



Communicators Talk

News from the NABE's Communications Section • Fall 2003

“Meet Me in St. Louis”

NABE 2003 Communications Section Workshop • October 15-18

Meet me in St. Louis, Louis

Meet me at the fair.

Don't tell me the lights are shining

Any place but there

— By Kerry Mills and Andrew B. Sterling (1904).

I saw the 1944 movie musical classic, “Meet Me in St. Louis,” a long time ago. I don't remember much about it (premature senility is obviously setting in), other than the fabulous tunes and the great cast featuring Judy Garland and other stars traipsing around in turn-of-the-century clothes. I do recall the title song, which alludes to the Saint Louis World's Fair of 1904.

St. Louis was the place to be in the early 1900's. Nearly a century later, St. Louis will once again be the place to be for the NABE Communications Section. Our 2003 section Workshop, under the capable leadership of Gary Toohey of the Missouri Bar, a former Section chair, is shaping up to be one of the best ever.

This year's workshop theme is, “Show me creativity... Show me imagination... Show me St. Louis!” Gary and his Workshop Committee have worked hard to put together an excellent

A variety of programs are planned to cover every aspect of bar communications.

schedule of programs and social activities for the three-day event, scheduled from Wednesday, October 15 to Saturday, October 18, at the Millennium Hotel in downtown St. Louis.

A variety of programs are planned to cover every aspect of bar communications. Programs will include sessions on publications, electronic communications, media

relations, polling and member feedback, marketing a bar association's programs and services and public speaking and presentation skills. Francine Walker of the Florida Bar, has



Christopher Blake
Former Section Chair

done a remarkable job of organizing and coordinating the many outstanding educational programs.

A highlight of the workshop is the annual Luminary Awards luncheon on Friday, October 17. The Luminary Awards, sponsored by the section and West, recognizes

excellence in bar publications, public relations, web sites and marketing campaigns. We thank West for its continued support of this outstanding recognition

program. We are also greatly indebted to Mark Mathewson of the Illinois State Bar Association for his dedicated service as chair of the Luminary Awards judging committee. Thanks also go to the judges and those who submitted entries.

Also at the luncheon, the 2003 E.A. “Wally” Richter Award will be presented by last year's recipient, Joyce Hastings of the State Bar of Wisconsin, and the 2003 Anne Charles Award will be bestowed by Paul Nickell of the Oregon State Bar Association. Thank you to Joyce and Paul for chairing these awards committees.

A variety of social events and tours are planned to give all of us a chance to see and enjoy St. Louis. On Wednesday evening, October 15, you will enjoy a reception and buffet cruise on the Mighty Mississippi River on the riverboat, Tom Sawyer. We thank Legal Directories Publishing Companies, Inc., for sponsoring this event. On Thursday afternoon, you can choose from a variety of optional excursions. These include tours of the Missouri Botanical Gardens, the

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**2002-2003
Communications Section**

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860-612-2014 or cblake@ctbar.org

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Gary Toohey
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Chair's column

Anheuser-Busch Brewery (that's where you'll find me), the St. Louis Zoo or the St. Louis Art Museum. Yvonne McGhee of the Fairfax Bar Association deserves our thanks for chairing the socials subcommittee.

The workshop committee has lined up a number of sponsors to help defray the cost of the workshop to our



members. We thank Dan Wise of the New Hampshire Bar Association for chairing the sponsorship subcommittee.

Capping off the workshop on Saturday morning will be a special event featuring past leaders of the section who have gone on to other careers (you mean there are careers outside of the bar association?). Our gone but not forgotten past leaders are coming back for an October 18 breakfast program called "Lessons Learned." They will tell us what it's really like to adjust to life outside the bar.

I would like to thank Gary and his entire committee for their efforts with special thanks to Francine Walker, Yvonne McGhee, Dan Wise and Joe Conte, who designed the attractive workshop brochure.

As this is my last column as section chair (please hold your applause), I would like to thank and recognize everyone who contributed to the success of the Communications Section during the 2002-2003 year. The list of those who gave selflessly of their time and talents is too long to mention everyone by name, but you know who you are and you have my thanks and gratitude for your support. In particular, I would like to thank the Executive Council for its guidance and support.

