

# CCRA

California Court Reporters Association

C C R A O N L I N E

## SPECIAL STATE LEGISLATION ISSUE

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California Court Reporters Association

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## MISSION STATEMENT

CCRA continuously leads our industry through legislative advocacy, educational opportunity, and professional inclusion. We actively protect and unify the freelance, CART/Captioning, official, and student communities.

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

By Brooke Ryan, CSR  
President, CCRA

What a great time for all of us! It seems as if this is – finally – the year of the woman! Of course, every year should be the year of the woman because we actually should be running everything. That's neither here nor there. But for a profession dominated by women, what a phenomenal time!

The two most important bills in recent history for our industry – sponsored solely by CCRA – are moving along. Not only do official reporters and official reporter pro tems deserve an overdue transcript rate increase, the freelance reporters and CSR-owned firm owners will hopefully have fairness and accountability in competition.

The most amazing part to me is all of the participation from court reporters. You have stepped up. You realize that we CANNOT do this alone. It truly does – to quote our first female presidential nominee – “take a village.” Not only has every local association supported our bills, so have many individual court reporters. They have written letters of support, have testified at committee hearings, and have gotten their co-workers/colleagues involved. I cannot state this clearly enough: You have all re-energized your board! On a personal note, you have strengthened my spirit and resolve.

Of equal import are the students. Supporting the students is one of our greatest strengths. To see our friends come out of the test with a smile on their face is a beautiful sight. Even if they do not pass, you can feel their excitement for their future. They know they are getting closer and that is refreshing.

Students, we fight every battle not only for current court reporters, but we fight them for your future. This is our battle! So the fact that a number of students attended the Capitol hearings with us made our hearts

swell. We do it for you, because of you, and now with you. We all have a role to play.

So as all of this is going on, we are also planning our convention. It is now complete. We are so excited to release the schedule. We are sure you will be impressed. We are going to Yosemite and to celebrate we are changing things up. We will have hikes, a Bollywood-themed Saturday night dinner/party, a speed contest and certification tests all set against the most majestic scenery you can imagine.

As we get ready for the convention, let me say how excited I am to see you all. I look forward to sharing this experience with you. We want it to be magical because this is not only the year of the woman, it is the year of CCRA! It's been one hell of a ride. Let's raise a toast to each other at the convention and revel in our accomplishments. And then discuss what we need to accomplish next year because 2017 will be the year of the woman as well!





