

NEWS Letter

WEBWEAVERS EVENT

The VWAA hosted its “first ever” Webweavers Event on September 28 – 29, 2007 at the Lansdowne Resort in Leesburg, Virginia. The VWAA organized the event to provide an opportunity to VWAA members to hone their networking skills.

The kick off reception on Friday night showcased the importance of business etiquette. VWAA member **Melissa Katz**, a litigation partner with the Fairfax firm of **Trichilo, Bancroft, McGavin, Horvath & Judkins, PC**, mingled with the group and provided pointers on the right way to handle joining a group already in discussion, making introductions, getting the first contact right and more. Melissa is certainly qualified to do it – she is a certified business etiquette trainer in addition to her other two full time jobs as lawyer and parent.

The next day started with an 8 a.m. breakfast that showcased the coaching skills of member **Leanne Cusumano-Roque**. Leanne is a member of the Northern Virginia Chapter and owns her

own consulting business, **CRC Consulting, Inc.** Leanne has been coaching lawyers to personal success for several years. She shared those coaching skills on Saturday morning by having conference attendees identify people in their networks and determine if there were any holes to be filled. She also raised awareness of just how many “teams” each one of us plays on during the course of our days – be it the “management team”, the “parent team”, the “family team” or others.

Check out Leanne’s website at www.shinelikethestun.com to get a taste of what you missed. Leanne also recommended the following books to our audience:

- Gail Evans, [Play Like a Man. Win Like A Woman](#)
- Gail Evans, [She Wins. You Win](#)
- Mark M. Maraia, [Rainmaking Made Simple](#)

- Dale Carnegie, [Lifetime Plan for Success](#), containing the 2 books, [How to Win Friends & Influence People](#) and [How to Stop Worrying & Start Living](#)
- Otto Kroeger & Janet Thuesen, [The Workplace Profiles](#), excerpted from [TypeTalk at Work](#)

Event attendees next got an opportunity to introduce themselves to one another. A full hour of mingling and chatting created lots of new opportunities! The group then settled down for a panel discussion presented by local business owners in the Loudoun County area. The panel included Georgia Graves, the CEO of Bridgman Communications, Inc., Kristina Bouweiri, president and CEO of Reston Limousine, Tiffany Bullock, a financial planner with Loudoun Financial and VWAA member **Linda Jackson**, a business and litigation partner with **Venable**. (cont. page 2)

Honoring Justice Lacy

On Saturday, September 29, 2007, the VWAA was pleased to honor the Honorable Elizabeth Lacey, Virginia Supreme Court Justice. The VWAA recognized her service to the Commonwealth and her dedication to the VWAA and women of Virginia with a luncheon at Lansdowne Resort. Justice Lacey announced her retirement last spring.

Professor Jayne Barnard from the William and Mary Law School presented remarks about Justice Lacey that highlighted the jurist’s intelligence, humility, and humanity. Professor Barnard’s comments were collected from the lawyers who had served as Justice Lacey’s law clerks.

VWAA member **Marni Byrum**, a principal with the Alexandria firm of **McQuade and Byrum**, presented Justice Lacey with a sculpture. The inscription on the sculpture read:

Presented to

ELIZABETH B. LACY

in appreciation of her belief that no one succeeds alone and her unwavering commitment to standing together, reaching back and moving forward

**VIRGINIA WOMEN ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION
September 2007**

In her remarks to the gathering, Justice Lacey emphasized the continuing need for qualified women attorneys to step forward when judicial vacancies appear. She challenged the VWAA to reach out to those candidates to encourage them to apply.

In recent years, the number of women on the Virginia courts has decreased and the number of women applying for openings has also fallen off. The VWAA continues to encourage its members to serve on judicial evaluation panels run through to VWAA when vacancies arise as a way to become familiar with the selection process.

