

WOMEN AND THE LAW SECTION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 11, 2007

Council members in attendance – Tonya Carter, President; Teri Danish, President-Elect; Carol Jendrzey, Vice-Chair Membership (by phone); Nicole Gonzalez, Vice-Chair Newsletter (by phone); Chantel Crews, Secretary (by phone); Ralph Brock, Treasurer; Alison McCall, Chronologist; Patricia Blackshear; Melissa Dorman (by phone); Judy Ney; Carolyn Moore; Ronnie Harrison; Andrea Johnson (by phone); Deanie King; Shannon Dacus. Council members absent – Carmen Samaniego, Louise B. Raggio, Mara Blatt.

- I. **Call to Order** – Tonya Carter called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.
- II. **Introduction of Returning and New Council Members** – all members in attendance introduced themselves to the rest of the council. Welcome everyone!
- III. **Approval of Minutes /Secretary’s Report** – Chantel Crews. Minutes from the Annual Meeting will be presented at a later date, and Tonya will distribute to the Council. No action was taken.
- IV. **Treasurer’s Report** – Ralph Brock reported he recently received \$7,240.00 in dues payments. Membership numbers are down eleven from this time last year, but we will likely get more members’ dues in the next few months. The Section’s balance is \$16,068.81, so we are doing very well. T-shirt sales are in the red currently by the amount of \$371.24. Numbers from the Annual Meeting booksale are \$1,365.00 net and \$2,933.00 in income. Ralph has also presented a budget for the State Bar of Texas (“SBOT”) on behalf of the Council. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer’s report and to approve the budget. The motion passed unanimously.
- V. **Old Business**
 - A. **Annual Meeting**
 1. **Awards** – Tonya Carter reported the 2007 Ma’at Justice Award was presented to Ileta A. Sumner of San Antonio, and the 2007 Sarah T. Hughes Award was presented to Judge Judith Guthrie of Tyler.
 2. **Diversity Forum** – Andrea Johnson reported on the Diversity Forum. The original idea for the diversity forum started as “Breadwinners v. Breadmakers.” The idea expanded quickly, and Andrea worked with the office of Minority Affairs as well as other Section Councils in order to put this forum together. The forum featured great speakers – judges, general counsel, and others. Andrea served as the moderator of two forums – “View from the Top” and “View from the Trenches.” The forums were dynamic and were standing room only. The audience participated, and the WAL Section Council received great notoriety from the forums. Andrea has written an article on the forums which is getting widespread publication.

3. **Booksale (Donations, Bags)** – Ronnie Harrison reported the Booksale was a success and raised good money for Texas Advocacy Project. She also noted the booksale simply could not happen without the amazing contributions from husbands Leo Ney and Alan Harrison. Ronnie said there were transportation difficulties with the books, as in years past. WestLaw approached us last year, and donated great bags for this year. Since there are too few people participating, the question was raised as to whether it was time for another fundraising idea. It is great that the SBOT gives us CLE books, but the overhead and getting manpower for the event are problematic. Also, there is a question regarding whether the costs in putting this together (economic and manpower) are efficient given the small amount of profit from the event. The idea of a booksale committee was raised, and might be a good way to get Section membership more involved. The council agreed an ad regarding the booksale and committee should be included in the next newsletter. Participating in the booksale might even be an excuse for Section members to attend the SBOT Annual Meeting. Ronnie also suggested getting SBOT CLE staff members to assist with the booksale. Ronnie further suggested the Council look for another charity to which the proceeds from the sale could be contributed.

4. **T-Shirts** – T-shirts are still available for Council members at the price of \$12. The Council really needs to push sales of the remaining t-shirts, especially since the t-shirts include this year's date. The kids' t-shirts sporting the slogan "My Mom is a Legal Goddess" have sold well. The Council agreed the t-shirts should be advertised on our website and in the newsletters. Also the t-shirts could be sold at the Texas Minority Council Program meeting in September and the new lawyer swearing in ceremony on 11/12.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. **Website** – Tonya Carter reported it has been difficult to keep updating the website, and she needs more assistance/manpower. The website address is www.txwomenlawsection.org. Alison McCall volunteered to assist Tonya. Tonya also needs photos of new council members as well as the names of the Ma'at Justice and Sarah T. Hughes winners for 2006. (Also, plaque naming winners of these awards needs to be updated.) Tonya does not have the newsletters from last year on the website, and wants to be sure we keep the website updated with the most current newsletters. Tonya will ask Nicole Gonzlaez to determine the whereabouts of last year's newsletters. Tonya noted there is a discussion forum available on our website, and brought up the idea of providing a brief news piece or op/ed piece per month to generate discussion. She will ask our webmaster how many hits we are currently getting on the website. Tonya also needs the Council members' profiles – she does NOT want resume, but does want to provide our pertinent biographical information in a blurb for the website. She also wants the next newsletter to have Council profiles and pictures.

