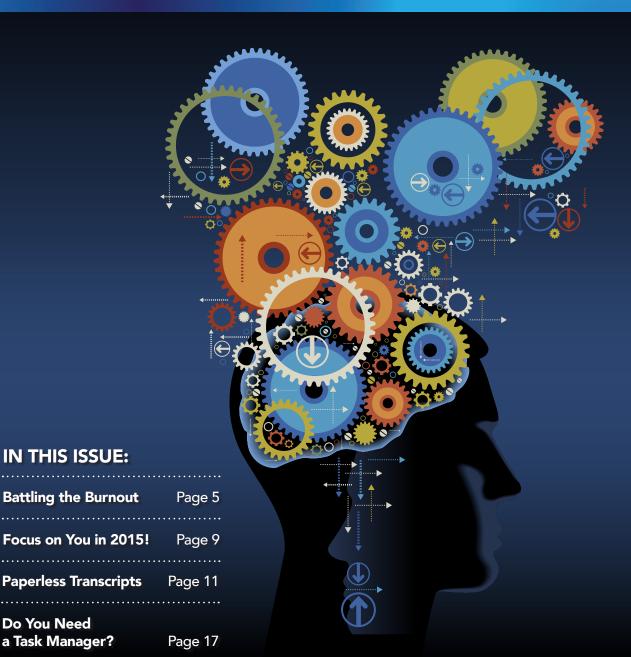
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MISSION STATEMENT

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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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

As we come into February, we begin to put our attention and energy into NCRA's Court Reporting and Captioning Week. CCRA is very happy to announce that we have penned a State resolution and, along with support from the other associations in California, will have Assemblyman and Judiciary Committee Chairman Mark Stone carry the resolution to the floor of the California State Legislature. This is a very exciting announcement for our state profession and for CCRA to be able to move this resolution forward honoring this distinguished profession and all of the hardworking court reporting and captioning professionals in California.

So what comes after the National Court Reporting and Captioning Week? Next up is the California State Certified Shorthand Reporters Examination, or more commonly referred to as "the test." The test will be given on March 20th at the Westin LAX in Los Angeles. CCRA will once again be there supporting the students who have worked hard and achieved the necessary skills to qualify and sit for the state exam.

Now, I'm supposed to use "we" and "us" when writing my articles, but I feel compelled to disobey that directive and write this article on a more personal note.

As many of you know, I had to take this test twice. Yes, twice. Those two times withstanding, I'm still on most days referred to as a court reporter. (I won't digress into what I'm referred

to on the other days.) Was it the path that I wanted to take to get here? No. Did it end up being the path that I was meant to take to get here? Yes. Do I regret taking the longer route? At the time I did. Now I'm thankful for the path taken.

So what am I getting at? For me, this test was about controlling my nerves. So how did I and thousands of others do it? Many people have utilized beta blockers to help them control their nerves. Some use meditation. Some use alcohol. I used exercise. I rarely ever played basketball. The night before the test, a friend of mine invited me to play pick-up ball for a little while. Three hours later, I was fully exhausted. All of the negative energy was gone, along with any wind and strength to walk around. My point is that if you are taking the test for the first or the 100th time, you need to use whatever it takes to get your nerves under control. If that's picking up the phone and calling a friend,

mentor, or a CCRA board member, that's what you do. If it means running sprints until you pass out. You do that. If it means getting totally blotto the night before -- and hear me, that's not a path that I would try -- well, you do what is necessary.

I will also suggest this, when you go to the test, only take somebody with you if they're the most supportive person you have ever known. This is the one time in your life that I will tell you that it's okay to be selfish. This test is about you. This test is about what you have worked hours and hours to be able to qualify to take. If you're in a relationship, unless your partner is Tony Robbins, leave him or her at home. This day and a half is yours. Use it to focus on your future. I have seen many test takers sabotaged by their well-meaning partners and some by not so well-meaning partners.

The first time I took the test, I went with my wife and our roommate. Our roommate was taking the test and my wife was there for support. The distractions were endless and apparently not helpful. I failed. The next time I took the test, I went by myself. I worried about myself and nobody else. I ate when I was hungry and slept when I was tired. On test day, I stayed as far away from other test takers as possible. I sat in my room and watched a college football game until it was time to sit for my portion. I passed. Coincidence? Maybe. But I think there is a lot to being able to guide your ship by yourself at this time in your life.

