



# EQUAL TIMES

## BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As technology evolves, I'm amazed by and sometimes overwhelmed with opportunities to use technology for both personal and professional purposes. I recently talked with a college friend and recalled a time without Internet, cell phones, or instant communication with people (yes, I am dating myself). We talked about notebooks and pens in class (no laptops for taking notes), checking answering machine messages at home for updates from friends on weekend activities (no cell phone or texting), and writing letters to family and friends (no emails). Practically ancient times in the technology world, and yet not really that long ago!



Laura C. Mason

I'll be honest – I have mixed feelings about technology and communication. Constant connectivity can be a blessing and a curse. It's great to have the ability to reach out to someone with almost instant feedback (and not rely on answering machines!). However, I often wonder if attorneys rely too much on technology to the detriment of face-to-face or telephone communication with clients and colleagues.

From a law practice perspective, I don't think technology will ever completely substitute direct interaction with clients and colleagues. Yet, technology can be a wonderful tool to enhance a law practice. Evolution of technology has given rise to evolution of attorney advertising rules in the Internet and social media age. The Advertising Review Department of the State Bar of Texas is responsible for reviewing attorney advertisements and ensuring attorneys comply with the ethical requirements created by the Supreme Court of Texas.

Websites are used regularly by many Texas attorneys to help promote law practices. Do you or your law firm use a website to provide professional information and promote your law practice? If so, then that website is subject to mandatory review by the Advertising Review Department. Many attorneys are familiar with these website requirements and include the appropriate disclaimers on providing legal advice, statements on attorney advertising, etc. Of course, technology has now moved far beyond the Internet.

What about using social media to promote your law practice? How about writing a blog on a legal topic? Twitter? A Facebook or LinkedIn page for your firm? These uses of technology are also addressed by the Advertising Review Department. As attorneys we must consider compliance with professional guidelines before launching new technology initiatives. There are effective ways to use these tools in compliance with our attorney-specific rules. For more information on how to use technology while staying compliant, contact the State Bar of Texas at: [adreview@texasbar.com](mailto:adreview@texasbar.com) or (800) 566-4616.

### JULY 2011

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Suzanne Oliva



Gaylia Brunson

## BCWBF 2011 Autumn Affair

By Suzanne Oliva & Gaylia Brunson

We are so pleased to let you know that the BCWBF Autumn Affair is Thursday, October 13, 2011, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Witte Museum.

This signature fundraising event will bring together the legal community for an evening of fun as we honor women judges and present the Belva Lockwood award to two outstanding members. Proceeds of the event will be distributed to a deserving, non-profit group that is dedicated to improving the lives of women or children. Currently, we are in the process of receiving nominations for the recipient of the proceeds. If you would like to submit a nomination, please contact Marissa Helm at [mhelm@coxsmith.com](mailto:mhelm@coxsmith.com).

In addition, we invite you to sign up for an Autumn Affair committee. Whether you are new to the Bar or have been a member for over twenty years, assisting with this fundraising event is an excellent way to meet and work with other local lawyers and help deserving members of our community. We sincerely hope that you will take an active role this year.

Also, if you have a silent auction or raffle item to donate, or would like to sponsor the event, please e-mail Suzanne Oliva at [oliva@satx.rr.com](mailto:oliva@satx.rr.com) or Gaylia Brunson at [gayliabrunson@gmail.com](mailto:gayliabrunson@gmail.com). With your help, this will be another successful Autumn Affair!

## August Cooking Class CLE: A Tribute to Julia Child

Help us celebrate legendary chef Julia Child in this very special cooking class and CLE.

**When:** Wed., August 3, 2011, 6:00 p.m.

**Where:** Central Market Cooking School (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor at Central Market on Broadway)

**Cost:** \$50 per person. Includes food, wine and one hour of CLE credit.

**RSVP:** Attendance is limited. Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. RSVP to Jamie Shipley at [siulaw7@yahoo.com](mailto:siulaw7@yahoo.com).

**Details:** Join us as we recreate favorite Julia Child recipes paired perfectly with wine and earn CLE credit by listening to Fourth Court Justices Phylis Speedlin, Sandee Bryan Marion, Marialyn Barnard and Rebecca Simmons speak about Appellate Court Rules and Cases of Interest. Menu includes: Bruschetta the Julia Child Way; Champignons Farci (Stuffed Mushrooms); Sole Meuniere (Sautéed Sole with Brown Butter-Lemon Sauce); Courgettes aux Epinards (Sauté of Grated Zucchini & Spinach); and Soufflé Au Chocolat (Chocolate Soufflé).

## July Luncheon

Take time out of your busy schedule and make time for yourself. Successful smart individuals know a lot about nutrition, but come find out what you don't know – especially in light of the newly revised nutrition guidelines. Make time to hear Felicity Bernier, a licensed nutritionist, and learn how tap into the energy, strength, and balance we all search for. Join us on Tuesday, July 5, 2011 at Club Giraud. Please rsvp through the website or directly to [lalcantar@prdg.com](mailto:lalcantar@prdg.com) or [mgiltner@prdg.com](mailto:mgiltner@prdg.com).

## Community Services Column

By Elena Villaseñor

As I prepare for the Fourth of July weekend, I look forward to spending time with family, grilling, and hopefully getting a glimpse of my nephews watching in awe at the local fireworks. For me, the Fourth of July is usually just a three day weekend—another day off and time to spend with my family! This year, however, Independence Day has a special meaning to me.

In mid-June, a veteran and partner in my firm, invited me to attend the Veteran's Clinic sponsored by the San Antonio Bar Association. SABA began the Veteran's Clinic last year in association with Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, a State Bar of Texas program to develop and assist pro bono legal clinics throughout the state for military veterans who otherwise cannot afford or do not have access to the legal services they need. Not having any experience in veteran's law, I was hesitant to attend, but was told that many veterans need legal assistance with matters other than veteran's benefits.

When I arrived at the Audie Murphy Veteran's Hospital, I learned that many veterans were looking for wills, advice on tort claims, or assistance in family law. I admit, as a commercial trial lawyer, I was hoping for a tort claim, but when Justice Speedlin kindly asked me to take a veteran's benefits claim, I could not turn it down. I am glad I didn't.

My client—a veteran of the Vietnam war—did not necessarily need a veteran's law expert. He needed an advocate. He was homeless and had been denied his health care benefits because the Veteran's Administration's records had mistakenly indicated that he had a warrant for his arrest. He was overwhelmed and frustrated by bureaucracy and needed someone with resources (regular access to a phone, computer, and fax machine). With a few phone calls to various law enforcement agencies and letter to the VA showing evidence that my client did not have any outstanding warrants, the VA acknowledged the mistake. I am informed that his benefits will be restored soon. I am hopeful this veteran will be able to see a doctor before July 4th.

I encourage our membership to take part in the Veteran's Clinic. In the meantime, have a happy and safe July 4th!

## June Luncheon Recap

We had a great turn out for our June luncheon. Chris Kirby, an Austin-based lawyer who now spends his time coaching and training attorneys in business development, offered real world tips on how to build your business even in a down economy. If you missed the luncheon, don't fret! We will be happy to send you Chris's presentation and contact information. You can also view Chris's video, Effective and Enjoyable Networking ... Really, for free on the Texas State Bar website.