

RESTART. REBOUND. RECOVER.

Voluntary Bar Virtual Event Series – July 28, 2020

Member Engagement/Retention and Return to In-person Events

As the worldwide COVID-19 crisis continues, leaders of voluntary bar associations are feeling the impact on group meetings, finances and operations. Keeping connections with members has never been more important. A series of webinar and discussion forums are underway now, thru November to help facilitate peer-to-peer opportunities for voluntary bar leaders to learn from each other on a variety of topics. These efforts are designed to help bars to restart, rebound and recover during and after the public health crisis.

More than 100 voluntary bar leaders from all-size bar across Florida met virtually on July 28 for an opportunity to learn from each other about keeping members engaged and what's in store socially in the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Led by moderator Amelia Beard Vice-Chair of the Voluntary Bar Liaison Committee, three active voluntary bar leaders, Lori Ward (Unstaffed Bar), Lisa Terwilliger (Staffed Bar) and Kyleen Hinkle (Statewide Bar), the group shared challenges and offered solutions to help enhance membership renewals and best practices when planning events in this uncertain time. Bar leaders from small, large, statewide and specialty bars on the Zoom connection also provided insight on how they are working together with local bar leaders to partner on CLE, judicial/election forums, mixers and health and wellness events.

Dori Foster-Morales, President of The Florida Bar recognized the Voluntary Bar Liaison Committee for hosting the town hall. She thanked the committee for providing the great information and the bar leaders for taking it back to Florida Bar members. VBs are very important to helping BOG leaders help members. We are here to help our members and to support this effort. Also participating was Mike Tanner, President-elect; Scott Westheimer, BOG; Lorna Brown-Burton, BOG; Paige Greenlee, BOG.

Amelia Hallenberg Beard, Vice Chair, Voluntary Bar Liaison Committee, served as moderator of the event. She identified the panelist and the basis they would use as bar leaders to help answer questions for the staffed, unstaffed and statewide bar participants

MEMBER DUES RENEWALS

Collier County Bar Association – Lisa Terwilliger (Staffed)

Humor is a good antidote during these uncertain and serious times. CCBA is using a Jack Nicholson theme on postcards to lighten-up the dark days. CCBA has 800 members and they have not seen a decline in dues. They are hoping that they will see increased support since all bar members can use a little help this year. Social media and electronic solicitation are also being used to reach their members.

Florida Association for Women Lawyers – Kyleen Hinkle (Statewide)

Membership and sponsorships are the primary sources of income for FAWL. To help avoid a decline in membership renewals, they have made an exerted effort to keep in touch with their members. FAWL made a game of renewals this Spring, offering a chance for a gift card if a member recruited a member. For a period, March – July, FAWL had a slow-down in membership. After adjusting to this new normal, members reached out and let other members know that FAWL cares. It is a softer way to get members to renew. They are seeing the renewals level off now.

A voluntary bar leader also shared that a friend and FAWL leader had reached out to respectfully remind her that she had not renewed. She immediately went online and renewed.

Walton County Bar Association – Lori Ellen Ward (Unstaffed)

We were lucky that WCBA was amid an 18-month renewal period. We did not have to deal with renewals in the pandemic period. Nevertheless, we have found that in the past it is important to individualize where possible and reach out on a personal level. This applies whether there is a pandemic or not.

HAS ANYONE REDUCED THEIR DUES IN RESPONSE TO COVID?

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Paige Greenlee (Staffed)

HCBA gave a 5% discount to members who renewed prior to 7/31, which is one month later than normal.

SARASOTA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Holly Lipps (Staffed)

SCBA offered a \$10 Panera E-gift cards for our Town Halls - up to 100 members

WALTON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Lori Ellen Ward (Unstaffed)

A local Chamber of Commerce worked out a deal with a couple of local restaurants to offer a specific discount (or dollars off) to registered attendees at a virtual event. They paid a portion of the registration fees to the restaurants to offset the discount. The FJA dues extensions are currently set as 90 days and we have found that our members are grateful for the flexibility and several have taken advantage of it.

