

The BAHR Reporter

Bar Association for Human Rights of Greater Houston, Inc.

CLE COMMITTEE DEVELOPS FULL DAY PROGRAM

BAHR is sponsoring an all-day seminar called *Fundamentals of Law Practice* on Saturday, March 22, 1997. The seminar will feature attorneys from a variety of practice fields speaking on topics on basic legal transactions and other practical information you'll want to know about practicing law in a new area of concentration or setting up a solo or small firm practice.

Connie Moore will begin the day with practical considerations of office space, computers, books, supplies, employees, and your relationship with your banker. Donald Skipwith will tell you how to find clients, how to obtain all kinds of court appointments, and how to keep them coming. Greg Glass will lend insight into handling a DUI case from the phone call from jail, the bonding process, all the way through plea or trial. Mitchell Katine will lead you through an employment termination case from the initial evaluation to drafting the complaint.

Our lunch session will offer an insightful discussion on same-sex marriage. There will be a brief debate on whether same-sex marriage is a fight our community should be involved in and the pros and cons of marriage for same-sex couples. That lively discussion will be followed by an update on the Hawaii marriage case and its probable impact in Texas.

The afternoon session will feature Terrance Baggott discussing wills and powers of attorney for your gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered client. David Elliott will provide a guide to helping your gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered client buy a house. The day wraps up with Robert Rosenberg reviewing ethical considerations and keeping your license.

Written materials will be provided. Participation size is limited and pre-registration is required so that lunch plans can be made. For your convenience, a registration form is on page 11 of this newsletter. For more information, please call Clyde Williams at 713-236-0064.

ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 17TH

BAHR's annual meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, April 17 at the law firm of Moore & Hunt at 6:00 p.m. Moore & Hunt is located at 3608 Audubon, just three blocks east of Montrose Blvd. In addition to the good food, drinks, and visiting, we will be discussing our organization and may be voting on some by-laws changes.

Other business that will be conducted at the annual meeting includes the election of new officers. While there is usually some overlap from one board to the next, each year new people join the board. If you are interested in serving on BAHR's board please attend the meeting. If you are interested in serving on the board and are unable to attend the meeting please call Connie Moore, the current president, at 713-522-4282, ext. 13. Generally, BAHR's board meets once a month. The time commitment is minimal, typically no more than three or four hours a month including the time spent at the monthly meeting. If you are looking for a way to contribute to the legal community, serving on BAHR's board is one way to do it.

The annual meeting is also a time to socialize with each other. BAHR will provide hors d'oeuvres, soft drinks, beer, and wine. We look forward to seeing you.

STATE BAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS DENIES GAY & LESBIAN ISSUES SECTION

The State Bar Board of Directors has voted not to approve the creation of a proposed Gay and Lesbian Issues section. The vote marked the first time that the Bar has rejected the creation of a new section. The section was proposed by Mitchell Katine, a BAHR member and former BAHR president. Katine has pushed for creation of the section to assist attorneys who represent gay, lesbian, transgendered, and HIV+ clients.

The Board of Directors considered the proposal at its October 4th meeting in Fort Worth after Katine obtained more than fifty signatures from attorneys who indicated their desire to join the section. Katine made an oral presentation to the Board and was joined by BAHR president Connie Moore and BAHR vice president Charles Spain. After the presentation, Charles "Reb" Gregg, immediate past president of the Houston Bar Association, moved for approval of the section, which was seconded by Texas Tech Law School Dean Frank Newton, the president elect of the State Bar.

There was extensive debate on the motion, and several members of the Board spoke in favor of approving the section, often in emotion terms. The opponents of the section advanced four arguments: (1) any needed discussion of gay, lesbian, transgendered, and HIV legal issues can be done in existing sections, such as the Family Law Section; (2) a Gay and Lesbian Issues Section is unnecessary in light of the existing Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section; (3) the State Bar already has too many sections and it would be divisive to create another, regardless of the merits of the Gay and Lesbian Issues Section; and (4) the majority of the State Bar membership would not feel comfortable with a section addressing gay and lesbian issues. Supporters of

the section countered that: (1) other sections do not have the time or interest to devote to gay, lesbian, transgendered, and HIV legal issues; (2) even though there already is an Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section, the State Bar has previously approved sections for African-American Lawyers, American Indian Law, Animal Law, Hispanic Issues, and Women & the Law; and (3) the proposed section would refrain from political activity and focus instead on helping attorneys to represent their clients who are gay, lesbian, transgendered, or HIV+.

