

WINTER SUBSCRIBE

A Quarterly Publication of the Nebraska Court Reporters Association

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Angela Comeau, RMR, CSR, CRR, CCR



During this Thanksgiving season it is a wonderful opportunity to take account of the blessings in our lives. I am grateful for so many things. The career I have chosen and the opportunity to serve on the board of NeCRA is among them. I am thankful for all of the members that take an active role in our association to make it a true success.

We had a fantastic fall convention in October. Our vice president, Jill Albracht, spent countless hour planning an educational, fun and inspiring day. Thanks, Jill.

I am pleased to report that we currently have no vacancies among the official ranks in our state. Vacancies are a problem in many states and I am thrilled that we are filling the openings that become available with qualified verbatim machine writers.

Our voluntary certification program is in its beginning stages. It is a perfect start towards mandatory certification in our state for the future.

It is a pleasure working with all of you.
Thanks for all you do!
Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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2008 - 2009 NECRA OFFICERS

President: Angela Comeau, RMR, CSR, CRR, CCR

Tel.: (402) 476-1912 Fax: (402) 475-9876
Angelatin_2000@yahoo.com

President-Elect: Kami Hooley, RPR, CRR, CCR

Tel.: (402) 336-2550 Fax: (402) 336-3601
kamisue@msn.com

Vice President: Jill Albracht, RPR

albracht@humtel.net

Secretary/Treasurer: Matisha Stratton

P.O. Box 863 Omaha, NE 68101

Immediate Past President:

Julie Pell, RPR, CRR, CSR, CCR

Tel.: (402) 476-1912 Fax: (402) 475-9876
Jpell@neb.rr.com

Freelance Member Representative:

Judy Herzberg, RPR, CCR

Tel./Fax: (712) 542-5809
judithh@heartland.net

Official Member Representative:

Open.

Website: Pat Laukaitis, RPR, CCR

Tel.: (402) 441-7605 Fax: (402) 441-3833
gosimba@msn.com

The Scribe Editor:

Sonya Kennedy, CSR, CCR

Tel.: (402) 444-7548 Fax: (402) 996-8151
Smrector67@cox.net

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PEOPLE TO PEOPLE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM RUSSIA

Russia was the destination for the second People to People Ambassador program for court reporters led by past presidents of the National Court Reporters Association Marilyn Sanchez and Laurel Eiler. A delegation of 37 professionals and 10 guests (including my wife Janet and me) made the journey to Moscow and St. Petersburg from October 3 to 12, 2008.



The delegation arrived in Moscow shortly after noon on October 4th and by 6:00 p.m. the program began. Mr. Alexander Shibanov, practicing lawyer and ex-Chief-of-Party of the Russian-American Judicial Partnership, presented an overview of the Russian judiciary.

Judicial reform began in 1991 after the demise of the Soviet Union. The judiciary consists of three different types of courts: a Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, and High Court of Arbitration. The Supreme Court hears general cases and has under it the High Courts of the Oblast, Kray, and Republic, District Courts and Justices of the Peace.

The Constitutional Court is self-explanatory and determines the validity of laws passed by the Russian legislature. The High Court of Arbitration hears economic dispute cases, including bankruptcy, and has under it Circuit Courts of Arbitration, Appellate Courts of Arbitration and Courts of Arbitration.

Russia has patterned its judicial system after the American federal court system. Judges are appointed by the president after being recommended by the Judicial Qualifications Collegia. A person must be 25 years old, hold a law degree, have practiced law for five years and be a Russian citizen to be eligible to become a judge. The Councils of Judges can impose discipline on a judge in Russia and approximately 70 of the 2500 judges are removed each year.

The only jury trials in Russia are for felony criminal cases. Felony cases may also be heard by a single judge or a three judge panel. There are 12 members for a Russian jury. Ninety percent of cases filed are tried in Russia. Sixty percent of the Russian judges are women.

A record is made for every case in Russia, however most are not verbatim. A Russian judge's staff includes a legal assistant and court secretary. The court secretary must have a legal degree and three years of legal experience. The secretary prepares minutes of each proceeding and usually has this done the same day of the hearing but can take up to three days to prepare the record. Many secretaries continue their legal education and after five years of legal school become lawyers.

