

Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

Volume 2009, Issue 1

March 2009

Message From the Current President

Gwen Burgess, CLA MPA's 2009 President

2009 is off to a terrific start for MPA! You elected a hard-working Executive Board who truly has your best interests at heart. Each officer is enthusiastic and is proposing ideas on how MPA may better serve you, the members. MPA has no reason to exist without you - thank you for submitting your membership renewals and new member applications. Our membership roster includes almost as many members at this early stage of the year as we had for the total membership in 2008.

We've already enjoyed two interesting speakers at the Region I lunch meetings for January and February. If you work in the Jackson metro area and aren't attending, you are missing some valuable opportunities to increase your knowledge of practice areas in which you may not normally work. As firms are tightening their belts, it is becoming increasingly

important that we are open to the possibility of working in areas outside our normal realm of expertise. Just because you have not yet worked in a particular specialty area, that doesn't mean you never will! Be open to learning as much as you can about every specialty - it increases your value to your firm, as well as your marketability should you find yourself in the market for a different job.

And speaking of the monthly lunch meetings, Region I members: remember to mark your calendars to attend on the **4th Thursday** of each month. And PLEASE get your reservations to MPA's Secretary, Janie Boyd, by the date and time specified in each notice - usually by noon on Tuesday before the meeting date. Non-members and members outside of Region I are always welcome to attend, as well.

We try to make anything you need to know about

upcoming MPA events available on our website: www.msparalegals.org.

Please be sure to check there for information you need. If you don't find what you need there, email one of the officers through the "contact us" email addresses. We've taken extra measures this year to ensure that your emails are sent directly to each officer as soon as you hit "send." If you don't receive a prompt response to your email, please let me know. If there's a problem, we'll do everything in our power to have it fixed as soon as possible.

APRIL 23 - save that date! Plan now to attend the Spring seminar at the Capital Club in Jackson.. Sarah O'Neal, MPA's Vice President/Education, already has speakers scheduled on topics sure to be of interest to you.

May 1 - deadline for submitting articles to MPA's Board for review



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Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.

prior to publication in *The Mississippi Lawyer* which is published by the Mississippi Bar Association. MPA has been privileged to provide articles for several years for a column and we'd love to have your input. If you are interested in writing an article for this publication, please contact me for more information.

May 15 – deadline to register for the July CLA/CP exam. Please visit NALA's website for more information on this exam: www.nala.org.

May 15 – Stewpot: Members in the Jackson metro area will have another opportunity to

participate in a community service project by helping serve the noon meal at Stewpot in downtown Jackson. Most of us go thinking we'll be helping others – and we are, but we always leave knowing that we, too, have been helped.

June 1 – deadline to submit articles for publication in this newsletter to the Board for review. Please know that your articles, as well as any ideas you may have for articles, are welcomed.

If you want to be more involved in the Mississippi Paralegal Association, now is the time! If you indicated a committee preference when you

renewed your membership or when you joined, you have been assigned to one of the committees you selected. The list of committees with the chairperson for each is available on MPA's website. The chairperson of your committee should be contacting you in the near future and, if not, please feel free to email them regarding your interest.

A lot of good things are on the horizon for YOU and for MPA in 2009. YOU and your involvement will help determine the success of each.

Catch the enthusiasm!

THE CLA EXAM
WILL BE FRIDAY
AND SATURDAY,
MARCH 20-21,
2009.



Membership Roster

The roster is available on MPA's website at www.msparalegals.org. If you are a member, contact the VP/Established Membership for the login and password. We use the roster to email members, so please make sure your information is current. If a change needs to be made, please let us know.



Executive Board Meeting

This year, the Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at noon. The meeting places rotates among the offices of the Officers. Meetings are open to the membership. Please contact an officer to find out the location of the next meeting.

Monthly Meeting

The regular luncheon/meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month from 12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m., at the Capitol Club. Please be sure to make your reservations for each luncheon by contacting MPA's secretary, Janie Boyd, CP at jboyd@watkinsludlam.com. The luncheon cost is \$14.50.

