

# Michigan Paralegal

The official newsletter of the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section

## Message from the Chair



It's going to be a great year! The council is jam-packed with individuals who truly appreciate our profession and want to provide you with excellent education and opportunities for networking. At our meeting in November, everyone was just bursting with good ideas, new things to try, and enthusiasm.

First, our Annual Day of Education will take place on Friday, May 4, 2012. We have not nailed down a location yet, but definitely save the date. We are looking at college campuses in the Detroit area. Please contact Annual Day of Education Co-Chair Cheryl Nodarse or Marianne Delaney if you have suggestions for speakers or any ideas about legal education or networking at this annual event.

Second, the section's annual meeting will be held at the DeVos Place in Grand Rapids on Friday, September 21, 2012. If you have any thoughts on what you would like to see at our annual meeting, please contact Annual Meeting Co-Chair Renee Jent or Linda Jevahirian.

Something new is in the works. The section is sponsoring a writing contest. Sharpen your pencils and get writing. In addition to being published, you may win some money. See the announcement in this issue, and more information will soon be on our website.

Also, the *Michigan Paralegal* will soon have a column dedicated to paralegal ethics. See the announcement in this newsletter. Please contact Jennifer Petty with your questions relating to paralegal ethics.

Don't forget to nominate a paralegal for the Shining Star Award. The award recognizes people in our profession who go beyond what is expected of them. A link for submitting a nomination can be found on our section's website. To date, we have presented two awards, to Vicki Voisin and Charlie Campbell.

I would love to hear from you. Please contact me if you would like to assist in the work of the section—we have openings on several committees—or if you would like to contribute an idea or write an article for the *Michigan Paralegal*. Please contact me at [kblunck@shrr.com](mailto:kblunck@shrr.com).

—Kathy Ann Blunck

Issue 1, 2012

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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 Assistant 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-of-events items, letters to the editor, paralegal association announcements, Section or other news and business, Section committee reports, personal stories) and advertising should be sent to the attention of Jeanne Nyhuis at [jnyhuis@wnj.com](mailto:jnyhuis@wnj.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 paralegals, 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.

## 2011-2012 Council

### Chairperson

Kathy Ann Blunck  
(231) 486-4526, [kblunck@shrr.com](mailto:kblunck@shrr.com)

### Chair-Elect

[vacant]

### Secretary

Jeanne M. Nyhuis, CP (2010-2012)

### Treasurer

Tracy Muck (2011-2013)

### Ex Officio Chairperson

Casey Stevenson

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Renee J. Jent, CLA (2010-2012)  
Cheryl J. Nodarse, CLA (2010-2012)  
Kelly J. Dufty, CP (2011-2013)  
Jennifer M. Petty (2011-2013)  
Megan G. Vogrig (2011-2013)

### Standing Committee Chairs

#### Annual Day of Education

Cheryl J. Nodarse, Marianne B. Delaney

#### Annual Meeting

Renee J. Jent, Linda S. Jevahirian

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Denise E. Gau

#### *Michigan Paralegal*

Jeanne M. Nyhuis

#### Policies & Procedures

Marianne B. Delaney

#### Public Relations & Communications

Linda S. Jevahirian, Kathleen Kasiorek

#### Scholarship

Jennifer M. Petty

# Opportunities are Inklings Before They are Jobs

By Linda S. Jevahirian, GCDF

Where do jobs come from? Who creates them, and how do they get filled? Understanding how positions evolve can be helpful if you are positioning yourself for new opportunities.

Employers hire people for a variety of reasons. The workload increases. A team member quits. Existing personnel do not have the right skills. Internal processes change. The company expands. What all of these situations have in common is that they present a problem that an employer is trying to solve. Sam, a litigation attorney, is one such employer. He needs help desperately but is too busy to look for it.

Sam wakes up one day and realizes that he must make some changes. His current staff is overloaded, and his clients are complaining about missed deadlines. He has an inkling that a new employee could solve his problem.

After mulling over the situation for a day or so, Sam gets distracted by a project that needs his immediate attention. Days go by, then weeks, then months, until he is so overwhelmed that his family life and health are suffering, and his clients are threatening to go elsewhere.