The Board voted 19 to 17 against approving the section. State Bar President Colleen McHugh of Corpus Christi and Texas Young Lawyers Association President Bill Jones of Houston voted against the section. After the vote, U.S. District Judge Norman Black, the federal judiciary liaison to the Bar, told the Board, "I've always learned a lot about my fellow members from these meetings. Today's the first time I wasn't real proud." Ironically, both Presidents McHugh and Jones wrote articles in the October *Texas Bar Journal* that stressed the need for diversity in the Bar and encouraged the increased involvement of female and minority attorneys.

Numerous attorneys have written the State Bar to protest the Board's action. One letter garnered the signatures of 240 attorneys, including 95 at Vinson & Elkins, 84 at Baker & Botts, and 61 at other law firms, appellate courts, and prosecutor's offices.

Katine has announced that he is already gathering signatures on a new petition to the Board for the creation of a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues Section. Any attorney who wishes to sign the petition should contact Katine at (713) 981-9595.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ☛ March 17, Monday - Deadline for sending in your registration form for the BAHR Conference.
- ☛ March 22, Saturday - BAHR Conference on *Fundamentals of Law Practice* from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: DoubleTree Hotel (Downtown at Allen Center) 400 Dallas Street, Houston, Texas 77002. For more information, please see related story in this issue.
- ☛ April 17, Thursday - BAHR Annual Meeting at the offices of Moore & Hunt, 3608 Audubon Place, from 6:00 p.m. to whenever we've eaten all the food.

Minutes of BAHR Annual Meeting
April 8, 1997

Connie Moore, President, called the annual meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Connie introduced guest Richard Pena, a candidate for state bar president, who took a few minutes to speak to the membership. Then Connie introduced the 1996-1997 board of directors to the membership and embarked on a retrospective of the past year's activities. It was reported that current BAHR membership stands at 66 members, comprised of 51 attorneys and 15 student and other associate members.

Mitchell Katine was presented with the Activist Award for his continuing work toward creating a state bar section for gender identification issues. Mitchell noted his optimism that the new state bar board of directors will favorably consider a proposal for section formation this year.

The Honorable Norman Black, Senior Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, was recognized with plaque as an outspoken guardian of human rights. Judge Black recounted his vocal criticism of the state bar board of directors this past summer after their vote rejecting the formation of a gay and lesbian issues section. Judge Black revealed a deep personal commitment to human rights that was kindled during his youth as a Jew growing up in segregated Houston, matured throughout his judicial career, and nurtured through his collegiality with individuals such as the Honorable John Brown, who served as Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit during the Civil Rights Era. Judge Black concluded with the words of Winston Churchill: "Never give up."

After a short break, the treasurer's report was presented.

Connie took the opportunity to recognize the contributions to BAHR of Margaret Brewer, secretary to Clyde Williams, and Natalie Williams, legal assistant at Moore & Hunt. Connie also recognized the support and assistance of her partner Deborah Hunt during her presidency, and invited Debbie to facilitate a discussion about the direction and possible future activities of BAHR. Suggestions included co-sponsoring of projects with other organizations. Members also noted the value of the newsletter, and how important it was for it to be made available at law schools.

The membership considered the proposed amendment to the by-laws for streamlining selection of associate members to serve as representatives to the board of directors. This amendment was passed.

Connie opened up the floor for nominations to the board of directors. The following nominations were made and accepted: David Elliott, Matthew Eastus (in absentia), Rick Thompson, John Fisher (in absentia), Kin Spain, John Harle, Anne Pike, and Connie Moore. Christa Mills, a law student at Thurgood Marshall School of Law, accepted nomination as an associate representative to the board. The nominations were closed, there being sufficient nominations accepted to fill the board of directors openings.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

The BAHR Reporter

Bar Association for Human Rights of Greater Houston, Inc.

