



Message From the Current President

Ginger Sullivan, CLA MPA's 2007 President

Happy Holidays!!! We are about to end a terrific year with MPA and begin a brand new one with fresh ideas and a board that is ready to work for you! You are such a wonderful group of paralegals and I hope that we will continue to grow in numbers as well as grow in our minds. I have enjoyed being your president in 2007 and am humbled that you would allow me to once again lead you into another year. I appreciate all the hard work that our board has put forth this year and the suggestions and compliments

received from you, the members. Each of you play an important role in our association and I look forward to working with you in 2008. I welcome any comments or suggestions from you. This is your organization and the board and I want to make it the best paralegal organization in the U.S.! I hope each of you have a terrific Christmas! Please take the time to help someone during this holiday season who may not be as fortunate as we. Remember - Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

MPA 2008 Officers

President – Ginger Sullivan, CLA

VP/Education- Kim Badillo

VP/New Membership - Mary Lynn Underwood

VP/Established Membership – Zenda Heafner, CLA

Secretary – Jamie C. Earls, CLA

Treasurer – Gwen Burgess, CLA

NALA Liaison – Tricia Nelson-Easley

Student Liaison – Sue Ellen Johnson

Region I Director – Veronica Coleman, ACP

Region II Director – Lisa Taylor, CP

Region III Director – Debbie Player

Region IV Director – Beverly Broocks

Region V Director – Kimberly Pierce, CP

MPA 2007 Officers

President – Ginger Sullivan, CLA

VP/Education-Betsy McCully

VP/New Membership – Zenda Heafner, CLA

VP/Established Membership – Cynthia Chambliss, CLA

Secretary – Jamie C. Earls, CLA

Treasurer – Gwen Burgess, CLA

NALA Liaison – Tricia Nelson-Easley

Student Liaison – Renee Tabari

Region I Director – Veronica Coleman, ACP

Region II Director – Lisa Taylor, CP

Region III Director – Dora Boaz, CP

Region IV Director – Cristie Bishop

Region V Director – Kimberly Pierce, CP

Parliamentarian – Debra D. Hammack

MPA Committee Chairs

Audit – Gwen Burgess, CLA
Bar Relations – Tricia Nelson-Easley
Bylaws – Debra Hammack
CLA Coordinator – Veronica Coleman, ACP
Education – Betsy McCully
Elections – Jamie Earls, CLA
Job Bank Coordinator – Kelli Newman
Membership – Zenda Heafner, CLA and Cynthia Chambliss, CP
Newsletter – Renee Tabari
Professional Development – Brenda Goolsby
Public Relations – Jamie Boyd
Social – Paula Joyner
Student Liaison – Renee Tabari

Monthly Meeting

There will not be another meeting in 2007. The next meeting will be January, 24th at 12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m, at the Capitol Club. Please be sure to make your reservations for the luncheon by contacting MPA's secretary, Jamie C. Earls, CLA at Jamie.Earls@butlersnow.com. Please remember, if you reserve a spot at the monthly meeting and are not able to make it, you need to find someone to take your place. If you do not come, MPA still has to pay for you if you made a reservation.

Executive Board Meeting

This year, the Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 12:00 noon. The meeting place 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.

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.



Vice President/New Membership

Zenda S. Heafner, CLA

Where did 2007 go? Wow! It seems like only yesterday that the Board was meeting and planning out 2007. The year has definitely flown by, but not without gaining new members and new friends. Usually by this time of year the interest in becoming a member has slowed down, but 2007 proved to be different. Membership applications continued to be received right up until year's end. I think that MPA members took my challenge earlier in the year and continued to encourage eligible persons to become members of our great organization. I would like to say thanks to those of you that are responsible for introducing MPA to those interested. Keep up the good work and carry that enthusiasm into 2008.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our new members and their choice of membership is as follows:

Michael Fox	<i>Active</i>
Cheryl Maberry	<i>Active</i>
Kelly Mozingo	<i>Active</i>
Christal Jenkins	<i>Active</i>
Kate Everett	<i>Active</i>
Pamela G. Winkler, CLA	<i>Active</i>
Kerri L. Herring	<i>Active</i>
Shelly Herrington	<i>Student</i>
Rachel Henderson	<i>Student</i>
Wendy Michelle Bradshaw	<i>Student.</i>

Welcome aboard new members! We encourage all of you to take part in MPA and enjoy our monthly meetings, seminars and socials planned for 2008. With your continued support and interest, we can all make MPA bigger and better.

