

# L.A.W.S. LEDGER

February 18, 2019



“Snowy Mt. Garfield”  
Image by Angela Classen

## ***NEXT MEETING: February 27, 2019***

The next meeting of the Legal Assistants of the Western Slope is scheduled for Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. at the Mesa County Library, Grand Junction, Colorado. Our guest speaker will be Thomas Acker, who will discuss the topic of human trafficking in western Colorado.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP with Rob Jones by phone (970-270-6104) or e-mail (rob@richardslawofficegws.com) so we can have an accurate head count. Also, please invite a friend! Let’s spread the word about our great organization!

See you there!

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## **GOALS OF LEGAL ASSISTANTS OF THE WESTERN SLOPE**

- To provide local access to continuing education
- To encourage a high order of ethical and professional attainment
- To promote the legal assistant profession
- To inform and educate the public and legal community about the effective utilization of legal assistants

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

February 27, 2019	LAWS First Meeting
May 1, 2019	Law Day – 2019 theme is “Free Speech, Free Press, Free Society”
May 8, 2019	LAWS Second Meeting
July 24, 2019	LAWS Third Meeting
September 25, 2019	LAWS Fourth Meeting

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

I see the forest, but what happened to all the trees?

It's a dirty little secret that everybody knows. Human trafficking is real. It really happens. It really happens in Colorado and it really happens on the western slope.

In its legislative declaration of July 1, 2014, the Colorado General Assembly said, "Human trafficking constitutes a serious problem in Colorado and across the nation," adding "Human trafficking is abhorrent to a civilized society and deserving of the most diligent response from the state." (CRS § 18-2-501). Human trafficking is, said the legislators, "this despicable practice."

"Human trafficking," says the website of Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, "occurs when a person is recruited, harbored, obtained or exported through force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of sexual or labor exploitation and involuntary servitude." From January 1, 2012 until July 31, 2017, Colorado prosecutors filed 367 cases of human trafficking, about one every week. "The problem is huge," Stephanie Fritts, a prosecutor in the 17th Judicial District told Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting. "And we're getting really good at identifying it."

In July 2017, then 21-year old Israel Jerome Massingill was charged by Mesa County District Attorney Dan Rubinstein with the murder of 17-year old Kiera Breanne Quintana. Rubinstein additionally brought charges against Massingill of patronizing a prostituted child, a friend of the murder victim. Massingill's trial by jury is on the docket through the middle of March.

Operation Cross County was a 2017 nationwide sting operation that resulted in the arrest of, among many, three western Colorado men. Charles Eugene Verquer of Delta was convicted in July 2018 of sexual assault on a child. William John Stephenson of Montrose was convicted, also in July 2018, on charges of soliciting a child prostitute. Steele Hampton Stevens of Grand Junction was convicted last September on charges of internet luring of a child. Stevens, by statute, would have had to have believed that the person he was luring was under 15-years old.

Dallas Cardenas

In March 2014, the Colorado Court of Appeals confirmed the conviction in the Jefferson County trial court of Dallas Cardenas. In addition to conviction for pimping an adult, Cardenas was found guilty of pimping a child, pandering a child, and inducing child prostitution. There is no question or dispute that Cardenas sold the services of his 17-year old victim. The tattoo on Cardenas' arm read "MOB," standing for "money over bitches." Cardenas' tat was, the Court of Appeals decided, evidence with probative value.

Cardenas, though convicted, exploited a major hole in Colorado law and his appeal on the charges of human trafficking was affirmed. The appeals court overturned the Jefferson County court's conviction of Cardenas on violation of CRS § 18-3-501(1)(a). In Colorado, apparently, the victim must be transferred, i.e., the child must have been sold, exchanged, bartered or leased. Cardenas merely instructed the under-age woman to advertise her services in a local publication. He sold the young woman's services, but he did not sell the young woman herself. Cardenas is currently incarcerated in the Colorado Department of Corrections.

Corrections in the Colorado statute were recommended by the Colorado Human Trafficking Council. The council advocated for a “safe harbor” in the statute, essentially a forbearance of criminal charges against the victim.

The purpose of the Colorado Human Trafficking Council, statutorily CRS § 18-3-505, is “to help prevent human trafficking in Colorado.” Members of the “council” are urban and rural, governmental and nongovernmental, advocates of children and advocates of exploited adults. Members come from law enforcement, human services, public interest advocates, immigrant advocates, nonprofits, and colleges and universities. Council members are appointed by the governor of Colorado. The council reports to and makes recommendations to the judiciary committees of both chambers of the Colorado legislature. It is the council’s task to “[i]dentify best practices for the prevention of human trafficking, particularly for the prevention of child sex trafficking.”

Legal Assistants of the Western Slope (LAWS) is a small group of paralegals who serve western Colorado attorneys and their clients. LAWS meets quarterly, and the meetings are highlighted by presenters who have something interesting to say to western Coloradans. The presenter for the February 27 meeting at the main branch of the Mesa County Library is Tom Acker, a professor of Spanish at Colorado Mesa University and a member of the council. The purpose of Tom’s presentation is to promote the Colorado Human Trafficking Council and understanding of human trafficking in western Colorado.

The presentation is open to the public. Attendance may be in person at the main branch of the Mesa County Library on Grand Ave., or by internet. The meeting is 4:00 on Wednesday, February 27. An RSVP is appreciated, whether attendance is in person or internet. Rob Jones, President, LAWS. (970) 270-6104 or [rob@richardslawofficegws.com](mailto:rob@richardslawofficegws.com).

