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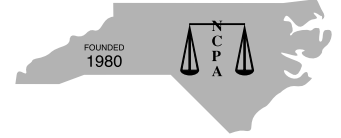
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Summer Forum 2009

North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.

Forum



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

Securing Your Future



IN THIS ISSUE...

- ❑ **Soaring Eagles: Is It a Want or Is It a Need?**
- ❑ **Five Simple Tips to Add Hours to Your Day**
- ❑ **“That’s Not My Job” (It May Not Be for Long)**

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President's Message

Patti Clapper, ACP, NCCP



Hooray for warmer weather! I don't know about all of you, but I have had my share of cold weather this season and am ready for some warm temperatures!

As I begin my position as NCPA's President, I look for ways to let non-members know that we are here and let them know what the Association can do for them. Do you know anyone who is not an NCPA member? If so, I challenge you to talk to them about NCPA and encourage them to join. Are you an NCPA member and feel like maybe you aren't getting your money's worth? If so, please contact me or your District Director and let us know what you would like to get out of NCPA. Our organization is unique because it is run solely by volunteer members who, like most of you, are paralegals and legal assistants. Because of that we take heart in all suggestions. There are many things happening with NCPA right now that are a direct result of someone's suggestion.

In these tough economic times, many of our firms are finding ways to cut costs and, unfortunately, that may mean your membership and CLE allotments have disappeared. Many members attending our Annual Seminar in March paid to come to the seminar out of their own pockets. We tip our hats to those folks who see opportunities like this as an investment in themselves and their careers.

Please make plans to join us for our Mid Year Seminar & Review Courses on September 17-19 in Winston-Salem. Details will be printed in the FORUM and posted online sometime in late July or early August. If you are planning to take the CLA or NCCP exam, I encourage you to register for the Review Courses.

I look forward to serving the next year as your President and my e-mail is always open for any comments, suggestions, or questions!

Patti Clapper, ACP, NCCP

Chairman's Message

Diane N. Morgan, NCCP



Greetings, NCPA!

Emily Dickinson once wrote, "A Light exists in Spring Not present on the Year At any other period -- When March is scarcely here". How true! To me, spring is such a spectacular time. It is a time for regeneration, renewal and growth in nature. The earth becomes new again. Spring 2009 is the perfect time for NCPA to regenerate, renew and grow as a professional organization.

NCPA strives to promote and enhance the paralegal profession. All that is needed to achieve these goals is your participation and support! Together, we can regenerate NCPA by activity participating in our districts, attending NCPA sponsored events and becoming involved in NCPA pro bono activities. We can renew NCPA by sharing our ideas and suggestions with officers, directors and each other. We can grow our membership by promoting NCPA to our colleagues and build tighter networks within NCPA and the districts.

I have spent the last eighteen years in both public service and the legal profession. I am proud to serve as your Chairman for 2009/2010, and I will endeavor to facilitate the goals of NCPA. I will strive to exemplify commitment and professionalism in my service to NCPA, its members and to the paralegal profession.

Warm regards,

Diane N. Morgan, NCCP



Second Vice President's Report Membership

Yolanda N. Smith, ACP, NCCP

The current membership breakdown as of May 11, 2009 is as follows:

General members:	347
Associate members:	38
Student members:	71
Sustaining Members:	10
Affiliate members:	4
Educational Program members:	3
Total	473

