

**Georgia Defense Lawyers Association**  
**Fall 2004 Board of Directors Meeting Highlights**

**Lake Oconoe, GA**

**October 16, 2004**

The meeting was called to order by President Grant Smith. In attendance were: President Grant Smith; Vice President John A. Foster; Secretary/Treasurer Warner Fox; board members: Staten Bitting, Bubba Hughes, Bob Travis, David Whitworth, David Nelson, George Hall, Luanne Clarke, Steve Kyle, Mel Haas, Walter McClelland, Lynn Roberson, Jo Jagor, past presidents Steve Kyle and George Duncan and executive director, Steve Milano.

The winter board meeting minutes were adopted unanimously

**Treasurer's Report**

Warner Fox reported the association's current cash on hand and receiveables. The association's current debts were primarily composed of charges owed to San Destin, for Web site development, printing and CLE expenses.

There was a discussion of the amicus committee and that Johnny Foster would contact Ted Freeman to get an update. It was noted that there should be a mention of the amicus committee in the newsletter. It was determined that guidelines for the publication of an amicus brief would be set forth in an upcoming GDLA Journal.

**Membership**

Johnny Foster presented the membership report. A motion was made to admit the following new members, and all were adopted and approved unanimously:

Cannon Alsobrook, Savell & Williams; Phillippa Victoria Ellis, Owen, Gleaton, Egan, Jones & Sweeney; Anne Westbrook Garliss, Callaway, Braun, Riddle & Hughes; Wayne S. Melnick, Gray, Rust, St. Amand, Moffett & Brieske; Carol P. Michel, Weinberg, Wheeler, Hudgins, Gunn & Dial; William L. Swank, Greer, Klosik, Daugherty, Swank and McCune; James R. Westbury, Jr., Mullins, Walen & Westbury

Thereafter, there was a discussion regarding a list of delinquent/ removed/resigned members. This was a list compiled by Steve Milano. On this list were 33 delinquent members. It was determined that Steve Milano would divide those names among the board members and that each board member would call the delinquent member assigned to him/her and try and convince them to return to good standing within the organization. As to the removed/resigned list, again, Steve Milano is going to divide those names and some of these individuals will receive follow up calls from board members.

George Duncan discussed his concerns about the membership policies of the organization. He believes a comprehensive study needs to be undertaken regarding the possibility of dropping the GDLA initiation fee. It was determined that a committee should be appointed to study the economics of this and George volunteered along with Mel Haas, Jo Jagger, and George Hall. It was also discussed that there has been a

comparison of DRI members in Georgia who are not also GDLA members. A letter was sent to approximately 450 such individuals and we obtained 10-12 new members from this. Steve Milano proposed putting together a packet of information regarding the association to send to potential members.

It was also mentioned that perhaps a luncheon could be held for targeted non-members. Additionally, George Duncan, as he goes through the list of delinquents/removed/resigned members, will try to identify a number of large firms who seem to have limited participation in the organization. Past presidents will be asked to approach these firms with the inclusion of young lawyers from the organization to press these firms to support the organization. Steve Kyle will attempt to pick past presidents along with young lawyers to assist in this endeavor. Steve Milano will prepare a list matching firm names of members so that we can identify larger firms that have only a few members.

### **Sponsorships**

Johnny Foster discussed our current sponsors. We now have nine sponsors, one of which is Silver (S), five Gold (G) and three Platinum (P). Those sponsors are:

A.J. Gallagher - S  
Benedict Engineering - G  
Exponent Failure Analysis - G  
Forcon International - P  
Georgia Lawyers Ins. - P  
Insurance Specialists - P  
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual - G  
Rimkus Consulting - G  
Special Counsel - G

Steve Milano reported the income from sponsors over the last 12 months. Most of them, as far as we know, are renewing in the Spring. There was also a discussion of adding additional sponsors in different categories and several suggestions were made regarding different areas of sponsorship.

Staten Bidding discussed the Workers' Compensation Academy. This will be held the day after the GDLA winter board meeting and the Judge's Reception. The Judge's Reception will take place on Thursday night, February 10th at the Capital City Club. The Board Meeting will be from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on February 10th at Hawkins & Parnell in Atlanta.

A brief discussion was held about the Trial Academy. The plans are progressing well, although it was noted that more immediate advertising needs to be done in order to secure appropriate attendance.

