

MCPA TODAY

NEWSLETTER

The Official Publication of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association

September 2019

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Newsletter Committee:

Michelle Calkins, Pa.C.P. Mcalkins@millerturetsky.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Nancy Piechota, Pa. C.P.

Summer is nearing the end and Fall is ready to make its entrance. It is that time of the year where Montgomery County Paralegal Association Board elections will be taking place. Voting will take place at the November member meeting and CLE. If you or anyone you know would like to become a member of the MCPA Board, please send a biography and picture to me at: npiechota@mannionprior.com. Please place "MCPA Board" in the subject line.

We are in need of a few Board members. Many of the members who are leaving the Board at the end of the year been on the Board for several years. We really need people who are interested in helping promote the paralegal profession and MCPA! Our meetings are held once a month and usually last an hour, so there is not a big time commitment. I know many of you are thinking "oh boy, I don't know if I have time for that". Take it from me, once a month for that short of period isn't much, especially to help keep our organization moving forward. There is great teamwork within the Board and we are committed to our association and our members. It would be nice to continue the wonderful things we have been able to accomplish over the last 20 years.

I realize that we all are busy between work and our home lives and that sometimes it is tempting to not get involved. However, if you feel like you would like to be a part of our organization as a Board member, and that you can give an hour a month, it would really make a difference to MCPA. As a member of the Board, you are an ambassador for our organization and for the paralegal profession. I know that when I joined the Board my employer was very happy and proud. They were even more so when I told them at the first meeting I volunteered to be the Chairperson for Marketing. And when I came to work and told them that I was elected President of MCPA, they were extremely proud of me. And I was proud of myself as well because I usually was not a person to and participate in too many outside organizations and bring myself to chair a committee or run for office. It just wasn't me! That being said, I am so happy I did step out of my comfort zone. I learned so much in the last two years during my time as President. That can be you too!

Think it over, and don't be afraid to take the chance. The MCPA Board could use your help. If interested, send you biography and picture to me by October 15, 2019. If you have any questions or would like to speak to me before making a commitment, please contact me at: npiechota@mannionprior.com. I really think you will be happy you did!

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Cheryll A. Schinski, Upper Providence Township

ATTENTION Credential Renewal Reminder

NFPA PACE Registered Paralegals
NFPA CRP Certified Registered Paralegals
Pa.C.P. Credentialed Paralegals

If your Credential expires in September, October or November, NOW is the time to submit your renewal application and proof of CLE. For more information, visit: RP and CRP – <u>www.paralegals.org</u> or Pa.C.P. – <u>www.keystoneparalegals.org</u>







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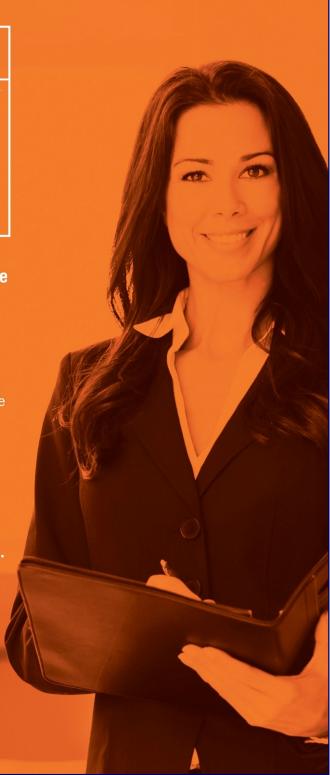
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20th Anniversary Celebration

William Penn Inn 1017 DeKalb Pike Gwynedd, PA 19436 OCTOBER 10, 2019 6:00 P.M.

Members: \$25.00 Non-Members: \$35.00

Spouses and friends are welcome!
Guest Speaker: The Honorable Lois E. Murphy

RSVP to Jen Kuemmerle (jekuemmerle @gmail.com) no later than October 3, 2019.

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BECOMING AN INVALUABLE MEMBER OF THE LEGAL TEAM

By Nicki L. Stewart CP, FRP

Whether you are new to the paralegal field or are a seasoned paralegal, I have some tips that may benefit you in your career. Consider what you can do to assist on each file on which you have been asked to work. If you know that records need to be requested or certain documents need to be drafted, go ahead and take the initiative and prepare a draft for your attorney to review, rather than waiting for your attorney to tell you to do so.

