

connections with SECTIONS

links to help you

Legal Milestones Program

www.michbar.org/programs/milestones.cfm

Access to Justice Pledge Form

www.michbar.org/programs/ATJCampaign/pledgeOnline.cfm

Member Services Orientation

www.michbar.org/programs/

SBM Free Subscriptions Sign-Up

www.michbar.org/publications/signup.cfm

Connections with Sections is an electronic newsletter published three times a year by the State Bar of Michigan and distributed without charge to Section chairs and chair-elects and the State Bar Board of Commissioners.

Announcements, articles, and pictures for Connections with Sections are highly encouraged. Please send suggestions to Candace Crowley at ccrowley@mail.michbar.org. The State Bar of Michigan reserves the right to edit for clarity and suggests that submissions be kept at 500 words or fewer.

Submission Deadlines:

October 15, 2007

February 15, 2008

June 15, 2008

Section Presentations to Board of Commissioners

In the last several years, one or two section leaders have attended each Board meeting to present information on current activities, highlight accomplishments, or reveal challenges in the practice of law or in section dynamics. Board meetings in Lansing are set for January 18, March 7, April 11, and July 25. The June 13 meeting is at Mackinac Island, and the September 17 meeting is in Dearborn. If your section would like a spot on one of these agendas, please contact Candace Crowley at ccrowley@mail.michbar.org or call for more information, (517) 346-6319.

Website Updates

It's most helpful to have current and useful section information readily available on your website, including the minutes of all of your meetings. Someone in your section, usually the secretary, should be responsible for sending approved minutes to the State Bar for posting on your site. Sandi Barger is the person who can make that happen for you; she accepts minutes and other materials at sbarger@mail.michbar.org.

Annual Meeting News

By now, you should have received a letter with information on the September 17-19 Annual Meeting in Dearborn, including a request to reserve space for your business meeting and program by December 21, 2007. Please contact Kari Brandel at kbrandel@mail.michbar.org, or (517) 346-6371 if you have questions.

Important New Decision Regarding Non-refundable Retainers

A recent Attorney Discipline Board opinion addressed problems that arise when the term "non-refundable retainer" is used in a fee agreement. The ADB held that a client's agreement that a fee is a "minimum fee" and "not refundable" does not override the duty to refund the unearned fees paid in advance for work to be performed in the future. This case remains on appeal. See the opinion at www.michbar.org/opinions/ethics/cooper.pdf. The Practice Management Resource Center has retainer agreement forms that comport with the new opinion. Visit www.michbar.org/pmrc/resources.cfm, click Client Relations, Client Intake, and then Forms.

Calendar of Events

SBM News

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: BAR LEADERSHIP FORUM AND UPPER MICHIGAN LEGAL INSTITUTE

These two events will join together again this year and will occur on June 13-15 at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT RESOURCE CENTER

Offers "How to Start a Law Practice"

This seminar will be held on January 11, 2008 at the Lansing Community College, West Campus, and offers great speakers and helpful sessions that address financial management, law firm formation, attracting good clients, marketing, records management, and support staff hiring issues. See www.michbar.org/pmrc/pdfs/Law_Practice.pdf.

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR MCCREE AWARD FOR JOURNALISTS

You have until February 14 to nominate Michigan broadcast and print media journalists who foster greater public understanding of the inherent values of our legal and judicial system through their published materials. See www.michbar.org/news/releases/archives07/mccree_nomination.cfm for more information.

Representative Assembly Invites Issue Proposals for April Meeting

The Representative Assembly invites bar associations and sections to submit policy items for review and voting at its April 12, 2008 meeting. Contact your RA member, Chair Bob Gardella at (810) 220-4200 or bobgardella@yahoo.com, or Anne Smith at (517) 346-6374 or asmith@mail.michbar.org by February 27, 2008. Information on actions taken at the September 2007 RA meeting can be found at www.michbar.org/generalinfo/announcements.cfm.

Criminal Issues Initiatives Focuses on Civil Consequences of Criminal Convictions

The Criminal Issues Initiative of the Justice Initiatives Division has several publications available on their website for download and printing, in addition to their Michigan Reentry Law Wiki. The materials are part of their Know Your Rights: Collateral Consequences of Criminal Conviction series, and include brochures about immigration and employment issues for persons facing criminal conviction, attorney-client questionnaires developed to minimize the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction, and a "Top Ten Resources" card (available in print only) for reentry persons. Please contact Judy Hershkowitz at (800) 968-1442 ext. 6335 or jherhshkowitz@mail.michbar.org for more information or to receive printed copies. www.michbar.org/programs/criminalissues.cfm and http://reentry.mplp.org/reentry/index.php/Main_Page

Give the Gift of Access to Justice this Holiday Season!

