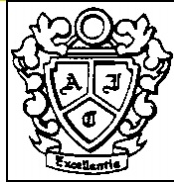


EARL E. O'CONNOR INN OF COURT THE INNFORMATION

November 2012

Volume 22 (more or less), Issue 1



UPCOMING MEETING DATES (NO DECEMBER MEETING)

January 8, 2013 Meeting	For all Dinner Meetings: 5:30 Social (half) Hour 6:00 Dinner 6:50 Program
February 12, 2013 Meeting	
March 12, 2013 Meeting	
April 9, 2013 Meeting	

JANUARY PROGRAM TOPIC:

Handling frivolous lawsuits.
Judge Farley's team will present.

MENTORING PROGRAM

The mentoring program is in full swing. Mentors and mentees have been paired and should have contacted one another for their first meeting by now. If you have any questions, please see Joseph R. Colantuano, Veronica Dersch or Tracy M. Gullickson

President's Message

I want to extend a warm welcome to our 23 new and all returning members of the Earl E. O'Connor Inn of Court. Our Inn was chartered in 1991 and is beginning its twenty-first year. I have been a member for half of our Inn's existence and have witnessed tremendous growth in membership, which has led to continuous innovativeness and freshness in our programs. I am confident that our new members will find participation in the Inn to be of great value in their personal and professional lives.

On October 20, 2012, I was privileged to attend the Celebration of Excellence Award Ceremony held in the United States Courthouse, which once again reminded me of how exceptional the Earl E. O'Connor Inn is. This annual dinner and award ceremony organized by the Board of the American Inns of Court honors individuals for their contributions and service to the organization and recognizes individual Inns that have reached the highest organizational practice level, the platinum level. For the second year the Earl E. O'Connor Inn achieved

the platinum level, one of only thirty Inns of the 350 Inns across the country. This level of achievement was accomplished under the good leadership of my predecessor Charles Getto and his executive board. In particular, I would like to thank the Honorable Gordon Atcheson and Melissa Sherman who guided our members through the many competency requirements for acquiring the platinum level, including those related to administration, communications, programs, mentoring and outreach.

This year, in addition to our monthly dinner and CLE meetings, the Outreach/Social Committee will put on a prom for children with special needs. This will occur in February and is a wonderful event. There will be volunteering opportunities and I encourage your participation. In May, our members will be invited to attend a joint meeting of the four Kansas Inns of Court. This is always an enjoyable event providing the opportunity to hear good speakers and meet judges and attorneys throughout the state. This year the joint meeting is

sponsored by the Topeka Inn of Court. Also in May, the Ethics CLE committee will hold the Fourteenth Annual Thomas VanBebber Ethics in Litigation Forum. This annual event is held in the federal court house in Kansas City, Kansas and always features outstanding speakers and panel discussions.

New this year to our meetings we will be considering an 'unfortunate' situation of an attorney behaving in a less than stellar manner. The basic facts will be presented to the members for the purpose of suggesting best practices for addressing the difficult situation. I encourage our members to e-mail me your anecdotes regarding such 'unfortunate' matters (less identifying information of course).

I truly appreciate the opportunity to serve this year as president of this exceptional Inn. I am looking forward to good camaraderie in our mutual pursuit of new insights, enhanced skills and knowledge to better our practice and professionalism.

THE INNFORMATION

Welcome New Members!

We are thrilled to have 23 new members join the Inn this year. This and subsequent newsletter issues will feature each new member in no particular order. Make sure to say hello to them at our next meeting.

Bryan C. Clark
Brett C. Coonrod
Sean Cooper
Jeff H. Coppaken
Denise K. Drake
Stephanie A. Ferry
Alan Fogleman
Brent A. Jepson

Jeremy T. Johnston
Carson M. Hinderks
Nathan Lindsey
Lauren E. Luhrs
Daniel E. Luppino
Cory C. Meyer
The Hon. Steven C. Montgomery
William E. Paulson

Sarah Morrison Rapelye
Kathryn A. Regier
Krystle M. Scherling
Philip Stein
Matthew D. Stromberg
Jennifer M. Walton
Robert O. Wickham II

New Member Profiles

Brett Coonrod

If you can't find Brett Coonrod practicing law at Smith Coonrod Mohlman, LLC in Overland Park, here are a few tips. First, check the local parks. Brett may be hanging out with his two miniature schnauzers, Alex and Tucker. Second, check out the home Brett purchased (and is still renovating) in Brookside. Third, Brett likes to travel overseas. Your best bet outside of the United States is Paris and London, two of Brett's favorite destinations. Still no luck? Well, as a second to last resort, just ask Eric Stonestreet, who plays Cameron on ABC's hit series "Modern Family." Brett knows Eric, and has even held Eric's Emmy Award (which, by the way, is surprisingly heavy according to Brett). The last resort? Advertise free chocolate cake at your home or office. Brett is sure to stop by for a piece of one of his much loved desserts.

