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Winter 2011

North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.

Forum



noun [C]; *för-əm*
an occasion or a place for talking about a matter of public interest

“CRAZY PARALEGAL



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IN THIS ISSUE...

- “Crazy Paralegal - *Party of One*”
- “What the CLA Designation & the CLA Program Mean to Me”
- NCPA MidYear Seminar & Review Course



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The NCPA FORUM is the official publication of the North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc., PO Box 36264, Charlotte, NC 28236-6264. Our publication is devoted to informing and educating the paralegal profession.

Opinions expressed in articles and features herein are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of NCPA. The Editor strongly encourages the submission of materials for publication. The Editor reserves the right to edit material and accept or reject materials submitted.



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President's Message

Stephanie B. Elliott, NCCP



Happy Holidays, NCPA! This is my favorite time of the year, when I reflect on all the good (and bad) of the year. I make myself promises, as I am sure each of you do, to improve certain areas of my life, and I realize how blessed I am. Recently, the blessing of my membership and involvement with NCPA was reinforced for me, not once, but several times. We accepted a role in a class action lawsuit this fall, and they are fast paced cases in Federal Court. The attorneys we are working with are in New York, and needed copies of some state court filings. They had absolutely no idea how to get them and called me, since we are local counsel for the case. In just a few seconds, I was able to contact Diane Morgan and Heather Padgett, who graciously made several trips to the courthouse in Wilmington to retrieve the court file, scan and send to me. Several days later in another case, I needed a copy of a Satisfaction of Judgment and Anita Wing was able to get it to me in record time. My boss did not need proof that NCPA does wonderful things for me, and for his practice, and he was quite proud to be able to deliver documents to our New York friends. I encourage each of you to make your membership count this upcoming year. Use the resources your membership offers you; use the network opportunities, like I have to, to assist your work; and get involved! NCPA is only as strong as its members make it.

In October, Beverly King Moore and I attended the UNCC Government Job Fair, and set up a NCPA booth. We gave out membership and mentor program materials, as well as some NCPA "goodie bags". The event was a major success, and we have had some interest in membership as a result. We plan to attend this event again next year, as well as some other local job fairs.

I am excited about the new year for us. In our most recent Executive Committee and Board meetings, we have planned some new and exciting endeavors. One of these is an "Educational Bus Tour". We believe strongly that in order to grow our membership, we need to recruit current students, who will later become general members. Starting in January, NCPA will visit paralegal educational programs across the state to give a presentation on membership and what it has to offer. We will provide these students with information on membership, our mentor program, and our yearly CLE offerings.

In addition to the Bus Tour, Kaye Summers has been working hard on our mentor program. We hope to be able to present this wonderful program to the NALA Affiliate Exchange next July in Omaha, Nebraska at the NALA Convention.

Wonderful things are happening in NCPA – stay tuned! Make one of your New Year's resolutions to become more involved in your organization. There are many openings, big and small. It takes all of us to make this train move!

Happy Holidays!

Stephanie B. Elliott, NCCP
President

Chairman's Message

Stephanie Ivans, NCCP



Hello to all! As the holidays approach, I am reminded once again of how this time of year brings us together with friends and family as we share the season. As legal professionals, it is important for us to band together and support each other through these economic times. The contacts we make through professional organizations like NCPA can assist us in our current positions and may possibly create future job opportunities.

During these difficult economic times, we see fellow professionals struggling and we often wonder what more we can do to guarantee the success of our law practices. Sometimes we feel the necessity to cut ever expense that we can, to survive the hard times. However, always remember that NCPA can be a tremendous asset during even the toughest economy. Getting together with fellow paralegals can help to refresh our thinking and promote new strategies for finding success. Networking with like-minded colleagues makes the most difficult of jobs easier, through our shared experiences and knowledge. Sometimes, just being able to email or talk to another professional who is dealing with the same issues is all we need to find a better approach.

I want to encourage all of you to stay involved with NCPA and invite your friends and colleagues to do the same. Work within the Organization and let the Organization work for you. One great way to do that is to volunteer for a position. NCPA is always looking for new faces with fresh ideas! If you are interested in learning more about the volunteer opportunities available with NCPA, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@ncparalegal.org for more information. It is an exciting time to be a part of NCPA and the Paralegal profession!

I hope everyone has a wonderful, safe and happy holiday season!

Warm Wishes,

Stephanie Ivans, NCCP

Chairman of the Board



First Vice President's Report Education

Melissa Stockley-Jones, ACP, NCCP

I can't believe our 2011 Mid-Year Seminar and CLA/NCCP Review Course, held at the Embassy Suites in Charlotte, is over and we have begun to work on our 2012 Annual Seminar! I would like to thank Crystal L. Robinson, NCCP; Debby Sawyer, ACP, NCCP; Michele A. Tuttle, CLA, NCCP; and Melissa Rutledge, NCCP for all their hard work in organizing these events. A special thanks to Stephanie Brooks Elliott, NCCP (and NCPA President) for her help with asking her local contacts to speak at both the Seminar and Review Course and to Debby Sawyer, ACP, NCCP for filling in at the last minute to oversee the Review Course. This is what teamwork is all about folks, and it is what makes NCPA such a great organization to be a part of! These ladies worked long and hard to provide us with informative topics and speakers.

I would also like to thank Chreatha Alston, NCCP for her hard work as Registration Chair. This was Chreatha's first run as Registration Chair and she did an awesome job! She is very technology savvy and made some really nice name badges for the attendees.

Details for our 2012 Annual Seminar are still being finalized. Due to the damage Hurricane Irene left in her wake at the Sheraton Atlantic Beach and not knowing if the hotel would

be up and running to its fullest capabilities by March, we were able to cancel our contract at the hotel. Martha Blackman Hughes, ACP, NCCP has been working diligently with a few hotels in the Wilmington/Wrightsville Beach area to get us set up for our Annual Seminar. Confirmation of the dates and location will be posted on the website and emailed to the membership as soon as they are finalized.

I would also like to say thanks to all of our exhibitors for all they have done and continue to do for us. From sponsoring receptions and breaks, to printing manuscripts, to hanging out with the members and, most of all, the goodies they provide, we are very fortunate to have their support!

I hope everyone has a Christmas that is merry and blessed and a safe New Year's celebration, and we look forward to seeing everyone in the spring.

Melissa Stockley-Jones, ACP, NCCP

2011-2012 NCPA First Vice-President



UNCC Government Job Fair

Stephanie Elliott and Beverly King Moore recently attended the UNCC Government Job Fair on behalf of NCPA. Stay tuned, NCPA will be coming to your area in the near future!

Second Vice President's Report Membership

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP

The current membership breakdown as of October 27, 2011 is as follows:

General members:	273
Associate members:	57
Student members:	90
Sustaining Members:	11
Affiliate members:	3
Educational Program members:	4
Total	438

We would like to acknowledge our newest (G)eneral, (A)ssociate, and (S)tudent members joining from July 22, 2011 – Oct. 27, 2011.

