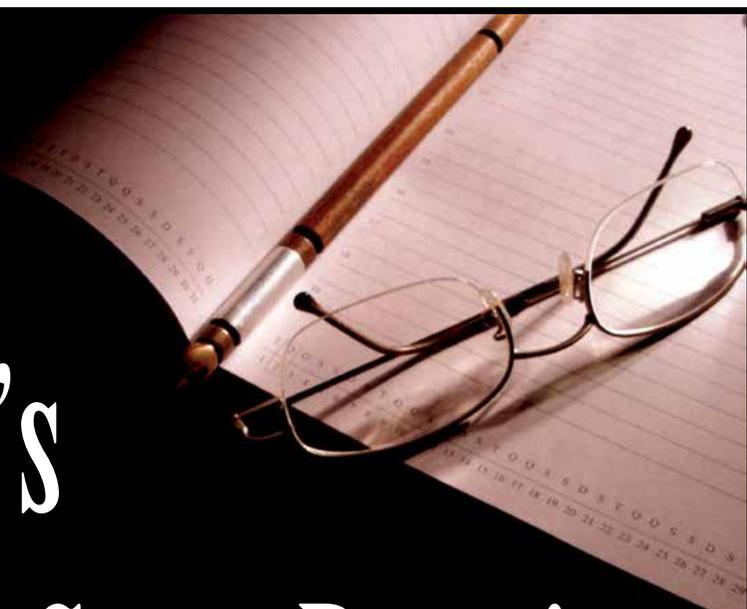




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ON THE COVER

In this issue, we examine the effect of innovation on law firm management. Articles range from potential new accounting rules, to diversity initiatives, to generational marketing.

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MY NJALA JOURNEY

BY AUDREY SERBAN

In 2003, I accepted an offer as an Office Manager for a small law firm in New York City, the start of my career in the legal industry. Coming from a background in the media industry, I quickly realized there were definite differences in what my position entailed and what goals needed to be achieved. Previously, I spent a lot of time “herding in” creative-minded individuals whereas now I was spending most of my time hand-holding attorneys. Where once I had created a breakout room with basketball hoops, a pinball machine, and bean bags promoting distraction with the intention of stimulating inspiration and imagination, now I found myself creating a war room with minimal distractions to encourage concentration and focus.

The managing partner at the time suggested that I join the Association of Legal Administrators (ALA). Of course, I had no idea what the ALA did and how it would help me, so I didn't join the organization. In fact, it wasn't until I joined my current firm that I joined the ALA, due to the fact that the HR Director was such a strong supporter. I joined without fully understanding what the ALA and NJALA had to offer. On September 13, 2006 I officially became a member of the ALA (believe it or not I still have my welcome packet) and joined the NJALA soon after.

After attending several meetings, I realized quickly how beneficial the NJALA truly was. I would look forward to networking with other members and sought advice from those more experienced than myself at the monthly meetings.

I tell you all of this to give you a glimpse into my journey. If you would have told me when I joined the NJALA in 2006 that I would someday be writing the President's message I would have said “Nah, not me,” however, here I am. I should have guessed that by having Sarah Clark and Mary Ellen Dolan as my mentors at my first National Conference, I would follow in their footsteps.

The one thing that I consistently say to others about the NJALA is what a remarkable support system it provides and how amazing people are at sharing their experiences and ideas. It is so refreshing to be able to vent to someone and have him or her totally understand what I'm going through. I've had situations where I thought my experiences were completely unique to me

and later found that others had gone through similar situations as well. I won't go into any one specific experience now except to say that one had to do with disturbing issues of digestion.

I would love nothing more than for others to experience the type of positive experiences that I've had being a member of the NJALA. With that in mind, I ask you to invite potential members as a guest to one of our meetings. As a bonus, if your guest joins the ALA and NJALA, you get a \$50.00 referral fee for each new member.

I would also love to continue growing our relationship with our Business Partners. No matter what level a Business Partner is, each one represents an outreach to YOU, the membership, and a commitment to enhance your success in the work place. Our partnership with these businesses affords us the opportunity to provide our membership with such things as educational speakers and scholarships to conferences. We cannot thank our Business Partners enough for providing us with these valuable tools that increase our individual professional success.

Make sure to take part in the “Opportunity Knocks Initiative” created by the chapter Business Partner Committee. Meet with at least three Business Partners you haven't met before and you may qualify to be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a scholarship to the 2015 National Conference, or a \$500.00 Amazon gift card (program rules are on the website under Resources). Do not forget to take time to thank our Business Partners every time you meet them!

In closing, I invite you to take advantage of all the things the NJALA has to offer and persuade others to do the same. I also personally encourage each and every member to take steps to make this an even better organization. For example, consider volunteering some time (if you haven't already) on a committee. There is certainly strength in numbers. The NJALA committee members welcome feedback regarding our past events and, of course, ideas for our future outings as well, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us. I look forward to seeing and hearing from you very soon.

Audrey Serban is Office Manager at Fisher & Phillips, LLP in Murray Hill.

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ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING— WHAT IS IT AND HOW WILL IT AFFECT THE FIRM?

BY DEIRDRE PETERSEN AND ALAN SOBEL



Congress is currently considering the Tax Reform Act of 2014 which would require a fundamental change in the way that law firms report income and are taxed by Federal and state governments. The proposed legislation, if passed, would require that any professional services firm with annual gross receipts over \$10 million use the accrual method of accounting for income tax purposes. This is a departure from the current situation under which all law firms are permitted to use the cash method of accounting regardless of annual revenue.

Although these are only proposed changes, it is important to consider the financial and managerial impact this law could have on your firm if it is adopted. In order to understand the significance of the proposed legislation, it is helpful to understand the differences between cash and accrual accounting.

What is the Difference Between Cash and Accrual Accounting?

Cash accounting is fairly simple, but the accrual method of accounting can be quite complex. The primary difference between accrual and cash accounting is the timing of when revenue and expenses are recognized.

Cash Basis; When operating on the cash basis, income is reported *when payment is received* and expenses are counted *when they are paid*.

Accrual Basis; When operating on an accrual basis, income is reported *when earned and expenses are recognized when incurred*.

Example #1 demonstrating the impact of the proposed legislation:

- A client matter is billed in November 2014.
- The client pays three months later in February of 2015.

Under the cash method, the payment is received and posted in February 2015 and that income is reported in the 2015 year.

Under the accrual method, the income is recorded when the time is billed in November of 2014 and that transaction is recorded as income in the 2014 year.

Example #2:

- January's rent is paid in late December.

Under the cash method, the expense is deductible in December *when the expense is paid*.

Under the accrual method, the expense is deductible in January *when the expense is incurred*.

These examples clearly show that the **cash method** considers collections but not billings, accounts receivable, or work in progress.

In contrast, the **accrual method** considers billings, accounts receivable, and work in progress, but not collections.

Consideration of all factors is required for a complete fiscal analysis of the firm. That said, profitability and partner income is generally based on cash flow.

A Focus on Cash

Most firms believe that the cash method provides the most reliable measure of the actual income the firm receives in return for their services. For this reason, the cash method has traditionally been the tax reporting choice of most firms, large and small.

Under the proposed legislation, this will all change.