We would like to acknowledge our newest (G)eneral, (A)ssociate, and (S)tudent members joining from February 3, 2009 – May 11, 2009:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Christine G. Bolyard, NCSB/CP, Raleigh, NC (G)
Dede W. Sellers, Wilmington, NC (G)
Melissa Blunkall Myers, Winston-Salem, NC (G)
Janet S. Grose, Swannanoa, NC (A)
Glenda T. Foley, New Bern, NC (G)
Bonnie Ruffin, NCCP, Sims, NC (G)
Harry S. Pearsall, Hope Mills, NC (S)
Erin D. Myers, Coats, NC (G)
Cynthia Y. Frazier, NCSB/CP, Durham, NC (G)
Christine L. Clark, NCCP, Durham, NC (G)
Jamie I. Parks, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Tanya S. Beck, Siloam, NC (S)
Ashley M. Jones, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Freda A. Bryant, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Jonathan E. Semones, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Susan L. Hutchens, Elkin, NC (S)
Zach D. Yarbrough, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Jenny G. Vernon, Pilot Mountain, NC (S)
Annie C. Pruitt, Sparta, NC (S)
Heather C. Bowman, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Lona V. York, Elkin, NC (S)
Aracele L. Zubieta, Mt. Airy, NC (S)
Rebecca L. Prevette, Wilkesboro, NC (S)
Amy Lynn Mears, Dobson, NC (S)
Santana C. Vernon, Pilot Mountain, NC (S)
Tammy C. Burcham, Mt. Airy, NC (S)</p> | <p>Marcie C. Sotelo, Elkin, NC (S)
Jeff B. Potts, Pinnacle, NC (S)
Lisa V. Hemric, Yadkinville, NC (S)
Michelle J. Curtis, NCCP, Durham, NC (G)
Annmarie Spiegel, Charlotte, NC (S)
Jeanette E. P. Fritz, Durham, NC (S)
Brenda Toudle, Richlands, NC (A)
John C. Barden, NCCP, Charlotte, NC (A)
Kelly Adair Wilkie, Greensboro, NC (A)
Timothy W. Davis, Winston-Salem, NC (A)
Amy H. Heimel, Raleigh, NC (A)
Ha Nguyen, NCCP, Raleigh, NC (G)
Camille D. Euliss, Burlington, NC (S)
Jenny R. Reed, Shelby, NC (S)
Bill Clements, Durham, NC (A)
Neeta Vyas, Durham, NC (S)
Stacey F. Davis, Wilson, NC (S)
Mary L. Tatum, NCCP, Hampstead, NC (G)
Sharon T. Martin, NCSB/CP, Sanford, NC (G)
Lisa M. O'Hal, NCCP, McLeansville, NC (G)
Audra R. Coulthard, Concord, NC (S)
Shawndria M. McCoy, Raleigh, NC (S)
Lindsey B. Costello, Charlotte, NC (S)
Hester R. Petty, NCCP, Greensboro, NC (G)
Alyssa J. Mozingo, Knightdale, NC (G)
Tiffanie M. Cannon, Jacksonville, NC (S)</p> | <p>LaToya D. Darrington, Beulaville, NC (S)
Jessica B. Garner, Jacksonville, NC (S)
Ann C. Lapinski, Jacksonville, NC (S)
Katherine Lowery, Jacksonville, NC (S)
Krystle Marie Mature, Swansboro, NC (S)
Amie C. Picanco, Jacksonville, NC (S)
Amber L. Reeb, Jacksonville, NC (S)
Lillian Rodriguez, Jacksonville, NC (S)
Sheldon G. Rowser, Beulaville, NC (S)
Amber M. Royer, Maysville, NC (S)
Stephanie D. Woelk, Hubert, NC (S)
Shirley S. Brown, NCCP, Shelby, NC (A)
Betty T. York, Asheboro, NC (A)
Melissa F. Sauls, CP, NCCP, Carthage, NC (G)
Elizabeth V. Sullivan, NCCP, Raleigh, NC (G)
Michelle Jean Blair, NCCP, Charlotte, NC (G)
Anna Sabella Mosley, Durham, NC (S)
Jennifer G. Henson, NCCP, Fayetteville, NC (G)
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Rosa Judith Portillo, Sanford, NC (S)</p> |
|--|---|---|

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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, Cumberland County Paralegal Association, Guilford Paralegal Association, Guilford Technical Community College, and Research Triangle Paralegal Association

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

Yolanda N. Smith, ACP, NCCP
Second Vice President, Membership Chair



Editor's Court

Melissa Rutledge, NCCP

By the time you read this issue I hope that the Red Wings are well on their way to winning the Stanley Cup. Yes folks, I grew up around hockey and am thrilled that the sport has really picked up in North Carolina. The

Canes are playing in the background and have sparked my thoughts for the evening.

The determination, hard work, balance, and speed that each player of the team brings to the ice reminds me of our profession. Paralegals work in very busy and fast moving offices. We are constantly reevaluating our priorities and working to improve our strategies to manage the case load. Please enjoy the

articles that our new Articles Editor, Crystal Robinson, NCCP, has provided for us. The articles provide guidance and perspective for each of us. Welcome to the team, Crystal!

Gear up for Mid-Year 2009! The CLA course is going to be a full day review this year, instead of a 2-hour cram course. Please contact Kaye Summers, CLA, NCCP with questions.

A huge Thank You to all of the NCPA volunteers from the last term. Your time and dedication is truly appreciated! It is great to see people moving in and out of different positions within NCPA. Welcome new NCPA members, officers, directors, and executive committee members.

As always, please enjoy this edition of NCPA's FORUM and please know that your feedback and/or comments are always welcome.

Melissa Rutledge, NCCP

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Ethics Corner

Sign or Not to Sign

Jacqueline M. Thurman, CP, NCCP

Paralegals are busy with the daily task of meeting deadlines as well as organizing and maintaining files. In the course of our daily routine an emergency situation will pop up and the attorney will call in and ask you to sign a pleading. Do you sign for him?

Well in this example, we can take a look at the opinion of the North Carolina State Bar, that if warranted by exigent circumstances, a lawyer may allow a paralegal to sign his name to court documents so long as it does not violate any law and the lawyer provides the appropriate level of supervision. The non-lawyer can sign the attorneys name with their own initials following the signature, which will indicate that the attorney did not sign the pleading.

However, as a general practice it is always best to have the

attorney sign court documents and pleadings because it is a way of verifying that the lawyer takes responsibility for the work product. In practical terms, having the attorney sign also forces the attorney to give his final review of the document. Nonetheless, if exigent circumstances do arise do not be afraid to sign the pleading as long as it does not violate any law, court order, local rule, or rule of civil procedure. The attorney has provided the appropriate level of supervision under the circumstances and the signature clearly discloses that another has signed on the lawyer's behalf. But beware a paralegal must never sign and file court documents in his or her own name. To do so violates the statutes prohibiting the unauthorized practice of law.

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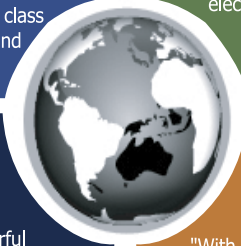
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SOARING EAGLES: Is It A Want Or Is It A Need?

By Cheryl J. Leone, Catalyst Group, Inc.
Email: cjleone@catalystgroupinc.com

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I spoke recently at the NCPA Semi-Annual Meeting and found that like everywhere we go we find people are concerned over the economy and the uncertainty of tomorrow. I talked about this at the meeting and wanted to share it with the readers of NCPA Forum as my first column of Soaring Eagles. Soaring Eagles is my name for paralegals who consistently reach great heights in their personal and professional lives through constant and open learning to be better each day.

