



January 2010

PGCBA NEWS JOURNAL

Newsletter of the Prince George's County Bar Association, Inc.

President's Message



I hope everybody has had happy and healthy holidays and as we begin a new year, my wish is that 2010 meets and holds everyone's expectations. As the beginning of the New Year hits the courthouse, the courthouse activity again picks up its pace after the slower pace of the holidays.

I wish to apologize for any confusion I caused in the December Newsletter announcing Russ Shipley's retirement after 50 years as a member of the Bar. Russ is still going strong and he has just CELEBRATED his 50 years as a member of the Bar. We wish him another 50 years in the practice of law.

I wanted to give all members a sneak peek at some of the activities that we have planned for the 2010 year. The Bar Association is bringing back by popular demand our "Brown Bag" lunches where members of the Bar can sit down in an informal setting and talk about legal topics with some of our local Judges. We are planning to start these "Brown Bag" lunches some time in March, 2010. I would like to thank the Honorable Leo E. Green, Jr., for organizing this and being instrumental in reviving this much needed program. The Bar Association is also trying to implement a service to the community of being able to speak directly to a lawyer for advice. Some of the other major Bar Associations, including Baltimore County, keeps this up and running for 40 hours a week. After discussion with the Executive Committee, we have decided to try this on a much smaller scale. Starting in approximately April, 2010, we want to have at least two lawyers to volunteer on the first Tuesday of each month between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to speak to potential clients. We hope that by starting with only two hours a month that our lawyers will be able to communicate with the public and potentially get clients. If this program is successful, we will attempt to expand it. Anyone interested in volunteering their services for two hours one day a month, please contact the Bar Association Office.

Please keep in mind that February is our joint meeting with the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association at the Federal Courthouse. This has always been one of our more successful meetings and with the guidance of the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, we have always had very interesting speakers for this event.

Additionally our new LRS forms have gone out or will shortly go out by the time this article is published. For all of our current members, please get your applications back in as quickly as possible and for any new members interested in signing up, please do that in January so that you will be able to benefit from the full year of referrals. Our numbers of referrals are much higher than in the past except for this late downturn we always have around the holiday season.

In conclusion, please feel free to tell either myself, members of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors Committee, or Section Chairs of any concerns, comments or ideas you may have regarding our Association. It is sharing ideas together that will help us accomplish our goals.

I hope that everyone bundles up as we all await the warmth of summer.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas E. Rattal
President

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PGCBA NEWSJOURNAL

Published monthly (except Jul./Aug.) by

The Prince George's County Bar Association

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UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS AND THE “REAL ID LAW”

A number of seemingly unrelated events have converged in a “perfect storm,” making the already miserable lives of undocumented immigrants even more precarious. It is not that the immigration reform package sponsored by Sens McCain and Kennedy went down in defeat in congress in 2007. That legislation would have recognized the presence in the U.S. of a large undocumented immigrant population and given its members at least a tenuous legal foothold here. Instead, I am referring, among other things, to its counter point, the Real ID Law of 2005¹, which did pass the Congress with overwhelming support, thanks to the xenophobic fervor engendered by the events of 9/11, which still reverberate throughout the county.

Among the objectives of the Real ID Law is to establish new, national standards for state-issued driver licenses, on the theory these state issued documents are “THE” acceptable form of identification for “official purposes”, such as boarding airlines, entering federal buildings and gaining access to nuclear facilities. Since there is no National Identification document available per se, in the eyes of our Congress, the humble, lowly, Maryland driver’s license acquired an aura of great importance, far beyond its original intended purpose. The job of verifying the immigration status of a large segment of our population fell on our state government; a major shift in the enforcement of immigration laws.

Never mind that this piece of plastic is a survival tool for the working classes, and specially for the new immigrants who live in an unseen, parallel universe, in the shadows if you will. They have to drive great distances every day as they work cleaning homes, office buildings, doing landscaping, and construction projects, as far away as Prince William County, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Richmond, you name it. They have no intention of returning to their countries of origin, voluntarily. They work very hard, raise families and contribute to our economy. They take the jobs nobody else will. And they want to remain in this country and build a future, even if it means getting up at 4 am, doing backbreaking work and performing chores none of us would even consider doing. But up to June of 2009, the Real ID Law was still seemingly far away, looming just over the horizon, waiting until the Maryland General Assembly would take up the debate.

