REPORT OF THE NOVEMBER PLENARY

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

From the evening of November 13th to the afternoon of November 15th, CDLPA hosted a very successful and productive plenary session at the Metropolitan Hotel in Toronto. Most of Ontario’s county law associations were well represented by Presidents and/or their delegates and on behalf of the entire Executive, I want to express our appreciation for your participation and engagement.

Our agenda was packed with thought-provoking topics for discussion which reflect the plethora of issues facing practicing lawyers in Ontario today. We covered a range of issues from access to justice to real estate law practice reforms. These conversations are reflected in the following pages and we welcome your feedback.

I want to particularly thank the work of Kelly Lovell who, once again, organized a great event that balanced a demanding agenda with sufficient time for productive discussion and professional networking (and the bit of fun our attendees have come to expect!)

I also want to thank our great line-up of speakers, which was led by Law Society Treasurer Thomas Conway at the Wednesday dinner. Sara McCoubrey, Executive Director of the Ontario Justice Education Network spoke during our Thursday lunch and Patricia Hughes, Chair of the Law Commission of Ontario addressed the attendees on Thursday evening.

A detailed summary of the sessions follow which include links to transcripts of the actual panel discussions, together with any Power Point or other material provided by the speakers. We encourage everyone to take time to read the topics of interest to you.

As I enter the final six months of my term as Chair of CDLPA, I am excited and proud of the work that CDLPA has achieved to date and I look forward to continuing the momentum. These are challenging times to be a lawyer in Ontario. I look forward to your feedback on our Plenary and to your continued support of CDLPA as the voice of the practicing bar.

Janet Whitehead, Chair, CDLPA
THOMAS CONWAY, TREASURER – LAW SOCIETY OF UPPER CANADA

The Treasurer kicked off our Plenary dinner at the Fifth Grill and Terrace with a speech that outlined the plans of the Law Society for the coming months. He spoke about the tremendous change hitting the legal profession in Ontario. He also spoke about the initiative of the Law Society to take a lead role in coordinating the many efforts to address access to justice in Ontario and stated that he viewed this initiative as a multi-year project that will continue well past his tenure as Treasurer.

Much of the Treasurer’s presentation touched on similar topics – albeit on a broader level – as Rob Lapper’s presentation the following morning. As such, the summary of Mr. Lapper’s presentation on the following pages can serve as the summary of Mr. Conway’s presentation as well.

We were also thrilled to welcome Benchers Janet Minor, Barbara Murchie and Malcolm Mercer together with the OBA President, Pascale Daigneault as our guests for dinner. Their participation was appreciated and their contribution to dialogue at the tables was welcomed by presidents and delegates.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14th Agenda:

The meetings of Thursday, November 14th kicked off with a Roll Call of the Presidents, and we were once again excited to have such a great representation from across Ontario. Most county law associations were represented, and some had multiple representatives.

Miriam Young brought greetings from the Toronto Lawyers’ Association and reiterated again the value the TLA places on its relationship with CDLPA.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY ROBERT LAPPER, LAW SOCIETY OF UPPER CANADA

Robert Lapper, CEO of the Law Society, gave a presentation (a copy of his Power Point can be accessed by clicking here) on the status of the work of the Law Society. He also introduced to those present, David Wright, the Law Society’s newly appointed independent (non-bencher) Discipline Tribunal Chair.

Tribunal/Disciplinary Process:

- Mr. Lapper noted that the Law Society has sought to enhance its adjudicative model by appointing a full-time, independent chair, supported by two part-time vice-chairs who are elected benchers.

Mr. Wright joined the Law Society in this role in September and comes to the position after a term as associate chair of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario and the Social Justice Tribunals of Ontario.

Mr. Wright noted that in the early days of his mandate he would be seeking forums to consult with the legal profession, such as the Chair’s Practice Round Table, one-on-one meetings with lawyers and paralegals who practice before the Tribunal and would be speaking at events such as CDLPA Plenary Sessions. He welcomed direct communication at dwright@lsuc.on.ca

His early priorities as Chair are firstly to enhance the quality of reasons put out by the Tribunal, so they are more clear and concise for all parties involved and, secondly, to work on scheduling so that matters move forward more expeditiously. In the longer-term, Mr. Wright stated that he is looking at more process matters and to improve its efficacy through the enhanced use of mediation and submissions outside the hearing room.
2014 Law Society Budget

- Mr. Lapper noted that there would be a 0.8% or $15 increase in fees for lawyers in 2014. As the organization continues to spend more than it takes in, a primary focus of his team will be working to make the budget more sustainable.

