



NEWS

*Vol. 14: No.2**Founded 1987**Serving the Interests of Lawyers Dedicated to Government Service*

GBA Announces Discount to CIWBA Members

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Illinois Government Bar Association has worked out an arrangement with the Central Illinois Women's Bar Association to give a discount to those dual members for our fiscal year 2011! The current membership fee is \$25 for members of the GBA and this will be reduced to \$20 for those that are already members of the CIWBA or who plan to be new members of the CIWBA in their fiscal year 2011. The CIWBA currently charges \$35 for membership. The CIWBA will reciprocate this discount and begin charging \$30 for new and renewing members that are also members of the GBA.

R. Patino

October's Luncheon: A New Era At the Top

Ted Chung talked at the October's luncheon which was a GBA's sponsored event at Maldaner's about how he came to be the General Counsel of Illinois' current Governor, Pat Quinn. He talked about how he had been working in private practice for a few years when he saw on the news that the former Governor Rod Blagojevich was arrested. He had been engaged to participate on an ethics reform commission by the then, Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn. He was later asked to become the General Counsel and when he entered the office, the morale of the attorneys that had worked under the former Governor Rod Blagojevich was extremely low.

Ted talked about the challenges of coming up to speed on the complexity and vastness of the many different structures that existed at the various state agencies and understanding their relationships. There are over 500 full-time lawyers outside the constitutional officers' offices and that many agencies seemed to be siloed. He also noted how there had not been an effort with the previous administration to integrate the lawyers at the higher levels and the relationships at those levels appeared to be stressed. Ted recognized these challenges and emphasized that an effective, ethical policy had to be developed to restore confidence that needed to be centered on transparency. Once that policy was developed, it had to be communicated effectively to the various agencies across the state.

Ted stressed his desire to treat state attorneys as a "firm" so that the attorneys would feel unified. He wanted to maximize the potential of the various agencies and enhance basic legal and problem solving skills. Attorneys working for the state

often struggle with the question, "To whom do we owe our highest duties?" Is it the agency directors, administration, the people of the state, or to the profession? Ted Chung promised to work with the various state agencies to help address these questions and others to manage these perceived conflicting duties.

R. Patino

November's Luncheon: Legal Issues Related to Pension Benefits



The Honorable Tom Gray, mayor of Chatham and the General Counsel of the Illinois Teacher's Retirement System (TRS), spoke to

Upcoming Events:

Government Bar Association:

- Feb. 18 – February Luncheon @ Maldaner's: Pat Delfino
- Mar. 18 – March Luncheon @ Maldaner's: Paul Miller
- Apr. 22 – April Luncheon @ Maldaner's: Kent Redfield
- Jun. 10 – 2.0 hr CLE Professionalism Course and GBA Annual Party @ SIU School of Medicine

Sangamon County Bar Association:

- Mar. 26 – Lawyers Assistance Program dinner @ Governor's Mansion

Central Illinois Women's Bar Association:

- Feb. 16 – Luncheon @ Maldaner's: Amanda Lundeen on FIOA
- Feb. 18 – Luncheon @ Sojourn Shelter Fundraiser @ the Alamo from 5 – 8 PM

a group of attorneys during the GBA's November luncheon at Sebastian's Hideout. He stated that the TRS is the 38th largest pension fund in the U.S. and has over 165,000 active members. The TRS currently maintains a \$3.8 billion/yr payroll. An 80% funded pension is considered "good" and the TRS resides at roughly 50%. Government plans are exempt from ERISA which requires a higher percentage of funding for their pension plan. The pension fund was not set up because of state law, but because Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code allows tax deferred income.

The TRS retirement plan has to operate for the exclusive benefit of its members and cannot be used as a piggybank for the government. Hon. Gray also mentioned several of the nuances that he has to deal with including Social Security, income raising limitations, FOIA, divorces and estate planning issues.

R. Patino



2009 Christmas Party

The annual Government Bar Association Christmas Party was held on December 10, 2009 at D. H. Browns. Approximately 35 people attended and had a wonderful time drinking wine and beer and enjoying hot and cold appetizers.

A silent auction was once again held to help raise money for our scholarship fund. Frank Martinez once again did an outstanding job getting donations for the auction. Mayor Tim Davlin and John Jones donated wine gift baskets from the Corkscrew Wine Emporium. Tim Moore, on behalf of Thompson West, donated a filled basket worth approximately \$80.00. Carol Kirbach donated a gift certificate to Popeye's. Maldaner's Restaurant also donated a gift certificate. Lee Beneze donated an assortment of books. Tom and Michelle Andryk donated a relaxation/spa gift basket. Barbara Rowe donated a wine and biscuit basket; Arden Lang donated wine; and Don Tracy gave a \$150.00 cash donation.

Almost \$450.00 was raised for the scholarship fund. The Government Bar Association Board decided to raise the scholarship this year to \$750.00. If anyone knows of a deserving law student interested in government law in Illinois, who would like to apply for the scholarship, please have them

contact either Frank Martinez or Barbara Rowe for the application information. The scholarship application information will once again be sent to the law schools in Illinois.

B. Rowe

January's Luncheon: County Governance



Andy Van Meter, the Sangamon County Board Chairman, gave a talk at the GBA's January luncheon about issues related to running a county government, including managing the budget and raising revenue. In a departure from just a normal lecture, Andy chose to give a more trivia driven "Q & A" type discussion on various facts that the audience may not have known about the county. For instance, the county budget in 2010 was roughly \$92 million and that the sheriff's department's share of that budget is approximately \$15 million. Andy commented on other issues with the budget such as state mandates which don't provide funding for those programs and union contract negotiations.

Andy also discussed some of the differences between the powers of the county board versus the power of the city council of Springfield. The county board cannot raise property taxes without asking voters; however, the city of Springfield is allowed to raise property taxes because it enjoys a "home rule status". Andy explained that it is the Assessor who is initially responsible for property value assessment in the county; however, in Springfield, the county clerk is responsible for assessing the property's value. It is the increase in property value that "raises" the amount we pay in property tax each year. The county is responsible for collecting the property tax each year. If a tax payer is unhappy with the value being assessed to their home, he may go to the Board of Review to challenge the assessment.

R. Patino

Officers & Board Members

President: Robert Patino - 217-545-8168 - rpatino@siumed.edu

Vice President: Lee Beneze - 217-524-7945 - lee.beneze@illinois.gov

Secretary: Carol Kirbach - 217-785-4471 - Carol.Kirbach@illinois.gov

Treasurer: Lydia Mills - Lydia.S.Mills@illinois.gov

Directors at Large:

Jennifer Kuntz - 217-753-6690 - Jrkuntz@juno.com

Frank Martinez - 217-789-2393 - Frank.Martinez@cwlp.com

Barbara Rowe - 217-785-6528 - bsrowe@sbcglobal.net

Tim Moore - 217-525-9255 - tim.moore@thomson.com

Arden Lang - 217-785-2288 - arden.lang@osad.state.il.us

Shari West - 217-558-0014 - shari.west@illinois.gov

Previous Past President - Ed Schoenbaum - 217-546-4897 -

JudgeEdS@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Robert Patino rpatino@siumed.edu