

Just When You Thought We Couldn't Get Any Better

By Keith W. Schneider

As is customary with most outgoing Presidents, this is my last opportunity to showcase the fine work of your Association over the past year. It seems as if only yesterday I was sitting down to write my first article for the Lawyers Quarterly and now as in all things in life, my tenure has passed!

Your Bar is so fortunate to have the best support staff, led by Jill Snitcher McQuain, of any bar association in the country. And while we are saddened by the loss and retirement of some absolutely wonderful people, the CBA continues as strong as ever. Most remarkable to me is repeatedly in this term and in my prior years as an officer, other state and metro bar associations from across the country want to know what "we are doing at the CBA." Through Jill's outstanding vision and guidance, the CBA continues to be highly regarded and ranked top notch amongst our peers. I have also been so fortunate to have at my back the hard work and dedication of my fellow board members who give tirelessly to the vision in doing the good work for your bar. Our committees are as active and strong as ever. I thank each and every committee chair who gave above and beyond the call of duty to make each respective committee the best it can be. And to our affiliates and other partners, a special thanks for your continued support and contribution in an effort to benefit the entire membership of the CBA. None of this could be achieved without your continued support.

My year began with the addition of a new member benefit: free, unlimited, online legal research for every member. Fastcase offers smarter, faster, and easier legal research, and boasts the most popular legal app among lawyers, two years in a row. Access to Fastcase typically costs an individual subscriber \$995 per year, but the service is included for free in the cost of dues for Columbus Bar members, and it could result in a savings of thousands of dollars for you and your clients.

The addition of Fastcase as a member benefit, among other things, has helped the association attract new members and retain existing members. As of the time I am writing this article, the Columbus Bar Association's membership has grown 10% over the previous year. This growth suggests that we are moving in the right direction.

While membership itself is on the rise, some of our traditional revenue generating services have seen a decline. The competition in CLE continues to increase, and we are working to identify new opportunities. Law firms continue to develop their own in-house programming as a client development tool; out-of-state providers are offering free CLE as a marketing strategy; and this year marked the first year when Ohio lawyers are able to get up to 12 hours of their biennial requirement online.

But, the CBA is not just sitting idly by. Judy McInturff - a seasoned bankruptcy lawyer and experienced educator - recently joined the CBA staff, and is directing our CLE program. We've ramped up our curriculum to deliver better quality, embrace multi-media in our delivery, and identify opportunities to help law firms develop programming that advances their brand.

We also brought online CLE in-house to allow us flexibility in pricing and content delivery. This year, we offered a new version of CLE Easy Pass, allowing users to access up to 12 hours of online programming for one flat fee of \$175.

Health insurance is another area of ongoing volatility. The CBA has offered a member health insurance program since 1989, and it has been a profitable business that allows the CBA to offer a valuable benefit, while raising revenue that allows us to keep dues affordable. The implementation of the Affordable Care Act continues to impact the bar association and its members, and the full impact is not fully known.

One of the benefits of the ACA, however, is that, for the first time in our 26 year history of offering health insurance to members, we are finally able to offer a product for the individual and solo practitioners. In September, we launched a new portal offering individual healthcare options through a collaborative partnership with Willis of Ohio and Connected Health. The new portal enables the subscriber to create a plan based on their own unique needs and circumstances. Members can even select coverage for their adult children, who may no longer be eligible for parental coverage on their parents' plan.

It has been a challenging yet rewarding year; one I will look back on with fond memories for years to come. I am so proud to have been able to serve as the 122nd President and be able to have served in the same capacity as so many outstanding attorneys, many of whom were a guiding force in my early career and who continued to offer their advice and guidance this year. Just as our profession has undergone changes in the wake of economic, technological, and generational developments, so too has the Columbus Bar. But, as with all things, change breeds opportunity. Though my tenure as President will soon end, I am humbled to have had the opportunity to lead the CBA in adapting to the shifting demands of our members.



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