

VOLUME 38 ISSUE 2

RPA On The Record

A Newsletter of the Richmond Paralegal Association
An Affiliate Association of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.
A Member of the Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Associations

May - August 2020

Check out our
Webinars!

P.O. Box 384, Richmond, VA 23218 www.richmondparalegals.org

President's Message



Kimberly Paulsrud, ACP

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE NAVIGATING THROUGH COVID 19

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought we'd be navigating through the days as we all have been. Throughout the numerous Governor's Orders and the guidance we've received from the federal government, I've witnessed paralegals coming up with insightful ways to get the job done.

Doing a quick Google search regarding paralegals, I came across an article on Job Monkey: "Paralegal: Desirable Traits and Skills."
<https://www.jobmonkey.com/paralegal/traits-skills/>

Check out these characteristics! Is this how you would define yourself as a paralegal?

Inside This Issue

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President's Message (continued)

A Paralegal:

- is extremely organized and detail oriented;
- Enjoys problem solving and digging into complex issues;
- Works well independently with minimal direction;
- Has excellent communication skills, and the ability to “know his/her audience,” be it judges, attorneys, other paralegals, clients, insurance representatives, or [law enforcement personnel](#);
- Possesses superior writing skills, and the ability to draft correspondence, legal documents, memorandums, and various legal forms; has a good understanding of legal terminology and the process of conducting legal research;
- Is accomplished in the use of technology applications that are common in law offices, including Word, WordPerfect, Excel, PowerPoint, litigation support software such as TrialDirector, and legal research technology such as Westlaw and LexisNexis;
- Is a good listener who has the ability to take orders and follow directions;
- Enjoys working with the public, and has patience with clients who have continual questions about their case;
- Doesn't mind working with relatively large amounts of paperwork on a continual basis;
- Understands the necessity of maintaining confidentiality;
- Acts and dresses professionally;
- Usually has a “thick skin” when it comes to abrupt, short-tempered attorneys with looming deadlines;
- Is able to anticipate an attorney's needs and has the ability to solve problems without direct supervision;
- Usually has to perform a certain amount of clerical work along with the substantive legal duties that he/she finds to be more challenging;
- Possesses an ability to work well under pressure;
- Is willing to put in overtime, especially when preparing for a trial;
- Has a high level of reading comprehension, and the ability to extract the major points by reading quickly and accurately;
- Is a seasoned multi-tasker who is capable of doing several things (or more) at once;
- Has great analytical ability;
- Is able to “go with the flow” and change his/her direction and priorities on a moment's notice;
- Doesn't need a great deal of encouragement or positive reinforcement to know that he/she is doing a good job;
- Is anal, or doesn't mind working for someone who is!

The key traits of a good paralegal in my opinion is the ability to improvise, think outside the box, knowing what needs to be done and devising a plan to get the task at hand done. With stay at home orders, we have all had to come up with a plan to help our offices function, get the job done efficiently and accurately, and remain available to our clients. Shifting to electronic filing only with the courts, Zoom conference calls with attorneys and clients, coordinating trips with co-workers to the office to handle mail and filing are just a few examples within the office. Outside the office, RPA is planning several online CLE webinars and NALA just announced that the 2020 Convention will be

virtual. Each day we are faced with a unique situation and it is our job to come up with the best solution.

We are a team, and we are in this pandemic together. I welcome each of you to reach out and support each other, share ideas, and share your wisdom. I am looking forward to the day when we can all get together and celebrate our success but until that day comes, please know that Richmond Paralegal Association is here for you, and this includes myself, the RPA board and our members. Please don't hesitate to reach out. Stay tuned for more ways to communicate with each other during this difficult and challenging time.

Kimberly A. Paulsrud, ACP
President



ABA Redefines Paralegal!

Early this year, the American Bar Association's House of Delegates adopted the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals' definition of "paralegal." The main take away from this is that they have stricken the language that the terms "paralegal" and "legal assistant" are interchangeable. This decision puts a cap on a 20-year trend.

When I started working in 1996, "legal assistant" was the most accepted term and this was reflected in the names of paralegal associations throughout the country. Through the late 1990s and early 2000s the trend started to shift toward "paralegal." There were many passionate arguments for and against the term "paralegal" at the time. The ABA and others used the terms "paralegal" and "legal assistant" interchangeably for many years. As the term "paralegal" won out, associations throughout the country started to reflect that in their names and designations.

