

CCRA *online*

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*Happy
Holidays*



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the California Court Reporters Association

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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 — Pulling Together

By Early Langley, CSR, RMR
CCRA President



Court reporters from all over the state face issues that affect all of us. CCRA's membership represents all of us: the freelancer, the freelance owner and the official court reporters of the State of California. That fact alone sets us apart. Collectively, we can have tremendous influence over issues that shape the future of our profession. At CCRA, our diversity strengthens us. We see many sides of issues that affect us as a profession.

Our profession is at stake here.

We face unprecedented challenges of electronic recording, court layoffs, and unethical gift giving. CCRA stands for the proposition that we have and will continue to work together to deal with these issues. We promote a profession that is unmatched in its ability to produce a realtime transcript whether it is in court or deposition. We advocate at a legislative level to protect all of our jobs. We educate the legal and political community on behalf of all of us. We promote the education of freelancers and official reporters who are all of us.

In order for us to thrive into the future, we need to pull together. Let us be united with and support our fellow court reporters whether in court or in deposition. To that end over this holiday and into 2012, let us connect as court reporters no matter what association we belong to, visit our local court reporting school, connect with our lawyers, judges, bar associations and law firms.

California court reporters face large challenges. United together, we will stand and accomplish what needs doing, but divided we will fall. The more we work together, the stronger you and the profession will be.

CCRA wishes you goodwill and peace, cheer, hope and joy, prosperity, happiness and harmony at this holiday season!



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Post a Story

*By Early Langley, CSR, RMR
CCRA President*

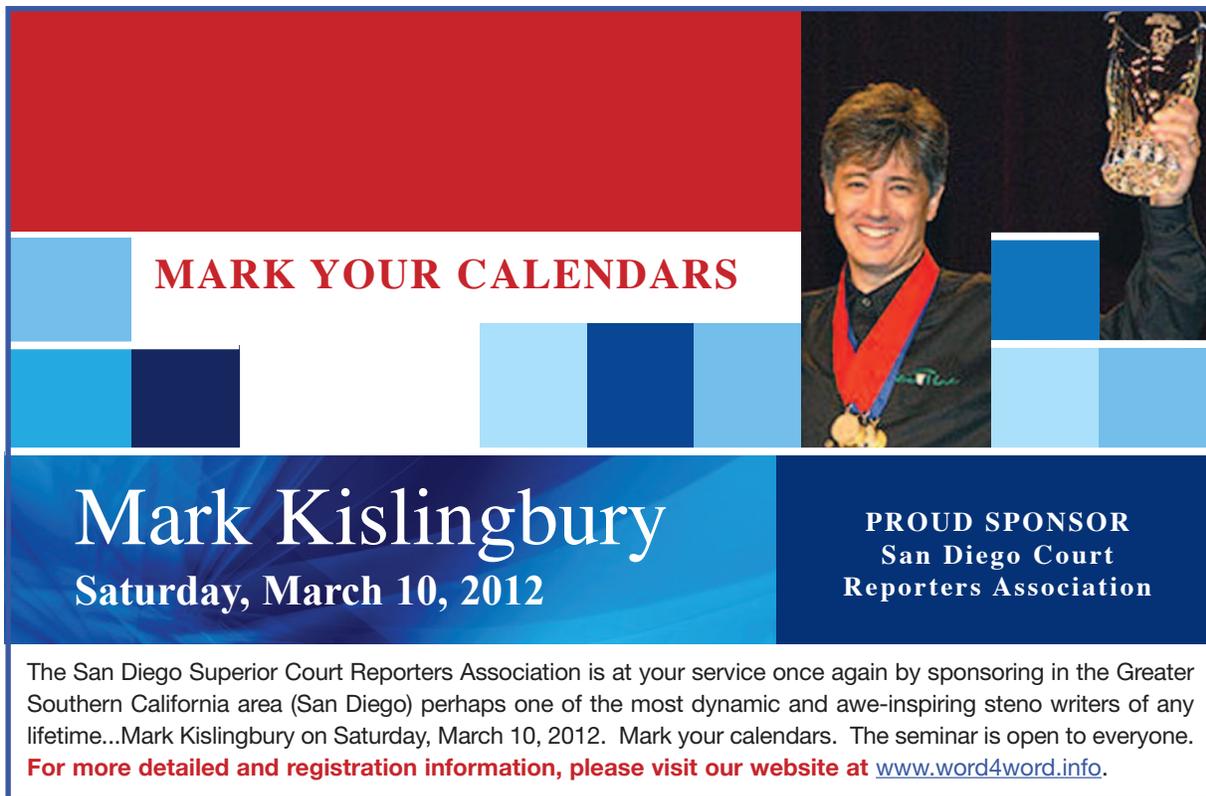
We at CCRA are grateful for all that you are doing, whether it's being a good example, sharpening your skills, keeping a watchful eye on unethical practices, helping others, having one-on-one conversations in your freelance or official capacity within the legal community, or chipping in what you can to help build the organization. Rolling up our sleeves to improve our image as court reporters and doing the work that gets us where we want to be as 2012 approaches is key to our success.

