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CCRA

California Court Reporters Association

C C R A O N L I N E

NATIONAL
**COURT
REPORTING**
&
CAPTIONING
WEEK

FEBRUARY 16-22

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CCRA ONLINE

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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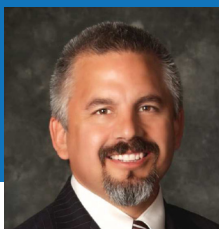
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P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

CHANGING THE RULES

By Carlos Martinez, CSR, RPR, CMRS
President, CCRA

In last month's edition of CCRA's Online, I spoke of change and the choices that we have when it comes to dealing with change. I said that change can be embraced or it can be feared. For me, I would rather embrace the inevitable and try to have some input into what the outcome of that change will look like. When I became president in October of 2013, one of the main legs of my platform was to embrace the changing reporting profession by being more inclusive of those to whom I felt we were not giving enough of our support.

Enter Change:

The first thing that was done was a revamping of the mentorship program and increasing CCRA's presence in the court reporting schools throughout the state. We have visited nearly every school in California. We have given mock CSRs. We have begun a monthly student membership drawing to allow students the opportunity to win a membership and begin receiving CCRA's membership benefits. We also had a booth at the November CSR for support and a reception afterwards for relaxation for the test takers. We were encouraged by the feedback and have chosen to do this at future CSR tests also. And one of the more exciting things that we have done is to increase student participation by having students like Candy Newland and Sharece Atkins write articles for our Online publication, and we have had other students, like Karly Greenshields, volunteer for committee positions.

My belief is that students are the life's blood of this profession. If we want the profession to remain viable, we have to assist them through school and into the working world. And once they've gotten through school and are ready to go into the working world, they need to know how to hit the ground running. To meet that need, Christy Cannariato developed BOOT CAMP, a comprehensive seminar geared towards giving these newly licensed CSRs that necessary information so that they could go to their first job with confidence.

Change.

And now our next leg of that platform: The Board of Directors has tasked the Bylaws Committee to develop

proposed changes to the current bylaws so that CCRA, if the membership votes to make the change, will be able to offer the inclusion of qualified CART and Captioners as regular voting CCRA members. This facet of the reporting profession has exploded in the past five years with reporters that are either switching from the more traditional court and deposition work to providing CART, and also students and newly licensed reporters who have decided in school that this is where they want to work when they get out of school.

CCRA is dedicated to representing every facet of the reporting profession, and we are excited and anxious to welcome this largely unrepresented group of reporters under the CCRA umbrella. We look forward to expanding who we represent which is why we are undertaking the task of rewriting CCRA's bylaws to be inclusive to the CART and Captioning providers in California.

Change.

We will be rolling this change out beginning today, February 16th, which is also the beginning of NCRA's National Court Reporting and Captioning week. This week is embraced by associations throughout the United States, many of whom are choosing to either create a state forum on reporting or to have a referendum put before their legislative bodies regarding the reporting profession. CCRA is taking this opportunity to say, "Welcome. We want you, CART and Captioning providers. We want to begin using our 100-plus years of experience for the benefit and advancement of CART and Captioning providers in California. We want to help enable you to more easily have a voice in matters pertaining to your chosen work."

As I said, we are excited and we are amped to move this forward. Saba McKinley and her CART Task Force have been working diligently on the material that you will see this week pertaining to CART and Captioning. They have put a great deal of work into this project.

So, what does all of this mean? It means a stronger more inclusive association. It means expanding CCRA to begin representing all facets of the reporting profession. How? By offering at our annual convention in October a new set of bylaws for our membership to vote on with the inclusion of qualified CART and Captioning providers in the regular membership structure.

Change is no longer coming. It's here. And I am very excited to help usher this change in and to propose to our membership the widening of our umbrella to begin representing an ever-growing group of qualified and dedicated professional reporters – CART and Captioning providers.



IF YOU CAN INVEST IN ONLY ONE CONVENTION THIS YEAR... MAKE YOUR INVESTMENT COUNT WITH CCRA

Inspired by the overwhelmingly positive feedback from previous convention attendees, CCRA is heading back to the Miramonte Resort & Spa in Indian Wells, California, October 3-5, 2014. Why is this the best investment for your hard-earned dollars?

- 1. PRICE!** CCRA's convention is an incredible value! Other conventions being held in California this year will cost you over \$450, and that's just to get in the door. Their room rates are also higher. Get those CEUs instead with CCRA for just \$349 (students \$165), which includes 5 meals and 2 receptions at a luxurious hotel and spa.
- 2. LOCATION!** The Miramonte Resort & Spa is remarkably close to metropolitan areas of Southern California and Ontario International Airport, yet far enough away to still feel like you're getting a refreshing getaway in the Palm Springs Valley, nestled at the base of the beautifully scenic Santa Rosa Mountains. SoCal residents can pop over just for the day. And did we mention shopping? The Desert Hills Premium Outlets is tantalizingly close.
- 3. NETWORKING!** The convention this year will include two receptions and five meals. Bring those business cards, because you will not only renew friendships with colleagues but also meet more people from your own state who are in the best position to help you expand your career opportunities. Our conventions typically draw over 350 people, more than any other state association in the country.
- 4. SEMINARS:** We are excited about the wide range of seminars we are developing. We have expanded and intensified our offerings on technology and realtime. Plus, interested in CART and captioning? Wondering if you have what it takes? Thinking about transitioning to a new career path? We are introducing a CART/Captioning track. Bring your writer and get some hands-on practical training from some of the top realtimers in California.
- 5. STUDENTS:** When you attend a CCRA convention, we don't track you into a limited number of classes. Your low registration fee admits you to your choice of any of our seminar offerings.

We at CCRA believe reporters and students should attend all the conventions they can. But if you can only afford one in 2014, you will be sorry to have missed CCRA's 104th, our best convention yet.

Like us on Facebook and regularly visit our website to receive all of the exciting details in the coming months.



BEING ON THE CCRA BOARD: SO WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU DO??

By Rachel Passarella, CSR, RPR

Twice this week I've been asked this question when speaking about the CCRA Board. As I fumbled for words to eloquently answer this question and sound like I knew what I was talking about, I realized that I need to reflect again on what I really do as a Director for the California Court Reporters Association. I had mentioned in conversations how I was busy with "Board stuff," but what was I really doing?

The phrase from Shakespeare comes to mind here. "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways." Let me count the ways I love this profession; let me count the ways I try to give back and pay it forward; let me count the ways I can contribute all I have to CCRA. I truly, madly, deeply love this career. I am beyond blessed to be in the position I'm in as a court reporter, and how wonderful to be a part of the movement of CCRA!

As I reflect on my short journey so far with CCRA, here's some of what I have been able to dig my hands into:

Convention Committee – Spending hours researching, emailing, calling, planning, brainstorming, and preparing for the best annual convention yet! I can't wait to unveil what CCRA has in store this year, and I'm proud to say I helped in the process.

