

Volume 1 Number 1

The Agenda

July 2008

Stepping up to Leadership....It's Priceless!

By Wendy Rice-Isaacs



I got involved in chapter leadership because I wanted to get to know more administrators in my local chapter. I wasn't arm twisted or talked into it like you often

hear. I simply wrote a note to the chapter President when I heard they were looking for a Chapter secretary. I wanted to learn and absorb any morsel of knowledge from the chapter leaders that I could! That is why I got involved. But, why I stay involved is another story.

The Local Network and Then Some

Getting involved in local leadership was my entrance into getting to know my legal administrator counterparts around town. It was a wonderful journey starting out as the secretary of the chapter. I greeted everyone at the door, collected lunch money and handed out nametags. I knew most of the chapter members by name in the first few months! You might say, "End of story", you met your objective. No way! Before my eyes, I had become a part of a community filled with trust and respect! Friendships were made and live on after ALA service. Priceless.

The Knowledge Factor

After getting involved in the chapter leadership, I began to see that the officers had more in common than just chapter business. The board meetings provided opportunities to talk about common interests, share dilemmas and bounce ideas off each other. As a new member who was the only manager in my office, it felt comforting to have others I could relate to. I wasn't going it alone. As my leadership expanded into a regional and national focus, my knowledge base grew. It feels good to help out and share expertise with fellow ALA leaders and members whom I have met through my involvement. Priceless.

Firm Respect and Credibility

When I first mentioned to my Managing Partner that I had stepped into a chapter leadership role, he was encouraging, but cautious. The

previous administrator had not been involved in ALA and didn't attend many, if any, meetings. This was foreign territory for our firm and he wasn't sure I could manage my ALA activities and my job. That prompted me to pay extra attention to managing my time at work and performing my new "second job" with ALA. The attention paid off. Getting involved and taking on additional responsibilities at different levels in ALA has provided me firm wide recognition and interestingly enough, more credibility. Priceless.

"It's useful to have the viewpoint from your seasoned members and your new members. If you don't have that knowledge, you can't be affective in your role."

Professional and Personal Growth

I had no idea that taking on leadership positions in an organization meant that I would grow-up. I can say for sure that this growth didn't occur overnight. It took some time and I made some mistakes along the way. Dealing with volunteers with different styles, motivations, opinions, provided me some great challenges, all of which have had a positive impact on me. ALA has also provided me

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Thank you to our Vendor Partners

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Message from the President

By Michelle Mistretta



It is my great pleasure to serve as the 2008-2009 President of the Metropolitan Detroit Chapter. Thank you for having the trust in me to lead this organization for

the upcoming year! I have been lucky to serve on the Board with some wonderful leaders, and in particular, I must add that Patricia Costigan did an amazing job as President. She was dedicated and resourceful and now, as I begin my year as President of the Metropolitan Detroit Chapter, I have the distinct advantage of learning from Pat, as well as each of the women who served before me. My goal is to fill their shoes and add some of my own ideas to build on the success of my predecessors. Since I have been on the Board, I have worked with and met some wonderful people and, because of their support and guidance, I know I can attain this goal. As I begin this exciting year, I am eager to serve the Chapter that has given me so much.

Last year we worked hard to improve and strengthen the organization in many areas. We gave more scholarships to both national and regional meetings, we gave more diversity scholarships and we continued to promote the Chapter and increase membership. This year will definitely be filled with challenges, road blocks and pitfalls. However, I know that I am able to accept these things because of the support network I have around me. The Chapter's board is built on the strength of various individuals, and we work as a team.

My overall goal for my term is to continue to make the Detroit Metro Chapter the best, strongest, most financially stable chapter in the ALA and

to do that one must think outside the box and look for ways to make positive changes within the Chapter. Thoughts of change often make one cringe and worry about the ugly parts or perhaps seeing the glass half empty. Change is a part of life, and I strive to look at it as a glass half full. Leading the Metro Detroit Chapter Board of Directors, I hope to keep the glass half full-maybe even throw in a little chocolate to give it a boost!

