Four powerful female executives from across Philadelphia gathered to talk about the challenges facing women in business at the Association’s Oct. 20 Quarterly Meeting.

The speakers included Dr. Arlene Ackerman, CEO/superintendent, School District of Philadelphia; Nina M. Gussack, chair, executive committee, Pepper Hamilton LLP; Tara Weiner, managing partner, Greater Philadelphia Region, Deloitte LLP; and Ahmeenah Young, president and CEO, Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority. The panel was moderated by CBS3 weekend anchor Mary Stoker Smith.

Weiner talked about the number of board spots held by women, noting that for the last few years, roughly 9 percent of those spots were held by women. “Even under accounting rules, less than 20 percent ownership is insignificant. Twenty to 50 percent is significant influence. Greater than 50 percent is control. It means you have seats at the table, but not enough to have structural change and shift that might really be the breakthrough that we need,” she said.

Ackerman said she can’t separate the issue of race from the discussion. “The two go hand in hand. I’m trying to break through several glass ceilings. My father used to say that success comes from having the opportunity and being prepared. I spent a lot of hours working. It gave me the confidence and prepared me to do that. I think that’s where the opportunity is today. Women can do this. It’s just a matter of being prepared.”

Ahmeenah Young (above, from left), Tara Weiner and Nina M. Gussack participate in the panel discussion at the Oct. 20 Quarterly Meeting. The panel also included (below) Dr. Arlene Ackerman and was moderated by Mary Stoker Smith.

Candidates Forum Set for Nov. 12

The Elections Committee will hold a forum for candidates seeking Bar offices on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

The candidates for Bar Association offices include Vice Chancellor, Rudolph Garcia; Secretary, Kathleen D. Wilkinson; Assistant Secretary, Sophia Lee; Treasurer, Jeffrey M. Lindy; and Assistant Treasurer, Joseph A. Prim Jr. The following candidates are running for three-year terms on the Board of Governors. Danielle Banks, Jeffrey Campolongo, Phyllis Horn Epstein, Regina Foley, Michael Shaffer, Sean Sullivan and Stacey Tees. A total of five new members will be elected to the Board of Governors in the Monday, Dec. 8 election.

The Candidates Forum begins at 12 p.m. in the 11th floor Conference Center of Bar Association headquarters, 1101 Market St.

Ballots will be mailed to regular, voting members.

Contact us now for more information:
610-995-9160 x813 or info@itacceleration.com

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By the time you read this column, this long presidential election season may finally be over. And no matter what the outcome, I believe that the historic nature of this election will have far-reaching, profound and long-lasting implications for gender and race relations across our nation.

The mere fact that a woman was the primary contender and came closing to winning the nomination for one party, that another woman was selected as the vice presidential candidate for another party, and that a person of color actually won the Democratic Party nomination for president (and may actually win election as president of the United States) makes a unique and historic moment in America.

For me, it even beats the landing on the moon.

In all candor, I never thought I would see this in my lifetime. Truly. Although I am an African-American who navigates a predominantly white professional world, I honestly admit that I didn’t believe America was ready to elect a woman or a person of color as president. Perhaps that’s a purely racial perspective, as nearly all my black friends concur, while some of my white friends don’t seem so surprised.

As most African-Americans my age would probably agree, we never believed the “you can be anything you want to be” speech presented to us as bright young children. We knew better. Sure, compared to our parents and grandparents, we knew we were reaching new heights. But we also knew that society would continue to impose limits due to our race and gender.

As a black man, I’ve had a different experience of and different expectations of America, and it does impact my worldview. And I think that many people of color across America share this view.

This was powerfully demonstrated on Oct. 20, when four dynamic female executives spoke during a panel discussion at the Philadelphia Bar Association’s quarterly meeting. As Dr. Arlene Ackerman, CEO and superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, pointed out, less than 10 percent of the 15,000 superintendents across America are women, six percent are African-American, and only four percent (including Dr. Ackerman) are black women. Ahmehnah Young, president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority, is one of only two black females out of 379 tourism leaders across the nation.

It’s not just race; it’s also gender.

Consider that Nina Gussack is the only woman on the entire convention center board of directors and it does impact my worldview. And I think that many people of color across America share this view.

Nominees are being sought for the inaugural Chancellor’s Diversity Award. The award will recognize a law firm, legal organization or individual who has made a substantial contribution to diversity and inclusion in the legal field. Nominations for the award will be accepted from any member of the Philadelphia Bar Association and must be submitted by Friday, Nov. 14.

Potential awardees may be an individual attorney, law firm of any size, legal services organization or law school. The nominee must reside in Philadelphia. Nominees should demonstrate a sustained and continuous appreciation of and contribution to diversity and inclusion in the field. However, nominations will be accepted for a single outstanding contribution.

If the nomination is for an individual, legal organization or a law firm, legal services organization or law school, the nominee must demonstrate a sustained and continuous appreciation of and contribution to diversity and inclusion in the field. Moreover, nominations will be accepted for a single outstanding contribution.

If the nomination is for a law firm, law school or organization, may include an outstanding or innovative programmatic activity that has highlighted diversity, increased diverse representation or supported inclusion efforts in the legal field. These activities should support the areas of commitment to diversity mentioned in the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Statement of Diversity Principles.

If the nomination is for an individual, that person must demonstrate a sustained commitment to the tenets of diversity through activities that should support the areas of commitment to diversity mentioned in the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Statement of Diversity Principles.

For more information about the Chancellor’s Diversity Award, contact Dr. Sean Kathleen Lincoln at (215) 238-6340.
By Raymond M. Williams

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Jane Cutler Greenspan believes that having served as a trial court judge before becoming a Supreme Court justice allows her to bring a unique perspective to the court with respect to how litigants view their cases legally and practically.

Justice Greenspan spoke to the State Civil Litigation Section at its Oct. 1 Quarterly Meeting.


A key difference according to Justice Greenspan between the Pennsylvania Supreme Court today and in 1973 is the level of preparation of the justices for argument. She believes they are able to be much more prepared today because of the decreased caseload before the court. While the court had direct appeal jurisdiction for all homicide and trusts and estates cases in the past, that is no longer true today. And because of the allocatur process, the justices know what is coming and can prepare in such a way that they have a great familiarity with the cases even before arguments begin. For litigants, this means there is no need to start at square one.

Why doesn’t the court allow rebuttal? “You got me,” answered Justice Greenspan. She suspects that the justices’ familiarity with the cases and the lack of time constraints imposed on arguments play a role in this tradition. She would like to see this rule changed. Justice Greenspan emphasized it is extremely difficult to get a petition for allocatur granted. In 2007, only 106 of the 2,434 petitions filed were granted. As such, Justice Greenspan recommended that litigants always move for re-argument in the Superior and Commonwealth Courts first before considering allocatur. She noted that although the relevant statute says allocatur may be granted by two justices, the court’s internal operating procedures say at least three justices are required. Moreover, Justice Greenspan advised to “keep in mind that we see ourselves as a policy court, not an error-correcting court.” The court seeks to consider policy issues that are applicable to the whole commonwealth, not just the litigants before it.

And, “[i]f anyone thinks that all the problems in the area of too much litigation occur in Philadelphia, then they should think again,” said Justice Greenspan. While 1,079 allocatur filings came from the Harrisburg office in 2007, only 626 and 729 came from the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia offices, respectively.

Raymond M. Williams, a partner with DLA Piper, is an associate editor of the Philadelphia Bar Reporter.

“Keep in mind that we see ourselves as a policy court, not an error-correcting court.”
E-Mail Security Key to Maintaining Privilege

By Julia Swain

Maintaining e-mail security is critical to protect attorney-client privilege, attorney Joel Bernbaum told members of the Family Law Section at an Oct. 17 program on e-mail, the Internet and family law.

Bernbaum explained that e-mail should be treated as any other important paper document intended to be preserved and used for litigation.

