

NFPA Primary Representative  
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### NFPA 2005 Annual Convention Report

VIVA Las Vegas! The 2005 Annual Convention for NFPA is over and I am sure it is riddled with stories of “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.” But believe it or not the delegates really did get down to business and get the job done. For four days we worked hard and for four nights we let our hair down, but we came away with a sense of having represented our associations well and NFPA is getting bigger, better and stronger with the passing of the torch from one conventioneer to the next. Next year’s convention will be hosted by the Illinois Paralegal Association and the “Blues Brother’s” were on hand to receive the torch from the Paralegal Association of Nevada.

The convention was well attended by the majority of the associations this year including Alaska and Hawaii and our newest members, the Navy Legalmen Association. There were a total of 44 credentialed associations represented. The breakdown of NFPA membership is as follows:

3 Student Memberships  
352 Individual Memberships  
247 Individual Student Members  
51 Associations

The following are the highlights from the four day event:

#### REGIONAL MEETINGS (Region III)

- It was announced that Tampa, Florida won out the bid for the 2007 convention. The 2006 convention will take place in Chicago, Illinois.
- Linda Hightshue McGirr from the Indiana Paralegal Association was nominated for the Region Director’s position for our region. She accepted the nomination and was voted in unanimously. Linda will be the new region director for Region III.
- The outgoing region director, Irene Yakovlovich, prepared an updated CD containing the pertinent information that is sometimes difficult to obtain from NFPA’s website. Some of the information provided to the delegates is as follows:

- Policy Procedures
- Regional Materials
- How dues are paid
- Leadership materials
- Policy and Procedures

- The following are the scheduled upcoming board meetings and dates to remember for NFPA:

May 21, 2005 – Coordinators Meeting via tele-conferencing

July 21, 2005 – Leadership workshop; Rochester, NY

July 22 – 23, 2005 – Summer Board Meeting; Rochester, NY

August 27 – 28, 2005 – Navy Legalmen will sponsor a leadership training in Washington, DC.

October (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week) – Fall Region Meeting; Location to be decided upon by delegates  
Bids to be submitted by September 1<sup>st</sup> for those associations interested in hosting the region meeting.

November 5, 2005 – Fall Board Meeting; Conference Call

January 13 – 14, 2006 – Winter Board Meeting; Location TBA

May 4 – 7, 2006 – NFPA Annual Convention; Chicago, IL

- *Regulation Review Conference to take place prior to annual convention.*

The delegates took the time at the Region Meeting to express some concerns that we as individual delegates shared in addition to bringing to the forefront some of those issues of our associations.

Some of the concerns addressed were problems associated with the Website, suggestions for the Reporter, and convention registration issues:

**Convention Issues:**

- Convention registration glitches—there were some members that had issues when they registered because they were either not attending the seminar or not attending portions of the workshops; delegates were concerned that registration would not go through properly
- The convention form was very confusing and needs to be clarified
- Seminar sign up should be separate to make it easier to expense
- Bid form from convention is not very accurate – didn't explain the 25% incentive
- Should be a separate form for convention bid, region meeting bid, board meeting bid, leadership workshop bid, and forms should be have clear instructions

**General Issues:**

- Still having email issues – problems with signing up for list serves; they should be posted with easy, clear instructions to sign up for list serves (note: many delegates had problems signing up even if they followed instructions)

- Things should be easily posted on the front page of the membership section – a “See Spot Run” section
- NFPA’s website is too hard to navigate, many links are imbedded/inactive, cumbersome to use and not user friendly (perhaps consider hiring someone to investigate every link)
- Policy and Procedure manual should be one document, not sections and subsections as it is now
- Same with Bylaws, etc. – all should be one document

**Website issues and suggestions:**

- Make all deadlines posted on the main page so that you can see the dates at a glance (not just on the *Inside*, the Inside report is vary large and can take a long time to open up)
- Check list for delegates should be posted in an obvious place
- The registration letter should include the first timer’s list, copy of the registration, confirmation letter, something that shows what seminars they’re registered for; emails are great, but a hard copy is needed
- Have a resource library on the website

**Reporter suggestions:**

- Have some generic articles that would appeal to a wider audience
- Have articles on legal writing, general English (grammar, style, etc.)
- Summarize court decisions that affect our jobs
- Technology articles – possibly get articles from vendors
- Consider getting permission to copy articles from other publications that are of particular interest
- Get articles from vendors (i.e. Robert Half) on resume writing, job interviewing, etc.
- Content should be improved – perhaps have segments or sections on various members associated with the law
- Have a new member or student section
- Highlight a new member or association in the magazine
- Possibly have a book review section
- Letters or articles from the Board on specific issues (such as Marketing)

Our region also felt that because some law firms don’t pay for their paralegals to join the Board (possibly the marketing committee) should develop a document that a paralegal could take to help convince employers to pay for membership and/or persuade members to pay the dues out-of-pocket (perhaps point out that dues are tax-deductible).

SEMINARS

As usual, no convention would be complete without the opportunity for its members to attend seminars that could be advantageous for their local association. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and as a cost saving measure, I did not fly out on Thursday to attend any of this year’s seminars but it is my understanding that a number of them were very helpful. It is also my understanding that a number of the materials from these sessions will be offered on the website as soon as the committee has the opportunity to issue a full report and the management company updates the news and information from the convention. Should you see a topic that may interest you then please feel free to contact me and I’ll be happy to get you the materials or direct you to the appropriate place on NFPA’s web site for your viewing.

