Crossroads of America Beckons Communicators

Mark Tarasiewicz | Chair, NABE Communications Section

The 2014 NABE Communications Section Workshop will be held in Indianapolis from Oct. 1-3 at the Omni Severin Hotel. This year's conference promises to be an exciting and education-packed event!

I hope you'll mark your calendar (today!) for the Indianapolis Workshop, not only because the annual Workshop is one of the best things that NABE does -- the sharing of best practices and new technologies among fellow communicators is a NABE hallmark -- it's also taking place in a fun and friendly city at one of the most beautiful times of the year.

And so, in honor of our arrival this fall in The Circle City, here are a few Indianapolis “fun facts” to wet your appetite for this year’s gathering:

• Indianapolis is the 12th largest city in the United States. It is the only major U.S. city not on a river.

• The first state capital was Corydon. Indianapolis became the capital in 1820.

• Indiana is called the Crossroads of America because Indianapolis has the most interstate legs in the United States.

• The Indianapolis 500 is the largest single-day sporting event in the world. The first Indianapolis 500 was held on May 30, 1911 and won by Ray Harroun, with an average speed of 74.59 mph.

• The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is one of only 18 full-time orchestras in the United States.

• Eagle Creek Park is one of the largest municipal parks in the United States. There are approximately 1,400 acres of water and 3,900 acres of land.

• The 23rd President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, opened his law practice in Indianapolis in 1854. He was only President for three months.

• The Raggedy Ann doll was created in 1914 by Marcella Gruelle of Indianapolis.

• Indiana University’s greatest swimmer was Mark Spitz, who won 7 gold medals in the 1972 Olympic games.

• Kurt Vonnegut Jr., well-known author and artist, is from Indianapolis. David Letterman is also from Indianapolis.
**NABE Small Bar Conference**

*June 26-June 28, 2014*

Save the date for the 2014 NABE Small Bar Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, Thursday, June 26, 2014 - Saturday, June 28, 2014.

The conference will be held at the Omni William Penn Hotel, 530 William Penn Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

*Registration Opens March 31, 2014*

Keep up-to-date online at:

[https://m360.nabenet.org/ViewEvent.aspx?id=88137&instance=0](https://m360.nabenet.org/ViewEvent.aspx?id=88137&instance=0)
Workshop Scholarships Available!

Each year, the NABE Communications Section offers scholarships to assist section members with attending the annual workshop and throughout the year NABE offers scholarships for its meetings. For 2013-14, I have the pleasure of serving as scholarship committee chair for the section and for NABE and I want to make sure all fellow Communications Section members are aware of what’s available.

The scholarships all include both a waiver of the registration fee and assistance with travel expenses up to a set amount. Scholarships are only awarded to members in good standing.

The Communications Section scholarships are intended to assist section members wishing to attend the annual workshop but whose bar associations have limited financial resources. In 2013, there were four scholarships awarded with a reimbursement of up to $500 in expenses plus registration fee waivers. The registration fee waiver is especially helpful because it includes all conference meals and breaks so that out of pocket meals expenses may be kept to a minimum.

For the 2013 communications workshop, the Section Council approved a budget of $2,000 for four scholarships with reimbursement of travel expenses up to $500 per recipient.

NABE offers scholarships for its midyear and annual meetings and for the CSE Retreat and Small Bar Conference. Midyear and annual scholarship expense assistance is provided up to $1,000; for the CSE and small bar meetings expense assistance is provided up to $750.

Scholarship recipients are required to cover all travel expenses up front. After the meeting, a reimbursement request form is submitted with receipts documenting costs of transportation, hotel accommodations, meals and other travel expenses.

The guidelines for the section and NABE scholarships are the same, with preference given to those who: have not previously received scholarship assistance from the committee; have not attended the meeting in the past five years; are not able to attend without financial assistance; are new to bar association work; would help to increase racial/ethnic diversity of the section; and would be likely to remain active in the section.