I am confident that the section is in very good hands under the able leadership of Cynthia Kuhn of the District of Columbia Bar. I wish Cynthia all of the success in the world as she assumes her duties as your new Communications Section chair.

The Hammer of Justice or For Whom the Toll Cells

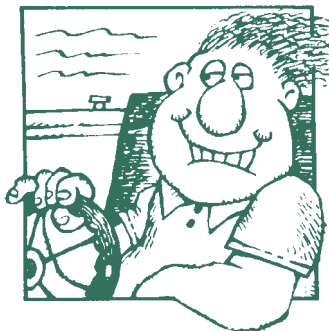
by Frederick D. Massie
Director of Communications, Rhode Island Bar Association

Due to an unfortunate coin toss at a tollbooth basket on the Massachusetts Pike seventeen years ago in 1985, or possibly a malfunctioning toll register, and alerted by the lens of a mindless robotic camera, the hammer of justice began its ever-so-slow descent toward your humble correspondent's head. How the hammer was set into motion is pure speculation since your fellow communicator has no recollection of, and never received any official notice regarding, the alleged crime until that fateful day, seventeen years later. So it goes.

However, returning to the immediate past. Your hero, blissfully singing along to a tune on the radio and drumming happily away upon his steering wheel, was paying less than careful attention to his car's speed. Clocked, pulled over, and taken to task for this momentary lapse by a member of the Swansea constabulary, he was informed that he was traveling at ten miles over the posted limit. Not one to plead, beg, cry, or grovel when clearly in the wrong, your chastened citizen acknowledged his transgression to the officer, accepted his fate and waited patiently in his car while the lawman ran a routine check of his driver's license and registration.

Then things changed. The policeperson, accompanied by another of his uniformed brethren summoned to assist in the arrest, ordered the Rhode Island resident from his car, informed him he was a fugitive from Massachusetts justice for, in the words of his captor, "Allegedly evading a highway toll," cuffed his hands behind his back, and placed him in the restraint cage of the police cruiser. Expressing his bewilderment and growing outrage, spiced by some salty adjectives, regarding this alarming turn of events, he asked the officer why he was being handled like an untrustworthy animal. The officer politely noted that, "everyone is treated exactly the same." As an aside, this leads one to wonder if a woman with an infant would also be handled in the same fashion for a similar offense, but I digress.

With his chin resting on his knees due to the close quarters of the cruiser's cage, he was taken to the



basement of the Swansea Police Station and his tie, belt, wallet, cell phone, and change were confiscated. He was fingerprinted, mug-shotted and locked behind bars like a dangerous lunatic.

Although his wife later shared her fears regarding the potential for unwanted amorous attentions by his fellow prison mates, he was, in fact, left alone. All, all, alone. Alone in a small, small cell. To wit: a cold, subterranean metal box, nine feet by six feet, painted a particularly offensive shade of green, containing: a steel bench; an exceptionally thin cotton blanket remarkably reminiscent of the kind his youngest daughter considered her best friend from age two to five; a seat-less open toilet with no apparent flushing mechanism; a harsh

white light; and a thick plastic shield drilled with a 12" x 6" grid of small holes allowing the Prisoner to breathe the stale

air of his underground dungeon.

After pacing back and forth like the tormented polar bear in the now, mercifully-closed, Slater Park Zoo, the

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Not one to plead, beg, cry, or grovel when clearly in the wrong, your chastened citizen acknowledged his transgression to the officer.

Do you need
information –
and you needed it
yesterday?

Do you have the gem of an idea, but wonder if anyone else has any experience along these lines?

Is your president wondering why you don't know what every other bar organization in the country is doing in a particular area?

CALL THE ABA'S DIVISION FOR BAR SERVICES
It's a clearinghouse for information.

