



# Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

## Message From the Current President Gwen Burgess, CLA MPA's 2008 President

So many things to do, so little time. Yes, this year is swiftly drawing to a close. But don't stop now! We have accomplished so many wonderful things—and there are still LOTS of exciting things to come in 2008. Some of the things we've accomplished include:

- Celebrated Paralegal Day on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Elsewhere in the newsletter you will see a copy of the Proclamation issued by Governor Barbour in recognition of the contributions of paralegals to the legal field. Many offices arranged for recognition of YOUR contributions to the operations of their offices and to serving their clients by providing lunch or gifts for their paralegals.
- Our Fall Seminar was held on **September 25<sup>th</sup>** at the Capital Club in downtown Jackson. Kim Badillo lined up some excellent speakers and topics including such topics as Katrina Litigation and Mediation; General Business: Contracts and Securities; and a Generations workshop, to name only a few.
- On October 10th, the University of Mississippi and MPA co-sponsored a seminar for paralegals on the Ole Miss campus. This was the first of many such seminars we hope to help co-sponsor with UM in different areas of the state. This is one of MPA's efforts to help make continuing legal education opportunities available to its members statewide.

On October 23rd, MPA's Annual Meeting was held in Jackson at the Capital Club. In

addition to conducting the business of electing officer for 2009, NALA Liaison Tricia Nelson-Easley narrated a slide show of photos taken by those MPA members who attended the NALA Convention in Oklahoma City in July. The slide show was beautifully compiled by Bridget Breithaupt. Look for articles written by those who attended the NALA Convention to learn more of what happened there.

And speaking of the elections, this year's elections were enlivened by the friendly competition among those candidates involved in contested races. The officers elected to serve in 2009 are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. I'm sure that all of the candidates join me in saying that your support was appreciated by each candidate who ran and that it was your participation in the election process that made this election season a little more exciting. Thank you to all who sent in your absentee ballots and to those of you who attended the Annual Meeting and voted in person. Your input is ALWAYS appreciated! ate. After all, MPA is all about YOU!

Finally, remember to submit your renewal as an MPA member. Renewal forms and dues are due **NOVEMBER 1<sup>st</sup>**. Please visit our website, print a renewal form, complete and mail it along with your dues. Renewal forms may be found at <http://www.msparalegals.org/renewal%202007.pdf>. After **NOVEMBER 15th**, a late charge of \$15.00 will be imposed.

I wasn't kidding about having so much left to do this year! Please take advantage of every opportunity to get the most out of your MPA membership and to make MPA the best it can be – now and in the future!

### MPA Officers

President – Gwen Burgess, CLA  
VP/Education-Kim Badillo  
VP/New Membership – Mary Lynne Underwood  
VP/Established Membership – Zenda Heafner, CLA  
Secretary – Jamie C. Earls, CLA  
Treasurer – Kimberly Pierce, CP

NALA Liaison – Tricia Nelson-Easley, ACP  
Student Liaison – Suellen Johnson, CLA  
Region I Director – Veronica Coleman, ACP  
Region II Director – Lisa Taylor, CP  
Region III Director – Deborah Player, CLA  
Region IV Director – Beverly Brooks  
Region V Director – Bridget Breithaupt, CP  
Parliamentarian – Paula Joyner, CP

---

## MPA 2008 Committee Chairs

Audit – Kimberly Pierce, CP  
Bar Relations – Tricia Nelson, ACP  
Bylaws – Paula Joyner, CP  
CLA Coordinator – Zenda Heafner, CLA  
Education – Kimberly Badillo  
Elections – Paula Joyner, CP  
Job Bank Coordinator – Kelli Newman  
Membership – Zenda Heafner, CLA and Mary Lynne Underwood  
Newsletter – Renee Tabari  
Pro Bono – Sandrena Durr  
Professional Development – Bridget Breithaupt, CP  
Public Relations – Suzanne Faison, ACP  
Social – Paula Joyner, CP  
Student Liaison – Suellen Johnson, CLA  
Parliamenrarian—Paula Joyner, CP  
Historian—Suzanne Faison, ACP

## Monthly Meeting

The regular luncheon/meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month from 12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m, at the Capitol Club. Please be sure to make your reservations for each luncheon by contacting MPA's secretary, Jamie C. Earls, CLA at [jearls@watkinsludlam.com](mailto:jearls@watkinsludlam.com). As of March 1st, the luncheon cost has been increased to \$14.50.



## Executive Board Meeting

This year, the Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at Noon. The meeting place rotates among the offices of the Officers. Meetings are open to the membership. Please contact an officer to find out the location of the next meeting.

## Membership Roster

The roster is available on MPA's website at [www.msparalegals.org](http://www.msparalegals.org). If you are a member, contact the VP/Established Membership, for the login and password. We use the roster to email members, so please make sure your information is current. If a change needs to be made, please let us know.



