Douglas-Carson Legal Professionals

# THE TICKLER

September - October 2026

## In This Issue


President's Message
Education
Professional Development
Chat GPT Tips
Cognitive Development
NALS & Chapter News
Code of Ethics
Contact Us


### President's Message

Hello everyone! Can you believe it? Another summer is almost over. I hope you all had a good one and were able to take a wonderful trip or have an exciting new adventure.

I travelled to the St. Louis area to see family for the first time in a couple of years. While I was there, I toured the Bessinger Chocolate Factory and the Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House. I have attached a few pics from both places. As you can tell from the photos from the Chocolate Factory, our tour guide loves his job. I highly recommend both places if you are ever in the St. Louis area.

I also did some hiking and bicycling this summer as well as seeing Luke Combs, Eric Church, and Dierks Bentley in concert.

Please plan to attend our September 2 CLE meeting via Zoom at noon. NALS member, Vicki Van Pelt, will give a presentation on the Bill of Rights, which is appropriate for America's 250th anniversary.

At our November 4 meeting, NALS member, Kerie Trindle Byrne, will give a presentation titled "Being a Productive Paralegal."

We look forward to seeing all of you at both meetings. If you have any suggestions for future speakers or topics, please let us know.



Sharon Coates, PP, CLP
President

SEP 2

**DCLP LIVE !!-- No Reservation Needed**

Via Zoom - **Wednesday, Sept 2** and **Nov 4** at noon.

Meeting ID: 922 280 3023. Passcode: 412889

No charge for non-members

**ALL ATTENDEES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE GIFT CARD DRAWING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING**

**Congratulations to Vicki Van Pelt for winning in July!**

NOV 4

Education

GUEST SPEAKER

**Douglas-Carson Legal Professionals**

SEP 2

Presents

# Introduction to the Bill of Rights

with

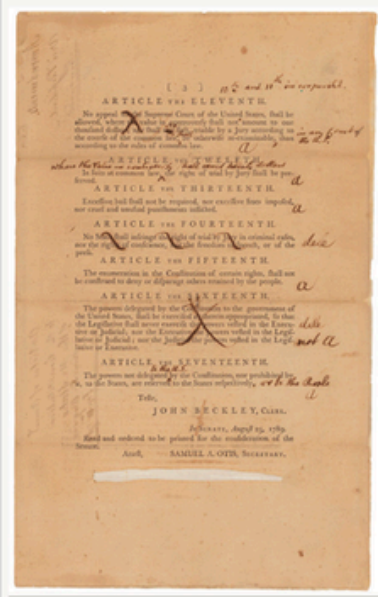
Vicki Van Pelt

The Bill of Rights is the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. It spells out Americans' rights in relation to their government. It guarantees civil rights and liberties to the individual—like freedom of speech, press, and religion. It sets rules for due process of law and reserves all powers not delegated to the federal government to the people or the states. And it specifies that "the enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people."

Our speaker, Vicki Van Pelt, will help us understand how the amendments came into existence and share some interesting stories on their creation and the personalities of the Founding Fathers who wrote them.







Images from the National Archives.

**Vicki Van Pelt** is a long-standing member of Douglas-Carson Legal Professionals and has served in numerous capacities on the chapter and state level (NALS of Nevada) throughout her long tenure. Vicki has over 40 years of experience working for a variety of attorneys, including in Australia where she worked for a solicitor who wrote briefs to barristers. She has one daugther, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. She retired in 2017 and enjoys reading and travel.

Education




**Douglas-Carson Legal Professionals**




Presents

# The Productive Paralegal--
# Time Management Strategies

with

Kerie S. Trindle Byrne, PP, PLS-SC

All legal support professionals aiming to gain additional time management skills will benefit from this presentation: The Productive Paralegal, Time Management Strategies. In this hour, we will discuss:

- routines and habits that optimize workflow including creating daily and weekly plans, and task prioritization and time management tactics, including templates and checklists.
- automating repetitive or tedious tasks with some hands-on application of Word Quick Parts and Outlook Signatures.
- prioritizing staying happy and healthy at work by discussing the benefits of taking breaks, preventing burnout, and keeping your inbox manageable.