Draft each document as if you are going to be the one to sign it. If you look at a

document from this perspective you realize the importance of the document and you will want to ensure that it is accurate.

Faster is definitely not better. When drafting a document or letter for review by your attorney, resist the urge to rush. Even if the matter is urgent, you must take the time to take a step back (and a deep breath) and review the document thoroughly. This is especially true if you have

been asked, as I have been, to forward a document drafted by someone else. I learned the hard way that prior to doing so, I should first review the document for accuracy. Once you forward the document, it becomes "your" work product and the recipient will credit any typos or mistakes to you. Your boss or client will not remember the speed in which you accomplished a task but they will remember any mistakes you neglected to correct.

Even if you have not been requested to review a document you should take a few moments to quickly review it for accuracy. Many times in the past I was

requested to hand deliver a pleading to Court for filing in order to meet a deadline, and while glancing at the document in the elevator I discovered a mistake. It is better to ask the attorney to take a final look at the document before you file it rather than point out a mistake after it has been filed. One of the secretaries would always say when she saw me coming back to her desk

"Uh oh, what did I do wrong this time?" You should take as much pride in someone else's work product as you do your own and do your

> part to ensure that all work product that leaves your firm is of the highest quality and error free.

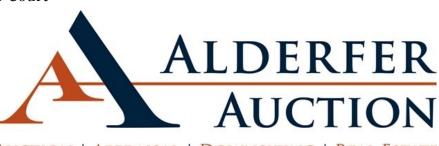
Take an interest in the cases you have been asked to work on and do not be shy about discussing your thoughts with your attorney. If you are working on a case that is

document intensive, go the extra mile and review the documents

thoroughly. I assisted two attorneys at the beginning of this year defending an employment law case in a fourday jury trial in Federal court which involved multiple witnesses. After the trial began we discovered that the plaintiff obtained copies of the trial witnesses' employment documents from the government entity we represented. One evening after a full day in trial I reviewed those documents and learned information about the witnesses' employment disciplinary actions and we were able to deal with those matters and diffuse the severity of the information rather than being ambushed by that information by opposing counsel's

CONTINUED

Consider what you can do to assist on each file on which you have been asked to work.



examination of the witnesses.

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BECOMING AN INVALUABLE MEMBER OF THE LEGAL TEAM **CONTINUED**

By Nicki L. Stewart CP, FRP

When reviewing documents to be used as trial exhibits, take special care to examine any headers, footers or handwritten notes appended to such documents and point these out to your attorney before you submit them to opposing counsel or the Court. If they are your client's documents, the attorney may want to scrub the headers and footers. In this same trial there was a document submitted by the plaintiff as a trial exhibit. During the trial when it was displayed on a large screen for the jury to view we noticed a footer called "Rainy day file." As the plaintiff was claiming employment discrimination, it did not look good for her case that she was making notes "for a rainy day." By the end of the day even the Judge was referring to the document as "the rainy day memo."

Be prepared to go "all in." If your situation allows, let your attorney know that you can work overtime if necessary when you are preparing for trial. When getting ready for trial I have come back early from vacation and worked through the weekend and 15–18 hour days when needed. These situations are very rare but I know that it is time well spent. I missed many meals and did not get much



sleep for two weeks but it was worth it as we achieved an excellent result for our client.

Finally, I have learned to always have a pen and legal pad with me when I go into an attorney's office. You can pretty much bet that if your boss calls you into his or her office you will be given an assignment, and nothing is worse than not being prepared to take careful notes.

Nickie L. Stewart, CP, FRP, has been a litigation paralegal for more than 25 years at Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A. She works for a team of 10 attorneys in a variety of fields including employment law, eminent domain, and mortgage foreclosures. She obtained her CP certification in 1987 and became a Florida Registered Paralegal in 2008. Nickie was the recipient of the 2015 Affiliates Award at the NALA Convention in Tulsa in July. She is currently the NALA Liaison for Gulf Coast Paralegal Association, Inc. and serves as a proctor for the CP exam, as well serving on the steering committee of the School of Business and Technology at Florida Southwestern State College. She is also in the 2016 NALA LEAP Class.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Representative Marcy Toepel, 147th District, has generously offered to host an event this event.

"Wills for Heroes" provides free basic estate planning documents to first responders and military veterans in

Pennsylvania. "Wills for Heroes" provides police, fire, emergency medical personnel, other first responders and military veterans – those on the frontlines for our personal safety – the tools they need to prepare adequately for the future.



