

As Time Goes By - Imagine This!

by Dale Carlson

Imagine this: you are sitting in on a luncheon keynote presentation by Federal Circuit Judge Pauline Newman while looking out a window of the massive conference room. You see another court, this one a tennis court, circumscribed by a golf course.

Judge Newman is giving a compelling presentation on the history of her Court. She focuses on the Court's first two years of existence. Realizing that she's talking about two YEARS, rather than DECADES, you awake from your daydream to the possibility that you are slipping through a Rip-van-Winkleian, multi-decade time warp. Where's the DeLorean when you need it?

On the Orwellian calendar, what time is more fitting than 1984, specifically Veterans' day weekend 1984. The place is Arrowood Conference Center in Westchester County. After lunch, you will join family and friends, and colleagues in the profession, for a game of tennis on the court that you overlook. Tennis will be followed by dinner, drinks and dancing in Arrowood's Grand Ballroom.

Too good to be true, you say? Just a dream... might be a dream, must be only make-believe. Perhaps, but consider this: long before it was fashionable, much less mandatory, our Association played an instrumental and vital role in the continuing education of its members. A key focal point for this education was, and continues to be, the Fall CLE seminars. Although today the Fall seminars typically take place during the course of a single day in one of Manhattan's university clubs, things weren't always so.

Prior to the New York bar's mandating CLE, the organizers of our Fall seminar had to stretch their imaginations to find ways to entice the members to attend. A popular enticement was location, location, location. Various "hot-spots" included the Poconos



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(e.g., "Skytop Lodge"), the Catskills (e.g., "Neville Grande" and "Mohonk Mountain House"), Connecticut (e.g., "Heritage Village Conference Center"), and Westchester (e.g., "Tarrytown House" and, as we dreamed, "Arrowood").

One particularly imaginative former President of our Association, Karl Jorda had visions of an event in Bermuda, or in the Caribbean Islands. Cost was invariably the show-stopper for the islands - typically running twice that of a local event reachable by car or train.

The echoes of the Veterans' weekend gatherings left an indelible imprint on the brains and psyches of those in attendance. The seminars invariably provided a primer on the law in a stimulating environment away from the maddening crowds. The opportunity to meet, greet, and get to know fellow members of our Association, and their spouses or significant others, as well as the tag-along tots and teens, was uniquely memorable.

Locations like the rec room at Skytop provided a perfect vehicle for getting to know one-another over a game of billiards or ping pong. Hiking up the trails at Mohonk past the "humpty dumpty" rock formations, and the signage urging "slowly and quietly please" that echoed the resort's Quaker origins, allowed time for reflection on the strengths of our Association and the substance of its people. "Tea time" brought everyone together, with the common bond being stomachs aching for "home-made" cookies.

The academic content of the Fall seminars was, and continues to be, detail-oriented, with plenty of time allotted for discussion and lively debate among the attendees. Spouses and significant others in attendance were encouraged to "drop in" to see what was going on in the IP field.

The depth of the Fall seminars stands to this day in sharp contrast to the "broad strokes" picture painted by our Association's Spring joint patent practice seminar. When Past Presidents Ed Filardi and David Kane dreamed up the idea of the Spring seminar, the by-words "short and sweet" must have been foremost on their minds. In the first Spring seminar, the speakers were allotted only five minutes each to present their talk. Now, ten minutes is the norm for the Spring event. In contrast, the speakers for the

Fall event typically have three or four times that amount in which to explore the full range of their topic. Time enough to really talk, and think, things through!

Meanwhile, it's still 1984 and we're back at Arrowood. Besides hearing Judge Newman, we can look forward to presentations from Rene Tegtmeyer of the Patent Office, Mary Beth Peters of the Copyright Office, Ian Calvert of the Patent Office Board of Interferences, and Judge Kevin Duffy of the Southern District of New York. Additionally, Past President Doug Wyatt will speak on the impact of the Federal Circuit's decisions on patent law, and Past President Jerome Lee will present the view of outside counsel with regard to sincerity and integrity in trial presentations. Association members Neil O'Brien and John Bergin will speak on the art of negotiation, and the practice of anticounterfeiting, respectively. All-in-all, it promises to be a great learning event.

After the weekend is over, we'll say good-bye to our fellow one-hundred-and-twenty attendees. We'll look forward to seeing them again at the next Fall seminar, and the next one, and the next one, albeit in a different time, and in a different place. ■