In 2018, the Standing Committee reviewed the definition of "paralegal" outlined in the ABA Guidelines. They sought feedback from national, state, and local paralegal associations, as well as bar association leaders regarding the terminology used to

describe “non-lawyer legal professionals.” And in February, the ABA adopted the following definition:

A paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.

So, that’s the history... You might ask yourself why the fuss? “A rose by any other name....”

The term “legal assistant” is still often used interchangeably with paralegal as well as legal secretary. It is a very general term that lumps all non-lawyer legal professionals together under one title. It’s true, there is a great deal of cross-over in the duties of a legal secretary and a paralegal. In some smaller offices, the jobs may even be held by the same person, but they are largely recognized as two separate jobs.

The primary difference is that a paralegal “is a person, qualified by education, training, or work experience... who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.” In a law firm setting, time for that substantive (non-clerical) work is billed to the client, like an attorney’s time, but at a lower rate.

While the term “legal assistant” will probably never go away completely, as employers expect paralegals to have specific education, including certification, and recognize the substantive work that paralegals perform, the term “paralegal” has really come to stand for something more than “a lawyer’s assistant.” I’m glad the ABA has recognized that in a formal way.

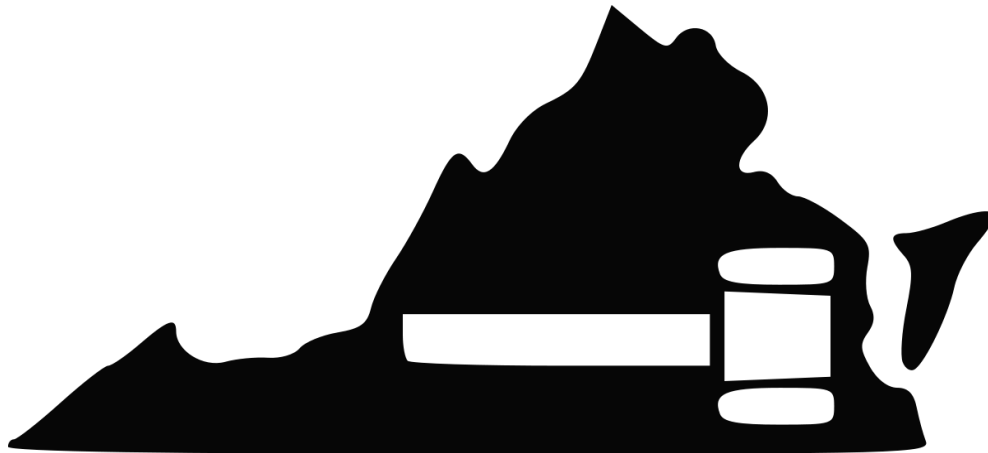
Stephanie Meharg
RPA Parliamentarian
President, Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Associations

¹ Richmond Association of Legal Assistants became Richmond Paralegal Association in 2003. Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Associations (VAPA) was founded in 1989 as VALA. In the early 2000’s NALA adopted the term “Certified Paralegal (CP)” to describe those who have passed the certification exam.

¹ American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals Report to the House of Delegates at 3.

¹ https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/current_aba_definition_of_legal_assistant_paralegal/

¹ <http://nala.org/about-paralegals/what-do-paralegals-do>



Save the Date!

Friday, October 9, 2020

Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Associations
12th Biennial Statewide Conference

~

DoubleTree by Hilton Charlottesville
990 Hilton Heights Road
Charlottesville, VA 22901

More information coming in 2020!

www.vaparalegalalliance.org



[More Information](#) [Register Now](#)



2020 NALA Conference Goes 100% Virtual!

We can all agree that 2020 has been an unprecedented year. While continuing our commitment to education, our main priority at NALA is the health and safety of our conference attendees. For this reason, we have decided to offer our annual conference as a 100% VIRTUAL event! Although we will not be meeting in person, we are thrilled for the creativity that technology affords us. We are fully committed to providing paralegals with the quality education they need while still maintaining social distancing.

Our new **2020 NALA Conference @ Home** featuring our digital exhibitors will be hosted by exceptional speakers. We will still have electronic voting for the upcoming Board of Directors election, and now we will gather virtually for all sessions and meetings, including the NALA Annual Meeting and NALA Affiliated Associations Annual Meeting.

