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## President's Message

Happy November! Welcome to the month for giving thanks, recognizing how fortunate we are, and appreciating those who help us along the way. I would like to take this timely opportunity to send some heartfelt thanks to our BCWB members.

First, a giant thank you to everyone who made the 2015 Autumn Affair a smashing success! From our dynamic co-chairs Lisa Alcantar and Greta McFarling to each and

every person who attended or bought a raffle ticket, from our table sponsors to our raffle and auction donors, from our hardworking committee members to our endlessly supportive families, this event would not have happened without YOU! Your efforts and generosity will have a direct impact on the work of the Children's Bereavement Center (CBC) in a big way. (To find out just how big, join us at our holiday



luncheon on December 11, when we will present the CBC with the proceeds of the event.)

Second, I want to thank everyone who supported the BCWB's (con'd on p. 7)

## November Luncheon: Jill Mitchell-Thein: The Basics of Veterans' Law

Please join us on November 3rd to welcome Jill Mitchell-Thein. Ms. Mitchell-Thein is an attorney at Heard & Smith, LLP. Beginning 2000, she limited her practice to veterans' law, assisting veterans with appeals for disability benefits. She is VA-accredited and admitted to practice before the Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims. Ms. Mitchell-Thein will present the procedural and substantive basics of veterans' law. She will discuss the theoretical aspects of veterans' benefits, as well as the practical aspects of practicing in this area of law. She

will explain who can file a claim, when, where, and what types of claims can be filed, what types of benefits are available, why veterans are eligible for certain benefits, and why the VA takes so long. She will share some war stories and fun facts. CLE approved.

**When:** Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2015

**Time:** Noon to 1:00 p.m.

**Where:** Club Giraud

**Cost:** \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members, \$20 for students, payable at the door

**RSVP:** RSVP by Friday, October 30, 2015 to [Events@bexar\\_countywomens\\_bar.org](mailto:Events@bexar_countywomens_bar.org). Include any dietary restrictions in your RSVP. We understand schedules change, but we can't guarantee a spot to individuals who do not RSVP by the date above. Walk-ins will be charged \$35 to cover the additional demands on Club Giraud's staff. No-shows will be billed.

For more information, contact Lindsay Riley ([lriley@dykema.com](mailto:lriley@dykema.com)) or Rachel Skinner ([rskinner@dykema.com](mailto:rskinner@dykema.com)). We hope to see you there!



# Swearing-In Ceremony

By Amanda Crouch

Bexar County Women's Bar Association and San Antonio Young Lawyer's Association will host the second annual San Antonio Swearing-In Ceremony on Thursday, November 19, 2015; the ceremony is open to all who pass the Texas Bar Exam. The event will begin at 4:00 pm at the Central Jury

Room located in the Cadena-Reeves Justice Center at 300 Dolorosa, San Antonio, Texas 78205. Chief Justice Sandee Bryan Marion of the Fourth Court of Appeals will preside over the event. Judge Henry Bemporad will also speak at the event. Representatives from local bar related organizations will be present to provide information on membership

for their respective organizations. Please RSVP at <http://www.bexarcountywomensbar.org/annual-swearing-in-ceremony> so we can have an accurate count of attendees as space is limited. Please contact Amanda Crouch at [acrouch@jw.com](mailto:acrouch@jw.com) for more information or if you have any questions!



*You Are Invited*

*to the*

*Bexar County Women's Bar Association*

*2016 Membership  
Drive & Celebration*

*Wednesday, December 2, 2015*

*5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.*

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*Membership forms can be found at [www.bexarcountywomensbar.org](http://www.bexarcountywomensbar.org)*

*Questions? Contact Connie Arambola at [carambola@jymbworld.com](mailto:carambola@jymbworld.com)*



## Book Review: *The Far End of Happy*



By Gaylia Brunson

*The Far End of Happy* by Kathryn Craft may hit a little too close to home for some of you who work in the family law arena. The writing is good with well-developed characters and complex relationships. The past is artfully intertwined with the present-day to give the reader a full picture of how the characters have all reached their current places in each of the relationships. The book is bleak and starts by letting you know that Ronnie is divorcing Jeff.