## NALA Liaison

*Tricia Nelson-Easley, ACP*

The 33rd Annual Convention of NALA was held July 30 - August 2, 2008 in Oklahoma City, OK. Seven MPA board members attended the convention. Our matching blue MPA shirts were a hit. We not only left with some useful information from the great educational sessions, but also left knowing we made valuable contacts with those who share our same interests in the profession. Make plans to join us next year as we head to San Diego for the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention.

The next CLA exam will be December 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for the application is October 1st. A late fee of \$25 may be submitted through October 16th. The CLA Review Seminar which MPA hosts each year will be held at Holmes Community College on the Ridgeland campus on October 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. If you are a CP and would like to be a speaker, please contact us ASAP.

You don't have to be a member of NALA to take advantage of seminars through "NALA-Campus". See NALA's website at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org) for a complete list of upcoming events. If you have any questions not answered by the website, please feel free to contact me at [TNelson@holmescc.edu](mailto:TNelson@holmescc.edu).

---

**Vice President/Established  
Membership**

*Zenda S. Heafner, CLA*

---

Where has 2008 gone? It seems like only yesterday that the New Year was starting and the new Board was planning a great year. It has been a great year, even though I have been participating via telephone conference and e-mail. I know I have missed out on a lot by not being able to attend our monthly meetings, but I assure you that I have been there in spirit.

I began the year by telling you that I had taken on a project that sent me to Cleburne, Texas. Well, the end of August I accepted a position on a new pro-

ject in Somerset, Pennsylvania. I packed up and moved 1,500 miles on a 48-hour notice. I traveled with Tropical Storm Faye from Texas to Pennsylvania, and then it stalled here and rained for three more days. Once the rain and fog went away I could tell that I was in a quaint little town in the mountains. What a shock! I went from 20+ days over 100 degrees in Texas to 58 degrees in Pennsylvania. I am not looking forward to the snow and cold weather. BRRRR!!!! I have been told that I will be here 2-3 years.

Therefore fellow MPA members, I have decided not to run for re-election. If elected for another term, it would not be fair

to you nor me to participate via long distance. I have been on the Board for 10 years, and it's time for me to move on. I have enjoyed serving the MPA membership throughout the years, and I wish the best to you all and to the 2009 Board.

I did get to attend the 2008 NALA Convention in Oklahoma City in July. As usual it was a great convention and seminar. We had seven MPA members that attended this year. That is a great turnout for a small state. If you have never been to one of the conventions, you need to make plans to attend. You don't know what you are missing. The convention will be in San Diego in 2009. I hope to see you there.

*The Short Course*  
*A preparation course for nationwide certification as a paralegal/legal assistant*

**CLA**  
CERTIFIED LEGAL ASSISTANT

**CP**  
CERTIFIED PARALEGAL

**November 13-15, 2008 • Dallas, TX**

**ala** The Association of  
Legal Assistants • Paralegals

Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau

---

**Region III Director**  
*Debbie Player, CLA*



Hello Region III members and friends in Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Coahoma, DeSoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Monroe, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica, Union and Yalobusha Counties.

In late July, I was fortunate to be able to attend the National Association of Legal Assistants' (NALA) Annual Convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In addition to experiencing the culture of a new city, there are many advantages for a paralegal who attends the annual convention, including, but not limited to, exposure to new areas of law, learn new skills, gain knowledge of current legal technology, network with other paralegals and legal support companies, and acquire CLE credits for those who are Certified Paralegals or Certified Legal Assistants.

One of the courses I attended was based on the premise that during the course of a case, unforeseen things can occur. For instance, an attorney working on a case leaves the firm two weeks before trial because his/her spouse got transferred to another city, or a tornado destroys the clerk's office where the court's records are kept, or your client is served with a default judgment. Patricia Gustin, a Certified Paralegal from Harrisburg,

Pennsylvania, believes in being prepared for the unexpected. In a presentation entitled *Eleventh Hour Case Management Survival*, given at the recent 2008 NALA Annual Convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Ms. Gustin suggests that one way to minimize the impact of unfore-

seen surprises in litigation is to use her **C-A-S-E** approach to case management: (1) **CASE ORGANIZATION**; (2) **ACCELERATED ANALYSIS**; (3) **SUMMARIZATION**; and (4) **EFFICIENCY/EFFECTIVENESS**.

