

### PERSPECTIVE

Volume 31, Issue 4 Fall 2013

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By JoAnne Haffeman

It hardly seems possible the Holiday Season is fast upon us. At this time of the year, wouldn't a hot meal and a drink with friends be nice? You have this opportunity each time you register and attend a membership dinner meeting. Your Association is working hard to plan upcoming PANJ dinner meetings. Not only will you find a delicious meal with good company, but also we'll throw in a little continuing legal education for good measure!!!

I have to tell you that the last two dinner meetings have been exceptional. In September, Mary Ellen Tully, Esq., gave an informative and interesting presentation on Bankruptcy. What made this meeting particularly enjoyable was the interaction between the speaker and attendees. The attendees asked extremely good questions, which promoted a very active dialog during the presentation.

Our November Meeting feature Fernando Pinguelo, Esq. and Natalie S. Feher, Esq., who talked about E-Discovery in the Civil Proceedings. The presentation provided a broad overview of the topic and management tools that paralegals can use in these situations.

As will be discussed later in Perspective, the 2013 New Jersey Paralegal Convention was again a very successful event. This convention marked twenty years of providing not only education to the paralegal community but also the opportunity to network and catch up with old friends. The Convention, despite the enormous amount of work it entails, is the single most rewarding, and important, event of the term. I am constantly and pleasantly surprised with the feedback provided each year that clearly shows how much attendees really appreciate and enjoy this event. That's the "payoff" for all the work that goes into the planning and hard work required for the Convention.

Hopefully, I've been able to pique your curiosity and your interest and entice you to join us in future dinner meetings. To me providing these education events are what a professional association is all about.

In closing, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

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### NALA News

### by Kandi Moncelsi, ACP

It's been about 30 years since I sat for the CLA exam and almost two decades since I achieved the advanced certification in real estate. I can still remember the studying until my eyes burned, apprehension on the day of the exam and total disbelief when I passed. Once the shocked passed, I was filled with a satisfaction and confidence that has carried me to this day.

Many times I am asked, what are the benefits to achieving the CLA/CP designation? Some states, such as Florida, have come to understand the difficulty of the test and the dedication and commitment to the profession required to pass the exam, and to keep it current via continuing education credits. Unfortunately here in New Jersey there are no salary increases, parades or other outwardly obvious reward. Just the self satisfaction of knowing you put yourself out there, took a leap of faith (and a whole lotta studying!!), sat for the CLA/CP exam and passed.

Perhaps if more New Jersey paralegals were to sit for and achieve the CLA/CP designation, then the attorneys would begin to understand its value.

PANJ is dedicated to the paralegal profession's continuing success. Want to sit for the exam? Join our study group. Take a personal challenge. Being a paralegal is not a 9 to 5 gig, it's a career. Let's show the attorneys we mean business. Contact me at <a href="mailto:kmoncelsi@gmail.com">kmoncelsi@gmail.com</a> if you are interested in joining the study group so you can sit for the CLA/CP exam and become a member of the growing ranks of that special group of CLA/CPs.



### 2013 NEW JERSEY PARALEGAL CONVENTION

### By Christine Principe, CP

The 2013 NJ Paralegal Convention was held on October 25, 2013, at the Renaissance in Woodbridge, New Jersey. The "theme" for this year's convention was "Celebrating 20 Years of Education for the Paralegal Community" as it has been that long that this event has been providing this educational and networking opportunity for the paralegals of New Jersey.

The convention, which was proclaimed "Paralegal Day" by Governor Chris Christie, was well attended with the State's practicing paralegals and paralegal students taking advantage of a day's worth of seminars and networking opportunities.

This year's convention was segregated into four tracks – litigation, family law, miscellaneous and basics. Three topics in each track were offered, ranging from pre-trial prep, to child advocacy, to immigration to legal writing and research. There was something for everyone. All attendees came together after lunch for a time management/billing seminar.

In addition to the seminars and networking opportunities, there were a variety of vendors providing information and goodies, including DGR, The Source for Legal Support, DTI Global, Esquire Deposition, Fortune Title Agency, Lexis Nexis, Spartan Detective Agency, Transperfect Legal, Guaranteed Subpoena, and the New Jersey State Bar Association. There were also thirteen sponsors for the Convention.

The National Association of Legal Assistants and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations approved CLE credits for the Convention seminars.

