2008 CAR CONFERENCE

HOUSTON

Thanks for joining us for IRE's 2008 Computer-Assisted Reporting Conference, the 14th installment of what has become the premier gathering of CAR experts.

This is a watershed moment for computer-assisted reporting. As news organizations put ever-increasing emphasis on their Web sites, more interactive and data-driven stories are taking center stage. Crusty editors who never gave much thought to the intricacies of crunching campaign finance numbers, for example, are now pushing their staffs to get that data, get it online and make it easy for the public to inspect.

But getting and posting data is only half the battle. Once you've got it, you've got to unlock its secrets.

Discovering the best ways to do that will be a theme running throughout this year's conference.

Over the next four days, you will have the opportunity to learn the latest skills, techniques and tips from many of the top CAR practitioners in the business. Some sessions deal with specific beats, including criminal justice, city hall, education or politics. Others offer skills that you'll use no matter what you're investigating.

A number of panels and hands-on classes will help you take data and maximize its use on the Web. We're offering advanced classes Thursday that meld cutting-edge CAR with online and programming skills. For the first time, you'll see an advanced hands-on primer covering frameworks for making data interactive on the Web.

For those who are just beginning, a special mini-boot camp series provides classes similar to those offered in the intensive boot camps we hold several times each year at the IRE and NICAR headquarters at the Missouri School of Journalism. These classes begin with basic spreadsheet calculations and encompass CAR techniques for both investigative projects and deadline stories.

If you're struggling to choose between two competing panels, don't worry. Shortly after the conference, all of the tipsheets will be available as a CD-ROM compilation, or IRE members can download individual tipsheets from the IRE Resource Center, www.ire.org/resourcecenter.

Don't forget to check out the Demo Room where new software and CAR techniques will be on display in a more informal setting. And spend some time getting to know your colleagues between sessions. The greatest strength of IRE and NICAR is our membership and the tremendous amount of knowledge and experience that each of you brings.

We're also here to celebrate some of the great work of the past year. On Friday evening we will present the Philip Meyer Awards, which honor those journalists who used social science methodology to add depth, context and meaning to their work.

We know you'll leave this conference with new skills, story ideas and approaches for presenting your work. Thanks for coming, and thanks to the hosts, the speakers who volunteer their time and all the sponsors who make these four days possible.

Mark Horvit
Executive Director, Investigative Reporters and Editors
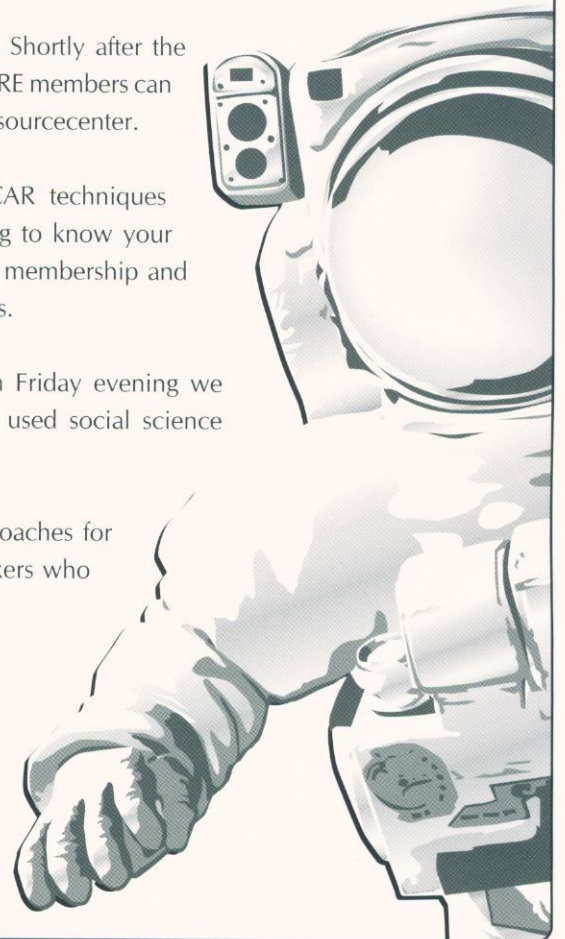
CONFERENCE SPONSORS

IRE and NICAR would like to thank these organizations for their contributions and support for this conference:

Downtown skyline with the Downtown Aquarium's Ferris wheel.

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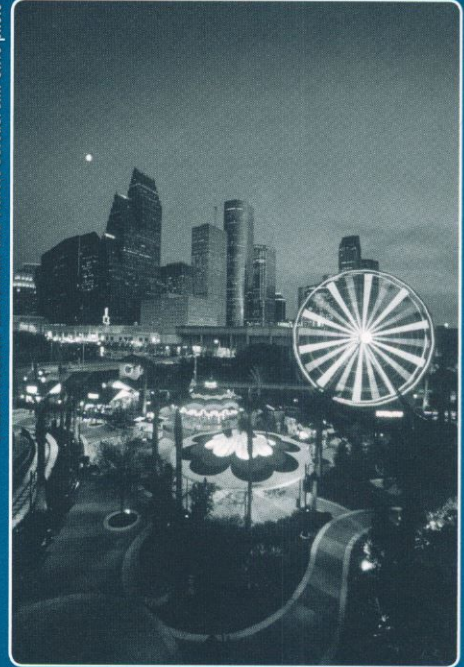· Gannett Foundation
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Local Committee
IRE would like to thank the following people for their invaluable assistance with this conference:

· Robert Arnold, KPRC-Houston
· Michael Berryhill, University of Houston
· Jay Carr, *Houston Chronicle*
· Nicole Casarez, University of St. Thomas
· Chase Davis, *Houston Chronicle*
· Wayne Dolcefino, KTRK-Houston
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· Ted Oberg, KTRK-Houston
· Lise Olsen, *Houston Chronicle*
· David Raziq, KHOU-Houston
· Todd Spivak, *Houston Press*
· Randy Wallace, KRIV-Houston

Thanks to the Missouri School of Journalism, which provides space and resources to IRE and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting. NICAR is a joint program of IRE and the school.

Fellowships
Congratulations to our 2008 CAR Conference fellows.

Minority Fellowships
This minority fellowship program for professional journalists is supported by the Philip L. Graham Fund, Chicago Tribune Foundation, and IRE.

· Kimetris N. Baltrip, Kansas State University
· Nishat Kurwa, Youth Radio

Jennifer Leonard Scholarships
For women who have worked in journalism for three years or less or who study journalism, these scholarships were established by IRE member David Cay Johnston to honor his wife, the president of the Rochester Area Community Foundation and a national leader in promoting ethical standards for endowments.

· Devin C. Varsalona, The Center for Public Integrity

	Registration:	Sales & Endowment:	Exhibitors & Recruiters:	Demo Room:
	Bagby Room	**LaSalle Foyer**	**LaSalle Foyer**	**Nautile (first floor)**
Thurs.	7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.	7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.	8 a.m.–5 p.m.	Closed
Fri.	7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.	7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.	8 a.m.–5 p.m.	8:30 a.m.-5:50 p.m.
Sat.	8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.	8 a.m.–5 p.m.	8:30 a.m.-5:50 p.m.
Sun.	Closed	8:30-10:30 a.m.	Closed	Closed

Panels & Hands-on classes

See schedule, p. 5-10

There is no pre-registration required for hands-on classes, except for the Mini-Boot Camp and Web Frameworks Advanced Boot Camp. (See conference boot camp details on p. 4.) For all other hands-on classes:

- Attendance is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Please arrive on time. Lessons move quickly, and instructors may not be able to accommodate late-comers.
- Class size is limited to the number of computers available. At the instructor's discretion, a limited number of standing-room attendees may be allowed.

IRE Board of Directors Meeting

The IRE Board of Directors will meet for routine business on Thursday at 2 p.m. in LaSalle Ballroom B. The meeting is open to members.

