



Law in Motion

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Message from the President... By Debbie Reber

When thinking about the topic of my "message", I had several ideas but nothing was coming together until I read the article that has been reprinted in this newsletter entitled "That's Not My Job". It was at that moment that I came up with a topic. This is a great article, by the way, and everyone should read it as we've all had that thought --- more than we'd like to admit.

Working in any law firm or related legal entity, whether a solo, small firm or large firm environment, requires a significant amount of ability to "get along", "go with the flow", or some other phrase equal to these. That applies not only to your working environment, but to your associations with non-work related organizations, i.e., the Santa Barbara Paralegal Association, among a host of others. Actually, the SBPA is semi-work related, but it's ultimately your choice whether or not you want to be a part of this organization. It's certainly not required. It's certainly not "part of your job". It is an option. Working within this organization requires effort and a willingness to work toward a common goal – that is, to further and better the local organization's impact on the community, to further your own legal education, and to heighten people's awareness of just what we do as paralegals. There may have been times that you have been asked to do something for this organization and you may have thought: "Oh, I don't want to be that involved. I just need my CLE credits. Please, don't ask me to do anything!" I've been guilty of that --- I admit it. But, after having been involved with this organization, I've found that in this particular organization there are many people in the SBPA who give more than would ever be expected of them or has actually been asked of them.

The SBPA's involvement with the Santa Barbara Legal Secretary's Association (SBSLA) on joint efforts as well as "cross-membership" has been a blessing and an eye-opening experience to the possibilities of combining efforts to raise the community's awareness and consciousness as to exactly what these organizations do and furthermore, what they are capable of doing within the community. Sometimes you're asked to do things for your organization that you feel uncomfortable doing, whether

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Message from the President... (Continued)

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through your feeling of lack of time to fully devote to the cause, your timidness about doing something that's been asked of you, or some other reason. Realize that the SBPA is only as strong as its membership and all members have a voice. We need your input – we need your assistance. Every member's efforts are needed. I could say that "teamwork" is what is needed, but I truly feel that the term "teamwork" has been highly overused and at some point, becomes a derisive term. One thinks of the movie "Office Space", and chuckles softly to him or herself. However, I beg to differ.

The SBPA offers not only CLE credit and great programming; it also relies on the thoughts, suggestions and input from all its members. If you haven't provided any "feedback" (another of those overused and overrated terms....) to your Board Members, you should rethink and offer suggestions to the SBPA as to what YOU would like to have for a program topic, community outing, fundraising for a worthy local cause, or for the annual MCLE conference program. Santa Barbara is a unique and incredible town --- it's a big "small town" with people/businesses willing to support your efforts with time, money, facilities and sponsorships.

I'm actually in hopes that our SBPA becomes not only a network for putting people in touch with others of like interests, job openings, discussion panels or merely a query to those in the field who can help when you're stuck on a project and have no where to turn. Our organization is a plethora of information – of many minds and inroads to other areas, contacts and data. Just last week, Lindsey Parks, the extraordinarily active secretary for the SBSLA emailed me with a query about a woman looking for a position in Santa Barbara as her husband had been accepted to the SB College of Law and she was hoping that we could assist her in possibly finding a position locally. In an almost instantaneous flurry of emails to the SBPA membership, possibilities

were found and the "network" of information flowed seamlessly to assist this young woman. It's neither something that's part of our job nor anything that we are expected to do, but it is something that we, as paralegals, do for others. We are in the field of assisting and helping others, whether it is for our direct attorneys to whom we are assigned, to a bevy of attorneys that we assist, to the clients that we represent, or to an associate of one organization or another. "Assisting" is our middle name. We wouldn't be in this field if we didn't like assisting others. No job is too small, too unimportant, too menial, or too insignificant that we cannot take on and do one heck of a job with it. That's what we do.

The entire state of California is connected, if you will, by various paralegal associations. We form this web of information and enlightenment. We all have the same or similar problems, challenges, woes, and varied working environments. By dissemination of information through the California Alliance of Paralegal Associations (CAPA), the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) and through our newsletters from every paralegal association in the State, we have an incredible wealth and network of information. We need only to ask for assistance and look to others for help and guidance. Actually, you can also access most any other state's paralegal associations and find their newsletters online in this "virtual reality". I urge all of you in the SPBA to become more involved, have a louder voice in what you want out of your organization and to be proud of the jobs that you do. We, as paralegals, are a valued group of professionals and all of you should be willing to do whatever you are asked to do, barring a "moral or criminal issue", because we have been trained, we are knowledgeable, we have good ideas, we have energy and we are here to ASSIST, whatever the task. This is not only for your job, but for the SBPA as well.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email me at dr@ppplaw.com. Have a great summer!

