



From the President
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THE BERTCH FIRM



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Big plans in Big Bear

STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT SETS OUT THE YEAR'S AGENDA

Last month, I promised an update on OCTLA's annual strategic planning retreat held in Big Bear. Over the first weekend in February, our organization's officers and directors braved the snowy elements for a weekend in Big Bear – the first time OCTLA has held its annual retreat there – to develop and share the big plans each of OCTLA's twelve committees had in store for the year. The retreat was a success, strengthening the bond amongst our leaders, exchanging ideas, and establishing action plans for the vision that has been created for the year. Highlights from some of the committees are provided in this article.

Education Committee

First, our Education Committee, chaired by past Top Gun Young Gun Award Winner Atticus Wegman of Atticus Injury Law, outlined their plan for providing excellent continuing education for our members, including a hybrid of in-person and virtual MCLE seminars, with an emphasis on more engagement and participation with the audience this year. OCTLA hit the ground running in February with its MCLE seminar featuring Senator Tom Umberg and the Honorable Lon F. Hurwitz, who provided invaluable instruction on SB235, codified in Code of Civil Procedure section 2016.090, which dramatically altered the landscape of discovery in civil proceedings. As the author of the bill, Senator Umberg not only personally taught our members the legislative intent behind the bill – to promote further transparency and earlier resolution of cases – but also its pros (and cons) for the plaintiff and defense bars alike. Additionally, Judge Hurwitz provided

a judicial perspective on the bill, including a discussion of the bill's "teeth" – the imposition of mandatory sanctions for parties who fail to comply with the initial disclosure requirements.

Mentoring Committee

Next, the Mentoring Committee, chaired by Edwin Hong of Simon Law Group, which organizes OCTLA's annual law school summer internship program, revealed that it would be *doubling* the size of the program this year, with six sponsor firms and six interns from local Orange County law schools (in each of the program's previous four years, no more than three sponsor firms and law students participated). In part, because applications for the program nearly doubled from last year. As program participants, each intern will experience working at three different law firms in three different practice areas of the plaintiff's bar. This program grows stronger each year and provides law students with real experience working for plaintiff firms. A big round of applause to Edwin and the Mentoring Committee for taking this program to the next level this year!

The Gavel Magazine

Additionally, the Gavel Committee, chaired by Benjamin Ikuta of Ikuta Hemesath LLP, also has big plans for this year, including the introduction of themed publications of the Gavel magazine, with each publication to feature articles on similar topics. Additionally, the committee plans to make the Gavel articles Google-searchable.

Membership Committee

Further, the Membership Committee, chaired by past Top Gun

Young Gun Award Winner Geoff Rill of the Law Offices of Geoff Rill, reported that OCTLA's membership continues to hover near an all-time high for both attorney and affiliate members.

Public Relations and Charitable Giving

Finally, in keeping with OCTLA's longstanding tradition of charitable giving through partnering exclusively with one local Orange County 501(c)3 non-profit organization, our Public Relations Committee, chaired by Amanda Robinson of Robinson Calcagnie Inc., carefully vetted multiple worthy charities this year. In the end, A Quarter Blue was selected as our partner charity. A Quarter Blue is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2003, based in Orange, California, whose mission is dedicated to serving the community of survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). I am so proud and excited to raise funds for this worthy organization. No doubt, OCTLA hit the mark by partnering with a charity that provides support to survivors of some of the biggest hardships and challenges any person can endure. I cannot wait to see the funds we raise and the positive impact we will have on this worthy charity.

Just the beginning

And this is all just the beginning. In the coming months, we will have more MCLE education, our annual Palm Springs Convention with CAOC/CAOIE, Justice Day, and our annual golf tournament in June. Stay tuned for more news and updates next month from OCTLA.

