

Lafayette Paralegal Association

*LPA Partnering with
Lafayette Bar Association and
Lafayette Young Lawyers
Association for Third Circuit
Judicial Candidates Forum*

A "3rd Circuit Judicial Candidates Forum" will be held on Tuesday, August 10th at the Petroleum Club in the main salon. The event will begin at 11:45 a.m. with registration for attendees to be held from 11:15-11:45 a.m. You are welcome to arrive early in order to visit with the four judicial candidates:

Steven G. "Buzz" Durio,
Jeanne M. Laborde,
Phyllis M. Keaty, and
Francis M. Boullion.

LPA is proud to partner with the Lafayette Bar Association and the Lafayette Young Lawyers Association for this informative event. The format will be a panel discussion in which a moderator will pose questions of concern to each of the 3rd Circuit Judge candidates. If time permits audience members may be allowed to submit written questions. However LPA has been asked to submit questions from our members now to be submitted to the moderator to consider which questions will be posed to the panel. What an exciting opportunity for LPA and our community. We look forward to having a large turnout of LPA members at this exciting event.

More information about registration, cost, etc. will be forwarded to all LPA members as soon as received from LBA, but in the meantime, please put on your thinking caps and send your proposed questions for the judicial candidates to Kaye Pooler at poolerk@onebane.com at your earliest so we can get them to LBA's moderator in a timely manner.

- Kaye Pooler, CWCP

THANK YOU TO OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS

The Onebane Firm

Lori Heaphy & Associates, LLC

Craig A. Bayer

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HG Litigation Services

Bryson Law Firm

Pooler Consultants, Ltd.

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June, 2010 Newsletter

Post Office Box 2775
Lafayette, LA 70502-2775

President's Note

Can you believe that summer is already here? It seems like we just had elections. Thank you to those that have renewed your membership. Please continue to invite other paralegals to become a member of LPA, as well as encouraging your vendors to join as sustaining members. As a benefit, sustaining members are listed in our newsletter and website, which you can view at <http://www.lpa-la.org/>. Remember that our sustaining members are important to our association, so please use their services.

I want to encourage each of you to continue to take advantage of the many educational opportunities provided by LPA. Please review the list of our future dates and seminars in this newsletter and mark your calendar to attend. Most lunch seminars allow you to earn an hour of continuing education credit and you gain knowledge which will assist you with your job. If you know of an attorney interested in providing a seminar to our group, please contact Rachel Martin, our program chair.

Our association encourages all members to earn their certification. If you are interested in earning your certification and would like some assistance, please obtain an application for our scholarship program. As we have in the past, we encourage study groups be formed by our members who are working on their certification.

Please plan on attending the Third Circuit Judicial Candidate Forum on Tuesday, August 10 at the Petroleum Club. This is a joint meeting between the Lafayette Paralegal Association, the Lafayette Bar Association, and the Lafayette Young Lawyers Association. We encourage all of our members to attend and become more informed on each of the candidates running for the Third Circuit Judge position.

Our social chair will be sending more details, but please plan on joining us after work on September 14 for our annual social held during paralegal week, which is Sept. 13-17.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

**E. Gregory Voorhies, Esq. presents
Mediation 101: A Primer in
Alternate Dispute Resolution**

12:00 – 1:30 pm

Petroleum Club, 111 Heymann Blvd.

RSVP by noon Tuesday 6/22/10 to

Kathleen@piccionelaw.com

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

**Emile Josepff, Esq. presents
Construction Law**

Tuesday, August 24, 2010

**André Comeaux presents
Oil and Gas Service Contracts**

- Regular monthly meetings are held at the Petroleum Club of Lafayette. The cost of the buffet or soup/salad bar is still only \$15 per person, and a beverage fee of \$3.00 for anyone not eating (all prices are inclusive of tax and gratuity).
- Seminars are free to members; non-members are asked to pay a \$5 seminar fee.

(President's Note Cont'd)

There will also be many great continuing education opportunities available at the LSPA convention held September 17 & 18 in Lake Charles.

It's never too late to join a committee or become more involved in your association. We have a couple of open chair positions and I know that the chairs of each committee would appreciate more help. All members of LPA benefit when you volunteer your services. I want to thank all of the executive board, committee chairs and committee members for doing such a great job this spring. I want to encourage all of our members to be active in their participation. The more active you are the more benefits you obtain from your membership, one of which is the great friendships made with other paralegals.

- Mae Ewing, LPA President

What Does a Paralegal Do & How Much do Paralegals Make?