In the meantime, work is overflowing and the existing staff is burning out from repeated deadlines and cranky clients. Sam wishes someone who understands his predicament would magically appear in the doorway so he could take his wife and children on the vacation he promised them months ago.

When the straw is just about to break the camel's back, Sam meets with his partners to discuss some alternatives to the workload issues that have been pending for some time. They agree they need to hire someone. The next day Sam gets a notice from the court and must start preparing for trial right away. The job that isn't a job yet gets put on the back burner while Sam is sidetracked for another month.

Next comes the first in a series of temporary fixes that will delay the solution to the problem even longer. Sam's secretary has a cousin who is in between jobs, and although she has no experience working in a law firm, he hires her to organize his trial documents.

Halfway through the project she gets a full-time job offer and leaves.

By a stroke of luck Sam's partner's secretary is available to finish organizing the documents. The combination of the rush, the lack of knowledge about the case, and the pressure of correcting the mistakes the cousin made creates so much tension that it is impossible to do an excellent job. She does the best she can, but the client is not fully satisfied.

Sam finishes the trial and has a short lull in his schedule allowing him to sketch out a job description. He announces the position to his network and waits for referrals. Several more weeks go by and he is faced with more deadlines, a secretary who is absent for a few days, more demanding clients, and disappointed family members who have missed their vacation.

Sam spends the next two weeks interviewing three candidates who were referred to him by various peers in the field. They are okay, but they lack the take-charge attitude he needs. After exhausting his resources, Sam posts the job online and hundreds of resumes start jamming up his inbox. He spends a week reviewing the resumes and finally settles on a candidate who will do in a pinch. Yet another short-term, temporary solution.

**Employers waste a lot of time and energy trying to find the most profitable talent.**

The next day the new employee shows up ready to work and at the same time his favorite client announces it is transferring its legal business to a competitor law firm that is better equipped to handle deadlines. Sam is devastated. Had someone with that certain sort of "magic" shown up at his door months before, he might have avoided the loss of his client, and saved a bundle on Alka Seltzer.



Linda Jevahirian is the founder and president of Legal Search & Management, Inc., a firm that provides recruiting, placement, and career and business planning. She has advised thousands of applicants on job-related issues. Read more about her and the services she provides at [www.legalsearchonline.net](http://www.legalsearchonline.net).

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## Report on NALS 2011 National Conference

By Dorothy J. Grant, PP

Three weeks later, Sam fires the individual he hired, and is nagged by the constant sensation that he has failed to solve his problem. Lo and behold, he gets a call from a candidate prospecting for employment. The applicant (who never saw the ad he placed) sends a resume, gets interviewed, and a day later starts the new job. Two weeks later Sam is on a plane to Aruba with his wife and kids.

The first stage of a new job is when the job isn't even a job yet. The problem exists but not the solution. While Sam was held hostage by his busy schedule he needed some "magic," someone who would show up at the door willing to take the helm and solve his problem.

What is the moral of the story? Prospecting directly to the employer is a win-win for both parties. Employers waste a lot of time and energy trying to find the most profitable talent. The best time to approach them is when they are in the "inkling, mull-it-over" stage. ●

On Wednesday, October 12, 2011, co-worker Kathy Ann Blunck and I headed out to "The Queen City" of Cincinnati, Ohio, for the NALS 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Education Conference and National Forum. While the trip out was uneventful (thank goodness), the conference was not, as it was packed full of education. The conference offered 40 sessions of legal education, in addition to two keynote speakers and a bonus session for networking.

Our opening keynote speaker, Vicki Voisin, ACP, demonstrated the Mystery of Ethics & Technology through a murder mystery presentation. The ethical perils inherent in law firm technology—ediscovery, metadata, websites, blogs, emails, cell phones, faxes, and more—were brought to our attention.

The various sessions centered around four major categories: (1) litigation/civil, (2) corporate law, (3) family and estate planning, and (4) general sessions. Most of the sessions I attended were centered around family law/estate planning, as I am a probate paralegal at Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge in Traverse City.

On Thursday, I joined in for two estate planning seminars and one litigation session regarding the death penalty. I attended two estate planning sessions on Friday, regarding Medicaid planning and IRS myths, and one corporate session called "First Drops in a Perfect Storm,"

which covered investment fraud cases, which are likely to surge as the baby boom generation moves into retirement.

