GAP The Paragraph

Georgia Association of Paralegals Quarterly Newsletter
Charter Member of the
National Federation of Paralegal Associations

August, 2005

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GAP LENDS A HAND TO HILLSIDE

by: Sharon Scott, Hillside with introduction by Alice Chow, GAP

Each year, GAP teams up with a charity to support its altruistic mission. This Spring, Hillside Inc. was chosen to be GAP's charity of the year. Members were asked to bring tax-deductible donations of wish-list items and funds to the June meeting. During the meeting, Teresa Stoker, Executive Director of Hillside, briefly introduced the history and mission of the organization.

Founded in 1888 as a shelter for women and children, Hillside is Atlanta's oldest organized charity. Today Hillside serves emotionally and behaviorally disturbed and abused children, adolescents and their families from throughout Georgia. Children in the intensive residential treatment program range in age from 7 to 17 years of age.

Hillside's residential psychiatric program helps children overcome their troubled pasts in a safe, secure, homelike setting. Here they can build trust, learn to understand and come to terms with early trauma, and gain the skills they need to return to their communities.

A treatment team that includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, medical personnel, a speech and language therapist, and activity therapists assesses the needs of each child. Because each resident is unique in his or her needs, Hillside uses a wide variety of approaches in order to find the special "key" to unlocking their full potential. The children participate in individual and group therapy, family therapy (when appropriate), and a wide variety of recreational, expressive, art, photography, horticultural, dance, drama and activity therapies.

Hillside's treatment success and effectiveness are exceptional. The vast majority of young people who complete treatment in the residential program never again need as intensive a level of psychiatric care.

Hillside's on-campus school is staffed by special education teachers. Small class sizes provide an opportunity for the students to overcome educational deficiencies. The students typically improve their academic scores by two years for every one year at Hillside's school.

To ensure a smooth transition when children are ready to leave residential treatment, Hillside offers the Therapeutic Foster Care Program. Here they are placed in specially selected families and given the opportunity to live in a healthy home environment. Other children can return to live with their families or relatives. To ensure that the transition is a smooth one and the results gained in treatment are sustained, Hillside added the Community Intervention Program.

Hillside's success is due largely to the support and leadership it has received from the community throughout our history. Thank you to each GAP member who generously contributed in June. Anyone who was unable to attend the June meeting or otherwise desires to make (further) contributions are welcome to do so.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Marcus C. Li, President
Georgia Association of Paralegals



Greetings,

Those who were able to attend our Annual Member Appreciation Dinner which was held on June 14th experienced a fine evening filled with great food from Anthony's and networking opportunities. Keeping with tradition, the agenda was purposely light so that members were able to explore other legal disciplines or to just simply swap stories and best practices with one another.

This year GAP was proud to sponsor Hillside Inc., as our community service project on the same evening. Hillside Inc., is an organization serving emotionally and behaviorally disturbed and abused children and their families. I wish to thank the membership for the donations to Hillside Inc. It is a great feeling to give back to the community in which we all serve. Our Community Service Coordinator, Jodi Pruitt did a nice job on her first project.



Have you heard the news? June 14, 2005 was Paralegal Day in Georgia! And yes, GAP made it happen! We were elated to share the news with everyone when we unveiled the proclamation by the Governor of Georgia, Sonny Perdue. Be sure to take a look at the proclamation contained in the later pages of this newsletter. Kevin Fogle, GAP's State Bar Coordinator took the lead on this project for us.

In addition to all of the festivities, free food and vendor door prizes, every member in attendance walked away with our new full-color 2005 Membership Directory. We hope that these are useful to you during your professional business day! Merrill Corporation did such an excellent job for us. Alice Chow, GAP's Newsletter Director, and the Staff at the GAP Office did an amazing job throughout the process of making the directory.

The Paralegal Super Conference is making its way back to Atlanta in the fall. Chere Estrin of Estrin Professional Careers is offering discounted registration to GAP Members. More information will follow in the upcoming weeks.

As you know, our corporate sponsors have been very supportive of GAP. Please continue to keep them in mind if and when a need arises for your firm or office to utilize their services.

Cheers,

Marcus

GOVERNOR PURDUE HONORS GEORGIA PARALEGALS

By: Alice Chow

Paralegals across the state were recognized on Tuesday, June 14, 2005 as Georgia Governor Sonny Purdue proclaimed it the *first ever* Paralegal Day! Thanks to GAP State Bar Coordinator Kevin Fogle of Epstein, Becker & Green, P.C. for his contributions in facilitating GAP's gaining this honored official recognition. See the entire text of the official proclamation below, which was unveiled at GAP's Annual Membership Appreciation Dinner. Let's all step out with pride in light of this appreciation for our profession!

PARALEGAL DAY

WHEREAS: A paralegal is a person qualified through education, training or work experience to perform substantive legal work that requires knowledge of legal concepts that is customarily, but not exclusively, performed by a lawyer; and

WHEREAS: Paralegals, working under the supervision of an attorney, improve management of cases and contribute substantially to the quality of legal services throughout the State of Georgia and reduction of legal costs to the public; and

WHEREAS: Excellence, dedication, and integrity are the unmistakable characteristics of paralegals and the services they provide to their attorney-employers; and

WHEREAS: Paralegals in Georgia uphold the highest standards of professionalism; and

WHEREAS: In cooperation with the Georgia Association of Paralegals, dedicated to the advancement and continued education of paralegals throughout the State of Georgia, a day shall be set aside to honor those who practice this distinguished profession; and

WHEREAS: The observance of Paralegal Day provides an opportunity to recognize paralegals throughout the state for their efforts to help our legal system perform more efficiently; and

WHEREAS: On June 14, 2005 the Georgia Association of Paralegals will honor its members at its annual appreciation dinner in Atlanta;

THEREFORE: In special recognition of the crucial contributions that these devoted professionals make to the practice of law in our state, I, SONNY PERDUE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2005, as PARALEGAL DAY IN GEORGIA.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this fourteenth day of June in the year of our Lord two thousand five.