The preceding sets the stage for the next round of developments. First, before the Real ID Law became “Law” in Maryland, came the changes to Transportation Article §16-101, MD Annot Code, DRIVERS MUST BE LICENSED. The changes, which went into effect in 2006, made the offense of operating without a license a jailable case. Before that it was a payable offense. Now, it is on a par with Driving Impaired (DUI). But even if jailable, there was always an “out,” an escape hatch. The State

of Maryland through the MVA, in its wisdom and generosity, did allow undocumented immigrants to qualify for a driver permits, provided they could show positive proof of their identity and could also show they had a valid address in Maryland; nothing more. No questions were asked about national origin or legal status. It was a nice, comfortable arrangement. The State made money and strengthened public safety by testing the drivers on the rules of the road and allowing them to purchase liability insurance. Public policy could not have been better served.

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¹Actually, the Real ID Act of 2005 is a misnomer. The 109 Congress repealed Title II of that Act in order to re-institute section 7212 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which “provides States with additional regulatory flexibility.....to more rapidly produce tamper and counterfeit resistant driver’s licenses...to achieve improved 21st century licenses to improve national security” The specific legislation is called the “Identification Security Enhancement Act of 2006”.

So although this upgrade in §16-101 drove (pardon the pun) a large number of Defendants into Court, they always had the option of signing up for a license in exchange for leniency, such as Probation Before Judgment (PBJ), pursuant to §6-220, Criminal Procedure Article. The Courts' dockets swelled. Aggressive over-policing in the Latino barrios produced bumper crops of unlicensed drivers. DWL, Driving While Latino, became a punch line. But the Courts were generous by allowing for hefty continuances to allow this process of eventually qualifying and getting licenses to prosper.

Then in June 2009 the bottom fell out. Everything came together, like a big puzzle. It was then time for Maryland to take up the debate

on the Real ID law. The only real key question: Should Maryland allow for a two-tiered system, whereby drivers who could not prove their legality in this country- the ultimate question hitherto left unasked- should be issued a second class license which would permit them only to drive? The "NO" answer was almost pre-ordained. Undocumented immigrants have no lobby in Annapolis. It is a national conundrum; they are here, but they are not really. Not only did Real ID stopped the practice of issuing licenses to undocumented drivers, it also required that those licenses previously issued to be voided in 2015, thereby dumping another huge crop of unlicensed drivers, who will most certainly lose their liability insurance on their already registered cars.

Although to be clear, the Real ID law does allow states to issue "driving privilege certificates" in lieu of regular licenses. The law allows states this flexibility. These certificates allow applicants in this category to be tested and licensed just to drive and obtain liability insurance on their cars. Labeled "not for Federal ID" licenses, they are being issued by states like Utah and Tennessee, among others.


Meanwhile, our Defendants, for whom driving is an economic necessity, are still flooding the Courts, charged with driving without a permit. Prosecutors will not enter the case nol pros when there is a plea to the more serious charge. These Defendants are now trapped; squeezed from all sides. They have to take the conviction and their driving



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records will now show a significant mark. Jail time is also being meted out, specially for repeaters. As one sitting judge said recently, at this rate, "we are going to have to build more jails" to put these people in, since there is no diversion- type of disposition. There is a much better chance for a Defendant convicted of DWI to continue to drive and keep his license, than one convicted of operating with no license. And once he goes to jail, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) can come in at its leisure, without doing any heavy lifting, and pick up these folks and put them in deportation proceedings; they are already "flagged" as undocumented anyway.

No doubt, undocumented immigrants face a harsh environment. There are thousands of them living all around us. They have to drive a car; it is inescapable. Their economic survival depends on it. The roads are less safe. Maryland is losing money it could otherwise gain. Events conspired and ratcheted up the pressure against this group. An obvious, strong anti-immigrant sentiment pervades the national discourse. Unfortunately, politics has entered the debate with a vengeance. In combination, making driving without a license a jailable offense and then blocking the issuance of licenses through the application of the Real ID Law, that is what can only be called a "perfect" strategy.

