

Message from the Chair

Seize the Day

As I looked at the hill, I was amazed at what I had just accomplished. Knowing that I had faced my fears gave me confidence to know that I could tackle other things I had been putting off or was afraid of.

Very recently, I had an opportunity to go skiing for a day. I am extremely afraid of heights, so agreeing to go was a big step forward. In the week leading up to the “ski day,” I imagined all of the bad things that were going to happen to me: falling and breaking a bone, or maybe even falling and having to get stitches. Everything that could go wrong I could see happening in my mind.

When I got to the ski resort and got my boots and skis, I was scared, but I also felt excited. I could do this. Sure it would be scary, but as I looked around at everyone else skiing (including the little three-year-olds), I began to gain confidence about my ability to ski. After a few moments of verbal instruction, I was heading up my first hill. It was big and slippery, and it was scary—okay, so it was only the bunny hill. Seriously, what was I doing up here, and how was I going to get down? I was stuck!

I couldn't go down the way I came up, so I guess my only option was to move forward. So, down I went. And, guess what? I didn't fall. With each run down (the bunny hill), I went faster and became more confident of my ability. After about six or seven runs, I was told that it was time to go down one of the actual hills. Of course, this also required me to get on and off the chair lift, but that is another story.

As I was at the top of a real hill, my fears came back, but they weren't as strong as I first encountered. As I was standing

on the hill about to go down, I could feel the anticipation and excitement growing. The only way I was going to know if I could ski down this hill, was to do it, so I pushed myself to the edge and took the plunge. Feeling the wind on my face and the way my legs and arms reacted was such an exhilarating feeling. And, to my amazement, I got to the bottom and hadn't fallen.

The rest of the day was just as wonderful. I did fall, but I was told that when we try new things sometimes we fall, and that just means that we are pushing ourselves. Falling is a good thing; it helps us grow and gain confidence in ourselves.

As the day came to an end, it felt like I had truly accomplished something. I had trusted in myself that I really could ski, and even though I was scared at first, I didn't let that stop me from moving forward.

The message I want to pass on to everyone is that at some point in our lives, we are all scared and hold onto fear. The unknown is scary. As people, we usually envision the worst, and by doing that, we hold ourselves back from things and events that could enrich our lives and bring us happiness. Sometimes the things we are scared of are a new job, maybe a promotion with additional responsibilities, or a move; but keep in mind that others before us have faced challenges and fears and by confronting their fears, they have come out as stronger and more confident people.

Sure, it will be scary at times, but believing in your abilities will take you a long way in overcoming your fears.

Carpi diem: Seize the day!

—Nicole Cook

Issue 1, 2009

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Disclaimer

Articles and columns that appear in the *Michigan Paralegal* do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Paralegal/Legal Assistants Section of the State Bar of Michigan, and their publication does not constitute an endorsement of views that may be expressed. Publication and editing are at the discretion of the editor. The *Michigan Paralegal* encourages republication and dissemination of articles it publishes. For information regarding permission to reprint articles, please address inquiries to the editor.

Editor's Note

The newsletter is published quarterly.

Newsletter submissions (Calendar Events/Items, Letters to the Editor, Section News and Business, Section Committee News/Reports, National and International News, State and Local News, and Advertising should be sent to the attention of KathyAnn Blunck at kblunck@shrr.com.

Section Mission

The Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section of the State Bar of Michigan provides education, information and analysis about issues of concern through meetings, seminars, the website, public service programs, and publication of a newsletter. Membership in the Section is open to qualified paralegal/legal assistants and to all members of the State Bar of Michigan. Statements made on behalf of the Section do not necessarily reflect the views of the State Bar of Michigan.

2008-2009 Council and Committee Directory

Chairperson—Nicole M. Cook
(517) 896-1016, hba1977@yahoo.com

Chair elect—Marianne B. Delaney, CP

Secretary—Jeanne Nyhuis, CP

Treasurer—KathyAnn Blunck

Ex Officio Chairperson—Cheryl Nodarse, CLA

Council

Ida R. Farhat, ACP • Elsie Morren
Rebecca C. Opipari • Virginia Roth, PP
Jaxine Wintjen, CLA

Commissioner Liaison—Eric J. Pelton, Esq.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Annual Meeting—Denise E. Gau, Chair

