



On The Record

Houston Court Reporters Association

From The President:

HCRA is well on its road in focusing and enhancing our relationships with our community at large. Reporters have donated and participated in the Houston Bar Association's Habitat for Humanity project. A Student Seminar was hosted and the proceeds went toward two student scholarships. The September 27th "Toasting Your Health" Seminar focuses on reporters' ethical, mental and physical well-being. Also, in September the officials are gearing up to host the first ever Judges Appreciation Luncheon!

Just as reporters are connected to the legal community and is focusing its efforts in enhancing our relationships with those in the legal community, I'd like to expand our community further and focus on Going Green. The first rule of ecology, "Everything is connected" applies not only to our professional lives, but our personal lives as well. Case in point, the August 2003 Northeast Blackout

"Skies were bluer and the air was healthier over much of the eastern United States during the blackout that hit the northeast and southeastern Canada last August, researchers at the University of Maryland report. Atmospheric measurements taken by the scientists on August 15, 24 hours after many power plants had shut down, found a 90 percent reduction in sulfur dioxide, a gas that leads to haze and acid rain, and a 50 percent reduction in smog, or ground-level ozone. The amount of light scattering particles in the air dropped by 70 percent and visibility increased by some 20 miles."

(Environment News Science, June 2004)

The 2003 Northeast Blackout serves as an example of how quickly nature can recover if we each do our part, and I encourage you to begin. So Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The top ten reasons to recycle are it saves trees, protects wildlife habitat and biodiversity, lowers

the use of toxic chemicals, helps curb global warming, stems the flow of water pollution, reduces the need for landfills, reduces the need for incinerators, creates jobs and promotes economic development, cities may profit by selling recyclables, and buying recycled products contributes to the demand for more recycled products.

I was happy to see the May 2008 JCR article RGR: Registered Green Reporter providing tips for court reporters on going green. Earth911.org is a great link to find community-specific information on reusing and recycling computers, paint, light bulbs, you name it. Look further in this newsletter and on the HCRA website to find other helpful recycling links. In visiting my local area recycling website, I discovered that boxes of bulk paper can be brought in and they will shred it for free in your presence. I also found tips for reducing junk mail! Now that's something we can all live without, junk mail.

Dorothy A. Rull, CSR, CRR, CART V
2008 HCRA President



Inside this issue:

HCRA Officers and Directors	2
HCRA Annual Party - Wine Tasting	3
Announcements	4
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle	5
2008 HCRA Student Seminar	6
Racing with Time to Preserve Histories	7
New Public Library of Law	8
Toasting Your Health Seminar	9