Ms. Gustin takes those four main topics and prepares a simple checklist that communicates the goals and strategies for a case. A few examples on her checklist include the following:

#### **CASE ORGANIZATION**

##### **Preliminary Preparation**

**Goal: Initial organization; general idea about the case; prepare strategic plan**

Read/understand the scope of assignment

Obtain case files (hard copy/electronic)

Calendar and deadlines

Other (specify)

##### **Meet with Attorney**

**Goal: Present/finalize strategic plan (take copious notes)**

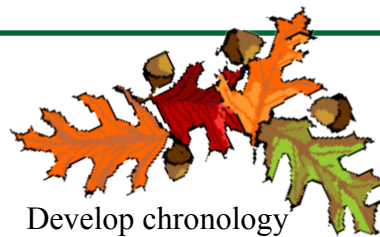
Case briefing/preliminary findings

Further requests for information/research

Attorney to attorney support discussion (establish lines of communication and delegation)

Other (specify)

#### **ACCELERATED ANALYSIS**



Develop chronology

Detailed written case, witness summaries

Index documents

Other (specify)

**SUMMARIZATION** (can complete in conjunction with "A")

Analyze/digest documents

Summary reports – uncovering new, important information, etc.

Document control/management

Other (specify)

#### **EFFICIENCY/EFFECTIVENESS**

Create friendly/uncluttered workspace

Time, resource and stress management

Creativity

Other (specify)

Please contact me if you have any questions, need assistance, or if you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a MPA member. I can be reached at work (601-351-2456 or [dplayer@bakerdonelson.com](mailto:dplayer@bakerdonelson.com)), or at home (601-952-0877 or [djplayer1251@bellsouth.net](mailto:djplayer1251@bellsouth.net)).



---

**Region V Director**  
*Bridget Breithaupt, CP*

As you know, the election of officers is just around the corner. I have decided to run for the Region V Director position. Since being appointed in May, I have enjoyed the time that I have served in this position but I would like more time to accomplish my goals. If I am given one more year in this position, I will diligently work toward fulfilling my objectives.

In the last newsletter, I indicated that one of my goals was to create two information packets that can be snail mailed and/or emailed. One packet would target the potential member and the other would target his/her employer. Once I began to assemble the MPA information to be included in the packets, I found

that our MPA brochure is hopelessly out-of-date. So, I created two new brochures. Like the packets, one brochure specifically targets the potential member and the other targets the employer. The brochures look very professional and give a good accounting of what it is to be a paralegal.

Several of the other board members were very helpful during the process of creating the new brochures. I would especially like to thank Suellen Johnson, CLA who was invaluable. I think our efforts have paid off. My aim is to have the final versions of the brochures approved by the board and ready for distribution by the end of September. At that time we will need help from law firms and copying companies to assist in preparing copies of the brochures. If anyone has any

suggestions as to which law firms or copying companies might be willing to donate their services to our cause, please let me know.

My second goal as Region V Director was to host a CLE seminar within Region V. I must confess that time has gotten away from me on this goal. What with working on the brochures and attending the NALA convention in Oklahoma City, life has kept me busy. The first step I must take is finding out everything that goes into planning a seminar. I must conduct more research before I can attempt to get started fulfilling this objective. If given one more year in this position, I would definitely have a better chance of accomplishing both my goals. So, vote for me in October!



*Litigation Support Services From Discovery To Verdict*

- HIGH-SPEED COPYING
- CUSTOM LABELING
- BINDING
- CUSTOM INDEX TABS
- COLOR COPIES
- BANKRUPTCY MAILOUTS
- DIGITAL OVERSIZE COPYING
- QUALITY CONTROL CHECKING
- DAY, NIGHT, AND WEEKEND SERVICE
- FREE PICK-UP AND DELIVERY
- DOCUMENT SCANNING
- OCR
- DOCUMENT CODING
- AUDIO/VIDEO DUPLICATION
- CD/DVD DUPLICATION
- ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT DISCOVERY
- TIMECODING / DEPOVIEW
- ELECTRONIC COURTROOM SETUP
- HIGH-SPEED PRINTING
- TRIAL BOARDS B&W / COLOR

JACKSON, MS  
601-355-5555

NEW ORLEANS, LA  
504-524-6789

SHREVEPORT, LA  
318-221-1111

---

## Student Liaison

Suellen Johnson, CLA

**The NALA Convention.** This summer the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of the National Association of Legal Assistants was held July 30 through August 2, 2008, in Oklahoma City, OK. The MS Paralegal Association was well represented with our NALA Liaison Tricia Nelson, Second Vice President Zenda Haefner; Regional Directors Lisa Taylor, Veronica Coleman, Bridget Breithaupt and Debbie Player and myself, the Student Liaison. Oklahoma City was beautiful and its citizens gracious. It was the first time that I had attended a NALA Convention in over ten years. Wow! They get better and better.

