

# the verdict

DENTON COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2011

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Vicki Schmidt, CLA



“Be the Change” – it’s one of those catchy slogans I’ve heard in the last few years. Have you ever wondered what advertizing whiz kid thought that one up? It turns out that was part of the slogan used by a “space adventurer” on the patch she designed for her space suit. I just finished reading the autobiography of Anousheh Ansari, *My Dream of Stars*. The book recounts the story of how she accomplished her life-long dream of going to outer space, or “flying among the stars” as she called it in her childhood.

Anousheh grew up in Iran but a few years after the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power, it became evident to her family that the oppression of women would become a way of life in Iran. Since she lived in a household with her mother and sister, that was a big problem for them so they began the long process of immigrating to the USA. By the time she was in high school, the family was living in Virginia. High school was difficult for Anousheh because although she spoke several languages, English wasn’t one of them...but she overcame that obstacle. She went on to earn a degree in engineering and then earned several higher degrees as well.

After several years of work in the telecommunications field, Anousheh and her husband Hamid Ansari moved to Plano, Texas and started their own business. Anousheh was the CEO of the endeavor which flourished because of the unique software solutions developed by the company. They sold the business and made a lot of money as a result of the long hours and hard work they put into developing their “.com” venture. Her story continues with an

account of how Anousheh used some of those funds to make her dream come true.

It seems the Russian space agency funds part of the costs of space exploration by selling seats on their space shuttle. Anousheh contracted with a company called Space Adventures to try to qualify for a seat on the Russian space shuttle. After being accepted by Space Adventure, she underwent six months of rigorous mental and physical testing and endurance training. When a Japanese business man was disqualified for a position on the shuttle, Anousheh won the right to take his seat on the shuttle that was leaving three weeks later. Shortly after her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday Anousheh Ansari spent a week at the International Space Station in October 2006. One of the patches she wore on her space suit featured her motto “Imagine. Be the Change. Inspire.”

Maybe this short summary will inspire you to take a risk; to take the steps to realize your dream. Each of us have the power to imagine, to inspire and to change. What can you change?

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## 2011 DCPA OFFICERS

President – Vicki Schmidt

President Elect – Michelle Beecher

Secretary/Parliamentarian – Gloria Porter

Treasurer – Lisa Pittman

Historian – Ava Watson

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## 2011 DCPA COMMITTEES

CLE Committee -

Michelle Beecher, Chairman

Lisa Bowles

Michelle James

Christine Piott

Fund Raising Committee -

Jenna Earhart, Chairman  
Lisa Pittman  
Adriana Sanchez

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 Snavelly  
Landra Turner  
Amy Riggs

Ad Hoc Scholarship Committee-

Information not available at this time

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



- Barbara Denton (4-8);
- Jennifer Stout (4-8);
- Christine Piott (4-16);
- Janna Cryer (4-24)

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 March Luncheon will be on Thursday, **March 31, 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**

- Joni Barr**, *Mackoy, Hernandez & Qualls*, Active Member
- Christina Cain**, *The Wright Firm*, Associate Member
- Michelle Merritt**, *The Wright Firm*, Active Member
- Miranda Miller**, *Bowen Law Group*, Active Member
- Lorin Strickland**, *Law Office of Dale A. Burrows*, Active Member
- Lacey Young**, *Duane L. Coker & Associates*, Active Member

**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, March 28, 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**

**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 MARCH MEETING

Date: Thursday, March 31, 2011

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

Time: Noon

- I. Welcome members and guests
- II. Old Business
  - a. Approve the January Minutes and Treasurer's report
- III. Introduction of guest speaker by Michelle Beecher; Guest Speaker – Attorney, Rick Robertson
- IV. Adjournment and door prizes

### MARCH SPEAKER INFORMATION



This month's guest speaker is Attorney, Rick Robertson, with Koons Fuller, speaking on "Social Networking in Discovery."

