Faculty of Federal Advocates Newsletter

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Welcome to the Faculty of Federal Advocates June Electronic Newsletter

The Newsletter brings you news about FFA events and CLE programs along with useful information for federal practitioners, including links to relevant websites.

The FFA welcomes contributions to our Newsletter from our membership. Newer attorneys, experienced attorneys, and law students are all encouraged to submit articles. If you are interested in submitting an article to be considered for publication, please contact the FFA by emailing ahoffman@facultyfederaladvocates.org.

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Effective Trial and Appellate Advocacy: A Presentation by Senior Judge David M. Ebel By Meghan H. Dunn and Marilyn S. Chappell

From the unique perspective of a judge simultaneously serving at the trial and appellate court levels, Tenth Circuit and United States District Court Senior Judge David M. Ebel shared tips for effective trial and appellate advocacy at a Faculty of Federal Advocates continuing legal education presentation on March 3, 2017. Judge Ebel served as a law clerk to Supreme Court Associate Justice Byron White and had extensive trial and appellate experience in private practice before his appointment to the Tenth Circuit bench in 1988. For the past ten years, while on Tenth Circuit Senior Judge status, Judge Ebel has also taken regular draws of cases from the United States District Court for the District of Colorado, and has presided over numerous trials in the District and in other U.S. District Courts.

Judge Ebel described his current experience as "toggling" between trial and appellate court service, sometimes within the same day. His presentation was in a compare-and-contrast format, organized around themes of effective advocacy.

Personality

Judge Ebel began by discussing the personality characteristics that allow lawyers to be most successful at the trial and appellate levels. While likeability and believability are needed characteristics for both trial and appellate lawyers, a trial lawyer will be ineffective without likeability, and an appellate lawyer will be unsuccessful if his or her credibility is undermined.

At the end of trials, Judge Ebel asks jurors about their perceptions - and the first

Elisabeth L. Owen Veronica Rossman Daniel R. Shaffer Benjamin Strawn Juan G. Villaseñor

<u>Mission of the</u> Faculty of Federal Advocates_

The Faculty of Federal Advocates (FFA) is an organization of attorneys dedicated to improving the quality of legal practice in the federal courts in Colorado by enhancing advocacy skills, professionalism, and the integrity of practice.

The FFA provides continuing legal education classes, mentoring and pro bono opportunities, and other support services to foster and demonstrate commitment to the highest standards of advocacy and professional and ethical conduct. The FFA promotes support, mentorship, education, and camaraderie for federal court practitioners.

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thing they want to talk about is whether or not they liked the lawyers. While it is important for trial lawyers to be competent, Judge Ebel emphasized, likeability is imperative.

By contrast, appellate lawyers have limited interactions with judges: judges read the briefs and only see lawyers for short oral arguments, if arguments occur. So, for appellate lawyers, likeability matters less - but credibility matters significantly. "If we don't believe you, there is no way you are digging out of that hole."

Appellate judges typically read the briefs as their first step in handling appeals. Their initial understanding of cases is thus based on the lawyers' filters. Three judges preliminarily decide which party will win, again based on what the lawyers have told them in briefs, and in oral argument if it occurs - and only rarely based on independent research. Only at that point does a deeper review of the law and the record occur.

Two factors are relevant to credibility, according to Judge Ebel. The first is the reputation of the attorney and his or her law firm or organization. The second is the appellate brief itself.

Appellate judges may be "suspicious" of a brief if it appears to gloss over bad information with invective, provides generalized instead of precise analysis, and paraphrases leading cases instead of quoting from them. Judge Ebel encouraged lawyers to include parentheticals with holdings of relied-upon cases and how they apply to the facts at hand. He also urged lawyers to cut out adjectives and hyperbole: "Just the facts, ma'am or sir - I hate adjectives!"

Most Common Mistakes

Next, Judge Ebel outlined the most common mistakes lawyers make in the respective forums. At trial, it is a failure to focus on the law. Trial lawyers often get too wrapped up in the facts and give little attention to the law. They should instead solidify coherent legal bases for cases by preparing jury instructions well in advance of trial, thinking through trial objections and being prepared to support them with case law, and ideally having their closing arguments in mind before trials begin.

