

2008 FALL OHIO STATEWIDE PARALEGAL ALLIANCE
September 27th – Dayton

Attended by:

CAP (Cleveland) – No attendees
CPA (Cincinnati) – Jose Pedro Santos, Carolyn Saenz
GDPA (Dayton) – Jennifer Blessing, Rima Davidson, Krista Smith
MVPA (Miami Valley) – No attendees
PACO (Columbus) – Barry Kiser, Karen Pierson
PANO (Toledo) – Tammy Kellar

As discussed:

The meeting was called to order by Krista Smith. Minutes of the 2008 Spring meeting of April 19, 2008 were reviewed, revised and approved.

Association reports:

CAP submitted a written report. The group commented it appeared that Cleveland continues to struggle with member participation and other issues.

CPA presented its written report. Among the items of interest is the proposal that the newsletter format be revised and a new layout artist be utilized. This matter will be presented to the CPA board shortly for its decision. CPA is slowly but surely having new faces make an appearance on the board and within the committees.

GDPA presented its written report. GDPA reported that although it has a full board; the membership numbers are down from the past few years and this will have to be addressed. Among the projects GDPA hopes to accomplish this year are the 25th Anniversary celebration, and the Records Archival and Retention project.

PACO presented its written report. PACO is having some issues with the Columbus Bar because it is promoting NALS (an association for legal secretaries and other professionals) in the Columbus area. There may be a conflict of interest because the Columbus Bar is administering the PACO association while at the same time promoting NALS. Also there are some issues with confusion because of the similarity of PACO and NALS luncheons, educational programs and newsletter appearance.

Two representatives from PACO will be attending the NFPA annual meeting in Arkansas in October 2008. PACO has finished the revision of its By-Laws and will have its 35th Anniversary celebration on October 2nd. PACO also offered to update the statewide alliance link on the Columbus Bar website.

PANO presented its written report. PANO recently elected a new board with some fresh faces present. Its membership numbers have decreased slightly. The social events continue to have good attendance. PANO is continuing its relationship with NALA. Some concerns were expressed regarding the confusion between the terms “legal assistant” and “legal secretary.”

Legal Assistant/Legal Secretary:

The group discussed issues regarding confusion of these two terms in some areas of the state. It was agreed that each association would place a comment on its web site stating that it does not agree that the terms "legal assistant" and/or "paralegal" are synonymous, as defined by the American Bar Association. Each association will present to its board the following Statewide Alliance position statement:

The Ohio Statewide Alliance of Paralegals acknowledges that the paralegal profession continues to evolve. In that regard, the Alliance recognizes that legal secretaries in Ohio are utilizing the title "Legal Assistant." However, the Alliance strongly believes that there is a clear distinction in the duties and responsibilities of a Legal Assistant and those of a Paralegal. Even though the American Bar Association still acknowledges the terms as synonymous, the Alliance does not concur.

As the next statewide meeting this subject will be reviewed by the alliance and decided upon.

National Associations:

The American Alliance of Paralegals presented its report. It will hold its annual meeting on October 9, 2008 via teleconference call. Since the American Alliance is an association of individual paralegals, as opposed to a federation, all voting members received a proxy and ballot.

The American Alliance held its 3rd Annual Paralegal Summit via Webinar on September 19, 2008. There were many attendees from across the country and presenters spoke about paralegal ethics, paralegal regulation in Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Two lawyers made presentations on the subject of the exempt/non-exempt status of paralegals as it relates to the Fair Labor Standards Act. One lawyer, who represented the plaintiff in the *Wersinger vs. Bank of America* case, advised that the lawsuit had been settled, and this case did not develop into the landmark that had been anticipated.

The American Alliance recently requested that ParalegalPort's website provide a link, or make reference to the American Alliance, since other national associations are referenced in its website. ParalegalPort rejected the American Alliance's suggestion stating that they do not advocate a bachelor's degree for paralegals and suggested that it re-write its bylaws.

NFPA is having its annual meeting in Arkansas in October 2008, and the region III meeting will be held during the same weekend. PACO representatives will be attending.

Forum:

A discussion followed regarding the Statewide Forum with each association presenting answers to questions that were posed to their individual associations following the 2008 Spring Statewide meeting. It was the general consensus that since each local association holds its own seminar, it is not cost effective for many paralegals to attend an out of town seminar. And many employers would not finance such an event.

A suggestion was made that the next seminar be held via webinar and that at least 1 hour of ethics be included. PACO is scheduled to hold the next Forum (Fall 2009) and it will look into the cost and feasibility of holding the Forum via webinar. It will report back at the Spring 2009 statewide meeting.

Statewide Salary Survey:

After presenting this subject to each association, GDPA, PACO and MVPA were in favor of a statewide survey; CPA was not in favor, and PANO had no opinion because this matter had not been presented to its board. A discussion followed as to which entity would administer the survey. The CPA agreed to review the survey questions with the group and go back to its board for a further clarification of its decision.

The group concurred that (i) paralegals who are not members of any local association should be included in the survey; (ii) the cost of the survey should be shared equally by each association; (iii) each association member would receive a free copy; (iv) the survey would be sold to other paralegals (non-association members) at a cost of \$5; and (v) the survey would be sold to companies, law firms, vendors, etc. at a cost of \$25.

The questions proposed by the CPA were reviewed and changes/corrections made.

OSBA:

To-date 124 persons have passed the OSBA Certified Paralegal exam. Kiser advised that although last Spring the group discussed presenting a plaque to Kalpana Yalamanchili and Melissa Quick (membership directors of OSBA) this has not taken place.

Spring 2009 Statewide:

The CPA will host the next meeting on _____ 2009.

Upcoming Meetings:

Fall 2009	PACO (Forum via Webinar)
Spring 2010	MVPA
Fall 2010	PANO
Spring 2011	CAP
Fall 2011	GDPA (Forum)
Spring 2012	CPA
Fall 2012	PACO
Spring 2013	MVPA