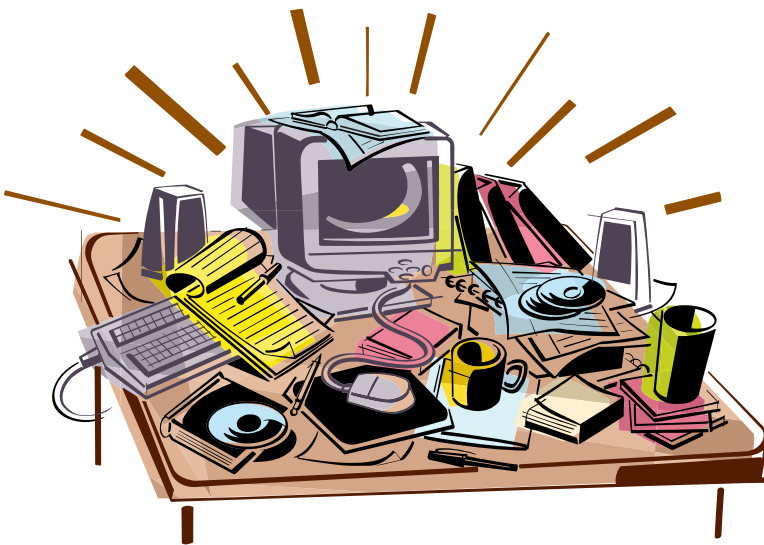


# Michigan Legal Assistant



March 1999

## Writing for Professional Publications



By Suzanne K. Fogle

Interested in becoming an author? The following are a few guidelines that a legal assistant can use when considering publishing an article.

- **Pick a Topic.** Legal Assistant Today Magazine advises writers to choose topics that offer readers new insights into the various aspects of the paralegal profession, with an emphasis on providing practical information in an easy-to-read, “how-to” format.
- **Substantive or Task-Oriented Articles.** A good place to start is to identify an area of interest to you. Determine if you are an “expert” (*i.e.* someone who has done the work enough times to learn the challenges, knows a variety of alternatives, and the pros & cons of each) or an “inquisitor” (*i.e.* someone who needs to learn and is willing to research and interview experts to develop a comprehensive resource that would be helpful to others).
- **Career Issue Articles.** Again, begin by identifying an area where you have established expertise, or an area of considerable interest to you. Determine whether your article will be written from a neutral perspective

or as an opinion piece, so that you can choose the proper forum for publication.

- **Research your topic thoroughly.** Provide an adequate mix of authoritative sources (like case law and court rules) as well as practical information (advice, examples, war stories and quotes). Try to highlight a couple of ideas that will cause readers to say “I never thought of that” or “that’s a better way to do it”.
- **Pick a Publication.** Choosing a forum for publication is equally as important as choosing your topic. Some authors prefer to choose the publication first and then determine what to submit.
- **Identify your audience.** Make sure you select the right periodical so that your article appeals to the broadest spectrum of the group you have identified as your audience. For example, a task-oriented article (*i.e.* how to organize discovery documents) might be best suited to a legal assistant publication unless you can add enough information of interest to lawyers (such as ways to more effectively supervise paralegals during discovery, or how to evaluate the costs of document management alternatives). As a general rule, submit articles to paralegal focused

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# Calendar Events

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Date	Description of Event
March 6	<b>State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section Council Meeting</b> Birmingham
March 6-7	<b>NFPA Regulation Conference</b> NFPA Headquarters, Kansas City, MO For more information, visit <a href="http://www.paralegals.org">www.paralegals.org</a>
March 16	<b>ALI-ABA Video Law Review</b> <i>Topic: Health Plans, HIPAA, and COBRA Update</i> 4 hour seminar—Viewing Site—Michigan: The Institute of CLE, Ann Arbor This program can be viewed in your office if you have a C-band satellite dish. Call (800) CLE NEWS ext. 1661 to register
March 26-27	<b>Nationwide CLA Examinations</b> <i>Contact: Marge Dover (918) 587-6828</i>
April 22-25	<b>NFPA's 25<sup>th</sup> Celebration &amp; All That Jazz</b> <i>Topic: NFPA's 1999 Spring Convention</i> Inter-Continental Hotel, New Orleans, LA  Hotel Reservations at special rates available at the Inter-Continental Hotel call (800) 445-6563 by March 20, 1999 (be sure to tell the reservationist that you are with NFPA).  <i>Registration: Visit <a href="http://www.paralegals.org">www.paralegals.org</a> for a registration form.</i>
May 14-15	<b>State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section Council Meeting and Spring Seminar</b> , Shanty Creek/Bellaire
May 15	<b>Application Deadline for the July 1999 CLA Examinations</b> Testing sites determined after application deadline Contact: Marge Dover (918) 587-6828

By Suzanne K. Fogle

In the last newsletter, I urged you to assess the current status of your career and look for ways to make it more interesting and rewarding. This issue explores publication as a conduit for personal satisfaction and as a tool for the promotion of the paralegal profession. In my opinion, our profession is still small enough, that the success of one affects the success of the group.

