

## A Brief History of the Paralegal Profession

by Elizabeth Olvera and Barbara Occhiogrosso, with contributions from Jamie Collins

In honor of SFPA's 45th anniversary year, we thought we'd celebrate the history of the role of the paralegal by presenting a look back at important milestone events that have shaped the way we work now. The role of the paralegal is ever-evolving and changing, as is the legal field itself, and we look forward to what the future role of the paralegal might bring!

**1968**

[The American Bar Association \(ABA\) creates a committee to explore the best ways to train non-lawyers.](#)

**1971**

With the expanding need for help in law offices, such individuals got more training and became "legal assistants," a term that was officially adopted by the ABA. It was around this same period that the ABA began to establish more formal guidelines for how to train such assistants.

**1974**

National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) is founded. The ABA adopts guidelines for the paralegal curriculum.

**1975**

The federal government recognizes the existence of this new occupation by creating a new job classification.

[The ABA begins approving paralegal education programs. Nine programs approved in this year.](#)

**1976**

San Francisco Association of Legal Assistants (SFALA) becomes a founding member of CAPA.

[NALA established its CLA program, the voluntary certification program.](#)

**1980**

First freelancing paralegals.

**1985**

*Beach Colony II. v. California Coastal Com.* (1985) 166 Cal.App.3d 106. Fourth Appellate District awards paralegal fees under Code Civ. Proc. § 1021.5.

**2000**

The Legal Document Assistant profession is created.

**2003**

[ABA changes it's name from Standing Committee on Legal Assistants to Standing Committee of Paralegals](#)

**2004**

In 2004, with the rise of legal document assistants, unlawful detainer assistants, freelance paralegals, and independent paralegals, the California legislature felt it necessary to regulate the paralegal profession.

The term "Paralegal" was defined in [BPC Code 6450, et seq.](#) in an effort to separate freelance paralegals from paralegals working in law firms, and to describe what a paralegal could, and could not do. It also created the mandatory continuing legal education requirements (MCLEs) that were once only designated for attorneys.

**2007**

[The question of civil Gideon opens up possibilities of new positions, including limited license legal technicians \(LLLTs\) and legal navigators.](#)

**2012**

Washington becomes the first state to adopt a Limited License Legal Technician (LLLT) Rule (APR 28).

[The new LLLT rule authorizes non-attorneys who meet certain educational requirements to advise and assist clients in approved practice areas of law.](#)

**2016**

[NFPA issues a position statement on regulation of the paralegal profession, which could prove influential to the evolution of the profession.](#)

# RECAP: 2017 SFPA Paralegal Day MCLE Event

by Devasta "Dede" De'Toles-Dugan

The San Francisco Paralegal Association (SFPA)'s Paralegal Day, a mandatory continued legal education (MCLE) event, was May 6, 2017. It was a huge success, with over 70 registered attendees, one of the highest in a long time! This was the first of two annual MCLE events that SFPA provides to its paralegal, student and associate members. Paralegal Day was held at the Bar Association of San Francisco in downtown San Francisco. The theme and focus of this event was "The Emerging Role of the Paralegal, Session 1," which provided six speakers and 6.0 total hours of MCLE credit.

Presenters were keynote speaker Dwight Dickerson, Paralegal Studies Program Director, California State University, East Bay in Hayward; Eric Rafael Bishop, Director of Spanish/English Interpretation Program at

San Francisco State University; Diane Mecca, Paralegal Manager and Certified Paralegal Instructor at Abrams College; Pamela R. Vincent, Attorney, Social Security Disability Law in San Francisco; Edward M. Lai, Attorney, Mediation Services at Law Office of Edward M. Lai; and Thomas Farrell, Freelance Paralegal, Owner of Bay Legal Support and SFPA President.

SFPA's next MCLE event is the Annual Meeting on October 13th, Friday which will be themed "The Emerging Role of the Paralegal, Session 2." This event will have the annual election of Board Members and Officers, the annual paralegal students' essay contest, and much more! Please check the SFPA website for registration and event details which will be posted once finalized.