Technology Committee – Making my boyfriend (BOIF) watch TV on mute while I attend an after-hours conference call or video conference or web demonstration in our tiny living room, seeing first-hand how CCRA is advancing our profession technologically.

Support Our Students Committee – Volunteering and being tasked with updating our Career Day resources, as well as meeting some amazing students and volunteers in the process who are just as gung-ho as I am about spreading the word about our fantastic career choice.

2014 Compendiums – I'm proud to say I had a small part in the creation of CCRA's 2014 Compendiums, both freelance and official! As a last step of the process, someone had to make sure all the page numbers matched up in the index. I was asked, I said yes, I spent days working on it in my time away from court. It was extremely rewarding to know that I was able to help get them ready for my fellow reporters for 2014.

Sounds like fun, eh? I can say I am having the time of my life with CCRA this year. And it's not all work and no play. Not a conference call goes by without a joke from Carlos, not a video conference goes by without us holding up our doggies and kitties to the camera to say hello to the other board members, not a day goes by that we are not in communication with each other. And this year will not go by without some significant change and progress within CCRA to benefit YOU, our fellow reporters, who we admire and respect so much, who we fight for and work for!

Find a way to give back to your profession. Join a committee. Become a mentor (PLEASE!) If nothing else, support those who support you and encourage others to join with us this year to make CCRA stronger than ever.

A VISIT TO BRYAN UNIVERSITY

By Jorge P. Dominguez, CSR, RPR

CCRA has been committed to supporting court reporting students throughout the state. Whether they're assigning a working reporter to mentor a student, awarding a scholarship, or hosting a BOOT CAMP seminar to help students transition from a school setting to a working reporter, the focus on students has been laser-like.

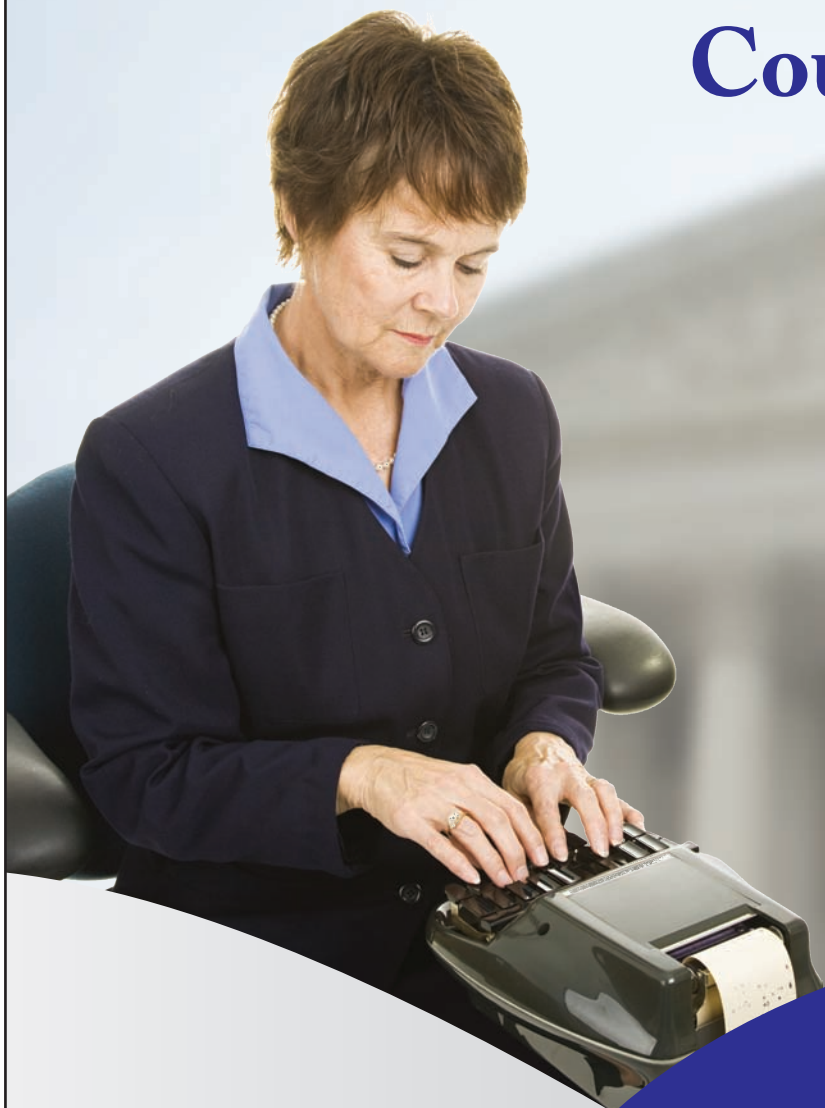
On January 28th I headed to Bryan University to meet with some of the faculty and the students to raise awareness to the programs available to them. Having attended a court reporting school in Southern California, I was familiar with Bryan and its rich history. Bryan College was established in 1940 and has produced many CSR candidates over the years. Bryan College has expanded with graduate courses, multiple campuses, an array of online courses, and even recently received a name change to Bryan University.

Following a brief meeting with the President, John A. Kolacinski, I was convinced that these students not only have a great leader, but they've been placed in a position to succeed. Bryan surrounds the students with cutting-edge technology and knowledgeable and caring staff.

The visit with the students, the room was jam-packed...some were sitting on the floor and some in the hallway. It was a wonderful time interacting and answering questions. Some questions just never go away and as a student, I remember asking it: Will we be replaced by digital recording? Well, not on CCRA's watch, not without an epic battle. Hopefully never.

Although it's been over 10 years since I was in court reporting school and there's been significant advancement with CAT software, steno machines, computer practice programs, etc., the advice I would offer to a student today remains the same – practice, practice, practice and type everything.

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WANNA KNOW ABOUT CART?

By Saba McKinley

Have you ever had a feeling that was so strong, so tangible, so deep, just tugging at you, that you had to stop and listen to what it was saying? I mean, really listen? I'm sure many of you have had that feeling and know exactly what I am talking about. Well, that's what began for me back in the fall of 2009, and it changed the course of my life. I kept having a pulling feeling, what I now term, "A Calling."

That calling was asking me to play a bigger game as to how I was showing up in the world. To quote Marianne Williamson, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that frightens us most. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and famous?' Actually, who are you not to be?" I answered the call, and being on the board of directors for CCRA is a huge part of that call.

I began my journey into CART in July of 2010. For the benefit of those of you who are unaware of what CART is, it is an acronym

for Communication Access Realtime Translation. The simplified definition is: "providing access to communication for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing."

What has grown out of that calling is to be an advocate in this field, not only for the service providers, but also for the consumers of the service. To that end, I speak about CART in any arena that I am asked to. I talk about it in the industry. I talk about it in social and networking events. I talk about it on social media. Most people are plain unaware that the service is available. People in our industry, court reporting, are still unsure of what it is or how to get started in it. I hope that when I speak on it, I bring awareness and education to those who are unaware.

I have been a reporter, CSR, for 23 years now. I still have such a passion for what it is that I do, and that passion comes through when I speak on anything related to court reporting, but speaking about CART is on another level altogether.

