

Lafayette Paralegal Association

January, 2011
Newsletter

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www.lpa-la.org



Lafayette Paralegal Association

• Since 1984 •

Benefits of LPA Membership

By Rachel Martin

I graduated from college in 2006, with a B.A. degree in Pre-Law/POLS and a minor in English. I took the LSAT within a few months of graduation with every intention of applying to law school in the not-too-distant future. When I began researching and visiting prospective schools around the country, I became quite overwhelmed with the daunting task of narrowing my possible choices down to five or ten "top schools". As with any significant endeavor, the decisions I faced were complex and rapidly multiplying; and I felt immensely unequipped to make any intelligent determination about which school and which specific law curriculum would be best suited for me and my future.

Feeling unequivocally stuck and frustrated, I began exploring my immediate employment options - with my present education and work experience to date - that journey led me to the Paralegal profession; and shortly thereafter, to my membership with the Lafayette Paralegal Association (LPA). In the years that have followed, I have found the association to not only be an invaluable resource in my professional career but also in my personal life. I have leaned on my fellow members without hesitation, and have always been greeted with a welcoming smile that says "how can I help?" and answered with a sound solution, a few kind words of encouragement, and a strong sense of "it will be okay!".

To list all the benefits I have enjoyed as a member of LPA would take much longer than this short article allows, so with that said, I will do my best to not let my own personal gratitude outweigh my more important professional message. Instantaneously upon becoming a member of LPA, you have at your fingertips a network of savvy Paralegals with a treasure trove of experience ready and willing to aid you in any way they can. The memberships' combined knowledge and experience spans the entirety of the legal profession and far surpasses what any one individual could hope to possess.

Effectively, when you join LPA, the memberships' knowledge and experience become YOUR knowledge and experience, and stands readily available and at your disposal. As a young Paralegal, lacking the professional experience, I found this wealth of know-how to truly be a God send. Tasks that had taken me hours were cut literally into minutes, duties that had consumed most of my afternoon became effortless (continued)

LPA Call for Nominations

By Kaye Pooler, CWCP, CMSP

The time to fill the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer for the Lafayette Paralegal Association for the year 2011-2012 is rapidly approaching. Elections of Officers will take place at our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, February 22, 2011, and we must obtain and confirm nominations for those positions at this time. The Nomination Form is available on the "Members Only" page of the LPA website (www.lpa-la.org).

Any active LPA member in good standing is eligible to run for office. The job duties for each office are also available on the "Members Only" page of the LPA website. The term for each office is one year.

Please review the membership roster, also available on the LPA website, which identifies members and their current status (i.e.: "active", "associate", "sustaining") and provide Kaye Pooler with the name(s) of any active members whom you would like to nominate to serve as an Officer on the 2011-2012 Board.

Please consider running for an office yourself, and take the time to look over the roster and nominate someone for each of the other offices. We need your help to continue the good work that our organization has done and continues to do! **Please provide your nominations to Kaye no later than January 31, 2011.** You can either mail the Nomination Form by standard mail to Kaye Pooler at 321 Upland Dr., Lafayette, LA 70506; or you can make your nominations via e-mail to poolerk@bellsouth.net.

Thank you for your consideration on behalf of LPA.

Benefits of LPA Membership

(Continued)

automatics; and perhaps most importantly, my feelings of professional inaptitude were replaced by a strong sense of faith and confidence in the professional experience and aptitude of LPA.

As my role and participation in the organization has increased, my genuine affection for the association has also grown; and the professional relationships I have enjoyed with my fellow members have developed into personal friendships...an unexpected bonus. In closing, I'd just like to say, "Thank You" and "Job Well Done" to all of the LPA members, old and new alike, for their individual commitment to the group effort that has made the association what it is today.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 22, 2011
Annual Meeting and
Election of 2011-2012 Officers

March 22, 2011
Speaker & Topic TBA

- Regular monthly meetings are held at the Petroleum Club of Lafayette. The cost of the buffet or soup/salad bar is still only \$15 per person, and a beverage fee of \$3.00 for anyone not eating (all prices are inclusive of tax and gratuity).
- Seminars are free to members; non-members are asked to pay a \$5 seminar fee.

President's Note



As we draw near to LPA's upcoming elections, I wish to thank everyone who has participated in LPA this past year. We have had a year filled with informative seminars and have made stronger friendships with fellow members. Meeting and participating in the Judge's Forum was another highlight of this past year. I encourage each of you to consider taking a more active role in our organization. Please review the officer positions and committees available, which are listed on page 2 of this newsletter. I feel blessed to have been able to serve you this past year and look forward to the upcoming year.

- Mae Ewing, LPA President
2011 - 2012

BECOMING A LOUISIANA CERTIFIED PARALEGAL

By Jessie Cormier, CP, LCP

I finally did it – I became a Louisiana Certified Paralegal as of December 22, 2010! It has been a long journey for me, one that started more than twenty years ago. Shortly after obtaining my paralegal certificate and then successfully passing NALA's Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal examination in 1989, I joined the Louisiana State Paralegal Association. One of the ways I became involved was to become chair of the certification committee.