On the day Jeff is supposed to move out of the house, he shows up drunk with a shotgun in the front seat of his car. After a struggle between husband, wife, and sons, Ronnie realizes the true danger she and her children are in and she calls the police. A 12-hour standoff ensues between Jeff and the police. During the standoff, Ronnie must find a way to protect their two boys, without giving Jeff false hope of reconciliation and staying true to herself - all while in the same room with her mother and mother-in-law. Ronnie's mother and mother-in-law both hold secrets of their own which

cause them to try to influence Ronnie to make choices which will correct the mistakes of their pasts rather than acknowledge the reality of Ronnie's failed marriage.

Despite knowing the outcome from the start, the author invites you into the struggles and the complexity of choices made. While the characters explore deep rooted causes for a broken marriage, the author forces the reader to respect Ronnie's strength and perseverance while allowing the reader to have empathy for Jeff. The reader is with questions such as how does one honor a marriage filled with challenges such as alcoholism or over spending? How do spouses find the strength to sign legal documents authorizing an action

that will have significant impact on each other's lives (i.e. commit a spouse to a psych ward or authorize the police to mace your spouse in the attempt to save him/her)?

Maybe the ending was only possible because the story is based upon a real event from the author's life, but I was surprised by the seed of hope planted at the end, showing signs of healing the wounds of the five remaining members of the fractured family. This is a sad, glorious book about facing loss, lack of control, and the inability to save someone else. It acknowledges that, regardless of what others say, it does not make you selfish, heartless, or a bitch to realize that sometimes you just have to save yourself.

### *Jingle, Jingle... Come and Mingle!*

*Please join us as we celebrate another fantastic year!*

#### *Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation's Annual Holiday Party*

*December 11, 2015*

*Noon to 1:00 p.m.*

*Marriott Plaza San Antonio*

*555 S. Alamo Street*

*Luncheon is \$40 (includes parking)*

*~You can help spread holiday cheer at the Holiday Party  
by donating new or gently used books or by making  
a monetary donation supporting Literacy San Antonio.  
Receive a free raffle ticket for each donation.~*

*RSVP required by November 25*

*Events@bexarcountywomensbar.org*

# Member Spotlight: Catherine Casiano



**What's your current job?**

I am the Director of Law Student Recruitment at St. Mary's University School of Law.

**How long have you been a member of the BCWB? What's your best experience thus far?**

I joined over a year ago. Having the opportunity to meet and interact with wonderful and energetic women attorneys practicing in so many diverse areas of law has been the best part of becoming a member.

**Tell us about your morning ritual or daily routine.**

I use all of my negotiation skills to get my two kids ready to go in the morning, especially with my two and a half year old who begs to go to school in her pajamas every morning, and then hopefully I have time left to get myself ready for the day. I also need my morning hot tea before I head out the door - I am not a coffee drinker!

**What's your favorite moment of your career so far?**

I love it when the students

I've recruited to attend law school stop by my office to update me on their progress in law school and their accomplishments. It makes me feel like a proud parent and I'm happy that I've played a positive role in someone's brand new law career.

**What was your childhood dream job?**

I grew up in El Paso and used to tell everyone that I was going to be Mayor of El Paso one day.

**Guilty Pleasure: What can you not live without?**

Cupcakes, celebrity gossip, and cuddles with my kids.

**What's the best career advice you've offered?**

Always dress and act professionally because the legal community in San Antonio is so small and tight knit, you never know when you walk out the door who you will see or meet on any given day.

### BCWB Lites

Suzanne Patrick, formerly of St. Mary's University School of Law, has joined Our Lady of the Lake University as Compliance Officer. Her new email is [sbpatrick@ollusa.edu](mailto:sbpatrick@ollusa.edu).

