

RIVER CITY REVIEW

Association of Legal Administrators

Sacramento Valley Chapter Newsletter

Summer 2006

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In This Issue

| | |
|---|-----------|
| President's Message | 1 |
| Letter From Your Editor | 2 |
| New Luncheon Location | 5 |
| Member Update | 6 |
| Highlights From The 35th Annual Educational Conference | 8 |
| Getting to Know Your 2006/2007 Board of Directors | 12 |
| Board Minutes Summary | 16 |
| Luncheon Highlights | 19 |
| Upcoming Luncheons | 21 |
| Survey Says . . . | 23 |
| Calendar Highlights | 27 |

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Tami Aschenbrenner

Greetings Sacramento Valley Chapter members! I am pleased to have started my term as your Chapter's President.

I began on the Board as membership chairman in 2004-2005 with the goal to increase Chapter membership. During my 2005-2006 tenure with the Board, I acted as President Elect and Managing Partners Dinner Chair. For that event the Board was able to secure sponsorships of many long-time loyal vendors. For those of you that missed the Managing Partners Dinner, the March 2007 event promises to be another unique and memorable experience.

Community Challenge Weekend in October is our chance to give something back to the Sacramento community. The Board is working at present to locate another project and to work in tandem with another organization such as the California Highway Patrol.

The Chapter's luncheon meetings continue to be an excellent source to learn of new developments in labor law, technology, insurance and law firm management. I would encourage everyone in membership to attend at least one luncheon meeting, if not more, this year.

My vision for the Board this year is to market the Chapter and establish a significant presence in the Sacramento legal community. My secondary goals are to bring proposals to the Board to increase member incentives to serve on the Board and to organize a joint member/vendor golf event or other vendor appreciation activity.

This promises to be a very successful year. Be sure to check the Chapter's website, newsletter notifications and emails for upcoming events.

**Association of Legal Administrators
Sacramento Valley Chapter
2006 / 2007 Board of Directors**

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Letter from Your Editor Jennifer Price

The season has finally changed from Winter to Spring and now Summer; and so there have been changes in ALA, as well. I take over this newsletter from Trish Hughes Kreis, who has given so much of her time and dedication to producing a terrific newsletter, issue after issue for four years. I hope to continue with the quality she has maintained, though hers are hard shoes to fill. Luckily for us all, she serves on the Board of Directors this year as Secretary, and especially lucky for me when I am in panic mode before a deadline!

I think I speak for all the SVALA members when I say "Thank You!" to the outgoing 2005 / 2006 Board of Directors, who have served with dedication and given so much of their time and energy to keeping our Chapter active and interesting! We all appreciate (but probably don't fully realize) how much effort goes in to the monthly luncheons, annual Managing Partner Dinner and Community Challenge Weekend (for which we won FIRST PLACE this year!). Again, many thanks to the Board!

On the subject of change, you may have heard that Andiamo is closing its doors and so our monthly luncheons will now be held at *Sofia* on 11th & H Streets. Our "survey team" had a great evening there and has told us the food is wonderful! So we look forward to the new location and the many informative and fun luncheons ahead!

This issue of *River City Review* includes highlights from the National Conference in Montreal; our First Place award for the Community Challenge Weekend; and an article by our Speaker at the April luncheon, Merilee Marsh, a bi-coastal marketing consultant with tips for turning Associates into Rainmakers!

I hope this issue of *River City Review* finds you enjoying your summer and ready for the changes ahead!

Association of Legal Administrators Mission Statement

The Association of Legal Administrators' mission is to:

- 1) improve the quality of management in legal services organizations;
- 2) promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and all members of the management team; and
- 3) represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large.

River City Review Article Submission Deadlines

Don't be afraid to submit articles, quotes, calendar items or advertisements! Any articles, advertising or other requests to be included in our quarterly Newsletter must be provided to the newsletter chair no later than:

Fall 2006

August 1, 2006

All submissions must be provided via e-mail or on a 3.5" diskette in the following formats: for text, any version of Microsoft Word or pdf format; for photos or other graphical artwork, jpeg format or camera-ready quality originals in black and white. Any questions? Please feel free to contact the newsletter chair:

Jennifer Price
(916) 446-6752
jprice@nmgovlaw.com

The Editor thanks you for your involvement!!



