

# MEMORANDUM

**TO: LYCOMING LAW ASSOCIATION**

**FROM: JOHN M. HUMPHREY, ESQUIRE**

**DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2005**

**RE: LYCOMING LAW ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S  
REPORT - 2004**

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I had the honor of serving as President of the Lycoming Law Association for 2004. My primary goal was to locate and hire an Executive Director for the Association pursuant to the resolution adopted at the last annual meeting authorizing such hiring, to implement the revised operational structure of the Association and the *Lycoming Law Reporter* utilizing the services and talents of the new Executive Director, and making decisions and recommendations concerning increased funding of and involvement in community activities and projects through allocation of a portion of surplus monies that have been generated by the *Lycoming Reporter* and increased activity by the Lycoming Law Association Foundation.

After an exhaustive process of soliciting and reviewing applications for the Executive Director position, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended to the Executive Committee four (4) highly qualified applicants from the 30 applications received. Ultimately, the part-time position was offered to Jessica A. Engel at an annual salary of \$17,420.00 plus parking. Ms. Engel accepted the offer and began her duties as LLA Executive Director on April 19, 2004.

The original plan was to continue the employment of the LLA secretary on a part-time basis. During Ms. Engel's first week on the job as Executive Director, she discovered and brought to the attention of the Executive Committee several financial irregularities over the previous several years for which it appeared the LLA secretary was responsible. The Secretary was suspended effective April 22, 2004, and a detailed investigation of questionable transactions was conducted. Ultimately, the Executive Committee concluded that the Secretary was responsible for unauthorized expenditures for her benefit in the amount of \$5,856.22. The Secretary was terminated and was offered the opportunity to repay the Lycoming Law Association the full amount of the misappropriated funds in lieu of pursuing criminal prosecution. Full restitution was made as of June 7, 2004.

Because the Executive Director believed that she could assume the responsibilities of the Secretary, the Executive Committee authorized increasing the Executive Director's

salary by \$125.00 per week in lieu of hiring a replacement for the Secretary. This assumption of duties by the Executive Director negated the necessity of securing additional office space for the Association and the additional expenditures such would have required.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Executive Director has taken over from Annabel Miller the functions of the *Lycoming Reporter* Business Manager. At tonight's annual dinner, Annabel Miller will be honored for her many years of exemplary service to the *Lycoming Law Reporter*. The finances of the *Lycoming Reporter* have been consolidated with those of the Association, and a unified report has been and will be produced monthly. The Executive Director has also computerized the financial records and other operations of the Association.

Many of the details of event planning and other Association operations are steadily being taken over and performed by the Executive Director, coordination and cooperation with the Pennsylvania Bar Association has been established, and assistance and input from Executive Directors of other local bar associations has been made possible through her involvement in the Pennsylvania Association of Bar Executives. The Association and its members can look forward to an expansion of the Association programs and continuity in those already implemented.

A subcommittee of the Executive Committee conducted an 8-month review of the Executive Director position in December 2004. Full satisfaction with the performance of Jessica Engel in the Executive Director position was expressed, and suggestions were made with respect to further expansion of functions. The Executive Director Review Committee also concluded that the Executive Director was spending more time than anticipated on *Lycoming Reporter* Business Manager duties formerly handled by Annabel Miller, and it has been recommended that the Executive Committee consider hiring a part-time staffperson to take over some of the clerical and routine functions of the *Lycoming Reporter* and the Association.

In addition to the hiring of the Executive Director and the integration of this position into the functioning of the Association and the Reporter, I am pleased to report the following accomplishments:

1. At the May 2004 meeting of the House of Delegates of the PBA, the Lycoming Law Association was presented with the prestigious Louis J. Goffman Award in recognition of the Association's exemplary pro bono program and the history of pro bono service of its members. This is an award for which all members of LLA should be proud as the Association is one of only three county Bar Associations throughout the state to receive this award. The \$500.00 grant accompanying the award was utilized by the Association to finance the free CLE seminar on education law held in November. Favorable publicity concerning this award and the pro bono service of Association members was generated by a front-page article in the Sun-Gazette.

2. A large portion of the substantial surplus which had been generated over the years through the operations of the *Lycoming Reporter*, approximately \$130,000 at a point earlier this year, has been invested in a Fixed Income Portfolio with Woodlands Bank. Although year-end statements were not available at the time of the preparation of this report, a sum in excess of \$110,000 was placed in this portfolio with 50% of the money in short-term securities, 40% in intermediate securities, and 10% in long-term securities, with an estimated annual yield of 3.9%. There was also a sum of approximately \$10,000 placed in three to six-month securities and rolled over into the Fixed Income Portfolio as appropriate. Money can be transferred from one account to the other if necessary. The Association also has a checking account with Williamsport National Bank for Association operations, and a checking account with Woodlands for Reporter operations. It is expected that year-end figures for all of these accounts will be available at the Annual Meeting.
3. The Association's tradition of service to the community through events such as the blood drive, Toys for Tots campaign, Law Day, and the mock trial program, has continued through the efforts of a number of members of the Association.
4. In addition to the second highly successful CLE Program put on by the Association in November, there is in place a plan to continue presenting in Lycoming County live CLE seminars on topics of interest to Association members, and a series of one-hour "Lunch and Learns" with CLE credit. A Lunch and Learn is scheduled for March and will provide a cherished "ethics credit."
5. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Lycoming Law Association Foundation has established a Community Activities Fund in addition to its Endowment Fund. Because of the continuing success of the pledge campaign for the Endowment Fund, that Fund has now exceeded \$100,000 and is expected to exceed \$120,000 by the end of 2005. The plan is to continue to increase the Endowment Fund to preserve principal and, hopefully, much of the earnings, so that in future generations there will be a very substantial amount available for the funding of local law-related programs. The new Community Activities Fund will likewise be used to fund such projects, and will not be limited to expenditures of income. The Association has recently formed a new committee, the "Community Activities and Outreach Committee," which will advise and assist the Foundation and the Association in a new era of community involvement, and will promote the availability of grants from the Foundation, review grant applications and make recommendations to the Foundation concerning the funding of worthwhile projects and activities, promote and expand Foundation fundraising programs, and encourage LLA members to participate in community activities. All

members interested in participating in this exciting new committee are urged to join in these efforts.

6. The Law Association's website has continued to be improved, and represents a wonderful resource to LLA members and the public. All opinions of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of Lycoming County are being added to the website, with a short index of the opinions being published in the *Lycoming Reporter*. Those members who have not yet taken advantage of the website are urged to do so. I guarantee that you will be well served by clicking on [www.lycolaw.org](http://www.lycolaw.org).

I would be remiss if I did not extend my sincere appreciation, and the appreciation of all LLA members, to Gary Weber. Many of the accomplishments of the Association this year were the result of Gary's foresight and leadership while he served as the Association's 2003 President. After his term expired, and throughout this year, Gary has continued to provide substantial service to the Association through his efforts in maintaining and improving the website and assisting the new Executive Director in her assumption of management responsibilities.

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President during this past exciting year of change and innovation for the Lycoming Law Association, and urge all of you to take full advantage of the many services provided by and events put on by the Association. I am confident that our new President, Norm Lubin, will continue furthering the progress of the Association.