Philip Meyer Journalism Awards Presentation

6 p.m. Friday, LaSalle Ballroom B
Reception with cash bar
For more on the 2007 winners, see p. 3

Reprints and Tipsheets

Granger Foyer

Copies of outstanding and innovative examples of computer-assisted reporting are available along with extra tipsheets. If you brought copies to share, please contact an IRE staffer in the reprint area. Don't forget that all tipsheets will be available from IRE's Web site and the Resource Center a short time after the conference.

E-mail access

The Demo Room (Nautile, first floor) provides computers to check your e-mail. (Fri. and Sat. only) The hotel also offers free wireless internet service in public areas.

Reminders

- Make sure you wear your nametag to all IRE events. Before you leave the conference, please drop off your nametag holder at the registration desk or in other deposit boxes in the main hall. We will recycle them.
- Please set cell phones, pagers and PDAs to silent or vibrate while in the sessions. The speakers and fellow attendees will appreciate it.

Don't forget your evaluation forms

Your feedback helps us plan future events. Complete your evaluation form online at www.ire.org/training/houston08/eval. You will be entered in a drawing for free registration for the 2009 IRE CAR Conference.

Exhibitors & Recruiters

Meet exhibitors and recruiters and learn about products and services of interest to journalists. (LaSalle Foyer)

- Caspio, Inc. - Come see how journalists are leveraging the power of the Caspio Bridge framework to rapidly create online forms, surveys, reports and searchable databases without programming at a Brown Bag with Caspio, 1 p.m. Saturday, Granger Ballroom A. (Bring your lunch, dessert and coffee will be provided.)
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Office of Justice Programs
- Society of Environmental Journalists

Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau
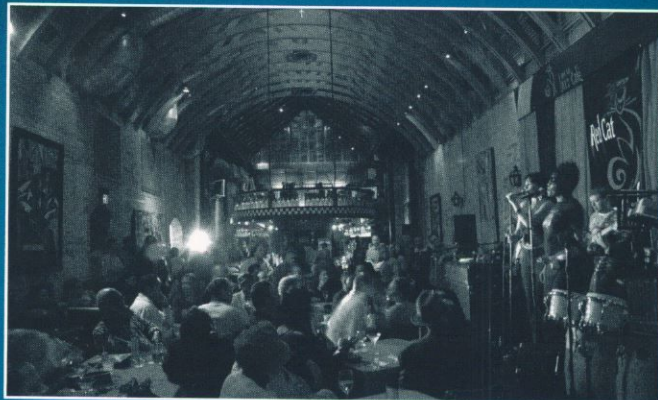
The good times will roll at the first-ever CAR Jazz Bash at the Red Cat Jazz Café in downtown Houston.

Jazz Bash - Friday

Investigate the night life at Houston's famed Red Cat Jazz Café on Friday night. Enjoy the camaraderie of your CAR colleagues, along with some great jazz at this IRE fundraiser. The venue combines sophistication and good times with a French Quarter-like atmosphere and some of the best Cajun and Creole cuisine in town. If you missed the advanced tickets, remaining tickets will be sold at the conference sales desk for $20 (price includes two drinks). Doors open at 8 p.m.; live music starts at 9. (Red Cat Jazz Café, 924 Congress St., 713-226-7870.)

PHILIP MEYER AWARDS

Congratulations to the winners of the 2007 Philip Meyer Journalism Awards, recognizing the best uses of social science research methods in journalism.

This year's entries again demonstrated the power of advanced analytical tools and the amazingly diverse questions they can help answer. The winning entries covered cheating on standardized tests in public schools, questions of equity in the death penalty and questions about how insurance claims are handled nationwide.

Other notable stories included a statistical review of electronic voting machines; the connection between property taxes and disparities in school funding; complaints about public housing; and how popular market commentators fare in their predictions.

The Meyer Awards are in honor of Philip Meyer, the Knight Chair in Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Meyer is the author of "Precision Journalism," the seminal 1973 book (and subsequent editions) that encouraged journalists to incorporate social science methods in the pursuit of better journalism. As a reporter, he also pioneered using survey research for Knight-Ridder newspapers while exploring the causes of race riots in the 1960s.

The awards are administered by the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (a joint program of Investigative Reporters and Editors and the Missouri School of Journalism), the Knight Chair in Journalism at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, and IRE.

2007 Winners

First Place:

The Dallas Morning News for "Faking the Grade," a three-day series that uncovered strong evidence of cheating on standardized tests by more than 50,000 students in Texas public and charter schools. Reporters Joshua Benton and Holly Hacker followed up on the paper's groundbreaking 2004 investigation of cheating at the district and school level by analyzing a huge public records database of the scores and answers of hundreds of thousands of individual students taking the tests during a two-year period. The series prompted the state to announce stricter controls over test-taking conditions in Texas schools and to adopt the cheat-detection statistical methods used by the paper.

Second Place:

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution for "A Matter of Life and Death," a four-day package of stories that documented how Georgia has failed to follow through on capital punishment reforms promised after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1972 that the state's application of the death penalty was "arbitrary and capricious." Reporters Bill Rankin, Heather Vogell, Sonji Jacobs and database specialist Megan Clarke led a team that hand-built a database of more than 2,300 murder convictions since 1995 by traveling to more than 100 of the state's 159 county courthouses, and researcher Alice Wertheim created a database of all Georgia Supreme Court death penalty decisions since 1982. They analyzed this data with multiple regression analysis to demonstrate wide variations in application of the death penalty by demographics and geography, prompting the Legislature to consider changes in the capital punishment laws and the state's chief justice to take steps to improve its review of such cases.

Third Place:

The Kansas City Star for "Insurance: Service or Shenanigans," a three-day series of stories and follow-ups that used a national consumer complaints database of nearly 35 million records to rate more than 2,400 insurance companies by complaint ratios. Reporters Mike Casey, Mark Morris and David Klepper spent nearly a year gathering and analyzing the national data along with more than 10,000 pages of records to demonstrate how responsiveness to consumer concerns varied widely by company, geography and type of coverage. Since the project ran, state and national legislators have called for a number of measures to address problems documented in the paper's analysis.

The 2008 CAR Conference offers two specialized training series — one for CAR beginners and one for experienced CAR journalists.

CAR Mini-Boot Camp

The popular Mini-Boot Camp offers an introduction to computer-assisted reporting, based on IRE and NICAR's popular 6-day CAR Boot Camps. The Mini-Boot Camp provides 10 hours of hands-on instruction in Internet, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, Access database manager, insights on how to apply CAR in news stories and beats, plus opportunities to practice in open lab and ask questions of veteran instructors. This option is limited to 36 pre-registered participants.

If you signed up for the Mini-Boot Camp, you will be assigned to a red or green team. (The red or green dot on your nametag is a reminder.) The Red Team will attend hands-on classes in Travis I; the Green Team meets in Travis II. See items marked "MINI BOOT CAMP" in the schedule.

Web Frameworks Advanced Boot Camp

In Houston, up to 15 pre-registered participants will sample a new advanced boot camp, an intensive series of hands-on classes designed to take you from the basics to a fully functioning data-driven application in Django, the Web framework that drives award-winning projects like EveryBlock, PolitiFact, and *The Washington Post*'s congressional votes databases.

All hands-on classes in the Web Frameworks Advanced Boot Camp will be held in the Lamar Room. See items marked "WEB BOOT CAMP" in the schedule.

