

The Florida Law Practice



For Florida Lawyers – By Florida Lawyers

A JOURNAL OF THE SOLO AND SMALL FIRM SECTION

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

by Lee “Pete” Muschott
2019-2020 Solo & Small Firm Section Chair

I am pleased to report we have a full slate of outstanding speakers for the February 7, 2020 Solo & Small Firm Conference which will take place at the Hyatt Regency in Orlando. As reported last quarter the theme is “SOS: Secure, Operate and Systematize.” All of the topics and speakers focus on the needs of the small firm and the solo practitioner and concentrate on technology and the use of technology to enable us to practice in a secure and effective fashion for our clients regardless of our area of practice. As you know we are a big tent and we address the needs and issues, particularly technology, of practitioners in every area of specialization.

Our November 1 meeting at Le Meridien in Tampa was very productive and I had the privilege of presenting a one hour CLE presentation at the conclusion of the meeting, “Basics of Sovereign Immunity litigation, under §768.28, Florida Statutes” which was well received. We had local practitioners attending for the CLE. As always we invite local members to attend our Executive Council meetings at the various locations around the state and for those in the Treasure Coast and Gold Coast areas our next meeting will be



LEE E. “PETE” MUSCHOTT

at the Marriott Hutchinson Island Resort in Stuart, Martin County, on February 21, 2020.

Plans for our out-of-country trip to Norway, May 10 through 17, 2020 are going well. We are planning to have Norwegian lawyers address us about the legal practice and the legal system in Norway in various areas of the law and we are hoping to be hosted at the headquarters for the Norwegian Foreign Service office in Oslo which is located next to the Royal Palace to be addressed by the Foreign Service Legal Department. This will provide the

attendees with Continuing Legal Education and should provide some very interesting insights into the operation of the legal system in that Scandinavian country.

Our Section continues to provide the ongoing CLE opportunities that we have including our Webinars and Audio Webcasts and we are working on developing an online benefit that will enable members to obtain court coverage within the Section to resolve potential conflicts, an issue that is particularly unique to our Section. Solo and small firms are 70% of The Florida Bar. Accordingly, I urge all of our members to reach out to their colleagues who have not already joined the Section to do so to enjoy the benefits and collegial association our Section has to offer.

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MARKETING PRO TIPS FOR SOLOS AND SMALL FIRMS

by Lisa McKnight Tipton APR, PR Florida Inc.
Solo & Small Firm Section Communications Consultant

How many times have you said that you want “more” or “better” marketing for your firm, but you haven’t defined your activities or put them on a calendar? If your firm’s marketing efforts could use a boost, add some of these items to your mix. The key is varying your marketing tasks to keep them fresh and allow you to reach more (and different) audiences.

Write articles. Publish at least two articles per year in an industry periodical, legal journal, association magazine or Florida Bar section newsletter. Consider collaborating with co-authors and quoting target audience members. Post the article links on your website, social media and blog, and include them in your newsletter. If you don’t have a newsletter, email each article to your key referral sources with a short “thought you might be interested” message.

Communicate with current and past clients. This is your best potential for referrals. Connect with clients at least four times each year through a firm newsletter, client alerts on key legislative issues or industry topics, free white papers, direct mail letters or similar substantive communication. Be sure to thank them for their business. Include a brief bio and summary of your practice areas, a photo and links to your website and online profile page.

Publicize everything. When you join a committee, receive an award, make a presentation, write an article, hire an associate or participate in a community or sports event, it’s newsworthy. News and Notes is one of the most-read sections of The Florida Bar News. Your local newspaper, city magazine, weekly newspapers, section publications, association and civic group newsletters,



LISA MCKNIGHT TIPTON

undergraduate and law school alumni magazines are avenues for publicity. Update your list of editors on a regular basis and follow up with phone calls to ensure that your news lands in the correct hands.

Use social media to create great first impressions. Even if you don’t actively use social media, take the time to claim and develop—at a minimum—your firm Facebook page, Google My Business, Google Maps and your LinkedIn personal profile. Incorporate graphics that replicate the look of your website: Add a cover photo that looks like your website home page; use your logo or your professional head shot for the profile image; and complete the “about” and “services” sections with as much detail as possible. When potential clients or referral sources search for you online, they will read the same information about you across multiple online sources, validating your business and legitimizing your online presence.