SHIRLEY E. MARSHALL, 86, a well-known paralegal in local legal circles, died in Modesto, California on June 16, 2008. Shirley began her career as a legal secretary for Willard McEwen, Esq. and worked in Santa Barbara for many years as a paralegal. As a charter member, she helped establish our paralegal association and later was made a lifetime member in recognition of her services.

Shirley was one of the first Certified Legal Assistants in California and served two terms as the President of our association, from 1979 to 1980 (our first year!) and from 1981 to 1982. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing and working with Shirley remember her as someone who was always willing to help others. She was the person other paralegals turned to for encouragement, career advice, and assistance with any and all legal questions—she always knew the answer! Shirley taught several legal secretary and paralegal classes over the years and was a mentor to many fledgling paralegals. She was also instrumental in creating and establishing the Certificate in Legal Assistantship program at UCSB Extension (now known Paralegal Studies).

After retiring from her active role as a paralegal, Shirley moved to Modesto to be near her daughter Susan and her family. While she was in Santa Barbara, Shirley helped the paralegal profession grow from a fledgling group of legal secretaries who wanted to expand their professional opportunities to the established career it is today. We owe much to her many contributions to the legal field. Because of her efforts, our association has become a strong presence in the local legal community and the paralegal profession has evolved into an acknowledged and fulfilling career.

Jane E. Endacott



"That's Not My Job!" (It May Not Be for Long)

Contributed by [Jeannie S. Johnston](#)

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We're all guilty of either saying or thinking this once or twice in our careers (present company included). The boss asks us to perform a task that we feel is a bit "beneath" us and the phrase magically pops into our brain. However, what happens when the thought becomes an attitude and how much truth is there in the comment in the first place?

For example, Peggy Paralegal is hard at work reviewing and organizing a stack of medical records that she has received as a result of her latest document production request binge. Suddenly, Betsy Boss appears in the door and states, "Peggy, Robin Receptionist is out sick today and I need you to cover her desk from 1:00 to 2:00 today. Thanks." Before poor Peggy can even explain that she has a mountain of work of her own, Betsy Boss is halfway to her office secure in knowing the front desk will be covered. You begin to feel your inner child stamping it's feet and turning bright red just before it falls to the ground in delightful tantrum. All of the sudden, out of blue...those words!!!! "That's not my job!!!"

Okay. So technically, it's NOT your job. When you interviewed for the position there wasn't ever a mention that you may have to cover the reception desk on occasion. You've come to a fork in the road at this point and you have a couple of options on which direction you could travel. To cover the desk or not to cover the desk? That is the question. Whatever the task, perhaps now is a good time to put things into perspective.

1. Is what you've been asked to do legal? No one would ever expect an individual to perform an illegal ask just because your boss has asked you to do it. Not many employers would ask you to perform an illegal act so, let's assume that you won't be heading off to jail for doing this particular task.

2. How important is it really? I'm talking about what you've been asked to do vs. what you normally do on a daily basis. Taking the view that anything you do for the company will benefit the company, and ultimately you, is a good way to keep a positive spin on those not-so-important tasks. This would fall into the "no job is too small" category.

3. Is this an obligation or an opportunity? If we turn negatives into positives, amazing things can happen. Don't assume that your boss doesn't notice how you react to anything and everything. Chances are good that they do notice. How you respond when you're asked to do something may play a significant part in your annual review and/or bonus.

4. Is your attitude showing? You can fake the genuine desire to be an asset to your employer in a pinch. They will recognize if you are sincerely glad to help or are doing something just because you were told to do it. Instead of sulking like a child, try taking the road less traveled and whistle while you work no matter what it is you may be charged with doing. Attitude is everything and can (and will) follow you throughout your entire career.

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"That's Not My Job!" (It May Not Be for Long)

Contributed by [Jeannie S. Johnston](#)

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Team work is an essential part of working for lawyers (or working for anyone for that matter). Take a trip to your local library and check out a few biographies on those who have made it to the top of their professions. Almost all of them started at the very bottom and to this day still perform what could be considered "menial" tasks. In fact, most entrepreneurs are what is described as "systems thinkers". What is a systems thinker? A systems thinker is one who intuits and sees the whole of a thing, the entirety of it, the one-ness of it, the integrated unity of it, as opposed to merely the sum of its parts. A systems thinker:

- Transcends the world in order to transform it.
- Is an inventor as opposed to an engineer.
- Sees purpose in everything, and sees the system as the realization of the purpose.
- Sees meaning in everything and, if not, pursues everything until the meaning becomes clear, until the system reveals itself in all its glory.
- Is possessed by the meaning of things.