The Impact of Tax Accounting Changes on Your Firm

Partnerships do not report income. It is the individual partners who report income and under the new legislation, partners would have to pay significantly higher taxes on that income for several years. With this change, partners would be required to report their share of the firm's work in progress and accounts receivable as income.

Although the proposal includes an adjustment which provides for the initial taxes relevant to the conversion to be amortized over four years, this could still represent a very serious financial burden for the partners of a firm. In particular, there will be a mismatch between the tax liability and when revenues are received.

(Continued on page 7)

Accrual Accounting

(Continued from page 6)

For instance, if the taxable income is \$20 million and the firm has \$8 million in receivables and work in progress, the increase in taxable profits would not be \$28 million in one year, but \$22 million over four years and each partner would be responsible for taxes on his share of that \$2 million for each of the four years.

After the conversion year, only the increase or decrease in receivables and work in progress over the prior year is treated as taxable income.

Under the legislation, if the partners are required to pay taxes on the accounts receivable and work in progress, they may be paying taxes on income they never receive.

The “2014 Report on the State of the Legal Market” published by The Center for the Study of the Legal Profession at the Georgetown University Law Center recently reported that collected realization rates have dropped from 85.32 percent to 83.49 percent, which is a record low. If the realization rate is factored in, partners would be taxed for every dollar billed and recorded as income, even though they would actually receive on average only \$0.84 of every dollar recorded.

Careful accounting will be required to accurately reflect the deduction for partially or completely uncollected receivables. But care will need to be taken because tax legislation does not currently permit the use of reserves or allowances against income.

It will take about 120 days for the \$0.84 to be realized. Since it is a common occurrence for many attorneys to be paid at the conclusion of the legal matters, it may be months or years after the work is performed before the income is actually received. Over that time, the value of that \$0.84 is reduced even more.

The accrual method of accounting will lead to complexities in the transition of partners into and out of the partnership. Lawyers in the firm will be taxed on income that the firm accrues in the current year even though they may not be with the firm when their clients actually pay the bills. A lawyer promoted to a partnership may have to contribute capital based on unrealized income.

Additional Complications

The financial burdens that are integral to the accrual accounting method will also be of tremendous significance as a firm grows organically or considers a merger. If the new growth leads to firm revenues in excess of the \$10 million limit, the costly accrual accounting method will be required and will result in the financial hardships for the partners as described.

Further, the change to accrual accounting will require a review of partnership agreements and will necessitate the evaluation of partner share allocation and partner distribution

formulas. Retirement and succession plans should be evaluated as well to be sure they are in alignment with the new accounting changes.

New Reporting Procedures for Accrual Accounting

It is important to note that the proposed changes will affect the firm’s tax reporting. Therefore, existing processes based on cash accounting will need to be changed to meet the new accrual based reporting requirements.

While most legal accounting software packages currently offer both cash and accrual accounting options, some do not, or may not, have the ability to simply convert data from one method to another. A new software package and/or the possible data conversion will most likely be costly and time consuming. Should the legislation be enacted, it is suggested that every firm assess the current system to establish what changes may need to be made.

The billing arrangements in the firm must also be evaluated with respect to the new reporting process. Monthly billing is fairly simple. However, alternative fee arrangements, contracted, contingent, and flat fee matters must be considered with respect to the timing of the recognized income.

The improvement of realization rates and collection time will remain important in the financial management of the firm. Adjustments, edit downs, and write-offs must be recorded accurately to reflect the firm’s loss of earlier reported taxable income.

Despite the dire outlook, the good news is that the proposal is just a proposal.

However, firms should have an understanding of the accrual accounting method and the potential impact these changes could have on the firm if the proposal passes.

In Conclusion

Being prepared and alert are the best first steps for any firm that is positioning itself to adapt should changes occur.

Administrators and partners can reach out now to their tax advisors to discuss updates on the proposal and avoid unpleasant “surprises” going forward. This is an excellent time to seek advice from the experts with respect to the impact of potential changes.

Deirdre Petersen is the Administrator at Skoloff & Wolfe, PC, located in Livingston.

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ERISA COMPLIANCE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE BENEFIT PLANS

BY CHRIS VANDERWOLK

A landmark Health and Welfare benefits law was passed with wide-ranging applicability and the result is that the overwhelming majority of employers are not compliant and subject to significant penalties. We have even been warned of increased audit activity in the coming years to help offset the costs of implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. How can this be sprung on employers and enforced so quickly? They've only had 40 years to prepare, since the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) was passed in 1974.

Joking aside, this long-ignored law is becoming more important day by day. The Department of Labor has grown its enforcement staff over the past few years and justifies their budget request on the basis of allowing them to:

“(a) work more aggressively in support of the outcome goal of improving health benefits and retirement security for all workers; (b) sustain effective implementation of the ACA.”

In the same budget request, they project that the enforcement activities will achieve over \$1.72 billion in “total monetary results.” This is over a 1000% return on investment, according to their budget proposal.

As if the premise of a Department of Labor audit wasn't enough to strike fear in even the most well-intentioned plan sponsor, there has been a surge in activity of medical service providers leveraging ERISA to attempt to overturn unpaid claims. Intimidating letters are sent to plan sponsors requesting all ERISA documents and warning of the penalties for non-compliance. This is a relatively new technique in the market, and the end-state is far from certain.

Background

ERISA is a large body of law designed to protect pensions and benefits for participants of employer, or employee-organization, sponsored plans. It can broadly be broken down into “Pension” and “Health and Welfare Benefits.” Our purpose is to discuss the Health and Welfare Benefits portion of the law.

Before diving into how to comply with ERISA, it's important to note who is subject to the law in the first place.

From Title 1 of ERISA, ERISA applies to “any benefit plan if it is established or maintained—(1) by any employer engaged in commerce or in any industry or activity affecting commerce; or (2) by any employee organization or organizations representing employees engaged in commerce or in any industry affecting commerce; or (3) by both.” Put in light of Roscoe Filburn's wheat growing, this is a very broad description.

There are some very important exemptions from ERISA, among them: government plans, church plans, plans maintained solely for the benefit of employees outside of the United States. Additionally, a benefit must be specifically identified in ERISA to be subject to the law, and the law specifically cites:

“(a) medical, surgical, or hospital care benefits or benefits in the event of sickness, accident, disability, death or unemployment, or vacation benefits, apprenticeship or other training programs, or daycare centers, scholarship funds, or prepaid legal services, or

(b) any benefit described in section 302(C) of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947 other than pension on retirement or death, and insurance to provide such pensions.”

With such a broad criteria for applicable sponsors and benefits, one quickly comes to realize that nearly all benefit programs are subject to ERISA, and must comply or face proscribed penalties. How does a plan sponsor comply with ERISA? Along with strict adherence to fiduciary standards, the main requirements of ERISA are:

1. Documentation
2. Disclosure
3. Reporting

Documentation

Every plan needs a document. The document is the written instrument that the plan sponsor (typically the employer) uses to describe the operation of the plan. While there is no set format, important provisions such as eligibility, funding, claims, appeals procedures, as well as specific identifying information and rights notices, must be included. In addition to the Plan Document, a Summary

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LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN MICROSOFT OFFICE PRODUCTS

BY JOSEPH JAMES IV

OMG! April 8th has come and gone, and Microsoft support for Windows XP has ended. You didn't update Windows XP and its related Microsoft Office products, now what do you do? You are now exposed to hackers who will exploit any opening they find, so, what version of Microsoft Office should you upgrade to? There is Office 2007, which is already 6 years old; there is Office 2010 which many establishments are currently using. Well, what about Microsoft's Office 2013 or Microsoft's Office 365? Should you consider one of these? What do they offer over Microsoft's Office 2010? First, let's look at the Microsoft Office history.

