I am finding my ASWB position as CEO to be quite exciting! Much of my work revolves around travel and meetings to raise awareness of ASWB and the role of regulation in public protection. Thank goodness I enjoy traveling and taking part in challenging, important, and strategic meetings. I truly appreciate that ASWB is invited to participate when professional regulation of social work practice is being discussed. As the organization representing the jurisdictional social work regulatory boards and colleges, ASWB should and will be there. The good news is that we are being included and we are being heard.

A second awareness is that I travel between two distinct professions—social work and professional regulation. These professions have different missions, yet both are interconnected and interrelated through the shared values of public protection, social justice, service, integrity, and competence.

Simply stated, the primary goal of social work is to help people in need and to address social problems. The primary responsibility of professional regulation is to protect the public from harm by establishing minimum standards of competence for social work professionals and offering legal recourse if harm occurs. Coincidentally, Protecting the public also results in protecting the title and practice of social workers, which is a major benefit to the profession.

The meetings I have attended have included social work educators, practitioners, and regulators—all essential partners in the social work regulatory community. Working together, we are expanding the conversation about the benefits of regulation and licensure. Whether talking to deans and directors of social work programs or to social work practitioners, my role in the conversation has been to provide insight about ways that regulation adds value and is connected to social work values and ethics.

As part of this outreach, I have traveled some major miles with ASWB President Dorinda Noble to share the benefits of ASWB’s Path to Licensure campaign. We have spread the word about the campaign to social work educators at the March Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, and at the April National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD) Conference in Asheville, North Carolina. The campaign is aimed at strengthening student and faculty knowledge of licensure and its role in developing accountability for safe, competent, and ethical practice. Another benefit for educators is receiving up-to-date...
information about regulation in their particular jurisdiction.

The next stop on the campaign’s trail will be at ASWB’s Spring Education Conference in St. Louis. Social work educators from Missouri and Kansas will attend a luncheon and learn about the program from the ASWB Board and staff. Also attending will be our special guests, Darla Spence Coffey, president and CEO of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and Angelo McClain, CEO of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). These leaders in the worlds of education and practice have become more than our colleagues in the Path to Licensure campaign—they are our partners in this exciting and new initiative.

While I was at the BPD meeting, I attended two sessions sponsored by ACOSA, the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration. In early April, I joined the leaders of NASW and CSWE in Washington, D.C., for a meeting with ACOSA’s special commission, launched to bolster macro practice in social work. Lively discussion ensued, with opportunities to correct misinformation and misperceptions. By the end of the meeting, we had a commitment to move forward with areas of commonality and a clearer understanding that licensing should and does embrace the full breadth and richness of all social work practice.

Following the Spring Education Meeting, my travels will take me north to St. Catherines, Ontario, with ASWB Executive Vice President Dwight Hymans. We are excited that ASWB has been invited to attend the 2014 National Joint Social Work Conference/Conference nationale conjointe de travail social sponsored by the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE). We are presenting “Getting to Consensus on Competency to Practice” with Claude Leblond, president, l’Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec, and John Mayr, registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers.

Our team of regulation experts will outline for Canadian social work educators how different types of assessment instruments are used to determine the minimal level of competency required for safe and ethical practice. Attendees will see the similarities and uniqueness among the instruments, as well as the competency profiles and practice standards that are derived from the analysis. Fred Phelps, president of CASW, assisted in bringing ASWB and our Canadian leaders to this annual meeting of Canadian social work educators and practitioners.

As you can see, my travels since the beginning of the year are taking me far and wide. The response to ASWB’s outreach efforts has been positive and rewarding. Being included at the table with social work educators and practitioners has encouraged collaboration on multiple levels, resulting in clarification, understanding, and good will. Triumphs, indeed.
The 2014 Spring Education Meeting’s theme, “Gateway to Effective Regulation,” comes from St. Louis’ most famous landmark, the Gateway Arch. The meeting will focus on the gateway that marks the transition from social work professional to social work regulator, with an emphasis on understanding the disciplinary process, from complaint through action.

The meeting will open with a session titled “The Passion of the Profession Meets the Paradigm of Regulation,” held Thursday afternoon at 5 p.m. This panel discussion will explore the positives and negatives of separating the role of passionate social worker and dispassionate regulator.

ASWB will host a welcome reception and dinner with live jazz music on Thursday evening. There will be a celebration for ASWB’s 35th anniversary year as part of the festivities. Attendees are welcome to dress up or come comfortable for an evening of good food and connecting/reconnecting with social work colleagues.

**Friday**

ASWB legal counsel Dale Atkinson will present Friday morning’s first session, with a short refresher course on board member training, emphasizing the role of social workers who become regulators.

Cultural competency takes center stage later Friday morning, with a panel discussion moderated by ASWB CEO Mary Jo Monahan. Panelists will discuss standards for cultural competence in social work education and practice in the U.S. and Canada. Panelists will include Darla Spence Coffey, president and CEO of the Council on Social Work Education; Angelo McClain, CEO of the National Association of Social Workers; and Alison MacDonald, executive director and registrar of the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers.

