

**SENIOR LAWYERS SECTION
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

June 18, 2025

This meeting was conducted via Zoom. The following Executive Committee members and WSBA personnel were present at this meeting: Interim Chair David Sprinkle, Steve DeForest, Al Armstrong, Carole Grayson, Joe Gordon, Jenny Rydberg, Laurin Schweet, WSBA Sections Program Specialist Carolyn MacGregor, Young Lawyer Liaison Ruth Apahidean. WSBA Education Programs Lead Rachel Matz, and BOG Liaison Lester Parvin Price, Jr. Not able to be present was Bill Cameron.

CHAIR’S WELCOME

David welcomed the attendees. He informed us that Bill would be unable to attend our meeting.

Jenny wanted to know what motivated the Bar to discontinue the WSBA/Community experiment. Carolyn answered that it was felt that the project “wasn’t the best choice all around and was not the right solution for the organization.” This decision was made after evaluating the feedback from participants in the pilot project and staff. Carolyn congratulated our Committee for its participation effort, remarking that our Section took to the project more than anyone else. She opined that the pilot project did not have a “collaboration piece” which would have allowed the participants to work together on a document in real time, “and [this deficiency] contributed to the luke-warm reaction of the WSBA membership.” Carolyn said that the Bar has retained documents we may need in the future. She also indicated that the minutes that were posted on the WSBA/Community site have, or will be, posted on our Section website.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

Al’s Minutes of our May 21 meeting were approved by Motion. Somehow the discussion turned to who among us had served as editor of their respective high school newspaper: Al, the *Garfield Messenger*, Steve, the *Kuay Weekly*; Carole, David and Jenny also served would-be James Restons at their high schools.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Joe indicated that he has received no financial information from the Bar since the April report. Joe reaffirmed that there would be no Section dues increase next year. He indicated that he had filed a draft of our proposed budget for fiscal year 2026.

SECTION ELECTIONS

The last day for voting is June 24. Al indicated that he never received a ballot. Jenny said it may have gone to junk email; she added that the ballot was not sent by the WSBA but by Survey Monkey.

Ruth has reapplied to act as Young Lawyer Liaison. Carole said that even though Ruth “ages out” of the Young Lawyer category this August, she will retain her position for the remainder of the fiscal year. It was mentioned that the application deadline for the Young Liaison position is June 27.

It was remarked that Steve is indeed on the ballot.

REBRANDING DISCUSSION

David led off the discussion as to whether we should rename our Section and, if so, what should that name be? He noted that he was aware that this was “not our first rodeo” relative to renaming discussions. He said he had talked to the Bar President, who “didn’t think much of our [Section] name.”

Laurin added that terms such as “senior citizen” and “senior lawyer” tend to have negative connotations, whereas titles such as senior vice president and senior sales associate sound more prestigious. She observed that the appropriateness of the adjective depended on the accompanying noun. Other names mentioned as possibilities were Master Lawyers, Senior Leadership and Experienced Lawyers. Carole said she didn’t like the term Senior Leadership because the name doesn’t designate us as lawyers. Ruth was asked just what aspect of our Section drew her to acting as our Young Lawyer Liaison. She answered that she saw us from the “experienced lawyer” perspective. Carolyn suggested that we try to put ourselves in the position of the “man in the street” when considering rebranding ourselves. Carole recalled how our late Brian Comstock advocated an automatic, dues-free membership in our Section upon reaching a given age. Laurin said we shouldn’t use the term “Master Lawyers” as the term “master” is now disfavored by some. Laurin also asked what the procedure for change would be once we decide on a new Section name. Carolyn replied that the procedure would be specified in our bylaws.

Carole recalled our earlier foray into renaming territory, indicating that we had previously found that Michigan’s Senior Lawyers section (Master Lawyers) provided for automatic and dues-free admission to all Michigan Bar members 55 years of age or older. This is what Brian Comstock had advocated, said Carole. Al said he liked our current name because it doesn’t sound like a euphemism. Parvin said that we should choose a title that would say to others, “oh, that would include me.” The name “Emeritus Lawyers” was mentioned, but Carole said perhaps we should wait until we see how many attorneys

currently in the “Honorary” category elect to change their designation to “Emeritus” before we give consideration to that name.

Carolyn suggested that we poll our Section membership. David asked Laurin if she wished to do the polling. She said yes. Carolyn said she would work with Laurin to do this.

Jenny asked “just what is so wrong with the term Senior Lawyers?” Al agreed, and mentioned the time, many years ago, when he told the Committee members that he was proud to be called a Senior Lawyer, and all present, most much older than he, looked at him “like he was nuts.”

Carole mentioned using her great aunt’s Roget’s Thesaurus to get variations for the term “senior.”

At the end of our meeting, someone suggested that we call ourselves the OWL: Older and Wiser Lawyers. This was well-received by other Committee members.

OUR NEXT CLE

It was mentioned that our last CLE had 20 attendees. Rachel said she thought that this CLE was “really good.” She mentioned that one attendee noted that the volume was too low, prompting Steve to opine that perhaps we should call ourselves the “High Volume” Section.

Relative to our next CLE, the questions before us included: in-person CLEs or remote? half day or longer? one-hour CLEs presented by our Section without the help of the Bar? Carole mentioned that it would be really difficult to put together another ½ day CLE. Rachel said that ½ day on-line CLEs are waning in popularity. Someone mentioned that “people want a destination” when an in-person CLE is offered. It was also mentioned that an in-person CLE allows for social time and that may be a draw. David mentioned that three one-hour CLEs was a possibility. Rachel cautioned that if we were to offer one-hour CLEs, our Section would get to keep all the net proceeds, but we would be doing all the work too, that is, without Rachel’s help.

Rachel mentioned the possibility of a three-session CLE, two hours per session. Signing up for 3 sessions separately would be more expensive than paying for all three sessions at once, as registrants who paid for all three CLEs would receive a discount. Rachel said that the WSBA has been experimenting with this format.

David brought the conversation back to: what should we do for this fall? Should we try to do something this year or wait until next year? Jenny cautioned that she would not be around to help this fall as she and her husband are planning to take a cruise through the Northwest Passage at that time. Laurin wanted to know if we can obtain a list of topics

that we have addressed in our past CLEs. Rachel answered that she could retrieve our past presentations for the last three or four years.

Rachel said we need to have our CLEs completely put together at least 8 weeks prior to the presentations to allow the WSBA to do an adequate job and to allow for sufficient advertising.

David suggested a CLE co-presentation with the Young Lawyers, but Ruth said that Young Lawyers was a committee, not a section.

NEWLETTER

David acknowledged that the editorship of our newsletter continues to be a dilemma at this point.

BOG LIAISON'S REPORT

Parvin reported that the next BOG retreat and meeting will take place on July 17-18 in Walla Walla. The recent doings of the BOG are set forth in the latest edition of the Bar News.

OTHER BUSINESS

Carolyn said that there will be an Executive Committee “on-boarding—best practices” session dealing with engaging new members on a given section’s Executive Committee, offered on July 10 at noon. Invitations were sent out last week and Carolyn said she would re-send them to us.

ADJOURNMENT

David adjourned the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will take place on a remote-attendance basis on July 16, 2025 at 10:30 am.