

# *the*WRITS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUCKS COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION



SPRING 2017

## **THE BUCKS COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER: Two Years Later**

**Commissioner  
Diane Ellis-Marseglia**

**2017 Mock Trial  
Competition**







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# contents

SPRING 2017

## President's

### Message

Page 4



## The Bucks County Justice Center: Two Years Later

Since it's now been over two years since the largest public works project in Bucks County history first opened its doors...

Page 8



## 2017 Mock Trial Competition

The Young Lawyers Division of the Bucks County Bar Association recently sponsored Bucks County's District level for Pennsylvania's annual Mock Trial Competition...

Page 12



## Maria Judith Rodríguez-Martayak: A Strong Advocate for Access to Justice for the Spanish-Speaking Community

Attorney Maria Judith Rodríguez-Martayak believes deeply...

Page 16



## Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW: Interview with the Commissioner

I have known Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia going back to the time when the old Courthouse was the new modern...

Page 20



## The Hungry Lawyer: Barley Sheaf Farm Restaurant

The Inn at Barley Sheaf Farm advertises itself as being in New Hope but, really, it's Holicong or Mechanicsville, definitely...

Page 22



## Driving Clients to your Law Practice with Blogging and Social Media

As you build your law practice, either inside a firm or on your own, it is critical to make sure you are viewed as an expert...

Page 29

## Also in This Issue:

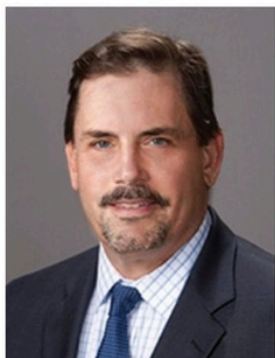
- BCBF St. Patrick's Day Fundraiser Page 14
- BCBA Business Law Institute Page 18
- BCBA Opening of Assizes Page 26
- Tech Tips From a Recovering Geek: Page 30
- Music Snob's Top 5 List Page 31

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**David Truelove**  
Bucks County Bar  
Association President

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Dear BCBA Members:

Every Spring for the last several years, the Pennsylvania State Legislature and Governor have wrestled with providing sufficient revenue to fund various initiatives and projects. The Great Recession of 2008–2009 certainly set the stage for crafting bare-bones and austere budgets, with

resultant cuts to education, infrastructure, welfare, and other departments and programs. While in the past the Spring was a time of optimism, anticipating the verdant blast of Spring colors, and the onset of another baseball season, much of that eagerness has been supplanted by the dread of another dragged-out and cumbersome (and usually unsatisfying) state budget passage drama.

2017 is no different from the budget years of the recent past, except as it pertains to the legal profession. While in the past a tax on legal services has been discussed and contemplated (and in 2016 part of a potential budget passage compromise), 2017 brings with it the clear possibility that a legal services tax may be part of an overall tax overhaul, purportedly designed to ease the burden on taxpayers paying property taxes to support schools, local municipalities, and county government. Key to the proposed legislation is that the school property tax, ONLY, will be allegedly offset by an amalgam of tax increases and imposing taxes on new revenue sources, including legal services.

The impetus behind this legislation (Senate Bill 76) is the notion that the property tax as a method to fund Education has become onerous and overly burdensome. No one likes paying taxes—no one can argue that point, reasonably. However, the truth is that the bulk of increased Education costs are imposed as a result of mandates emanating from the state, not local, level. School tax increases are limited by Act 1 of 2006, as amended and modified by Act 25 of 2011, and all of those increases are consumed by pension costs, unfunded/underfunded mandates (special education, for example), and charter school payments. Local school districts have no control or say in how these costs are imposed. Simply stated, the legislature is attempting to make up for its own inability to right the fiscal ship of state.

In addition, many studies and articles have reviewed the proposed legislation and have concluded that its promise of a dollar for dollar replacement of lost property tax revenue is a false one. The proposed legislation includes the provision to “broaden” the Sales and Use Tax (“SUT”) to “include more goods and services” (including legal services) and increasing the SUT from 6 to 7 percent. The state’s Personal Income Tax (“PIT”) would increase from 3.07 to 4.95 percent, and the Hotel Occupancy Tax would increase from 6 to 7 percent. The legislation also relies on continuing casino revenue to eliminate school property taxes, a source

### **“Access to justice is a basic constitutional right that should not be taxed.”**

not necessarily the most stable in providing a reliable funding stream. Non-lawyer professionals not subject to the tax (for now) have also weighed in, calling SB 76 a “horrible idea” for Pennsylvania taxpayers. (See April 12, 2016 column in “CPA Now,” the publication of the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants (“PICPA”) entitled, “Don’t Believe the Rhetoric ! ‘Property Tax Independence’ Is a Dreadful Bill” [www.picpa.org/articles](http://www.picpa.org/articles).)

One can see that once these new taxing sources are introduced, the ease to increase and expand from the same sources, and to hike the rates, will also increase.

The Pennsylvania Bar Association (“PBA”) and several county bar organizations have weighed in on the subject, arming themselves with data and arguments which compel an objective observer to conclude that SB 76 is just a bad idea. As noted by the PBA, legal services are not a commodity and, moreover, that “[A]ccess to justice is a basic constitutional right that should not be taxed.” Basic legal services would be affected: obtaining workers’ compensation and Social Security benefits; avoiding home foreclosure; gaining court-ordered protection from an abusive spouse or parent; obtaining fair and equal access to fundamental rights; fighting a property assessment action by a local government; dealing with a hostile landlord or tenant; having a simple will

## We Welcome Your Feedback!

Thanks for your interest in *theWRITS*.  
Please send all comments, questions,  
submissions to: [WritsEditor@BucksBar.org](mailto:WritsEditor@BucksBar.org).







## Judge Friedman Receives Jewish Law Day Award

On April 6, 2017, at the 35th Annual Jewish Law Day program in Philadelphia, the Judge Norma Shapiro Award was presented to the Hon. Rochelle S. ("Shelly") Friedman. Bucks County's own Commonwealth Court Judge is well deserving of this recognition. The Bucks County Bar Association offers its heartfelt congratulations. 🖊️

written, or probating a will. (See PBA Talking Points—"Sales Tax on Legal Services," [www.pabar.org](http://www.pabar.org).)

