

Feb / Mar 2018  
Vol. 2018, No. 1

## MEMBERSHIP



**DON'T MISS:**

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Dear Laura Advice Column

**Pg. 22**

Reset Your Membership

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Is It Time for a Brand Audit?

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## 2017 - 2018 ALAMN OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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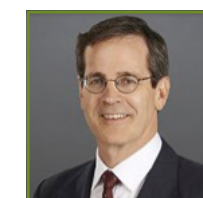
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### ALAMN has adopted ALA's Mission Statement

To improve the quality of management in legal services organizations; promote and enhance the competence and professionalism of legal administrators and all members of the management team; and represent professional legal management and managers to the legal community and to the community at large.

## 2017 - 2018 ALAMN COMMITTEES & SIGs

**ALAMN COMMITTEES** serve as liaisons between membership and the respective director, representing the ALAMN Board of Directors.

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**ALAMN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)** are educational forums specific to functional specialty. Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting attendees need not be ALAMN members.

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## ALAMN CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### FEBRUARY 2018

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	1	2	3

**\*PLEASE NOTE:**  
 SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) attendees need not be ALAMN members

### MARCH 2018

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
25	26	27	28	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### FEBRUARY 2018

- 7 Large Firm SIG Meeting**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Merchant & Gould
- 8 Mock Interviews Planning Meeting for ALAMN D+I Committee Career Fair**  
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
Bowman and Brooke
- 9 Board Meeting**  
8:30 am – 10:30 am  
Barnes and Thornburg
- 13 General Meeting**  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Stinson Leonard Street
- 15 Small/Medium SIG Meeting**  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Town and Country Club
- 17 17th Annual MLBA Conference**  
8:00 am – 2:30 pm  
Mitchell/Hamline School of Law
- 20 Facilities SIG Meeting**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Location TBD
- 20 Membership Development Committee Meeting**  
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Madigan, Dahl & Harlan, PA
- 21 Simpson Shelter Meal**  
5:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
Simpson Shelter
- 28 Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting**  
8:30 am – 9:30 am  
Nilan Johnson Lewis
- 28 Communications Committee Meeting**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Location TBD

### MARCH 2018

- 1 28th Annual ALAMN Educational Conference and Business Partner Expo**  
8:30 am – 5:30 pm  
Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel, the Depot
- 2 13th Annual MHBA Gala**  
5:30 pm – 10:30 pm  
Radisson Blu
- 6 HR Committee Meeting**  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Briggs and Morgan
- 7 Large Firm SIG Meeting**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Foley & Mansfield
- 9 Board Meeting**  
8:30 am – 10:30 am  
Barnes and Thornburg
- 20 Facilities SIG Meeting**  
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Location TBD
- 20 Membership Development Committee Meeting**  
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
Madigan, Dahl & Harlan, PA
- 21 Community Service Committee Meeting**  
11:30 am – 1:00 pm  
Zimmerman Reed
- 28 Diversity and Inclusion Committee Meeting**  
8:30 am – 9:30 am  
Robins Kaplan

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Sarah Evenson, JD, MBA

*"It's good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." ~ Ernest Hemingway*

I was told this year would go by faster than I could imagine, and it has. It seems not that long ago I was writing my first President's article and struggling to figure out what I should write about. Looking back at everything this organization has accomplished in the last year, my last article is very easy to write, as I am simply amazed by our success and so thankful and proud to have been a part of it.

Before anything else, I need to thank my fellow board members for their hard work, time, energy, and dedication. I pushed our board to THINK BIG and without limitations this year. To help everyone get on board with this way of thinking I created a board motto and started yelling "BAM" when we were brainstorming ideas that met the criteria of THINKING BIG. While BAM is a good sound effect stolen directly from Emeril Lagasse, it actually stood for Think Big, Take Action, Make Your Mark. I will be honest, it took a couple of people by surprise the first time I yelled it. But once everyone got into it, celebrating the idea of thinking big, and asking ourselves, "Are we thinking BIG enough?" totally changed our approach to addressing the challenges we were examining. This motto really allowed us as a group to think beyond the now and even the next year and look forward to the long-term future of ALAMN and how we continue on our journey to being seen as the leading industry expert in the business of law in the State of Minnesota.

As a result of everyone's hard work, creative ideas, and willingness to try something new, we have had a very successful and innovative year:

- Increased membership. For the first time in a while our membership levels have raised instead of staying the same or decreasing.
- Created new and exciting ways to connect with each other and others in our community.
  - » Launched video campaign highlighting different aspects of ALAMN.
  - » Planned multiple events with other legal organizations.
- Redesigned our Business Partner program to better align with our goals and build stronger relationships with

those companies and organizations that are truly committed to ALAMN and its members.