Volunteer to speak. Seek out opportunities to make presentations to legal-community, civic, nonprofit and industry groups. Sign up for The Florida

Bar Speakers Bureau. Contact relevant Florida Bar section CLE chairs and offer several topics for their consideration for upcoming courses. Plan to make at least four presentations per year.

Network with current and potential referral sources. Make lists of your current referral sources and others who potentially could become referral sources. Create a schedule for connecting with one or more of them every week through emails, hand-written notes, lunches, workouts, cocktails, etc. Thank them for their referrals in previous years, let them know how much you appreciate them thinking of you and offer to reciprocate, if possible.

Network with organizational contacts. Attend Florida Bar and section committee meetings, local bar association and legal-community events and regular meetings of civic and community groups. Hand out and collect business cards. As soon as you return to your office, email each person who gave you a business card to provide your contact information and say how much you enjoyed visiting. Seek networking, speaking and publishing opportunities

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MARKETING PRO TIPS

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through each organization. Evaluate the return on your investment each quarter.

Schedule it. If you are handling your own marketing, the most important marketing campaign component is a schedule. Map out daily, weekly and monthly tasks and set reminders for yourself and your staff. Keep a list of who is responsible for the task and note the frequency with which each is implemented. If you get behind, prioritize the remaining items and establish a new schedule.

At the end of the year, track your progress and evaluate each activity's return on investment. If you have been attending local Chamber of Commerce meetings for two years but have not had a single referral, that time and money might be better invested in another organization. When preparing the next year's marketing calendar, jettison the activities that had little or no return on investment, build in more frequency for the ones that were productive – and don't forget to add fresh, new tasks to the mix.

Lisa McKnight Tipton is a nationally accredited PR professional who implements communications and marketing strategies for legal associations, law firms, nonprofits and corporate clients. Her more than 30 years of public relations experience includes 14 years as a consultant to The Florida Bar, promoting its board certification program and managing communications and social media for its Solo & Small Firm, ADR and Tax sections. PR Florida Inc. is her communications consulting company. Connect with her at lisa@prflorida.com or on LinkedIn.



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MINDFULNESS, COMPASSION FATIGUE, AND THE UN-INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

by Scott L. Rogers

The practice of law is intellectually engaging and calls for a great deal of effort and capacity. The demands placed upon lawyers and that lawyers place upon themselves to excel and win can be a source of great fulfillment and, when pressure mounts, can be overwhelming and depleting. For many lawyers, the intellectual rigors of practice, which involve reading, analyzing, deliberating, drafting, reviewing, strategizing, and arguing, make up much of the landscape of the law. It is, however, but a partial view. For the heart of legal practice often touches the heart of who we are as human beings in ways we may not always appreciate, owing to the relentless drive to do well, win, and help solve *other* people's problems.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. reminds us that the life of the law is not logic, but experience—an insight that runs deeper than even he may have realized. As systemic concerns over lawyer health and well-being take center stage, we are all encouraged to take stock and, as needed, take action to attend to self-care and the quality of our emotional lives.

Compassion Fatigue

This month's column explores an area of increasing concern in the law known as compassion fatigue. If the term is new to you, compassion fatigue, also known as vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress, refers to the cumulative emotional, physical, and psychological toll of ongoing exposure to emotionally charged experiences. These can include the traumatic stories we hear and images we see, along with interactions with anxious,



SCOTT L. ROGERS

confused, sad, and angry clients and colleagues. Importantly, compassion fatigue is different than burnout, which is brought on by the intensity of workload stress. The stressful nature of our work, however, can exacerbate compassion fatigue, and burnout and compassion fatigue can co-exist. Fortunately, compassion fatigue is treatable. It is important to appreciate its tell-tale signs and to take action to ameliorate its impact on our well-being, productivity, and health.

Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Feeling overwhelmed and depleted
- Becoming emotionally numb and detached
- Having difficulty sleeping, headaches, and weight loss
- Experiencing disturbing memories and images, while awake and when dreaming
- Inclined to anger, irritability and worry

- Withdrawing socially, at work and home
- Harboring feelings of self-doubt, guilt, and self-contempt
- Seeking escape through alcohol, drugs, work, sex, food and other objects of addiction.
- Loss of purpose and job satisfaction

Many of these symptoms may be experienced periodically and dissipate. However, if you experience them over time, and regularly work in a helping or healing capacity or in an emotionally charged environment, they may indicate compassion fatigue. The American Bar Association reports that lawyers are especially susceptible to compassion fatigue if they practice in areas like criminal, family or juvenile law, which can involve visiting accident scenes, viewing graphic evidence, listening to victims' stories, and dealing with reports of trauma and victimization. As caring human beings with shared experiences and the capacity to empathize with those who are suffering, it is important to be attentive to the emotional residue that we all can pick up from our work.