Participants have two options for Friday afternoon. The first is a session on the ASWB Path to Licensure Campaign. The campaign is being developed to enable educators to incorporate social work licensing throughout the social work program. Already two social work schools, at Texas State University and New York’s Adelphia University, are participating in Path to Licensure as a pilot program. Dorinda Noble, president of ASWB and director of the social work program at Texas State University, will offer an overview of the campaign. The ASWB Board of Directors will host a discussion of Path to Licensure over lunch Friday.
For those eager for fresh air and a taste of some of St. Louis’ famous brews, attendees can grab a box lunch provided by ASWB and head out for a guided tour of the city. The tour will trace the history of St. Louis, beginning at the site of the original settlement and finishing up with a “King of Beers” tour and tasting at the famous Anheuser-Busch Brewery.

Saturday

The ASWB Program and Education Committee has assembled presenters and moderators for sessions on Saturday focusing on disciplinary actions—“Disaster Preparedness” is the theme. Attendees will cover all aspects of disciplinary cases, starting with “Weathering the Disciplinary Storm.”

The two morning sessions will use scenarios to explore the legal and practical issues facing social work regulators as they respond to complaints and carry through with disciplinary actions.

Presenters will include Dale Atkinson; Richard Steinecke, senior partner at the Toronto law firm Steinecke Maciura LeBlanc; Richard Ferriss of the North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board; Margaret Hazlette of the Kentucky Board of Social Work; and Robert Payne of the Idaho Board of Social Work Examiners. Richard Silver of l’Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et des thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec and Tom Reichard of the Missouri State Committee for Social Workers will moderate these sessions.

Joel A. Poole, chief counsel in the Missouri attorney general’s office, will also be on hand to discuss a civil judgment in excess of $6 million awarded to the plaintiff/chiropractor in the matter of Edwards v. Gerstein, et al. (members of the Board of Chiropractic Examiners). Dr. Edwards was the subject of a multi-count disciplinary proceeding brought by the board. The board’s decision was later overturned on appeal. Edwards then pursued his own claim against the members of the board, alleging breach of duties by the board members in their investigation of him.

“Storm Clean Up” is the title of the afternoon session. Attendees will learn about alternatives to disciplinary hearings as well as the steps leading to a successful final order. Afterward, participants will have a chance to continue the conversation with one another at “table talks” drawn from the topics covered at the conference, from cultural competency to disciplinary cases.

Sunday

Dale Atkinson will offer the closing presentation, “Rebuilding: Post-Disciplinary Consequences.” The session will answer the question, “After a disciplinary order is implemented, what happens next?” Attendees will gain insight into another part of their role as regulators: making decisions about license reinstatement, record expungement, and more.

The 2014 Spring Education Meeting is the work of the current Program and Education Committee: Chair Janice James of Kentucky, Sandra Barlow of Florida, Lynnet Kase of Idaho, Glenda McDonald of Ontario, Tom Reichard of Missouri, Valerie Sims Rucker of Illinois, Anna Lyn Whitt of Mississippi, and board liaison Richard Silver of Québec. M. Jenise Comer, ASWB secretary and Missouri board member, also participated and will provide the welcome address from the Missouri board.
Richard Steinecke started his law career at a firm that practiced regulatory law and commercial litigation. It was clear to Steinecke early on which path he preferred. “You’re on the side of the angels” in regulatory law, he explains. “You’re protecting the public, encouraging people to act ethically and professionally.” After working in the field for a decade, Steinecke wrote a book about regulatory law in Ontario and, as he says, “after that, there was no turning back!” Thirty years into his career, Steinecke is now senior partner in the Toronto law firm Steinecke Maciura LeBlanc, and will be a presenter at the ASWB Spring Education Meeting in St. Louis, Mo.

Steinecke’s firm works with more than three dozen professions, including psychotherapists, speech language pathologists, and occupational therapists. Even though he hasn’t worked directly with social work regulators, Steinecke is excited to speak at the meeting. His session, co-presented with ASWB legal counsel Dale Atkinson, will emphasize the similarities in regulatory laws between Canada and the United States. “Despite different languages,” Steinecke explains, “a fair complaint process and prosecuting effectively are really universal in North America.”

“We’re all dealing with the same issues and can learn from each other about what goes well and what goes awry,” Steinecke continues. Steinecke was invited to the Spring Education Meeting by ASWB Board member Richard Silver of Québec, who had heard Steinecke speak at another conference. Steinecke has presented extensively across the United States and Canada. “My practice today is primarily education and training,” he says. Steinecke spends his time writing, conducting workshops and seminars, and presenting at conferences for organizations like ASWB.

Steinecke’s most recent work focuses on applying risk management perspectives to professional regulation. While most organizations emphasize risk management in matters related to insurance and finance, Steinecke sees benefits in using risk management approaches in a broader context. “Organizations need to identify risks across the board, regardless of insurance impacts,” he says. By identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing risks from a regulatory perspective, agencies that issue professional licenses can modify their risk exposure, avoid exposure, transfer risk (through vehicles like insurance) and even exploit positive risks.
Positive risks? “Look at risks as opportunities to maximize the positive outcome,” Steinecke advises. He cites a regulatory example: public information. By making information about licensees available to the public, regulatory boards and colleges expose themselves to risks such as lawsuits over inaccurate information. On the other hand, the same activity has benefits: increased transparency, becoming a go-to source for information about licensed professionals, for instance. “If we want to be relevant,” Steinecke says, “we have to be aware of the opportunities behind that risk.”

With a new focus on risk management and a session titled “Disaster Preparedness: Weathering the Disciplinary Storm,” Steinecke will be in his element at the ASWB Spring Education Meeting.
Meet Us in St. Louie

Prepare for good company and an engaging Spring Education Meeting, and don’t forget to wish St. Louis a happy 250th birthday!