Dave and I started this year with a very simple agreement. We would ask ourselves, before we expend any money beyond our ordinary expenses, this question: IS IT A WANT OR IS IT A NEED? We have it posted in our kitchen to make sure we keep it in the forefront of all we do.

Good question but the answer may not be that simple. A need is something that is necessary let's say to live a healthy life. Needs are different from wants because without a need there would be a clear negative result. A want is something that is desired.

It does not make any difference if you are looking at your life or your business; you have to have a purpose that is known to understand your needs. For example, Dave wants to trade up on his camper and I said that is clearly a want. His first pitch was that if we had a camper with a slide out there would be more room for me to work and it would get us away at the same time. As I quit laughing, we actually sat down and talked. Our current camper was bought in 1999 when we had a vision of traveling the highways of America (cough). It is like a floating Hilton but small. To date it has 6000 miles on it which means that the only trips we have taken is to take it to a dealer to service it. We have been too busy to use it. Our problem now is that it is an older camper and even though in excellent condition is losing its value. We also feel because it sits it is deteriorating. We also want to try to take some short trips as we simply don't do vacations. Now this may now be a need...a need to upgrade to avoid further loss of value, gain a clear better cost because of the economy, and we are now in a position to travel more. Thus what appears to be a want could also be a need.

The point of this story is that we have decided the days of instant gratification are over with. We are going to have to examine everything we do and whether or not it serves our long term vision of our lives. We took a long hard look at our budget, our lives, and our wants and our needs. Then we put some

stakes in the ground with our spending habits. We are willing to give up things to have stability.

Hiding your head in the sand does not make a stable life. This is the time to set down and take stock of where you are with your career, how it impacts your family, and what will you do if you do not have a job tomorrow. Because this is fearful people don't want to think about it. To the credit of the lawyers I am talking to, there are doing everything they can to keep their firms stable and save jobs. Those firms also have strong paralegals who are looking at ways to save money, handle more work so that fees are generated faster, and have become a part of the solution to keep the firm stable so they can be stable.

And if the worst happens - a lay-off, what are your plans? Make them now. I am seeing paralegals creating some secondary work to help build cash. If your firm looks like it needs to down-size talk to the leadership. Offer suggestions. Offer to be contract labor. Anything to maintain a forward movement with your career. What you can't do is wait until it is too late. And if it is an issue within your firm no one talks about, talk about it! We are all in this together. My son has lost his job and the family is pitching in. My daughter is having to make business decisions that are designed to keep her staff working with all benefits. None of us are immune no matter who we are.

A simple control such as asking yourself is it a want or a need allows you time to assess the expenditure or the event. It is also a good lesson to pass on to your children. Frankly it is a great lesson to give to your firm. We are preaching to the firms the same thing: Stop spending and start asking if it is a want or a need!

When you live in fear you cannot move forward. These are fearful times but these are also hopeful times. Things are going to get better but during this time of uncertainty you have a certainty of hope. You should take these times to create new habits in your career and your home plans. Look forward not backward. Nothing is worse than the absence of hope and only you can create a hopeful future no matter the events.

Cheryl Leone is the CEO of Catalyst Group, Inc., a professional development company focused on high performance law firms and high performance teams. She speaks to lawyer and paralegal professional associations on issues of personal and professional development. Soaring Eagles is printed nationally in many paralegal publications. She enjoys hearing from paralegals and can be reached at cjleone@catalystgroupinc.com.

BYLAW AMENDMENT 2009

The following Bylaw Amendment was approved at NCPA's Annual Meeting on March 27, 2009 in Wilmington, NC. The changes to Article V are in **BOLD**.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

1. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NALA AFFILIATION. It is required that NCPA hold a minimum of four educational events or a total of ten hours of educational programs during each fiscal year in order to maintain affiliation with NALA. These programs may be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the membership.
2. PLACE OF MEETING. All meetings of the membership shall be in such places as designated by the Board.
3. ANNUAL MEETING. The annual meeting of the membership shall be held at a date and time fixed by the Board. The time shall not be more than ninety (90) days after the end of NCPA's fiscal year. The purposes for such annual membership meeting shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - (a) to elect officers;
 - (b) to hear reports of the officers, the committee chairmen, and the Board;
 - (c) to consider Bylaw amendments;
 - (d) to adopt a budget for the ensuing fiscal year.

Election of officers and adoption of the budget for the ensuing fiscal year shall be reserved for the annual meeting. Notice of the annual meeting must be sent to the membership in writing by the Secretary no later than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting. Any matter other than the foregoing to be placed on the agenda of the annual meeting must be received in writing by the Secretary no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. **Notice shall be deemed to have been properly given when delivered in person, by electronic transmission, or by mail.**

4. SPECIAL MEETING. Special meetings of the membership may be held at the proper place for the holding of an annual meeting upon call and notice as herein provided and at any time properly fixed therefore. The members may transact any business at a special meeting which could be transacted at any annual meeting unless such business is by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws specifically reserved to the annual meeting. A special meeting shall be held either on the call of the President or the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Committee or the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all then elected and qualified directors. The Secretary shall cause written notice of the time and place of such meeting to be given to each member not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date of such meeting. **Notice shall be deemed to have been properly given when delivered in person, by electronic transmission, or by mail.**

[amended 3/27/2009]

2009 MEREDITH R. POLLETTE, ACP SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

**THINKING ABOUT TAKING THE CLA OR ACP EXAM.....
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CLA EXAM FEE AWARD

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*“Discuss the Advantages and Disadvantages of Certification
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or

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

ACP EXAM FEE AWARD

Submit an essay on

“I am pursuing the ACP designation because.....”