The third quality of a systems thinker states they "see purpose in everything, and sees the system as the realization of the purpose." Again, no job should be too small to perform and what is good for the part is good for the whole. Everyone benefits!

Interestingly enough, when polled, most lawyers and firm administrators prefer a positive attitude over experience when considering hiring a perspective new employee. Individuals can learn to perform a particular task however, attitude is not necessarily something that can be taught.

I'd like to conclude by encouraging. Make your mark! Take charge and ingest the concept of "no task too small"! Don't be a work snob but instead be a team-player. You may be pleasantly surprised at the benefits you reap from such a change of heart. If that's not enough incentive to evoke a change consider this, the next time the desire to utter the words, "That's not my job" over come you, remember with an attitude like that...it may not be for long.

Jeannie S. Johnston obtained her Paralegal Degree from Athens Technical College and has been a practicing Paralegal for over 15 years. She has written for [Legal Assistant Today](#) and is the Founder and President of Paralegal Gateway, Inc. (a/k/a [ParalegalGateway.com](#)). Jeannie was recently hired as the Director of Paralegal Placement for the Atlanta division of Hudson Legal, the largest legal staffing firm in the United States and she also speaks at Paralegal Conferences nationally. Jeannie lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband, Daniel and their three furry children Tricksy (the dog), Riley (the cat) and Carson (the cat).





14 Tips Toward Effective Communication for Paralegals

Contributed by Elizabeth Brantlinger Angus

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onsider what you do on average day. For most paralegals, a conservative estimate has you spending 85% of your day communicating. Whether it is writing an inter-office memo, talking with a court clerk, discussing a case with your supervising attorney, or asking for a raise you are using the skill of communication. Enhancing your skills as a communicator is vital as you advance your career.

What is communication? It is the imparting and understanding of ideas and concepts. Note that in order to excel as a communicator you must be able to both articulate your thoughts and to understand others thoughts-it is truly a two way street. Everyone has had the experience of leaving a meeting and having no idea what was decided or even fully discussed. This is a result of lapsed communication-both on the part of the meeting facilitator and those attending. By applying the strategies discussed in this article, you will be able to avoid such unproductive meeting time and demonstrate your value to your organization.

The Basics of Oral and Non-Oral Communication

[change order: oral tips first then non oral]

1. Always consider your audience. This core concept applies whether you are speaking to a colleague over the water cooler to speaking before a large group of attorneys at a meeting. By taking into consideration who you

are speaking to and why you can target your remarks to that audience.

Using the example above of the unproductive meeting, the meeting facilitator should always determine prior to a meeting who will be there, for what purpose and draft an agenda accordingly. Following that agenda, drafted with particular audience in mind, allows the facilitator to guide the meeting more effectively and therefore communication among the group if far more productive.

2. Do your homework. Like a good boyscout, you should "always be prepared." Know who will be in a meeting and know what their interests are. If you are reporting on the status of a project, have all your notes and materials neatly organized in a way you can access easily. Shuffling papers and making mad dashes back to your desk to retrieve items does not make a good impression.

3. Understand the occasion. While it is fine to stop a colleague in the hall to quickly update them on a case, it is not effective to try to conduct an in depth analysis of a problem there. If you stop your boss on the way to the elevator to ask for a raise, why should she take you seriously? If it wasn't important enough for you to make an appointment it probably isn't important enough for her to consider.

4. Don't underestimate the power of your appearance and environment. Related to the point above, it is important that your surroundings and appearance add to your professionalism, not detract from it. Your surroundings and appearance communicate volumes; a messy desk, a loud radio, too much perfume or jewelry -- these things dilute your message.

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14 Tips Toward Effective Communication for Paralegals

Contributed by Elizabeth Brantlinger Angus

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5. Body language speaks for you. Just like your mother always told you, posture is important. Slumping in a chair, not standing to greet someone and avoiding eye contact all send the message that you are not engaged in the conversation. To clients this behavior indicates that they are not valued, to a supervisor this behavior indicates that you lack professionalism. Neither is an impression you want to make. If you're unsure what type of message your body language is sending, ask a trusted colleague to observe you in a meeting and report back problems they noted.

6. Listening is more than just hearing. People can listen nearly three to four times as fast as others can speak. Harrop Arthur Freeman, *Legal Interviewing and Counseling* (West Publishing, 1964) This means that it is easy for your mind to wander as a person speaks. Effective active listening requires that you listen without jumping to a response, to consider how something is being said, and to appreciate pauses and gaps in the conversation. By doing so, the effective paralegal understands what is being said and can make sense of it.

