

Paralegal Focus

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Paralegal Focus is the quarterly newsletter of the Vermont Paralegal Organization.

Vermont Paralegal Organization is a Member of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

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President's Message

By Kristin Provost, RP®

It's with sadness and excitement that I pen my last President's message. The sadness stems from the realization that in May I will no longer be a leader of the VPO – an organization filled with amazing, passionate and dedicated professionals. However, that's also where the excitement stems from because I am confident that the new President will bring new qualities and new opportunities to the VPO. As I leave my position, I want to encourage each of you to consider running for a Board position. Once you join the Board, you essentially join a family of remarkable professionals working to advance the paralegal profession and a family that will support you in all your career endeavors. If you have a question about the joining the Board, please feel free to reach out me.

And now a little humor...

A paralegal, an associate, and a partner of a prestigious law firm are walking through a city park and they find an antique oil lamp. They rub it and a Genie comes out in a puff of smoke. The Genie says, "I usually only grant three wishes, so I'll give each of you one." "Me first!" says the paralegal. "I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat with Tom Cruise." Poof! She's gone. "Me next!" says the associate. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with a professional hula dancer on one side and a Mai Tai on the other." Poof! He's gone. "You're next," the Genie says to the partner. The partner says: "I want those two back in the office after lunch."

Editor's Message

By Louise Reese

2017 has started with a bang just like 2016 ended. We are back to planning the VPO's annual meeting with seminars, and it is an election year.

This issue offers a convention update from Corinne Deering, who was at the helm running the convention last October with Carie Tarte. Corinne's passion for the profession and our organization shows in her commitment to articles for the newsletter and in keeping track of the VPO's running parts. Carie is behind the scenes brainstorming with others on ways to keep the paralegal profession alive and strong in Vermont. These ladies did not stop after convention, but rather gained inspiration to keep going.

The future of the organization depends on its members. If you are passionate about the profession and encouraging your fellow members, please consider running for a board position, or join a committee. You not only gain colleagues to consult with on new tasks but good friends who keep you laughing when you need it most and who encourage you to keep forging ahead in your career!

We have Tracy Lord, our newest RP, as our Spotlight, and Tracy has also provided a brief article on her "Quest for Certification." Please give it a read; you may have the same passion for certification.



The 2017 VPO Annual Meeting Conference will be held Thursday, May 18, 2017 at the Doubletree Hotel in South Burlington. Stay tuned for more details as planning continues.

Membership News

As of February 24, 2017, we have 62 total members: 52 voting; 8 associate; and 2 student.

Our newest member is Carisa Warren from Unsworth Laplante, PLC in Essex Junction. Welcome, Carisa!



Q&A

Tracy Lord, RP®
Member Spotlight

<i>How old are you?</i>	54
<i>Describe your family?</i>	I have two beautiful, intelligent and talented daughters. They are both out of college and beginning their own careers.
<i>Town in which you live?</i>	I moved from the State of Georgia to Burlington last year – there’s a definite temperature difference!
<i>What is your favorite food?</i>	Anything homemade.
<i>Do have any pets? If so, what are they, and what are their names?</i>	I have two soft and fuzzy cats, Sekhmet and Keca. I also have little Jack Russell terrier, Penny.
<i>What kind of hobbies do you have?</i>	I like to do paper crafts, ribbon crafts, cook (not bake), and read.
<i>How do you unwind at the end of a long work week?</i>	Nothing specific.
<i>What is your educational background?</i>	I have a B.S. in Organizational Leadership, with a concentration in law office management. I am also in the process of getting my Masters in Legal Studies.
<i>Where do you work?</i>	I work at Marathon Health in Winooski.

When did you first become a paralegal?

25 years ago... a long... long... time

What area of law do you work in?

I worked in litigation for most of my career. Now I am working in a large corporation doing legal research.

What do you enjoy about working in that area of law?

I loved litigation because it was so interactive! No two cases are the same, and it was a real challenge. I really like being intellectually stimulated.

When I moved to Vermont, I decided I wanted to move on to a new challenge, and decided to step into the world of corporate law.

If you could work in any other area of law, what would it be?

I think I would like employment law. I dabbled in it a little, and found it to be very interesting.

