



THE PARAGRAPH

*Newsletter of the Georgia Association of Paralegals
Charter Member of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations*

Fourth Quarter, 2001

October, 2001

IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE

•

THANKS TO GAP
OFFICERS

•

2002 BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

•

WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN IF . . .

•

NEW
MEMBERS
WELCOMED

•

GAP
CORPORATE
SPONSORS

•

PARALEGAL CAREER
FAIR

•

YOUR MEMBERSHIP
INVESTMENT

•

PACE EXAM HINTS

•

UPCOMING
DEADLINES



HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!



*Derinda Mason and Lori Hemmel, Paralegals at OSI
Portfolio Services, Inc., at the GAP holiday party*



*Kim Mellen won the door prize from Jeff Harper of
Document Technologies*

Anthony's Restaurant, decorated for the holidays with poinsettas, holiday lights and a lovely tree is a wonderful setting! We hope you will attend, bring a spouse or a guest or even your boss for our lovely annual dinner meeting.

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The GAP 2001 Holiday Dinner

December 11, 2001

5:00 - 6:00 Cocktail Reception

6:00 Dinner

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**First five bosses with confirmed reservations to attend
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

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I first want to address the horrific events that took place on September 11, 2001. I know you all remember where you were and what you were doing when you heard the news. I know I will never forget. I still feel numb when I think of the innocence that we all lost on that day. And tears still swell in my eyes when I think of the over 6,000 who lost their lives. Tears also swell when I see the countless acts of kindness that have happened, and are still happening. The GAP Board discussed what we could do to help. In the end, we decided that it would just be best to donate blood, money, and time when requested and needed. GAP has also sent letters to the Manhattan Paralegal Association and the National Capital Area Paralegal Association offering condolences, prayers, and thoughts. I have always been very proud to be an American, but never more so than now.

At this time, if you will forgive me, I have a few thoughts now that I have reached the end of my term as GAP President. It is hard to believe that I have been President for two years! Where did the time go? At moments like this, I believe that a little reflection is in order . . .

When I attended my first GAP Board meeting, I just wanted to see what was going on in the association and to see if there was any way I could help. I left the meeting as the new Secretary. I served as Secretary for two years, and then moved up to Senior Vice President. And for the past two years I've been your president. I learned that you never *really* know what you are getting yourself into, do you?

I must say that I have also learned that a leader is only as good as the people she chooses to surround herself with. And I think I surrounded myself with the best. This year I don't think I could have made it without the assistance of Jennifer Kirkland as my Senior Vice President. She offered invaluable support and was an excellent "sounding board." She will lead you well in the years to come. GAP is truly indebted to Linda Bowman as Vice President of Membership. When Linda agreed to take the VP position, she took it and ran! Linda's committee has worked tirelessly this year and I think the results shine. I hate to think of the mess GAP would be in without our fearless Secretary and Treasurer, Linda Sloope. Linda always kept things in order, kept us up to date, answered our questions, and if she didn't know the answer, she'd find out! As far as our relations with NFPA, Marcus Li made Georgia stand out. Marcus has kept the membership informed of NFPA happenings, represented Georgia with conviction and verve at national conventions, and provided me with perfect comic relief! Marcus will be moving up next year to Senior Vice President. When we needed a new Job Referral Director, I don't think Mimi Smith knew quite what she was in for . . . but she reinvented the position and made it her own. Mimi went new age and put the



*Kim Hollomon
2001 GAP President*

entire procedure online. I think I can honestly say that GAP's Pro-Bono program has never been better, and that is due to the diligence of Co-Directors Jennifer Kirkland and Beth Barnhart. Jennifer, Beth, and their committee worked incessantly to provide worthwhile opportunities for GAP members to learn, share and grow. As stated earlier, Jennifer will be President of GAP next year. Beth Barnhart reluctantly resigned from GAP during the summer to move to Florida. GAP's newsletter gets better, and better, and better . . . thank you to GAP's newsletter editor, James Singletary, for keeping up with the wonderful tradition of our publication. And to the GAP office staff under the direction of Norene Quinn. What more can be said than thank you . . . thank you for answering the flood of phone calls, taking care of the mail, helping to plan the meetings, putting together the directory, helping with the newsletter – I could go on and on!

