

Special Interest Articles:

- January meeting heralds bylaws changes.
- HCRA sets website advertising rates.
- NCRA and ER/DAR testing??

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Local. Grassroots. Court Reporting.

President's Message

In January of this year when I took over as president of HCRA, I thought of the Italian proverb: Voice of one is the voice of none. Right now the voices of court reporters in Houston are silent. With all the proposed changes to our profession on a national level that are being discussed, it is important that we as the Houston court reporter community gather together and let our voices be heard. As

president, I represent your interests on the state and national level, but I can only do that if you stand up and be counted.

Shortly we will begin a membership drive where the members of the Board will be contacting all court reporters licensed in the Houston Metro area and asking them to join. We need your voice. We understand in hard economic times money is tight so the Board has been working hard this

year to increase the benefits of membership. Look for the launch of our new website, which, among other improvements, includes hyperlinked ads for members. The Board is dedicated to protecting and preserving our profession just as you are dedicated to protecting and preserving the record. Please fill out the membership form below and return. Let your voice be heard.

~ Shauna Beach
2009 President

January 22, 2009 Meeting

On January 22nd, 2009 at 6:00 p.m., the Houston Court Reporters held its Annual Meeting at Baba Yega's where changes were presented and voted upon by the members present.

The Bylaws were streamlined to eliminate repetitive verbiage. The amended bylaws are posted on the HCRA website.

www.hcrainfo.com

Another change was the addition of an Honorary Member category.

Members who are over 70 years of age are eligible for Honorary Membership status.

The composition of the HCRA Board was downsized so that in 2009 it comprises a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, one Freelance Directors, one Official Directors and a Past President. The positions of President-Elect, one Freelance Director and one Official Director were eliminated.

Additionally, the 2009

Board of Directors was elected: President Shauna Beach, Vice President Camille Bruess, Treasurer Kaetheryne B. Kyriell, Secretary Carl Browning, Freelance Director Vickie MacNaughton King and Official Director Nancy Capetillo.

So if you haven't joined HCRA, now is the time! An application is provided on page 5.



HBA Habitat for Humanity - April 4 – May 7



4826 Brisbane Drive,
Houston, Texas.
Work commences at
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

During the Houston Bar Association's fundraising state, the Houston Court Reporters Association and the Bay Area Court Reporters Association donated monetarily toward the HBA meeting its financial goal of \$70,000 to build one Habitat Home this year.

Additionally, in 2009, court reporting firms were given the opportunity to coordinate the

sponsorships of breakfast and lunch at the Habitat worksite, which occurs consecutive Saturdays beginning on April 4th through May 7th at 4826 Brisbane Drive, Houston.

HCRA and BACRAT sponsored the first day of construction on April 4th by providing breakfast and lunch. Caterer, Jim Benton of Houston, generously donated the delivery fee and delivered

pastries and coffee for breakfast and boxed lunches in the afternoon.

Thank you to Allied Advanced Reporting, Inc., Coastal Reporting Service, Continental Court Reporters, Houston Reporting & Videoconferencing, Innovative Reporting & Video, Ross Reporting, Sunbelt Reporting Service and Stratos Legal Services for their sponsorships!!!

May 7, 2009 HBA Golf Tournament at Memorial Park

The Houston Bar Association's Annual Charity Golf Tournament has been scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2009 at Memorial Park. Attorneys and members of the judiciary get to enjoy an afternoon of golf at this event. Proceeds benefit the Houston Bar Foundation.

"The Houston Bar Foundation was established in 1982 as a charitable arm of the Houston Bar Association. Since that time, the Foundation has supported programs that help

provide legal representation to the indigent, promote community understanding of our legal system and foster the administration of justice. Through the generosity of its many contributors, the Foundation has been able to make a difference in the greater Houston community." http://www.hba.org/folder-HBF/HBF.htm

The Houston Court Reporters Association and the Bay Area Court Reporters Association are sponsoring a beverage cart for the Golf Tournament.

There are varying levels of sponsorship. If you or your firm is interested in being a sponsor, please contact me at rullcsr@gmail.com and I will e-mail you the sponsorship form.



Student Corner

.....by Carl Browning

Howdy all! Well, as this is my first attempt writing an article for the Student Corner of the HCRA News Letter, I figured I'd turn first to that tried and true topic that makes maniacs of us all. It makes students weep and carp at their teachers. It makes teachers' eyes glaze over, and carp back at their students. It helps keep Pengad in business. However, it makes licensed, seasoned reporters and merit writers of us all. What is that topic you ask with a grimace, fear and trembling trepidation? Practice!