So, now you are thinking about becoming a published author. Of the periodicals I researched, only Legal Assistant Today offers payment for some of its articles. So, other than sending copies to your loved ones, what are the benefits of authorship? If you wrote the article to satisfy a personal goal related to career development, you may be rewarded in many ways.

First, the activity of writing is a natural way to specialize. After completing thorough research and interpretation of your subject matter you may achieve true expertise in the subject area. You may also challenge yourself by beginning to analyze other aspects of your job (as you subconsciously search for the next article topic) with the same level of detail. I believe it changes the way you look at what you do and how you feel about it.

Second, one of the byproducts of publication is the potential for financial reward. In the legal industry, it is my view that clients and insiders are impressed by publication. Your expertise may be parlayed into higher billing rates and fee awards in federal courts, which can justify a higher salary. Make sure you reference your articles on your resume, it may enhance your marketability.

Finally, personal satisfaction feels good. Get used to the attorney introducing you to the client as the paralegal who wrote the book on ... and smile to yourself when you get a call out of the blue from some newsletter in Puerto Rico or Alaska who would like to reprint your article, and you realize that it has taken on a life of its own.

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*Suzanne K. Fogle is Chairperson of the State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section. Suzanne is currently working as a legal assistant in the litigation department of Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC., in Detroit, MI.*

*The views expressed in this column, as well as other expressions of opinions published in the Newsletter from time to time, do not necessarily state or reflect the official position of the State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section, nor does their publication constitute endorsement of the views expressed.*

## SYNOPSIS OF COUNCIL MEETING

By Lisa J. Silverthorn, CLA

A meeting of the Council of the Legal Assistants Section, State Bar of Michigan was held on January 23, 1999, at the offices of Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C. in Lansing, Michigan. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

### Minutes and Other Reports

The minutes of the October 24, 1998, council meeting were presented and approved, as was the treasurer's report. In addition, the committee chairs present made reports to the council including reports from committee chairs regarding upcoming seminars and events.

### Membership Cards

It was mentioned that some members have not received their membership cards for 1998-99. Those members should contact Jeff Smith at the State Bar.

### New Pro Bono Committee Chair

Council Member Kevin Gasiewski volunteered to serve as the *pro bono* committee chair.

### Seminars

Education Chair Jaxine Wintjen and Chairperson Suzanne Fogle will meet with a committee of interested section members to plan additional educational seminars to be held in various locations this upcoming year.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

*Lisa J. Silverthorn, CLA is the Secretary-Treasurer of the State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section and for the past 10 years has worked as a legal assistant in the business and tax department of Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C. in Lansing, MI.*

## The Michigan Legal Assistant

The Michigan Legal Assistant accepts advertising from companies that provide useful resources to legal assistants. Ads must be camera-ready.

For further information contact Jerri Lynn Luidens of the newsletter committee at (517) 371-8247.

### Prices are PER ISSUE

\$150—full page/insert

\$100—half page

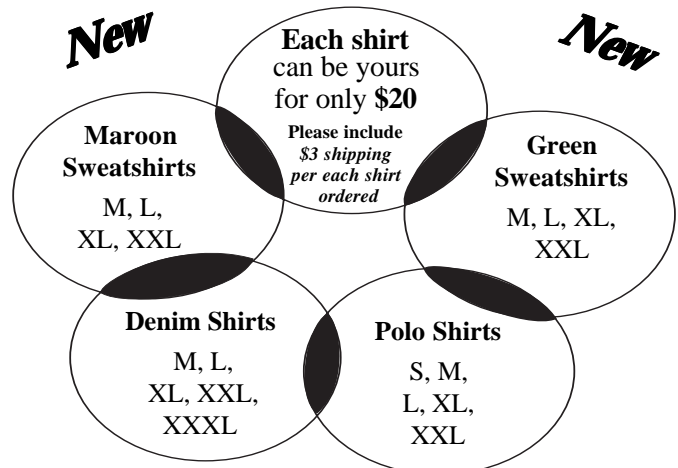
\$75—quarter page

\$50—business card/classified

## Legal Assistants Section

### Logo Sweatshirts Denim Shirts, Polo Shirts

The Section is selling high-quality sweatshirts, denim shirts and polo shirts that bear the Section's logo. The sweatshirts are 80% cotton and 20% polyester—either maroon with green embroidered logo or green with maroon embroidered logo. The denim shirts are 100% cotton—navy with maroon embroidered logo. The polo shirts are 100% cotton—navy and white embroidered logo.