Sonny Perdue
Governor

GAP MEMBERS RECOGNIZED DURING JUNE 14, 2005 MEMBERSHIP DINNER MEETING



by: Alice Chow

Sometimes it feels good to be appreciated. In a profession that is oftentimes misunderstood or in which one can be taken for granted, being rewarded is a welcome change of pace. GAP members were met with appreciation and thanks for all that they do during the annual Membership Appreciation Dinner meeting on June 14 at Anthony's Restaurant. Thanks to the generous meeting sponsors, attendees enjoyed a free buffet-style dinner and had the opportunity to win many fabulous door prizes.



Several members won culinary-themed prizes. Deidre Malone was presented with a gift certificate for **Anthony's Restaurant**; while Monica Gilbert and Anne Clauson left with snack baskets provided by **Legal Eagle**.





Kenny Overby of **Georgia Messenger Service**, in a delightful Colonial-era costume, presented Ann J. Jackson with an American Express gift card.

The Norcross Group presented Martha Zemanek of Bank of America and Pamela Garner with American Express gift cards.





Laura Spencer and Lisa Suit both won a set of four Atlanta Braves tickets from **Merrill Corporation**.

Janice Perez was the fortunate winner of a Spa Sydell gift certificate courtesy of **TLS Service Bureau**, who also provided a shirt to Val Northcutt.



Continued on page 14

FROM THE EDITOR



As the not-so-lazy summer days begin to wind down and we begin to gear up for another busy fall, let us take a few moments to step back, observe, and evaluate our career situation. GAP's June meeting was a time of networking and camaraderie and also provided us opportunities to celebrate our triumphs and also evaluate our career satisfaction.

See the fruits of your labor formally recognized on page 3 of this issue. Pay attention to the results of the career satisfaction survey. Where do you fall in comparison to other GAP members? Studies have shown that the more engaged an individual is, the more satisfied he/she feels. Try taking a stab at more active participation or step up to a leadership role in GAP. The opportunities are there.

As always, remember to send any newsworthy announcements to my attention at gap_editor@yahoo.com.

Here's looking forward to a busy and exciting fall!

Alice Chow
Newsletter Editor
gap_editor@yahoo.com

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2005 GAP CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Anthony's Restaurant ** 3109 Piedmont Road ** 5:00 cocktails - 6:00 dinner

Aug. 9, 2005

GAP Membership Dinner at Anthony's
Speakers: John Zwald, Esq., Chandler, Britt, Jay & Beck, LLC
and Lynn Smith, R.N., Hawkins & Parnell, LLP
Topic: Insurance Law
Sponsor: **Kelly Law Registry**
Sponsor: **Discovery Support Services**

Oct. 11, 2005
(5:00 – 6:00)

GAP Membership Dinner Meeting at Anthony's
New Member Mixer Sponsor: Andrew Grace Associates
Speaker: Jesse Spikes, McKenna, Long & Aldridge, LLP
Topic: Sports / Entertainment Law
Sponsor: **The LawStaff Group**
Sponsor: **Brown Reporting**

Dec. 6, 2005

7th Annual GAP Holiday Party at Anthony's
Chief Charles M. Walters, Gwinnett County Police Department
Installation of the 2006 Board of Directors
Sponsor: **Alexander Gallo & Associates**
Sponsor: **Document Technologies, Inc. (DTI)**
Sponsor**: Paramount Staffing Services**

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Wheeler Reporting Company, Inc.



New GAP Member Roger Holtzen of Visual Litigation Service networks at the June Member Appreciation Meeting

MEET THE CHALLENGE – GAP'S ANNUAL PACE SCHOLARSHIPS

by: Beth Magee, RP, Pace Ambassador

Paramount Staffing, Inc. will again sponsor two PACE Scholarships for GAP members to take the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam (PACE) in 2006. We will not only pay your application fee to take the exam but we will also provide you with the PACE Study Manual and a stipend to use to either take the on-line sample exam or to defray the cost of taking the PACE on-line review course to help you prepare for the exam. Also, once you become a PACE Registered Paralegal we will present you with the PACE Registered Paralegal pin so you can show others you have received the credential.

If you meet or will meet the education and experience criteria in 2006 and want to take PACE, apply for the scholarship. Paramount Staffing's article in this newsletter gives compelling reasons for seeking the credential now.

To apply for the scholarship you must be a current member of GAP, agree to continue your membership in GAP as a Voting Member in 2006 and take PACE by December 31, 2006. Fill out the application form found in this newsletter and also on our website (www.gaparalegal.org) or available from the PACE Ambassador (Beth Magee, RP, bmagee@convexgroup.com, 404.760.4327) and submit a statement of three hundred words or less discussing "How My Being a PACE Registered Paralegal Benefits GAP, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) and the Paralegal Profession."

Keep in mind that you do not have to pass PACE to receive the scholarship. You simply have to commit to take the exam and give it your best try to pass.

Applications are due by October 3, 2005. Send your application to GAP headquarters at gaparalegal@mindspring.com, (fax) 404.522.0132, or 1199 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307-1509. The PACE Scholarship Committee (GAP's President, NFPA's PACE Coordinator and a representative from Paramount Staffing) will review the applications, choose the recipients for the scholarships, and introduce the recipients at GAP's annual holiday party on December 6. If you are chosen as a recipient you will be our guest at the party, too!