My Southeastern Pennsylvania counterparts have also eloquently added their voices to the cause. Montgomery Bar Association President Eric Smith has noted that "the costs of implementing and reporting the tax carried by lawyers and law firms will ultimately be passed on to clients as either a service fee or a higher hourly rate..." and that the tax will "discourage the retention of counsel, causing more *pro se* litigation, and thereby burdening the Court system" (April 6, 2017 letter from Eric Smith to SB 76 primary sponsor, Senator David Argall). Smith also pointed out a significant flaw in the legislation, noting that only three areas of legal service are exempt from the tax: "business to business," domestic relations matters, and criminal defense matters.

None of the states surrounding Pennsylvania tax legal services, a key element noted by Philadelphia Bar Association Chancellor Deborah Gross in an April 4 communication to her membership. The PBA also noted that in 1987, Florida enacted a sales tax on services, including legal services, which proved so unpopular that it was repealed in less than a year. The PBA further notes that "[I]f Pennsylvania enacts a sales tax on legal services, it will be the only state in the nation with such a tax" (PBA Talking Points).

Many will scoff at the idea of lawyers "suffering" due to the imposition of a legal services tax. However, small and solo practitioners will be burdened with administrative responsibilities for monitoring and collecting taxes on fees, especially since many small and solo office practices engage in services not exempt from the tax (i.e., Estates and Probate, Workers' Compensation, etc.). Other professions currently not included in the legislative scheme should not assume that they will be perpetually immune from a tax on their services. Experience has shown that once a tax is implemented, new demands for increased revenue result in expanding the tax base (i.e., finding more services to tax), and increasing the taxation rates.

Pennsylvania, like many other public entities, is facing a significant challenge in finding revenue to fund all of the many projects and programs it oversees and for which it is responsible. Unfortunately, taxing legal services is an inadequate and unwise source from which to shore up deficiencies in a short-sighted attempt to appease a weary and burdened taxpayer population. The responsibility for the flawed system rests with those who created it, and who now run away from the opportunity to craft any really effective and long-term solution. A proposed tax on legal services is ineffective politics and bad policy. 🖊️

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## From the Editor...



### Proposed Federal Budget Eliminates All Legal Services Funding

*"I'm trying to think, but nothing happens"*

I was certain that this was the official quote that accompanied the release of the proposed Federal Budget for fiscal year 2018 on March 16. My bad. In fact, our awesome fact checkers

here at *the Writs* point out that the above quote was from Curly Howard of the Three Stooges, while the *actual* quote had something to do with keeping Americans safe.

I have read many commentators' opinions on the proposed Budget, especially with regard to the cutting of 31% of the funding for the Environmental Protection Agency, the complete elimination of funding for various arts and cultural agencies as well as the Global Climate Change Initiative, and the likely abandonment of programs such as Meals on Wheels and LIHEAP. Yet I don't recall anyone that equated these cuts with a general warm, fuzzy and all around safer feeling.

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**"Legal Aid of Southeastern PA receives about 25% of its budget from Legal Services Corporation and another 20% from various other federal programs which are also to be drastically cut or eliminated in the proposed federal budget."**

Legal Services Corporation (LSC), "America's Partner for Equal Justice," is a non-profit organization established in 1974. It is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low income Americans. The size of the population financially eligible for their assistance has unfortunately increased dramatically over the past ten years. The legal services it provides include: family law matters and helping victims of domestic violence; wrongful eviction, housing and mortgage foreclosure cases; consumer issues; and employment matters. In 2015, LSC closed over 755,000

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**"Cutting funding for this vital program essentially denies equal access to justice and risks the well-being of many vulnerable residents in every corner of our state."**

cases, a majority of which were on behalf of women and the elderly. LSC also helps military families and has a website, [StatesideLegal.org](http://StatesideLegal.org), specifically to provide legal resources and assistance to veterans.

LSC distributes 90 percent of its total funding to 133 independent non-profit legal aid programs throughout the country. One such program is Legal Aid of Southeastern PA (LASP), which admirably serves Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties. This publication routinely and proudly features articles on the good works of LASP and its attorney and lay staff members and volunteers. A profile of BCBA member Judith Rodriguez-Martyak, who for decades has graciously donated her valuable time and expertise, appears in this issue on page 16.

According to Executive Director Elizabeth Fritsch, Esq., LASP receives about 25% of its budget from Legal Services Corporation and another 20% from various other federal programs which are also to be drastically cut or eliminated in the proposed federal budget. Clearly, if 45% of LASP's funding were to disappear, "thousands of southeastern Pennsylvania residents will lose access to desperately needed legal services."

Fortunately, and almost immediately, many organizations and individual voices were raised in support of legal aid funding and against the proposed cuts. The American Bar Association "is outraged" and is "calling on Congress to restore full funding to LSC." The Pennsylvania Bar Association points out that LSC provided nearly \$12 million to Pennsylvania's legal services organizations in 2016, representing more than 82,000 cases. "Cutting funding for this vital program essentially denies equal access to justice and risks the well-being of many vulnerable residents in every corner of our state."

General Counsel for some 185 corporations signed a letter asking Congress to oppose the elimination of funding to





LSC. Former Governor Dick Thornburgh wrote an op-ed discussing the importance of civil legal aid. Partners from more than 150 major law firms signed a letter to the director of the OMB stressing the importance of their own partnerships with legal aid organizations. Finally, the Deans of more than 160 law schools sent a letter to Congressional leaders identifying legal aid as a vital constituent service.

We share the serious concerns of the LASP and this broad cross-section of the local and national legal community. We believe in justice for all, not just for those who can afford it.

Don't be a stooge. Think, act and speak out on behalf of legal aid funding.

For additional information, contact LASP Development Director Ann Tydeman-Solomon at 610-275-5400 ext. 123, [asolomon@lasp.org](mailto:asolomon@lasp.org), or consider making a donation: <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/LASP>. 🐘

—Scott L. Feldman

## Need a Lawyer?

Welcome to the **Bucks County Bar Association's Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS)** serving all of Bucks County. The LRIS is a public service of the non-profit Bucks County Bar Association. Each year the LRIS responds to thousands of callers, referring them to attorneys with experience in the appropriate area of law or to area agencies able to provide assistance.