Friday
- Objects, Models and the ORM: The foundations of frameworks, the object, the model and the object relational model, or ORM.
- Prepping your data: How to turn your data into the foundation of your app. Here we talk about relational data, good model design and putting that data into your models.
- Using the ORM to get data: All that data we put in? Now we start to get it out by learning the foundations of the ORM's query syntax.
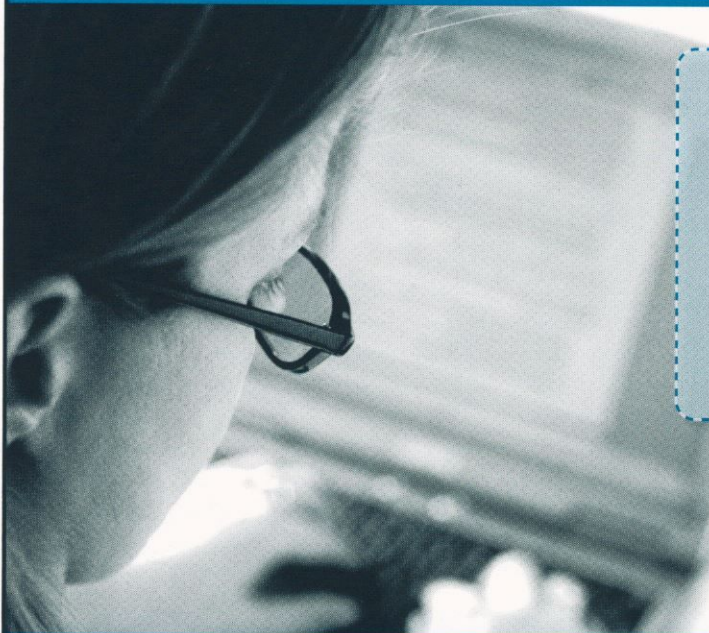
Saturday
- Design by URL: Used to be, a URL went to a static file. In a framework, a URL is a critical component of your application.
- Views: The view is where the work gets done. Information from the request goes in and data for your templates goes out. Here we take another step toward putting it all together.

Sunday
- Templates are what your users see. Here we talk about how to take the data passed from the view and turn it into something your designers can start to work with.
- Wrap up, show off: We'll wrap up with questions and show off some tricks, like feeding Google Maps, Google Charts, Twitter and some other flashy things with Django.

THURSDAY PANELS

	Dezavala	LaSalle A	Granger Ballroom A	Granger Ballroom B
9-10:10 a.m.	**Overview of the year in CAR (B)** • David Donald, IRE and NICAR	**Social science methods (E)** • Steve Doig, Arizona State University • Stan Ketterer, Oklahoma State University	**Dissecting a Web site and who is running it (E)** • Chase Davis, *Houston Chronicle*	
10:20-11:30 a.m.	**The Internet: Search methods, engines and indexes (B)** • Carolyn Edds, *St. Petersburg Times* • Neil Reisner, Florida International University	**Surveys and sampling (E)** • David Donald, IRE and NICAR • Paul Overberg, *USA Today*	**Programming basics (A)** • Daniel Lathrop, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* • Derek Willis, *The New York Times*	
11:40-12:50 p.m.	**Using spreadsheets for daily and long-range stories (B)** • Aaron Kessler, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* • MaryJo Webster, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*	**Basic statistics (E)** • Stan Ketterer, Oklahoma State University • Holly Hacker, *The Dallas Morning News*	**Web development at newsroom speed (A)** • Aron Pilhofer, *The New York Times* • Matt Waite, *St. Petersburg Times*	
12:50-1:50 p.m.	**Lunch on your own**			
2-3:10 p.m.	**Using databases for daily and long range stories (B)** • Griff Palmer, *The New York Times* • John Perry, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*	**Advanced statistics (A)** • David Donald, IRE and NICAR • Jennifer LaFleur, *The Dallas Morning News*		**The latest in mapping and the Web (A)** • David Herzog, IRE and NICAR • Maurice Tamman, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*
3:20-4:30 p.m.	**Building up a data library for your beat (B)** • Jennie Coughlin, *The News Leader*, Staunton, Va. • Matt Wynn, *Springfield* (Mo.) *News-Leader*	**Building databases (E)** • John Maines, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* • Maurice Tamman, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*	**Future tools (A)** • Brian Hamman, *The New York Times* • Tom Torok, *The New York Times*	
4:40-5:50 p.m.	**Writing, editing and presenting the data-driven story (B)** • Robert Benincasa, Gannett News Service • Doug Haddix, *The Columbus* (Ohio) *Dispatch*	**Open source CAR (E)** • Chase Davis, *Houston Chronicle* • Derek Willis, *The New York Times* • Matt Waite, *St. Petersburg Times*	**Web scraping (A)** • Griff Palmer, *The New York Times* • John Perry, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*	**Building intranets (A)** • Rob Gebeloff, *The* (Newark, N.J.) *Star-Ledger* • Jennifer LaFleur, *The Dallas Morning News*

FRIDAY PANELS

	Dezavala	Granger Ballroom A	Granger Ballroom B	Nautile (DEMO ROOM)
8:30-8:50 a.m.	**How to make best use of this conference (B)** • David Donald, IRE and NICAR • David Herzog, IRE and NICAR • Mark Horvit, IRE and NICAR			
9-10:10 a.m.	**Better CAR coverage for insurance (E)** • Mike Casey, *The Kansas City Star* • David Herzog, IRE and NICAR	**Bridge collapse! Lessons learned (E)** • Dan Browning, *Star Tribune* • MaryJo Webster, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*	**Using wikis (A)** • Daniel Lathrop, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* • Matt Wynn, *Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader*	
10:20-11:30 a.m.	**Broadcast and CAR: Quick hits and visuals (E)** • Mark Greenblatt, KHOU-Houston • Tisha Thompson, WTTG-Washington, D.C.	**Disasters: From floods to fires (E)** • Agustin Armendariz, *The San Diego Union-Tribune* • Brad Heath, *USA Today* • Richard Russell, *The Times-Picayune*	**Social networking (E)** • Aaron Kessler, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* • Asra Nomani, Freelancer	**Web development at newsroom speed** • Aron Pilhofer, *The New York Times*
11:40-12:50 p.m.	**Investigations and blogging (B)** • Bill Allison, The Sunlight Foundation • Bill Conroy, Narco News	**Justice: From arrests to death row (E)** • Megan Clarke, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* • Janet Roberts, *The New York Times*	**The quick CAR investigation (E)** • Rob Gebeloff, *The (Newark, N.J.) Star-Ledger* • Sarah Okeson, *Florida Today*	**Spycraft for journalists** • Steve Doig, Arizona State University
12:50-1:50 p.m.	Lunch on your own			
2-3:10 p.m.	**The Internet: The invisible Web (B)** • Margot Williams, *The New York Times* • Nora Paul, Institute for Media Studies	**Federal contracts: The military and Homeland Security (E)** • Mike Fabey, *Aviation Week & Aerospace Daily* • John Perry, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*	**Writing CAR stories so people care (E)** • Doug Haddix, *The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch* • Mark Katches, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*	**What IRE and NICAR can do for you** • IRE and NICAR staff
3:20-4:30 p.m.	**Keeping up with the Web alerts, RSS feeds, robots and more (B)** • Daniel Lathrop, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* • Nils Mulvad, Kaas & Mulvad	**CAR for money and politics (E)** • Bill Allison, The Sunlight Foundation • James Grimaldi, *The Washington Post* • David Heath, *The Seattle Times*	**Editing the CAR story (E)** • Mark Horvit, IRE and NICAR • David Raziq, KHOU-TV	**Displaying databases in iCal, RSS Feeds and other formats** • Derek Willis, *The New York Times*
4:40-5:50 p.m.	**Google mash-ups on the run (E)** • Robert Benincasa, Gannett News Service • Maurice Tamman, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*	**Investigating subprime lending and foreclosures (E)** • Cheryl Phillips, *The Seattle Times* • Tisha Thompson, WTTG-Washington, D.C.	**Presenting the CAR story: New techniques (E)** • Mark Greenblatt, KHOU-Houston • Nora Paul, Institute for Media Studies • Jeremy Rogalski, KHOU-Houston	**Using CrimeStat III to find hotspots** • Ted Mellnik, *The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer*
6-7:20 p.m.	**Philip Meyer Journalism Award Reception** LaSalle Ballroom B			