Say thank you to Paramount Staffing for its commitment to the paralegal profession in funding the scholarship and show your commitment to the paralegal profession by applying for the PACE Scholarship today. If you have questions about the scholarship or PACE in general, e-mail or call GAP's PACE Ambassador, Beth Magee, RP at bmagee@convexgroup.com or 404.760.4327.

PACE = Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam

Offering experienced paralegals an option to

- validate your experience and job skills;
- establish credentials; and
- increase your value to your organization and clients.

The only exam of its kind, PACE

- developed by a professional testing firm;
- administered by an independent test administration company;
- tests concepts across practice areas;
- offers the profession a national standard of evaluation; and
- offered at multiple locations on numerous dates and at various times.

PACE = Personal Advancement for the Experienced Paralegal

APPLICATION FOR THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF PARALEGALS' PACE SCHOLARSHIP PACKAGE SPONSORED BY PARAMOUNT STAFFING, INC.

THE BASICS

Name: _____

Contact Address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Contact E-Mail: _____

Current Member of GAP: ❑ Yes Category: _____ ❑ No

Number of Years I Have Been a GAP Member: _____

I have participated in GAP and its Activities by: _____

_____

_____

I will continue my membership in GAP as a Voting Member in 2006: ❑ Yes ❑ No

If I receive a PACE Scholarship I agree to take PACE by December 31, 2006 ❑ Yes ❑ No
(Note: if you do not renew your membership in 2006 or take the exam by December 31, 2006 you forfeit any scholarship benefits.)

EXPERIENCE WORKING AS A PARALEGAL

(Please attach a copy of your resume or list paralegal positions you've held listing employer and a few of your job responsibilities in the position.)

Number of Years as of December 31, 2005:_____

Number of Years Expected as of December 31, 2006:_____

EDUCATION

(Please attach a copy of your degree or certificate.)

Bachelor's Degree in any major: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Bachelor's Degree in Paralegal Studies: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies: ❑ Yes ❑ No

Certificate from a Paralegal Studies Program: ❑ Yes ❑ No

STATEMENT

Attached is my three hundred word or less statement "How Being a PACE Registered Paralegal Benefits GAP, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) and the Paralegal Profession": ❑ Yes ❑ No

INCLUDE THIS FORM WITH YOUR STATEMENT AND SUBMIT TO THE GAP HEADQUARTERS BY OCTOBER 3, 2005.

(E-mail: gaparalegal@mindspring.com, fax: 404.522.0132, or mail: 1199 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307-1509)

SETTING THE PACE . . . PARAMOUNT STAFFING, INC.

For the last two years, Paramount Staffing, Inc. has been honored to sponsor scholarships for the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam (PACE). This exam offers experienced paralegals the means to establish credentials, validating the value of their experience and job skills and increasing their value to an organization and its clients. We have been thrilled with the responses we have received from the GAP community. It is the hope of Paramount Staffing to see continued interest from qualified paralegals in taking this exam.

Paramount Staffing recognizes the importance of qualified, experienced paralegals in the Atlanta legal and corporate communities. We have the good fortune of working with Atlanta's top firms and in-house legal departments of major corporations. Every day, our clients express their needs and desires for qualified, certified paralegal assistance. The paralegals our clients seek need to have not only years of experience, but also a solid educational background. Our clients are looking for motivated professionals who are constantly striving to better themselves in their profession. Becoming PACE certified is a means by which paralegals can demonstrate their desire to be the best in their profession.

GAP recognizes the importance of PACE, and has dedicated countless hours to promoting the PACE exam. Because of their efforts, many employers in the Atlanta legal community have learned of the significance of the PACE exam. These employers recognize the value of the exam, not only for the credentialing of paralegals, but also for the added value that is brought to the organizations that employee those paralegals.

This past year, the applicant response to the PACE scholarship was unparalleled. This stems from the fact that GAP did such an excellent job in disseminating information in a widespread and timely manner. As a result, the GAP PACE Scholarship Committee evaluated several qualified candidates, facing the difficult decision of selecting two to be awarded the coveted PACE scholarship. In the end, the two candidates who received the awards displayed the intelligence, dedication and desire not only to succeed individually as paralegals, but also to pioneer the growth and advancement of the profession.

Paramount Staffing would like to challenge the members of the Georgia Association of Paralegals to pursue this scholarship opportunity. Our company is firmly committed to simultaneously promoting this educational opportunity while decreasing the financial burden. GAP is committed to promoting the importance of this exam to the employers in the Atlanta legal community. Employers are committed to embracing those paralegals who strive to improve themselves in their profession. Shouldn't you be committed, too?

2005 RP PIN FOR A LUCKY PACE REGISTERED PARALEGAL

Here is a chance for a current PACE Registered Paralegal to get your RP Pin, if you don't already have one. Thanks to Paramount Staffing, Inc., PACE Registered Paralegals who receive or renew their credential before October 1, 2005 may apply for our annual RP Pin. We will choose one member who is a PACE Registered Paralegal to receive the 2005 RP Pin at our annual holiday party on December 6.

To be considered, you must do the following by the **October 3, 2005 deadline**:

- Send your application to GAP headquarters at gaparalegal@mindspring.com; (fax) 404.522.0132, or 1199 Euclid Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307-1509
- Provide your name and contact information, a copy of your Registered Paralegal certificate or letter confirming you passed PACE and are currently a PACE Registered Paralegal
- Include a a three hundred word or less statement on the topic, "How I'll Explain What a Registered Paralegal Is When People Ask Me What RP Stands For."