Thursday – April 28, 2005

*Cutting Edge Technology – Catchin’ On Fast: “SMARTER” Trial Presentation with the SMARTBOARD & Smart JURY – High Tech Voir Dire-Jury Selection software for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*HIPPA – Anything That’s Part of You: How to Get the Medical Records You Need & Legal Nurse Consultants: Who’s That?*

*Civil Litigation – Am I Ready: Effective & Ineffective Trial Support*

*Ethics – Never Ending: The Proper Care and Feeding of Lawyers*

*A Whole Latta Shakin’ Goin’ On: Construction Defect/Mold Litigation Construction Defect*

*E-Discovery & Internet Research – How the Web Was Woven: What Paralegals Need to Know to Get a Jump on Discovery & Web-surfing Dude’s Totally Indispensable Guide to Surfing the ‘Net*

*A Little Less Conversation: Intellectual Property Overview*

*How’s The World Treating You?: Developing People to Strengthen Organizations*

*A World of Our Own: Overview of Environmental Law*

Friday – April 29, 2005

First Timers Meeting

ABA Approval

Working with Bar Associations

How to Write an Agenda Topic

Communication

*Regulation Review and Update: What is Paralegal Regulation and Where are Paralegals Regulated?*

How to Be an NFPA Leader

PACE

## POLICY MEETINGS

Saturday morning, bright and early at 8:00 the real work began – the policy meetings. If you attended the last PACO general membership meeting, or in the alternative, took the time to read the *Agenda Topics* I forwarded on the listserv, you are well aware of the complexity of some of the issues that we were dealing with during this year's convention. For those of you who might be completely unfamiliar with this process (and I challenge you to step up to the plate), suffice it to say that it can become a grueling marathon session on those topics of discussion that people care most about, while other issues just breeze through the voting process with little or no fanfare. This year was no different. I am attaching the table that I shared with you prior to the convention and I have added in the results of the votes. Should you have any questions about any of the topics, please feel free to contact me either via e-mail or by phone.

As always it was both a pleasure and an honor to represent Central Ohio on the national scene. Furthermore, due to the success of our affiliation with the Columbus Bar Association, we continue to be at the center of attention as to the secrets of our success. Therefore, I'd like to take this opportunity to challenge each and every one of you reading this article to get on board and offer your talents and skills in furtherance of what we've been able to achieve during this past year. In the words of my former college band director – "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." So I ask the question – are you the weak link in this organization?

I will be taking the time to break down some of the convention topics in upcoming issues of the *Citator* so stay tuned.



NO.	PACO Vote/Position	AGENDA TOPIC	PURPOSE OF TOPIC	SUMMARY
5.	<b>Unanimous Yes.</b>	Amendments to Bylaws Section 4.1.A.1 Increase Dues for Voting Member Associations <b>PASSED</b> <b>35 = Yes</b> <b>9 = No</b>	To assist NFPA in gaining financial stability.	Current Dues: \$20.00 per voting member \$15.00 per student.  - Last increase was in 1992 - There was a dues <b>decrease</b> in 1996.  - Increase petition is for member raising the dues to \$ and \$5.00 per student, raise \$20.00 per member.
6.	<b>Unanimous Yes.</b>	Amendment to By-Laws (addition), Article XII, Section 12.1 <b>FAILED</b> <b>25 = Yes</b> <b>16 = No</b> <b>2 = Abstain</b>	To prevent board members from holding office in more than one national paralegal association.	Proposed Added language: C concurrently hold a position a director, or member of the bo another national paralegal ass
7.	<b>Majority Yes.</b> <b>3 Opposed.</b>	Amend Policy 01S-7, 00S-4 and 94-M11 Re-establish Foundation = <b>PASSED</b> Funding PACE = <b>FAILED</b>	To provide the profits of PACE to be divided in half between NFPA	The Foundation does not have funding, or financial support or advance the paralegal profession intended. It also does not support itself.
8.	<b>Majority Yes.</b>	Staggered Two-Year Terms for Officers and Directors of NFPA (Except region Directors) <b>PASSED</b> <b>41 = Yes</b> <b>3 = No</b>	To extend the term of Board Members to two years.	Staggered terms for officers provide continuity from one to the next and ease of training.  - Current terms are served maximum of 3 years.
9.	<b>Majority No.</b>	Definition of "Substantive Legal Services" <b>PASSED</b> <b>35 = Yes</b> <b>9 = No</b>	NFPA to revise the definition for Paralegal.	Definition will be more definitive what substantive services mean

NO.	PACO Vote/Position	AGENDA TOPIC	PURPOSE OF TOPIC	SUMMARY
11.	<b>Majority Yes.</b>	Pace Exam and Other Fees (Admin. Resolution)	To raise the non-NFPA member application fee for PACE and add a late fee for late submission of RP renewals.	There continues to be a number of members applying to take PACE. Other certification require the non-NFPA members to pay a higher fee or join the association.
12.	<i>Had to leave before vote went to floor – will update when info obtained from Region Director.</i>	Regulation of Paralegal Profession (Discussion Topic)	To discuss the positive and negative effects regulation would have on the profession and whether as a profession it is necessary.	Topic is to bring about discussion on NFPA's position with respect to regulation. Needs to be changed where necessary. Develop a clear policy position on regulation, creating more of a proactive position on NFPA with regulation of the profession in the state.
13.	<b>Did not vote.</b>	Legal Documents Preparers <b>PASSED</b> <b>33 = Yes</b> <b>7 = No</b>	Adoption of NFPA positions on provisions which should be included in legislation.	To give direction to the Directors (or committee) on a comprehensive position statement on the positions adopted by the directors.
14.	<b>Unanimous Yes.</b>	NFPA Fiscal Year <b>PASSED</b> <b>39 = Yes</b> <b>5 = No</b>	Change the fiscal year.	Changing NFPA's fiscal year from the calendar year would provide more uniformity of association dues to be received throughout the year, thereby allowing for better financial management and more accurate budgeting and planning.