

# Paralegal Focus

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### PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS!

Paralegal Focus is the quarterly  
newsletter of Vermont  
Paralegal Organization, Inc.

Vermont Paralegal Organization, Inc.  
is a Member of the National  
Federation of Paralegal  
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Vermont Paralegal Organization, Inc.  
P.O. Box 5755  
Burlington, VT 05402-5755  
[vermont@paralegals.org](mailto:vermont@paralegals.org)  
[www.vtparalegal.org](http://www.vtparalegal.org)

*Newsletter Design By  
Jeffrey T. Moreau*

## President's Message

*By Laurie S. Noyes, MBA, PHR®*

Here we are – the first quarter of 2023 is wrapping up, and I can hardly believe that we are almost to Spring! 2022 was a year of challenges for me on a personal level, and one that pushed me to a level of sadness and anger that I had never experienced before. I was happy to see 2022 out the door. 2023 is showing itself as a time for healing, and hopefully for a stronger, triumphant chance for growth and the return of joy. One thing that the moments of personal grief and trying times can do for us is remind us to look around and appreciate all that we have, even when things seem to be impossible. In the moments of darkness, we often find out that we are surrounded by people who will carry us through, who will help fill in for us on the journey, and who will help us shoulder the burden of the struggle when we feel like we can't go on. We realize who are tribe is, and we appreciate them more than we may ever have before. Many of you in the VPO have shown yourself to be my tribe this past year, and I am grateful for each and every one of you, both on a personal and professional level. It is true that our work and our profession also become like a second family, as we spend much of our time with those we work with. The same can be said for the VPO and its membership as we surround ourselves with people that share a similar passion for the profession and our careers, we also find that we share similar goals and aspirations in our personal lives as well. And this past year for me was a great reminder of what a treasure having a tribe of compassionate people can be. I hope for each of you that as you continue through this year that you take a moment and recognize your tribe - you find those who will carry you and help you to shoulder the burdens that come your way. That is my hope for each of you in 2023.

In 2022, the VPO lost a beloved member of our team, Tina Wiles. Tina's passing was a huge loss to the VPO as she was a beloved member of our community, and a valued board member for many years. Her commitment to this organization and to the paralegal profession came from a place of love and passion, for the community and those around her. Tina's energy and enthusiasm was contagious, and even in her final months and weeks, she stayed committed to the VPO and its members. She will be greatly missed by all of us, and her loss will continue to be felt by our community for many years to come.

*Continued on Page 2*

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In Tina's spirit, and in her honor, I challenge you to rise to the occasion and consider stepping up to the plate to keep her hard work and perseverance going, and to continue supporting the VPO. We have several vacancies on the Board, and we invite you to consider getting involved. Tina was instrumental in the creation and continuation of this organization, and we hope that we can honor her legacy by continuing the good work of the organization and expanding the role of paralegals and our profession in the community.

I also look forward to seeing you all in person at our Annual Meeting on May 18, 2023. Details to follow. It's a voting year – come out and vote for the VPO's leadership. Get involved and support the VPO!

## **Editor's Message**

*By Louise Reese*

2023 started off with many challenges, but one of the greatest to affect the paralegal community is the death of Tina Wiles, a long time paralegal and friend to many. For those who never got to meet her, please read our "in memoriam" included in this issue. Tina lived her life helping others, and she was a leader in how to live life with kindness.

The VPO needs your help. We have openings on the Board and committees, which are detailed more in this issue. Please consider offering your support!

The CLE Committee is always looking for topics of interest and suggested presenters for its seminars. If you have any ideas, please direct them to me at [lreese@dinse.com](mailto:lreese@dinse.com).

We have a detailed article from Krista Cadieux on certification, and CATIC has provided us with another article on increasingly sophisticated scams and how to stay ahead of them.

Please keep the newsletter in mind for any Tech Talk tips.

Thank you to all who contribute to our newsletter!

## Membership News

*By Melinda Siel*

As of February 2023, we have 77 active members: 53 voting; 21 associate; 1 student; and 2 sustaining corporate.

