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NEBRASKA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

2010 AFFILIATED ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

The Nebraska Paralegal Association (formerly known as the Nebraska Association of Legal Assistants) was formed in 1976 by charter members. On April 18, 2008, the membership voted to change our name to the Nebraska Paralegal Association (NePA). As of May 30, 2010, NePA had:

- 133 active members (voting)
- 13 associate members
- 16 student members
- 10 sustaining members
- 6 honorary members

Additionally, NePA maintains relationships with:

- 3 newspapers
- 4 schools

The membership is drawn from the entire State of Nebraska, which is divided into five districts. Both District 1, covering the Omaha metropolitan area, and District 2, covering the Lincoln metropolitan area, have meetings and other activities on a regular basis. District 1 has monthly educational luncheons and District 2 holds quarterly educational luncheons. Since July 2007, District 1 has sponsored monthly luncheons with speakers on various topics. This year's topics have included updates to the Douglas County District Court, LEAP, stress relief through chiropractic treatment, interesting investigation techniques through social networks, hospice care, and organizational tips. NePA was able to continue to offer monthly luncheons for both District 1 and District 2 at a reduced price to its members, for the second year in a row. District 2, under the direction of Carla Larson, ACP, District 2 Director, continues to meet on a quarterly basis at the Green Gateau restaurant in downtown Lincoln, with attendance ranging from 12-20 people, and speakers presenting on a variety of member-suggested topics. There are two remaining District 2 meetings scheduled for 2010. District 2 now has a total of 8 certified paralegals, which entails approximately 1/3 of its current membership. Various members of the NePA Board of Directors have encouraged the professional growth, development and expansion of the District 2 contingent, and their support has been invaluable in its growth.

District 2 continues to grow and over the next year, we hope to be able to expand association membership through the additional districts throughout Nebraska as we prepare for the 2011 NALA Convention in Omaha, Nebraska. District 2 draws its membership from the city of Lincoln and 11 surrounding counties and there are currently 22 members. At the suggestion of members, District 2 held its first annual 4-D Party ("Food, Fun, Friends, Frivolity") on January 16, 2010 in Lincoln, Nebraska, without any career-related agenda but rather an abundance of food, drink, and fun.

As of May 30, 2010, the Nebraska Paralegal Association has a total of 61 NALA Certified Paralegals, 21 of which hold Advanced Certified Paralegal designations, with 2 of those members holding multiple ACP designations.

Current members of the Board of Directors are:

President:	Loretta Phillips
President Elect:	Alison Barthel, CP
Vice President:	Kim Hansen
Secretary:	Jaci O'Brien, ACP
Treasurer:	Teresa Barnes, CP
NALA Liaison:	Christina L. Koch, ACP
District 1 Director:	Laurie Vik, CP
District 2 Director:	Carla Larson, ACP
Parliamentarian:	Kalisha Reed, CP
Official Publications Editor:	Stephanie Henson, ACP
Website Administrator:	Kimberly A.S. Brown, CP

The overall operation of NePA is carried out by the Board of Directors. Active committees are Student Membership/Mentoring, Seminar, Continuing Legal Education with a sub-committee for the CLE Review Course, Website, Public Relations/Nebraska Bar Association with a sub-committee for Law Day, and Scholarship Committees (student and CP/ACP scholarships). Our fiscal year commences October 1 and ends September 30.

The *In Brief* newsletter is used to inform our members of activities and Board actions. In October 2006, the newsletter was distributed electronically for the first time. The newsletter is distributed quarterly, with the next issue due to be distributed in the fall of 2010. Additional updates have been added to the newsletter this year, including a "job flash" section, posting available job openings. NePA thanks its Editor, Stephanie Henson, ACP, and her Publications Committee, for the excellent work on the newsletter.

Our Website was updated this last year to include additional enhancements for the membership, inclusive of a new photo gallery, updated calendaring functions which have color-coded NALA events and NePA events, a new educational event which includes NALA education and CLE news and events, and additional enhancements to assist the members. The website now allows for cost-saving enhancements such as the ability to conduct some of our own website maintenance. Additional updates are being considering for the website, including the possibility of using vendor links on our website. NePA's website can be viewed at www.nebraskaparalegal.org. Examples of other information you may find on our website include: issues of *In Brief*, membership, scholarship, and student mentoring application forms, and copies of our By-Laws and Standing Rules.

NePA currently offers two scholarships. The student scholarship is granted annually to a full-time student in a legal assistant program meeting stated criteria. The CLA scholarship is available annually to NePA members to help cover the cost involved with preparing for and taking the CLA exam or an ACP course. The scholarship committees review applications and recommend approval of the recipients to the Board of Directors, which makes the final selection. The CLA Scholarship Committee revised the application process during the past year to clarify the application and selection process for the scholarship. Additionally, these scholarships are now advertised in the *In Brief* to encourage more applications for the scholarships NePA provides.

NePA held its Annual Recognition Breakfast on September 17, 2009. Daryl Hansen, Dean of Business for the Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Nebraska, was the special guest and keynote speaker. During the Annual Recognition Breakfast, several paralegals were honored, including Connie Kretchmer, ACP, the 2009 National Affiliated Associates Achievement Award winner, Stephanie Henson, ACP, the NALA Affiliate Award Winner for Outstanding Service for 2009, and Christina L. Koch, ACP, for completing the NALA LEAP program. This was also the first year that NePA held their annual CP/ACP Pin Award ceremony, awarding pins to 20 Certified Paralegals in attendance, as well as 13 Advanced Certified Paralegals in attendance. Additional pins were mailed to 28 Certified Paralegals and 4 Advanced Certified Paralegals who were unable to attend. Following the breakfast and membership meeting, NePA held its fall seminar, with educational sessions continuing through the afternoon of Friday, September 18, 2009. Topics covered at the seminar were Immigration Law, Criminal Law, UCC, Lien & Court Searches, CM/ECF Filing in Federal Court, and Attorney-Paralegal Team Building.