Education—Nicole Cook, Chair

Job Bank—Jeanne Nyhuis, CP, Chair

Membership—Denise E. Gau, Chair

Newsletter—KathyAnn Blunck, Chair

Policies—Jaxine L. Wintjen, CLA, Chair

Pro Bono—Ida Farhat, ACP, Chair

Public Relations—Linda S. Jevahirian, Chair

Scholarship—Rebecca C. Opipari, Chair

Website—Kathleen D. Kasiorek, CP, Chair

Editor's Note

By KathyAnn Blunck

There is a first time for everything—and this is my first time editing a newsletter. I hope you enjoy the articles. Suzanne Schultz has updated an article that she wrote for the *Michigan Legal Assistant* in 1999. I hope it inspires you to write an article for an upcoming article of the *Michigan Paralegal*. The council publishes the newsletter quarterly, so we will need to adhere to the following deadlines:

- Spring: April 15, 2009
- Summer: July 15, 2009
- Fall: October 15, 2009

Newsletter submissions should be sent to the attention of KathyAnn Blunck at kblunck@shrr.com. I would appreciate your comments and ideas for future issues of the newsletter.

Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section New Members

(As of January 10, 2009)

Jeffrey A. Ahonen Bessemer	Patience M. Hall Royal Oak	Frank C. Rodriguez Carson City
Janice M. Balog Southfield	Khalid Hanifi Ann Arbor	Elizabeth J. Rogatski Ann Arbor
Brenda J. Beiter Pontiac	Carrie A. Hahn Traverse City	Dawn C. Roffey Southfield
Susan M. Bradley Grand Rapids	Laura L. Hughey Flint	Kathleen T. Ross Mattawan
Erma C. Brown Detroit	Anna R. Iannelli-Moses Detroit	Virginia D. Roth Holland
Emily A. Butchart Jackson	Nicole Karklin Lansing	Amy M. Schnieder Farmington Hills
Lisa A. Canning Traverse City	Linda M. Klaker Lansing	Erin J. Schwartz Farmington Hills
Tracey L. Carlson Novi	Katharine I. Lyon Flint	Piper P. Smith Troy
Sara K. Clementson Clare	Patricia L. Maldonado Livonia	Cynthia A. Stasak Troy
Wendy S. Cusenza, CP Livonia	Casey M. Mobley Lansing	Christopher D. Swinko Bloomfield Hills
Terri L. Davis Farmington Hills	John P. O'Connor Kalamazoo	Arthur P. Thorp Detroit
Doreen R. DeFauw Bloomfield Hills	Rene R. Pass Farmington Hills	Tina M. Trospen Rochester
Rosanne M. Frank Ann Arbor	Michelle A. Payne Farmington Hills	Dina T. Trudeau Kalamazoo
Mary A. Gosciminski Bingham Farms	Lina S. Putrus Southfield	Laurie A. White Novi
Timothy D. Greer Detroit	Eris Rivero Troy	Stephanie C. Wolf Rochester

Working in the Legal Environment of a Native American Government

By Mary J. Kelley-Shomin (with assistance from John Petroskey), Legal Affairs Administrator, Grand Traverse Band Legal Department

A lot of people wonder about Native American governments: How do they operate? Under whose power and control do they function? And most notably, why do they exist?

In being one-half Native American by descent, these were questions I, too, wondered about as I came into adulthood. I grew up knowing some of my culture, but didn't learn a lot about culture or the history of Native Americans until I was in my 30s, when I began working for my own tribe, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB). I began working for GTB as an executive assistant to the superintendent of the (then) newly created school, Waabno Gimaak, which means "Future Leaders' School." Unfortunately, after three short years, 1996–1999, the school closed down, and shortly thereafter, a paralegal job opened up at GTB (which is what I went to school for), and thus began my journey of finding out about the legal environment of a Native American government.

That was June of 1999. Fast-forward nine years since I began working as a paralegal for my tribe, and I can honestly say that every day I continue to learn about this interesting legal environment and how tribal governments fit into the larger picture of American society. There is much to learn—much more than I ever imagined!

As a paralegal, to understand tribal government is to understand the pain and promise of federal Indian law, and it is to understand the central legal jurisdictional concept of federal Indian law which is "Indian Country." A tribal government is a complex amalgam that cuts across geography (water) and time to assert its governmental authority over member and nonmember activities in a variety of civil and criminal areas. This authority is a result of this continent's history, authority that always existed with the tribe in the past and authority that has developed over time, authority "then and now"

in generality of time because to be specific would entail lessons on history and associated timelines, which are better left to the legal scholars of educational institutions. So for this article, I will offer my personal and professional perspectives in tiny snapshots.

As a paralegal, to understand tribal government is to understand the pain and promise of federal Indian law, and it is to understand the central legal jurisdictional concept of federal Indian law which is "Indian Country."