Please welcome our newest members: Heather Fernandes of the Law Offices of FJ Von Turkovich, PC, Noah Housman and Ian Sartwell of Gale and McAllister PLLC, Sylvia Jerome of Casella Waste Systems, Betsey Leach of PC Construction Company, Sheila Mooney of Langrock Sperry & Wool, and Carla Felice, Kelly O'Brien, and Rebecca Butler of the Vermont Attorney General's Office!

### **ANNOUNCEMENT: OPEN COMMITTEE POSITIONS**

The VPO needs your help! We have open committee positions and one Director position on the VPO Board, and we are hoping that one of you has the will, the talent, and the drive to serve the paralegal community by becoming a committee chair or Director.

First, we have an opening for a Finance Committee Chair. The Finance Committee Chair assists the VPO treasurer in tracking and identifying expenses, preparing reports, and updating the VPO Board with respect to the financial position of the Organization. The Finance Committee Chair is open to any voting member of the VPO and is a standing committee with a right to vote on the Board. Anyone interested in this position should reach out to the VPO's Treasurer, Elsie Goodrich, at [egoodrich@srhlaw.com](mailto:egoodrich@srhlaw.com) to learn more about the role and its requirements.

Second, we need someone to take over the role of Website Committee Chair. The Website Committee Chair can be any member of the VPO who has an interest in social media and website maintenance. Duties include maintaining the Organization's website to ensure that current and accurate information is available to its members, such as Board of Directors current contact information, membership information, employment opportunities announcements, newsletters, meeting and seminar announcements, NFPA affiliation and Paralegal Certification announcements, news and information; and to periodically verify links and forms provided for informational purposes on the Organization's website to ensure correct functionality and accuracy. If you would like to learn more about the position, please reach out to the VPO's Vice President, Melinda Devoid-Siel, at [mdevoidsiel@srhlaw.com](mailto:mdevoidsiel@srhlaw.com).

Also, we need someone to take over the role of Employment Opportunities Chair. The Employment Opportunities Chair can be any member of the VPO who wants to help with employers seeking to utilize our employment opportunities services, invoices to employers for advertising of employment opportunities; to work with the Website Chairperson for posting on the website and the Treasurer for payments. If you would like to learn more about the position, please reach out to the VPO's Vice President, Melinda Devoid-Siel, at [mdevoidsiel@srhlaw.com](mailto:mdevoidsiel@srhlaw.com).

Finally, we need someone to take on the role of NFPA Secondary. The NFPA Secondary position is open to any voting member of the VPO and is a Director position with a right to vote on the Board. The NFPA Secondary assists the NFPA Primary as the VPO's representative to the national organization NFPA, become familiar with NFPA philosophies and publications as well as current national issues, and attend and act as the VPO's voice at NFPA national convention and regional meetings, as well as regularly held NFPA Board meetings. If you would like to learn more about the position, please reach out to the VPO's NFPA Primary Robyn Sweet at [vpofnfa2@gmail.com](mailto:vpofnfa2@gmail.com).

## CLE Update

The VPO's 2023 Annual Meeting and Conference will take place in person on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at the Hampton by Hilton Burlington-Colchester in Colchester, Vermont. We are still developing some of the seminars, and the layout may change, but we are planning for four different 90 minute sessions in the morning (two offered in each time slot), and a one hour ethics session after lunch. It is a voting year, so please join us and consider offering your time and talents to help keep the organization running!

We are also hoping to offer at least two virtual seminars in the fall. If you have any topics or possible presenters you would like to suggest, please direct them to Louise Reese at [lreese@dinse.com](mailto:lreese@dinse.com).

A special thanks goes out to Krista Cadieux who was a valuable resource for real estate topics, and helped me to coordinate those seminars.

## In Memoriam Tina Wiles

*August 30, 1967 – January 16, 2023*



Sadly, Tina Wiles, a valuable member of our legal community, has passed away after a relatively short, but valiant, battle against cancer. There are many of our members who never had the opportunity to meet Tina. She was a force in the paralegal profession, but also very much a kind and gentle soul, who cared deeply about the well-being of those around her, even if she didn't know them personally. She had a wonderful sense of humor, which usually won over the people she was with, and all would share a good laugh.

