



The REAP Record

The Official Publication of the
[Redwood Empire Association of Paralegals](#)
Fall 2009 Newsletter

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REAP

REAP was established in 1981 under the name Redwood Empire Legal Assistants (RELA) as a professional and educational organization for legal assistants and paralegals.

REAP
P.O. Box 143
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

[REAP Membership Info.](#)
[Membership Application](#)

REAP

is also a member of CAPA,
the

[California Alliance of
Paralegal Associations](#)

President's Message

By [Grace De La Torre](#), CP and REAP President

This will be my last message as your President. It has been an amazing journey and I want to thank the members and the Board for allowing me to be your President. In the last seven years we have accomplished many goals together as an association and I just wanted to touch for a moment on our accomplishments.

We have developed an annual vision meeting that takes place every January facilitated by Kathy Juarez. This meeting assists the board in targeting our goals for the year, and allows us to hear from our members how to better serve them.

We have marketed our continuing legal education ("CLE") seminars, so that they not only generate a profit to our association, but serve as a venue for our members to obtain their CLE credit. We continue to strive to educate our legal community on the importance of continuing education for paralegals.

We reinvented our website www.redwoodparalegals.org so that it provides a gateway to REAP for our members. It also includes job opportunities and information on continuing legal education seminars for our members. Our newsletter was also reinvented to become more informative to our members and we went green establishing a system to distribute it to our members through e-mail. We changed our name from Redwood Empire Legal Assistants to Redwood Empire Association of Paralegals to reflect our role in our profession. In 2007 we became volunteers for the California Supreme Court visit to our county. Over 40 of our members volunteered for this event and helped make it a success.

We have hosted two CAPA board meetings together, the first in 2005 with a private wine tasting at St. Francis Winery and the second last November at the Dry Creek Best Western, Krug Event Center.

We have forged an alliance with our Sonoma County Bar Association that is unique to paralegal associations in our state. This alliance includes are members volunteering for events and improving our legal community. This year we were able to offer a scholarship to our student members and ultimately we awarded two scholarships to student members. We are currently working on establishing and building our committees within our board to help us achieve our goals.

I want to thank our board member s who continue to support our association mission tirelessly. I am proud to be part of this association and what it stands for in our legal community. I now hand over the Presidential reins to our distinguished member Trudy McQuidy. Trudy has been an instrumental part of our association and I have every bit of confidence that she will lead us to bigger endeavors in the future-stay tuned.



CAPA Corner

By [Trudy McQuiddy](#)

Trudy, a litigation paralegal at [Senneff, Freeman & Bluestone, LLP](#), is REAP's CAPA Co-Representative

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of the California Alliance of Paralegal Associations will be on November 8, 2009, in San Diego. On Saturday, November 7, CAPA, through the San Diego Paralegal Association, will present its bi-annual Leadership Conference. The Leadership Conference is designed for individuals who serve on the board of non-profit organizations, and is an opportunity to gain knowledge and information for your personal use in any such position while at the same time providing 5 units of MCLE. A flyer for the [2009 CAPA Leadership Conference](#) is available on the REAP website by clicking on the foregoing link, and registration is available through the CAPA website at www.caparalegal.org. In addition, the latest issue of RECAP, the CAPA newsletter, is also available on the REAP website at this link: [CAPA RECAP newsletter](#).

The November CAPA Board meeting will be an opportunity to address recent developments on the statewide level. On August 28, 2009, Inland Counties Paralegal Association withdrew from CAPA, followed by the withdrawal of the Los Angeles Paralegal Association on September 1. These events are of great concern to the CAPA Board, as well as the Board of REAP. As REAP's CAPA representatives, both Kathy Juarez and I will participate in the November CAPA Board meeting and report back on the steps CAPA plans to take to address the issues that led to the withdrawal of these two great associations.

As always, if you have any questions regarding CAPA benefits, you can contact me at tmcquiddy@sennefflaw.com, or check out the CAPA website.



