

Inter Alia

Among Other Things

Spring 2008

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A View from the Chair: Going, Going, Gone!



Robert Fergan is Chair of Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Michigan. Mr. Fergan is an intellectual property attorney for the firm of Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Robert practices patent, trademark, copyright, and trade secret law. He can be reached at rfergan@brinkshofer.com or at (734) 302-6036.

No, it's not the Tigers, but *some* of us are still hopeful. I feel that this phrase describes how this exciting bar year is progressing. First, the Young Lawyers Section has had some real Home Runs this year. Those that were able to attend our First Annual Young Lawyer Summit know exactly what I am talking about. What a great forum to network with motivated peers who are still building their list of contacts. These people already are or are going to be power players in the legal industry in the next five to ten years. There was also top shelf substantive programming from current heavyweights. If you missed the summit this year, read the summit article later in this issue and don't miss it next year.

In addition, we have a number of great social, community service, and educational events in Metro Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Flint. Honestly, I can't take the credit. The old adage is true: surround yourself with great people, and great things will happen. I was fortunate enough that you, the Young Lawyers Section, elected such a phenomenal group of individuals to serve on the Young Lawyers Section executive council. If you know or meet any of them, please let them know what a great job they are doing. They will "keep swinging for the fences" on your behalf.

Bernhardt D. Christenson III, Flint
 Danielle Mason Anderson, Kalamazoo
 Timothy Tyrone Gardner, Jr., Lansing
 Erika Lynn Anderson, Saint Johns
 Carlos A. Escurel, Detroit
 Antoinette S. Gilbert, Detroit
 Lisa J. Hamameh, Bloomfield Hills
 Jennifer M. Harvey, Northville
 Felicia O. Johnson, Detroit
 James William Low, Southfield
 Maureen M. McGinnis, Troy

Sean P. McNally, East Lansing
 David R. Millar, Grand Rapids
 Solon M. Phillips, Detroit
 Brandy Y. Robinson, Detroit
 Brent George Seitz, Troy
 Bonnie R. Shaw, Ann Arbor
 Hope V. Shovein, Southfield
 Jessica Renee Simmons, Troy
 Keith A. Wuotinen, Farmington
 John J. Conway, Detroit
 Robert K. Fergan, Ann Arbor

Second, the phrase "going, going, gone" applies to my time as chair of the section. With about three months left in the bar year, I can tell you this has been a great ride. If you are thinking of getting involved, please do. You will get twice as much out of the experience as you put in. We still have some great programming left this year; look for information on the Back to School Barbeque and other fun social events.

ABA YLD Spring Conference

By Timothy T. Gardner, Jr., District 20 proxy



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Dear Affiliate Leader and YLD Members:

I had the distinct honor to serve as a proxy for District 20 representative Danielle Mason Anderson. This report will be a brief synopsis of the 2008 ABA YLD Spring Conference held in Washington, D.C., April 15-19, 2008 and provide you with updates about the ABA YLD 2007-2008 bar year.

This year, the Spring Conference was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The conference commenced with ABA Day on April 15, 2008. Several ABA members visited with congressional members and learned about the various challenges facing Congress. For more information about the ABA YLD Spring Conference, please check the website at www.abanet.org/yld.

In my capacity as a district representative proxy for Michigan, I met with fellow ABA YLD council members on Thursday afternoon. There were many discussions that occurred, including new ideas for increasing ABA YLD memberships and recommendations regarding increasing diversity in the legal profession. Moreover, ABA YLD Chair-Elect Elizabeth Acee shared her vision for the 2008-2009 bar year. During her term, Ms. Acee will implement a teen domestic violence program and focus on mentoring for ABA YLD members. Council minutes will be forwarded when available.

Shortly thereafter, Miller & Chevalier, a Washington, D.C.-based law firm, sponsored a Diversity Summit Reception at its offices. The reception featured a scenic view of the White House. In planning the reception, ABA YLD leaders wanted to make sure that YLD members had the opportunity to network and exchange ideas with local attorneys. After the reception, ABA YLD members were treated to a fantastic welcome reception at the 1223 nightclub. Many ABA YLD members danced all night long.

