

In Case We Missed You! Sections Spring Meeting Summary

By Paris Seabrook, WSBA Section Leaders Liaison

The Sections Spring Meeting held on May 25, 2011, marks the beginning of a new two-meeting tradition. In addition to the annual Fall Orientation Meeting, we will continue to host a second meeting during the year. It is important that Section Leaders and the Sections Team continue to dialogue about issues that impact and enhance the leading of your section. Below is quick summary of what was discussed at the recent Sections Spring Meeting.

Section Membership Year: Great advances have been made to streamline the section membership year. We believe the changes will be seamless and beneficial for section members and section leaders. As a reminder, the section membership year is October 1 – September 30. This matches the WSBA fiscal year. Going forward, any member who joins a section in the month of September will be paying in advance for the coming year's membership, beginning October 1. Any member who joins prior to the month of September will only receive membership for that current year. More importantly, the cut-off date for membership renewals will be February 1. This will match the WSBA licensing deadline. Anyone who has not renewed in the fall will have until February 1 to renew. After February 1, non-renewals will no longer be considered members of the section.

New WSBA Website: After reviewing features of the new website (which launched in early May), the Sections Team reviewed web-content best practices. These best practices include: keeping information "above the fold," organizing content with the most significant details at the top, restructuring sentences to be shorter, and understanding that a web viewer expects to "scan, grab, and go" with information.

WSBA Legislative Process: WSBA Legislative Liaison Kathryn Leathers attended the meeting to review the WSBA legislative process, discuss section leaders' experiences with the most recent legislative session, and share insights that will be helpful for the next legislative session. The most important tips were to complete broad vetting as early as possible, work with stakeholders to perfect proposal, and follow through on your proposal from beginning to end.

We look forward to continuing the dialogue of these and other subjects in the future. We look forward to meeting with you at the Fall Orientation Meeting, tentatively scheduled for November 2011.

If you would like to discuss the above topics further or receive the materials from the Sections Spring Meeting, please contact your liaison.

Section Leader's List Serve: This list serve has been established to allow for quick and easy communication between the Section Team and the Section Leaders. It also provides an outlet for Section Leaders to communicate with each other, a tool that has already proven useful. If you would like to ensure you are a part of this list serve, please e-mail us at sections@wsba.org.



The Newest Member of the Sections Team: An Interview with Melina Lambuth

What is your favorite word?

I love the image I get when I think of the word "Twilight." (There is a slight chance I may be a fan of the books as well.)

What sound or noise do you love?

The sound of the waves as they hit the shore is one of the most peaceful and calming things in the world to me. It's one of the reasons I love Hawaii so much.

What do you dislike most about your appearance?

My height. With a brother who is 6' 3" you would think I would have gotten at least a couple more inches.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

I consider going from high school right into college and keeping my GPA up the whole time quite an achievement. By the end, your brain starts to fry, and it's easy to just let go.

What is your most treasured possession?

I would honestly have to say my book collection. I absolutely love to read, and each book represents a new world I can delve into. I love each one for what it offers.

Who are your heroes in real life?

My grandpa will always be one of my greatest heroes.

What is your motto?

Take life one day at a time.

Outreach Starts Within—Exceed the Expectations of Your Members

By Joy Eckwood, WSBA Section Leaders Liaison

Many section leaders ask us what they can do to improve outreach and retention of members. The overriding key to successfully marketing your section is to **exceed the expectations of your members**. How can you accomplish this?

Know who your members are and ensure that they know who the section leadership team is. A simple idea in beginning this process is to request an updated membership list periodically throughout the year. Some sections request one each month. If your section is fairly large, ask each executive committee member to take a group of names and commit to calling one to three new people each month. The call should focus on introducing yourself as an executive committee member and simply thanking them for being a part of the section. Phone calls are now considered high-touch interaction because so many people spend time texting or emailing. You can be different by talking to members and thanking them for joining. Members expect e-mails so give them what is unexpected.

Who they are, what they know, how they are recruited, and how their skills and attitudes are developed over time are important to the innovation and growth of the section. Inventory your team strengths. This is a great way to extend membership benefits. How? By capitalizing on the strengths of individual members, the executive team expands its capacity exponentially in deciding how to best serve the membership. Members of the leadership team should be able to find and fill a niche that allows them to grow and influence the culture of the overall executive team. By creating this type of space for leadership development, the larger membership is exposed to new thinking and shared decision making. Shared decision making indicates a strong sense of team cohesiveness and commitment to fulfilling established goals. *Members are looking for sections to set goals and to fulfill those goals*. When decision making, the goals are

Outreach Starts Within, Cont'd

more likely to be accomplished.

People get involved in things that are meaningful and where a clear objective exists. The professional health and environment of a section can be seen in how decisions are made, information disseminated, and goals communicated. The wider section culture always affects what a section is capable of achieving, but that culture is a reflection of the leadership team. *Word of mouth is the most powerful tool for marketing your section*. A member may use a text message, phone call, networking event, or tweet to communicate his or her experience with your section. It is up to the leadership of the section to determine what the message will be. The leadership team that moves out of its enclave to engage the membership beyond internal organizational boundaries will be exceeding the expectations of its members. Your members have a voice. Have you heard it lately?