Passing the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam is a wonderful accomplishment and here is your chance to receive well-deserved recognition for your dedication to the paralegal profession.

WELCOME NEW GAP MEMBERS

Thuy Lawler

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Angela V. Greene

Arnall Golden Gregory LLP
Angela O. Chambliss
Tamikia T. Gregory

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Heather Skinner

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Visual Litigation Services, LLC
Roger A. Holtzen

The Weatherly Law Firm
Fawn Alston



Charles Coleman welcomes new GAP member Joan Curran

CASE 101
LOST EVIDENCE



The Case of the Troubled Attorney:

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HILLSIDE HOUSE - A REFUGE FOR MANY

continued from the cover



Monroe Administration Building

TAMARA

Tamara was 15 when she was referred to Hillside from Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Her scars, both inside and out, needed healing. With her mother in prison and her father deceased, she had been sent to live with her aunt. Tamara's anger over her mother's abandonment was intense. She was a difficult child to raise. In a terrible moment of frustration, her aunt threw gasoline on her and set her on fire.

Burned over 70% of her body, the healing process was very slow as grafting could only be done in small increments. Emotionally, Tamara became depressed and suicidal. When ready to leave Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, it was obvious that she needed intensive help to deal with her depression. She was admitted to Hillside where she received therapy and support. Tamara began to come out of her shell and look forward to her future. Ongoing outpatient surgeries helped to restore her body while Hillside worked to get Tamara ready to live independently.

After graduating from high school while at Hillside, Tamara decided she wanted to become a nurse. Hillside helped her locate an apartment and apply to a nursing program. Thanks to Hillside, Tamara now has a bright future. She calls occasionally to fill staff in on her successes.



Kiwanis is one of five residential cottages, each serving 7 to 12 young people in an open setting

JEFF

Jeff came to Hillside at the age of 14. After the death of his father he lived with his mother and her boyfriend. Jeff reported that his mother's boyfriend had both physically and sexually abused him for many years. At admission, Jeff was extremely depressed and had attempted to hang himself and cut his wrists on a number of occasions. He was aggressive and preoccupied with death and dying. He had no friends. His diagnosis of schizophrenia added to his sense of isolation from everyone around him.

