

Banack's Benchers News #56

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FEED THE HUNGRY PROGRAM: Since 1998, this program has become very important to Toronto's less fortunate citizens. Each week, more than 100 volunteers, including lawyers, judges, law students, legal staff and friends cook, clean and serve approximately 1500 meals. The program is not possible without dedicated volunteers and financial contributions from the legal community and other supporters. To ensure the ongoing success of the program, a fundraising gala is scheduled to be held on Saturday, January 29, 2005 at the Carllu Theatre. For more information, please contact Ms. Mary Shena (416-947-3946 or mshena@lsuc.on.ca).

OSGOODE HALL: For those interested in legal history and architecture, John Honsberger's recently published "Osgoode Hall, An Illustrated History" is a must read, marking the 25th anniversary of the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History. Beginning with the \$1,000.00 purchase of the land, Honsberger's account captures the beauty of various court rooms, details of the Great Library and history of the building. The book, published by Dundurn Press is available at book stores.

PARALEGALS: After years of study and consultation and more study and more consultation, hopefully the new year will see the Attorney General introduces legislation. The window of opportunity that will ensure passage of a new law during the tenure of this government is not unlimited. If legislation is not quickly forthcoming, one can only speculate how many more years might pass before the public is properly protected from the unregulated and uninsured work of unsupervised paralegals.

LAW SOCIETY GOVERNANCE: Benchers have spent years considering, studying and discussing the strengths and weaknesses of our current governance structure. After reducing the number of standing committees in years past, pressures have found another way of keeping Benchers occupied through the establishment of numerous task forces. In fact, we even now have a Governance Task Force, including three former Treasurers. It is expected to report to Convocation by June, 2005.

MORE TASK FORCES: Having created a Tribunals' Task Force and debating its terms of reference, Convocation concluded the proposed objectives could not be fulfilled by a single Task Force. Hence, an Investigations Task Force has been struck for which terms of reference must be determined and members selected.

ARTICLING: In preparing for the new licensing program to commence in 2006, it was necessary to assess the length of the articling term and enhanced educational supports that might be appropriate. A recently conducted survey indicated that both principals and recently called members overwhelmingly felt that the current ten month articling term is sufficient and is a valuable process in preparing students for the practice of law. The survey findings suggest that there are no glaring deficiencies in the current articling process which likely means it will remain unchanged in the near future. Additionally, it is anticipated students will be provided with ongoing support in respect of Skills Development, Substantive/Procedural Development and Professional/Personal Development. However, the Substantive Bar Admission Teaching Program will be discontinued. Check the Law Society website for the complete report from the Professional Development, Competence & Admissions Committee.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS: The Law Society Medal and the Lincoln Alexander Award recognize lawyers who have made significant contributions to the profession or demonstrated long-standing interest and commitment to the public through the pursuit of community service. Letters of nomination must be delivered to the office of the Treasurer by no later than February 25, 2005.

LAW SOCIETY MEMORABILIA: Never wanting to miss an opportunity to be of service to the Profession, the Law Society offers a catalogue of specially selected products, which may be purchased to celebrate a special occasion or mark a professional milestone. Visit the e-transactions area of the Law Society website.

SILLY SEASON: The new year will bring a fresh round of campaigning by those aspiring to be elected to succeed Frank Marrocco as Treasurer. The Winter months will see supporters and those campaigning for the office of Treasurer, urging all of the Benchers with a vote (which includes former Treasurers) to support a particular candidate. The "campaign" often gives rise to peculiar performances in Convocation. Stay tuned.

HAVE A HEALTHY, SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

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