

# the VERDICT

DENTON COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2011

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Vicki Schmidt, CLA



Change... Change...Change... That is frequently the emphasis in the month of January. Change the year on all the document formats you use, change your exercise program, change your diet, change in leadership in DCPA...I am looking forward to 2011 with excitement. It will be good to see you all at the first meeting of the year and to encourage you to get on board with our focus for this New Year – *Self Improvement and Taking Care of Ourselves*. We got a preview of that at our Christmas party when we all received guest memberships to a Denton Health Club, some beauty products, and got a chance to relax and enjoy the company of friends. I join with all of our members to thank the Social Committee, headed by Barbara Denton and Pam Snavelly, for their hard work in putting together the goodie bags and gathering some really great door prizes.

I encourage each of you to consider this: we get legal education at most of our monthly meetings to update our knowledge of issues in the legal field in which we have chosen to work, but our organization also offers a \$500.00 scholarship annually to a person who sits for exams to qualify for certification or specialty designations. If you have been considering taking the NALA certification exam, the Texas Board of Legal Specialization exam for paralegals, or the NFPA certification exams, please make those plans and apply for the scholarship. If you are considering taking the NALA certification exam, I strongly urge you to consider taking the review course offered by the North Texas Paralegal Association in Dallas, in mid March. The information was sent to you by email earlier this month. One of the best ways to improve yourself is to seek certifications that acknowledge

your specialized knowledge of your field. Earning a certification designation will certainly boost your self esteem and your professional image.

The Executive Committee and the Committee Chairmen met in December to discuss ways to implement our theme for this year and ways to support the goals and objectives of our organization. Our CLE committee, headed by Michelle Beecher, starts off 2011 by arranging for a half-day of talks with the judges, and with the District Clerk and County Clerk so we can get a better understanding of how the different courts and clerks' offices are run. Since almost all of us must deal with the courts and the clerks' offices, the information will be a good refresher course for all of us in how we are expected to deal with those offices. That event will take place February 24<sup>th</sup>, so I hope you will be proactive in informing your employers about the need for you to be out of the office for that afternoon.

See you at Oakmont for lunch and CLE with the Denton District Attorney Paul Johnson, on Thursday, January 27, 2011.

## 2011 DCPA OFFICERS

President – Vicki Schmidt  
President Elect – Michelle Beecher  
Secretary/Parliamentarian – Gloria Porter  
Treasurer – Lisa Pittman  
Historian – Ava Watson

## 2011 DCPA COMMITTEES

CLE Committee -  
Michelle Beecher, Chairman  
Lisa Bowles  
Michelle James  
Christine Piott

Fund Raising Committee -  
Jenna Earhart, Chairman  
Lisa Pittman

Legal Directory Committee -  
Ava Watson, Chairman  
Lisa Pittman  
Gloria Porter  
Carol Pelzel  
Denise League  
Debbie Maldonado

Membership Committee -  
Sunnie Palmer, Chairman  
Jennifer Harris  
Denise League  
Christine Piott

Newsletter Committee -  
Lisa Pittman, Chairman  
Jennifer Earhart  
Jackie Cox

Social Committee -  
Jennifer Flores – Chairman  
Barbara Denton  
Pam Snavely  
Landra Turner  
Amy Riggs

Ad Hoc Scholarship Committee-  
Information not available at this time

anyone who would like to join, please contact Sunnie Palmer at [sunnie@zellmerlaw.com](mailto:sunnie@zellmerlaw.com) or (940) 383-2674.

**BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE DENTON COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION INCLUDE:**

- ❖ Receipt of the monthly issue of *The Verdict*
- ❖ Free Accredited CLE at monthly meetings
- ❖ Continuing Legal Education seminars on various topics
- ❖ Job Bank
- ❖ Motivation
- ❖ Networking with other paralegals in Denton County
- ❖ Professional growth through participation
- ❖ Communication and promotion of professional conduct and responsibility
- ❖ Continued individual and professional growth as paralegals
- ❖ Fulfillment that is received from being involved in the direction of the paralegal profession

**BIRTHDAYS**

Our members with February birthdays are:



- Jennifer Harris (2-10);
- Debbie Mitchell (2-10);
- Ruthann Stovall (2-14);
- Adriana Sanchez (2-14);
- Glenda Hill (2-18);
- Kim Guertler (2-19); and
- Bruce Stewart (2-22)

Hope each of you will have a **Happy Birthday!**

**DCPA WEBSITE**

Check out what's new on our website at [www.dentonparalegals.org](http://www.dentonparalegals.org). Let us know what you think, and what you would like to see on our website in the future. If you have any changes that need to be made to your contact information, please let us know.

**MEETING NOTICE**

The Denton County Paralegal Association November Luncheon will be on Thursday, **January 27, 2011** at noon at Oakmont Country Club, 1901 Oakmont Drive, Corinth, Texas.