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# DAY AT THE CAPITOL

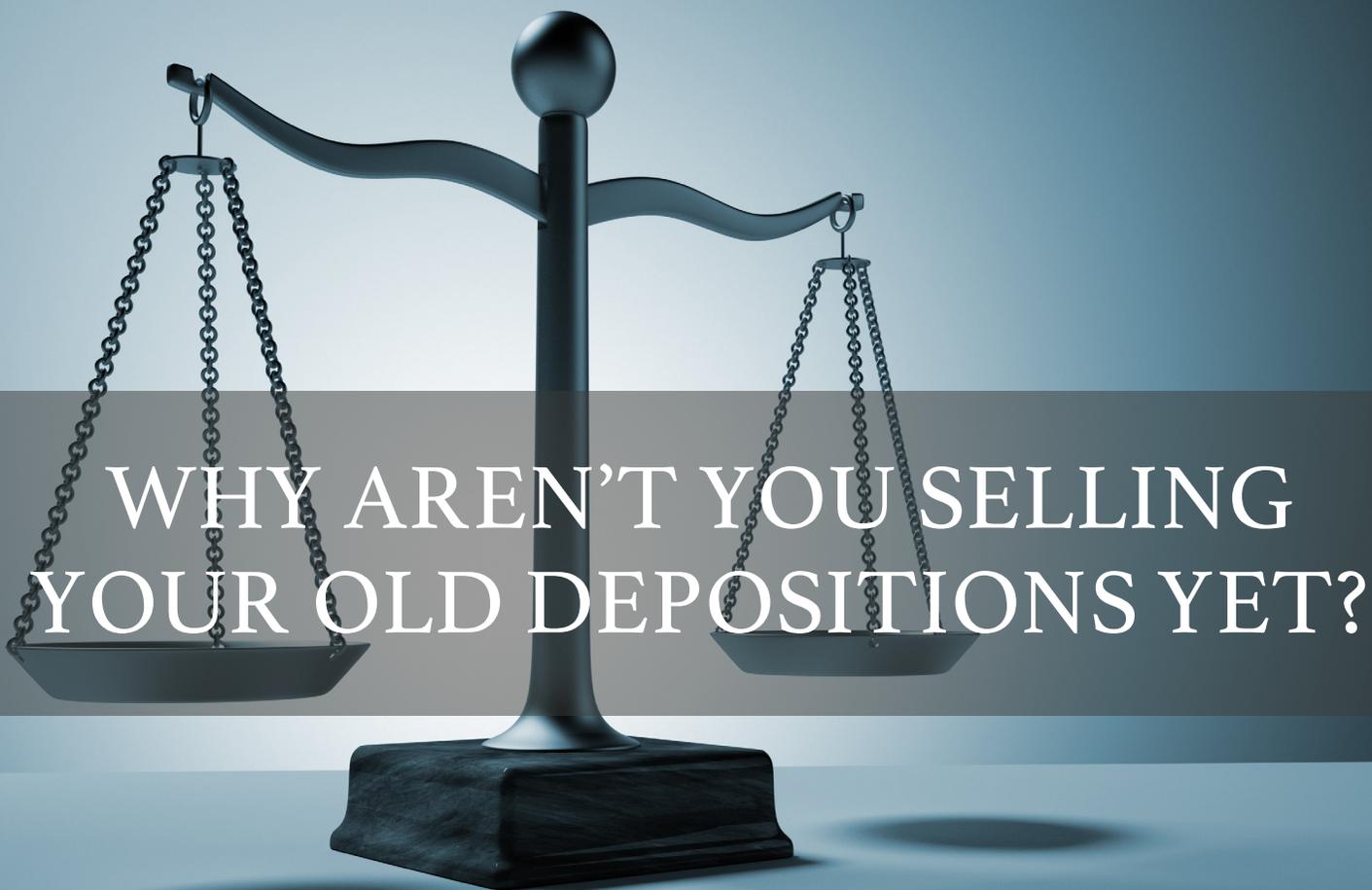
By Trisha Brownfield

As a court reporting student in Sacramento, I had the opportunity to spend the day at the Capitol and help the CCRA support SB270. While I was at the Capitol, I was introduced to several working reporters, key members of the CCRA, the CCRA lobbyist, and Senator Mendoza. I was able to see firsthand how our legislative process works and how important the CCRA is in advocating for the court reporting profession.

As a student, it was impressive to see how hard everyone

works to get a bill passed. While the lobbyist spends time behind the scenes persuading individual committee members to vote in favor of SB270, Senator Mendoza and our CCRA representative, Karly Powers, spoke to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. They presented the advantages of the bill, fielded questions from the committee, and addressed opposing viewpoints. They were awesome!

After the presentation, Senator Mendoza spent time with us, took our group on a tour of the Senate floor, and allowed us to take pictures.



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## MY FIRST TIME TESTIFYING AT THE CAPITOL



By Karly Powers

It all started when I got an email that our President, and phenomenal legislative advocate, Brooke Ryan would be on vacation when SB270 was to be heard in the Judiciary Committee. Everyone else couldn't get work off to testify, and those who could needed to be readily available to testify for AB2629. This left me with some big shoes to fill as I took my first shot at testifying.

As I sent my "I got my day covered. I'm available" email, nerves immediately washed over me. Not only was I nervous about testifying, but I was nervous about testifying for one of the biggest bills our industry has seen in a very long time. As the minutes passed, I grew so excited and so humbled. YES!! I actually have the opportunity to testify on behalf of my colleagues and be a large part of our history.

This day was an incredible one for the future of court reporting. Our lobbyist, Ignacio, and his staff at Hernández Strategy Group, was very instrumental the entire day. They were so helpful through every step of the process. All of us met up outside the committee room where our bill was to be heard. We had a couple court reporting students and a number of working reporters there to support SB270. Our lobbyist and staff did a great job explaining the process to

those who had questions and guiding us through all the details of the day. Finally, when our bill was called, we all went into the committee room.

A couple deep breaths later, and I found myself seated in between Senator Mendoza and lobbyist Ignacio Hernández. Senator Mendoza introduced himself and the rest of us at the table. He spoke his piece regarding the importance of this bill and its necessity for the consumers and our profession. Opposition was then heard with further discussion and questions from the committee. After that, support was given by our students and all of the reporters present.

Senator Mendoza and Ignacio Hernández are truly great at what they do. We are so incredibly lucky to have them on board for this important bill. Senator Mendoza was gracious enough to take the time to give our group a tour of the Senate Chambers and allowed us to take pictures and ask questions. I particularly loved this part of the day. It provided a little celebration for our bill passing out of the Judiciary Committee and making it to the next phase.

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to testify for SB270. I am humbled that the members of CCRA and the Board of Directors had the faith in me to do this job, and that they helped me through every step. Being involved in this process was inspiring and definitely a highlight of my 2016.



# SUPPORTING SB270

By Shawna Cordonnier

I am a court reporting student attending Argonaut Court Reporting School. A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of joining CCRA for the assembly judiciary committee for the SB 270 Bill. I realize that this is a very important bill in which all court reporting firms will be held accountable to the Court Reporters Board of California, but what I didn't realize was the hard work that CCRA put into this bill. It was amazing to see the hard work our fellow court reporters and our lobbyists have worked to get this bill passed. I learned all the ways this bill will protect all court reporters working today.

It was very interesting attending the assembly committee and seeing how the process works. Karly Powers did an

amazing job speaking in support of this bill. Also, I had the pleasure of meeting Senator Mendoza, who wrote this bill. A great end to an amazing day!

All the court reporters and lobbyists that we there to support this bill didn't treat me as a court reporting student but as a fellow court reporter. They made sure I understood what this bill stood for and included me in all the discussions. I felt so welcomed that I cannot wait to get through school and become a part of this amazing field. I am so glad that I made the decision to support CCRA and attend the assembly judiciary committee. The experience that I gained in those few hours will carry me through the rest of my school.

# THE FATE OF CCRA'S FIRM ACCOUNTABILITY BILL – ROUND 1

By Ignacio Hernandez and Christy Cannariato.

CCRA's sponsored bill, SB 270 (Mendoza), our firm accountability bill, unfortunately ran out of time this legislative year. We came within one vote of getting it to the governor's desk, and our bill's intrepid author, Senator Tony Mendoza, has vowed to carry our bill again in January. He is committed, and so is CCRA. Stay tuned for a new season of "Finally Leveling the Playing Field" starting January, 2017!

We are proud of what we accomplished this year with this bill. There were many skeptics who early on urged CCRA not to take on the deep-pocketed national deposition firms, most arguing that it was impossible to even get out of the starting gate, our first policy committee hearing. Even those who are supposed to be our allies urged us behind the scenes to drop this "unwinnable" fight, claiming that we were overmatched by the political influence of the national deposition firms, that we lacked the political acumen and tenacity to step in the ring with these corporations.

Nevertheless, CCRA's leadership decided, and without hesitation, that enough was finally enough. Our members, and all freelancers, needed to speak up and fight back. Despite CCRA's proud 100+ year history of legislative achievements, we had to shed our self-doubt and remind ourselves about the power we harness when we work collectively.