I would also like to thank the membership for allowing me to serve them in 2006 and 2007 as their Vice-President of New Membership. However my time is up as your VP/New Membership, and I must move on. No luck in getting rid of me so quickly! You have chosen me to serve as MPA's Vice President of Established Membership in 2008. Thank you for your confidence in me, and I promise to serve in this position and for you to the best of my abilities. Again thank you for your votes of confidence and support. Hope to see all of you in 2008.

Have a safe holiday season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

NALA Liaison

Tricia Nelson-Easley, ACP

Thank you for allowing me to be your NALA Liaison for 2008. I look forward to serving you and hope you will consider becoming a member of the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA). There are several advantages of becoming a member. Go to www.nala.org for more information. A couple of advantages include discounts on both the registration fees for the NALA Annual Conference and the Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) Exam. The 33rd Annual Convention of NALA will be held July 30 - August 2, 2008 in Oklahoma City, OK. I hope you'll join me where we will meet a lot of people who share our same interests in the paralegal profession. The next CLA exam will be March 28 – 29, 2008. The deadline for the application is January 15th. A late fee of \$25 may be submitted through January 30th. You don't have to be a member of NALA to take advantage of seminars through "NALA-Campus". See NALA's website for a complete list of upcoming events. If you have any questions not answered by the website, please feel free to contact me at TNelson@holmescc.edu.

Treasurer Report

Gwen Burgess

Wow! 2007 has flown by! Thank you for your votes in electing me to serve as MPA's Treasurer for another year. I will strive to fulfill the duties of my office in a manner that is professional and beneficial to you as members individually and to the Association as a whole.

During 2007, we faced a rather large unexpected and unbudgeted expense when we were forced to obtain the services of a new webmaster who completely re-constructed our website. Bryan Adams with SonLight Productions, LLC did a wonderful job within a very short timeframe of getting our new website up and running. Please check it out – www.msparalegals.org. Bryan has most responsive in making requested changes in a timely manner.

Most information on our website is available to the general public, except the membership roster and the Job Bank information. Access to these parts of the website is restricted to members. If you need login information, please contact the VP/New Membership, the VP/Established Membership, me or any other Board member.

In spite of this unexpected and unbudgeted expense, we have enjoyed a good year financially. No, we're not "rolling in dough", but by being careful, we have been able to meet all expenses, with a little left over even to help us start the new year.

At the annual meeting held in October and through mail-in ballots, the membership approved the proposed 2008 budget, a copy of which appears in this newsletter. In adhering to this budget, it is hoped that MPA will be able to bring to you, the members, more opportunities to obtain CLE credit, to network and socialize, and to promote the paralegal profession as a whole.

Please know that MPA's financial information is available to you as a member, and I will always be

happy to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to working with you to make 2008 the best year ever for MPA.



MPA Budget for 2008

Program expenses	63%
NALA convention expenses	15%
Storage Rental	4.40%
Prizes & Awards	4.05%
Lunch for Board meetings	2.50%
Website maintenance (monthly)	2.00%
Postage & Delivery	1.80%
Dues & Subscriptions	1.45%
Website hosting (annual fee)	1.25%
Gifts & Flowers	1.25%
Printing & Reproduction	1.25%
Office Supplies	0.70%
Insurance Bond	0.50%
Post Office Box Rental	0.35%
Miscellaneous	0.50%
TOTAL	100%

A note from MPA Secretary 2008

Jamie C. Earls, CLA

Because of the dedication of YOU, the members of the Mississippi Paralegal Association, Inc., 2007 has been a great year for us. Our new virtual presence has led to greater facilitation of our organization's mission to serve its members and the Mississippi legal community. We also implemented various new procedures for our monthly meetings which have made our reconciliation process more efficient this year. If you have suggestions which you believe would further help the efficiency of this process, please make those suggestions known to any board member.

