



The Official Publication of the  
Montgomery County Paralegal Association  
[www.montcoparalegals.org](http://www.montcoparalegals.org)

**May 2014**

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MCPA Editing Team:  
**Newsletter Committee Chair:**  
Rachel Fineberg  
[Rfineberg@goldblumhess.com](mailto:Rfineberg@goldblumhess.com)  
**Contributing Editor:**  
Suzanne Sarver  
[SSarver@cubessmart.com](mailto:SSarver@cubessmart.com)  
**Layout Editor:**  
Michelle Calkins  
[Mcalkins@millerturetsky.com](mailto:Mcalkins@millerturetsky.com)

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** by Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa. C.P.

**S**pring has sprung (finally)! The trees are budding, flowers blooming, and there is newness and freshness in the air (sorry allergy sufferers). It is hard to believe that we are almost half way through 2014 already.

With Spring budding all around us, thoughts turn to new beginnings, new challenges, new ideas, and new growth for the warm season ahead. Whether it is to clean out that cluttered closet that you never got to over the long Winter or making a lifestyle change to better your health, Spring is that season that motivates us towards those goals and new growth. In the March issue I put out the challenge for members to become more involved in 2014. Why not make Spring the time to take the challenge and become more involved? Just like the flowers and trees budding, becoming more involved in your Association can bring about amazing growth for not only the Association but also for YOU the volunteer. Becoming involved helps the MCPA bloom and grow (just like the Spring flowers) and volunteering can give a great feeling of personal accomplishment and growth.

*Unless a tree has borne blossoms  
in spring, you will vainly look for  
fruit on it in autumn.*

*~ Walter Scott*

You will see in this Newsletter that the Committee Spotlight is on Student Affairs and Mentoring. What a better way to volunteer than to offer your time, knowledge and experiences to a student or recent graduate entering the workplace. Take the time to talk to a student or better yet offer one hour and speak to a class at one of our local schools (or even at your own Alma Mater). Your experiences are an invaluable asset to our students. If you have any questions about Student Mentoring or how you can help, please email Lisa LaPenna at [llapenna@kaplaw.com](mailto:llapenna@kaplaw.com).

Make Spring your season of inspiration and personal growth. Inspire a promising paralegal student or a recent graduate. Aspire to become more involved with the growth of the MCPA and lend a hand to a Committee or the Board. You will be surprised how your involvement will help the MCPA -- and YOU -- bloom and grow in leaps and bounds.

**NEXT CLE EVENT:**

**THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2014 at 6:00 pm**

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**By Seth D. Wilson, Esquire**

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## Great News!

*NFPA has received sponsorship for both a PACE and PCC Exam scholarship to be awarded at this year's convention. The deadline to apply is July 1, 2014. Please notify your Certification Ambassador and your membership of these wonderful opportunities.*

*The topics of the essays are:*

*(a) PCC Exam Scholarship Topic:*

*“Why are you seeking a professional credential? How will you use the CRP™ credential to promote or advance your career?”*

*(b) PACE Scholarship Topic:*

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## RECAP OF CLE AT ZOTO'S DINER ON MARCH 15, 2014

**O**n Saturday, March 15, 2014 was a great turnout for our CLE event in Full Disclosure in the Sale of Real Estate at Zoto's Diner located in Line Lexington, PA. We had two presenters that were very knowledgeable in their respective fields and provided educational materials and information that was very beneficial to all our members.

Our first speaker was Terri Sirianni, the President of By-Weekly Mortgage Corporation located in Glenside, PA. Terri discussed the mortgage industry and how the standards have changed since the mortgage collapse back in 2003 and the passage of the Dodd Frank Act. One of the main differences and changes from 2003 are the stricter guidelines for underwriting to ensure that lenders are establishing qualified mortgages for consumers. The Dodd Frank Act which is also the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act helped establish Appraisal Mortgage Companies and regulate lenders and mortgage practices. Qualified mortgages establish caps on debt to income ratios along with implementing a 3% limit on fees and points lenders can charge to a consumer loan. Federal and State regulations require an AMC to be a licensed and unbiased company as they will provide an impartial educated opinion of the market value of the property. Appraisers are not allowed to work with lenders, sellers, or clients to keep the unbiased impartial opinion.



