

MCPA TODAY

The Official Publication of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association

January 2011

www.montcoparalegals.org

Editor: Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P.

Message From the President

For those who don't know me personally, I'd like to take this first message to "introduce" myself. In 1984 I started my legal career as a receptionist at a downtown Philadelphia firm. I quickly moved to a secretarial position at another downtown firm working Plaintiff's Personal Injury work. When I married, I moved to Montgomery County. I held word processing, secretarial and bookkeeping positions and was the Office Administrator at a Lansdale firm. I worked full-time, cared for my 5 year old and went to school in the evening to obtain my Paralegal Certification in 1993. Shortly thereafter, I left the workforce to be a wife, stay at home mom and homeschooled my three children (now ages 13, 17 and 22). In 2008, I came back to the workforce due to the separation and consequent divorce, which also lead me back to my maiden name - Annette Long (*that we know of, there is no relation to the previous President of MCPA - Deb Long*). Since 2008 I have worked for the Norristown law firm of Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer for senior partner, William H. Pugh, V specializing in defense medical malpractice work.

Once back into the Paralegal workforce, I joined MCPA. When first approached about being a part of the MCPA Board, I was hesitant, but agreed to be a part of the Board and accepted the appointment of Public Relations Chair. The year 2010 brought many personal changes - the death of a loved one, the end of a marriage, moving to a new home, family issues with my son, the re-taking of my maiden name, the start of a new life a new relationship and the realization that I was a part of the MCPA family. The friendships that formed and the distraction of working on something meaningful helped me through a difficult time in my life. I am all about overcoming obstacles and have a drive to excel in all I do. I believe that all difficulties can be faced and conquered. The important thing is that we learn from the hardships.

As we enter 2011 MCPA will continue to work with the Montgomery Bar Association, the Young Lawyers Section and become a more visible and viable part of the County. We have entered into the social networking scene via our Facebook page and will soon look to upgrading our website page. Our membership numbers continue to climb and we recently crossed the 150 member mark. We will continue with Community Outreach projects such as Beads for Life, Manna Food Drive, Special Olympics and the annual hat and mitten collection as well as some new projects that will be announced later in the year. We will look to continue participating in the Wills for Heroes events and the Delaware Valley Legal Expo as well as adding events and participation with Montgomery Child Advocacy Project (MCPA) and Legal Aid. Look for interesting and informative CLE events this year including topics of organization, billing, ethics and more!

As I take the helm of MCPA, I am whole-heartedly looking forward to serving and working with the Board Members and Committees to take MCPA to the "next level". Let's make 2011 a year to be remembered!

Annette Long, President

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SAVE THE DATE!!

February 17, 2011-- Getting and Staying Organized (CLE Seminar)

March 19, 2011--Annual Breakfast Meeting; Billing Buzzwords (CLE Seminar)

April 13, 2011--Paul Biedlingmaier, Edward Jones (CLE Seminar)

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December 2009 MCPA Holiday Social – “Naughty or Nice”

Submitted by Ro Fedorka

If you were at Chap’s that night, NICE, I’m sure you had a wonderful night. If you missed it, don’t be NAUGHTY and miss the next one. More than 30 NICE members in festive holiday attire braved the NAUGHTY cold and enjoyed great food and beverages (some NAUGHTY) while mingling and catching up with other members. Some members were as busy as Santa’s elves (NICE) – with the collection of new hats & mittens for Norristown Head Start Program. We filled the tree again this year! Other NICE members were otherwise engaged in selling, looking at, trying on, and shopping, shopping, shopping, the “BeadforLife” table. And, as the saying goes, tis far better to give than to receive –great!! Because by buying from Bead for Life, you actually gave to a very worthy cause. Thanks to our NICE members, over \$600 was raised for Bead for Life that night! That’s pretty impressive! Also, through the generosity of our



NICE members, that evening we presented a check in the amount of \$450 for Holidays for Heroes. Several NICE members of the Young Lawyers Section of the Montgomery Bar Association came by to visit with our members and accept the check, and then they were off to attend their own holiday party. With all this giving, we still added another \$50 to our scholarship fund through the sale of 50/50 tickets!! It was, without a doubt, a very NICE successful, fun evening! Thanks to all who helped sponsor, coordinate, attend, and/or contributed in any way to this event. I can’t wait to see what 2011 brings – both NAUGHTY and NICE?! HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



Annette Rolon, Norma Gunning & Maureen Stankiewicz



Jennifer Castiglia--Lucky Prize Winner!



**Members of YLS of MBA accepting Collection for
Holidays for Heroes Campaign**



Natalie Choy--surprised 50/50 winner!



Karen Strehlow and Debbie Long



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www.dos.state.pa.us
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<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>
www.pacdl.org
www.mylicense.state.pa.us/
<https://www.tcs.ed.state.pa.us/>
<http://php.app.com/PAteachers0607/search.php>
www.licensepa.state.pa.us
www.ethicsrulings.state.pa.us/Search.aspx

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WHY I BELIEVE IN (AND ENCOURAGE) CERTIFICATION

Written By Sherry Barag, Pa. C.P.

At the present time, there are two types of certification programs available for those of us who work in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: the PACE exam offered by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations ("NFPA") and the Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal Program (Pa. C.P.) of the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations.

The Pa. C.P. program has educational and/or work experience qualifications and requirements. There is no testing.

Sometime this year, hopefully by October or November, NFPA will roll out their second exam, the Paralegal CORE Competency ("PCC") exam. CORE stands for Competent, Organized, Responsible and Ethical. The PCC exam will be for those who do not qualify for the PACE exam.

These exams will set the standard in the paralegal profession and provide a way for employers to recognize qualified individuals whose skills and knowledge have already been tested, having already proven to have a knowledge of legal ethics and practices, technology and terminology. Yes, sometimes credentials do equal credibility.

And since the exams are voluntary, they also demonstrate a desire to enhance recognition of the professional status of your chosen field, as well as establishing a credential in the absence of formal regulation.

As you may know, the paralegal profession is one of the very few that does not require specific educational requirements and passing an exam before working in that field.

Yes, these exams may cover types of law that you're not familiar with. But in today's economy, wouldn't it be to your advantage to be able to claim some knowledge about different type of laws from those in which you are already familiar?