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~NEW LUNCHEON LOCATION~

*Beginning on June 20, 2006
SVALA's Monthly Luncheons
will be held at...*

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 35TH ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE MONTREAL, QUEBEC

***By Tami Aschenbrenner
President, SVALA***

The Montreal conference was my first experience attending a National conference since joining ALA in 2001. Attendees had the good fortune of mainly warm and sunny weather. There were numerous “touristy” places to visit – Old Montreal, the underground mall, and breathtaking cathedrals.

My first duty as the Chapter’s representative was to attend the Regional Conference meeting. I learned more of leadership succession and the successes and challenges of other Chapters in the region.

In addition to the Regional Conference meeting, there was a Chapter Awards ceremony where the Sacramento Valley Chapter was honored with first place in Community Service for the Extreme Landscape Makeover of Rio Linda Junior High School.

The seminars I found most useful were those related to internet technology, legal ethics and leadership. The following are some excerpts from those seminars:

Blogs, The Hot New Technology for Communication and Information

LawFirmBlogging.com asks: “What advice would you give a firm that is toying with the notion of starting a legal blog?”

“Go for it. If you fail or get tired of it, then chances are that no one will have noticed anyhow . . .

If it turns out and you love it, then you’re honing your writing skills, your public persona, your VOICE. Just wait a bit before you link from your firm Web site.”

- Burkey Belser in “Market Your Law Firm,” LawFirmBlogging.com, 12/16/05

Anticipating Technology Trends for 2006 and Beyond

Products lawyers should consider:

1. CaseMap5 (if you are a litigator)
2. Microsoft Office 2003
3. Abode Acrobat 7
4. Tablet PC (or notebook) with WiFi and OneNote.
5. FeedDemon or news aggregator of choice.

- Dennis Kennedy, 2006.

Legal Ethics: What Every Administrator and Support Staff Needs to Know

The presenter, Anthony Davis, Esq., had one saying I found quite useful, “Your job is to create the systems to enforce the policies.” For instance, if an attorney wants to bill to a file but the conflicts check hasn’t been performed, a file number will not be issued until the proper procedures have been followed.

Law Firm Leadership: “Walking the Talk” Observations From One Who Has Spent Time On (and Off) The Path

“Strong leaders surround themselves with strong people.”

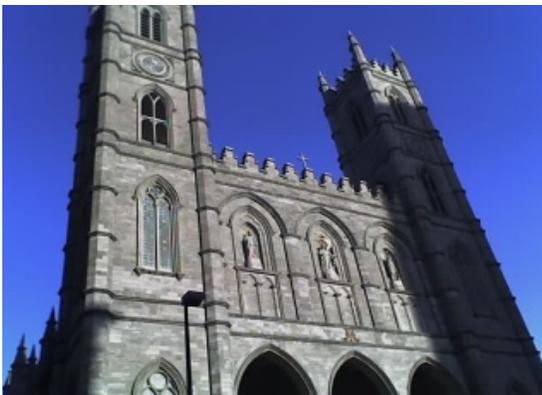
- F. Daniel Balmert, Esq., 2006

“Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”

- John Wooden, Former UCLA Basketball Coach

As an aside, my only advice to those signing up for National Conference, don’t delay because you will miss out on some events that sell out, such as the Grand Finale.

I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend this conference. I would encourage all members to attend either the Regional or National conferences, you are sure to come away with a memorable experience.



Cathedral in Montreal



Old Montreal



SVALA member Shauna Manner
At 2006 Educational Conference in Montreal

Vendor Advertising Policy

The *River City Review* accepts advertising from vendors offering products and services to the legal community. Advertising space is available on our web page! Please make note of the following advertising rates:

| Size | Rates | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Per Issue | 4 Issue Rate | Including Website |
| Full Page | \$125.00 | \$475.00 (\$25 savings) | \$1,475 |
| Half Page | \$ 75.00 | \$275.00 (\$25.00 savings) | \$1,275 |
| One Third/One Quarter Page | \$ 50.00 | \$175.00 (\$25 savings) | \$1,175 |
| Business Card | \$ 25.00 | \$ 85.00 (\$15 savings) | \$1,085 |

Camera-ready artwork for all advertising must be provided to a Newsletter Co-chair prior to Newsletter submission deadlines. The Sacramento Valley Chapter of the ALA reserves the right to accept or reject any advertisement submitted at their discretion.