Correction to March 2017 At Issue article,  
*In Memoriam: Karen Kunze*

On behalf of the late Karen Kunze, a beloved member of the San Francisco Paralegal Association (SFPA), due to terms in the association's bylaws that would complicate making donations, the SFPA will not make a donation at this time to Bonita House, Inc., the non-profit organization specializing in mental health wellness favored by Karen.

However, individual donations to Bonita House are welcomed. Donations can be done online at <https://www.bonitahouse.org/> then click on the icon "DONATE NOW THROUGH NETWORK for GOOD", or by mail to Bonita House, Inc., 6333 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 102, Oakland, CA 94609. The Bonita House Tax ID is 941735133.

Any questions about donations should be directed to Cherry Molinari, Administration Director, tel. (510) 923-1099, ext. 13, or email [cherryc@bonitahouse.org](mailto:cherryc@bonitahouse.org).

**ANNOUNCEMENT** The California Alliance of Paralegal Associations (CAPA) will host its 29th Annual Educational Conference – "The Heart of California," on Saturday, June 24th in Visalia, California. Please click the link for registration information and agenda details at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/capa-29th-annual-june-conference-the-heart-of-california-tickets-32943244130>.

SFPA's Sustaining Members - Thank you for your support!



SFPA At Issue is produced by blueviolet.



San Francisco Paralegal Association  
1 Sansome Street, Ste. 3500  
San Francisco, CA 94104-4448  
(415) 946-8935  
[info@sfpa.com](mailto:info@sfpa.com)

Connect with the Association:



[www.sfpa.com](http://www.sfpa.com)

At Issue is published on a quarterly basis. If you would like to contribute content for submission to our newsletter, please send your inquiry to [info@sfpa.com](mailto:info@sfpa.com)

# What Rules Are You Breaking?

by Oakland Lawyer

Some people consider themselves to be well informed and law abiding citizens. However, even the most law abiding of citizens can break a law, if they have no idea it exists. Here's a list of laws you might not be aware of.

The following activities are expressly prohibited:

1. Wearing two ear buds while driving a vehicle, this includes a bicycle. CVC 27400.
2. Turn your wipers on without turning on your headlights. CVC 24400 (B).
3. Smoking marijuana while driving. HS11362.4(a).
4. Driving a bicycle under the influence of alcoholic beverages. CVC 21200.
5. Tinting your front windows. CVC 26708(a).
6. Stopping on the freeway to make a call. CVC 21718 (a).
7. Mounting your GPS in the center of your windshield. CVC 26708.
8. Only having one license plate on anything except motorcycle or big rig tractor. CVC 5200(a).
9. Driving faster than 55, when towing a trailer. CVC 22406.
10. Traveling in other than the far right lane with three or more axles, or when towing, except to pass, or continue on your path of travel. CVC 22348(c).
11. Putting your seat belt under your shoulder. CVC 27315.
12. Mounting red or blue lights to the front of your vehicle. CVC 24003 and CVC 25950.
13. Modifying your exhaust to make it louder than the manufacturer did. CVC 27151 (a).

Also, did you know that the law allows an officer to accept proof of insurance from a mobile electronic device, like your phone or tablet? CVC 16028(a) Knowing this one could save the time and cost of going to traffic court and paying the \$25.00 administrative fee charged when you show proof you had insurance.

Many new laws go into effect each year, sometimes so many it is hard to keep track. In 2017, 898 new laws went into effect. So you might have missed a few. Here are some that you might have missed:

- Minors cannot be charged with an infraction or misdemeanor for fare evasion. PC 640(g).
- Single use bathrooms are gender neutral, and require signage as such, effective March 1, 2017. HS 118600.

And sometimes people are just misinformed about the law. For example, many people have heard the term "common law marriage." As of today, there are only eight states where you could start a common law marriage today. Jurisdictions that allow the creation of common law marriage as of 2017 are: Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and the District of Columbia. And of course, each state has their own rules for what makes a common law marriage, so it is not one size fits all. But more importantly, if you never lived in any of those places, you could not have created a common law marriage under their laws.