History

For the last 25+ years we were treated to a standard look and feel of not only Microsoft but also other vendor's products with their dropdown menu choices. Then, in 2007, Microsoft decided to change the look and feel of their Office products, migrating from dropdown choices to a Ribbon bar interface in all products except Outlook. On a Ribbon bar, users have icons (Graphical User Interface, a.k.a. GUI) replacing dropdown lists of action items. Hovering over an icon gives you a pop-up of what function it performs. Many of the icons have the same look and actions as the ones on the standard and formatting tool bars in older versions of Office.

In Office 2010, Outlook took on the look and feel of the other Office products. There were some other major enhancements to Office 2010, including the return of the "File" button. In 2011, word began to spread about Office 2013 and Office 365. Now that they are available, the question is, which version should you choose and is there a major difference between Office 2010, 2013, and Office 365?

Latest Developments

To begin, Office 2013 and Office 365 are the same, except Office 365 resides in a cloud environment as opposed to being stored locally (network or workstation). Office 2013 comes with One Drive (formally Sky Drive). Documents stored in One Drive can be accessed from anywhere as long as you have Internet access. You can even download a temporary version of Office 2013 to any device, including Tablets, when using One Drive.

What are some new features of Office 2013? Quick Access Toolbars (QAT) can now be saved for restoring or sharing purposes (same as 2010). With Internet access, inserting pictures and videos into a file (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) has been simplified. There is now online access to the Microsoft store and links to Wikipedia. Opening your document can return you to your place in the document; Word remembers where you left off, even in an on-line document from a different machine. A new "Read Mode" in Word allows you to move through a document more easily by using the arrow, spacebar, and backspace keys. In "Reading Mode" double click or tap twice with your finger on the tablet or object to enlarge it while reading; one click or tap returns it to normal. Open a PDF and edit the content in Word's editor. If there are objects in your document, alignment is easier with alignment tools. You can tell Auto Save to save the document even if you close and choose not to save the changes.

If you are an Excel user, you will like the new "Flash Fill." If you are separating or combining data from different cells, with the second iteration of your action, Excel will automatically fill the remaining cells with your action. Need a chart? Excel will automatically suggest a likely chart(s) based on your data, with easy to use formatting tools.

PowerPoint users will like the new slide transitions, and the ability to add video and pictures directly from the web without having to first save them locally. Another great new feature is the ability where only you can see your slide notes while giving a presentation (no more paper notes).

Operating Systems and Workstation Processors

Office 2013 is designed to be easily used on Smart Phones, iPhones, Tablets, laptops, and PC's in a cloud environment. However, there are other factors to be considered when moving to Office 2013—the operating systems and workstation processor.

With Windows XP no longer being supported, you will have to upgrade to Windows 7 or 8.1 to run Office 2013; it will not operate in an XP environment. In considering upgrading your operating environment, you will need to

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Latest Developments in Microsoft Office Products

(Continued from page 10)

focus on all your office applications and the operating system requirements. Some older programs will not run in Windows 7 or 8; meaning they (as well as hardware) will need to be upgraded too. This is one reason many firms have not moved from Windows XP. It is a substantial investment of hardware, software, and training. In a 2012 ILTA survey about 30 to 35 percent of law firms were still on XP. That number may be somewhat smaller today but, there is still a vast audience of XP users.

Training

If you are migrating from Office 2003, training is absolutely necessary. The new look and feel will temporarily confuse most users. An overview will help smooth the transition. If you are moving from Office 2007, focus should be given on the new features, especially Outlook. If you are upgrading from Office 2010, a few lunch and learns may suffice. Along with the Office upgrade, a mini session on some of the new features, functions, and benefits in Windows 7 or 8, will allow users to become more proficient in the use of all the tools.

As always, you will need to work closely with your I/T department on the upgrade. A migration can be lengthy depending on an organization's size because of the technical challenges and multi layered decisions to be confronted. If I/T tells you training is not necessary ...talk to someone who recently has upgraded, and they will tell you, training is a must.

Happy conversion.

Joe James is Project Support Manager for MicroStrategies, located in Denville. Joe can be reached at 973-625-7721 ext. 6444, and at jjames@microstrat.com.



ERISA Compliance for Health

(Continued from page 8)

Plan Description (SPD) must also be created. This is a plain-language description of the benefit plan and is considered the main vehicle for communicating rights of the participants and their beneficiaries. Additional documentation comes in the form of Summary of Material Modifications (SMM) when amending the plan, and Summary Annual Reports (SAR) to describe the plan's assets.

Disclosure

All of the effort that goes into creating those documents is meaningless unless they are provided to the plan participants. Plan Documents should be available for viewing at specified locations, and SPDs, SMMs, and SARs must be distributed in a timely manner to participants. In addition, all documents must be made available upon request. Sponsors commonly misunderstand their insurance policy documents (policies/contracts/booklets/certificates) to be ERISA documents, but they typically do not contain the provisions required under the law. Additionally, as seen in *Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. v. Bruch*, the plan documents afford the plan sponsor a deferential standard of review, but the documents must exist.

Reporting

The ERISA function that most sponsors are familiar with is the Form 5500 reporting. Unfortunately, most sponsors misconstrue an exemption from filing as an exemption from ERISA. According to the law, every plan subject to ERISA is required to file a form 5500. There is a large exception to this, in that fully-unfunded plans with less than 100 participants at the beginning of the plan year are not required to report. There are additional reporting requirements for specific plan types, but they exceed the scope of this article.

So we have an old law that applies to the lion's share of employee benefit programs, plan sponsors who are unaware of their obligations and risks, and an agency actively enforcing the law—what to do? Get compliant!

1. Create a plan document, either by using a Wrap Document and incorporating your policies or by writing the entire document from scratch.
2. Create and distribute SPDs, SMMs, and SARs where applicable.
3. Ensure that the people running the day-to-day operations of the plan understand every letter of every word in the aforementioned documents.

Summarizing 40 years of code and case law in 1,000 words is an impossible task, but if you take only one message from this - get compliant!

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TIPS FOR GOING PAPERLESS

BY LISA GALLAGHER

In today's hustle and bustle of the workplace there isn't much time to consider how our daily habits can affect our production levels and the overall functionality of our environment. There is one thing consistently wreaking havoc in most law firms; an abundance of paper. It becomes overwhelming to deal with all of the tangible information handed to us on a daily basis, but there is hope for the modern work-place. Technology has guaranteed us a more streamlined working environment, free of clutter and wasted productivity. Implementing a paperless office has become one of the growing trends in the "going green" revolution.

Today, law firms are looking to cut down on paper waste, find ways to streamline their productivity, and bring their document management to the modern age. Document management software has become one of the biggest contributors of going paperless and offers high level solutions for law firms that depend largely on folders, filing systems, and storage rooms. One of the biggest motivators of going paperless is the amount of money companies can potentially save. Law firms want to find ways to make more usage of their office space, decrease overhead, and increase profitability. Another motivator for going paperless and filing digitally is security, which reduces courier costs at the same time. Let's look at some cost savings that are easy to implement in this going paperless, going green initiative.