Lawyers, sections, and bar associations have generously supported the Access to Justice Campaign since its inception in 1997, helping the ATJ Fund reach over \$7.5 million in gifts and pledges to date for civil legal aid for the poor. However, the need still far outstrips available resources. A recent State Bar study showed that for every four persons who receive assistance, civil legal aid programs turn three others away because they lack sufficient resources to help more people. More than 1.3 million persons in our state qualify for help from legal aid because their income is no more than 125% of the federal poverty level, or just over \$21,000 annually for a family of three.

Your continued generosity will help assure that low-income persons in Michigan receive help with civil legal needs such as keeping families safe in their homes, protecting the elderly from unscrupulous contractors, or helping the disabled access medical care. A gift of at least \$300 is one way lawyers may satisfy their annual obligation under the State Bar's Voluntary Pro Bono Standard.

Please consider making a tax-deductible gift before December 31, 2007 to continue building a statewide endowment that can generate much-needed revenue, or direct your ATJ Fund gift to an eligible nonprofit civil legal aid agency. Endowment gifts may also qualify for a state tax credit. To donate online, print a pledge form, see a list of eligible agencies, or obtain information about possible tax benefits or gift options, go to www.atjfund.org or call the Michigan State Bar Foundation at (800) 968-8723. The ATJ Campaign is a partnership of the State Bar of Michigan, the Michigan State Bar Foundation, and civil legal aid programs in Michigan. The Bar Foundation holds the ATJ Fund and receives and administers contributions according to the ATJ Fund Guidelines, located at www.msb.org/atjfund.



At the October Section Orientation, Family Law's Barb Kelly is prominent at the Finance discussion table, while Business Law Chair Michael Khoury stands in the back.

Legal Milestones Program

Jeff Paulsen, chairperson of the State Bar's Public Outreach Committee, is encouraging bar associations, sections, and committees to suggest persons, places, statutes, cases, and events in Michigan's legal history for the Legal Milestone program. The program educates the public about the law and the legal process, and reminds people of the unique role that lawyers and judges have in our society. The Outreach Committee partners with bar association and others to honor these milestones. Contact Jeff at (248) 203-0889 or jpaulsen@dykema.com, or Naseem Stecker at (517) 346-6428 or nstecker@mail.michbar.org for more information. More information about the milestones can be found at www.michbar.org/programs/milestones.cfm.

Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys, Public Corporation Law Section Host Joint Summer Conference

These two groups have partnered to present a Summer Conference on Drummond Island to occur on June 27-28, 2008. Watch the Public Corporation Law Section website for more details.

ABA Legal Opportunity Scholarship Fund

March 1, 2008 is the deadline for racial and ethnic minority students to apply for this \$5,000 financial award. The application can be downloaded from the ABA website at www.abanet.org/fje.

Out and About

The Young Lawyers Section, the Straker Bar, and the Wolverine Bar are joining forces to raise funds for children of incarcerated parents by hosting an Old School Skate Party on Thursday, December 27 from 9:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. at Bonaventure Skating Rink in Farmington. Contact Solon Phillips at (313) 598-2724 for more information.

The Taxation Section enjoyed a joint seminar with ICLE on November 13, 2007, addressing Property Tax Appeals.

A successful Environmental Law conference on Climate Change & Alternative Energy took place on November 28, 2007.

The Antitrust, Franchising and Trade Regulation Section hosted a fantastic seminar on the Basics of Franchise Law on November 29, 2007.

The Health Care Law Section held an educational teleconference on November 20, 2007, focusing on the MiHIN and its impact on health care providers and attorneys.

Real Property Law held a Breakfast Roundtable on Water & Real Estate Transactions on December 6, 2007.

The Workers' Compensation Section Fall Seminar will be held on December 14, 2007, with guest Speaker Doug Holmes.

The Labor & Employment Law Section is looking forward to its Annual Holiday Cocktail Party on December 17 – if you haven't registered, hurry to do so!

Another of Real Property Law's "Groundbreakers" Breakfast Roundtables will be held on the subject of Title Insurance, on January 17, 2008.

A fantastic Mid-Winter Meeting is planned for the Labor & Employment Law Section on January 25-26, 2008.

Plan Ahead! The Real Property Law Section is pleased to announce "Chicago Style: Deep Dish Development," a three-day seminar to be held March 6-8, 2008 at the Sofitel Water Tower in Chicago, IL.

Had a fantastic event? Planning one?

Contact Heather Anderson at the State Bar of Michigan to help get the word out! handerson@mail.michbar.org at (517) 346-6414.



Wanda Nash, right, presents the Animal Law Section's 1st Annual Wanda Nash Award to Elizabeth Livorine of Wayne State Law School.



Jesse Reiter presents Peter Dunlap with the Michigan Trial Lawyers Respected Advocate Award at the 2007 Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids

Bridgette Sparkman, left, receives the Young Lawyers Section Regeana Myrick Award while Rebbie Myrick and friend look on.



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