

## As Time Goes By – What Makes the NYIPLA So Special?

A quarter century ago, the Hon. Robert W. Sweet answered that question thusly: “It is rather paradoxical that in this most modern area of the law, this organization fosters the spirit, the camaraderie and the fellowship of a simpler day when lawyers rode the circuit, knew and trusted each other. Because you strengthen each other and your own branch of the profession, you strengthen all of us in the justice system.”<sup>1</sup>

The NYIPLA’s success in fostering a kindred spirit among its members has taken different forms over the years, ranging from dinner dances and golf outings to CLE programs in the form of weekend get-aways, full- and half-day programs, and luncheon seminars. The timeless Judges Dinner continues to afford us the opportunity to share the kindred spirit with others, including family, friends and, needless to say, judges.

The NYIPLA’s efforts to help its members strengthen each other professionally by means of continuing legal education dates back to a time long before mandatory CLE became the order of the day. Indeed, from its founding the NYIPLA has served as a platform, an academe if you will, for educating members and the public alike in all things IP.

Through its seminars, the NYIPLA affords its members the opportunity to prepare papers and have them published, as well as the opportunity to speak before fellow members and non-members on developments in IP law. Public speaking skills and writing skills honed through NYIPLA programs serve to catalyze leadership roles for many of our members, both within the Association and within local, national, and other regional IP law associations.

We now live in an era when tweeting and instant messaging are the order of the day. Whether we’re at the dinner table at home or in a booth in a fancy

restaurant, cell phones are conspicuously competing with fellow diners in demanding the attention of their owners. It seems that we’ve become slaves to our machines.

Query: Is there a place for face-to-face connectedness in our lives today? If so, one may wonder how our Association can continue to foster this connectedness so that our members can continue to appreciate and love the Association for the kindred spirit it engenders, rather than merely “like” it with the click of a button on their computer. I believe that the answer is “yes,” and that it is our active members who are the key to maintaining professional growth and collegiality within our Association for the simple reason that it is the active members who exemplify the spirit of the organization.

Judge Sweet’s kind words about the NYIPLA continue to ring true today. Our members strengthen each other and the IP profession as a whole through the vehicle of our Association. However, this can only be accomplished by active participation of the members in Association activities.

The NYIPLA continues to provide a fine forum for in-person gatherings, whether for CLE, networking, or Committee meetings. There is no doubt that face-to-face interactions are still the best way to ensure that we get to know and trust our fellow colleagues in the IP profession.

As NYIPLA President Tom Meloro launches the 2012-13 Association year, I encourage each of you to actively participate in our Association’s Committee activities and CLE programs. Such participation is its own reward, and often provides a stepping-stone to leadership positions within and outside of the Association. There is also the satisfaction of knowing that you can help preserve the kindred spirit of the Association’s founding for the foreseeable future. After all, that’s what makes the NYIPLA so special.

With kind regards,  
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*Dale Carlson, a partner at Wiggin and Dana, is NYIPLA Historian and its Immediate Past President.*

### (Endnote)

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from an after-dinner speech at the NYIPLA’s 1988 Annual Meeting; see July/August 1988 *NYPTC Bulletin*, volume 28, number 6, page 4. ■