

De Novo

Colorado Association of Legal Support Staff

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Are You Exposed?

by Nickie Hyde

Referred by a friend, Mary walks into a law office for the first time, looking for help probating an estate. She's greeted warmly by the receptionist and asked to wait. Mary glances around at the chairs in the tiny reception area – they're only three feet away from the receptionist's desk and though the proximity makes her a little uncomfortable, she sits anyway. As she waits, Mary can't help but see documents lying all over the receptionist's desk. As the receptionist answers the phone, Mary overhears the phone conversations – one involves a client with a family law matter and another is to a court asking about custody arrangements for two children. She's shocked when she recognizes the names of the children – they go to her grandson's school! She had no idea there was trouble brewing in the family. She picks up a magazine to help get her mind off the fact that she can see the receptionist's computer screen and everything she's working on. After all, she came to discuss her issues, not find out about other people's problems.

After 30 minutes of waiting, she finally gets to see the attorney. They discuss the estate and what needs to be done. The attorney then indicates that if Mary wants to hire him, all she has to do is give him a retainer for 50 percent of his fee. Mary is a little confused about this; she expected to sign some kind of contract or agreement. But the attorney assures her that's not necessary; the canceled check will indicate that she hired him. Mary is just not sure about all this. After all, her daughter is in the legal field in another city and told her what to expect – and this wasn't it! As Mary leaves the office, she feels relieved – she doesn't want her business exposed. She is really appalled and decides not to return.

Does this sound like fiction? This didn't really happen, did it? Yes, it did. The "Mary" in the story is my mother, and she experienced everything written above. The long wait bothered her, but what really upset her was that the lawyer's clients (and their business) were talked about openly without regard to who could hear, documents were lying about for anyone to read, the

computer screen faced her so she could see what the receptionist was working on, and she wouldn't hire anyone – especially an attorney – who considered a canceled check any kind of regular business agreement. Even though she doesn't interact with legal professionals often, she knew she had witnessed many breaches of client confidentiality.

How many ethics violations do you think took place that day? After all, she was exposed to four in just 30 minutes.

Of course, attorneys know the importance of the ethics rules, but what about staff? If your firm is like most, staff members sign the confidentiality rules waiver on their first day with the firm. What happens to that piece of paper? It goes in the employee's file and the newly hired staff person never sees it again. In my years of consulting, I've worked with many firms, several of which were large and prestigious, and only a very limited number of them have any kind of staff ethics training. I know of many staff members who have never attended a class, a lecture, or even a staff meeting regarding ethics. Yet staff can be the cause of an ethical breach, just as my mother witnessed.

Why Is This Important?

Staff should know the rules because they're formally educated in legal issues, aren't they? What about your office? Take a look at your staff's resumes and see how many have legal training. My bet is that the paralegals are the only ones with any type of formalized legal training. Most legal secretaries, administrative assistants, and other members of staff learn on the job. If none of their previous firms taught them legal ethics, it's incumbent that your firm does so. Why?

1. As in anything, education and information are the keys to a well-trained employee.

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See Special CALSS Annual Meeting Section beginning on page 8.

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From the Editor:

Five issues down; one to go. There's still time to get that article submitted that you've been just burning to share with the other members!!! (Submission deadline for the final issue is August 15.)

In downtown Denver there's lots of excitement as we look forward to the Democratic National Convention in a few weeks. Although there are also lots of not-so-exciting things surrounding this event (i.e., road closures, restricted parking, and LOTS of added security), overall I'm sure it will be good for Colorado and bring lots of additional revenue into the state.

The Grammar Queen is back in this issue. Please be sure to send questions for her to address in her September article.

Note: The article titled "Are You Exposed?" beginning on page 1 was originally written for the Texas Law Journal, so all references are to Texas resources. For information specific to Colorado, a good place to begin would be the Colorado Bar Association.