This session will give you practical tips you can immediately implement to improve your work-life balance.

**Kerie Trindle Byrne, PP, PLS, SC-Family Law** has been a legal professional for over twenty years working up the ranks from file clerk to paralegal. Through determination, hard work and on-the-job training, Kerie gained the background knowledge and skills to perform as a paralegal. Believing education to reinforce her skills was important Kerie attended Phoenix College and earned her Associate of Arts Degree in Paralegal Studies, obtained her PLS and PP certifications from NALS and CP certification from NALA. Kerie is currently pursuing her Legal Paraprofessional License and looks forward to representing clients in Family Law. Kerie has practiced many areas of law and is currently employed as senior family law paralegal with Warner Angle Hallam Jackson & Formanek, PLLC where she supports four family law partners, including David N. Horowitz, Giancarlo A. Sapelli, Jennika N. Stith, and Greg R. Davis. Kerie believes her communication skills and creativity make her an effective leader.

Education
Cont'd

# Quiz on the History of the U.S. Constitution

1. In 2026, the U.S. is celebrating the 250th anniversary of _____.

2. The U.S. Constitution was signed on (date) _____.

3. The thirteen original colonies were: New Hampshire, Delaware, Virginia, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

4. The Revolutionary War started in April _____ at Lexington and Concord and ended in September _____.

5. The Treaty of _____ was signed to end the Revolutionary War.

6. _____ states had to ratify the Constitution in order for it to go into effect.

7. Shays' Rebellion was an uprising in Massachusetts of 2000 farmers that exposed weaknesses of the _____ .

8. _____ was unanimously chosen as the presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention.

9. The _____ of the Constitution begins: "We the People of the United States in order to form a more perfect union . . . ."

**Answers on page 10**



Education
Cont'd

# Quiz on the Bill of Rights

Complete the questions in the following quiz to test your knowledge of basic ideas and concepts covered by the Bill of Rights. Attend the DCLP meeting on September 2 to find out if you were correct.

1. Despite Benjamin Franklin's closing speech at the Constitutional Convention calling for all delegates to unite in signing the new Constitution, three delegates refused to sign it on September 17, 1787—the final day of the Convention. These three are known today as _____.

a. The Dissenters
b. The Troublemakers
c. The Rebels
d. The Loyalists

2. What is the Bill of Rights?

a. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution
b. A document declaring independence from England
c. A list of rights and freedoms
d. Both A and C

3. Which Convention delegate and author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights could accurately be described as the true father of the Bill of Rights?

a. George Washington
b. George Mason
c. Thomas Jefferson
d. James Madison

4. The language of the Virginia Declaration of Rights can be seen as the inspiration for which founding document?

a. The Declaration of Independence
b. The Bill of Rights
c. Both A and B
d. Neither A nor B

# Quiz on the Bill of Rights (cont'd)

5. Which of these is not a freedom found in the First Amendment?

a. Freedom of speech
b. The right to remain silent
c. The right to assemble
d. Free exercise of religion

6. The text of the Fourth Amendment says that the people shall be secure against _____.

a. All searches and seizures
b. Warrantless searches and seizures
c. Unreasonable searches and seizures
d. Inconvenient searches and seizures

7. Amendments that deal with fair process, jury rights, and the rights of the accused include all of the following except the _____.

a. Third Amendment
b. Fifth Amendment
c. Seventh Amendment
d. Eighth Amendment

8. The Sixth Amendment provides what rights for criminal defendants?

a. A speedy trial
b. An impartial jury
c. The right to counsel
d. All of the above

9. The Seventh Amendment protected the right to a trial by jury in civil cases where the amount in question was worth a certain amount of money. What was that amount?

a. At least $20
b. At least $100
c. At least $1,000
d. At least 1 million dollars

# Quiz on the Bill of Rights (cont'd)

10. Which amendment responded to Madison's concern that a written bill of rights might undermine other rights retained by the people?