She will send an e-mail reminder to those unable to physically attend the meeting for this information.

- B. Newsletter** – Nicole Gonzalez will be handling the newsletter this year. Since she is a new Council member, the entire Council needs to assist her. Tonya also stressed the importance of the newsletters actually going out this year since several Council members did not receive last year’s newsletters. The newsletters will be sent in September, January, and April. Tonya will provide the president’s short monthly address to the membership. She wants to encourage the membership to log on to website and put their opinions on the blog. The Council decided the opinion area would be called “WAL – Writing on the Wall.”

1. **Articles** – Please contribute articles for the newsletter!

C. CLE

1. The use of SBOT CLE was discussed briefly. The WAL Section cannot really make money by using SBOT CLE, but the SBOT puts the event together, advertises the CLE, and usually helps to increase attendance. Tonya asked if this was something we would want to explore. She explained the WAL Section did not really make money on Roadshow this year. The Women in the Profession Committee has a book coming out in April 2008 on early women lawyer. The idea was raised regarding possibly collaborating with that Council. Judy Ney said she will approach Women & the Law Council.
2. Roadshow – Carolyn and Ralph are currently working with Dana Garay (nurse/lawyer – on original Roadshow panel) in Lubbock for their September 7 Roadshow CLE. The Roadshow is co-sponsored by the WAL Section and the Lubbock County Women Lawyers. The Lubbock County Bar Association will help send notices out regarding the seminar. Both associations are encouraging attendance. Lunch will be provided (for a charge of \$10). Attendees will be able to receive 1.5 hours of CLE for the bargain price of \$25. Teri Danish is still working on a Roadshow in Brownsville for October or November. Houston will likely try to do a Roadshow, too. Tonya asked whether there needed to be a committee appointed specifically for CLE? The Council determined it would be best to just ask each region to handle and coordinate its own CLE.

D. Membership

1. **Listserv** – Is the listserv being used? The consensus was no. Carol will contact Tonya regarding getting a full list of membership from SBOT to council members. Ralph thinks the list can be generated by county, zip code, or area code.
2. **Brochures** – Shannon did a fabulous job on the brochures! The brochures will be distributed at our Roadshows and really need to be distributed

3. **Member Liaison Appointment** – Tonya asked whether we needed a point person for members to contact? The Council agreed that person should be the Membership Chairman.
- E. Chronology** – where are our archives? UT San Antonio could not store our boxes any longer, and the boxes were sent to SBOT. However, no one knows where those boxes are now. One council member suggested including a request for any old chronology records in the next newsletter. Someone needs to contact SBOT archives – Cathy Cannon was going to do this last year. Tonya will contact Carmen to see what was going on with North Texas and UT San Antonio regarding our archives. Shannon said she could contact UT Tyler or the Women’s Museum in Dallas to house records. The Council has tapes of oral history, but no one knows where all of those tapes are or what tapes we actually have. Cathy Cannon had a list. Tonya also encouraged the Council to think about women’s histories we need to obtain now – seems like an automatic list would be Sarah T. Hughes Award winners.

VII. New Business

- A. Reaching out to our members/member contact** – Tonya explained member contact is very important, and we are not the only section struggling with membership. She reported she learned at the Bar Leaders’ Conference that other sections are doing some of the same things the WAL Section is trying to do – CLEs, newsletters, website, awards, collaboration with other sections/schools, t-shirts, scholarships to law schools, webcasts, committees, recruiting at law schools and at induction ceremony, non-attorney membership (provided by bylaws), and word of mouth.

