



The Gavel



Newsletter of the Lycoming County Paralegal Association

Paralegal Day:

Governor Tom Corbett proclaimed July 23 - 30, 2012 Paralegal Week and July 27, 2012 [Paralegal Day](#) throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Please watch your email for a forthcoming announcement about how the LCPA plans to celebrate.

At least one day a year the paralegals in Pennsylvania are honored for the valuable work they do in the legal field. Paralegals deserve to be recognized for their contribution to the legal profession. Pennsylvania Paralegal Day is a great way for attorneys and law firms to appreciate paralegals.



The LCPA has a facebook page!
Please "like us" on Facebook and you will receive updates on the LCPA lunch and learn schedule as well as membership news and happenings.

Bringing a Civil Action Before the Magisterial District Judge



For parties seeking recovery of twelve thousand dollars or less, filing a lawsuit with the magisterial district court is potentially inexpensive and efficient.

If a client is seeking to limit legal fees and filing/service costs, as well as greatly reduce the amount of time waiting for his/her case to be heard, the option of filing with the magistrate should be discussed/considered.

Paralegals can easily assist with selecting the appropriate district court to file with (generally suit is filed either in the district where the claim arose or the district within which the defendant lives). Once the appropriate district court is identified, the civil complaint should be prepared on the standard form (http://friendsfw.org/Advocates/District_Justice_Complaint.pdf) and submitted (mailing is acceptable) for filing along with the requested fee. If the filing party is successful, the defendant(s) will be responsible for payment of the filing fee.

Service of a civil complaint filed with the magisterial district court is far simpler than service of a complaint filed in the Court of Common Pleas. Specifically, the magistrate's office will serve the civil complaint either by certified mail or by sheriff. The method of service is the filing party's decision.

At the hearing, both parties are allowed to introduce evidence and call witnesses to testify. The procedure is relatively informal and the magisterial justice will often issue a decision at the end of the hearing. However, the decision may be issued later (within five days of the hearing).

If the plaintiff is successful the defendant(s) may make arrangements to pay the judgment in installments (lasting up to twelve months). However, it is important to remember that an unsuccessful party may appeal the decision to Common Pleas Court within thirty days.

When filing an appeal of a magistrate's judgment be sure to comply with the rules (there are specific rules that govern the magisterial district court). For example, a Proof of Service must be filed no later than ten days after the appeal is filed.





NOTE: The LCPA's address has changed! The LCPA's post office box has been closed. The mailing address has been changed to:

**Lycoming County Paralegal Association
c/o Lepley, Engelman & Yaw
140 East Third Street
Williamsport, PA 17701**

The LCPA thanks Lepley, Engelman and Yaw for its willingness to allow the organization to use its mailing address.



LCPA reusable tote bags for sale!

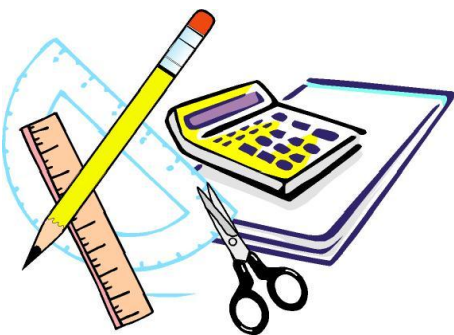
For a \$3 donation to the LCPA you can have a reusable tote bag. For a \$5 donation you can have two reusable totes.

Our totes are sturdy and handy. Help to save the environment and promote the LCPA. The tote bags are navy blue and feature our logo in light blue.



Congratulations!

Pennsylvania College of Technology has identified the recipient of the Maxine Stiffler/LCPA Scholarship. Congratulations to Stephanie Dimon, a senior in the Legal Assistant – Paralegal BS program. Ms. Dimon was awarded \$250.00.



The LCPA is proud to fund a scholarship at Penn Tech and assist future paralegals with fulfilling their educational goals. In addition to the Maxine Stiffler/LCPA Scholarship, the LCPA awards a Penn Tech paralegal student with a financial stipend for winning the Outstanding Senior Project Award.



On March 21st Attorney James Malee hosted a Lunch and Learn titled, “Do We Really Need a Guardianship?” The event was well attended and the LCPA has received lots of positive feedback. Attorney Malee spoke about plausible alternatives to guardianships as well as some of the idiosyncrasies he has experienced during guardianship proceedings in various counties.

Attorney Malee was an engaging speaker and the LCPA is grateful for his willingness to host a Lunch and Learn. This is the second time that Attorney Malee has hosted an LCPA Lunch and Learn and we are hopeful that he will speak to us again in the future.

On May 16, 2012 Attorney Jenna Niedig hosted a Lunch and Learn titled, “Custody Crash Course.” Attorney Niedig provided extensive materials and insight about who has standing to seek custody of minor children, when a party should (or should not) file for custody, how the court determines custody and factors considered when filing a Petition for Special Relief. Attorney Niedig provided the many paralegals and attorneys in attendance with lots of valuable resources and the LCPA has received considerable feedback from its members interested in attending similar family law educational events in the future.

Upcoming Lunch and Learns

July: John A. Felix, Esquire

August: Marc S. Drier, Esquire

The LCPA asks all its members to provide input on lunch and learn topics and speakers. If you know of any potential speakers, please contact any board member.



Michele Frey is the 2012 editor of The Gavel. If anyone has any articles or contributions to The Gavel, please contact Michele at MicheleF@lepleylaw.com

2012 LCPA Board Of Directors

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All members are encouraged to join a committee. Please contact any board member if you are interested in joining a committee.

Committees: Membership, NFPA, Continuing Education, Job Bank, Service Project, Finance, Newsletter, and Keystone Alliance.



Legal Laughs:

A woman was being questioned by counsel in a trial involving slander.

"Please repeat to the jury the slanderous statements you heard, exactly as you heard them," instructed the lawyer.

The witness hesitated. "But they are unfit for any respectable person to hear," she protested.

"Then," said the attorney, "just whisper them to the judge."



"Maybe that isn't the way it happened, but that's the way it should have happened, and that's the way I'm going to remember it happened."