On Friday, there were several intriguing programs focusing on topics such as financial planning, presenting winning legal arguments to judges, a writing workshop, and preparing for your first trial. These programs provided beneficial training, and many were co-sponsored by the ABA Section of Litigation. Following these programs, a dinner dance was held at Union Station.

On Saturday morning, the ABA YLD presented the Diversity Summit. The program moderator was Michael Brandwein. Since I serve as vice chair for the ABA YLD Minorities in the Profession Committee, I was asked to serve as a facilitator for the Summit. For all the ABA YLD members, it was a great opportunity to discuss how to make the legal profession more diverse. More than 100 ABA members were divided into discussion groups and asked to respond to challenges faced by lawyers of color. My group concluded that partnering with other interested parties could be the best way to achieve greater diversity in the legal profession. The proposed solutions will be placed onto a white paper, which will be used to draft resolutions for possible adoption by the ABA YLD Assembly.

In addition, ABA YLD's public service project "Wills for Heroes," which has been commended throughout the country, was postponed until April 27, 2008. If you want to implement this program in your part of the state, please contact Danielle for further information.

Finally, I have a few more details concerning the ABA Annual Meeting scheduled for August 7-9, 2008, in New York City. There are already several programs scheduled for the meeting, including a judicial clerkship program, corporate counsel chronicles, and immigration law panel discussion. Again, it was a pleasure serving as your District 20 proxy. After attending this event, I must sincerely commend Danielle for her stellar service to the Bar.

Please feel free to contact Danielle with any questions, concerns, or comments, at andersond@millercaanfield.com or (269) 383-5880.

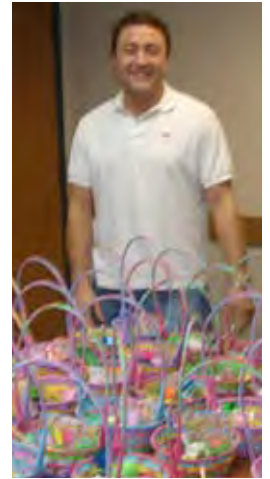
Young Lawyers Eaton County Easter Event

On March 14, 2008, State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section members and other volunteers gathered together at the Eaton County Department of Human Services building in Charlotte, Michigan for an exciting afternoon of crafts, games, and food.

With the help of funding from the Young Lawyers Section, State Representative Steve Cushingberry and local restaurant, 621, event coordinators were able to provide lunch and Easter baskets for each of the children that attended.

Social workers at the Eaton County Department of Human Services extended invitations to local foster children and their parents to attend the event. Over 20 children came, many with their parents, to participate in egg painting and an Easter egg hunt.

Thank you to everyone who donated time, energy, and resources to making the event a success! We look forward to continuing this and similar projects in the future. Look to *Inter Alia* for updates on future Young Lawyers Section volunteer opportunities!



JROTC 5K: Young Lawyers Run to Promote Education

Belle Isle in Detroit was filled with over 1,500 people stretching and warming up for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) 5K Fun Run in the early morning hours of April 19, 2008.

Among the participants were 20-30 young lawyers running to promote higher education for the JROTC cadets. All proceeds from the run went to help fund its summer camp. The camp takes 600 students each year into Northern Michigan, many of whom are from inner-city Detroit public schools. This opportunity teaches them leadership, confidence, and teamwork in a controlled and caring environment which is very different from city life.

Of special note is that JROTC does not recruit for the military. Rather, it promotes citizenship and education. Many of its students are the first in their families to finish high school and go on to pursue their education in college.

The students were able to connect with young attorneys better than with parents and teachers. They are often told to attend college and pursue their dreams; meeting young attorneys gave the students encouragement to pursue education. Watching the attorneys come to support them in the 5K assured them that others cared about them and wanted them to succeed.

The Young Lawyers Section was a corporate sponsor of the event, contributing \$1,000 to the JROTC summer camp.

After a run of 3.2 miles, all participants, including the young lawyers, were tired. But their efforts on a cool spring morning will last long beyond that day as the JROTC students learned that they can advance to college—and maybe law school—to better themselves and their community.



Cadets get ready to run.



Inkster JROTC relaxing.

Second Annual Motor City Blight Busters Initiative

By Jessica R. Simmons



A former crack house being torn down.