Our Region I monthly luncheon meetings in 2008 will again be held at Noon on the FOURTH Thursday of each month at the Capitol Club, 125 South Congress Street, Jackson, Mississippi. All MPA members statewide have a standing invitation to attend this meeting which is usually an educational meeting with one hour of continuing legal education credit available to the attendee. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to network with your fellow MPA members and obtain your CLE credit very inexpensively!! It's a true bargain in today's market!

Most of us have probably renewed our memberships and updated our contact information for the upcoming year, but I would again encourage you to consider your contact information at MPA to be of great importance and keep it up-to-date as we cannot contact you if you do not tell us when you relocate your personal or professional life. You may contact me at my personal email address which is jearls@bellsouth.net or my work address which is jearls@watkinsludlam.com to update your MPA records at any time.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your association's secretary for the upcoming year! With your continued support and dedication during 2008, I know MPA will experience its best year ever!

I wish each of you a joyous and merry holiday season!



Vice President / Education

Kim Badillo

WOW! Can you believe 2007 is almost over and 2008 is fast approaching!!!! I hope you all had a blessed Thanksgiving and you are ready for an exciting Christmas filled with joy and fantastic family time! January 2008 will be here before we know it and time for getting back to filling our brains with knowledge by learning new techniques, polishing old skills, increasing our enthusiasm and becoming accomplished paralegals through our wonderful MPA!

But first, please let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you as your VP of Education again! I sincerely appreciate your trust, faith and confidence in me. Thank you for your optimism and your hope. I am privileged and humbled to be able to serve you again in 2008.

NOW, back to being accomplished paralegals! In 2004 and 2005 it was an honor to serve you as your VP of Education! We worked together to bring in the most knowledgeable, talented and interesting professionals in the legal world to teach us and to encourage us to become better individuals and superb paralegals! As a result, we saw more paralegals become certified, our membership grew and our

attendance at our monthly meetings and seminars exploded! Our Board even began a lengthy and thorough search for a larger place to hold our monthly meetings! Do you remember the days when we were squeezed in so tightly that we could barely lift our forks to our mouths! I know it was uncomfortable at times but it was absolutely amazing to see such a huge group of professionals who hungered for more knowledge and strived to be the best of the best! Do you know why we were so enthusiastic and why our membership exploded at monthly meetings and seminars? It was because of YOU! That's right...YOU spoke up and brought your topics and suggestions to the table! YOU selected the speakers and your Board listened! We want to hear YOU again! I want to hear YOU again! We want to E X P L O D E again!!!! Not because we want to be "just a big group" but to get excited about the meetings and the seminars! To leave each event with new ideas and the passion to prosper! To have the thrill of wondering what inspirations the next meeting or seminar will bring!

Therefore, I would like to **CHALLENGE** each of you to help me put forth an ambitious agenda for 2008! And...you **DO NOT** have to contact anyone! I'll do that for you! All you have to do is email your thoughts, ideas, topics you are interested in and names of people you know who would be excellent speakers to kbadillo@tellusoperating.com! Get on board! Get involved! Be informed and make your voice heard!



2008 Vice President/ New Membership

Mary Lynn A. Underwood

For the benefit of those who do not know me, I'd like to briefly tell you who I am. I am a paralegal at Watkins & Eager. I work for Mark D. Jicka, whose practice primarily consists of products liability defense work, and recently, criminal defense work.

I grew up in Jackson, the youngest of three children, and the only girl. Yes, I was a "daddy's girl". My father was a lawyer here in Jackson, and then both of my older [much older] brothers went to law school to join the rank of legal counselor with my father. I use the term counselor versus attorney or lawyer, as my father viewed himself as a counselor first. He didn't just advise people of their legal rights and/or remedies, but counseled with them on a personal yet practical manner.