All essays must be a 1,000 to 1,500 words in length, typewritten and
postmarked on or before August 15, 2009

Participants do not need to be NALA members, but must be NCPA members in good standing
and meet the eligibility criteria for sitting for the CLA/CP or APC exam.

Finalists will be notified by September 15, 2009.

Scholarship fees will be paid directly to NALA and the finalists will have one year from
the date of the award to sit for the exams. The fees will be refunded to NCPA if the
finalists do not sit for the exam within the one-year time requirement.

Send your typewritten essays by August 15, 2009 to:
North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.
c/o Chairman of the Board
P.O. Box 36264 Charlotte, NC 28236-6264

For additional information, please email:
NALA Liaison Jacqueline M. Thurman, CP, NCCP
jacqueline.thurman@yahoo.com

Statewide News

Beverly Johnston, NCCP
District II Director

District II held its first meeting on April 20, 2008. It was a tremendous success! Thanks to all who attended!

In an e-mail query to all members of District II, a decision was made to hold two meetings in our district, one north of the district, the other south. Our next meeting is scheduled May 18th at 6:30 p.m. at Golden Corral in Garner, Highway 70. The members of District II are excited to see activity once again! Patti Clapper suggested to the District Members that we participate in the Susan Komen race for the cure on June 13, 2009, as a paralegal team. An email invitation to members resulted in five who are willing to commit to this worthwhile event; in order to qualify as a team, we need ten individuals. A challenge to participate will be extended to other districts at the Board meeting on May 3rd. This will be one of many pro bono activities involving District II members. Please continue to check the website for upcoming events, as I will post all activities on the events calendar.

District II continues to grow. We have added five new members since March 28th and have had two members renew their memberships this year. Please continue to support our Association, our District and our Profession by inviting others to share in the excitement of 2009-2010!

Thank you once again for making our first meeting such a success, and I hope to see all of you again on May 18th.



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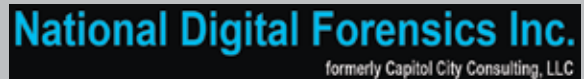
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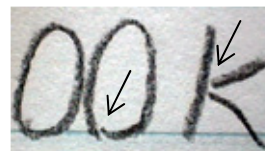


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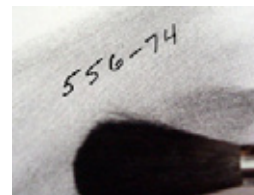
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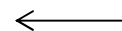
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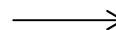
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Five Simple Tips to Add Hours to Your Day

Vicki Voisin



The concept of time is both interesting and frustrating. There are 24 hours in every day, no more, no less. There is no way to beg, steal or borrow time. It cannot be saved or stretched or squeezed. Time is the same, day in and day out: it doesn't get any shorter, it doesn't get any longer. Many people foolishly believe they can manage their time. This is impossible because time cannot

be managed. All you can manage is the way you spend your time.

If you begin every day with a 'to do' list so long that you always run out of day before you run out of list, you need to take a step back and give some thought to how you can better manage the way you spend your time. Here are five simple tips that will help you add more time to your day:

Determine what is important and what is not. Is your first inclination to take on additional responsibilities and then just scramble to get more done in the time you have? How can that possibly work? A day is still twenty-four hours long, no matter how much you have to do. Time organization is not about getting more done in less time. It is about doing fewer things of greater importance in the time you have. You have to decide which things are important and which are not. Then eliminate the less important. Yes, this means deleting one obligation before you take on another.

Eliminate the 'leaks' in your day. Leaks are the distractions that sneak in and gobble up time that needs to be spent on those things you've decided are important. E-mail is one of the biggest distractions. Other examples are unnecessary meetings, telephone calls, cruising the Internet, and that co-worker who stops by your office with a question that will take "just a minute." Quick...stop the leaks! The 'Do Not Disturb' button and 'Caller ID' program are there for a reason. Be sure to use them. Instead of checking e-mail as it comes in all day long, schedule a certain time for reading and responding to e-mail. When someone wants 'just a minute' of your time, tell them that you have something important you are working on but you will get back with them later in the day. Every time you are interrupted or distracted, you are taken off task and it takes precious minutes to get back on course.

Have a home for everything. You waste precious time when you have to search for something that is lost. The items that travel with you wherever you go (your keys, cell phone, BlackBerry™, purse, brief case, etc.) must be put in the same place every time, both at home and at work. If you do this, you will always know where they are when it's time to go. It is also a good idea to staple papers together, rather than use paper clips. This avoids losing documents when the paper clips become tangled. Never place large things on top of small things. I can almost guarantee that if you place a file on top of your daily planner, you will waste valuable time searching for that planner. The key is to eliminate the need to be looking for anything.

Learn to say no. It's not always easy to say 'No.' Often a request catches you off guard or you just hate to turn down someone you like and respect. Other times you may be confronted by people you just can't refuse, such as a boss or co-worker. Remember, though, that saying 'No' to one thing allows you to say 'Yes' to something else. You do not need to offer excuses. Your time is yours and yours alone to spend how you want to spend it.

