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ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

The Newsletter of the ISBA's Committee on Law-Related Education

The Illinois State Bar Association's Law-Related Education Newsletter is provided free of charge on a quarterly basis during the school year. We are dedicated to promoting law-related education resources and discussion topics appropriate for use in classroom or community settings. If you do NOT wish to receive this complimentary newsletter, please reply and indicate in the message line that you wish to be removed from our mailing list. Statements, expressions of opinion or comments appearing herein are those of the editors or contributors, and not necessarily those of the Association or the Committee.

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CHAIR'S WELCOME

This publication comes to you through the work of the *Standing Committee on Law Related Education for the Public* of the *Illinois State Bar Association*. Earlier this year, I was re-appointed by **Richard Felice**, in his role as President of the ISBA, to serve as Chair of the Committee for 2014-15. To such end, I have



continued to help guide a group of hard-working and dedicated attorneys who volunteer their time to advance the Mission of the Committee.

The Committee's *Mission* is simply stated:

The mission of the Standing Committee on Law Related Education for the Public is to develop, implement, and administer law-related education programs that will enhance the understanding of the legal system and the role of lawyers in our society, including programs which educate the public and students of all ages about the important role of lawyers and judges, the importance of an independent judiciary for the proper administration of justice, and which foster an interest in students to respect our justice system and consider pursuing careers in the law.

To these ends, the Committee is continuing its work through five sub-committees.

Our *Publications Subcommittee* is now chaired by **Pablo Eves** of Bloomington, who is a Past Chair of the Committee and who otherwise serves the public as an Assistant State's Attorney for McLean County. Thanks to Pablo and the hard work of his Subcommittee in producing this newsletter, managing the Committee's portion of isba.org, and working on other publications. Letters to the editor, along with questions, comments and suggestions about our publications, should be directed to and through Pablo.

Our *Civics Education Subcommittee* is now chaired by **Lauren DeJong** of Park Ridge, who is a Past Chair of the Committee and who otherwise serves in private practice. Lauren is working to help advance the charge of President Felice and others, to enhance civics education throughout the State. Through her Subcommittee's work, the ISBA is looking to collaborate with the Illinois Judges Association and others to provide increasing opportunities for education.

Our *Mock Trial Committee* is again chaired by **Sarah Taylor** of Carbondale, who is a Past Chair of the Committee and who otherwise serves in private practice. As the *Ex-Officio* – the Immediate Past Chair – of the Committee, Sarah has spent countless hours over the past two fiscal years of the ISBA (and into this current year) working to keep the ISBA involved with high school mock trials, and make the next rounds better than ever.

Our *Long-Range Planning Subcommittee* is now chaired by **Rocky Martinez** of Culver, Indiana. Rocky also serves as Vice Chair of the Committee, coordinates presence on the web, and covers various aspects of our operations. Thanks to Rocky for her work in helping to guide the Committee into the future.



Our new *Membership Subcommittee* is chaired by **Marylou Kent** of Springfield. In her day job, Marylou works with the Illinois Department of Transportation. Marylou has served the ISBA for years in various capacities, and will work to help the Committee develop its Membership and list of volunteers.

The Committee started its current year of work on June 20, 2014, and is in full throttle in its attempt to achieve an ambitious agenda with, again, *volunteer* attorneys and *meager* funding. In simple parlance, we are working to make our State a better place through education. Members of the Committee and other volunteer attorneys stand ready, willing and able to visit school and other places to talk civics. Please let us know if we can help, and stay tuned for new and exciting opportunities.

Judge Mike Chmiel

ISBA CO-SPONSORS IJA PROGRAM

Chief Justice Rita Garman of the Supreme Court of Illinois, Justice Michael Hyman as President of the Illinois Judges Association, and Attorney Richard Felice as President of the ISBA have focused attention on the need for greater civics education in the State. Over the past few months, meetings with leaders of the IJA, ISBA, and others have resulted in the ISBA co-sponsoring the IJA's *Bringing the Courtroom to the Classroom* program (the "BCC Program").

On October 24, 2014, for the first time, judges *and lawyers* were trained to present the BCC Program. More than fifty judges and lawyers attended the training on a Friday afternoon at the Richard J. Daley Center. The training was provided by Cook County Judges Clare McWilliams and Eileen O'Neill Burke, and McHenry County Judge Mike Chmiel. The training provided an overview of the program and the presentation of PowerPoint slides which will be used by volunteers to educate students.

The BCC Program was initially established through the work of the current In-School Programs Committee of the IJA and its predecessors, along with Justice Carol Pope and others. The program was advanced last year by Justice Mary Schostok during her term as President of the IJA, and is now being advanced by Justice Hyman. Beginning in 2014, judges and lawyers will be able to make presentations together.



The Standing Committee on Law Related Education of the Public of the Illinois State Bar Association (“LRE”) is coordinating the ISBA’s participation. For more than three decades, LRE has sponsored high school mock trials and other programs designed to educate students about civics. Over the past few years, LRE has increased its efforts to bring civics education about our legal system to classrooms.

In addition to the BCC Program, LRE, which is chaired by Judge Chmiel, invites lawyers and judges to participate in its *Lawyers in Classrooms* program and in its *High School Mock Trial Invitational*. Further information can be found through the ISBA’s website at www.isba.org/teachers.

In addition to the BCC Program, the In-Schools Programs Committee, which is co-chaired by Judges Domenica Stephenson and McWilliams, invites judges to participate in the IJA’s *7 Reasons to Leave the Party* program. Further information can be found through the IJA’s website at www.ija.org.