FRIDAY HANDS-ON CLASSES

Travis I	Travis II	Austin	Fannin	Lamar
Excel 1: Performing simple calculations and sorting (B) • Jennie Coughlin, *The (Staunton, Va.) News Leader*	Beyond basics: Access string functions for standardizing and cleaning data (A) • Rob Gebeloff, *The (Newark, N.J.) Star-Ledger*	Mapping 1: Displaying data geographically with ArcView9.2 (A) • Mark Greenblatt, KHOU-Houston	Downloading and analysis using American Community Survey data (I) • Paul Overberg, *USA Today*	When desktops aren't enough: SQL Server intro to database set-up and importing (A) • Janet Roberts, *The New York Times*
Excel 2: Calculating ratios and rates. (B) • David Wethe, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*	Beyond basics: Access functions and other tools for advanced analysis (A) • Ted Mellnik, *The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer*	Mapping 2: Importing and selecting data by attribute (ArcView9.2) (A) • David Herzog, IRE and NICAR	Web sites and search techniques for reporters (B) • Neil Reisner, Florida International University	Working with queries and views in SQL Server (A) • Tom Torok, *The New York Times*
Excel 3: Learn pivot tables, filtering and more (B) • Danielle Cervantes, *San Diego Union-Tribune*	Beyond basics: Building a database using Access forms to ease the process (A) • Brad Heath, *USA Today*	Mapping 3:Geocoding to merge databases with street addresses into maps (ArcView9.2) (A) • Andy Lehren, *The New York Times*	Backgrounding people on the Internet (B) • Margot Williams, *The New York Times*	When desktops aren't enough: Intro to MySQL, open-source database server (A) • Daniel Lathrop, Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Lunch on your own

Travis I	Travis II	Austin	Fannin	Lamar
Excel 1: Performing simple calculations and sorting (B) (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Steve Doig, Arizona State University	Excel 1: Performing simple calculations and sorting (B) (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Sarah Okeson, *Florida Today*	Mapping 4: How Spatial Analyst can pinpoint places and improve stories. (ArcView9.2) (A) • MaryJo Webster, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*	Backgrounding businesses on the Internet (B) • David Milliron, Caspio, Inc.	Intro to Django and frameworks (A) (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Chase Davis, *Houston Chronicle* • Aron Pilhofer, *The New York Times*
Excel 2: Calculating ratios and rates (B) (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • David McKie, CBC	Excel 2: Calculating ratios and rates. (B) (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Aaron Kessler, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*	Mapping 5: Nailing down the details – dealing with projections (A) • Jennifer LaFleur, *The Dallas Morning News*	Excel and Internet: Importing data from the Web into spreadsheets (B) • David Donald, IRE and NICAR	Objects, Models and the ORM (A) (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Brian Hamman, *The New York Times*
Importing data into Excel (B) (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Griff Palmer, *The New York Times*	Importing data into Excel (B) (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Matt Carroll, *The Boston Globe*	Connecting the dots and statistics with social network analysis (A) • Jaimi Dowdell, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*	Excel and Internet: Importing PDFs from the Web into spreadsheets (B) • Neil Reisner, Florida International University	Prepping your data (A) (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Chase Davis, *Houston Chronicle*

SATURDAY PANELS

	Dezavala	Granger Ballroom A	Granger Ballroom B	Nautile (DEMO ROOM)
9-10:10 a.m.	**CAR and consumer reporting (E)** • Sarah Okeson, *Florida Today* • Mc Nelly Torres, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*	**Education: From cheaters to teachers (E)** • Holly Hacker, *The Dallas Morning News* • Jill Riepenhoff, *The Columbus* (Ohio) *Dispatch*	**Mining personal Web sites and YouTube (E)** • Nora Paul, Institute for Media Studies • Nanci Wilson, KEYE-Austin, Texas	
10:20-11:30 a.m.	**Covering fuel: From alternative energy to the gas pump** • Paula Lavigne, *The Des Moines Register* • Mc Nelly Torres, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*	**City Hall CAR: Watchdogging expenses (E)** • Matt Carroll, *The Boston Globe* • Matt Stiles, *Houston Chronicle* • Darnell Little, *The Chicago Tribune*	**Visualizing data (E)** • Sarah Cohen, *The Washington Post* • Ted Mellnik, *The Charlotte* (N.C.) *Observer*	**Uplink Feedback:** Current and former readers wanted. Focus group or interview volunteers will receive a thank-you gift. • Rebecca Norris, IRE and NICAR
11:40-12:50 p.m.	**Making the most out of census data (B)** • Ted Mellnik, *The Charlotte* (N.C.) *Observer* • Paul Overberg, *USA Today*	**Infrastructure: Dams, levies and roads (E)** • Jaimi Dowdell, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* • Ben Poston, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*	**Getting noticed in the newsroom: Battling shrinking budgets and declining resources (E)** • Mark Katches, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* • Jennifer LaFleur, *The Dallas Morning News*	**Mind mapping** • Neil Reisner, Florida International University
12:50-1:50 p.m.	Lunch on your own or Brown Bag with Caspio (1 p.m., Granger A. Bring your lunch; dessert and beverages provided.)			
2-3:10 p.m.	**The health beat: drugs and doctors (E)** • Fred Schulte, *The Sun* of Baltimore • David Heath, *The Seattle Times* • David McKie, CBC	**How to win FOI fights (E)** • Joe Larsen, Ogden, Gibson, White, Broocks & Longoria LLP • David Milliron, Caspio, Inc. • David Smallman, Wollmuth Maher & Deutsch LLP	**Putting data on the Web: Ethics and standards (E)** • Moderator: Brant Houston, University of Illinois • Steve Doig, Arizona State University • Anne Saul, Gannett • Matt Waite, *St. Petersburg Times*	**What IRE and NICAR can do for you** • IRE and NICAR staff
3:20-4:30 p.m.	**Investigating toxic emissions (E)** • Lise Olsen, *Houston Chronicle* • Scott Streater, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*	**CAR and crime** • Mark Fazlollah, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* • Kelly Guckian, *San Antonio Express-News* • Dylan Purcell, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*	**Wheels and wings: Using databases to cover transportation** • Trebor Banstetter, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* • Fred Vallance-Jones, University of King's College	**Web scraping quick start using Ruby** • Aron Pilhofer, *The New York Times*
4:40-5:50 p.m.	**Nonprofits and religion: The 990 and beyond** • Andy Lehren, *The New York Times* • Cheryl Phillips, *The Seattle Times*	**Analyzing political data (E)** • Bill Bishop, *The Register-Guard* (Eugene, Ore.)	**Global data for local stories (E)** • Tommy Kaas, Kaas & Mulvad • David McKie, CBC • Lise Olsen, *Houston Chronicle*	**Using OpenKapow to automate scraping** • Alex Richards, *Las Vegas Sun* • Matt Wynn, *Springfield* (Mo.) *News-Leader*

SATURDAY HANDS-ON CLASSES

Guide to sessions: A = Advanced   B= Beginner   I = Intermediate   E = General interest