St. Louis, Missouri, is a vibrant, historic, and iconic city, made even more so by its breathtaking monument to westward expansion, the elegant Gateway Arch. It is here, in the city called the “Gateway to the West,” that we will gather for the annual ASWB Spring Education Meeting, May 8–11.

Although our focus will be on the exciting business at hand, it pays to be prepared to optimize your free time by getting to know the city of St. Louis. ASWB is offering an optional tour on Friday afternoon from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., which includes a visit to the Anheuser-Busch Brewery and beer tasting. If you want to do something on your own, you have plenty of options to explore.

A little history

St. Louis was founded in February 1764 by Pierre Laclède and Auguste Chouteau and is named for King Louis IX of France. After the 1803 Louisiana Purchase from France, St. Louis became a major port at the confluence of the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. Today, the economy of St. Louis relies on service, manufacturing, trade, transportation of goods, and tourism.

Once famous for one of the nation’s first skyscrapers, St. Louis is now recognized for its beautiful stainless steel Gateway Arch, the nation’s tallest manmade monument. The arch was completed in 1965 as part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. If you’re not too claustrophobic, take the tram 630 feet up the Arch to the observation room for spectacular views. Or, go underground to the vast visitor’s center.

Here, in no particular order, are more of the sights and tastes of St. Louis.

Points of interest

If you cannot get enough height in your day, enjoy a fantastic 360-degree view of the city from the top of the Compton Hill Water Tower, one of seven such towers remaining in the country.

The millions of mosaics lining the New Cathedral are a sight not to be missed. With approximately 41.5 million glass pieces, this is the largest mosaic collection in the world.

Go way back in time with a visit to Mastodon State Historic Site. Here, archaeologists unearthed Clovis arrowheads and mammoth bones, proving humans and prehistoric creatures existed side by side. Marvel at the reconstructed woolly giants.

Forest Park was the site of the 1904 World’s Fair and is home to some of St. Louis’ most popular
attractions: the St. Louis Zoo, Art Museum, Science Center and Planetarium, and the Jewel Box conservatory, an art deco masterpiece. This complex is accessed easily by bus and metro.

The old Courthouse brings the turbulent past to life with historic exhibits and information about the Dred Scott decision, the Underground Railroad, and more.

**Shop, eat, enjoy**

For big-time entertainment, book yourself a seat to see Broadway shows and concerts at the magnificently restored Fabulous Fox Theatre in the Grand Center Arts and Entertainment District. For a more intimate musical experience, the Soulard neighborhood boasts some of the best blues venues in town. All around the city, you can find a cozy spot to enjoy your favorite tunes, everything from rock to ragtime.

Hungry? St. Louis offers unique city and regional dishes, including toasted ravioli, gooey butter cake, provol cheese, the slinger, the Gerber sandwich, the St. Paul sandwich, and St. Louis-style pizza, featuring thin crust and provol cheese. Also unique to St. Louis is the Ted Drewes “Concrete,” which is frozen custard blended with any combination of dozens of ingredients, served in a large yellow cup with a spoon and straw.

**Thirsty?** Tour a variety of breweries by joining the Brewery Tours of St. Louis.

Laclede’s Landing and Washington Avenue are fun areas of fine dining, family restaurants, dance clubs, bars, and shops on the riverfront—all right near the Lumiere Place Casino. And the Hill, a quaint St. Louis neighborhood, is acclaimed for its Italian cuisine.

The Delmar Loop is a famous six-block entertainment and shopping district packed with bars, restaurants, music venues, vintage clothing boutiques, and more.

**Fun facts about St. Louis**

The Eads Bridge, completed in 1874 over the Mississippi River, was the first arched steel truss bridge in the world. When it was first proposed, it was scoffed at as impossible to build.

The first successful parachute jump from an airplane took place at St. Louis’ Jefferson Barracks in 1912.

St. Louis Zoo is home to 18,000 animals from 700 species on 90 acres and features a Zooline Railroad.

At the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis, the ice cream cone and iced tea were invented and Dr Pepper was introduced. 7-Up and peanut butter were also invented in St. Louis.

The cocktails Planter’s Punch, Martini, Bloody Mary, and Tom Collins, were invented at the historic Planter’s House hotel, built in 1817.

Famous writers, including T.S. Eliot, Maya Angelou, William Gass, Tennessee Williams, Eugene Field, and many others, were from St. Louis.

Nicknames for St. Louis include: The STL, St. Louie, Mound City, River City, The Lou, and of course, Gateway to the West.

**And more**

More information can be found on the city’s official website at [https://stlouis-mo.gov/](https://stlouis-mo.gov/). We look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting.
From ASWB’s beginnings, volunteers have been the driving force of the association. In 1979, a group of 23 representatives from 12 states voluntarily met to figure out how to form a social work organization dedicated to public protection that would provide a national exam and a forum for regulators. Over the last 35 years, volunteers have been a vital force in ensuring the association continues to fulfill its vision and mission. The association’s strategic objectives could not be met without the support and expertise of all the members who over the years have given of their time. This year is no exception.

