

Melissa Klimpel,
ACP, Editor

Inside this issue:

New Members	3
Officers/Executive Committee, Board of Directors, & Committees	4
First Vice President's Report	5
Second Vice President's Report	6
WDALA Birthdays	6
NALA Liaison's Report	7
Calendar of Events	8
Treasurer's Report	9
Region Director's Reports	9
Region III's Drug Court Report	10
A Personal Perspective: Happiness and Professional Growth <i>By Christine K. Lillo, ACP</i>	12
A Basic – and Often Overlooked – Key to Career Success <i>By Vicki Voisin, ACP</i>	15

SUMMONS

Official Publication of

WESTERN DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS

An Association for Paralegals/Legal Assistants

www.wdala.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Shari L. Erdman, CP



Shari L. Erdman, CP

Happy 2014!

This is going to be such an exciting year for WDALA! We have a new brochure that we are now ready to implement so feel free to contact First VP, Leigh Johnson, if you would like some for distribution in your area. Schools, law firms, and local bar associations are just a few of the great places to send them to. Thank you to Leigh Johnson and Candy Schafer for the time they spent on the brochure - it looks great.

We are also getting closer to finalizing our website. Jen and Charlene have been working on this project and once they are at a point where they are comfortable, our plan is to set up a noon webinar for WDALA members to view and discuss any modifications. Once the new website is online, it should just be a matter of minor updating as needed.

Thank you to Charlene Smith and Jen Defoe for all their hard work on this project.

I am excited that beginning in February, the Williston WDALA members will start meeting for lunch every third Thursday of the month and I am really looking forward to it.

Our 2013 fundraising here at Crowley Fleck was successful and we were able to make a \$500 donation to the Christmas for Kids program and a \$500 donation to the Christmas for Veterans program. My family participated again this year with the Wal-Mart shopping for the Christmas for Kids program and we focused our attention on the needs

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued

of 23 nursing home residents. In the realm of Christmas, it is certainly humbling when you see that someone's wish list contains only a bag of socks or a pair of sweatpants. We, of course, supplied them with much more than they asked for!

If I could give you any advice for the New Year, it is this: Get involved, get educated, and get out of the box! Find something that you are truly passionate about and get involved. We have many members that are involved in various fundraising activities, volunteering for various causes, speaking at Law Day, and assisting with drug court. I applaud you all! At WDALA, we always appreciate your input whether it be topics for speakers for our

spring, fall, or luncheon seminars or simply how we can do things better. We also encourage you to be active in our organization either by volunteering to be on a committee or maybe even holding a board position.

By getting educated, I mean go to those CLEs, research a topic that interests you, or offer to work on a new project at work that involves doing something you've never done before. Once I took the CP test, I didn't care if I studied anything ever again. Luckily, that feeling passed and I am almost done with my ACP requirements. I believe each of us has a need to be challenged in one way or another.

As far as getting out of the box, take a look at your bucket list.

There are probably things on that list that you feel you could never do, but I bet you could if you set your mind to it. What's the worst that can happen if you don't succeed? At least you tried.

Thank you for being a member of WDALA and I look forward to seeing you at our seminars this year. Please feel free to contact me any time at 701-774-6813 or serdman@crowleyfleck.com if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas.

I wish you and your family a wonderful 2014!

“Opportunities to find deeper powers within ourselves come when life seems most challenging.”

Joseph Campbell

Welcome Our New and Former Members



Rosanna Smith

Sheila Funk, CLA and Noni Geer, CLA – picture and bio not available. Sheila and Noni are former WDALA members and employed with the McGee Law Firm in Minot.

Rosanna Smith. I currently work for Nehring Law Office, PLLC here in Williston. Prior to this, I worked for the Pringle & Herigstad Law Firm P.C., in Minot. I worked for David Hogue who primarily focused on corporate and commercial transactions, personnel law, health care law, telecommunications law, contract law, real estate, and public utilities. I occasionally worked with guardianships and criminal law as well. I started with Nehring Law Office in July, 2013 and I have worked as a Paralegal & Office Manager since then. I work mainly with criminal law but occasionally some family law as well. I graduated from Rasmussen College Online with a degree in Paralegal studies in June, 2013 and I'm currently enrolled online to further my education. I live with my better half/best friend, his two kids and 1 dog in Williston! In my spare time, I love to spend time with my family, go snowmobiling and travel. I'm originally from Europe & I love to go back there and visit family and friends once a year.

