

ACTAR NEWS

Spring - Summer 2000

- Chairman's Message -

Charles Sulzbach #39

As the millennium comes to it's final quarter, I will be stepping down as chair of ACTAR to permit a smooth transition for Stan Oglesby of Central Missouri State University to assume the duties of ACTAR Chair. Stan will need time to acclimate himself to the position before the next annual meeting of the Board.

The most important advertising tool is you, the Accredited Reconstructionist. To my amazement, in a test sampling, only about ten to fifteen percent have ACTAR on their business cards, letterhead or advertising material. How can you promote yourself as one of the best if you don't tell everyone? Your competition won't do it for you. We should also be telling every judge and jury about ACTAR. You took the time, you took the test, tell them how good you are. As a final large sampling, before my term ends, please send me your business card if and when it promotes ACTAR.

- Welcome New Participating Organization -

Colorado State Patrol Joins ACTAR

The ACTAR Governing Board of Directors unanimously voted to accept the Colorado State Patrol into our ranks as a participating organization. The addition of CSP as a participating organization raises the number of participating organizations to twenty. The CSP is the ninth organization to become a participating member since the inception of ACTAR in 1990. Embracing the goals and mission of ACTAR, the CSP becomes only the third law enforcement agency to seek participating organization status.

Founded in 1935, the CSP is responsible for law enforcement missions throughout the entire state of Colorado. In the future, Troopers fulfilling specialized collision reconstruction assignments will be required to attain ACTAR accreditation as a requisite demonstration of competence.

The CSP ACTAR GBOD representative is Bob Nuse. Bob is ACTAR accredited and can be reached by e-mail at "cyber@info2000.net". For further information about the Colorado State Patrol, write to:

700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000 Denver, CO 80215-5865

or visit their website at "www.state.co.us" and follow the public safety directory listings.

- Annual Board of Directors Meeting -

April 7-8, 2000

The ACTAR Governing Board of Directors held its annual meeting April 7 and 8 in Sacramento, California.

With ACTAR representation on the GBOD about evenly split between the two U.S. coasts, the Board is seeking the most economical locations for its annual meetings.

Representatives from all twenty participating organizations were in attendance. With ACTAR solidly established, the Board devoted the bulk of the meeting to discussions focused on the delivery of services and benefits to accredited reconstructionists.

- Survey Results -

Accompanying the last edition of ACTAR News was a survey offering accredited individuals the opportunity to comment on how well ACTAR is fulfilling their expectations and whether improvements to the accreditation process should be made. The survey comprised seventeen areas on which to comment. The questions were designed to provoke a written response that could be considered by the GBOD when making decisions regarding the future of ACTAR.

Although the return rate of the survey was less than desirable (11% of the accredited population), the responses provided were constructive and beneficial. Many of the comments bolstered ideas already being considered by the Board, thereby assisting in bringing these ideas to fruition.

The survey results are summarized in an eight-page report that was submitted to the GBOD. A synopsis of the survey is presented here. The entire report is available through the ACTAR administrative office.

Nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents reported that ACTAR accreditation is a benefit to their profession. Most respondents cited accreditation as a demonstration of credibility, validation of training and experience and individual recognition within the field of collision reconstruction. Other respondents reported that accreditation demonstrated professionalism and a dedication to the profession.

Respondents reporting few benefits from ACTAR accreditation reported that accreditation was not widely recognized by the courts, their peers or their employer (typically a law enforcement agency). Most respondents, however, conceded that accreditation will gain acceptance through increased "advertising"

and participation within the profession. A few respondents viewed the cost of acquiring and maintaining accreditation as a hindrance. Some of this blame was leveled at the participating organizations for not hosting conferences or seminars more accessible to members.

More than three-quarters of the respondents reported that ACTAR had been mentioned or "played a role" in a court proceeding. Most frequently accreditation was cited to establish expert qualifications. In some instances the possession of accreditation by one expert was used to counter an opposing expert who was not accredited.