Division for Bar Services
541 North Fairbanks Court
Chicago, IL 60611-3314

Phone: 312-988-5356; Fax: 312-988-5492
E-mail: derricoe@staff.abanet.org

The Hammer of Justice

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Prisoner recognized the futility of his march, reclined on the cell's cold steel shelf, closed his eyes, and hoped for sleep. Almost immediately, visions of demons, remarkably similar to those in Hieronymus Bosch's painting, The Garden of Earthly Delights, slithered across the inside of his eyelids. At this point, it is worth mentioning that his cell was where a drunken man committed suicide by hanging himself with his socks and where one of two sick creatures, arrested in Swansea and traveling with severed human hands in their car, were temporarily incarcerated. Abandoning meditation for more physical, and body-warming, relief the Prisoner performed 100, steel-shelf, sit-ups. Considering a series of Jack Palance-inspired one-arm push-ups to entertain the jailhouse video watchers, he ruled this out due to the questionable conditions of the cell floor.

Several, seemingly endless, hours later, the Clerk of Courts appeared and graciously accepted his \$40.00, non-refundable payment for the delightful accommodations. A telephone call to his wife brought her to the station for a ride to the towing company where another equally agreeable soul accepted \$100.00 to release his car from its prison.

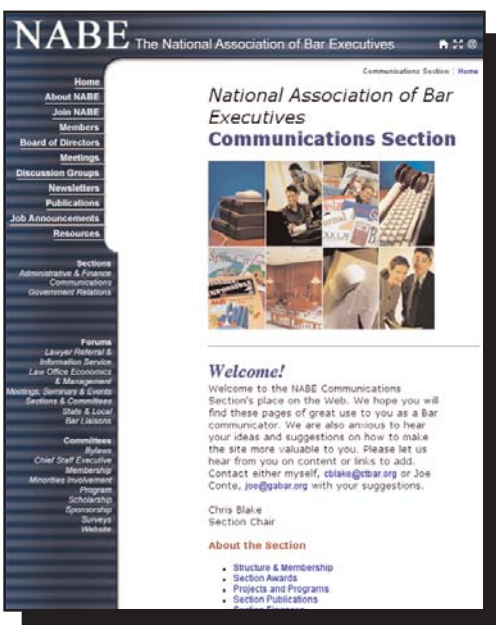
The next morning, showered, shaved and shamed, your humbled correspondent joined the Boston rush hour pilgrimage to face the music. To reach the court, the Accused had to travel through the scene of his alleged crime, the Mass Pike Toll Road, and pay a \$1.00 toll. After stopping the car at the tollbooth basket, carefully placing four quarters in the coin basket and watching them

descend into the slot, the tollbooth machine refused to acknowledge the offering and stopped him cold with its unblinking red light.

Howling about the awful condition of the universe in general and Mass Pike tollbooths in specific, the Accused looked madly about for relief while his fellow travelers, backing up behind him, began honking their horns. At that moment, from the tollbooth opposite, a hand emerged and impatiently waved him onward. Clearly ordering him to commit the same crime that had already caused so much heartache! Broken and babbling he drove past the angry red Cyclops' eye toward his fate.

Presenting his papers to a court probation officer, he was confronted by what would later become a familiar sight: the incredulous Head Shake and painfully embarrassed Smile of a person struck almost dumb by the absurd and pathetic nature of the charge and the surrounding events. Three hours later, after listening to the lies, half-truths and pleadings of many other defendants accused of everything from drug dealing to home invasion, your Defendant stood before the Bench and, after once again witnessing the Head Shake and Smile, this time from the presiding judge, in less time than it takes to toss a coin, the arrest warrant was recalled and the charge was dismissed.

Emerging older but no wiser from the belly of the beast, your correspondent returned home, stopping only to ensure that a live human being accepted his offering to the tollbooth, and sincerely wishing the attendant a most pleasant day.



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Communications Can Supplement Your Bar's Lobbying Efforts

By Christopher G. Blake, CAE

Sometimes it seems as though a bar association's government relations and communications functions operate in parallel universes. The lobbyist is busy at the state capitol pushing for passage (or defeat) of a variety of bills that are on the bar association's legislative agenda. The communications director is hard at work producing publications, updating the Web site and trying to get publicity for a host of worthy bar projects and initiatives. And never the twain shall meet.