WESTERN DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS 2013-2014

OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

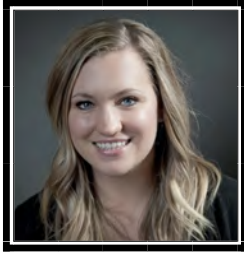
President..... Shari Erdman, CP
 First Vice President..... Leigh Johnson
 Second Vice PresidentAfton Basden, CP
 Secretary Nilla Fry
 TreasurerCorrina Pfaff
 Parliamentarian.....Laurie Guenther, ACP
 NALA Liaison Jen Defoe, ACP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Region I..... Tera Skaar, CLA and Cherlyn Biber, CLA
 Region II.....Mary Sue Knutson, CLA
 Region IIICharlene Smith, CP
 Region IV

COMMITTEES

EducationLeigh Johnson (Chair); Corrina Pfaff; Melissa Hamilton, ACP;
 Traci Hilsabeck, ACP; and Candace Schafer, CLA
 MembershipAfton Basden, CP
 Finance/BudgetCorrina Pfaff
 CLA Chairman Jen Defoe, ACP
 Nominations/Elections Melissa Hamilton, ACP
 Auditing Donna Seright; Lorelee Clay; and Afton Basden, CP
 Legal Assistant DayJen Defoe, ACP and Melissa Hamilton, ACP
 Ethics/Professional Development..... Vicki Kunz, ACP
 Summons Melissa Klimpel, ACP
 Library Melissa Hamilton, ACP
 State Bar/NDTLA Liaison Bonnie Harris
 HistorianLaurie Guenther, ACP
 Student Liaison Vicki Kunz, ACP
 Website.....Charlene Smith, CP; Jen Defoe, ACP;
 Melissa Hamilton, ACP; and Terri Atkins
 30th Anniversary Committee..... Shari Erdman, CP; Leigh Johnson; Afton Basden, CP;
 Laurie Guenther, ACP; Melissa Klimpel, ACP;
 Melissa Hamilton, ACP; and Vicki Kunz, ACP



Leigh Johnson

“In addition, I’m also eagerly anticipating WDALA’s 30th anniversary which will be celebrated simultaneously with the Fall Seminar.”

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

By Leigh Johnson

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed the past year of WDALA, and thank you for being members of this organization. I’m very much looking forward to a new year and exciting adventures in 2014.

Fall Webinar: WDALA’s Fall Webinar was held October 30, 2013 at 12:00 PM. Our guest speaker was Kay Halvorson, Esq. Kay is a Westlaw Academic Account Manager and the title of her presentation was “Westlaw in the Transactional and Litigation Setting.” Twenty members and three non-members were present.

Winter Teleseminar: WDALA’s Winter Teleseminar was held on January 16, 2014. Our guest speaker was Laura Erickson. Laura’s presentation was entitled “Introduction to Oil & Gas Operations.” Thirteen members and two non-members were present.

Spring Seminar: Our Spring Seminar is scheduled for April 25, 2014 and will be held at the Sleep Inn, Minot. So far, Judge David

Nelson will be speaking about probate matters and Assistant Attorney General Sandra Voller has agreed to speak about open records and meetings. I appreciate the topic suggestions I received at the 2013 Spring and Fall Seminars from those in attendance. Please feel free to call or email me your suggestions for topics or speakers.

Fall Seminar: The Fall Seminar does not have a set date yet, however, Jack Marcil has already offered to present about preparing for mediation so I’m looking forward to that. In addition, I’m also eagerly anticipating WDALA’s 30th anniversary which will be celebrated simultaneously with the Fall Seminar.

Thank you to everyone who was of great assistance to me throughout 2013!



Afton Basden, CP

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

By Afton Basden, CP

We have three new members since October 2013: Rosanna Smith of the Nehring Law Office in Williston, and former members Sheila Funk, CLA and Noni Geer, CLA, both of the McGee Law Firm in Minot. We currently have 46 members, and an updated roster is attached.