If you are interested in purchasing a sweatshirt, denim shirt and/or polo shirt, please fill out the following and remit with your check payable to **State Bar of Michigan** and send to:

**Kevin D. Gasiewski, CLA**  
**Ford Global**  
**Parklane Towers East**  
**One Parklane Blvd. Suite 911**  
**Dearborn, MI 49126**

Any questions, please call  
Kevin at (313) 845-1053

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**SWEATSHIRTS:** Circle Color: maroon or green

Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ Size(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**DENIM SHIRTS:**

Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Size(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**POLO SHIRTS:**

Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Size(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(\$20ea. + \$3 shipping each)

publications unless you can add utilization guidelines directed to lawyers or information that lawyers need to know about legal assistants.

- **Consider the interests and level of expertise of your audience.** If you have a subject that would appeal to a very limited group, find a publication that caters to that group. Consider submitting an article on immigration practice to the State Bar of Michigan, Immigration Section Newsletter instead of the *Michigan Bar Journal*. Newsletter editors of various sections may be looking for articles on specific areas to inform their members on various topics.

It is difficult to satisfy multi-levels of expertise, such as finding rudimentary ways to explain key terms that will hold the interest of advanced readers. It is much more effective to identify a level of expertise, write to that level, and then find a corresponding publication catering to that level, than to try to be everything to everyone. Once you begin writing, you may find that you can write on the same subject at different levels and submit it to separate publications.

- **Follow submission guidelines.** Unless otherwise requested by the publication, follow general rules of style and grammar, such as using the active voice and quoting in the past tense. Most bookstores have a variety of resources regarding feature writing. However, the best way to determine the appropriate writing style is to read articles already published in the magazine or publication, to develop an idea of what is acceptable. (*I.e.*, are the articles friendly sounding or authoritative? Are they amusing or no-nonsense? Is the information supported by cites and quotes or with graphics and checklists?)

Most publications have guidelines for submission which address format, length, styles, footnotes, graphics and deadlines. It is important to contact a publication in advance for instruction sheets.

Publishers usually accept articles contingent on retaining the ownership rights to the article once it is published. They also reserve the right to make editorial changes, although they will usually contact an author before making substantive changes. You should negotiate any deviation from normal editorial policy before committing to submit an article.

- **Submit a brief biography.** Submit a brief biography (50 words or less) with emphasis on your credentials applicable to the subject matter. A professional black & white glossy photo is usually optional.

The following is a list of a few of the periodicals that accept articles by and for paralegals. The submission guidelines are summarized; however, each publication should be contacted to obtain their specific rules:

- ◆ **The Michigan Legal Assistant.** The Michigan Legal Assistant is published bi-monthly by the Legal Assistant Section of the State Bar . This publication reaches approximately 600 Michigan paralegals and attorneys. Articles about career issues for legal assistants as well as articles on substantive legal topics and “how to” pieces are welcome. Questions about submission guidelines and subject matter should be submitted to the editor, Jerri Lynn Luidens at (517) 371-8247 or jluidens@fosterswift.com.

- ◆ **The Michigan Bar Journal** is published monthly by the State Bar of Michigan. *The Michigan Bar Journal* also accepts articles by paralegals for publication. Each edition features a theme, but they also publish articles of general interest in each issue. The 1999 themes are as follows:

THEME	DEADLINE
June	Tort Law
July	Transportation Law
August	Annual Convention Issue
September	Presidential Theme Issue
October	Labor and Employment Law
November	Arts/Entertainment Law
December	Probate and Estate Planning

Contact the Bar Journal editor, Nancy Brown, for publication deadlines and detailed submission guidelines at (517) 345-6300

- ◆ **Laches.** The Oakland County Bar Association’s monthly magazine, **Laches**, accepts articles of general interest as well as theme articles for publication. They also accept articles which are substantive as well as features and editorials. Contact Jan Anson at OCBA (248) 334-3400 for a copy of the Laches Author Checklist. The scheduled theme editions are as follows:

THEME	DEADLINE
Environmental Law	April 1
Family Law	May 1
Employment Law	June 1
Probate, Estate & Trust	July 1
Immigration Law	August 1
Municipal Law	September 1
Criminal Law	October 1
Federal Law	November 1

- ◆ **Briefs.** The Ingham County Bar Association’s monthly newsletter “*Briefs*” accepts articles of general interest, as well as theme articles for publication. Contact Sally Pratt at (517) 351-4643 or spratt@voyager.net for more information.