But it doesn't have to be that way. In fact, by working together and allowing each department to do what it does best, the lobbying and communications functions can complement one another and boost the chances of success for the bar association's legislative agenda.

"Lobbying and Communications: Working Together to Achieve Results" was the subject of a panel discussion at the recent National Association of Bar Executives 2003 Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Ronald L. Kennedy of the New York State Bar Association, immediate past chair of the NABE Government Relations Section, moderated the discussion. Chris Blake of the Connecticut Bar Association, immediate past chair of the NABE Communications Section, organized the program and served on the panel. Daniel A. Cirucci of the Philadelphia Bar Association, and William Weisenberg of the Ohio State Bar Association, served on the panel.

Panel members agreed that the keys to a successful working relationship between the lobbying and communications staff are constant communication and clear delineation of roles and responsibilities.

Early identification of legislative issues was seen as a key to sound planning and development of lobbying and communications strategies and tactics. Issues identification will allow the association to be proactive in either pushing for or opposing legislation. Lobbyists can advance this

process by staying in constant touch with legislators and other key government officials. Communications staff should closely monitor the daily news coverage of legislative issues on news organizations' Web sites. Bar communicators should give the government relations staff a heads up when they see a news story about a brewing legislative issue that is of interest to the bar.

As public relations practitioners, bar communicators realize they must identify and reach key audiences with their bar's message. Their key audiences include the media and the general public. Similarly, lobbyists have key audiences: the three branches of government (executive, legislative, judicial), and other policymakers. Lobbyists and bar communicators share a common key audience: association members.

Once the key audiences have been identified, staff in the two departments can work together to craft effective messages for each audience on a particular legislative issue. Messages should be simple, understandable and should speak to the audience and its interests. Once a legislative session begins, the lobbyist's role in this process is to educate lawmakers on the bar's priorities, monitor key legislative issues, gather intelligence on the prospects for the association's bills, communicate constantly with the executive director and the officers, keep the communications department in the loop and identify issues requiring member and/or external communications efforts. The lobbyist also identifies the most ideal time in the legislative cycle to launch a media effort.

The communications department's role is to advise on media strategy, draft articles and news releases, serve as liaison with news organizations' editorial boards, editors and individual reporters, pitch story ideas, develop and place articles on the bar's Web site and help with grass roots communications efforts. The bar communicator also selects the best media vehicles for getting the message out and the most opportune time in the news cycle to maximize exposure.

The volunteer leadership also plays a pivotal role. They can identify members of your governing boards in key legislative districts or media markets who can be trained by your bar's communications staff to serve as a spokesperson with the local media. The volunteer leaders also support legislative efforts by attending and testifying at public hearings.

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Communications Can Supplement Your Bar's Lobbying Efforts

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The panel identified these keys to success:

- Identify legislative issues early. This facilitates early planning and coordination of lobbying and communications efforts.
- Watch your timing. Know when to move forward with a media campaign and when to pull back.
- Communicate constantly and thoroughly. The lobbyist and the bar communicator must communicate frequently and ensure there is mutual understanding of issues and activities.
- Play the game and understand the rules. The communicator should listen to the lobbyist and know the rules and strategies in the legislative arena. The lobbyist should defer to the communicator when it comes to media strategy.
- Keep the public's interest in mind. Ask yourself: how will this issue play with the public? For example, you may think it's a great idea to announce your bar's opposition to legislation mandating pro bono service, but the public will see this issue differently. The public might see this position as self-serving – lawyers not wanting to serve the public interest, when the reality is that many lawyers perform pro bono service; it is the mandatory aspect that is objectionable.
- Be flexible. There are times when you want to be proactive on an issue, but there are other instances when it is best to lay low and let things play out.
- Keep your officers and your governing bodies informed. Also, let the governing bodies and the members know about your successes. If you don't tell them, nobody will.
- Let the lobbyist and the bar communicator do what they do best.

A coordinated effort between the lobbyist and the bar communicator can leverage the power and effectiveness of both and help to achieve legislative success and public awareness.

Christopher G. Blake, CAE, is the director of communications for the Connecticut Bar Association and served as the 2002-2003 chair of the NABE Communications Section.



www.nabenet.org

Whether you're trying to locate a colleague in another state, or checking in to stay current with the latest news and information, we've put together a variety of resources to make your visit worthwhile.

