



January 2, 2017

CALENDAR YEAR END REPORT

As I write this, we are saying good bye to the calendar year 2016 and welcoming in 2017. It is hard to believe another year has come and gone so fast. There have been many changes in the law this year, as well as within the AADC. I am glad to have been a part of them.

Specifically, membership has continued to grow and is now at an all time high. That has resulted in us being in better financial condition than ever before, allowing for some added benefits at this coming Summer's annual meeting. For instance, there will be more included in your registration fees, such as additional meals, drinks, a rocking band and cooking classes. It should be a lot of fun and I hope all can attend!

Speaking of the annual meeting, I understand some have already tried to reserve a room at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute but were unable to do so. That has now been corrected and you may reserve a room. I urge everyone planning to attend the meeting to reserve a room early as there are different types of rooms available to fit all needs, but a limited number of each type. The menu has been finalized and I must say looks amazing. For those that know me well, you know food is a big deal. I'm excited about the choices and think all will be very happy with them too. Vendors (including the Thor look-a-like) will again be present with goodies to take home and spouses, significant others and children are welcome.

Further, as some of you know, we formed a Legislative Committee this year, chaired by Bryan Burns. The Committee consists of 20 members of the AADC, including: Bryan, Scott Strauss, Rebecca Hattabaugh, Brad Runyan, Jason Hendren, Chad Pekron, Kevin Crass, Tom Curry, John Tull, Michael Langley, Jeff Singleton, Colin

Johnson, Chase Carmichael, Jerry Lovelace, Shane Baker, Jordan Broyles, Sarah Cullen, Nick Hornung, Mary Carole Young and myself. Many thanks to you all! The Committee has been tasked with reading the proposed bills filed each week the Legislature is in session, as well as the pre-bills filed prior to the Legislative session beginning, for determination of whether there are any the AADC's membership needs to be aware and/or concerning which the AADC needs to have a voice or otherwise take action, for or against. It is a somewhat daunting task, though an important one. Unlike ATLA and the Plaintiff's Bar, the AADC and the Defense Bar have for too long simply reacted to the Legislature's actions. Hopefully, the Legislative Committee's efforts will be a step forward in being more pro-active and better representing the AADC's members' interests. In that regard, if you become aware of a proposed bill you believe deserves the attention of the Committee and/or the membership as a whole, please let Bryan, myself or another member of the Legislative Committee know so we may address it. Sometimes proposed bills get fast tracked and we have to move swiftly. As such, we must all be diligent!

The AADC's standing in Arkansas continues to grow, as evidenced by the speaking engagements and requests for our input I have fielded recently. In that regard, the AADC was recently asked to provide several members to participate in a panel discussion at the annual Bar Association's meeting next Summer concerning tort and judicial reform, as well as other issues of concern to both sides of the Bar. Additionally, Stark Ligon recently asked specifically for the AADC's input on certain aspects of proposed changes to the Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Neither of those things had previously occurred and demonstrate the weight the AADC now carries in the legal community. We

are no longer a silent observer, but rather have a strong voice!

I encourage our members to become more involved. I recognize time is a precious commodity of which most of us have too little. However, we get back what we put in and can never expect positive change or growth if we don't work to achieve it. In that regard, please consider running for the Legislature. We desperately need more lawyers in it, especially more defense lawyers. Or, serve on one of the Bar's executive committees or House of Delegates (6 positions went unfilled last year as members either did not want to serve or were unaware of the availability). We certainly need more of a defense perspective in the Bar Association. Finally, and at the moment most dear to my heart, you can submit a newsletter to the AADC! Seriously. Please. I'm almost out. The reserves are running dry. I'm begging.

In other positive news, the AACD's new website is complete and up and running. Kudos and many thanks to Chad Pekron who spear headed the website overhaul and completed it prior to his deadline of the end of the calendar year. If you have not already, I invite you to check it out. While doing so, please make sure your contact information is correct. If it is not, please fill out the change of address form on the website, a copy of which is attached hereto, and send it in to our Executive Director, Tracey Cline-Pew. Every week I hear from members about how the AADC has not updated their contact information, how an attorney left/joined their firm months/years before, but their old firm is still indicated on our roster. Well, if you fail to tell Tracey you have changed firms, email addresses, etc., that change doesn't get made. As such, please remember to advise her when such changes occur. It's important we keep our contact roster current.

The travel and expense reimbursement policy we passed at the annual meeting last July is working out well and all are adhering to it. Thank you. Our coffers are not so rich yet that money can be squandered.

The officers will begin slating soon for next year's officers. There will be a vacancy. If you wish to be

an AADC officer, or have any questions about same, please let me know.

As the year ends, I'd like to say a special thank you to Tracey Cline-Pew for her dedication and hard work on behalf of the AADC. She had to put up first with Scott Strauss as President last year and now with me this year. I'm not sure what she did in a former life to deserve that, but by now she is certainly a saint!

That's all I have for now. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President. I look forward to 2017 as a stellar year for the AADC and all its members. Happy New Year!

Michael McCarty Harrison, President



We welcome your articles and thoughts for future editions.

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