

MCPA TODAY

NEWSLETTER

November 2015

The Official Publication of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association

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

Can you believe there are only 2 months left in 2015! Wow does time fly by. I want to first congratulate and welcome MCPA's two newest Board Members for 2016 – Nancy E. Piechota, Pa.C.P. and Shari Weber Bradley, Pa.C.P. Both Shari and Nancy have been long-time MCPA members and have been active in the Association. The Board welcomes Nancy and Shari and looks forward to their fresh ideas.

Next, just a reminder that the end of November is membership renewal time. Keep an eye out in your email boxes for the Renewal forms. The MCPA Board has voted that membership fees in 2016 will remain the same as 2015. What other organization do you know that keeps its fees low year after year and offers the membership benefits that MCPA does? If you know a paralegal who is not a member, please tell them about MCPA and encourage them to be a part of the best paralegal association in the area.

As I mentioned at November's CLE, many of the benefits available to our members would not be possible if not for the work of MCPA committee members. Without their talents, speakers would not be found, meeting locations would not be scheduled, and sponsors would not be contacted. Our Association would not be able to

offer the many CLE opportunities available let alone the benefits of being members of a state-wide organization like the Keystone Alliance and national organizations like the National Federation of Paralegal Associations. However, for these committees to continue to make these benefits happen, they need volunteers from MCPA membership to help. Volunteering just an hour of your time for one month to a committee can make a large difference. When I say an hour of your time, I don't mean at a meeting. I mean, for example, making a couple of phone calls to line up a speaker or reserve a conference room for an upcoming meeting or collecting food after a meeting to deliver to Manna on Main Street just to give a couple of examples. Volunteering for a committee does not take a large amount of time but can make a large



~ Winston Churchill

difference to the MCPA. Please consider joining a committee today. Contact any Board member or committee chair (contact information is listed at the end of the newsletter). Two committees that have a real need for assistance are marketing and planning but all committees need our help.

The final MCPA event for 2015 is the annual Holiday Social which will be held on December 10th at P. J. Whelihans. The Amazing Harry will be available again that evening to provide tarot card readings. Mark your calendar for this relaxing night and find out what 2016 has in store for you. What a perfect way to unwind before the hectic holiday season.

Finally, our January Kickoff meeting is in the works. You should have received a survey from the listsero with three easy questions regarding the Kickoff meeting. Please take the time to answer the survey so we can make the event the best it can be. This event promises to be unbelievable. Besides swearing in our 2016 Board of Directors and Officers, we will also be joined by many charitable associations from Montgomery County. Each representative will be available to share more about the organization and to also offer ways that paralegals can participate with the organizations. According to a survey by Duke University as published in Prevention Magazine, "Volunteering just one day a month will give your life a greater sense of purpose and will make you feel more connected to your community." What better reason than that is there to consider volunteering at one of the many charitable organizations in Montgomery County? Come out in January and learn more.

Best wishes for a peaceful Thanksgiving Holiday and I look forward to seeing everyone at PJ Whelihans in December and at the January Kickoff meeting.

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SAVE THE DATE

For the MCPA Holiday Social

December 10th



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JUDGE HAROLD BOREK PRESIDES OVER MOCK TRIAL

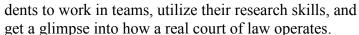
Written by Kimberly Joniec

"All rise! Oyez, oyez, oyez, all persons having business with the Court of Montgomery County come forth and be heard. The Honorable Harold D. Borek presiding." The 2015 mock trial, organized by George Whitehair, Program Administrator at the Lansdale School of Business, and presided by Judge Borek for the past 10 years had begun. Paralegal students from Lansdale School of Business are given the opportunity to try a case inside a real courtroom, with a real Judge deciding the case.



There is a Plaintiff and a Defendant, witnesses, testimony is given, and this year, there was also a jury (comprised of students who had previously participated in the mock trial exercise).

Each year the students are assigned to be counsel for either the Plaintiff or the defense. They are all given the same fact pattern (usually a civil matter) and it is up to them to come up with a solid plan for winning their case. The instructor of the course, George Whitehair, gives guidance and support, but ultimately leaves the students to their own devices. The exercise allows stu-





The case this year was a negligence case. The Plaintiff was a minor child named Leslie Parker (and her parents) who was injured on school grounds while demonstrating her science project- a simulated volcano. The Defendants were the science teacher who assigned the project and the school board. The Plaintiff and her father created a model of a volcano that used firecracker powder to simulate an eruption which re-

quired an incendiary device to activate. The official demonstration of the volcano happened during the school's "Science Day", and the volcano was ignited by the teacher using a fuse. The day following "Science Day" the students were instructed to pick up their projects and bring them home. Leslie picked up her project from her classroom and brought it out to the bus. She then proceeded to demonstrate her project to her peers while waiting for their school bus. She activated the volcano three times, and on the third try, the firecracker powder exploded before Leslie was able to move her hand out of the way. She sustained injuries to her right hand, which required multiple surgeries resulting in only 80% usage of her hand.