Some of you may be offended by what I've said. Others of you may find some wisdom in it. I'm not sure whether either side of the coin is the right or the wrong side. I just know from seeing both avenues of approach the side that worked best for me.

I want to see you pass this test. I want to see you succeed in life. I would like to see a 100 percent pass rate. So if there's anything that I can do to help you get there, contact me. My email address is carlos.martinez@cal-ccra.org. You can also find me on Face Book.

After the test, be sure to come to our reception. It's a good place to unwind and blow off steam with the only people on this planet that understand what you have just gone through.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in March.





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NAPA AND THE EARTHQUAKE

By Karen R. Kronquest, CSR

On Sunday, August 24, 2014, the ground beneath Napa shook. Most people were lucky to experience only some minor damage – cracks in walls, glassware and china broken. A number of homes lost their chimneys. Some streets had cracks and a few water pipes broke, flooding the roads. Others were not so fortunate. Some homes were moved off their foundations, porches and windows displaced. Unfortunately, the older buildings experienced the most damage.

One of those most affected was the historic courthouse. Built in 1879, it has withstood the great San Francisco earthquake, numerous smaller quakes, flooding, and other natural disasters. This time, though, there was major damage. Interior walls buckled, plaster fell, pipes broke, and a corner of the building crumbled, exposing the attic.

The Napa Superior Court is small – we consist of six judges, two commissioners, and less than 100 employees total. Our historic courthouse building housed four courtrooms, our civil division, administration's offices, jury assembly room, and other services. Due to safety concerns, the entire building was inaccessible.

After only one day of closure, mostly for cleanup, the Napa court was back up and running. How did we do it? The short answer is teamwork, cooperation, and technology. It was not easy – the entire court was now housed in one building, our criminal courthouse. Almost every inch of space was shared or repurposed. Judges shared courtrooms and chambers. A former storage area was converted into a temporary courtroom. On Monday mornings we had hundreds of jurors in the public

hallways waiting to be called for trials. It was chaotic, but with a bit of patience and understanding, we were open for business as usual, with a few modifications.

One thing stands out that made it all possible. Several years ago the court began the major project of converting all of our files to electronic format. At the time of the earthquake, every case in our court was paperless. All filings and transcripts are scanned into our system so they are immediately accessible to all staff and judges for viewing. During the first few weeks after the earthquake, many cases were continued because the district attorneys and public defenders did not have access to their files. The building that housed both of their offices was damaged and inaccessible to them until it was stabilized so that items could be retrieved. The court, however, caused no delay to cases being heard.

It has now been almost six months since the earthquake, and we've adapted and managed quite well. A few weeks ago we were able to return to the newer portion of the historic courthouse, so we're not quite so on top of each other as we were. Part of our juror assembly room has been converted to a courtroom, so most of our family law and lesser civil cases now have a regular location to be heard. Administration and IT were able to move back into their offices. Jurors now have a place to assemble, and our mediators are back in their center. All juvenile cases are now heard at the courtroom at juvenile hall. Part of the clerk's office is being remodeled, and soon our civil division will have their own space. Probably the best thing of all is it appears that our beautiful historic building will be restored, albeit in a few years.

BATTLING THE BURN-OUT

By Amanda Scott

You're setting up your equipment for the day when Joe Blow approaches and says "Wow, I didn't know there were still court reporters!"

You're looking forward to a much-needed day off when the phone rings and you get The Call. There's a job that just came up, and it's for your best client, and there's NOBODY else to cover it...

Your body aches after a long day of writing while everyone else agreed to work through lunch, ignored your pleas to slow down and take turns, and then declined to order copies.

Some days it is so easy to feel burned-out on court reporting. We've all been there! The trick

is to not get beat down by it and instead keep looking forward. It's important to stay challenged, but balanced. Challenge yourself to learn a new feature of your software! Try adopting some new briefs! Find ways big or small to get involved! If you have concerns that you don't feel are being addressed, attend a board meeting, or write an article. If you would like to give back and share your experience, mentor a student, or attend a career fair. Find your balance. Learn to say "no" when something asks too much of you, but remember to say "yes" sometimes too.

Serving on the board this year was an intimidating thing for me to take on, but it has already been so rewarding and motivating. It shows me that any little thing I try can open doors and start a spark in me!





