

## SABA-DC July/Aug 2009 Newsletter

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## SABA-DC Receives Outstanding Program of the Year Award

On June 26, 2009, SABADC received the Outstanding Program of the Year Award from the North American South Asian Bar Association ("NASABA") during the Sixth Annual NASABA Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia. Following a competitive nomination and voting process, SABA-DC received the award for its Election 2008 Town Hall Meeting, held on October 8, 2008 at Georgetown University Law Center. The award was based on the timeliness, success, and effective organization of the event.

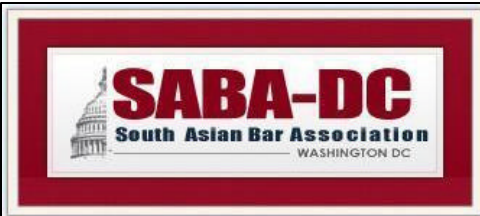


Anjali Desai (right) accepting the award for SABA-DC from Anna Sankaran, President-Elect of NASABA

In the midst of last year's Presidential election, the South Asian Bar Association of Washington, DC hosted a well attended and unique town hall meeting that focused on the needs of the South Asian community. The event featured speakers representing the Obama and McCain presidential campaigns, with a focus on each candidate's positions on issues of importance to the South Asian community. The Obama campaign was represented by The Honorable Preeti Bansal, former Solicitor General of the State of New York and a senior policy advisor to the campaign. The McCain campaign was represented by Asheesh Agarwal, former Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice and Special Counsel to the campaign. The program was moderated by Amol Sharma of the Wall Street Journal.

SABA-DC organized and hosted the program but invited all the major South Asian organizations in the DC metropolitan area as co-sponsors to increase the reach of the event. It was an informative, audience-driven event that focused on each candidate's appeal to the South Asian community. The event was attended by over 120 people.

The event is available via webcast at the following address:  
<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/webcast/eventDetail.cfm?eventID=638>



## Upcoming Events July/Aug 2009

### Reception Honoring New Administration Appointees

THE SOUTH ASIAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON D.C. (SABA-DC)  
AND  
THE NORTH AMERICAN SOUTH ASIAN BAR ASSOCIATION (NASABA)  
*invite you to*

*An Evening Reception Honoring  
the South Asian American Appointees  
to the New Administration*



*Wednesday, September 2, 2009  
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Hosted by DLA Piper  
500 8th Street N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20004*

To register for the Event, follow the link below  
<http://www.ersvp.com/r/ObamaAppointees>

Questions or Additional Details - Please Call:  
Dharmesh Vashee, President, SABA-DC  
(202)-326-4000 ext. 3316 or at  
[president@sabadc.org](mailto:president@sabadc.org)

Space is Limited. Register Today!



We are grateful to our sponsors for supporting this Event:  
DLA Piper LLP  
Howrey LLP  
Kumar Pathak, LLC





# Upcoming Events

## July/Aug 2009

### Summer/Fall Events

#### SABA-DC August Dinner Series

Pro-bono dinner series with the Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV)

**Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2009**

**Time: 7pm - 9pm**

Where: Tandoori Nights

2800 Clarendon Boulevard, Ste 900, Arlington, VA 22201

(703) 248-8333

Metro: Orange Line Metro - Clarendon

Cost: your dinner

**Please RSVP to Tina.Rao@gmail.com by August 10, 2009.**

Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) is a non-profit public interest organization that provides free legal assistance to low-income residents of Northern Virginia. Their mission is to provide high-quality legal assistance to families and individuals who face the loss or deprivation of a critical human need, such as food, shelter, income, medical care, education, family stability or personal safety and offer clients hope and empowerment.

LSNV is looking for pro-bono attorneys to support their mission of helping underrepresented survivors of domestic violence, many of whom are of South Asian heritage. Lauren Smith (managing attorney for the Family unit) and Divani Nadaraja (domestic violence attorney) will be speaking about the organization, their domestic violence work, presenting on civil protective orders, and discussing LSNV's upcoming CLE program in October. This dinner series is ideal for those who are interested in pro-bono work, looking to be trained in domestic violence work and/or family law, and law students who are interested in public-interest work.