Allison Ellis at Dykema Cox Smith and her husband, John Ellis, welcomed their beautiful baby girl, Madison, in July.

Soledad Valenciano of Spivey Valenciano, PLLC, in conjunction with the Bexar County Dispute Resolution Center, recently completed the Texas 40-Hour Basic Mediation Training Course. As a credentialed mediator, Soledad provides pro-bono mediation services to disputants at the BCDRC.



## Fitness Column: Photos from the River City Run



Thanks to everyone who came out to the BCWB/SAYLA River City Run event! We had a great time learning about San Antonio while burning some calories!



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## Judicial Spotlight: Judge Daphne Previti Austin, 289th District Court



### Why did you decide to become a lawyer?

I only decided to become a lawyer because I scored higher on the LSAT than the other graduate school placement tests. I never intended to practice law. I lived in Washington DC, where many people use their legal education to work outside the courtroom for non-profits, governmental agencies, or the private sector. I worked for an international development group that implemented USAID and World Bank projects worldwide to better the lives of the less fortunate. I enjoyed that work and went back to school to earn a graduate degree for promotion in that company. While at St. Mary's

University School of Law, I participated in their Criminal Justice Clinic and fell in love with trial work. I knew that the job in DC would always be there and thought I'd try trial work for a little while. Many years later, I'm still here! In life, I've learned to be receptive to opportunities presented when doors open along your path.

### Who are the people who have had the greatest influence upon your legal career?

God leads me where I should be. As with all aspects of my life, my parents have been very influential. With my mother's encouragement, and having been raised in the post-women's movement era, I believed that there was nothing I couldn't do if I worked hard and put my mind to it. At a young age, my father taught me that integrity is crucial. All we have is our name. With a good reputation and hard work, anything is possible. There are too many legal Mentors to name within the confines of this article. Suffice it to say, I was very impressed with the tutelage I received in the Clinic, at the Federal Public Defender's Office, at the Bexar County District Attorney's Office, the Judges and Justices in front of whom I've practiced, and the community of the San Antonio Criminal Defense Lawyer's Association.

### What are you most proud of so far in your legal career?

I enjoy advocating and being a champion for those who have no voice. I've done that for victims, the accused and now, children and families in need of supportive, rehabilitative services.

### What tips can you give other lawyers interested in becoming a judge?

I recommend working in areas that provide perspective on more than one side of a case. It makes for a better negotiator and advocate. Always be your best self. You only have one opportunity to make a good first impression.

### What are you looking forward to the most during your time on the bench?

We have had a need for a boys' mental health specialty docket for some time. My colleague, Judge Laura Parker services Bexar County's girls at her CrossRoads Court specialty docket. I am pleased to have received a grant from the Department of Justice to begin our MIND (Males in Need of Direction) specialty court docket in the 289th District Court. I most look forward to making a difference in the lives of all children, but especially those who may be labeled criminals for behavior that is a result of a mental illness.



## President's Column (con'd from p. 1)

involvement in the Association of Corporate Counsel's 10th annual Ethics Follies performance of Scamalat last month! We had an amazingly talented contingent of singing and dancing nuns: Katherine Noll, Victoria Bongat, Katie Fraser, Hannah Hembree, Angelica Jimenez, and Leslie Lewis. We so appreciate our BCWB

members who made it out to see the show to support us and the Community Justice Program. It was so much fun that we might have to do it again next year—stay tuned for your chance to get involved!

Third, I want to thank our BCWB members for participating in our various events, offering your time and talents to help

our programs, and telling your friends and colleagues how much fun the BCWB is! We're nearing the home stretch of my year as president, and your involvement has made this year so very rewarding (and go by so very fast)! Membership renewal is right around the corner, and I truly hope you'll join us for another amazing year in 2016!

