



Lafayette Paralegal Association, Inc.

lpa-la.org

Summer 2006

Issues Affecting the Paralegal Profession

Throughout the US, bar associations and all national paralegal organizations are debating the following topics, which will affect all current and future paralegals:

1. Job Satisfaction

Most paralegals are satisfied with their choice of profession and would choose it again, by an 82% to 18% ratio, according to *Legal Assistant Today*, January/February 2006.

The top five reasons for working as a paralegal are: 1) enjoy the intellectual stimulation; 2) enjoy law but do not wish to be a lawyer; 3) enjoy helping others; 4) enjoy job security, a variety in duties, etc.; 5) enjoy the pay.

Those unsatisfied with the profession give the following reasons: 1) lack of upward mobility [31%]; lack of respect as a professional [19%]; salary ceiling [19%]; work not challenging; attorneys too hard to work with; pressure for billable hours.

In that same issue, a survey of paralegals by a legal newspaper, *The Fulton County Daily Report*, found salary to be a key issue with paralegals and may be why paralegals look for a new position. However, 31% of respondents said a challenging job is more important. Flexible hours and medical insurance was the most important issue for 24% of the respondents, and salary for 13% of the respondents.

Professionalism was a top concern for respondents, but most felt they were treated as professionals and part of a legal team. Most respondents had careers for more than 11 years with 57% reporting salaries of more than \$50,000.

2. Paralegal Education Standards

When the paralegal profession began, anyone working in the legal field with the interest and aptitude for paralegal work was welcomed and trained by attorneys who were more than happy to

share some of the necessary, but tedious “going over records,” drafting, research, etc., with a paralegal. Hence, the beginning of the profession.

As the use of paralegals has grown, employers and clients, have begun to require more education and/or certification before hiring a paralegal. This has been fueled by the use of paralegals in more complex fields.

Paralegal educators are recommending that those wishing to pursue a career in the paralegal field obtain a bachelor’s degree and a paralegal certificate or certification. Some universities offer a master’s degree in paralegals studies, however, a paralegal’s salary requirements with a master’s degree may be limiting. At present, the minimum hiring standard remains a bachelor’s degree and a paralegal certificate.

3. Paralegal Regulation

Always a hot topic in the paralegal field, various forms of paralegal regulation are being considered throughout the United States.

Richard A. Plumer, Esq., weighs in on the issue in the *Raising the Bar*, *Legal Assistant Today*, May/June 2006:

I don’t believe it’s coincidental that the professions recognized and respected throughout the country are those professions that are significantly self-regulated from an educational, practice and disciplinary standpoint. If paralegal organizations remain voluntary and all-inclusive, I think the profession will miss its opportunity to be recognized both in terms of respect and financial rewards. If the professional paralegal community is willing to set and enforce high standards in which employers and clients have a high level of assurance of competency and credibility backed by a strongly regulated professional association, only then do I see paralegals receiving credit for being the true professionals they are.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Jackie L. Landry, CP

First, I would like to welcome all our new members, thank renewing members for their continuing membership, and thank our sustaining members for their continued support. I would also like to thank all the Committee Chairs for their hard work and assistance. Everyone has come into the new year with a willingness to work and to work together for the benefit of LPA.

LPA is a wonderful organization for many reasons. It is a great networking system for paralegals to meet other paralegals in their field and to meet paralegals in other areas of law. Our monthly seminars assist our CLAs, CPs, RPs, notaries public, and LCPs with continuing education. A topic not in your area of law may spark and interest and become something to pursue later in your career.

LPA helps with community interests such as Downtown Alive and Pro Bono clinics with the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers. We donate presents for children at our Christmas Social and bring happiness to special children in our area.

LPA is here to help you if you decide to sit for a national certification. We have members that are NALA certified CLAs or CPs, CLAS or CPS (specialized), and members with Louisiana State certifications. These members are here to help you prepare to sit for the examinations.