To begin, I'll start where I begin every day: my "in-box." My in-box is similar to many other paralegal in-boxes. I have to do's, done's, to be filed, to find, to hide, and to pray's that will hopefully be done before my boss realizes they aren't yet completed! Yes, I am a typical paralegal in a legal environment, but that environment in which I work is what is slightly different from the average American law office. The client of our office is the tribal council. Who or what is a tribal council, you may ask. A tribal council is a seven-member governing board of elected tribal members who serve staggered terms as the governing executive and legislative branches of a federally recognized tribe. Each federally recognized tribe in America is defined and formed by its own constitution, whatever that unique definition and form may be.

With my tribe, our legal department works to offer advice and legal representation to the executive and legislative branches of our tribal government. We work on a daily basis to critique ordinances; develop or review resolutions; and advise the various departments of the tribe (e.g., Natural Resources Department, Accounting

Tribal Council = a seven-member governing board of elected tribal members who serve staggered terms as the governing executive and legislative branches of a federally recognized tribe.

Department, Department of Public Works, to name a few). We also work with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) on other aspects of business and law. The legal department, in its legal representation of the tribal council, does so through tribal, state, and federal courts for the protection of treaty rights, established hundreds of years ago between the United States and many tribes across America.

In this environment, a paralegal is able to rise to heights of self-improvement never before thought possible.

But, back to the in-box—on a daily basis, there are tribal trust matters to tend to in relation to the per capita gaming revenue accounts that have been set up for GTB minors. In protecting the interests of the minors, the legal department, on behalf of the tribal council, reviews requests from GTB minors filed in the GTB tribal court to ensure that the minor's trust interests are protected. At the tribal court hearing, a minor's petition for access to his/her trust fund will either be opposed or not by the legal department (on behalf of tribal council), based on what the minor is requesting the access for; e.g., it must be for extraordinary needs in relation to health, education, or welfare.

Additional in-box goodies include employment issues to deal with (assistance to human resources regarding the personnel policy, fair labor practices, employee terminations); and there is the codebook—the codified laws of GTB—ensuring that they are updated and maintained and available for use. Did I mention our legal department also assists in the business transactions of GTB's EDC businesses? Yes, we assist with business transactions of the casinos, the resort, the hotel, etc. These complex transactions involve much planning, many meetings, the development of potential ordinances, resolutions, financial documents, and many other items in the execution and finalization of the business deals. It is the paralegal's duty to maintain the files, set up the meetings, prepare drafts, proof-read documents, and whatever else is requested. During those times, all other duties/projects of the office are prioritized in a manner that allows for effective and proficient efficiency.

Finally, but really not finally, although our office is a legal office, it is also considered to be a “program” in the realm of the tribal government, and with this comes the administration of the program's business activities. This includes developing and managing the program's budget, which means processing all orders for the office: paper, paperclips, envelopes, check requests, purchase requisitions, book orders, dues and memberships, travel arrangements (start to finish) and the processing of costs associated with them. Summarizing these details takes place on a monthly basis by providing a report to the tribal manager. Quarterly meetings also take place with the accounting department to ensure the program is in compliance with its goals and objectives—you know—basic law office management, a.k.a., a maniacal steady stream of in-box woes!

But not to end this tiny snapshot seeming ungrateful for the mountain of work the paralegals of this office are expected to do—after all, this is Michigan, and our economy is suffering immensely and any job is one to be grateful for—so in conclusion, I will end on a positive note.

Working in a tribal government is an exciting and continuous learning environment. There is always something new to experience or someone new to meet. Some of the finest people I've met, I've also had the pleasure of working with: Brian Upton, attorney who now works for the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes in Montana; Matthew Fletcher, attorney and author and associate professor of law and director of the Indigenous Law & Policy Center of Michigan State University; Ezekiel Fletcher, attorney with the firm Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP; William Rastetter, of Olson & Bzdok; Wenona Singel, assistant professor of law and associate director of the Indigenous Law & Policy Center of Michigan State University; and of course my wonderful boss, John Petoskey, who is our tribe's general counsel. In this environment, a paralegal is able to rise to heights of self-improvement never before thought possible. For me in particular, I grew up in a poverty-stricken atmosphere, but I had wonderful parents (my mother was full-blooded Michigan Ottawa Indian and my father full-blooded Irishman—what a combo). My parents taught me that through perseverance and hard work, you can obtain any goal you wish to obtain. In addition, I was also given incredible opportunities

Working in the Legal . . . Continued from page 5

as an inner city child to be mentored by college students who wanted to help Indian children—a program I later learned was started by Joseph “Buddy” Raphael, who is a current tribal counselor and previous tribal chairman for GTB.