2016 KICK-OFF

A night is planned with an emphasis on *Access to Justice*. Access to Justice is defined by the American Bar Association as providing access to civil justice at all levels for low-income and disadvantaged by assessing their civil legal needs.



Presenters for the evening will include representatives from *Legal Aid*,

Montgomery Child Advocacy Project, Mission Kids, Laurel House, Wills for Heroes and the Women's Center of Montgomery County. Each of these associations are in need of attorneys and paralegals who will help by offering probono, volunteer hours to expand and assist with their services as well as increase their operating support for free legal assistance in Montgomery County.

In addition, we have scheduled a District Judge to perform the ceremony inducting the 2016 Board of Directors for MCPA.

Please help us plan for this exciting evening by completing a short (3 question) survey!

Click here to take the 2016 Kick-Off Event Survey

2 MINUTES OF YOUR TIME



JUDGE HAROLD BOREK PRESIDES OVER MOCK TRIAL CONTINUED

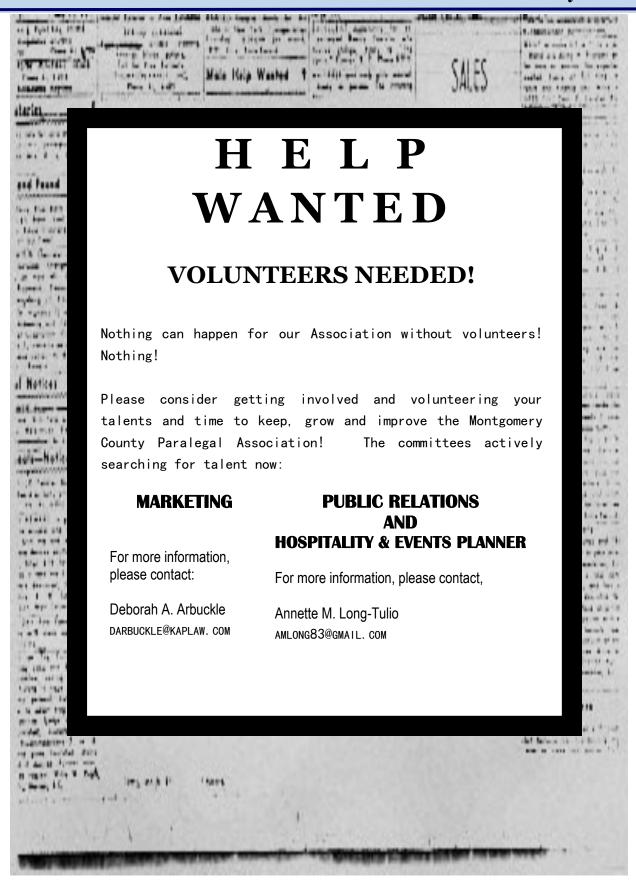
Plaintiffs argued that the teacher was negligent by not supervising students picking up their projects, and by allegedly leaving matches out, which Leslie used during her impromptu demonstrations. In her testimony, Leslie admits to running across the street to a local drugstore to purchase chewing gum. The Defendant's counsel raised the argument that Leslie must have picked up matches while she was there, and that there was no negligence on the part of the teacher or the school board.

From the juror's perspective, both sides argued well, and came up with plausible alternate theories of what ultimately caused Leslie's injuries. Objections were flying around the room, and the defense was even granted an opportunity to voir dire a witness to determine if they could be considered an expert witness. After both sides gave their closing arguments, Judge Borek gave instructions to the jury on the requirements for negligence (specifically comparative negligence), and sent them into deliberation. The final outcome of the case was that both sides were negligent, and the jury determined that the Defendants were 60% negligent and the Plaintiff contributed 40% to her own injuries.

For the students, the exercise is exciting and nerve wracking, and they all get a chance to challenge themselves and their classmates to utilize their knowledge and skills. The friendly competition helps to ignite their passion for the law and allows them to demonstrate creativity and ingenuity within the confines of the applicable laws. After the case is complete, Judge Harold Borek hands each student a certificate of participation and poses for a picture with each student individually. Judge Borek has graciously given up his free time for the past ten years in order to support the advancement of legal



education, and he does it with authority and the kind of patience that must come from twenty years of serving the Lansdale community and the pursuit of justice for any who might find themselves in his courtroom.



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Young Lawyers Hosting Coat Drive Through November 24

Have extra coats around the house? Here's a wonderful way to clean out your closets.

In an effort to bring warmth to those in need, the Young Lawyers Section is collecting coats through November 24th The Young Lawyers Section is partnering with "Cradle to Crayons" for childrens' coats and with "Catholic Social Services of Montgomery County" for all adult coats.