By contrast, appellate lawyers know the law but often do not know the facts - that is, the record of what happened at trial (*e.g.*, what a witness said or why the judge did not admit certain evidence). While appellate judges will likely have some understanding of the law in approaching an individual case, the record will be new to them. A lawyer's credibility will be affected if a judge asks questions about the record and the lawyer does not "know the facts cold."

Time Management

In Judge Ebel's view, at trial lawyers often have too much time, while on appeal they do not have enough. Most trial court judges give lawyers latitude in the time needed to present cases, because the lawyers know the cases better than the judges. Allotted their requested trial time, many lawyers present cases chronologically, throwing out facts to support each element of the law.

However, a trial lawyer's rule of thumb should instead be: "If you wanted to

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publish this story with the goal of making it a New York Times bestseller, what would the story be and how would you tell it?" But lawyers present their cases as coherent stories in fewer than one out of every five trials over which Judge Ebel has presided.

To encourage lawyers to present their cases more effectively, Judge Ebel budgets each side's trial time allocation, telling the lawyers that they will receive more time if needed if their presentation has been focused and efficient. No lawyer has ever asked Judge Ebel for additional time. The time constraints do lawyers "a favor" because they would otherwise include a lot of "extraneous information."

A trial lawyer's "unforgivable sin is to bore the jury." Experts place individuals' maximum attention span at 60 minutes; to hold viewers' attention, a 60-minute television show will transition between 2-3 themes. If that is necessary for a television show, according to Judge Ebel, it is all the more necessary for trial.

Trial lawyers should break up trial presentation into discrete 30- to 60-minute pieces. They should not question a witness on a single topic for more than an hour, and should change topics every hour, plan topics around breaks, and break up questioning by, for example, having witnesses stand up and diagram something for the jury.

On the other hand, in appellate oral argument, lawyers have only 15 minutes to discuss all of the problems with their cases. Yet they often take 10 minutes before getting to the heart of the issues.

Judge Ebel recalled the best appellate argument he had ever heard, by United States Solicitor General Rex Lee: he began by listing the three reasons he could lose the case, and used the remainder of his time to explain why he should not lose the case based on those reasons. Judge Ebel recommended that lawyers ascertain and explain the single issue that will win the case if the court agrees with the lawyer's argument, and do the same with the number one reason the case could be lost.

Body Language

Judge Ebel addressed effective body language at trial and in appellate oral argument. Trial lawyers often use too much body language, trying to unduly influence the jury. Jurors see through those tactics and may dislike lawyers who try to convey messages through physical gestures. Thus, while sitting at counsel table, trial lawyers should be respectful, non-demonstrative, and quiet.

However, appellate lawyers frequently memorize their remarks, delivering them while tightly gripping the podium. But they can be more effective, Judge Ebel noted, if they describe their cases in the same manner they might use at a cocktail party. Lawyers can convey that they care about their cases through appropriate use of body language and emotion; "if you don't care about your case, why should we?"

Control

Next, Judge Ebel discussed who has control of the courtroom in the different level proceedings. At trial, lawyers should have control because it is their opportunity to shape the stories of their cases - or as Judge Ebel put it, "to sculpt a piece of art."

But attorneys do not have control at appellate oral argument, which is the judges' chance to ask questions. Judge Ebel noted that many attorneys seem "annoyed" when interrupted by questions, but they should not be: "we are doing you a great favor" by giving attorneys a "chance to persuade us." Attorneys should embrace questions and take advantage of the opportunity to speak about the key points upon which decisions may turn.

Brevity

Judge Ebel emphasized the importance of brevity in both trial and appellate practice. He noted the volumes of pages that district and appellate judges must read every day, and the finite attention that can be given to each case.

The more focused lawyers are in their writing, the more focused attention their filings are likely to receive from judges. If a brief is exactly the page or word limit, Judge Ebel is likely to read it quickly, as the lawyer probably did not use discretion in making only the most important arguments. But if the brief is under the limits, Judge Ebel is more likely to read it word for word, as the lawyer would have used discretion to whittle down the arguments for him.