What is the one thing about being a paralegal you would change if you could?

Nothing specifically for me, but I do think licensure is important.

How or why did you first enter the paralegal field?

When I first started working as a legal secretary, the attorney I worked with gave me paralegal duties. The more I learned, the more interested I became. After about two years, I took the plunge and got a paralegal certificate from a local school.

Did you hold other positions, or have a different career, prior to becoming a paralegal, and if so, what was it?

Before I was a paralegal, I worked part-time at a book store, and full-time as office manager of a small pest control company. Working for the pest control company was pretty dull. There's only so much you can say about ants and fleas.

What do you love about the paralegal profession?

I have a real passion for the law, and wanted to stretch myself. After I got my paralegal certificate, I continued to learn as much as I could about the law. I was fortunate in the beginning of my career path, because when I started I worked for a general practitioner. I was able to touch on virtually all areas of the law – I think the only areas I never came into contact with were immigration and bankruptcy.

Each client matter is a puzzle, and finding the pieces to assemble the puzzle is exciting and fun.

What things about the profession do you dislike?

I believe that many paralegals entering the profession are inadequately trained. Many paralegal educational programs offer a course of study which is inadequate for the reality of the profession. Because of this, the respect that was once given to paralegals has decreased – both by attorneys and clients.

How long have you been a member of the VPO?

I have been a member of the VPO for a year – I joined immediately when I moved to Vermont.

Tell me about the skills or traits you possess that you find most useful in your position?

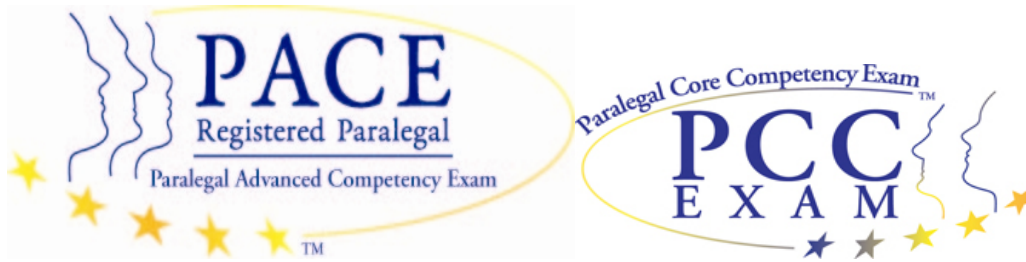
I cannot even begin to stress how important writing and communication skills are to our profession! An attention to detail is required, as is extreme organizational skills. Finally, computer skills are a must! In this age of technology, just knowing how to type isn't enough.

What character oddities or personality traits do you find at odds with your career?

When I first began as a paralegal, I had to train myself to stop making snap judgments about people. Also – and this may sound weird – empathy can be very dangerous. You need to do your job for your client; if you feel sorry for the opposing side, you may not perform to the best of your abilities.

What brief advice or friendly tip would you offer to someone just entering the paralegal field?

Find an experienced paralegal who is willing to mentor you, and never stop learning!



THE PCCE™ / PACE® POSTING

*By Ashley LaRose, RP®
Paralegal Certification Ambassador*

The Vermont Paralegal Organization would like to congratulate Tracy Lord on becoming the newest PACE Registered Paralegal® in Vermont. Tracy is now the 11th paralegal in Vermont to obtain the RP® designation. Great job, Tracy!

Paralegal Certification Scholarship

Don't forget the VPO offers a scholarship each year to one lucky paralegal who would like to obtain a paralegal certification. If you are interested in sitting for PACE® or PCCE™, please apply for the VPO's scholarship right now. Go to <http://vtparalegal.org/pace-scholarship.html> to get information on our scholarship and apply today.

If you have any questions on the scholarship or studying for either PACE® or PCCE™, please contact me at ashlarose@yahoo.com. As your Certification Ambassador, I am more than happy to answer questions, including why you may want to become a certified paralegal. I look forward to hearing from you.

ONE PARALEGAL'S QUEST FOR CERTIFICATION

By Tracy Lord, RP®

During the course of my life, I worked in many fields. I worked in retail shops (my favorite was a book store), with domestic animals (in several capacities), and for service companies. Working in the retail and service industries have their benefits; however, the job functions tend to be repetitive and quickly lose their charm.