MPA Officers

President — Gwen Burgess, CLA

VP/Education — Sarah O'Neal

VP/New Membership —

Mary Lynne Underwood

VP/Established Membership —

Cathy Myers, CLA

Secretary — Janie Boyd, CP

Treasurer — Kimberly Pierce, CP

NALA Liaison —

Tricia Nelson-Easley, ACP

Student Liaison — Darleen Dozier, CLA

Region I Director — Paula Joyner, CP

Region II Director —

Deborah Player, CLA

Region III Director — Ammi Gates, CLA

Region IV Director — Sharon Gowan

Region V Director —

Bridget Breithaupt, CP

Parliamentarian —

Suzanne Faison, ACP

MPA, Inc. Secretary

Janie M. Boyd, CP

I would like to take this time to tell you how much I appreciate the opportunity to serve as Secretary of MPA, Inc. this year. MPA, Inc. has gotten off to a great start for 2009.

For those of you who attended our January 2009 monthly meeting and luncheon, I think you would agree! I have heard so many positive comments. Sarah O'Neal has worked very hard to secure equally outstanding speakers for the remainder of the year; not only for our monthly meetings and luncheons but also for our Spring and Fall Seminars. I hope that each of you will be able to attend these, too.

I look forward to getting to meet each of you at our upcoming meetings. Thank you again, for giving me the opportunity to serve our organization as Secretary.

VP/New Membership

Mary Lynne A. Underwood

Welcome back! Once again I'd like to thank you for placing your trust in me as your VP/New Membership for 2009. I'm happy to report that for January/February we have 14 new members, and I have several ready for review and approval this month. Sarah O'Neal has worked hard, and I believe that you will find our monthly speakers to be quite excellent. Not to mention the seminars - hang on - this is going to be an exciting year despite the state of our economy. Be active and enjoy!

MPA'S SPRING
SEMINAR IS
SCHEDULED FOR
THURSDAY,
APRIL 23, 2009.
SAVE THE DATE!



Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.



AS OF 1/31/09,
THERE ARE **181**
CLAs/CPs IN
MISSISSIPPI.
AS OF 2/2/09,
THERE ARE **25**
ACPs IN
MISSISSIPPI.

Calendar

March

- 2 Deadline to submit articles to *The Mississippi Lawyer*
- 2 Deadline to submit articles to *The Assistant*
- 11 Executive Board Meeting
- 13 StewPot Community Service
- 20-21 CLA Exam
- 26 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon

April

- 1 2009 First Quarter Report due to NALA
- 8 Executive Board Meeting
- 23 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon and Spring Seminar

May

- 1 Deadline to submit articles to *The Mississippi Lawyer*
- 13 Executive Board Meeting
- 15 Deadline to file application for July 10 & 11 CLA Exam
- 15 StewPot Community Service
- 28 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon

June

- 1 Deadline to submit articles to *The Assistant*
- 10 Executive Board Meeting
- 25 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon

July

- 1 2009 Second Quarter Report due to NALA
- 1 Deadline to submit articles to *The Mississippi Lawyer*
- 6 Executive Board Meeting
- 8-11 NALA 2009 Annual Convention in San Diego, CA
- 23 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon
- 24-25 CLA Exam

August

- 12 Executive Board Meeting
- 14 Letters sent to schools for Student Essay Contest
- 27 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon

September

- 1 Deadline to submit articles to *The Assistant*
- 4 StewPot Community Service
- 9 Executive Board Meeting
- 10 Paralegal Day
- 24 Region I Monthly Meeting/Luncheon and Fall Seminar/ Vendor Fair
- 30 Deadline for nominations for Paralegal of the Year Award and Pro Bono Award

October

- 1 2009 Third Quarter Report due to NALA
- 1 Deadline to file application for December 4 & 5

- CLA Exam
- 2-3 CLA Review Seminar - TBA
- 14 Executive Board Meeting
- 15 **Absentee Ballots for 2010 Officers due**
- 15 Deadline for submitting Student Essays to Student Liaison
- 22 Annual Meeting/Luncheon - Election of New Officers

November

- 2 Annual dues to be submitted by membership
- 11 Executive Board Meeting
- 16 Final deadline to submit Membership Dues
- 20 StewPot Community Service
- No Region I Monthly Meeting

December

- 1 Termination of Membership for non-payment of dues
- 1 Announce Student Essay Contest Winners
- 1 Deadline to submit articles to *The Assistant*
- 4-5 CLA Exam
- ? Holiday Social
- 9 Executive Board Meeting - Capital Club
- No Region I Monthly Meeting



VP/Education

Sarah O'Neal

For several years now, I have attended MPA's regular monthly luncheons and a few seminars. I never believed that one day I would be sitting on the Board. Thank you for the faith and confidence you have placed in me, I will work hard to live up to it.

