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President's Message

Motivation. We all know what it looks like. And we certainly know when we're lacking it. With a quarter of the year already behind us, I've decided to put some real energy and effort into exploring my motivation and kicking it up where it needs a boost. After looking into the various theories and models of motivation, though, it seems that it's a much more complicated concept than I originally thought. Do I need push or pull motivation? Am I intrinsically or extrinsically motivat-

ed? Does it matter?

I've found that, for me, the best motivation is seeing results. Yes, this requires a substantial amount of energy to overcome the initial inertia of the status quo, but once I get started, positive outcomes push me to do it again, better, and more. I'm also, unfortunately, motivated by possible negative consequences of not taking action. When a family member was recently placed on a very restrictive diet for health reasons, it made me take a



good, hard look at my own health and wellness. A couple months of not hitting my goal metrics at the office have motivated me to revamp how my legal department takes in and manages its workload. Scare tactics work! (con'd on p. 3)

April Luncheon: Law Day Luncheon

Please join us at noon on April 7, 2015 as we recognize our Law Day winners from the Young Women's Leadership Academy. Sonia Rodriguez, partner in Branton|Hall|Rodriguez|Cruz, P.C., will discuss this year's Law Day Theme: "How has the Magna Carta impacted individual liberties?"

When: Tuesday, April 7, 2015

Time: Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Where: Plaza Club, Colonel's

Foyer/Plaza Room, located at Frost Bank Tower, 100 West Houston, #2100, San Antonio, TX 78205-1489

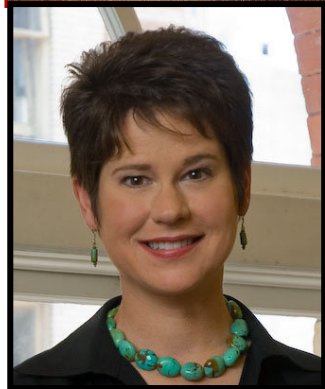
Cost: \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members, \$20 for students, payable at the door

RSVP: The Plaza Club needs a headcount well in advance of the luncheon, so please RSVP by Tuesday, March 31, 2015 to Events@bexarcountywomensbar.org. Please include any dietary restrictions in your RSVP. We understand that

schedules change, but we cannot guarantee a spot to individuals who do not RSVP by the date above. Walk-ins will be charged \$35 to cover the additional demands on the Plaza Club's staff and no-shows will be billed.

For more information, contact Lindsay Riley (lriley@coxsmith.com) or Rachel Skinner (rskinner@coxsmith.com). We hope to see you there!

Member Spotlight: Nissa Dunn



What's your current job?

I am a shareholder with Houston Dunn, PLLC, and practice in the area of civil appellate law. My practice includes handling appeals and original proceedings in state and federal appellate courts, as well as working closely with trial lawyers to assist with law-intensive issues, legal briefing, and error preservation at the trial court level.

What's your best BCWBA experience thus far?

In 2003, I was approached to co-chair the auction committee for BCWBA's annual Bench Brunch (now Autumn Affair). I was reluctant - I've never been com-

fortable asking for donations. But I really wanted to do my part and I was promised a co-chair - Lisa Barkley - so I said "yes."

At that time, Lisa was fairly new to San Antonio and I had not yet met her. We got together for our first co-chair meeting after work one day, and after lots of discussion (some about the auction and some about life), and a glass of wine (or maybe two), a new friendship was born.

Lisa and I had a great time co-chairing the auction, and I gained a lot from the experience. I learned that some donors use auction donations, like re-gifting, to dispose of unwanted items: framed art with cracked glass, passes to the "Oddity Museum," and my personal favorite for an event sponsored by lawyers, a children's fireworks set. But I found that by and large, potential donors are extremely generous and genuinely happy to support a good cause. I also realized that having someone to share (and commiserate about) such a huge project reduces the work exponentially rather than proportionally. But best of all, I gained a life-long friend. What a gift!

Tell us about your morning ritual or daily routine.

My day normally starts with a cup of coffee and about 30 minutes of quiet time.

I use that time to mentally organize my day. But if my workload has me paralyzed with panic, I physically make a list of everything I need to accomplish. While writing it down doesn't change what I have to do, it somehow makes it seem more manageable.

I also try to do some form of exercise before going to work, usually a walk or yoga. Exercise, particularly if it involves getting outdoors, really clears my head and gives me more energy during the day.

What's the most memorable event in your career so far?

Starting Houston Dunn, PLLC, with my good friend Sam Houston. In 2012, I had been practicing on my own for about five years, and was to the point that I needed some help with the work load. I also really missed working with other lawyers.