The next issue of *De Novo* will be distributed before the CALSS Annual Meeting in September. In the meantime, I hope you are enjoying your very warm Colorado summer!

Cathy Hansen, PLS
De Novo Editor



De Novo is a bi-monthly publication of the Colorado Association of Legal Support Staff (CALSS), published in odd-numbered months. The information in this publication is intended for general guidance, and should not be construed as legal advice. CALSS accepts no responsibility for loss to any person or entity as a result of action or inaction based on the use of any information in this publication.

Articles that appear in *De Novo* do not necessarily reflect the view of CALSS, nor does their publication constitute an endorsement.

An annual e-subscription to *De Novo* is provided to members of CALSS as part of their membership dues. Printed copies may be obtained from the editor.

All correspondence regarding content should be directed to the editor. Original articles may be submitted for publication, as well as reprints of previously published articles. (In the latter case, please include author and publication information so appropriate reprinting permission may be obtained.)

Deadline for submission is the 15th day of the month preceding publication (i.e., December 15 for the January issue).

SO . . . You're Going to Pass the Torch

by Audrey Brekel, CALSS Parliamentarian

So . . . it's time to think about officers for the new year for both the local affiliates and the state association and plans are being made to pass the torch of leadership. How do you find members willing and able to run for office? How do you keep members and officers enthusiastic?

Members are more likely to serve if they feel informed and competent to do the job. What can you do to make a potential officer feel more comfortable about running for office? A few suggestions are (and feel free to come up with some of your own!):

- Schedule a group training or information session hosted by the outgoing officers for members who think they may want to run for office. Potential officers would have the opportunity to ask questions and find out what is expected of a particular officer.
- Talk one-on-one with a member, encourage him/her to run for office and explain the duties and time commitment necessary to fulfill the duties.
- Get a small group together and practice conducting meetings, taking minutes, and writing and giving officer or committee reports.
- After the election and installation, schedule training or information sessions between the outgoing officer and the new officer – go over the files, explain the duties, share what worked and what didn't work over the past year, answer questions, discuss the duties and procedures, etc. However, be careful to not be negative – just because something didn't work 10 years ago doesn't mean you can't try it again!
- Keep in mind that just because you might do something differently than those that came before you (or those that will follow you) doesn't mean that you are wrong and they are right (or you are right and they are wrong) – there are different ways to get the job done.
- Mentor your newer members – keep them informed, keep them active in the organization, keep them interested in what is going on, get them excited about taking on a leadership role.
- Keep in mind that new members may not know everything about the organization like you do because of your 25+ years of membership!

By taking the time and making the effort to train incoming officers, the transition at the beginning of a fiscal year will be seamless!

Do your local chapter in general and/or your officers in particular feel burned out? How can you keep this from happening?

- Take a look at your meetings. Can you streamline the meetings so they don't take so long?
- Are two or three of your members doing everything all the time, year after year? Take the time to get *everyone* involved and take the burden and stress away from those willing to do whatever it takes to keep an organization functioning!
- Take a look at your committees. Are they necessary? Are they fluff? Could you dispense with some of the committees with no detriment to the organization?
- Take a look at the duties of your officers and committee chairmen. Is the workload overwhelming? Could the duties of an officer or chairman be split between members? Do the officers and chairmen ask for help if they need it? Do members volunteer to assist an officer or chairman with projects?

An organization can only be as strong and successful as the members who are willing to give of their time, talents, and expertise. It also takes new ideas and a fresh perspective to keep the organization growing and thriving. Tap the resources of your members! ☞

Audrey Brekel is a past president and charter member of CALSS who currently serves as parliamentarian. Audrey has earned the reputation of parliamentary guru of the association, having written a number of articles and presented many seminars on the topic. Comments and questions may be directed to audrey.brekel@hro.com



Are Denver Courts Open During the DNC?