On Sunday, October 5th, the entire group toured Red Square, the Tretyakov Art Gallery, the Kremlin grounds, Assumption Cathedral and Amory Chambers. Upon entering Red Square we were greeted with the sound of church bells ringing - a truly unforgettable experience. We walked the entire parade grounds of Red Square, passed Lenin's tomb, and ended up at St. Basil's Cathedral.

Monday found the court reporters at Moscow City Arbitration Court while the guests toured the Novodevichy Convent and Cemetery and shopped on the old Arbat Street. The role of the record keeper in Russian courts was again explained to the professionals. It is hoped by 2011 there will be a mandatory use of audio recording by all arbitration courts. At the present time a brief record is made by pen and paper and rarely are proceedings recorded by audio, video or steno.

The professional delegates went to the Court Reporters Department of Moscow College #16 on Tuesday to learn how students are trained for court work. The program began with a group of students singing several songs, ending with a young girl's English rendition of "I Will Survive". We learned that the school has existed for 14 years and the students were 14 to 18 years old. The court reporting program took four years and there were expected to be 75 graduates this year. However, Russian court reporters are really court secretaries and only earn around \$300 per month.

Our guests toured the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and Christ the Savior Cathedral before joining the professionals at the school cafeteria for lunch.

Tuesday afternoon the delegation flew from Moscow to St. Petersburg on Rossiya airlines. The flight was a little over an hour but we were served drinks and a meal. The weight restriction for the flight was 44 pounds and some of our delegation had luggage that weighed more than that. However, Tatiana, our 72-year old tour guide, made sure everyone made the flight without paying extra. She did this by handing the ticket agent a roll of rubles!

The entire delegation toured Peterhof, the summer palace of Peter the Great, on Wednesday, October 8th. After an afternoon bus tour of St. Petersburg, the evening was spent at the Imperial Hermitage Theater for a performance of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake Ballet.

The Arbitration Court of St. Petersburg and Leningradsky Region was the site for Thursday's professional session. This court hears 60,000 cases a year but has only two rooms equipped with audio recording equipment. In the morning the guests toured Pavlovsk Palace. The afternoon found the entire group touring the Hermitage Art Museum and admiring the private collection of Catherine the Great.

Our final professional tour was at the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation in St. Petersburg. From 1991 to 2008 the court was headquartered in Moscow. We were the first American delegation to get to view the St. Petersburg court. There are 19 judges appointed to constitutionality

this court which rules on the of the 135 articles to the Russian constitution. There are four separate courtrooms in this building and each has an audio and video recording system. A pool of six workers and two managers prepares a daily record of proceedings. The managers cut and splice portions of the recording and the workers type the transcript which is then pasted together by the managers at the end of the day.

Friday afternoon found the entire delegation touring the Peter and Paul Fortress and the Cathedral of the Savior of the Spilled Blood.



The last tour was Saturday, October 11th, at Catherine's Palace in Tsarskoye Selo. Our two buses were met by a four-man brass band playing The Star Spangled Banner. It was then we knew for sure Russia was a capitalist country as the band had their tip jars prominently displayed! Catherine's Palace is a massive place and home to the famous Amber Room.

Saturday evening we had a farewell dinner to end a magnificent adventure in Russia. The People to People Ambassador program does an outstanding job in lining up guides and programs which make the journey quite interesting and educational.

For those interested in viewing pictures of this trip the group has posted them at <http://photobucket.com/p2prussia> with the password to get in being russiarocks

Kremlin entrance Gary & Janet in front of Lenin's Tomb

NCRA - STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

On Thursday, November 13, 2008, I jumped on a plane in Omaha and headed off to my destination of Reston, Virginia for NCRA's State Leadership Conference.

We started the conference off with a Welcome Reception and tour of NCRA Headquarters, where the magic happens. We toured the offices and met the staff and directors. To me, one of the interesting aspects of the tour was the Information Center. Every time you dial 1-800-272-NCRA, it goes into a simple little room set up with cubicles and computers and telephones, and they can answer every question that comes to that room, or at least direct you to who can answer that question! The evening was filled with good food and great networking and socializing with other reporters.



