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# LEGAL BYTES

## NALS of Michigan 2021 Legal Professional of the Year: Deborah Surls, CLP

Congratulations go to NALS of Lansing member Deborah Surls, CLP, for being awarded NALS of Michigan’s highest honor: the Legal Professional of the Year Award! Deb is a legal assistant at Oade, Stroud & Kleiman, P.C. and has 42 years of experience in the legal field. During her 18 years as a member of NALS, she has served as president of her local chapter, as well as in other board positions, as the NALS of Michigan Audit chair, the NALS of Michigan Certification chair, and the NALS of Michigan Nominations chair. When not at work or working with NALS, Deb assists with Crossroads Church and Ministries. She has a busy family with her husband Michael, three sons, a daughter, and two granddaughters.

As can be seen in Deb’s award, her colleagues and attorneys have nothing but the highest of praise for her. Words such as “dedicated,” “mentor,” and “expert” were just some used to describe Deb. She has been recognized by her office as meeting stressful demands with a proper work ethic and skill. Fellow NALS members have experienced Deb’s encouragement and witnessed her engaging people to ensure all voices can be heard. A pastor at Deb’s church describes her as a peacemaker, good natured, and welcoming to all new families.



Please congratulate the 2021 NALS of Michigan Legal Professional of the Year, Deborah Surls, CLP, for an award most deserved!

## Finding SOLACE in Michigan

One never knows when and if we will ever face a traumatic issue. When we do, we can feel so alone and like no one understands or cares. For legal professionals in Michigan, that is about to change.

The Michigan State Bar is now participating in the nationwide SOLACE (Support for Lawyers/Legal Personnel–All Concern Encouraged) program. It began in Louisiana in 2002. The program pairs legal professionals dealing with personal (cont. p. 2)



## SOLACE (cont.)

challenges or tragedies with others in the legal community who have a lot of compassion, resources, and connections to give. This is available for ALL legal professionals working in Michigan: judges, lawyers, ***court personnel, paralegals, legal secretaries***, law students, ***and their immediate families***.

If you need assistance from SOLACE or know someone who does, simply go to

the State Bar's website and submit an application. A team member will work with the person in need to format a message to the group to request assistance. Those who wish to help will contact the coordinator at SOLACE, who connects them with the person in need.

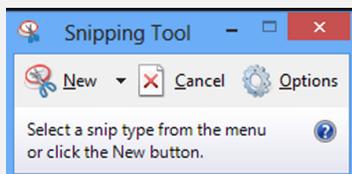
Would you like to get involved, either individually or as a bar group or organization? Check out SOLACE:

<https://www.michbar.org/solace>

*Congratulations go to NALS of Lansing member Deborah Surls, CLP, for being awarded NALS of Michigan's highest honor: the Legal Professional of the Year Award!*

## Tech Time

Have you heard of the Snipping Tool? It is the handiest little gadget. Instead of simply copying and pasting a picture or (ugh) cropping, the Snipping Tool allows you to frame the exact area of what you want, even if it is only a small part of a large picture. When in the Snipping Tool box, click on New, and set of crosshairs appears. Place the crosshairs on a spot and create a frame around the picture you want. Then copy and paste. Goodbye to cropping! To find the Snipping Tool, go into your search box at the bottom and start typing "Snipping Tool." Have fun!



## Are Virtual Court Hearings Here to Stay?

Everything we know as "normal" last year was tested when the COVID-19 virus tore through the United States and the rest of the world. Referred to as a "once every hundred years" virus, our technology was put to the test, and businesses and organizations that did not rely on technology as much were scrambling to figure out how to connect with everyone else.

Many in the legal profession in Michigan believed that working with courts in a new techie manner would be near impossible. It wasn't but just a week before everything closed that most courts still insisted on receiving everything in paper format and required attorneys to appear in person for even the simplest of hearings. And if all courts were required to be closed, what was going to happen to all of the criminal defendants awaiting arraignments, sentencings . . . trials?

