

**Washington State Bar Association
Animal Law Section
Annual Section Report, FY 2004**

October 23, 2004

Ms. Toni Doane, Section Liaison
Washington State Bar Association
2101 Fourth Avenue, Fourth Floor
Seattle, WA 98121-2330

Re: Animal Law Section year-end report, 9/30/04

Dear Ms. Doane:

In response to the Board of Governor's request for a summary of its activities, the WSBA Animal Law Section is happy to report its achievements at the end of its second year in existence. The highlights of those activities are as follows:

Regular meetings

The Executive Committee met at least five times (up one from last year), including a "cyber space" meeting. The section also put together two general membership meetings, one at the lunch break of the Super CLE, and one fiscal year-end meeting which included an optional mini CLE and a dinner catered by Cafe Flora.

CLEs

Our section organized its second successful full-day animal law CLE in March of this year, put together in conjunction with the WSBA's Super CLE and the assistance of the WSBA staff.

Two mini CLEs were also offered by our section. One, in October of 2003, gave an overview of service animal law and was presented by Adam Karp. The second was offered in conjunction with our year-end general membership meeting in September of this year, and at that CLE Denise Lukins presented a summary of the Endangered Species Act.

Newsletter

The section compiled one large newsletter during the year, complete with case summaries, member profiles, philosophical articles, ALS Committee reports, book reviews, and more. The section had originally hoped to compile four newsletters per year, so last year we fell short of that goal. Although there is discussion about increasing

the number of newsletters published this year, there is ongoing debate about whether or not several, smaller newsletters is better than fewer, more substantial newsletters.

List-serves

The ALS has two email list-serves, one for attorneys and one for non-attorney members. These list-serves have proven to be a highly successful forum for sharing ideas, questions, answers, resources, and perspectives. This year the referral process within the list-serve was not as successful.

Connecting with the public

The group continued to make connections with all three law schools in the state, as well as with several professional groups, including veterinarians, search and rescue organizations, animal control agencies, shelters, breeders, other bar associations (including a few nationwide), law firms, and trainers.

By-Laws

The section made some helpful changes to its By-Laws this year. The changes included clarifying the relationship between year-end meetings and elections, providing a process by which election ties could be resolved, and allowing some Executive Committee business to be officially held via e-mail.

Member benefits

Although the March 2004 CLE was not offered at a discounted rate for ALS members, the section is planning on offering its members a discount for the April 2005 CLE. The two mini-CLEs, however, were free to members. The newsletter is only available to members, as are both list-serves. We are currently working to add some valuable resources and reference materials to our website, which is available to members as well as the general public. In addition to these benefits, members have the opportunity to attend the meetings and network with one another to keep abreast of and to help shape this evolving field of law.

Future goals and priorities

The section is on track once again to put together a full-day animal law CLE next April. We also want to continue to offer multiple mini-CLEs throughout the year, including hosting classes in areas other than Seattle. In furtherance of that particular goal, the ALS is working to present a one-half day CLE in Spokane in January of 2005, which will be structured in conjunction with Gonzaga Law School and will hopefully also include veterinarians. The section is also on track to work with the WSBA to put together a regional animal law CLE in 2006, and we are currently recruiting members to serve on the steering committee for that project.

The ALS wants to continue its connections within the community, with a particular emphasis on working with the law schools as well as providing public education to the community at large. The Professional Liaison Committee also discussed assisting a pre-existing volunteer community in re-establishing the Citizens' Advisory Committee to King County Animal Control. Additional community-involvement projects the section hopes to structure this year include increasing public awareness about cruelty laws and developing the pro bono base to handle cruelty cases; encouraging and helping to develop uniformity among municipalities regarding dangerous dog definitions and issues; and emphasizing our connection to veterinarians and exploring our common interests.

The ALS has ongoing interest in offering financial bonuses to law school students who help our section compile public education materials. However, we have come up against the employment tax obstacle. We are still looking into whether there is an appropriate way to compensate student help without having to take on the complication and paperwork of employment taxes. (If the WSBA has any input on this issue, it would be greatly appreciated.)

Pro bono work is especially important to this group. Many of our members are already engaged in animal-related pro bono projects. This past year the group had hoped to organize some CLE trainings in a few specific pro bono areas, as well as put together a resource and referral list for potential clients needing low-cost or free legal help. Although we were unable to get those pro bono projects off the ground last year, we are still hoping to accomplish those goals this year.

Our relationship with the WSBA

The WSBA has been very helpful to the ALS in many ways, including helping us organize the March CLE and mailing out our correspondence. We are particularly grateful to you, Toni Doane, for your ongoing help, guidance and patience.

We are looking forward to collaborating in the coming year with other bar sections whose interests overlap with our own; in particular, we'd like to organize some joint-CLEs. Finally, as we mentioned in our report last year, we continue to struggle with the unclear parameters of GR 12, and how our legislative committee shapes itself is dependent on getting some clear guidelines from the bar on this issue.

Please convey our continued appreciation to the WSBA for allowing us the opportunity to organize ourselves within the state bar association.