Sinister minister swindles own family.

Robert C. bought a home with his mother over 30 years ago and it was completely paid off. Robert was a good son, who lived with and took care of his mother as she aged. Robert’s brother, however, was not so good. Although he claimed to be a minister, he spent most of his time trying to rip off his own family. After his mother passed away, brother minister recorded a quit claim deed allegedly signed by their mother, giving the house to him, and then systematically attempted to scare Robert away from the house. Volunteer Charmaine LaChappelle stepped in to help protect Robert and his property. She filed a temporary restraining order to have brother minister removed from the property as well as a complaint to quiet the title to have the alleged deed from the mother declared void. Although brother minister didn’t give up without a fight, neither he nor his attorney were a match for Charmaine. After many months of legal wrangling and stalling, brother minister is out and Robert’s house belongs only to him.

DIY not possible with a DUI.

Diane C., who’d been convicted of several DUI’s, didn’t seem to be a very sympathetic client when she first appeared before the Chancery court trying to overturn the Secretary of State’s decision not to reinstate her driver’s license. In active recovery for five years with a non-AA-sanctioned program, she’d petitioned the State several times for her license back. The State continually turned down her petition for technical reasons. Finally, Diane filed a case in the Chancery court, where Judge Sophia Hall appointed CVLS under the Access to Justice Program. Kevin Kamraczewski of Sonnenschein, Nath and Rosenthal took the case. He realized that, while our client was not overtly sympathetic, she was genuinely clean. If she’d been rich, she would have been able to hire an attorney and would probably have won. Although Diane’s Chancery case was not successful, Kevin succeeded, after almost 2 years, in getting his client a new hearing before the State and finally won Diane limited driving privileges.
DHS victimizes single mother over food stamps.

Kimberly S. had lived a volatile life with her alcoholic boyfriend. She tried to make it work for their 2 children, but Greg’s drinking and chronic job jumping and unemployment finally made that impossible. First, she filed for an order of protection and refused to let him return home. Then, she applied for and received food stamps. Unfortunately, a few months later the Department of Human Services charged her with a food stamp overpayment of several thousand dollars. Kimberly’s boyfriend had used her address when he applied for a job. Although she wasn’t receiving the benefit of his wages, DHS had included him as part of her family and refused to back down. When Kimberly filed an administrative review case against DHS, Judge Rita Novak appointed CVLS to represent her under the Access to Justice Program. Volunteer Ankur Shah stepped in to defend Kimberly and get the overpayment overturned. When DHS agreed to give Kimberly a new hearing, Ankur said no—he didn’t want her to endure a new hearing. His persistent advocacy on Kimberly’s behalf paid off when he convinced the court to remove the overpayment without a new hearing. Kimberly is on her way to a life without her abusive boyfriend and with DHS off her back.

Paralegals we have. Lawyers we need.

Have you ever found yourself working late at night on a particularly tough CVLS case? Have you often wished that someone could help you draft pleadings, or submit your court documents, possibly even help with your research? Come on, you can admit it. We’re all friends here. I thought so. You want someone. Nay, you NEED someone. Well don’t fret, CVLS is here for you like we always are. We just so happen to have paralegal volunteers who are just itching to help out and do some pro bono work. Think about it, you and a paralegal standing side by side fighting injustice and bringing the sweet smell of equality under the law to the less fortunate. It brings tears to our eyes just thinking about it. I know you are a little misty eyed yourself so stop pretending you have allergies.

If you are interested in obtaining your very own volunteer paralegal to help you with a CVLS case, call Terri Hooker at:
312-332-6436
Please remember that this is for CVLS cases only.

Seminar on estate planning a success.

On October 14th, Mary-Ann Wilson of Harrison & Held LLP gave a fantastic seminar on simple estate planning and wills. The seminar filled up quickly for this ever-popular topic. A frequent speaker on estate planning and administration, Mary-Ann was able to demystify and boiled down to basics what CVLS volunteers need to know on the subject. CVLS would like to thank Mary-Ann for all of her hard work preparing such a helpful seminar for our volunteers.
Thanksgiving is a time for sharing.

November 26th is a day we are all looking forward to and for good reason. Thanksgiving is our excuse to “accidentally” cheat on our diets, or to veg out and watch the football game on the old telly, maybe even try your hand at deep frying that beer marinated turducken. All good things. However, when you’re sitting around the table giving thanks this year please remember those who may not be as fortunate.

Chicago Volunteer Legal Services has served people in your community who have nowhere else to turn for over 45 years. We too have been fortunate to have such a great group of volunteer attorneys who are willing to take cases that others won’t, and willing to show compassion when others scorn. We thank you dearly for your commitment to decency and respect for your fellow human beings. We hope to continue this very important work of bringing equal access to justice to everyone, not just those who can afford it, for another 45 years.

We need your help. Today everyone is feeling the effects of the downturn in the economy. Once reliable foundations who have donated to CVLS for years and new foundations we hope will fund us have been hit hard by interest rates hovering around $0. With our critical donor base under financial pressure, we need you, our volunteers and friends, now more than ever.

