

PICA Investigative Reporter



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President Friedman's Message



Dear PICA Members,

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your PICA President this past year. Your Board worked very hard, with great success; many new member benefits were added, an enhanced and updated website, new Bylaws and outstanding educational meetings.

For me personally, I had the opportunity to meet a lot of new and returning members and I had the satisfaction of participating in a top quality Annual Business Meeting and Educational Conference.

I'm especially happy that this has been a drama free year with a lot of positive interaction on our professional listserve, with many of our members actively participating, by offering job opportunities and providing answers to requests for help.

I'm very happy to welcome Jose Newman to the executive board, as PICA's 2014 President. He is a person who really cares and had some great contributions to PICA this past year. I believe he will do a fine job.

I'm fortunate to have been elected to the 1st Vice President's position where my primary duties are to oversee the educational aspects of PICA. This has always been my forte and interest. I have been doing investigations for over 25 years and being able to share my experiences and knowledge with members has been fun and as a result I have also learned so much.

I would like to thank our 2013 Board of Directors and Ambassadors for helping to make PICA a successful and very professional organization.



Sincerely,

J. Corey Friedman, President

Who Can Obtain a Credit Report?



Julie Stein at the PICA Booth

Credit report access is restricted to companies that have a specific need for the information and customers who request their own reports. If you have power of attorney, are the executor of someone's estate or have his or her permission, you may be able to obtain his or her credit report. In addition, you may obtain the credit report of your own children if they are minors.

and job applications. A credit check is the best way to protect yourself or your business from any danger. You should not risk hiring someone or renting your property to them unless you have run a proper credit check to verify the individual's honesty.



Gretchen Lichtenberger receives a thank you plaque from PICA President, Corey Friedman.

Limitations on who is allowed to acquire another individual's credit report prevent the risks of identity theft, potential fraud and any other inappropriate uses. Anyone who acquires the credit report of another person under false pretenses will be substantially fined and possibly put in jail for a sentence of up to one year.

A credit report will give you information on an individual's credit accounts, home liens, payment histories, bankruptcies and a financial overview. Property owners and business owners find credit reports to be an invaluable asset.

There are three major credit-reporting agencies in the nation that handle the credit checks of individuals. These companies are TransUnion, Equifax and Experian.

Examples of purposes that may be deemed as permissible:

Only individuals or businesses that have a permissible purpose may access the credit report of another individual. The definition of "permissible purpose" can be found in Section 604 of the FCRA.

- Court Order
- Consumer consent
- Legitimate business transactions
- Consumer credit transactions
- Intended for employment
- Insurance underwriting
- Consumer's eligibility for a license
- Consumer's eligibility for benefits

There are several reasons why you would want to run a credit check on someone. It is a common practice for applicants to lie on rental



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2014 PICA Board of Directors Introduced at ABM



Gary Brummond • Ann Marie Batesole • Rob Dick • Jose Newman • J. Corey Friedman
Secretary Executive Director 2nd V.P. President 1st V.P.

Calculating Your Fees and Actual Costs

The costs of being in business as a private investigator consists of essentially two things – direct (records, etc.) and indirect (overhead, etc.) expenses. Over the years I have heard many methods of calculating how to charge for services. I found that these often do not account for all costs, especially indirect costs; nor do they account for experience, background, skills, knowledge, reputation and other non-cost factors. One of the most damaging theories of rate structures to our profession is the “I’m retired, so what I charge doesn’t matter” or the large company that subcontracts out at a rate that is not sustainable, but is a volume profit for them. Your costs, as well as education, training and experience in consideration with your market should be the foundation of determining what your hourly or per-service fees are. If your market is \$80 per hour, do not charge \$40 because you are retired. Work smarter, not harder. Would you rather bill ten hours for \$800 or \$400 – either way, you are working ten hours to supplement your retirement. The same consideration for subcontracting – would you rather accept \$30 or \$60 (assuming you will provide a professional discount of your normal rate)? Courtesy professional discounts are acceptable and should still be a sustainable fee for the investigator.

