

## Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program

### Manage and Protect Your Reputation Online

In school you learned that justice is served in a court of law, but what about the court of public opinion? In the Internet age, where information sits at the tips of your fingers, how your name appears in Google search results defines your identity, whether it's accurate or not.

You've spent too much time and money going through law school to let your career get sidetracked by a bad online reputation. Here are some tips to help you put your best foot forward online.

#### Clean Up Your Facebook Profile

Your Facebook profile can be a valuable networking tool, but only if you keep it professional. Use Facebook's privacy settings



to separate work colleagues from friends and family. Your law school buddies might like that funny

Halloween costume you wore, but the Senior Partner at your law firm might not.

#### Monitor Your Name

If someone is talking bad about you online, it's not the end of the world. If you address the situation quickly, you can mitigate most of the damage and salvage your reputation. This is why it's so important to constantly monitor your name online. For a quick solution, use a Google News alert.

#### Start a Blog

Are you an expert in Finance Law? Skilled litigator? Whatever your specialty, let the world know by creating your own blog. If you use your name as the URL, you can draw positive attention to yourself and attract the attention of future employers.

- *By Rob Frappier*



*Harvard Law graduate Michael Fertik founded ReputationDefender in 2006 to help protect and defend individuals from Internet defamation.*

*Today, ReputationDefender maintains a suite of four products: MyChild, MyReputation, MyPrivacy, and MyEdge. ReputationDefender's diverse clientele, ranging from CEOs and politicians to soccer moms and college students, comes from over 35 countries worldwide.*

*For more information on ReputationDefender, visit [www.reputationdefender.com](http://www.reputationdefender.com).*

### Congratulations to our TLAP Certified Speakers:

Adam Michael  
Buddy Burnett  
Graham Prichard  
Judge Tom Woodall  
Matt Eggleston  
Richard Taylor  
Becky Freeman  
Jennifer Hall  
Nancy Corley  
Paul Singleton  
James Corcoran  
Judge Kelly Thomas  
Christopher Hall  
Wesley Baker  
Billy Gribble  
Rebecca Young  
Fred McDonald  
Jim Cornelius  
Pat Officer  
Stanley Barnett

*"Best three hours of free CLE I've ever participated in, to date."*

Learn more about training and Robert Kiefer on Page 4.

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## IS ALCOHOLISM A DISEASE?

### What do you think?

Research is available on both sides of the debate. This month, TLAP invites you to join the discussion. Write from your experience or do a little research of your own and answer the question:

#### Is alcoholism a disease?

### New Research from the Baldwin

#### Research Institute:

New research from the Baldwin Research Institute indicates that the existence of the disease of alcoholism is pure speculation. The American Medical Association (AMA) determined alcoholism to be a disease in the absence of empirical evidence.

Research has shown that alcoholism is a choice, not a disease, and stripping alcohol abusers of their choice, by applying the disease concept, is a threat to the health of the individual. A disease cannot be cured by force or will, therefore, adding the medical label transfers the responsibility from the abuser to others. Inevitably they become unwilling victims, and inevitably take on that role.

A natural assumption would be that the classification of a disease requires that characteristics and symptoms can be measured and observed.

While the majority of diseases fit this requirement, substance abuse does not. This supposed disease's symptoms are only discovered after the consumption of alcohol. Further, it seems illogical for medical professionals to prescribe meeting attendance as a remedy for an "incurable" medical ailment, not to mention a contradiction to the supposed nature of the problem.

### What the AMA Is Saying:

Alcoholism, is a disease that includes the following four symptoms:

- **Craving** – A strong need, or urge, to drink
- **Loss of control** – Not being able to stop drinking once it has begun
- **Physical dependence** – Withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating, shakiness, and anxiety after stopping drinking
- **Tolerance** – The need to drink great amounts of alcohol to get "high"

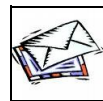
The craving that an alcoholic feels for alcohol can be as strong as the need for food or water.



An alcoholic will continue to drink despite serious family, health, or legal problems.