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Stacy D. Allison – Charlotte, NC (G) | Nora S. Grady – Morganton, NC (G) | Phebe B. McClellan – Maiden, NC (A) |
| Deann L. Benedict – Gastonia, NC (S) | Charity L. Inglis – Raleigh, NC (G) | Micki Wojdylo – New Bern, NC (S) |
| Sean K. Benton – Charlotte, NC (S) | Lydia M. James – Rock Hill, SC (S) | Michael Munson – Gastonia, NC (A) |
| Gladys Bethea – Durham, NC (G) | Susan H. Johnson – Chapel Hill, NC (S) | Tanya P. Stamey – Lake Toxaway (S) |
| Angela N. Canup – Salisbury, NC (A) | Pamela C. King – Cary, NC (G) | Shannon Strayhorn – Raleigh, NC (S) |
| Lakisha A. Chichester, Durham, NC (S) | Richard A. Kinsey – Cary, NC (S) | Joan E. Such – Asheboro, NC (G) |
| Catherine A. Freeman – Charlotte, NC (A) | Jamie J. Kirk – Wake Forest, NC (S) | Peter W. Watts – Cary, NC (S) |
| Olga Gammalo – Pineville, NC (A) | Terry Lane – Chapel Hill, NC (A) | |
| John Gibson – Mooresville, NC (S) | Karla Lefin – Waxhaw, NC (G) | |
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NCPA would also like to recognize our Affiliate and Educational Program members:

Alamance County Paralegal Association, Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Carteret Community College Paralegal Technology Program, Cumberland County Paralegal Association, Guilford Paralegal Association, Guilford Technical Community College, Miller-Motte College-Wilmington

Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about membership in NCPA.

Beverly K. Moore, NCCP
Second Vice President, Membership Chair

Registration Chair's Report

Chreatha Alston

The following chart is a breakdown of attendance at NCPA's functions for the 2011 calendar year:

	<u># of Attendees</u>	<u># NCCP's</u>	<u># CLA/ACP</u>
2011 Mid-Year Seminar	36	29	7
2011 Review Course	28	1	1



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

December 1, 2011

Deadline to register for January 2012 NALA CLA/CP Exam

December 10, 2011

Late Application
Deadline to register for January 2012 NALA CLA/CP Exam (\$25 late filing fee)

December 19, 2011

Declaration of Candidacy for Office Due

JANUARY

January 1, 2012

Membership renewals begin

January 1-31, 2012

Testing window for NALA CLA/CP Exam

January 4, 2012

Recommendations for District Directors Due

January 14, 2012

Deadline for registration for the April 2012 NCCP Exam

January 14, 2012

Student Scholarship Essay Entry Deadline

January 31, 2012

2011-2012 Membership Year Ends

FEBRUARY

February 28, 2012

Memberships expire if not renewed

MARCH

March 22-24, 2012

NCPA's 32nd Annual Meeting and Seminar

March 23, 2012

NCPA's 32nd Annual Membership Meeting

APRIL

April 1, 2012

Deadline to register for May 2012 NALA CLA Exam



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This issue of the FORUM represents the completion of my second year as Senior Editor. I hope all of you have found the past eight issues to be interesting and informative, and I hope you have enjoyed reading them as much as I've enjoyed putting them together for you. And as my second year comes to a close

Editor's Court

Brandon L. Ruth, NCSB/CP

I would like to thank the many members of NCPA who put in extra time pulling together articles, writing columns, doing research, working with advertisers, and lots of other untold little tasks that help put each issue of the FORUM together. If it wasn't for all of you, I'd have very little to do. I would also like to give special thanks for Melissa Clayton, NCCP and Martha Blackman-Hughes, ACP, NCCP for being both my right and left hands in the preparation of each issue and helping to keep this machine running smoothly.

We continue to get positive reviews from our readers and advertisers regarding all facets of the FORUM. It seems everyone loves checking out the old pictures in the Time Machine, and I've learned from putting it together that many of the issues from the past are still relevant and important to us today. Please pay special attention to the Calendar of Events and State News sections! With over 400 members, there is bound to be something going on that interests each and every one of you, and we love to see our members getting involved. As always, please don't hesitate to contact Melissa and let her know where she can find new and different articles you would like to see in future editions of the FORUM. We hope you enjoy this edition of NCPA's FORUM and please know that your feedback and/or comments are always welcome.

Regards,

Brandon L. Ruth, NCSB/CP



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Essay Topic: "I have chosen to be a paralegal..."

Essay Requirements: The essays must be typed, double spaced, and on letter sized paper. They may not exceed two pages in length. Please be aware that spelling, grammar and punctuation will be taken into consideration, so please review your work before submitting. The essays will be judged anonymously, so do not reference your name or your paralegal program within the body of the essay.

Awards**:	First Place:	\$400.00
	Second Place:	\$300.00
	Third Place:	\$200.00
	Fourth Place:	\$100.00

In addition to the scholarship, all awards include a one-year, free student membership to NCPA and one free student registration to NCPA's 32nd Annual Meeting and Seminar to be held March 22-24, 2012.

Send your typewritten essays by January 14, 2012 to:

**Charlotte A. Ward, CLA, NCCP, Student/School Relations Chair
ward_charlotte@yahoo.com
919-906-1822**

Please contact Charlotte A. Ward with any questions.

****All award scholarship checks will be made payable to the winners' educational facility**

NCPA MidYear Seminar & Review Course



Another strong turnout at Mid-Year!



Come for the knowledge, stay for the food!



NCPA President, Stephanie Park, NCCP and attorney Ed Bogle, who provided our Criminal Law presentation



Meeting with our exhibitors, they help make things possible!



NCPA would like to extend its sincere thanks to the following companies, without whose support our Mid-Year Seminar would not have been possible:

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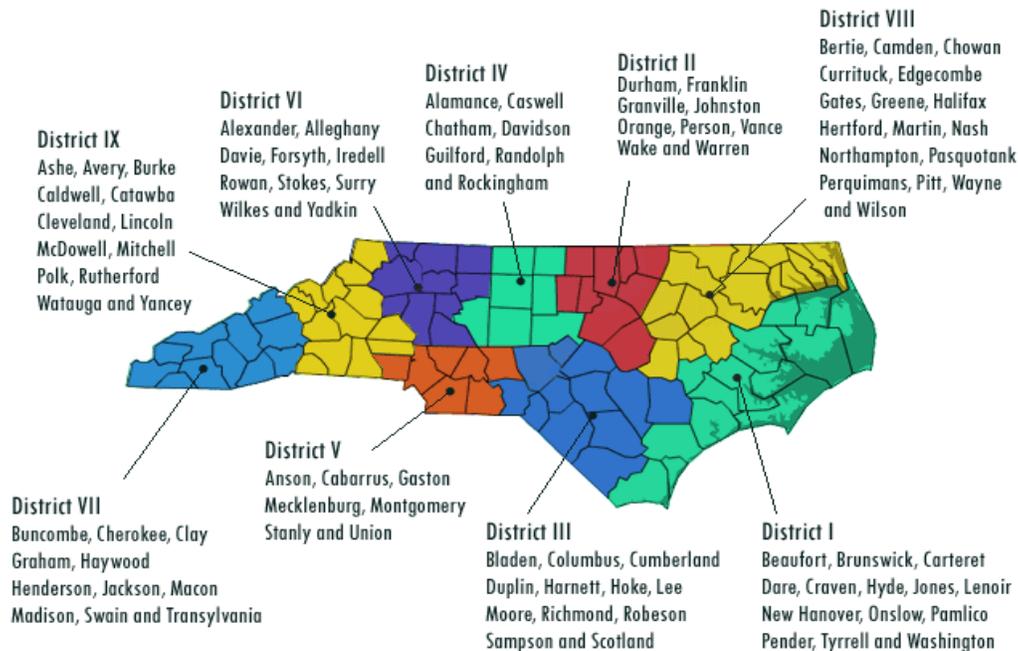


NCPA NEEDS YOU!