Direct costs are those attributed specifically to the case, and are usually itemized on the invoice. These may include: toll calls, records, gas and other expenses. Generally these are straight forward, but profits are still lost here without good expense tracking. Some these may be lumped into indirect costs (e.g. toll calls if you have a flat fee long distance service).

Some indirect costs are those related to the case, but not specifically. These are likely not part of the “overhead” either. Because of this type of thinking, or lack of good planning, this is the largest contributor to profit loss (retailers call unaccounted losses ‘shrink’). These types of costs may include: monthly vendor fees or minimums, time fees for online services, long distance not easily tracked, lost billable time, etc. As a rule of thumb, for every 10% lost in unbilled expenses, you will need to gain 12% in revenue. The same is true for discounts, but a discount is a choice you make to attract business (as is a referral fee). Not accounting for direct and indirect costs is negligent.

Rates and methods of billing vary from agency to agency, as well as service types. This is especially true when considering specialties, case types, experience and locale. Overhead and case expenses are other factors in determining an accurate hourly or flat rate for services. In order to adequately recover all costs, pay expenses and still turn a profit, we must calculate all of our fees accurately. This goes beyond “doubling” the costs of records; or adding annual overhead to a base fee and dividing that by 2000 hours (40 hours per week x 50 weeks per year) to determine your hourly fee; both common methods of fee calculating. Although case expenses are typically added to the hourly billing, a lot of expenses are not accurately accounted for in the case, and other expenses of the agency are not defrayed on a case by case basis.

Determining your final hourly rate is a process:

- The first thing to tackle is the hourly rate needed only to operate. To do so add up the entire overhead of the agency, only those items necessary to operate without a caseload. These would include: rent, utilities, advertising, phone, etc.
- Next calculate the operating costs directly associated with casework, but not a specific case (indirect expenses). These would include: vendor monthly fees, unaccounted long distance, agency insurance, etc.
- Finally, calculate your value. This is not arbitrary. Your skills, reputation, background and knowledge are valuable and should be included in the fees you set. Your message is that your clients will get what they pay for...and you must deliver on your message and promise.
- Learn the average hourly rate is for your area and determine your position on the scale of experience, reputation and other factors.

Once you have established your agency’s overhead, expenses and value, simply determine what rate you feel is beneficial to your agency and client. An average of 1/3 will be for taxes, 1/3 for overhead and expenses, and 1/3 profit. The lower the hourly rate, the lower the overall profit – remember, overhead remains unchanged and expenses and taxes are based on the billable income.

Next is to realize the Rule of 20/80. Simply stated, the rule of 20/80 is that 20% of your clients will produce 80% of your income. Conversely, 80% of your clients are costing you productive time (and related income) because they are providing only 20% of your income. The same theory holds true for expenses, and particularly vendors. About 80% of your vendor expenses are likely wasteful because only 20% of your vendors produce 80% of your positive results. Good investigative and business skills will fine tune all of this. Productivity equals profits.

This may seem a little much, but there is a lot of revenue lost to arbitrarily picking your fees, not accounting for all expenses and costs and basically just plain giving it away. Once you have figured all the aspects of what it costs to operate your agency and all of its services, you can begin to charge appropriately for time, knowledge, skills, reputation and value of the services you provide. You will never see an investigator charge too much – you will see plenty not charge enough.

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Nicholas Boilvin Harris 1882-1943



Nick Harris was born on the south side of Chicago on February 2, 1882. His father, Charles H. Harris, was the founder of the Chicago Daily News. After relocating to Los Angeles, before 1890, Nick followed in his father's journalistic footsteps and secured a position as a police reporter for The Los Angeles Times. As a reporter, he was credited for solving many of the most notorious crimes in California at the turn of the century.

At the suggestion of Los Angeles Police Department captain, A.J. Bradish, Nick joined LAPD. Two years later, he left the department for the private sector, founding the [Nick Harris Detective Agency](#). The following year, the Nick Harris Professional Detective School was founded. Today the training facility is the world's oldest detective academy.

