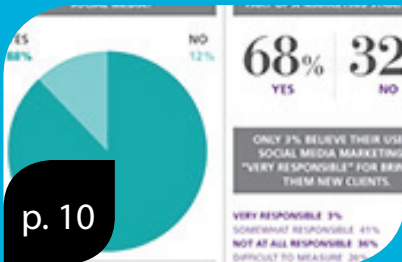


# The NETWORK

INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIONS

## When Personnel Hurdles Result in Office Triumphs



Marketing In the Digital Age



Breathing New Life Into  
Ageing Receivables



2016 Charity Freedom Ride

## THE NETWORK IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

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## THE NETWORK

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MARIE COLÓN, LITTLER MENDELSON

Happy New Year 2017! We made it through another year! With a new year, you've probably made some New Year's resolutions – and why not? This is the time for a fresh start with new perspectives. The South Florida Chapter can help you gain a fresh start into the new year. Have you thought about joining a committee? Did you know we have the following committees looking for volunteers like you?

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- DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
- EDUCATION/PROGRAMS
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There are volunteer opportunities for everyone on every schedule. Some of the tasks are project-specific and require a small commitment of time, while others are more time-intensive. With reasonable effort, committee involvement and balancing work/life is manageable and very rewarding.

Volunteering for this chapter has been a great highlight in my career and in my personal life. The connections and friendships I've made have been worth the time, effort, and commitment it takes to volunteer. There's also the possibility you can chair one of these committees. As a committee chair and after you've served one year, you're eligible to receive a \$2,000 scholarship towards any ALA Conference. Isn't that amazing? Need more information? Reach out to me or any board member for additional information. I highly encourage each of you to become more active in our chapter. You won't regret it! I certainly haven't.

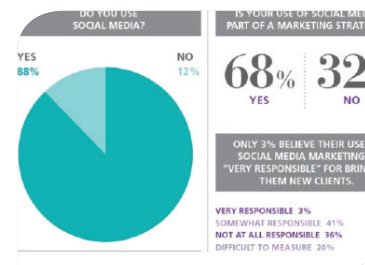
Wishing all of you good health, wealth, and more importantly happiness into the start of 2017!

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## WHEN PERSONNEL HURDLES RESULT IN OFFICE TRIUMPHS



Legal managers are often hurled into the throes of difficult and sometimes awkward situations when it comes to dealing with personnel matters.

We analyze the issues, develop an objective resolution and hope that it all pans out positively and to the benefit of all involved. Sometimes the results aren't always how we'd hoped, but sometimes the outcome is great. We asked fellow ALASOFLA Chapter members if they would be willing to divulge an experience that demonstrated a "win-win" situation. The following

contributions were shared anonymously.

### *Difficult Situation #1*

We had an employee that was stellar all around – punctual, efficient and truly integral to our core staff. The only downside was that she had, what was presumed at the time, a body odor issue. Also, there was a neighboring cubicle containing an employee that was an ardent wearer of strong perfumes – a noteworthy fact that would become pertinent later on.

### *Proposed Resolution*

This issue needed to be addressed with this employee in an effort to see if there was anything we could do to assist her. Knowing full well this was a delicate matter, I prefaced my conversation by stating that what I was about to say may be difficult to hear. I explained to her that there was an unpleasant odor coming from her work area and that this was noticeable to others. She said she was aware of the strong odor. She explained that she suffered

from migraines, which made her sensitive to the smells of perfumes and other robust scents. She went on to say that one of the remedies she used to alleviate her discomfort was the application of a medicinal ointment. This ointment gave off a pungent smell. She continued by saying that the heavy perfume worn by the nearby employee would exacerbate her symptoms, making her apply more of the strongly-scented ointment.

*Continued on next page >*

### Final Outcome

Because the main problem was due to a medical issue, this needed to be tackled with particular tact and sensitivity. I decided to purchase an air purifier and place it in a common area, closest to the employee with the migraines/smell sensitivity. Before doing so, I met with her and told her about the proposed idea – she was thrilled! She was pleased that the purifier would provide relief to her from the peripheral odors of the office i.e. perfumes, cleaning products, etc., causing her to use less of the strong-smelling ointment. This resulted in the elimination of all unwanted odors. Now that's a win-win!