Floridian in St. Louis

by Francine A. Walker

It took me 44-1/2 years but I finally added another of the 50 states to my "been there, done that" list. For the benefit of my colleagues in the NABE Communications Section, as well as mine as your workshop program committee chair, I took a site visit to St. Louis, MO, in June and I can't wait to be there and do that again in October!

I knew I wasn't in Florida any more when I got the change back for a MetroLink ticket in Sacagawea coin dollars which I saved as my first souvenirs. You may have noticed that our MO-host, Gary Toohey, put in the workshop registration brochure - and I quote - "For those more adventuresome travelers, there is the MetroLink light rail system." Never let it be said that I am not adventuresome! I'm also cheap, and the train ride only cost \$3. However, if you're not a light packer I'd go for the shuttle or a taxi. It's a bit of a hike to the hotel from the stop, not to mention a tight squeeze into a seat with luggage in tow.

The hotel is wonderful. On one side you have a view of Busch Stadium and on the other the fabulous Gateway Arch. The staff there are nice too. In fact, it's the closest I've come to encountering Southern-like hospitality anywhere north of Atlanta. My room was in the South Tower facing the arch, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and Park and the Mississippi River. The hotel has coffee pots and hair dryers in each room and there's a Pizza Hut you can order from in the room service menu. The fitness center is small, and in a temporary location, but opens at 6:30 a.m. and has weight machines, treadmills, stationary bikes, etc., and a small indoor pool nearby. The Top of the Riverfront Restaurant (supper and Sunday brunch only) is lovely and it revolves to take in the whole town. The Fourth Street Grill serves all meals and has good food and good service.

For supper the first night I visited Laclede's Landing, just a short walk north. It appears to have been set up as a "festival marketplace" but now just has lots of restaurants and a Fat Tuesdays. I had a great late-lunch at Train Wreck Tavern and sampled one of the local beers (not Bud) which went down well. Then as the sun went down, instead of taking in the Millennium's lobby bar - Martini's - or the hotel's Dugout Sports Bar, I decided to walk a few blocks to get an ear-full and a taste of BB's Jazz, Blues and Soups nightclub located in a vintage 1800's brick building

just south of Busch stadium. Let me just say, the music was FINE and the sweet potatoe pie a la mode was heaven. Show Me another place to sing the blues and I'll be right there with you!

Don't for any reason — short of a dire emergency — miss going down and up the Gateway Arch. I say down because you actually enter the arch complex and walk underground for the theatres, gift shop, exhibit and ride to the top. Going up and down the arch itself is an experience. Did you ever, when you were a kid, want to take a tumble in the electric clothes dryer? Well if that was your idea of fun (I confess that I did), then climb right in the "vessels" that carry you through the arch, but if you're at all claustrophobic I don't recommend it. I also saw the National Geographic film on the Lewis and Clark Expedition and thought it was just fabulous. I left the theatre and went straight to the gift shop and bought myself a stuffed "Seaman." The exhibit is a Smithsonian-west: take your time and enjoy all of the relics of the past.

For the ladies who like to shop, there's not much fashion to be had in close proximity. I took a taxi up to Union Station and it's chock-full of gift and novelty shops and has some good restaurants including a Hard Rock Cafe and Landry's Seafood. Make sure to check out the lobby of the Hyatt Hotel adjacent to the old train station. Look up and all around - it's spectacular. The Cosmopolitans in the Hyatt bar are real good — and the place was even more fascinating after having a few!

The only other tourist attraction (ha! - this from the Section member who lives down the road from the Weeki Wachee mermaids and Mickey Mouse) I took in was the Old Courthouse. It's nicely restored and historic with the Dred Scott case having first been heard there. I was the only visitor who took advantage of a guided tour with a ranger and I even got to see areas not usually open to the public. For you "justice-junkies" (all of us, right?), I'd say don't miss it. I decided to save Forest Park and its many features for my Thursday afternoon workshop excursion.

