



MY OPINION

BY BUCK FILES

PRESIDENT, STATE BAR OF TEXAS

A Snapshot of TexasBarCLE

The continuing legal education program of the State Bar of Texas has been the love of my Bar life. I have had the honor of being a course director for the Advanced Criminal Law Course and was an author/speaker for 23 years. I had the fun of chairing the Bar's CLE Committee for three years and working closely with Pat Nester and many of his staff. Pat is the director of the Professional Development Division of the State Bar of Texas and of TexasBarCLE.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS HAS EVOLVED

I was at the first Advanced Criminal Law Course in 1975. Courses in family law and labor law were also offered that year. In 2011, the State Bar presented 85 seminar topics. Some of these were repeated for a total of 110 live events. TexasBarCLE provided video replays of some of these courses for 39 bar associations across Texas. Attendees at these courses also had unlimited free access to the online versions of the programs they attended.

In 2006, TexasBarCLE offered its first webcast. By definition, this is a live broadcast or rebroadcast from the State Bar's studio. Last year, we had 75 of these, with some of them repeated, for a total of 150 webcasts. A total of 6,690 lawyers viewed these webcasts.

TEXAS LAWYERS ARE RESPONDING TO OUR PROGRAMS

In the most recent full year, there were about 17,000 registrations for our live programs and about 35,000 registrations for programs delivered to computers, tablets, smartphones, DVDs, and MP3 players.

Surprisingly, more younger lawyers than anticipated are attending our live programs, and more older lawyers than anticipated are signing up for our webcasts.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In my budget, I allocated funds for TexasBarCLE to be able to continue with its research and development program. Many of our courses and delivery systems would not have been possible without such funding in the past. TexasBarCLE is working to ensure that we continue to provide the best CLE in America.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Each year, 2,000 or so Texas lawyers and judges volunteer as author/speakers for TexasBarCLE. At our live courses, these volunteers do not have to pay the course registration fee, but they receive reimbursement for only one night's lodging and out-of-pocket expenses. Interestingly, we still have more volunteers than we have slots for author/speakers.

GOOD STEWARDS WITH THE BAR'S MONEY

The TexasBarCLE staff strives to trim expenses and save money. For example, contracts with hotels and conference centers are executed years in advance in order to lock in favorable rates.

SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, TexasBarCLE has allocated \$50,000 to provide scholarships for lawyers who need financial assistance to attend CLE courses. A lawyer will be expected to pay what he or she can afford for a course and then be supplemented from these scholarship funds. To receive an application for these scholarships or to learn more, call (800) 204-2222, ext. 1574.

ATTENDEES' EVALUATIONS

Course directors are urged to request/plead/beg for attendees to fill out evaluation forms. These are important to the TexasBarCLE staff who evaluate each

course and prepare the materials for the planning committee for the next year's course. Unfortunately, only 20 percent of the attendees fill out these forms. As an author/speaker, I always reviewed my evaluations and was disappointed if I didn't receive any suggestions on how to improve my topic or my presentation.

WHERE TO FIND THE ANSWERS TO ALL OF YOUR CLE QUESTIONS

TexasBarCLE.com (It's great!)

SAYING THANK YOU TO OUR AUTHOR/SPEAKERS

The next time you're at a State Bar seminar, you might take the time to say thank you to the volunteers and the TexasBarCLE staff who are there. They're working so very hard to serve you. ☺

MythBusters

The Myth: The Professional Ethics Committee for the State Bar is a committee of the State Bar.

The Problem: The committee issues an ethics opinion that angers a significant number of Texas lawyers. They respond by suggesting the tarring and feathering of the officers and directors of the State Bar.

The Truth: The president of the State Bar does not appoint the members of the committee. The State Bar has no input on the opinions authored by the committee. The State Bar does not receive advance notice of the contents of the opinions to be issued. Each opinion concludes with the following:

The Supreme Court of Texas appoints the nine members of the Professional Ethics Committee from members of the bar and the judiciary. The Court also appoints the committee's chair. According to Section 82.092(c) of the Texas Government Code, "Committee opinions are not binding on the Supreme Court."