At CCRA, we've rolled up our sleeves. We have committees in place working in the following areas to support you as a team in protecting your jobs and interests in the community of court reporting: Electronic Recording/Digital Recording; Unethical Gift Giving; Legislation; Voice to Text; Official and Freelance Rules and Practices; Official and Freelance Compendiums for 2012 and associated test packages designed for the CSR test taker; Ask A Reporter; Support Our Students.

If you know of someone within your circle of influence who has made a difference to you, whether it is your mentor, judge, lawyer, court reporter, teacher or fellow student, please share it with us on our Facebook page or write to us at info@cal-ccra.org.

As 2011 draws to a close, let us in on what and who has mattered to you. We'd love to hear the story!

Thank you, All!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Mark Kisingbury
Saturday, March 10, 2012

PROUD SPONSOR
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The San Diego Superior Court Reporters Association is at your service once again by sponsoring in the Greater Southern California area (San Diego) perhaps one of the most dynamic and awe-inspiring steno writers of any lifetime...Mark Kisingbury on Saturday, March 10, 2012. Mark your calendars. The seminar is open to everyone.
For more detailed and registration information, please visit our website at www.word4word.info.

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30 Years of Increased Access to Justice

By Paula Bruning, CRB



When asking the average court reporter about the Transcript Reimbursement Fund (TRF), a typical response is, “I know I should know about it, but... or I remember learning about it for the license exam, but...” Details on this powerful program are definitely sketchy. Yet a portion of every court reporter’s license fee renewal is set aside to fund the TRF.

The TRF was created by the Legislature in 1981 to assist low-income California litigants represented by pro bono counsel in pursuing and defending themselves in civil cases such as unlawful termination or eviction, securing child support, protection from domestic violence, and elderly and disabled discrimination. Since its inception, an average of \$253,000 in annual assistance, totaling **\$7.6 million**, has been disbursed.

As stated in the CA Business & Professions Code 8030.2(a), the self-supporting TRF is “established by a transfer of funds from the Court Reporters’ Fund and shall be maintained in an amount no less than three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for each fiscal year.” Funds are used to offset costs to court reporters and deposition agencies that otherwise would not be able to provide transcripts to individuals in need of their services at a reduced or free rate. They are also used to help defray costs for attorneys who represent clients on a pro bono basis, as transcript expenses can be a significant factor in the decision to accept or decline a case.

Many of the clients benefitting from the TRF are single mothers, elderly, unemployed, or disabled. To be eligible for assistance, a litigant’s income must be at least 125 percent of the current Federal poverty threshold or be eligible for (or receiving) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or services under the Older Americans or Developmentally Disabled Assistance Acts.