What You Can Do

One of the most agreed upon treatments for compassion fatigue is self-care. While the importance of self-care is probably a familiar refrain, implementing it in our lives can be challenging owing to feelings of not enough time, that it is a sign of weakness, or misconstruing what constitutes

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MINDFULNESS

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self-care. Turning your attention to one or more of its most commonly espoused forms—especially those you enjoy and may find to be waning—can be beneficial. These include:

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Relaxation
- Nutritious eating
- Therapy
- Mindfulness practice
- Social connection

Mindfulness meditation is included in most lists of self-care yet stands apart in a few notable ways. First, most forms of self-care are an explicit part of daily life, e.g., eating, sleeping, and exercise, and the challenge many grapple with is finding balance, or getting enough of it. Meditation, however, is regarded by many as a “nice to have,” and many conclude that they do not have time for it. At the same time, practicing mindfulness meditation is not only useful as an end in itself for well-being, but it also helps to establish a steadier state from which to meaningfully engage in other forms of self-care.

Self-Awareness

You may have friends and family who share with you their concerns for your emotional well-being. Often, though, people are too busy to notice, or feel uncomfortable sharing their concerns. Greater self-awareness allows us to more readily notice when we are not quite ourselves, and to pause and check for signs of compassion fatigue. Doing so may sometimes result in an unexpected wake-up call. The initials of compassion fatigue are “cf” which is a grammatical devise that means “compare with.” It can be helpful at times to compare yourself today with yourself at a good period in your life. If that comparison suggests that you are not quite yourself—perhaps

more irritable, prone to anger, experiencing headaches or having difficulty sleeping, feeling sad or exhausted, or self-medicating, it may be worthwhile talking with someone and exploring forms of self-care that resonate with you.

A New Cause for Action and Avenue for Relief

In many ways, our empathic and compassionate human capacities, coupled with our motivation to help others who are suffering, amid a stressful and combative landscape like the law, can lead to the *un-intentional infliction of our own emotional distress*. It is a cause for action, and there are steps we can take to find relief and feel better so that we can do better for ourselves, our clients, our families and friends, and our profession.

One of the reasons mindfulness meditation has become so popular is that it helps to develop resilience. As discussed in previous columns, while mindfulness practices can be relaxing, an important aspect of their utility is developing the capacity to remain steady amid emotionally agitating moments. A key to this is not learning to grin and bear it, but perceiving with greater clarity what is actually taking place. And because mindfulness practices are often calming, their benefit as a form of self-care is compounded. You can visit [this link](#) to read previous columns appearing in the Bulletin and the Florida Bar News on mindfulness insights and a series of practices that you can bring into your busy day to help enrich the quality of your life. You may want to begin with articles that discuss (1) The Three Minute Breathing Space and (2) Mindful Listening.

Closing with a S.T.E.P in the Direction of Mindfulness

As with sleep, exercise, social engagement, and eating, establishing a regular mindfulness practice is recommended to more fully and reliably experience its benefits. As we close this article, we can together take a S.T.E.P. in this direction with a short practice.

It is one that you can do amid an emotionally challenging moment for a few breaths. The instruction is to:

- Stop
- Take a Breath, Aware of the Breath
- Expand Awareness Around the Object
- Proceed

Even now you can practice. “Stop” or slow down the momentum of this moment by forming the intention to take a few moments and practice mindfulness; you are reminding yourself that you are here. “Take a Breath” and, as you inhale and exhale a little bit more deeply for a few breaths, bring awareness to the sensations of the breath flowing through your body. The key here is a pivot toward greater awareness. “Expand Awareness” beyond these words, or whatever has the lion’s share of your attention in the moment and take in the larger field. Listen for sounds, feel the temperature and movement of the air, notice aroma, observe whatever arises and passes through the visual field. This is shifting into a state of what has been termed “choiceless awareness” or “bare attention,” as you practice being present for the moment, as it is. When you are ready to do so, “Proceed,” carrying on with your day—perhaps bringing a little of what you cultivated through this short practice into the moments that follow. We might think of this as the Intentional Infliction of Emotional De-stress.

