

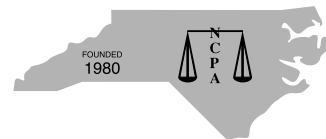


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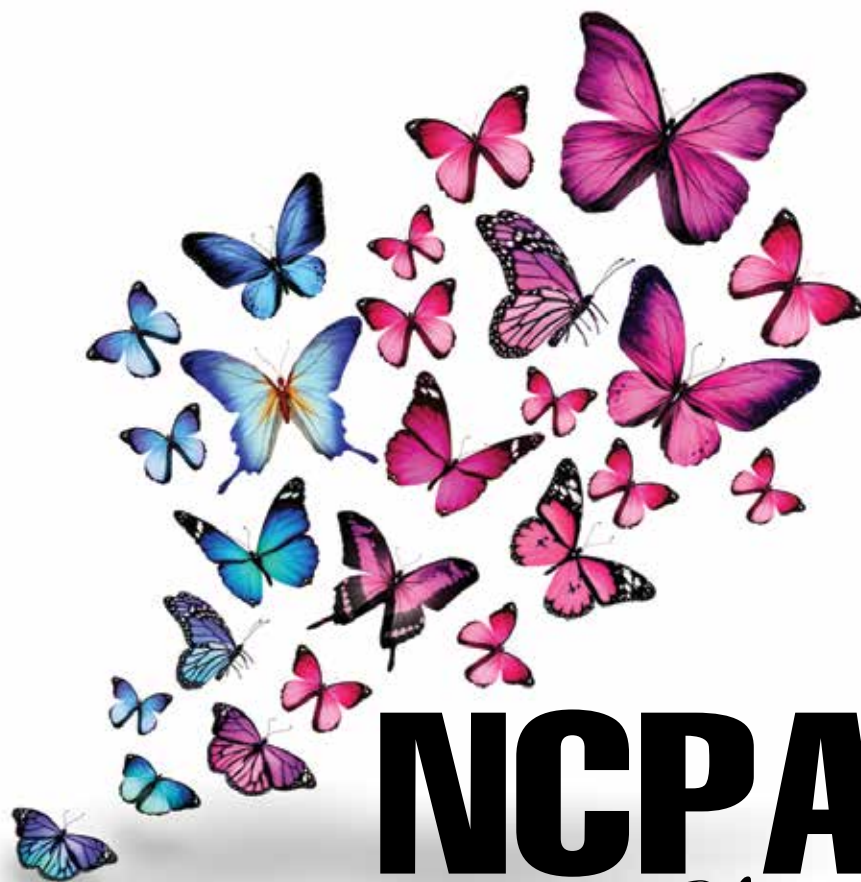
North Carolina Paralegal Association, Inc.

# Forum

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



# NCPA



# NCPA

## *Changes*



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## IN THIS ISSUE...

- NCPA Student Scholarship Winners
- NALA Certifying Board Announces New Exam Specifications
- Top Ten Tools of Effective Time Management  
and Organization of Work



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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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# Moving?

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## President's Message

Patricia F. Clapper, ACP, NCCP



I hope everyone enjoyed the Annual Seminar and spending time at the beach, despite the rainy weather. Our Education Committee is already back at work planning topics for next year's seminar. Mark your calendars for March 21- 22, 2014 and yes, we are going back to the beach! If you have any suggestions for topics

or speakers, please send an email to [education@ncparalegal.org](mailto:education@ncparalegal.org).

I encourage everyone to take a moment to read my article this month. A lot of changes have been happening in NCPA over the last few years and I have had many questions about those changes. I am hoping by writing an article, those questions will be answered. My email box is always open and anytime you have a question or a concern, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I hope everyone has a safe and fun Summer!

Warmly,

*Patricia F. Clapper, ACP, NCCP*

President

## Chairman's Message

Karen F. England, NCCP

As we look toward summer and the hustle and bustle it brings, I am reminded of the many things we have going on within NCPA. Our 2013 Annual Seminar has come and gone, and it has brought many new faces, ideas and lots of energy to our Board of Directors. Having served on the Board for the past several years as District IV Director, I am very excited to be your new Chairman of the Board this year. As your Chairman, I will always be available to help in any way that I can, and my email and phone are always open for questions, feedback or suggestions. Anyone who hasn't volunteered yet and would like to become more involved in NCPA, this is the year! There are many opportunities to serve and become more involved. Please don't hesitate to contact Patti, me or any member of the Board or Executive Committee, and we will find a spot for you.

Summer is also time for NALA's annual conference. I am so excited to be able to attend this year's conference in Portland, Oregon! I have never been to that particular part of the country, and since everyone knows our President doesn't fly and it's just a little too far for her to drive, I am honored to be going in her place. I know that our NALA Liaison, Stephanie B. Elliott, will have something spectacular planned for us to bring a little bit of the south to the northwest and show them what North Carolina Paralegal Association is all about.

So as you are participating in all of your backyard barbecues, swimming, beach and other exciting summer activities, remember that it's also a great time to become more involved in NCPA!

Have a great Summer!

*Karen F. England, NCCP*

Karen F. England, NCCP  
Chairman of the Board



# Report of the First Vice President and Education Committee

Diane L. Tally, NCCP

Hello to all from your new First Vice President & Education Committee. I would like to begin by thanking Melissa Stockley-Jones, ACP, NCCP, Michelle Bryant, CLA, NCCP, Anita Watts Wing, NCCP, Melissa Rutledge, NCCP and Rebecca Davis, NCCP for their contributions and outstanding work in making NCPA's 2013 Annual Seminar and CLA/NCCP review course so successful.