### Difficult Situation #2

I once had two “legal secretaries,” as they were called back then. Both ladies were in their mid-late 50's, unmarried,

with excellent secretarial skills and experience. It was a large firm that had few secretaries available and willing to do overtime work as needed and as family situations permitted. These two ladies, always eager to work overtime, became very competitive and eventually combative about being assigned overtime work. One of the women felt the other “sabotaged” her by directly soliciting work from the attorneys rather than it being assigned to either of them. She felt this resulted in the other getting more overtime hours than she did. They each came to my office regularly to complain about the other for various things, such as chewing gum too loudly, wearing too much perfume, always getting the “grunt” work, etc. I eventually had to move them to separate work areas.

### Proposed Resolution


Sometime after, the firm took in a very large case. It required intense document word processing, editing, re-processing, and re-editing. All which resulted in a large number of overtime hours and thus, overtime pay. I brought the situation to the two ladies, explaining that because the case was so large, it could not be assigned to just one secretary. It would require at least two, so that a backup was always available and knowledgeable about the case. Other overtime work would be distributed to other secretaries available for overtime. It required me to relocate them to their original workstations next to each other.

### Final Outcome

The two ladies had no choice but to work closely and amicably to get through the

huge document prep required. And they did so to such a degree that I spoke with them and applauded their hard work on the case and said that I had received high praise for their work from the attorneys. They were referred to as the “(case name) Girls”, which they loved. They took pride in working

on the case and spent many evenings working together, having supper together, and they even coordinated their vacations to allow for one of them to always be in the office. As time went on, their working relationship became a friendly relationship. So much so that even when the case was

concluded, they took a vacation to Europe together and had a blast! While at one point they were at odds with each other, they were proud to have “survived the case” and received accolades from me, as well as publicly by the firm. 






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# Marketing in the Digital Age: Attorneys and Social Media



By Lilly Torres

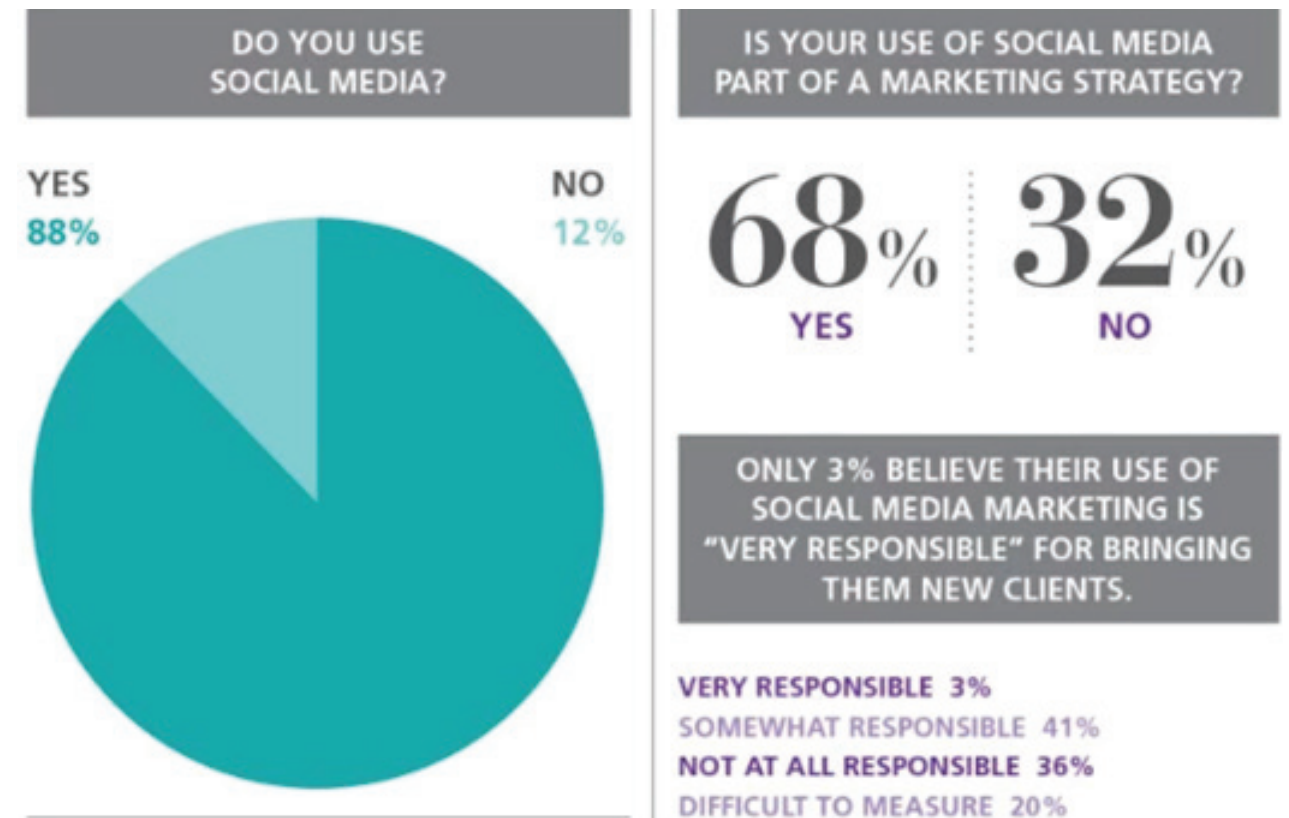
Office Administrator,  
Pathman Lewis, LLP  
Editor-In-Chief,  
*The Network*