Scott L. Rogers is a Lecturer in Law and Founder and Director of the Mindfulness and Law Program at the University of Miami School of Law. He is the author of *Mindfulness for Law Students: Applying the Power of Mindful Awareness to Achieve Balance and Success in Law School* which is being used in law schools across the country, *The Six-Minute Solution: A Mindfulness Primer for Lawyers*, and co-author of *Mindfulness and Professional Responsibility A Guide Book for Integrating Mindfulness into the Law School Curriculum*.



THE BUSINESS OF LAW: YOU AREN'T A COBBLER. YOU'RE A SADDLER.

by Laurie M. Lee

Part 1: Internal Relationships

"The cobbler's kids and all that, right?" That's what an attorney said to me one time while we were talking about the legal aspects of running a law firm business. Actually, as a business attorney for service professionals, I hear a variation of that quite a lot.

The old fable refers to a cobbler who makes shoes for everyone in the village but his own children go barefoot. Today, we use the "cobbler's kids" saying to refer to someone who is very good at his or her profession but does not use their knowledge to benefit themselves or their family, business, or situation.

When I hear this from fellow attorneys referring to themselves and their firms, I ask them if they are business attorneys. "Well, no. I practice family law (or criminal law, or estate planning, or personal injury, etc.)". I gently respond by asking why they expect themselves to have that knowledge and expertise. This isn't the case of a cobbler not taking the time to make shoes for his children. It's a case of a saddler not making shoes for his children. Both a cobbler and a saddler use leather; they just make different things with it. (A saddler makes saddles.)

If you have ever judged yourself for not doing all that you can to protect your business legally, STOP. Just because you went to law school doesn't mean you're a business lawyer. You may use the law (leather) for your clients, but you make something different with it. Don't be hard on yourself if you don't know or understand business laws. It's ok. It doesn't mean you're stupid or a bad lawyer.

To make it easy on you, I'll share the legal infrastructure map I created



LAURIE M. LEE

for our clients (service professionals – including law firms). There are seven areas where the law affects these types of businesses:

GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT:

- 1. Regulatory Compliance** – Specialized rules for certain professions, activities and locations.
- 2. Entity Structure and Governance** – The care and maintenance of the "container" for your business.

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- 3. Client Relationships** – Establishing the "rules" and setting expectations for everyone.
- 4. Vendor Relationships** – Getting what you want and need from other businesses.

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- 5. Owner Relationships** – Responsibility and accountability for partners.
- 6. Worker Relationships** – Making sure you deliver quality to your clients.

WHAT WE CREATE:

7. Intellectual Property – Owning what you create (and what you have others create for you).

For this article, I'll focus on the **INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS:**

Owner Relationships

We see this one most often when partners are joining a firm or leaving a firm. We also see it when a firm is considering promoting an associate to partner. Those are the "trigger events" that make you think about the relationships you have (or will have) with your business partners. As with any type of relationship, owner relationships tend to be more successful and easy to manage when there are clear and defined expectations for how it's going to work, whether that is during the relationship or when that relationship ends.

During the relationship, it's important to understand the responsibilities of each partner and how they will be accountable to the firm. In addition to the regular business law issues involved (and there are many), our ethical rules as attorneys add another layer. It's critical that responsibilities for supervision of staff, trust accounting and other professional responsibilities are clearly allocated. "I thought she was doing it" is not an acceptable reason for not following the rules. (Associates who are being promoted to partner also have these considerations.)

I don't even have to go into those situations when an owner relationship

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THE BUSINESS OF LAW

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ends – you can imagine how sticky those can get, can't you? Clearly defined roles, "rules" and expectations are well worth the time, effort and expense to put them in place. You don't have to know how to do it. It's perfectly acceptable for a real estate attorney or a family lawyer (or any other type of attorney) to hire a business lawyer to help them.

Worker Relationships

In my experience, business owners often approach the subject of workers from the perspective of protection – it's a defensive position. And that's a legitimate perspective. After all, we certainly realize that employment law is a deep, deep area where sea monsters live. But as professionals, there are two other aspects to these relationships that you should consider. Before I start, I want to make clear that I'm

talking about ALL workers – employees and independent contractors (yes, law firms have independent contractors, even as attorneys and paralegals).

There are two aspects to worker relationships you need to consider and both are related to our professional obligations and ethical rules. The first aspect concerns your duties to clients. You must make sure that your clients are well represented and your obligations of confidentiality are upheld by everyone in your office. For attorney workers, it's good practice to have them acknowledge these obligations and agree to abide by them. For non-attorney workers, it is important that they commit themselves to following your ethical rules, including those of client confidentiality.