I would also like to thank Kaye Summers, ACP, NCCP and Chreatha Alston, NCCP for their help with Registration at Annual.

The NALA Certification Exam is being offered in a new format starting in September. This does not allow enough time to review and revise our review course content for this year, so we are going to only offer the NCCP Review Course this year. We do plan to revise the CLA review course content and have it ready for next year!

CLA/NCCP Review Course Chairs Rebecca Davis and Alicia Mercer have started to plan the upcoming NCCP Review Course to be held in September. This will be offered in two locations again. For those planning to attend Annual in the spring, it will be at the Holiday Inn Resort, Sunspree on March 20-22, 2014. Mark your calendars! We look forward to seeing you there!

Have a great summer!

*Diane L. Tally, NCCP*

Diane L. Tally, NCCP  
2013-2014 NCPA First Vice-President



So here we are at the end of an era. My 3 ½ year, 14 issue experience as Senior Editor of the NCPA FORUM has drawn to a close. And now I'm tasked with writing one of THOSE columns, one of those farewell pieces that supposed to make you laugh or tug at your heartstrings or whatever. But since I've never done this before, I'm not sure what to write.

## Editor's Court

Brandon L. Ruth, NCSB/CP

I'm sure I would need to open with an amusing anecdote about how I got the job in the first

place, such as when Patti approached me at the Mid-Year Seminar a few years back and said something along the lines of "We need some diversity on the Board. Hey, you're a man, how'd you like to be Editor?"

Then I could talk about how the years just flew by. How suddenly my two-year commitment to NCPA had turned into almost four - mostly because I was having so much fun I didn't want to give up the position.

Maybe I could humbly brag about accomplishments on my watch, such as some of the biggest issues ever, a new influx of advertisers, some nifty new columns and features. Most of which I had nothing to do with, so that may not work.

I could fire off a few inside jokes about how the FORUM comes together every month, if I had any.

I could make some deep ideological statement about the power of the press (or in this case the PDF file) and expound about how over the past four years we've been able to go almost completely paperless, and that by putting the FORUM online we've been able to reach paralegals and other legal specialists across the country. Maybe I could drop in something about the e-mails I've received from people in Colorado, Oregon and California, who stumbled over the FORUM and asked me for advice on how to produce a magazine for paralegal groups in those states. Hey, that might fit in the "bragging" section.

Then I could close by letting everyone know that I have left the FORUM in great hands, that Lakisha Chichester has excellent credentials, and how she will no doubt be a better Editor than I ever was. I could mention that maybe someday I'll show up at the beach during Annual and pop in on everyone. Lament about how much I'll miss those 11:00 PM e-mails to the printer and reading draft versions of the FORUM until my eyes crossed.

I suppose those are the types of things I would include in a farewell column, if I knew how to write one.

Regards,

*Brandon L. Ruth, NCSB/CP*

Senior Editor, NCPA FORUM

## Second Vice President's Report Membership

Shelby G. Tyson, NCCP

The current membership breakdown as of June 4, 2013 is as follows:

General members:	237
Associate members:	40
Student members:	119
Sustaining Members:	11
Affiliate members:	3
Educational Program members:	2
Total	412

We would like to acknowledge our newest (G)eneral, (A)ssociate, and (S)tudent members joining from February 14, 2013 – June 4, 2013.

Rose M. Anders (S)	Elizabeth W. Coward (S)	Shadawn Lax (S)	Jennifer L. Robbins (S)
Pamelia R. Arms (S)	Jacqueline Louise Cox (S)	Jessi Lindsley (S)	Meredith R. Robinson (S)
William E. Babb (S)	Laura J. Dabney (S)	Ranna A. Lowber (S)	Horace Kip Rollins (S)
Dennis S. Barbour (S)	Patty M. Draughn (S)	Amy L. Lynch (S)	Rain A. Sawyers (S)
Stephanie S. Bates (S)	Kathy A Eichenbrenner (G)	Martha R. Mahlke (S)	Keonda Chimere Sessoms (S)
Samantha A. Beck (S)	Eugene Evans (S)	Jocelyn Marks (S)	Alysha D. Shelton (S)
Kati D. Beckerdite (S)	Korra Jean Flaisher (S)	Jessica S. Marshall (S)	Kelly J. Shoffeitt (S)
Deborah L. Black (G)	Sara K. Foust (S)	Michelle N. Martin (S)	Kristie M. Taylor (S)
Tamsin Bomar (S)	Megan R. Freeman (S)	Tara N. Martinelli (A)	Diane L. Thompson (S)
Debra Brown (S)	David E. Gilmore III (S)	Liana McLaughlin (S)	Anzhelika V. Thompson (S)
Lucero Calderon (S)	Shannon Payne Hager (S)	Belinda D. Mcleod (S)	Latanya J. Tisdale (S)
Kwasia Cameron (S)	Kerianne M. Hall (S)	Maycle Gayle Meadows (S)	Anne Marie Webb (S)
Maria D. Campbell (S)	Kathleen S. Hart (S)	Sukesha Moore (S)	Anne Marie Williams (S)
Jennifer Carter (S)	Bridgett A. Hawks (S)	Ashley W. Moretta (S)	Mary Elizabeth Williams (S)
Judy H. Caudill (S)	Dana Heredia (S)	Krystal K. Murphy (S)	Marcus Allen Woods (S)
Cortney M. Chatman (A)	Cassie N. Hernandez (S)	Allyson L. Nichols (S)	Curtis B. Woods (S)
Sheryl L Christie (G)	Tequilla Hinson (S)	Margaret M. Norman (S)	Stacy Wright (S)
Catrina Marcel Colon (S)	Megan Hoecker (S)	Sharon O'Hara (S)	Whitney G. York (S)
Angela Yvonne Cook (S)	Heather L. Horne (S)	Stefan M. Podzinski (S)	
Sarah (Sally) E. Cook (S)	Heather Renee' Key (S)	Andrea M Poore (S)	

NCPA is proud to recognize the following Sustaining members:

Case-Closed Investigations, CaseWorks Inc., Chapel Hill Court Reporting, Chaplin & Associates, Inc. CourtLogic, Incorporating Services, Ltd., Lawyers Mutual Liability Insurance Co., Legal Media Experts, LLC, National Digital Forensics, Inc., Ruffin Consulting, Inc. and Triad Land Surveying, PC.



