

# METRO BAR *e-news*

E-NEWSLETTER OF THE METROPOLITAN BAR CAUCUS · FALL 2007 ISSUE

## *Calendar*

### **2008 NCBP/MBC Midyear Meeting**

Early Registration Deadline  
December 7, 2007

### **2008 Bar Leadership Institute**

Early Registration Deadline  
January 3, 2008

### **2008 NCBP/MBC Midyear Meeting**

Final Registration Deadline  
January 4, 2008

### **2008 Bar Leadership Institute**

Final Registration Deadline  
February 8, 2008

## **O'MARA PASSES THE GAVEL TO BLANER** *"First Bar Executive to serve as President of MBC"*

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At the conclusion of the Metropolitan Bar Caucus (MBC) Annual Meeting in San Francisco, MBC President Tim O'Mara passed the gavel to incoming president David Blaner. The first bar executive to hold this office, Blaner serves as the Executive Director of the Allegheny County Bar Association in Pittsburgh. "It's an honor to be selected to serve as the president of the Metropolitan Bar Caucus. Several years ago I was completely caught off guard when I received a call from Carl Smallwood, then chair of MBC's nominating committee, asking if I would be willing to serve as the secretary-treasurer. I was serving a second term on the MBC Executive Committee and was aware that a bar executive had never been selected to serve as an officer of the organization. I was honored to be elected and to follow my friend Tim O'Mara who did a great job as MBC president," Blaner said.

He outlined his goals for the year at MBC's August board meeting. Blaner would like to see the dues restructured so that small bars pay a little less to be members of MBC. He seeks to increase MBC's membership, publish an e-newsletter three times a year and continue to develop interesting and timely seminars for MBC members that attend the ABA/NCBP Midyear and Annual Meetings. Finally, he would like the board to consider creating an annual award that would be given to a metropolitan bar that has developed a project to address a significant issue within the association or the community. MBC would ask the winning bar association to conduct a workshop based on their project so that others could replicate it at their bars.

## **METRO BAR CAUCUS MEMBERS TO MEET IN LA**

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The Metropolitan Bar Caucus will host its 2008 Midyear Meeting in Los Angeles, February 7-9. The conference is held in conjunction with the meeting of the National Conference of Bar Presidents (NCBP). MBC will sponsor several workshops on Friday, February 8, including "Dealing with Runaway Committees, Divisions or Sections," "How Metro Bars are Dealing with Gender Equality and Work/Life Balance Issues," and "Improving the Image of Lawyers and Bar Associations," an open discussion on issues facing metro bars. The Metro Bar Caucus will again host a welcome reception at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel on Thursday, February 7. Don't miss this great networking event.

Register for this meeting on-line at <http://www.abanet.org/midyear/2008/>. Please select the NABE/NCBP/NCBF Form.

## **METRO BAR E-NEWS GOES ON-LINE**

This is the first issue of the on-line version of *Metro Bar E-News*. We hope you like the look.

The e-newsletter will be published three times per year: fall 2007, winter 2008 and summer 2008.

If you have news items and/or articles you would like to include within an upcoming issue, please e-mail them to [dblanser@acba.org](mailto:dblanser@acba.org)

## **METRO BAR CAUCUS**

### **OFFICERS AND COUNCIL 2007 - 2008**

#### **President**

David A. Blaner  
*Allegheny County Bar Association*

#### **President-Elect**

Gary L. Klotz  
*Indianapolis Bar Association*

#### **Secretary-Treasurer**

Rae Jean McCall  
*Kansas City Metropolitan  
Bar Association*

#### **Immediate Past President**

Timothy M. O'Mara  
*Erie County Bar Association*

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS AT-LARGE**

#### **2008**

D. Larkin Chenault  
*Cleveland Bar Association*

Elizabeth (Liz) A. Price  
*Atlanta Bar Association*

Connie Pruitt  
*Hillsborough County  
Bar Association*

A. Gregory (Gregg) Ramos  
*Nashville Bar Association*

Hon. Shirley L. Fulton  
*Mecklenburg Bar Association*

Carolyn (Carrie) B. Witt  
*New Haven County Bar Association*

#### **2009**

Sandra K. Cousins  
*Tulsa County Bar Association*

Christina Melton Crain  
*Dallas Bar Association*

Jane Leslie Dalton  
*Philadelphia Bar Association*

Marlene Garvis  
*Hennepin County Bar Association*

Allen W. Kimbrough  
*Maricopa County Bar Association*

Marc R. Staenberg  
*Beverly Hills Bar Association*

#### **ABA Staff Liaison**

Kimberly Vann  
*ABA Division for Bar Services*

# **METRO BAR CAUCUS ADOPTS NEW DUES STRUCTURE**

The MBC Members-at-Large approved a new dues structure effective January 1, 2008. The current annual dues are \$125.00 for all metropolitan bar associations with membership of 1,000 or more attorneys. Past presidents of metro bars can join as individual members for \$25.00 each year. The structure will be divided into three classes based upon membership size. Please refer to the chart below.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Annual Dues</u>
1,000 to 4,999	\$80.00
5,000 to 9,999	\$100.00
10,000 and up	\$120.00
Past Presidents	\$25.00

