



Referrals, Relationships, Rewards

E-letter

May 2008

This is a communication of the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW Austin). In this issue you will learn about CREW Austin activities. Our members are encouraged to submit information to our [administrator](#) for the next publication.

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GEORGIA DUKE: Recognized as Woman Pioneer of the Title Industry



In celebrating its 100th anniversary, the Texas Land Title Association (TLTA) profiled several unique Texas women who pursued professional careers in the title industry when it was rare to do so. Those women best exemplify the spirit of "the pioneer" in their display of strength, determination, tenacity and commitment as they pursued their dreams of owning or managing a title company.

The TLTA has selected **Georgia Duke**, Austin division president, North American Title Company, and CREW Austin member, as one of its distinguished women.

Georgia learned her trade at age 18 from State Senator William Fly of Victoria, Texas, and took to the title business like "a duck to water." The senator, who owned a title company in Victoria, instructed her about the rules and regulations of the business, instilled in her the importance of responsibility and character and trained her how to do title examinations, cure title and handle closings. She moved to Houston where she conducted closings for a law firm before going to work for a title company. In a very

5th Annual Golf Adventure



The 5th Annual CREW Austin Golf Adventure is scheduled for October 23rd, 2008 at [Grey Rock Golf Club](#). (formerly Circle C Club)

Please contact one of our chairpersons with specific questions and [marketing opportunities](#) [Donna Ripley](#) of Grubb & Ellis or [Lenora DuBose](#) of Jackson Walker.

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short time, Georgia was closing 65 deals a month with one secretary. She made herself indispensable to the company; and in less than six weeks, she had earned the title of closer. By the 1970s, she had worked her way up to senior vice president in charge of branch operations and helped set up 11 branches in Houston in addition to closing commercial transactions.

In 1979, Georgia moved to Austin with her husband and high school sweetheart, Bill. She served as president of Commonwealth Land Title Company from 1981 to 1983 before opening Texas Professional Title. She sold her company to North American Title Company in 2000, and continues to work for the company managing four offices in the Austin area.

Georgia believes the industry protects the consumer by supplying information they may not have when purchasing real estate. She sees her job as a one-time mentor - a teacher - making sure the customer understand all aspects of the closing transaction.

"I would definitely urge young women to go into this business, although they don't get the hands-on training like we used to," said Georgia. "The TLTA Land Title School is priceless in that regard - it has been a tremendous asset to our industry, and it's helped educate many people in the title business."

*Article submitted by **Melissa Anthony** of [anthonyBarnum PR](#)*

Members Making The Connection



Pictured above left to right: Diann Cowling, Michelle Martin, Janna Paulson & Kristin Gardner

First rule in real estate: Location, location, location - second: it is all about who you know to make things happen.

CREW Austin prides itself in creating a network which allows deals to happen. A great example of this is a deal submitted to us by **Diann Cowling**, CCIM with Quick & Company.

CREW member, **Michelle Martin** with MMartin Associates Inc., a consultant to Loomis Austin, an engineering firm, recommended Diann for the tenant representation assignment for Loomis' office relocation. **Tom Loomis**, also a CREW member and President of Loomis Austin required additional office space and needed the aid of a real estate professional in his search for a new office

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location. Once awarded the assignment, Diann Cowling then recommended **Janna Paulson**, with Peel Paulson Design, for design and programming services. Loomis Austin was previously in approximately 8,000 square feet but once the programming was completed it was determined that Loomis really need about 14,000 square feet. With the design phase completed and the location determined, Diann then recommended **Sue Savage** with Hurst Savage & Vanderburg L.L.P. to do the legal work for this transaction. Once the leases were executed and construction was underway of Loomis Austin's new corporate office, **Kristin Gardner**, with CBRE, was involved in the construction management of the tenant improvements.

One deal - six CREW Austin members - congratulations to a job well done.

*Article submitted by **Jinny Saad** of Thomas Properties Group*

New Member Orientation



Pictured from left to right: Jennifer Latto, Mary Anne Castles, Adeline Rem, and Jennifer Horsch.

On Thursday, May 29, CREW Austin hosted an orientation lunch for its newest 2008 members, including: **Adeline Rem** (Apr 2008), **Jennifer Horsch**, **Jennifer Latto** and **Mary Anne Castles** (May 2008).

We would also like to welcome our newest members: **Yvonne Parra**, **Alex Castano**, **Nancy van Praag** (May 2008) who were unable to attend the lunch but will be invited to the next orientation luncheon.

CREW hosts included **Rosalie Keszler** (Liaison - PR/Communications), **Amy Cooper** (Chair - Friends of CREW), **Susan McCampbell** (Liaison - Special Events), **Kathy Mayfield** (Chair - Programs) and **Charlie Dismore** (Chair - Membership).

Membership Committee

We are pleased to announce that [Charlie Dismore](#) CCIM, CFM, CPM, FMA, RPA of Capstone Real Estate Services, Inc. has accepted the chairperson position for the



membership committee. He will be conducting a committee meeting soon and will begin challenging all of us to spread the word of CREW Austin!

DIANN COWLING, CCIM: Member Profile



Diann Cowling (right) and Rhonda West (left) blue gill fishing in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin in February 2007.

