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ABC Update

BY BETTIE KELLEY SOUSA

Improving Our Profession, One Weekend at a Time



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I love Chicago. I've never been there except for an American Board of Certification (ABC) board meeting or a Commercial Law League of America conference, so my free time comes in bits and pieces. Thankfully, Bloomingdale's is across Michigan Avenue, and the Windy City offers opportunities to indulge in my favorite hobby: fine dining.

Like many professionals, lawyers often spend weekends volunteering their time in great cities or at plush resorts, away from home and family. We teach seminars, and we serve on boards, committees, task forces and panels. For no pay. In hotel rooms we barely notice, we stay up late and get up early in different time zones to put out fires, soothe distraught clients and juggle our real job responsibilities back home. For lawyers, there is no such thing as "comp time." A sleep-deprived weekend at a legal conference plus travel days usually means the upcoming week at work will be a bear, not a breeze.

So why do we do it? Why do so many of us volunteer our time in this way? I think it's because we want our profession to do better, to strive to be better. We see a problem, and we work to fix it. We see young professionals, and we want to share our knowledge. We see outstanding lawyers, and we are proud when they achieve board certification and other recognition by their peers.

As this year's ABC chair, I had a great time in Chicago in May presiding over our first board meeting of 2012, getting to know those new board members who gave up their weekend to attend in person, and enjoying several wonderful meals. Thanks go to ABC President **John Young** (Markus Williams Young & Zimmerman, LLC; Denver) and all of the ABC officers and directors for volunteering their time to guide our organization. Special thanks also go to board member **Walter**

Greenhalgh of Duane Morris (Newark, N.J.) for introducing me to grappa, a delicious and effective "cough syrup."

Maybe it isn't just the fine dining or the shopping. Maybe I love Chicago because it always offers a chance to exchange ideas and stories and laughs with people who care enough to volunteer a weekend to improve our profession. Our ABC board will meet in conjunction with the ABI Winter Leadership Conference Nov. 29-Dec. 1 in Tucson, Ariz. I've never been there, but the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa sure looks snazzy. You should come (additional conference information is forthcoming; check www.abiworld.org for updates). At the ABC board meeting, our ABC reception, over a fine dining experience or while sampling "cough syrups," we can exchange ideas and stories and laughs—and maybe make our profession a little better in the process. **abi**

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