- Created a new Conference Committee Task Force that is going to take a fresh look at our conference structure and programming and help us figure out how to take our annual conference to the next level of awesome.
- Used every opportunity to find ways for our members and business partners to Build Lasting Relationships and made the same the theme of this year's annual conference.
- Created a new recognition program that acknowledged both members and business partners who helped us to accomplish our mission statement of Improving, Promoting, and Representing ALAMN.
- Experienced an increase in renewed involvement by our members in different committees and SIGs and had a great number of new leaders emerge this year.



The year started off going way outside my comfort zone and singing karaoke in Denver at the ALA annual conference. While I will not be repeating that performance to close out the year, I do challenge you to do something new this year. Remember, life begins at the end of your comfort zone. It is our excellent members who make ALAMN an exceptional organization. Your excellence is our excellence! Find a way to share your excellence with others and help us accomplish our mission of Building Lasting Relationships and IMPROVE – PROMOTE – REPRESENT ALAMN!

Thank you for allowing me to be your President. It has been an amazing experience that I will not soon forget and will appreciate for the rest of my career. Like the Hemingway quote, while I am proud of what we have accomplished as I reach the end of my year of service, I will look back even more fondly on all of the adventures and people I was able to meet and work with throughout this year. I am so excited for what has been put into motion, and even more excited about what is yet to come!

*"Look closely at the present you are constructing: It should look like the future you are dreaming." ~ Alice Walker*



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## GOT CLM?

### What is certification?

Certification is defined as a credentialing process by which a profession grants recognition to an individual who meets certain predetermined qualifications specified by that profession.

### Why certification?

ALA's voluntary Certified Legal Manager (CLM) program was developed in order to provide legal administrators with an opportunity to demonstrate a command of the core areas of knowledge identified as essential to the effective performance of a principal administrator. CLMs are recognized as administrators who have met the work experience requirement, displayed a commitment to continuing education, and passed a comprehensive examination.

### What does competency mean?

In 2012, ALA conducted its fourth Competency-Based Education Job and Needs Analysis. Through this extensive research, ALA investigated the job of a legal administrator and identified an impressive 65 competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) critical to successfully perform the administrator's job. These analyses are the guidelines used in the development of ALA's educational and certification programs.

### How does becoming certified benefit me?

Certification ensures recognition of your expertise, and assists you in your development and self-improvement by identifying a body of knowledge and establishing professional standards. In addition, certification helps junior-level professionals gain top-level management approval, while enabling senior practitioners to remain current in the field and improve their performance and proficiency.

### How does this benefit my employer/organization?

Certification serves as an aid for recruitment, provides a way to encourage and improve job performance for its employees, and acknowledges training and development of those who are certified.

### What must I do to become certified?

To become certified, ALA members or nonmembers must meet the eligibility requirements and pass the certification examination given by the Association of Legal Administrators. Legal administrators in Canada and other countries are eligible to become certified, but must realize that major portions of the examination are based on U.S. federal law.

### Interested in taking the next steps? ALAMN's CLM Study Group is here to assist you!

A preview of discussion topics studied are as follows:

- Legal Industry – Conflict of Interest Issues/Law and Regulations re Business Insurance Coverage/Professional Liability Insurance/Trust Account Procedures and Regulations/ABA Model Rules of Professional Responsibility/Changes & Trends in the Legal Industry
- Financial Management – General Tax Regulations/General Accounting/Analysis
- Human Resources Management – Employee Selection & Promotion/Performance Management/Compensation & Benefits/Organization Development
- Office Operations – Technology & Automation Management/Office and Project Management/File Management/Strategic, Disaster, and Business Planning

For further information regarding ALAMN's CLM Study Group, please contact Tracy Johnson at [tjohnson@ecklandblando.com](mailto:tjohnson@ecklandblando.com).

## CLM Sample Exam Question

"Claims made" professional liability insurance policies typically include a provision for "prior acts" coverage. This coverage reaches back in time to a period prior to the policy period. A condition precedent to this coverage is that the insured individual:

- Purchased an extended reporting option at the conclusion of the prior policy period.
- Notified the carrier during the policy year in which the act, error, or omission occurred of the possibility that something had happened that could give rise to a future claim.
- Diligently pursued a path to mitigate damages from some act, error, or omission which was reported to the carrier in a subsequent period because of an unanticipated event.
- Did not know or could not have reasonably known that a particular act would result in a claim.

Answer on page 18

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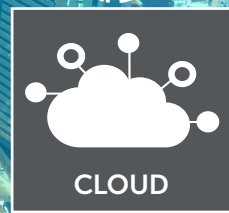
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## KNOW YOUR LEGAL JARGON

### Duces Tecum – Latin for “bring with you”

A “subpoena duces tecum” typically specifies items one must produce or bring to court.



## PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEWEST ALAMN MEMBERS

### Jennye Croft

Legal Administrative Manager  
Dakota County Attorney’s Office

### Taryn Krumwiede

HR Manager  
Wagner, Falconer & Judd, Ltd.

### Michelle McCullough

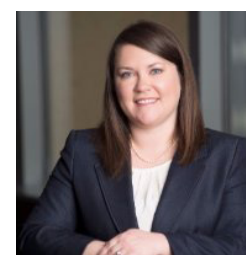
Director of Legal Services  
Viksnins, Harris & Padys, LLP

### Yvonne Miller

Director of Human Resources  
Faegre Baker Daniels

### Shining Star

The Board of Directors proudly announces Teresa Reiner, CLM as the next Shining Star. Teresa is the Assistant Office Manager at Gislason & Hunter, LLP. Teresa joined ALA and ALAMN in 2014 and is now chairing the Young Professional group and is an active member of the Membership Development Committee. Teresa was a member of the CLM study group and passed the exam in 2016. Teresa enjoys attending ALA national and regional conferences. She is great about sharing what she learns at the conference with her fellow ALAMN members. Teresa is extremely passionate about her job, her membership within ALAMN and gives 110% each day. Congratulations, Teresa!



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## MEET THE ALAMN BOARD NOMINEES FOR 2018-2019

### Past President – Sarah Evenson



Sarah Evenson, JD, MBA, is currently the Minneapolis Director of Law School Programs & Office Administrator for Barnes & Thornburg LLP. Sarah graduated from Hamline University School of Law in 2002 and received her Masters of Business Administration in 2007 from the University of St. Thomas. Sarah practiced law for eight years before transitioning her career to the administrative side of law.

Sarah joined ALAMN in 2009 at the suggestion of another member who transitioned from the practice of law to legal administration. Sarah believes you get out what you put into something, and your success will be proportionate to the quality and quantity of your efforts. As a result, she has actively participated in ALAMN through membership on the Small and Medium Firm group, Co-Chairing the Communications Committee two years, attending ALAMN general meetings and annual conference, participating in ALAMN community service projects, writing articles for *The Verdict*, traveling to the national ALA meetings, and regularly attending ALAMN socials and business partner events. Sarah has also worked diligently to build and grow ALAMN's relationships with the local bar associations and law schools. This has helped bring greater awareness not only of the association, but also the profession of legal management in general. Sarah currently serves on the ALAMN Board as the President. Sarah has been on the Board since 2014.

Sarah and her husband, Thomas, live in Maple Grove. They enjoy cooking, baseball, running 5Ks, and Hawaii

### President – Abby Rooney



Abby Rooney is the Director of Human Resources at Foley & Mansfield. She has a BA in Sociology from the University of Minnesota.

Prior to moving into Human Resources, Abby worked as an accounting professional. Abby was on a path to be-

coming a CPA when she realized that, while good with numbers, she prefers to work on the "people" side of business. Abby's accounting background often comes in handy when analyzing benefits data or reviewing vendor contracts.

Abby has been with Foley & Mansfield for about ten years, and she enjoys her role at this mid-sized firm because she is truly an HR generalist. Abby gets to work in many areas, including benefits, recruiting, employee relations and more. She appreciates the variety she gets from her role. Abby believes it is a wonderful organization, and she has a great team.

Abby has served as a co-chair on the HR Committee and is finishing her third term on the ALAMN Board.

When not at work, Abby enjoys spending time with her family. She lives in Edina with her husband, Colin, and their sons, J. J. (8 ½) and Will (5). The boys are very active and keep them exhausted and busy.

### President-Elect - Jessica Gerhardson



Jessica Gerhardson is the Administrator at Monroe Moxness Berg PA where she has worked since 2014. She has a Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies from the University of Central Florida. Jessica has been a member of ALAMN since 2010 and has actively served the Association as a member of the Membership Development Committee, Communications Committee, co-chair of the Small and Medium Firm Group, and a participant in the Diversity Career Fair and Community Service events. As the Administrator at a small firm, Jessica wears many hats, and she wouldn't have it any other way. Jessica served as the Membership Director on the Board last year.

Jessica lives in Richfield with her husband, Jeremiah, and their two dogs and two cats. When they are not vacuuming pet hair, they enjoy traveling to Jessica's na-

Continued on page 13

## MEET THE ALAMN BOARD NOMINEES FOR 2018-2019 - CONTINUED

Continued from page 12

tive Florida to visit family, exploring the many Minnesota parks and trails, reading, and attending shows at the theatre.

### Membership Director – Kelly Thaemert, CLM



Kelly Thaemert joined Hellmuth & Johnson as the accounting assistant in 2009. Her role has continued to transition through the years, and she was promoted to HR and Facilities Director in 2013 and Firm Administrator in December 2016.

