

ACTAR NEWS

Fall 1996

A Message from the Chair

Charles Sulzbach

ACTAR, since its infancy in 1990, has come a long way. However, a small percentage of ACTAR's goals have proceeded more slowly than anticipated, and these problems are being addressed.

There are presently 474 ACTAR Accredited Reconstructionists practicing throughout the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia. We have added five new sponsoring organizations to the Board since ACTAR's inception and are presently talking with two other organizations who have expressed an interest in becoming sponsoring organizations. There are specific criteria to becoming a participating organization. Each new organization must represent a substantial number of accident reconstructionists, or be recognized as a training facility for the accident reconstruction profession, be willing to send a member to the annual Board meeting, cover all their representative's expenses for the first three years and make a donation of \$200 in "seed" money to ACTAR. These requirements mimic the financial commitment of the eleven original sponsoring organizations for ACTAR's startup cost.

I would like to stress to all participants that the first person to contact is your participating organization's representative regarding any questions, comments or problems. The most efficient way to communicate with your representative is by fax. Your representative will then have a written copy of your inquiry, and you should receive a written fax in return. This will eliminate the interminable game of cross country "phone tag". If you don't have access to a fax machine, feel free to call or write to your representative.

Please keep in mind that all the Board members are volunteers with time constraints. Please be patient if you do not receive an immediate response to an inquiry.

As you receive this newsletter, the printers are 'running the presses for the directory that all accredited .reconstructionists will be receiving. This first run of the directories will, however, not include photographs. The costs are too prohibitive at this time.

As I correspond with many ACTAR participants, I notice that many are not using their accreditation number. The best way to get a product or concept accepted is to advertise. If more participants incorporate their accreditation number on letterhead or beside signatures, their **recognized expertise** would be placed in front of attorneys, judges, district attorneys, insurance companies, etc.

Remember, the more you promote ACTAR the more credible **your** ACTAR accreditation will become. For those of you who write articles or speak to various insurance companies, bar associations, etc., we encourage you to speak about ACTAR and request that you forward your article or presentation to the ACTAR office for our files.

If you would like to have an ACTAR exam presented in your area, please contact the office to arrange the details. We require 12 to 15 applicants to schedule a test at a location other than a participating organization's seminar.

There has been extensive discussion regarding the difficulty level of the exam and the failure rate. When grading the test or reviewing a test failure with an applicant, my experience has been that the participant usually has a sufficient knowledge of the material, but often had a case of 'test jitters', failed to read the instructions, or simply did not lay out the scaled drawing properly before attempting to answer the questions. When you are asked about the failure rate, explain how you, the **Accredited Reconstructionist**, prepared for and passed the exam.

An interesting point regarding the international acceptance of accreditation - Mr. John Ruller from Australia tells me that many people "down under" still consider accident reconstruction to be black magic. Nonetheless, it is becoming more acceptable to the courts. His organization, Australian and South Pacific Association of Collision Investigators, has over 100 members.

A message from the Vice-Chair

Richard Chapman

At the last ACTAR Board of Director's meeting, one of this organization's most active founding members resigned due to a busy schedule. "Rusty" Haight was the force behind ACTAR during the years that saw an idea blossom into an internationally recognized accreditation program. Nobody promoted ACTAR and the accreditation process with more enthusiasm. Rusty's presence on the Board of Directors will be missed. On the other hand, Rusty has been replaced as ACTAR's Chairman by Charlie Sulzbach. Charlie has worked hard behind the scenes since joining the Board of Directors as a founding member. It will be his task to take ACTAR through the next challenging years as those of you who have completed the rigorous ACTAR testing process now head into your first five-year recertification. I am happy to assume the Vice-Chairman slot on the Board of Directors and look forward to working with a great group of people whose intent is to bring the discipline of traffic accident reconstruction to a higher level.

I have to admit that I have been very impressed with the caliber of people I have had the pleasure of meeting while proctoring the ACTAR exams. In addition, the vast majority of applications I have reviewed, as part of the ACTAR Application Review Committee, have reflected test candidates with fantastic credentials, both engineering and police types. While there probably will always be the debate as to which is better, the "white collar" or the "blue collar" reconstructionist, I now feel that either background can yield a highly qualified individual.

Finally, the ACTAR Directory will soon be out. You have the option of framing your copy and hanging it on a wall in your office or you can "use" this directory. By "use" I mean, you took the time to struggle through the tough ACTAR test while many others in your area have not. Make ACTAR an issue. Order a couple extra copies and send: them to local courts and lawyer associations. Let them Know who the real reconstructionists are in your area. You deserve the extra attention.