Terri also spoke about seasoning requirements for home purchasing due to purchasers of properties that "flip" houses to sell it on a profit with an inflated value in a short period of time. The seasoning requirement, usually 90 days, helps lenders reduce risk. Certain loans, such as FHA loans can refuse to back a mortgage unless the seller owned the home for a certain period of time. Fannie Mae loans impose six month seasoning periods for refinances unless homeowners are buying with cash.

Our second speaker was Faith Philip of Coldwell Banker Preferred. Faith is a member of the Montgomery County Association of Realtors as well as the PA Association of Realtors and has broad knowledge of the real estate industry. Faith spoke about the disclosure law which states that a seller of a property must disclose to a buyer all known material defects about a property being sold.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## RECAP OF CLE AT ZOTO'S DINER ON MARCH 15, 2014 CONTINUED

*Exceptions to disclosure that are important to know when purchasing a property include bank owned properties, estate sales, new construction, and vacant land. Faith discussed the importance of a buyer to perform their own due diligence when purchasing a property by investigating the comparables in the area, the neighborhood itself, and the special types of housing that may be designated to a particular neighborhood or area such as group housing.*

*A question and answer section which awarded \$10.00 Wawa gift cards were presented to attendees which entered Faith's drawing and if the attendee's name was called and answered Faith's question correctly than they were awarded the card. Additionally, Debbie Arbuckle, Pa.C.P. won a Home Goods gift certificate for accurately answering Faith's last question from her speech.*



M. Faith Philip, Sales Associate  
Coldwell Banker Preferred

*Zoto's diner was a great venue for all our members to get together and enjoy a great breakfast. The food was delicious and Zoto's is very accommodating. We look forward to other guest speakers and*

*other venues here at Zoto's and the turnout was impressive. It was a great morning for real estate discussions and good food. We hope everyone had a great time and we would especially like to thank our speakers, Terri Sirianni and Faith Philip for their time. The Montgomery County Paralegal Association is appreciative of their education in these matters and helping paralegals stay informed and up to date on the latest real estate disclosures. Make sure you reach out to Terri at [biweekly@aol.com](mailto:biweekly@aol.com) and Faith at [faith@faithphilip.com](mailto:faith@faithphilip.com) if you have any questions or are looking to buy or sell a home in the future.*

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## STUDENT AFFAIRS AND MENTORING COMMITTEE

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

The student mentoring program provides a range of services and support to students who are interested in developing a career in the paralegal field. The mentoring program enhances and encourages students to develop a professional relationship with experienced paralegals.

The committee provides recognition and support for student members and acknowledges their importance and contributions to the MCPA. Members also periodically speak to students at local colleges about the association as well as other various topics.

If you wish to be on the committee, please contact me at:

*(610) 941-2523 or [llapenna@kaplaw.com](mailto:llapenna@kaplaw.com)*

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## Keystone Alliance's 2014 Education Summit – A Huge Success!

By Harry A. Reichner, M.A., Vice President and Chairperson of the Keystone Alliance

*The Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations held its 2014 Education Summit on Saturday, May 3 at the Villanova University Conference Center, a charming facility situated at the pastoral wooded Montrose Mansion estate on Philadelphia's famous "Main Line."*

*Summit participants attended from all across our region as well as Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Lancaster to share their experience, learn from one another, facilitate discussions within sessions and volunteer in a multitude of ways to help make this year's Summit a success. We were pleased to have 83 registrants for the morning and afternoon CLE sessions and student workshops, an ethics CLE presented by Professor Carol J. Sherman, J.D. of Peirce College, and a presentation regarding the regulation of paralegals by NFPA President Robert S. Hrouda, RP and NFPA Secretary and Director of Operations Valerie A. Wilus, RP, Pa.C.P.*



*We were fortunate to have sponsorship by Morgan Wentworth, LLC, Capitol Copy Service, Love Court Reporting, Signature Information Solutions, and the Villanova University Paralegal Certification Program. The Summit would not have been possible without their generous support – we encourage you to explore the services they offer.*