Nick Harris had a national radio program prior to the birth of television. The show, "Why Crime Doesn't Pay," aired locally on KFI, a station still in operation in Los Angeles. On KFI's golden anniversary they remembered Nick Harris as "the front runner of today's who-done-its."

Nick Harris was also the author of two best selling books. One was named "Why Crime Doesn't Pay" after his radio show and the other was titled "In the Shadows, Thirty Detective Stories."



Nick Harris Professional Detective School 1918
NickHarrisDetective.com

The [Nick Harris Detective Agency](#) has solved many of the most baffling criminal cases in California.



Detectives, Spies and Private Eyes

Private Investigator, Ben Harroll is the curator and founder of the P. I. Museum, located in downtown San Diego, California. The museum is the world's only museum dedicated to finding, acquiring, preserving and displaying historic treasures from P. I. History. Ben has been adding a vast number of P.I. historic treasures and artifacts that he has been collecting for over 34 years.

The P. I. Museum has a very serious research and documentation purpose and goal, yet retains a youthful sense of adventure and wonderment about this endlessly fascinating profession. The museum balances its collecting efforts between the real and the fictional. You are as likely to find an actual letter penned in 1852 by the hand of Eugene Francois Vidocq or a spy camera, as you are to find your favorite Dick Tracy collectible.

The museum displayed an extensive part of its collection at the World Investigators Conference in Las Vegas and several of PICA's Annual Conferences.

Visit www.piMuseum.org to learn how to help the museum preserve P. I. history.



John Walsh and Ben Harroll
 1921 Issue of *The Detective*
 The 1st America's Most Wanted

PICA Welcomes New and Returning Members in 2013

Henry Aghassi	Mark Eskridge	Viorel Latan	Bruce Robertson
James Aguirre	Ernest Estrada	Kenneth Luna	Ralph A. Rocha, Jr.
Michael Alford	John Everett	Mark Lucatorto	Martin Rosales
Paul Anderson	Jennifer Faer	Joe Lumbreras	Stephen Salazar
Brandon Becker	Steve Faer	Jennifer Manibusan	Cody Salfen
Vicki Boser	Rico Fernandez	Monica Martinez	Daniel Santana
Dennis Bridwell	Beth Fleming	Fred Martino	Eddie Shore
Frank Brisslinger	Charles Flippo	Joseph McGlinchy	Vincent Shields
Dana Champion	David Fucci	Roger McGrew	Michele Stuart
Ken Chow	Louis Galindez	Christopher Melendez	Reginald Stewart
Michael Chuck	David Gama	Al Mendoza	Ian Tausig
Bryan Ciapessoni	Sal Garcia	Erik Mora	Todd Taylor
Ann Ciulla	Robert Gardner	Michael Mosbach	Tara Tegos
Stephen A. Comando	Arthur Gonzales	Robert Nagle	Markis Velez
Robert Crain	James Green	George Newman	Denaire Walker
Tom Curnett	Joseph Grillo	Chris Nicely	Ronald Walters
Dave Curtis	Simon Gutierrez	Tiffany Noonan	Robert Weekes
April Davis	Richard Hansen	Evan Pitney	Ken Welty
James Devitt	Al Hernandez	Bryan Pinto	Martin Whited
John DiCarlo	Cynthia Hetherington	Daniel Pitts	Norman Williams
Gregg Dietz	Rick Hippach	Ivan Potter	Rick Williams
Carl Dougherty	Hagop Hovakimian	David Queen	Don Wilson
John Doyle	Donald Hugh	Daniel Quirk	Katie Wright
Robert Duncan	Bob Hunter	Everett Rabbon	Aaron Wyman
Laurien DuTremble	Michael Johnson	Don Ray	Paul P. Young
Ken Edick	Anthony King	Thomas P. Riley	Monica Zaragoza
Gregory Egger	Dean Lawrence	Alphonse Ristuccia	Lily Zhuo



2013 Member Benefit - Photo ID Card \$10

An attractive durable plastic identification card, designed to last for years, includes a photo, name, and the member's company name. Member's photograph can be replaced with the official PICA seal.

