

MINUTES
Council Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia
August 7, 2004

Members Present

Phyllis G. Bossin, Chair	Peggy L. Podell, Chair-elect
Howard Lipsey, Vice Chair	Carlton D. Stansbury, Financial Officer
Joel D. Tenenbaum, Immediate Past Chair	Lynne Gold-Bikin, Section Delegate
Timothy B. Walker, Section Delegate	Sandra Morgan Little, Parliamentarian
Herbert Belgrad, At Large	Mark Chinn, 2 nd Region
Willard DaSilva, Family Advocate	Richard DeMichele, Young Lawyers Rep.\
Linda Elrod, Family Law Quarterly	Scott N. Friedman, 3 rd Region
Sondra I Harris, 1 st Region	Mitchell K. Karpf, At Large
Thomas M. Mulroy, At Large	Llewelyn G. Pritchard, At Large
Linda J. Ravdin, Publications Board	Harlan Tenenbaum, At Large
Anita M. Ventrelli, At Large	Maryann Foley, At Large
Wade Baxley, Liaison from the Board of Governors	

Past Chairs Present

Sam Schoonmaker III
Marshall Wolfe
Sharon L. Corbitt

Others Present to Report

Deborah Akers, Financial Officer 04-05
Bruce Wilder, Chair Reproductive Technology Committee

Staff Present

Kate Hagan
Tina Belanger
Sena Leach

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to Order at 9:15.

The Chair welcomed our newest member, Mary Ann Foley.

The Chair introduced our new Law Student Liaison, Alisa Rosales

The Chair welcomed Wade Baxley, Liaison from the Board of Governors and complimented him on his service.

Approval of Minutes Spring Meeting

Kate Hagan asked that the minutes be corrected to reflect that Llewelyn Pritchard was present for the meetings.

Sondra Harris moved that the minutes be approved as corrected, seconded by Harlan Tenenbaum and approved

Approval of Minutes June Meeting

Herb Belgrad moved for approval, seconded by Sondra Harris and approved.

Report from the Chair–Phyllis Bossin

The Chair stated that she would deliver the bulk of her report at the luncheon.

- a. Overview of the Section's new web site. Staff member Tina Belanger demonstrated the new site for Council members. She pointed out how the web site was designed and its ease of navigation.
- b. Membership. Our Section suffered a drop in membership, but the drop was correlated with people who left the ABA. We are gaining new members though, gaining over three hundred in July.
- c. The Chair passed out the Section's White Paper on an Analysis of Same Sex Marriage.
- d. The Chair passed out new membership recruitment brochures and the Section's new member welcome kit.

Report from the Chair Elect–Peggy Podell

Peggy passed out the new brochure for Milwaukee. She complimented Carlton Stansbury and Jim Podell for their work on the conference. There will be a lot of CLE with a lot of new faces serving as moderators. There are a lot of people from across the country participating, particularly in the area of valuation, which is the emphasis of the meeting. They have scheduled committee meetings at lunch in an attempt to encourage participation. The Committee worked hard to keep costs down.

The Spring, 2005 meeting will be in Austin, April 13-16.

Report of the Vice Chair

Howard Lipsey discussed the commitment of the leadership of the Section to develop continuity in leadership. The future Section Chairs have agreed to appoint Deborah Akers as Financial Officer in each of their terms. Anita Ventrelli and Scott Friedman will chair the CLE Committee and their focus will be civility.

The current Chair has done an excellent job in promoting teleseminars. Deborah Tate will be in charge of this.

Mark Sullivan will serve as head of the military committee.

Edward Newman will serve as Parliamentarian.

He discussed locations of meetings in 2005.

He stated that he looked forward to his service.

Board of Governor's Report

Wade Baxley stated that he was very glad to have been reappointed to serve as our liaison with the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors controls the general fund, which has a budget of 92 million dollars. There is a shortfall of 2.3 million dollars. Senior staff is cutting back on expenditures by limiting new hires. The Sections are in good financial shape. The Board is trying not to cut programs. The Board is trying to increase revenues by recruiting new members. The Board is not going to raise dues.

Wade believes the shortfall is caused by the economy. We have 271,000 dues paying members. In addition we have a number of law school students who are not dues paying. We have increased members in new admittees, but are losing members in the highest dues paying class. They are attempting to find out why.

Wade discussed the move of the ABA offices and said it was a good thing.

Kate Hagan reported that the new location is superior to the old location in many respects, but the Section's expenses have been increased as a result of the move. Our rent went from \$4,000 to \$16,500.

Lynne Gold-Bikin complained about the ABA's imposition of a credit card charge fee. She stated that this was just one example of ABA surcharges, which gives us less money to deliver services and keep people involved in the ABA.

Herb Belgrad stated that a dues increase would have deleterious effect. Wade repeated that a dues increase is not going to happen.

Joel Tenenbaum asked Wade to meet with the officers to find out more about Family Law Section's concerns. Wade said he would be happy to do that.

Herb Belgrad moved and Anita Ventrelli seconded that the ABA not increase dues in the foreseeable future. The motion carried.

House of Delegates Report

Tim Walker discussed the Resolution of the Intellectual Property Section to urge Congress to remove restrictions placed on the scope of patentable subject matter imposed for the purpose of discouraging patents on human organisms. This is going to be debated on the floor of the ABA House. This resolution affects family law because it deals with potential cloned human beings. Tim is concerned that if the resolution fails, it may drag our cloning resolution down with it.

