



Roanoke Valley Paralegal Association

P.O. Box 1505, Roanoke, Virginia 24007

<http://www.rvpa.org>

JULY 2011
Edition

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And now, a word from our President.....

Hello Members,

I hope everyone is enjoying his or her summer. It's been a scorcher thus far. Whether your plans involve your back yard, a community pool, or a beach (hopefully somewhere tropical), try to stay cool. Before you know it, we will be complaining about snow!

I am very excited and grateful for the increase in attendance at this year's monthly member meetings. I hope attendance continues to grow well into 2012. We have had some great speakers so far this year and the slate for the remainder of the year looks just as good.

We have some great community service opportunities coming up in the months ahead that I hope you will consider participating in. We are always looking to lend a helping hand anywhere we can.

As always, any and all suggestions, comments and feedback are welcome. Feel free at any time to email an Officer or Board Member with a suggestion for a speaker, a topic or an organization you think could use our support.

Have a safe and enjoyable rest of the Summer!

- Kara

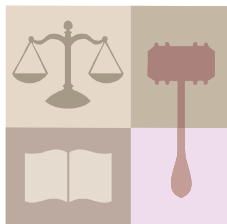
RVPA is now on Facebook! Become a fan and/or member to see all of the upcoming meeting and event information. Invite your paralegal/legal assistant friends and colleagues to become our friend.

Facebook is updated on a regular basis and provides RVPA members with all of the latest RVPA news and information.

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=327204826804>

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CLE Committee



Upcoming Speakers:

July – Rudy Austin of GLRM. Mr. Austin will speak on “Ethical Considerations for Paralegals.” This is a topic vital to all of us; we hope to see you there!

Speakers for remainder of year to be determined...check back!

Community Relations



We are always in search of organizations to lend our support to. If you belong to or support an organization or group that is in need of volunteer work, send an email to Beth Reed at reeddome@verizon.net.

Finance Committee



We are hoping to have some sort of fundraiser / social combination in mid to late August. Planning is underway and once details have been finalized, we will announce our plans.

Membership Committee



RVPA Welcomes New Members!

If you haven't joined or are interested in joining our organization, please contact our Secretary, Beth Reed, at reeddome@verizon.net or 540.580.4376, for more information.

Social Committee



Our Annual Holiday Social is scheduled for December 8, 2011, at Noon, in the Red Room at Blue 5 Restaurant. We hope to see you there!



VAPA Report
reported by Lisa Woodson
VAPA Liaison

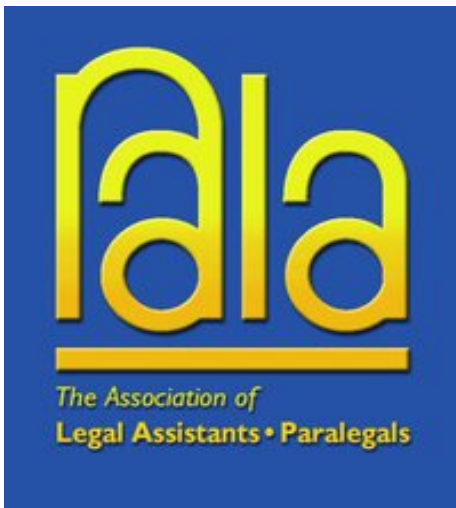
Next meeting is scheduled for:

Saturday, September 10, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. Richmond, Virginia.

Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Associations
VAPA Semi-Annual Seminar
October 10-13, 2012

For more information visit: <http://www.vaparalegalalliance.org/events>

NALA Annual Conference: July 27-30, 2011 – Dallas, Texas



NALA Report
reported by Colleen Doyle
NALA Liaison

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For 2011 CLE Opportunities via “NALA Campus Live!,” visit our website at www.rvpa.org and click on the VAPA & NALA tab for a list of upcoming programs!



**Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX)
The National Honor Society in Paralegal/Legal Assistant Studies.**

**Lambda Epsilon Chi (LEX)
c/o American Association for Paralegal Education
19 Mantua Road
Mt. Royal, NJ 08061
(856) 423-2829 Fax: (856) 423-3420
E-mail: info@aafpe.org**

**For a list of Paralegal Schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia,
visit www.rvpa.org under the Newsletter tab!**

How to Choose a Paralegal Program

Here are some important factors to consider in evaluating the quality of paralegal programs:

- ❖ Is the program ABA Approved?
- ❖ What is the reputation of the institution and the paralegal program?
- ❖ What services are offered to students?
- ❖ What facilities are available to students?
- ❖ What activities are available to students?
- ❖ What is the mission of the institution and what are the goals of the paralegal program?
- ❖ What is the content and nature of the curriculum?
- ❖ What are the graduation requirements?
- ❖ What are the backgrounds of the program director and faculty?
- ❖ What are the special considerations of enrolling in a distance education program?

The Paralegal Mentor

Are You Looking for a New Challenge? by Vicki Voisin, aka The Paralegal Mentor

Vicki Voisin, "The Paralegal Mentor," delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by achieving goals and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, organizational tips, ethics issues, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She publishes a weekly ezine titled *Paralegal Strategies*. More information is available at www.paralegalmentor.com.

Do you love your job but feel the itch for a new challenge? The solution may be as simple as moving into a new practice area...for example, from litigation to intellectual property.

I can hear you now: "Vicki, That sounds easy, but it's not! All my experience is in litigation and I know nothing about intellectual property!"

My answer? I said the *solution* was simple, I never said anything about the *process* being *easy*. This is doable, though, and you can do anything you decide to do.

Here are a few strategies to make your new challenge a reality:

Don't think you have to change jobs to change practice areas. Be sure to look for opportunities to make this change right where you're currently working. You don't want to give up the seniority, benefits and privileges you've earned (and also the friends and relationships you've established) unless you absolutely have to. Think about being the little fish in the big pond...or low man on the totem pole...this may not be where you want to be.

Take advantage of continuing education opportunities. Never say you're not going to a continuing education event because you don't practice in that area. Instead, go to everything available because you never know when you might land there. This is especially true when you think you might like to cross the bridge into another area.

Network, network, network! Did I mention 'network'? You bet! Within the firm, this is where you'll hear about new opportunities and form relationships that might get you recommended for the change. Outside the firm, you'll find opportunities that might be happening elsewhere. Your network will also offer suggestions such as what skills you'll need for the new practice area and what you'll need to learn to get there.

Find a Mentor. This is the person who will guide you and advise you as you take on your new challenge. Perhaps this is a person who is working in the new practice area or a person who made the leap in the past. Listen, learn...and appreciate the knowledge this person has to offer.

Volunteer to do some work in the new area of interest. Ask to assist at trial or to work on a file in the new area. Take on even the smallest job because you will learn from everything you do. You may have to use your own time to do this but it will be worth it in the end.

If your firm offers in-house training, be there! You would be a silly goose if you missed opportunities that are (a) free, (b) usually done during the work day, and (c) say you are serious about learning! Don't pass up this 'abc' strategy!

Get advanced certifications. Do you want to work with contracts and know just enough about the Statute of Frauds to be dangerous? Take an advanced certification course!

These are offered by paralegal professional associations and by state bars. For more information, go to your state bar's web site. Also, check out NALS (<http://nals.org>), NFPA (<http://paralegals.org>) and NALA (<http://nala.org>). NALA also offers web-based advanced certifications, currently in 17 different areas, with more being offered all the time.

Explore every avenue...this is a slick way to get the credibility you need for your new area of interest.

Ask for what you want. If you don't ask, you don't get! Be sure your managing partner, paralegal manager or HR Director knows you are interested in moving to a new area. Stress that you are *NOT* unhappy where you are, but that you're looking for a new challenge and want to be kept in mind should the opportunity crop up. Be subtle, but let that person know the steps you've taken to learn the ins and outs of the new practice area.

One word of caution: It is always a good idea to take a good look at the work available where you currently work, as well as research trends both in your geographic area and across the nation. You need to be sure you can sustain yourself in the new specialty area. You don't want to specialize your way out of a job!

Your challenge: Whether you're interested in a new practice area or not, you need to keep yourself positioned to make a change if necessary. Think about what area you'd like to work in *IF* you moved from your current specialty. Think about where you want your career to be in one, five and ten years. What will challenge you and keep your job interesting? Examine the strategies offered and choose one or two you can begin working on today. If you have a plan, you're set to take steps to reach your goal.