a. Third Amendment
b. Sixth Amendment
c. Seventh Amendment
d. Ninth Amendment

11. What year was the Bill of Rights adopted?

a. 1776
b. 1787
c. 1791
d. 1800

12. Who played a key role in the creation of the Bill of Rights?

a. Anti-Federalists
b. Populists
c. Democrats
d. Republicans

13. Which Pennsylvania founder offered arguments against a bill of rights in his State House Yard Speech?

a. Benjamin Franklin
b. Robert Morris
c. Gouverneur Morris
d. James Wilson

14. What was a key argument against having a bill of rights?

a. It was unnecessary.
b. It could be dangerous.
c. The Constitution already protected the rights of the people.
d. All of the above

# Quiz on the Bill of Rights (cont'd)

15. James Madison gave a speech in support of adding amendments to the Constitution in 1789. This is particularly significant because Madison _____.

a. Had always supported a bill of rights
b. Had originally been reluctant to support a bill of rights
c. Had joined the dissenters in refusing to sign the Constitution
d. Was the oldest and most experienced delegate at the Convention

16. The protections of the Bill of Rights originally applied against abuses by which level of government?

a. All levels of government
b. Only local government
c. Only state government
d. Only the federal government

17. Which amendment has "incorporated" in the Bill of Rights the rights against abuses by state governments?

a. 12th Amendment
b. 14th Amendment
c. 19th Amendment
d. 27th Amendment

18. Which famous founder, living in France at the time of the Convention, corresponded with James Madison on the subject of including a bill of rights and may have helped convince him of the value of a bill of rights?

a. Samuel Adams
b. Patrick Henry
c. John Adams
d. Thomas Jefferson

19. What political term was coined after the political maneuverings of dissenter Elbridge Gerry?

a. Gerrymandering
b. Gerrybuster
c. Elbridgement
d. Gerry-packing

## Quiz on the Bill of Rights (cont'd)

20. Which article of the Constitution outlines the process for adding amendments like the Bill of Rights?

a. Article I
b. Article II
c. Article III
d. Article V

Attend the DCLP Membership Meeting on September 2 to learn the answers.

# Proofreading



**Proofreading exercises provide a way for you to test your knowledge and sharpen your editing skills. Here are some good exercises and quizzes available online:**

- **Purdue OWL Exercises - The Purdue OWL offers exercises and answers on a number of topics including punctuation, grammar, sentence style, spelling and more.**
- **Hemingway Editor - ten questions to test your editing skills.**
- **Skills Practice: Find the Mistakes - this New York Times article lets you attempt to find errors in five different article excerpts. The answers are available in the included PDF.**

# On the Books – Believe it or Not!

- Alabama forbids citizens from wearing a fake mustache in church if it causes people to laugh out loud.
- Alaska makes it completely illegal to whisper in someone's ear while they are actively hunting moose.
- California law strictly bans anyone from wearing cowboy boots unless they actually own at least two cows.
- Connecticut requires a pickle to bounce from a table to be legally considered a pickle.
- Arizona law states that cutting down a wild saguaro cactus carries a heavy prison sentence up to twenty-five years.

**Answers to the Quiz on the U.S. Constitution**

1. the signing of the Declaration of Independence
2. September 15, 1787
3. New York, Georgia, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, and South Carolina
4. 1775; 1783
5. Paris
6. Nine
7. Articles of Confederation
8. George Washington
9. preamble