- ◆ **Legal Assistant Today.** *Legal Assistant Today* is a bi-monthly publication. Articles are accepted on assignment only, therefore initial query letters are strongly recommended. Before any article is accepted, writers must receive an assignment letter from an editor. They also publish several columns with specific requirements for content.

# Council and Committees

## **Chairperson**

Suzanne K. Fogle  
(313) 496-8433

[fogle@millercanfield.com](mailto:fogle@millercanfield.com)

## **Chairperson-Elect**

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[klagrave@fosterswift.com](mailto:klagrave@fosterswift.com)

## **Ex-officio**

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[rbareham@juno.com](mailto:rbareham@juno.com)

## **Secretary-Treasurer**

Lisa J. Silverthorn, CLA  
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[lsilverthorn@fosterswift.com](mailto:lsilverthorn@fosterswift.com)

## **Corresponding Secretary**

Peggy H. Pratt  
(248) 746-2803

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## **Standing Committees**

### **Education**

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[jwintjen@fosterswift.com](mailto:jwintjen@fosterswift.com)

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Ronald A. Reyna  
(313) 446-1530

[ronald.a.reyna@glmsb.com](mailto:ronald.a.reyna@glmsb.com)

### **Pro Bono**

[vacant] Chairperson

## **Council**

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(616) 946-2700

[kathy@rwwfp.com](mailto:kathy@rwwfp.com)

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(517) 371-8247 · (FAX) 371-8200  
[jluidens@fosterswift.com](mailto:jluidens@fosterswift.com)

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(616) 893-1508

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Susan McIntyre  
Elizabeth Sherry  
Rochelle Smith  
Evelyn Symonds  
Linda Jevahirian

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Chairperson  
(313) 496-8433  
[fogle@millercanfield.com](mailto:fogle@millercanfield.com)

## **Annual Meeting Coordinator**

Kelly A. LaGrave, CLA  
(517) 371-8287  
[klagrave@fosterswift.com](mailto:klagrave@fosterswift.com)

Payments for features and columns are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Names, telephone numbers and addresses of all sources quoted in articles must be provided for fact-checking purposes. If information is obtained from written material, include a copy of the material for proofreading purposes.

For publication guidelines and article queries contact LAT Editor, 3505 Cadillac Ave., Ste. H, Costa Mesa, CA 92626; fax to (714) 751-5508; or e-mail [HYPERLINK mailto:nemmons@jamespublishing.com](mailto:nemmons@jamespublishing.com) nemmons@jamespublishing.com.

- ◆ **The National Paralegal Reporter.** The National Paralegal Reporter is published quarterly by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (“NFPA”). NFPA will accept unsolicited articles for publication. Contact NFPA regarding the topic of your article and they will advise you as to the submission guidelines. NFPA can be contacted at (816) 941-4000 .
- ◆ **Facts & Findings.** *Facts & Findings* is published quarterly by the National Association of Legal Assistants (“NALA”). NALA will accept unsolicited articles for publication. Contact NALA directly regarding the topic of your article and they will advise you as to the specific submission guidelines. NALA can be reached at (918) 582-6772.

### Conclusion

Many good writers are intimidated at the beginning of the process. Those who follow through and continue to write for publication seem to find a great deal of satisfaction from the process and results. Using the skills you have developed as a legal assistant, and carefully following the guidelines provided by the publication, may assist you.

### NOTE TO MEMBERS

If you have not received your 1998/1999 bar cards, please contact:

Jeff Smith at the State Bar of Michigan at 517-346-6359

### OF GENERAL INTEREST

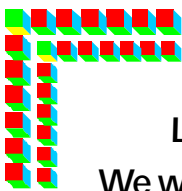
Maurine Payne is our section historian. Should you have pictures or articles for the history books, you may contact Maurine at: Lewis & Munday P.C., 660 Woodward Avenue, 1300 First National Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226. Telephone: 313-961-2007, ext 159; facsimile: 313-961-1270.

