



Gears of Law is provided by the Paralegal Student Association and sponsored by Student Life.

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GEARS OF LAW

October 2014

20 Questions

Each issue we are giving readers a glimpse into the lives and interests of legal professionals through a series of questions and answers (20 to be precise). Each issue will feature a different professional responding to the same 20 questions. This first installment of 20 questions features one of NHCC’s very own professors.

- 1. What is your name?** Carrie Vaia.
- 2. What is your title/position?** Faculty and Attorney.
- 3. What has been your largest success or achievement (academically or professionally)?** Being published in the Northwestern Reporter.
- 4. What is the biggest challenge you have faced in regards to the legal profession and how did you overcome it?** Being nervous when speaking in front of judges and classes. Experience.
- 5. Do you live by a motto? If so, what is it?** Keep a positive attitude.
- 6. What court case (either past or present) interests you the most? Why?** I like the cases of the Hairy Hand and the McDonald’s Hot Coffee because it illustrates damages and how different juries have the power to impute those damages on defendants.

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Punishment and Humility

By Nathanael Smith

While researching current trends in the legal field, I came across a surprising movement that is gaining ground in America that is changing how we execute punishment for crimes. Instead of sentencing convicts to jail time, judges throughout the United States are going back to a practice that was used a long time ago. According to a recent article by Don Claxton on midmissouri.com (powered by KRCG 13), the county of Belle, Missouri is going back to a form of punishment once used in Colonial Times: that is, public humiliation. Because of the vast number of people not showing up for court dates or paying fines on time, the county has instituted a new policy that gives each lawbreaker a choice. The accused can either go to jail or stand at a “corner of shame” holding a large sign for two hours.

According to an article from Law Vibe, Belle is not the only county trying a new form of punishment to hold offenders accountable for their actions to try to curb the number of repeat crimes. In Painesville, Ohio, a group of teens who called cops pigs had to stand with a pig on a busy street corner holding a sign that stated “this is not a cop.” And in another case, a man had to hold a sign that said “I stole mail. This is my punishment” outside a San Francisco post office after committing mail fraud.

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Want to Write for Gears of Law?

If you have something you would like to share for the next newsletter, please contact Nathanael Smith at nathanaelcsmith@gmail.com

So What is the Legal Studies Seminar?

By Mary Fenske

Every semester, students visit me to ask questions about the Legal Studies Seminar course, PLEG 2930, which is a course I teach both semesters and during the first summer session. The Legal Studies Seminar is a capstone course. Everything you have learned in your paralegal education comes together in this course. It is designed to be taken in the final semester of your education, so that you can apply what you have learned in an office setting. All students complete a portfolio that includes essays on the paralegal career and ethical situations, a resume and cover letter, revised legal research memos from Legal Research & Writing I and II, work samples from either student internships or practicum assignments, and six samples of coursework completed within the program as a whole, including at least one PowerPoint presentation.

Students in PLEG 2930 have the option of pursuing the internship tract or the practicum tract within the course. The internship choice requires students to obtain an internship on their own through networking opportunities, cold calling, and research. I offer suggestions to those looking for an internship, if needed. However, it is up to the student to send in a resume, complete the interview process, and obtain acceptance with the internship host site. Be aware that most internships do not turn into permanent jobs. However, you will be gaining valuable experience for your resume and, hopefully, an excellent reference for your job search.

Practicum students are those students who either have difficulty finding an internship or whose schedule or finances won't permit them to commit to the 150 hour, typically unpaid, internship requirement. The practicum tract requires students to complete assignments similar to those in a law office in the Paralegal Learning Lab. In addition, practicum students also benefit from hearing the experiences of those completing internships.

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Punishment and Humility Cont'd

With any form of punishment, critics (including offenders who have endured public humiliation) state that the sentence is harsh and unfair. However, proponents of the punishment have pointed out that each offender does have a choice in choosing which to suffer: jail or humiliation.

While the overall results of such experiments have yet to be seen, one county in Florida (Putnam County) has stated that only 3 of over 600 offenders sentenced to public humiliation have repeated their crime.

In Belle, the new policy has been tested once (as of September 20th) and the county hopes similar results to those in Putnam will be achieved.

If it all works out, we might see an increase in alternative forms of punishment in the future, perhaps even in Minnesota.