The word from Reba Nance, Director of Law Practice and Risk Management of the Colorado Bar Association, is that the Bar Association is working with the courts to get an official response approved and posted. In the meantime, the verbal answer is that Denver courts will be open for emergency filings only, and no hearings will be scheduled for that week. More information will be available from the Bar Association as it becomes available.

Timeless Tips on Becoming a Better Leader (Part 2 of 3)

by Cathy Hansen, PLS

Planning Tools

Good leadership skills depend on the use of leadership tools. The four tools discussed here are Goal Setting, Getting Organized, Delegating, and Decision Making.

1. **Goal Setting.** *If it isn't written, it isn't a goal!*

Goals are the outcomes you wish to achieve. Every successful leader has them. Properly established goals will allow you to move toward your vision. For this to occur, goals must:

- Be clearly stated and attainable.
- Be measurable.
- Be realistic.
- Have deadlines.
- Require prioritized action steps for each goal.
- Be revised and changed as necessary.
- Be big enough to challenge, but no so big as to overwhelm.

A good leader will always involve team members in goal setting. A team member cannot effectively and continuously strive toward someone else's goals. They must each have a personal stake in the goals. A leader must "own" the tools of his or her organization in order to attain them and motivate team members to accept and work toward achieving them.

In setting goals, the roles adopted by the team members and team leader place responsibility for performance on the team members. The leader can then concentrate on leading. These roles are outlined below.

| <u>Team Member</u> | <u>Leader</u> |
|---|---|
| Helps establish performance goals and standards. This is a "self contract" for achievement, as well as a commitment to deliver a result for the team. | Ensures team goals are achievable, but challenging enough to meet organizational needs and provide a sense of accomplishment. |
| Develops methods to measure results, and checks points for control purposes. | Helps balance the complexity of measures and controls with value received. |
| Outlines the action required to accomplish goals and standards. | Participates with the team to test the action plan's validity against other alternatives. |
| Specifies participation required from colleagues or in other units within the organization. | Reviews what cooperation and support is required and helps obtain it if required. |
| Reports progress as work is performed. Seeks guidance and assistance when needed. | Follows the progress of the work, reinforces achievement and assists in problem solving when indicated. |
| Adjusts plan as required. | Ensures targets are met or modified if circumstances so indicate. |

2. **Getting Organized.** *"Getting organized is not an end in itself; it is a means to get where you want to be."* Stephanie Winston, *The Organized Executive*

Time management is perhaps the most important part of getting organized. Following the ten commandments of time management listed below will allow you to get organized, leaving you more time to fulfill your leadership duties.

1. Plan your activities DAILY.
2. Do high priority actions FIRST.
3. Learn to delegate effectively.
4. Group similar activities to save time.
5. Learn how to handle interruptions efficiently.
6. Learn to say "NO" to noncritical tasks.
7. Eliminate inefficient habits.
8. Mark appointments, meetings, and deadlines on your calendar, and review it daily.
9. Do only those tasks that are appropriate for your position.
10. Learn the difference between "urgent" and "important."

3. **Delegating.** *Effective leaders keep a steady pace, expect the unexpected, know how to delegate for results, and don't waste other people's time.*

Effective delegation takes time, patience, and follow-up, but is well worth the effort. A leader who knows how to delegate wisely will stimulate commitment and energy among team members by allowing them to think like leaders.

Some opportunities to delegate arise when a leader (1) needs more time for his or her own duties; (2) wants to develop a member's potential by delegating an assignment and observing the results; or (3) needs to restructure responsibilities to handle a heavy workload. The project to be delegated should be carefully matched to the person chosen to perform the task, and all individuals involved in the project must be prepared for the change. Finally, the leader must follow up. Authority can be delegated, but responsibility cannot. As long as the leader is responsible, he or she must know how the project is progressing.

4. **Decision Making.** *Most decisions involve an element of risk or uncertainty. Good leaders are good decision makers, even when it means taking a risk.*

The following steps in the decision making process are taken by effective leaders.

- Identify available options before making the decision.
- Seek alternative options from team members.
- Encourage discussion of alternative options to stimulate creativity.

