

Women and the Law Section
State Bar of Texas
Austin - October 31, 2009

Meeting Minutes

Attending in person: Chair Andrea Johnson, Chair-Elect Carol Jendrzey, Treasurer Ralph Brock, Patricia Blackshear, Ronnie Harrison, Hon. Carolyn Moore, Hon. Judy Ney, Suzette Patton.

Attending by telephone: Secretary Chantel Crews, Tonya Carter-Clary, Deborah Cordova, Marlene Williams.

Absent: Alison Colvin, Melissa Dorman, Cori Harbour, Mary Evelyn McNamara, Yolanda Odom, Mara Blatt, Teri Danish

I. Call to Order – Chair Andrea Johnson called the meeting to order at 11:17 a.m. Andrea read the Section’s mission statement, which is on our website: To encourage and facilitate the active and effective participation of women in the legal profession and the community. The Council Members introduced themselves, and Andrea discussed the items in the notebooks for those attending the meeting in person.

II. Approval of the Minutes/Secretary’s Report – Chantel Crews presented the Minutes from the Annual meeting which had been e-mailed to the Council prior to the meeting. Carolyn Moore moved to approve the minutes with a second from Judy Ney. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Treasurer’s Report – Ralph Brock presented the Treasurer’s Report, a copy of which had been e-mailed to the Council prior to the meeting. Ralph reported the Section is doing well financially. A dues check from the past quarter was received recently amounting to around \$8,000. The balance of the Section’s checking account is \$20,780.60. Andrea moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented with a second by Carolyn. The report was accepted unanimously.

A. State Bar reception reimbursement. The total for the Section’s portion of the combined reception with General and Solo Practitioners at the Annual Meeting was \$1,400. Ralph reported that it has already been paid.

B. Charges for meeting. The Section Council’s meetings have normally taken place on Saturdays. However, if a meeting goes beyond 1 p.m. at the State Bar building, the Section will have to pay for security (\$35/hour). The SBOT will not waive charge – security is required, especially since the Chief Disciplinary Counsel offices at the State Bar building. The consensus of the Council was to keep meetings on Saturday, and the possibility of meeting at Council members’ offices was also discussed. Patricia Blackshear said she would check with her law firm for next meeting. Marlene Williams said she would also check with her firm in Houston.

IV. Short Report of the Chair from the State Bar Meeting – Andrea discussed the Council of Chairs meeting which took place in September. She said she learned a lot about the SBOT. The main issue discussed at the meeting was disclosure of insurance requiring an attorney to disclose if he or she does not have malpractice insurance. The SBOT has been soliciting information from members; most public hearings have already passed. The final decision regarding the issue will be in made in January 2010. The SBOT still welcomes comments which can submitted via website.

Andrea will put together a one to two paragraph e-mail to the Section membership about issue (will send to Council for approval). The Council generally discussed the pros and cons of the disclosure issue. The SBOT website also lists pros and cons as well as the task force findings. Ronnie Harrison requested the Council to take a position on behalf of the Section. Carolyn suggested allowing individual attorneys to let their opinions be heard, but not to take a stance as a Section. Andrea moved to send an e-mail to the Section membership with attachments. Ralph suggested just sending links to the SBOT website. Andrea accepted the friendly amendment. Carolyn seconded the motion, which carried.

Other things mentioned at the Council of Chairs meeting included MCLE approval will be changing to become more technically savvy. The SBOT is trying to make it easier to make webcasts approved. The current President of the SBOT is also pushing a mentoring program called "After the Bar Exam." The Council discussed whether this mentoring program would be an area of interest for the Section. Judy reported the Women and the Profession Committee was interested in putting together a video geared towards women and recommended the Section join in on the project. Ronnie offered to work with Judy on the mentoring program. Carolyn said Andrea should be featured on the video. Judy said the Sections would get a little blurb at the end of video. Andrea suggested doing a mentoring program and/or an educational program (similar to the presentation at the Annual meeting – smaller version for webcast) and/or "here's what it's like to practice law as a Texas women lawyer" and/or previous roadshows on health care. AJ and Marlene will work on an employment law panel like the June 2009 Annual meeting presentation.

Membership – Carolyn questioned whether we need to nominate a representative to the SBOT Board. Discussion ensued regarding whether this Section is considered a small or medium Section.

V. Committee Reports

A. Website (Tonya, C.) Lily Hewgley, the Web Designer for Sections of the SBOT approached section chairs asking if we needed assistance. The Council determined that if there is no charge, we should utilize Lily's assistance. Andrea will contact her to see if there is a charge, and also Lily thinks needs to be changed.