On Friday, the convention began. We were introduced to NCRA's board of directors. There was a Town Hall Meeting talking about some of the major issues within the various state associations. One of the big concerns with many state associations is gift giving and what some are doing to control gift giving within their state. There was discussion on ER, on certifying reporters, and discussion about what some states

are doing to help their association save money, yet keeping the association going. Of course, a consensus among all state leaders is how to get more members involved in the association and just keeping the members as members. This was a great opportunity to chat with other leaders and get new ideas for what can be done

Next we heard from Mark Golden, NCRA's executive director and CEO. He talked about the fact that every organization needs good leaders and good managers to put themselves out in front of the rest. If we could do it by ourselves, we wouldn't need an association.

We ended the day with a Roundtable gathering where the various departments of NCRA sat at a table and we were free to visit each table and ask questions of what each office does at NCRA and what they can do to help us.

Saturday we began the day with Dave Wenhold describing tools that we need to run an organization smoothly. We also heard from our government relations department reported on some of the various federal initiatives that their department is working on to help reporters.

We ended the day with the state-to-state report, where various states reported on the good and bad things going on in their state regarding court reporting. Individuals talked about what they're doing in their state to push reporters to do realtime; things they're doing to make attorneys, court administrators, legislators, judges and even the public aware of how important it is to have a court reporter and what a court reporter can do for you.

Attending the National Leadership Convention was an incredibly motivating and inspiring experience for me. I left the convention feeling encouraged to continue the hard work that others before me have done, and continue to strive to make our organization better and stronger. All court reporters have worked very hard to get where we are today. We all remember the stress and hard work we went through to graduate from court reporting school. We cannot stop that hard work just because we now have a job. Who knows when that job can be taken away? We need to go from good to better to best. There is always something out there that we can do to improve ourselves, whether it's shortening your editing time, writing realtime for yourself, writing realtime for your judge, or obtaining that higher certification. We should always be challenging ourselves to make ourselves better. We need to let others – attorneys, judges, court administrators, legislators, the public – know exactly what it is that we as court reporters do and that we are needed to make the most accurate record. Remember, **KNOWLEDGE + ACTION = POWER.**

THE HISTORY OF NeCRA/NOcRA

I recently attended the State Leadership Conference, and a state leader from New York is compiling information on the history of each state association. So, I myself thought that would be a very interesting history project to put together, but I need your help. If you have any information, old newsletters, any kind of information on when NeCRA/NOcRA was formed, what some of the issues were when the association first started, who some of the members were, how many members there were, anything you think would be of interest, or if you know who I could contact to gather this information, please e-mail Kami at kamisue@msn.com, or call me at 402-340-0755.

NEWS FROM NOCRA

Celeste Mack, RPR,
CCR President
1701 Farnam Street
Courtroom 12
Omaha, Nebraska
68183
Tel. (402) 444-5581
Fax (402) 996-8165
Email: cmack@dc4dc.
com

Andrea Freeny, RPR,
CRR, CST, CCR
Past President
Box 1237 428 Broad
Street
Fremont, Nebraska
68026
Tel. (402) 727-2780
Fax (402) 727-2773
Email: acme42@juno.
com

Lori Blume, CCR
President-Elect
1555 Colfax Street
Blair, Nebraska 68008
Tel. (402) 426-6808
Fax (402) 426-6821
Email: loriblume@msn.
com

Matisha Stratton
P.O. Box 863
Omaha, NE 68101

Naomi Alderson, RPR
Vice-President
575 South 10th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
Tel. (402) 441-7374
Fax (402) 481-3833
Email: nalderson@lan-
caster.ne.gov

The Supreme Court Rules have been renumbered and codified. The rule regarding BOEs is now called Neb. Ct. R. § 2-105(B)(1)(e). This is the rule that is to be cited when providing an estimate of cost. When citing the rule that allows us to charge the 3.25, in our certificates, we should now state that it is pursuant to Neb. Ct. R. § 2-105(B)(1)(e) and Neb. Ct. R. § 1-218. It now appears in two places.

