

VOLUME 13 | ISSUE 8

# CCRA

California Court Reporters Association

C C R A O N L I N E



Photo: Stacie Parsons, The Wave Girl | Page 5  
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California Court Reporters Association

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## 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.

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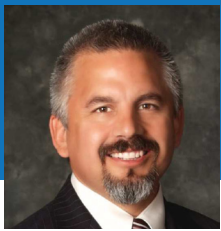
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# BOOT CAMP, STUDENTS, AND THE GIFT OF GIVING

Carlos Martinez, CSR, RPR, CMRS  
President, CCRA

Merry Christmas. This is the time of year, not only because of Christmas but also because we're closing in on the end of another year, that many of us, well, probably all of us, take time to look back on how our year has progressed. If you're like most people, you can't believe it is already late December of 2013. 2013...think about that. Where has all of the time gone? How did the year go by so quickly? Did I accomplish anything that I started out to do? Did I make a difference?

If the answer to any of those questions leaves you wishing that you had done more, it's not too late to start. And I will tell you at the end of this article how you can give back.

Right now, 135 students are nervously awaiting the results of their CSR exam. For them, Christmas is a time of anticipation, anxiousness, and some fretting. I remember what it was like when I took the test for the second time and had to expect my results at Christmas time. It was a tough season, but it ended up being filled with joy, only to have me completely fall on my face the first time I had to turn a transcript in two weeks later. As anyone reading this knows, there are a lot of things that school does not prepare us to do upon receipt of our CSR license.

CCRA has developed a seminar to help out recently licensed court reporters, as well as those that are waiting for their results from the November test and will begin working in January, get the knowledge necessary to be successful in this career field. But this seminar is not only for them. It's also for any reporters that may have been laid off and those that are just looking for a change due to the unrest in the official arena and would like to transition into CART and broadcast captioning. To help do this, CCRA has created BOOT CAMP, a comprehensive, one-day seminar in Burbank, California, that will touch on everything that a new reporter and a transitioning reporter will need to know to hit the ground running.

CCRA is not only trying to make registering for this seminar as inexpensive for the attendees as possible, charging just \$89 for the seminar, but CCRA is also offering rides from Northern and Central California on a chartered bus at the cost of \$75 to cut down on the expense of travel. This is half the cost of a plane ticket and a fraction of the cost of gas.

This isn't all that CCRA has done for our profession this year. At this past November's CRB meeting in Sacramento, Christy Cannariato, Abby Waller, and Carole Browne were in attendance on behalf of CCRA's members. During this meeting, Christy Cannariato spoke on behalf of CCRA urging the CRB to add CCRA's proposed language that would place any discipline and responsibility for wrongdoing by an agency, wrongdoing that is completely out of the freelancer's hands, back on the agency. We were disappointed that the CRB did not accept our language, but what they have done is begin to take steps towards remedying this situation. We will continue to work on this issue and do whatever we can to help protect your profession.

As I mentioned above, nearly 135 students are waiting anxiously for their CSR test results. For them, their Santa Claus is dressed in a postal worker's uniform. CCRA was at the CSR exam in November talking with these students, listening to their concerns, and trying to assuage their fears. You'll read in this month's edition an article written by Stacie Parsons, or better known at the CSR test as the "Wave Girl." She'll tell you about how she turned a machine failure into a positive life experience. I had the great opportunity to meet and talk with Stacie at the post-test reception that CCRA held for students, teachers, and staff. She truly impressed me with her resiliency and strength and has shown through this that she has the maturity and the mettle to be a good court reporter.

So now is your chance to give. CCRA's BOOT CAMP is on January 11th at the Pickwick Gardens in Burbank. When CCRA was at the CSR test, every student that we talked to wanted to attend BOOT CAMP. I'm asking you to help make that a reality. A gift from you of \$89 will allow one of these students that chance to hit the ground running by attending this seminar. You will be the reason that they understand what will be required of them when they enter the courtroom or sit down to take a deposition. If the \$89 isn't what you would feel like gifting, the \$75 bus fare would be another way for you to help ensure their attendance at BOOT CAMP. If you feel more comfortable giving less, whatever you can give will help to get a new CSR to the Pickwick. We were all students once. Let's help to strengthen our profession by helping those that are coming up behind us to get the skills necessary to walk into their first job on the first day of their new career with confidence and a little bit of swagger.

On behalf of all of us here at the California Court Reporters Association, I wish you and your family a safe, happy, and joyful Christmas.

# BOOT CAMP UPDATE

By Christy Cannariato



In the last issue, I wrote about designing BOOT CAMP and how nervous I was that no one would register. Well, that proved to be needless worry because people are registering left and right. We may even have to cap registration to ensure everyone gets the optimal experience. And here I was imagining I'd be standing out front of BOOT CAMP with a handwritten sign flagging random people down like school kids do for car wash fund raisers.

Maybe you've even heard CCRA is offering to charter a bus to bring Northern and Central California reporters to BOOT CAMP as easily and inexpensively as possible. For \$75 you get a round-trip plus a great opportunity to make friends and network. I am fortunate to live 15 minutes from Burbank, but I'm actually kind of jealous I don't get to ride along.

But what touches me most are little random acts of kindness, like this one. Gerie Bunch, CCRA's Vice President Freelancers and longtime chair of the Support Our Students Committee, called Bryan College in Gold River and told Chris Coughlin that she wanted to sponsor a student who had taken the CSR exam in November. Chris recommended Amelia Castro, who graduated in August and has passed both legs of the written exams, and feels really good about how she did on the CSR skills exam.

Upon receiving Gerie's sponsorship offer, Amelia replied, "I was SO hopeful to attend the BOOT CAMP. But I am a single mom of twin boys...so with Christmas, things are hard, especially while being totally unemployed until I get

my CSR results! I had basically written off the Boot Camp." And, "I was blown away when my teacher emailed me to let me know that, not only does a reporter want to sponsor a stranger, but also that she would be recommending me for the sponsorship. Tell the world about Gerie's generosity and what a difference it makes in my life!"

Amelia will be on that bus to BOOT CAMP.