## Recap of Helen Suzman Exhibit

By Suzanne Patrick

On September 29, 2015, the Bexar County Women's Bar hosted a tour of an exhibit featuring the life of Helen Suzman, Fighter for Human Rights at the Barshop Jewish Community Center of San Antonio. Members of the Bexar County Women's Bar walked through the exhibit that depicted the courageous and meaningful place Ms. Suzman had in South Africa as an opponent of apartheid. Ms. Suzman was a pioneer and led the way for women in the Parliament and was relentless in her efforts to

move her agenda forward within the government. She was the only Member of the Parliament from the Progressive Party for 13 years from 1961-1974.

Although she represented the affluent white constituency, she saw herself as an "honorary ombudsman for all those people who have no vote or no Member of Parliament."

Ms. Suzman developed a great friendship with Nelson Mandela over her life. She first met him in 1967 when she visited him on Robbin Island. She then had to wait seven years to return to the Island to visit him. When he

was moved to Pollsmore Prison and then Victor Verster Prison, she visited him as frequently as she was permitted. Their friendship grew and strengthened over this time.

Ms. Suzman withdrew from her political role in government at age 71 and passed away in January of 2009 at age 91. Her life was definitely one of a passionate and courageous women who paved the way for freedom and leadership. For more information about this exhibit and Ms. Suzman's life please visit [www.helensuzmanexhibition.com](http://www.helensuzmanexhibition.com).



## It's Election Time for the Bexar County Women's Bar!

It is time for us to vote for our Officers and Directors for the 2016 year. Voting will be conducted electronically, so please keep a lookout for an email in early November with a link to a Survey Monkey ballot. All members in good standing will receive a link to the ballot, each member can only vote once, and all votes are completely anonymous—just like with our previous paper ballots. The ballot will include photos and background information on each of the candidates up for election.

The slate of Officers is as follows:

**President: Katherine Noll** is a shareholder with Dykema Cox Smith where she assists clients on a diverse range of tax Issues, including resolving IRS and state tax controversies, business tax planning, employee benefit plans, executive compensation and tax-exempt organizations. Katherine started practicing tax law in 2006 after receiving her J.D. and LL.M. degrees, and she represents individuals, public corporations, closely held entities as well as tax-exempt organizations. She has been a member of the BCWB for nine years, has served as Director, Treasurer, Vice President and President of the organization, and has chaired numerous committees.



**Candidate for President-Elect: Lisa Alcantar** has served BCWBA in one capacity or another since graduating from St. Mary's in 2009 - everything from running luncheons to Autumn Affair. She is currently Vice President. She practices commercial litigation with Porter, Rogers, Dahlman & Gordon, PC, with a focus on healthcare and employment issues. When not working, she keeps busy with her husband and two kids.



**Candidate for Vice President: Greta McFarling** is a St. Mary's graduate who has worked as a staff attorney at the Fourth Court of Appeals for the past 10 years. She was elected to the Bexar County Women's Bar board in 2013 and currently serves as treasurer. Along with Lisa Alcantar, she had a lot of fun co-chairing this year's Autumn Affair. When not at work, she enjoys spending time with her family, practicing yoga, and shopping online (although she later returns most of her purchases).



**Treasurer: Hella Scheuerman** is a graduate of St. Mary's University School of Law and has been in private practice since 1997. She is Board Certified in Personal Injury Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Scene in San Antonio Magazine has recognized her as a Best Lawyer in personal injury (2009, 2012), civil litigation (2011), and general litigation (2013-2015). She has been a Member of BCWB since 1997, Director 2011-2014 and Treasurer Elect 2015. Hella has been an Active BCWB Member on various committees, including: Co-Chair Autumn Affair (2013), Chair BCWB Family Event (2013), Chair Law Day (2012, 2015), Chair Mentor-Mentee (2014), and Young Women's Leadership Academy Liaison (2015). Hella also serves as a Mentor through the Mentor/Mentee programs of both BCWB and San Antonio Bar Association. She is a Fellow in the Texas Bar Foundation, a member of the Grant Review Committee for Impact San Antonio, serves as a Faith Formation Catechist and is a Member of the Woman's Council in her local Parish. She also participates in supporting St. Pj's Children's Home, San Antonio Food Bank and Thru Project.