New Member Report

REAP welcomes 17 new members this quarter. The new members are:

Amanda Riley
Amy Jarvis
Ashley Dominique Shippey
Char Mendoza
Erick Clayton Beall
Gregory D. Spanos
Lucia Fincher
Marjorie Ansagay
Martin Ananias

Newby Law Office
Nikki Vasquez
Nora Rose
Patricia Lawrence Dietz
Stacey Nevarez
Suzanne C. Murphy
Tamera Moore
Viviana Henao

Cheap and Easy File Management

The October issue of [Plaintiff](#) magazine features an article on how to set up a reliable file management system using your Windows PC. No special and expensive software is required with San Francisco employment law attorney [Michael Mortimer](#)'s easy-to-follow template for setting up a file management system for maintaining all the documents created in any client case. Here's a link to the [article](#).



Editor's Corner

By [Jeff DiCello](#), Editor

The \$80,000 Paralegal Education

If you thought your paralegal program tuition was high, take a look at the bankruptcy case of Cheryl Craig, an aspiring paralegal from Arizona who borrowed upwards of \$80,000 trying to get a paralegal education. In the end, she was only able to find work as a customer service rep for a financial services company (at \$10/hr.) so she ended up filing for bankruptcy. Craig sought relief from having to repay her student loans. The 9th Circuit sent the case back to the bankruptcy court to review whether the loans should be forgiven. The case is [In Re Craig](#).

Are You Ready for Your Close-Up?

Have you ever fantasized about being another Erin Brockavich while plowing through a tedious deposition summary? If so, you can follow the path of Sherri Sheperd, a former paralegal who is now an actress/ stand-up comic and one of the co-hosts of the ABC daytime talk show "The View." Sheperd also has a new semi-autobiographical sitcom on Lifetime in which she plays a paralegal who does a little acting on the side.

Free Appointed Counsel in Civil Cases?

It may eventually be possible thanks to [AB 590](#), which just became law this month. The law requires the Judicial Council to develop pilot projects in certain courts to provide legal counsel to represent low-income parties in civil matters involving critical issues affecting basic human needs.

The law, which would be funded by tacking a \$10 fee onto state civil case filings, also prohibits private, for-profit organizations that have no lawyers from using the name "legal aid" in order to obtain business from people who believe they are obtaining services from a nonprofit legal aid organization.

"Breathalyzer" Pilot Project

Next July, as part of a pilot project in five selected California counties, anyone convicted of a first offense DUI will, at his own expense (\$75 to \$100), be required to install an ignition interlock device on their vehicle. These devices measure a person's blood alcohol and prevent a vehicle from starting unless the machine receives a "clean" breath. The five counties selected for the pilot project are Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento and Tulare. The DMV will report back to the legislature in 2015 on the program's effectiveness. DUI attorneys and a restaurant trade group oppose the measure.

A Real "Whiz" Kid

Ousama Haddad was on probation in Los Angeles County for possession of methamphetamines. As part of his probation, Haddad was required to submit regular urine tests to probation officials and also not commit a drug-related offense.

During one of his routine urine tests, Haddad's probation officer caught him using a concealable urine storage device called a "Whizzinator" to foil his drug test by submitting someone else's "clean" urine.

Probation officials accused him of violating probation by committing a drug related offense and the trial court agreed. The Court of Appeal disagreed, saying that failing to take a required drug test would have been a drug-related offense, but that trying to pass off another's urine as one's own was not. I would venture to say that this is probably the only Court of Appeal opinion to ever use the term "Whizzinator." The case is [People v. Haddad](#).

Renewal Time: It's time to renew your REAP membership for 2010. Link to application: <http://www.redwoodparalegals.org/images/REAP%20Application%202010.pdf>



By Vicki Voisin

Working Overtime: Is it a wise use of time?

