



## Horizon Lines, Scouting and Safe Eddies

As I write this article, I am sitting in the President's Office of our new and spectacular Bar Center, my temporary home away from home. Two of the walls of this office are glass and my view today is of an early sunrise reflecting on the downtown buildings as the river rolls past our headquarters toward downtown Little Rock and on into Arkansas' Delta. It is a unique and inspirational view. The inspiration for me is to continue the analogy likening this bar year to a river trip.

### Horizon Lines

When a whitewater boater sees a horizon line, he or she knows something different and, usually, difficult is about to happen. A horizon line is the view you get when you see the river just disappear, meaning a steep drop is in your immediate future. The problem that is created by a horizon line is that you have no idea what is just over the lip of the waterfall, making it impossible to know which direction to go.

Until now, our long range planning consisted of a small meeting of key people at John Stroud's cabin on Lake Greeson. It is a wonderful retreat and Judge Stroud's hospitality is unequalled. We are able to plan our course of action for the coming year at this meeting. The best idea from this year's meeting was Immediate Past President Jim Sprott's suggestion that we increase our efforts at long range planning; to be more focused and more "long range." I have, through the Southern Conference of Bar Presidents, become friends with Janet Ward Black, the current President of the North Carolina Bar Association. Through this connection, we had Ms. Black make a presentation at our recent Board of Governors meeting which was held at The Lodge on Mount Magazine. Shortly after her impres-

sive presentation, our Board of Governors authorized me to form a long range planning committee consisting of Governors from the three bar districts, as well as representatives from the House of Delegates and other bar leaders. Just as a river changes, the world and the practice of law is changing rapidly (pun intended). I have asked Jim Julian of Little Rock to lead this important committee. Under his leadership, I am confident that the Association will choose the right course as it navigates its future.

### Scouting

Additionally, in order to travel the difficult and unknown sections of a stream successfully, a river runner often stops, gets out of his/her boat, and scouts a particularly challenging rapid. This is a safety precaution that allows the paddler to evaluate the risk, determine the options on how to run the rapid and assign rescuer positions to ensure safe passage.

Once again, the river analogy fits. Every few years, the Association conducts a survey of its members to evaluate what we are doing well and where we need improvement. Since the last survey, taken in 1998, the legal profession has changed greatly. For that reason, the time has again come to do some scouting. John Vines of Hot Springs, serving as the Chairman of our Member Benefits Committee, will head up a new survey planned for this year.

Speaking of changes, this survey will be totally online and probably in a series of four separate installments. Please be on the lookout for this survey and respond promptly. Our Association is member driven. It can only be what you make it. This means of "scouting" will go a long way toward improving the future of the Association. My goal is to make this great organization even better.

### Safe Eddies

In the paddling community, there is an educational process used to equip our paddlers with the knowledge about how to use the river's obstacles to their advantage. One of these tools is the safe eddy. Paddlers are taught how to use techniques that allow them to find a spot of calm water when the river is raging around them. It is a comfortable feeling to have this knowledge and use it. In short, education prevents problems.

Again, the analogy fits. Youth in our society today are faced with problems and temptations far beyond what most of us realized and encountered in our young lives. As the world grows smaller, and more and more complex, young people are exposed to the potential for personal problems on a regular basis. Former President Glenn Vasser first approached the idea of ramping up the Association's involvement with law related education. Immediate Past President Jim Sprott helped organize this effort and, during this year, we hope to get it off and running. Mark Hodge of Little Rock is chairing this effort.

This program's goal will be to expose young people to the principles of freedom – hopefully making them more informed and better citizens – to help them find the "safe eddy" as they pick and choose their way through these difficult years. It will be taught by local lawyers to students in their communities. Programs like Law Related Education make me proud of our profession and proud to be an Arkansas Lawyer.

Recognizing horizon lines, learning to scout and finding safe eddies. Knowledge helps young people to successfully navigate life's difficulties, and helps us to deal with the changes, and challenges, of our honorable profession. ■