

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION**

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2008-2009 BAR YEAR

**Prepared and Submitted by
BERNAHRDT D. CHRISTENSON – CHAIR**

**I. STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION
COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

The 2008-2009 State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyers Section Executive Council Members are as follows:

OFFICERS:

- *CHAIRPERSON: Bernhardt D. Christenson*
- *CHAIRPERSON-ELECT: Danielle Mason Anderson*
- *VICE CHAIRPERSON: Timothy Tyrone Gardner, Jr.*
- *SECRETARY/TREASURER: Maureen M. McGinnis*
- *EX OFFICIO: Robert Fergan*

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

District 1 (Wayne).

- Carlos A. Escurel, Detroit
- Jennifer M. Harvey, Northville
- Felicia O. Johnson, Detroit
- Brandy Y. Robinson, Detroit

District 2 (Oakland and Macomb).

- Lisa J. Hamameh, Bloomfield Hills
- James William Low, Southfield
- Maureen M. McGinnis, Troy
- Brent George Seitz, Troy
- Hope V. Shovein, Southfield
- Jessica Renee Simmons, Troy
- Keith A. Wuotinen, Farmington
- Andrea Irons, Utica

District 3 (remaining counties).

- Bernhardt D. Christenson, III, Flint
- Danielle Mason Anderson, Kalamazoo
- Timothy Tyrone Gardner, Jr., Lansing
- Erika Lynn Anderson, Saint Johns
- Sean P. McNally, East Lansing
- Bonnie R. Shaw, Ann Arbor
- David R. Millar, Grand Rapids
- Alexandra Nassar, Flint
- Joseph P. Pittel, Lansing

**II. STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN'S YOUNG LAWYERS SECTION
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The State Bar of Michigan Young Lawyer's Section has conducted or will conduct the following meetings:

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Wednesday, September 17-19, 2008 Annual Meeting	Dearborn Hyatt Dearborn, MI	9:00 A.M.-10:00 P.M.
Saturday, November 15, 2008	Soaring Eagle, Mt. Pleasant	9:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
Thursday, January 15, 2009	University Club Lansing	6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
Friday, March 6, 2009	University Club Lansing	8:00 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.
Thursday, April 23, 2009	Blackstone's Pub & Grill Flint, MI	6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.
Friday-Saturday June 5-6, 2009	YLS Summit Soaring Eagle	4:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M. 8:00 A.M. – 9:00 P.M.
Thursday, July 23, 2009	Telephone Conference	11:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Wednesday, September 16-18, 2009	Annual Meeting	

III. PROGRAMS

Back to School Barbecue (Brandy Robinson)

On Saturday, August 16, 2008, the Young Lawyers Section held its third annual “Back-to School Barbecue” at the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries Genesis House III in Detroit. This year’s event was cosponsored by the D. Augustus Straker, Michigan, Asian-Pacific American, and Wolverine Bar Associations. The YLS believes that the best way to start the school year is with an end-of summer celebration. Imagine a picnic atmosphere, the smell of hot dogs and hamburgers grilling, children running around playing games, and a disc jockey playing music in the background. Oh – and backpacks overflowing with school supplies.

Kindergarten through 12th grade students and their parents participated in the barbecue. The students played indoor and outdoor group games while their parents relaxed to the smooth sounds of music. All of the participants ate a picnic style meal. Each of the student participants received a sling backpack filled with notebooks, pocket folders, paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, an eraser, a ruler, a protractor, and a pencil sharpener. More than 30 volunteers devoted an afternoon to this worthy cause. Volunteers prepared food, decorated, stuffed and distributed backpacks, and organized games for the children.

Habitat for Humanity (Brent Seitz and Hope Shovein)

On Saturday, September 27, 2008, the young lawyers participated in this program assisting in the construction of housing for pre-approved families.

Oakland County Youth Assistance Program (Mentors Plus)(Maureen McGinnis)

On Saturday, October 4, 2008, 60 plus participants attended a picnic with 5 attorney volunteers who answered questions and mentored kids.

What They Didn’t Teach You in Law School (Jennifer Harvey)

On Thursday, October 9, 2008, a seminar was held outlining items that were not taught in law school.

YLS Conference

November 15-16, 2008 conference was held at the Soaring Eagle in Mt. Pleasant, MI. This is a planning retreat for council members to review the programming from prior years and to plan programming for the coming year.

Novemberfest (James Low)

On Wednesday, November 19, 2008, a young lawyers' social and networking event took place.

Project Compassion Blanket Drive (Alexandra Nassar)

In November 2008, blankets were collected and provided to various shelters throughout southeast Michigan.

Old School Skate Party with SKIP (Brandy Robinson)

On Tuesday, December 30, 2008, a skating party was held to raise funds for S.K.I.P. S.K.I.P. is an organization committed to providing the children of incarcerated parents with positive experiences that will assist in shaping them into positive and productive citizens. S.K.I.P.'s Michigan chapter focuses on elementary age children who attend Detroit public schools. Funds from this event were used to support ongoing monthly programming.

