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PARALEGAL PRESS

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October/December 2018

How To Use Social Media as an Employee Screening Tool

By Deb Ferguson, NJCP

Social media is a staple in life. It is the way in which many people obtain news, communicate with one another, and even conduct political conversations. Therefore, it makes sense that employers want to utilize social media when conducting employee screening investigations on potential employees. While using social media can be helpful, it is important to be mindful of the ways in which social media can, and should, be used in this delicate process.

Farm; Don't Hunt with Social Media

Social media is a wonderful screening tool that can be used to farm information to create a full picture. The idea is to browse everything available to the public and get to know your candidate through this public persona. As opposed to running criminal background checks and credit reports, which allows you to hunt for specific information, social media is an open-ended search process. Anything can be found through the social media profiles and activities, whether the information is more of a personal nature or even a professional nature.

Therefore, do not be closed-minded when perusing a candidate's public profiles and activities online. Reviewing information such as profiles, as well as postings, Reddit activity, Twitter follows, and even Instagram and Snapchat activity can create an in-depth picture of whom you are potentially hiring.

Stay Within Legal Guidelines

Since social media is an open book for those who offer public glimpses into their lives and activities, it is easy to get swept

away in the idea that anything goes. However, this is still an employment situation with federal and state guidelines in place to protect the rights of employment candidates.

For instance, it is illegal to mandate an employment candidate provide you credentials to access their social media accounts. Employees have the right to privacy. Unless they have purposefully, and willfully added you as a friend or follower, you can only have the same access any member of the general public has to the candidate's social media.

In addition, hiring decisions cannot be based on discriminatory facts, such as age, race, creed, sexual orientation, or other similar factors. Social media gives you an insight to all of these types of issues surrounding a potential candidate. Therefore, tread lightly and do your best to only focus on the activities at hand, as opposed to facts that you know to be discriminatory.

Finally, it is best to have a clear policy in place for your hiring staff and management regarding the use of social media for employee screening purposes. This is something to design with your HR team and legal team to ensure you are following the guidelines set forth by any and all laws affecting the hiring process.

Social Media's Standard Practices

Beyond the legal issues, there are several standard practices that may be a good idea to follow when researching potential or even

(continued on page 3)

Calendar

This:



Board Meetings

October 18, 2018
November 8, 2018
December 13, 2018
January 10, 2019

Dinner Meetings

November 27, 2018
January 15, 2019

Paralegal Educational Symposium

March 29, 2019

Meet Your Judges and Law Clerks

October 23, 2018



Inside this issue:

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New Members

SJPA extends a warm welcome to our new members and we look forward to your success with our organization and your paralegal career!

- Tiziana Calligari, Associate
- Cecilia Calvo, Student
- Maria Crincoli, Student
- Jasmine Fisher, Student
- Laura Frias, Student
- Brooke Golec, Student
- Sarah Gravener, Student
- Janice Y. Kennedy, Associate
- Philip Lynch, Student
- Zachary Standig, Student
- Karolina Tomicki, Voting
- Winston Willis, Voting
- Gretchen Wilson, Student



October

- Charlene Bates
- Sarah Gravener
- Elsie Louie

November

- Andrew Ballistreri



December

- Kim Bracken
- Laura Frias
- Philip Lynch
- Gretchen Wilson
- Jennifer Vento



2018 - 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

- Christi L. Valerio-Rainey, NJCP President
- Margari Aviles, NJCP Vice President
- Vacant Recording Secretary
- Judith Alvelo, NJCP Treasurer
- Stephanie L. Miller, NJCP NFPA Primary Rep
- Sue Merewitz, NJCP NFPA Secondary Rep
- Betsy Lindenberg, NJCP Parliamentarian
- Stacey Devine, NJCP Corres. Secretary

Policy Committees

- Betsy Lindenberg, NJCP & Stephanie Miller, NJCP Delivery of Paralegal Services
- Stephanie Miller, NJCP Membership
- Vacant Nominations & Elections
- Vacant Pro Bono
- Sue Merewitz, NJCP Professional Development

Administrative Committees

- Vacant Continuing Education
- Sue Merewitz, NJCP Fundraising/Marketing
- Sue Merewitz, NJCP Job Bank
- Vacant Meetings
- Janice Kennedy Editor, Newsletter
- Vacant Programs/Speakers
- Christi L. Valerio-Rainey, NJCP/Betsy Lindenberg, NJCP Public Relations/Website
- Deb Ferguson, NJCP Paralegal Edu. Symposium

Ad Hoc/Special Committees

- Betsy Lindenberg, NJCP NJSBA Liaison

THE PARALEGAL PRESS

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

- Janice Y. Kennedy Editor

Please submit all articles to the editor at:
janice.kennedy@njcourts.gov.