As a very small child I watched my father counsel people, and aid in their legal affairs at our kitchen table. Sometimes because of their jobs, they were unable to get to his office at normal working hours, but often times because they were afraid to be seen going into a lawyer's office. My point in all this is to say, even though I originally did not actively study law, I learned a very deep respect for the field law, and now love it, as did my father.

I will do my part in encouraging new membership for MPA, but also challenge each one of you to do the same. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in this office.

Region III Director

Debbie Player, CLA

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your Region III Director. This is my first assignment in MPA, and I sincerely hope that my representation of Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Coahoma, DeSoto, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Marshall, Monroe, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Quitman,

Tallahatchie, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Tunica, Union and Yalobusha Counties will be informative, impart the support needed, and encourage a better understanding of our profession.

According to the membership roster provided to me, there are nine Active members, two Student members, and one Inactive member in Region III. I don't believe I have had the pleasure of meeting or talking with any of those members, but I hope to change that after the holidays. With 22 counties in Region III, however, I know there are law firms, attorneys, paralegals, legal assistants, and other legal professionals who would benefit from the opportunities available to MPA members, including continuing education, paralegal/legal assistant certification, and legal information. Please contact me if you need assistance, or if you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a MPA member. I can be reached at work (601-351-2456 or dplayer@bakerdonelson.com), or at home (601-952-0877 or djplayer1251@bellsouth.net).

As 2008 approaches, I look forward to the challenges of a new year and of being your Region III Director. May each of you have a very safe and Happy Holiday.



Region III Director

Kimberly Pierce

I want to begin with a "Thank You" for allowing me to serve as your Region V Director, again.

As the New Year approaches, I want to remind you to submit any ideas for seminars, meetings or socials that you would like to see happen for the paralegals of the area. I am open to all suggestions and will work with any of you to get them going. We have the support of the whole MPA

membership, so please contact me so we can grow in the Region and MPA.

As Kim Badillo states, we are fortunate to be able to have informative speakers at the monthly meetings and Spring and Fall Seminars. I want to invite you to attend any of these meetings or seminars as you will benefit from the information you gather, and in meeting and networking with other paralegals. I will gladly assist with the meal expense for anyone that would like to join us for a monthly meeting. Last year it was \$13.00 and held at the Capitol Club. Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month and are good for a one hour CLE credit.

I want to extend a 'Thank You' to Shelly Herrington for providing me copies of The Paralegal Eagle. I look forward to attending a meeting of the USM Paralegal Society and meeting some of you. Hopefully we can make plans for a brown bag luncheon or early supper for members outside of, and including, those at USM. It would be a great opportunity for future paralegals to get to know some of us in the working world which would provide new connections and information about possible fields and job opportunities that may be pursued.

I want to remind each of you that the MPA website has information and a job bank for your review. Also, please know that I will be glad to pass on any information from you as members of Region V in these newsletters.

I do hope that you all had a Happy Thanksgiving and are looking forward to a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Best Wishes to All .



2007 Student Essay

The topic for the 2006 MPA

Essay contest was “Why I am choosing to Become a Paralegal”. Here are the top three winners:

1st Place, Rachel Henderson Holmes Community College

I moved to Jackson, Miss. in November 2006. I applied for a job as a runner in a large law firm downtown. Within weeks, I had a new job but no clue where it would take me. I began asking many employees what their job description entailed. After conversing with several paralegals and researching information, I became very interested in the idea of becoming a paralegal. By summertime, I had enrolled at a local college in the paralegal program.

I learned the legal field is full of a variety of opportunities. By becoming a paralegal, I would have the chance to help provide justice to citizens in our society. Working in the legal profession would allow me to be of service to others and maintain a fulfilling career. I am pursuing my goal of becoming a paralegal to further my knowledge of the law and to constantly challenge myself.

As one of the most important assets to the legal team, a paralegal must be structured and meticulous. Since I take pleasure in organizing, scheduling, and meeting deadlines, I knew being a paralegal would be the ideal job for me. I also enjoy reading and writing. Now, I could utilize these hobbies in my profession. While I am a perfectionist and the exact opposite of a procrastinator, I find that being able to perform tasks that complement my personality and character traits will be an essential part of working as a paralegal.

