



SMPA

Spring - 2022

The Liaison



Smoky Mountain Paralegal Association (SMPA)

SMPA is an affiliated association of NALA - The Paralegal Association. SMPA welcomes new members. While our emphasis is on promoting paralegals in Tennessee, SMPA does not restrict membership by state of residence or employment and has welcomed paralegals from other states who wanted to take advantage of our membership benefits.

Membership in the Smoky Mountain Paralegal Association is open to paralegals, students in paralegal programs, attorneys, law firms, corporations and businesses promoting the paralegal profession, and educational institutions providing paralegal programs.



U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice John Catron

Associate Justice John Catron (1837 - 1865) was the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice from the State of Tennessee. He was nominated on President Andrew Jackson's last day in office, March 3, 1837, and confirmed on March 8, 1837. His was one of two new seats on the Court authorized by the Judiciary Act of 1837, which increased the seats on the U.S. Supreme Court from seven to nine.

The Judicial Circuits Act of 1866, would reduce the number of seats from nine to seven after Justices Catron's death. Justice Catron was opposed to secession and wished to keep Tennessee from seceding even though he was a slave owner. He sided with the majority in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*. He was also the first Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

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Case in Review

In the Court of Appeals of Tennessee at Nashville. September 22, 2021 Session. Bonnie S. Bodine v. Long John Silver's LLC. M2021-00168-COA-R3-CV. Filed January 14, 2022. Go to www.tsc.state.tn.us Enter M2021-00168-COA-R3-CV in the search box on the left.

- Do you agree with the ruling in this matter?
- When contacting a franchise or any business entity for legal service of process, make sure you have the correct contact information.
- What steps should have been taken to ensure the correct defendant was identified and served?
- What ramifications could occur to the attorney that failed to respond to JAK Foods, Inc.?
- How might proper calendaring of this docket or case have prevented this dismissal with prejudice?



"The trial court subsequently entered an order denying Plaintiff's motion to alter or amend. In its order, the trial court noted that it 'considered and noted the extreme lack of due diligence exhibited by the Plaintiff' and further stated that no additional due diligence was performed by Plaintiff from July 2020 to January 2021. Upon its consideration of the procedure of the case and the actions and omissions by Plaintiff, the trial court denied Plaintiff's motion to alter or amend."

-Hon. Kristi M. Davis, J., (Delivering the Opinion of the Court)

Legal Support Duties

- Calendar well and calendar often!
- What type of calendar system does your office use? Outlook, Excel, whiteboard? More importantly, who and how is it managed.
- Mistakes such as in this case may cause malpractice issues and sanctions by the Court.
- How does your office investigate to identify opposing parties for service of process?

Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 15.01

A party may amend the party's pleadings once as a matter of course at any time before a responsive pleading is served or, if the pleading is one to which no responsive pleading is permitted and the action has not been set for trial, the party may so amend it at any time within 15 days after it is served. ***Otherwise a party may amend the party's pleadings only by written consent of the adverse party or by leave of court; and leave shall be freely given when justice so requires.*** For amendments adding defendants pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 20-1-119, however, written consent of the adverse party or leave of court is not required. A party shall plead in response to an amended pleading within the time remaining for response to the original pleading or within 15 days after service of the amended pleading, whichever period may be longer, unless the court otherwise orders.

Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 15.03

Whenever the claim or defense asserted in amended pleadings arose out of the conduct, transaction, or occurrence set forth or attempted to be set forth in the original pleading, the amendment relates back to the date of the original pleading. An amendment changing the party or the naming of the party by or against whom a claim is asserted relates back if the foregoing provision is satisfied and if, within the period provided by law for commencing an action or within 120 days after commencement of the action, the party to be brought in by amendment (1) has received such notice of the institution of the action that the party will not be prejudiced in maintaining a defense on the merits, and (2) knew or should have known that, but for a mistake concerning the identity of the proper party, the action would have been brought against the party.

