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CALIFORNIA STATE LAW UPDATE I



California Civil Discovery Act Undergoes Significant Overhaul

A Closer Look at The Extensive Initial Disclosures & Their Possible Impact

by Travis Chow – LAPA Executive Vice President

PROCEDURALLY

Last year, State Senator Umberg introduced Senate Bill 235. After going through the legislative process, Governor Newsom signed the bill into law on September 30, 2023. This bill amends *Civil Code of Procedure* §§ 2016.090 and 2023.050 and officially took effect on January 1, 2024.

BROADLY

The new disclosure obligations under Section 2016.090 are similar to the obligations under *Federal Rules of Civil Procedure*, Rule 26(a)(1), which requires parties to disclose any documents and identify any witnesses “that the disclosing party may use to support its claims or defenses.”

The amended statute now requires any party to a civil action to disclose, within 60 days of a demand (unless otherwise stipulated), information that is relevant

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Time Is Fleeting

by Jonathan Dang – LAPA President

Can you believe we are already in March? To say the least, LAPA has been extremely productive in its first two months of the year. Reflecting on February, we celebrated Black History Month, Lunar New Years, and even witnessed the Kansas City Chiefs win another Superbowl.

On February 22, 2024, we held our first networking mixer with over 50 attendees! Attendees shared with the organization on various event ideas, how we can improve the organization, and also gaining new mentees. Receiving input from our members is crucial to address the needs, concerns, and a great way to grow our organization.

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to the subject matter of the action. Additionally, it will require disclosure of information and records related to insurance policies. Further, the amended statutes increase sanctions to be imposed for failure to comply to \$1,000.

The amended statutes are applicable to all civil cases **filed on or after January 1, 2024**, and will remain in effect until January 1, 2027. Exclusions from the amendment are small claims cases, actions or proceedings made under the Family Code or Probate Code, and unlawful detainers (evictions). Additionally, the disclosure obligations under the amended statute do not extend to parties representing themselves (pro per).

SPECIFICALLY

The first component of the disclosure requirement states that a party must identify **“all persons likely to have discoverable information, along with the subjects of that information, that the disclosing party may use to support its claims or defenses, or that is relevant to the subject matter of the action or the order on any motion made in that action...”**

What it does not include is any information that would be used for impeachment only. Further, parties do not have to disclose any expert witnesses that they may designate later as expert witnesses.

Second, a party must identify, produce, and describe the location of all documents within the same categories as the first component.

Thirdly, a party must identify any agreement or insurance policy that **“may be liable to satisfy, in whole or in part, a judgment entered in the action or to indemnify or reimburse for payments made to satisfy the judgment.”**

Lastly, the disclosures must be verified by a written declaration by the disclosing party, its representative or by the party’s counsel. *continued on page 3*


PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE - cont. from page 1

On February 27th, we had an amazing Black History Month panel to celebrate black voices in our community and all their accomplishments. In March, in lieu of Women’s History Month, we plan on doing the same.

I am so ecstatic to share that we have several events for MCLE, DEI, pro bono, and networking in queue. It has been a mission of mine to provide our members with affordable MCLE’s and topics our members want. We have three very interesting MCLE’s coming up in March and hope you will attend.

I would also like to share that LAPA has been collaborating with several organizations in California to strengthen our statewide ties, which makes us a strong community all together. DEI has been a focus of mine; we plan on hosting various events to celebrate all heritage months, eliminate biases, and strengthen the legal community.

If you are interested in serving or volunteering with LAPA, please do not hesitate to contact us. We can all make a difference together!

Jonathan Dang is currently a Paralegal with Freeman Mathis & Gary LLP. In his diverse career, he previously worked for a fortune 100 insurance company, private law firms, and the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office. Jonathan Dang is also currently enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves. Aside from LAPA, he also serves on the board of directors for the University of La Verne’s Legal Studies Program and Mt. San Antonio’s Paralegal Program. 

JOIN LAPA ON...     & WWW.LAPA.ORG

LAPA REPORTER

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THE ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL DEADLINE IS THE 5TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.

Articles and news items should be directed to LAPA at editor@lapa.org. Inquiries about making a submission should be directed to LAPA at info@lapa.org.

Inquiries about advertising placement, applications, membership materials and address changes should be directed to LAPA at admin@lapa.org.

Articles will be published as space permits. The Newsletter Committee reserves approval and edit rights on any article submitted.

The Los Angeles Paralegal Association is a non-profit, mutual benefit corporation and is tax exempt within the meaning of section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. Membership dues and donations to LAPA are not tax deductible as charitable gifts, but may be deductible as related business expenses. LAPA suggests that you consult your tax advisor in this regard.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

- 6- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 13 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 16- **Run for Justice** – Dodger Stadium; 8:00 AM; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5574300> for more information & to register.
- 19- **Social Media Ethical Evidence Collection & Use (MCLE)** – Online via Zoom; 6:00-7:00 PM; Featuring: Joseph Jones; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5621091> for more information & to register.
- 27- **LAPA Litigation Committee: Initial Disclosures SB235 Changes in Civil Discovery (MCLE)** – Online via Zoom; 12:00-1:00 PM; Featuring: Mikaela Pflueger, Esq., Allison Melendez, Esq., & Robert T. Simon, Esq.; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5604113> for more information & to register.

APRIL

- 3- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 10 - **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 16- **LAPA Litigation Committee: Exploring Crash Data Retrieval (CDR) & Understanding the Black Box (EDR) (MCLE)** – Online via Zoom; 6:00-7:00 PM; Featuring: Elvis Desai, Sr. Forensics Engineer; Go to <https://www.lapa.org/event-5624367> for more information & to register.

MAY

- 1- **LAPA Executive Board Meeting** – Conf. Call; Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.
- 8- **LAPA Board Meeting** – Contact Jonathan Dang at president@lapa.org.

CALIFORNIA STATE LAW UPDATE I - *cont. from page 2*

BUT WAIT THERE'S MORE

A party only needs to make **“disclosures based on the information then reasonably available to it.”**

Beware, however, that a party cannot make an objection based on language that it has not fully investigated the case yet. Further, a party cannot withhold disclosures because the other party has not made any disclosures or if the party is challenging the sufficiency of another party's disclosure.

Additionally, a party may **“propound a supplemental demand twice before the initial setting of a trial date ... [and] once after the initial setting of a trial date.”** The inherent problem with this is that the Los Angeles Superior Court automatically assigns a trial date for certain types of cases upon the filing of the complaint.

Lastly, the Senate Bill amended *Civil Code of Procedure* § 2023.050 by increasing the sanctions from \$250 to \$1,000 if a party **“did not respond in good faith to a request for the production of documents,” “produced requested documents within seven days before the court was scheduled to hear a motion to compel production of the records,” or “failed to confer ... with the party or attorney requesting the documents in a reasonable and good faith attempt to resolve informally any dispute concerning the request.”** Further, the amended statute gives judges the discretion to direct the attorney to report such a sanction to the State Bar.

IMPACT, INTENTIONS, AND ISSUES

I believe the amendment aims to expedite the discovery process by compelling all parties to investigate and disclose information more promptly, potentially enhancing overall efficiency. However, concerns arise regarding situations where a party fails to disclose due to lack of prior knowledge or if the

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SAVE THE DATE

for

LAPA'S Annual October Conference!

“NAVIGATING YOUR CAREER PATH”

When : Saturday, October 19, 2024

Time : 8:30am – 3:30pm

Location : Omni Los Angeles Hotel
251 South Olive Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012



We look forward to seeing you.
Mark your calendar and stay tuned for further details!



