I am writing this column after just returning from the Annual Meeting. For those of you who did not attend, you missed a very interesting and informative program. What I was particularly impressed with was the number of government lawyers who participated on the panels. I am grateful to all of you, and to your agencies, for your participation. As I remarked during the meeting, and will continue to reiterate through the year, our Section must find ways to make it possible for all stakeholders—including government lawyers—to participate in Section activities during this difficult time of fiscal cutbacks. Without multiple viewpoints from law firms, industry, and the government (federal, state, and local), our Section’s programs and work products lack the persuasive credibility that we have become known for.

Section participation was a focus of discussion during the Annual Meeting. We explored ways to facilitate the participation of government lawyers in Section activities, provide opportunities for young lawyers, and promote diversity within the Section. Outreach, mentoring, training, discounted membership rates and programs—all of these were discussed as ways to facilitate the continued participation of all of our colleagues in this profession.

In addition, the Section awarded Marshall Doke the Allan J. Joseph Excellence in Leadership Award for his lifetime of service to the Section. What many of you do not know is that Marshall chaired the Section when he was only 35 years old. So, if you think that our younger attorneys are unable or unqualified to speak at events, spearhead projects, or serve in leadership roles, please reject that notion. I ask that we all encourage our younger attorneys to step up and participate, and that we give them opportunities to grow. Now just may be their time to shine, and our time to benefit from their energy and ideas!

At the Annual Meeting we also discussed technology and how to improve the way we communicate, operate, and better serve our members. Based on your input, we will be “going paperless” at our future programs. Instead of program books, you will be provided the program materials in an electronic format that you can search and store more easily than hard-copy books. Also at your request, we are putting together a calendar of all committee activities, to be distributed to Section members.

Sharon L. Larkin

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monthly, so that members can easily see what is happening throughout the Section. Finally, we are looking at the possibility of converting some of our Section’s books and newsletters to e-books and smart phone applications. For all of these efforts, and for the many more ideas that we have yet to implement, I must thank the Technology and Electronic Communications Committee (TECC) chairs—Dan Chudd, Greg Bingham, Joshua Drewitz, and Jerry Walz—for what will undoubtedly be a lot of work in the upcoming year. If any of you are interested in working on these projects, please let me or one of the TECC chairs know. We welcome, and encourage, your help.

Finally, at the meeting, we said goodbye to Mark Colley, our 2012–13 chair, and we welcomed Ty Hughes as our new secretary. Ty joins Stu Nibley (chair-elect), Dave Ehrhart (vice-chair) and Jeri Somers (budget secretary) as the Section’s officers. We also said thank you to retiring Council members Dan Chudd, Elizabeth Grant, John Jones, Jim McCullough, and Aaron Silberman; and we welcomed four new Council members: Kristen Ittig, Susan Ebner, Annejanette Pickens, and Anthony Paladino. I look forward to working with all of you.

I would like to thank everyone at the meeting who welcomed me as chair, as well as everyone who could not attend and who nonetheless sent me kind words of congratulations and encouragement. To all of the membership, please know that my door is always open. Do not hesitate to call or e-mail me with ideas, comments, or suggestions. I hope to see you all at a meeting or event over the coming year.