



Midterm Report

Where we are with CLE, UPL, image advertising, and more.

I take this opportunity, halfway through my term as president, to report on the status of some of the many ISBA activities and initiatives.

Midyear Meeting in Chicago

The ISBA Midyear Meeting, held Dec. 6-8 in Chicago, was well attended and successful, and once again afforded us the opportunity to partner with the Illinois Judges Association and the Illinois Supreme Court on matters of mutual interest to the bench and bar and the administration of justice in Illinois.

A few of the many programs were a highly acclaimed joint program, "Colleagues in Crisis," which focused on the continuing problems regarding the risk of and treatment for addiction in our profession; a timely CLE program on "Legal Implications of Effective Representation of Unmarried Couples"; a special mentor training session; and powerful speeches by Attorney General Lisa Madigan at the joint ISBA/IJA luncheon and by Justice Anne M. Burke (regarding the Supreme Court's initiative on historic preservation) at the annual Supreme Court dinner co-sponsored with the Chicago Bar Association.

Midyear events culminated with a meeting of the ISBA Assembly on Saturday morning, December 8, 2007, starting with an inspiring address by the Honorable Robert Thomas, Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. Among actions taken by the Assembly were a vote to make it easier for members to be candidates for the Assembly by reducing the number of signatures required on nominating petitions and approval of two additions to the ISBA legislative package – bills relating to administrative law review and to abandoned funds in lawyers' trust accounts escheating to the Illinois Lawyers Trust Fund. Assembly members also reviewed the new ISBA member mark and its usage requirements (for more about the mark, see "Strategic marketing" below).

Continuing legal education

ISBA continues its efforts to provide effective, convenient, and affordable programming to its members throughout the state under the direction of the Committee on Continuing Education (chaired by Paul Osborn of Sterling) and CLE Director Jeanne Heaton. ISBA sections and committees have been instrumental in sponsoring an increasing number of live and video replay CLE programs.

From July through December 2007, ISBA presented 30 program titles and 10 repeat presentations to over 2,600 attendees. Thirty-one MCLE credited topics were presented by 58 speakers at the third annual Solo & Small Firm Conference in September to a record crowd of more than 350 attendees.

As the first MCLE reporting period draws to a close on June 30 for attorneys with last names beginning with A-M, the ISBA is offering a variety of programs tailored to your practice area. More than 40 program titles and a number of repeat presentations are planned for January-June 2008, with more programming to be announced.

Additionally, the ISBA is planning a CLE fest in Chicago on June 5-7 and in St. Louis June 26-27 during the 2008 Annual Meeting. Both events will offer a variety of hourly CLE programs to help you fulfill your 20-hour MCLE reporting requirement.

If you prefer to stay at home or in the office to complete your CLE requirements, join the increasing number of members completing MCLE accredited programs through our online FastCLE store in multiple formats including video streaming, DVD, audio CD, video CD-ROM, and podcasts. ISBA's electronic CLE is fast, easy to use, and available anytime and anywhere.

ISBA has videotaped most of its live programming, so FastCLE choices include a variety of substantive law topics, multiple options to fulfill all four hours of your professional responsibility MCLE requirements, and last year's Solo & Small Firm Conference. Visit www.isba.org/fastcle for the complete selection of programs, available to ISBA members at discounted prices.

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Unauthorized practice of law

The Task Force on the Unauthorized Practice of law, chaired by ISBA Board of Governors member Keith Fruehling of Urbana, continues to work diligently.

Recently ISBA settled its lawsuit against We the People USA (as the franchisor) and all of the We the People franchisees located in Illinois. In its complaint, ISBA alleged that the We the People entities participated in the unauthorized practice of law in Illinois by operating within the We The People standard business model. We The People denied the allegations but eventually agreed to the terms and conditions of a formal consent decree modifying and restricting the We The People business model in Illinois. A copy of the consent decree is available at www.isba.org/upl/decree.html.

Additionally, ISBA was successful in having an amendment to the Attorney Act passed in the legislature so that

persons harmed by the unauthorized practice of law may seek actual damages for their injuries, a civil penalty of up to \$5,000 payable to the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, and appropriate equitable relief.

Strategic marketing

In addition to its continuing placement of ISBA ads across the state (featuring most notably Abraham Lincoln), the ISBA Committee on Strategic Marketing (chaired by Board of Governors members Carl Draper of Springfield and Rich Zuckerman of Peoria) unveiled ISBA's new member mark and member firm mark program in December during the ISBA Midyear Meeting.

The member mark program was created to enable individual members and firms with 100 percent ISBA members to proclaim their ISBA membership in conjunction with ISBA advertising appearing weekly in more than 260 newspapers statewide. ISBA members can use the mark on their business cards, letterhead, envelopes,

Web pages, and in print ads in newspapers and magazines, office/building signage, and email signatures or permitted solicitations by regular mail. The license agreement is available on ISBA's Web site at www.isba.org/membermark.

Supporting Pakistani lawyers

Illinois lawyers joined lawyers nationwide in condemning actions by the government of Pakistan to subvert the rule of law during much of 2007. The issue came to a head on November 3, when Pakistan's president Pervez Musharraf declared a state of emergency accompanied by dissolution of the supreme court and the four provisional high courts, the detention of eight supreme court justices, and sweeping restrictions on opposition parties and the media. Thousands of protesting Pakistani lawyers were imprisoned, and many others were beaten for taking their courageous stand in support of the constitutional rights that were being denied to all of Pakistan's citizens.

The ISBA joined leaders of 40 other bar associations in signing a letter to Pakistan's ambassador to the U.S. demanding the reinstatement of the rule of law and a constitutional government in Pakistan. The opportunity to stand in solidarity with our beleaguered, courageous colleagues in Pakistan was a proud moment.

Free Fastcase legal research

Computer legal research through Fastcase, free to ISBA members, has continued to be a popular program. Renewal of the Fastcase contract is under review by the ISBA Ad Hoc Committee on Electronic Research.

The ISBA is busily at work on your behalf. We are proud of our important role in so many issues of importance to our profession and the administration of justice in Illinois. I continue to be thankful for the opportunity to serve you as president. Your comments and feedback are welcomed and appreciated. ■

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