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CART WITH STACY MOLINA, STUDENT

By Stacy Molina, Student

I started court reporting school in January of 2011. As a busy mom of two young boys, I progressed at a decent pace and entered qualifiers in May of 2013. And then it happened -- the dreaded plateau. Yes, my friends, 20 months to date and I'm still in qualifiers. But no pep talks or words of encouragement are needed, because I have experienced the biggest growth during this so-called plateau. If you too are experiencing a plateau, may I suggest you shift your focus off feeling stuck and go after some secondary goals. "Don't just go through it; grow through it." – Joel Osteen.

I decided that while one main goal of mine was to obviously become a CSR candidate by qualifying at school, my ultimate goal was to be the best court reporter/captioner I could be, and this entails a lot more than just qualifying. I also discovered that having a "student" status equals big-time discounts.

From the beginning of court reporting school, I felt a strong pull towards CART and captioning. I love having the ability to work from home and the challenge of constantly tweaking and finetuning my writing to provide quality realtime and access to all. It instantly became more important to write cleanly than to pass a test with sloppy notes. I decided that I would be realtime ready when I got out of school, even if that meant it would take me longer to finish. With this new mind-set, I scoured the Internet for any tools to improve my realtime. I attended workshops, seminars, webinars, and online classes -- anything that I could find and afford -- and many provided discounted student rates. Some of my favorite realtime classes were Anita Paul's Realtime Mastery Workshop, Caption Masters' online CART series, and Jennifer Bonifilio's recorded webinar: Realtime Fear Busters. I also purchased many helpful books from NCRA's website that provided guidance in cleaning up my realtime by having distinct outlines for prefixes, suffixes, word parts, and homonyms that eliminate potential word boundaries. I highly recommend the following books: Writing Naked, Realtime Writing, and Realtime Captioning the Vitac Way.

CR school is a total mind game. We must learn to be comfortable at failing, since we will inevitably fail 99% of our tests before we pass the one test that allows us to advance to the next speed. We have a brief celebratory moment before the process starts all over again at the new speed. I recently heard the expression "fail it forward" and find it so fitting and appropriate to this process. As I continued to "fail it forward" and improve my realtime, I started to sit out. I sat out in all facets of the profession: Court, depositions, CART, and captioning. Sitting out allows you to learn things that can only be experienced and not taught in a class. I made some very valuable contacts that subsequently led to job opportunities. After sitting out for several months and having worked on my realtime, I began providing CART three days a week, which allowed me to attend qualifiers on the other two days.

The next thing I focused my attention on was learning my software. I cannot stress how important this is. I learned to edit faster, create CART layouts, and create macros for improving my realtime. My favorite macro is "find and replace." If I wrote "The red shirt" and want to change "red" to "blue," I would write

RED/BLU/ and then my macro -which is FAEG -- and it would change "red" to "blue." If you haven't tried macros, they are a game changer. I believe most CAT software has predefined macros that you can get started with until you're comfortable creating your own. There are many CR groups on Facebook that share and upload their macros that can be imported into your software and enjoyed immediately. The latest thing I'm learning is editing from the machine. I recommend picking three macros a week to practice and incorporate into your writing. Using this method, you'll be editing from the machine like a pro in no time!

I then used this time to start building up my work wardrobe. I never thought about doing this until I sat out at court and ran out of business attire the first week and suffered

the wrath of ill-fitting shoes. Even if you only provide CART/ Captioning in a casual setting, business attire is recommended for conventions. Conventions are another valuable investment. I made it a point to attend the annual conventions put on by CCRA, NCRA, and DRA. I looked up the dates and prices at the beginning of the year and started to budget and save accordingly. I cut costs by forgoing the expensive convention hotel and staying at a less expensive neighboring hotel. There is a big break in prices for students, some offer scholarships, and one year I was very fortunate to be sponsored by my mentor. If you don't already have one, I highly recommend getting a mentor. Oftentimes our family and friends don't understand what we go through. We constantly get the question of "When will you be done with school?" A mentor gets it and can be your biggest cheerleader and supporter and may even sponsor a convention for you.