I have been told of certain firms that promote to their clients that some of their paralegals have passed the PACE exam. And I have also heard of certain firms that bill their RP paralegals at a higher rate.

I agree that the cost of taking these exams can be prohibitive. The cost for taking the PACE exam, including study materials, is almost \$400.00, and it is anticipated that the PCC exam will cost about the same.

I am hopeful that MCPA will at some time in the future offer a scholarship for taking either the PACE or PCC exam.

Some firms, including mine, reimburse you for expenses after you have passed the exam. And in talking to many RPs at last year's NFPA convention, I found out that many firms give a cash bonus for passing the exam, some up to \$1000.00.

Maybe you're still thinking, so what does this do for me? Maybe your employer doesn't care or won't recognize or reward you. So why should you do it? Why should you put yourself through the ordeal of studying perhaps up to six months and then taking a test for up to four hours?

My answer: when you do a good deed or act of charity, do you do it to be recognized? Or do you do it for your own personal feeling of satisfaction? Feeling better about you should count for something.

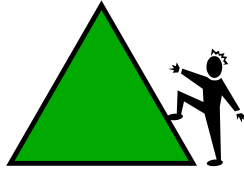
So in the same vein, shouldn't you take one of the exams to be certified so that you can feel the personal satisfaction of knowing that you have credentials, that you have credibility in your chosen profession, and that you have demonstrated that you have the knowledge and skills required to pass an examination of this type?

My top 10 reasons to obtain certification:

1. It demonstrates commitment to the paralegal profession.
2. It establishes your credentials.
3. It validates your job experience, skills and abilities.
4. It sets you apart from your counterparts.
5. It provides a way for employers to recognize you as being qualified.
6. It can lead to greater earnings, better career opportunities and greater job responsibilities.
7. It improves skills and knowledge.
8. It allows for greater recognition among peers.
9. It enhances the entire paralegal profession.
10. It builds your self confidence.

So I highly recommend that you apply for the Pa. C.P. program as soon as you are eligible. Take the PACE exam if possible, or the PCC exam when it is available, and then proudly add (and show off) those initials after your name.

Remember, being a paralegal is not just a job, it's our profession.



Student Liaison Program

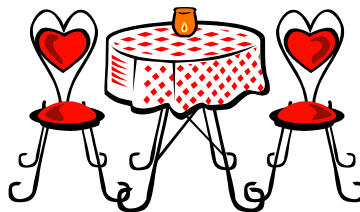
By: Lisa M. LaPenna, Pa.C.P.

If you belong to a school that is not represented and would like to become a student liaison, please contact Lisa LaPenna at (610) 941-2523 or llapenna@kaplaw.com. Prospective candidates must be members of the MCPA, enrolled in a paralegal studies program, and able to attend one Board Meeting a month held in Montgomery County. Although student liaisons do not have voting power, they can provide input to the Board on behalf of their fellow students regarding their needs and how the Association can better serve them. Student liaisons also assist with coordinating speaking events and informational sessions between the MCPA and their respective schools.

If you are interested, please submit a short bio/resume to me. Please include the name of your school, expected graduation date, job (if you have one), any legal experience, and any other organizations with which you may be affiliated. I will review and submit to the Board for final approval. The appointment of Student Liaisons to our Board of Directors has not only been a huge success, but it has peaked interest with other local associations. This is a networking opportunity, which can benefit your career search as a paralegal. Your voice as a student needs to be heard!

Lisa M. LaPenna, Pa. C.P. and Chair of the Mentoring Committee of the MCPA

llapenna@kaplaw.com (610) 941-2523



WHAT'S **YOUR** FAVORITE RESTAURANT?

Have a favorite restaurant that can accommodate a large crowd? Let the Planning Committee know and maybe the next MCPA function could be held there. If the MCPA uses your restaurant, you will receive a free gift. Send ideas to Lindsey Tait at lindsay.tait@gmail.com.

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PARALEGAL REGULATION

Written by Deborah Arbuckle, Pa. C.P.

In June of 2010, I attended the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (“NFPA”) Joint Regulation/Leadership/ PACE Ambassadors Conference in Washington, D.C. I was intrigued to learn about not only the different types of paralegal regulation, but also the status of paralegal regulation across the country. At MCPA’s Election Meeting in November of last year, I gave a brief overview of regulation and an edited version of that presentation is printed below.

Regulation of Paralegals - sounds like a relatively simple concept – oh wish that it was so!

Our profession has evolved over many years, and continues to evolve. We don’t have the same set standards that attorneys do – i.e., passing a state bar in order to practice law. Some paralegals have completed certificate programs (both ABA and non-ABA approved), some have associate or bachelor degrees, some a combination of all of those, and yet others have none of this “formal” educational background, but have years working in the trenches. And trust me; working for attorneys qualifies as working in the trenches!

Regulation of paralegals is defined by NFPA as “the process by which a governmental or other entity authorizes general practice in the Paralegal profession and in the use of the title “Paralegal” to individuals meeting predetermined qualifications that include (a) an educational requirement; (b) passage of a proficiency based examination; (c) continuing legal education (d) adherence to a code of ethics and (e) other criteria as required by the governmental or other entity.”

Regulation by a non-governmental agency or self-regulation requires a cohesive profession with a strong sense of collegiate identity.

The paralegal profession does not have a cohesive identity. There are 4 national paralegal associations -

- NFPA (National Federation of Paralegal Associations – to which you belong as a

- member of MCPA);
- NALA (National Association of Legal Assistants);
- NALS (National Association of Legal Secretaries); and
- AAPI (American Alliance of Paralegals, Inc.).

Each has a different set of values and objectives which makes self regulation problematic. Each also has a similar, but slightly different definition of Paralegal. Some use “paralegal” and “legal assistant” interchangeably.

I think the most comprehensive definition of all the national organizations of Paralegal is NFPA’s, even more comprehensive than the ABA’s.

As defined by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, a “Paralegal is a person, qualified through education, training or work experience to perform substantive legal work that requires knowledge of legal concepts and is customarily, but not exclusively, performed by a lawyer. This person may be retained or employed by a lawyer, law office, governmental agency or other entity or may be authorized by administrative, statutory or court authority to perform this work. Substantive shall mean work requiring recognition, evaluation, organization, analysis, and communication of relevant facts and legal concepts”.

The Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations’ definition is almost identical to NFPA’s but falls short in that it does not define “substantive legal work.”

The American Bar Association’s current definition of a Legal Assistant/Paralegal reads:

A legal assistant or paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

Again, no definition of substantive legal work which I think is a crucial element.

So, we are kind of behind the 8 ball in that we don’t all agree as to even what the definition of a paralegal is.

TYPES OF REGULATION –

Registration – Individuals or institutions must register with an association or agency. This may be voluntary or mandatory. Usually no educational requirement for registration, however bonding is sometimes required.

Certification – This appears to be the most popular means of regulation across the United States –with several states having a program in place. Certification is primarily a voluntary means of regulation, obtained or regulated by a non-governmental professional association. There are usually predetermined qualifications which may include graduation from an accredited program,

acceptable performance on a qualifying examination or completion of a certain amount of work experience.

There are currently two widely accepted forms of voluntary certification at the national level – PACE Registered Paralegal offered by NFPA and NALA's Certified Legal Assistant/Certified Paralegal designation. Additionally, NALS has Professional Paralegal and AAPI has American Alliance Certified Paralegal.

There are also voluntary certification programs offered by various statewide associations, including Delaware Paralegal Association, Louisiana State Paralegal Association and of course, Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations. Pennsylvania, through KAPA, began its certification program in 2008. North Carolina Plan for Paralegal Certification's plan is a voluntary certification plan operated under the auspices of the North Carolina State Bar, as is the Ohio Paralegal Certification Program.

NFPA's "Model Plan for Voluntary Paralegal Regulation" contains mandatory requirements that are much more stringent than what KAPA has adopted for its Pa. C.P. program. They include passing a proficiency exam, having an associates or bachelors degree in either paralegal studies, or in any subject, plus a pre-determined number of semester credit hours. NFPA is adamant regarding raising the bar when it comes to the educational criteria for certification. In 2009 at NFPA's convention in Portland, Oregon, I witnessed exactly how passionate paralegals are regarding regulation and NFPA's education requirements. I wholeheartedly support not only educational requirements, but continuing legal education. However, due to the nature of how this profession has evolved, I personally believe it is imperative for us to recognize that evolution and give due credit to work experience.

Licensure – this is the most restrictive form of regulation. It involves an agency or branch of government granting permission to those meeting predetermined qualifications to engage in a profession or grants permission to institutions to perform specified functions. This means that a person must hold a license to practice, whether or not they possess any specified prerequisite qualifications.

Regulation of the paralegal profession is not unique to the United States. Canada, Scotland, England and Wales also have some sort of regulation. Those countries have a different legal structure so I won't go into any detail here.

NFPA's website has a listing, current as of March, 2010, of the status of regulation in all 50 states. It's an interesting read, in that some states have defined "paralegal", "paraprofessional" (Arkansas), "legal document preparers" (Arizona), "legal document assistants" (California). We have a long way to go, in that 27 states currently have no form of certification of any kind in place.

The foregoing is meant as a brief overview and not to be a comprehensive report on regulation (for those who did not recognize it – that's a disclaimer).

Why have Regulation/Certification???

Without regulation or certification of some sort, any person employed either by a lawyer, law office, corporation, government agency or other entity, can use the title of *paralegal or legal assistant*, without qualification by education, work experience or training and without the knowledge to perform **substantive** legal work. Those individuals and/or law firms utilizing the term “legal assistant” or “paralegal” are devaluing the image and professionalism of paralegals/legal assistants. It invites the possible lack of ethical standards as well as a possible unauthorized practice of law by persons not qualified to be a paralegal/legal assistant with loss of professionalism and recognition among bench and bar. That is unacceptable.

Now, why obtain your Pa. C.P. or R.P.?

Recognition and respect by the bench, bar and general public as a professional. Admittedly, we have a long way to go to educate the bench and bar as to what those designations actually mean and what it takes to obtain them.

CLE requirements to maintain standards and status. This is absolutely necessary.

As a profession, we need to be pro-active and educate our supervising attorneys, co-workers, firm administrators. Get your Pa. C.P. or your R.P., then when asked “what are those initials after your name?” give them an earful! Tell them what your particular accreditation is and why it was important for you to get it. I understand that not everyone works for a firm or attorney that is willing to pay for certification or the attendant CLE’s. But MCPA offers many CLE credits at no cost to members, and at a minimal cost to non-members, so you can easily get your CLE’s through MCPA.

Take pride in your profession – and it is a profession, not just a job.

Do it for yourself! We don’t have to have these additional certifications once we have completed a paralegal program, but the self esteem and satisfaction is well worth the time and effort.



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5:15 pm – 6:30 pm - Jurors needed for Mock Trial at the Montgomery County Courthouse

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The 3 phases of "becoming paperless"

Written by Ernie Svenson , Esquire

Submitted by Debbie Long, Pa. C.P.

Reprinted with the permission of the author and The Paralegal Mentor. This article appeared in the January 6, 2011 Vol. IV, Issue 1 Issue of the Paralegal Mentor's e-zine, Paralegal Strategies. The article is reprinted in its entirety below.

People are getting hip to the idea that being paperless is a good thing. When I preach the benefits of being paperless now people are easily converted to enthusiastic supporters. And the first question I get after a conversion is: what should I do first? It's a great question, of course. And, depending on several factors, the best answer will vary.

An acceptable answer, however, is this: the road to becoming paperless involves three phases.

Phase I doesn't require any sudden change; you just have to commit to optimize your digital skills in general. Take email for example (please!). If you're drowning in email (i.e. you don't have good techniques for processing your email quickly and reliably) you're not going to help yourself by adding more burden to your incoming stream of digital information. Likewise, if you're a solo and you don't know how to backup your critical information, and you start creating more critical information that you have to deal with, then you're just increasing the likely pain when you have a hard drive failure and no good backup.