Submitted by: Joseph Trevino

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Need Some Ideas to Add to Your New Year's Resolutions? Yes, That's Wonderful!!!

I hope each one of you had a happy holiday and look forward to this year with renewed hope and a sense of collective commitment to resolve the challenges that await us individually and as a nation! A year ago I wrote that the present year was marked by change and serious challenges, nationally and internationally - change because of the historical presidential election - serious challenges because of the economic crisis at the time, and the two wars being fought abroad. While there have been improvements, it is clear that the strategies to resolve these problems are part of a long-term process. AND in the process of resolving these challenges, home-owners continue to face foreclosure, the number of low-income or unemployed clients who seek legal assistance in family law, landlord/tenant and wage disputes at

CLS continue to increase.

Further, before matters improve, we the legal service providers will face more challenges this year. In a December 7, 2009 Washington Post edition, reporter Mary Pat Flaherty titled her article "**Need is up, but funding plummets for legal aid.**" She went on to say that clinics around the country which help with noncriminal cases are facing funding cuts, and locally, Maryland is hit the hardest. One of the principal reasons is that the main source of funding for organizations that provide assistance with civil cases in Maryland are those coming from Interest on Lawyer Trust Account (IOLTA) funds. Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC) is the entity that appropriates IOLTA funds to civil services providers in Maryland, and is also our main funder. The same article provides that in the past year deposits on these accounts have decreased and the interest rate paid on them also dropped to zero.

Our Executive Director **Neal T. Conway** was quoted in this article regarding the increased number of people calling our office for assistance saying "it is like gambling, in a sense, on whether people can get through on our lines." We currently have insufficient staff to answer and respond to all the telephone calls that are made to our office.

Nevertheless, we at CLS are committed to work our best to address these challenges as they come so that the greatest number of people receive legal assistance, and we invite you to be an active part of the solution. Here are some ideas to add to your **New Year's Resolutions**, and I must say that they are partly inspired by **Chief Judge Robert M. Bell** of the Maryland Court of Appeals, who has urged attorneys to donate time or money to help preserve legal service providers programs.

1. Choose to make your IOLTA deposits in a **Honor Roll** bank. These are banks that pay a **net yield of the greater of 1 percent, or 65 percent or more of the federal funds target rate** on IOLTA deposits. For all IOLTA-approved institutions, please visit this MLSC website link to see a list of below the Honor Roll list: <http://www.mlsc.org/honor-roll.htm>

2. Volunteer periodically to provide legal advice at our CLS Clinic for the Self-Represented in the Upper Marlboro Courthouse, Room 2435 M. Our contact person there is Michael Udejiofor, 301-952-3010. This can also benefit you **increase your client-base** since a percentage of our clients have sufficient funding to pay for the services of an attorney and often hire our volunteer attorneys for further assistance. We share some numbers with you. From July 1, 2009 to October 31, 2009, 1,897 litigants received legal advice at this clinic. We have calculated that based on staff hours and time allocated per client, we are able to provide legal advice to 1,404 litigants during a four month period. Thanks to our volunteer attorneys and our staff overtime, we provided legal advice to an additional 493 litigants during the first four months of Fiscal Year 2010! Further below is a list of our recent volunteers.





3. Participate in our **Lawyer Referral Program**. We will assign pro bono and reduced fee cases to you, and will include you in our list of attorneys given to applicants who are over our income-guidelines. Please refer further below for a list of the magnificent attorneys who have participated in this program in the past few months, as well as information regarding funding available to pay attorneys for reduced-fee cases.

4. Make a periodic financial contribution to CLS to help us sustain our programs. If you are unable to donate your time, making this financial contribution will provide substance when you conduct your yearly

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IDEAS FOR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

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Notice that in choosing any of these four options, you become part of the solution of the larger picture!!

OTHER UPDATES

The Two New Angelas!