NCPA is kicking off its “Educational Bus Tour” in January

NCPA will visit paralegal educational programs across the state to give a presentation on membership and what it has to offer. We will provide these students with information on membership, our Mentor Program, and our yearly CLE offerings.

Our Mentor Program is growing and we expect the program to really grow as we visit with students and educators. **WE ARE IN NEED OF MENTORS.** If you are interested in becoming a mentor to a student or paralegal who is just getting started in the profession please contact Kaye Summers, the Mentor Program Chair, at kaye@pulleywatson.com or 919-682-9691.



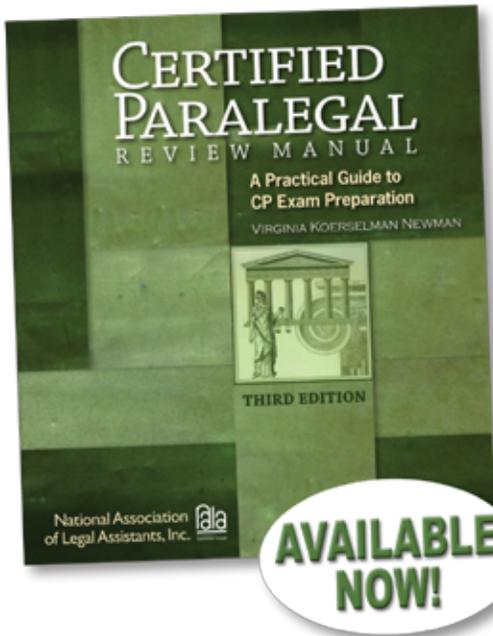
Attention:

The CLA/CP EXAM is now computer based. Below is updated information on testing and deadlines!

Testing Window	Application Deadline	Late Application fee (w/\$25 late filing fee)
September 1-30	August 1	August 10
January 1-31	December 1	December 10
May 1-31	April 1	April 10

For further details see NALA News on our website or contact our NCPA NALA Liaison Kaye H. Summers, ACP, NCCP at kaye@pulleywatson.com

Newly revised and thoroughly updated, this is a must-have resource for anyone preparing to take the NALA CLA/CP Exam!

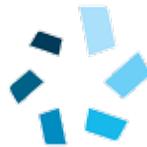


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NORTH CAROLINA
LAWYERS WEEKLY

Dear Paralegal,

I am happy to inform you that **Carolina Paralegal News (CPN)**, a special publication of *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly*, will now be published monthly. As many of you know, this product started out as a quarterly publication, and then went to bimonthly and now monthly due to increased demands and content popularity.

I personally wanted to thank you for your continued support of **CPN**, which has allowed us to provide the large paralegal community in two states with important news, information, profiles and industry trends.

As of January 2010, **CPN** will be available to you each month for \$5.00 per issue. Subscribers to *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* will continue

to see **CPN** inserted in their mailed copies. Also, a PDF version of **CPN** will be available online at www.nclawyersweekly.com.

Please call our office toll-free at 877-577-6221 to order copies of **CPN**, which will be available the last Monday of each month.

Again, thank you very much for your support in growing this product and I hope you have a successful new year!

Kind regards,

Tonya Mathis
Publisher

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Any advertiser or other Exhibitors / Sponsors wishing to participate in the 32nd Annual Meeting and Seminar can contact Exhibitor Chair Michele A. Tuttle, CLA, NCCP, at mtuttle@wfubmc.edu or (336) 716-7335. Payment for sponsorship or exhibitor opportunities can be made online at www.ncparalegal.org after confirmation of the availability of the event you wish to sponsor.

Mentoring Program

The purpose of the NCPA Mentoring Program is to develop and promote the career development and professionalism of future paralegals. The Program invites senior paralegals to share their knowledge of the profession and their area(s) of expertise with junior paralegals and students enrolled in a Paralegal Program in the State of North Carolina. NCPA strongly believes that it is vitally important that seasoned paralegals help foster the growth of its newer members as a means to meet the needs of our ever growing profession and to set the standard for the future.



If you are interested in either being a Mentor or Mentee, please contact the Mentoring Program Chair Kaye Summers at kaye@pulleywatson.com or 919-682-9691.

Your mentor/mentee relationship will contribute to the success and retention of new paralegals and the learning of the profession!

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THE *Director's* CHAIR

DISTRICT II REPORT

District II presently has 152 members. The membership was recently polled regarding future meet and greets. If you are a member of District II, please respond to Crystal Robinson concerning this poll! These meet and greets present a wonderful opportunity to network within our field, as well as within your own specialty! Don't miss out - send your e-mails to Crystal at crissi1975@gmail.com today!

DISTRICT III REPORT

District III consists of Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson and Scotland counties. District III currently has 25 members consisting of 13 general members, 2 associated members and 10 student members.

The American Bar Association House of Delegates granted approval to the Legal Studies Program at Methodist University on August 10, 2011. Congratulations to Program Director Wendy Vonnegut!

The Cumberland County Paralegal Association (CCPA) appointed Wanda Evans as President on August 15, 2011 due to Deborah Brodosky's resignation. CCPA sent a team to participate in the Second Harvest Food Bank's bowl-a-thon on August 19, 2011 at B & B Lanes in Fayetteville. CCPA is planning an October bake sale at the Cumberland County Courthouse. CCPA generally holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Thursday of the month. For further information, please visit www.ccpa.com.

Sylvia L. Erickson, NCCP

District III Director
(910) 484-0179
sylvia_erickson@fd.org

DISTRICT IV REPORT:

As of September 15, 2011, District IV has 75 current members. That consists of:

- 62 general members
- 4 associate members
- 5 student members
- 1 attorney/advisory
- 2 affiliates
- 1 educational program

GPA held its 5th Annual Spring Seminar on May 14, 2011, which provided those in attendance (112) with 6 hours of CPE credit. The seminar was held at the Deep River Event Center in Greensboro, NC. Its new officers took office beginning July 1, 2011:

President	Elizabeth Vance, CP, NCCP
Vice-President	Karen F. England, NCCP
Secretary	J. Taylor Barrett, NCCP
Treasurer	Jane A. Harris, NCCP
Parliamentarian	Jamie E. Coll, NCCP

In June I spoke at an information session for students at Guilford College. I provided them with information about the benefits of being a member of NCPA and encouraged them to join NCPA. I am currently planning a meet & greet/mini-seminar in partnership with GPA for sometime this fall. Our speaker will be Tim White, a licensed psychologist and career coach. As soon as he provides me with a date we will get the details circulated to all members of District IV, GPA and ACPA.