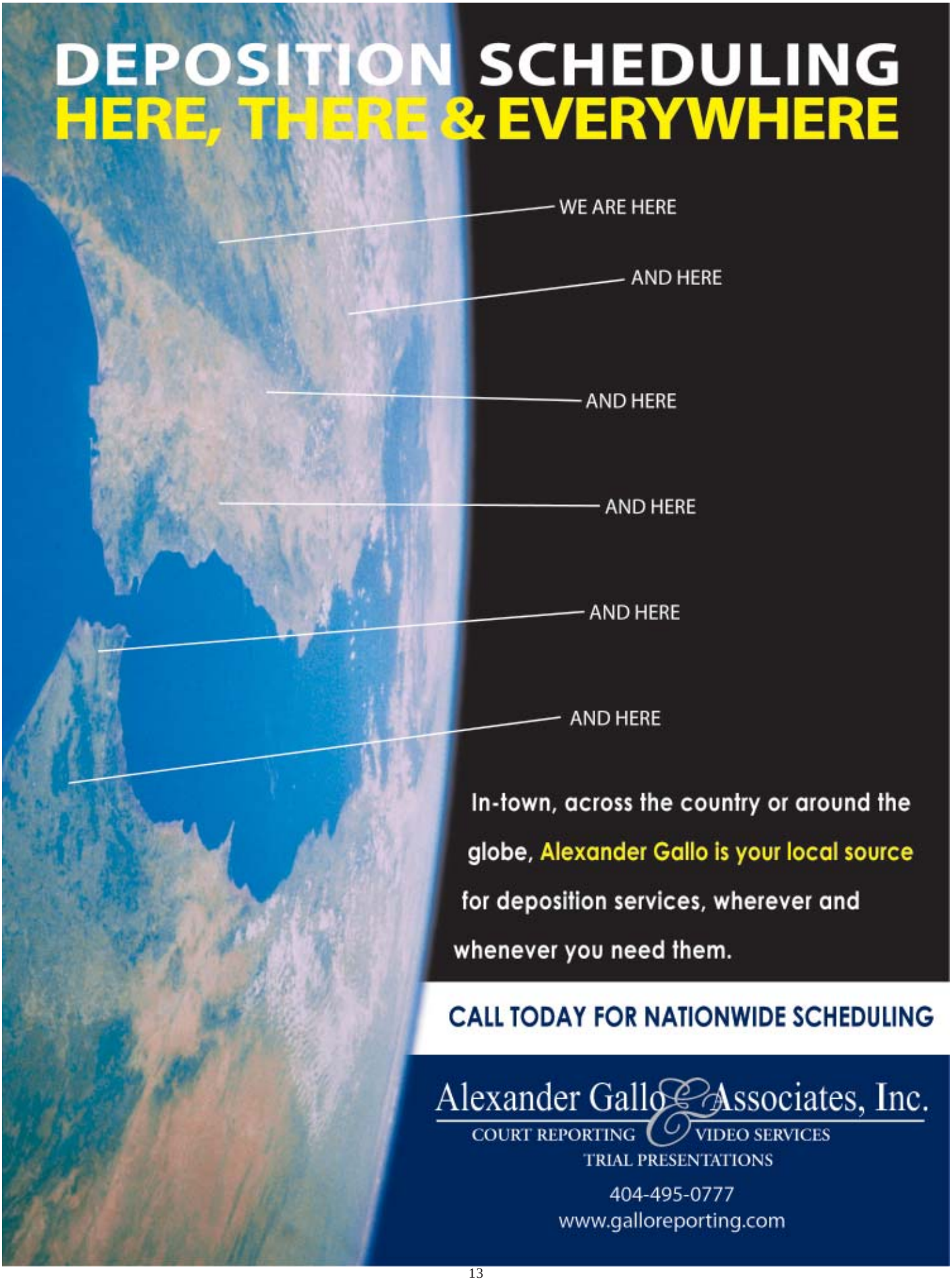


John Conant School

During his stay at Hillside, Jeff began to develop a sense of himself and learn his strengths. Great gains were made by helping Jeff understand his diagnosis and teaching him to manage himself with medications and therapy. With his mother in jail for not protecting him from the boyfriend's abuse, Jeff began to work on being able to talk to his mother about the abuse and his feelings and was able to recreate a relationship with her.

Jeff blossomed on campus. He found a source of strength in the on campus work program. He began to learn independent living skills necessary to help him after discharge. Coupled with the help from his mother and grandparents, Jeff was able to leave Hillside and move into an independent living center. Jeff has now been gone from Hillside for many years. He has held steady employment and visits Hillside from time to time to tell staff about his successes.

For more information about Hillside, please visit www.hside.org or call 404-875-4551.


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GAP MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

Continued from page 4

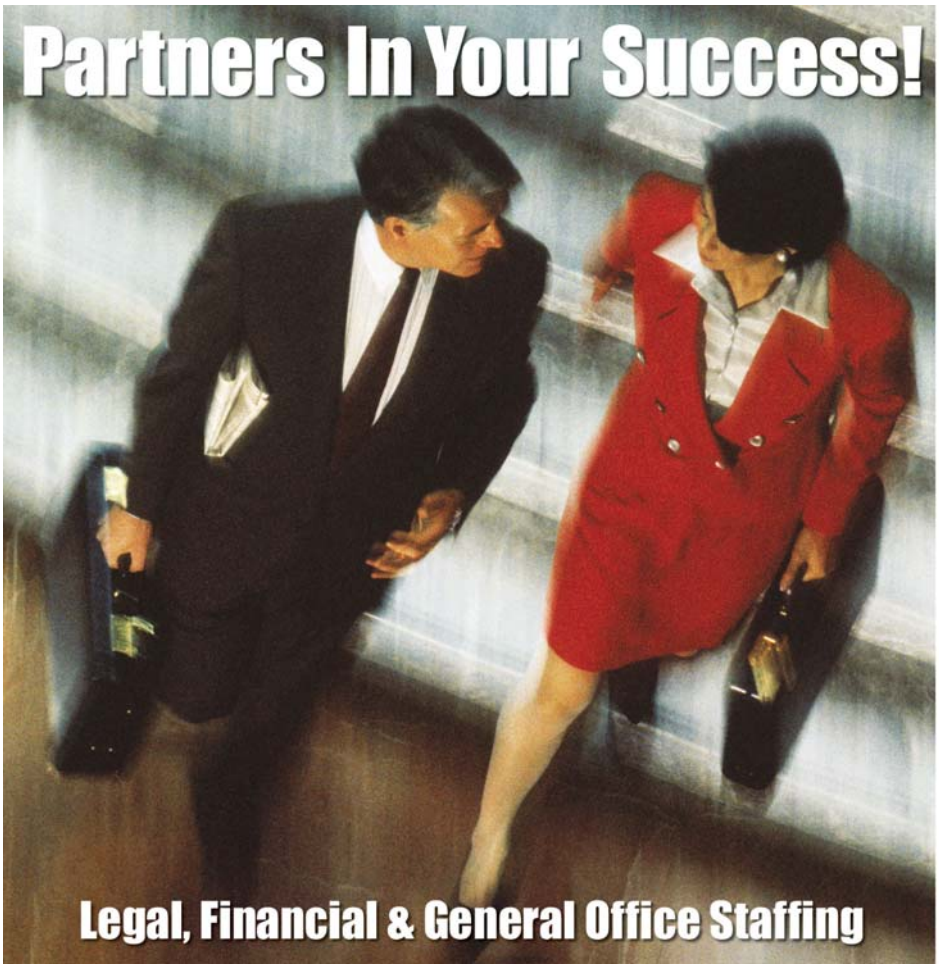
Not to neglect GAP member's literary needs, Vito de Gennaro received a free one year subscription to and courtesy of **The Daily Report**. Mariposa Publishing donated gift certificates for the Georgia Secretaries and Paralegals Handbook to Linnie Bailey, Stacy Fehlinger, Tarrah Gales, Theresa Knight, Lib Martinez and Bernadette Seals.





Congratulations to all paralegal prize winners, and ***thank you to all of the sponsors***!

Most importantly, on this night GAP members reciprocated with donations to Hillside, a charity home for neglected and underprivileged children. Read more about Hillside's mission and some success stories in this newsletter. Tax deductible donations of funds or specified wish-list goods are needed and appreciated. For more information, please point your browser to http://www.hside.org.



