

# THE WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

## A CATALYST FOR 2002



Women and the Law Section Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2002

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### 2002-2003 WAL OFFICERS AND COUNCIL

#### CHAIR

Misty M. Ventura  
Hughes & Luce  
1717 Main St., Suite 2800  
Dallas, Texas 75201  
Office: 214/939-5462  
E-Mail: [VENTURM@HughesLuce.com](mailto:VENTURM@HughesLuce.com)

#### CHAIR-ELECT

Judy L. Ney  
12242 Brookvalley Dr.  
Houston, Texas 77071  
Office: 713/723-1937  
E-Mail: [judyinejd@aol.com](mailto:judyinejd@aol.com)

#### VICE-CHAIR/MEMBERSHIP

Teresa Oxford  
U.S. Global Investors, Inc.  
4010 Tallulah  
San Antonio, Texas 78218  
Office: 210/308-1232  
E-Mail Work: [taoxford@usfunds.com](mailto:taoxford@usfunds.com)

#### VICE-CHAIR/NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Cynthia Reppert  
Ryan & Co. Dispute Resolution Group  
100 Congress Ave., Suite 1900  
Austin, Texas 78701  
Office: 512/476-2000  
E-Mail: [cynthia.reppert@ryanco.com](mailto:cynthia.reppert@ryanco.com)

#### SECRETARY

Hon. Carolyn F. Moore  
TWCC Administrative Law Judge  
P.O. Box 959  
Lubbock, Texas 79408-0959  
Office: 806/744-4569  
E-Mail: [carolyn.moore@twcc.state.tx.us](mailto:carolyn.moore@twcc.state.tx.us)

#### TREASURER

Lisa R. Hernandez  
Easley & Marquis, L.L.C.  
5000 Legacy Drive, Suite 400  
Plano, Texas 75024  
Office: 972/578-9597 x131  
E-Mail: [lhernandez@easleyandmarquis.com](mailto:lhernandez@easleyandmarquis.com)

#### CHRONOLOGIST

Susan R. McMenamy  
Phillips Petroleum Company  
300 West Sixth Street  
Borger, Texas 79007  
Office: 806/275-3708  
E-Mail: [sumcmenam@sbccglobal.net](mailto:sumcmenam@sbccglobal.net)

#### IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Hon. Deborah L. Ingraham  
SOAH Administrative Law Judge  
P.O. Box 13025  
Austin, Texas 78711-3025  
Office: 512/936-0727  
E-mail: [Deborah.Ingraham@soah.state.tx.us](mailto:Deborah.Ingraham@soah.state.tx.us)

#### EMERITUS VOTING MEMBER

Louise B. Raggio, *Dallas*

#### COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2004

Ralph H. Brock, *Lubbock*  
Avo Stevens Butler, *Sherman*  
Sherry Wetsch, *Houston*

#### COUNCIL TERMS EXPIRING 2003

D'Metria Benson, *Dallas*  
Mara Asya Blatt, *El Paso*  
Christy Drake-Adams, *Austin*  
Ronnie E.G. Harrison, *Houston*  
Lisa Smith, *San Antonio*

#### BOARD ADVISORS

Kim J. Askew, *Dallas*  
Linda R. Butter, *Longview*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Your Council Members are hard at work. Our first Council meeting following the June 14, 2002 annual meeting and CLE program was held in Austin on September 14, 2002 (see enclosed meeting minutes for details of both the June 14th and September 14th meetings). A portion of the Council meeting was dedicated to brainstorming and goal setting. Following are a few of the ideas presented by your Council Members:

1. Increase awareness of our Section in the legal community.
2. Increase Section membership.
3. Partner with local women's bar organizations.
4. Continue our support of the Women's Advocacy Project.
5. Continue to increase the utility of our website to our members.
6. Promote our CLE programs to secure better attendance and appeal to a broad audience.
7. Identify projects that will help in the Section's evolution.

We now need to hear from you. What goals do you want our Section to achieve this year? How much time are you willing to commit to achieving these goals? Please contact your Council members with this information (our contact information is to the left of this note).

As Past Chair, Ralph Brock reminded us in 2000: There is strength in numbers, so we must increase our membership. There is strength in education, so we must produce outstanding CLE programs. There is strength in honoring our best, which we will do with our Sarah T. Hughes and Ma'at Justice Awards. There is strength in honoring our past, which we will do through our chronology project.

