

THE AWA BRIEF

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

My seven-year old niece, Katherine, tells people that she wants to be a pop star, a model, or a fashion designer. Plus, she has a back-up plan, first women president of the United States. That's one of the wonderful things about children—they dream, they dream big, and it seems to come naturally. Not so with us grown-ups. More often than not, we get so caught up in the deadlines and stresses of day-to-day life that we fail to take time to dream.

Instead of dreaming, adults make lists, organize, set goals. At the beginning of a new year, we set resolutions for living a better or healthier life. Unfortunately, studies show that the chances of keeping those resolutions are pretty slim. According to a study by the Opinion Research Corp., only 8% of the people who make resolutions are always successful in achieving their resolutions and 24% never succeed and have failed on every resolution every year. The study indicates that the younger you are, the more likely you are to achieve your resolutions. Approximately 39% of those in their twenties achieve their resolutions every year or every other year while less than 15% of those over fifty achieve their resolutions every year or every other year. These statistics made me wonder if younger adults dream more and, thus, are more successful in their resolutions than older adults. If so, dreaming might be the key to meeting our goals and changing our lives for the better.

With that in mind, I challenge you to try something different for 2010. Instead of creating an overwhelming list of things you think you should change about yourself, choose a dream ... one thing that you truly, passionately want to learn, see, change, do, or experience in this lifetime.

Kim Simpson, a political reporter turned communications and fund-raising consultant, coined the term Resolutionista,

someone who make resolutions, *keeps* resolutions, and *enjoys the journey*. Her formula for a successful Resolutionista starts by developing your dream. The next steps are to make a firm commitment to the dream, turn it into a specific, one-sentence resolution that clearly states your intention, and develop a plan. The final step to making the dream a reality is to set and carry out small “daily resolves,” daily goals that can be achieved one at a time, one day at a time. Simpson sums up her plan: Dream, Decide, Define, Develop, and Do it Daily.

Whether you decide to set resolutions to change bad habits or to follow a dream, you may find that an upcoming AWA event will help with your journey. Ann Daly's Mini-Retreat will be an excellent tool for gaining clarity and developing dreams. If those dreams include giving back to the community, consider making your voice heard at the judicial endorsement meeting next week, attending an upcoming CLE training by the Tahirih Justice Center and providing pro bono services to protect immigrant women and girls seeking justice in the United States (details TBA), serving on the AWA Foundation to raise scholarship funds for deserving female law students, or advising students at our law student reception. If you want to develop new friendships or simply have fun, join us for monthly meetings and watch the calendar for upcoming social events. Chick Flick II is in the works!

While writing this letter, I started thinking of my own dreams and remembered the book *Eat, Pray, Love* and the author's trip to Bali. So, I am thinking of traveling there with Habitat for Humanity. Any Resolutionistas want to join me?



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2009 AWA JUDICIAL RECEPTION HIGHLIGHTS

By: Caroline Marciano, AWA Newsletter Editor

An evening of decadence and delight awaited the members and friends of the Association of Women Attorneys on October 28, 2009, as the judges of the Harris County Civil District Courts and the Federal District Courts of the Southern District of Texas—Houston Division descended upon the fabulous River Oaks Country Club for the AWA’s annual Judicial Reception. It couldn’t have been a more perfect fall evening as the wine was poured and the hors d’oeuvres were savored along with the lively conversation that abounded the room of this celebrated venue. Sophia Adrogué and S. Shawn Stephens, Co-Chairs of the AWA Judicial Reception Committee, led an impressive march toward attracting guests and sponsors for the event, enabling the AWA to donate \$12,000 to the AWA Foundation for the purpose of awarding scholarships to eligible Houston-area law students. Many thanks are owed to our Co-Chairs and AWA President, Pamela Powell, for their hard work, as well as to our generous sponsors who altogether helped make the event possible and a resounding success. An enjoyable time was had by all as we look forward to the celebration of this event every year!



TIFFANY STAR — DEBORAH LAWSON

By: Shannon Powers

Many of you may *think* you know Deborah Lawson. Sure, you know she's Treasurer for AWA, and she is a Trustee of the AWA Foundation. You may even know that she specializes in certain niche practices, including maritime, non-profit governance, and entertainment law. But those topics only glint on the surface of Deb's multifaceted character.

