

## CBA Nova Scotia - Law Week Year End Report 2011

The 2011 Law Week Committee of CBA-NS set three goals for itself this year; to plan earlier, engage more regions in Nova Scotia, and expand community and bar engagement in Law Week activities.

Planning began in June, monthly meetings started in the fall and a tentative schedule was mapped out by the end of 2010. The theme, *Citizenship – Here for Good*, was selected to focus Law Week activities on how our legal processes protect and enforce of the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship. The theme and Law Week activities were highlighted in a one page province wide newspaper insert, made possible by the participation of law firms throughout the Province.

With this theme in mind, the Law Week Committee, led by committee member Lena Diab, hosted its first citizenship ceremony on April 14th. The event, attended by Nova Scotia Chief Justice Michael MacDonald and CBA National President Rod Snow, bestowed 40 new Canadians with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The pride and enthusiasm that these individuals and their families was evident throughout the ceremony and reception, and served as a perfect reminder of the value of citizenship. Mr. Snow also participated in a number of other events throughout Nova Scotia during Law Week.

Recognizing that it is never too early to educate about citizenship, the Law Week Committee continued its partnership with the Cub Scout organization and expanded this partnership to include the Girl Guides. Lawyers volunteered and organized with Girl Guide Groups throughout the Province to provide education and a mock trial based on the three little pigs, including in Digby, Halifax, Coldbrook and Port Hawkesbury. High school law classes were also treated to presentations in by local lawyers on various topics, provided in both official languages. Led by Law Week Co-Chair Dan MacRury, Q.C., CBA members also held a mock trial at Glace Bay High School.

Law Week culminated with Law Day which was held on April 16, 2011 at the historic Provincial Courthouse in Halifax. Over a hundred children and citizens came out for the opportunity to learn about citizenship and legal processes. The Committee is indebted to his honour, Judge Castor Williams, who acted as the Honourary Chair for Law Day. The Law Day award was presented to the Voice of Youth in Care Newsletter Project which offers youth who are in care increased knowledge about legal processes, but also the chance to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and speech to question those processes in a positive and affirming way.

Law Day also included the largest number of law day exhibitors to date. The sheriffs went above and beyond the call of duty in assisting with setup and did a wonderful job of cell and vehicle tours. The military police offered a haven from the snow (yes snow) in their tent where a mock military summary proceeding was held. Designed to be used during active duty, this abbreviated summary process was viewed with great interest by attendees. It also served as a contrast to the criminal law procedures that were displayed through a mock criminal docket. “Murder, mayhem and the presumption of innocence” allowed members of the public to play an accused. Various scenarios were played out, including pleas, requests for jury hearings, consultation with duty counsel and bench warrants for those who did not appear. Prepared and organized by Crown attorney, Susan MacKay, the volunteer participation of crown and legal aid counsel made the mock docket enjoyable and educational.

The mock docket also tied into the afternoon's festivities which included a reading and Q&A session with Halifax lawyer and author, Pamela Callow. Ms. Callow's reading from her book, *Indefensible*, was held in the courtroom that was the setting for that scene. The alleged murderer from the book was arraigned during the mock docket.

The Law Week Committee was also excited this year to expand its association with other groups in the legal community including Nova Scotia Legal Aid and L'Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse which hosted its Law Day activities on April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Provincial Courthouse as well.

With more activities, in two languages, in more than 7 areas of the province, and greater engagement from the community and legal groups than ever before, the Law Week Committee met its goals. But plans are already starting to make next year's Law Week even better!

Submitted by  
Carrie Ricker  
CBA-NS, Law Day Co-Chair  
[Carrie.ricker@cdha.nshealth.ca](mailto:Carrie.ricker@cdha.nshealth.ca)