A great opening for the convention was the keynote address given by Charles P. Schroeder, the Executive Director of the National Cowboy Museum in Oklahoma City. He welcomed everyone from across the USA and quoted **Jim Owens' cowboy code** which we all really liked: (a) live each day with courage; (b) take pride in your work; (c) do what has to be done; (d) always finish what you start; (e) be tough but fair; (f) when you make a promise, keep it; (g) ride for the brand (give service and loyalty where it is deserved and returned); (h) talk less, not more; (i) remember that some things are not for sale; and (j) know where to draw the line. The MS paralegal group was able to visit the outstanding cowboy museum too.



Since I am a Health Law Litigation paralegal at Baker Donelson, I attended the Healthcare Track which included: (1) “Unmasking the Healthcare System”; (2) “Healthcare Regulatory Issues”; and (3) Healthcare Litigation (Medical Malpractice). It was a great choice the presenters were excellent and each session was 3 hours. Paralegals attending worked for in-house counsel for hospitals, law firms and a few worked for the Division of Medicaid. My favorite presentation was by Philip Sprinkle of Balch & Bingham’s Atlanta office on “Unmasking the Healthcare System” which was about how we got where we are today, the history of the healthcare system and where we are heading with our healthcare system in America. I have his PowerPoint presentation.

Another excellent presentation was by Matt Aiken of Balch & Bingham’s Birmingham office entitled “Healthcare Regulatory Issues.” He was very clear that transactions work requires teamwork and recommended that everyone read The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick M. Lencioni.

Healthcare transactions are very complex business environment and include political issues as well as state/federal regulation. Healthcare is also constantly changing so staying up to date is very important. The regulatory framework includes healthcare regulations, anti-trust, tax and securities. He focused on healthcare regulations and securities issues. He also covered the fraud busters in the healthcare arena, laws that fight fraud and the sale of ownership of a healthcare company in the securities area.

Since his presentation focused on teamwork and had specific suggestions for transactional paralegals, I have chosen to highlight some of his practice tips. He discussed in depth **Pre-Deal Considerations.**

These include Confidentiality Agreements, Letters of Intent and Due Diligence. Paralegals can assist attorneys in drafting both Confidentiality Agreements and Letters of Intent and then follow-up with identifying and organizing confidential documents and creating timelines for the transaction. Paralegals who become good at drafting documents and eliminating legalese will be a benefit to the team.



**Paralegals can become really involved in the transaction during the due diligence phase** where you investigate the healthcare facility. He mentioned several mistakes to avoid by the transaction team: (1) being bashful in asking questions; (2) not raising issues; (3) losing focus; and (4) not understanding your client’s business. He reiterated to all of us to memorialize all your findings in writing. A due diligence checklist and list of contracts is also helpful. He stated that you should learn everything you can about the Seller (SEC filings, websites, Google searches, industry search and news articles), the structure Visiting Colleges and University Paralegal Programs statewide

Developing Stronger MPA Relationships with ABA approved Paralegal Programs

Providing career advice to students

Developing Student Scholarship Awards

Encouraging High School Students to enter the paralegal field

Participating as an MPA Board member

(stock or asset sale, indemnification issues, escrow and legal opinions) and the price. He also specifically recommended visiting the facility!

Lastly, Mr. Aiken spoke on **Principles of Good Negotiating**. This is your personal style. He pointed out that **a negotiation is a marathon, not a sprint**. Be mindful of the goal. He also reiterated that the personalities involved can often make or break the deal. He gave several negotiating skills: (1) be yourself; (2) know the Goal; (3) have a plan (know the deal breakers, budget, client needs); (4) recognize obstacles; (5) understand compromise (it should not be win at all costs; winning is completing the goal for both sides); (6) avoid non-negotiable demands (get another person, adjourn the meeting, switch topics); (7) learn to say “no” without being negative; (8) be professional; and (9) take advantage when appropriate.



**Transactions are a team sport** with paralegals, attorneys, associates, clients, bankers and accountants. Know your role in the transaction. The key paralegal skills in transactional work are (1) research (finding information on the web or at BNA, OIG, CMS); (2) drafting skills; (3) organizing documents; and (4) attention to detail. Paralegals can anticipate needs and have useful information that attorneys may need. The deal management skills include distribution lists, charts and timelines and issue grids. Paralegals can also help with presentations such as excel charts and power points. While attorneys need to focus on the big picture and manage personalities, paralegals can focus on the detail- document review, exhibits, closing process, post closing process and required filings. Paralegals can also create a central depository for healthcare information.

I found all of these paralegal practice tips helpful and pass them along to you. All in all, I obtained 12 hours of CLE at the Convention. I recommend each one of you to attend a national convention for your individual professional development. That’s a career tip!

