

REPORT OF THE 2008 LLA PRESIDENT

JANUARY

As was apparent by the extremely limited agenda of his last noon Executive Committee meeting as President, John Pietrovito left no unfinished business for me, just a few items of ongoing business.

At the Annual Meeting held January 14, 2008, in the Juror's Lounge, the LLA membership adopted new by-laws and voted in a record 4 new members to the Executive Committee. We presented John Pietrovito with a clock in appreciation of his dedication and years of service on the Executive Committee. John was a wonderful President and I know that I have a lot of work ahead to follow successfully in his footsteps.

The Annual Banquet was held at 33 East and was a huge success with 73 in attendance including 19 past presidents. The past presidents received lapel pins as a token of our appreciation for their accomplishments for our organization. The food was good, the company was great and we all enjoyed the speech on leadership given by former President Judge Thomas C. Raup.

Two days after ascending to the presidency, I presented a Lunch and Learn, "Criminal Defense in State Court – With the Feds in Mind," to 23 attendees. I determined that it is important for me as LLA President to support our lunch and learn program. Even if an LLA member cannot be a presenter, we can all attend and support the program that way.

On January 21, 2008, I held the first of what I hope to be an annual retreat for Board members. With a record 4 new members sitting on the board, this was a perfect opportunity to bring the board together. We enjoyed lunch at LeJune Chef and then went to the Professional Development Center at Penn College for a two hour meeting. Jessica prepared and presented a packet of information which included the budget, the new by-laws and the by-laws for the Foundation so that each board member would have these items at their fingertips throughout the year. Although most of the time was spent as an orientation for the new members, we also discussed creating a mission statement for the LLA. That will be an ongoing project.

On January 24th, Jessica, President Elect Joy McCoy and I participated in a conference call with PBA President Andrew Susko focusing on the sales tax issue facing the legislature (which was defeated later the next week by a vote of 148 to 47!). During that call each County was asked to appoint a representative to act as a liaison to the PBA Legislative Affairs Committee. Naturally, I appointed William Carlucci, Esquire.

January was a busy month. One down and eleven to go!

FEBRUARY

As reported by John Pietrovito in his President's Report for 2007, the LLA was in the process of hiring counsel to take legal action against an individual engaging in the unauthorized practice of law. The LLA hired the firm of Raup and Wiley (now Raup, Wiley and Mott). On February 6th, John Pietrovito, Esquire, Scott A. Williams, Esquire, Chair of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee and I met with Mike Wiley regarding the filing of a lawsuit to enjoin the unauthorized practice of law in Lycoming County. The action is proceeding.

On February 7th, the moving van showed up early to move the office of the LLA from Pine Street to Third Street. Jessica really did all the work in preparation for the move. I simply showed up one evening and put a few things in a box for her. She packed, moved, unpacked and organized. What a great job you did Jessica! I know it was a lot of work.

On February 28th, 29th and March 1st, Jessica and I attended the annual Conference of County Bar Leaders in State College. This is a great conference. I returned with some interesting ideas for more regular social events for our members and ideas for involving the magistrate judges with our bar. I also attended an interesting session on the unauthorized practice of law, which was quite timely in light of our present situation.

Unfortunately during this month, Joy McCoy informed me that regrettably she had to step down as President-Elect because of her other personal and professional obligations. I was truly sad to see her leave the Board; she was such a help to me during my transitional period. Thank you Joy for your faithful service during several years on the Executive Committee, which included serving as Treasurer. We were all sorry to see you go.

MARCH

At our March meeting, we experienced a shift in the Board to fill the President-Elect position with Jonathan Butterfield. Howard Langdon, who had only served on the Board for two months suddenly became an officer and took over the Secretary position. I am grateful that Howard was willing to "step up to the plate" when called upon to fill the officer position during his first year on the Board. The first order of business at our April meeting would be to elect a new member to fill the member at large position.