President's Message

In 2005, I was employed as a "paralegal" for the first time, although I had been doing paralegal work at my previous job for three years. One day, a coworker invited me to a paralegal meeting. I was nervous and excited at the same time. Shortly after that meeting a brand-new local paralegal association was born and my coworker and I decided to join. Our employer even agreed to pay the yearly dues!

Since this was my first "paralegal" job, I wasn't sure I qualified for membership. I didn't have a bachelor's degree, I hadn't taken any paralegal classes, I only had on-the-job training. However, the powers that be said I was, and my boss signed the attestation form (I had worked with him and his office for six years before going to work for him), and that was that.

I only knew my coworker. She knew everybody it seemed, and I followed her to meetings like a lost puppy. I was anxious, scared, and didn't really know what to expect. I'd been in professional groups before that weren't very friendly. To my surprise, the members of SMPA welcomed me with open arms. It didn't matter that I didn't have the experience or education like most of them did. The comradery, networking, and even friendships I've made over the years was worth every awkward moment.

I challenge you to invite the paralegals you work with – in your firm or on opposite cases – those who work down the hall in a different firm whom you see in the hallway or elevator, even those "legal assistants" who do paralegal work without the title, to attend a meeting and/or a social. You will be surprised how much you have in common with others.

-Kati Wheatley, ACP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom

The second quarter of the meeting of the 2022 Executive Committee (EC) of the Smoky Mountain Paralegal Association was held on April 26, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. The attendees included: Kati Wheatley, ACP; Brittini Cockrum, CP; Michelle Jephcott, ACP; Kate Harris, CP; and Stephanie Lee, ACP. The meeting was brought to order at 6:36 p.m. by Kati Wheatley. Kelley Myers, ACP joined the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

APPROVAL OF EC MINUTES:

A motion was made by Shelia Williams to accept the minutes of the January 2022 Meeting. The motion was seconded by Michelle, all approved, and the motion carried.

OFFICER REPORTS

1st Vice President Report: Michelle Jephcott provided a written report, which is attached to the original of these minutes.

2nd Vice President Report: A verbal report was provided by Kati Wheatley and a supplemental update will be provided at a later date. The second vice president recently resigned due to personal reasons. Kati is communicating with a potential new second vice president.

Treasurer: Stephanie Lee provided a written report, which is attached to the original of these minutes.

Academic Outreach Committee: Kate Harris provided a written report, which is attached to the original of these minutes.

NALA Liaison: A written report was provided by Shelia Williams prior to this meeting, which is attached to the original of these minutes. The Affiliate Award and Certified Paralegal Champion Award were discussed. The deadline for information is May 1, 2022.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Outreach Coordinator: A verbal report was provided during this meeting. The Children's Festival of Reading is scheduled for May 21, 2022, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the World's Fair Park. Volunteers are needed to read to the children during the festival.

CP Exam Review Committee: A written report was provided prior to this meeting, which is attached to the original of these minutes.

Publication Review Committee: A verbal report was provided during this meeting. The submissions for the Spring Liaison are due by May 12, 2022, to Kati Wheatley.

Audit Committee: A written report was provided prior to this meeting, which is attached to the original of these minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The prior website manager resigned due to personal issues. Kati is searching for a new local website manager.

NEW BUSINESS

There was discussion regarding providing the option to participate in a lunch buffet at the meetings. Due to cost and lack of interest, attendees will be invited to bring their own lunch to the monthly meetings. A boxed lunch will be offered to the speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 26, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. With no further business to be discussed, this meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katy Mitchell, ACP
SMPA Secretary, 2022

Searching for Significance

by Janie M. Shelton, ACP

AN ARCHIVED ARTICLE FROM APRIL 2012 (ADDING TO IT)

CARPE DIEM (SEIZE THE DAY) FOR YOU LATIN ENTHUSIASTS

What does “*Seize the moment*” mean to you? Does it mean sit on an idea and think about it a while? Does it mean being impulsive and leap without looking? Are you more of a procrastinator than a *seizer*?

To *seize*, in this context, means to take possession or control. It may also mean to grasp mentally, understand clearly and completely. To “*Seize the moment*” conveys the act of taking advantage of something, immediately. “*Seize*” is a verb, an action word (if I remember my elementary grammar correctly). It means to do something - take action - now!