**Elections.** The new **NALA President is Linda Wolfe from Texas**. Other newly elected candidates include Karen Greer McGee, First Vice President from LA; Sharon Werner, Second Vice President from Michigan; Ann Atkinson, Secretary from Nebraska and Kelly LaGrave, Treasurer from Michigan. Region III’s Director (MS, AL, TN, GA and FL) was not up for election.

**LEAP Program.** During the elections process, the first LEAP class chosen by NALA for 2007-2008 made their presentations. LEAP is leadership enhancement and preparation. I thought it was interesting that they pointed out the intergenerational issues in today’s workforce and stated that career level is more important than age. Also 75% of paralegals do not belong to associations and **80% of employers do not provide continuing legal education**. The second LEAP presentation focused on mentoring.

**Richlin v. Chertoff.** U.S. Supreme [Court case decided June 2, 2008](#) stating that paralegal fees may be recovered at market rates. The opinion is available on NALA’s website [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org).

**San Diego.** NALA’s Convention in 2009 will be in San Diego, CA.

**Student Liaison Position.** Together with Bridget Breithaupt, I helped re-designed and write **new MPA brochures for attorneys and paralegals** this year. Also, I started researching paralegal scholarships. Many other state associations spon-

sor **student scholarship awards**. Currently, MPA’s annual Student Essay Contest is the only scholarship awarded to paralegal students. This is a long term project which I hope will be continued by other Student Liaisons.



It has been an honor to serve as your Student Liaison this year. As some of you know, I broke my foot in August and recovery will take several months. I have decided to resign in order to focus my efforts on my job responsibilities and the healing process. I will not be able to complete this marathon. Melissa McCarty has stepped up to the plate and volunteers to oversee the Student Essay Contest.

Student Essay Contest

Visiting Colleges and University Paralegal Programs statewide

Developing Stronger MPA Relationships with ABA approved Paralegal Programs

Providing career advice to students

Developing Student Scholarship Awards

Encouraging High School Students to enter the paralegal field

Participating as an MPA Board member

**MPA Officers for 2009:**

**President:** Gwen Burgess, CLA

**Vice President Education:**

Sarah L. O’Neal

**Vice President New Membership:** Mary Lynne Underwood

**Vice President Established**

**Membership:** Cathy Myers, CLA/CP

**Treasurer:** Kimberly A. Pierce, CLA

**Secretary:** Janie M. Boyd, CP

**NALA Liaison:** LaTricia M. Nelson-Easley, ACP

**Student Liaison:** Darleen T. Dozier, CLA

**Region I Director** – Paula M. Joyner, CP

**Region II Director** - Deborah Player, CLA

**Region III Director** – Ammi N. Gates, CLA

**Region IV Director** - TBA

**Region V. Director** – Bridgett Breithaupt, CP

**T-Shirts ordered by those who helped on MPA’s Volunteer Day with Habitat for Humanity in July 2008**

**REMEMBER...**

**SEND IN YOUR  
2009 MEMBERSHIP  
RENEWAL TODAY—  
DON’T DELAY!**



**Contact Sandrena Durr if you would like to order one of these t-shirts for yourself!**



**886 Foley Street ♦ Jackson, MS 39202**

**601-944-1470 ♦ FAX: 601-944-1476**

**ppc1@bellsouth.net**

- ★ Color Copies
- ★ Document Reproduction
- ★ 24/7 Availability
- ★ Padded Forms
- ★ Envelopes
- ★ Laminating
- ★ Audio/Video/Electronic Duplication
- ★ Pocket Folders
- ★ Computer Forms
- ★ On-Site Duplication
- ★ Custom Tabs
- ★ Letterhead
- ★ Catalogs
- ★ Mail-Out Services
- ★ Oversize/Blueprint Reproduction
- ★ NCR Forms
- ★ Invitations
- ★ Facilities Management
- ★ Analog (VHS) to Digital Conversion
- ★ Booklets
- ★ Lettering
- ★ Document Imaging
- ★ Exhibit/Presentation Boards
- ★ Newsletters
- ★ Fliers★ Invoices
- ★ Full Service Bindery & Index Tabs
- ★ Document Repository
- ★ Banners
- ★ Tickets
- ★ Bates Labeling
- ★ Free Pick-up and Delivery
- ★ Checks
- ★ Postcards
- ★ Numbering
- ★ Confidentiality Guaranteed
- ★ Posters
- ★ Statements
- ★ Die Cutting
- ★ Mailing Lists
- ★ Perforating
- ★ Thermography
- ★ Engraving
- ★ and much more!

## “Criminal Law and Paralegals”

By: Veronica W. Coleman

The Firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, P.C., was gracious enough to send four Paralegal’s from the Jackson Office to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for the NALA Convention this year. Each of the four members that attended, are board members for the Mississippi Paralegal Association as well. As we attend Conventions yearly we not only get the opportunity to meet paralegals and instructors from all over, but we have the chance to be involved in some of the most interesting classes that one can imagine.