This memorial will share some of Tina's history, because even if you may have never met her, we can all benefit from her impactful work both as a paralegal, and in service to the community.

Tina was born in 1967, and grew up in Hinesburg, Vermont. She graduated from Champlain Valley Union High School and went on to Champlain College where she graduated with degrees in Legal Administrative Assistant and Paralegal Studies. She then began her journey to become one of the most respected real estate paralegals in the legal community. She also later became an adjunct instructor of Real Property II at Champlain College. Most recently, she was instrumental in developing a grass roots training program through the VPO for new paralegals.

Tina had a strong history of serving in various community service organizations. She was actively involved in Court Diversion, STEPS (f/k/a Women Helping Battered Women), Girl Scouts, and of course, the Vermont Paralegal Organization (VPO). She also jumped right in to serve as the VPO's delegate to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA). We will remember Tina's passion for being a leader in the Girl Scouts, even after her children were grown. She was very proud to chaperone a Girl Scout troop to the Galapagos Islands to see the turtles. Tina continued to support the mission of the Girl Scouts, and she did not hesitate to cross counties to hand-deliver cookies.



Tina's work was recognized with the 2009 Champlain College Roger A. Perry Alumni Leadership Award. Current VPO Newsletter Editor and CLE Co-Chair, Louise Reese, was honored to have been asked to present her with the award.

Tina enjoyed life and all that it had to offer, and she wanted to share that joy with others. She even learned how to make beautiful cakes for birthdays, anniversaries, and weddings.



Tina was a two-time alum of Champlain College, having earned an Associates of Science (AS) degree in Legal Administrative Assistant in 1987 and an AS in Paralegal Studies in 1992. She joined the VPO in 1993, and since that time held the positions of President, Membership, Scholarship, Newsletter, and NFPA Primary. Tina was also a key leader in coordinating real estate seminars for the VPO. During her years with the VPO, Tina worked very hard to get members involved with the operation of the VPO, including encouraging them to consider serving on the Board or as a Committee Chairperson.





Tina was also very passionate about the paralegal profession beyond Vermont, and she once served as Region V Director for NFPA. She devoted 30 years to the paralegal profession both in Vermont and nationally. We all benefit from the work that she did. The profession was quite different when she started with the VPO in 1993 compared to now. Whether she was representing Vermont at national policy meetings, educating attorneys about the distinction between various legal support staff, teaching a title searching class from the land records, or conducting a real estate closing with all the expertise and professionalism of the attorneys at the table (or more), Tina was the ultimate advocate and representative of paralegals everywhere. There are very few paralegals in Vermont who have made such a profound and lasting impact on the development of our profession over the past 30 years.

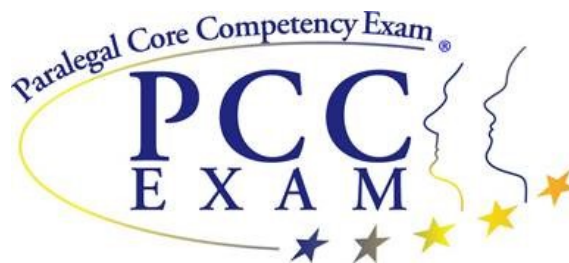
Tina believed that everyone could achieve whatever they set out to do. She selflessly lifted people up and she helped them to become more confident in their abilities. Tina was a role model in the way that she supported other people. Her daughter Maria shared that her mother would come up with a plan and successfully complete whatever she set out to do. That comes as no surprise to the VPO Board or anyone who knew her. No obstacle was too big for Tina – it would just drive her to push that much harder.

Tina left behind quite a legacy. We will miss her.

## Certification

By Krista Cadieux, RP®

VPO Certification Ambassador



Have you thought about earning a paralegal credential? It's a great way to elevate your paralegal career, while learning more about the law. A credential improves your resume and validates for your employer and the legal community that you are indeed an excellent paralegal.