Are you always the last one to leave the office at night? If you are, you may need to re-think how you spend your work day. Are you using your time wisely or are you wasting time needlessly because you think you can finish it later?

There will always be occasions when you will have to work overtime. Deadlines, rush jobs, special projects, and trials are a fact of life and often require professionals to work beyond 5:00 p.m. These special circumstances are not a problem. They happen, they pass and life returns to normal.

When these 'special circumstances' become habitual, when you're working overtime whether it's needed or not, when your whole life revolves around being at the office or texting on your BlackBerry, you may need to take a leap off the merry-go-round and reclaim your life.

Is your ego tied to working overtime? Sometimes we feel better about ourselves if we're giving 150% to the team, whether anyone else notices or not. Please give this some thought. Working long hours can lead to increased stress and burnout. This habit may also send you on a guilt trip because of it conflicts with family time. Weekends and evenings happen for a reason. Use them to restore your spirit and your energy.

Working overtime may foster procrastination. You may find that you're not productive during regular working hours because you have the option of finishing the work later. Your inclination to put off your work because the whole day and evening stretches before you will only lead to procrastination.

You may make more errors. You simply can't be your best 24/7. If you're consistently working overtime, the quality of your work may suffer. What's more, if you are working late on your own time, you may feel you're being taken advantage of and, therefore, justified in turning in a second rate performance.

Working overtime leads to increased interruptions. You'll always find something to do to fill the time you have, whether it's putting your nose to the grindstone and churning out the work or drifting around the office to chat about Big Brown's loss at the Belmont. When your work day has no definitive end time, you may also be more apt to tolerate unnecessary telephone calls and e-mail or interruptions by your co-workers. These all waste your time and keep you from getting your work done.

Other people's procrastination may rule your overtime. Some people simply cannot do their work unless they are up against a deadline. If your supervising attorney has this tendency, you're going to find yourself in Overtime Land all too often. If at all possible, do what you can to head off the crisis by completing some parts of the project ahead of time. You usually know what the procedure will require. Also, if you don't tolerate constantly being asked to work overtime, you may find that the last minute behavior changes.

There are two things you should consider: First, you'll always fill the time you have...so you'll probably get the same amount of work done whether you're working eight hours or twelve.

Second, you've heard that no one has ever had "I wish I'd spent more time at the office!" engraved on their tombstone. Life is simply too short to spend it all at work.

If you have no 'quitting time' your day will stretch on and on. You need a deadline. Make 5:00 p.m. your new deadline and stick to it.

About the Author:

Vicki Voisin, "The Paralegal Mentor," delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by achieving goals and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, organizational tips, ethics issues, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She publishes a bi-weekly e-zine titled [Strategies for Paralegals Seeking Excellence](#). Visit Vicki's website at: <http://www.paralegalmentor.com>



Educational Seminar Report:

Seminar Title

By [Jeff DiCello](#), REAP Record Editor

On October 7, the Sonoma County Bar Association sponsored a very informative seminar entitled “I Told You to Fire Nicholas Farber, or Why Some Good Attorneys Overbill Their Clients.” The presenter was Sonoma attorney [Jim Schratz](#).

The intriguing seminar title is taken from an article written by Mr. Schratz in 1998 for the Rutgers Law Review. In the article, Mr. Schratz reported the results of a survey of 3,000 CEOs, CFOs and general counsel that found that almost half of those surveyed believed their attorneys were over-billing.

Mr. Schratz offered insights into spotting bill padding as well as some very practical billing guidelines that law firms should follow. Some of the tips included not block billing, limiting incremental billing, not billing for intra-office conferences that appear unnecessary and duplicative, not using “boilerplate” motions recycled from prior submissions to other courts, reducing unnecessary time spent on discovery and for excess time billed for preparation of case analysis memoranda.



