

Passing the Baton

THIS SUMMER IN Beijing, the U.S. men's and the women's teams for the 400-meter relay races dropped the baton. Despite years of training by tremendously gifted and dedicated athletes, both teams went home without even reaching the finals because of a missed transition. Unfortunately, like many transitions, the passing of the baton is more notable in its failure than in its performance: What gets noticed is when the baton is dropped, not when it is passed smoothly.

Our goal for *The Federal Lawyer* is to make the transition from one year's editorial board to the next year's board as seamless as possible. That means this upcoming year is a challenge, because we have some very large shoes to fill, with Judge Craig Gargotta stepping down from position as editor in chief of the magazine. On behalf of the board, I want to extend a very warm thank you to Judge Gargotta for his compassionate leadership of the editorial board and for the many years of service he has extended and continues to devote to the Federal Bar Association. We look forward to his valued participation for many years to come.

The Federal Lawyer is also privileged to enjoy another year of service from several members of the magazine's editorial board, including, Kelle Acock, Nathan Brooks, Julie China, Henry Cohen, Thomas Donovan, Ray Dowd, Kim Koratsky, David Lender, Jeffrey McDermott, Michael Newman, Jonathan Redgrave, Becky Thorson, Michael Tonsing, Vern Winters, and welcomes new members including Juanita Sales Lee, current president of the FBA, R. Johan Conrad Jr., Héctor Ramos, and Daniel Winslow. This team works together with the managing editor, Stacy King, to provide relevant, timely, and insightful material for each issue.

After two U.S. Olympic teams dropped or bobbed the baton in this year's Olympic games, Doug Logan, the chief executive officer of the USA Track & Field Federation, said the organization would conduct a "comprehensive review" of the way it trains and coaches its teams. Whether the baton is passed, bobbed, or dropped, transitions are always a good opportunity to review, critique, and plan for the next stage. For example, in this 2008 presiden-

tial election year, both presidential candidates have been preparing their transition teams for months—despite the fact that the polls will not open for several weeks yet. Transitions are so important that Congress has legislated the process: the Presidential Transition Act of 1963, as amended, establishes the incoming President's transition team as a federal entity to provide for the orderly transfer of power between administrations:

The national interest requires that such transitions in the office of President be accomplished so as to assure continuity in the faithful execution of the laws and in the conduct of the affairs of the Federal Government, both domestic and foreign. Any disruption occasioned by the transfer of the executive power could produce results detrimental to the safety and well-being of the United States and its people. Accordingly, it is the intent of the Congress that appropriate actions be authorized and taken to avoid or minimize any disruption. See 3 U.S.C. § 102 notes.

The Federal Lawyer is neither an Olympic team nor a presidential hopeful, but as the magazine finishes one lap and begins the next, we want to take this opportunity to review where we've been, where we want to go, and how we're going to get there. *The Federal Lawyer* has a history of remarkable runs.

Where Have We Been?

The Federal Lawyer, in its current format, has been published since 1995 and is the only professional magazine dedicated solely to the interests of the federal legal practitioner. (*Federal Bar News & Journal*, *Federal Bar News*, and *Federal Bar Journal*, TFL's predecessors were first published in 1981, 1953, and 1931, respectively.) *The Federal Lawyer* has covered topics from civil procedure and rule changes to closing arguments, from e-discovery to computer forensics, from military commissions to sentencing for terrorism, and from corporate fraud to Medicare. Contributions by more than 1,000 authors have been published in the magazine, and more than 500 books have been reviewed in its pages. *The Federal Lawyer* is delivered 10 times a year to every FBA member and to more than 1,300 Article I and Article III judges.

For the last two years, the magazine has partnered with the Legal Information Institute at Cornell Law School to bring readers previews of upcoming arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court. Regular columns that appear in the magazine include “Washington Watch” by Bruce Moyer, “The Federal Lawyer in Cyberia” by Michael Tonsing, “Labor and Employment Corner” by Michael Newman and Faith Isenhath, and “Language for Lawyers” by Gertrude Block.

Where Do We Want To Go?

First and foremost, we want to continue the trajectory established already: to be the foremost publication that prints quality articles, information, and commentaries tailored to the needs and interests of the federal practitioner. But as with all good things, there is always room for improvement. Some of the goals for the next year include—

- creation of an online database of the profiles of federal judges, so that federal practitioners can search and review profiles of hundreds of sitting federal judges;
- expansion of the “Chapter Exchange” section, so that chapters will have event information that would allow them to replicate other chapters’ successful events;
- continued focus on theme issues, so that we can bring relevant, timely matters to the attention of federal practitioners;
- increase in funding for the magazine through advertisers and sponsors; and
- greater diversity in the subject of the articles and the authors published in the magazine.

How Do We Get There?

In addition to the continuity provided by a great editorial board, we will succeed in this next lap of the race by involving more authors, more chapters, and more FBA leaders. *The Federal Lawyer* should be the national showcase for the best contributions by the best authors in individual chapters as well as a compilation of original articles submitted solely for this unique federal forum. We will be reaching out to the editorial boards of chapter newsletters to offer local authors a national forum for appropriate material. We also will be soliciting original material from new and varied sources—from administrative agencies to federal officers, private practitioners, and law school professors and students. Perhaps most important, we want to be responsive to the requests and needs of federal legal practitioners and the readership of *The Federal Lawyer*. What do you want to see in your association’s magazine next month or next year? As a reader of *The Federal Lawyer*, you have a voice in its direction, and we welcome your comments and suggestions. Send in a letter to the editor, submit an article or a commentary, or suggest

a theme issue for 2009.

Thank you for your dedication to the Federal Bar Association and for reading *The Federal Lawyer*. We look forward to running a good race with you! **TFL**

René Harrod serves as editor in chief of The Federal Lawyer and a member of the FBA Board of Directors, and president of the Broward County Chapter. She is a shareholder on the Dispute Resolution team of Berger Singerman in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Editorial Policy


The Federal Lawyer is the magazine of the Federal Bar Association. It serves the needs of the association and its members, as well as those of the legal profession as a whole and the public.

The Federal Lawyer is edited by members of its editorial board, who are all members of the Federal Bar Association. Editorial and publication decisions are based on the board’s judgment.

The views expressed in *The Federal Lawyer* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the association or of the editorial board. Articles and letters to the editor in response are welcome.

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