Take advantage of small bits of time. It is amazing what you can accomplish in five, ten or even fifteen minutes. Instead of wasting those small pockets of time, use them to make a phone call, write a memo, straighten your desk, etc. You can also approach this from a different angle. If you have a large project you need to work on but don't feel you have the time to tackle the whole thing, start working on it for just a few minutes at a time. My personal favorite is a fifteen minute chunk of time. If you do this again and again, your project will be done before you know it.

Your challenge: Never forget that *time is life!* Time cannot be reversed or replaced. If you waste your time, you waste your life. If you master your time, you will make the most of every minute, every hour and every day. The minutes you save will add up to more hours in your day. Grab a legal pad and write down all the things that take up your time every day. Include absolutely every activity. Once this is done, check off the things that you can eliminate. Make a commitment to get rid of the things that eat up major amounts of your day but are not important to you. Remember, instead of doing *more* things, choose to do *more important* things. How can you save minutes that will add up to more hours in your day?

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Vicki Voisin, "The Paralegal Mentor", delivers simple strategies for paralegals and other professionals to create success and satisfaction by setting goals and determining the direction they will take their careers. Vicki spotlights resources, ethics issues, organizational tips, and other areas of continuing education to help paralegals and others reach their full potential. She publishes a bi-weekly ezine titled *Strategies for Paralegals Seeking Excellence*. More information is available at www.paralegalmentor.com (Subscribers receive a free special report titled 'Is Your Computer Talking Behind Your Back?' and are invited to attend free monthly Paralegal Mentor Mastermind Calls that feature guest experts discussing issues of interest to the paralegal field.)

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29th Annual Meeting

The 29th Annual Meeting of the Membership of the North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc. was called to order by First Vice-President Patricia F. Clapper, ACP, NCCP, at 3:17 p.m. on March 27, 2009 at the Hilton Wilmington Riverside in Wilmington, North Carolina.



Chairman King announced that there had been no nominations for District Directors III, IV and VI, and that these appointments would be announced at a later time.



First Vice-President Patti Clapper, ACP, NCCP and Chairman of the Board Beverly G. King, NCCP recognized the Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs for the 2008-2009 year. First Vice-President Patti Clapper, ACP, NCCP

Kim Pellicone, CP, NCCP presented the Treasurer's Report for fiscal year 2008-2009 and proposed budget for fiscal year 2009-2010, both which were approved.

The following were nominated and appointed to serve as NCPA's Officers for 2009-2010

President:	Patricia F. Clapper, ACP, NCCP
First Vice President:	Stephanie Elliott-Park, NCCP
Second Vice President:	Yolanda N. Smith, ACP, NCCP
Secretary:	Diane L. Tally, NCCP
Treasurer:	Kimberly C. Pellicone, CP, NCCP
Parliamentarian:	Beverly G. King, NCCP

recognized special guests NALA President Linda Wolf, ACP and Debby Sawyer, CP, NALA Affiliated Association Secretary.

Student/School Relations Chair Debby Sawyer, CP presented the recipients of the 2009 Student Scholarships. The winners of the 2009 Scholarship Awards are as follows:

- 1st Place:** Stacy Finch Davis – Meredith Collage
- 2nd Place:** Patricia Jingoizian – Durham Technical Community College
- 3rd Place:** Lindsey Costello – UNC Charlotte
- 4th Place:** Shawndria McCoy – Meredith College

The Minutes of the 2008 Annual Meeting were presented and approved.

President Summers' report and Chairman King's reports were presented and the actions stated therein were approved. Committee Reports were also presented.

The following were appointed to represent their districts on the NCPA Board of Directors:

- District I:** Diane Morgan, NCCP
- District II:** Beverly Johnston, NCCP
- District III:** Open
- District IV:** Open
- District V:** Vicki Sgro, NCCP
- District VI:** Open
- District VII:** Stephanie Ivans, NCCP
- District VIII:** Beth Falgout, NCCP
- District IX:** Beverly King, NCCP

First Vice President Patti Clapper, ACP, NCCP informed everyone that NALA President Linda Wolf, ACP would be inducting the officers at the dinner later in the evening.



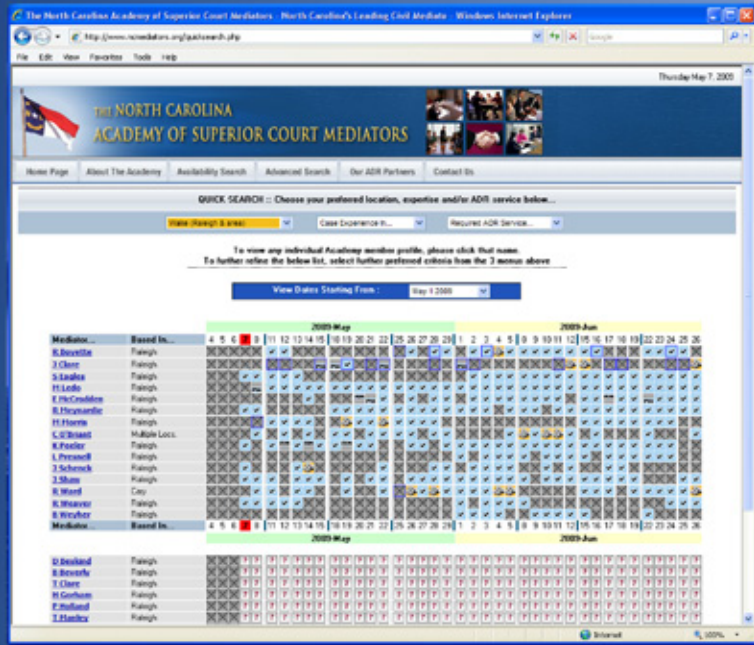
Parliamentarian Dennis Embo, NCCP read the proposed amendments to the NCPA bylaws, a printed copy of which was provided to members in their ballot envelopes. Mr. Embo then made a motion to vote on the proposed amendments in the form of a single motion. This motion was seconded by Diane N. Morgan, NCCP and carried by voice vote.