MBC President David Blaner welcomed the new dues structure and explained, "MBC Members asked the board to consider a new dues structure that would lower the dues for smaller bar associations. The board reviewed the financial position of the organization and was confident that the new structure would enable more bar associations to join the MBC while minimizing the impact on the budget."

## **SANDY BEACHES, COOL BREEZES AND HOT TOPICS HIGHLIGHT 2007 COMBA CONFERENCE**

*By Rae Jean McCall, Immediate Past President of COMBA*

The Conference of Metropolitan Bar Associations (COMBA) held its annual conference at the Westin Resort on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, on September 26-29, 2007. With over 40 executive directors representing 20 metropolitan bar associations, the conference was deemed an overwhelming success.

An optional pre-conference session for senior executive directors was facilitated by John Norwine, executive director of the Cincinnati Bar Association, on career, succession and retirement planning. This informal discussion centered on issues such as when and how to tell the board you are leaving, should you be involved in selecting your successor, and how to plan for an easy transition for your replacement.

Thursday sessions included topics such as "What Law Firm Members are Experiencing" and "Membership Development." Friday sessions covered "Local Bars' Response to Attacks on the Judiciary," "Staying Competitive in CLE," "Collaboration/Competition with Other Associations," and "Committees are Like Horses - Sometimes You Spur Them On and Sometimes You Rein Them In." On Saturday, officers met for a free-wheeling discussion of burning issues and executive directors met separately to discuss operational matters for their respective association. The conference ended with Jennifer Lewin, ABA Field Services Representative, leading a wrap-up session on take-aways from the conference.

Conference planners Alex Lagusch, executive director of the Columbus Bar and John Norwine, executive director of the Cincinnati Bar, were commended for their work in planning another outstanding conference. Many thanks also go to GoMembers, USI Affinity, Casemaker/Ohio State Bar Association, Allegheny County Bar Association, and Liam/Columbus Bar Association, for sponsoring the conference.

# METRO BAR MEETINGS ARE A GREAT SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS FOR BAR LEADERS

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*By David A. Blaner*

Over the past sixteen years I have had the privilege of working for a metro bar association, the Allegheny County Bar Association. During this time, numerous metro bars have taken on difficult problems, ranging from the New Orleans Bar recovering from Katrina to the Columbus Bar dealing with the diversity issue. They have also addressed issues that have been brought to their attention by the membership--judicial evaluations, gender equality, recruiting and training attorneys to handle pro bono cases, supporting sole and small firm practitioners and re-energizing the lawyer referral service to name a few. The solutions to these various problems or issues have been creative and downright good. In many cases, I have borrowed a number of these good ideas to help solve a similar problem or issue at the Allegheny County Bar Association. No need to reinvent the wheel, just pick up the phone or e-mail a metro bar colleague or two and you will have a multitude of possible solutions, right?

Not so fast...if you are a new bar leader understanding which metro bar association has a solution to your problem can be a bit taxing. Anyone that is new to bar association leadership knows this firsthand. This is where your Metro Bar Caucus membership can help. MBC is a section of the National Conference of Bar Presidents. We sponsor networking sessions and seminars during the ABA/NCBP Midyear and Annual Meetings focusing on issues impacting metro bars. During these meetings, you have the opportunity to get to know which bar associations have solved problems that are similar to yours or who is the correct contact person. If all else fails, the ABA Division for Bar Services staff is ready and willing to help you find a solution or point you in the right direction.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to send me an e-mail at [dblaner@acba.org](mailto:dblaner@acba.org).