My Advice to Young and Upcoming Paralegals

by John Badon

You have now reached your goal - finishing your paralegal studies, completing all the assignments, late night stress of an endless research paper while working at a job that really wasn't your dream. You finally wake-up and you are now starting your first day at a major law firm giving you a shot of a lifetime as a paralegal. What's next...

Here's my personal approach:

- I wake-up feeling grateful and being thankful – It's my way to stay positive.
- I show-up on time and even early if all possible – Creating my own consistency.
- I'm eager and excited about what I'm doing for the team – I'm always happy.

- I always have a positive attitude – it's my "can do" approach that creates trust.
- I always create a lasting first impression and – I'm always smiling and being pleasant.
- I never say "no" to any assignment – I know my limitations and capabilities.
- I always ask for clarification and seek insight from fellow colleagues – I'm asking questions.
- I manage my time by knowing what assignments can wait and the ones that will require more attention, thought and preparation and will start these firsts – I know how to multitask which I've refined over the years.
- I have my cases organized giving them special attention every single day – I know and anticipate the next steps.
- I've redefined my approach to case assignments by organizing them logically – I know the details and confirm all due dates; I do not miss any deadline which is not an option.
- I'm in constant communication with my assigned attorney's, by sending emails as necessary and visiting their offices when appropriate with a

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opposing party neglects to demand a supplemental response later in the case. In such instances, the question arises whether the lack of disclosure would impact the admissibility at trial.


An additional challenge arises when dealing with large corporate entities. Such companies often possess a multitude of witnesses and documents pertinent to the case, making early identification challenging. Additionally, it would appear that this amendment goes further than Rule 26, in that a party may also have to list witnesses and documents that would be harmful to their case.

Further, the requirement to disclose actual insurance policies can potentially lead to complications between the insured and insurer, particularly in the context of coverage disputes. It's worth noting that the nature and substance of insurance policies are

typically safeguarded from disclosure by *Civil Code of Procedure* § 2017.210.

The success of the new section and the enforcement of its various aspects and requirements will become clearer over time as we observe its implementation and how the courts interpret and apply the new requirements.

The Senate Bill can be read at - https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB235.

Travis Chow is currently the Paralegal Coordinator at Collins + Collins LLP. Before that, he freelanced at several private practice firms in Southern California. He has been a Paralegal for over fifteen years. He is a Certified Social Media Intelligence Expert and Certified Cyber Intelligence Professional. He is also a California Licensed Realtor and Notary Public. With the help of Walter T. Shatford and San Gabriel Valley Bar Association Legal Scholarship, he earned his Paralegal Certificate from Pasadena City College along with an associate degree in Social Behavioral Science, Humanities and Paralegal Studies. He then earned his Paralegal Certificate and bachelor's degree from the University of La Verne in Legal Studies. 



Plaintiff's Legal Team Perspective of CCP § 2016.090

by Elizabeth Garcia, ACP

As a certified litigation paralegal employed by a plaintiff's law firm, the implications of California's optional Initial Disclosures under CCP 2016.090 will potentially revolutionize the litigation process. The disclosures are similar to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. These disclosures, if demanded by a party, require all parties to disclose and produce crucial case information at the onset of litigation. The use of the disclosure demand presents an opportunity to significantly reduce overall litigation expenses and expedite early resolution of a case by compelling litigants to disclose the factual basis of his/her allegations or defenses and produce supportive documents at the inception of litigation. The disclosures have the benefit of establishing the claims and defenses of the litigants and seek to eliminate unsupported claims or defenses, by bypassing the lengthy timelines associated with traditional discovery that may extend for months or even years. The impact extends to the parties' early assessment of their case, fostering a comprehensive understanding of strengths and weaknesses. While

the rules aim to streamline actions, the new procedure could potentially become an additional task in an extensive discovery process; however, strategic collaboration with attorneys and legal support staff can harness these tools to facilitate early resolution and identify potential issues swiftly. The new law lacks safeguards against multiple demands for initial and supplemental disclosures, simultaneous with standard discovery requests, which could potentially present a challenge. However, the requirements are likely to incentivize all litigants to expedite their preparation of discovery strategies at the onset of litigation. Furthermore, the mandatory disclosures may influence the scope of subsequent written discovery, potentially narrowing it down and offering efficiencies for all litigants. Although the impact might be marginal, the prospect of a more focused and efficient approach in litigation is promising.

The major changes are outlined in California Code of Civil Procedure § 2016.090, under Senate Bill 235, with exceptions for small claims, family law, probate, Section 36 preference cases, and self-represented parties. The voluntary nature of initial disclosures presents an opportunity to discourage opposition from pursuing certain lines of attack, signaling a shift towards a more transparent and efficient litigation process. Early disclosures afford a glimpse into the opposing party's strategy, aiding in better preparation and resource allocation. Understanding how opponents organize and produce this initial material can provide insight into

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HELPFUL HINTS - cont. from page 4


notepad and pen – I'm always ready for the next assignment or case.

- I let "silence" be my guide – Creates my environment conducive to focusing, learning, and through understanding of any case assigned.
- My "inner calmness" and "tranquil workspace" provides me a "peaceful mindset" – gives me "mental clarity" in problem solving of complex case assignments.

I have only 3 real principles that drive me every single day: 1) a fearless approach to hard work, 2) a career plan executed with precision and 3) a commitment to life-long learning. I show up, engage, and participate everyday

knowing my past skills in aerospace engineering, business administration and project management bring the key attributes to my legal career.

With 22 years working at some of the largest and most prestigious law firms in Los Angeles, I never quit, never think I've reached my peak but always knowing I need to further my legal skills and knowledge. I will continue to push my limits and create the ability to step into the most complex matters, take command of the situation, reduce stress of the attorneys, staff, and the client by producing a thorough plan to move forward.

John Badon is currently a Paralegal with Dykema Gossett in their Los Angeles office working in product liability, mass tort litigation representing GM, Nissan, Harley-Davidson, Tesla, Kia, Hyundai and working on other complex cases. 



LAPA Celebrates Black History Month

by Mariejo Plaganas

The Los Angeles Paralegal Association's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee hosted its first event of the year on Tuesday, February 27, 2024. In collaboration with San Diego Paralegal Association and Orange County Paralegal Association, the associations put on an amazing panel to celebrate Black History Month. Having a collaborative event with associations throughout California strengthens the legal community and provides additional networking opportunities. The panelists included Kai Williamson, M. Ed., Terri Walters, CP, ACP, and Katie Oliver, ACP.

This event was moderated by LAPA's DEI committee chair, Tony Sipp. Panelists shared their thoughts on dealing with biases, overcoming adversities, and how we can all promote diversity in the legal field. The panelists also shared valuable knowledge on advice they would share to their younger selves and why mentors are important. The event was well attended and attendees felt a deep connection to each and one of the messages shared by our panelists. DEI events like such, build a great sense of camaraderie amongst the paralegal profession as a whole. LAPA's DEI committee will be putting on additional panels to celebrate each heritage month and I am looking forward to the next one!

Mariejo Plaganas is a Volunteer for the Newsletter Committee and recently obtained her Paralegal Certificate in June 2023 from Fullerton College. She also holds a Technology Certificate from National Society of Legal Technology. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a focus in Toxicology and published her undergraduate research, which is featured on PubMed and peer-review journal Environmental Science & Technology. In her free time, she enjoys working out, practicing yoga, and going to the farmer's market. 

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their cooperativeness through the discovery process, assisting in the preparation of clients for potential costs and delays throughout litigation.


