

President's Message

by Judith Eschberger, Esq.

Access To Information Increases

PAGR has been working since September, 2001 with Kathy Sullivan, Executive Director of the Legislative Data Processing Center (LDPC) to gain access to information that we use in our everyday practice as lobbyists. True to form the wheels of government move slowly and you don't always get everything that you ask for, but we've made progress.

Under the watchful eye of our immediate past President, Ted Mowatt, a request was made for online access to the following information: Acts; House and Senate floor amendments; voting schedules; supplemental calendars; bill analyses; fiscal notes; roll call tally sheets; updated House Committee meeting schedules and Journals.

A new website for the Pennsylvania General Assembly was introduced a couple weeks ago. It includes access to statutes dating back to 1990 along with updated House Committee meeting schedules. There will be a continuing discussion as to whether the House amendments and the House voting schedule will be made available. Representative Samuelson indicated that he intends to send a letter to the Bi-partisan Management Committee asking them to consider this request.

As for what remains unavailable, the Senate floor amendments and supplemental calendars which are not currently available to Senate staff online remain elusive.

There are no plans to make them available to either the staff or the public. Additionally, LDPC has access to House fiscal notes and bill summaries, but does not get that information from the Senate. The House roll call votes are available in the back of the House chamber, but not available to staff and the Senate votes are not available online. The bill analyses are done by each caucus and not provided to LDPC. Lastly, it is unlikely that the Journals which are used as a research tool will ever be made available. Although the committee has determined that they are taking this matter off of their agenda because they believe that they have satisfied a number of our requests, PAGR will continue to pursue the issue of the House amendments and the voting schedule with Representative Samuelson as well as the House fiscal notes and bill summaries.

2003 Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

President.....Judy Eschberger
Vice President.....Brian Barno
Secretary.....Stephanie Larkin
Treasurer.....Deb Kisela

Board of Directors

Association.....Peter Calcara

Corporate.....Mary Ellen McMillen
Lawyer.....Jill Kusic
Independent.....Gregg Taylor
At Large.....Mark McManus
At Large.....Amy Leader

Immediate Past President
Ted Mowatt

Executive Director
Christine Corrigan

Notice of Proposed By-Law Changes

For the first time since they were initially drafted, the PAGR Board of Directors has approved a comprehensive rewrite of the association's by-laws. These changes, which update the 12-year old governing rules, reflect over two years of work by the By-laws Committee, and in particular David Tive. They will be presented for members' approval at the last membership meeting of the year, December 1, 2003 at the Firehouse. The proposed changes have been posted on the PAGR website, www.pagr.org.

Please feel free to contact the PAGR office or the chair of the By-Laws Committee, Ted Mowatt, (Tmowatt@wannerassoc.com) with any comments or concerns prior to the meeting.

Welcome New Members

Kristen Ballentine
Alzheimer's Association

Ruth Simons
Simons & Company Inc.

Chad C. Harvey
Modular Building Systems Association

Shelly Whitcomb
PA State Association of County Controllers

Board Meetings:

- Thursday, January 8
- Thursday, March 4
- Thursday, May 6
- Thursday, July 1
- Thursday, September 2
- Thursday, November 4

BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD 9:00-10:00 AM AT THE OFFICE OF OUR PRESIDENT, JUDY ESCHBERGER, 600 N. 2ND STREET, SUITE 300, HARRISBURG

Membership Meetings:

- Monday, February 2
- Monday, April 5
- Monday, June 7
- Monday, October 4
- Monday, December 6

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE HELD 11:30AM-12:30PM ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE FIREHOUSE RESTAURANT, 606 N. 2ND STREET, HARRISBURG.