I mixed up the sessions a bit on Saturday by attending a general session, an estate planning session, and a corporate law session.

The closing keynote speaker, Alanna Moravetz, J.D., spoke about how to be happy and gain professional satisfaction in our work in the legal profession. Ms. Moravetz showed us strategies and techniques on how to build resilience and sustain our careers despite the stress level that can sometimes accompany our jobs.

To top off the conference, Kathy Ann and I went on a riverboat cruise down the Ohio River. A delicious dinner, good music, and a fun night of networking proved to be a great way to end the weekend. I took some spectacular pictures of the scenery along the river.

We were both eager to get home on Sunday. This seminar was so jam-packed full of information that we needed time to unwind and relax. I want to thank the Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section for the opportunity to represent the section at the NALS annual conference. ●




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*Dorothy Grant, a paralegal at Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge, in Traverse City, is a council member of the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section.*

## ANNOUNCING...2012 Writing Competition

You are invited to enter the SBM Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section's writing contest. Your experiences and expertise are of great interest to the section, and we invite you to share them with other paralegals.

Applicants are required to be members of the SBM Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section.

Your essay may cover any area of paralegal practice and development that holds a special interest for you: for example, your area of practice, practical advice and experiences, news, trends, career enhancement, technology.

Please send your essay in Word format to [jnyhuis@wnj.com](mailto:jnyhuis@wnj.com) no later than March 1, 2012. Your essay should not exceed 1,000 words.

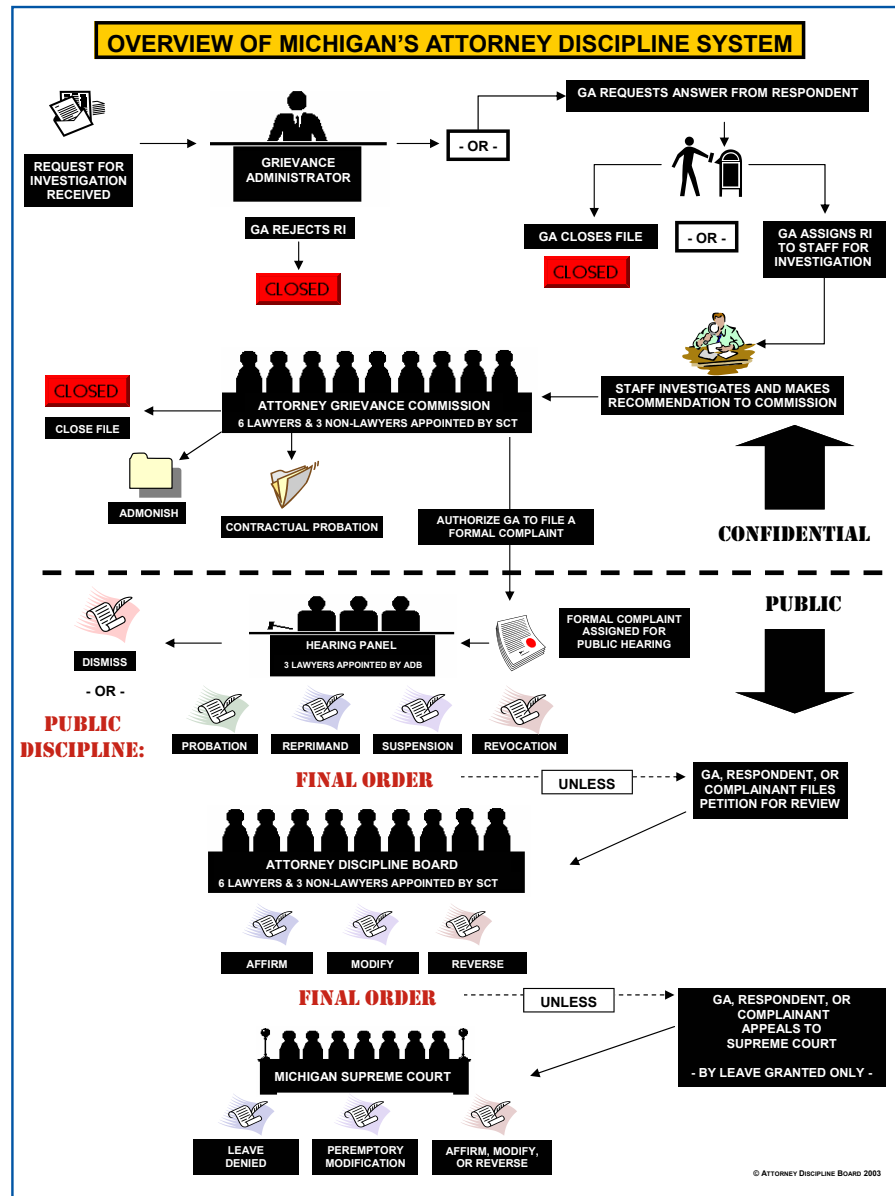
The first-prize winner will receive \$200; the second-prize winner will receive \$125; and the third-prize winner will receive \$75. Prizes will be awarded at the May 2012 Annual Day of Education. The three winning essays will be published in the *Michigan Paralegal*.