*Hit the ground running  
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# THE WAVE GIRL

By Stacie Parsons

The CSR is the biggest test of every court reporting student's life. We work so hard to get there. We fail more tests than we pass; but once we pass those qualifiers, we never imagine getting to the CSR and failing because of a machine malfunction. I was told that you have to have your machine on "test mode" in order to take the CSR.

I got in the testing room, started taking down the dictation, and walked out with the biggest smile on my face. I knew that I nailed it and was so excited to start transcribing.

I completely forgot I was in "test mode" and ended the dictation like I always did to read in my notes on my computer. I got in the transcription room and plugged in my writer to my laptop. To my surprise, there was no memory to read into my computer. I unplugged my machine and plugged it back in. Once again, there was nothing. This was the point where I started to panic, tears started welling up in my eyes, and my heart sank.

A proctor saw the fear in my eyes and came over to help me. He asked if there was any type of backup memory I could try. The Wave writer has no backup memory, no SD card, no paper notes, and there was nothing anyone could do to help bring back that test. My test was gone. I was devastated because I knew I passed that test, so I started packing up and left the room.

Two reporters ran over to me before I could get on the elevator to leave. They did everything in their power to help me -- they even called Stenograph. There was nothing anyone could do. I failed the biggest, most important test of my life by having my machine on "test mode" and hitting the "end" button. When you end the file on "test mode," it completely erases your memory, and there's no way of getting it back.

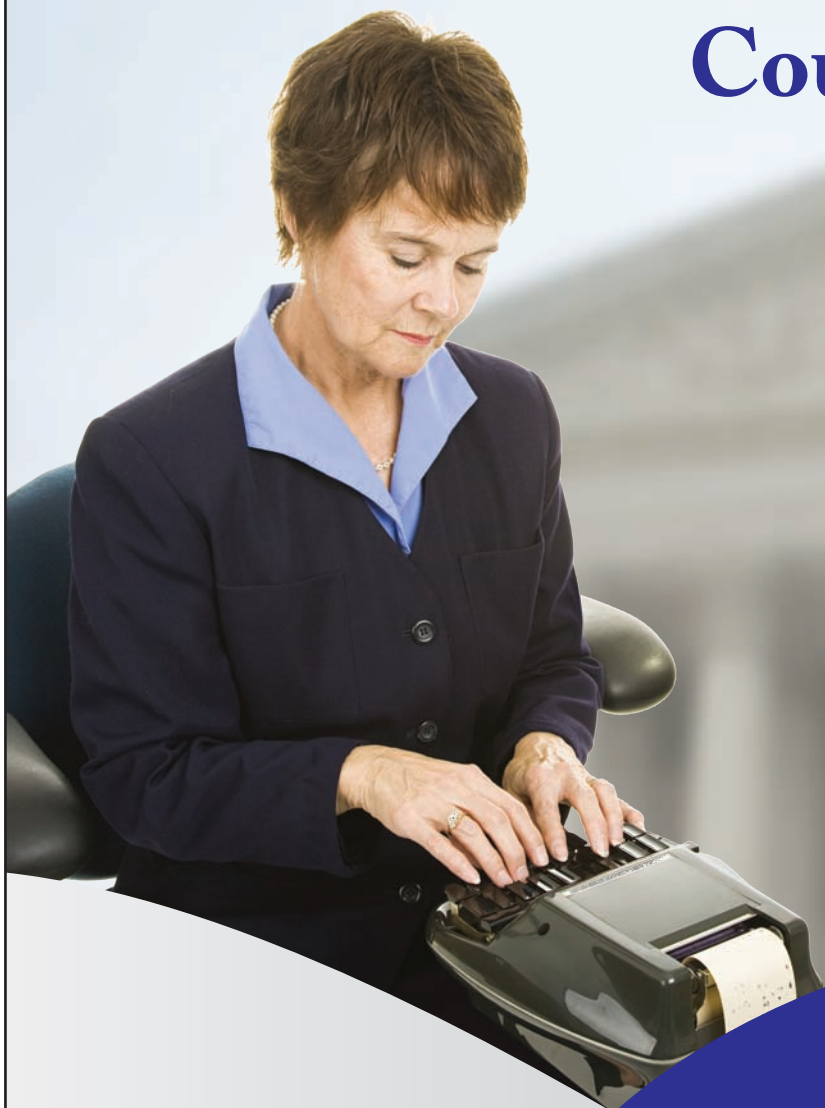
I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. Why these things happen, we may never understand at this moment. There is always a reason for things happening, and I believe that this happened to me for a reason. I was blessed by the number of reporters who came to my rescue, offered their assistance, and the opportunities that have come my way. If this never happened to me, I never would have met Carlos Martinez, the CCRA President, and a number of other reporters that helped me in so many ways.

I learned a lot from this experience and have been blessed because of it. I will not use my machine on "test mode" again. This event taught me that court reporting is the best profession to be in. When I was a complete wreck, the support I received was unbelievable, especially from my teachers. Thank you to those who helped me. I will be forever grateful.



**CCRA's Reception  
at the CSR Exam  
in November 2013**

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# SAGE COLLEGE'S CSR SEND-OFF

On November 13, 2013, CCRA Secretary-Treasurer Christy Cannariato appeared as a guest speaker at Sage College – San Diego for a graduation celebration. Being honored were Nick Steckel, days away from taking the California CSR skills exam, and Rachel Freischlag, CSR, who had recently become a CSR and was missing her own party because she was reporting a deposition.

Before taking a dozen questions from the audience, Christy gave advice on mastering test anxiety, the importance of mentorship, and the necessity of giving back to the court reporting community. Administrator Tiffany Lewis presented Christy with a beautiful glass paperweight and a card signed by the faculty.

Nick gave a heartfelt speech thanking his family and fellow students for helping get him through school and thanked each of the teachers present.

Christy reported back to the CCRA Board that she briefly got choked up during her talk. At one point, "I was so moved at how supportive the Sage students and faculty were. I certainly didn't go to a school like that! There were probably 50-60 people in attendance, and through their questions and the attentiveness with which they listened to my ramblings, I could feel how much these people not only want a good job when they finish school, but they want to be a part of this profession that I love so much. It was powerful and a privilege to have been able to share it."