Tonya said she needed the minutes to post on the website from 2005. Chantel will send what minutes she has to Tonya. Tonya also asked for legislative reports and Council members' pictures. Andrea said she would send legislative reports on employment issues, and would also send those to Marlene for review and comment. Ralph suggested including information about any referendums, and Judy suggested highlighting any state elections with women candidates.

B. Newsletter (Patricia B./Carol J.) – The newsletter also needs to be updated on the Section website. Several members of the Council reported they had not received the newsletter. Andrea suggested collection articles from both Council members and Section members. The next newsletter could feature an introduction to Council members. The newsletter should go out three times per year. If anyone would like to submit an article, please do so by 11/20. Andrea will send out an e-mail out this week soliciting articles. The next newsletter will be published by the end of December or the first part of January.

C. CLE – Women’s health, time management, employment law

1. For State Bar meeting – June 10-11, Fort Worth

a. Andrea provided a brief recap of last CLE program from the Annual Meeting.

b. Carol Jendrzey solicited ideas for the next CLE program. A committee will be designated to brainstorm on ideas for the next CLE program, and then sent to the Council for a decision at the January Council meeting. Suggestions discussed during the meeting included commercial law, i.e., what women need to know about running a business, national healthcare, and how women are portrayed in the media. Andrea said she thought the Council would still be part of the diversity forum. Suzette, Carolyn and Tonya will assist Carol in brainstorming for CLE ideas.

2. “Roadshow” status and CLE approval – Tabled. Andrea will e-mail Carmen Samaniego for an update.

3. Andrea discussed a possible Texas Bar Webcast to be taped in Austin. The WAL presentation from June 2009 SBOT Annual meeting could be reprised. No action was taken.

4. Membership - A current list of members, the Section bylaws, and three different spreadsheets were presented to the Council members attending the meeting in Austin. Andrea reminded the Council that we need to reach out to former members, and Tonya suggested being prepared to let them know what this Section has to offer. Andrea moved to send an e-mail to those who did not renew their membership, and the e-mail will be sent to the Council for approval. Carolyn seconded the motion. The motion carried. The membership application should also be featured on our website. Andrea said she would work with Melissa Dorman to update information to the SBOT regarding the Council. Andrea also said she wants to encourage communication with Section members. The Council discussed using Facebook and Twitter and other social networking sites to communicate with and reach the Section membership. Andrea said she would research these ideas. Tonya suggested a mid-year meeting with members as a networking opportunity, and offered the country club to which she belongs as a meeting place. Andrea will also solicit nominations for Council members and officers. The Membership Committee will consist of Mary Evelyn McNamara, Marlene, Judy and Carolyn.

5. Chronology – Ronnie reported she still needed to look through boxes of old Section membership documents. She will contact Shannon Dacus as well. Andrea suggested she write a column in the newsletter regarding some of the history of the Section.

VI. Other Business

- A. Section Meeting - Annual State Bar Meeting (June 2010 - Fort Worth)
 - 1. Andrea provided a brief recap of State Bar meeting/Diversity Forum 2009
 - 2. See the WAL Section CLE for the SBOT Annual Meeting discussion above.
- B. Award nominations for 2010 meeting – Andrea directed the in-person attendees to review the description for the Ma'at & Sarah T. Hughes awards. The SBOT website provides a description of the criteria for the awards and lists the former winners of the awards. Andrea requested a committee for a serious search for nominations for the 2010 awards. Chantel will take lead with Marlene, Deborah, and Mara. Nominations will be solicited via e-mail to Council and Section members. Andrea requested everyone on the Council to review the qualifications for each of the awards.
- C. Professional liability disclosure issue – see discussion above.
- D. Council Retreat – The Council discussed getting together, but noted it does not have to be at a resort or spa. No action was taken.

VII. Next Meetings. Andrea set the next meetings as follows:

Saturday, January 23, 2010, Austin – in person or telephone

Saturday, March 6, 2010, Austin – in person or telephone

Monday, May 3, 2010, by phone only

Andrea announced the upcoming Texas Women Lawyers CLE announcement. WAL Section brochures could be added to the CLE goodie bags if the Section were a sponsor. This could be a great marketing opportunity for the Section. A motion was made to be a sponsor of the TWL CLE at \$250. The motion carried.

VIII. Adjournment – Andrea adjourned the meeting at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chantel Crews
Secretary