



ANNUAL MEETING REPORT:

BY BEAU STERLING, ESQ.

It was June in Las Vegas when my wife and I boarded the plane for the short flight to the Reno airport, and the summer heat was upon us. But at Lake Tahoe, it was still spring, complete with blooming wildflowers, April showers and the small birds making melody. And so it was that we made our pilgrimage to the State Bar of Nevada Annual Meeting.

The lake, as always, was astonishingly beautiful.

Mind you, this is not the Lake Tahoe described by Mark Twain when he visited there in late August of 1870. Then, as befitting the season, the skies were cloudless, the weather “superb” and the lake marked by its stillness and tranquility. It was under those conditions that Twain famously marveled at the singular clarity of the water, comparing his excursions upon the lake to floating high aloft in a balloon.

In June, the wind blows and the weather is constantly changing. The surface of the lake is constantly changing, too – sometimes sunny, sometimes dark and brooding, often both at the same time as squalls move across the basin, displaying a thousand variations of blue, grey and white in the sky and upon the water. Even after having lived up here for over a year during my younger days, I am amazed by what I see each time I return.



BAR MEMBERS GATHER IN LAKE TAHOE FOR THE 81ST ANNUAL MEETING



[Left to right] Nevada Supreme Court Justice Kristina Pickering; Chief Justice James Hardesty; his wife, Sandy; Justice Michael Cherry; Justice Douglas' wife, Martha; and Justice Michael Douglas enjoy the lakeside view at the annual meeting.

This year's annual meeting emphasized continuing education – even more so than usual. The new format featured multiple, concurrent educational tracks and three nationally known speakers, along with regular annual meeting events such as a banquet, the swearing-in of the incoming Board of Governors members, invocation of the new officers and breakfast with the Supreme Court Chief Justice.

Along with the herculean efforts of the bar staff, various sections were instrumental in putting together the educational program. Among those sections were the Young Lawyers, Environmental and Natural Resources, Construction Law, Insurance & Health Law, Probate & Trust, Bankruptcy, Tax Law, Real Property, Family Law and Intellectual Property Sections.

In the opening presentation on Thursday, “Mind Bugs: The Science of Unconscious Bias,” award-winning Harvard professor Mahzarin Banaji helped us explore our unconscious biases and generally made us feel uncomfortable about the inadequacy of our brains – in an immensely fun and entertaining way! I plan to put this information to good use immediately by avoiding all railroad crossings and giants.

On Friday, Professor Barbara Kellerman from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government led us through a close look at the dark side of the human condition and the powerful and enduring impact of bad leadership, in her session “Honest Evaluation of Leadership.”



Kathy England, attending the Red Sox themed annual banquet is sworn in as President of the State Bar of Nevada by Chief Justice Hardesty.



[Left to right] Former U.S. Senator Richard Bryan and Chief Justice James Hardesty deliver a CLE seminar on leadership and pro bono.



[Left to right] Hearing Master Sylvia Teuton and her husband, Judge Robert Teuton [Eighth Judicial District, Family Court] were in attendance.

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News anchor Paula Francis attended the annual banquet with Kathy England and a guest.



[Left to right] Phil Patee, Esq. [Assistant Bar Counsel], Mark Hinueber, Esq. [Stephens Media] and Dominic Gentile, Esq. [Gordon Silver] lead a CLE session on media relations.

During the lunch hour on Friday, attorney/comedian/motivational speaker Sean Carter gave us an animated and entertaining educational session on law firm diversity called “Can’t We All Just Get Along?”

There was also a charity blackjack tournament, won by Las Vegas attorney Jocelyn Cortez. The tournament raised funds for Children’s Cabinet of Incline Village, a private, non-profit organization providing low/no-cost services to children and families living along the north shore of Lake Tahoe.

At the annual banquet, we heard from outgoing bar President Bruce Beesley, who (again) thanked his wife, Ann Morgan, whom he famously forgot to mention at last year’s swearing-in.

We also heard from incoming bar president Kathy England, whose talk was both heartfelt and marked by her

characteristic good humor and laughter. During her talk, she called out all of the members in attendance who had given their time and service to the bar over the years – a large portion of the people in attendance.

We said goodbye to outgoing Board of Governors members Nancy Allf, Dara Goldsmith, Hon. Bridget Robb Peck, Bryan Scott and Robert Witek.

At the Chief Justice’s breakfast on Saturday morning, Chief Justice Hardesty reported on the state of the judiciary and various issues facing the bar, the courts, and the administration of justice generally. Of course, for good measure, he began by first thanking Beesley’s wife, Ann Morgan.

The chief justice highlighted the positive changes to come from the passage of recent legislation increasing court filing fees and designating the funds for court improvements, including the funding of several much-needed District Court



(Left to right) Cam Ferenbach, Esq. (Lionel Sawyer and Collins), Judge Janet Berry (Second Judicial District), Federal Magistrate Judge Robert A. McQuaid (in the yellow tie), and guests.

judges. He discussed the success of the recent Settlement Marathon for medical malpractice cases in Clark County and praised the other efforts of Nevada's senior judges. He discussed the proposal for a court of appeals to be located in already-existing facilities at the Regional Justice Center in Las Vegas.

Finally, the chief justice again exhorted members of the bar and their firms to switch their IOLTA trust accounts to one of the several financial institutions offering higher interest rates. IOLTA funds are crucial to the funding of legal services in Nevada for those who cannot afford them. Simply relocating these accounts to the institutions with the higher rates will make a huge impact on the amount of money available for this worthy purpose.

Hardesty also helped present several of the educational seminars, including a session with former U.S. Senator Richard Bryan on leadership and pro bono.

This year's annual meeting was attended by about 150 members of the Nevada legal community, including most of the justices of the Nevada Supreme Court, several District Court judges, Clark County's discovery commissioner, several of Nevada's federal court judges and other public officials.

I hope to see you all next year in Monterey, California. **NL**

To view more photos from the annual meeting, visit nvbar.org.

BEAU STERLING is the managing member of Sterling Law LLC, an appellate practice law firm, and a member of the Nevada Lawyer editorial board. He attended this year's annual meeting with his wife, Carmen.

**2010 ANNUAL MEETING
June 24-26, 2010
Monterey, California**



(Left to right) Discovery Commissioner Bonnie Bulla (Eighth Judicial District) and Judge Linda Marie Bell (Eighth Judicial District) attend the annual meeting.



Kathy England's nieces enjoy the lighthearted baseball theme at the annual banquet.



Harvard Professor Barbara Kellerman speaks about the effects of bad leadership during her plenary session.



Nevada Supreme Court Justice Kristina Pickering listens intently while attending a CLE workshop.