



Chairperson's Report

by Brian Henry

The Real Property Law Section is comprised of lawyers who want the Section to flourish. Over the years, the Section has evolved in many ways.

Our Summer Conference has moved from a large lecture format to smaller workshops and breakfast roundtables. Non-lawyers have been asked to lead roundtable discussions on relevant topics. We have solicited outside speakers for the Saturday morning session to obtain information and humor about topics beyond the practice of law. Materials are now distributed electronically, rather than in large notebooks.

At the Summer Conferences, the Section now assigns "seasoned" lawyers to younger lawyers to answer questions and to help them meet new people. We have modified our Summer Conference programming to provide more basic seminars so that newer lawyers can learn more about the fundamentals in various areas.

Homeward Bound programs were originally administered solely by the Section. After some thoughtful discussion, Homeward Bound became collaborative with ICLE. With the support of ICLE technology, the Homeward Bound programs became available both online and live. Any presentation can be viewed electronically after the live presentation.

The Technology Committee continues to explore more efficient ways for our member to access content and store seminar materials. Many exciting options are now being evaluated.

Our Membership Committee has scheduled social events and educational programs for newer lawyers. A mentorship program was created and has evolved into the "Next Level" program so that new members can take their involvement to the "next level." We want to make it easier for any lawyer to become more involved in the Section and contribute to both seminars and publications. We want to make the "path to leadership" roles simpler and easier.

The Next Level Program will continue to evolve as we find additional creative ways to serve our newer members.

All of these innovations were possible because our members want the Section to maintain a standard of excellence in educational programs and in membership. Every lawyer deals with numerous time demands, but our members continue to find time to devote to initiatives to move the Section forward.

Our most recent Summer Conference on Mackinac Island was a great success and showcased additional innovation. At our opening meeting, each of our Committees Chairs provided a brief summary of their work, their meeting schedule, and their focus for the upcoming year. John U. Bacon served as our Saturday morning speaker and conducted an engaging exercise with various teams being challenged to develop "unrealistic ideas regarding uses for a broomstick." John's exercise taught that outlandish ideas often are the foundation of genius.

The Law Revision Commission has asked our Section to examine the impact of same sex marriages upon current legislation affecting real estate. David Pierson leads the Ad Hoc Committee that will examine existing law and recommend whether changes are necessary. In addition, David's committee is examining the related impact upon dower, tenancy by the entirety and related legal concepts. This Ad Hoc Committee facilitated two lively roundtable discussions on these topics at the Summer Conference on Mackinac Island. The Section will keep its members informed as the effort of this Ad Hoc Committee progresses.

I again want to thank David Pierson for his leadership as Chair during the 2014-2015 year. He served as my mentor as I progressed through the various officer responsibilities for the Section.

I look forward to serving as Chair this year. Many opportunities lie ahead.