Central Florida Paralegal Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 1107
Orlando, FL 32802
(407) 672-6372

Contact Us

CENTRAL FLORIDA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
Monthly E-Newsletter

CARPE DIEM - September 2023

Hello CFPA Members!!

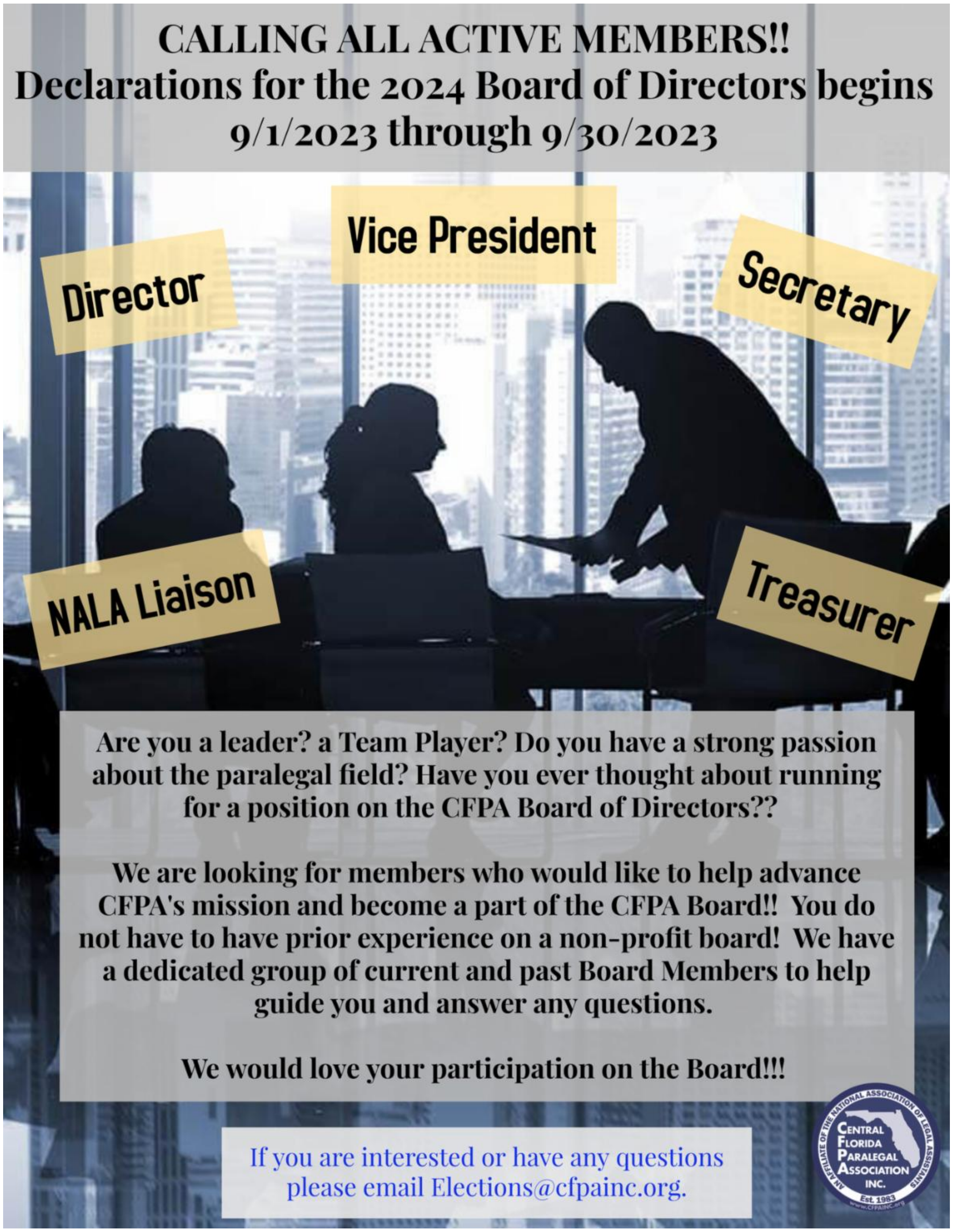
This month CFPA will be focusing on seeking Declarations of Candidacy for the 2024 Board of Directors and the upcoming elections.

Are you interested in helping lead CFPA into 2024? Have questions? Please reach out to any member of the current board (or past board members) as we would be more than happy to answer any questions.

Active Members

Jenn Shareef

Sincerely,
Jennifer Diminich, ACP, FRP
CFPA President 2023



CLICK HERE - 2024 Declaration of Candidacy Form

Community Service Corner

For Membership Information and Application CLICK HERE

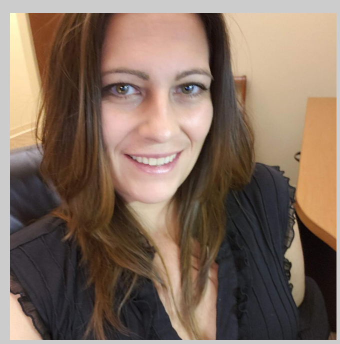
ALREADY A MEMBER??