Karen F. England, NCCP
District IV Director

THE
Director's
CHAIR

continued

***DISTRICT VI
and DISTRICT IX REPORT:***

Currently Districts VI and IX do not have a local district director. District VI has 36 members and District IX has 14. Since I am in Wake County, this will make it difficult for me to be able to work with members in those districts. If you are interested in serving as a director, you must have been a general member for one (1) year and must be able to attend our Board meetings (this is a voting position). If you are interested, please email me for more information.

Patti Clapper, ACP, NCCP
At-Large Director
Immediate Past President
lglduck@aol.com

DISTRICT VII

There are currently 18 members in District VII consisting of 13 general members, 2 associate members and 3 student members.

I am in the process of planning a meet and greet session for the new paralegal students at Southwestern Community College (SCC) in Sylva, NC. I am coordinating the details with SCC's Paralegal Instructor Kelly Burch.

As District Director, I here to be your voice to the Board of Directors so please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, suggestions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Ivans, NCCP
District VII Director

Volunteers Wanted



Districts III, VI and IX need Directors!

District Directors are responsible for the promotion of NCPA and its activities throughout the District, including the recruitment of new members and the development of min-seminars or other educational events within the District.

District III includes the counties of Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson and Scotland

District VI includes the counties of Alexander, Alleghany, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Rowan, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin

District IX includes the counties of Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Lincoln, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Watauga and Yancey.

If interested, please contact Stephanie Ivans, Chairman of the Board, at wncparalegal@gmail.com.

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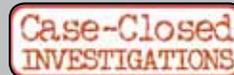


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“CRAZY PARALEGAL

~ PARTY OF ONE”

How to Deal with Stress and Become the Ultimate Taskmaster in 10 Simple Steps

By: *Jamie Paye Collins*

Do you have a reservation made for “Crazy Paralegal - Party of One?” Do you ever find yourself completely overwhelmed by the daunting multitude of tasks you need to accomplish within a short span of time? Ever find yourself wondering how in the world it is even possible to get it all done? Welcome to paralegal world. I currently find myself on the verge of three first choice jury trials in the same month and in all honesty, I find myself wondering the same thing. Next time you find yourself sinking into the dark abyss of stress, use these tips to help navigate your way back to the light.

Buckle down. Step one is to fully commit yourself to the project. This may take a matter of minutes, hours or even days. If it is a highly complicated project, it may even take you a few weeks. The key is to commit fully and unconditionally to the project. Think of it as a marriage ceremony uniting person to project, for better or worse, minus the cake and flowers. You must take full ownership in order to begin your reign as the ultimate taskmaster.

Perform an analytical assessment. For repetitive projects, this will be easy. For less familiar projects, you may need to put your analytical skills to good use. Determine what needs to be done, the order in which it should be completed, the best way to accomplish each aspect or component, and which staff members or vendors, if any, you will utilize to complete the project from start to finish. Create a list, chart or outline to track your progress. Don't lose sight of the end goal, but put it on the back burner of your mind for now. Once your analysis is complete and you have developed a clear and focused strategy, it's time to move on. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Turn off the negative voices in your head. Each of us has a little voice, which perpetuates either positive or negative feedback from within. You may find yourself

working on a particular project and typing at your desk – when all of a sudden, the little voice creeps in stating “*I can't possibly get this done,*” “*This is not even possible,*” “*I can't do this,*” “*I really need to work on x.*” Silence all negative feedback. Stifle it. It serves no purpose and has no place in your endeavors. You have mountains to climb and negative thoughts will only serve as rough terrain in your climb to progress. When you feel this voice creep into your head, replace it with affirmative phrases such as: “*I can get this done*” or “*I will get this done.*” You may *literally* need to say one of these catch phrases to yourself *three to five times in a row* before the negative thoughts will dissipate. Just try it! It really does work.

Be diligent and industrious. Keep in mind that a billion small tasks or a complicated project will not be accomplished any more quickly than time will *realistically* allow. If you think too much about the big picture, it can make you feel overwhelmed, so focus only on one particular task at a time. If you are working on a thirty-step project, focus on step one, then step two. This seems logical, but this is precisely when you need to refer back to the previous tip above. When you are on step 1, step 15 is not allowed to enter your brain, nor is step 26. You cannot get to where you are going if you do not stay on course. Knock down tasks one by one and you will make it to the end goal.

If you are truly, (and I repeat, truly) embarking on a “mission impossible” than you will accomplish all that is *humanly* possible within the time allotted. You are a paralegal, not a miracle worker – although the terms are often interchangeable. Anyone who followed a high caliber paralegal around for a day would quickly come to this realization. Strive valiantly to do your *absolute best* in spite of your pre-conceived notions regarding the project (and promptly change your business cards to read: Helen Keller, CP.) Paralegals do not surrender; they go down in a blaze of glory.

If someone offers you help, take it. One of the biggest mistakes you can make is to turn away help. Trust me, I get it. You are so overwhelmed and you think it would take you longer to explain a task than to “just” do it yourself. However, when you have entered the paralegal pressure cooker, this is not true! If there is a task you could delegate with 5 minutes of instruction that would save you 30 minutes of real time – it is a worthwhile trade off. Be sure to realistically assess what you can delegate and delegate it! When a kind co-worker approaches you – do not coil like a cobra ready to strike upon approach. Find *something* to give this kind-hearted, generous Good Samaritan...unless you find an impending sense of doom and overwhelming pressure refreshing. If you do this, you will feel some relief. A little help and support goes a long way.

When in need of encouragement – look to the past. The truth of the matter is – if it is possible – you *will* get it done. You always have. Think back to a time when you felt equally as crazy, overloaded and overwhelmed and realize that you fully executed on that task, just as you will this one. Your professional history speaks volumes about you and will instill personal confidence. Don’t be afraid to take a stroll down memory lane. If this is the first placard to be hung on your paralegal wall of fame – remain focused. You can do it! Think of it as your first real opportunity to seize greatness.

Step away from the desk. I repeat: Step away from the desk. Take a brief respite. Go to the restroom, grab a drink, grab a snack, chat briefly with a co-worker or catch some fresh air. You *will* return with more clarity and focus and will be a more productive paralegal because of it. Conducting a typing/sorting/reading marathon at your desk is no different than attempting to take a 10-15 hour road trip without pulling over to take a bathroom break. Take a brief recess from the madness! I promise you – that pile of work will still be there when you return – you can count on it.

In the event you would happen to be hit by a bus while taking in some fresh air – rest assured that your attorneys will gladly provide you with a bedside laptop and a lovely array of banker’s boxes to keep you occupied...perhaps even a nice flower arrangement and a greeting card. They’ve got you covered – so back *away* from the desk!

Do not do a “roll out” and come to work. I know, I know, you’re tired and getting “ready” for work will take a toll on you. It’s so much easier to go from your bed to your car with minimal effort. Too bad! Put at least a half-hearted effort into the looks department. The only thing worse than having a bad day is looking a “hot mess” while doing it. It will only help solidify your title as the queen or king of darkness

and secure your reign as the omnipotent ruler of the damned. If you look good – at least you’ll have one thing going for you. If the dark clouds should happen to part, you’ll be ready to enter the land of flowing fields, butterflies and happiness. Okay, in reality, you may be ready to hit the Mexican cantina down the road for a margarita after work, but either way you will look moderately appealing. Not a bad thing. Who knows, you may even get a compliment to lift your spirits. No roll outs. We’re all watching you...