Like many other diseases, alcoholism is chronic, meaning that it lasts a person's lifetime; it usually follows a predictable course; and it has symptoms. The risk for developing alcoholism is influenced both by a person's genes and by his or her lifestyle.

Submit responses to:



200 4th Avenue North  
 Suite 810  
 Nashville, TN 37219

Or via email to:

[tlap@tncourts.gov](mailto:tlap@tncourts.gov)

\* Submissions will be treated with complete anonymity.



## In Other News:

### Lawyer-Heavy States See Higher Cocaine Use

A new statistical analysis showed a correlation between cocaine use and the number of lawyers in a state, and to a lesser extent, those in business and finance occupations, computer jobs, and management fields. "Although we can't infer whether it's people in those jobs actually doing drugs, those profession are generally regarded as intense and lavish."

The study also found that marijuana use is associated with high concentrations of artists, scientists, architects and educators according to Atlantic's analysis of data from the National Survey of Drug Use and Health.

- Compiled from an article  
 By Debra Cassens Weiss

### High-Functioning Alcoholic Lawyers May Defy Stereotypes

Lawyers and other professionals who are high-functioning may defy the stereotypes-that alcoholics can't maintain a career or care for their families, or that alcoholics always drink alone.

Personality traits such as perfectionism, over-achieving tendencies and a workaholic nature may help high-functioning alcoholics succeed professionally despite their disease. It is just as important for these people to reach out for help, even though they may appear successful.

- Compiled from an article  
 By Debra Cassens Weiss

**Volunteer Spotlight: Cynthia Cheatham**



I am married and have two boys, Davis and Brent. My husband Lyle and I have been married for

twenty-four years. Soon after Davis was born, I went to work as a juvenile probation officer. During that time, a coworker and I began to study for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and talked about going to law school.

Before I could take the LSAT, Davis was diagnosed with autism and I left the probation office to care for him full time. We implemented intense therapy for him in our home, but he developed behaviors that required round the clock supervision and eventually residential care. In 1997, Davis moved into a group home and attended a special needs school in Southboro, Massachusetts. In 1999, I moved to Massachusetts so he could remain in his school. My move followed protracted litigation, including federal court proceedings.

For the next several years, Davis and I lived in Massachusetts and Lyle and Brent remained in Tennessee. In

2001, I enrolled in Roger Williams School of Law. I graduated in 2004, but remained in Massachusetts full time until the spring of 2005.

When I applied to take the bar during the summer of 2004, I was "selected" for a character and fitness interview. I was also directed to contact Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program. By this time, I had seven years of active participation in a twelve step program and saw this as an "opportunity." I spoke with Laura Gatrell and she explained the aspects of TLAP. We laughed and talked for a long time. Laura said she had contacted a couple of other 2004 law school graduates and they did not laugh at all. That is the main thing I remember about our conversation.

In the spring of 2005, I went to work for two attorneys I had known since Davis and Brent were in diapers, Tom Parsons and Walter Nichols, in Manchester, Tennessee. Both Tom and Walter are good friends. Tom is also a commissioner for TLAP.

Last year, I opened my own practice, but still stay in regular

contact with Tom and Walter and we still share some cases. Laura Gatrell and Tom Parsons both encouraged me to become active with TLAP, which I have done over the past few years. This past year, I was appointed as a TLAP commissioner, a position I consider an honor. It is hard to describe the feeling I got when Justice Sharon Lee contacted me to let me know that I had been chosen to serve as a commissioner for TLAP.

Over the past four years or so, I have gotten to know Ted, Laura, MC, Emily and Jackie, in addition to the other commissioners and attorneys who are active in various capacities with TLAP and it has been a lot of fun. I felt fear during the first few weeks following my bar application (that was nervous laughter, Laura). However, I am so happy to be a part of this organization. My gratitude greatly increased when I attended COLAP in October. TLAP really is part of a vital organization that is dedicated to helping others become better stewards of our profession and more useful members of society as a whole.

Thank you for letting me serve.