Travis I	Travis II	Austin	Fannin	Lamar
Access 1: The purifying experience of filtering your data. Learn to select and sort data items you choose. **(B)** • Ted Mellnik, *The Charlotte* (N.C.) *Observer*	Beyond basics: Using advanced Excel functions to clean and categorize data **(A)** • MaryJo Webster, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*	SPSS 1: Navigate SPSS, using descriptive statistics and frequencies. Create basic counts and percentages to help you understand your data. **(A)** • Doug Haddix, *The Columbus* (Ohio) *Dispatch*	Backgrounding businesses on the Internet **(B)** • Neil Reisner, Florida International University	Web scraping 1: Programming techniques to mine the Web **(A)** • John Perry, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
Access 2: Summarizing databases with counting and summing **(I)** • Robert Benincasa, Gannett News Service	Beyond basics: Using Excel functions for advanced analysis **(A)** • MaryJo Webster, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*	SPSS 2: Doing crosstabs to show the data in different ways, and statistical tests **(A)** • Stan Ketterer, Oklahoma State University	Backgrounding people on the Internet **(B)** • Kelly Guckian, *San Antonio Express-News*	Web scraping 2: More programming techniques to mine the Web **(A)** (attendance from Web scraping 1 required) • John Perry, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*
Access 3: How to join tables, matching information from one file to another **(B)** • David Donald, IRE and NICAR	Excel 1: Performing simple calculations and sorting. **(B)** • Matt Carroll, *The Boston Globe*	SPSS 3: Basic linear regression techniques and diagnostics **(A)** • Holly Hacker, *The Dallas Morning News*	Web sites and search techniques for reporters **(B)** • Carolyn Edds, *St. Petersburg Times*	Google maps: How to build dynamic maps **(B)** • Maurice Tamman, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*
Moving into Access: An introduction to filtering with Access (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Aaron Kessler, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*	Moving into Access: An introduction to filtering with Access (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Jaimi Dowdell, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*	SPSS 4: Using logistic regression **(A)** • Jennifer LaFleur, *The Dallas Morning News*	Downloading and analyzing campaign finance data **(I)** • Daniel Lathrop, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*	Using the ORM to get data **(A)** (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Brian Hamman, *The New York Times*
Access 2: Summarizing databases with counting and summing **(I)** (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Mc Nelly Torres, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*	Access 2: Summarizing databases with counting and summing **(I)** (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • David Heath, *The Seattle Times*	Mapping 1: Displaying data geographically with ArcView9.2 **(A)** • Paul Overberg, *USA Today*	Excel 2: Calculating ratios and rates **(B)** • Sarah Okeson, *Florida Today*	Design by URL **(A)** (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Matt Waite, *St. Petersburg Times*
Access 3: How to join tables, matching information from one file to another **(A)** (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Paula Lavigne, *The Des Moines Register*	Access 3: How to join tables, matching information from one file to another **(A)** (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • David Milliron, Caspio, Inc.	Mapping 2: Importing and selecting data by attribute (ArcView9.2) **(A)** • David Herzog, IRE and NICAR	Excel 3: Learn pivot tables, filtering and more. **(B)** • Doug Haddix, *The Columbus* (Ohio) *Dispatch*	Views **(A)** (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Derek Willis, *The New York Times*

SUNDAY
PANELS & HANDS-ON CLASSES

Guide to sessions: A = Advanced   B= Beginner   I = Intermediate   E = General interest

	Dezavala	Granger A	Travis I	Travis II	Lamar
9-10:10 a.m.	**Internet redux: Search tricks and best gateways (E)** • Carolyn Edds, *St. Petersburg Times* • Kelly Guckian, *San Antonio Express-News*	**CAR training: An educators' roundtable (E)** • Dave Herzog, IRE and NICAR • Brant Houston, University of Illinois • Stan Ketterer, Oklahoma State University	Build your own database: The ins and outs of how to structure and maintain a database your create **(B)** (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • David Donald, IRE and NICAR	Build your own database: The in's and out's of how to structure and maintain a database your create **(B)** (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Maurice Tamman, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*	Templates **(A)** (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Matt Waite, *St. Petersburg Times*
10:20-11:30 a.m.	**Downloading data for daily stories (E)** • Neil Reisner, Florida International University	**FOI for reporters (E)** • Wayne Dolcefino, KTRK-Houston • Terri Langford, *Houston Chronicle*	Final Q&A session, exercise, and how to take it all home (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • David Donald, IRE and NICAR	Final Q&A session, exercise, and how to take it all home (MINI-BOOT CAMP) • Maurice Tamman, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*	Wrap up, show off **(A)** (WEB BOOT CAMP) • Matt Waite, *St. Petersburg Times*

BREAK◆THROUGHS
FUNDING IRE'S FUTURE

We invite you, our loyal membership, to invest in the future of IRE by donating or pledging to IRE's endowment fund. When you do, you will help us raise a stable, long-term source of funding for IRE's mission of fostering excellence in investigative journalism.

If you recognize the importance of keeping governments, businesses and individuals accountable, then please pledge to the IRE endowment fund this year. All endowment gifts make a difference because, taken together, they form a strong foundation that continues to grow for years to come.

And, for a short time longer, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation will give $1 for every $2 you donate or pledge under a $1 million partial matching program. What an excellent way to stretch your philanthropic dollars.

Many sincere thanks to the hundreds of IRE members who have supported the drive already. We had a record-breaking end-of-year drive this past December, when more than 350 individuals rose to the occasion and donated and pledged more than $85,000. This turned into more than $125,000 for IRE with the Knight Foundation match. Thanks again!

To Make a Pledge:

...during the conference, please drop by the **sales desk** in the LaSalle Foyer and fill out a pledge form and/or make a payment to the Breakthroughs drive.

...when you get home, please visit the Breakthroughs page on the IRE Web site: **www.ire.org/endowment**

Questions? Please call or e-mail IRE's development officer, Jennifer Erickson, at **jennifer@ire.org** or 573-884-2222.

DATABASE LIBRARY

The IRE and NICAR Database Library maintains a collection of federal government databases covering a broad range of news topics. The datasets can provide the backbone for investigations, infographics, maps or Web-based interfaces. NICAR provides data-analysis services for news organizations and provides assistance to journalists trying to resolve data problems.

The August 2007 collapse of the I-35W bridge in downtown Minneapolis demonstrated the power of knowing how to find and use data on deadline. Within 48 hours, IRE and NICAR's Database Library provided National Bridge Inventory data to more than 150 news organizations. The data helped establish the inspection history of the failed highway bridge and enabled reporters to localize the story with data on bridges nationwide. See *The IRE Journal* (Nov./Dec. 2007) for more about how journalists used CAR to cover bridges.

Other recent NICAR collaborations with news organizations include:
• Mapping disparities in property taxes for KDFW-Dallas.
• Uncovering hotspots in bank ATM robberies with KHOU-Houston.
• Assisting the *Portland Press Herald* in Maine with its examination of dangerous drivers with suspended licenses.

IRE and NICAR staff can provide customized database analysis or mapping tailored to your project and budget. We collaborate closely with news organizations to create stories backed by high-quality research.

Get help with raw data. The Database Library can transfer data from magnetic data tapes to CD-ROM. Our staff can help download/import/format large datasets, too.

Jackie Kazil photo
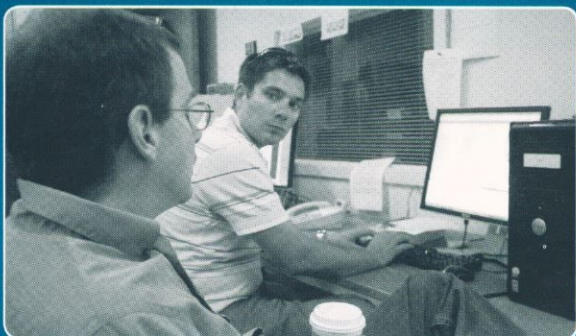
NICAR academic adviser David Herzog discusses a mapping project with former data analyst Mike Pell.

Ask Us!
Staff will be available throughout the conference to answer your questions about data and CAR for your news organization. IRE members can place data orders or preview datasets at the conference, too.

"What IRE and NICAR can do for you" will be presented in the Demo Room (Nautile) at 12:50-2 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

Data for breaking news, projects and beats
• Transportation (air safety, roads, waterways, hazardous materials)
• Elections (federal campaign contributions)
• Health (pharmaceuticals, medical devices)
• Business (home mortgages, wage violations, federal contracts, SBA loans)
• Public Safety (crime, bridges, dams, firearms dealers, workplace safety, consumer products)
• Environment (toxic releases, hazardous sites)
• Federal Spending (payments to states, federal grants, arts grants, Social Security payments)
• Demographics (county and state migration, Social Security Master Death Files, mortality)

Get the big picture by accessing the Database Library's archived data. Many collections cover decades, and past years are available at low cost.