If you have recently changed jobs, moved or just have a new email address, PLEASE make sure that you update your membership records by notifying the Membership Committee so that you stay up-to-date with all events:

Email Us

9/12/23 Virtual Lunch CLE
9/13/23 DE&I Book Club
9/28/23 40th Anniversary Mixer
9/30/23 Declaration Deadline

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President:
Jennifer Diminich, ACP, FRP
CFPAPresident@cfpainc.org

If you have any suggestions for volunteer opportunities feel free to contact our Community Service Chair, Aimee Chentnik: CommunityService@cfpainc.org

This is a new section that we are bringing to the Newsletter in 2023! Kind of like "Dear Abby" for Paralegals. Do you have a scenario you would like to run by Dear Lady Justice? All submissions will be kept anonymous. Email Editor@cfpainc.org.

Dear Lady Justice,

We have a temp paralegal with our defense firm who used to work at a plaintiff's firm here in town. She works on one team in our office. One of our attorneys that she is assigned to just received a new file with her prior plaintiff's firm being the opposing counsel. We are going to ask her if she had worked on this file pre-suit or in any other way prior to coming to our firm. If she has, we would assign the file to someone else in our firm, but if she did work on the file, do we have to make opposing counsel aware of that if she is not going to be working on the file? Is there an Affidavit or anything we should have her to sign as to no involvement if that is the case?

Signed,

Vice President/President Elect:
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VicePresident@cfpainc.org

Secretary:
Martha Giller
Secretary@cfpainc.org

Treasurer:
Iris F. Walker, FRP
Treasurer@cfpainc.org

A concerned paralegal

Dear concerned paralegal,

As with so many things in life, communication can solve so many problems. Lady Justice is not aware of any rule that requires you to notify opposing counsel that she is not going to be working on the file. However, it could not hurt to communicate that to the opposing counsel. An affidavit is not necessary but if it makes everyone feel better, go ahead and prepare an affidavit for the temp paralegal to sign.

Sincerely,
Lady Justice

Submit your questions for the next issue of the Carpe Diem by 9/27/23.

40th Anniversary Membership Mixer

We would love to see you all at the 40th Anniversary Membership Mixer on September 28, 2023, at Solita Tacos & Margaritas starting at 5:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

This event is being held in conjunction with Light Up CFPA Blue! On September 28th the SunTrust Building will be lighting up blue for CFPA!!

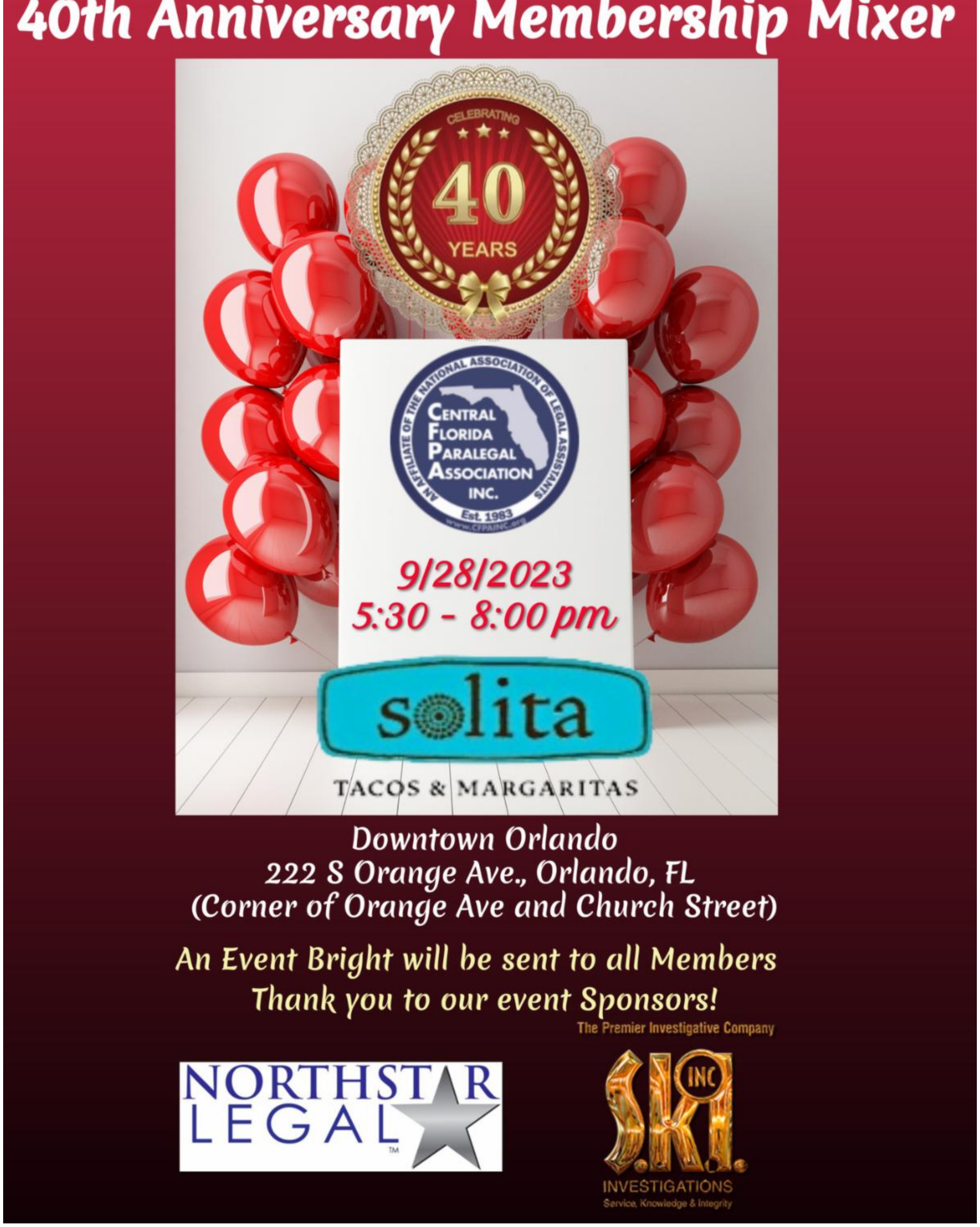
Thank you to our awesome Patron Members and event sponsors, NorthStar Legal and S.K.I. Investigations.

