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Greater Houston Chapter Website <http://www.hftphouston.org>

July 2008

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**\*\*\* Tentative\*\*\***

**Dependent upon attendees and CHAE Certified volunteers**

**CHAE Review**

**The Woodlands Resort and Conference Center  
2301 N. Millbend Drive  
The Woodlands, TX 77380**

**Host:**

**John Smith 281-364-6369**

**Directions:**

[http://www.woodlandsresort.com/gen\\_map\\_directions.html](http://www.woodlandsresort.com/gen_map_directions.html)

**Cost is \$99 for Non-members  
Free for HFTP members**

**Date: Saturday, July 19th 2008**

**Review: 8<sup>am</sup> - 12<sup>pm</sup>**

**Testing: 1pm - 5pm**

**RSVP:**

<http://www.hftphouston.org/Calendarlist.asp>  
or email JohnSmith at [President@HFTPHouston.org](mailto:President@HFTPHouston.org).

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Colleagues;

How cool was June? Combine HITEC and Austin with Horseracing in Houston in the same month and then try to write a letter about it. Can't be done! For those of you who missed HITEC and/or the Controllers Conference or Club Conference, all of it was quite a success. The educational portion of the event was great, but the trade show floor was even better. There is something about Austin that puts a little bit more excitement into the production. Then turn around and hit the Sam Houston Race Track for some Quarter Horse racing for our summer social. We had about 50 people or so attend and a good time was had by all. Nice facility, good food, and great social interaction.

We have our CHAE/CHTP review and testing scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup>. It's right around the corner. Please send Ursula a note if you're interested in attending the review. The testing has a sign up period that is several days prior to testing. By the way, we need about 3 or 4 volunteers who are certified to lead various segments of the review. I have the PowerPoints ready to go, but need some help in presenting.

We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of one of our family members in the Chapter. Hans Lubbeck, the Assistant Controller at Marriott IAH, lost his wife recently after a very courageous battle with cancer. She was a very well respected Director of Human Resources in the Marriott organization and will be missed by all. We wish to extend our sincerest condolences to Hans and his 2 young children.

Yours in Hospitality,

John Smith, CHAE, CHTP



## Keeping the Peace When Two Departments Can't Get Along

### Clash of priorities has one employee steaming

Running your own department is a full-time job. But when one department gets into a feud with another, your job jets even harder.

That's the situation manager April Baker found herself in when an IT outage sent one of her employees on an anti-tech rampage.

#### 'I'll fix it my own way!'

SMASH! SMASH! "They're not working on the pipes again, are they?" asked April. "Nope, it's me," said employee Dylan Waters. SMASH! "Just having a little tech problem - thought I'd take care of it myself since IT wouldn't lift a finger to save my life."

"Quit the racket," April said. "It won't solve a thing. You'll just end up breaking your keyboard and giving everyone a headache."

#### 'He never got back to me'

"Please, nothing's as bad as the migraine I've already got," said Dylan. "This report's due by the end of the day, and my computer's crashed twice." "Call Stan over in IT," April said. "Just let him know it's a priority. I'm sure he'll take care of it."

"Already did," said Dylan. "He told me to sit tight until he finished upgrading the new servers. That was two hours ago."

"Did you tell him about the project you need to get done?" asked April. "Yep, I gave him an earful just now," said Dylan. "Thanks to IT, there's no way I'll finish things."

#### 'They don't care about us'

"Please tell me 'earful' doesn't mean you treated Stan the same way as your keyboard," said April. "IT's tapped out enough as is."

"Hey, I didn't say anything that wasn't true," Dylan said. "I just told him I'd have better luck opening this thing up and fixing it myself than waiting for some IT lackey to show up."

"Dylan, you can't go mouthing off, especially to other departments." "It's the truth! Ask anyone - our e-mail was down on Tuesday, then the printer goes on the fritz. IT only shows up when they *feel* like it. They don't give a hoot about us," said Dylan.

#### The Big Question

April needed a way to defuse the situation. Dylan's temper wasn't the way to handle the computer problems. But Stan and the rest of IT's lack of help was putting people in her department in a major bind. *If you were in April's situation, what would you do? One of the ideas offered below by our readers might provide some guidance.*

#### What you need to know:

Stepping in to handle conflict isn't always the answer, but you might need to when feuds involve other departments. When you do:

- Assure both parties that you're not picking sides, and
- Encourage people to open communication lines to prevent problems from occurring again.

## How Two Managers Would Solve the Above Communication Problem

### 1. Calm him down, then build a bridge to IT

First, I'd have Dylan work on another computer. The quicker he gets back to work on his project, the sooner he'll cool down. If that weren't an option, he should talk to someone else in IT. It sounds like Stan might've had his hands full with another task, but he's even less likely to want to help after Dylan's insults. Talking to the right person might be the trick to getting the help he needs. After everything was fixed, I'd have Dylan apologize to Stan - that way, he'll have an ally in IT next time he needs urgent help with something.