Find data fast
• Set up a customized online account – for individuals or news organizations – including special pricing for our entire database collection. Choose data by topic and access the latest updates as soon as they're available.
• Start your stories faster with government data that arrives in user-friendly format with Database Library readme files and supporting documentation. The service was created to help you devote your time and resources to other reporting tasks.
• Use quick searches of aviation data following a plane crash to find reports of service difficulties, previous accidents or incidents and registration information of that plane.

Contact the Database Library at 573-884-7711 or visit www.ire.org/datalibrary.

UPDATE YOUR BOOKSHELF!

Take home IRE Beat Books, investigative reporting titles, tote bags, and more at the sales table.
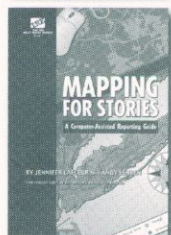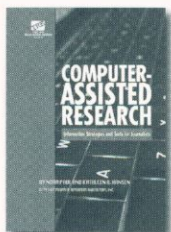
• Computer-Assisted Research: Information Strategies and Tools for Journalists, by Nora Paul and Kathleen A. Hansen
• Mapping for Stories: A Computer-Assisted Reporting Guide, by Jennifer LaFleur and Andy Lehren
• Covering Pollution: An Investigative Reporter's Guide, by Lori Luechtefeld
• Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Practical Guide, by Brant Houston

• Unstacking the Deck: A Reporter's Guide to Campaign Finance, by Michael A. Weber, Aron Pilhofer and Derek Willis
• Investigative Reporter's Handbook, by Brant Houston, Len Bruzzese and Steve Weinberg
• Numbers in the Newsroom: Using Math and Statistics in News, by Sarah Cohen
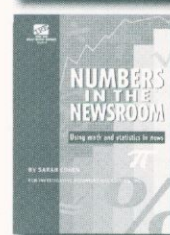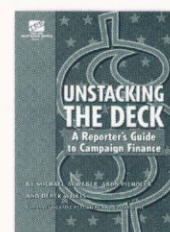
HOUSTON DINING GUIDE

Compiled by *Houston Chronicle* staff

Houston is a fabulous restaurant town. Most of these eateries are downtown within a 10-15 minute walk and reasonably priced, unless otherwise indicated.

17 Restaurant, Alden Houston Hotel. 1117 Prairie St., 832-200-8800
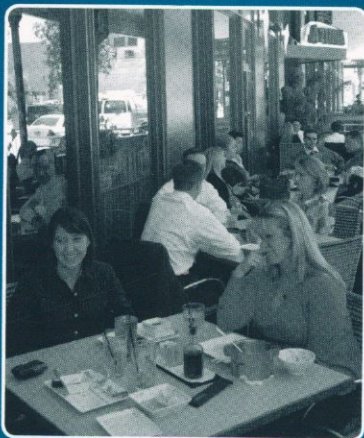Upscale New American restaurant with a Gulf Coast flair, expensive.

Azuma's offers a high quality sushi experience.

Azuma Sushi & Robata Bar, Rice Lofts, 909 Texas Ave., 713-223-0909
Sushi and Japanese grilled items in a sleek, zen atmosphere.

Bank, Hotel Icon
220 Main St., 713-224-4266
Think Grand Hotel, complete with antiques and velvet drapes. New American menu, expensive.

Bistro Lancaster, Lancaster Hotel
701 Texas Ave., 713-228-9502,
Downtown/Theatre district.
Quiet, neatly appointed restaurant with fine-dining menu, expensive.

Breakfast Klub
3711 Travis St., 713-528-8561, Midtown.
This no-fuss, bustling counter-service restaurant serves hearty all-day southern breakfast and lunch.

Cabo is a popular Tex-Mex restaurant downtown.

Cabo Original Mix-Mex Grill
419 Travis St., 713-225-2060
Fish tacos and grilled seafood salads.

Cafe Express
650 Main St., 713-237-9222
Brain-child of notable Cafe Annie chef Robert Del Grande. This casual venue serves reasonably priced salads and sandwiches.

Cali Sandwich
3030 Travis St., 713-526-0112
A fixture for Vietnamese sandwiches and soups.

GETTING AROUND

Take a Walk
Many eating, shopping and entertainment options are within walking distance of the hotel. You can also explore the city's famous tunnel system; tunnel shops and restaurants tend to be open only on weekdays until early afternoon.

Catch a Cab
There is a $6 flat fee for downtown cab rides anywhere.

Ride the Train
MetroRail can get you to many Main Street restaurants, the Museum District or Midtown for $1 a ride.

Go for a Jog
Want to go running? Across the street from the hotel you'll find a jogging path that takes you along Allen Parkway. It's nestled among the historic buildings of the Houston Heritage Society museum.
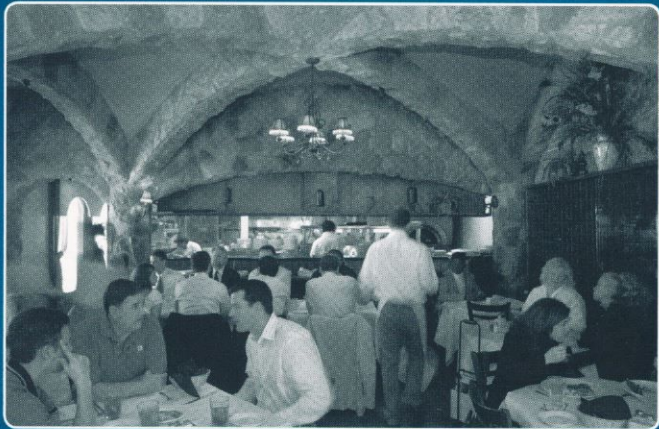
Cava Bistro - A cozy New American bistro on Lower Main St.

Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau

Cava Bistro
301 Main St., 713-223-4068
Nice patio for evening dining. Menu includes savory crepes and salads.

Chipotle Mexican Grill
909 Texas Ave., 713-225-6633
For on-the-go, build-your-own burritos.

El Rey Taqueria
233 Main St., 713-225-1895
Great tacos, fresh limeade, rotisserie chicken, king-sized salads and Cuban sandwiches.

Hunan Downtown
812 Capitol St., 713-227-8999
Standard Chinese menu.

Les Givrals Sandwich & Cafe
801 Congress St., 713-547-0444
Vietnamese sandwiches, noodles and papaya salad.

Market Square Bar & Grill
311 Travis St., 713-224-6133
Burgers and other grilled items. Cozy, outside courtyard.

Mia Bella Trattoria
320 Main St., 713-237-0505
Build-your-own pasta and other Italian-inspired dishes.

Original New Orleans Po-Boy
3902 Main St., 713-524-5778
Oyster po'boys and other New Orleans specialties.

Perbacco Cucina Caprese
700 Milam St., 713-335-4441
Simple, reliable pastas and salads.

Sambuca
909 Texas Ave., 713-224-5299
Sleek bar and live music venue with a restaurant.

Treebeard's Restaurant
315 Travis St., 713-228-2622
Casual, steam-table restaurant with Creole and Cajun-inspired dishes. Lunch only, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Zula
705 Main St., 713-227-7052
Las Vegas meets Texas at this New American restaurant, expensive.

QUICK EATS
(within .2 miles of hotel)

Conference venue, The Doubletree
400 Dallas St., has two restaurants and a bar.

