

Administration Finance

e-communicqué

Spring 2005

From the Chair

By Helen Druce



The NABE year is flying by, having more than passed the mid-year meeting point! Thanks to ALL who participated in the Salt Palace Workshop and our A&F Section meeting. There was tremendous enthusiasm, plenty of pertinent information presented, and good ideas shared by our speakers, vendors, and participants.

Our Section meeting was well attended, and in fact, though there was no Hollywood style red carpet, the Stars were present, and the awards were given! With great appreciation we acknowledged the leadership for the workshop preparation and presentation with symbolic stars, which Trudy Levindofske secured,

for A&F members Greg Derwart (chair), Janis Jerman, Colleen McManus, and Charlie Lorenzetti, and to Jill Werner of the ABA Bar Services staff for their dedication, time and talent. The program reviews were glowing with such comments as “Great job—speakers & planners! The topics today were most relevant and helpful.”

Due to such interest, Colleen and Janis will be presenting at the Annual NABE meeting in Chicago in August, so watch for more A&F-related topics then.

I would encourage all members to pass along suggestions for speakers, articles, and topics since programs bloom with the richness of ideas. In fact, one such idea is developing, and that is the association software program, Bar Alliance, which many had the opportunity to observe.

Soon we'll be registering for the Chicago meeting and planning the A&F Section meeting. Please send

along suggestions and messages of interest since it's time for Fred Parker, past Section chair, to lead the annual Nominating Committee.

On that note and since I am last minute in writing this message, I have the distinct honor of giving a hearty cheer for Greg Derwart for his years of commitment to this A&F Section. His news today is that he is moving on to a very responsible position with the Maryland Transportation Authority. What a loss for the Maryland Bar, NABE, and, of course, the A&F Section, BUT an enormous gain for the MdTA. To quote Donna Fouste from her message to Greg, “We will really, really miss you and your ever-optimistic approach to everything!” It has been a delight to know Greg and to admire his accomplishments here, there, and now everywhere! Thank you, thank you, Greg, for all your contributions, one outstanding example being this publication. We will hope for at least an e-mail now and then.

Happy Spring to all!
Helen



Help Desk Stories

Tech Support: "I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop."

Customer: "Ok."

Tech Support: "Did you get a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "Ok. Right click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?"

Customer: "No."

Tech Support: "Ok, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?"

Customer: "Sure, you told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click'." (At this point I had to put the caller on hold to tell the rest of the tech support staff what had happened. I couldn't, however, stop from giggling when I got back to the call.)

Tech Support: "Ok, did you type

'click' with the keyboard?"

Customer: "I have done something dumb, right?"



Customer: "I'm having trouble installing Microsoft Word."

Tech Support: "Tell me what you've done."

Customer: "I typed 'A:SETUP'."

Tech Support: "Ma'am, remove the disk and tell me what it says."

Customer: "It says '[PC manufacturer] Restore and Recovery disk'."

Tech Support: "Insert the MS Word

setup disk."

Customer: "What?"

Tech Support: "Did you buy MS word?"

Customer "No..."



Customer: "Uhh...I need help unpacking my new PC."

Tech Support: "What exactly is the problem?"

Customer: "I can't open the box."

Tech Support: "Well, I'd remove the tape holding the box closed and go from there."

Customer: "Uhhhh...ok, thanks..."

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Find the Right Executive

The DBS Job Announcement Service (JAS) is the bar community's premium outlet for conducting an effective executive search, matching high-quality position ads with an audience of highly qualified candidates. The JAS is prompt, powerful, and fitted to your bar and your opening. Visit the JAS Web page at www.abanet.org/barserv/jobann.html for more information. To request an announcement, e-mail Michael Ward at wardm@staff.abanet.org.