Attorneys and legal professionals should be thorough and meticulous in gathering all the evidence, and not assume every case will settle before trial, working up each case as if it is going to proceed to trial. It is important to marshal all evidence at intake and continue through the pre-litigation process. Photographs of vehicles, streets, intersections, injuries, and store flooring relating to a slip and fall incident are all important evidence that potentially could support a claim and would need to be disclosed if a CCP 2016.090 demand is made. Documents such as the following would need to be collected: total loss documents, tow bills, police reports and arrest/DUI reports, copies of criminal complaints made against the offending driver, loss of use documentation, loss of earning documentation to include w-2's for 5 years prior to the accident until the client returned to work, 1099's for the same time period, doctor letters for leaves of absence or work restrictions, complete medical records and bills from every provider-client give you an ambulance bill for instance, you must request the ambulance records/reports that support the bill, for instance. The names of spouses, children,

and anyone living with the client would need to be gathered, as well as names of employer, supervisor and co-workers who might be called to testify as to the character of the client.

The adoption of initial disclosure provisions, though voluntary, mirrors the transparent and efficient litigation processes enjoyed by federal litigants, promising a more strategic, efficient, and cooperative approach to California litigation."

Elizabeth Garcia, an Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP) accredited through NALA, began her legal career in 2010 as a legal assistant in Miami, Florida. Early on, she discovered her passion for personal injury law, ultimately specializing in Personal Injury and Litigation when given the opportunity to work for The Liddy Law Firm. As an integral part of the litigation department, she is dedicated to upholding ethical standards while providing exceptional assistance to attorneys and lawyers. Thriving in team-oriented environments, Elizabeth excels in communication with legal department members, clients, and courtroom personnel, continually seeking improvement in her knowledge, skills, and abilities to excel in the paralegal and legal fields.

As a Board of Directors member for LAPA, Elizabeth serves as the Committee Chair for Compliance/MCLE, overseeing legal compliance standards. Additionally, she holds the position of Litigation Chair, actively contributing to the strategic direction and execution of litigation-related initiatives as the Litigation Director at LAPA.

Since August 2020, Elizabeth has been the Litigation Paralegal Manager at The Law Offices of Edward Shkolnikov, EFS Law Center in Burbank, CA, bringing extensive experience in Plaintiff's Personal Injury cases. Alongside her professional pursuits, Elizabeth enjoys reading, taking walks, and window shopping, with hobbies that include learning fun facts on all things chemistry, biology, and genetics. 



Myanmar's Spring Revolution: The Bloody Price for Democracy

by Zaw Tu Hkawng – LAPA Student Member

As the world focuses on the Israel-Palestine and Ukraine-Russia conflicts, the battle between freedom and fear, democracy and dictatorship, justice and cruelty, and life and death rages on in my beloved nation, Myanmar, since the February 1st coup in 2021.

COUP AND REVOLUTION

Slogans like “We Want Democracy,” “Down with the Military,” and “We must Win” were daily mantras for freedom fighters and peace-loving people of Myanmar, and we called it “Myanmar’s Spring Revolution” after the military junta took power in a coup on February 1st, 2021. Hundreds of thousands from different regions of Myanmar joined the revolution or resistance against one of the most brutal military dictatorships in the world. Regardless of gender, race, age, profession, or social status, everyone came together to fight against our common enemy—the military, the main source of the country’s instability and the root of all problems, including Rohingya ethnic cleansing, economic deterioration, corruption, lack of rule of law, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, and the world’s second-longest civil war after Israel-Palestine.

DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

Fighting for democracy against dictatorship means sacrificing lives in Myanmar, as the word “democracy” is the deadliest poison to the military generals. The more the forces of democracy protested on the streets, the more repressive or slaughtering campaigns began. Many young people, including myself, were on the streets day after day, night after night, week after week, month after month. Right in front of me, an 18-year-old boy was shot in the head by a soldier simply because we said, “Democracy must prevail over dictatorship.” Myanmar’s army



Protest in the city of Yangon following the military coup on February 1st, 2021.

and its soldiers regarded their own citizens, like us, peaceful protesters and peace-loving individuals, as their state enemies whose very existence is to protect us and preserve peace. They even executed prominent politicians, such as Phyo Zeya Thaw, who was also a well-known rapper, Kyaw Min Yu or Jimmy, by hanging. Since the February 1st coup, over 4,520 people have been killed, and more than 20,105 people are currently under detention, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) as of February 14th, 2024. Hundreds of thousands of families are now homeless, displaced, and have lost their loved ones due to the brutality of the military in several regions across the country. According to the United Nations, 18.6 million people or 1/3 of the populations, need humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES AND MYANMAR

Like many others, I fled into the jungle, located at the Myanmar-China border area, in search of safety and security due to my frontline activism against the military coup. In that jungle, I saw and experienced the agony of the coup, COVID, natural disasters like flooding and landslides, losing parents and children, and starvation. I reported all of my experiences to local and international media alike and also to my former organizations, such as the McCain Institute

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Kachin Art Students persecuted by the military express solidarity with Ukrainians after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

from Washington D.C. and also to the then Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's Office. During 2019-2020, I was placed at the Los Angeles Mayor's Office of International Affairs as a professional fellow, which was part of the International Leadership program of the McCain Institute. Both organizations supported my journey of activism by voicing our struggles and releasing statements by then Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. At the same time, both taught me to do the right thing even when it is difficult. As a McCain's Global Leader, I followed the profound example of the late Senator John McCain—serving causes greater than self. Therefore, in the midst of pitch darkness and life-threatening situations, I initiated what I called the "Through the Eyes of Agony Art Program" for orphanages, persecuted youths, tormented children, and displaced people while I was still in the jungle.


Now, I am back in the greater city of Los Angeles, where I feel at home, but I am still continuing to fight for my home country by raising awareness on any given platform and in any circumstance. I shared my personal experiences with professors, activists, people from both private and public sectors at Arizona State University, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Arizona Jewish Historical Society, notably. On February 4th, 2024, a group of supporters of Myanmar's struggles for democracy organized a 3-mile freedom walk on the Long Beach. At the same time, I am working on a project that virtually helps connect our very unfortunate school boys and girls



3-Mile Freedom Walk in Long Beach commemorating the 3rd anniversary of Myanmar's military coup.

from Myanmar with Angeleno high school students

I still hear the screams of children crying, people dying, and others running for their lives. I hope that my beloved city of Los Angeles, along with empathetic and compassionate Angelenos, will hear them as I do and extend helping hands.

E Zaw Tu Hkawng is an anti-military coup activist from Myanmar and the founder of the 'Through the Eyes of Agony Art Program' for Myanmar's internally displaced children, who are affected by persecution, military coups, and armed conflicts. Previously, Zaw worked as a project coordinator for BBC Media Action Myanmar, overseeing the nationally broadcast radio drama "Tea Cup Diaries." This program aimed at promoting peace and social cohesion among diverse ethnic and religious communities. In addition to his media work, Zaw has provided special assistance to Myanmar refugees in Malaysia. Zaw is a McCain Global Leader and was a fellow at the Los Angeles Mayor's Office of International Affairs. 



Looking Forward Despite COVID-19

by Deena Bowman

Living with the COVID-19 virus has changed our means of enjoying recreational and cultural pursuits. However, good times can still be experienced —albeit in different ways. March is Women's History Month, and here are two podcasts showcasing women who made history and women who are making history now.