The Section’s scholarship application asks applicants to respond to four queries:

--Briefly state your professional goals and how attendance at this Section Workshop will help you reach those goals.

--Explain any factors in your Bar association that make your attendance at the workshop financially difficult or impossible.

--Would your participation in any way improve the racial and/or ethnic diversity of the section?

--In what ways do you intend to be involved in the ongoing work of the Communications Section?

The NABE application has check-offs for certain information and then require that the applicant “briefly state your professional goals and how attendance at this NABE meeting will help you reach those goals” and that the applicant “briefly state the circumstances regarding your bar’s inability to fund your participation at the meeting for which you are requesting a scholarship.”

The scholarship committees, which are composed of members, review all applications received, discuss all of the responses and information provided, and then select and award the scholarship recipients. All applicants are notified, whether they received a scholarship or not, in advance of the early registration discounted fee deadline.

Details, deadlines and forms for the NABE scholarships are posted on the website. The workshop scholarships will be announced by email via the section’s list serv.

I encourage all Communications Section members to apply for these scholarships and ask that you help to promote them among your colleagues in your Bar. If you have any questions, let me know!

Column contributed by Francine Andia Walker
Andia Walker serves as Director of Public Information and Bar Services for The Florida Bar.
Communicating With the
New Lawyer

Becoming a lawyer is a feat of perseverance under the best of circumstances. These days, it is also an act of courage.

Today’s new lawyers – in practice for five years or less – face daunting obstacles, including crushing law school debt, a dearth of jobs, and limited practice-readiness.

How can bar associations help? In Communicating with the New Lawyer, a workshop at the NABE mid-year meeting in Chicago, Alexa Giacomini of the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA), Heather Clark of the Denver and Colorado Bar Associations (DBA and CBA, respectively), and Priscilla Camacho of the Texas Young Lawyers Association (TYLA) outlined their associations’ efforts in meeting these truly epic challenges.

Why Bar Associations Must Act
Standing idly by is clearly not an option. As outlined in The Impact of Law School Debt on the Delivery of Legal Services, a 2013 ISBA study, the stakes are simply too high. To begin the workshop, Giacomini summarized the study’s findings and its ripple effects on the profession:

Burdened by debt, many new lawyers delay major life milestones. An increasing number feel overwhelmed and seek counseling. Because of weak job prospects, more lawyers start their own business as solo practitioners. Without a lot of practical experience, this can be a high-risk and stressful endeavor.

And while the job market may have stabilized, there is no rosy glow on the horizon. Law firms prefer to hire laterals who already come equipped with hands-on experience. In the not-for-profit world, there are fewer jobs as well, as organizations do more with even less after years of funding cuts. Even the lucky 56% of law graduates who find full-time, long-term legal jobs, struggle to make a living. The median salary of $61,245 does very little to pay down the average $100,000+ law school debt burden.

The effects on the profession are daunting. Because of financial pressures, perhaps, new lawyers do less pro bono work. There is a brain drain towards higher-paying jobs in large firms and urban areas. Meanwhile, rural practices, small firms, and public interest firms have trouble retaining talent. All of this, of course, exacerbates the already widening gap between providers of legal services and those who need them most. And with more lawyers going solo without adequate training, the profession also faces increased risks of malpractice and ethics violations.

Fortunately, there is a number of solutions bar associations already employ to tackle these problems.

Debt Counseling
According to a 2013 survey by the ABA Law Student Division, only 7% of graduates meet with a financial planner prior to graduating from law school. Hence, the need for debt counseling among new lawyers is enormous. The DBA helps fill that gap by offering Getting a Grip on Your Student Loans, a popular workshop with student loan expert Heather Jarvis.

In addition, the CBA also offer dues assistance to its members. In Clark’s experience, the program not only fills an immediate need but builds lasting loyalty with program recipients.

Continuing Education and Guidance
To jump-start new lawyers’ practice-readiness, some bars offer free CLE seminars to new lawyers. Clark and Camacho’s associations have gone further and implemented innovative approaches tailored to a new generation of lawyers.