Continuing Legal Education

By [Jeff DiCello](#), REAP Record Editor

As most paralegals know, [Bus. & Prof. Code sec. 6470\(d\)](#) requires that paralegals complete mandatory continuing legal education to maintain their status as paralegals. Specifically, every two years, paralegals must complete four hours of ethics and four hours in general or specialized law.

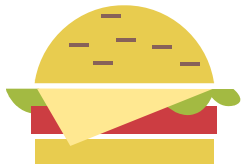
Paralegals must certify completion of these educational requirements to their supervising attorney, and are responsible for maintaining their own records in this regard.

It is not always easy to maintain these educational requirements. Many paralegals lament that their employers do not pay for these required courses. It is also sometimes difficult to find in person CLE outside of major metropolitan areas. While these concerns are understandable, they are not valid excuses. Employers can help in this regard by paying for paralegal CLE. The emergence of online CLE can make it easier to acquire one's CLE credits.

To keep track of your CLE, use this [log](#). The log can also be used to certify to your employer that you are in compliance with CLE requirements. Here are some links to some online paralegal CLE providers: [National Federation of Paralegal Associations Online CLE Courses](#) and [NALA Online CLE](#).



MCLE SPOTLIGHT: Also, there is still time to take [Personal Injury Law](#) at Sonoma State for CLE credit. The one unit course is offered on two Saturdays: Nov. 14 and 21. And REAP is offering a seminar good for CLE credit on Oct. 22 entitled “[How to Get and Keep a Paralegal Job in These Challenging Times.](#)”



Monthly Paralegal Lunches

Each month paralegals working in the downtown Santa Rosa area meet informally for lunch. You do not have to be a REAP member to attend. These informal lunches are a great way to meet other members who work near you.

When: The second Tuesday of each month.

Time: Noon to 1:00 PM. We are in and out in one hour so you can get back to work on time.

Where: At a restaurant in the downtown Santa Rosa area. E-mail reminders with the exact location are sent out a few days before the event.

How Much Does It Cost? There's no fixed cost; each member pays his/her own check and decides what to order and spend.

REAP Membership Information

1. Voting Member (dues: \$42.00 per year). Voting members are defined as qualified paralegals by education or valid declaration. REAP membership application: [Click Here](#)

2. Associate/Non-Voting Member (dues: \$30.00 per year). Associate/non-voting members are defined as attorneys, paralegal educators or members of the Sonoma County Bar Association.

3. Student Member/Non-Voting Member (dues: \$20.00 per year). Student/non-voting members are defined as current paralegal students.

4. Sustaining/Non-Voting Member (dues \$50.00 per year). Sustaining/non-voting members are defined as individuals, law firms and companies that endorse and promote the paralegal profession.

Membership Period: REAP's bylaws provide that the REAP membership period is from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each year.

Full Amt. Due: The full amount of dues must be paid when joining REAP, regardless of date of application. First time (new) members joining after Sept. 1 retain their membership for 16 months (until Dec. 31 two years after they join).

Due Date: Renewal memberships are due Jan. 1 and become delinquent on April 1, at which time membership is terminated. If past members reinstate after April 1, they are not treated as new members under this agreement.

Voting Eligibility: Only active members in good standing 45 days before the annual or special meeting shall have been called to order shall be qualified to vote at membership meetings or upon other matters coming to the members for action.

Who Cannot Vote: No active member who is delinquent in the payment of any dues or other assessments shall be qualified to vote. In no event shall student, sustaining or associate members vote.

REAP Board, Mentors & Committee Contact Info.



