



REFEREES ASSOCIATION

O F M I C H I G A N

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2005-2006 RAM Annual Report

The year 2005 – 2006 has been a wonderful year for the Referees' Association of Michigan. Many long-term projects reached fruition, and the year was capped with an unusually successful conference. All along the way there seemed to be a certain serendipity to our accomplishments. Most of our good fortune is directly due to the good work of the RAM executive board. They did a wonderful job and had a good time working together.

Perhaps the most notable accomplishment was the creation of our guest author series in our newly established *Referees' Quarterly*. Dignitaries across Michigan drafted articles for our publication, including submissions from: Governor Jennifer Granholm, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chief Justice Cliff Taylor, Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, U.S. Congressman Dave Camp and State Bar President Nancy Diehl. There were many other submissions, but the above list illustrates the caliber and policy-making power of our authors. In the summer of 2006, the *Quarterly* will be published as an annual periodical, and copies will be donated to various law libraries throughout the state as well as the Library of Congress.

Another less tangible accomplishment in 2005 – 2006 was the maturation of our web site, www.referees-association.org. The site went live on St Patrick Day 2005. In its first twelve months it received over 5,200 hits. Now, a year after its creation, our referee cyber community has reached critical mass, and referees from across the state routinely use the listserv to communicate with fellow referees, and view the bulletin board for current information. Postings include, for the first time, conference handouts and the speakers' power point presentations.

2005 – 2006 witnessed two moments of which all RAM members can be proud. In September 2005, RAM's executive board voted unanimously to donate \$500 to the American Red Cross in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. The sum of \$500 is a significant donation for our small non-profit

organization. But more to the point, it represents RAM's *first* such donation in our organization's history.

A second proud moment was announced in the spring 2006 edition of Wayne State University Law School's alumni magazine. Melissa Gollob became the first recipient of RAM's Philip Ingraham Memorial Scholarship. Ms. Gollob won the scholarship after having received the book award in an introductory family law class.

Another successful project in 2005 – 2006 was public relations. Ram received much positive publicity in dozens of newspapers and magazines. An aggressive PR campaign has boosted our image, and helped make RAM a known organization. (Please forward any RAM newspaper/magazine clippings you see to the PR chairperson for posting in our "news" section of our web site. We only post what we receive.)

The good work and great team chemistry of our executive board in 2005 – 2006 manifested in a highly successful, and just plain fun, 2006 conference. We had our highest turnout in years (54 referees) and the location (the Perry Hotel in Petoskey) and weather (sunny and low 80s) couldn't have been more agreeable. We even hit the peak of the lilacs. Mark Sherbow did his usual banner job in securing excellent speakers. New conference chair Helen Hartford did a spectacular job with the details of the conference (meals, registration, gifts, etc.). Art Spears continued his fine tradition of conference hospitality as well as a golf scramble, this time in Harbor Springs. Finally, president-elect Kathy Oemke did a wonderful job with her awards ceremony and by recognizing referees for their years of service with anniversary certificates.

Though the official tally will not be known for some time, RAM treasurer-extraordinaire Paul Jacokes predicts that we made money on this conference due in part to our high attendance. It will be the first time in a few years that we have made a profit. RAM membership chair, Erin Magley, had some influence on this year's attendance as she continues her good work and recruitment effort.

The only potential negative of the year 2006, the SCAO "Beatty memo", turned out to be a huge positive. RAM now has strong dialogue with Dan Wright, the Director of the FOC Bureau. Now we hope to work in partnership as a referee division at SCAO is contemplated, and as we face massive budget cuts in October 2007. Our friendship with Dan is an alliance made just in time. And the Beatty memo? It may never be published.

My last act as president is drafting this annual report. I'd like to conclude by expressing my heartfelt thanks to RAM's executive board for all their great work. I'd also like to express my gratitude to Nancy Thane for her willingness to step up and fill the vacant recording secretary position (previously held by Jean Dohynos). And my

biggest thanks goes to our three retiring past presidents – Jon Ferrier, Deb McNabb and Mark Sherbow. Thank you for your forty+ years of service to our organization!

All referees should consider joining the board, or at least attending board meetings. You'll get as much out of the organization as you put into it. I can honestly say that RAM 2005 – 2006 has been the most professional board I've ever had the pleasure of working with. Good work was done, friendships were made. Can one ask for any more?

Ken Randall
RAM President

June 27, 2006