PICA members may purchase this unique photo ID cards for their employees. The company card is separate from the PICA ID card. The company ID card will contain the member company's identifying information in place of PICA's name and website.

PICA's 12th Annual Conference



Don Ray with the Document



Mark Habberfield Robert Martin



James Aguirre
Santa Paula, CA

Markis Velez
Lomita, CA

Katie Wright
Boise, ID

Viorel Latan
Bucharest, Romania



Jennifer Faer on Simulator



PICA's Annual Business Meeting and awards dinner party



Simon Gutierrez
L.. A. District Ambassador



David Nanney & John DiCarlo
Save Your Six Training



Gretchen & Ann Marie
Working the Check-in Table



Michele Stuart & Corey
Award & Membership

~ 2013 Conference and Business Meeting Held in Thousand Oaks ~

2013 Conference Instructors

Interviewing the Document



Don Ray is a veteran multimedia investigative journalist, producer and author. He has written or produced for NBC, CBS, PBS and Disney.

Don has written six books that relate to background investigations, public records, document interpretations and privacy issues.

Internet Profiling and Intelligence Gathering



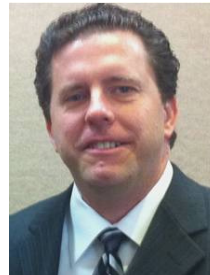
Michele Stuart is a Licensed Private Investigator with over twenty years of investigative experience, she is also an Adjunct Professor with University of Virginia and an Instructor at Quantico for multi country training programs.

Small Claims Court Process



Gretchen Lichtenberger has a Bachelor's Degree from University of California Santa Barbara and an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice from Ventura College. She is a Registered Process Server, Certified Paralegal and Judgment Recovery Expert.

The Power of Business Credit



Gary Brummond is a licensed Private Investigator, Registered Process Server, Credit Expert, who coaches individuals on how to obtain a better credit score. Mr. Brummond has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration and Management from Cal Poly-Pomona.

Live Scenario Training Simulator



Rob Dick is a Licensed Private Investigator, Locksmith, Notary, Bail Enforcement Agent and instructor, Bail Recovery Agent and instructor and firearms training instructor. Rob has over 25 years of investigative experience.

Lock & Security Bypass Techniques



J. Corey Friedman, a Forensic Locksmith, he is also a licensed California Private Investigator, Registered Process Server, Bail Agent, Bounty Hunter, a TV Consultant, and college instructor, with over 27 years of experience in the investigative industry.

"Calculating your Fees and Actual Cost"

Article contributed by:

Dean A. Beers, CLI, CCDI and **Karen S. Beers**, BSW, CCDI
Colorado Licensed Private Investigators
 Nos. PI-503 and PI-502
Board Certified Legal Investigator / Expert
Board Certified Criminal Defense Investigators
Certified Death Investigators / former Deputy Coroners

Associates in Forensic Investigations, LLC

www.Forensic-Investigators.com
beersda@Forensic-Investigators.com

(970) 480-7793 Office (Dean x1 / Karen x2)
 (970) 480-7794 Fax
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2013 Board Members Receive Recognition



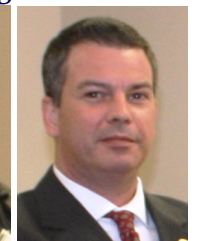
J. Corey Friedman



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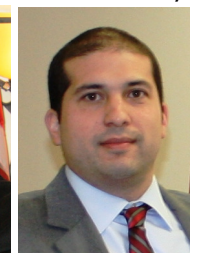
Steve Wachtel



Rob Dick



Gary Brummond



Jose Newman



P. O. Box 568
Verdugo City, CA 91046

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www.TLO.com
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www.dataquick.com
www.DocEdge.com

Document Retrieval:

www.CourtHouseDirect.com

DMV Records:

www.LoganReg.com
www/RecordsResearch.com

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www.fonefinder.net
www.tnid.us
www.phonevalidator.com

PI Magazines:

www.PImagazine.com
www.Investigator-Magazine.com

Build Excellent Credit:

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Realistic Masks:



www.spfxMasks.com

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