I know what you are thinking...So, Ms. *Searching for Significance* author, exactly what are you trying to say here?!

I’m glad you are intrigued and want to know more. To begin with, see if any of these clichés ring a bell:

- ❖ Opportunity knocks only once
- ❖ Reach for the stars
- ❖ Life is too short, make the most of it
- ❖ There’s no time like the present
- ❖ Wake up and smell the roses (coffee...bacon...whatever you prefer)
- ❖ One day at a time
- ❖ Make the best of a bad situation
- ❖ Time is of the essence
- ❖ Here today, gone tomorrow
- ❖ Today is the first day of the rest of my life (that was my high school senior class motto)
- ❖ Live in the present
- ❖ Do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today
- ❖ Live life to the fullest
- ❖ [I’m sure you can fill in your own here.]

If we had time (and enough paper), I’m sure we could explore every one of those sayings in-depth and come up with an analysis of what each one means in the development of our lives.

Have you ever had a time or situation where you thought...“*I should have taken advantage of that opportunity.*”? I am not advocating jumping at everything that comes your way, but I do believe we all have had many missed opportunities because we were not *seizers*. We were (sorry to say) *slackers*. We missed the boat and therefore, did a little sinking.

Come with me, if you will, on a little journey into my life to examine an illustration of how I took advantage of some opportunities and *seized the moment*!

Once upon a time.....sorry.....several years ago when I needed a job, I just happen to obtain a position as receptionist/secretary for a personal injury law firm in Tampa, Florida. I knew nothing about law or automobile accidents, slip and falls, or anything of the sort. I was privileged to be trained by a wonderful office manager who took the time and effort to teach me what personal injury was all about, step-by-step, as each case would come across my desk for one reason or another. I also was an excellent typist (yes, I typed over 100 words a minute - that's really what landed me the job), and therefore, I did a lot of transcription. Looking back to my first "legal assistant" position (as I now like to refer to as), I remember I *seized the moment* many times. I paid attention as I transcribed those letters about the different personal injury cases and took notice of what was going on with each case, who the adjusters were, and also, when a demand went out, I knew to be on the alert to when those adjusters would call in to respond to the demands. I remember many times taking the initiative to go get my attorney boss off the phone right away to take what I thought just might be an important call that he would not want to miss then. Most of the time, I was right. I learned from what I did, I took notice of what was going on with each case, and I *seized the moment* to excel in my position there.

Fast forward 3 ½ years...I wanted to learn more about the litigation side of personal injury, especially since my only exposure there was developing and settling PI cases. I wasn't involved at all in the litigation aspect since my boss had a paralegal who handled all the litigated cases. I *seized the moment* again and literally "acted" the part of confidence in what I had learned and went out and landed a job which gave me the full spectrum: developing cases from start to finish, including any litigation. I learned everything there was to learn about litigating PI cases (as well as some med mal cases the firm had) and quickly caught on to what the litigation side was all about.

Fast forward 2 years...I desired more growth and challenge in the legal field. I, again, portrayed confidence within myself (which was actually beginning to become more real) and obtained a position with a high profile PI/Med Mal attorney who was very well known within the media in central Florida at that time. In fact, because of some of his cases, he was asked to appear on The Maury Povich Show, Oprah Winfrey, and 20/20. He was a wonderful, charismatic-type person and we hit it off beautifully as employer and employee. He loved the fact that I was energetic and thrived on challenge, and he gave me many challenges. He taught me a lot about the creativity of developing PI/Med Mal cases and I soon became his top legal assistant after just a couple of years. Looking back to that awesome experience, I see that I *seized the moment* many times in my position with him. Even though I remember at times I was scared out of my wits when I would try my hand at something I had never done before or drafting a document that was a big challenge, I would go for it and *seize the moment*! Many times, I would be totally surprised at his approval and even praise at what I had attempted for the first time.