As part of this effort, the Law Society has moved to projecting budgets over a three year period to help with planning and to signal priorities of the Law Society over the medium-term.

Mr. Lapper also stated that the practice of using reserves to mitigate fee increases will be phased out. In 2013, $5.4M in reserves will be used; $1.5M in 2014 and $413k in 2015.

Access to Justice

- The Treasurer’s priority remains focused on the issues around access to justice and his vehicle to pursue these issues is through the Treasurer’s Advisory Group on Access to Justice (known as TAG). The Law Society is looking to define the right role for itself and feels that promoting dialogue and facilitating cooperation and change are within its purview.

Alternative Business Structures:

- Mr. Lapper noted the fundamental changes happening in Canada with respect to the provision of on-line legal services and reflected that the Law Society’s challenge is whether it can effectively regulate these structures in the public interest.

This is a question the Law Society is grappling with, but so too is CDLPA as the profession seeks to find ways to deal with new competition, but also embrace potential new opportunities.

Pathways Pilot Project

- Mr. Lapper foreshadowed the announcement coming out of November Convocation which was the launch of a three year pilot program called the Law Practice Program (LPP) allowing licensing candidates to choose either ten months of articling or a four month LPP (course work and simulations) and four months of work placement.

This program has since been announced as one that will be delivered by Ryerson University, and the University of Ottawa (for French language delivery). Further, Lakehead University has been approved to incorporate the equivalent skills study within its 3 year law degree program. As such, students graduating from that program will only have to write their licensing exams in order to pass the bar.

Mr. Lapper assured CDLPA that the LPP would be simulation-based training and would be delivered in a very professional adult-learner environment and that it would help overcome some of CDLPA’s concerns that lawyers receive training in practical, realistic settings prior to being licensed.

(Note: In the coming weeks, CDLPA will be consulting with the program designers and seeking to provide input to the curriculum and course design. Wherever we can help to make this program better, CDLPA will be there to provide the perspective of the practicing bar.)

Bill 111 – Modernizing the Regulation of the Legal Profession Act, 2013

- Mr. Lapper gave an update on Bill 111, the recently introduced legislation that incorporates many of the Law Society’s requests for updated legislative authority. Most of the changes contained in legislation address the planned reforms to Tribunals, including the appointment of an independent Tribunal Chair. The legislation also clarified the governance structure of the Law Society with respect to paralegals and increased the number of elected benchers from two to five.

Mr. Lapper believes second reading of this legislation in the Ontario Legislature would take place “soon” and that the Bill enjoys all-party support as it is not viewed as controversial.
**Model Code of Professional Conduct**

- An updated Rules of Professional Conduct, reflecting the Federation of Law Societies of Canada model code is being introduced. The Federation’s code is largely based on the Law Society of Upper Canada’s existing Rules, so the impact to most practicing lawyers in Ontario will be minimal.

The few substantial changes to the Rules of Professional Conduct relate to conflicts of interest, undertakings and withdrawal from representation. The Law Society will be offering CPD on the new changes and you can review them by clicking on this link:


**Library Services**

- Mr. Lapper addressed the ongoing concern that budget considerations at the Law Society could result in cuts to the law library system across Ontario. He acknowledged that as a line-item covering 10% of the Law Society overall budget, legal information was an item that is receiving some attention. In his remarks, Mr. Lapper echoed many of CDLPA’s positions with respect to Law Libraries and acknowledged the need for some degree of physical space, that the libraries (or as we call them, Practice Resource Centres) are critical to supporting member competence and that they are a critical service, particularly to those who practice in small firms or as sole practitioners.

Mr. Lapper noted that a Committee has been struck under the leadership of Susan Elliott and that CDLPA is well represented on that committee. He looks forward to a working strategy to emerge from the work of the committee in the coming months.

**Challenges of Racialized Licensees**

- A priority of the Law Society is to better understand the challenges faced by racialized lawyers at all levels, including getting into practice, representation in governance structures, etc. Lapper noted the early responses received from an on-line survey and consultation and stated that he expects recommendations from the working group in 2014.

**AGM Consultation**

- The effectiveness and access to the AGM of the Law Society is another area getting Mr. Lapper’s attention. He is interested in ideas to improve the format and purpose of the AGM, how motions are dealt with and also whether web-casting and interactive participation could be incorporated. He is also interested in looking at a rotating location for the AGM.