Acknowledge that today may suck and rise to the occasion. Granted, this may not sound too pleasant, but it is a reality. You must acknowledge that today may suck. Not every day is going to be a holiday and not every meal is going to be a picnic. Let’s face it; there are always going to be bad days and bad projects. It’s a part of life. All you can do in this situation is cling strongly to your sense of self and general happiness and remember – today may suck, but you *can* overcome it. You *will*. You simply need to accept your perilous circumstances at face value and continue to move toward the goal. Think positive. It is merely a challenge. Failure is not an option. Rise to the occasion.

When a great level of stress exists, an opportunity for greatness also exists. Will you allow this one stressful event to steer you off course or will you adhere to the Latin creed *carpe diem* and seize the day? It’s your choice. The land of stress is a true breeding ground for failure or greatness. The paralegal that works valiantly under pressure and makes it to the end goal with grace and confidence will emerge as a true gladiator (perhaps a crazy one, but a gladiator nevertheless). Trust me; attorneys *do* take notice of the savvy paralegals around them who consistently adhere to the gold standard. They take mental notes. They know exactly who they would prefer to accompany them into battle. Will you make that list? When a great level of stress exists, an opportunity for greatness also exists. View stressful events as opportunities. Mentally prepare yourself. Be a gladiator!

If all else fails, make that reservation for “*Crazy Paralegal - Party of Two*” and I’ll join you!

If you enjoyed this article, please be sure to follow Jamie’s litigation column - KNOW Business - featured in KNOW: The Magazine for Paralegals and watch for her future guest blogs on The Estrin Report. You can find Jamie on LinkedIn or send your comments to her directly at: jamietheparalegal@yahoo.com. Need a mentor? E-mail away!

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Calling All Members!



“People who ask our advice almost never take it. Yet we should never refuse to give it, upon request, for it often helps us to see our own way more clearly.” --Brendan Francis

Please consider contributing to the next edition of the *NCPA Forum*. Not only do we want our association’s publication to be informative and innovative for each and every member, we also want it to include helpful hints and sound advice from our main resources, our members. We are looking for all types of articles that relate to the paralegal community. Anything of interest to you will most likely be of interest to other paralegals across the state. Let your voice be heard in the *NCPA Forum*. Please submit all articles in Word format to mel_clayton79@yahoo.com. You may also e-mail your comments, suggestions and possible article contributors to us as well.

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NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Now Is the Time to Offer Your Service

To paraphrase the esteemed Ralph Waldo Emerson -- It costs a beautiful person no exertion to paint his or her image on our eyes, but yet how splendid is that benefit?! It costs no more for a wise person to convey his or her quality to other persons, and every one can do his or her best thing easiest. Even though certain liberties have been taken with the above "quote", the meaning remains clear. Each of us is given certain talents and abilities that we can use for the good of others. Now is the time for each of us to consider using those abilities for the good of NCPA and its members. Please consider serving as an officer or director in the 2012-2013 membership year. As you ponder this decision, contemplate the special abilities you may have to share, and the leadership opportunities afforded each of us to further the paralegal profession in North Carolina and beyond.

Following this article, you will find a "Declaration of Candidacy for Office" form and a "Recommendation for District Director" form for some districts. If you are interested in becoming more involved in NCPA, or know of someone who you believe would be good for the organization, please complete the appropriate form and return it to the address listed on the form. The deadline for returning the "Declaration of Candidacy for Office" form is **December 19, 2011**, and the deadline for returning the "Recommendation for District Director" form is **January 7, 2011**.

For your convenience, listed below is a short description of the duties for each office. Please refer to the NCPA website, under "About NCPA", if you wish to further explore the duties of an officer or director.

President:	Represents needs and concerns of the membership before the Board of Directors; supervises the work of other Officers and Committee Chairs; and keeps the membership advised. [See Bylaws Article VIII.1. and Standing Rule VIII.A.1.]
First Vice President:	Responsible for the planning of seminars, workshops, and other educational events; serves as Education Committee Chair. [See Bylaws Article VIII.2. and Standing Rule VIII.A.2.]
Second Vice President:	Serves as Membership Committee Chair; responsible for compilation of the Membership Directory. [See Bylaws Article VIII.3. and Standing Rule VIII.A.3.]
Secretary:	Responsible for keeping a permanent record of all meetings of the membership. [See Bylaws Article VIII.4. and Standing Rule VIII.A.4.]
Treasurer:	Serves as Finance Committee Chair; prepares budget for the ensuing fiscal year to be approved by the Board of Directors; responsible for the deposit of funds as well as all disbursements as provided for in the budget. [See Bylaws Article VIII.5. and Standing Rule VIII.A.5.]
NALA Liaison:	A NALA member who is familiar with NALA Bylaws and Standing Rules, this officer represents NCPA at the NALA Annual Meeting of Affiliated Associations and makes quarterly reports to NALA concerning NCPA's activities; coordinates with the CLA Review Course Subcommittee Chair on planning and presentation of CLA Review Course. [See Bylaws Article VIII.6. and Standing Rule VIII.A.7.]
Parliamentarian:	Serves as Bylaws and Standing Rules Committee Chair; attends all membership meetings to give opinions on parliamentary procedure and interpret NCPA's Bylaws and Standing Rules. [See Bylaws Article VIII.7. and Standing Rule VIII.A.6.]

For those district members who are electing new District Directors, a "Recommendation for District Director" form follows this article. Each District Director, as a member of the NCPA Board of Directors, is responsible for the promotion of NCPA within his or her own district, including recruitment of new members and assisting with development of educational events within each district. [See Standing Rule IX.C.5.] This position gives the District Director a great chance to network with other paralegals in a specific geographic district and it affords the opportunity to find out how other areas in North Carolina are educating and promoting paralegals in their districts. The completed "Recommendation for District Director" form must be returned by **January 7, 2012**.

If you have any questions about any officer or director position, please contact Nominations & Elections Committee Chair Kimberly C. Pellicone at (980) 387-4458 or info@ncparalegal.org, or contact one of the current NCPA officers or directors. Names and email addresses of officers and directors can be found on the NCPA website at www.ncparalegal.org. Rest your pointer on "About NCPA" on the left to see a drop-down menu for "Board of Directors" or "Officers and Executive Committee."

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY FOR THE OFFICE OF

OF
NORTH CAROLINA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
2012-2013

The undersigned hereby declares that he/she is actively employed as a Paralegal or Legal Assistant; is legally competent to enter into contracts; and is currently a General Member in good standing of North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc., and has been so for at least one (1) year.

Qualifications for Office:

Having read and understood Articles VII and VIII of the Bylaws of the North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc. pertaining to officers, I hereby declare myself a candidate for the office of _____, subject to election at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

Date: _____

(Print/Type Your Name)

(Sign Your Name)

Candidate's Address and Telephone Number:

Send to: Kimberly C. Pellicone, ACP, NCCP
NCPA Nominations and Elections Chair
North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.
Post Office Box 36264
Charlotte, NC 28236-6264
info@ncparalegal.org

RECOMMENDATION FOR DISTRICT DIRECTOR
FOR DISTRICT ____ OF
NORTH CAROLINA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

Pursuant to the provisions of ARTICLE IX.3 and .5 of the Bylaws of North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc. and Section IX.C of the Standing Rules, the position of District Directors for District I, III, V, VII or IX (two-year term position), will be elected by the members of their respective regions and announced at the Annual Meeting in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina on March 23, 2012.

