

STATE BAR *of* TEXAS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 4, 2007

Election 2007 — Voting started Monday for State Bar and TYLA races. For the first time, State Bar members can vote online or by paper ballot for the entire voting period. Interviews with State Bar President-elect candidates Harper Estes of Midland and Mark Osborn of El Paso and TYLA President-elect candidates Cheryl Camin of Dallas and Sylvia Cardona of San Antonio are included in the April issue of the *Texas Bar Journal*. A videotaped “Meet the Candidates” forum with Estes and Osborn is available at www.texasbar.com/election. Ballots are due on May 1, 2007, by 5 p.m. CST.

Legislative Update — With fewer than 60 days remaining in the Texas Legislature’s 80th regular session, legislators are considering hundreds of bills, from a proposal to reorganize the court system to a proposal to keep lawyers’ personal identifying information private. Nearly 5,000 Texas lawyers have subscribed to the State Bar’s e-newsletter, the Friday Update. If you’re not one of them, sign up at www.texasbar.com/fridayupdate.

Proposed Standards for Criminal Appellate Law Certification — The Texas Board of Legal Specialization’s proposed standards for certification in Criminal Appellate Law are posted at www.tbls.org. A public hearing will take place in Austin on April 25. After considering comments, the board will decide whether it should make a recommendation regarding the proposed specialty to the Texas Supreme Court.

Proposed Pattern Jury Charges for Criminal Cases — A new volume of the Texas Pattern Jury Charges series for use in criminal cases is being developed. The State Bar committee writing these charges would like input from attorneys and judges across the state. TexasBarBooks has created an Internet forum to make the draft charges for the new series available for review and comment. To review and comment on drafts of this new series, go to www.texasbarcle.com, find “Practice Manuals from TexasBarBooks” in the middle column, and click on “Review proposed changes to the Pattern Jury Charges.” Charge language for DWI, intoxicated assault, and intoxicated manslaughter are currently posted for comment.

Harboring Committees — Ninety percent of the demolition work to Floors P1, 1, and 2 of the Texas Law Center is complete. Because of the noise and inconvenience of the construction, most meetings have been moved from the Texas Law Center for the next few months. We thank the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, the Texas Trial Lawyers Association, and the various state agencies and law firms that are allowing committees to conduct meetings in their facilities.

Training Leaders — Almost all State Bar staff members have been trained in the first set of DDI courses (“Essentials of Leadership” for managers, “Interaction Skills for Success” for non-managers). Weekly assignments for non-managers are reinforcing the learning.

Praising the Buck — The Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Board of Directors recently passed a resolution honoring Tyler lawyer and State Bar Director F.R. “Buck” Files, Jr. According to the resolution, Files exemplifies “the qualities inherent in a true criminal defense lawyer, always striving to fulfill the ultimate purpose of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association: to promote justice and the common good.”

Minority Leadership Summit — The annual Minority Leadership Summit will take place May 4 in Dallas. The summit provides an opportunity for leaders of minority bars, sections, and committees to discuss issues with each other and State Bar officers and minority directors.

Arbitration Road Map — TexasBarBooks has released a new guide to the arbitration process for domestic and international disputes. The Arbitration Road Map begins with strategies for drafting arbitration clauses, walks readers through the substantive and procedural law of arbitration and the hearing process, and ends with enforcing the arbitration award. The accompanying CD contains the entire manual, sample clauses from the American Arbitration Association, the International Chamber of Commerce, and the text of international arbitration statutes. To order, visit www.texasbarbooks.com or call the Sales Desk at (800)204-2222, Ext. 1411.

Legally Large Collaboration — Law Practice Management launched its new online training portal for legal support staff. This is a joint product with Legally Large, the co-sponsor of LPM's popular live support staff training programs. This is the only product/resource of its kind in the country, which LPM hopes will help provide much-needed training and educational opportunities for all legal support staff.

Conquering the Real World — The Law Practice Management Program and Committee held its Planning to Conquer the Real World of Private Practice course at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio. The course was a success with roughly 32 law students in attendance along with three licensed attorneys.

Mile-High Ambitions — The 2007 ABA/NLADA Equal Justice Conference was held in Denver last week. The conference brings together lawyers, judges, and other advocates for access to justice throughout the nation. The final day of the conference coincides with the annual ATJ Chairs meeting, which was attended by 130 people this year from 42 states and the District of Columbia. ATJ Commission members, Supreme Court justices, and other supporters attend the meeting to share ideas and develop initiatives for improving access to justice for low-income people in their respective states.

Increased Traffic at TexasBar.com — In recent months, TexasBar.com achieved several milestones. In January, for the first time ever, the website had more than 100,000 unique visitors. There were 106,346 unique visitors, 2,121,516 page views, and 40,067,242 "clicks." By way of comparison, in FY 2006 the site averaged 78,432 unique visitors per month. Thanks to advertising representative Pat Niekamp and a growing demand for online ads, the Website Department hit its FY 2007 revenue target early. In December, Haynes and Boone became the first major firm to purchase law firm links for all its members. Law firm links are live hyperlinks from an attorney's profile on TexasBar.com to the firm's website. As with banner ads, link sales are ahead of the FY 2007 budget target. Attorneys continue to use MyBarPage to manage their accounts online. In January, attorneys logged in to MyBarPage a total of 62,067 times and made 1,845 profile updates and 2,444 address changes.

By the Numbers — The April issue of the *Texas Bar Journal* was distributed to 94,000 subscribers, which included 39 subscribers in Canada, 10 in Mexico, and 269 in other countries.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the State Bar of Texas is to support the administration of the legal system, assure all citizens equal access to justice, foster high standards of ethical conduct for lawyers, support and provide services to its members, enable its members to better serve their clients and the public, and educate the public about the rule of law.

