

PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2005-2006 ANNUAL REPORT

This has been another active and productive year for the committee, one in which the co-vice-chair organization we adopted two years ago has enabled us to divide labor, specialize, and focus on the greatly expanded range of duties that were assigned to us as part of the recent general reorganization of bar entities in 2002.

The committee has made increasing use of e-mail, conference telephone, and listserv communications to work directly with staff and each other to get things accomplished faster, better, and cheaper. Nancy Brown continues to practice “just in time” wizardry in the paper market to keep our costs of publication to a minimum. Stacy Sage, our sales executive, exceeded our ad revenue budget once again. I am grateful for this opportunity to acknowledge publicly her hard work and success. I hope that all who encounter her will say a word of praise. Like all of our staff, she labors behind the scenes to enable us to produce the best publications we possibly can for our members.

Perhaps the happiest surprise of the past year has been working with our new editor, Linda Novak. When we finally found someone to relieve her of her former duties on the e-Journal – for a while she was doing the work of two! – she took to the Journal like a duck to water, which is unsurprising in light of her Hopwood Award-winning background in English and her journalism experience. She has a sharp eye for detail, and has demonstrated fine editorial judgment.

We have revived the Point-Counterpoint tradition, and one of our most successful installments, “The Michigan Supreme Court” feature in January 2006, generated more (and more thoughtful) reader response than any feature in memory. Vigorous debate and reader reaction are a sign that the Journal is read and stimulates discussion among our members, which is what their forum should do, so we are pleased.

Francine Cullari (also a commissioner, a practitioner, and, in her spare time, an MBA candidate – where does she find the time?) has taken on many tasks effectively and seamlessly in her role as vice-chair for the Journal. Her thoughtful Citizen Lawyer columns have spotlighted some truly remarkable attorneys who epitomize what is good about our profession. She is always looking for suggestions, so send them along if you know of a suitable subject.

John Tatum, co-chair for electronic publications, continues to work with Nancy Brown and staff to enhance and upgrade our website and add features that will make it more useful to our membership. The complete redesign of the website last year was an enormous accomplishment, but they have not just fallen across the finish line to rest on their laurels: they continue to work aggressively to improve and expand the electronic services we provide. Our opinion service receives an enormous number of hits, demonstrating its value to members, and the e-Journal continues to

expand and provide timely information about recent decisions, news about the profession, classified advertising, notices of Bar and section events, and all of the other features that members have come to expect. John is working with staff to find the best home for our server, looking at providers who can give us the capacity to add voice, interactive, video, Boolean search, and other features that were not even a gleam in our eye just a few years ago. The recent disruption of service when our current provider's server failed drove home two things: the importance of securing reliable and ample capacity for the ever expanding array of online services we provide to our members and the increasing dependence of our members on those services. We certainly heard from more than a few members when the website and the e-Journal disappeared for a few days. Hats off to John and staff for the work-arounds they performed while our provider was fixing the problem.

Naseem Stecker, who was hired as our first full-time staff writer in 2000, is now our Media and PR Manager, as well. She is still rising to the challenge of writing, however, and in 2005 received an Award of Excellence from APEX (Awards for Publication Excellence) for a feature entitled, "Domestic Violence and the Animal Cruelty Connection," which appeared in our September 2004 issue. This award complements the Grand Award she received in 2004.

We now have another writer on board -- our Media Coordinator, Mike Eidelbes, who will be helping Naseem with media work and also writing articles for the Journal. He is very promising, and already has done some very good work. Together, Naseem and Mike are revamping the Up Front Section to include more photos, short announcements, and news of interest, in addition to continuing to do articles of interest. Mike stepped into the media coordinator role after spending six months as an electronic publications coordinator. A journalism graduate of the University of St. Thomas, he was assistant news director at KDAL Radio in Duluth, Minn., before returning to school to obtain a master's degree in public relations at the University of Denver. After two years in DU's athletic media relations department, and two years of similar duties at Michigan State University, Mike worked primarily as a freelance writer, and as co-founder and co-editor of insidecollegehockey.com, before joining us. We welcome him.

Regrettably, we are losing two committee members. The first is Yashmyn Jackson, who, with Prof. and Associate Dean Gary Maveal, has revised and updated the three noncumulative indexes that former member Bill Haggerty compiled over his years on the Committee. The next goal is to create a single, cumulative, and more detailed-entry online index extending back to 1980. It will allow research into the hundreds of practical and useful articles we have published in that over quarter of a century since the old paper index first began to be compiled. We are sorry to lose Yashmyn, and wish to express our thanks for her efforts and those of Dean Maveal, on this project. Why is she leaving, now that her work is completed, you might ask. Why, to become a stand-up comedian -- isn't everyone? I can't wait until she is ready to show off her material, because she has promised that I can come to see her perform when she has her act down pat. Good luck to her from all of us at the Committee!

We also lose John Schlinker, whose years of involvement with the committee must at last come to an end as he takes on the challenges of a new position and law teaching at MSU College of Law. Thanks, John, to you, too, for all of your contributions to the committee's work over the years you have served.

As you can probably tell, I am proud of this committee's work, its members, and our staff. I believe that we get more done with fewer human and material resources than any other bar publication organization in the country. We do it for you, and we want to hear from you if you have suggestions for how we can improve upon the services we provide. To all who have contributed to our work for another year, thank you!

*Frederick Baker, Jr.
Chairperson
Publications and Website Advisory Committee.*