I know that we are all in a fast paced profession, but please remember to take time once in a while to think about how far our profession has come and where LPA is going. I look forward to seeing you at the luncheon seminars and social functions.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We extend a **warm** welcome to our new members:

Patrice E. Francis

Tara Richard

Lesley T. Simon



Incoming President, Jackie Landry, CP, presents outgoing president, Debbie Fontenot, CLA, with a plaque of appreciation.

*** SUSTAINING MEMBERS ***

We thank our sustaining members
for their continued support!!!

Liskow & Lewis

The Juneau Firm

Kenneth W. Jones, Jr., APLC

Allen & Gooch

Pro-Legal Copies

Lowry's Kwik Kopy

Scan Solution Services

Randy David

DNA Services of America

Reynolds Law Firm

The Glenn Armentor Corporation



Hon. Don Aaron installs 2006-2007 officers. President: Jackie L. Landry, CP, Vice President: Wayne Lemoine, and Secretary: Debbie Billiot. Not shown: Treasurer: Traci Hebert.

MONTHLY LUNCHEON SEMINARS

LPA continues to offer monthly luncheon seminars and continuing legal education credits for participants. The seminars are held at the Petroleum Club of Lafayette.

Thanks to all our speakers who are always informative and, as a bonus, quite entertaining.

November 2005 -- **Forensic Investigation**, presented by Jeff Martin, President and CEO of DNA Services of America, Inc.,

January 2006 -- **Investigating High Profile Cases**, presented by Maj. James Craft, Lafayette City Police



Traci Hebert, Maj. James Craft, Kathy Stanley, CLA; and Debbie Fontenot, CLA

February 2006 -- **Annual Meeting, Elections, and Installation of Officers**, by The Honorable Don Aaron, retired.

March 2006 -- **Mediation in Litigation**, presented by Joel E. Gooch, Esq.

April 2006 -- **Workers Compensation in Louisiana – A Practical Look**, presented by Mark Riley, Esq.



Mark Riley, Esq.

May 2006 -- **Think you Need a High Profile Criminal Defense Lawyer? Think again!**, presented by James Kirk Piccione, Esq.



Kirk Piccione, Jackie Landry, CP; Mary Margaret Comeaux, CP; and Wayne Lemoine

June 2006 -- **The ABC's of MRP's – A Basic Guide to the Medical Review Panel Process**, presented by Daniel C. Palmintier, Esq.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- July 25** Luncheon Seminar/Petroleum Club
Speaker: Blaise M. Sonnier, Esq.
Topic: Forced Heirship
- Aug. 25** Luncheon Seminar/Petroleum Club
Speaker: Glenn Armentor, Esq.
Topic: Representing the Profoundly Injured Client – Two Case Studies
- Sept. 21 & 22** Louisiana State Paralegal Association
Annual Meeting and Seminar
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- Sept. 12** Paralegal Week Social
A' la Carte
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 25** Luncheon Seminar/Petroleum Club
Speaker: Jimmie Murvin, CLA, LCP
Topic: Discovery
- Nov. 25** Luncheon Seminar/Petroleum Club
Speaker: Angela Rayon, CLA
Topic: Paralegal Ethics
- Dec.** Christmas Social
TBA

Contact **Kaye Pooler** at **266-1190** or at **poolerk@onebane.com** for luncheon reservations or with suggestions for meeting speakers and topics.

DOWNTOWN ALIVE !!!

LPA participates in various community activities, including being a vendor in Downtown Alive! twice yearly. Great fun and great publicity. Thanks to Debbie Fontenot, CLA, for the photos.

If you would like to participate with LPA as a vendor in Downtown Alive!, please contact **Molly Davenport** at davenportm@onebane.com or **266-1166**, for the next date and time



Al Thomas, Nina Piccione, Mary Margaret Comeaux, CP; Savannah Stephan, CLA; and Darlene Conque

LOUISIANA STATE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING AND SEMINAR

The Sheraton Hotel in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is the site of LSPA's Annual Meeting scheduled for September 21 and 22, 2006.