# Improve Your Writing - Verb Tenses

| TENSE | USE/FUNCTION | USE IN A SENTENCE |
|---|---|---|
| Simple Present | Regular actions, habits, and general truths. | She works every day.<br>Water boils at 100c. |
| Present Continuous | Actions happening now or around now. | I am reading a book right now. |
| Present Perfect | Past act with result in present. | I have lost my keys. (I can't find them now.) |
| Present Perfect Continuous | Actions started in the past and still continuing. | He has been working here since 2019. |
| Simple Past | Completed action in the past. | They visited Paris last year. |
| Past Continuous | Past action in progress (often interrupted). | I was watching TV when she called. |
| Past Perfect | An action completed before another past act. | She had left before I arrived. |
| Past Perfect Continuous | Ongoing action before a point in the past. | They had been waiting for hours before the gate opened. |
| Simple Future | Future acts, decisions made now. | I will call you later. |
| Future Perfect | An act that will be completed before a specific time in the future. | By next week, she will have completed the project. |
| Future Continuous | Action that will be happening at a specific time in the future. | By this time tomorrow, I will be flying to London. |
| Future Perfect Continuous | Ongoing action that will continue up to a point in the future. | By December, I will have been working here for 10 years. |

# Mental Fitness



Professional Dev. Cont'd

# Keeping Up with the Latest in AI Technology

Since January 2026, we've been discussing primarily Chat GPT but AI is evolving rapidly and there are new options. It's important to discover and experiment with new platforms as they are released. Here are a few to try out:

| WHAT YOU WANT TO DO | BEST PLATFORM TO USE |
|---|---|
| WRITE SOMETHING THAT SOUNDS HUMAN | CLAUDE |
| BRAINSTORM | CHAT GPT |
| CREATE A PRESENTATION | GAMMA |
| AI IMAGE CREATION | GPT IMAGE 2 |
| GENERATE AI VIDEOS | HIGGSFIELD |
| BUILD A WEBSITE | CLAUDE CODE |
| IMPROVE YOUR RESUME | CLAUDE |
| ASK FOR AN EXPLANATION | CHAT GPT |
| LEARN A HARD TOPIC | GEMINI |
| RESEARCH FAST | GEMINI |
| ASK RANDOM LIFE QUESTIONS | CHAT GPT |
| ARGUE THROUGH A DECISION | CLAUDE |
| TURN RANDOM THOUGHTS INTO A PLAN | CHAT GPT |

Professional Dev. Cont'd

# Prompt Codes

Preface your question to AI with these codes to get results.

| PROMPT CODE | WHAT IT DOES |
|---|---|
| EXPOSE: | THE REAL REASON YOU ASKED YOUR QUESTION |
| GENIUS MODE: | ANSWER LIKE A TOP EXPERT WHO KNOWS THE TOPIC REALLY WELL |
| AUTOPSY: | STARTS ASKING INSTEAD OF ANSWERING. BREAKS DOWN YOUR PROBLEM AND SHOWS YOU WHAT'S REALLY HOLDING YOU BACK |
| THINK 10X: | STOPS GIVING YOU THE FIRST THING THAT POPS UP. IT GOES OVER YOUR PROBLEM AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL IT GETS IT RIGHT. |
| KILL CRITIC: | STOPS AGREEING WITH YOU. NOW IT ANSWERS YOU STRAIGHT WITHOUT ANY SUGAR COATING. |