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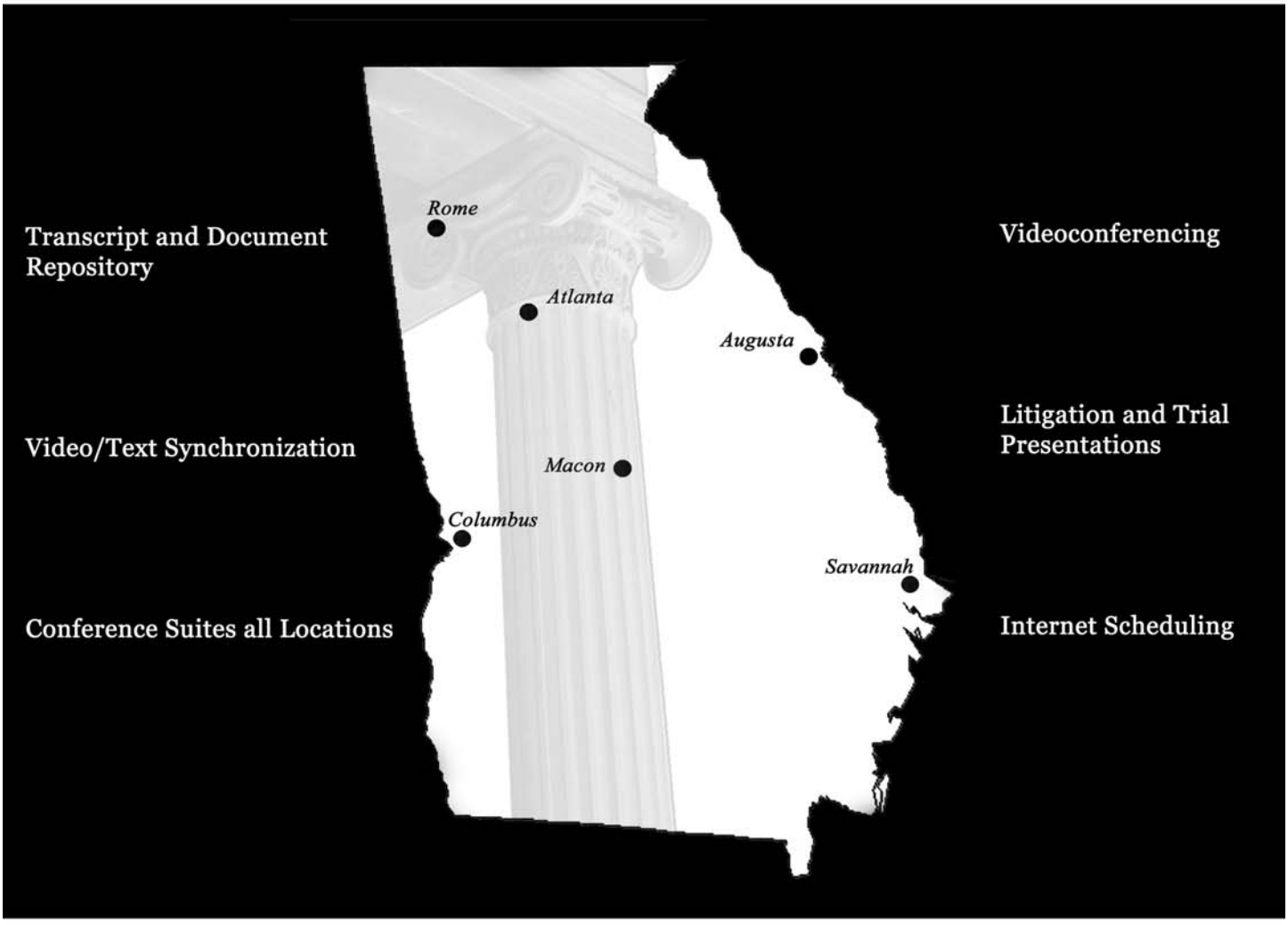
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EDD: Opportunity At Your Door

by: James D. Shook, Esq.

Whirrr. Bzzz. Pop. Opportunity used to knock, but when it's related to technology, you never know how it will present itself.

That loud noise at your door today is probably Electronic Document Discovery, or EDD. Although it's been around for a while, EDD has become a very hot topic in the legal community. But fortunately, it's not too late for you to be at the forefront of this new specialty.

What is EDD?

Put very simply, EDD is simply a part of good old-fashioned discovery that focuses on electronic documents, especially email. However, because many people still struggle with technology, EDD is generating some significant problems for lawyers and their clients.

Recent Developments

To get a flavor for what is driving all of this buzz about EDD, let's consider two recent cases:

Case One: Coleman Holdings sued investment bank Morgan Stanley for fraudulent activity in connection with a large merger. During discovery, Morgan Stanley failed to timely and completely hand over emails and other data that had been stored on backup tapes, despite its representations to the contrary. Eventually, the judge so tired of Morgan Stanley's misrepresentations regarding electronic discovery that she gave the jury an adverse inference instruction on whether Morgan Stanley had defrauded the plaintiff. Left with having to prove only reliance and damages, the jury awarded Coleman Holdings $604 million plus another $850 million in punitive damages – essentially without reaching the facts!

Case Two: A fairly routine employment discrimination case turned into a nightmare when the defendant, UBS Warburg, was accused of destroying relevant emails and backup tapes. Eventually, the judge sanctioned Warburg and permitted the jury to learn of its conduct. The jury returned with a verdict of $9 million against Warburg plus an additional $20 million in punitive damages!

In both cases, it is questionable whether the defendants acted in bad faith or just did not understand their E-Discovery responsibilities and the technologies underlying their electronic documents. So let's answer that door and get started on learning just a little bit more about EDD.

What's So Special About EDD?

We are all familiar with the discovery process. So what makes EDD so different, special . . . and scary?