As a VPO Member you are also a Member of the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA), which offers two credentialing exams:

- The [Paralegal CORE Competency Exam™](#) (PCCETM) assesses the core knowledge, skills and abilities of paralegals. Those who pass the PCCETM earn the CRPTM or Core Registered Paralegal® designation after their name.
- The [Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam®](#) (PACE®) is for paralegals who have a comprehensive education and experience as a paralegal. Those who pass the PACE® exam earn the RP® or PACE Registered Paralegal® designation after their name.

Visit the VPO ([vtparalegal.org](http://vtparalegal.org)) or NFPA ([www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)) websites for more information about eligibility, the exams, application fees, etc. Feel free to contact me ([certification@vtparalegal.org](mailto:certification@vtparalegal.org)) with any questions or for help getting started!

The eligibility requirements to take the **PACE®** exam are summarized below:

<b>Education, Military Service, CRP™ credentials</b>	<b>Years of Substantive Paralegal Experience</b>	<b>CLE</b>
Bachelor's Degree in paralegal studies	2 years	None required preceding the application
Bachelor's Degree (any subject) plus paralegal certificate	2 years	None required preceding the application
Bachelor's Degree (any subject)	3 years	None required preceding the application
Associate's Degree in paralegal studies	6 years	None required preceding the application
Associate's Degree (any subject)	7 years	None required preceding the application
Associate's Degree (any subject) plus CRP™ credential plus 2 credential renewals	See PCCE™ requirements	See PCCE™ requirements
Military Paralegal Rank of E6 or higher	See rank requirements	12 hours of NFPA®-approved CLE, including 1 hour of ethics





The eligibility requirements to take the **PCCE™** exam are summarized below:

<b>Education, Military Service</b>	<b>Years of Substantive Paralegal Experience</b>	<b>CLE</b>
Bachelor Degree in paralegal studies	None required	None required preceding the application
Bachelor's Degree (any subject) plus a paralegal certificate	None required	None required preceding the application
Bachelor's Degree (any subject) - no paralegal certificate	6 months	1 hour of NFPA®-approved ethics CLE, within the year preceding application
Associate's Degree in paralegal studies	None required	None required preceding the application
Associate's Degree (any subject) plus a paralegal certificate	None required	None required preceding the application
Associate's Degree (any subject) - no paralegal certificate	1 year	6 hours of NFPA®-approved CLE, including 1 hour of ethics, within the year preceding application
Paralegal Certificate	1 year	6 hours of NFPA®-approved CLE, including 1 hour of ethics, within the year preceding application
Military Paralegal Rate	See rank requirements	1 CLE hour of ethics, within the year preceding application
NFPA® Assurance of Learning Education Partner Students	N/A	N/A
High School or GED	5 years	12 hours of NFPA®-approved CLE, including 1 hour of ethics, within 2 years preceding application

The VPO now has the most recent Study Manuals for the exams that we will lend out to our Members. Feel free to contact me to borrow one. Although the Study Manuals are very helpful to prepare for the exams, candidates are strongly encouraged to study other source materials as well to be fully prepared for the exams.

For any Members who are less than confident in their studying or test-taking abilities, consider the Review Course offered by the Advanced Paralegal Institute (API). Information about the course content, schedule, registration, etc. can be found on NFPA's website ([paralegals.org](http://paralegals.org)) under the Certification tab. The fee for a Review Course is \$395, which includes the Study Manual.

Finally, remember that the VPO offers one Certification Scholarship annually in the amount of \$300. Visit VPO's website for information regarding the application, eligibility, requirements for utilizing the award, etc.

The VPO is committed to supporting your paralegal career, including your goals for certification!

## Real Estate News

### BEC Scam Impersonations

Perhaps one of the largest threats that the real estate industry faces daily is a business email compromise (BEC) scam. As we have learned in past communications, BEC is particularly unforgiving for our business, as threat actors will target entities that use wire transfers as part of their routine. BEC attacks are able to thrive within a housing/commercial equation since many of these transactional exchanges are electronic and may be temptingly large-scale. This fertile playing field makes it appealing for threat actors, and it is no surprise that BEC caused \$2.4 billion in losses during 2021.