While in the midst of a plateau and feeling discouraged, sometimes the best thing you can do is get outside of yourself and be of service to others. Volunteering can bring fun and fulfillment to your life, and, in my experience, I have always benefited much more than the receiver. That's why I decided to join CCRA's newly formed CART/Captioning committee. I find it to be meaningful and interesting, and it also provides me with renewed motivation. It's a great way to meet agency owners and colleagues in the field, and it looks great on your resume by conveying your commitment and passion for the profession.

I hope I have given you some tips on growing through your plateaus, and I wish you a year of growth and breakthroughs in 2015. The best is yet to come!



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CAPTION IT FORWARD: FOCUS ON YOU IN 2015!

By Regina DeMoville, CSR

Another year has flown by. Where does the time go? Around this time, everyone starts making resolutions. The usual: lose weight, stop smoking, save money, et cetera. Those are all great, but what about YOU!? What about get out of school? What about pass into that next speed level? What about get that dream job you think is so far out of reach? No one can do these things for you. You MUST focus on what's important in your life right now! Not tomorrow, not in a year from now...RIGHT NOW! We all have busy lives, but we tend to put ourselves on the back burner. Make your resolution about success!

I'd like to get the perspective of a new reporter and what they think 2015 will look like for them. Beatriz Lisud, CSR, is a depo reporter as well as a CART provider. She has graciously offered to answer my questions. Let's see her outlook on 2015!

Regina: What were your biggest struggles, professionally, in 2014?

Beatriz: I'm still pretty new to the court reporting/captioning field (over two years), and I would say I'm now starting to get used to the flow of the business and what to expect. I do well with my schedules and jobs as they come, but I guess my biggest struggle would be figuring out the next step of my career, where I want to be in the long run, and working towards that.

Regina: What do you think you can do in 2015 to rid yourself of those struggles?

Beatriz: For any path I want to take, I always know to look inside and trust myself to find out what really makes me happy and fulfilled when the day is over. I love what I do, but if I want to take it to the next level, I know I have to commit to my goals every single day. If I need to build my speed or expand my vocabulary to take on denser material that comes up on that higher-paying job, I should be setting aside practice time and focusing on those areas.

Regina: I know that you are highly interested in becoming a broadcast captioner. What will you focus on in 2015 that will help you become a captioner?

Beatriz: I definitely want to focus on increasing my speed, accuracy, and paraphrasing because I know those are imperative when it comes to broadcast. I've always used briefs since in school, and that helps me tons. Just recently I signed up for My Realtime Coach, and I love it because it really breaks down my writing and presents areas in need of improvement. The CBC/CCP preps are particularly helpful.

Regina: Even as a working reporter, do you think that becoming a good-quality broadcast captioner is within reach?

Beatriz: I have no doubt it is within reach! I believe I'm very in tune with my skill set, and I know what I need to do to get there.

Like pretty much anything, if you know yourself and know what you're capable of, with hard work, you can go anywhere.

Regina: When you were in school, and even as a working reporter, what comes to mind when you hear "broadcast captioner"?

Beatriz: Broadcast captioning is actually the first branch of the court reporting field that piqued my interest back when I started theory. My image of a captioner has evolved since then, but it has always been positive. As a new student, I saw a captioner as someone who is independent and can work from home in their pajamas. I remember going into higher speeds we had a quest speaker at our school who

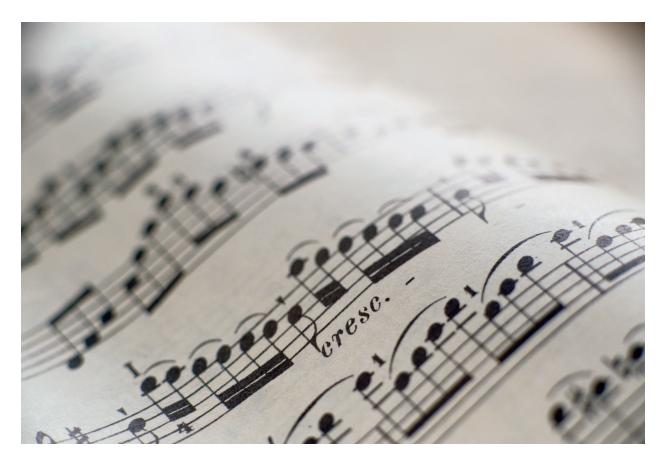


spoke about her captioning career, and I saw her as someone who is flexible, a fast learner, and ready for anything (because in captioning, most of the time you don't know what you're going to get). These were all essential traits I knew had to be acquired to be in the captioning field. But now, as a reporter and aspiring captioner, I believe that the true essence of a broadcast captioner is someone who is well-rounded, strong, and confident, not just professionally, but in all aspects of life. This line of work is not an easy one to get into, so to actually be doing it says a lot about your drive, knowledge, adaptability, and sense of self.

