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Denton County Paralegal Association

Save the Date!

Submitted by Michelle Beecher, CLE Chair

Litigation: Nuts & Bolts Seminar
Sponsored: Denton County Paralegal Association and the State Bar of Texas Paralegal Division
When: Thursday, September 24, 2015
Where: Grand Jury Room, Denton County Courthouse

TOPICS:

- Jury Charges
- Everything a Paralegal Should Know about Drafting Affidavits
- Pre-Trial Orders and 30 Day Deadlines
- Judge's Expectations in the Courtroom
- Trial Notebooks
- Evidence Spoliation
- Legal Research, Citation and Writing

2015 Officers

Cheryl Cooper, President
mlj@steelelawfirm.com

Melody Brackeen, President-Elect
mbrackeen@dentontexaslawyers.com

Pamela Snavely, Secretary/Parliamentarian
psnavely@hbvwlaw.com

Lisa Pittman, Treasurer
lpittman@hbvwlaw.com

Kim Guertler, Historian
Kim.guertler@dentoncounty.com

Meeting Notice

The Denton County Paralegal Association's next Luncheon will be on Thursday, **February 26, 2015** 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.

Did you know...

Payments for the CLE Luncheon can now be made online. For more information and online registration see Events/CLE Luncheon at www.dentonparalegals.org.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED and can be made via e-mail to Cheryl Cooper@mlj@steelelawfirm.com. The deadline to RSVP is February 20, 2015.

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 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)

2015 Committee Chairs

CLE, Michelle Beecher
mbeecher@dentonlaw.com

Fundraising, Melody Brackeen
mbrackeen@dentontexaslawyers.com

Legal Directory, Brandi Hunter
BHunter410@gmail.com

Membership, Sunnie Palmer
sunnie@zellmerlaw.com

Newsletter, Lisa Pittman
lpittman@hbvwlaw.com

Social, Heather Walker
heather.walker@dentoncounty.com

TAPA, Jennifer Stout
jennifer.stout@dentoncounty.com

Ad Hoc Scholarship,
Wanda Woodworth
wandawoodworth@dentoncounty.com



AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY MEETING

Date: February 26, 2015
Place: Oakmont Country Club
1901 Oakmont Drive
Corinth, Texas 76210
Time: Noon

1. Welcome members and guests

2. Old Business

- a. Approve January 2015 Minutes
- b. Approve January Treasurer's Report
- c. Participation Prize

3. New Business

- a. Fundraising Committee Chair – provide update on Valentine's Fundraiser.
- b. Social Committee Chair – announcement on Social at Fuzzy's and upcoming events.
- c. Remind everyone to check out our website and Facebook page

4. Introduction of Speakers

- The Honorable Brody Shanklin, Judge of the 211th District Court and his staff
- The Honorable Tiffany Haertling, Judge of the new 422nd District Court and her staff.

5. Announcements

6. Adjournment



President's Message



Love is in the air...



By 2015 DCPA President, Cheryl Cooper

It's February and we've all likely settled into somewhat of a routine since the New Year and gotten used to writing 2015 instead of 2014. It's also the month we most associate with L-O-V-E because of Valentine's Day. By the time you read this, Valentine's Day, with all its expressions of love and friendship, nice dinners, flowers, candy, and stuffed animals will be over. Whether you are single or you have a sweetheart, I hope your day was filled with love or was, at the very least, an occasion to revisit sweet memories of a loved one.

February is also American Heart Month. The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association report that cardiovascular disease is the leading global cause of death. In 2008, cardiovascular deaths represented 30 percent of all global deaths. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, taking more lives than all forms of cancer combined. These statistics are certainly alarming and something to take stock of. Many of us work and live in stressful environments. Studies have shown a link to stress and heart disease which is certainly an argument for reducing stress. I encourage you to find ways to take care of yourselves, whether it's taking some time out during a lunch hour to find a quiet, peaceful place to renew and restore yourself, taking a walk, or eating something healthy. Make a plan for healthier habits. Give someone a hug. Laugh. Research has shown that laughter, physical contact, and exercise release natural hormones to counteract cortisol and other harmful hormones. Many of you know my own father died from complications of heart disease although he lived a healthy lifestyle, never smoked or drank, so heart disease can affect folks even in the best of circumstances. Heart disease is genetic, so if you have a family history, be aware. One way you can support the cause is to wear red on Fridays to support the American Heart Association's effort to bring awareness to this most critical of health issues.