NALA Liaison:
Caroline Wilkerson, ACP
Nalaliaison@cfpainc.org

Parliamentarian:
Yolanda Fuhrmann, CP
Parliamentarian@cfpainc.org

DIRECTORS

Michelle Coleman, FRP
Director2@cfpainc.org



Email Public Relations to RSVP

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Director1@cfpainc.org

Deborah Kallas, ACP, FRP
Director3@cfpainc.org

Jodi Peterman, FRP
Director4@cfpainc.org

CFPA Committees:

CLE Chair:
Nancy Jordahl, ACP, FCP, FRP
CLEChair@cfpainc.org

Membership Chair:
Debbie Dollar, ACP, FRP
Membership@cfpainc.org

Founded in 2009, NorthStar Legal began with one simple mission: to find the perfect fit between client and candidate. It is our belief that with a little work and effort, clients and candidates can rest easy knowing that they have found exactly what they were looking for.

With nearly 20 years of experience in the legal placement arena, we are confident that no matter your needs we have your perfect placement! Let NorthStar Legal navigate your hiring needs.

Find NorthStar Legal on social media at:

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Publicrelations@cfpainc.org

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Aimee Chentnik
CommunityService@cfpainc.org

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Sara Ferguson, CP, FRP
Students@cfpainc.org

Social Media Chair:
Jennifer Diminich, CP, FRP
Socialmedia@cfpainc.org

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Newsletter - Carpe Diem
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Editor@cfpainc.org

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Nalaliaison@cfpainc.org

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Dana Rudolf, FRP
Jobs@cfpainc.org

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TBD
ReviewCourse@cfpainc.org

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Peonca Grier, CP, FRP, MSM-HR, SHRM-CP
peoncag@gmail.com
DEICommittee@cfpainc.org

NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

Do you have a seminar topic you would like to see? Are you interested in being a seminar speaker or know someone who might? If so, please reach out to our CLE Committee.

If you have any questions, feel free to email the CLE Committee at CLE@cfpainc.org.

Time for a Brain Break ...

Jennifer Magnusson
President, COO, SR
Office: 407-841-2045
Fax: 407-841-2046
jennifer@northstar-legal.com

Jennifer Morrow
Account Executive
Direct: 918-630-6771
jmorrow@proofserve.com

Rob Murphy
Director of Business Development/SIU Manager
Mobile: 407-404-9981
Office: 877-754-7545
RMurphy@skiinv.com