Discussion was had about working to increase NCPA's membership. Many ideas and concerns were shared among all the attendees and it was decided this would be discussed at length at the next Long Range Planning meeting.

First Vice President Patti Clapper then entertained a motion to adjourn. Beverly King moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Blanche Berkowitz and the meeting was adjourned at 4:37 pm.



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- International Transactions
 - Catherine R. Durgin, *ACP*
 - Mary L. Theroux, *ACP*
- Social Networking: Not Just for Kids
 - Vicki Voisin, *ACP*

Affiliates Exchange

- Increasing Your Association's Visibility in Your Community
 - San Diego Paralegal Association
- How to Organize a Successful and Profitable Seminar with Emphasis on Review for the CLA/CP Exam
 - Tennessee Paralegal Association

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“That’s Not My Job!” (It May Not Be for Long)

Contributed by Jeannie S. Johnston

We’re all guilty of either saying or thinking this once or twice in our careers (present company included). The boss asks us to perform a task that we feel is a bit “beneath” us and the phrase magically pops into our brain. However, what happens when the thought becomes an attitude and how much truth is there in the comment in the first place?

For example, Peggy Paralegal is hard at work reviewing and organizing a stack of medical records that she has received as a result of her latest document production request binge. Suddenly, Betsy Boss appears in the door and states, “Peggy, Robin Receptionist is out sick today and I need you to cover her desk from 1:00 to 2:00 today. Thanks.” Before poor Peggy can even explain that she has a mountain of work of her own, Betsy Boss is halfway to her office secure in knowing the front desk will be covered. You begin to feel your inner child stamping its feet and turning bright red just before it falls to the ground in delightful tantrum. All of the sudden, out of blue...those words!!!! “That’s not my job!!!”

Okay. So technically, it’s NOT your job. When you interviewed for the position there wasn’t ever a mention that you may have to cover the reception desk on occasion. You’ve come to a fork in the road at this point and you have a couple of options on which direction you could travel. To cover the desk or not to cover the desk? That is the question. Whatever the task, perhaps now is a good time to put things into perspective.

1. Is what you’ve been asked to do legal? No one would ever expect an individual to perform an illegal ask just because your boss has asked you to do it. Not many employers would ask you to perform an illegal act so, let’s assume that you won’t be heading off to jail for doing this particular task.
2. How important is it really? I’m talking about what you’ve been asked to do vs. what you normally do on a daily basis. Taking the view that anything you do for the company will benefit the company, and ultimately you, is a good way to keep a positive spin on those not-so-important tasks. This would fall into the “no job is too small” category.
3. Is this an obligation or an opportunity? If we turn negatives into positives, amazing things can happen. Don’t assume that your boss doesn’t notice how you react to anything and everything. Chances are good that they do notice. How you respond when you’re asked to do something may play a significant part in your annual review and/or bonus.
4. Is your attitude showing? You can fake the genuine desire to be an asset to your employer in a pinch. They will recognize if you are sincerely glad to help or are doing something just because you were told to do it. Instead of sulking like a child, try taking the road less traveled and whistle while you work no matter what it is you may be charged with doing. Attitude is everything and can (and will) follow you throughout your entire career.

Team work is an essential part of working for lawyers (or working for anyone for that matter). Take a trip to your local library and check out a few biographies on those who have made it to the top of their professions. Almost all of them started at the very bottom and to this day still perform what could be considered “menial” tasks. In fact, most entrepreneurs are what is described as “systems thinkers”. What is a systems thinker? A systems thinker is one who intuits and sees the whole of a thing, the entirety of it, the one-ness of it, the integrated unity of it, as opposed to merely the sum of its parts. A systems thinker:

- Transcends the world in order to transform it.
- Is an inventor as opposed to an engineer.
- Sees purpose in everything, and sees the system as the realization of the purpose.
- Sees meaning in everything and, if not, pursues everything until the meaning becomes clear, until the system reveals itself in all its glory.
- Is possessed by the meaning of things.

The third quality of a systems thinker states they “see purpose in everything, and sees the system as the realization of the purpose.” Again, no job should be too small to perform and what is good for the part is good for the whole. Everyone benefits!

Interestingly enough, when polled, most lawyers and firm administrators prefer a positive attitude over experience when considering hiring a perspective new employee. Individuals can learn to perform a particular task however, attitude is not necessarily something that can be taught.

I’d like to conclude by encouraging. Make your mark! Take charge and ingest the concept of “no task too small”! Don’t be a work snob but instead be a team-player. You may be pleasantly surprised at the benefits you reap from such a change of heart. If that’s not enough incentive to evoke a change consider this, the next time the desire to utter the words, “That’s not my job” overcome you, remember with an attitude like that...it may not be for long.