Whether it's being discussed at an educational session at the ALA national conference or just among peers at an ALA South Florida Chapter event, the subject of attorneys and their use, or lack thereof, of social media as a marketing tool is a hot topic. Many of us legal managers have had exposure to attorneys on both sides of the spectrum when it comes to how they approach social media as a medium for business development: the ones that embrace it and swear on its increase of their networking pool resulting in business leads, and then there are the ones that have blank profile pictures in LinkedIn because they don't see the benefit or simply don't understand how it all works.

Attorneyatwork.com, an online resource providing useful information to lawyers trying to improve their practice, recently conducted their second annual survey called "Attorney at Work 2016 Social Media Marketing Survey". The findings proved interesting. It's no surprise that the majority of responding attorneys indicated that they did in fact use social media, but only 68% said that they used it for business or professional purposes to market themselves or their companies. Most participating attorneys said that social media was "somewhat" responsible for actually landing clients, with only 3% saying that social media was "very" responsible.

In order of popularity, the social media platforms most preferred were Facebook then LinkedIn, with Twitter coming in third.

If you're thinking that age plays a factor here, you are correct. To simplify the survey results when it came to age, the folks over at Attorney at Work created two age groups: the over-30 lawyers and the under-30



Source: Attorney at Work 2016 Social Media Marketing Survey @attorneyatwork  
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lawyers.

