


2016 IS JUST GETTING STARTED

Michael Tubach

It's hard to believe, but I am already more than a third of the way through my year as president of The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF). And let me tell you, it has been a busy four months—the kind of busy that reminds us why BASF continues to be a leader for bar associations around the country.

Here's a quick snapshot.

STRATEGY In the hustle and bustle of running an organization with 7,000 members, 44 sections, 250 CLEs a year, not to mention a medium-sized law firm in the Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) with almost \$20 million in annual “revenue” donated by our volunteers, it is easy not to take the time to step back and reflect on where BASF is and where it is headed. This is a mistake for any organization, but particularly so for a volunteer bar organization whose continued vitality—and even existence—depend on remaining relevant to its members and the legal community it serves. So this year we are working on strategic direction building and asking BASF, JDC, and Barristers Club board members to take stock of where we are and where we want to be in five and ten years.



INCUBATOR As I mentioned in my inaugural address in December, BASF is creating an incubator for legal talent—a way to marry the many recent law school graduates who can't find law jobs with the many people in San Francisco who need a lawyer but cannot afford to pay the high hourly rates that many of us charge. Thanks to the generosity of other incubators around the country who have shared their ideas and materials with us, and to a great committee of staff and attorney volunteers here at BASF, we are making good progress in putting together our incubator. We are calling it the Community Law Practice Incubator (CLPI). We hope to launch in the second quarter.

ELECTION DEBATE No, not that election. I'm talking about the June 7 election for an open seat on the San Francisco Superior Court. Such an election only occurs every once in a while, and this is one of those years. To make sure voters had a chance to evaluate the candidates in person, BASF hosted a judicial forum at which the three candidates who were running participated. BASF Board Member David Carrillo moderated and kept the candidates off balance with “lightning round” questions, incisive follow-up, and the unexpected. We have posted a videotape of the forum on our website for anyone who missed it. As a teaser, I promise you have never heard the last question at any election debate before.



HOMELESS PREVENTION

You would think anyone fortunate enough to reach the age of ninety-nine would not have to worry about being evicted. Unfortunately, that is exactly what faced ninety-nine-year old Iris Canada. JDC's Homeless Advocacy Project (HAP) to the rescue. HAP staff attorney Michael Spalding leaped into action and got the court to grant an emergency stay of eviction.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

The Legal Referral and Information Service (LRIS) turns seventy this year, and it doesn't look a day over twenty-one. LRIS still gets fifty thousand calls a year and still does a great job of matching up clients with high-quality lawyers. Many thanks to Carole Conn, our indefatigable leader of LRIS for many years.

STATE BAR BREAKUP?

Breaking up is hard to do, but there has been talk for a while about "de-unifying" the State Bar of California. In plain English that means the state bar may well be limited to regulating and disciplining members. All of its other functions, in particular the work of its many sections, would be discontinued. What this means for local bars is anyone's guess at this point. But BASF and other local bar associations may need to step in to fill the void created by a "de-unified" state bar. To make sure we're prepared to act nimbly, I have created a task force to study the various proposals and to keep current on this issue. Many thanks to President-Elect Merri Baldwin, Rogers Joseph O'Donnell; Alicia Gámez, Law Office of Alicia M. Gámez; and Maulik Shah, Arnold & Porter, for agreeing to serve on this task force.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

As reported in the last issue, BASF's Criminal Justice Task Force continues its great work. Its work is now being studied and replicated across the state and nation as the task force offers an intellectual, diverse, and neutral perspective to the San Francisco Police Department and the San Francisco Police Commission. The task force and board members continue to meet with San Francisco Police Chief Greg Suhr twice a year, with the last meeting in early May.

All this and more in just four months. I can't wait to see what the rest of the year brings!

Michael Tubach is the 2016 president of The Bar Association of San Francisco. A partner at O'Melveny & Myers, he is the former managing partner of the San Francisco office and is also the former chair of the firmwide Pro Bono Committee. He practices civil litigation and white-collar criminal defense. He can be reached at mtubach@omm.com.