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Client Development 101: 7 Tips to Successfully Market Your Practice

by *Melissa Busby Fernlund*

Marketing is a topic most attorneys want to avoid. You are too busy doing good work for your clients, learning more about your practice areas, balancing your work and your personal life, managing office politics, and pursuing business opportunities. When one item has to get cut, we all know which one it is.

And marketing is tough. Almost everyone does good work, and there is relatively little price sensitivity. It's all about DIFFERENTIATION and NAME RECOGNITION, or keeping your name on the "top of mind" when legal issues arise. It's also about being likable and making clients want to work with you. Most women have an advantage here. So jump into minimal marketing; I'll try to make it as painless as possible.

1. Golf and Golf Alternatives.

Women attorneys may or may not golf, the classic client development activity. Golf gets potential clients out of the office, captive and away from interruptions for extended periods of time. It is a treat, can be expensive, and gives people an excellent opportunity to get to know each other in an environment governed by strict rules of behavior, where manners – good or bad – are on display. You might not be a great golfer, but if you know how to conduct yourself and what to say when, you're in. As an alternative to golf, some women are organizing spa days, museum visits, high tea, fishing, tennis, wine tastings, ballet, and other cultural events that can bring about the same relationship results as golf outings.

2. Positioning Statement/Differentiation/Unique Value Proposition.

If you do one thing after reading this article, make it refining your elevator pitch. The term "elevator speech" came out of the VC world and is a 30 second overview of your business. Use it every time you meet someone. You might currently say "I am a lawyer at XYZ"; better to say "I am a partner in a family law practice in Northern Virginia"; even better would be to say the previous, but follow with more differentiation: "I represent prospective adoptive parents in the Washington area and handle complex divorce cases." Keep it short and sweet, try to make it sound sincere, and

immediately follow with a question about the other person, so it won't seem obnoxious or arrogant. This part of what happens on the golf course; everyone in the foursome has a clear idea of exactly what the others do, so they can make a referral at an appropriate time. It also builds your personal brand, and when you deliver, it builds your credibility and professional reputation.

3. Build Relationships.

Legal marketing is all about relationship building, and you can meet referral sources and potential clients anywhere. It's all about (1) delivering a concise message about what you do, and (2) keeping in touch. Both of these items will help you stand out in the crowd. Draw a networking diagram. Place yourself in the middle of a page, and map out the organizations and groups you belong to. Include schools you attended, companies where you worked and the contacts you have at each. Whenever you start a new project, your diagram can shed light on the opportunities and help you implement your approach. How big is your network? It's the size of your contacts, plus all of your friend's contacts, your colleagues' contacts, and so on. The average person knows 250 people. If you want to pursue mapping further, go to www.visiblepath.com – view online demo. Your goal is to assemble a database of your personal contacts:

- Business contacts
- Club members
- Fellow board members
- Schools (yours and your children's)
- Volunteer work
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Religious organizations
- Spouse's/families' connections

4. Make contact

How often do you contact these people? You don't want to become a pest, but quarterly contacts, personalized if possible, are the mark that will put you and your practice top of mind.

Contact ideas:

- Phone call just to ask how things are going/ what's new

- Lunch or dinner invitation
- Party or tickets to an event
- Copy of an article (3rd party validation of your professional standing)
- Token gifts
- Holiday cards with personal notes inside
- Newsletters
- Invitation to seminar or webinar
- Link or referral to a blog
- Press release
- Information about an interesting pro bono case
- Information about a public relations initiative

5. Improve your communication skills.

Communicate in a way that reinforces your professional credibility. Simplify technical legal jargon. Speak from a technical background but with a business perspective. Your potential clients want to understand you.

6. Deliver great customer service.

Think of yourself as a customer service provider whose work product happens to be legal documents. More than the quality of your work, how you treat customers determines your long-term success. Return calls promptly. Get your staff on board. Script the client experience: determine exactly what the receptionist will say, who will walk clients to the conference room, when the lawyer will arrive. Always deliver an outstanding experience.

