

To: Barristers Board of Directors
From: Ann Coulson
Date: Originally written in March 1992, revised February 9, 1994
Re: Community Law Week History - Long, Tedious and Inaccurate
(Coulson's favorite kind of memo to write)

General History

In 1957, the ABA designated May 1 as "Community Law Day". Since then, the ABA has spent lots of time and money promoting Community Law Day and attempting to get all affiliates to do something to recognize it.

In the 1970's, BASF (mainly Deputy Director Joan Firestone and BASF Committee/Sections Director Barbara Fanning, who gave me this information) initiated a *Law Day Luncheon*. That gradually transmuted into *Community Law Day*, then *Community Law Week*, and finally, *Community Law Month*.

Working with local specialty bars, BASF set up neighborhood legal clinics -- talks by lawyers to the public on topics such as wills or landlord/tenant law -- and booths at street fairs manned by lawyers willing to answer legal questions from all and sundry. During this period, Barristers Law Week programs were organized by the Club's "Youth Law Committee" (later merged in the Club's Community Legal Education Committee) which organized speakers in the schools or mock trial programs.

VLSP Director Tanya Neiman says around 1982 or so she began winnowing down the number of legal advice booths at street fairs, partly due to the low turnout in some locations.

In 1979, BASF and KQED-TV held the first *Call-A-Lawyer* program. This program has been held continuously since then. The 1992 program would or will be the 13th year, depending on whether it takes place. Basically, lawyers at the KQED phone banks (normally used by pledge-takers) answer viewers' call-in questions (off camera). During the three or four program breaks, VLSP and KQED hold short interviews with bar dignitaries about something-or-other. VLSP selects the volunteers for each category and locates experts for those fields. In 1986, Peggy McGee, the Barristers administrative assistant, volunteered Barristers help with arrangements for Call-a-Lawyer, but Call-A-Lawyer has basically been the VLSP staff's organizational responsibility (or nightmare).

Let's Put on a Show!

The Barristers Club organized a rock concert as a fundraiser for VLSP for many years, until 1988, when it mutated into a comedy benefit program with the proceeds earmarked specifically for the Homeless Advocacy Project of the VLSP (at that time, VLSP's newest project.)

The Barristers were also responsible for the CLW Kick-Off Luncheon, which was not a fundraiser.

The Community Law Day that Ate a Month

The Barristers Club finally created a separate CLW Committee in 1987, although this is somewhat unclear from the records. Mark Schickman told me he chaired the CLW committee in 1980, but there are no Club records about the CLW committee before 1987. By 1987 activities included the advice clinics organized by VLSP in conjunction with specialty bar associations (with VLSP training all volunteers), a kick-off luncheon, a benefit rock concert, lawyers speaking in the schools, a mock trial, informational legal seminars for the general public and Call-a-Lawyer.

Making Community Law Week More Practical, or, Every Day is Community Law Day at the Bar Association

In 1989, Community Law Week Chair Carin Fujisaki, with Tanya Neiman's encouragement, decided to use Community Law Week to focus attention on BASF's on-going activities, especially the VLSP's year round activities. BASF staff believed that CLW volunteers in previous years viewed CLW service as satisfying any pro bono obligation for the year. The neighborhood legal clinics sponsored by each specialty bar were dropped, although the VLSP's regularly-scheduled "Legal Advice and Referral Clinic" was publicized as a CLW project. (Please remember that VLSP works with other bar associations on projects, such as the AIDS legal advice and referral clinic, on an on-going basis.) Information was sent to all the co-sponsoring specialty bars' members about special training sessions for the VLSP's year-round programs. The kick-off luncheon was dropped (a money-loser each year, unless Dru Ramey strong-armed law firms to sponsor tables). The Comedy Benefit for the Homeless Advocacy Project was repeated.

