

MEMORANDUM

To: LLA Membership

From: Gary Weber

Date: January 2, 2009

Subject: Annual Report of the Customs and Rules Committee

The LLA Customs and Rules Committee met twice in 2008.

The Committee recommended and the court adopted revised rules in 2 areas:

- **An update of the Lycoming County Orphans' Court Rules.** These local rules had not been reviewed for a number of years. A sub-committee of LLA members consisting of Marc Dryer, Joe Rider, Bill Knecht and Julie Steinbacher was commissioned to thoroughly examine the existing rules and to consider revising, eliminating or adding to existing rules.

Based on the work of the sub-committee, quite a number of recommendations were made to the court. Obsolete rules were eliminated and other rules changed. The rules relating to incapacitated persons were significantly revised to confirm to state rule changes. The new rules were implemented in September, 2008.

- **Civil Case Arbitration Limit.** The arbitration limit was increased to \$50,000. In addition, the arbitrator's fee increased to \$200 per case and \$50 per hour over 3 ½ hours. This became effective in the Spring of 2008.

At the same time, new rules relating to the number of copies and printing of court filed documents were implemented.

Other action by the Committee included:

- **Title Search Customs** - On July 10, 2008, Fred Holland reported to the Committee that the Title Search Customs had been thoroughly reviewed and revised by the Real Estate Committee. The proposed revisions were discussed and approved on the same date. The changes were subsequently approved by the LLA Executive Committee and are presently in effect.
- **Fee Dispute Resolution Committee Rules** - On July 10, 2008, the Committee also considered proposed rules for mediation and arbitration of fee disputes. The rules were approved and referred to the Executive Committee for final

approval, which came in July. These rules are now in effect and posted on the LLA Website.

- **Domestic Relations Local Rules.** The Committee appointed a sub-committee under John Pietrovito to consider revisions to the local domestic relations rules. The sub-committee met several times in 2008 and will report back to the Committee in early 2009. The sub-committee is awaiting promised state rule changes before issuing a proposal.
- **Civil Case Scheduling.** The Court has recommended changes in the procedures for case scheduling. Under the proposed rule changes, case scheduling conferences will no longer occur. Rather the Court will issue the scheduling order based on information in the initial civil case cover sheet. These proposals are to be reviewed at a meeting scheduled for January 15, 2009.