I have only one caution: pack a raincoat or poncho because I didn't, and on my second day there I found it wasn't easy to go get one without getting soaked to the skin first. Otherwise, I can't think of anything you need other than a your usual enthusiasm!

The NABE Communications Workshop with its great professional development and networking is really the Place To Be for bar communicators from around the country, October 15-18, 2003. But, believe me, St. Louis is one great town and I know you'll enjoy exploring all you can of what it has to offer. Seaman and I will see you there!

Press Heavyweights Discuss How Lawyers Fare in the Glare of Media Spotlight

By Chris Blake

A blue-ribbon panel of media heavyweights, featuring legendary White House news correspondent Helen Thomas, debated such issues as the media's focus on sensational trials, the balance of ratings and responsibility, and the use of legal "talking heads" to offer analysis of high-profile cases.

The American Bar Association's General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section and West sponsored the panel discussion program, entitled, "Media's Coverage of the Law: What's Good, What's Bad and What's Downright Ugly?" on August 8 at the 2003 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

The panel debated the increasingly blurred distinction between news and entertainment. Viewers of popular reality-based television shows like "Law and Order" and "Crime and Punishment," begin to believe every trial has the drama and excitement they see on these shows.

"Don't you feel like a parasite?" said moderator Arthur R. Miller, professor of law at Harvard University and noted scholar and author on privacy issues. He addressed the question to panelist William N. Fordes, supervising producer of "Law and Order," which is based on actual trials in the news.

"I basically sell soap," said Fordes, a former prosecutor. "I provide entertainment. I don't owe anybody anything. . . . If everyone watches the show and is [ticked] off, I've done my job."

Howard Mintz, legal affairs reporter for the San Jose Mercury News, said the print media has a higher obligation for truth and accuracy than does the television media. "We have to get it right. We're not television, but we get lumped in, too," Mintz said.

Roz Plater, a television reporter for KPIX-TV, defended television news journalism. The nature of the medium means that television reporters only have a minute and a half to tell the story, but they have to be accurate, too, Plater said.

However, Susan Beck, senior writer for American Lawyer magazine, admitted the magazine straddles the line between news and entertainment. "We're looking for good stories," Beck said. "Unlike Bill (Fordes, of Law and Order), we can't make it up. We're looking to entertain our readers. We know we're not their primary source for

information. We're there to tell a story that hopefully informs as well as entertains," Beck said.

Mintz also acknowledged that the media sometimes gets "sucked in" to covering salacious trials. An example was the San Francisco dog mauling case. One of the dog's owners was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and the other one was convicted of second-degree murder after their dog killed a neighbor. "We covered it because the (San Francisco) Chronicle did," Mintz said.

He noted that 90 percent of murder victims are not white women from the suburbs, but the media does not cover that story.

Panel member James Hammer, assistant district attorney for San Francisco, prosecuted the dog mauling case. Hammer said he became concerned when Law and Order broadcast an episode based on the dog mauling case before the jury reached a verdict in the actual trial. "The fear would be if he (Fordes of Law and Order) had acquitted the defendants. . . . it would have definitely affected the jury panel," Hammer said. The Law and Order defendants were convicted.

Panel members were split on the question of whether decisions to prosecute cases are based on how it is going to play in the media. Hammer cited the Kobe Bryant rape charge case as an example of where the prosecutor was not influenced by media pressure. "The stupidest thing the district attorney [in Eagle County, Colo.] could do is prosecute a case [in the national media spotlight] he's not going to win," Hammer said.

Legal commentators came in for scrutiny from the panel. Hammer noted that a prosecutor appearing on "The Larry King Show" on CNN actually said that Scott Peterson looks guilty of murdering his wife, Laci Peterson, "because of his hair."

Retired Massachusetts Judge Hiller Zobel, who presided over the famous Louise Woodward nanny trial, was sitting in the audience and related to the panel a personal anecdote. One evening, during the trial, Judge Zobel was dining in a Boston restaurant and several legal commentators on a nearby TV screen were discussing the trial. "One after another said, 'Here's what Judge Zobel is thinking,' . . . or, 'This is what's on Judge Zobel's mind' . . . Finally, I said to the TV, 'Hey you dummies, I'm Judge Zobel and I'm not thinking any of that!'" he said.