~ Rob Jones, President

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**– SPEAKER BIO**

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Thomas Acker, PhD

Professor of Spanish in the Hispanic Studies and Spanish Program, LLMC, Colorado Mesa University, Grand Junction, CO

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Instructional Focus: Spanish for the Professions, including Translation and Medical Spanish. Tom works part time as a medical interpreter.

Education

PhD, Temple University(1992)

MA, Temple University (1986)

BS, Kutztown University (1984)

Civic and Policy Interests

Founding member Western Slope Against Trafficking ( WSAT) 2013 to present.

Member Colorado Human Trafficking Council by appointment of the governor –2014 to Present

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC) board member, 2012 to 2014

Hispanic Affairs Project (HAP) board member, 2013 to present

Grand Valley Peace and Justice (GVPJ) Board of Directors, 2011-present

State Advisory Board Human Trafficking Project (2013- present)

Catholic Diocese of Pueblo, Human Development Commission, 2010-present

Tom has worked for more than a decade on the issue of immigrant integration and civil rights which evolved into exploring the plight of H2A visa workers in the western U.S., especially the shepherders. His interests continue to include abuse of workers, social and economic inequities.

***JOB OPPORTUNITY***

Busy law office is looking for a friendly, outgoing legal assistant to add to our team. We are looking for someone who is dependable, very good with people, professional in appearance, self-motivated, organized and reliable.

**Job Duties:**

- Answer telephones
- Maintain files
- Manage attorney calendar
- Draft correspondence
- File documents
- Assist team members as needed

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Must have at least 1 year of experience working as a receptionist
- Must have excellent written and oral communication skills
- Basic knowledge of Outlook and Microsoft Word
- Ability to multi-task
- Strong proof reading skills
- Excellent typing skills
- Excellent customer service skills
- Basic math skills

Please contact Kris Evers for more information or to apply: [Kris@mahrelaw.com](mailto:Kris@mahrelaw.com)

## EDUCATIONAL ARTICLE

Editor's Note: I don't know about you, but on average I'm interrupted far more often than every eight minutes! How about you?

### **Top 5 Ways to Minimize Interruptions** **By Vicki Voisin, ACP**

How can you get your work done if you have constant interruptions? You can't...and it's very frustrating.

You have to practice self-defense when it comes to interruptions. If you don't take steps to minimize them, your time will be wasted and your productivity will suffer.

Studies show that the average worker is interrupted every eight minutes. The same studies reveal that 15% of the interruptions are important, while the remaining 85% are a waste of time.

Telephone calls and e-mail are major culprits, but even worse are the two-legged interrupters: your co-workers.

Here are five tips to minimize those two-legged interruptions and keep you in the productivity fast lane:

1. Stand up when someone enters your workspace...or when they've over-stayed their welcome. When you stand, you send a message that the meeting will either be brief or that it has ended. This works every time. You start moving, they start moving...end of interruption.

2. Never ask "How are you?" when someone stops by your office. This is an open invitation to chat. Do you really want to hear about their gallbladder surgery? Instead, ask "What can I do for you?" This will get you right to the point of the interruption.

3. A bit of creative workspace re-organization goes a long way. If your desk faces the door, turn it so you don't look right into the hallway at everyone who passes. Once they make eye contact, they always stop to chat.

Can you remove your chairs? If not, stack some files on them so the office pest (IE time waster) can't take root for a half hour of blah blah blah. Last, NEVER have a bowl of candy on your desk. Who can resist a handful of M&M's...and a little conversation to go along with them?

4. If you're asked to answer a 'quick question or someone wants 'just a minute' of your time, beware! Your first question should be, "How much time do you need?" If you have the time available, go for it and hold them to the deadline. If you don't have a spare fifteen minutes, schedule an appointment with them later.



Rehearse a few lines like: “I’m sorry but I need to finish this deposition summary in the next hour. Can we talk later?” or “Attorney X is waiting for this research. I can spend some time with you at 2:00 this afternoon.” If you use lines like these, you’ve turned the tables and you’re now meeting on your own terms.

5. Urge co-workers to accumulate their questions. They should save all but urgent issues to discuss with you in one chunk of time. It’s much more productive to spend twenty minutes discussing five client matters than it is to talk about one client matter for ten minutes every hour.

**BONUS TIP:** Don’t interrupt yourself! Determine the time of day you are most productive (early morning? mid-afternoon?) and make yourself unavailable to the world during that time every day. Shut your door. Turn off anything that might be noisy or distracting. Stock your desk with all the supplies you need to eliminate unnecessary trips to the supply room. Practice what you preach: gather your questions and assignments and interrupt your co-workers only once.

Your challenge: Make a short list of the interruptions you will allow. For all the rest, decide which of today’s tips you can implement to minimize them. Once that decision is made, take the necessary steps to curb those interruptions and you’ll find yourself on your way to a more productive day.

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Vicki Voisin, “The Paralegal Mentor”, delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by achieving goals and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, organizational tips, ethics issues, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She publishes a weekly ezine titled Paralegal Strategies and co-hosts The Paralegal Voice, a monthly podcast produced by Legal Talk Network. More information is available at <http://www.paralegalmentor.com>.

**Legal Assistants of the Western Slope (LAWS) creates and maintains good fellowship among association members, The National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc. (NALA), and members of the legal community. Visit our website, [www.ws-laws.com](http://www.ws-laws.com).**



**IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME (ACTUALLY - IT'S LATIN!)**

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- AFFIDAVIT
- AMICUSCURIAE
- BONAFIDE
- CAVEATEMPTOR
- CORPUSJURIS
- DEFACTO
- ETSEQ
- EXOFFICIO
- HABEASCORPUS
- LEXLOCI
- MOTIONINLIMINE
- PROBATIO
- PROBONO
- QUANTUM
- SITUS

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