EDD encompasses email, documents, databases, voice mail records, instant messaging, electronic photos, etc. Here are just a few things that make electronic documents very different:

- Volume. Estimates on emails received range from 40 to 60 emails per person per day. When you add in attachments, documents created or edited, instant messaging, voice mail and other forms of electronic communication, the amount of data is staggering.
- Ubiquity. Data is everywhere. A single email can have several copies – on the sender's computer, each recipient's computer, the sender and recipient email servers. Transient temporary copies may also exist, and even if the email is deleted, it may be maintained in a recovery area. The same email will also likely exist on one or more backup tapes.
- Metadata. Metadata is simply "data about data" and is frequently hidden from normal view. For example, most email programs let you see the sender, recipient, subject line and text of an email. However, an email will also have metadata that may include a unique message ID, information on the originating mail server and the path that the email took, a list of people copied (cc: and bcc:), etc. Excel spreadsheets may include hidden or underlying data that is not available in a printed copy.

What Can You Do?

So what can you do to take advantage of this new opportunity and increase your own skills in this hot area? Here are a few ideas:

- **Get educated**. There are many resources on the Internet with both primary and secondary materials. Many companies are providing free Internet webcasts, and some even provide CLE credits. You can start by visiting the Sedona Conference at www.sedonaconference.org, the Preston Gates law firm blog at www.ediscoverylaw.com or the vendor-neutral site at www.ediscoveryresources.org.
- **Be aware**! If you practice in litigation, make sure that your clients are being counseled on their potential responsibility to maintain electronic documents and even cease normal deletion practices once they are on notice of a potential lawsuit. The five opinions written in Zubulake v. UBS Warburg provide guidance on when this duty begins. If you are a corporate paralegal, whether in-house or at a firm, understand your clients' or company's document retention program and plans for a litigation hold. If there is no such program, you may want to talk about starting one. The cost of not having a good program in place before litigation strikes is evident in many cases, especially Coleman Holdings v. Morgan Stanley.
- **Be Strategic**. The next time you are involved in litigation, consider whether it makes sense to have your client depose the opposing party's IT group to determine what information might be available to support your case. A 30(b)(6) deposition can be a great tool.
- **Act Locally**. Think twice about the documents that you create on your computer, especially email. Remember that those documents may be sent to people that you have never considered as potential recipients, and that they may last for a long time. In accordance with company policies, consider deleting transient emails and documents that really are not needed. Consider saving important emails and documents in a non-transient file or folder.

James D. Shook, Esq., is the Executive Director of Special Counsel's office in Atlanta. Jim holds a degree in computer science and practiced law for over ten years. You can reach him at Jim.Shook@SpecialCounsel.com.

THE CREATION OF A BOARD

By: Gina S. Farley, CP
GAP Sr. Vice President & NFPA Primary

Some of you may have heard me introduced at the last membership meeting as "next year's President of GAP". My response to such introduction was "unless someone else applies". Some thought that to be an odd statement. My intention in that statement was not to say that I do not wish to be GAP's next President, but to make it clear that my becoming President is not a "done deal". As I explained my comment to those who overheard, it occurred to me that many members may not be aware of the process that is in place for filling board positions. Perhaps many of you think that you have to be invited or personally recruited to be on the board, but that is not the case.

In the near future, you will receive notice that Statement of Interest forms are available for 2006 positions. The Statement of Interest notice is GAP's invitation to all members to apply for positions in the association. If you are interested in holding a board position, you should review the criteria and responsibilities on the website to see if you are qualified and contact the GAP office for information if you have questions.

Even current board members are required to submit a Statement of Interest if they would like to remain on the board in 2006. It is not an automatic placement. However, due to the knowledge-base and experience that is required for certain board positions, there is a succession plan in place for the positions of President (typically filled by the former Vice President) and NFPA Primary (typically filled by the former Secondary who trained under the Primary the previous year) and those persons will be given preference for holding those positions in the coming year.

Once the deadline has run for submitting Statements of Interest, the applications are reviewed and considered. If there is more than one qualified candidate for a position, it is possible that one of the candidates might be asked to consider another position, until all board positions are filled. Otherwise, there will be an election held for the contested position. It is my understanding that GAP has never held such an election because we have not had any contested positions.

So, be on the lookout for the Statement of Interest notice. Also, don't forget that you can always volunteer on a committee or to assist with a pro bono project!





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Finding Balance in the Legal Profession

By Jane H. Allen

Much has been written lately about creating and leading a balanced life. Since starting Counsel On Call over five years ago, I have had the opportunity to explore the meaning of a balanced life through interviews with hundreds of attorneys and paralegals from across the country, each struggling to come to terms with the correct mix of career and personal life. The ingredients are different for every professional.

Just like the law is rarely black and white – neither is balance. Just as the law is dynamic your personal definition of balance evolves through your career. Be prepared for it to change.

There is a constant struggle to achieve the correct combination for all facets of life. How do you prioritize between professional and personal/family responsibilities? How do you fit pro bono and civic responsibilities within the demands of private practice? How can you be an involved parent and cultivate a career?

The answers differ depending on the individual. Each individual that we meet who has a "balanced" life has set priorities, established boundaries and constantly reassesses these choices. It takes time and effort to lead a "balanced" life – or at least to try to lead a balanced life. Legal professionals are often retained to work through challenges to find effective and positive results. When one is looking for balance – the same approach is beneficial.

My choice to achieve balance was becoming a contract attorney. It allowed me to spend more time with my children. The decision to become a contract attorney, however, was not easy. I was a commercial litigation attorney who loved the practice. Yet, a pivotal moment in my career was when a successful attorney was ordered to be in chambers on the same date that a long-awaited trip was scheduled with his child. The trip was postponed. Although I loved the practice, I did not want to be put in that position, and I wanted to take steps to avoid having to make those difficult choices. My husband and I worked through priorities and looked at options that were available to enable me to avoid being faced with choosing between my family and my client.