I have had the honor of serving in various capacities with the organization over the past few years as well as this year, where I currently serve as the Region I Director. During my attendance at the National Convention, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Criminal Law Institute. Criminal Law is an entity of law that requires a creative mind, as well as a great sense for detail. As I participated in the Criminal Law Institute at the NALA Convention, I was overwhelmed with ideas and suggestive responses to the particular case that the Institute de-



ecided to cover. S. Catherine Dodson, Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney, very thoroughly discussed the details of a double murder crime and the scenarios that had taken place throughout the unfolding of the crime.

There were many points in this session, where everyone began to make assumptions and began to analyze on what may have happened or what could have happened. However, after examining the evidence with the Attorney we all were amazed at the different thought processes of everyone in the room. At this point we all realized the importance of evidence evaluation and also were brought to a point where we eventually accepted that there is always more to a story than what meets the eye.

As a Paralegal working in the capacity of any field of law, it is our responsibility to focus on the facts and not on our own emo-



tions and perceptions. Details are of the utmost importance in deciding whether something is real or not real. In criminal cases it is imperative to organize, review and consider all facts prior to making any decisions on the case at hand. There are many facts to consider when the evaluation of evidence is involved.

In most cases the attorney handles the specifics, but the responsibility of the Paralegal starts before the attorney ever begins evaluating the case.

Therefore, there is much required on behalf of the Paralegal in order to insure effective support for the attorney and the client. Paralegals



are always required to be organized. The organization of the files and the information in the file can determine whether a case will be a success or a failure. This ranges from lab reports, medical reports, databases, witness documents, exhibit lists, to even blood samples. These items have been received and documented by many entities and once it reaches the paralegal it must be preserved from that point on. The less hands on the original case files, the better the possibility of preserving the file becomes.

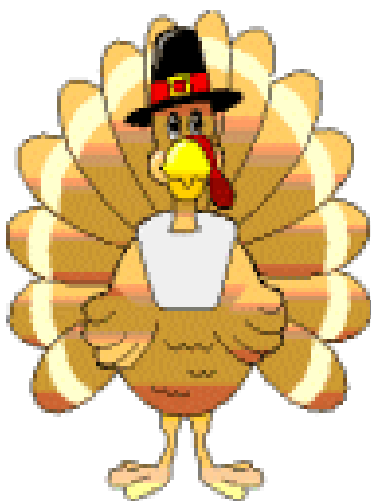
Paralegals upon reviewing information are expected to know the things that are most important. There will be situations where we as Paralegals have to determine if the information is important to us or if it is imperative to the case. These conclusions can save not only time for the paralegal but also time for the busy attorney involved in the case. Attorney's expect effectiveness, but in less time. There are many things that paralegals can do to assist in the thorough examination of a criminal case for their perspective attorney:

Maintain thorough databases and spreadsheets

Organize files in a manner that are conducive to the lead attorney, as well as the day to day paralegal.

Label documents and make copies (this will insure that the originals are preserved).

Handle all DNA, medical transcripts, autopsies, ballistic reports, from all sources as if someone's life depends on it.



Review all documentation related to the case, whether it seems relevant at the time or not.

Be prepared for challenges that are not expected.

Among these are many more, but these will guarantee good results on behalf of the firm, paralegal and the attorney involved.



## Upcoming MPA Events for 2008

### November

- 1 Annual membership dues to be submitted
- 2 Daylights Saving Time Ends
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 12 Executive Board Meeting
- 15 Final deadline to submit Membership Dues
- 21 StewPot Community Service  
No Region I Monthly Meeting
- 27 Thanksgiving

### December

- 1 Termination of Membership for non-payment of dues
- 1 Announce Student Essay Contest Winners
- 1 Deadline to submit articles to *The Assistant*
- 5-6 CLA Exam
- 25 Christmas
- TBA Holiday Social  
No Region I Monthly Meeting



- **MPA Newsletter**
- **Advertising Rates**
- Business Card
- \$25 Per Issue, \$75 Per Year
- 1/8 Page
- \$35 Per Issue, \$105 Per Year
- 1/4 Page/Bronze Level Sponsorship
- \$45 Per Issue, \$135 Per Year
- 1/2 Page/Silver Level Sponsorship
- \$55 Per Issue, \$165 Per Year
- Full Page/Gold Level Sponsorship
- \$75 Per issue, \$225 Per year

## **COMMUNICATION TIDBITS**

### **FROM NALA CONVENTION 2008**

**Submitted by Lisa Taylor, CLA**

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending the 2008 NALA Convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I participated in a three-day course of study on Corporate Law and also attended the classes on Communications and Ethics. The Communications presentation was designed to re-introduce effective tools for listening and communicating. Highlights from the Communications Presentation entitled "Is Anyone Out There Listening" as presented by Doreen Hall, CP and Jaye Koch, CP, are summarized below:

