

The Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Paralegal
Association

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MAY 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Dana Jorna, Pa.C.P.

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It is hard to believe that we are almost at the mid-year mark of 2021. This seemed like a good time to recap MCPA's year so far, as well as share what we have planned to finish out the year. First, I want to thank everyone who has attended our monthly webinars and to members that stepped up and joined committees as members and/or chairs. While other associations seem to be struggling with membership participation and engagement, we have been fortunate enough to grow. If you are ever interested in learning more about a specific committee or joining one, please feel free to reach out to any board member or committee chair. Information can be found in the monthly newsletter/quick news, as well as on our website. We are always looking for new ideas and fresh perspectives to keep MCPA moving forward.

Our Planning Committee has put on the following presentations this year: Under Investigation...The Process—presented by Michelle Harris; Guardianships and How to Avoid—presented by the Honorable Stanley R. Ott (Ret.); Mindful Meditation/Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction—presented by Phillip Sallvanti; What You Need to Know About Representing Applicants for Naturalization/U.S. Citizenship—presented by Emily Cohen, Esquire and Mary Sims, Esquire; and Montgomery Child Advocacy Project: Representing Neglected, and Trafficked Children in Montgomery County—presented by Sharon Jones Hofer, Esquire. In the coming months, the committee has tentatively scheduled the following presentations: untitled presentation on Civil Rights—presented by Tony Sherr, Esquire; Real Estate Transactions in Relation to Family Law—presented by Mark McGuire; and an untitled presentation on License Suspension—presented by Craig Sopin, Esquire. Please feel free to reach out to the Planning Committee if you have any specific topics or know any speakers our members could benefit from. While most of this year is planned out we are open to hosting more than one webinar a month and/or start filling in 2022's slate of presentations. If you are planning to attend any of these future CLEs, please be on the lookout for polls which will be launched at the end of each meeting and will be used to gauge members interest in various topics.

See p.2



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www.montcoparalegals.org

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Our hope is to be able to use the webinars presented in February and through June, as on-demand CLEs which can be purchased by members and non-members who were unable to attend live. As of right now we are working on offering the on-demand CLEs starting June through August, especially for those members that may still need credentialing credits. We are still working on figuring out the logistics and if it's even possible. If we are able to move forward with this idea, we will be sure to let you know via the Listserve. Please also keep in mind that NFPA and Keystone Alliance are working on presenting a series of webinars as well so you can always check out their event pages. Specifically, on the NFPA's website, all their CLEs from its October 2020 virtual conference are available on-demand to purchase as a bundle or a la carte.

Our Social Media Committee is working on expanding our social media presence, which included starting an MCPA Association YouTube Page. As of right now we do not have any public videos, however, there are ongoing discussions about how to share informational videos about the Association. We are always looking for ideas on how to reach more members and perspective members through our social media accounts. If you have any ideas or requests, please contact the Social Media Chair, Chris Gregg.

The Community Outreach and Pro Bono Committee has been working diligently to reach out to local offices/agencies who could benefit from paralegal volunteers. Legal Aid of Southeastern PA ("LASP") joined us for our April meeting where we were able to identify possible tasks/projects that our working and student members could volunteer for through their organization. In response, we were able to send LASP 10-15 members who were willing to be added to their volunteer email group to be contacted whenever LASP comes across a task/case that could use the help of a paralegal. The Committee is also looking to make connections with the Montgomery County Public Defender's Office to help with their newsletter they send to local prisons/prisoners. We have developed a list of charities for the monthly donation link for the CLE flyers. We are looking into taking over a Meals on Wheels route which the MBA Young Lawyers Section has committed to for the year. If you are interested in attending any Committee meeting please reach out to Karen Manzanares or I for more information. At this moment the Committee plans on meeting the first Monday of every month at 7pm by Zoom.



*Mindy Harrell '19
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The Student Affairs and Mentoring Committee is now chaired by Laura O'Halloran. They have held meetings the last few months and have developed a plan for the upcoming year. The Committee hopes to connect every student member with a working paralegal member to be a mentor and answer any questions they may have throughout their schooling. The Committee is also working on creating connections with local paralegal programs. We hope to be a resource by facilitate meetings between students and working paralegals to help answer any questions students' may have about paralegal roles, and the expectations of working in a law office. There will be no meetings in June, July, or August. Meetings will begin again in September.