So we laid the groundwork. We parted ways with our former lobbyist and hired the Hamiltonesque "young, scrappy, and hungry" Ignacio Hernandez, who, along with Morgan Carvajal at Hernandez Strategy Group, breathed new energy and a fighting spirit into CCRA's lobbying efforts. When we

told Ignacio about all of the seemingly insurmountable legislative projects CCRA wanted to pursue simultaneously – transcript rate increase, firm accountability, and e-filing to name just three – Ignacio didn't tell us that it was too much, too hard, too expensive. Ignacio not only said, "Let's do this," but his unflagging determination, creativity, and amazing political talent, gave our leadership renewed courage over the past two years. And his enthusiasm for the fight, and the dizzying hits that came in from all angles, was contagious.

Sure, maybe the large corporations would eventually stop us, but we were not going to stop ourselves. We were not going to postpone a fight to study the issue further, as some in the industry publicly suggested. Win or lose, CCRA planned to take on this issue to send a clear message: We are not afraid of the big guys, and we will not back down. We will continue to fight for an even playing field until it is achieved.

Against all odds, CCRA's bill forged ahead. We secured victories in four legislative policy committee hearings, two appropriations committee hearings, a vote of the full California State Senate, and in the final week of the end of the legislative session we were one vote away from getting to the Governor's office. This bill had been counted out so many times by our detractors, and privately even our would-be allies, and yet we overcame every time.

As a result, with SB 270 still moving toward the Governor's



**FATE OF SB 270**  
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**FATE OF SB 270**  
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desk, the national corporations were up against the wall, had been losing at every turn, and so they got desperate. In August, they leveraged an even bigger political player to fight against us: the insurance industry. Several trade associations representing every insurance company you can think of decided to oppose SB 270. The national corporations threatened to take away "discounts" if SB 270 became law. Suddenly, this bill improbably became the number one fight for the insurance industry.

Then, for good measure, the California Chamber of Commerce opposed us as well as a tort reform association known for throwing around millions of dollars in campaigns. These were the "big dogs." Many of our allies suggested we drop the fight, even telling our author, Senator Mendoza, to just pull the plug on the bill. Really? CCRA is not afraid of a fight. California is one of the best states to be a court reporter because CCRA has always fought the big fights for you.

Then, just days before the end of the legislative session, the national firms attempted to enlist – wait for it -- the United States Department of Justice against us. Our "allies" advised that we withdraw from this battle. CCRA's response: Take it head on. You know why? Because we were fighting for fairness, not to hamper competition. The next day, CCRA spoke directly with the DOJ and were able to talk through the issues, getting the DOJ to clarify that they were not opposing our bill.

We want you to know that Senator Tony Mendoza, the author of SB 270, has been a warrior on this bill. With every new obstacle, his determination increased. He has been with us every step of the way, never wavering in the face of greater opposition. And he is standing with us to take up the fight anew in a few months.

As you all know, the legislative process is complex, confounding, and frustrating. The allies you think you can count on don't come through for you in the end, and that buzzer-beating support you get from the most improbable place is simply breathtaking.

The language of our bill transformed many times over, which is par for the course in lawmaking. One needs to be flexible to navigate the waters of opposition. But our one constant aim was that out-of-state firms have to follow the same ethical rules as we in California do or they can't operate in California. Period. We at one point included strict penalties in the bill. At one point we required registration, which really alarmed the national firms, even though numerous other states have similar statutes. CCRA was never deterred nor distracted by delaying tactics, by attempts to kill the bill through industry outsiders, by public and premature

quibbling about language, or by attempts by others to discredit CCRA's motivations, political acumen, integrity, or to take credit for our hard work. We kept our focus on the ultimate goal.

CCRA leaders always counsel incoming board members that we are like the FBI. We don't grandstand. We shrug off criticism. We just quietly do the work and take the high road when others question our motives, integrity or claim credit for our work. We train our eyes always down the road, on the future of court reporting, not only the short term, not just for our dues-paying members or a certain niche of the profession, not for our own personal aggrandizement, but for the entire profession nationally, because California needs to lead the way.

So if it seems this year that CCRA has been uncharacteristically boastful and occasionally provocative, it is because the stakes are incredibly high for the profession. We knew that to take on the deep pocketed special interests lined up against us that it was going to take extraordinary confidence, talent, integrity, and leadership to get this bill over the finish line in face of backroom opposition and lackluster support from fellow industry professionals. We realized we had to lead, and we at the helm of CCRA continue to trust that with effective, confident leadership and success that our detractors will lock arms with us again in the best interests of the profession.

Thank you for having faith in us. Thank you for your visits, calls, and emails to legislators, and for the private messages to us urging us on, and your generous donations to our general and special funds, for renewing your memberships for multiple years. Thank you for being part of this struggle. We have won many battles along the way, defied the odds, ignored the advice of skeptics, took the high road by shrugging off their false claims and insinuations, and we rallied court reporters in this state to help us fight for this bill, because it's the right thing to do. And it was long past time.



California Court Reporters Association

# e-Compendium

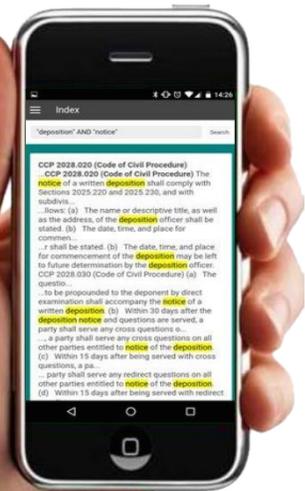
**CCRA is proud to break new ground by becoming the first court reporters association in the nation to launch an e-Compendium, offering exactly the same high level content as our yearly paperback publication now in digital form. You will no longer have to buy multiple versions as we are consolidating the freelance/CART and official compendiums into one easy-to-use app.**

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## REPRESENTING AT THE CAPITOL

After one year of working and living in Sacramento, that one of the greatest benefits is being so close to the State Capitol. This was actually my first time appearing at the Capitol ever, and now in a dual capacity, as a board member of CCRA and as a member of the Sacramento Official Court Reporters Association. And it was definitely a great day to be present.