Persons identified as needing legal representation and who do not claim inability to pay an attorney will be referred by LRIS to a participating attorney. LRIS participation is open to all Bucks County Bar Association members having their primary office in Bucks County. You can contact the LRIS at **215-348-9413**. 🐘



## New BCBA Executive Director, Stacey Mulholland

The Bucks County Bar Association is pleased to announce the hiring of Stacey Mulholland as its new Executive Director. Stacey's hiring brings to a successful conclusion the search process that began last November with the Board's empaneling of an Executive Director Search Committee, which I was privileged to chair. Over the course of the ensuing months, our Committee evaluated the Executive Director job description, the Association's needs and our own expectations in a new Executive Director. After advertising the position, our Committee reviewed over 100 resumes and conducted two rounds of interviews, concluding the process at the end of March.

Stacey has served as the temporary Executive Director since February, so her transition into the permanent position will be pretty seamless. In a later issue of *the Writs*, we will ask Stacey to tell us more about herself and her outlook for the Association, but briefly Stacey most recently worked (for six years) as Deputy Chief of Staff/District Director for former Congressman Michael Fitzpatrick. Prior to that, Stacey worked for two Bucks County non-profit organizations. She and her family live in Plumstead Township, not far from our Doylestown office. The Association is in very good hands with Stacey now at the helm.

The next time you have the opportunity, please welcome Stacey to our Association. 🐘

—Timothy J. Duffy





# THE BUCKS COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER

## Two Years Later



— By —  
Chris Serpico

Since it's now been over two years since the largest public works project in Bucks County history first opened its doors to the public on January 10, 2015, your crackerjack investigative reporters here at *the Writs* thought it an opportune time to make inquiries into how things have been going, and what might be expected to unfold at the "new" Justice Center and the "old" Courthouse — now known officially as "The Administration Building."

President Judge Jeffrey Finley feels that most of those who work in the Justice Center are pleased with the building. Although as with any new structure, there have been issues that have arisen, he has heard mostly positive comments from Justice Center employees as well as the general public. In fact, he had a unique chance to hear from the man in the street recently when he spent a day on jury duty as Juror #22. He found the jury room to be very comfortable, and observed most of the jurors using the high tech waiting area to stay connected to their jobs or their loved ones.

He continues to hear nice things about the appearance and the aesthetics of the lobby areas, which were intentionally designed to have a "Bucks County feel,"



*As for future plans relating to the fifth floor, Finley believes that the decision to leave that area unfinished may prove to be fortuitous as lessons learned from the first two years of operating the building can be applied in the future when the fifth floor is built out.*

with Mercer tiles on display throughout the building as well as the strategic placement of municipal emblems in certain areas.

He also praised the work of county maintenance workers who have "busted their butts to address any concerns."



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*Michael L. Saile, Jr., Esq.*

*John F. Cordisco, Esq.*

*The goal was to consolidate county agencies and service providers (to the extent possible) under one roof to save money and to make those providers more accessible.*

Among the problem areas which we talked about were the frequent disruptions attributable to faulty elevators; and the report of water seeping in to some of the judges' chambers from the ceiling.

Judge Finley confirmed that the elevators had been an on-going problem and had caused a great deal of inconvenience.

However, the situation seems to have resolved with the County Commissioner's decision to re-hire the original elevator vendors to once again service the elevators. Most of the problems causing the disruption to elevator service were software related, which the interim vendor was having difficulty addressing.



Mercer tiles enhance the fireplace located in the first floor lunch area.

He also confirmed that there had been some water problems in a few of the judges' chambers relating to snow melt that had built up and evaporated through the ventilation system.

**A**s for future plans relating to the fifth floor, he believes that the decision to leave that area unfinished may prove to be fortuitous as lessons learned from the first two years of operating the building can be applied in the future when the fifth floor is





*“The taxpayers of Bucks County spent a lot of money to build the Justice Center; they should be able to feel free to come in and see it, and to feel comfortable inside it.”*

built out. For example, it's clear that the Ceremonial Courtroom on the fourth floor is not large enough to accommodate some of the galleries for especially noteworthy trials, or for certain public events. Future plans call for the construction of five more courtrooms on the fifth floor, and he would anticipate at least one or perhaps two of those courtrooms having a greater seating capacity than the 220 people that can currently sit in Courtroom 4202.

As for the Administration Building, things seem to be moving along on schedule. A “master plan” was initially drawn up to “retrofit” that building, one floor at a time, to cause as little disruption as possible. The goal was to consolidate county agencies and service providers (to the extent possible) under one roof to save money and to make those providers more accessible. According to Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia, “best practice” would dictate locating the Children







The Fifth Floor awaits future expansion needs.

and Youth Social Services Agency closer to the Justice Center rather than in the Warwick location where it's currently situated.

In addition to Children and Youth, it is the County's intention to relocate Mental Health and Intellectual

Disability, Drug and Alcohol, Human Resources, Area Agency on Aging, and the Controller's Office into the old Courthouse. (In fact, the County has sold the Controller's Office located at Broad and Court Streets and is expected to complete the Controller's move sometime in 2019.)

**I**n an effort to generate public interest and appreciation for the Justice Center, Mary Smithson, Bucks County's Clerk of Courts, has been instrumental in bringing in artwork, both from young artists in area high schools as well as from disabled painters, and displaying their efforts in the Justice Center lobby.

Judge Finley commended her efforts as a way of making Bucks County citizens feel more "at home" in their Courthouse.

As he remarked to me in closing our conversation, "The taxpayers of Bucks County spent a lot of money to build the Justice Center; they should be able to feel free to come in and see it, and to feel comfortable inside it." ✎



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JUSTICE JOHN MARSHALL  
MCCULLOCH VS. MARYLAND, 1819



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## 2017 MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

— By Breandan Nemec —

The Young Lawyers Division of the Bucks County Bar Association recently sponsored Bucks County's District level for Pennsylvania's annual Mock Trial Competition. The Commonwealth's competition is one of the largest in the nation – this year 294 teams competed, comprised of students from 252 high school and middle schools. Locally, Bucks County entered 17 schools at the district level.