Finally, the Board is in discussions about making changes to the website and possibly switching platforms. We are looking to make the site more interactive and useful to members and committee chairs who need to have a centralized place for their data, as well as, the capability to easily communicate with membership. If you have any ideas please feel free to contact me directly. We are also looking for members to volunteer to help with these changes as well as learn the current platform in order to help out our current webmaster, Shari Weber Bradley (swbradley@delucalevine.com). It takes work to keep our website running and up to date and Shari has been doing it by herself for many years. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

I hope everyone is able to have a nice, enjoyable summer with their families and friends as we look forward to a hopeful return to "normal" in the fall.



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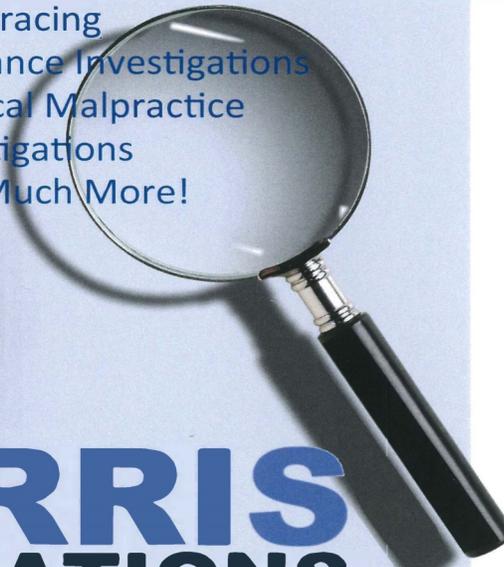
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Robyn Poochigian, Howson & Howson, LLP

MCPA Professional and Student members enjoy these benefits:

- ◇ Receive MCPA's bi-monthly newsletter MCPA Today;
- ◇ Access the MCPA job bank;
- ◇ Access MCPA List Serv where paralegals can get advice and assistance in all areas of practice;
- ◇ Monthly meetings or Seminars* dealing with topics that affect paralegals today;
- ◇ Obtain the annual MCPA Membership Directory;
- ◇ Automatic membership in the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA);
- ◇ Subscription to the National Paralegal Reporter, the official bi-monthly magazine of the NFPA;
- ◇ Network with paralegals and other members of the legal community.
- ◇ Stay on top of local and national trends in your career! Join MCPA today by visiting

[www.MCPA -BECOME A MEMBER.org](http://www.MCPA-BECOME A MEMBER.org)

Join us for our next Board of Directors Meetings

JUNE 4, 2021

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

OCTOBER 7, 2021

NOVEMBER 4, 2021

DECEMBER 2, 2021

A MESSAGE FROM THE KEYSTONE ALLIANCE

By Karen Sheriff

Greetings!

The Keystone Alliance held its first meeting of 2021 via Zoom on February 27th. It was also my inaugural meeting as President. I am looking forward to working as Keystone's President to bring new and exciting things to our Alliance. I truly enjoy the work I do with Keystone and find it both personally and professionally rewarding. My hope for my presidency is to share with all of you the passion I have for the paralegal profession.

I am fortunate to work with such a great group of Officers, Delegates, and Committee Chairs and thank them for their continued efforts! Without their volunteer efforts, Keystone would not exist. On behalf of Keystone, I would also like to thank our Past President, Cathy Wright, for her years of service to the Alliance and I would personally like to thank her for mentorship. She has been showing me the ropes since 2014 when I first became involved with Keystone.

I would also like to extend a hearty welcome to the Lycoming County Paralegal Association, who officially became a member of the Alliance in 2021! We are thrilled to have you on board!

As we look forward to the upcoming year, Keystone Delegates and Committees are hard at work making plans for new projects. As many of you may recall, our 2020 Education Summit was cancelled due to the pandemic. Due to the uncertainty that we are still facing in 2021, our education committee is pivoting its efforts and looking at ways to bring you virtual educational opportunities. We hope to bring you some of the same great topics we had planned for the Summit soon.