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.

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

*Shelby G. Tyson, NCCP*

Second Vice President, Membership Chair



## 2012 NCPA Historian's Report

Karen F. England, NCCP

The 2012 Annual Meeting and Seminar was held in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, at the Holiday Inn Resort. Stephanie B. Elliott, NCCP, was elected as President, and Stephanie Ivans, NCCP, was appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors. The NCPA Student Scholarship winners were David Shelton, Wendi Cook, Mary B. McDermott and Jessica Stutts. The winner of the 2012 Meredith R. Pollette Scholarship was Elizabeth R. Vance, CP, NCCP.

Stephanie B. Elliott, NCCP, Kaye H. Summers, ACP, NCCP, NALA Liaison, Belinda A. Thomas, ACP, NCCP, and Martha L. Blackman-Hughes, ACP, NCCP, attended the NALA annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, July 25-28, 2012. NCPA's Affiliate Exchange presentation entitled "Shaping the Future: NCPA's Mentoring Program" was selected as the presentation for the 2012 NALA Affiliated Associations Meeting. Kaye and Stephanie made the presentation on Thursday afternoon, July 26th. Also, during that week, Martha and her fellow LEAP team members gave the winning presentation to the NALA Board of Directors for their skit called, "Paralegal vs. Wild," which was a spoof of the television series, "Man vs. Wild." Belinda and her attorney, Wiley Wooten, were the presenters for the Family Law Institute. Congratulations to all who represented NCPA at NALA.

Once again, NCPA was represented by several members who participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

NCPA's Board of Directors voted to discontinue the Mid-Year seminar this year. However, the NCCP/CLA Review courses were held on September 14-15, 2012, concurrently in Charlotte and Sanford. Both were well attended and well received by the participants.

This year NCPA saw an increase in student membership as a result of the Bus Tour, which kicked off in February at UNC-Charlotte. The mission of the bus tour was to promote membership in NCPA to paralegal students across North Carolina, and to specifically promote our Mentoring Program.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen F. England, NCCP*

Karen F. England, NCCP  
Historian



## Liaison to the North Carolina State Bar Board of Paralegal Certification Report

Yolanda N. Smith, ACP, NCCP

The Spring 2013 NCCP exam was held on April 13, 2013, at various locations throughout the State. One hundred eighty-eight people registered to take the exam and one hundred fifty-seven people took the exam. The exam results will be released in mid-June.

The next exam is scheduled for October 5, 2013. The deadline to register for the exam is July 15, 2013.

The Board is looking for people to proctor the NCCP exam. Proctors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and

are prohibited from participating in NCCP exam review events for one year from the last exam proctored. If you are interested please contact Kelly Farrow at [kfarrow@ncbar.gov](mailto:kfarrow@ncbar.gov).

Respectfully submitted,

*Yolanda N. Smith, ACP, NCCP*

Yolanda N. Smith, NCCP



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# NCPA

## *Changes*



NCPA has been through many changes in the last 33 years, as most of us probably have in our own lives. Technology and the job market have played huge parts in those changes. NCPA often receives questions related to changes we make and I want to address some of the recent questions. I also want to let you know about an upcoming change.

In early 2012, our Board and Executive Committee decided to end our Midyear Seminar held in September. Over the last 5 years of the seminar, attendance was dwindling to less than 50 attendees and NCPA was coming out of pocket a great deal of money to hold the seminar. So the decision was do we continue to hold the seminar and increase the registration fee or do we cease holding the seminar? NCPA is a non-profit. We do not try to make money from our seminars, but we do need to at least break even in order to maintain the organization's financial stability. This was not happening. After a lot of discussions at several meetings, it was decided we would no longer offer the midyear seminar but instead focus our efforts to the review course and other CPE opportunities. We intend to continue to offer the review course as well as meet and greet seminars and some online opportunities for CPE.

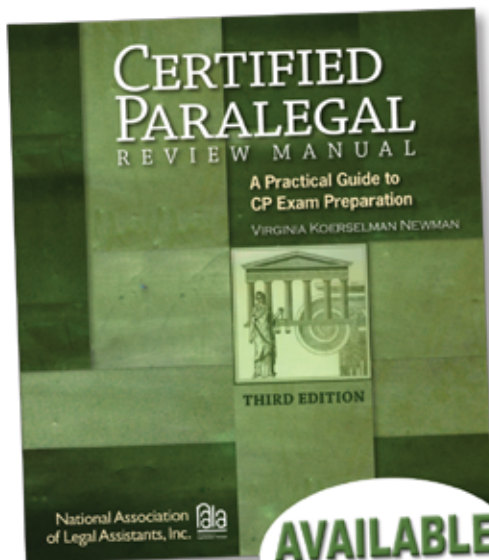
We have started communicating with most members through our website. We send a lot of emails, our publications are online and you can now pay your dues and registrations online. While this is convenient for most of our members, we do recognize that not everyone has access (or wants access) to us via our website. We still offer our FORUM via regular mail and will mail you information about membership and seminars. We promise to always accommodate our members to ensure they still receive the benefits of membership.

