



MY OPINION

BY TERRY TOTTENHAM
PRESIDENT, STATE BAR OF TEXAS

Radio Nowhere

*I was tryin' to find my way home,
But all I heard was a drone;
Bouncing off a satellite,
Crushin' the last lone American night.*

*This is Radio Nowhere,
Is there anybody alive out there?*

— Bruce Springsteen
“Radio Nowhere”

No matter where we live or what type of law we practice, we are inundated with information. By day, we may be on the receiving end of hundreds of emails and phone calls. We may subscribe to Twitter feeds and podcasts and follow blogs. We may keep up with dozens of news outlets and record hours of movies or TV programs. Even when we are “offline,” our inboxes continue to fill.

Trying to keep pace with the sheer volume of information can be stressful. Trying to connect to others and make sure your message is heard can be equally trying. In an age of supposedly constant connectivity, how do we break through to actually connect?

As a professional association, the State Bar is committed to keeping members informed about major developments affecting members, but is understandably wary of overwhelming them. Some members may think we communicate too frequently; others that we do not communicate frequently enough. Some may believe we overpublicize programs and events; others that we fail to tout the great work that we do.

Wherever you fall on this spectrum, it is critical that the State Bar be able to connect with you. Last year, the State Bar worked hard to engage members in a discussion of whether lawyers should be required to disclose to clients whether they carry professional liability insurance. (In response to the feedback we received, the Board of Directors recommended to the Texas Supreme Court that disclosure not be required and the Court decided to retain the status quo.)

This year, we are working to ensure that members have the opportunity to weigh in on proposed amendments to the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. The initially proposed rules, as well as subsequent revisions to those rules, have appeared in the *Texas Bar Journal* and on *TexasBar.com*. In August, you received a letter from the State Bar directors in your district and an electronic newsletter from me alerting you to a series of public education hearings. I am pleased to report that hundreds of Texas lawyers and members of the public showed up at nine locations around the state to learn more about the proposed rules and to voice their concerns. After each of the hearings, we uploaded an audio recording of the public testimony to the State Bar website and posted a summary to the Texas Bar Blog. We encouraged lawyers and members of the public to post comments to the blog or submit written comments.

On Oct. 1, the Board of Directors will make a recommendation to the Court regarding the proposed rules. The board may request a referendum of all

Texas lawyers. If the Court orders a referendum, we will educate members about the final version of the proposed rules and the referendum process.

Yet aside from rules and procedures, it's important that lawyers continue to connect on a personal level with other lawyers and the clients they serve. This year, we are focusing on several initiatives that have at their core the need to connect. *Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans* is connecting our nation's veterans with volunteer lawyers, agency officials, and mental health professionals to ensure that veterans receive the care they deserve. Our mental health initiative is helping to connect impaired lawyers, judges, and law students with the counseling and treatment options that are available. We are coordinating a series of podcasts to connect unemployed and underemployed lawyers, as well as solo and small-firm practitioners, with resources that can help them during this challenging economic environment.

Each of us can recommit to connecting with lawyers, clients, and friends. We can go to local bar association meetings and attend live CLE. We can volunteer at a veterans clinic and take on pro bono cases. We can lend a helping hand to colleagues in need. We can reach out and make a connection. ✪

*I was driving through the misty rain,
Yeah searchin' for a mystery train;
Boppin' through the wild blue,
Tryin' to make a connection with you.*