What is really the most amazing thing of all is what those *moments* did for me. They helped me to excel in my abilities as a legal assistant and I grew into becoming a full-fledged paralegal, equal with my paralegal peers - all by taking advantage of new opportunities and experiences that I could have just as easily or lazily let slip by. I actually wanted to *seize the moment* and excel in this field. But, I could have also just wanted to stay with the *status quo* and do the same old humdrum each day and never get to where I am now.

During the time that I was with my last attorney in Florida, I had a wonderful co-worker friend who introduced me to NALA and enlightened me as to the CLA/CP. I was intrigued and kept thinking to myself...this would be the ultimate challenge for me. If I can do this (on my own), I will have arrived! (Come on, I know you think the same way...if you just accomplish a certain something in life - you will have arrived. And that's what I thought.) So, I decided I was going to do it and make it happen. I first joined NALA so that I would be able to have all the benefits of membership. A wonderful coincidence occurred during that time as well. I learned through NALA about the CLA/CP Short Course which was going to be held in (guess where?) Knoxville, Tennessee in October of 2000. Well, it just so happened that my husband and I had been coming up to the Smoky Mountains in October every year since 1994, and of course, were planning to come again that October. Ta - dah! *Seize the moment! Carpe diem!* I made it happen; paid the money and combined our Smoky Mountain vacation with the Short Course in Knoxville in October of 2000. (Life is so amazing sometimes!)

After completing the Short Course, coming back home and started studying the CLA/CP Manual I had purchased at Knoxville, I then made a decision that I had to just set the date and make myself be ready to take the test. *Seize the moment! Make it happen - now!* In a nutshell, I did it, and got my CP - Certified Paralegal through NALA in 2004.

[We take this short time out to bring you this very important message from NALA: Established in 1976, the CLA /CP (Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal) program has enabled the profession to develop a strong and responsive self-regulatory program offering a nationwide credential for all paralegals. Today over 15,000 paralegals have achieved this credential.

And you can, too!!!]

Back to our regularly scheduled article. Fast forward (one last time) to 2009. Of course, I am now living in Knoxville (our dream of living in our favorite vacation area) and working again in the legal field after taking some time off after moving here. I had also become involved in the Smoky Mountain Paralegal Association in 2006 and was mostly content to just come to the CLE meetings most every month. But, as fate would have it, one of our members saw something in me and said to me one day, "I think you should run for an office in SMPA. You would be good." (That may not be the exact words, but it was pretty close.) That woke up something within me that said...*Seize the moment!* So I did. I ran for NALA Liaison and became your NALA Liaison for 2010 and 2011. The time that I served as NALA Liaison was a great experience, especially attending the NALA Conventions in Jacksonville, Florida in 2010 and Dallas/Plano, Texas in 2011. As NALA Liaison, I wanted to encourage and inspire other SMPA members in their growth as legal assistants and paralegals. As part of that idea, I set a goal for myself, to obtain the ACP - Advanced Certified Paralegal credential.

Again, life sometimes can be full of amazing surprises and twists. As luck would have it, the 2011 NALA Convention in Dallas/Plano offered a Personal Injury Core Course, which would give me free access to the required on-line PI Core Course, and I received a discount from NALA for any PI - APC course. Ta - dah! *Seize the moment! Carpe diem!* I took the course at the convention, came back home and signed up for the required on-line courses for the ACP in Automobile Accidents, and...*voila!* I now have my ACP...and have arrived! ☺

What's next...I wonder!

→ A brief break away from the prior article, to the present 2022. What's next? I don't wonder anymore. I know what's next. As many of you know, I have gone through cancer, first in 2018 and then again last year when the cancer came back with a vengeance. I've undergone intensive treatment at Vanderbilt during late 2021 and into 2022. And now, I'm cancer-free!!! But what is the next Carpe Diem for me? I'll tell you. I'm writing a book about my cancer journey. Yes, I had *seized the moment* a couple of years ago and purchased a publishing package through WestBow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson and Zondervan publishing companies. I knew in my spirit that I needed to write a book, and it's always been a dream. I wondered, though, why I could not get the writing of the book to flow before. I thought I was being the world's worst procrastinator. But after going through all that I did last year and into this year, I realize now that there is so much more to the story. I understand now why there was a reason I just couldn't get it finished. I am writing almost every night now and it is flowing. The plan is to finalize the transcript late summer for publishing in the fall. This endeavor is really HUGE for me, but it was a dream. I'm sure there is a dream that you have, but also think it is HUGE for you. I know you can do it. Believe and you shall achieve!! And Carpe Diem! Back to the archived article.