DBS Corner

Section Leadership 2004-2005

Helen Druce, *Chair*
 Allen Kimbrough, *Vice-Chair*
 Greg Derwart, *Secretary*
 Trudy Levindofske, *Treasurer*

Council Members

Janis Jerman (2006)
 Yvonne McGhee (2006)
 Colleen McManus (2005)
 Dana Collier Smith (2005)
 Madonna Vandeventer (2005)

Fred Parker, *Immediate Past Chair*

What did she just say?

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Customer: "I'm having a problem installing your software. I've got a fairly old computer, and when I type 'INSTALL', all it says is 'Bad command or file name'."

Tech Support: "Ok, check the directory of the A: drive-go to A:\ and type 'dir'."

Customer reads off a list of file names, including 'INSTALL.EXE'.

Tech Support: "All right, the correct file is there. Type 'INSTALL' again."

Customer: "Ok." (pause) "Still says 'Bad command or file name'."

Tech Support: "Hmmm. The file's there in the correct place-it can't help but do something. Are you sure you're typing I-N-S-T-A-L-L and hitting the Enter key?"

Customer: "Yes, let me try it again." (pause) "Nope, still 'Bad command or file name'."

Tech Support: (now really confused) "Are you sure you're typing I-N-S-T-A-L-L and hitting the key that says 'Enter'?"

Customer: "Well, yeah. Although my 'N' key is stuck, so I'm using the 'M' key...does that matter?"



Customer: "I got this problem. You people sent me this install disk and now my A: drive won't work."

Tech Support: "Your A drive won't work?"

Customer: "That's what I said. You

sent me a bad disk, it got stuck in my drive, now it won't work at all."

Tech Support: "Did it not install properly? What kind of error messages did you get?"

Customer: "I didn't get any error message. The disk got stuck in the drive and wouldn't come out. So I got these pliers and tried to get it out. That didn't work either."

Tech Support: "You did what sir?"

Customer: "I got these pliers, and tried to get the disk out, but it wouldn't budge. I just ended up cracking the plastic stuff a bit."

Tech Support: "I don't understand sir, did you push the eject button?"

Customer: "No, so then I got a stick of butter and melted it and used a turkey baster and put the butter in the drive, around the disk, and that got it loose. Then I used the pliers and it came out fine. I can't believe you would send me a disk that was broke and defective."

Tech Support: "Let me get this clear. You put melted butter in your A: drive and used pliers to pull the disk out?"

At this point, I put the call on the speaker phone and motioned at the other techs to listen in.

Tech Support: "Just so I am absolutely clear on this, can you repeat what you just said?"

Customer: "I said I put butter in my A: drive to get your crappy disk out, then I had to use pliers to pull it out."

Tech Support: "Did you push that little button that was sticking out

when the disk was in the drive, you know, the thing called the disk eject button?"

Silence.

Tech Support: "Sir?"

Customer: "Yes."

Tech Support: "Sir, did you push the eject button?"

Customer: "No, but you people are going to fix my computer, or I am going to sue you for breaking my computer?"

Tech Support: "Let me get this straight. You are going to sue our company because you put the disk in the A: drive, didn't follow the instructions we sent you, didn't actually seek professional advice, didn't consult your user's manual on how to use your computer properly, instead proceeding to pour butter into the drive and physically rip the disk out?"

Customer: "Ummmm."

Tech Support: "Do you really think you stand a chance, since we do record every call and have it on tape?"

Customer: (now rather humbled) "But you're supposed to help!"

Tech Support: "I am sorry sir, but there is nothing we can do for you. Have a nice day."

Newton's Laws of Accounting

1. For every accountant, there is an equal and opposite accountant.
2. Both of them are wrong.

April Fools . . . Some of the More Ridiculous Things Employees Have Said

By Colleen J. McManus

Have you ever been in a situation with an employee when he or she says something just incredulous? Here are some of my favorites . . .