#### Meet and Greet with D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty

**Date: Thursday, August 27th, 6:30pm**

**Place: W Hotel, 515 15th Street NW (corner of 15th St & Penn. Ave.)**

Join the South Asian Bar Association of Washington DC (SABA-DC), the American Association of Physician of Indian Origin (AAPIO), and the Network of South Asian Professionals (NetSAP) for a "Meet and Greet" with Washington D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty. In November 2006, he was elected the 6th mayor of D.C. He is the youngest person ever to hold the office of District of Columbia Mayor, winning election at age 35 and entering office at 36. The event is free to attend.

#### Legal Services of Northern Virginia CLE

**Date: Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009**

**Where: Fairfax Courthouse**

Please join Legal Services of Northern Virginia at the Fairfax Courthouse for our annual Stop the Violence CLE on the evening of October 7, 2009. We provide this FREE CLE for advocates of victims of domestic violence and to recruit volunteers for LSNV's Attorney of the Day Projects in Fairfax County and the City of Alexandria. **Contact Dan Schy at (703) 778-6812 or dschy@lsnv.org** for more information or to register. **A form to sign up is on Page 5.**

#### SAVE THE DATE! SABA-DC invites you to its 2009 Public Interest Fellowship Benefit Gala.

**Date: Saturday, November 14, 2009, 8:00 pm**

**Place: Hamiltonian Gallery, 1353 U Street, NW Washington DC**

**Metro: U Street-Cardozo**

Registration details to follow

#### SABA-DC to Host Civil & Human Rights Symposium, October 2009

##### Program Preview

Where: Georgetown University Law Center, McDonough Hall, 600 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington DC 20001

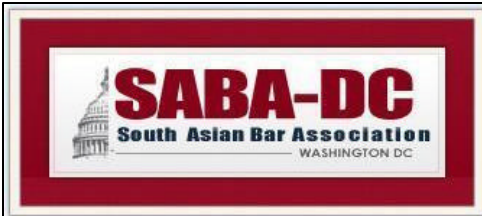
Metro: Union Station & Judiciary Square (Red Line)

SABA-DC, the South Asian Law Students Association at the Georgetown University Law Center, and experts in the fields of surrogacy, adoption, and violence against South Asian women will participate in an interactive panel discussion about contemporary issues affecting South Asian women in the East and West.

The topics to be addressed in the program will include: 1) Adoption - Although adoption is not only about women or South Asians, many couples in the United States are seeking to adopt children from South Asian countries. The program will examine the process and how the decision of adoption affects the birth mothers abroad and the women at home.

2) Surrogacy - An increasing number of South Asian women - particularly in India, where the process is unregulated - have been getting paid to be surrogates for American parents. The panel will discuss the ethical issues involved, whether surrogacy should be regulated, and what economic and legal implications it may have. 3) Violence Against Women in South Asia - News of honor killings, acid attacks and dowry deaths has increased in the United States. The panel will consider whether this violence is a product of cultural and religious traditions making their way across the ocean and whether the violence is growing in the US.

The panel will be moderated by SABA-DC Programming Director Ritu Kelotra, an Associate at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and will feature three distinguished speakers: T. Kumar, Advocacy Director for Asia & Pacific, Amnesty International USA; Hilary Neiman, Founder, The National Adoption and Surrogacy Center, LLC; and, Kathleen Strottman, Executive Director, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI).



## Pro Bono Program

### D.C. Bar Pro Bono Advice and Referral Clinic

SABA-DC provides pro bono assistance on a quarterly basis through the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's monthly Advice and Referral Clinics. We are currently seeking four to five volunteer attorneys to staff the Saturday, September 12 clinic. Subsequently, we will need volunteers on December 12.

Attorneys with limited experience are welcome to volunteer; expert mentors and other resources will be available on site. Law students may volunteer to provide non-legal assistance in the form of interviewing clients prior to their consultations.

When: Saturday, September 12 from 9:30am-1:00pm  
Where: Bread for the City  
1525 Seventh Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Green Line to Shaw/Howard University. Street parking is also available.

To volunteer/register or for more information, please contact Padma Shah, secretary@sabadc.org.