This year, the writers created a hypothetical centered around the criminal prosecution of Taylor Edsel, an employee of Nash Electromotive, Inc., a vehicle manufacturer. A criminal complaint was filed against Edsel alleging arson in the first degree, in violation of 18 Pa.C.S. §3301(a)(1) (ii), after Edsel was found at the Nash plant immediately following a fire which reduced the plant and the company's revolutionary new car, which was about to hit the market, to ashes. The school teams, comprised of six students for each trial, took turns trying the case as the Commonwealth and alternately, the defense. The student-attorneys had



The school teams took turns trying the case as the Commonwealth and alternately, the defense.

to argue evidentiary issues such as the admissibility of prior bad acts (including arson), and the admissibility of other evidence including web browser search history and text messages sent by the Defendant.

Following the initial rounds of the competition, seven teams moved on to the playoff rounds, culminating in our four district semi-finalists: Bensalem, Central Bucks South (the 2016 defending champs), Council Rock South and Central Bucks East. After two hard-fought semi-finals, the championship round pitted Bensalem versus Central Bucks South. The Honorable John J.

Rufe presided over the final trial in which Bensalem High School emerged as the victor. For the second straight year, our district winner then went on to further success at the regional level and beyond. Bensalem defeated teams at the regional level from Chester and Delaware Counties, and proceeded to represent our region at the state competition, which took place in the Dauphin County Courthouse in Harrisburg. Following a round 1 victory, Bensalem eventually





*The Bensalem High School team took top honors in Bucks County and the region before moving on to represent the region at the state competition.*

succumbed to Roman Catholic High School, one of this year's final two teams. Congratulations to Bensalem High School, and attorney-advisers Denise Bowman and Felicity Hanks, on their success in this year's competition!

**A** big shout out and thank you to this year's coordinator, Mike Martin, who was able to fit in this obligation between the birth of his second child (congrats Mike and Cassi!), a job move, and a relocation from Philadelphia to Bucks County! On behalf of the Young Lawyers Division, I would also like to thank each and every judge and attorney who volunteered their time to help with this year's competition. It is a great sacrifice every year to put aside professional and personal obligations and make the time to stay late into the evening in Doylestown, but it is appreciated, and the competitors are provided with the only trials in the state in which the presiding judge and jurors are comprised entirely of practicing attorneys. Thanks are also due to everyone in the Justice Center who helped coordinate the courtrooms and those who were asked to stay late to accommodate the after-hours traffic.

The 2017 iteration was a great success and the YLD is looking forward to hosting another successful competition in 2018. Congratulations to all of the student competitors and thanks again to everyone who made it possible. 📌



*Bucks County Finalists: Teams from Bensalem (top) and Central Bucks South (bottom) High Schools*



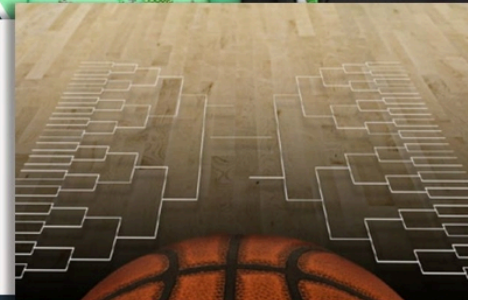
# BUCKS COUNTY BAR FOUNDATION ST. PATRICK'S DAY FUNDRAISER

March 16, 2017



## March Madness

**Congratulations to Bill Longo, winner of this year's YLD March Madness bracket challenge.** Bill had the most points, including picking the champion, University of North Carolina, as well as another of the Final Four teams. Larry Scheetz was the runner up. Chris Serpico wins the "weenie award" for having the fewest points in placing 36th out of 36 entries. 🍀







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## María Judith Rodríguez-Martyak

### A Strong Advocate for Access to Justice for the Spanish-Speaking Community

— By Barbara Overholser —  
Communications Manager,  
Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania

**Attorney María Judith Rodríguez-Martyak** believes deeply in the value of public service and access to justice. For more than twenty-two years she has been a steadfast pro bono volunteer for Legal Aid of Southeastern PA's (LASP) Bucks County office. "For the longest time I kept my Wednesdays open just in case someone needed assistance for a Protection from Abuse case at the last minute," says Ms. Rodríguez-Martyak.

For those facing a critical legal issue and who cannot afford an attorney, access to justice can seem unattainable, especially when English is not their primary language. Using her legal skills and her English/Spanish bilingual ability, Ms. Rodríguez-Martyak provides guidance and representation for LASP's Bucks County Spanish-speaking clients, helping them navigate the court system, file Protection from Abuse petitions and handle Family Law issues.

*After volunteering at Legal Aid, and finding deep satisfaction in working with clients who needed Protection from Abuse orders and who were facing custody issues, her interest shifted in the direction of Family Law. She has been a solo practitioner in the field since 1998.*

The Hispanic population in Bucks County has grown 119% since 2000. The number of residents whose primary language is Spanish hovers around 3% of the overall population, creating the need for Spanish language translation in many areas, including legal and social services.

Ms. Rodríguez-Martyak grew up speaking Spanish and English in Puerto Rico. When she arrived in the United States at the age of 21 for a graduate program in Chemistry at SUNY Binghamton, she didn't foresee a career in law. But after a happenstance meeting on an airplane with an attorney from Bell Labs where she worked at the time, and a conversation with a friend who was also contemplating a career change, Ms. Rodríguez-Martyak headed down a new path.

With her law degree from St. Louis University School of Law in hand, she moved to the Doylestown area in 1994. "I didn't know anything about Doylestown when I came here. But I found out it was a county seat and that there was a legal aid office here. I stopped in and said I'd be happy to work with you and volunteer," while she awaited the results of her bar exam.