Kelly joined ALAMN in the spring of 2013. She attended her first national conference in Toronto, Canada in 2014 through a scholarship from ALAMN. After that conference, she quickly realized the immeasurable value of ALAMN and jumped in head first. She was asked to co-chair the Human Resources Committee, and shortly after that volunteered to co-chair the Facilities Special Interest Group as well. Kelly also attends ALAMN general meetings, ALAMN Finance SIG meetings, ALAMN annual conferences, and ALAMN socials. Kelly earned the distinction of the CLM (certified legal manager) designation in 2016.

Kelly and her husband live in Watertown along with their Puggle, Demsey. They enjoy traveling together, camping, riding their Harleys, and spending time with family.

### Education Director – Tracy Johnson, CLM



Tracy Johnson, CLM, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, C(k)PF, is the Executive Director at Eckland & Blando where she has been employed since 2011. She has a Legal Secretarial Certificate from Anoka Vo-Tech, an A.A.S. in Accounting from North Hennepin Community College, and a B.S. in Management from Cardinal Stritch University. Tracy has been a member of ALAMN from 1992-2009 and again upon her return from a Legal Administrator position in Miami, Florida, in 2011. In the mid-2000s she served on the Vendor Relations Com-

mittee. Tracy is co-chair of the CLM Study Group as well as the Education Committee.

Tracy resides in Fridley with her boyfriend, Joel, and their Field Bred English Springer Spaniel, Harley. They enjoy taking Harley on walks, their annual trip to Gunflint Lodge, reading, book club, and spending time with family and friends.

### Administrative Director – Jessica Johnson



Jessica Johnson is the Director of Operations at Zimmerman Reed LLP. She brings with her over ten years of experience in administrative positions in law firms. At Zimmerman Reed, Jes-

Continued on page 14

# PROTECT

what's important to your law firm.

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## MEET THE ALAMN BOARD NOMINEES FOR 2018-2019 - CONTINUED

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sica works with all departments of the firm determining staffing needs, administering benefits, overseeing systems and technology, facilities management, and equipment training. She enjoys working in a variety of areas and collaborating with all members of the firm. Jessica joined ALAMN in 2013 and has served the Association as a member of the Business Partner and Conference Committee and as co-chair of the Small and Medium Group.

Jessica resides in Andover with her husband, Josh, and their daughters, Abby and Stella. She enjoys spending time with her family, playing the piano, and reading.

### Finance Director – Kim Pepera

Kim Pepera is the Firm Administrator at Eckberg Lammers, P.C. in Stillwater.



She has been with the firm since 1996. Her role has morphed and expanded over the years, and she has truly enjoyed the journey. Working at a smaller firm, she has been involved in all aspects of the firm management and gets to wear several hats at the firm, including financial analysis, Human Resources, supervising IT, and facilities. She joined ALAMN in 2004 and has served as the co-chair of the Small and Medium Firm Group since 2014. Kim has attended four annual conferences and is excited to expand her involvement in ALAMN.

Kim lives in Stillwater with her husband, Tim, and their new dog, Griffin. She has three grown daughters who are scattered throughout the US and have made her the person she is today.

### Communications Director – Tracey Grill

Tracey Grill is the Office Manager at Gustafson Gluek, PLLC where she is responsible for the overall operations of the law firm, including finance, human resources, facilities management, and supervision of the firm's office staff. Tracey joined Gustafson Gluek with 20 years of office management experience.



Tracey has been an active member of ALAMN since 2008, after talking with a business partner who recommended that she join. Since that time, she has participated in a vast number of meetings and networking events and served as the co-chair of the Human Resources Committee from March 2010 – February 2012. She joined the Business Partner Conference Committee in 2014, assisting primarily with conference education, and has served as co-chair of that committee since 2016.

Tracey and her husband, Tim, live in NE Minneapolis, along with their dog, Winston. She enjoys spending time with her two daughters (Kirstie and Jessica), and she loves hiking, golfing, biking, and spending time at the lake.

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## LEADERSHIP EVENT

ALAMN members, managing partners, and other law firm leaders gathered on November 14, 2017 for a networking reception and a presentation by Russ Haskin. Russ had a lively discussion on the various challenges

surrounding not only the growth of the firm, but the individuals within it. Russ is the Director of Business of Law Consulting at Wilson Legal Solutions.



## FEBRUARY 2018 GENERAL MEETING

**Tuesday, February 13, 2018**

**11:30 am – 1:00 pm**

**Stinson Leonard Street**

“Nuts and Bolts on Diversity & Inclusion Plans”

Speaker: Ellie Krug

We’ve all heard the phrase, “diversity and inclusion,” but what does it actually mean to make a law firm or other legal employer more diverse and inclusive? And of the two goals—“diversity” and “inclusion”—which is more difficult to achieve and maintain? Finally, what does a diversity and inclusion plan actually look like on paper and in action?