Our greatest strength, however, is membership involvement. This can be our best year yet, with your help.

Misty Ventura

## AROUND THE STATE

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this new column, we plan to feature local women's bar associations around the State of Texas. This is the first installment of this column, so if you don't see your local women's bar featured in this edition, look for it next time! We plan to feature them all. Articles are always welcome and may be sent to laddalisa@earthlink.net.

### BEXAR COUNTY WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION

by Nancy Farrer

The Bexar County Women's Bar Association ended 2001 celebrating the success of its nineteenth annual Bench Brunch at a festive Christmas luncheon where Santa Claus, aka Judge John Specia, gave away over \$110,000 in Bench Brunch proceeds to sixteen deserving charities serving women and children in the San Antonio/ Bexar County area. Bench Brunch, BCWBA's yearly fundraiser honoring women judges in Texas, has become the premier event of the Bexar County legal community, attended by approximately 900 people this past fall. The 2002 Bench Brunch committee is already hard at work preparing for the Bench Brunch's upcoming twentieth anniversary!

Bench Brunch is not the only BCWBA project to impact the Bexar County community. As we look back on a year that saw the BCWBA, along with its charitable arm, the Bexar County Women's Bar Foundation, receive numerous local, state, and national awards for its innovative and caring programs, BCWBA is already on fast forward for this year's projects. Here are some highlights.

#### *GALS Project*

The BCWBA is off and running with its new GALS (Girls and Life Sports) mentoring program in conjunction with Harlendale School District and the San Antonio Sports Foundation. Trained BCWBA volunteers are working with at-risk middle school girls in a teaching program geared to introducing or re-emphasizing life skills such as self-esteem building, healthy decision-making, goal-setting, and many other topics. As a special treat for girls in this first session, they will be participating in some of the activities surrounding the Women's Final Four in college basketball, held here in March. A second volunteer training session is scheduled in February and BCWBA hopes to reach out to other area schools as the program develops.

#### *Wills Clinic and Elder Law Handbook*

On April 6, BCWBA takes its semi-annual Wills Clinic on the road, setting up at the Ella Austin Community Center to be closer to the clients it serves. The Wills Clinic provides free wills and powers of attorney for senior citizens who otherwise cannot afford them. The BCWBF also continues to publish the Elder Law Handbook containing essential infor-

mation for seniors, including vital information regarding senior services in the local area. Last year, BCWBF published 5,000 copies of the handbook in English and another 2,500 copies in Spanish.

#### *Law Day*

At its regular April luncheon, the BCWBA will celebrate Law Day by inviting 55 freshman high school girls from the Fox Tech law magnet school to be its guests. Freshman girls tend to be at risk for dropping out of the program because they do not believe they can succeed. Speaker for the luncheon will be the Honorable Carmen Kelsey, talking about juvenile justice, but also how she became a lawyer and judge. Hopefully, listening to Judge Kelsey and speaking to legal professionals, including attorneys, legal assistants, and legal secretaries, will encourage these young ladies to continue pursuing their highest goals.

#### *Battered Immigrant Women's Project*

The BCWBA/BCWBF, together with St. Mary's University School of Law Center for Legal and Social Justice, have trained a group of volunteer lawyers to help battered immigrant women and children find safety by providing both immigration and family law assistance. The Battered Immigrant Women Committee also publishes and distributes personal safety brochures in English and Spanish, which are designed to guide battered women and children through the legal and social service system. Last year, with a grant from the American Bar Association, the Project created a CD-ROM, a 700-page manual, and an eight-hour instructional videotape to assist other bar associations in conducting similar seminars in other regions of Texas. A live seminar in Laredo is currently in the planning stage.

#### *The Working Parents' Guide to Summer Survival*

Not last and not least, BCWBF is publishing a second edition of its Working Parents' Guide to Summer Survival. The Guide contains information on daylong, weekend, and camp activities that children, aged 4 to 16 years, will find fun, entertaining, and stimulating. The Guide is provided free as a service to working parents struggling to successfully juggle work and family, especially in the summer. The BCWBF has already received requests for over 12,000 copies!