After a lot of thought, I decided that the best move would be to partner with another appellate specialist, but perhaps someone who was younger (and had more energy) than I. Sam immediately came to mind - not only was he a long-time friend, but I respected his work and he had just become board certified in civil appellate law.

Starting a law firm was a huge decision for both of us, and we (con'd on p. 3)

Member Spotlight (con'd from p. 2)

spent about nine months end-lessly going over pros and cons before finally deciding to launch our appellate boutique. Houston Dunn opened for business in January 2013, and without question, it has been the best career move I've ever made. Sam and I work well as a team, and his irrepressible wit and infectious sense of humor can salvage even the lousiest day. I'll be forever grateful that he was willing to throw his lot in with me.

What was your childhood dream job?

From the time I was about ten, I dreamed of being a concert pianist. In pursuit of that goal, my college career started at North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas) as a piano performance major. Unfortunately, the demand for concert pianists at the time was one every two years for the entire United States. I was young, but not too foolish to realize that I would not be on anyone's short list for that spot. So I transferred to Trinity University here in San Antonio and changed my career path. The rest, as they say, is history.

Guilty Pleasure: What can you not live without?

I love movies, but not just watching them. I love learning about how a movie was made, what actors were originally considered for the major roles, other movies the actors have been in, and any other worthless trivia I can find on the Internet Movie Database. We don't go the theater very often, but with Netflix, VUDU, and Turner Classic Movies, I can get

my fix with all the comforts of home.

What's the best advice you can offer?

To me, two qualities set truly outstanding lawyers apart from the rest: credibility and civility. Credibility in the practice of law (and life in general) is so important. And by credibility, I mean more than just our ethical obligation as lawyers of candor toward the tribunal. Our credibility has to permeate every professional relationship, whether with the court, opposing counsel, our clients, or our co-workers.

Credibility takes time to develop, but can be lost in a minute. So cultivate it zealously, and guard it jealously. The smartest lawyer in the world can't be a great lawyer unless she is trustworthy and dependable.

Civility goes hand in hand with credibility. The lawyers I admire the most always take the high road, but in a profession that is so often adversarial, that can be extremely difficult. When I read a brief that misrepresents the law or the record, or attacks my integrity, I have to fight the temptation to respond in a similarly unprofessional or unmeasured way. My answer is to rant to Sam or my sweet and incredibly longsuffering husband, then approach the written word in (hopefully) a more dispassionate way.

Personal attacks and hyperbole diminish the persuasiveness of any form of communication. In the practice of law, they demean our profession, and our ethical obligations as lawyers (and good advocacy) demand we avoid them. So in law - and in life - be gracious, be kind, and always try to rise above.

Ready to **Exhale**?

Ready to **Connect** with other great women lawyers?
Ready to **Hone** your negotiating and other practical skills?
Ready to **Earn 8.0 CLE** hours?

Then join us June 11-12th as we return to the Purple Sage Ranch in Bandera for the annual Bexar County Women's Bar Retreat. This year we're focusing on practical skills, including negotiation training exercises with Professor Wayne Scott of St. Mary's Law School.

Registration Opens Mid-April



So You Want to...Take A Pro Bono Family Law Case



By Maurleen Cobb

CJP FAMILY LAW CLINIC - JOIN US MAY 12, 2015

There are a lot of things in life that are unknown and scary to most of us, snakes, spiders, bugs of all sorts come to mind but joining BCWB at the May 12, 2015 Community Justice Program (CJP) Family Law Clinic should not be one of them.

Those who have participated in the Family Law Clinic have valued the experience and appreciated giving back to the community by volunteering their services. There is no need to con-

vince the members of our organization about the importance of volunteerism and our moral obligation to pro bono work. It would be, to honest, preaching to the choir. However, when you say the words Family Law or Divorce most attorneys want to scream and run the other direction.

To alleviate this fear, the CJP staff does an amazing job of helping volunteer attorneys navigate this new to them area of the law. All cases brought to the CJP Family Law Clinic are either uncontested or agreed. When you first arrive at the CJP Clinic, you will be signed in for your CLE credit and given a case file. You will be able to review the case file and discuss the best plans for your client interview with the family law mentors, who are in most cases board certified family law attorneys. You will then meet with your client. Once you have spo-

ken with the client, you can proceed to file the case if you are ready. Clerks from the District Court will be present to assist you in filing your petitions and understand you do not usually deal with this type of case and its filings; they are there to help.

As you progress through your case, you will have access to your mentors and the CJP staff to help with any issues that may arise. If at any time your matter becomes more complicated, you can return the case to CJP for reassignment.