Increasing Chapter membership is always a priority, and this year will be no different. The Metro Detroit Chapter held a membership drive at Morton's, the Steakhouse in Southfield as a way to introduce our Chapter to new members and to thank those who are already members. The Chapter meetings have presented a great opportunity to interact with other members and take valuable knowledge from our speakers and business partners. Remember, it's just as important to have fun, as it is to gain knowledge. The success of our Chapter relies on all members to participate in any way possible. We can do this by learning from each other, attending as many Chapter events as possible, volunteering for various committees, referring non-members to join the ALA and our Chapter, supporting our vendor sponsors by using and referring them whenever possible, and getting involved in running the Chapter in some way. And so, my fellow Chapter members: ask not what your Chapter can do for you, but what you can do for your Chapter. Together we can make a difference. I look forward to an exciting year!

If you are interested in joining a committee or attending a Board of Directors meeting feel free to contact me at president@aladetroit.org for details.

Michelle Mistretta

Visit the website at www.aladetroit.org for important information, a calendar of events and past editions of the Newsletter!

A Special Thank You

Our professionally designed quarterly newsletter, The Agenda, has made the jump online. The online version will continue to keep our members informed on upcoming events while recapping past events. The Board of Directors, however, would like to take this opportunity to send a special thank you to Norm Bornstein, Editor; Lyssa Holtz, Design/Layout; and the rest of the newsletter committee for their hard work and dedication in producing the award winning newsletter.

Welcome New Members

Dawn Baffi, Kienbaum, Opperwall, Hardy and Pelton

Catherine L. Borza, Bodman LLP

Steven J. Campbell, Dykema Gossett, PLLC

Ronda Harris, Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, PLC

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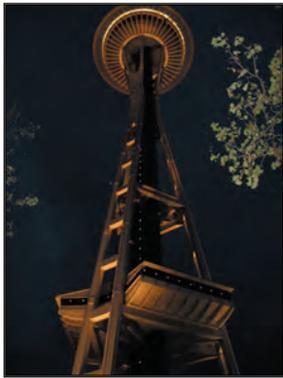
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Robert Half Legal

ALA 37th Annual Educational Conference and Exposition

A First-Timers Look

By Larry Halicki



“It never rains in California...” A popular song from days past. Now I know why, the rain moved up to Seattle!

It wasn't all that bad. Most of it

was heavy mist and nobody seemed to mind. The downtown section is rather condensed and you can go from block to block under large store coverings. And

The speakers were very good, especially Dr. Steven Sample, president of the University of Southern California. His message on leadership was right on point - to best model desired behavior see the gray, be open to new ideas, listen to your staff, and when necessary, shoot your own horse. Come see me at a future chapter meeting sometime if you'd like me to explain that one.

Paula Nailon had a great talk about managing Gen X & Y employees. They do think differently than the boomers or traditionalists, don't they? I heard some good ideas from Ross Fishman on marketing to preserve existing

profit taking versus long term investment in your law firm.

The best was Bud Krough, former head of special investigations for President Nixon. He approved the first break-in of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's office. It was a badly botched operation. He admitted what he did, pled guilty, spent time in prison, was dis-bared and later re-admitted, and 30 years later came out with a public apology in the form of a book. He talked about the “integrity zone” and what bad things happen when you wander outside of it just to endorse company initiatives. He clearly explained the dangers of group think and ‘yessir’ as your only response.



that's what a lot of people do -SHOP! Imagine Nordstrom's, Tiffany's, Macy's, Coldwater Creek, Talbot's and all the others all in a few blocks. OMG! It gave me hives.

Then there was some conference going on as well, the ALA 37th Annual Educational Conference and Exposition. Over 1700 attended the event and pretty much took over the Convention Center.

clients rather than spending heavily on advertising and coaxing new ones. Dick & Jeanne Roy gave the attendees to their session some very practical and important reasons to ‘get your green on’ and help mother earth along as best you can. Tom Collins was not a famous bartender, but a former PWC partner and former CEO of Juris who had some very interesting thoughts on the problems with short term

If you go to Seattle, be sure to spend enough time visiting the Space Needle and all the shops along the waterfront. Look out for flying fish! I must say you really missed a show if you've haven't seen Wendy Rice-Isaacs and Patty Groff playing catch with a mackerel.