This year seems to be flying by and what a year it is turning out to be. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the education committee being: Ammi Gates, Brenda Goolsby, Cathy Shiflett, Dawn Phythyon, Dora Boaz, Jennie Cannon, Judy Wilson, LaTonya Welch, Michael Fox, Molly Adcock, Patsy Dillon, Paula Joyner, Russell McAllister, Sharon Gowan, Tameika Givens and Tonia Hales. They have been working hard to obtain interesting speakers on current issues or topics for the upcoming year.

In response to several member requests for ethics education, in January we heard from attorney, Rebecca Wiggs of Watkins & Eager, PLLC, on Ethics: Lessons On Conflicts & Billing: Owen v. First

Family Financial. She reminded us how important our actions, as Paralegals, are to the firms in which we work and to the profession as a whole. In February, we learned about "Alternate Dispute Resolution in Workers' Compensation Claims" from Mr. James E. Higginbotham of Watkins & Eager, PLLC.

For March, we have the Judge Advocate General of the Mississippi National Guard speaking to us. In addition, we have an exciting seminar planned for April that will include a variety of topics and speakers relevant to issues we face in our profession. I hope all of you can attend.

I feel that Paralegals should be exposed to all areas of law and with that belief; my goal is to provide our Association with topics that cover many different areas of law. If you have suggestions for speakers or would like to see a particular topic covered, please do not hesitate to contact me. After all, this is your association; let's make it the best it can be.



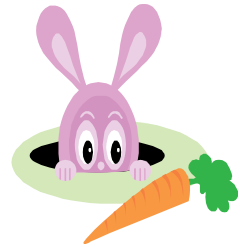
VP/Established Membership

Cathy Myers, CLA

Hello MPA!!! My name is Cathy Myers and I am your newly elected VP of Established Membership. Thank you so much for allowing me to serve in this capacity. I look forward to a VERY rewarding year.

ROSTER

So, let's get started -- First off, renewing members are at 51 percent. Not bad. For 2009, our membership currently boasts a total of 165 members. The roster has been posted to the website, so please take the time to ensure that your information is correct and, if you know someone who is not a member and should be we encourage you to visit with them about our wonderful organization. MPA is a great NETWORKING force and in times like these you can never have too many friends! If there is someone you would like me, or Mary Lynne (VP-New Membership), or any other member of the Board to contact feel free to let us know. We would love to visit with prospective members. As always, the Board is here to serve the membership, so we welcome your input.



AS OF THE
SEPTEMBER
2008 CLA/CP
TESTING
SESSION, THERE
WERE **14,965**
CLAs/CPs IN THE
UNITED
STATES.

Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc.



JOIN US FOR
COMMUNITY
SERVICE AT THE
STEWPOINT ON
FRIDAY,
MAY 15, 2009.

Contact information for Board members is on the MPA website, www.msparalegals.org.

MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES

MPA Membership Certificates for renewing members were passed out during the February luncheon. Members who did not pick up their Certificates during that meeting were mailed their Certificates on 02/28/2009. If you have not received your MPA Membership Certificate by 03/15/2009, please e-mail me and I'll find out what went wrong and get your Certificate to you immediately.

INSURANCE

One of the items on this year's agenda is to empower the membership as much as possible. To that end, I will be gathering information on group insurance rates (health, dental, life) for MPA members. Basically, we are pooling our members together as a group and looking for group rates.

We will be talking to several agents and will select the agent who best fits the needs of MPA's members. Once the agent has been selected (probably some time this summer),

individual members who desire to take advantage of the group rate will contact the agent, let him/her know that you are a MPA member, and get a quote based on your specific history and circumstances. Members will pay their own premiums directly to the insurance agent/company. MPA is solely facilitating a group atmosphere to make each of us eligible for a group rate.

Feel free to e-mail me with any questions you may have concerning this. Also, if you know of any insurance agents you would like me to contact regarding quote ranges, please provide me with their contact information and I will be glad to contact him/her.