NCPA is not the only organization making changes. The National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA) has

decided to revise the CLA/CP exam. Effective with the September 2013 exam, several areas of the exam under the substantive law section will be eliminated. The exam will now consist only of sections on Communications, Ethics, Judgment & Analytical Ability and then 4 Substantive Law sections (American Legal Systems, Civil Litigation, Business Organizations and Contracts). What this means for NCPA is that we will need to look at our CLA/CP part of the review course and revise it to meet the needs of the test takers. Unfortunately we will not be able to do this in time for us to have it ready in September. However, NALA is holding its annual convention in Charleston, SC next Summer so any of you who are planning to take the NALA exam can actually attend a review course as part of their convention. This is a four-day program and is much more intense than what NCPA offers. So while we regret that we will not have the CLA/CP part of the review course ready for September, we are happy that NALA will be close by next year so those of you sitting for the exam can still have a review course.

NCPA is a unique organization. Our members vary in many ways, including age, location and practice areas. Our Board and Executive Committee work hard to try to accommodate as many of the members as we can. Most time changes are good, but there is always going to be resistance to change and NCPA understands that. The Board and Executive Committee work very hard behind the scenes to ensure the success of NCPA. We always try to make the best decisions based on facts, feedback and a lot of discussion. The Board and Executive Committee never take any decision lightly. We always welcome feedback and suggestions from members. Our Board meetings are open to any NCPA member and my email box and phone are also open.

***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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## NCPA Student Scholarship Winners

Each year, NCPA offers a Student Scholarship to any paralegal student enrolled in an accredited North Carolina paralegal educational program. The scholarship is determined by an essay competition, with the essay topic of "I have chosen to be a paralegal..."

All winners receive 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. First place winners receive \$400.00; Second place winners receive \$300.00; Third place winners receive \$200.00; and Fourth place winners receive \$100.00.

I would like to thank our Student/School Relations Chair, Charlotte Ward, CLA, NCCP, for providing me with the winning essays for this edition of the FORUM. I'm sure it was a difficult decision for the judges. Below are the names of the Scholarship Recipients, along with their winning essays:

**Debra Brown**  
**1st Place Winner**  
**Western Piedmont Community College**

*"I have chosen to be a paralegal..."*

I have chosen to be a paralegal because for me, there was no other choice. This is one of the only things I have ever done for me. I would like to first of all say I am honored to have this opportunity to apply for the 'NCPA scholarship'. My dream all through school was to go to law school and become a lawyer. Remembering back to when we were younger, and as children we always pretended to be teachers, nurses, doctors, etc. Well, I always wanted to be the lawyer. At the age of 15, I was allowed to go to the beach with my best friend. While we were there, she was abducted, and murdered. I was the last person to see her alive and the only witness to a possible murder suspect. I got a real education of the seriousness of the legal system and how important the law is. It literally can save, ruin, or change lives. I graduated high school in 1975. My parents worked in a factory, and my dream of going to college was going to put a tremendous burden on them even though they were willing to make the sacrifice. I was with a friend at the Army recruiters office and I discovered that I could join the Army, serve my country, and get my education all at the same time. It seemed like the perfect solution. It was an experience that cannot really be put into words, but being a proud person, I stuck with it, counted my days, and made the best of it. I ended up marrying my first husband in the Army and that was the beginning of a very bad dream that lasted on and off for almost 10 years. It was a very abusive

relationship. Fear, obstacles, embarrassments, and shame became a way of life. I had two beautiful children and I think I had convinced myself that a bad father was better than no father. I was always very outgoing and popular and could not believe what was happening in my life. So here again, life was displaying the power of the legal system and how a good attorney could affect your life. During one of the final marital separations, I began pursuing my dream once again. I entered a community college and completed my associate degree with a 3.0 average. I transferred to a university and I thought I was really on my way. I already had my son, but he was a blessing instead of a hindrance. Well the ex-husband showed up with a handful of "sorrows and empty promises", and I took him back. It wasn't long before the nightmare began again. I struggled with school for almost a year and then just gave up. After my daughter was born, I realized, I owed it to my children to provide a safe environment for them, and through the love I had for them, I was able to save myself.

Life has been good though, because I ended up with a good job that would support the family, and ended up marrying my high school sweet-heart. We have been married almost 24 years and to this day, he still brings me coffee in bed. I opted to take an early retirement in 2009, because the job I had was wonderful for the first 20 years, but then things started going downhill. I was in a management position and was working 60-70 hours a week and getting paid for 40. I was literally on call 24 hours a day. The early out was offered with benefits and an annuity, so my husband and I ran the numbers and it was just enough to make it. We both have disabled parents, so the time at home was desperately needed. So, I retired and became busier than I had ever been working a job. Except now the days were filled with a feeling of worth. It is the kind of work and duty that you cannot put a price tag on. I got a call from a local veteran's representative telling me of a program enabling veterans to attend one year of school with assistance. Well this was a dream come true. I jumped at the opportunity. "Why the paralegal program?" There was no other possible choice and no hesitation. The law has affected my life all of my life. I was exposed to two-way mirrors and life sentences at 15 years of age. I've had to learn about separations, custody, marital distribution, divorce, wills and probate, and some real estate law on my life's journey. And now I was being offered an opportunity to really learn about the legal system. Like I said, there was no other choice. So I entered the paralegal program this past fall and I absolutely love it. I love the material, the homework, the studying, and even get excited about the grades. My life has been reenergized and this time, the support is there. My family is proud and more importantly, I am proud. Your scholarship

## NCPA Student Scholarship Winners - continued

would help me to secure another semester, taking me closer to my goal and my dream. I am a student, wife, mother, daughter, grandmother, and love being all. My long term goal is to go into conflict resolution and mediation or arbitration. Who knows, law school is still in the back of my mind. I do know that the final path will be one that serves and helps others. So, in closing, any consideration you give me regarding the 'NCPA Scholarship' will be greatly appreciated.