Seriously, the town is very beautiful and the weather turns nice, right about 6:00 PM. I'd go back in a minute.



Managed Services

By Rob Stants, C.A.S.S.

“Managed services” has become a very popular term and similar to so many other industry buzzwords, its meaning has become diluted. In fact, the dilution has become so prevalent that some see managed services as simply a generic term for outsourced IT services.

Managed Services refers to much more than just outsourcing. Managed Services is an innovative business and service model that is transforming the way law firms and IT service providers are doing business. More and more companies are moving away from the traditional, break-fix service model and making the transition to managed services — predictable and proactive business-focused IT services.

Results managed IT services have produced: more billable hours, increased focus on the business development, increase productivity and user satisfaction, a network with more predictable performance, increased predictability in strategic planning.

I have provided a brief on the industry norms of services in example; Break-fix, Responsive, Proactive and Managed. To help organizations understand which process they currently utilize for their IT needs and why understanding is important to maximize efficiency and profit. Consulting professionals who understand and have a working knowledge of the Managed Services model is imperative. The model is based on proven industry practices, Gartner analyst research, and noted experience; to help both law firms and service providers assess the business

and develop a plan to improve their managed services offering.

Break-fix – this process is impromptu and typically not documented. Service delivery is unpredictable, service level objectives typically do not exist, and 100% of technician time is dedicated to reacting to failures discovered by the customer.

Responsive – This stage is similar to Break-fix except the service provider has some documented processes, typically offers some level of basic monitoring, and technical resource time is still dedicated to repairing failures. The failures are often caught by the monitoring tool and not the customers.

Proactive – This point differs from the first two levels in that preventative maintenance is at the core of this approach to service delivery. Proactive tech teams or service providers can minimize the threat of failure, capture performance and capacity utilization information, and use service level objectives to set targets.

Managed – This is the primary level, which takes a “utility” approach to service delivery. Managed-level customers are business perceptive but not very technical. They are more interested in performance, capacity and regulatory compliance than

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REGIONS 2&3
EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

FAST TRACK TO KNOWLEDGE
INDIANAPOLIS, IN • NOVEMBER 13-15, 2008

The information you need to face any challenge at your law firm or legal department can be found at the

ALA 2008 Regions 2 & 3
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Stepping up to Leadership *continued from page 1*

a professional and personal buffet of training and education. Through my leadership experiences I have presented programs, led workshops and attended some powerful programming. I have learned firsthand that butterflies in your stomach do flutter away over time, but also keep you engaged and on your toes. This truly is priceless stuff.

Those Thought Provoking People

As an ALA leader, I have worked with so many incredible, smart, creative people at all stages in their careers. I love to listen to the way ALA use to be or how chapters use to run their chapter meetings, etc. The stories are fascinating to me and they have been extremely useful in helping me get a better perspective on the pulse of a

membership. It's useful to have the viewpoint from your seasoned members and your new members. If you don't have that knowledge, you can't be affective in your role. That is truly priceless.

ALA leadership involvement is voluntary. It's something that takes commitment, time, energy and patience. It's not for everyone, but it's certainly for me. So step up....it's priceless!

Managed Services

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they are in the overall complexity of the environment. Managed Services provide an executive overview of your network, to help understand the overall utilization of your network infrastructure. This type of service is consistently collecting network data for performance, management, as well as incident notification. This enables efficient network management and a higher level of network performance.

"Managed Services" and why? The first questions is does your law firm spend too much time or effort on the fundamentals of providing technology services or support? Are you increasingly reactive and unable to focus on projects

issues, and improve overall IT services and support, and allow your partners, associates and staff to be more productive engaging their time within their expertise, instead of focusing their energy on IT issues. Managed Services should provide the law firm with a wealth of IT skills without the need to build a technical service department. True managed services will provide the ability to stabilize the network environment, preventing downtime and network outages, increasing uptime substantially. Managed Services should help resolve your technology dilemmas and improve IT services over time with predictable costs and predictable service. Top tier service providers provide 24x7 operational support capabilities.