Did you know that Deb is a dedicated Aggie? How dedicated? It turns out that being an Aggie is the story behind her personal email moniker: elephant92. Apparently, at Texas A&M, seniors are known as "elephants." Deb was a senior in 1992. She picked up that user ID 17 years ago, and it has stayed with her ever since. Go to any online service (Hotmail, Yahoo, Facebook, etc.), and look up elephant92. It will *always* be Deb. (If you find one where it is not, please let her know. Deb actively polices use of *her* moniker.)

Deborah recently brought together various sides of her personality by hosting an A&M Alumni Association luncheon. The star attraction was Roger Creager (known for "The Everclear Song"). I understand it was a very successful, standing-room-only event, and no invisible intoxicant was required.

Many folks who *think* they know Deb may be a bit confused about her "day job." She has been doing maritime work with

Fowler, Rodriguez, Valdes-Fauli for a number of years, but you will not find her on their web site. She works with them as something of a freelance attorney. It sounds like a dream job: all the work you want, be your own boss, staff and IT support as needed, and independent contractor tax deductions. True to form, Deb describes her work with humor and humility – she makes it look easy.

When asked about her long-range goals, Deborah indulges her creative side. Yes, it is true that she recently made it to the final round of the 2009 Stella Cameron Scarlet Boa Mystery Writing Competition. But, rather than striving for artistic success in her own right, Deb would prefer expand her entertainment law engagements to include acting as a literary agent. She also plans to always have some ongoing work with non-profit organizations, finding the personal rewards of "giving back" always worth the effort.

At home, Deb is surrounded by her family: Rusty Williams (husband), 5 cats, 4 rabbits, 2 fish, and 3 birds. You will find her on Facebook, where she networks with upwards of 150 friends. During her spare time, Deborah enjoys reading. Currently her recommended reading list includes Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson series (<http://www.rickriordan.com/index.php/books-for-children/>), especially *The Lightning Thief*.



Deborah Lawson,
AWA Tiffany Star Recipient

"DEB FINDS THE
PERSONAL
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PAST RECIPIENTS INCLUDE: Shannon Powers, Barbara Gardner, Carol Keough, Trisha Keough, Joanne Ericksen, Janet Beck, Johnetta Lang, Andrea Tran, Chantal Rappi, Rachel Greene, Caroline Marciano, Pamela Powell, Teri Walter, Heather Asselin, Alia Vinson, Martha Failing, Lynne Clarke, Denise Kurt, Lisa Rossmiller, Deana Freeman, Jenn Rustay, Patricia Casey, Monica Vaughan, Paige Sarff, Karen Hurwitz, Teresa Waldrop, Hon. Eva Guzman, Susan Myres, Jeannine Flynn, Janiece Horn, Janet Schafer, Terry Elizondo, Barbara Runge, Janice Pardue, Cameron Vann, Sally Andrews, Ellen Shelton, Kathleen Gasner, Elizabeth Asher, Brenda Whitehead, Karen Lister Conticello, Katherine Yzaguirre

AN EVENING OF ART AND WINE—A REVIEW

By: Joanne Ericksen, AWA President-Elect

On November 4, 2009, AWA members enjoyed an Evening of Art & Wine, which was generously co-sponsored by FindLaw, US Legal Support, and the Association of Women Attorneys. The event took place at the John Palmer Gallery in the Heights. Guests were able to view numerous works of internationally-known contemporary abstract artist John Palmer. Mr. Palmer's works, in canvas, wood and paper are full of color and energy. His abstracts are expressive and infused with passion. AWA members also had the opportunity to meet Mr. Palmer, a native Houstonian, and his delightful partner Ryan Lindsay. What a treat to be able to talk to the artist himself to discuss what inspires him and his creative process!

Due to the generous sponsorship of FindLaw and US Legal Support, our members and their guests enjoyed also able to enjoy delicious appetizers and wine, in addition to the delightful art of Mr. Palmer. It was a lovely evening of art, wine and camaraderie.