All the rules have been renumbered and codified, but these are the rules most referenced in our jobs on a day-to-day basis.

FALL MEETING
HIGHLIGHTS
FRIDAY, OCT. 24, 2008



Ann Fenner gave us tips on how to enhance our credibility through how we dress. Some head to toe critiques were given, and also some helpful hints.

Jana Simon gave the attendees some excellent advice on the state of finances today, along with some dos and don'ts of how to handle money from a freelance and official perspective



Nate Smith, Staff Liaison, NCRA ER Task Force gave a compelling seminar on marketing court reporter value. It truly takes every one of us, being the professionals we know we are, to market ourselves and our abilities to the fullest



Jackie Pflug gave us a lot of hope with the telling of her encounters with hijackers on a plane that she was on bound for Egypt. Her message was one of how we can change our lives even if we face adversity, and how we choose to react to that adversity can change who we are and how we deal with everything in our lives.



President Angela Comeau addresses the membership at the Business Luncheon.



To: NeCRA Members

From: Gary G. Latimer

Thank you all for the wonderful clock I was presented honoring my retirement. It is extremely gratifying to be recognized by one's colleagues in such a way.

A special thank you to the Executive Committee, and especially President Angela Comeau, who made the presentation memorable. And, Matisha Stratton, I thank you for your part in the tribute.

It was interesting that during the meeting in October there were only two male Nebraska reporters in the room. I recall at the first meeting I attended of the Nebraska Shorthand Reporters Association in 1974 there couldn't have been many more than two females in the room!

Again, I thank you all for your kindness upon my retirement. It has truly been my honor to have served our profession with such a fabulous group of associates.

DON'T FORGET...

■ To pay your legislative assessment! It was through our lobbyist's efforts and your contribution and support by paying your legislative assessment that helped get LB 916 passed.

■ If you need CEU's, you need to register through NeCRA. JBE points are offered free through the state. CEUs are attained through NeCRA

■ We are always looking for people to fill committee and officer seats. If you are interested in serving on a committee or becoming an officer, please notify an officer of NeCRA!



■ **Have a safe &
HAPPY HOLIDAY!**

JOIN NECRA TODAY!

APPLICATION FORM

I HEREBY APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE NEBRASKA COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION AND ENCLOSE MY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR THE YEAR. PLEASE CHECK THE CORRECT MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY.

_____ FREELANCE MEMBERSHIP (\$75.00) Freelance Membership in this Association shall be limited to any person who is a writer of shorthand, manual or machine, and who is or has been engaged in the active practice of law reporting or general reporting in this state.

_____ OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP (\$75.00) Official membership in this Association shall be limited to any person who is a writer of shorthand, manual or machine, and who is or has been an officially appointed shorthand reporter in a court in this state.

_____ INSTRUCTOR MEMBERSHIP (\$40.00) Instructor membership in this Association shall be limited to any person who is an instructor in an NCRA-approved court reporter education program.

_____ STUDENT MEMBERSHIP (\$20.00) Student membership in this Association shall be limited to any person who is enrolled in a course of study in shorthand reporting. Such student member shall not vote or hold office in this Association.

_____ RETIRED MEMBERSHIP (N/C) Retired membership in this Association shall be limited to any person who has been in good standing for a period of twenty (20) years and is no longer in the active practice of shorthand reporting. Such retired member shall not vote or hold office and shall be exempt from the payment of dues.

_____ HONORARY MEMBERSHIP (N/C) Honorary membership in this Association shall be a person who has rendered some special service to this organization or to the reporting profession. Such honorary member may be elected by majority vote at the annual meeting of this organization, and shall not vote, nor hold office, and shall be exempt from the payment of dues.

PLEASE LIST YOUR CORRECT MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FOR THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY. MAIL THIS FORM, ALONG WITH YOUR DUES, TO THE SECRETARY/ TREASURER. NOTE: Membership will expire on May 31st of each year. Annual dues payments include a one-year subscription to The Scribe, published quarterly by neCRA. Please make check payable to NeCRA.

