



HENNEPIN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

The Board of Directors of the HCBA Tuesday, February 12, 2008 HCBA Offices

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by President Miller-Van Oort. The minutes of the December 11, 2007 meeting were approved.

The board then discussed the value and benefits of HCBA membership, beginning by asking “why do you belong to the HCBA?” Networking, social and leadership opportunities were cited, particularly for solos, small firms and those who often work out of state or are locked into their large firms. The desire to do community service is a motivator. The Hennepin Lawyer and the interaction with the bench are particularly of value. CLE opportunities and the HCBA’s link to minority bars were also highly valued. The association is of value to those who are involved with the foundation. The Judges Social is of great value, particularly to litigators, as one aspect of interaction with the bench. CLE programming, particularly law and literature, are particularly beneficial.

As for proposals for still further benefit to members, the HCBA could interact more with the RCBA and the Ramsey County bench. Increased contact with the Hennepin County Bench is also desirable. The HCBA could provide a valuable place to post job opportunities, particularly for members of the minority bar associations. It was suggested that web postings be free, even if THL classified ads will have a modest cost. President Miller-Van Oort cited the efforts of the non-dues revenue committee to identify needs of members as part of its mission. Personal services might be identified by the HCBA (day care, office cleaning, etc.) Mr. Sandok (in absentia) emphasized that support of the bar is appropriate as the bar can often do what an individual attorney cannot. The board recognizes that large firms and even corporations are increasingly asking their attorneys to justify their involvement in bar activities.

Ms. Miller-Van Oort reported on efforts to reach baby boomers, in the form of a seminar and an interest in offering long term health care insurance. She attended an HCBA seminar dealing with lawyers and their relationship with money. She reported on her attendance at a conference of the National Conference of Bar Presidents; she specifically cited programs to encourage diversity through attention to the pipeline. Another program dealt with Pennsylvania’s judicial election campaign and the unsuccessful effort to unseat all of the judges, as well as the current attack on the Missouri plan. Still another program dealt with lawyer image. Finally, she cited a Texas project on how a bar association might use YouTube and MyFace to its advantage, running a contest on justice videos. She suggested that Directors visit the website of the Texas Bar Association to view the results.

Mr. Buxbaum reported on the Commitment Defense Project, its performance standards and the status of the contract with the county, which expires on March 31, 2008.

Ms. Schultze reported on six months financial results. She cited increased dues and membership. She discussed market performance as a negative impact; positive extended CLE revenue is partly offsetting that decrease. She further discussed LRIS performance year to date.

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Ms. Lori Semke reported on the activities of the Community Relations Committee. She advised that Legal Stuff has been revised and reprinted. The Legal Expo will take place on February 26, providing information to high school students on a variety of subjects. Nineteen schools will be attending, including 8 Hennepin County Schools. Spanish translations of the Tel-Law scripts is proceeding well, using volunteers from the legal community and law schools. Law Day will be planned in the very near future, with a theme of “The Rule of Law.” The Speakers Bureau continues to function with 31 presentations to date, twenty-five to schools and six to adult groups. We the Jury has been restarted; this is a program that goes into high schools to discuss the jury system and to build an appreciation of jury service. “Helping Kids Belong” is a program on tolerance for third graders; schools have been reluctant to give up time to permit the program presentation, as they are preparing students for state-wide proficiency tests. Ms. Semke made a plea for more volunteers to work on all these programs. Ms. Bartocci suggested collaboration with MWL on some of these programs.

Mr. Wind reported on the activities of the 4th Judicial District Ethics Committee. The Committee investigated 200 complaints last year. There are 115 volunteers, 25% of whom are non-lawyers. He described the Screening and Investigative Review Committee process, defending the latter. He described the training program for investigators, including a bias training component. He requested greater participation by lawyers in minority bars in support of the mission to project fairness to participants in the process.

Ms. Zeller indicated that the MSBA is considering establishing a task force to look at Minnesota Laws, which confer benefits to different sex couples and to suggest changes in the law to confer benefits upon same sex couples. The matter was referred to the Diversity Committee to make a recommendation on the proposed resolution at the March Board meeting.

Mr. Morris reported on newspaper editorials and articles relative to the Quie Commission. Legislators are meeting to hear testimony and consider action on a proposed constitutional amendment.

Ms. Ward-Reichard encouraged attendance at the Bar Benefit on March 11th.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Courtney Ward-Reichard
Secretary