In order to get a realistic quote range from the agent, I will be sending out a questionnaire to gather information to provide to the agents. These questionnaires will be completely anonymous, so please answer all of the questions and return them to me as soon as possible. Your contact information will not be given to anyone. Just answer the questions, e-mail them to me, I'll print out the

questionnaires, and delete the e-mail. Do not put your name or any contact information on the questionnaire.

THANKS AGAIN!

Again, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to serve you. E-mail is the best way to contact me. The insurance questionnaires will hopefully be ready some time in April and will go out shortly thereafter.



NALA Liaison

Tricia Nelson-Easley,
ACP

The next Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) exam will be held March 20th & 21st at Copeland, Cook, Taylor & Bush in Ridgeland on Highland Colony Parkway. If you are thinking about becoming a certified paralegal, I encourage you to accept the challenge and join approximately 180 certified paralegals in Mississippi.

The next testing date for the certification exam is July 24th & 25th, 2009.

The application deadline is May 15th. Usually a late fee of \$25 may be submitted for an additional two week extension.

If you already have certification as a paralegal/legal assistant, I urge you to consider becoming an Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP). In 2006, NALA unveiled a web-based format to gain advanced certification. Participants work through modules and take quizzes at the end of each module. Several specialized topics are available for advanced certification. More information is available at www.nala.org

NALA has posted its NALA Campus LIVE! Spring Program offerings on its website. Brochures will be available at the Region I meetings in Jackson. Course dates and times are listed from February 1 – May 21. Don't forget, you do not have to be a member of NALA to take advantage of these sessions. If you have any questions not answered by the website, please feel free to contact me at TNelson@holmescc.edu. And don't forget to make plans early for the 34th Annual Convention in San

Diego, CA. Hope to see you there!



Student Liaison

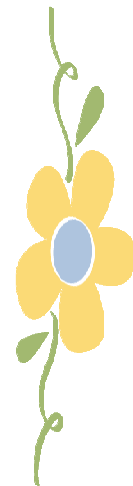
Darleen Dozier, CLA

It's hard to believe that we're already into March...but here we are. I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as the 2009 Student Liaison for MPA. During my 18 years of teaching, I continue to have a desire to help paralegal students through their time in college and as they make the transition into the working world. The Student Liaison Committee will work toward these same goals.

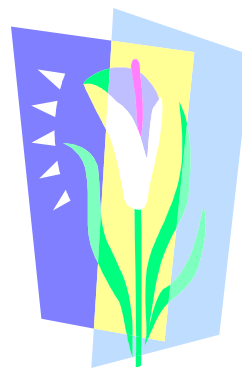
My committee this year consists of the following members: Rose Copeland, Rae Hopkins, Suellen Johnson, Jan Thomas and Diane Wigley. We held our first meeting on February 20, 2009, and outlined several goals for the year. Our main goal is to connect with all paralegal programs in the state and in turn, help their students connect with

MPA. We will spend the early part of the year promoting student membership in MPA and student participation in the spring seminar. Each committee member has "adopted" a school and will stay in contact with that school as the year progresses to determine any students needs with which MPA can assist. We will also continue a project begun last year by last years' committee of identifying scholarships that are offered specifically to paralegal students and making that information accessible to our student membership.

In the fall, we will heavily promote the Student Essay Contest and hopefully increase participation.



**MAY 15, 2009
IS THE DEADLINE
TO FILE THE
APPLICATION
FOR THE
JULY 10-11,
2009 CLA EXAM.**



Along those lines, the committee has developed a new essay topic that we will be sharing with the Board soon. We will also use the fall to promote student membership with those students just starting their paralegal education and to increase student participation in the fall seminar.

The Student Liaison Committee is excited to be working with the paralegal students of Mississippi this year and look forward to increased student participation.

Mother's Day

Region I Director

Paula Joyner, CP

First of all, I want to thank all of you for electing me to be MPA's Region I Director for 2009. I've been on the Board for a number of years, and I know that this year, we really have a "go getter" team. I have also, as in the past, been appointed Social Chairman. The Board has not discussed what we will approve for a Spring social this year. It all pretty much depends on the economy. I know a number of you expressed your approval of our contributions to the

various animal shelters and charities for our Christmas social. We all feel this was a very rewarding decision. Any input you have regarding any of our social events will be considered and appreciated.