Droubi Brothers Mediterranean
507 Dallas St., 713-652-0058

Hunan River Express
1200 Smith St., 713-652-4042

Italia D'Oro Coffee House
333 Clay St., 713-750-0074

Massa's Restaurant
1160 Smith St., 713-650-0837

Pho Bui
507 Dallas St., 713-659-4746

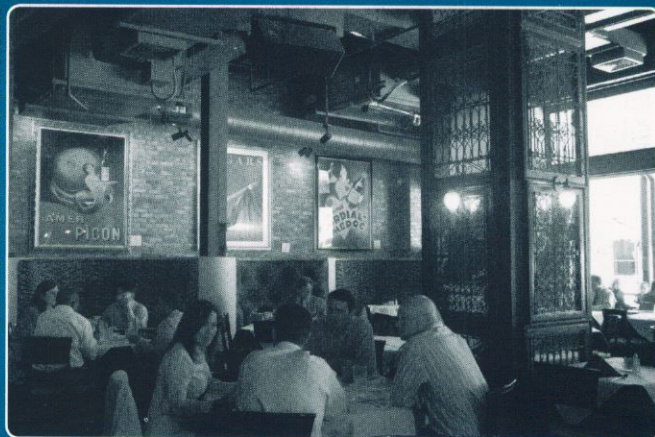**Simon's Homestyle Café**
500 Dallas St., 713-739-9009

Starbuck's Coffee
1100 Louisiana St., one block from the Doubletree, across from the Hyatt Regency
(Also at 914 Dallas, three blocks from the Doubletree)

Sambuca Jazz Café - Classic fare and nightly live music make this Rice Lofts restaurant/bar a hot spot.

Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau

THINGS TO DO

The Museum District
Take the train to visit the museum district, which includes the Houston Zoo, Houston Science Museum, Houston Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Children's Museum and Herman Park.

Bayou Place
A 130,000 square foot two story center of evening activity with restaurants, movies and theatre is blocks from the Doubletree. It includes the Angelika Film Center, the Verizon Wireless Theatre (713-225-8551) and restaurants and bars: such as Hard Rock Café, Mingalone Italian Restaurant, Sake Lounge, Bar Houston and Slick Willie's Pool Hall. Next to Bayou Place is the over-the-top Houston Aquarium restaurant, where you can see and eat fish, as well as ride a Ferris wheel and take a kiddie train ride.

Theatre District
A few blocks south of the Doubletree, this district includes the Houston Opera, the Alley Theatre and a host of other theatre and concert venues.

Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau
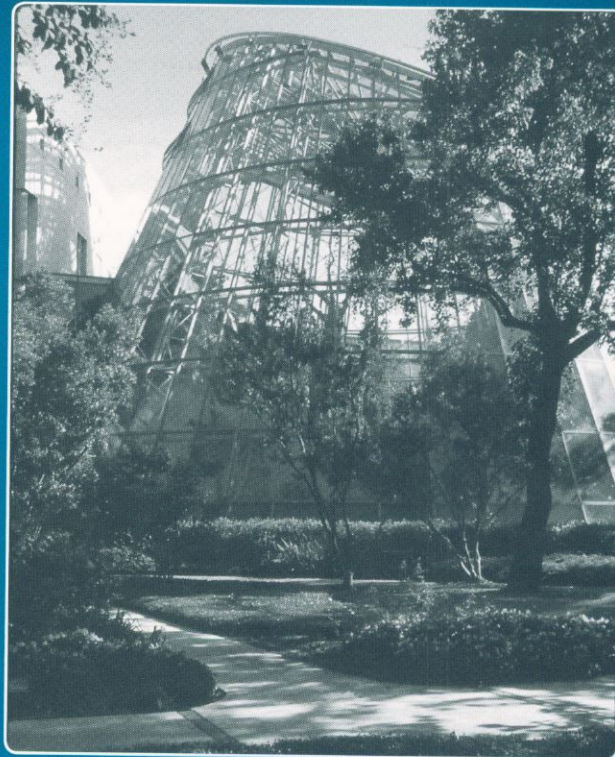
Houston Museum of Natural Science - The Cockrell Butterfly Center is a living exhibit that showcases hundreds of butterflies in a naturalistic rainforest setting.

Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau

Space Center Houston - This unparalled exhibit features spacesuits dating back to the first American trip to space and a wall that contains portraits and crew photos of every U.S. astronaut who has flown in space.

BARS AND LIVE MUSIC

A + Bar, Alden Hotel, 1117 Prairie St., 832-200-8800
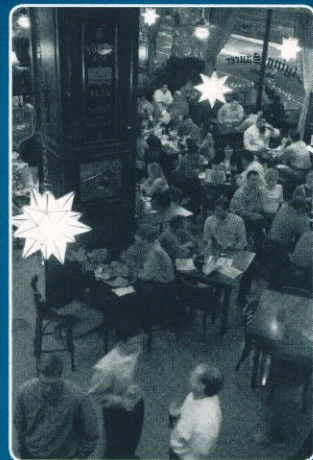High brow hotel bar with ultra cool décor.

La Carafe
813 Congress St., 713-229-9399
Historical and romantic setting for wine and beer Cash only.

The Continental Club
Midtown, Live music venue that's a Houston sister to an Austin favorite.

The Cotton Exchange
708 Main St., 713-237-8974
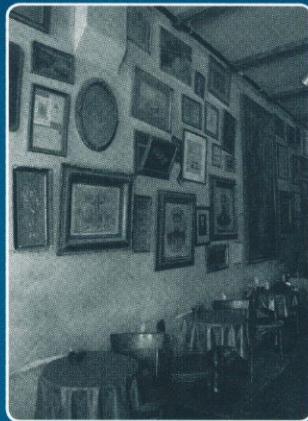Another historic bar venue downtown.

Deco
510 Gray St., 713-659-4900
Coffee in the morning and wine and soft lighting by night.

EscoBar
2905 Travis St., 713-520-1000
Trendy no-fuss dance club with good music.

The Flying Saucer, Draft Emporium
705 Main St.
Bar with an extensive beer menu.

Glo
505 Main St., 713-223-3456
Decadent dance club with window and platform dancers.

La Carafe - A historic building and a mysterious interior make for a great romantic hideaway.

Hickory Hollow
Heights Blvd., 713-869-6300
In the Heights historic neighborhood. Texas BBQ and live country music on the weekends.

Mercury Room
1008 Prairie St., 713-225-6372
Posh décor, high-energy dance club with live jazz, blues, etc.

The Mucky Duck, Greenway Plaza area
2425 Norfolk St., 713-528-5999
Beloved Houston live music venue, featuring folk, Texas roots music, etc.

The Red Cat Jazz Café
924 Congress St., 713-226-7870
Live music venue, host to NICAR's Jazz Bash on Friday night, and good N'Orleans food as well.

Six Degrees Lounge
911 Franklin St., 713-228-2990
A cozy bar that's a great start or ending to an evening.

Speakeasy Lounge
110 Main St., 713-547-0655
Downtown urban watering hole – great for drinks and conversation.

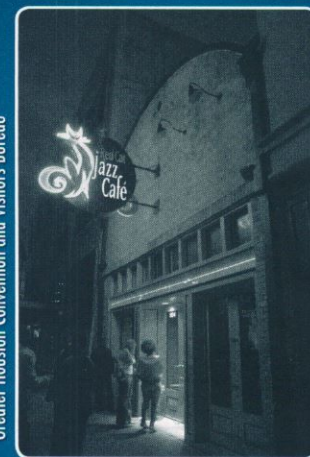**The State Bar**
909 Texas Ave., 713-229-8888
Bar in historic Rice Hotel with a New Orleans style veranda.

Warren's Inn
307 Travis St., 713-247-9207
Downtown after-work watering hole with many faithful reporter followers.

Red Cat Jazz Café - these brick walls have resonated with many a blues and big band jam through the years.

The Flying Saucer - A trendy downtown pub with 85 beers on tap.

2008 IRE Conference
Miami, June 5-8

Hosted by *The Miami Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald*

Make your plans today to join IRE in Miami for four days of hot investigative reporting discussions and the presentation of the 2007 IRE Awards.

Greetings from IRE
JUNE 5-8
Miami
2008 IRE CONFERENCE

Highlights include:

- Panels touching every beat, including special tracks focused on elections, business, broadcasting, editing, international topics, government spending, public safety, education and more

- Special focus on the Web in reporting, storytelling and presentation.

