

**Public Information Committee
Minutes
Aug. 11, 2001 Meeting**

The meeting of the Public Information Committee began with the introduction of members attending. Chair Tim Maragos gave welcoming comments and introduced LSBA President Mike Rubin.

Mike welcomed all members and gave a brief overview of his presidential initiatives.

Law School for Journalists

Tim announced the upcoming Law School for Journalists in Baton Rouge and announced plans for another Law School for Journalists in the northern part of the state. In preparation for the September program in Baton Rouge, Tim reviewed a list of volunteer assignments that need to be filled. A number of committee members agreed to moderate and coordinate the panel presentations. These included:

Death Penalty Panel – Patrick Jackson and Mike Rhymes

Contact moderation for Mock Grand Jury – Craig Feldman

Volunteer witnesses – Mary Mouton and Andy Dotson

Judicial Campaign Panel – Mike Rubin suggested E. Phelps Gay coordinate this panel

Statewide Lawyer Referral and Information Service

Mike gave an overview of his plans for the new Statewide LRIS. Baton Rouge Bar Association Executive Director Ann Scarle presented information on the BRBA LRIS. A copy of the BRBA LRIS rules and application were included with the meeting materials.

Andy Dotson agreed to chair the LRIS Subcommittee.

Mike said he would write letters to all bar association presidents and lawyer in the areas where the Statewide LRIS would operate.

Mock Disaster Drill

Karolien Debussdhere, Deputy Coordinator, Office of the Governor, Oil Spill Coordinator's Office gave a presentation on the upcoming federal and state coordinated SONS (spill of national significance) drill, which is to take place the week of Sept. 25. The following committee members volunteered or were suggested to coordinate the LSBA's participation

Sandy Cosby – chair the Disaster Response Subcommittee

Craig Freeman – coordinate the YLS involvement

Melanie Mulchay – was announced she is the new ABA YLD disaster response representative and had just completed training last week

Mike said he would ask LSBA President-Elect Larry Feldman to coordinate the LSBA Disaster Response Team's participation.

The People's Law School

Mike gave an overview of this new program geared for the public. One-hour seminars would be given around the state. The Family Law Section has agreed to create the outline and materials. Initial topics would be on family law issues (divorce, custody, child support) or wills and estate planning. Certificates would be given to all attendees. Information from the Tel-Law library and our consumer brochures would be distributed.

Mike noted that the Louisiana Trial Lawyers Association picked up the name "The People's Law School" several years ago and a new name had to be used. After discussion, the committee voted to use the name "Law School for Non-Lawyers."

Mike recommended Winston Decuir or Beth Foote to chair this subcommittee. The first Law School for Non-Lawyers should be held in Alexandria before the end of November; and the second LSNL should be held in northern Louisiana in late January or early February 2002.

Crystal Gavel Awards

Mike announced that the Bar has instituted a new honor, the Crystal Gavel Awards. The award is designed to recognize outstanding lawyers and judges:

- who have been unsung heroes and heroines in their communities,
- who have performed services out of a sense of duty, responsibility, and professionalism, and
- who have made a difference in their local communities, in local organizations, or even in the life of one person, the awards will be given locally throughout the year.

We anticipate that there will be at least 15 honorees in the next nine months.

The Crystal Gavel award is available to those who have served the public in a number of areas, including:

- aiding the administration of justice,
- assisting groups or individuals on a volunteer basis in a non-legal capacity,
- educating the public or individuals or students about legal matters, or
- providing pro bono legal services in a significant numbers of cases; or in a way that significantly changed the life of one person or group.

Tim challenges every committee member to surface on nomination from a small town in Louisiana. Nomination forms will be available shortly.

Committee Members Attendance

Tim suggested we match those members not participating the meeting with active committee members to find out if they non participants want to continue working on the Public Information Committee.

Patrick Jackson to contact Reginald Abrams, Robert Kennedy, Jr. and John Slattery, Jr.
Tim to contact Erin Beyer
Mike Ryhmes to contact Rose Hager
Mary Mouton to contact Elizabeth Hollins
Brian Jackson to contact Sclynski Smith

Craig Freeman noted that Melanie Mulchay has replaced Monique Svenson as the ABA YLD Disaster Representative.

Future Meetings

The committee agreed to meet at the Louisiana Bar Center in New Orleans on Oct. 13 and at the Baton Rouge Bar Association office on Dec. 8.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.