

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL DOCUMENT ASSISTANTS

**Board Meeting
Basement Conference Room of the Southland Square Building
23401 Southland Dr., Hayward, CA
January 18, 2020 @ 10:00 am**

Officers Present:

Carol Ludlow - President
Ian Duncan – Vice President
Debra Hollis - Secretary

Directors Present:

Dane Gambill - Legislation Chair
Catherine Hertzog – Education Chair
Rob Van Steen – Events Chair
Jeri Blatt – Public Relations Chair
Michael Mendenhall – Publications Chair
Jim Wilroy – Professional Designations Chair

Absent:

Sofia Sanchez - Treasurer
Loretta Szudy – Professional Standards Chair
Lisa Castillo – Chapter Liaison Chair
Elizabeth Olvera – Membership Chair

Guest: Tracey Booth – Administrative Manager

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am. by President Carol Ludlow.

1. **Minutes:** Jeri made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 5, 2019 board meeting, as submitted and Rob seconded. Michael and Catherine abstained because they were not in attendance at the last meeting. Motion carried.
2. **Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report was tabled until the next meeting because Sofia was unable to attend this meeting. Carol stated that the Directors should email her and Sofia with what they believe they will need for the year, so they can work on the budget.
3. **Welcome Catherine Hertzog:** The Board welcomed Catherine Hertzog to the Board to serve as Education Chairperson. Catherine is excited to get started in her position and already has ideas for Teleclasses, including UPL, Ethics, and AB 1850.

4. Conference:

Rob stated that the conference will be held on October 23, 2020 and October 24, 2020. Some locations that are being considered for the annual Conference include Palm Springs, San Diego and Long Beach. The hope is to have the location confirmed by the end of January. Some factors to consider when determining the location should include an airport nearby, the food prices, and the fee for the meeting rooms.

Carol suggested considering the fee for the food when determining what to charge for Conference attendees. Tracey suggested implementing a payment plan for those who wish to attend. That would make it easier for some attendees.

There was discussion about asking Judges and Court workers to be instructors for classes, to keep the cost of the conference down, because they are not allowed to accept a fee for being an instructor.

Debra stated that she intends to begin the Scholarship program earlier, to allow for more new members to submit an essay. It was discussed that mid-August would be a good time.

5. Seminar locations:

Rob stated that the Spring Seminar will most likely be held in Sacramento on April 24, 2020 through April 25, 2020. The possible topic of this Seminar may be a Probate Boot Camp – Probate.

Milpitas is one location being considered, for the Santa Clara Seminar. This Seminar may be held on June 20, 2020. It was agreed by the Board that this Seminar should be regarding Divorce issues.

One date for the LA Seminar that is being considered is July 25, 2020. This Seminar may cover Trusts.

Rob believes that all Seminars should be “boot camps”, and that it would benefit our membership to have Teleclasses on preparing members for the boot camps, prior to the Seminar dates.

6. Clarification of description of Board Positions:

Carol stated that the Events Chair will be responsible for choosing the locations of events and Education Chair will be involved in the planning of subject matter for classes at the events. Ian suggested creating a permanent committee for the conference so that all of the work doesn't fall on one or two people. It was discussed that the Vice President and the Treasurer should always be on the conference committee.

It was suggested that the Education Chair have 2 additional Board members, assigned by the President, to serve on that committee.

Jim asked Ian to work on a description of Jim's Chair, which is Professional Designations Chair.

Ian will work on a draft of by-law changes and descriptions of Chair positions, with Jim's help. The will then send the proposed changes to the Board for review and discussion. Members could then vote for the changes online.

7. Board Member deliverables – method of reporting to Board:

It was discussed that there could be a “Board of Directors Monthly Note” where the Directors and Officers could provide “status reports” to the membership. Tracey said if the Board has their article to her by Fridays, she can publish the “Board of Directors Monthly Note” on Mondays.

Some “to do” items for Directors that were discussed are:

Dane to keep an eye on legislation that may affect our profession. Elizabeth would contact counties and ask for lists of LDAs registered in each county. She would also continue to work on her Mentors Program. Michael is to continue to work on updating the brochures, with Ian becoming a member of Michael's committee. Rob would continue to work on the upcoming Seminars and the annual Conference and Catherine would work on class subject ideas and instructors.

8. Update on Lobbyist/Statewide Data Base

It was reported that the California Bar Association has formed a task force to study the “judicial gap”. The task force is currently made up of one-half attorneys and one-half people in the technology field. They are studying how to improve access to justice and are “rethinking the legal profession”. The BAR studied Washington State and found that their method didn't work well. They are now considering creating a “new” profession called “Independent Paralegal”. The education requirements would be the same as for current Paralegals, however there would also be a background check and they would need to

have worked under an attorney for 3 years, in the field they intend to specialize in. The proposal is that Independent Paralegals who pass all requirements could then appear in Court with their clients, and possibly give advice or at least explain concepts, etc, to clients.

