



AABA Newsletter

WWW.AABA-BAY.COM

FEBRUARY 2007

AABA thanks
the following
sustaining
members of
2007!

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Michael Begert
Edward Chen
David Chiu
Thomas C. Chow
Rosemary Fei
Samuel Feng
Kevin Fong
Emi Gusukuma
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Alan Ting
Garner Weng
Darryl Woo
Franklin Yap
Stanley Young



David Chiu, AABA President

A TIME TO CELEBRATE!

As February comes around, Asians and Asian Pacific Americans all over the world are ushering in the 2007 Lunar New Year. Whether you care about the Year of the Pig or the Tet Festival, it's a time for celebration. And AABA has a lot to celebrate this month as well, as we...

...CELEBRATE OUR NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP! Announcing the recent AABA election results: Congratulations to Marissa Tirona and Yu-Yee Wu for their re-election and to Reichi Lee to her first-time election to the AABA board. In the era of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, it is fitting that a majority of AABA's new board will be women.

...CELEBRATE OUR NEWEST CITY COMMISSIONER! On February 15th, our very own Yu-Yee Wu will be sworn in as San Francisco's newest Civil Service Commissioner by Mayor Gavin Newsom. This year, the number of AABA members who have been appointed as San Francisco city commissioners has more than doubled, as our members seek to serve our local communities.

...CELEBRATE OUR NEW CLINIC! In partnership with API Legal Outreach, we will be launching AABA's new San Francisco legal clinic at UC Hastings' Civil Justice Clinic this month. We hope that all AABA members will consider contributing some time and expertise to low-income residents who otherwise would not receive legal assistance.

...CELEBRATE AABA'S 30th ANNIVERSARY! All AABA members should shortly receive our invitation to our Anniversary celebration. In late 1976, a mix of "older guard" and younger activist APA attorneys founded AABA. Today, we have been told that we are the largest Asian bar association in the country, with the most advocacy, activities, and programs of any Asian bar. We hope that you, your firms and your organizations will join our very special birthday.

I hope all of you will be celebrating the Lunar New Year AND AABA in the coming weeks!

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AABA Installation Dinner

By Edwin Prather, AABA President-Elect

Our wonderful bar association, established in 1976, is the oldest and arguably largest local Asian American bar association in the nation. This year marks the completion of our 30th year and the hosting of our 30th Installation Banquet. What a tremendously proud moment for AABA, our members, our founders, and the entire Asian American legal community. To further recognize this achievement, we have re-introduced our original logo from 1976 with a modern update and will continue to use the "retro" logo through 2007.

But wait there's more . . .

On March 16, 2007, AABA will host its 30th Anniversary Celebration and Installation Banquet in San Francisco at Yank Sing in the Rincon Atrium.

While AABA is sad to go outside of our nostalgic and traditional Chinatown venue, we are very excited to celebrate our birthday with a grand celebration. The short program — themed "honoring our history" — will feature a short video history by award-winning producer Dianne Fukami. We will also pay tribute to "30 Years of AABA Presidents," recognizing the significant role that each has

played in the foundation and development of our bar association. Lastly, AABA will proudly honor Minami Tamaki LLP, a law firm instrumental in AABA's growth and still one of our biggest supporters.

AABA will also introduce our officers and board of directors for 2007-08, including:

Officers

President - Edwin K. Prather
 Vice President/President Elect - Celia W. Lee
 Treasurer - Garner Weng
 Secretary - Billy Chan

Board of Directors

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| S. Isabel Choi | Willie Nguyen | Marissa M. Tirona |
| Emi Gusukuma | Christine K. Noma | Yu-Yee Wu |
| Reichi Lee | Eugene M. Pak | Malcolm C. Yeung |

We promise a good time while we honor our history; no stuffy bar event. Axiom Legal will sponsor a surprise menu item in attempt to top itself from last year's messenger bag giveaway and the evening will be full of other surprises as well. Please join us as we celebrate 30 years. This event is not to be missed!! For information, please contact Lisa Herico at fyh@rjo.com or 415.956.2828.

"Sustainable Lawyering" Brings New Hope for Big Firm Lawyers

By Tony Paikeday, Co-Chair, Practice Development Committee

"Who says being a lawyer has to suck?"

– bold words about big firm law practice from the opening line of a January feature article in San Francisco Magazine. Maybe life at big firms is awful, but help is on the way! A few innovative firms in San Francisco are paving new career pathways for big firm refugees. Some are succeeding in combining big firm perks, including high compensation and sophisticated client work, with work-life balance which the big firms banished with the typewriter.