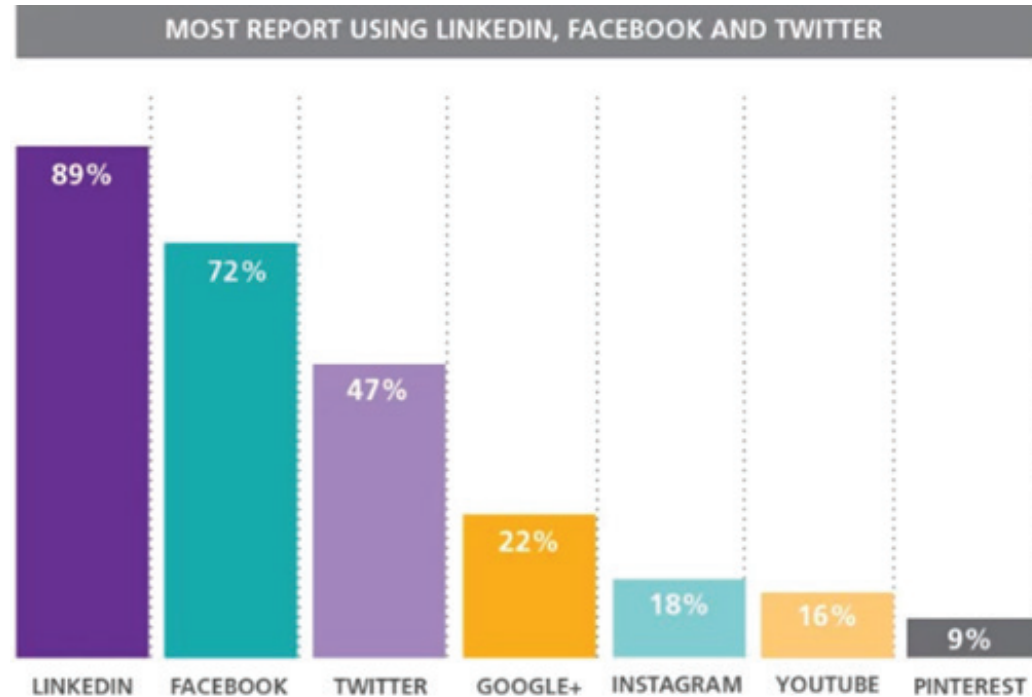
Of the over-30 lawyers that used social media as part of their overall marketing strategy, 33% favored LinkedIn as their first choice. In contrast, the under-30 lawyers preferred Instagram, with only 7% saying LinkedIn was their first choice.

Both age groups said that they regularly used

Twitter, with the majority of those users being under 30.

But which of these platforms proved to produce the most business? The older lawyers said that LinkedIn was the best source, with younger lawyers saying

Continued on next page >



Source: Attorney at Work 2016 Social Media Marketing Survey @attorneyatwork. Used with permission from Attorney at Work [www.attorneyatwork.com](http://www.attorneyatwork.com)

that Facebook was the best for them.

In summary, it's undeniable that social media is progressively playing a pivotal role in business development and marketing strategies in the legal industry. Are your attorneys ready to jump on the bandwagon and embrace this medium, or will they leave their strategies to more traditional, less technological methods? Have the discussion with your attorneys and get their feedback on the subject.

Check out the entire Attorney at Work survey at <https://www.attorneyatwork.com/survey-results-truths-lawyer-social-media/>.

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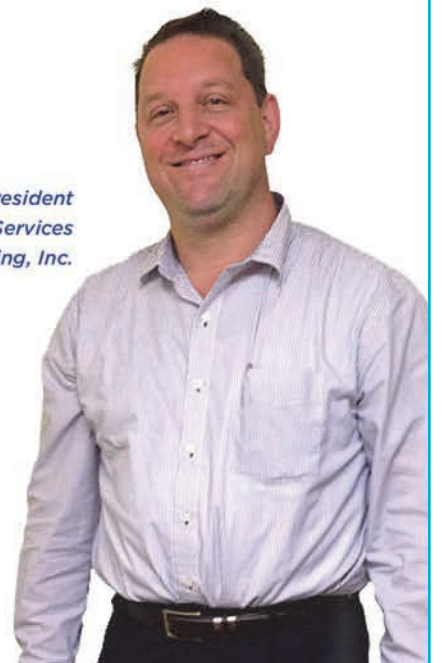
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*Ilan Sredni, President  
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# Breathing New Life into Ageing Receivables

By Jake Krocheski, Client Connections

Behind most receivables more than 90 days past due is a story about why the account has not been paid – cash flow problems, complicated transactions, and many more. Understand those stories, get to the bottom of them and you will have a better understanding of how to get paid.

Firms find themselves facing a dilemma. On one hand, they truly want to embrace institutional thinking and run as a business, putting structures and procedures in place and holding people accountable.

On the other, they are reluctant to hold the individual attorneys accountable and deprive them of their autonomy because of the different circumstances that impact payment from clients.

It is hard to have clear-cut procedures while poking holes in them with plenty of exceptions. The truth, though, is that your firm must. You need to make it clear to your attorneys and staff – as well as your clients – what your policies and your expectations are.