7. Always confirm your understanding. By actively listening, you can fully understand what the other person has said and give meaning to the feelings and content of the person's statements. To confirm that you understand what the person has communicated, it is important to "mirror" back what you have heard. *Effective Client Communication*, P.M. Lisnek, (West Publishing, 1992). In this process the listener repeats what he understands the speaker to have said. This process is vital when you are given an assignment orally. This mirroring is the only way both the speaker and the listener can be sure they have a mutual understanding of what has been decided. Simple phrases such as "To confirm, you want me to do a. b. c..." can do wonders in clarifying conversations.

The mirroring technique is equally effective in conversations with clients. By repeating your understanding of what they have said, clients feel valued and confident that their message has been heard and understood.

8. Speak clearly. It is always important to speak clearly and with enough volume that it is easy to hear you. Speak with confidence and everything you say will be more effective. Accurate and appropriate vocabulary is a must. Slang and curse words are never appropriate.

The Basics of Written Communication

"Because legal employers prize writing ability more highly than almost any other skill, you'll gain several immediate advantages:

- You'll be more likely to get whatever job you want.
- You'll be more likely to be promoted quickly.
- You'll have greater opportunities for career mobility, with a broad range of possibilities."

Legal Writing in Plain English, B. Garner (University of Chicago Press, 2001)

1. No legalese! It is a common occurrence during a student's first year of law school to begin speaking and writing in sentences that sound like this: "The respondent has heretofore neglected to file such writs as are required by such parties of the first part." Don't let this happen to you. The urge can be strong to demonstrate your legal knowledge by using "heretofores" but such legalese only makes your writing harder to understand and therefore less effective. Substitute legalese with "plain language" words.

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14 Tips Toward Effective Communication for Paralegals

Contributed by Elizabeth Brantlinger Angus

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2. Remember who you're writing for and why. As with oral communication, it is important that you always keep in mind who you are writing for. An inter-office memo to your supervising attorney requires a different kind of candor and research than a status letter written for a client. By keeping your audience foremost in your mind as you write, you can keep yourself focused on the proper tone.

3. Always use an outline. Justice Brandeis once said "There is no such thing [as] good writing, only good re-writing." The writing begins with a good outline. That outline should be your roadmap and guide you through the writing an re-writing process. It should include all resource and research references and also provide the order in which you will address each issue.

4. Know your assignment. If you have been given a writing assignment by a superior be sure you know exactly what they want. Confirm what they have requested by reading back to them your understanding of the assignment. Working on assignment and then being told it "isn't what I asked for" can be demoralizing and certainly not good for your career. It is often a good idea to begin any written assignment with the statement "You asked me to..." This frames the questions for the reader and reminds them what they requested.

5. Style and grammar are important. There is no excuse for submitting any type of writing that is not grammatically correct. The same goes for spelling-no errors allowed. Spell Check is a lifesaver and there are many good websites that offer a grammar refresher online, however – be careful – automatic spell check often introduces errors. Use short sentences and paragraphs whenever possible. Also, all papers should be clean visually, and formatted in the style dictated by your office.

6. Email etiquette. Email is great but must be used smartly

- When submitting a written assignment, determine if the recipient wishes to receive it electronically or in paper form. Many attorneys still prefer to have a paper copy on which to make notes and comments.
- Don't fall into the trap of being too informal. All email messages should be professional and include a salutation and signature. Be sure to use proper grammar and spelling here too.
- Keep it short. No one likes to see a 12 page email pop up and even fewer will read them.
- Always review your message before you hit the send button. Sender's remorse is a terrible thing.
- When answering a question with an email, be sure to include the original email containing the question or include the question in the beginning of your answer.
- Be clear and specific in the subject line of your email. Many people will not open a message called "memo to Steve".

With these tips in hand, you are on your way to a big career!

Attorney Elizabeth Brantlinger Angus is a member of the Connecticut bar. She graduated from St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY with a BA in Government and from the University of Connecticut School of Law with a JD. A native of West Hartford, she has practiced in the Greater Hartford area for over 10 years. Attorney Angus developed the Paralegal Studies Program at St. Joseph College, West Hartford, CT and has taught there for over 4 years. Attorney Angus is the author of The Professional Paralegal Workbook, for Thomson Delmar, an imprint of West Publishing Group. Attorney Angus has served on the boards of the Simsbury Junior Women's Club and the Latimer Lane Elementary School PTO.

Happiness Comes to Firms in Small But Important Perks



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Sometimes it's just the small things that matter. When workdays stretch into worknights and the pressure to meet the quota for billable hours grows, lawyers and paralegals at the firm of Perkins Coie can often expect a little bonus.

The firm actually has a "[Happiness Committee](#)" that surprises lawyers and staff members with lifestyle perks to keep morale up and takes the pressure off of long hours and stressful pressure to keep billable hours high.