So the first phase of becoming paperless is to simply get better at using the key tools that you already have in place. Definitely, that means becoming a major Email Ninja. It also means being adept at saving files to your hard drive and finding things by searching your computer. Being able to search for information on the Internet is also helpful for those times when no one is around to help you troubleshoot a problem. Solving most tech problems is a lot easier than you'd think. Why wait for Godot to show up when you can probably fix the problem yourself? Well, not by yourself exactly, because you'll be searching Google for answers to these problems.

The second phase of becoming paperless is to make sure that you keep digital information in digital form. For example, don't print out emails just to file them (or really for *any* reason). Emails are already in digital form, and they're easier to manage in digital form so the last thing you want to do is to print them out.

A less obvious example is faxes. Don't let faxes go on to become paper!

Yes, it's true that when someone sends you a fax they often begin by putting paper into a fax machine. But what people forget is that fax machines are actually scanners; that's how the paper gets digitized before its journey to you. If you put a traditional fax machine in your office to receive those faxes what you're really doing is turning digital information back into paper. Web-based faxing is the way to go, and will keep you from receiving that nasty paper stuff.

Even outgoing information is often made into paper unnecessarily. A good place to defend against this is with a digital signature. If you had a 'digital signature' (e.g. a graphic image of your signature) and you could put it on letters that you were sending out then you'd be more likely to send the letter as a PDF attached to an email. That system would save you valuable time and probably get a much faster response. Granted some letters have to go out in the traditional way, but most letters don't. And if you don't know how to send letters as PDF attachments it's probably because you've never created a digital signature and learned how to use it.

Finally, another place that people commit to paper is when they keep reference materials. Many magazine articles and other scholarly documents are available online for free. You can either download the documents and save them as PDFs or bookmark their URL into a system that lets you find this information quickly later. Why keep the paper "just in case you need it"? Eliminate paper documents that have little immediate value, or only uncertain future value.

Lastly, in Phase II you'll want to learn to read documents you receive on a computer screen. I understand that you would rather read paper; so would I. Paper is very comfortable and it's familiar so it feels good to absorb information by reading paper. But, the sooner you wean yourself from always printing out documents to read them the easier the transition to a paperless world will be. The cost of storing and sending digital information is steadily dropping. The cost of printing (are you paying attention to the economic crisis in the world of newspapers?) is going up and the cost of sending large documents is going to always go up too. Eventually it will be necessary for everyone to learn to read certain kinds of documents on a computer screen.

Why wait for inevitability to dictate what you can do? Why not start adapting to the format that will soon prevail and dominate? If you like to read on document while you create another one

then get two monitors for your computer. They're cheap and easy to set up. In other words, start taking proactive steps to reduce the paper that you create, or allow to be created. If you work hard in this phase then next phase is not really going to be that challenging.

The last step, Phase III, is to learn to digitize information, especially paper. People send you paper whether you want them to or not, so what can you do? Find an easy way to turn it into digital information. Basically, this means buying a scanner and learning how to use it. I recommend the [Fujitsu ScanSnap 1500](#) (or [1500M if you have a Mac](#)). It's easy to set up and use, but it does still take some getting used to. But if you've spent the right amount of effort in phases 1 and 2 then this part will be pretty easy.

For example, let's say you don't know how to tweak some setting on the scanner. Well if you followed my recommendation that you become more adept at looking things up on Google, you'd be willing to type a search phrase like "fujitsu scansnap set up" and see what kind of help is out there. Probably someone has created a YouTube video, or perhaps a document with screenshots, that walks you through the process. And maybe they even offer some useful tips that they just discovered, and which wind up helping you tremendously.

Okay, let's review the phases of becoming paperless: (1) you work on improving your digital skills with the goal of becoming more efficient, and more self-sufficient (e.g. learn how to do everything in Outlook if you have that email program); (2) you strive to avoid letting digital information become paper, using various tricks; and (3) you buy a scanner ([Fujitsu Scansnap!](#)) and learn how to use it and how to incorporate it into your daily workflow.

To learn more about The Paralegal Mentor and/or to subscribe to this FREE e-zine, www.paralegalmentor.com.





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NFPA UPDATE

Submitted by NFPA Primary Representative, Debbie Arbuckle, Pa. C.P.

Please remember to check out member benefits on the NFPA website, under the “Members Only” tab at the very top right on the home page. Password for the “Members Only” section is “Regulation”.

In December, 2010, member associations of Region IV of NFPA teamed up and provided gift cards to the family of Wayne Baker, NFPA representative from the Navy Legalman Association. Wayne is currently serving in Afghanistan, and when asked what we as a Region could do for him and his family at the holidays, he asked for nothing for himself only for his wife and 3 young sons. Gift cards were sent and gifts purchased for the boys, and a spa escape provided for his wife. This was a joint effort with the Rocky Mountain Paralegal Association, as Wayne’s wife and children are staying with family in Colorado.

Wayne also recently volunteered to head NFPA’s Military Outreach Program. He thought being stationed in Afghanistan would put him in the unique position of knowing exactly what our troops would like to get in the care packages we send from home. Stay tuned for more information about the Military Outreach Program in the near future.

Please keep Wayne, and all of our service persons, in your thoughts through the coming year.



Mentoring Committee

Lisa LaPenna, Pa. C.P., Mentoring Committee Chairperson

If you are interested in giving back to your profession, being a student mentor might be the fit for you.

If you know of an available externship or internship paralegal position, please contact me ((610) 941-2523 or llapenna@kaplaw.com).

Externships are short-term (one to two days), offer no pay or academic credit to help students gain an insider’s view of the paralegal profession.

Internships are longer term (a semester or summer), may involve pay and academic credit, and support.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Ro Fedorka, Chairperson

2010 – Where did it go and what did we do?

Where did 2010 go? As many of you know, it was a very busy year for MCPA and our Community Outreach Committee. We developed our Mission Statement, as follows: ***Our Mission is to proudly represent MCPA through responsible citizenship and united efforts to raise awareness, enhance and enrich the lives of those less fortunate and most in need, through the spirit of giving, acts of service, encouragement, inspiration and supportive nurturing in the local community and beyond.***

Early in the year, we made a generous contribution to the Haiti Relief Fund to help those whose lives were shattered by the devastating earthquake. We were proud tee/green sponsors of the Montgomery Bar Association Legal Aid Classic. This affords representation and services to victims of domestic abuse, low-income and elderly individuals in our community. Also, our generous members donated several large boxes of food items during the 6th Annual “Sinko de Mayo” collection for Manna on Main, which is a soup kitchen and food cupboard serving those in need in the North Penn area. Muchas Gracias!