If you are an attorney or an estate planning attorney expert, a notary or can assist as a witness, you are needed!

When:

Saturday, September 21 9:00 am-3:00 pm

Where:

Encore Experiences Senior Center 312 Alumni Avenue, Harleysville

Free CLE credits will be provided to attorneys courtesy of Ballard Spahr.

For more information, please contact:

Lisa A. Shearman, Esquire Semanoff Ormsby Greenberg & Torchia, LLC lshearman@sogtlaw.com



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SEPTEMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Board met on September 5, 2019, in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. A number of issues were discussed including:

- Nancy Piechota reported regarding the status of Marketing. We are welcoming US Legal and Harris Investigations as new sponsors this year and Reliable, Alderfer Auction, Peirce College, and Allevistar returning as sponsors. Thank you to our sponsors for your continued support.
- Tracey was happy to report that membership now stands at 100 members!
- ♦ Nancy and Deb Arbuckle reported on the upcoming 20th Gala. Invitations will be sent out via Email blast. The Honorable Lois Murphy will be speaking. Newsletters and pictures from the past 20 years were requested.
- Shari reported that the website will be transforming onto a new platform.
- Deb Arbuckle reported regarding the status of NFPA and the upcoming convention in Rochester. She and Deb Long will be attending. Deb reported that NFPA is now looking for a new Management Company and she has participated in many conference calls over the summer regarding Board business and the new Management Company search. Agenda topics for the upcoming Convention will be submitted shortly.
- Deb Arbuckle and Dana Jorna reported on Pro Bono activities. MCPA collected \$240 for Operation Gratitude and items were purchased and shipped. The Montgomery Bar Association Reentry Day Clinic was a great and impactful event that was well attended and staffed by attorneys, paralegals, notaries and legal interns. Additional upcoming events include Norristown NAACP 5K, Sole Harvest 5K and 1 Mile Walk, Laurel House 5K Dash Against Domestic Violence, and Women's Center of Montgomery County Annual 5K Run/3K Walk, and the popular Special Olympics at Villanova University.



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The Board will meet again on October 3, 2019. All members are invited to attend board meetings to express their opinions about issues affecting the Association. Meetings are held at Mannion Prior, LLP, 840 First Avenue Suite 100, King of Prussia the first Tuesday of each month. For more information, contact Nancy Piechota at NPiechota@mannionprior.com.

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August 27, 2019

Montgomery County Paralegal Association Attn: Deborah Arbuckle

1910 Harvest Drive

Blue Bell, PA 19422

Dear Deborah,

Thank you for your generous donation of 274 wish list items, 5 lbs of candy and your dedication to our mission. With the help of grateful Americans like you, we have delivered over 2.3 million of our signature Care Packages to Deployed Troops, Veterans, Wounded Heroes and their Caregivers, Military Families, Recruits Graduates and First Responders since 2003.

A Care Package brings joy to a Service Member stationed far from home and enables a Veteran, Wounded Hero or Caregiver to feel appreciated – many for the first time. Our Battalion Buddies bring comfort to the children of Deployed Troops at a very stressful time in their young lives. When we hand deliver Care Pouches to new Officer and Recruit Graduates, they know that as they begin their career of service to our great nation, they are supported along the way. And the delivery of First Responder Care Packages shows local heroes that their community values them in an often thankless job.

Your kindness not only helps to send Care Packages to brighten someone's day - by contributing to Operation Gratitude, you are also helping us to do something even greater. Together we are strengthening communities, and it all starts with you, our generous and thoughtful contributors and volunteers.

To demonstrate your impact, I want to share one of my favorite emails with you. It reminds me of what it was like to receive Care Packages during long deployments away from my own three sons:

To the Volunteers at Operation Gratitude:

I cannot express in words what your care packages do for our soldiers. The letters I received today brought joy to an otherwise lonely heart. I've never felt so proud to be a soldier in the US military. I am a husband and father of four. This is my first deployment and I have never missed a holiday with my family until this point. Your cards and very helpful items are a great reminder of the love I have for my family and for my country. Thank you for your support, and I will ensure that we pay it forward. God Bless, 1LT W.B., Army Reserves, Afghanistan

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and wonderful patriotic spirit. Every single donation we receive furthers our mission, and the recipients of your generosity will remember your kindness forever. As a 20-year Marine Veteran and the CEO of this amazing organization, I will always be appreciative of your support and encouragement for Operation Gratitude. You are truly making a difference!

