

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

by *Lawrence R. Shoffner*

Land Title Standards 6th Edition

The 6th Edition of the Michigan Land Title Standards is nearing completion after many years of hard work by the Land Title Standards Committee. The Standards were first published in 1956 by the State Bar Committee on Title Standards (then a Committee of the State Bar). The 1st Edition was published serially in the Michigan State Bar Journal from 1956 to 1963, and consisted of 164 Standards. The 5th Edition was published in 1988 in binder format and was last supplemented in 2004.

The Michigan Land Title Standards are statements of the law of real property and land titles, which have been relied upon by bench and bar since inception. The Standards are regarded as among the most complete and authoritative of all state land title standards in the country. The 6th Edition will have several new standards and all of the Standards in the 5th Edition have been thoroughly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in statutory and case law.

The 6th Edition will be available for purchase in the traditional binder format in the next few months. I am excited to announce that, for the first time, the Michigan Land Title Standards will also be posted on the Real Property Law Section website without charge. Beginning in the Summer of 2008, the entire 6th Edition with full search and download capabilities will be available. While this might appear to be a break from tradition, it is entirely consistent with the original purpose of the Michigan Land Title Standards. As Albert Blashfield explained in his President's Page in the August 1956 State Bar Journal containing the first 108 Standards, "[t]he Michigan Land Title Standards are distributed by the board of commissioners to the entire active membership of the bar of this state without charge. This is in keeping with the policy that the fruits of the labor of a State Bar committee belong to the bar as a whole."

The Michigan Land Title Standards are, and will continue to be, a valuable resource for lawyers and judges across the state. I encourage all to take advantage of the greater accessibility to the Standards that the upcoming website posting will provide.

Real Property Law Section Winter Conference

This year's Winter Conference is being held in Chicago on March 6-8, 2008. The program is entitled "Chicago Style: Deep-Dish Development" and the location is the Sofitel Chicago Water Tower hotel. Discounted rooms are available on a limited basis, so make your reservations as soon as possible to get the best rate. As always, there will be many opportunities for socializing and entertainment in this delightful city. The Program Chairpersons are Marie Racine and Gregory Gamalski, who have worked hard to bring you an extraordinary program. For more information, go to www.michbar.org/realproperty/winterconf.cfm.

Foreclosure Initiative

Janet Welch, SBM's Executive Director, recently approached the Section to help address the rising number of inquiries being made regarding foreclosure. The "Perfect Storm" created by the Subprime Crisis and our own State's unique economic difficulties has resulted in record numbers of foreclosures. The Section currently provides information and useful links regarding predatory lending on the Pro Bono Committee's webpage of the Section's website: www.michbar.org/realproperty/probono.cfm. Additionally, the Committee has prepared a pamphlet entitled "Mortgage Loans & Predatory Lending," which can also be viewed at the Committee's webpage, and which is available in both English and Spanish language versions.

Unfortunately, the problems confronting most borrowers are not related to predatory lending practices, so in addition to the existing materials, the Pro Bono Committee and the Section's Special Committee on Commercial Real Estate Finance are currently working on a new pamphlet that will provide a much-needed overview of the foreclosure process for non-lawyers. The Committees' chairpersons, MaryAnn Kanary, Jeffrey Weisserman and Jessica Wood, are currently at work on this extremely important project and should have the materials ready in the next few months.

Once completed, printed copies of the pamphlet will be available for distribution (free of charge), so if you are aware of community organizations that should be

provided with copies of this valuable resource, please contact Arlene Rubinstein at (248) 644-7378 or e-mail at LAWA1@aol.com.