←

Empowerment: I believe every one of the above sayings (including your own), that we've all heard most of our lives, all say: ***Seize the moment!*** You are only guaranteed the moment that you are living - today, right now. You have no control over the future and you can't change the past. It is gone. But, you do have today, this very moment. Enjoy it, savor it, and make the most of what you have been given. By the way, it is a gift. *Seize the moment!* or *Carpe diem!*

Motivating Quote for the Motivated

"We have only this moment, sparkling like a star in our hand, and melting like a snowflake."
- Marie Ray (author 1930s-1960s)

Upcoming Monthly CLE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
June 9, 2022	Freelancing as a Paralegal	Brooke Govert Knoxville Paralegal Services
July 14, 2022	Legal Writing	Luke Ihnen, Esq. FDSET
August 11, 2022	Search & Seizure Law	Tim Arrants, Esq. Myrick Law Firm
September 8, 2022	What is HIPAA, really?	Rachel Hurt, Esq. Arnett, Draper & Hagood
October 13, 2022	TBA	
November 10, 2022	TBA	
December 8, 2022	Annual Meeting	

bookmarked.

By: Kate R. Harris, CP

Hi there, fellow reading extraordinaires! Are you looking for a book that you just can't put down? Maybe even something related to the law? Then I am your girl for some stellar recommendations!

Sit back, relax, and let's get reading. 📖

Thriller: What would you do if an attorney called you explaining that your recently murdered grandmother left you a mystery estate hiding away in the Swedish woodlands? In ***The Resting Place*** by Camilla Sten, Eleanor is faced with task of discovering her grandmother's past, and dark secrets, as she learns about the family legacy she never knew existed. Did I mention there may be an unexpected guest at the estate, too?

Romantic Comedy: What happens when you're released after spending five years in prison from a tragic accident, and all you want is your daughter back? Find out in ***Reminders of Him*** by Colleen Hoover. Enter Kenna, who will do anything to be reunited with her daughter, Diem. As Kenna continues to prove herself as more than a monster, she connects with Ledger, a local bar owner and main link to her daughter. This book will fill you with laughter, tears, and so many other emotions!

Non-fiction: Do you need a crash course on some of the most unusual, exasperating, and important legal topics in today's culture? If you answered yes, pick up a copy of ***The Law Says What?*** by Maclean Stanley! This is a great read for exploring laws that affect us daily and references cases along the way to keep it interesting and relevant.

Series: Have you ever wondered if you could break the law without getting caught? If so, you can live vicariously through Peter and Ainsley Greenburg in the domestic thriller, ***The Arrangement*** by Kiersten Modglin (and book #2, ***The Amendment***). It follows a couple through their unconventional marriage, and how they work to keep it together at the seams...even if some laws get broken along the way. There are so many twists that will keep you guessing in this unputdownable thriller series!



Main Reading Room at the Library of Congress photograph by Carol M. Highsmith, [1980].

Jacobson v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 197 U.S. 11 (1905)

In the late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries smallpox was a serious and deadly disease that killed about 3 out of every 10 persons that contracted the virus. Those that did not die had significant scarring and in some cases blindness. Owing to the overcrowding in larger cities and poor sanitation, smallpox was a serious health hazard. In February of 1902, the City of Cambridge Massachusetts enacted a law (Revised Laws of Massachusetts chapter 75, § 137) requiring that all persons not previously vaccinated since March of 1897, be vaccinated, or receive a revaccination for smallpox.