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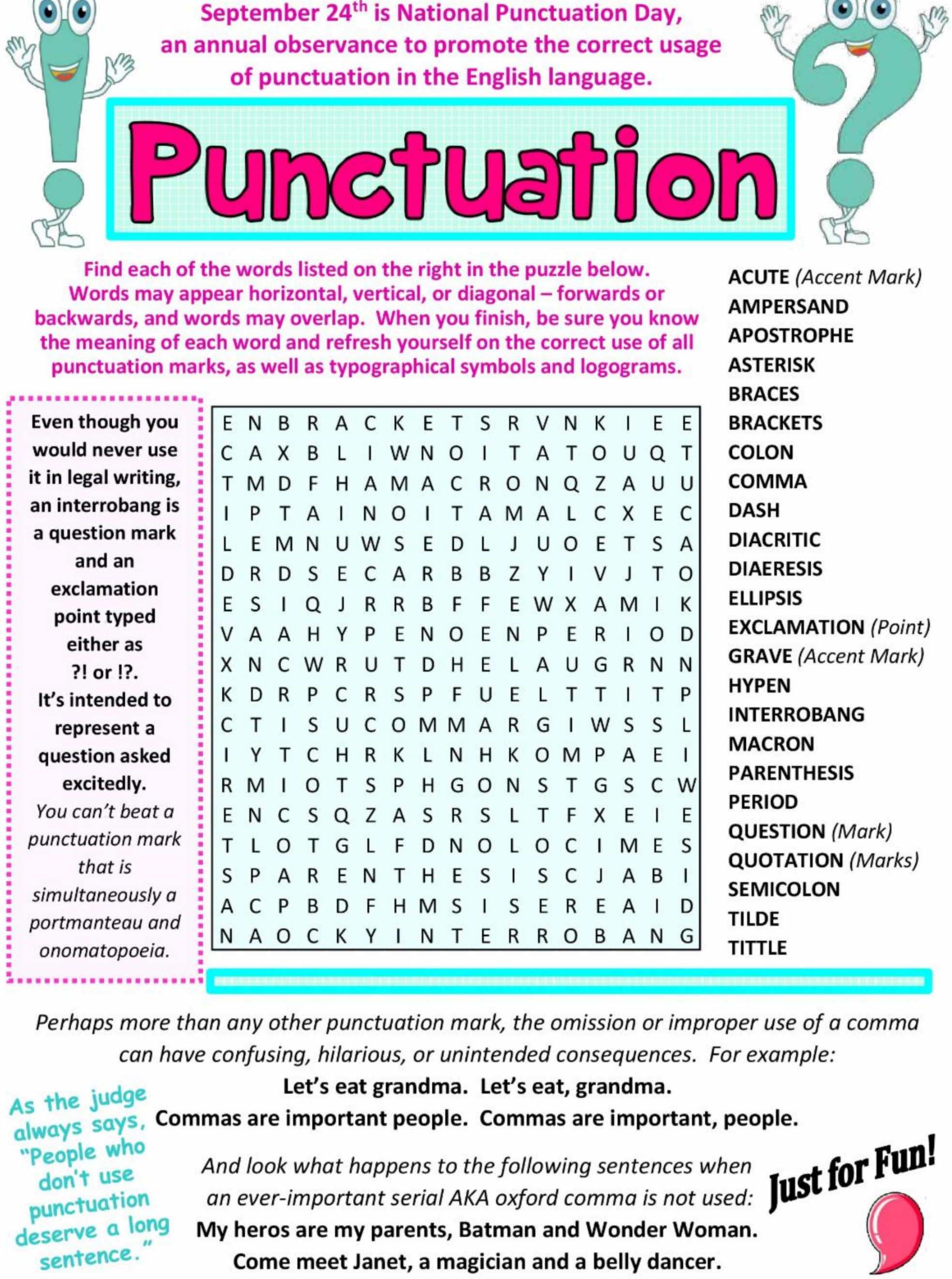

September 24th is National Punctuation Day, an annual observance to promote the correct usage of punctuation in the English language.

Punctuation

Find each of the words listed on the right in the puzzle below. Words may appear horizontal, vertical, or diagonal – forwards or backwards, and words may overlap. When you finish, be sure you know the meaning of each word and refresh yourself on the correct use of all punctuation marks, as well as typographical symbols and logograms.

Even though you would never use it in legal writing, an interrobang is a question mark and an exclamation point typed either as ?! or !?. It's intended to represent a question asked excitedly.

You can't beat a punctuation mark that is simultaneously a portmanteau and onomatopoeia.

E	N	B	R	A	C	K	E	T	S	R	V	N	K	I	E	E
C	A	X	B	L	I	W	N	O	I	T	A	T	O	U	Q	T
T	M	D	F	H	A	M	A	C	R	O	N	Q	Z	A	U	U
I	P	T	A	I	N	O	I	T	A	M	A	L	C	X	E	C
L	E	M	N	U	W	S	E	D	L	J	U	O	E	T	S	A
D	R	D	S	E	C	A	R	B	B	Z	Y	I	V	J	T	O
E	S	I	Q	J	R	R	B	F	F	E	W	X	A	M	I	K
V	A	A	H	Y	P	E	N	O	E	N	P	E	R	I	O	D
X	N	C	W	R	U	T	D	H	E	L	A	U	G	R	N	N
K	D	R	P	C	R	S	P	F	U	E	L	T	T	I	T	P
C	T	I	S	U	C	O	M	M	A	R	G	I	W	S	S	L
I	Y	T	C	H	R	K	L	N	H	K	O	M	P	A	E	I
R	M	I	O	T	S	P	H	G	O	N	S	T	G	S	C	W
E	N	C	S	Q	Z	A	S	R	S	L	T	F	X	E	I	E
T	L	O	T	G	L	F	D	N	O	L	O	C	I	M	E	S
S	P	A	R	E	N	T	H	E	S	I	S	C	J	A	B	I
A	C	P	B	D	F	H	M	S	I	S	E	R	E	A	I	D
N	A	O	C	K	Y	I	N	T	E	R	R	O	B	A	N	G

ACUTE *(Accent Mark)*
AMPERSAND
APOSTROPHE
ASTERISK
BRACES
BRACKETS
COLON
COMMA
DASH
DIACRITIC
DIAERESIS
ELLIPSIS
EXCLAMATION *(Point)*
GRAVE *(Accent Mark)*
HYPEN
INTERROBANG
MACRON
PARENTHESIS
PERIOD
QUESTION *(Mark)*
QUOTATION *(Marks)*
SEMICOLON
TILDE
TITTLE

Perhaps more than any other punctuation mark, the omission or improper use of a comma can have confusing, hilarious, or unintended consequences. For example:

Let's eat grandma. Let's eat, grandma.