<sup>1</sup> CVC = California Vehicle Code

<sup>2</sup> HS = Health and Safety Code

<sup>3</sup> PC = Penal Code

Special thanks to the California Highway Patrol, Oakland Office and its Public Information Officer, Sean Wilkenfeld, for taking the time to answer my questions.

The information provided in this article is not legal advice, does not constitute a solicitation and no attorney-client or confidential relationship is or will be formed by reading this article.



**Dalia Liang Moore** is the winner of the SFPA 2017 Paralegal of the Year! Nomination forms were distributed ahead of and at the SFPA Paralegal Day – MCLE event and tallied up by the Board on June 5th. Dalia is the SFPA Treasurer with over 20 years of professional employment and legal experience.

She has an unwavering commitment to social justice evidenced early on in her profession when she worked as an advocate and Spanish and Chinese translator for battered women and immigrant women of sex crimes. In Spring 2006, Dalia received her Paralegal Certificate with high honors and a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Behavior from San Francisco State University. Dalia lives in the East Bay with her husband Tyler, her two children Kyle and Leon, and their dog, Honeybutt. Congratulations, Dalia!

# What Does It Take to be a Board Member of the San Francisco Paralegal Association?

by Devasta "Dede" De'Toles-Dugan

Be honest, did you ever wonder what it takes to be an elected Board Member of the San Francisco Paralegal Association? Hopefully, these checklists of qualifications and responsibilities will help.

## President - Thomas Farrell

- Paralegal Certificate, Degree, or a minimum of 24 semester credits from a school accredited by the state required.
- Exhibit strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Attend monthly Board meetings.
- Provide leadership and guidance for the growth and betterment of the association.
- Exercise and perform duties as assigned to him by the Board or as prescribed in the bylaws.

## Treasurer - Dalia Liang-Moore

- Paralegal Certificate, Degree, or a minimum of 24 semester credits from a school accredited by the state required.
- Attend monthly Board meetings.
- Must have a basic understanding of accounting.
- Oversee the management and reporting of the association's finances to ensure safe custody of money and prompt banking deposits.
- Provide financial reports to the Board and members of the association.

## Board of Directors - Trinh Doan-Johnson, Devasta (Dede) De'Toles-Dugan, Denise Bashline, Olivia Lombard, Leticia Jimenez, Vincent Yasay

- Paralegal Certificate, Degree, or a minimum of 24 semester credits from a school accredited by the state required.
- Exhibit strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Attend monthly Board meetings.
- Take initiative to multi-task and manage projects to grow and promote the association.



## Vice President (*position currently vacant*)

- Paralegal Certificate, Degree, or a minimum of 24 semester credits from a school accredited by the state required.
- Exhibit strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Attend monthly Board meetings.
- In the absence or disability of the President, shall perform all duties of the President.
- Take initiative to multi-task and manage projects to grow and promote the association.

## Secretary - Albert Chen

- Paralegal Certificate, Degree, or a minimum of 24 semester credits from a school accredited by the state required.
- Exhibit strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Attend monthly Board meetings.
- Able to take concise and clear minutes for the Board.
- Provide a meeting agenda to the Board at least one week before the next meeting to allow Board members the opportunity to approve, reject, or add relevant issues.

---

## About the San Francisco Paralegal Association

The San Francisco Paralegal Association is a nonprofit organization created to represent the paralegal profession as an independent, self-directed profession, to enable paralegals to enhance their professional development, and to support the expansion of the delivery of legal services in an economic and effective manner.

More information about our Board of Directors, bylaws, committees and practice sections can be found in the [About](#) section of the SFPA site.

Please visit our [Calendar](#) to find out about upcoming events.

If you're interested in joining the SFPA, information about how to do so can be found in the [Membership](#) section of the SFPA site.