

The Verdict

Denton County Paralegal Association

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School Supply Drive

This month to support our School Supply Drive endeavors, please bring to the luncheon a package of **Pens** and **Pencils**. We are also still accepting paper goods such as spirals, notebook paper and composition books!

Valentine's Day Grams Update

Valentine Grams was absolutely awesome! Everyone pulled together to make this happen and it really did go smoothly!! Everyone who ordered we appreciate you and hope you enjoyed the cupcakes.

NOW FOR THE IMPORTANT PART... I am happy to say that the Fundraising Committee's goal was 200 cupcakes. We went above and beyond that amount. I am HAPPY to say that we sold over 270 cupcakes and make a little over \$1900.00 with less than \$100.00 in expenses. We could not have done this without everyone that baked cupcakes and made icing at the last minute. A BIG-BIG thank you and hugs go out to every one of you! To the law offices of Duane Coker, Hayes, Berry, White & Vanzant and Alagood & Cartwright, P.C., we could not have done it without your donations of our time, paper, and jars. We will be forever be grateful!

Please make your calendars for the month of May, the Fundraising Committee and the Membership Committee have big plans coming your way!!! FUN, FUN, and MORE FUN!!!!



Meeting Notice

2013 Officers

Ria Sherman, President
ria@cokerlegal.com

Kim Guertler, President-Elect
Kim.guertler@dentoncounty.com

Michelle James, Secretary/Parliamentarian
mjames@csplaw.net

Lisa Pittman, Treasurer
lpittman@hbvwlaw.com

Jennifer Stout, Historian
Jennifer.stout@dentoncounty.com

The Denton County Paralegal Association's next Luncheon will be on Thursday, **February 28, 2013** at noon at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Drive, Corinth, Texas.

The all-inclusive cost of lunch is \$14.00 payable when you sign in. We cannot accept debit or credit cards, or make change, so please bring **exact** amount of cash or a check made payable to DCPA.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED and can be made via e-mail to ria@cokerlegal.com. The Deadline for making your reservation is **5:00 P.M. on Monday, February 25, 2013.**

Notice: We must notify Oakmont of the number attending prior to the meeting for preparation of adequate food and seating arrangements. Those that have RSVP'd will get served and seated first. We cannot guarantee that you will have seating or food if you do not RSVP.

Directions to Oakmont

Oakmont Country Club is located in Corinth off I-35 East between Lewisville and Denton.

- Exit 461 – Shady Grove Road/Post Oak Drive
- Turn west onto Post Oak Drive
- Turn right (west) onto Robinson Road at stop sign
- Turn left (south) onto Oakmont Drive – you will see an Oakmont sign in the median
- Turn right into Oakmont Country Club (second right)

AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: February 28, 2013
 Place: Oakmont Country Club
 1901 Oakmont Drive
 Corinth, Texas 76210
 Time: Noon

1. Welcome members and guests
2. Old Business
 - a. Approve January minutes
 - b. Approve January Treasurer's Report
3. New Business
 - a. Fundraising Committee update
 - b. Membership Committee update
4. Speaker – Adam T. Whitten
5. Adjournment

2013 Committee Chairs

CLE, Vicki Schmidt
Vicki@cmloveless.com

Fundraising, Michelle Beecher
mbeecher@dentonlaw.com

Legal Directory, Michele George
mgeorge@hbvwlaw.com

Membership, Gina Elliot
gottigina@yahoo.com

Newsletter, Lisa Pittman
lpittman@hbvwlaw.com

Social, Christy Powell
cpowell@csplaw.net

TAPA, Sunnie Palmer
sunnie@zellmerlaw.com

Ad Hoc Scholarship, Georgya Rankin
georgya@cokerlaw.com

President's Message

By: Ria Sherman

Balance: harmony, poise, equity, parity.

I love to visit the Museum of Modern Art in Fort Worth; it helps me to see things in a new and different perspective. There is a sculpture comprised of two 6 foot square slabs of lead, impossibly heavy, set on edge at a right angle and held in place by a pole of rolled up lead, placed at the sweet spot where the three parts come together. Entitled 'Right Angle Corner Prop with Pole' by Richard Serra, it is a study of balance. The parts are held together by the intuitive placement of the three. I've walked past it many times but this weekend it resonated with me as an object lesson in teamwork.

With a very successful Valentine's Gram fundraiser under our belts (great job fundraising committee and volunteers) and our membership committee getting into high gear, it's easy to be swept up in a big project; especially if you spent Wednesday dressed up as a Valentine Fairy running all over the courthouse and county!

In this message I wanted to recognize the importance of our individual members and how they contribute to and support the DCPA. When you attend a luncheon, invite a guest, bake a batch of cupcakes or buy a couple, give a friend a DCPA application, send an encouraging email to a member or to a hard working committee chair, you are 'hitting the sweet spot', making a difference and helping the DCPA to find that perfect, resonant balance.

Kudos to you! Don't forget to turn in your renewal!



Legal Directory

The 2012 Legal Directory is available for purchase. This latest directory has been updated to include some of the newest attorneys in Denton County. The cost of the directory is \$25.00 each. If you have an old directory, turn it in for a \$2.00 rebate on the purchase price. This is a great resource! Get yours today! For more information contact Michele George or Lisa Pittman at (940) 387-3518 or at mgeorge@hbvwlaw.com or lpittman@hbvwlaw.com.

CLE Guest Speaker



Our Speaker this month is Adam T. Whitten, with Michael J. Whitten & Associates, P.C., who will discuss how to use State Bar Of Texas' research tool called Casemaker.

Birthdays

Our members with March birthdays are:

Lisa Pittman (3/14)
Carly Hensley (3/15)
Heather Collard (3/19)
Bruce Stewart (3/22)
Lisa Bowles (3/31)

Hope each of you will have a **Happy Birthday!**

Benefits of Membership In The Denton County Paralegal Association Include:

- ❖ Receipt of the monthly issue of *The Verdict*
- ❖ Free Accredited CLE at monthly meetings
- ❖ Continuing Legal Education seminars on various topics
- ❖ Job Bank
- ❖ Motivation
- ❖ Networking with other paralegals in Denton County
- ❖ Professional growth through participation
- ❖ Communication and promotion of professional conduct and responsibility
- ❖ Continued individual and professional growth as paralegals

Support Our Sustaining Members

Please help support our Sustaining Members by calling them when you have a project that needs outside support. Remember it is through their continued support and generosity that DCPA is able to provide social events at a low cost.

Accurate Concept Insurance

Jay Freeman

13321 Montfort Road
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Phone: 972-386-4386 | 800-967-4386

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Email - accurateconcept@msn.com

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Stewart Process Service, Inc.

Bruce G. Stewart

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Fax: 940-484-0999

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Stoffels & Associates, Inc.

Janel M. Stoffels

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Denton, Texas 76201

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The Reporting Professionals

Cheryl Perlich

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Denton, Texas 76210

Phone: 940-484-6053

Fax: 940-484-6054

Email - reportingpros@sbcglobal.net

In The Know

Talking with: Wanda Woodworth

Employed by law firm: Denton County Criminal DA – Civil Division

Years experience: 2.5

What made you want to become a paralegal? I couldn't find a job as a technical writer and I missed the wave of the alternative teaching certification hirings (I completed the program but by then there were a lot of certified teachers applying for jobs). I have a dog training business (Wanda Woof Dog Training) and have clients on the weekends and some evenings. I decided to get my paralegal certificate after winning a judgment in small claims court against some rotten tenants I had. In April 2008 I finished my certificate from a one year online program with AIPS (American Institute of Paragal Studies). I was unable to find employment –all the firms I looked at wanted 2-9 years experience and someone ready to jump in with both feet. I even cold called some lawfirms without any luck. When a girlfriend suggested contacting the local courthouse and seeing if they had an open intern position, I jumped at the opportunity to work with the Civil Division Bond Forfeiture section. Priscilla Brooks taught me the ins and outs of the BF world. I left after spending a valuable 8 months there. When an administrative position opened in Civil they called me and asked if I was interested. I've been working in the Civil Dept for 2.5 years now.