HALF THE POPULATION = SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY

The History Chicks is the brainchild of Beckett Graham and Susan Vollenweider. Their recipe is simple: "Two women. Half the population. Several thousand years

of history." The latest episode in the podcast series focuses on the two sisters of two famous composers — Mozart and Schumann. Maria Anna Mozart and Clara Schumann were equally talented and musically gifted women who, unfortunately, were in the shadow of a famous male relative. <https://thehistorychicks.com/>



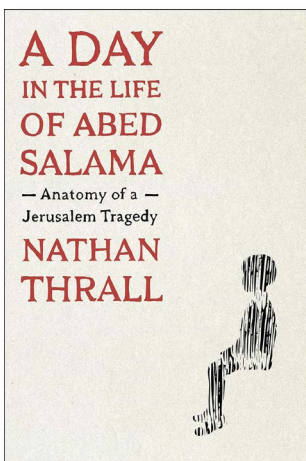
MEET WOMEN LEADING THE WAY IN REDEFINING TECH

Brenda Darden Wilkerson, President and CEO of AnitaB.org, hosts the podcast *B the Way Forward*. Each month, Wilkerson interviews pioneers and changemakers who forge a path to a future where those who create technology mirror the faces of those who use it. <https://anitab.org/b-the-way-forward>

Deena Bowman is a Senior Legal Analyst at the State Compensation Insurance Fund in Glendale, California. Deena earned her paralegal certificate from the University of West Los Angeles, and she was a former Director at Large with LAPA.

LAPA READING CORNER

A recurring column that reviews books focusing on voices and subjects that reflect the diversity of the human experience



by Deena Bowman

A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy

by Nathan Thrall

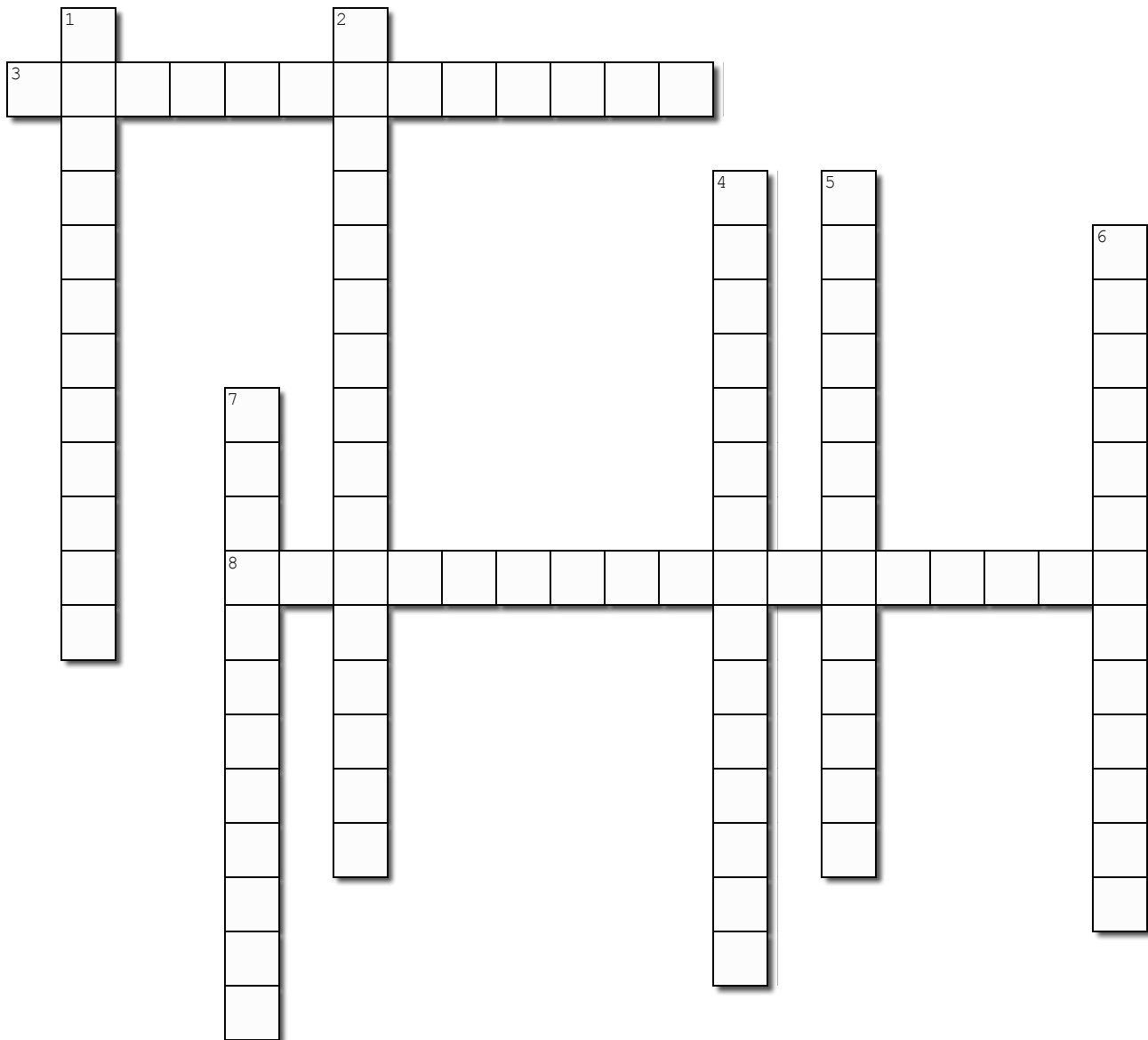
It's every parent's fear: your child is hurt, and you have difficulty reaching them. In Nathan Thrall's nonfiction work, *A Day in*

the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy, this fear is a living nightmare when five-year-old Milad Salama's school bus collides with a semitrailer on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Thrall documents how the entwined histories of Jerusalem and the West Bank created a nightmare maze of physical, emotional, and bureaucratic obstacles, which Milad's father, Abed, must navigate because he is Palestinian. Set against the backdrop of the Jewish-Palestine struggle, *A Day in the Life* is a harrowing tale of a father's odyssey to learn his son's fate.

2023, 255 Pages, New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt & Company, \$29.99 hardcover. Also available for checkout from the Los Angeles Public Library in book form, e-Book, and e-Audiobook.

March | April Crossword Puzzle

Complete the crossword puzzle and learn interesting facts for Women's Herstory and Arab Heritage months.



ACROSS:

3. She is the first Muslim and Arab American woman in Congress.
8. This British chemist discovered the structure of DNA.

DOWN:

1. The son of Lebanese immigrants, he was the first American jet ace in history.
2. In 2014, she became the world's youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

DOWN cont.:

4. In 1987, she became the first female artist to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.
5. One of the most prominent progressive activists in the country and co-chair of the Women's March.
6. One of America's first female Muslim comedians.
7. An American nurse who founded the American Red Cross.

ANSWER KEY FOUND ON PAGE 17



True California Oddities

by Denise Blassak

History buffs have been known to Google goofy laws. There are some codes and ordinances that qualify. Yet a good number of articles on the subject may be inaccurate. I was curious to find out what is (or was) true. Below are three oddities I discovered.

