

Chair's Message

Our Lucky Days

Thomas Jefferson said: "I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it." Our Section has experienced some recent good luck, and all of it is attributable to the hard work of many.

First, we are in a solid position financially. When Donna Pugh was Chair, she cut where she could and enhanced revenue at every turn. We have added non-dues revenue from increased attendance at meetings and the remarkable efforts of the Publications Oversight Board and the hardworking authors, editors, and ABA publications staff. Generous sponsors have supported our meetings. In the process we have served our members well with expanded educational opportunities and content.

Second, and hold on to your socks, we have just learned that during the last year, when the going has been the toughest, we increased our membership by almost 13%. How can that be, when overall ABA membership decreased by 2.2% and all but five sections reported net losses?

The answer can be found in the hard work of the Membership Committee, led by Lora Lucero and Ellen Rosenblum, and Section staff, Tamara Askew and Marsha Boone. Many, many people at all levels were totally focused on holding fast to what we had and building on it. All the substantive committees showed increased strength and participation. That constant drive added momentum and carried us through. Only the Forum Committee on Air and Space Law outpaced us and, as someone quipped when they saw the numbers: "Heck, they probably promised a ride in space. Why, we could offer a muni-bond, a labor contract for teachers, advice on a Superfund site, a three-lot subdivision, and a Votomatic chad investigation." Still, hats off to Air and Space. We'll beat them this year. It's our Sputnik moment.

We are now 12,485 members strong.

Not only did our Fall Meeting in Providence have a large turnout, but we were also able to capture the outstanding content on video through a do-it-yourself effort. The production values may be about the same as *The Blair Witch Project*, but we have it all and we will be making it available at the least cost possible to those of you who couldn't make it to the meeting. Maybe Netflix will want to be our next big Section sponsor.

The Midyear Meeting in Atlanta was a great success with a Diversity Law Hot Topics session at Georgia State University School of Law. Thank you, Professor Julian Juergensmeyer, for helping make that possible. The session was co-sponsored by the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association (GAPABA), the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers (GAWL), the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association (GHBA), the South Asian Bar Association of Georgia (SABAGA), the Georgia African American Attorneys Association (GAAAA), and the Stonewall (GLBT) Bar Association. It was simulcast as a teleconference and will be available for purchase online. Thank you, Larry Hoyt, chair of the Diversity Law Committee, for making this happen and to Margaret Rowell Good for moderating the session.

The Spring Meeting in Portland, Oregon, I absolutely guarantee will be nonpareil. Please go to the Section's website for details. I hope to see you there.

Finally, although spring is in the air as my photo suggests (taken with my youngest, Lucy) and we are crawling out of the deep recession, state and local governments continue to suffer. The lower-than-expected quarterly growth report for the fourth quarter of 2010 (2.8% vs. 3.2% annual) is attributed in part to a downturn in state and local government spending, which decreased 2.4%. Government lagged behind the private economy going into the recession and will be the last sector out. There's a lot of work to be done, and our Section can help you as we all continue to struggle over the next year or two. Together, we can make our own good luck.

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