"My first inclination when I went to law school was to focus on patent and intellectual property law, using my backgrounds in chemistry and math," she says. But after volunteering at Legal Aid, and finding deep satisfaction in working with clients who needed Protection from Abuse orders and who were facing custody issues, her interest shifted in the direction of Family Law. She has been a solo practitioner in the field since 1998.



At LASP she sees clients that are striving to make ends meet while working to their maximum potential. "I see people who are really struggling," she says. "They may be limited by a variety of reasons, whether it's health, some sort of disability or immigration status. They have two or three jobs, and they juggle their work and family obligations. That is the hardest part to see. They are going above and beyond trying to make a life for their families."

*"If every attorney in Bucks County took just one case a year, the assistance to Legal Aid would be enormous."*

"Judy is a true professional," says Maryjane Kelley, Managing Attorney for LASP's Doylestown office. "She uses her talents to serve her clients, the Court and the community with integrity and zeal. She has been a strong advocate for access to justice for the Spanish speaking community. She has made herself available to the Court, Legal Aid and the private bar whenever she could, to assist with clients who have difficulty navigating the legal system due to language and cultural barriers. I have been inspired by her dedication to advocate for clients and never disappointed when I have turned to her for assistance."

Pro bono attorneys like Ms. Rodríguez-Martíak are integral to ensuring fairness in our justice system. Last year, LASP pro bono attorneys provided 4,217 hours to help represent those in our community who cannot afford legal services. But the need for these services continues to outpace LASP's capacity.

"I wish more people would participate in assisting legal aid purposes, and not just by giving money. I understand people's reluctance. They might think that taking a case means it's a forever case. But they're not forever cases," Ms. Rodríguez-Martíak says.

"If every attorney in Bucks County took just one case a year, the assistance to Legal Aid would be enormous. It's okay to donate money. I donate money, but that's not the point. Legal Aid needs the human factor — the people — in order to carry out their mission." ✎

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## Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, LCSW Interview with the Commissioner

— Susan E. Dardes —

**I have known Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia** going back to the time when the old Courthouse was the new modern Courthouse, and she was my wise and witty middle school classmate known simply as “Diane Ellis.”

Our Moms were friends at Church and we were junior deacons, sharing donuts and tea between morning services at Morrisville Presbyterian. I had always wanted to be a lawyer and go into politics. She had always wanted to be a social worker. We got it half right, I think. I am a lawyer, she is a licensed clinical social worker and *she* went into politics. She is also a part time faculty member of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department at Bucks County Community College. So, I asked her how it came to be that she is in her third term as the minority Commissioner of Bucks County, on the 5th floor of that old post mid-century Courthouse.

**Let’s go back about four decades.** Diane was raised in Lower Makefield, the older of two children in a family of active committee people, so local politics was in her blood all along. When one of our eighth grade teachers, Mr. Bergman, mentioned a career in social work during class, it seemed a natural fit for Diane.

And then the Congressman dropped by. Peter Kostmayer was elected in 1976 on Jimmy Carter’s coattails as the freshman Congressman for the 8th District of Pennsylvania and came to speak at a Pennsbury High School assembly. I don’t recall the visit, but Diane did; Kostmayer’s talk made a great impression on her. So it’s no surprise that she came to be one of three women delegates elected to represent Bucks County at the Democratic National Convention this past July.

Diane’s innate community involvement and her empathy for others sent her to the University of Pennsylvania to earn her Masters in Social Work after obtaining her Bachelor’s Degree. She was asked to serve on the Neshaminy School Board which was an honor as a young mom, but it was a part time occupation that she did

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*In 2005, Ellis-Marseglia began working with the Neshaminy School District to create a suicide prevention task force, after the death of her daughter, Becky. Now county-wide, the task force raises awareness of mental health conditions and suicide risk.*

after the full time work day had ended. Then, she was recruited for the Board of Supervisors of Middletown Township, where she has lived for more than 20 years. She supported healthy families by serving on the Youth Aid Panel for Offending Youth from 1986 to 1998 and later, in 1999, created the Teen Task Force in Middletown Township, to help create an environment where teens had a voice in their community and planned healthy activities. In 2005, she began working with the Neshaminy School District to create a suicide prevention task force, after the death of her daughter, Becky. Now county-wide, the task force raises awareness of mental health conditions and suicide risk. Each passing year sees additional districts joining the program and participating in a fundraising walk, called *#holdonyoumatter*. Diane





## *Ellis-Marseglia is an advocate for specialty courts, including those carved out for mental health cases and veterans.*

believes that talking is the way to confront the stigma surrounding the issue. Talking. And tackling the tragedy of suicide head on.

**In 2007, the Bucks County Democratic Party chose her to run as Commissioner,** and she beat her primary opponent, Sandra Miller.

It's a State law that the county have at least one Commissioner representing the minority party. When I asked Diane how she felt to be in the minority as a woman Commissioner, she reminded me of what I've been saying for years, that "women *aren't* the minority." Of course, she's right. (And, fun fact: in 1984, for four years, two of the three seats in the Commissioner's Office were held by Democrats.)

As Commissioner, Diane chairs Bucks County's Emergency Health Council and the local Emergency Planning Commission, the Board of Elections, and represents Bucks to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. She was also nominated by Governor Wolf in July 2015 to the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board.

**So, what is it like, being the only woman in the room on the 5th floor?** Diane said this past term provided a fruitful working environment with her colleagues, Vice Chairman Robert Loughery and Chairman Charles Martin. She is an advocate for specialty courts, including those carved out for mental health cases and veterans. A substance abuse treatment module at the county jail was piloted just nine months ago, when Bucks County introduced a program which offers addicts the opportunity for individual and group therapy in an effort to turn their lives around. Commissioner Ellis-Marseglia has long recognized that serious drug addiction has plagued our once sheltered suburbs.

Diane believes that drug addiction, alcoholism and a downturn in the economy are some of the core reasons for homelessness. She was a leader on the "Code Blue" project to assess the homeless and protect those less fortunate from harsh weather, joblessness and hunger. The County now works alongside churches and synagogues to support people needing food and shelter, partnering with over 100 food banks, the newest of which is Rolling Harvest.

**Up next on Diane's agenda?** What about running for Congress herself? I asked that, too. No, she said. She would like more time in the Commissioner's Office to see more of her projects through. She sees herself as a helping hand for people who can't advocate for themselves.

