

WHAT'S HAPPENING

REPORTERS SPONSOR RESCUE DOG TEAM IN HONOR OF JULIE BRANDAU

The Reporters Association of Southern California (RASCAL) has surpassed its goal of raising \$10,000 to sponsor a National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (NDSDF) search and rescue team in honor of Julie Ann Brandau, the court reporter who was killed last March in the Atlanta courthouse shootings. Aided by contributions from reporters around the country, donations

now total \$15,750.

After learning that Brandau loved animals, RASCAL approached her daughter, Christina Randall, with the idea of sponsoring a search and rescue team.

NDSDF's mission is to provide disaster search teams consisting of highly trained canines. Many of these dogs are taken from shelters and are placed with firefighters and other first aid responders for extensive training. Search and rescue dogs and teams are FEMA certified, which requires passing tests in direction control, obedience, passing an



Fire Captain Marc Valentine and his search dog Val. RASCAL sponsors this canine search and rescue team.

obstacle course, and identifying building markings and safety concerns. This test must be re-taken every two years to remain FEMA certified.

Currently there are only 105 canine search and rescue teams in the U.S., far short of the estimated 336 that are needed. RASCAL notes that reporters are a short step away from sponsoring a second team. Donations can be made on the NDSDF Web site at www.ndsdf.org or by mail to NDSDF, 206 North Signal St., Ste. R, Ojai, CA 93023. Please note "RASCAL/Brandau Memorial" with your payment.

MATC STUDENTS "CONNECT TO THE PROFESSION" WITH WCRA MEMBERS

Three years ago, Madison Area Technical College's judicial reporting and broadcast captioning program initiated a series of get-together events for reporting students and area working reporters titled "Connecting to the Profession." The purpose of the once-a-semester event is to bring working reporters and students together for a networking and learning opportunity.

The events are held on campus and have featured a hands-on workshop on speech recognition, a speaker on care and repair of the stenewriter, a panel of freelance reporters, programs on broadcast captioning, and a presentation by the past president of the Wisconsin Association of the Deaf, which was complete with sign language interpretation and CART services. The most recent event hosted a NCRA past president, Bruce A. Matthews, and a live online walk-through of NCRA's Web site resources, which included the Student Community of Interest, virtual



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mentor service, and more.

The events are well attended and supported by members of the Wisconsin Court Reporters Association, who have made involving reporting students in professional activities a high association priority. WCRA invites a student from each college program to sit on the WCRA board of directors as a student liaison. WCRA has also developed programs for students to earn free memberships or convention registrations by attending meetings, participating in WCRA fundraising activities, and transcribing tapes for the Veterans History Project. WCRA earmarks considerable resources for student opportunities.

Rollie Cox, an MATC instructor, says that connecting with reporting professionals serves as a strong motivator for the student to continue through the difficult reporting curriculum. "Students can easily complete a two-year reporting program without hardly any contact with those actually working in reporting professions," Cox says,

"unless the school and state association integrate classroom studies and outside experiences."

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see and reach their end-of-school goal: their first job. Cox attributes his convictions about professional involvement as a student to one of his graduate school professors who encouraged member-

ship in and attendance at local, state, and national professional organizations.

To further solidify the connection, students in MATC's reporting program are automatically enrolled as members of NCRA and WCRA through the collection of a program fee component within their tuition. As a result, every reporting student receives his or her own copy of the *JCR*, which can then be used as a textbook with assignments. For each issue, a general professional reading list is prepared by faculty members in the program and then distributed to all program students to encourage them to develop a regular habit of reading professional material.

In response to the changing reporting field, membership on MATC's reporting program's advisory committee includes — in addition to the official and freelance reporters — a broadcast captioner, a CART provider, a freelance firm owner, and an executive of a regional television broadcast station, a member of the state reporting associa-

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tion, a member of the deaf community, and a student member. Members of the committee meet twice a year with college faculty to discuss program curriculum and other issues in the reporting and captioning field. Committee members also attend the regular get-togethers and are available to students on an online discussion forum called Ask the Advisory Committee.

For more information on this program, contact Rollie Cox at rcox@matc.madison.edu.

ETHICS

Disclose All Relationships

What should you do if you find out — when you show up for a deposition or any other proceeding — that you are related to one of the attorneys?

According to NCRA's Public Advisory Opinion No. 2, the reporter must disclose any relationship, whether by blood or marriage, before the proceedings begin. It is the opinion of the Committee of Professional Ethics that failure to disclose any relationship that might reasonably call into question the reporter's impartiality is a violation of Provisions No. 1 (impartiality) and No. 2 (conflicts of interest) of the Code of Professional Ethics.

You should state the relationship as soon as you are aware of it. Doing so gives counsel the opportunity to object or to waive any objections on the record to the reporter's reporting of the proceeding. If any objection is raised, the reporter must withdraw and offer to attempt to obtain another reporter. Counsel may elect, however, to select a reporter of their own choosing.

Obviously, it is not possible to list all of the relationships that may be a conflict of interest or might give the appearance of a conflict. Therefore, the Committee recommends that whenever a reporter is unsure of whether to disclose a relationship, he or she should disclose the relationship.

Public Advisory Opinion No. 3 is closely related. It considers whether a freelancer should report depositions for a spouse's law firm. In that scenario,

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although the reporter refrains from taking the proceeding when the spouse conducts it, the reporter can take the deposition when other members of the spouse's law firm schedule proceedings.

Is it a violation of the Code of Professional Ethics for (1.) the reporter to schedule proceedings for the law firm of the reporter's spouse, (2.) the reporter to send another reporter and thereby retain a commission, or (3.) the reporter to report proceedings for other members of the law firm?

With respect to the scenario, first, the reporter may schedule proceedings for the spouse's law firm.

Second, the reporter acted prudently by having another reporter cover the proceeding; the retention of a commission is permissible. The reporter should not personally cover the proceeding but should request another reporter to do so.

Third, the reporter can report proceedings for other members of the law firm only if the following three conditions are satisfied:

1. A full disclosure of the relationship is made when it is known.
2. An agreement is reached by all counsel that there is no objection to the reporter's taking the deposition, which should be stated on the record before the deposition.
3. The reporter's certificate is amended to conform with the two conditions.

If the reporter does not follow these steps, it would constitute a violation of Provisions No. 1 (impartiality) and No. 3 (guard against even the appearance of impropriety) of the Code of Professional Ethics. These provisions require that the reporter be impartial in all aspects of any reported proceedings and guard against not only the fact but also the appearance of impropriety.

For this advisory opinion and others, please visit the NCRA Web site at www.NCRAonline.org.

This public advisory opinion reflects the status of the law in most jurisdictions. Members are required to conform to the accepted practices set forth in this public advisory opinion to the extent that such practices are consistent with their own applicable state and local laws, rules, and regulations.

IN MEMORIAM

Larry B. Dorfman

Larry B. Dorfman, 54, of Rocky Hill, Conn., died December 17, 2006, of a heart attack. Larry attended Hartford public schools and graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1973. He was a court reporter for more than 25 years, following in the footsteps of his uncle, Paul Fromm, a legendary reporter from New York City.

Larry was active in the Connecticut Court Reporters Association. Always a professional, he was personally requested by attorneys more than any other reporter I have ever worked with.

Larry always had a broad smile and a genuine interest in others. He was a truly caring and generous human being. We shall miss his infectious kindness and affability.

*Jerry Gale, RMR
New Haven, Conn.*