Cheerfulness and contentment are great beautifiers and are famous preservers of youthful looks.
— Charles Dickens

Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble.
— Frank Tyger

If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to it.
— Jonathan Winters



SVALA Extreme Landscape Makeover Takes Home First Prize!

ALA National bestowed First Place honors for Community Service on the Sacramento Valley chapter this year at the annual awards ceremonies held in conjunction with the annual conference in Montreal. This year's Community Challenge Weekend Extreme Landscape Makeover project for Rio Linda Junior High School won the judges' high praise.

This was the first time our chapter has been recognized for its work in community service and caps a long history of outstanding accomplishments in our community. Just previous to the 2005 project for Rio Linda, Sacramento Valley ALA dedicated two years to landscape and building improvement projects for the Sacramento Children's Home.

This year's award will hang in a place of honor at Rio Linda Junior High School as inspiration for what a community working together can accomplish!

Congratulations to everyone involved, including Karen Rothstein from Communities in Schools, Principal Roxanne Mitchell and the teachers, staff, students, and parents of RLJHS. Thanks to our law firm sponsors and our vendor partners. Linda Brughelli, 2005 CCW Chair credits Julie Juarez, co-Chair, and Kathy Zelnik, her administrative assistant and volunteer on CCW, as key to the successful outcome of the project. Moreover, what made it so successful is that it was truly a community effort and everyone's role was vital to the outcome.

See the full text of the winning entry at

<http://www.alanet.org/members/chapters/awards/2006/CommunityService.pdf>

Thanks to our Vendors . . .

Special thanks to our vendors for their professional services and advertising support. We couldn't do it without you!

Getting to Know Your 2006 / 2007 Board of Directors...



Tami Aschenbrenner **President**

Law Firm: Banks & Watson
Last Book Read: *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown
Favorite Restaurant: Tamaya Restaurant, Midtown Sacramento
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Gardening, sports, activities, painting
(oil and acrylic landscapes and abstracts)
Phrase/Person that Inspires Me: “Captain, I’m giving it all I’ve got”,
Scotty, from the original Star Trek series
Favorite Thing About ALA: Camaraderie (and being President of the Chapter!)



Camilla Arnds **President-Elect**

Law Firm: Schuering Zimmerman Scully & Doyle, LLP
Last Book Read: *Lake House*, James Patterson
Favorite Restaurant: Fat’s Bistro in Roseville, yummy!
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Free time, what’s that?! Taking Liz and Gypsy (the dog) to the
park, gardening (actually most people call it weeding!), reading
the kind of book that you hate to put down, and trying new
places to eat.
Phrase/Person that Inspires Me: “Not to try is to fail”
Favorite Thing About ALA: Networking and the wonderful, friendly people.



Trish Hughes Kreis **Secretary**

Law Firm: Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld, LLP
Last Book Read: *Autobiography of a Fat Bride*, Laurie Nataro
Favorite Restaurant: Las Palmas, Rancho Cordova
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Spending time with my family, doing Sudoku puzzles, writing,
collecting rejection letters from publishers.
Phrase / Person that Inspires Me: “You must do the things you think you cannot do”,
Eleanor Roosevelt
Favorite Thing About ALA: Being able to rely on the experience of others when needed.



Ken Sockolov
Treasurer

Law Firm: Boutin Dentino Gibson Di Giusto Hodell, Inc.
Last Book Read: *Of Human Bondage*, W. Somerset Maugham
Favorite Restaurant: Bodega Aioli, Midtown Sacramento
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Free time? Reading, watching football
Phrase / Person that Inspires Me: "Sometimes it is not enough that we do our best; sometimes, we have to do what's required." *Winston Churchill*
Favorite Thing About ALA: Learning opportunities, since I'm new to the industry.



Shauna Manner, CLM
Membership

Law Firm: Resources Law Group, LLP
Last Book Read: *The Year of Magical Thinking*, Joan Didion
Favorite Restaurant: Tuco's
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Free time?
Phrase / Person That Inspires Me: My supervisor at Resources Law Group
Favorite Thing About ALA: Access to resources and answers to questions related to law firm management issues.