- **Ink costs and paper costs for printers reduced as documents go digital.** Although law firms are required to keep hard copies of certain cases and legal documents, think about the amount of paper and ink that is wasted on documents that can be electronically saved, emailed, and filed digitally. This will also help reduce paper clutter.
- **Cost of runtime for printers and copiers.** In larger law firms the use of large copiers and printers are a necessity, however, by cutting down on the amount of paper that is printed your firm can save money in print charges and consumable costs related to the printing equipment. Most multi-function printers have a Preview button now that allows you to view the document before the final document is complete.
- **Time spent looking for files— time is money.** It can be a daunting task spending hours looking in filing cabinets, organizing files, or searching for misfiled

documents. Document management systems help alleviate this process by organizing files digitally and keeping them readily available at your fingertips.

- **Without paper, make sure you're backing up files.** Backup solutions can include backing up to a second hard drive, to removable drives or the cloud, to minimize the risk of loss of data from a computer failure. Have a system in place for regular and consistent backing up of your information.
- **Eliminate paper faxes.** Generate faxes on your computer and have in-bound faxes delivered to your computer system. You can even electronically sign or signature-stamp outgoing documents.
- **Paperless doesn't happen overnight.** Going paperless is a progression. Depending on the size of your law firm you may need a high speed scanner to save documents digitally.
- **Opt out of paper mail.** Go online with paperless mail.
- **Share files digitally internally and externally.** You do not always have to make that trip to the printer. Free services such as Google docs can run through Gmail and allows you to work simultaneously with colleagues on the same live document. These systems even allow you to chat with others while working on your document.
- **Paperless statements and online bill paying.** The more online bill paying you do, the less you spend on postage, envelopes, and employee time coordinating invoices, checks and mailings.

The most visible impact of a paperless office is the reduction in cost of printing, mailing, shipping, courier services, paper waste, and storing paper. Over time the other benefits will become apparent: Less time spent looking for documents, case files, bills, and correspondence. The ability to access information from computer files in a matter of seconds is essential in today's legal environments. People are resistant to change, but in short... making changes by going paperless is profitable for law firms of any size.

Lisa Gallager is a Senior Account Executive at Konica Minolta Business Solutions, Inc. Lisa can be reached at 732-621-5530 and at lgallagher@kmb.s.konicaminolta.us.



COLOR BY NUMBER, MARKETING BY GENERATION

BY EDWARD C. MILLER AND
SHANA A. GILLIS



Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it.

-- George Orwell

Increasingly, we are dealing with many generations in the marketplace, and each generation has its unique experiences and characteristics. As service providers today, it is as important for us to understand different generations as it was and is to understand different cultures in a global market. Building relationships, gaining trust, and closing business is easier when you understand the unique characteristics of each generation and how they impact decision-making.

The Silent or Traditional Generation (born 1922-1945) generally will not be found actively using today's technology and social media, such as LinkedIn. The best approaches may include mailing them a letter and/or sending them appropriate information in an article or a newsletter. You could also ask for an introduction by a person that they know and trust and who will give you a good endorsement. Then, you can call to schedule a face-to-face meeting, but do not expect to be hired on the spot. You will have to pay your dues and invest in developing a relationship and earning their trust. Your message should be clear and concise, but do not dispense with the niceties.

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) are like Traditionalists in some aspects, but be prepared to be challenged. Dot all your i's and cross all your t's. They are going to have questions, and they are going to want detailed, nuanced answers. Any questions?

You could send them a letter or an email, but your best bet might be getting them on the phone or leaving them a voicemail message. You could also host client seminars and social gatherings to get face time and inspire word-of-mouth promotion. It is still about the relationship for Boomers, but it is also about convincing them that hiring you is the best decision they can make.

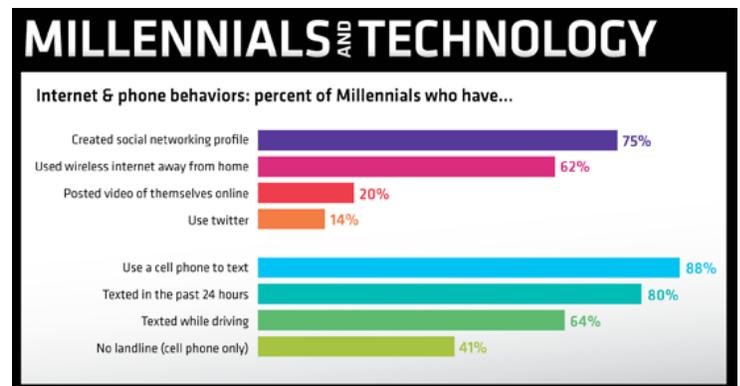
Generation X (born 1965-1980) uses technology like they were born to it and an unsolicited, mailed letter could end up in the trash without being opened. They definitely have email and use it on a daily—or even hourly or, more likely, a real time—basis. However, an email can be deleted just as fast. You have to capture their attention. So:

- Email them.
- Get to the point quickly.
- Be succinct.
- Think bullet points.

They also use the internet and social media. Make sure you have a presence on the internet, and definitely a website, and a profile on LinkedIn. An introduction and recommendation through LinkedIn would serve almost as well as an in-person, face-to-face introduction and recommendation. Lastly, show that you are open to their feedback. Thoughts?

Millennials or Generation Y (born 1981-2012) is also known as Generation Why. Why? Because they want to know the reasoning behind everything.

Like Generation X, they use email, the internet, and social media, liberally. They were *actually* born to it. Their sonogram picture was probably shared via email and/or posted on social media or elsewhere on the internet.



Source: Understanding Gen Y,

<http://www.techinasia.com/understanding-gen-y-infographic>

You will need to constantly amend your offerings to keep up with this segment. For a law firm, this means staying abreast of trends and changes in the law and the prospect's industry, and reimagining your services to directly address the trends and changes. You have to be creative and differentiate yourself from your competitors to capture their attention. Visuals, such as infographics, are important in communicating to this segment.

(Continued on page 15)

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Color By Number

(Continued from page 13)

Conclusion

When you are trying to address each generation, you have to adjust. When a client or prospect opts-in, let them select the way they receive information, snail mail vs. email. If you send a newsletter or alert, be thoughtful about how you follow-up. Would this person be more receptive to a lunch meeting, a call, or an email? If you put on a client seminar, whom should you make sure you talk to face-to-face before or after the seminar? Whom should you call and whom should you email? If your newest service is widget compliance, how do you communicate this new service? Is it a press release that will end up in the newspapers? Do you share the online version of the article on LinkedIn? Do you summarize new services on your blog with bullet points and

visuals (and share on all your social media platforms)? Is it all of the above?

If you know how to reach each generation where they are and how to communicate with them, you will get a return on your marketing dollar investment, and your bottom line will be positively impacted.

Edward Miller is Chief Marketing Officer and Shana Gillis is Marketing Manager of Norris McLaughlin & Marcus, P.A. in Bridgewater.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST MEMBERS OF NJALA

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MANAGING CLIENT PORTALS

BY ELYSSA GOLDSTEIN

Prior to 1995, the legal industry's utilization of electronic billing (commonly referred to as e-billing) was relatively non-existent. A partnership between the American Bar Association (ABA), the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), and (what we now know as) PricewaterhouseCoopers led to the development of the Uniform Task-Based Management System (UTMBS). The UTMBS is a set of activity, task, and expense codes created to standardize work performed by lawyers serving corporate clients.

