

Banack's Bencher News #72

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PARALEGAL APPLICATIONS: The deadline for submitted applications to be grandparented as a paralegal licensee ended on October 31, 2007. 2171 applications were received. For those qualified, grandparent examinations will be held in January, February and April, 2008. It is anticipated that the first group of qualified paralegals will be licensed by March, 2008. Based on current projections, the regulation of paralegals should be self-sustaining.

AUDIT COMMITTEE: The Audit Committee has reported in respect of the Law Society's third quarter General Fund financial statements. There was no significant concern or anomalies. Overall, expenses are tracking close to 2006 figures with a few exceptions. The most notable is the projected cost for outside counsel in the Regulatory Division. Approximately \$1.5 Million may be expended in that respect in contrast with the budgeted amount of \$950,000.00. The significant increase is generally attributable to a number of sensitive or unusual matters such as the use of experts on mortgage fraud cases and matters involving complex issues, court interventions and highly contested unauthorized practice matters.

PAKISTAN LEGAL SYSTEM: On November 9, 2007, the Law Society issued a media release condemning the actions of the President of Pakistan in the dismissal of the country's Chief Justice, other judges, the abrogation of the rule of law and the reported detention of 3,500 lawyers and civil rights activists. In addition, the Canadian Bar Association organized a march of protest in Ottawa on November 26, 2007. In Toronto, a gathering of over 300 lawyers met at the encouragement of the Ontario Bar Association and the Law Society. In the face of such abhorrent behaviour, it is important for Ontario lawyers to support members of the legal profession in Pakistan to maintain the independence of the judiciary and promote the rule of law in that country.

CIVIL JUSTICE REFORM: On November 22, 2007, the Honourable Coulter Osborne released his summary of findings and recommendations solicited by then Ontario Attorney General, Michael Bryant. To review the 81 findings and recommendations, visit: www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/pubs/cjrp/. Some of the recommendations are self-evident, can be implemented without significant cost and should see the light of day as soon as possible. The balance, however, will require further study and funding commitments by the Provincial Government. It is incumbent upon all members of the profession to examine the report and provide input through our various provincial legal organizations so that the impact of the report is considered from every perspective throughout the Province.

LAW SOCIETY PRIORITIES: A Priority Planning Committee will report to Convocation during the first half of 2008 in respect of the nine priority areas identified by Benchers during a planning session held in September, 2007. This process is intended to identify the most important issues to be addressed by the Law Society during the next four years. The priority areas are:

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| Discipline | Access to Justice | Regulation of Paralegals |
| Small Firms and Sole Practitioners | Governance Structure | Strategic Communications |
| Diversity Within the Profession | Licensing and Accreditation | Maintenance of High Standards & Ensuring Effective Competence |

2008 PUBLIC EDUCATION SERIES:

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| Black History Month – February 6 | Southasian Heritage Month – May 12 |
| Access Awareness – February 26 | National Aboriginal Day – June 16 |
| Women's International Day – March 5 | Pride Week – June 24 |
| Elimination of Racial Discrimination – March 14 | Louis Riel Day – November 13 |
| National Holocaust Memorial Day – April 30 | |

In order to more fully understand the issues facing Convocation, you may wish to review previous editions of Banack's Bencher News at http://www.kmlaw.ca/publications/banacks_bencher_news_home.aspx.

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