The NC Notary Association held its Annual Fall Conference on Saturday, October 8, 2011 at the Wilkes County Community College, Wilkesboro, NC.

The program was entitled “Back to Basics” and focused on getting back to the basics of the notary act, North Carolina’s Professional Code of Ethics, and best practices. Featured speakers were a few of North Carolina’s most experienced Notary Instructors. Topics included Major Responsibilities and Duties of being a Notary Public in North Carolina—Faye Senter, Wake, Durham Tech Instructor and NCNA Treasurer; Ethics—Patty Holloway, Wake Tech Instructor and NCNA President; Oaths and Affirmations—Mary Louise Canter, Wilkes County Magistrate, Wilkes Community College Instructor, and NCNA Director; Sufficiency of Notarial Certificates—Patty Holloway; and Personal Appearance—JoAnn Morgan, Buncombe County Senior Asst. Register of Deeds (retired), and Asheville-Buncombe Tech Instructor.

Detective Jason McGuire, Wilkes County Sheriff’s Department gave a very informative presentation entitled “Self Defense 101”. Some issues brought to the attention of the group, especially the women, were to be aware of your surroundings; know how to use your gun (if you have one); position yourself so that you can leave immediately when you are away from home and something looks suspicious.

Lunch was catered by the college and it was delicious! All in all a very successful conference.

The NCNA plans to have its 2012 Fall Conference in Hendersonville, NC. Look for emails from ncnotary.org in the next few months, and on our website for the details.
According to our Corresponding Secretary, Charlotte Carrère, we are sent some very interesting questions at Info@ncnotary.org. We are happy to respond to them, and in fact, glad that we are able to clear up some misunderstandings and/or misinformation that our NC Notaries Public may have received in the past. After all, education is one of our main purposes and that’s why NCNA got started in the first place! Here is a sample of those questions along with our answers:

1. I need to order a certified birth certificate. What documentation, other than a valid drivers license, is acceptable to prove identity to the Notary Public?
   **Answer:** Whoa! Hang on there! N.C. Notaries are not authorized to certify true copies. The three powers as set forth in G. S. 10B-20(a) are as follows:
   - Acknowledgments
   - Oaths and Affirmations
   - Verifications or proofs
   With that being said, a valid drivers license is a satisfactory form of identification for the notary public to use in completing one of the three notarial acts listed above.

2. Can an N.C. Notary Public perform a wedding ceremony in North Carolina?
   **Answer:** NO! Enough said; see answer in Number 1 above for the three powers of notaries public in North Carolina.

3. What is an ambassador to the Notary Association?
   **Answer:** We have absolutely no idea.

4. What is a U.S. Notary?
   **Answer:** See our reply in Number 3 above. Take note, however, that there are some groups in North Carolina who call themselves “sovereign citizens”, “freemen”, “straw people” who think they have the authority to perform notary acts without commissions and have notary seals made with the term “U.S. Notary” in them. These are totally illegal operations.

5. My manager and I had a question about notarizing health documents and school documents that do not have any place for a notary to put the county, date, signature, seal and the commission expiration date. Do those documents need to have an acknowledgment on them?
   **Answer:** If they are to be notarized, they must have the certificate language on them. A notary cannot just stamp and sign documents. In addition, it is not the notary’s responsibility to put this language on the certificates—it is the drafter’s responsibility. (See G. S. 10B-20((m) for more information on this subject.)

**BE SURE TO CONTACT NCNA AT INFO@NCNOTARY.ORG IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION!**
Sufficiency of Notarial Certificates

At the last two conferences, this information was shared with our attendees. It is a clear and concise outline of what language and components a certificate must have to be sufficient. You may decide to print this off and use it as an easy and handy reference.

Acknowledgment (Sufficient)

- State & County (Venue Statement)
- Principal’s Name
- Indicates
  - Personal appearance and
  - Signature or signature acknowledgment
- Date of acknowledgment.
- Notary’s seal, signature & commission expiration date. (Notary’s Attestation)

Oath or Affirmation (Sufficient)

- State & County (Venue)
- Principal’s Name (if the certificate says only “Subscribed and sworn to before me....” Is the principal’s name nearby?
- Indicates:
  - Personal appearance of oath taker and
  - Oath or Affirmation given
- Date of Oath or Affirmation
- Notary’s signature, seal, & commission expiration date (Notary’s Attestation)

Verification or Proof (Sufficient)

