



# THE Connection

Official Newsletter of the Georgia Association of Professional Private Investigators, Inc.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Next  
GAPPI Atlanta  
Chapter Meeting  
April 10, 2012  
at Ryan's Restaurant  
705 Jimmy Carter Blvd.  
Norcross  
(770) 840-9096

Networking and lunch  
from  
11:30 a.m.—12:00 noon  
Meeting from  
12:00 noon—1p.m.

The cost is \$15.00 for  
GAPPI members

\$20 for non-members  
(includes lunch and  
beverage)

\$10 for meeting only -  
no lunch

Students and potential  
members are always  
welcome.

“We look forward to  
seeing you all there!”

## President's Pen

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the Legislative Session. This is the second most important day and is called “Crossover Day”. Any bill introduced in one chamber must be voted on and passed to the other chamber by this day or it is generally dead.

Listed below is the legislation that relates to our industry. The information provided here is based on the most current information put out by the General Assembly. The number of stars indicate the level of importance.

\*\*\*HB-357: Motor vehicle registration records; persons to receive certificate of title; add authorized persons. This bill died in Committee.

\*\*\*HB-674 This bill would make it totally illegal to place a GPS tracking device on any object or person within the state of Georgia and to track the movements using such a device. This bill never made it to Committee and is dead.

\*\*\*SB-421: This bill would allow access to motor vehicle records by persons licensed by the Board of Private Detectives and Security Agencies. This bill did not crossover, but may be attached to a bill that did crossover, so it is still alive.

\*\*HB 526: Marshal responsibilities; only those certified may serve process in court; provided they are certified by the Marshal of that County. This bill did not crossover.

\*\*HB 284: This bill relates to commencement of action and service, so as to change provisions relating to the procedure involved with certified process servers This bill was replaced by HB-1048.

\*\*HB-1048 This bill provides for “Certified Process Servers” without any involvement from the Sheriffs. This bill did crossover and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

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\*\*HB-735 This bill would require new applicants for gun carrying permits from the Probate Court to have four (4) hours of training, and also those who currently have valid permits to also have the training when they go to re-new such permit. This training could be obtained from any firearms instructor licensed by the Georgia Board of Private Detectives and Security Guards. This bill did not crossover.

\*HB 402: This bill relates to the Georgia Crime Information Center, so as to change provisions relating to disclosure and dissemination of criminal records to private persons and businesses. This bill did not crossover.

\*HB 478: This bill relates to the Georgia Crime Information Center, so as to provide that the criminal record of a person convicted of a misdemeanor or a nonviolent felony who has been released from custody for a period of two years without a further conviction shall be restricted from disclosure from the public. This bill did not crossover.

\*HB 663: A bill relating to the Georgia Crime Information Center, so as to change provisions relating to inspection, purging, modifying, or supplementing of criminal records  
The bill did not crossover.

HB 8: A bill relating to wiretapping, eavesdropping, surveillance, and re-

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lated offenses, and prohibiting certain forms of surveillance without search warrants. This bill did not crossover.

SB 15: A bill relating to operators of private detective businesses and private security businesses, so as to clarify that persons certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standard and Training Council are excluded from the provisions and regulations of this chapter. This bill did not crossover. This bill was rendered mute with the passage of HB-53 last year. HB-53 was an identical piece of legislation that was signed into law by the Governor in 2011.

SB 102: This bill relates to crimes and offenses relative to the carrying and possession of firearms; to provide for penalties; to revise certain terminology; and to revise the manner of issuance of and qualifications for firearms licenses. This bill passed the Senate on 3/16/11 and is in the House Judiciary (non-civil) Committee.

SB-445 This bill was requested by the Secretary of State to revamp the application process for all licensing boards. This bill was withdrawn, but may be introduced again next year..

SB-493 This bill would allow persons between the ages of 18-21 to obtain concealed carry permits after 8 hours of training provided by a "licensed" firearms instructors. This bill did crossover and is in the House.



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## GAPPI 2012 Spring Training (CEU's)

Registration is now open for the GAPPI Spring Training being held Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at Chattahoochee Technical College in Acworth. The address is 5198 Ross Road, Acworth, GA 30102. Please note that this is a change in address from previous years.

Spring Training provides 6 hours of Continuing Education, which includes an hour each for Ethics and Homeland Security as required to maintain your license with the State of Georgia. The cost is \$90 for GAPPI members and if your registration is postmarked or faxed in by April 23<sup>th</sup>. We have included the registration form in this newsletter or you can click on the registration link under Spring Training on the News & Events page on the GAPPI website ([www.gappi.org](http://www.gappi.org)) to download a registration form.

In addition to our lineup of excellent speakers, there will be an update on GAPPI's ongoing legislative initiatives for the 2012 State Legislative Session and an opportunity for you to contribute to the cause – so bring your checkbooks!

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:

If you donate at least \$250 to the GAPPI Legislative Fund, you can attend the Spring Training for free. For \$500 or more, you can attend free as well as receive a free business card size ad in all remaining GAPPI Connection Newsletters for 2012.

# 2012 Spring Training (CEU's)

Chattahoochee Technical College – North Campus  
5198 Ross Road, Acworth, Georgia 30102

**Please Note: This is at last year's new location!**

GAPPI will conduct a one day training seminar offering SIX HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION credit.