HATS OFF to all who donated hats and mittens for Norristown Head Start! Once again we filled the tree at our Holiday Social. Let’s see if we can’t fill it and have a pile under the tree as well this year. Yes, that’s a challenge!

Perhaps the greatest outpouring of true compassion and generosity came as the holidays approached. What a great time to really pitch in and help others! Our members partnered with the Young Lawyers Section of the Montgomery Bar Association in contributing to the Holidays for Heroes campaign. These donations support local service members deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and their locally based families. What an honor to help serve those who so bravely and selflessly serve us every day. But we did not stop there. Members enjoyed shopping for lovely gifts for friends and family at the Bead for Life table at the Holiday Social. This resulted in over \$600 going to women in Uganda to support their efforts to overcome extreme poverty. How rich is that? We also provided a heartwarming collection of gifts and gift cards for the BCS, which provides quality care to youth ages 13 to 18. These youth are brought into the care of BCS through unfortunate circumstances such as poverty, unemployment, illness, parental addiction or incarceration, mental illness, failed adoptions, family conflicts and any number of other extreme conditions. Then, going above and beyond the gifts and monetary donations, some members volunteered their time and efforts, during this most busy time of year, to wrap gifts at the BCS office. Kudos to the wrappers! Of course when people give of themselves for others, there is no expectation of anything in return. Yet, I can’t help but wonder if that overwhelming feeling of accomplishment, yes, the “warm & fuzzies” of giving, doesn’t actually

compare with the happiness of those receiving. On the following pages are some of the Thank You notes from the teens at BCS. Now, I ask, did you *give* or *receive* a great gift?

Thanks to all who helped in any way. There is no gift or act of kindness too small to make a real difference in the lives of others.

Thank you so much for my gifts. I really appreciate them. Thank you for caring and taking your time for finding me gifts! Thank you so much.

♥
Tori

Thank you for the Christmas presents I greatly appreciate it. I love every single last thing I got. my Christmas could not have been any better.

Thanks again,

Jazzmine

Thank you for the presents, I Really appreciate it. I loved what I got for Christmas and I Really like the sweaters and the ipod I got. Thank you so much and god bless.

Sincerely,

Mill

Thank you for the Christmas Presents They were really nice gifts.

Thank you for taking your time to do all this stuff for us.

I really appreciate it!

Love

Sara

Dear, whom it may concern
I would like to say
thank you! Thank you
for all of the gifts
that you have donated
to BCS!! You have
put smiles on many
faces!! Thank you
very much!!
-Mauricia



MCPA APPAREL, MUGS and TOTES

MCPA long-sleeved t-shirts and short-sleeved polo shirts are still available. The long-sleeve shirts are \$10 and the short-sleeve shirts are \$20. Show your MCPA spirit by purchasing a shirt (or two).

MCPA coffee (or tea, or hot chocolate) mugs and re-usable MCPA Totes are also still available! Each at a low cost of \$5. Show off your MCPA spirit in the office with a new mug and in the community with a tote bag or two.

All MCPA spirit items will be available at the general membership meetings or you may contact J. Maxwell Conaboy, Paralegal, O'Brien & Ryan, LLP, mconaboy@obrlaw.com.



MCPA AND THE MILITARY OUTREACH PROGRAM



Dear Colleagues,

For the past several years, the Montgomery County Paralegal Association has joined the NFPA in supporting our colleagues that are serving our country in combat zones around the world. Many of these paralegals are reservists that have left their safe and secure homes and families to defend our way of life. These military paralegals are from each and every branch of the military. In an effort to show our appreciation and support, MCPA has been sending care packages on your behalf to Iraq and some to Afghanistan. Recently, the program has been revised in an effort to support more of our colleagues. Instead of being assigned an individual to send the packages to, we are now supporting a JAG (Judge Advocate General) office of paralegals so that no one in that office is left out.

I have been given the honor of continuing to coordinate those packages for our troops. Please visit the MCPA website (www.montcoparalegals.org) for suggested donations for the package. It is my hope that we will get enough donations to be able to send an extra package now and then to help lift the moral of our troops. As a veteran, I cannot tell you how much mail and packages mean to those away from home. Please DO NOT send any items that can be considered obscene or even questionable in any way and DO NOT send anything that contains pork or a pork byproduct. The troops must respect the customs of the country where they are stationed.

I have placed my contact information below so that anyone wishing to donate will be able to reach me. Feel free to contact me at any time. Items may also be given to Board members. Thank you so much for your support of MCPA and the Military Outreach Program.

Charlene M. Healy, RP
chealy@sattinronca.com
610-278-2630



Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations (KAPA)

News of Note

Submitted by Harry Reichner, Primary Delegate

Reminder to Pennsylvania Certified Paralegals, if you are approaching your second anniversary from your original certification, you will need to begin the renewal process. Below is the renewal procedure and requirements for your reference:

RENEWAL:

No sooner than forty-five (45) days prior to the expiration of your certification (two years from the date of your original certification date, or in subsequent years, two years from the date of your most recent renewal) you must submit the following:

- Renewal Application with the required supporting documentation attached;
- CLE Reporting Form listing your CLEs for the past two-year period; and
- Twenty-five (\$25.00) Dollars non-refundable Processing Fee.

CLE REQUIREMENTS:

Twelve (12) hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) every two (2) years are required for the Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal to maintain his or her credential. Two (2) of the twelve (12) hours shall be in ethics credits.

To be accepted as CLE credit hours, the credits must be obtained prior to the Pa. C.P.'s credential expiration date, and within two (2) years of the Pa. C.P.'s anniversary date.