## REALTIME READY

By Christy Cannariato, Secretary-Treasurer of CCRA

Being realtime ready. That's the big thing lately; right? Absolutely! Whether you're fresh out of school or have been reporting for years, it is the future of our profession. We have to act now.

After visiting Argonaut Court Reporting School and Bryan College of Court Reporting in the last month and a half, it is something I, as a working official, could not stress enough; getting certified. Not only does it keep us on our toes with having goals to meet personally, but it is actually what is keeping our profession alive.

If you're coming out of school as a new reporter, you basically already have it in the bag to pass the CRR. You're used to taking tests in five- or ten-minute takes, even longer, you're used to the nerves that come along with test taking, and on top of that, you learned a realtime ready theory. No excuse, right?

That said, after I got out of school in 2007, I got my RPR but then didn't follow up on the CRR until years later when I was out of test practice. You could call it procrastination. Sure, officials write up to 290 WPM in court almost every day, but my nerves took over. It was

ridiculous! I finally passed the CRR, but it was not without determination.

I say this not to be discouraging, but rather to encourage. I have spoken to many long-time reporters and they were able to become realtime certified after a few years or even less by changing their writing to where they no longer had conflicts. Again, it was not without hard work, but well worth the outcome.

This past year, our official court reporters in Yolo County have started to provide realtime to our judges through an iPad with a wireless router connection. Not only are the judges thrilled to have the latest and greatest technology at their fingertips, but it brings perspective to what we as reporters provide in doing our job every day. It's certainly nice to be recognized, but even better to be appreciated for the perspective of what we reporters provide in doing our job every day. It's certainly nice to be recognized, but even better to be appreciated for what we do.

There is not time to sit back and watch while technology steps in; we have to grasp it and leap forward to use it to our benefit. The incentives for this certification are endless.





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# TAKING THE CSR EXAM

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by Jesse Pickelsimer

As a student that has taken what I believe to be the hardest test that I have ever taken in my whole life, I would like to share my experience about going to the November 15, 2013, CSR exam.

I should tell you, first of all, that this was not my first time taking the test. I have always cringed when people ask me how many times I've taken the test because I feel like people are judging me. It took me a while to realize that all of this self-doubt and sabotage was all my own doing. Nobody was judging me except for myself.

I remember like it was yesterday the very first time that I went to the machine portion of the exam. I remember having so many emotions going into it. I was excited at what my life was going to be like when I passed this last hurdle. I was excited to get to the next chapter of my life. I was excited that all of the hours of practice and studying were finally going to pay off. I'm sure you can imagine the devastation I felt when I received the results that meant I would have to go to the next exam.

As I was preparing for the next exam (and several more thereafter), I increasingly would get more and more anxious and doubtful about my skill and ability as the exam date would get closer and closer. The day of the exam I would always feel like I was going to throw up. I felt like everything was out of my control. And as soon as I would get in the dictation room, my fingers would just freeze up... except for the uncontrollable shaking from nerves.

Thankfully, I had a great support system. Among my family, my friends, my teachers, and my classmates, it was like I had my own cheerleading squad. They were great at lifting me back up and repeatedly told me that the next one would be mine and not to worry about it.

Unfortunately, it seems as though I got completely complacent with this idea of "the next one would be mine." Little did I know that I was completely sabotaging myself. I "just knew" that the next one would be mine, so now let me get on with my day. I completely got into this routine of "not worrying about it." I would go to school occasionally, but I had to work too. I felt like I didn't need to worry about it, though, because "the next one would be mine."

Fast forward to the summer of 2013. I discovered that now my passing grades that I had previously received on my English and Professional Practice exams were going to expire! This seemed to knock me out of complacency mode. I was like "What are you talking about? Expire???" I knew that it took three years for them to expire and that there was no way I had been at it for that long. Well, sure enough, it had been that long. I had been to every exam that was offered in that time period without fail.

This really seemed to light a fire under me and made me realize that something had to be done. I was really mad at

myself for allowing this to happen. I really had to figure out what the problem was. I went back to school full time and really started examining my writing. I was transcribing every day. I was pushing my goal speed every day. Outside of school, I also did some things to improve my mental state. I started going on hikes on a regular basis and started doing yoga to work on breathing techniques.

So, now, here I am on the way to the hotel in Sacramento for another attempt at the machine portion of the exam. It's the night before the exam, and I feel really strong and confident. I had just passed another qualifier at school the day before. I was definitely ready, but I knew I still had the task of keeping my nerves in check.

I did go to practice dictation for about an hour on Thursday night. But I also did some fun things too. I went to the CCRA table that they had set up in the hotel lobby. They were having a raffle, and I just had to win something! I also walked across the street and spent some time at the mall. I just did things to keep my brain occupied.

The next morning I got up and went out for a brisk walk in the cool air. I got the blood flowing and again just kept my brain occupied. I returned in time for a quick, 15-minute warm-up, and then it was time to start lining up for my test.

As we proceeded into the dictation room, I really made a conscious effort to not let any negative thoughts enter my brain. I kept telling myself, "You got this. Just do it." I kept focusing on my breathing. I was looking all around the room just to keep myself busy. I was laughing and engaging with the readers as they were telling jokes. All of this also was to simply keep my brain occupied.

Then the test started. It was read at the perfect pace. I didn't have any issues with hearing. I didn't have any issues with distractions from people around me. I'm breathing. My fingers haven't frozen up. Everything was going perfectly. I was focusing on every word that was said and not allowing myself to have any wandering thoughts. It seemed that as soon as the test started, it was over. I was super excited because I knew I didn't even have any drops. But I'm still trying to keep my cool because I know things can still go wrong if my printer doesn't work or something atrocious like that.