What Do Lawyers Do? is a project by TYLA that tackles questions pertaining to life before, during, and after law school. Visitors are treated to clear, concise answers and multi-media resources. The microsite features a clean, responsive design that makes navigation a breeze on any screen size.

TYLA also offers The Ten Minute Mentor, a searchable archive of short video vignettes on specific legal topics. Another creative approach is Fit to Practice, an initiative by the DBA, combining health and legal education into action-packed and popular bike socials, yoga, and spin classes.

Business Development
Networking is an important business development component for new lawyers. The DBA makes sure networking is effective by increasing networking opportunities with senior practitioners and by encouraging sections to sponsor young attorney events.

Communicating | continued on page 10

Continuing on page 10
Congratulations to our Luminary Winners!

A special thank you to Fastcase for sponsoring our awards, and to those serving on the award committee for the time you invest in reviewing our projects!

Regular Publications
Louisville Bar Association - Bar Briefs
San Diego County Bar Association – San Diego Lawyer
State Bar of Wisconsin – Wisconsin Lawyer

Special Publications
DuPage County Bar Association - Brief/Grief
Bar Association of San Francisco
First Annual Report of the Justice & Diversity Center
The Florida Bar - Guide for Florida Voters

Electronic Publications
San Fernando Valley Bar Association
Biweekly E-Newsletter
San Diego County Bar Association
This Week at the Bar
Washington State Bar Association - NWSidebar

Public Relations
Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association
“Bench, Bar & Boardroom Conference”
Iowa State Bar Association
“Retention Election”
The Florida Bar
“The Vote’s in YOUR COURT: Judicial Merit Retention”

Marketing
Austin Bar Association
“Annual Bench Bar Conference”
Pennsylvania Bar Association
“Animal Magnetism”

Websites
Cincinnati Bar Association - www.cincybar.org
San Diego County Bar Association - www.sdcba.org
Ohio State Bar Association - www.ohiobar.org

Save the Date!
Communications Workshop
Indianapolis, October 1-3
80 percent of Facebook users are mobile.

*Be a filter, not a fire hose.*

— “They’ll find it through Google – they’re never going to go to your website.”—

“Without bar associations, this would be one sorry, sad profession.”

Don’t be afraid to change course if something is not working - don’t be afraid to delete.

We’re all from member organizations and we all run member organizations--but we don’t talk about our members.

Market share for voluntary bars is shrinking.

There is no organization anywhere that does what NABE does!

There’s no need to re-invent the wheel when you can steal the wheel.
Francine Andia Walker, APR, CPRC, received the E.A. “Wally” Richter Leadership Award at the Section workshop in Portland, Oregon.

The award recognizes outstanding professional achievement in the field of bar communications, extraordinary service to NABE and distinguished leadership of the section. It is the section’s highest honor, established in 1983 and named for a preeminent bar communicator who served as Director of public information for the Missouri Bar for 28 years.

Anybody who knows Francine knows how deserving she is of this high honor! Francine is a true friend, mentor and colleague to all bar communicators and the section is richer for her energy and contributions to its efforts. She has been involved at all levels of the division and has made an impact on bar organizations across the country with her expertise and commitment to the ideals of professionalism. Francine has done everything from write articles about programs, to develop and implement panels and presentations, to serve as chair of the section and chair of the workshop, to represent the section on big NABE programs and committees.

Letters nominating Francine were filled with praise for her creativity and tenacity. “I wonder how Francine has time, because I sure couldn’t keep up with her;” read one nomination. “And whatever task she does, success follows. Skill, grace, experience, leadership ability – she’s got it all.”

Francine receives great praise for her leadership ability, energy raising funds for the section and NABE, and her service as the scholarship chair. She believes in the value of the Communications Section and encourages people to apply for scholarships, seeks additional funding if it is needed, and works diligently to include as many bar communicators as possible in the outstanding annual workshop. She goes out of her way to ensure new attendees feel welcomed and comfortable.

