



January

THE BONDSMAN

2011

From the ^{OBA} Presidents Desk:



OBA Director Cathy Guyer and I attended the Associated Bail Agents of Tulsa's October meeting; the highlight was a tour of the David L. Moss Criminal Justice Center. The tour was arranged and conducted by Sgt. Shannon Clark and Chief Robinette. It was an educational experience to say the least, the facility was clean, well lighted and had a fresh smell to it. In my 30 plus years in this business it's nice to walk into a jail without the aroma of stale smoke and sweat in the air.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Tulsa County association for its public relation efforts. A lot of work has been done in this area, especially the last ten years. This was evident at our December Board meeting held in conjunction with the eleventh annual Christmas Dinner sponsored by ABAT and held in the Jury Room of the Tulsa County Court House.

Dudley Goolsby, OBA President

facebook® IS A NEW TOOL FOR BONDSMAN

(Information taken from a story posted on the Internet by KTUL, Newschannel 8, in Tulsa.)

Facebook is proving to be a useful weapon, in the fight against crime. If you are wanted, Facebook and the Internet are two places, you don't want to be seen. It's no secret that bondsmen post bail for suspects, but now, when trying to track down someone that has skipped out on a bond, they're posting the skippers picture on Facebook and asking if anyone has seen them.

The office of Wallace and Associates in Tulsa uses this devise in their search for bond skips. Virgil Wallace says that within a couple of hours after posting someone on his Facebook site he will usually get a "hit" that will lead him to the skip. (A "hit" is whenever someone sees a posting and comments on it. Often they will leave enough information to give Wallace a lead on where to find his skipping client.)

Another way to use Facebook is to check out the wanted person's name to see if they have a Facebook page. If they do, often they will post information about themselves that may lead to their location.

Social scientists continue to be amazed at the amount of information people will put on a Facebook page even knowing that it will be open to hundreds or even thousands of other people to read and then leave comments about the posting.

Law enforcement agencies use Facebook the same way as Wallace, i.e. post a wanted person's photo and wait for hits from the general public. In addition, one of the first steps in a criminal investigation is to see if the suspect has a Facebook page. (This has become such a well known investigative technique that it is making its way into television crime shows such as CSI, NCIS, and Law & Order.)

"These guys are out there committing crimes, robberies, burglaries, shootings or whatever and then are posting on Facebook. They are doing all this stuff and boasting about their crimes," said Jason Willingham, of Tulsa Police Department.

If the suspects are caught, arrested and allowed to post bond, they should know that Facebook is no place to hide. (But many of them can't seem to pass up an opportunity to brag with words and even photographs, creating an information trail that the police may be able to follow right to them.)



ABAT ENTERTAINS TULSA COURT WORKERS

The Tulsa bondsman association, ABAT, fed over two hundred court house workers on Friday, December 17, at its annual courthouse lunch. The affair features a full holiday lunch menu of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and all the usual side dishes.

Court house workers say they look forward to the lunch. One said that she always feels that the Christmas season has started when ABAT serves its lunch and "it reminds me to finish my Christmas shopping."

While the lunch is open to all court and jail employees, no one is turned away. Some offices will send two or three employees down to bring back food for the staff members that have to work through the usual lunch time.

PLANNING UNDER WAY FOR ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

OBA's educational conferences for 2011 are scheduled for Tuesday, June 7 and June 28. Almost all OBA members are required to attend one of the programs each year.

The Oklahoma City program on the 7th will be held in the Clarion Hotel's Meridian Conference Center near I-40 and Meridian Avenue. Tulsa's program will be held in the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Conference Center in Catoosa, Oklahoma, just north and east of Tulsa.

Each year the OBA tries to come up with a program made up of 6-7 one hour talks, with the same topic and same speaker, at both conferences. Sometimes it is necessary to use different speakers in OKC and Tulsa, but the topics will still be the same.

The OBA conference planning staff would like to hear suggestions for topics and/or speakers from the membership. Making an effort to have talks that fit the needs of the membership requires input and suggestions from bondsmen throughout the state.