We go back to the transcription room, I pull in my notes, and bam! Everything was there. I finish transcribing, printing, proofing, get signed out by the proctor, and turn everything in. I pack up my stuff, walk back out into the lobby and get greeted by my teacher and some classmates. This is when I completely lose it. I'm super excited because I know that I just passed this test. I think to myself, "Why did you wait so long to do that?" I'm not sure what the answer is, but I'm just glad that I had the perseverance to keep at it. Never give up on your dreams!

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# BRYAN SCHOOL VISIT

By Carole Browne, RPR, CSR

If you were a student struggling through court reporting school today, would you be interested in knowing if jobs exist in your chosen field? Among the court reporting schools in California is Bryan College, which trains future court reporters for prospective jobs in depositions, the courtroom, closed captioning, and public hearings. Court reporting students are concerned about the availability of future jobs following their extensive training.

On November 20, 2013, CCRA board members Abby Waller and I visited the court reporting students and staff at Bryan College in Gold River. The purpose of the visit was to encourage students about potential future job prospects and the ever-expanding need for court-reporting skills.

Abby stressed the importance of developing strong realtime skills and how students should consider taking their national certification exams as soon as they're eligible, pointing out the income-earning potential for those who offer realtime

services to clients. The students were eager to ask questions and learn more about the career they're pursuing.

Abby and I also described CCRA's mentoring program and invited students to request a mentor, someone to encourage them through their schooling, as well as provide valuable insights and guidance into the workforce once they've passed the CSR exam. Passing the exam is important to these students, but it is not the final entry step into the fields of court reporting, depositions, CART and captioning. Mentoring helps these "new recruits" into the field and gives them insight into challenges they will face.

CCRA is currently in need of mentor volunteers to fill the ever-growing number of student requests. At the Bryan visit alone, 15 students signed up to be mentees. Please consider volunteering to be a mentor. You'll be providing a valuable service to future court reporters as well as the industry.



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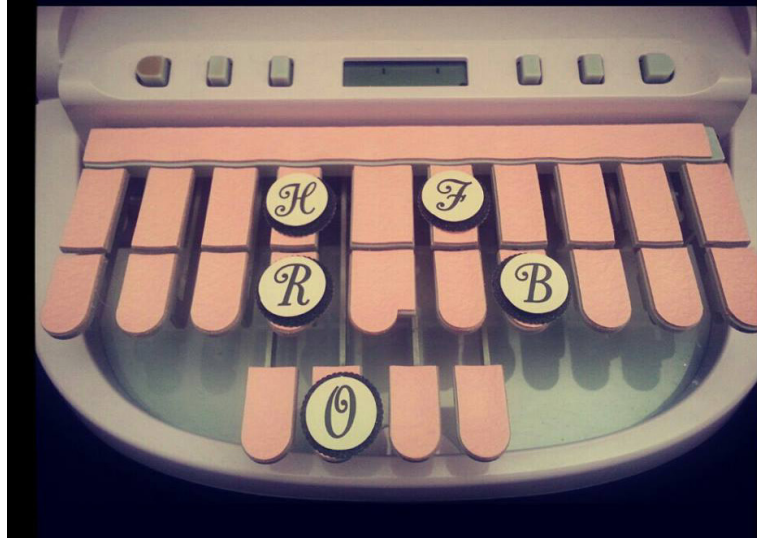
By Regina DeMotive, CSR

I am sad to say that many of you reading this don't know a thing about broadcast captioning. This is a weakness in our schooling system that I'm hoping will change in the future.

Broadcast captioning, as well as other career choices within this field, should be taught in all court reporting schools from the very beginning. Speaking for myself, I did not learn about CART or captioning until I was in the 180 speed class. I don't know where my career path would have gone if I had known about CART/captioning sooner, but I know that I would have appreciated learning about the field choices from my court reporting school rather than by word of mouth from another student.

So what IS broadcast captioning? Basically, a broadcast captioner provides real-time closed captioning for television shows such as news, sports, weather, and other programming. Broadcast captioners are connected to an encoder through specific captioning software. The encoder connects to the specific news station's encoder that the captioner is connected to which allows the captions to stream out to the television. Many people believe that the captioning is done by a computer. They are amazed when I tell them it's a person captioning live! Mostly, captioners produce closed-captions for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. But recently, more hearing people are using captions as well, such as in a gym while working out.

Captioners are writing at high speeds on a continuous basis. The news anchors have much information to get through in a limited amount of time which causes them to speak at a high rate of speed. Captioners are required to prep before every show to guarantee the highest accuracy rate. Prep time varies depending on how long that specific captioner has been assigned to that specific station or event. Dictionary building is recommended



while you're still in school. It's never too early to start building your dictionary! I feel CART helped me to hone in on my vocabulary. Broadcast, on the other hand, is a lot of worldly vocabulary. The sooner you familiarize yourself with both, the better. Watch the news or read a newspaper (who does that anymore?!), or read online articles about different news stories in other countries. I admit that I was not an avid reader before I became a broadcast captioner. It did make my career choice more difficult, but it was not out of reach. I immediately began learning vocabulary and phrases I never knew existed. So next time you watch the news and a world story is on, pay attention!

In closing, I will give you all a little fun challenge: Turn on the closed-captioning on your television. Watch for a few minutes and even try writing it, if you're in high speeds or out in the field. It's not as easy as it looks. But take a moment to reflect on all the words the captioner is getting RIGHT! Even with a few mistakes here and there, the captioner is still over 98-99%+ accurate. Remember that no one is perfect. It takes a high level of skill for this very unique and rewarding career. Captioners work very hard to maintain their high-quality captions. They love what they do! Make sure you follow your heart in your career path. You have to wake up every morning loving what you do! I sure do!

# CALIFORNIA'S FISCAL OUTLOOK

By Brooke Ryan, VP of officials

On November 20th, Mac Taylor, California's Legislative Analyst, held a news conference on California's fiscal outlook and I, as CCRA's vice president of officials, was in attendance.

The good news is that under current policies, there is a \$5.6 billion projected reserve at the end of 2014-15. This is better news than was anticipated in the governor's May revise. The increase is due to a number of issues, including passage of Proposition 30 and the improving economy. California is looking at surpluses for the next six years – even after the temporary taxes under Proposition 30 expire.