Who are the Participating Organizations and their Representatives to ACTAR?

International Association of Accident Reconstruction Specialists (IAARS)-

Steve Benanti, fax (508) 687-1538

Society of Accident Reconstructionists (SOAR) -

Arnold Wheat, fax (303) 403-9401

National Association of Professional Accident Reconstruction Specialists (NAPARS) -

Gary Vencill, fax (541) 484-0882

National Association of Traffic Accident Reconstructionists and Investigators (NATARI)-

Charles Sulzbach (Board Chairman), fax (215) 443-5644

Canadian Association of Technical Accident Investigators and Reconstructionists (CATAIR)-

J. Dwain Friesen, fax (403) 469-8407

Midwest Association of Technical Accident Investigators (MwATAI)-

Ray Knight, fax (515) 332-4941

Southwestern Association of Technical Accident Investigators (SATAI)-

Jim Goodwin, fax (602) 545-1828

Maryland Association of Traffic Accident Investigators (MdATAI)-

Bob Squire, fax (410) 360-8140

Central Missouri State University (CMSU)-

Stan Oglesby, fax (816) 463-7161

Illinois Association of Technical Accident Investigators (IATAI)-

Brent Pinkston, fax (217) 782-4996

Texas Association of Accident Reconstruction Specialists (TAARS) -

Joe Montgomery, fax (409) 862-2788

Washington Association of Technical Accident Investigators (WATAI) -

Dick Chapman (Board Vice-Chairman), fax (206) 546-2680

New Jersey Association of Accident Reconstructionists (NJAAR)-

Jim Mentzer, fax (609) 697-4722

Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) - Ronald Baade, fax (717) 783-7690

Michigan State Police (MSP)-

Bill Brandt, fax (517) 336-6257

Forensic Accident Reconstructionists of Oregon (FARO) -

Richard Kuehmicel, fax (unavailable)

The ACTAR Governing Board of Directors wishes to acknowledge the recent resignations of Rusty Haight, previous Board chairman and representative to SATAI; and Jim Hall, IATAI representative. Both Rusty and Jim served ACTAR well and their contributions will be missed.

Charlie Sulzbach (NATARI) and Dick Chapman (WATAI) have assumed the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the GBOD.

During the past year new organizational representatives were appointed by IATAI, NAPARS, MaATAI and SATAI.

ACTAR also welcomes FARO as a new sponsoring organization.

Time for Reaccreditation - The CEU Process

For those of you who were accredited in late 1992 or early 1993, next year marks the time to renew your ACTAR accreditation. A passing grade on the exam rewards the participant with a five-year accreditation. During that five-year period, all accredited reconstructionists must attain 80 Continuing Education Units (CEU).

CEU will be awarded for every hour of continued education/training in the area of, or related to, Traffic Accident Reconstruction. Courses taken prior to completion of the ACTAR examination will not be considered as continuing education.

Traditional education, such as college courses, will also be awarded CEU based on college credit hours, provided the courses are reconstruction-related university courses. Closely-related courses may be awarded CEU, and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

A maximum of 25% of CEU can come from teaching during any renewal period, i.e., a maximum of 20 CEU during the five-year accreditation. If the subject being taught would be approved for CEU for the students, the instructor would be eligible to obtain CEU at a rate of 10% of those hours actually taught.

Each applicant for teaching CEU must complete a CEU application and remit \$3.00 per allowable teaching CEU.

Any organization wishing CEU approval for a seminar/class must submit an Organization CEU application, the agenda or outline of the class, and the appropriate application fee. If an organization/institution itemizes classroom activity, specifically listing breaks and lunches, CEU will be awarded for the total number of seminar/course hours. If the organization does not itemize classroom activities, the CEU awarded will be 0.75 of the total number of hours, which will account for breaks, lunches, etc. Thus, a recertification candidate attending a 40-hour course sponsored by one of these groups would be awarded 30 CEU.

Pre-approval of CEU for a future course or conference necessitates submission of an outline prior to the date of the course. Upon completion of the conference/course, the sponsoring organization will submit the CEU application along with a listing of the ACTAR reconstructionists seeking CEU. The CEU fee of \$25.00 plus \$5.00 for each individual request CEU must accompany the application.