ASWB President Dorinda N. Noble sent appointment letters to all volunteers following Board of Director approval of the proposed committee list. To date, 72 members from 40 jurisdictions are serving. Nine of them for the first time. (The volunteers of the 2013 Program and Education Committee will complete their service at the conclusion of the 2014 Spring Education Meeting. A new committee will then be appointed following the meeting.)

The work of ASWB’s committees and task forces has gotten under way with its usual flurry. Although the weather has been fickle, the committees with the earliest meetings of the year have met despite challenges of snow in March—lots of snow in some cases. The first meetings of the Approved Continuing Education (ACE) Committee and the Examination Committee have taken place. The most recent addition to ASWB’s task forces, the Governance Task Force, also met in March. Better—more springlike—weather was in store for the Finance Committee, which met in Culpeper at ASWB’s offices in late April.

Members of the Nominating Committee are scheduled to have their first meeting during the Spring Education Meeting in May. They are responsible for filling a slate of
candidates for election to the Board of Directors and to their committee. One of their key charges will gain even more emphasis this year relative to the objectives of the Strategic Plan: Identifying and encouraging potential new leaders among association membership.

Other committees will meet this summer, in July. Those include the Bylaws and Regulations Committee and the Regulation and Standards (RAS) Committee. RAS is entering its second year of a three-year comprehensive review of the Model Social Work Practice Act, or model law. Included in this year’s charge is for the committee to consider changes to the model law based on findings of the supervision analysis conducted in recent years by a joint task force of ASWB and National Association of Social Work (NASW) members.

The ACE Committee will hold its second in-person meeting, also in July. In addition to two in-person meetings, the ACE Committee maintains a full schedule year-round to consider applications of continuing education providers for the ACE program. Its work continues via phone conferences at the rate of about every six to eight weeks.

Another committee with a full schedule is the Examination Committee. The second of four weekend meetings will take place in Washington, D.C., in June. During these meetings, the committee reviews items for use as non-scored pretest questions on the licensing exams. A separate group of former members of the Exam Committee often meets concurrently to perform form reviews of the 170-item tests, or forms. All three committees will meet this year: Bachelors, Masters, and Clinical.

The International Technology Task Force, which got under way in 2013, will continue its work to develop standards for electronic practice and all things Web and Internet based. Chaired by Frederic Reamer, the task force membership includes social workers from Ireland, New Zealand, and Wales, and representatives from ASWB, NASW, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Canadian Association of Social Workers, and the Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators. The anticipated publication date for the standards is 2015, and the findings will be incorporated into the model law during the third and final year of the RAS Committee’s comprehensive review of this cornerstone resource.

The Foundation Editorial Review Committee will meet in August to review applications for grants from ASWB’s nonprofit research arm, the American Foundation for Research and Consumer Education in Social Work Regulation (the “Foundation”). The Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, supports efforts to explore the ways in which professional social work regulation affects the profession and the public it serves. The current cycle of grants is due to close May 1.

Service on ASWB’s committees is vital to members gaining greater leadership opportunities within the organization. By serving, volunteers gain insight into how ASWB operates and gain experience in leadership roles. As part of ASWB’s Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors has committed to focusing its energies toward the development of a leadership trajectory for members, not only to serve on ASWB’s Board but to serve as regulatory leaders in their own jurisdictions.

Toward that goal, the Board has identified the need for a Regulatory Education and Leadership Committee that will help guide these efforts. A leadership academy, which in President Dorinda N. Noble’s words “will help shape jurisdictional, national, and international regulatory leaders,” is also envisioned.
New volunteers bring expertise and enthusiasm

**New committee members look forward to making a difference and giving back**

The four new volunteers serving on the Exam Committee reflect a diversity that the exam is often criticized for lacking. But that diversity is a hallmark of the exam development program. Item writers are selected based on geographic, demographic, and subject matter needs of the program, and Exam Committee members are selected from the roster of item writers using the same criteria. Exam Committee members serve a one-year term, renewable for two additional years, during which time they form close professional relationships with the other members. For the four new members of the Exam Committee, it all began over a rainy, cold weekend in Baltimore at the end of March.

Despite the official arrival of Spring a week earlier, the rain and cold temperatures persisted for the three days that committee members met in darkened rooms to review items projected on screens for group deliberation. Joining the Masters Committee are June Yee, of Alberta, and Adolpha Bassett, of North Carolina. Starting their terms with the Clinical Committee are Emily Honken, of Minnesota, and Bora Sunseri, of Louisiana.

Each year the Examination Committee meets up to four weekends to review items for the licensing exams. Some items get approved for pretest, some do not. Last year the committee reviewed 1,635 items and approved 1,234 for pretest. The volume of items approved year over year has built a sizable bank of items to choose from when it is time to build the 170-item exams, or forms, as the tests are called. The collaborative experience of serving on the Exam Committee is completely different from the experience of being an item writer. Item writers work independently to develop their items, which they then submit to one of ASWB’s item development consultants. The item review process is a one-on-one interaction conducted primarily via email. Following approval by the item development consultant, the items move on for consideration by the Examination Committee.

June Yee said of her first day as a Masters Committee member, “I was not overwhelmed. It seems organized, and it’s a practical, intellectually stimulating, and...
enjoyable process.” Bora Sunseri, one of the new members of the Clinical Committee, also found the experience enjoyable, saying, “I liked the group discussion and seeing what happens to the items.” When your own items are on the screen, she said with a laugh, “it’s humbling, but you also see what happens to your contribution” and how the items are improved.

