

# President's Message

**Belinda T. Pruitt, CLAS**

This year we have had an increase in membership in a very valuable group of people – the students of North Carolina Paralegal Programs. I feel that assisting paralegal students is an important task for NCPA.

I receive inquiries almost every day from students all over the state. Many of those are forwarded to our Student/School Relations Chair, Erin Burris, CLA. However, I receive calls on a weekly basis from students who are working on research projects, general class assignments and newsletters. Recently, I received questionnaires from Wilson Technical Community College. Samples of the questions are: "Can paralegal students be members of your association? If so, what are the dues for students? Does your association have a mentor program where an experienced paralegal member provides guidance or advice to new members? Do you have a student rate for subscriptions to your newsletter and magazine? Does your association have a job bank service? Would your association consider conducting a "Career Day" in which experienced paralegal members of your association describe work in different employment settings in the state?" I realize many of these questions are answered on the NCPA website at [www.ncparalegal.org](http://www.ncparalegal.org). However I believe that we as professional paralegals can assist these students who have inquisitive minds!

Two weeks ago, I received an email from Anita McDaniel from Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville. Anita single-handedly prints the newsletter for that school's paralegal program. She wanted to interview me regarding the paralegal profession. She had gathered questions from each of her classmates. I was awed by the questions posed by the students. Examples of those were: "What benefits do you get from attending paralegal conferences? In what ways does being part of the NCPA help you? In which areas of law do most of the NCPA members work? Do paralegals have to deal with ethical dilemmas on a regular basis? Where does the Association stand on the issue of certification? Do you prefer "paralegal" or "legal assistant?" Do you ever think of becoming a lawyer? Why or why not? Which courses do you feel are of the most value to the paralegal student? Why?" The questions went on and on. Once again, the website would have answered many of them, and I know it would have been easy to ignore the project, but I believe that our students are an integral part of our association. I answered the questions as best I could, and I felt like I had written a term paper when I was finished!

Many of the students' questions were about the CLA Review Course offered by NCPA, and the short courses offered by the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA). Many students ask about the qualifications and guidelines to take the exam. Recently,

a Guilford Technical Community College student called on behalf of her classmates to ask for information on the exam and credential. Sarah Hutchins, CLA, our NALA Liaison, offers valuable help to these students. To sum all of this up, I just want our student membership to know that YOU are valuable. We appreciate your instructors and you for your continued commitment to NCPA. Please use our website ([www.ncparalegal.org](http://www.ncparalegal.org)) and NALA's website ([www.nalanet.org](http://www.nalanet.org)). These are tools for you that are available 24 hours a day! Most of all, remember we are proud of you!



## Editor's Court

**Brenda Mareski, CLA, Senior Editor**

As promised, I am pleased to bring you the fresh, new look of the NCPA FORUM! Many people worked diligently to bring you this issue, and I am grateful for all of their time and talent. I would like to ask you, our members, to continue to send your ideas for stories, columns, or reprints of other articles. If you have an article you would like to write, we would be pleased to talk to you about including it in a future issue of the NCPA FORUM.

Letters to the Editor and suggestions for special topics are all welcome.

One item that I will be introducing in the next NCPA FORUM is "Paralegal Pride" column, where we will make announcements about our paralegals and their special accomplishments, achievements, or even personal news. Send us your news about promotions, new jobs, certifications, new babies, awards, marriages, or anything newsworthy about our members that you would like to share with the rest of the membership. This is your publication – let's share our successes and victories with each other! After all, even though North Carolina is a pretty big state, we can keep in touch with our fellow professionals and celebrate their good news!