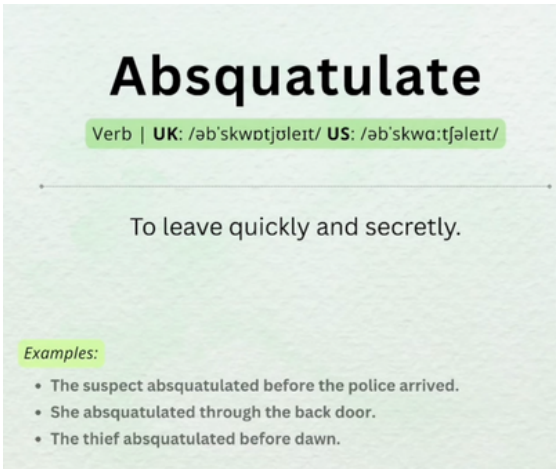
## DCLP NETWORKING LUNCH

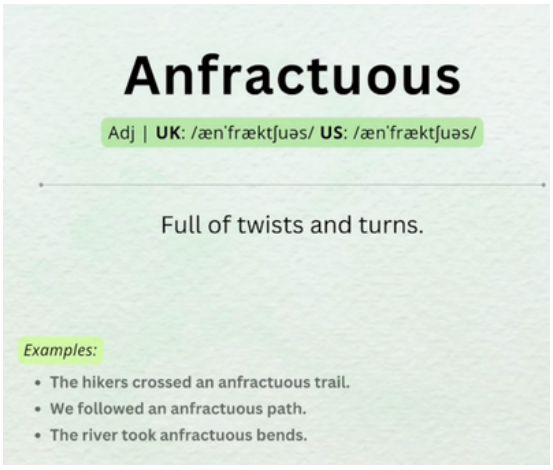



The upcoming monthly networking lunches will be held on **September 16** at LA Bakery at 1280 N. Curry and October 21 at The Basil, 311 North Carson. Guests are welcome. RSVP to marnelson03@gmail.com so we make sure we have a large enough table.

Cognitive Development

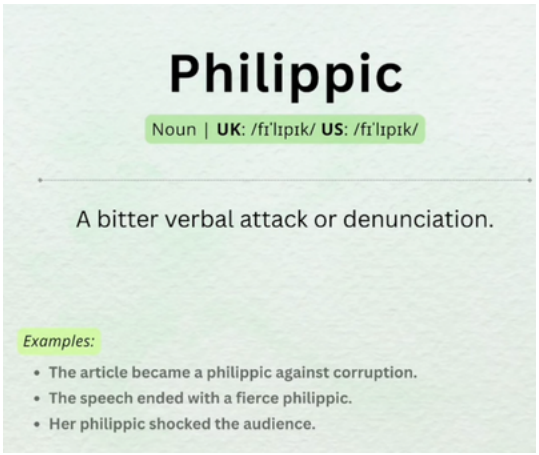
# Lexicon

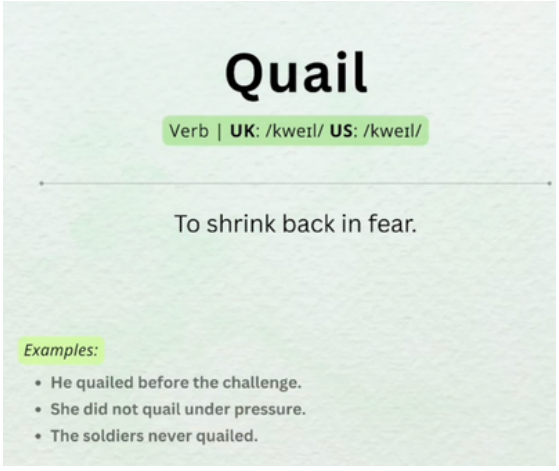


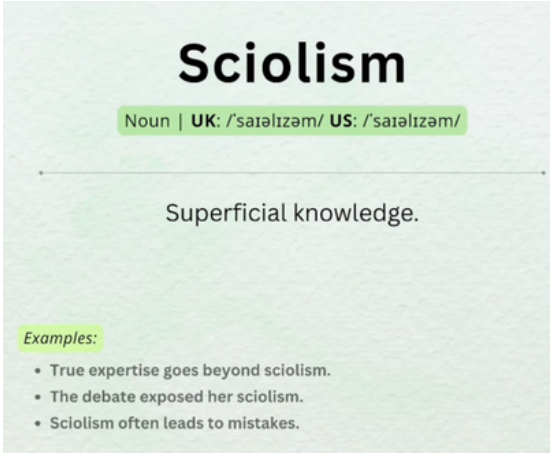










Source: Satis Writes



## SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER JUMBLE PUZZLE

Unscramble the word clues and then arrange the circled letters in the correct order to complete the sentence. Answer in the November-December issue.

