



## President's Message

Our Fourth Annual VIP Event is fast approaching! This year, the Board, in collaboration with the Vendor Committee, has decided to sponsor the Spring bowling event to benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska. The Alaska ALA Board and Members will team up with our Business Partners and with our firms' Managing Partners and participate in the Bowl For Kids' Sake fundraising campaign, which culminates in a **Bowling Celebration Event on Saturday, April 24th, at Jewel Lake Bowl.**

This event will provide an excellent opportunity to spend quality time with our Business Partners who have generously supported and continue to support Alaska ALA's education programs and scholarships. Whether or not you know how to bowl, it's fun! And what better way is there to get to know our Business Partners than by having fun with them? I can't think of a better way, and I hope you agree, too!

Our participation will also give us an opportunity to help raise funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska, a volunteer and donor supported organization that helps children aged 6-17 reach their potential

through professionally-supported, one-to-one relationships with proven results. Kids with a "Big" are far more likely to avoid drugs, alcohol, or skipping school; they also report higher levels of self confidence and better relationships with their families.

So, please put this event on your calendars: **April 24th – Jewel Lake Bowl.** Here are some of the details:

- Each team will have five bowlers
- The five bowlers will consist of Alaska ALA members paired with Business Partners and Managing Partners
- Each Alaska ALA member who is bowling will have a goal of raising a minimum of \$100 in pledges to bowl
- We will not have a Chapter meeting in April, so we are asking that each member contribute their \$24 lunch fee to this cause (see how easy it is to raise money? Only \$76 to go to reach your goal J)
- Please note: tax deductible pledges can be done online!
- Each Managing Partner bowling

must contribute a minimum of \$100 to bowl

Additional details are also posted on the BBBS website at: [www.bbbs.org/bowlak](http://www.bbbs.org/bowlak). Please check it out! I understand fabulous prizes will be awarded, including a cruise and Alaska Airlines tickets. **We are planning to award our own prizes as well, including a \$150 VISA credit card for the Alaska ALA Member who raises the most donations.** We'll also have prizes for the highest score, the lowest score, and more! So, please come and join the fun!

Dawn Gray, Jenny Haldane, and I are working hard at putting this event together and we are committed to making it a success. ***Remember, this occasion is the kick-off event of the benefits we are offering our Business Partners in 2010 -- your participation is critical to the success of our 2010 Business Partner Program.*** Here's the level of benefits we're offering each Business Partner for this event:

**Denali Partner:** Four (4) partner representatives receive complimentary

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## POINTS OF INTEREST

- ◆ Community Challenge Weekend
- ◆ New Member Profile: Angie Miller
- ◆ An Update on Lawyer Trust Account Scams

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## President's Message—cont'd

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attendance

**Platinum Partners:** Three (3) partner representatives receive complimentary attendance

**Gold Partners:** Two (2) partner representatives receive complimentary attendance

**Silver Partners:** One (1) partner representatives receive complimentary attendance

**Bronze Partners:** One (1) partner representatives receive complimentary attendance

Please join us in getting started in this joint effort of

fundraising and showing our Business Partners how much we value their ongoing support of Alaska ALA!

Thank you for your help and participation in this **very important event!**

~Karen

**P.S.** We don't have specific times for bowling, yet – I have learned, though, that each team will bowl for one hour, and all of our teams will be scheduled to bowl at the same time. We are putting together an after-bowling get-together

for everyone -- more details to come. Again, thank you! Looking forward to having some fun with you, our Managing Partners, and our Business Partners!

President  
**Karen Ponsness**  
Stoel Rives LLP  
263-8409



## Chapter Meeting Minutes

Alaska ALA Chapter  
Meeting  
January 19, 2010  
Orso Restaurant

The monthly meeting was called to order by President Karen Ponsness at 12:00pm. Twenty members and one guest speaker attended. The speaker was Jason Pierce, CPA from Mikunda Cottrell.

Karen introduced the newest member of our Chapter, Angie Miller from Walker and Eakes. Also noted in attendance today is a member retiring, Kathy Waggoner.