To everyone's delight, the state courts were ready. All judges and courts in Michigan state courts obtained Zoom licenses in 2019. The courts had the TVs and cameras in places for about twenty years per the Michigan Supreme Court administrator's office, so getting hearings to Zoom did not take much effort.

But Michigan is opening back up. What are the benefits of continuing to hold virtual hearings? It saves a lot of attorney and client travel time and frees them up to work on other matters while waiting for their hearing time . . . time that would have been spent in a car. The SCAO's office also appreciates the transparency virtual hearings offer to the public. As of June 4, Michigan courts have recorded over 3.2 million hours of Zoom participation. The courts' YouTube channels have about 300,000 hits with 2.3 million views. Taxpayer money could be saved if state employees do not have to travel for appellate hearings. (cont. page 4)



## Ethics Watch

Canon 1 of the NALS Code of Ethics & Professional Responsibility states that members will “maintain a high degree of competency and integrity through continuing education to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide quality legal services to the public.”

The Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct have a similar rule for attorneys. Rule 1.1 covers competence. The comment to the rule discusses the knowledge and skill a lawyer must possess to maintain the proper-client-lawyer relationship. Most of the time the proficiency of a general practitioner is all that is necessary. Adequate representation can be provided through necessary study. The comments do state that to maintain the needed knowledge and skill, lawyers should participate in CLE, including technology and anything necessary to represent a client in a particular matter. So, when human resources or your supervising lawyer tells you that you do not need to attend a CLE event, remind them to take a look at the comments to MRPC 1.1 and to think about the last time they had some CLE.

## Virtual Hearings (cont.)

But there are drawbacks. Some judges just do not like it. They would much rather have people right there in the courtroom. Some have said that participants have become even more brazen with not following the rules, such as sitting behind the wheel in their car for a hearing on a suspended driver’s license, or attending by Zoom from their girlfriend’s home for violation of a PPO taken out by that girlfriend. Judges are concerned about witnesses being coached or intimidated while testifying remotely. And for criminal cases, the rights of the defendant must be protected due to the stakes involved.

Still, COVID-19 has made a lasting impact on the court system and the way law is practiced. A new normal has been created, and virtual hearings are here to stay.

### Sources:

Redman, H. (2021, May 26). The court system is returning to normal, but virtual is here to stay (sometimes). *Wisconsin Examiner*.

LLanes, C. (2021, June 4). Remote proceedings for Michigan courts are “here to stay,” says state. *Michigan Radio*.

Judges expect hybrid trial system after pandemic (2021, June 21). *American Bar Association*.

## On the Road to Annual Meeting

The NALS of Michigan 2022 Annual Meeting will see us make another attempt at getting together in person and at getting together in Frankenmuth, Michigan. And most of us know that Frankenmuth is famous for . . . Bronner’s. Yes, the gigantic Christmas wonderland open year-round with acres of everything Christmas. (cont. p. 4)

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**President:**

Laleise Curtiss, NALS of Detroit

**VP Membership/Marketing:**Andrea Kardatzke, NALS Greater  
Kalamazoo**VP Certification/Education:**Jennifer Yocum, CLP; NALS Jackson  
County**Executive Secretary:**

Kathy Rood, NALS of Lansing

**Treasurer:**

Natacha Valmont

**Parliamentarian:**

Teresa Garber, PP, CLP

[www.nalsofmichigan.org](http://www.nalsofmichigan.org)

## Annual Meeting (cont.)

Wallace (Wally) Bronner began the business in 1945 as a small sign painting business. Wally created custom Christmas panels to be placed on lampposts in the city of Clare. He began by working in his parents' basement, but by 1954 had opened his first storefront with his wife, Irene (go to 121 East Tuscola near Main Street while you're in town). Wally purchased more property over the years to handle his expanding business, and in 1977 the current Bronner's Christmas Wonderland was opened. It doubled in size in 1991, added a shipping department in 2000, and had another major expansion in 2002. There are now over five football fields of Christmas decorations for you to choose from! Make sure you take time check out the world's largest Christmas store while you are with us for annual meeting.