The deadline for all submissions for the January issue is December 15th!

The opinions expressed in the Paralegal Press are those of the writers and not necessarily of the Editor or the South Jersey Paralegal Association.

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SAVE THE DATE!

SJPA's 7th ANNUAL PARALEGAL EDUCATIONAL

We are back at the Double Tree for our fourth year in a row and we have an amazing line-up of speakers, as well as wonderful vendors, prizes, and networking. Mark your calendar now!

Visit sjparalegals.org for more information.

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New Jersey Certified Paralegal (NJCP®)

The South Jersey Paralegal Association's Board of Directors adopted and approved the NJCP (New Jersey Certified Paralegal) Plan in October, 2010.

The NJCP credential is a voluntary certification for paralegals who are members of the South Jersey Paralegal Association, and meet the qualifications set forth in the NJCP plan. Please see our website for information and forms pertaining to the program.

Betsy Lindenberg, NJCP is the committee chair. This is a reminder to all members who hold the NJCP credentials that you need to renew your credentials every TWO YEARS. Reminder notices are emailed to members on a continual basis. If you do not renew your credentials and they lapse, you are not permitted to use the NJCP initials after your name until you re-apply. Please remember to send in COPIES of your certificates along with a completed form outlining the courses and CLE hours you have taken. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any Board member.

SJPA has proudly certified the following members for the NJCP credential. **Congratulations to all of our NJCP Members!**

- Lisa Renee Aberman, NJCP
- Judith Alvelo, NJCP
- Margari Aviles, NJCP
- Kim Bracken, NJCP
- Noreen M. Bratton, NJCP
- Debra J. Brigher, NJCP
- Brian Butwin, NJCP
- Loribeth Conda, NJCP
- Deanna S. DeFeo, NJCP

- Stacey M. Devine, NJCP
- Michele Enley, NJCP
- Deb Ferguson, NJCP
- Anthony J. Iannini, RP, NJCP
- Betsy Lindenberg, NJCP
- Nicole Longo, NJCP
- Susan R. Merewitz, NJCP
- Stephanie Miller, NJCP
- Dawn Moskalow, NJCP

- Deborah A. Naglee, NJCP
- Marie B. Norcross, NJCP
- Jean Passalacqua, NJCP
- Rebecca Lynn Reedy, NJCP
- Laura Schwartzkopf, NJCP
- Nancy Z. Seldomridge, NJCP
- Pamela B. Tate, NJCP
- Christi L. Valerio-Rainey, NJCP
- Jodi Zaharoni, NJCP

Board Bytes...



The Board continues to work hard to ensure that we enrich your professional career no matter whether you are an entry level or experienced paralegal.

President, Christi L. Valerio-Rainey, NJCP is busy organizing the new board and planning for a successful 2018-2019. Discussions also encompassed the upcoming PES and future conventions.

Treasurer, Judy Alvelo, NJCP will be meeting with the Board to discuss and complete this year's Budget. Judy provides the Board and our members with comprehensive fiscal reports each meeting.

NFPA Primary Stephanie Miller, NJCP is in the process of obtaining votes on Agenda Topics for the 2018 NFPA Convention and Annual Policy Meeting.

PES Chair Deb Ferguson, NJCP has scheduled the PES event is working with her committee to secure vendors and devise a program of CLE's for all attendees.

Membership Chair Stephanie Miller, NJCP, reports that ??? new members joined SJPA in the months of June through September.

Professional Development Chair Sue Merewitz together with Karen Kapsimalis presented to the Paralegal Students at Rowan BCC on September 24, 2018.

The 2018-2019 Board Members are dedicated to serving you, our members. If you have any suggestions or comments, please "contact us" on our website, www.sjparalegals.org.

BOARD MEETINGS

2018

November 8
December 13

2019

January 10
February 7
March 14
April 11
May 9
June 14

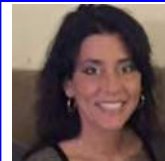
DINNER MEETINGS

November 27, 2018 - Carlucci's
January 15, 2019 - Carlucci's
March 19, 2019 - Carlucci's
May 21, 2019 - Election of Officers, Carlucci's
June 18, 2019 - Installation Dinner, Tavistock

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TO SPEAK TO THE
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"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet."

Steven Hawking



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By: Christi L. Valerio-Rainey, NJCP

As a new fiscal year begins for our association, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our members for their support in electing me as your president for another term. I would also like to extend sincere gratitude to all of our sponsors and supporting law firms for their continued support of SJPA. Your continued dedication helps our association to thrive and remain successful.