I also want to thank the membership for entrusting me to lead GAP for the past two years. I have had the opportunity to travel to Kansas City, Missouri, New Orleans, Louisiana, Honolulu, Hawaii, and Washington, DC to represent GAP on a national level. I have learned more about my profession and gained a true sense of pride in being a paralegal. But I think my favorite part of the past two years is the friendships and bonds that I have established with my Board, GAP's membership, and paralegals from across the country.

It is with great honor that I will serve on the 2002 GAP Board of Directors as Immediate Past President/Board Advisor. Thank you all again, and have a safe and happy holiday season. ❖❖❖

Deadlines Approaching!

November 1 is the deadline for PACE Scholarship.

November 1 is the deadline for GAP Employer(s) of the Year.

Questions? Call the GAP office, 404-522-1457

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NEW MEMBER MIXER IS A SUCCESS!



Janice Henderson (l) welcomes new member Heather Bates at the October New Member Mixer



Bates is introduced to other GAP members at New Member Mixer by Henderson



Verna Challenger of Cox Enterprises with CSC reps Dale Moore and Fawzia Jaber, sponsors of the GAP October Dinner Meeting



October New Member Mixer Door Prize Winner, Janice Baker, shown with Sandy Owens of the Legal Concierge

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TWO NEW CORPORATE SPONSOR MEMBERS!



(l-r) Charlotte Meyers and Sally Weaver, paralegals with Seyfarth Shaw, at the New Member Mixer with new Corporate Sponsor member, Jessica Fields of Hughes & Sloan, Inc., a firm which places attorneys and paralegals.



GAP Member Tanya Reed welcomes Bradford Rogers, president of E-Lit. at the GAP New Member Mixer. E-Lit. is an electronic litigation support firm.

HANDS ON ATLANTA BY SEYFARTH SHAW

Saturday, October 6th, was Seyfarth Shaws' annual Hands On Atlanta Day Project. This year, we went to Margaret Fain Elementary School in south Atlanta. Despite threatening skies and shortages of materials, our team completed our project of painting the front doors of the school plus all of the railings around the school grounds!

Of the 43 team members, the following paralegals/legal assistants (and their guests) participated:

Cindy Bastos Debbie Davison Roni Hefter
Kimberly Mellen Michele Merkel Charlotte Myers
Sally Weaver

Also participating were Paul Mattingly (Managing Partner) and Jim King (GAP's 2000 Boss of the Year).

Submitted by GAP member, Roni Hefter

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF . . .

Close your eyes and just imagine for a moment – What if one of the firm's long-time clients has found themselves in a maritime contract dispute. It involves carriage of goods by sea under a bill of lading, and your attorney has asked you to review the insurance contracts to determine whether or not they are considered maritime contracts and therefore would be governed by Admiralty Law – something you have never done before. (scenario one) – OR

What if the partner you have been assigned to leaves the firm and now your job is to help an attorney with a corporate closing, something you were briefly introduced to in school six years ago. Now, the attorney is asking you to prepare a Closing Checklist and obtain the tax clearance certificates. (scenario two)

And, the dreaded – what if – after ten years of loyal service to your law firm, you find yourself without a job, not due to anything you have done, but as a result of a merger, the firm has eliminated duplicate positions, and you have one month to find a new job. Now what?? (scenario three)

If networking contacts or deadlines weren't an issue, you might have the luxury of time to find a way to obtain the information or resources you need to succeed. But why take a chance? The best way is to proactively maximize your GAP Membership Benefits now – before you find yourself in these scenarios. When you take advantage of the full spectrum of what GAP Membership provides, you will increase your efficiency and enhance your career opportunities. Are you taking advantage of GAP's:

Monthly meetings

Local and national publications -

if you read an article that is of interest, take a moment to note the author's contact information and send them a note of appreciation, thus adding them to your networking list of contacts. Then, later, if you need a resource, you'll have one.