Ever Creative

There was an employee with a chronic attendance problem. She called out frequently due to her health, car problems, having to care for sick children (who were adults themselves . . .), an aging pet, and just about any other reason one can imagine. She called in on two occasions to say that her car was “trapped” in her garage by an inoperable garage door opener. Apparently, she had not figured out how to manually open the door . . . The most creative reason she ever gave for an absence, however, was one day when she called out saying that there had been a fire at a house down the street and the Fire Department had advised all of the neighbors that the road was just too wet to safely navigate. Note: she did not live on a cul-de-sac.

Gimme That Old Time Religion

I once worked for an organization that hired dispatchers to work around the clock, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. Applicants went through an intensive screening and testing process that included their submission of a statement reflecting their understanding of the work schedules and requirements. No

sooner had we hired an individual and scheduled him to work weekends, when he informed us that due to his religion, he was unable to work from sundown on Friday to sundown on Sunday. He further said he was prohibited from working all religious and public holidays.



As we were unfamiliar with any formalized religion that had these particular requirements, we asked the name of the religion in which he participated. He said, “It’s my own religion.” He was terminated for his inability to work the required schedule and his untruthfulness about his availability during the selection process.

This is not the end of the story, though. The former employee filed a charge of religious discrimination with the EEOC. Despite the fact that he did not participate in a formal religion, as well as the fact that he had, in writing, acknowledged his availability to work the required schedule, the EEOC found that the organization had discriminated against this individual on the basis of his religion. He was reinstated as a dispatcher with the kind of preferred Monday through Friday schedule that one earned only after several years on the job. Once word

got around, several other dispatchers found their own religions!

Never Mind

I worked in the Human Resources office of a savings and loan many years ago. I was processing payroll when I received a call from a manager at one of the branch offices. Sounding surprised that I had answered the phone, she said, “Oh, Colleen, I didn’t expect to reach you.” I asked her why she seemed so surprised, when she blurted out, “I thought they would have evacuated all of you by now!” I asked her what she was talking about and she said, “Oops – never mind,” and abruptly hung up the phone. I was really puzzled by this, until the radio subsequently announced that the savings and loan had received a bomb threat, and the bomb squad was on the scene! The bomb was a very small one that had been used in conjunction with a robbery, and it was safely detonated by the professionals on-site. They had evacuated the first floor, but opted to not evacuate the rest of



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Say What?

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the building so as to not create a panic or place people closer to danger while they were working with the bomb. Too bad our branch manager could not have been more professional in her handling of the situation.

Be Careful What You Ask For

A department director wanted to challenge the performance evaluation he received from his Assistant Executive Director (AED). We called a meeting of the department director, the AED, the Executive Director, and me, the Human Resources Director. The director came to the meeting and, in a rather smug and righteous fashion, challenged the AED to justify the ratings she had given him. I stated that the evaluation had provided supporting documentation for the supervisory ratings and asked the employee what he had to discuss or provide to justify any higher ratings. He had come prepared to challenge his boss, but being asked to make a case of his own seemed to catch him really off-guard.

The director said he had been downgraded for not having submitted an annual work plan to the AED. He looked the AED in the eye and, in an indignant tone, assured her that he had submitted this plan to her some time ago. He further said that if her organizational skills were better, she would “keep better tabs on these kinds of things.” I asked him for a

copy of the plan, and he responded that he would provide us with copies later in the day. I then said we’d wait while he retrieved it. He disappeared for about 15 minutes and when he returned, he stammered that he wasn’t able to get to the document because it was in a locked file cabinet. He noted that his assistant, who was out ill, was the only one who knew where the keys were kept. We asked him to call the assistant at home to ask where we might find the keys. After another several minutes, he reported back that she had the keys at home with her.