I have worked in college settings, civic meetings, board meetings, federal prison, one-on-one grievance meetings, remote settings, and most recently in a wonderful resort where a retreat was being held. The opportunities are endless. I enjoy the variety of jobs I'm offered. My job is hardly ever boring because I have a zest for continual learning, and that's what this job provides.

Working on the board of CCRA and as a committee member of the CART COI (Community of Interest) committee for NCRA, the National Court Reporters Association, has empowered me to become more educated and courageous in moving the CART Captioning industry forward. I am tasked with making decisions and creating programs that educate and bring awareness in the field. As a result, a CART Task Force has been created at CCRA, and we have been tasked with getting the word out about captioning during the upcoming Court Reporting and Captioning week, which is February 16th through 22nd, 2014. At the time of the printing of this article, this week will be underway.

We have also been tasked with creating an educational CART & Captioning track at this year's annual convention held at the beautiful Miramonte Resort in Palm Desert. I sure hope you all will join us.

I am often asked, "How do you get started?" "Where are the jobs?" "How much does it pay?" "Was it hard to transition from court work to CART?" "How good does one's realtime have to be?"

The answer to all these questions is another part of my "calling." I love giving back. Part of that giving back is being a resource for those who are seriously interested in entering the field of CART. After speaking at BOOT CAMP, and having people tell me that their lives were affected by the idea of being able to give back using the skill of court reporting, I was motivated to create a Facebook group to discuss all things CART. If you are one of these people who feel that this information is of value to you, and would like to stay connected with me, please look me up on Facebook under Groups. The name is "Divinescripts." I can also be reached at saba@divine-scripts.com.

Happy CART'ing!



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MY BOOT CAMP EXPERIENCE

By Sharece Atkins



I was excited when the instructors at Argonaut announced that CCRA would be putting on BOOT CAMP. I was even more excited that CCRA was offering a bus to transport students from northern California to southern California. Over the winter break I received an e-mail from Carlos Martinez, CCRA's president. I have to admit, the e-mail made me scared and happy at the same time. In the e-mail Carlos offered to rent an SUV to carpool students to Burbank. I couldn't believe a president of a large association would be so generous.

Six of us students loaded the SUV. I met two students from Humphreys: Candy and Shivanee. The other three students I go to school with at Argonaut: Danielle, Karly, and Gareth. The car ride was fun and informational. Carlos and Mary were both down-to-earth and made us feel comfortable. We got to ask Carlos and Mary all sorts of questions regarding court reporting. We laughed most of the way and talked the entire ride down. We also learned that Carlos is quite the jokester. *Note: Never end a car ride with Carlos with a full bladder. He will either say something really funny or do something to scare you.* After arriving at the hotel, all of the students went to dinner together. It was a great opportunity to get to know each other more.

The next day was BOOT CAMP. The first part of BOOT CAMP was registration. When I opened my registration packet, I was surprised to see dog tags. It made it feel official that I was at a boot camp. What made the dog tags even cooler was the flash drive hidden in it! After registering, students could walk around the vendor fair. I was over-the-top excited to see so many vendors and such a variety of vendors.

The room BOOT CAMP was held in was packed with over 160 students. All of the presentations were extremely helpful. I took a lot of notes! Each speaker provided valuable information to prepare us to enter the court reporting field and help officials who are interested in switching court reporting fields. Several of the presenters were CCRA board members. Hearing their presentations motivated me to strive to one day be a CCRA board member. Involvement in court reporting associations is so crucial to the future of our profession.

The day started off with a presentation about depositions by Christy Cannariato, the brains behind BOOT CAMP. Christy put a lot of work and a year's worth of time into making BOOT CAMP successful. Helpful tips that I received in the deposition presentation included how to interrupt tactfully, statements I can use to interrupt, and rough draft tips.

Rachel Passarella gave a presentation about how to market yourself. She gave an interesting resume tip that I had never thought about before: put seminar and association involvement at the top of your resume. Another great tip was to put your backups in different locations. What if your house burnt down? Unless one of your backups is a cloud

or online storage database, your backups would be lost forever. That's one very scary thought.

It was great that CCRA got Toni O'Neill from the Court Reporters Board to speak at BOOT CAMP. She reiterated that we need to be professionals; we are not just in a career, we are in a profession. When we offer court reporting services, we are representing all court reporters.

Pat Barkley gave some great tips in her presentation on interviewing and how to be a top-notch court reporter. A tip that she gave us was to be mindful of our conduct and attitude. Be sincere in what you're doing, continue to improve yourself, make the deposition go smoothly, and clean up the conference room when you leave. A simple thing such as putting up the coffee cups in the conference room can get you that next job. Being prepared is a must. One reporter had a kit that she took with her to all depositions that had a pointer and a flashlight. Oddly enough, the reporter had to use both of those things one day. Because that reporter was prepared, she was requested on several more jobs.

Laurie Miller gave a great presentation about working in the L.A. courts. I hear about a lot of deposition reporters having to go into court. Lori went over the logistics of appeals and transcript formats for L.A. In court, the clerk is your best friend. You can nicely ask the clerk to give you an exhibit list and witness list.

Carole Brown and Phil Liberatore gave valuable information regarding taxes and how to keep track of expenses and income. Carole gave the advice of opening an impound account to save for any expenses. A good idea is to set aside 30% of your income for taxes. Anything left over at the end of the year can be used for a vacation. Phil Liberatore was very animated! Just what we needed to not fall asleep after eating lunch. He said that anyone you pay over \$600 in a year you should give a 1099, including your hairdresser. This idea created quite a few chuckles and didn't go well with the women. An angry hairdresser might mean a bad hairstyle.

I started court reporting school because I wanted to be a CART provider. Saba McKinley's CART presentation gave me extra motivation and made me less scared about being a CART provider. I learned that a person can provide CART remotely by Skype or by telephone. Saba conducts CART workshops throughout California. I can't wait to go to one!

The day went by quickly. There was so much information that my brain was hurting a little by the end of the day. I met a lot of great people, including an official court reporter for the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles and a CART provider, just to name a few. Even though most of the contacts were from Southern California, I was very appreciative of the advice professionals gave me. They were all very supportive

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MY BOOT CAMP EXPERIENCE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

and excited that I was going to take the CSR in March with Gareth. They all wished me good luck, gave me some valuable tips on how to stay calm during the CSR, and wanted me to contact them when I got to L.A. in March.

Back in the SUV we went. We were all tired. We ordered food at El Pollo Loco, received some very interesting nicknames on our receipts, and back home we went. On the car ride home we talked about BOOT CAMP, asked more questions, and laughed a lot more.

Overall, BOOT CAMP was an amazing experience. I learned a lot and made some great contacts. The flash drive in the dog tag has a lot of information, tips, and templates on it. If you have the chance to go to the next BOOT CAMP, definitely go.

I am so thankful to Carlos for driving us students to BOOT CAMP. Carlos and Mary are very passionate about court reporting and want to help students on their path to becoming court reporters. Carlos is a great president for CCRA. He has a lot of changes in store for CCRA, and I can't wait to see them unfold.