California fans of cuisses de grenouille, a/k/a frog legs, be on notice. You cannot dine on just any frog. When one dies or is killed during a frog-jumping contest, it “may not be eaten . . .” (Cal. Fish and Game Code Section 6883.) “[I]t must be destroyed as soon as possible . . .” (*Ibid.*)

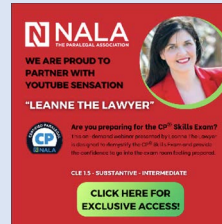
Visitors to Carmel by the Sea, pack appropriate footwear. Otherwise a permit is needed to walk the sidewalk. Shoes like stilettos surpass the heel height limit. (CMC Sections 8.44.020 and 8.44.030 at codepublishing.com/CA/Carmelbythesea/html/Carmel08/Carmel0844.html [as of Feb. 17, 2024].) The city keeps sidewalk and street surfacing informal to maintain its “urban forest character.” (CMC Section 8.44.010.) Naturally, this poses a greater risk for high heeled folks. (*Ibid.*)

Some of you know of Arcadia’s prevalent peacock population. But do you know why the bird is there? One article suggests that years ago, a rancher brought them over from India. (Vargas, *Surging peacock population has Arcadia residents crying ‘fowl,’* June 29, 2021, at spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-east/news/2021/06/29/arcadia-residents-having-peacock-problems [as of Feb. 17, 2024].) Problems arose as numbers increased, i.e., watch where you step. It is “a nuisance to feed peafowl [a/k/a peacock] on public or private property.” (City of Arcadia Ordinance 2389, amending Ordinance 4137, at library.municode.com/ca/arcadia/codes/code_of_ordinances [as of Feb. 17, 2024].)

Know of other crazy laws where you can cite the code? Send me a line at southerncaparalegal@gmail.com.

Denise Blassak, a San Diego based paralegal, is SDPA's 2024 Newsletter Editor. She has over 15 years of paralegal experience. Her responsibilities include international research, argument drafting for motions and briefs, and more. Denise's education includes her ABA approved bachelor's paralegal degree from Winona State University. In her free time, she enjoys DIY travel and Grisham novels. 🏠

NALA THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION CERTIFICATION CORNER



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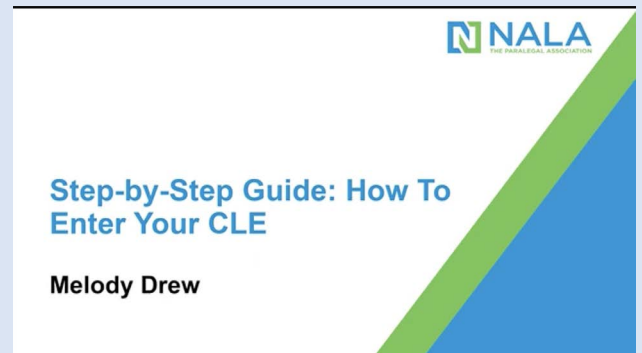
We would love for you to be amongst the first testing group for the updated CP® Exam in January 2024. There will be a new section on the Knowledge Exam: Debtor/Creditor and Bankruptcy. For anyone taking the Knowledge Exam in January, we will refund your testing center fee for that section of the CP® Exam (it must be paid upfront during the application process). You can be a trendsetter and help set the standard by taking the updated Knowledge Exam in January 2024.

CP® PARTNER TESTING IS COMING BACK!

Employers, schools, and military bases, we are bringing back Partner Testing! In 2024, you will be able to administer the CP® Exam at your business, school, or military base for aspiring CPs! For more information, click [here](#) and scroll to the PSI Partner Testing drop-down.

CPS, HERE IS HOW TO ENTER YOUR CLE.

As a Certified Paralegal (CP®), it is imperative that you know how to enter your CLE credits into your NALA account so that you can qualify for recertification. We made a video to serve as a step-by-step guide on entering your CLE credits. In addition to showing you how to add CLE credits to your NALA account, it also explains the three types of CLE: substantive, non-substantive, and legal ethics. To learn more about the different types of CLE and how to enter them into your account, click below to watch the video.



www.nala.org

For more information contact:

Michelle Tabb, ACP,

Terry Wright, ACP, LAPA Board Director

Doug Kuhn, CP

LAPA Paralegal Certification Committee Members



A monthly column where sponsors and/or vendors share helpful hints

Elevating Your Visibility – A Paralegal's Guide to Success Within A Firm

by Tracey Perkins – Senior Recruiting Associate, Round Hill Search

As a paralegal, one may ask, why is elevating my visibility within my firm important? The simple answer is this; increased visibility is a pathway to professional growth and will open the door to new opportunities that can enhance your career. Visibility can increase your job security at your existing firm, open doors for new opportunities at other firms and companies, expose you to matters and individuals that can elevate your skill set, enable you to network professionally for enhanced opportunities and a host of other benefits for your professional career.

Often, we think of Attorney visibility in law firms. Elevated visibility is imperative to paralegals as well. It can have a positive impact on your bill rate/hours, income, job security, value, and growth within the firm. Furthermore, your firm can keep or bring on clients where they otherwise must outsource the work.

Here's an example. We have a business litigation paralegal, and the team obtained a judgment in favor of the client and needed to collect the judgment. The Attorneys were not well-versed on the procedures for collection. The paralegal had experience with collections from a prior firm and could research and walk the Attorneys through the process and successfully garnish funds on their client's behalf. The paralegal elevated their visibility through effective communication of their skill set which led to favorable outcomes for the team. That experience's ripple effect resulted in the client being happy, which led to more business and referrals for the team and firm.

No-one knows what you can do and what you're capable of unless you tell or show them! Market your skill set to teams across the firm. It's not only who you know, but who knows you AND what you can do!

Following are 6 key strategies to elevate visibility within your firm.

1. Understand your Firm's Culture, i.e. is there an open-door policy...how is work assigned?

2. Strategize your Networking Efforts. Who do you need to network with internally? What Partners, teams, locations?

3. Showcase your Expertise! Show your team what you can do utilizing key showcasing strategies!

4. Brush up on your Verbal and Written Communication Skills. You must be able to communicate effectively through several mediums.


5. Build a Positive Reputation. A positive reputation MUST go along with elevating visibility. There are several ways you should be building your reputation to enhance your visibility, including showing your successes.

6. Contribute to the Firm's Culture. Lead with a growth mindset, promote collaboration, solicit feedback, and support and engage in professional development programs as part of your contribution to the fabric of the firm's culture.

By continually using these key strategies to elevate your visibility, you will achieve success and an overall progressive trajectory in your career as a paralegal.

Join us on April 9th, 2024, for a deep dive into the key strategies during a presentation with Round Hill Search titled "Elevating your Visibility – A Paralegal's Guide to Success Within A Firm.". Register now for complimentary access using the QR code below and the code LAPA1.

Tracey Perkins is a Senior Recruiting Associate with Round Hill Search, a boutique, minority/female-owned legal search firm headquartered in Los Angeles. With over 18 years of experience in the legal industry, Tracey brings a wealth of knowledge in legal recruitment, backed by a solid foundation in litigation paralegal work. Tracey's journey in the legal field began as a litigation paralegal with Steptoe & Johnson in Washington DC, where she honed her skills in legal research, case management, and client communication.

Her dedication and aptitude led her to join the litigation team at Finnegan & Henderson where she further expanded her experience in complex commercial and intellectual property litigation. Relocating to Atlanta, Georgia, Tracey continued to excel in her career, contributing her expertise to firms such as Freeman Mathis & Gary and Carlton Fields. Alongside her professional endeavors, Tracey found fulfillment in teaching paralegal courses at Kennesaw State University, sharing her knowledge and insights with aspiring legal professionals. Drawing on her extensive legal background and passion for helping others, Tracey transitioned into the realm of legal recruiting. Joining Round Hill Search, she embraced the opportunity to leverage her industry knowledge to facilitate meaningful connections between clients and candidates. With a client-focused approach, Tracey collaborates closely with legal departments across California, striving to make enduring placements that align with both candidate aspirations and client needs. In recognition of her exceptional performance and dedication, Tracey was honored as the inaugural recipient of the Round Hill Search "Rookie of the Year" award in 2023. Motivated by a steadfast commitment to excellence, integrity, and professionalism, she aspires to further elevate recruiting industry standards and leave a lasting impact through her contributions. 