During the initial client interview it is important to ask about e-mail accounts, both private and work related, password protections; and, to identify who has access to the client’s e-mail accounts or to the storage devices where e-mails are archived, such as the computer’s hard drive, a portable flashcard, a backup drive, or even a third party data archiving company. Clients should be advised to change their passwords, or better yet, change their e-mail provider. Setting up a new account with providers such as Yahoo (ymail.com), Google (gmail.com) and Microsoft (hotmail.com) is free, and a secure method to ensure privacy.

Clients should minimize the number of their e-mail accounts since having too many accounts often means less security. They should be made aware that deleting an e-mail from their computer may not actually delete all copies of the e-mail, particularly if the account has been set up to archive e-mails. E-mails deleted on a computer may be retrieved. The deleted e-mail is not actually erased when one clicks on the delete function, it is just removed from your inbox. E-mail retrieval programs can extract deleted e-mail so long as the e-mail data has not been overwritten. Clients should be aware that electronic data can be retrieved from home computers and portable drives.

E-mails may be stored by the account provider, allowing any family member to access the e-mail account. For attorney-client communication, it is important for your client to acquire a new e-mail account to ensure that one’s spouse or a child does not access your account. Passwords can be changed regularly to enhance security. Making these changes can also be used as evidence to demonstrate an expectation of privacy so as to bar the use of improperly obtained e-mail or to demonstrate that the client did not waive any recognized privilege.

Clients should be advised that intercepting private, protected e-mail is a criminal offense, and that they should not purposely retrieve e-mails transmitted to their spouse’s personal account. Keylogging, used to capture and record key strokes by a person using the computer, is illegal. Evidence obtained improperly may be inadmissible, and again, could subject your client to criminal charges. Clients should also be advised that courts will usually find that e-mails transmitted from an employer’s account have no privacy protection.

Bernbaum recommended that when communicating with your client or with counsel an attached document should be saved in a format that allows the revised document to track all of the edits made to the text; or better yet, send in PDF format. He also reminded attorneys to be cautious in using the “cc” or “bcc” functions because the attorney-client privilege could be waived if the e-mail is also sent to a third party in addition to your client.

Counsel and litigants should be mindful of how easily e-mailed documents can be forwarded, copied, or extracted, and that special precautions must be taken to preserve the integrity of the attorney-client privilege. With law firms and courts heading towards a paperless environment, attorneys should implement procedures to safeguard their electronic data and the data of their clients. www.interventionassociates.org

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Clients should minimize the number of their e-mail accounts since having too many accounts often means less security. They should be made aware that deleting an e-mail from their computer may not actually delete all copies of the e-mail, particularly if the account has been set up to archive e-mails. E-mails deleted on a computer may be retrieved. The deleted e-mail is not actually erased when one clicks on the delete function, it is just removed from your inbox. E-mail retrieval programs can extract deleted e-mail so long as the e-mail data has not been overwritten. Clients should be aware that electronic data can be retrieved from home computers and portable drives.

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Panel: Business Development Opportunities Everywhere

Everyone a lawyer encounters is a potential client, a group of veteran attorneys said at the inaugural Chancellor’s Diversity Training Series program on Oct. 7.

Panelists for the program on business development included Christopher A. Lewis, Blank Rome LLP; Charisse R. Lillie, Comcast Corporation; Chuck Polin, The Training Resource Group; Bernard W. Smalley of Anapol, Schwartz, Weiss, Cohan, Feldman & Smalley, P.C.; and Joan Stern of Blank Rome LLP. The program was moderated by Chancellor A. Michael Pratt.

Lewis likened developing a client relationship to a marriage. “It’s not about what they can do for you; it’s about what you can do for them. It’s about staying in touch … the more you give, the more you receive.” Lewis also emphasized that it was important to maintain those relationships that already exist.

The panelists agreed that relationship development and maintenance was an extremely important part of business development.

“The workshop on business development was very helpful. The Association brought together a phenomenal group of accomplished panelists and having the opportunity to meet them and hear about their experiences in a small group setting was invaluable,” said Fabiana Pierre-Louis, an associate with Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, LLP.

The Diversity Training Series will continue through mid-December with the following programs:

• Navigating the Partnership Track, Thursday, Nov. 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. Learn about the legal and other professional skills and abilities needed, as well as the practical steps that can be taken, to advance to the partnership level.

• Transitioning from Government to Private Practice, Thursday, Nov. 20, from 5 to 7 p.m. Information about legal and other professional skills and abilities needed, as well as the practical steps that can be taken to move from practicing law in the public sphere to a private firm.

• Life at a Mid-Size Firm, Tuesday, Dec. 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. Learn about working at mid-size firms. Of particular interest are the benefits of mid-size firms, as well as how mid-size firms contribute to an attorney’s growth and development in the legal profession.

All workshops will be held in the 11th floor Conference Center of Bar Association headquarters, 1101 Market St. Bar Association membership is not required and there is no cost to attend. A light snack and beverages will be served as part of the events.
SOLO AND SMALL FIRM COMMITTEE

First Impressions Key to Distinguishing Yourself

By Asima Panigrahi

The key to dressing for success is figuring out what you want to say through how you look, an image consultant told members of the Solo and Small Firm Committee on Oct. 3.

Megan Kristel of Kristel Closets, Inc., conducts workshops for employers on dress codes and forming a company's image, and also does image consulting for individuals.

Kristel noted that an initial impression is made within the first three to 30 seconds of meeting someone and "we need to figure out a way to distinguish ourselves from the person sitting next to us...who can do the same thing that we do." She also noted that personal image goes beyond age and education and is more about socioeconomic and your general likability factor. "Your image opens the door to opportunity and then your skill set takes you to the next level."

She said there is a certain expectation to the way attorneys should dress. If you take time and put effort into yourself and the details of how you dress, your client will also think that you will spend that much time on them. Kristel also noted that projecting yourself is related to owning your own confidence, something that can be done through clothes and styling. Kristel also discussed factors to consider when getting your company headshot taken. Women should always wear makeup since the lighting will bring out imperfections, and men who are not opposed should consider it as well. Also, since the photo will only be from the neck up, you should also wear the right amount of accessories and make

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APPELLATE COURTS COMMITTEE

Supreme Court’s New Session Previewed

By Heather J. Holloway

Predicting decisions from the U.S. Supreme Court is a difficult task, two city attorneys told members of the Appellate Courts Committee at an Oct. 15 meeting looking ahead to the court’s new session.

Thomas W. Dolgenos, chief of the District Attorney’s Federal Litigation Department, described the court as interesting but hard to predict. He said Justice Anthony Kennedy is the center of a 4-4 justice split; however, there are not many recent 5-4 criminal decisions. Jane L. Istvan, a senior attorney in the City of Philadelphia Law Department’s Appellate Unit, said there are more 5-4 splits in civil decisions.

Dolgenos discussed death penalty, Guantanamo Bay, and search and seizure cases. Recently, the court decided that lethal injection does not violate the Eighth Amendment. The court has also refused to allow the death penalty in child rape cases, finding that evolving standards of decency prohibit execution for crimes that do not result in death. The court applied a consensus method and concluded that the death penalty is not favored, nationally. Rehearing was sought, in part, because both the litigants and the court failed to consider the recently enacted Military Justice Act that allows the death penalty for some rapes perpetrated by military personnel. The request was denied. In another case, after issuing a temporary stay of execution to consider the petition, the court refused to stay the execution of a death row inmate who produced evidence that seven of nine witnesses recanted their testimony. The court left the issue of guilt or innocence for the states to decide.

Discovery issues are also being considered by the court. On issues involving Guantanamo Bay detainees, the court requires a fair adversarial process, including a fair discovery process. In such cases, the court has endorsed a practical test, requiring consideration of whether there is jurisdiction and what kinds of procedures, when taken away, constitute a suspension of the writ. During the next term, the court is also expected to address search and seizure issues, including questions regarding generally accepted rule that allows a vehicle search when the occupant is arrested. The arrest of an individual outside of his car, however, presents the question of whether the police can search a vehicle when they are in no danger and there is no evidence of an additional crime. Finally, the court will examine the exclusionary rule and the nature of mistakes made by court personnel and possibly by police, that will require evidence to be excluded.