Change of email address for Linda Hagen: hagenlk@gmail.com.

As the WDALA Second Vice President, it is my job to encourage and recruit new members. It is great to have three new members since my last report, but we can always use more, so please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions in this regard.

If there are any questions, please feel free to drop me an e-mail message at abasden@srt.com.

Happy Birthday to the following WDALA members:

Lorelee Clay	February 5
Laurie Guenther, ACP	February 16
Debra Grenz, CLA	March 21
Tonia Fitterer	March 23
Alice Johnson, CLA	April 7
Afton Basden, CP	April 11
Charlene Smith, CP	April 13
Melissa Klimpel, ACP	April 27



Jen Defoe, ACP

“Attending a NALA convention is well worth your time and will leave you invigorated about your career and will give you a renewed respect for what we all do as paralegals.”

NALA LIAISON’S REPORT

By Jen Defoe, ACP

Is anyone else ready for SUMMER?? I know, it is only January 24 as I write this ... which is North Dakota’s winter ... but it has just been too cold of a winter. I am ready for the sun. I hope you all have stayed warm throughout, and next time I write, it will be SPRING!

The NALA Campus LIVE! Spring Program is available February 3 – May 16, 2014. There are 67 classes to choose from. Details about the various courses are available at www.nala.org/spring2014schedule.aspx. Please remember to use your NALA gift certificates if you have received any. Using them for one of the 67 courses offered is an excellent idea.

The January *Facts and Findings* should be released shortly. This is the annual “Career Chronicle” issue, which offers a wealth of information from paralegals and professionals in various areas of expertise. This issue focuses on the various changes and challenges paralegals have faced in their careers and how they have used changing times and personal choices to their advantage. In addition to the careers profiled in this issue, there is an article about the Washington Limited License Legal

Technician program that begins this year, an article about mediation, and one about finding happiness in the workplace. Sounds like a great read for all professionals!

The NALA 39th Annual Meeting and Convention will be July 23-25, 2014 in Charleston, South Carolina. Attending a NALA convention is well worth your time and will leave you invigorated about your career and will give you a renewed respect for what we all do as paralegals. No matter which educational program you choose, you WILL leave with good information that I guarantee will be helpful somewhere, somehow! It is a great opportunity to meet new people and share ideas. More information about the convention will be contained in the January issue of *Facts and Findings* and available soon on the website.

Founders and Presidents award nominations are due April 15, 2014. Nomination forms may be obtained through NALA headquarters or the website: www.nala.org.

For your information, Certified Paralegal notification of updates to CLE hours will no longer be provided

NALA LIAISON’S REPORT continued

via first class mail - the information will be emailed to the paralegal.

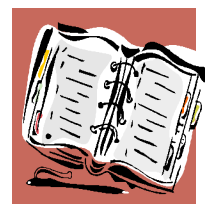
Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions concerning NALA or the products and services they offer.

Information for the CLA/CP testing and registration dates is listed below. Filing deadline dates are strictly enforced.

Examination Date	Application Filing Deadline**	Late Application Filing Deadline (With \$25 late filing fee)
2014/2015	2014	
May 1-31	April 1, 2014	April 10, 2014
September 1-30	August 1, 2014	August 10, 2014
January 1-31	December 1, 2014	December 10, 2014

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 1, 2014 Application Filing Deadline for May CLA/CP Exam Window
- April 18, 2014 Deadline to submit *Summons* articles
- April 25, 2014 WDALA’s Spring Seminar, Sleep Inn, Minot
- May 1-31, 2014 CLA/CP Exam Testing Window
- July 23-25, 2014 NALA Convention, Charleston, SC
- August 1, 2014 Application Filing Deadline for September CLA/CP Exam Window
- September 1-30, 2014 CLA/CP Exam Testing Window
- December 1, 2014 Application Filing Deadline for January CLA/CP Exam Window
- January 1-31, 2015 CLA/CP Exam Testing Window





Corrina Pfaff

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Corrina Pfaff

The WDALA checkbook balance is \$13,731.89 as of January 21, 2014. Thanks to everyone for all of their help with any questions I have. A special thanks to Carmen for being such an organized person, sure made the transition easy.