Yet, there needs to be a fair amount of latitude for decisions based on individual client relationships.

To ensure that your receivables are not enjoying a ripe old age, take these steps:

**1.** Start on the older, harder-to-collect backlog of receivables. It may be necessary to dig deep to understand just how old they are. Many firms do not differentiate between receivables that are 90 days past due and those that are much older. Look to see if there is any recent billing activity on the account, when the last payment was received and for how much. It is surprising how firms continue to do work for clients without considering whether they are paying their bills.

**2.** When managing the backlog of receivables, look first at your oldest receivables and work your way back to those that are newer.

**3.** Ask all attorneys to review their clients with outstanding balances and ask them to be truthful. Have them take decisive action: make the collection themselves, get help from the firm's accounts receivable management team or clear the books. The attorneys are best able to assess whether a receivable should be kept on the active list or written off. However, they are often reluctant to follow through with the write-off process.

**4.** Evaluate each account and determine the likelihood of payment if the firm invests more time and

effort to collect. But recognize that when a receivable exceeds 180 days past due, there is only a 50% chance that it will be collected, and the likelihood drops off dramatically after that point. There may be a logical reason why it has not been paid. Perhaps the client does not have the ability to pay. Maybe the attorney has worked out an arrangement with the client whereby he can pay after the matter has been completed. Make sure the responsible attorney communicates what arrangements have been made with each client.

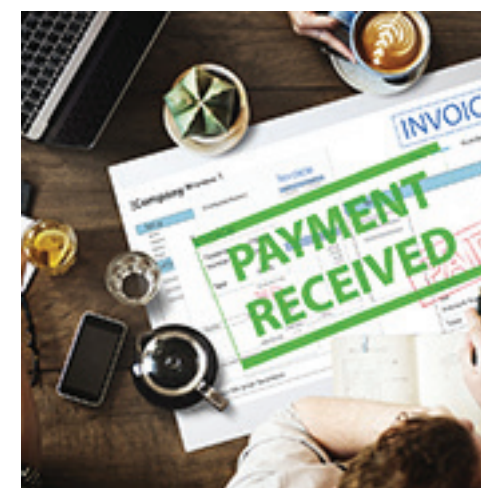
**5.** Urge firm leadership to be decisive and step in to take action. Management must work through receivable issues and not just take the attorney's word for it.

Get your arms around the problem by creating – and empowering – a committee.

**6.** Evaluate the firm's overall collection efforts. Ask yourselves: Did we do the job right or did our processes and procedures allow receivables to age far longer than they should have? Review the firm's policies and procedures concerning receivables that go beyond 90 days. Determine if policies exist only on paper. Implementation is the key. Do you have the right people in place to move the ball forward, and are they empowered to do so? Many firms receive their older receivables with the goal of determining why accounts have not paid and if they have collection problems.

Often they learn they have long had problems, but did not detect them earlier in the ageing process.

**7.** Make the most of staff whose job is to focus exclusively on receivables. Ensure they have the skills and talents that can help attorneys reduce the backlog of receivables. Also, measure the staff's performance to ensure progress is being made and sufficient time is being devoted to working directly with accounts



receivable, as opposed to other administrative duties.

**8.** Write off the account after all efforts have been exhausted. If efforts have been made to collect that do not bear fruit, accept the fact that there is little chance of getting paid and write it off. If the attorney continues to hold up the write-off process, firm leadership needs to step in and get the account written off.