PLEASE NOTE: Attorneys that work in the federal government and/or barred in D.C. are allowed to provide brief advice at this Clinic. Unless you are barred in D.C. or have an application pending, the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program's malpractice insurance cannot cover you. If you are not barred in D.C., you can still attend the Clinic and provide non-legal assistance in the form of interviewing clients prior to their consultations.

#### ABOUT THE ADVICE & REFERRAL CLINIC

It is estimated that about 70% of those individuals requesting free legal assistance require only brief services – and not full representation – to solve their legal problems. The D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program Advice & Referral Clinic is designed to provide those brief service by offering pro se individuals the opportunity to discuss with volunteer attorneys certain kinds of matters governed by D.C. or federal law including bankruptcy/debt collection, consumer law, employment law, family law, health law, housing law, immigration/asylum, personal injury, probate, public benefits, and tax law. All services are provided free of charge.

The Clinic is limited to providing generation information, advice and brief services, and does not provide representation.

Providing "brief services" may not always be achievable by the end of the Clinic session. For example, calling a third party or government agency to ascertain about a client's matter, writing a demand letter to a landlord or a judgment-proof letter to a creditor, or reviewing a contract or settlement agreement may require some of the volunteer attorney's time after the Clinic. However, Clinic volunteers do not appear in Court or otherwise establish an extended attorney-client relationship unless they wish to do so and discuss the matter with Pro Bono Program staff.

If brief service is not enough to resolve the problem or if a different type of service is required, Clinic volunteers attempt to refer individuals to or provide information about a legal or social service provider appropriately suited to handle the case.

The Clinic is held on the second Saturday of each month at two sites (Bread for the City's NW and SE locations). The clinic is staffed by volunteers from law firms, government agencies, voluntary bar associations, and DC Bar Sections.

#### WHAT VOLUNTEERS NEED TO KNOW

On the second Saturday of every month from 10:00 am until noon, the Advice & Referral Clinic operates out of two locations – Bread for the City, Northwest Center located at 1525 7th Street, N.W. and Bread for the City, Southeast Center located 1640 Good Hope Road, S.E. The Clinic is staffed by volunteers from law firms, government agencies, voluntary bar associations, and DC Bar Sections. SABA-DC helps with the Clinic at the Northwest Center.

Volunteers should arrive at the Clinic by 9:30 am for a brief orientation of Clinic operations. Bagels and juice will be served. Dress is very casual. Volunteers should be prepared to stay until the last client is served (usually around 1:00 pm).

Although it is impossible to predict, most individuals have pretty basic questions. However, volunteers are not expected to be familiar with every area of the law. In fact, we anticipate that most volunteers will have very little, if any, experience in the types of matters on which they will advise. Therefore, Pro Bono Program staff and expert mentors are available on-site, as well as access to [www.LawHelp.org/dc](http://www.LawHelp.org/dc), reference manuals and guidebooks.

Regardless of your practice area or lack of experience, this is a great opportunity for attorneys to engage in a very important, although very manageable pro bono project. The D.C. Bar Advice & Referral Clinic is providing incredible services to hundreds upon hundreds of individuals each in their own communities.



*Public Interest*  
July/Aug 2009

LSNV Domestic Violence CLE



# STOP THE VIOLENCE

Training for Advocates of Victims of Domestic Violence

## October 7, 2009

Fairfax County Courthouse  
General District Courtroom 1E

Registration, Information Fair and Light Dinner: 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.  
Nuts and Bolts Training: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Optional Trial Advocacy: 8:10 p.m. – 8:40 p.m.