## Conference Prices:

|  | Early Registration<br>before 04/23/12 | Late Registration<br>after 4/24/12 |   |          |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAPPI or other State PI Association Member: | \$90                                  | \$110                              | = | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member:                                 | \$135                                 | \$155                              | = | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student:                                    | \$50                                  | \$70                               | = | \$ _____ |
| <b>Walk-in registrations welcome based on seating availability</b>   |                                       | <b>Total:</b>                      | = | \$ _____ |

**(Please use one form per attendee)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Registration Confirmations will be sent to this email address.*

**I'm a Member of:**  GAPPI  NCISS/ISPLA  Other State PI Assn. (Please List): \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment Options:

I have enclosed a check payable to GAPPI for the amount in the "TOTAL" box above.

I want to pay by Credit Card.

1 Visa 1 MasterCard 1 American Express Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date (MM/YY): \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code (3 digits for Visa/MC: 4 digits for Amex): \_\_\_\_\_

Exact Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Exact Statement Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to be charged: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- Registration includes conference materials, light refreshments and attendance certificates.
- In order to keep conference costs at previous years' prices, **lunch will be on your own.**
- Cancellation Deadline is **March 30, 2012**. No refunds will be issued after this time. An alternate may attend with notification to GAPPI.
- Walk-in Registrants will receive conference materials based upon availability.
- Conference seating is classroom style and is **First Come, First Served**. Arrive early for a good seat!
- Returned Check Fee is \$35.00. If using a credit card, your charge will read AHQI.

**Return payment and registration form to:**

**GAPPI 665 Red Oak Road Stockbridge, GA 30281**

**fax: 404.768.7767 or email: vernon@ahqi.com www.gappi.org**

## Private Investigators Reviews and Referrals

It's a well-known fact that word-of-mouth advertising is one of the most effective forms of advertising. Whether you want powerful testimonials, referrals or social media followers, it's important to have a word-of-mouth marketing plan. The most powerful aspect of that strategy can be private investigator referrals and reviews.

### **Helpful hints for getting reviews and referrals**

Unhappy clients are more likely to write online reviews than satisfied clients, so it's important to encourage satisfied customers to submit reviews. Happy clients aren't always active about giving positive feedback, so here are a few tips for getting the most out of your reviews.

**Under-promise and over-deliver.** If you meet expectations, your client should walk out the door happy. If you exceed those expectations, your client might leave ready to spread the word.

**When your client has a problem, fix it.** If a client has an issue with your service, solving it is an opportunity to leave the client with good feelings toward your company. A client that walks away satisfied and had no issues might not share their experience, but if you cleared up a major problem that could have been disastrous, that client might be more vocal about their experience.

**Ask for a letter of recommendation.** If a client tells you they are happy with your services, ask them for a recommendation. You can then post parts of it as a testimonial, or even supply it to potential clients. You can also ask repeat clients if they know anyone else who uses investigative services on a regular basis.

**Ask for specific reviews.** If you encourage a satisfied client to write a review, ask them to be specific about how you helped them. 'Great service and very personable' isn't quite as powerful as "XYZ Private Investigators found the information I needed, and handled the situation with discretion and empathy. I'd recommend their services to anyone."

**Ask your Facebook fans for feedback.** Post a question asking past clients how you've been most helpful and how your business can improve. Negative feedback is just as important as positive feedback, and something potential clients actively look for. This way you can show that you care about your clients, get controlled negative feedback, and show how you

interact with your clients. It might also give you the opportunity to help clients that weren't completely satisfied.

**Create a channel for feedback.** A follow-up email or online poll can be a place for clients to share their likes and dislikes about your service. Most people don't complain in person, even if they're asked. With this approach you can get some insight to what problems you need to fix. And if anyone gives a great review you can always ask to use it as a testimonial.

**Network with friends and family.** Although your friends and family probably haven't used your services, they can still recommend you to people they know. Often enough, people choose to go with someone who is connected to someone they know and trust.

**Get involved with your community.** It's hard to get referrals from people who have never used your services and don't know you very well, but if you interact and network with your community you might be remembered the next time someone needs an investigator. Most people are fascinated with your profession, so it should be an easy talking point. Remember, getting referrals and good reviews is about making sure your customers are satisfied. Make sure your customer service skills are polished and that you aren't promising unrealistic results.

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## **Places where reviews can function as referrals**

Ideally, your satisfied customers will be sending new clients your way, but if you aren't getting enough traditional referrals here are a few places where reviews can function as referrals.

**Local Search Listing.** Once you submit your business to local search, encourage clients to rate your service and write a review on that listing. This way, people who are searching for a private investigator online can get a feel for your customer satisfaction rate.

**Facebook Page.** Facebook is one of the most important places to showcase your reviews. If a satisfied customer leaves a positive comment on your business page, not only does it boost confidence in your page visitors, but that comment is also visible to the commenter's friends.

**Website.** When a potential client visits your website, they are checking for signs that your business is legitimate. Testimonials and reviews from recent clients can turn those page visitors into clients.

Keep in mind that your online presence is how many potential clients will find you, so it's important to put your best image forward.

## **Conclusion**

Having a constant stream of clients takes a great deal of effort and balancing. It's important to manage your online identity and do your best to get positive reviews, and also make the most of your relationships with previous and repeat clients. Whenever you find out a new client is a referral, be sure to thank the person who sent them to you. It's a simple gesture that could send even more clients your direction.

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