Karen reminded the members that membership renewals are due January 31 in order to receive the discounted rate from ALA

and Alaska ALA.

There has been a change from the wording Vendor Partner to Business Partner.

Karen announced that there will be no VIP luncheon this year. Instead, we will participate in the Bowl for Kids' Sake to benefit Big Brothers/Big Sisters. We will pair up with our Business Partners to bowl and help raise money for Big Brothers Big Sisters. The event will be held April 24. More information will follow at a later date.

Karen reminded us that registration is due before January 20 to save \$100 for ALA's Law Firm Financial Management Conference & Exposition in

Carefree, Arizona February 18-20.

Advance registration and housing reservations for ALA's Annual Conference & Exposition are now underway. The Conference will take place May 3-6 at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center in Boston. Register online now or look for your Conference preview brochure that was mailed to all members in early January.

The Scholarship Program for the 2010 ALA Annual Conference & Exposition in Boston in May will have a winner announced shortly. Tanya Wood is the recipient of the scholarship awarded at our Fall

Education Conference.

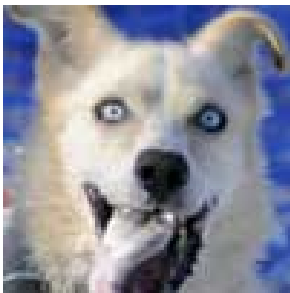
Today's speaker, Jason Pierce, gave a talk on "2010 Tax Update". He went over Estate Tax, Roth IRA Conversions, various Tax Acts, Small Businesses, Energy Efficiency, Estimated Tax Payments, Section 179 and Bonus Depreciation, Property, Gains Tax, and Rate Increases. He also had three different handouts for us to take. His talk was relevant to our Firms' or our personal tax situations.

The Hagen Insurance gift card drawings were won by Maureen Hunt and Janet Hite.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.

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*Welcome  
New  
Member  
Angie Miller,  
Walker & Eakes*



“Any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts.

ARNOLD BENNETT



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Karen D. Ponsness  
Steel Rives LLP  
Suite 500  
510 L St.  
Anchorage, AK 99501-1959

Dear Karen:

Thank you and congratulations to your chapter for participating in ALA's 11<sup>th</sup> annual Community Challenge Weekend (CCW). I'm pleased to report that 88 of 100 ALA chapters participated in CCW for 2009. That's an incredible accomplishment!

Again, we thank you for your support and look forward to your chapter's participation in this year's Community Challenge Weekend, October 8-10, 2010.

Sincerely,



Susan French Koran  
ALA President  
Fellers Snider Blankenship Bailey & Tippens, PC  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

encl.: Certificate



Presented to ALA's

## Alaska Chapter

In recognition of the great efforts you made to improve your communities and the lives of others.

Thank you for your dedication and participation during **ALA's 11th Annual Community Challenge Weekend – October 2009!**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan French Koran'.

Susan French Koran  
ALA President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Steven J. Carasso'.

Steven J. Carasso  
ALA CCW Leader

(Continued from page 2)

Cont'd from page 2

Note: On September 18, 2009, via an email poll, the Board approved \$500 for the purchase of door prizes for its November Educational Conference.

~Kathryn Crocker,  
Secretary




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### *Speaking of Scholarships...*

**CONGRATULATIONS GILLIAN HAVRILLA!** Gillian won the Alaska ALA points-based scholarship and has accepted it. She will soon be on her way with a full-ride scholarship to ALA's Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, at The John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, Boston, MA, May 3-6, 2010.

Joining Gillian in Boston will be TANYA WOOD, who won the Alaska ALA scholarship drawing held at our annual Fall Educational Conference in November.

And joining Gillian and Tanya will be JANET HITE, who won the Region 5 scholarship, which includes registration to the Boston conference and a \$400 stipend.

Again, congratulations Gillian, Tanya, and Janet!

And, again, THANK YOU to all our Business Partners who have so generously supported Alaska ALA and have made all of our wonderful educational scholarships possible!