Yee’s social work career has been mostly in health care. She applied to be an item writer because she thought it would give her an opportunity to learn. “It was a good reason to read,” said Yee, “I increased my knowledge and got a broader exposure to literature.” She became an item writer in 2010 but is not writing while serving on the committee.

Yee is currently a clinical social worker for the Southern Alberta Congenital Heart Clinic and Heart Health. The PLC hospital has a specialty clinic that treats adult patients born with a heart defect. She also works with people who have acquired heart conditions. In addition to treatment for physical symptoms, patients are treated for psychosocial conditions such as stress, depression, and anxiety. Yee’s clients meet with her as often as necessary for therapeutic assessment and treatment. Outside of work, she enjoys activities such as cryptic crosswords, hiking, gardening, cooking, and dancing. “I look forward to further involvement with the Masters Exam Committee,” she said.

For Sunseri, getting started in the item writing program was more by accident than by design. She received an email announcement about the program and responded. She was accepted to the program in 2011 and found time to write after work and when her two children, now 10 and 12, were asleep.

Sunseri is currently a CQI child welfare manager for the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. CQI stands for “continuous quality improvement.” In this administrative role, she works with managers in the field across three state regions to provide child welfare case review feedback to improve the quality of practice. The goal is to engage families, providers, and staff to increase the safety, permanency, and well being of children involved with the child welfare agency. Her role also involves assessing quality and suggesting ways to improve practices statewide for consistent performance, which may include policy and practice changes and related legislative changes.

During the time that she was an item writer, Sunseri was a training manager for the department. Before that, she worked in the field and was involved in many different settings. In addition to working in child welfare investigations, foster care, and adoptions, she worked in the state correctional system with offenders, and later she was recruited by the Air Force to provide clinical services as a civilian.

The Air Force saw her expertise in child welfare as important to the work she would be doing with military members. She describes the interrelationship of the jobs in her career: “The children who don’t get good care come into the child welfare system,” she explained. “Many end up in the correctional system. Sometimes juveniles who improve within corrections will enlist [in the military]. At that point, their tough childhood might come out in their service. They might show disrespect to others. They then are mandated for treatment by their commanding officers or other authority. Their treatment is often not voluntary.”

Sunseri’s husband asked her why she decided to work on the Exam Committee as a volunteer. “I wanted to contribute to the social work field,” she said. “It’s important to give back and help others.” As a practitioner of quality improvement initiatives, Sunseri was quick to praise ASWB’s exam development process. “I’m impressed by all that goes into the process,” she said. “It’s top of the line. The items make sense, are professionally sound, and are grammatically correct.”

Emily Honken, of Minnesota, also on the Clinical committee, is a new mother in addition to being a new committee member. She traveled to Baltimore with her 11-week-old son and husband. Asked what her first meeting was like, she responded, “It’s extremely busy! I’m running back and forth during the breaks to feed my son. But it’s been a good weekend.” Honken had applied to the item writer program after seeing an announcement on her state board’s website. At the time she was licensed at the Masters level. When she was accepted in 2007, she had just passed her clinical exam. So over time she has written for both the Masters and the clinical exams.

Honken currently is a clinical social worker at the Fraser Clinic, a clinic for children from the ages of 2 through 21 who have special needs, including autism spectrum disorders. She provides individual therapy for children on the autism spectrum as well as parent/child
interaction guidance for parents of children with autism. She has been with the clinic for the last 10 years. She also is a program and staff supervisor. She credits her work as an item writer with helping her work supervising staff. “You always have new situations,” she said, “and have to think through what the right reason is.” Writing items provided her “additional insight.” Her areas of expertise are special needs, supervising staff, child development, and cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Adolpha Bassett, of North Carolina, serving on the Masters Committee, felt welcomed as a new member at his first meeting. “I enjoyed how everyone worked together and contributed to the review process,” he said. He also appreciated the “wealth of knowledge and skills” of the other members of the Masters Committee.

Bassett was accepted as an item writer in 2012. His areas of specialization include assessment and diagnosis, human development, families, social work ethics, and cultural diversity. He decided to apply in part because he considered it a “worthwhile challenge” and in part to see what goes on behind the scenes in developing the exams. He discovered, like Sunseri and Yee, that a lot of care goes into the development of the exams: “It is quite obvious that a significant amount of time, energy, and planning is invested,” he said.

When he is not serving on the Exam Committee, Bassett is a hospital liaison for a county government-funded health center in the Raleigh area, Johnston Mental Health Center, which is in partnership with a managed care organization. He is involved with treatment and discharge planning for adult patients who are psychiatrically hospitalized in acute units in the eastern region of North Carolina. Outside of work, Bassett is an avid fiction reader and enjoys traveling.

The Examination Committee will meet three more times this year, in June, August, and October. The August meeting will be in Philadelphia. June and October meetings will be held in Washington, D.C., and Herndon, Virginia, respectively. From “getting their feet wet” at the meeting in Baltimore, these new volunteers will spend the rest of the year contributing their expertise and enthusiasm for a process that ensures the reliability, defensibility, and validity of the exam.
The facilitators of New Board Member Training will tell you that each group of attendees is unique. Each comes with its own collective set of experiences, needs, and questions. The group of 17 attendees in March’s session, the first of three to be held in 2014, was no different.