Another colleague wrote, “Francine is most deserving of this recognition. She has always been helpful to me whenever I have needed to bounce an idea or sought her opinion as well as tap into her previous PR experience. She has the unique distinction among our group of having been the PR director for the Florida Medical Society before she joined the bar.”

Gwynne Young, former president of the State Bar of Florida, praised Francine as “the consummate communications professional. I could not have had a better partner. She is just the best.”

Walker has been director of Public Information & Bar Services at the State Bar of Florida since 2000. Walker has been a member of NABE since 2000. She served for six years on the executive council of the 220-member Communications Section and was the chairperson in 2007 – 2008. She was the chair of the Communications Section’s annual workshop in 2004 and has served as chair of the scholarship, sponsorship and program committees for other workshops.

Walker is currently the scholarship committee chair for NABE and a frequent speaker at NABE meetings. She continues to be involved in section activities. At The Florida Bar, Walker works closely with leadership on strategic communications and is responsible for media relations, consumer awareness programs, law related education, the voluntary bar liaison program and the Web site: www.FloridaBar.org. A graduate of University of Florida (BS Journalism 1981), Walker is nationally Accredited in Public Relations (APR) and is a Florida Public Relations Association Certified Public Relations Counselor (CPRC). She is also a member of the Capital Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association.

Column contributed by Kelley Jones King
Past Chair, Richter Award Committee
Sam Lipsman, the longtime publisher and editor of Los Angeles Lawyer magazine, was posthumously honored with the 2013 Anne Charles Award for Distinguished Service at the NABE Communications Section’s annual workshop held in Portland, Ore., Sept. 23-25, 2013.

Lipsman, who died June 13, 2013, after a seven-month battle with cancer, was a cherished colleague and a familiar figure in the Communications Section. Citing his decade-plus of section participation, former Section Chair Christine Cendagorta described his contributions as a fitting tribute to the award’s namesake, the late Anne Charles, the State Bar of California’s elegant and articulate communications director who was widely recognized as a true professional in the field of communications and for generously sharing her communications and public relations experience with the state bar and her colleagues. Charles died in 1999.

“[Sam] exemplifies what the Anne Charles Award is all about,” Cendagorta said, “being a willing go-to sort of person who does not just take on a project or assignment but follows through on that assignment or promise.”

Lipsman was a frequent presenter at workshops, a buddy to newcomers and chair of one critical committee, the Luminary Awards Committee. During his four years chairing the awards committee, Lipsman was credited for not only managing and organizing the project, but for taking it to a new level by arranging (with the help of David Simms) to have the judging done electronically and ensuring subsequent publicity for the award winners.

The NABE Communications Section created the Anne Charles Award in 2000 to recognize the unsung heroes who quietly and competently do so much of the work of the section. They—like the namesake of this award—share their expertise, enthusiasm and time with colleagues. See a list of past recipients at www.nabenet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=55.

At the workshop’s farewell luncheon in September, Cendagorta’s announcement of the award was met with an extended ovation. After a moment of silence, several of Lipsman’s longtime colleagues lightened the mood (just as Sam would have had it) by regaling luncheon attendees with memories.

Here’s a sampling:

Paul Nickell: “He loved his work and it showed. LA Lawyer has always been, to my mind, one of the finest bar journals in the country. I think I can also say that every single one of us has benefitted at one time or another from Sam’s advice, whether by list serve or a personal one-on-one sidebar at our annual workshop.”

Joyce Hastings: “Sam reminded me, as he has many times over the years, that I was his NABE buddy, the one assigned to welcome him during his first workshop. While I regret I don’t remember the details of that first meeting, what matters is he did and each of us can have that impact on another NABE member. He called me his ‘NABE sister,’ and today I am missing my brother.”

Mark Mathewson: “Sam was the smartest guy in the room. Any room. And the most honest. Whenever I had a serious question about the business of publishing, I reached out to him. A lot of us did, obviously.”