$97 is all it takes to keep a child safe from abuse or to prevent a family from losing their home to foreclosure. $97 is our per case cost to provide the poor and working poor with equal access to justice in a wide range of civil legal aid. Whether you contribute $97 or $97,000, your support will change lives. Equal access to justice is everyone’s right and everyone’s fight. Make it yours. Contribute today at: www.cvls.org.

Junior Board comes on the scene in a big way.

Ladies and gentlemen, attorneys and paralegals, CVLS has the very special honor of introducing to the law community at large our very own Junior Board. Yes, that’s right, we have a Junior Board. What, pray tell, is a Junior Board? Well we’re glad you asked.

Our Junior Board is a collection of the very best young attorneys from various firms and partnerships in Chicago. To highlight our point, let us just say that Brion Doherty of Stotis & Baird is the Junior Board Chair with Maura Harrington of Feinberg & Barry, P.C. as Second Chair. Impressed? Well that’s just a taste. We have other big names on the board such as Emily Schmid of Horwitz, Richardson & Baker LLC, Jordan Heinz of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Avani Patel, Joshua Heidelberg of Bell Boyd & Lloyd LLP, Mona Thakkar of Direct Buy, David Wolff of Duncan Associates Attorneys and Counselors, Patrick Spangler of Vedder Price, Shelly Merkin of Schiff Hardin LLP, Katherine Sams of ArcelorMittal USA, Shennan Harris of Mayer Brown, Rachael Mamula of McDermott Will & Emery LLP, Patrick Croke of Sidley Austin, Eileen O’Connor of Michael E. Sweeney & Associates, Kimberly Halvorsen of Clifford Law Offices, Derek Holland of Bryan Cave, Libby Pozolo of Winston & Strawn LLP, and Michelle Marek of Howrey LLP. What a list! It’s a veritable smorgasbord of who’s who and where’s where of the legal community. So don’t be surprised when you see them making some big waves and bringing the fight for equal access to justice to all to the law schools, to the firms both big and small, to downtown, to uptown and around town! They are here to get things done and by golly nothing had better get in their way.

Friends, let us give thanks this day, for we truly are thankful that these young stars are fighting on our side.
Junior Board hosts Vino & Van Gogh fundraiser.

October 16th, 2009 was a day that changed the world. It was the kind of day that historians will debate and professors will lecture their students about. They’ll use it as an example of how a small group of dedicated young attorneys can, in one night, spread the news about pro bono to over 100 professionals unfamiliar with the organization, all while viewing incredible art and sipping delicious wine.

CVLS’ Junior Board hosted their first annual fundraiser, Vino & Van Gogh. A huge success, it filled the Zolla/Lieberman Gallery to the brim with young professionals interested in learning about CVLS and the work that we do. Party goers were treated to delicious catering donated by Augustino’s Rock and Roll Deli as they listened to the smooth melodies of the Slaughtertown Strings. Everyone had a great time and, best of all, they learned a little bit more about CVLS.

(top) Catering was donated by Augustino’s Rock and Roll Deli, (bottom-left) Junior board member Emily Schmitz enjoying the night with some friends, (bottom-right) Junior board chair Brion Doherty gives a speech about CVLS to the crowd
You are cordially invited to attend

2009 Annual Award Ceremony

Including the presentation of the Court of Honor Award to

The Honorable Maureen E. Connors
Circuit Court Judge of Cook County
Probate Division

and the Law Firm Award to

Sidley Austin LLP

and many more distinguished CVLS volunteers.

Thursday, November 12th, 2009
5:30 to 7:15 pm

hosted by Sidley Austin LLP
One South Dearborn
November 17 “Representing Landlords in Eviction Cases” by Wayne Shapiro

Attorney Wayne Shapiro will be focusing on what you need to know to evict a tenant. Mr. Shapiro will discuss the law and procedures for handling a forcible entry and detainer case, including practice tips to help make the process flow smoothly. By the end of the seminar you will be given everything you need to know to help a residential landlord oust a bad tenant.

There will be no seminar in December.

All seminars are held from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. at 100 North LaSalle, Suite 900.

Archived seminars can be found at www.illinoisprobono.org.

Return to: Seminar Registration, Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
100 North LaSalle, Suite 900, Chicago, 60602.2405
FAX:312-332-1460
EMAIL: jengle@cvls.org

Please Print Your Name: ________________________________________________

Telephone Number: _________________________________________________
The noble turkey.

When people picture the United States they often think of the Bald Eagle, but there was one founding father who thought very differently. Benjamin Franklin had this to say about the bag of feathers:

“For my own part I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly. You may have seen him perched on some dead Tree near the River, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing Hawk; and when that diligent Bird has at length taken a Fish, and is bearing it to his Nest for the Support of his Mate and young Ones, the Bald Eagle pursues him and takes it from him.

“With all this Injustice, he is never in good Case but like those among Men who live by Sharping & Robbing he is generally poor and often very lousy. Besides he is a rank Coward: The little King Bird not bigger than a Sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the District. He is therefore by no means a proper Emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America who have driven all the King birds from our Country . . .

“I am on this account not displeased that the Figure is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turkey. For the Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America . . . He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on.”

-Excerpt of Benjamin Franklin’s letter to his daughter, Sarah Bache, January 26, 1784

That should give you something to think about this Thanksgiving.