**FEATURING:**

Tips from the Bench and Question and Answers Session  
with the Honorable Thomas P. Mann and the Honorable Teena D. Grodner  
Judges on the Fairfax County Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court

**Please pre-register by September 30, 2009, by returning this form via fax to Dan Schy,  
LSNV Pro Bono Coordinator, at (703) 778-6812, or to Lauren Waller Smith, LSNV  
Family Law Managing Attorney, at (703) 273-6746:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

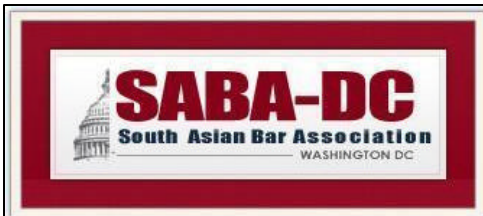
Firm Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Co-Sponsored by Legal Services of Northern Virginia, Potomac Legal Aid Society  
and The Northern Virginia Pro Bono Law Center*



### Tips for Lawyers Applying to Federal Govt. Jobs: Anticipating Timeliness, Deciphering Postings, & Drafting KSA's — Katherine Neville



Katherine Neville founded Neville Career Consulting to help lawyers understand their options and make informed decisions that advance their interests, both in the short-term and further along their career paths. She works with clients both locally in her offices in downtown Washington, DC, and across the country by phone.



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In the current economy, lawyers are increasingly considering applying for jobs with the federal government. Indeed, this influx of federal applications seems to be well-timed, since a Friday, June 19, 2009, *Washington Post* editorial pointed out that the federal government needs 600,000 new employees over the course of the present Administration alone.

#### I. Prepare for a Long Wait and Don't Assume It Works Like Other Places

Unfortunately, the primary focus of the editorial was a recent memo from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), highlighting aspects of a hiring system that is unbelievably — particularly for those coming from the private sector— slow and bureaucratic. The memo referred to previous studies that documented a sometimes *year long hiring process that 45 percent of federal job applicants polled found difficult to navigate.*

However shocking these numbers may seem to the uninitiated,

it is not as if the Administration and Congress are unaware of the problem. A bill to revise the government's hiring process is pending in Congress, OMB mandated in the memo mentioned above that agencies make at least basic improvements within six months, and the new director of the Office of Personnel and Management (OPM), John Berry, appears to be highly thought of and has vowed to streamline his agency's procedures.

Nonetheless, today's job seekers face the status quo, and previous unsuccessful efforts to improve the federal hiring process abound.

Any one who decides to wait until the hiring process has improved may miss any chance to work for the current Administration all together. Currently, hiring procedures vary widely by agency. OPM sets a number of the personnel policies and coordinates the hiring process for a number of agencies, but other agencies conduct the process independently.

#### II. Figure Out Where You Want to Work and What Jobs Your Skills Match

##### A. Research Agencies and Offices

There are offices in the federal government of which many people remain unaware, one of which may have a job very well suited to you. It is in your interest to cast a broad net, especially since positions with lesser known agencies and offices will have fewer competing applicants.

The first task is to research which federal agencies, divisions,

and/or offices do the type of work for which you are well suited. You can start by consulting broader resources, such as an A-Z list of agencies and offices in the federal government, websites for the legislative branch, and the annual rankings of the Best Places to Work in Federal Government.

##### B. Search for specific openings

Though it is referred to as the clearinghouse for federal government positions and is the most common search vehicle for job seekers, not all jobs are posted on USAJobs.

- Agency websites, whether or not they post on USA Jobs
- Excepted list of agencies that are not required to post on USA Jobs includes DOJ and the SEC
- Alternative search engines specifically related to federal postings

- Twitter (SEC recently added this feature and others are beginning to)
- Talk to people who do the type of work you want to do to ask about the office's upcoming needs

Positions are searchable by several criteria, including:

- Geographic location,
- Title (verify that you're searching for the technical title rather than the informal title);
- Occupational series, such as 900=Lawyer; 500=Accountant; 343=Management Analyst
- Agency or Office
- GS Level (Salary range; GS11=entry level attorney)

##### C. Network

Not just the hiring process, but management, policies, and work

environment vary widely by agency, division, and often by office. As in any job search, the only way to know what work is like in a particular agency or office is to speak with people who work in that environment. Reaching out before a specific job is posted gives them a chance to let you know what they foresee coming down the pike and to know about you in advance.