Istvan discussed civil litigation trends, including the court’s rejection of facial challenges to abortion and voter registration laws. The court has rejected facial challenges as premature, refusing to decide hypothetical, worst-case scenarios. Instead the court requires evidence that disputed laws will be unjustly applied. Litigants argue that facial challenges avoid delay and allow the court to provide guidance. However, dicta from many decisions provides guidance on how to avoid unjust application and confusing interpretation of disputed laws.

A pro-business trend was also identified by Istvan. Decisions pre-empting state laws have allowed a more uniform system of regulation of businesses. A pro-business position is also apparent from the court’s recent maritime decision, reducing a multi-million dollar punitive damage award to mirror the significantly smaller compensatory damage award. A footnote in the admiralty law decision suggests that the 1-to-1 ratio between compensatory and punitive damage awards may also apply to constitutional claims. However, Istvan noted the court’s apparent plaintiff-friendly position in recent employment law cases that may continue in the next term when the court is also expected to issue decisions related to free speech claims.

Heather J. Holloway, an associate with Thorp Reed & Armstrong, LLP, is an associate editor of the Philadelphia Bar Reporter.

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By Regina Parker

The Internet is full of information waiting to be discovered. The convenience and effectiveness of the search experience depends on the use of the right search engine, Dan Giancaterino, Internet librarian at Jenkins Law Library, told members of the Health Care Law Committee on Oct. 2.

He explained that there are many search engines designed to assist with navigating the Web and locating information that is stored on other sites.

You must select the best search engine for your particular need. For example, you are searching the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Web site, www.cms.hhs.gov, Giancaterino explained that rather than rely solely on the CMS search engine, you could also use Google, Yahoo or any other search engine to obtain additional information related to your query. Google, is capable of extracting information from the CMS website, simply by adding “site:cms.hhs.gov” at the end of your search term(s), he said. Giancaterino encouraged people to use at least two different search engines. Do not limit yourself to one because each engine may provide different results. He recommended Google because it has one of the largest databases of Web pages. He explained that Google attaches more weight to the first word in a search. Giancaterino also recommended search.yahoo.com, which is similar to Google. Gigablast.com is another excellent search engine, which allows you to search multiple Web sites simultaneously. Another beneficial search engine is dogpile.com, which allows you to search the engines and retrieve results by relevance or separate source engine.

Search engines allow you to use common search techniques such as: phrase searching by enclosing terms in double quotes; searching with capitalized OR; searching by inserting + immediately before a term (no space) to limit search to documents containing a term; and searching by inserting – immediately before a term (no space) to exclude documents containing a term. Giancaterino further explained that there are many useful government search engines available online. For instance, you can explore the unannotated version of the United States Code by going to uscode.house.gov. This free site comes through the House of Representatives and has a great search engine. USA.gov is another site that is useful if you are looking for statistical information. This site collects statistical pages from various government agencies. Other useful sites are GPAccess.gov or the legal information institute at Cornell that is one of the best legal sites on the Web. Also, PaCode.com allows you to search the Pennsylvania Administrative Code and the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Another rich site is Thomas.loc.gov, which is named after Thomas Jefferson. This site allows you to check the status of a bill and includes senate reports, votes, testimony, conferences and other reports. Most of these links are available through jenkinslaw.org. Jenkins Law Library has more than 1,000 legislative histories going back to the 1830s, Giancaterino said.

Do not limit yourself to one search engine because each engine may provide different results.

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By Regina Parker

Announcements honoring new partners, promotions, and accomplishments are some of your firm's most important public relations tools.

Shoul’nt your next important announcement run in the publication of record for the Philadelphia legal community?

For more information please contact Howard Hyatt at (410) 902-5797 or howard.hyatt@mediatwo.com

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The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, which introduced the use of electronic equipment in the courtroom as early as June of 1995, has long been on the forefront of courtroom technology. As a result of the district court’s pioneering efforts, nine district judge courtrooms, as well as three magistrate judge courtrooms, are now equipped with state-of-the-art technologies that will aid in expediting the litigation process and will result in substantial cost savings.


The court’s relatively new technology includes a digital audio recording system that creates a searchable audio recording of the official court record; a language interpreting system that uses wireless headphone technology to permit jurors and litigants to listen to a simultaneous interpretation of court proceedings; a touch-screen annotation system, which allows counsel and witnesses to make annotations on exhibits or videos being displayed on the document/video presentation system; and a document camera that transmits the image of paper documents, x-rays, negatives, transparencies, and 3-D objects to the judge’s, litigants’ and jurors’ monitors.

Perhaps the most interesting technological development thus far involves the court’s participation in the Digital Audio File Electronic Access Pilot Program. The court is one of five district courts selected to participate in the pilot program which will enable PACER users to download, in MP3 format, court proceedings that have been recorded using a digital audio recording system. Access to the digital audio files will cost a mere 16 cents; 8 cents for accessing the docket, plus another 8 cents for selecting the audio file.

According to the panelists, making use of all that new courtroom technology has to offer does make a difference in presenting a case at trial. In their experience, juries appear to be very receptive to presentations done with the new technology. For example, Judge Stengel has seen instances when litigates have very effectively presented inconsistent statements by playing back videotapes and asking jurors to observe the inconsistent statements on their personal video monitors. In addition, using the new technology makes certain processes more efficient. Time no longer needs to be spent passing a document through the jury box. Instead, a litigator can ask the judge to permit the document to be published to the jury, and the judge will be able to send an image of the document to the jury members’ monitors with the press of a button.

After the panel discussion on technology, Judge Mary McLaughlin discussed the district court’s pro bono panels. The court receives hundreds of pro se civil rights cases every year, and in order to deal with the special challenges presented by these cases, it has established the Plaintiffs’ Employment Panel and the Prisoner Civil Rights Panel. The panels are comprised of volunteer attorneys who have agreed to represent plaintiffs in employment or prisoner civil rights actions by court appointment. Judge McLaughlin encouraged all Philadelphia attorneys to join one of the panels.

By Ria C. Momblanco

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Back in April, Philadelphia Magazine wrote a scathing article called the “The Last Days of the Philadelphia Lawyer” declaring that the practice of law in Philadelphia has become so much a business, so much focused on billable hours and client development that the profession has forgotten its foundation in public service and commitment to justice.

What the article failed to mention was the incredible amount of work done at all levels of the private bar for access to justice with and through the Philadelphia public interest legal community. Philadelphia Bar Foundation grantee organizations like HAIS and Council, Senior-LAW Center, Support Center for Child Advocates and the Legal Clinic for the Disabled rely not only on funding from the Bar Foundation and private law firms to support their talented and dedicated staff, but also depend on the pro bono support of the private legal community to accomplish many of their goals.

Joe Sullivan, director of pro bono programs at Pepper Hamilton LLP, puts it this way: “The commitment of Philadelphia’s legal community to public interest law is one of the deepest and most intense among all major cities in the United States. The more than 30 public interest law centers in Philadelphia work closely with the largest law firms as well as smaller firms and sole practitioners whose lawyers provide tens of thousands of pro bono hours to the disadvantaged each year. This synergy creates a whole that is much larger than the sum of its parts.”

Sullivan, who co-chairs the Delivery of Legal Services Committee, leads the Bar Foundation and the Bar Association for their support of the public interest bar through the DLSC, which brings together monthly the executive directors of the public interest agencies to discuss funding and legal and service delivery issues among other things. The Bar Association also supports the Law Firm Pro Bono Committee where leaders of more than 25 firms meet to discuss how to expand the reach of pro bono services to more of those in need.

