

THE GBA NEWS DOCKET

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Lisa W. Arthur
*President of the
Greensboro Bar
Association*

Message from the President

GBA Members,

We've come to our last newsletter of the 2020-2021 GBA year and what a year it has been! This year was nothing like what I expected it to be, and it certainly presented the GBA leadership with a number of challenges.

Our board and committee chairs rose to meet these challenges. We created a COVID Response Committee to assist members in practicing in a COVID world. We hosted a virtual Holiday Party where we traded book wrapping and live music for at home scavenger hunts and show and tell. Even without that wrapping at the Holiday Party, we were still able to have our Elementary School Book Project. We held every single membership meeting virtually, hearing from a variety of speakers on diverse topics. We held CLEs, trivia, craft night, a Herb Falk Society induction, and diversity training all via Zoom. We created a Long Range Plan to better position the GBA for years to come. We embarked on a fundraising initiative for our 9th Habitat House virtually. The GBA Foundation remained active in giving financial grants and our Awards Committee recognized deserving members. We published our monthly newsletter and expanded our social media presence. We continued to connect this year, even though we couldn't be together in person.

I want to especially thank our board and committee chairs for all of your hard work this year. None of these events would have been possible without each one of you, and it was an absolute pleasure working with you. I also want to thank Diane Lowe, who is the doer of all things GBA and a trusted advisor for our group. I'm excited about the next wave of GBA leadership, and I know that the GBA will be in good hands next year.

As I said at our last meeting, being your president this year has been one of the highlights of my professional career thus far. I could not have asked for a better group of leaders to work with and a better group of members to serve. Thank you for trusting me with this important role.

If you benefited from any of the programs that the GBA offered this year, I encourage you to consider making a donation to the ninth Habitat House to show your appreciation and thanks: <https://give.habitatgreensboro.org/campaign/bar-build-2021/c328465> Help us build something even better next year!

I look forward to seeing you next GBA year, hopefully in person. Until next time, friends! I hope you all have a wonderful summer.

Lisa Arthur

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You can contribute news or topics of interest to the GBA by contacting Editor Gabe Snyder: gsnyder@wardblacklaw.com

MAY CALENDAR NOTES

- May 6 **Battle of the Bars Trivia,**
7:00 PM, Zoom
- May 12 **GBA Board Meeting,**
4:00 PM, Zoom
- May 19 **Young Lawyers Board Meeting,**
12:00 PM, Zoom

[Click to keep up with GBA Events Online](#)
[Click Here for Legal Community Events](#)

Connect with us!



[GBA Young Lawyers Section](#)
[Greensboro Bar Association](#)

Wellness Corner

BarCARES is a confidential, short-term intervention program provided cost-free to members of the 24th Judicial District Bar and other participating judicial district bars, voluntary bar associations and law schools. If you would like additional information about the program and/or its availability in your area, please contact the BarCARES coordinator at 919.929.1227 or 1.800.640.0735 or click on the icon below.

BarCARES®

KEEPING UP WITH COVID

The Greensboro Bar Association's website now includes a page specifically for COVID-19 updates. Look for the RED banner at the top of the Home page for direct access to: <https://www.greensborobar.org/category/covid-19-updates/>. Here you will find information such as Administrative Orders, COVID-19 Positive Reports, and other news regarding COVID-19. The GBA's email updates will continue as this webpage is designed as an alternative means to publish information related to COVID-19.

BATTLE OF THE BARS TRIVIA NIGHT



Let's Get Ready to Rumble! Are you a trivia master? Do you want to support your local Bar Association and help the GBA bring home the trophy?

Join us for a virtual Battle of the Bars rematch with the High Point Bar Association on Thursday, May 6 at 7:15 PM.

Registration is required. Limited to 30 players.

Members registered as individuals will be randomly assigned to a team upon arrival. **Members wanting to form their own team of 4-6 players should ask one teammate to register and add each team member (and their email address) to their reservation as a guest.**

[Register Here!](#)

NOTICE

Submissions for consideration for the Greensboro Bar Association Newsletter should be made to gsnyder@wardblacklaw.com. All written submissions should be made in Word format and should be in complete and final form, and any photographs should be submitted in jpeg format. Any photographs submitted should contain a caption identifying the person or persons in the photograph and, where applicable, other information necessary to understand the context of the photograph. Submissions made in other formats, including e-mail text submissions, may not be considered for publication.

CONTRIBUTE NOW TO THIS YEAR'S HABITAT PROJECT

Our campaign to raise the money and volunteer commitments for this year's Habitat project is now in full swing, with a goal of raising the rest of the cost of the house in the next few weeks and getting ready for construction to begin on September 18.

Please visit our giving page now at <https://give.habitatgreensboro.org/campaign/bar-build-2021/c328465>. It gives you three options: to make an immediate contribution on the site, to mail a check to Habitat at the address provided or to make a pledge payable by July 31. Please also use the link on the Giving Page to add to a list of volunteers for the construction work. We will contact the volunteers on the list to schedule their work once a construction schedule has been developed.