*We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the huge success of the 2014 Education Summit, especially the Education Summit Committee chaired by Deborah A. Long, Pa.C.P. and including Wendy Reczek, Pa.C.P., Lynn Rohr, Pa.C.P., Catrina Mackes, Pa.C.P., Tess Shore, Kandria James, RP and Harry A. Reichner, M.A..*

*Each of the sessions was well-attended and all received positive feedback. Participants were delighted by the Villanova University Conference Center's fine dining and scenic setting.*

*Lastly, we would like to thank each and every one of the participants who made the Education Summit successful.*

*We look forward to seeing all of you at the next Summit in 2016!*



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## KYLE J. SOMERS, ESQUIRE ENLIGHTENS MCPA MEMBERS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY AND OBTAIN SCHOOL RECORDS

*by Rachel Fineberg, Pa.C.P.*

On Wednesday, April 23, 2014, the MCPA held its general membership meeting at the Dischell, Bartle and Dooley in Lansdale. President Tracey Barnes introduced the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. Vice President Harry Reichner briefly reviewed topics of interest such as the upcoming Keystone Alliance Education Summit that will be held on May 3, 2014. Also, MCPA will be celebrating its 15th anniversary and will be doing so by having a Gala this year. Harry encouraged anyone interested in helping out with this great event to contact Tracey. Finally, Harry announced that the next meeting will be held on May 22, 2014 at the Whitpain Township Building in Blue Bell and the topic will be "The Unauthorized Practice of Law."



Kyle J. Somers, Esquire

Having dispensed with the announcements, Harry then turned the spotlight over to Kyle J. Somers, Esquire, an Associate Attorney at the Law Offices Dischell, Bartle and Dooley, who specializes in Education and Special Education Law. Specifically, Mr. Somers represents school districts with regard to special education matters and investigations conducted by both state and federal departments of education. Mr. Somers earned his Bachelor's Degree in History Education from the University of Delaware and is a graduate of Syracuse University Law School, magna cum laude, where he served as the Editor-in-Chief of the Syracuse Law Review. While in law school, he also earned a Master's Degree in the field of Public Communications from the renown S.I. Newhouse School at Syracuse University.

In his presentation on identifying and obtaining school records, Mr. Somers discussed the difference between public records and school records in a school district setting and who has access to such records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Specifically, Mr. Somers explained parents' right to view their child's educational record and how they might go about doing so, whether it be making an appointment to come into the school to view them or obtaining a copy for their own records.



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## KYLE J. SOMERS, ESQUIRE ENLIGHTENS MCPA MEMBERS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY AND OBTAIN SCHOOL RECORDS CONTINUED

*He also explained that once the child turns eighteen, the right to access and view the records switches from the parents' to the student, except in the case of students under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). However, Mr. Somers did point out that if a student is still listed on their parents' tax return as a dependent, the parents can still access the school record without consent of the student, even if they have turned eighteen. Mr. Somers briefly discussed the types of records that are maintained by the school district, such as health records, attendance, discipline and projects/work product of the student, to name a few. While parents have the right to view their child's school record, it becomes tricky when documents in the record pertain to more than one student. However, most schools and school districts have procedures in place to deal with such situations.*

*Mr. Somers provided some helpful tips when submitting a request for a school record. Specifically, with consent of the student and/or parent, the request should be explicit in which records are needed. Unless you need the entire file, it is helpful to narrow down what particular information you are looking for as this could result in the school district providing the requested information more quickly than it would if it had to compile an entire record for that student. Also, the request should include a brief reason on why the record is being requested and for whom. The school district must keep their own record of who they sent such documents and for what reason. Finally, Mr. Somers briefly touched upon school district employee records and parents with students under the IDEA before giving MCPA members some hypothetical situations and time for questions.*

*The MCPA is grateful to Mr. Somers for his interesting and informative presentation. This information is beneficial to MCPA members not only in our daily life as legal professionals, but as parents ourselves it is helpful to know our rights in connection with our children's school records. A huge thank you is also extended to Dischell, Bartle and Dooley for the use of their conference room and the light dinner and refreshments provided for the meeting. It is this type of support that helps us to maintain our commitment of professional growth and development to our members and to the paralegal profession in general.*

