

# THE VERDICT

DENTON COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

JULY 2011

## Inside this issue:

|                             |   |                                 |     |                          |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|---|
| President's Message         | 1 | Notice of DCPA Luncheon Meeting | 2-3 | Employment Opportunities | 4 |
| 2011 DCPA Officers          | 2 | Agenda for DCPA Meeting         | 3   | Minutes                  | 5 |
| 2011 DCPA Committees        | 2 | Monthly Speaker                 | 3   |                          |   |
| Membership News             | 2 | TAPS 2011 Information           | 3   |                          |   |
| Benefits of DCPA Membership | 2 | DCPA Fundraising Announcement   | 3-4 |                          |   |
| Birthday Congratulations    | 2 | Support Our Sustaining Members  | 4   |                          |   |

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Vicki Schmidt, CLA



Dear members:

Keeping cool this summer has been a challenge, but this unusually long streak of over 100 degree days has forced me to try out some new alternative strategies. For instance, I have started taking the A-train to work three or four days a week. I commute from Lewisville to downtown Denton (doesn't that sound so big-city sophisticated). Two of the biggest advantages are that I have eliminated the nerve racking experience of driving in rush hour traffic and I am getting to read an extra hour or so each day I ride the train. Another "benefit" is that sometimes I get exercise when I have to walk to the office from the train if the connector bus isn't available.

One of the books I have read this summer is *Dog Tags* by David Rosenfelt. Basically, it's about an attorney who represents a retired police dog who is involved in a criminal enterprise. My favorite quote from the book is "If we ever lose our democratic personal freedoms, Discovery will be among the first things to go. For anyone accused of a crime, I consider it among the most important rights. To tell the truth, it makes Miranda look like an aging flamenco dancer."

While the concept of Discovery is theoretically true, sometimes when I'm reviewing discovery documents, it seems that the spirit of the rules of discovery have evolved into an exercise in hiding the smoking gun with feathers, recriminations and sudden memory loss. If like me you are sometimes frustrated by trying to convince your client or the opposing counsel that they really do have to produce the

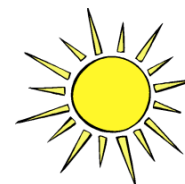
requested documents, then you will surely enjoy the book, *Dog Tags*.

I want to personally thank each of our DCPA members who volunteered their time at the Wills for Heroes event and those who worked behind the scenes to prepare for the event. It was a very well run event and a lot of Heroes and their families were helped. As you may already know, a will-signing involves a lot of people because two witnesses are required as well as a notary. It was a good thing that most of the paralegals who attended the event were prepared to notarize the signings because we witnessed and notarized 50 wills, durable powers of attorney, and medical directives.

Please join me in thanking the following Heroes within our organization who helped make this event a success: **Christine Piott, Denise League, Marguerite Alba, Allison Martin, Michael Garcia, Pam Snavelly, Glenda Hill, Sunnie Palmer, and myself.**

As you may know, Susan Wilen, President of the Paralegal Division of the State Bar, has made pro bono work a priority goal during her presidency. There will be another will signing event in the future and I encourage you to participate. I know will signings are not very exciting, however it is a great way to show your appreciation for those who protect and serve us – why wait until you are in a car wreck and the local firemen block on-coming cars with their big, red truck or your roof is on fire and men in yellow bunker coats are trying to save your home?

Keep cool and I will see you at our meeting on July 28<sup>th</sup>.



**2011 DCPA OFFICERS**

- President – Vicki Schmidt
- President Elect – Michelle Beecher
- Secretary/Parliamentarian – Gloria Porter
- Treasurer – Lisa Pittman
- Historian – Ava Watson

**2011 DCPA COMMITTEES**

- CLE Committee -
  - Michelle Beecher, Chairman
  - Lisa Bowles
  - Michelle James
  - Christine Piott

- Fund Raising Committee -
  - Jenna Earhart, Chairman
  - Lisa Pittman
  - Adriana Sanchez

- Legal Directory Committee -
  - Ava Watson, Chairman
  - Lisa Pittman
  - Gloria Porter
  - Carol Pelzel
  - Denise League
  - Debbie Maldonado

- Membership Committee -
  - Sunnie Palmer, Chairman
  - Jennifer Harris
  - Denise League
  - Christine Piott
  - Gina Elliott
  - Michelle Merrit
  - Miranda Miller
  - Pamela Snavely

- Newsletter Committee -
  - Lisa Pittman, Chairman
  - Jennifer Earhart
  - Jackie Cox

- Social Committee -
  - Lisa Bowles – Chairman
  - Barbara Denton
  - Pam Snavely
  - Landra Turner
  - Amy Riggs
  - Jennifer Flores

**DCPA WEBSITE**

Check out what's new on our website at [www.dentonparalegals.org](http://www.dentonparalegals.org). Let us know what you think, and what you would like to see on our website in the future. If you have any changes that need to be made to your contact information, please let us know.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Please encourage those paralegals and others in the legal field, whom are not currently members, to join. If you know of anyone who would like to join, please contact Sunnie Palmer at [sunnie@zellmerlaw.com](mailto:sunnie@zellmerlaw.com) or (940) 383-2674.

**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
- ❖ Fulfillment that is received from being involved in the direction of the paralegal profession

**BIRTHDAYS**



Our members with August birthdays are:

- Landra Turner (8-3);
- Kristi Patel (8-7);
- Michele George (8-22);
- Gabrielle Davis (8-24);
- Allison Johnston (8-29);

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

**MEETING NOTICE**

The Denton County Paralegal Association July Luncheon will be on Thursday, **July 28, 2011** at noon at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Drive, Corinth, Texas.

The all-inclusive cost of lunch is \$13.00 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 [Vicki@cmloveless.com](mailto:Vicki@cmloveless.com). The Deadline for making your reservation is 5:00 P.M. on Monday, July 25, 2011.**

**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. Please note we are also required to bill those individuals who make reservations and do not attend.**

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

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



### AGENDA FOR JULY MEETING

Date: Thursday, July 28, 2011

Place: Oakmont Country Club  
1901 Oakmont Drive  
Corinth, Texas 76210

Time: Noon

1. Welcome members and guests
2. Old Business
  - Approve the June Minutes and Treasurer's report
3. Speaker: Sunnie Palmer
4. Door prizes and adjournment

### MAY SPEAKER INFORMATION

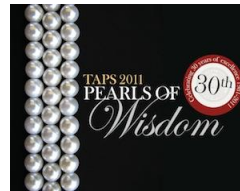


Our Speaker this month is fellow paralegal, Sunnie Palmer who will be speaking about "Compassion Fatigue: How to Care for Clients and Take Care of Yourself" or Just Plain Old "Compassion Fatigue".

### EVENTS/NEWS



Do you have a recipe, informative tip/idea, or joke, etc. that you would like to share with your fellow DCPA Members? If so, please submit your idea to Jenna Earhart at [jeahart@hbvwlaw.com](mailto:jeahart@hbvwlaw.com). Thank you!



**TAPS 2011 - FORT WORTH, TEXAS**  
October 5-7, 2011

TAPS 2011 will be held October 5-7, 2011 at the Marriott Hotel (DFW) & Golf Resort. *See flyer attached.*

**PD Members:** Scholarships are available to attend TAPS if you need financial assistance. Deadline for submitting applications for the TAPS Scholarship is **Friday, July 29, 2011**. For information regarding TAPS visit the PD website: [www.txpd.org](http://www.txpd.org)

### PARALEGAL DIVISION AWARD



**Gloria Porter Named Paralegal Division Outstanding Committee Chair**

The Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas awarded an Outstanding Committee Chair award to Gloria Porter for her work as chair of the Elections Committee.

The award was announced at the Paralegal Division's (PD) Annual Meeting in San Antonio on June 24, 2011. The award was presented to Gloria at the DCPA meeting by PD District 12 Director, Sunnie Palmer, on June 30, 2011.

The Elections Committee is responsible for each Director election and for enforcing election guidelines. In short, Gloria is responsible for the integrity of every PD election.

In a written statement, PD President-Elect and Election Committee board advisor Joncilee Miller-Davis stated: "Gloria has always been a dedicated volunteer for the PD, serving in many capacities over the years. Being her Board

Advisor this year, I have learned just how organized she truly is. She always has the answer about any Elections questions and she stayed on top of all deadlines for the 8 elections we had this year throughout the State of Texas. For these reasons, and many other, she was nominated for Committee Chair of the Year. Congratulations, Gloria. You deserve this award for all you have done for the PD.”

Gloria is returning as the 2011-2012 PD Elections Committee Chair and serves the PD in other capacities as well—as Marketing Chair for the 2011 Texas Advanced Paralegal Seminar (TAPS) and in various roles on ad hoc committees as requested by the PD President. In addition, Gloria serves as DCPA’s Secretary and is a Past President.

**SILENT AUCTION**



**Donation Sign Ups are now being accepted.** – We have received some emails with items willing to be donated – a huge **THANK YOU** to those who have done that already! We definitely need more participation to make this Silent Auction a success – remember the proceeds will benefit our Thanksgiving and Christmas families we assist with each year. Items we are looking for include: baked goods, plants, jewelry, skin care goodies, baby blankets, photography, monogrammed items, etc. If you do something as a hobby or a part-time job on the side or have a special talent in creating or making items - this is what we are looking for!

