

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Saturday February 23, 2002

Minutes

Chair Tim Maragos called the meeting to order with Mike Rhymes, Chuck Davoli, Elizabeth Ryan, Jeff Ory and Lori Ruello in attendance; with Yigal Bander, Andy Dotson Craig Freeman, Melanie Mulcahy and Mary Mouton participating by telephone.

Andy Dotson reported on the formation of the Lawyer Referral and Information Service governing board, and noted that four nominees have been submitted from various sections and that names are expected soon from 2-3 other sections. All who had been assigned a section to contact was reminded to follow-up so this board can be put into place and begin working. LSBA President Mike Rubin has said that this board will become a committee in its own right next year, rather than remain a subcommittee of the PIC.

Andy and Lori reported that the free sign-up period would be extended in order to encourage a wider participation of lawyers throughout the state. There have been 94 applicants accepted to date. At present it is taking the Baton Rouge Bar Association about 20 minutes to process a referral call because of the difficulty of locating attorneys in some areas of the state. Lori will try to focus recruiting efforts in those areas where the most phone calls are coming from, if such a correlation can be made.

Chuck Davoli, of the Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee, reported that his committee has decided to focus exclusively on lawyer-to-lawyer referrals and invite any attorneys interested in client referrals to join the LRIS or to participate in the referral program operated by the Advocacy Center.

Patrick Jackson has begun planning a Law School for Journalists program in Shreveport, which will be held in late April or early May. He anticipates the two of the topics will be the open meetings law and grand jury practices and procedures. His committee is also contemplating a program on the death penalty. He will discuss with Lori early in the coming week various locations and dates.

The Law School for Non-Lawyers program is being planned for April in Alexandria by Beth Foote. She is meeting soon with representatives from the City of Alexandria, which is interested in co-sponsoring the event. Mike Rhymes volunteered to arrange for the same program to put on in Monroe. Mike was asked to try to hold the program prior to the Annual Meeting in late June.

The Disaster Response Plan subcommittee members, Brian Jackson, Sandra Cosby and YLS Disaster Response Coordinator Melanie Mulcahy, will be meet with Lori and Tim to do a table-top run-through of the program. This will probably be done in mid- to late-April or early May. Melanie is preparing a primer on disaster response, based on the YLS contract with FEMA and the LSBA Disaster Response Plan, which she will send to the committee via e-mail.

Mary Mouton has volunteered to take responsibility for coordinating revisions to the Tel-Law scripts. She will work with representatives from various sections to ensure the information is up-to-date and accurate, and will then put them in a style that the general public will find useful.

Committee members were asked to let Lori know whether they wished to continue to serve on the committee next year. Tim asked for a volunteer to serve as committee chair next year.

The next meeting will be held via telephone conference on Friday, April 12 at 11:30 a.m., rather than on the usual Saturday morning. Lori will send reminders, along with the dial-in number.