Mentoring groups

GAP Job Bank

Update your resume and email it to mimigap@juno.com. Mimi will keep your resume in the strictest of confidence and forward a detailed questionnaire which essentially provides you with an opportunity to let her know what may or may not be of interest to you and keeps you in control of who will see the information.

NFPA Web Site -

Check out their research station, participate in NFPA's online chats, networking sessions, and Career Center Professional Directory.

Professional Publications -

For some immediate answers, become ACTIVE today and find the answers in *National Paralegal Reporter*.

Scenario one – June/July 2001 edition – lists two web sites:

www.admiraltylawguide.com <http://www.admiraltylawguide.com/> or

www.law.cornell.edu/topics/admiralty.html <http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/admiralty.html>

If you need immediate resources, you may want to email the authors of the article, Barbara Lawley at the law firm of Pierce, Ledyard, Latta, Wasden & Bowron in Mobile, AL or Victorialei Naka'ahiki at Seagate Technology in California.

Scenario two – Winter 2000 – Volume 25 edition features an article entitled "Ten Steps to Preparing for a Corporate Closing," by Laura L. Gonzalez, a corporate paralegal and senior legislative policy analyst at the Washington, DC office of Schnader Harrison Segal and Lewis.



Linda Bowman
VP Membership
lindaparalegal@att.net

A NOTE OF THANKS TO THE GAP OFFICES



I greatly appreciated your introducing Mr. Carlos Estefani of Professional Translating Services (a new Corporate Sponsor member of GAP) to me on October 9, 2001 at the dinner meeting of GAP.

I sent my email out to him today mentioning my work in English Translation. Hopefully, he and I can work together in the near future.

By the way, should you encounter any attorney who wants a part-time English-Chinese interpreter, please let me know.

Thank you again for your kindness and considerateness.

Sincerely yours,

*J. C. Lin (Jui Lin)
GAP Member*

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Meral Llewellyn of the NCPT (National Center for Paralegal Training) gave the Georgia Association of Paralegals a table at the

NCPT Career Fair on October 24. Linda Bowman and Russ Stayanoff represented the GAP board.

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GET A HIGH RETURN ON YOUR MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT ("ROI")

With most firms and corporations tightening their belts, you may find yourself in the position of having to define the benefits and ROI of GAP membership to your boss. One possible response is to point out the knowledge you may gain from attending monthly meetings. Yet, this may open you up to an objection, as not all meeting topics present information well-suited to your company's goals. So how can you demonstrate that GAP membership, when maximized, can provide a high R.O.I.?

May I suggest you begin by utilizing the variety of networking tools available for the taking. Next time you come to a meeting, make a point of going over to someone you have never met. The challenge is to grow your network, not shake so many hands that you leave not getting to know anyone. Introduce yourself briefly, and be definitive in how you can be a resource to the new contact you meet. Think ahead of time about questions, so that at the end of your discussion, you will know enough to decide how they can be a resource to you. Listen carefully, jot down key items, such as their areas of expertise or services. That way, if your firm has a question which requires quantitative non-confidential data, you will have an immediate resource.

If you find out that the person is not a paralegal, but an Associate Member — such as a recruiter, document production company, translator, concierge service, researcher, corporation service firm, graphic production company, etc. — take the time to learn their business, and ask them to define three scenarios when you should think of calling them as a resource to your company.

Again, give them a chance to get to know you and your background. Remember, networking is a two-way street. If all you want is information and are not willing to reciprocate, you will be viewed accordingly and your network will not grow or be there when you need them.

Remember, as a GAP member you automatically become a NFPA member. This entitles you to pose questions to paralegals nationwide. You receive quarterly magazines with articles on various subjects, but have you thought about adding the authors to your network by simply noting their name, area of expertise, and contact information? This can result in a high ROI for your organization.