The seminar begins Friday, with an awards banquet Friday night. The annual meeting will be held on Saturday morning, following by a transitional board meeting.

For more information on the seminar or membership in LSPA, contact **Lescee Mills** at lesceem@yahoo.com or **337-289-6906**.

LPA T-SHIRTS

LPA t-shirts available in grey with red lettering and logo. \$10 Contact **Savannah Stephan** at **291-1212**.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

"To further education and certification among members of the paralegal profession" is a goal of LPA. LPA would like to assist those members wishing to attain a national certification.

If you are contemplating sitting for a nationally certified examination and would like to coordinate with others preparing for the exam, please contact **Angela Rayon, CLA**, at abr@juneaulaw.com or at **269-0052**.

The following national certifications are available for paralegals. Detailed information on the requirements is available on the following websites:

CLA "Certified Legal Assistant" or
CP "Certified Paralegal"
National Association of Legal Assistants
www.nala.org

PP "Paralegal Professional"
National Association for Legal Professionals
www.nals.org

RP "Registered Paralegal"
National Federation of Paralegal Associations
www.paralegals.org

PRO BONO WORK

LPA members assist the community by volunteering their services at pro bono legal clinics sponsored by the Lafayette Volunteer Lawyers. Debbie Fontenot, CLA, Debbie Burke, Darlene Conque, and Savannah Stephan, CLA, participated in the last clinic, held April 29, 2006. The next clinic will be held August 5, from 9 to 11. If you would like to participate, please contact **Savannah Stephan** at savannahstephan@allengooch.com or **291-1212**. No family law experience is necessary.



Michelle Trahan, Nancy Hartwell, Deborah Hernandez, Jessie Cormier, CLA; Lesley Simon.

Paralegal Week Social

Each year, the Governor of Louisiana and the Lafayette City-Parish President designate one week in September as Paralegal Week, and LPA celebrates Paralegal Week with a social.

Last year's celebration was a great success and we are looking forward to this year's celebration which will be held at A La Carte on September 12.

All paralegals, attorneys, paralegal students, secretaries, and those working in law are invited to attend.



Savannah Stephan, CLA; Jill Romero of DNA Services of America; and Renatti Dupont toast the paralegal profession.



Welcoming committee: Barbara Barton, Traci Hebert, and Jackie Landry, CP.



Brent Norris, Cathy Bacon, Deputy Clerk of Federal Court; Jean Ouellet, Esq.; and Douglas Truxillo, Esq., join in the festivities.

***Paralegals, Attorneys, Paralegal
Students***

are cordially invited

to a social hosted by

***The Lafayette Paralegal
Association***

In celebration of

Paralegal Week

A La Carte

September 12, 2006

5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.



Lafayette Paralegal Association, Inc.
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LPA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS FOR 2006-2007

President:	Jackie L. Landry, CP	landja@liskow.com	267-2383
Vice President:	Wayne Lemoine (Membership Chairperson)	wlemoine@glennarmentor.com	233-1471
Secretary:	Debbie Billiot	paralegal@kjoneslaw.com	593-9062
Corresponding Sec:	Savannah Stephan, CLA	savannahstephan@allengooch.com	291-1212
Treasurer:	Traci Hebert (Fund Raising Chairperson)	tha@juneaulaw.com	269-0052
Parliamentarian:	Mary Margaret Comeaux, CP (Website)	marymargaret@allengooch.com	291-1242
Education/Survey:	Angela Rayon, CLA	abr@juneaulaw.com	269-0052
Historian/Photographer:	Molly Davenport	davenportm@onebane.com	266-1166
Program:	Kaye Pooler	poolerk@onebane.com	266-1190
Public Relations:	Yvette Hanks	ymh@prklaw.com	267-6062
Job Bank:	Barbara Barton	bbarton@oatshudson.com	233-1100
LSPA Liaison	Lescee Anne Mills	lesceem@yahoo.com	289-6906