Updated conference prices are as follows:

- **Virtual conference attendance:** \$99 for members and \$149 for non-members
- **Complimentary sessions:** access to the Installation Ceremony, Annual Membership Meeting, Affiliated Associations Annual Meeting, and both NALA Board of Directors meetings are free to everyone (*Please note you will still need to register for the complimentary sessions if not registered for the virtual conference*)
- **On-Demand Conference Recording bundle** for a virtual conference attendee: an additional \$199 for members and \$249 for non-members
- **On-Demand Conference Recording bundle ONLY** (*for those not registered as a virtual conference attendee*): \$575 for members and \$628 for non-members

REGISTRATION TYPE	MEMBER	NON-MEMBER
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION	\$99	\$149
*COMPLIMENTARY SESSIONS (BOARD MEETINGS, ANNUAL MEETINGS)	FREE	FREE
ON-DEMAND CONFERENCE RECORDING BUNDLE (FOR VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES)	\$199	\$249
ON-DEMAND CONFERENCE RECORDING BUNDLE (NOT REGISTERED FOR CONFERENCE)	\$575	\$628

**You will still need to register for the complimentary sessions if not registered for the virtual conference.*

If you register and pay before June 12, 2020, you will receive a complimentary, exclusive 2020 NALA Conference @ Home care package!

Cancellation Policy: Refund requests received on or before June 21 will receive a full refund. Any refund requests from June 22 until the time of the event will be subject to a \$50 cancellation fee.

Please join your fellow paralegals and other legal professionals July 9-11 for this unique online educational event. Develop new skills and techniques to help advance your career, all from the comfort of your own home or office.

Stay tuned for more conference information via email, social media, and our website.

REGISTER NOW



NALA—The Paralegal Association

7666 E 61st Street, Suite 315

Tulsa, OK 74133

918-587-6828

www.nala.org

[Manage Email Preferences](#)

Unsubscribe from ALL NALA emails.



2020 RPA EDUCATION WEBINARS (CLE)

**Kathy E. Kabala, CP, VARP
1st Vice President-Education Chair**

Hello fabulous RPA members!

RPA had discussed purchasing Zoom during our January Board of Directors Retreat as we had intended to make our Spring Seminar both in-person and virtual. COVID-19 reinforced our necessity for Zoom! I am pleased to announce RPA has a Zoom account and can hold Zoom Meetings and Zoom Webinars!

I am actively working on coordinating webinars for the foreseeable future! If you know anyone interested in speaking please contact me at Education@RichmondParalegals.org!

If you have any trouble accessing the links below, you may register for any of these webinars on RPA website!

May 27, 2020 at Noon

“Discover Your Career Happiness”

By: Carol Maloney-Scott



MAY 27 "Discover Your Career Happiness" By: Carol Maloney-Scott

Register Here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4I3tuf9ZQxWtWF5YdMf5nA

June 10, 2020 at Noon

“Viral Ethics: Ethics Issues That Are Front and Center During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

By: Kelly Faglioni, Esq.



Register Here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_boKzABAnQcGPQay3tro47A

June 24, 2020 at Noon

“Legislative Review Series”

By: Sean M. Hutson, Esq.



JUN 24 Legislative Review Webinar By: Sean M. Hutson, Esq.

Register Here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_H9Jun6B1QNiWOnQQ4oURkg

June 25, 2020 at Noon

“Legislative Review Series”

By: DeMarion Johnston, Esq.



Register Here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_X2QPXYfs3CLY5O0Dn463g

July 22, 2020 at Noon

“How COVID-19 is Affecting Domestic Relations”

By: Dawn DeBoer, Esq



Register Here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_j4PK9um_TdysfBb2-Qfl2w

Here is a sneak preview of our future speakers. Stay tuned!!!

Date TBD

“Topic TBD”

By: Eric Robinson, JD



Date TBD

“Topic TBD”

By: Planet Depos



Date TBD

“Topic: Workers’ Compensation - TBD”

By: Jennifer G. Capocelli, Esq.



Electronic Notarization



I have been a notary for as long as I can remember and have always made myself available to my co-workers and to attorneys needing such services at any time. I recently transferred from a law firm position to a corporate position, which was very different than I thought it would be. As a Corporate paralegal, my role includes compiling and producing information requested via *subpoena duces tecum* or by release, and in doing so I act as the company's Custodian of Records. Therefore, I needed to be able to notarize an Affidavit of Authenticity in my new role.