Tonya asked for recommendations – the Council should send postcards to those who did not renew their membership this year. Now would be a good time to send the postcards (and the website address should be included on the correspondence, too). The only drawback to sending postcards is the Council does not get feedback and will not know whether the expense of sending the notices would work. Ralph suggested waiting until September to send the postcards out since SBOT dues are considered delinquent after August 31. There might actually be a few members who would send their dues in by the end of the month.

The Texas Young Lawyers Association (“TYLA”) has 10,000 members, many of whom are women. TYLA should be contacted; perhaps a liaison from TYLA be could be part of WAL.

Out of close to 80,000 lawyers in Texas, 30,000 are members of SBOT sections. Perhaps we should actively recruit younger members who might be looking for a place in the SBOT to get connected. Also, we should collaborate with local women’s bar associations throughout the state. Senior lawyers could be a source of membership, too.

B. Bios/Photos – Tonya requested Council members to get bios and photos to her as soon as possible, and she will get the information on the WAL website and in the newsletter.

C. Annual Meeting 2008 (Houston) (out of order)

Teri reported the possibility of partnering with author Judi Craig, who has a book to be released February 2008 entitled “What It’s Really Like for Women to Practice Law.” She is not a lawyer, but is a Ph.D., and seemed interested in doing something with our Section. Perhaps we could tie the presentation in with a judge or the SBOT depression video in order to get CLE credit. She could also be a keynote speaker at a WAL Section retreat for council/membership?

1. Topics/Agenda – committee to work with Teri (Andrea). Ideas included retention, promotion, women’s images in the law, rainmaking, and the 25th Anniversary of the failure of ERA (submitted to Congress every year, and fails to pass every year).

2. ¼ page ad in Bar Journal – Should this space be used to announce winners of awards and/or advertise annual CLE? The consensus of the Council was we really do not receive nominations by posting the awards in this ad. The item was tabled.

3. Hotel Accommodations? – Solo Practitioners Section often sets up members with discounted rates at certain hotels. Is this something we want to do? While the idea sounds good, a Council member stated she would hate for SBOT to lose money since it provides us with CLE books, tables, etc., for the book sale. The idea was dropped.

4. Awards – Tonya encouraged the Council to start thinking now about potential nominees for the Ma’at Justice and Sarah T. Hughes awards. Tonya asked for volunteers for the awards committee, and Carolyn volunteered. Tonya will ask Mara whether we have any additional Ma’at awards available.

D. Pro-Bono Programs/ SBOT \$1000 winner – Tonya. At Bar Leaders’ Conference, the SBOT talked about sections doing pro-bono programs with a

- E. Personal Profile Info w/SBOT** (complete form or log onto web) – Tonya said this information should be included in newsletter. As of September, SBOT will use the address you have identified (which could be your home address!) for publication. The membership should be informed about this.
- F. Council Retreat?** Ideas were discussed regarding a Council retreat. Would the retreat be open to members? Should we obtain sponsors? Should the retreat piggy-back on other meetings? Can we get discounted hotel rates through SBOT? Could the retreat tie into a webcast? What about Judi Craig as speaker – or does she want a bigger audience like at Annual Meeting? What would be the purpose of the retreat? Meeting/brainstorming? Cost? If this is a working Council meeting, should have option to stay overnight. If just Council members would be attending, there would be no need to disregard Houston. Patricia agreed to brainstorm further on the retreat idea. The Council members wanted to also include significant others.
- G. Legislative Committee?** Tonya noted the idea of a legislative committee has been on WAL Section Council meeting agendas many times. Alison volunteered to help on the committee. Kalynn Laney with SBOT can assist.
- H. Reminder about Reimbursements for Meetings** – please get your reimbursement sheets in to Ralph Brock before the next meeting.

VIII. Next Council Meetings –

Monday, November 12, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. - teleconference

Monday, January 28, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. – teleconference OR retreat on Saturday, January 19, 2008.

Saturday April 12, 2008, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Live meeting in Austin

June 26-28, 2008 – SBOT Annual Meeting in Houston

IX. Other Announcements

We have Molly Ivans on video from a few years ago; this video would be great to distribute, especially since it discusses Ma’at. Also, ideas were requested for small gifts for panelists for Road Show.

- X. Meeting Adjourned** – Tonya adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.