LAPA's Far East Bar Mixer: Networking Success!

by Mariejo Plaganas

On Thursday, February 22, 2024, nearly 40 plus attendees gathered at the Far East Bar in the Little Tokyo district of Los Angeles for the new year's first in-person Happy Hour mixer. With help from First Legal, this Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) event provided all students, paralegals, and legal associates an opportunity to network and connect with different industry professionals.

The happy hour mixer was the first in-person gathering of the year. It was the perfect opportunity for LAPA members, students, attorneys, and other legal professionals to interact and find potential job leads with fellow attendees and vendors. As the evening progressed, the atmosphere was buzzing with lively conversations, as attendees expanded their professional network through commingling.

An evening highlight was President Jonathan Dang's heartfelt message thanking all the attendees for their time and support of the legal community. Additionally, four gift cards from First Legal were raffled to lucky

winners at the end of the evening if you entered a business card to the game. Safe to say that the event was a resounding networking success for students and paralegal professionals.

Networking with fellow LAPA attendees provides great benefits to students and legal industry professionals. The chance to meet and connect in a more relaxed setting allowed students and junior paralegals to establish and expand relationships with potential mentors, employers, and colleagues, which can be invaluable for their future careers. It also provided the opportunity to build confidence, visibility, and communication skills at these informal environments with like minded attendees that are there to support you.

We would like to once again thank all attendees, volunteers, sponsors, and everyone else who made this evening a huge success. LAPA continues to connect with everyone in our legal community and fulfill its mission of developing, strengthening, and advancing the legal profession. As we continue this new year, our goal is to provide a platform to connect professionals from different parts of the legal industry to advance your career. We look forward to seeing everyone at our next Happy Hour Mixer! 📺

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 31, 2024

NEW ELECTRONIC FILING PROCEDURE FOR PROPOSED ORDERS IN CIVIL DIVISION CASES EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 5

Beginning February 5, in accordance with [California Rule of Court 3.1312 \(c\)](#), all parties electronically filing (efiling) proposed orders for Civil Division cases, except for small claims cases, must submit the proposed order as both a Portable Document File (PDF) and as a separate editable word-processing file, such as a Microsoft Word document.

Specifically, parties submitting proposed orders in applicable cases must efile the following documents at the same time:

- The *Proposed Order Cover Sheet* ([Form EFS-020](#)) and the proposed order, combined into a single PDF document;
- An editable version of the proposed order.

Editable versions of the proposed order are not required for proposed orders located on either Judicial Council of California or Los Angeles Superior Court approved forms.

The above procedure will be included in future proposed changes to Los Angeles Superior Court Local Court Rule 3.4 (a), regarding Mandatory Electronic Filing.



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PLEASE NOTE:

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Questions or Submissions please send to
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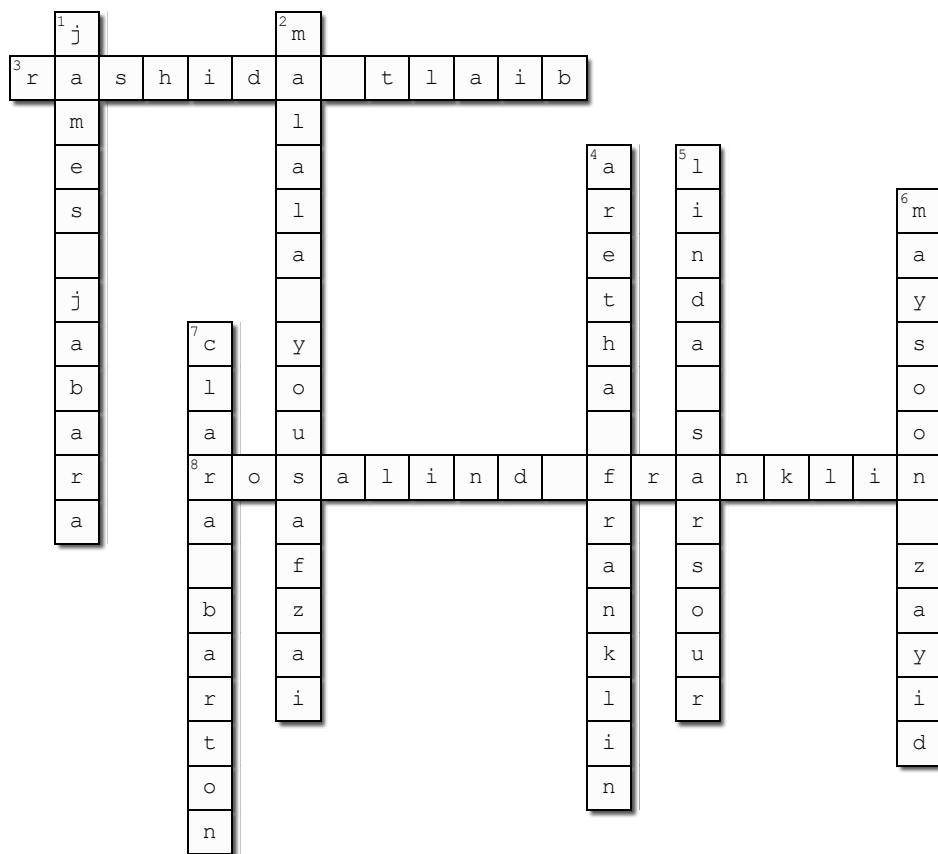
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LAPA'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE - *cont. from page 10*

1. James Jabara
2. Malala Yousafzai
3. Rosa Parks
4. Aretha Franklin
5. Linda Sarsour
6. Maysoon Zayid
7. Clara Barton

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Child Welfare in Los Angeles County



As of January 2021, there are 38,243 children/youth in the Los Angeles Child Welfare System.



Most children are in the child welfare system for about 2+ years.

Black & Hispanic children encompass

 **81.5%**

of children/youth in care.

High turnover rates in child welfare professions create gaps in knowledge and care, and limit youths' access to consistent and appropriate supports.



In an overwhelmed system, L.A. County professionals face the daunting task of making complex, life-changing decisions about a child/youth's overall well-being.

The Solution? The Essential History Program!

The Essential History Program aims to help social workers, attorneys and judges make trauma-informed decisions about the young people they serve. Through this program, a CASA volunteer reviews the entirety of a child/youth's case file and produces an objective and comprehensive report that highlights key historical events for the young person while in the system.