(con'd on p. 9)



## It's Election Time for the Bexar County Women's Bar! (con'd from p. 8)

**Candidate for Treasurer-Elect: Shari Y. Mao** is an associate in the Corporate & Securities section at Jackson Walker. Prior to law school, Ms. Mao was vice president of a flooring company, where she managed the North American operations and collaborated with factories in China and Taiwan. She was a Risk Manager on the Pulp and Paper Desk at Enron and was retained after the mass termination to unwind and liquidate trades. Additionally, Ms. Mao was an associate at J.P. Morgan & Co., where she managed projects and implemented trade processing solutions in New York, London, and Tokyo. During law school, Ms. Mao interned for Chief Judge Fred Biery of the United States District for the Western District of Texas, where she researched and wrote memos for the court. She also worked as a student attorney at St. Mary's Center for Legal and Social Justice. Ms. Mao received her B.A., magna cum laude, from Duke University and her J.D., magna cum laude, from St. Mary's University School of Law, where she was an associate editor and staff writer for St. Mary's Law Journal and a member of the Order of Barristers.



**Candidate for Secretary: Lindsay Scaief Riley** is originally from Mesquite, Texas. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. She went on to attend law school at Texas Tech University School of Law, and served as the Managing Editor for the Texas Tech Law Review, as well as a research assistant and teaching fellow. After graduating from law school in 2012, she served as Briefing Attorney to Justices Rebecca Simmons and Patricia Alvarez on the Fourth Court of Appeals. In August 2013, Lindsay joined Cox Smith, now Dykema Cox Smith, as a litigation associate. Her practice focuses on advising clients with complex litigation matters in the energy, utilities and natural resources sectors. She also advises clients with matters related to business and commercial litigation, including all stages of pretrial and trial work in state and federal court. Lindsay is an active member of the San Antonio Bar Association, San Antonio Young Lawyers Association and William S. Sessions American Inns of Court and has enjoyed serving as a board member, luncheon chair and Autumn Affair subcommittee chair for the Bexar County Women's Bar Association.



We have 7 vacancies on the Board of Directors. The Candidates for Director are:

**Gaylia Brunson** graduated from St. Mary's University School of Law in May 2003 and became licensed to practice law in November 2003. Gaylia has been in Civil Litigation since she began practicing law in 2003 and teaches negotiations and mediations at St. Mary's University School of Law. In December 2014, she obtained her Master's in Business Administration, graduating with a 3.97 GPA. She has been an active member of the Bexar County Women's Bar since 2005, working on and chairing various committees for Autumn Affair to include being Co-Chair for the event in 2011.



**Laura Cauley** graduated from St. Mary's School of Law in 2011 and served as a Briefing Attorney to the Honorable Sandee Bryan Marion on the Fourth Court of Appeals and as a term law clerk to U.S. Magistrate Judge Henry J. Bemporad prior to becoming a Career Law Clerk to Senior U.S. District Judge David A. Ezra. She graduated from Texas Lutheran University in 2002 with a B.S. in Biology and a minor in History. Laura also received a M.S. in Forestry from the University of Montana. Prior to law school, she worked for Texas Parks and Wildlife. She is an active member of the Bexar County Women's Bar Association and has served on various committees for Autumn Affair. If elected, she looks forward to serving the BCWBF in an even greater capacity. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband Shannon and two-year old daughter Iris Elizabeth.