Essays will be judged based upon substance, grammar, appeal, and originality. The section reserves editorial rights and the right to publish.



# Michigan Attorney Discipline Board, Detroit, Michigan

By Jennifer M. Petty



When the State Bar of Michigan was created in 1935, it assumed the duty of overseeing attorney discipline. In 1970, the Michigan Supreme Court created a new disciplinary body, the State Bar Grievance Board. However, in 1978, the Michigan Supreme Court established an entirely new, bifurcated disciplinary system consisting of an investigation and prosecution agency—the Attorney Grievance Commission, or AGC—and a separate adjudicative body—the Attorney Discipline Board, or ADB.

All cases begin with the filing of a grievance, called a “Request for Investigation,” with the AGC. That agency will investigate the matter and, if it appears that the attorney may have committed professional misconduct, the AGC will authorize the grievance administrator to file a formal complaint with the ADB. Among the types of professional misconduct which can lead to a formal complaint are misappropriation of client funds, failure to refund an unearned fee, misrepresentation of the status of a client’s matter; abandoning or neglecting a client’s matter, and falsifying documents.

Once the matter has been filed with our office, we will assign it to a hearing panel, comprised of three volunteer attorneys, based in the county where the attorney practices. The panel will hold public hearings, conducted in much the same way as a trial, with the grievance administrator functioning as the prosecutor, and the Board functioning as the court. Our website, [www.adbmich.org](http://www.adbmich.org), has a flowchart (included with this article) that shows how attorney discipline matters begin with the filing of a grievance with AGC and can go as far as the Michigan Supreme Court.

I have been the paralegal for the ADB since 1999. One of my responsibilities is assisting the hearing panels in preparing their reports and orders of discipline. The reports will summarize the witness testimony, list any exhibits presented during the hearing, and announce the panel’s findings regarding the alleged misconduct. If the panel finds that an attorney has committed misconduct, the report will also contain the level of discipline to be imposed, as well as the panel’s rationale. In Michigan, the minimum sanction that

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## Michigan Attorney Discipline Board