Concluding Remarks

Finally, Judge Ebel discussed the key differences between a trial and an appeal. At trial, the primary motivation is to serve justice for the individual parties - the judge or jury will try to decide who should win based on the facts and the law, but also based upon a sense of equity. On appeal, equity takes a backseat to the law - that is, determining the law that should be applied uniformly among the courts.

Judge Ebel concluded with anecdotes making the point that honesty is an appreciated and powerful tool for lawyers. He provided the best advice he had received from Justice Byron White: "As a trial lawyer, you are not responsible for the facts - they are already done. Your responsibility is to present the case with integrity."

Judges' Corner Judicial Profile: Magistrate Judge Nina Y. Wang By Emma Garrison

Reprinted from The Docket by Permission of the Denver Bar Association



Magistrate Judge Nina Y. Wang. Photo courtesy of the Denver Bar Association.

Nina Wang has served as a magistrate judge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado since February 2015.

Nina Wang was first exposed to the judicial system at a very young age. Her family emigrated from Taiwan to the United States on a diplomatic visa, and her father served as consul for the government of Taiwan in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1979, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan and closed the consulate office. Her father then applied to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for an adjustment of immigration status to permanent resident. Following several delays and miscommunications, the INS did not adjudicate the application until two years after it was first submitted. During this time, the relevant law had changed, imposing stricter eligibility requirements. The issue of whether the new requirements should apply to the application was litigated up to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. From that experience, Wang gained an understanding of how the courts affect the lives of the individuals who appear before them.

Her interest in the law was further cemented during a fourth-grade biography project. As the selection of books went in alphabetical order, one of the few options remaining when her teacher got to "Wang" was a biography of Thurgood Marshall. "I was enthralled by his story," she says.

Wang grew up in Kansas and attended Washington University in St. Louis and Harvard Law School. After clerking for a federal district court judge in Maryland, she applied to openings at the U.S. Attorney's Office in locations around the country and accepted a position in Colorado. She served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for four years and then went on to become a partner in the intellectual property group at Faegre Baker Daniels. Wang always knew she wanted to be a judge, so when the magistrate position became available following the retirement of Judge Boland, she had to apply. "I was happy at Faegre, but it had been seven years since the last magistrate opening became available. I thought it was a good time to apply." Having spent her career as a federal practitioner, she felt she had the necessary experience and was ready for the bench.

Following overlapping interviews with the magistrate selection committee and the district judges, the court unanimously selected Wang for the position. Wang is on the draw for civil cases and also handles criminal misdemeanors up to the

arraignment for felonies. Comparing her new role as a judge to her previous life as a litigator, she comments that in litigation, there is more of an ebb and flow. "At the court there's just flow, not much ebb," she explains. During her first trial as a magistrate judge, she was surprised how hard it was from the judge's perspective. "I was very engaged. I wanted to be sure I ruled on objections correctly." In preparation, Wang searched the applicable case law for "error" to see if the Tenth Circuit or state appellate courts had weighed in on jury instructions or other issues that come up at a trial. She also sees a lot of state law claims in diversity cases, which she was never exposed to when she practiced. "That's part of the reason I love my job - I'm never bored!" When issuing orders or recommendations, Magistrate Judge Wang strives for a turnaround time that allows for a well-reasoned decision without delaying matters.

Off the bench, Wang remains involved in the legal community. "It's an honor and an obligation to help those who come after you," she emphasizes. She believes that diversity throughout the legal system is important to ensure access to justice. "When we include the multitude of voices from various communities and interests, even if they are not our own, we ensure the development of the law." Additionally, she sits on a board for pro bono patent access, which works to guarantee that governmental systems are accessible to everyone, regardless of their financial means. Wang also volunteers for the *Our Courts* initiative, which educates the public about how the courts operate.

Magistrate Judge Nina Wang is, above all, very thankful for the opportunity to serve on the bench. "I have the best job that a lawyer can have. Even on bad days, I feel really grateful and lucky."

Emma Garrison is staff counsel at Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell LLP, a former chair of the CBA YLD and the current chair of the Docket Committee. She can be reached at garrison@wtotrial.com.