(con'd on p. 10)



## It's Election Time for the Bexar County Women's Bar! (con'd from p. 9)



**Amanda Crouch**, originally from San Antonio, received her undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 2009 and her law degree from Baylor University School of Law in 2013. After graduation, she moved back to the Alamo City and began practicing commercial litigation with Jackson Walker, LLP, where she represents clients in oil and gas litigation, collection matters, personal injury defense and general business matters. She has been an active member of BCWB, serving as Co-Chair for the inaugural Swearing-In Ceremony Committee in 2014 and Chair of the Swearing-In Ceremony Committee in 2015. Amanda has also recently served as Co-Chair of the first ever Live Auction Committee for the 2015 Autumn Affair. As Co-Chair, she worked with the committee to solicit donations for the live auction packages and helped coordinate the logistics of the auction. In addition to the Swearing-In Ceremony and Autumn Affair, Amanda has enjoyed attending various social and community events with BCWB and getting to know the women in the organization. Amanda is also a member of Defense Counsel of San Antonio and is the founding President of Hemisfair Coalition, a young professionals group with the mission of raising awareness and funds to support the Hemisfair redevelopment in downtown San Antonio. When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Scott, exploring San Antonio and trying new restaurants. Being a part of BCWB has given Amanda the opportunity to meet like-minded women who share common interests and goals and have a desire to give back to the legal community and the city of San Antonio. She would be honored to be elected to serve on the BCWB Board of Directors and looks forward to continuing to contribute in 2016.



**Amanda Hazleton's** litigation practice with Allen, Stein & Durbin, PC includes the areas of personal injury, insurance defense, insurance coverage, and civil appeals. Amanda began her legal career in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2005 before moving with her husband Greg to San Antonio in 2009. In San Antonio, Amanda focused her practice on multistate mass tort/multi-district litigation with a local firm before joining Allen, Stein & Durbin in 2014. Amanda received a B.A. in English, Minor in Journalism, from the University of Missouri - Columbia and obtained her J.D. from St. Louis University. Amanda is a member of the State Bar of Texas, Bexar County Women's Bar Association and San Antonio Bar Association.



**Heidi Helstrom** has been with Tessmer Law Firm, P.L.L.C. since May 2011. Heidi received an Associate's Degree in Paralegal Technology from an ABA approved program in Fayetteville, North Carolina. She also completed the Paralegal Program at University of Texas San Antonio. Heidi achieved her Paralegal Certification from the National Association of Legal Assistants in January of 2010. Heidi was born in San Antonio, but has lived all over the United States and Europe, including England and Italy. She has been living in San Antonio with her three daughters since 2001. Heidi is past President, past Education Director and current President Elect of the South Texas Organization of Paralegals. Heidi also has memberships in the National Association of Legal Assistants, State Bar of Texas Paralegal Division, Bexar County Women's Bar Association, San Antonio Bar Association, Family Law Section of the SABA and the College of the State Bar of Texas. (con'd on p. 11)

## It's Election Time for the Bexar County Women's Bar! (con'd from p. 10)

**Lauren M. Horne** graduated from Texas A&M University in 2005 with a B.S. in Political Science and a Minor in History. She received her law degree from Texas Wesleyan (now Texas A&M) in 2008 and began practicing in Houston where she represented clients in professional liability, medical malpractice, personal injury, premises liability and negligence claims. Lauren currently practices civil litigation, mostly defending medical negligence claims, with Hoblit, Darling, Ralls, Hernandez, & Hudlow, LLP. When Lauren and her husband, Justin, moved to San Antonio in 2011, Lauren became immediately involved with the BCWB, volunteering for events as needed. She has been an active member since that time. Lauren's involvement includes the following: Board member (2013-2015), Luncheon Co-Chair (2013-2014), Co-Chair Arrangements Committee for Autumn Affair (2013), Co-Chair Silent Auction Committee for Autumn Affair (2014), Co-Chair Balloons and Raffle Committee and Website Committee Chair for Autumn Affair (2015), and Website Administrator (2015). Lauren enjoys watching her husband forecast the weather on KSAT 12, exploring the outdoors with her toddler, and hanging out with her Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas "little sister," Lucy. Lauren has enjoyed her time working with the BCWB's talented women and would be honored to continue to work with such incredible women in 2016.