Jessica Miller
Programs & Education

Law Firm: Sweeney & Greene, LLP
Last Book Read: *Gone*, Jonathan Kellerman
Favorite Restaurant: The Broiler, Downtown Sac
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Reading voraciously, blogging, tending to my garden, hanging with friends and family, and watching kick-butt action flicks in the theater!
Phrase / Person That Inspires Me: My maternal grandmother. She figured you won't drown if you're too busy swimming. I try to keep her attitude in mind whenever life throws me a curve ball.
Favorite Thing About ALA: Amazing resources! I love the fact that you can send an email or make a quick phone call and have large amounts of information at your fingertips.

Getting to Know Your 2006 / 2007 Board of Directors... (cont'd)



Jennifer Price **Newsletter**

Law Firm: Nielsen, Merksamer, Parrinello, Mueller & Naylor, LLP
Last Book Read: *Kings, Queens, Bones & Bastards, Who's Who in the English Monarchy*, David Hilliam
Favorite Restaurant: Sweetwater, East Sac
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Cooking, Gardening, Movies, Musical Theatre, watching tennis
Phrase / Person That Inspires Me: "Take care of the luxuries and the necessities will take care of themselves", *Dorothy Parker*
Favorite Thing About ALA: The wealth of knowledge so easily accessible among the members.



Linda Magyar **Director-at-Large**

Law Firm: Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, LLP
Last Book Read: *Wicked*
Favorite Restaurant: Bouchons
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Wine tasting
Phrase / Person That Inspires Me: "Start each day with a clean slate, a clear and open mind and remember to float", *Jessel Miller*
Favorite Thing About ALA: The people.



Joelle Stone **Past-President**

Law Firm: Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld, LLP
Last Book Read: Not last, but Best... *I Love Everybody (and Other Atrocious Lies)*, Laurie Notaro
Favorite Restaurant: My Grill (as in backyard with someone else cooking)
In My Free Time, I Enjoy: Reading, Glass Beach in Ft. Bragg
Phrase / Person That Inspires Me: "Get to Work! You aren't being paid to believe in the power of your dreams."
Favorite Thing About ALA: Meeting new friends.

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BOARD MINUTES SUMMARY

March 2006

Ken Sockolov, the incoming Treasurer, distributed the financial report and it was reviewed. Ken noted the balance sheet shows the investment is growing due to increased interest rates. The past year showed revenue up and expenses down. Joelle mentioned the Board is required to have a double check system. The Murphy Austin Adams Schoenfeld, LLP Controller, Sarah, volunteered to be the second check. Ken will contact Sarah to coordinate the procedure.

Richard, Membership Chair, reported that three people have been sent member packets. Richard reported there are currently 67 members. There was a short discussion regarding changing the renewal period and/or the member dues but that was tabled to later in the meeting.

Lynn, Program & Education Chair, reported that the April luncheon speaker has changed to Merilee Marsh. The May luncheon will be the national conference review. So far, only five members will be attending the national conference. Tami and Shauna committed to speak in May since they are two of the five going. Lynn reported that Anderson Staffing would like to again sponsor a lunch.

Trish Hughes-Kreis distributed the Annual Newsletter Report. There was a profit this year of \$1,585 due to the advertising invoices getting sent out and payment received. There is an outstanding amount of \$825 for past due invoices. Trish distributed a list of current vendors and she will send that list to Karen Martin who will be taking over the newsletter advertising. Trish also distributed the current ad rates for the Board to review and possibly consider an increase.

Liz Sabel reported we collected \$7,800 for the survey this year. She brought the original master survey with her and will turn it over to Linda Magyar, the new Director-at-Large, in case requests still come in for it. All other copies were sold. Linda briefly discussed that she was looking into changing the survey this year and suggested it be created so people could do it online.

Many thanks were given to Tami for a successful Managing Partners Dinner. Tami distributed the predicted vs. actual budget. There was good feedback from the membership regarding the quality of the location and speaker. Some reported a problem with the sound system at Crocker. Also, it was suggested the firm names be on name tags next year.

Tami Aschenbrenner, incoming President presided over the rest of the Board meeting. Tami said her focus or theme this year will be "marketing" the SVALA. She would like to promote the organization more aggressively. Tami would also like the Board to become more active in regional events. Linda said she and Julie would like to try again with the Sac County Bar. She has written articles for the Bar publications and would like to see them printed.