7. THANK YOUR REFERRAL SOURCES PROFUSELY.

They are a big part of your lifeline. Let them know how much you appreciate the referrals, and return the favor when you can. Write a note or pick up the phone each and every time you receive a referral. Take your referral source to lunch twice a year, if not more. A thriving practice should have 5-10 reliable referral sources.

In my next article, I will discuss second tier marketing initiatives.

Melissa Busby Fernlund is an independent marketing and media relations consultant based in Northern Virginia. She has over 20 years of marketing experience at Covington & Burling, Spiegel & McDiarmid and other firms. She currently represents law and professional services firms in Northern Virginia and DC and is part-time Marketing Director at Spiegel & McDiarmid. She can be reached at mfernlund@cox.net or 751.437.0254.

WEBWEAVERS EVENT cont.

The group presented interesting stories about their own experiences in growing their businesses, shared resources that aid in networking, and provided practical tips about "do's and don'ts" of marketing. The candid presentation from these business women was well-received and was followed by many questions from attendees. The panel moderator was VWAA member **Kathleen Holmes**, business counseling and litigation partner at **Williams Mullen**.

This event was the brain-child of VWAA president **Sheila Costin**. It was made possible through the support of our sponsors (in alphabetical order) :

Allen, Allen, Allen & Allen; Barbara S. Williams, Personal Injury Law; Bowman and Brooke LLP; Chevy Chase Bank - Private Bank; Cochran & Owen; Guynn, Memmer & Dillon, P.C.; Harbour Law, PLC; Hart, Calley, Gibbs & Karp, PC; JMW Settlements, Inc.; Law Offices George M. DePolo, PC; LeClairRyan; Lieblich & Grimes, PC; McQuade Byrum; Morris & Morris; Northern Virginia VWAA Chapter; Rich Greenberg Rosenthal & Costle LLP; Richmond VWAA Chapter; Roanoke VWAA Chapter; Rubenstein, Cogan, Quick & Revesman; The Herring Law Firm; The Law Office of Catherine M. Reese, PLC; The Loudoun Financial Group; The Susan Hicks Group PC; Trichilo, Bancroft, McGavin, Horvath & Judkins PC; Venable LLP; and Williams Mullen.

President's Message...Sheila Costin

I am pleased to be able to share with you the activities to improve the VWAA over the past few months. First, I pleased to announce the newly formed Prince William Chapter. **Cathy Croft** is the President of the Chapter and the Chapter's Representative on the Board of Directors. The Chapter is already planning events and is a great asset to the VWAA.

Anyone who has gone to our website recently, www.vwaa.org, has noticed a considerable change. For those of you who have not visited the site recently, please do. Our goal was to convert the website into a resource for our members. Like all technology, it is a work in progress so expect it to continue to develop. **Kathleen Holmes** was the driving force behind this significant effort.

There can be no discussion of improvements to the VWAA without mentioning **Kai Memmer**, our immediate Past President. Not only did Kai dedicate hundreds of hours to the VWAA over the past year, but she organized the Webweavers Event last month and is responsible for the newsletter. The Webweavers Event was created in response to requests from our members for more networking opportunities. Many of our members pitched in to make it a huge success and a great weekend.

Next on the horizon is the mailing of directories. While we have moved to the electronic age with many of our mailings, we decided to mail hard copies of directories. In the future, you will be able to update your contact information via the website.

Now that I have caught you up to date on what has been happening, I have a request to ask of each one of you to help to improve the VWAA. Between now and January 1, I ask that each of you contact your Chapter or a Board member and join a committee that interests you or sign up to attend an event. The way to improve the VWAA is to become more involved with the VWAA.



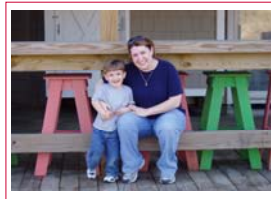
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Meet Tracey Hovey— Administrative Director

I am so honored to have been chosen by the VWAA to be the new Administrative Director. I worked in the legal field as a paralegal for approximately 10 years for different law firms and in different areas of practice. In between my paralegal work I managed a family owned print shop. Coincidentally enough through the print shop I have worked on a few VWAA projects. When Jill said she was retiring I was very excited about the opportunity because it seems to fit well with my printing and legal background.