### EVENTS/NEWS

**It's Spring Cleaning time! Here is a boost to get you thinking on where to start:**

**Turn a critical eye to your collections:** Most people collect something – what do you collect? Is it something that consistently brings you joy? Or is it something that you just do out of habit at this point? Does the collection itself have value? Could you perhaps "trim the fat" from this collection by getting rid of duplicates or getting rid of the items you no longer use? Also could you perhaps cut down on your spending on that hobby? Focus on trimming the things you don't feel strongly about – if you dig into things that *bother* you, you're going to eventually relapse.



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@hbwvlaw.com](mailto:jeahart@hbwvlaw.com). Thank you!

### DCPA FUNDRAISER ANNOUNCEMENT

#### SILENT AUCTION



**Donation Sign Ups are now being accepted.** – We have received some emails with items willing to be donated – a huge **THANK YOU** to those who have done that already! We definitely need more participation to make this Silent Auction a success – remember the proceeds will benefit our Thanksgiving and Christmas families we assist with each year.

Items we are looking for include: baked goods, plants, jewelry, skin care goodies, baby blankets, photography, monogrammed items, etc. If you do something as a hobby or a part-time job on the side or have a special talent in creating or making items - this is what we are looking for!

Please email Jenna Earhart, Fundraising Committee Chair, at [jeahart@hbwvlaw.com](mailto:jeahart@hbwvlaw.com) or call at (940) 387-3518, with your donation commitment. Deadline to turn in your donated item(s) is September 16, 2011.



### **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!**

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Full-time Paralegal/Legal Assistant needed for small law firm in Frisco, Texas. Must have knowledge and skills handling civil litigation and governmental representation. Some legal research, drafting, proofreading, case preparation, general office work including billing, filing, supplies, and administration. Send resume and references. Vesting SEP retirement plan. No health insurance plan.

Contact Clark McCoy at Wolfe, Tidwell & McCoy, L.L.P.  
Tel: (972) 712-3530, Fax: (972)712-3540; E-mail [mcmobile@wtmlaw.net](mailto:mcmobile@wtmlaw.net)

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@hbwlaw.com](mailto:lpittman@hbwlaw.com).

### **JANUARY MINUTES**

1. President, Vicki Schmidt, called the meeting of January 27, 2011, to order at 12:07 p.m. at the Oakmont Country Club. There were 33 in attendance, which included 28 members, 4 guests, and the speaker, all of whom were welcomed by the President.
2. President Schmidt announced that a revision had been made to November 2010 Meeting Minutes that had previously been distributed to the membership. "Number 10. was changed to reflect that after Sunnie Palmer counted the ballots for election of officers, and Lisa Pittman confirmed the count, the President announced the 2011 officers." A motion was made by Ava Watson and seconded by Michelle Beecher to accept the revision, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.
3. President Schmidt advised that the current Treasurer's Report was in the newsletter and asked for a vote of approval. A motion for approval was presented by Pamela Snavely and seconded by

Denise League, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. President Schmidt announced that the Association's annual Cookie Gram event was in process and the deadline for orders is February 4, 2011. February 11, 2011 is the deadline for payment.
5. President Schmidt announced that the Association's annual half day CLE is February 24, 2011, and encouraged everyone to attend and learn about the procedures of the new Denton County Judges, and the County Clerk and District Clerk offices.
6. President Schmidt announced that the Committee Chairs for the current year are:

Michelle Beecher – CLE

Jenna Earhart – Fund Raising – The President announced that the Fund Raising Committee was planning an auction for fall and requested members to contribute craft items for the auction

Ava Watson – Legal Directory – The President announced that a new directory was being published this year because of the many changes made in the judiciary. It was requested that all unsold directories be returned to Ava for recycling

Sunnie Palmer – Membership – The President announced that the Committee is working on ways to reach non-members and increase membership

Lisa Pittman – Newsletter

Jennifer Flores – Socials

7. President Schmidt asked if there was any other new or old business that needed discussion. There being none, she introduced Michelle Beecher, CLE Chair.
8. Michelle Beecher, CLE Chair, introduced the speaker, the Honorable Paul Johnson, Denton County District Attorney, who presented "*Policies and Procedures of the D.A.'s office.*"
9. Erin Pack won the monthly drawing for the gift presented by the Association.
10. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.