



Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution

Provide for the speedy, efficient, and inexpensive resolution of disputes and prosecutions

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Be Neutral - December 2015

A publication of the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution

Welcome to the December 2015 Issue of *Be Neutral*

2015 ADR Institute Dec. 11: Early Registration Still Open!

Please join us for the 22nd Annual ADR Institute and 2015 Neutrals Conference, Friday, December 11, 8:15 am-3 pm, at the State Bar of Georgia Conference Center, 104 Marietta St. NW, Atlanta. Every year, the Institute features presentations on a broad variety of dispute resolution topics by local and national experts. Come learn and network with your fellow dispute resolution professionals.

For registered neutrals, 6 hours of CE is available. For attorneys, 6 hours of CLE is available, including 1 Ethics hour, 1 Professionalism hour, and 6 Trial Practice hours.

Register and find more information here: <http://www.iclega.org/programs/9023.html>

Just as last year, a Georgia Courts Registrar staff member and several laptops will be available to help neutrals to complete their renewals on site. We are pleased to offer this service again this year after the overwhelmingly positive response at the 2014 ADR Institute.

Note: ICLE has informed us that due to a broadcast scheduling conflict, this years ADR Institute will not be simulcast to the State Bar offices in Tifton and Savannah. However, the Institute will be videotaped, and ICLE says that a video replay will be broadcast sometime in January 2016 to Tifton and Savannah. Please check www.iclega.org in January for details.



New Directory, Privacy Settings for Your Georgia Courts Registrar Profile

The vendor for the Georgia Courts Registrar is preparing to launch a long-awaited searchable public directory for all court professionals in the Registrar.

Out of respect for the privacy and security of our registered neutrals personal information, the public listing of registered neutrals we have been publishing each week has included only basic information name, website, languages, registration categories, and registration ID number. When the new directory launches, as a default setting those fields will continue to be the only ones that appear. Registered neutrals will be able to log into their Registrar accounts and choose what other personal information they wish to be displayed in the directory. Heres how to do that:

1. On the Georgia Courts Registrar home page (<https://gcr.onegovcloud.com/>), login using your username or email address and password.
2. Locate your name in the top right hand corner of the screen.
3. Click your name to reveal the user menu.
4. Select Privacy Settings from the menu.
5. Place a check next to each item you would like to make public by clicking the box next to the item.
6. Click the Save button to save your selections.
7. Return to the user menu by clicking the Back to Profile Page button or by clicking People then MyProfile on the top blue menu.



8. To logout, click your name in the top right hand corner of the screen and select Logout.

For assistance, please email gcr.neutrals@georgiacourts.gov or call 404-463-3808.

2015 Registration Renewal Reminder: Late Fees Apply After December 31

The on-time renewal deadline for the 2015 registration renewal season is 5 pm, **December 31, 2015**. A late fee equal to your regular renewal fee will apply after that date, so please renew before the end of the year.

To renew, you must use the new **Georgia Courts Registrar** to create an account (if you have not already created one), answer a questionnaire, enter your continuing education information (a form is no longer required), and pay your renewal fee.

To renew, please follow these steps:

1. Read the [Step-by-Step User Guide](#) and follow the instructions in the Neutral Registration section.
2. Open the [Georgia Courts Registrar](#) using Google Chrome or Internet Explorer 11. Google Chrome is recommended for the best user experience.
3. **If you already have a Registrar account, proceed to step 6.** If you do not have a Registrar account yet, Under New Account, choose **Neutral** from the menu. Click Create Account.

Complete every field with an asterisk. Make sure to choose the categories in which you are currently registered.
4. Also, make sure to type the birthdate using the following format for month/day/year, xx/xx/xxxx; if the year does not have four digits, you will receive an error message. Then, click **Register**.
5. You will receive an email from the Registrar. Click on the hyperlink in your email to verify your account or copy and paste the entire link into your address bar. If you do not see the email immediately, check your spam folder.
6. Login to the Registrar with the username and password you created.
To submit continuing education hours for approval, click on **Events** at the top of the page. On the following page, click **Events Management** at the top of the page, and select **Submit External CE Hours for Approval**. In the Type box, select **Neutrals**. Complete every field with an asterisk and click Submit. To add another CE event, repeat the steps starting with the **Events Management** menu.
7. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on **Questionnaire 1**. Answer every question and click Submit. Upload any documents as requested.
8. Click the green **Payment** button (located next to the Reset Password button at the bottom of the page). Select payment and add it to your shopping cart. Click on the cart and complete payment.