LWDAR = ○ _ ○ _ _

HSEOW = _ ○ ○ ○ _

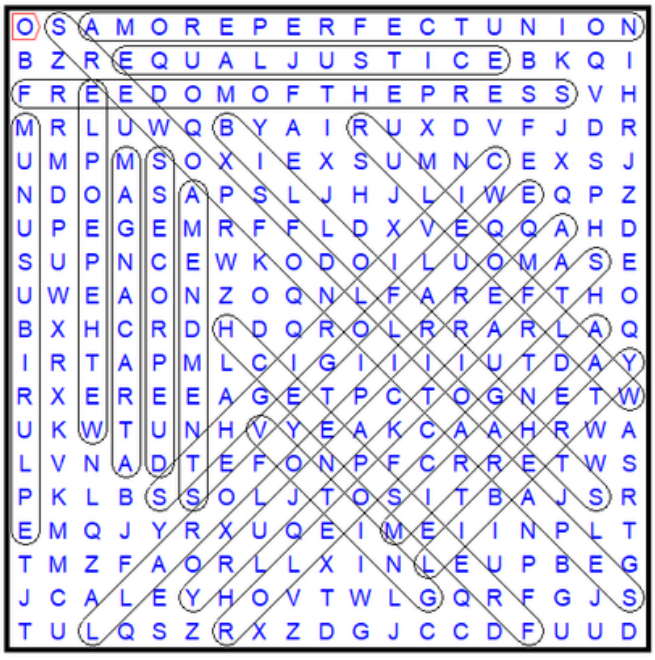
RMRORI = _ _ ○ _ ○ ○

CLBAHE = _ ○ _ ○ ○ _

He graduated with a degree in street building, which made him a

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

**Answer to July-August Word Search Puzzle**





# NALS Certification Update

NALS is pleased to announce an important change to our ALP credential. Beginning January 1, 2026, the **Accredited Legal Professional (ALP) certification will transition to the Certified Legal Support Professional (LSP).**

The ALP has served as a trusted entry-level credential for those starting their careers in legal support. As the legal support profession evolves, NALS is rebranding this certification title to better reflect the skills, competencies and professionalism the credential represents. The new LSP name offers clearer recognition across law firms, legal departments and the broader legal community.

Current ALP holders may continue using the ALP designation if they choose. All new credentials and recertifications issued on or after January 1, 2026, will carry the LSP title.

NALS will begin updating its website and digital materials in the coming weeks, so LSP references will appear ahead of the official transition.

To learn more about NALS certifications and upcoming updates, visit our website at NALS.org.

## NALS 2026 National Legal Education Conference!




Get ready to learn and network at the 2026 National Legal Education Conference taking place October 5-7, 2026, at the Hilton Jacksonville at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida.

Join legal support professionals from across the country for three days of high-quality education, inspiring speakers and the invaluable networking opportunities.

Exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities are already open and registration opened in May.

# Continuing Education

As a legal support professional, you can earn CLE credits in a variety of ways in addition to attendance at chapter or national educational sessions regardless of your location. Check at NALS.org for opportunities from other local and state associations.

Appropriate educational topics range from law office procedures, technology, ethics and judgment, grammar, and more.

Additional sources you may not have considered include:

- Local bar seminars or educational sessions
- Legal Talk Network ($)
- Lorman Training Products ($$$$)
- Westlaw Seminars ($$$)
- American Bar Association ($$$)
- Lexis-Nexis ($$$)
- Internal Revenue Service (Free-$)
- TED (Free)
- NALS @Law Magazine Quizzes (Free-$)
- 123ce.com

And did you know that you can also obtain CLE credit for volunteering on a National Task Force, e.g., Board of Directors, Leadership Identification Committee (LIC), National Certifying Board, Manuals Task Force, etc. If you are claiming CLE credit for volunteering, you must provide proof of your involvement and your task force leader must confirm same.

You can also earn CLE for volunteering your time and skills as a paralegal or legal support professional to legal organizations or nonprofit organizations (e.g., Legal Aid Services) in a *pro bono* capacity. A maximum of five (5) hours can be earned for *pro bono* legal support services and you must provide confirmation of your time/services dedicated. Examples of these organizations:

- Wounded Warrior Project
- Wills for Heroes
- Folds of Honor
- Justice for Children
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline
- NAACP
- ACLU
- The Legal Aid Society
- SPCA
- The Human Rights Campaign

## Membership Renewals

Renewal notices were sent to members, reminding them that their memberships with both NALS and their state or local chapters expired on April 30. Have you renewed?