**Wendi Cooke**

**2nd Place Winner**

**Western Piedmont Community College**

*"I have chosen to be a paralegal..."*

I have chosen to be a paralegal for many different reasons. These reasons include helping people, being a positive role model, and taking care of my family.

The ability to help people in difficult situations is important to me. Adults and children in the middle of a divorce need assurance. They need to know that their attorney and paralegal will do everything possible to help them get their lives back to some semblance of normalcy. As a paralegal, I can help in this process. Couples who are buying their dream home also depend on a knowledgeable and dutiful paralegal. The process of buying a house can be very confusing and as a paralegal, I can help couples achieve this goal. Another group that desperately needs legal assistance is victims of criminal behavior. As a prosecution paralegal, I can make a difference by helping give victims and their families the justice they so deserve. There are many avenues one can take as a paralegal but I believe helping people is one of the greatest things anyone can do.

Being a positive role model is something else that is important in my life. An education is crucial in today's society. My choice to return to school proves to my daughters that I value not only my education but their future as well. I am also showing other parents that it can be done. I cannot count the number of times people have said that they are too old or do not have enough time to go back to school. My usual responses are either "You are never too old to learn something new" or "If you want it bad enough, you will make the time". I also want to make my family feel proud of me. I am the first on my mother's side and the second on my father's side to attend college. I want my parents to be able to say that they are proud of my accomplishments. Being a positive role model is a goal that everyone should strive for.

Another reason I have chosen to be a paralegal is a simple one. I want a career. A career that will allow me to take care of my family. My family struggled to make ends meet when I was a child just as my husband and I do now. I want more

than that for my children. As most parents do, I want to be able to give them things and opportunities that I never had. My parents are also included in that. My parents are very dear to me. When they get to where they can no longer take care of themselves, I want to be there. I want to make sure that they have everything they need. I also want to provide for my own retirement. As we all know, we cannot depend on Social Security to be there. I want to be able to live comfortably and travel some when I retire. But to do that, I have to start saving in the very near future. While becoming a paralegal will by no means make me rich, I can build a career that will allow me to take better care of my children and in the future, provide for my parents and myself.

There are many reasons why anyone would choose a certain profession. I do not know if my reasons are the same as any other person looking to enter a paralegal career but the reasons I have chosen are important to me. Helping people, being a positive role model, and providing for my family are just a few of the reasons why I have chosen to be a paralegal.

**Michelle Martin**

**3rd Place Winner**

**Central Piedmont Community College**

*"I have chosen to be a paralegal..."*

Amelia Earhart once said, "You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process, is its own reward." I believe Amelia is correct in her thinking. Each person has decisions or choices to make throughout their lives. It is an ever-changing process. Personally, I have had many changes in my lifetime. Each one leading me to the next direction my life would take. I was always trying to figure that all famous question "What do you want to be when you grow up?" For many years I struggled to find the answer. Would it be a musician, teacher, secretary, store manager, banker, or a project coordinator? I tried them all still wanting and looking for something more in my life. I wanted something that would challenge me mentally day to day and yet provide for me emotionally by helping others in their time of need. I needed something that not only uses my intellectual capabilities but my desire to give back as well.

I have made many choices in my lifetime, however, I have just now realized the answer to the question everyone asks of themselves, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and that is a paralegal. I have chosen this field for so many reasons; past experience, the challenge it proposes, the need to help others just to name a few. Twenty years ago I had thought about being a paralegal but wasn't sure of the field. Attorneys, law books, and court systems can be a little daunting to a twenty year old. Plus, I believe I had more life experiences to go through prior to making this decision.

## NCPA Student Scholarship Winners - continued

Over the years, I have dealt with friends being beaten by their boyfriends, watched as a teacher held students back during breaks because of her prejudicial tendencies, watched as helpless people were manipulated by criminals, families who go through divorce, child custody, and aging parents. All of these instances and more have made me want to be able to help in some way.

I have become tired of working in a job that is not challenging for me mentally or rewarding for me emotionally. Simply stated, I need more. I have begun my studies within the paralegal program at my college and finally feel at peace with what I have chosen. I find myself excited to go to class and learn more each day. I realize now, after all these years, that this is where I am to be in life. It's amazing how you can make one change and from that point forward, everything else surrounding you seems to fall into place.

Amelia is correct; you can do anything you want by changing your actions. I found that I just needed to take control of my future instead of letting it control me. By doing so the procedure and process are a tremendous reward in my current life and I look forward to finding what rewards the future still hold for me.

**Sharon O'Hara**  
**4th Place Winner**  
**Fayetteville Technical Community College**

*"I have chosen to be a paralegal..."*

As an unemployed Veteran and experienced professional, choosing a second career is challenging, especially with so many interesting occupational fields where I can best use my technical skills, formal education, and God-given talents to benefit others. After researching several of the 200 high demand technical programs offered through the Veterans' education retraining program, I found an Associate of Paralegal program most interesting. After selflessly serving my country, I already possess many of the innate characteristics desired of paralegals. For this reason, I have chosen to be a paralegal because it would afford me another opportunity to serve others in a structured environment where uniform legal procedures and processes are well established. I also desire to associate with others in the legal profession whose character qualities and ethical behavior mirrors those of military leaders. These qualities include integrity, honesty, teamwork, respect, loyalty, and selfless service.