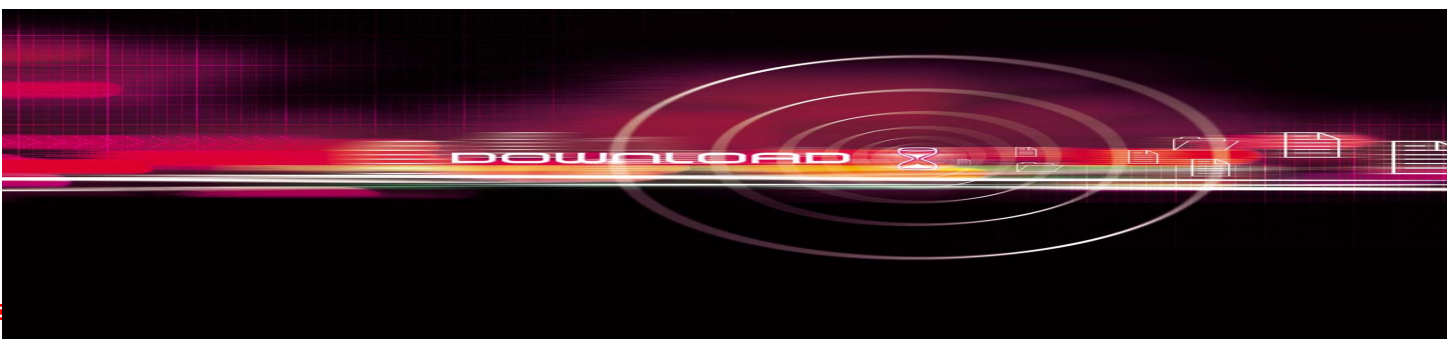
What's the point of practice; don't I get what I need in school? Let's examine that and give some perspective. The CRCB website lists 237 court reporters in Houston. That's not counting the surrounding area. By contrast, the Houston Astros list 40 players; the Texans list 67; the Rockets have 15, counting Yao Ming as one player; and the Houston Dynamos have 24, a total number of 146 professional athletes. So, you ask.

There are about twice as many court reporters in Houston as there are professional athletes. That's a rough approximation of the effort I feel it takes to become a working reporter. That's how tough a task this is. Do you think all those professional athletes just kind of kept at it after high school and college? That they just kept playing the game. Of course they did, but they had to be better than the competition. To do that takes countless hours of practice in addition to playing their particular sport. Lance Berkman has to reach out automatically without thinking to catch that line drive to first base. That's how fast our court reporting reflexes must be.

The difference for the court reporting student is that there is only one person that you need to be better than, and that person is you. That makes our profession different from others. Not only is the amount of practice important, but how you practice is equally important. Hours pounding away at the keyboard won't do. Below are some of my practice tips.

1. Always read back what you write. How else will you know what the mistakes are?
2. When you practice, (and during school dictation) keep a note pad handy so you can write down the outlines you don't write clearly or correctly. Pick one or two words from that list a day. Write them 20 times cleanly using a coma in between. Try alternating between two words. The point is to get your fingers used to moving to that out line from a different position. That increases the accuracy and strength in your writing.
3. Practice the words you hate to write. That advice was actually given to me by Mr. Steve Shastay.
4. When trying to increase speed, listen to the speed before you ever try and write it. That way it doesn't sound so intimidating.
5. And my final practice tip, learn to listen like they're going to ask you to throw away the machine and recite the testimony from memory. What does that mean? Be aware of the story, the readers, the room around you and what you hear. Your fingers know what and you'll wish you'd done a lot more of it. What am I talking about? Practice!!!!to do. Focusing on mistakes, how hard the next word is and how much you hate that outline places your concentration on something other than the dictation you should be hearing.

Hackneyed and trite as the adage is, practice really does make perfect. Remember, we all had to do it. A lot of us still do it. When you finally do it, you'll realize how beneficial it is!



May 16, 2008 Student Seminar

Agenda

- 8:00 – 8:30 **Registration**
- 8:30 – 9:30 **Advice/Techniques on How to Market Yourself as a ...**
 Freelance Reporter, Deputy Court Reporter, and Officialship
 Cynthia Berry
- 9:40 – 9:50 **Breakfast Break**
- 9:50 – 10:50 **What is the Uniform Format Manual?**
Helpful Tips and Examples for On-the-Job Forms
 Camille Bruess



- 10:50 – 11:00 **Break**
- 11:00 – 1:00 **Panel Discussion on Deposition/Courtroom Etiquette:**
Captioning/CART, Freelance (court/depositions), Official Reporters
 Susan Henley, Pat Arredondo, Edna Hipp Thornton, Anita Manley

- WHEN:** May 16, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- WHERE:** COURT REPORTING INSTITUTE OF HOUSTON
 13101 NORTHWEST FREEWAY, SUITE 100, HOUSTON, TX 77090
- COST:** \$10.00 FOR STUDENTS, \$50.00 FOR TEACHERS.
- RSVP:** YOUR SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE ON OR BEFORE MAY 8, 2009

PROCEEDS FROM THE STUDENT SEMINAR WILL GO TOWARD TWO STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS TO BE AWARDED TO CRIH.

Come learn and have fun! Door prizes will be awarded!

Name: _____

Firm / Court / School: _____

Address, City, State Zip: _____

"...[To] serve as a resource for attorneys attempting to locate Houston-area court reporters."