Christine Cendagorta: “He brought intelligence, warmth, humor and creativity to all that he did. He helped me work through a publication challenge, offering valuable tips for solving my problem and I’m sure I’m not alone in that category of friendship.”

Brad Carr: “He was a real friend of the Section and a helluva good guy, a mensch.”

Column contributed by Paul Nickell
Nickell serves as Editor of the Oregon State Bar Bulletin
In an increasingly digital world, the need to facilitate connections between members becomes more important each day. Bar associations in particular have a unique opportunity to be the facilitators of online communities that connect members and provide value beyond traditional face-to-face interactions—perfect for associations with a larger geographic reach or for busy members who struggle to get away from their desks.

Julia Nardelli Gross, Online Communications Specialist at the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA), and Lorrie Trogden, Associate Director of the Arkansas State Bar Association (ArkBar), tackled this topic at their session, dubbed “Online Communities: A Bar’s Eye View,” during the recent NABE Mid-Year Meeting in Chicago, Illinois. Julia and Lorrie shared the different approaches that each of their associations have taken to in order to provide online communities for their members. The ArkBar has its own community, Arkansas Community Exchange (ACE), which was created through Higher Logic. The WSBA, on the other hand, has chosen to focus its efforts into creating a bar presence on existing social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Julia was quick to point out that before any decision is made on what tool will be used to create the online community, it is imperative to answer various questions, which she identified through the POST Method:

• **People:** Who is your audience or target user base? What is their existing engagement levels within the bar and with each other? What are their technological abilities? Will this audience change at all over the next five years?
• **Objectives:** What are your members’ needs or problems, and how will your community address or solve these? What will the community provide that your members don’t already have, or how are you enhancing what they do already use? What are the objectives of the community (number of users, amount of activity or interaction) versus the objectives of the association (greater promotion of events or more data on members).
• **Strategy:** How will you pay for it? Who will manage it? What will the association’s role or voice be in the community? What does success look like?
• **Technology:** What bells and whistles do you absolutely need, and what features might not be necessary right now? What solution—creating your own community or utilizing existing communities—will help you best accomplish your goals?

Julia noted that after the WSBA completed the POST process, their decision was to focus their efforts on the bar’s Facebook page, Twitter account and on the NWSidebar blog.

Having taken a different approach, Lorrie shared the ArkBar’s experience with its own customized online community, ACE, detailing the features available to members and how members have utilized the community since its rollout in mid-2013. Lorrie noted that their approach allowed the ArkBar to accomplish several existing goals in a cost-effective manner—creating a mobile website and making the directory accessible on the go. The launch and six months of initial operating fees were funded through donations made by sections from their reserves. Lorrie estimated that 40 to 50 percent of ArkBar members are currently using the community.

ACE was created with a single sign on log-in process, meaning that members use the same log-in credentials on the community as they do on the bar’s website. Members access the community from the ArkBar website or through a branded app. Once in ACE, members can see which communities they belong to within ACE and section feeds that correspond to the members’ section affiliations. The ArkBar did use list-servs prior to ACE’s launch, but the list-servs were integrated into the community. ACE offers members the opportunity to interact with each other, earning points for each interaction and even winning contests based on point levels. Members also interact in open forums and blogs in the community. In addition, ACE offers robust support for bar events, allowing uploading of agendas, materials, and sponsor recognition ads.

Seeing the success that each bar has experienced using different completely approaches drove home the need for an association to take a critical look at its unique situation and position before diving headfirst into any solution.

Column contributed by Mary Kay Price
Price serves as the Director of Marketing & Communications for the Indianapolis Bar Association.
In addition, the DBA helps members with business planning and developing new revenue streams. For instance, the association offers a toolkit and training in unbundled legal services. Also known as limited scope representation, the model not only helps new lawyers gain experience and business but it also serves clients of moderate means who may not be able to afford full-scope representation.

