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Board of Directors**

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CCRA Online Copy Deadlines

The deadline for ad and article copy for CCRA Online is the first of the month prior to the scheduled publication date. Articles, ad copy, changes of address, complaints of nondelivery and subscription requests should be directed to CCRA, 65 Enterprise, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 or call (949) 715-4682. Advertising inquiries also should be directed to the Association office. Photographs accompanying articles should be RGB color JPEG files with a resolution no less than 120 ppi.

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CCRA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the California Court Reporters Association is to advance the profession of verbatim shorthand reporting by promoting professional reporting excellence through education, research, and the use of state-of-the-art technology; establishing and maintaining professional standards of practice; and advocating before legislative and regulatory bodies on issues which impact the judicial system and others served by the court reporting profession of California.

President's Message — Court Reporters Board on the Chopping Block

By Sheri Turner Gray, CSR 7350
CCRA President



In the midst of the continuing ER/DR battles regarding the budget proposals, a new dragon has reared its ugly head and is breathing out fire. Governor Schwarzenegger has directed the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to eliminate, among others, the Court Reporters Board of California (CRB) as part of his streamlining-of-state-government agenda. We're not quite sure why the CRB made it to his elimination list, other than the fact that we are an enigma, a unique and different entity that couldn't be easily combined with anyone else. It might also have something to do with the fact that the CRB runs so efficiently and smoothly that no one pays attention or even has a clue as to what is accomplished by the board.

DCA Director Carrie Lopez held a stakeholders meeting on January 21 to begin a "dialogue" about Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to eliminate or realign some 17 boards and commissions under her control. Lopez held one-hour meetings with each impacted group.

The problem is that there were no "stakeholders" present. Attending for the CRB were Chairman Greg Finch and Executive Director Yvonne Fenner. Toni Pulone, President of DRA, was present, as well as Jim Cassie, CCRA's lobbyist, and me. There was no representation of the court reporting schools, which have oversight by the CRB; the attorneys and judicial system, who are consumers of our services and transcripts; nor any of the public or users of the Transcript Reimbursement Fund, which is funded by reporters' license fees and administered by the CRB.

Regarding the elimination of the CRB, there have been several conflicting and somewhat sketchy proposals to move oversight of official reporters under the state bar, perhaps with a DCA-housed examination unit administering testing, or to move oversight directly under the court system. Freelance reporters would pretty much fend for themselves with the "free market regulating the industry." One issue which was clarified at this meeting with Director Lopez is that it is her intention that licensing would be maintained for all reporters, an issue that hadn't been made clear in any proposal. We expressed concerns that oversight by the bar or by the courts would create a conflict of interest, as they are consumers of reporting goods and services.

The \$800,000+ savings to state government that has been used in press releases by the administration is misleading. The CRB collects licensing fees, and that revenue is shown as a state government program. It also spends that money, which shows as an expense. Those funds effectively would be moved off the books of the state, even though they would be collected and spent by the state bar or some other organization chosen as the survivor. It is definitely "spin over substance."

Nothing came of this meeting. CCRA will now focus attention on getting the real consumers, from judges to attorneys to access-to-justice groups to weigh-in with their opinions about this proposed elimination of the CRB and how that might negatively impact the judicial system. This effort will be directed to the Governor's office rather than to the DCA. The DCA is supposedly trying to meet a February 1 deadline to put reorganization-plan language on paper, so time is of the essence.

**CCRA is once again working hard for you,
protecting and defending the profession of reporting
and our solemn obligations as officers of the court
and guardians of the record.**



Shop at the CCRA Store!



Mini Mouse = \$25



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CCRA Adopts NCRA Guidance on Gift Giving Rules

Gift giving in all states has reached an all-time high and is a hot topic among reporters. As reporters we are held to the strict guidelines of the California Court Reporters Board Professional Code of Ethics. Unfortunately, nonreporter firm owners are held to a different standard than firm owners who are reporters. Nonreporter firm owners are not in jeopardy of discipline from the Court Reporters Board or having their reporter's license subject to revocation. CCRA is working together with the Court Reporters Board to level the playing field for all reporters and firm owners.