Tree planting volunteers

On May 3, 2008, I, along with fellow young lawyer Bart O'Neill (from Saurbier & Siegan PC), and several dozen Comcast employees and their children joined together to volunteer with Motor City Blight Busters. Motor City Blight Busters is a non-profit organization, located in northwest Detroit, committed to stabilizing the surrounding area through neighborhood revitalization. The organization is able to achieve this goal through the volunteers that donate their time and numerous charitable contributions. The neighborhood boasts a beautiful area called the Artist's Village, where local artists have painted murals and perform their work. Motor City Blight Busters has also created a jazz café in the area, and will soon be opening a coffee shop. The State Bar of Michigan Executive Committee generously donated \$1,000 toward the organization's continued efforts.

The volunteers who came out that day broke into three groups to tackle one of three projects which included planting trees, painting murals, and tearing down a former crack house. In a matter of hours, we were able to make a lasting impression in the neighborhood. A vacant lot, which adjoins a daycare center and used to be the site where a crack house once stood, was transformed into a peaceful play area with beautiful fruit trees. The children helped to turn the facades of plain, uninteresting buildings into works of art.

Many of the volunteers who came out that day expressed how truly uplifting it was to be involved in such a positive project, myself included. We worked extremely hard, but the end result was very rewarding.

Second Annual Young Lawyers Section vs. SBM Board of Commissioners Bowling Event

By James W. Low

On April 11, 2008, the Young Lawyers Section executive council competed with the State Bar Board of Commissioners and the State Bar executive staff in the Second Annual Bowling Challenge at the Royal Scot Lanes in Lansing, Michigan. While the Board of Commissioners and State Bar staff averaged a respectable 93.45, the Young Lawyers Section averaged a score of 98.72, giving the Young Lawyers the trophy for the second year in a row!

During the challenge, the record for the high scoring game went to Jim Horsch of the State Bar at 160. The record for the highest average game went to Chris Christensen of the YLS at 137.5.

Besides being an excellent social event, the Bowling Challenge raises money for Access to Justice. While the expected donation was \$10 per member of the losing team, this year Commissioner Bruce Courtade challenged his fellow members of the Board of Commissioners to pledge a penny for every pin knocked down during the challenge. A majority of the members of the Board of Commissioners accepted this challenge, and several commissioners donated even more. Overall, the event raised over \$1,000 for Access to Justice.

The Young Lawyers Section looks forward to successfully defending its title next year.



Bowling Champion Trophy

The Summit: A Smashing Success

By Sean P. McNally



1. The council at the Summit
2. Bob Fergan, Timothy Gardner, Jonathan N. Jilek, Mrs. Myrick, Danielle Mason Anderson, and Chris Christenson
3. Bob Fergan and Tom Cranmer
4. Special guest Justin Goldstein, current chair of the ABA YLD (left), and council members enjoying the dance.



On May 16 and 17, 2008, over 100 attendees from across Michigan gathered at Soaring Eagle Resort in Mount Pleasant for the First Annual Young Lawyers Summit. The event featured prominent members from the bench and bar as presenters, a keynote speech by Chief Justice Clifford W. Taylor, and amazing sponsorship support by companies from across the state. The purpose of the Summit was to provide networking and educational opportunities to young lawyers, in addition to building a stronger statewide network for the section's membership.

Section members were greeted with a welcoming cocktail reception on the evening of May 16. The programming began on May 17 and provided a variety of substantive seminars from a dynamic set of presenters. The presenters included Judge William C. Whitbeck, Judge Joseph J. Farah, Judge Dennis C. Kolenda, Larry Schoffner, Thomas Cranmer, Bob Wright, Victoria Kremiski, Martha Burkett, Kelly Burris, Michael Ashcraft, Jeffrey Ammon, JoAnn Hathaway, Erika Butler-Akinyemi, and Robert Fergan. The programming ranged from Mr. Cranmer's presentation on effective opening statements in criminal trials, to Judge Whitbeck's presentation on effective appellate advocacy in the first 90 seconds of your argument, and Ms. Kremiski and Ms. Burkett's program on dealing with difficult opposing counsel.