See you at the next BOOT CAMP!

EXTREME REPORTING IN NEW DELHI

By Lisa Barrett, RPR, CRR, CSR

My kids are into extreme sports: snowboarding, kiteboarding, skateboarding. After this last-minute reporting assignment, I'm feeling like an "Extreme Reporter."

In mid-November, on a Friday, I was asked to go to India to do an international arbitration for ten days. I waited a mere 15 minutes to respond, "Yes." I immediately began to try to obtain a visa. That process was enough to cause any sane person to throw in the towel. I almost did. The website said it would take 5-6 days. I called the Indian Consulate several times, each time being told a different procedure or wait time or cost. I went around in circles, and finally decided if it's meant to be, it will be.

I needed to fly by Wednesday, and by Monday I still had no clear instructions on how to secure a visa. My route to work on Monday took me past the Indian Consulate office on Bloor Street, and the thought process went like this: "If there's a parking spot, I'll park." "If the line-up is too big, I'll walk out." "If the Indian High Commissioner says there's not enough time, I'll give up." Obviously you know the stars aligned and I ended up getting a visa on Tuesday. It's an awesome-looking visa too, taking up an entire page in my passport.

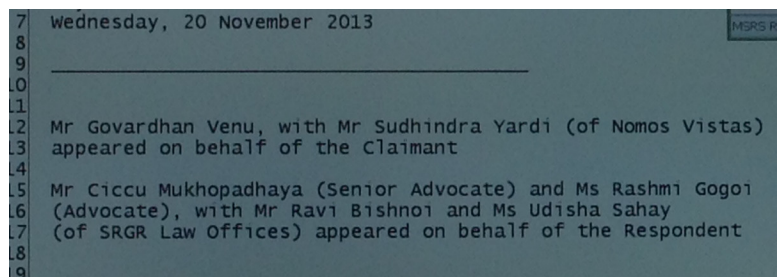
I left at 6:00 p.m. Wednesday for my 18-hour flight. I had a three-hour layover in Brussels, which I was thankful for. A chance to have a Starbucks, grab another Starbucks mug for my collection, and of course grab some Belgian chocolate!

I arrived in India 12:30 a.m. on Friday morning.

Upon arriving at the airport, I got some news I wasn't prepared for: I'd have to report in to the arbitration at 8:00 a.m. in the morning. (I had thought I would have a weekend to recover from the jetlag.) Amazingly, I guess from sheer exhaustion, I managed to get five hours of sleep. I also had to work half the day on Saturday, so I would have less time to tour.

Luckily, my editor (Americans call them scopists) was one who I had worked with extensively in Singapore, plus she had been to India and New Delhi several times. I was happy about that and we would tour together when we had the time.

It was a bit of a shock to the system, Day 1, with this *dramatis personae*.



7 Wednesday, 20 November 2013

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12 Mr Govardhan Venu, with Mr Sudhindra Yardi (of Nomos Vistas)

13 appeared on behalf of the Claimant

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15 Mr Ciccu Mukhopadhaya (Senior Advocate) and Ms Rashmi Gogoi

16 (Advocate), with Mr Ravi Bishnoi and Ms Udisha Sahay

17 (of SRGR Law Offices) appeared on behalf of the Respondent

18

19

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

EXTREME REPORTING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11



About an hour into the arbitration a hawk decided to watch me work. That's not distracting at all; right?

The work was challenging, but I really enjoyed it. The lawyers were really

grateful for the work that we did, and were amazed that we could understand their accents. We had several realtime connections. At the end of the day we would ask the lawyers to have an audio listen to some of the indecipherable parts in the witness' evidence that day. They were very obliging. It was a construction arbitration dealing with a road/bridge construction in Andhra Pradesh. We sat from 10:00 until 5:00 daily. Names like: Maheshwari, Anantapur and the Indian currency: rupees, lakhs, crores quickly became familiar. We worked at the India Habitat Centre, a 15-minute taxi ride from the hotel.

At lunch one day, a hawk swept down to grab a piece of mutton from one of our plates at lunch and hit me in the face with a wing. Well, I've never experienced that before.



There was the 15-course Indian lunch we were served each day, varying menu of course. Everything was delicious!



On Sunday, we went to Qutab Minar, a place of 13th century amazing architecture, (Qutab Minar is the tallest minar - 73 metres) in India, originally an ancient Islamic monument, inscribed with Arabic inscriptions.

I think I had no less than a dozen families that wanted to take my picture with their family/kids. These are mentally challenged children with a World Vision leader.



My drive to work.

This was the road on my daily drive to work. I was shocked by the dirt, rubbish and the children banging on the car windows begging for food. I was not prepared for that, even though I've seen Slumdog Millionaire three times. The abject poverty was such a shock to my system, and I had a hard time looking away from the begging children, as I was instructed, when stuck in traffic jams.



The noise levels from honking and the lack of lanes, disregard of traffic lights and disregard for people, children, animals or anything else on the roadway made me change my mind about walking at night, to jumping into an equally dangerous tuk-tuk.



I loved wearing the Kameez to work with a pair of leggings, so much fun! The lawyers and my editor were all wearing saris, so I thought I would opt out of a suit also. Forgive the zombie-selfie!



CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

EXTREME REPORTING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Work venue



The Rabies Scare!

Silly me ... I decided to feed as many stray dogs as I could. I carried kibble in my purse in a plastic bag. Some of the dogs looked particularly beaten up. These dogs are fine.

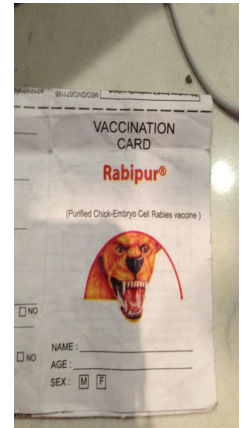


Unfortunately, I got BITTEN by a street dog - not by a dog I was feeding, but another one nearby for no apparent reason. The fierceness of his attack on my foot, the growl, the feeling of his teeth hitting the bones on the top of my foot will be something that will take me a long, long time to get over and led to more difficulty sleeping.

When I noticed blood coming from two puncture holes (I will save the expletives), I knew I was in trouble! These are unvaccinated street dogs. I searched for a chemist, and finally found one. I had to explain what had happened to a bunch of young blank staring faces. Luckily a customer who spoke English ordered them to fetch me some rabies vaccine. They put the vaccine on an ice pack with a rubber band. I paid my Rs 300 and then began looking for a doctor to inject it. I finally found a doctor in an ultrasound clinic (off duty) who refused at first, but then had someone chase me down the street and bring me back. At that point I had to wonder whether this person was even a doctor OR did they just want my money! I asked for alcohol to be applied before he jabbed my arm. (I remembered that I had also applied alcohol to my foot by myself after getting the injection). After my shot I felt somewhat relieved. He was a real doctor. He gave me his card after, and didn't charge me anything. I sent him a thank you card with a snow man on it and some rupees that I had left over.