The Convention provides a great opportunity for paralegals to gain insight into a variety of different topics and practice areas as well to mingle with fellow paralegals. It was a productive day through and through for all those who attended.

Please keep an eye out for the "Save the Date" flyer for the 2014 Convention.



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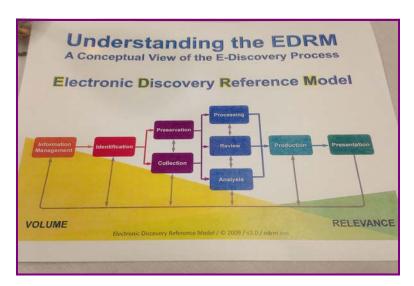




2013 NEW JERSEY PARALEGAL CONVENTION









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For more information about the NJ Academy, please visit www.NJMediators.org/about

### REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE R. BENJAMIN COHEN (RET.) AT THE JUNE 2013 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

[Editor's note: As noted in the Summer Newsletter, Judge Cohen's remarks at the dinner meeting were thought provoking and profound. He has graciously provided excerpts of his presentation for publication in <u>Perspective</u>.]

Litigation is a team endeavor (attorney, paralegal; administrative assistant, others) . . . My court team (law clerk, court clerk, administrative assistant, Sheriff's officers); must have decency, courtesy, helpfulness. . . . As a paralegal you play in integral role on that litigation team.

What happens in the courtroom is of tremendous importance to the litigants (clients), to the attorneys and to our system of justice. But what happens in the courtroom cannot happen without weeks, months or sometimes years of hard work and preparation by the team. . .

Three most important things in real estate [are] location, location, location. Three most important things in litigation — preparation preparation, preparation...

On Reputation being a lawyer's most valuable asset:

A paralegal should make their attorneys/firm look good and well-prepared.

- Make sure their work product is in its best form, not riddled with errors. If a client/adversary/Judge sees lack of
  care in your documents, they will equate that to lack of care about their case. Typos, misspelled words, incorrect
  grammar, awkward or confusing sentences detract . . .
- Being on time is important. You do not want to be the last party on a conference call or the last attorney to show
  up to a deposition, mediation, or trial call; or worse, showing up late. Lack of respect for other people's time
  demonstrates a lack of care as much as errors do.
- Anticipate your attorney's needs. Pack your trial bags with highlighters, pens, folders, exhibit stickers and extra
  copies, just in case. Whether your attorney is going to a case management conference, a deposition, a mediation or a trial, make sure he/she has the proper documents available and handy for review and reference beforehand
- Your tone is the face of your boss/company. When you are contacting the Court, scheduling a deposition with an adversary firm, requesting an adjournment, etc. coming off as difficult or curt will not help your cause. As with interviews, when a firm asks the receptionist how he or she was treated upon the entrance of an interviewee, a Judge may ask his/her law clerks or secretary. It can't hurt your cause to be polite when requesting adjournments, to appear telephonically instead of in person, or for leniency when the appearing attorney is running late.
- Try to be prepared with any necessary case information before making a call. Having the docket number, the case name and parties, and names of the attorneys appearing in the case will expedite getting the proper people you need on the other line.
- If an adversary requests a professional courtesy, grant them the favor (with permission). It will be remembered if you were unwilling to provide copies of a document, to push back a conference or deposition or to pass a message along. When it comes to the time leading up to trial, you may need a professional courtesy of your own.

Decency breeds decency in return.

### CONCLUSION

Our system of justice in the USA is not only the best system in the world today, it is the greatest bastion of freedom and equality that the world has ever known. There can be no true freedom and no real equality of opportunity where there is not a justice system that is fair and impartial, where the judiciary is not independent, where the basic civil liberties of all people are not sacrosanct. In this country, we have such a system. There are flaws as with anything human beings do. Our system is slow. It is expensive. And yet, our system is the envy of the entire world — and rightly so. As paralegals, you are privileged to play an important role in our great system of justice. That privilege is something you can be proud of. But with that privilege comes the responsibility to work to the best of your ability, as part of a team, to give your clients the best representation possible and to always do so while adhering to the highest standards of professionalism. The noblest thing we human beings can do is, know that we can never achieve perfection, but to strive for that perfection. Only in that way can we each give the very best effort we are capable of.

Thank you.



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### **NEXT PANJ DINNER MEETING!!**

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