The Nebraska Paralegal Association held its Mid-Year Meeting and Spring Seminar at Mahoney State Park on April 16, 2010. This was the second year that NePA was able to offer an outstanding spring seminar at no charge to its members. Sixty-seven members attended the seminar and benefited from the expertise of four legal professionals, who addressed the topics of employment law, legal ethics, handwriting analysis, and arbitration. This year, Linda Hess, ACP, was unanimously voted to receive NePA's NALA Affiliate Award for Outstanding Service for 2010. She will receive her award at the NALA Convention in July in Jacksonville, Florida. Congratulations, Linda!!! Highlights of the NePA spring seminar can be found on NePA's website in the May/June 2010 issue of *In Brief*.

NePA continues to support charity work and is currently in the process of preparing for the June 2010 Sarpy County Relay for Life. This year's team will again be led by Teri Gibbons, and currently has ten members. The Relay for Life will be held on June 4-5, 2010.

NePA also was active in celebrating Law Day once again. The Law Day Committee was led by Thomas Tilden, ACP. Each year, NePA is in charge of the poster contest in connection with the Omaha Bar Association ("OBA") Law Day activities. The poster contest is open to the 5th grade students from Omaha area public and parochial schools, inclusive of all parochial schools which fall under the Omaha jurisdiction. The posters are judged based on adherence to the Law Day theme, clarity, creativity and neatness. The 2010 poster contest winners were Grace Wagner, First Place, Brooklyn Linderman, Second Place, and Teresa Otter, Third Place, all of St. James/Setton School. Loretta Phillips, President of NePA and Law Day Spokesperson, presented awards to each of the winners. Awards for the contest include OBA Certificates and savings bonds. The first place winner also received a family membership to the Joselyn Art Museum and the honor of having her poster displayed at 77th & Dodge Street. Other highlights of Law Day included keynote speaker, Attorney General Jon Bruning, and public service awards given to the Honorable Douglas F. Johnson (lawyer service award) and John Dougherty (non-lawyer service award). The Omaha Bar Association Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Harold L. Rock, of Kutak Rock. This event is an excellent opportunity for NePA to work within the community and with students to introduce them to our legal system and Law Day through art.

NePA is proud to continue to sponsor the CLA Review Course at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Nebraska. The Review Course is being conducted by an Ad Hoc Committee (Sub-Committee of Continuing Legal Education Committee) consisting of Loretta Phillips, Janie Boswell, ACP, Ann Atkinson, ACP and Annette Dieteman, CP. Working with Metropolitan Community College, a 9 week study course is offered to our members for \$200.00 to assist in preparation for the Certified Paralegal exam offered through the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA). The next study course will be offered in the fall. Flyers are mailed to all members and information will be available on the NePA website. An e-mail blast will be provided to our members prior to the class to encourage those who have not obtained the credential to take the class and obtain professional certification through NALA. NePA encourages its members to pursue the CLA/CP and ACP designation and honors its members for that achievement. NePA provides congratulatory e-mails, assists with publication of the announcement of the achievement in local newspapers in Omaha and Lincoln, and honors those who achieve paralegal certification at our annual Recognition Breakfast with presentation of a lapel pin to commemorate those achievements.

NePA continues to work on building our membership by keeping in contact with the paralegal colleges in Nebraska and taking time to promote student mentoring and visit colleges to promote both NePA and NALA. NePA also encourages its members to become active in NALA. NePA is very lucky to have so many wonderful members who are willing to devote their time and talents to our association.

In addition, NePA is fortunate to have three members who currently served NALA in leadership positions this past year. Ann Atkinson, ACP, Second Vice President, and Janie Boswell, ACP, NALA Region VI Director, served the NALA Board of Directors in 2009-2010. Linda Hess, ACP, also served NALA this past year as Ex Officio Certifying Board Chair. These three women have spent a number of years in service to both their state and national associations, improving the paralegal profession. NePA also has a number of members who both write legal articles and speak at local and national seminars on various paralegal topics, also offering great contributions to the paralegal profession. Last year, Christina L. Koch, ACP, also completed NALA's LEAP program. This year, Carla Larson, ACP, has applied for the LEAP program. NePA congratulates each of these women for accepting the challenge to enter national leadership for the paralegal profession.

NePA also has two candidates for national office this year. Ann Atkinson, ACP will be a candidate for First Vice President and Christina L. Koch, ACP will be a candidate for Affiliated Associations Secretary at this year's NALA Convention in July. NePA thanks Janie Boswell, ACP, for her many years of service as the NALA Region VI Director. Ms. Boswell has offered guidance, leadership, and been a paralegal influence to many of NePA's members.

NePA is also proud to announce that Christina L. Koch, ACP was recently nominated for the 2010 American Association of Justice Paralegal of the Year. The winner of that award will be announced in June of 2010 and the award will be presented to the winner on July 10, 2010 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Of course, the most exciting thing to happen to NePA this year was the announcement that the 2011 NALA Convention will be held in Omaha, Nebraska. NePA thanks NALA for honoring us with the opportunity to serve NALA in this capacity and looks forward to assisting NALA with preparations for the first national paralegal convention to be held in Omaha, Nebraska. NePA is very proud of our affiliation with NALA and is thrilled for the opportunity to be involved with the planning of the largest gathering of paralegals each year.

In the coming year, NePA hopes to increase its membership, continue to contribute to the educational goals of its members and provide additional charitable contributions to its community, while participating in a positive impact on the paralegal profession as a whole.

Respectfully submitted by
Christina L. Koch, ACP, NePA NALA Liaison 2010