NCRA's NewsFlash states, "NCRA first tackled these questions in 1993 when it amended the Code of Professional Ethics to include, as Provision 8, language prohibiting '...giving, directly or indirectly, any gift, incentive, reward or anything of value to attorneys, clients, witnesses, insurance companies or any other persons or entities associated with the litigation, or to the representatives or agents of any of the foregoing, except for items that do not exceed \$100 in the aggregate per recipient each year...' The Association held that the practice of giving valuable items to attorneys, their staffs, or their clients undermined the integrity of the reporting profession by raising questions about reporters' neutrality."

"Last March, in response to member requests, the Board of Directors asked the Committee on Professional Ethics to consider these matters and determine if Provision 8 is still relevant. Following extensive discussion at the committee and Board levels, NCRA has issued a new COPE advisory opinion, No. 45, to provide additional guidance on the subject of gift giving. Although the \$100 limit remains in place, this new document provides additional clarity to this longstanding policy."

"First, the PAO makes clear that when COPE determines whether a gift violates the Code, it will look to the fair market value of the gift, not the cost of the



gift to the reporter giving the gift. (This approach is consistent with ethics practices in other professions and governmental agencies.) Second, all cash and cash equivalent gifts (i.e., gift cards, gas cards, etc.) are prohibited, regardless of the amount. Finally, the PAO now explicitly states that a gift includes 'points' or 'credits' that may be exchanged by the recipient for something of value."

CCRA wholeheartedly endorses NCRA's Advisory Opinion No. 45 Included Below

NCRA Guidance on Gift Giving Rules (Provision No. 8)

Statement of Facts

The NCRA Board of Directors asked the Committee on Professional Ethics to provide practical guidance on the gift giving restrictions of Provision No. 8, which states in part that "A Member shall ... Refrain from giving, directly or indirectly, any gift, incentive, reward or anything of value to attorneys, clients, witnesses, insurance companies or any other persons or entities associated with the litigation, or to the representatives or agents of any of the foregoing, except for (1) items that do not exceed \$100 in the aggregate per recipient each year."

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CCRA Adopts NCRA Guidance on Gift Giving Rules

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Discussion

Purpose of the Provision: The Association adopted the restrictions contained in Provision No. 8 because the practice of giving items of value to attorneys, clients, or their staff could create in the eyes of the public the appearance that the reporter or firm holds some partiality or favoritism toward the recipient. As such, these practices undermine and dilute the integrity of the reporting profession and the status of the reporter as neutral and impartial officer of the court.

What is a Gift?

As in the rules governing the United States Congress, the term “gift” is defined broadly to include any item, gratuity, favor, entertainment, hospitality or other item having monetary value. This includes “points” or “credits” that may be exchanged by the recipient for something of value.

From its adoption in 1993, Provision No. 8 has recognized that gifts of nominal value, such as pens, pencils, coffee mugs and other advertising paraphernalia or modest forms of meals and entertainment do not compromise the reporter or firm’s appearance of impartiality and are permissible.

What is the Value of a Gift?

The size of a gift is measured by its retail or fair market value. That is, what the recipient would reasonably expect to pay if they were to purchase the gift for themselves from generally accessible sources. The actual cost incurred by the firm or individual providing the gift is irrelevant.

What is the \$100 Aggregate Limit?

Such gifts that do not exceed \$100 in aggregate value, per recipient, per year are considered nominal and are permissible.

Items with a value of less than \$10 do not count toward the annual limit.

Cash or cash-equivalents (e.g.; gift cards, Starbucks cards, gas cards, etc.) of whatever size are not allowed under any circumstance.

These aggregate limits apply to the individual person who is the recipient and beneficiary of the gift.

Pro Bono Services Allowed

Provision No. 8 also recognizes an exception allowing for members to provide pro bono services as defined by the “NCRA Guidelines for Professional Practice” or by applicable state and local laws, rules and regulations.