When Diann isn't busy hunting, skeet-shooting, golfing or tap-dancing, she finds time to serve on the CCIM Institute Board of Directors and member of the Central Texas CCIM chapter, recently graduating from the Levine Leadership Academy; is a founding member of CREW Austin, Inc. having served on its Board of Directors and Chairperson of the Member Services and Recruitment committees; is a Charter Member, Past President and Board Member of Commercial Leasing Brokers Association; has been a member of Austin Commercial Real Estate Society since 1994 and Past President; is currently involved in several philanthropic organizations including Soroptimist International of Austin, Meals on Wheels, and the Austin Woman's Club. An avid outdoors- person, she gave up tennis and racing sailboats several years ago but still likes to travel and snow ski. Diann can make a young person feel tired just reading about her active life.

As Senior Associate Broker with Quick & Company Commercial Realty, Inc., Diann has successfully honed her specialty in tenant and buyer representation. She represents buyers and tenants of office properties, closing over 465 transactions generating more than \$130 million in sales volume over the last 25 years.

Q. How have organizations such as CCIM and CREW impacted your life and career?

A. I wanted to become active in CREW. My interest was to be involved in an organization that would help build self confidence for all women in real estate. Such an organization did not exist when I entered the commercial field. I am a founding member. We attempted tried to establish a similar organization several years before CREW was established but it was during a down market. Even then I knew this type of organization is what I wanted to

be a part of and eventually the timing was right. What has CREW done for me? I'd say it is a place to blossom and grow. I have grown not just as a woman, but as an individual. CCIM is continually evolving with women in more leadership positions and an expansive community including so many more commercial real estate disciplines. Today they are recognized leaders in technology and networking, not just education.

Q. If you were able to start your career over again, what one organization you would be associated with first?

A. CREW. CCIM is primarily about investment sales, finance and brokerage. I'd say 85% of my business is leasing. Back then, CCIM was the only organization available. Today, I would join CREW straight out - we are exposed to the big picture of commercial real estate with CREW. Their networking model is almost as good as the Good Old Boys network!!!

Q. What advice do you have for women in a "man's" world today?

A. Regardless of your gender, I would say find your niche; find a group or organization like CREW that includes an extensive variety of commercial real estate disciplines - learn how to see the big picture, to network and excel at your craft. CREW is much more than a brokerage business. Back then, I was so focused on brokerage that I didn't understand the whole expansiveness of the commercial real estate world. I am now well-known as a tenant rep, with a great reputation, but it took me a while to develop that niche. Over time I did it all - leasing, listing, sales, buying, land deals - but it is important to specialize. Back then I felt it was WHAT I knew, not WHO I knew. Now I realize it is both. If I had expanded my understanding of the horizon of commercial real estate early on, I could have reached success faster. Understand the big picture then hone in on the details.

*Interview conducted by **Rosalie Keszler, CCIM** of Torreon Capital*

[Click here to view entire interview](#)

June 17th Networking Program "Boogie Around Town"

The Real Estate Council of Austin early this year unveiled its DAPR program (Downtown Austin Park and Ride) as a way to reduce vehicular congestion in Downtown Austin. The DAPR plan calls for the construction of 5 new municipal garages along IH 35 and MoPac and a rubber tired circulator system to move people to and from the garages and around Downtown.



Tom Terkel, President of RECA, will explain the background behind DAPR, the response to their proposal and how this all fits into the conversation about Downtown rail.

Networking program to be held on June 17th from 11:30 - 1:00 at Sullivan's. \$25 for members and \$35 for guests.

[Click here for more info & to register](#)

Special Thanks to CREW Co-Chairs!



Special thanks to **Angela Benschneider** of Bourn Companies (left) and **Jennifer Sherrill** of Fulbright & Jaworski (right) for a job well done on the CREW Careers program held on April 26, 2008. The day was a hit with the Girl Scouts. Please join us at the June 17th luncheon where we will review the video and present a check to the Girls Scouts.

ICSC's RECon, May 18-21, 2008, Las Vegas, Nevada

The Spring 2008 global retail real estate convention hosted by ICSC took place the last weekend of May as is typical. This year's convention was possibly more important because of the year-end 2007 capital markets crises leading to the grinding halt of many commercial real estate projects across the country. The mood in Vegas, however, was positive. As reported by ICSC, business was up during RECon, where attendance was close to last year's record levels. ICSC experts report that real estate prices are returning to more "realistic levels, allowing developers to consider projects that last year would have cost too much to contemplate." Opportunities, an end to the slump, and a more productive second half of 2008 are on everyone's mind.

Meanwhile, several CREW Austin members were spotted at the Women in Real Estate Networking breakfast, held in collaboration with CREW Network. The first day of the convention sessions started bright and early 8am on Monday, May 19 kicked off by the CREW breakfast. Introduction was provided by Lynny Osenbaugh, MAI,

CCIM, 2008 CREW Network president and the presentation speaker was Marti Barletta, president of TrendSights. CREW Austin members spotted in the crowd included **Jane Snoddy Smith (CREW Network Board Member & Past President)**, **Lila Nelson Beard**, **Rhonda West (CREW Austin Past President)** **Rosalie Keszler** and **Angel Benschneider (CREW Careers Co-chair)**.

CREW Network hosted a booth this year and received many very interested visitors. Gail Ayers, CREW Network CEO & CREW Foundation President was on hand to talk CREW, as was our own Jane Snoddy Smith. A cocktail party was held at the end of the day on Monday, May 19 drawing a large crowd of ladies and gentlemen.

*Article submitted by **Rosalie Keszler, CCIM** of Torreon Capital*

CREW AUSTIN IS A PROUD MEMBER OF THE AUSTIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

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