Holiday Dinners (Danielle Anderson, Brandy Robinson, Felicia Johnson, Chris Christenson)

Again this year, we had tremendous success with our holiday dinner programs. The Young Lawyers Section helped organized five holiday dinner programs this year adding Washtenaw County to our list. The dinners were held at the following locations:

Kalamazoo – December, 2008

Detroit – December, 2008

Pontiac – December, 2008

Flint – December, 2008

Ann Arbor – January, 2009

Coat Drive (Lisa Hamameh)

On Thursday, December 4, 2008 a coat drive took place with 50 coats and more than \$400.00 being donated to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

American Bar Association Midyear Meeting

The ABA Midyear meeting was held on February 12-14, 2009 in Boston, MA. The Michigan delegation included Danielle Anderson, Carlos Escurel, Brent Seitz, James Low, Maureen McGinnis, Alexandra Nassar, and Chris Christenson.

Bar Exam Workshop at University of Detroit Mercy Law School (Timothy Gardner)

On Monday, February 16, 2009 a bar exam workshop entitled “After Graduation: How to Prepare and Pass the Bar Exam” took place. The purpose of the program was to assist University of Detroit Mercy law students in writing effective essay exam responses, selecting the appropriate bar review courses, and devising solid study plans.

Bowling Challenge (James Low)

On Friday, March 6, 2009, the Young Lawyers section challenged the SBM Board of Commissioners with proceeds from the event going to charity.

Jumpstart Your Career (Jennifer Harvey)

On Wednesday, March 4, 2009 a seminar took place at Cooley Law School, Auburn Hills campus entitled “Jumpstart Your Career: Finding employment that fits you in this economic climate.” There were 40 attendees.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition (Solon Phillips and Brandy Robinson)

The 17th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition was held on Saturday, March 14, 2009, Noon, at Wayne State University law School. Selected 11th and 12th grade students from local high schools presented their position on the following topic: “In 1961, the year President-Elect Barack Obama was born, Dr. King gave a commencement address in which he explained the “American Dream” . . . Has the “American Dream” as described by Dr. King been realized with the election of President-Elect Obama? Explain why or why not.”

This momentous event is held annually in commemoration of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and in observance of Black History Month. Savings bonds were awarded to the top advocates to be used for educational purposes.

Cell Phone Drive (Jessica Simmons and Keith Wuotinen)

On Thursday, March 26, 2009, a charity event took place to benefit HAVEN (Help Against Violent Encounters Now), a domestic violence shelter and resource center in Oakland County. This event was held to gather old cell phones to be used for emergency purposes.

Mock Trial for SKIP

This program consisted of a mock-trial for 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students participating in Save Kids of Incarcerated Parents (SKIP). The format was modeled after “We The Jury” and a similar SKIP event held in 2006. Members of our section coached teams of students to serve as prosecutors, defense attorneys and jurors. Lunch was served afterwards, allowing the children and their attorneys to interact. The event was held Saturday, April 25, 2009, 1-5 pm.

Law Day Event (Erika Anderson)

This is an annual event to help bring awareness to students and the community about career opportunities in the legal field.

American Bar Association Spring Young Lawyers Conference

The ABA Fall conference was held on May 14-16, 2009 in New Orleans. The conference was attended by Lisa Hamameh, James Low, Keith Wuotinen, Timothy Gardner, and Chris Christenson.

Safe House (Bonnie Shaw)

On Thursday, May 14, 2009, several young lawyers participated in a fund raiser to raise money and show support for Safe House Center, an Ann Arbor based organization committed to building communities free of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Networking Stroll (Lisa Hamameh)

This event was held on Thursday, May 21, 2009 and included a networking event including cuisine from different countries at four different restaurants in downtown Royal Oak.

YLS Summit (Chris Christenson)

On Friday, June 5, 2009 and Saturday, June 6, 2009, the Young Lawyers Section held its Second Annual Young Lawyer Summit at Soaring Eagle Resort in Mt. Pleasant, MI. The event was attended by over 120 attendees. The summit provided substantive programming, seminars addressing young lawyer issues, and networking opportunities all in one event. We had an incredible panel of speakers including 3rd Circuit Court Judge, Daniel Ryan, 7th Circuit Court Judge, Joseph Farah, and Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Stephen Borrello. The event was a huge success for the second year.

Getting Started – Switching Gears

On Saturday, June 20, 2009 from 12:00 to 4:30 P.M. this program offers practical advice for attorneys in transition.

American Bar Association Chicago

This will be held on July 30, 2009 and attendees are Bonnie Shaw, Timothy Gardner, Jessica Simmons, Carlos Escurel, Felicia Johnson, Brandy Robinson, and Andrea Irons

I V. AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION 2007-2009 APPOINTMENTS

- **AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES: Jessica Simmons**
- **AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE: Danielle Mason Anderson.**

Respectfully Submitted,
B.D. 'Chris' Christenson
Chair, Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Michigan