



# Key Note



Volume 74

Northeast Texas Association of Paralegals, Inc.  
An Affiliate of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.  
Editor, Mona Hart Tucker, ACP

February 2011

## *From the Hart*

*To do two things at once is to do neither.*

-- Publius Syrus



I'm sitting at my desk during the lunch hour, working on getting the *Key Note* ready. At times like this, I am amazed at how quickly time has slipped away. This newsletter should have been sent out last week, and here I am, still not finished!

The saddest part is that I know you have all felt that way. There are times when it just seems impossible to get it all done.

I received an email from a paralegal friend in Oklahoma City a few days ago and noticed that her signature block had changed. Now, instead of being paralegal to Attorneys 1 and 2, she is now paralegal to Attorneys 1, 2, 3 and 4! Maybe her title should be changed to "caretaker" or "zoo keeper".

How do you prioritize all those projects that needed to be done "yesterday"?

When working with/for multiple attorneys, the best thing I've been able to come up with is to let them know what other projects you have going and ask whether the new one needs to be done first. Recently, I was asked to do something and it seemed pretty pressing, so I responded that I was working on such-and-such for Attorney 1 and that if this new one needed to take precedence, would Attorney 2 please run it by Attorney 1 so he'd be aware. Attorney 2 decided that the new project could wait until the first one was finished.

Sometimes, putting the decision back on the attorney is the best call.

Mona Hart Tucker, ACP  
President



### 2011 Executive Committee

- President - Mona H. Tucker, ACP
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Ginger D. Gage, ACP
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - Sandi Clarke, CP
- Secretary - Sandi Clarke, CP
- Treasurer - Elisha Calhoon, CP
- NALA Liaison - Javan Johnson, ACP

### 2011 Chairpersons

- Parliamentarian - Javan Johnson, ACP
- Employment - Andrea Brunson, CP
- Auditor - Andrea Brunson, CP
- Scholarship - Javan Johnson, ACP
- Hospitality - Ginger Gage, ACP; Sandi Clarke, CP; & Javan Johnson, ACP



## *What's Happening*

Lori Campbell welcomes grandbaby Aurora Skye, born Jan. 24, 2011. She weighed 7 lb, 12 oz, and was 21½ inches long. Congratulations!





### Vote on Revised Standing Rules

Please be present at the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting to cast your vote on the revised Standing Rules. Copies were distributed at the January meeting.



### **Northeast Texas Association of Paralegals, Inc. Minutes of the Membership Meeting Wednesday, January 19, 2011**

The monthly membership meeting of the Northeast Texas Association of Paralegals was held at the Longview Community Center on Wednesday, January 19, 2011.

Those in attendance were Nadriette Hardeman, Mona Tucker, Ginger Gage, Sandi Clarke, Elisha Calhoon, Javan Johnson, Shannon Qualls, Shannon Watts, Ranita Shows, and Cindy Van Blaricom.

Guest in attendance was John Hull of Nix, Patterson, and Roach, LLP.

2010 President, Nadriette Hardeman, welcomed members and guests and called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. A wonderful lunch was provided by Terri Strange of Angelwood Catering in Shreveport, Louisiana.

President Hardeman introduced 2011 President, Mona Tucker. President Tucker introduced John Hull of Nix, Patterson, who swore in the 2011 NTAP officers, as follows:

- President - Mona Tucker
- First Vice-President - Ginger Gage
- Second Vice-President - Sandi Clarke
- Secretary - Sandi Clarke
- Treasurer - Elisha Calhoon
- NALA Liaison - Javan Johnson

President Tucker thanked 2010 President Hardeman for her service last year and called the business meeting to order. President Tucker provided the membership with a brief update on the Officer Workshop held on January 15, 2011. She also reported to the membership that the board agreed that the Rainbow Room will be our charity for 2011 and that the stuffed animals were delivered last year at Christmas and were very much appreciated.

President Tucker announced that Gail Love has agreed to serve as the 2011 Parliamentarian and Andrea Linton-Brunson has agreed to serve as the 2011 Job Bank Chairperson.

Shannon Watts announced that Lori Campbell won the award for 2010 Paralegal of the Year. Lori was not present to accept the award.