True Managed Services provide performance reporting as an offline business-reporting solution that demonstrates the performance of your IT infrastructure from a business perspective. In addition, the managed service provider should be able to produce a business value report that

illustrates the results of a Managed Service offering from a business perspective.

Managed Services can provide comparative baseline data for specific time periods or devices to provide insight into the current systems. This process is also valuable in strategic planning, evaluating whether current resources are able to provide the level of service required for future projects, and determining what investment will be valuable for future plans.

What are the gains and advantages of Managed IT Services for law firms? For those law firms that are ready, the advantages are limitless! Results managed IT services have produced: more billable hours, increased focus on the business development, increased productivity and user satisfaction, a network with more predicable performance, and increased predictability in strategic planning. More importantly, these benefits are acquired through a predictable monthly cost.

More and more companies are moving away from the traditional, break-fix service model and making the transition to managed services – predictable and proactive business-focused IT services.

that enhance the firm's competitive position? By example, is supporting the remote access system taking precedence over supporting a new office?

Managed Services is setup to proactively manage your IT infrastructure to free you from typical mundane tasks, help resolve technology



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Save the Dates



8/21/08 Member Meeting

Detroit Institute of Arts
11:30 lunch, meeting
20 + year members honored
Afternoon optional unescorted DIA tour
Going Green in the Legal Industry,
Marshall Fletcher, All-State Legal
Sponsor - Esquire Litigation Services

Going Green - It's Just Good \$ense!

Corporate America is becoming heavily committed to "Going Green", one of the fastest developing trends in the U.S. As law firm clients make this major move, they are expecting their

vendor partners to take an active role in supporting their efforts. However, few law firms really understand "Going Green", its implications and how to include their efforts as part of their marketing program.

This presentation addresses the critical questions marketers need to be asking for their firms -

- What is Going Green and what's the big deal?
- Why is it important to the legal industry & to my law firm?
- What are other firms doing or planning?
- What can my firm do?
- How can I get my vendors involved?
- How can I relay the message to my clients?

This PowerPoint presentation with handouts will provide administrators and marketers at all levels a better understanding of this emerging trend and they will take away suggestions for programs they can begin implementing

immediately in their firms. The program is already scheduled for presentation in 2008 to the Birmingham LMA CityGroup and the ALA Tennessee State-Wide Educational Conference.

9/18/08 Vendor Show and Educational Conference

Club Venetian
11:30 lunch, meeting
Speaker - Michael Caruso,
The Edison House
Topic: Leadership

10/16/08 Member Meeting

Club Venetian
11:30 lunch, meeting
Speaker - Mark Gilman, Decus
Communications, LLC,
Topic: The Top Five Things You
Can Fix to Fuel Your Marketing Goals

11/20/08 Member Meeting

Club Venetian
11:30 lunch, meeting

12/11/08 Holiday Party

Morton's Steakhouse, Southfield
5:00 social

ALA Annual Educational Events

Conference

2008 Law Firm Financial Management Conference and Exposition

Time and Location

October 16-18, 2008
Renaissance Schaumburg Hotel
& Convention Center
1551 N. Thoreau Drive
Schaumburg, Illinois 601073
Reservations: (800) 468-3571 or
(847) 303-4100
(Please reference the Association of
Legal Administrators/Finance
Conference)
Online reservations
Check-in 4 p.m.; Check-out Noon

Expected Attendance

Attendees can select from more than 20 sessions focused on finance-related topics and trends specifically for the law firm environment.