NALS & Chapter News Cont'd

# Summer Fun 2026

A big thank you to Mary and Joe Baldecchi for once again hosting our annual summer party. And thanks to our members for sending in pics of their summer activities!

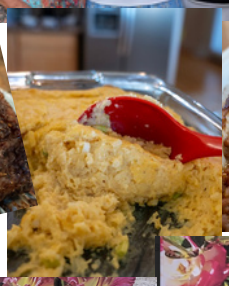
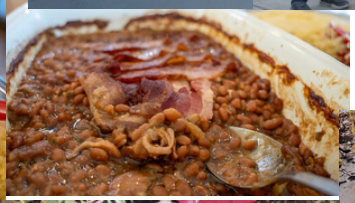




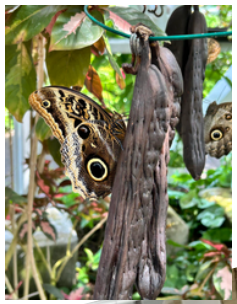
PATIO PARTY!





Gardening!





PONY EXPRESS



Chocolate!





Quilt Retreat!

# DCLP Readers' Nook


Kiminariyin under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0

## The True Tails of Baker and Taylor
by Jan Louch with Lisa Rogar

I picked up this book at the Douglas County Library and started skimming through it, but I couldn't put it down. It's the true story of two library cats, Baker and Taylor, and their "mother," Jan Louch who was an assistant librarian at the Douglas County Library for many years. She first got the job because she loved books. But she also loved animals and when these two cats came into her life, everything changed. The cats became famous around the world and even had their own fan club. They received letters and gifts from their many admirers, and people constantly stopped in the library just to see them. – Mary Baldecchi, Emeritus PP, PLS, CLA

## 12 Angry Librarians by Miranda James

This is the 8th book in the bestselling Cat in the Stacks series starring retired librarian Charlie Harris and his 30 lb. maine coon cat Diesel who must find a killer in a room full of librarians.

Charlie is stressed out. The Southern Academic Libraries Association is holding this year's annual meeting at Athena College. Since Charlie is the interim library director, he must deliver the welcome speech to all the visiting librarians. And as if that weren't bad enough, the keynote address will be delivered by Charlie's old nemesis from library school.

It's been thirty years since Charlie has seen Gavin Fong, and he's still an insufferable know-it-all capable of getting under everyone's skin. In his keynote, Gavin puts forth a most unpopular opinion: that degreed librarians will be obsolete in the academic libraries of the future. So when Gavin drops dead, no one seems too upset.

But Charlie, who was seen having a heated argument with Gavin the day before, has jumped to the top of the suspect list. Now Charlie and Diesel must check out every clue to refine their search for the real killer among them before the next book Charlie reads comes from a prison library!

I am thoroughly enjoying this series set in a small southern college town where everyone knows everyone.

At last count (2025), there were 17 books in the series. Don't worry if you have to skip around as the author is skillful at weaving in backstory without doing an info dump. – Dee Beardsley, Emeritus PP, PLS.

NALS & Chapter News Cont'd

# CLE Clarification for Certification Recertification Extension

NALS has transitioned to a single annual recertification period, meaning all certifications will renew in January of their applicable year. To support this change, certification expiration dates have been extended for certifications earned or renewed prior to this alignment.

**Important CLE Clarification**

Your CLEs will not expire or be rejected due to this extension. For active certifications, all CLEs earned since your previous renewal or earned date will continue to count, even if that window extends beyond five years. The January expiration date simply gives you additional time to complete the CLE requirements.

**What this means for you:**

- All certification expiration dates have been extended to January 31 of the following year.
- For example:
  - All certifications originally expiring in 2026 now expire January 31, 2027.
  - All certifications originally expiring in 2027 now expire January 31, 2028.

This is a **one-time extension** to align all recertifications to the same expiration date. Certifications earned or renewed from this year onward will already be set to expire on January 31 and will not require an extension.