*Jake Krocheski is President of Client Connections. He has more than 25 years of experience as a management consultant, working with law firms. Client Connection assists law firms of all sizes throughout the United States by furnishing accounts receivable management services and developing practical receivable programs. He can be reached at [jakek@clientci.com](mailto:jakek@clientci.com).*



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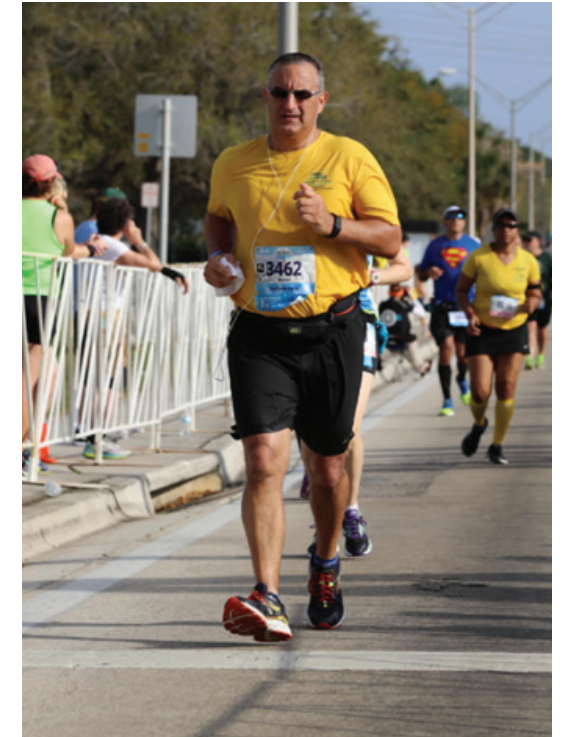
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## CONGRATS TO MARIO RUMASUGLIA ON 1ST HALF MARATHON

I joined FIT (Friends in Training) last August and began training for a half marathon (13 miles). I ran my first one last November and three more after that. While I'm certainly not setting any records, I have enjoyed the process and am pleased with the results. I've lost a few pounds, firmed up and I'm in much better shape than I had been. The second season began in July this year and I already see myself improving. Going into it, I never thought this would be easy and the conditioning is gradual. Getting out of bed early on Saturday morning can be challenging enough, never mind running anywhere from 3 to 12 miles.

**-Mario Rumasuglia**  
Director of Administration, Berger Singerman



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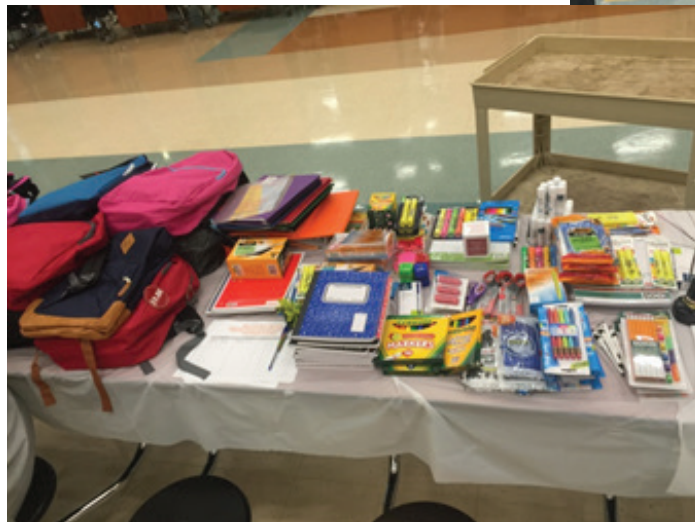
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## ALASOFLA Donates School Supplies to Miami Carol City High School

The ALA South Florida Chapter recently donated school supplies for needy students at Miami Carol City High School. The supplies were handed out during the school's open house that took place last September. The school administration, parents and students were very appreciative and grateful for our efforts in providing the generous donation. It was great to see the impact we had on this school and the community!



## ALASOFLA & the PinoStrong Foundation Make HEROBX Care Packages for Overseas Troops

The South Florida Chapter ALA once again joined the PinoStrong Foundation for a HEROBX Holiday Care Package Collection supporting our troops who spent their holidays serving our country overseas. Our goal was to pack 200 care packages. Thanks to all the generous donations from members, business partners, firms, and families, we surpassed that goal!



# ALA South Florida Chapter Sponsors The Main Rest Stop At 2016 Charity Freedom Ride Benefiting Local Veterans

By Carole M. Sheets, Murray, Morin & Herman, P.A.

