



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

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A Message from the New Chair, Jacqueline Watson

I am privileged to be taking over from the awesome Kelli Stump this year and I look forward to continuing the good work she started on liaison building, pro bono, and CLE. It was a joy to serve with Kelli on ExComm and she will be a tough act to follow; luckily, I have her home phone number.

I am equally excited to begin new projects and address new challenges this coming year. To be working with a dynamo ExComm will make it all seem easy: Jason “Mad-Dog” Mills is our new Vice-Chair; Maggie “Sasha Fierce” Murphy takes over as Treasurer; and Olsi “The Marquis from Albuquerque” Vrapa will be our Secretary. With Kelli on speed-dial as our Immediate Past-Chair, I couldn’t ask for a better team. With that in mind, we are going to tackle an ambitious agenda this year.

Liaison, Liaison, Liaison

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to our liaisons and coordinators for their service this past year. I hope to keep building on their hard work, and expand our liaison activity to the POEs at the southern border. Hear that, CBP? That’s the Texas Chapter knocking on your door.

Pro Bono like a Boss

Our Chapter has stepped up and represented when it comes to pro bono efforts in Karnes and Dilley. In coordination with AILA National and AILF, we will be recruiting more volunteers in the fight for due process for families in detention. Girl, hold my earrings!

Treat yo self!

We are currently planning the Fall Chapter CLE to end all CLEs in the Dominican Republic in November; stay tuned for details as they develop and plan your trip early. The Spring Conference will take the Chapter to my adopted hometown of Austin and we are planning another barn-burner; be ready for that, my friends.

Turning Practice and Professionalism up to 11

Turning to the interests of our new members, we will focus on offering more tools to improve our practice, from ethics to law office management.

Texas Chapter vs. UPL

In addition, this year the Chapter will work with AILA national on a new media outreach campaign designed to educate consumers about the importance of finding the right legal help for their immigration needs.

The Texas Chapter Must REPRESENT

Finally, it is with a heavy heart that I report that our Chapter's long-time representative on the AILA Board of Governors, Sarah Brown, did not win her bid for re-election. This means that our Chapter, the second largest in AILA, will be represented on the BOG only by our chair. Thus, another goal I have set for this year: we must get out the vote and be the powerhouse Chapter that we are. Please read Craig Miley's reflections on this last AILA election. Come spring, I will challenge the Chapter to elect at least one TX OK NM Chapter member to the BOG; no excuses!

Finally, to anyone wanting to volunteer, praise, or complain, my electronic door is always open: Jackie@tomesparza.com.

How fortunate am I to chair this redoubtable Chapter? Very.

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