

March 2018

# DE DIE IN DIEM

The Newsletter of the Western Montana Bar Association



**Don't Miss — WMBA  
March Luncheon and  
CLE—Thursday, March  
15!**

**WMBA  
Spring CLE  
and Lunch  
At the  
Florence Building**

(4 CLE credit pending)

Please RSVP by Tuesday, 313 at 5:00 p.m.:  
[rsvp@westernmtbar.com](mailto:rsvp@westernmtbar.com)

WMBA Spring CLE is \$60 for WMBA members, \$75 for non-members. This includes lunch!

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## Board of Director's Message from Meri Althausen:

Happy March, WMBA! The sun is out and things are looking up (at least, as I'm writing this message!) My name is Meri Althausen, I run a solo family law and mediation firm in Missoula called Forward Legal, PLLC, and was for the last five and a half years a partner at Montana Legal Justice, Missoula's law firm serving the justice gap with exclusively sliding scale fees. As the President-Elect of the WMBA I am responsible for organizing our annual Spring CLE and, like the name of my new firm implies, I wanted this CLE to take a forward-looking and positive tone with respect to the opportunities we have to do good for ourselves and our community in 2018.

Some of you know that a few years ago I took on a second "job" of running the Monkey Bar Gym Missoula, a small class-based functional fitness studio similar to a cross fit or Momentum Athletics. I had been working out there regularly and when the previous owner announced she intended to close the gym, a friend and I offered that we would take it over instead to preserve the awesome community and wellness space that had developed there.

When I first started I couldn't shake the feeling of nervousness that comes with showing up to work: blood heating up, heart pumping a little faster, trepidation on pressing "open" on my email. I wasn't sure where it was coming from but within a week, I realized... this was all my conditioned response to work. Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE there was positive. Thankful, even! Could it really be true? My job description included handing out high fives at least once every 20 mins, if not more? They were calling me at home TO GIVE ME MONEY? To ask if they could bring a friend? I had no idea there was an entire profession where everyone was... happy.

This drew my attention to how conditioned we are, in the legal profession, to withstand stress and conflict. For a time I was assigned to several high conflict GAL cases at once, and for a good bulk of my day each of the parents who called me called for the sole purpose of screaming at me. I was regularly complimented by my co-workers at how collected I could remain while getting screamed at and threatened, usually eventually turning the conversation around into something productive. Some of you may have even seen my protestor, set up for a day complaining outside my office. Testifying in these cases, I felt a strange honor in taking the heat from these battle-worn parents in hopes that their children wouldn't have to. But should that really be all in a day's work? Should we be expected to withstand that kind of conflict, or participate in it?

As lawyers we all probably thrive a little under pressure, managing conflict on behalf of other people, helping them fight their fights so they don't have to, working the complicated legal issues with precision. But do you really know how stressed out you are, if you have nothing to compare it to? No break? No purposeful attempt at doing just the opposite? How much of that tolerance for stress do we just get "used" to, and are we really "used" to it or is it silently hurting our health? Our relationships? Or our self-care? If these cases don't resolve in a forward-moving direction, do we feel our work was worth anything, or did we just enable more fighting?

We often feel like our client's counselors, and we are in the position of giving life advice, help with managing conflict, choosing battles, and helping our clients have realistic expectations about the future. We're often the first line of defense, getting the call "he's here, on the property," "the kids won't get in the car with her, what do I do," "the police are going to his house right now, what do I do?" But so often, we receive little to no training on managing our own stress, handling ourselves under pressure, or how to properly deal with the fear and concern we bottle up in those moments in order to be cool and collected for the families with whom we work.

Continued on page 2



**Board of Director's message (Cont. from page 1):**

The Montana Bar Association and the American Bar Association have directed us to begin to emphasize wellness and provide opportunities to engage in the mindful practice of law. So with our CLE on March 15th, we will start off with a presentation on wellness from Pippa Browde, tax professor and coordinator for the ABIII Law School's WELL Project, and we will conclude with a presentation from Jane Cowley and Simon Fickinger on managing difficult situations: practical tips for keeping your heart rate down when others' are up. Included will be tech tips to make life easier in 2018 from Dana Hupp and Steve Schmitz, and a positive look at creating families via surrogacy from Susan Ridgeway.

Please join us! Thursday March 15<sup>th</sup> from noon-5:00. \$60 Members and \$75 Non-Members, and Lunch will be served promptly at 12:00 with presentations starting at 12:10.