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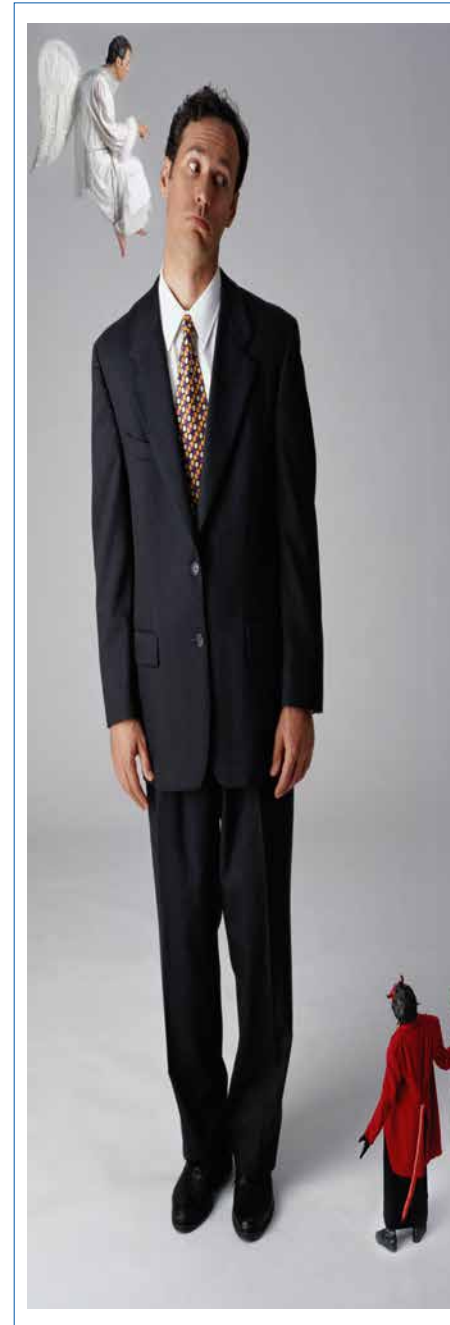
can be imposed by a hearing panel is a reprimand, and suspension can range from 30 days (minimum), to disbarment (maximum). However, disbarment is not permanent in Michigan and a disbarred attorney may petition for reinstatement to the practice of law after five years from the date of his or her disbarment. An attorney who has been suspended for 180 days or more must also petition to be reinstated, but an attorney suspended for 30 to 179 days can be automatically reinstated once he or she files an affidavit with the Michigan Supreme Court, the ADB, and the AGC. MCR 9.123(A).

One of my other responsibilities, once a case is closed, is to draft a Notice of Discipline, which summarizes the findings of misconduct, the rules which were violated, and the sanction imposed. These notices are published each month in the *Michigan Bar Journal*, as well as other legal publications. I also submit these notices to various state and federal courts, as well as other legal agencies.

Additionally, in my capacity as webmaster for the ADB, I post all notices to our website within 24 hours of being issued. These notices are also added to our research database, which contains all notices of discipline issued since 1978, all Board Opinions issued since 1978, and all Board Orders issued since 2009.

The ADB and the AGC are the only agencies which handle attorney discipline in Michigan. Other states employ differing procedures for the oversight of attorney conduct. The National Organization of Bar Counsel (NOBC) represents member organizations who enforce ethics rules that regulate the professional conduct of lawyers who practice law in the United States, Canada, and Australia. The NOBC's website, [www.nobc.org](http://www.nobc.org), is the best place to start to get a better idea of how attorney discipline is handled in each state, or even in other countries. Additionally, the National Council of Lawyer Disciplinary Boards (NCLDB) is an organization comprised of agencies which perform strictly adjudicative functions regarding attorney discipline, like the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board. More information is available on its website: [www.ncldb.org](http://www.ncldb.org). Finally, [www.legaethics.com](http://www.legaethics.com) is a website which focuses on the Internet's impact on legal ethics, but it also has a tremendous amount of general ethics content and a comprehensive listing of ethics sites on the web. ●

*Jennifer Petty, paralegal and webmaster for the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board, is a council member of the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section.*



## New “Ethical Hypotheticals” Column

Paralegals are bound by many of the same ethical standards that apply to attorneys—including those relating to loyalty to the client, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest—and, more specific to the paralegal, standards prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law. From time to time, every paralegal is faced with an ethical dilemma or question involving his or her own prospective conduct or the conduct of a supervising attorney or other legal colleague.

If that currently describes you, you are invited to submit your question for feedback in our new “Ethical Hypotheticals” column. Responses will be provided by paralegal Jennifer M. Petty, who has worked for the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board for 12 years, in consultation with Vicki Voisin, ACP, a nationally recognized writer and speaker on the topic of legal ethics, who publishes a weekly e-newsletter, *Paralegal Strategies* ([www.paralegalmentor.com](http://www.paralegalmentor.com)), and cohosts *The Paralegal Voice*, a monthly podcast produced by Legal Talk Network.

*Please send your ethical hypothetical to [petty@adbmich.org](mailto:petty@adbmich.org). Please include “Ethics Suggestion” in the subject line. Your identity will remain confidential.*

# Therapeutic Jurisprudence

By Jeanne Nyhuis, CP

“Legal professionals don’t realize there are alternatives to the adversarial practice of law,” says Cindy Faulkner, an attorney, Cooley Law School professor and former paralegal, who gave the keynote address on “Therapeutic Jurisprudence” at the 2011 Annual Day of Education. “We often only know what we know.”