Personal integrity combined with honesty is the cornerstone of my moral compass in the workplace. As a future paralegal, the consistency of my actions, values, and intentions are vital to the success of my employer's ability to represent clients. Regardless the situation or problem encountered, my employer will depend on me to perform a myriad of legal

administrative actions within a timely and efficient manner. My integrity will provide the guiding principles to ensure that positive outcomes are produced and expectations achieved. My integrity will remain steadfast and uncompromised whenever I interact with represented clients, court officials, medical professionals, insurance adjusters, fellow legal assistants, law enforcement, and lawyers and other professionals whether at work or off duty.

For any organization to work effectively and achieve winning results, a team environment must exist based on good communications, mutual respect, and cooperation. As a future paralegal, I am committed to working hard and doing my fair share to ensure my assigned duties and responsibilities are accomplished. Through my exceptional verbal and written communication skills, I can express my creative ideas and suggestions to resolve problems, build relationships, and develop esprit de corps. Additionally, I will remain flexible, open-minded, and adaptable to ever-changing situations or when dealing with unprecedented circumstances. By actively communicating and interacting with team members, I can help keep others in the loop with information, provide expertise to help get the job done, and avoid surprises. Finally, my refined listening skills will enable me to embrace the thoughts and ideas of others which are important for meaningful dialog to occur and essential for teams to function successfully.

While serving in military leadership positions, I earned the respect of my subordinates and peers. Respect is something that cannot be demanded, it has to be earned. As a paralegal, I plan to earn the respect of others by exhibiting a positive attitude and "Walk the Talk" by setting a good example for others to emulate. By earning respect, I can easily influence others to provide necessary support and willingly perform tasks. In turn, I will remain respectful of my superiors and coworker, especially for their expert legal knowledge and technical experience.

As a paralegal, I will remain loyal to my employer. I will conform to the legal rules and procedures of the United States federal and state court systems and uphold the ten Canons of the National Association of Legal Assistants. Most importantly, I will always present myself as a paralegal to avoid the unauthorized practice of law and avoid any conflict of interest. Finally, I pledge to continue selflessly serving the community where I reside by participating in community service projects and performing random acts of kindness to enrich the lives of others.

In summary, I have chosen to be a paralegal because I believe that I already possess many of the professional qualities and job skills of a paralegal. My paralegal education combined with my military and life experiences will provide my future employer with a well-rounded employee.

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# *Top Ten Tools of Effective Time Management & Organization of Work*

By: Stephanie B. Elliott

The goal of any legal team is a successful outcome for their client AND to be paid for the hard work in obtaining that success. That sounds like a lovely goal, and you're probably asking "how do I do that when I'm so busy and there is chaos in my office all the time?" I know. It happens to me, too. How is it possible to move a case along when the phone is ringing, your email inbox is filling up, and your attorney has yelled your name 15 times in one hour taking you off task? To become an efficient and effective manager of time, you need to learn to make rules for yourself and follow them. You'll love your job more at the end of day when you have managed to see past the chaos, and have actually met your goals.

Here are 10 tips to help you get on the track to become an effective and organized time manager:

1. **Know your universe and how it works.** Your universe includes your immediate supervising attorney, your practice area, your firm, and even bigger, your legal community. It is important for any paralegal to understand how the people around them interact, their working habits and how information is exchanged. Knowing how your universe operates is key to securing your role.
2. **Know your role.** It is important to understand your role in any task and to understand it, you must ask yourself these questions: What are my priorities? What am I expected to accomplish? There is nothing worse than devoting significant time on an assignment only to learn that the attorney actually wanted something else. Listen, ask questions, clarify your assignment and then get it done.
3. **Understand your deadlines.** A successful paralegal understands when things are due, but more importantly understands the steps involved in getting the work completed. You might not be directly involved in drafting a brief, but you can set up a draft document with the correct sections (caption, procedural history, word count certification, certificate of service), filling in the information you know or can locate. Pull relevant case law and statutes, and do the same from the opposing side's brief before being asked. Learning your attorney's work habits will help you plan for how long a task will actually take. Think of yourself as the hand moving the chess pieces. You aren't necessarily the piece that affects the game, but you are the player moving all the pieces together to be able to play the game.
4. **Delegate!** It can be hard at times to let go of assignments you've been given. A successful time manager learns to delegate work, and trust that it will get done. Let go of tasks that you can assign to someone else so the greater goal of a finished product is accomplished.
5. **Be a Problem Solver, not a Problem Pointer.** Analysis a deadline. What is required to accomplish it? Track deadlines and plan for them to be accomplished. Be proactive with your attorney's calendar and break the cycle of procrastination. Keep up with the progress of your group so that you are always aware what the status is, but reframe from becoming the "police" of the group. When you see that things aren't moving, ask your team to regroup. It may be necessary to delegate or reassign.
6. **Plan how to spend your time: Schedule your day.** An effective time manager organizes their tasks at the beginning of each day. Check the calendar for that day's tasks, as well as for a few days out. Make a list or assign an electronic task. Whatever works for you (I'm a list maker from way back!) use it to keep yourself on task.
7. **Schedule time for email.** Schedule time for reviewing and responding to emails, avoiding first thing in the morning (before you've had a chance to review and prioritize the deadlines you know about) and last thing in the afternoon. Do not spend more than 2 hours a day in email – a time limit helps you prioritize and become faster. Without a limit, you will spend all day in email!

