



2015 Convention Wrap Up

By: *Corinne Deering, RP*

Aloha! The 2015 NFPA Convention has come to an end and the last year of planning for the 2016 NFPA Convention has commenced full speed ahead.

The Aloha Spirit is a reference to the attitude of friendly acceptance for which the Hawaiian Islands are so famous. It also refers to a powerful way to resolve any problem, accomplish any goal, and to achieve any state of mind or body that you desire. In the Hawaiian language, aloha stands for much more than just "hello" or "goodbye" or "love." Its deeper meaning is "the joyful (oha) sharing (alo) of life energy (ha) in the present (alo)."

As always, the NFPA convention is a whirlwind of activities, learning, meeting new friends and connecting with old friends. It's an exhausting three and one-half days of fun. Upon arrival in Waikiki Beach and after checking in, the first "must do" was to walk to the beach and put my toes in the sand and the ocean. Laurie Noyes, RP, our Region V Director, and I walked the strip by the beach and checked out the shops and restaurants. After being awake for about 22 hours of travel time and getting settled, we decided we needed some sleep before the convention hit full throttle the next morning.

On Thursday, I attended a full day of CLE sessions: Proposed Amendments to the FRCP & eDiscovery Case Law Update; What Paralegals Really Need to Know About eDiscovery; Three Questions on Legal Technology and Ethics; and Washington State at the Forefront. I then attended the very informative NFPA Workshop on Review of Parliamentary Procedure and Robert's Rules of Order. Following the day of learning was the Exhibitors' Reception where we enjoyed some traditional Hawaiian food, met the exhibitors', and enjoyed being entertained by members of the Hawaii Paralegal Association who treated us to some beautiful music and hula dancing. We ended the day by attending the Board of Directors' meeting where the Paralegal Association of Rochester won the bid to host the 2019 Annual Convention, and the New York City Paralegal Association won the bid to host the 2017 Joint Conference.

Friday started early by attending the First Timer's Meeting for a brush up on the rules and procedures for the policy meeting. The Region meetings then commenced for the day. We discussed a variety of subjects and had a brief special guest from the JAG Corp speak to us. The highlight of the day was probably the social event. We traveled by bus for approximately 30 minutes to the Chief's Luau. We passed by some beautiful seaside locations on our way to the Luau and were met with friendly smiles and greetings from the Luau entertainers. There was fun, dancing, food, drinks, and more dancing, fire and drums. It was a great time had by all.

Saturday and Sunday are the more formal policy meeting days where decisions are made affecting the future of NFPA and its members. A local Boy Scout group kicked off the day with a color guard ceremony. My involvement in the ceremonies began on Sunday morning with

distribution of some gifts to the delegates to entice the attending members to come join us in Burlington in 2016. We provided them with the *Experience Burlington* magazine as well as a Vermont postcard, a Vermont pin, and a "Vermont is Sweet" keychain. Unfortunately, the maple candy which was included in the gift bags did not survive the Hawaiian heat. The candy had to be removed from the bags the night before. We prepared a brief video of scenes from Vermont and the Burlington area to try to spark interest in those attending to come to Burlington next year.

The results of the bylaw amendments and agenda items discussed at the policy meeting are as follows:

- 1) Bylaw Amendment 15-03 passed amending Bylaw Sections 3.3, 3.8, 3.9, and 4.1 (effective January 1, 2016) to provide clarification of membership categories;
- 2) Bylaw Amendment 15-02 passed amending Bylaw Sections 8.3 and 6.6 to limit the terms of Region Directors to four consecutive one-year terms;
- 3) Agenda topic 15-06 passed allowing for PACE and PCCE candidates to waive the six month waiting period in order to retake the exam and to test beginning four weeks after their initial attempt;
- 4) Agenda topic 15-04 passed requesting that NFPA develop and issue a position statement supporting the concept of regulation in its various forms consistent with NFPA policy and presenting the draft statement for approval by the delegates at the 2016 Policy Meeting;
- 5) Agenda topic 15-01 passed requesting that NFPA draft a position statement supporting legislation permitting non-lawyers to deliver limited legal services, incorporating previous positions, and in accordance with Resolution 01S-04, which imposes certain limits on advocacy efforts in those states with NFPA voting member associations; and complete the draft within six months of the adoption of this resolution and that the final position statement shall be distributed to the Primary and Secondary Representatives and the President of each NFPA voting member association via electronic mail;
- 6) Agenda topic 15-05 passed requesting NFPA create a standing Committee and that a State of the Paralegal Profession Report Committee be established and charged with initiating the process of creating for publication purposes a State of the Paralegal Profession Report by reporting on trends in the delivery of legal services which may potentially affect the Paralegal Profession; educational and CLE topics and modes/delivery of training; any changes to titles within the paralegal profession; the state of regulation/limited practice; and any prevalent and consistent ethical violations by paralegals; and providing quarterly reporting to the Delegates and members of the NFPA Board of Directors regarding the status of the State of the Paralegal Profession Report through Inside Reports submitted to the Vice President and Director of Profession Development; and submitting an Inaugural State of the Paralegal Profession Report no later than the 2016 Annual Convention and Policy Meeting to be held in Burlington, Vermont.

Agenda topics that did not pass include:

- 7) The proposed topic requesting that the eligibility requirements to sit for PACE be expanded to include having held the CRP credential for two years or more with at least one successful renewal, with six years of substantive paralegal experience; and
- 8) The proposed topic requesting that the membership observer fee be reduced to a nominal fee for NFPA members.
- 9) The alternative proposed topic requesting the establishment of an ad hoc committee to research the concept of licensed legal technician or non-attorney provider programs and draft a position statement to be presented to the NFPA Board and the delegates at the 2016 Annual Policy Meeting became moot with passage of agenda topic 15-01.

The Board of Directors' election results are as follows:

Allen F. Mihecoby, CLAS, RP as Vice President & Director of Profession Development
Yvonne DeAntoneo as Vice President & Director of Membership
Lisa Lynch, CRP as Vice President & Director of Marketing
MaryAnn Ivie, RP as Treasurer & Director of Finance
Tom Holmes, RP as Director, Region I
Mianne L. Besser as Director, Region II
Barbara O'Shaughnessy, FRP as Director, Region III
Donna M. Huntermark, RP, Pa.C.P. as Director, Region IV
Josie Estes as Director, Region V
Beth King, RP as Education Coordinator

The Scholarship and Award winners are:

The Thompson Reuters scholarship winners were Aurora Hood and Nancy Brooks
The PACE scholarship winner was Fatima Mahmud
The PCCE scholarship winner was Stephanie Jackson
Certification Ambassador Award - Linda Odermott, RP - Oregon Paralegal Association
Association Pro Bono Award - Dallas Area Paralegal Association
Individual Pro Bono Award - Linda Teater - Rocky Mountain Paralegal Association
Outstanding Local Leader Award - Beth King, RP - Oregon Paralegal Association
Paralegal of the Year Award - Joyce Kent, RP - Oregon Paralegal Association
William R. Robie Award - Kathleen Miller, RP - Oregon Paralegal Association

Overall, the convention appeared to be a success. HPA did a wonderful job hosting the convention and pulled out all the stops to make us feel welcome. The Aloha Spirit was alive and well at the 2015 NFPA Annual Policy Meeting and I hope it followed us all home.