For more information, visit the full articles available at:

http://www.connectmidmissouri.com/news/story.aspx?id=1098348&hpt=ju_bn2#.VCA8FLsg-W
And <http://lawvibe.com/get-caught-stealing-and-face-public-humiliation/>

Current Events:

- Judge allows Detroit water shutdown to continue

<http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2014/09/29/3573249/detroit-water-shutoffs-rhodes-ruling/>

- Woman released from prison after 17 years from crime she didn't commit

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/10/susan-mellen_n_5968164.html

- Red Bull gives \$10 dollars to people who didn't "get wings"

<http://www.businessinsider.com/red-bull-settles-false-advertising-lawsuit-for-13-million-2014-10>

- Court strikes down Arizona's no bail law for immigrants

<http://www.abc15.com/news/state/court-tosses-arizonas-no-bail-law-for-immigrants>

- Woman sent to jail for failing to mow yard

<http://atlanta.cbslocal.com/2014/10/16/woman-sent-to-jail-for-overgrown-yard/>

- Houston demands pastors to turn over sermons

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/10/14/city-houston-demands-pastors-turn-over-sermons/>



The Legal Studies

Seminar

Information

Session is set for

November 21st,

2014



So What is the Legal Studies Seminar? Cont'd

The course consists of two types of classroom activities. We hold joint meetings between internship and practicum students where we discuss topics that relate to both groups. We also discuss what happens in a law office so that internship students can benefit from comparing their situations with other internship students and practicum students get to benefit from the office experience of the internship students. I also frequently bring in speakers on the various topics we discuss in class.

The other type of classroom activity is only for practicum students. During that time, we discuss various assignments that are similar to assignments students would receive in a law office and students complete the assignments while working in the Paralegal Learning Lab in CBT 101B.

The Spring 2015 Orientation Session will be held on November 21, 2014, from 1:30 -2:30 p.m. in CBT 179. Please plan on attending if you are registering for the Spring 2015 session of PLEG 2930. Another orientation will be held in April 2015 for Summer 2015 students.

At the orientation session, we discuss how to obtain an internship, I distribute the packet and syllabus, and I answer any questions. Please plan on attending the orientation session if you register for the course. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at mfenske@nhcc.edu or 763-488-0294.

20 Questions Cont'd

7. **What do you like most about Minnesota?** My family and bright and sunny Autumn days.
8. **What do you think the largest change for the legal profession will be in the future?** E-filing and other new technology.
9. **Describe yourself using three words:** I am kind, confident, and organized.
10. **What is/was your favorite subject in school?** English.
11. **Who is your biggest role model?** My Brother.
12. **Share something people would be surprised to know about you:** I have a Remington 1100, 12 gauge, automatic rifle that I use for trap shooting and hunting.
13. **What is the number one advice you would give to someone entering the legal profession?** Don't let the complexity and the workload make you give up. Keep taking one step in front of the other and you will make it through.
14. **What is your favorite movie?** Lincoln Lawyer, To Kill a Mocking Bird.
15. **If you only had one day left to live, what would you do?** Spend it with the ones I love.
16. **What is one goal you have for the future?** To be a better communicator.
17. **What is your favorite book?** I like books with threads of History in them.
18. **Which country would you like to visit the most if you were given the chance to?** Denmark.
19. **If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?** Forgive yourself for your mistakes. I am who I am because of those mistakes.
20. **If you could redo your career and start over, with the option of picking another career, would you redo it? Why or why not?** No. I love my profession.
- Bonus Question:**
21. **What area of law do you like the most (criminal law, probate law, contract law, family law, etc.) and why?** Appeals because it appeals to me. Haha haha.



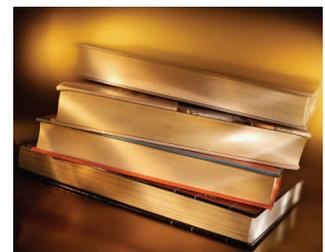
**North Hennepin Community College
7411 85th Ave Brooklyn Park MN 55445**

CONTACT US:

Nathanael Smith-Editor of Gears of Law
nathanaelcsmith@gmail.com

Textbook Advertising

In our upcoming issues, we are giving paralegal students the chance to advertise their used textbooks. If you would like to see your book featured in our next issue, please email Nathanael at nathanaelcsmith@gmail.com and provide your name, how you would like to be contacted (for example, by email or phone number), the price for the textbook(s), and the class (or classes) you used the book(s) in.



Paralegal Student Association Halloween Party



All Are Welcome!!

Thurs., Oct. 30, 2014

3:30 - 6:30 PM

LRC 104

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