When I got home on Saturday, I told my husband what had happened and we headed for the hospital. The hospital does not carry rabies vaccine; it comes from Public Health.

Luckily I had the insert from the wrapping from the rabies vaccine from India.



At the hospital here, I had a tetanus shot administered and had to go back the next day for another 8 needles. I've had another two injections, so 11 all together. Here I was going to add a joke about frothing at the mouth or cravings for kibble, but maybe I shouldn't be joking about such a serious matter. And to be honest, the whole thing shook me to the core, especially being on the other side of the world.

(Can you see the monkeys?) Presidential palace.



Last Day of Work:

A trip to the Oberoi Hotel for dinner, a quick shower and hop on the plane, midnight (a day early). Total Time in india = 8 days.



Good bye India ... It certainly has been an adventure I won't soon forget.



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SD Card vs Thumb Drive vs External HD

Q. I'm dithering between purchasing an SD card and a thumb drive for the storage of photos and documents. Is one better than the other or should I get an external hard drive?

A. SD cards and thumb drives basically use the same technology. A thumb or flash drive plugs into a USB port and it is quickly removed so you can take it with you. Its small size also makes it easy to misplace so if your life is lacking drama and you enjoy a good adrenaline surge periodically, thumb drives are the way to go.

In your situation, you can't go wrong with either option. I have external drives, which have served me well, but in recent years I have gravitated more towards flash or thumb drives simply because of their size and convenience.

Q. How can I print a Web page when there is no printer icon or no "printed version" link for the item?

A. Your browser should have a print command on the Menu bar, so click File > Print and you should be able to print it. CTRL + P is also a fairly universal Print command, so give that a try.

Q. Is there a way to set a default font style and size in Gmail?

A. If you are not enamored with the font Gmail uses when you compose an email, you can change the default font. You can even change the color of the font, but before you go crazy with color creativity, have mercy on the eyes of your recipients.

To change the default font, log into Gmail then go to Settings (the little gear icon to the far right). Locate the Default Text Style section on the General tab. Choose your text style using the icons above, "This is what your body text will look like." Click Save Changes at the bottom of the page.

Q. Someone is using my email address to sign up for various mailing lists, seminars, meetings and other things. Aren't there laws against this? What can I do to prevent it?

A. While there are federal and state laws against email "spoofing" and other forms of misleading or deceptive online practices, the problem is tracking down and prosecuting the perpetrators.

On its face it probably appears that a despicable human bean (don't email me) is the culprit; however, in most cases of this type, automated scripts harvest email addresses from

legitimate sources such as Web sites, message boards, blogs, social media and those dreadful "chain" emails so many people feel compelled to forward to others.

If you are receiving email from legitimate companies or Web sites that you recognize, it's usually safe to click an Unsubscribe link located at the bottom of those messages. Don't attempt to unsubscribe from messages that are not from legitimate senders. That type of Unsubscribe link is designed to trick you into verifying your address so it can then be sold to other spammers at a premium. (Of all the nerve!)

I recommend having a minimum of two email addresses, one being your primary address that you use to communicate with friends, family and other trusted individuals, and another address that you use for all other purposes, including making online purchases and registrations. I prefer free Gmail accounts for this purpose, but Yahoo! Mail (<http://mail.yahoo.com>) is also an excellent choice.

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

An Optical Illusion - If you enjoy optical illusions, this site features modern interpretations of illusions. The site is presented blog style, so scroll down the page and prepare to be wowed. You can also use the Older Posts link at the bottom of the page to view previous entries. My suggestion is to just dive in, but take a break if your eyes start to hemorrhage or if you feel your head is about to explode.. www.anopticalillusion.com

For the Love of Monet - I remember first becoming enamored with Monet's art while I was living in Paris, working on my doctoral dissertation, "The Influence of Renaissance Mimes on Baroque, Neoclassicism French Architecture." It was a magical time. If you're a Monet enthusiast, you won't want to miss this site. Once the site loads, you will have three paths from which to choose: Gallery, Journey and Practical Informations -- yes, the non-traditional spelling with the silent "s". Select Journey to begin your digital excursion. If you prefer a more traditional tour or to skip directly to the art, check out the Gallery, organized by the year of each work. www.monet2010.com/en

Web Crosswords - If you're a crossword puzzle enthusiast, here you can select easy puzzles or L.A. Times crosswords, as well as other word-related games. In the unlikely event you get stuck, stymied or flummoxed, click the Solve tab or button to reveal a letter, a word, or the solved puzzle. The daily, theme-oriented crossword puzzles are fun. A little timer in the upper right-hand corner is informative, yet humiliating. www.webcrosswords.com

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COURT REPORTING INSTRUCTOR HIGHLIGHT

By James Littau
Student Member, Support Our Students Committee

Margaret (Maggie) Ortiz is the Department Chair for Court Reporting and Related Technologies at West Valley College, a community college in Saratoga, California.

Q. Court Reporting students come from all sorts of backgrounds and life experiences; some come in right out of high school, and at the other end of the spectrum, others have raised families and maintained busy careers before beginning their CR training. How do you handle the challenges of making sure that all students receive the support and training that they need given their specific situations?

Working with students of various ages and backgrounds is definitely a challenge. Although we strive to accommodate each student's needs, we cannot practice for them! Regardless of age, the challenges of families and/or careers, the biggest challenge that I believe we face is to get students motivated to practice outside of class. We do teach students effective practice techniques and work hard to give them the tools that they need, but in the end, it's up to them. Students who attend class every day, work on their skills in our lab, and produce transcripts for all or most of the daily speedbuilding tests progress much more quickly than students who do not do these things. Sadly, I believe that many students talk the talk, but do not have the self-discipline and/or the time-management skills to implement these very basic tasks.

In addition, some students have significantly more challenges building competency on the machine writer than others, and instructors have to strike a balance between ensuring that these students are well-served while keeping things moving at a quick-enough pace in order not to frustrate those who are progressing more quickly.

On the bright side, one thing that I believe has helped students immensely is that we used funds from our U.S. Department of Education Training for Realtime Writers grant to video-record all of the 40 StenEd theory lessons taught by the two theory instructors as if students were in the classroom. We provide the links to these lessons to all of our students, both in theory and in speedbuilding, for theory reinforcement and review. Again, the students who listen to us and review their theory and stick to their theory do far better than those who do not have a good theory foundation and end up "winging it" and making up outlines on the fly in speedbuilding. Once again, repetitive practice using the correct theory concepts is key!

As department chair, I went to the three-day "On Course 1" workshop for professional development held at our college in January, and I am planning to apply On Course principles in my own classes this semester. I also plan to share and discuss On Course principles and tools with the instructors in the Court Reporting department so that they can better serve our students. On Course focuses a great deal on students taking personal responsibility for their own success in school and helps them to identify and

overcome their barriers to success. Significantly increased student success has been documented for schools regularly applying On Course tools in their classrooms. Anyone can go to the On Course website and obtain tons of great ideas, facts, and tools for student success at no cost, without having to pay for seminars. I think that this would be a great resource for NCRA to share with all of the court reporting schools. (Please note: I am in no way affiliated with On Course. I am just very excited about it!)

