

In Brief 3d

May/June 2011

NOPA P. O. Box 30604

New Orleans, Louisiana 70190

The Official Publication of the New Orleans Paralegal Association
Member of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations

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NOPA Mission Statement : To maintain a high standard of performance in the paralegal profession; To inform members of new developments in the paralegal profession; To encourage and provide continuing legal education for paralegals. NOPA's goal is to promote awareness, and to educate the community regarding use of paralegals.

THE STATE OF THE PARALEGAL PROFESSION

By Becky Rolland

Why are you a paralegal? Its my guess that either you care about the legal profession, still believe it is a lucrative career path or you feel the need to nourish your inner nerd who loves to organize documents, bates stamp or spend hours looking at a computer screen. Whatever your reason the paralegal profession is growing and evolving and you can either choose to be a part of the change or stand by and watch.

According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor, paralegal jobs are projected to grow 22% per year through 2016, a rate much faster than the average for all other occupations. As this fresh crop of paralegals join the workforce, there is still no distinction in the title "paralegal" as it still refers to the entry level as well as the experienced. Employers will continue to hire those with no legal education or experience and refer to them as "paralegals" unless we set the standards to define our profession. Consider Jefferson Parish's recent firings of paralegals from the parish attorney's office. First it was revealed that former parish president Aaron Broussard hired his ex-wife, Karen Parker, as a paralegal supervisor at a \$65K annual salary. Ms. Parker was terminated after further investigation revealed that she had no prior legal experience and she did not even report to work in the parish attorney's office. Months later, three more paralegals were fired because they lacked certification according to WWL (2/14/11) and the Times Picayune (2/15/11) (please see websites for full articles). To clear this confusion, NOPA has asked **Jefferson Parish Attorney Debra Foshee, to speak at our Annual Dinner Meeting on July 21st at Landry's Restaurant.**

We are all aware of law firms, who in the spirit of "cutting costs", combine paralegal and secretarial job descriptions into "legal assistants" or allow clerks without legal
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NOPA'S NEXT SOCIAL IS JUNE 29TH AND OUR ANNUAL DINNER MEETING IS JULY 21ST !!!!!

On June 29th, NOPA and Crescent Bank and Trust will sponsor a social at Rotolos Pizza at 1100 Rampart St., from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Crescent Bank will show us, "How to Make Your Money Grow" and free pizza and beverages will be provided. NOPA's Annual Dinner Meeting and Silent Auction is July 21st at Landry's (at the lake) from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. with guest speaker, Jefferson Parish Attorney Debra Foshee, who will explain, "Why your Paralegal Certificate Matters".

THE STATE OF THE PARALEGAL PROFESSION

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experience to bill as “paralegals”. But paralegals are not helpless in controlling their own fate! If you want to know how far paralegals have come in defining our profession and establishing the minimal requirements for paralegal education and experience, take a look at [NFPA’s Report on Paralegal Regulation by State](#). As of March, 2010, although there are only 2 states with mandatory paralegal registration or certification, 21 states offer voluntary registration or certification (either through their paralegal or state bar associations) and 10 states have defined standards of the paralegal profession.

Considering that on December 1, 2011, the Paralegal Core Competency Exam (PCCE) will go live and allow more paralegals to earn certification, NOPA is re-evaluating our by-laws to determine whether to expand the definition of associate membership. Presently, the minimum requirement to take the PCCE is a high school diploma or GED, 5 years legal experience and 12 hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits including 1 hour of ethics taken within 2 years of taking the exam.

NOPA will continue to keep you informed and updated as the state of the paralegal profession develops through our newsletter, website, linked in page and monthly membership meetings. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the NOPA board members as we are always here to serve you.

Becky Rolland, RP, NFPA Primary Representative

DATES TO WATCH

June 29, 2011: NOPA SOCIAL (NOPA Members—please invite your fellow paralegals) **First round compliments of Crescent Bank and Trust, Pizzas and Salad compliments of NOPA**

Place: Rotolos Pizza, 1100 Rampart St., New Orleans, LA
Time: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

July 1, 2011: NOPA Board Meeting will be at the LSBA, 601 St. Charles Ave., 12:00 p.m. till 1:00 p.m., **ALL MEMBERS INVITED**. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

DEADLINE FOR NFPA AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIPS

July 21, 2011: NOPA’S ANNUAL DINNER/SILENT AUCTION will be at Landry’s Restaurant from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. **Guest Speaker Debra Foshee will address “Why Your Paralegal Certificate Matters!”**

October 7, 2011 NOPA’S ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

NOPA COMMITTEES

Bar Association Liaison Committee:
Germaine Galjour, Chair

By-Laws Committee:
Kathy Williams, Chair

Job Bank Coordinator:
Sandra Cantrell

Marketing Committee:
Carroll Lanassa, Chair

Membership Committee:
Jennifer Lasseigne, Co-Chair
Crissi Moseley, Co-Chair

Military Paralegal Outreach Committee:
Jill Neumann, Co-Chair
Kathy Williams, Co-Chair

Newsletter Committee:
Brenda Wall and Becky Rolland

Pro Bono and Community Service:
Tomoro Wilson, Co-Chair
Sandra Cantrell, Co-Chair

Regional Outreach Committee:
Lisa Patterson, Chair

Social Coordinator: Pam Angel

Student Liaison: Megan Hall

Survey and Standards Committee:
Sheela Babu, Chair

Website Committee
Sue Pundt, Chair

If you would like to join any of NOPA’s committees, please contact Becky Rolland at bro978@aol.com

SPECIAL THANKS FROM NOPA

Thanks to **VENUE DOCKET** for printing our Annual Dinner Meeting Flyers and our Newsletter and to **CHOICE** for printing NOPA’s letterhead!