That depends on who you ask, and when. If someone had asked me that question five years ago, I would have had a totally different answer than the one I'd give you today. Today I'll point out that not all paralegals work for law firms. Many paralegals can be found working for companies either in the legal department or in other areas that require the skills and knowledge of a paralegal. I am currently employed by an oil and gas exploration and development company and my primary responsibility is contract preparation and negotiation. I also serve as the company's secretary with the responsibility of preparing Minutes and Resolutions for our company and our parent company. The company retains outside counsel in connection with acquisitions and banking transactions and I work closely with these attorneys which places me on the opposite side of the table from my former job as a paralegal with a law firm. I've also worked with outside counsel in connection with registration of trademarks and an Initial Public Offering on the AIM division of the London Stock Exchange. Since our parent is a UK company, I work with attorneys, bankers, and Board members in the UK on corporate and banking issues.

I love my job! But was I unhappy with the law firm? No. I was with the law firm for 20 years and was very happy there. But I saw a wonderful opportunity and went for it. And I'm not sorry I did.

At the law firm I worked primary in the oil and gas division, assisting with title opinions and various Office of Conservation matters including unitization. I assisted in transactional matters, preparing various transfer documents, corporate resolutions and organizing and assisting with execution of the numerous documents involved in large acquisitions and divestitures. I assisted in litigation matters, including drafting of Motions, Orders, discovery requests and responses, etc. I assisted our clients in setting up corporations and limited liability companies, and even worked on a few successions. I didn't work for one attorney, I worked for all of the attorneys at the firm and gained experience in many areas. Even after 20 years there was always something new that someone would come up with for me to handle. A paralegal has to always be ready for a challenge!

-Deborah P. Fontenot, CLA

Litigation Paralegal:

The role of a litigation paralegal differs on a daily basis. The main responsibilities are assisting the attorney in preparation for a Hearing and/or Trial, attendance at Hearings and Trials, summarizing medical records, summarizing depositions and many other responsibilities.

The job is very challenging on a daily basis, but for some people, as myself, this is why I chose to be a paralegal. The everyday workload is very challenging and that is what I strive for; the challenge and then finding the answer to the issues. Being passionate about your career choice is also a very important factor.

Please do not be swayed by the "glamorous" things you may have heard about the legal field and/or becoming a paralegal. There is nothing fun about being in a courtroom; it is very interesting, but not a joyous occasion.

Also, please do not be swayed by the "\$80,000.00" annual salary for a paralegal. That figure may be accurate in bigger cities, but I have yet to meet a paralegal who takes home the aforementioned figure on an annual basis. The pay is commensurate to your education and experience and no matter the education or experience you may have, you will not command that salary in the local market.

I know that there are schools and online programs that are very misleading as to what paralegals do on a daily basis and as to what salaries are. PLEASE do not let these programs mislead you; become a paralegal because you want to, not because you want to make a lot of money.

The legal field is to be taken very seriously and as paralegals, we are taken very seriously. The best advice that I can give to someone who is considering becoming a paralegal is to take the job seriously and not to enter the legal field thinking that it will be glamorous and that you will take home an annual salary of \$80,000.00. It is a wonderful field to be involved in, just make sure that you know what your job will encompass before you make your decision.

-Rachael A. Miller-Oliver

LPA 2010 – 2011 Officers

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Mae Ewing

Vice-President:

Deborah P. Fontenot, CLA

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LPA JOB SURVEY

In the next few months you will be hearing about one of LPA's programs that should be of primary interest to all of us, the Job Survey. Periodically we compile information regarding the "State of the Paralegal Profession" in Lafayette in order to confect a picture of the types of positions open to paralegals in our area, the educational background and job experience of the persons holding the positions, working conditions, and of course, compensation. Once we've collected the data, we consult with a statistician who helps us interpret it correctly, and then we publish the results.

Why is LPA's Job Survey so important? After all, both NALA and the Louisiana State Paralegal Association do job surveys. Well, do you feel that the working hours of a paralegal commuting into Chicago, or the salary of a paralegal in Terre Haute have much to do with your job? Probably not. Even within the state, smaller markets such as Alexandria and larger markets like New Orleans will offer different opportunities from those we encounter here in Lafayette. LPA's survey is your best tool to compare your job to others available where you actually live and work.

Once again, of course, GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) applies. The only way to find out about your job is to ask you, and we will be doing that in the near future by means of a questionnaire. It is painless and anonymous. The questions are objective and to-the-point, and we promise that you will know all the answers. The more responses we get, the more comprehensive our results will be. So please, when you get your survey, take just a few minutes to answer it and return it. Don't decide to let someone else do this. There is no such person as the ubiquitous "they" – there is only you, and this is your chance to put in your two cents. By getting our Survey out to the Lafayette legal community, LPA is able to help enhance the paralegal profession for all of us.

-Savannah Stephan, CLA

Parliamentarian:

Kaye Pooler, CWCP

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