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The Grammar Queen: How Many Periods Do You Really Need?

by Darlene Johnson

When you put a period at the end of a sentence, that means it's over. Finished. Kaput. Right?

Yes, that is correct, but recently an assistant (let's call her Joan) to an attorney asked me what happens if there is a period at the end of the sentence that is functioning as something else — should you then add another period to end the sentence? Her attorney insisted that a second period should be added. I insist that it should not.

Here's an example: "I work for the I.R.S." In this sentence, the last period is actually acting in its capacity as punctuation for an abbreviation. The "I" has one; the "R" has one; and the "S" has one. In this situation, Joan's attorney would insist on writing it this way: "I work for the I.R.S.." But I say, "What is that — two-thirds of an ellipsis?"

Punctuation is supposed to help clarify writing and make written communication easier on the reader. If the reader has to stop to figure out what your punctuation means, it's probably not doing its job in the right way.

As an aside, I spoke with Joan after our conversation, and she said her attorney still insists on adding a period. I suggested that the best thing to do when this situation comes up again might be to rewrite or rework in order to avoid it altogether: "I work for the I.R.S., and I'm here to help you." ☞

Darlene Johnson is the Managing Editor at Continuing Legal Education in Colorado, Inc. When she's not busy making sure all the i's are dotted and the t's crossed, Darlene enjoys baking scones and spending time with her husband and daughter. Please send your grammar questions to Darlene at djohnson@cohar.org.



Articles Wanted for *De Novo*

De Novo is currently seeking legal educational articles for the September 2008 issue. Submission deadline is August 15. Articles should be two to four pages in length, and should be submitted in Word (.doc) or Rich Text (.rtf) format. Questions may be directed to Cathy Hansen, *De Novo* Editor, at 303-965-8088 or cathy.hansen@qwest.com.

Thanks for your support!

Timeless Tips (continued from page 4)

- Test each option against the situation.
- Identify the individual(s) who will assume responsibility for taking the action decided upon.
- Build feedback mechanisms into the decision so its effectiveness can be assessed.
- Make the decision.

Leaders Are Problem Solvers

Problem-solving is the act of getting from where you are to where you want to be.

Even the best leaders often come up against difficulties in solving problems. The following eight steps can be helpful in effective problem-solving.

1. Accept the problem as an opportunity to improve a situation.
2. Solicit the perceptions of those affected and identify differences.
3. Define the problem as specifically as possible.
4. Analyze why the problem exists, obtain facts, and identify barriers to resolution.
5. Brainstorm possible solutions.
6. Set criteria for ultimate solution.
7. Select solution that best meets criteria.
8. Make decision and install means to measure the outcome.

Strong leaders must also be proficient at conflict resolution. Seven steps to resolving conflict are:

1. Schedule a meeting with the other party to discuss the situation.
2. When you meet, initiate a discussion that acknowledges there is a conflict.
3. Use "I" statements to avoid accusations. Encourage the other party to also use "I" statements.
4. Ask direct questions that require the other party to talk about the situation.
5. Repeat what you hear (*i.e.*, "Based upon what you've told me, this is how you see the situation."). This is an excellent way to confirm that you understand what you hear.
6. Tell the other party what you want as an outcome and ask what the other party wants.
7. Agree to work toward a resolution, and schedule a follow-up meeting, if necessary.

Difficult people are everywhere. They can be negative, irritating, seemingly impossible to manage, and create stress for everyone around them. Learning to identify and deal with different personality types is a must for a good leader.

- *Attackers* assert their views forcefully. They require people to listen to what they say. They need room and time to blow off steam. Address them quietly by name, and discuss the problem. Do not counter-attack.
- *Egotists* also assert themselves, but unlike attackers, they may be "subject experts." Show honest respect for their knowledge, but don't be intimidated. *(continued on page 7)*

Exposed (continued from page 1)

2. The firm’s malpractice is on the line.

Attorneys are responsible for the actions of their staff and can be held legally accountable for a breach of ethics by a staff member.¹

3. A professional firm will have professional staff. If potential or existing clients witness a breach of confidentiality, they’ll walk away. They don’t want that happening to them.