There was discussion about changing the advertising rates. The last change was in 2001. Tami suggested that each Board member approach at least one vendor to drum up more advertising. Tami will also send an email to all members to recruit advertisers for the website and the newsletter. Any potential advertisers should be given to Karen.

BOARD MINUTES SUMMARY (continued)

March 2006

Linda Magyar, the incoming Director-at-Large, suggested considering a secondary survey for benefits. Linda also suggested the survey be created so people could participate online. Shauna Manner, the incoming Membership Chair, introduced the topics of changing the annual renewal time and increasing the rates. It was decided to keep the renewal period the same but raise the dues to \$75 per year. Brenda Beltran, the incoming CCW Chair, said she would like to do something with Loaves & Fishes and will have more ideas at a future Board meeting. Julie, the incoming MP Dinner Chair, has a concern about finding a speaker. The Board agreed to help find a speaker. Tami suggested advertising in Sacramento Lawyer or Sacramento Magazine to generate more interest and attendance.

There was discussion about the group emails and suggested keeping notes of topics so as to discuss at the next board meeting instead of so many emails going around.

April 2006

Tami Aschenbrenner, President, provided a copy of the chapter meetings guidelines for the Board to review. Tami also distributed copies of the membership goals for each chapter as set by National. The SVALA goal for 2006 is five new members. Tami also printed and distributed sections of chapter membership guide for PR, marketing, etc. Tami distributed copies of the current bylaws and said she would like the Board to review them and present to the board any proposed changes.

Tami distributed her SVALA Chapter Goals and Deadlines. Tami asked if there was interest in a vendor/member golf event. The Board thought it would be worthwhile to send an inquiry to the whole chapter to see if there was interest. Tami will send out an email to the entire chapter.

Ken Sockolov, Treasurer, distributed the financial report. Nothing has been audited or reconciled yet. Ken has changed the bookkeeping system to Quickbooks. Ken will send the monthly update to Trish but first the Board needs to purchase Quickbooks for Trish's computer.

Jessica Miller, Program & Education Chair reported on the April lunch. The May luncheon will be the Montreal update with the speakers being those having attended the conference. Jessica has Marshall Fletcher of All State Legal scheduled for June who will speak on "seeing the law firm through the client's eyes." Jessica will also change the June luncheon to Tuesday, June 20 instead of the regularly scheduled date of Wednesday June 21 due to the Golden Gate chapter event which would possibly affect our attendance. Jessica reported that Smile wants to sponsor a lunch. Since Andiamo's is closing at the end of May, Jessica is trying to find a new locale for our luncheons.

Jennifer Price, Newsletter Chair, reported that she and Trish met to discuss transition of the newsletter. Trish sent the electronic files to Jennifer for her use. Jennifer encouraged the Board to submit articles. Potential advertisers were discussed. Jennifer will keep all invoices on a separate spreadsheet. It was noted that in the past, advertisements would not be run without prepayment.

BOARD MINUTES SUMMARY (continued)

April 2006

Linda Magyar, Director-at-Large reported that we appear to make money now on the survey in addition to providing a service. Linda would like to track sales of the survey, the expenses and resulting profit.

Linda is reviewing the survey to get more information about why people didn't participate in last year's survey. The Board decided to keep timing of the survey the same. Linda would like to place an ad in Sacramento Lawyer to promote participation and then another one to promote sales.

Brenda Beltran, Community Challenge Weekend Chair, is trying to reach the representative of Loaves & Fishes so we can work with them for our CCW project. Brenda has a co-worker who has connection with the media department of the Kings. Brenda also plans to ask a friend in the media business for help with press releases, local media coverage, etc. The Board agreed Loaves & Fishes would be a good idea. Also, it was suggested to team up with another organization as we have in the past.

Tami reminded everyone the National Conference was coming up May 1 – 4, 2006. Trish reported that Joelle told her she will contact a design firm to create a pin using the “winning” design from last year's contest.

