

**REPORT OF
WORKERS' COMPENSATION SECTION**

2002 - 2003

The Workers' Compensation Section of the Michigan State Bar held its Annual Seminar in conjunction with the State Bar Annual Meeting at the Amway Plaza on September 27, 2002 in Grand Rapids. A business meeting and an election of counsel members took place at that time. Alexander T. Ornstein, the Chairperson for the 2001-2002 year handed over the Chairpersons' gavel to Charles A. Gilfeather. Officers elected at that time were Michael Flynn, Vice Chairperson, Alan S. Helmore, Secretary and Richard L. Warsh, Treasurer. Ronald D. O'Keefe was named Commissioner Liaison to the Section. At the meeting, Alexander T. Ornstein was presented a plaque by the Section in appreciation for his time and efforts on the Workers' Compensation Council and as Chairperson of the Section.

The Workers' Compensation Council recommended, and the members approved, an increase in the dues of the Section by \$5.00. Craig Petersen, Deputy Director of the Workers' Disability Compensation, State of Michigan reported on Bureau changes and updates. Commissioner Winston A. Wheaton of the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission gave an excellent discussion on new rulings from that appellate body. Additionally, Chief Magistrate Crary E. Grattan, gave an update on the status of the Magistrates and Bureau affairs. Daryl Royal and Gerald M. Marcinkoski gave an excellent presentation on the Sington Decision and how it would effect workers' compensation issues for both the Plaintiff and Defense Bars. Much thanks is given to Brian Goodenough for his excellent planning of the Annual Seminar.

The Workers' Compensation Council met several times over the course of the year and had excellent discussions on maintaining its services to the Section Members. For the first time, the Section participated in the State of Michigan Bar's "Listserv" in an effort to bring better communication to its members via the Internet. Additionally, efforts were made to reduce the future Workers' Compensation Section Newsletters to a computer base and format for easier access by the Members of the Section.

Kudos are given to Tim McAree, the newsletter editor for his fine work in the fall of 2002 and winter of 2003 in producing the Workers' Compensation Section Newsletter. It has again proved to be informative for Section Members.

The Council further co-sponsored a Seminar in May of 2003 on Medicare issues. Edward Welch of Michigan State University and Deputy Director Craig Petersen spoke on various issues. Additionally, Attorney Bennett L. Pugh gave an excellent discussion on Medicare issues and how they affect workers' compensation settlements in the state. The program was chaired by Richard L. Warsh. It was both well attended and well received and provided excellent information to Section Members on Medicare issues in Workers' Compensation.

The Spring Seminar was held at Boyne Highlands in Petoskey on June 12, 2003 through June 14, 2003. The Seminar was organized by Ronald W. Ryan, John B. Combs and David DeGraw. Deputy Director Craig Petersen again was kind enough to attend the meeting and give the Members a update on workers' compensation administrative changes. Magistrate Kenneth P. Frankland updated the Members on changes in the Bureau staffing and Commissioner Richard B. Leslie of the Appellate Commission updated the Members on recent decisions of that body. Richard L. Warsh gave an excellent discussion on Medicare rulings and a general presentation on its effect on Workers' Compensation settlements.

All in all, the year has been a very production one for the Workers' Compensation Section and I certainly congratulate the Council Members on all their fine efforts this year.