**Mary Sue Knutson,
CLA**

REGION II REPORT

By Mary Sue Knutson, CLA

Region II continues to meet on a monthly basis.

We took on a new project in December and sponsored a family from Community Action for Christmas. We sponsored a mother and her four children. We asked for donations from our members to purchase Christmas gifts. Several of our co-workers and bosses who are not members of our organization contributed to the cause and we were able to buy a majority of the items on the children's wish lists, including gifts for the mom. We also furnished them with a tree and decorations. It was a fun project and very rewarding.



Charlene Smith, CP

REGION III REPORT

By Charlene Smith, CP

Region III continues to have monthly luncheons at A&B Pizza South every second Tuesday. I would like to encourage everyone to attend.

Our Christmas community outreach project with Drug Court was a huge success. The participants were very thankful for our help during the holidays and WDALA members were very generous with both time and money. Candy made some great contacts with the Justices of the Supreme Court for future Drug Court outreach projects. Great job everyone!



Laurie Guenther,
ACP

“Besides financial assistance, Region III members were so generous with their time to make this event a success.”

REGION III’S DRUG COURT REPORT

By Laurie Guenther, ACP

I am happy (and proud) to report that Region III opened their hearts generously this holiday season in support of the Bismarck-Mandan Adult Drug Court program. Region III members contributed a total of \$600. The majority of the funds were used to purchase Christmas gifts for three participants in the drug court program, one spouse, and four children.

WDALA presented these gifts in December. Three of the children were so excited they opened their gifts right then and there. We were thrilled to see the looks of excitement on their faces when they got “just what I wanted” as one little girl expressed. Without prompting or prodding from Mom, all three children gave us each a hug and a big Thank You. We presented gifts to another humble participant who has no family support in the area. We hope the gift of community support we offered was as helpful to him as the material gifts. Lastly, we offered gifts to a Mom who had no presents under her tree. She was beaming from ear to ear knowing she could surprise her daughter with something under the tree after all. It was a very rewarding experience.

We also raised enough money allowing us to make a cash contribution to Drug Court of just over \$200! The money will be put towards the purchase of weekly incentives. (Each week

a name is drawn of those appearing in Court and the lucky winner gets the incentive which might be a movie ticket, bowling ticket, gas card, etc.) The program is always in need of support for the weekly incentives and really appreciate our help in that regard.

Drug Court graciously invited us to attend the annual Drug Court Birthday Party on Friday, January 3, 2014 at the Burleigh County Courthouse. At that time, Region III presented Drug Court with our financial contribution towards the weekly incentive program.

Besides financial assistance, Region III members were so generous with their time to make this event a success. Various members shopped for gifts, helped at our wrapping/Christmas party, and/or distributed the gifts. But wait....there’s more. We also have bakers amongst us. Several members baked Christmas goodies which we boxed up and delivered to Drug Court.

I thank Region III for all their efforts and support for this community service project. WDALA is such a great example of teamwork. Our members all have different strengths and abilities. The best of those assets come out during these events with everyone chipping in. Kudos to you all.

REGION III'S DRUG COURT REPORT continued

Thank you to the following Region III members for helping make our 2013 community service project a huge success:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Carol Solberg, CLA | Cheryl Tryhus, CP |
| Laurie Guenther, ACP | Dianne Taix, ACP |
| Bonnie Harris | Melissa Hamilton, ACP |
| Linda Hagen, CLA | Vicki Kunz, ACP |
| Candace Schafer, CLA | Corrina Pfaff |
| Charlene Smith, CP | Melissa Klimpel, ACP |
| Char Jacober, ACP | Alice Johnson, CLA |
| Jen Defoe, ACP | |



Region III delivering Christmas gifts: Charlene Smith, CP; Melissa Hamilton, ACP; Melissa Klimpel, ACP; Carol Solberg, CLA; Laurie Guenther, ACP; and Bonnie Harris.

dear drug court,
 thank you for the gifts I received
 from you.
 I love them a lot. have a nice
 day.