Jeff Coppaken

A third-year law student from the University of Kansas (who is actively seeking employment after graduation, hint, hint), Jeff Coppaken has a LOT going on these days. When he is not hanging out with his one-year old son, playing basketball, or attending his favorite boxing class at Title Boxing Club, Jeff serves as Vice President of A Life Story Foundation. Launched in February 2012 by Jeff's fraternity brother, Kevin Swan, the foundation aims to raise awareness and funds to abolish ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). To date, A Life Story Foundation has raised more than \$130,000 and is approaching 1,000 likes on its Facebook page. Congrats, Jeff and Kevin! Jeff's first career choice (other than the practice of law, of course) is to own a greasy-spoon diner that serves breakfast all day. We suspect the diner would also serve Swedish fish (Jeff's biggest vice), as well as a tantalizing home brew (Jeff just bought a beer brewing kit and plans on making a batch of English Pub Ale for his first masterpiece).

Job Olympics Dance

Inn members can once again participate in this fun & worthwhile project benefitting special education students in area KCK School Districts. The Job Olympics Dance is a celebration of the students and their accomplishments who have participated in the program. They really look forward to this dance and are very grateful for our help with it. Inn members will assist with dance decorations, set up/cleanup & chaperone. The easiest and most entertaining community service project you will can be a part of.

5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday, Feb. 22, 2013, at Harmon High School in Kansas City, Kan. Please contact Inn member Janell N. Avila for more information, javila@salawkc.com

The mission of the American Inns of Court is to foster excellence in professionalism, ethics, civility, and legal skills.

*All meetings at Homestead
Country Club, 6510 Mission Road,
Prairie Village, KS 66208*

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THE INNFORMATION

New Members (continued)

Brent Jepsen

Although he is still a third-year law student at Washburn Law School in Topeka, Brent Jepsen already spends more time in court than he does in class. Brent entered the year needing only 16 credits to graduate, and his work experience at the Johnson County District Attorney's office has given him ample opportunity to argue and try cases that many lawyers do not get until years into their practice. Brent and his wife also have two dogs and two cats, so perhaps he is getting some good mediation experience, as well.

When he graduates law school, Brent would like to practice litigation in the Johnson County area. He and his wife recently bought a house in Olathe, and Brent went to high school at Olathe East before attending college at Central Missouri on a football scholarship. Brent enjoys traveling whenever he has the opportunity. He spent six months in Sweden while he was in college and traveled across Europe. He has also been to various islands in the Caribbean and on numerous road trips.

Nathan Lindsey

Although he was born in Wichita, Nate Lindsey spent most of his formative years in Lawrence and considers himself a Lawrence townie and a Jayhawk to the core. He took a brief detour to attend college at Grinnell College in Iowa, but then he returned to the University of Kansas for law school so that he could get a true Jayhawk experience.

Nate graduated from law school this past May and recently started his practice at Rasmussen, Willis, Dickey and Moore, LLC. His practice focuses on products liability defense, and he says that he enjoys the "creativity" that is inherent in litigation.

In Lawrence, Nate loved the burgers at Dempsey's Burger Pub and studying law treatises at the cafeteria in the Dillons grocery store on 6th and Wakarusa. But he is now discovering new places in Kansas City like the Art Institute and Starlight Theatre, where he recently relived the 90s by seeing Ben Folds Five perform. Nate is also a big fan of local sports, including the Jayhawks' basketball team and Sporting KC.

Cory C. Meyer

Cory is currently a 3L at the UMKC School of Law. He is a staff member of the Law Review, case note and review editor for the Urban Lawyer and a teaching assistant in the legal writing program. In addition, Cory has clerked with Inn member Mira Mdivani at the Mdivani Law Firm since summer 2012 and also at the Missouri Attorney General's Office, Kansas City Litigation Division. Outside of school, Cory has been a die-hard St. Louis Cardinals fan since he was a boy and even sang during the seventh inning stretch at one of the last games played at the old Busch Stadium.

Cory recently acquired a 6-month-old rescue black lab/Rottweiler mix named Diesel. Cory's favorite places that he has had the opportunity to travel to date are London and Dublin.

The Hon. Steven Montgomery

Judge Montgomery has served as a District Court Judge in Miami County since 2006. His docket includes primarily civil, felony, domestic relations and juvenile offender cases. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX and his JD from Washburn School of Law. Prior to serving on the bench, Judge Montgomery was in private practice and is a founding member of the Alderson, Alderson & Montgomery in Topeka, KS.

Judge Montgomery grew up in western Kansas in Great Bend. He credits his upbringing there for instilling in him an appreciation for perseverance and hard work and for leading to a love of the outdoors and nature. Like many others who grow up in small towns, Judge Montgomery later developed a love for travel and has traveled extensively internationally with his wife Jane, including his favorite travel destination, Italy.

