



Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association E-Newsletter

May 2007

President's Message

Dear Members, Friends and Colleagues,

Spring is finally upon us... I think! CAPABA has been busy supporting many organizations and the community with their diversity initiatives. I am incredibly proud to be part of such a vibrant organization as we make in-roads to a more diverse community.

This newsletter certainly highlights the achievements and positive impact that CAPABA members are making out in the community. But on a personal note, whenever I have participated in an event or meeting to further promote diversity, I find it very rewarding as well. I truly enjoyed meeting new and current members at our Lunar New Year Celebration. Many thanks to Pepe & Hazard LLP for hosting, and to Calvin Woo, VP of Communications, and Doug Hirai, Secretary, for organizing a great evening. It was also heartening to see the APA community come out in full force at the Asian Pacific American Coalition's, (APAC), Lunar New Year Celebration at the Legislative Office Building. Likewise, by participating in Citizenship Day with the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and assisting people in the community with their applications for citizenship, I met people from different walks of life who had decided to take the plunge in becoming a naturalized citizen like myself.

In April, Susan Kim and I participated in a career development panel at Western New England College (WNEC) School of Law. It was exciting to have the WNEC law students back on-line with CAPABA through its Multi-Cultural Law Student Association once again. Last week, I met with the UCONN

School of Law with the other affinity bar leaders. We offered ourselves and our organizations as resources in helping UCONN with their renewed diversity initiative. By reaching out and participating in one of our community events or attending a social function, I can guarantee that you will get more out of it than you put in!

I look forward to seeing you, your family, and friends at our Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration on May 8, 2007, at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. It will invigorate you!

With warmest regards and best wishes,
Shirley

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
APA Affairs Commission	2
CAPABA's Open Membership Meeting . .	2
APAC Lunar New Year Celebration . . .	3
CBA's YLS Diversity Award	3
"Citizenship Day"	4
Annual Career Panel	5
East Coast Asian Conference	5
Job Opportunities	6
Upcoming Events	6

APA Affairs Commission in Connecticut One Step Closer to Becoming a Reality

By Amy Lin Meyerson, CAPABA Director

On Monday, April 30, 2007, the Connecticut Legislature's Appropriations Committee voted 38-to-4 in favor of a bill that would create an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission in Connecticut.

CAPABA has been working with APAC, an acronym for the Asian Pacific American Coalition of Connecticut, for the passage of Proposed H.B. No. 6002 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION that was introduced by Connecticut State Rep. William Tong, and co-sponsored by Rep. Jason W. Bartlett, Rep. Steve Fontana, Sen. Jonathan A. Harris, Rep. John W. Hetherington, Rep. Jack Malone, Rep. David McCluskey, Rep. Melissa M. Olson.

APAC is a non-partisan group of concerned citizen leaders in their respective Asian communities who are volunteering their time and resources to work on the behalf of Connecticut Asian Pacific Americans. APAC's current efforts are aimed at the creation of a Connecticut Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission that would work to assist the Connecticut government to better understand and serve the Asian Pacific American (APA) community by advising the Governor, the Legislature, state agencies, departments, and commissions on issues relating to the social, educational, health and economic development, rights, concerns and interests of the APA community.

Asian Pacific Americans constitute the fastest growing minority population in Connecticut as well as in the United States. Connecticut has the 8th fastest growing APA population in the country. APAs represent a very diverse population in Connecticut, bringing to our state over 50 different languages, cultures, histories, backgrounds and traditions. Many APAs have overcome great hardships, lived the American dream and continue as exemplars of hope and inspiration to their fel-

low Americans as well as to new groups of Asian peoples as they join the American family.

However, contrary to the myth of the model minority, many APAs live in poverty with little access to legal and other services. Currently, over 9,000 APAs in Connecticut live in poverty. Additionally, Asian Pacific Americans continue to face many challenges in their efforts to achieve full social, political and economic integration, including discrimination and sometimes inadequate access to justice, education, jobs and decent housing.

After its introduction, on January 18, 2007, the Bill was referred to the legislature's Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee that voted unanimously to draft the proposed legislation. The GAE Committee Bill was available at the subsequently held public hearing for the Bill on March 16, 2007. Members of the APA community testified at the public hearing, including CAPABA members. The complete Bill History as well a link to the text of the current Committee Bill may be viewed at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/cbs/H/HB-6002.htm>. Next, the Bill will go to the House of Representatives for debate and amendments.

Please let us know if you would like more information about our efforts or if you would like to assist us in getting this important legislation passed. Angel Feng (afeng@immigrantcenter.com) and Tanya Wolanic (wolanict@jacksonlewis.com) are coordinating visits to key legislators. You may reach me at amy@almesq.com.