This is truly a rewarding experience and a wonderful way to give back to our community. If you have any questions regarding volunteering with the BCWB at the May 12, 2015 Family Law Clinic please contact Maurleen Cobb at mcobb@stokeslawoffice.com.

April Around Town Lunch

Please join us for our April Around Town Lunch at

Mon Thai Bistro & Sushi Bar

Where: Mon Thai Bistro & Sushi Bar, 4901 Broadway (<http://monsthai.com/menu.html>)

When: Friday, April 10th at 12:00 p.m.

Who: Your fellow BCWB members.

No need to RSVP. Look for Lindsay Riley. We hope to see you there!

May Around Town Luncheon

By Marissa Helm

For our May Around Town lunch, the Bexar County Women's Bar is excited to mix things up with a campus tour and food-truck lunch at Rackspace!

Thanks to Mary Stich, 25 BCWB members can buy lunch from the food trucks visiting Rack-

space on Friday, May 15, and tour the company's unique digs at the old Windsor Park Mall (map: <https://goo.gl/maps/k57Gr>). There may even be an opportunity to try out the slide Mary discussed at our March monthly luncheon!

Space is limited, and RSVPs are required for this very special around-town experience. You will need to bring your photo ID to be admitted as a Rackspace visitor. Please email marissa.helm@parallon.com to reserve your spot. First come, first served.

Book Review: *And the Mountains Echoed*



By Gaylia D. Brunson

I love to read and have the bad habit of picking up multiple books from random places while having no idea when I am going to read them. So, I really do not know when, how or why I ended up with *And the Mountains Echoed* on my bookshelf. Further, when I sat down to read it I was puzzled because it is not a book at which I would normally look twice. But once I opened this book, I could not put it down; it pulled me back in night after night. This was a love story but not in the sense you would normally think. This was a love story of a brother who lost a little sister and never stopped

longing for her return and the bond which they shared. At the same time, it was a tale of a child being provided a better life while making you question what "better life" really means.

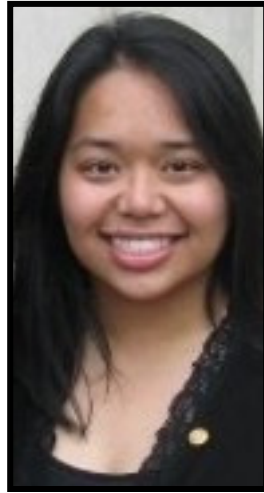
The character development was intriguing as I quickly realized that no character was ever minor, even when they seemed insignificant on the surface. Everyone resurfaced somewhere, at some time before the end of the book. The book is far from overwritten and its simplicity is part of what tugs at your heart; it is easy to identify with the love and the loss that the characters are feeling as well as the constant underlying sense of yearning. It is about a yearning that last so long that it exceeds life and, thereby, makes it all the more heart wrenching. This book made me cry.

If you have a sibling that you love and cannot imagine life without, read this book. You

will appreciate what you have with your sibling even more. If you have a sibling with which your relationship is strained, this book will make you re-evaluate the rights and wrongs of that relationship and make you question your role in how the relationship has gotten strained or, at the very least, whether the other person sees the issues in a different light than you do.

The author of this book, Khaled Hosseini, also wrote *The Kite Runner*. I admit I have never read or watched *The Kite Runner*, but I am most definitely a fan of Mr. Hosseini after reading *And the Mountains Echoed*. If you want a book that grabs you and does not let go, that covers everything from nostalgia, devastating details, and triumph over the odds, then this is the book for you. But know, it will break your heart and then leave you satisfied rather than sad in the end.

Restaurant Review: Tazas Café



By Victoria Marie S. Bongat

Tazas Café is a low-key dining establishment located at 3126 Pat Booker Road, Universal City, Texas 78148. Although the building can be a bit tricky to find, it is worth the effort to visit. The menu includes baked goods, such as muffins, cookies, and cake; savory offerings for lunch and dinner, such as soup, salad, paninis, and pizza; and numerous beverages, such as smoothies, hot or frozen coffee, and tea. There are also many vegetarian dishes. Upon entering the building, customers make their way to the counter where they place their orders, either to-go or to dine-in. And with the second option, they may choose their dining spot from many available choices.

I went to Tazas for breakfast with my sisters before work on a Wednesday. There was no line when we arrived around 7:45 a.m.

and we had our pick of places to sit. Since it was our first time at Tazas, we took some time to peruse the chalkboard menu display while another customer picked up the to-go order he had placed online. When we had finally decided what we wanted, the cashier exhibited patience and politeness as we told her our selections. After repeating our order to ensure accuracy, our cashier gave us the total and explained that she appreciated us bearing with her since it was her first day. Despite her disclaimer, our drinks were delivered to us quickly while the food was prepared fairly quickly and then delivered to our table fresh from kitchen.