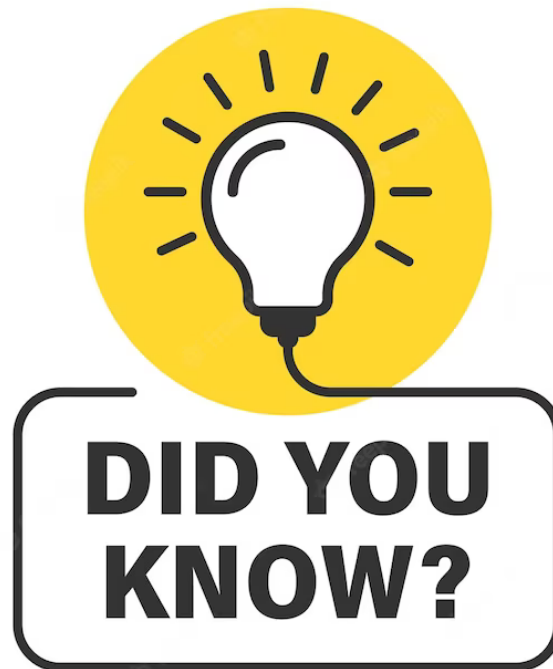
Since these scams lead to a potentially lucrative payday, it should not be at all shocking that there is a new BEC gang impersonating lawyers, by purporting to be “real” lawyers from “real” law firms. The second part to this scam involves targeting legitimate companies with phony invoices that request payments for tens of thousands of dollars. These invoices are carefully crafted with account numbers, bank information, and a company’s VAT ID. Should the recipient of the invoice hesitate, or fail to pay it, another email that impersonates the recipient’s manager is sent. In this follow-up phishing email, the recipient’s “manager” states that an invoice from this firm was expected, and that the initial requested payment should be made since it is “legitimate.”

The follow-up message is a cunning move on the threat actor’s end, as we know that employees have the tendency to act promptly when they are pressed by their managers to complete a task. In any case, to potentially prevent falling victim to this type of scam, it is best to understand and examine these red flags:

- Examine the sender’s address in the email. For example, if you receive an email from a manager, executive, etc., ensure that the display name matches your company’s correct address and the domain for them as well.
  - ♦ Threat actors will often purport to be someone of power, to enforce the element of familiarity, so your alertness is critical in these situations.
- Question “urgent” and “prompt” emails that want you to pay something.
  - ♦ Again, understand this oddity and VERIFY all of these requests with known sources, numbers, etc.
- Similar to bullet two, ask yourself, “Was I even expecting something from this sender?” Phishing emails are often arbitrary and will appear out of the blue.
- Resist pressure to act immediately. Remember, threat actors want you to act quickly in response to a potential problem. When we act in a hasty manner, irrationality can be expected and this can cause us to make detrimental decisions.

**Information was derived from [knowbe4.com](https://www.knowbe4.com) and [breachquest.com](https://www.breachquest.com).**

**Holly Mendez, IT Security Analyst, CATIC**  
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**Per the CAO Member to the Bar dated February 7, 2023:**

a. *Order Amending Rule 4.3(a) of the Vermont Rules for Family Proceedings*  
[https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/PROMULGATED--VRFP4.3\(a\)--STAMPED](https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/PROMULGATED--VRFP4.3(a)--STAMPED)

This Order was promulgated on **February 6, 2023, effective June 5, 2023.**

The amendment to Rule 4.3(a) clarifies provisions related to consolidation of relief-from-abuse cases and domestic cases. The amended language specifies that the rule applies to all actions subject to Rule 4.0 where a relief from abuse action is filed either prior to or following the filing of the action subject to Rule 4.0. The actions subject to Rule 4.0 are set forth in Rule 4.0(a)(1). In addition to divorce and annulment actions, they include legal separation, dissolution of a civil union, parentage, desertion, and nonsupport. The amendment to Rule 4.3(a)(3) automatically consolidates cases where a relief from abuse action is filed after the Rule 4.0 action and a temporary order is issued or, in the case of a denial, a request for hearing is filed, when one of the following three circumstances exists: (1) the complaint in that action is still pending; (2) there are pending post-judgment motions; or (3) the requests for relief in the abuse-prevention action conflict with an outstanding order in the action subject to Rule 4.0.

