

NABE-News

OF BAR EXECUTIVES

Tuesday, November 30, 2004



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CALENDAR from www.nabenet.org

NABE Administration and Finance Section Meeting

When: Feb. 7 - 8
Where: Salt Lake City, UT

NABE/NCBP/NCBF Midyear Meeting

When: Feb. 8-12
Where: Salt Lake City, UT

CSE Retreat

When: March 8 - 9, 2005
Where: Chicago, IL

Bar Leadership Institute

When: March 10 -12, 2005
Where: Chicago, IL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NABE MIDYEAR MEETING: Now begins the first of weekly “exhortations” to attend the NABE Midyear Meeting in Salt Lake City, February 8-10. Salt Lake City is a lovely place and not as expensive as other recent ABA locations, plus the Program Committee (despite chair John Norwine) has put together an outstanding line-up of topics and speakers. The housing deadline is January 7, 2005. You can get a housing form online through the NABE web site (www.nabenet.org) – remember that the NABE headquarters hotel is the Marriott Downtown, which is right across the street from the Salt Palace Convention Center where the programs will be held.

If you plan to attend the Midyear Meeting, come out a couple of days early for the Administration & Finance Section Workshop, which begins with a reception at 5 p.m. on Monday, February 7 at the Convention Center. On Tuesday, February 8, following a continental breakfast, the workshop will feature a plenary session on the office of the future and workshops on budgeting & finance, human resources, office administration, and strategic planning. The registration fee for the workshop is \$75 for section members and \$100 for non-section members – or if you want a deal, \$95 if you register for the workshop and join the A&F Section at the same time. You can sign up for the workshop when you register for the Midyear Meeting. Check the NABE web site (and/or NABE-News) for more details to come!

WHY BOARDS DON'T GOVERN (PART 2): In the November 16th issue of NABE-News, I referred to an article by Jan Masaoka and Mike Allison in the October issue of Board Café on the material reasons – such as lack of time, unfamiliarity with the field, lack of independent information, and aversion to conflict – that act against effective board governance. In the November issue of Board Café, the authors propose some practical ways to strengthen governance:

- Make sure that board members have information about the financial and program performance of the organization that comes from independent sources. They suggest that the Board (or its Audit/Finance Committee) select the external auditor, hear the auditor’s report, and meet at least once with the auditor without staff present. Similarly, the board should periodically work with independent program evaluators and outside experts who make their reports directly to the board and staff.
- Use independent management evaluators. In addition to auditors and program evaluators, the board needs unbiased information about management. One of the most difficult tasks for

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boards is the evaluation of the CEO. On one hand, a board can't interview staff about their opinions; on the other hand, problems are created when a board obtains all its information from the person being evaluated. An independent evaluator can bridge that gap.

- Make governance an explicit part of meetings. Boards should affirm their responsibilities in both support and governance. Board agendas should be clearly marked, "governance items," and "supporting items." Among the qualities to seek and reward in board members are critical thought, discernment, and a questioning attitude. When someone raises an objection or concern, or votes against the majority, the board president should make a point of going up to that person and expressing appreciation for the seriousness and courage to make the point.
- Encourage dissent, debate, and questions.
- Recruit governors. When recruiting, boards should seek members who are good governors as well as good supporters. In many cases, governors and supporters may turn out to be the same people once governing responsibilities are recognized and valued as much as supporting responsibilities.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: I know that you've been eagerly awaiting the answers to last week's Thanksgiving trivia quiz, so here they are, without further fanfare:

- What year was the first Thanksgiving celebrated? 1621
- What didn't the Pilgrims eat at the first Thanksgiving? Pumpkin pie
- Why didn't the Pilgrims whip up some mashed potatoes for their dinner? Potatoes were thought to be poisonous.
- Which US president scoffed at the idea of a national holiday in honor of the first Thanksgiving? Thomas Jefferson
- Which character was the first balloon to take flight in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade? Felix the Cat
- In what film did John Wayne utter his signature phrase, "Pilgrim?" The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
- Which current balloon has made the most consecutive appearances in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade? Garfield
- What unusual meal does Chef Snoopy prepare for the gang's feast in "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving?" Popcorn and toast (you would have known this if you watched it Thanksgiving night!)