“The work of these two committees, which each sends representatives to the other’s meetings, has led to early identification of emerging legal issues and the ongoing development, in cooperation with the courts, of innovative service models such as the Court of Common Pleas Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program, the Landlord-Tenant Representation Project, and the Tangled Title and other pro bono practice groups that train law firm attorneys in various areas of poverty law,” Sullivan explains.

This spirit of collaboration among all the branches of the Philadelphia legal community recently led to the birth of one of this country’s groundbreaking programs to deal with the mortgage foreclosure crisis, the Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program. As reported in The New York Times in September, “[Philadelphia’s] effort is the first city-sponsored plan in the United States to broker negotiations between mortgage lenders and homeowners who have fallen behind in their payments” and “has averaged the sale of almost 80 percent of the properties referred to it in its first three months.”

“The program was started by former Court of Common Pleas President Judge C. Darnell Jones II and Judge Annette Rizzo and offers homeowners whose homes are up for foreclosure an opportunity to have their individual cases reviewed by lenders, credit counselors, the borrowers themselves and the court before the homes can be sold. The parties seek agreements that allow loans to be modified so borrowers can resume regular payments and remain in their homes. As the “hub” of pro bono for the public interest community, Philadelphia VIP is taking the lead on training attorneys to help in this effort. Volunteer attorneys can choose to help with limited representation, spending one morning or afternoon a month at the court’s conciliation conference session assisting walk-in clients or get more extensive training to help clients in mortgage foreclosure litigation cases from start to finish,” says Sarah Woods, executive director of Philadelphia VIP. A mortgage foreclosure training is scheduled for Nov. 5 at Blank Rome LLP.

As a volunteer for the Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Program, VIP’s current “Volunteer of the Month,” Cheryl Jacobs, has helped make a tremendous difference in the life of one 72-year-old, nearly blind victim of predatory lending. Thinking she was borrowing $7,500 for some home repairs, Jacobs’ client was actually signing for a new mortgage. Over time, the payments ballooned to the point that this woman, despite her best efforts, couldn’t pay them and was going to lose her house.

Jacobs wrote to the mortgage company, and through her efforts, convinced them to forgive the loan. At the conciliation conference with Judge Rizzo, the mortgage company showed up and presented the client with the deed to her home.

“I feel it’s important for lawyers to do pro bono work,” said Jacobs, who also has volunteered for Support Center for Child Advocates. ‘And I believe home ownership is important for the health of communities, so when I saw the information about this program and how it was helping people stay in their homes, I signed up.”

The reach of the pro bono commitment continued on page 14

Naturalization Speakers

Bar Reporter Editor-in-Chief Sunah Park (left) joins U.S. District Court Judge Juan R. Sanchez and Min Suh following an Oct. 16 naturalization ceremony at the U.S. Courthouse. Park and Suh addressed 88 people from 42 nations who took the oath of citizenship in a ceremony sponsored by the Philadelphia Bar Association.

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In Philadelphia, many seasoned lawyers have maintained memberships in numerous associations, clubs and groups to provide them with an opportunity to network with other lawyers, judges, politicians and corporate professionals.

Whether they are a member of the Philadelphia Bar Association, The Union League of Philadelphia, The Pyramid Club or the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, these lawyer members are afforded an opportunity to dine with or meet their colleagues on a regular basis. There are two lesser-known groups that also provide for such networking, but on a less frequent basis.

The Lawyers Club of Philadelphia (lawyersclubofphiladelphia.org) was originally formed to "encourage among its members social intercourse and a free discussion of matters affecting lawyers; elevating the standard of professional ethics; aiding in all movements looking toward the prompt and efficient administration of justice; the promotion of legislation for that purpose; and the maintenance of a clubhouse and library for the use of members." Today, the Lawyers Club functions as a professional organization that sponsors three cocktail receptions. Each of these three receptions are mini bench-bar conferences where lawyers and judges informally network and mingle over cocktails and appetizers. For a small yearly dues payment, each Lawyers Club member is invited to each of the three receptions: one with the judges of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas and Municipal Court; one with the Pennsylvania appellate judges (Commonwealth, Superior, and Supreme Courts); and one with the federal bench (The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, along with the federal magistrate judges, bankruptcy judges and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit).

The other superb, but infrequent, networking opportunity is The Pennsylvania Society (www.pasociety.com), a charitable nonprofit, not affiliated with any particular political party, business or profession, with more than 2,000 members around the world. Originally called The Pennsylvania Society of New York, its purpose is to "honor achievement, to reward excellence, to promote good will and understanding and to celebrate service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to humanity in general." It was founded in 1899 when Pennsylvanian James Barr Ferree, who was living in New York City, invited 55 Pennsylvanians who were also living in New York to join him for dinner at The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The 110th Annual Dinner is Dec. 13 at the Waldorf. Some of the society's notable guests and honorees have included Winston Churchill, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, President George H.W. Bush, Sen. Arlen Specter, James Michener, Andrew Wyeth, Judith Rodin, Arnold Palmer, Joe Paterno and Bill Cosby.

The Pennsylvania Society’s Annual Dinner weekend brings together Pennsylvanians from across the commonwealth for one weekend a year. Many major law firms and corporations sponsor individual parties. It is common to find most of the Pennsylvania legislature, many judges, the governor, business leaders, lawyers, and other politicians attending many of these parties. If you'd like to make contacts from all over Pennsylvania, the Annual Dinner weekend is the place to be.

Scott P. Sigman, chair of the Young Lawyers Division, is an attorney at Bochetto & Lentz, P.C. and may be reached by e-mail at ssigman@bochettoandlentz.com or by telephone at (215) 735-3900.

By Scott P. Sigman

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YLD Family Fall Festival at Philadelphia Zoo

Kathy (left photo, from left), Elizabeth and Tim Pell were among the 175 people who attended the Young Lawyers Division Family Fall Festival Oct. 19 at the Philadelphia Zoo. Julia, (above, from left) David, Andrew and Matthew Swain also took part in the festivities.

Blair, Kassandra, Kim and Natalie Alegant. Nick, Arya and Mita Heble. Aliyah Peckman gets a closer look at a rabbit from the Zoo on Wheels demonstration.

Abbie DuFrayne and niece Ally. Kristina Littman took time out from volunteering at the registration desk to get her face painted. Shanna, Sophia and Jeff Campolongo.
By Jeff Lyons

Two veterans of the Philadelphia legal community were honored for their accomplishments at the Association’s Oct. 19 Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon.

Robert D. Liebenberg, a partner at Fine, Kaplan and Black, R.P.C and former chair of the Women in the Profession Committee, was presented with the Sandra Day O’Connor Award. The award is given annually to a woman attorney who has demonstrated superior legal talent, achieved significant legal accomplishments and has furthered the advancement of women in both the profession and the community.

Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Albert W. Sheppard Jr. was presented with the Justice William J. Brennan Jr. Distinguished Jurist Award. The Brennan Award recognizes a jurist who adheres to the highest ideals of judicial service.

Sheppard talked about her career and finding her niche with her current firm and the importance of equality and mentoring. “Although the glass ceiling may be cracking, it still looms over us. All of us, men and women, must re-double our efforts to eliminate that ceiling once and for all so that the legal profession provides equal opportunity for women attorneys. I have seen first-hand during the course of my career how the profession has been so greatly enriched by the increased participation and leadership of women attorneys,” she said.

“None of us can succeed on our own. It is incumbent upon everyone, particularly women lawyers, to use our experiences and networking relationships to mentor younger women lawyers who are confronting many of the same challenges we faced earlier in our own careers. We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and we must all reach out to help those behind us to climb the ladder of success,” she said.

Rhonda Hill Wilson, chair of the Brennan Award Committee, called Judge Sheppard an innovator with a long history of service to the community and the nation, citing his military record.

Judge Sheppard, in his 25th year on the bench in Philadelphia, was overwhelmed by the honor. “An award coming from this bar association really means something. You lawyers have made my job very easy. You made it challenging and you made it fun. I still get up in the morning looking forward to going to work. And that’s a joy that not many of us have,” he said.