<b>MODES OF LISTENING</b>	
<i>Competitive or Combative Listening</i>	Closed off; Aloof; Not allowing effective communication
<i>Passive or Attentive Listening</i>	Not asking questions vs. asking questions for purpose of clarification
<i>Active or Reflective Listening</i>	Genuine interest shown in conversation; restating what you are told to ensure you understanding; looking for feedback

<b>COMMON LISTENING BARRIERS</b>	
<i>Knowing the Answer</i>	Make yourself wait 5 seconds before you "spill the beans"
<i>Trying to Be Helpful</i>	Interrupting to offer helpful suggestions; Sometimes you just need to let someone "vent"
<i>Treating Discussion as Competition</i>	Always having to dominate the conversation
<i>Trying to Influence or Impress</i>	Having an ulterior motive; Focused on your own agenda
<i>Reacting to "Red Flag" Words</i>	Shutting down or triggering strong emotion on certain words or phrases; Confirm what is meant in use of the word or phrase
<i>Believing in Language</i>	Be sure to get clarification on slang or work lingo words
<i>Mixing Up the Forest and the Trees</i>	Being too detailed (matter of fact; concrete) or too abstract (sweeping; birds eye view)
<i>Over-splitting or Over-lumping</i>	Splitters think about how things are different; Lumpers think about how things are alike

<b>TIPS TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS</b>	
<i>Take Notes</i>	Your mind is not always precise on recalling every detail
<i>Listen Now, Report Later</i>	Listen with the idea that you will be reporting back on what you were told at a later date
<i>Learn to Want to Listen</i>	Give up preoccupation with yourself; Mental energy is a limited commodity – use it wisely; Use the DISC principle:  D – Desire to Learn  I – Interest  S – Self Discipline  C – Comprehension/Concentration
<i>Be Present</i>	Focus on the speaker and the message instead of day-dreaming
<i>Anticipate Excellence</i>	Show and express interest and/or concern; Pay attention;
<i>Become a “Whole Body”</i>	Sit with good posture – lean forward slightly – give full attention – look person in the eye – nod to let them know you hear them  Communication is:  55% Non-Verbal  35% Inflection and Tone  7% Words
<i>Build Rapport by Pacing the Speaker</i>	Slow your pace down and they slow down; Put the person at ease; Match phrases, voice rate and voice volume
<i>Control Your Emotional “Hot Buttons”</i>	Stay calm; Take a deep breath; Clarify yourself (ie – “what this means to me, is ...”)
<i>Control Distractions</i>	Turn off your phones; “Lock” your work station
<i>Listening is a Gift, Give Generously</i>	You will be rewarded in listening well

Finally, remember ....

“We were given two ears but only one mouth because listening is twice as hard as talking .“



The Association of  
Legal Assistants • Paralegals

For Immediate Release

## Fall 2008 CLA/CP Short Course Set

The Fall CLA/CP Short Course, an intensive three-day workshop for nationwide certification as a paralegal/legal assistant, is scheduled for November 13-15 at the Renaissance Dallas Hotel, Dallas, Texas. This is the only CLA/CP Short Course scheduled by the National Association of Legal Assistants before the December 2008, March 2009, and July 2009 CLA/CP examinations.

This short course meets credit requirements of the NALA Certifying Board for maintaining the CLA/CP credential as well as helping those who are preparing for the examination. The program is also helpful to experienced paralegals seeking a refresher.

Short Course Coordinator is Kay Kasic, CLA, with Coombs & Dunlap, Napa, CA. A distinguished faculty of attorneys, certified legal assistants, and legal educators will teach the courses ranging from a survey of the American legal system and essential paralegal skills to specific legal topics. Extensive handout materials, available only to participants, will supplement the instruction.

Nearly 3,000 legal assistants have participated in this program since its inception in 1985. It is widely regarded as the most comprehensive continuing education program offered to paralegals. The short course is one of an array of continuing legal education efforts by NALA, and earning the CLA/CP credential is not ensured, nor contingent, upon completion of the course.

The schedule of courses is as follows:

### Thursday, November 13

*American Legal System*—Karen Sanders-West, ACP, JD; Foulston Siefkin, Wichita, KS.

*Judgment & Analytical Ability*—Virginia Koerselman, JD, Attorney; Omaha, NE.

*Ethics: Part I*—Kay Kasic, CLA; Coombs & Dunlap, Napa, CA.

### Friday, November 14

*Contracts*—John W. Dunn, LLB, and Karen M. Dunn, ACP; John W. Dunn & Associates, LLC, Avon, CO.