When asked how the accreditation process could be improved, nearly three-quarters of the respondents reported complete satisfaction. Many of those who did suggest improvements presented thoughtful insight. Overwhelmingly these respondents suggested enhancing ACTAR's visibility. Other suggestions included making the accreditation process more difficult, conducting enforcement of the "Code of Ethics" (now referred to as the Code of Professional Conduct) and creating an "Accident Reconstruction degree program" at the college level.

Regarding the ability of the accreditation process to accurately reflect minimum standards for traffic collision reconstruction, a significant majority of the respondents replied in the affirmative. Others commented that the test was "too easy" or that accreditation should be offered at multiple levels of experience or reflect specialized skills. Despite a few negative comments, only one respondent acknowledged that their accreditation would not be renewed.

The results of the survey and many of the comments offered by the respondents came as no surprise to the GBOD. The Board is continuing with several projects designed to improve the process and address deficiencies. The Board is increasing advertising and expanding resources to better promote ACTAR. ACTAR continues to communicate with universities regarding possible degree programs focusing on motor vehicle collision reconstruction. ACTAR will continue to review the accreditation process, insuring that the exams adequately reflect minimum industry standards while keeping abreast of the profession's future and the need for change.

Comments and suggestions are always welcomed. Should you have a comment or suggestion, please contact the ACTAR administrative office (via e-mail, phone or letter) or contact a representative of any participating organization.

- ACTAR to Produce a Pin and Stamp -

Merchandising to Promote ACTAR

Responding to the ideas and requests of those persons accredited, the GBOD will facilitate the production and distribution of (shirt) pins and ink stamps bearing the

ACTAR logo. Production of the pin is underway. It will be circular in design (about 7/8 inch diameter) bearing the ACTAR logo. Every person accredited will receive one pin free of charge. Additional pins will be available for purchase. The purchase price will be set after production costs are finalized. The Board expects to have the pins ready by the WREX 2000 conference and anticipates being able to distribute many at that time.

The Board is also pursuing the production of an ink stamp for accredited persons. A preliminary design incorporates the ACTAR logo with the accreditation number of the individual. The stamps will be custom made and therefore require individual purchasing. Additional information on this product will be forthcoming as this project is finalized.

- Directory - New Format for 2000

The ACTAR Directory is published biannually with the next publication scheduled for the fall of 2000. The next edition will include a listing of all individuals accredited through, at least, June 2000. All persons attaining accreditation since the 1998 publication will receive a gratis copy of the 2000 edition. At this time all supplies of paper copies of the 1998 Directory have been exhausted. Reprinting of additional copies is not anticipated with the advent of the electronic version.

The year 2000 directory will undergo a major change - it will be distributed only in a CD (compact disc) format. The directory's production in an electronic medium offers many advantages. In addition to significant reductions in production and mailing costs, enhanced features are possible. The directory, prepared in .PDF format, will feature numerous search capabilities, space for (personal) advertising and "hot" links to a website or e-mail address. Software required to use the disc will be included.

Individual or company advertisements, business card images, logos, etc., for accredited persons or their companies, must adhere to the following guidelines. Material must be limited to a single 8.5 x 11 inch printed page or 500KB if submitted electronically. Acceptable electronic formats include Word, PDF, Illustrator, FrameMaker or HTML. Any pre-scanned items should be forwarded in .JPG format. Advertisements are good for the life of the directory. A flat fee of \$50.00 is being charged for all advertising space.

"Hot links" from the directory to an e-mail address or website via the Internet are also available. These links are also good for the life of the directory. The fee for this service is \$25.00 for an e-mail address link and \$50.00 for a website link.

Accompanying this newsletter is a form to be used for noting any changes to the directory entries. Follow the instructions on the form, otherwise your directory

information will be reproduced from existing records or the previous directory. For additional information contact the ACTAR administrative office.

- Website Reminder -

Just a reminder that the ACTAR website (<http://www.actar.org>) posts a great deal of information regarding ACTAR. An on-line version of the directory is also available. ACTAR can link to your e-mail or website address. An annual fee is charged for this service -- \$25.00 for an e-mail link and \$50.00 for a website link. For additional information concerning website links contact the administrative office.