Sincerely,
 milla



Region III Christmas Party: Candy Schafer, CLA; Corrina Pfaff; Carol Solberg, CLA; Vicki Kunz, ACP; Charlene Smith, CP; Melissa Hamilton, ACP; Laurie Guenther, ACP; and Melissa Klimpel, ACP.



Region III Christmas Party: Candy Schafer, CLA; Carol Solberg, CLA; MacKenzie Hamilton; Charlene Smith, CP; Katelynne Hamilton; Corrina Pfaff; and Laurie Guenther, ACP.

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE: HAPPINESS AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

By Christine K. Lillo, ACP

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Happiness is a choice. Some people are naturally happy, and some people need to remember to be happy. I need to remember. According to psychologists studying positive psychology, happiness is 50 percent your pre-programmed happiness level, 40 percent the steps you take to be happy, and 10 percent what you have. One day I realized, I was stuck in neutral and needed to change my view of the world.

I have a great job in the paralegal profession, but was feeling stuck, limited by my prospects for advancing my career and improving certain aspects of my life. Something needed to change. One day I realized, I was stuck in neutral and needed to change my view of the world.

This revelation came after a trip to the hair salon. My hair designer had been after me for years to take advantage of my naturally wavy hair. It only took 30 years of convincing, but I fi-

nally gave in. Much to my surprise, I discovered I was much happier not fighting the inevitable.

At about the same time, I read Gretchen Rubin's book, *The Happiness Project*. One of Ms. Rubin's happiness resolutions was to "Be Gretchen." I started to wonder, what would happen if I found other ways to "Be Chris." Could I be a happier person, too? My math is probably off, but I figured I had a 40 percent chance of improving my outlook.

If I were a happier person, could I also be a happier paralegal? I wanted to find out. Do not get me wrong, I love being a paralegal. At some point it stopped being a career and became a job. I knew I did not want to pursue a different area of law, but at the same time, I knew I had lost some of the enthusiasm I once had.

The next choice I made was to stop lugging home that heavy briefcase filled with another day's worth of pro-

jects. I had the best of intentions, but was too exhausted to do any of it. Instead of losing sleep and feeling guilty, I simply stopped bringing the briefcase home. The trade-off was being more focused at work, balanced with an occasional weekend project for good measure. Not only did I create more balance, but also I discovered that cutting out guilt cleared the way for more happiness.

These simple changes led to an internal desire to start my own happiness project and with it came a desire to read everything possible. In *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor makes an observation about performance that really stuck: “our brains are literally hardwired to perform at their best not when they are negative or even neutral, but when they are positive.” Studies show that happy people function better are more open to possibilities and make better leaders.

Happiness is personal

The first thing one must recognize is that happiness is uniquely personal. What makes me happy, may not make you happy, and vice versa. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi states in the introduction to *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*: “a joyful life is an individual creation that cannot be copied from a recipe” Not having a procedure to follow disappointed my inner paralegal. In true paralegal fashion, though, I accepted the challenge.

Happiness is looking for the positives

I am not a psychologist and do not pretend to know anything about happiness, except I think I recognize it when I feel it. Happiness does not mean living in a state of total euphoria. It is more about living in the moment, having a good attitude, looking for the positives, finding “the zone,” and being grateful.

What I like about pursuing happiness is the potential for success that comes with it. Consider this: Shawn Achor found that “[w]aiting to be happy limits our brain’s potential for success, whereas cultivating positive brains makes us more motivated, efficient, resilient, creative, and productive. This is exactly what I needed: more positivity.

If you decide happiness is a goal worth pursuing, you might start with the following:

- Be authentic. Do what interests you, not what you think should be of interest to you.
- Be willing. Be willing to work at changing. Be willing to keep practicing and be willing to find joy in day-to-day life. Like losing weight, there is no fast track to happiness. Above all, be willing to cut yourself a little slack.

As Michael J. Fox said, “Perfection is God’s business.”