Judge Sheppard credited Judge John Herron for making the Commerce Program a reality. “He was the one with the vision and he was the one who said ‘let’s do it.’ Judge Herron gets a lot of that credit, if not all of it.”

He also credited the members of the Business Litigation Committee for their hard work in making the Commerce Program a success.

Judge Sheppard also thanked the late Judge Bernie Avellino for “kicking open” a number of doors for him. “His mantra was that you have to be consistent, predictable and quick with an overarching fairness. And if you do that, you’ll be doing the lawyers a courtesy and you’ll be treating the law the way it should be treated.”

Quarterly

continued from page 1

my life making sure I was prepared,” she said.

“We have 15,000 school districts across the country. Less than 10 percent are run by women. And less than 6 percent are run by African-Americans and 4 percent by female African-Americans. For me, it’s not about reinventing myself. It’s about me being who I am and being prepared,” she said. “I have made it a point to mentor other women because we open the door. I feel like I have this awesome responsibility to make sure that I open the door for other people because that’s how the glass ceilings are going to be broken.”

Gussack said that being prepared and being an expert is essential. “But it is not sufficient. There are so many more things that you must be doing routinely. You need to set goals and take risks. They should be calculated risks, but you need to keep yourself honest about what is important to you and to challenge yourself every day as to whether you are moving down the path that matters to you.”

Gussack also stressed the importance of having mentors — “who by the way, come in all shapes, sizes, colors and ages. I have been mentored by many of the men sitting here today who challenged me. You do not want a mentor who is just patting you on the back and saying ‘nicely done.’ You want someone who is demanding of you. The best way to find a mentor is to find someone who does something well that you do not. So men, some of your mentors should be women,” she said.

Young noted that she is one of two African-American women who run one of the 379 convention centers across the country. She pointed to the presidential election as a turning point for the country. “One of the best things that has happened to all of us Americans is this election. What we get to see is people who always don’t look like us in situations that they’re not usually seen in. So yes, I broke the glass ceiling, but be clear. I got cut and it continues every day. Every day I come to work I have to prove myself. I don’t start from yesterday, where I may have had some success. I start anew each day,” she said.

In other business, amendments to the Association’s bylaws were approved by voice vote. The Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg “Pursuit of Justice” Legal Writing Competition award was presented to Mary Clark, a student at Temple University Beasley School of Law.
I became involved in the Hazleton case as a result of my involvement in the Hazelton case: “As a fifth-generation immigrant, it is my personal commitment to reach out to my peers and neighbors who may take for granted the efforts made by their immigrant ancestors, and the importance of helping those who, like our forefathers, arrive in a new land.”

For many years, LexisNexis has partnered with the Philadelphia Bar Foundation to provide research resources at no charge to the nonprofit public interest organizations that receive funding from the Foundation. This year, LexisNexis expanded its pro bono support of legal services organizations by offering a series of free LexisNexis research training programs to all recipients of the 2008 LexisNexis in-kind grant administered by the Philadelphia Bar Foundation and other pro bono organizations that are members of the Delivery of Legal Services Committee. The training sessions were held on March 19, June 9 and Oct. 8. Twenty-five attorneys and paralegals from 10 different public interest legal organizations participated in the training programs, which were designed to provide an interactive learning experience and address the individual research questions and various needs of the participants.

For each of the past several years, LexisNexis has contributed 240 hours of LexisNexis research time on an annual basis to PBF grantees free of charge. “We hope that other corporations follow the lead of LexisNexis in providing in-kind services to help bolster the capacity of our grantees,” said Rod E. Wittenberg, regional client manager for LexisNexis, and trustee of the Philadelphia Bar Foundation. “Organizations that participated in the training programs this year received a bonus from LexisNexis in the form of additional free LexisNexis research hours. In today’s economy, nonprofit legal services organizations can really benefit from this type of partnership.”

“The LexisNexis research training program has greatly helped to expand the research capacity of our organization, and maximize the impact of our research grant,” said Linda Peyton, executive director of the Legal Clinic for the Disabled, a small nonprofit with only three full-time staff members. “The generosity of LexisNexis has enhanced our ability to provide high quality legal services to our clients. The grant is invaluable to us,” she said.

To be eligible for a grant of LexisNexis research hours, applicants must provide free legal services, either through pro bono, VIP or BPL, or to those who cannot afford to pay for legal services. The Foundation accepts applications for the LexisNexis research grants in December of each year, and awards research grants in the beginning of January. His year the following public interest organizations received pro bono LexisNexis research grants: Equality Advocates Pennsylvania (formerly The Center for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights); Friends of Farmworkers; Homeless Advocacy Project; Legal Clinic for the Disabled; VIP Honors Jacobs

Philadelphia VIP is pleased to announce that Cheryl P. Jacobs, an associate of Kline & Specter, P.C., has been recognized as Volunteer of the Month for her outstanding assistance to VIP clients.

Jacobs successfully assisted a VIP client in her fight to stay in her home. Our client was a victim of predatory lending 10 years ago, when she applied for a loan to cover much needed repairs in her home. However, our client unknowingly signed a $7,500 mortgage agreement. The mortgage was bought and sold by various lenders over the years. Due to fees and costs, the amount of the mortgage ballooned to $28,000, which our client couldn’t pay based on her limited income. As a result, her house was scheduled for foreclosure. ‘Through Jacobs’ tenacious advocacy, the mortgage company first reduced the value of the debt to $9,000 and has now agreed to satisfy the loan entirely. Thanks to Jacobs’ hard work, our client is able to stay in her home.

Philadelphia VIP understands the everyday demands and time constraints that its volunteer attorneys face. VIP values all volunteers and recognizes those who handle multiple VIP cases, dedicate numerous hours to complex matters and take on cases outside of their general practice area. Philadelphia VIP volunteers serve their clients with compassion and offer them assistance. VIP is proud to recognize volunteers who are helping achieve access to justice for all.
City's Director of LGBT Affairs Explains Role

By Rebecca Schatschneider

Gloria Casarez, the newly appointed Director of LGBT Affairs for the Nutter Administration, met with the LGBT Rights Committee on Oct. 3 to introduce herself and to explain her role in the mayor’s office.

Casarez began work on July 1, 2008 in a position created by Executive Order No. 13-08, which establishes an Office of LGBT Affairs as well as a Mayor’s Advisory Board on LGBT Affairs. Her duties include developing city policy regarding civil rights issues affecting LGBT people; serving as a liaison between the Mayor’s office and the region’s LGBT residents and organizations; improving LGBT access to city services; supporting the growth and development of Philadelphia’s LGBT communities; and serving as the mayor’s spokesperson in connection with LGBT issues and activities.

Casarez will also serve as the point person for the Mayor’s Advisory Board on LGBT Affairs, a 22-member board established by the same executive order.

Casarez noted that while previous administrations have had point persons whose responsibilities included addressing LGBT access to city services, her position marks the first time that this function is located within the mayor’s office. Previous point persons have been located in the managing director’s office, which was appropriate given their more limited roles.

She comes to the mayor’s office from a long career of public service and community organizing. Prior to her appointment, she was the executive director of the Gay and Lesbian AIDS Education Initiative. Casarez is also the current co-chair of the board of the Bread and Roses Community Fund.

During her conversation with members of the LGBT Rights Committee, Casarez emphasized Mayor Nutter’s broad platform of support for LGBT issues. Specifically, the cited policy initiatives addressing access to HIV/AIDS services through the Health Department and addressing the overrepresentation of LGBT youth in the “system” — the network of city services including DHS, shelters, behavioral health services, foster care, and care for new HIV infections. She also underscored the Mayor’s commitment to and understanding of LGBT issues as civil rights issues, pointing to the current conflict with the Boy Scouts as evidence of Mayor Nutter’s beliefs, as well as his belief that there is a connection between protection of civil rights and economic strength. “There is great support (in the Mayor’s office) for framing LGBT issues as what they are, civil rights issues, and then for using common sense — dollars and cents — to make a persuasive argument.”