Your application is much more likely to be successful once you have networked to:

- gather information about what the work entails and what skills are needed,
- identify what experience an attractive candidate brings to the table so you can tailor your application accordingly,
- demonstrate your interest, e.g. professional association committee, undergraduate or law school coursework or projects, pro bono work, etc.
- get your name recognized so that can be pulled out of the pile of applications

#### III. Take Time to Read Postings and Strategically Draft KSA's

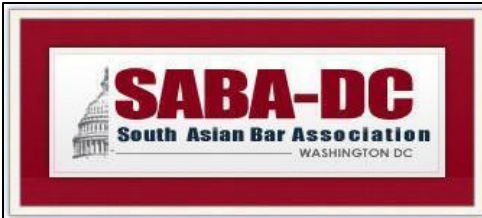
##### A. Read each posting carefully

Vacancy announcements may look the same but are not. Before investing time in compiling an application, examine the posting carefully to determine:

- Who can be considered: internal (already work for fed) or external candidates
- Open period: applicants cannot miss the closing date, no exceptions.
- The type of appointment being advertised: perm, temp, term, part-time
- The number of positions the agency is looking to fill with the vacancy announcement, which can represent one or multiple hires/openings

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**[A] Washington Post editorial pointed out that the federal government needs 600,000 new employees over the course of the present Administration alone**



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• The GS level of the position being posted (can range) and its promotion potential

In addition to the Overview that is first displayed online, postings include four tabs: Duties, Qualifications, Evaluation, & How to Apply

It is critical to note that the position's key words and requirements can be found in any or all of #'s 1, 2, and 3 above. As a result, it is important to review all three carefully and break the text down into outline format.

### **B. Be aware of how your application will be reviewed and how KSA's are used**

It is critical to understand that you could be the best candidate in the world for a specific position, but if you don't get beyond the HR screening process, your application won't be seen by those making the hiring decision. This hurdle can be tricky as a recent Partnership for Public Service Survey of federal agency Chief Human Capital Officers reported that "only 29 percent of agency Chief Human Capital Officers, the government's top HR experts, believe to a great extent that HR staff members *have the competencies they need.*"

- The hiring process typically includes five steps:
1. First Screen: Basically Qualified (determined by HR)
  2. Second Screen/Score: Highly Qualified (given a score and ranked by panel of staff in program office or by HR)
  3. Interview Best Qualified (as determined by second screen in #2)
  4. Final Interviews (Selecting Official)
  5. Reference Check (HR)

Applications for federal government jobs can include between

zero and seven essay questions that require responses of one page or more each. These questions are referred to as KSA's which stands for "Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities" (KSA's), which are formally defined as the rating and ranking criteria that determine top candidates who are referred for selection (already qualified).

Traditionally, applications for attorney positions have not required KSA's, so that only attorneys applying for positions that did not require a JD—e.g. policy analyst, compliance officer, program manager, etc.—had to complete them. Currently, however many attorney positions now require KSA responses in addition to a resume and writing sample as part of the application.

### **C. Tips to Draft Successful KSA's**

Some examples of how KSA's are worded include: "Describe your..."

- knowledge of accounting principles and practices;
- skills in analyzing federal and state regulations related to the Clean Water Act and related federal statutes;
- ability to solve problems and to work well under pressure;
- ability to communicate, both verbally and in writing.

In answering each part of such questions, it is critical to comply with the bifurcated review process and to write simultaneously for review by two audiences—both lay and sophisticated. The goal is to satisfy any posted HR and key word requirements but

also to impress your potential colleagues and supervisor in the office where the position will be located. With the caveat that the hiring procedures and processes differ by agency and sometimes by office, a summary of tips for a successful application that includes KSA's follows.

Identify Key Words by outlining and analyzing the Duties, Qualifications and Evaluation sections of the posting. Phrase items on your resume and in your KSA's in a way that incorporates these key words. Do not be afraid to use the exact words from the announcement in preparation for a review by a software application or a person without background in the field.

Translate Your Skills and Experience so that they are relevant

to the position to which you are applying. Summarize your skills and experience in the appropriate context. Narrow your emphasis in the text of your resume and in your KSA's so that unrelated items do not distract from the relevance of your related experience.

Analogize if you have experience performing the required task in a different content area. Show how your skills can add value even if your experience analyzing regulations is related to a different area of law or in a different context, e.g. advocacy rather than enforcement.