Q. Community college administrators seem to favor programs where students can complete their training in the shortest possible time. In fact, one community college here in California is shuttering its court reporting program despite the program's success. What does your district do to support a program with such high attrition rates that are typical for a court reporting program, as well as having a program rate that is usually longer than two years? Do you get push-back from your administrators to make changes to address these issues?

Yes, we do get push-back and have faced challenges due to the small size of our program, the length of time it takes for most students to complete the program, and the student success rate. In fact, our former VP of Instruction recommended our program for discontinuance in late 2009, but there was such an outcry from the community, including former students who are working reporters, judges, deposition firm owners, hearing impaired individuals who use our students' CART services, and current students, that the discontinuance proposal was overturned.

The other challenge facing us -- and other community college programs in California -- is the elimination of repeatability of courses. This has had the greatest impact on our ability to serve students in this skill-based program.

I believe that becoming a recipient of the U.S. Department of Education Training for Realtime Writers grant in 2010 lent us a lot of credibility with our college administration and has helped to keep our program alive. We are currently using funds from this grant to outfit one of our classrooms to enable live streaming for an interactive classroom concept to be able to serve students in California who do not have any court reporting schools in their local area. This should enable us to reach out and effectively serve more students and to increase our enrollment. Our administrators have been very supportive of this effort up to this point, allowing us to purchase the equipment and set up the classroom.

Having students in our program who provide CART services to hearing impaired students on campus gives us some positive visibility for our program.

Q. How do you keep students motivated to push forward?

We bring in working reporters, guest speakers (like Margie Wakeman Wells), our rep from Stenograph, former students, etcetera to talk to students and answer their questions and to share what they love about the profession. We also stress the concepts of taking one step at a time and of focusing on progress, not just test passes.

CAPTION IT FORWARD: WHY STENO IS LIKE MARRIAGE

By Regina DeMerville, CSR

February is the month of “love.” It’s a time where couples expect to be showered with flowers, chocolate, and overpriced cards with which we can never really find the right words to express our love. Should February be the only month we show our love to our spouse or flood our spouse with unnecessary, expensive gifts? My answer is no.

When we find that special someone and want to spend the rest of our lives together, we make the commitment to get married. What is marriage? Some people might say a “love-hate relationship.” It does feel like that some days. But it’s also a constant learning experience, a road with many speed bumps, and, if you do it right, a way to fall in love many times over but always with the same person. That saying, “You can’t live with ‘em, can’t live without ‘em,” yeah, that’s true! I adore my husband. He’s been such a blessing to my life. We’ve been together for over 10 years and married for over 5. Most days I reflect on his positive attitude, what a hard worker he’s always been, and how he treats me like a queen; but there are those days I just don’t know how we’ve been together for so long without one of us strangling the other (I’m sure many of you can relate! haha).

So...what does all of this have to do with steno? How many times in court reporting school did we fail tests? More than any of us care to admit. We would type a test that felt really good, get it back, and it would be a fail. What are our first thoughts? “UGH! I HATE this! I am never going to get out of school! I will never be a court reporter at this rate!” Then more time passes. We type a test that we didn’t feel that great about, get it back, and what do we see? A PASS!? “Oh, my goodness! I LOVE court reporting! This is so awesome! I’m going to be a court reporter in no time!” See a pattern?

No matter what speed you are in or how many years you have been married, the outcome is always worth it. We are human. We live in a technology-based world. We want things done right this minute. But just like marriage, court reporting school takes time. Think about dating. Why do we date? Get to know someone, see if we like them, see if we could potentially start a life with this person. Same with steno. Theory is our “dating” period. We start court reporting school and, within the first few months, we know whether we like it and whether this field is a good fit for us. Think of how many people drop out in Theory. When I started Theory I, there were 32 students. At the end of Theory II, there were 11.

Think of how many people nowadays get married and, within the first few months, get a divorce. Marriage is not for everyone and neither is court reporting school. BUT...for those of us who have made it through Theory and through the dating process, what have we found? True love. We need to embrace our spouse and embrace court reporting

school each and every day. We need to appreciate them and show our love all year long, not just when the calendar says we have to.

I have such a passion for my career. And guess who has been there for me since day one of court reporting school through my working career? My husband. He’s been there for me for every tear down my face, and he was there the day I opened the congratulatory letter from the board, as I was crying hysterically with joy. The bond I share with steno is as strong as my marriage. We all have our faults. We all have our bad days in marriage and in school. We all go through life and school at a different pace. Let’s remember to appreciate the fails in school and the faults of our spouses. Dating is what led us to find our true soul mate. Theory, failed tests, and many nights practicing is what led us (or will lead you) to an amazing career! If you haven’t found your soul mate, keep dating! If you haven’t made it to the state exam yet, use those failed tests as motivation! Each fail is one step closer to becoming an amazing court reporter!

Happy Valentine’s Day!





LOS ANGELES OFFICIALS VOLUNTEER TO REPORT MOCK TRIAL

by Cynthia Rosales, CSR 5410

Being Co-chair of the Public Outreach Committee for Los Angeles County Court Reporters Association (LACCRA) has afforded me the opportunity to participate in events I would never have imagined myself participating in. Recently, myself, along with Dina Lidis, Diana VanDyke and Diana Whitsel, all Los Angeles County officials, volunteered to report for the 2013-2014 season of the Constitutional Rights

Los Angeles County Mock Trial.

The California Mock Trial Program is a statewide academic competition in which senior and junior high schools compete at the county, state and national level. The trial itself is a simulation of a criminal case in which students portray each of the principals in the cast of courtroom characters. Students participate as lawyers, witnesses, court clerks and bailiffs. Adults volunteer as scorers, presidors and coaches. The only person missing was -- you got it -- a certified shorthand reporter.

This is where we came in. Co-Chair, Diana VanDyke, contacted Lourdes Morales, the Senior Program Director, and inquired if they would like to have court reporters volunteer to report their trials. Ms. Morales thought this was a splendid idea. So we agreed to give it a try.

The mock trials took place at Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. When I first arrived, I was very

surprised at how well-dressed all the students were in their dark suits. Very professional. I'll have to say I was a little nervous.

The students spoke very loudly, clearly, and, unfortunately, because it was rehearsed, extremely fast. One student sounded like she was at an auction. We weren't allowed to stop them because this was the first time we were there, and they are timed. Also, participation was two-and-a-half hours with no breaks.

Amazingly, though, it was such a rewarding experience. The students and all the volunteers were so excited that we were there, and everyone wanted to know if there would be a transcript prepared. I didn't have the heart to tell them it would be virtually impossible. There's some bugs we need to iron out. The Mock Trial Program may have to be restructured to have us factored into the timing, and we may have to do a little tag-team reporting.

They liked us so much we were asked to participate in the awards ceremony. Diana VanDyke presented The Helen Bernstein Outstanding Teacher Award to Jennifer Bader. I'll have to say Diana did a fabulous job and had everyone laughing and cheering.