Legislation initiating a two-year pilot project opening the TRF on a limited basis to applicants who represent themselves, passed on January 1, 2011. Senate Bill 1181 (Cedillo) implementing the pilot project was written as a result of the realization that there was a growing body of California’s court system consumers not being served, and the money to fund their needs was available, as the TRF is not typically fully utilized. Without representation, individuals historically have been denied access to the funds, making the cost of transcripts unaffordable, and thereby forcing them to abandon efforts to pursue civil litigation or defend themselves in an action.

Qualification for assistance under the new program is based on the fee waiver granted by the court in which the case is pending. Requests for TRF funds for pro per litigants are being processed through a streamlined two-page application form. The applicant must provide the name and address of record for the court reporter(s) so that the CRB can contact them to provide provisional approval. Upon confirmation that the transcript has been produced and delivered to the applicant, reimbursement is authorized, and the court reporter should receive payment within six to eight weeks. To date, the CRB has processed over 70 applications from pro per litigants, and distributed more than **\$15,000** in reimbursement funds to reporters for transcripts that otherwise would not have been produced.

Hats off to court reporters for doing their part to help the most vulnerable in the justice system.



Could He Be Right?

*By Kristi Garcia
Vice President, Officials
President Elect*

In response to the October 22, 2011, article in the San Diego Public Policy Examiner, I ask: Can David Green be right? Can California get out of debt with the elimination of all courtroom reporters in the state, virtually wiping out an entire profession?

That's what he states Kentucky did with the conversion to audio/visual equipment in more than 415 courts. Mr. Green states, *"It's not about right or wrong, it's about making it better."* He built a company called Jefferson Audio Visual Systems (JAVS).

Well, Mr. Green, I say what is better than an instant feed to lawyers and judges with something called **Realtime**?

According to the article, *"he figured out how to capture the sound of an attorney's voice while eliminating the sound of rustling papers and nearby overhead fans that interfered with the audio."* We reporters do that every day.

The article goes on to say, *"they figured out how to make the video cameras switch to the correct speaker as each person speaks."* Reporters do that with the slight turn of our head. We also can look at a speaker who doesn't use words and makes a side-to-side or up-and-down motion with their head, something a voice-activated camera cannot do.

I'm convinced Gregory Harper doesn't think these cameras are the cure for California's debt problem. He's a man sitting in prison in Kentucky, who appealed his sentence where the recording equipment failed to record any audio of his three-day trial.

In *Gregory L. Harper vs. Commonwealth of Kentucky*, the Opinion of Judge Caperton states:

"In the trial court's "Order Denying New Trial and Addressing Trial Record," the court stated that the failure of the audio equipment was "an endemic problem with the current, somewhat dated version of JAVS which is in use in Jefferson Circuit Court. Allegedly, subsequent versions have been modified to minimize or eliminate this problem." The court determined that an attempt had to be made to reconstruct a trial record by employing a narrative statement before the court could decide whether a new trial was necessary."

The Opinion goes on to say, *"the trial judge relied on his own notes and memory of the trial to uphold the sentence of Mr. Harper."*

To those of us who provide the very notes on which some judges rely, I say to you, we continue to be the best choice for an accurate record...in Kentucky or California.



The Michigan Bar Sounds off on Contracting

Follow this link to the Michigan Bar's view of Contracting:
<http://www.michbar.org/journal/pdf/pdf4article1939.pdf>

Scholarship Winning Essay by Allison Wong from Downey College

Permission from Cindy Grafton

A career with court reporting training takes the mind and body to new destinations and bridges the boundaries beyond what most would expect of a job. I use the word "training" in the sense that the profession is imbued with the integrity and honor of crafting one's skill to the degree of mastery exhibited by a professional athlete or musician.

In court reporting, the routine is never routine, and I find that refreshing. Reporters are continually being introduced to unfamiliar domains characterized by varying sounds and speeds; and more often than not, unique destinations. Additionally, there are opportunities to interact with a variety of people and gain a sophisticated perspective of world cultures.