All CLE credit hours may be obtained in person, via audio or on-line or video from the following sources:

- Courses/seminars offered by the Pennsylvania Bar Association or any bar associations;
- Courses/seminars offered by approved national or state law-related organizations (e.g., American Trial Lawyers Association, Pennsylvania Association for Justice, etc.);
- Courses/seminars offered by any national or state paralegal association;

- Courses/seminars offered by any accredited education institution or organization;
- Courses/seminars offered by professional education providers (e.g., Institute for Paralegal Education, Mealey's (via Lexis/Nexis), West LegalEdcenter (via Thomson West), etc.);
- Courses/seminars offered by any federal/state regulatory or government authority;
- Courses/seminars/programs offered in-house by the applicant's firm, corporation or employer;
- Self study programs provided by any of the entities listed herein above which are available on audio and/or videotape and have supporting written materials;
- Teaching, speaking or guest lecturing at a seminar or course. The subject must be on substantive law or issues, or must be relevant to and oriented to the specific nature of the paralegal profession that are relevant to employed paralegals and/or paralegal students.
- Authoring an article or publication on substantive legal issues and be relevant to and oriented to the specific nature of the paralegal profession that are relevant to employed paralegal's and/or paralegal students.

COURSES/SEMINARS/PROGRAMS

When applying for CLE credit hours for seminar/courses attended, the Pa. C.P. must submit with his or her renewal application the following:

- an outline of the seminar topics including a brief summary of each topic being presented and, if available, a copy of the seminar brochure.
- a copy of each speaker's resume including his or her relevant qualifications;
- a detailed time line of each segment of the seminar being offered including lunch and breaks; and
- the number of hours attended (e.g. proof of attendance).

CLE credit hours shall not be granted for less than thirty (30) minutes of classroom instruction. There is no restriction on the number of CLE credit hours obtained in this manner.

SELF STUDY PROGRAMS

When applying for CLE credit hours for self study programs, the Pa. C.P. must submit with his or her renewal application the following:

- a copy of the promotional brochure;
- the course outline;
- a list of faculty names and credentials;
- sample exam questions or blank affidavit of completion;
- a copy of your final test score; and
- the certificate of completion.

The course provider must provide a minimum of ten (10) test questions for each CLE credit hour to all participants, and participants must correctly answer 80% of the questions to receive credit for the on-line seminar.

The determination of the number of credit hours is based as follows:

- audio and video tapes will be based on the amount of time it takes to view and/or listen to the tapes;
- CD and DVD and Internet presentations will be based on the amount of time it takes to view;
- written materials including books and seminar manuals will be based on 50 pages per hour.

A maximum of three (3) CLE credit hours may be obtained in this manner.

TEACHING, SPEAKING OR GUEST LECTURING SEMINAR

When applying for CLE credit hours for teaching, speaking or guest lecturing, the Pa. C.P. must submit with his or her renewal application information pertaining to the course or seminar for which CLE is sought will be reviewed and considered for CLE credit. The information must include the following:

- a copy of the course advertisement or seminar brochure;
- a description of the seminar topic, including areas of substantive law or professional issues to be presented; **or** a copy of the seminar outline;
- description of the speaker's relevant qualifications; **or** a copy of the speaker's resume;
- if offered, the number of credits available to attendees; and
- number of hours/minutes of the engagement.

The number of CLE credit hours to be awarded in this category will be based upon the length and content of the presentation. The number of CLE credit hours granted is at the discretion of the Committee on Paralegal Certification.

The maximum of five (5) CLE credit hours may be obtained for a course or seminar presentation. CLE credit is provided only one time for any seminar/course presentation.

PUBLISHING ARTICLES

When applying for CLE credit hours for publishing an article, the Pa. C.P. must submit with his or her renewal application the following:

- the article(s) for consideration;
- proof the article was published; and
- the date of publication.

The number of CLE credit hours to be awarded in this category will be based upon the length and content of the article. The number of CLE credit hours granted is at the discretion of the Committee on Paralegal Certification. To receive credit, the article must be published prior to the Pa. C.P.'s certification expiration date.

The maximum of two (2) CLE credit hours may be obtained in this manner.

FORMS:

The application for Certification can be found on the [FORMS AND DOCUMENTS](#) page of the KAPA web site.

The MCPA is a member of the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations ("KAPA"), a professional organization comprised of paralegal organizations located throughout Pennsylvania. The member associations represent in excess of 1,400 paralegals of varying backgrounds, experience, education, and job responsibilities, reflecting the diversity of the paralegal profession. The Keystone Alliance was formally established in 1995 from groundwork laid in the 1980's by the paralegal associations in Pennsylvania.

Be sure to visit KAPA's web site for more updates at <http://www.keystoneparalegals.org/>.



Facebook

The Montgomery County Paralegal Association (MCPA) now has a Facebook page!

Join our group for updates on membership meetings, CLE events, socials, job postings, news at the local, state and national levels and connect with other Paralegals in Montgomery County.

SEARCH: Montgomery County Paralegal Association (MCPA)



NFPA MEMBER BENEFITS

Submitted by Sherry Barag, Pa. C.P.

Just in case you were not aware, membership in MCPA also includes membership in the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA). There are many advantages to membership in NFPA, which include special discounts and benefits specifically obtained by NFPA for us.

To check these out yourself, go to the NFPA website (www.paralegals.org), click on the Members Only area (password: regulation) and then to the Member Benefits section. These special discounts and benefits include:

- Discounts on Walt Disney World Resort Vacation: As an NFPA member you can log on to the following website to plan a Florida trip to any of the 16 Theme Parks in the Orlando area. The website is <http://www.orlandovacation.com/discounts/login.php>. Our username is "**NFPA**". From there you can view the National Member Discount Program and all the discounts and special offers in Orlando. Some of the packages include cruises and resorts, National Car Rentals and other discounts.
- Dell - Take off an additional 7% on top of generally advertised Dell Products! Go to www.dell.com/paralegals. Our member ID is CS105317223 or call 1-800-695-8133.
- Car Rentals - Special rental rates on cars and vans are offered to members. Call Hertz at telephone (800) 654-3131 and provide NFPA's discount identification CDP# 336599. At least 24 hours advanced notice is required to receive this discount.
- 1-800 FLOWERS - Members can receive a 10% discount off an array of gift products including gourmet gift baskets, novelties, and flowers. 1-800 Flowers is offering this special benefit through its secure web site <http://ww12.1800flowers.com/>. Enter code "NFPA" under special offers during checkout or telephone 1-800-356-9377 and mention the promotion code "NFPA."
- Hotel Reservations - Members can receive up to 65% off regular hotel rates in certain cities. Take advantage of this benefit to save money for yourself and your employers. Telephone (800) 964-6835. Or visit www.hoteldiscount.com and identify yourself as an NFPA member to receive the discount.