## TOP TEN TOOLS OF EFFECTIVE ... continued

8. **Eliminate time wasters:** Take away the phone from yourself and your attorney and schedule time (the same time each day) to return phone calls. Make your work time routine (try to take breaks at the same daily). Taking away the time wasters helps you stick to your schedule.
9. **Make meetings more productive.** Schedule regular (monthly or weekly) team meetings – YOU must do this because no one else will! Have an agenda and discuss who is going to do what task. Follow up immediately with task assignments and deadline(s) for completion and send out email reminders.
10. **NEVER stop talking to your attorney!** The practice of law is stressful and communication is the only way we survive. If you feel yourself becoming overwhelmed, or you realize your time is not your own, tell someone! It's ultimately their client and their work. Give an honest assessment of your situation and look to them for guidance.

*Stephanie B. Elliott is a North Carolina State Bar Certified Paralegal with the Gastonia law firm of Gray, Layton, Kersh, Solomon, Furr & Smith, P.A., where she specializes in corporate and complex business litigation. She manages the practice of the senior litigation partner; William E. Moore Jr., and together they were featured in the "Legal Teams" column of Legal Assistant Today (May/June 2008). Ms. Elliott is a founding faculty member in the paralegal certificate program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she teaches Paralegal Profession and Legal Technology, and also serves on the program advisory board. She is also a featured speaker for the National Business Institute/Institute of Paralegal Education. In addition, she served as the President of the North Carolina Paralegal Association from 2011-2013, and is currently serving as NCPA's Liaison to the National Association for Legal Assistants. She earned her B.S. degree from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and her Paralegal Technology Post-Baccalaureate Diploma graduate degree from Central Piedmont Community College. Ms. Elliott was awarded Gaston County Paralegal of the Year in 2007, and was also nominated for the North Carolina Bar Association Paralegal of the Year Award. In 2011, she received the Paralegal Gateway's Paralegal Superstar Award.*

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*For additional information, please email:  
NALA Liaison Stephanie B. Elliott, NCCP at [selliott@gastonlegal.com](mailto:selliott@gastonlegal.com).*

# NALA Certifying Board Announces New Examination Specifications

The NALA Certifying Board has announced new specifications for the Certified Paralegal examination effective with the September 2013 testing window. These modifications are based on a careful and detailed analysis of the findings of the 2012 Job Task Analysis study conducted by the Board in consultation with PSI Psychometric Consulting Services.

The new examination specifications call for minor adjustments to the number of points per topic within all sections of the examination. No new topics were introduced in any examination area.

The most significant modification is the elimination of several practice area tests under the Substantive Law section. The Job Task Analysis study demonstrated that, on a nationwide basis, a low percentage of paralegals utilize the knowledge and skills tested by these practice area examination sections on a regular and routine basis in the workplace.

In addition, the option to test in certain specialty practice areas will no longer be available to examinees. All examinees will take the same Substantive Law section of the examination, as is the case with all other sections of the Certified Paralegal examination.

Effective with the September 2013 testing, the Substantive Law section will consist of questions on the following subjects:

- American Legal System
- Civil Litigation
- Business Organizations
- Contracts

With these modifications, the Certifying Board listened to member and nonmember paralegals, and applied findings of the Job Task Analysis study to the exam specifications. The Certifying Board strives to link the Certified Paralegal examination directly to the day-to-day duties and responsibilities of paralegals in the workplace. The modifications announced for the September 2013 examination are a continued effort to ensure the Certified Paralegal examination remains an accurate and relevant reflection of the duties and responsibilities of today's paralegals.

A detailed list of specifications for the Certified Paralegal examination may be found on the NALA web site under "Certification/Certified Paralegal Exam Description" as well as a more detailed statement of these modifications.

Please contact NALA Headquarters if you have any questions.

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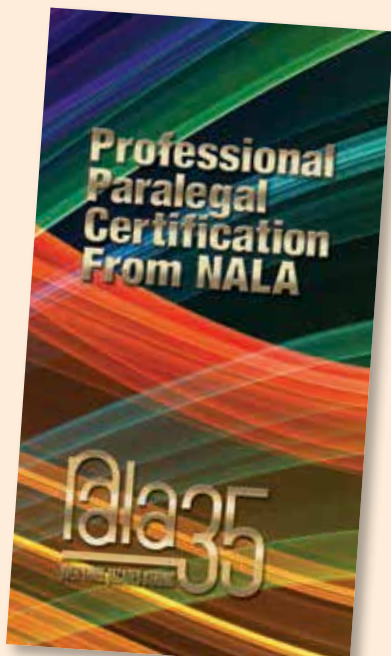
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Examination Subject	Range of percentage who reported use of the knowledge/skills in day to day activities	Avg. % for the subject	Communications	% of points
Communications	88-100% eight subjects/tasks presented	98%	Grammar, punctuation, and capitalization	19%
Ethics	97-100% five subjects/tasks presented	98%	Word usage, spelling, and vocabulary	17%
Legal Research	90-95% three subjects/tasks presented	93%	Written correspondence and composition	17%
Judgment & Analytical Ability	97-99% four subjects/tasks presented	98%	Verbal communication	17%
American Legal System	91-98% six subjects/tasks presented	94%	Nonverbal communication	16%
Administrative Law	58-71% six subjects/tasks presented	67%	Client and witness interview preparation and techniques	13%
Bankruptcy	47-58% four subjects/tasks presented	51%	<b>Ethics</b>	<b>% of points</b>
Business Organizations	73-81% five subjects/tasks presented	78%	Ethical responsibilities centering on performance of delegated work	21%
Civil Litigation	87-93% seven subjects/tasks presented	89%	Paralegal professional responsibility	21%
Contract	70-77% five subjects/tasks presented	82%	Professional relationships	21%
Criminal Law & Procedure	29-44% eight subjects/tasks presented	33%	Client and public contact	19%
Estates and Probate	38-56% five subjects/tasks presented	46%	Attorney code of ethics and discipline	17%
Family Law	36-47% five subjects/tasks presented	39%	<b>Legal Research</b>	<b>% of points</b>
Real Estate	42-65% seven subjects/tasks presented	51%	Sources of law	34%
			Research skills	32%
			Analysis of research	34%
			<b>Substantive Law</b>	<b>% of points</b>
			Legal terminology	7%
			Court system	6%
			Sources and classifications of law	6%
			Branches of government	5%
			Legal concepts and principles	5%
			Remedies and dispute resolution	5%
			Jurisdiction and venue	6%
			Civil litigation process and rules	6%
			Civil discovery	6%
			Civil pleadings	6%
			Civil trial and appellate process and rules	6%
			Corporations	5%
			Publicly-held corporations	4%
			Partnerships and limited liability companies (LLCs)	4%
			Other business entities	5%
			Financial structure and management of business entities	5%
			Contract classifications	4%
			Contract formation	5%
			Contract defenses	4%
			Contract remedies	5%
			<b>Judgment and Analytical Ability</b>	<b>% of points</b>
			Identification of relevant facts and main issues	26%
			Application of law to facts	24%
			Analysis of issues and formation of conclusions	25%
			Organization of information and clarity of expression	25%