*Leslie Rose, Training Coordinator  
North metro Community Services, Denver*

### 2. Complaining isn't a solution

Dylan has to realize that nothing he's doing is going to help - he's just looking for someone to complain to. His first call to IT might have been earnest, but insulting another department's employees and banging his keyboard isn't going to fix a thing. Since the problem could turn into a major crisis, I'd speak to the IT manager to see what the delay is. If they're in the middle of a critical task, that's one thing. But holding up help because one employee was rude to another isn't helping either department. Even if people don't get along with each other, that needs to be put aside for work to get done.

*Ann McKay- Thompson, Assistant Executive Dean  
USDSU, Sioux Falls, SD*

### Upcoming Meetings

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACES</u>	<u>SPEAKERS</u>
July 17 <sup>th</sup>	CHAE/CHTP review - Woodlands	
August 21 <sup>st</sup>	Marriott Intercontinental	Arlene Ramirez
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	Bentwater Country Club-Golf Outing	
October 16 <sup>th</sup>	Hilton Conrad- UH	Carolyn Davis
November 20 <sup>th</sup>	Woodland Resort and Conference	
December 18 <sup>th</sup>	Social Event	

**We are still in need of venues and speakers.**

*Please contact:*

*Bret Myers for Speakers 713-465-8381, [bmyers@houstoncc.com](mailto:bmyers@houstoncc.com)*

*Eric Ehsan for Venues 713-622-3667, [controller@thebriarclub.com](mailto:controller@thebriarclub.com)*

## Sharpen Your Judgment

### **Employee always needs help: Is it a disability?**

"Is this supposed to be a joke?" asked employee Chris Lewis. "You're letting me go?"

"There's a list of duties you haven't been able to perform since your surgery," said manager Sandra Kiley. "And we need someone who can take care of them."

"I don't get what the big deal is!" said Chris. "I haven't been falling behind - I'm still getting work done, just like I was before my surgery."

#### **Sapping everyone else's time**

"I've talked to other people about that," Sandra said. "They said you've been asking for help whenever something heavy needs to be moved."

"They're just pitching in," said Chris. "I'd do the same for them if I could. And no one complained about me asking for help."

"It's not about whether they mind," said Sandra. "If you can't do the basics without help, we can't keep you in the position."

"But there's good news - we've got another job for you. There's no lifting, It's a great fit."

"I don't want some other job!" said Chris. "I want the one I have, and you can't take it away from me just because you think I'm disabled!"

"We don't think it's a disability, you just can't get the job done anymore," said Sandra.

Chris sued the company for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and it fought to have the suit thrown out. Did it win?

### **THE DECISION**

Yes, the company won when a judge threw Chris's discrimination suit out of court. Chris argued that he was taken out of his job because of his protected disability after a recent surgery. He was unable to do heavy lifting, but still managed to get all of his work done on time.

As for being able to complete his work, the company agreed Chris hadn't missed deadlines. But he was only able to complete assignments by asking for help from other employees.

The company said Chris's condition wasn't a disability - he just couldn't lift heavy objects. Since it was a major requirement of the job, the company couldn't keep him in the position.

The court agreed his condition wasn't protected under the ADA - it impacted his work in the position, but not being able to lift wasn't severe enough to be a "life-impacting condition."

**Analysis: Be willing to work things out**

If the employee were protected under ADA, the company could've been on the hook for finding more ways to accommodate his condition.

If employees are "perfectly able to meet a job's duties," a company can't remove them from a position because of a disability. But if an employee has trouble with a task, altering duties can be an alternative to termination.

*(Based Gruener v. The Ohio Casualty Insurance Co.)*  
\*both articles are from *Communication Bulletin for Managers and Supervisors*

\*\*\*\*\*JOB POSTINGS\*\*\*\*\*

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## Assistant Controller

Posted: 6/17/2008

Hospitality Pro Search

Contact: [michael@hospitalityprosearch.com](mailto:michael@hospitalityprosearch.com)

An upscale luxury hotel in the Houston, Texas area is looking for an experienced Assistant Controller. This job requires a Bachelors degree with 3-5 years experience. The salary range is \$50-60K per year.

Qualified Candidates should contact:

Michael L. Horrocks  
Account Executive  
Hospitality Pro Search  
[michael@hospitalityprosearch.com](mailto:michael@hospitalityprosearch.com)  
281-584-0601 x24

This candidate should have a minimum of 3 years experience in hospitality and hotel accounting.

Decentralized accounting and luxury hotel background a big plus.

Degree in accounting is a definite requirement.

This individual should be ready to be a Controller in one year.