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2009 AWA HOLIDAY RECEPTION HIGHLIGHTS



Many thanks to Laura Gibson, AWA Board Member, for opening her home to our organization and graciously hosting this wonderful event!



TAKE A MEMBER TO LUNCH—MEHA GARGI

By: Joanne Ericksen, AWA President-Elect

In November, I had the pleasure of dining with AWA member, Meha Gargi. We had lunch at Tony Vallone's newest restaurant, Ciao Bello. Ciao Bello is located in the Galleria-area at 5161 San Felipe at Sage. The restaurant is light and airy and full of noise. If you want a nice, quiet place to chat with a friend, this place is not it. But if you want to see and be seen, this is the place for you!

Meha and I perused the menu for a good 10 minutes before being able to decide what to order. The menu is full of choices including soup, salad, pasta, pizza, steak and chicken. Meha opted for one of the lunch specials, a Seared Salmon Salad, laced with a light, lemony vinaigrette. I chose the Agnolotti di Zucca, which is Italian for butternut squash tortellini bathed in a sage butter sauce. It was tasty, but a bit too sweet for an entree.

Our menu choices behind us, Meha and I got down to the business of getting to know each other. Meha graduated from the University of Houston in 2000, with a double major in Finance and Management, as well as a minor in Asian Studies. Meha is a 2008 South Texas College of Law graduate, and became licensed in November 2008. Since

graduation Meha has assisted other attorneys with appellate work, document review, and general civil litigation matters. However, she is still looking to land a permanent, full-time position that takes advantage of her tremendously varied skill set and knowledge base.

Meha is an engaging conversationalist with a smile as warm as the Texas sun. We laughed and talked easily, and our lunch hour together flew by. In fact, I think we stayed at Ciao Bello closer to 2 hours because we were having so much fun talking!

Meha has been a member of the AWA since law school and frequently attends AWA meetings and events. She enjoys the wide variety of events the AWA offers, as well as the camaraderie of fellow female attorneys. Meha finds her fellow AWA members to be friendly and warm, and always welcoming. I am thrilled to have Meha as an AWA member, and I urge you to seek her out at the next meeting or event. If she's not wearing a nametag, just look for a warm smile and mirthful eyes and you'll find Meha.

TAKE ANOTHER MEMBER TO LUNCH—KIMBERLY CARTER

By: Pamela Powell, AWA President

AWA member Kimberly Carter recently joined me at one of my favorite lunch spots—Daily Review Café. Located on West Lamar just off of Allen Parkway and Dunlavy, the restaurant is easily accessible from downtown, the Galleria, and Greenway Plaza. From location to atmosphere, the café is ideal for a quiet, relaxing lunch with a colleague or client. Kimberly and I agreed that the charming porch and garden patio provide a perfect spot for *al fresco* dining and a respite from the hectic workday, as well as a bit more space and privacy than the inside tables.

Not only is the atmosphere at the café inviting, but the staff is outgoing and the menu offers something for everyone. Avoiding carbs? Look to the special low-carb menu for lean proteins and vegetables that are surprisingly appealing. Already renouncing your New Year's resolutions? Seek comfort in the famous chicken pot pie or Southern-fried chicken. Seeking moderation? Check out the menu for options such as baked goat cheese salad with spiced pecans and grilled apples, warm spinach salad with pine nuts and feta cheese, black bean chili, and a Mediterranean plate with

tabouli and hummus. Now that I have you convinced to try Daily Review Café, on to the real story ...

Kimberly, a Houston native, attended Memorial High School before heading east to Wellesley College for undergraduate studies. After earning a bachelor's degree in English, Kimberly returned to the warmth of the south for law school at the University of Texas. After all, she is an avid UT football fan! Kimberly clerked for Judge Carnes on the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Montgomery, Alabama, before joining Fulbright & Jaworski, LLP. After spending time in the firm's Bankruptcy and Insolvency Practice Group, Kimberly developed an interest in probate law and is now working with Cenatiempo & Ditta, LLP. She joined the AWA last June and immediately volunteered to help greet guests at the meetings. Little did she know this would lead to more work as one of our Membership Co-Chairs, which she has taken on with a smile and a can-do attitude. In her spare time, Kimberly keeps our membership list up-to-date, volunteers with Bunny Buddies and Brigid's Place, cares for her own bunny and cat, and (last but certainly not least) hangs out with her husband, Christof Spieler.