You may log in as many times as you wish to complete your application. However, our office will not review or accept your application until you have completed all steps and have paid your fees.

Notice: For those registered neutrals attending the 2015 ADR Institute on December 11, a Georgia Courts Registrar staff member and several laptops will be available to help neutrals to complete their renewals on site. We are pleased to offer this service again this year after the overwhelmingly positive response at the 2014 ADR Institute.

For assistance, please email gcr.neutrals@georgiacourts.gov or call 404-463-3808.

In Depth Articles



Experts Shared Tips, Wisdom, Stories at ABA Advanced Mediation Institute in Atlanta

I hope you have all had the good fortune of attending a professional conference that stimulated your thinking, inspired your vision, and reenergized your practice. That happened for me when I signed up for the ABA Section of Dispute Resolutions Annual Advanced Mediation and Advocacy Skills Institute, which was held October 21-23, 2015, in Atlanta.

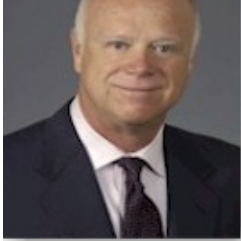
[Read Full Article](#)

Catherine Futch

Practice Tip:

Case Watch for Arbitrators: Georgia Appeals Court Affirms State Police Executive Arbitration

CaseWatch for Arbitrators: Georgia Appeals Court Affirms State Policy Favoring Arbitration



John Allgood

This past summer, the Georgia Court of Appeals issued an important decision that affirms the states public policy and echoes the federal policy favoring arbitration of consumer disputes.

The case before the appeals court arose from a consumers dissatisfaction with the quality of work performed by a contractor recommended by the respondent company, DirectBuy, which sold home furnishings and fixtures. The consumer had signed a membership agreement with DirectBuy. The agreement included a list of the companys preferred installers, who would perform services at a reduced rate for members who purchased products and fixtures from the company

[Read Full Article](#)

Marketing Tip: If Your Website Isnt Mobile Friendly, Google Will Kick You Aside



Michele Gibson

Last January, Google announced a change that website developers dubbed their "full employment act". Effective April 21, 2015, any website that was not "responsive" would be ranked lower than those that were.

Responsive does not refer to whether or not you reply to site visitors who ask questions or whether the FAQs on your site answer all possible questions. Rather, responsive is the programming that ensures that a website is equally visible regardless of what type of device a site visitor is trying to view it with, whether it be a desktop, laptop, mobile phone, or tablet. Today a large percentage of your audience is primarily uses mobile devices such as phones and tablets, and Google (which owns Android and has a big stake in the success of these devices) wants to make sure mobile users have a good web experience.

[Read Full Article](#)

In The News

"In the News" is a new feature of the GODR newsletter designed to keep readers abreast of happenings with their fellow ADR practitioners. Whether it be awards, a new book published, a profile published, etc., we want to know about it so we can share it with you and others



Dennis Burnette

Canton Registered Mediator and Arbitrator Dennis Burnette has been doing his part to raise awareness in his community of mediation as a productive alternative to traditional litigation. During October 12-19, which the American Bar Association designated as its annual Mediation Week, Burnette jumped on the opportunity to organize a number of efforts to promote mediation among lawyers and the public in and around Cherokee County.

With the encouragement of Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit Chief Judge N. Jackson Harris, Burnette asked the Cherokee County Commission to consider officially supporting Mediation Week. The Commission agreed and issued a proclamation declaring the third week in October to be Mediation Week in Cherokee County. All week, a poster-sized copy of the proclamation was on display in the County Justice Center. And a photo of County Commission Chairman L.B. Ahrens, Jr., presenting the proclamation to Judge Harris and Burnette was published in the *Cherokee Tribune*, the countys legal newspaper.

The Blue Ridge Bar Association also supported Burnette efforts. Prominent local attorney Jessica L. Long started the week with a Bench & Bar op-ed column in the *Cherokee Tribune* (the same issue that contained the County Commission proclamation photo), in which she explained the process of mediation and the role of mediators in helping litigants resolve their conflicts without trial. Later that week, Cherokee attorney mediator Dana M. Thompson wrote a Letter to the Editor of the *Cherokee Ledger-News* extolling the benefits of mediation in an approachable question-and-answer format.

Burnette, who during last years Mediation Week spoke to several civic clubs in his community about the benefits of mediation, reports that he and the Blue Ridge Bar Association are already generating ideas for next years Mediation Week celebration.