This law required anyone over the age of twenty-one to be vaccinated or fined \$5. There were some exceptions for children and persons under guardianship. Henning Jacobson refused to be vaccinated citing the preamble and the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and various other legal claims infringing on the spirit of the Constitution. As you brief this case and the Massachusetts Supreme Court case, *Com. v. Pear*, 183 Mass. 242 (1903) pay close attention to both rulings and opinions about state police powers and the balance between personal liberty and public health and safety.

No rights are absolute, and in all societies, persons have responsibilities that go along with liberty and freedoms guaranteed to them by the laws or constitutions of which they are subject. Legislatures enact statutes and regulations that impose on, or inconvenience personal liberties, and courts generally uphold those mandates when they are challenged. However, if a statute or regulation is found to impinge on personal liberty with no discernable benefit to a society, courts will very likely find it contrary to a constitutional protection.

Jacobson was opposed to the smallpox vaccination and was tried and convicted and subsequently fined \$5. The Cambridge Board of Health offered to vaccinate Jacobson free of charge but, he still refused. Jacobson had several concerns regarding the vaccine itself and the way in which the vaccine mandate would impact his rights and liberties. Jacobson claimed that the vaccine was unsafe and apt to cause harm to those it was administered to. He also argued that mandatory vaccination violated the Fourteenth Amendment as well as the preamble to the Constitution of the United States.

Jacobson's strategy of defense at his trial was his opinion that statutory vaccinations violated his personal liberties, and thus allowed him to refuse the vaccine. He also opined and insinuated that vaccines were dangerous in that some persons became ill or died as a result. These were the opinions of Jacobson, who as far as we can determine, was not a medical professional. Jacobson wished the Court to instruct the jury on his opinions regarding the efficacy of vaccination and the impingement of vaccine mandates on personal liberties and constitutional protections. Jacobson never offered any expert witnesses during his defense; he simply based his case on personal opinions.

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Jacobson v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 197 U.S. 11 (1905) had to determine if the smallpox vaccination statute promulgated by the City of Cambridge violated the Constitutional liberties guaranteed to Mr. Jacobson and his fellow citizens. The Court determined that the police power of the state did allow the city to mandate vaccination and punish those that refused to comply. The Court further opined that a state has the power to enforce laws and regulations enacted by legislatures that affect the health and safety of the public. A well-ordered society must have limits on personal freedoms and liberties in order that the security and safety of all citizens is ensured.

Vaccinations and public health measures are actions taken by officials to ensure the health and safety of citizens. They are based on science, experience, and trend analysis of data gathered throughout the global population. Although it is true that some people may have adverse reactions to vaccination or medications, a vast majority of people have realized enormous benefit from the scientific advances in recent decades regarding medicine, including vaccination.

Every person has rights, liberties, and opinions. However, their opinions, beliefs, and even prejudices must not be allowed to endanger society or put others at risk unnecessarily. In *Jacobson*, 197 U.S. 11 at 38, the Court succinctly stated:

We are unwilling to hold it to be an element in the liberty secured by the Constitution of the United States that one person, or a minority of persons, residing in any community and enjoying the benefits of its local government, should have the power thus to dominate the majority when supported in their action by the authority of the state.

The Court reiterated that this decision involving the vaccination requirement would not apply to an individual that had a specific and reasonable impairment that would result in his or her injury or death.

There are always exceptions to the rule and the power of the state must take those exceptions into consideration. Over the last two years there has been much discussion and consternation over health related mandates involving a global pandemic. Mask wearing, social distancing, a vaccine developed in record breaking time, business closures, and societal disruptions all influenced people. Review the footnotes in this opinion for some interesting historical information regarding vaccination.

Questions to Consider

- What is your opinion on vaccine mandates?
- Do you agree that the state has the police power to enact mask mandates, social distancing, and business regulation during a public health emergency?



WHAT SMPA MEANS TO ME

I've been blessed to be a part of SMPA since its first meeting in 2006. SMPA was formed simply because a core group wanted a great organization that promoted the paralegal profession with high standards. I believe that goal has been met, maintained throughout the years, and hopefully improved upon. I'm proud to say I've been a part of it and I hope that I've been an asset.