CAPABA's Open Membership Meeting Celebrates the Year of the Boar

By Ethan Ung, CAPABA Law Student Member

This year's quarterly Meeting focused on celebrating the Lunar Year and ushering the Year of the Boar with leaders from around the state. According to tradition, many believe that those born in the year of the boar are

pure of heart, generous, and kind. They are full of inner strength, courage, and the capacity to take on any task. The boar is said to be cheerful, loves company, and is always willing to make the greatest sacrifices for friends and family.

An Open Membership Meeting in celebration of the Boar certainly was held in this spirit. It brought together familiar faces, friends, family, and welcomed new membership. The evening was full of cheer and joy complete with traditional *hóng bao* (red envelopes), chocolate coins, authentic Asian cuisine, and even raffle winnings. It was the good fortune of some of the members on the Executive board to be holders of the winning raffles. And it was the good fortune of the entire membership to have the event hosted by Pepe & Hazard, LLP, organized by members of the Executive Board, Kristin Wargo, and many others who made the evening possible. Gung Hay Fat Choy!

The Asian Pacific American Coalition Lunar New Year Celebration

By Tanya Wolanic, CAPABA Vice President

On February 22, 2007, a celebration of the Lunar New Year and the election of Representative William Tong, the first Asian Pacific American elected to the Connecticut General Assembly was held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Angela Rola, Director of the University of Connecticut Asian American Cultural Center, welcomed the attendees and discussed the immediate need for an Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission so that the Connecticut legislature could partner with the growing APA community to identify and address the APA community's unique needs.

Not only did Governor M. Jodi Rell proclaim February 22, 2007 as Lunar New Year Day in Connecticut, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, House Majority Leader Christopher Donovan, and Speaker of the House James Amann took the podium to honor Will-

iam Tong and recognize his election to the Connecticut General Assembly as a triumph for diversity in Connecticut. William Tong encouraged the children in the room to consider public service as their future career and spoke of the need to empower APAs in the political process.

To exemplify the unity of the APA community's support of the celebration, the event was sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Coalition PAC, the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent in North America - CT Chapter, Bangladeshi American Association of Connecticut, Bengali Association of Greater Hartford, CAPABA, the Connecticut Asian American Leaders Consortium, Federation of Filipino Associations of Connecticut, Organization of Chinese Americans - Fairfield County Chapter, Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee, Pilipino American Association of Greater Hartford, South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut, University of Connecticut Asian American Cultural Center and University of Connecticut Asian American Asian American Studies Institute. The numerous attendees were also treated to the traditional Chinese dragon dance, meant to bring good luck to all.

The CBA's Second Annual Young Lawyer's Section Diversity Award Reception

By Kim Starr, CAPABA Member

Turnout was high at the Quinnipiack Club in New Haven for the Connecticut Bar Association's Second Annual Young Lawyers' Section Diversity Award Reception. On March 14, 2007, the Honorable Nina F. Elgo, Carolyn Golden Hebsgaard, and State Senator Andrew J. McDonald were presented with diversity awards by the CBA YLS in recognition of their commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

Judge Elgo was honored for her commitment within the Asian Pacific American community, particularly her

active involvement with the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and the Filipino Heritage Foundation. She was introduced by her friend and colleague, the Honorable Judge Douglas Lavine. Judge Elgo, as the first Asian Pacific American appointed to the Connecticut Superior Court, eloquently spoke of the need to advance the cause of justice by enriching the bench and bar with a diversity of perspective and experience.

Ms. Hebsgaard, the Executive Director of the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity, Inc. in Connecticut and the Executive Director of the Boston Lawyers Group, was introduced by her good friend and supporter, City of Hartford Corporation Counsel John Rose. Ms. Hebsgaard was recognized for her tireless advocacy to increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of lawyers of color within the state. Ms. Hebsgaard spoke of the importance to assist attorneys of color and women to find satisfying professional opportunities and make Connecticut a more attractive place to practice law.

Senator Andrew J. McDonald was presented with the diversity award for his instrumental role in Connecticut's legislation to provide legal benefits of marriage to same-sex couples in Connecticut and add gender identity and expression to Connecticut's hate crimes statutes. Senator McDonald, introduced by his friend and compatriot, the Mayor of Stamford Dan Malloy, was recognized for his commitment to the Gay and Lesbian community. Senator McDonald spoke of the need to continue working for equality and make Connecticut inclusive to all.

The recipients were indeed inspirational. While each recipient chose different paths to their success, their acceptance speeches included a common theme: helping others, and removing barriers through a commitment to diversity and inclusiveness - a message that was clearly recognized by all who attended the event.

CAPABA Members Volunteered for “Citizenship Day”

By Angel Feng, CAPABA President-Elect

Increasing our community service and support of other bar associations, CAPABA participated in the first Citizenship Day in Connecticut on March 24, 2007. The event brought together attorneys, paralegals, and interpreters to assist legal permanent residents in the preparation of naturalization applications and advice to those with questions about naturalization. Citizenship Day was organized and sponsored by the Connecticut Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA).