Join national speaker and “Inclusionist” Ellen “Ellie” Krug as she presents a survey of how to make your workplace more diverse and inclusive. This talk is for legal administrators and team members who want to “get it right” relative to attracting and retaining a diverse team for the rest of this decade and into the next.



**Register now on the ALAMN website!**

## JOIN US FOR ALA'S 47TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO IN NATIONAL HARBOR, MARYLAND!

The 2018 Annual Conference is already shaping up to be a memorable event that includes exceptional resources, outstanding education, and fun networking events including:

- **Keynote speaker** John Quiñones, an “ABC News” correspondent and currently the host of “What Would You Do?”
- **General session speaker** Vernice Armour, the first African-American female combat pilot in the U.S. Armed Forces
- **A Legal Management Finance Specialist Certificate track** that includes a series of six Financial Management courses that complete the requirements for FM 1 — the first half of the education requirements for the certificate — at no additional cost
- **The Exhibit Hall**, an outstanding opportunity to interact with our business partners and learn about their services, products and expertise

- **A Thursday evening “Special” Welcome Reception** that will give you the opportunity to reunite with old friends, interact with business partners and network with other legal managers

**Act SOON to save \$200 - the early bird deadline will not be extended! Early Bird deadline ends February 5.**

Learn more about this exciting event here: [2018 ALA Annual Conference](#)

**ALA Annual CONFERENCE & EXPO**  
*Navigate Our Future Together*  
 GAYLORD NATIONAL RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER  
 MAY 3–6, 2018 | National Harbor, Maryland

## COMMUNITY SERVICE MEETING MINUTES

## DEAR LAURA ADVICE COLUMN

**January 17, 2018 | 11:30-1:00**

Zimmerman Reed – 1100 IDS Center, 80 South 8th Street

**Attendees:** Wendy Cornelius, Sarah Didrickson, Darlene Downs, Pam Gerads, Laurie Greenberg, Sheila Johnson, Cheryl Nelson, Tracy Smith, Pat Stender, and Norma Thayer

**1. Current committee members and upcoming committee co-chair position**

**2. Recap of events:**

- » December 12 Blessing Bags
  - 5 Business Partners and 11 ALA Members
  - Craig Freeman, Manager, spoke on the organization
  - 50 bags filled – thank you Cheryl for the conference room and pizza!

**3. Upcoming events:**

- » January 18, 2018 Happy Hour Squared
  - Joint Event with Legal Marketing Association
  - 21 ALA and LMA registered thus far
  - Walk-ins will be welcome; Sarah will include reminder in email tomorrow
- » February 21 Simpson Shelter Meal
  - Darlene and Cheryl to coordinate
- » March 1 ALAMN Annual Conference
  - Bret from Emergent (Superior Sponsor) has chosen Big Brothers/Big Sisters
  - We will reach out to him to ask for promotional materials or if a Big Brothers/Big Sisters representative could give a brief talk before the conference starts – either breakfast or lunch

**4. Remaining 2018 events:**

- » April – People Serving People – Sheila
- » May 9 – Cookie Cart – Tracy
- » June 14 – Simpson Shelter BBQ – Wendy and Norma
- » September – Neighbors Inc – Anastasia
- » October – Baby Blanket suggestion; Project Linus – TBD
- » November – Fischer House VA Medical Center – Pat
- » December – Angel Tree – Wendy and Norma
- » Darlene and Norma will meet with Julie Koch this month to discuss Firefly Sisterhood

**5. Bridging for Beds request – consider for next year**

**6. 2018 Goals**

**7. Other discussion**

**8. Next meeting March 21 at Zimmerman Reed**

**CLM Sample Exam Question on page 9**  
*Answer: D*

**Dear Laura,**  
 We recently rolled out a great new timekeeping system to the firm. However, several people (attorneys and staff) are having a hard time adjusting to the new program, and they spend more time complaining about it than they do entering their time! What do I do?  
*Signed, Timed Out in Taylors Falls*

Dear Timed Out in Taylors Falls,

Don't you just love the complainers? They will whine for hours with their colleagues, but they will never share their concerns with you. Here's what you do. Some afternoon, gather all of your complainers into a comfortable meeting room, and pull out the bottles of wine. Tell them you are serving wine to the whiners. OK - that might not be a great idea. Instead, bring them into a conference room and do more training. Follow that up with regular email tips-n-tricks about the new program. Encourage folks to share what they learned with each other during regular brown bag lunches. Also, keep in mind that each person learns in a different way, so take that into account when you are planning your training program. With some folks, you may need to go visit their offices one-on-one. With others, they just want to play with the technology on their own. Don't plan a one-size-fits-all training program. It won't work. But, when you do plan the training sessions, make them fun ... and bring in some wine (and beer).