Commas are important people. Commas are important, people.

As the judge always says, "People who don't use punctuation deserve a long sentence."

And look what happens to the following sentences when an ever-important serial AKA oxford comma is not used:

My heros are my parents, Batman and Wonder Woman.

Come meet Janet, a magician and a belly dancer.

Just for Fun!

This puzzle is courtesy of CFPA Member, Janet Mahindroo, ACP, FCP

4 Pro Tips for Drafting Billable Time Entries

By: Ann Pearson

July 12, 2023

How much do you love drafting billable time entries?

Oh, don't we all love trying to figure out how to describe what we just did?

We spent four hours. We know it was valuable work to the client, but now we have to sit down and describe it.

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CFPA's 2023 Charities

The Russell Home For Atypical Children

www.russellhome.org

The Russell Home for Atypical Children in Orlando has been in continuous operation for over 60 years without any government support. The Home is the only private, non-profit facility of its kind for severely disabled children in Central Florida.

The Russell Home provides around the clock specialized care, with love and a home-like atmosphere. The love that is in this home, expressed through the eyes, sounds, and smiles from the children will make you count your blessings for the simple things in life.

To make a monetary donation:
https://russellhome.org/giving

To make a donation from their Wish List:
https://russellhome.org/needs

AND

Or worse yet, you spent .1 on a task that takes you .1 to figure out how to describe it.

In today's blog, I'm going to give you four quick tips to help you draft better time entries. This is an example of something that I teach inside the **Billable Hour Boot Camp**.

Tip 1: Change Your Mindset About Your Billable Time Entries

What mindset? Well, the mindset that it's an administrative task that gets done when you've finished ALL of your other work.

Entering your billable time is not just an administrative task that you're burdened with that gets in the way of you doing your actual work.

If you're a paralegal working in a firm that bills time to clients, then drafting billable time entries is part of your job, part of your "actual" work the same way that getting that contract drafted or that brief e-filed.

Tip 2: Know ALL of the Ins and Outs of Your Timekeeping Software

I can't tell you the number of times that I've been inside a law firm doing a live session of the **Billable Hour Boot Camp**, and half the people in the room didn't know that their firm's time entry software could do XYZ function. They just learned the basics of it when they first started at the firm or when it was first rolled out at the firm. In other words, they just learned enough to get by and get the job done.

The problem with that is…you could be taking longer than necessary getting your billable time entries into the system. For example, using it to create shortcuts and templates so that it takes less time to input your time.

Also, the timekeeping system might have other functions that could help you track your time better, create reports on your non-billable time, etc.

My advice is to get to know the ins and outs of your timekeeping software just like you do all of the other software tools that you use on a daily basis. Get in there and watch those video tutorials. You'll thank me, I promise.

Tip #3: Your Billable Time Entries Should Answer AT LEAST Two Questions

What are those questions: What and Why.

Did you know that journalists use the 5W1H method as the way to they know that they have a complete story. There story has to answer: who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Who was involved, what happened, when did it happen, where did it happen, why did they do it or why did it happen, and how did this happen.

Think about some of those questions when you're drafting your time entry.

How can I show the real value of the work that I did to the client? Well, first to the billing partner, so that it does get written off before it ever goes on the actual bill, and then how can I show the real value to the client.

So the main questions that your actual time entry needs to answer are the why and the what.

Why

Why did you do it and what did you do? Did you review something? Okay, but a client doesn't really want to pay for you to review something just for the sake of you reviewing something.

Review an analysis of documents for the sake of what? Why are you charging me, the client, to review my documents that I gave to the attorney? That's where the why comes in. And the why is really the most important question that you can answer because the why is what the client is asking.

Why should I pay my law firm's paralegal to do XYZ? Why is she or he doing this work on my file?

When

Obviously, the when question is usually answered automatically in the timekeeping system when you're entering it.

What

Ask yourself what did I actually do? And one of the ways that you can answer that better and more efficiently and effectively is if you're entering your time contemporaneous with doing the work, because then you remember all of "the what" that you did.

Here's a perfect example: *Review and analyze client documents.*

Why

Instead write: *The review and analysis of client documents to remove any potential privileged and confidential information prior to the production to the plaintiffs.*

That's an important "why" that's valuable to the client that their documents are reviewed and the privileged documents removed prior to the production to the plaintiff. So always add in a why.

Don't ever just have "the what" in a time entry. When you're describing the what, describe what it is that you're actually doing.

Here's another example.

Let's say that you are reviewing and comparing licensing agreements and you're reviewing a particular section in all of these license agreements for the client. Maybe they've got dozens or hundreds of these license agreements, and what are you reviewing them for? What is the substantive thing that might happen from that?

Maybe when you're reviewing it, you're also preparing a chart, some type of comparison chart, a licensing tracking chart, whatever it is. So think about maybe not only what you did, but what was the result of it?