Consequently, I began to look for work that would challenge my intellect. I was fortunate enough to find a job in a small law firm. It only took a few weeks to realize this was the field I loved and wanted to make my career. I quickly worked my way from receptionist to paralegal. Being a paralegal gives me the opportunity to “think outside the box.” No two cases are alike, and each delivers different challenges that must be researched and overcome.

My passion for the legal field left me with the desire to reach higher. I began to contemplate certification, and decided this was something I could achieve. The only thing holding me back was my financial situation, and the testing center locations.

Fast forward twenty years....

Last year, I moved from Florida/Georgia to Vermont. I was able to obtain a job with a decent salary, and was – for the first time in decades – in a position where I was financially able to seriously consider taking THE TEST. I talked a former co-worker – who is currently in Philadelphia – into taking the review course and the test at the same time. A study-buddy is a definite boon; we were able to discuss the course materials, and the issues we were having with various law types (I am a contract and litigation guru, but have minimal real estate and probate experience; my friend is the exact opposite).

I took the review course, read the materials, and applied for authorization to take THE TEST. I received permission, and promptly scheduled testing for the week after Thanksgiving. As the day loomed closer, my stomach began to spawn butterflies. The butterflies began to breed and multiply. I hoped they were pretty butterflies. The day of the test arrived. I didn’t feed the butterflies, and asked my daughter to drive me to the testing site because I was too nervous to drive myself.

Man, was I shaking! I trembled my way to the testing office, and gave them my information. I was frisked, checked for electronic devices, and answered a quiz on my identity. It’s easier to get through airport security than it is to get through the doors of the testing site. Finally, I was brought to the desk and began to answer questions. The rest of my time in the chair was lost in a gray fuzz. Did I want to submit? Review? Throw up? I took a deep breath, and clicked the submit button.

“Please wait while we submit your answers.” The longest 60 seconds of my life started. I began to contemplate when I was going to retake THE TEST. There was no way I passed it. I second-guessed myself on every issue presented. Maybe I was going to throw up.

“Congratulations....” Blink. “Congratulations...”

The word was still there.

HOLY MOLY! SON OF A BISCUIT! I PASSED! I took a deep breath, and all the hungry butterflies left to find a new stomach to occupy.

My journey to becoming a certified paralegal began when my children were infants. I had several life-changing experiences on my quest. Decades passed, my children grew up, and I continued reaching for my grail. I have it in my hands, and it is more beautiful than I ever expected.

NFPA NEWS

*By Corinne Deering, RP® and Ashley LaRose, RP®
NFPA Representatives*

The two remaining items from the 2016 NFPA Convention are in the process of wrapping up. We received our financial report from the NFPA Board, and are happy to announce that the convention was a financial success for NFPA. The VPO will soon receive an incentive payment, and we are happy with the results.

The second item to wrap up is the electronic vote on Resolution 16-04, which was an agenda topic, brought to the convention floor requesting an update on NFPA's non-lawyer practice position statement. After some debate, a motion was ultimately made by the committee presenting the agenda topic to refer the statement back to the Ad Hoc Committee for further editing. The amended proposed statement was posted to the NFPA Discussion Boards on January 13, 2017, for delegates review and comment. The comment period was open from January 13 until February 2, 2017. On February 3, 2017, the final version of the Amended Position Statement regarding Non-Lawyer Legal Professionals was posted to the discussion boards for voting. The delegates received a voting ballot from the Committee with instructions to submit their vote before February 24th at 11:59 p.m.

There was surprisingly a very small amount of discussion and posts on the discussion boards regarding the amended statement. There were a few posts from Region V with suggested revisions to the statement, as well as a few posts from another region. Several members of Region V had concerns that the statements made within the final version of the Amended Position Statement were inconsistent with the remaining content of the Statement. In addition, there were concerns about including legal secretary certifications in a listing of paralegal certifications, especially when it has been the delegates' desire to promote and market the paralegal professional.

It is likely that the results of the vote will be released after the deadline for submission of this newsletter article, so an update will be posted at a later date.

The Region V Meeting will be held in Albany the weekend of April 22-23, 2017. Ashley LaRose and I will be attending on behalf of the VPO. We expect that we may be working on agenda topics for the 2017 Convention in New Orleans.