In my opinion, there’s a big “disconnect” regarding this issue in firms. How do staff find out about the ethics rules? Some attend educational meetings at their local legal association (www.texasalp.org lists local chapters). Unfortunately, less than 5 percent of legal staff join associations and are educated on these issues. What about the other 95 percent – do some of them work at your firm?

What Can You Do?

Every firm should train staff on legal ethics (particularly confidentiality), the unauthorized practice of law, conflicts of interest, and insider information. There are training resources that make it very easy. One of the best and most cost-effective is an online course offered through TexasBarCLE that is written especially for staff. Find “Legal Ethics for Support Staff” by going to www.texasbarcle.com and clicking the “Online Staff Training” button.

At the very least, all offices should post ethical guidelines for staff that can be reviewed at any time and be used as a reminder. Some of the basics:

- Lawyers are paid to keep secrets. That means staff, too.
- Everyone’s job includes not revealing confidential information.
- “Confidential information” is broadly defined as any information learned within the purview of the attorney-client relationship.

- When communicating in writing on a legal matter, put your title (i.e., “Legal Assistant for John Doe”).
- When talking on the phone with a client, expressly state your role.
- Don’t ever refer to yourself as a lawyer or imply that you might be one by your silence.
- Do not fall into the trap of helping friends with legal documents.
- If a client asks for legal advice, respond with “I cannot give legal advice and I will have the attorney contact you as soon as possible.”

You can assess your firm’s risk by taking the “Confidentiality Quiz” at www.legallylarge.com/exposure. The site includes an ethics poster that can be displayed with other employee notices on your bulletin board, and you can find information about a webinar being offered by the Lawyer Referral Service of Central Texas on supervising an ethical staff.

Plan for the future and train your staff in legal ethics. Make your staff that informed 5 percent and leave the 95 percent exposure to your competition. ☺

Endnote:

¹ Tex. Disciplinary R. Prof. Conduct, 5.03 Responsibilities Regarding Nonlawyer Assistants. Additionally, Comment 1 states that “a lawyer should give assistants appropriate instruction and supervision concerning the ethical aspects of their employment The measures employed in supervising non-lawyers should take account of the fact that they do not have legal training and are not subject to professional discipline.”

Nickie Hyde owns Legally Large, a training and consulting firm specializing in the business of practicing law. For more information, visit www.legallylarge.com

Words to Live By . . .

- Wherever you are, be there.
- Expect the best; plan for the worst.
- When you miss the target, never in history has it been the target’s fault.
- Live life as if you were an exclamation point.
- Never confuse what you CAN do with what you WILL do.
- Remember the “Hole Principle.” When you find yourself in one, stop digging!
- When it quits being fun – quit!
- Never be dull.
- Make other people feel important.
- Be on time. Start on time. Stop on time.
- Your best is good enough.
- Buy things from little kids.

Excerpted from The Little Red Book of Stuff That Works
Larry H. Winget

Timeless Tips (continued from page 5)

- *Sneaks* take “pot shots” and often use sarcasm as a weapon. Confront them with direct questions and positive reinforcement.
- *Victims* see everything negatively; they act powerless and defeated, often whining about everyone and everything. Ask them what they think they can do to improve their situation.
- *Negators* are usually suspicious of those in authority and believe that their way of doing things is the only way. Appoint them to positions of *some* authority; make it clear, however, who is ultimately in charge!
- *Super-agreeable* people have such a strong need to be liked that they do whatever you request at the expense of their own needs. They will over-commit and often disappoint and frustrate everyone. Be understanding, and show respect for those who resign.
- *Unresponsive* people are the most difficult to manage; they are seemingly impossible to draw out. Try to pull them out by meeting them one-on-one.