The legislative analyst was speaking directly to the legislature as they will make decisions about the State's 2014-2015 budget in the coming months. He presented a "strategic approach to allocating operating surpluses, while the state's budgetary

condition is stronger than at any point in the past decade." He suggested a three-prong approach: First, to put money aside for a strong reserve; second, pay down unfunded liability; third, the legislative analyst's office also "allocated amounts each year for the state to provide inflationary increases for existing programs and /or to create new commitments."

While things can change, the fact that the state is not operating at a deficit any longer is extraordinary. That's where CCRA and YOU come in. We will be out in full force this year lobbying for an increase in money designated directly for court reporters. So please keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities to help direct funds back to the courts and court reporters specifically.

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## Change Folder Icons

**Q. Is there a way to create custom folder icons or pictures associated with folders? I don't necessarily like the ones that appear by default and wondered if I could change them?**

A. Right-click a folder that displays an icon you find repulsive and choose Properties > Customize tab. Under Folder Pictures, select Choose File or Choose Pictures, depending on the version of Windows.

Browse to a location on your hard drive that has a picture or icon (.ICO file) you want to use, click to select it and choose Open, followed by OK. Presto! Your folder will display your selected picture and life, as you know it, can continue.

**Q. I forgot my WiFi network password and I'm in a panic. Is there any way to recover it? I'm using Windows 7 and I'm afraid if I shut down that I won't be able to get back online. Help!**

A. If you are still able to use your WiFi, you can view your saved password by clicking the wireless connection icon on the Taskbar, right-clicking the network you are connected to, then click Properties.

On the Security tab, one field will display the Network Security Key as a series of dots or asterisks. Below that will be a little check box to "Show Characters," which will then display the Network Security Key and your saved password.

If you cannot access it in this manner, most routers have a Reset button on the bottom or back of the router which will reset it to factory settings. You would then need to follow your router's set-up instructions from the manufacturer (which will either be in the printed material that came with your router, on the accompanying CD, or on the manufacturer's Web site) to configure the router as if it were brand new, and assign it a new password in the process.

**Q. How can I confirm it so multiple start pages display in Firefox?**

A. When you delete a file from your Recycle Bin, the file is

still there and can be recovered. When you shred a file, the computer overwrites the saved information with random data. Although the file is still physically present, and still taking up the same amount of space, the information contained in the file is obliterated and cannot be recovered.

The primary reason for shredding is security. If you delete something and you don't want anyone to ever be able to access it again (think subpoena), shred it. Most free shredder programs, such as Eraser (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/eraser>), will make one pass, writing ones and zeros over the information. Industrial-strength, professional, no-fooling-around shredder programs will make one pass writing ones and zeros, then additional passes writing different characters in order to obfuscate (wow!) previously written information.

Government-level file-shredding standards generally mandate eight (8) passes over file data to be certain it is not recoverable

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

**Askpatient.com** - Launched by a physician in 2008, here you can access a database of patient opinions, comments and ratings as they relate to the effectiveness of various medications and contribute your own experiences and opinions. It also includes weekly consumer opinion polls on health care topics. The multiple-choice poll question I was asked when I visited the site was, "By what percentage has the taking of antidepressants increased in the past ten years?" I was too depressed to participate. Perhaps next time. [www.askpatient.com](http://www.askpatient.com)

**Ask Numbers** - Measurement conversion charts and converters for metric, Imperial and U.S. systems. In addition to conversion calculators, scientific calculators, definitions, abbreviations and formulae, the site also provides printable metric conversion tables and unit converters for commonly used items such as feet to hectometers, meters to perch, and the always useful kilometers to dekameters. [www.asknumbers.com](http://www.asknumbers.com)

**In Search of Myths and Heroes** - This site, which is based on the PBS program of the same name, focuses on four myths: The Queen of Sheba, Shangri-la, King Arthur and "The harder you swing, the farther the golf ball will go." Just kidding. The fourth myth is Jason and the Argonauts. (One of my favorite '50s rock groups.) This site has lots of interesting features and I particularly enjoyed the Living Legends Quiz, so you won't want to myth that. [www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes](http://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes)

**For more information about Mr. Modem's award-winning, weekly computer-help newsletter featuring personal answers to your questions by email, visit [www.MrModem.com](http://www.MrModem.com)**



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

by Candy Newland

When asked if I would be interested in writing a monthly column about what it's like to be a court-reporting student, I couldn't respond quick enough. I loved the idea from the very beginning. The notion of sharing my struggles and accomplishments with other students just thrills me. My plan is to communicate a bit about life as a student and what court reporting looks like through the eyes of a beginner.

On that note, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Candy Newland, and I am a current full-time court-reporting student at Humphreys College in Stockton, California. I started in the fall of 2011, and I am working on my 180s. My personal goal is to take the CSR exam next winter. Wow, I've never said that out loud before. But now that it's out, there's no taking it back. Next year it is.

As much as I'd like to say that school is my only focus, I also work, am married, have two young children, and volunteer one day a week at a deposition firm. The 3-day a week round trip car ride is 133 miles which gives a girl a LOT of time to think.

I believe school is about experiencing failure. I have felt how extremely frustrating and self-loathing this ride can be from one failed attempt after another. But I don't let it keep me down. I get up, dust myself off, and get

back behind my steno machine. I also believe school is about success! I know how it feels when my fingers finally take on a mind of their own and how wonderfully accomplished I feel after attaining something that I have been working on feverishly for weeks and even months on end. There is no greater feeling in school than seeing that "P" word on the top of your transcript. PASS! It makes every late night and early morning worth it.

Most importantly, I believe that above, below, and in between every success and every failure, school is about practice. Practice, practice, and practice some more. I'm on a three-week winter break from school right now, and all I can think about is practicing. Not enjoying my Christmas tree, not listening to my kids tell me about their Santa list, but practicing; even if it's only for 15 minutes at a time. I'm not saying I like it, but I know it's good for me; kind of like brussels sprouts.