Make Clear That You're Interested and rebut the presumption that you are pursuing government work because the legal market is down. Put yourself in the employer's shoes and make

the case that would convince you of both your interest and how your skills that add value.

Use Specific, Concrete Examples of results-based accomplishments; include skills and experience you gained outside of work, volunteer work, during school, professional associations, etc.

Think Of Your Resume As A Supporting Document, making sure to back up your claims and be clear what you're referring to in your resume text. Don't use examples in your KSA's that aren't supported by your resume. You don't want to explicitly refer the reviewer to your resume in your answer (e.g., "see bullets under Jones & Smith"), and don't repeat the language of your resume verbatim. Figure out a way to reword the items in prose format.

Stay Within the Word Or Character Limit in your response to each KSA. The challenge is that the application itself does not always make clear that a limit exists or what it is. Any words over the limit will not be submitted as part of your application, so it is important to determine any applicable limits in advance of drafting your responses. To do so, you can cut and paste filler text in the online application itself to determine what the exact limit is before you begin to write.

If no KSA's are required by a posting of interest, then be grateful and apply the tips re answering KSA's to your resume: make sure it responds to the posting, incorporates key words, and provides relevant, results-based examples of your work.

**[Y]ou could be the best candidate ... for a specific position, but if you don't get beyond the HR screening process, your application won't be seen by those making the hiring decision.**



### Tips For Young Lawyers Embarking On a Job Search

— Tara R. Sarathy



Tara Sarathy has been a Career Counselor to JD students and the Judicial Clerkship Counselor at Georgetown University

Law Center for the past three years. Previous to that, she practiced law in several government settings, most recently with the Office of the Parliamentarian of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ms. Sarathy received her JD from the University of Michigan Law School, and her AB from Brown University

I'm always hesitant to suggest a one size fits all approach to conduct a job search. Just as people's exercise, diet, study and work habits vary, so too does the way people navigate assessing their interests, skills, comfort and strengths with regard to networking, financial goals and needs, and career aspirations. I would strongly encourage anyone contemplating a job search or who has already embarked on one to think about how you have navigated important endeavors and transitions in the past and apply those same strategies to your job search. Then, identify what are the aspects of a job search you find most challenging and consider pushing the boundaries your comfort zone. I like to think of this strategy as relying on your strengths as the foundation to a job search so that you also feel capable of challenging yourself to do things that may not come naturally. What follows are some general tips that I would recom-

mend customizing as you see fit.

#### Informational Interviewing & Gathering Information

In addition to responding to job postings and talking with some type of outplacement counselor or support, if your employer provides this, conducting informational interviews with people who work in industries and practice settings of interest, and when possible, in-person is a must. This is true in any econ-

omy, but particularly so in a difficult one. Many temporary and permanent opportunities are not advertised, and by first getting to know key players in practice settings of

interest, you may learn important information about navigating a particular type of job search and enhance your chances of receiving serious consideration by showing that you have done your homework, are serious about your interest, and by becoming a known quantity.

If you are new to informational interviewing and find the prospect a bit daunting or awkward, consider tapping into the alumni network of your high school (particularly if it's in a regional of interest or has an active alumni network), college, and law school, as well as that of bar associations of interest and other groups with which you are affiliated. Resources like LinkedIn, Martindale Hubble, and the Leadership Direc-

tories are some good starting place to identify attorneys in the geographic and practice area of interest. When you are doing outreach, consider first send a brief email of introduction, identify how you located the person and note if a mutual friend or colleague recommended you contact them. Be sure to be clear that you are trying to gather information about a field rather than asking for a job. Always be mindful of a person's time; when in doubt, ask about their availability and

**[T]his strategy [relies] on your strengths as the foundation to a job search so that you also feel capable of challenging yourself to do things that may not come naturally.**

when are some convenient times to speak. Expect that some of your outreach will produce conversations and some won't, and remember to not take it personally

when you don't get a response to a request for an informational interview. While your job search is your number one priority, a recipient of an email may be juggling many other professional and personal commitments when you contact them and occasionally emails fall through the cracks.