In Perkins Coie's Chicago office, members of the firm's "happiness committee" recently left candied apples on everyone's desks. Last month, the happiness committee surprised lawyers, paralegals and assistants in the Washington office with milkshakes from a local Potbelly Sandwich Works, a favorite lunch spot.

Perkins Coie is not the only firm creating additional lifestyle perks primarily designed to retain young associates. "We're in a war for talent," says Gary Beau, HR Director for Kirkland & Ellis. The benefits go beyond the laptops and BlackBerrys, late-night rides home, Friday beer-and-pretzel fests and sports tickets that are standard fare at many large and midsize law firms. Many of the new perks recognize a lifestyle change that law firms are just coming to grips with.

DLA Piper, the country's largest law firm, reimburses employees \$2,000 when they buy a hybrid car. Fulbright & Jaworski offers on-site tailoring and offers employees reimbursements when they buy a Subaru, Nissan or General Motors car.

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson, a 600-lawyer firm, offers employees a personal coach and psychotherapy. O'Melveny & Myers, a large California-based law firm with offices in Asia, holds yoga classes at its Newport Beach office for lawyers and their staffs. And Kilpatrick Stockton, a large firm with offices throughout the Southeast, has a nap room in its Raleigh, N.C., office, complete with a reclining chair, sofa and travel alarm clock.

Arnold & Porter, based in Washington, was among the first to offer on-site day care, in 1995. Only a few firms, including Crowell & Morning, have followed suit — deterred, among other things, by insurance and zoning issues.

Some firms have come up with variations. Dechert, a 1,000-lawyer firm based in Philadelphia; Fried, Frank; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison; and Fulbright & Jaworski provide emergency nanny services, in which the firm will find and send a nanny to a lawyer's home.

While the perks are focused on keeping associates from turning-over, it's good to see that many of the perks also apply to the hard-working paralegal who has pretty much the same billable hourly demand but no chance of making partner. Finally, law firms seem to be "getting it".

Chere Estrin is the CEO of Estrin LegalEd, a Los Angeles based paralegal training company and founder of the Paralegal SuperConferences throughout the U.S. She has written 10 books in the paralegal field including Hot Jobs & Amazing Careers: Smart Moves for Paralegals. She can be reached at www.EstrinLegalEd.com.



CAPA REPORT (California Alliance of Paralegal Associations)

By: Josefina R. Martinez, CAPA Primary and Debra Wheels, CAPA Secondary

CAPA's 20th Annual Education Conference, "Strength through Alliance –Expand your Horizons", took place on Saturday, June 21, 2008 in Santa Clara County at the Hilton Hosted by Santa Clara County Paralegal Association ("PASCCO").

The attendance of Paralegals and other Professionals were overwhelming, the speakers and their topics were phenomenal. CAPA raised over \$3,000 in profit and around \$3,600 from the Opportunity Drawing. Each member association donated a prize valued at \$100 or more for the opportunity drawing.

There were approximately 14 vendors in attendance, Atkinson Baker Court Reporter, Catalyst Repository Systems, Corp 2000, CT Corporation, Deadlines on Demand, Inc., Fenwich & West LLP, Legal Secretaries, Inc., Marksmen Investigations, National Federation of Paralegal Associations, National Association of Legal Assistants, OneLegal, Inc., Robert Half Legal, Sarnoff Court Reporters and the Rutter Group. Each vendor donated a prize and held its own drawing giving the attendees a chance to win various prizes it was an exciting event.

CAPA BOARD MEETING:

Board Meeting, June 22, 2008, Santa Clara California

Representatives from all member paralegal associations were present.

Upcoming events were discussed, including the State Bar Annual Meeting, which will be held in Monterey on September 25-28, 2008. CAPA will be exhibiting at the meeting, which is viewed as

great venue for promoting the paralegal profession. CAPA will be promoting its handbook, which is a guide for utilizing paralegals. This guide is available on CAPA's website: www.capaparalegal.com.

The website has useful resource links, a calendar featuring the events of the member associations, and affiliate links, which every association member is encouraged to use. CAPA member benefits include discounts on movie tickets, theme parks, CEB materials/programs, flowers, and more. See <http://www.caparalegal.org/benefits.html>. Also, members and non-members alike are encouraged to use the Amazon link - <http://www.caparalegal.org/books.html> - whenever purchasing books, because each purchase benefits CAPA.

CAPA's VP of Policy, Heidi Maersch, reported on the current overhaul of the CAPA bylaws. The member associations are being asked to review changes in the bylaws, and representatives will be discussing and voting on those changes at the next board meeting.

CAPA's sustaining membership was discussed. Sustaining members are a source of income and public support for CAPA. Sustaining members are individuals or organizations who contribute \$150.00 or more annually to support CAPA, and receive prominent advertising placement on CAPA's website. Currently there are only three sustaining members. The board seeks the assistance of the member associations in recruiting sustaining members.

Carolyn Yellis, who is CAPA's liaison to the Solo & Small Firm Section of the State Bar, delivered a report on the Section's brainstorming retreat held in March 2008. The Solo Section intends to launch several "webinars" for MCLE credit. The

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CAPA REPORT (California Alliance of Paralegal Associations)

By: Josefina R. Martinez, CAPA Primary and Debra Wheels, CAPA Secondary

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Section is also looking for an attorney recipient for the Myer Sankary Lawyer of the Year Award.

To be eligible to receive the Myer J. Sankary Lawyer of the Year Award, individuals must be members of the Solo and Small Firm Section of the State Bar of California. The award serves to recognize lawyers who have volunteered time and leadership to furthering development of greater justice in the field of law, and focuses on those who have faithfully served the Solo and Small Firm Section of the State Bar of California. To nominate an attorney for this award, visit http://www.calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_generic.jsp?cid=10714&id=34143.

Thomas Horlick, CAPA's liaison to the Public Law

Section of the Bar, delivered a report on the Public Law Section's meetings in April and June 2008. Thomas took an opportunity at the latest meeting to discuss *Richlin v. Chertoff* (2008), the recent U.S. Supreme Court case which held that paralegal fees are recoverable at market rates. This case not only supports the economic incentive for attorneys to utilize paralegals, but helps elevate the status of paralegals as professionals.

The Executive Board reported on issues which will be further discussed and voted on at the next meeting, including whether to purchase a bond for the Board Treasurer, and Directors and Officers liability insurance.

The next CAPA board meeting will be held November 5-7, 2008, in Healdsburg.

NALA (National Association of Legal Assistants)

By: Cyndi Hitsman, NALA Liaison

“What exactly is “NALA” and what does it do?” This is a question I hear over and over again as the NALA Liaison for Santa Barbara Paralegal Association. In short, NALA stands for the National Association of Legal Assistants and is the national association with which our local association (SBPA) is affiliated. On a national level, NALA offers its association members and non-members continuing education opportunities and professional development programs. NALA also serves to further the paralegal field through its support of paralegal programs and legislation at state and national levels.

Professional Certification

NALA offers professional certification through its CLA/CP (Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal) Program and its ACP (Advanced Certified Paralegal) Program. The CLA/CP

certification is obtained by completing a two-day, nine part examination. The CLA/CP exam consists of examination on seven required subjects - Communications, Ethics, Legal Research, Human Relations and Interviewing Techniques, Judgment & Analytical Ability, American Legal System, and Legal Terminology - and four elective subjects chosen from Administrative Law, Bankruptcy, Business Organizations/Corporations, Contracts, Family Law, Criminal Law and Procedure, Litigation, Probate and Estate Planning, and Real Estate. The CLA/CP examination is offered three times per year for qualified examinees. Currently there are 1,424 paralegals holding the CLA/CP designation.

The ACP examination is offered to those individuals who have successfully obtained their

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NALA

By: Cyndi Hitsman, NALA Liaison

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CLA/CP designation. The ACP exam is an on-line course and examination offered through the NALA website. Examinees may choose from the following subjects: Contracts Management/ Contracts Examination, Discovery, Social Security Disability, Trial Practice, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Business Organizations (Incorporated Entities). Currently there are 59 paralegals holding an ACP designation.

More information regarding the CLA/CP and ACP examinations may be obtained from the NALA website at www.nala.org.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

NALA offers continuing education through its website, its annual convention, and through various programs offered throughout the country. NALA offers on-line educational opportunities in many areas of law, including ethics, to assist paralegals in maintaining compliance with continuing education requirements. Some classes may be taken on-line at the attendee's convenience, and others are offered via web transmission at *NALA Campus Live!* NALA offers study courses for their CLA/CP examination as well.

NALA's annual convention offers attendees an opportunity to earn over fifteen hours of continuing education credits. NALA offers various educational "tracks" focusing on one specific legal area or attendees may choose from a "cafeteria style" offering of various subjects. This year the convention will take place in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma from July 29 through August 2, 2008.

NALA publishes many educational books such as the CLA Review Manual and the NALA Manual for Paralegals, among other publications. NALA also

publishes a monthly educational magazine entitled "Facts and Findings" for its members.

Various other continuing education opportunities are offered throughout the Country by NALA such as their CLA Review Course. More information regarding all of NALA's programs may be obtained from NALA's website.