NORTH TAMPA BAR ASSOCIATION – Jared Krukar (Unstaffed)

We lost about 15% of our members this year, but we hope to recruit them again when things improve next year.

JACKSONVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION – Craig Shoup (Staffed)

JBA renewals are set up on an anniversary basis. We offered scholarships for hardship cases on membership dues. More than 2000 invoices were mailed and only two members have requested scholarships.

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS – Kyleen Hinkle (Staffed)

FAWL provided an extended payment plan.

IN-PERSON EVENTS

Walton County Bar Association – Lori Ellen Ward, (Unstaffed)

WCBA has about 85 members. As the outgoing president, Lori wanted to have an in-person installation to wrap up her year. WCBA held an installation luncheon in June, the first and only in-person event. Numbers of cases were down at that time. When considering the event, the Board did wrestle with a few unknowns. Did our members want to get together in-person? Whether we require mask or not. Since it was a luncheon, we did not require a mask. The board agreed that WCBA members were ready for a small, in-person meeting. We planned for 35 at a local restaurant. Social distancing guidelines were adhered to with 30 people in attendance. We looked for a place large enough to be safe. Great social event and the members were comfortable. We did not see any major difference in interest/attendance as we typically draw about that many for our monthly events. With small numbers, in person events are doable. However, WCBA is not planning in-person events for the foreseeable future since the COVID case numbers are increasing in our area. Before planning an in-person event, be sensitive to your specific area.

The most important thing is to do something. With all the uncertainty, the temptation is to not make plans. Whatever leadership position you are in, some one has paved the way. Don't let that momentum fall flat. Keep the momentum in events and participation. Keep doing something. For our bar it has been what have we done successfully in the past. How can we turn that into a virtual event or a different way to deliver that information? We have always hosted an in-person candidate forum. We are not in position to do that in-person, nor can we put together a virtual event with the time limitations. Instead we have reached out to local candidates asking for a position statement, so this information will be distributed to the members.

VOLUNTARY BAR LIAISON COMMITTEE – Amelia H. Beard

The "do nothing" is not an option. Geographical areas are different. Consider setting deadlines. This is the decision we have made now until a future date. Do you need to bring your social media game back? Do we need to have our website redone? Don't exhaust yourself in making decisions.

COLLIER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Lisa Terwilliger (Staffed)

CCBA did a survey of section chairs, membership and board on comfort level of return to in-person events. The results yielded a mixed reaction with members on both ends of the spectrum. The majority just don't know when they will be comfortable. The real estate lawyers have been publicly involved because of the nature of their business. The Real Estate Section is hosting in-person event. They are a smaller group.

The CCBA Board of Governors will participate in a retreat which will be a hybrid event -both in-person and Zoom. We do not have anything else planned for in-person until the holidays. A Drive in Movie Night is planned for the Fairgrounds. The venue has space for 250 cars. This will be a get the family out of the house event and give them something fun to do. We are planning food trucks and specialty desserts.

WHAT ARE SOUTH FLORIDA BAR LEADERS DOING?

TJ REDDICK BAR ASSOCIATION – Ashley Gantt (Unstaffed)

TJRBA is partnering with other bars in Broward County. We are participating in a VB happy hour/Bingo Zoom event, and we have no plans for in-person meetings any time soon. Engaging on social media is effective and we are broadcasting meetings/events on Facebook live. This creates an opportunity as well for members to go back and watch the event if they miss it. We are also partnering with nonlawyer organizations and this helps get information out to the non-legal community. Zoom is our preferred media.

