

MCPA TODAY

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association

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www.montcoparalegals.org



Message from the President

Beth Ann Breckenridge

*Behind every successful attorney
is one exhausted paralegal!*

Pittsburgh Paralegal Association

Welcome to MCPA 2007!

Another year has come and gone so quickly. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as President for a second term and I am looking forward to another terrific year. All our committees are once again planning for another busy year. If you haven't done so already, please log on and visit MCPA's new website www.montcoparalegals.org. While you're there, please take a minute and fill out your 2007 membership renewal form. The new membership form is part of the renewal form so if you know someone who may be interesting in joining MCPA, please share your form with them!

On our website you will find an events calendar with information on upcoming meetings, seminars, speakers and community events/projects. **Barry Furman**, Esquire will be speaking at our **February 22nd** meeting about those dreaded tax issues. A perfect topic for this time of year! Please plan to join us and bring your questions!

Back by popular demand, our planning committee has once again scheduled another breakfast meeting on Saturday **March 24, 2007** at **Otto's** in Horsham. Our guest speaker will be **Jeanine Kelly** with Women in Crisis. We also have a domestic relations seminar planned for our **May 23rd** meeting.

Community Outreach has many events planned as well. MCPA formed a team for the MS Walk last year and we will be walking again this year. It is a wonderful cause and a perfect Spring day to bring the family out, "smell the roses" and get to know your fellow colleagues. MCPA is supporting Manna on Main Street and their Easter Basket Project. Earth Day with the Wissahickon Watershed project is planned for **April 24th** and there is much, much more.

We are in need of a secondary representative for the Keystone Alliance, an organization comprised of Pennsylvania paralegal associations. If you're interested, please contact me. We are looking for someone other than a Board member to volunteer for this position.

I look forward to seeing all of you on **February 22nd**!

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Save the date!

NFPA will be holding the 2007 Pro Bono Conference in Denver, CO on **March 24-25** immediately following the Equal Justice Conference. Information and a registration form for the conference can be found on NFPA's website at <http://www.paralegals.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=749>.

NFPA Navy Legalman and Military Paralegal Outreach Program

By: Charlene M. Healy, RP

For almost a year now, MCPA has been participating in the NFPA Navy Legalman and Military Paralegal Outreach Program. Every other month, supplies are gathered, boxed and mailed to our fellow military counterparts in an effort to support them and try to bring some comfort into a very difficult time in their lives.

I thought you would like to know where your generous contributions are currently going. MCPA is supporting two Air Force paralegals in Baghdad, Iraq. One is a female, aged 34. She is married and has two small girls back home with daddy, Katelyn is 9 years old and Madelynn is 4 years old. This is her first time away from them. Her position involves working with Detainee Operations. They handle thousands of detainee cases and they keep coming in by the hundreds. She spends 12-16 hours a day going through the cases and preparing them for review boards or for the Iraqi court system. Much of the work is high visibility and as she says "extremely monotonous". However, it is a very important job as these are the individuals that have caused America and coalition forces so much pain. Below is a short email I received from her some time ago:

*Hi Charlene,
How are you? I received the package that you sent and wanted to tell you. Thank you so much!! That was really great and I needed that! Halloween was a little sad for me because I missed my girls dressing up and having fun (first time away for the holidays). Christmas is really going to be tough Again, thank you (as well as the other members) for your generosity, thoughts, and prayers. If there is anything that I can do for the association, please let me know.*

Please understand that for security's sake, I cannot release her name, address or other identifying information but know that she is very thankful to everyone for their generosity!

Our second military paralegal is a male, aged 31. He is the married and the father of a little girl whom he misses very much. When asked for a wish list, he writes:

"We do a lot of walking. Foot powder for our boots is always welcomed. Toiletries such as Listerine mouthwash, lotion, shampoo, body wash and air fresheners. Phone cards to stay in touch with my



wife and daughter would be greatly appreciated. I want to thank you for your support and know that what you do means so much to me and the other soldiers out here."

Both of our "adoptees" received phone cards in the last mailing and were ecstatic to receive them so they could talk with their loved ones back home. They are always a perfect choice to donate! Our latest mailing also included candy, chap stick, lotion, shampoo, books, magazines, hand sanitizer, and lots of other goodies." A few more examples of items requested are: **Twin bed sheets, Halloween type candy (small snickers, small chocolate bars), Baby wipes, Flea collars (sand fleas are a big problem and they put the flea collars around their boots to repel the fleas), Bandanas (neutral colors), Freezer pops, Corn nuts, Sunflower seeds (David's).**

Our next boxes are due to go out in the mail on **February 25! Please try and get donations to me by February 22 so they make it in this mailing.** You are ALWAYS welcome to donate items at any time and they will be put into the next delivery's boxes. I start new boxes as soon as the others leave my home!