2008 HCRA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Reporter Sites of Interest

CRCB Web Site:
www.crcb.state.tx.us

HCRA Web Site:
www.hcrainfo.com

TCRA Web Site:
www.tcra-online.com

NCRA Web Site:
www.NCRAonline.com

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WORDSETC

Proofreading
Case Catalyst Scoping
Word Processing

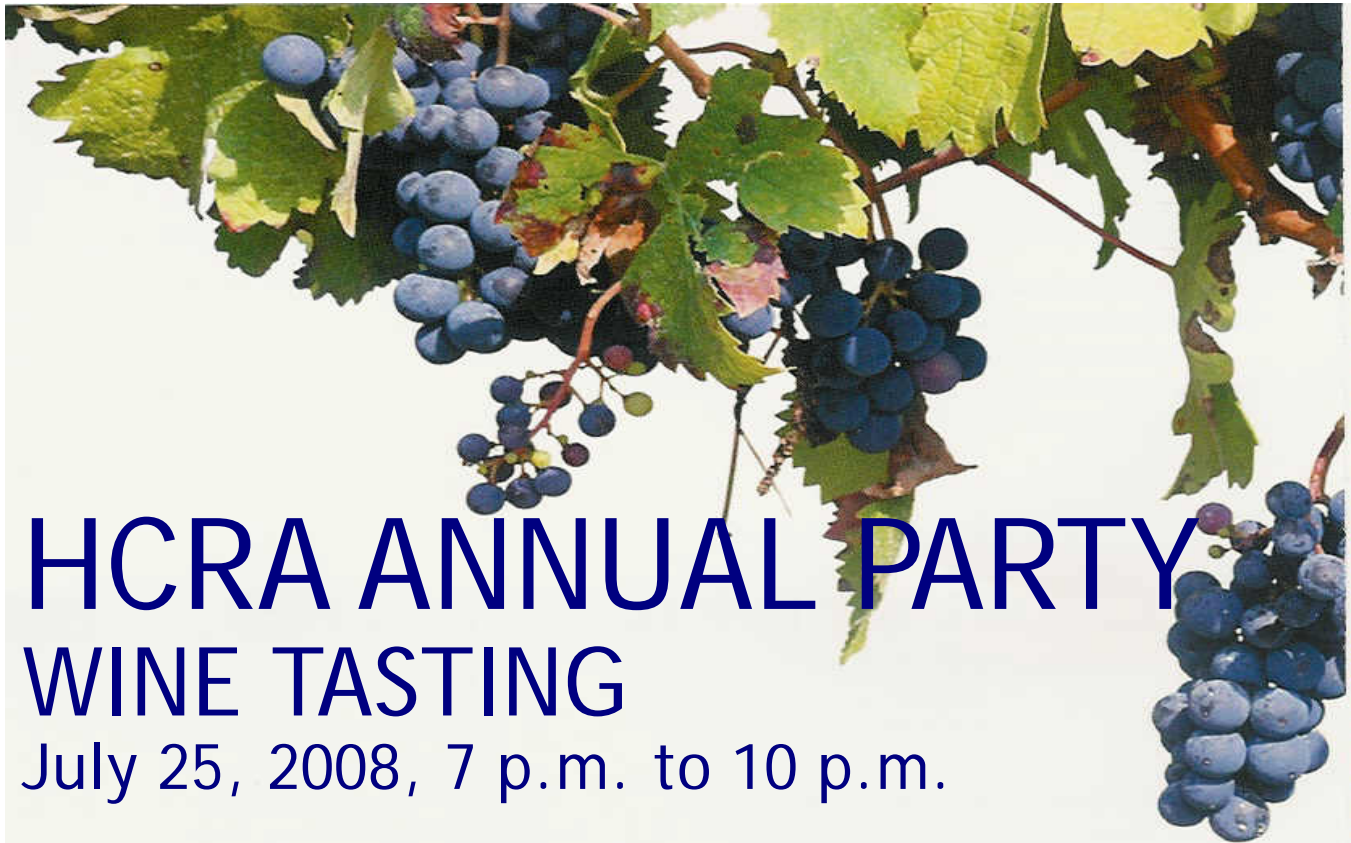
Your bridge to a professional product

Julie Matson

www.wordsetcplus.com

(281)955-5330

matson_julie@yahoo.com



HCRA ANNUAL PARTY WINE TASTING

July 25, 2008, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

HCRA MEMBERS RECEIVE COMPLIMENTARY INITIAL TASTING, ADDITIONAL TASTING \$15.00. Hors d'oeuvres provided. Bring a friend!

Water 2 Wine
Premier Custom Winery

*3331 Westpark
Houston, Texas 77005*

713.662.Wine (9463)

*www.Water2Wine.us
Houston@Water2Wine.us*

AN INVITATION SCOPISTS / PROOFREADERS

TO JOIN HCRA
Local. Grassroots.



In an effort to better serve our Community, HCRA is restructuring its web site. Scopists/Proofreaders have their own separate heading under the Member Directory. This reference resource will benefit our local scopists, proofreaders as well as the reporters they serve. Reporters, if you know a good scopist and/or proofreader, please encourage them to join HCRA.