Program Goals

- Reduce time youth is in the child welfare system
- Improve outcomes for youth in the areas such as: permanency, mental health, education and social supports
- Ease changes/transitions for service providers
- Reduce burnout and compassion fatigue for child welfare professionals
- Consolidate information to observe data trends in the child welfare system
- Create systematic change towards healthier and equitable systems

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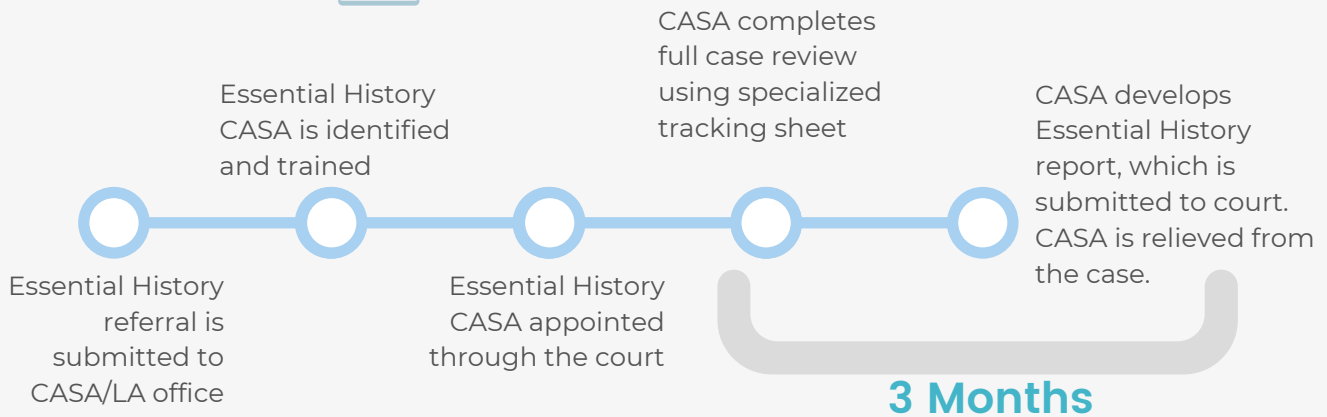
Essential History Program



continued from previous page



Process & Timeline



The Report

Objective & Neutral Language

Information is retrieved from case documents with no additional bias/interpretation.

Strengths-Based

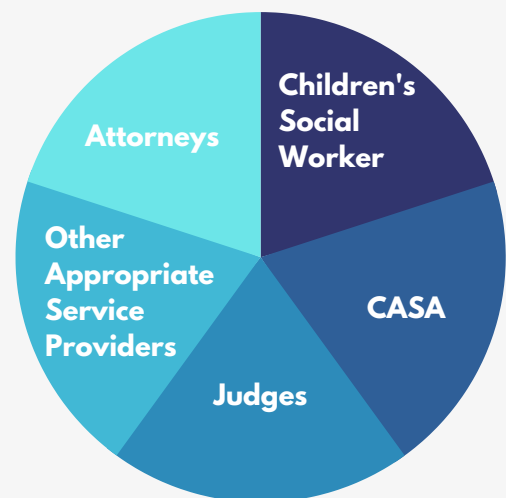
Focus is kept on not creating a negative perception of the youth

Report Content

Report Covers Risk & Protective Factors in the areas of:

- Permanency
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Education
- Family & Social Supports

Who Can Access the Report?



Questions?

essentialhistory@casala.org
Visit Us! www.casala.org



The Los Angeles Paralegal Association (LAPA) reflects the diverse nature of Southern California, and we strive to be as inclusive as possible. As an organization of legal professionals, we hold the ideals of equality and justice in the highest regard. The injustices experienced by the communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are a stark reminder that equality and justice are ideas that have yet to reach fruition in this country. We, as a nation, must do better. LAPA stands in solidarity with the families and friends of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. It is our sincerest desire to see justice is done as the law requires for their tragic deaths.

Diversity and inclusion are LAPA's initiative for 2022. We hold firm in striving to be more inclusive and diverse to reflect the community that we serve and represent. Moreover, LAPA will continue to steadfastly advocate and create initiatives to prepare and support our paralegals.



Housing + Community Investment Department

Attention: City of L.A. Tenants & Landlords

**Coronavirus: What You Need to Know
about L.A.'s *Eviction Protections***
visit: hcidla.lacity.org





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LAPA Voting Members

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MCLE: SOCIAL MEDIA ETHICAL EVIDENCE COLLECTION & USE



19 MAR,
2024

6:00 - 7:00PM

JOSEPH JONES

SPEAKER



Members \$20
Student Members
\$15
Non-Members \$40

**LAPA LITIGATION COMMITTEE
PRESENTS: MCLE – INITIAL
DISCLOSURES SB 235 CHANGES
IN CIVIL DISCOVERY**



**27 MAR,
2024**

**12:00PM
-1:00PM**

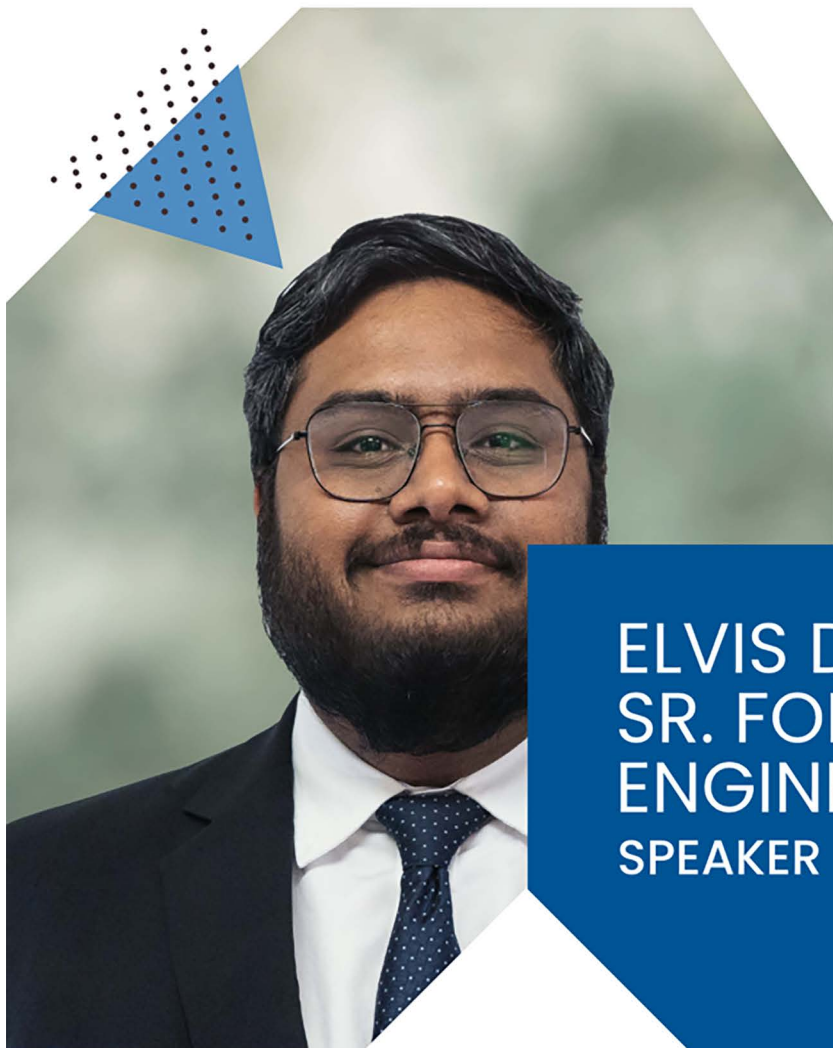


**MIKAELA PFLUEGER, ESQ.
ALLISON MELENDEZ, ESQ
ROBERT T. SIMON, ESQ.
SPEAKERS**



**Members \$20
Student Members \$15
Non-Members \$40**

**LAPA LITIGATION SECTION
PRESENTS: MCLE – EXPLORING
CRASH DATA RETRIEVAL (CDR)
AND UNDERSTANDING THE
BLACK BOX (EDR)**



**16 APR,
2024**

6:00 - 7:00PM

**ELVIS DESAI,
SR. FORENSICS
ENGINEER
SPEAKER**



**Members \$20
Student Members \$15
Non-Members \$40**

Members Only Benefits

Regional and Networking Sections

LAPA has many opportunities for meeting and connecting with your paralegal colleagues and other legal industry professionals. Such opportunities include seminar and networking events based on geographical locations such as Downtown (Los Angeles), South Bay, West L.A., the San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita, and more. LAPA also provides educational seminars in various legal specialties, including, but not limited to, Litigation, Probate Law, Intellectual Property Law, Corporate Law, Immigration Law, and Ethics. Additionally, with the support of our legal industry partners, LAPA also hosts other networking and charitable events and mixers. Your participation in LAPA is encouraged, so be sure to reach out to a LAPA Section or Committee Chair, develop your leadership and networking skills, and make LAPA an even better association.