I know this works. Recently I was asked by my new employer why he should pay for our paralegal team's membership. My response was simple — GAP membership has given me access to a nationwide network of mentors with knowledge on a variety of legal and business issues. Intrigued, he suggested I go to that network and ask for their assistance on a research project. The focus was to establish very specific criterion for activities and/or events which would

continued on page 11



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PACE EXAM HINTS

Sabra Douglas, RP, a paralegal with Club Car, Inc. in Augusta, took the PACE exam and passed! If you are considering taking PACE, we thought you might want to have a few "tips" on taking the exam. We asked Sabra to tell us a little about herself, her preparation for the exam, and the exam itself. Following is her response. Thank you, Sabra!

I have worked as a general litigation paralegal since graduating from Georgia State University with a BA in English and The National Center for Paralegal Training in 1986. I have been very fortunate to work with some extraordinary litigation attorneys and staff and learned early in my career to take advantage of and absorb as much knowledge and skills as possible while working with such professionals. Since 1998, I have worked strictly in the area of product liability in the Product Safety department of a manufacturing plant in Augusta, Georgia. My experience gave me a solid knowledge base to draw on while preparing and sitting for the exam.

Because I earned my Bachelor's Degree and my paralegal certificate in 1986, I had no problem with the approval process to sit for the PACE exam. To prepare, I took the on-line PACE Review Course with CALE. During the course, the only thing I did was study. I prepared for the exam for approximately three months. I highly recommend the course. It addresses a lot of the specific areas found on the PACE exam; however, those that have rarely, or never, worked in litigation should be aware that the PACE Review Course is only a *review* course, and strongly slants toward general litigation as does the PACE exam. The review course and the exam are more difficult, *but not impossible*, if your background is in anything other than general litigation.

The review course is taught in an electronic arena as a series of chapters, one chapter per week. The subject matter varies from week to week, and at the end of each chapter, the student is assigned some rather challenging homework in the form of multiple choice and essay questions. The homework was either directly related to the material studied during the previous week, or related to the general knowledge and experience a paralegal at this level should already possess. Grades are posted on a weekly basis so that the student will always be aware of his/her progress.

At the end of the course, the student may take a mock PACE exam. This is a shorter version of the PACE exam, but the multiple choice questions do mirror the exam, and provide the student with an accurate idea as to how prepared he/she is to sit for the exam. Even though I have years of solid experience in this field, I found both the review course and the PACE exam very challenging, but worth taking.

Quite honestly, I was a nervous wreck prior to sitting for the exam, just ask my boss! Because I took the CALE review course, I had a good idea as to what to expect from the exam and myself. I took the PACE exam at the end of last year and passed the first time I took it! This resulted in a promotion and a raise! :D

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ATLANTA — CHARLOTTE — RALEIGH

ROI

continued from page 9

trigger the need for BOD minutes. This criterion would later be used to establish corporate policy. I sent an email request to my NFPA and GAP mentors and their response was phenomenal!! The information was quantified, and I even received forms which included boilerplate questions designed to track high-level corporate activities and expenditures. My boss was convinced, and agreed to support our team. In order to show my appreciation to my NFPA mentors, I sent a summary of the responses to the survey participants. In the cases where people were kind enough to give me even more information than I asked for, I included a special internet list, which I have found very helpful in my research efforts.

Each time I attend a meeting, read an article, send an email request, or speak about GAP to potential members, I increase the ROI by expanding my Mentor Network. Even my current job came from this network. When I found out that my former employer decided to sell the company only 1-1/2 weeks after I joined, and was subsequently laid off two weeks later, the GAP network came to the rescue. I received leads from Board members, people that I met at meetings, and recruiters with whom I had spoken over the past two years. Thanks to one of those recruiters, Bellon & Associates, I was back at work eight days after I was laid off!! So the moral of the story is — When you maximize and give back to your network, everyone wins!!



GAP members found flyers at the October dinner meeting on CLE courses, a Paralegal Career Day, and a group from GAP walking for the American Cancer Society on October 20.

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