If you have heard an interesting speaker with a topic that you think might be of general interest, please contact Ed Kelsay, OBA's Education Coordinator, and he will contact your recommended speaker.

AUSTIN LAWYERS OWE TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS, OVER \$2 MILLION FOR CLIENTS THAT FLED

Defense lawyers, who once had little restriction on signing bonds to free clients from jail, owe Travis County nearly \$2 million in outstanding fees after defendants broke promises to return to court, records obtained by the Austin American-Statesman show.

The bills to about 40 attorneys for forfeited bonds range from a few hundred dollars to nearly a half-million, according to a list compiled by the (Travis) county attorney's office. Five lawyers owe six-digit totals. Officials said some of the cases that contributed to the debt reach back a decade and, despite collection efforts, have languished on the books. Until recent years, county sheriffs continued a long tradition of allowing lawyers to easily sign bonds for clients without logging the frequency or verifying that they could pay the amount should defendants not show up in court.

Several attorneys on the county's debt list said they issued bonds to lure new clients to new or struggling law practices. Some would charge clients only legal fees and nothing for their services in getting them out of jail. "It was a business decision that went bad," said Austin attorney Kent Leediker, who, records show, owes \$141,600. "It was intended to be a source of revenue, and it wasn't something that I had an area of expertise in to know it was going to blow up to the extent that it blew up. Once it blew up, I stopped writing the bonds, but by that time, the liability had already happened," he said.

Suspects in Travis County can be released from jail pending the outcome of their case in several ways, including the use of surety bonds. Bail bondsmen typically work with insurance companies to back their bonds, and those companies generally require the bondsmen to more immediately pay forfeited bonds, county officials said. Lawyers traditionally have not had such relationships.

Officials said the main goal of pursuing those who flee is to get them back in court to face charges. Those who signed the bond, including lawyers, have a financial incentive to help find the suspects when the county seeks to collect the bond money, they said.

Officials with the Travis County attorney's office, which operates the county's collections service, said that, over time, many lawyers who were once on their debt list have paid off fees in lump sums or through payment plans. Others have continuously dodged county bills and not responded to lawsuits, they said. County Attorney David Escamilla said that, in several instances, he is evaluating whether to move forward with property seizures against some of the lawyers. "Some people come in; some people we send a letter to, and they'll pay," Escamilla said. "Some,

we have to go all the way to the end and get a judgment against them and start collection procedures." Attorneys with two of the highest bills include Craig Sandling, who owes \$343,300 and did not return calls for comment, and R. Patrick Fagerberg, whose bill totals \$300,800. He declined to comment. Others, including attorney Robert R. Smith, are trying to clear their balances in other ways. Smith in recent months has split his time between representing clients in his private practice and working as a court-appointed attorney for defendants who can't afford a lawyer. The county applies his earnings from those cases to his \$414,950 balance — the highest debt on the list.

Until about six years ago, the county had no policies in place to monitor lawyers signing bonds for their clients — an operation overseen by the sheriff's office. Former Sheriff Margo Frasier said that when she left her position in 2004, she began realizing the consequences of that practice.

"I think there were some of these folks who were, 'I'm just going to write tons and tons of bonds, and when the debt comes due, I'm going to thumb my nose at things and dare the county to come after me,'" she said. Made aware of the issue, Sheriff Greg Hamilton said that, soon after he took office, he developed new requirements for attorneys who want to write bonds. Now, lawyers must file written applications and attach financial disclosure statements. Sheriff's officials then cap the amount of bonds attorneys may write based on that information. "Now that we have put some checks and balances in place, everybody plays by the rules," Hamilton said. According to a list from the sheriff's office, 17 Austin lawyers have been approved to write bonds in amounts from \$16,000 to \$2.1 million. Longtime Austin attorney John Kuhn, who is on that approved list, said he closely evaluates whether he will sign bonds for clients. "We ask, 'What is their record?' If they have been down in the penitentiary and that sort of thing, I'm usually pretty hesitant," he said.