In 1958, the American Bar Association estimated that "there were only approximately 1,300 fee-earning hours per year". Hmm... are weekends, holidays, vacations, and bio-breaks non-billable? That's a tough question for many big firm associates in the Bay Area, who may get branded as "slackers" and fall off the partnership track if they can't hit 2000 billable hours. Attrition rates today at big firms are higher than ever recorded and, according to San Francisco Magazine's anecdotal reports, higher in the Bay Area than just about any place but New York. Why? A relentless focus on increasing "PPP" (profits per equity partner) continues to increase billable hour pressure and squeeze the life (or at least the few precious remaining hours of non-working, non-sleeping time) out of attorneys. A survey by the Bar Association of San Francisco last year found that the higher a firm's billable hours per attorney, the higher its associate attrition rate. And for those associates who finish and "win" the multiple year billable hour marathon, the new prize is "non-equity partner". At some firms, that can seem like a permanent tour as a senior associate. Depressing, huh? The good news is that the chronic suffering of big firm attorneys, as well as their sky-high hourly rates, are creating opportunity for a new breed of firms to emerge

Welcome to the dawn of "sustainable lawyering." In AABA's midst, there are at least a few examples of innovative firms which dare to be different while playing in the big leagues. **Silicon Counsel LLP** in San Francisco (www.siliconlaw.com), focuses on business transactions, representing Fortune 500 and emerging companies. By successfully implementing a low-overhead business model with no subsidy of "million dollar senior partners", its attorneys achieve excellent compensation levels without billable hour requirements or weekend work. The firm's attorneys share a belief that happier lawyers serve clients better — perhaps reflected in the Client Service Award the firm recently received from CMCP. **Charter Law Group LLP** in Menlo Park (www.charterlawgroup.com), represents a wide range of companies, with a focus on emerging company representation and Asia cross-border transactions. Like Silicon Counsel, the firm is thriving without compromising

work life balance for its attorneys.

Axiom Legal

(www.axiomlegal.com), an AABA sponsor, has taken the Bay Area by storm after first launching in New York, growing its new San Francisco office in ten months from zero to nearly seventy attorneys. Its unique business model embeds attorneys in the corporate legal departments of Fortune 1000 companies on a temporary basis, giving Axiom attorneys the flexibility to choose clients and projects and be compensated accordingly. The practices of these three firms aim to be sustainable for lawyers and corporate clients alike. By operating with overhead cost-efficiency, they offer billing rates much lower than large firm competitors. Each is looking for talented attorneys who would welcome freedom from billable hour requirements – see their web sites for more information. (Full disclosure: I'm the Managing Partner of Silicon Counsel, and the leaders of Charter Law Group and Axiom Legal are my friends).

In addition, solo and boutique practice have long been viable alternatives for big firm attorneys seeking better work-life balance. My fellow Co-Chairs on the AABA Practice Development Committee provide inspiring examples of successful practices which enable their founders to pay Bay Area home mortgages while achieving their career and life objectives. Alex Chiu opened a solo practice in San Francisco, **Law Offices of Alexis S.**

continue on page 7

. . . in the news Around Town



David Chiu,
Political Activist

In January, AABA President **David Chiu** was re-elected chair of the 13th Assembly District Committee of the California Democratic Party, representing the eastern half of San Francisco. In addition to his activities within the legal community, David has also served as a Small Business Commissioner for the City and County of San Francisco.



Dennis Chin and
Ted Ting at the
Alameda County
Bar Association
Installation Dinner
held at the
Claremont Resort
and Spa in
Berkeley

Also in January, AABA Judiciary/ Public Appointments Co-Chair **Ted T. Ting**, AABA Members **Dennis Chin** and **Wayne S. Nishioka** were sworn in as members of the Alameda County Bar Association Board of

Directors. They are three Asian Americans on the 14- member ACBA Board. Ted is a partner at the firm of Reed Smith in Oakland. Dennis is an associate at Sellar, Hazard, Manning, Ficenec and Lai in Concord. Wayne is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Richmond.



Former AABA board member **Elaine Chow** was recently elevated to partnership at Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Preston Gates & Ellis.

If you know of a fellow AABA member who is making or about to make the news around town for inclusion in the MARCH issue of this newsletter, submit an announcement and digital photo of the individual, if available, to the newsletter committee at Newsletter@aaba-bay.com on or before February 27th. We want to hear about your achievements and victories!

