

Full Court Press

Hennepin County District Court Newsletter



Back to school

by Judge Steve Pihlaga

A yellow school bus pulls up to the Hennepin County Government Center with a group of students on a field trip to the courts. It's a common sight. However, a review of the passenger list of the bus that departs every Wednesday at noon yields some surprises. Among the 25 riders are four judges: Mickey Greenberg, Harry Crump, Lloyd Zimmerman, and Steve Pihlaga as well as lawyers, court reporters, law clerks, legal secretaries, and administrators. Their destination is Lincoln Elementary School, Judge



Karla Scott, Carol Hill and "Everybody Wins (when adults read to children)" organizer Lisa Wilde prepare to board the bus for a short ride to Lincoln Elementary.

Greenberg's *alma mater*, and their mission is to read aloud with second-

grade students for a half-hour each week.



Judges Zimmerman, Greenberg and Pihlaga board the bus

The half-hour goes by fast. So fast sometimes that we don't have time to finish the week's book. A couple of weeks back, second-grader Spencer was disappointed when he had six pages left unread in his *Little Bill* [Cosby] book. I asked him if he would finish the book and tell me the ending the following week. Spencer did just that. "Do you know

(continued on page 2)
what you just did?" I

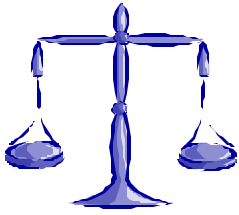
Inside this issue:

Back to school	1-3
I Live and Work in Kosovo	4
Measuring quality in the courts	5-6
HC reporters rock!	7
Dealing with Change in the Workplace	8

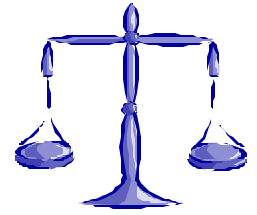
A monthly newsletter by and for employees and friends of District Court.

Newsletter Editorial Team

- Larry Anderson
- Ken Bergstrom
- Susan Love
- Eric Henning



Around the Courts



Back to school - continued from page 1



Yvonne Forsythe, Brenda Trulove, Sandy LaCroix, and Amanda Bloodsaw are about to board the bus.

asked him when he had finished the story. “You gave a book report.” “I did?!” responded Spencer proudly.

Marking the progress our students make is each week’s reward. Gradually, most students have wanted to read to us, rather than have us read to them. Students are proud of their improved reading skills. And they are eager to talk about the content of the books, which become a little more challenging each week.

At times it appears that the adults are enjoying the class and perhaps learning more than the students. At a recent class my law clerk, Amy Hoffman, was given a guided tour of the library and the tropical fish tank by her student, Shayla. My student, Spencer, demonstrated how to hop up and

down all three flights of stairs between his classroom and the library, while court reporter Steve Gill and his student, Contrell, exchanged fine points of strategy for the *scissors, paper, stone* game.

Lisa Wilde, the Minnesota State

Bar Association’s public service director, is the coordinator of the Minneapolis “Everybody Wins (When Adults Read with Children)” volunteer program that began in January. Lisa recruits the volunteers, handles all administrative tasks, and tries to maintain order on a bus filled with vocal legal professionals. One second-grader is assigned to each adult volunteer, who monitors the student’s progress on a week-to-week basis.

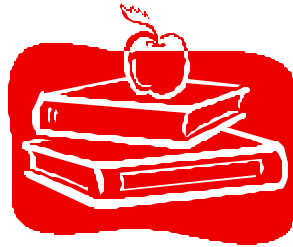
There are still some empty seats on the bus, and some deserving students who do not have an adult to read with. If you would like to join us, call Lisa Wilde at (612) 333-1183.



Everybody back on the bus, it’s time to get back to work



Around the Courts



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS! CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Sign up now for “Everybody Wins (When Adults Read with Children)”

What is the “Everybody Wins” program?	EW is an award-winning national reading program designed to improve students’ literacy skills. Volunteers from the legal community have made this program a success in St. Paul for the past 5 years, and now the Minnesota State Bar Association is starting EW in Minneapolis.
What do the volunteers do?	Ride a school bus once a week to Lincoln Elementary School and read with a student. One volunteer refers to Everybody Wins as “the most convenient volunteer program you can imagine.”
Who is needed?	At least 25 adults in downtown Minneapolis who are willing to spend one lunch-hour each week reading with a second-grade student. (St. Paul has approximately 130 volunteers each year, including Supreme Court justices, Court of Appeals judges, attorneys general, law clerks and court staff.)
What do volunteers say about Everybody Wins?	“This program allows members of a community to talk to, read to, and be read to by students of a young age. We have the opportunity to encourage young, impressionable minds to see the value of reading. Not just because it is important academically, but also because reading is one of life’s joyful activities. The program enhances the student and the volunteer. I look forward to my bus ride each week.” (Hon. Edward Toussaint, MN Court of Appeals)
How much time does it involve?	One lunch-hour a week. A bus will leave Hennepin Co. Govt. Center each Wednesday (starting Jan. 8) at 12 noon and return downtown at 1:00p.
Do I meet with the same student each week?	Yes. You’ll get to know your student’s reading strengths and weaknesses, and see their skills improve as the school year progresses.
Can I team up with another volunteer?	Yes. Two people can “share” a student, alternating weeks and covering for one another if one reader is not at work due to travel, vacation, illness, court appearances, etc.
What if my student is absent from school?	We will notify you via e-mail and/or phone on Wednesday morning and you don’t have to show up that day.
What if something comes up and I can’t make it?	We will have a roster of volunteers who are willing to fill in occasionally for missing readers. We’ll call around until we find someone to go in your place, so that no student is left without a “reading buddy” that day.
How do I sign up?	Call or e-mail one of us: Lisa Wilde, MN State Bar Association: 612-278-6306; lwilde@mnbar.org Anita Arockiasamy, Halleland Lewis: 612-204-4109; aarock@halleland.com