With Warm Regards and Semper Fidelis,

Kevin M. Schmiegel

Lieutenant Colonel, USMC (Ret.)

Chief Executive Officer

Operation Gratitude has been granted non-profit status under Section 501 (c) 3 of the IRS Code. Your contribution to this organization is fully deductible in accordance with applicable law for federal income tax purposes as no goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS NEEDED

MCPA is seeking to appoint five new board of director members to ensure we have the capacity and skills to oversee the Association. Board members are expected to attend all board meetings, but also to participate in the life of the organization between board meetings, CLE meetings and acting in an ambassadorial role for the MCPA. Board meetings are currently held the first Thursday of each month at the offices of Mannion Prior in King of Prussia. Positions are held for a two year term.



The MCPA Board of Directors consists of nine members that serve for a two year term. The Board's activities are determined by the powers, duties, and responsibilities delegated to it or conferred on it by an authority outside itself and are detailed in the bylaws.

The MCPA Board of Directors hold monthly meetings usually the first Thursday of each month. All are welcome to attend. If you've ever wondered what the MCPA Board is doing on behalf of all of its members, attend one of these meetings. For information regarding where the next meeting will be held, please contact any of the Officers listed at the end of this newsletter.



If you are interested in becoming a candidate for this position, please email a short bio and headshot of yourself to President Nancy Piechota at npiechota@mannionprior.com. Your submission must be received no later than October 31st to be eligible for this year's election in November.

Voting takes place in November!







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OFFICERS



Nancy Piechota, Pa. C.P.—President

Mannion Prior, LLP (610) 265-7800 NPiechota@mannionprior.com

Nancy is a Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy also sits on the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She lives in Berks County with her husband, Joe and rescue dogs.



Kelly Lightcap, Pa.C.P. —Vice President

Bennett, Bricklin & Saltzburg LLC (267) 654-1100 lightcap@bbs-law.com

Kelly is a Paralegal at the law firm of Bennett, Bricklin & Saltzburg LLC in its Blue Bell office. She currently serves as the Association Vice President having served as its Treasurer since 2013. She lives in Phoenixville with her husband and cat, Emmett J.



Christopher Gregg—Treasurer

Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer (610) 275-2000 cgregg@kanepugh.com

Chris works for the law firm, Kane, Pugh, Knoell, Troy & Kramer as a Paralegal. He has been an active board member for the past 3 years and serves as its Social Media Committee Chair. Chris was born and raised in Willow Grove and still resides there with his family and their dachshund Queenie.



Jen Kuemmerle, CRP, Pa.C.P.—Secretary

Luther Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation Center (215) 675-5005 jkuemmerle@lutherwoods.org

Jen is the Vice President of Finance at The Luther Woods Nursing & Rehabilitation located in Hatboro. She has served on the Association's Board of Directors and was recently elected to serve as its Secretary. She lives in Hatboro with her husband and two children.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Noreen Messmer, Pa. C.P.

Noreen is a Paralegal with the law firm of Ford & Buckman. P.C. in Blue Bell and has worked with Sarah Ford. Esquire for over 40 years. She has been a Board member since 2010 and also serves on the Hospitality/Planning Committee. Noreen lives in Blue Bell and is the mother of three and Nana to three granddaughters.



Dana Joana, Pa. C.P.

Dana has been an active member since 2013. Dana assists in the areas of Civil Defense Litigation, Medical Malpractice, Legal Malpractice and Personal Injury defense at the Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer, LLP law firm since 2013.



Shari Weber Bradley, Pa. C.P.

Shari works at the firm at DeLuca Levine. A long time member of MCPA, she currently serves on the Board and is the Webmaster. Shari lives in Eagleville with her husband and has two grown sons and three grown stepsons.



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

Tracev is an Estates Administration and Estate Planning Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley, PC. She attended Penn State University, completing the Paralegal Certificate Program in the Summer of 1992 and took the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam. receiving her RP (PACE Registered Paralegal) credential in 2000. In 2008, she received her Pa.C.P. certification through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Associations and is currently its Credentialing Chair. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since its inception in 1999 and has been a Board Member, Secretary, Treasurer and President. In 2017, she was appointed as the CLE-Associations Co-Coordinator for the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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