The Executive Committee agreed to recommend to the membership that the LLA contribute \$12,000 to produce a documentary on the life of the Honorable Malcolm Muir. John Humphrey, Esquire, has agreed to head this project. The membership approved the expenditure and Jack got right to work on the project.

An issue was raised with the Executive Committee concerning the removal of an opinion from the LLA website which was written by Judge Kieser in the case of Stroehmann v. Stroehmann regarding a prenuptial agreement. An attorney representing Jeff Stroehmann wrote a letter to the

LLA, requesting that we remove the opinion. After consultation with Gary Weber, I wrote a short letter declining the request to remove the opinion. However, the matter did not end there. Mr. Stroehmann's attorney asked Judge Williamson to take action to remove the opinion in a matter pending in Lycoming County which did not even involve the LLA. A few of us from the LLA Executive Committee and Gary Weber attended the oral argument regarding the removal of the opinion. Ultimately, Judge Williamson refused to take any action with respect to the opinion. My thanks to Gary Weber for helping me get through this situation, for all of his hard work on and dedication to the website and for being a wonderful "go to" person when these types of issues arise.

Jessica settled into her new office space. Thanks goes to Mark Taylor for assembly of the chairs, to John Pietrovito for assembly of the conference tables and to Brian Bluth for helping move boxes into storage.

APRIL

On April 2nd, Jessica and I participated in another conference call with PBA President Andy Susko. The call was mostly informational about upcoming events including the PBA Day on the Hill Program set for May 5th. I was pleased to have Bill Carlucci attend the Day on the Hill on behalf of the LLA.

On April 14th, we held our first Executive Committee meeting in the new office space and welcomed Tom Waffenschmidt to the Board as the new member at large. The office space, new conference table and chairs worked perfectly for our meeting.

MAY

On May 1st, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Law Day. As usual, we had an entertaining afternoon with area students presenting their essays and art work on "the rule of law." Thanks to Joy McCoy and all of the members of the Law Day Committee for their work on and dedication to this event. Following the festivities at the courthouse, the members of the LLA and the members of the Lycoming County Paralegal Association joined together for a social event at the new LLA office. Jessica threw a great party! Although I would have liked to see more members attend, those of us who did attend enjoyed a good time with plenty of delicious food and cold beverages!

On May 20th I presented a lunch and learn with respect to federal criminal law to the Lycoming County Paralegal Association. It is nice to see such an active, interested paralegal association in Lycoming County which I am sure goes unnoticed by many of the members of our bar.

JUNE

On June 5th, Jessica and I attended the PBA Annual Meeting and Dinner at the Hershey Lodge. It was a pleasant event to welcome incoming PBA President Dale McClain. The dinner was delicious but I was expecting a little more in the way of chocolate for dessert. The next day, I attended my first House of Delegates Meeting. I was honored to attend my first meeting at which Charles "Skip" Greevy, III, began serving his three year term as our Zone Governor. I was also pleased to see 100 % attendance of the Lycoming County delegates for Zone 4. Although it was absolutely freezing in that room, it was an interesting time with some interesting debates and a few not so interesting debates. (Thankfully, there was plenty of chocolate to snack on!) The House of Delegates approved numerous committee recommendations, including a \$7.00 increase in PBA dues for 2009. The House did reject some of the committee recommendations. Also, for those of you who take advantage of Incite, a legal research program through LexisNexis which is free to PBA members, PBA Executive Director Barry Simpson reported that the PBA contracted to provide Incite for three (3) more years and will be expanding its content.

JULY

Ahhhh, it's picnic time. Is this really half way for me? The picnic was held at Gray's Run Hunting Club on July 23rd, the fourth Wednesday of the month, to avoid a conflict with the State Trial Judges' Conference. A rainy, damp day ruined the outside activities but the socializing went on inside and on the porch. Although (as usual) I wished we could have had more members attend, I am sure the members who did attend thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks goes to Bud Greevy for being our Gray's Run on site member this year.

