

Report of the Special Committee on Young Barristers

The Special Committee on Young Barristers ("YBC") serves a multitude of functions. Apart from providing assistance and support to young barristers ("YBs"), the YBC acts as a platform for YBs, both to get along with one another and to voice out their concern and opinion on a collective basis. The YBC also strives to promote a better understanding of the Bar among the community, in particular university and secondary school students. All these aims could not be achieved without the valuable input and commitment of all those sitting in the committee (whom I am most indebted to).

The YBC Talks

The YBC talks aim to provide opportunity for sharing on practice-related areas amongst YBs and pupils. The talks were held in an informal manner to encourage exchanges amongst attendees. The highlight this year is a talk on "Appearance before District Court Judges and High Court Masters: Practical Tips and Sharing from the Bench", followed by sharing in the form of YBC drinks. The YBC is honoured to have invited His Honour Judge Lok of the District Court and Deputy Registrar Mr Andy Ho of the High Court to share their experience and give practical tips to the YBs on various issues, such as jurisdiction of district court/masters, the art of written submissions, etc. They have also kindly attended the YBC drinks afterwards to discuss with YBs in person. The YBC will be organizing another talk regarding practical tips on appearance in the Companies Court in early 2009.

The YBC as a Medium for Collective Bargaining

Following last year's initiative, the YBC continues to engage in collective bargaining for the benefit of YBs in various aspects. For instance, following negotiations between the YBC and Sweet & Maxwell Asia, the latter agreed to extend various special offers on their products to YBs, including a HK\$ 200 book voucher to be redeemed against any Sweet & Maxwell Asia title directly with them, a discount on the monthly subscription rate for Westlaw for YBs, and complimentary offer to YBs for access to Hong Kong Current Awareness free of charge for 1 month. More recently, LexisNexis has extended an offer to all YBs for a 15% discount in selected titles of law books.

The YBC's Publication

The YBC will be issuing the forthcoming issue of BUZZ in early 2009. The YBC believes that such publication serves as an invaluable channel of communication and continues to welcome articles and letters from YBs and pupils alike.

Sports, Recreation and Social Gatherings

The YBC continues to organize and lead the Bar's team in taking part 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 they were great occasions, not only for doing sports, but also for better communications amongst YBs and pupils of different sets of chambers. The event certainly fosters a closer and friendlier relationship at the young Bar.

Apart from YBC Drinks, the YBC also hosted a Christmas Drink Party on 12th December 2008 at the Foreign Correspondents' Club. The event was well attended by members of the Bar and the Judiciary and, as always, it was a great occasion enjoyed by all.

Events for Law Students

The YBC has been liaising with the organizing committee of the Law Fair 2009, which is due to take place in early February 2009. The YBC is also involved in all preparatory steps in preparing the necessary leaflets and organizing the Bar's booth in the event. Various solicitors firms, the Department of Justice and the three local universities will be present to provide information to those intending to pursue a career in law. The presence of the Bar is important as it increases the transparency of the profession and affords an opportunity for the Bar to answer various enquiries by students on its entrance requirements and relevant procedures.

At the university level, the YBC had paid a visit to the main campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong this November. There were a talk about the Bar Scholarship and sharing on the life of the junior bar. The YBC delegates were warmly received by the students who never fail to demonstrate their passion and enthusiasm for the legal profession.

Event for Secondary School Students

The YBC has been organizing the Hong Kong Bar Association Debating Competition for the fifth 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 32 teams participated in the preliminary rounds held in October. The quarter-finals for the competition were completed in November, and the semi-finals and Grand finals will be held in January and February 2009 respectively. The event provides a valuable 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 making their presentations. I would take this opportunity to express my gratitude to members who spared their time to adjudicate the debates, the Debates sub-committee (comprising YBs and pupils), and the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong for providing venue on a complimentary basis and their law students for their assistance.

Collaboration with other young members group

The YBC has built up a collaborative relationship with the Young Members Group of Chartered Institute of Arbitrators ("YMG"). As a result, the YMG has kindly extended offers to members of the Bar and pupils alike to attend functions organized by them which are related to practices in the Bar. For instance, the YBC has extended an offer on behalf of YMG for members and pupils to attend an evening talk organized by them on medical negligence cases.

A Note of Thanks

Without the commitment, input and assistance from fellow members of the YBC, all the above activities would not be as successful as they were. Credit also goes to members of the Debates sub-committee. The time and efforts required in organizing the debates (a total of 30 matches) should not be underestimated. I would also like to thank our Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary and members of the Bar Council for their immense 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 2008-09

Jenkin Suen (Chairman)
Derek Chan (Vice-Chairman)
Jolie Chao (Vice-Chairlady)
James Yu (Secretary & Treasurer)
Rachel Lam
Gloria Tse
Annie Leung
Alfred Cheng
Tony Ko
Kevin Li
Felix Li
Albert Cheung
Ann Lui
William Liu
Agnes Chan
Joseph Lee
Joe Chan
Johnny Fok

Jenkin Suen
Chairman
Special Committee on Young Barristers

15 December 2008