MARTIN COUNTY FAWL – Gloretta Hall (Unstaffed)

Our bar hosted a Champagne toast to recognize Court of Appeals judge Marsha C. Warner. Her mentor, Rosemary Barkett, the first female chief justice of Florida Supreme Court, also participated. The local Chief Judge gathered all judges to make a toast. More than 50 people were on the call. We were able to pull people in from all around to recognize a member with FAWL's most treasured award. Judges were honored as well. Kyleen Hinkle, who served as President of FAWL, was there also.

GWEN S. CHERRY BLACK WOMEN LAWYERS ASSN – Sheena Benjamin Wise (Unstaffed) GSCBA uses Zoom and a newsletter to keep members informed. We have a judicial forum coming up and we have prepared digital information for that.

HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION (REGION VIII), Lisa Capote (Staffed)

We are statewide but most of our members are in south Florida. We are hosting virtual events and did 40 webinar series during the stay at home order and we are currently organizing some of our traditional programs virtually.

CUBAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION – (Staffed)

CABA is doing a virtual happy hour with gift bag giveaways to active members and a specialty beverage for the happy hour.

DADE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION - Shay Garcia (Staffed)

DCBA hosted a virtual 5k for our members. They are also taking the time to work on re-branding and an upcoming full building renovation.

OTHER VOLUNTARY BAR VIRTUAL NETWORKING EVENTS

THE FLORIDA BAR used Sporcle <https://www.sporcle.com/> for the Annual Convention Trivia event. The online company charged us \$300 for up to 60 participants, they provided the host and for an extra \$50 they wrote the questions. They provided two host and provided music as well. Teams were selected at random and assigned to breakout rooms. Since you did not know everyone, you got to meet new people. Sporcle is recommended for special events <https://www.sporcle.com/live/special-events/> . This would be good for any voluntary bars to take advantage of.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BAR YLD – Traci Koster (Unstaffed)

The Young Lawyers Division of the Hillsborough County Bar Association is supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay in a whole new way. The group's Annual Cornhole for a Cause fundraiser benefits the

organization's mentoring programs for at-risk children. But since the event was cancelled because of the pandemic, a VIRTUAL trivia and scavenger hunt night is planned instead. The July 30 ONLINE event will be hosted by Rec Dec and Tampa Bay Club Sport.

ST. PETERSBURG BAR ASSOCIATION – Melissa Byers (Staffed)

SPBA had a happy hour that had been scheduled for a local bar. Instead, they had a local bar create signature cocktails and mocktails to go in vacuum sealed bags. Members picked them up.

ST. PETERSBURG BAR ASSOCIATION – Melissa Byers (Staffed)

SPBA hosted a full day virtual strategic planning session with a 12-member board and included a scavenger hunt to keep it lighthearted. It went very well.

CENTRAL FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS – Mary Walter Ingram (Unstaffed)

CFAWL has had weekly networking events since the pandemic started. Whether crafts, or cooking classes hosted by judges, or discussions about working out, CFAWL has utilized the talents of its members to keep connection since the pandemic began. The events have been well attended by a variety of members, even some out of our area that are now able to participate virtually. They have made excellent use of social media to promote the events far and wide.

ORANGE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S YLD – Mary Walter Ingram (Staffed)

YLD has had a few happy hours, encouraging attendees to donate what they might have paid for a drink to a charity instead. It's a fun way to connect, but also benefits the community.

FRED G. MINNIS, SR. BAR ASSOCIATION - Danielle Weaver Rogers (Unstaffed)

The 6th Judicial Circuit is hosting a Meet the Presidents Happy Hour with all the voluntary bars of the 6th Judicial Circuit on August 6th to engage members!

OKALOOSA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Laura Pentel-King (Unstaffed)

We have a free court reporter zoom meeting regarding "real time remote litigation" scheduled for the Walton County Bar Association coming up in September

MANATEE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION - Graceann Frederico (Staffed)

MCBA hosted two technology CLEs while quarantined. YLD provided a program on how to work remotely using Zoom. Attorneys received a crash course on how to use technology. In August, the Board retreat will be in person. We surveyed the membership and about 1/3 is ready to meet in person.