*Legal Research*—Virginia Koerselman, JD, Attorney; Omaha, NE.

*Civil Litigation*—Karen Sanders-West, ACP, JD; Foulston Siefkin, Wichita, KS.

*Communications*—Virginia Koerselman, JD, Attorney; Omaha, NE.

### Saturday, November 15

*Ethics: Part II*—Kay Kasic, CLA; Coombs & Dunlap, Napa, CA.

*Real Property*—John W. Dunn, LLB, and Karen M. Dunn, ACP; John W. Dunn & Associates, LLC, Avon, CO.

*Business Organizations*—Connie Kretchmer, ACP; First National Bank of Omaha, and Virginia Koerselman, JD, Attorney, both of Omaha, NE.

*Administrative Law*—Karen Sanders-West, ACP, JD; Foulston Siefkin, Wichita, KS.

*Estates and Trusts*—Virginia Koerselman, JD, Attorney, and Connie Kretchmer, ACP, First National Bank of Omaha, both of Omaha, NE.

Members of NALA may register for \$390. The cost to non-members is \$450, and members of the California alliance of Paralegal Associations may enroll for \$425. Fees cover the short course, handouts, coffee service, Friday luncheon, and a complimentary copy of the *CLA Study Guide and Mock Examination*.

Registration information is available on the web site <http://www.nala.org>.

**Contact:** Vanessa Williamson  
Convention Services  
National Association of Legal Assistants  
1516 S. Boston Avenue, Suite 200  
Tulsa, OK 74119  
(918) 587-8828  
(918) 582-8772 (fax)  
williamson@nala.org



# The Short Course

*A preparation course for nationwide certification as a paralegal/legal assistant*

**November 13-15, 2008 • Dallas, TX**

**Renaissance Dallas Hotel**

For paralegals preparing for the CLA/CP exam, or those interested in freshening up their professional skills and knowledge. This will be the only CLA/CP short course before the December 2008 and Spring 2009 exams.

A distinguished faculty will provide a general overview of subject matter and present specific knowledge and skills needed by paralegals. Certificated paralegals may use this course to satisfy the CLE requirement for their CLA/CP.

*American Legal System*—Karen Sanders-West, ACP, JD

*Judgment & Legal Analysis*—Virginia Koerselman, JD

*Legal Research*—Virginia Koerselman, JD

*Ethics I & 2*—Kay Kasie, CP

*Contracts*—John W. Dunn LLB & Karen M. Dunn, CLAS

*Real Property*—John Dunn LLB & Karen M. Dunn, ACP

*Business Organizations*—Connie Kretschmer, ACP, & Virginia Koerselman, JD

*Estates & Trusts*—Virginia Koerselman, JD & Connie Kretschmer, ACP

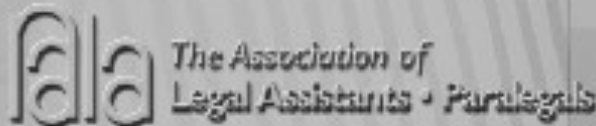
The award-winning Renaissance Dallas Hotel is centrally located in Market Center, near the city's top attractions in the West End. Special NALA rates are \$150/night for single, double, triple or quad. Call 800-468-3571 or 214-631-2222 and reference this meeting to ensure your special rate.

NALA Members: \$390 • Non-members: \$450

Visit [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org) for full details and to register online.

**Continuing Education Credit:**

This seminar meets the Continuing Education requirements for Florida Registered Paralegals as set forth in Rule 20-61 of the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar. NALA is a State Bar of California approved CLE provider. NALA has Accredited Sponsor Status with the National Commission of Legal Education. The CLA/CP Short Course meets the requirements of the CLE Boarding Board for state bar continuing education. NALA's Short Course program will qualify for a maximum of 20 CLE credits.



1516 S. Boston Ave., Suite 200 • Tulsa, OK 74119 • [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)

# STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

*Office of the Governor*



## A Proclamation

**WHEREAS**, the State of Mississippi recognizes the immense contribution of paralegals to the legal profession in the Magnolia State and nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, through the evolution of paralegals, the judicial system has been able to respond to the dramatic increase in court caseload in recent years; and

**WHEREAS**, attorneys are able to concentrate their time and efforts at a higher level of expertise because paralegals have taken responsibility for a substantive portion of the legal work previously performed by attorneys; and

**WHEREAS**, the general public is better able to afford increased access to quality legal services because of the paralegal profession;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Haley Barbour, Governor of the State of Mississippi, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2008 as

## *Paralegal Day*

in the State of Mississippi and recognizes paralegals as integral partners in the cost-efficient delivery of legal services.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the twenty-seventh day of June in the year of our Lord, two thousand and eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and thirty-second.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Haley Barbour".

HALEY BARBOUR