If you are a member of District I, III, V, VII or IX, and wish to nominate a candidate for the Directorship of your District, please complete the following form and mail it, together with a letter from your nominee expressing his/her interest in the position and a copy of the nominee's resume, in accordance with the following instructions.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT BY ELECTIONS CHAIR IS JANUARY 7, 2012

Send to: Kimberly C. Pellicone, ACP, NCCP
NCPA Nominations and Elections Chair
North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.
Post Office Box 36264
Charlotte, NC 28236-6264
info@ncparalegal.org

FROM: _____
(Print/Type Your Name)

Address: _____

With his/her permission, I hereby recommend for election to the Board of Directors of North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc. as Director of District _____, subject to the provisions of Article IX of the Bylaws:

(Print/Type Name of NOMINEE)

Address: _____

Employment: _____

Telephone No.: _____

This will certify that I am a member in good standing and that my nominee is a General Member in good standing of North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc., and has been so for at least one year as of this day, is employed as a paralegal, and is a permanent resident of the State of North Carolina.

Dated: _____
(Signature of Nominator)

**STANDING RULES OF
NORTH CAROLINA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

XIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- A. Qualifications and method of election are set forth in detail in Article VII of the Bylaws.
- B. Each candidate shall have the opportunity to campaign for his/her position as follows:
 - 1. Each candidate shall have the opportunity to make a speech at the annual meeting for no more than two minutes and three minutes for questions and answers from the floor.
 - 2. That by way of *NCPA FORUM* all candidates shall have the opportunity to notify all members of the Association that they are currently seeking an office. This shall be done by publishing the slate of candidates in the appropriate issue of *NCPA FORUM*. Each candidate may submit for publication in *NCPA FORUM* a photo and a statement not to exceed 750 words. No candidate shall be allowed to place an advertisement in *NCPA FORUM*, whether paid for individually or paid for by another individual, privately or publicly donated. Candidates shall be allowed to receive the current mailing labels for the membership (at the current cost to NCPA) so that they may send a separate mailing to the membership regarding their qualifications and other personal information. *[amended 1/10/1998]*
 - 3. A copy of all of the above mentioned rules shall be attached to the call for candidates that is to be issued to the membership by December 5.

Has your
Email
address changed?

Please be sure to let us know so we can keep you informed of what's happening in our profession.

Send your old and new email addresses to:

info@ncparalegal.org

OR you may update this and other personal information on your own by logging onto the NCPA website and modifying your profile.

Congratulations to Crystal Robinson, NCCP on her award winning essay and wishing her luck on the upcoming CLA Exam!

“What the CLA Designation and the CLA Program Mean to Me”

By: Crystal L. Robinson

In grade school, all my teachers always asked everyone “What do you want to be when you grow up.” As a young child, my mother told me “I was going to be a lawyer because I enjoyed arguing with everyone.” It was not until my second year in college that I realized that law school was just not for me. I enjoyed the law and would be happy working in that field, but attending college and then law school I was just not sure. My life was changing and I needed direction and fast. My husband proposed and I decided that I needed to have a job so I decided to be a paralegal.

Out of the 14 years that I have been a paralegal, I have not regretted my decision. It is a great experience being a paralegal. As a paralegal you find your forte in a particular field. Real estate is mine! I have finally realized after 9 years in the field that this career path depends on what I make it. I have missed out on a lot of seminars and meeting great mentors because I was scared. Scared to venture out and do things outside my comfort zone. I felt as if I did not belong here. However, getting involved with my local organization helped me in my self doubtfulness.

The Certified Legal Assistance Program is great for any paralegal. It is a program that provides support, encouragement and strong community ties. This program is one that has helped me come slightly out of my shell. It's a hard shell to break but eventually I will be there. I'm able to be myself with the members of this group and there is no judgement. Everyone knows the realities and demands of every day stress in our jobs and it is a great place to vent and reflect on those times. Each member of this program has a way of giving that positive feedback that you sometimes need to hear.

Becoming a member of this organization it has provided me with the opportunity to meet some wonderful new paralegals. This fine group provides me with positive and encouraging growth and the support that we all need from time to time. Being part of this group makes me want to strive for the next level, it gives me the motivation and strength I need to push forward and take the exam.

As a member of this program, I have come to realize that I need to put more demands on myself if I want to succeed further at my career choice. As a paralegal you should expect more and have higher expectation for yourself than your employer. Not to mention you should want that higher level of achievement and the success of a great career because you have chosen this path. A path that you may not have chosen had you not had the heart for it. Although being certified is completely a voluntary commitment, it is one that you would not regret. It is well worth your time and energy to become certified. Being certified is recognized by both employers and the paralegal community. The only certification that you can take with you if you chose to move to a different state.

As a paralegal being designated as a certified legal assistance will allow me to the ability to stand tall and know that I gave my all to accomplish a goal. A goal that paces me on the next level of success.

With this program you can stay one step ahead of your coworkers and your employer by attending certified legal education seminars. Which can provide you with the knowledge of new law or procedural changes. Attending these events, gives you a great way to network with other paralegals. You would stand out if your boss came to you asking for an attorney in a particular state and you just knew of one. That would be a great way to get on the good side of your employer.

As a member of this program, I have seen myself change and I believe it has done wonders for my self confidence. I am happy to be a member of this group and to be connected to so many great paralegals. And to be able to call them my colleagues and friends is just an extra benefit for me. I feel as if I belong and that this group of paralegals are just like a big extended family and can get together a a family reunion.

By achieving the CLA exam and earning my Certified Legal Assistance title will provide me with the confidence in knowing that I could accomplish this goal. It gives me the sense that there were others that completed this task and I am amongst them. There would be no more self-encouraging, and everyone in the program understands that reality and demands of everyday strong community ties and great colleagues. Furthermore this will give me the honor of knowing I'm in an elite group of other s with the same achievement.

Having this certification will provide me with the courage to step even further out of my shell than before. To help me be able to help new paralegals feel the security that they may need to proceed with this career or to get involved in this organization. Or to make a difference in someone's career as someone did for me. It will give me the opportunity to enhance my career further by being certified in my forte, eventually.

As a paralegal, I know that by taking the CLA exam and getting my certification will help me in the long run with my career however, I have already succeeded with just being a member of this group. The support, the compassion, the strength and the encouragement that this group provides puts a smile on my face and I am glad to be a part of that. Even if I do not pass the first go around, I know that my friends and colleagues will be right there to pick me up and say try again. There is no one person who would want to see anyone fail, and everyone would do what they could to help you out. Every last one of the members in this group are awesome and I wont to be just like them.



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NCPA IS ON THE MOVE!

No Experience = No Job? **5** THINGS YOU MUST DO NOW!

By: Vicki Voisin, ACP

You have done well in school and you finally have your paralegal degree. You were certain law firms would be banging on your door on graduation day offering you fantastic jobs.