**Suzanne Patrick** is the Compliance Officer for Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU). Prior to joining OLLU, she was the Director of Career Services at St. Mary's University School of Law for six years. Prior to joining St. Mary's she was the Firmwide Professional Development Coordinator at the international law firm of Reed Smith LLP. At Reed Smith, Ms. Patrick developed curriculum for Reed Smith University's (RSU) School of Law programming for summer and new associates. Additionally, she worked with partners and associates to develop programming for substantive practice area (CLE) training. Prior to joining Reed Smith, Ms. Patrick was the Director of Employer and Professional Development at the University of Maryland School of Law and focused on counseling students and alumni, marketing, recruiting, and programming and developed a professional development curriculum for students and alumni. She previously worked for The George Washington University Law School's Career Development Office as Assistant Director and Acting Director of Alumni Relations and at the University at Buffalo Law School as the Assistant for Public Interest. Before moving in the direction of higher education administration, she practiced law at an international trade association enforcing copyright laws in software piracy cases in the U.S. and Canada. Ms. Patrick has presented at numerous national conferences. She is an active member of the Bexar County Women's Bar Association and serves on their 2014-2015 Board of Directors and as a co-chair of the Sponsorship Committee for the Annual Autumn Affair. She is also a member of Moms in Law San Antonio. Ms. Patrick has been licensed to practice law in Maryland since 2001.



**Serina Rivela** serves as Associate General Counsel for Bexar County Hospital District d/b/a University Health System providing representation in a variety of legal matters including contract law and regulatory health law. Her primary practice area focuses on: negotiating and drafting a wide variety of contracts such as managed care service agreements, physician employment agreements, real estate leases, research agreements, and purchase and license agreements for items such as lab equipment and software. She provides guidance on medical, ethical and open government issues, advises human resources staff on labor and employment matters, and reviews corporate policies. Mrs. Rivela is responsible for assisting Corporate Communications and Marketing teams on significant e-commerce and patient privacy matters. General duties include reviewing and updating corporate policies; preparing business name, trademark, and other official corporate filings; and overseeing outside counsel work as appropriate. She is a member of the San Antonio Bar Association, Bexar County Women's Bar association, and Association of Corporate Counsel. She is also a previous member of the Women In the Profession State Bar of Texas Committee. Mrs. Rivela received her Bachelor's at University of Texas-San Antonio and Law Degree from St. Mary's University. (con'd on p. 13)







## Restaurant Review: The Grill at Leon Springs

By Suzanne Patrick

The Grill at Leon Springs is located just north of the Rim and La Cantera on IH-10. It is a family owned restaurant with a mission statement.

Mission Statement: A restaurant is not a business but a way of life. When you come to the Grill, you are coming to our home and will be treated as honored guests by all Grill ambassadors.

Recently, my husband and I visited the Grill for the first time on a Saturday evening this past month. Because it was a Saturday night, we made a reservation. When we arrived, there was a valet in front ready to take our vehicle. We walked in and they had our table ready and waiting.

The restaurant has nice ambience which includes a rustic feeling. The menu

offers a wide range of options including homemade pastas, pizza, steaks and fish to name a few. Many of the dishes seemed to offer a bit of French inspiration. We decided to try a few things since this was our first time dining at the Grill. We had heard about all of the homemade pasta dishes so we knew trying one of them was high on the list.

We started off with the French onion soup which was prepared very well and had a strong flavor but was not overly salty as it is at most places. It was just the right balance of onion flavor with soaked bread and baked cheese on top. Next we tried the white pizza which included roasted garlic ricotta, mozzarella cheese, grilled chicken, caramelized onions, wild mushrooms and artichoke hearts. The pizza overall was very tasty but at first bite it appeared to have a bit too much overpowering garlic and onion flavor, but as you continued to eat that seemed to dissipate. All in all I would recommend the dish.