Community Forum on Recent U.S. District Court Local Rules Changes By Russell Stewart

On March 16, 2017, United States District Judge Raymond P. Moore and Magistrate Judges Kristen L. Mix and Michael E. Hegarty, members of the District's Advisory Committee on the Local Rules of Practice and Procedure, discussed the reasons for recent changes to the District's Local Rules and answered questions from the bar about the changes at a presentation sponsored by the FFA.

The session began with an explanation of the Committee's annual activities. It meets regularly to consider proposed changes to the Local Rules. In August it makes recommendations for changes to the District Judges, who vote on the recommendations in September. Proposed amendments are published in October for public comment, and if no changes are made, become effective as rules changes on December 1. However, starting in January 2018, the Committee will move to a two-year cycle for recommending changes to the Local Rules.

The Committee encourages attorneys who have suggestions or comments on the Local Rules to email the Committee, at LocalRule_Comments@cod.uscourts.gov. Each email is read by each Committee member and is discussed with the Committee as a whole.

Magistrate Judge Mix discussed the most significant recent rules changes:

Civil Rule 2.1. A proceeding may be filed as civil miscellaneous ("mc") or registered judgment ("rj") only if the proceeding is listed as a "Categories of Miscellaneous Cases" for which a fee has been adopted. All other proceedings must be filed as standard civil actions for which the standard fee must be paid. This amendment is designed to discourage commencing proceedings as "mc" or "rj" to avoid paying the standard civil filing fee.

Civil Rule 5.3. Unless otherwise ordered, written discovery requests and responses must now be exchanged by private e-mail or other non-paper means. Recent changes to Fed.R.Civ.P. 6 eliminated the former "three-day rule" which had added time for responses when service was made electronically.

Civil Rule 30.3. A judicial officer may now order that a deposition be taken at *any* location. This is a significant change from previous Rule 30.3, which permitted judicial officers to specify a deposition location only if deposition "abuse" was anticipated, and limited the specified location to the courthouse. The amended rule provides parties and attorneys with additional options for secure depositions.

Civil Rule 40.1 There is now a single form to indicate "consent" or "nonconsent" to Magistrate Judge jurisdiction. The standardized form has been posted to the District's website.

Civil Rule 42.1. A motion to consolidate civil actions must be filed in the lowest-numbered case included in the motion, and notice of the motion must be filed in all other cases proposed for consolidation.

Civil Rule 72.1 Magistrate Judges may now, following reference by a District Judge, enter orders on discovery disputes pending in other federal courts. This is a technical change to enable Article III judicial review of petitions for issuance of subpoenas within the District seeking evidence for use in foreign proceedings.

Civil Rule 79.1 Sixty days after entry of a final civil judgment, the District Clerk will notify the parties that trial exhibits will be destroyed in 14 days unless a party files an objection. If an appeal has been filed, and exhibits are not made part of the appellate record, exhibits will be returned to the offering party to be retained pending orders from the appellate court.

Criminal Rule 49.1. The three-day rule is now eliminated where service is effected electronically.

Local Attorney Rules 2 and 5. These rules have been amended to permit limited representation of *all* unrepresented parties - non-prisoners and prisoners alike - in civil actions. However, counsel must follow three procedural steps to enter an appearance, practice, and withdraw from a case.

Counsel must first file a motion to provide limited representation defining the scope of the proposed representation with "reasonable particularity." After the

motion is granted, counsel must file an entry of appearance to provide limited representation. After the task or service is completed as demonstrated in a motion to withdraw, and upon an order granting the motion, counsel may withdraw.

The Committee members explained that limited representation is an excellent way for attorneys, especially those recently admitted to the bar, to gain experience and understanding of federal court practice. Approximately onethird of all new filings in the District are made by unrepresented parties, and having attorneys assist the parties in these matters will be a great help to the District. Matters for which limited representation may be appropriate include, but are not limited to, drafting of complaints and dispositive motions; motions hearings; settlements/mediations; and trials.

(On August 17, 2017 at noon, the FFA will host a free continuing legal education program at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP featuring an indepth conversation with federal and state judicial officers about the details and requirements of limited-scope representation.)