### **Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting was discussed by Steve Kyle. This year we initially incurred a penalty of \$6,500 relating to food costs. This has been negotiated down to \$2,100. We narrowly avoided a room penalty. Mr. Kyle discussed at length the problems we are having with last minute no-shows and cancellations which continue to cost the association significant funds. It was determined that for the time being we will not ask members to pay if they cancel unless we incur expenses on their behalf, but it will be reiterated to members the importance of attending if they have indicated that they will do so. Steve Kyle is

developing a systematic marketing approach for the upcoming annual meeting in Ponte Vedra. It is noted that this meeting will conflict with the State Bar Meeting on June 16th. Johnny Foster is trying to develop a program that will rely primarily on judges, but notes that this is somewhat problematic given the conflict with the State Bar meeting. A discussion was held about having the annual meeting for 2006 in Bermuda. It was determined that this will likely be accomplished with a date in early June. It was also noted that we are going to try and hold the spring board meeting in Bermuda, probably April 14 through April 17. It was also discussed that we are going to try and make every third year of the annual meeting a "couples program" as opposed to a program catering to the family. It is hoped that this will increase attendance.

### **Newsletter**

The newsletter was also discussed at length. It was noted that Steve Milano has done a great job putting together the newsletter and that the format has looked much better than it has in the past. The cost for the current newsletter is \$1,628 whereas the cost for the Fall 2004 newsletter was \$1,881. A discussion was held as to whether or not we should submit the newsletter to Apex for the potential of an award. It was decided that we should not submit it.

### **Law Journal**

The GDLA *Law Journal* was discussed by Luanne Clarke. The Law Journal is ready to go although she is waiting on a few items. There was a discussion held as to whether the new Law Journal should be forwarded to members as an electronic version or as a hard copy. It was also discussed whether the Law Journal should be mailed to all Judges in a hard copy and that it must look professional for this purpose. Steve Milano will get bids on the Law Journal in either the hard format or the electronic format (CD). A decision will be made by the Executive Committee as to which route to go with respect to the Law Journal. With this year's dues notice there will be a question asked of the members as to whether or not they want the Law Journal on disc or print. We will use this "questionnaire" to determine how we want to proceed with the Law Journal in the future. There was also a discussion about abandoning the journal format and instead, incorporating it into the newsletter. It was determined that the newsletter itself would not be sent to judges. However, it was determined that we will publish, to the extent possible, journal-type articles in the newsletter and at the end of the year these articles will be put into a compilation as the GDLA Journal and sent to Judges.

### **Web Site**

Steve Milano discussed that the Web site is updated and now up and running. A discussion was held about an expert witness database and discovery tools/brief banks. It was noted that on a questionnaire sent last year this was the number one request of members. Gary Seacrest is to send follow-up e-mail blasts to the members regarding expert witness and brief banks. During the Board Meeting Steve Milano circulated a list of 17 different areas regarding discovery tools/brief banks and various members of the board volunteered to send to Steve Milano, for inclusion within the brief bank/discovery tools those items. Steve is to remind the board members of the areas in which they volunteered.

### **YLS Section**

Jo Jagor discussed the younger lawyers section committee and noted that she has the

names of a number of people who want to write for either the Law Journal or the newsletter. Jo was also asked if she could put together another CLE and Skits & Suds program which was successful last year. There was also discussion of the possibility of the younger lawyers section of the GDLA holding a career-oriented program at the annual meeting.

### **Legislation**

There was a discussion of the legislative liaison, Barry Fleming. It was noted that it is not against tax laws for us to be active, but the bylaws of the organization are against it. It was noted that not all members are "on the same page" with respect to legislative concerns.

### **DRI**

A discussion was held regarding the board members attendance at the DRI Annual Meeting. It was determined that reasonable expenses would be paid for the executive committee members and the executive director who attended as well as the DRI liaison. This is not to include any expenses associated with spouses.

### **New Business**

A discussion was held regarding GDLA blast e-mails and the fact that there have been some complaints regarding the content of certain e-mails. It was discussed that these blast e-mails need to be limited to certain types of inquiries, primarily about judges, jurisdictions, experts and legal issues. No political announcements or certain agendas should be contained within the content of a GDLA blast e-mail. George Ellington and George Hall are to put together a policy regarding GDLA blast e-mails which will be published on the GDLA site.

It was also determined that the executive committee and Steve Milano are to come up with a "slogan" for the GDLA so as to better identify it in its position within the state's legal organizations.

There being no further business, the meeting was dismissed.