

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

by Lawrence R. Shoffner

Big Shoes

Pat Karbowski is a tough act to follow. Pat has done such an extraordinary job on Council and as Chairman that it is impossible to list, let alone match, his many accomplishments. My goal as incoming Chair is simply to keep some of his momentum going.

During his tenure, Pat undertook a number of projects that will ultimately change how the Section operates. For many years, the Section's continuing legal education efforts have been focused on our Homeward Bound program, which we presented live in Troy. The problem was that most of our members could not physically get to Troy to attend; it was just too far away. The same, unfortunately, was true of any alternative location. We are a statewide organization, so unless you were lucky enough to live or work nearby, you could not fully benefit from the program. However, by working with ICLE, Pat has made the Homeward Bound series available "live" over the internet. Every Section member can attend Homeward Bound from the comfort of his or her own home or office. Geography is no longer a barrier to participation.

Pat orchestrated a similar breakthrough for Council meetings. Last year, Pat started web-conferencing the Council meetings. Lawyers who could not attend in person could now attend via the internet. This change allows unprecedented access and involvement in the Section's governing body. Pat has helped changed the Section forever. Geography is no longer a barrier to participation in any of its programs or activities, including governance.

Big Tent

So how do we keep Pat's momentum going? In the past, most (and sometimes all) of the Section's Special Committee Chairpersons were from the Metropolitan Detroit area. The reason was somewhat historic, but more geographic: you needed a certain concentration of people to have meetings. With current technology, this is no longer true: meetings can be held by conference call or web-cast, committee members can communicate by email or listserv. With this in mind, we have asked a

number of highly qualified real estate lawyers from the West side of the State to act as Co-Chairs of various Special Committees. Kim Shierk has graciously agreed to help coordinate this exciting new undertaking.

Here's the roster of our recruits as Co-Chairs: Jonathan Anderson of Varnum Riddering Schmidt Howlett LLP; Roger Anderson of Gavigan Anderson & Andrews; James O. Brown of Warner Norcross & Judd LLP; Melissa N. Collar of Warner Norcross & Judd LLP; John Gregg of Barnes & Thornburg LLP; Leslee M. Lewis of Dickinson Wright PLLC; Melissa B. Papke of Varnum Riddering Schmidt Howlett LLP; Bennett S. Schwartz of Troff Petzke & Ammeson; J. Scott Timmer of Miller Johnson; Jessica L. Wood of Law Weathers & Richardson PC. "Oh brave new world, that has such people in it!" (Shakespeare, *The Tempest*.) I want to thank each for agreeing to be a part of this effort. I also want to apologize to others who were not asked, but who would like to be more involved. If you're interested in becoming active in a Special Committee, or any other Section activity, please let me know. My email address is Law@LawrenceShoffner.com. A list of Special Committees is available on the Section's corner of the State Bar of Michigan's website (go to www.michbar.org and follow the links).

Big Heart

Finally, congratulations are in order for Carol Ann Martinelli. At the Summer Conference, Carol Ann was given the Section's C. Robert Wartell Distinguished Service Award. This honor is awarded only to those individuals who have given exemplary service on behalf of the Section over an extended period of time. The Chairperson's Report in the Summer Issue of the Review chronicled a portion of Carol Ann's contributions over the years, perhaps most famously as past Chair of the Section's Pro Bono Committee. But no list of achievements can fully convey her generous nature, which has greatly benefited everyone around her.

So again, thanks to Pat and Carol Ann for all the great work you've done, and all the inspiration you've provided. We are a much better Section because of your involvement!