On this day, two important bills passed out of their respective committees in the legislative process. And what makes this even more exciting is that the passage of these two bills will ultimately benefit both freelancers and officials, which is exactly what CCRA and been doing for over 100 years and is always striving to accomplish. While we still have a long "legislative road" ahead of us before we reach complete victory by a signature of the Governor, I'm thankful that I had the chance to stand before the assembly members and affirm my support of these two bills on behalf of CCRA, SOCRA, and as an individual reporter. This was definitely an educational and exciting first time at the Capitol, and I look forward to continuing my representation of our association and profession by being present at other hearings and meetings on current and future legislative bills introduced by CCRA.



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# TRAIN: NO FEAR!

## GETTING PAST REALTIME ROADBLOCKS



July 12, 2016 by NCRA

*What's preventing you from providing realtime? The Technology Subcommittee asked realtime providers through the TRAIN program for their best tips in getting past the roadblocks and into the groove.*

*How do you fight the fear of your realtime feed not being perfect? Breathe! After 32 years of reporting, I still get nervous for the first five minutes of any deposition. How in the world am I supposed to make my realtime feed readable when they are speaking at breakneck speeds (and they are often mumbling or their speech is unintelligible)? First, take a deep breath, and know everything will be okay. I promise! Once you administer the oath in a very slow-paced and methodical way, you set the stage for counsel to continue in a slow-paced and methodical way.*

*Also, make sure you are prepared. Do your case preparation before the deposition starts. They don't have a prior transcript? Get the complaint. They don't have a copy of the complaint? Google the case name/number. There's so much information out there these days, there's no reason you can't prepare (creating brief forms for tricky words you might come across). It's amazing what you can accomplish when you put your mind to it!*

*Lisa Knight, RDR, CRR  
Realtime Systems Administrator  
Co-chair of the TRAIN Subcommittee  
Littleton, Colorado*

---

When asked what holds reporters back from providing realtime, the nearly universal answer is fear; fear that your writing isn't completely conflict-free, fear that you aren't comfortable with the technology, fear that your translation rate isn't good enough, fear of having someone watching your screen, let alone judging your untrans and mistrans.

This feeling also applies to other areas of your life. Trying something new always causes some sort of anxiety, but if it's something you want to do, excitement overrides that fear. Realtime is no different.

Take it one step at a time, and don't expect perfection in the first week, month, or year, but go ahead and take your first step. Start by setting up realtime for yourself and get used to seeing your writing on your screen. Slowly address your untrans and mistrans, and watch for trends in your writing that you can improve upon. Once you're comfortable with that, set up a second screen next to you so you get used to the technology. Eventually, slide that screen in front of someone. Before you know it, realtime will become your new norm, and you will be encouraging others to get started as well.

*Merilee Johnson, RMR, CRR, CRC  
Realtime Systems Administrator  
Co-chair of the TRAIN Subcommittee  
Eden Prairie, Minnesota*

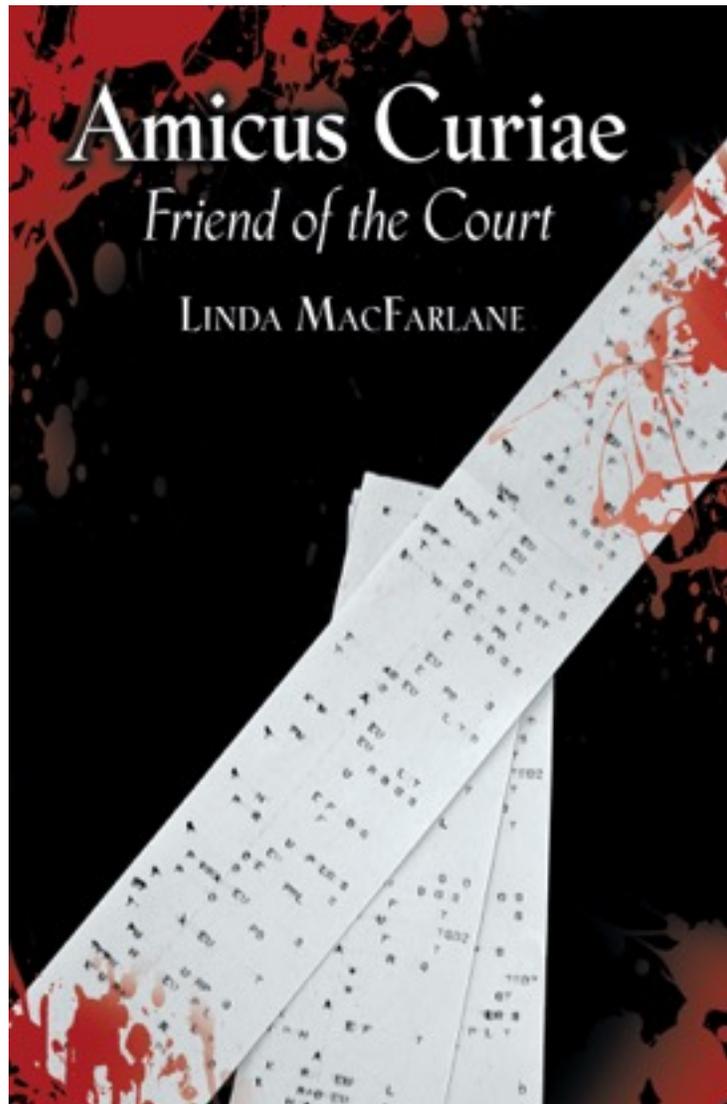
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Do you remember the first time you tried to ride a bicycle? When you knew the training wheels were off or your mom or dad had let go of you, did you panic and fall to the ground? Many of us did, but we got up again, dusted ourselves off, and tried and tried again until we were sailing down the street on our own power. That's how it is with writing realtime.