Include the Tangibles When Drafting Billable Time Entries

Did it result in something that the client could see, feel, or touch? Make sure to include that in your time entry because your time was spent on something tangible that the client can see. It might be a License Provision Comparison Chart that you prepared to better analyze those licensing agreements. Or maybe it was a timeline.

When you are reviewing those client documents, are you trying to get a handle on what happened when? Then prepare a timeline. Extract those dates and events into a case chronology. You get where I'm going here.

All right, so remember, ask the questions who, what, when, where, why, and how that will allow you to start drafting the time entry, but then make sure that every single time entry that you draft at least answers the what you did and why you did it. And the rest is going be easy. Well, not easy, but it will be easier for you.

Think about it from the client's perspective. Why do I want to pay this lawyer or this paralegal to do this work for me?

Why Should I Care About Billable Time Entries?

If you're like so many of us, you started your first position at a law firm maybe years ago even, and you were told you have to bill X number of hours to client files per year.

But no one told you exactly how to do that. They just expected that you would do it. Then you moved on maybe to another law firm, your second position, and no one told you how to do it there either. Even though your bonus might depend on it, your raise might depend on it, and your job security could depend on it.

You're not alone. I'm telling you. I've been in the legal industry for over 30 years now. My entire professional life. It has given me the opportunity to meet thousands and thousands of legal professionals from across the country in all different roles, associates, junior partners, partners, paralegals, litigation support.

And I can tell you that in all of those years, I have never met a single person, not one, who went to work for a law firm and received comprehensive time entry training that made them feel confident that they were doing it correctly.

Billable Hour Training That Makes a Difference

I'm on a mission to change that with the **Billable Hour Boot Camp** because I believe that if your wallet, your livelihood, and your career depend on you getting X number of billable hours per year, then you should be given every tool possible to be able to do that.

Now you might be thinking, well, Ann, I don't have any control over the amount of work that the attorneys give me. That's what I'm going to show you in the course first. We're going to start with five strategies that you do have control over, things that you could do. And in fact, first in the course, I start out with several strategies that show you how you are probably leaving billable hours on the table because you're ghosting them.

It means you're already doing the work, you're just unknowingly doing things that make it to where those billable hours never make it into the timekeeping system. After that, we're going to jump into looking at strategies that are going to get you more billable work if you're short on billable hours, and those are going to come in handy even if you're working from home.

The Art and Science of Drafting Better Time Entries

And then finally, we're going to take a deep dive into what I call: the art and science of drafting better time entries. And we're not going to talk about general improvements here. We're not going to talk about things that you see out there saying don't talk in a passive voice that everybody knows. We're going to take a deep dive into it and show you how to master the art and science of drafting time entries.

In addition to the on-demand part of the course that you take at your convenience, I also hold live Q &A sessions – or coaching calls – throughout the year to help you succeed. You can ask me your burning questions, whatever you like, and we're going to make sure that this is your best year ever. So if you work in a law firm, regardless of what your title or role is, whether you are a paralegal associate, litigation support, or legal assistant, if you have a billable hour requirement **this course and coaching program** will be the best investment you will ever make in your career.

Make This Your Best Year Yet

How so? Well, I'll let you in on a little secret I learned when I was a paralegal manager. It's a heck of a lot easier to get a bigger raise and bonus for the paralegal who exceeded the annual billable hour goal and was bringing in more money for the firm – than it was for the paralegal down the hall that had great reviews, but crappy billable hours.

Okay, back to the tips, with one more. Remember:
1 – Change your mindset about your billable time entries.
2 – Get to know ALL of the ins and outs of your timekeeping software.
3 – Make sure that every one of your billable time entries answer the questions what and why.

Tip #4: If you're struggling to describe it as billable, it probably isn't.

If you are struggling to draft a time entry for something that you feel like was clerical, but you're sitting there at your computer trying to come up with a way to describe it that makes it sound billable, it's probably not billable.

So ask yourself: that .1 filing that you did this morning – is it the best use of your time spending another .1 or worse, a .2, trying to figure out how to describe that work in a way that makes it sound billable?

No. And I won't even get into the ethics of it at this point. Just ask yourself, am I struggling to draft the time entry because maybe it wasn't billable, and I'm trying to come up with a way to make it sound billable?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ann Pearson is the Founder of the Paralegal Boot Camp, and host of the **Paralegals on Fire! Podcast Show**, and passionate about promoting the paralegal profession. Ann spent 20 years working as a paralegal manager and a litigation paralegal before opening the Paralegal Boot Camp in 2010. Ann's training programs focus on adding immediate value to a paralegal's career and bridging the gap between what a paralegal learns in school and what they actually do on the job.

Visit the **About Us Page** to learn more about why Ann started the Paralegal Boot Camp. **Connect with Ann on LinkedIn**.

CFPA recorded its first all virtual CP Review Course which took place in August 2022!

- U.S. Legal System
- Civil Litigation
- Contracts
- Corporate & Commercial Law
- Criminal Law & Procedure
- Estate Planning & Probate
- Real Estate & Property
- Torts
- Professional & Ethical Liability

We are now offering the entire recorded course for purchase for $100.00.

