

## IT IS NOT THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX IT IS CREATIVE WAYS TO ENTICE MEMBERS

**Exciting, fun, and little wild projects** that have worked for the Tarrant County Bar Association:

### **CLE AND SPANISH LESSONS IN COSTA RICA**

In Texas, there is an increasing demand for legal professionals to speak Spanish. A few years ago, the International Section of the Bar Association developed a program to provide Spanish lessons and CLE. What better way than to take Spanish than in the beautiful country of Costa Rica and attend the Pura Vida Language School? The venue included lodging with local residents of Heredia, Costa Rica who would only converse in Spanish (like a bed & breakfast—but two meals a day), Spanish lessons in the morning, and CLE in the afternoon. The Spanish lessons were designed for the beginner to the advanced student. Lawyers and their families plus several judges, clerks, and a deputy sheriff have attended this program.

### **CLE CRUISE**

When a past president suggested a CLE Cruise project at the Board Orientation, several eyebrows were raised. This unique project gave members the opportunity to obtain 6 to 9 hours of CLE and enjoy a Western Caribbean Cruise with their family and/or friends. The Bar Association was assisted by a local travel agency in booking a 4-Night cruise, setting up CLE rooms, social events, and any special needs for members. The first CLE cruise project made a profit of \$9,000 with 120 registrants. A second cruise was booked the next year through a national CLE company, University at Sea. This company provided the same services plus color brochures for a direct mailing and staff on the cruise. It was a 7-Night cruise and only 55 people registered for it. The profit margin was \$2,900. (A survey showed that the length of time out of the office was the reason for a lower attendance.)

### **MEMBERSHIP CLE LUNCHEONS & DOCKET CALL SOCIALS**

The attendance at the **monthly** membership CLE luncheons was dropping. A big leap was made to reduce the monthly membership luncheons to six and to replace them with an evening social event. After some brainstorming, the name “Docket Call Socials” was adopted to bring back memories to seasoned lawyers and to make memories for new lawyers. (Years ago when Tarrant County was a one-courthouse county, the judges held docket call on each Thursday. So all of the bar members would go to the courthouse and swap stories while handling their cases.) Next question, how do you get the members to come—make it FREE. But who pays for it—SPONSORS—legal vendors, court reporting firms, banks, and law firms. The members and sponsors have a great time in a relaxed atmosphere.

Other projects:

Wine Tour at the Bench Bar Conference

Membership Drive at the Fort Worth Zoo

Oz Party on the one year anniversary of the tornado that damaged downtown Fort Worth