

Special Committee on Young Barristers

The Special Committee on Young Barristers ("YBC") continues to serve a multitude of functions. Our primary objective is to act as a platform for young barristers ("YBs") - to provide assistance and support to them in practice-related issues or other matters of common interests as well as maintaining a strong sense of fraternity among YBs. Besides, the YBC strives to promote a better understanding of the Bar by reaching out to other sectors of the community, in particular university and secondary school students. Furthermore, the YBC is exploring opportunities for YBs to enrich our experiences and broaden our horizons. All these aims could not be achieved without the dedication and devotion of all those sitting in the committee (whom I am most indebted to).

The YBC Talks

The YBC talks aim to provide an opportunity for sharing among YBs and pupils in an informal manner. This year, we organized two practice-related talks by inviting judges to be our speakers. They include "Appearance before the Companies Judge: Practical Tips and Sharing from the Bench" by The Honourable Mr Justice Barma held on 27th February 2009, and "The Role of Mediation in CJR and How YBs Can Become Involved" by The Honourable Mr. Justice Reyes on 24th April 2009. The talks were inspiring, informative and well received. Both Barma J and Reyes J also kindly attended the YBC drinks afterwards to discuss with YBs in person. The YBC will be organizing another talk regarding practical tips on legal visit, plea and mitigation, transfer proceedings and arraignment on 15th January 2010.

The BUZZ

The YBC's publication, BUZZ, serves as an invaluable channel of communication and it continues to welcome articles and letters from YBs and pupils alike. The August Issue (Issue 14) was well received amongst members of the Judiciary and the Bar. We continued to include featured articles relating to YBs, including a Survey on Livelihood of YBs 2008, YB's weblog and letter to senior & letter from senior. The YBC will be issuing the BUZZ (Issue 15) in early 2010.

Sports, Recreation and Social Activities

The YBC continues to organize and lead the Bar's team, Dragon Advocates, in the dragon boat competition held on the Tuen Ng Festival at Stanley beach. Five practice sessions were held in the preceding two months and a junk boat was chartered on the day of the competition. To our reward, the Bar's team successfully captured the 2nd runner-up in one of the races. The dragon boat competition and the practice sessions were great occasions, not only for some exercise, but also for fostering a closer and friendlier relationship amongst YBs and pupils of different sets of chambers. Besides, we managed to recruit some university students to join our team this year and this was a good opportunity for us to promote a better understanding of the Bar.

Apart from YBC Drinks which were usually held after YBC talks, the YBC also hosted a Christmas Drinks Party on 4th December 2009 at Madison's Restaurant & Bar. The event was well attended by members of the Bar and the Judiciary and, as always, it was a great occasion enjoyed by all.

The YBC as a Medium for Collective Bargaining

The YBC continues to engage in collective bargaining for the benefit of YBs. Since mid-March, the YBC was in frequent contact with Justis Publishing Limited in the UK negotiating for a special discount package of internet legal resource services exclusive to YBs. Ultimately, the YBC managed to secure an attractive discount exclusive to YBs on top of the standard pricing package offered by Justis as well as a complimentary 6 week trial period for all YBs and pupils between 1st May 2009 and 12th June 2009. The YBC will continue to look for opportunities for negotiating deals for and on behalf of YBs on a collective basis.

Events for Law Students

The YBC organized the Bar's booth in the Law Fair 2009 held on 7th February 2009. A number of law firms, the Department of Justice and the three local universities were also present to provide information to local and overseas law students. The presence of the Bar at the Law Fair is important as it increased the transparency of the profession and enabled queries on its entrance requirements and procedures to be properly addressed. The YBC has been liaising with the organizing committee of the Law Fair 2010, which is due to take place on 30th January 2010.

At the university level, the YBC maintained frequent contacts with student representatives of the three universities by inviting them to join our activities such as the Hong Kong Bar Association Debating Competition ("HKBA Debating Competition") and the dragon boat competition as well as sending our committee members to attend their official functions such as the inauguration ceremony of various student bodies.

Furthermore, we organized a Kickstart Talk for PCLL students on 29th May 2009. Members of the YBC were there to address and answer queries from students on topics ranging from applications for pupillage, admissions to the Bar, life as a pupil barrister, available scholarships and funds for pupils or new barristers etc. The talk was well attended and proved to be of assistance to those who wish to pursue a career at the Bar.

Event for Secondary School Students

The YBC has been organizing the HKBA Debating Competition for the sixth consecutive year with the aim of raising the awareness of socio-legal issues and the rule of law among secondary school students. It has proven to be a huge success and has attracted remarkable publicity and popularity. The debating competition was oversubscribed and, upon drawing of lots, a total of 32 teams participated in the preliminary rounds held in early November. The quarter-finals, the semi-finals and Grand finals will be held on 19th December 2009, 16th January 2010 and 27th February 2010 respectively. The event provides a platform for

members of the Bar to discuss and share their thoughts on socio-legal issues with students, many of which had done extensive research on the law in presenting their arguments. I would take this opportunity to express my gratitude to members who spared their time to adjudicate the debates, the Debates sub-committee and the Faculty of Law of The University of Hong Kong for providing venues and their law students for their assistance.

YBC Official Trip to Shanghai

With the assistance and support of the Chairman, the Bar Council and Andrew Mak, Chairman of the Special Committee on Mainland Affairs (“MAC”), the Bar Secretariat and representatives of the Legal Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government, the YBC organized its first official visit to Shanghai between 29th October 2009 and 1st November 2009. Given its experimental nature, the delegation comprised of only about 20 YBs and pupils. During the trip, the delegation paid official visits to and met representatives of various institutions and organizations including Legislative Affairs Working Committee, Standing Committee of Shanghai Municipal People’s Congress, Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Justice, Shanghai No. 2 Intermediate People’s Court, China International Economic & Trade Arbitration Commission, Shanghai Commission, Law Faculty of Fudan University and Shanghai Bar Association. The trip enabled YBs and pupils to have a better understanding of the legal system of the Mainland, the work of the administration of justice, the provision of legal services and the legal profession and etc. It was also an event full of fun and laughter and a great opportunity for YBs and pupils to mingle together. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the sub-committee for all the preparatory work and also all participants for their contribution. Special thanks must also go to Andrew Mak, Dora Chan, Anny Lin and Nelly Zhang of the Bar Secretariat for their guidance and assistance.

A Note of Appreciation

Without the commitment and hardwork of fellow members of the YBC and other YBs, all the above activities would not be as successful as they were. I would also like to thank our Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Honorary Secretary, Deputy Honorary Secretary and members of the Bar Council for their immense and unfailing support. Last but not least, I would like to thank Rani Romani and the rest of the Bar Secretariat for their great support and assistance.

Members of YBC 2009-2010

Jolie Chao (Chairperson)
Derek Chan (Vice Chairman)
Kevin Li (Vice Chairman)
Gloria Tse (Secretary/Treasurer)
Annie Leung
Alfred Cheng
Tony Ko
Felix Li
William Liu (employed member of DOJ)
Albert Cheung
Ann Lui

Isaac Chan
Joseph Lee
May Chung
Joe Chan
Johnny Fok
Queenie Lau
Esther Chan (employed member of DOJ)

Jolie Chao
Chairperson
Special Committee on Young Barristers

5 December 2009