

NORTH CAROLINA COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION SPRING-SUMMER E-SKRIPT (JUNE 2007)

Happy spring, everyone! I'm sure it's been as busy for you as it has been at my house. Let me take this time to fill you in on what's happened in NCRA... and what's going to happen for NCCRA.

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MIDYEAR CONVENTION IN VANCOUVER, BC

As you know, NCRA tries to find different locations for the conventions. Sometimes they are able to take advantage of off-season rates (like Orlando in July a couple years back) or extra availability of convention rooms. This year's midyear convention was at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver in downtown Vancouver, BC. 445 people attended to get their chance to see beautiful BC, and even a few North Carolinians made the trip – and I think some even extended their business trip to include a couple of days of vacation. There were great programs on offer for CEUs, the vendors unveiled some new products, and the foodie experience in Vancouver was wonderful!

NCCRA ANNUAL CONVENTION – ASHEVILLE, NC – SEPTEMBER 28-30

If you've not yet marked your calendars, PUT IT IN INK! The dates are set and the application is in for CEUs. If you attend for the Saturday and Sunday event, it's a full 1.0 CEUs and if you come in Friday for the optional Biltmore Estate tour, we're asking for an additional .15 CEU. The program ranges from computer gadgets, nuts and bolts of transitioning to captioning or CART, information on the Rwanda genocide trials, Janice Gregory from the Tax Research Institute for tips on how to make the most of your deductions, vendor tables, silent auction, firm owners' cocktail party... and on and on! Join your colleagues from the Georgia Shorthand Reporters Association at the Crowne Plaza in Asheville for a wonderful weekend in the mountains. Look for the registration in your packet in the mail in late June/early July!

NCRA ANNUAL CONVENTION – DALLAS, TX – AUGUST 9-12

Registration is now open at the NCRA web site for the annual convention in Dallas. The event is being held at the Gaylord Texan resort – and if any of you went to the convention in Nashville last year, it's the same company that developed the resort. The Gaylord

Opryland was magnificent, and the Texan looks pretty amazing too. As usual, a weekend chock-full of CEU-earning opportunities, networking, vendor exploration, speed and realtime competitions... AND MEMBER VOTING!

If you can manage to attend the member business meeting on Thursday afternoon, you will have the opportunity to change the way our national association handles voting on issues. Currently, in order to make changes to the bylaws, a member must be present at the business meeting in order to vote; a proposal regarding allowing people to vote online even though not present at the meeting is under discussion. If you would like to read more about Direct Member Voting, please visit this web site:

<http://ncraonline.org/NewsInfo/KeyIssues/DMV/> You'll need your member ID number and a password (if you've never logged in, you'll need to originate – and while you're there, stop by the online forum, too!)

JOINDER

At the spring meetings of NCVRA and AOCR, the members of NCVRA agreed to continue moving forward with developing a plan to merge that association with NCCRA. If you're interested in participating in the committee that will develop bylaws and board positions, please let me know at the ncra_president@yahoo.com email address.

Currently AOCR does not believe that their interests will be served by joining with the other two associations. It's the hope of the committee members that any concerns of the AOCR members will be addressed at the time that the constitution and bylaws of a new association are developed and that the issue can be readdressed in the future.

LCC – STUDENT LUNCHEON

On Sunday, May 6 (yes, right after test day!) several LCC students met for lunch in Kinston with Federal Official Harry Hagopian, CART provider Crystal Jones, and me, in discussing what it's like to be a reporter. Several students made the drive to Kinston, including a 160-level student from Charlotte, a couple from the Raleigh area, one from Little Washington, and several from the Kinston area itself. The lunch was planned by the students and we working reporters told a little about ourselves and then sat with students answering questions.

