

**To: General Practice Solo and Small Firm Section Colleagues and Members**

**From: Adam W. Heaton, Chair**

**RE: Summary of Fiscal Year 2008-09 and Looking Forward into Fiscal Year 2009-10**

---

**Fiscal Year 2008-09:**

As some of you know, I had the honor of the opportunity to serve as the chairperson of the MSBA General Practice, Solo, and Small Firm (“GPSSF”) Section’s governing council for fiscal year 2008-09 and during that time it was my personal goal to work toward ensuring that members of the GPSSF Section received a worthwhile return on their investment of the \$20 annual section dues. This goal of mine was also a shared goal among all of the members of the governing council; each member of the council contributed a significant amount of their time and energy in furtherance of this goal. The following paragraphs provide several examples of programs and activities provided by the GPSSF Section in the past year, thus demonstrating the governing council’s efforts at achieving the goal of making the \$20 annual investment worthwhile.

During the 2008-09 year, the GPSSF Section provided several continuing legal education opportunities to the members, including a very popular session on using QuickBooks to manage your office finances, as well as promoting and sponsoring a full-day seminar and workshop led by nationally-acclaimed law firm management and business coach Ed Poll, author of the *Attorney and Law Firm Guide to The Business of Law*.

Additionally, the GPSSF Section governing council actively campaigned on behalf of solo and small firm practitioners in opposition of legislation that would have imposed a sales tax on legal services; and also actively campaigned on behalf of solo and small firm practitioners in opposition of the Lawyers’ Professional Responsibility Board’s adoption of “Opinion 20” regarding the use of “& Associates” in a law firm’s name. I trust you are aware of the results of both endeavors.

Earlier this year, in January, I believe, the governing council established a committee to be comprised of members of the GPSSF Section, along with at least one member from the governing council, with a mandate to evaluate the impact of the unauthorized practice of law on those individuals in need of legal counsel, as well as the impact on the legal profession as a whole. To date, a number of attorneys have expressed an interest in volunteering their time on this committee, including past MSBA President Michael Ford. For those of you who have expressed an interest, expect to be contacted soon; for anyone who is interested in devoting some of their time to this matter, but have not already contacted a member of the governing council, please let me know as soon as possible.

Lastly, it should be noted, that over the past twelve months, membership in the GPSSF Section is estimated to have grown by more than twenty percent (20%), and former GPSSF Section Council Chair, Bob Woodke stated that he believes the Section membership has never been this high. Considering that there are more than twenty thousand attorneys in the State of Minnesota, I am actually perplexed as to why membership in the GPSSF Section is not several times higher than its current level. If you have appreciated your membership in the GPSSF Section, then please encourage your colleagues to join the Section as well.

**Fiscal Year 2009-10:**

As each fiscal year draws to a close, and pursuant to the GPSSF Section Bylaws, the governing council is required to select from among the council members a chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer, and secretary to serve for the following fiscal year. For fiscal year beginning July 1st, 2009 and ending June 30th, 2010, Bonnie S. Westlin, Esq. will serve as the GPSSF Section Council Vice-Chair, Helen M. Federline will serve as the Treasurer, and Thomas A. Borash, Esq. will serve as the Secretary. As for the GPSSF Section Council Chair, I am pleased to announce that the majority of the Council has asked me to continue my efforts at making membership in the GPSSF Section not only relevant, but also an extremely valuable and worthwhile investment. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the members of the Section Council with any thoughts, ideas, or concerns that may be relevant to the GPSSF Section. The MSBA website provides a number web pages devoted to the GPSSF Section, and the contact information for each member of the Section Council is likely available through the MSBA member directory.

Moving forward into Fiscal Year 2009-10, at the first meeting of the Section Council on July 31st, 2009, a number of new Section committees were established by the governing council. The GPSSF Section governing council is completely voluntary, and most--if not all--members of the governing council devote a sizeable number of hours each week to their own practice, serving their clients, and providing an income for their respective families. With this in mind, I felt that if the GPSSF Section were to provide valuable and successful programs, events, and activities for many years to come that it was imperative to recognize that those serving on the governing council could not be expected to do all of the work necessary in order to continue, year-after-year, to provide those valuable and successful programs, events, and activities to our Section members.

Therefore, in addition to the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee established earlier this year, the GPSSF Section is forming a *Workshops, Seminars, & CLEs Committee*, a *Communications Committee*, a *Section Membership Committee*, and a *Legislative Committee*. Each committee shall include at least one governing council member and not less than three committee members in total (inclusive of the council member). A number of section members have already expressed their interest in serving on one or more of these committees; please contact me directly via email as soon as possible to express an interest in serving on any one or more of the committees. Each committee will have its first meeting before September 18th, 2009.

In addition to the new committees getting underway, the following programs, activities, and events are in the planning stages and will likely occur before the holiday season:

- ~ A law practice management (“LPM”) software application event with three prominent LPM software application vendors demonstrating their product offerings, while also providing an opportunity to compare and contrast with the other two vendors’ software applications also on display.
- ~ Another event focusing on using QuickBooks to manage your firm’s finances, with a special segment dedicated to trust account record keeping.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to remind you to encourage anyone you know who is not a member of the GPSSF Section, and is eligible to be a member, to join the Section. The 2009-10 dues are only \$20—an insignificant amount when compared to the many valuable programs, activities, and other events GPSSF Section membership offers!

With kind regards,  
~Adam W. Heaton