

President's Message



A Home to Call Our Own

By John M. Howe

As the holiday season approaches, I am amazed at how fast another year has gone by. With the holiday season

comes all of the usual excitement and anticipation of time spent with loved ones, doing charity, gift exchanges and the promise of the New Year. This year however, the holiday season brings another unique reason for our Bar to be excited. It is the excitement that comes with first-time homeownership!

Homeownership has always been the hallmark of achievement of the American dream. It represents the security, promise and self-determination that come with holding exclusive title to the place one calls home. In March of this year, the Bar secured exclusive title to the place it will call its home. I am pleased to announce that in January 2012, we will take occupancy in our new home which will be at 1507 Belvedere Road in West Palm Beach. However, this was no small task. This dream would not have been possible without the combination of the desire for a permanent home, diligent searches, a touch of blind luck and the incredible support and generosity of our members and partners in the community. It is a story worth telling.

Our Bar was founded in 1922. From 1922 until 1970, the Bar was operated from the business offices of the person who held the office of President. From 1971 until 1979, the Bar operated out of the law library with Mary Burdick serving as its Executive Secretary. In 1980, the Bar moved from the law library into its first "apartment" in the Citizen's Building in downtown West Palm Beach. In 1992, and as it outgrew that space, we again relocated moving to 1601 Belvedere Road, where we have been for the last 20 years. During this time, we have weathered rent hikes, lease modifications, lease term re-negotiations, space limitations and countless other challenges. For these reasons, the Board determined in 2008 that we should use our best efforts to secure a permanent home for the Bar and its membership.

In 2008, then Bar president, Richard

Schuler focused his year on finding a permanent home. We determined that the space would ideally be centrally located, close to freeways and major roadways, large enough to accommodate growth, and have access to sufficient parking. Each year after that, we searched high and low for such a location, but nothing suitable could be found. But then, call it what you may, divine providence, good luck, dumb luck, fortune – whatever – was visited upon us.

In October 2010, our Executive Director, Patience Burns, and her husband, Tom, happened to be driving by the old and very decrepit former Denny's restaurant on Belvedere Road when they saw some men erecting a "For Sale" sign. At that very moment, the skies parted, a bright light shone down from the heavens, and a great voice proclaimed.... Ok, I got a little caught up in the story, but a loud jet could have been taking off from PBIA at that very moment. Patience does tell me that she did say to Tom, "Wow, that Denny's has closed. What a perfect location that would make for the Bar. Looks like the right size building and it has parking!" When Patience relayed this information at our next board meeting, it took little discussion to realize we might have stumbled across a near perfect relocation opportunity, considering the aforementioned criteria. After the ensuing due diligence phase was completed, led by last year's President Michael Napoleone, the Bar closed on



the purchase of its new home on March 14, 2011. I would be remiss if I did not thank past Bar president, Manny Farach, and Steve Rubin who volunteered their time and expertise in real estate to assist us with our due diligence and all the way

through closing.

On September 12, the renovation of the building commenced and has been progressing at an amazing pace. With 5,842 square feet of usable space, the new building represents a great advancement and will enhance the Bar's ability to serve its



membership. It will feature a state-of-the-art seminar and meeting room, visiting attorney office, member services office, conference rooms, and much more. Bruce Alexander, of Casey Ciklin, generously volunteered to serve as the project consultant, and his service has been invaluable. The contractor, Butler Brothers Construction, has done an excellent job moving this project forward and ultimately securing our certificate of occupancy.

None of this would have been possible, however, without the incredible generosity of our members and community partners. In May of this year, we launched our Building Capital Campaign and reached out to our membership to make a commitment to securing the strength and stability of our Bar. The response, particularly with room sponsorships, has been nothing short of overwhelming. Through room sponsorship opportunities and our "Buy a Brick" campaign, we have secured \$316,500 in room sponsorships and brick purchases toward our ultimate goal of \$450,000. You can view a list of all our sponsors (as of November 1) on Page 5 or on our web site at palmbeachbar.org. I would encourage you, if you have not already done so, to be a part of this momentous time in your Bar's history. It is a gift that will give back to you for the duration of your career. If you have already given, encourage a friend or colleague to do the same.

Happy Holidays!

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Historical Committee

Who are they?

Can you guess who these members are? Answers can be found on page 19. If you have old pictures of yourself or other members that you'd like featured, please send them to Patience Burns at the Bar Office.



A Home of Our Own

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Featured Board Member

This month's featured board member is my good friend Jason Guari. I have had the pleasure of serving on this board with him for the past four years. Jason attended law school at the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Michigan and has been practicing personal injury and wrongful death law in Palm Beach County for over 15 years. Jason and his lovely wife, Nicole, have been married for 9 years and are the parents of a beautiful daughter named Lily. The Guari family pet is a



Maltese/Shih Tzu named "Milkshake" (I'll leave that one alone). When Jason isn't seeking justice for the injured, he enjoys playing tennis and golf, skiing and travel. Something you might not know about Jason is that he is an ardent supporter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and he is currently training to run the Disney Half Marathon in January. Jason's personal creed is "The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little 'extra'". Jason, we thank you for your extraordinary service to the Bar!

SAVE THE DATE

For your Holiday Shopping and &
Donate a book for Legal Aid's Pro Bono Auction!
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County's

9th Annual Holiday Bookfest & Luncheon

Presented by Palm Beach County Chapter of FAWL
Friday, December 2, 2011
11:00 am until 4:00 pm
Barnes & Noble CityPlace
Complimentary Lunch!!

Please RSVP by calling 561-655-8944 ext. 316
A Percentage of Sales will go to Legal Aid's Children's Advocacy Projects