Nothing that is good, challenging, or worthwhile comes easily. It takes practice. It takes perseverance. It takes endurance. It takes grit. Don't be consumed by your fear. Embrace the challenge just like you did when you overcame the fear of riding your bicycle without the training wheels. Don't let a less-than-perfect translation defeat you. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and try, try again.

**TRAIN: NO FEAR!**  
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*Have you read it yet?*  
*(need CEUs?)*



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**TRAIN: NO FEAR!**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

You can do it! It might not be easy, but it will be rewarding. As you see the translation percentage on your screen getting better and better, you will be saying to yourself, yes, I knew I could do it!

*Mary Bader, RPR*  
*TRAIN Subcommittee member*  
*Medford, Wisconsin*

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I think this affects us all in individual ways. Some are afraid of making an error; others get nervous when they know their work is on display and they have to be kept on their toes at all times; some might feel intimidated walking into a medical or a pharmaceutical case and are hoping the words come out right. Whatever the case may be, I have learned that fear can be a good thing.

I watched a TED talk once about stress and how you can make it your friend, and that put realtime into a whole new perspective for me. Instead of seeing stress as this horrible anxiety taking over your writing, you have to be the one to conquer your stress and fear and turn it into adrenaline.

As an adrenaline junkie, I can tell you that I absolutely love everything about realtime. I love the way I get a little nervous, I love the way it keeps me sharp throughout the day, and I love that my writing is even better because I am editing on the fly, trying to make my transcript as flawless as possible for less editing time later. Grab a hold of your fear and don't let it conquer you. Sometimes you have to fake it till you make it and simply believe in yourself and know that you are competent and capable of doing a stellar job.

In order to provide excellent realtime, you need to couple control of your fear with preparation. As good as you may be, you will be even better if you are well-prepared. Try to get a list of anything and everything that will be used during the deposition — names, esoteric terms, countries, etc. You won't always have this luxury, but in most cases, if you are providing realtime, attorneys will be willing to inform you of the content and spellings of words that might come up.

Another way to prepare is to insert all of this information into your software the night before instead of waiting until the day of. If you can make your caption page and even appearance page beforehand and a list of J-defines ready to go, you can spend your time before the depo making sure your connections are properly hooked up and less time inputting all of this time-consuming information before being bombarded with business cards.

*Sharon Lengel, RPR, CRR*  
*TRAIN Subcommittee member*  
*Woodmere, New York*

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If the fear is ever completely gone, then you're probably being unrealistic about what you're providing. Everyone runs into issues that are overwhelming. You lower your fear when you train to address those issues competently with the best effect that you can provide. Then that fear channels into energy to solve the problems that crop up.

Write realtime for yourself first, and practice on the methods that produce the best results on your screen. Mastery of your software and writing methods will reduce your fear.

Talk to other reporters who provide realtime. Expect mistakes to happen. Don't discount them when they happen, and work to remedy and overcome them, but they will happen. And once you're providing realtime, constantly work to better yourself with your knowledge, your skills, and your technical know-how, and always with the knowledge that what your clients are seeing is better than what they'd have if you were not there.

*Jason Meadors, RPR, CRR, CRC*  
*Fort Collins, Colorado*

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After more than 30 years of reporting, I still have that uncontrollable fear of providing realtime. I get that sick feeling in the pit of my stomach before each job — even though I set up the night before, have my job dictionary built, my EZ Speakers defined, input case-specific terminology, and have Googled industry terms on the case.

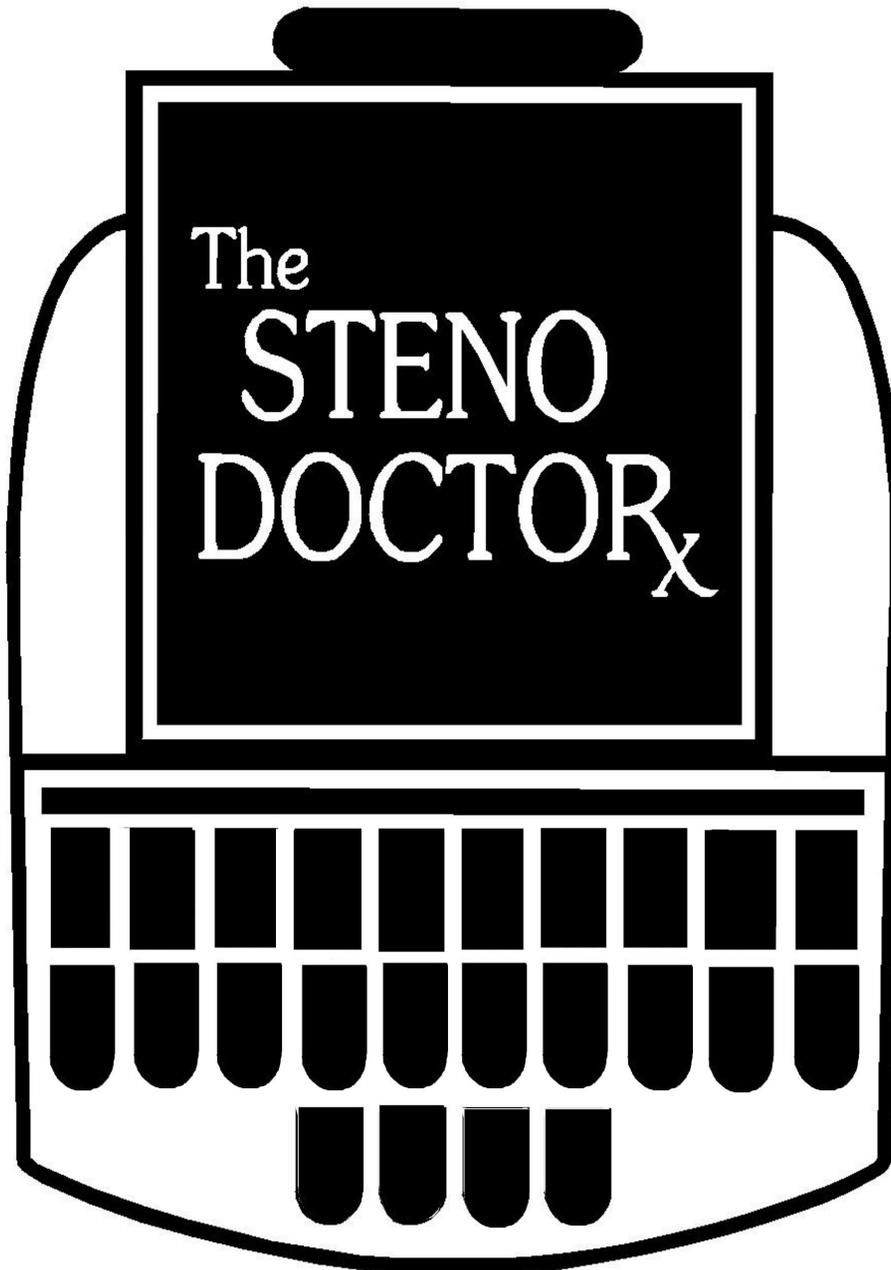
Fear is normal for everyone. Even the best of the best in our profession, I'm sure, experience that tug of fear every now and then. We must not let fear hold us back, though. Court reporters need to embrace the future of court reporting and move ahead — the future is realtime.