#### How to Navigate an Informational Interview

- Come prepared to the conversation with questions, and remember to send prompt, error free thank you notes. If you found the conversation useful, always ask an at the end of an information interview if you may contact the person again in the future if you have additional questions and if there's anyone else that they would recommend you contact. A contact is

more likely to remember you in the event they hear of an opportunity if you have had an ongoing conversation and you have shown continued, demonstrated interest.

- Test your assumptions about positions and fields of interest. What skills are required, what is the lifestyle, tempo and predictability or not of the work, what are some of the enjoyable and more challenging aspects of a person's position, what is the career trajectory, is it a practice area that is doing well or poorly in this economy, in what geographic areas is this work being done, in what types of settings (government, firms, public interest organizations)?
- Inquire about what skill sets are valued, background required for practice areas and setting of interest, how competitive settings and geographic markets are at the moment .

- What are journals, list serves, professional organizations, conferences or more informal ways members of a professional community communicate and post vacancies?

- Stay active. Consider volunteering in areas of interest if you are attempting a job transition so you can show you are committed to your goals, so that professional in your areas of interest know of you and can vouch for your work, and if you are currently unemployed — you are continuing to invest in your skills and be part of a work environment. Consider taking courses related to your professional or personal interests. This might have a secondary benefit of putting you in contact others with similar interests, i.e. a language

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### Tips For Young Lawyers Embarking On a Job Search

— Tara R. Sarathy

class, a sports league, an editing class, etc.

- Assess what matters most to you in terms of the work itself, your financial and other needs and commitments and long term goals. All job transitions involve tradeoffs particularly in a difficult economy.

#### Secure and Prep Your References

Expect that you will need professional references. Make outreach to potential references one of the first steps in your job search as you never know how soon you might need them and conversations with references can provide food for thought and leads for informational interviews. Think about who will your best advocates, whether they are former legal and non-legal employers and law school faculty, and offer to arm your references with ammunition so that they can speak to prospective employers about your work product, professional judgment, and fit as a colleague with enthusiasm and in specific, concrete terms. If possible, offer to meet your reference in person, as you are more likely to have a person's undivided attention in a face to face conversation. Share your resume, relevant information about your background that a reference may not already know about you, appropriate information about why you are conducting a job search, refresh the recommender's recollection about what work you performed for him or her, and what types of jobs you are targeting. One you have confirmed someone as a reference, you might offer to write your reference a brief narrative or bullet points, if this would be of value and seems appropri-

ate. If so, send any narrative along with your resume by email, so in the event a prospective employer calls a reference, he or she can quickly retrieve your email with important talking points. In short, you want to make it as easy as possible for your references to speak thoughtfully and positively about you for the particular types of positions you are targeting. Then stay in touch with your references as your job search unfolds and, while being respectful of their time, let them know of any updates or changes in your areas of interest.

#### Preparing for an Interview

Take inventory and be prepared to articulate what key points about your skills, successes and interests you want to make in an interview regardless of what questions you are asked. Think of yourself as an active contributor to an interview, while being responsive and attentive to questions asked. Have specific and relevant illustrations of your skills to add dimension to your interview. (Think of your eighth grade English teacher who reminded you to show rather than tell your story.) Don't assume prospective employers will have read your resume carefully or that they will have given careful thought as to how your background translates to the responsibilities of the position especially if you are making a job transition. Some other key considerations include:

- Rehearse your answers to

easy and more difficult questions and consider doing a mock interview with a friend, family member, or someone in your professional network you trust. Answers that sound composed in your head do not always sound so when articulated out loud without practice.

- Identify and have thoughtful, brief answers to potential weaknesses or concerns a prospective employer might have. Always frame answers in the positive. i.e. be careful not to speak negatively of a former employer and a previous field. Employers will want to hire candidate who show an affirmative interest in their work not a lack of fit with your previous work.

- Ask for business cards of all individuals with whom you interview so that you are confident of correct spelling of names and titles. Be sure to be courteous to everyone you meet in the course of the interview from the receptionist to the most senior member of the office. Employers often discuss job candidates after an interview and look poorly on those who do not treat all members of a team with equal courtesy.
- Send error free with thank you notes within 24 hours of your interview. Professional correspondence whether by mail or email (depending on the industry and timing the employer expresses for making a hiring decision) is a safer bet than a handwritten thank you note.