<http://www.hcrainfo.com/joinNow.htm>

WANTED:

HCRA needs you, yes, you! We still have a vacant seat on our Board. The Secretary seat is still available. This is a vital seat, of much importance to the membership. In this position, you will take minutes of meetings and actively participate in meetings and events.

If you have ever felt the need to get more involved in your profession, now is the time. This is your call! Please contact Dorothy Rull at (713)436-0094 or at rullcsr@gmail.com.

Hurry! We need you!

Recycling Web Sites

- <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/ecycling/donate.htm#local> . The EPA website lists websites to find local recycling programs and also lists manufacturer and retail programs to recycle cell phones, computers and a variety of electronics.
- <http://Earth911.org> a comprehensive communication medium for the environment. It has taken environmental hotlines, websites and other information sources nationwide, and consolidated them into one network. Once you contact the Earth 911 network, you will find community-specific information on eCycling and much more.
- <http://www.greendisk.com/gdsite/Default.aspx> recycles and reuses all your technotrash.
- <http://www.cristina.org/welcome.html> The National Cristina Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to the support of training through donated technology.

Tips to Reduce Junk Mail

- When providing your name and address to a business or organization, request that they not rent, sell or exchange it with anyone else.
- Contact your credit card companies and request that they do not sell, trade or lend your name to mailing lists.
- Request an unlisted phone number from the telephone company.
- Avoid participating in sweepstakes and contests.
- When completing warranties, product registrations or questionnaires, do not include personal information.
- **TIRED OF RECEIVING COUNTLESS CATALOGS, CREDIT CARD OFFERS & COUPONS?**
- Business and other organizations subscribe to the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) to gain access to the largest mailing list in the country. Go to their website www.Directmail.com or call 1-888-690-2252 to opt out of their system.
- Transactions with mail order catalogs are compiled by Abacus Direct Corporation. To opt-out of their database send your name and address to Abacus, P.O. Box 1478, Broomfield, Co. 80038 or go to their website optout@abacus-us.com .
- The major consumer credit bureaus generate mailing lists for potential lenders that send pre-approved credit card, bank and insurance offers. To reduce solicitations, have your name and address removed by calling 1-888-567-8688.
- To reduce the number of items addressed to *Occupant* or *Current Resident*, call 1-888-241-6760 and ask to be removed from the ADVO mailing list or go to their website at www.advo.com/consumersupport.html
- Say no to unsolicited advertising by contacting Valpak Coupons at <http://www.coxtarget.com/mailexpression/s/DisplayMailSuppressionForm> or call the Houston office at 713-849-4477 and ask to opt-out.
- Mailing list companies collect information from government records, phone books, membership rosters and other sources to sell for marketing purposes. Contact Donnelley Marketing (owned by InfoUSA) to have your name removed at 1800-321-0869 or on their website at www.infousa.com .
- Call the following data compilers to remove your address from their lists: Axicom: 1877-774-2094 and Equifax: 1800-873-7655.

2008 HCRA Student Seminar Recap

by Jessica Macias, CRIH student

If you didn't get a chance to attend the HCRA seminar this past Saturday, May 17th, 2008, I hope that you make it to the next one. It is truly worth your time to be there. We had many guest speakers who shared so much valuable information that is required as a Court Reporter. I left the seminar very prepared on what to expect at graduation, obtaining your state license, internship, future prospect jobs, and so much more. I know that we have been told that networking is very important in this industry, and there couldn't be more truth to that. This seminar was four hours so I will sum up what everyone missed out on.

For those who are about to take your CSR, one thing that Ms. La Vearn Ivey mentioned was **DO NOT BUY** your printer the day before your test. She has seen so many people do this, and they were not able to connect their printer or print out their test. Be familiar with your equipment and know how it works; especially your software, no matter which software you choose. Once you are out in the field as a Court Reporter, TRCA will assist you with all of your questions and concerns. Also, it is very important to be a member of at least one organization because you will always be updated with the law requirements. Your membership dues pay for lobbyists who attend legislation meetings in Austin to hear about the new bills that are in session.