Jeannie S. Johnston obtained her Paralegal Degree from Athens Technical College and has been a practicing Paralegal for over 16 years. She has written for Legal Assistant Today, The Paralegal Reporter and has been a guest speaker at several National Paralegal Conferences. Jeannie is the Founder and President of Paralegal Gateway, Inc. (a/k/a ParalegalGateway.com), the oldest and largest Paralegal portal/webzine on the internet. Jeannie lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her husband, Daniel and their four furry children Tricksy (the dog), Riley (the cat), Carson (the cat) and Mr. Smithers (the cat).



Throughout the year, the Student/School Relations Committee fields a variety of e-mail requests from current and prospective students interested in the paralegal field. We provide information, including links to other sites that may be of interest to the students. The majority of requests concern school programs and requirements for a paralegal working in the State of North Carolina.

Another responsibility of the Student/School Relations Committee is to promote The North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.'s yearly Student Scholarship Program. Any paralegal student enrolled in an accredited North Carolina paralegal educational program is eligible, and an essay competition is the basis of the scholarship. The essay topic is: "I have chosen to be a paralegal..."

All winners received a complementary student registration to the Annual Meeting and Seminar, a complementary one-year student membership to NCPA, and a scholarship check to be paid to his or her school.

This year, we received a total of 20 essays from 13 different programs for the Contest. It was a difficult decision for the judges. In this article, we have included the winning essays:

1st Place Winner
Stacey Finch Davis
Meredith College

I have chosen to be a paralegal because of my passion to help others, my desire to grow professionally, and the excitement I get from the daily challenges presented by the legal field. After working for attorneys for the past five years, I am convinced I am well suited for working in this field.

As Americans, we value the freedom and rights our forefathers sacrificed so dearly to win. By nature, we know that the freedom and rights we enjoy cannot persist without protections provided by laws. Thus, the legal system is the foundation upon which our society is built. An orderly society, governed by laws, and in which individual rights are respected, provides the strongest and most flexible means by which to respond to the challenges presented by an ever-changing world. Without the order provided by the legal system, our way of life could not reasonably be expected to continue. No more important or essential service can be given than that performed by those who work in the legal field.

I am suited for the paralegal field because I have an understanding of the importance of law and have a real interest in the law developed by personal experience. In addition, I am well organized, detail-minded and have the ability to multi-task. I possess good oral and written communication skills. I like work activities that follow set procedures, rules and standards. I like to help people. Achieving results by utilizing my skills and abilities is important to me. I enjoy getting a feeling of accomplishment from my work and feel that these attributes would make me a valuable member of any legal team.

While searching for my career path after graduation from college, I decided to gain experience in another field and accepted a job at a local law firm. I have worked in this law firm for the past five years. Through this experience, I have learned that I love this field and that is why I have chosen to further my education as a paralegal. I want to study the law further and to learn more about my responsibilities and duties in my job. My experience has been primarily with family law. Therefore, I would like specifically to further my legal knowledge in the areas of separation, divorce, child custody, child support, and equitable distribution of marital property and debt. I would like to increase my knowledge and develop my professional skills in these areas, so I can expand my responsibilities as a paralegal. By doing so, I will be able to better assist the attorney in these types of cases. I hope to further develop my knowledge of laws, rules, court procedures, research and the legal process, in order to grow and reach my full potential in this field.

2nd Place Winner
Patricia A. Jingoian
Durham Technical Community College

If there was any doubt as to why I chose to become a paralegal, I found the answer in the moments after I looked into our client's careworn face. I shook his hand and wished him well. "Thanks so much for all your help. It meant the world to me during this painful time in my life", John said as I handed him the manila envelope that contained his divorce decree. He turned and slowly walked out of our law firm door and I was forever changed.

I knew from that moment I had chosen the right profession: to be a paralegal. To be part of a legal team devoted to the advocacy of our law clients. To utilize the myriad of life and technical skills I had acquired through years of working for the public. To continually enrich and broaden my understanding of law by attending legal continuing education classes and develop and retain a professional connection to other paralegals who participate in my local paralegal association. This would be an unending journey of self-renewal and learning. I was ready for the journey.

When was the first time I thought about becoming a paralegal? It was twenty-two years ago and my husband and I were at our attorney's office for our first real estate closing. No sooner did our attorney start to read from the first closing document, when I began to ask a multitude of legal questions. I was in my element. I was relishing each and every legal phrase spoken. "What's a grantor? What's a covenant? What do you mean by escrow?" I said inquisitively. The attorney carefully and methodically answered my litany of questions. This was pure bliss. I was in law nirvana.

In 2004, around the time when our son was entering college, I came across an interesting advertisement for a local paralegal certificate program and decided to take a new career leap. Less than six months later, I proudly graduated with an A. Following my graduation, I enrolled in a paralegal degree program as I yearned for more substantive legal discussion and learning. Choosing to enter the field of law as a paralegal was the best decision I've made other than marrying my husband.

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Essay Contest continued...

In October of last year, I decided it was time to break free from the comforting cocoon of academia and begin the search for my first legal job. After mailing out what seemed like an infinite number of resumes, I finally got a bite! It was a temporary two month position as a law firm paralegal. My job search reasoning was simple: take anything to get some legal experience. When my supervising attorney called with the job offer, he said, "The firm opens promptly at 8:30. I was there at 8 the next morning. As I walked over the threshold of the law firm's front door, I felt myself crossing over into a new career in law. Although I was aware of the challenges that would lay ahead for me, I couldn't wait to draft that first legal complaint. For me, this was the embodiment of the American Dream. Take your passion and make it happen.