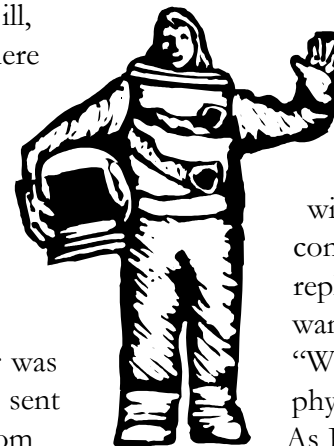
Suspecting that the director was being evasive or untruthful, we sent a courier to retrieve the keys from the assistant. We met with the director later that day, provided the keys, and asked him to retrieve the file. Not surprisingly, he couldn’t find the document in question. He explained that he must have taken it home with him and offered to provide it to us the following week. The next week, he provided the document and asked how quickly his performance evaluation ratings would be changed. A quick check of our computer systems reflected that the director had produced the work plan over the weekend, following the meeting with the AED to discuss his performance ratings. His ratings were changed, alright, and his employment was terminated.

Up, Up and Away

When reflecting on my dealings with applicants, I think of several

interesting interactions. Here are just two:

One applicant came into the HR office with a completed application. He had written the word “structure” all over the blank spots on the application form, but had left the position applying for section blank.



Going through the motions, I asked him what position for which he wished to be considered, and he replied that he wanted to be “Wisconsin’s first physicist in space.” As I have never worked for a space

agency, I gently explained that he may wish to consult with other possible employers regarding this type of career opportunity.

Another applicant who was very well-groomed and professional in her demeanor was interviewing with me as a first step in a selection process for a sales and marketing position. During the interview, she expressed to me that she wasn’t so much interested in the position for which she was being interviewed. Rather, she said it was her intention to have my job.

There are some days when I really wonder . . .

Colleen McManus, SPHR, is the Senior Director of Human Resources for the State Bar of Arizona.

Funny Performance Reviews

These quips have been taken from actual performance reviews. Rumor has it that some of the reviews were of federal employees.

“Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.”

“This employee is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won’t be.”

“Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.”

“He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.”

“This young lady has delusions of adequacy.”

“He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.”

“This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.”

“This employee should go far, and the sooner he starts, the better.”

“Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together.”

“A gross ignoramus – 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.”

“He certainly takes a long time to make his pointless.”

“I would like to go hunting with him sometime.”

“He would argue with a signpost.”

“He brings a lot of joy whenever he leaves the room.”

“When his IQ reaches 50, he should sell.”

“A photographic memory but with the lens cap glued on.”

“Donated his brain to science before he was done using it.”

“Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn’t coming.”

“If he were any more stupid, he’d have to be watered twice a week.”

“If you give him a penny for his thoughts, you’d get change.”

“If you stand close enough to him, you can hear the ocean.”

“It’s hard to believe that he beat out 1,000,000 other sperm.”

“Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled.”

“Takes him an hour and a half to watch 60 Minutes.”

“The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.”

“His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity.”

“I would not allow this employee to breed.”

“This employee is really not so much of a has-been but more of a definite won’t be.”

“He’s been working with glue too much.”

“A prime candidate for natural deselection.”

Funny how? I mean, funny like I’m a clown? I amuse you? I make you laugh? I’m here to amuse you? How da’ “heck” am I funny? What da’ “heck”



is so funny about me? Tell me, tell me what’s funny.

Signing Off . . .

I learned a long time ago that the best way to improve yourself is to surround yourself with people better than you. And that’s exactly what I did when I chose to rub shoulders with the individuals in this venerable group. Before I close this wonderful chapter in my professional journey, I would be remiss not to thank each and every one of you for your sharing of knowledge and advice, and more importantly your camaraderie and friendship.

A great man once said, “I’m not one for looking back. I figure there will be plenty of time for that when I get old. But rather, what I take from the past is inspiration for the future.” Please know that I take your friendships with me, and that gives me the ability to face my future with confidence.

God bless you,
Greg

Trouble sleeping

An auditor is having a hard time sleeping and goes to see his doctor. “Doctor, I just can’t get sleep at night.” “Have you tried counting sheep?” “That’s the problem - I make a mistake and then spend many hours trying to find it.”