NAME: _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

BUSINESS PHONE: (____) _____ PHONE: (____) _____ FAX: (____) _____

DOB: _____ M _____ F _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

HOME ADDRESS (optional): _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

_____ Freelance Firm: _____

_____ Official Judge: _____

_____ CAT System: _____

_____ Member in good standing of NCRA since _____

_____ RPR _____ RMR _____ RDR _____ CCR _____ STATE CSR (Indicate state) _____ OTHER

Signature: _____ New _____ Renewal _____ Dated: _____

WELCOME TO THE NEBRASKA COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION!

**Application for NeCRA
Certified Court Reporter (CCR)**

Voluntary Certification

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone No.(s): _____

At this time do you hold the designation of RPR _____, RMR _____, RDR _____,
CRR _____, or any other designation you have obtained by meeting the requirements established by the National
Court Reporters Association (NCRA)? _____

At this time do you hold active certifications from any other states? Yes _____ No _____
If so, which states? _____

Are you currently a member of the Nebraska Court Reporters Association (NeCRA)? Yes _____ No _____, but I am
including my application for membership and dues payment herewith. _____

Please send this CCR application and \$30 fee, payable to NeCRA, (along with your NeCRA membership application
and \$75 dues fee, if applicable) to:

Voluntary Certification Committee

Nebraska Court Reporters Association

P.O. Box 113

Omaha, NE 68101

NeCRA Voluntary Certification Program Section 5(B) (1) requires an applicant to be a member of NeCRA. Section
7(B) requires \$30 initial application fee, with renewal of \$20 due September 30th of each year.

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DICK MOWERS, ORIGINAL DSA RECIPIENT, DIES

We are saddened by the death December 4 of Richard L. Mowers in Omaha, Neb. He was 92. In 1960 he was honored as the first recipient of the association's Distinguished Service Award. He continued his affiliation with NCRA and interest in reporting matters long after his retirement and was a regular at annual conventions into his 80s.

Reprinted from NCRA



WANTED:

Any and all interesting news items. Whether it's a trial you reported or a human interest story, share your insight and experiences.

Have you had a change of address, telephone, fax or e-mail? Please notify the NeCRA secretary at necrasecretary@yahoo.com of any changes so that you will continue to receive THE SCRIBE and other NeCRA mailings.

What do YOU get from being a member of NECRA???

- The opportunity to attend NCRA-sponsored seminars locally for CEUs
- A skilled lobbyist who represents the needs of court reporters in the state of Nebraska
- NCRA-administered tests
- Quarterly publications of *The Scribe*
- Job opening notices
- And much more!!

Please renew or join NECRA today by completing and sending in the membership form on page today!

"Do you have a new name, address, phone number or e-mail address? Please forward all changes for the NeCRA Membership Directory to Julie Bellis at juliebellis@hamilton.net.

If you are a member of NeCRA and have not received a new Membership Directory please contact Julie at juliebellis@hamilton.net or (402) 694-6334."



The Nebraska Court Reporters Association is looking for someone to work with our website. If you are computer savvy and have a creative flair, please email Angela at Angelatin_2000@yahoo.com

THE SCRIBE

Sonya Kennedy, Editor
1701 Farnam St.
Courtroom #5
Omaha, NE 68183
402-444-7548

TO:

Calendar of EVENTS

Iowa Court Reporters Association

Mid-Year Conference

Jan. 17, 2009

Des Moines, IA

NCRA Firm owners Executive Conference

Feb. 1-3, 2009

Palm Desert, Ca

NCRA WKT &

Skills Test Registration

Feb. 2nd - Mar. 18th 2009

NCRA Skills Tests

May 2, 2009

NCRA WKT Tests

April 6-18, 2009

NCRA Legislative Boot Camp

Feb. 22-24, 2009

Tysons Corner, VA

NCRA Midyear Conference

Apr. 17-19, 2009

New Orleans, LA

NCRA 2009 Annual Convention & Expo

Gaylord National Resort

& Convention Center

National Harbor, MD (metro DC area)