## NEW MEMBERS JOIN MBC BOARD

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In addition to installing a new president at its annual meeting last August, members of the Metro Bar Caucus (MBC) elected four new members-at-large, as well as the secretary-treasurer for its 2007-2008 organizational year. Rae Jean McCall, executive director of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association, was elected MBC Secretary-Treasurer. She will ultimately serve as MBC president in 2010. Elected as members-at-large were Christina Melton Crain, first vice president, Dallas Bar Association; Jane Leslie Dalton, chancellor, Philadelphia Bar Association; Marlene Garvis, past president, Hennepin County Bar Association; and Connie Pruitt, executive director, Hillsborough County Bar Association who was nominated to fill the unexpired term of Rae Jean McCall.

MBC Members-at-Large manage the business affairs of the organization and assist in developing programs held during the midyear and annual meetings of the ABA and the National Conference of Bar Presidents, in February and August, respectively. Nomination information for the 2008-2009 organizational year will be sent by next March. Those wishing to nominate a colleague should contact MBC Staff Liaison Kimberly Vann at [vannk2@staff.abanet.org](mailto:vannk2@staff.abanet.org).

# MBC MEMBER ROUNDUP:

## *Metro Bar Programs, Projects and Resources*

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### **Allegheny County Bar Association, Pittsburgh, PA**

Linda Hernandez, Esquire has been hired as the Gender Equality Coordinator for the Allegheny County Bar Association. She will be developing a report with recommendations to address gender equality issues facing women attorneys in the Pittsburgh region. For information about the ACBA Gender Equality survey, please contact Linda Hernandez at [lhernandez@acba.org](mailto:lhernandez@acba.org) or call 412-402-6660.

The ACBA's Disaster Legal Assistance Manual for Volunteer Attorneys which was prepared by the Bar Association Public Service Committee in 2006 is now available on-line. This manual provides the information necessary to launch a volunteer legal program in the event of a disaster. The information can be found at [www.acba.org/ACBAsite/Members/MemberResources](http://www.acba.org/ACBAsite/Members/MemberResources). If you need assistance on forming a volunteer disaster legal assistance program feel free to contact Lorrie Albert at [lalbert@acba.org](mailto:lalbert@acba.org) or by calling 412-402-6640.

### **Boston Bar Association, Boston, MA**

The Parents' How-to Guide to Children's Mental Health Services in Massachusetts was created by the Boston Bar Association with support from Children's Hospital Boston. It is an easy reference tool that makes navigating the system simpler for families with children in need of mental health services. Each chapter of the guide covers a specific topic and offers useful tips for parents and advocates. The entire guide is available on-line at [www.childrenshospital.org/mentalhealthguide](http://www.childrenshospital.org/mentalhealthguide). To obtain a copy of the guide, please e-mail [theguide@bostonbar.org](mailto:theguide@bostonbar.org) or call 617-778-1934.

### **Bar Association of Erie County, Buffalo, NY**

The Bar Association of Erie County produced a special program to assist attorneys in planning for events over which they have no control such as accidents, illness, disabilities, etc. Operating without a plan can jeopardize the attorney and his or her clients and also the financial security of the attorney's family. The program is also a valuable resource for attorneys nearing retirement as it covers such topics as long term care insurance, sale of a law practice, Medicare, etc. Handout materials include a book recently published by the State Bar entitled, *Planning Ahead - Establish an Advance Exit Plan to Protect Your Clients' Interests in the Event of Your Disability, Retirement or Death*. The program is underwritten by the Erie County Bar Foundation to keep registration costs at a minimum. For more information, contact Kathie Bifaro at 716- 852-8687 or by e-mail at [kbifaro@eriebar.org](mailto:kbifaro@eriebar.org).

### **Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, St. Louis, MO**

The Consumer Law Committee of The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis has developed a "Before You Make the Loan" Checklist, to help people understand the terms of mortgage loans. Review the checklist at [www.bamsl.org/public/checklist.html](http://www.bamsl.org/public/checklist.html).

### **Orange County Bar Association, Irvine, CA**

The Orange County Bar Association (OCBA) has a community service program called, "Teenage Legal Survival Skills." OCBA member volunteers visit high school classrooms to make presentations on legal survival skills for teens approaching the age of majority. For more information, call 949-440-6700, ext. 126.

### **Tarrant County Bar Association, Fort Worth, TX**

For many years, members of the Tarrant County Bar Association have joined forces with Trinity Habitat for Humanity [formerly Fort Worth Area Habitat for Humanity], contributing their time and money to build houses for working people who may have only dreamed of home ownership. Families qualify on the basis of need, willingness to partner with the Habitat program and ability to make mortgage payments that average between \$350 and \$450 monthly including taxes and insurance. To find out more, contact TCBA liaison, Bette Alexander, [bette@tarrantbar.org](mailto:bette@tarrantbar.org), 817-338-4092.