Didn't happen? You're not alone! Unfortunately, this is an issue for many new paralegal school graduates.

Here are 5 things you MUST do NOW to keep yourself in the game and find that job you've been looking for:

1. Update Your Resume – Often. “An update?” you gasp. “Why update a perfectly good, nearly new resume?”

Your resume should be a work in process because “one size does not fit all”. It should be customized to each position you are seeking. Read the job details carefully for the specific requirements and then tailor your resume to that job.

Limit to your resume to 1 page and print it on nice white paper. Do not use anything fancy or colored.

Be sure your resume spotlights your skills and experience. You have no experience? Not true! You have been in school, you may have done an internship, perhaps volunteer work, and what about your previous jobs? You may not highlight each one specifically but do highlight the the experience you gained and the skills you learned to demonstrate how those apply to working as a paralegal at the specific job you are applying for.

2. Take A Job While Waiting/Looking for THE Job. In this economy, you may not find the dream job you thought would be waiting for you when you finished your education. It is important to be employed, though, if for no other reason than you like sleeping indoors and eating 3 meals a day.

This is where taking “A JOB” comes in. Look for something related to the field so you can gain get that experience under your belt. You may not be working as a paralegal but come as close as you can.

Consider targeting a law firm or corporation where you would eventually like to work and take another job there just to get your foot in the door. You should also consider doing some volunteer work with a legal aid clinic or the court system. You will not only gain a lot of practical experience, but it will look good on your resume and show what you have been productive during your unemployment.

A JOB will be of assistance in making connections that that may lead you to THE JOB.

3. Leverage the Internet and Social Media. The importance of participating in social media (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter in particular) cannot be overstated. Even if you don't find a job through social media (and it is possible you will), it provides you with exposure to other professionals. It also affords you the opportunity to research would-be employers.

Potential employers use social media to search for information on prospective employees. You will want them to find you there and see that you would be a spectacular employee. Having

a professional picture posted on these sites is essential so have one taken NOW.

LinkedIn is particularly important because it is a professional “resume type” site. You can join forums, participate in discussions, and make new contacts. Also, ask people you know to give you a recommendation on LinkedIn.

Whatever you do, though, **do not allow the Internet make you invisible.** Read on!

4. In-Person Connections Remain Key. This is not the time to hide out in your home office surfing the web for a job. The truth is that your next job is probably right in your back yard, so to speak, because personal connections are a primary source of hires. You should focus the majority of your efforts on face-to-face networking.

So many jobs are found by word of mouth that you have to network both with the people you have known forever and with anyone new you can meet. Begin with the people you knew in school (fellow students, professors, guest speakers), and widen your web to the people you met while you were interning, members of your local association. Join that association and attend any events possible, including job fairs and CLE events. You never know whom you'll meet today that will recommend you for a job tomorrow.

5. Walk the Walk and Talk the Talk. Dress, act and speak like the professional you aspire to be. Your student days are behind you so do not revert to “student casual” clothing when you are networking.

Professionalism should be at the top of your mind when you are on social media, too. Never post anything (including pictures) that you would not want your mother OR a future employer to see.

Searching for a job can be difficult, discouraging and depressing. Try to get past that and maintain a positive attitude. Begin every day planning on good things to come your way and be sure you take these 5 steps:

- Update your resume to tailor it to the specific job you are seeking
- Take A Job while you're seeking THE Job
- Use the Internet to your advantage but do not disappear; personal connections are key
- Have a professional photograph taken NOW
- Act, dress and speak like a professional

Remember, getting a job IS your job – for now.

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If your birthday is not listed correctly, please edit your profile on our website (www.ncparalegal.org) to make sure we have the correct month!

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NCPA TIME MACHINE

In this edition of the Time Machine we're taking a look past at Winter issues past. First we go back to Winter 1992 for a look at the proposed ethics opinion that would allow for paralegals to be included on law firm letterhead. Next, it's back to Winter 1987 for a dot-matrix look at some early paralegal educational programs (a feature we hope to be updating for 2012). Finally, we jump ahead to Winter 2001, the year our own Brenda Mareski, ACP won the Meredith Pollette essay contest. We hope you enjoy the Time Machine, and if you have any memories from issues back you would like us to revisit, contact me anytime at brandonruth@gmail.com.

NORTH CAROLINA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC. WINTER 1992

"I'm all for it," said Mary Brawley, a legal secretary in Statesville and current president of the North Carolina Association of Legal Secretaries. "This will enhance our status. Many of us are certified professional legal secretaries. We've studied hard and passed the exams. This will give that extra compensation of being looked at with some authority."



Brawley also said listing legal assistants on the letterhead would make the firm more efficient. She also predicted that clients would favor the listings because they would have an alternative person to contact with questions.

"Clients will appreciate this," she said. "They feel like they

can ask us the dumb questions. They feel safer with us than the attorneys. Sometimes attorneys have the habit of assuming the clients know more about the legal system than they do. The assistant can fill them in on the procedure."

Goldsboro paralegal T. William Tewes, Jr., who is president of the N.C. Paralegal Association, said it made sense to put paralegals in the letterhead because so many clients are billed for their services. "Paralegals in many areas can give efficient legal service at a lower rate," he said. "As long as these people are going to be billed for the paralegal's time, it makes sense to list them as firm members."

The proposed ethics opinion will be published for public comment in the next State Bar newsletter. It could be adopted by the State Bar Council at its quarterly meeting in April.

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Winter 1992

NORTH CAROLINA PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION, INC. WINTER 1992

PROFESSIONAL STAFF MAY GET LISTING IN FIRM LETTERHEAD

Paralegals and other legal assistants may soon see their names listed with the lawyers on the firm's stationary.

In a proposed ethics opinion, the State Bar has ruled that nonlawyers may be listed on a law firm's letterhead, as long as their status is clearly indicated. Presumably, the names of any non-lawyer would be accompanied by the appropriate title, such as paralegal, legal assistant or secretary.

The opinion marks an about-face from the Bar's previous stance. Paralegal guidelines published in 1986 stated that a lawyer's letterhead could not include the name of an assistant. However, the Bar Ethics Committee said there was nothing in the rules to forbid such listings.

"Rule 2.3(C) prohibits only the listing of persons not licensed to practice law in North Carolina as attorneys affiliated with the firm," the advisory opinion states. "It is, of course, necessary that any communication of a lawyer or law firm be presented in a manner which is not false, deceptive or misleading. To ensure that the public is not led to believe that a nonlawyer is eligible to practice law, the nonlawyer's limited capacity should be clearly set forth on the letterhead."

The request for the ethics ruling came from the Bar's own

Paralegal Committee, which has spent the past year reviewing the 1986 guidelines. The letterhead rule is the only change the committee recommended to the State Bar council at its recent quarterly meeting.

"We felt this change was consistent with the practice pattern and trend to use more legal assistants and more paralegals," said Kinston lawyer P.C. Barwick, Jr. who chairs the committee.

"I don't really expect a wholesale listing of paralegals and legal assistants," Barwick said. "We don't anticipate doing it in my firm. But those who want to will be able to list nonlawyers as long as their roles are clearly described."