We welcome the newest members of CLS staff, **Angela Richardson Green** and **Angela Wright**. Angela Wright began to work at CLS as a volunteer legal assistant early last year. We were so impressed with the quality of her work and professional manner towards clients, we wished we could hire her. We finally did this past December and are very happy to have her on board. We are also happy to have attorney Angela Richardson Green on Board. This was possible due to funding we received from the **Cafritz Foundation**. She is a much welcomed addition to our Foreclosure Prevention Project and will be working alongside our legal assistants **Laura Bowman Pimentel** and **Alex DeLorme**, our newest legal assistants for this project. Alex I'm sorry I forgot to mention you in previous articles. We give you a great welcome into this CLS family!

KUDOS TO ATTORNEYS

We thank the following volunteer attorneys who accepted cases via our **Lawyer Referral Program** to provide legal representation for our low income clients from mid-September to mid-December. If we mistakenly failed to mention your name, please report it to us so that we may give you proper credit in our next column. Note also that many of these attorneys have taken more than one or two and in some instances three cases!

Shanice Adams, Katrina Wallace, Diana Wyles, Richard Moore, Debra Saltz, Dontrice Hamilton, Francis Barikor, Moges Abebe, Cherie King, Hughie Hunt, Janell

Bell, Christopher Daniels, Caleb Solomon, Donya Zimmerman, Nakia Gray, John Green, Shane Major, Orlando Barnes, Anu Kemet, Shanna Liberman, Anthony Hayes Davis, III, Harold Boyd, Angela Richardson Green, Bill Shelton, Anthony Hayes Davis, III, Samona Watts, Angela Richardson Green, Shanne Major, Denise Dominguez, Chika Ojiaku, Aretha Arrington, Leonardo Canseco, Robert Carney, Nichole Davis, Angela Dawkins, Essita Ducan, Ike Ezekwu, Angela Floyd, Gillian Flynn, Kelly Hebron, Anica Hobson, Carlos Kizzee, Leslie Lobos, Laureen Mullins, Chika Ojiaku, Sharon Primus Theodore, Joaquin Sequeria, Steve Sturgeon, LaVonne Torrence, Lindsay Warnes, Richard Williams, Beverly Winstead, Richard Ugelow, Robert Ostrom, Robert Carney, Stephen Stair, Scott Conwell, Michelle Adams, Melissa Brault, Amir Guerami, Craig Ewan, Karl-Henri Gauvin, Aidan Jones, Mark Hunt, Melanie Mfume, Aidan Jones, LM Biggs and Tyler King. We also thank the following attorneys who volunteered to provide legal advice during the same period of time at our CLS Clinic in the Upper Marlboro Courthouse (room 2435 M; for more info contact Michael Udegiofor at 301-952.3010):

Anthony Davis, Ryan Thomas, Kesio Dallo, Diana Wyles, Shane Major, Harold Boyd, Adrian Johnson, Sharon Theodore, Jeane Aelion, Maria Martinez, Cramer Herman, Kerry Davidson, Steve Stairs, Reginald Sealey, James Thomas, Annu Kemet.

SPECIAL FUNDING TO PAY FOR ATTORNEYS FEES

CLS continues to refer cases under our Judicare funding project made available by Maryland Legal Services Corporation. Attorneys receive \$80.00 per hour up to \$1,600.00 per case. Cases

referred involve family law matters including guardianship. We also refer domestic violence cases, except we will reimburse the attorney for a maximum of five (5) hours only. Attorneys accepting cases under this program are required to participate in our pro bono program as well. For more information please contact Darielys Pinto at 301-864-4907, ext. 11.

Community Legal Services of Prince George's County, Inc. is a non-profit organization established to provide quality civil legal services to low-income persons in Prince George's County. It does this through the generous contribution of legal advice and legal representation by members of the private Bar. Additionally, CLS operates free legal clinics in the County. They are located in the in Circuit Court House and Langley. For more information about our services, please contact Nora C. Eidelman, at 301-864-4907, ext. 12.