The all-inclusive cost of lunch is \$13.00 payable when you sign in. We cannot accept debit or credit cards, or make change, so please bring **exact** amount of cash or a check made payable to DCPA.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Yolanda Jacques**, *Harris Cook, LLP*, Active;  
**Robert E. McCubbins**, *Bowen Law Group*, Active

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED** and can be made via e-mail to [vicki@cmlovesless.com](mailto:vicki@cmlovesless.com). The Deadline for making your reservation is **5:00 P.M. on Monday, January 24, 2011.**

**REMINDER:** Membership renewals are due by **January 31, 2011.**

**Notice: We must notify Oakmont of the number attending prior to the meeting for preparation of adequate food and seating arrangements. Those that have RSVP'd will get**

Please encourage those paralegals and others in the legal field, whom are not currently members, to join. If you know of

**served and seated first. We cannot guarantee that you will have seating or food if you do not RSVP. Please note we are also required to bill those individuals who make reservations and do not attend.**

**Directions to Oakmont: Oakmont Country Club is located in Corinth off I-35 East between Lewisville and Denton.**

- Exit 461 – Shady Shores Rd/Post Oak Drive
- Turn west onto Post Oak Drive
- Turn right (west) onto Robinson Rd at stop sign
- Turn left (south) onto Oakmont Dr – you will see an Oakmont sign in the median
- Turn right into Oakmont Country Club (second right)



**AGENDA FOR JANUARY MEETING**

Date: Thursday, January 27, 2011

Place: Oakmont Country Club  
1901 Oakmont Drive  
Corinth, Texas 76210

Time: Noon

- I. Welcome members and guests
- II. Old Business
  - a. Approve the November minutes and Treasurer’s report
- III. New Business – Committee Reports
  - a. CLE – Michelle Beecher
  - b. Fund Raising – Jenna Earhart
  - c. Legal Directory -- Ava Watson
  - d. Membership – Sunnie Palmer
  - e. Newsletter – Lisa Pittman
  - f. Social Committee – Jennifer Flores
- IV. Introduction of guest speaker by Michelle Beecher
  - a. Guest Speaker – Paul Johnson, Denton County District Attorney
- V. Adjournment and door prizes

**JANUARY SPEAKER INFORMATION**



This month’s guest speaker is the Denton County District Attorney, Paul Johnson. Mr. Johnson will be speaking on "Policies and Procedures of the District Attorney's Office".

**EVENTS/NEWS**



Do you have a recipe, informative tip/idea, or joke, etc. that you would like to share with your fellow DCPA Members? If so, please submit your idea to Jenna Earhart at [jeahart@hbvwlaw.com](mailto:jeahart@hbvwlaw.com). Thank you!



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**DCPA Celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**

In 1991 a group of local legal assistants decided to organize a group to help our profession become recognized as the valuable legal asset that we all knew we were. We began by meeting in the conference rooms of various law firms in Denton. Our first meeting was in the Lawyers Building on the Southwest corner of the square at Hickory and Elm. This building burned some years ago. Wanting to include all legal assistants in the Denton County area, we decided on the name Greater Denton Legal Assistants Association.

In 2005, the State Bar officially recognized the legal assistant as paralegal, and the name of the Association was changed to Denton County Paralegal Association. Over the years there have been many wonderful members involved in the Association that have now moved on to other areas or positions. We appreciate all that have helped keep the Association going through the years.

Can you name the paralegals in the picture below that were founding members of the Association and are still active members?



**DCPA'S ANNUAL CLE SEMINAR**

*“Changing Faces of the Denton County Courts”*

Date: Thursday, February 24, 2011  
Location: Oakmont Country Club  
Time: 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Cost: \$20.00 (includes lunch & snacks)  
CLE Credit: 5 hours

Attached is the flyer and registration form.

Contact Michelle Beecher with any questions at [mbeecher@dentonlaw.com](mailto:mbeecher@dentonlaw.com) or (940) 891-0003..

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

If you have an open position in your office or know of another office that has an opening and would like to e-mail it to the members and have it posted in the next newsletter, please contact Lisa Pittman at (940) 387-3518 or [lpittman@hbvwlaw.com](mailto:lpittman@hbvwlaw.com).

**2010 CACDC CHRISTMAS FAMILIES**



A special **thank you** to all that contributed to the Children Advocacy Center of Denton County's 2010 Christmas families. It is such a great honor to be associated with such generous people! Attached is a letter of appreciation from the CACDC.

**DCPA FUNDRAISER ANNOUNCEMENT**



The Denton County Paralegal Association is holding its annual fundraiser selling *Valentine's Day Cookie Grams*. Each cookie gram includes a variety of sweets wrapped in festive packaging and a personalized message tag. You may order for friends, co-workers and/or family members for \$5.00. We are looking for volunteers to donate treats (homemade or store bought) and to help assemble the cookie grams. Please email Jenna Earhart, Fundraising Committee Chair, at [jeahart@hbvwlaw.com](mailto:jeahart@hbvwlaw.com) or call at (940) 387-3518 if you will donate treats or if you can help assemble. You will be receiving the order forms via email soon.

**SUPPORT OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS**



**Our Sustaining Members give so much to our Association, please be sure to think of them when you are in need of services that require their specialty!**