In addition to taking LGBT policy issues in new directions during the Nutter administration, Casarez expressed an interest in illuminating some existing services that have been underutilized. She confirmed that the Domestic Partnership Registry is still active and encouraged members of the Committee to get the word out that the Registry is available to LGBT families in Philadelphia. The committee also discussed the more recent development of an exemption from Philadelphia realty transfer tax for financially interdependent persons, a category that presumptively includes registered domestic partners.

Rebecca Schatschneider is an associate at Ferrer & Palmer, P.C.
Seven years ago, I left my career in the private sector to join a nonprofit agency because I wanted to make a difference in our community. After all of these years, it is still the best career decision I ever made.

When I tell people that I work for Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern PA, they usually say, “that’s nice!” And it is. As the leading youth mentoring agency in our region, I have the pleasure of working with more than 4,000 volunteers and community stakeholders who are committed to helping children. As a result, we have so many “nice” stories to tell: of “bigs” (adult volunteers) and “littles” (mentees) and their relationships that often last a lifetime.

But, our work is not just “nice.” It’s absolutely necessary. Forty-seven percent of the students in the Philadelphia school system will not graduate from high school. Last year 80,000 children in Philadelphia were chronically truant. And these two statistics alone point to the urgent need for our work. I have personally visited prisons and talked with inmates who beg us to “match” their child with a mentor so they will not make the same mistakes as their parents. I have visited schools that look like prisons with crumbling infrastructures and bars on every window. I have listened to mothers and grandmothers, many of them working two jobs, asking us for help so their child can benefit from having an additional friend and role model.

Doing more for these children is not simply nice – it’s a societal, educational, governmental and business imperative.

Mentoring provides children with the extra guidance, support, and high expectations that far too many of them need. It’s part of a multi-pronged solution to insure that our region remains safe, vibrant, and competitive. A report from Public/Private Ventures proves that BBBS mentoring keeps kids in school and away from drugs, alcohol and violence. Sometimes, all it takes to turn a life around is steady encouragement and high expectations from someone who cares. Recently we had one young man in our program, Frank, who commented that his Big Brother was the only one who had high expectations for him. And because of this, and the support of his mentor, Frank completed his GED, started college, and is working toward becoming a paralegal. And we have dozens of stories just like Frank’s.

That’s why I am so excited about the budding partnership between the Philadelphia Bar Association and Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern PA. We have so many different program options that volunteering with us is much easier and less time consuming than you think. With 700 boys on our waiting list, the need for broad-based community support is great.

We know that partnerships like the one with the Philadelphia Bar Association will not only encourage more people to become mentors, but it will connect law firms to the community in a meaningful way.

I am sure that once you learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters, and start to talk about our partnership, you too will hear about how “nice” it is. And that will be your chance to explain how “necessary” it is.

Marlene L. Olshan is chief executive officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania, the oldest, largest and most experienced one-to-one youth mentoring organization in the state. Last year, BBBS SEPA served more than 4,000 children. To learn more, visit bbbssepa.org.

YLD, Musicians Rock phiLAWpalooza

A Band Called M performs at phiLAWpalooza on Oct. 2 at the Field House. The band is comprised of attorneys from Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, LLP.

Class Action (left, with attorneys from Marshall, Dennehey, Warner, Coleman & Goggin) performs at the event. Mommy’s Little Monsters play (above, from Caesar, Rivise, Bernstein, Cohen & Pokotilow, Ltd.). John Judge (right) performs with A Band Called M. More than 130 people attended the fund-raiser for the Bar Foundation.

Stephanie Mensing (left) and YLD Chair Scott P. Sigman join performer Paula Boggs.

By Marlene L. Olshan
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Casino

continued from page 5

could be expanded for table games. “It was the worst kind of compromise,” Ruben added, explaining that different kinds of gaming draw more of a variety of people, whereas slots tend to prey on kinds of gaming draw more of a variety of people, whereas slots tend to prey on

Another point of controversy in the legislation is the “qualified majority” requirement for vetoing the Gaming Board. Comprised of seven members, the Board is made up of four members appointed by legislative leadership and three, including the chair, who are appointed by the governor. In effect, King explained, anyone can veto a significant decision, including the grant of licenses, which often creates “jockeying and compromise” and affects the Board’s independence.

Further, while in many states, the investigative and enforcement function of the gaming board is independent from the adjudicatory function, in Pennsylvania, it is a division of the Board – and one without formal law enforcement capabilities that would allow it to access to certain criminal records of license applicants. Louis DeNaples, who was granted a license and later revealed to have a criminal record, provides a cautionary tale. As a result, the Gaming Board is “exceptionally gun shy” now, King observed.

Ross said Councilman Frank DiCicco has proposed a bill to re-designate the zoning in the Market Street East area, home to the Gallery, to allow for a casino, a plan for which Mayor Nutter has indicated support. Relocation, though, requires that the license holder demonstrate good cause to the Gaming Board to move the original, approved location. “I think some folks could legitimately say that the entire process has to be reopened, or the process has to be reopened for any applicants that were not successful,” King speculated.

The process behind the granting of licenses and the placements of casinos remains a sore point for many of its critics, however. “When the public gets 51 cents out of every casino dollar, it’s not private development, it’s public policy, and the public is majority partner and was not treated as such,” Ruben noted.

Sunah Park, a partner at Thorp Reed & Armstrong, LLP, is editor-in-chief of the Philadelphia Bar Reporter.

HIAS and Council Honors

Members of Hangley Aronchick Segal & Pudlin pro bono team (from left to right) Naomi Mendelsohn, Shara Alpern, and Michael Lieberman join Judi Bernstein-Baker, executive director of HIAS and Council, at its annual luncheon meeting on Sept. 24. Hangley, Aronchick, Segal, & Pudlin received an award for their work representing unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers. Brian Watson (currently with Kaufman, Coren & Ross, PC) and the team from Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP have worked on more than 20 different cases assisting asylum seekers and immigrant survivors of interpersonal violence. HIAS and Council also honored private practitioners Wayne Sachs for his consultations and expertise in several areas of immigration law.

By Sunah Park
You’ll Clamor for More at Seafood Unlimited

Seafood Unlimited
270 S. 20th St.
215 SEAFOOD (732-3663)
seafoodunlimited.com

This seafood market and conjoined restaurant demystifies the arcana of most Center City “fish stories.” My recollection is that it opened in the neighborhood in the early 1970s as a meager fish-mongering fortress. The restaurant and bar phases took decades to augment the purchasing experience thereafter. And today, there is simply no better fishy philly shebang for your buck. Frankly, you’ll be hooked.

One enters upon a tiny six-tushed-stools-bar (and TV) area to the right, followed forward to tanks of live lobsters and cases of iced fish. All then leads to the restaurant proper, although “proper” is not a term precisely dispositive of its description. Brown tables, held steady by black metal supporting bases, can be counted at less than 10. Lime-green banquets back up to two long side walls, each of which is laden with an extremely wide mirror in an attempt to make the eyes see more dimensional space than really exists. Turn-of-the-century tiled floors, white brick, and splashes of maroon paint supplement the total feel as one of humility and friendliness.

Never miss starting with this catay’s chowders. A soup-spoonful of New England clam chowder ($5.50/bowl) passes your lips, and brings to them every limerick whose first line ends with Nantucket. Even the sesame crusted Chilean bass, served with bok choy and zucchini fries ($23.50) has a constant theme over which the sea bass reigns, unified by a spritely Oriental honey-miso glaze. The dish is honestly prepared. Seafood Unlimited’s chef, Chris Jones, and its owner, David Einhorn have taken freshness to extremes. They neither suffocate nor superimpose unnecessary sauciness or clashing after-tastes. What is plated is not gold-plated. Simplicity sparkles more.