Also this month, upon recommendation of the Customs and Rules Committee, the Executive Committee approved revisions to the Title Search Customs proposed by the Real Estate Committee and Rules of Procedure for Mediation or Arbitration of Fee Disputes proposed by the Fee Dispute Committee.

AUGUST

On August 4th, I attended a meeting of the Bench Bar Committee. We discussed recent happenings in the court system with a new underage drinking court, videoconferencing and an upcoming change in the lists for jury selection. Both before and after the meeting it was informally brought to my attention that the portraits of Judge Anderson and Judge Gray are long overdue. I promised to make this a priority before my term ends.

The Executive Committee took a little break this month and canceled the monthly meeting. Luckily, it was a quiet month. (With one minor exception: While Jessica was away on vacation, it was my responsibility to check the mail and fax any Reporter notices to Clare Printing. I expected this to be an easy task but because I could not figure out how to operate the fax machine at the LLA office it turned out to be one of my tougher presidential moments. ☺)

I do apologize for “dropping the ball” somewhere because we did not have our annual outing to the Crosscutters game this month. Perhaps, if there is interest, this is an activity that can be scheduled again next year.

SEPTEMBER

Our monthly Executive Committee meeting resumed with a light agenda. However, as was evident by the numerous committee reports, the LLA committees did not take a summer break and are busy moving the association forward. The Bench Bar Committee, the Customs and Rules Committee and the Real Estate Committee continue to meet and address pertinent issues. Also YLD has been busy planning this year’s Lawctoberfest activities. Jessica has been busy scheduling CLE programs for the 2008-2009 Lunch and Learn series as well as with PBI. At last, Judge Anderson and Judge Gray were advised to schedule their sittings for their portraits.

OCTOBER

On October 4th, the Annual Lawctoberfest was held at the Herdic House. Unfortunately, this was the one event this year that I could not attend due to another commitment but by all reports it was another successful year. We received a lot of positive feedback about the location and the food. Thanks to everyone who participated. I am told that John Pietrovito was the winning bid on throwing out an opening pitch at a Crosscutters game in 2009. That just may be the perfect occasion for the LLA to attend a game and cheer on one of our own.

On October 8th, I attended a meeting of the LLA Foundation Board. Tom Burkholder attended to review our financial reports. The good news is that even in the current national financial crisis, the investments of the Foundation have not suffered a tremendous loss.

At the October Executive Committee meeting, Jessica advised that the PA Bar Insurance Fund has approved her grant request in the amount of \$2,315.23 for the purchase of a new laptop, a projector and a projection screen which will allow the LLA to present groupcast CLE programs. The LLA will need to purchase some additional software for the laptop and the Executive Committee has approved the expenditure of the funds. This is a great accomplishment by Jessica for the LLA to increase local CLE opportunities.

On October 22nd, I attended a PBA Presidential Dinner in Lewisburg hosted by PBA President Dale McClain for our Zone 4 Governor, Skip Greevy, and the county bar presidents within Zone 4. In attendance from the PBA in addition to Dale were Barry Simpson, Executive Director; Fran O’Rourke, Deputy Executive Director; and Michelle Shuker, Director of County Bar Services. In addition to Skip and me, county bar presidents from Tioga, Snyder/Union and Montour/Columbia attended. During dinner we engaged in open conversation about issues of importance to the local bars. The president of Snyder/Union expressed an interest in the creation of a law journal and the president of Tioga expressed an interest in the creation of a website and doing more communication with her members by e-mail. The LLA is way ahead in those areas

and we were praised by the PBA representatives for our wonderful website. (Again thanks to Gary Weber!) We are also the only county in Zone 4 with an Executive Director. All of the other presidents do all of the work themselves with the help of their private office staff and their terms seem to last as long as they are willing to serve. We talked about the common problem of increasing interest and attendance at local bar events. Everyone shares the same problem, except Tioga which averages 40 of its 50 attorneys at its 2 annual social events; however, it was reported that Tioga County attorneys do not show much interest in anything else, including Law Day. It was a fun and interesting evening. I actually left feeling proud of the accomplishments of the LLA.