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YEAR IN REVIEW: SEEKING JUSTICE 2009

Each year I set goals for the State's Attorney's Office. At the start of 2009, a major goal included obtaining a grant to enable the SAO to update our case management system. I am happy to announce that this became a successful accomplishment that is

having a positive impact on the entire office as we continue to roll it out into the new year.

Significant progress in all areas is on-going. Prosecutors continue to work long and hard on all criminal cases including homicides, which have decreased. We also are working hard at prosecuting mortgage fraud, elder abuse, domestic violence and gun cases all of which have increased this past year.

We had a busy year educating interested County residents who join us in our Community in the Courtroom program observing actual trial proceedings. We continue to recruit and humbly applaud our volunteers who sign up through our Reading to Succeed and C.A.R.E.S. programs to read with second graders. The SAO summer internship program along with Moot Court, and Drug Court keep us busy working with youth to help keep them out of trouble or help them work through the trouble they are in.

Aside from our responsibility to prosecute criminals, we are also busy helping ex-offenders when we can through Re-Entry programs, helping businesses through our Bad Check Restitution program, and helping elders and victims of crime through our Crime Victims Fund Run, victim/witness coordinators and through support group meetings.

As 2010 begins, I am counting on the Bar Association's help on important legislation for 2010. My goals still include changes intended to leave a legacy of efficient, stringent and fair prosecution. I will continue to give my best to our communities in this New Year. As I transition out of office, I also look forward to helping the Prince George's County Bar Association continue to recruit and strengthen our community through the rule of law.

Yes, 2010 will be just as busy as the past seven have been even as my tenure comes to an end. I will always consider it a great honor to have served the people of Prince Georges County as State's Attorney, and I look forward to continuing to give my best during this last year in office.

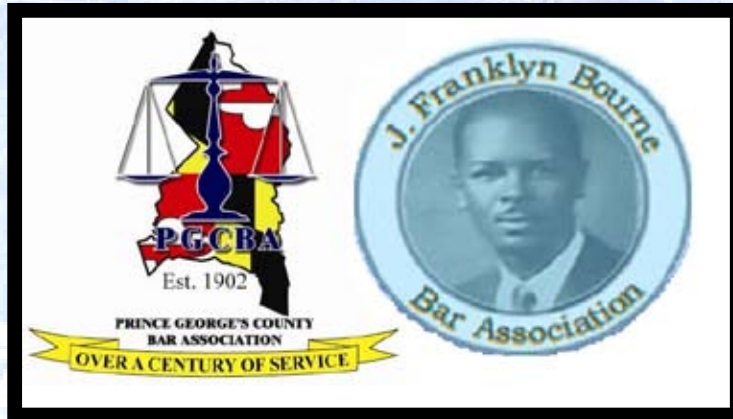
Have a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year,

Glenn F. Ivey
State's Attorney
Prince Georges County

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JOINT MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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J. FRANKLYN BOURNE BAR ASSOCIATION

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OCTOBER 20 MEETING





PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S
BANKRUPTCY LAW COMMITTEE PRESENTS

Basic Bankruptcy 101
For New Practitioners



February 24, 2010
3:00p.m.-6:00p.m.
Courthouse Room M0421

Moderator: John Burns
Panel: To Be Announced

- **Review of a Consumer Bankruptcy Case from Start to Finish**
- **Creditor and Debtor Practice Points**
- **Essentials of Bankruptcy Law for Non Bankruptcy Practitioners; ie: Personal Injury, Domestic Relations, Immigration and Related Topics**
- **Strategic Choices and Case Screening for the New Practitioner**
- **Materials Will Be Available**

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**UNDERSTANDING
NUTRITION TERMS AND
PRODUCT LABELS**



It's tough to know how to eat the right foods to aid in your weight loss efforts if you don't know much about nutrition.

You may think you're eating healthy when the advertisement on a food product says "low fat" or "healthy", but those labels don't always mean that what you're about to eat is going to aid in your fat loss efforts. For example, while fruit juice may be "good for you" because it contains certain vitamins, it's also packed with sugar and more calories than

you would expect. And often, you'll find that the "fat free" version of your favorite snacks actually have more sugar and calories. That's why reading and comparing food labels in the supermarket is very important if you want to make sure you're eating smart.