The second aspect deals with the end of the worker's relationship with your firm. For attorneys, this involves figuring out how client notifications will be handled. I prefer to get this out of the way up front and agree to

the procedure when they're hired. For non-attorneys, it's important to obligate them to confidentiality even after their employment terminates.

In conclusion, I hope you take some time soon to assess your own business. However big or small your firm may be, it's possible to insert some legal (and professional) protections into your business in a way that is appropriate for you and your practice. And I'm happy to talk with you if you need a cobbler!

Laurie M. Lee of *The Legal Department for Service Professionals* has been a business attorney and member of the Florida Bar since 2003. In 2019, she was named North Florida Woman-Owned Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. *The Legal Department*, based in Jacksonville, provides direction and advice to small professional firms throughout the state of Florida. You can visit their website at www.thelegaldepartment.law.



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UPCOMING CLE'S 2019-2020

2019

December 10 Audio Webcast 12 to 1 PM, 1.0 credit

"Transitioning from Government to Private/Solo Practice," by Sean Desmond, of Dudley, Sellers, Healy, Heath & Desmond, PLLC and John Maceluch, Office of the 14th Circuit State Attorney

So I know how to litigate a jury trial or take a case to DOAH, surely I can run a law firm, right?" Learn from the experiences of two former prosecutors who opened up a practice and learned the hard way about overhead, personnel issues, marketing, etc.

December 11 Zoom Webinar 12 to 1 PM, 1.0 credit

"Wednesday Wisdom: Does the Practice of Law Need to Be This Stressful?" by Jamie Billotte Moses

What makes the practice of law so stressful? What are you doing or not doing that might be contributing to your stress? Are you making things more time consuming and frustrating than they need to be? Are you sabotaging your peace of mind? Jamie Moses, appellate specialist at Holland & Knight, will share with you some of her strategies for balancing work, raising children, and trying to be a contributing member of the community.

2020

January 21, 2020, Audio Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Medical Marijuana & Hemp Update in Florida: Ethics and Law." Tara Tedrow, Land Use Attorney and Chair of the Cannabis and Controlled Substances Group, Shareholder at Lowndes PA

This webinar will focus on the quickly evolving legal and ethical issues in Florida with representing medical marijuana and/or hemp growers, distributors and sellers.

January 22, 2020 Zoom Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Wednesday Wisdom: Tips for Preparing Jury Instructions and Verdict Forms," by Cristina Alonso, Alonso Appeals PLLC

Jury instructions and the verdict form are the keys a jury needs to unlock the proper analysis of the evidence and argument at trial, rendering them a critical aspect of any successful trial strategy. This presentation will address best practices in drafting the instructions and verdict form, how to prepare for the jury charge conference, and tips when objecting to instructions and modifying instructions with an aim toward preservation of error for appellate review.

February 7, 2020, Solo Small Firm Conference, Live event and Webcast, Hyatt Orlando

"SOS: SECURE, OPTIMIZE, SYSTEMIZE. Survive—and Thrive—Strategies for Solos and Small Firms," Theresa Jean-Pierre Coy and Cristina Alonso, Co-Chairs

Feb 18, 2020, Audio Webcast 12 to 1 PM, 1.0 credit

"Sharing is Caring: The Ethics of Sharing Fees Among Law Firms," by Kristy Johnson and Jason Alderman, The Alderman Law Firm, will discuss the best practices for sharing legal fees among different law firms to comply with the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar and Florida case law.

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February 26, 2020, Zoom Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Wednesday Wisdom: Trustbooks for Solo and Small Firms" with Renee E. Thompson, Upchurch Watson White & Max, moderating a discussion about the Trust Accounting Software Program, a new Florida Bar member benefit.

March 17, 2020, Audio Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Work, Interrupted," a presentation on how to identify and deal with the constant flow of interruptions in your practice by Steve Riley, of Atticus.

March 25, 2020, Zoom Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Wednesday Wisdom: Do Law Firms Need Those? – Creating an Employee Handbook in the Legal Industry" by Chris Johnson and Colby Ellis of Johnson Jackson PLLC

As lawyers, we tend to think that we know the rules and can make decisions about our employees when they arise. And what is there to worry about – these are our employees – they love us! But, notifying employees of the rules and available benefits ahead of time and making consistent decisions based on those rules is paramount to avoiding potential liability and allegations of unfair treatment. Join us on this webcast on creating a workable Employee Handbook that will identify the must-have policies along with the potential landmines that various statutory schemes create.

