

## Andrea Davis

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**From:** Lynne Devenny & Kate McAllister [ncaj@ncaj.com]  
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**To:** Andrea Davis  
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## LEGAL ASSISTANTS DIVISION

### Newsletter

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**February 2010**

### Message from the Division Chair

**Happy New Year** and **Welcome** to the February 2010 issue of the Legal Assistants Division e-newsletter.

In this issue of the e-newsletter you will find informative articles that will assist you in your daily professional life as well as upcoming Division events that are being held statewide.

The Spring Seminar for Paralegals will be held at the Embassy Suites in Concord on March 17 and the Summer Conference for Paralegals (in connection with Convention) will be held at the Coastline Inn Conference Center in Wilmington on June 19. I encourage each of you to attend not only to gain your full CPE credits for the year, but to also network and meet with Division members from across the state.

NCAJ President David Pishko has charged all NCAJ members to get involved in NCAJ. That involvement can be range from volunteering for an NCAJ public service project, volunteering to participate in Division leadership, writing an article for Trial Briefs, and the list goes on and on.

If you cannot devote too much time to volunteering, I encourage each of you to sign up for the Division listserv. This is an invaluable tool, available 24/7, that Division members have access to solely as a result of Division membership. Take advantage of it. And, don't forget to enroll in your free Section! As a legal assistant member of NCAJ, your membership includes one complimentary Section, which includes Section listserv.

Thanks so much for the opportunity to serve as your Chair and I look forward to seeing you at the many planned Division events statewide!

**Rhonda B. Rodenbough**  
**Chair, Legal Assistants Division**

### Division Member Spotlight: Pamela Hemphill

*Submitted by* **Kate McAllister**

One of our LAD members, **Pamela Hemphill**, was honored in October 2009 with the Burke County Business and Professional Women's "Woman of the Year" award. Pam is a North Carolina Certified Paralegal and has worked for Legal Aid in Morganton for 30 years. She recently shared some reflections on her lengthy involvement with Legal Aid and on her recent award.

Pam, who was born and raised in Philadelphia, first began her employment with Legal Aid as a secretary in 1979. She had just graduated from Temple University and was looking for a job in the Morganton area

where she could apply her office skills. Like many legal assistants and paralegals, Pam received most of her professional training on the job. She soon found that she was able to help the office staff attorneys with pleadings and transactional documents, like wills. She decided to further her professional education and took several classes, with the encouragement of the Legal Aid office, at Western Piedmont Community College. Over the years, Pam's skill set continued to grow and she was promoted to "paralegal." The attorneys in the Morganton office encouraged her to seek state certification, and Pam became an NCCP during the first few years of the certification program.

Pam coordinates private attorney involvement with domestic violence shelters in five counties for Legal Aid. The shelter directors contact her when they identify potential Legal Aid clients, and Pam does intake investigation and then refers the clients to private attorneys who have agreed to assist. Eager for additional responsibilities, Pam has recently begun to handle unemployment hearings, representing clients who have been denied benefits. She considers this aspect of her job at Legal Aid both challenging and incredibly rewarding. She works closely with the attorneys in the Morganton office, seeking their advice regarding upcoming hearings. Pam also actively participates in office conferences where cases are discussed and strategies are considered.

Over her 30 years at the Morganton Legal Aid office, Pam has seen staff and attorneys come and go. Though she demurs when asked whether she's the rock of the office, she did admit to telling her managing attorneys that they'd have to padlock the door to keep her away. She has enjoyed the sense of mutual respect, trust, and support that she has found at Legal Aid; she considers herself lucky to work in such an environment. Besides providing valuable assistance to Legal Aid clients, Pam has helped younger Legal Aid attorneys find their footing. As a committed community volunteer, she recognizes the value of the Legal Aid organization and the difference it makes in the lives of others.

Burke County Business and Professional Women, an organization that helps women advance their careers or build businesses, recognized the value that Pam has made and continues to make in the Burke County area through her involvement with diverse organizations like Relay for Life, Habitat for Humanity, and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Pam was selected for the "Woman of the Year" award and honored at a banquet in late October. Members of the community nominate individuals for this award. Pam was surprised and honored by the award, but she is emphatic about her professional and volunteer motivations - she works and acts from her heart, not for recognition.