Questions? or
Interested in purchasing?
Email: ReviewCourse@cfpainc.org

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Payments can be made on the CFPA website:
www.cfpainc.org/cp-review-course

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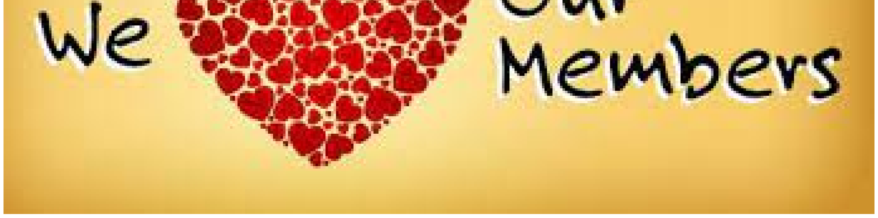
MEMBER MATTERS

with Debbie Dollar, Membership Chair



IN THE KNOW: Join CFPA on Facebook, Instagram, and Linkedin and stay up-to-date on all of our events!!

CFPA INVOLVEMENT: CFPA is a top association because of our members and their involvement with events, committees, community outreach, and networking. If you are someone who excels in these areas please reach out and we would be happy to discuss getting you involved!

CFPA is looking for members who have time to join and help us grow and excel CFPA! Please contact membership at: **membership@cfpainc.org**.

MEMBERSHIP MENTORS: Katheline Stryker, Caroline Wilkerson, and Jennifer Diminich.

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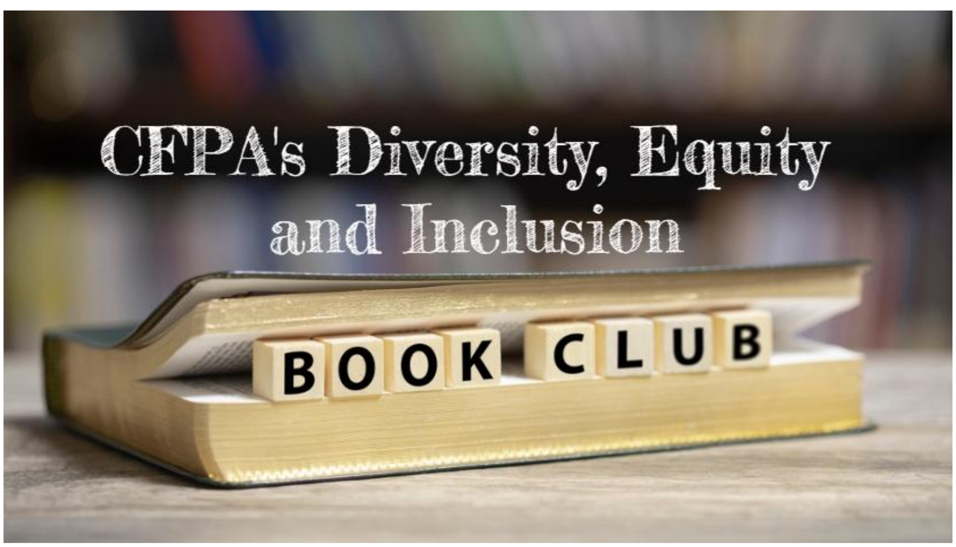