Website Revamped

HCRA's website will continue to undergo changes this year. HCRA has contracted with Dellamark.com for the revamp, maintenance and monitoring of our website.

In order to better serve our membership and the local court reporting community, HCRA's website will add features

to better serve the local court reporter and hopefully, also, serve as a resource for attorneys attempting to locate Houston-area court reporters.

Plans and work are underway to incorporate a president's blog so the HCRA President can post comments and up-to-date information. The ability to

renew and pay online are features that will be incorporated, along with a web calendar.

The HCRA Board established advertising rates for local individual court reporters and court reporting firms.

Website Advertising Rates

As a Member, your name and phone number will be posted on the website. If you wish a hyperlink to your e-mail and/or website, the a la carte advertising rates as follows:

- \$50 - Member Directory Listing with a Hyperlink to your e-mail address
- \$100 - Member Directory Listing with Logo Hyperlink to your website
- \$100 - Front-Page Rotating Banner Ad (Note: Multiple ads will rotate.)

In order to draw those interested in court reporting services to our website, HCRA will advertise with the Houston Paralegals Association. HCRA is looking into having links to its website placed on local legal-related sites and other sites as well.

Contact rullcsr@gmail.com for format requirements. Payment to HCRA, P.O. Box 2205, Houston, Texas 77252-2205

HOT TOPICS – NCRA to Test ER/DAR???

In a March 12, 2009 letter to TCRA Members, Jo Ann Leger and Karen Morris wrote: "The staff at NCRA conducted a self-study that concluded that NCRA could gain financial strength through certification of "non-dues" industries, such as digital audio recording transcriptionists, medical transcriptionists, National Verbatim Reporters Association, and the American Association of Electronic Reporters and Transcribers, among others.

NCRA is proposing to design and administer certification tests and provide continuing education to the above mentioned industries. "

Please click on the hyperlink below to become better informed than I could possibly share with you in a single email. This is our profession. This is our livelihood. Please get involved. You have to be present at the NCRA Annual Convention August 6-9 in National Harbor, Maryland to vote at this "Special Meeting" being called for the Motion to Rescind. Although there is a petition at the Motion to Rescind website, you MUST attend the annual convention just to VOTE!

If you have questions, wish to make a comment or take action on this matter, please contact TCRA at texasra@embarqmail.com.

Links: <http://motiontorescind.wordpress.com>
<http://www.concernedreporters.com>



NCRA is undertaking the issue of possible testing and certification of ER/DAR (electronic recording/digital audio recording) operators through NCRA.

Houston Court Reporters Association

2009 Membership Application

Dues: Professional Dues \$35 / Student Dues \$15 / Associate \$25 / Past President \$0

Contact Information

Please Print Neatly

Name		
Firm / Court / School		
Address, City, State ZIP		
Home Phone:		Fax:
Work Phone:		Cell:
E-Mail Address:		

HCRA MEMBER Directory on Web Site: Include Me _____ Do Not Include Me _____

(HCRA sends monthly meeting reminders, newsletter notices and periodic important information via email)

Member Information / Volunteer Opportunity

Type of Reporter: Freelance / Official (State/Federal) / Deputy Official / Captioner / CART / Other _____

Texas CSR No.: _____ **NCRA No.** _____

Certification Method: Machine / Gregg / Pitman **CAT Software:** _____

Other Certifications: RPR / RMR / RDR / CRR / CBC / CCP / CLVS / Notary Public

I would like to mentor a student: Yes _____ No _____

Student: Reporter Student / Scopist Student

Associate: Instructor / School Official / Retired Reporter / Proofread / Scopist / Transcriptionist / Attorney / Paralegal
/ Secretary / CLVS / Vendor / Other _____

I would like to volunteer with HCRA: Yes _____ No _____

Agreement and Signature

I certify the above information is correct. I pledge myself to abide by the requirements of the bylaws of the Association.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return form and payment to: Houston Court Reporters Association, Attention: Membership Committee,

P.O. Box 2205, Houston, Texas 77252-2205

Note: Membership expires on December 31st of the current year.

Form of payment: Check # _____ Money Order # _____ Cash (on site only) _____

HCRA

P.O. Box 2205
Houston, Texas 77252-2205



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.hcrainfo.com

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Websites

- ✚ CRCB: <http://www.crcb.state.tx.us>
- ✚ HCRA: www.hcrainfo.com
- ✚ TCRA: www.tcra-online.com
- ✚ NCRA: www.ncraonline.org
- ✚ Webmaster: www.dellamark.com

*Drink nothing
without seeing it;
sign nothing
without reading it.*

Spanish Proverb

**2009 HCRA Calendar of Events**

- ✚ January 21 – Inauguration
- ✚ March – Dress for Success Business Suit Drive
- ✚ April 4 – May 9th HBA Habitat for Humanity Build
- ✚ May 7 – Golf Tournament
- ✚ May 16 – Student Seminar
- ✚ July – Annual Party
- ✚ September/ October - Seminar
- ✚ December 3 – Judges Appreciation Luncheon