If you are interested in donating any items, please feel free to contact me by email at Chealy@sattinlaw.com and I will make arrangements to get the items from you. Remember; ask your co-workers if they would like to contribute too! If anyone needs another complete list of suggested items, please contact me at any time.

It is hard to imagine what life is like for our soldiers at war, but each of YOU are making a difference for two soldiers and letting them know that we have not forgotten them. **THANK YOU** for all of your generous donations!

Stress=Perception

By: Tracey L. Barnes, RP



The MCPA got kicked off in 2007 on January 24, 2007, at the Village Caterers. Sharon Jones, Esquire, founding member of the MCPA attended the meeting and administered the oaths to the 2007 Board members who include, Beth Breckenridge, Lisa LaPenna, Kathy Zamorski, Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Karen Garcia, Matthew Fine, Stephanie Dise, Mary Hoskinson, and Harry Reichner. Thank you



Sharon Jones, Esquire

Sharon for your time and feel free to come back and visit the MCPA.

After some event announcements from Beth Breckenridge and a delicious dinner, the members heard a presentation by three representatives of Central Montgomery Hospital.

The first speaker was Rebecca Herman who is a dietician. Rebecca started her presentation by passing around test tubes to the members which demonstrated the different amounts of fats in certain every day foods. Members were surprised by some of the fat amounts such as the amount in a Subway turkey sub and the Taco Bell taco salad (filled 2 test tubes!). Rebecca also discussed the different types of fat (i.e., polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, and Trans fats) and the different types of cholesterol. There were many questions asked of the members including questions regarding butter v. margarine and vegetarian dietary needs. Ms. Herman also provided the members with numerous handouts which included a hand out on how to read product labels and how many grams of fat should be included in your diet.

Susan Bausch, RN, followed Rebecca with a discussion regarding stress and how the body handles the stress. Susan explained that stress is how we perceive change. Ms. Bausch explained that the body handles stress by engaging the “fight or flight” mode. When your body enters this mode, different organs in your body produce



Susan Bausch, RN

different chemicals which your body does not need, for example fatty acids, sugar, sodium, etc. Someone who has chronic stress could also create an insulin resistance in the body— very harmful if you are a diabetic. Some people who

are considered higher risk for stress are children, elderly, caretakers, women, the less educated, racial/ethnic groups, people who live in urban areas, anger-prone people, and people who lack family and friends.

Judy Brenner, RN, concluded the evening with a discussion on stress management.



Judy Brenner, RN

Everybody responds to stress differently and what works for one person may not work for another. One way of helping stress which is helpful for your health all around is to get 6-8 hours sleep on a regular basis. Some other techniques that Judy suggested were to learn to say “no,” laughing at yourself, believing in yourself (“everyone is a great person”), and knowing that you are “only human.” Another great way to relieve stress is to exercise, and this is not limited to work outs at local gyms. The absolutely best form of exercise is walking as it helps your physical health as well as your mental health. Walking just 15 minutes 7 days a week will increase the burning of calories. Judy also suggested that asking for help is a great stress reducer and also makes a person stronger. Things you can do at work to help reduce stress include taking 5 minutes and take a walk around your building or complex or take a few minutes and just sit still and close your eyes or look at some pictures. A final suggestion is to pamper yourself by getting pedicures, massages, long hot baths, etc., and to make sure that you pencil this item into your calendar—don’t break the appointment!

In conclusion stress is just a perception and if we learn to change our perception of a situation and have a positive attitude we can help to lessen the stress in our lives. There will always be stress but we can help to lessen the stress with just some small changes. Thank you Rebecca Herman, Susan Bausch, RN, and Judy Brenner, RN for taking the time to come out and educate us on nutrition and stress. Thank you also to Judy Stark from Central Montgomery Hospital for arranging for the speakers.

FRIENDS HEAD START AND ACLAMO



Thank you! Your thoughtfulness meant so much! (A thank you note from **Friends Head Start**)

Last year we collected enough hats and mittens at our Holiday Social to donate to both Friends Head Start and ACLAMO – there were enough sets to give to 50+ children!

Lisa LaPenna and I delivered the hats and mittens to the Friends Head Start School in Norristown on December 19th. This school hosts a pre-school program for 3-5 year olds from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. every day. When we arrived early that morning, the teachers were busy sewing banners, each with two little handprints on them that the children were making for gifts. They were very gracious and extremely grateful for our gifts. They explained that there are many families in need in this community and our donations would be put to good use.



Lisa made a second trip later that week to ACLAMO in Norristown to deliver more hats and mittens to their pre-school children. This is the second year we have donated to ACLAMO.



