



The County & District  
**Law Presidents' Association**

**L'Association Des Bâtonniers**  
De Comtés et Districts

**Janet M. Whitehead, Chair**

**Daniel J. Rosenkrantz, Vice Chair**

### **In The Trenches**

#### ***A summary of the January 2013 CDLPA Executive Meeting***

In January 2013 the Executive of the County and District Law Presidents' Association held a scheduled meeting in Toronto to deliberate on matters affecting our Membership.

Since that meeting we have communicated with you details on priority issues and activities, including the distribution of the ***summary of our November Plenary (Memo – January 23<sup>rd</sup>)***. This summary was provided in as much detail as possible, to help demonstrate how your Executive and Presidents are working together, on your behalf, to confront the challenges we face as a profession. By including transcripts and presentations in our message, we are inviting our full membership in to the discussions and topics that are a priority to our organization moving forward. I encourage your comments and feedback on this document and its content. Your input is helping shape the way we communicate with you and the information that we provide.

In addition to that summary, we wish to provide you with an overview matters considered at our meeting and encourage you to share these details with your Association.

#### **UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR**

Though the time between our December and January meetings was brief, and the seasonal holidays fell in between, it was no less a busy and important month for the CDLPA. Most significantly, Janet and our Director of Public Affairs met with Ontario's Attorney General, Minister John Gerretsen, in early January to discuss matters affecting the practicing bar. The meeting covered such topics as:

- The importance of libraries and the value of the space to the profession,
- Access to justice issues in Northern Ontario resulting from a decision to not appoint an Ontario Court of Justice judge in the Rainy River District,
- The CDLPA submission on the regulation of paralegals, and
- Challenges in the Toronto justice system as relate to processes associated with case management masters.



Minister Gerretsen spoke very knowledgably on these topics during a refreshingly candid meeting in his office. As part of the conversation, Janet introduced the concept of evolving the traditional law library in to a modern Practice Centre. The CDLPA believes that there is a great opportunity to improve the function of law libraries in our courthouses while at the same time easing some of the financial concerns that contribute to uncertainty about their future. Janet outlined the Practice Centre as being a *“research centre where lawyers can access legal information; a learning centre where lawyers access continuing legal education; a business centre, where lawyers using the courthouse can have access to technical support in the form of computers, fax machines, copiers, etc.; a conference centre, where segments of the bar meet to discuss legal issues; and a community centre, which fosters communication, professionalism and collegiality among lawyers.”* The Attorney General affirmed his support and the importance of law libraries within the justice system, an interest in the concept of Practice Centres and offered to acknowledge this by way of letter to the CDLPA. His support will in turn be used to promote the development of Practice Centres in Ontario courthouses. A copy of our letter to Minister Gerretsen can be found [here](#).

The Chair has recently met with David McKillop, from Legal Aid Ontario for a discussion on a variety of issues.

The CDLPA, also by way of letter, confirmed our willingness to participate in the budget review process currently being undertaken by the Law Society. This correspondence was in follow up to discussions Janet had engaged in personally with members of the Audit and Finance Committee and we are awaiting formal response.

### **MEMBERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/ONTARIO LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The CDLPA continues to express concerns regarding the transition between OLAP and MAP. In an effort to better understand the process, and to share our member concerns directly with the Law Society, a significant portion of our Executive meeting was focused on this issue. Representatives of the Law Society, including Robert Lapper, CEO, and Terry Knott from Member Services, attended to provide details and updates on the changeover between providers. It is the position of the CDLPA that we will not be ‘taking sides’ in the ongoing dispute between OLAP, the Law Society and LawPRO. Our focus will continue to be on ensuring that practicing lawyers in Ontario have appropriate access to counseling assistance when required. We will communicate with our members and provide relevant updates in support of improving awareness or access to programs as developments warrant.

The decision to pursue an outside service provider was precipitated by a number of concerns on the part of the Law Society and LawPRO regarding accountability for funding increases sought by OLAP together with other management issues. Following an RFP process, *Homewood Human Solutions* was selected as the new provider due to the extensive suite of services available, its ability to provide access to 1,100 professional counselors in every geographic region across the province and its ability to accommodate broad cultural and linguistic needs.



Homewood has prior experience in integrating and providing ongoing professional support for peer to peer counseling programs, most recently with the Toronto Police. As the Law Society viewed the peer-to-peer counseling program as an essential component of any support program, Homewood's ability to provide training on ongoing volunteer support was a key consideration in the decision.