Recently, I was contacted by a member of our credit team. She frequently files proofs of claim in bankruptcy matters where the company is a creditor, and who like me was working from home full time as a result of COVID-19. She asked me how she could get documents notarized from her home office. Honestly, I had no idea how to answer that and realized that I would soon be finding myself in the same situation. I was very surprised to learn that Virginia has used E-Notaries since 2012. For information on how to become a Virginia E-Notary, click the link below.

<https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/official-documents/notary-commissions/enotary-faq/>

For the purpose of responding to my colleague, and for my own use, I googled Virginia E-Notary (like any paralegal would do in these circumstances) and found several companies available that conduct this service. I was disappointed to learn that Virginia did not have a list of E-Notaries. The companies who provide an E-Notary typically charge as much as \$50 per document for this service. Personally, I have never charged for my notary services and cannot imagine doing so in the future.

I plan to become an E-Notary as soon as possible and encourage others to do so as well.

By Teresa A Clark, ACP



What is LinkedIn?

The Benefits of LinkedIn:

A How-To Guide

Connect, Communicate, Collaborate

By: Kathy Kabala, CP, VARP

LinkedIn is one of the largest professional networking sites. This social media platform allows individuals, companies, non-profits (and more) to promote missions, strengths, personal and company brands, and messages to encourage collaboration, constructive communication, and the strengthening of professional relationships.

Creating a Profile:

- Choose a professional photo (headshot if possible) and create a brief headline showcasing your talent
- Select an attention-grabbing background photo
- Make your summary descriptive and informative to market your talents
- List your relevant skills and keep them current and up-to-date
- Be authentic
- Start connecting and grow your network!
- Endorse others!
- Request recommendations
- Follow relevant influencers

Networking:

Expand your network by connecting with personal and professional contacts. Do not be afraid to join Groups! Diverse networks allow for more opportunities to collaborate and to learn valuable skills. By sharing information and expertise, you not only expand your knowledge, but you can help others achieve success!

Articles:

I personally enjoy browsing the articles daily. I save the links to my favorite articles in my “notes” app on my iPhone. Many articles and posts are inspirational and motivational. You can learn a lot of valuable information that can help with your own day-to-day tasks and career ambitions.

Job Searching:

Change your headline to indicate you are looking for new opportunities. Research and follow the companies that interest you. Get involved with professional LinkedIn Groups. Change your LinkedIn settings to let recruiters and employers know you are job seeking or interested in new opportunities. Interact with your connections and network!

Marketing:

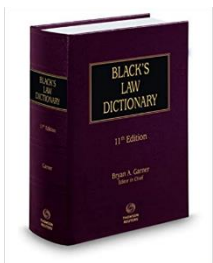
LinkedIn is a great resource to promote events and market brands. By sharing photos, articles, blog posts and event details, you can effectively educate and inform your key audience. Encourage your employees or members to connect and engage with your page. Publish and share valuable content!

LinkedIn Learning:

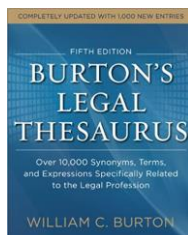
LinkedIn Learning is a valuable resource just a few clicks away! Several employers offer this learning tool to their employees. Others can try it free for 30 days! Enhance your performance and skillset by completing online courses. Take the initiative to continue your education and improve your development. Be proactive! Keep your resume sharp and up-to-date by adding your completed courses!

HELPFUL APPS FOR PARALEGALS! (courtesy of the Editor)

Paralegals rely on many different tools to support and define quality work product, especially when we have to work from home. The May 2020 edition of NALA's Facts & Findings magazine offers a few apps that are available to help with accuracy and make our jobs easier! Download a few of these apps if you are interested!



1. Black's Law Dictionary – Over 43,000 legal terms (\$54.99 but worth it)



2. Burton's Legal Thesaurus (\$49.99 ditto)



3. CalendarRules (free)



4. Fastcase (free)



5. Rulebook (free)

6. Date and Time Calculators (free)

7. Lawstack's (free Federal Rules)

Also check out how to remove Metadata from your word documents! For example, in Microsoft Word on a PC, go to File and Info. Then check for issues and inspect document. Remove some or all of the metadata listed by checking the application boxes.

“Office” Break? Let’s Color!