1990 activities included nine special training clinics set up by VLSP, which were specially-scheduled versions of the training sessions held on a regular basis throughout the year. VLSP also organized KQED-TV Call-a-Lawyer and two radio call-a-lawyer programs. The Barristers Club called all the local specialty bars to invite them to co-sponsor CLW. Co-sponsorship meant publicizing CLW activities to their members with materials provided by BASF, but did not require any financial contribution. The Barristers worked with 10 bar associations to oversee mailing of a 4-page sign-up form to all their members, as well as mailing the sign-up form to every BASF member and collecting and organizing the sign-up form returns. The Barristers Speakers Bureau organized the speakers in the schools program, with Club staff handling the mailing and returns and the committee "matching" speakers and schools. Speakers in the Schools was by now a year-round Barristers activity. The Barristers also organized the Comedy Benefit for Homeless Advocacy Project.

1991 activities included eight VLSP training clinics, two radio call-a-lawyer programs, KQED-TV Call-A-Lawyer, Speakers in the Schools and the Comedy Benefit and a partridge in a pear tree. The Barristers again coordinated local bars' participation and the CLW activity sign-up cards. The Barristers Community Education Committee organized two seminars for the public on estate planning in the era of AIDS.

What CLW Looks Like at the Moment

The CLW chair (appointed by the Barristers) oversees activities by a number of separate Barristers committees and the VLSP. The CLW chair generally appoints a publicity chair or subcommittee, if she or he can find a victim. BASF staff and the CLW chair attempt to explain to a new group of volunteer representatives from other bar associations the nature of CLW during the course of several planning meetings. No meetings have taken place in 1992, and the Chair (Angie Benjamin Dorward) is involved in a long trial. There is no Vice Chair.

Budget, or, Your Bar Dollars at Work

CLW expenses have been budgeted at \$5,000 as part of BASF's "Public Relations" line item for at least the past six years. In 1991, CLW's budget was \$5,700 and cost \$12,011. No funds have been budgeted for CLW for 1992. The CLW budget does not include Call-a-Lawyer. In 1991, Call-a-Lawyer was budgeted at \$4,000 and cost \$7,600. In 1992, \$4,000 has been budgeted for Call-a-Lawyer.

For the 1991 budget, Ann Coulson asked BASF to reallocate the CLW \$5,000 budget to the Barristers budget so she could keep track of expenses from BASF, VLSP and the Barristers. Call-A-Lawyer would remain in the General Bar budget. Due to an accounting glitch, CLW remained as part of the General Bar publicity budget. For the Barristers Club 1992 budget, Coulson decided against reopening the issue, since adding the CLW budget to the Barristers budget would appear to increase the Barristers expenses in a lean year.

In earlier years, a significant part of the cost was use of an outside public relations firm to create interest in local newspapers and radios. The firm was not terrible successful, and it was decided we could do at least as good a job ourselves for much less money.

Current Activities and Who Organizes Them

The Barristers already has separate committees that organize the following activities:

- ◆ The Speakers Bureau Committee, which sends lawyers to classrooms all year, but makes a big push in the spring and fall
- ◆ The Community Education Committee, which holds other programs during year
- ◆ The Comedy Benefit for Homeless Advocacy Project Committee (only during CLW)

The Barristers also

- ◆ contact all the specialty bar associations requesting cosponsorship of CLW
- ◆ create, print, distribute and allocate responses of 6,500 signup sheets
- ◆ publicize Community Law Week

VLSP organizes the following activities:

- ◆ training clinics - special versions of the monthly clinics VLSP holds throughout the year, and, if I understand correctly, some are joint projects with other specialty bar associations
- ◆ KQED Call-A-Lawyer
- ◆ radio call a lawyer programs

February 9, 1994 Addendum

In March 1992, the Barristers Board, with VLSP's and BASF's whole-hearted approval, voted to disband the Community Law Week Committee. The Barristers continues to hold public service programs through the Community Education Committee and Speakers Bureau; VLSP still holds training clinics at least monthly as well as the Legal Advice and Referral Clinic each month. The Barristers and VLSP staff no longer threaten to quit each April.