PLANNING IN-PERSON AND PIVOTING TO A VIRTUAL EVENT

VOLUNTARY BAR LIAISON COMMITTEE - Amelia H. Beard

The timeframe is important. Voluntary Bar Liaison Committee decided in early April to postpone the July Voluntary Bar Leaders Conference. We planned early and that was important to everyone involved.

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS - Kyleen Hinkle (Staffed)

In Mid-March FAWL leadership made the decision to cancel and convert the Annual Summit scheduled for the end of April to a virtual event. It was more of a pragmatic decision – cancellation clauses, sponsorships, and the financial stability of our organization. Now we are in this new normal, we all can plan a big event for 2021 in person but have a contingency option and we are able to change it. Contract clauses can be negotiated. Hybrid option is a good choice too. You can have attendance widespread; no travel involved and get more participation from all over the state and nation. No matter what size your bar is, plan for both. Practical considerations are important. Set the expectation with your members. You can pull speakers from across the globe for a virtual event.

NORTH TAMPA BAR ASSOCIATION – Jared Krukar (Unstaffed)

NTBA has 80-100 members. We just transitioned a live event to a virtual event. We had decided to partner with community group on our in-person judicial forum. We chose a group of senior voters - Older Wiser Lively Seniors a fun group of almost 500 people This age group is the most vulnerable for the virus. We made

decision a forum could not happen. We pivoted to Zoom recordings and we worked with a group of candidates in six contested races in Hillsborough County and got them to work with us on Zoom recordings. We posted to YouTube. These are available for anyone to look at now at any time on their schedule.

www.northtampabarassociation.com Our members are reaching out to other groups and can send them the link. They were able to reach more people by going to an online event. Volunteers did the work. We were able to reach more people thru the online effort. Jared offered to assist others with video recording and editing. Hillsborough County Bar Association is helping promote this recording to their members as well. We can offer value to our members by working with others.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Walton County Bar Association – Lori Ellen Ward (Unstaffed)

Especially the smaller bars, look at how you can collaborate with other bar groups and other community organizations. It helps with member engagement and allows you to reach a much broader market. WCBA partnered with other panhandle bar associations – Escambia – Santa Rosa and Okaloosa - and did a webinar on using Zoom in the court system. We dovetailed on what other bars had done and we did it for 1st Circuit. Reach out to the other bars and get support and good way to offer relevant content. Now we have an ongoing partnership with each other. We are sharing content and will continue to after the pandemic.

Broward County Bar Association – Robert Vaughan (Staffed)

Broward Bar completely agrees that these types of partnerships are invaluable. During this time period, we can all benefit from leveraging resources. Broward Bar is happy to partner with any bar to help share information and participate in the partnership we have underway on CLE courses, etc. Braulio Rosa has been a leader in this endeavor.

PALM BEACH COUNTY BAR – Carla Tharp Brown (Staffed)

PBCBA held a Judicial Candidate forum and hosted a virtual meeting with our Supervisors of Elections. Both went over very well with our members. Please feel free to view it on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqOkch8VQaw&t=300s>

OTHER CHALLENGES - CANCELED EVENTS AND COMPENSATING SPONSORS?

LEE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Laura Baugh (Staffed)

LCBA focuses on annual sponsorships. We collect the fees and allocate to the event where financial support is needed.

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS - Kyleen Hinkle (Staffed)

This is the crust of the problem. We must create new ways of serving the sponsor. FAWL is considering allowing our sponsors do a 15-second spot during a webinar or meeting. At a live event time is limited. On a virtual event, everyone hears the message. The virtual event is drawing a larger crowd so even more exposure for a sponsor. Sell it by using the numbers. It is a statewide audience. A virtual event draws more people.