Before I knew it, two months had past. It was a late Friday afternoon when our last client of the day arrived. John was a familiar family law client at the firm. It was my last day on the job and coincidentally, his last visit to our law office. For John, it was the end of an exhausting chapter in his life that transformed the young man who first walked into our law office over a year ago. His gregarious personality and contagious smile had long disappeared. A very different young man now stood before me emotionally scarred by a painful marital separation, divorce and child custody. As I handed him the manila folder containing his divorce decree, he thanked me for working so diligently on his case. For taking the time to listen. For re-scheduling his appointments when his kids were sick. For being a competent yet compassionate paralegal. For realizing that the stacks of legal documents in our neatly colored coded folders represent real people. If I only helped our client John in some small insignificant way with his legal case, I felt I had made a difference in his life.

Now I knew why I was here at this moment in time and why I chose to be a paralegal. Now I knew my passion for law brought me to this place of beginning. Now I knew I shared with other paralegals a commonality of purpose: a lifetime journey of striving to be the best paralegal you can be. It is a journey of discovery as you find yourself, where you belong and your true self worth. My journey has just begun.

3rd Place Winner

Lindsey Costello

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

I have chosen to be a paralegal because the law fascinates me. I have always been interested in the way the law works, the way the law protects the people, the way the law has changed over time, as well as how it has stayed the same. The Constitution of the United States of America, the oldest written constitution of any major sovereign state, has molded this country and our judicial system into what it is today. It has been amended only a couple dozen times since it was adopted in 1787 but it has been reviewed thousands of times by the Courts as they apply it to specific situations.

I grew up in Central New York in a family full of Union tradesman; I have fond memories of walking the picket lines with my father and my uncles as a child. My father started as an apprentice electrician in his early 20's and has worked his

way up to Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 43. Throughout college I was fortunate enough to work in the Union hall on summer and holiday breaks. While working there I enjoyed learning about their collective bargaining agreement and how the members could file their grievances. I also became familiar with their arbitration process and the National Labor Relations Act. After graduation, from Niagara University, I was awarded an internship with the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in Chicago, Illinois and in Portland, Oregon. The experience was extremely rewarding and I learned quite a bit about the importance of health care, living wages, contract negotiation and of course the National Labor Relations Act and it's laws. Throughout these events in my life, I was always intrigued by equality, fairness, liberty and justice; the foundation of our legal history.

While some may call me naive, I believe in Lady Justice's blindfold that represents objective facts being considered and the disregard of positions and opinions of those committing crimes. I believe in her scales that demonstrate the impartiality in which justice is served and her sword that signifies the power of those making decisions.

I don't just want to be a paralegal; I want to be an extraordinary paralegal. My father instilled in me a work ethic like no other and I am confident that I will prove to one day be successful in this profession. I believe in the Goddess of Justice and Law and I look forward to being part of her process.

4th Place Winner

Shawndria McCoy

Meredith College

I possess a wealth of interest in paralegal work and the legal field as a whole. I have chosen to be a paralegal, because law is a part of our everyday lives and I enjoy the various aspects of the law and studying how they work. I have a strong foundation and understanding of paralegal work and its essential qualities. However, my strong desire is to expand my professional training and knowledge of paralegal work in different areas of the law. Further, I aspire to be a paralegal to learn how different cases are handled from an attorney's office through the court system. I have possessed an interest in the legal field since I began high school and feel becoming a paralegal will help me to achieve my goals of having a legal career without the stress and financial burdens of law school, as well as give me the diversity I seek.

Further, I enjoy working with individuals from varying backgrounds, ethnicities, and social classes and becoming a paralegal will allow me to interact with all types of individuals on a daily basis, from clients to other professionals. I would like to assist attorneys in providing quality legal services to all clients. I am an outgoing, extroverted person, and have an honest interest in clients and the general public. I possess the people skills, cooperation, concern, and helpfulness essential to working as a paralegal. My career objective and long-term aspiration is to work in a noble, professional environment as a paralegal where I can provide exceptional services to others. This career journey

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Essay Contest continued...

is less about me and more about my service to others and is what drives my determination and desire to become a paralegal.

I am a team player, who can lead as well as follow the lead of others. I ensure that I always pull my weight in any work environment in which I am involved and will bring these same skills to my paralegal career. In my former job as a paralegal and my current legal assistant position, I have demonstrated qualities of a fast learner. I take the necessary steps to learn all the things I need to know to perform my job duties without having to constantly ask for assistance from others. Further, I have a great memory and can quickly recall cases, facts, communications, and other details pertinent to the role of a paralegal's daily work duties.

Becoming a paralegal will offer me a host of work-related skills that will enhance my overall knowledge and productivity. For instance, I will have an opportunity to improve my legal writing skills and can develop my exceptional time management and multi-tasking skills. I seek to become a better professional overall, while honing the skills I already possess. Characteristics of a successful paralegal, which I possess, are skills that can be utilized in any job environment. It is this practical, hands-on experience that will allow me to remain marketable in this competitive workforce and is why I would like to become a paralegal.



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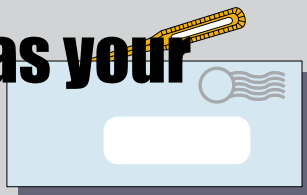
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