Pam is also involved with the Catawba Valley Paralegal Association. She has found paralegal/legal assistant professional groups extremely valuable throughout her career, as a resource for case-specific questions, for the networking opportunities they afford, and for the CPE classes that many groups offer. She is glad to be a part of the NCAJ and encourages all legal assistants/paralegals to take advantage of professional organizations.

Though Pam's level of community involvement is high, she is able to balance her volunteer work with time spent with her five grandchildren in the area. She also enjoys traveling to visit family in Philadelphia.

## Get Involved – Participate in Division Leadership!

2010-11 leadership positions within the Division are available! What better way to get-to-know your colleagues across the state - volunteer today and participate in Division leadership! Being involved in leadership is fun and fulfilling and doesn't take too much time out of your already busy professional schedule. Positions are available in the following areas: membership, education, public education, publications. Please contact [Andrea Davis](#) to volunteer or for more details!

## Trial Prep for Paralegals: Working With Your Attorney

*By Michael L. Coyne, Esq. and Ursula Furi-Perry, Esq.*

How can the attorney-paralegal team best work together in preparation for and during trial? By now, you understand that paralegals perform integral practical functions as part of the attorney's preparation for trial; you also know that paralegals must be familiar with the substantive and procedural rules that govern the trial process. But there is one more key component to assisting your attorney efficiently and effectively: working together as the attorney-paralegal team.

Consider the following twenty "commandments" for working together with your attorney: [\[READ FULL ARTICLE\]](#)

## Take Advantage of Your Free Section Today!

With your NCAJ legal assistant membership, you are entitled to receive one complimentary Section membership.

- Does your firm handle cases in many practice areas?
- Do you want to learn more about a specific practice area?
- Does your workload involve a new practice area?

If you answered Yes to any or all of these questions, contact [Andrea Davis](#), NCAJ Sections & Divisions Director, to enroll in your complimentary NCAJ Section. And your complimentary Section membership includes access to that Section's listserv as well. So take full advantage of your NCAJ Membership -- Join a Section Today!

## Using Social Media – Without Letting It Take Over Your Life

*Submitted by Lynne J. DeVenny, NCCP*

Many legal professionals are aware that social media is changing the way we learn and communicate, but many of them are still reluctant to use it.

When I ask colleagues why they aren't using social media, many of them say that they fear becoming overwhelmed by the potential distractions and a seemingly unlimited information stream. They worry that they're already investing too many hours in their professional lives and wonder how they can add social media - without sacrificing quality time, both at work and at home.

Using social media doesn't have to become a second job or a digital addiction, like video gaming or teen texting. Social media includes professional networking sites and law blogs (or "blawgs") which provide the latest legal news, technology and practice tips. But many legal professionals don't use these invaluable interactive Internet resources.

It's almost impossible to keep up with the rapid-fire changes in the way that we learn, practice law and network without using social media. But you can effectively manage your usage to keep up with the latest trends in your specialty areas and the ever-evolving technology that makes practicing law more efficient and economical - as well as to market your own expertise within the legal and wider community.

Here are a few ways that you can start using social media for career development, and have it add to the quality of your professional life:

**Limit the time that you use it.** Set aside specific times for social media activities, such as catching up on your favorite professional blogs and checking in on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. A quiet hour on a weekend is a great time to catch up on your blog reading and to get inspiration from some of the greatest legal minds in the country. Taking a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break at work to quickly review your Twitter stream can be as stimulating and enjoyable for your mind as getting out of the office and taking a quick walk around the block is for your body.

**Use an RSS reader.** Set up an RSS feed reader to subscribe to your favorite professional blogs, but limit your subscriptions to start with, to no more than a dozen blogs. An RSS ("Really Simple Syndication") feed reader is news aggregation software that publishes updates from websites that you designate, including blogs and news headlines, in an easy-to-read format. Using an RSS feed, such as one of the most popular and easy-to-use feeds, Google Reader, will insure that you don't miss any blog posts. You can read them at your convenience, as well as tag and label your favorites for future reference.

**Comment on blog posts.** If you find that you enjoy legal blogs, but don't want to make the time commitment required to maintain a blog of your own, you can still be a part of the blogging community. Develop your professional network and share your expertise by leaving comments at others' blog posts that interest you. If you

have information that you want to share, without committing to a weekly writing schedule, offer to do a guest post for a blog that matches your professional expertise. Most bloggers love to have other talented professionals that they can count on for occasional guest posts.