Our annual Valentine fundraiser was a success. Our fundraising committee tried something new again this year – large bags of gourmet popcorn with candy hearts sprinkled inside. Thanks to our Fundraising Committee Chair, Melody Brackeen, and her committee, Christy Rodgers and Michelle Beecher (*who cooked and prepared the bags of popcorn*) for an outstanding job. Our organization

made some money and a lot of people were surprised with a big bag of yummy popcorn with a sweet message from a friend or loved one. Thanks also to Pam Snavely and Carol Pelzel who helped Melody and Christy put the finishing touches and tags on the bags, as well as Gina Gotti, Pam, and Carol who delivered the Valentine grams. Without the support of our members who purchased Valentine grams, who posted the flyer, or sent it out to others – this venture would not have been a success.

February is also the time to renew your membership with DCPA. Many of you have been faithful to register and pay for your registration via our website. If you haven't registered yet, please do so soon. Membership Chair, Sunnie Palmer, announced at the January meeting that she is conducting a contest. All you have to do to be entered is to submit to her the name and contact information of someone you feel would be a viable candidate for membership. This includes all levels of membership that we offer. Sunnie promises a great prize for the winner.

I just discovered that we have had a problem with mail getting delivered to our DCPA P. O. Box. Treasurer, Lisa Pittman, picks up our mail and is in the process of working with the post office to determine why they are returning our mail. If you have a problem or have some mail returned to you, please let me and Lisa know.

We still do not have our large Participation Prize donation, so let me know if you have a resource or suggestion.

Social Chair, Heather Walker, and her committee are hard at work planning all sorts of fun things for us this year. I hope you were able to attend our first official Social at Fuzzy's on Thursday of this week.

Remember to check out our webpage @ www.dentonparalegals.org and our Facebook page under *Denton County Paralegal Association*. We are trying to keep it updated and interesting for you.

Last, but not least, our newest district court judges, the Honorable Brody Shanklin (211th) and the Honorable Tiffany Haertling (newly formed 442nd) will be our speakers at the February CLE luncheon. Be sure to come hear what the judges have to say about their new benches. Michelle Beecher, CLE Chair, has informed me that the judges plan to bring their staff with them, so be ready with some great questions. This is a rare opportunity to ask the things you really want to know about the judges and their staff. Tell your attorneys, staff, or anyone else you know of that might be interested in coming. I hope we provide a great turnout for our newest judges. If you and your guests are planning on eating lunch, please either register and pay for the lunch on our website, or send me an email at mlj@steelelawfirm.com so I can give Oakmont a headcount. Hope to see you there. ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

**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

Birthdays

Our members with March Birthdays are:

Amanda Peachee (3/12)
Lisa Pittman (3/14)
Ginger Escobedo (3/17)
Bruce Stewart (3/22)
Lisa Bowles (3/31)

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

Membership News

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.



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.

Stewart Process Service, Inc.

Bruce G. Stewart

110 Sheraton Place
Denton, Texas 76209
Phone: 940-367-4643
Fax: 940-484-0999
Email – stewartprocess@verizon.net

Stoffels & Associates, Inc.

Janel M. Stoffels

207 W. Hickory St., Ste. 304
Denton, Texas 76201
Phone: 940-565-9797
Fax: 940-565-9197
Email – jmstoffels@aol.com

The Reporting Professionals

Cheryl K. Perlich

2925 Country Club Road, Suite 104
Denton, Texas 76210
Phone: 940-484-6053
Fax: 940-484-6054
Email – reportingpros@sbcglobal.net

County Process Service

Fred Bowles

159 Sunny Side Lane
Valley View, Texas 76272
Phone: 940.-390-0914
Email - fbowles@ntin.net



IN THE KNOW

Month: February

Talking with: Heather Walker

Employed by: Denton County District Attorney's Office – Civil Division

Years' experience: 3

What made you want to become a paralegal? I've always been interested in the various aspects of law. It first started in elementary/middle school with learning the legal system, court system, and the basic laws and my interest continued to grow over the years until I eventually decided to make the step from legal secretary to paralegal.

What type of law did your atty practice? Primarily bond forfeitures, health contracts and civil service.

What was it like being a new paralegal? It was very exciting yet overwhelming all at the same time. While I knew and had confidence in what I was doing, it was difficult learning how the attorney liked their work load handled and how to adjust everything in order to keep everyone happy.

How many paralegals are at your current firm? There are 3 Senior Paralegals in the civil division and 2 paralegals in the criminal division of the office.