We've got some great students at LCC who cannot wait to join us in our great profession. I'm sure many would love to sit in on a deposition or a morning in court, maybe see how your home office is set up, maybe have a mentor, participate in a field trip to your agency... If you would like to develop a program for the students or participate as a mentor for them, please contact Loretta Armstrong, our student liaison at loretta6195@yahoo.com

CERTIFICATION TESTING

May 5, Hickory

Thanks, as usual, to Lisa Nedrow and Cheryl Nuccio for volunteering to administer the NCRA certification examinations in Hickory. This year we had 10 RPR, 1 RMR, and 12 CRR candidates take the test. I know it's a long wait, but hopefully we had some success.

November 3, Kinston

Starting in November, only skills tests will be taken at testing sites. NCRA has developed a protocol for testing written knowledge candidates using the internet. In January, April, June, and October, a skills candidate may attend a Pearson VUE Professional Center to take the test – please contact NCRA for more information on locations for taking the test.

However, those of us who still need skills portions – RPR, RMR, CRR – will be able to take the test as we have in the past. So, if you need one or more of these, rest assured, for now you'll still be able to make the trek to Kinston for the test. Do know, though, that NCRA is reviewing the possibility of making these tests available online or some other method as well.

And, so you know, these changes are in direct response to members' requests! Keep making comments to NCRA and how they can make your testing experience better.

Freelance Question: How to Stop Attorneys from Giving Away Free Copies?

You've seen it. An attorney doesn't order a copy, but says he'll "share" it with other counsel. Of course, you fume. But what do you say? Reporter Lysne Cook from Jacksonville, Florida, offered this explanation to one attorney when she was presented with that situation. She's given her permission to reprint her comments.

"The O&1 pays for me to be a court reporter. The O&1 covers my taxes, my fees, my expenses, my certifications and CEUs and overhead – all the stuff to basically keep me up and running professionally. The copy sales, however, are what puts food on my dinner table, pays my home mortgage and utilities, an occasional vacation or bottle of wine to keep me sane – all the stuff to keep my up and running personally so that I'm worth something in my professional capacity.

"Would a lawyer only charge so much to keep his or her business up and running, or would he or she charge enough so that the business is covered, as well as the personal expenses, too. The copy sales are essentially where we see our profit.

"Giving away free copies to opposing counsel not only hurts attorneys in that particular case they're involved in, as they're "helping" the other side – which I'll be damned if I help the other side if I'm ever in litigation – but it will cause a trend for reporters to start charging higher rates on the originals across the board if we see our copy sales go away.

“Reporters aren’t going to do this job just to break even, you know? Take away our copy sales, at least in the non-salaried freelance arena, and it’s taking away our profit.

“That’s the way I see it, anyway. And it seemed to hit home with my client, too, as he’s stopped sharing.”

Annual Dues

If you haven’t already, you’ll soon see an invoice in your mailbox for membership in NCCRA. Please don’t forget to renew!

Board Service – Volunteers

As you know, our Board serves two-year terms. All of us are ending our current terms. If any of you is interested in serving on the Board, either as an Area Director or Executive Officer – we invite you! Thanks so much to Karla Grant and Jenny Carroll, Eastern Area Directors; Tracy Daniels and Jennifer Wagner-Lloyd, Central; Sydney Silva and Carol Adkins, Western; Dawn Walton (recently stepped down), Secretary/Treasurer; Tina Stancill, Immediate Past President; and, last, but not least, Briana Nesbit, Vice President – who also stepped in to fill the Secretary/Treasurer position as well. It’s been a joy working with you all. And, for any of you who wish to serve - in any capacity - it’s not TOO time consuming, and it is very fulfilling to give back to your profession.

They Constitution & Bylaws require a two area directors from each area, one each of the executive positions. Please, consider volunteering.

And that’s it in a nutshell! I hope you enjoyed getting caught up. Please contact me if you have any questions – regarding anything NCCRA or NCRA related, and I’ll be happy to respond. And, when your mailing for the convention comes in, please make plans to join us in Asheville.

Until then, write much and sell MANY copies!

Tori