Regina: Do you think broadcast captioning is well known within the court reporting community? If yes, how? If not, what can be done in 2015 to help make it well known?

Beatriz: I do not think it is as known as it should be. To get the word out, I think that court reporting schools should start educating and advocating more for broadcast. Maybe have more speed courses designed for developing real-time captioning or CART skills for those students who are interested. I know that my school fell short on that, and I probably would have been more determined to pursue broadcast right after school if they hadn't. I think students close to completing school and new reporters are the best potential captioners because their speed is usually at its peak, and they're still trying to figure out where they want their court reporting career to go. Mentors from the captioning field reaching out to students or reporters like me would also be of great guidance, and you, Regina, have been just that!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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Caption It Forward CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Regina: Where do you see yourself in your career at the end of 2015?

Beatriz: At the end of 2015, I can clearly see myself working as a broadcast captioner! Aside from that, I especially love CART, so I still see myself doing that when I can, for as long as I can. With the support and willpower I possess, there's no doubt my goals can be achieved and that I can be happily sitting at home in my pajamas feeding live captions on television soon enough!

I challenge you all to think about what your answers would be, and work on turning those dreams into reality! Find a good mentor in the field you are interested in! Having a support system is important.

And to working reporters: please, help these students! This field needs more quality mentors who are willing to take students under their wing and give them the time they deserve to learn from you! We know what it's like to be a struggling student. Help sponsor a student to go to a convention! Take them to lunch and share your knowledge of the field! These are all worth more to them than you know!

I wish you all a happy and successful 2015!



By Doreen Perkins

I'm sitting at my desk and out of the corner of my eye I see the ream of paper that I placed there six months ago. Seeing that paper makes me reminisce of how my career as a court reporter has changed in the last 34 years. Many of you will not know what a Stenorette is, but I began my career spending every evening dictating into one. I would then deliver those tapes - yes, they were reel to reel -- to a transcriptionist who then had to type up the transcripts. There were many a night that the transcriptionist did not complete her job on time, and I would have to pick up the tapes from her and stay up all night completing the transcripts in order to meet my deadlines. I don't miss those days at all. I remember the day in 1983 that Baron came out with one of the first "Portable Computers." It had a 5 megabyte hard drive. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. Not only did the computer make my job easier, I was excited about my profession again. I was learning something new. Now, I know and understand that many reporters fight change, but I would not for one second want to turn back time and return to the way we have produced transcripts in the past. It is time that we as reporters look forward to the next change.

Ten years ago we were pushing all reporters to become proficient in the use of realtime. I truly believe that realtime was the savior of our profession in years past. It's time that we move forward to the next step, which is to produce our transcripts digitally. We need to embrace this technology and begin offering this fabulous product to our clients.

Currently in Fresno Superior Court there is an ongoing pilot project to upload official reporter transcripts electronically. This project started June 1, 2014. We are currently uploading all pleas, sentencings, preliminary hearings, and, yes, criminal appeals. We are also uploading death penalty daily trial transcripts to the Court and trial counsel. These electronic transcripts are far superior to our paper transcripts. To highlight just two of their special features, these transcripts are searchable and contain hyperlinked word indices. To date, all of the end users, our justice partners, are loving these transcripts.

I have received a number of inquiries from various counties wanting to produce their transcripts electronically. Please feel free to contact me at info@cal-ccra.org if you are interested in learning how you too can join the digital age for uploading your transcripts.

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MY JOURNEY TO BECOMING A CLVS

By Steve Strunk

I began my journey to obtain my CLVS certification in 1993. The initial step in this journey was to attend the CLVS seminar in Newport Beach, CA, to qualify for the test. I then traveled to San Francisco to take the written test. After that, I traveled to Vienna, Virginia, to take the production test. All of this traveling started in the San Francisco Bay Area and culminated in my receiving the Certified Legal Video Specialist (CLVS) certification, which was presented to me by the National Court Reporters Association in 1994. It all sounds fairly simple, but there was the added difficulty of performing my regular day job, studying for the exams, practicing for the hands-on portion of the exam, and then subsequently taking the exams.