I am fueled by this rush of endless possibilities. More so by the power of commanding my machine

to a level of preciseness required to find that harmonious rhythm between the mental and physical and to embody "my future destination" as a professional. At times I find myself in awe at the limitless opportunities as I strive towards my goals, tackle the challenge of hitting every word, and achieve that gratifying sense of accomplishment.

I look forward to becoming a licensed reporter to provide my talents toward this profession's great history of preserving justice to the highest standard. It is difficult to contain my excitement about how much there is to learn and contribute in a lifetime, but I am compelled by court reporting and endowed with the means to experience firsthand the quintessence of life.



Cal-e-licious

By Gerie Bunch

Submitted by member Bree Mervin

CROCKPOT CHOCOLATE MESS

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. two-layer chocolate cake mix
- 3 oz. pkg. instant chocolate pudding mix
- 4 eggs
- 1 c. water
- 2 c. sour cream
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. vegetable oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. semisweet chocolate chips

Spray a 4-qt. crockpot with nonstick cooking spray and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the cake mix and pudding mix. In a medium bowl, beat the eggs with the water, then add the sour cream and oil and beat until smooth. Add to the dry ingredients and beat well. Stir in the chocolate chips. Pour into crockpot. Cover and cook on low for 6–8 hours, until top springs back when touched very lightly with a finger. 8–10 servings.



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Uninstall iPad Apps

Q. I installed several apps on my iPad, but after using them, I decided that I don't want to keep them. How can I delete them?

A. To uninstall an application purchased or otherwise installed from the iPad Apps Store, press your finger on any Home Screen icon until all icons begin to shake and jiggle. (If you begin to shake and jiggle, call 9-1-1.)

Tap the X that appears in the upper left-hand corner of the icon for the app you want to remove. Tap the Delete button to delete the selected app.

To prevent the app from re-syncing to your iPad, plug the iPad into your computer. Under the iPad > Applications tab in iTunes, remove the check mark from the app in the Sync Applications list. That's all there is to it.

I've got oodles (it's a technical term) of additional, easy-to-use iPad tips waiting for you on amazon.com at <http://amzn.to/nw7pjf>, or simply search for "Mr. Modem."

Q. When I create an Excel spreadsheet with grid lines, the lines appear very faint when printed. Is there a way to make the grid lines darker?

A. Try using borders instead of grid lines. Highlight the area within which this is to apply, then click Format > Cells > Border tab, where you can select the thickness and style of the lines, as well as the color. Then click Outline and Inside, followed by OK to apply your selections.

Q. Sometimes people I send email to tell me that when they open my message, their computer freezes and they have to restart it. I'm sending you one of my emails that did this. Can you tell me what I'm doing wrong that might be causing this?

A. The email you sent me contains eight graphical animations, including four animated closings, "Goodbye," "Adios," "CUL8TR," and "Sayonara." While I understand that "cutesy" is in the eyes of the beholder, I would encourage some measure of restraint when it comes to email enhancements of this type for several reasons:

First, the graphics and animations you're including increase the size of your email exponentially, turning what should be a simple message into an unwanted, bloated presence — not unlike my Uncle Rudy. For recipients with older systems or PCs with a minimal amount of memory, attempting to open your graphically intensive message can be overwhelming to the system, resulting in the freeze.

Graphical animations are also notorious carriers of malware and will be summarily blocked by some email systems. Depending on the email program being used, these items may not even be displayed as a safety precaution for the recipient.

While cutesy graphics, animations, dancing cherubs, winking smiley faces, etc. are fine to use with close friends and family, I would avoid including them in any professional or less-familial correspondence.

If you can't help yourself and feel compelled to include numerous graphics with your messages, you can't go wrong if you extend the courtesy of asking your intended recipients if it's okay to

continued on Page 11

(continued from Page 10)

include animations. If they decline, don't take it personally. Simply thank them for their response and honor their request.

