

NABE-News

OF BAR EXECUTIVES

Thursday, March 24, 2005

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CALENDAR

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NABE Board of Directors Meeting

When: April 8-10, 2005

Where: Memphis, TN

NABE/NCBP/NCBF

Annual Meeting

When: August 2-4, 2005

Where: Chicago, IL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DON'T FORGET: The nominations deadline for the Bolton Award for Professional Excellence and the Partners in Success Award is April 1 (and that's no joke!)

PROFESSIONALISM TASK FORCE APPOINTED FOR NABE: Do you see your position in your bar association, regardless of your specific duties, as a calling to public service? Do you value and seek to enhance your reputation among volunteer leaders and other members of your bar staff for competence, reliability, integrity, fairness and truthfulness? Are you regularly striving to improve your job skills and competencies as you serve your members and the public?

These and other values and components of professionalism will be one focus of our NABE educational and related efforts during the next couple of years as we seek to equip our members to be even better and more successful in their bar association work. We have devoted a great deal of time and attention within the organized bar to enhancing professionalism in the legal communities that are our constituencies, but we have only infrequently examined how the concept of professionalism applies in the context of bar staff and their responsibilities and activities.

Tom Edmonds and Allan Head, the next two leaders of NABE, have collaborated in assembling a group of bar executives who are real pros to conduct such an examination in some depth, and we anticipate great results for the benefit of all our members during the next two years and beyond. The chair of the Professionalism Task Force is Chuck Turner, Executive Director of the Colorado and Denver Bar Associations; Susan Jacobs, Associate Executive Director of the Indiana State Bar Association, is the vice chair. A dozen other NABE members from all sizes and types of bar associations round out the task force, and they perform a wide range of different kinds of work for their organizations, including communications, government relations and administration. The other members of the group are: Susan Andres of the Alabama State Bar; Kathy Bifaro of the Bar Association of Erie County; Chris Cendagorta of the Washoe County Bar Association; Wanda Claiborne of the Maryland State Bar Association; Joe Conte of the State Bar of New Mexico; Stuart Forsyth of the Los Angeles County Bar Association; Donna Fouste of the Orange County Bar Association; Susan Grabe of the Oregon State Bar; Alex Lagusch of the Columbus Bar Association; Diane Minnich of the Idaho State Bar; Avery Okin of the Brooklyn Bar Association; and Linda Oligschlaeger of The Missouri Bar.

The task force held its organizational session during the mid-year meeting in Salt Lake City, and had a second meeting in Chicago this month during the Bar Leadership

Institute. It hopes to work with the Program Committee to produce a significant plenary on professionalism next year at the mid-year meeting in New Orleans, to be followed by other programming over the next several of our meetings. Other materials and ideas on the subject of professionalism may be made available to NABE members in other ways.

We greatly appreciate the commitment made by the members of the task force to this important assignment, and if anyone has thoughts or suggestions for the group as it begins its work, please feel free to pass those along to Chuck, Susan or any member of the task force.

BAR LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (PART 2): The always entertaining Dadie Perlov returned to BLI to offer wise advice and counsel on governance matters. She began by noting that each organization has a life cycle. In the beginning, a few people band together to create the organization (Stage A). This is a time of high energy and focus, and the leaders are innovative and risk-taking. It's also a time of no budget, no staff, no bylaws, etc. As time goes on, the organization seeks stability (Stage B): leaders become managers, and all the accoutrements of organizational life are acquired (staff, structure, budget, etc.) There are six dangers involved in this stage:

- Not appreciating dissent
- Loving special interest groups
- Planning based on today, not tomorrow going backwards
- Falling in love with process
- Not being able to distinguish between activity and achievement
- Basing decisions on what's good for the organization, not the members.

If these dangers are not resolved, the organization may fall into crisis (Stage C), where it loses members and prestige. At this stage, a group may break off and form a new organization (back to Stage A). The ideal stage in the life cycle of an organization is on the edge between Stages A and B.

As we all know, boards set policy, which staff carries out. But what is and isn't policy? Dadie posits that policy encompasses only the following areas:

- Strategic direction of the association
- Public policy of the association
- Resources needed
- Role of the Executive Director
- How the association is governed

Based on her company's research, an organization's members can be divided into four distinct groups: owners (10%); unambitious (60%); dissidents (10%); and potential owners (20%). The owners are highly involved and satisfied. They are or want to be leaders; they support the leaders, dispense rewards, and make decisions. At the other end of the spectrum are the potential owners who have low involvement and are unsatisfied. They are untapped bounty; they have opinions (which are not listened to) and might like to become involved in the association if asked. Dadie suggests calling people in this group (e.g., newest members, lapsed members, and prospective members) and asking their opinion. The unambitious have low involvement, but are satisfied. They like the association, but are willing to let others do it. In the last group are the dissidents, who are highly involved, but unsatisfied. They oppose programs and leaders; they have supporters and seek recognition. Generally we pay no attention to them, but we do so at our risk because they may have a great idea.

Dadie finished with her "importance matrix," exhorting associations to get rid of low impact, low mission programs and projects. As she said, "Don't major in minor things."

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

I know you've been waiting breathlessly for the answers to the St. Patrick's Day quiz, so here they are:

1. "Erin Go Bragh," a phrase heard often on St. Patrick's Day means:
b) Ireland Forever
2. The Blarney Stone is located near this town:
c) Cork
3. This Nobel Prize-winning Irish poet and playwright was senator of the Irish Free State from 1922 to 1928:
d) William Butler Yeats
4. This film, shot in Ireland in 1952, was directed by John Ford:
b) The Quiet Man
5. Traditional Irish music has found an international audience with the popularity of such Celtic bands as:
a) The Chieftains
6. The current prime minister of Ireland is:
c) Bertie Ahern
7. With 27,136 square miles of land, the Republic of Ireland is approximately half the size of this U.S. state:
d) Arkansas
8. Today, this number of Americans trace their ancestry to Ireland:
c) 40 million
9. There are three states in which Irish is the leading ancestry group. Which of these states is not among those three:
b) Tennessee
10. How many cities in the U.S. share their name with Ireland's capital, Dublin?
c) 9

Have a Happy Easter!