But wait, there's more.

Let me backtrack a bit -- actually, quite a ways back. Way back in junior high school, I had a propensity for working in stage production and audio visual classes. This interest continued on into high school. I also had a great love for law enforcement. I continued this interest on into college at Sacramento State University, graduating with a degree in criminal justice. I went on to a five-year tour in the United States Army. After my service tour, which was mostly overseas, I left the army and went into law enforcement. After a period of time I quit, and in 1987, I went into private practice as a licensed private investigator.

I did all the normal P.I. work, but I really enjoyed the technical side. I performed some work in the fields of electronic countermeasures, video, and high-tech security systems. I really enjoyed the covert and overt video systems, and that is what got the juices flowing for my future in high-tech video work.

I really can't recall when I decided to get my CLVS certification, but it was in late 1992 or 1993. I believe it came about after reading about it in a magazine article. I told myself, "Hey, I can do that." I studied the requirements for my state, which of course is California, and I found out that all I needed to do is become a notary, get a camera, and start shooting depositions. I told myself, "That's easy." But I wanted better training in this legal arena, and I wanted some sort of certification. That is when I found out about the National Court Reporters Association and their CLVS program. "Wow," I told myself, "this is the program for me!"

I performed some depositions as well as other video work as a P.I. In 1997, I went back into law enforcement. At this point in my life, as I get ready to retire from this vocation and head back into P.I. work, I recently renewed my CLVS by taking some Continued Education Units (CEUs). I had the pleasure of attending the NCRA convention in San Francisco last year. There I met some wonderful folks from the California Court Reporters Association. I joined the NCRA and subsequently joined the CCRA. I attended the CCRA state convention in Indian Springs in the California desert in early October, got some CEUs, and met some great people.

In mid-October, I attended the annual NCRA Legal Video Convention in Las Vegas where I got brought up to date on technology, I went from the analog world to the world of digital.

Now it's time to upgrade my equipment, put into practice what I learned about modern-day marketing at the conventions, and get on with utilizing my CLVS certification.

THE CALIFORNIA COURT REPORTERS' OATH

"Being admitted to the profession of court reporting, I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of a court reporter, acting always as a neutral third party to protect the accuracy of the record of the proceeding I report. I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity and in keeping with the professional standards of court reporting."

TECH COMMITTEE GADGET OF THE MONTH LUIDIA EQUIL SMARTPEN 2

Unlike some smartpens, the Equil Smartpen 2 doesn't require special paper; it captures notes scribbled on anything from a cocktail napkin to a legal pad. True, it requires a clip-on receiver, but when you're done writing, the receiver and pen both snap into a compact, bag-friendly charging cradle.

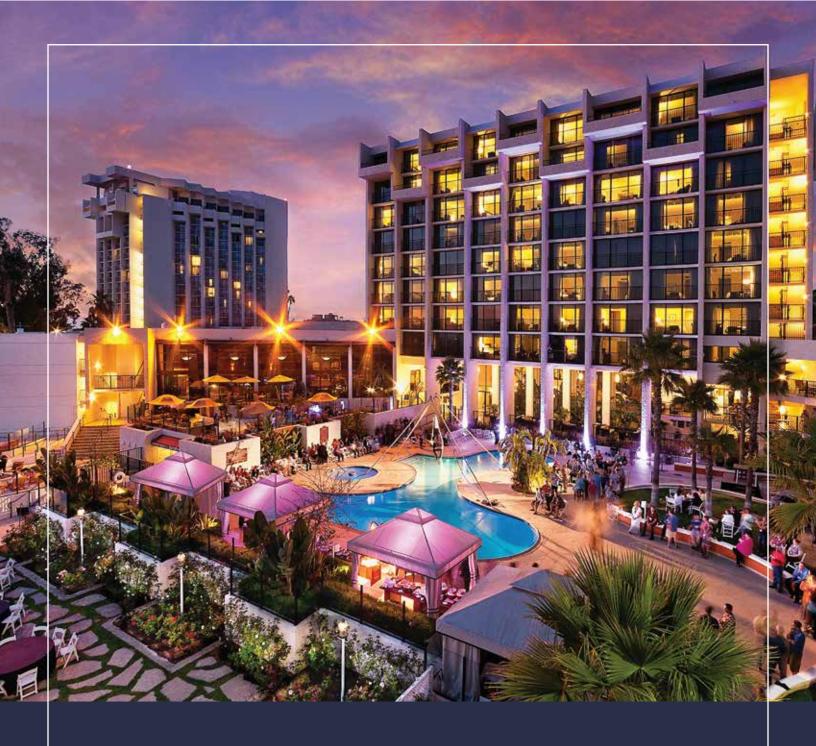
As you write, your notes are synced in real time to a phone, tablet or laptop via Bluetooth, though the sensor can also capture everything for later syncing if your