Coaching and counseling are also important aspects of leadership. Coaching is a *directive* process by a leader to train and orient a team member to the realities of the organization and to help the member remove barriers to optimum performance; counseling is a *supportive* process by a leader to help a team member define and work through personal problems that affect performance. There are many benefits to be gained from the use of counseling—productivity is improved when team members feel they are listened to and supported; turnover is reduced when members feel they can vent their thoughts and feelings and deal with problems openly and constructively; leaders are often forewarned of resistance or problems that may occur later; efficiency of organization is increased when the leader understands the motives, needs, and reactions of each team member; team conflict is reduced and self-esteem preserved when parties are really listened to; and decision-making is improved when everyone’s ideas are heard and their strengths and abilities complimented.

Problem-solving, especially conflict resolution, can leave leaders stressed, and sometimes angry. Try some of the following tips to relieve anger and stress.

To relieve anger:

- Admit your angry feelings to yourself.
- Take deep breaths to calm yourself.
- If you begin to lose control, “drop” a pen or pencil, and regain your composure as you bend to retrieve it.
- Take a break and do something physically vigorous or highly creative. Physical or mental exercise helps to dissipate your anger.

- Prepare to confront the person or situation that caused your anger. Once things are “aired,” they usually improve.

Stress busters:

- Be present.
- Grow, or let go.
- Don’t let tension build up.
- Remember that your life isn’t your job (or your association).
- Expand your world.
- At work:
 - Take short breaks.
 - Add variety to your duties.
 - Develop a support system.
 - Keep yourself detached.
 - Develop positive work habits.
 - Encourage positive feedback.
- At home:
 - Develop leisure interests.
 - Maintain personal relationships.
 - Leave your work at the office.
 - Keep physically fit.
 - Talk and play with loved ones.
 - Encourage open communication.

The final installment in this series will cover Developing Personal Leadership. ☺

Cathy Hansen is a Certified Professional Legal Secretary, a CALSS charter member and current Bulletin Chairman. Employed in the legal field for more than 35 years, Cathy’s experience includes working as a legal secretary, word processing supervisor, and judicial secretary. She is currently an executive administrative assistant supporting the Public Policy Department at Qwest Corporation. Cathy’s seminars and articles have covered topics such as leadership, humor in the workplace and stress/time management. Although this leadership series was originally written more than 12 years ago, Cathy believes these tips are as true today as they were in 1995! Comments and questions may be directed to cathy.hansen@qwest.com.



(Picture taken by co-worker and labeled “Cathy with her ‘Are you nuts?!’ look.”)

SPECIAL CALSS ANNUAL MEETING SECTION

CALSS Annual Meeting To Be Held in Boulder

The Colorado Association of Legal Support Staff (CALSS) will hold its Twelfth Annual Meeting & Educational Conference at the Boulder Broker Inn in Boulder, Colorado, September 12 and 13, 2008. The theme of the event is "The Midnight Hour."

The conference seminars are "Employee Issues in Today's Workplace" presented by Jean Farrington from Waste Management and "Where Are They Now? Finding People Who Don't Want To Be" presented by Private Investigator Ryan Ross. CLE credits have been applied for.

For more information, contact Ann Salek at 303-832-1900 ext. 114, or asalek@klmtaxlaw.com.

CALSS was incorporated as a Colorado non-profit organization in 1996. The Association is dedicated to furthering the knowledge of the law and upholding its honor and dignity, furthering the professional interests of legal support staff, establishing good fellowship among members, promoting and encouraging a spirit of loyalty and cooperation between employer and employee, and promoting a high standard of ethics among members.