**Keep your LinkedIn profile up to date.** Check your LinkedIn account at least once a week. Post an updated status report about a professional activity you're involved in, and contribute to a group discussion if you have information that is helpful. Extend contact invitations to other LinkedIn users that you've met during the week, physically or virtually, and consider extending invitations to people you may not have met, but whose work you admire, such as authoring an article you found helpful. (But state the reason for the invitation when you send it.)

**Maintain a professional Facebook presence.** Set up a professional profile on Facebook (or use your personal profile professionally, although this is trickier), and let your friends and colleagues know about it. Check on it at least once a week, and provide an update regarding your professional activities, or a link to a news article related to your specialty area. You never know when someone in your Facebook network will need legal services and be reminded by your professional page that your firm provides them.

**Use Twitter as a news feed.** Twitter offers extensive networking and learning opportunities for legal professionals. Even if you don't have time to use it as a conversational or networking tool and don't want to acquire many followers of your own, you can still use it as a learning tool. Limit the professionals that you follow on Twitter to a manageable number who tweet the information most helpful to you and your specialty areas. Use Twitter applications like TweetDeck or HootSuite (or mobile Twitter apps if you have a smartphone) to make Twitter usage more efficient, to easily follow the fast-moving Twitter stream and to set up multiple search columns for the topics that most interest you.

Social media used effectively won't take over your life or chain you to your laptop an extra 30 hours per week, but it can enrich your professional life in ways that you never imagined. Don't be afraid of it, and make a place for it in your life.

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**Lynne J. DeVenny** is a North Carolina State Bar Certified Paralegal employed by Elliot Pishko Morgan, P.A., in Winston-Salem, NC. She blogs for the legal profession at Practical Paralegalism (<http://practicalparalegalism.com>) and co-hosts a monthly podcast with Vicki Voisin, *The Paralegal Voice*, at Legal Talk Network.

## Division Listserv – Join Today!

If you have not joined the LAD listserv, you are missing one of the best membership benefits of being a Legal Assistants Division member. The listserv is a great way to receive responses, 24/7, to legal practice matters and issues, distribute information on important topics and to survey Division members. Check out these topics that were recently discussed on the LAD listserv:

- Domestic question
- Toyota Recall
- Sample Affidavit of Service
- Child Support Question
- Need help w/Estate Matter
- Commercial Litigation Summit - RSVP Today!
- Charlotte mediator
- Form 36 Question
- Reverse cell # look up
- Name change
- Section 1011 Payment
- WC fee question
- Randolph County Legal Notices
- Guardianship/custody
- Hearing on Motion to Set Aside Default Judgment
- 26A cover ltr to client re SOL
- Telephone Nurse Ltr
- Social Security Question
- Medical Malpractice Cases
- Pre-Trial for Uninsured Employer
- Mileage Reimbursement Rate Form 25T
- Real Estate Software
- Dog Bite complaint
- NCCP/CLA Question
- NCIC inclement weather policy?
- Medical cost estimator
- Motion for Payment of Medical Bills
- Gaston County matter
- Changes to law regarding drafting Wills
- Social Security Practice in Hickory Area
- Service on City of Greensboro
- Employer Negligence?
- Freedom of Information Act
- Cease & Desist Letter

It's easy to join -- contact [Andrea Davis](#) to set-up your listserv account.

## Spring Seminar for Paralegals – Enroll Today!

DATE/LOCATION: March 17, 2010, Embassy Suites, Concord (I-85 at Concord Mills Mall)  
6.0 CPE Hours (inc. 1.0 ethics)

Learn more about preparing for *absolute Medicare compliance, workers' comp pre-trial agreements, stress management in these uncertain times, using social networking sites to find out more about the plaintiff or defendant, the unauthorized practice of law, and turbo-charging your office with technology*. In addition, the Division is honored to have *NC Representative Tricia Cotham* as the luncheon speaker who will discuss highlights from the long session of the NC General Assembly.