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MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

A small (2 lawyers) litigation firm is looking for office space to share, preferably in the Galleria, Heights or Greenway area. Wants to either share with a larger firm or organize a group of small firms/solos to lease space and share costs. If interested, call Teri at 713 529-2020.

The AWA is now on Facebook! Visit us at www.facebook.com/awahouston to view our photos, upcoming events, and more! Please enter the URL above in your web browser address bar to visit the AWA fan page without having to open an account on Facebook.

*Have something you'd like to share with the AWA members—career change, wedding, etc? E-mail Caroline Marciano at cmarciano@cenatiempo.com to include your special announcement in the next newsletter!

DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING EVENTS...

JANUARY 27, 2010: AWA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP AND JUDICIAL ENDORSEMENT MEETING at The Houstonian, 111 North Post Oak Lane, Grand Ballroom, at 6:00 p.m. Only those members in good standing on December 28, 2009, and whose dues are current for 2010 may attend the endorsement meeting. If you are eligible to vote but are unable to attend, you may submit a proxy. Proxies will be emailed to the membership the week of the meeting. To RSVP, email Joanne Ericksen at jmejoanne@yahoo.com.

JANUARY 30, 2010: ANN DALY "RETURN TO CLARITY" MINI-RETREAT at Brown Sims, P.C., 1177 West Loop South, 10th Floor, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. AWA members have the opportunity to attend a special mini retreat led by Ann Daly, PhD, a life coach, keynote speaker, and award-winning author. Dr. Daly will discuss embracing your ambition, replacing worn-out strategies, controlling your time, and refocusing on what matters most. The cost is \$149. Register at www.ann Daly.com/workshops before Tuesday, January 26, 2010. Many thanks to Monica Markovich and Brown Sims, P.C., for the venue.

FEBRUARY 24, 2010: AWA LAW STUDENT RECEPTION at the Harris County Civil Courthouse, 201 Caroline, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The AWA invites Houston-area women law students and practicing attorneys to join us for an evening of friendship and networking to help introduce area women law students to what it is practicing women attorneys really do during their days. To RSVP or express your interest in explaining your practice area, please e-mail Kimberly Carter at kimberlyjancarter@gmail.com.

MARCH 24, 2010: AWA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND ELECTIONS at La Griglia, 2002 West Gray. David P. Frizell, Jr. of Frizell Group International will present "Fraud Investigations in the Workplace". David is a Certified Fraud Examiner and former counterintelligence agent, including almost five years with the Central Intelligence Agency. Elections for the 2010-2011 AWA Board will also be held that evening. The meeting begins with networking at 6:00 p.m. followed by the elections and presentation at 6:30 p.m. To RSVP, email Joanne Ericksen at jmejoanne@yahoo.com.

You are also invited to attend the following events which are not sponsored by the AWA:

FEBRUARY 12-14, 2010: JESSUP INTERNATIONAL LAW MOOT COURT COMPETITION at the University of Houston Law Center. The ILSA is looking for lawyers to serve as judges for both the oral and written components of the competition. Participation as a judge counts towards self-study CLE credit in Texas. Additionally, CLE credit may be available at no cost for attorneys admitted in other jurisdictions. If interested in volunteering, please contact Antonio Riva Palacio at arivapa@ilsa.org.

MARCH 4, 2010: HBA'S NIGHT COURT TWENTY at the Hobby Center, 7:30 p.m. The one-night-only event will compile the best of the best from the past two decades of original shows, featuring both live performances and video-taped highlights. It will be an occasion for reunion, remembrance, and celebration, with lots of concentrated entertainment and, of course, plenty of laughter. Tickets are available for \$20 plus surcharge through the Hobby Center Box Office beginning Monday, January 18 by calling 713-315-2525 or at www.thehobbycenter.org.