Judge Montgomery and his wife are the parents of three children: Michael, 8, adopted from Kazakhstan; Nathan, 5, adopted from Guatemala & Jackson, 3, adopted from within the United States. The family also owns a labrador retriever named Bella to round out the family.

Bob Wickham

Bob is currently serving as law clerk to U.S. Magistrate Judge Gerald L. Rushfelt in the District of Kansas. Bob is originally from Kansas City, Kan., graduating from Schlagle High School. He is pure Jayhawk having earned a Bachelor of General Studies in Psychology and a joint Masters of Business Administration and Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Kansas.

After college and prior to law school, Bob worked in an envelope plant as a baler, making ton-size bundles out of envelope scraps and card board and loading them on trucks. After graduating from law school, Bob worked as a law clerk to Judge Rushfelt for eight years. Upon Judge Rushfelt's retirement in 1999, he accepted a staff attorney position with the Northern District of Texas, where he worked in that capacity for seven years before accepting a law clerk position in chambers. After three years in chambers, he was excited to return to Kansas to resume work for Judge Rushfelt in 2011.

When asked about the one thing most people don't know about him, he said that "When I left National Envelope, I held the record for most bales out in a shift, most weight of bales out in a shift, and the largest bale—not that I am competitive or anything." Bob and his wife Mita have four children, twin boys attending the University of Texas in the honors Computer Science program, and two daughters, a sweet and compassionate 16 year old and an athletic, inquisitive, and driven 11 year old who wants to do everything from writing a novel to playing soccer at the highest levels.

THE INNFORMATION

“I speak for the trees, pursuant to K.S.A. 60-234.”

The following poem was authored and read by Inn member Zach Chafee-McClure at the November 13, 2012, meeting. We present it here with Zach's gracious permission.

At the far end of town, an attorney idly sits,
reviewing discovery requests giving him fits.

And deep in the documents, some people say,
if you look deep enough you can still see today
where civility stood just as long as it could
before something drove poor, poor civility away.

What happened to civility? And why is it gone?
Take a look at the requests to which he must respond.

You can't skim this discovery, it is far, far too dense.
There are Definitions and Instructions, if you want to make sense
of this boorish amalgam of miff-muffled moof.
Don't believe me? Just listen. I'll cite plenty proof.

We begin with definitions, first comes the word “a.”
That's easy to define, you might naively say.
It's an indefinite article, of the singular sort.
But that's far too simplistic, and far, far too short.
Here “a” may mean “an,” or “any,” or “the,”
except as provided in Subparagraph C,
where we learn that the meaning of “he” can be “she,”
whichever will lead to more documents, see?

And “or” can mean “and,” and “and” might mean “or,”
whichever it is that will make you do more
of those mental gymnastics we all do adore,
and produce all the documents,
documents galore.

And what *is* a document? Have you not read the rule?
If you think that's exhaustive then you're quite the fool.
Because that's just the tip of it, a place to begin.
The term “document,” as it is used herein,
includes (but is not limited to) all manner of writing,
all memos and letters, things far more exciting,
all e-mails, all snail-mails, all voice-mails and more,
all calendar entries, all stains on the floor,
all lithographs, stereographs, all earthly possessions,
all utterances, gestures, and facial expressions,
all pleadings and requests for judicial review,
telegrams, telegrommets, telewhatzamazooos.
All sticky notes, Facebook likes, insurance claims,
...and all non-identical drafts of the same.

He had never produced a gesture, but a few came to mind.
And were it not unduly burdensome, he might have gone,
line by line,
through these loathsome directives and stated with particularity
how each one represented some unfounded barbarity,
was improper, uncivil, devoid of clarity.
He could have said each of these things with sincerity,
as he had done times before with some regularity,
all of his objections preserved, for posterity.

It may shock you to know, that despite his best practices,
he reacted, as some do, from a place of great blackness
and responded instead with the course that was fastest!

Yes, this tired attorney, having read to page twenty,
fed up with instructions and definitions aplenty,
proceeded to deploy his finest collection
of self-serving, unnerving General Objections.

Then he turned to request number one, and I quote:
“Produce all the documents anyone ever wrote
that relate to, concern, or describe in any way,
facts material to the claims and defenses in play.”

And our poor, tired hero, his civility spent
packed up his old briefcase, and away he then went.

And I'll never forget the grim look on his face,
when he heisted himself and took leave of this place,
And all that he left here, was one word on the page.
One word, like a whisper, mysterious yet sage.

“OBJECTION,” I suppose, is a logical guess?
But this attorney wrote down just the one word,
“Unless.”

That was long, long ago, but each day since that day
I have sat here and wondered, and wondered away.
What did “unless” mean, and why did he write it?
Was it some kind of warning? An invitation unrequited?

But now, now that you're here,
the word of the attorney seems perfectly clear:
Unless someone like you drafts thoughtful, carefully tailored re-
quests,
how it's going to get any bit better is anyone's guess.