- Accreditation Exams -

ACTAR is constantly reviewing the long-term exams and the examination process. The review process involves the analysis of continuing research and the feedback from individuals taking the exam. Exam questions are continuing to be revised, updated or deleted as needed. ACTAR is currently conducting a query of the major teaching institutions for collision investigation to determine what "new" concepts are being introduced for the basic qualification as a collision reconstructionist. At issue is ensuring that the ACTAR exam adequately reflects the skills required for basic qualification.

Comments offered through the ACTAR user survey and exam feedback, suggest that the accreditation exam include topics such as commercial vehicle and pedestrian collisions, antilock braking and all-wheel drive technologies and enhanced driver reaction fundamentals.

The ACTAR exam is designed to evaluate the basic skills necessary for collision reconstructionists and a query of the major teaching institutions should provide a baseline for this evaluation.

Some accreditation recipients commented that they would like to see advanced or specialty areas of accreditation in addition to the standard accreditation. These issues are being reviewed by ACTAR. Before an advanced or specialized area of accreditation can be established, accreditation must be widely accepted. Accreditation is gaining acceptance and recognition; however, there is still room for improvement.

Regarding the long-term exam, an analysis of the 1999 pass-fail ratio revealed a 67% pass rate on the first attempt. This ratio is consistent with previous years and indicates that the process is sufficiently difficult without being unattainable. During the past year, the Board also instituted an internal policy of having all exams reviewed, graded and a score returned to each applicant within 60 days of the exam date.

- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) -

Information was conveyed to the Board that the Traffic Institute for Police Services (TIPS) of Pennsylvania is on board to provide ACTAR CEUs upon successful completion of approved TIPS training. Ask a TIPS representative or contact the ACTAR administrative office to inquire about CEUs for a TIPS course.

Although ACTAR has approached the SAE regarding CEUs for attendance at SAE seminars, little progress has been made. It is suggested that SAE members, interested in acquiring ACTAR CEUs, collectively solicit SAE to participate. (See Administrator's Comments)

- Accreditation Activity -

During the first quarter of 2000, the ACTAR accreditation roles grew to 668 individuals. ACTAR accredited reconstructionists are representative of three professional groups - law enforcement (54%), private consultants (28%) and engineers (19%). Reconstructionists in five countries now fill the ACTAR roster. These countries include -- Australia, Canada, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and the United States.

One frequently asked question is how ACTAR evaluates an application to determine whether an applicant possesses the minimum qualifications to take the exam. The application review committee uses a point system based upon the training, experience and accomplishments reported in the application. Sixty percent of an applicant's total score is based on education and training (formal education and specialized collision investigation training). The remaining forty percent of the score is based on additional activities such as teaching, practical experience or research.

- Treasurer's Report / Financial Status -

The Treasurer's Report indicates that during 1999 revenues exceeded expenses. The additional revenue is providing ACTAR the means of financing technical assistance (sites, vehicles and equipment) for crash tests for the practical portion of the accreditation exam. The Board is also pursuing the production of new brochures, an ACTAR pin and ink stamp.

Although financially sound at this time, the Board continues to review expenses and seek methods to ensure that expenses remain reasonable. There will be no change in the fee structure for any ACTAR service related to the application, testing or CEUs. The fee for new participating organizations to become part of the ACTAR Governing Board of Directors was, however, increased to 1,000.00. New participating organizations must continue to fund their board representative's activities for three years after which ACTAR assumes this expense.

- Brochures and Printed Material -

Two brochures describing ACTAR and the accreditation process are now available. The first brochure is designed for distribution at training courses and conferences to promote accreditation.

The second brochure describes the Continuing Education (CEU) aspect of accreditation and is designed to clarify the process and encourage individuals to continually seek additional education in the field of collision reconstruction. The subsequent printings of both brochures will be on higher quality paper than in the past.

ACTAR will soon have available a paper describing the history, goal and role of accreditation. This paper is intended to serve as an informational guide to attorneys or parties working with an accredited reconstructionist or having an interest in the accreditation process. This paper should also assist the accredited reconstructionist in explaining the process to potential clients, courts or other interested persons.