Volunteers included seasoned immigration attorneys as well as attorneys and staff with no immigration experience. With locations in Hartford, New Haven, and Stamford, volunteers assisted over 100 people with their applications for naturalization. The success of the first Citizenship Day event in Connecticut won AILA's commitment to organize the event yearly. According to Kristin Hoffman, event coordinator and Chapter Vice-Chair, “CT AILA was very pleased to see volunteers from other bar associations, including CAPABA. We appreciate not only the time of these volunteers, but their recognition of the need for pro bono assistance to immigrant communities. The variety of practice areas represented by non-AILA attorneys provided a wider and valuable perspective to Citizenship Day. We hope that we can repeat and expand our cooperation next year.”

CAPABA hopes to continue our support of this service to the immigrant community by promoting the event and providing volunteers. We hope you join us next year. For more information, contact Angel Feng.

The Annual Career Panel at Western New England College School of Law

By Elwyn Brewster Quirk, CAPABA Law Student Member

On April 9, 2007, the MultiCultural Law Students Association (MCLSA), of Western New England College, School of Law hosted its annual Career Panel—Minority Opinions. Panelists included Ami Gadhia of Shipman & Goodwin, LLP; Edward Wilson, Jr. of The Greater Hartford Legal Aid; Susan Kim, partner at Bingham McCutchen, LLP; Alfred Gray, Jr., partner at Bowditch & Dewey, LLP; along with Shirley Ma of Rockstar Technologies, LLC and president of CAPABA. Elwyn Brewster Quirk, MCLSA - Day Vice-President, served as the panel's moderator.

Panelists provided real life insight on what law students and young lawyers should expect in various sectors of the legal profession. Discussions ranged from personal experiences and insight in working in the legal environment; expectations of minority attorneys in the legal profession; billable hours from the firm perspective compared to the public interest sector; balancing family and work lives; and the do's and don'ts when sending a resume and applying for internships or job positions.

“Every year the goal of the MCLSA panel is to inform lawstudents about the realities of practicing law as an attorney of color. This year was no exception. We were so pleased to have a diverse panel consisting of attorneys from different cultural backgrounds and practice areas,” said Elizabeth Ho Sing, President of MCLSA.

The MultiCultural Law Students Association of Western New England College thanks all the panelists of this year's events for their contributions. The organization welcomes the opportunity to host future interested panelists for next year.

East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference

By Calvin Woo, CAPABA Vice President of Communications

On February 9 – 10, 2007, Yale University hosted the annual East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference, which was attended by over 900 undergraduate students from all over the country. The panel discussions, speakers, workshops and other events addressed a whole variety of issues relevant to the Asian American university student community. CAPABA Board of Directors member, Superior Court Judge Nina Elgo, led a small workshop with Attorney Chris Kriesen for students interested in exploring careers in the law. The students were given an overview of the variety of legal careers in the profession, and a compilation of resources available online and elsewhere to assess what skills, interests and experiences were relevant and important for a given career. They also participated in an exercise to assist them in discerning what values, skills and interests they already possessed which might point them in the direction of a specific field in the law. With Judge Elgo's efforts as well as financial sponsorship of the conference, CAPABA is proud to have supported this endeavor.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Division of Criminal Justice has the following employment opportunities:

Deputy Assistant State's Attorney, Domestic Violence for GA #20, Norwalk, closes May 10, 2007; State's attorney for Hartford JD, closes May 24, 2007 and Deputy Assistant State's Attorney for GA #10, New London, closes May 24, 1007.

Please refer to the Division's website @ www.ct.gov/csao for applications and information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CAPABA and SABAC's Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration

When: Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Where: The Legislative Office Building
The Atrium
300 Capital Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Time: 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Come and join us for our celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This exciting

evening will include esteemed guest speakers Chief State's Attorney Kevin T. Kane and Connecticut State Representative William Tong, cultural performances, and great food and beverages.

CAPABA's Seventh Annual Dinner and Auction

When: Wednesday, August 8, 2007

Where: At a venue to be confirmed in the Hartford, CT area

Save the date for an evening of networking, fun, and great food at CAPABA's Annual Dinner. This event will include CAPABA's presentation of its annual Diversity Award, as well as great prizes for the auction.

Scheduled speakers currently include renowned forensic scientist Dr. Henry Lee as the keynote speaker.

If you or your organization would like to be a sponsor for this event, please contact CAPABA President, Shirley Ma, at smaesquire@yahoo.com.

Please send any articles or information, such as news or announcements, that you would like to have published in the next issue of the CAPABA E-Newsletter to Calvin Woo at cwoo@pepehazard.com. Please also feel free to provide suggestions for future articles or comments on what you read. Note: The opinions expressed in the CAPABA E-Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect association policy or editorial concurrence. Publication of any written materials or advertisements does not constitute an endorsement. The editors reserve the right to accept, reject, or edit materials or advertisements in accordance with their editorial judgment.