Corporate Leavers Research Initiative

Have you ever thought, "I'm outta here" after some experience in your workplace? Have you left a career in Corporate America or are you thinking about leaving? Level Playing Field Institute is interested in learning why people voluntarily leave corporate jobs, change jobs or change careers altogether. Get a story off your chest. Tell Corporate America about the potential it lost.

Corporate Leavers is a national study investigating the reasons people voluntarily leave their employers. The study focuses on the obstacles faced by all people, especially people of color, LGBT professionals, and women. The anonymous stories collected through this research and through a national quantitative study will be used to generate a web site and other media to address hidden barriers to fairness in the workplace, and also to provide tools to enable employers to create more inclusive work environments. Participants' identities, company names and any other information that could link your story to you will never be shared publicly.

Level Playing Field Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to revealing and removing barriers to fairness in education and workplaces. Its workplace programs focus on revealing hidden barriers to fairness at work and the cost and effect they have on both employees and employers. For more info, please visit www.lpfi.org.



THE ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION'S
CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE and
THE UC HASTINGS' ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN LAW
STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
Cordially invite you to a screening of
SENTENCED HOME

Sentenced Home is a documentary that follows the lives of three young Cambodian Americans as they face final orders of deportation. The film will be followed by a short panel discussion / Q & A. Panelists will include: **Nicole Newnham**, Co-director of Sentenced Home and **Avantika Shastri**, Immigration attorney at the Law Offices of Van Der Hout, Brigaglano & Nightingale

Date: Thursday, March 1, 2007
Time: 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Place: UC Hastings College of the Law
198 McAllister Street, Room A, S.F.

A light dinner will be served.

Please RSVP to Hongvilay Thongsamouth at mzhongvilay@yahoo.com

Hastings Civil Justice Clinic Teaching Fellowship

The Hastings Civil Justice Clinic seeks applications for a new two-year clinical teaching fellowship program. The fellowship is designed for lawyers with preferably at least five years of outstanding legal practice experience, who are interested in preparing for a career in law school clinical teaching. One fellow will be selected for a full-time position beginning June 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2009.

The Civil Justice Clinic consists of four different clinics with accompanying seminars. The permanent staff includes six full-time clinical faculty members. The clinical fellow's responsibility will be as a co-teacher and supervising attorney in the Individual Representation Clinic. In this one-semester clinic, which is offered each term, students act as lead counsel, under careful faculty supervision, to take cases start-to-finish from the planning of an initial client interview to their culmination in a trial, administrative hearing, or settlement. The Individual Representation Clinic practices in three different subject fields: wage & hour law, social security disability law, and San Francisco rent control law. The other clinics within the Civil Justice Clinic are the Group Advocacy and Systemic Reform Clinic, the Community Economic Development Clinic, and the Mediation Clinic. The Hastings Civil Justice Clinic is widely respected for its high quality representation of clients and its pedagogy, which closely integrates hands-on legal practice experiences and extensive readings, written assignments, and classroom discussions on legal skills development and professional role conceptions.

Hastings College of the Law is part of the University of California. It has a large and vibrant clinical education program that takes advantage of its location in San Francisco's Civic Center and abutting the Tenderloin, a diverse, low-income neighborhood. In addition to the Civil Justice Clinic, Hastings has a separate in-house Refugee and Human Rights Clinic; out-placement clinics in Criminal Practice, Environmental Law, Immigrants' Rights, Local Government Law, Workers' Rights, and State Legislation; an extensive judicial externship program; and a large number of simulation skills courses in negotiation, mediation,

roles and ethics, problem solving and professional judgment, contract drafting, trial advocacy, trial objections, and appellate advocacy. Altogether 19 members of Hastings full-time faculty and numerous adjuncts teach real-client clinics or simulation-based clinical courses.

Fellowship requirements: At least five years of legal experience in client counseling, advocacy, and litigation, as well as experience in or aptitude for supervising and teaching law students (or, if less than five years lawyering experience, exceptional training and experience in supervising or teaching students or other colleagues); California Bar admission; strong written and oral skills; considerable initiative; a collegial disposition; and a demonstrated commitment to public interest or pro bono lawyering.

Fellowship salary and benefits: Salary range of \$50,000 to \$60,000 annually depending on experience; excellent University of California medical, vacation, and other fringe benefits; and full access to all law school facilities.