A Call for Input on ideas for how to make the AGM more effective and accessible to the membership across Ontario has been made, with a deadline for submissions of December 16th. The CDLPA executive will be providing a comment on behalf of the Association. Further details can be found at this link:

[http://www.lsuc.on.ca/uploadedFiles/For_the_Public/News/Consultations/AGMissuescallforinputoctober2013.pdf](http://www.lsuc.on.ca/uploadedFiles/For_the_Public/News/Consultations/AGMissuescallforinputoctober2013.pdf)

**Contingency Planning**

- A Lawyers’ Guide to Contingency Planning was released by the Law Society and they are encouraging lawyers to take a serious look at this area. The Law Society’s research indicates that not enough lawyers and paralegals have wills and contingency plans in place to adequately protect their clients in the case of the untimely and unexpected death of the lawyer.

New guidelines were released in June 2013 and can be found here:

The Member Assistance Program

- The Member Assistance Program has been in effect since January 2013 and is a confidential support program that provides peer to peer counseling and other mental health services to help lawyers or their family members who are facing particular challenges. The program is provided independently through Homewood Human Solutions, and representatives are willing to speak to local law associations to make lawyers aware of what services are available.

Complaints

- Mr. Lapper completed his remarks by noting that there is a continued rise in the number of complaints – 7% in 2011; 8.5% in 2012 – and that this increase in rate applies in equal measure to both lawyers and paralegals. As always, the Law Society examines these trends to identify areas of concern or if earlier intervention could prevent some of the complaints.

We thank Mr. Lapper for his candid comments and enthusiastic participation in our Plenary. He was able to clear his schedule to attend most of the Plenary and he was able to hear our comments and concerns directly.

Self-represented Litigant Panel

Many Plenary participants eagerly anticipated this panel discussion, as the issue of self-represented litigants is increasing in prominence in courts and matters across Ontario.

The panel included Dr. Julie Macfarlane, from the Faculty of Law at the University of Windsor, Justice Harrison Arrell from the Superior Court of Justice in Brantford, Beverly Martel, Deputy Judge in Small Claims Court and the Central West representative for CDLPA and Janice Etter, a self-represented litigant who shared her recent experiences in Small Claims court.

The presentation kicked off with Dr. Macfarlane summarizing her research on self-litigants conducted across Canada in the last year. Dr. Macfarlane interviewed 259 SRLs in family and civil court and interviewed a further 107 service providers, court and agency staff who had to work with SRLs.

Dr. Macfarlane’s work is too detailed to summarize in these pages, but her report can be found at by clicking here.

Her Power Point presentation to Plenary can be found at this link.

A bottom-line conclusion of Dr. Macfarlane’s work is that SRLs come from all sectors and strata of society and that the most common reason for representing themselves is related to the cost of retaining a lawyer. In fact, 53% of the sample had previously retained counsel or had been represented by a legal aid lawyer, but ran out of funds or they were no longer eligible for continued Legal Aid. Most would prefer to have a lawyer act for them in court, and are seriously intimidated by the complexity and the stress of the court system.

Justice Arrell and Deputy Judge Martel offered their perspectives as judges attempting to balance the needs of SRLs to access justice and the difficulties that having untrained people in court can pose to the efficient administration of justice.

The last speaker on the panel was Janice Etter, a self-rep who explained that her experience with the court system was not a positive one despite her efforts to educate herself about the process and the steps required by her. She also noted that the conversation to date is mostly about SRLs in the court system, but it should also focus on all the matters that never make it into court because the litigants/disputants are too afraid or intimidated to bring it forward, with or without a lawyer. The points Ms. Etter raised speak to the very fundamental questions of access to justice in Ontario.
In the Q&A session that followed, a spirited discussion ensued about the perception of some attendees that many self-litigants have chosen to represent themselves because they are not prepared to accept the advice of their lawyer about the merits of their case. As Justice Arrell pointed out: “To be clear, in 100% of cases, 50% lose . . . ” Dr. Macfarlane noted that a solution to this lies, in part, in better training lawyers to manage expectations and to better explain both the process and their billing practices so that the average litigant/disputant understands the limitations on the system and on the law.

Other questions focused on the direction of Dr. Macfarlane’s conclusions that the “problem” of SRLs was a systemic problem that required “wholesale change”, but that there remains a wide gulf in opinion on what those changes should be. As Justice Arrell pointed out, “let’s be careful about throwing out 200 years of precedent and what has worked well in the past” in a rush to fix the problems embodied by the SRL phenomenon seen in courts across Ontario.