Vital Savings

This benefit provides LAPA members a discount program for dental and vision services, long term care, as well as many pharmaceuticals. LAPA has been able to obtain special pricing of Vital Savings discount cards through Aetna. By using the discount cards and Aetna approved providers, LAPA members can save dramatically on the services provided by these professionals. For more information, please visit LAPA's website, www.lapa.org.

Working Advantage

LAPA members may join a program that offers discounts up to 60% on tickets, travel, shopping, and more. LAPA helps you save money on items from clothing to theater tickets to flowers. This benefit is available by logging onto the LAPA website "Members Only" section.

United Insurance Partners

LAPA has teamed with UIP - United Insurance Partners - to bring LAPA members the opportunity to purchase health, dental, and/or vision insurance. When you access UIP through the link provided on the Benefits webpage, you will find an array of insurance products available for you to purchase with companies such as Blue Cross, Aetna, and many other top insurance companies. Please visit LAPA's website, www.lapa.org, for more information.

NALA Affiliation

LAPA is an affiliated member of the National Association of Legal Assistants. NALA is the nation's leading professional association for paralegals. As a member of an affiliated association, the initiation fee for individual membership in NALA is waived for LAPA members. NALA boasts some of its own benefits. Access its NALA Campus Live for online continuing legal education, self-study courses, and preparation for the CLA/CP Exam. Its annual educational convention in July allows you to expand your network beyond your state's borders as you network with other paralegals from around the country, attend educational institutes and member related activities.

Freelance/Contract Paralegal Listing

LAPA provides a "Freelance Paralegals" section on its website to assist LAPA members who are freelance, contract, or independent paralegals, as defined by California Business and Professions Code Section 6450. For a nominal fee of \$60, you can post your contact information on LAPA's website for six months. You can sign up online through the Members Only section of the website.

Membership Database

Available only to LAPA members, the Membership Database is a valuable tool in locating other paralegals or legal professionals with whom you have worked or networked. The Membership Database also provides up-to-date contact information as well as members' legal specialties and geographical areas.

Credit Union

LAPA members are eligible to join Southland Credit Union. Southland Credit Union, with over \$435 million in assets, offers an online presence, a new full-service branch in downtown Los Angeles, an upgraded ATM network and five new proprietary ATMs. Southland Credit Union has expanded its product line by introducing a new high-yielding certificate of deposit, a Rewards Plus program and a market-leading high interest yielding checking account. Southland Credit Union prides itself on outstanding service to its members and has recently earned a 95 percent Member Service satisfaction rating.

Lorman Education

LAPA is dedicated to providing efficient and readily-available continuing education opportunities that meet the needs of our members and enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies. LAPA has partnered with Lorman Education to provide continuing education in a variety of topic areas. LAPA members receive a 20% discount on all orders.





Bet Tzedek Needs YOUR Help!

Intake Services Volunteers Sought

Bet Tzedek's Intake Services volunteers conduct pre-screening assessments in order to determine the appropriate course of action for individuals who call seeking legal assistance. Our volunteers are often the first contact our community has with our organization, and we rely on our volunteers to handle a high volume of calls from a diverse population of individuals with a broad range of needs.

Gain Issue Spotting and Client Interview Experience

Under attorney supervision, volunteers develop foundational legal skills, including learning to spot legal issues; to conduct telephone interviews with potential clients dealing with challenging, stressful situations; determining what information provided by the caller is relevant; and to begin to develop judgment of potential cases in a wide array of legal areas. Volunteering with Intake Services also provides first-hand knowledge of the landscape of legal services available in Los Angeles County and exposure to and understanding of the issues faced by the communities we serve.

Commitment: 40+ hours. During the school year, we ask that volunteers commit to working in the Intake Center for 8-10 hours/week for 8-10 weeks. During certain periods, such as winter break, we may be able to accommodate schedules that include a higher number of hours per week for fewer weeks. Work must be completed during normal business hours (M-F, 9am-5pm).

To Apply: Email volunteer@bettzedek.org or call (323) 549-5839 with any questions. Spanish language skills are highly preferred, but not required.

WELCOME NEW & RENEWING LAPA MEMBERS

The following is a listing of legal professionals and paralegal students who joined or renewed their membership in Los Angeles Paralegal Association within the last 30 days. The employer and work telephone number also are included when available. If any information is incorrect, please fax corrections to 866-460-0506, call LAPA at 866-626-LAPA or e-mail updates to info@lapa.org.

VOTING

Charlene Aparicio	Independent Contractor	charlene.aparicio@gmail.com
Marie Bernadac-Esparza	Lockheed Martin Corporation	marie.bernadac@lmco.com
Leighann Burick	Kading Briggs LLP	lburick@kadingbriggs.com
Maree Contreras	DaCorsi Placencio	manac@dacorsi.net
Linda Diane Feldman	Law Offices of David A. Leveton	linda.feldman@sbcglobal.net
Toni Fratiello	Haight Brown & Bonesteel LLP	toni_fratiello@yahoo.com
Aide Gaytan	Zubiate Beauchamp, LLP	divinaluzjim@yahoo.com
Jordan Ginter	Dykema Gossett LLP	jgint1024@gmail.com
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Ashley Hoffman	Boyd Law, APC	ashley21122@yahoo.com
Rosamond Hopkins		rosamond.hopkins@gmail.com
Robin Jones	Hoffman Sabban & Watenmaker APC	robin@hswlaw.com
Rachel Lichter	NBCUniversal	rclichter@gmail.com
Sandy Lopez	ACTS Law	slopez@actslaw.com
Courtney Luengo	Hennig Kramer Ruiz & Singh	courtney@employmentattorneyla.com
Jacqueline Mahoney	Self	taleajm@hotmail.com
Bertha Mira	Shouse Law Group	bertha_mira@outlook.com
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Krystal Pazanti	Jeff Anderson & Associates, PA	krystal.pazanti@andersonadvocates.com
Cecily Ruben	Guzman Law Group	cruben@guzmanlg.com
Hetal Shah	Product Outlet, Inc.	hetalusa7@gmail.com
Jasmine Sirivoharn	National Choice Lawyers	jsirivohh@gmail.com
Sally J Smith	The Demand Writer	thedemandwriter@yahoo.com
Diane Supple	Green Dot Corp.	dmsuppl@cs.com

VOTING cont.

Michele M. Vader	Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP	mmvader@gmail.com
Christina Verdugo	Farzad and Ochoa Family Law Attorneys	christinaverdugo214@gmail.com
Jacqueline Zamora	Department of Justice	jacqueline.zamora@doj.ca.gov
Ivan Zogovic, ACP	Office of the California Attorney General	zogovic.ivan@gmail.com

ASSOCIATE

Carolyn Davis	Family Leave	csdavis95127@gmail.com
Enrique Lopez, Jr.	Aperture, LLC	enriquelopez1@gmail.com

STUDENT

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Randle Bloom	Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield	starttwofor@gmail.com
Elise Charif		elisecharif@gmail.com
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Time : 8:30am – 3:30pm
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We look forward to seeing you.
Mark your calendar and stay tuned for further details!