Tami drafted Chapter Email Guidelines and distributed for the Board to review. The Board discussed having an “opt out” policy. Larger chapters do have that option but it is more for messages coming from the Chapter and not from individual members. The County Bar has the “opt out” option as well. The Board agreed there was a benefit to sharing information with other members and it is impossible to manage individual email lists. Someone mentioned the Bar organization also has “opt in” option which we might consider. The Board thought it would be a good idea to add an “opt in” question to the renewal form in the next renewal period. The Board also discussed how those that did not “opt in” would get notices of luncheons, etc. Jessica offered to mail those people a luncheon flyer.

Tami distributed the guidelines for the President's Awards of Excellence. Her goal is for our chapter to submit our Chapter for consideration. Tami requested a reimbursement to her firm of \$1,000 for her attendance at the National Convention. The Board approved this request. Tami suggested the Board consider a Board member retreat this year. To be discussed at next month's meeting. Tami will send an email query the Chapter membership to see if there is interest in a vendor/member golf event.

Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.
— George Bernard Shaw

Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it.
— Lou Holtz

et LUNCHEON HIGHLIGHTS et

The following article was written by Merilee Marsh, our speaker at the April 19th SVALA Luncheon. The topic of the luncheon was How to Help Associates Become Rainmakers.

MARKETING TIPS FOR RAINMAKERS

by

Merilee Marsh, Marketing Consultant ~ Professional Speaker

The legal landscape changed when the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the rule that attorneys could not solicit business through advertising [*Bates v. State Bar of Arizona*, 433 U.S. 350 (1977)]. To remain competitive, it has become increasingly important for law firms to recognize and seize business development opportunities.

A law firm's associates can help increase the firm revenue through selected action steps that can lead to rainmaking. The following marketing tips are suggestions for ways that administrators and attorneys can help with rainmaking activities.

BASICS: POSITIONING AND BRANDING

- ☪ Consider the position the firm holds in the mind of the clients and the community.
- ☪ Describe the differences among each attorney and each practice area within the law firm.
- ☪ Take into account how your law firm differs from the competition.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- ☪ Identify the market(s) for your legal service(s). Create a list of targeted prospects.
- ☪ Formulate and implement a marketing program to methodically pursue your potential clients.
- ☪ Create and maintain a database that allows you to pull up by obvious categories (name, title, company, contact information, industry, dates of contact) and not-so-obvious categories (e.g., client's preferences and celebratory occasions).
- ☪ Develop a list of individuals (under 125 persons) who may help as a client, through referrals, or with sound advice.
- ☪ Start or expand a referral system of lead sources. Then build and nurture relationships with attorneys and other colleagues who refer business to you and reciprocate—when appropriate—with referrals.
- ☪ Develop a list of qualifying questions for contacting prospects.
- ☪ Survey your clients to uncover their unmet needs.
- ☪ Develop a follow-up process and calendar for maintaining contact with prospects, clients, and colleagues.
- ☪ Develop a file of sample marketing letters and a list of references.

COMPETITION

- ☪ Research your competition (services offered, business development strategies, clients, company philosophy, rates ...).
- ☪ Differentiate yourself from the competition in every aspect of your legal service(s).

MARKETING TIPS FOR RAINMAKERS (continued)

COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- ☪ Get involved in a non-profit with a mission that interests you or join a service club and contribute your time and expertise.
- ☪ Join a prospect's professional association, attend events where you are likely to meet prospects, and make presentations in your area of specialization.
- ☪ Serve on a board of directors for an area related to your practice area.
- ☪ Join a business-to-business club or a weekly business-leads exchange group.
- ☪ Attend functions for the Chamber of Commerce, economic development groups, law school, or other appropriate venues.
- ☪ Join one of the Bar Association's committees.
- ☪ Ask to be put on a committee in the firm and be an active participant.

MARKETING—INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

- ☪ Reward your staff with positive words and actions when the staff exceeds expectations.
- ☪ Request business cards for every person in the firm and a nameplate for the receptionist.
- ☪ Suggest a process for the staff to offer feedback and suggestions on improving the firm and/or bringing business into the firm.
- ☪ Write articles and/or give presentations to prospects and clients.
- ☪ Disseminate reprints of articles (or send links about articles and presentations) to clients, colleagues, and/or prospects.
- ☪ Request that the firm's marketing materials be current and cohesive.
- ☪ Update your bio on a regular basis.
- ☪ Be proactive with your public relations: develop relationships with reporters in your industry so you can be a news resource for the media concerning trends, breaking news, and relevant stories.
- ☪ Develop a quarterly or annual survey that could interest the media.
- ☪ Write positive letters to the editor about your industry.
- ☪ Consider advertising that is pertinent to your target market.
- ☪ When exchanging business cards—from trade shows to networking events—note the date, event, and a “memory jogger” on the back of the business card so you may take follow-up action.