We are already making great progress in getting ready for our September start:

- Over \$45,000 has been raised to date moving us steadily closer to our goal.
- A number of volunteers have already signed up on the volunteer list.
- Under the leadership of Judge Vincent, all the available District Court Judges have volunteered for the work. Their commitment continues their tradition of active participation in our Habitat projects.
- We have contacted the staff at Elon Law School, who will recruit law students to work with us when they return to school in the fall.

- We have lined up representatives in several firms to solicit contributions and volunteer commitments from within their firms. Please respond if a representative from your firm approaches you about participating.
- The Fox Rothschild firm has agreed to take on one of the workdays in the fall. Please let us know if your firm would also like to provide the crew for one of our workdays. Law firms who have adopted workdays on our past projects have found them to be a rewarding team-building experience.

As the start date approaches, we will be assigned the homeowners for the house, who will work with us to build a new home and new future for themselves and their children. We will also be assigned a house site. As soon as we know the family and site, we will let you know.

This will be our ninth Habitat project building on a proud tradition of Habitat work by the Greensboro Bar Association. As far as we know, our work with Habitat is unmatched by any bar association in the country. Please go to the Giving Page now and join us in this effort!

If you have any questions, contact Bill Cooke at wocjr@bellsouth.net.

Many thanks to the District Court Judges and to the many generous members who have contributed so far, and lets all look forward to making another Habitat house a reality.





Camille Stell
is President and
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this conversation
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or 800.662.8843.

A PRIMER ON YOUR FIRM'S FINANCIAL HEALTH PART 3: COLLECTIONS

If you are operating the fees, billing, and collections component of your practice as you did twenty years ago, chances are you are missing opportunities for work.

Clio COVID-19 Impact Report

Clio is a cloud-based legal practice management solution designed for solo and small law firms. Clio serves 150,000 customers spanning 90 countries.

As part of Clio's ongoing research for their annual Legal Trends Report, they have undertaken new research to learn more about the impact of COVID-19 on the legal industry.

According to the 2020 Clio COVID-19 Impact Report:

- 71% of legal professionals are more concerned about their clients' ability to pay legal fees than before the pandemic
- 25% of law firms are losing revenue due to unpaid bills than before the pandemic
- 75% of clients would prefer to pay their legal fees via payment plan, while only 53% of law firms are equipped to offer payment plans

Online Payments as a Marketing Tool

The 2019 Clio Legal Trends Report showed that 50% of consumers in need of legal services are more likely to hire a lawyer who accepts online payments. And 40% of individuals in need of legal services said they would **not** hire a lawyer unless they accepted credit or debit cards.

A recent study conducted by Total System Services showed that as many as 75% of customers today prefer to pay with a credit or debit card. In addition to the convenience, customers enjoy credit card rewards, cash back and other perks of using their cards.

And importantly, studies show that 85% of electronic invoices are paid the same week they are sent, and 57% are paid the same day the client receives the invoice.

You need online payment options. Taking credit cards means you get paid faster. The money is deposited in your account sooner than with a check. Integration between your credit card processor and your time and billing program and your accounting system reduces duplication of payment information. Using a

credit card processor avoids the risk of client credit card numbers jotted down on sticky notes in your office.

Credit Cards and Trust Accounts

No credit card fees from the merchant should ever be taken out of the trust account. If the client disputes the charge, the merchant should not remove the funds from the trust account without notifying your firm and verifying your permission. See NC State Bar Ethics Rules RPC 247 Payment of Fees by Electronic Transfer, 97 FEO 9 Credit Card Chargebacks Against a Trust Account, 2009 FEO 4 Credit Card Account that Avoids Commingling, and 2013 Formal Ethics Opinion 13 – Disbursement Against Funds Credited to Trust Account.

When shopping for a credit card payment processor you should consider costs such as transaction fees, monthly rates, integration with your other practice management tools, and Terms of Service language.

While there are many online payment platforms available, LawPay is the Affinity Partner of the NC Bar Association. LawPay was designed specifically for attorneys. LawPay prevents commingling of earned and unearned funds, protects your trust account from third-party debiting, and ensures IOLTA compliance for credit card, debit card, and eCheck transactions.

Other legal specific credit card payment processors include ClientPay, Headnote, LexCharge, and MyCase Payments. LawPay and other credit card payment processors can also process ACH, e-payments, and e-checks.

Automated Clearing House, a U.S. financial network used for electronic payments and money transfers, often have fees that are lower than credit card processing fees.

In the NCBA's Center for Practice Management blog, Catherine Reach has a post with a link to the ABA Solo, Small Firm Division listserv discussion on the ethics of charging processing or convenience fees to make up for the credit card processing fee, check it out. The short answer is don't charge your client a fee to make up for the credit card processing fee.

