

Psychology and Family Law

With Gratitude to SGVPA

By Mark Baer, Esq.



In lieu of my regular column, I feel the time has come for me to thank the San Gabriel Valley Psychological Association and its members for the amazing things that have occurred in my professional life since joining

In early 2008, Dr. Elisse Blinder encouraged me to attend the January Jubilee. She thought that SGVPA would be a perfect fit for me because I have always recognized the connection between family law and psychology. The members were so warm and welcoming that I immediately joined, and began regularly attending the monthly lunch meetings.

In mid-2008, Dr. Suzanne Lake, the then President, and Editor of the Newsletter, approached me about writing an article for *AnalyzeThis!* I was very reluctant about doing so because I did not think writing was my forte. She convinced me to write the article, which was titled Marital Russian Roulette, and which appeared in the September/October 2008 edition of *AnalyzeThis!* I must admit that Suzanne had to do a significant amount of editing with that article, because it was written by a lawyer who then was only familiar with writing for other lawyers. However, she explained each and every editorial change she made, with meticulous attention to accurately expressing my ideas in more accessible language. Suzanne liked the end result, and invited me to be a regular contributor. Although the second column required somewhat less editing by Suzanne, she still had to spend a good amount of time working with me in order to make the piece more suitable for non-lawyers to read. As a result of Suzanne's painstaking work with me, I was becoming much more adept at writing! In April 2010, SGVPA won its first award for *AnalyzeThis!* from the California Psychological Association as the most outstanding chapter newsletter in California--and my column was specifically listed as a factor in that decision.

In April 2010, I began using social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, where I began posting links to my articles. People far beyond SGVPA's membership began reading those articles, and liked the information I was conveying.

In November 2010, my first article came out in a

publication other than the SGVPA newsletter. The article titled, Cost of Raising a Child Calculation Tool – Issues Involving Child Support, was published in Valley Lawyer Magazine. Since then, my articles have been published in Pasadena Weekly, The Daily Journal, and Forbes. Columnists from the Pasadena Star-News, the Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal, and other publications now regularly use me as a resource for their stories. I have been interviewed on KTLA news, and profiled by the Beverly Hills Bar Association (in an article entitled, Family Law Par Excellence), and by the Pasadena Star-News (in an article entitled Finding the Solution).

In March, I was the Keynote Speaker at The Divorce Expo in Detroit--designed to offer resources and information to the Detroit community regarding positive and future-oriented options for divorce. I released the written version of my speech the following day, and that week the speech was viewed by 1,264 people. The general response I have received has been incredible. In fact, one person emailed me the following comment: "Outstanding! You are truly a gifted writer... Well done." Please note that nobody edited or even saw this speech before I delivered it--and that nobody edited the written version that I released on-line!

I have since been asked by several other organizations to deliver my Keynote Speech to their members, and people are commenting that I have "the capability of being a great spokesman for my industry."

Then too, I met Dr. Linda Bortell through SGVPA, and by the time you are reading this, we will have been co-presenters at the CPA Annual Convention. Linda and I also joined forces to give a presentation at SGVPA's February lunch meeting this year. And finally, as a fitting consequence of my successful collaboration with Suzanne Lake, she and I are currently working on the writing of a book which will further develop my ideas about the psychological impact of the flaws in the family law system.

In sum, I cannot fully express my appreciation for all of the amazing things that have evolved in my professional life as a direct result of joining SGVPA. It's been my pleasure to be involved with such a wonderful group of people. Thank you!

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