DEAR EDITOR:

The field of alternate dispute resolution has rapidly increased in popularity over the last few years. In recognition of this growth, the American Bar Association has deemed the third week of October as Mediation Week. Multiple states, bar associations, and other organizations have recognized and participated in this celebration. With the upcoming celebration and presentation of a proclamation requesting that October 12-19 be proclaimed as Mediation Week to the Cherokee County Commission, I wanted to take a moment to explain the benefits of mediation.

[Read Full Article](#)

What We're Reading

We all read articles in the general media that talk about how mediation is used, about court decisions involving mediation, or about tangential issues such as body language and negotiation. "What We're Reading" is a new section of this newsletter designed to share some of the best of those articles with you. Inclusion of articles here does not imply an endorsement of the author's thesis - rather they are included to spur discussion among you and your colleagues. Read something recently that others would enjoy? Send it along, and we'll look at publishing it in the next issue.

- [Read](#) ***When Neighbors Tangle Online***
- [Read](#) ***Lawyers Have Lowest Health - Highest Rate of Alcohol Abuse***
- [Read](#) ***Divorce and the Shared Mortgage***
- [Read](#) ***Arbitration - Privatization of the Justice System ?***
- [Read](#) ***The Impact of Lawyers in ADR***

Marketing

LIMITED TIME SALE - Save 30-40% on Your Marketing



Have you been thinking about using email or events to market your practice? Constant Contact (the company we use to create & email this newsletter) has a [30% off sale good Tuesday, December 8th through midnight Eastern time on Thursday, December 31st](#) for new customers. [Alternately, this coming Monday - December 7th, you can sign up and get 40% off.](#) In addition, they'll give you another 10-15% off if you prepay for 3 or 6 months of service! Not only do they offer newsletter services but with their Email Plus (Toolkit Essentials) product you also get things such as their survey & event tools included at no additional charge. These discounts require that you make a purchase - you do not get the discount if you sign up for a free trial account.

- Link to purchase:** <http://www.constantcontact.com>
- Promo Codes:** [INDCYBER15](#) (valid Monday, December 7th only)
[ALESWEET16](#) (note - you must enter this at checkout and it is ONLY active 12/8 - 12/31)
- Product to purchase:** Email Plus (or Toolkit Essentials)

CE Calendar

Check frequently at our website for the latest CE and training offerings. Remember, any ADR-related training you take counts as CE as long as you took it since your last renewal or your initial registration, whichever comes later. Lawyers, any CLE you took during that same time period counts as CE. Likewise, judges and CJE. Accountants and other professionals with CE requirements, same thing.

And remember, we have posted videos on our website that registered neutrals can watch for free to earn CE credit. Each video is at least one-hour long. Neutrals are free to watch the videos as many times as they wish, but we can only award 1 CE hour credit for each video once a renewal season. Please note the date you finished viewing each video so you can report it on your renewal form. Remember, registered neutrals are required to take at least 3 hours of CE each year in order to renew their registrations. Look for the link, [Continuing Education Videos](#), in the main menu of our website. For more information on what qualifies for CE, please see the [Help! I Need CE! link](#) link on our website.

December 11

22nd Annual ADR Institute and 2015 Neutrals' Conference (REGISTRATION OPEN)

Presenter: ICLE

Time: 8 AM - 3 PM

Location: State Bar of Georgia Conference Center, 104 Marietta Street NW, Atlanta, Georgia

Cost: Varies

Info: <http://www.iclega.org/programs/9023.html>

Potential CE Hours: 6 hours

December 17

Back to the Future

Presenter: Marti Kitchens Cobb, M.A., LMFT and Georgia Geiger, M.A.LPC

Time: 8:30 AM - Noon

Location: Justice Center of Atlanta, 976 Edgewood Ave, NE, Atlanta, Georgia

Cost: \$85

Contact Info: <http://www.justicecenter.org/training/cle/>

Potential CE Hours: 3 hours

December 18

Mediation Techniques in Collaborative Practice

Presenter: Diane C. Dierks, LMFT, CFLE

Time: 1 PM - 4 PM

Location: The Georgian Club, 100 Galleria Parkway, Suite 1700, Atlanta, Georgia

Cost: (CLIG Member) \$125 (nonmember)

Contact Info: Tracie Gonzenbach, tracieg@fairsharefinancial.com

Potential CE Hours: 3 hours

Share This Publication

Please forward this newsletter to anyone who might be interested in ADR in Georgia courts. Forward it just as you would any other e-mail. If folks who are not registered neutrals want to receive the newsletter free of charge, they can submit their e-mail addresses in the subscription box at the bottom right of the home page of our [website](#). And sending us feedback is easy just reply to this e-mail as you would any other e-mail. We want to hear from you !