

Banack's Bencher News #98

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REGISTER NOW for Access to the Law Society Portal to report continuing professional development hours at <https://portal.lsuc.on.ca/wps/portal/register>

IMPORTANT DATES:

February 3-5, 2011 OBA Annual Institute – Get your annual CPD hours in one place.

February 11, 2011 Bencher Nominations must be received by the Law Society at Osgoode Hall by 5:00 p.m.

February 25, 2011 Nominations close for:

LAW SOCIETY MEDAL – For outstanding Service within the Profession

LINCOLN ALEXANDER AWARD – To recognize long-standing interest and commitment to the public and to the pursuit of community service

LAURA LEGGE AWARD – For a female member of the Law Society who has exemplified leadership within the Profession.

March 31, 2011 File Lawyers' Annual Report electronically at <https://eforms.lsuc.on.ca>

PBLO AT SICKKIDS: Pro Bono Law Ontario promotes access to justice by creating opportunities for lawyers to provide *pro bono* legal services. A two-year pilot project at SickKids Hospital in Toronto was designed by PBLO to deliver free legal services to low income families whose children are receiving hospital treatment. The funding for the pilot project was scheduled to end in February 2011. Alternate funding had not been secured. Accordingly, Convocation agreed to provide funding of \$90,000.00 for one year in order for the project to continue and an evaluation undertaken. Hopefully, the evaluation will demonstrate the merit of the project and enable PBLO to obtain alternate secure funding in the future. The Access to Justice Committee had stipulated that this request for funding was a stand alone, one time initiative.

ARTICLING JOBS: As at September 2010, approximately 6% of the eligible group did not have a position. This is an increase from 4.6% in the preceding year. Economic conditions and growth in the number of candidates continues to pose a challenge of securing an adequate number of articling positions. We now have over 2,000 law school graduates registered in the licensing process – being an increase of 12% from last year. The increase is a consequence of greater enrollment in Canadian law schools and applicants from foreign law schools coming through the National Committee of Accreditation. As previously noted, there must be serious consideration of alternate programs to the articling requirement, in order to accommodate the increasing numbers seeking entry to the Profession.

LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE: Lawyers in private practice should consider enrolling in the program. Since January 2010, there has been no cost to callers, which greatly increased the number of referrals generated. During the first nine months of 2010, approximately 180% more calls were received than in the same period in 2009.

YOU TUBE: Following the lead of other jurisdictions, a series of short video vignettes was launched in October 2010, highlighting particular areas of law. The goal is to reinforce the role of the Law Society in facilitating access to justice and to demystify the law. The vignettes currently address family law, real estate, personal injury and wills and estates. A sixth vignette is being prepared in relation to the areas of practice covered by licensed paralegals.

PARENTAL LEAVE ASSISTANCE PLAN: To September 2010, the Law Society paid benefits of \$371,000.00 to 52 applicants.

LAWYERS FEED THE HUNGRY PROGRAM: Following the long-standing Toronto program, similar efforts were launched by volunteer lawyers in Ottawa (April 2010) and Windsor (September 2010). London lawyers raise money for local not-for-profit organizations involved in hunger relief. These combined efforts of the profession ensure that thousands of needy guests are provided with meals on a monthly basis throughout the year.

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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