The law firm of Brinks, Hofer, Gilson & Lione sponsored a luncheon on May 17. The lunch was a great networking opportunity, but was truly highlighted by the keynote speech by Chief Justice Taylor. For those in attendance, Chief Justice Taylor provided inspirational remarks that made the Summit worth attending. To have the support of Chief Justice Taylor and his perspective on what it meant to be a lawyer and a judge truly made the Summit a success.

After the work for the day was done, members attended a social hour, dinner, and awards presentation all sponsored by Paul Gobel Group Insurance.

The evening was highlighted by the presentation of the Regeana Myrick Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. The Outstanding Young Lawyer Award is named in honor of Regeana Myrick, who was an active member of the Young Lawyers Section and also served on its executive council. From the time of her swearing-in to the Bar to her untimely passing, Ms. Myrick exemplified the commitment to service to the public that the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award represents.

This year's recipient was Jonathan N. Jilek of Portage. Mr. Jilek has shown dedication to service to the Bar and community. He has impacted the Kalamazoo community, and the award was well deserved.

After the award presentation, members enjoyed dancing to music provided by a DJ.

The Summit was truly a success and is hopefully the first of many annual events to come. The section hopes to provide the same great social atmosphere next year with a new set of excellent programming.

Stroll Around the World

On Thursday, June 5, 2008 the Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar sponsored a Networking Stroll Around the World. There were 50 young lawyer participants. We went to four restaurants in Royal Oak. We started at Sangria for some Spanish fare. Next we went to Ronin Sushi for delicious Sushi and outstanding atmosphere. Then we walked to Bastone for a European taste. We ended the night with access to the VIP area of a new wildly popular Irish Restaurant, BlackFinn, where we enjoyed a delicious sampling of their menu.



In an effort to encourage networking, we played a few games. On arrival, the participants were notified that the number on their name badge had a match. The first order of business was to locate the person with the same number on their name badge and learn their name and area of practice. Next, upon check-in each participant was provided a red, white, or blue star necklace. The object of that game was “You cannot say No!” If you were caught saying “No,” you had to give your necklace(s) to the participant who caught you. The one with the most necklaces at the end of the night won a gift certificate to one of the participating restaurants.

Finally, during the initial registration process, participants were asked to provide three trivia facts about themselves so that throughout the evening the hosts could ask the participants: “Who among us did/does this?” Gift certificates to participating restaurants were awarded to the participant who was able to answer the questions correctly. Examples of the trivia questions were ...who among us had a tree limb lodged in his ear lobe? Who among us went to medical school in Grenada? Who among us had a client come to a meeting with no pants on? Who among us worked for the Scottish Parliament? Needless to say, we were a very interesting group. We enjoyed the company, delicious food, varied atmospheres, and plenty of opportunities to win one of eight gift certificates.

What people are saying:

“...event was a RAGING success - it was classy, effective, and everyone looked like they were really enjoying it!”

-Chiara Mattieson,
Holzman, Ritter &
Leduc, PLLC

Join Us

The Young Lawyers Executive Council for the State Bar of Michigan does have positions open for appointment for the 2008-2009 Bar Year. Please contact the current Chair Robert K. Fergan at rfergan@brinkshofer.com or (734) 302-6036 for more information.



Save the date for the SBM Annual Meeting YLD section meeting

Thursday September 18, 2008

9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Hyatt Regency Dearborn
600 Town Center Drive
Dearborn

Register for the Annual Meeting at
<http://www.michbar.org/news/releases/archives08/AM/registration.html>



SBM ICLC Together Delivering More to Bar Members

Hyatt Regency, Dearborn September 17-19

2008

State Bar of Michigan
ANNUAL MEETING
& Solo & Small Firm
INSTITUTE

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Business Law Section
Practice Management Resource Center

SAVE THE DATE!

2008 YLS Back to School Bash

Coming this August, be on the lookout for the third annual Back to School Bash! The YLS created this event to support students with parents who are incarcerated and/or living in local shelters. Every year, we provide 100+ students with fully-stocked backpacks at an outdoor party featuring food, games and pure end-of-summer fun! Please join us this August as we work together for a very worthy cause. More details on ways you can volunteer will appear late this summer on the YLS List-Serv. We look forward to working with you!