Merilee Marsh, a bi-coastal marketing consultant with clients in California and New York, works with law firms to help clients recognize and seize marketing opportunities. She believes in results-oriented marketing and has presented speeches at various ALA Chapters as well as the ALA Regional Conference in Boston. She also has written several articles for the ALA Encyclopedia, including The Art and Strategy of Business Development and Associates and Their Role in Marketing. She was editor of Chapter 7 Marketing Your Practice on the Internet for the New York State Bar Association's Internet Guide for New York Lawyers, Second Edition (2005).

I'd rather be a failure at something I enjoy than a success at something I hate.

— George Burns

The more I want to get something done, the less I call it work.

— Richard Bach

et **UPCOMING LUNCHEONS** *et*

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

Topic: *Looking Through The One Way Mirror:
How Your Clients View Your Law Firm*

Speaker: Marshall Fletcher, Director of Business Development
ALL-STATE Legal

Location: Sofia Restaurant
815 11th Street, Sacramento

If we could see our firm through a one way mirror, how would we appear? What is really important to our clients and how should we address those items within the firm at a practice level?

Marshall Fletcher has been actively involved in ALA leadership at the chapter, region and national levels for over 11 years. He is a past ALA President (2001 – 2002) and has worked in both the private and public sectors as a legal administrator. He is currently with ALL-STATE Legal, which was the first ALA vendor partner in 1971, and which continues to give back to the legal community by providing speaker assistance. He has presented to over 90 ALA chapters, including at managing partner functions.

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Survey Says . . .

In case you don't have time to read the group email questions and responses as they come in on any given day, following is a recap of some of the topics that have been discussed. Thank you for your participation!

I wanted to get a general consensus regarding sick leave policy. We do not pay our employees for any unused sick leave at the end of the year, but does any firm allow the employees to carry over unused sick leave from year-to-year?

We do not pay for unused sick time. In addition, sick time unused can not be carried over. January 1 we start fresh.

We allow employees to carry over sick leave but it is rarely an issue. The more likely situation is that an employee will go negative with accrued sick leave. In those instances, the firm will carry the employee for five unaccrued sick days but will dock pay after that.

We changed to a PTO policy. With our previous sick leave policy, we did not pay them for unused days and they were not allowed to carry over any sick leave.

We do not pay for unused sick days, but we do allow this time to accrue. Employees can accrue up to 12 weeks, a little like short term disability insurance.

Our employees (0 to 5 years) accrue 2 weeks sick leave per year. At the end of the year we pay the employees for unused sick leave *~~ as an incentive not to call in sick*. Most of our employees receive sick leave pay at year end. We do not carry over unused sick leave into the next year. (Exception: A scheduled surgical procedure in the first quarter could warrant a sick leave balance carry over.)

Sick leave is accumulated pro-rata on a monthly basis. Support staff are entitled to 10 days sick leave per calendar year after completing 90 days of employment. If more time is required, the employee must first use any vacation time earned but not taken, and thereafter take unpaid leave. If an employee is absent from work due to illness or injury for more than three consecutive days, medical substantiation of the absence will be required. If an employee is absent due to the illness/injury of a child or spouse, no medical substantiation will be required upon their return to work.

To encourage employees to use sick leave only when necessary, an employee will have the option of either being paid (on a straight-time basis) one-half day for each day of unused sick leave remaining at the end of the calendar year or carrying over to the following year one-half of the unused sick leave. Please keep in mind that if you choose to be paid for your sick leave at the end of the year, you will start the next year with no sick leave. If you become ill in January, this will result in time without pay. After an employee has accrued 15 sick leave days, no further sick leave days will be accrued.

Our employees accrue 10 days sick leave per year and are allowed to carry a balance up to 30 days. We do not pay for unused sick leave.

