

ANNUAL REPORT, 2009-2010
PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee's 2009-2010 season saw continued investment in expanding the resources available to members on the State Bar's website, which has truly become a trove of resources. The Google search function has made it amazingly easy to navigate around the site and in January the much-anticipated Heinonline database became available, enabling our members to search, view, and download any article from any issue of the *Michigan Bar Journal* published over the past 75 years, free of charge. We continued our theme issue approach to working with the sections, but have begun expanding our general issue format to accommodate the wealth of articles being submitted "over the transom" by an increasingly sophisticated cadre of member authors who are willing to share their expertise with the rest of us.

As the season winds down we are wrestling with how to control directory issue printing and mailing costs that have mushroomed to the point where the directory issue—long a "profit center" for the *Journal* from sales to non-members and extra copies for members and extensive display and classified advertising—has become a "loss leader," owing to the growth of the book, its features, and our membership. We have duplicated most directory components on the website, where we will be adding some new search features that will make it more useful to members. Beginning with section and committee membership searches, we hope eventually to include a "sounds like" function for those who cannot recall the exact spelling of the name, and a firm search feature, while continuing to publish the hard copy with the features most important to members. We will probably have to do a member survey to decide how to reduce the print version's size without impairing its utility, but for now at least this popular member benefit will continue to be provided in hard copy. Old fashioned though a print directory may be, it is the one issue of the *Journal* that practically everyone seems to use—surprisingly to us, only a relatively small percentage of members have chosen to opt out of receiving it. So take that, digital age!

Our experiment in distance editing has proved to be enormously successful. The amazing ability of the Internet to render distance almost irrelevant has enabled us to retain the services of *Bar Journal* editor Linda Novak even after she relocated to Northville. It is as if she is in her office here in Lansing, with maybe the door closed. Wonderful.

We now have a blogpost, of which Executive Director Janet Welch has been a principal editor (and contributor). She did not have enough to do already. Seriously, this contribution to our stable of online features is much appreciated, and she deserves a hat tip for taking it on.

All is well so far, as the undersigned turns the corner into year 25 of chairing this committee and working with what has to be the most remarkable, intelligent, creative, and talented committee of the State Bar. Or so it seems to me. My thanks to them all, each and every one, and to our amazing staff, who provide so much service to our members so efficiently. If you do not have the State Bar website bookmarked, you are missing a bet—it is a tool, along with the e-Journal, that every Michigan practitioner should be employing.

Finally, a word of remembrance for committee member Fred Melamed, who passed away this past year. We will miss his humor and hard work.

Frederick Baker, Jr.
Chair, Publications and Website Advisory Committee