A number of distinct alternative approaches are already in use right here in Michigan:

- *Collaborative lawyering*, primarily used in family law, seeks to achieve a settlement that best meets the needs of both parties without the underlying threat of contested litigation. The couple signs a contract binding themselves to the process and providing that their respective lawyers may not represent either party in any future family law litigation. If either party says he or she is going to court, both attorneys must resign.
- *Restorative justice*, primarily used in juvenile criminal cases, emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior. Those affected by the offender’s misconduct—e.g., the victim, the juvenile, the juvenile’s family—are brought together in a room and seated in a circle. The offender is confronted with the consequences of his or her crime and expected to make restitution.
- *Holistic lawyering* calls for lawyering from a place of love and acceptance. Conflicts are seen as opportunities for growth. Holistic law practitioners view their mission as creating a world where lawyers are valued as healers, helpers, counselors, problem-solvers, and peacemakers.
- Finally, *therapeutic jurisprudence* arose from the mental health/disability area of law and seeks to treat each client as a whole person who must live with the consequences of the court order. An attorney practicing therapeutic

jurisprudence seeks to educate the client and provide the client with the information he or she needs to arrive at the truly best outcome given all circumstances, not just the legal aspect.

Practitioners of therapeutic jurisprudence make an extra effort to hear and understand the *client’s* goals, not just the *legal* goals. They recognize that law has social consequences and try to preserve relationships.

Faulkner uses the following concrete illustration: An attorney meets with an elderly widow. The woman has discovered that her neighbors’ fence is 12 inches over the property line. She is adamant that the fence must be torn down. In gathering further information, the attorney realizes that the woman has a friendly relationship with the young family whose fence is encroaching on her property—they chat in the yard, she is invited over for meals, she occasionally babysits. In fact, these neighbors are the closest thing to family that the woman has. Given these circumstances, the attorney practicing therapeutic jurisprudence focuses on negotiation and compromise. Rather than recommending a demand letter or mentioning a possible lawsuit, he suggests sitting down with the neighbors and reaching some sort of agreement, be it an agreement whereby the neighbors waive any future claim of adverse possession or the woman agrees to sell the 12-inch-wide strip of land. Given the psychological and social effects that a full-blown adversarial dispute would have on the client’s well-being, the practitioner seeks to mediate the dispute to everyone’s satisfaction.

Even the words that a lawyer uses can have a huge impact on a dispute, Faulkner says. Divorce can be said to *destroy* a family or it can be said to *transform* a family, to *alter* a family, to *change* a family. And the term *parenting time* is, from a noncustodial parent’s perspective, a much more empowering term than *visitation*.

For more information on therapeutic jurisprudence, check out Stolle, Wexler & Winick’s *Practicing Therapeutic Jurisprudence: Law as a Helping Profession* (Carolina Academic Press, 2000). ●

Jeanne Nyhuis, a paralegal at Warner Norcross & Judd LLP, in Holland, is secretary of the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section.

# Legal Road Trip

By Kathy Ann Blunck

Looking for an excuse to take a road trip? One option: Check out some of the bronze plaques that the State Bar of Michigan has planted throughout the state of Michigan recognizing significant legal cases and personalities in Michigan's history. A complete list of those markers can be found on the State Bar of Michigan's "Michigan Legal Milestones" [webpage](#). Here are descriptions of just a few:

The first plaque, commemorating the Ossian Sweet trial, which took place in 1925, was dedicated on May 2, 1986, and placed inside the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in Detroit. Dr. Sweet and his family were arrested and charged with murder after a member of a white mob attacking the Sweets' home was shot and killed. Clarence Darrow defended the family and convinced an all-white jury to find the black defendants not guilty.