- Request for Occupational Code -

U.S. Department of Labor Application Research revealed that the U.S. Department of Labor does not list an occupational code or definition for Traffic Collision Reconstructionist. To satisfy this void, ACTAR has submitted a proposed definition.

The definition submitted by ACTAR defines a Traffic Collision Reconstructionist as follows -- "Inspects and evaluates motor vehicle traffic collision scenes including collecting, photographing, measuring, recording and evaluating physical evidence from the road, environment and vehicles to determine how the collision occurred. Evaluates physical injury to vehicle occupants and pedestrians in relation to determining subject motion during the collision process. Confers with operators, pedestrians and witnesses or reviews statements from these persons obtained by others. Analyzes motions of vehicles, occupants, pedestrians and utilizes equations to determine time, distance, velocity and/or speed of collision involved vehicles. Evaluates data to prepare verbal or written reports. Interprets applicable laws and regulations to advise employer on legal requirements. Applies scientific principles to formulate opinions relative to collisions which are otherwise unknown or are a matter of dispute. May testify in legal proceedings."

The definition is intended to be all inclusive of the numerous attributes routinely used by a collision reconstructionist. Upon acceptance of the request for an occupational code, an occupation as a Traffic Collision Reconstructionist will be recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor.

- Bylaws Review -
Rules of Professional Conduct

The ACTAR "Rules of Professional Conduct" (formerly Code of Ethics and Discipline) as found in Articles Six and Seven of the ACTAR Bylaws has been rewritten. The overhaul was initiated to ensure that the language in the Articles is clear, concise and enforceable. The revisions are currently undergoing legal review. A final draft will be prepared following this review.

- Upcoming Exam Locations -

Accreditation exams are scheduled for the following cities in 2000. Additional exam dates and locations can be scheduled. Please consult the ACTAR website or contact the administration office for specific details concerning an exam or to register for an exam. Upcoming exam locations and dates:

Fourty-Fort, PA August 2, 2000

Schwenksville, PA August 3, 2000

Peoria IL September 5, 2000

Albany, NY September 8, 2000

Riverside, TX September 24, 2000

- Credit Card Payments -

ACTAR in cooperation with the Society of Accident Reconstructionists (SOAR), a participating organization, will now accept credit card payments of application, renewal and test fees as well as CEU option purchases. Currently, we can only process Master Card (MC) and Visa cardholders at this time. If you wish to utilize this option, please contact the administrative office.

- Administrator's Comments -

Al Baxter

Enclosed with this edition of the ACTAR News is a printing of each accredited reconstructionist's record with ACTAR. As stated elsewhere, we are in the process of updating the ACTAR Directory and the ACTAR Electronic Directory. Please take a moment to review the information for it's accuracy. If there are any corrections or additions please advise me no later than August 15, 2000.

Many accredited reconstructionists did not return the last survey update form and failed to indicate if there services were offered to the public, (i.e. consulting). The

information on-file is what will appear in the next edition of the directory and on the website. Please do not delay advising me of any changes.

Currently, among the missing are: Jeffrey L. Kidd #192 Hudson WI, Ronald E. Sheahan #717 Littleton CO, and Lindsey N. Shortland #706 LaMirada CA.

As this edition goes to press, ACTAR has processed just over 1100 applicants since first accepting applications in 1992. Currently there are 679 accredited reconstructionists and another 96 waiting to complete the examination process.

Bob Squire report on the results of the ACTAR Survey included the point of ACTAR's visibility. One easy method is to ensure that the acronym ACTAR and your registration number appear on your business cards, stationary and resume or CV. There are still people doing reconstruction work who claim to have never heard about ACTAR.