Approximately three years later, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Law Department Services Group took the UTMBS practice one step further with the introduction of the Legal Electronic Data Exchange Standard (LEDES). Working in conjunction with law firms, corporate legal departments, electronic billing vendors, and time and billing software vendors, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Law Department Services Group formed the LEDES Oversight Committee (LOC) to establish the set of file format specifications intended to regulate invoice data transmitted electronically (e-billed) from a law firm to a corporation.

In the roughly 15 years since LEDES was first presented to the legal industry, e-billing has steadily risen in popularity and practice. Growing numbers of corporate legal departments are requiring the submission of invoices through various client portals, with one estimate from an October 2011 [Maryland Daily Record](#) article falling between 60 and 70 percent.

The benefits of e-billing systems (some of the most prominent being Serengeti, Bottomline Technologies, TyMetrix, Lexis Nexis, Mitrtech, Datacert, Legal Solutions, Advocate, Accuity, and Allegiant (recently converted to Legal-X)) are numerous, as detailed in ALM Legal Intelligence's [2011 Law Department E-billing Survey Report](#). Electronically providing invoices via client portals allows law firms to increase efficiency and decrease man hours devoted to billing, facilitate faster invoice approval, routing and payment, generate management reports from billing data, audit compliance with billing guidelines and other requirements of outside counsel, receive budgets and identify budget overruns, collect accruals/WIP, avoid duplication, save paper, and organize and store all legal department information in a centralized location.

Of course, client portals present their fair share of obstacles

as well. Not all law firms are able to connect to particular e-billing systems due to the accounting systems employed by the firms, implementation can be time-consuming and complex, and workflows and interfaces are not always intuitive. Additionally, as ALM Legal Intelligence reported, cost, slow-operating websites with frequent bugs, and poor customer service/support, are all prohibitive factors in selecting client portals for use.

However, as the desire for streamlined matter management becomes more and more prevalent in the legal industry, it is imperative for law firms to equip themselves with the tools necessary to properly create and transmit e-bills. Often times, clients dictate their preferred portal and law firms become responsible for training their lawyers and staff on the chosen system thereafter.

Review and documentation of client guidelines is critical and protocols must be formulated and followed to ensure all invoices are properly submitted. It is essential to question when e-bills are sent and who is responsible for sending them. If the e-billing system does not provide automated invoice approval or rejection notifications, law firms must decide who will be tasked with tracking invoices and reviewing the client portals for status updates.

The lawyers assigned to clients relying exclusively on e-billing must also be carefully selected. E-billing systems tend to scrutinize the language of an invoice much more thoroughly than an in-house lawyer reviewing a paper copy. Choosing attorneys who are not willing to invest the time and effort to study client guidelines, revise their work and promptly respond to staff billing-related requests, may prove detrimental to the overall attorney-client relationship, no matter how well a case is litigated.

Training multiple individuals on client portals is a vital safeguard. The more personnel at a law firm who are comfortable navigating these third-party vendor websites, the better. While limiting the number of people familiar with e-billing systems may initially appear to save more time and money, the potential hours and dollars lost down the line are staggering. For example, should a firm's sole e-billing coordinator become ill for an extended period of time or resign abruptly, how would this firm continue to present its invoices in a timely fashion? A

(Continued on page 31)

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FIRST ANNUAL BOWL—A—THON

BY MITCHELL RAIT, ESQ.

The First Annual NJALA Bowl-A-Thon took place on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at Eagle Rock Lanes in West Orange, to further the organization's commitment to community service. All proceeds went to the Interfaith Food Pantry serving Morris County.

In advance of the big day, bowlers solicited donations via flat pledges or an amount per pin. Over twenty members and sponsors raised over \$2,500! Participants enjoyed unlimited bowling for two hours, food, and beverages. Official NJALA Bowl-A-Thon t-shirts were distributed. A great time was had by all.

Corporate sponsors included: Applied Utility Auditors; Bederson; Coffee Distributing Corp.; Document Solutions; Gunlocke; Jamison; LexisNexis; MicroStrategies; Millicare DriKlean; OBS; Quantum Legal Solutions; RD Weis Companies and TransPerfect Legal Solutions.

NJALA plans to host another Bowl-A-Thon next year in the Spring.







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What's on Tap

ALA and NJALA 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Free ALA Webinar Series — Affordable Care Act and Your Law Firm
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Part 2: Getting a Jump Start 2014 and 2015
Available On Demand

Part 3: Affordable Care Act and Your Law Firm: The Healthcare Evolution
Available On Demand

Tuesday, September 16, 2014 (6:00-9:00 pm)

Don't miss our every popular Business Partner Expo at Mayfair Farms! This well-attended event provides something for everyone – entertainment, prizes, a chance to mingle with members and to meet our business partners.

New! ALA Business of Law Conference, October 27-29, 2014

This new 3-day event, to be held at the Sheraton in Philadelphia, PA, takes the place of the Regional Conferences. The conference offers broad based legal management education and networking. See the ALA website at www.alanet.org for more information.

Tuesday, October 14, 2014 (6:00-9:00 pm)

Monthly Meeting and Workshop at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. Topic: To State and Local Employment Law Developments and Trends, Presented by David Lichtenburg, Esq. of Fischer & Phillips, LLP. A buffet dinner will be served.

Tuesday, November 11, 2014 (6:00-9:00 pm)

Monthly Meeting and Workshop at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. Topic: To Be Decided. A buffet dinner will be served.

For information about:

Monthly meetings – Please contact Robbin Dolan of Laddey, Clark & Ryan, LLP at 973-729-1880

Educational Workshops – Please contact Nancy Harris, of Gordon Rees at 973-549-2500.

NJALA Socials – Please contact Judy Sotardi of Forman Holt Eliades & Youngman, LLC at 201-845-1000, ext. 376.

ALA Webinars: Registration and general information is posted on the ALA site, www.alanet.org/education/regconf/telesem.html.



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UP TO THE MINUTE . . . SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF THE NJALA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS HELD THROUGH MARCH, 2014

BY MARY BETH DONOGHUE

Board Members are Audrey Serban, President; Robbin Dolan, Vice President, Programs; Doreen Marino, Vice President, Membership; Kurt Brown, Treasurer; Mary Beth Donoghue, Secretary; Mary Ellen Dolan, Immediate Past President; Gayle Englert, Trustee; Mitchell Rait, Trustee; Jim Van Leir, Trustee; Lisa Cuffari, Trustee; Nancy Harris, Alternate Trustee; Teri Siegle, Alternate Trustee; Louise Ruffo, Alternate Trustee; Fran Puntillo, Alternate Trustee; and Jim Wostbrock, Alternate Trustee.

President's Report

The Board voted to make a donation in memory of our fellow member H. Michael Corr. The donation was made to the Kevin Cain Memorial Foundation, the charity of the family's choosing. The Nomination Committee proposed the new slate of Board Members at the February 11, 2014 Educational Session and the swearing in of the new Board was held at the March 11, 2014 Educational Session. Mary Ellen thanked the Board Members for their service as the current Board term expires as of March 31, 2014 and plans are in place to kick off the new year on April 1, 2014. Mary Ellen directed the Board to make all transitions during the month of March.