To make giving easier, they have established several designated collection sites for all new or gently used (clean) coats at various points around Montgomery County.



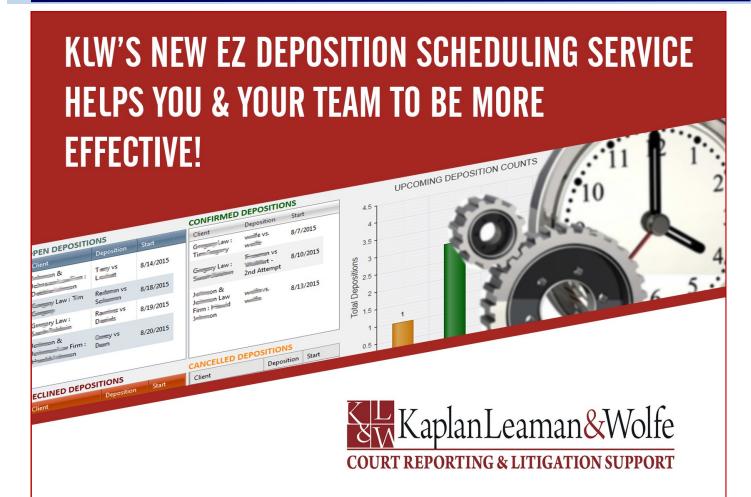
DESIGNATED COLLECTION SITES:

Montgomery Bar Association 100 W. Airy Street Norristown

Vetrano, Vetrano & Feinman 630 Freedom Business Center, Suite 215 King of Prussia Elliot Greenleaf 925 Harvest Drive, Suite 300 Blue Bell

Hamburg, Rubin, Mullin, Maxwell & Lupin 375 Morris Road Lansdale

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NOTABLE WEBSITES:

American Bar Association:

www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals

The Bar Association is a great resource for paralegals for understanding the ABA's continuing mission in supporting the standards of education for paralegals and by promoting attorneys' professional, effective and ethical utilization of paralegals.

Montgomery Bar Association:

www.montgomerybar.org

The Montgomery Bar Association is a resource for Montgomery County Paralegals that are registered with the site and are also an MCPA member. The website has an entire marketplace for CLE classes, seminars, publications and opinions that affect our state and county. The website is a great resource for job searching as well in the Montgomery County area.

Montgomery County Paralegal Association: www.montcoparalegals.org

The Montgomery County Paralegal Association has a website that can give you the latest details on events and happenings with Montgomery County Paralegals. It is a site to connect to other paralegals and get involved in committees or other volunteer events.

National Federation Paralegal Association: www.paralegals.org

The NFPA website is an invaluable resource for all paralegals. The NFPA is devoted to establishing standards for all paralegals and providing resources for paralegals to continue and enhance their skills in the field. The site has CLE information, a job bank, professional development as well as exam information to become a certified or registered paralegal.

Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations www.keystoneparalegals.org

The Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations is a professional organization comprised of paralegal associations located throughout Pennsylvania. The Keystone Alliance provides a statewide voice for paralegals in Pennsylvania and administrates the Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal credential. The program requires paralegals to meet minimum educational and employment standards in order to qualify for and maintain the Pa.C.P. Credential. Paralegals certified by the Alliance receive the Alliance's express authorization to use the credential "Pa.C.P.," which is the designation and registered state trademark for "Pennsylvania Certified Paralegal." It is the hope of the Keystone Alliance that the program will become the standard for hiring and/or promoting experienced paralegals.

VALUABLE LEGAL RESEARCH SITES:

Supreme Court of the United States:

www.supremecourt.gov

The official page of the United States Supreme Court featuring court opinions, orders, calendars, schedules, rules, news releases and general information. A great resource concerning issues affecting our constitution.

US Government Printing Office:

www.gpo.gov

The US government printing office provides free public access to full-text federal documents, such as the Code of Federal Regulations, the US Code, and Congressional Reports. This site has the latest information with news, legislation as well as the history of our great nation.

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

MEMBERSHIP

Coordinates membership drives and membership matters.

Tracey L. Barnes, RP, Pa.C.P. TBarnes@dischellbartle.com

<u>NEWSLETTER</u>

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

Rachel Fineberg rfineberg@goldblumhess.com

JOB BANK

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

Kelly Smith ksmith@kanepugh.com

MARKETING

Solicits sponsors and advertisers for MCPA.

NEEDED

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Promote the MCPA in the legal and general Community.

Annette M. Long-Tulio, CRP, Pa.C.P. amlong83@gmail.com

HOSPITALITY & EVENTS PLANNING

Plan and schedule upcoming MCPA presentations, meetings and social events.

Annette M. Long-Tulio, CRP, Pa.C.P. amlong83@gmail.com

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PRO BONO

Plan and schedule MCPA charitable and community events.

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

STUDENT AFFAIRS & MENTORING

Provide a range of services and support to students

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

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