NALA'S SUPPORT OF PARALEGAL LEGISLATION

NALA works closely with State associations in supporting and adopting the definition of a paralegal. For instance, in California, NALA worked with and supported CAPA (the California Alliance of Paralegal Associations) as CAPA was actively lobbying for the definition of a paralegal, which ultimately resulted in the adoption of California *Business and Professions Code Section 6450*.

NALA most recently submitted an amicus brief in support of the recovery of paralegal fees in the Supreme Court Case of *Richlin v. Chertoff* which decision stated paralegal fees may be recovered at prevailing market rates. To read the entire *Richlin* decision, visit NALA's website.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any additional questions regarding NALA or what the association may do for you. Or, even better, visit NALA's comprehensive website to obtain answers to all of your questions. Also, please consider attending the NALA Convention in Oklahoma this year – I hope to see you there!



Paralegal Salaries Continue to Increase

Robert Half Legal projects moderate compensation growth in its 2008 salary guide.

By Ursula Furi-Perry, Esq.

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In the coming year, paralegals can again expect to see increases in their salaries, according to the 2008 Salary Guide released in October by Robert Half Legal, a nationwide legal recruiter based in Menlo Park, Calif. The guide projects that salaries for paralegals employed by large law firms are expected to climb by as much as 4.3 percent, from an average of \$55,750 to \$78,250 in 2007 to an average of \$57,750 to \$82,000 in 2008.

Salary growth also is projected for paralegals working in certain specialties, including litigation, corporate law, intellectual property, and real estate, according to Charles Volkert, executive director for Robert Half Legal. "We are continuing to be optimistic that salaries will continue to grow in the legal field, especially in high-demand practice areas such as litigation, intellectual property and corporate compliance," Volkert said.

According to the guide, increases in salary also are expected to vary based on the size of the law firm. For example, senior paralegals at large firms are expected to see their salaries grow 4.3 percent, to between \$55,750 and \$82,000. Paralegals with the same experience working at midsize or small firms can expect to see only a 2.9 percent increase, to between \$46,000 and \$60,500. However, senior in-house paralegal salaries are expected to grow 4 percent. In 2007, salaries ranged from \$51,000 to \$74,000, but in 2008, the range is expected to be \$52,500 to \$77,500.

In 2008, midlevel paralegals nationwide at large firms can expect a 4.4 percent salary in-

crease, ranging from \$48,000 to \$64,500; a 3.8 percent increase at midsize firms, ranging from \$45,750 to \$57,500; and a 2.4 percent increase at small firms, ranging from \$37,750 to \$48,500, according to the salary guide. Paralegals new to the field also will likely see increases in salaries with a 4.2 percent increase for new paralegals who are hired at large firms, \$30,750 to \$38,250; 3.5 percent at midsize firms, \$29,500 to \$37,500; and 3.2 percent at small firms, \$25,000 to \$31,750.

The guide also indicates a clear preference among firms for paralegals with technical skills. "Paralegals who are well versed in technology tools are at a premium," Volkert said. He cited in-demand technology skills involving litigation and case management programs such as LexisNexis Concordance, CT Summation, InData's TrialDirector, IConnect, Kroll Ontrack, and Stratify, and research tools such as Westlaw and LexisNexis.

According to Volkert, paralegals who speak foreign languages also are in high demand, as are those willing to move across the nation — or even the pond — for work. Robert Half Legal has placed candidates with language skills that include Mandarin, Spanish, German, Portuguese, French and Japanese. For firms heavily involved in international business, fluency in these languages is highly desirable. "The ability for candidates to relocate can certainly assist them," Volkert explained. "And that can allow for an increase in salary."

Another finding of the salary guide is that senior paralegal candidates continue to be in-demand, with some firms offering these candidates perks, such as signing bonuses and increased vacation time, which traditionally were offered to attorneys.

When looking at salary surveys, it's important to ensure accurate reliance on the data. Both paralegals and employers should look at a variety

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of salary surveys because each one uses different methodology and data sources, noted Carolyn Hilgers, director of paralegal services at King & Spalding in Atlanta and immediate past president of the International Paralegal Management Association. "Paralegals and students need to make certain that each survey they review is using the same data before relying on one survey," Hilgers said. "For example, an average salary is not that helpful unless the years of experience, location, size of firm and specialty are included in the data. It is helpful to know as much as possible about the organization that responded to the survey so the user of the survey can assess the accuracy, again looking at the size of the firm or organization, years of experience, region or city and specialty."

Salary surveys also can influence those "new to the legal field and looking for career growth," Volkert pointed out. Higher salary increases in different practice areas generally mean increased growth and hiring as well; new paralegals can look at salary trends to determine which specialties might offer more job opportunities.

Employers also can benefit from scouring salary guides. "It's really crucial to know what the salaries are in the market," Volkert said. Employers who are out of touch in terms of compensation might not find the quality of talent for which they are looking.