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FREE access to the laws for 19 states (including Pennsylvania and New Jersey), the U.S. Code, and the U.S. Constitution:

- Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes–Pennsylvania Attorney Resources –Pennsylvania Laws:

- <http://law.onecle.com/pennsylvania/>

- Crimes and Offenses – 18 Pa. Cos. Stat. –Pennsylvania Attorney Resources– Pennsylvania Laws:

- <http://law.onecle.com/pennsylvania/crimes-and-offenses/index.html>

Montgomery Bar Association – The Sidebar, the free Quarterly Newsletter of the Montgomery Bar Association: <http://www.montgomerybar.org/publications/sidebar.php>

The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Paralegals - GREAT resources from the ABA!: <http://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals.html>

Paralegals and Legal Assistants; Occupational Outlook Handbook; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, A statistical snapshot of U.S. paralegals: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Legal/Paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm>

The Empowered Paralegal - Comprehensive online blog by Robert E. Mongue, an Assistant Professor of Legal Studies at the University of Mississippi: <http://theempoweredparalegal.com/>



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*Don't forget to check out the following great media outlets to get connected and informed with other Paralegal Associations and Events:*

- ➔ **Montgomery Count Paralegal Association on Facebook at:**  
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- ➔ **For those who do not use Facebook or are looking for paralegal jobs, join LinkedIn and start your professional profile today!**

*Join Paralegal Networks on LinkedIn and get involved in discussions and stay informed with tips and news from these organizations like:*

- *Institute for Paralegal Education (IPE)*
- *National Federation of Paralegal Association, Inc.*
- *Paralegals Rule*
- *Philadelphia Association of Paralegals*
- *The Paralegal Society*
- *The United Legal Professional Association (this is a Canadian site however great articles because of the regulation with Paralegals in Canada)*



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# MCPA VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*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@dischellbartle.com](mailto:TBarnes@dischellbartle.com)

## **NEWSLETTER**

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

Rachel Fineberg, Committee Chair  
[rfineberg@goldblumhess.com](mailto:rfineberg@goldblumhess.com)

## **JOB BANK**

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

Kelly Smith  
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## **MARKETING**

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## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Promote the MCPA in the legal and general Community

Annette M. Long, CRP  
[amlong83@gmail.com](mailto:amlong83@gmail.com)

## **HOSPITALITY & EVENTS PLANNING**

Plan and schedule upcoming MCPA presentations, meetings and social events

Kathleen M. Zamorski, Pa. C.P.  
[kmz@elliottgreenleaf.com](mailto:kmz@elliottgreenleaf.com)

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PRO BONO**

Plan and schedule MCPA charitable and community events

Roberta Fedorka, Pa. C.P.  
[rfedorka@obrlaw.com](mailto:rfedorka@obrlaw.com)

## **FUNDRAISING**

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

Noreen Messmer and  
[nmessmer@fordbuckman.com](mailto:nmessmer@fordbuckman.com)  
Sherry Barag, CRP, PA. C.P.  
[sbarag@foxrothschild.com](mailto:sbarag@foxrothschild.com)

