

# The Times In Which We Live



By Thomas L. Cuni

**T**he current state of the economy has affected our lives in ways we would not have imagined a year ago. Along with many other parts of the economy, the legal profession has experienced significant problems. The CBA, both in good times and in difficult times, is dedicated to providing support to its members. No organization can solve all of the problems caused by the loss of a job or a significant drop in income, but the CBA can help in many practical ways.

**The Lawyer Referral Service** remains one of the most successful programs sponsored by the CBA. LRS provides a service to the community by making appropriate referrals for those in need of legal services. For CBA attorneys who are on the panel, this program provides a way to build a legal practice. Call LRS at (513) 381-8359 for more information.

For several years the CBA has offered a **Practice Roundtable** to assist attorneys who are in transition in their careers. Experienced practitioners regularly offer their time and experience to advise participants on such topics as client development, legal technology, practice management, support staff, and many other areas. Terry Patterson or Dimity Orlet can provide more information. Call them at (513) 381-8213 and see page 22.

The extensive **committee** system supported by the CBA offers its members an extraordinary opportunity to improve legal skills while serving the profession and the community. There are commit-

tees which focus on ADR, Bankruptcy, Domestic Relations, Employee Benefits, Estate Planning, Real Estate, and many other areas of practice. Participation in Bar committees and activities is an effective means of meeting and getting to know other attorneys in a non-adversarial atmosphere. It has been my experience that people tend to hire, or go into business with, those whom they know. A new job or business venture may not result from a short association with the CBA, but it can help improve a lawyer's prospects in the course of a legal career.

**The CBA Legal Directory** is an important reference for information about law firms, areas of practice, and CBA committees and programs. You can make sure you have your own copy on your desk (see page 26) and see who you can network with.

**Continuing Legal Education** is one of the most important of the CBA's activities. The impressive depth and breadth of the course offerings can serve as an introduction into new practice areas. Preparing materials and participating as a presenter at CLE seminars sharpens an attorney's skills, and there is no better showcase for a lawyer's talent than a CLE seminar. (See pages 28-30)

Aside from the potential advantages for career advancement, being active in the CBA provides intrinsic rewards which come from **helping others**. Most of the men and women who enter the profession do so in the belief that they will be useful to society. Even in personally difficult times, attorneys have unique opportunities to help other

people. Providing legal services through such CBA-supported programs as the Volunteer Lawyers for the Poor does two things. The most obvious is the reward from assisting others, and the less apparent reward is the opportunity to extend a lawyer's skill into new practice areas and to help improve, by practice, skills in dealing with clients.

Active participation in the CBA is an investment in a member's career. It would be a happy circumstance if participation could quickly solve all of the challenges facing our profession. A more realistic view is that the CBA can offer opportunities that in the long term will repay many times over the investment in membership dues paid.

Stay with the CBA if you already belong. Join us if you don't. In either event, become active in some aspect of the CBA's many great programs.

I am happy to be entrusted with the presidency of the CBA at a time when this organization can be of the most help to its membership. The CBA will, in the next year, try to extend its programs and efforts to assist its membership in these difficult times. ■

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*Thomas L. Cuni is 2009-10 president of the Cincinnati Bar Association.*

See page 33 for special opportunities to grow your career.