Adhering to the Spirit of the Rule

Members must adhere to the spirit as well as the letter of the rule regarding gift giving and avoiding the appearance of impropriety. For example, to repeatedly give gifts valued at under \$10 to the same recipient in order to exceed the \$100 aggregate limit would violate the spirit of the provision and hence be impermissible. Elaborate or complicated schemes to obfuscate the value of gifts offered or to direct gifts to a single recipient through different staff members from the same firm in order to exceed the limits of Provision No. 8 would similarly violate the spirit of the rule and be impermissible.

Complaint Process

Allegations of violations of Provision No. 8 of the Code will be considered and adjudicated using the standard procedures and due process protections contained in the COPE Complaint Procedures.

<http://ncraonline.org/AboutNCRA/cope/Complaint/>

The Committee on Professional Ethics may find a violation of the Code based upon the above factors.

Pursuant to the Complaint Procedures and NCRA’s Constitution and Bylaws, following the filing and consideration of a complaint, the Committee shall prepare a written decision containing its findings of fact and conclusions. It may issue a cautionary letter, warning or statement of advice to the Member, require remedial ethics training, order that the Member be reprimanded, or determine that the Member be suspended or expelled from the Association, depending upon the severity of the violation, prior history and other relevant circumstances.

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CCRA Adopts NCRA Guidance on Gift Giving Rules

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NCRA is extremely sensitive to its obligation to ensure that nothing in the Code infringes upon a member's ability to make independent business decisions or otherwise raises antitrust concerns. By way of clarification, the Committee notes that Provision No. 8 is not designed to prevent or deter members' practices relating to volume or price discounting of their reporting services. The purpose of the gift giving restrictions is to discourage practices that in the past have undermined the critical role court reporters play as impartial and neutral officers of the court, not to inhibit legitimate forms of price competition. These restrictions are similar in scope and nature to those placed on other professions both within and outside the legal field. These restrictions have been in place since 1993 and have been reviewed by the U. S. Federal Trade Commission. NCRA satisfied the FTC that the reasonable limits the provision places upon the profession are appropriate.

This Advisory Opinion No. 45 Amends and Supersedes Advisory Opinion No. 27

THIS PUBLIC ADVISORY OPINION REFLECTS THE STATUS OF THE LAW IN MOST JURISDICTIONS. MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED TO CONFORM TO THE ACCEPTED PRACTICES SET FORTH IN THIS PUBLIC ADVISORY OPINION TO THE EXTENT THAT SUCH PRACTICES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR OWN APPLICABLE STATE AND LOCAL LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS.





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Members, We Need You!

By Geri Bunch, Support or Student Chair

Officials, Freelancers, Captioners or CART reporters, the Each One Reach One Mentoring program needs more mentors.

CCRA's mentoring program has been active for many years now, and we have more students requesting mentors than we have mentors. This is your opportunity to give back to your profession. All you have to do is remember what it was like to be a student, how hard you worked to get where you are today, and what it felt like to have the opportunity to speak to a "real" working reporter.

To apply, please go to the Web site, www.cal-ccra.org, and click on the "For Students" tab and look for the Mentoring program. Please take a few minutes to fill out the online application to become a mentor. This program also has an outline of what is expected of the mentor and the student.

When the requests for a mentor come in, Dina Lossone-Lidis of the "Support Our Students" Committee will match you up with a student. She will check in with you periodically to make sure that you and your student are connecting, ensuring the program is running smoothly. Students have expressed how much they appreciate the help and encouragement their mentors are giving them.

Thank you for your willingness to help further the profession by supporting our students.



Skunk Deodorizing Shampoo

By Geri Bunch

I know many of us have dogs who are curious and have been on the wrong end of a skunk in our lifetimes.

This mixture is amazing and completely neutralizes the skunk smell within in minutes of bathing. Also, the ingredients are usually readily available in one's home and it's much cheaper than the over-the-counter shampoos that can be purchased at a pet store.