The "Rose of Aberlone" plaque can be found in Kellogg Park, in Plymouth. The original plaque was stolen and a replacement was unveiled on May 13, 2008. This plaque commemorates a classic contracts case involving Hiram Walker & Sons, Rose the cow, and the principle of rescission based on mutual mistake. T. C. Sherwood, president of a Plymouth bank, contracted to purchase Rose for \$80 from Hiram Walker, of Walkerville, Ontario. Both gentlemen thought the cow was barren and it was sold for beef. Mr. Walker subsequently discovered that Rose was pregnant and refused to complete the sale. Her value was now about 10 times greater than the agreed-upon purchase price. Mr. Sherwood sued to take possession of Rose at the original price. The Michigan Supreme Court in 1887 declared in *Sherwood v Walker* that, because a mutual mistake affecting the substance of the transaction had been made, Hiram Walker had a right to rescind the contract and keep the cow. The case of

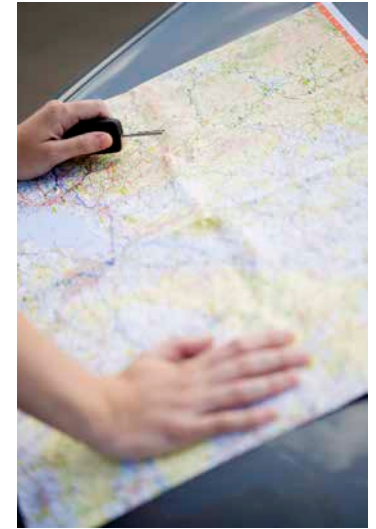
*Sherwood v Walker* has been said to have "written the book" on the law of mistake.

A marker titled "Pond's Defense" was placed outside City Hall on Mackinac Island, on June 10, 1995, to commemorate an important Michigan Supreme Court decision in *Pond v People* (1860) on the issue of self-defense and defense of others. Mr. Pond shot and killed a neighbor who was on Mr. Pond's premises and had been threatening his family and hired hands for three days. Mr. Pond was tried, convicted, and sentenced to 10 years' confinement at hard labor in Jackson prison. Pond's attorney appealed the case to the Michigan Supreme Court. A new trial was ordered and Pond was eventually set free.

Closer to my home in Leland, Michigan, is a marker that honors Emelia Schaub. The marker was dedicated and placed outside the Leelanau County Courthouse on May 26, 1994. Ms. Schaub was the first woman to practice law in Leelanau County. She graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1924. She was cited as the first woman attorney in the nation's history to successfully defend a murder case. She also helped the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians receive federal recognition in 1980.

The most recent marker was dedicated at the State Bar of Michigan's Annual Meeting held in September 2011, to commemorate the 1974 U.S. Supreme Court case of *Milliken v Bradley*, which addressed the planned desegregation of schools and busing in Detroit. The plaque will be placed at a suitable location.

Check out the State Bar's "Michigan Legal Milestones" [webpage](#) and read about these and other significant events and people that have shaped Michigan's legal history. ●



The Michigan Legal Milestones program recognizes significant legal cases and personalities in Michigan's history and uses bronze plaques, placed at featured sites, to relate the historical significance. A new milestone is dedicated each year. The Legal Milestone plaques are on display across the state.

Kathy Ann Blunck, a paralegal at Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge, in Traverse City, is chair of the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section.

# Council News

By Jeanne Nyhuis, CP

## *Highlights of recent meetings of the council of the SBM Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section*

**November 12, 2011:** The council met on Saturday, November 12, 2011, at 10 a.m., at Hubbard Law Firm, P.C., in Lansing.

The section's balance sheet stood at \$12,558.42 as of 9/30/2011.

Council member Jennifer Petty, of the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board, suggested a new feature for the *Michigan Paralegal*: an ethics column that provides answers to ethics-related questions submitted by paralegals. She will ask Vicki Voisin, ACP, an expert in legal ethics, to contribute her expertise.

Council member Renee Jent suggested sponsoring a writing contest in order to encourage greater involvement in the section by its membership and to gather additional articles for the newsletter. After a discussion of eligibility requirements and prizes, council adopted a motion to award up to \$400 to the winners of a section writing competition. An announcement will be published in the next issue of the *Michigan Paralegal*.

Council adopted a resolution to dissolve the section's Pro Bono Committee given that the section does not currently have an active pro bono program and the committee could be rejuvenated at any time.

