

Banack's Bencher News #51

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BAR ADMISSION REFORM: If you have not already done so, please review the task force report to be debated in convocation on December 5, 2003. To view the report electronically, you can visit the following site: http://www.lsuc.on.ca/news/pdf/convoct03_continuum1.pdf. Please forward your comments to me, or to any other bencher or the Treasurer so that your thoughts may be circulated and considered by Convocation.

FREE BAR ADMISSION MATERIAL: The highly regarded, well-known bar admission course reference material is now available on line for the first time at no charge. In order to access this information, please visit <http://ecom.lsuc.on.ca/index.html?/html/bac/bacHome.html>.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETENCE: The Law Society has developed substantive law resources, practice management resources and programs available to assist members in our professional development. There are currently 51 "products" available, including matters as diverse as bookkeeping, mentoring and time management. Brochures are available for our use and client education. For more information visit www.lsuc.on.ca/services_en.jsp (Bilingual material is equally available).

SOLE PRACTITIONER AND SMALL FIRM TASK FORCE: This important initiative co-chaired by Mr. Abe Feinstein and Ms. Judith Potter, has begun its work by undertaking the design of a survey to study the pressing issues throughout 2004.

PRO BONO LAW ONTARIO: Following a successful conference in 2003, Convocation approved the Law Society's support for a first province-wide pro bono conference to be held in May, 2004. It is expected that this further conference will focus on developing a pro bono culture, social responsibility and legal practice, pro bono models in Ontario and global perspectives on access to justice.

LAWYERS' FUND FOR CLIENT COMPENSATION: The Fund exists to compensate clients victimized by lawyers' dishonesty. The number of claims to the Fund at September, 2003 was 195 compared to 181 as at December 31, 2002. The Fund balance as at September, 2003 was approximately \$10.3 million. As a result of the claims experience and fund balance, it was possible to reduce the contribution lawyers make by way of our annual levy from \$280.00 to \$230.00.

LIBRARYCO INC.: LibraryCo manages the County and District law library system to develop and enhance skills for the "competent lawyer" in Ontario. There are 48 libraries across the Province staffed, according to size, on a part time or full time basis. In 2003, LibraryCo distributed \$4.6 million in grants and, on average, \$42,500.00 in centralized purchases for each of the 48 law libraries. More information and services provided by LibraryCo can be reviewed at <http://www.libraryco.ca>.

SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: Recently approved changes in the program are to be implemented in the coming year. For 2003, specialists must complete 12 hours of CLE directly related to their specialty area. However, commencing January, 2004, specialists must complete not less than 50 hours of self study in their specialty area and not less than 18 hours of relevant professional development, at least 6 of which consist of participation in approved CLE programs. By March 31, 2004, specialists must file a report demonstrating compliance during the previous calendar year with the program policies. Failure to do so will result in revocation of certification. By now, specialists should have received an invoice for next year, as well as the particulars of the program effective 2004. For more information, contact the Law Society at 416-947-3932, or 1-800-668-7380 (ext. 3932) or visit http://www.lsuc.on.ca/services/scp_redesign_en.jsp.

LAWYERS FEED THE HUNGRY PROGRAM: The legal community raised over \$150,000.00 at a fundraiser to support the program. More than 1,350 meals weekly are served from the Law Society cafeteria by volunteers including lawyers, judges, law students, legal staff and friends who cook, serve and clean up. As a result of dedicated volunteer support, all donations go directly towards paying for food purchases and supplies for the program with no administrative costs. Volunteers are always welcome. Donations may be sent to the Law Society Foundation, c/o Lawyers Feed the Hungry, Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON, M5H 2N6.

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