Please keep in mind that serving as a Director and in Board appointed positions are volunteer positions that we take time out of our jobs and homes to contribute to the Association and membership. We urge you to "spread the word" and bring a guest or guests to our luncheons and seminars. It always makes us feel good and appreciated to look out at the members and guests in attendance. We have good speakers this year, but there is always room for more, and your input is always helpful and appreciated.

We are also printing brochures for the organization, one for paralegals and the other for employers. Each Region Director will distribute these to the various firms in their regions to be shared with the paralegals and attorneys in their firm. We hope to increase our membership for MPA, and give others the opportunity

to join us and utilize our association and what we offer.

We strive to have good door prizes, and the more we have, the better. Please ask your firm or boss if they would be interested in contributing a door prize to MPA luncheons and seminars. I have found in the past that by simply going to a restaurant or establishment and asking for the manager, they are usually more than happy to donate a gift certificate for a door prize. Of course, this would be a tax write off for them, and we do send a letter of acknowledgement and appreciation.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to serve on the Board again this year. I look forward to working with everyone to make 2009 a really good year for MPA.



**SUPPORT
OUR TROOPS!**

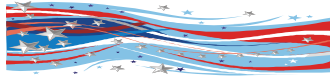
CHECK OUT THE
NALA WEBSITE
(WWW.NALA.ORG)
FOR
OPPORTUNITIES
TO EARN CLE
CREDITS.

Region III Director

Ammi Gates, CLA

Thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve as Region III Director. Although I am a resident of Region I, I was born and raised in Northeast Mississippi. Most of my family still lives in the Tupelo area. If you are a paralegal in the counties of Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Coahoma, DeSoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Monroe, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica, Union and Yalobusha, and are interested in becoming a member, renewing your membership, and/or have ideas or suggestions for meetings or seminars in the Region III area, please contact me at ammigates@yahoo.com. I

look forward to serving you this year!



Region V Director

Bridget Breithaupt, CP

Thank you to everyone who voted me into office this year as the Region V Director. I look forward to working for you again.

There are several projects the MPA Board is already hard at work on. This year we are planning to organize a half day seminar on the coast. This will give our Region V members an opportunity to earn some CLE credits or to just meet some of our Board members. We may be contacting members in the area to assist with ideas on how to accomplish this feat.

The Board is also working on mailing MPA brochures to law firms throughout Mississippi in the hopes that we will garner some new members. To stay abreast of the work being done by the entire MPA Board read the newsletter on the MPA website at www.msparalegals.org/. This year I have volunteered to be the newsletter editor. Anyone who wishes to submit an article, feel free to contact me at bbreithaupt@mississippi.edu. So any praises or complaints can also be sent to this same email address.



THE 34TH
ANNUAL NALA
CONVENTION IS
JULY 8-11, 2009
IN SAN DIEGO,
CALIFORNIA

CT & ASSOCIATES
TOM THOMASON
#1 Process Server On Entire Gulf Coast
Bay St. Louis to Pascagoula
Best prices on the coast
Fast turnaround, same day or next day available
228 255-6554 cta1@bellsouth.net Cell 228 223-8906



VOLUME 2009, ISSUE 1

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What is MPA?

We are a professional organization dedicated to the paralegal profession. We support paralegal/legal assistants by promoting professional development, education, and the Certified Legal Assistants ("CLA") and Certified Legal Assistant Specialist ("CLAS") examinations. Please contact us concerning membership or for additional information about MPA.

MPA was founded in 1980 by paralegals/legal assistants in Mississippi who wished to encourage a high order of ethical and professional attainment. The main purpose of MPA is to promote the profession of the legal assistant or paralegal. MPA supports, encourages and maintains high standards for the service, conduct and ethics of paralegal/legal assistants. MPA members have the opportunity to further their education through MPA sponsored meetings and seminars. Members are also able to maintain a close tie with county, state and national bar associations as well as with other members of the legal community. MPA is kept abreast of national affairs and news through their affiliation with the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

We're on the web!
www.msparalegals.org



**Preserve our Earth.
Recycle and Save Energy!!!**

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