

# Auf Wiedersehen, Danke Schön, Alles Gute...

## Goodbye, Thank You, and Best Wishes

By Martha D. Burkett

How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.

—Carol Sobieski and Thomas Meehan, *Annie*

**T**here are so many clichés about parting, and in this instance they all apply. Yet not one encompasses the yin and the yang of my feelings in telling you that this is my last Practicing Wellness entry. I am leaving a position that I love—the SBM Lawyers and Judges Assistance Program (LJAP) administrator—in early March. As of March 12, I will be a civilian employee of the U.S. Army on a 36-month assignment in Grafenwoehr, Germany, working with soldiers in training and those returning from active duty as a counseling psychologist in the Army Substance

Abuse Program. I have wanted to do this work since the U.S. declared war on Iraq. I do not love the war, but I do care deeply about the men and women who serve our country in the military.

I have full confidence that LJAP will continue to function exceptionally well with regard to ease of access, quality of service,

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clinical acuity, integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness. My successor and the competent LJAP staff will continue to work diligently to support attorney and law-student wellness while keeping public interest at the fore, and nurture meaningful relationships with the Attorney Grievance Commission, the SBM Character and Fitness staff, the courts, and other referral sources.

With the continued involvement and support of SBM Director of Professional Standards Dawn Evans, my successor, the Lawyers and Judges Assistance Committee, and other program volunteers in cooperation with the Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (COLAP) conference planning committee, the 2012 COLAP meeting will take place in Grand Rapids as planned. I wish I could be in attendance to enjoy the stunning success that I know it will be.

It is not sorrow that I feel about leaving the State Bar, but rather a deep apprecia-

tion—appreciation for the opportunities to learn and grow; for the chance to work for a quality employer like the State Bar; for the standards of excellence upheld by Bar staff; for the outstanding women that now comprise the LJAP team; for the dedication and commitment of the ever-evolving LJAC; for the expertise of the LJAP treatment providers; for the enthusiasm of the tireless LJAP volunteers; and, most of all, for the strength and courage of the LJAP participants. These are the men and women who have made my work worthwhile, and the relationships I have built will sustain me as I go forth into this grand adventure.

I am excited about this new chapter of my life. I look forward to developing new skill sets to help me effectively serve this unique and very deserving population within the context of the military culture. I am eager to immerse myself in the German and greater European cultures, and as I explore in my free time with my dog, Cody, and make new friends, I will remember fondly all the amazing people I have met over the past 13 years at the State Bar. With each new experience I will be thinking, How lucky I am! ■



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