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

Re: Animal Law Section

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 initial year in existence. The highlights of those activities are as follows:

Regular meetings

The Executive Committee met at least four times and the section put together two well-attended general membership meetings.

CLEs

Our section organized a very successful Animal Law CLE (nearly 100 participants) in March of this year, put together in conjunction with the WSBA's Super CLE and the assistance of the WSBA staff. The ALS gave out four scholarships to law students making them able to attend the CLE at half price.

A smaller, brown bag CLE entitled "Regulating Rover" was offered by our CLE Committee last month. Some fifty folks attended, many of them nonlawyers. The class covered dog bites (liability and valuation), the Seattle dangerous dog ordinance, and estate-planning for pets.

Newsletter

The section compiled three cutting-edge newsletters during the year, complete with case summaries, member profiles, philosophical articles, ALS Committee reports, book reviews, and more.

Listservs

The ALS has two email listservs, one for attorneys and one for non-attorney members. These listservs have proven to be a highly successful forum for sharing ideas, questions, answers, resources, perspectives, and referrals.

Connecting with the public

The group worked hard at getting the word out that the WSBA had a new Animal Law Section. In a variety of ways, connections were made 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, trainers, and insurance companies.

Member benefits

The March CLE was offered at a discounted rate for ALS members, and the brown bag CLE last month was free to members. The newsletter is only available to members, as are both listservs. We are currently working to add some valuable resources and reference materials to our website, which is and will continue to be available only to members. In addition to these benefits, members have the opportunity to attend the meetings and network with one another to keep abreast of, and even help to shape, this evolving new field of law.

Future goals

The section is on track to participate once again in the WSBA Super CLE next March. We also want to put together several smaller, brown bag CLEs, including offering the classes in areas other than Seattle.

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 in primary and secondary schools about animal-related laws and issues .

Pro bono work is especially important to this group. Many of our members are already engaged in animal-related pro bono projects. The group has plans 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.

How can the WSBA better serve us?

The WSBA was extremely helpful to the ALS in many ways, including helping organize the March CLE and promptly mailing out all of our correspondence. Toni, your ongoing help -- ideas, information, clarification, patience, and attendance at our meetings -- has been particularly appreciated.

The ALS ran into some difficulties, however, with the unclear parameters of GR 12. Our

legislative committee had a great deal of valuable input on several proposed bills, and it became quite confusing as to what kind of input would meet the approval of GR 12. We repeatedly asked for some very specific guidelines to clarify these questions and, to my knowledge, no such guidelines were ever offered to help us or other sections going through the same difficulties.

If you have any questions regarding the ALS's activities during the past year, please give me a call. Please convey my sincere appreciation to the WSBA for allowing us the opportunity to organize ourselves within the state bar association and for helping us to make our first year an eventful and successful one.

Respectfully,

Brandyn D. Miller