Application procedure and materials: Please send to Professor Mark Aaronson, the Director of the Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, a cover letter describing your prior legal, teaching, and other relevant experience; your aspirations regarding clinical teaching; and any other information relevant for assessing your potential as a clinical teacher and supervising attorney. In addition, you must include a detailed resume and a sample of your advocacy writing of up to 10 pages.

The deadline for submitting applications is February 28, 2007. The address for hard copies is Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, 100 McAllister St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94102. Electronic copies should be sent c/o Karen Amaya at <amayak@uchastings.edu> with "CJC Clinical Teaching Fellowship" on the subject line.

UC Hastings is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified persons including people of color, women, individuals with disabilities, and LGBTQ persons are encouraged to apply. The Hastings Civil Justice Clinic is committed to diversity in the workplace.

Upcoming Calendar of Events

February

FBANC Annual Evening with Fil-Am Attorneys: Speed Mentoring, Wednesday, **February 21, 6 pm**, Hanson Bridgett Marcus Vlahos & Rudy LLP, San Francisco. Please RSVP to rhean@fajardolawoffice.com

AABA Partner Luncheon, **February 15, 12-2pm**. Contact Chris Noma at Cnoma@wendel.com if you are a law firm partner

National South Asian Law Students Association conference and South Asian Bar Association of Northern

California Annual Dinner, **February 17**. Visit www.nsalsa.org and www.southasianbar.org

AABA Launch of New Clinic at Hastings, **February 28** (see newsletter article)

March

AABA Civil Rights Committee film screening, **March 1** (see newsletter article)

AABA 30th Annual Dinner, **March 16**, 6 pm. Yank Sing Restaurant, Rincon Center Atrium, San Francisco



PROMOTING JUSTICE SINCE 1877

January 31, 2007

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Judicial Appointments Secretary

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

Recently, your Appointments Secretary, Mr. Timothy Simon, was the featured guest speaker at the Alameda County Bar Association's (ACBA) Annual Installation dinner. The ACBA was honored that Mr. Simon was able to join us. At the dinner, Mr. Simon announced that Mr. John Davies was resigning as your judicial appointments secretary. On behalf of the East Bay Diversity Bar Coalition (EBDBC), a committee of the ACBA, we are writing to urge you to consider the appointment of a successor who will embrace the diversity of the State's legal profession and strive to create a judiciary that will be truly reflective of the people of the State of California.

Over the last year, much has been written and said about the obvious lack of diversity among recent appointees to the California judiciary. You have this opportunity to select a judicial appointments secretary who will outreach to the many, many lawyers in California who reflect the unique diversity of the State. The EBDBC members include representatives from the diversity bar associations with members in the East Bay and as such, we are aware of many minority applicants who have stellar and outstanding qualifications to serve on the bench. The fact that there are not a hundred such applicants is irrelevant. The only relevant question is—Are there exceptional minority lawyers who have applied for a judicial appointment? And to that, we answer, resoundingly, "YES."

The Judges of this State must herald from many backgrounds and reflect all of the races, ethnicities, cultures and life experiences that make California a "GREAT STATE." The EBDBC and the ACBA urge you to select a judicial appointments secretary that will work tirelessly to fulfill that mandate.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Hicks
2007 President, ACBA Board

Christine Noma
2007 Co-Chair, EBDBC

ACBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2007-2008 MEMBERSHIP

ALAMEDA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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Looking for Board Members for the nation's oldest APA arts and social justice organization!

The Kearny Street Workshop (KSW), the nation's oldest Asian Pacific American multi-disciplinary arts organization, is recruiting Board members! From its founding in 1972 on the battleground of the International Hotel to its current home in the Mission District of San Francisco, KSW is dedicated to using art to express political activism and community identity. KSW produces and presents a wide range of programs throughout the year, including a series of writing workshops led by prominent APA literary figures; visual exhibitions, concerts, and publications; and the annual APAture festival, which features dozens of young and emerging APA artists, performers, and musicians. In 2007, we're looking forward to kicking off a series of exciting programs to celebrate our 35th anniversary.

The Board is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction of the organization and its staff, fundraising, community outreach, and assisting the staff in planning events. Board members get to know the organization intimately—it's a great way to volunteer your time and skills for KSW and to become involved in San Francisco's growing APA arts community. The KSW Board meets on a monthly basis. For more information, please visit our website (www.kearnystreet.org) and contact the Board Co-Chair, Marilyn Yu-Li (plutoniumclothing@gmail.com).