Taking Rule 30(b)(6) Corporate Depositions: Should The 45-Year-Old Rule Be Changed? A Discussion with Magistrate Judge Craig Shaffer By Ryan M. Sugden

Adopted in 1970, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(b)(6) authorizes the deposition of an organization through a well-known procedure: the party taking the deposition designates topics for examination, and the party to be deposed produces witnesses knowledgeable on those topics. Yet, after 47 years on the books, is the rule having a "mid-life crisis," and has the time come for it to be substantially reformed? That was the topic of a lively discussion on March 31, 2017 hosted by the Faculty of Federal Advocates and moderated by United States Magistrate Judge Craig B. Shaffer.

Judge Shaffer is a member of the United States Judicial Conference's Advisory Committee on Rules of Civil Procedure ("Advisory Committee"), which advises the Judicial Conference's Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure (the "Standing Committee"). He opened the lunch-hour discussion by noting that practitioners had contacted the Advisory Committee to report problems with Rule 30(b)(6) and to suggest changes.

Judge Shaffer stated he was uncertain whether the rule needs to be changed. He typically sees only one Rule 30(b)(6)-related dispute per month. He posed a question that animated the remaining discussion: does Rule 30(b)(6) need to be reformed or are suggested changes simply solutions in search of a problem?

In response, many practitioners stated they agreed that revisions might be helpful, though consensus on what changes should be made was elusive. They noted that the number of discovery disputes brought to the court might not be a fair measure of the number and gravity of problems. Even if many disputes are resolved without court intervention, substantial time and resources are devoted to them, which could itself be reason enough to refine Rule 30(b)(6).

Practitioners noted that Rule 30(b)(6) disputes typically revolve around the number and scope of designated topics. Judge Shaffer observed that disputes are often avoided by distilling the topics through negotiations between counsel. However, attendees described this process as informal, time-consuming, and frequently leaving parties in limbo if agreement is not reached on disputed topics before depositions begin.

Accordingly, the most common suggestion by attendees was to include a specific procedure in Rule 30(b)(6) for objecting to designated topics. Competing proposals for procedures were offered: like Rule 45, the party taking the deposition should bear the burden of proving the reasonableness of disputed topics after an objection is made. Alternatively, like Rule 26(c), the burden should be on the defending party to obtain a protective order against unreasonable topics.

Attendees discussed additional issues:

- Should Rule 30(b)(6) depositions and attendant issues such as scheduling and the scope of designated topics be added as a topic for consideration in discovery plans under Rule 26(f)?
- Should comprehensive changes be avoided in favor of encouraging local rules? Practitioners spoke out against this proposal because there were "already enough" local rules for practitioners to deal with.
- Should the number of Rule 30(b)(6) topics be limited? This proposal also had little support from attendees. A large number of topics can signal more specificity rather than less. Judge Shaffer and practitioners noted that the quality of Rule 30(b)(6) topics is often more important than the quantity of them.
- Is testimony given pursuant to a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition a judicial admission of the organization being deposed? Judge Shaffer noted that the majority rule is that the testimony is not a judicial admission, though there is disagreement in case law.
- How should penalties be assessed for unprepared Rule 30(b)(6) witnesses? Some practitioners noted that this issue was intimately tied to the procedure for objecting to designated topics. Parties are often faced with uncertainty when preparing for and attending a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition after counsel has objected to a designated topic but no agreement has been reached before the deposition begins.
- Can a Rule 30(b)(6) deponent be expected to respond to "contention" topics that seek "all" facts, witnesses, or documents related to a given issue, for which topics responses can be very burdensome? Judge Shaffer suggested that such questions are more amenable to interrogatories; however, some practitioners wryly noted that interrogatory answers are rarely helpful.
- Should Rule 30(b)(6) be drafted to apply differently in different types of cases? Judge Shaffer noted that Rule 30(b)(6) is written to apply equally to all cases, regardless of the parties, subject matter, or amount in controversy. Practitioners agreed that tailoring Rule 30(b)(6) to the size and nature of cases may have merit, but there was no agreement on how that should be accomplished.
- Should changes to Rule 30(b)(6) be deferred until after courts and practitioners can better observe the effect of recent federal rules changes, and specifically changes in 2015 that encourage active case

management by courts? Judge Shaffer noted that early judicial intervention may address typical Rule 30(b)(6) problems.