It is, she said, all about framing the issues and framing the finances. So, maybe that's not about politics after all. ➡



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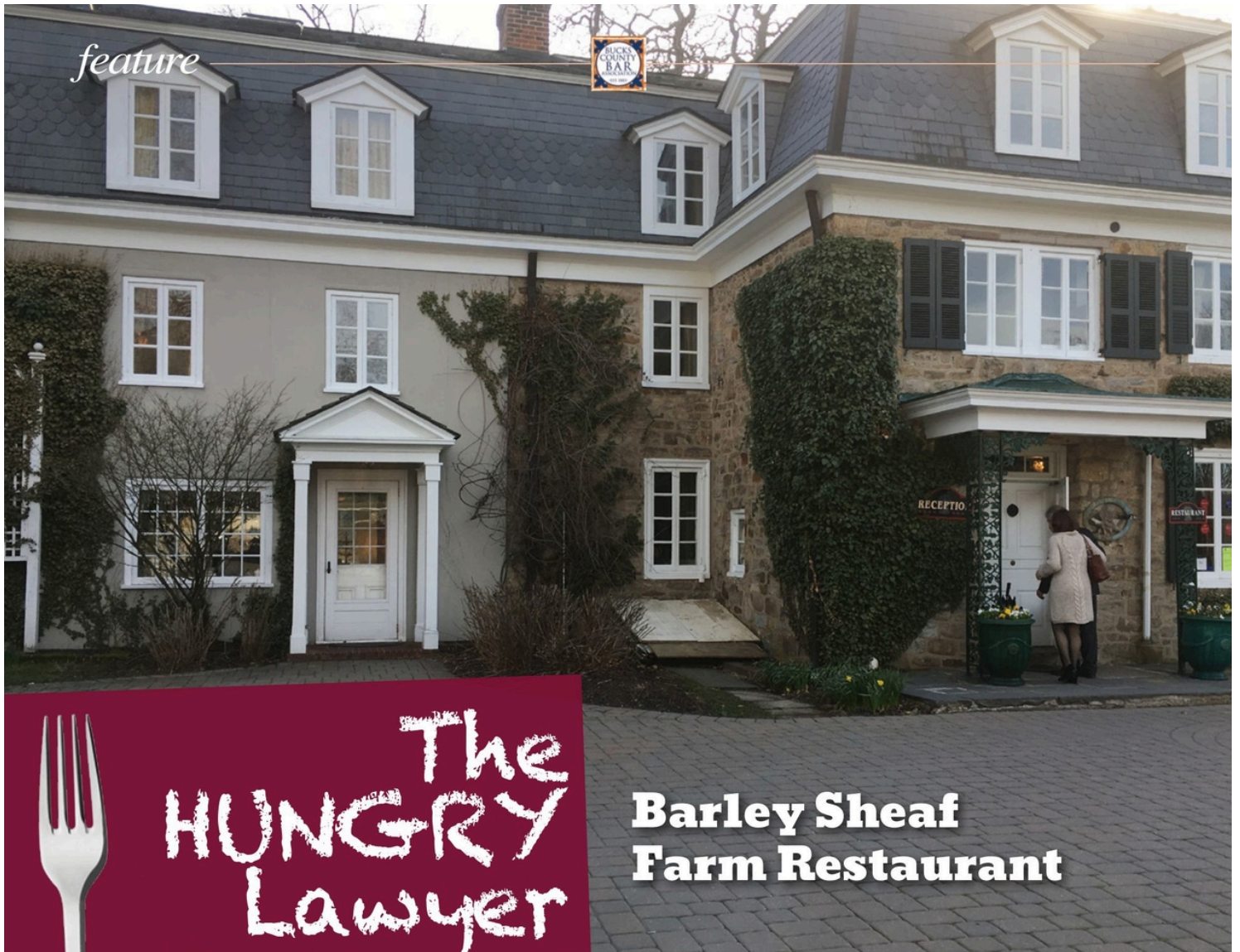
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feature



## Barley Sheaf Farm Restaurant



THE INN AT BARLEY SHEAF FARM advertises itself as being in New Hope but, really, it's Holicong or Mechanicsville, definitely somewhere in Buckingham. But what are six or seven miles when it comes to great dining?

**T**he Hungry Lawyer and his gorgeous bride often wondered about the place during many years driving north and south on 202. We knew that it had once been the home of the acclaimed playwright George S. Kaufman. Had great dinner parties with guests such as Oscar Hammerstein II taken place there? Maybe Pearl Buck dropped by to borrow a cup of sugar? The entrance from the road is impressive but we were always too intimidated to turn into the long driveway to see for ourselves how the place looked. Our interest was only piqued when we





read a few years ago that new management had taken over and had grand plans for Barley Sheaf's restoration. And then one day not too long ago, the Hungry Lawyer got his ticket to legitimately enter the grounds. Always in search of a dining bargain, yours truly came across a Groupon for the restaurant at Barley Sheaf. Now I must say to all you other bargain hunting readers, "Too Bad!", because it is impossible to imagine that this fine BYOB will ever again need to offer a Groupon incentive to attract devotees of fine dining.

It is a good thing for us that I generally buy two Groupons for a restaurant. If the restaurant is great, the advantage is obvious. And if it's bad, I'm willing to give it another chance. Because of the latter, we returned to Barley Sheaf after a very mediocre first meal. The second meal was glorious and on multiple visits since we and our guests have never been disappointed.

Barley Sheaf offers a beautiful visual experience as well. From Route 202 you turn into the long, stately driveway, especially stunning after dark because of the up lighting of the trees along the way.

***"Our favorite tables are those across from the open kitchen that allow us to enjoy the magnificent views through the picture windows as well as watch the kitchen staff prepare the meals."***

The approach ends at a large, paved courtyard in the center of which is a dramatic fountain. Arrive early to walk the grounds before you eat. Barley Sheaf is definitely one of the most beautiful and romantic venues in Bucks County.