- Showcase panels featuring leading voices in journalism

- Broadcast Show-and-Tell Room

- Tips for CAR and data in investigations, plus hands-on training for beginners

- Mentoring opportunities

Register at www.ire.org/training/miami08.
IRE's room block at the InterContinental Miami expires May 9.
In recent years, the room block has filled before that date.

Computer-Assisted Reporting Boot Camps

Looking for more hands-on training? Check out the 2008 Boot Camp schedule.
Details and registration information online at www.ire.org/training/bootcamps.php

Advanced Stats Boot Camp
Reporters can move beyond basic CAR to statistical analysis. Return to your newsroom with the ability to craft statistics into stories that count! Hosted by the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. Apr. 4-6 —Tempe, Ariz.

CAR 6-day Boot Camp
Visit IRE and NICAR headquarters at the Missouri School of Journalism for this intensive introduction to spreadsheets, databases and acquiring data for news stories.
Mar. 25-30 — Columbia, Mo.
May 18-23 — Columbia, Mo.
Aug. 10-15 — Columbia, Mo.

Mapping Data for News Stories Boot Camp
Participants will learn how to uncover interesting news stories by mapping data with geographic information system (GIS) software.
Aug. 22-24 — Columbia, Mo.

Watchdog Journalism

This training program for small to mid-sized newsrooms or bureaus of larger papers is made possible in part by generous grants from the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation and the *Las Vegas Sun*, Barbara J. Greenspun, publisher. To find out how to bring this training to your area, contact David Donald, ddonald@ire.org.

Upcoming workshops:

- March 8, Memphis, Tenn.

- March 14-15, Oklahoma City

- March 29-30, Des Moines, Iowa

- Apr. 5-6, Urbana-Champaign, Ill.

- July 23-27, Unity '08, Chicago

Unleashing the Watchdog Workshops, held in partnership with the American Society of Newspaper Editors, feature top editors and trainers sharing techniques, tips and years of experience on how to get watchdog journalism done, especially from reporters covering beats and daily stories. Better Watchdog Workshops help reporters learn the investigative skills that keep government and business accountable and to produce enterprising and informative stories. These programs cover how to guide reporters in the effective use of the Internet, open records laws, computer-assisted reporting and anonymous sources.

To learn more, see www.ire.org/training/watchdogjournalism.html

FIRST LEVEL

The Demo Room is on the first
floor in the Nautile room.

SECOND LEVEL

Travis I

Elevators

Travis II

Austin

Fannin

Lamar

Registration

LaSalle Ballroom B

LaSalle Ballroom A

LaSalle Foyer

Sales/Endowment/Vendors

Dezavala

Granger Ballroom A

Granger Ballroom B

Reprints/Tipsheets

Skywalk (Allen Center) →
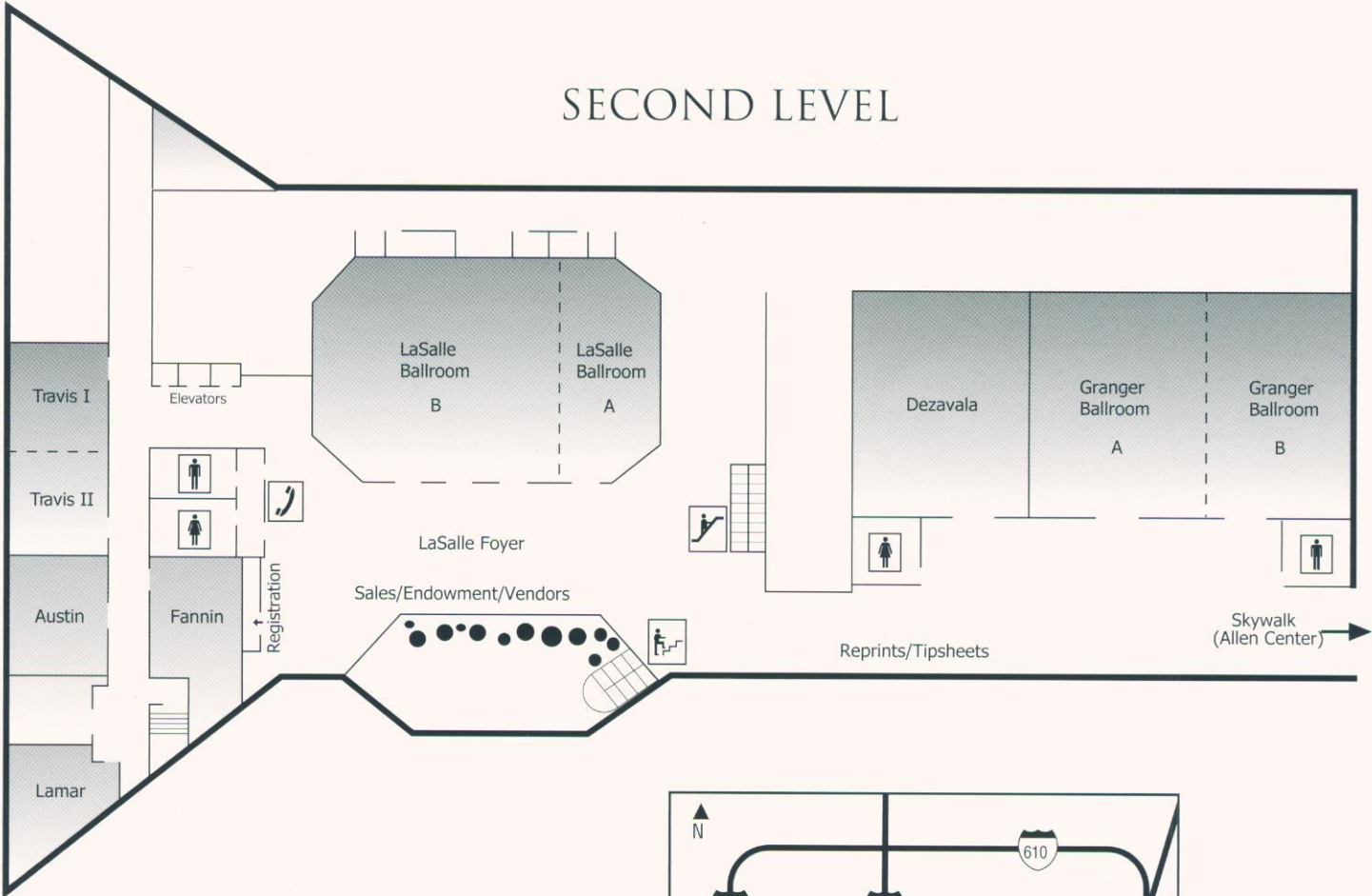
DOUBLETREE® HOTEL
HOUSTON · DOWNTOWN

N

610

610

45

10

KATY FRWY

BAGBY

SMITH

LOUISIANA

DALLAS

POLK

EASTEX FRWY

59

610

59

SOUTHWEST FRWY

610

45

HOUSTON DOWNTOWN

10

Buffalo Bayou

Wortham Theater Center

Downtown Aquarium

Alley Theatre

Houston Chronicle

Preston Station

Downtown Entertainment District

Minute Maid Park

Bayou Place

Jones Hall

METRORail

Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

George R. Brown Convention Center

Sam Houston Park

Main Street Square Station

The Shops at Houston Center

Avenida de las Americas

Macy's

Doubletree Hotel

Toyota Center

45

59

Bell Station

Ride METRORail south to Midtown, Museum District, Hermann Park, Houston Zoo and the Texas Medical Center

Downtown Transit Center Station

N

500 feet

45

← Commerce
→ Franklin
← Congress
→ Preston
← Prairie
→ Texas
← Capitol
→ Rusk
← Walker
→ McKinney
← Lamar
→ Dallas
← Polk
→ Clay
← Bell
→ Leeland
← Pease
→ Jefferson
← St. Joseph
→ Pierce
← Gray

Baldwin Bagby Brazos Smith Louisiana Milam Travis Main Fannin San Jacinto Caroline Austin La Branch Crawford Jackson Chenevert Hamilton