The attendees who sat around the rectangular conference table in the meeting room at the Loews Hotel in Washington, D.C., included both new and longtime board members and staff from ASWB and a guest from the Federation of Association of Regulatory Boards (FARB). The two facilitators were from the worlds of U.S. and Canadian regulation and law: Dale Atkinson, ASWB legal counsel, and Richard Silver, legal counsel for the Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec and chair of the association’s New Board Member Training.

At the completion of the three-day training, the diverse group of 12 social workers, four staff members, and an attorney was brought much closer together by embracing a clearer and more enlightened understanding of social work regulation and the regulator’s role in providing public protection.

Mary Bridgman traveled from Florida to attend the training. She was a first-time attendee. She is a retired attorney, a freelance writer, and chair of the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling. Like most of the attendees, she didn’t know what to expect from the training.

“Until I got there, I didn’t really know what ASWB is and how committed the association is to the public good, to servicing the consumer through its members,” she said. “I was impressed by the caliber of the instructors. Being a lawyer, I particularly appreciated that they provided so much legal insight.

“Another thing is that I was not familiar with the Model Social Work Practice Act. And I see it now as a resource for our board when we’re looking at issues that maybe our regulations, our laws, don’t address the way that we might need them to. Obviously it doesn’t have the force of law, but it is a valuable resource.”

A couple of days after the training, Bridgman was contacted by one of the other attendees who asked for information on the Florida board’s regulations on qualifications/training needed by mental health professionals prior to conducting child custody evaluations. Bridgman was thrilled she could help.
“Now I have access not only to the model act, but to other board members in other jurisdictions. Another aspect of that networking is the strength you draw from your colleagues, the moral support, recommitment to your purpose, supporting each other in work that is rewarding but not always easy. The training provides a wonderful opportunity to do that. I’m going to recommend that everyone on our board participate in the training.”

Josh Myers, MSW, RSW, from Vancouver, British Columbia is a newly elected member to the British Columbia College of Social Workers. British Columbia will begin using the ASWB licensing examination for the first time in 2015, so his attendance at the training was both instructive and timely.

“With all the things our college is rolling out and has rolled out, ASWB has been critical in terms of us gaining the knowledge and confidence we require,” he said.

“I was pleasantly surprised at how practical the training was. It was a good mix of oral information, written information, and also a chance to work collaboratively with the other participants through some rather difficult scenarios using the tools that were given to us by ASWB.

“ASWB really made it relevant for us in Canada—you did a really good job with anything that may not be relevant to the work we do up here.” Myers added that he appreciated Richard Silver’s presence as facilitator to provide the Canadian perspective. “That would be an important thing to highlight for the folks in our country—that might help them see the relevance of sending their members to a training like this, because they’ll know that they are going to get not only the global perspective, but also the really rich Canadian content as well.”

Jennifer Henkel, MSW, LCSW, ASWB Member Services senior manager, attended not only as the leader of Member Services, but also as a trainee.

“I think the training was excellent and well received. It was interesting for me to hear about their [regulators’] processes and what happens at their meetings. I also learned how much they have to do, including investigating and resolving complaints and educating the public. There are so many different perspectives,” Henkel said.

“I would truly like to have even more opportunities to share more about all the many different things ASWB does and offers, not just the headline topics but the softer things we do for our members: the research, the meetings, the support, as well as why we do them.

“I would love to see board members and staff from every jurisdiction have the opportunity to attend New Board Member Training one time,” she continued. “They’re not going to get this training any place else, or the opportunity to be surrounded by other people doing what they’re doing.”

The other 14 attendees at last month’s ASWB New Board Member Training were: Barbara Arango, staff at Atkinson & Atkinson; Meenakshi Budhraja of Arkansas; Gary Cockman of Ontario; John Dick of Colorado; Gloria Harper, ASWB staff; Valerie Huntley of Iowa; Justin “Jay” Miller of Kentucky; Adrienne Newman of Tennessee; Tim Schoch, ASWB staff; Robert Showers of Louisiana; Sherryl Silberman of Maryland; Jennifer Venable-Humphreys of Alabama; Tara Watson of Tennessee; and Annie Wilson of Nevada.

To take advantage of this unique training opportunity, visit http://www.aswb.org/members/board-member-training. ASWB will pay all expenses for one board member per jurisdiction, per meeting. Space and funds are limited, so seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. The next training with openings is August 22–24, in Seattle, Wash.
Boards of social work are created and empowered to protect the public by regulating the profession. These immense responsibilities fall on volunteer board members who are placed in a position of authority over the practice of the profession and are expected to represent the interests of the consuming public. One of these board responsibilities includes the issuance and renewal of licenses. Of course, boards are also involved in disciplinary actions and may be the ultimate decision makers in determining the fate of persons accused of violating the practice act and/or regulations. It is imperative that regulatory boards appropriately draft and execute final disciplinary orders regarding persons found to have violated the law. Such orders will address many factors, including:

- findings of fact
- conclusions of law
- burden of proof
- sanctions
- reinstatement rights, if any
- publicity of the action
- appeal rights, if applicable

Part and parcel to the final adverse action (and assuming that the licensure revocation is not permanent), is the right of the disciplined person to seek reinstatement of licensure. Reinstatement petitions can be complex and involve significant analyses of the final adverse action that led to the loss of practice privileges. Petitioners seeking reinstatement bear the burden of substantiating the satisfaction of all delineated parameters of the original board order. Generally, boards are granted wide latitude to fashion sanctions, and substantiation of reinstatement criteria is critical to this public protection mission.