President Tucker announced to the membership that the board discussed having a will clinic, for veterans and active military. Discussion was had regarding procedures for the clinic and that we will need to get several attorneys and paralegals involved to help with the clinic. President Tucker asked the membership to talk to their attorneys about help. Discussion was had regarding having the clinic around Memorial Day. President Tucker announced that she will do research on a place to hold the clinic and Nadriette Hardeman announced that the Sloan firm will help.

#### Reports:

**Education** - Ginger Gage announced that Casey Goolsby will speak on business organizations at the February membership meeting.

**Treasurer** - Elisha Calhoon provided a Financial Report for 2011.

**Secretary** - President Tucker announced that the minutes of the December meeting were on the tables and asked the membership to review. Elisha Calhoon made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Javan Johnson seconded the motion and the minutes were approved, as printed, by the membership.

**Membership** - There was no membership report.

**Old Business** - Javan Johnson announced that she was finally able to get the IRS to change NTAP's name (from NTALA).

**New Business** - President Tucker requested that someone make a motion to destroy last year's ballots for Paralegal of the Year. Nadriette Hardeman made the motion; Javan Johnson seconded the motion and the membership voted to destroy the ballots as proposed.

President Tucker announced that we will have a drawing at each membership meeting for a free lunch, as was done in 2009.

President Tucker requested that last year's Treasurer provide the checkbook and records to this year's Treasurer, Elisha Calhoon.

President Tucker announced that the revised Standing Rules were on the tables, being provided to the membership, and asked the members to review them carefully as we will be voting on them at the February 16, 2011 meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Submitted by  
Sandi Clarke, CP, Secretary



## Our Officers Speak Out

*Our new officers have each been asked to write one column for the Key Note this year. This first one is from Ginger Gage, First Vice-President.*

Ladies and you have to try this new diet I started for New Years Gentlemen, today I would like to well of course you get to have chocolate, why do you think I'm on it discuss something of great importance to AND he didn't even apologize after he said it! the paralegal practice and so that's when I told him he could just leave all those who aim to better their rudeness, that's the only trait my daughter's boyfriend has pursuits in the field. I am honored to kiss my behind, where did you find them 80% off! be speaking here today, and I hope that everyone here has a staring problem you find this presentation both loud and obnoxious like her orange sweater inspirational and informative. Please direct your attention to this group of buffoons walks over to our table and the front of the room where idiots on parade, but that's the dating scene in this town the slideshow illustrates no lack of civility is so last season - so, where do you want to have lunch tomorrow? new online venues for legal research and I wonder if I left the garage open this morning important new updates to Westlaw and LexisNexis.

Did you find the previous paragraph

distracting? hard to follow? annoyingly interrupted by things that had little meaning to you? Did you think that perhaps if only you could block out the meaningless parts, your reading experience would have gone more smoothly and maybe you could have even learned something from the information given?

Rarely does rudeness combat rudeness, so our aim is to get your attention in a way that illustrates how even tiny interruptions can cause a presentation to become disjointed. People put in lots of time and effort to make sure that we gain pertinent new knowledge about our professions when we attend NTAP functions. If you are one of those paralegals who already knows EVERYTHING about the field and doesn't need any continued training, congratulations! We are very excited for your achievement. However, for those of us who desire more information and preparation, your comments are not always appreciated.

Let us keep in mind the hard work we all put in to do our best at our jobs. Please show speakers and fellow members respect by not talking during presentations. After all, with everything you already know, you could be our next speaker!

*Ginger D. Gage, ACP, TBLs*



### **Applications for the May Certified Paralegal Exam are due April 1, 2011**

April 1 is the deadline date for applications for the Certified Paralegal examination, May 2011 testing! Application forms may be found on the NALA web site, [www.NALA.org](http://www.NALA.org).