We had ordered three different drinks and breakfast items to share: a short caramel de leche frozen coffee; a tall strawberry peach smoothie; a grande hot chai tea latte; the honey maple ham egg cheese croissant; the broccoli-cheddar quiche; and the cinnamon roll, which has been featured in the *San Antonio Express News* and named the best cinnamon roll by *News 4 San Antonio* in 2013. Each of these items tasted delicious. The frozen coffee was mixed so well that the coffee permeated each sip and the overall flavor was not too sweet. The smoothie had the perfect consistency and tasted equally of strawberry and peach. Although the chai tea latte

took some time to cool to a comfortable temperature for sipping, we had no complaints about the hints of spice in its flavor. The combination of honey maple ham, egg, and cheese on a croissant was delicious, and fulfilled my breakfast cravings. The broccoli-cheddar quiche was so good that even the presence of broccoli made it hard to believe it had any nutrients. The cinnamon roll was as good as advertised—light, flaky, buttery and yummy. We thoroughly enjoyed our breakfast.

The cost of our meal was \$23.76, and the portion sizes were satisfying. I definitely recommend Tazas to anyone seeking a good-value, quick and casual bite. People with looming deadlines will find the atmosphere conducive to preparing, while those needing some fuel for a day of shopping or traveling will enjoy its proximity to the Forum Shopping Center and I-35. I regret not trying the paninis, pizza and salad, but will remedy that on future visits. Since Tazas is open from 6:30 a.m. until midnight seven days a week, a busy schedule is an inadequate excuse for not trying it. For more information about “Tazas, where the mood is chill and the food is always fresh,” go to its website: tazalicious.com; call: 210-658-2927; or email: tazas.coffee@gmail.com.

President's Column (con'd from p. 1)

No matter how you get motivated, or where you are on the motivation spectrum right now, I hope you'll take some time to focus on what motivates you and how you can use that to accomplish everything you need and want to, this month and the rest of the year. And please remember that the Bexar County Women's Bar is here to help! Join us for one of my all-time favorite events (and surefire

motivator), our Law Day luncheon with students from the Young Women's Leadership Academy. I think you will be impressed with the students' enthusiasm, motivation, and the caliber of their submissions in the Law Day essay, photography, and poster contests on the topic of the Magna Carta. Their excitement is contagious! And keep looking ahead - in May

we have some one-of-a-kind events in store. In addition to our regular monthly luncheon on Cinco de Mayo at Club Giraud, please join the BCWB to "just take one" pro bono case from the Community Justice Program on May 12th. And come explore one of San Antonio's coolest companies, Rackspace, at our special around-town lunch on May 15th. I hope to see you there!

Women's Law Association Update

By Leah Wise, WLA President-Elect

The Women's Law Association 1L Senators put on a successful service and social last month with the Court Appointed Special Advocates of San Antonio (CASA). CASA's mission is to recruit, train, and supervise court-appointed volunteer Advocates who provide constancy for abused and neglected children. At the event, WLA members and St. Mary's Law students helped the children make their own artwork to take home. The children also made shirts with the help of WLA members. If you would like to volunteer with CASA please e-mail Elisabeth at ereise@casa-satx.org.

The Women's Law Association will hold elections for our upcoming 2015-2016 board the first week of April. The new board will be announced at our wine and half-wit social on April 10th. The new board will hit the ground running in prepa-



WLA & CASA members

ration for our 2015 silent auction to take place in November. If you would like to donate or help with the WLA silent auction please e-mail Leah at leahmariewise@gmail.com.



Moms ^{In} Law

San Antonio

PANEL LUNCHEON - MANAGING YOUR LEGAL PRACTICE

Join us as we host a panel discussion on how to excel in your career as a leader and manager while offering excellent legal services to clients. Discussion will include how to develop a successful legal team, importance of building networking relationships, and impact of budget management on the practice of law.

DISTINGUISHED PANELISTS

Deborah D. Williamson

Managing Director, Cox Smith

Sandee Bryan Marion

Chief Justice, Texas Fourth Court of Appeals

Carolyn E. Shellman

Executive VP and General Counsel, CPS Energy

Sponsored by:
Cox Smith Matthews Incorporated

DATE AND TIME

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2015 FROM 11:45 AM TO 1:00 PM

LOCATION

COX SMITH 112 E. PECAN, SUITE 1800

COST

\$25 MILSA MEMBERS/\$30 NON-MEMBERS