## **6 CLE Sessions for the Price of 5 (\$50)**

**Choose from a minimum of 1 CLE Session each month.**

**You have 1 year to use your 6 Sessions.**

**Something comes up at home or work?**

**You can get a recording of the CLE OR choose to attend  
a different, upcoming session.**

**Email Jennifer Joy Yocum, CLP at  
[jenjoyyocum@gmail.com](mailto:jenjoyyocum@gmail.com) or Tami Carl, CLP at  
[carlt@millerjohnson.com](mailto:carlt@millerjohnson.com) for details.**

**Thank you for supporting NALS while you learn.**



# HELP WANTED

The Legal Education Committee is looking for Members to join Legal Education in the following posts:



**The Seeker** (This is not a reference to Harry Potter. No Golden Snitch required.)

- Do you find yourself going down rabbit holes while keeping your finger on the pulse of the latest developments in the legal world?
- Do you find interesting articles about legal titans who you would love to meet, but are too shy to email or tweet them?
- Maybe you *wish* you could do these things but need a safe place to try?

If so, the **Seeker** position is for you! The **Seeker** would seek out and submit ideas for upcoming legal education offerings to the Legal Education Committee. That's all there is to it. The rest of the committee will help contact the potential speaker. Of course, the Seeker could have first dibs to introduce a speaker at CLE if desired.

\* \* \*

**The Tracker** (This isn't some whodunnit where we need a detective though that surely could be interesting).

- Do you enjoy keeping procedures running smoothly by knowing exactly where the right information is stored?
- Are you the creator of processes that keep your attorneys and potentially your whole law firm running smoothly?
- Do you enjoy communicating with members and giving them good news?
- Would you like to develop these skills?



Then the Tracker is for you! The Tracker would help keep track of who attends CLE offerings and process the certificates for CLE hours earned.



\* \* \*

**The Bridge.** That's the Legal Education Committee Chair who would be the bridge between the Legal Education Committee and the VP of Legal Education and Certification (that's me, Jen Joy Yocum, CLP - 😊).

- This is a terrific opportunity to chair a committee with support and guidance from Tami Carl, who was the previous Chair, as an active member. And I, as VP of Legal Education, love working on legal education too. So, if you ever thought about being a chair but were worried about going it all alone, *look no further!* You have a safety net and a place to gain experience.
- This position entails being a part of the planning and visioning of upcoming legal education topics and communication with the VP and the membership about these exciting offerings.

If you would be interested in trying on any of these roles, the Legal Education Committee would love to hear from you. Please email Jennifer Yocum at [jenjoyyocum@gmail.com](mailto:jenjoyyocum@gmail.com) or call or text (517) 242-0171 for more information or to say "Yes!" ~ Thank you!

Jennifer Joy Yocum, CLP – Vice President of Legal Education and Certification

# Calling all Leaders....

**Do you have a passion for Marketing or Membership?**

**If you answered yes, reach out to NALS of Michigan Vice President Andrea K. at [Andreamkardatzke@gmail.com](mailto:Andreamkardatzke@gmail.com) to Inquire about open volunteer opportunities.**





Wieder Zusammen!  
(Together Again)



## NALS of Michigan 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting and Education Conference

The River View at Frankenmuth Brewery  
April 8–9, 2022



### Veranstaltungen (Events):

- April 7 (evening) Willkommensfest (Welcome party)
- April 8 Bildung (Education)
- April 9 (day) Geschäftstreffen (Business meeting)
- April 9 (evening) Preisverleihung (Awards banquet)

### Unterfunft (Lodging):

Fairfield Inn & Suites Frankenmuth	\$89/night	989-652-5000
SpringHill Suites Frankenmuth	\$104/night	989-652-7500

Last day to book at these rates is **March 7, 2022.**

Call number to hotel and ask for NALS of Michigan block, or use this link to book room:

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1621958642227&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

Conference will be hosted in person and virtually.

Registration rates will be posted soon.