Inside the farmhouse you can relax in the living room enjoying the artifacts before you are shown to your table in the dining area. Located in an enclosed porch-like area with an open kitchen is their beautiful and intimate dining room. There is a smaller room to the left as you enter the dining area. We avoid this room as it is a bit dark and confining but the privacy it provides can be just right for certain moments, or certain diners. Our favorite tables are those across from the open kitchen that allow us to enjoy the magnificent views through the picture windows as well as watch the kitchen staff prepare the meals. An expansion is planned but currently there is no "bad" table and from what we understand that won't change. When warm enough, al fresco dining is available.

Our most recent visit was a romantic impromptu, just because we were fortunate to get a last minute reservation. Do not count on this happening for you, especially on a weekend. The table was beautifully set. Our server, Rachelle, promptly greeted us and exuded just the right combination of warmth and professionalism; she was quick with the wine glasses and showed us she knew what she

was doing. A small basket of homemade crunchy bread and a dish of deliciously seasoned olive oil with a garlic clove garnish were provided. After an appropriate amount of time to take a few sips of wine and discuss the menu, we were ready to order.

My lovely bride began her meal with the beet and



***Josh Homacki is the young executive chef. He has an excellent resume and it shows. Check the menu on-line as it changes often.***





goat cheese salad. I had the grilled octopus. Barley Sheaf prepares all their plates with fresh, quality ingredients. The beets were tender and flavorful. The goat cheese was tasty and creamy enough to soothe the palate. The octopus was perfectly grilled. Since we were close to the kitchen counter, I used the opportunity to ask the chef what he recommended as entrees. Monkfish was not on the menu but that was his suggestion. It was delicious, served with a garnish of crawfish. Our other entrée was the skirt steak despite this cut's notorious reputation for being tough. Not this time. It was grilled to medium, exactly as requested and was genuinely tender and seasoned to perfection. By the time we were finished with our second course, we were full. But the Hungry Lawyer knows his journalistic obligations so we forced ourselves to end our meal with dessert. We chose the strawberry churros with white chocolate, rhubarb, and mint and the Meyer lemon tartlet (such a decadent word) with huckleberry and meringue. Both were perfect.

Alas, nothing is perfect, even at Barley Sheaf. I would like to see a better system employed to let the wait staff know that a dish is ready. Hot food on a hot plate does not stay that way even when placed on the counter under a heat lamp. That is where some plates sat for just a tiny bit too long. Servers should use napkins between their thumb and the plate, a feature common in Europe and New Orleans but inexplicably rare in the rest of the United States. It was fascinating to watch the chefs work as a team to prepare each delicious meal but they should dress more like they work in the kitchen of a fine dining establishment than like the members of the house band at Puck's.

***Our other entrée was the skirt steak despite this cut's notorious reputation for being tough. Not this time. It was grilled to medium, exactly as requested and was genuinely tender and seasoned to perfection.***

The dishes were even better than they appear in the photos.

Barley Sheaf provides all of the elements that make for a great dining experience. The tables are beautifully set. The service is professional. The food is plated in the most appetizing design, a visual prelude to the taste treats delivered. Sauces and garnishes not only enhance the appearance of the food, they enhance the flavors to allow the diner to experience the quality and preparation of everything on the plate. Unlike too many restaurants today, no matter what the cuisine, nothing at Barley Sheaf is drowned in sauce to the degree that the main ingredient, whether it be meat, fish, chicken or seafood, might just as well be a lump of white bread.

We enjoyed our meal with a moderately priced bottle of Pauillac Gran Bin de Bourdeaux 2010. It definitely exceeded our expectations. It was light enough to not overwhelm the fish but still strong enough to stand up to the steak. And its tart characteristics helped to amplify the sweet flavors of our desserts.

Josh Homacki is the young executive chef. He has an excellent resume and it shows. Check the menu on-line as it changes often. Other dishes that we have enjoyed include the scallops and game meats. Vegetables, available as sides, are deliciously prepared and often are the excellent structure around which our vegetarian friend designs her meals. There is no reason to ever be bored with the food. Service at 18% is automatically added to the check. Since tipping a minimum of 20% is our preference for top service, frequently we leave an extra few dollars. Our servers at Barley Sheaf have always earned the extra gratuity. Credit cards are accepted.

We have always found dining at Barley Sheaf to be a pleasure. I am sure that you will agree. 🍴





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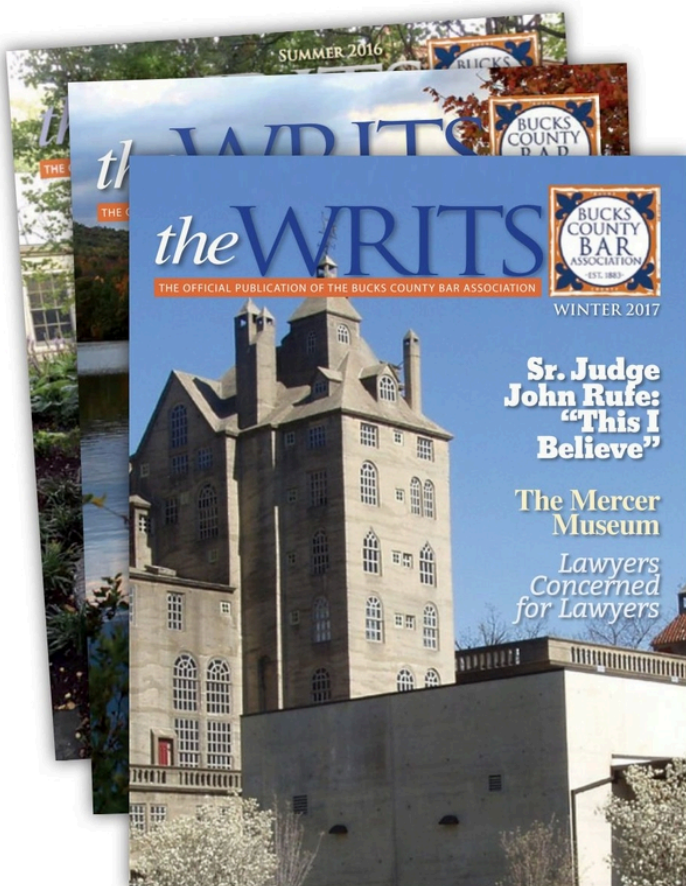






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# Driving Clients to your Law Practice with Blogging and Social Media

— By Jennifer Gardella —

**As you build your law practice**, either inside a firm or on your own, it is critical to make sure you are viewed as an expert. In today's modern world this means having a strategic plan for your blog and a substantial social media presence.