Call for Volunteers: Opening of AABA-API Legal Outreach's New Clinic at Hastings!

By Dorothy S. Liu, Co-Chair of the Community Services Committee

The Community Services Committee is pleased to announce its partnership with API Legal Outreach in the opening of AABA's new San Francisco legal clinic. The new clinic will open on Tuesday, February 27, 2007 and will be located at UC Hastings' Civil Justice Clinic on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The Committee extends a special thanks to Eumi Lee and Victor Hwang for making this endeavor possible. AABA needs you! We are looking for attorneys to participate in this worthwhile clinic, which will provide much needed assistance to low-income residents in the San Francisco area. Training will be provided on topics ranging from employment and immigration to housing and public benefits. Your expertise and language skills are in high demand (in particular, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese). If you would like to volunteer for one of the monthly clinics, please email CSC co-chairs Dorothy Liu (dliu@hansonbriddgett.com), Jason Lee (Jason.E.Lee@fds.com), and Ruth Ann Castro (RCastro@fbm.com), and indicate your area of expertise and any language skills. We look forward to working with you.

Opportunities Through the BASF Law Academy Mentoring Program

The Law Academy Mentoring Program offers attorneys and professionals in the legal community the opportunity to mentor high school students attending Balboa and Mission High Schools. Mentors are an integral part of the students' education in resume writing, public speaking, interview training, working in a professional environment, and general legal principles. The program culminates with the students interviewing for summer jobs in law offices in the San Francisco vicinity.

Mentors meet with students on a weekly basis at one of the high schools for one class period. The classes at Balboa will start on Wednesday, February 21st. There are two class periods at Balboa, one at 8:15 a.m. and the other at 9:45 a.m. Classes at Mission start on Tuesday, February 13 and the one class period starts at 2:08 p.m. The program at both schools runs for eight weeks. Each class is an hour long, so combined with travel time; the commitment is approximately two hours per week.

An orientation meeting will be held on Thursday, February 8th from 5:30 - 7 p.m. at Shartsis Friese LLP, One Maritime

Plaza, 18th Floor (at the corner of Clay and Front), Tel. (415) 421-6500. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Monetary donations can also be made to the Law Academy. For more information, see <https://www.sfbar.org/foundation/donate.aspx>

To learn more about the program, visit the BASF website: http://www.sfbar.org/barristers/committees_lawacademy.aspx

AABA SCHOLARSHIPS - Deadline: Feb, 9, 2007

The Asian American Bar Association (AABA) is now accepting applications for scholarships awarded to Asian American law students who are committed to advocating and improving their communities.

The AABA Law Foundation is a nonprofit entity dedicated to serving the community and law students through its annual Law Foundation Scholarship awards. This upcoming year, the Foundation is offering the Raymond L. Ocampo Jr. President's Scholarship, the Joe Morizumi Scholarship, and the AABA Law Foundation Scholarships.

Please check www.aaba-bay.com for 2007 AABA Law Foundation Scholarship information and application materials. The deadline to submit applications is February 9, 2007 by email to Annette K. Mathai-Jackson at: amathai-jackson@hansonbridgett.com. Interviews will be held on February 24, 2007 and scholarships will be awarded at the AABA Installation dinner in March 2007.

SUSTAINABLE LAWYERING *continued from page 2*

M. Chiu, four years ago after working at Holland & Knight LLP and other large firms. He focuses on public finance, real estate, and general corporate work. Wesley Lowe founded a firm in San Francisco, **Mannion & Lowe**, ten years ago after working at a large litigation firm. Wes focuses on representation of plaintiffs in insurance bad faith and coverage litigation and other consumer actions. Richard Tamor founded a firm in Oakland, **Tamor & Tamor**, eight years ago after working at Sideman & Bancroft LLP. Richard focuses on criminal defense and handles some civil litigation.

As you can now see, there is hope after all for corporate lawyers at big firms who aren't ready to defer full enjoyment of life in the Bay Area until they retire or abandon our profession. Sustainable lawyering has arrived. It's gaining momentum and changing the lives of the lawyers who are part of it. Maybe 2007 is the right year for you to join the converted?



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Business addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and biographies of all Officers and Directors are available online at the AABA Website: www.aaba-bay.com

Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area

P.O. Box 190517
San Francisco, CA 94119-0517
www.aaba-bay.com