**Recertification Processing**

Recertifications may be submitted early but will be processed in January as part of NALS annual recertification cycle.

If you have questions about this recertification process, **please reach out to our Certification and Events Manager, Kelsey.**

# NALS Foundation

## Events + Fundraisers

- Foundation Grants
- Faynell Poe Memorial Fund

## Quick Links

- Ways to Give
- Donor Recognition

## Building Your Career & Future

The NALS Foundation was established in 1989 and is dedicated to ensuring a rewarding future for you and all legal support professionals. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational foundation working hand in hand with the National Association for Legal Support Professionals to enhance educational opportunities. Since its inception, the NALS Foundation has awarded grants and contributions of over $200,000 for the benefit of chapters and states.

## Purpose

The NALS Foundation strives to ensure top-notch legal services are the norm. It funds quality education programs for legal professionals working with attorneys and the public to enhance their skills and provide them with the latest information on their profession. The NALS Foundation also keeps the good of the legal profession in the public eye, emphasizing a positive image of the profession and the importance of qualified, competent legal professionals.

The NALS Foundation is governed by a volunteer board of trustees. The board has designated the following as funding priorities:

- Educational/Research Opportunities
- Grants Keynote Speakers/Workshops
- Recognition

Please direct any questions you may have to the NALS Foundation Chair at foundation@nals.org.

## Get Involved

Serving on the NALS Foundation Board of Trustees is a simple, fun, and rewarding way to give back to the legal support profession. Click here and select NALS Foundation Board of Trustees on your volunteer interest form. Contact any current Trustee if you'd like to discuss the possibilities!

**NALS Foundation Board of Trustees**

- Tina Hurley, PP, PLS (chair)
- Melissa Canich, PLS (secretary/treasurer)
- Julie Abernathy, PP, PLS
- Stephanie Johnson
- Amylyn Riedling, PP, PLS-SC
- Judy D. Whigham, PP, PLS

# Wishing you all the best!







*May your birthday be the start of a year filled with new opportunities, accomplishments, and endless joy.*

*Happy Birthday!*

# NALS Code of Ethics & Professional Responsibility

Members of NALS are bound by the objectives of this association and the standards of conduct required of the legal profession. Every member shall:

- Encourage respect for the law and administration of justice
- Observe rules governing privileged communications and confidential information
- Promote and exemplify high standards of loyalty, cooperation, and courtesy
- Perform all duties of the profession with integrity and competence
- Pursue a high order of professional attainment

Integrity and high standards of conduct are fundamental to the success of our professional association. This Code is promulgated by NALS and accepted by its members to accomplish these ends.

**Canon 1.** Members of this association shall maintain a high degree of competency and integrity through continuing education to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide quality legal services to the public.

**Canon 2.** Members of this association shall maintain a high standard of ethical conduct and shall contribute to the integrity of the association and the legal profession.

**Canon 3.** Members of this association shall avoid a conflict of interest pertaining to a client matter.

**Canon 4.** Members of this association shall preserve and protect confidences and privileged communications of a client.

**Canon 5.** Members of this association shall exercise care in using independent professional judgment and in determining the extent to which a client may be assisted without the presence of a lawyer and shall not act in matters involving professional legal judgment.

**Canon 6.** Members of this association shall not solicit legal business on behalf of a lawyer.

**Canon 7.** Members of this association, unless permitted by law, shall not perform legal functions except under the direct supervision of a lawyer and shall not advertise or contract with members of the general public for the performance of paralegal functions.

**Canon 8.** Members of this association, unless permitted by law, shall not perform any of the duties restricted to lawyers or do things which lawyers themselves may not do and shall assist in preventing the unauthorized practice of law.

**Canon 9.** Members of this association not licensed to practice law shall not engage in the practice of law as defined by statutes or court decisions.

**Canon 10.** Members of this association shall do all other things incidental, necessary, or expedient to enhance professional responsibility and participation in the administration of justice and public service in cooperation with the legal profession.