# Ethics Corner

*This is the ninth and last installment drawn from Javan Johnson's paper on paralegal ethics.*

## **Recognize Your Role as the Client's Contact, and Promote Responsiveness to the Client's Questions and Concerns.**

- a. Common complaints by clients about attorneys and some of their staff members is that they are unresponsive.
- b. Make it a point to return your clients' phone calls in a prompt and courteous manner.
- c. When a client has a question calling for legal advice, bring it to the attorney's attention quickly, and encourage the attorney to respond to the client promptly.
- d. If the attorney is busy, offer to pass along the message the message, being careful to avoid giving legal advice yourself.

## **Know When to Ask for Help and Where to Get It.**

- a. Every paralegal should have a copy of the ethical rules for attorneys and paralegals.
- b. Regularly review ethics opinions, disciplinary proceedings, and cases interpreting the rules of professional conduct.
- c. When questions or concerns about ethics arise, know where to turn for help.
- d. Some firms may have a designated person within the firm as the "contact person" for ethical inquiries.
- e. Many state and local attorney licensing and regulatory agencies, bar associations, and paralegal associations provide services to legal professionals who have ethical questions.
- f. Inquire about your firm's policies regarding ethical questions and take advantage of all available resources.

## **Become Active in Local, State and National Professional Associations.**

a. Collaborate with and learn from your colleagues as a member of a paralegal professional association, such as your local associations, the Paralegal Division, or even one of the national associations, NALA or NFPA.

b. These organizations take pride in raising awareness about the paralegal profession, and provide excellent sources of information for their members and for the public.

c. These associations also have promulgated ethical guidelines for paralegals and publish ethics opinions and cases on ethics to guide their members.

d. Consider becoming certified. The Texas Board of Legal Specialization offers specialty exams in Civil Trial, Personal Injury, Family, Estate Planning and Probate, Real Estate and Criminal. NALA offers the Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal exam, and the Advanced Certified Paralegal exams; NFPA offers the PACE exam; and other associations also offer exams.

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## **February Meeting**

Judge Dulweber will be the speaker at our February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, and he will be addressing probate and guardianship issues.

The menu calls for Ginger Gage's famous gumbo, so please RSVP to Sandi Clarke if you plan to attend: [sandi.clarke@boonlaw.com](mailto:sandi.clarke@boonlaw.com). The cost is \$5 per person.



## **Prosecutors in One Texas County Will Use Courtroom iPads to Search Potential Jurors on Facebook**

District Attorney Armando Villalobos of Cameron County, Texas, says he doesn't want defense lawyers to be ahead of prosecutors during jury selection.

Toward that end, prosecutors in his county will use iPads to check out the Facebook profiles of potential jurors, the [Brownsville Herald](#) reports.

"I would like my attorneys and staff to use every available tool in their arsenal," he told the newspaper.

Villalobos acknowledged that some jurors may see the searches as an invasion of privacy, but he said prosecutors will discard the information after it is used in the selection process.

*From ABA Journal*



**"Geeky" Project Will Make Online Searches for US Laws More Productive**

The co-founder of the world's first legal information website will be heading a project to improve digital access to federal legislative information.

Thomas Bruce, an ABA Journal Legal Rebel ([http://www.legalrebels.com/profiles/thomas\\_bruce\\_first\\_adapter](http://www.legalrebels.com/profiles/thomas_bruce_first_adapter)), helped Cornell Law School put legal information online before the World Wide Web even existed. He is director of the school's Legal Information Institute, a nonprofit group dedicated to making the law available online, without charge. Now he will work with the Library of Congress to better organize and present materials such as congressional bills, presidential documents, committee reports, public laws, and the U.S. Code, according to a press release.

The project will redesign "legislative-metadata models" for the Library of Congress, the Legal Information Institute says on its website. The aim is to improve the material that can be retrieved, linked and referenced by the free THOMAS search system ([http://thomas.loc.gov/home/abt\\_thom.html](http://thomas.loc.gov/home/abt_thom.html)) used by the public as well as by Congress' own

internal searching system. "This sounds like really geeky stuff (and it is), but the effects for government and for citizens should be pretty big," the Legal Information Institute says on its LII [Announce blog \(http://blog.law.cornell.edu/blog/2011/01/05/library-of-congress-taps-lli-for-expertise-in-legislative-information\)](http://blog.law.cornell.edu/blog/2011/01/05/library-of-congress-taps-lli-for-expertise-in-legislative-information).