I'm definitely looking forward to next year, and, hopefully, we'll be producing a transcript for them.

Photo: Diana VanDyke (left) and Jennifer Bader (right)



DONATIONS SOUGHT FOR CCRA'S CSR EXAM RECEPTION

By Christy Cannariato, Secretary-Treasurer

Remember taking the CSR? Remember the emotions you experienced when you turned in your exam? Maybe you were thrilled and excited. Maybe you were disappointed and sad.

But no matter what you felt, you deserved to be congratulated (and consoled, if need be) by the people who know best what it is like to experience this amazing rite of passage for all certified reporters in California.

CCRA is seeking your help. We would like to host a reception on Friday, March 14, 2014, for all of the examinees and their supporters at the Westin Los Angeles Airport Hotel.

Can you spare \$10, \$25, \$50? For the price of a couple of lattes, you can help CCRA put on a reception these deserving examinees will long remember.

Donate \$100, and you will receive \$25 off your order from the CCRA store. You know you need the CCRA's 2014 Compendium anyway. Donate to a reception for the next generation of reporters and get a significant discount for yourself.

The names of all donors will be displayed prominently at the reception and printed in CCRA Online newsletter (unless you prefer to remain anonymous).

I donated. I hope you will, too.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

by Candy Newland

So the people at the CCRA tell me, "Just write about what you're going through and what the court reporting world looks like from your perspective." Well...have you ever tried to describe what the world looks like when you're on a roller coaster?

When the ride starts, I feel exhilarated. I have this VERY cool machine that I don't know how to use, a book filled with words that I can't read, and there is no way on this earth that I could feel any better. I pass a few takes, learn a few briefs, and now I start feeling powerful as well as euphoric. I reach the top, and the world is mine. I can see everything clearly. Every court reporter that I see, every graduation reception I go to, I can see myself in vivid detail typing away at 270 words per minute while I'm drinking a cup of coffee and organizing my day planner all at the same time. At this point my stomach falls onto the floor as I look down at my 80 words per minute take that is missing a good 30% of the sentences. I try again and again, just focusing on the small steps; but I can't even seem to get the small steps right. I can't pass a take if my life depended on it. And I can't shake the feeling that my life does, in fact, depend on it.

I'm supposed to relax and just let my fingers take on a mind of their own, but with every dropped word or hesitation I feel pressure, doubt, and anxiety building. I finish the take, know I didn't pass, and sigh; trying to patch up my self-esteem and get ready for the next one. Now, I can't even

see what the world looks like. One second I'm upside down, going left, going right, I don't even know anymore. What I do know is that this ride is scary, and I want off. The ride starts to level off as I finally pass my 140s by the skin of my teeth, and I try to look ahead of me and find the exit gates. Only the gates are not there, and the only things I can see are seemingly endless miles of rollercoaster tracks. I have no hope of getting off the ride, and I am sure doubt is starting to take hold of me. The only reason that I don't rip this shoulder harness off and jump into the lake below is because that would mean that I have to go and tell all of my friends and family that I couldn't handle the ride. I can't see what the world looks like; I can't even see the car in front of me. All I can think about is how deflated I feel.

Then, all of the sudden, I feel that feeling in the pit of my stomach again. My skin feels prickly all over my body, almost like there's a slight breeze; only there is no wind at all. Reality and perspective snap back into place as the ride towards the exit sign. I passed a 3-voice! No wait, I passed two!! I just want to throw my head back and laugh, but I'm too astonished to do anything but breathe with my mouth wide open.

Then the person next to me asks what I thought of the ride. I stare off into space realizing that I can't even recall anything about the ride except getting in and sitting down. I don't really know what to say, so I just subconsciously say the first thing that comes to mind. "The ride was good... really good!"

OVEN BEEF STEW

By Janet Hughes, Gerie's Cousin

Depending on how many people you want to feed, this will determine the size of your turkey roaster type pan.

- 1 layer of lean stew meat or chuck roast, 1 inch pieces (about 3 lbs.)
- 2 – 3 onions, coarsely chopped
- 4 – 5 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 3 – 4 stalks celery, 1 inch piece
- 1 – 2 bags baby carrots
- 3 – 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- Couple bay leaves
- 3 – 4 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- 1 – 2 tsp. dried thyme flakes
- 1 – 1½ bottles cheap red table wine
- 1 – 1½ pkg. tapioca

In whatever size pan you choose, put 1 layer each of the following: beef, onions, celery, garlic, potatoes, carrots and spices; then salt and pepper to taste. Next pour in red wine to almost cover the veggies. Sprinkle the top with at least 1 pkg. of tapioca.

Cover and bake @ 350 degrees for 12 hours, and just forget about it. The veggies can be prepared ahead of time and put together in 10 minutes the morning of your dinner. It makes a delightful gravy. Leftovers can be frozen in Ziploc bags for future meals.

This recipe is very forgiving. You can use any type of vegetable you want or even boneless, skinless turkey or chicken and adjust spices and wine (white) accordingly.

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SO I GOT MY LICENSE. NOW WHAT?!

By Jesse Pickelsimer

What a great year this has been so far! I passed this last CSR exam that was given in November of 2013. I found out I passed the exam the day after Christmas and got my license a couple of days into the new year.

It has definitely been a busy month but maybe not for the reasons you're thinking. Yes, I have my license, but it has been a really eye-opening experience to find out that agency owners haven't been (and won't be) banging down my door to offer me a job. I knew that I would have to go out and do the legwork to meet some key people, and I have truly learned how critical networking is in this field.

One goal of mine has always been to get an officialship in court. Of course with all the budget issues going on in the state, that goal might take a little longer than I ever would have expected, but I have not let that discouraged me.

I decided as soon as I got my license that I was going to find an official somewhere in some court that would take me under their wing and let me do an "internship," for lack of a better word. The point of it wasn't to make money. The point of it was to get experience. Sure, I have my license, but there's still a lot to learn. Things that you'll never learn in school. This is where my networking came in handy.

I had met someone whose wife is an official. I reached out to her, and she graciously took me under her wing. I spent a whole week with her, and the whole experience was incredibly valuable. During that week with her, I met the lady that is in charge of scheduling the pro tems. She asked me if I would be available to cover an emergency situation. They needed a family law matter covered on Friday. I took a deep breath and answered, "Absolutely." So my very first job making money with my license was in Superior Court. Incredible! Now I am on their "list" of reporters to call when they need the extra help. And all because of my networking.

The next week I decided I needed to make sure my software and dictionary and everything was up and running and ready to go and that I was all set up to go out there and actually start making some money.

The following week I had to decide which agencies I wanted to apply with, all for different reasons. That was a daunting task. There are so many agencies. How do you know where to start? Which agency has the highest page rate? Which agency has a great reputation? Which agency will give me the support I need as a new reporter? Well, this is where the networking came in handy again. I have a few reporter friends that I just knew would steer me in the right direction.

