

MSBA



# Judicial Administration Section Newsletter

John A. Bourgeois, Chairman  
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David C. Chiu, Editor  
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## *Discover JAS!*

### JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

**Results of the member survey** are here! Incoming Chairman John Bourgeois and Vice Chair Judge Lynne Battaglia spent the end of summer contacting many of you to discover what you thought of the Section.

Last year's award winning *Discovery Disputes Forums* were well received, and you expressed a desire to experience more public contact with the bench. Members wanted **more opportunities to meet with judges, lawyers, clerks, and court staff** to explain disparities in various jurisdictions.

There was a request for the revival of an **annual review of Court of Appeals decisions**, which could be

done by a panel of judges and practitioners.

Many expressed a desire for an examination into the **civility and professionalism of the judiciary**. According to Vice Chair Judge Battaglia, the **Professionalism Task Force** also heard this theme expressed repeatedly. Some desired **evaluations of judges**.

There was a request for **annual Section-wide meetings**.

Sincere thanks to all who so graciously gave of their time in sharing their thoughts, ideas and suggestions in the survey!



### **2004/2005 COUNCIL PROJECTS**

Several topics were discussed at this year's first Council meeting that could merit the Section's attention.

Judge Alpert made a dramatic presentation demonstrating the **severely overcrowded dockets in Baltimore City** by unfolding the trial docket sheets for a single day in Special

Felony Drug Court, which included approximately thirty cases *set for trial* in one day.

Philadelphia has thirty-two felony criminal courts compared to

Baltimore City's fourteen, for an equivalent caseload.

After numerous factors were discussed that affect this rapidly growing problem, it was suggested that examining the effects of drug addiction and its criminal prosecutions on the judicial administration of Baltimore's overloaded dockets might be an appropriate project for this year's Council.

It was also suggested that the Judicial Administrative Council might undertake revising the **Trial Judges' Benchbook**.

The federal bench in New York has chambers manuals for each judge.

Superior Court judges in the District of Columbia give lawyers packets explaining their individual procedures and expectations.

Judge Alpert reported that a large committee is working on this, chaired by Baltimore County's Judge Cox.

Finally, a **statewide study of mandatory versus non-mandatory mediation** was suggested.

The Council always welcomes any and all suggestions and ideas on projects you would like to see!

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### **GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY OF THE COUNCIL**

The Honorable William Missouri of Prince George's County has pointed out a lack of geographical diversity on the JAS Council.

He notes that just over half of the JAS Council's members are from Baltimore County or City.

Judge Missouri suggested that perhaps more Council members should be invited from the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland.

Judge Missouri's concerns are valid, and the Council unquestionably needs greater geographic diversity.

The Council is nevertheless extremely proud of the diversity that has been accomplished in the Council's membership, both gender and racial, with attorneys from both civil and criminal, State and defense, as well as members from every single branch of the judiciary in Maryland.

A concern in the past has always been that centrally located Council meetings would make it difficult for judges from the Eastern Shore or Western Maryland to participate.

In an attempt to address this problem, the Council is endeavoring to rotate the location of its meetings, holding its second meeting of the new term, for example, in Columbia, MD.

In an attempt to encourage geographical diversity, it was also suggested that the Council include the administrative judges, court administrators and clerks from various jurisdictions throughout Maryland.

### **MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR**

*Many thanks to those survey respondents who expressed appreciation for the Newsletter! We tried to make this year's first issue both informative and interactive where we could solicit input on suggested projects as well as inquire about Section Interest in things like section-wide meetings or participating in the revival of an annual review of Court of Appeals decisions. If anyone wishes to contribute articles, I would love to type by-lines with other section members' names in future issues! --David C. Chlu, Editor*