Treasurer's Report/Budget

The Board has decided to invest in an upgrade to the NJALA Website to include better services for our members. Presentations by web designers will be held at the transition meeting scheduled for April.

Michael Harrison reviewed the year-to-year comparison and reported that it appears all budgets are on target.

Membership Reports/Renewals

Membership renewal was underway through March. The Board decided to extend a 30 day grace period to members since the change in fiscal year poses some challenges for some firms.

Programs Report

Audrey Serban reported that all programs are on target and prepared for transition to the new Vice President of Programs.

Workshop Report

The Board was pleased with the Lunch & Learn workshop turnout and looks forward to providing more lunch and learns (in place of evening workshops) when it can be offered.

The NJSBA Annual Meeting is underway and programs are being developed by the Bar Association Relations Committee. NJALA sessions being offered at this convention are:

- The Future of the Law Firm
- The Art of Persuasion
- Ethics & Business Development
- Trust Accounting

Community Challenge

The Board is very excited about the upcoming Bowl-A-Thon scheduled for March 29th. Lanes are reserved at the Eagle Rock Bowling Alley in South Orange. This is a Community Challenge Event where member bowlers and business sponsors will join together to raise money for the Interfaith Food Pantry serving Morris County.

Business Partner Relations

Renewal of Business Partner sponsorships are underway for the new NJALA fiscal year. Mary Ellen Dolan proposed a new sponsorship program and asked the Business Partner Relations Committee to review.

Mary Ellen Dolan introduced to the Board the *Opportunity Knocks* initiative. After detailed review the Board voted to immediately introduce this initiative to the membership.

Newsletter Report

The first issue of the newsletter for 2014 is underway for printing and will be published shortly. This is the first version that is electronic copy only. Robbin Dolan has received some favorable feedback about the newsletter going electronic.

Website

Teri Siegle discussed details of several proposals that we received on upgrading the website. The Board discussed the different features that would be beneficial to the membership and selected a company to do a demonstration at the April Transition Meeting of the Board.

Socials and Other Events

Socials proposed to be planned are as follows:

1. Board Dinner— Mary Ellen President's Dinner (proposed in July, 2014)
2. Business Partner Appreciation Dinner
3. June Social—June 11th



INTRODUCING THE BUSINESS PARTNER “Opportunity Knocks Initiative”

The NJALA Business Partner Committee is pleased to introduce the new “**Opportunity Knocks Initiative**,” an incentive program designed to introduce YOU to the 2014/2015 Business Partners.

Program Rules:

- Members must meet with at least three Business Partners that they have not met with before.
- Meetings must be at least 15 minutes long, in person, and two of the three meetings must be outside of an NJALA event.
- At least one of the three meetings must be with a new Business Partner.
- Each meeting will be reported to the Chapter Business Partner Committee with the Business Partner copied.
- All three meetings must take place between April 1st, 2014 and October 31st, 2014.

Members who schedule three meetings in accordance with the guidelines outlined above will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a Scholarship to the 2015 National Conference or a \$500.00 Amazon gift card.



YOUR DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

BY SARAH CLARK

When legal professionals talk about achieving greater diversity and inclusion, what does that mean? Have you wondered how your firm's efforts compare to others? Have you wanted to start a diversity and inclusion effort, but do not know where to start?

Professionally, I was challenged in how to develop a more effective program within my firm so I volunteered to become a part of ALA's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is comprised of 9 members throughout the United States and Canada. The goal of the committee is to increase diversity in the Association, in the legal management community, and in all legal service organizations.

I think by now, we all recognize the importance of having a Diversity Initiative within our firms. According to the 2004 U.S. Census, the population is growing more diverse each year. Since 1950, the non-white U.S. population has grown from 10.2 percent of the total population to more than 26 percent in 2006.* Employees come to work every day and they bring their stereotypes and preconceived biases about other people with them. To be successful in an increasingly diverse world, leaders must be able to manage and leverage the differences that exist in their workforce, suppliers, and clients to develop workplace harmony for all employees. Further, anyone who has assisted in the completion of a client's RFP knows that our clients are looking to engage firms that recognize the importance of Diversity within the workforce. Many corporations now ask for specific numbers concerning Diversity ratios and I imagine, this information carries great weight in the decision-making process when referring work to law firms. The programs you develop will help to determine if your employees continue with your firms or move on to a more inclusive company.

ALA's Diversity Committee realized that many members needed assistance with developing effective programs and as a result, launched the Diversity Initiative Scorecard – Roadmap to Change. This scorecard is a resource that will assist those who wish to develop an initiative or expand an existing program based upon a list of Best Practices.

The Scorecard was designed to help you, as a firm leader, increase awareness of and sensitivity to the differences among our workforce and to advance the concepts of inclusiveness and acceptance. To help meet these goals, ALA has created leadership

panels, educational programs, and the new Scorecard. Our committee is eager to be on the forefront of creating a standard of measurement for law firms and ALA chapters with regard to diversity and inclusion.

Whatever reasons lead your legal organization to develop and implement a diversity program, one thing remains consistent: Be prepared. Because the process is fluid and takes time, it is essential to provide forethought and to acquire support for the initiative at all levels of the organization. To stand the test of time, administrators must be proactive, plan ahead, and establish the foundation for a diversity initiative that is flexible and reflective of their organization's unique culture.

As mentioned earlier, to help you along in the process of developing or expanding your Diversity Initiative, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee has created ALA's Diversity and Inclusion Scorecard – Roadmap to Change for Law Firm Leaders. You can find this Scorecard on ALA's Website on the Diversity Page. Many questions on the scorecard deal with specific policies or practices within workplaces, while others are informational questions intended to help track trends and better understand how organizations of different sizes are approaching diversity and inclusion.

We are hopeful this scorecard will help to instill a spirit of accountability while providing the much needed educational components to begin to guide your firm along the path to creating successful diversity and inclusion programs.

We have identified 53 best practices for law firms and placed them into seven categories:

- Firm Leadership
- Firm Culture
- Firm Policies
- Professional Development
- Organizational Diversity
- Community Involvement
- Supplier Diversity

Also on ALA's Diversity Page are monthly spotlights of significant diversity highlights and tips for how you can celebrate them in your workplace. In the very near future, attached to

(Continued on page 28)

A Quarter Past



January, 2014

The Monthly Meeting and Education Session was held on Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. This financial session was presented by Russell B. Shinsky, CPA, Partner with the New York firm of Anchin, Block & Anchin LLP, and focused on “Law Firm Structure, Firm Capital, and 2014 Income Taxes.”



From left: Russell Shinsky; Curtis Turpan, Esq., and Ronald Barr, Harwood Lloyd; Doreen Marino, Lerner, David, Littenberg, Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP; and Sponsor, Noel Santiago, Herbert L. Jamison & Co., LLC.

A Lunch and Learn Workshop on Lease Negotiations took place on Wednesday, January 29, 2014 at the offices of Budd Lerner, P.C. Presenters were Roger Cantor and Eric Ladden, both Principals of Cornerstone Real Estate Group, LLC.

February, 2014

The Monthly Meeting and Education Session was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2014 at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. This professional development session was presented by Judy Hissong of Nesso Strategies and focused on “The Power of the Mind.” At this meeting the Nomination Committee presented to the Membership the 2014-2015 Board Members.