Basic nutritional knowledge will help you navigate your way through what to eat, what NOT to eat, and what things should be eaten in moderation. So this month's article will focus on providing education regarding nutrition terms to aid in reading labels when buying food from the store, and to assist you in knowing what basic terms mean.

CALORIES. The number of calories listed on a food label tells you how many calories are in one serving. It's important to remember

that even small packages often contain more than one serving. FYI - it takes 3500 calories to cause you to gain one pound of weight, AND you'd have to burn 3500 calories to lose a pound of body fat.

PROTEIN. Proteins are essential to the structure of red blood cells, for the proper functioning of antibodies resisting infection, for the regulation of enzymes and hormones, for growth, and for the repair of body tissue. Protein is found in a variety of foods including meat, fish, milk, cheese, and egg which are complete proteins that have all the essential amino acids. Other non-complete sources of protein include beans, legumes, oatmeal, peas, and peanut butter. Proteins have 4 calories per gram. They are believed to aid in weight loss because many protein

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sources such as chicken and fish are also low in fat. When combined with vegetables as the main components of a diet, great weight and fat loss can be achieved.

CARBOHYDRATE. A sugar or starch, such as pasta, bread, or juice that the body uses as its main energy source. Carbohydrates have 4 calories a gram.

CHOLESTEROL. Vital for building hormones and cell membranes. Your body makes most of the cholesterol it needs. Cholesterol is listed under the fat information on a nutrition label. Most people should consume less than 300 mg of cholesterol daily.

DAILY VALUE. This shows the percentage of a certain nutrient in a food, based on a 2,000-calorie diet. The daily value gives you an idea of a food's nutrient contribution to your diet; 5% or less is considered low for that nutrient, 20% or more is high.

DIETARY FIBER. The part of plant foods that we cannot digest. Whole grains, and fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds contain fiber. Fiber helps fill you up, and you need at least 25 grams daily. To be considered high in fiber, a food must contain least 5 grams per serving. Many cereals and oatmeals such as Weight Control Oatmeal are every high in fiber and thus, aid in weight loss.

ENRICHED. Enriched foods have nutrients added to them to replace those lost during food processing. B vitamins, for example, are lost when wheat is processed into white flour, so these nutrients are later added back. It's best to avoid enriched products and just stick with whole wheat breads and products which have not been

processed. This generally means brown breads, rather than white.

FORTIFIED. Fortified foods have nutrients added to them that weren't there originally. Milk, for example, is fortified with vitamin D, a nutrient that helps you absorb milk's calcium.

HIGH-FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP (HFCS). A sweetener that is often used instead of sugar in food manufacturing. It's best to avoid or reduce foods or drinks containing HFCS. This ingredient is high in sugar, calorie dense, and elevates blood sugar levels. It's often found in juices, jellies and jams, syrup, and sweet beverages.

HYDROGENATED. Hydrogenation turns a liquid fat such as vegetable oil into a semi-solid, more shelf-stable fat, such as margarine. Most oils are only partially hydrogenated, which

creates harmful Trans fats that can raise cholesterol. Instead of buying butter or margarines with these harmful fats, use a spread such as Smart Balance which has no hydrogenated oils, but has Omega-3s instead. When using liquid oils, stick to olive oil.

LECITHIN. Added to chocolates, baking products, and cosmetics, lecithin is used as a thinner, a preservative, or an emulsifier. Egg yolks, soy beans, fish, and other foods naturally contain lecithin.

MODIFIED FOOD STARCH. Extracted from corn, potato, wheat, and other starches, modified food starch is used as a thickener, stabilizer, or fat replacer in foods like dessert mixes, dressings, and confections.

MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE (MSG). Used as a flavor enhancer, MSG is a salt.

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Though some people may have a mild reaction after consuming MSG, the FDA recognizes MSG as “generally safe” when “eaten at customary levels.” However, be aware that MSG will have the same effect on you as salt - it will cause water retention.

MONOUNSATURATED FAT. A healthy fat found in foods such as nuts, olive oil, and avocados. When used to replace saturated fats, a diet high in monounsaturated fats can help lower bad cholesterol. Most of the fat in your diet should be mono- and polyunsaturated. All fats have 9 calories per gram, which are more calories per gram than either protein or carbs.

POLYUNSATURATED FAT. A fat found in foods such as walnuts, salmon, and, soybean oil. Polyunsaturated fats provide essential fatty acids such as omega-3s and omega-6s to your diet. Most of the fat you eat should be mono- and polyunsaturated.

POTASSIUM. Essential for life, potassium helps maintain normal blood pressure and keeps your heart and kidneys working normally. Potassium is found in bananas, nuts, potatoes, and other foods. Adults should aim for 4,700 milligrams of potassium daily. Potassium supplements are a good idea especially if you have borderline high blood pressure or actual high blood pressure. A little known fact is that blood pressure management is more about the proper balance of sodium and potassium than it is about simply reducing sodium intake.

SATURATED FAT. Usually solid at room temperature, saturated fats are found in meat and milk, as well as in coconut and palm oil. Saturated fat is often used in foods

to prevent rancidity and off flavors. No more than 7% of your total daily calories should come from saturated fat. That means limit red meats and dairy products and any processed foods that list saturate fat as one of the first five ingredients.

SERVING SIZE. This section of a nutrition label helps you determine the number of calories and amount of each nutrient in a recommended serving of a food. USDA serving sizes are often smaller than you might eat. So read labels carefully so that you’ll know if you’ve consumed one or four servings when you eat that bag of chips. While one serving might be only 150 calories, if you eat a “big grab” size bag, you could be consuming as much as four servings and 600 calories. Remember that even small packages often contain more than one serving.

SODIUM. While sodium (commonly called salt) is vital

for healthy nerves and muscles, most of us get too much salt in our diet, often from processed foods. Read food labels to help keep your sodium intake to 2,300 milligrams a day or less. And try to never add salt to your food, since it’s pretty much a guarantee you’re already getting more than your recommended daily allowance from the food you buy which is already prepared. Experiment with seasonings such as Ms. Dash, rosemary, garlic, and peppers instead of salt. You’ll be surprised at how much more flavorful your food can be with spices instead of salt.

SUGARS. This section of the nutrition label refers to added sugars such as sucrose, glucose, fructose, and corn and maple syrups. If you are concerned about your intake of sugar, be sure added sugars are not one of the first few items in a food’s ingredients list. For coffee drinkers,

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try to buy the sugar free version of creamers. If you like to drink fruit juice, then you should make it a habit to cut your juice with 1/2 water. It'll take a little while, but you'll get used to the taste and substantially reduce your sugar consumption and calorie consumption. (Look at how many calories you save by cutting out 1/2 of the listed calories per serving on the nutrition label).

TOTAL CALORIES. This number on a food label indicates how many calories are in a single serving of a food.

TOTAL CARBOHYDRATE. This number on a food label indicates how many carbohydrates are in a single serving of a food. It's best to consume the bulk of your carbohydrates during the early part of the day when they can be used for energy. Eating carbs late at night is believed to contribute to weight gain because you don't get a chance to burn off those calories which are used for providing energy.

TOTAL FAT. This number on a food label indicates how much fat is in a single serving of a food. Limit total fat to less than 25% to 35% percent of the calories you consume each day. All fats have 9 calories per gram.

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TRANS FAT. Trans fats are created when liquid fats such as vegetable oil are hydrogenated into more solid fats, such as margarine and shortening. Trans fats are linked with high LDL cholesterol, which can increase your risk of heart disease. Avoid products that list this ingredient on the nutrition label altogether.

WHOLE GRAIN. Whole grain foods include the bran, nutrient-rich germ, and endosperm of grains such as wheat, oats, or rice. Examples include brown rice and whole wheat bread. Whole grain foods have more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than processed white grains. Eating more whole grains can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Keep these nutritional terms handy when you next go grocery shopping so that you have a better grasp on what you do or don't want to bring home to fill your refrigerator. And good luck with those New Year's Resolutions that include weight or fat loss. This guide should aid you in your quest.

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