Technology and Puppies
Practice 2.0
March 2016

Technology has made it possible, and ever so convenient, to have a virtual law office – or to practice from a home office. This is particularly useful for sole practitioners, small or start-up firms who wish to minimize overhead while building a practice or so that they may offer lower fees to clients. The wonders of embracing technology in this manner is that it is also isolating. Depending on the nature of a solo practice, the lawyer may not interact with clients or colleagues on a day to day basis. You may be saying, "this is on a similar vein to the post from the last eLegal Solo, why another reflection on this theme?"

Well, it's about puppies. At a recent legal technology expo one of the vendors had puppies at their booth. These seven or eight adorable puppies were available for cuddling and for adoption. What was amazing was the fact that lawyers in attendance, all ages, women and men, from all areas and varieties of practice, queued up to get their chance to hold a warm, snuggly puppy. It was a connection that everyone wanted.

So, do we all crave some kind of connection? For most, the answer is yes. As a solo practitioner, or a lawyer in a small firm, don't you want a connection with others who encounter the same challenges, joys, troubles and satisfactions? Regardless of your specific area(s) of practice, there are other lawyers in the Arizona legal community who likely feel the same way. Family lawyers want to connect with family lawyers, general practitioners want to connect with general practitioners . . . well, you get the drift. Whether it's more social, more networking, more for referrals or for a mentor or colleague, most professionals crave that connection.

Last month, we discussed the State Bar's Online Community – a great way for technology to serve that need to connect. But this month, more personal connections are the focus. No, this isn't a dating column . . . don't worry. There are a number of ways to foster the in-person connection that, if the opportunity to cuddle puppies is any example, we want as well. How to connect, then?
First suggestion: State Bar Sections. If you are a solo or in a small firm, consider joining the Sole Practitioner/Small Firm Section. The Section is active, both on the Online Community and in hosting events at the Bar and off-site. Sure, it’s great to participate in discussion threads in the Online Community, but it’s also great to sit down in person with a colleague and share experiences, get ideas, and network.

Which leads to the next suggestion: The State Bar’s Annual Convention. This year the Convention will be held from June 15 – 17, at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass (not the casino – the resort) for the first time. This year’s theme is My Bar- Our Future. It’s a great venue – easy parking, everything in one building, on one floor and all inside (think good air conditioning in June). It’s not only a great way to get your year-worth of CLE in three days, it’s a great way to mix and mingle with the other 1,400 or more Arizona attorneys in all walks of legal practice. It may not be cuddly, per se, but it's collegial, there's great evening entertainment, and it's fun.

So plan to connect; save the date for the State Bar Convention, join a section, get active in your Bar! More next time.