Please email Jenna Earhart, Fundraising Committee Chair, at [jeanhart@hbwvllaw.com](mailto:jeanhart@hbwvllaw.com) or call at (940) 387-3518, with your donation commitment. Deadline to turn in your donated item(s) is September 16, 2011.



**DCPA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD**

Deadline to submit your application for the DCPA Scholarship Award is September 15, 2011. Attached are the instructions and the application. This is a scholarship for paralegals sitting for the certification test such as TBLS, NALA, NFPA.

**DCPA FUNDRAISER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE**



Each year DCPA Members assist the Children’s Advocacy Center of Denton County with school supplies to help those families that need it the most. All donations must be delivered to CACDC no later than August 5<sup>th</sup>.

Donations must be new/unused items **OR** monetary. You may deliver your donations to Jenna Earhart at Hayes, Berry, White & Vanzant, LLP, 512 W. Hickory, Suite 100, Denton, Texas 76201 **or** you may drop your donations off during our June and July monthly luncheon.

All monetary donations should be hand-delivered or mailed to Lisa Pittman’s attention at PO Box 2641, Denton, Texas 76202, no later than August 1, 2011. Please make those checks payable to DCPA and mark those for CACDC school supply drive. Lisa Pittman and Jenna Earhart take all monetary donations and purchase the school supplies that are still needed before the August 5<sup>th</sup> deadline.

The CACDC School Supply Wish List is attached to this newsletter and you may also pick up a list at our June luncheon.

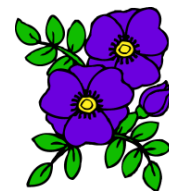


**SUPPORT OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS**

**Our Sustaining Members give so much to our Association, please be sure to think of them when you are in need of services that require their specialty!**

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

If you have an open position in your office or know of another office that has an opening and would like to e-mail it to the members and have it posted in the next newsletter, please contact Lisa Pittman at (940) 387-3518 or [lpittman@hbwvllaw.com](mailto:lpittman@hbwvllaw.com).



**JUNE MINUTES**

1. President, Vicki Schmidt, called the meeting of June 30, 2011, to order at 12:20 p.m. at the Oakmont Country Club. There were 14 members in attendance, all of whom were welcomed by the President.
2. President Schmidt advised that because there was not a member quorum in attendance to vote, the minutes of the May meeting and current Treasurer's report would be voted on at the next meeting.
3. President Schmidt announced that Lisa Bowles had been appointed the Chair of the Social Committee by the Executive Committee.
4. President Schmidt announced that the annual school supply drive was ongoing and that the deadline to donate supplies or money is the first of August.
5. Membership Chair, Sunnie Palmer, announced that current membership was 80, and that the Committee was continuing to discuss new ways to promote membership.
6. Sunnie Palmer, as District 12 Director of the State Bar of Texas Paralegal Division, presented information about PD membership, and the Texas Advanced Paralegal Seminar that will be in our local area this year. Sunnie then presented Gloria Porter the Paralegal Division's award of Committee Chair of the Year for 2010-2011 Elections Chair. The award had been given at the State Bar Annual Meeting, but Gloria was unable to attend that meeting.
7. Legal Directory Chair, Ava Watson, showed the cover of the 2012 Directory, and announced that advance directory orders were still being accepted and encouraged all members to ask their firms to pre-order. Ava announced that the directory was almost ready for proofing and asked anyone that was interested in helping proof the directory to let her know. Ava also advised that there would be no charge to the advertisers that had purchased ads in the 2010 directory.
8. CLE Committee Member, Michelle James, presented information about the CLE Committee's activities. The July speaker will be Sunnie Palmer whose presentation will be regarding compassion fatigue. The August speaker will be Michelle Houston presenting information about the Denton County Bar Association and the Denton County Alternate Dispute Resolution (DCAP) program. The September speakers will be Rick Hagen and Sam Burke presenting information on criminal law and criminal law legislative updates. The October speaker will be Charla Bradshaw presenting information on family law legislative updates. Michelle announced that the Committee was planning a salary survey that would be sent to members, and is also planning a social event to incorporate DCPA's theme for this year of care, support, and encouragement of paralegals.
9. Fund Raising Chair, Jenna Earhart, presented information about the annual school supply drive, and the silent auction being planned for October. She announced that all proceeds from the silent auction will be used for the DCPA's Thanksgiving and Christmas families. She encouraged members to donate to both events.
10. Michelle James and Denise League won the monthly drawing for the gifts presented by the Association.
11. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.