Entrees are no less simply and supererogatorily prepared. Seafood Unlimited’s owner, David Einhorn have taken freshness to extremes. They neither suffocate nor superimpose unnecessary sauciness or clashing after-tastes. What is plated is not gold-plated. Simplicity sparkles more.

Even the sesame crusted Chilean bass, served with bok choy and zucchini fries ($23.50) has a constant theme over which the sea bass reigns, unified by a spritely Oriental honey-miso glaze. The dish is brimming with the pearlized white fish flesh, smothered in mahogany shininess, and blanketed with frothy-crisp frites. The bass filet melds and melts at the slightest jiggle of your jaws. The zucchini tickle the top of your palate, forcing your tongue upward to quell the emerging appreciative laughing gurgle.

Less complicated fare? Try the grilled swordfish with French fries and cole slaw ($17). There’s nothing more hearty and plain in concept. Your pupils dilate as you sip and slurp in the deeply fried potatoes. Drown and engorge them in wet swal; complement the sopping concoction with a thick slice of swordfish. Now almost mindless, reach for more fries and renew the process before you’ve swallowed. Soon the bulges of your cheeks become blatantly “swordid.”

The tables are close enough here to share anecdotes and any leftovers. Everyone wins the congeniality contest, especially after a few swigs of the house special bottle of pinot grigio ($17). Mild multi-table arguments occur only while discussing which dishes to order. “One key lime pie and two forks. Make that four forks and two extra plates. No, let’s have carrot cake, extra icing, with three more plates and three more forks; and a blueberry streusel on the side.” You’ll need the forks and extra plates for neighboring pilferers who politely invite themselves to your merriment, expecting, the next time, to return the favor. It’s that kind of kindness that defines your meal at Seafood Unlimited. And it’s not easy giving carrot cake of this quality to anyone. The cake is close to gingerbread rustic, bloated with assorted sweets to resemble a chocka-block. Obviously started from scratch: as homemade as it is homespun. The icing takes the cake to a sixth dimension. The cream cheese tartness requires you to part and purse your lips in a full-blown swarthy kiss. Patrons around you pucker in unison.

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Election

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members on or before Nov. 24. Those members who wish to vote by mail must have their ballots received (not postmarked, but received) at Bar Association headquarters by 10 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 5. Ballots received after that time will not be counted.

Anyone not returning their ballot in a timely fashion may still vote in person on Dec. 8 at the Park Hyatt Philadelphia at the Bellevue in conjunction with the Association’s Annual Meeting Luncheon from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Annual Meeting, beginning at 12 p.m., will feature remarks by Chancellor-Elect Sayde J. Ladov with her plans for her year in office. Tickets for the Annual Meeting can be purchased online at philadelphiabar.org.

By Skinny D’Bockel

Skinny D. Bockol, a sole practitioner, is an advisory editor of the Philadelphia Bar Reporter. Read his reviews online at bockol.com.

November 2008 Philadelphia Bar Reporter 19
“RELIGIOUS,” A FILM THAT BEARS THE MARK of smarty-pants comedian Bill Maher, is a flawed attempt at making flawed thought look flawed. This mockumentary, fabricated by “Borat” director Larry Charles, is a nonbeliever’s attempt to show blind faith as a traditional evil, and those who ask no questions as “jijits.”

As Maher correctly pointed out, more gory and evil were practiced in the name of the great spirit than for any other historical reason. Or, as Mark Twain noted - man, being a holy creature, will even kill his nonservant neighbor in order to make him holy. This movie is a pointed look at the kooky side of religious fundamentalism that, although very funny, has all the grace of a blowtorch.

Maher, who narrates the film, lost me years ago when he tried to liven a television discussion about the Rosenbergs by showing blind faith as a traditional evil, and those who ask no questions as “jijits.”

The problem with this film is that it is an entertainment vehicle. As an objective document this film ignores so much of its subject that is worth considering that its mocking tone is nasty rather than self-evident. Maher may know something about biblical scholarship even if the victims in this film do not. Biblical scholars are, for the most part, those people who interpret holy texts in a way that allows for modern invention. They are able to keep faith in religion alive, just as Darwin and Einstein did, while believers in absolute literalism are enemies of faith. It does not take a big movie to comprehend the simple minds of those who, if one word of their biblical text is shown to be unsupported or mis-leading, could not hold the same beliefs as they do by blindly accepting a printed word. That is why flat-Earthers need to ban Darwin and eschew science. Unfortunately, Maher fails to deal with the brilliant scientists who loudly deny organized faith with the same rigidity as fundamentalists adhere to it. Maher also fails to examine religions other than Christianity (for which he reserves his most barbed coverage) Judaism and Islam. In a film that contrives to controversy, it is not a good idea to ignore obvious information that may not be as entertaining as the full story. Hindus are just not as entertaining, I guess.

There is a need for messages that cast doubt on those who find doubt unholy. The western concept of the true believer/literalist is, at its base, a mantra for morons. But what this film fails to address is the fact that many thoughtful commentators, most of them prominent churchmen, have provided guidelines for the faithful of the modern era, who hold faith even as they uncover scientific discoveries that seem to make the tales in some of the holy books a little doubtful. As Aquinas told us, man can look into the smallest particles of matter to find the origins of life and never find an answer, because there will always be a smaller particle. Religion, as wise men have pointed out, is the humble acceptance that in the end, even the most brilliant minds have not half a clue. Doubt, and the humility to live with it, may well be the key to faith in people who have the wit to question.

As noble entertainment, the play “Inherit The Wind” forgivingly summed up the reality of fundamentalist dogma by telling us some people look too high for heaven. It tells us, usefully, that faith is the acceptance of science with the understanding that no matter how many stories science may debunk, it will never replace human faith, when that faith is practiced by thinking people. Making simple-minded, science-hating robots look even more foolish is nasty.

Highlighting them against a background of religious charlatans is overkill.

As wise men tell us, the existence of the great spirit is limited by the imagination of men. This movie, in its crude effort to make obviously idiotic people more obvious, no matter how benign they may be, is much like “Fahrenheit 9/11” - very funny in an offensive way, and too heavy handed to be taken seriously.

Marc W. Reuben, a sole practitioner, is an advisory editor of the Philadelphia Bar Reporter. He has been writing about the arts and media since 1973.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Note: While the following listings have been verified prior to press time, any scheduled event may be subject to change by the committee or section chairs.

**Monday, Nov. 3**
Family Law Section: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
Young Lawyers Division: mentoring meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center.

**Tuesday, Nov. 4**
Committee on the Legal Rights of Persons with Disabilities: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Committee Room South.
Philadelphia Bar Foundation Board of Trustees: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room.

**Wednesday, Nov. 5**
Delivery of Legal Services Committee: meeting, 8:30 a.m., 10th floor Board Room.
Rules and Procedure Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
Intellectual Property Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.

**Thursday, Nov. 6**
Health Care Law Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $8.50.
Civil Rights Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.
Environmental Law Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Committee Room South.
Chancellor’s Diversity Training Seminar: 4 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center.

**Friday, Nov. 7**
LGBT Rights Committee: meeting, 8:30 a.m., 11th floor Committee Room.

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Workers’ Compensation Section Executive Committee: meeting, 10:30 a.m., 11th floor Conference Center.
Workers’ Compensation Section: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.

**Monday, Nov. 10**
Business Law Section Executive Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Committee Room South.

**Tuesday, Nov. 11**
Section Chairs: meeting, 8:30 a.m., 10th floor Board Room.
Cabinet: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room.

**Wednesday, Nov. 12**
Appellate Courts Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
Candidates Forum: 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center.

**Thursday, Nov. 13**
Disaster Planning Committee: meeting, 8 a.m., 10th floor Board Room.
DLSC Diversity Committee: meeting, 8:30 a.m., 11th floor Conference Center.

**Friday, Nov. 14**
Philadelphia Lawyer magazine Editorial Board: meeting, 12:15 p.m., 10th floor Board Room.

**Monday, Nov. 17**
Public Interest Section Executive Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room.
Young Lawyers Division: lunch seminar, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.