A middle ground might be found in the comments of Ms. Etter who confirmed there is a much legal information available, but stated: “What I want most (from a lawyer) is strategic advice; someone to look at the box of stuff I have and tell me what is important and what can be ignored so that the self-litigant can prepare themselves . . . ”

CDLPA Chair, Janet Whitehead, pointed out in her closing remarks that the phenomenon of SRLs shows that there is a large, untapped market needing our services and expertise; the challenge we have to figure out how to meet that demand for the mutual benefit of the client and the lawyer.

The issues that arise because of self-represented litigants – and the causes of the phenomenon – will be a major focus of CDLPA in the coming months and years as we represent the interests of practicing lawyers who are increasingly impacted by these challenges.

**SARA MCCOUBREY, ONTARIO JUSTICE EDUCATION NETWORK**

The theme of the challenges posed by self-represented litigants continued at lunch with a compelling presentation by Sara McCoubrey, Executive Director of the Ontario Justice Education Network, who implored plenary delegates to reach out in their communities to help bridge the gap in understanding that often exists between the general public and the justice system.

“By strengthening public understanding of the legal system and the administration of justice, a vital pillar of our democracy is strengthened.”

The mission of the OJEN is to:

1. Foster public understanding of the justice system and the challenges it faces.
2. Support and encourage the values of a public, transparent and accessible justice system through research and education.
3. Encourage dialogue between justice system participants and the public.
4. Develop, coordinate, or deliver justice education information and programs to students and others.
CDLPA Advocacy/Outreach Initiatives

CDLPA Chair, Janet Whitehead and new Director of Public Affairs, Michael Ras, gave the CDLPA plenary an update on the advocacy and government relations initiatives of CDLPA.

Michael’s presentation covered the political situation in Ontario (perpetual minority governments and tight fiscal challenges for the foreseeable future) and the agenda of Premier Wynne and her government. That agenda is much more consultative and inclusive and is seeking to put distance between Premier Wynne and her predecessor in both tone and substance. According to Michael, agenda items in the coming months will focus on the Poverty Reduction strategy, job creation and the “Open Government Initiative” – all of which offer opportunity for CDLPA to put forward its perspective and new ideas that fit within the agenda of the Wynne government.

The focus of CDLPA’s public affairs efforts in the coming months will be on both the higher-level thematic questions and the symptomatic problems that arise from them.

Thematic:

1. Sustainability and viability of the practicing bar, particularly among sole and small practitioners
2. Access to justice in rural and remote communities and certain other disadvantaged communities.

Symptomatic and Specific:

1. Law libraries
2. Judicial resources in some communities
3. Legal Aid funding
4. Paralegals
5. “Red tape” and regulatory burden on law practices as small business
6. Court security (an example of “unintended consequence” of other policy, legislation and regulation that results when groups like CDLPA are not consulted)

CDLPA will also be taking advantage of opportunities to engage with the government on initiatives such as Auto Insurance reform and the Pre-Budget consultation process.

In the next number of months, Michael will be focused on expanding the “advocacy infrastructure” of CDLPA, including launching the new web-site, increasing our social media presence and engagement and many other exciting initiatives. Watch this space for more news!

If you have any ideas or issues that arise, please do not hesitate to contact Michael at mike.ras@rogers.com. He is an advocacy resource available to all CDLPA member associations across Ontario.

Real Estate Issues Committee Meeting

Responding to a timely request by the County of Carleton Law Association for a fulsome discussion on the serious issues facing the real estate bar in Ontario, the Plenary facilitated a spirited discussion that resulted in the following resolutions, which were adopted unanimously by Plenary delegates.

Resolution for Presentation to CDLPA Plenary

Re: Establishment of a Real Estate Task Force Under the Auspices of the Law Society

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The County and District Law Presidents’ Association ask the Law Society of Upper Canada to establish a Task Force, Working Group, or other effective vehicle on Real Estate, including the direct participation of LAWPRO, to examine the current state of the real estate bar and practice, and problems faced, with the objective of developing a plan to address those problems in the long-term interest of the public in the Province.
BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The County and District Law Presidents Association forward to the Law Society of Upper Canada the following list of issues to be addressed by the Real Estate Task Force, recognizing that this list is not comprehensive and may be expanded as the formal mandate of the Task Force is developed and as the work of the Task Force progresses:

- The Real Estate Bar’s Role in Access to Justice and the Legal System
- Claims Against Real Estate Lawyers
- Complaints Against Real Estate Lawyers
- Disciplining Real Estate Lawyers
- Practice Standards for Real Estate Lawyers
- The Education Deficit for Real Estate Lawyers
- Identifying and Leveraging Existing Resources for Real Estate Lawyers
- Expanding the Real Estate Lawyer’s Tool Box
- Lack of Representation in Governing Bodies for Solicitors in General and Real Estate Lawyers in Particular
- Possible Implications for the Real Estate Bar of the Law Society’s Examination of Alternate Business Structures
- Title Insurance and Its Impact and Potential Impact on the Real Estate Bar
- Relegation of the Real Estate Bar to “User” Status in Many Quarters
- Development of a Stakeholder Role for the Real Estate Bar
- The Importance of a Strong Real Estate Bar to the Economic, Social and Cultural Fabric of our Province
- Ways to Improve Regulation of the Real Estate Bar to Better Protect and Assist the Public
- Investigate options for lawyers and their clients for secure, timely, efficient and cost effective funds transfers.

The CDLPA executive is pleased to report that the Law Society has received this resolution and planning is already underway to strike a working group to examine these issues. CDLPA will take a leading and aggressive role in seeing that the concerns expressed by the real estate bar are addressed and that viable solutions and ideas are put forward. We will keep all CDLPA members apprised of developments through our web-site and our monthly newsletter.

**LAWPRO PRESENTATION**

**Kathleen Waters,** President & CEO of LAWPRO reported that LAWPRO is currently monitoring a number of issues with the potential to have an impact on Ontario lawyers’ professional indemnity insurance. Her Power Point presentation can be accessed here.

First, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) remains committed to its plan to discontinue the solvency regulation of property and casualty insurers, including LAWPRO. If FSCO were no longer prepared to regulate LAWPRO, LAWPRO would likely have to transition to regulation by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI), which would in turn require compliance with the standards of the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS) as adopted by OSFI. Since such a move has costly and complex implications, LAWPRO continues to work with stakeholders to seek an exception for itself (and the right to remain with FSCO).

Also on the regulatory radar are changes to the calculation of the Minimum Capital Test (MCT) ratio. These are likely to require that LAWPRO amass greater capital to maintain current score targets – a requirement that is expected to put pressure on premiums in coming years. However, the final version of the new test is not likely to be available until 2014 and the regulator is still evaluating the feedback received in the consultation process.
With respect to the insurance policy for 2014, LAWPRO will maintain the base premium at $3,350 – a number that has remained stable since 2011. There have, however, been some important changes to policy terms:

- Beginning in 2014, an increased deductible (i.e., $10,000 on top of the lawyer’s existing deductible) will apply where a claim arises from the administrative dismissal of an action that is not set aside through steps taken by or under the direction of LAWPRO.
- Also introduced for the coming year is express coverage for eligible cybercrime claims, with a sublimit (or cap) of coverage of $250,000.
- Paralegals working in partnership with lawyers will be required to obtain LAWPRO coverage.
- Changes have been made to the policy to support lawyer mobility within Canada as provided under the National Mobility Agreement 2013, in order to facilitate mobility with the Quebec bar.

The policy change with respect to cybercrime coverage will be supported by a campaign of education designed to encourage lawyers to address the risk posed to their practices by cybercrime. Cybercrime is not new. But in many cases lawyers and law firms still need to understand and appreciate the extent to which they make an appealing target, given their access to confidential client information, access to client trust funds, and varying levels of technological security. While the policy will cover eligible cybercrime losses directly related to the provision of professional services up to the sublimit, in the coming months LAWPRO will produce resources and make presentations designed to support lawyers in reducing their cybercrime risk. Insurance can never be the sole answer to crime prevention, as losses from a focused criminal attack always have the potential to exceed any available insurance coverage.

**DR. PATRICIA HUGHES, CHAIR, LAW COMMISSION OF ONTARIO**

Dr. Patricia Hughes, Chair of the Law Commission of Ontario was a keynote speaker at the Thursday dinner and continued the conversation on our theme from the day of discussion about a modern, accessible justice system in Ontario.

A list of the specific projects currently being undertaken by the Law Commission can be found by clicking on this link.

Dr. Hughes challenged the Plenary delegates to get involved with these projects and, most importantly to get involved in any initiative that modernizes the law and improves legal access in Ontario.
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practicepro.ca
**LibraryCo Presentation**

Frances Wood, CDLPA’s representative on the LibraryCo Board, Alan Silverstein, Chair of LibraryCo and Martha Foote, Board General Manager of LibraryCo kicked off the Friday morning discussion with an update on the state of LibraryCo, some of the resources available to lawyers from LibraryCo and the take-up of some of those resources.