Continuing Legal Education Program HIV And The Law: An Update

On November 12, 1997, BAHR is sponsoring a continuing legal education program entitled "HIV and the Law: An Update." The program is to be held from 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. in the Baker & Botts, L.L.P.'s Mall Conference Room, One Shell Plaza, 910 Louisiana. This program is designed to provide an update of legal, medical, and social issues arising for people with HIV, especially in light of new medical treatments available to persons with HIV and AIDS. The program will conclude with a mock oral argument addressing whether asymptomatic HIV should be actionable under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As a special community outreach event, this program is free to members and interested non-members. A detailed program may be found on the back cover of this issue of the BAHR Reporter. For more information, please contact Anne Pike, 713-758-2411, or Matthew Eastus, 713-229-1991.

Update On The Proposed Sexual Orientation & Gender Identification Bar Section

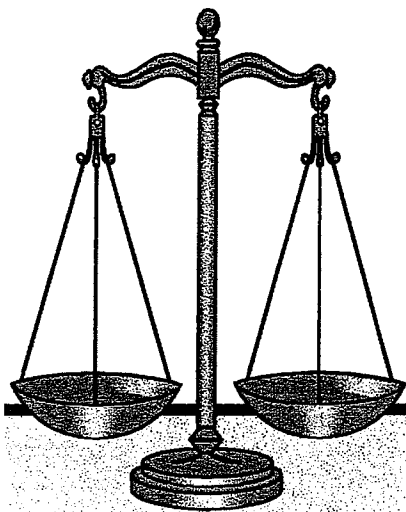
In a recent mailing to the BAHR membership, President Anne Pike informed current and former BAHR members of a renewed effort to establish a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues Section of the State Bar of Texas. We hope to obtain 200 signatures to present to the Texas State Bar Board of Directors. BAHR encourages all members to sign the petition enclosed in the mailing and asks all members to contact other interested non-members in Houston and elsewhere in Texas to sign in support of the proposed section. If you are interested in participating in this effort, please contact Anne Pike, 713-758-2411.

Successful Back-to-School Mixer

On October 2, 1997, BAHR hosted a back-to-school mixer at Baby Barnaby's Cafe. The event was a great success in our continuing outreach efforts to local law students. Seventeen students expressed interest in becoming associate members of BAHR! Much thanks to Baby Barnaby's for generously donating their space for the mixer.

Celebrate the Holiday Season at The Annual BAHR Holiday Party

Mark your calendars for the annual BAHR Holiday Party to be held from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. on December 12, 1997 at the home of President Anne Pike, 2210 North Boulevard. More details as the date approaches. Hope to see you there.



THE

BAHR

Bar Association for Human Rights of Greater Houston, Inc.

February 1999

REPORTER

IN THIS ISSUE

President's Letter

Law Student-Attorney Mixer

BAHR Luncheon Series

SOGII Meeting Notice

BAHR Now Affiliated with NLGLA

USA Today Poll

Human Rights Campaign Poll

Recent Law Review Articles of Note

President's Letter

BAHR is having a great year. Our monthly lunch meetings continue to be a great success and are quickly becoming the core of BAHR's activities. For January, we are excited to announce that Houston City Council member (and long time member of BAHR) Annise Parker will be speaking (see article below). Starting in February, and continuing every other month, we plan to use the monthly lunch meeting for a CLE presentation on legal issues of interest to our members. Please come and join us. Not only will you have an opportunity to meet with others interested in lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered legal issues, but you will also earn CLE credit.

After working hard to establish the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues Section of the State Bar of Texas last year, it is now time for BAHR to re-examine its role in the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered legal community. There is plenty of room for both organizations and each needs to focus on what it does best. To help focus BAHR's efforts, the board has tried to identify the major distinguishing factors between BAHR and SOGII. We believe one of the chief differences between the two groups is that BAHR is an independent local group while SOGII is a state-wide organization operating under the constraints of the State Bar of Texas. Accordingly, the board has tried to focus on providing opportunities for members to meet and network with local l/g/b/t attorneys at regularly scheduled social and educational functions.

In addition to the monthly lunches, BAHR will also be sponsoring several purely social functions such as the Law Student—Attorney Mixer to be held February 11, 1999, 5:30 p.m. at Central Congregational Church. An important purpose of all these functions is to give you an opportunity to share your views on BAHR's future. The board needs your input in this ongoing process of redefining the organization's role in Houston's l/g/b/t legal community. We hope you are able to take advantage of these opportunities and come visit with us. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas for BAHR's future.

RECEIVED

FEB 6 1999

CHARLES A. SPAIN, JR.