Program Chairs and LAD Division Education Co-chairs: **Daina Delgado**, NC Certified Paralegal, Law Offices of Wade E. Byrd, P.A., Fayetteville and **Nicole Dozier**, Senior Litigation Paralegal, NC Justice Center, Raleigh

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER!](#)

## Convention 2010: It's Wonderful in Wilmington!

### SUMMER CONFERENCE FOR PARALEGALS

DATE/LOCATION: June 19, 2010, Coastline Inn Conference Center, Wilmington  
6.0 CLE Hours (inc. 1.5 ethics)

This seminar is held in conjunction with NCAJ's Convention 2010. Summer Conference topics to be covered include *workers comp liens and third party recoveries, integrating technology into your law practice, top 10 tips for drafting pleadings, immunity with governmental agencies, social security disability hearings, and ethical issues for the paralegal*.

PROGRAM CHAIRS and LAD Division Education Co-chairs: **Daina Delgado**, NC Certified Paralegal, Law Offices of Wade E. Byrd, P.A., Fayetteville and **Nicole Dozier**, Senior Litigation Paralegal, NC Justice Center, Raleigh

Most Convention activities will take place at the Hilton Riverside in Wilmington, but some will be held at the Coastline Inn Conference Center, which is less than 2 blocks away and adjacent to the Best Western Coastline Inn. We have hotel room blocks at both the Hilton and the Best Western. See Convention information below to make your hotel reservations.

*Make plans NOW to attend Convention 2010!* Convention takes place on **June 19-23** at the **Hilton Riverside** in historic downtown Wilmington. The Hilton sits directly on the riverfront of the Cape Fear River and is steps away from scenic views, dozens of fabulous restaurants, lots of fun nightlife options, and eclectic shopping.

### CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS:

**Keynote Speaker: Bryan Stevenson, Executive Director of Equal Justice Initiative**

**Saturday's Luncheon Speaker: U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder**

**Civil & Criminal Masters in Advocacy Seminars:** The Civil program features nationally renowned speakers, while the Criminal seminar focuses on mastering practical skills.

**Summer Conference for Paralegals on Saturday, June 19:** A fun and informative full-day seminar providing the annual CPE requirement.

**Section & Division Meetings:** The primo place to find out what's happening in your Section or Division -- activities, issues, hot topics and much more!

**Social Events:** Saturday night's **Welcoming Party** will take place poolside at the Hilton. Sunday night features the annual **Kirby & Holt Reception** followed by the ever-popular **Texas Hold 'Em Tournament** and a **dance party** featuring the **party band, Evolution**, which is lead by NCAJ member, **Frank Pope**.

Rumor has it that they will give away a *FREE Fender guitar*, so you don't want to miss it! Monday evening's **Sunset Soiree** will take place on the *Royal Winner Princess* as it cruises up the Cape Fear River and the **New Lawyers Division** will host a **Haunted Pub Crawl** through the streets of downtown Wilmington. And the Convention finale will be at the **President's Gala** on Tuesday evening at the Hilton. Plans for the **Spouse/Guest program** include a **Ghost Walk of Old Wilmington** on Sunday morning and a **Hollywood Location Walk** on Monday morning.

We recommend that you go ahead and reserve your hotel accommodations. We've reserved room blocks at these locations. *Be sure to mention the NC Advocates for Justice for discounted rates!*

**Hilton Riverside** - \$159/night - 910.763.5900

*Where the action is and most Convention activities take place. Both river view and city view rooms available.*

**Best Western Coastline** - \$129/night - 910.763.2800

*Location of the Paralegal Conference, all river view rooms, less than two blocks from the Hilton.*

**Riverview Suites** - \$159/night - 910.772.9988

*One-bedroom condos, all river view, one-half block from the Hilton.*

**Shell Island Resort** - \$199/night - 910.256.8696

*In Wrightsville Beach, beautifully renovated facility, a wide revamped beach, oceanfront one-bedroom condos.*

Wrightsville Beach is a 20-minute drive from downtown Wilmington. For those who wish to rent beach cottages, we recommend these realtors:

**Intracoastal Realty** - 800.346.2463 or 910.256.4503 - [www.intracoastalrentals.com](http://www.intracoastalrentals.com)

**Bryant Real Estate** - 800.322.3764 or 910.256.3764 - [www.bryantrealestate.com](http://www.bryantrealestate.com)

Stay tuned for updates!

## 2009-10 Legal Assistants Division Officers

[Rhonda Rodenbough](#), Chair (Winston-Salem)

[Deborah Welsh](#), Vice Chair (Greenville)

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[Nicole Dozier](#), CLE Co-Chair (Raleigh)

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