I have always known that I will not be one of those reporters that are really great at juggling working for a handful of different agencies. A couple of my friends are actually on calendar at any given time with four or five agencies, and basically whoever offers them a job first is the job they

accept for the next day. But then they have to call the other agencies and update their availability with them before those agencies confirm a job. I knew I didn't want to do all that.

I truly have been blessed because a couple of my reporter friends who know what type of writer I am and what type of work product I create have put in a good word for me. I was invited by a couple of agency owners to come in for an interview because of this.

During the month I also attended the BOOT CAMP seminar that the CCRA held in Burbank. They had some great speakers, and it was another great networking opportunity. One of the speakers was an agency owner. Of course I made sure I met her. I followed up the following week and asked to come in for an interview.

There definitely are a lot of options out there for new reporters. You just have to put together a game plan, weigh out all the options, decide what exactly it is that you want, and then go after it. You'll have to be creative in these economic times, but the reward will obviously be worth it. And the networking is a CRITICAL part of it! Start making connections now, even while you're in school. Make great impressions on your peers and your teachers. Go to conventions and make yourself known to others. You are your own brand. Build that brand up! Then, when the time comes, people will know who you are. This is something that is completely in YOUR control, and you never know who will be able to help you later when you need it most.

I made a list of what the top three agencies are, in my mind, based upon my criteria and what I want out of an agency. I'm happy to report that I have made a decision on the agency I will be calling home, and I will be taking my first depo with them next week. They say they have plenty of work and will be able to keep me busy. And I can't wait! I'll let you know how it goes...

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

January 15, 2014

Letter to the Editor
The Gavel & Quill
1175 E. Garvey Avenue
Suite 105
Covina, CA 91724

Re: *"The Courts Are Not Serving the Citizens Well"*

Dear Editor:

I have practiced law in this area for forty-five years. I am witnessing the demise of justice in our courts and it saddens me. In days past, the State Bar and/or local bar associations collaborated with the courts to solve the problems of lack of funding, delays in setting trials, etc. Today, the bar associations and the State Bar have "rolled over," leading to the chaos we have today. This letter addresses three of the areas where the citizens and the administration of justice are being shortchanged.

1. The elimination of court reporters being provided in civil litigation.

For the most part, my clients can afford to provide a court reporter for the purpose of having a record of a court proceeding and/or trial. That is a bad alternative because the side with the greater economic strength i.e. an insurance company may not share the cost of the reporter and will stick the other party who needs accountability and transparency that a court reporter provides with the full cost of the reporter until the trial or hearing is over. Gamesmanship will prevail.

Also, the elimination of court reporters sticks the poor. Why should the justice system have accountability and transparency only for those that can afford to pay for the reporter? All citizens benefit from what transpires in the court system.

Litigants in a particular case often set a precedent by which people can guide their lives accordingly. If someone is too poor to have a court reporter, the same mechanism that allows the waiver of filing fees for the poor could be used to pay for a court reporter for those too poor to pay for one. This is simple justice.

2. The abuse of the ex-parte system

Some judges have a tendency to decide ex-parte motions in chambers without appearing on the bench or allowing the parties to make a record. In my lengthy years of practice, this does not seem to be a factor in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. It has happened a few times to me in Orange County but not enough to establish a pattern. However, this unfair practice has definitely become a pattern with some judges in Los Angeles County. People who spend a lot of time filing the motions have judges in their chambers make decisions without the parties being able to make a record.

In San Bernardino County, the parties are required to secure an ex-parte date, serve the papers on opposing counsel the day before so that opposing counsel would have time to respond to the motion and prepare opposition. In Los Angeles County, the ex-parte motion practices are more restrictive. The moving party can actually file their papers the same day as the hearing and hand them to opposing counsel the day of the hearing.

Allowing opposing counsel the ability to write a hand written note in opposition to a motion is inadequate. Attorneys must have the ability to make a record. We are in a litigious, adversarial, bare-knuckles society. Sadly, it is survival of the fittest. Clients pay substantial sums for a lawyer's services to have their arguments advanced. Their arguments cannot be advanced if lawyers have to scratch out an opposition on a piece of paper and cannot make a record.

Why won't a judge take the bench on an ex-parte motion? Any confusion in either the moving or responding papers could be cleared up on the record and a ruling could be reported by a court reporter. Backroom justice without a court reporter lacks accountability and transparency and is not what the clients deserve. The clients are paying for this system. They are being stuck for the increased cost of filing papers. Judges must encourage accountability and transparency and not encourage actions that frustrate those goals.

3. Closure of the Rancho Cucamonga courts to all but criminal cases.

Although I recognize that the budget shortfall is causing some hard decisions to be made by the courts, nevertheless, the decision to transfer civil and family law cases from Rancho Cucamonga to San Bernardino is really a dumb

decision for a number of reasons. First, the west end of San Bernardino County is the economic engine that drives the county economy. Between the housing and the businesses in the west end, there needs to be a courthouse to handle civil and family law matters in the area where families live and businesses operate. As long as I have practiced, having courts in various districts in a county was to try to provide proximity to the courthouse for all people, particularly the poor, so that they would have access to the courts.

Since family law cases take up a large part of the filings, the notion that people seeking family law relief have to find a way to get to downtown San Bernardino is an attack on the people least able to afford it.

Although my office is in Claremont, the lawyers in the east district of Los Angeles County courts which comprise Pomona, Claremont and many other cities, routinely use the Rancho Cucamonga court. Taking away civil and family law cases will be harmful to the businesses in the area.

I understand that my comments may offend some of the judges I know and respect, but I feel transferring family and civil court cases to San Bernardino is wrong and should be reversed.

One final point is in order. When the court funding controversy started, the court should have immediately filed suit when the governor and legislature started taking away money from the courts. The last I heard the judiciary is a co-equal branch of government with the executive and legislative branches. If you believe what Governor Brown and the legislature are saying and carry it to its logical extreme, the Governor and legislature can eliminate the courts because they do not have enough money to fund them. Obviously no one would tolerate that, so what they have done instead is try and starve the courts when they have no right to do so.

For reasons known only to them, the California Supreme Court Chief Justice and the other judges folded and begged for money instead of going into court and challenging them for this affront to the rights of the citizens to have courts that function properly to adjudicate their disputes. Had a suit been filed, there might have been a constitutional crisis in this state, which would have been good. The give and take of the legal process would have yielded a better result than we have now.

What is happening now in San Bernardino County has

already happened in Los Angeles County, San Diego County and other places throughout the state and must stop. No judges salaries and no pensions are being reduced, but the citizens, especially the poor, who the courts exist to help, are being shortchanged and hurt dramatically.

Unfortunately, the citizens are being so badly harmed in many areas lately that they are starting to accept getting harmed as the "new normal." Maybe the citizens will wake up and realize that elections do matter, and when politicians and judges run for office, votes can make a difference in the quality of citizens' lives. The bottom line is that the legal system, in many aspects, is very unfair and causing great harm to many people, especially the poor. For there to be justice for the citizens, there must be fairness, accountability and transparency for all.

Very truly yours,

Paul M. Mahoney
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