SKUNK DEODORIZING SHAMPOO

The remedy used by skunk researchers:

- 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide
- 1/2 cup baking soda
- 1 Tbsp. Liquid dish soap

Mix together and apply to your wet dog, work into the fur well; a sponge is recommended around the muzzle and eyes. Thoroughly rinse your animal after shampooing. Reserve a little shampoo in case a spot was missed and needs reapplying.





Top 20 Internet Videos

Q. I replaced my old printer with a new one. Now, when I try to print, my computer still thinks the old printer is the one to use. My new printer was installed properly and I can see it listed, but how do I make sure that is the printer my computer uses?

A. You need to tell your computer which printer is your default, meaning the printer it should use whenever it receives a print command. To do this, click Start > Settings > Printers. You'll see your old and new printer icons displayed. Right-click the printer that you want to establish as your default printer, which in this case is your new printer.

On the menu that appears, click to place a check mark next to Set Printer as Default, then close the Printers window. Your new printer will spring to life the next time you have something to print.

Q. I bought a new keyboard that I'm not used to, so I keep hitting the CAPS LOCK key accidentally. I know there is a way to make the computer beep when I do that, but I can't remember how that's done. Can you help, Mr. M?

A. The ToggleKeys feature is what you're looking for and you can find it by going to Control Panel > Accessibility Options. On the Keyboard tab, place a check mark beside Use ToggleKeys. Windows will emit a high-pitched sound when the CAPS LOCK is enabled, which is not unlike

the sound I make when I discover that I've BEEN TYPING IN ALL CAPS. It will emit a lower-pitched beep when it is turned off. The same holds true for the NUM LOCK and SCROLL LOCK keys, though nobody ever uses the SCROLL LOCK key.

If you're using Windows Vista, go to your Control Panel, then click Ease of Access > Make the Keyboard Easier to Use. Place a check mark beside Turn on ToggleKeys.

Q. Sometimes when I'm trying to install software, I get a message that tells me to disable my anti-virus protection first. Following your recommendation, I'm using the free Moon Secure (Beta) (<http://tinyurl.com/5n2fs7>) anti-virus, but I can't figure out how to temporarily disable it. I love your newsletter. I always learn something new.

A. You can temporarily disable any anti-virus program by right-clicking its little icon in the System Tray, located in the lower right-hand corner of your screen. From the menu that appears, click Exit or Quit. Other programs may use the word Close or Stop or Disable, but the 'Net effect is the same.

There may be an additional prompt that asks you to confirm your action. When the anti-virus icon disappears from the System Tray, your anti-virus program is disabled. You can start it again via Start > Programs and launch it manually, or restart your computer to reactivate it.

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Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em) Sites of the Month

Musicoverly: Mood Radio

A novel, interactive site that plays music based on the mood of the user. Click the site's graphical iPod-like console that features two mood scales that range from "Energetic" to "Calm" vertically, and "Dark" to "Positive" horizontally. No "Surly" or "Hostile," so I was out of luck. Click to include or exclude specific genres of music, plot a point along the timeline from the 1950s to the 2000s, then sit back and listen. Hint: There is nothing like a snappy, toe-tapping Gregorian chant to brighten up one's day. www.musicoverly.com

Vaudeville!

Vaudeville represents the true beginning of popular American entertainment, long before Britney came along and ruined everything. Don't believe the vicious rumors that vaudeville is dead; it can still entertain you on the virtual stage today, thanks to this tribute site. Here you can read about the amazing acts, savvy showmen, bold entrepreneurs, and the entire history of the vaudeville movement. If you prefer, sit back, relax,

and listen to recordings of sketches and songs, or watch videos of vintage acts. Historical minutia: The word "vaudeville" comes from the French Chanson du vau de Vire or "Song of the Vale of Vire," a valley near Calvados, France, noted for satirical folk songs. (I'll bet you didn't know this was going to be so educational. I apologize. It won't happen again.)