The thing that sets us apart from veteran court reporters is that we are learning Realtime. This is a very important skill, and you must be very accurate in your writing. If you are planning on becoming an official court reporter, judges love court reporters who can write Realtime. Also, plan to sub for courts before you find your place. This gives you experience and an idea if an official court reporter is what you would like to do. If you want to Freelance, you need to find a firm who meets your criteria. Make sure you are working for a firm that respects you as a reporter and your job. You are looking for someone who can be your mentor. So choose carefully when you are interviewing. Do not be afraid to learn new things. Firms want individuals who are willing to learn, who are flexible, and present themselves well in a very professional manner. CART and captioning is also in high demand. If you are interested in this field then take the time to build your vocabulary, learn information from various websites, such as www.depoman.com and visit the National Captioning Institute for more information on captioning. CART writers who know sign language is a big plus. So if you are willing to take on a new challenge, learn sign language.

Ms. Carolyn H. Grace gave a wonderful speech on techniques for controlling your stress. Learn to control your breathing and keep your mind from wondering off during test time. Before a test is given, relax and take in long breaths and try to focus. She mentioned that FEAR stood for **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal. Know what your intentions are, what your strengths are and what your rewards will be afterwards. Apply your strengths towards your fear to demolish it. She recommended a book for individuals, *The Nibble Theory & the Kernel of Power* by Kaleel Jamison. This book will help you understand what your fears are and how to overcome them.

Lastly, Professional Image. This is very important as a court reporter. You want to always look your best when you are out working. This doesn't mean that you have to buy a new wardrobe that will make you penniless. You can get amazing clothes at Wal-Mart, Target, and Ross as you would at the Galleria. Learn to mix and match your clothes. For women, you really need a pair of black slacks, a black skirt and a pair of black shoes. Your tops can go with any of the pants or skirts. If you plan on freelancing, always be ready to be on call. Your first impression is very important so make sure you leave a good one. As for the men, you only have to worry about wearing different shirts with your pants. You can also wear different ties. Always tuck in your shirt, and do not wear white socks.

Like I said, this seminar was full of information. Please make sure you attend the next one. It will definitely be worth it. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I will gladly share more information with you.



RACING WITH TIME TO PRESERVE HISTORIES

Brenda Evans
The Pasadena Citizen
(Published March 5, 2008)

Time is running out and it's taking a toll on a local woman's heartstrings. Two and a half years ago, Bobbie Ames read a story in the US News and World Reports about an effort to record the histories of World War II veterans.

"When I read that," she said, "I thought, 'that's a wonderful thing to do.' So I started doing it too."

Since that time, Ames has successfully sought out and interviewed 20 different World War II veterans. The written history verbally recounted to Ames is sometimes as large as 40 pages long, which is not a problem for a court reporter of 49 years. During her career, she has transcribed testimonies as long as 78 pages. In fact, because of her exposure in the courtroom, she has learned how to interview more proficiently.

With 20 thorough histories now successfully filed in the archives of the Library of Congress, Ames still cannot rest. She has taken upon herself a personal mission to try and find as many of these veterans as possible.

"They were the great generation," she said. "As I've met these men, I've come to realize that they were the most gentle of gentlemen."

Ames understands the importance of these men's histories. Her brother, Don Nelson, had been a Vietnam veteran and her husband had been a paratrooper in the Battle of the Bulge, the Normandy invasion on D-Day and had made three drops. He received four Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star and his unit of the Oak Leaf Cluster in the Presidential Citation.

Ames cannot explain the draw that pulls her to continue in her recording efforts. It has become an emotional one for her and she feels a great sense of urgency.

With tears welling in her eyes, she said, "These men are dying fast."

Unfortunately, she explained, because of the rampant crime of identity theft in the United States, it has become more difficult to get the histories from a few of these veterans.

"I do not ask for personal information such as Social Security numbers, military IDs or anything that could be used to steal someone's identity," she said. "I just want to hear their stories. I want to record that history so it will not be forgotten."