COLLIER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Lisa Terwilliger (Staffed)

How to make sure our sponsors feel the love? We are considering extending current sponsorships for next year and asking for an upcharge. The existing sponsors would get to sponsor next year without additional costs. We have not adopted but this will be considered at our upcoming retreat. In addition, we will feature their support on Zoom events and social media and eblast.

ST. PETERSBURG BAR ASSOCIATION - Melissa Byers (Staffed)

We also do annual sponsorships. We don't allocate to a specific event. We have increase sponsor visibility by adding them to all CLE and events SPBA hosts. We don't break up according to the event. It is split among the events. With the 20 renewals for sponsors we only had two that did not renew. Repeatable marketing on all events. The big piece we lost was big networking events. The Paraclete magazine was converted to digital during COVID. We added a link from the ad back to a sponsor website. Video from our president. This is a new benefit. We also created a profile feature for the sponsors, members, etc. to replace the traditional networking.

We also added a personal information for more friendly approach. Now, 1100 members get the information instead of just those attending an event. Everything has gone virtual. We are giving them speaking access for all virtual events. We will be hosting a Meet our Sponsors event. I am planning now and trying to develop a way want to draw-in our members to make this happen.

DADE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Jane Muir (Staffed)

DCBA has 3000 members ordinarily, but now at 2000. We are a staffed bar in Miami. Currently we are in a fundraising effort for a major renovation of our building. We are rebranding to Miami Dade County Bar. We have moved member outreach to online media - advertising, email spotlight, offering sponsors to speak at webinar or organize their own webinar. For example, if a Bank that wants to talk about trusts we can coordinate with our committees. A huge value for search engine optimization is link backs, it enhances a sponsor authority for search purposes. When a firm joins with a group renewal. For example, 100 people join on one invoice and the firm paid. We did a member spotlight and highlighted a past president from that firm. We also recognize our sponsors. They get tickets to our events, luncheons and Gala rollover to next year. We are giving them credit. This will be a Revenue challenge, but the sponsors will be happy.

FLORIDA JUSTICE ASSOCIATION - G.C. Murray (Staffed)

If you raise funds for event and convert to virtual, what do you do with funds.

NORTH TAMPA BAR ASSOCIATION – Jared Krukar (Unstaffed)

We offered to delay the sponsorship for a luncheon that went virtual until the next in-person luncheon, whenever that is. They took that option over a refund. Although I will probably follow up again and see if they want the refund given the extended pandemic

LORI ELLEN WARD - The Florida Bar pivoted to a virtual Annual Convention. They gave the sponsors an option to convert to virtual ads or get a refund. They reworked the sponsor package to make the virtual package as attractive as possible.

For future events, it is a good idea to have a virtual package ready. And to explain to the sponsor that If we must change to a virtual event, this is what it will look like.

FUTURE IN-PERSON MEETINGS MOVING FORWARD

DADE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION is booking future events but putting very liberal cancellation provisions in place.

COLLIER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

Go ahead and book it. If you need to cancel, roll over to another time.

HOLIDAY EVENT PLANNING

CENTRAL FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS

We normally do a luncheon. A virtual luncheon may be possible.

NORTH TAMPA BAR ASSOCIATION

We normally have a nice dinner at a local country club. Our members are not technologically inclined. We have done happy hour and trivia.

OKALOOSA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

OCBA did a Secret Santa event. This was live event but could be easily transitioned in a virtual way. Give your recipient two deliveries leading up to the party. Set a dollar amount limit. Find out at the party who your Secret Santa is. Open mail and get a fun gift. It is a fun way to interact with other members. A reveal may help with a virtual happy hour to increase buy-in, etc.

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS

Wine tasting – The company will send wine to members for a virtual event.

CENTRAL FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN LAWYERS

A company in Miami does virtual chocolate tasting. They got us the items overnight.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION YLD

In line with the Secret Santa, mail a person a small gift. Everyone who wants to participate gets a gift. Require sign up in advance. Even better do a Secret Santa opening party with chocolate and wine.