So is the Bexar County Women's Bar Association all work and no play? No way! Planning is underway for the annual overnight retreat at Guadalupe River Ranch in May. Before that, BCWBA will host a President's Party and Judicial Reception, a mixer for the judiciary, the legal community, and BCWBA mentees from the Women's Law Association at St. Mary's University School of Law. The BCWBA also plans to celebrate the baseball season with a family picnic and opening home game with the San Antonio Missions. 2002 promises to be another fun and busy year!

**TRAVIS COUNTY WOMEN LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION**

*by Christy Drake-Adams*

The Travis County Women Lawyers' Association held its Pathfinders Luncheon on January 15, 2002. The purpose of this annual event is to recognize some of the most notable women in the legal profession in the Travis County area. The

women honored this year included Myra McDaniel, Jo-Christy Brown, and Bree Buchanan. The varied backgrounds of the honorees, public interest (Bree Buchanan), large well-established law firm (Myra McDaniel) and small private firm (Jo-Christy Brown) made for an interesting presentation. Each of the women described the aspects of their career that they found most and least rewarding and how they have balanced their professional and personal lives.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN AND THE LAW SECTION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS  
JUNE 14, 2002, IN DALLAS, TEXAS**

Deborah L. Ingraham of Austin, Chair, convened the annual meeting of the Women and the Law Section, welcoming members and guests. She recognized Betsy Whitaker, of Dallas, President-Elect of the State Bar of Texas and Tony Alvarado, Executive Director of the State Bar of Texas. She announced that Ralph H. Brock, who had been nominated by the Section, received the Presidents' Award from the State Bar just prior to the Section's annual meeting and she announced that Suzanne Duvall, former president of the Section, had been appointed as a Section Representative to the State Bar Board of Directors.

Deborah L. Ingraham invited all attendees to enjoy refreshments provided by the Dallas Women Lawyers' Association and Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P.

Deborah L. Ingraham discussed several accomplishments made by the Section during the 2001-2002 State Bar year. She said she was proud to announce that the Section's web site was on line; it will be maintained at a cost to the Section of \$20.00 a month. She complimented the work of the council members who had worked with the State Bar in organizing a continuing legal education program that was conducted by telephone. She also stated that the Section's newsletter had a color banner. She then thanked each officer and council member of the Section, giving each a bag of sachet.

Judy Ney, of Houston, Treasurer, said that as of June 14, 2002, the Section had \$2,502.97 in its account. Suzanne Duvall moved to accept the treasurer's report. After a second by Jan Soifer, the motion carried.

Judy Ney reminded council members that they could request a maximum of \$100.00 from the section as reimbursement for expenses they paid to attend this annual meeting.

Ronnie E.G. Harrison, of Houston, said that she, Judy Ney, and Leo Ney had been selling small miniature "dancing cows" to raise money for the Women's Advocacy Project, which is the Section's pro bono project. Ronnie said that she had approximately 100 cows to sell, at prices from \$20 to \$30.

Amy Wright of the Women's Advocacy Project expressed appreciation to the Section for its continued support of the

Women's Advocacy Project, which began 20 years ago with a hotline for women and developed into an organization that addresses family and domestic violence issues.

Carolyn F. Moore said that the minutes of the March 11, 2002 meeting had been accepted by an e-mail vote of the officers and council members.

When Ms. Ingraham asked for other news from the Section members, D'Metria Benson and Ronnie E.G. Harrison reminded attendees that they are running for public office. Ms. Benson is running for judge and Ms. Harrison is running for the State Senate.

Deborah L. Ingraham explained that pursuant to the by-laws, she will have the position of Immediate Past Chair for the next year and announced the following slate of nominations:

Chair	Misty Ventura	Dallas
Chair-Elect	Judy Ney	Houston
Vice-Chair-Membership	Teresa Oxford	San Antonio
Vice-Chair-Newsletter	Cynthia Reppert	Austin
Secretary	Carolyn F. Moore	Lubbock
Treasurer	Lisa Hernandez	Plano
Chronologist	Susan R. McMenemy	Borger

Council member for term expiring in 2003  
Lisa Smith San Antonio

Council members for term expiring in 2004  
Sherry Wetsch Houston  
Avo Stevens Butler Sherman  
Ralph H. Brock Lubbock

Ms. Ingraham said that the following council members with terms expiring in 2003 had been elected at the last annual meeting:

Christy Drake-Adams	Austin
Mara Asya Blatt	El Paso
Ronnie E.G. Harrison	Houston
D'Metria Benson	Dallas

After a motion, with a second, the slate of nominations was accepted by acclamation by members attending the meeting.