The leadership of a section is time-consuming; it can also be very fulfilling. Take small steps to increase awareness of and participation in section activities. Exceeding the expectations of your members may not be done in one election cycle. Make the commitment as a team to establish this objective as a long-term goal and connect concrete activities in pursuit of that goal. Starting small but remaining consistent will speak louder to section members than a one-time spotlight on a hot topic CLE. Take stock of your leadership team and ask yourself what skills are not reflected on the team; then network until you find the right person with the skills and time needed to serve on the committee. Have a heart-to-heart with your leadership team on the decision making process and discuss whether or not internal barriers exist which prevent open recruitment and retention of new leaders. The primary goal of section leadership is to serve the best interests of its members as a whole. **Successful sections exceed the expectations of their members.**

Section Chair Fireside Chat

Creditor Debtor Rights Section Chair: Gloria Nagler

My first priority as Chair of the Creditor-Debtor Section is to communicate to our Section members about the where and when of Executive Committee meetings, about legislation we are considering proposing or supporting, and any other news of interest to members. I use our Section's WSBA website and the Section's email list to keep members up to date. Our members have expressed their appreciation for



being kept in the loop. **Practice tip: delegate and form subcommittees!** Committee members are (mostly) eager to serve, and your clients and your family will thank you for not taking on everything your-self. Follow up with subcommittees to keep everyone on track. We are all working at warp speed in our practices, and committee obligations can get lost in the shuffle. Get to know our legislative liaison (Kathryn Leathers—she's great!) and have a system for reviewing and getting your committee to vote on the proposed legislation Kathryn sends your way. I was initially overwhelmed by this aspect of the job, but soon came up with a system that worked. You may even delegate a committee member to review and summarize relevant legislation so that not everyone has to read everything. Finally, enjoy! Not everyone gets the opportunity to serve our membership, and the glimpse into how the Bar and the legislative process work. You're one lucky lawyer.

Senior Lawyers Section Chair: Stephen DeForest

As the number of lawyers admitted in Washington continues to increase, the WSBA staff has also grown, and with it a more detailed organizational structure. You can request an organizational chart from your Section Leaders Liaison, but you may find it confusing, as I do. If your section co-sponsors a CLE with the Education and Outreach Department (CLE Department), you will be dealing with someone in that department and not the Section Leaders Liaison assigned to you. It would be the latter individual whom you would contact, for example, about the posting on the section's website of an upcoming CLE.

Fireside Chat, cont'd

For a co-sponsored CLE, you will need to appoint a section representative to work with the WSBA CLE staff (there may be more than one person assigned to your program). If you have lined up a speaker or topic that may be questionable as to MCLE credit, you should allow more lead time to obtain that approval, and to arrange a substitution or change of topic. It is also helpful to acquire an understanding of the time required to obtain approvals or reports from the WSBA. If you publish a section newsletter, and there is in it a time-related notice or article, such as the promotion of an upcoming CLE or other section activity, you need to know the time that will be required for the newsletter to be processed by the WSBA, from the time of its initial submission to distribution to your section members.

Outside the Box with Business Law

By Paris Seabrook, WSBA Section Leaders Liaison

In May, the Business Law Section invited members of the section and members of Washington Women Lawyers to a social networking event featuring, Michelle Wilson, general counsel for Amazon.com, Inc. Guests were treated to catered snacks and beverages while having the opportunity to talk and network. Additionally, Ms. Wilson shared insights on how to work effectively as outside counsel and how to develop your career. The event was well attended and is a great example of how structured social networking events can be very beneficial to guest experiences.

Success Stories: SOGILI

By Joy Eckwood, WSBA Section Leaders Liaison

The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification & Legal Issues (SOGILI) section was established in 2006. The section got off to a great start and identified achievable goals. Participation was high and energy contagious in organizing around issues such as domestic partner registration and anti-discrimination laws. By fiscal year 2010, the SOGILI Section was struggling to maintain traction. Involvement on the Executive Committee and from the membership began to wane. As fiscal year 2011 rolled around, WSBA staff and SOGILI Executive Committee members began to meet in earnest. The goal was to determine the section's long-term viability. What emerged from those meetings was a concentrated focal point on re-establishing a dedicated team of leaders. Former SOGILI Treasurer Christopher Jennings stepped into the vacuum and assumed the role of Interim Chair. The new slate of SOGILI interim officers deserve a pat on the back for stepping in

and stepping up. Not only are they meeting every month, planning events and CLEs, they have been actively recruiting officers for the upcoming elections. Congratulations to SOGILI for pressing through the challenges.

amazon^{*}

Section Membership Renewal

The membership year will be up September 30, so don't forget to renew your section memberships! You can easily do so by logging in to your mywsba account.

<u>Section Leaders:</u> You'll want to ensure that your membership in this section is current for 2011-2012 year (Oct. 1, 2011-Sept. 30, 2012).

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Upcoming BOG Meetings

- September22-23: WSBA,Seattle
- October 28-29: Hotel Murano, Tacoma