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Hillary Kies is President of the Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section and is an attorney with [Turning Point Litigation](#).

Young Lawyers Section: Connections

End of the Year Party

YLS will be hosting a final virtual social event to mark the end of the year! Watch your emails for more details. We look forward to seeing you!

April Events

In April, the Young Lawyers Section was busy! First, we provided a catered dinner from Liberty Oak to Greensboro Urban Ministries. We also had a fun virtual March Madness beer tasting event!

Facebook Group

Have a question about practice? Procedure? Which clerk to talk to? The Young Lawyers Section has created a private Facebook Group for its members to communicate with one another about the ins and outs of practicing law. A link to the Group can be found at [Greensboro Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Group](#). Please request to join and ask your peers for any legal advice you may need!

Connect With Us

Do you want more information about upcoming Young Lawyers Section events or how you can get involved? Visit our website at www.greensboroyls.org, email Hillary Kies (hkies@turningpointlit.com) to make sure you are on the listserv, and follow us on Facebook ([Greensboro Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section](#)). If you have missed the opportunity to connect with the Young Lawyers Section, we hope to see you at one of our future events!



A PRIMER ON YOUR FIRM'S FINANCIAL HEALTH PART 2: COLLECTIONS Continued from page 4

Orion Law Management 2019 Collections Survey

The Orion Law Management 2019 Collections Survey reveals the many challenges law firms face with collection matters.

- Policy – 57% - setting a universal payment and collections policy that will apply to all clients
- Enforcement – 29% - how do you handle approaching clients about late payments once they become overdue?
- Tone – 14% - how do you contact the client to get payment but avoid offending them in the process

Best Practices

Invest the time to establish a policy and communicate it throughout the firm. Get attorney buy-in for the process you use and share success stories. If you use resources other than the attorney, make sure everyone is on the same page about the collections message. In other words, don't have attorneys undermine collections efforts by saying, "it's not me trying to shake you down!"

Be *proactive*. Stay on top of accounts receivable with monthly reports so that billing doesn't become delinquent, and if it does, it's not extremely overdue. Following up with the client on outstanding invoices at billing time can help clients avoid falling too far behind to catch up.

Phone calls can be impactful. This gives you a chance to connect with your client and determine if there is a problem in the process – the work, the amount billed, a personal or business issue with the client.

Asking for money is hard – but forfeiting firm revenue is harder. Be respectful, courteous, and kind. Listen. Look for options to assist your client.

Cash is King

Keep in mind, in times of crisis such as a pandemic, everything is negotiable.

For clients who have outstanding balances:

- Reach out by phone *and* email to inquire about the status of payment

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PRESIDENT ARTHUR RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

President Lisa Arthur was recognized for her service at the virtual Annual Meeting of the Greensboro Bar Association and the 24th Judicial District Bar on April 15, 2021. President Elect Desmond Sheridan paid tribute to Ms. Arthur's many accomplishments and contributions to our organization. This year's need for social distance dictated that a gift from the members be presented to Lisa at her office after the meeting.

Thank you, Lisa, for serving the members of the Greensboro Bar Association well in these challenging times!



HERB FALK SOCIETY 2020 INDUCTION

The Herb Falk Society honors those members of the Greensboro Bar Association who contribute at least 75 hours of pro bono service annually. The sixteen individuals inducted for 2020 were recognized at the April 15, 2021 virtual annual meeting. They are:

- Lisa Arthur (130.3 hours)
- Kearns Davis (156.6 hours)
- Richard W. Gabriel (75 hours)
- Eloise McCain Hassell (90.6 hours)
- Manisha P. Patel (393.25 hours)
- Karen McKeithen Schaede (76 hours)
- Jim Slaughter (94 hours)
- D. Clark Smith, Jr. (305.4 hours)
- Theodora A. Vaporis (94 hours)
- Jonathan Wall (94 hours)

**Congratulations
and thank you
for your service!**

- Continue to send the bill to your client – their situation may change in a few months
- Send invoices in a different way – if you mailed it, send it via email as a follow up
- Offer payment deferrals
- Consider payment plans
- Consider extending a discount for remitting a balance due
- Make it easy for clients to pay you with online or electronic payment options, including credit card
- Ask for a discount for remitting a balance due
- Use a credit card with favorable terms or benefits to you such as cash-back options

Conclusion

Billing and collection of fees is a work in progress. As with many aspects of your business, this is an evergreen component, meaning that there is always work to be done in this area, always knowledge to collect to make sure you are on top of trends and clients are responding to your fees, billing, and collections processes.

Also, assess your own law firm accounts payable situation:

- Reach out to your creditors to inquire about options for payment
- Request payment deferrals
- Request a payment plan

Camille Stell is the President of Lawyers Mutual Consulting & Services. Continue this conversation by contacting Camille at camille@lawyersmutualconsulting.com or 919.677.8900.



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