Unfortunately, they didn't teach you much marketing in Law School.

With a busy practice to run, how can you get started building your digital footprint? Just like so many of life's endeavors, success all starts with a plan.

1. Make sure you have a blog internal to your website: One reason you want to blog is to build up the number of pages on your website. There are many factors that go into your site "showing up" in Google search



results. A big website that is continually updated with fresh content like a weekly blog is critical to a ranking on the first page of Google Search. If you already have a website for your firm just ask that they turn on the blog feature.

2. Do your keyword research: Keywords are the specific words and phrases that individuals use when trying to find your information on the internet. For instance, I could ask Google "who is the best personal injury law firm in Bucks County, PA?" Personal Injury, law firm and Bucks County, PA are all keywords, so if you want your website to show up on the first page they need to be naturally written into the content of your website.
3. Get together an editorial calendar: Your editorial calendar should be organized by month and list the blogs you are going to write each week. For instance, if you are a divorce attorney your blog posts for summer may include "How to handle the first time you take your children on a vacation alone." Your editorial calendar can also include ideas and dates so you remember to write about them as they relate to your practice and clients. The fourth of July and start of summer are good examples. Make sure to leave a bit of room in your editorial calendar to comment on important changes to the law as they relate to how you help your clients.
4. Set-up your Social Media profiles: Every attorney should have profiles set-up on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. They should be uniquely written with standardized pictures and a logo that represent your firm. Do not forget to link the profiles to one another and then have the connect buttons on your website.
5. Chip away at it every day and week: Have a plan for when you are going to blog each week and how you are going to find time to find content to share on social media. Building out your digital footprint will take some time and effort but, when done correctly, has the potential to help you build your law practice.

**As you build your digital presence** make sure to craft all of your writing so that you speak to your ideal client and the problem they need solved. Successful digital marketing strategies highlight attorney expertise but are framed so that the individuals who need you and are looking for your services can easily understand how you will help them. 📌

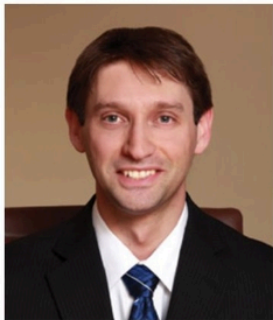
*Jennifer Gardella, PhD, helps attorneys build their law practice to attract ideal clients.*





# Tech Tips From a Recovering Geek: Privacy? Not on the Internet

— By Jason R. Weiss, Esquire —



**In recent weeks, you have most likely seen, read, heard or otherwise been bombarded on social media** about the passage of S.J.

Resolution 34. Specifically, you have almost certainly been introduced to the idea that this Resolution, now public law as of April 3, 2017, will strip the public of any semblance of

privacy from their respective Internet Service Provider (ISP). The law, which passed the Senate and House more or less on party line votes, repeals privacy rules put in place by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in late 2016 that would have restricted ISPs from sharing your online history with third parties without your consent. The rules from the FCC set to take effect this year, required ISPs to obtain consent from customers before using, sharing, or selling private consumer data. In short, if an ISP such as Comcast or Verizon wanted to track your every move on the Internet (think web browsing history, emails, location, message contents, financial and health information, etc.) and sell that data to a third party, the ISP could only do that with your permission. With the recent law signed by President Trump, ISPs such as Comcast and Verizon no longer need your permission to take advantage of your Internet footprint and can now track, horde, and sell for a hefty price any or all of your data without your consent.

**Why does this matter?** If you are not concerned with your Internet and digital footprint data being tracked and sold to the highest bidder, then it doesn't. On the other hand, if you are like many consumers that believe privacy is a fundamental right associated with web browsing and communicating via email, then you need to take proactive steps to protect your information.

**If you are concerned with protecting your privacy**, you may be interested in some steps you can take to prevent the tracking and ultimate sale of your data. Most effective is a virtual private network (VPN). Without getting into how they work, VPNs provide a secure connection between your device and the VPN provider so that all data transferred is shielded from your ISP and other sites. This means your ISP cannot access and track your data and therefore has nothing to sell to third parties. There are countless VPN services available to consumers and they vary in effectiveness and reliability. But beware, many of the free and low cost VPN services will track and sell your data — exactly what you are trying to avoid in using a VPN. It is important to research VPN providers before making a selection. A VPN also adds extra cost to already high ISP bills and can slow down your internet speed.

**You can also protect your web browsing history** with a privacy-oriented search engine such as DuckDuckGo or Ixquick. These sites allow you to search the web as you would with Google (who probably knows everything about you already), but do not track or store information about you. Additionally, Ixquick allows you to load search results by Proxy, which prevents the linked site from learning anything about you as well.

While there is certainly more to the backstory of the passage of this law, you should have an understanding of how your ISP is able to handle your "private" data. Short of removing yourself from the virtual world entirely, you will likely never be able to fully safeguard your data. That said, you can use the tools above to take control of your privacy, however limited it may be.

Happy (and safe) computing. 🖱️

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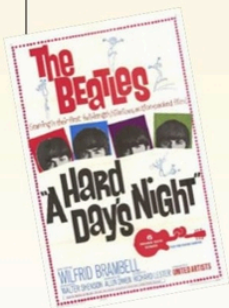
## Top 5 Rock and Roll Movies

# The Music Snob's Top 5 List:

1.

### A Hard Day's Night

Beatles



2.

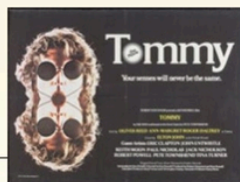
### The Last Waltz

The Band

3.

### Tommy

The Who



4.

### Stop Making Sense

Talking Heads



Honorable Mention:  
This is Spinal Tap

5.

### Woodstock



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