We asked Bruce to walk us through a hypothetical of how the project might improve a search for legislation dealing with in vitro fertilization. In an e-mail to the ABA Journal, Bruce said it's difficult to be exact, but these things might happen:

- 1) Somewhere in the search results you might find statutes that don't use the words "in vitro fertilization," but involve medical procedures that fall under some similar classification made for statutory purposes.
- 2) You could more easily find legislation that is still in the pipeline.
- 3) Within the legislation, you would be able to click to linked information, including perhaps a complete voting record for the bill's sponsor, the path the law followed through passage, any regulations enabled by the statute, and outside data. For example, if some medication were mentioned by name, it might be possible to navigate to information from the manufacturer. In general, Bruce says in the e-mail, the project is "about linking data to other data ... as much as it is about providing new hooks for retrieving things in a search."

*From ABA Journal*



# Quality Time

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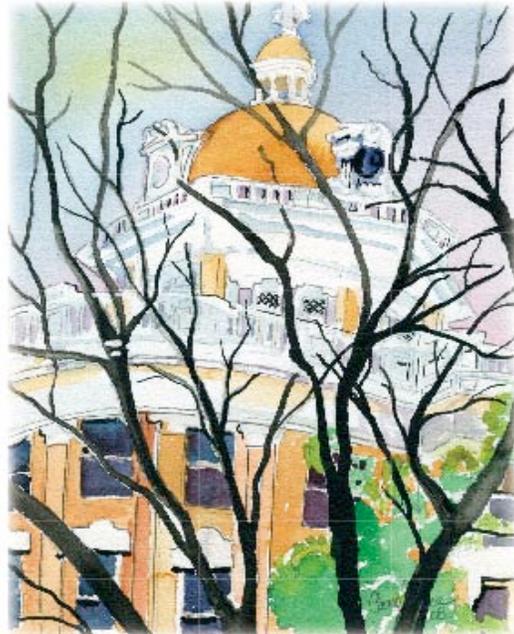
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# CLE Calendar

For additional information about CLE across the State see the SBOT - PD web site at [www.txpd.org](http://www.txpd.org). Also, don't forget that the PD and NALA both offer on-line CLE.

**(Online) Texas Bar CLE free online seminar.** TexasBarCLE offers a complimentary half hour of participatory MCLE credit. You will find a new topic available every other month. HOWEVER, right now, there are two versions of "Proposed Drs: Final Draft Before Referendum" (one hour and two hours, both with ethics credit) and they are *free*. [www.texasbarcle.com](http://www.texasbarcle.com).

Check out the **Ten Minute Mentor** on [www.texasbar.com](http://www.texasbar.com). These instructional video presentations are from leading lawyers in their areas of expertise. Each presentation is typically short (around 10 minutes or less), practical, and free. Viewing presentations qualifies for MCLE self-study credit only. Topics available include Daubert challenges, petitions for review, bankruptcy issues, and many more.

**(Online) NALA Campus Live!** has many topics to choose from, and the Texas Board of Legal Specialization has approved certain programs for certification and re-certification. More information is available at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org).

**(Online) Free Webinars** sponsored by Litigation Solution, Inc. Contact Todd Kelly at KTS Litigation Support, [mtkelly@ktslitigationsupport.com](mailto:mtkelly@ktslitigationsupport.com), for a schedule and to register.

**(Online) Free Webinars** sponsored by Fios Inc. Go to [www.fiosinc.com/e-discovery-knowledge-center](http://www.fiosinc.com/e-discovery-knowledge-center) to see what they have coming up in December and January.

Articles published herein do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Northeast Texas Association of Paralegals.  
Calendar listings and seminars should not be considered as endorsement of any such program or seminar.

## NTAP EMPLOYMENT REFERRALS

One of the benefits of your membership is NTAP's employment referral service. We receive calls from firms offering employment opportunities. If you are seeking a position or considering a change, we encourage you to use NTAP's employment referral service. If your firm is searching for qualified paralegals, ask your attorney or firm administrator to let us know about current openings.

If you are interested in being listed with the service, mail a current resume and contact information to:

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