

CAPITAL CONNECTION

CAPITAL CHAPTER
Association of Legal Administrators™



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Welcome to 2007, and our Chapter's **first** electronic newsletter!

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The beginning of a new year provides us with a fresh start. It's as if we can file away everything that happened last year and start anew, somewhat like our first day of school. We have a clean chalkboard, new classmates to meet and impress, and the knowledge that we're a year older and wiser! We think

about what we want to accomplish, behaviors we want to change, and feel optimistic and thankful for what we have.

One goal the Chapter had for 2007 was to initiate an electronic newsletter, and we are quite excited with our initial product. We hope you find it easy to read, and welcome your feedback. Make sure you scroll through each page – you don't want to miss any articles from our members or partners.

As you're reflecting on your goals for 2007, keep in mind that our Chapter relies upon its members and partners to provide the creativity, talent, perspective, energy, insight, and camaraderie to help achieve our mission and goals. We thrive on fresh ideas and welcome your participation in the committee of your choice. You *will* make a difference, and you *will* make new friends! Check out our calendar on page 13 as to what interests you. If you've never attended a sec-

tion meeting, give me a call and we can go together.

By now you should have received your renewal notice for both ALA International and Capital Chapter memberships. **Remember, you must be a member of ALA International in order to join or renew with our Chapter.** As a matter of fact, when is the last time you took a few minutes to review the **free** resources available to you from National? You can go to www.alanet.org for a list of reference and information sources available to you, including the Legal Resources Management Center (<http://thesource@alanet.org>).

As I look at the calendar for our Chapter, it's simply amazing that before we know it we'll be sending out announcements for our annual Fundraiser Aboard The Odyssey scheduled for March 22. This event is one of the most widely attended functions for our Chapter which raises funds for the charities we support, this year being Emmaus Services for the Aging. Not only is it a very worthwhile event, but you'll have the best time ever. We'll soon be soliciting items for our silent auction, so stay tuned!

So what do you say? Are you ready to start off your new year with some professional and personal development opportunities? That blank chalkboard I referred to earlier is no longer blank – it now reads "2007 is the year to invest in yourself!" ■

Patricia Howell

TRIPLE FEATURE

CHANGING RULES in Federal Legislation



ARE YOU AT RISK?

The Law Firm Administrator's Role and the Recent Changes to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure

By Andrew Hall, MBA, *Crowell & Moring LLP*

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As a law firm administrator, why should you care about the new amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure? These rules affect the discovery process, or the exchange of information between parties, often referred to as Electronic Data Discovery (EDD). The new rules affect the attorneys' law practices and the support staff behind them who work closely with case management. So, why in the world would you as part of the firm's management team need to understand how these new rules affect your firm? Generally, these rules guide the manner in which firms must handle the discovery process, which in turn affects other areas within the firm. As a firm administrator, you should

consider how the rules could impact the firm's various departments.

Marketing

Attorneys tell stories of how client business was lost because the client was unaware of the firm's expertise in a certain practice area. For example, if your firm represents a corporation for most of their Intellectual Property work and the client is not familiar with your firm's expertise in Electronic Discovery, then there is a high probability the client may look elsewhere when faced with e-discovery needs, even in the context of

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an IP litigation. Hence, the Marketing department should be acutely aware of your firm's level of expertise in e-discovery to ensure the proper information is flowing to new and current clients.

Accounting/Finance

Many firms have established policies and procedures, which allow the firm to pay invoices from vendors, then pass that cost, with some limitations, directly to the client via the monthly statement. As discoverable electronic data continues to grow, sizeable data collections may result in vendor invoices, which may not be payable by the firm based on your current policies. Being aware of these issues increases the likelihood of addressing costs early, potentially through the firm's engagement agreement with the client.

Operations

Here you need to consider not only numbers of staff and qualifications, technical systems, and network infrastructure necessary to handle the potential influx of hosted data, but also how the new rules may impact the firm's business strategies with respect to handling EDD in-house versus outsourcing all or part of it to vendors.

You may have already heard of Litigation Readiness but may not fully realize how this issue impacts your firm. Courts have held that, in addition to preservation of all paper (or hard copy) records, parties with potentially relevant Electronically Stored Information (ESI) have a duty to preserve ESI as soon as they become aware of a potential claim or action.

This duty may require adjustments to your policies, procedures and protocols for Records Management (including auto-delete and archiving practices), E-Mail, Instant Messaging, Voice-Mail, Blackberrys, and any other electronic devices on which attorneys or staff may store firm information.

Following these pages are two articles, one dealing with Litigation Readiness for law firms and the other with general project management of the EDD process. ■

For more information about the changes to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedures, visit the U.S. Supreme Court's web site:
www.supremecourtus.gov/orders/courtorders/frcv06p.pdf

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JANUARY IS RENEWAL TIME

1. Renew your
ALA membership at
www.alanet.org.

You must be an ALA
member before joining
the Capital Chapter.

2. Renew your
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