The Chair stated that we have been trying to get the cloning resolution passed for some time without success. The Chair outlined the Section's options regarding support of the Intellectual Property Section's Resolution.

Bruce Wilder stated that he felt the Intellectual Property Resolution was too vague and does not impact family law.

Lynne Gold-Bikin and Tim Walker asked for discretion on the vote so the delegates had the freedom to adjust positions as necessary given developments as they occur.

Harlan Tenenbaum moved and Linda Elrod seconded that the delegates be given discretion to handle the vote, as they deem best.

The Chairman suggested that the Council take a position that it supports stem cell research.

Howard Lipsey asked if the movers would accept a friendly amendment that the delegates should vote the sentiment of the Section that stem cell research be promoted. The movers accepted the amendment. The membership voted to approve the motion with Mark Chinn voting "No."

Lynne Gold-Bikin brought up the Section's cloning resolution. Bruce Wilder addressed the issue.

The Chair reported on her service on the Kennedy Commission. She discussed a recent Federal District Court ruling that the Federal sentencing guidelines are unconstitutional.

Financial Officers Report

Carlton Stansbury reported that this was a year of "ebb and flow." We will have \$35,000 less in membership income, primarily attributable to a drop in ABA membership. In July, we added 305 lawyers to the Section. Our meetings have all been profitable, thanks to Phyllis' efforts in obtaining sponsors. Income from publications has been terrific. All in all it was a very good financial year this year.

Proposed 2004-05 Budget

Deborah Akers reported that she is proud to serve as financial officer for both Peggy Podell and Howard Lipsey. One of the biggest issues is the "ABA pass throughs." The "head tax" has returned to \$1 from \$2. The ABA has increased our computer expense. Total ABA charges create a net budget increase of \$7,075. There have been budget increases for the web site, and for publicity to minority lawyers. We have budgeted an extra \$15,000 for teleseminars. Microphones at the meetings have been reduced to save money. Tim Walker moved and Joel Tenenbaum seconded the adoption of the budget and it was unanimously adopted.

Publications Board Report

Linda Ravdin reported that revenues and profit look good with a current profit exceeding \$100,000. Divorce Trial Manual has been a blockbuster and there has already been a reprint. There have been several positive developments in ABA Publishing such as, the ABA web store, cleaning up of the mailing lists, a new book store distributor, and the state and local bar distributorship initiative which develops relationships with state and local bars to distribute publications. Linda discussed efforts to distribute our publications at the Texas Family Law Section meeting, which has 3,000 lawyers. The Board is developing publications on parenting plans, and divorce trial objections. Finally, Linda complimented the ABA staff assistants.

Family Law Quarterly

Linda Elrod discussed the latest issue of the Quarterly, which was on alimony. Linda complimented Twila Larkin on her work in producing this issue.

Family Law Quarterly, Fall and Spring issues will be International. They are working on a reproduction issue and a domestic violence issue. Joel Tenenbaum stated that domestic violence will be a topic in Congress next spring and feels the subject will be “topical.” Sharon suggested that Linda interface with the Commission on Domestic Violence. Linda stated that she would have to have articles by February to get anything out on domestic violence by May. She discussed a project dealing with teen dating violence. She asked members of the council to give her the names of the Governors of their state so she can ask them for help on this project.

Family Advocate Report

Willard DaSilva discussed the newest issue of the Advocate, a manual to be given to clients. He commended Sharon Corbitt and Jacqueline Valdespino for the work in producing this manual.

Future editions are planned until 2006. The look of the cover has been updated and revised and the paper quality has been improved. The changes have increased costs. Willard urged each Council member to place an order for the client guides. Sandra Morgan Little stated that the latest issue is the best publication yet.

Pro Bono Child Custody & Adoption Project Report

Linda Rio reported that they had done a lot of research involving children in civil domestic violence cases. They are considering publishing an article on this project in the Family Law Quarterly. They are embarking on a project of educating attorneys who represent children in cultural sensitivity. She discussed awards they are presenting. The project has added new sections to the web site to assist attorneys in adoption cases. They are working on rewriting adoption statutes so children can understand them. Finally, she discussed their fund raising campaign to raise \$300,000. Joel Tenenbaum complimented Linda on her work. Linda Elrod added that Linda Rio has to be one of the hardest working people she has ever been around.

Phyllis Bossin announced that her gift to Council, as the outgoing Chair, is a donation to the Child Custody Project.

Partners Committee Report

Lynne Gold-Bikin reported that she couldn't find a grant writer. She requested the assistance of the Council in obtaining a grant writer.

Lynne urged Council members to purchase a program.

New Business

Howard Davidson addressed the membership on behalf of the Center for Children and the Law. He thanked the Section for its support of their recent conference. The center is turning its attention to upgrading the representation of parents of abused children. Parental kidnapping remains an important issue. The center would like to do more on this issue.

Lynne Gold-Bikin complimented the authors of the White Paper and stated that she was proud to be a part of this Section because of this excellent product. She moved, seconded by Anita

Ventrelli, and carried, that the Council acknowledge the excellent work of the committee and its Chair Sandra Morgan Little in authoring the report.

Old Business

Closing Comments by the Chair

The Chair recognized members of the council who will be leaving office: Sondra Harris, Joel Tenenbaum and Tom Mulroy.

The meeting was recessed until the luncheon at which time the Chair gave the remainder of her report and was adjourned at the conclusion of the luncheon.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark A. Chinn
Acting Secretary