The contract arrangement – getting paid for actual hours worked – provides professional interaction and intellectual stimulation while affording a significant amount of quality time for personal responsibilities. Virtually all hours are billable and there is not the pressure of primary responsibility for cases.

Paralegals have the ability to organize, analyze, communicate, and administer. They provide unique insight into clients' needs by not only recognizing that clients want issues addressed thoroughly, but concisely as well. Contract work provides challenging work with a different approach that offers flexibility in your professional life while offering the opportunity to find your niche, whether it's real estate, tax, corporate, environmental or litigation through different assignments. Contract assignments give paralegals the opportunity to explore different substantive areas while maintaining the balance between their professional and personal lives.

Over the last five years, I am happy to report the contract work in the legal profession has been met with wide appeal. With attorneys and paralegals working from Los Angeles to New York, there has been an increase in the hiring of contract legal professionals across the country. In recruiting and getting to know hundreds of candidates, I am constantly impressed by the number and talent level of individuals desiring this type of work – many for reasons much different than mine.

Looking for balance? Contract work is one solution. For some, it is the perfect way to strike a balance between maintaining a career and having a life outside of the office.

Jane Allen is Founder and President of Counsel On Call a company specializing in the placement of contract attorneys.

Announcements

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Special opportunity to save more money on the registration price only for members attending the August 9 dinner meeting!

LEGAL WORD POWER

Match the Latin-derived term or abbreviation with its definition. Email your answers to gap_editor@yahoo.com to win a Barnes & Noble gift certificate courtesy of IKON Office Solutions. The prize will be awarded to the timeliest paralegal GAP member respondent with the highest number of correct answers.

1. Et al (et alii/alia)
2. Non sequitur
3. Etc (etcetera)

A. A statement that does not follow logically from what preceded it.

B. And so forth.

C. And others.



GAP President Marcus Li and Beth Garnes of The Fulton County Daily Report show off GAPs new ad. Thanks to The Daily Report for helping GAP find new members!

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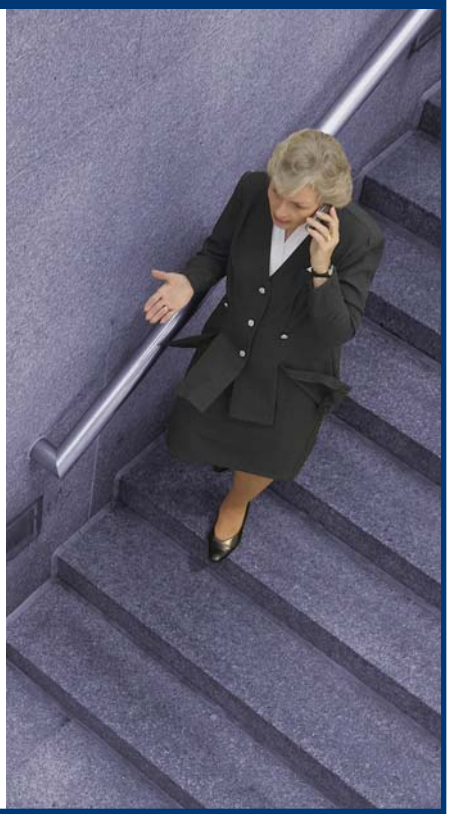


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GAP members were generous with their donations to Hillside House!

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR PRESENT JOB?

By: Dotty Pritchett of Andrew-Grace Associates

At the June GAP meeting, we distributed Job Satisfaction Surveys and included the survey on the GAP website. We received 60 responses. Some individuals completed parts rather than all of the survey. To compile the results, we used information received for each question which meant that we had more responses for some questions than for others. Twenty-five (25) % of all respondents rated their satisfaction at the highest possible level (10).

ALL RESPONDENTS

Most significant satisfaction-determining factor:

1. Employer appreciates my work
2. Open communication
3. Increased compensation
4. Ability to make a contribution
5. Challenging assignments
6. Team work

Most helpful ways to increase satisfaction:

1. Compensation
2. Training to improve personal skills
3. Individual coaching to create action plans for success
4. Training to improve practice area skills
5. Pro bono projects
6. Mentor program

Most stressful element of job:

1. Unrealistic expectations *(tie)*
1. Not enough hours in the day *(tie)*
3. Compensation
4. Lack of communication about assignments
5. Disconnect of personal life with work life
6. Feeling that what I do doesn't matter

Most meaningful element of job:

1. Learning and growing professionally
2. Making a positive difference to clients
3. Working as part of team to provide legal services
4. Solving problems
5. Serving justice by using my paralegal skills
6. Participating in pro bono projects

Fifty-eight (58) % of all respondents rated their satisfaction at 8 or above.



New Member Tammy Walton wins Flag Day themed basket from Dottie Pritchett

HIGHLY-SATISFIED RESPONDENTS

Most significant satisfaction-determining factor:

1. Open communication
2. Ability to make a contribution
3. Employer appreciates my work
4. Challenging assignments
5. Team work
6. Increased compensation

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1. Learning and growing professional
2. Working as part of team to provide legal services
3. Making a positive difference to clients
4. Serving justice by using my paralegal skills
5. Solving problems
6. Participating in pro bono projects

Based on this non-scientific survey, GAP members generally:

- Are satisfied with their jobs but want to advance their careers by learning and growing professionally;
- Recognize that compensation is a helpful way to increase job satisfaction but is also a significant stress factor;
- View communication as an important factor for satisfaction;
- Wish employers would have more realistic expectations about the time required to complete assignments; and
- Are not engaged in pro bono projects.

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