*Alaska ALA Board*



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**Karen Ponsness**  
*Stoel Rives LLP*  
263-8409



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## *Upcoming Webinars*

Mark your calendars for these upcoming ALA webinars:

**March 17, 2010** Law Firm Innovation: Will You Lead or Follow? *Speakers: Gary and Catherine Mitchell of GEM Communications*

**April 21, 2010** Administrator's Role as Coach in a Multi-Generational Workplace *Speakers: Judy Hissong and Camille Grabowski*

**May 19, 2010** The Social Networking Revolution *Speaker: Ross Fishman*

**June 16, 2010** The Keys to Develop and Implement the Firm's Dreaded Strategic Plan *Speaker: John Remsen*

**July 21, 2010** Legal Risks to Assessing Candidates by Social Network Sites *Speaker: Shelly Freeman, J.D., HROI*

**August 18, 2010** Law Firm Profitability Enhancement *Speaker: Richard Turnbow*

**September 15, 2010** Electronic Records Management: How to Manage your ESI in the 21st Century *Speaker: Dana Moore*

Remember, if four Alaska ALA members sign up, the chapter will sponsor the webinar. And, if you commit to attending the event and the chapter sponsors it, the fee is only \$20 (payable whether you actually attend or have to cancel at the last minute). The host attends for free -- in exchange for making the webinar reservation, providing the meeting space, and copying course materials for everyone.

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*New Member Profile: Angie Miller*

I've lived in Alaska since 1976.

I have worked for Walker & Eakes since July 2009.

I have been in the legal field since 1999. My main responsibilities are Office Administration/  
Billing.

The thing I like best about my job is that the firm partners reached out to me and gave me this opportunity for growth in a new aspect of the legal field.

The thing I like least about my job is I find the 'human resource' portion of my job a bit strenuous. That will wear off, right?

My idea of perfect happiness is always learning something new, never becoming stagnant.

I am the happiest when I am with my family doing the things we love.

My favorite stress reliever is riding snow machines with my husband and boys.

If I were not a legal administrator I'd be independently wealthy and decorating my chateau! Just kidding. I've always wanted to be a librarian.

My plans for the next 10 years are to grow with my firm and become established as the resident 'know-it-all'!

If I could change one thing about myself it would be to be less hesitant.

I joined ALA because I was told it is a great group and resource to administrators, especially new ones like me.

My most marked characteristic is punctuality. I most value in my friends honesty.

The best advice I've ever received from another legal administrator is to join ALA. Thanks,  
Dawn!

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Matthew Singer, Esq.  
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"...I wanted to pass along another great anecdote about the website. The firm was recently hired by a new client -- a Fortune 1000 corporation with some significant real estate holdings and big potential litigation in Anchorage. Its general counsel needed an Anchorage law firm and looked first to Martindale Hubbell and then to firm websites. He contacted Mark Melchert and told him that most of the other Alaska law firms had websites that looked like they hadn't been updated for 10 years. He thinks a website is a good indication that the firm "has it together" and our website was the reason he contacted us first..."

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## *ALPS: An Update on Lawyer Trust Account Scams*

By Mark Bassingthwaite, Esq.

*Note: In recent weeks, several more law firms have fallen prey to Internet scams that have resulted in quarter million dollar plus losses at each firm. Given this, the following updated blog post is shared here with the intent of helping the profession maintain a high level of awareness of these types of scams.*

Trust is a very good thing, particularly when properly balanced with a healthy bit of mistrust. This sentiment couldn't be truer than today when the "name of the game" in cybercrime is social engineering. While

tools such as firewalls or Internet security suites provide an effective layer of security, they fall short in protecting us from ourselves. In short, the best defense to a social engineered attack is to learn from past attacks and then couple the resulting insights with a healthy dose of social, and yes, professional mistrust. We must learn how to avoid becoming a victim. Why? Because when it comes to social engineering, our own trust, innocence and naivety is any scammer's most effective weapon.