COLLIER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

Sunshine Kids virtual events. Normally take them to zoo. Since we could not do this, we Shipped packaging with ingredients. And cookbook to prepare spaghetti dinner for Father's Day.

The same concept could be used for virtual cookie baking with Santa.

Just do something. Plan something to give your members something to look forward to.

PLATFORMS OTHER THAN ZOOM

Lorna Brown-Burton, Board of Governors

WebEx as well as Windows Microsoft Teams. Zoom appears to be the preferred and then WebEx.

JACKSONVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION – Craig Shoup (Staffed)

We use GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar

HAS ANYONE ELSE HAD THE ISSUE OF MEMBERS BECOMING FRUSTRATED WITH CONTINUING TO DO ONLINE EVENTS AND NOT MEETING IN PERSON?

COLLIER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION – Lisa Terwilliger (Staffed)

For the most part, our members have enjoyed the online events. They don't have to travel to get their CLE. Of course, we do have those that really enjoy the networking. We're trying to accommodate everyone with the hybrid meetings.

HAS ANYONE FIGURED OUT GETTING ACTUAL FOOD TO PEOPLE, OR HAVE THEM DO A PICKUP, IN PLACE OF A REGULAR BAR LUNCH? PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN LARGER BAR ASSOCIATIONS.

A non-Bar group was having their members place an order with a restaurant-and pay online and then a delivery. Not sure how well would work with a large bar association logistically.

ON POINT ... TAKE HOME POINTS FROM THE TOWN HALL - Amelia H. Beard

- Continue making plans
- Make the decision and set criteria to reevaluate those decisions. Set deadlines for the conversation on what to plan and how
- Be ready to pivot
- Collaborate with other bars and non-lawyer groups to further the bar's mission – diversity, inclusion, access to justice – further all these goals
- Geographical areas are different but regardless of where you are, keeping members engaged is critical
- Review what you have done in the past and make it virtual if you can.
- Stay positive. Take the benefits from these collaborative events. Take the group chat and use these ideas. These collaborations are good and hopefully will continue after the pandemic. Keep this going, no matter how crazy things are.
- The CLE approval code for this event is 4094.

REMINDERS

Florida Bar President Dori Foster-Morales Virtual Town Halls Events in each judicial circuit beginning on August 5.

Let your members know about these events. Check the website for the schedule and registration.

<https://www.floridabar.org/news/releases/2020-virtual-town-hall-meetings/>

The next voluntary bar virtual event is a webinar on August 25 on budget and finance to assist in recovery during and after the health-crisis.

USEFUL LINKS

CDC guidelines on COVID 19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

Event Planning and COVID-19: Q&A

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html>

CDC Personal and Social Activities

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/personal-social-activities.html>

IMPORTANT LINKS ON COVID 19 FLORIDA BAR RESOURCES

The Florida Bar website [COVID-19 page](#).

<https://www.floridabar.org/news/releases/covid19/>

COVID-19 Resources for Voluntary Bars

<https://www.floridabar.org/about/volbars/covid19/>

SideBar As It Happens

<https://www.floridabar.org/about/volbars/the-sidebar/sidebar-news-as-it-happens/>

Candidate Forums

If your Bar is doing candidate forums or any voter education, please look at TFB's resources here:

<https://www.floridabar.org/public/faircts/votes010/>

These news releases detail the content:

<https://www.floridabar.org/news-release/bar-announcements/the-votes-in-your-court-resources-for-voters-on-judicial-candidates-now-available-on-the-florida-bars-website-2/>

<https://www.floridabar.org/news-release/bar-announcements/the-votes-in-your-court-resources-for-voters-on-judicial-candidates-now-available-on-the-florida-bars-website/>

Also, here's link from the Bar resources directly to the voluntary statements many of the trial court candidates submitted:

<https://www.floridabar.org/public/faircts/votes010/judicialcandidates/>