A person seeking reinstatement has the burden of substantiating eligibility for licensure. A petition usually addresses the final adverse action and completion of the criteria set forth in such order. In the event the criteria has not been established, the board has the right (or perhaps obligation) to deny the request. Denial of a petition may trigger appeals and an analysis of the board findings. Consider the following.

In 1997, a licensed professional counselor (Respondent) pled guilty to charges of billing and insurance fraud regarding claims to the federal government. As a result, the Respondent was placed on probation for five years and he was prohibited from participating in Medicaid, Medicare, or any other federal health care program.
At the time of his arrest in 1997, the Respondent was under investigation by the Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors (Board) for complaints related to inappropriate and intimate relationships with three patients and misrepresenting himself as a licensed clinical psychologist. Upon advice of counsel, the Respondent surrendered his license to the Board.

In 2002, the Respondent was arrested for embezzlement and also arrested on another occasion for theft. As a result of being found to have violated his criminal probation, the Respondent was imprisoned. He was released from prison in 2003. In August 2010, the Respondent applied to the Board for reinstatement of his license as a professional counselor. In January 2011, the Board issued a notice advising the Respondent that he would be afforded a hearing to allow him to show cause as to why his application should not be denied.

At the hearing, the Respondent testified, as did several character and professional witnesses. In September 2011, the Board issued an order denying his application for reinstatement. The Circuit Court affirmed the denial of licensure and the Respondent appealed the matter to the Court of Appeals of Mississippi. On appeal, the court first addressed the standard of review and emphasized the rebuttable presumption in favor of the agency’s decision and that the court would not substitute its judgment for that of the Board.

The Respondent argued that the denial of his application was not supported by substantial evidence and therefore, the decision was arbitrary and capricious. Substantial evidence has been defined by the Mississippi courts as meaning more that a mere scintilla of suspicion. Using that definition as its benchmark, the court turned its attention to the statute. Mississippi law requires applicants for licensure to be of good moral character. Further, the statute allows for the Board to suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue a license to those convicted of a felony.

In response to such legislation, the Board developed guidelines for determining when and whether convicted felons may be issued a license. The guidelines promulgated into regulations call for the immediate denial of licensure or renewal if an applicant has been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude. While subject to debate, it appears the court interpreted the moral turpitude element to modify both felony and misdemeanor convictions. An alternative interpretation would be to consider any felony to be a disqualifying event as well as those misdemeanors involving moral turpitude.

The regulations also identify what factors are to be considered when determining a crime of moral turpitude. They include:

- the age at which the crime was committed
- the circumstances surrounding the crime
- the length of time since the crime
- the applicant’s subsequent work history
- employment references
- character references
- any other evidence demonstrating that the applicant does not pose a threat to the health or safety of the public

In the current case, the Board had found that although the crime occurred 14 years earlier, the Respondent exhibited a disregard for federal law as well as the laws of Mississippi. Further, when the crime occurred, the Respondent was an adult and not a youth and his conduct was serious, egregious, and closely and directly related to his fitness and trustworthiness. As noted by the Board, “[t]he deceptive, dishonest and exploitive acts that formed the basis of [Respondent’s] conviction demonstrate untrustworthiness and a lack of fitness to carry out… duties and functions of an LPC in the State of Mississippi.”

In addition, the court noted that the Board considered the fact that the Respondent had his counseling certification revoked by the National Board of Certified Counselors, violated his probation, served 10 months in prison, had his access to Federal programs indefinitely suspended, and had several complaints pending before the Board at the time he surrendered his license. Based upon these factors, the court found the Board ruling to be supported by substantial evidence and affirmed the denial of reinstatement petition.

This case presents a good example of how good moral character can be assessed and used to determine licensure eligibility. Such an analysis can occur during an initial licensure application, renewal, or reinstatement petition. Equally important is the issue of the voluntary surrender. At such time of a “surrender,” the Board should insist on the entry of a consent/settlement agreement whereby
the parameters of reinstatement are addressed. Boards are encouraged to require a settlement agreement as part of a resolution of a complaint, thereby turning a surrender into a consent agreement. Under those circumstances, the parties are bound by a contractual agreement, thus modifying the legal arguments.

ASWB member boards, in their own words

Name of jurisdiction: Missouri
Name of board: State Committee for Social Workers

Number of board members: Ten-member board, to be made up of six LCSWs and one each: baccalaureate, masters, advanced macro, and public member. Only six are currently serving and all are LCSWs.

Licensure categories offered: Baccalaureate (LBSW), Masters (LMSW), Advanced Macro (LAMSW), and Clinical (LCSW).

Number of licensees: 6,300

Biggest achievement in the past 12 months: The State Auditor came to visit (never fun), which resulted in only one finding—and that was out of our control: that we have vacancies plus members serving with expired terms on our board, which has caused numerous meetings to be cancelled/rescheduled due to lack of quorum.

Biggest lesson learned in the past 12 months: Send all legal documents both certified and first class. Although our social worker statutes specify first class notification, the statutes for the administrative hearing commission require certified mail.

Biggest challenge facing the board: Not having enough gubernatorial appointments to ensure a quorum. Our statute requires members from all levels of licensure, which apparently is a challenge.

(complete the sentence) “I would really love to hear about how other jurisdictions...” deal with an attorney general’s office that seemingly has difficulties in handling disciplinary cases in a timely manner, which on occasion has resulted with dismissal because of the statute of limitations.