"I greatly value the perspective and experience of practitioners and members of the bar, particularly on issues such as Rule 30(b)(6) depositions," Judge Shaffer concluded. "This discussion was very insightful, and I will take the comments I received back to the Advisory Committee for consideration."

(The Standing Committee meets on June 13, 2017 to consider changes to the civil rules. Comments and suggested rule changes can be emailed to the Standing Committee at <u>Rules_Support@ao.uscourts.gov</u>.)

Bryan Garner on Winning Oral Argument: An FFA-Sponsored Event By Bishop Grewell

As nationally-known legal advocacy author and speaker Bryan Garner explained at an FFA-sponsored event on May 11, 2017, lawyers do two things: speak and write. And if they are really good, he added, they might also listen.

The nearly-200-member audience listened as Mr. Garner explained that lawyers are some of the world's most highly-paid writers and speakers, and they should be ashamed if they are not also among the world's best-spoken. The editor of Black's Law Dictionary and co-author of several books with the late United States Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, Mr. Garner encouraged the audience to "stand out like real pros" by employing proper usage and pronunciation.

In one example, he criticized those who say "I could care less" when they really mean "I could not care less." (As Mr. Garner observed, if you could care less, you probably care more than you are indicating.) He suggested raising children to say, "I could not POSSIBLY care less" to avoid the error. And he joked that it was also a superior alternative to the teenage standard for disinterest: "Whatever."

Mr. Garner's specific examples underscored a general lesson: lawyers must make mastery of the English language a lifelong endeavor. Reading books such as The Big Book of Beastly Mispronunciations and periodicals including The Economist and The Atlantic Monthly helps to identify errors in one's writing and speaking that might otherwise be missed. And he told the audience to volunteer for as many public-speaking opportunities as possible.

Using himself as an example, Mr. Garner added one more intimidating suggestion: lawyers should record their voices to identify possible improvements. During the 1990s, he was able to lower his pitch and master the importance of pausing. Ninety minutes of his deep, golden tones testified to his success two decades later.

Tips from Mr. Garner's book, The Winning Oral Argument, were also featured in his talk. Suggestions included:

Tip 45: Start with "May it please the court."

Tip 18: Identify three points that you want to make and be prepared to present them in any order.

Tip 19: Develop memorable phrases - even sound bites - for the issues in your case.

For Mr. Garner, professional oral advocacy "marries first-rate ideas with first-rate expression." His presentation proved him a worthy celebrant of his craft.

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Friday, June 16, 2017 12:00 - 1:15 p.m. View from the Grand Junction Bench *The Honorable Gordon P. Gallagher* FREE

Wayne Aspinall Federal Building Video Conference Alfred A. Arraj Courthouse, Jury Assembly Room

Friday, July 21, 2017

12:00 - 1:15 p.m. View from the Criminal Bench The Honorable Christine M. Arguello and The Honorable Philip A. Brimmer FREE

Alfred A. Arraj Courthouse, Jury Assembly Room

Thursday, August 10, 2017 12:00 - 1:15 p.m. The District Court, By The Numbers *The Honorable Michael E. Hegarty* Alfred A. Arraj Courthouse, Jury Assembly Room

Thursday, August 17, 2017 12:00 - 1:15 p.m. Limited Scope Representation and Unbundled Legal Services Under the New Rules FREE Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP 410 17th St #2200

Friday, September 15, 2017

1:00 - 4:30 p.m.

The Faculty of Federal Advocates FORUM Judge | Lawyer | Client | Juror | Human The Hyatt Regency Denver 650 15th Street

Friday, October 20, 2017

1:00 - 5:30 p.m. Bankruptcy Bench-Bar Retreat The Westin Downtown Denver 1672 Lawrence Street

More Programs Coming Soon!

Contact <u>ahoffman@facultyfederaladvocates.org</u> for more information or to register for any of these programs. Or register on-line: <u>www.facultyfederaladvocates.org</u>.

Faculty of Federal Advocates

Contact Mandi Hoffman, Executive Director, at <u>ahoffman@facultyfederaladvocates.org</u> for information about submitting an article for the newsletter. New Attorneys and law students are always welcome to submit an article.

You can also register on-line for CLE programs on the Faculty of Federal Advocates website.