For more information about the Association, visit www.calss.org. ☞

The Colorado Association of Legal Support Staff Twelfth Annual Meeting and Educational Conference 101

by Audrey Brekel, CALSS Parliamentarian

The Twelfth Annual Meeting and Educational Conference of the Colorado Association of Legal Support Staff (CALSS) will be held on September 13, 2008, at the Broker Inn in Boulder and hosted by the Mile High Association of Legal Support Staff (MHALSS). Theme for this year's event will be "The Midnight Hour." As a CALSS member, you may have questions about the purpose of an annual meeting, why you should attend, what happens during the weekend, and what your rights are as a member. This article will answer some of those questions! The first thing you should know is that by virtue of your membership you are entitled to attend the annual meeting and educational conference and you are encouraged to do so!

Anatomy of the Weekend

The annual meeting weekend begins with registration around noon on Friday. Two seminars are scheduled for the afternoon with a break between. Extra time is provided around registration and the break for you to visit the vendors. Each meeting has a variety of vendors – in the past we've had crafts to Mountain Man goodies to pampering items to lending institutions to court reporters to jewelry and beyond!

Friday evening is a time for fun and getting to know each other on a personal level. Come to the dinner and social event ready to have a grand time!

Saturday morning starts with a breakfast before the business meetings. Again, another time to socialize and chat with your old and new friends!

Business meetings are the main event on Saturday morning. Both the annual meeting (ending the prior fiscal year) and the first board meeting of the new fiscal year

are held. More information concerning each meeting is below.

Saturday afternoon is free time for you to shop, read, take a nap, hang out with your friends, or whatever you want to do.

Saturday evening is the banquet to wrap up the weekend. The evening begins with a social hour and then dinner. After dinner there is entertainment, the Outstanding Member award is presented, the outgoing president presents the gavel to the incoming president, etc.

Saturday Morning Meetings: Annual Meeting

The term "annual meeting" refers to a regular, periodic meeting designated by the bylaws as the annual meeting. The annual meeting is the meeting in which members hear the annual reports of officers and committee chairmen, elect officers, and perform other once-a-year business. The CALSS Annual Meeting is held at the end of the fiscal year.

In July or August of each year, your local chapter and the members-at-large (as a group) will elect three delegates and three alternate delegates. For purposes of this article, the members-at-large will be included in the reference to a local chapter. A maximum of three delegates from your local chapter holds the vote of your chapter on any matter to come before the meeting. In the event one or more of the elected delegates cannot attend the meeting, or for some reason need to leave the room during the meeting, one of the alternate delegates takes the place of the delegate (again, not exceeding three people). One delegate holds one vote. If your chapter has

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CALSS Annual Meeting 101 (continued from page 8)

only one delegate at the annual meeting, you are entitled to only one vote.

When your delegates and alternates arrive at the meeting room, they will check in with Credentials. The Credentials chairman will usually be located near the entrance to the room. After checking in with Credentials, your delegates and alternates have the right to participate in the business of the annual meeting. If you are not a delegate or an alternate, you do not need to check in with Credentials. The parliamentarian will also meet with the delegates and alternates prior to the start of the annual meeting to go over procedures during the meeting and answer any questions that they may have.

Even though the delegates hold the vote for your local chapter, all members can attend an annual meeting because they are members of CALSS by virtue of their membership in a local chapter. In fact, any member attending the annual meeting has the right to bring an issue before the meeting, ask questions, make and second motions, and enter into discussion. However, only delegates have the right to vote on any issue. To assist the president in knowing who the delegates are and counting votes when needed, the three delegates from your local chapter sit in a specially-designated area at the front of the room.

The delegates are representatives of the local chapter as a whole. For all issues to be voted on at the annual meeting, the delegates should vote as the entire membership of their local chapter would want – not how that individual delegate might personally feel about an issue.

If an issue requiring a vote is brought before the meeting and the delegates are unsure of how they should vote or if the members of the local chapter would like to discuss an issue before the vote is taken, a caucus can be requested. A caucus is a meeting of a group of persons (the local chapter) belonging to the same organization (CALSS) to decide how they wish to vote on an issue. A caucus usually lasts less than five minutes.