April 21, 2020, Audio Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Merging Law Firms and Promoting Associates to Partners: How to Handle the Legal Structure of Law Firm Ownership," by Laurie Lee, The Legal Department for Service Professionals, PA.

Many solo practitioners and small firms run into particular issues when looking to expand. Some expand by merging practices with another lawyer or firm and some expand by promoting associates to partners. In both scenarios, there are business concerns that need to be understood and addressed that will be discussed during this program.

April 22, 2020, Zoom Webcast 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m., 1.0 credit

"Wednesday Wisdom: Florida's Newly Enacted Remote Online Notarization (RON)" by Michelle Garcia Gilbert, Gilbert Garcia Group PA.

Join Michelle to learn what Solo and Small Firm attorneys need to know about how this new law (effective January 1, 2020), can impact their practices.

June 18, 2020, Thursday, Florida Law Update at the Florida Bar Annual Convention, Bonnet Creek

2020 SOLO & SMALL FIRM CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 7, 2020 LIVE AND WEBCAST HYATT REGENCY ORLANDO



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FLORIDA SMALL-FIRM PRACTICE TOOLS

1st Edition

BY STEVEN F. SAMILOW

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PARALEGAL CORNER

News for Paralegals to Use...

by Priscilla Horn Warren, CP, FRP

Welcome to the Paralegal Corner, where you can find breaking news and other useful items (including website link information) pertaining to our profession.

The Solo and Small Firm Section was invited once again to participate as an exhibitor at the PAF Annual Fall Seminar, held in Safety Harbor, Florida, on September 26-27, 2019. The paralegal seminar attendee who won the drawing for the SSF's gratis one-year affiliate SSF membership, was **Cathy Silverthorn, CP, FRP**. The SSF gift basket and gift card winner was **Valerie Cisco, FRP**. Our deepest thanks and appreciation to the PAF Seminar Committee, for producing such an informative and well-attended seminar! The vendors who participated at this event were outstanding, and Safety Harbor Resort & Spa proved to be an excellent location. Over 70 paralegals had registered for the seminar.

PAF's 2020 slate of officers were also announced, and the following persons will begin serving in January 2020:

President: Asha Maharaj-Lucas, FRP

First Vice-President: Jennifer Heape, CP, FRP

Second Vice President: Sherry Weber, CP, FCP, FRP

Secretary: Michelle Ridge, ACP, FCP

Treasurer: Patricia DeRamus, CP, ACP, FRP

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PRISCILLA HORN WARREN

Please refer to the PAF website, www.pafinc.org for contact information for these officers with any questions or comments you have.

SAVE THE DATE: The Solo and Small Firm Section has completed the program and speakers' roster for its **SOS: Secure, Optimize, Systemize**, an all-new CLE event on survive-and-thrive strategies for solo and small firms. This conference takes place during The Florida Bar Winter Meeting, to be held on **February 7, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando, 9801 International Drive, Orlando 32819**. Please go to our website, www.FLSoloSmallFirm.org, for more information on registration and accommodations, or contact our Section Administrator, Ricky Libbert, at rllibbert@floridabar.org or 850-561-5631.

If you are not an affiliate member of the Solo and Small Firm Section, what are you waiting for? Just download the online form today and send it in. Affiliate memberships are only

\$35 per year. Multiple benefits are available to our members and affiliate members, as detailed in our new website: www.FLSoloSmallFirm.org. Becoming an affiliate member of the SSF Section might be one of the best personal and professional decisions you will make for your paralegal career to flourish and prosper. AND - - we now offer online, lunchtime, Wednesday Webinars for CLE credit, available for free to all SSF members!

Curious about the requirements for obtaining the Florida Registered Paralegal designation? This is a separate paralegal membership opportunity, and for more information on attaining the FRP designation with The Florida Bar, please go to their main website: www.floridabar.org, and click on the **Florida Registered Paralegal tab**.

It is also very beneficial for you to be a member of one of the local Paralegal Association of Florida chapters, not only for the benefits of networking and continuing education opportunities, but to maintain your professionalism and credibility within the paralegal community. For more information, their website is www.pafinc.org.

In closing, if you or your employer need more information on NALA, the nationwide paralegal association, and/or wish to obtain your national Certified Paralegal designation, kindly visit the NALA website at www.nala.org for membership requirements and continuing education opportunities that are available online.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. My direct email is: pris2323@yahoo.com.