Hmm, I think I have found the pearl of wisdom for this article. Practice is like eating brussels sprouts...Hah! I bet you can't wait to see what I have in store for you next month. On that note, I created a suggestion box for feedback and ideas about this monthly adventure. If you have questions, comments, or ideas to share with fellow students, I'd love to hear from you. You can email them to me at [borntobrief@gmail.com](mailto:borntobrief@gmail.com).

Until next month.....Happy Holidays.

## The November CSR Test

By Carlos Martinez

CCRA was on hand on November 14th and 15th at the Double Tree Hotel in Sacramento to interact with students taking the November CSR test. We were there to listen to, encourage, and to help calm the nerves, the fears, and the concerns of those taking the test. Being there gave us the chance to meet a lot of very bright students that have what it takes to become professional reporters.

During our time there, we raffled off compendiums, shirts, hats, lunch boxes, and gave away various CCRA items. We also signed up students for our Each One Reach One Mentoring Program. We talked with school administrators and CRB staff members.

After the test on Friday, CCRA hosted a reception at former CCRA board member Linda Hart's deposition firm. We had a terrific turnout, and the reception allowed us to talk with and get to know the students in a much more relaxed atmosphere, and it also gave the test takers a chance to blow off some steam after a stressful day.



# CARLOS AND THE GAVEL

By Rachel N. Passarella, CSR, RPR

Along with the Christmas spirit, this month brought with it the first Board of Directors meeting for the new Board of CCRA. Gathered together were new reporters, experienced reporters, retired reporters, lobbyists, former board members, and even two fantastically smart and involved students. The marathon of discussions began as we tackled topics of legislation, strategies, technology, and so much more. All day Saturday and almost all day Sunday, we spent every hour together giving 110% for each other, for ourselves, and for our fellow reporters.

As a new board member and a generally new reporter (2.5 years), I had no idea what to expect and didn't really know if I'd have anything to bring to the table. But, boy, was this fun! I felt a transformation within myself as the hours passed by. There were several times that I tried with all my might to understand and comprehend what was being said. And sometimes, you know, I just didn't. But that's when I asked some more knowledgeable colleagues on a break, "What did they mean when they were talking about this?" Turns out I wasn't as lost as I thought I was. After some affirmation from others that it was okay not to get everything, it's okay to say that I'm ignorant in this, but it's all about asking questions to move forward, my whole demeanor changed. I made sure to ask someone if I didn't understand what was going on. And I made sure to speak up when I had something to say. As the hours rolled by, I found myself being more and more confident in my thoughts and ideas, and I really feel like I spoke up a lot. What an honor to have a chance to put in my two cents with such an amazing and influential group of reporters!

Now, if you noticed the title of this article, I haven't gotten around to tying that in yet. Not only did we get a ton of work done, we had an amazing time socializing and laughing together. Saturday night was a fantastic dinner and holiday party with a gift exchange and lots of laughs. I will never forget some of the hilarity that ensued there. Mr. Carlos Martinez, our fearless leader this year, had a menacing little gavel with him at our meetings both days. He used it to call the meetings to order, mostly in a joking manner. Leave it to the chatty 20-something board member (me) to absolutely ignore that knock... knock... knock... as I continued to talk Saba's ear off at the table. Is there something on the roof? What the heck is that noise? I'm not quite sure how many times he smacked the table with that gavel before I realized he was trying to get me to shut up, but it sure gave us all a laugh when I looked up to everyone staring at me and Carlos with the gavel in the air.

In conclusion, being a new director on the Board for CCRA has been my greatest accomplishment so far in my career, my greatest challenge, and I'm having the most fun on this adventure! Just remember to take pride in your work, give back to your fellow reporters, have a ton of fun, and when you hear a weird, knocking, repetitive sound, check to see if Carlos has a gavel in his hand.





# CCRA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GEARS UP FOR 2014

By: Carolyn Dasher and Brooke Ryan

On Saturday, December 7th, the CCRA Legislative Council met to discuss the upcoming legislative priorities. Local associations from around the state are invited to participate and submit proposals related to issues affecting our reporting profession.

CCRA's lobbyists, Jim Cassie and Meghan Loper, gave a rundown of the climate in the Capitol.

The good news, no talk about more official layoffs and freelance reporters are still filling the civil courts. Audio recording has not reared its ugly head.

The statutes that were signed by the Governor last year take effect January 1st, including AB 648 which implements the \$30 fee earmarked for court reporter services for civil cases lasting an hour or less. These fees, once collected, will be sent back to the trial court which collected them, helping the local court retain or perhaps bring back civil calendar reporters.

There was a list of eight legislative priorities formulated by the Legislative Committee that were discussed this

weekend. The Orange County Superior Court Reporters Association added a ninth. These priorities cover all facets of the reporting profession, which is very exciting. Our Deposition Advisory Committee and CART/Captioning Task Force have been working hard on a number of these proposals.

Additionally, AB655, CCRA's current two-year Court Reporter Salary Fund bill, is being discussed by the Legislative Committee, as well as the Board of Directors, to see how we can bring more funding to the courts for court reporter services.

If you (and your extended family) are sending holiday cards out this year, please think about sending one to your Assembly Member and Senator, and include a written sentiment about how grateful you are for your profession and how reporting impacts the public by having a reliable record. Please click here to find your legislator: [www.legislature.ca.gov](http://www.legislature.ca.gov) and under "Find my District" click on the "Search for address" tab.

## In Memory of Sandra von Haenel

Sandra von Haenel, my colleague and dear friend, was born in Northampton, England, in 1948, and entered into celestial life on June 7, 2013, after many health challenges with cancer.

I had the pleasure of working with Sandi on the California Court Reporters Board, and sharing many stories of her adventures during breaks and lunches. At one point during a workshop we both attended, a heated discussion ensued regarding how to rewrite a portion of the CSR examination. After much discussion, I stated: "Well, let's ask Sandi. After all, she speaks the King's English." Sandi was quick to reply, "Bite your tongue, Dearie. It's the Queen's English!" All of us sitting around the table began to laugh so hysterically, it was necessary to take a break. This is but one example of her great sense of humor and exemplified what a genuine person she was.