## Join us for NALSfest in Frankenmuth!





engage  
inspire  
enhance  
promote

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONTACT**

Rachel Daeger  
Communications Manager  
[rachel@nals.org](mailto:rachel@nals.org)

## **NALS 70<sup>th</sup> National Conference “Driving the Soul of Legal Professionals” in Detroit, Michigan**

(June 22, 2021) NALS...the association for legal professionals announces its 70<sup>th</sup> National Conference is planned for September 16-18 at the Sheraton Detroit Metro Airport. After moving online in 2020, NALS is excited to be planning both an in-person event with a follow-up virtual education day on October 2.

The conference will feature speakers from diverse aspects of the legal industry who will present current information on key areas of law. Through these presentations and discussions, attendees will have the opportunity to earn continuing legal education credits from some of the industry’s most respected experts and leaders.

In addition to education, the national conference will welcome exhibitors of products and services key to helping legal professionals perform at a high level every day. Retail vendors of crafts, jewelry, and clothing are also part of the exhibit hall. Evening receptions give attendees time to network and celebrate their hard work over the last year.

Nakia Bradley-Lawson, president of NALS, said, “I am excited to be able to return to meeting in person while adding online education for members unable to travel. NALS members value relationships. Time and time again I hear how being able to tap into our national network of legal support professionals is one of the greatest benefits of NALS.”

All legal support professionals are welcome to attend and registration is open. Register before August 15 for the lowest rates. Cost for NALS members is \$349 and cost for non-members is \$449. Students register at a discounted rate of \$249. More information may be found online at <https://www.nals.org/page/2021conference>.

###

About NALS: For 92 years NALS has been a leader in the legal services industry offering professional development by providing continuing legal education, certifications, information, and training to those choosing the legal services industry as their career. NALS members represent every area of this industry from paralegals and legal assistants to legal administrators and office managers. Because of this diversity and an openness to welcome all members of the industry, NALS offers a broad spectrum of expertise to make the programs offered valuable to all members of the legal services industry. Visit us online at [www.nals.org](http://www.nals.org).

**NALS OF DETROIT**

# **HAPPY HOUR**

**JULY 16, 2021  
AT 7:31 PM**

**FREE**

**NALS OF DETROIT PRESENTS HAPPY HOUR VIRTUALLY IN THE "D" ON FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2021 AT 7:30 PM. BRING YOUR FAVORITE DRINK, SHOT GLASS, AND YOUR PARTY SHOES.**

**REGISTER at <https://tinyurl.com/hnsn795d>  
or CONTACT Rashonda at [rwilson@oakland.edu](mailto:rwilson@oakland.edu)**



# NALS of Lansing 5th Annual September Swing Golf Outing

Saturday, September 25, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Meridian Sun Golf Club

1018 Haslett Road  
Haslett, Michigan

New Location!

Join NALS of Lansing for its 5th Annual September Swing Golf Outing. NALS of Lansing is a non-profit organization that has been serving the capital region for over 50 years by providing an annual scholarship, continuing legal education, and certification opportunities to those in the legal services industry.

## GOLFER REGISTRATION:

## Golfer Name(s) and Email

Format: 4 - Person Scramble, Shotgun Start

Price:  \$75 per golfer       \$300 foursome

Includes: ☆ 18 holes of golf with golf cart

☆ Burgers or chicken lunch

☆ Open driving range

☆ On-the-course contests

Please mail checks payable to NALS of Lansing, c/o Jessica Bertolozzi, 313 S. Washington Sq., Lansing, MI 48933. For more information, please contact [jbortolozzi@fosterswift.com](mailto:jbortolozzi@fosterswift.com).

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** (all sponsorships include logo/link on social media and verbal recognition at event)

**Cart Sponsorship: \$800**

Large ad on each golf cart; foursome of golf; hole sign

**Exclusive Scorecard Sponsorship: \$500**

Your logo on every event scorecard; hole sign

**Exclusive Scoreboard Sponsorship: \$300**

Your logo on the official event scoreboard; hole sign

**Hole Sponsorship: \$100**

8x24 printed sign visible at the tee off area

Donations of items for prizes such as tickets to sporting or theater events, gift baskets, gift cards, etc., are appreciated.