From left: Judy Hissong; Gina Fresolone, Elias Sellitti, LLC; Audrey Serban, Fisher & Phillips, LLP; Margaret Hand, The Weiss Group; and Cynthia Landis, Gennet, Kallmann, Austin & Robinson, P.C.

March, 2014

The Monthly Meeting and Education Session was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2014 at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange. This technology session was presented by Steve Salz and Tim Horigan of Advance2000. At this meeting the 2014-2015 Board was sworn in by Pat McGovern for a term beginning April 1, 2014.



From left: Tim Horigan, Steve Salz; Sponsor, Julie Rhatican Nelson, Esquire Deposition Solutions; Kurt Brown, Einhorn Harris Ascher Barbarito & Frost, P.C.; and Michelle Cohen, Schneck Law Group, LLC.

(Continued on page 28)

A Quarter Past

(Continued from page 27)



2014-2015 Board Members

Due to popular demand, a repeated Social Security Dinner Workshop was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at the offices of Greenberg Traurig. Amanda Lott and John Zeltmann, both Financial Advisors from Regent Atlantic presented “Social Security— Not Your Grandma’s Social Security Strategies.”

NJALA held its first Annual Bowl-A-Thon on Saturday, March 29, 2014 at Eagle Rock Lanes in West Orange. This is a Community Challenge Event where member bowlers and business sponsors joined together to raise money for the Interfaith Food Pantry serving Morris County. Just another great example of our organization’s commitment to the New Jersey community.



First Annual Bowl-A-Thon

April, 2014

Alfred Fiesel, Principal/Senior Project Director, and Holly Williamson, Director of Design, Nelson, Chicago & New York, presented “Designing the Legal Workplace—Building

Blocks for Long-Term Profitability and Viability” at the April 8 chapter meeting held at the Highlawn Pavilion in West Orange.



From left: Alfred Fiesel; Holly Williamson; Sponsors Beth O’Brien and Philip Gerlach, Gunlocke; Anette Anello, Day Pitney, LLP; and Doreen Formato, Schwartz, Simon, Edelstein & Celso, LLC.

Your Diversity Initiative

(Continued from page 26)

this scorecard will be links to tools to help you implement these programs within your firm. Rather than just tell you to develop a Diversity Strategic Management Plan, we will provide a link to sample plans so you will not have to reinvent the wheel. We will provide links to sample policies, reports, and links to speakers who can assist your firm with sensitivity training and other diverse training topics.

We are very excited about ALA’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee and this Scorecard and we hope you will be too.

Sarah Clark is the Director of Administration at McElroy Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter, LLP in Newark.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004, “U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin,”
 <<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>>
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BY MARY ELLEN DOLAN AND LOUISE RUFFO



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(Continued on page 31)



HATCHES, MATCHES & DISPATCHES

BY CINDY LANDIS

The winter was a long one for everyone; the temperature has finally turned in our favor. I searched for the perfect quote that is so true...

“No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.” ~ Proverb from Guinea

My husband and I flew to the windy city of Chicago in March to attend the National Mock Trial Competition in which our son, Steven, was participating. He and his team from Quinnipiac School of Law competed in four trials, making it to the semi-finals. Here is a picture of his group on the last day of competition.



From left: Steven, Alexandra, Rob, and Phil Landis

We are very proud of all of them; their professionalism and support for each other was overwhelming.

Law school graduation is scheduled for Mother's Day, May 11, 2014; it is sure to be a perfect day for all the mothers in attendance.

My daughter, Carol and her husband, John, remain in Maryland working on their new home. They too have news — a trip to Italy in October. They will be staying at a villa in Sienna with ten friends whom she meet while studying aboard in 2004. She had been hoping to return for a visit after having such a wonderful experience while still in college.

And now for news from some of our NJALA members.....

Susan Weinreb (Goodwin Procter, LLP) passed the PHR (Professional in Human Resources) examination in December.

Congratulations Susan!

Sarah Clark (McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter) and her daughter Patricia spent New Year's with Mickey Mouse and friends on a Disney Cruise. Here is a picture of the three of them. She reports they had a blast! Sarah also went to Paris on January 29 for four days (without Patricia) for her dear friend's 40th Birthday bash. Ooh la la...



From left: Sarah and Patricia Clark and Mickey

Karen Steinberger (Saiber LLC) announced that on the professional front, effective January 1st, the firm of Marcus, Brody, Ford & Kessler, L.L.C. joined Saiber in Florham Park.

Karen just returned from her annual trip to New Orleans— this time to attend the French Quarter Festival, a remarkable gathering of all Louisiana musicians throughout the Quarter. She also met up with New Orleans ALA member Ray Lightell and his wife for a few drinks in the Quarter while she was there.

Karen's next adventure will be in May when Bob and she will be joining her son, Ryan, and daughter-in-law, Stefanie, in Key West for the Songwriter's Festival. After that they won't be trekking off until June when they will go with family to the Outer Banks.

Angela Segal (Latham & Watkins, LLP) reports that Steve and she will become grandparents for the first time. Their son Andrew & his wife, Marissa expect to be parents in early August.

(Continued on page 33)

Hatches Matches & Dispatches

(Continued from page 32)

Angela says they are really excited about the news.

Ron Henry (Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer) says this winter brought another visit to Leipzig, Germany to see twin grandsons, Oscar and Andre, just before their first birthday. Ron will be visiting granddaughter Norah in the spring. She lives on Eleuthera in the Bahamas.

Oscar and Andre



Linda Gerber (Einhorn Harris Ascher Barbarito & Frost) has some news! Her family continues to grow. Her son, Gregory, and his long-time girlfriend, Katie, got engaged in January. No date has been set yet, but she is anticipating a spring 2015 wedding. She reports they are very happy and excited!

Teri Siegle (Ansell Grimm & Aaron) reports that her son, MacGregor, will be graduating high school the end of June and will be off to George Mason University in Fairfax, VA in the fall to study Game Design. Her daughter, Tandy, is wrapping up her second year at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Florham Park where she is majoring in Humanities as well as focusing on becoming an elementary school teacher. Teri and her husband will be empty nesters in the fall and she's not sure if she is supposed to be happy or sad about the situation.

John Hagy (Podvey Meanor) says that his daughter, Taylor, received an award from Montclair State University recently for being only one of 2 students with a 4.0 grade average and she also received the outstanding freshman award from the History department.



John and Taylor Hagy

Barbara Herbert (Stein McGuire Pantages & Gigl, LLP) reports that her 14 year old son, Robert Thomas Herbert, made Eagle Scout. Robert is the 7th Kenilworth Eagle Scout from Troop 83. The Court of Honor was at the VFW in Kenilworth. There were many in attendance, including Senator Leonard Lance, Assemblyman Bramnick, Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage and Kenilworth Mayor Kathi Fiamingo.

Robert completed his Eagle Scout requirements in just 3 years, and he is believed to be the youngest Eagle Scout in New Jersey. Other than the required twelve Eagle Merit Badges, Robert has earned an additional thirty Merit Badges. He installed a new vinyl tile floor at St. Theresa's School in Kenilworth where he attends the 8th grade this year.

Robert Herbert with his mother and father



As an administrator's work is never done, I must say "goodbye". Until next time...