The CATIC/VATC office has moved. As of March 1st, their new office will be located at Post Office Square, 76 Pearl Street, Suite 203, Essex Junction, VT.

## Tech Talk

*By Louise Reese*

Perhaps this is a “how old were you when you discovered” moment, but sometimes you just don’t know all that a program can do until you need something different from it. I was recently asked to determine a way using Adobe to create links in a chronology with supporting documents so that a click of the link would take you to a specific page in a large pdf. A helpful co-worker shared this tip with me, and in case anyone reading this was not aware of this feature, I hope you find this helpful.

In this instance, the chronology was added to the front of the key documents Pdf. I then highlighted the relevant entry, right clicked, then clicked on “create link.” A menu box pops up and you should make sure “Invisible Rectangle” is chosen so the outline does not remain, then click on Next. Another box will pop up, but you need to first go to the page on which you want the link set. Once you click on that page, you then go to the small pop-up box, and click on “Set Link.” Then to access the link from the chronology or index, you hover your cursor over the text and then click once to be brought to the linked page.



## Vermont Paralegal Organization

P.O Box 5755  
Burlington, VT 05402-5755

[info@vtparalegal.org](mailto:info@vtparalegal.org)  
[www.vtparalegal.org](http://www.vtparalegal.org)

### Board of Directors 2021-2023

		<u>Phone</u>	<u>Fax</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
President:	Laurie S. Noyes	658-2311	658-0042	<a href="mailto:lnoyes@pfclaw.com">lnoyes@pfclaw.com</a>
Vice President:	Melinda Siel	495-5260	860-1208	<a href="mailto:msiel@dunkielsaunders.com">msiel@dunkielsaunders.com</a>
Secretary:	Donna Sims	864-9891	864-6815	<a href="mailto:dsims@sheehyvt.com">dsims@sheehyvt.com</a>
Treasurer:	Elsie Goodrich	860-1003	860-1208	<a href="mailto:egoodrich@dunkielsaunders.com">egoodrich@dunkielsaunders.com</a>
NFPA Primary:	Robyn Sweet, CRP, RP	342-9285		<a href="mailto:vponfpa2@gmail.com">vponfpa2@gmail.com</a>
NFPA Secondary:	VACANT			
Past President:	Lucia White, CP®	242-0451		<a href="mailto:lwhite.home@gmail.com">lwhite.home@gmail.com</a>

### Standing Committee Chairpersons

Membership:	Melinda Siel	495-5260	860-1208	<a href="mailto:msiel@dunkielsaunders.com">msiel@dunkielsaunders.com</a>
Finance:	VACANT			
Professional Liaison:	Carie Tarte, RP®	489-5258	489-5386	<a href="mailto:carie@maleyandmaley.com">carie@maleyandmaley.com</a>
Paralegal Certification Ambassador	Krista Cadieux, RP	859-7059	859-8759	<a href="mailto:kcadieux@dinse.com">kcadieux@dinse.com</a>
Ethics:	Carie Tarte, RP®	489-5258	489-5386	<a href="mailto:carie@maleyandmaley.com">carie@maleyandmaley.com</a>

### Special Committee Chairpersons

Advertising:	Carie Tarte, RP®	489-5258	489-5386	<a href="mailto:carie@maleyandmaley.com">carie@maleyandmaley.com</a>
Bylaws:	Melinda Siel	495-5260	860-1208	<a href="mailto:msiel@dunkielsaunders.com">msiel@dunkielsaunders.com</a>
Continuing Legal:	Carie Tarte, RP®	489-5258	489-5386	<a href="mailto:carie@maleyandmaley.com">carie@maleyandmaley.com</a>
Employment Opportunities:	VACANT			
Legislative Paralegal Affairs:	VACANT			
Newsletter:	Louise Reese	859-7063	859-8763	<a href="mailto:lreese@dinse.com">lreese@dinse.com</a>
Website:	VACANT			
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