Since I was hired by the VWAA I have since left the printing field and now manage a branch of First Market Bank in Williamsburg where I live. I am married and have a four year old son. I am really enjoying being involved with the VWAA and I look forward to many years of working with everyone.

Tracey and son, Zach, pictured to the right.



- SAVE THE DATE -

Our 2008
VWAA Conference
is scheduled for
October 3-5, 2008
at Kingsmill
in Williamsburg

See you there!

CHAPTER NEWS—New River Valley & NoVa

New River Valley Chapter Holds Annual Judicial Reception...

For the past seven years the NRV Chapter of the VWAA has sponsored a Judicial Reception to honor the Judiciary of the 27th Judicial Circuit. This fall the Chapter hosted its annual Reception on Thursday evening, October 11, 2007, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., at the home of Harriet Dorsey, Esq. Judges, attorneys, law enforcement officials, legislative representatives, and VWAA Board members were invited to attend. Approximately 55 people attended.

New River Valley Chapter Contributes to Women's Resource Center...

Last year the NRV Chapter of the VWAA hosted a gathering of its members to collect items to contribute to the New River Valley Women's Resource Center. This year the NRV Chapter members will once again host this event on Thursday afternoon, December 13th, at the home of Stephanie Murray Shortt, Esq., in Floyd County, to collect items for the Center for this holiday season. Last year the group contributed more than \$500.00 in food, clothing, personal care, and Center and program supply items to the Women's Resource Center to support families in need. The members also contributed other monetary

and gift items for the women and children served by the Center.

Submitted by Janet Tuckwiller

NoVa Chapter...plans to host its Holiday Reception 6:30 – 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 5, 2007, at the Atrium at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Vienna, Virginia. They also just held their Legislative Reception on October 29th.

Submitted by Debra Powers

CHAPTER NEWS—Prince William, Hampton Roads & Roanoke

Prince William...The Fall of 2007 has been an exciting time for the newly formed Prince William Chapter. Prior to acquiring our formal chapter status, the Nova Chapter and the Law Office of George DePolo sponsored a Happy Hour for the intended Prince William Chapter which was held at the Law Office of Von Keller and Von Keller. The organizational meeting was held in September during which short and long term goals were discussed and the board was put in place. An upcoming Happy Hour is scheduled for November 1, 2007 from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at the law

firm of sponsored by Curran and Whittington, PLLC. We are off to a good start with much interest generated within the legal community and very much appreciate the generosity and encouragement of the Nova Chapter in particular. *Submitted by Catherine S. Croft*

Hampton Roads...We are hosting a CLE on Collaborative Law on January 15, 2008 at the Virginia Beach Central Library in the evening, presented by our own Ellen Carlson. We plan on also doing a legislative update after the Spring session – no date yet.

Submitted by Virginia E. Brown

Roanoke Chapter...will be hosting its Holiday Reception honoring our local judiciary on December 6, 2007 from 6-8 pm at Metro! Along with a silent auction to benefit the Ellen Moore Scholarship Fund.

Submitted by Kai Memmer

We're on the web at
www.vwaa.org

Contact Our Board of Directors

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Virginia Women Attorneys Association

The mission of the VWAA is to assist women attorneys in developing their professional practice and in achieving their potential, to bring about changes in the law and to affect public policy for the benefit of the women of the Commonwealth of Virginia.



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The VWAA was formed in 1981 to advance the interests of women attorneys in Virginia, to encourage their mutual improvement and social interaction, and to promote the interests of women under law.

The VWAA remains the only statewide bar association dedicated to the needs of women attorneys in Virginia as professionals and as women.



Justice Lacy at the luncheon...



Justice Lacy, Sheila Costin and Marni Byrum at the overlook at Lansdowne