Although the specific details of the scam attempt that you may see will differ, as that's the nature of social

engineering, there currently seems to be a common approach toward lawyers. Typically a lawyer is contacted by a potential client via e-mail. (Note that versions of this scam have also occurred over the phone.) This potential client will ask for the lawyer's assistance in the collection of a significant sum of money. The lawyer will usually ask for additional information in order to conduct a conflicts check and in many instances the information provided will check out. Some lawyers go even further and ask for documentation of the outstanding debt and this information may in fact be

(Continued from page 10) provided. Shortly thereafter, via an overnight mailing service, a check for a significant amount of money will arrive. The check will be payable to the lawyer/firm. The "client" will then contact the lawyer expressing an awareness of the check and ask (soon to become press) for a timely disbursement, of course, after the attorney has taken her well deserved share of the proceeds. Those lawyers who deposit said check into their trust account and timely forward the funds as instructed may soon be shocked to learn that they have been scammed as the check that came in was a forgery. To make matters worse, the bank will then turn around and debit the trust account for the amount the attorney authorized to be dispersed thereby shorting

any other clients who had money sitting in the attorney's trust account. Not good.

Already this approach has been engineered for and directed toward lawyers who do divorces, conduct real estate closings, and handle corporate collection matters. The approach will continue to evolve. Beyond just awareness of the scam, what can be learned? There are several valuable lessons. First, an obvious one -- there is a difference between funds being available for disbursement and funds being good. Even though the bank may have said the funds are available, this does not mean that the funds have actually been collected and are therefore good funds. The difference can easily be seven or more working days, which

is more than enough time for the scam to run its course. A real concern with some of the forged checks is that the bank routing number has been changed and will not match the name of the bank listed on the check. This alteration will further increase the time it will take for a check to bounce thereby giving scammers additional time to press for the funds.

Less obvious are the trust missteps. It is so easy to assume that the person who is on the phone or sending the email is who they say they are, particularly when names and contact information check out. For example, assume that you know me and we are meeting face to face. I can tell you that the woman accompanying me is my wife, but if you have never met her

(Continued on page 18)



*Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art...It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that give value to survival.*

C.S. Lewis

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## *Gold Partners—cont'd*

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## *Gold Partners—cont'd*

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## *Bronze Partners—cont'd*

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*Annette R. Cartier has 29 years of legal experience in Anchorage. Annette carries out temporary assignments to handle specific projects for law offices or manage civil and criminal cases for trial. She also has extensive real estate experience. Additionally, she also acts as a temporary replacement for legal staff. She has the skills and experience to take on any assignment with ease and confidence, on short-term notice. Annette's qualities include superior organizational skills, an eye for detail and the philosophy that the work product is a direct reflection of herself.*

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(Continued from page 11)

in person, how would you know for sure? It is worse when talking to someone on the phone or communicating via email. Blind acceptance that one is who they say they are can be a serious misstep.

One should also check out and confirm the details or specifics of each situation. For instance, get a copy of the court order and confirm that it is authentic. On your own, determine the contact information of the client who is owed the money or is sending the email asking for representation and verify the situation with the company or individual directly. Again, I can give you actual names and addresses and provide a phone number for you to call or a contact email in order to help you verify identities or the situation. If you trust that the number or email address that I've given you is accurate, you risk speaking to or exchanging email with an imposter.

Finally, be cautious with other people's money. The more pressure that is put on you to disburse funds, the more cautious you should be. Hold firm and never disburse the funds until the bank has verified that the funds have actually been collected and

are good funds. At the outset, inform the client of this policy and let them know that this can take at least seven business days and sometimes longer. If you have a concern over the deposited check, call the issuing bank and ask them if the check has been paid. The reason for this is that there are several steps that occur in the check clearing process. A check can clear locally but take a few more days to clear on the issuing bank's side. Don't get caught.