The NFPA Joint Conference (Leadership, Regulation, and Certification) will be held in New York City on April 28-30, 2017. Currently, I am planning to attend the conference with VPO member, Robyn Sweet. We hope to learn a lot of helpful information to bring back and share with the association.

Future convention dates are:

2017	New Orleans	October 12-15, 2017
2018	Seattle, Washington	October 25-28, 2018
2019	Rochester, New York	October 10-13, 2019
2020	Minnesota	To Be Determined

Please remember to reach out to the VPO Board and to me and/or Ashley LaRose, RP, as your NFPA representatives if you have suggestions, comments or concerns about the NFPA website or the News You Can Use emails, if you would like to see a certain CLE subject offered, or if you are interested in volunteering with NFPA. We are here to represent your interests with NFPA and would like your feedback.

POST CONVENTION CELEBRATION

By Louise C. Reese

To further show our convention volunteers how much their time and commitment was appreciated, Carie Tarte organized a fun night of food and laughter at the Best Western Plus in South Burlington on January 20, 2017. We had volunteers from multiple counties present, including our Washington County and Rutland County delegations. The event would not have been complete without a cake made by Therese Corsones, the VBA Executive Director. Lori Cohen was kind enough to make sure the cake made it from Montpelier to South Burlington in one piece. Cheers to everyone who helped make the 2016 Convention a success!

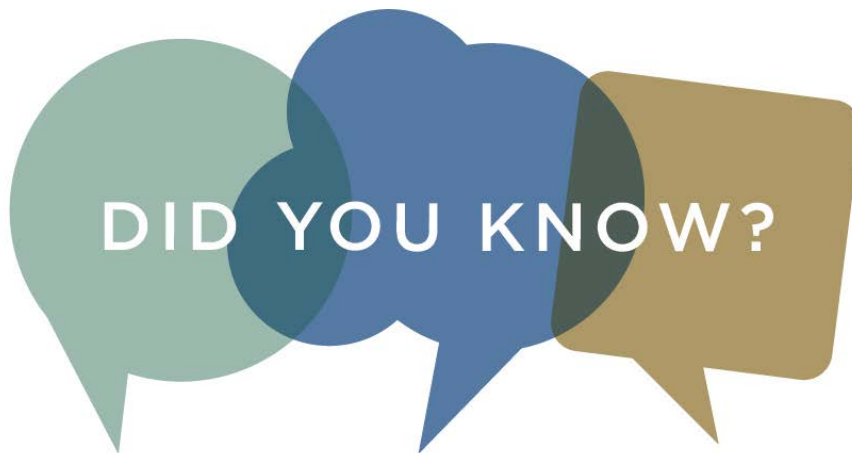


THE REAL ESTATE CORNER

Vermont Attorneys Title Corporation has given us permission to reprint the following information from its January 2017 newsletter.

IRS Revises the 2017 Form 1099-S, Proceeds from Real Estate Transactions, Effective January 1, 2017

The IRS has amended the 2017 Form 1099-S, Proceeds from Real Estate Transactions, which will take effect for all real estate transactions on or after January 1, 2017. The form includes a new Box #5 which questions whether the transferor is a foreign person: a nonresident alien, foreign partnership, foreign estate or foreign trust. Box #6 is now "Buyer's part of real estate tax." The new Form 1099-S can be ordered by visiting www.IRS.gov/orderforms, or by calling the IRS at 800-829-3676.



*Promulgation Order
Amending Rule 17 of the
Vermont Rules of Criminal
Procedure*

The amendment to Rule 17(a) clarifies that a subpoena is provided by the clerk of court, but actually issued by a judicial officer, subject to certain notice of rights on the part of persons subject to subpoena thereto. The amendment conforms the rule to current practice.

The amendment to Rule 17(c) adds express provision for “nonproceedings” subpoenas duces tecum, that is, for production of specified objects, including but not limited to documents and electronically stored information, outside of the context of deposition or judicial proceedings. The amendment also prescribes certain protections for persons who are subject to the issuance of subpoenas.

This Order, promulgated on December 15, 2016, effective February 20, 2017, can be found on the Vermont Judiciary website.



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