When I decided I wanted to become a paralegal, I was excited to learn about so many options in the legal field. I could work for a large firm or a small firm. I could work for the government, a firm, or even as a contract paralegal. I could work for a firm that focuses on specific types of law: family law, bankruptcy, real property, civil litigation, criminal defense, etc. I was also attracted to the idea of working in a professional environment with advancement opportunities.

Another reason I am seeking a career as a paralegal is for job security. Previously majoring in fashion merchandising, I soon recognized the lack of job security in that particular field. I realized I wanted to work in a field with constant availability of employment, as well as, benefits and bonuses. As a single, young woman striving to be self-sufficient, I am looking forward to having a career which allows me to have medical insurance, 401(k) investment, and any other incentive provided by my employer.

I think becoming a paralegal will be advantageous to me in all areas of my life. I have already been taught many concepts I can relate to my own personal experiences. I am captivated by the idea of knowledge I will gain in the course of working as a paralegal. Learning and understanding how the law works will give me an edge over a lay person. When associated with attorneys and other professionals, I may acquire their expertise at my disposal. My familiarity of the law can help me make decisions pertaining to real life scenarios.

The research done in preparation for a case may be challenging. Because I like a challenge, I get fulfillment in completing such tasks. Even though work prepared by a paralegal may become monotonous, no two cases are exactly the same. Therefore, the job will not become too routine even when working in a

specific area of law.

In conclusion, my fascination with the law and the different viewpoints within the legal field is continuously growing. After listening and working with different lawyers and paralegals, I am even more intrigued with the idea of assisting an attorney. I am extremely interested in knowing what the law is and how it works. I believe with my comprehension and skills, I will be a great asset to any legal team.

2nd Place, Manisha Chatlani Holmes Community College

I am a forty-one year old homemaker who immigrated to the United States from India. For many years I focused all my attentions on my family and put my dreams for a career on hold. I wanted to start a new chapter in my life and find a promising career before it was too late. I was shocked and disappointed to learn that my college degree was almost obsolete in the United States. I lacked qualifications, work experience and was totally out of touch with modern office technology that is almost a pre-requisite in today's workplace. I knew then that in order to enter the workforce and start a successful career, I would have to first acquire the necessary qualifications through education, familiarize myself with computer skills and learn everything I could about office technology. My objectives were quite clear; I wanted a career that would encompass all the interests and passions in my life and make the most of all my potential abilities. It had to be mentally stimulating, challenging and rewarding. Above all, I wanted my skills to be used for helping people make their lives better in some capacity. Last, but not the least, I wanted job security and financial freedom.

I have always had an interest in

both politics and law. After careful consideration and research, I realized that the most expedient way for me to become involved in the legal profession was to pursue a career as a paralegal. I enrolled myself in a local college. Upon graduating from this program, I look forward to embarking on a new and exciting career as a productive member of a legal team. One of the many key factors that attracted me to paralegal studies is the versatility of this profession. My research showed that paralegals are not merely confined to working in law offices; their services are often needed in government agencies, corporations, financial institutions, real estate, community service agencies and even the entertainment business. I was excited to have finally found a profession that would make the optimum use of my multitasking and organizational abilities and also my knowledge of foreign languages. Since paralegals perform various duties that differ from one organization to another, I would learn new and challenging things all the time and never experience boredom. I could explore all my options until I find what works the best for me.

Due to the ever increasing demands of the legal profession, many busy attorneys and prospective employers are beginning to realize how much time and money is saved by delegating many time consuming tasks to qualified paralegals. As a result, the opportunities for growth and advancement in the paralegal field are tremendous and show no signs of slowing down. It is important to know that by increasing my qualifications and taking exams I can compete for the best opportunities in the job market. Many law firms offer internship programs to students or entry-level positions to graduates, which not only gets them a foot in the door, but provides valuable work experience and on-

the-job training. With greater experience, paralegals are often promoted to higher positions with greater responsibilities and increases in salary. It is gratifying to know that I can go aspire to reach greater heights in this profession through dedication and hard work.