We then we moved on to one of the homemade pastas and chose the Jumbo Texas Gulf Shrimp sautéed in a cilantro butter sauce on a bed of linguini. Overall the presentation and smell of this dish was excellent. The only downside to this dish was the addition of too

much fresh raw garlic and cilantro on top. These added raw ingredients seemed to take away from the wonderful cooked shrimp and sauce. I found myself picking off these raw ingredients to avoid eating whole chunks of garlic.

We ended our meal with coffee and dessert and ordered the Baked Alaska and Peach and Plum Clafoutis. The Clafoutis – shown in the photo – is a French dessert most commonly made with cherries. This one was executed wonderfully and made with peaches and plums. The fruit is arranged in a buttered dish and then baked with a flan like custard baked over it. We thought this was one of the best dishes of the night and would order it again. I found the Baked Alaska to be very average and lacking of any outstanding flavor profile. The Baked Alaska is not something I would recommend ordering.

Additionally, while I did see a few people with children dining that evening, and they offer a limited children's menu, we were there later on a Saturday night and it definitely had a date night feel with live music playing on the outdoor patio. I presume if you went earlier in the day or during the day for lunch it would serve as a very kid friendly spot as well. Overall, I would recommend the Grill and suggest you try it.



Shown at right:  
Peach and Plum  
Clafoutis

## It's Election Time for the Bexar County Women's Bar!

**Rachel Rebekkah Skinner** is originally from San Antonio, Texas. She received her undergraduate degree in Pre-Law from the Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida. She went on to attend law school at Baylor University School of Law, and served as the head of Alumni Relations and Assistant Editor for the Baylor Law Review. After graduating from law school in 2013, Rachel joined Cox Smith, now Dykema Cox Smith, as a litigation associate. Her practice focuses on advising clients in commercial litigation in disputes involving breach of contract, fraud and insurance coverage. She routinely practices in state and federal courts throughout Texas, and advises clients in all stages of pretrial and trial work. Rachel is an active member of the Junior League of San Antonio, San Antonio Bar Association, San Antonio Young Lawyers Association and Defense Counsel of San Antonio and has enjoyed serving as a luncheon chair and Autumn Affair subcommittee chair for the Bexar County Women's Bar Association.



**Heather Tessmer** was born in Ohio, moved to the Texas Hill Country at a young age, and grew up on Lake LBJ in Llano County. After graduating from Angelo State University and marrying her Air Force husband, the couple lived for a time in Germany. They were transferred back to San Antonio where Heather went to St. Mary's University School of Law and graduated in 1999. Heather was a non-traditional law student, entering school with a 1-year old toddler and having her second child during her 3rd year. Since starting her own practice, Heather has grown her law office from her home with one assistant to professional offices in the Lincoln Center building with an Associate Attorney and various Paralegals and support staff. When not at work, Heather enjoys traveling, cooking, gardening and reading.



**Judge Renée (McElhaney) Yanta** has served as a District Court Judge for four years. Prior to taking the bench, she was an attorney for over 20 years. Judge Yanta has been a long-time member of Bexar County Women's Bar, previously serving as Bench Brunch Chair and President. Presiding over the 150th District Court, Judge Yanta handles civil litigation, include family law matters. She also has deployed her judicial resources to impact at-risk youth. With Children's Court, Judge Yanta has innovated PEARLS Court. This specialized court partners with Girls Inc. (and several other essential social service organizations) to help teen girls in Foster Care, providing strong oversight, mentorship and additional educational support, expanded career opportunities, trauma informed emotional care, and positive role models. Judge Yanta's foundational principle is derived from Micah 6:8: What is asked of us but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly.



The November around-town lunch will take place on Thursday, November 19, at noon at Zoe's Kitchen in Huebner Oaks. There's no need to RSVP; just look for Marissa Helm! Contact Marissa with any questions at [marissa.helm@parallon.com](mailto:marissa.helm@parallon.com).



# Photos from Autumn Affair

Here's a sneak peak of the fabulous Autumn Affair. Stay tuned for December newsletter for more photos and a full report on the event's wonderful success.

