



Stanley L. Blend*

I am pleased to be writing my first column as Chair of the Section of Taxation, and to follow on the terrific leadership of our immediate past chair, Susan Serota.

As you may know, the Section's activities over the last year were prolific. Just in our Government Relations area, we were involved in more than 50 comment projects, spanning myriad substantive issues in tax law. We also visited with congressional and federal agency staffs, and met informally with others on proposed regulations, rules and issues facing the practice of tax. Our Committees continue to be as active as ever; please see the Government Submissions Boxscore page in this issue of the *NewsQuarterly* to review comments that have been submitted over the past few months. The Section continues to participate in programming dealing with the patenting of tax strategies, and continues to lead educational efforts on Capitol Hill. Patenting Tax Strategies Task Force co-chairs Dennis Drapkin and Ellen Aprill have been quite active in communicating with our members, other lawyer groups and organizations in the accounting field, to keep everyone apprised of developments in this area. In addition,

we plan to continue providing instruction to patent examiners in the manner in which to research whether a particular tax strategy is unique and whether there is prior art. In early September, the House of Representatives passed legislation that would prohibit the patenting of tax strategies. The Senate is expected to work on its own patent reform bill in this session of Congress.

Our Joint Fall CLE Meeting with the Real Property, Trust and Estate Section (formerly Real Property, Probate and Trust Law) was a big success. Many members chose to attend the Meeting to take advantage of the beautiful destination—Vancouver, British Columbia. The city offers wonderful scenery and outdoor activities, as well as terrific restaurants and nightlife. The CLE programming was outstanding, and we continue to enjoy great success from our collegial relationship with RPTE.

Our next meeting is a great destination as well—we'll be at the Loews Hotel and The Ritz-Carlton in Lake Las

Vegas, Nevada, January 17-19, 2008. We anticipate a large attendance for this meeting as well, so be sure to register early and make your hotel reservations.

In addition to the high-quality CLE programming that is offered at the Section's three annual meetings, we also sponsor a variety of CLE programs that can be accessed from anywhere there is a phone. I urge you to sign up for one of the Section's monthly "Last Wednesday" teleconferences. These 90-minute programs are held on the last Wednesday of each month. We welcome your feedback on topics of interest to you, and those that may help you in your practice. Our Professional Services Committee, chaired by Charles Lavelle, and overseen by our Vice Chair—Professional Services, Sam Braunstein, steers the planning for the "Last Wednesday" programs and will take your ideas into account.

We also have successful CLE partnerships with a number of outside organizations, among them the IRS, ALI-ABA, IBA, IPT, Georgetown, Philadelphia Tax Conference, and several state and local bars. This CLE programming provides specialized conferences and meetings throughout the year. Please see the CLE

Our Joint Fall CLE Meeting with the Real Property, Trust and Estate Section (formerly Real Property, Probate and Trust Law) was a big success. Many members chose to attend the Meeting to take advantage of the beautiful destination—Vancouver, British Columbia. The CLE programming was outstanding, and we continue to enjoy great success from our collegial relationship with RPTE.

* Oppenheimer, Blend, Harrison & Tate, Inc., San Antonio, TX.

Calendar in this issue for upcoming programs that might appeal to you. Due to the success of our annual U.S.-European Tax Planning Strategies Conference, now going into its eighth year, we are expanding our CLE offerings in the international tax arena and plan to undertake a two-day conference focusing on U.S.-Latin America tax planning strategies, which is tentatively scheduled for June 2008. Join us for one or more of our CLE programs, and you'll see why they are consistently considered some of the best in the market.

The Tax Section Council recently approved the formation of a new Committee on Publications. The Committee's mission is to focus and develop the Section's publishing program to serve our members, the tax profession, and the public. In coming months, the Committee will be looking at updating or expanding publications such as *The Tax Lawyer* and the *NewsQuarterly*, and possibly developing new titles. This issue of the *NewsQuarterly* is an example of

As Chair, I have the great honor of serving you, the members of the ABA Section of Taxation, during the next year. I hope that you will work, along with me, to make the Section as successful as we can be.

some of the cosmetic changes we are making to our publications to incorporate the Section's new logo and design. If you are interested in writing for one of the Tax Section's periodicals, or proposing a new publication, please contact Lou Mezzullo, Vice Chair – Publications.

Finally, the Section's Officers, Incoming Officers, Council Directors, and Incoming Council Directors held a retreat this past July to discuss Section activities, procedures and policies. Our discussions focused on how the Section can best meet its goals, and how we can better serve our members. Among other items, we reviewed our

government submissions process, the value of our visits to Capitol Hill, the format of our meetings, and our CLE and member outreach. If you have thoughts about any of these issues or others, please let us know. You may reach Tax Section staff at 202.662.8670 or tax@abanet.org. We welcome your ideas and feedback.

As Chair, I have the great honor of serving you, the members of the ABA Section of Taxation, during the next year. I hope that you will work, along with me, to make the Section as successful as we can be. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

JANET SPRAGENS PRO BONO AWARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

Each year the Tax Section presents its Janet Spragens Pro Bono Award to a member or members of a firm who devote their time and energies to pro bono representation, particularly representation of low-income taxpayers. The award may be based upon any of the following criteria:

- Handling a significant number of tax controversies for low-income taxpayers on a pro bono basis over an extended period of time, or intensive involvement over a limited time with significant impact
- Voluntarily forming, operating or

participating in organizations, such as low-income taxpayer clinics (LITCs) devoted to representation of low-income taxpayers, particularly if such participation is over an extended period

- Formation, supervision and participation in programs to assist tax controversies, including "attorney of the day" programs for the Tax Court
- Mentoring law students and other individuals who work for LITCs
- Preparation of resource materials for LITCs and other low-income programs
- Providing pro bono legal assistance to tax-exempt organizations, especially those formed to help low-income taxpayers

PLEASE SEND YOUR NOMINATIONS ALONG WITH SUPPORTING MATERIALS BY MAIL OR E-MAIL TO:

Robert E. McKenzie
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 1200
Chicago, Illinois 60606-3910
remckenzie@arnstein.com

PLEASE ALSO SEND A COPY TO:

Christine Brunswick
740 15th Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
brunswickc@staff.abanet.org
The deadline for nominations is December 1, 2007.

News Briefs continued on page 23