As your President, I always have a full agenda! The goals this term for our organization are to review membership, sponsorship, and NJCP to ensure that everyone is getting the right services and attention for their fees. SJPA will also be speaking to the PANJ (Paralegals of New Jersey) board members in hopes of combining our two conventions, between South Jersey and North Jersey, as was done in the past.

Board and committee chairs will also be speaking with members during dinner meetings and events in order to gain a clearer perspective on what they feel the association could improve upon. Our ultimate goal is to have every member involved in some form or another.

And speaking of involvement, as you are aware, some of our board members chair more than one board position, and they all work extremely hard to provide the services our members deserve. Member and sponsor involvement provides SJPA the opportunity to host bi-monthly dinner meetings and offer CLE's to the paralegals who hold the NJCP credential. Becoming involved in your organization provides the avenue of becoming more invested in your career and the paralegal profession as a whole.

All of our upcoming dinner meetings will be held at Carlucci's Waterfront in Mt. Laurel, with the exception of the Installation of Officers which will be held at Tavistock Country Club in Haddonfield. Please see our calendar of events for all of those dates!

While we're on the subject of events, if you attend any SJPA event and happen to take any photos, submit them to my attention by email at christivalerio@yahoo.com. We would like to include these photos in our newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn page. Stay connected to SJPA through social media, as we update those outlets regularly.

Lastly, should you wish to become part of our official board, please feel free to contact me directly. We can always use your assistance in any area!



(continued from Cover)

current employees on social media. While the following concepts may not be illegal they may put you into a generally difficult position, at best, or be unethical, at worst.

1. Do not "friend" employees or candidates on social media. This creates a level of personal connection that may be detrimental, especially if any adverse action is to be taken with that employee in the future.
2. Speak to the potential employee or candidate about the findings before making any decision. Sometimes social media is not truly an accurate portrayal of an individual. Maybe a photo was posted without the person's permission. Maybe that photo was photoshopped and is not a truthful photo. Maybe the person was hacked and information on their social media account is inaccurate as a result.
3. Be cautious when making decisions based on findings on social media to make sure there is no breach of any legal duties.

It is not a bad idea to utilize all available resources to get to know the potential employee, however, when utilizing social media, make sure you are appropriately cautious in your approach. If you are in need of a company who specializes in employee screening and using all available resources while abiding by state and local laws, contact us at 856.429.0325. Our investigative experts will be happy to help you make sound hiring decisions without compromising ethics or legal requirements.



From the Editor

Hello to all members, sponsors, supporting individuals and organizations. I hope this finds you all well and rested from Summer activities! The kids are back in school and September has finally given way to Fall with the beautiful colors and smells of the season!

I wanted to drop a quick note to inform you that I will be resuming my duties as Newsletter Chair, and will be issuing the Paralegal Press on a Quarterly basis. So please feel free to drop me a message by email at janniey@comcast.net, if there is anything that you may want to be placed in the newsletter. It could be a funny story, a promotion, or a new job. Maybe your firm is moving to a new location and they want to get the word out. It could be just about anything! We'd love to hear from you all!

One final quick note . . . If you don't see your name listed under birthdays or NJCP and your membership is current, please drop me a line so I can add a correction to the next issue.

Wishing you all a safe Halloween, Thankful Thanksgiving, and Peaceful Holidays!

2018 EXECUTIVE BOARD



L-R: Judith Alvelo, Treasurer; Margari Aviles, Vice President; Christi L. Valerio-Rainey, President; Hon. Octavia Melendez, J.S.C.; Stephanie L. Miller, NFPA Primary Rep.; Sue Merewitz, NFPA Secondary Rep.; Betsy L. Lindenberg, Parliamentarian (Missing: Stacey Devine, Corresponding Secretary)



Betsy Lindenberg and Sue Merewitz



L-R: Noreen Bratton, Kelly Ann Malamisura, Tina Stargell



Speaker-Andrew Kushner, Esq. and Sue Merewitz



L-R: Christi Valerio-Rainey, Deb Naglee, Joseph Buonadonna



L-R: Michelle Enley, Betsy Lindenberg, Noreen Bratton



L-R: Stephanie Miller, Brooke Golec, Student, Therese O'Brian, Jon DiPippio from Harris Investigations

SEPTEMBER DINNER MEETING

A special "thank you" goes out to Harris Investigations for sponsoring our September Dinner Meeting. We are grateful that you continue to be such a huge supporter of our organization.

We also would like to thank Andrew Kushner, Esquire, for being our speaker for the evening. Mr. Kushner delivered a great deal of information regarding Wills and Estates. Many of the attendees were impressed with his wealth of knowledge and providing recent changes in the laws regarding this topic.

Preparing for the future regardless of your personal situation is imperative. Make sure you have a Will, Living Will, and Power of Attorney prepared so that your wishes are followed. Don't leave those decisions to your loved ones!



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