Additionally, given that many of our members continue to struggle with finding CLE opportunities, Delegates voted in January to continue the 3-month automatic extension to cover all for Pa.C.P. credentialing periods with an ending date up to March 31, 2021. There is no application necessary to receive this extension, and there are no fees associated with this extension.

Finally, as I end this message, I just want to take this opportunity to encourage you to become more involved with Keystone. If you have ever thought about becoming more involved with Keystone but do not know how, I would encourage you to reach out to me. The first (sometimes scary) step is to reach out and say, "How can I help?" It's a leap of faith. Even the smallest amount of time can be a huge help. And, I think you will find, as I did, it can be very rewarding.

As always, please feel free to contact me with your questions, suggestions or concerns. Have a wonderful Spring!



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PROCLAMATION**PARALEGAL WEEK***July 26-30, 2021***PARALEGAL DAY***July 30, 2020*

WHEREAS, the practice of law is a challenging and complex endeavor – one in which the rights, liberties, and safety of our citizens has been protected and preserved for centuries; and

WHEREAS, members of the bar require knowledgeable and reliable assistance to fulfill the duties of their profession. Paralegals have become an invaluable source of support in law offices, providing lawyers with a variety of skilled professional services throughout their practice; and

WHEREAS, paralegals are highly educated, trained, and experienced professionals with expertise in legal and case research, interviewing clients and witnesses, legal and correspondence writing, and other critical aspects of successful and efficient law practices; and

WHEREAS, the value of talented paralegals is often overlooked by the general public, but their worth is never underestimated by the lawyers and firms for whom they work.

THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim July 26-30, 2021, as PARALEGAL WEEK and July 30, 2021, as PARALEGAL DAY. I encourage all citizens to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of paralegals.



GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, on this thirteenth day of April two thousand twenty-one, the year of the commonwealth the two hundred forty-fifth.

Tom Wolf
TOM WOLF
Governor



UPCOMING CLE

TOPIC: CIVIL RIGHTS

DATE: JUNE 17, 2021

TIME: 12:30-1:30

PLATFORM: ZOOM

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8 traits of a methodical paralegal (and why you should be one)

By: Jan Hill March 11, 2020

Paralegals should be many things: organized, efficient, ethical, hard-working, meticulous, and methodical. Being methodical means forming a routine and sticking to it, even as deadlines loom and stress ensues. Here are some of the qualities that define a methodical paralegal and why methodical should be your new MO:

#1: Accurate

Competent paralegals focus on the big picture, but also pay attention to the small details that can make or break a case. Methodical paralegals are careful to follow all procedures – overlooking nothing – to ensure the accuracy of documents and case information.

However, nobody is perfect, and mistakes are a part of life.

When you make a mistake, you should take responsibility for it, correct it if possible, forgive yourself for making it in the first place, and (here's the methodical part) learn from it by implementing strategies to avoid repeating the mistake.

#2: In control (sometimes)

Paralegals have little or no control over many of the things that occur during any given day in a law firm – the demands, the cases, the personalities, the workload, the hours required to prepare for trial, the frustration of

clients, and whether or not your computer decides to cooperate.

However, you can control the way you react to stressful situations, the overall quality of your work, and whether you tackle your job proactively or reactively.

Focus on exercising control where you can and experiment with controlling how you react where you can't.

#3: Inventive

Because methodical paralegals have a solid routine, they have the time and insight to tackle issues and problems before being instructed to do so by an attorney. They see what needs to be done and have the independence and assertiveness to take the ball and run with it. They are also resourceful and inventive when searching for solutions to problems. They use their skills and good judgment to develop solutions on their own and then present them to the attorney.

#4: Logical

Paralegals often deal with the intangible, complicated, and vague components of the law, and successful paralegals must be able to think rationally to recognize the key concepts and facts regarding specific cases.

This requires communicating facts and conclusions in a clear, methodical way to the attorney – a skill that is critical for paralegals who are valued for their ability to use logic to

analyze a case, ignore the irrelevant facts, and focus on what is most important.