News coverage decisions based on ratings, was a subject that drew lively debate from the panel. Several panelists noted that the media does not cover the murder of minorities, even though most murder victims are minorities. However, when a white woman is killed in the

Workshop, Hotel, Registration Deadlines Fast Approaching

"First in booze, first in shoes . . . and last in the American League."

Much has changed since that phrase was used to describe St. Louis during the 1940s. While the city remains home to the world's largest brewer, Anheuser-Busch, it no longer leads the nation in the manufacture of footwear and the magnificently inept St. Louis Browns long ago pulled up stakes and moved to Baltimore.

Today, St. Louis is a vibrant city. While one normally associates St. Louis with the soaring Gateway Arch, the city has much more to offer: historic sites, such as the Old Courthouse; an exciting nightlife at such locales as Laclede's Landing; unique architecture, such as the Byzantine-inspired Fox Theatre; the magnificent restoration of the grand Union Station; shopping opportunities galore; natural wonders, such as the dazzling Missouri Botanical Garden; the world-famous St. Louis Zoo; and the lure of the ever-flowing Mighty Mississippi. Indeed, today St. Louis promotes itself with the slogan, "There's More Than Meets the Arch."

You'll have the opportunity to experience it all by attending the 2003 NABE Communications Section Workshop, scheduled for October 15-18 at the Millennium Hotel in downtown St. Louis. A superb rate of \$129 single/\$139 double has been arranged at the hotel, which sits (literally) in the shadow of the Gateway Arch

and within easy walking distance of all downtown attractions. But you'll need to hurry – rooms at this low rate are guaranteed only until a September 15 deadline!

The workshop features a program-packed agenda addressing issues sure to interest bar communicators, regardless of their areas of responsibility. Attached is a copy of the program, with a complete schedule of events providing more detail on the outstanding program scheduled for the workshop.

In addition, the conference agenda includes a welcoming reception/cruise along the Mississippi River on an authentic sternwheeler; organized social outings to such St. Louis landmarks as the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, the Missouri Botanical Garden, the St. Louis Zoo and the St. Louis Art Museum; and the always-popular Luminary Awards Luncheon, at which the Section's "best and brightest" will be honored. Plenty of time is also built in for walking to the Gateway Arch or other attractions you may wish to visit in the St. Louis area.

To take advantage of the low early registration rates, you will need to register for the conference by September 24. Conference registration includes all educational programming, handouts, in-hotel meal functions, refreshment breaks and more. So hurry – finalize your plans to join your friends and colleagues in St. Louis by completing and returning the attached meeting registration and hotel reservation forms today!

from page 8

suburbs, it is considered news. Plater, of KPIX, said she has a hard time selling to her producers stories about drug-related homicides in poor, minority neighborhoods. She approaches this subject by focusing on the impact of drug-related murders on the law-abiding citizens who live in neighborhoods infested with drugs. However, she added, every time the station aired a story like that, viewer-ship fell off.

Hammer said a television news producer told him that the station gets 200,000 more viewers every time it airs a story about the Laci Peterson case.

"The net effect is to convey a distorted view of the legal profession," Miller noted.

Hammer said the media's decision to ignore crimes and legal issues facing the poor underclass of society creates "an expectation among poor minorities who don't think they are going to get a fair shake from the justice

system." But, Fordes added that the public must share the blame for the type of coverage it gets because the public has an appetite for sensational stories. "You're responsible too when you read the paper that covers the Laci Peterson case or when you watch the nonstop CNN coverage of the Kobe Bryant case," he said.

One questioner asked about the erosion of civil liberties following 9-11 and the subsequent passage by Congress of the Patriot Act, which gives the government broad powers to detain and question citizens it suspects of terrorism activities.

Thomas, who has covered nine U.S. Presidents, blasted the Bush Administration for what she described as its attacks on civil liberties. But she also chastised lawyers for not speaking out against the administration's policies regarding civil liberties. "I want to know where the lawyers are," Thomas said. "I want to know why you aren't out there fighting every day for civil liberties," she said.