## **STUDENT AFFAIRS & MENTORING**

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

Lisa LaPenna, Pa. C.P.  
[llapenna@kaplaw.com](mailto:llapenna@kaplaw.com)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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LANSDALE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS	CORY M. SCOTT JAYLENE JOHNSON HOPE LATTANZE WESLEY GARVIN DARREN MERRITT	MANOR COLLEGE	BRIANN HAAG LINDA WILKENS
PEIRCE COLLEGE			
<b>MARKETING &amp; PUBLIC RELATIONS:</b> <i>MARKETING CO-CHAIRS:</i>  DEBBIE LONG, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:DEBLONG420@GMAIL.COM">DEBLONG420@GMAIL.COM</a>  DEBBIE ARBUCKLE, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:DARBUCKLE@KAPLAW.COM">DARBUCKLE@KAPLAW.COM</a>  <i>PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAIR:</i>  ANNETTE M. LONG, CRP <a href="mailto:AMLONG83@GMAIL.COM">AMLONG83@GMAIL.COM</a>		<b>NEWSLETTER:</b> <i>COMMITTEE CHAIR:</i> RACHEL FINEBERG <a href="mailto:RFINEBERG@GOLDBLUMHESS.COM">RFINEBERG@GOLDBLUMHESS.COM</a>  <i>CONTRIBUTING EDITOR:</i> SUZANNE SARVER <a href="mailto:SSARVER@CUBESMART.COM">SSARVER@CUBESMART.COM</a>  <i>LAYOUT EDITOR:</i> MICHELLE CALKINS <a href="mailto:MCALKINS@MILLERTURETSKY.COM">MCALKINS@MILLERTURETSKY.COM</a>	
<b>STUDENT AFFAIRS &amp; MENTORING:</b> LISA LAPENNA, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:LLAPENNA@KAPLAW.COM">LLAPENNA@KAPLAW.COM</a>		<b>HOSPITALITY &amp; EVENTS PLANNING:</b> KATHLEEN M. ZAMORSKI, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:KMZ@ELLIOTTGREENLEAF.COM">KMZ@ELLIOTTGREENLEAF.COM</a> ANNETTE M. LONG, CRP <a href="mailto:AMLONG83@GMAIL.COM">AMLONG83@GMAIL.COM</a>	
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH &amp; PRO BONO:</b> RO FEDORKA, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:RFEDORKA@OBRILAW.COM">RFEDORKA@OBRILAW.COM</a>		<b>FUNDRAISING:</b> NOREEN MESSMER <a href="mailto:NMESSMER@FORDBUCKMAN.COM">NMESSMER@FORDBUCKMAN.COM</a> SHERRY BARAG, CRP, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:SBARAG@FOXROTHSCHILD.COM">SBARAG@FOXROTHSCHILD.COM</a>	
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA:</b> CHRISTOPHER GREGG <a href="mailto:CDGREGG@GMAIL.COM">CDGREGG@GMAIL.COM</a>		<b>MEMBERSHIP:</b> TRACEY BARNES, RP, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:TBARNES@DISCHELLBARTLE.COM">TBARNES@DISCHELLBARTLE.COM</a>	
2014 REPRESENTATIVES AND COORDINATORS			
<b>NFPA PRIMARY DELEGATE:</b> DEBBIE ARBUCKLE, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:DARBUCKLE@KAPLAW.COM">DARBUCKLE@KAPLAW.COM</a>  <b>NFPA SECONDARY DELEGATE:</b> SHERRY BARAG, CRP, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:SBARAG@FOXROTHSCHILD.COM">SBARAG@FOXROTHSCHILD.COM</a>		<b>KEYSTONE ALLIANCE PRIMARY DELEGATE:</b> HARRY REICHNER <a href="mailto:HREICHNER@KLEHR.COM">HREICHNER@KLEHR.COM</a>  <b>KEYSTONE ALLIANCE SECONDARY DELEGATE:</b> TRACEY BARNES <a href="mailto:TBARNES@DISCHELLBARTLE.COM">TBARNES@DISCHELLBARTLE.COM</a>	
<b>CERTIFICATION AMBASSADOR (PACE &amp; PCC):</b> SHERRY BARAG, CRP, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:SBARAG@FOXROTHSCHILD.COM">SBARAG@FOXROTHSCHILD.COM</a>		<b>BAR LIAISON:</b> ANNETTE M. LONG, CRP <a href="mailto:AMLONG83@GMAIL.COM">AMLONG83@GMAIL.COM</a>	
<b>JOB BANK COORDINATOR:</b> KELLY SMITH <a href="mailto:KSMITH@KANEPUGH.COM">KSMITH@KANEPUGH.COM</a>		<b>CLE COORDINATOR:</b> TRACEY BARNES, RP, PA. C.P. <a href="mailto:TBARNES@DISCHELLBARTLE.COM">TBARNES@DISCHELLBARTLE.COM</a>	
<b>WEBMASTER:</b> HARRY A. REICHNER		HREICHNER@KLEHR.COM	