It is clear that paralegals are the direct liaison between the attorneys and their clients. I really enjoy working closely with people and knowing that in a very small way I am helping them in resolving their legal problems. I hope that I may be able to use my skills in helping the poor, the aged, and those in need of legal assistance at some point in my career. I truly believe that being of service to someone who deserves it most will probably give me the greatest joy in the world.

3rd Place, Meagan Higbee Holmes Community College

Paralegals are significantly vital individuals in today's workplace. Many clients do not realize the amount of research paralegals prepare in order for them to win their case. Paralegals are incredibly intelligent and are also extremely hard workers. I believe anyone who is a paralegal is strong-willed and has an enormous personality. I am choosing to become a paralegal because I am devoted to learning and researching the law. Second, I take pleasure in organizing things and helping businesses run efficiently. Third, I like the variety of places a paralegal can work. Finally, I like the way paralegals contribute to assisting people fight for their rights.

The law continuously fascinates me. Having a job where I will work with the law all day every day is like a dream to me. New laws are made all the time, therefore there is constantly something new to learn in our legal environment. I enjoy

learning about people's rights and being able to apply them to a case. The law is a very complicated set of rules, but that is exactly why I love it. The more complicated the rules, the more I enjoy learning about them. Paralegals use these laws everyday in their research. A paralegal's research is key in helping people with individual cases. Learning and researching the law is very appealing to me and is a major incentive for my decision to become a paralegal.

I have worked in different types of office environments since I was fifteen years old. I enjoy helping organize the office. Paralegals sometimes, depending on the employer, may help organize files, schedules, and activities for the office. They may also help organize financial records and similar items. Being organized makes me perform better. I believe helping the law firm get organized would make things easier for the attorney and all the other employees in the office. I have an impressive skill of organizing and I love using it to help benefit the workplace and other employees.

Another reason I decided to become a paralegal is the fact that a law firm is not the only place that you can work. Many businesses have started hiring paralegals and it grows every day. For example, many corporate offices will hire paralegals in their legal departments to help make sure the corporation is following any new laws that may have been made. Also, insurance companies will hire paralegals as claims adjustors since the law is used so much in deciding the outcome of a claim. Banks and real estate companies have also been hiring some paralegals. A paralegal can not only work in a private law firm, but also can work for the federal government, the state government, or the local government. This variety in workplaces makes

being a paralegal a exceptional job for me. If I ever got tired of working in one environment such as a private law firm, then I could go work for an insurance company. I am very keen on having the option of some versatility.

The final reason I want to become a paralegal is the most significant reason. I have always taken pleasure in aiding people in any way I can. It makes me feel delightful every time I get to make a difference in someone else's life in any way. Paralegals help make a difference with the research and dedication to each and every case. Paralegals work hard and do everything they can to help a client. Some may even develop a close relationship with the client so that the client will place their trust into the paralegal. I enjoy the feeling of knowing someone trusts me and is depending on me to help them. It motivates me to perform better and work harder to assist individuals.

In conclusion, I believe paralegals are extremely significant people in today's society. They work hard and contribute a lot to their work place. I am very confident that a paralegal is exactly what I want to be. Learning and researching the law is incredibly important and fascinating to me. My organization skills will be especially helpful once I become a paralegal. All the different work environments one can work in as a paralegal is exceptionally convenient. I am so thrilled that I will be able to assist people and have them place their trust in me. A paralegal is the perfect job for me, and I can not wait to get started!



Effective Tools for Managing Stress in the Law Office

Contributed by Jeannie S. Johnson

Is stress really different for those of us who work in a law office? There may be people who tend to think that stress is stress is stress...however, I've worked within a law office and I've worked in non-legal environments and my first hand experience leads me to believe it is a different type of stress. Especially if you are a legal assistant (i.e. a Paralegal or Legal Secretary). Anyone who has worked anywhere knows that the "bad stuff" all runs downhill and those of us who are on the lower end of the totem poll tend to bear the brunt of what accumulates at the bottom of that hill!