LSPA's certification committee promoted voluntary certification, specifically the CLA program, as well as explored the area of state specific certification. Paralegals in Florida already had a state specific certification exam and other state paralegal associations were considering it. NALA promoted voluntary certification while the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) was in favor of mandatory regulation and even independent status (performing specific paralegal services directly to the public).

After attending a national forum on paralegal certification and regulation, I presented information to LSPA's board, and a resolution in favor of a Louisiana specific certification was passed by LSPA's membership at the 1992 annual meeting. Over the next four years, LSPA held a statewide symposium on certification and paralegals, paralegal educators and attorneys including the Louisiana State Bar Association were invited to attend. Presentations were made to local paralegal associations. A daylong seminar was held during which Chad Ellett, Ph.D. of LSU instructed attendees on the process of preparing a certification examination. Many members of LSPA were involved, most notably Sandra Smith, CLAS, (LSPA President 1993-94) who completed the process of preparing the examination.

The LCP exam was first offered in 1996 and has been offered twice a year every year since. So, why didn't I sit for the LCP exam then? I was already a CLA which is a pre-requisite (you can take the LCP exam before obtaining CLA/CP status but you can't use the LCP designation until you pass the national exam). There were personal reasons including being stressed out and burned out. Burn out? I never thought it would happen to me because I love being a paralegal, I love the practice of law and I enjoy participation in both state

and local paralegal associations. I guess if it could happen to me, it could happen to you.

I left my paralegal position at The Onebane Firm in 1998 for a sabbatical. My husband's job required him to travel to other states so we bought a fifth wheel camper and I traveled with him. We spent time in Georgia, north Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Texas and New Mexico. I never gave up being a paralegal, though. I attended seminars to get the necessary continuing legal education hours to maintain my CLA/CP status. I even listed paralegal as my occupation on our income tax returns. As much as I enjoyed those four years, my husband's job petered out as his hours were cut, the company was sold and he was laid off. Although he looked for work and worked sporadically, financial obligations required me to go back to work. I did some temporary work and returned to full time paralegal employment in 2002.

I became more active in LSPA (although I maintained my membership and continued to keep the association's history books). I chaired the LCP Review Course committee and attended the three day annual review course ". . . Only in Louisiana" in 2008. Then I sat for the exam and began the two year process of studying, retaking sections and, yes, even praying. For more information on the exam, visit www.la-paralegals.org.

Attaining the Certified Paralegal and Louisiana Certified Paralegal credentials is a goal for all who consider the paralegal profession a career, not just a job. It may not get you a raise, a window office or eternal gratitude from your employer but it is:

1. An accomplishment of which you can always be proud,
2. A step in building your career,
3. A way to earn the respect of your colleagues,
4. A measure of your paralegal knowledge and education,
5. A means to enhance your career options and more.

Voluntary certification establishes professional standards and promotes recognition of the paralegal profession. I encourage you to take up the challenge and begin the process of obtaining one or more paralegal certifications.

CONGRATULATIONS

Jessie Cormier, CP, LCP

Louisiana's newest LCP

and

Kaye Pooler, CWCP, CMSP

on earning her Certified Medicare
Secondary Payer designation



LPA 2010 – 2011 Officers

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Vice-President:
Deborah P. Fontenot, CLA

Treasurer:
Cheri-lea T. McDonald

Parliamentarian:
Kaye Pooler, CWCP, CMSP

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Kathy D. Stanley, CLA

Corresponding Secretary:
Rachel Martin

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Molly Davenport, CLA

Finance: Cheri-lea McDonald
Job Bank: Darlene A. Conque

LSPA Liaison: Debbie Billiot

LBA Liaison: Savannah Stephan

Membership: Deborah Fontenot, CLA

Newsletter: Deborah P. Fontenot, CLA

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Survey: Savannah Stephan

Technical/Web Page:
Deborah P. Fontenot, CLA

What Have You Missed?

Haven't been able to attend the LPA events? Here's a look at what you've missed since our last Newsletter.

September: LPA Paralegal Week Social



Monthly Luncheon Seminars:

The Louisiana Supreme Court: "So You Want a Little Help from Above?"

Presented by
J. Keith Gates, Attorney at Law
September 28, 2010



Workers Compensation Update 2010

Presented by
Mark L. Riley,
The Glenn Armentor Law Corp
October 19, 2010



"De-Mystifying Computer Forensics"

Presented by
Dr. Johnette Hassell, Ph.D.
November 16, 2010



Autumn After Hours Social

hosted by **HARD COPY**
November 4, 2010



December: Annual Christmas Lunch & Acadiana Youth Project

December 7, 2010



LAFAYETTE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION THANKS ITS SUSTAINING MEMBERS:

To contact Sustaining Members please visit www.lpa-la.org and click on their logo.

Benjamin J. Pooler II

Pooler Consultants Ltd.

Safety Expert



Legal Reporting, LLC



**PERRIN, LANDRY, deLAUNAY,
DARTEZ & OUELLET**
PERSONAL INJURY & MARITIME LAW