Members of the Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans (Achilles International), all suffering serious injury from combat, were paired with able-bodied cyclists



who assisted on their rides from the Homestead-Miami Speedway, to as far away as Key Largo. This year we had hand cyclists from several states and two that traveled from Germany for the ride. Normally these amputees, paraplegics and quadriplegics participate in shorter marathon distances (26 miles), whereas this event allows them to ride with cyclists and distances from 12 to 100 miles.

In spite of the threatening weather, all of the 30 veteran hand cyclists showed up for the ride, whereas many of our able-bodied cyclists feared

riding in the rain. As in 2014, our veterans were an inspiration to all of our ride buddies, cyclists and volunteers. They served in the armed forces and continue to serve in their communities.

Our members, business partners and their family members worked together to setup the rest stop area, make peanut butter sandwiches, slice bananas and oranges and keep plenty of water and Gatorade available for the riders. Once again the enthusiasm at our rest stop was recognized by the riders.

We also had two business partners who volunteered as ride buddies – thank you Gary Naidus of My Office Products – Hi Touch Business Services and Peter Fariñas of Pinetree Benefit Solutions.

I had the privilege of riding with the two hand cyclists who traveled from Germany for the ride. Both are quadriplegics who continue to compete in marathons and share their experiences with people all over the world. Our volunteers had the pleasure of meeting these two veterans and listening to their story and challenges.

Thanks to all of our members, business partners and their families who helped make this event a success. Special thanks to Edgard Delgado's family and Jackie Benito's children for spending their day at our event.

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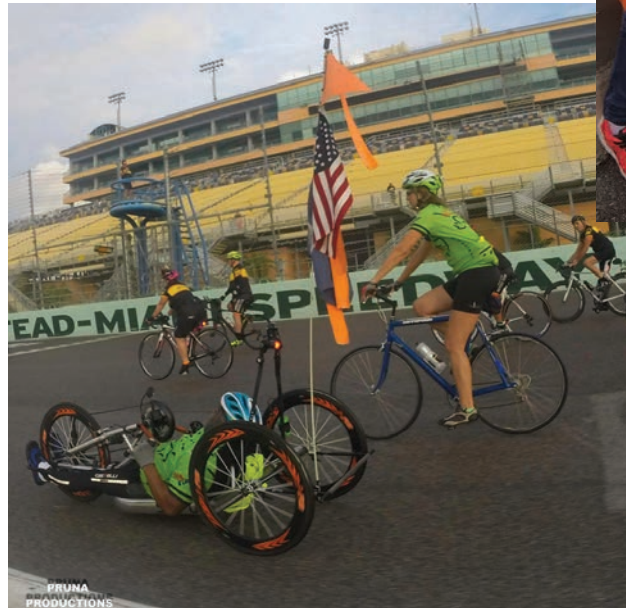
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Since the 2014 ride, The Everglades Bicycle Club continues to reach out to disabled cyclists which has resulted in a new alliance between the club and the disabled cycling community. This not only opened up opportunities for joint-participation in future events and rides, but created new friendships and respect for these amazing athletes. I have been contacted by other hand cyclists in Germany who are interested in riding from Key Largo to Key West in 2017.

Net proceeds from the FREEDOM RIDE will go to the Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans to be used to assist the local needs of our wounded veterans.