Participants can learn to:

- Create meaningful budgets aligned to your firm's strategic goals
- Implement innovative strategies for managing accounts receivables
- Leverage Microsoft Outlook® to improve your efficiency and organization
- Assess your firm's vulnerability to fraud and embezzlement

- Implement proven measures for retaining your associate level talent
- Uncover multiple strategies to improve your firm's bottom line
- Effectively lead and manage the 21st century law firm in an increasingly competitive landscape

Also featured are topics ranging from retaining associate level talent to business intelligence dashboards and succession planning.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Roseki, Manager of Exhibits & Sponsorships at ALA headquarters at kroski@alanet.org or 847/267-1374. For more information visit the ALA website at alanet.org."

Pardon Our Antitrust

by Jan Waugh



Most ALA members belong to a local chapter for the networking and exchange of information and ideas. Face-to-face meetings provide great opportunities for this but perhaps

of equal importance are “just in time” communications – the ability to obtain information at the moment it’s needed. Not surprisingly, then, many ALA chapters have formed e-mail groups or listserves to facilitate that need. A great idea? Indeed it is, as long as everyone understands and follows important ground rules to prevent on-line discussions from straying into dangerous territory.

First, a little background: The single most significant law affecting professional associations and its chapters is the Sherman Antitrust Act, which makes unlawful “every contract, combination in the form of trust of otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce...”. A professional association, by the very fact that it is comprised of competitors, is a “combination” – thus satisfying one of the elements in proving an antitrust violation. Other federal antitrust laws as well as state laws apply here also.

There is no organization too small or too localized to escape the possibility of a civil or criminal antitrust suit. Moreover, the penalties for antitrust violations are so severe (including enormous fines to the individuals, their employers, the chapter and the association – not to mention incarceration) that all members owe it to

themselves and their fellow members to know the boundaries, especially since it can be easy to stray beyond them without realizing it.

In an association setting, there are four main areas of antitrust concern: price fixing, membership, standardization and certification, and industry self-regulation. The area where members are most likely to violate the law – and the area where the government appears most concerned – is price fixing. ALA’s Antitrust Guide, written by legal counsel John Jeffries, states that “members should refrain from any discussion which may provide the basis for an inference that the members agreed to take action relating to prices, production, allocation of markets, or any other matter having a market effect.” While not specifically stated in that phrase, wages – both current and future – are included in the list of topics to avoid. Discussions about fees, disbursement charges, billing rates, interest charges and credit terms should also be avoided.

Having a group discussion (whether in person or on-line) about any of the above topics is not price fixing, in and of itself, but it can raise the presumption that the discussion was held for that purpose. Worse yet, if two or more members conclude to pay a specific salary or salary range for a position based on discussions that took place among the group, a claim of price fixing could easily follow. Such a claim would have to be proven, of course, but the trouble and expense of defending yourself – not to mention the severe penalties if found guilty – underscore the wisdom of avoiding these discussions in the first place. Similarly,

In an association setting, there are four main areas of antitrust concern: price fixing, membership, standardization and certification, and industry self-regulation. The area where members are most likely to violate the law – and the area where the government appears most concerned – is price fixing.

discussing the results of a salary survey with “competitors” (i.e., other members) should be avoided since it could create a perception of collusion on fees, wages, and/or billing rates.

The closing paragraph of the Antitrust Guide says it best: “The government’s attitude toward professional associations [like ALA] requires professional association members, as well as professional associations themselves, to at all times conduct their business openly and avoid any semblance of activity which might lead to the belief that the association members had agreed, even informally, to something that could have an effect on prices, fees or competition. Therefore, chapter officers and every member of ALA must be vigilant in their role of “antitrust watchdog”.

For further information about this or related matters, refer to ALA’s Antitrust Guide or contact ALA’s Executive Director, John Michalik.

Listserve – Benefits and Limitations

The many benefits of membership in the Metropolitan Detroit ALA includes access to the chapter’s list serve for quick answers to management questions, business partner recommendations, and policy suggestions. As a member of the chapter you are entitled to join the list serve, and may do so from the chapter web site at www.aladetroit.org.

The benefit, unfortunately, comes with some limitations. We are not able to discuss salary issues in a forum such as the list serve, as that discussion would be in violation of anti-trust laws (price fixing). This type of question comes up from time to time not only in our chapter, but other chapters around the country as well.