Results in the 2008 salary guide are based on temporary and permanent placements made by Robert Half throughout North America. In addition to paralegals, the report also surveyed attorneys; employees who hold legal management, corporate, and legal administrative positions; legal secretaries; and legal specialists. The guide can be obtained for free at www.roberthalflegal.com.

Additional National Salary Surveys

The National Federation of Paralegal Associations

Survey: Compensation and Benefits Report

Release Date: December

Legal Assistant Today

Survey: Annual Salary Survey

Release Date: March/April issue

The National Association of Legal Assistants

Survey: National Utilization and Compensation Survey

Release Date: April

The International Paralegal Management Association

Survey: Annual Compensation Survey for Paralegals/Legal Assistants and Managers

Release Date: May

Ursula Furi-Perry, Esq., is a nationally published legal writer based in Massachusetts.

2008 CALENDAR

CALENDAR

September 1, 2008 – Labor Day

(court closed)

October 13, 2008 – Columbus Day

(court closed)

October 16, 2008– National Boss Day

November 11, 2008– Veteran’s Day

(court closed)

November 27, 2008 – Thanksgiving Day
(court closed)

November 28, 2008 – Day after Thanksgiving
(court closed)

December 25, 2008– Christmas Day

(court closed)

CONFERENCES

July 30-August 2, 2008 - 33rd Annual Convention of NALA will be held at the Renaissance Hotel, Oklahoma City, 10 North Broadway, Oklahoma City, OK



SBPA LUNCHEONS

This year’s general membership meetings will be held on the following dates and are open to you and your guests:

September 9, 2008 - 12:00 pm. - 1:30 p.m.

November 11, 2008 - 12:00 pm. - 1:30 p.m.

All luncheon membership meetings are held at Santa Barbara Bank & Trust, located at 1021 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara. If you have questions regarding the program please contact Jill Sadler at jill@jackmansadler.com.

Catered Buffet Luncheon - \$18 members, \$20 non-members

RSVP to Jill Jackman Sadler at jill@jackmansadler.com

Please remember that food orders for the meetings are based on the RSVPs. Please cancel your RSVP before the food is ordered if you are unable to attend the meeting after all, otherwise the association will have to pay for the meal and too much food is left over. On the flipside, please RSVP for meeting before the food is ordered (especially if you are part of a bigger group) to ensure that there is enough food for everyone. Thank you!



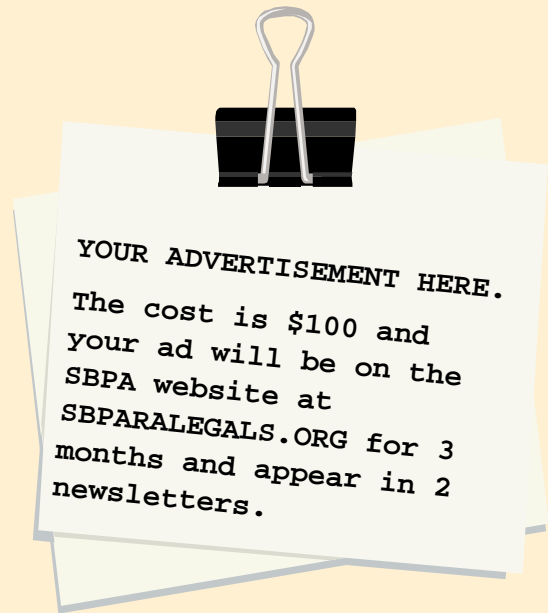
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The cost is \$100 and your ad will be on the SBPA website at SBPARALEGALS.ORG for 3 months and appear in 2 newsletters.



New Superior Court Voice Communications System

The Santa Barbara Superior Court has installed and converted to a new voice communications system to replace the County-supplied telephone system currently in use. The new communications system includes an enterprise IP phone system and an Intervoiced automated business process system for voice and web. New telephone numbers will be assigned to most employees and Divisions in our North and South County regions. The exceptions to this conversion are the Pre-Trial Services Division and the Interactive Voice Response system used for payment of fines in criminal and traffic cases.

The cutover to the Superior Court new telephone system is July 1, 2008. Effective July 1, 2008, please utilize this new list of Santa Barbara Superior Court telephone numbers. Please advise all staff of this change, and direct them to the Superior Court website for new court telephone and fax numbers effective Tuesday, July 1, 2008.

<http://www.sbcourts.org/SBCourtsPublicDirectory.pdf>

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Employment and Job Bank	Jill Jackman Sadler

If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Deborah Reber. If you have comments, questions, or articles to submit for the newsletter, please email them to Sandra Biesinger. Thank you.



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