Lisa and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your kindness and generosity. We want you to know that there's nothing like seeing a smile on a child's face to brighten up your day!

Beth Breckenridge



MCPA participated in its second collection of used cell phones which were distributed on January 26, 2007. This cell phone collection will benefit HIV/AIDS research. Thank you everyone who participated in this drive.

The Community Outreach Committee is currently collecting monetary contributions to benefit the "Aids for Friends" project. The proceeds collected will be used to purchase food items which will be assembled in Breakfast Bags and distributed to shut-ins.

If you would like to contribute, we will accept donations at the February General Membership Meeting. No matter how nominal the donation, collectively we can make a difference.

If anyone is interested in joining the Community Outreach Committee, please let me hear from you. We are always looking for new ideas and community projects which will enhance the lives of our neighbors in need.

Joyce J. O'Brien
Chair, Community Outreach
Committee

Protecting The Profession *Paralegal Kit Found on ebay*

Excerpted with permission from the Western
New York Paralegal Association, Jessica Noveck, RP.

MCPA Today will be presenting a series on Paralegal Regulation in the upcoming months, however, an issue regarding a scam involving a do-it-yourself Paralegal training kit. How it could have impacted the profession and its impact on public opinion raised some interesting issues.

The item on eBay™ read "Home-Based Independent Paralegal (form prep) Business (No Degree Needed)." The package sold for \$2,995. The advertisement stated that this was an inclusive package and that the business could easily bring the buyer \$25,000 - \$50,000 per year working no more than 15 - 20 hours per week. How many of us have that luxury?

One of the purchasers testimonials stated how she had "seen first-hand how much attorneys charged their clients, and how most of the work was done by paralegals. Much of the work involved filling out complicated forms; but once you did it a few times, it was easy."

At first glance to the general person, it would not appear that such a promotion posed a problem. What could be so wrong about having an individual prepare a form for a client? Of course, we in the industry know the complications that can arise from doing that.



Firstly, with the practice of preparing forms for clients; even if a paralegal knows precisely which form to prepare and how to prepare the form, they cannot assist clients with selecting forms without advising them. Advising clients constitutes UPL. Telling clients what information goes into the particular blanks on a form the clients have selected also requires advice. This again constitutes UPL. A well-educated paralegal knows this, and would never purchase a package such as the one discussed above. An individual who is uneducated concerning UPL or other ethical practices would be unaware of this and could leave himself open to both civil and criminal penalties.

Back in March of 2001, a federal judge recommended closure of a Florida-based "paralegal kit company" such as the one discussed above. The closure recommendation came after several



complaints were filed with the Federal Trade Commission. Complaints were filed after purchasers were promised a paralegal diploma and client referrals. The FTC determined that the defendants were engaged in deceptive trade practices, failed to address complaints made by purchasers, failed to determine the legality of their own dissemination of business opportunities because the business was not properly registered and failed to educate the purchasers concerning UPL.

What is most disturbing about this type of "kit" is having the public believe that by purchasing a kit an individual could become capable of providing the services of a paralegal. Becoming a competent, educated paralegal requires some form of education, provided by quality paralegal studies programs, supervising attorneys and CLE's. Regulating the paralegal profession could assist in ending this type of scam the internet so readily advertises.

Regulation could protect the public in other ways. By prohibiting a kit from being sold, the public is protected against having an uneducated paralegal preparing legal documents for them. Although legal documents are often prepared by paralegals, an attorney always reviews any legal documents prepared by a paralegal. If this weren't the case, consumers could end up with a document that has been incorrectly prepared, and with little recourse against the unlicensed individual who prepared it.

Paralegal Awareness: It comes with the job.



THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION

When:	February 22, 2007 6:00 P.M.
Where:	KAPLIN, STEWART, MELOFF, REITER & STEIN, PC 910 Harvest Drive Blue Bell, PA 19422
Special Guest:	<i>Barry Furman, Esquire to speak on how to Challenge the IRS: A discussion of the IRS' examination, assessment and tax collection procedures including challenging assessments and collection actions before IRS Appeals and in the courts.</i>
Menu:	Light dinner and beverages supplied by Kaplin, Stewart, Meloff, Reiter & Stein, PC
Cost:	<i>Free to members</i>
RSVP:	By Tuesday, February 20, 2007 To Tracey L. Barnes, RP, at Traceyb@dbyd.com

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW AND LET US KNOW THAT WE WILL
SEE YOU ON THE 22nd!!**



How to Contact Us



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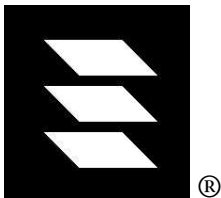
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