If you remove the graphics and animations from your message and re-send it, individuals who previously experienced a computer freeze should be able to open and view it without any problem.

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

Elderpost

Think of Elderpost as a Craig's List for Senior Care. This is a site where seniors, care-givers, and families can post ads for, or search for, anything and everything having to do with seniors, care-giving and aging. Service and product providers, as well as individuals seeking employment are invited to post ads. There are categories for government and nonprofit listings, articles, blogs, information on aging, eldercare and more.

www.elderpost.com

The Name Engine

Here you will find the correct pronunciations (including audio) of names of athletes, entertainers, politicians, news makers, and hundreds of other individuals you've never heard of. Even well-known names are often pronounced in different ways, leaving you to wonder what the correct pronunciation is. For years I've struggled with the pronunciation of Zydrunas Ilgauskas and like everybody else, I've always wondered, "Is it ZY-drunnas" or "zy-DRUN-es"? Turns out it's neither. It's "zih-DROON-ess," with the traditional pronunciation of Ilgauskas. Go figure.

www.thenameengine.com

TryPhone.com

This novel site provides the ability to try various electronics items before purchasing. Use the interactive online virtual handsets to test-drive mobile devices, cell phones, applications, content and services, as well as watch demonstrations from the comfort and convenience of your own computer. No pressure, no hovering salespeople, no features you don't understand. Try it, then possibly buy it.

www.tryphone.com

"Mr. Modem's Top 50 Computing Tips," a sweeping five-book epic series is available on amazon.com! Each volume features 50 of Mr. M.'s favorite computing tips, all written in Mr. Modem's entertaining and occasionally informative style.

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Now and Then

By Margie Wakeman Wells
mww@margieholdscourt.com

The words *now* and *then* are problematic because they can be used in two different ways, one that requires a comma and one that does not. Each word can be an adverb that takes no punctuation; each word can be a throwaway that requires commas.

When *now* is an adverb, it means “at this time” or “at the present moment.” It takes no punctuation.

I am leaving now to go to the office for a while.
She now knows what her fate with that company will be.

When *now* is a throwaway, it has no meaning and often reflects a “glitch” in someone’s speech. It takes commas around it.

Did he say, now, that he was involved with her?
Where, now, was he living at that time?

When *now* is at the beginning of a sentence, there are times when the comma after it is determined by how it was said — the “You had to be there” punctuation. There is no way in these sentences to determine whether to use a comma except by how it was said and getting the comma in your notes.

Now I want to ask you about the night of the 5th.
Now, I want to ask you about the night of the 5th.

The same basic ideas apply to the word *then*.

When *then* is an adverb, it means “at that time” or “next” and does not take commas.

Then did you speak with her about the issue?
I decided then to confront him with my suspicions.

When *then* is a throwaway, it means nothing and takes commas around it.

Are you saying, then, that he was with you?
She is still with the company, then.

Margie Wakeman Wells has taught reporting for 36 years and has given over 300 seminars on punctuation for the court reporting community. She has written the definitive text and an accompanying workbook on punctuating the transcript, *Court Reporting: Bad Grammar/Good Punctuation*. Check out the book on Facebook, and check out Margie’s new website, margieholdscourt.com, where her books are now being published and distributed. Contact her at mww@margieholdscourt.com.



THANK YOU

THANK YOU TO CONVENTION STUDENT SPONSORS:

The Support Our Students Committee would like to thank and recognize the following people for their generous contributions to sponsoring students to attend our 101st Annual Convention in San Diego:

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Carolyn Dasher
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Paula Chavez
Sandy Bunch VanderPol
Gerie Bunch

Several others who contributed wish to remain anonymous.

By all accounts, the students came away rejuvenated and excited to become court reporters. They learned a lot from the student track that we put together for them.



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