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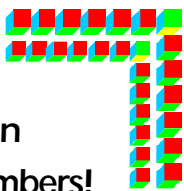
ADVERTISEMENT

# ***VISUAL EVIDENCE CENTER, ADD GOES HERE.***

The Oakland University Legal Assistant Program will be holding its 25th Annual Alumni Reunion on April 17. If you are a former OU paralegal program graduate and did not receive an invitation, please contact Gloria Boddy's office at (248) 370-3125



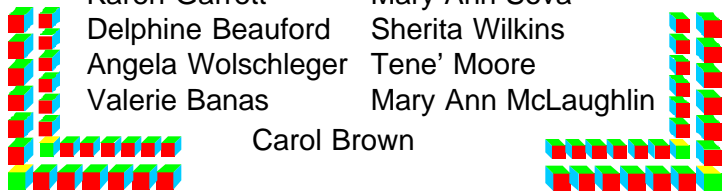
## **New Members**



### **State Bar of Michigan Legal Assistants Section**

**We welcome our newest members!**

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Cynthia Stasak     | Martina Klien       |
| David Jarvis       | Cheryl Smith        |
| Patricia Towers    | Susan Martin        |
| Shemetria Springer | Sandra Cole         |
| Stephanie Milledge | Wendy Golding       |
| Karen Garrett      | Mary Ann Sova       |
| Delphine Beauford  | Sherita Wilkins     |
| Angela Wolschleger | Tene' Moore         |
| Valerie Banas      | Mary Ann McLaughlin |
| Carol Brown        |                     |



### **Document Storage**

The council is attempting to locate materials and documents being stored by previous council members and officers in order to provide a central storage location. Should you have pertinent documents in your possession, please contact:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Peggy H. Pratt at<br>(248) 746-2803;<br>email <a href="mailto:pprat@swbta.com">pprat@swbta.com</a> | or Kevin Gasiewski,<br>at (313) 845-1053;<br>email <a href="mailto:kgasiewski@prodigy.net">kgasiewski@prodigy.net</a><br>email <a href="mailto:kgasiewk@ford.com">kgasiewk@ford.com</a> |
|--|---|

### **Check out these Web Sites**

- National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) . . . . . [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)
- American Association for Paralegal Education (AafPE) . . . . . [www.aafpe.org](http://www.aafpe.org)
- National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) . [www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)
- State Bar of Michigan . . . . . [www.michbar.org](http://www.michbar.org)

**We will constantly be improving and modifying this site, please check us out often—you will like what you see!**

***[www.michbar.org](http://www.michbar.org)***





**Legal Assistants Section**  
 State Bar of Michigan  
 Michael Franck Building  
 306 Townsend Street  
 Lansing, MI 48933-2083

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**The Legal Assistants Section has the following videos of past seminars  
 available for purchase at \$15 per video:**

- Trends in Fee Agreements and Impact on Legal Assistant Utilization**
- How to Afford a Legal Assistant**
- How to Enhance Your Career**
- Information Management—Litigation in the ‘90’s**
- Utilization of Legal Assistants in Trial Practice**
- Profile of a Winning Team**
- Paralegals—Practice & Profit**
- Writing Seminar** (5/96 - *speaker: Brian A. Kaser, Esq.*)
- Law and Ethics on the Cyber Frontier** (9/96 - *speaker: Todd Smith, Esq.*)
- Litigation Support Software** (1/97 - *speaker: Ciara, Inc.*)
- Due Diligence & Public Record Searching** (1/97 - *speaker: CT Advantage, Inc.*)
- Changes in Probate Code** (5/97 - *speaker: Judge Joseph E. Deegan*)
- Estate Settlement Act: An Overview** (9/97 - *speaker: Bruce Newman*)
- Personal Estate Planning for the Legal Assistant** (2/98 - *speaker: Douglas A. Mielock, Esq.*)
- Ethics for Legal Assistant** (5/98 - *speaker: Vicki Voisin, CLAS*)
- Investing for Retirement** (5/98 *speaker: Christopher A. Ballard, Esq.*)
- Internet Research for the Legal Assistant** (9/98 - *Speaker: Jenny E. Upham*)

If you are interested in purchasing any of the Legal Assistants Section videos, please complete this form and send it with your check, made payable to the State Bar of Michigan to:

**Rose E. Bareham**  
**P.O. Box 90**  
**Frankenmuth, MI 48734**  
 (800) 215-8950  
 Fax (517) 652-9741

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Name

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Address

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City State Zip