The usual business that will come before an annual meeting is election of officers for the next fiscal year, selection of the site for the next annual meeting, election of the nominating committee for the next year (pursuant

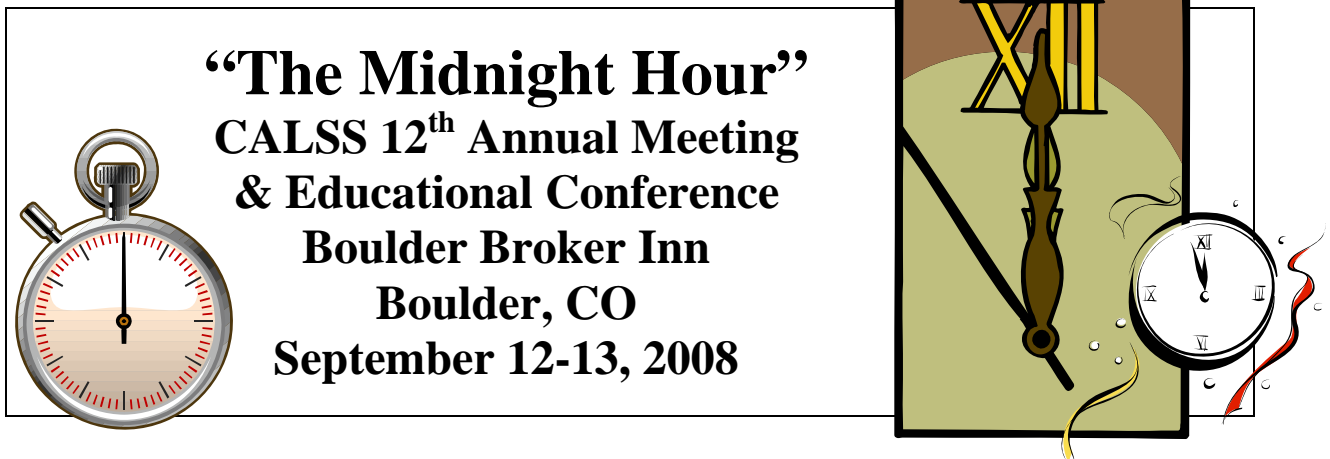
to the CALSS Bylaws the nominating committee is elected by the delegates – the president appoints all other committee chairmen), and reports from committee chairmen about accomplishments over the past year. The president will also appoint tellers to count the ballots during the election and site selection for the next annual meeting, as well as a timekeeper to make sure the meeting flows smoothly if discussion on an issue needs time limitations. Depending on the wishes of the incoming president, installation may also be held at the end of the annual meeting (the other alternative is that it is held during the Saturday evening banquet).

Saturday Morning Meetings: First Board Meeting

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the state association between annual meetings and consists of the elected and appointed officers of CALSS, one representative from each chapter, and one representative elected by the members-at-large. An alternate state representative may be designated by each local chapter and by the members-at-large for purposes of voting at any Board meeting if the elected state representative is unable to attend the meeting. As with any CALSS meeting, all members may attend board meetings. They also have the right to bring an issue before the meeting, ask questions, make and second motions, and enter into discussion. However, only the members of the Board have the right to vote on any issue.

The First Board Meeting of the new year is usually held after a short break from the annual meeting and is conducted by the incoming president for the next fiscal year. The usual business for the new year that will come before the First Board Meeting is announcement of the committee chairmen and parliamentarian, discussion and adoption of the budget, selection of sites for the second and third board meetings, and perhaps goals or announcements by the new chairmen.

Your attendance at the annual meeting weekend will give you insight as to how your state association works. While there is business to be conducted during the weekend, it is also a time to get energized for the new year! Also, you have the opportunity to help YOUR organization in its future direction! ☞



“The Midnight Hour”
CALSS 12th Annual Meeting
& Educational Conference
Boulder Broker Inn
Boulder, CO
September 12-13, 2008