Cabin Fever

Have an interesting topic to share? Write about it!
Contact Brooks Godwin, brooks.godwin@allenandallen.com



Summer Fun

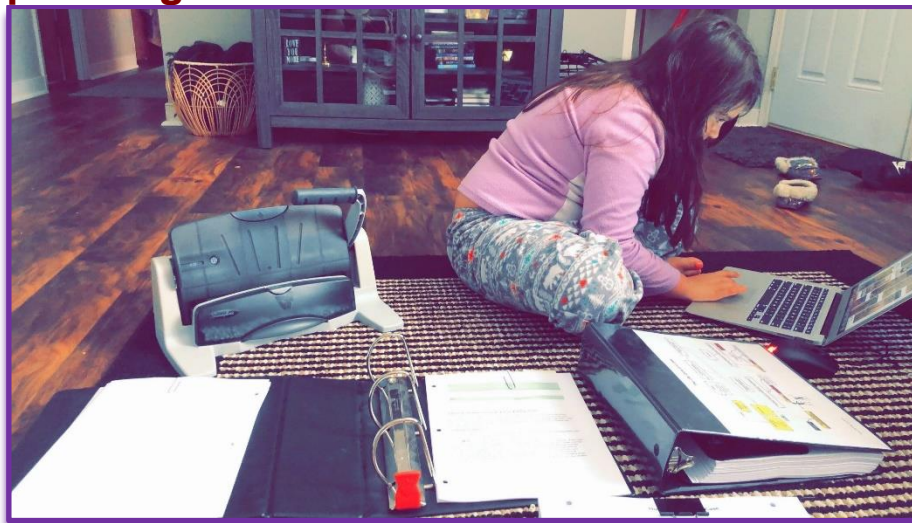
Paralegals in a Pandemic!



Quarantined again . . . where is that catnip . . .



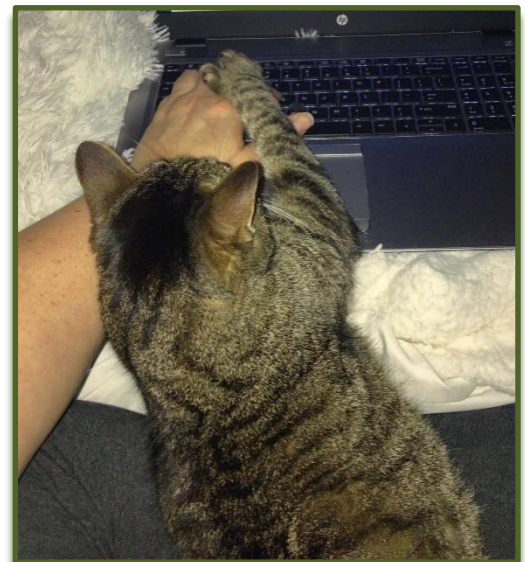
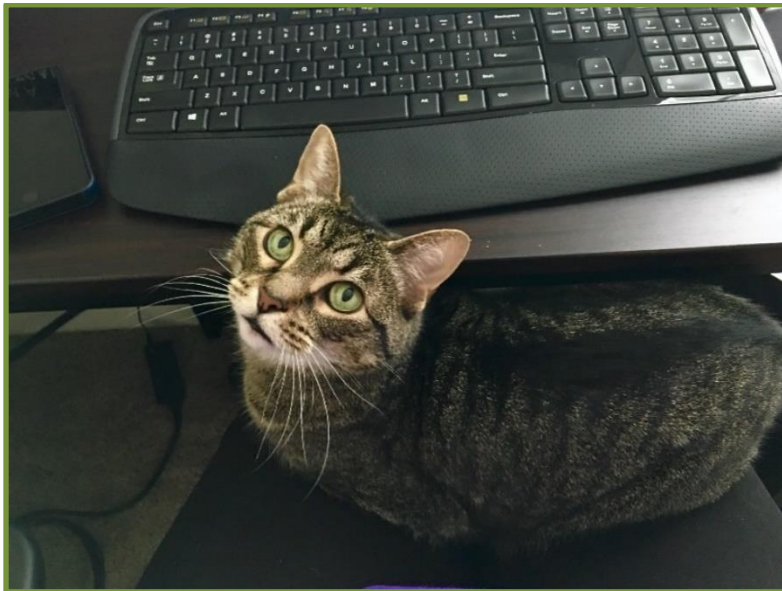
Melissa Hill and co-worker, Sheryl, prepare safely for a client to sign their estate planning documents outside of the office... Herndon Law