Sandi was also an active participant with the Northern California Court Reporters' Association, as well as our very own California Court Reporters' Association. She certainly was an advocate for the court reporting profession and always was an outstanding example to anyone entering our career. Sandi attended Bryan College of Court Reporting, and worked for Capitol Court Reporters, as well as Diamond Court Reporters.

She and I shared many good times together during a lunch break at the United States Bankruptcy & District Court in Sacramento, and whenever I would see her at the office of Diamond Court Reporters. Her positive attitude and lovely outward demeanor made her a friend to everyone she ever met.

I will leave you with this thought: Sandra von Haenel was a woman of distinction and courage. I will miss her always, but will remember how much she meant to the court reporting profession, how much she enjoyed reporting, and what a dear friend she was to me.

- Eric L. Throne, CSR, RMR, CRR  
Vacaville, California



# PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF FREELANCERS BEFORE THE CRB

By Christy Cannariato

On November 19, 2013, CCRA Directors Carole Browne, Abby Waller, and I attended the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Court Reporters Board of California. This was the first meeting following the appointment by Governor Brown of the new Board members, Rosalie Kramm and John Liu.

The Board formed three task forces, two with regard to developing best practices on the subject of exhibit handling and interpreted depositions, and a third to explore the subject of digital or electronic signatures. CCRA is very pleased with this development and has volunteered to provide representatives to work on the task forces to ensure our profession is protected and educated on these matters.

The Board gave an update on the new gift-giving regulations that go into effect January 2014. The new regulation limits the value of allowable gifts to not more than \$100 per annum. Unfortunately, however, the restrictions can only be enforced against CSRs and California-based court reporting firms and not those from out of state, which incidentally have been the most egregious gift-giving violators. These regulations, therefore, are an important first step, but it is way too soon to declare victory until the out-of-state violators can be made to comply and the playing field can then be made even.

The Board then invited public comment on the proposed Scope of Practice Regulation. CCRA had previously requested changes in the language. Some of its changes were accepted, but I was disappointed that the Board has not accepted our language proposal that would clearly

delineate and clarify which duties are that of the court reporter and which duties are commonly performed by a deposition firm. I addressed the Board on behalf of CCRA during the public comment period and expressed our concerns on our members' behalf.

CCRA feels it is important that freelancers are protected from discipline for acts over which they have little or no actual control. While the CRB believes this new scope of practice will now give them the authority to enforce the rules against firms as well as against CSR licensees, the freelancer remains precariously at risk of discipline for acts or omissions of the deposition firms.

And that is where the real problem lies, because the proposed amended scope of practice would only be enforceable against California-based deposition firms. Therefore, in the case of work done on behalf of an out-of-state depo firm, the status quo will remain, and the freelancer remains the only one on the hook for a violation. We are asserting to the CRB this month that this clarification not only protects the freelancers but also the consumers, because it alerts the consumer that there is a division of duties, and that therefore they may be best served by hiring a California-based deposition firm for their depositions.

CCRA will continue to work to protect freelancers on this and other issues. It was a tremendous privilege to have an opportunity to speak to the Board on behalf of my fellow court reporters.

## Buttermilk & Herb Stuffing Muffins

4 tbsp. butter  
2 med onions, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
3 stalks celery, chopped  
1 tbsp. rosemary, crushed  
2 tbsp. fresh parsley, minced  
½ tsp. dry sage  
½ tsp. thyme  
½ tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. salt (or less if stuffing is salted)  
½ - ¾ c. dried cranberries  
¼ - ½ lb. cooked sausage, crumbled (optional)  
8 oz. mushrooms, chopped

½ c. white wine  
½ c. chicken broth  
1 12 oz/14 oz pkg. of stuffing  
2 c. low-fat buttermilk  
2 lg. eggs

Heat oven to 425; prepare muffin tins with spray or butter.

Sauté onions, garlic and celery in butter until tender, about 4 minutes; add the spices, cranberries & sausage and stir; add the mushrooms and cook 5 minutes; add the wine and broth and bring to a simmer. Add the stuffing, buttermilk and eggs. Let stand 5 minutes. Mound in muffin tins and cook 25 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes. These are a very yummy alternative to stuffing the bird. Serving suggestions: Add your favorite dried fruits like raisins, dates, or cranberries, or substitute almond, cashew or sunflower nut butter for the peanut butter in this high energy breakfast and snack-time staple.



# YOU ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR DICTIONARY

By Jennifer Porto

I'm sure we can all agree: For every easy job, there is that one job that humbles us when we quickly realize that we will never have enough words in our dictionary, nor will we ever write fast enough.

My story begins on the first day of a new semester. With my first glance -- or whiff of the professor -- I knew this was not going to be a typical Bio 211 lecture class. The lanky professor kicked off his worn Birkenstocks as he unpacked his satchel of textbooks. Staring, I willed myself to look away. *Look away. Look away.* I couldn't. *Why does it smell like cinnamon and sweaty socks?* I couldn't take my eyes off of the brown cotton socks with snags where the buckles from his Birkenstocks rested. His frayed, multi-stained Levi's made me wonder if he had worn these jeans while foraging for wild mushrooms. His hair mimicked a shorter version of Einstein's.

The student and I made our introductions. He asked if I had ever captioned a biology class. "Of course, no problem." *Been there, done that, bought the T-shirt,* I thought. Math, biology, chemistry, and the like, are my favorite classes to caption. I was 100 percent confident in my dictionary -- well, until the professor began the Power Point presentation on the subjects to be covered during the semester. How many times have you been on a job and thought, "Why don't I have that word in my dictionary?"