Finally, some bars are also looking to emulate the co-working model to help solo practitioners. While many associations rent surplus conference room space, some are beginning to offer shared workspaces and room rentals with amenities such as free Wi-Fi.

Communication is Key

From debt counseling to jobs assistance, there is much bar associations can do to support new lawyers. Communication is key in this effort. New Lawyers are natives of the digital age, where effective communication crosses channels and platforms with ease.

Clark and Camacho stress the importance of making information accessible. This includes making resources mobile-friendly, concise, and visually appealing. Microsites and blogs are among the best ways to reach and retain the attention of new lawyers. Highlighting new and future lawyers and empowering them to blog about their experience provides much-needed exposure and builds loyalty.

The new lawyer is sharp, resourceful, and courageous. Bar associations who are ready to collaborate, innovate, and communicate are in a unique position to help. Whether you leverage your resources to advocate on behalf of new lawyers, provide a platform for new lawyers to share their experiences, or roll up your sleeves to provide hands-on practical experience and guidance, you help shape the future of the profession.

Column contributed by Kerstin Firmin

Firmin serves as Creative Manager at The Bar Association of San Francisco.
Q: What is your title and duties?
A: Director of Communications. I oversee all forms of communication—direct and indirect—with Austin Bar members. I serve as the managing editor of the monthly publication, Austin Lawyer; manage the content of the Austin Bar Web site; and write/develop presentations for Bar leadership. I interact with local media to provide feature and background information for news stories and help organize several special events including the Austin Bar Foundation Gala, Austin Adoption Day, and Law Day Luncheon.

Q: Tells us about yourself:
A: I graduated from Texas A&M and moved to Austin in 1990. I began my career working in political campaigns and in a few years, moved into non-profit communications. I love getting to write and create for a living. I've worked at the Austin Bar Association for more than 10 years, and have been married for almost 18 years. My husband’s background is advertising and publishing. He is now a freelance writer, and we have two large, adorable dogs.

Q: Why did you become a NABE Council Member?
A: The entire time I’ve worked for the Austin Bar, I’ve been a member of the NABE Communications Section. I have always been amazed at the incredible talent held within this section. Bar communicators face so many of the same challenges, and everyone in the section is eager to help. I'm excited about taking a more active role to help continue the legacy of the excellence the section is known for.

Q: Tell us an interesting, random fact about you:
A: I design jewelry.

Q: What’s the best place to visit in Austin?
A: Lady Bird Lake – on the water or anywhere on the Hike & Bike Trail

Q: Most likely place to find you on a Saturday night?
A: With my husband playing Rock Band (I’m the drummer) and our two dogs watching us like groupies.

Q: What are you currently reading?
A: Let’s Pretend this Never Happened (Jenny Lawson); At the Mountains of Madness (H. P. Lovecraft); Lapsing into a Comma (Bill Walsh)

Q: Most interesting/new idea at the Austin Bar?
A: The Austin Bar Association is partnering with the Austin PBS affiliate to host a Battle of the Barristers. It will be a joint fundraiser for the station and the Austin Bar Foundation and will feature lawyer musicians. We are in the beginning stages of the project and are very excited about the event.

Q: What would we find on your iPod?
A: AFI, Greenday, Elvis Costello

Q: What are you looking forward to accomplishing this year?
A: The Austin Bar is at the beginning stages of a complete redesign of our website. As any communicator knows, this can be one of the most interesting (yet infuriating) projects on our plates. I’m very excited about the new functionality that we can offer members and how we can make their online experience better. And six months from now, we see if I’ve maintained my sanity.

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2014

NABE COMM

INDIANAPOLIS

ENRICHED BY THE PAST, ENERGIZED FOR THE FUTURE

WHO
National Association of Bar Executives

WHAT
Communications Section Workshop 2014
hosted by the Indiana State Bar Association

WHEN
Oct. 1-3 (Sept. 30 for early arrivers)

WHERE
The Omni Severin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis

WHY
It’s the annual pilgrimage of bar communicators!

HOW
By trains, planes & automobiles, of course!