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NCPA's Directors are elected by the general membership. A District Director must have been a general member for a year and reside or work within the district represented. As a Director, you serve on the Board of Directors for NCPA. Your responsibilities include attending scheduled quarterly Board meetings to offer input and vote on policies and procedures; coordinating meetings or a mini-seminar within your District; submitting information about your District for the AMICUS and FORUM; and generally being a liaison between the members of your District and NCPA.

If you are interested in serving as a Director, please email Karen F. England, NCCP, Chairman of the Board, at [kengland@wehwlaw.com](mailto:kengland@wehwlaw.com).

### ***DISTRICT IV REPORT***

As of March 15, 2013, District IV has 94 current members. That consists of:

- 66 general members
- 8 associate members
- 16 student members
- 2 affiliate members
- 1 attorney/advisory
- 1 educational program

Many District IV members join in with NCPA Affiliate Associations, Guilford Paralegal Association (GPA) and Alamance County Paralegal Association (ACPA) at their regular meetings.

GPA hosted several meetings during the year which offered CPE credit. It also held its 6th Annual Spring Seminar on May 5, 2012, which provided those in attendance with 6 hours of CPE credit. The seminar was held at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC. In September GPA held its annual ice cream social at Feeney's Yogurt Bar in High Point. The annual Holiday Dinner was held in December at the Chop House restaurant in High Point.

ACPA holds its meetings on the third Tuesday of the month in Graham.

I was honored this past year to participate as a member of a roundtable panel discussion at Wake Forest University with paralegal students from Guilford College. Each member of the panel discussed their experiences as a paralegal and answered questions from the students who were very eager to learn. Along with my individual experience I addressed the importance of belonging to an association and stressed the benefits of NCPA. I also distributed a flyer I had designed as well as the mentoring handbook.

For more information, contact Karen F. England, NCCP at [kengland@wehwlaw.com](mailto:kengland@wehwlaw.com).

### ***DISTRICT V REPORT***

District V Current Membership – 65

General	- 39
Associate	- 9
Student	- 16
Atty Advise	- 1
Gold	- 0
Sustaining	- 0
Affiliate	- 0

Statistics show that total membership is currently down from 91 to 65 with the following membership breakdown: General – down from 48 to 39; Associate - down from 14 to 9; and Student - down from 27 to 15.

Marie Andresen

### ***DISTRICT V REPORT***

District VIII consists of Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Wayne and Wilson counties. We currently have 9 members consisting of 3 general members, 4 student members, 1 associate member and 1 Gold member.

Regina H. Newsome, CLA, NCCP  
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## 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@pwkl.com](mailto:kaye@pwkl.com) or 919-682-9691.

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## CAMILLE STELL NAMED AS VICE PRESIDENT OF CLIENT SERVICES

**Cary, NC, March 28, 2013**

Lawyers Mutual is proud to announce that Camille Stell has been named Vice President of Client Services. This is Camille's second tenure with the company. She worked in the Risk Management Department from 1994-2000 and returned in 2009 as Director of Client Services. The appointment was confirmed by the Board of Directors March 15th.

"Lawyers Mutual is very lucky to have someone of Camille's caliber," says Dan Zureich, President and CEO of Lawyers Mutual. "She is dedicated to improving the legal profession and community. I'm constantly amazed by the number of people I've met who tell me about how Camille has helped them in some way at some time."



Camille is a graduate of Meredith College and the Meredith College Paralegal Program.

Camille's legal career has included work as a paralegal, recruiting professional and business development professional for law firms. In her current position with Lawyers Mutual, Camille is responsible for risk management efforts and is a frequent speaker and author on risk management, law practice management, and legal marketing. Camille was recognized by Lawyers Weekly as a member of the inaugural class of "Leaders in the Law" in 2011. She is serving as the Chair-elect for the Legal Marketing Association, Raleigh City Group.

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Media Contact

Camille Stell, Vice President of Client Services

800.662.8843 or [Camille@lawyersmutualnc.com](mailto:Camille@lawyersmutualnc.com)



## 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 [ncpaforum@gmail.com](mailto:ncpaforum@gmail.com). You may also e-mail your comments, suggestions and possible article contributors to us as well.

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