Be sure to check out the complete listing of all of the special benefits and discounts available to us in the Members Only section of the NFPA website.

BECOMING A PENNSYLVANIA CERTIFIED PARALEGAL (Pa.C.P.)

QUALIFICATIONS:

To become a Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal you must fulfill the following qualifications and grandfathering or the educational requirements set forth below:

1. Applicant must be a member in good standing of a Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations member association;
2. Applicant must be a legal resident of the United States of America;
3. Applicant must satisfy Education/Experience or Grandfathering requirements;
4. Applicant must submit declarations from one (1) attorney in good standing with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania who will attest to his/her direct knowledge of the Applicant's skill level and his/her work as a Paralegal;
5. A Paralegal making application under work experience only must submit declarations from two (2) attorneys; and
6. Certified copy of Applicant's official transcript(s) from the educational institution(s) attended OR a letter from the education institution(s) attended indicating the dates of the Applicant's attendance and the date(s) of the Applicant's graduation OR a copy of the Diploma/Certificate received by the Applicant from the education's institution(s) attended. Certified Legal Assistants ("CLA"), Certified Paralegals ("CP"), Registered Paralegals ("RP"), or Paralegals holding another Paralegal credential approved and recognized by the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations need only submit a copy of their original credential certification and their current letter of good standing. Applicants who are making application for certification under work experience only, do not need to submit transcripts or Diplomas/Certificates.

GRANDFATHERING PROVISION:

Prior to June 30, 2012, Applicant must meet one (1) of the following criteria:

1. Bachelor's Degree in Paralegal Studies from an ABA-approved Paralegal Program AND one (1) year of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
2. Bachelor's Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution AND a Certificate/Associate's Degree from an ABA-approved Paralegal Program AND one (1) year of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
3. Bachelor's Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution AND three (3) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
4. Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies AND three (3) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
5. Certificate from an ABA-approved Paralegal Program AND three (3) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
6. Associate's Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution AND five (5) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
7. Certificate from a non-ABA-approved Paralegal Program AND five (5) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
8. Seven (7) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
9. Designation of CLA, CP or RP or other Paralegal credential approved and recognized by the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations AND two (2) years of substantive Paralegal experience.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

After July 1, 2012, Applicant must meet one (1) of the following criteria:

1. Bachelor's Degree in Paralegal Studies from an ABA-approved Paralegal Program AND one (1) year of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
2. Bachelor's Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution AND a Certificate/Associate's Degree from an ABA-approved Paralegal Program AND one (1) year of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
3. Bachelor's Degree in any discipline from an accredited institution AND three (3) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
4. Associate's Degree in Paralegal Studies from a Paralegal Program AND five (5) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
5. Certificate from a Paralegal Program AND five (5) years of substantive Paralegal experience; OR
6. Designation of CLA, CP or RP or other Paralegal credential approved and recognized by the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations AND two (2) years of substantive Paralegal experience.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Requirements – Twelve (12) hours with two (2) hours being in ethics for every two (2) years' renewal.
- Examination – No exam at this time.
- Fees – Fifty (\$50.00) Dollars non-refundable Processing Fee for initial two (2) year period. Twenty-Five (\$25.00) Dollars non-refundable Processing Fee for each renewal period of two (2) years. Fees subject to change.

Visit www.keystoneparalegals.org for forms and additional information





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Why Take PACE®?

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(www.paralegals.org -- NFPA's Official Website)

- provides a fair evaluation of the competencies of paralegals across practice areas; and
- creates a professional level of expertise by which all paralegals can be evaluated.

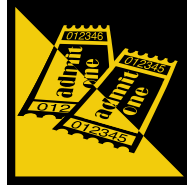
PACE presents a bold opportunity to all paralegals to advance the profession. This exam provides hard facts about the competency of experienced paralegals. While PACE does not address all the issues of regulation, including certification and licensing, it does provide the legal service industry with an option to evaluate the competency level of experienced paralegals.

As members of a self-directed profession, all paralegals should consider the vital role the profession performs within the legal service industry. PACE is independently monitored and well-structured. PACE provides test results across practice areas and, possibly, state-specific laws. While the test is offered on a voluntary basis, all experienced paralegals are encouraged to sit for the exam.

NFPA® is committed to ensuring the paralegal profession responds to the changing needs of the public and legal service industry. In voting to develop PACE, NFPA's membership took a bold step toward addressing the future issues facing the profession.

Lexis-Nexis has sponsored a twenty minute presentation on paralegals which highlights PACE and can be ordered from the [PACE Merchandise](#) page. For more information on Lexis-Nexis newsletter [click here](#).





Surrounding Paralegal Association Events

Bucks County Paralegal Association

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 - Uva Coles, Career Development Services, Peirce College, will hold a workshop on Resume Do's and Don'ts

Thursday, April 22, 2011 - Attorney Charles Weiner will discuss LSAT guidelines, Disability and Education Law. Mr. Weiner has a very specialized niche of practice, primarily he helps to get accommodations for disabled individuals for taking the LSATs and SATs.



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International Spring Festival April 16, 2011

The Lansdale Public Library's 20th Annual International Spring Festival will be held on **Saturday, April 16, 2011 at North Penn High School in Lansdale from 11:00 AM-5:00 PM**. The festival is the library's biggest program, and it is also the largest multi-cultural festival in Montgomery County. The Festival celebrates ethnic and cultural heritages through performances, food and cultural displays. There are plenty of activities for children, including a passport program and a special crafts room where children can try ethnic costumes, food, musical instruments and art projects. There is no charge for admission to this community sponsored event that includes 2 performance stages, but you might want to bring some money to purchase the luscious food sold from 12 different cultures and the inspired crafts.