**Author Bio:**

Laura J. Broomell, CLM, is the COO at Greene Espel PLLP. She served as the 2016-17 ALA President, and has contributed to numerous ALAMN committees during her 20+ years as an ALA member. Rich with experience in the legal industry and in ALA, Laura has become the ALAMN de facto go-to person for advice of all kinds. Leading by example, she strives to educate all legal professionals to be diplomatic problem-solvers.

How can Laura help you? Please send your "Dear Laura" questions to *The Verdict* editor, Gretchen Luesenheide, at [gluessenheide@robinskaplan.com](mailto:gluessenheide@robinskaplan.com).

**Dear Laura,**  
 What is one thing you wish you had learned earlier in your career?  
*Signed, Mentee in Minneapolis*

Dear Mentee in Minneapolis,

Can I only list one? There are so many important lessons I have learned over the years, and all of them would have helped me if I learned them earlier in my career. Some of those are:

- Think before you speak; although there are times when you should speak before you think too much about it
- Be a Servant Leader
- Let it go and don't lose sleep over it
- Don't take things so seriously
- Learn to dance
- If you wonder about something, ask
- Unlearn things and start from scratch

But, the most important lesson I have learned is to ask for help. That was super hard for me to do because I thought it was a sign of weakness, but it became a necessity during difficult times in my personal and professional life. That is why ALA is critical to our success—the basic foundation of ALA is sharing with others, which makes it much easier to ask for help when we need it.

## AVENUES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH BLESSING BAG RECAP

## PHOTOS FROM AVENUES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Thank you to the following volunteers who donated goods and cash towards blessing bags for Avenues of Homeless Youth on December 12. We enjoyed a pizza lunch and filled 50 bags to the rim while listening to the inspiring story of the organization from Craig Freeman, the Community Engagement Manager.

This is an organization that brings to light the huge problem of youth homelessness and offers sustainable solutions for transition.

Together, we *Make the Difference!*

**Photos on next page**

### THANK YOU!

#### Business Partners

- |                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Lynn Daniels    | Payroll Direct              |
| Dan Herman      | Fluid Interiors             |
| Seth Spreadbury | Marsh & McLellan Agency LLC |
| Beth Sullivan   | Beacon Hill Legal           |
| Tina Wiehle     | Payroll Direct              |



#### ALAMN Members

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Collette Canniff | Robins Kaplan LLP                       |
| Wendy Cornelius  | Minneapolis Airports Commission         |
| Darlene Downs    | Henson & Efron, P.A.                    |
| Pam Gerards      | Merchant & Gould, P.C.                  |
| Laurie Greenberg | Briggs and Morgan, P.A.                 |
| Kathy Hubbard    | Madigan, Dahl & Harlan, P.A.            |
| Chong Lee        | Fish & Richardson P.C.                  |
| Cheryl Nelson    | Robins Kaplan LLP                       |
| Tracy Smith      | Smith Gendler Shiell Sheff Ford & Maher |
| Norma Thayer     | Zimmerman Reed LLP                      |
| Cynthia Trana    | Briggs and Morgan, P.A.                 |



## RESET YOUR MEMBERSHIP

By Jessica Gerhardsen

It's a new year, and many of us have resolved to do things differently: eat more vegetables, work out more, manage our inboxes better, spend less time on our devices – but have you thought about your ALAMN membership? Since over half of all resolutions fail, it's been said that we should think of the new year as a "reset" rather than a "resolution." While a resolution represents a firm decision to do or not do something, a reset is an opportunity to "set again," or set your habits differently. With a reset, you commit to moderate, realistic goals and making small changes every day—not just on January 1. Another disadvantage of resolutions is that they typically have a clear start date (and corresponding end date). A reset, on the other hand, is about creating habits for the long term. For far less than the cost of a gym membership or trip to the organic food grocery store, ALAMN provides you with a wealth of information and connections to enrich your professional and personal life. This year,



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Office Water Services



I challenge you to RESET your ALAMN membership to achieve its full potential. You are already making a great start by reading the bimonthly newsletter, *The Verdict!* Now you just need to take it to the next level.

### Attend a Meeting

Whether you are new to ALAMN, or you have been a member for 20 years, one of the most beneficial resources of the ALAMN is its community. Attend a monthly General Meeting or one of the 10+ special interest groups (SIG), section committees, and service committees. Have you ever wondered how other firms handle cyber security, succession planning, or the changing roles of the LAA? Peers and industry experts provide invaluable insight to those questions (and more), and these meetings are usually held over the lunch hour for convenience. Much like the gym, you won't be sorry you showed up!