- State & County
- Subscribing or Non Subscribing Witness’s Name
- Original Signer’s Name (person who executed document by signing)
- Indicates Subscribing or Non Subscribing Witness in Notary’s presence.
- Also indicates
  - Oath or Affirmation by Subscribing or Non Subscribing Witness that the signing was witnessed, or that the original signer acknowledged his or her signature to the witness.
- Date of Proof
- Notary’s signature, seal, & commission expiration date (Notary’s Attestation)
To perform your official duties "ethically", you must do so in accordance with the acceptable principles of right and wrong that govern the conduct of your profession. The Office of the Notary Public has its own code of conduct. A North Carolina Notary Public should follow this code at all times. If there is ever a situation when the notarization of a document is in conflict with any one of the following, a notary has an official duty to refuse to notarize the document:

1. You must never notarize your own signature.
2. You must never notarize when you will benefit from a transaction, apart from the statutory fee for a notarial act.
3. You must never refuse to notarize on the basis of a person’s race, national origin, lifestyle, religion, political belief or because you personally disagree with the contents of a document.
4. You must refuse to notarize when a document or transaction is deceptive, false, fraudulent or criminal.
5. You must require the face-to-face physical presence of every document signer at the single time and place of notarization for both traditional and electronic notarizations.
6. You must carefully identify every signer through personal knowledge, the word of a personally known credible witness under oath, or through authorized identification documents for both traditional and electronic notarizations.
7. You must never perform a notarization when a signer’s willingness to sign is in doubt or when a signer is unable to respond understandably to your questions.
8. You must never instruct signers on how to complete a document or give advice on any matter relating to a document unless you are an attorney or a professional certified in a relevant area of expertise.
9. You must never affix your official signature and seal on any document without first completing a notarial certificate.
10. You must never charge fees greater than those prescribed by state law. The fees for acknowledgements are $5.00 per signature. Oaths or affirmations without a verification or proof are $5.00 per person, and verifications or proofs are $5.00 per signature. You may charge fees up to $10.00 per signature for electronic notarizations.
11. You must give laws and official directives precedence over the demands of your employer.
12. You must conduct yourself with the dignity and integrity befitting a public official.
13. You must only use your Electronic Notary Public signature and seal to notarize an electronic document that has been signed with an electronic signature.
14. You must file your Electronic Notary Public oath of office with the Register of Deeds in your county of residence prior to performing an electronic notarization in the same manner you filed your traditional notary oath.
15. You may only obtain an Electronic Notary Public signature and seal from an Electronic Notary Public solution provider who has been authorized by the Department to provide eNotary solutions to North Carolina Notaries Public.
16. The Electronic Notary Public signature and seal must be protected by a password, PIN number, token biometric or other form of authentication verified by the Department.
17. You must always keep your traditional notary seal or stamp in a secure location and never allow anyone else to use it.

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The Annual Professional Development Conference was held at the Blue Ridge Ramada Inn on March 10, 2012. The main program’s theme was “Back to Basics: Part II”.

Our guest speaker, The Honorable Laura M. Riddick, Wake County Register of Deeds, gave an update on the eRecording/eNotarization initiatives in her office. In 1999, Ms. Riddick launched North Carolina’s first on-line digital Registry record system. Her on-line records date back to July 7, 1785, before the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. In 2007 Wake County became one of the first four counties to accept and record electronically transmitted instruments.

The program included the nomination and election of new officers. Ms. Riddick administered the oath of office to the 2012-2014 Officers.

The rest of the program included presentations by a few of our most experienced notary instructors on the following topics: Ethics, Sufficiency of Notarial Certificates, Criminal Offenses, Oaths/Affirmations, Personal Appearance/Satisfactory Evidence of I.D., and a brief summary on how to complete the notary certificates on DMV title documents.

NCNA’s 2012 Educational Scholarship Award in the amount of $500.00 was presented to member, Ms. Adriana Velasquez-Perilla. (See last page for more information.)

Hope to see all of you in Hendersonville in the Fall! Look for an email in the next few months with the details.

“We always learn something new and have a good time doing it.”

Birthday Girl Nancy Cormany in the foreground. Left to right behind her are Donna Wray, Hope Carr, and Pamela Bruton.

Laura Riddick, on left, accepting the “coveted” NCNA speaker gift—The Paperweight.

Pre-conference get together and dinner with Officers and Directors.

Dora Boyce, 87 years old, came to the conference in style!
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCNA Member Ms. Adriana Velasquez-Perilla was awarded the $500.00 Educational Scholarship Award on March 10, 2012. Ms. Velasquez-Perilla assumed a new challenge in the Summer of 2011 by beginning her graduate studies in Master of Arts in teaching (MAT) at Meredith College. The monetary award will allow her to focus more on the most important aspect of graduate school, reading and applying technology in education. Congratulations and best wishes, Adriana, for a most successful teaching career!