As for the BCC Program, additional training is being planned and will next be scheduled to be provided in conjunction with the joint meeting of the IJA and ISBA in December.

Judge Mike Chmiel

OUR BILL OF RIGHTS – AN ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS

On November 4, 2014, during the Illinois General Election, Illinois voters had the opportunity to vote “Yes” or “No” for two proposed amendments to the Illinois Constitution.

Article I – Bill of Rights, Section 8.1 “Crime Victims’ Rights”

Provides new rights to crime victims:

- **Protect victims** from harassment, intimidation, and abuse throughout the criminal justice process.
- **Allows crime victims to be heard** at any proceeding that involves the victim’s rights and any proceedings involving a plea agreement, release of defendant or convicted individual, or sentencing.
- **Requires Prosecutors and the court** to notify victims of the proceedings or events before they happen.



- **Victims would have a right to** formal notice and a hearing before the court rules on any request for access to the victim's information which is privileged or confidential information.
- **Victims would have the right to** have the judge consider the victim's safety and the safety of victim's family before deciding whether to release a criminal defendant, set amount of bail to be paid before release, or setting conditions of release after arrest or conviction.

Article III – Suffrage and Elections

Creates a new “Section 8: Voter Discrimination”:

Ensures a person's right to register to vote or right to vote shall not be denied based upon race, color, ethnicity, status as a member of a language minority, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or income.

U.S. and Illinois Bill of Rights

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution of the United States are our **federal Bill of Rights** which guarantees individual activity and prevents interference with individual activity by limiting the use of state and federal government powers.

Article I of the Illinois Constitution of 1970 contains the **People of the State of Illinois Bill of Rights**:

Individual rights include freedom of speech & religion, protection against self-incrimination, etc., and guarantees freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national ancestry and sex in the hiring and promotion practices of an employer or in the sale of rental property. Other provisions guarantee women the equal protection of the laws and prohibit discrimination based solely on physical or mental disabilities.

Absolute Right = A right that belongs to every human being.

Right = A recognized and protected interest, the violation of which is a wrong.

A Bill of Rights by Students for Students



The Illinois Constitution (Article X) states “A fundamental goal of the People of the State is the **educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities.**”

Develop a Bill of Rights for students which achieves Illinois’ fundamental goal.

What rights would you include?

Arguments in favor?

Arguments opposing?

Would you include any of the following?

- Right to an education
- Freedom of association
- To be free from physical harm, bullying, sex texting & cyber stalking
- Right to a school environment which stimulates studying, creativity, speculation, and reflection
- To be free from false attacks upon your honor and reputation
- To not be compelled to belong to a club, team, or other group / association.

Sources:

- Constitution of the United States
- Illinois Constitution of 1970
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly of the United Nations adopted 12-10-48).
- Jesse White, Illinois Secretary of State, “**Proposed Amendments And Addition to the Illinois Constitution**” (June 27, 2014).

Zeophus Williams

Illinois School Success Story: Students Explore Patriotism & Dissent

A 1917 Illinois Murder Helps Students Explore the Role of Patriotism and Dissent
Four 8th graders at Unity Point School near Carbondale IL focused on an early Illinois murder as the feature of their 2014 history project. The students named their project: “The Prager Case: Patriotic Murder?”



The 2014 history fair theme was Rights and Responsibilities. The students sought a case that was less well known but that heralded the age of civil rights. Their early research led them to the Prager case.

Mr. Prager was a German immigrant living in Collinsville, Illinois during World War I when the U.S. entered the war against Germany. Prager was suspected of being a traitor and a mob set upon him and killed him in 1917. Eleven persons were indicted for the murder but were acquitted and treated as patriots. The students “concluded that the case had three major effects: questioning the balance of American/human rights and Patriotic responsibilities, contributing to the passage of the Sedition Act, and redefining patriotism so as to disinclude vigilantism.”

In the documentation accompanying their project, the 8th graders also reported that they learned that “when rights and responsibilities clashed in the Prager Case, patriots were forced to question their actions. Eventually, with the help of furious media, Congress passed the Sedition Act, which limited wartime dissent... and would bring future Pragers to legal law instead of mob law. Vigilantism decreased. This tipping of the rights and responsibilities scale in the favor of rights would build the foundation for America's civil rights of today.” During their winter break, the students traveled two hours to the Collinsville historical museum where they interviewed local historians and gathered historical data.

They also interviewed a history professor from SIU, read newspaper accounts, and gathered copies of posters and other propaganda pieces of the era. The culmination of the students’ research is a website that includes photos, music, text from the students, as well as quotes from those who lived the event. The 8th graders believed a website would stand out as a means of presenting a historical event. The students’ website won the local and regional history fairs and at the state competition, won the chance to compete nationally. During the June 2014 national competition, the students’ project placed 5th.

The award-winning website can be viewed at <http://94167088.nhd.weebly.com/> The trip to the national competition was the first in many years for the Unity Point School. It has inspired this year’s 8th grade class to aim high. Social studies teacher C.J. Buss requires each eighth grader, working alone or in groups, to prepare a history project for the school history fair. Mr. Buss believes these projects make history come alive and helps students see connections with today’s issues and become critical thinkers. The students competing in this



year's award-winning efforts are: Leah Hall, Irene Gao, Faith Golz and Marissa Ivory.

History fairs are a great opportunity for students to learn about law. We have previously highlighted the work of Carbondale Middle School students who entered the performance category of the history fair. To see more about the Carbondale Middle School success story, visit the March/April 2013 Newsletter: <http://www.isba.org/sites/default/files/teachers/newsletter/March%20April%202013.pdf>

Suzanne Schmitz

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