**Tuesday, Nov. 18**
City Policy Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
Employee Benefits Committee: meeting, 12:30 p.m., 11th floor Committee Room South.
Board of Governors: meeting, 4 p.m., 10th floor Board Room.

**Wednesday, Nov. 19**
Federal Courts Committee: meeting, 12:30 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
LegalLine: 5 p.m., 11th floor LRIS offices.

**Thursday, Nov. 20**
LPM Technology Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center.

**Friday, Nov. 21**
TAXATION COMMITTEE: meeting, 10:30 a.m., 10th floor Board Room.

**Saturday, Nov. 22**
Thanksgiving: Bar Association offices closed.

**Sunday, Nov. 23**
Thanksgiving: Bar Association offices closed.

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**Friday, Nov. 28**
Chancellor’s Diversity Training Seminar: 5 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center.
Women’s Rights Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
Social Security Disability Benefits Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 1st floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.
Corporate In-House Counsel Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center Room South. Lunch: $7.50.

**Monday, Nov. 24**
Young Lawyers Division Executive Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room.

**Tuesday, Nov. 25**
Criminal Justice Section: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.
Women in the Profession Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.
Committee to Promote Fairness: meeting, 4 p.m., 10th floor Board Room. Lunch: $7.50.

**Wednesday, Nov. 26**
Medical Legal Committee: meeting, 12 p.m., 11th floor Conference Center. Lunch: $7.50.

**Thursday, Nov. 27**
Thanksgiving: Bar Association offices closed.

**Friday, Nov. 28**
Thanksgiving: Bar Association offices closed.

Register online for most events at philadelphiabar.org. Unless otherwise specified, all checks for lunches and programs should be made payable to the Philadelphia Bar Association and mailed to Bar Headquarters, 1101 Market St., 11th fl., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107-2955. Send Bar Association-related calendar items 30 days in advance to Managing Editor, Philadelphia Bar Reporter, Philadelphia Bar Association, 1101 Market St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107-2955. Fax: (215) 238-1159. E-mail: reporter@philabar.org.

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**Diversity Training**

Dr. Sean Kathleen Lincoln, director of the Association’s Office for Diversity, meets with members of the Delivery of Legal Services Committee for a training seminar on Oct. 15. The session was the first in a series for the leadership of the public interest legal community. The first session focused on discussions on the definition and meaning of diversity, how biases impact individuals in the workplace and the different generations. Session two will focus on selected special topics in addition to recruitment and retention of diverse staff and board members. Session three will include DLSC staff and will again focus on diversity in the workplace and peer and colleague relationships.
Carol E. Tracy, executive director of the Women’s Law Project of Pennsylvania, received the 23rd Annual Mary Philbrook Public Interest Award from Rutgers University-Camden School of Law Women’s Law Caucus on Sept. 25.

Michael Mattioni and Dawn M. Tancredi of Mattioni, Ltd., were speakers at the National Business Institute’s Aug. 11 seminar on Land Use Law.

Richard E. Wegryn, a member of Cozen O’Connor, has been elected chair of the Board of Directors of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia.


Paul D. Keenan, a shareholder with Keenan Cohen & Howard, P.C., addressed the IPC International Transportation Expo in Fort Lauderdale on motor carrier freight contract issues on Aug. 12.

Priscilla Mattison, of counsel to Bernard M. Resnick, Esq., P.C., gave “An Overview of Copyright Law” to the attendees of the American Law Women’s Law Caucus on Sept. 25.

Richard D. Dorval, a partner with Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP, has been elected as a member of the Board of Directors of the Police Athletic League of Philadelphia.

Stephen C. Goldblum, an attorney with Semanoff Ormsby Greenberg and Torchia, LLC, recently presented Fire at Will: Wrongful Termination in Pennsylvania at the 14th annual Employment Law Institute.

Shari Shapiro, an associate with Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, led the roundtable discussion “Legal Considerations in Green Building” as part of the 2008 Pennsylvania Green Growth Partnership Forum in Hershey.

Lynn E. Rzenca, managing partner of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, was elected to the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Rzenca was a panelist at the “Women in the Legal Profession Summit: Rainmaking, Negotiating and Collaborative Development,” held Sept. 17 at the Cira Centre.

David E. Prewitt, of counsel to Bennett, Bricklin & Saltzberg LLP, was a featured speaker at the Southern Methodists University Law School Air Law Symposium in Dallas, where he discussed “Replacement Parts for Aging General Aviation Aircraft – Liability of Overhaul and Maintenance Facilities.”

Dorothy K. Phillips, managing partner of Dorothy K. Phillips & Associates, LLC, was a featured speaker at the Sterling Education seminar Family Law Update on Sept. 24.

Richard R. Harris, a partner with Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, served as a member of the faculty for the Pennsylvania Association for Justice CLE course “Race, Gender, Ethnicity: Dealing With Bias on Juries” on Sept. 18.

Michael E. Bertin, an associate with Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, served as the co-course planner and moderator of the Pennsylvania Bar Institute program “A Look Inside: 3 Experts Discuss the Rotschach Test, Bricklin Test, and the MMPI.”

Cynthia M. Philo, president/CEO of the Old City District, presented at the International Downtown Association’s Annual Conference in Calgary, Canada regarding Balancing Nightlife in Core Downtown Communities on Sept. 13.

Nancy Winkelman, a partner with Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP, was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers at the organization’s fall meeting Sept. 18-20, 2008 in Portland, Ore.

Emily J. Lawrence, a partner with Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP, has been named chair of the executive committee of Women’s Way.

Michael Gross, a partner with Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, participated in a panel discussion on what sells in today’s housing market at the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia’s 7th Annual Housing Conference on Sept. 17.

William A. Stock, a partner with Klasko, Rulon, Stock & Seltzer, was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Immigration Lawyers Association at AILA’s recent annual meeting in Vancouver, Canada.

Jason E. Reisman, a partner with Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, was recently elected to the Philadelphia Regional Board of the Anti-Defamation League.


Robert Swajkos of Curtin & Heefner LLP presented “Mediation: What’s in it for Lawyers and Clients” at the 13th annual Pennsylvania Bar Association Bankruptcy Institute on Oct. 16.

Robert T. Whitelaw, managing partner of Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP, has been elected vice president of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Kim R. Jessum, of counsel to Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP, was appointed as the chair of the American Bar Association Intellectual Property Law Section’s 24th Annual Intellectual Property Law Conference.

Lynn A. Marks, executive director of Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts, was honored at Living Beyond Breast Cancer’s Butterfly Ball on Sept. 27.

Marjorie Stern Jacobs, of counsel to Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP has been invited to membership in ‘The Counselors of Real Estate, and now holds the CRE Designation.

Robert C. Clothier, a partner with Fox Rothschild LLP, served as a panelist at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s seminar “Protecting the First Amendment: Freedom of the Press and Reporter’s Privilege” on Oct. 22.

Jonathan S. Ziss of Margolis Edelstein addressed the CPA Club of Wilmington, Del. on Sept. 24 on the topic of electronic discovery and data retention programs - new obligations and exposures.

Elizabeth L. Bennett, founder of Bennett & Associates, discussed ethics at the PBI Seminar “The Second Season: Issues for Divorce Over 50,” in Mechanicsburg, Pa., on Sept. 16.

Martin Belisario, a partner with Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel LLP spoke at the Fourth Annual Conference on Current Issues in Complex IP Licensing on Sept. 11 at the Union League.

George E. Martin, managing attorney at Martin, Banks, Pond, Lehocky & Wilson, was recently inducted as a Fellow into ‘The College of Workers’ Compensation Lawyers.

“People” highlights news of members’ awards, honors or appointments of a community or civic nature. Information may be sent to Jeff Iygos, Senior Managing Editor, Philadelphia Bar Reporter, Philadelphia Bar Association, 1101 Market St., 11th fl., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107-2955. Fax: (215) 238-1159. E-mail: reporter@philabar.org. Color photos are also welcome.
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