

MINUTES OF THE GP SMALL FIRM AND SOLO SECTION

Friday, August 26, 2005

Members Present: Carlton Williamson, Carole Spainhour, Kay Summers Mal King, Dawn Battiste, Kirk Sanders, Natalie Watson, Joey Ray, Matt Wall, Kennedy Thompson, Tom Hull

NCBA Staff Members Present: Allan Head and Jane Weathers

NCBA President: Mike Colombo

I. Call to Order.

Section Chair Carlton Williamson called the meeting to order.

II: Introduction of the Members of the Council.

III. Comments by Mike Colombo, President of the N.C. Bar Association which included encouraging an increase of the N.C. Bar Association in Sections and also emphasizing this year's theme of Professionalism by the N.C. Bar Association to encourage more public and professional service and stress more core values of the Bar.

IV. Comments by Allan Head congratulating the section on the recent award in which he appeared on behalf of the Section in Chicago for the S.L.O.R.M. Allan advised that the Ohio and the N.C. Bar Associations were both recognized and that we were recognized as among the best this year and have outstanding reputation nationwide. Allan thanked our Section for allowing him to be there on our behalf. Also, Allan stated that at the National Convention, the outstanding General Practitioners were recognized and suggested that we may also wish to nominate some of our members for national recognition. He emphasized that one attorney that was recognized in Chicago was the attorney that represented Terry Nichols and the struggles that he had during the one year of his representation of Mr. Nichols. Allan stressed that the attorney practiced "good lawyering, the right way". Allan also recommended that the Section try to determine better ways of marketing the S.L.O.R.M. for the Section to get better sales from it.

V. Committee Reports:

Membership: (Discussed out of order to receive comments from Allan Head and Mike Colombo, who were in attendance at that time).

See Handout for particular numbers of the Section. The Section discussed whether Steve Valentine would co-chair this Committee with Carole Spainhour. With discussions taking place as to see if our members are moving to other Sections or just dropping their membership. Mike Colombo said that membership in N.C. Bar Association is up about 3 % per year but that the Section memberships across the board is flat. He suggested a flier or brochure with direct mailings to encourage renewing memberships or encouraging new members to the section. Dawn Battiste is working on the text of a brochure and Mal

King suggested that we may want to have a complimentary copy of the book “Turning Out the Lights” free to all new members who join. The Committee also discussed the question of whether or not we could get a reduced rate for the S.L.O.R.M. for Section members or a higher price for non-section members but that CLE so far has not be receptive to that idea. Mal King also suggested taking a copy of the publications of S.L.O.R.M. and the desk book to our local, county, and district bar meetings to encourage Section membership, showing the publications we are are putting out.

VI. Minutes:

The Minutes were approved as amended by Dawn Battiste. The Council thank Mal King for the use of his office at the last meeting and per S. Halle Vakani who just came on to the Section had to resign because of the change of practice to a large firm and that Donna Shumate resigned because of the distance of travel from Sparta, N.C. to the meetings. The Minutes were adopted unanimously.

VII. Treasury Report:

Ragan Dudley is new Treasurer, however, was not present because he had been in trial all week so Jane gave the report. See handout for particulars. The budget for upcoming year is based on 575 members, because our membership has been declining lately. There was a question by Matt Wall regarding printing the newsletter versus receiving the same electronically. At the discussion we found that too many people were not receiving the electronic newsletter because of Spam blockers, etc. The Section will print the first newsletter and then electronically submit the remainder for the year. The Section will mail the newsletters to those who would rather have them mailed. Matt Wall was concerned that we have no CLE budget and we discussed combining with Law Practice Management Section and wanted to know about funding for the same. Jane said we could use those monies from the uncommitted funds. Matt Wall moved to we amend the budget to \$2,000.00 for the Hall of Fame and \$500.00 for the CLE which was approved. Tom Hull said that because the money for wine and beverages and the dinner at the Hall of Fame is such a small part of the overall Annual Meeting, that if we needed help with beverages, he did not see a problem with the Annual Meeting covering those kind of expenses.

VIII. Meeting with Tom Hull to tour the facilities of the Liberty Garden Construction at the Bar Center:

Tom Hull presented a handout of the Liberty Garden with opportunities for funding as presented and encouraged members to become involved in naming rights for certain items.