### Find Your Peer

If the idea of showing up to a meeting where you don't know anyone seems daunting, please reach out to me or the chairs of the Membership Development Committee (<https://alamn.memberclicks.net/service-committees>) to find your Peer. We match members from similar-sized firms and similar job functions, so you have a friendly face at meetings and someone to reach out to for advice. Any amount of time I have invested in building relationships with ALAMN peers has repaid me (and my firm) tenfold through advice, friendship, and insight!

### Visit the Website

Did you know that the ALAMN website is so much more than an event registration tool? With a few clicks, you have access to the Member and Business Partner Directories, Job Bank, Diversity Toolkit, The Verdict, videos, dozens of ALA resources, and more. A visit to the website each week will keep you informed and engaged, and it takes less time than meal prep!

Continued on page 23

## RESET YOUR MEMBERSHIP - CONTINUED

Continued from page 22

### Volunteer

In the words of Charles Dickens: "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another." Community service is a core value of ALAMN. The Community Service Committee coordinates events throughout the year on behalf of the chapter. Past initiatives have included serving meals at Ronald McDonald House and Simpson Shelter, creating blessing bags for Avenues for Homeless Youth, and assisting high school students with mock interviews. Community service provides you with the opportunity to connect with fellow members and business partners while giving back to our community. In addition to Community Service, there are so many opportunities to volunteer at the Association level. Our Association Service Committees are always looking for fresh ideas and new perspectives, and participation in these committees will provide you with a deeper understanding and appreciation for all ALAMN has to offer its members. Make some time this year to give back. The rewards are truly remarkable!

## DIVERSITY STATISTICS

The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) released its 2017 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms based on the recent analyses of the 2017-2018 NALP Directory of Legal Employers (NDLE). The report shows that women and Black/African-Americans made small gains in representation at major U.S. law firms in 2017 compared with 2016. However, representation of both these groups remains below 2009 levels. The following is a brief look at national and local levels. How does your firm compare? If you would like to see the full report, go to <https://www.nalp.org/diversity2>.

### Follow Us

ALAMN's mission for the last year has been Build Lasting Relationships. I can't stress enough the benefits of building those relationships offline, but we also shouldn't underestimate online engagement! With a simple click, you can follow ALAMN on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/minnesotaala>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Minnesota-Chapter-Association-of-Legal-Administrators-ALAMN-140325649377476/>) to stay informed on the go.

Membership in ALA and ALAMN is a financial investment you and your firm make to elevate your role in the legal management profession. As 2018 commences, it is a perfect time to take stock and reset your membership: cultivate connections and increase your participation. It doesn't take a lot of time, and the benefits are limitless.

NALP WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN LAW FIRMS- ALL ATTORNEYS- 2016 & 2017

	% Women		% Minority (persons of color)		% Minority Women	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
National Average	33.89	34.54	14.62	15.18	7.23	7.54
Minneapolis	32.90	34.08	6.54	6.63	3.29	3.34

NALP WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN LAW FIRMS- PARTNERS- 2016 & 2017

	% Women		% Minority (persons of color)		% Minority Women	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
National Average	22.13	22.70	8.05	8.42	2.76	2.90
Minneapolis	27.39	28.75	3.53	3.75	1.59	1.65

\* 2.64% (2,664 lawyers) of all NALP lawyers are openly LGBT. The percentage is up from 2.48% in 2016 and the total number of lawyers is up from 2,431.

## IS IT TIME FOR A BRAND AUDIT?

By ALL-STATE LEGAL

Auditing your brand can help you maximize your brand's value, streamline procedures, increase efficiency, and reduce costs. Working with existing or potential suppliers will allow you to come up with new and different ways to maximize your efficiency and your budget. Before you can assess if a brand audit is right for your firm, you must first have an understanding of what the term "brand audit" really means.

### What Is a Brand Audit?

Brands tend to become less consistent over time. This can be due to the introduction of innovative technologies as well as new communication channels. Changes in personnel and priorities can also be a factor. Because of this, it is often hard to pinpoint when a brand needs to be updated. A brand audit will help you determine the current state of your brand as well as inconsistencies and opportunities for improvement.

A brand audit should include a thorough examination of your brand in 3 distinct ways:

1. Its current position in the market compared to your competitors
2. Its consistency in printed and electronic form
3. The ease in ordering both repeat and new materials

The process takes you through a deep, raw look at your branded materials to determine what is consistent and effective in order to create a plan to improve any abnormalities. At its most basic level, it is a brand makeover. However, a brand audit can also lead to improvements in process, efficiency, and costs.

### Can I Perform a Brand Audit Internally?

It is important to be as objective as possible during a brand audit. Performing a brand audit with internal resources only can often skew the data based on biased opinions.