Several attorneys on the county's debt list said they wish they had been more cautious. Some blame themselves for being too trusting. "I'm still in a bind," said attorney Arnold Garcia, whose bill is more than \$75,000. "It's not like I didn't anticipate something being done about it. We'll have to figure out what we are going to do." Jody W. Sims, who owes the county more than \$28,000, said he no longer has an interest in writing bonds for clients. He said he knew he had a debt to the county but has had no money to clear his balance. "I need to pay it, I guess," he said.

(This story taken from STATESMAN.COM and written by Tony Plohetski of the American-Statesman newspaper staff.)

OKLAHOMA LEGISLATOR'S DONATION HELPS SAVE ARIZONA WOMAN'S LIFE

Rep. Mike Shelton, D-Oklahoma City, probably never thought that an action he took at Langston University while he was in college would make him a hero and life-saver to a woman he had never met. It was 1995 when he registered as a peripheral blood stem cell donor during a campus blood drive. In fact it was so long ago he had almost forgotten about it.

Cancer had a hold on Patrice Tillman for nearly two years when doctors came to her with what could have been life-threatening news. "Well, we don't have a match," they said.

Tillman, now a healthy 31-year-old, was on her second relapse with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Her first marrow treatment was with her own bone marrow. Yet the cancer snapped back six months later. Now she needed a peripheral blood stem cell transplant from someone else. Since her siblings weren't a match, she was desperate for a lifesaving transplant from a stranger.

She didn't give up, though, because she'd already had her "miracle baby" in 2005, when the cancer and treatment had seemed to eliminate all chances of having another child. Surely, more miracles were ahead.

Indeed, another miracle arrived in the form of a remission. But once again, the cancer returned.

A little more than a year ago, Tillman once again joined the estimated 10,000 people waiting for a donor transplant from a stranger. "They told me I only had a year or less to live," she said.

Meanwhile, Rep. Mike Shelton, D-Oklahoma City, was busy talking to constituents and studying potential laws affecting Oklahomans. He hadn't thought in years about his college days at Langston University, much less that day in 1995 when he registered as a peripheral blood stem cell donor.

"I'm going to be honest. The reason I was there was probably because they gave out cookies or maybe ... free T-shirts," he said.

But one day his mother contacted him. She'd just received a surprising phone call from the Oklahoma Blood Institute, saying Shelton's blood type and other donor characteristics determined in 1995 matched someone who needed a peripheral blood stem cell donation. As

a college student, he'd left his mother's contact information on the donor registry nearly 15 years earlier. The criteria for donors had been revised, and his name had popped up as a close match this time for an anonymous recipient recently identified as Tillman.

Shelton wanted to commit to the donor registry that he'd nearly forgotten more than a decade earlier.

He said he wants to help others with whatever they might need. And now someone needed him more than ever before. He found a new perspective over the years as he watched both of his grandmothers die of cancer and his youngest brother go through chemotherapy and radiation for brain cancer.

"I was willing to do anything to help this young lady," Shelton said.

He went through two days, eight hours per day, of letting health care workers extract his stem cells by needle in July 2009. Couriers rushed the precious contents through airports and hand-carried it in a miniature ice chest to the Arizona hospital where Tillman lay with her marrow stripped from her body.

Shelton began the first day of recovery in Oklahoma City while fresh cells flowed through an IV bag into Tillman's body in Tucson, Ariz.

"It literally takes your immune system and puts it in another person," said Dr. James Smith, Oklahoma Blood Institute Medical Director.

Tillman and Shelton met several months ago and became friends. They visited the Oklahoma Blood Institute and other Oklahoma locations as part of their new mission to encourage people, especially minorities, to donate marrow and peripheral blood stem cells, which come from marrow.

Tillman now is a lively, upbeat woman striding toward the next chapter.

Spreading out her hands and smiling, she said: "I'm perfectly healed. I'm not on any rejection drugs. I'm cancer-free."