NOPA'S GENERAL MEETING AND SOCIAL HELD ON APRIL 20, 2011

NOPA's general membership meeting on April 20, 2011 was held at Lemle Kelleher and sponsored by Esquire Deposition Solutions. A representative from Sanction Solutions discussed "Winning Litigation" technology. Also, that evening, NOPA held its first social and membership drive at Allegro's Café. NOPA and Esquire Deposition Solutions sponsored free appetizers and drink specials from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m.

SPOTLIGHT ON NOPA'S BYLAWS COMMITTEE

1. How many members are on the committee? **8 members.**
2. Is the committee in need of helpers/assistants/committee members? **Not at this time.**
3. What can the members do to help the committee achieve its goal? **Review suggested changes to Bylaws, feel free to ask questions, and be ready to vote on the changes when presented at the general membership meeting. Members will be given 30 days notice of proposed by-law changes.**
4. How and when do you meet? formal? informal? via email or teleconference only? **At this time, we meet, informally in person, approximately once a month and will continue to meet until all proposed changes and amendments are addressed. Typically, by-law committee meetings are held annually.**
5. What are the 2011 Goals for the committee? How will you achieve them? **To continue to meet and review items that have been identified as needing review/revision/deletion/addition, to streamline the NOPA bylaws and bring them up-to-date with current trends. There is usually an annual maintenance review of bylaws.**

By Kathy Williams, Chair of Bylaws Committee

NFPA HEADLINES AND DEADLINES

The NFPA Paralegal CORE Competency Exam (PCCE) pilot test was held on Saturday, June 11, 2011 at 12 locations across the country. Candidates who successfully pass the exam will earn the CORE Registered Paralegal (CRP) credential. Online registration for the PCCE Exam and a study guide will be available on December 1, 2011 at www.paralegals.org.

In October, 2010, NFPA formed an ad hoc committee to study the effects of the U. S. Department of Labor's **Exempt versus Non Exempt** status for paralegals. A short member survey was conducted in June that polled members' opinions regarding this issue.

The deadline for applying for NFPA Awards and Scholarships is July 1, 2011. NFPA awards include the William R. Robie Leadership Award, PACE Ambassador Award, Individual and Association Pro Bono Awards, NFPA Paralegal of the Year, and the NFPA Outstanding Leader Award. Scholarships for PACE and the NFPA / Thomson Reuters Scholarship will be awarded based on essay submissions. For more information visit www.paralegals.org.

NOPA'S GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON MAY 18, 2011

NOPA's general membership meeting on May 18, 2011 was held at Adams and Reese and sponsored by Brooke Companies, Inc. Attorney Michelle Denice Craig taught us the proper techniques on how to conduct background investigations by utilizing social networking sites. NOPA applied for .50 Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits from NFPA and upon approval will provide CLE certificates to all members who attended the presentation. Venue Docket video taped the presentation and NOPA will soon have this CLE available on our website.

SPECIAL THANKS TO NOPA'S SUSTAINING MEMBERS!!

Amy Shanks - Strategic Recruiting Solutions
www.srslegal.com

Fred Richissin - Venue Docket
www.venuedocket.com

Charles Sellers - Deep South Investigations
www.deepsouthinvestigations.com

Cheryl Rodrigue - Brooke Companies
www.brookecompanies.com

**Julie Hackler - Avansic Digital Forensics
and E-Discovery**
www.avansic.com

Sallie Davis - Tulane Paralegal Studies
[http://www.tulane.edu/~uc/degrees_programs/
paralegal.htm](http://www.tulane.edu/~uc/degrees_programs/paralegal.htm)

Marie Estenzo Pettit—Crescent Bank and Trust
www.cbtno.com/

Darnell Schoen - Shuart & Associates, Inc.
www.shuart.com

Celeste O'Keefe — Dancel
<http://dancel.com/>

BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Bylaws Committee met for the second time this year and has approved proposed changes or improvements to the NOPA by-laws. This amendments and additions to by-laws will be presented to membership and, after 30 days, a members will vote to accept or reject the proposed changes.

Look for presentation of these proposed changes at the July meeting of the general membership.

Kathy W. Williams, Chairperson, Bylaws Committee

Military Paralegal Outreach Program Report

The New Orleans Paralegal Association is continuing the effort to support our troops. As a Marine mom whose son is on his second deployment, I know just how much they appreciate anything they receive. Care packages See below for a list of ideas. Those items marked with an * are really big hits. If you like I can do the shopping for you, any donation is appreciated. These are just a small token of our appreciation for those serving our Country overseas. Suggestions:

- Zapp's chips*
- Beef Summer Sausage rolls*
- Ritz Crackers*
- Beef Jerky*
- Energy Bars*
- Canned goods with pop tops*
- Little Debbie Snack Cakes*
- White boot cut socks*
- New Orleans Style treats*
- Individual Powder Gatorade or Energy drink mixes*
- Candy that doesn't melt
- Cheese Wiz
- Deodorant
- Eye/Nose drops
- Foot Powder
- Dice/travel games
- Puzzle books
- Tuna Kits
- Fruit cups/pudding cups
- Tylenol/Advil

Anything to help keep them cool during the hot summer months. Please let me know if I can answer any questions, and thank you for your support.

Jill G. Neumann, Co-Chair
NOPA Military Paralegal Outreach Committee Legal Services Department
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New Orleans, LA 70113
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***In Brief 3d* encourages members to contribute to the newsletter. If you wish to share or see an article published, submit it to the NOPA newsletter by contacting Becky Rolland at broll978@aol.com. We will assist in getting reprint permission.**