Some reasons cited by other reporters for not taking the leap to realtime:

- My writing isn't good enough.
- I don't want anyone to see.
- Hookups scare me.
- I don't know where to start.
- The realtime feed is not perfect.
- I don't know how to handle overlapping voices.

**TRAIN: NO FEAR!**  
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# **The Steno Doctor has moved!**



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**TRAIN: NO FEAR!**  
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- I worry about how to control the environment.

When I do start having that feeling of fear, I take a step back and remind myself to do a few things in order to control the situation — and these are simple steps that you can take too:

1. I do my realtime testing and job dictionary building the night before in order to be ready for the next day's job. A detailed prep session will relieve the perceived stress.
2. I control my breathing. It has a calming effect on the whole body.
3. I don't overthink my realtime sessions. Fear and anxiety thrive when I imagine the worst. I go in the deposition setting with the confidence that I will do the best job I can.  
  
I've already prepared and done the testing — I know I've got this!
4. I think about the last realtime session I provided and how well it went. Yes, the fear was present, but the client was extremely pleased with my output. I get a "high" for a job well done!

In an article on Inc.com, Geoffrey James says: "Fear is the enemy of success. Large rewards only result from taking comparably large risks. If you're ruled by fear, you'll never take enough risks and never achieve success you deserve."

The benefits of realtiming for your clients and yourself are many.

- improved skills
- less editing time
- improved translation delivery
- quicker transcript turnaround
- job satisfaction
- name recognition (people will ask for you specifically)
- increased income
- phenomenal readback

Overcoming your fear of anything will give you the focus to achieve great things and to do what you really want to do. It takes much effort to strive to become realtime-proficient, but the rewards are worth it!

*Lynette L. Mueller, RDR, CRR, TRAIN Subcommittee member  
Johns Creek, Georgia*

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# MOCK CSR

By Amanda Scott

For CCRA's most recent mock CSR, I was awarded the crucial role of "helper," which basically meant I got to have all the fun of spending the day with some of my favorite students, and none of the responsibility of organizing the event or actually taking the test. My favorite role! And Rachel Barkume did such a great job of putting on the Fresno mock that I was hardly needed at all. Although I'd had a really good experience with the last mock I was involved with, this one was even better!

First of all, we had an even better turnout with a great group of students. It all starts and ends with the students, after all, and they always make it worth it! But more than that, we tried to make it as similar to the actual CSR test as possible so that test-takers would know what to expect, so the morning started with checking in students with their photo IDs and registration papers, and sending them back to the transcription room to set up their computers and printers. Once everyone had their stations set up, we moved the party across the hall for our panel discussion.

On our panel we had Freelancer Rachael Espinoza, Official Deja Garver-Cole and CART/Captioner Regina DeMotive. Rachael and Deja shared their experience starting out as a new reporter, on-the-job challenges, tips and advice for the students, and answered questions. Then we Skyped in Regina as she traveled through the desert and she shared her experience as a CART/Captioner, showed us her office setup and software, and shared on-the-job pictures and stories.

After that we took a break for lunch and gabbed about the usual; kids, birds, pickpockets, Lula-Roe. You know. Now it was test time! The students were assigned rows as they entered the testing room, we gave a short warm-up, and then read the test. By this point I was exhausted, but the students continued on, moving across the hall to the transcription room where they had their computer stations set up and immediately transcribed their tests.

In the end, it was a fun day and I hope the students found it helpful. I know I would have found this rewarding when I was in school, and anything that prepares the students for the CSR and their career beyond is something that I'm glad to be a part of.

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Yamaguchi Obien Mangio (YOM) Reporting & Video



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## NORTHERN CA MOCK CSR SKILLS EXAM ARGONAUT COURT REPORTING SCHOOL – SACRAMENTO, CA

By Karly Powers

CCRA's Mock CSR Skills Exam once again was a success. The Support Our Students Committee decided to alter the exam process by choosing to forgo a WKT Mock this time around and give our students the full experience of the CSR skills exam. Sacramento was the Northern California location, where Argonaut Court Reporting School's staff was kind enough to let us use their school for the day. The other locations included Sierra Valley in Central California, and South Coast College in Southern California.