Many of the accredited reconstructionists with ACTAR participate in training events hosted by the Society of Automotive Engineers (S.A.E.). Since September 1997 ACTAR has been requesting that SAE participate in the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Program. Currently, each reconstructionist wishing to obtain ACTAR CEU's for attendance at an SAE event must purchase them at \$3.00 per CEU. For example, a recent TOPTEC was eligible for 14 CEU's. Purchased individually, this would cost the ACTAR reconstructionist \$42.00. If SAE was participating in the CEU process, the cost would be only \$5.00. SAE would pay a grand total of \$25.00 to register this particular TOPTEC. What are you currently getting, (in addition to a monthly magazine and short newspaper) from SAE for your annual \$80.00 membership fee and tuition costs for classes like a TOPTEC?

If you are a member of SAE, I strongly urge you to write to SAE regarding this problem. Address your concerns to Rodicia A. Barancscu, incoming president of SAE, or to J. Kevin Perry of their Professional Development Division. SAE's address is: 400 Commonwealth Drive Warrendale PA 15096-0001.

- Year 2000 Conference -
College Station, TX

Remember that the WREX2000 conference dates are fast approaching. The ACTAR is a supporter of the conference which is being held in College Station, Texas, September 24-29, 2000. Most of the ACTAR participating organizations have signed on in support of the conference.

This conference promises to be the largest traffic collision conference ever assembled and will offer something for everyone involved in any aspect of motor vehicles and motor vehicle crashes.

The conference is being coordinated by the Texas Association of Accident Reconstruction Specialists (TAARS). For additional information or to offer your assistance with the conference, contact TAARS or its president, Conrad Dippel <DippelC@aol.com>. Hurry, don't be left out!!!

July 24th, the deadline for receiving a \$250.00 discount off your conference registration is fast approaching.

Something for everyone, from the beginning investigator to the experienced reconstructionist, at the largest conference on motor vehicle collision investigation and reconstruction ever held.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2000 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.: Hilton Hotel, main ballroom. Check-in and a get-acquainted hospitality room. ALL registration procedures should be completed prior to your arrival on Sunday.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2000

Texas A&M's main campus for general sessions.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2000

Texas A&M's Riverside Campus. Robust Tests and Crash Tests all day.

Tuesday Evening:

6:00-8:00 p.m. CATAIR Annual Business Meeting: Hilton Hotel 6:00- 8:00 p.m.
PSFM Business Meeting: Hotel to be announced

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2000

A&M's main campus for breakout sessions.

Wednesday evening:

5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Vendor's Night. Buses will be available. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Come see the latest and greatest products and services available to the AI/AR industry.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2000

Texas A&M's Riverside Campus. Robust Tests and Crash Tests all day

Thursday Evening:

6:00 - 7:30 p.m. TAARS Annual Business Meeting: Hilton Hotel 7:45 - 9:00 p.m.
SOAR Annual Business Meeting: Hilton Hotel 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. IAARS Annual
Business Meeting: Comfort Inn

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2000

Texas A&M's main campus for general session

12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. Conference Ends

An ACTAR test will be administered on SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2000.
Shuttle buses will be furnished between hotels and the Riverside Campus. Contact
Al Baxter or ACTAR for additional information.

Conference Fee: Register & Pay

Before July 24: \$450

Before August 24: \$550

August 25 Sept. 21: . . . \$600

After Sept. 21, 2000: \$700

Daily passes for those who can not attend all week: \$150/person

Hotel & Airfare:

For hotel information, visit the web site or contact Marie Atchley, 800-239-6121
or 281-495-6787. Discounted airfare is also available through Marie.

Cancellation Policy:

Cancellation more than 30 days out, refund less \$50.00 (US) administrative fee.
No cancellation less than 30 days out; however, notebook(s), handouts, and test
data will be mailed to you.

Registration forms may be printed from WREX2000's website or send a fax
request to 281-893-9683.

World Reconstruction Exposition 2000 c/o Conrad Dippel P.O. Box 680224
Houston, TX 77268-0224

To offer comments or ask questions concerning ACTAR or the accreditation process contact:

The Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction
P.O. Box 5436
Hudson, Florida 34674-5436
(800) 809-3818 (Voice mail)
<http://www.actar.org>
E-mail - atbaxter@akos.net (administrator)

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