We provide quality CLE for our members and diligently try to offer a variety of community service opportunities that appeal to our group. But I always say the same thing when I'm asked what my favorite part of SMPA is – it's the people. Networking is vitally important in our profession and getting to know my peers in this field is invaluable. I've even been fortunate enough to have some of those contacts moved over to my friend list (some of you may now be on speed dial). It is always helpful to be able to call on a fellow professional for guidance or to be able to provide that help so that your colleague shines like the star you know he or she is.

Covid has wreaked havoc on this nation over the last couple of years and, unfortunately, SMPA was not immune to it (pun absolutely intended). Getting together has been quite difficult lately and, while I hope you are taking advantage of our new hybrid meetings and/or watching the CLE rebroadcasts to stay abreast of legal topics, I hope we are able to come back together again fully in the near future to share with each other. WE make up this association and it needs us as much as we need each other!

-Kelley Myers, ACP

Mobile Meals

May 27

Kelley Myers

Kati Wheatley

September 2

Kathy Herd

Kelley Myers

June 24

2 Volunteers Needed

September 23

2 Volunteers Needed

July 1

Kelley Myers

Kati Wheatley

October 28

Kathy Herd

Kelley Myers

July 22

Cheryl Denton

Arlene Shoemaker

November 4

Kelley Myers

Kati Wheatley

August 26

2 Volunteers Needed

December 23

Kathy Herd

Kelley Myers

The Birth of SMPA

By Shelia Williams, ACP, MPS

The idea of a new local association apart from the state association started with Cathy Hulsey, Angie Walls, and me. After careful consideration, we approached Tracie Livesay and Rhonda French. Cathy, Angie, and Tracie had just begun serving on the board of the state association and were quickly becoming discouraged. I had quit running for office out of frustration and tiring of the long trips to Nashville for quarterly meetings.

The five of us began having regular meetings to discuss a name, a logo, NALA affiliation, bylaws, rules of procedure, and all the other tasks that had to be completed. We laughed, we fussed, we probably cried, we agreed, we disagreed, and we laughed some more. We spent many hours going over every detail. We wanted our association to be the best. We of course enlisted NALA's assistance.

Our reasons for the association were centered around making association benefits more accessible to our East Tennessee paralegals. The largest percentage of the state association's membership was from Knoxville; however, not many were able to attend seminars or serve as officers. The spring seminars were held in Jackson, Chattanooga, or Knoxville on a rotating basis. The fall seminar and annual meeting always occurred in Nashville. Many paralegals in Knoxville were unable to get time off from work to attend the seminars on Friday and many employers did not pay for CLE, travel, or hotels. Since Knoxville also had the highest concentration of CPs, it only made sense to make CLE more accessible. We also wanted to mentor our students and groom young paralegals to take over as leaders in our association.

We soon were ready to present this idea to the local chapter of the state association. While we had some opposition, the majority was overwhelmingly in favor of it. We began preparations to notify the state association and confront any controversy we might encounter. As we suspected would happen, those opposed to the idea had already notified the state association. At the 2005 annual meeting, we officially notified the state association, had a lengthy discussion with the officers, and broke away. Our bylaws were approved by NALA, we paid our affiliation dues, and as planned were an official association by January 2006.

As an association, we have had great seminars and monthly CLE meetings, mentored students, volunteered for Mobile Meals, raced for a cure, bowled for JDRF, supported Ronald McDonald House, and had fun. We strive to meet the professional needs of not only East Tennessee paralegals, but also, paralegals in other areas of the state and in other states. For those who cannot attend monthly meetings, from the beginning we have videotaped the monthly CLE meetings and posted them on our website for viewing. I am very proud of our CP exam preparation classes which can be attended via Zoom. The number of CPs in Knoxville has increased dramatically as a result.

I want to encourage all our members to market SMPA in your firms, among your classmates, or anywhere you encounter paralegals. We need more leaders so that SMPA can continue to thrive for many years.

Save the Date!

October 21 – 22, 2022

SMPA 2022 Annual Seminar

The Read House Chattanooga, TN



SMPA would like to thank its Sustaining Members



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