## 2016 Charity Freedom Ride Benefiting Local Veterans



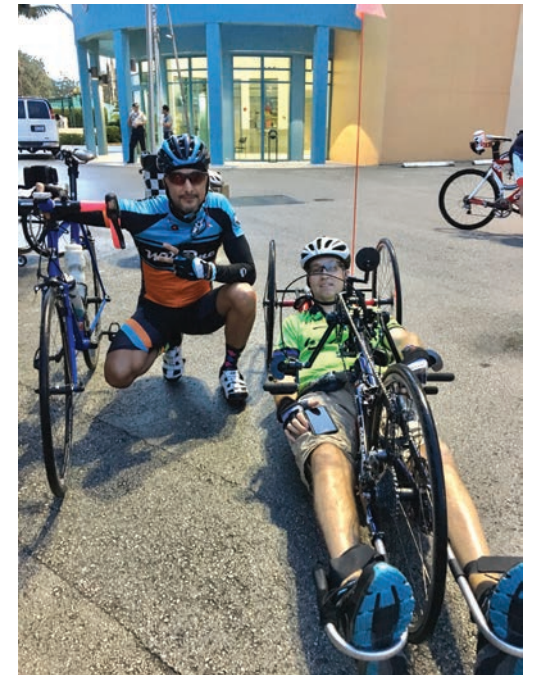
## 2016 Charity Freedom Ride Buddies

This is the second time that I volunteered through the South Florida Chapter Association of Legal Administrators to be a ride buddy at the Freedom Ride to benefit wounded military veterans and Achilles International. In 2014, I rode 11 miles with a woman named Francine Prescott. Francine is an amazing woman who taught me more about what giving back is all about. This year I was assigned to a gentleman named Donald Sirois. Don is deaf and has no use of his legs. Don, myself, and another rider rode 29 miles together. Before the ride, we had to establish hand signals to communicate as we rode together for four hours through the streets of Homestead. The Freedom Ride is one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever been involved in. The people, the riders, the volunteers, and the cause make this one of the most inspiring things one can do. I look forward to my next Freedom Ride experience in 2017.

**Gary Naidus**  
**My Office Products (ALA Business Partner)**  
**Strategic Account Manager**



I would like to take a moment to express what an incredible and moving experience the 2016 Freedom Ride was, this past Sunday. During registration, I had the opportunity to meet Jason and his lovely wife, who was scheduled to be his buddy for the ride. Unfortunately, she wasn't feeling well enough to ride that day, therefore, she decided it would be best if someone else was his buddy, and that's how we were paired up. Jason, who is a quadriplegic, would require assistance while riding, with the tasks of replenishing his water, opening his nutritional packets and in the event of any unforeseen mechanical problems, have someone there to back him up. My role was quickly defined and I knew I was there to help and support him in any way possible. The ride started with a thrilling lap around the Homestead Miami Speedway and then we were on the road ready for the next 65 miles. During our 4-hour journey, Jason and I rode side by side and learned about each other's families, careers as well as other hobbies. As we made our way through the roads of Homestead, on our way to Key Largo, we made a few stops to refuel and take breaks. After I assisted Jason with his needs and got back on my own bike, I would reflect on how tenacious he is considering his limitations. Every moment that we shared made me more and more appreciative for everything in my own life. Heading back to the speedway took everything Jason had, but he made it. I was so impressed by his drive and his willingness to finish. As I reflect on that day, I realize that my initial goal was to help someone in need. However, it turns out that I was the one that got the most out of the experience. I will be eternally grateful to Jason for such an amazingly humbling experience. Thank you for allowing me to share my story and I can't wait until next year.



**Peter Fariñas**  
**Pinetree Benefits Solutions**



**ALASOFLA  
2016  
Holiday Luncheon &**

*Ugly*

**Xmas Sweater Contest!**



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Sat., Jan. 28, 2017  
[ALASOFLA FAMILY  
PICNIC](#)

12:00-4:00 PM  
Tropical Park

Sat., Feb. 4, 2017  
[Kozyak Minority  
Mentoring Foundation  
Picnic](#)

8 am - 4 pm  
Amelia Earhart Park

Wed., Feb. 8, 2017  
[Miami Dade Monthly  
Lunch Meeting](#)

11:45 - 1:30 PM  
Hyatt Regency, Downtown  
Miami  
Topic: New Market Solutions  
for Lowering Your Group  
Health Insurance Rates

Thurs., Feb. 9, 2017  
[Broward Monthly Lunch  
Meeting](#)

11:45 - 1:30 PM  
Location TDB, Ft. Laud.  
Topic: New Market Solutions  
for Lowering Your Group  
Health Insurance Rates

Thurs., March 2, 2017  
[Legal Expo 2017](#)

Hyatt Regency,  
Downtown Miami

April 2nd-5th, 2017  
[ALA National  
Conference](#)

Denver, Colorado