<http://tinyurl.com/3xd74y>

Viral Video Chart

No need to search Google Video (<http://video.google.com>) and YouTube (www.youtube.com) for the best videos, when you can view the cream of the video crop from one location. Think of this as a digital-age version of the "Top 20 Countdown," a daily listing of the top 20 Internet videos. www.viralvideochart.com

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What CCRA's Support Our Students Committee Does for Students:

By Geri Bunch, Support our Students Chair

Each One Reach One Mentoring Program

For many years, CCRA members have been providing mentoring for students through this mentoring program. Students who need encouragement and some guidance are quickly matched up with a volunteer from our association who e-mails the student, and the mentor provides the encouragement that the student needs. This program is monitored and gives students and mentors the opportunity for feedback if their matchup is working or not working.

Sponsor a Student Membership

Each year, very generous members send in an extra donation for a student to become a member. Those certificates are sent to the schools and distributed by them to 180 to 200 wpm level students. By sending in the certificate, a student becomes a member for a year. This benefits them because they have to be a member to qualify for the scholarship and for sponsorship to the annual convention. Additionally, students then receive the "CCRA Online" publication and can take advantage of other member benefits.

Scholarships

For the past several years, the SOS Committee has judged essay entries for the one, sometimes two, \$500 scholarships that are awarded. Scholarships are given to students in the 160 – 180 wpm and 180 – 200 wpm

levels if they qualify and are selected to be the winner. To qualify, a student has to be a member in good standing with their school, be a member of CCRA, and write a one-page essay highlighting the qualities it takes to be a successful reporter. The state's local CR associations continually contribute to this fund.

Sponsorship to the Convention

Every year, we have members who want to see students have a chance to attend our convention. Their benevolence has made it possible. A complete and informative student track is offered which culminates in a Mock CSR. There is also an opportunity for students to meet working reporters and CCRA Board members during our social gatherings. Most students have had a wonderful time and come away energized for their future careers.

Ask a Reporter

Questions are asked and answered from the "Ask a Reporter" tab on our Web site. Students frequently write questions asking about online programs, whether this will still be a profession in 10 years, which schools have the best pass rate, coming from another state and qualifying here, etc. Responses are given within 48 hours, which helps students make informed decisions.



Congratulations! California's Newest Reporters

Dawn Henson – Galt
Alyssa Castillo – Ripon
Monique Flores – Los Angeles
Carrie Lamontagne – Aliso Viejo
Arcelia Dropulic – Fontana
Amanda Martella – Armona
Piper Simpson – Costa Mesa
Shannon McKeighan – Brea
Deanna Deremo – Cathedral City
Marcia McEntee – Huntington Beach
Lisa Makowski – Henderson, NV
Clay James Frazier – Murrieta

Teresa Felix – Shafter
Candice Crosetti Brown –
Beverly Hills
Brenda Nevarez – Los Angeles
Kele Smith – Las Vegas, NV
Krystal Curry-Emrick –
Garden Grove
Kasey Mobley – Riverside
Sophia Washington –
Rancho Santa Margarita
Tawyna Pierce – Visalia
Laura Iwai – Rosemead

Isela Chavez – Santa Ana
Jacquelyn Armendariz –
Moreno Valley
Grace K. Kim – Northridge
Anne Klunder – Fresno
Candice Andino –
Huntington Beach
Dominic Lamar – Clovis
Tameka Jones – San Diego
Karen Aligo - Fullerton
Seth Allen Battle – Fresno

Pun Intended!!!

1. The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. An explosion in a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
10. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
11. Atheism is a nonprophet organization.
12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway.
One hat said to the other, "You stay here, I'll go on a head."
13. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
14. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: "Keep off the Grass."
15. A small boy swallowed some coins and was taken to a hospital.
When his grandmother telephoned to ask how he was, a nurse said, "No change yet."
16. A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
17. The short fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
18. A sign in the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra practice room read,
"WHAT WE NEED IS MORE SAX AND VIOLINS."™
19. The man who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
20. A backward poet writes inverse.
21. In democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.
22. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
23. Don't join dangerous cults: Practice safe sects!