REAP Board Members

Name/Office	E-mail Address	Telephone
Grace De La Torre President	gdelatorre@sbcglobal.net	H: 433-8183 W: 522-8251
Janet Jefferson Vice-President	jjefferson@cfk.com	W: 523-1181
Monica Lehre Secretary	mlehre@empirecollege.com	546-4058 or 217-8117
Ginger Orosco Treasurer/Webmaster	gorosco@obrienlaw.com or webmaster@redwoodparalegals.org	W: 545-7010 ext. 470
Trudy McQuiddy CAPA Primary	tmcquiddy@seneffflaw.com	H: 526-9509 W: 526-4250

Area of Law Mentors & REAP Committees

Name/Mentor Area/Chair	E-mail Address	Telephone
Janet Anderson Probate Mentor	janet.anderson@azdgg.com	H: 527-0886 W: 545-4910
Renee Ramsey Family Law Mentor	rramsey@perrylaw.net	546-4677
Rhetta Hinton Litigation/ Discovery Mentor	rhetta@shapirogalvinlaw.com	544-5858
Joni Boucher Computer Legal Research Mentor	joni.boucher@yahoo.com	
Grace De La Torre CLA Exam Mentor	gdelatorre@sbcglobal.net	433-8138
Jeff DiCello Criminal Law Mentor Newsletter Chair	jeffdicello@comcast.net or newsletter@redwoodparalegals.org	537-0475
Monica Lehre & Anne Goodwin Educational Committee Chairs	mlehre@empirecollege.com or annegoodwin@att.net	
Christina Welch Membership Committee	membership@redwoodparalegals.org	
Teresa Lyons Public Relations Committee	pr@redwoodparalegals.org	
Gerie Johnson , Chair, Student Outreach Committee (SOC)	geriemichele@hotmail.com	623-4305
Katie Cromwell , Ranking Member SOC	cromwell.k@gmail.com	
Carmen James , Ranking Member of SOC	c_james83@comcast.net	
Lorraine Dickerson , Ranking Member of SOC	lorrainedickerson@empirecollege.com	



REAP/Legal Community Event Calendar

REAP encourages its members to attend its own educational seminars and those sponsored by the Sonoma County Bar Association (SCBA). For more information on upcoming REAP seminars, contact REAP's educational committee co-chairs, [Monica Lehre](#) or [Anne Goodwin](#). For information on REAP and SCBA seminars, you can refer to our legal event [calendar](#), below.

For more information about any event held at or sponsored by the Sonoma County Bar Association, please call 542-1190 or visit the association's [website](#).

Event	Date/Time	Location
How to Get and Keep a Paralegal Job in These Challenging Times Presented by Ceanne Herndon, Law Office Administrator for O'Brien Watters & Davis AN OFFICIAL REAP EVENT	October 22, 2009/5:30 pm to 8:00 pm	Sonoma Co. Bar Assoc. 37 Old Courthouse Sq. Santa Rosa
The Nuts and Bolts of Trust and Probate Litigation	Nov. 5, 2009/3:45 pm to 6:00 pm	Sonoma Co. Bar Assoc. 37 Old Courthouse Sq. Santa Rosa
Advising Clients About Foreclosure	Dec. 7, 2009/11:30 am to 2:00 pm	Fountaingrove Inn 101 Fountaingrove Pkwy. Santa Rosa
Ethics Jeopardy	Jan. 12, 2010/5:00 pm to 6:30 pm	Sonoma Co. Bar Assoc. 37 Old Courthouse Sq. Santa Rosa
Forms and Procedures in the Civil and Probate Departments of Sonoma County Superior Court	Jan. 19, 2010/11:45 am to 1:30 pm	Sonoma Co. Bar Assoc. 37 Old Courthouse Sq. Santa Rosa
Recent Developments in Labor and Employment Law	Jan. 28, 2010/5:00 pm to 8:30 pm	Sonoma Co. Bar Assoc. 37 Old Courthouse Sq. Santa Rosa
Family Law New Forms and New Law for 2101	Feb. 4, 2010/3:30 pm to 6:00 pm	Fountaingrove Inn 101 Fountaingrove Pkwy. Santa Rosa
Malpractice Claims and How to Avoid Them	Feb. 25, 2010/11:30 am to 1:00 pm	Sonoma Co. Bar Assoc. 37 Old Courthouse Sq. Santa Rosa