



2007 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For a fourth year in a row, I am pleased announce that the BC Paralegal Association ("BCPA") has maintained its membership of over 350 members. This past year, we were able to further increase the number of our voting members as many of our students have entered the profession and became voting members. We continue to work hard to increase our membership to include almost every paralegal in British Columbia and with the hard work of our directors in Kelowna and in Nanaimo, there is evidence of increased membership outside of the lower mainland. We hope our hard work will continue to raise awareness of the BCPA and increase membership in all regions of British Columbia.

Despite the delay in launching our new website, we are working hard make available to our members a website that can fully support the needs of all members across the entire province.

At the AGM in April, Patricia Terlecki retired from our board of directors. Patricia served on the board on a number of different occasions and during her most recent tenure, also held the office of Treasurer. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Patricia for all of her hard work and dedication to our board and would like to wish her the best in her future endeavours. Currently, your BCPA board is comprised of ten directors. We are a board of volunteers and as such we are always looking for assistance and contributions from our members - even if that may be in a non-director committee capacity. If you wish to assist your board, please contact us.

This year, we launched our very successful Lunch & Learn series. With various topics presented and the facility to broadcast our the series via webinar to our out of town members, we are excited with the series to date and are excited for future sessions. The next Lunch & Learn is tentatively scheduled for September 5, 2007 and will focus on family law.

Last month we hosted our annual Spring dinner at the Terminal City Club. This dinner was again very well attended with over 115 members in attendance. As with our previous three dinners, the feedback amongst members has been positive and many have indicated that the dinners are functions that they look forward to attending. Our Autumn dinner is tentatively scheduled for the second week of October.

I am again honoured be your President for the upcoming year and look forward to working hard with a dedicated group of directors to improve our association and profession.

Sincerely,

John Kim

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MEMBERS' CORNER**WELCOME**

The BCPA would like to welcome each of the new members and
all of our renewing members.

Your support is greatly appreciated.
We look forward to meeting you in the future.

NOTICE

The opinions expressed in the *Paralegal Press* are those of the
writers and not necessarily those of the BC Paralegal Association
(BCPA). BCPA cannot assume liability for errors or omissions.

If you are interested in re-printing any of the articles in this
newsletter please contact Christine Uhrmann or Andrea Mac-
Donald.

LUNCH & LEARNS

I am very pleased to announce that the BCPA Lunch & Learn program has been a huge success!

The first Lunch & Learn was held in early January. Jean Chose of David Aplin Recruiting was our guest speaker covering the topic of *"The Role of BC Paralegals, Salaries, Benefits and Recruitment Agencies"*.

Lindsay Duprey and Natasha Doucas from Commonwealth Legal Inc. presented at the March Lunch & Learn session. The topic covered was *"The New Meet and Confer Convention and the Changing Role of the Paralegal"*. The March session was the first Lunch & Learn that we introduced the use of webinars to include all of our members throughout BC.

Our third Lunch & Learn was in May. Brad Martyniuk, Partner at Lindsay Kenney, covered the topic of *"Insurance Fraudsters – Up Close & Personal"*. The May Lunch & Learn was presented via webinar through the facilities of Dye & Durham.

The next scheduled Lunch & Learn session is Wednesday, September 5, 2007 and will feature Craig Neville, Partner at Watson Goepel Maledy LLP. Mr. Neville will be covering the topic of Family Law. Additional information and registration details will be provided closer to the date of this session.

Thank you to all of our members for your interest and participation in the Lunch & Learn program. The Lunch & Learn series is a membership benefit and without your participation this program would not have been such a success. Please feel free to forward topic requests to me directly at LManderscheid@wgmlaw.com.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Lunch & Learn event.

Lana Manderscheid
BCPA Director

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Online Courses: Long term solution or Flash in the pan?

Christine Williams

May 30, 2007

"Earn your MBA online!"

"Complete your business degree from the comfort of your own home!"

"Get a complete online education while you sleep!"

Every day we hear more offers to check out online education. How much of it is hype? How much "easy online learning" is really easy, or really *learning*?

Educators today agree that "as an old technology, the traditional classroom suffers from severe limitations. . . We need a better system of learning to enable students to acquire knowledge. "

In addition, a growing number of learning institutions recognize that learners are clients, with the power to select and demand an education that is relevant, cost-efficient, and convenient.

Consumers expect today's education to exceed old standards, welcoming and specially fitted to a diverse and ever-changing adult population. "Institutions should concentrate on what learners need and are demanding, as well as what society is demanding of our graduates. It is . . . a customer-service orientation to education."

Here are the steps that a typical online or distance learner might encounter:

- The student registers for the course, providing an email contact address;
- The instructor emails students with login instructions and a secure weblink;
- Student log in to a website and view the "introduction," panel, which includes course expectations and participation requirements;
- Students and instructors log in any time of the day or night, from any internet-accessible computer, completing activities and assignments on a weekly basis;
- Instructors and other students provide ongoing feedback and discussion; and
- If there is a final exam, it may be submitted directly to the website, or proctored at a local learning institution.

