

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a relaxing holiday season. The holidays are so important because they give us time to rest and recharge our batteries after a long year. Like a lot of people, I look to January as a time to hit the ground running with hard work. The Washtenaw County Bar Association had a great year and there is much to look forward to in the new year.

The Bar hosted our Annual Holiday Party at a new venue: Live nightclub in downtown Ann Arbor. It was a major success! We had over 75 members sign up for the event. It was great to see so many people having a great time at one of our long-standing Bar traditions.

Washtenaw County welcomes two new judges to the bench. The Honorable Arianne Slay will take the Honorable Archie Brown's seat in the Trial Court. The Honorable Karl Barr will preside over the Honorable Kirk Tabbey's seat in the 14A-2 District Court. We recognize Judge Brown's and Judge Tabbey's decades of service to Washtenaw County and the justice system and wish them the very best in retirement.

A couple of Bar announcements for the upcoming months. The Bar will host a Courts' Update on January 26th (via Zoom). We anticipate changes in how courts are doing business in this new year. It is anticipated that we will see more of a return to in-person court. This forum will present important information for anyone who frequently attends court in Washtenaw County. You are encouraged to attend.

Mark your calendars for the return of Trivia Night on February 9th. This much-beloved Bar event was put on hold during the pandemic, and we are very excited to once again host this event at the Zal Gaz Grotto. Come out to compete with your fellow lawyers.

A new year always holds the possibility of change. And this new year seems to have a lot of changes coming. With Zoom court, lawyers saw their workflows increase. We could appear more frequently in court without the need for adjournments. I just think about the days I Zoomed to three counties a morning. My ability to resolve cases was much faster because I spent more time on client matters and less time driving and sitting in court. At the same time, I sometimes felt stuck in overdrive with such a fast pace of workflow.

With the return to in-person court, I'm wondering if we will see our workflow slow down. The speed of work now doesn't seem possible with a return of in-person court. I would expect that cases will move slower, as they did before we had Zoom court.

So while I start the new year with the hopes of hitting the ground running, perhaps it will mean something different than the past couple years. I will be mindful that the same level of workflow may not come back. Maybe the slowdown will ultimately be a positive for lawyers. I wish everyone a healthy and productive New Year.

Happy New Year,

Sam Bernstein