The Scholarship Committee reported that all 2011 scholarships have been paid out. Letters to schools announcing the 2012 scholarships will be sent in January. Applications will be due on June 1; all applications will be reviewed in June/July; scholarship amounts will be determined by council in July; and the scholarships will be formally awarded at the section's annual meeting in September. Jennifer Petty volunteered to take over as chair of this committee.

No nominations for the section's Shining Star Award have been received for September-November.

The office of chair-elect remains vacant.

The next Annual Day of Education is scheduled for Friday, May 4, 2012. The Annual Day of Education Committee is still actively working on a location. The ALSP is once again willing to partner with the section in sponsoring the event. Council discussed various means to reduce costs of the event, which was originally intended to raise funds for the section, but now essentially breaks even. Public Relations & Communications Committee Co-Chair Linda Jevahirian will be asked to request the proclamation of a 2012 Paralegal Day by the State of Michigan.

The section's annual meeting will be held at the DeVos Place, in Grand Rapids, on Friday, September 21, 2012. Council members discussed various ways of increasing attendance at the event, including the selection of an optimum time slot and excellent speaker. DUI attorney Patrick Barone, who spoke at the 2011 annual meeting, was an outstanding choice.

Council will ask the SBM about an online search tool for identifying section members. Council members also discussed the creation of a Facebook page and a LinkedIn page for the section.

The Membership Committee will investigate the possibility of sponsoring a leadership conference for section members, planned and implemented by the section or conducted by outside leadership experts. ●

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

**The council scheduled the following meetings (all open to the public) for 2012:**

- **January 21, 2012**, at 10 a.m. (teleconference)
- **March 3, 2012**, at 10 a.m. (location tbd- possibly central Michigan)
- **May 3, 2012** (Site of Annual Day of Education, late afternoon or evening)
- **July 21, 2012**, at 10 a.m. (teleconference)
- **September 20, 2012** (Site of SBM Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids, time tbd)

*Jeanne Nyhuis, a paralegal at Warner Norcross & Judd LLP, in Holland, is secretary of the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section.*

## Nominations for Shining Star Award

The State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section welcomes nominations for its monthly “Shining Star” Award to honor paralegals who have gone above and beyond what is expected of them professionally by contributing to charitable and community service organizations. Each award winner will be featured on the SBM website and in this newsletter and will receive a congratulatory certificate and a gift card.

Please submit your nomination at <http://www.michbar.org/paralegal/shiningstaraward.cfm>.

For more information, contact Casey Stevenson at [mobleyc@northwood.edu](mailto:mobleyc@northwood.edu).

## Calendar of Events

(in chronological order)

### NALS

[www.nalsofmichigan.org](http://www.nalsofmichigan.org)

- March 1–3  
2012 NALS Professional Development & Education Conference  
DoubleTree Warren Place  
6110 South Yale Avenue  
Tulsa, OK 74136

### ALSP

[www.alsponline.org](http://www.alsponline.org)

- March 12–13  
2012 ALSP National Conference  
Sheraton New Orleans Hotel  
500 Canal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70130

### SBM Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section

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

- May 4  
2012 Annual Day of Education  
Location tbd

### NALA

[www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)

- July 25–26  
NALA 37th Annual Convention & Exhibition  
Hilton Omaha  
1001 Cass Street  
Omaha, NE 68102

### SBM Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section

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

- September 21  
SBM Annual Meeting  
DeVos Place  
303 Monroe Avenue, N.W.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

### NFPA

[www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)

- September 27–30  
NFPA 2012 Annual Convention and Policy Meeting  
Sheraton Anchorage  
401 East 6th Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501

### NALS

[www.nals.org](http://www.nals.org)

- October 18–21  
NALs 61st Annual Education Conference & National Forum  
Sheraton-Portland Airport Hotel  
8235 Northeast Airport Way  
Portland, OR 97220

**(Please verify date and information  
on each organization's website)**

## New Section Members

- Rebecca “Abby” Adams  
(Ann Arbor)
- John A. Bliss  
(Bloomfield Hills)
- Deborah C. Bohn  
(Jackson)
- Bryan Christie  
(Jackson)
- Lisa M. Coates  
(Iron River)
- Lynda G. DeFrain  
(Madison Heights)
- Louise A. Evans  
(Warren)
- Tracy Fitzgerald  
(Livonia)
- Terri L. Renaud  
(Birmingham)