The performances are too good to miss. This year, the famous Voloshky's Ukrainian Dance Ensemble will perform. Also performing this year are: Obidiah, an African drum and dance ensemble, the Steven Cain Jazz Quartet, Lenny Gordon and the Soul Senders, and many more international singers and dancers. For a more detailed listing of performances, go to the festival website www.internationalpringfestival.com.

Last year, over 3,500 people attended the festival which had 131 displays. Some of the countries that will be featured this year are: China, Ireland, Korea, Ukraine, Taiwan, Poland, Nepal, Jordan, Germany, Israel, Malaysia, Jamaica, Peru, India, Argentina, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Philippines, and the list keeps growing. The United States will be represented in a historic colonial and Native American display. If you would like to represent a country not listed here, please contact us.

A favorite part of the festival is the large selection of ethnic food. Cuisine from Jamaica, Hungary, China, Middle East & Mediterranean, Thailand, Peru, Philippines, and India will be available for purchase. Pizza and hot dogs will be available for the less adventurous. If you own an ethnic restaurant and would like to participate, call us at the number below.

The International Spring Festival is even more fun if you are a volunteer on the day of the event. If you can volunteer for just a few hours setting up (the night before the festival), assisting with children's activities, staffing tables, or tearing down (immediately after festival) that would help tremendously. To get more information or to volunteer, contact **Tom Meyer at Lansdale Public Library (215-362-2666)** or email director@lansdalelibrary.org.



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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MCPA

Below are the names and contact information for the Chairpersons of the various MCPA committees. If you have an idea or would like to volunteer, please contact a Chairperson! The Fundraising and Public Relations Committees are newly formed and are actively seeking new committee members.

Membership

Coordinate membership drives and membership matters

-

Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P.
Tbarnes@dbyd.com

Newsletter

Solicit and write articles; layout and editing for the bi-monthly newsletter, MCPA Today

-

Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P., Editor
Tbarnes@dbyd.com

Job Bank

Solicit, accumulate, and distribute current job postings to the general membership

-

Stephanie Dise, Pa. C.P.
sad@elliottgreenleaf.com

Marketing

Solicit sponsors and advertisers for MCPA

-

Deborah A. Long, Pa., C.P.
dlong@dbyd.com
Deborah A. Arbuckle,
darbuckle@kaplaw.com

Public Relations

Promote the MCPA in the legal and general Community

-

Annette Long
along@kanepugh.com

Planning

Plan and schedule upcoming MCPA presentations, meetings and social events

-

Lindsey Tait
ltait@millerturetsky.com
Terri Hall
thall@streamlight.com

Community Outreach

Plan and schedule MCPA charitable and community events

-

Roberta Fedorka
rfedorka@obrlaw.com

Fundraising

Organize and hold fundraisers for the Association and/or charitable organizations

-

Christine Horace
chorace@good-lawyer.com

Mentoring

Provide a range of services and support to students interested in a paralegal career

-

Lisa LaPenna, Pa. C.P.
llpenna@kaplaw.com

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

Theodore Roosevelt



And now a word from our sponsors...

Actually, a word *about* our sponsors. The relationship between the MCPA and its sponsors offers mutual benefits.

Benefits to the MCPA

The support we receive from our sponsors allows us to carry out Association functions, offer free CLE's, and participate in the development of the paralegal profession not only locally, but also at the statewide and national levels. Additionally, we have a pool of expert resources readily available if, for instance, we need to obtain a Certificate of Merit, develop a Life Care Plan, schedule a deposition, or suggest a resource for assistance with legal staffing.

Benefits to Our Sponsors

Sponsors of the MCPA have a direct link to the legal community. Information distributed at our general membership meetings can be shared with attorneys, office managers, and coworkers who may have a need for the specific services offered. Direct advertising is available through *MCPA Today*, and sponsor and vendor links are readily accessible through our website.

What Can You Do?

Check the MCPA website on a regular basis so that you know who our sponsors are. Then, share this information – as well as information you receive at our general membership meetings – with those in your office who have a need for these services. Be sure to have them mention the MCPA when they call so that the provider knows the work came through us and will be likely to renew their sponsorship next year.

Don't see one of your office's service providers on our website? Could this service provider benefit from a relationship with the MCPA? Let us know! Send an e-mail to Debbie Long at dlong@dbyd.com or Debbie Arbuckle at darbuckle@kaplaw.com. If the service provider becomes a sponsor of the MCPA, you will receive a \$25 debit card!

“This is your organization. The more involved you are, the more you will benefit from your membership.” Sharon Jones, founding President of MCPA, 1999



ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE TO MCPA MEMBERS

Do you own your own business? Consider advertising in the *MCPA Today*.

Advertising rates offered to MCPA members are as follows:

¼ page \$15 per issue

Business Card \$8 per issue

Commit to a full year and receive one ad for free!

Complete the information below and submit along with your advertisement to Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P., tbarnes@dbyd.com (Word or JPEG format preferred, PDF format accepted). Payments should be mailed to MCPA, PO Box 1765, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania 19422.

Member Name _____

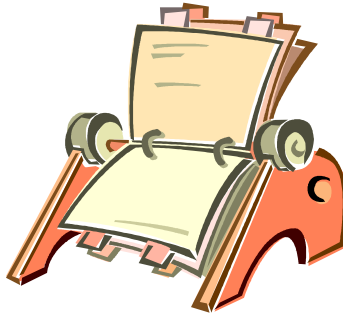
Member E-Mail _____

Member Phone _____

Business Name _____

Number of Issues _____

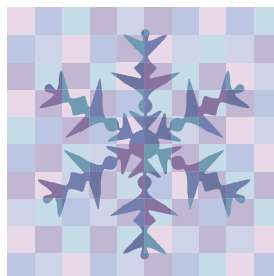
*All submissions are subject to Board review and approval.



How to Contact Us-2011

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2011 MCPA Committee Contact List

2011 Committee Chairs:

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Membership Chair

Tracey Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P. –
tbarnes@dbyd.com

Community Outreach Chair

Ro Fedorka
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Newsletter Editor

Tracey Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P.
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Mentoring Chair

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Fundraising Chair

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Publicity Chair

Annette Long
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Scholarship Committee Chair

Beth Breckenridge
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2011 Representatives and Coordinators:

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NFPA Secondary Delegate

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Keystone Alliance Primary Delegate

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