The paralegal guidelines now permit paralegals and other support staff to sign their names on law firm letterhead as long as they accompany their signature with their title. That guideline was left unchanged by the Paralegal Committee.

Move Welcomed By Paralegals

The change in the Bar's position was embraced by paralegals and legal secretaries, who said inclusion of nonlawyers on a firm's letterhead would give support staff the recognition they deserve.

NCPA TIME MACHINE continued

PROFILE: PARALEGAL SCHOOLS

CENTRAL PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Central Piedmont Community College is located in Charlotte, North Carolina and is part of the public service department. Those graduating from CPCC receive an Associate in Applied Science Degree. Those wishing to enter the paralegal program must have a high school diploma or the equivalent. CPCC offers courses in legal research, tort law, corporate law, title abstracting, real estate, legal composition and other courses dealing with the legal system, trial preparation, English and psychology.

Admission requirements are: completing a student data sheet, submitting official transcripts of all high school and pre-college and college work, taking placement tests if required and when notified, completing an academic advising interview with the program counselor.

The Piedmont Association of Paralegals is the program's club. Meetings are held twice a month and include speakers such as judges, lawyers and others involved in the legal field. If CPCC sounds like the place for you, contact Program Director, Henry A. Oder, Jr., Post Office Box 35009, Charlotte, North Carolina 28235 or Debbie Templeman, Program Counselor at (704) 373-6419.

CAPE FEAR TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Cape Fear Tech has its home in historical Wilmington. Entrance requirements are graduation from high school or GED certificate.

Application procedures include completion of application, transcript of grades and personal interview. Upon completion of the 2 year program (7 quarters - 120 hours) a student earns a degree in Paralegal Technology. Courses include business, legal research, real estate, family law, litigation, law office management, etc. for further information contact Edward B. Higgins, Jr., Director of Paralegal Program, 411 N. Front Street, Wilmington, North Carolina 28401, (919) 343-0481, Ext. 261.

CENTRAL CAROLINA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

CCTC is a member of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Applicants should possess a high school degree or equivalent. The curriculum includes business classes, criminal law, research, real property, family law, tax, probate, etc. Upon completion a student receives an Associate Degree in Applied Science. Financial Aid is available through Pell Grants, College Work-Study Program, N.C. Student Incentive Grant Program and Guarantee Student Loans. CCTC will assist students in locating housing. For more information contact: Admissions Office, Central Carolina Technical College, 1105 Kelly Drive, Sanford, North Carolina 27330, (919) 775-5401; Toll Free outside Lee County 1-800-682-8353.

LAURA E. PONELL, CHAIRMAN
STUDENT/SCHOOL RELATIONS

Winter 1987

NCPA FORUM/SEP-OCT-NOV, 1987/15.

NCPA TIME MACHINE continued

2001 Meredith R. Pollette, CLA Scholarship Essay Contest

Brenda J. Mareski, CLA

I am pursuing the CLAS Designation because....

Personal satisfaction. Professional respect. Educational challenge. There are many reasons to pursue a Certified Legal Assistant Specialty designation, and each person has his or her own incentive for reaching for that goal. In my case, there are several goals, each of which is important in its own way.

Throughout my adult life, I have been in awe of those who have committed themselves to the pursuit of advanced education. Taking time out from career and family to study and prepare for an advanced degree or certification is certainly a sacrifice, one that many people are not prepared to make. I am impressed by those who have spent their time and energies to excel in their professional careers. I recently watched as my youngest brother graduated from a local private college, earning his Masters in Business Administration. Over the past twenty-four months, he struggled through night classes, usually two in each semester, in addition to excelling in his full-time career. He sacrificed time with his wife and son, who were very supportive of his efforts. He gave up outings with our extended family, social functions, reading for pleasure, weekends, and much sleep, because he felt that, while he was proud of having earned his bachelor's degree, he knew he was capable of doing more. When he walked across the podium to receive his M.B.A. degree, I realized how

proud of him I was, and how much he had accomplished. As I spoke with him on graduation day, I became aware of the deep personal satisfaction he received from the advanced education he had worked so hard to obtain, and realized how much I wanted to feel that I, too, had measured up to my full potential. I recognized that, even though I had passed the CLA examination, I still had not reached the limits of my abilities. I wanted more. That is one of the reasons I decided to obtain my CLAS designation.

Having only received my Certified Legal Assistant (CLA) designation in January 2000, I am very aware of the rigors of additional study, but have decided that achieving a Certified Legal Assistant Specialty (CLAS) designation is a task worthy of any amount of time and effort.

Over the past eighteen months I have become accustomed to adding the CLA designation after my signature. More often than not people ask me what it stands for, and what it means. Once I was asked why I bothered to get my CLA designation, when so many people don't even know what it represents. The first question is simple to answer, and the second takes only a little more explanation. The third made me stop to think - why

Winter 2001

was I trying to become a CLA - or in this instance, a CLAS?
One reason is professional pride.

We all like to think that we are highly regarded by our peers, but the truth is that inside, each of us feels a little insecure. It goes back to watching others achieve their goals - we wonder whether we are capable of more, and whether we have the courage to attempt to reach further. I always thought that I would have no problem taking and passing the CLA examination, but as the appointed time for testing approached, I was full of self-doubt. Had I prepared enough? Was I smart enough? Did I remember all the things I learned in my paralegal coursework, and would they actually come back to me when I needed to recall them? Obviously the answer to all of these questions was "Yes". Having successfully passed the CLA examination, I gained the confidence to attempt a specialty examination. Just as the CLA means that the recipient has achieved an advanced level of competency in general paralegal studies, the CLAS shows that in a specific area of law, the recipient stands out from the crowd. This is the kind of self-fulfillment that I have always desired, and I can think of no better professional honor than being called a specialist in my chosen field.

The CLA designation has made my employer aware of how seriously I take my profession and my position. When I first spoke with my attorneys about taking the CLA exam, while they were supportive, they were also unfamiliar with the exam, and the study and preparation that were required in order to pass it. Now that I have my CLA designation and have made my attorneys aware of my desire to continue on to obtain the CLAS designa-

tion, they are eager to see me succeed. They know that employing paralegals who have advanced levels of competency will enable them to delegate more tasks, and to be certain that the work is done in a precise and professional manner. I will be proud to be able to inform them when I have passed the CLAS examination, and hope that it will reflect as well on them as on myself.

The last reason for wanting to earn my CLAS designation is that, with the increasing number of people choosing a paralegal career, staying informed and educated will enable me to be a leader in our field. I have committed myself to serving in local and state organizations that promote our profession, and I would like to see all paralegals regarded as a group dedicated to high standards in our work product, ethics and professionalism. The accomplishments of each paralegal, whether a graduate with a paralegal degree or certification, or one who learns through experience, reflect on us as a whole. I feel that, as in any other career field, the more of us who can represent to the community that we are willing and able to excel in our chosen profession, the more valuable and the more highly regarded we will become as employees and co-workers.

While not every paralegal will obtain a CLA or CLAS designation, each time another of us strives for and reaches this goal, our reputation as a group of professionals is improved and enhanced. I know that, by obtaining my CLAS designation, I will be able to further promote the paralegal profession of which I am so proud to be a part.

i'm ready for
the next step.

but what's
my next move?



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