There was some discussion about how this would affect the Legal Document Assistant profession. Some members felt it may include many LDAs. Carol and Ian agreed that they don't think Independent Paralegals are going to replace LDAs, but to be "beside us", as a new profession. Ian stated that if they are to be beside us, we should take the position that LDAs should be able to select forms, direct clients, explain certain documents and procedures, and so forth, but not give advice.

Carol and Helen Bellamy were the only members of the public in attendance at the meeting of the task force. Carol reported that she emailed 2 people on the task force and already received a reply from one, a lady in Tennessee. Carol believes it would benefit CALDA if we make relationships with task force members. Ian will attend the next meeting of the task force.

Carol expressed that she believes we need to move forward on creation of a statewide data base for LDAs. There is a proposal in place whereby County Recorders will send all fictitious name businesses to the Secretary of State, to be listed on the Secretary of State's website. She thinks that would be good for LDAs as well. Carol also said that she will include \$5,000 in the budget which will include the cost for a Legislation Day and ask Matt to assist CALDA in putting one on. Matt did the Legislation Day last year which was successful.

9. Membership Drive

The Board discussed ideas about increasing membership. Some ideas discussed included offering "18 months for the price of 12" to a new member; anyone wishing to become a member at the same time as signing up for a Seminar or the Conference, would receive a discount on their first year dues; direct mailing to LDAs that are not members, telling them of the advantages of membership in CALDA.

The mentor program was ended because no one would volunteer to be a mentor. It was suggested that during the April Seminar and maybe the LA Seminar, we should hold a one-half day of "how to start your own business".

10. Professional Designations

Jim stated that he felt that this would be certification within CALDA, as a certified LDA. There was some discussion about what certification would involve and how it would benefit the public. Ideas were that it would give credibility to our profession, it would require LDAs to have a certain amount of experience and education, which would include UPL and Ethics classes.

11. Brochure/Questionnaire update

Michael stated that he would like to have a brochure on the Declaration of Disclosure, explaining the purpose of it, and the importance of fully disclosing. He believes that the first brochure and questionnaire updated needs to be "Family Law – Dissolution/Legal Separation". It was agreed that the majority of members are involved in typing family law documents.

Carol stated that she has a document that she asks all clients to sign, saying that they have reviewed all documents they are signing and have checked for correctness of name, address, phone number and information included in the documents.

It was pointed out that, in the bottom left corner of all forms, it states “optional” or “mandatory”. If we fill out those that are mandatory, we are not “choosing” forms.

12. Discuss Elias Attorney Network

Carol reported that Chris Stefan asked to be removed from the Elias Attorney Network. He said he was receiving too many calls from people who expected more than what was originally agreed on. Carol believes we need to revise the Elias Attorney Network by removing the requirement that attorneys have to offer a discount. She says that if we do, Chris will come back. We need to “relaunch” the Elias Attorney Network after revising it. It was discussed that it would be a good idea to ask, on the forum, for members to suggest attorneys for the Elias Attorney Network.

13. PR Update

Jeri stated that she and Connie worked on a year long project to produce a video about CALDA. It was debuted at the Conference. She believed it got a positive response. She also had sent it to the Board several times, for review and suggestions and believed the Board approved it, only to find out at the November 5th meeting that it was not as well liked as believed. She stated that she felt they spent \$1740 and a year’s time for nothing. Carol reported that Chris Stefan felt it was not professional. Richard Lubetsky commented to Carol that if attorneys saw the video, they would no longer work with us.

Chris offered to be the Spokesperson and work on a different video with Jeri. Jeri offered to check with Chris about what his fee would be. It was suggested that perhaps \$150 per hour would be fair. Ian felt that the comedic tone of the video that Jeri and Connie completed was not a good idea for a first video. Ian has several videos on his website for his business. He suggested that it would be better if CALDA hired a videographer and provided the script, rather than have a member be the videographer. However, since Connie was involved with the other video, it was suggested that she be kept apprised of the video production, but hire professionals to do the work.

The Board watched a couple of the videos on Ian’s website and it was agreed that we all liked them. Ian will provide the name of the person he uses to do his videos. He suggested that we use Chris’ input in determining the script. Sofia will put \$5,000 in the budget for PR.

Jeri made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Rob seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Debra I. Hollis
Secretary
California Association of Legal Document Assistants
(CALDA)