I have talked to many attorneys who say, "I would never fall for these kinds of scams. They're so easy to spot." Trust me, the folks who did get taken in felt the same way. I've talked with them. So, if you somehow find yourself a victim of these types of scams, immediately take steps to prevent harm to any clients who had funds in the trust account. You might do this replacing the stolen funds with a deposit to a new account at a different bank. Then make a report to the Internet Crime Complaint Center at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov) and to your local bar.

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*ALA Master Calendar*

|                       |  |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| <i>March 10, 2010</i> | <i>10 am</i>   | <i>Chapter Presidents and Presidents-Elect Conference Call</i>  |
| <i>March 10, 2010</i> | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Stoel Rives LLP</i>                  | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>   |
| <i>March 16, 2010</i> | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>  |
| <i>March 17, 2010</i> | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>ALA Webinar: Law Firm Innovation: Will You Lead or Follow? Speakers: Gary and Catherine Mitchell of GEM Communication</i>      |
| <i>April 14, 2010</i> | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>   |
| <i>April 20, 2010</i> | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>  |
| <i>April 21, 2010</i> | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>ALA Webinar: Administrator’s Role as Coach in a Multi-Generational Workplace. Speakers: Judy Hissong and Camille Grabowski</i> |
| <i>April 24, 2010</i> | <i>Time TBA<br/>Jewel Lake Bowl</i>                  | <i>Alaska ALA Members &amp; Business Partners Spring Bowling Event to Benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters</i>                        |
| <i>May 2, 2010</i>    |  | <i>ALA — Certified Legal Manager (CLM) Exam, Boston, MA (in conjunction with ALA's Annual Conference)</i>                         |
| <i>May 3-6, 2010</i>  |  | <i>ALA — Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, The John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, Boston, MA</i>      |
| <i>May 12, 2010</i>   | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>   |
| <i>May 18, 2010</i>   | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>  |
| <i>May 19, 2010</i>   | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>The Social Networking Revolution. Speaker: Ross Fishman</i>  |
| <i>June 9, 2010</i>   | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>   |
| <i>June 15, 2010</i>  | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>  |
| <i>June 16, 2010</i>  | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>The Keys to Develop and Implement the Firm’s Dreaded Strategic Plan. Speaker: John Remsen</i>                                  |
| <i>July 14, 2010</i>  | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>   |
| <i>July 20, 2010</i>  | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>  |

|                           |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| <i>July 21, 2010</i>      | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>Legal Risks to Assessing Candidates by Social Network Sites. Speaker: Shelly Freeman, J.D., HROI</i>                            |
| <i>August 11, 2010</i>    | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>  |
| <i>August 17, 2010</i>    | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>   |
| <i>August 18, 2010</i>    | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>Law Firm Profitability Enhancement. Speaker: Richard Turnbow</i>  |
| <i>September 8, 2010</i>  | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>  |
| <i>September 15, 2010</i> | <i>TBD</i>   | <i>Electronic Records Management: How to Manage Your ESI in the 21st Century. Speaker: Dana Moore</i>                              |
| <i>September 21, 2010</i> | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>   |
| September 23-25, 2010     |  | ALA Large Firm Administrators Retreat, Barton Creek Resort & Spa, Austin, TX   |
| <i>October 13, 2010</i>   | <i>Noon – 1<br/>Jermain Dunnagan &amp;<br/>Owens</i> | <i>Alaska ALA Board Meeting</i>  |
| <i>October 19, 2010</i>   | <i>Noon – 1:30 p.m.<br/>Captain Cook</i>             | <i>Alaska ALA Monthly Membership Meeting</i>   |
| <i>May 23-26, 2011</i>    |  | <i>ALA — Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, Orlando World Center Marriott Resort and Convention Center, Orlando, FL</i> |
| <i>April 23-26, 2012</i>  |  | <i>ALA — Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, Hawaii Convention Center, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, HI</i>         |
| <i>April 15-18, 2013</i>  |  | <i>ALA — Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, Gaylord National Resort &amp; Convention Center, National Harbor, MD</i>    |
| <i>May 19-22, 2014</i>    |  | <i>ALA — Annual Educational Conference and Exposition, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada</i>                        |

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