Bianca Gonzalez's daughter keeps everyone in line! "Shhh, I am getting down to business." Allen & Allen



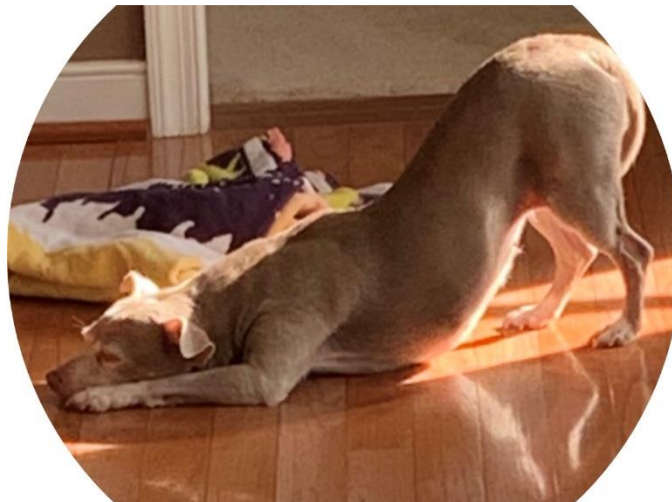
**Staphanie Meharg's "office mates" at home
Mayze the dog, Finn and Lexi provide great support!
Hunton & Williams**



**Kathy Kabala's Team Leader, Khloe, takes charge!
Dominion Energy**



**Kimberly Paulsrud's home supervisor, Dove, is all business!
Sands Anderson**



**Susan Link's very relaxed companion, Lilly
She seems to have learned a new yoga pose!
Allen & Allen**



Working from home can be so exhausting . . .



**Let's remember to get up, smile and move! Brooks & Co-Editors
Allen and Allen**

Thanks to all for submitting these great photos!



WHY GRAMMAR MATTERS

By Carolyn Morris

Anyone with children, students, left-brained partners or co-workers has probably heard the question, “Why does grammar matter?” In the grand scheme of things, does grammar really matter? Yes. It does.

While I have not done any scientific studies, I would estimate that we could potentially decrease the need for the sentence, “That’s not what I meant” by 50% if everyone used correct grammar.

Liz Bureman, editor of *The Write Practice*, wrote, “The reason that the rules of grammar exist is to give all speakers of the same language a playbook to make sure that they are understood by each other.” Exactly. Spoken and written communication are integral parts of our daily lives. We all want to be understood. We all want our words, statements, and sentences to matter. If your audience has to pause to consider your meaning due to a misused word during a conversation or a missing comma in a sentence, you will lose some of your audience’s focus on your message. The impact of verbal and written grammar mistakes range from minimal to monumental. Regardless of scale, you don’t want any mistakes to distract your audience from the purpose of your communication.

Each morning, I ask Alexa for today's grammar tip or I type "grammar tips" in Google. This is a great way to ensure you maintain and improve your grammar skills. Today's grammar tip from Google: Stay active

All sentences are identified as being either active or passive. In an active sentence, the subject performs the action. "The girl ate the salad" is an active sentence.

In a passive sentence, the subject of the sentence is also the subject of the action. "The salad was eaten by the girl" is a passive sentence.

Though both are grammatically correct, passive sentence structures often lead to more errors, including dangling modifiers, misplaced commas, and run-on sentences. Sticking to the active voice will help ensure clarity.



RPA Job Bank

Kitty Bice, ACP

Did you know we have a job bank that is available to members only? Many of the top firms contact us looking for the best paralegals. I post their ads to our Job Bank; and if I know someone who may be looking for a position or would be perfect for the job, I will let you know it is available. Paralegals who are members of RPA are excellent candidates for employers, Not only do we stay current on all the latest trends and changes in the law, we are dedicated to constant learning and improvement of our skills. The RPA Board members also keep their ear to the ground when they hear of a good job prospect, and I also monitor some of the various search engines for new opportunities for paralegals. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, people posting on our site often say they don't get many applications from RPA paralegals. That is either because you are not looking because you are happy in your current position, or you are not using this resource. Many of our members have moved on to great jobs and opportunities from posts on the Job Bank. Please use all resources available to you to make your career the best it can be.



There is still time to Join the CASA Super Hero Virtual Run!