And Oklahoma State Representative Mike Shelton is getting ready for the opening of the 2011 legislative session.

A CAN OF WASP SPRAY?



The story goes like this: a cashier in a convenience store became suspicious about the actions of one of her customers. He just stood around like he was waiting for something. And he was. He was waiting for all the other customers to leave the store.

He then pulled out a pistol and headed toward the cashier. In the mean time she had reached under the counter and picked up a can of wasp spray. When the gunman looked back at the door, she raised the can and sprayed him right in the face from nearly 15 feet away.

The bad guy was immediately blinded and in very severe pain. He dropped the gun and went to his knees. When the police arrived they had to take him to the hospital for the antidote before booking him into jail.

Wasp spray? Yep, it makes one heck of a home or business defense without killing. Often times now, if you call a police department and ask about pepper spray, they will recommend wasp spray. You have to use pepper spray very close to the bad guy, but you can spray wasp killer with great accuracy up to 25 to 30 feet.

The chemicals in the spray are very toxic and result in almost instant blinding that requires a hospital visit to neutralize. Pepper spray doesn't even affect some people, especially those on drugs, and many can take a direct hit and just shake it off. They can't shake off wasp spray.

It works great for home and work place defense, so keep a can handy around the house, by the bedside, and at the place of business. While some people might wonder about a pepper spray canister, they probably will not think twice about a can of wasp spray in Oklahoma.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST GRANDFATHERED BONDSMEN IN 2010-2011

Kenn Cousins
Doyle Davis
Mike England
Sue Hamilton

M. L. Knight
C. J. Lawson
Ed Mayfield



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OBA CALENDAR

Please mark your calendars NOW for the following upcoming events:

Monday – Thursday

02/20/11 – 02/24/11

Annual PBUS Meeting,
Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas

Tuesday 02/22/11

1:00 a.m. ABAT Meeting in Tulsa

Thursday & Friday

03/3 & 4/11

PLE#1 at OBA

Thursday 03/17/11

10:00 a.m. OBA Monthly Board Meeting at OBA

Tuesday 03/22/11

1:00 a.m. ABAT Meeting in Tulsa

Thursday 04/21/11

10:00 a.m. OBA Monthly Board Meeting at OBA

Tuesday 04/28/11

11:00 a.m. ABAT Meeting in Tulsa

Watch OBA website www.okbondsman.com for updates to be announced!

NEW BONDSMAN LICENSES

Kenneth Andrews Oklahoma County
Shelby Brinkley..... Grady County
Lloyd Coughran Oklahoma County
James Hatman Garvin County
Debbie Hodge Okmulgee County
Alicia Knox Oklahoma County
Jeffery Limore..... Adair County
Gary Middleton, Jr. Canadian County
Gregory Moore..... Delaware County
Tandy O'Leary Craig County
James Panter Ottawa County
Doyle Patterson..... Muskogee County
Paul Richards Payne County
Artina Silas Tulsa County
Troy Squyres Tulsa County
Rebecca Stubblefield Cotton County
David Van Brunt..... Pottawatomie County
Buster Venable Seminole County
Dennis Weems, Jr. Tulsa County
Robert Wigington Jackson County

2010 BPAC CONTRIBUTORS THANK YOU!!!!

Kenny Boyer
Carol Carlson
Kevin Crouch
Gary Duke
Bill East

Dudley Goolsby, Jr.
Jack O'Daniel
Marilyn Pledger
Eric Smith
Barry Tucker

PRE-LICENSE SCHOOLS SET FOR 2011

MARCH 3 & 4, 2011

JUNE 2 & 3, 2011

SEPTEMBER 1 & 2, 2011

DECEMBER 1 & 2, 2011

OBA DUES ARE DUE!!

Your OBA dues for 2011 are due NOW! Dues paid January 1, 2011 or later are not eligible for a discount. Dues not paid by March 31st shall result in suspension from membership and have no accidental death & dismemberment insurance coverage and no voting rights until dues are paid in full!