

THE DAILY RECORD

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Better than a root canal, and on your own computer

"Learning is like rowing upstream: Not to advance is to drop back."

— CHINESE PROVERB

Root Canals. Political Robo-Calls. Mandatory Continuing Legal Education. It has been over 13 years since New York attorneys have been required to meet minimum CLE requirements in order to maintain their right to practice law in New York state, and some attorneys find the mandate as painful as the proverbial root canal. But it doesn't need to be.

Now, more than ever, with the depth and breadth of MCBA's CLE offerings, and the wide range of ways to access our programs, getting your CLE and keeping abreast of current legal developments has never been easier or more painless.

I am especially excited that MCBA is now offering live, online webcasts (aka webinars). Although many for-profit providers and some national and state bar associations offer webinars, we are one of the first county bars in the country to do so.

I "attended" one of our first live webcasts, Social Media in the Workplace. It was a typical cold, snowy, December day in Rochester, and instead of trudging through the slush, I sat in the warmth of my office at my work computer.

At the appointed time, I simply clicked on the link sent to me by e-mail, and through the magic of the Internet, my screen filled with a live shot of the speakers and their PowerPoint presentation. I also had access to the written materials, which I could view online or print off at my convenience.

And, if I wanted to ask any questions, I could type them in and hit send, and they would be provided to the moderator. A couple of times during the webcast, a message appeared on the screen that I had to click to prove that I was paying attention.

When it was over, I filled out the questionnaire online and was able to immediately print out my attendance certificate. I did not have any "technical difficulties," but if I did, the friendly help desk at Peach New Media Inc., our webcast provider, was standing by to help out (their tech support is not outsourced offshore). The only thing I missed by attending virtually instead of in person was the free lunch provided by D4.

We are offering a number of our live CLE programs in January and February also as webinars, including: An Update on Ethics and the CPLR, Bankruptcy Exemptions, Nuts & Bolts of an Article 7 Proceeding, and Estate Planning for the Terminally Ill

Client. Pricing is the same as for our live seminars.

Special thanks is given to Louise Spinelli, our CLE coordinator, and the rest of the bar staff for working tirelessly to launch our webinars.

Of course, we still offer all of our CLE programs live, so if you prefer a free lunch, and the invaluable opportunity to network with your colleagues, we have over thirty programs in the works in the upcoming months. Our Academy of Law, ably run by Dean Beth McDonald, is planning a Bridge the Gap series for Young Lawyers this spring, which will include sessions on ethics, negotiations and a legal writing seminar with a national speaker. We are also working on a series of CLEs targeted to solo practitioners and small firms.

And, save the date, May 3, for a special program on The Legacy of John Adams (this year's theme for Law Day), which will focus on representing unpopular clients and matters of public controversy. Jim Moore will provide a historic background, and our featured speaker, Brian Mizer, will discuss his representation of the alleged chauffeur of Osama Bin Laden.

In addition to live programs and webinars, most of our programs are recorded and can be watched in the comfortable video viewing room at the MCBA, or purchased and viewed online or as a DVD at your convenience.

In survey after survey over the years, our members rate CLE as one of the most valuable benefits provided by the MCBA, and for many members, we are the sole or primary source of their CLE. We get consistently high grades in the quality of CLEs we provide, and the expertise of our talented local attorneys who generously volunteer their time and talent to speak.

As a former dean of the Academy myself, our CLE program has always been near and dear to my heart. It is one of the most important benefits we provide to our members, not only to meet their mandatory CLE requirements, but to ensure that we have a legal community that is well-trained and up to date with the latest, ever-changing legal developments.

By extension, it is a critically important service to the Greater Rochester community to ensure that our clients have the best possible legal representation.

Let the MCBA help you row upstream, whether in person or virtually!

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