Mr. Silverstein reminded the audience that LibraryCo has received stable LSUC funding through 2014, however the result is that while the total funding remains the same, the per lawyer funding is being reduced. LibraryCo has utilized its available reserves and this is forcing LibraryCo to decide how to respond to these funding challenges.

Martha Foote provided a summary of the resources available to lawyers via the LibraryCo Toolkit (her Power Point presentation can be accessed by clicking here). She confirmed that LibraryCo had analysed the options for electronic resources and has decided to purchase products from LexisNexis QuickLaw supplemented by free resources and CanLII. Martha provided statistics that highlighted the lack of growth in usage of these resources. LibraryCo will be continuing to track the usage and it is imperative that lawyers use the resource if they wish it to be maintained.

**Alternative Business Structures Presentation**

An exciting initiative that is being closely watched by the CDLPA executive is being undertaken under the auspices of the Alternative Business Structures Working Group, co-chaired by Benchers Susan McGrath and Malcolm Mercer.

Their presentation to the CDLPA Plenary was very informative as it walked through some of the alternative business structures currently in place around the world and how those might apply in Ontario. Alternative ownership arrangements that would allow lawyers to respond better to new on-line competition were of particular interest to CDLPA Plenary attendees. CDLPA will continue to monitor the work of this committee and provide input where appropriate.

For more information on the work of this Working Group, click on this link: [http://www.lsuc.on.ca/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147495044](http://www.lsuc.on.ca/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147495044)

**Law Society Trustee Services**

Margaret Cowtan, Manager of Trustee Services at the LSUC and Carrie Boniface, Counsel and Assistant Manager with Practice Review spoke about the important work of Trustee Services at the Law Society and in particular the importance of contingency planning, especially for sole and smalls.

Whether planning for what happens to a law practice if it is hit by a tornado or the inevitable death of a lawyer, the same planning, forethought and process is required and the Law Society has developed a tool-kit to help lawyers prepare for these contingencies.

Trustee Services steps in when a lawyer is not attending to their practice – be it from suspension, death or sudden illness. The other side of the Trustee Services department is in Practice Reviews which seeks to avoid situations where the Law Society needs to step in as a trustee. Their function is more educational and preventative and produce things like the new Contingency Planning Guide, which lays out an eight step process for contingency planning and includes precedents and check-lists to help guide lawyers through some of the complex parts of the process.

The main message from Margaret and Carrie was that Trustee Services is a resource of the Law Society available to help lawyers in your community who may have run into some trouble in keeping up with demands.

At the time of this publication, a copy of their presentation was not yet available. One is forthcoming, so please contact Mike Ras at mike.ras@rogers.com and one will be sent to you as soon as CDLPA has it.
TREASURER’S REPORT

Eldon Horner, CDLPA Treasurer finished off the formal part of the Plenary with a report on the status of CDLPA’s financial position.

Eldon confirmed that CDLPA continues to be on stable financial footing. As reported in May, and in keeping with the budget provided to the Law Society, CDLPA expects to have a net deficit in 2013 and 2014. With the approval of the presidents, the executive of CDLPA will be utilizing a portion of existing reserves to further CDLPA’s advocacy initiatives. There were one-time expenses incurred for the recruitment of our current Director of Public Affairs. In addition, Eldon reviewed CDLPA’s revised method of financial reporting which is intended to increase transparency in the financial statements. The executive will be monitoring the level of reserves going forward with the assistance of KPMG to ensure they are maintained in an appropriate range.

Communications and Website

We are pleased to announce that CDLPA’s new website is now up and running. Check out the new streamlined look at www.cdlpa.org. Over the coming weeks, more content will be added and we hope to make this site a regular destination for members looking for more information on CDLPA initiatives.

And the winner is …

This year, we asked all plenary participants to fill in a brief survey to give us feedback and offered the carrot of a draw-prize for those that filled in the survey. And the winner this year is Carrie Campbell from Muskoka! Congratulations Carrie – you win a $100 gift certificate at the Keg Restaurant. (But don’t tell anyone in your association – they may want to join you!)
We welcome your feedback:

As part of our ongoing effort to improve communication with our members, we have – we hope – improved this report of plenary in both format and content. These improvements will continue to evolve in the future, and we welcome your feedback.

We also encourage you to share this newsletter with all of the members of your association. If you wish for us to e-mail this document directly to anyone, please let us know.

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