The first time he said, "synapomorphy," my fingers FROZE! I thought, "Syn-nappy-what?" I sit up straighter. Words and syllables that I've never heard were whizzing past my ears like bullets in a combat zone. "Symplesiomorphy," SIPL/PHRAEUZ-what??????? "Autapomorphy," AUT-what-PHOR/TPAOE. I knew I had to drop, but he was speaking so quickly that there was not a clean place to pick it up again. This is about when my self-talk got the best of me. *He's talking so fast!* "Synapomorphy," hearing the word, I was repeating the syllables in my head as I cleanly stroked SEUPB/AP/PHOR/TPAOE. Scolding myself, *why don't I have a brief for "morpho?"* *What did he say?* "Clades," so I write KLAEUZ, *thankfully, I knew that word would come up.* "Cladogram," *okay, I can get this word to come up too.* Concentrating, I stroke, KHRAEUZ/O/TKPWRAPL. "Cladogram," *ugh, that'll have to be good enough.*

I'm no longer rhythmically writing, but pounding because my fingers feel like they have weights attached to them. I'm suddenly aware of the horrible acoustics in the auditorium. *Is that the acoustics or is he mumbling? He's mumbling.* My thoughts were frantic now. *Why is he walking around in holey socks? Stop mumbling.* "Synapomorphy," SEUPB/AP/PHOR/PHAOE. *Keep writing! Keep writing! Keep writing! Keep writing! TOO FAST! How do I finger-spell when I can't understand what he's saying?*

When the professor finally spoke the words, "Okay. See you next week," I inhaled deeply. I realized I was short of breath. I must have been holding my breath for what felt like the entire two-hour class. My legs were aching from pushing my feet hard into the floor to help me channel my concentration. Saving the transcript and turning off my computer, I thought about the tiresome task of editing the notes for the student. I knew I would be Googling every other word. There was only one positive thing I could be certain of. I was going to have a stellar dictionary at the end of the semester.

I am sure I am not the first reporter to be blown away by the terminology on a job. I did everything in my power to prepare, just as I do for all of the classes I am assigned. I create what seems like never-ending lists of words before each class. I knew that most of the words were multisyllabic, so it would not be enough to merely put the words in my dictionary just once. I would stroke out each phonetic syllable over and over, creating new prefixes and suffixes. Briefs, unfortunately, were of no use. Well, I could use a few. Synapomorphy came up often, so I used SAEUP. Most of the terminology changed weekly as the class progressed through the textbook; unfortunately, the only constant was the stinky shoeless professor and his holey socks.

When we arrive at our jobs, while we will never know if we have a chair to sit in or if the environment around us will be a distraction, one thing you can be in control of is how well your dictionary is prepped. How do you make your dictionary better? To me, editing my transcripts and working on my dictionary are a priority. The better your dictionary is, the better you write because the words will, hopefully, come up on the first attempt; ultimately, your concentration will be better and the less stressful the job becomes. Prepping may be tedious, but having an idea of the terminology allows me to think less, because I'm not struggling to write every word. I write faster and with ease.

There are many things I do to find new words to build my dictionary. One of my rules is to look up every word before putting it in my dictionary to make sure I have the correct spelling, capitalization, whether it needs a hyphen, etcetera. What good is a word in your dictionary if it is not correct? When you read the morning paper, novels, recipes, these are all resources to finding new words that are not in your dictionary. There are also a variety of lexicons that can be useful to find terminology on specific topics. For example, I had a job once that was discussing the Harry Potter books as they relate to Greek mythology. Do you have Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape in your dictionary? I didn't.

For me, hearing the words as I read in real time is the most efficient way. How many times have you phonetically entered a word

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by sight, and then realized the word is pronounced differently than the way you phonetically stroked it? It happens to me all the time when I'm inputting words from the lecture's Power Point. I utilize websites such as Khan Academy, YouTube, and TED Talks for dictionary-building resources. You can search almost any topic and listen to lectures and speeches to help you practice writing the words.

While in school, we are so focused on building our speed that we don't spend a lot of time building our dictionaries. I believe it is our duty to provide the best real time possible for our students and/or clients. One of the greatest aspects of our job is that it is different every day. There are always a multitude of situations where we must be flexible and problem solve on the fly, but you are in control of your dictionary before you walk through that door. Ask yourself: Aside from editing, how much time do I spend researching words? Can you watch the news and know that every word said is in your dictionary, if just for one minute? Try it.

# UK FOOTBALL MESSENGER

By Sam Dick  
Reprinted from [www.wkyt.com](http://www.wkyt.com)

With the news this week that commonwealth stadium will be rebuilt into a smaller, more intimate venue...the emphasis is on making it more fan friendly. We caught up with one woman who plays a hidden, but important role in keeping fans in the stadium informed and entertained.

She walks into the stadium with no fanfare or notice, but what Lisa Schwarze's fingers will do the next 3-hours will be seen by nearly every fan in Commonwealth Stadium.

At a time when more fans are choosing to stay home and watch the game, schools like UK must find ways to give them a reason to show up. Instant information on what's happening on the field is one example of giving fans what they want, and that's where Lisa comes in.

"This is such a new area we're venturing into."

Deep in the bowels of Commonwealth, in the corner of a room, Lisa sits in front of a stenograph machine. It's the same one she uses in her first career as a court reporter. She uses shorthand based on phonetics, and strikes a key. Unlike a computer keyboard where you hit keys based on spelling, she uses the sound of the word to know which key to stroke.

"This the first sound of my word, here are my vowels, here are the second sounds, this is my numbers, and I combine things, like Commonwealth Stadium is one stroke."

After decades as a court reporter, Lisa has built her speed up to an amazing 250 to 300 words per minute. She is now part of small group of court reporters nationwide who are taking their talents into the sports arena. An hour before kick-off, Lisa is sending messages that appear on the ribbon board at both end zones. Sponsor announcements, player introductions, song titles, and play by play details.

"It's just one opportunity to say, hey you didn't hear it, here you can read it."

Lisa wears headphones so she can hear all the stadium announcements, the referee's microphone, and the music being played. She also relies on a tv monitor to watch the action. For 3-hours, there's no break. Lisa is constantly taking in all that information, and putting it into words that thousands of people see in the stadium...on the end zone message boards, on the concourse tv monitors, and in the suites. She can literally feel the fan's excitement.

"Oh, I hope that ceiling doesn't come down on me, because you actually kinda feel the vibration that goes with it."

And yes, she's a Wildcat fan...which gives her some liberty with punctuation on the message boards.

"I am allowed to put the exclamation point on, and we do that for every touchdown. Go Cats!"