Ms. Ingraham announced that Susan M. Horton had been named the winner of this year's Sarah T. Hughes Award, and presented her with a crystal Capitol Dome, made by Waterford. In accepting the award, Ms. Horton introduced several family members who accompanied her to the meeting and discussed her first encounter at the Texas Municipal League with a man who needed advice from an attorney. She said that he really wanted to talk with a man, but listened to her and took her advice on the question he posed.

Jan Soifer, announced that Justice Deborah Hankinson of the Texas Supreme Court had been named the winner of the Ma'at Justice Award. Ms. Soifer said that Justice Hankinson had worked tirelessly on the Gender Fairness Task Force that had been appointed by the Texas Supreme Court on a request years ago by this Section. Ms. Soifer said that Justice

Hankinson had also worked very hard on a newly created organization, Texas Access to Justice, which is trying to make certain that people with low income have legal representation. Justice Hankinson graciously accepted the award, which was a small statute of the Egyptian Goddess Ma'at.

Misty Ventura introduced the guest speaker, Rani Garcia, a lawyer with Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P. Ms. Garcia spoke on the topic "Breastfeeding and the Working Woman, a Legal Perspective." The speech was approved for one hour of continuing legal education credit.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 A.M.

Respectfully submitted

Carolyn F. Moore  
Secretary

July 3, 2002

## **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF THE WOMEN AND THE LAW SECTION OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS SEPTEMBER 14, 2002, IN AUSTIN, TEXAS**

### **Call to Order/ Welcome/ Quorum**

Misty Ventura of Dallas, Chair, convened the meeting, determined a quorum was present, and welcomed the following officers: Judy L. Ney of Houston, Chair-Elect; Teresa Oxford of San Antonio, Vice-Chair for Membership; Lisa R. Hernandez of Plano, Treasurer; Susan R. McMenemy of Borger, Chronologist; Hon. Deborah L. Ingraham of Austin, Immediate Past Chair; Louise B. Raggio of Dallas, Emeritus Member; and the following council members: Lisa Smith of San Antonio, Christy Drake-Adams of Austin, Mara Aysa Blatt of El Paso, Ronnie E. G. Harrison of Houston; and Kristie Brasfield, Director of the Office of Minority Affairs and State Bar of Texas Liaison to the Section. Also attending via telephone were council members D'Metria Benson of Dallas and Sherry Wetsch of San Antonio.

### **Absences**

Deborah Ingraham moved with a second by Mara Blatt, to excuse absences for members who sent in reasons for their inability to attend the meeting. The motion passed. Members with an excused absence for the meeting were Carolyn F. Moore of Lubbock, Secretary; council members Ralph H. Brock of Lubbock, Avo Stevens Butler of Dallas; and Board Advisors Kim J. Askew of Dallas, and Linda Butter of Longview.

Cynthia Reppert, Vice-Chair- Newsletter, was also absent.

### **Announcements**

Deborah Ingraham announced that Teresa Oxford would be awarded the Belva Lockwood Outstanding Young Lawyer Award from the Bexar County Women's Bar Association at the Bench Brunch on November 3, 2002, in San Antonio.

Teresa Oxford moved, with a second from Mara Blatt, that the following dates be approved as the schedule of meetings for the Section: November 21, 2002, by telephone; February 22, 2003, in Austin; April 30, 2003, by telephone; and June 13, 2003, in Houston at the Annual Meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Meetings that are held in Austin will begin at 10:30 A.M.

### **Secretary's Report**

Deborah Ingraham moved, with a second by Mara Blatt, that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Women and the Law Section of the State Bar of Texas, June 14, 2002, in Dallas, Texas, be approved. The motion carried.

Judy Ney, acting as secretary in the absence of Carolyn Moore, and read aloud to attendees the following information:

On July 23, 2002, the Section Council voted to approve a motion by Teresa Oxford, with a second by Lisa R. Hernandez, that the Women and the Law Section offer travel reimbursements to recipients of the Sarah T. Hughes and the Ma'at Justice Award up to \$100.00.