In order to ensure that the strict confidentiality is maintained for the benefit of the member lawyer, specific safeguards have been incorporated to ensure no individual information is transferred from Homewood to either the Law Society or LawPro. In particular, AON Hewitt has been retained as an intermediary to provide an additional firewall between the Homewood and the funders of the support program.

What remains as an issue for the CDLPA is the ongoing challenge over the implementation of the peer-to-peer program and the communication to members about the new program and how to access the available services. The Law Society personnel acknowledged that communications on transition have been sub-optimal, and the Executive provided suggestions for how the information about the new program could be more effectively communicated to the practicing bar. The Law Society personnel further acknowledged that the deterioration of the relationship between OLAP, the Law Society and LawPRO impacted on what they had hoped would be a smooth transition of peer volunteers into the new program. In response to this concern, Homewood has been asked to provide a plan to the Law Society that includes details on the recruitment strategy for peer volunteers. Details will be shared with our membership as they become available.

### **ADVOCACY INITIATIVE UPDATE**

January and February are busy months for the CDLPA and our advocacy initiative. Already the following events are confirmed or have occurred and more meetings are being booked with local political leadership. As a reminder, these early meetings are a part of the "support tour", where Janet and Scott Lovell will be working with Regional Directors and local presidents on meetings with priority members and creating appropriate products for use by our Member Associations. The intent is to "hone our pitch" and ensure we are able to provide the tools for local associations to carry on this important step in the coming months.

**East Region:** Janet and Scott participated on behalf of CDLPA in the Anniversary celebrations of the CCLA on *January 26<sup>th</sup>* and following met with east region Members of Provincial Parliament Jack MacLaren (PC – Mississippi Mills – Carleton) and Steve Clark (PC – Leeds – Grenville) in their Queen's Park office.

**Southwest Region:** Janet and Scott met with Member of Provincial Parliament Bob Bailey (PC – Sarnia) in his Queen's Park office.



**Northwest Region:** Janet and Scott have confirmed their participation in the Kenora Law Association AGM on *March 1<sup>st</sup>*.

**Northeast Region:** Janet and Scott have confirmed her participation in the Sudbury AGM and the Peel AGM, both on *February 21<sup>st</sup>* and will travel to the Central East on *February 22<sup>nd</sup>*. Meetings with local MPPs and Benchers will be scheduled for this trip.

**Toronto:** Janet and Scott will be attending the Toronto Lawyers' Association Awards of Distinction in late February.

Additional dates have been blocked to accommodate other opportunities in March. Details and final arrangements will be made with the support of Regional Representatives and local member Association input. All Associations are reminded to contact their Regional Representative if they wish to have either or both of Janet or Scott to attend their AGM or other events. In the near term, as the political landscape in Ontario becomes a bit more certain, more details on this initiative will be rolled out.

## **FUNDRAISING**

The CDLPA is focusing more attention and making progress on our potential to offset costs associated with the delivery of our core services to member associations. Since our last Executive meeting the Hamilton Law Association, through Regional Representative Mike Winward, provided a comprehensive list of suggestions for the CDLPA to consider as part of our revenue generating initiative. In the immediate term it was decided that the work of a Fundraising Committee would be concentrated on confirming sponsorship for our May plenary. This exercise will inform a discussion and direction regarding the level of contribution service providers can offer in exchange for promotion at this particular event. Longer term this exercise will provide a foundation for contribution levels at future Plenary sessions and allow us to evaluate our strategy going forward.

Other revenue generating concepts will be developed in tandem with our commitment to continued improvement in our communications with members (i.e. advertising in a newsletter) or the general public (i.e. advertising on our website). In addition, we will be leveraging the power of our aggregate membership to explore negotiated member benefits with other organizations.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

As a part of our emphasis on revenue generation and fundraising, considerable discussion was held on how we communicate with our membership. As noted in the opening of this edition of *In The Trenches*, we have tried to ensure that we provided as much information as we could to members on our Plenary session. We distributed this product, and similar messages on priority matters, to our Presidents with the expectation that they are in turn circulated the members of the local associations. Circulation of this information not only assists the practicing bar in remaining current on issues of concern, but also ensures that they understand and appreciate



the value of the work performed by law associations and the CDLPA.

We continue to encourage our Presidents to share our Executive messages with their membership, and again invite your comments or feedback on the content. We commit ourselves to ensuring we are discussing and responding to the issues that affect members of the practicing bar, and improve our ability to do so with your input and support.

In addition to providing our message to Presidents and our members, we have recently become active on Twitter and can be followed at @cdlpa. Our intent through this medium, and through an improved public website, will be to better communicate our organization to the general public on the issues that affect our organization and profession.

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