Not that attorneys are difficult to work for. They are all level-headed, open-minded, patience individuals who have attained a higher standing in life secondary to their educational and professional achievements. NOT! Well, they do have their redeeming qualities however, I think we can all admit there are times when between dealing with difficult clients and law office management, they all are capable of making life a bit tense for those who work for them. That means us. Does this sound familiar? We've spent days reviewing documents, organizing the same in immaculate detail, prepared an index, a report and a memo outlining everything that has been accomplished and are expecting not only a pat on the back, but a small cash bonus for our trouble. Instead, we're met with, "Why didn't you do x, y and z

while you were at it?!! Now get me a cup of coffee!" Okay, so maybe that's not the scenario for everyone but, I am sure you can offer something similar or even worse! So, what's a Paralegal (or Legal Secretary) to do? There are actually some great techniques you can use to help manage all that stress, and you don't even have to leave your chair. I recently spoke with a certified yoga instructor, who has advised me on the many different methods of "coming to your breath."

"Deep, conscious breaths are very important," she says, "as they not only ground you in the present but, they also release endorphins within the brain, similar to that which a runner may experience after a long run."

These endorphins give us an immediate sense of calm and well-being that not only help to alleviate stress but have actually been shown to heal our bodies in many ways. There many ways to "come to your breath" from the convenience of your chair:

Alternate nostril breath: While sitting with your eyes closed, place your left hand in your lap palm up. Take your right hand and place it near your face with the palm facing your nose. Pinch off your right nostril with your thumb and take a deep breath in,





Groundhog Day

filling your lungs completely, and then hold. Pinch off your left nostril with your pinky finger, and release all of the air in your lungs, slowly and deliberately. Take in another deep breath and hold. Pinch off your right nostril with your thumb and release the air. You can do this for several minutes and the results are truly astounding!

Controlled deep breathing:

Sitting with your eyes closed, palms facing up, take in a deep breath, completely filling your lungs with as much air as you think they can hold. Release what you think is a third of the air and hold. Release another third and hold. Release the remaining air slowly and completely. Repeat this several times and also repeat it doing the opposite (breathe in a third and hold and then release the air completely).

You may feel some tingling in your fingers and arms but, this is actually very normal. Scientists are discovering that every cell in our body is living. We just never take the time to stop and observe what is going on with our own bodies and never realize it. When you are performing the exercises, take that time also to focus on what really matters to you. Give thanks for everything that you have. Concentrate on all of the positive things in your life.

While both of these exercises may seem simplistic, the truth is,

they allow us to step away from the circumstances that are causing our stress and allow us to focus. Once we have taken control back, we can make decisions based on calm, rational thinking and not react to the circumstances. This not only allows us to lower our stress levels, but it also prevents us from allowing outside influences to steal our power from us. Your energy IS your power. I am a runner and have never been “turned on” so-to-speak by yoga. But, since I’ve spoken with a yoga instructor and tried these techniques, I have to admit there is something to this science. Breathing actually makes perfect sense because oxygen is so vital to the proper function of the human body.

Well, there you have it. A couple of office-friendly and on-demand tools you can use to maybe help ease a bit of your daily stress while working in the law office. The next time your lawyer has blown his/her top and is sweeping the halls looking for someone to release the frustration on, I hope you’ll remember this. I can liken it to catching on fire. Instead of stop, drop and roll, you can sit, breathe and take control!



Jeannie S. Johnston is originally from Warner Robins, Georgia. She attended Athens Technical College (ABA Approved) in Athens, Georgia where she obtained her Associate of Science degree in Paralegal Studies. She has worked as a Paralegal for over 15 years, has written articles

for Legal Assistant Today and has spoken at Paralegal Conferences Nationwide. Additionally, Jeannie is the Founder of ParalegalGateway.com, the largest Paralegal information portal on the World Wide Web. Jeannie lives in suburban Atlanta, Georgia with her husband, Daniel and their four furry children Tricksy (the dog), Riley (the cat), Carson (the cat) and Mr. Smithers (the cat).



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