On August 2, 2002, the Section Council voted to approve a motion by Carolyn F. Moore, with a second by Teresa Oxford, that Deborah Ingraham, Immediate Past Chair of the Women and the Law Section, be the Section's liaison to the Texas Supreme Court's Gender Fairness Task Force for this State Bar Year, June 1, 2002 through May 30, 2003.

On August 13, 2002, Carolyn F. Moore, Secretary, wrote to Clara E. "Betsy" Johnson on Section letterhead, stating that the Section does not take a position, for or against, the appointment of judges. This letter was in response to a letter written to the Section by Ms. Johnson.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Lisa Hernandez presented the Treasurer's Report, reporting that the current balance is \$7,299.35. She gave members reimbursement forms to fill out and return to her. She reminded members that the mileage reimbursement rate is now \$0.345 per mile. Members voted to accept the Treasurer's Report.

### **Chair-Elect's Report**

Judy Ney said that she, Ronnie Harrison, and Sherry Wetsch, all from Houston, comprise the subcommittee to plan the Section's Annual Meeting, which will be in Houston in mid June 2003.

### **CLE Report**

Misty Ventura gave a history of the Section's previous CLE events. Some of the programs were in-house productions, other programs were held in conjunction with PDP, now TexasBar CLE, or with Texas Women Lawyers. She emphasized that the Section should get involved in other CLE programs as sponsors so that the Section can get recognition and increase its membership. She asked attendees to send her an e-mail list of potential speakers for CLE programs, along with topics for the speakers. She and Christy Drake-Adams will work on the Section's CLE program.

### **Newsletter/Mailing**

On behalf of Cynthia Reppert, Deborah Ingraham reported that the deadline for submitting articles for the next newsletter is September 16, 2002. The newsletter will be mailed on October 15, 2002. Other newsletters that will be published during the year will include copies of the Section's minutes of meetings. Ms. Reppert asked that each officer and council member write one article for the newsletter this year.

### **Membership Report**

Teresa Oxford distributed a list with the names of Section members. She said that membership is now 484. She will e-mail a copy of the list of Section members to anyone requesting a copy.

Ms. Oxford said that Deborah Ingraham and Christy Drake-Adams would represent the Section at the next ceremony for newly licensed attorneys. The two representatives will hand out information about Section membership after the induction ceremony in Austin in November of 2002.

Ms. Oxford said that as the Section's name has more exposure, membership should increase. She stated that both the newsletter and web site are two ways that the Section gets good publicity for activities of the Section. She will develop a definitive list of why people should join the Section. The list can be placed in the Section's brochure, newsletter, and web site.

### **Pro Bono Report**

Ronnie Harrison stated that the Section sent \$1050.00 to the Women's Advocacy Project from proceeds raised during the June 2002 State Bar Annual Meeting in Dallas. Ronnie, along with Leo and Judy Ney, sold miniature dancing-cow figurines to raise the funds.

Deborah Ingraham stated that she would respond to a letter from a prisoner requesting help from the Section. She will send the prisoner a list of volunteer legal aid organizations that might provide the help requested by the prisoner.

### **Chronologist Report**

Susan McMenemy said that she was excited about working on the chronology project of the Section. Louise Raggio suggested that women who were past presidents of the State Bar should be interviewed.

### **Web Site Report**

Deborah Ingraham said that the Section's web site could be viewed at [www.txwomenlawsection.org](http://www.txwomenlawsection.org). She requested help in getting links for the site. She is considering providing links to other legal services and explaining on the web site that the Section does not offer legal services.

### **New Policy**

Mara Blatt, with a second by Teresa Oxford, moved that the travel expense policy for recipients of the Sarah T. Hughes and Ma'at Justice Award be \$100.00 per person upon request. The motion passed after discussion. Deborah Ingraham and D'Metria Benson abstained from voting.

### **Vacant Council Position**

Ronnie Harrison suggested that the Section consider Jennifer Rustay of Houston to fill the vacant council position, which expires in 2004. Misty Ventura appointed Ms. Rustay, subject to Ms. Rustay becoming a member of the Section.