device isn't handy. Either way, you can then edit and/or annotate those notes using the included iOS, Android, OS X or Windows apps, or you can have the software convert handwriting to text.

\$179

http://tinyurl.com/ojy7pus





SAVE THE DATE!

CCRA'S 105TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

<u>OCTOBER 9 - 12, 2015</u>

NEWPORT BEACH MARRIOTT HOTEL AND SPA



Q: When I installed the latest version of Microsoft Office on my Windows 8 computer, all my favorite keystroke combinations, such as ALT + F + V for Print Preview are

gone. Now I have to use the mouse or touchpad, click in

www.MrModem.com

the corners, scroll here and there -- it drives me crazy. Any suggestions, Mr. M?

A: The good news is that most of your favorite keyboard

commands are still present but have been changed. Why? Because it would obviously make too much sense to leave them as they were. Your beloved Print Preview is now ALT + CTRL + I.

Accessing a list of all keyboard commands is as simple as clicking the question mark in the upper right of the page. Word Help will open. Type "keyboard shortcut" and you will find a complete listing. I tested a bunch of them out under both Windows 7 and Windows 8 and didn't run into any problems, so I think you will be very pleased with the results.

Investigate Slow Connection

Q: I'm using high-speed Internet over a phone line. It works okay, but on occasion it goes so slow that most sites never finish downloading. Is this a provider problem?

A: I would start your investigation with your Internet service provider, and initially determine what connection speed range you should have. Your provider's website will have that information, or you can call their Customer Service department. With that information in hand, run several speed tests using a site such as speedtest.net, bandwidthplace.com or cnet.com/ internet-speed-test.

Connection speeds can vary greatly throughout the day and night, so conduct tests at varying times over several days. If your average upload and download speeds fall below what you should be receiving, contact your provider's Tech Support. That way you will have evidence to support your assertion that the connection speeds you are receiving are not what were represented, and your provider can investigate from there.

Q: I received a message from Yahoo! Mail telling me that I'm running out of storage space and that I need to provide my password so they can increase my capacity. You've warned us about anybody that asks for our passwords, so I'm suspicious. Is this for real or what?

A: Your suspicion is justified. I'm glad you remembered what I so frequently yammer about: Never provide your password or voluntarily confirm any other personal or account information when requested to do so by email. No legitimate organization or service will ever ask you for that information. Just delete the message you received and don't give it another thought.

Q: In my old version of Firefox I was able to bookmark a site to a folder. But now if I click the star, it doesn't allow me to select a folder. I have to move it into a folder after the fact by opening all bookmarks. Is there an easier wav?

A: In the current Firefox, you can instantly create a bookmark by selecting the star icon at the top right of the browser. When the star turns blue, your bookmark is created, so tap or click the star again. (Medical Tip: When you turn blue, call 9-1-1.) You will see options to edit the bookmark. You can also drop it into an existing folder, using the drop-down menu, or create a new folder.

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

Ba Ba Dum - Ba Ba Dum is a language game that lets you practice your vocabulary in one of eleven different languages, including my native Svenska. When you arrive at the site, click Play to begin and select the language you want to practice by clicking the country's flag graphic. For a real challenge, you can practice in a randomized assortment of languages. In the topright corner you will see your score. There are two numbers: Your cumulative score and the score for the language you are currently playing. This site presents a fun way to practice vocabulary in different languages. babadum.com

Crossword Puzzles - If you're a crossword puzzle enthusiast, this is an online treasure trove of puzzles. With a repository containing more than 32,000 crosswords, you are guaranteed endless hours of entertainment or escapism. www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com

Pica Pic - Created by Hipopotam, this site features a digitalized collection of handheld games. These games triggered a wave of nostalgia for me. I can still remember playing my Little Mermaid game on the school bus and almost being beaten to death. Good times, indeed. Use the menu at the bottom to select a game and use the arrows at the left and right of the screen to scroll back and forth. A down arrow shows which game is currently selected. If you mouse over the game, a Play button appears. If you want to play that game, click it to begin. This will enlarge the game and display its controls. The games feature the same sounds as if you were playing the original handheld version. www.pica-pic.com

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WHAT'S THE ADVANTAGE?

