

# Banack's Bencher News #97

Volume 4  
Issue 28

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November 25, 2010

## **2011 BENCHER ELECTION - SELF ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS**

The Profession needs you! To test your interest in running for Bencher, ask yourself, spouse, partner(s) and children:

**DO YOU HAVE:** A willingness to work hard and have enough time to read extensive material and participate diligently on a regular basis (600 to 1,200 hours per year can be devoted to preparation for and attendance at Convocation meetings, Committee Days and Discipline Hearings)?

**ARE YOU ABLE TO SHOW:** A track record of commitment to the Profession and patience, willingness and ability to work with others in group decision making, remaining open minded while you listen to new and opposing views?

**CAN YOU:** Accept that the role of the Law Society is to regulate the Profession in the public interest because elected benchers do not represent a constituency or self interests?

**DO YOU REPRESENT:** Diversity in language, geography, practice area and age?

**DO YOU HAVE:** Leadership skills and experience in financial matters necessary for supervising an \$87 million Law Society Budget?

**DO YOU HAVE:** Decision making/adjudicative experience, writing skills and ability to meet deadlines?

**BECOME INVOLVED - RUN IF YOU CAN - IF NOT, THEN VOTE!**

### **BENCHER ELECTION INFORMATION SESSIONS**

Former Treasurer Derry Millar, Treasurer Pawlitza and attending Benchers will discuss the role of Bencher and the election process. Sessions are from 5:30–6:30 pm.

**Please see Ontario Reports for cities, dates and locations  
(and [www.lsuc.on.ca](http://www.lsuc.on.ca)).**

**LAW SOCIETY LEVY:** The 2011 levy for lawyers will increase by \$49.00 to \$1,785.00 per year and for paralegals by \$24.00 to \$957.00 per year. The budget is created by staff, reviewed by the Finance Committee, considered at a Bencher Budget Information session and approved in Convocation. Convocation's debate of an \$87 million budget occupied 45 minutes. The Budget Information Session for Benchers attending took approximately 1½ hours. The annual levy would have increased more dramatically had there not been reductions to each of the Compensation Fund and County Libraries and because Convocation approved accessing \$4.5 million from the General Fund and Errors and Omissions Insurance Fund. The Law Society Budget repeatedly yields a surplus. Surplus budgeting means that there can be insufficient accountability of expenses on a line by line basis. The budget is prepared based on a comparison with last year's budget. Actual figures are not used in the budget analysis process nor is there input from the Audit Committee. The budget process is flawed and lawyers are paying more than should otherwise be the case. In addition, of course, perhaps it is time to recognize that maybe fewer services should be provided by the Law Society and in a more cost effective manner. This should be a critical Bencher election issue in 2011.

**PORTAL ACCESS:** Commencing in January 2011, we must report continuing professional development hours to meet CPD requirements. To access the portal, you must first register at <https://portal.lsuc.on.ca/wps/portal/register> With your Law Society number, you will be asked a series of questions to complete the registration. For inquiries or assistance, contact the Law Society at (16) 947-3315 or 1-800-668-7380 (ext. 3315). Through the portal, we will also have secure access to change contact and status information online.

**DISCIPLINE RECORDS:** The discipline history of lawyers and paralegals is now available on the Law Society public website. This is consistent with the Law Society's duty to act in a timely, open and efficient manner. The site now includes discipline history, trusteeship and current practice restriction information. That is available with respect to all applicable discipline proceedings that were heard in public with decisions and orders published from February 1986 to the present.

**CONVOCATION REPORTS:** All reports to Convocation can be viewed at <http://www.lsuc.on.ca>  
In order to more fully understand the issues facing Convocation, you may wish to review previous editions of Banack's Bencher News at <http://www.kmlaw.ca/publications>

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