- Start a happiness journal. Start by listing everything you are grateful for. I was surprised that my gratitude list was longer than expected. I re-discovered that I am grateful for my career as a paralegal. The amazing opportunities afforded me by NALA and my local association help brighten my professional reality.
- Look for positives. List three positives each night in your happiness journal. Eventually, I started noticing the positives without having to reflect on them at the end of the day. Why focus on problems, when you can focus on possibilities.
- Smile. Smiling is contagious. Unfortunately, so is negativity. Be the person in

the office who dispenses positivity, rather than squelches it.

These exercises helped me realize something about my job, I mean, career. It encompasses more than just the paralegal position at the firm in which I work. It includes everything I hope to contribute to the profession. Having goals and aspirations are important on my path towards true happiness. It is the challenge of pursuing my goals that makes them so appealing and, hopefully, fulfilling.

It might take some time to discover what truly makes you happy. The above suggestions barely scratch the surface. You may find something else that works for you.

I continue to work on my happiness project and expect it to be a life-long journey. Perhaps I’ll find some success along the way, but if not, I’ve decided that’s okay, too. I am happier working

on my happiness goals and that’s all that truly matters. As Gretchen Rubin observed, “Happy people make better friends, colleagues, and citizens. I want[ed] to be one of those persons.”

Christine K. Lillo, ACP, is a NALA member and a Past President of the South Dakota Paralegal Association. She has been a paralegal for over 20 years working primarily in the areas of Probate & Estate Planning and Business Organizations. She graduated with honors from Kilian Community College with an AAS Degree in Legal Assistant Studies. She is also a graduate of NALA’s LEAP Class of 2011 and currently serves as a member of the NALA Certifying Board. Chris is paralegal at Woods, Fuller, Shultz & Smith, P.C. in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Chris.Lillo@woodsfuller.com



Vicki Voisin, ACP

*“The key to success, both in your career and in your life, is to know what **your** challenges are and then work with them.”*

A BASIC – AND OFTEN OVERLOOKED – KEY TO CAREER SUCCESS

By Vicki Voisin, ACP

Paralegals talk about a lot of things related to career success: from networking to goal setting to education and, of course, ethics.

And yet one of the most often overlooked keys is *knowing yourself!*

Yes, that’s it – just know yourself. Sound simple? Many paralegals believe that once they have their education and a job, they will instantly change into a super productive, super successful paralegal. Reality is far different.

Reality is that they are still that same individual who:

- struggles with getting their work done or whose work is so demanding they feel overwhelmed before they start;
- feels so tired at certain times of

the day that their work puts them to sleep;

- never feels appreciated or valued, even though they do everything in their power to make everyone else happy and to meet their needs.

Humans are not perfect. Everyone has challenges. The key to success, both in your career and in your life, is to know what *your* challenges are and then work with them. For example:

- If you **procrastinate**, then you need to adopt strategies to get yourself started on a project: use a timer; start anywhere in the project; be sure you have the information you need; gather all the supplies you will need; break the project into chunks and tackle one part at a time,

etc.

- **If you are not as productive as you should be**, decide when you have your highest energy and do your best work. If you are at your best in the morning, then that is when you want to focus your most difficult task. If you're at your best in the afternoon, do your most difficult tasks then. Save easy tasks (returning telephone calls, answering email) for the time of day when your energy is at a lower level;
- **If you are a people-pleaser who wants everyone to get along and be happy**, decide at what point making everyone around you happy intrudes on your career aspirations and your emotional well-being.

You may have different challenges. Ask yourself what they are. Once you determine your challenges, take the necessary steps to overcome them.

Doesn't this sound so simple and so basic? The reality is that many of us let our challenges stop us from career success.

Remember: This is *your* career and *your* life. Recognize your dreams and the challenges that keep them from coming true. Figure out how you can conquer those challenges and then design your career for optimal success.

How will you personalize, customize and optimize your career?

Vicki Voisin, "The Paralegal Mentor", delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by setting goals

and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, organizational tips, ethics issues, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She is the co-author of *The Professional Paralegal: A Guide to Finding a Job and Career Success*. Vicki publishes *Paralegal Strategies*, a weekly e-newsletter for paralegals, and hosts *The Paralegal Voice*, a monthly podcast produced by Legal Talk Network. More information is available at www.paralegalmentor.com where subscribers receive Vicki's 151 Tips for Your Career Success.