Meri Althaus lives in Missoula with her husband Andy and two kids Ellie (12) and Macy (5). She has 13 years of experience in crisis management and social work and now operates a solo family law and mediation firm, Forward Legal. She will be the president of the WMBA beginning this fall. Through all of childhood she was the last picked for every sports team (except kickball...) and the kid dangling at the bottom of the rope in gym class, but now is the head trainer and general manager at the Monkeybar Gym Missoula!



## **Join us for the WMBA Spring CLE!**

### **Thursday, March 15     12:00-5:00 p.m.**

## **Wellness, Tech Tips, Surrogacy, Managing Difficult Situations, Pro Bono Opportunities Update**

### **\$60 for WMBA members, \$75 for non- members (includes lunch)**

**Rsvp: [rsvp@westernmtbar.com](mailto:rsvp@westernmtbar.com)**





## Join the New Lawyers' Section for its 2018 Annual Toolkit CLE! Friday, April 6, 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The NLS Toolkit CLE offers an affordable opportunity for professional growth, education, and networking. NLS is seeking approval of 4.0 CLE credits. Pre-registration pricing is \$40 for NLS members and \$45 for non-NLS members (prices increase by \$5 for same day registrants). Law students and others not seeking credit hours are welcome to attend free of charge. Topics include: Indian law; risk management; judges panel; and electronic discovery. A post-CLE reception will follow.

Connect with the most extensive section of the Montana State Bar and enhance your career!




### Celebrating a High Water Mark: A Montana Stream Access Law Symposium

Please join us on Friday, March 16, at the Blewett School of Law for a special gathering "Celebrating a High Water Mark: A Montana Stream Access Law Symposium." The event commemorates Montana's extraordinary stream access case law and legislation.

Governor Steve Bullock will open the event, followed by attorney Jim Goetz, who brought the landmark cases that recognized the public's right to access state waters for recreational use. Next, a roundtable of the drafters and stakeholders who crafted the original Stream Access Bill will discuss the key lessons to their success. Later, panels will cover legal ethics, subsequent developments in the law, and issues on the horizon such as climate change, tribal rights, and instream flow. For a full agenda and registration information go to: [www.umt.edu/montana-stream-access](http://www.umt.edu/montana-stream-access).

*4.5 CLE Credits, incl. 1.0 Ethics Credits (Pending Approval).*



The Veterans Law Section of the State Bar of Montana, the Alexander Blewett III School of Law Veterans Advocacy Clinic, and the Montana Supreme Court Statewide Pro Bono Program are partnering to offer **free four-hour CLE training** and materials in exchange for assisting one veteran with a discharge upgrade.

Wednesday, March 21, 12:00 p.m.— 4:00 p.m.

Register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MilitaryupgradeCLE>



The Western Montana Bar Association ("WMBA") periodically emails attorneys and other interested parties regarding upcoming events. To balance providing notice of relevant events while at the same time avoiding clogging our members inboxes, effective October 15, 2016, the WMBA will send email announcements to its members for non-WMBA events on the first and third Monday of each month (if requested), and only for events that are not for profit and that promote the mission of the WMBA as approved by the Board. These announcements can also be included in the WMBA's monthly newsletter. For all other events, ad space can be purchased in the WMBA's monthly newsletter. If you are not receiving announcements, please contact: [president@westernmtbar.com](mailto:president@westernmtbar.com). If you would like to inquire about purchasing ad space in the WMBA's newsletter, please contact: [secretary@westernmtbar.com](mailto:secretary@westernmtbar.com).

## Office Share Downtown Missoula.

Nice space in the Higgins Building with Randy Harrison and Charley Carpenter. Call Randy at 721-7210.

## Upcoming WMBA

### Family Law Pro

### Bono Clinics:

March 21, 2018

April 4, 2018

April 18, 2018

If you want to volunteer, please contact Gina Zobenica at [coordinator.wmba.pro.bono@gmail.com](mailto:coordinator.wmba.pro.bono@gmail.com) or 543-8343, ext. 207

## BECAUSE BAD THINGS CAN HAPPEN TO GOOD LAWYERS.



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# WESTERN MONTANA BAR ASSOCIATION



## MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION 2017-2018

The WMBA is now accepting applications and payment for the 2017-2018 membership year. The cost is \$25.00 per attorney for full membership in the WMBA from September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018. Please complete the following form and return it to:

WMBA Treasurer  
P.O. Box 7451  
Missoula, MT 59807-7451

*(Please print or type:)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25.00

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Attorneys: *(for firm use – provide name and email address)*

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**Please make your check payable to WMBA in the amount of: TOTAL      \$     .00**