In this way, learners enjoy a unique learner-centred environment, tailored individually to the interests, pace, and schedule of the learners.

Also as a positive, online courses offer a rich variety of learning activities including video links, online quizzes, review panels sessions, discussions, written summaries, and collaborative writing activities. The variety of online learning activities is almost endless.

But distance learning is more than variety and convenience. *"Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace,"* Palloff and Pratt (1999), from which all quotes in this article are taken, notes that the real key to success in distance learning is about creating a changing, growing, diverse community of learners. Honesty, respect, openness and responsiveness, relevance in bringing the outside world into the classroom, and above all, **empowerment** are strengths of a strong learner-centred online environment. "The learner is truly the expert when it comes to his or her own learning" is a key concept in online learning.

The Paralegal program at Vancouver Community College is fairly new to the online course presentation format. Our students juggle full time legal jobs, family obligations, and busy home lives with evening or online courses, proving themselves tremendously hard-working, highly disciplined and skilled learners and professionals.

The quality of discussion forum contributions speaks of a rich variety of personal and professional experience in our learners, reflecting a skilled and articulate student population. Our instructors are full time lawyers or senior paralegals, able to bring a hands-on value and texture to the courses, contributing to a strong and vibrant adult learning community.

Considering online courses? Before signing on, investigate the quality of learning resources, the calibre of instructors, and the dedication of co-participants in your learning journey. Find out what the participation requirements are. Will students be expected to reflect and review their learning in a meaningful way? Will the delivery method allow students to learn and even transform themselves in their learning experience? These are some of the questions to consider.

Online learning isn't for everyone. We have a dedicated core of students who frankly prefer evening lecture and discussion style courses, and because of that, we offer a choice between lecture and online delivery for all our courses.

Review your goals, and take a look at your schedule. If you have the time, interest, and discipline to commit to an online course, consider giving it a try. With online learning, the old truth is especially fitting: the more you put in to it, the more you get.



Christine Williams, J.D., formerly a Wills and Estates lawyer in Chicago, is Program Coordinator of the Vancouver Community College Paralegal Certificate Program at www.cotinuinged.vcc.ca/legal.

Christine Williams can be reached at CWilliams@vcc.ca.

PARALEGAL PROFILE – HEATHER STEWART

Heather Stewart graduated from Capilano College in 1991 receiving honors in the Paralegal Diploma program. She immediately specialized in complex litigation cases, learning database management and file organization techniques along the way. For the most part, she has enjoyed her 16 year career as a Paralegal, it being a good match for her natural tendency toward compulsive sorting and colour coding.

In 1995, she moved to ICBC litigation in New Westminster working exclusively in the personal injury defence area. When ICBC opened up its first regional office in Victoria, Heather was first in line to transfer. She had obtained a B.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Victoria and was keen to return to our Capital. She moved to Victoria in 1996 in the midst of a record breaking blizzard. Heather quickly bought a house, before the prices became outrageous, and is living there happily with her husband and two kids.

Heather enjoys gardening and has slowly transformed her weed-infested backyard into a tranquil oasis. In her spare time, she is the President of a small community association, it's primary focus on improving pedestrian safety and accessibility in her neighbourhood. Heather recently dusted off her creative writing degree to try her hand at writing fiction. She has undertaken yoga in an attempt to unbend her spine after years of sitting in front of a computer. Because her life isn't busy enough, she is contemplating getting a puppy.

Recently, Heather co-wrote a BCPA submission to the Justice Reform Task Force regarding certification of Paralegals. She believes that it is essential to our profession to have objective standards and see certification become a reality. She hopes that the BCPA will continue its determined push towards certification in the future.



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2007 SPRING DINNER

The BCPA 2007 Annual Spring Dinner was held on May 1st at the beautiful Terminal City Club. Our second year at the TCC saw yet another year of impressive attendance and spectacular service. With just over 100 attendees, the evening was alive with conversation and laughter. The annual dinner continues to grow in popularity and attendance due to the incredible generosity of our sponsors and the hard work of the Dinner Committee.

This year the BCPA invited Sandy Chernoff who spoke on Time Management & Organizational Skills. Sandy's engaging and energetic presentation had the crowd worked into a frenzy as every table worked in small teams to complete small tasks. Everyone had a great time and learned about managing time and learning to handle those around you who don't manage their time. Thank you Sandy!

The BCPA would like to extend a heartfelt Thank You to the following Sponsors, without whom these events would not be a reality.

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Lindsay Duprey of Commonwealth Legal with
Roshni Reddy of Dye & Durham



Amanda Magee of Stewart Title
Guaranty with BCPA member
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John Fairlie of Capilano College with
BCPA member Susan Atkinson