Cindy Landis is the Office Administrator of Gennet Kallmann Antin & Robinson in Parsippany

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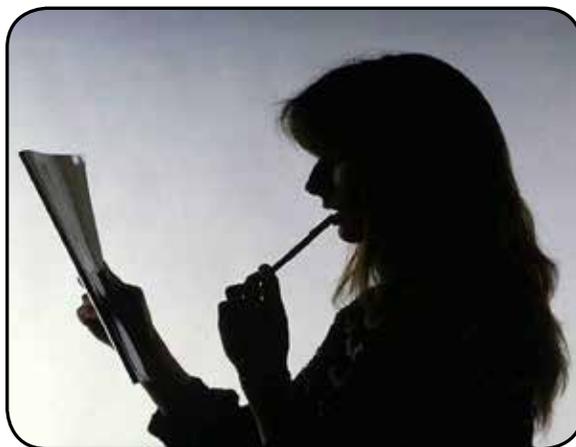
Q & A: TODAY

BY ELLI ALBERT



Assuming no constraints whatsoever, identify one problem of any nature in your office that, in a perfect world, you would like to fix—and how you might fix it.

Doreen Marino of Lerner David Littenberg Krumholz & Mentlik, LLP: If I won the law firm lottery so to speak, one of the first things I would do is fix the physical working environment. A large portion of manager's time is dealing with personality issues and, of course, the complaints about what everybody else is doing. I would convert all employees to work areas with solid walls on the bottom half and high glass walls on the top. This would enable the firm to utilize more space without making anyone feel "closed in." It also prevents "chatting" and avoids the arguments of people getting on each other's nerves. The glass walls also provide the visibility that managers and supervisors need to quickly assess workloads and workflow.



Anonymous Law Firm:

While we may have big problems to fix in our office, I believe sometimes it's the little things that can make a difference! Therefore, in a perfect world, I wish I had the powers to sprinkle the fairy dust to make the following wishes come true.....I wish that when the dish washer was full in the break room, someone would happily volunteer to empty it; when the water cooler needs a new 5-gallon jug, the person who just took the last drop would replace the empty with a new one; when the soda in the fridge is low, the person taking the last one will put the warm ones in to get them cold for the next person; when someone pulls off the last piece of paper towel, they will walk two feet to the closet and put a new roll on; and finally, when the Keurig machine is running low on water, they would simply fill it up for the next person and not leave it empty. Little things like that would make the workplace a considerate environment. Unfortunately, these little acts of kindness seem to never happen.

Barbara Hughes of Littler Mendelson: I wish I could find a great way to organize the tabs in the supply room!

Elli Albert of Fox Rothschild LLP: Mine is simple. We have a strict prohibition against overtime. One of the results is that my office is drowning in back filing that the staff just can't seem to get to. In a perfect world, I would love to have at least two or three filing clerks to remove this task from my staff.

Anonymous Law Firm: One problem is the growing divide between the staff and attorneys in different practice groups. We never used to have this problem, but as we grow bigger there are divisions forming, where certain groups get preferential treatment.

The best solution is for everyone to "follow the rules" instead of bending them for certain people.

Mitchell Rait, Esq., of Budd Lerner, P.C.: Paper, paper, and more paper! If there were no time constraints, cost constraints, and culture constraints, I would first shred every piece of superfluous paper in the office, and then scan necessary documents. After reducing the amount of paper in the office, I would implement a scanning process going forward. Then I would reduce the quantity of file cabinets and beautify the office, and make it run more efficiently.

Elli Albert is the Office Administrator of Fox Rothschild LLP in Roseland.

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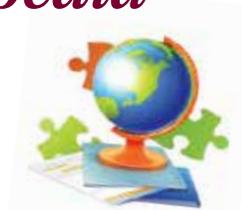
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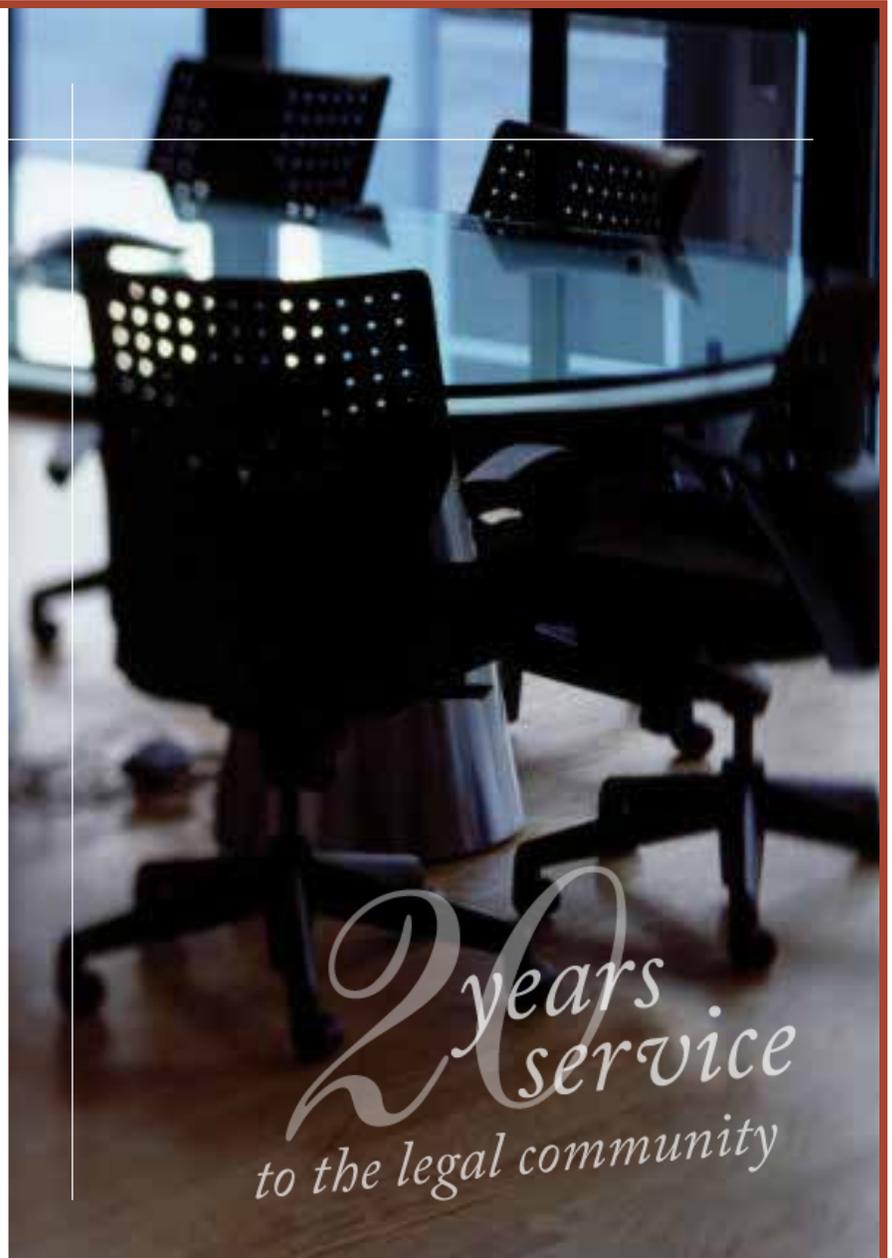
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