By Gerie Bunch, SOS Committee Chair

Students, you may be asking yourself, "What's the advantage of attending a Mock CSR Day?"

Well, I'll tell you. First off, CCRA's Mock CSR Day is the perfect way to find out what the actual CSR exam will be like. It will be a day for you to get over your test-taking jitters. Think of it as having a chance to test your readiness without the pressure of the real thing.

You will be given two separate Written Knowledge Tests: one English and the other one Legal, Medical, Professional Practice and Vocabulary. These tests have similar content to the WKTs given by the CRB. Answer keys will be handed out so that you can grade yourself and then be able to use them as a study guide later on.

We will give you two dictated tests, one court and one deposition proceeding at 200 WPM with a warm-up and leadin, just like the actual CSR exams. This may be one of the best mock tests you'll take, as our readers have practiced extensively for it.

There will then be a review of the Minimum Transcript Format Standards, which are required for the CSR to even be graded. Trust us, you'll want to nail down those standards *before* you get to the actual CSR.

After the testing and review, we will hold a panel of speakers who represent all aspects of court reporting: Official, Freelancer,

CART Provider and Captioner. You will hear how they got into their chosen field of court reporting and what they enjoy about it. These working reporters will answer your questions and give you their personal perspectives to help guide and inspire you along your own path.

As an added bonus, industry vendors will be present and handout information available to showcase their products and services that you can expect to use once you become a CSR. Court Reporting is a small community, and networking with these vendors is invaluable.

The Mock CSR Day is also a great opportunity to meet some of the board members of CCRA who work hard to protect the future of Court Reporting and also, among many other things, volunteer to help students achieve their goals by mentoring and presenting at events.

The CSR can be the most nerve-wracking part of court reporting school, but by attending the Mock CSR Day, you will come away feeling more comfortable with the CSR experience and more familiar with its sometimes confusing requirements. You will have also learned about different aspects of the reporting field through firsthand accounts and learned about useful products and services to help you do your job in the field. Don't wait until the actual CSR to dive right in; test the waters with us at the CCRA's Mock CSR Day.

It's your test for success.

DO YOU NEED A TASK MANAGER?

By Steven "Kosmo" Kosmata

Do you need a Task Manager? Do you even know who or what is a Task Manager? Would you like a digital secretary 24/7 to help you remember those important items for work or home? Let's say you have a kid's birthday project you need to schedule and keep track of, transcripts that are due for the appeals court or that impatient depo office, home remodeling checklist, wedding to-dos, or tasks you need to accomplish for that upcoming family vacation. I sought the advice of a respected tech person, and I've been taking advantage of my digital secretary called Trello. This is a free task manager that is crossplatform, meaning no matter the device -- laptop, tablet, and phone – you've got Trello always with you at your fingertips and always at the ready.

So how does it work, you ask? It's very user friendly, which is a big plus for me. You literally set up topics, or what they call "cards," and underneath that are all of the tasks that you need to accomplish. You can have as many cards or projects as you like.

Another reason this is fantastic to use is you can invite your

friends or coworkers to your Trello cards, assign tasks and colors to them, and you can make sure that everyone is on the same page and tasks are getting completed on time and by the correct people. You can set reminders for deadlines to get your tasks accomplished.

I am including a link that will help explain everything in a visual way: https://trello.com

This may be the solution you are looking for to keep your life and "tasks" on schedule and never have to think of another excuse again.

For a free task manager, you really can't get any better than this digital secretary.

Now, if I can only figure out a way to get Trello to edit my transcripts so I can go on vacation, that would be ideal!

If you do want to sign up, please use this link. It's free and will help CCRA. https://trello.com/stevenkosmata/recommend

Don't get overwhelmed by life. Start managing it.