IX Jane Weathers handed out brochures on the Section with Applications for the same for the Section members to take and promote. The Handout further indicated 30 great reasons to belong the N.C. Bar Association and advantages to belonging to the same.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. ABA SOLO/SMALL FIRM PROJECT:

Was discussed that this was not a formal Committee. Ragan submitted our last project and we also won several awards in recent years. We discussed whether the Desk

Book was an appropriate entry. Right now the Desk Book is being re-thought of format, etc... and we may need to wait on submitting this as a project

B. DESK BOOK:

Kirk Sanders is new chair. We are developing a new format. Currently each volume is a mix and match of topics. We questioned whether to pair the topics to sell for specific volumes. Next meeting we will discuss suggestions of Bundle Topics. There may be some updates to go with this. Usual time line from finding a writer for each topic to publication is 15 months. We discussed that we may pair down some topics to more of just what General Practitioners use.

C. CLE/ANNUAL MEETING:

Matt were last year's chair. This year we are considering a joint Meeting with Law Practice Management. Also discussed having the annual meeting and Council meeting on the same date. Kate is to be chair and has the agenda and speakers lined up. Law Practice brings in a National speaker and then usually Break Out Sessions for GP Topics. Currently, we have 3 speakers, Susan Gray from Winston-Salem on Family Law, Tate Davis on Elder Law and Mike O'Foghludha on Worker's Comp, for Break Out Sessions.

D. GP/HOME PAGE

Donna served as chaired last year. No new information to report. Home page runs itself with help of tech. support. Joey Ray is new Chair.

E. HALL OF FAME;

Dawn is new Chair. Reported that Tom Wellman did a great job last year, with 250 persons in attendance. The event was quite moving. Past Chair of Section is the HOF Chair. Dawn reported that the event is becoming very popular. This year we had 8 inductees. Next summer's event will be at Atlantic Beach, on Thursday night at the Dunes Club (opening night). Will have more info. Later.

F. HARRIS COMMITTEE:

Mal King explained history of the Committee to new members. Also, whether we need to expand idea if an attorney needs extended time-off (ie. 3 months). The idea would be how to run the office by getting help, or "Keeping the Lights on" to take a sabbatical. Need to consider the ethical issues. Mal stated that he would need a committee members from Lawyers Mutual, State Bar, our section and Legal Assistants to cover all Insurance coverage and ethical issues. Volunteers from our Council are Natalie Watson, Dawn Battiste and Kaye Summers.

G. LAD

Kaye Summers Chair reported 1) State Bar started taking applications for certifications, 2) New Committee called Utilization Committee that is preparing a brochure for better utilization of paralegals by attorneys, and 3) went over some of the requirements for certification.

H. MEMBERSHIP:

Emphasis this year by the Bar Association. Stressed personal contacts, letter by section to possibly reduce price of SLORM by \$35 and get SLORM and Section Membership for the price of SLORM. Dawn is working on a Brochure for Direct Marketing and are writing copy then to edit and send out about the section with emphasis on publications. Carlton will talk to Jane about Membership/Publication Bonus. Kennedy and Carole to assist on this Committee. Also stressed talking the section up at local bar meetings and give out brochures and encourage membership by personal contacts. We need new members on the Council. Suggested Carole or others try to encourage membership from the western areas of the State. Discussed possibility of making it easier for them to attend by conference call.

I. NEWSLETTER:

Dawn and Tom were last year's chairs. New Co-Editors are Seth Campbell and Natalie Watson who was an Editor at UNC-G. Dawn said that they really want to get 4 newsletters out/year.

J. PRO-BONO:

We haven't had any project in this other than Habitat for Humanity. Suggested we could come back now with a re-joinder on it. There are new issues re: foreclosures, predatory lenders, etc... so it would be a good time to update. Matt Wall will Chair and look into new issues. Natalie and Kaye can possibly help. Also, we questioned encouraging membership in IOLTA.

K. NOMINATIONS:

Carlton will take care of this.

L. SLORM:

Nothing currently needs to be done since it was just completed. We just need to market the product. Requested that CLE try to push it and the Practical Skills CLE.

NO OLD BUSINESS

UPCOMING MEETINGS

We normally meet in November, Jan/Feb/Mar and then in May. Jane is looking into her schedule and will notify when she can attend. Next meeting either 11/11 or 11/18 depending upon Jane.

Dawn thinks putting the Annual Meeting/CLE and Council on the same day is too hectic. Possible dates for Council Meetings, depending upon Jane's Schedule are 3/3/06 and 5/12/06 @ WFU Law School or another announced location.

Meeting Adjourned.

Joseph Ray, Secretary.