Through my elders’ tenacity and the foresight of wanting a better life for future generations, I have been able to make it! And there are many Native Americans and non-natives who thrive in this economic environment/tribal government and its associated businesses. My tribe is one of the biggest employers of northern Lower Michigan, and I am proud of that fact! From the depths of repression and despair, Native Americans have risen with the strength and courage of our ancestors to ensure that in our corners of the world, life would be good and productive, ever growing in the direction of the seven teachings: love, courage, bravery, humility, wisdom, respect, and truth. Such is the good fortune of my life: that I’ve been able to learn what it’s like to work in the legal environment of a Native American government, my tribe, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. I hope my snapshot has proven to be helpful to you in providing a better understanding of tribal governments. Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts.

Meet a Section Member



Cheryl J. Nodarse, CLA

I graduated from the Lansing Community College legal assistant program in August 1986. I then went on to complete my bachelor’s degree at Central Michigan University in December 1987.

I have been a paralegal/legal assistant continuously since January 1988, and earned my CLA designation in 1990. I have previously been a council member of the local chapter for Florida Legal Assistants, and I have been a member of the State Bar Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section since approximately 1993. From 2007 to 2008, I served as the section chair.

Throughout my career, I have worked solely in law firms (as opposed to corporate legal departments or governmental agencies), starting in a large West Palm Beach, Florida firm with over 80 attorneys, then joining a small West Palm Beach firm of just 3 attorneys, and finally working the past 15 years with The Hubbard Law Firm in Lansing. My work has always had some connection to litigation, but I have worked in a variety of concentrations, including securities litigation, environmental litigation, and municipal law throughout my 21-year career.

I live in St. Johns with my husband of 21 years, Ruben Nodarse, and our children, Sarah (14) and AJ (12), along with two dogs and a variety of fish. My hobbies are walking, reading, and generally making others and myself laugh.

Calendar of Events

February 2009

February 26: 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.
Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association, Paralegal Section “Making the Most of Your Yearly Review” Registration and information: www.detroitlawyer.org

March 2009

March 12-14: Professional Development & Educational Conference, Tulsa, OK.
www.nals.org

April 2009

April 24-26: NALS of Michigan’s 48th Annual Meeting & Educational Conference
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI. www.nalsofmichigan.org

May 2009

May 1: State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section Annual Day of Education, Davenport University, Grand Rapids, MI. www.michbar.org/legalassistants.

July 2009

July 8-11: NALA 34th Annual Convention
San Diego, CA. www.nala.org

September 2009

Sept. 16-18: State Bar of Michigan Annual Meeting and ICLE Solo & Small Firm Institute.
Dearborn, MI www.michbar.org

October 2009

October 8-11: NALS 58th Annual Education Conference & National Forum.
Irvine, CA. www.nals.org

If you would like to post your event, please e-mail me at kblunck@shrr.com.

Council News - Highlights of Council Meetings*

By Jeanne Nyhuis

November 1, 2008: The council met at the Hubbard, Fox, Thomas, White & Bengtson law offices, in Lansing, Michigan, on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. The treasurer reported a fund balance of \$18,673.37. The council adopted the treasurer's proposed budget for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Council members suggested topics and speakers for the May 2009 Annual Day of Education, to be held at Davenport University, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on May 1, 2009. The council endorsed Chair Nicole Cook's proposal for a Las Vegas Night vendor event the evening of April 30. Vendors will be asked to sponsor a variety of gaming tables, and attendees will be able to redeem winnings at a prize redemption center at the close of the evening. The council ratified the following appointments:

- KathyAnn Blunck, treasurer (office vacated by Marianne Delaney, the new vice chair).
- Elsie Morren, council member (filling the one open council seat for which no declarations of candidacy were received prior to the last annual meeting).
- Casey Mobley, council member (filling the council position vacated by KathyAnn Blunck, the new treasurer).
- Denise Gau, membership coordinator (in the wake of Kevin Gasiewski's resignation after many years of service).
- Jeanne Nyhuis, job bank coordinator (in the wake of Margaret Agius' resignation after many years of service). [The SBM Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section job bank can be found at www.miparalegaljobs.zoomshare.com.]
- Denise Gau, annual meeting coordinator.
- KathyAnn Blunck, editor of the *Michigan Paralegal*. Efforts will be made to find a coeditor.