Completed by: Tom Reichard, Executive Director

useless tidbits from the association news editors:

It’s the Law!

In Columbia, you cannot have an antenna exposed outside your house, yet you can have a 25-foot satellite dish.

In Kansas City, installation of bathtubs with four legs resembling animal paws is prohibited.

In Mole, frightening a baby is against the law.

In Natchez, it is against the law to provide beer or other intoxicants to elephants.

In University City, one may not honk another’s horn.

In St. Louis, it is illegal to sit on a curb of any city street and drink beer from a bucket.
In another record-breaking year, the number of social work licensing exams administered in 2013 increased by 6.6% to reach 36,391. Tests were administered not only in North America but at international test centers in 2013. In the second year that this option was offered, candidates took the licensing exam in Ramat, Israel; Johannesburg, South Africa; Osaka-Shi, Japan; and Seoul, South Korea, to name a few.

Despite the increase in the number of exams administered, the pass rates for first-time test takers has remained consistent. This stability reflects positively on the validity of the exam and is a good indication of the examination’s reliability. The 2013 pass rates were: Associates exam, 76.9%; Bachelors, 77.8%; Masters, 82.3%; Advanced Generalist, 75.3%; and Clinical, 77.9%. Important to note of these results is the fact that pass rates are most representative for groups of more than 200 candidates. Both the Associates exam (117 exams administered) and Advanced Generalist exam (162 exams administered) fall short of this volume.

If this was a busy year for exam administration, it was also an exceptional year for ASWB’s Candidate Services Center (CSC), which handled registrations, product orders of study guides and online practice tests, requests for accommodations, and general questions from candidates about how to become licensed. The CSC answered 71,534 calls and registered 37,988 candidates in 2013. In response to a post-exam survey, candidates agreed 93.5% of the time that they were able to schedule a reservation easily and indicated a 91.6% satisfaction rate that registration went smoothly. These high ratings can be attributed to the outstanding customer service provided by ASWB’s dedicated staff.

Pass rates of first-time test takers are reported because they are the most reliable measure of ability. North American pass rates can be found on ASWB’s website.
It is with sadness that we notify our members of the passing of GRACE WHEELAN, wife of DAN WHEELAN, of Rhode Island. DAN served for many years as an item development consultant for ASWB’s examination program and is serving this year on the Finance Committee.

ASWB President DORINDA NOBLE, director of Texas State University’s School of Social Work, shared that a number of Texas State social work students are part of the social work service at the Ft. Hood military base. During and after the tragedy earlier this month at Ft. Hood, this team has been front and center providing aid to service members and their families. One of DORINDA’s faculty members wrote of the Ft. Hood social work service the day after the tragedy: “They are an INCREDIBLE team (one of the strongest I have ever seen in our profession!), and I know they hard at work this morning.”

What else do you eat when you’re minutes from the National Harbor in Baltimore? Exam Committee members GREG WINKLER (with wife KATHLEEN), MARY STEBBINS, TRISH SMITH, MIRIAM BALIN, and STACEY OWENS gathered for a crab feast in March during their first meeting of the year.

We heard that ALISON MACDONALD, executive director/registrar of the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, recently was a presenter at a seminar “Ethics R Us: Pursuing Ethical Practice in Social Work” hosted by the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers. BRIAN PHILSON, vice-chair of the Michigan Board of Social Work, and PAMELA MANELA, another member of the Michigan board, stopped by ASWB’s exhibit booth at the NASW-Michigan conference in Lansing to say hello.
ASWB was well represented at the NABSW conference, held in Indianapolis this year. Gathering for a photo op at ASWB’s exhibit booth are: LATONYA BANNISTER, ASWB staff; M. JENISE COMER (MO), ASWB secretary; FRAN FRANKLIN (DE), ASWB director at large; KAREN FRANCISCO, ASWB staff; PATRICIA HEARD (NC), ASWB past president; and SAUNDRA STARKS (KY), a former ASWB secretary and Exam Committee member.

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PHIL MATUSIEWICZ, registrar of the Prince Edward Island Social Work Registration Board, was honored by the Canadian Association of Social Workers during National Social Work Month. PHIL was one of two social workers to receive CASW’s Distinguished Service Award in March for having provided “exceptional service to the populations they serve as well as upholding and exemplifying the best of the profession.” Congratulations, PHIL!

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DONNA DeANGELIS, former ASWB executive director, and husband DENNIS recently returned from a three-week tour of India that included a visit to the Taj Mahal. “It was a very interesting experience,” DONNA wrote of the trip. “More of an expedition. The schedule was very demanding and it was a very long trip back. India is probably the most exotic place we’ve been, and the most undeveloped.”

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After seven years working at the Mental Health Clinic for the Canadian Forces, VICKI COY, of New Brunswick, has opened a private practice. She writes: “I am enjoying making my own hours and I am getting close to my caseload goal.” VICKI is a former member of the ASWB Exam Committee and a former Form Reviewer.

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Tops, a popular, four-level shoe store in Asheville, NC, proved too much of a temptation for ASWB President DORINDA NOBLE, ASWB CEO MARY JO MONAHAN, and AMANDA DUFFY RANDALL, a past president of ASWB. DORINDA and MARY JO were presenting to the National Association of Deans and Directors. AMANDA, director of the School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, was a participant.