#5: Patient

The ability to stay calm and not become irritated when faced with problems or difficult people is part of a paralegal's job. According to Joyce Meyer, "Patience is not simply the ability to wait, it's how we behave while we're waiting."

A patient (and methodical) paralegal does not just sit around waiting for problems to get solved or go away. Instead, they rely on their organizational skills to work toward the ultimate goal – while they're waiting.

#6: Persistent

Methodical people are usually very persistent, meaning they do not give up easily. Why should a paralegal be persistent? Great paralegals think outside the box rather than merely accepting what is presented to them, and they keep going regardless of how tough things might seem. While some people give up when they come up against an obstacle, a persistent person draws on their logic and ingenuity to find a solution to a problem.

#7: Prepared

A paralegal generally has no idea when their supervising attorney is about to swoop in on them, so they have to be ready at all times. This means being able to accurately present the status of a particular task or case before being asked about it. Once the stress begins to build, if you haven't set up systems to quickly check your progress, you'll be unable to control the things you can proactively control, negatively affecting not only your sanity but also your success.

#8: Well-trained

Methodical paralegals tend to seek certification and obtain continuing legal education (CLE), not only to maintain their credentials but also to continue to learn and grow in their careers.

While devoting time to education might seem to only add more responsibility to an already busy paralegal's life, a methodical person can multi-task, not only at work but also between work and educational pursuits.

Do you know of any other steps a paralegal can take to be more methodical? How do you ensure that you are covering all your bases?

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Dana is a Litigation Paralegal at the law firm Kane Pugh Knoell Troy & Kramer, LLP. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since 2013, and a board member since 2018. More recently, she has become the MCPA's Job Bank Coordinator and co-chair of the Community Outreach & Pro Bono committee.

***Tracey Barnes, Pa.C.P.—Vice President***

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Tracey is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She has been an active member since the organization's inception in 1999 and has been a Board Member, Secretary, Treasurer and President. Currently, she is the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association's Credentialing Chair, and VP since 2019. In 2017, she was appointed as the CLE-Associations Co-Coordinator for the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

***Trista Davis Pa.C.P.—Treasurer***

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Trista is an Estates Administration Paralegal at Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys in Wyomissing. She attended Central Pennsylvania College completing the Paralegal Program and graduated in 2009. In 2014, she received her Pa.C.P. certification through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association. Trista lives in Douglassville with her husband and son.

***Deborah L. Arbuckle, Pa.C.P.—Secretary***

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Deb is a Paralegal at the law firm Kaplin Stewart Meloff Reiter & Stein in its Blue Bell office. She has been a member of the Montgomery County Paralegal Association since 2003, serving as a board member from 2007 through 2011. Debbie has also co-chaired the MCPA Marketing Committee and currently co-chairs the Pro Bono and Community Outreach Committee. She has served as the primary delegate for the MCPA to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations for 10 years.

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.

Lisa Effrig Lagreca



Lisa is a Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She recently graduated Summa Cum Laude from BCCC Paralegal Program and currently attends Pierce College. Lisa is a mother of four and grandmother of two. She has been a member of the MCPA since 2018 and is its newsletter editor.



Jennifer L. Echikson, Pa.C.P.

Jenn is a Family Law Paralegal at the law firm of Dischell Bartle & Dooley P.C. in its Lansdale office. She graduated from Peirce College in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies. She became a certified paralegal through the Keystone Alliance of Paralegal Association in 2015. Jenn is on the planning and outreach committees for the MCPA and is also membership chair of the Family Law Paralegals of Pennsylvania.



Nancy Piechota, Pa.C.P.

Nancy is a Certified Paralegal at the law firm of Mannion Prior, LLP in King of Prussia. Nancy sits on the Board of Directors and also serves as Chair of the Marketing Committee. She was the past Vice President of Keystone Alliance and is the Primary Delegate to the Keystone Alliance for Montgomery County Paralegal Association..



Karen D. Manzanares

Karen is a Law Clerk for Attorney Michelle A. Fioravanti and recently became a realtor. After graduating from Villanova University she spent 22 years as a law clerk for the Governor's Office, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Chief Counsel in King of Prussia.

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