Any organization/institution teaching courses on a regular schedule may submit an outline of the courses to ACTAR on a one time basis for pre-approval. Once approved, the outline will be kept on file and will remain approved as long as the outline is not changed. This allows for institutions to advertise that their courses are ACTAR approved. There is no fee for this pre-approval. However, each time the course is taught, a \$25.00 fee plus \$5.00 for each ACTAR reconstructionist seeing CEU must be submitted. If there are no students in the class eligible for CEU, no fees are required.

Acquiring CEU without use of the pre-approved methods or outside of the sponsoring organization requires that the individual submit a CEU application, course curriculum or detailed outline and a fee of \$3 per CEU.

When a recertification candidate attains 80 CEU, the cost of accreditation renewal will be \$100.00. The candidate has two options at that time: Option 1 - wait until his/her five-year anniversary date to renew, or Option 2 - renew when the candidate attains 80 CEU, before reaching the five-year anniversary date. In the event an accredited reconstructionist does not attend any approved seminars/courses within a five year period, he/she may re-test at a fee of \$250.00 without going through the reapplication process.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding reaccreditation or the CEU process, call or write the ACTAR office and request the attention of the CEU Coordinator.

The Directory is Coming

The long awaited ACTAR Directory should be ready for distribution in late October or early November. Individuals who were accredited by July 1, 1996 will be featured in this first printing. Everyone featured will receive one gratis copy.

Additional copies of the directory will be available for purchase. Prices are to be established and information regarding ordering should accompany your gratis copy.

The first Printing will not contain photographs due to the high cost of printing. The inclusion of photos will be evaluated for future editions. Likewise, a time-table for the printing of future editions is under consideration.

Other Happenings

As ACTAR and the accreditation process grow, so does the administration of the process. At present all administrative tasks are being fulfilled by volunteers. To provide better service, ACTAR is researching the cost of hiring professional clerical staff. To offset the cost and, thereby, not raise fees, ACTAR is researching the feasibility of fund raising and selling ACTAR merchandise. Fund raising proposals are in the works as is the process of copyrighting the ACTAR logo.

Following the annual Governing Board of Directors meeting in April of this year, additional test questions for the ACTAR exam were prepared. Several new crash tests for the practical portion of the exam were also conducted.

Where are You? ACTAR M.I.A.

The main ACTAR office is looking to communicate with the following individuals. Correspondences directed to them were returned by the post office and no forwarding addresses were available. If you know any of these individuals have them contact the office.

Curtis Flynn	David E. Oeilhausen	David J. Johnson
Timothy J. Kyburz	Stephen M. Neese	Russ Jones
Guy J. Sanders	David J. Shepardson	Thomas J. Szabo
Thomas J. Wielenga	David W. Wilson	James B. Madison

ACTAR Exam Dates

ACTAR has three exam dates currently scheduled through the end of 1996. The dates and locations include:

Thursday, October 24, 1998 - Hershey, PA Pennsylvania State Police

Saturday, October 26, 1996 - Denver, CO Following the "Forensic Physics Applied to Accident Reconstruction" class

Saturday, November 2, 1996 - Deptford, NJ Sponsored by NJAAR

Tests currently scheduled for 1997 include:

Sunday, March 23, 1997 - College Station, TX Before the CRASH'97 Seminar

Saturday, April 5, 1997 -Warrensburg, MO Before the Rec*Tec course

Sunday, April 20, 1997-Jacksonville, FL Before IPTM's Special Problems class

Friday, September 19, 1997-Lansing, MI Michigan State Police

Please consider having your organization sponsor an ACTAR exam. Individuals are often waiting for an exam to be held somewhere in their area. For additional information on any of these examinations, please contact the ACTAR office.

You Make ACTAR What it is

Individuals, such as yourself, who have taken the time and expense of attaining ACTAR accreditation inevitably will determine the role that ACTAR and accreditation play in the field of accident reconstruction. Throughout the U.S. and other countries the accreditation process is being recognized and embraced.

You can enhance your standing and dedication by expounding the virtues of accreditation to persons for and with whom you work Try to get others in the field involved.

ACTAR is dedicated to establishing responsible and credible standards within the accident reconstruction field.

For additional information or to pass along ideas or comments, contact your sponsoring organization's representative or contact the main ACTAR office at: The Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction P.O. Box 40304 Denver, Colorado 80204-0304 (800) 799-8334.

If you happen to reside in or travel to Alaska, Hawaii or Canada, our 800 phone number to the office in Colorado is accessible.