Survey Says . . . (continued)

Our employees accrue 12 days sick leave per year or 7.50 hours per month. We do pay out unused sick leave at year end however they are allowed to carry over up to 15 hours. Our schedule runs Dec-Nov of each year which allows me to figure out sick time payout for year end projections.

Our employees accrue one day each month and we allow unused sick time to roll over into subsequent years (in lieu of short term disability). We do not purge or compensate for unused sick leave at the end of each year.

We use PTO, so we no longer have sick leave as such.

We changed to PTO last Nov. 1st.

We don't pay out for unused leave, but we do let them roll time from year to year.

Sick Leave Donation Program. Does anyone have one? How do you handle this?

Unfortunately, we have looked into this matter and have found that if we allow sick leave to be "donated" then we are in jeopardy of our sick leave being considered wages (as vacation is) and therefore potentially having to pay out sick leave upon termination.

What are your plans for Independence Day this year? July 4th falls on a Tuesday ~ Is anyone closing on Monday as well? (The courts are open.)

Here are the results regarding July 3rd (15 firms responded):

Open on July 3rd – 9

Closed on July 3rd – 2

Open with reduced staff – 3

Open but closing early – 1

Does your firm offer employees a bonus for referring a new employee? If so, how much.

No we don't offer bonuses for that.

. . . . has never done so, but I think the idea has possibilities if the parameters are very clear (i.e., length of service of new ee before bonus is paid to old ee, and so forth).

Yes, we offer a \$500 bonus to associates and staff if they refer a new employee who stays for 90 days. No bonus for associate partners or senior partners who refer new hires.

We give \$1,000 for a staff employee referral (paid \$500 after first month; \$500 after six months employment); and \$2,500 for the referral of an attorney employee, split \$1,000/1,500.

The Firm encourages employees to refer candidates to the Office Manager for open positions. Candidates referred by employees will be considered equally with others who apply. If an employee-referred candidate is hired by the Firm, the Firm will pay the referring employee \$50.00 upon hiring and \$50.00 if that candidate is still employed by the Firm 90 days from the hire date.

Thank you for your input and for being a resource to all members!

SALARY SURVEY

Are your firm's salaries competitive? Need help in budgeting your personnel costs and anticipated increases? The SVALA Salary Survey provides comprehensive data on salaries for Sacramento law firms. Associates, paralegals, management staff, IT staff, secretaries and law clerks are all included in the survey. This is a reasonably priced tool for the competitive law firm.

Member cost: \$200
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Please contact the Director at Large, Linda Magyar, to order your survey. She can be reached at: lmagyar@pillsburywinthrop.com or (916) 329-4705.

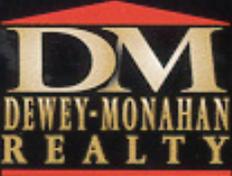
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Calendar Highlights

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>June 2006</u></p> <p>Thursday, June 8</p> <p>SVALA Board Meeting Time/Location: 5:00 pm @ Murphy Austin, 304 S St.</p> <p>Tuesday, June 20</p> <p>Membership Luncheon 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Sofia Topic: How Your Clients View Your Law Firm Speaker: Marshall Fletcher ALL-STATE Legal</p> <p>Wednesday, June 21</p> <p>Golden Gate Chapter Knowledge to Leadership Conference Time / Location: 7:30 am – 5:45 pm Argent Hotel, SF</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>July 2006</u></p> <p>Thursday, July 13</p> <p>SVALA Board Meeting Time/Location: 5:00 pm @ Murphy Austin, 304 S St.</p> <p>Wednesday, July 19</p> <p>Membership Luncheon 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Sofia Topic: TBD Speaker: TBD</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>August 2006</u></p> <p>Thursday, August 10</p> <p>SVALA Board Meeting Time/Location: 5:00 pm @ Murphy Austin, 304 S St.</p> <p>Wednesday, August 16</p> <p>Membership Luncheon 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Sofia Topic: TBD Speaker: TBD</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Upcoming Events</u></p> <p>Region 5 & 6 Educational Conference September 15-16, 2006 Wyndham Palm Springs Palm Springs, CA</p>  |

One must care about a world one will never see.
— Bertrand Russell

The man who has no imagination has no wings.
— Muhammad Ali

Region 5 & 6 Educational Conference - September 15 - 16, 2006
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