The students checked in with us early in the morning, with their printers and equipment in tow, and began to set up their testing space. Each student checked in just as they do at the CSR exam, and was only allowed to bring the proper equipment allowed at the CSR. Once everyone was set up and their spaces were checked over, practice began. The students had some time to practice and get warmed up before our next phase to get the jitters out.

Next, we had our Q&A panel with our Official, Brooke Ryan, Freelance Reporter, Karly Powers, and Senate Judiciary Reporter, Ina Leblanc. As a panel speaker, it was so nice to

be able to answer the questions of students and talk about how wonderful the career of court reporting is. We were able to talk about our personal experiences at the CSR and go into great detail about our careers. Lunch was served shortly after our panel.

After lunch, the students lined up and were given their seat numbers for dictation. Each one grabbed their appropriate seat and geared up for dictation. An old CSR exam was read, and we all tried our hardest to read the best we could. Following the dictation, students were allotted time to transcribe. This process emulated the CSR as closely as possible. The process and its parameters were just like the CSR skills exam. We tried to be as accurate, thorough, and explanatory of the process as we could.

We truly hope that the experience was as enjoyable for the students as it was for all of us with CCRA. It was a truly gratifying day. Having the opportunity to plan, execute, and experience this day was pretty great. As a student, I always treasured anything that could help me stay calm and feel confident. I hope the CCRA Mock Skills Exam did just that for you.

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## 106TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

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# MY FIRST CONVENTION

By Aimee Skochko, Nominated District Board Member

This is my first article for CCRA Online, so please let me introduce myself. My name is Aimee Skochko, and I've been a CSR since the summer of 1998. Somehow that adds up to 18 years in the workforce, but who's counting? I attended court reporting school at Sierra Valley College in the Central Valley, began working in the charming courthouses of the Central Coast, and finally made my home in Orange County. I'm currently an official court reporter, but I also have experience in the freelance field.

I was one of those students who loved my little steno machine. I came home from school and practiced every night. From day one as a student to my current assignment in a family law courtroom, I have truly enjoyed my job. Well, maybe not EVERY minute, but certainly the steno part. My best friend (who's not in the reporting profession) always referred to me as the only person she knew who loved their job. With the ups and downs our California economy has experienced the last ten years and the uncertainty many California workers have faced, that's a pretty awesome thing.

But the court reporting profession, while rewarding, isn't easy. After 18 years, there's definitely been some trying times, especially while working for our California courts. I'm feeling the need to re-energize my love for this profession, find my passion again. So guess what I'm doing? I'm attending my first CCRA convention. Yes, you heard that correctly. In all my years of reporting, because I so loved the day-to-day aspects of the work we do, I didn't spend

much time attending professional association events. In the beginning years, I was overwhelmed working as a new reporter and thought I was too young to be needed. What did I know? I was just starting my career. As time went on, I embraced the work, took on bigger jobs, and was buried in transcripts. Now I was too busy to attend!

Well, call me a late bloomer, but 18 years in, I'm excited to attend my first CCRA convention. The fact that the location this year is in gorgeous Yosemite, just miles from where I grew up and attended school, makes my first convention a littler sweeter for me. My recent participation with CCRA has been so rewarding. I have supported CCRA at the Capitol while they've fought for our bills this legislative season. I've become a member of CCRA's legislative committee. I attended the last board of director's meeting in Orange County. Most importantly, I've met so many wonderful people – you know who you are – who have dedicated so much of their personal time to improving and protecting our profession. It's been a pleasure to meet them, and we all owe them our gratitude.

So how long have you been a reporter? Do you feel like it's time for you to hit the "refresh" button on your career? That's exactly how I feel, and that's exactly what I'm doing. For me, this year's convention transforms my career into something new, something that gives back to the profession, and that in itself feels refreshing. There doesn't seem like a better opportunity than now, at this convention in Yosemite, to kick off the next chapter of my career. I hope to see you there.

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN YOSEMITE

By Caroline Cansino, Shasta County

I'm a bit mortified to admit it, but this upcoming conference will only be my 3rd one in 22 years of reporting! Once I went just to go to experience Las Vegas with my coworker, Mary Alice. In this past year, it became clear to me I needed to pick up the torch and jump in where Tom Pringle left off, after he had contributed many years to support CCRA and our profession.

When I received the "Save the Date" flier announcing the 2016 CCRA conference was going to be held in Yosemite, I taped it to my cubicle wall and made plans to attend. My Uncle Lee was a park ranger in Yosemite for many years and my Auntie Ti taught kindergarten over 40 years right there in the park. I'd go with my grandmother to Yosemite in the summer to visit my cousins, and those summers are the most exciting and adventurous childhood memories I have.

My cousin, Mary Lee, her friends and I would lay camouflaged in the tall meadow grass near the Ahwahnee Hotel, passing

a half gallon glass flask of Almaden Rose, (on Etsy these flasks are now vintage!) smoking cigarettes, making out with boys in the park, and watching the August Perseid meteorite showers. It was spectacular and romantic. If my uncle had caught us or if we had gotten busted by anyone else in law enforcement he worked with, we definitely would have been toast. That factor just added to the thrill of it! We'd skinny dip right there in the middle of the park and so much more.

I am looking forward to this conference in Yosemite as it will bring new experiences and memories of a different nature, embarking on my first conference in service to CCRA. I am very humbled, as I perceive my knowledge to be limited, but I am grateful to be of service to my profession and fellow reporters. I look forward to catching up with reporters I went to school with at Argonaut, taking different classes I've chosen and maybe hanging out in the meadow with new acquaintances Saturday night after Bollywood!

## ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

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By Rachel N. Barkume

"What do you do for a living?" "I'm a court reporter." "Oh, so you write on one of those little...(insert wiggly fingers hand gesture here)" "Yes, I sure do." This is one of my favorite conversations to have. On a recent trip out of state, I had the pleasure of meeting a lot of new people that happened to know my husband very well but were meeting me for the first time. I was asked this question almost every day, and I absolutely LOVED being able to talk so much about court reporting with others who had never had a chance to be exposed to any form of stenography. Everyone was so interested in how my job worked. For context, we were in the absolute middle-of-nowhere Alaska where most people don't have running water, power, or plumbing, and they certainly have never been in a courtroom. One thing I was able to catch their attention with was speaking about

broadcast captioning. I always love telling people how court reporters are behind the scenes providing those captions, and it's fun to see their reactions to that.

Captioning has always been very fascinating to me, but I've always had the mindset of, "No way! I couldn't do that. Those news anchors speak too fast, my brain doesn't work that way, etc., etc." When I got home from my trip, the same day was a Caption It Forward Friday by my good friend Regina DeMerville. On Fridays she does a live broadcast on her Facebook page and answers questions she may have heard recently from students or just gives some information that she thinks is important in the world of captioning and CART. She mentioned that students can sit with her while she's captioning to see how it all works, and I was immediately interested! I've always wanted to watch how the "other side" does it. I say that jokingly. Regina and I joked later that we have the same skill and do completely different jobs, and both of us are terrified of doing what the other does every day! Regina let me sit in on a live news broadcast that she was captioning. I'll set the scene. Regina is in her

**ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN**  
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home office in Southern California. I am sitting in my kitchen in the mountains in Central California. We're connected through Skype and another program called TeamViewer so I can see her screen and also hear the audio that she's hearing. And the news show she's captioning is somewhere in Wisconsin where they're talking about the Green Bay Packers and the weather man goes 500 words per minute about towns I've never heard of! It was absolutely captivating.

What amazing opportunities we have in this incredible profession we've all chosen! We can all learn so much from each other. It doesn't matter if you're an official, freelancer, CART captioner, or broadcast captioner. We are all stenographers. And we have one of the coolest skills in the world. I encourage you all to do what I did and take a chance to see how the "other side" does it. There is a world of opportunities out there. Don't be afraid to explore them!



## RELEASING STRESS AND BUILT-UP ENERGY

By Carolyn Dasher, Chair of the Legislative Committee

Spring is lovely in Southern California. As the first light comes over the horizon, the sky begins to change from a dark blue/black into a deep blue. Many different birds begin to sing their songs (yes, even the rooster!). I begin my yoga stretches as the birds are singing happily that a new day has begun.

It is so important that we find our own personal way to deal with the challenges of our job and our lives. Court Reporting is very demanding physically, not the mention the everyday challenges that we work through daily. If we are holding our stress and not releasing it in some way, we will have physical challenges.

It could be our low back screaming out to us, it could be our shoulder. Sometimes we get that kink in our neck. Perhaps you've sat in the same position for two hours and the expert terminology is challenging. Your neck starts to ache. Your shoulder is hunched up to your ears. The energy is not flowing properly and is stuck in a body part.

How do you release that energy? Perhaps you get regular massages. Some people use Tai Chi to get the energy flowing, others work out with weights. Another way to relieve the stress and release the built-up energy is taking long walks or hiking.

Perhaps it's time to look at how you release your stress. Everyone uses the method best for them. The most important thing is that you be proactive to keep yourself as stress-free and physically fit as you can.

I find morning yoga stretching works for me. I find peace in the quiet of the morning. If I am overloaded with transcripts or I oversleep, I modify my routine and walk or do yoga stretches after work.

I will be teaching two yoga classes at the CCRA convention October 8th and 9th at the beautiful Tenaya Lodge by Yosemite National Park. You will learn simple stretching that can be done on the floor or in a chair. I hope to see you there!



# IN MEMORY OF STUART M. SIMEN

Stuart M. Simen, CSR #1568, long-time court reporter and CCRA member, has passed away suddenly. A freelance reporter and firm owner, Stuart was very active with the LA General Shorthand Reporters Association for many years and served CCRA as a board member, historian and parliamentarian. In fact, Stu was the ultimate parliamentarian, always knowing the rules to assist the president in keep a meeting running fairly and efficiently.

While working for a company teaching its workers about computer programming, the company sent Stuart to court reporting school. Afterwards, Stuart was one of the early users of CAT in the United States.

Stuart earned his license in 1966, worked as a freelance reporter, and owned and operated his own freelance agency for over 15 years, 1989 through 2005. During his career he reported many international cases. He was proud to have reported on every continent except Antarctica.

Stuart was also active with NCRA committees and was named a Fellow of the Academy of Professional Reporters in 1978. He was presented the CCRA Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor bestowed on any member, in 1995.

Stu liked to talk and was always energetic and eager to see his fellow reporters so he could network and discuss the "news" of the moment. He was quirky, yet kind and generous with his time and knowledge, and he could think outside the box.

He mentored everyone before it became vogue. When a difficult deposition came to the agency he worked for, Stuart would volunteer to take the harder job out of concern for a new reporter. He made it his job, usually to his personal financial detriment, to honor, strengthen, and maintain the future of reporting amongst the local LA scene by exchanging jobs, thereby protecting that new reporter in need of a little more experience before tackling that difficult case.

Stuart was a dedicated freelancer who worked tirelessly for his profession and CCRA. Just last month, Stu was contacted on the off chance he remembered an obscure code section related to legislation CCRA is currently sponsoring. Not only did he know the code section off the top of his head, he also knew the year it was enacted and the history behind its passage.

In Stu's more recent years, he became a founding member of the Valley Village Neighborhood Council Board of Directors in the area where he lived and served as its parliamentarian from 2004 until his death.

He set an example of what a model volunteer to a profession should be. Although not currently reporting, Stu kept his CSR license until his death because he was so proud to be a court reporter. We will miss Stuart's energy, knowledge and tireless dedication to our profession.