Ames told about one gentleman who was a retired major. At first he agreed to let her record his history, then he became worried about identity theft and decided against it.

"My kids know everything they need to know," he told her.

She understood completely, however, she knew deep down inside that once the gentleman's children are gone, the histories will be "all but forgotten" and that is what saddened her.

"If there's one word to describe these men," said Ames, "it would be precious. The ones who are still with us and the ones who gave it all."

She said there are many stories she has recorded that have greatly touched her heart. One such story was told to her by 84-year-old Gene Smith, who had been a World War II pilot.

"He told me how he had stood there in camp," she said. "The German soldiers were coming in and laying their rifles in front of them. The couldn't speak English, but they managed to say, 'surrender.'"

Ames reports having lived a full and wonderful life, and even had the pleasure of owning a condominium in Acapulco for 15 years. Over the years, she has saved 51 dogs and adopted a lady at the nursing home who recently died. At 72 years old, she reminisces about some of the 58 countries she has visited.

"The place to go for fun was Rome," she said. "The place to go for beauty was Paris. The place to go for the beauty of the country is Ireland."

Now Ames feels that recording these histories and documenting them into the Library of Congress is her way of giving back. She does not charge for the service. Besides the lengthy amount of time it takes her, it costs her an additional \$20 for the paper, disc, toner and FedEx charges, but money is not the issue for Ames.

"Their stories are so interesting," she said. "People don't know about the hardships they went through just to get to the battlefield."

Ames can do one World War II history per month. She is willing to get started on her next one. Those interested can fax a letter of interest to 713-472-0575.



For those with ravenous appetites for free case law, the floodgates have been opened in the past several weeks.

Last month, [Fastcase](#) launched what it calls the "largest free law library" on the Internet with the debut of the [Public Library of Law](#), which consolidates more than two million pages of cases.

The 10-year-old Washington, D.C., company announced in November that it partnered with [Public.Resource.Org](#) to make 1.8 million pages of federal cases available in the public domain, including all Supreme Court opinions dating back to the 1757 and all U.S. appeals courts decisions dating back to 1950. That archive was made available in mid-February.

The PLoL, which launched days later, includes all of those cases plus an additional 10 years of case law from all 50 states.

"We wanted this to be the best starting place to do legal research," said Ed Walters, CEO of Fastcase. The previous online archives of case law were "uneven at best and scattered across so many web sites."

The site's search function works like many popular search engines, by listing the most relevant results at the top. Case citations link to other decisions in Fastcase, which can be accessed through a free 24-hour subscription or a \$95 per month agreement. Also available on the free site are statutes, regulations, court rules, constitutions and legal forms. The free-site project launched by Walters and company president Phil Rosenthal, both former attorneys at [Covington & Burlington](#) in Washington, came about from the sheer volume of state court cases being made available on state Web sites.

It's aimed at nonlawyers, journalists and the "other 70 percent of firms" that don't rely on [Westlaw](#) or [LexisNexis](#) for their research, Walters said.

"Just as the Internet has made it possible for people to book their own travel, manage their own investments and file their own taxes, PLoL will enable individuals to find answers to their routine or small-claims legal questions online -- either by themselves or in conjunction with a lawyer," Rosenthal said.

Though Walters wouldn't divulge traffic statistics, he said the company was "very surprised" when it hit its first month's traffic forecast within the first 24 hours of operation.

Douglas S. Malan
The Connecticut Law Tribune
(Published March 11, 2008)

HOUSTON COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

WWW.HCRAINFO.COM

P.O. Box 2205, HOUSTON, TX 77252

"Toasting Your Health" Seminar



Saturday, September 27th, 2008

7:30 a.m. Registration

Crowne Plaza, 2712 Southwest
Freeway, Houston, Texas 77097

Focusing on maintaining your ethical,
mental and physical well-being.

Those interested in becoming a sponsor, please
contact us at HCRANewsletter@GMail.com.