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MAGAZINE

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THE MT. SAN JACINTO/ HEMET BAR ASSOCIATION

by Jude Thaddeus A. Powers

I have been asked to write a short history of the Mt. San Jacinto/Hemet Bar Association (MSJHBA). There is some question as to when the association came into existence, as I was only the first "Activity Coordinator," not the president.

In 1976, when Dick Swan was my senior partner in the firm of Cox, Swan, Carpenter & Powers, he felt that the San Jacinto Valley should have a bar association. Dick contacted all the attorneys in the valley (I think there were 12 attorneys at the time), and four or five of us met at the Acapulco restaurant in Hemet to discuss the possibility of an association.

Dick was running for President of the Riverside County Bar Association back then, and I suspect that he didn't want a junior partner being the president of a bar association before he was, so I was given the title of Activity Coordinator. My job as Activity Coordinator was to make sure we had a speaker for the monthly meeting.

Dick was elected President of the Riverside County Bar Association in 1977. That was quite an accomplishment, as Dick was not a resident of the City of Riverside nor did he have an office there. After that, I was again elected to the highest office of our bar association, and then I was allowed to be called "President."

Since this was the first year for the Association, we needed a gavel, and since I was the president, I decided to make one rather than buy one. I made the head of the gavel out of oak, to represent the strength of the law, and the handle out of olive wood to represent the conciliatory nature of the law. I am not sure what has happened to that gavel over the years. I do know that it is not used any longer.

The written history of our bar association started in 1998, when attorney Kevin Speir became President. Speir kept good records, which was not one of my strong suits.

Since Speir's presidency ended, I think that every young attorney who came to Hemet or San Jacinto has been president. Several of us have also been president more than once. In my opinion, the best president to date is the current president, Mark Ellis. He has scheduled some of the best speakers for our meetings that I think we have ever had.

MSJHBA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, normally at the El Jalapeño restaurant, 199 North State Street in Hemet. The MSJHBA hosts a variety of MCLE programs, including a probate update and bench officer presentations. Notice of meetings and the MCLE events is sent by email. To be added to the email list, please send a request to mcellislaw@hotmail.com. The current MSJHBA officers are Mark Ellis (President) and Binu Varughese (Treasurer).

Jude Powers is with the firm of Powers & Hanich in Hemet.



THE LEO A. DEEGAN INN OF COURT

by Robyn A. Lewis

The Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court is a professional organization comprised of attorneys and judicial officers and organized under the American Inns of Court. The organization focuses on improving the skills and professionalism of the bench and the bar. Each month, the Leo A. Deegan Inn holds a dinner meeting, during which a team of members presents a program that focuses on matters of ethics, skills and professionalism. Membership is by invitation only. Applications for membership are considered each summer to allow for invitations to new members for the upcoming year.

The inn was named for the Honorable Leo A. Deegan, a legend of the Riverside legal community. Judge Deegan first began practicing in Riverside in 1946 as a member of the district attorney's office. After also serving in the county counsel's office, he became the city attorney for the City of Riverside in 1958. He was appointed to the bench by Governor Edmund Brown in 1959. He served on the superior court until his retirement in 1975. In the late 1980s, he served for 14 months on the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, in Sacramento.

Each year, the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court recognizes both an attorney and a judicial officer for their outstanding contributions to the legal community, as well as for their professional accomplishments. The Terry A. Bridges Award honors an outstanding attorney, while the Elwood Rich Award honors an outstanding jurist. Additionally, the inn's membership votes on its favorite presentation, and an award is given to that team.

This year, the inn is focusing on exploring topics that are relevant to a practitioner in the current time, such as the impact of the economy. The inn is headed by President Jeb Brown, with the Honorable David Bristow, the Honorable Jack Lucky, Robyn Lewis, Chad Firetag, John Michels, Jeremy Hanson and Connie Younger serving as Executive Board members.

Former Leo A. Deegan Judicial Master Angel Bermudez is in the process of establishing a chapter of the Inns of Court in the southwest region of the county. Judge Bermudez is hoping to have the chapter up and running in September 2012.

For more information on the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, please contact Sherri Gomez, Executive Director, at sherri.gomez@gmail.com, or Robyn Lewis, at rlewislaw@yahoo.com. Contact Robyn Lewis for more information regarding the new Southwest Inn.

Robyn A. Lewis is with J. Lewis & Associates, APLC. She is President of the RCBA and Vice President of the Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court, as well as a member of the Publications Committee.



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