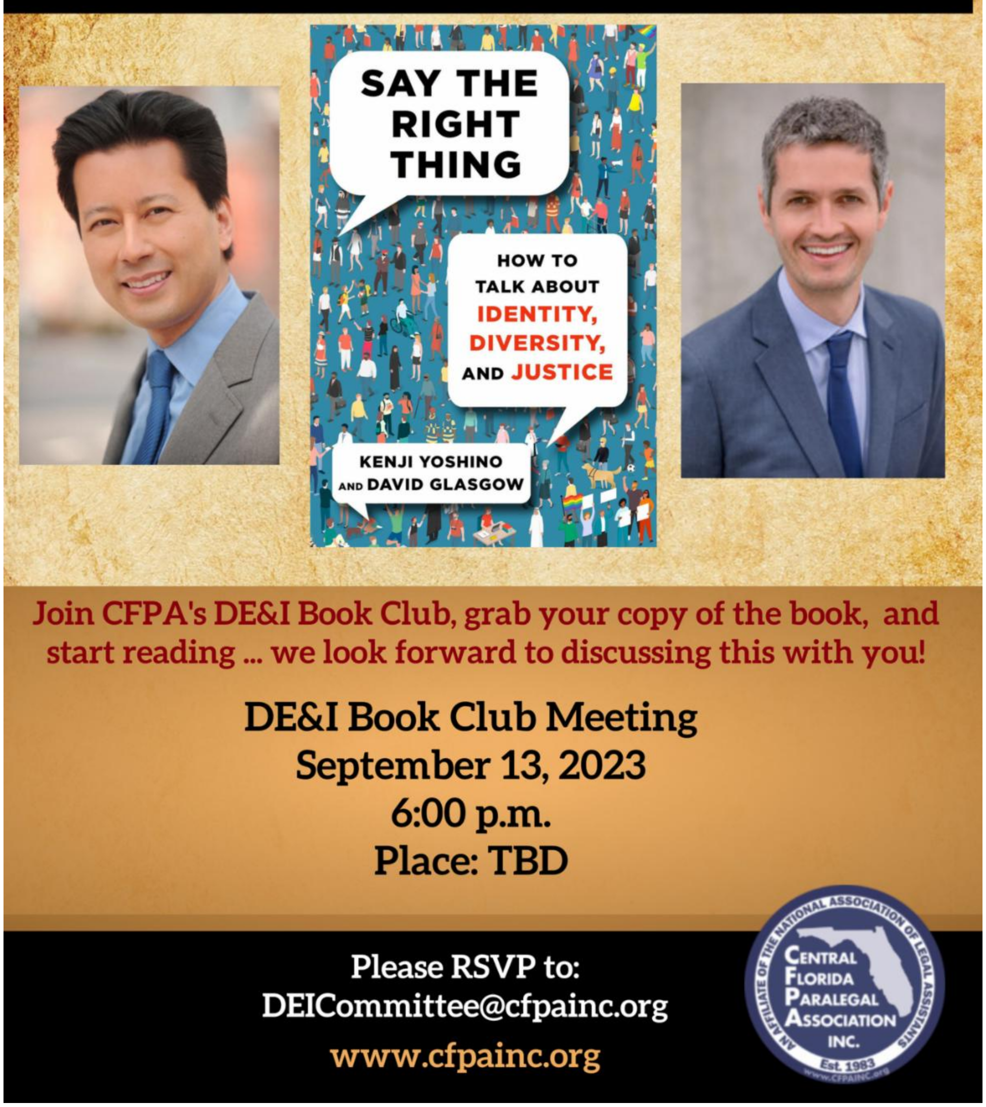

Click to Email the DEI Committee

Hello Friends –

I attended an Affiliate Association virtual Town Hall meeting on August 22, 2023, led by our new Affiliate Associations (AA) Director Sharon Jones. It was an excellent opportunity to chat with Sharon, Rich Hahn (AA Secretary), and other NALA staff members about how the Conference went in Boston – praises, suggestions for improvement, and ideas to think about for next year's conference in Louisville, Kentucky. It was also a great forum to exchange ideas with other NALA Liaisons about what their local associations are doing.

NALA has a census data survey they would like everyone to complete for a chance to win a $100 Amazon gift card. If you are a NALA member, you will find the census data in your account portal. It takes less than a minute to answer some basic questions and then you are automatically entered into the drawing each month. You only have to fill out the census data once.

Upcoming Webinars

September 13, 2023 – 12 pm CST/1 pm EST – Mental Health Law: Understanding Race, Ethnicity, and Bias in the Legal Profession. Course W2333. Basic Non-substantive CLE 1.5 Credits
This webinar discusses diversity, and inclusivity, and identifies the skills necessary to compassionately self-reflect on personal biases and explore what it means to value collaboration and diversity of thought, experiences, and perspectives.

September 27, 2023 – 12 pm CST/1 pm EST – Corporate Compliance: Contract Review, Management & Administration Course W2332 Intermediate: Substantive CLE 1.0 Credit
This session will provide tools and resources to walk through the ins and outs of corporate contract review, management, and administration.

September 28, 2023 – 12 pm CST/1 pm EST – To Thine Own Billing be True – Course W2331 Intermediate Non-substantive CLE 1.0 Credit
This course is designed to explore the four most common billing methods. This course will explore how unsuspecting legal professionals engage in the unethical practice of overbilling and the costly mistakes that follow. This course will provide tips on how to get the most out of the legal professional's billing time and how to effectively communicate the service(s) provided.

To learn more about these webinars or to register go to https://nala.org/courses
Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about NALA. **carolinecwilkerson@gmail.com** or **nalaliaison@cfpainc.org**

Click Here to Register for NALA Seminars

CFPA Newsletter Sponsor

INVESTIGATIONS

Service, Knowledge & Integrity

S.K.I. Investigations was founded in 2000, with the primary goal of providing a quality product and unparalleled customer service. Since that time, our customers have received exceptional results that have helped to redefine the industry standard for surveillance success, fraud detection, and client satisfaction.

SERVICE | KNOWLEDGE | INTEGRITY

- · To offer a boutique level of service with national coverage
- · To exceed our clients expectations on service and product
- · To expand the company while maintaining standards and allow for growth from within
- · To build a company based on hard work with family in mind – the current tenure of our staff is 14 years

Find S.K.I. Investigations on social media at:

From the Editor ...

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of the Carpe Diem. We would love to hear from you! Have you written an article that has been published that you would like to have placed in our newsletter? Does your attorney write articles that he or she would like to share with our group for publishing? If you are interested in writing an article for the newsletter let me know.

Big THANKS to NorthStar Legal, Proof Serve and S.K.I. Investigations for sponsoring the newsletter for 2023!!

Thank you,
Cassie Snyder, ACP, FRP

Editor

Carpe Diem Archived Issues