#### Take Care of Yourself & Invest In Other Parts of Your Life During Your Job Search

I know from personal experience and my work as a career counselor, a job search can feel like an all-consuming chore. Try to be realistic about how much time you need and can afford to devote to your job search, be patient, and expect that it may take months and several steps and positions to arrive at your end goal, and your goals and priorities may change along the way. If you are someone who finds having a schedule useful, carve out dedicated on a weekly basis to conduct informational interviews and conduct related follow-up, research opportunities and draft career related documents. Then try to stay engaged in and enjoy other activities that are important to you whether that's reading fiction or playing tennis. Stay in touch with the important people in your life and enlist their advice and support and be a source of support to them. (It can be easy when in the midst of a transition or negotiating stress to lose sight of the fact that others in your life may be dealing with similar or other stressors.) Getting involved in organizations of interest, whether law related or not, can be a great way to continue to meet people who might assist in your job search whether by providing information or leads, keep you motivated, and will demonstrate to prospective employers, you are using your time well whether you are currently employed or not.

**Take inventory and be prepared to articulate what key points about your skills, successes and interests you want to make in an interview**



# Recent Events

## July/Aug 2009

### KSA Workshop, Happy Hour & June Dinner Series

#### SABA-DC KSA Drafting Workshop

On Wednesday, June 24th, SABA-DC held a KSA Workshop at Georgetown University Law School. The event was targeted to attorneys who were interested in transitioning to government practice. Approximately twenty people attended. The Workshop was lead by Kate Neville, of Neville Career Consulting, LLC. Ms. Neville spoke generally about the government hiring process as well as specifics about drafting a responsive and successful KSA submissions for government legal positions.

#### SABA-DC and NetSAP Summer Happy Hour Event

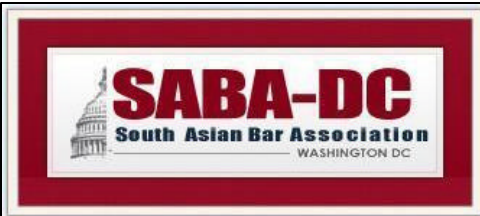
On Thursday, July 16th, the Network of South Asian Professionals (NetSAP) and the South Asian Bar Association of Washington DC (SABA-DC) joined for a fun evening of networking at IL Mulino restaurant. About 200 people attended the joint event, which was in conjunction with NetSAP's monthly "Third Thursday" series.

#### SABA-DC June Dinner Series: Party Perspectives on U.S. Healthcare Reform

As a follow-up to their articles written on the future of U.S. healthcare reform and policy from Republican and Democratic perspectives, Aarti Shah and Kathy Kulkarni were the featured speakers at SABA-DC's June Dinner Series. Aarti Shah, who currently serves as counsel to the Minority Staff on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce, presented the Republican perspective. Speaking for the majority position on healthcare reform, Kathy Kulkarni currently serves as Principal at Rubicon Advisors, a lobbying and government relations firm, and was previously legislative director and healthcare policy aide to U.S. Representative Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ).

The dinner, which was held on Tuesday June 16, 2009, at Thai Chili focused on the healthcare debate currently taking place in Congress. Attendees included lawyers, public policy professionals, and physicians interested in participating in the conversation about healthcare reform. The dinner featured a lively exchange between the attendees and the speakers and an enlightening discussion on the impact perceived by each side of the healthcare reform debate. Based on the level of interest in this topic and the active discussion that took place, SABA-DC plans to revisit this issue in a dinner this fall as the proposed legislation moves through Congress.





# Recent Events (cont.)

## July/Aug 2009

### SABA-DC Summer Picnic

#### SABA-DC Summer Picnic

On Saturday August 1, 2009, SABA-DC held a picnic at Quincy Park in Arlington, Virginia. A good time was had by all. As with any successful event, there was plenty of food, including veggie-burgers, hamburgers, hot dogs, and of course paapri chaat. SABA-DC would like to thank those who attended, provided food, and helped make for an enjoyable and wonderful afternoon.

