



## *Message from the President:*

### **“HAPPY NEW YEAR!”**

For some of us, it's hard to remember a year more fraught with economical discomfort, employment nightmares and, oh yes, the health insurance reform debate. (Don't worry - we will not debate that here). I think my stomach has had a constant knot in it for the past fifteen months!

As a working paralegal and as a Board Member of HMPA, I have heard so many stories of paralegal layoffs, and yet even more stories about deteriorating working conditions. Many who have kept their jobs are finding they now must do the job of 3 or more, as a cost saving measure for the company. While it is true that some employers have used the economic crisis as a “housekeeping oppor-

tunity”, let's not forget that many more have braved the storm without layoffs and fought for their most valuable asset - their employees. I've known a few firms to even distribute year-end bonuses and raises - AND keep their scheduled holiday party! That is an act of loyalty that will not be soon forgotten and I dare say that those firms will reap the benefits of retaining and attracting top talent as the economy continues to improve. Unfortunately, the others may face a harsh backlash as their quality employees flee - memories can be very long indeed.

Knowing that we are all in this together is of some comfort, and remember, there is strength in numbers! Houston is one of the largest geographic locations in the country and there is simply no reason that we should

not be capturing many more paralegals as members. Any time we, as an organization, are effecting changes that impact our professional lives, whether it concerns status, salaries, licensure issues or other matters, our bargaining power comes from our numbers. This is the same for local associations across the state. At our annual TAPA convention, paralegal associations from all over Texas meet, compare notes and strive for improvements that will help shape (and benefit) the professional lives of paralegals in their respective communities. The sense of unity at TAPA is effective, but we must improve our efforts to combine forces and, as a united front, truly effect changes. Based on the talented group of Presidents that currently represent their associations at TAPA,



Mel Glina, TBLS, CP, PHP  
HMPA President

I have no doubt we will get there.

It has truly been my honor to represent Texas' largest local p a r a l e g a l association this past year. Although I have a few more months to go in my term, I just wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt thanks to all our members who make HMPA the great association that it is.

Until next time...