KathyAnn Blunck, the outgoing annual meeting coordinator, reported that 29 section members attended the 2008 annual meeting of the section. Council members discussed ways to boost attendance at the 2009 annual meeting, to be held at the Dearborn Hyatt September 16-18, 2009. Chair Nicole Cook reminded council members that certain steps must still be taken to fully implement the section name change from "Legal Assistants Section" to "Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section," adopted by the SBM Board of Commissioners at its April 2008 meeting e.g., revision of court rules and bylaws.

December 13, 2008: The council met at the Hubbard, Fox, Thomas, White & Bengtson law offices, in Lansing, Michigan, on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. The treasurer reported a fund balance of \$25,878.37. Chair Nicole Cook announced that the Michigan chapter of the Association of Litigation Support Paralegals (ALSP) has agreed to offer a separate technology track at the May 2009 Day of Education at Davenport University, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Three educational tracks will be offered, covering a variety of topics. Following a review of outgoing Membership Coordinator Kevin Gasiewski's membership report, KathyAnn Blunck proposed sending each new section member a welcome package to address concerns expressed by new members that they currently receive no acknowledgments of membership. A list of new members will be published in the next issue of the *Michigan Paralegal*. The council tabled a decision on whether to participate in the September 2009 ICLE Solo & Small Firm Institute or to offer its own separate program. Casey Mobley volunteered to follow through on the necessary steps to fully implement the section name change from "Legal Assistants Section" to "Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section."

*Complete minutes are available to section members upon request to the section secretary.

Oakland County Bar Association— Paralegal Committee News Report

The Paralegal Committee of the Oakland County Bar Association is excited to present four inspirational meetings in 2009. A lunch meeting on January 22, 2009, featured Alita M. Buford, a Certified Professional Organizer and Paper Tiger Authorized Consultant. Buford talked about “Distractions: Necessary or Nuisance.”

On February 5, 2009, Linda S. Jevahirian of Legal Search & Management, Inc. presented “Effective Use of Paralegals” as part of the New Lawyers Basic Skills Seminar Series Introduction to Practice. The afternoon event took place at the Oakland County Bar Center.

On March 19, 2009, the Committee will meet for a “Problems and Solutions Pot Luck.” A panel of senior paralegals will provide resolutions to some of the pertinent work issues that face paralegals today. Topics to be addressed include implementing technology, staying busy with billable hours, performance and goal setting, mentoring, and reinvention—what happens when you burn out? Sullivan, Ward, Asher & Patton, P.C. will sponsor the lunch and the meeting at their Southfield office from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

In June 2009, face reader Lin Klaassen will join Paralegal Committee members to celebrate their growing membership at an evening “Main Event.” Details are being confirmed and will be announced shortly.

For further information or to get involved with the committee, please contact Linda S. Jevahirian, chair, (248) 471-3443 / linda@legalsearchonline.net, or Tracy Fitzgerald, vice chair, (248) 566-8534 / tfitzgerald@honigman.com. Candice Russ, CLE Coordinator, is the committee liaison and is available at (248) 334-3400 / cle@ocba.org. For membership, please contact Katie Augsburger at (248) 334-3400 / membership@ocba.org.

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

PARALEGAL/LEGAL ASSISTANT SECTION

Annual Day of Education 2009

May 1, 2009

Davenport University
Grand Rapids, MI

- ADR/Negotiating
- Corporate-Succession Planning
- Constitutional Law I & II
- Creditor/Debtor (Collections)
- Drafting Contracts & Agreements
- Legal Research-Lexis I & II
- Mortgage Foreclosures
- Paralegal Career Advancement

Watch your mail for registration information.

Writing for Professional Publications

By Suzanne K. Schultz

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 and 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 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 its specific rules:

The Michigan Paralegal Newsletter. *The Michigan Paralegal Newsletter* is published quarterly by the Paralegal/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, Kathy Ann Blunck at kblunck@shrr.com or (231) 929-4878.

The Michigan Bar Journal. *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 the Bar also publishes articles of general interest in each issue. Check out the article guidelines at www.michbar.org/publications.

Michigan Lawyers Weekly. Contact the editor Todd Berg for publication guidelines at todd.berg@mi.lawyersweekly.com with story ideas.

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. 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.
- If an original news lead turns into a news story printed in *Legal Assistant Today*, you will be paid \$25. Providing them with a lead may eventually get your foot in the door for writing assignments.
- For publication guidelines and article queries contact LAT at www.legalassistanttoday.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 it 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 it 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 results. Using the skills you have developed as a legal assistant, and carefully following the guidelines provided by the publication, may assist you.