## 2002-2003 Section Goals

Ms. Ventura stated that her emphasis for 2002-2003 is to identify and implement specific goals of the Section.

## Council Member Job Descriptions

Ms. Ventura described duties of officers and council members. She said that she and Judy Ney would work on a job description for Chair-Elect.

## CLE event

Mara Blatt moved, with a second by Deborah Ingraham, that the Section sponsor a local bar leaders conference, site to be determined later, to network with women bar leaders. The motion passed. Misty Ventura appointed Ms. Blatt to be in charge of planning the conference.

## Louise Raggio Lecture Series

The Louise Raggio lecture series will be October 2, 2002 in Dallas.

## National Conference of Women Bar Associations

Misty Ventura requested that the Section pay \$100.00 to become a member of the National Conference of Women Bar Associations. Attendees voted to approve the request.

## Texas Women Lawyers

Misty Ventura will attend the September 20, 2002 meeting in Dallas of Texas Women Lawyers and report on the meeting at the Section's next meeting.

## Council of Chairs of Sections of the State Bar

Misty Ventura attended the Council of Chairs' first meeting of the year recently. She said that perhaps the Section's legislative committee should be reactivated to review all the legislative materials from the State Bar.

Attendees voted not to sponsor a writing contest for law students.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Carolyn F. Moore  
Secretary

September 26, 2002

# AWARDS

This year's State Bar Annual Meeting in Dallas in June provided the backdrop for recognizing the extraordinary achievements of two extraordinary Texas women lawyers. Susan M. Horton and Justice Deborah G. Hankinson were the recipients of the Section's top honors.

The Women and Law Section honored Susan M. Horton with the Sarah T. Hughes Award, recognizing her many efforts in public service during the past twenty years. Ms. Horton has served as General Counsel and Deputy Executive Director with the Texas Municipal League since 1983. She currently serves of counsel for Bickerstaff, Heath, Smiley, Pollan, Keever and McDaniel, LLP.

The Sarah T. Hughes award recognizes the accomplishments of women who have achieved success in their own careers while paving the way for other women attorneys. Each year, Sarah T. Hughes recipients have excelled in the areas of serving their communities, furthering their profession, and advancing opportunities for women lawyers.

Ms. Horton has likewise succeeded in these areas and excelled in public service. While working for the Texas Municipal League, Ms. Horton's duties included managing the Legal and Legislative Departments, overseeing delivery of legal services, and developing legislative agendas. She has also served as a speaker and author on municipal law issues.

Last summer, Ms. Horton was honored by the Texas City Attorney Association Board of Directors, which presented her with a Star Stream Steuben award. This honor recognized her years of contributing to law within her community.

The Women and Law Section also recognized Supreme Court Justice Deborah G. Hankinson by awarding her the Ma'at Justice Award. Justice Hankinson serves as the Supreme Court's liaison to the Board of Law Examiners, the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation, and the Supreme Court Task Force for Gender Fairness. Additionally, she is the Vice-Chair of the Texas Access to Justice Commission and is on the Board of Directors of the Texas Center for the Judiciary and the National Association of Women Judges. In past years, Justice Hankinson has been honored for her efforts in coordinating efforts to provide legal services to the poor as well as being "Texas Judge of the Year."

The Women and Law Section's Ma'at Justice Award is a unique award, honoring individual attorneys or associations who have contributed to the advancement of justice in Texas. The award's name comes from the Egyptian goddess of justice, who symbolizes truth, order, righteousness, and the emergence of order out of chaos. Due to Justice Hankinson's commitment to supporting women in the legal profession and the community, she was honored with this year's award.



## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**FEBRUARY 22, 2003**  
**WAL Section Council Meeting**  
Texas Law Center, Room 208  
10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**MARCH 3-4, 2003 – AUSTIN**  
**Women's Legislative Days**  
WAL Representative: Immediate Past Chair Deborah L. Ingraham

**WAL CONFERENCE**  
**Tentatively Spring 2003**

**JUNE 12-14, 2003**  
**State Bar Annual Meeting**  
Houston



*Happy Holidays*  
*to all*  
*Section Members*



**STATE BAR OF TEXAS**  
**P.O. Box 12487**  
**Austin, Texas 78711-2487**

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