It is also important to have the resources internally to dedicate to the process. Many firms, even those with

large marketing departments, can find it difficult to fully execute a brand audit without help from an impartial resource.

### Why do a Brand Audit?

Strong brands attract better candidates, appeal to more clients, instill loyalty, and make more money. Even strong brands need a health check to keep them on track.

One of the ways to stay on track is to convey your commitment to your clients through smart, consistent deployment of your firm's brand. This is where your printer can become a true partner and an extension of your team. While you focus on creating and executing a communication plan, your printer should continually assess your firm's printed materials and make recommendations for ways to strengthen your brand, streamline ordering procedures, and reduce costs.

This assessment should cover all aspects of your firm's printed materials, including:

- How your firm's brand and printed materials stack up against those of other firms in your geography
- Brand consistency and market exposure
- Color consistency across all of your firm's materials, across all mediums
- Ordering efficiency, effective inventory management, and reporting
- Whether your materials are compliant with your firm's sustainability initiatives - you can go green and save green!
- Recommendations for alternative products and ordering options that can potentially save you in both product cost and time

The audit should provide you recommendations for new and different ways to maximize your efficiency and lower your expenses. You, your designer, and your printer should meet to review your firm's printed materials and to discuss your firm's objectives. Doing this will ensure

**Continued on page 25**

## IS IT TIME FOR A BRAND AUDIT? - CONTINUED

Continued from page 24

that you remain satisfied with the performance of your printer, and, most importantly, with the quality and effectiveness of your firm's printed materials.

### Audits Lead to Action Plans

Deciding how to proceed with the results of the audit is the hardest part of the process.

Typically, you have three main options specific to your brand:

- Keep it
- Refresh it
- Rebrand

If you choose to refresh your brand, you can make improvements to both your logo and your branded materials along the way without much up-front cost investment. This is a nice compromise for firms who find that their brand is still effective, but they need cost savings, more consistency, or just a more modern feel without a full rebrand effort.

If you choose to rebrand, you will need a plan to get full firm buy-in, create a timeline of events, including a clear delegation of responsibilities both within and outside the firm and get approval for a budget. Including your designer and printer in as many steps of this process will help you set a schedule that is realistic and achievable.

Once you have made a decision regarding your brand, you can review the list of recommendations that are aimed at increasing efficiency and reducing costs. You will need to create a plan to implement and reap the benefits of each recommendation.

### The Time is Now

While a brand audit will be effective any time of year, now is the perfect time to get started. The beginning of the year always starts with such promise for the next twelve months. And the best ways to start off the new year right is to avoid making resolutions and to make real actionable plans instead.

Founded in 1946 and headquartered in Cranford, New Jersey, ALL-STATE LEGAL is the legal industry's most trusted rebranding specialty printer. The company has been involved in over 20 major rebrands over the past year, has a national footprint (with manufacturing and distribution centers located in and around all the major U.S. legal markets), a best-in-class online ordering platform, and an experienced and knowledgeable client service team – all focused on providing the highest quality products and services to law firms of all sizes, from solo practitioners to the largest global firms. Over 94% of clients surveyed say they would recommend us to a colleague or friend.

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## GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD

**Think of an ALAMN member you know. Without mentioning his/her name, tell us something you admire about that person.**

### Sarah Evenson, President

I admire her tenacity and constant drive towards excellence. She is a true leader who inspires others to do their best.

### Sarah Didrikson, Past President, Education Director

This member has the ability to build others up and makes others feel valuable.

### Abby Rooney, President-Elect

She is someone that everyone wants to be around. She is intelligent, funny, not afraid to speak her mind, and she knows how to enjoy life. She is also an extremely caring and generous person who gives so much of herself to everything and everyone she encounters, including her friendships, her professional life, and ALAMN. I'm glad to know her and want to be more like her.

### Kelly Thaemert, Administrative Director

I love her excitement for ALAMN. She has jumped in and embraced everything ALAMN! She is positive and cheerful and makes those around her feel positive and cheerful as well.

### Laurie Greenberg, Communications Director

An ALAMN member I admire has been a member for a very long time and has held various positions within the Association. Despite her longevity and experience, she continues to actively participate, contribute, and build meaningful relationships with other members and business partners. She has been one of my mentors throughout my time in the Association.

### Philip Rush, Finance Director

The three members of ALAMN who come to mind all have unique traits that I admire. Those traits are 1) knowledge of the rules and regulations that affect our firms; 2) a compassion and caring for the people who work for them; and 3) a business sense that makes the right decisions to help their firms grow.

### Jessica Gerhardson, Membership Director

There are so many amazing members I admire, but if I had to choose one... it would be her organization, drive, energy, and professionalism. She inspires me to give more!

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