NOVEMBER

On November 10th at 8:30 a.m. Jonathan Butterfield, Jessica and I participated in a conference call with PBA President Dale McClain. Chief Justice Emeritus John Flaherty commented on behalf of the Pennsylvania Judicial Independence Commission about an effort to encourage bar members to volunteer to speak at schools in light of a decrease in civic education curriculum in school districts around the state. More information about this program will be discussed at a plenary session at CCBL in February, 2009. Also, Alfred Axen, Executive Director of Pennsylvania IOLTA, spoke about an effort to seek unlimited FDIC coverage for IOLTA accounts. A few days before the call, we received an e-mail regarding this topic which Jessica forwarded on to our membership so that anyone interested could send letters to our U.S. Representative in support of unlimited FDIC coverage. At the suggestion of the Executive Committee, following our noon meeting, Jessica and I prepared a letter which was sent directly to FDIC with copies to Representative Carney and IOLTA Executive Director Axen in support of unlimited FDIC coverage for IOLTA accounts. Two weeks later, the FDIC announced that all client funds deposited in IOLTA escrows are eligible for full deposit insurance coverage under the Temporary Liquidity Guarantee Program through June 30, 2009.

On November 20th I attended my second and last House of Delegates meeting (as a bar president) in Camp Hill. Surprisingly, the meeting lasted only a little more than 2 hours. This must be a record for the HOD. There wasn't much business to conduct. In my opinion, the highlight of the meeting was Bill Carlucci's speech as Chair of the PBA Political Action Committee in which he made a fabulous analogy to the Titanic. (Ask him about it; he'll share it with you). After the adjournment, Skip Greevy, Bill Carlucci, John Pietrovito, Julie Steinbacher and I sat together and ate our box lunches. It was a nice end to a short meeting.

On November 24th I attended the meeting of the Bench Bar Committee. Primarily, we discussed the abuse of PFA petitions and other concerns of the family court bar. Unfortunately, none of the judges were in attendance; however, Judge Gray and Judge Anderson did show up at the Ross Club the following Monday, expecting to attend the Bench Bar meeting as was set forth on the court calendar. They were surprised to learn that they missed it. (Later I learned from Kevin Way that there was a mixup with the circulation of the meeting notice but, hopefully, it has been resolved for future meetings).

DECEMBER THROUGH JANUARY 12th

The last couple months of my presidential year have been filled with a variety of meetings. In addition to the regular Executive Committee meetings, the Finance Committee met a few times to prepare the budget and evaluate Jessica's performance. The Nominating Committee met to nominate a new member for the board. I also attended meetings of the Law Day Committee which is getting a head start for next year. With Judge Brown's permission, I became involved in forming a committee to prepare Resolutions to memorialize the life of William Hartman Askey. The Resolutions have been prepared, filed with the Court and published in the Lycoming Reporter. The portraits of Judge Anderson and Judge Gray are finally on display in the Juror's Lounge.

On December 12th I attended the new attorney admission ceremony and the reception sponsored by the YLD. Eight new attorneys were presented to the Court. As always, it was a nice event. I am glad Lycoming County continues this tradition.

Although I have a few more meetings to attend before my year as LLA President officially ends, the Annual Meeting on January 12, 2009, is fast approaching. I look back on my presidential year with a sense of accomplishment. First and foremost, I want to thank Jessica for all of the work she performed over the year to make my job a lot easier. She is completely dedicated to this organization and does whatever she is called upon to do and then some. I also want to thank all of the members of the Executive Committee with whom I have served over the past six years. Together we have worked toward a common goal of success for the LLA. As I slip quietly into the Immediate Past President seat and welcome Jonathan Butterfield as the new President, I am grateful to all of the members of the LLA for giving me the opportunity to serve you in the capacity as President. I wish Jonathan well this year and offer him my complete support and assistance in moving this organization forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy L. Taylor
2008 LLA President