When such questions are unwittingly posed, chapter leaders have been asked by ALA to remind our members that a discussion with respect this type of issue is not allowable. It is easy to forget this limitation, so you may see a friendly reminder come across the list serve from time to time.

8th Annual Color Me Healthy Community Expo



The Metropolitan Detroit Chapter will be participating in Matrix Human Services Center and its' Mission Partners eighth annual Color Me Healthy Community Expo on Saturday, August 16, 2008. Major highlights include:

- **Back To School – Education Fair.....** FREE children's backpacks and school supplies, supplied by the Association of Legal Administrators Metropolitan Detroit Chapter

- **Health Fair.....** screenings and resources for adults & children
- **Community Resource Fair.....** community & social service organizations on site
- **Youth & Children's Art Show.....** Tour the Arts at the Center studio
- **Activities for Children.....** Give A Ways..... Refreshments

The Color Me Healthy Community Expo is scheduled for 10 am until 2 pm at the Matrix Human Services Center, 13560 E. McNichols, Detroit, MI. Vendors, activities and displays will be located throughout the Center, including the front courtyard, community garden and Pelkey entrance

parking lot. Last year 85 vendors and 1,000 community residents joined together to make connections for much needed resources and services. This year 2,000 community residents are expected to attend.

Your support of this worthwhile community-focused event would be greatly appreciated. Please send your donations, made payable to ALA Metro Detroit, to:

Mary Ann Dunham
Assistant Treasurer,
Bush, Seyferth, Kethledge & Paige
3001 W. Big Beaver Rd., Suite 600
Troy, MI 48084

Please indicate Community Challenge project on the check.

Community Service Backpack "Packing" Party



PMV Technologies is excited to be hosting the "packing" party for the ALA community service project on August 2nd. As you know we will be providing backpacks filled with school supplies to Matrix of Detroit. We hope you will help us fill the backpacks and prepare them for distribution. PMV has plenty of room at their new facility to ensure that we have the space needed to sort supplies and prepare the backpacks.

Our goal is to make this an event that you can enjoy with your fellow ALA members, PMV employees and family. Therefore, PMV Technologies will be providing a BBQ lunch, soft drinks, and snacks. It will be a fun afternoon for a wonderful cause. The backpacks are scheduled to be distributed to the children of Matrix in mid August.

Date & Time

Saturday August 2nd
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
(or whenever the backpacks are completed)
Lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m.

Location

PMV Technologies
29215 Stephenson Highway
Madison Heights, MI 48071

If you would like to register for this event so we know that you will be attending please go to: www.teampmv.com/ala

ALA Connects - Opportunities

Among the many benefits of membership in the ALA Detroit Chapter is access to the chapter's confidential job bank. This confidential service connects law firms with prospective candidates for non-lawyer positions. Perhaps your firm has an opening for either a legal administrator or legal support staff; perhaps you are aware of prospective candidates for a non-lawyer position. Consider contacting the chapter president at president@aladetroit.org to put this service to use.

**Be sure
to visit the
website at
www.aladetroit.org**

New Officers Elected For 2008/2009 Term

Congratulations to the following Metropolitan Detroit Chapter members who were voted into office for the 2008-2009 calendar year: Michelle Mistretta, President; Denise Doherty, Vice President; Kimberly Zortman, Treasurer; Lyn Calu, Secretary; Pamela Fontana, Director of Vendor Relations; Larry Halicki, Director of Meetings & Publicity. Also serving on committee chairs for the 2008-2009 term is: Mary Ann Dunham, Assistant Treasurer; Raisa Medvinsky, Diversity; Pamela Davis, Membership. Patricia Costigan is Immediate Past President. They will no doubt continue the long tradition of excellent service to our Chapter.



Your 2008/2009 Officers

ALA Metro Detroit 2008/2009 Officers

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We value your comments/suggestions and your articles. After all, this is your Newsletter! If you would like to make a suggestion that would enhance the newsletter, or would be interested in writing an article that would be of interest to our members, please email Pamela Fontana at newsletter@aladetroit.com. Your input would be greatly appreciated.