

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN  
PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT**

Another year has seen us continue the theme issue format for the *Michigan Bar Journal*, working with the sections and committees to produce informative and useful articles on a variety of subjects. In keeping with the results of our readership surveys, however, we have tried to provide some new features and to include more general-interest (non-theme) issues, drawing on the inventory of articles submitted by members independent of any section or committee sponsorship. We have set a policy of publishing at least two general-interest issues out of the 11 monthly (non-Directory) issues we publish annually, and would appreciate any comment from our readers on our attempt to introduce more variety in the *Journal*. Contributions may be thrown over the transom whenever the spirit moves you, so please do feel free to write for your fellow members and share your knowledge and insights.

We have also begun publishing reviews of books by Michigan authors or about Michigan (law-related) subjects. Among them, we have included a review of *The History of Michigan Law* by Paul Finkelman and Martin Herschok, and will soon publish a review of *Death's Door: The Truth Behind Michigan's Largest Mass Murder*, by Michigan lawyer Steve Lehto.

We have inaugurated the *Journal's* first short-story contest, for which we received 42 entries from the budding authors among us. The judging panel is completing their review of the finalists as this is written, and the winning stories will be published in the *Journal's* August 2007 issue, along with some honorable mentions, probably.

You saw, though you may not have appreciated, how nimble our staff can be in the January 2007 issue, in which we honored member and former President Gerald "Our" Ford to mark his passing. With the issue almost put to bed, staff leaped into action when word of President Ford's passing reached us. Managing editor Linda Novak redesigned the book to make room for a special tribute by President Cahill and a new cover, and staff writer Naseem Stecker worked closely with six members to assemble an in memoriam tribute in which they shared their personal reminiscences of President Ford with us.

Finally, after five years, it was time to do some redesign to keep the *Journal's* interior fresh and interesting. Linda Novak spotted the opportunity to do it during the transition from Blue Pencil, our longtime graphic design firm, to Ciesa Design, which recently acquired Blue Pencil and has an award-winning design staff. We hope you like the changes, which are intended to make the book more attractive and usable.

Several members of the Committee have devoted substantial time to revising the many pamphlets distributed by the Bar on various subjects of Michigan law, which require periodic updating to remain useful, and I take this opportunity to thank them.

Website vice-chair John Tatum has been working diligently to accomplish the changes that we have approved for the State Bar website, including the installation of the Google search appliance and arranging for a new web server, closer to home than our current vendor, which is located in Oregon. We believe that this change, which will include an arrangement for backup service, will make blackouts like the one we experienced for a few days last year far more unlikely, and far briefer if they do occur. By the time this is published, our negotiations with Farmington Hills-based ZenaComp should be completed, and the improvements underway.

The e-Journal now has approximately 16,000 subscribers. What astonishes us is that it does not have 30,000 (the number of members who have e-mail addresses), because it is free, it is fast, and it is informative, providing summaries (and links to the full text) of all state (both published and unpublished) and federal Michigan decisions within about 48 hours of their release, as well as news, member services announcements, classifieds, and a wide range of other features. The very hardworking e-journal staff – executive editor Sharon Barnes, editors Caroline Gamble and Lucille Willis, and electronic publications coordinators Julie Turcotte and Sandi Barger – are, together, a “production line” (with apologies to Gordie, Sid, and Ted, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Production\\_line\\_\(hockey\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Production_line_(hockey))), that works every day with no mistakes to deliver what many call the greatest service the Bar has ever performed for its members. In any case, the e-Journal has changed the lives and practices of thousands of Michigan attorneys, who increasingly appear in court with opinions in hand that they saw first in the e-Journal. Try it! You’ll like it!

Thanks to the efforts of Jim Horsch, director of finance & administration, Will Kramer, information technology services manager, and Melanie Jaramillo, information systems analyst, who developed and helped execute a very thorough process for quality assurance testing, the 2007 Directory issue was the most error-free it has been in memory. Their work, coupled with the countless hours that Sue Oudsema, our desktop publisher, devoted to compiling the updates and meticulously typesetting the main sections of the Directory, provided our readers with a directory crammed with features and information useful to our readers. It is a huge effort, and vice-chair for the Directory, Jan McMillan, is becoming more involved in these efforts as we strive to improve this reader service. She is working with staff to survey our membership in June to determine how the Directory can best meet their needs. Plus, the Directory had a really cool cover this year, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the State Bar’s most eminent author’s bestseller, *Anatomy of a Murder*. Thanks go to our graphic designer, Mike Smith, who followed up on the leads and contacts graciously provided by the Voelker family to secure the art for and design this memorable cover!

A word of thanks is in order, too, to vice-chair for the *Journal*, Francine Cullari. I wonder when she sleeps, between pursuing one advanced degree after another, running a busy practice, writing columns for her local bar newsletter, serving on the Board of Commissioners, and serving on the Committee. In addition to countless thoughtful comments in the e-mail and telephone exchanges by which Committee members and staff sort out the problems that arise constantly in managing a sophisticated website and producing the *Bar Journal*, 26 section newsletters, and the e-Journal, contributing the good judgment and creativity that have helped make for good decisions on short notice, Francine somehow has found the time, as well, to identify, interview, and profile Citizen Lawyers in her eponymous column. These stories about members of our organization who quietly go about the business of serving and bettering their communities through contributions that otherwise might go unsung will serve, we hope, to inspire all of us to work for the good of the public in exchange for the privilege of the license to practice our profession.

We like to think that, like James Brown, we are the “hardest working committee in the Bar.” But even if we are not, we are a busy bunch, and I want to thank everyone on the Committee (look in the *Journal* – there are too many to list), and our amazing staff (Nancy Brown, editor, who celebrated her 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the Bar this year; Linda Novak, managing editor; Joyce Nordeen, editorial assistant; Michael Eidelbes, media coordinator; Stacy Sage, sales coordinator; and Naseem Stecker, media and public relations manager) for all the hard work they have put into bringing you what we believe is one of the best bar journals in the country. And on a personal note, this year marks my 20<sup>th</sup> year as chair of this committee. Does anyone want this job?

Frederick M. Baker, Jr.  
Chairperson