

KUDOS & CHEERS



Council of
Residential
Specialists

Mario Romero, CRS, is the 2005 Realtor of the Year for the Phoenix Association of Realtors! Way to go for our Treasurer!



Jill Knox, CRS, Arizona Chapter 2006 President, was elected to the AAR Board of Directors for 2007.



Sarah Frese, CRS, was re-elected to the AAR Board of Directors for 2007.



Mike Wasmann, CRS; is moving up at AAR and will be 2007 1st Vice President of AAR as well as President of the Arizona CRS Chapter for 2007. Great for our chapter and for Arizona!



Claire Jean Prager, CRS

"KUDOS and CHEERS" blurbs for future columns in every issue of "The Specialist".

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Protecting the CRS Designation

Most REALTORS® who proudly market themselves with the CRS Designation have worked long and hard to earn it. But some non-CRSs who claim to be Designees "are holding themselves to a higher standard as a CRS than they have achieved," says CRS Regional Vice President Dorothy Reinecke, CRS.

The Council strives to protect the Designation from misuse, either by REALTORS® who have not earned it or by former Designees who have let their memberships lapse. Maintaining the integrity of the Designation is critical because "clients make a choice between agents," says Reinecke, with RE/MAX Around Atlanta Results. "If they are evaluating my abilities against Agent X, who is an impostor CRS, then it's not a fair comparison."

Although it is difficult to determine exact numbers of agents who misuse the Designation, Ralph Renninger, CRS, with RE/MAX Premier Choice in Powell, Ohio, estimates that 20 percent of those using the CRS either never earned it or are no longer paying Council dues. Renninger, who is the Ohio CRS Chapter Immediate Past President, estimates that 25 to 50 percent of those misusing it had never earned the CRS Designation, while 50 to 75 percent had earned it in the past but had stopped paying their annual dues and neglected to remove the CRS logo from their Web sites, business cards, signs, riders and other marketing materials.

"The strength of our Designation is only as good as our policing of it," says Renninger. "CRS Designees need to learn how to follow up on these impostors and verify that they have removed the CRS Designation from their materials."

The Council urges CRSs to report any misuses of the Designation to Sharese Simmons, the member services assistant, who can be reached at 800.462.8841, ext. 4459, or ssimmons@crs.com. Whistle-blowers will be kept completely anonymous throughout the process, which

begins when violators are notified by phone that they must remove the CRS from their marketing materials or pay \$170 to reinstate their membership within two weeks.

If the person does not comply, the Council sends them a letter, with copies going to the agent's broker, state association and local REALTOR® boards, and the CRS Chapter President. If they do not respond to that notice within two weeks, the Council sends a final letter to the agent and those same organizations before a complaint will be filed with the state real estate commission. During the course of this process, approximately half of all terminated Designees choose to reinstate their Council membership.

Designees themselves are often the best protectors of the CRS Designation, Simmons says. After all, the Designees who report violators often "feel like it isn't fair that they're paying their dues every year, and there are others out there who are getting a free ride."

Reinecke points out that in some cases, people make an honest mistake. For example, some who have joined the Council and taken a CRS Course may think they are entitled to use the CRS Designation. Most of these people remove the CRS from their Web sites as soon as they find out they are in violation of the rules, Reinecke says.

On the other hand, there are some unscrupulous agents who try to get away with using the Designation after they have dropped their Council membership. "With anything like this, you're always going to have people out there who are trying to abuse the system," says Indiana CRS Chapter Immediate Past President Michael Litchin, CRS, with Resource GMAC Real Estate in Fort Wayne, Ind. "That's why it's so important for the Chapters and for individual CRSs to be alert to make sure people who are using the Designation are in good standing with the national Council."

*The Arizona CRS Chapter wants to find out how we may increase the value of and improve the experience of belonging to our state Chapter, but we need your help. Please take just a couple of minutes to answer the following questions. In appreciation of those who respond, we will hold a drawing from the names of all that complete the questionnaire and award the name drawn with **FREE CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FOR 2007!** (Winner must be a CRS national member) The winner will be announced in a future CRS Chapter newsletter.*

1. In what way do you feel the AZ CRS Chapter might be of greater value to you? _____

2. Approximately how many CRS classes have you taken since you received your CRS designation? _____
3. When is the last time you attended a CRS class? _____
4. Have you taken any CRS classes online? If so, which ones and did you find them to be of value to you? _____

5. What is the greatest member benefit of belonging to the AZ CRS Chapter? _____

6. Do you take advantage of post designation CRS classes for license renewal credit? _____
7. Have you ever repeated a specific CRS class and if so, what value did you find in doing so? _____

8. Have you taken advantage of any networking opportunities offered by the State Chapter? _____

9. Would you be interested in networking opportunities with other CRS members? _____
10. Are there any specific areas of education that you believe should be added to the CRS curriculum? _____

11. I prefer to receive CRS Newsletters:
 - a. By E-Mail
 - b. Printed and by regular mail
 - c. It really doesn't matter. Just make them interesting and of value to my business.
12. Would you be interested in getting involved with the AZ CRS chapter as a regional representative, task force member or in a possible leadership position? YES! No, not at this time.

Please fill in your name, email address and preferred phone number to enter in the drawing.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

**PLEASE FAX YOUR RESPONSE TO MIKE WASMANN AT 623-680-0800
PROVIDING YOU DID NOT TAKE THIS AAR SURVEY ONLINE THIS WINTER. THANK YOU!**