What is your advice to new paralegals? Take your time, pay attention to detail, use your resources and do the research, and last but not least, if ever in doubt ask questions.

To which paralegal organizations do you belong? DCPA

How do you relax after a tough day at work? I love to read.



Minutes

1. President Cheryl Cooper called the business meeting of January 22, 2015 to order at 12:14 p.m. at the Oakmont Country Club. There were 20 members in attendance. President Cooper welcomed the members and introduced the elected executive officers and volunteer committee chairs for 2015:

Executive Officers

Cheryl Cooper, President
Melody Brackeen, President-Elect
Pamela Snavelly, Secretary/Parliamentarian
Lisa Pittman, Treasurer
Kim Guertler, Historian

Committee Chairs

Membership – Sunnie Palmer
CLE – Michelle Beecher
Social – Heather Walker
Newsletter – Lisa Pittman
Legal Directory – Brandi Hunter
Fundraising – Melody Brackeen
TAPA – Jennifer Stout
Scholarship – Wanda Woodworth

OLD BUSINESS:

2. President Cooper asked for a vote on the November 2014 meeting minutes. A motion for approval was presented by Michelle Beecher and seconded by Kim Guertler. The motion carried by unanimous vote.
3. President Cooper asked for a vote of approval for the November 2014 Treasurer's report. A motion for approval was presented by Melody Brackeen and seconded by Christy Rogers. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. President Cooper announced that all the committee budget requests were received and all were approved.
5. President Cooper confirmed that TAPA is scheduled for April 10th and 11th and will be held at the Marriott Courtyard in Denton.
6. Sunnie Palmer, Membership Chair, thanked members for renewing on line and indicated that most renewals went smoothly. Sunnie recognized our sustaining members and reminded us to support those who support the association:

Fred Bowles, Process Service
Patty Ochoa, Merrill Corporation
Cheryl Perlich, Perlich Reporting
Bruce Stewart, Stewart Process
Janel Stoffels, Stoffels & Associates

7. Melody Brackeen, Fundraising Chair, announced that the Valentine's Day Fundraiser will be White Chocolate Gourmet Popcorn with sprinkles of conversation hearts in clear cellophane bags selling for \$10.00 each. The flyers and order forms will be available the first of week next week.
8. Michelle Beecher, CLE Chair, announced that Judge Brody Shanklin and Judge Tiffany Haertling will give a presentation with their Court Coordinators and Court Reporters in February about the policies and procedures of their respective courts. Julie Luke, Denton County Clerk, will speak to the association in March. The CLE Committee is planning a half-day seminar regarding litigation and/or a mock jury trial later in the year.
9. Heather Walker, Social Committee Chair, announced that the first social outing of the year will be a Meet & Greet to be held February 19, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Fuzzy's Taco Shop in Denton.
10. Lisa Pittman, Newsletter Chair, announced that items for the newsletter should be submitted the Monday prior to the monthly meeting and encouraged members to share any tips or interesting articles.
11. President Cooper announced on behalf of Brandi Hunter, Legal Directory Chair, that there is a need for volunteers to help proof the Legal Directory. The work can be divided into sections to facilitate the work among the volunteers.
12. President Cooper announced that the DCPA Website made it much easier to update information, post announcements regarding CLE and social events. Members were encouraged to keep their contact information updated through the website. President Cooper added that the DCPA Facebook page is also maintained with regular updates.
13. Michelle Beecher announced on behalf of the State Bar Paralegal Division that there is a District 12 Facebook page, that the division is interested in what happens locally, and to please feel free to share photographs of events and activities with the division.
14. President Cooper announced that the association planned on having an end of year member participation door prize drawing, with the prize to be determined. Members' chances to win will be cumulative over the course of the year, similar to the Ipad and Pandora Bracelet drawings in the past. The participation prize will be awarded at the November meeting.

15. President Cooper announced that rather than a scheduled speaker, the January meeting would be a meet and greet for members. All those present participated in a “Whodunit” icebreaker guessing game to share interesting facts and get to know one another better. Two door prizes from Bath & Body Works were provided for the first and second place winners of the game. Heather Walker won the first prize, a Vanilla Bean Candle and Kim Guertler won the second prize, a Peach Bellini Candle.
16. Members’ names were placed in a drawing for the attendance door prize. Heather Walker was the winner of a Nothing Bundt Cake.
17. There being no further business, President Cooper adjourned the meeting at 12:59 p.m.

**Denton County
Paralegals Association**

PO Box 2641
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)