This is the final week of the **Henrico and Chesterfield CASA's Virtual Superhero 5K Run/Walk/Kids Run** and we need your help! We hope you have registered to walk or run to help support the vulnerable kids in our community, because home is still not a safe place for everyone.

Once you register, run, or walk your 5K by this Sunday, May 31, 2020, upload your time to see how you compare to your fellow superheroes, post your best pictures and tag us on Instagram, and receive a race bib and t-shirt as a thank you from Henrico and Chesterfield CASA.

This is your chance to be a superhero for kids that really need your help!

Your \$25 Registration Fee Includes:
A Commemorative T-Shirt
A Race Bib

To register open this link or go to the website

<https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/AnyCityAnyState/SuperheroRun>

Membership Report

*Brooks Godwin, VARP
2nd Vice President, Membership Chair*

May 27, 2020

Active Members:	55
Provisional Members:	5
Student Members:	18
Lifetime Members:	11
Sponsor Members:	12
Associate Members:	2
Total Members:	103

WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Any questions? Please email Brooks Godwin at brooks.godwin@allenandallen.com or Membership@richmondparalegals.org. Check your profile periodically to ensure your email and other information is up to date. If you can't remember your password or need any other assistance, email Brooks!

Professional Certifications

Please let us know when you pass the CP or ACP exam so RPA can help celebrate your accomplishment and recognize you in On the Record!

Please let us know if you have obtained your Virginia Registered Paralegal (VARP) designation so RPA can help celebrate your accomplishment and recognize you in On the Record!

WE WOULD LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

As we plan upcoming RPA events, we need your feedback. Please copy these questions into an email to Education@RichmondParalegals.org, and give us your input.

- 1) I would like to be the presenter of a CLE on this topic.
- 2) I can write a blog post for RPA on this topic.
- 3) I have speaker or topic suggestions.
- 4) Who pays my RPA membership?
- 5) I would like to be more involved in RPA.
- 6) I connect to RPA via FaceBook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest (list all).
- 7) I get (too much, just the right amount, not enough) email from RPA.
- 8) I prefer to receive information by (email, Facebook, Twitter, Newsletter).
- 9) Other comments and suggestions?

We welcome your feedback! You may also contact Brooks Godwin at brooks.godwin@allenandallen.com or any of our board members if you have any questions or concerns.



Thank you to our Sponsors!



Check out our website for upcoming events and meetings!

www.richmondparalegals.org

•RPA is now on **Instagram**, **LinkedIn** and **Facebook** !



Instagram

@Richmond_paralegal_association



@Richmond Paralegal Association



@RPARichmondVA



2020 Board of Directors

Membership@richmondparalegals.org or Education@richmondparalegals.org

President.....	Kimberly Paulsrud, ACP
1 st Vice President.....	Kathy Kabala, CP, VARP
2 nd Vice President.....	Brooks Godwin VARP
Secretary.....	Tracey Huang, CP, VARP
Treasurer.....	Darla Yoder, VARP
Director	Michele Charnock
Director	Stephanie Meharg, ACP, VARP
Director.....	Jacqueline Perkins-Ross
Director	Reba Gagne
Parliamentarian.....	Stephanie Meharg, ACP, VARP
NALA Liaison.....	Teresa Clark, ACP



2020 RPA Social

2020 Committee Chairs

Standing Committees:

Education	Kathy Kabala, CP, VARP Stephanie Meharg, ACP, VARP Zarea Hawkins, Student Liaison
Membership	Brooks Godwin, VARP Zarea Hawkins, Student Liaison
Nominating and Elections	Stephanie Meharg, ACP Darla Yoder, VARP
Technology/Marketing	Kathy Kabala, CP, VARP
Mentoring	Reba Gagne
Job Bank.....	Kitty Bice, ACP
Audit	Stephanie Meharg, ACP, VARP Kitty Bice, ACP
VAPA	Tracy Huang, CP, VARP
Richmond Bar Liaison	Kathy Kabala, CP, VARP
Webmaster.....	Reba Gagne

Next RPA Board Meeting will be held via Zoom on June 17, 2020

RPA is always interested in your input and help. If you would like to make a difference or contribute to the success of your organization, please contact one of the above committee chairs for more information.

Do you have useful information to share? Are you interested in contributing an article? Please contact Brooks Godwin.
brooks.godwin@allenandallen.com

Are you interested in assisting on one of our committees? Please contact us. We would love to have your help!

Membership@richmondparalegals.org