What type of law does your atty practice? I work with Mary Miller, Bond Forfeiture Litigation attorney and John Biggins, the Asset Forfeiture & Seizure attorney.

What was it like being a new paralegal? While I don't have the official title of Paralegal, the work has been very busy. Learning the ropes and forming partnerships/understandings with other departments (such as the District and Civil Clerks, mailroom staff was key). Keeping up with the huge volume of bond forfeitures is a challenge because we are dependent on good relations with the various bondsmen (sureties) to settle their cases by signing agreed judgments. I wanted to learn as much as possible about bond forfeitures so I met with a local surety to learn their piece of the bond business.

How many paralegals are at your current firm: There are 3 Senior Paralegals in the Civil Division, 1 Paralegal in the Criminal DA's office and 1 Senior Paralegal who works with the Civil DA stationed at the Denton County Sheriff's Office.

What kind of law is practiced at your current firm? Civil defense and litigation, and Criminal prosecution.

What is your advice to new paralegals? Become familiar with the office workings and make business partnerships/build relationships with the people your job intersects with. Become well versed in office equipment & software programs so you can help coworkers.

To which paralegal organizations do you belong? Denton County Paralegal Association

How do you relax after a tough day at work? I hug, play and walk with my 4 dogs (Powder, Peggy Sue, Stanley & Yoji – 3 boxers and a Boston mix), read a lot, sometimes I paint with watercolors, and I watch Walking Dead on Sundays.

Denton County Paralegals Association

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Denton, TX 76206

Visit us on Facebook:

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/
Denton-County-Paralegal-
Association](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Denton-County-Paralegal-Association)

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.dentonparalegals.org

January Minutes

1. 2012 President, Jennifer Stout, called the meeting of January 24, 2013, to order at 12:03 p.m. at the Oakmont Country Club. There were 25 members, 4 guests, and the speakers, all of whom were welcomed by the 2012 President Stout. 2012 President Stout announced to everyone that the 2013 President, Ria Sherman, had been detained at the office, so she was filling in for her until President Sherman's arrival.
2. 2012 President Stout introduced three (3) guests: Melody Brackeen (who works at Alagood & Cartwright, P. C.), Beverly Rezadad, and Toni Fisher (who works for JC Penney).
3. 2012 President Stout asked for a vote of approval for the December, 2012, meeting minutes. A motion for approval was presented by Ava Watson, and seconded by Vicki Schmidt, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
4. 2012 President Stout asked for a vote of approval for the Treasurer's report in The Verdict. A motion for approval was presented by Stephanie Taylor, and seconded by Priscilla Brooks, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
5. 2012 President Stout asked for a vote of approval for the 2013 budget. A motion for approval was presented by Michelle Beecher, and seconded by Gloria Porter, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
6. 2013 President, Ria Sherman, arrived and took over the meeting, at which time she made the following announcements:
 - a. The membership application fee is increased from \$25 to \$35 on the new membership applications for 2013.
 - b. The 2013 Valentines fundraiser will be cupcakes in a mason jar with \$8 for delivery. President Sherman and Michelle Beecher would be in tutus to deliver them.
 - c. Upcoming event is a Bingo night, and possibly something at the Denton Arts & Jazz Festival.
 - d. School supplies will be collected each month at the CLE meetings, with a focus on different supplies for each month, for example: notebooks and paper one month. The supplies can be dropped in the box, or cash can be donated.
 - e. There will be an evening get together for a brainstorming session on February 11, 2013, at Chuy's in Denton. The topic for discussion will be branding.
 - f. There will be tickets collected by attendees at the monthly CLE luncheons for a progressive door prize.
7. Member, Christine Piott, introduced guest, Jean Manion.
8. CLE Chair, Vicki Schmidt, introduced the speaker, Darcy Loveless, with Loveless & Loveless, who presented information on Denton County Alternate Dispute Resolution Program (DCAP) mediation, who later introduced a subsequent speaker, Erin Manley, Executive Director of DCAP who presented information about mediation at DCAP.
9. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p. m.