**Preventing Suicide:**

**A Challenge to the Legal Profession**

Every American knows that on 9/11 approximately 3,000 Americans were killed by terrorists. What most Americans don't know is that ten times that many Americans kill themselves every single year, leaving hundreds of thousands of loved ones, colleagues and friends to grieve.

A study of Canadian Bar Association members suggest that the suicide rate among attorneys is five to six times the national average. If ABA members are like CBA members, the number of U.S. attorneys and law students who have died by suicide since 9/11 could exceed 5,000.

Because lawyers play a pivotal role in the lives of many distressed people, lawyers were identified as possible "key gatekeepers" in the 2001 Surgeon General's National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goal 6.7: "By 2005, increase the proportion of divorce and family law and criminal defense attorneys who have received training in identifying and responding to persons at risk for suicide."

Attorneys have unique opportunities to identify and refer the potentially suicidal clients, employees, and colleagues. They are often in the thick of stress, loss, and the psychological combat of conflicted relationships. With enhanced literacy in mental illness and substance abuse, lawyers become uniquely positioned to act as gatekeepers in the implementation of the first U.S. national suicide prevention effort.

No lawyer or judge is unfamiliar with suicide and its consequences. By learning early signs and speaking up, lawyers can lead in suicide prevention.

By Skip Simpson and Paul Quinnett

**Learn Suicide Warning Signs**

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when it's out of the ordinary
- Feeling hopelessness, rage, vengeful, anxious or trapped
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or society
- Being unable to sleep
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life

**TLAP offers trainings and presentations on suicide prevention. Contact our office for more details.**

## Training TLAP Speakers: Robert Kiefer



In the last few months, professional public speaking coach Robert Kiefer has worked with TLAP staff members to help boost the effectiveness of their presentations given throughout the state. Robert helped write these presentations and used his 30 years of directing experience to shape them for the greatest potential effect. These presentations have helped acquaint everyone from law students to the judiciary with TLAP services.

Robert has also facilitated workshops for volunteers selected to give TLAP presentations so that they too may reach their audiences most effectively. Through his hands-on methods, Robert addresses the basics of speaking like voice and diction as well as helping participants articulate their passion for TLAP with clarity and purpose. He helps uncover their own personal connections with TLAP's goals, so that, as presenters, they can reach all members of Tennessee's legal profession, making them aware of TLAP as a lifeline in troubled times.

Feedback from those who have worked with Robert has been overwhelmingly positive. As one client put it, "Robert can't get rid of the butterflies in your stomach, but he can help you get them to fly in formation."


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(615) 741-3238  
Call toll free at:  
(877) 424-8527

**We're on the  
Web at:**

**[www.tlap.org](http://www.tlap.org)**

When you call TLAP, you can be sure that **complete confidentiality** will be maintained. The Tennessee Supreme Court has established TLAP as an approved impaired lawyers program pursuant to a Rule 33 of the Rules of The Supreme Court of Tennessee. By virtue of said rule, all communications with TLAP are confidential and members of TLAP are relieved of their duty to report ethical violations discovered as a result of their TLAP work. This means that any misconduct or ethical violation discovered or revealed to a member of TLAP will **not** be reported to any disciplinary board. Additionally, communications with TLAP are confidential and privileged by virtue of T.C.A. Sec. 23-4-101, *et seq.*

*Problems are not a sign of failure, but an opportunity for growth.*



### TLAP Softball

Congratulations to the TLAP softball team for an exciting and fun-filled season. If you are interested in playing or organizing a team for next season, please contact our office : 877-424-8527.

Would you like to submit an article for the next newsletter? Have a topic suggestion? We are accepting submissions and encourage you to get involved!  
Email [tlap@tncourts.gov](mailto:tlap@tncourts.gov)

**CAMP TLAP 2010**  
**Montgomery Bell State Park**  
**March 19-21**  
Saturday night speaker:  
Edith T. Peebles, P.C.  
Omaha, Nebraska  
For hotel reservations:  
(800) 250-8613 or (615) 797-3101  
For registration information:  
Email [tlap@tncourts.gov](mailto:tlap@tncourts.gov)



Montgomery Bell State Park

**TLAP**   
TENNESSEE LAWYERS  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM