

# The Deposition Reporter

DEPOSITION  
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION  
OF CALIFORNIA

SPRING 2016  
CONVENTION ISSUE

## IN THIS ISSUE

Board of Directors .....	2
DSA Recipient Lisa Michaels .....	4
Susan Swan on CalDRA's 20th Annual Convention .....	6
Lorrie Marchant on CalDRA's 20th Annual Convention .....	7
2016 DRA Convention Photos .....	8
Smiles For CalDRA's 20th Annual Convention .....	9
DRA's Third Annual Realtime Competition .....	10
Depo Divas – Shoes of the 2016 Convention .....	10
More Than Meets the Eye .....	13
Attending My First DRA Convention .....	15
A Day in the Life .....	15
Scholarship Winners .....	17
Student Corner Pop Quiz .....	18
Dress Me Up! .....	19
Bill Watch .....	20
AskDRA .....	22
The “Miracle Brain” of the Court Reporter .....	23
Puzzle Me This .....	24
You Can Never Ask For Too Much Reporter or Bust .....	27
Breaking Down the Mystery of Realtime .....	30
Pop Quiz .....	31



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**MONYEEN BLACK, CCRR, CLR**  
DRA PRESIDENT

Well, hello, Freelancers!

Getting sworn in as President this February was a little emotional. Standing before the convention attendees, some who are as close as sisters and brothers, others who are cherished mentors, and all of them my court reporting family, feelings overwhelmed me.

I wanted to share how I felt that day and let you learn a little bit more about me. I had wished my biggest cheerleader could have been there to see it, but I know my husband will be there for me during the upcoming year. Without his encouragement, I wouldn't be your new president. He really gets us since he is the son of a court reporter. Keith and I met when I was 10, the cute boy next door. It just took him 25 years to realize I was the one for him.

I first heard about court reporting from his mother, but I wasn't interested in the profession at that point.

Then my mom had me read an article about three siblings who were very young that were court reporters in Fremont. And that article on the Griffin family instantly had me hooked. I was 14, and I knew I would be a deposition reporter.

And now here I am.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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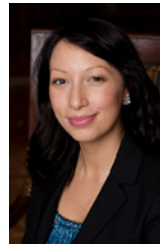
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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I am grateful for the founding members who started DRA. I'm sure you guys are all proud of what this organization has become. I feel awe for the ones who have held this office before me. I know I have big shoes to fill.

I feel determination to make sure our often-misunderstood profession doesn't just survive, but thrives. And I want to make sure that no machine can ever, ever replace the judgment, integrity, and professionalism of an old-fashioned human being.

There is a saying: "You never know when one kind act or one word of encouragement can change a life forever." That's how I ended up here. A good friend of mine got me involved in 2011 as the Secretary-Treasurer of CalDRA. I have since served as the Vice President and also in the District Director position. And now somehow here I am as your president.

I have always wanted to volunteer in some way, but I just wasn't sure how. True, there's nothing like that immediate gratitude that comes from when you serve a warm meal to those in need. But I can tell you, there's also nothing like the deep and forever-lasting fullness that comes from joining hands with like-minded people and then marching together through challenges to a better place - TOGETHER. That is the DRA I love!

Sure, we have a great administrative director, and, sure, we have a brilliant lobbyist. But this is a volunteer organization. Your DRA succeeds only because of member support. And because you all realize that, if you just sit on the sidelines and do nothing, then eventually nothing will get done. So my plea is that you please consider volunteering for OUR amazing organization.

I'll end with the final emotion I'm feeling.

I love this profession.

I love the amazing, independent-minded, brilliant women and men who are my colleagues.

I love that among all the licensed professions – doctors, lawyers, you name it – we, the little ol' court reporters, the silent ones in the room, we are the ones untouched and unblemished by scandal.

For this upcoming year, your President and Vice President, what do we plan on doing for this profession we love?

We plan to bring the "Mo-Jo"!

Get it? See, my name is "Mo"... and Jodi is "Jo."

(I should probably just stick to reporting.)

This year is going to be all about "Gaining Momentum."

It's a year to build on the tremendous momentum created from the past boards of CalDRA and to keep the ball rolling with the SoCal stip and getting more people into this profession.

Let's do it because we all love this profession and the people in it. Because if I am able and your Board is able during this next year to make your lives a little better, to make you feel less alone, to make you feel like you have a champion who doesn't just fight but fights and wins for you everywhere, every day, if we on your DRA Board can do that, I will forever thank you for that privilege - just as I will forever be grateful to you, my mentors, friends, colleagues, and fellow freelance professionals, for this, what I feel is the honor of a lifetime.

Again, I thank you so much for your continued support of DRA. Looking forward to what 2016 has in store!



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EXPOSE BOGUS E.R. CLAIMS  
PROTECT OUR SCHOOLS

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THE STATE BAR  
THE PRESS





# CALDRA PRESENTS LISA MICHAELS, 2016 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

The following is the transcript from the speech given by CalDRA Secretary-Treasurer Linda Nelson at our annual convention. Linda was kind enough to present the Distinguished Service Award to this year's recipient, Ms. Lisa Michaels. Lisa Michaels is a former CalDRA president, business owner, and court reporter in Orange County, California. We at CalDRA are incredibly thankful for the myriad contributions that Ms. Michaels has made to the field. We truly could not have picked a more worthy recipient of this year's Distinguished Service Award.



I am honored to present this year's Distinguished Service Award to my mentor, my teacher, and my best friend, Lisa Michaels.

To honor her properly, I have to talk about three Lisas. There's the Lisa known to her DRA and professional colleagues; there's Lisa, the reporter and businesswoman; and then there's Lisa, the person; the Lisa that I know.

Here, first, is the Lisa known to DRA and court reporting leaders nationwide.

She is, of course, known to you as the "tormentor of body builders turned politicians." Unlike anything in modern court reporter memory, and unlike maybe anything ever in court reporting history: Lisa's video speaking directly to Arnold Schwarzenegger, challenging him for his wrongheaded, ignorant, and disrespectful assumption that we can be replaced by machines electrified reporters throughout the country.

It was the first time it felt like one of us hit back. It was the first time one of us so publicly, for everyone to see, gave voice and therefore validation to our value, our professionalism, our worth.

I watched it again in preparation for this speech and it still, even now, fills me with pride, pride in who we are, and pride in this organization. Lisa did it with substance and poise and elegance and, well, she did it with class, in a way that made her and DRA rightly famous in court reporting land.

But, beyond the video, you need to know this: She was

maybe DRA's most pivotal and transformative president; exactly the right leader at exactly the right time.

She was not just a dependable bridge between DRA's bold founders and DRA's generation of leaders today. She also had the strategic and artistic vision and powerhouse drive and ambition to vastly expand DRA's reach to new kinds of communications, such as the Arnie and AskDRA videos; new kinds of branding and marketing strategies, making sure that we not only did good things, but, like her, looked good while doing them. New kinds of advocacy, such as advocacy before the Court Reporters Board, the Franchise Tax Board, the State Bar, NCRA, and litigation in court; basically, everywhere we needed to be, for the first time we were there, and everywhere we advocated, we won. And the lives of every reporter in this room are better because of it.

Here, within DRA, we take all of these many, many things for granted today. But that's because, whether we realize it or not, Lisa Michaels' leadership and vision for DRA set the standard for every DRA President since and will set the standard for every DRA President yet to come.

Anyone who's ever worked with her knows that her passion and dedication to this organization are simply unmatched in its history, boundless and, again, standard-setting.

I doubt if any single DRA member between District Rep,

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

# CALDRA PRESENTS LISA MICHAELS, 2016 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4



Board Member, Convention Chair, President, Newsletter Editor, Finance Chair – and, by the way, all in which Lisa has served -- has spent more hours on making DRA the most successful state association in the nation. We could not have chosen a better DSA.

Next, is Lisa the reporter; and businesswoman.

As a reporter, I'm in awe of her skills. She can take any type of proceeding, no matter how incredibly stressful it is, and shrug it off as if it were no big deal. She has an incredible way of rolling with the punches that this profession can throw your way. She is, in every way, a true professional and, by just her example, she makes you want to be a better reporter.

As a businesswoman, the results speak for themselves. I've stood by in awe as she has built her business from a small agency run out of her home to one of the most successful agencies in the state, with a dream office in Anaheim and a team that would take bullets for her along with reporters who absolutely adore her and look up to her as a mentor, friend, as well as a boss.

And then finally the part you have been waiting for: Lisa, the person.

If you were to play the game of word association about her and say, "Lisa Michaels," here is what you should say next:

SHOES!

This woman loves her shoes almost more than life itself.

She – and I'm not joking about this – takes photos of each pair, pastes them on the outside of the original boxes, and stores them in her closet neatly lined up in their designated spots.

Yes, yes...she luuuuuuuves her shoes!

But here is the funny thing: She has, on many different occasions, forgotten to wear them on the way to one of her depositions. I'm not kidding.

More times than she'd probably like to admit, I have received an early morning panicked phone call from her that she had left the house without her shoes again, ending up with her having to settle for the tennis shoes in the back of her car trunk to wear with her styling dress or suit, hoping nobody would notice.

My husband once asked me, how can someone so organized and in love with their shoes forget to put them on?

I don't know.

That's just...Lisa.

This is Lisa, the person; a powerhouse driven by contradictions.

She is intensely private, but she is also a talented hip-hop dancer who, on the dance floor, dances like nobody is watching.

Creative and organized and ferocious against bullies, but tender and thoughtful and devoted and caring to those she values.

Then there's the Lisa I know; my friend, my sister from another mister, my laugh-at-life partner in crime, my confidant, my twice-daily call, the person who I depend on to talk over life and family and hurt and joy...the friend of my dreams.

Lisa, I never dreamed when I met you and you somehow twisted my arm into going to an NCRA event that I would grow to love and cherish you as my best friend, my teacher, my cheerleader, my big sister (and sometimes my little sister). I never ever dreamed we would be holding hands through our lives together.

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand and raise your glasses and join me in a toast to the 2016 recipient of DRA's Distinguished Service Award, Lisa Michaels.

To Lisa!

# SUSAN SWAN ON CALDRA'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION



**SUSAN SWAN, CSR, RPR, CRR, CCRR**

Court reporters love to talk shop! When I get together with my reporter friends, it's pretty much nonstop chatting about the latest great depo or a witness with a heavy Russian accent that really needed an interpreter or of the many quirky things that happen on and off the record. DRA conventions are like this times ten. It is three days focused on what we, most of the time, love – being a court reporter.

The 2016 convention for me started off with three hours of Case CATalyst software training. I find this is invaluable and something I don't do nearly enough. Then it was on to one informative, entertaining seminar after another. After listening to Ed Varallo, I realized that I need to get in gear and implement many more briefs. Another standout seminar for me was presented by Rich Alossi and Monyeen Black. I thought I understood prepping for a realtime job, but this was an entirely new level of doing so. The quick-reference guide they prepared and distributed is something I now carry with me to all my jobs.

I like to stay up to date on what's happening in my field, whether it's test-driving the latest equipment, hearing about the new trends, or keeping abreast of legislative

issues and of the many other matters of importance to our profession. All of this and much more happens at convention. I had the opportunity to spend time with a former colleague who is now doing most of her reporting work internationally. I had quite a few questions for her, and what I learned was fascinating.

Conventions also present wonderful networking opportunities. I always meet firm owners from other cities, and we exchange business cards. I've covered a number of assignments for other firms I've met this way. It's also exciting to see student reporters and new reporters who attend the convention. They have so much to look forward to, and I wish them much success.

The three days flew by for me, and I loved every minute. As the convention was coming to a close, I thought about the presenters, some of whom traveled across the country, and of their valuable time expended in preparation. I also gave some thought to the DRA officers, representatives, and volunteers who worked so hard to make the convention happen. It was then that I truly felt grateful for the opportunities afforded by attending the DRA convention.





# LORRIE MARCHANT ON CALDRA'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION



LORRIE L. MARCHANT, CSR, RMR,  
CRR, CCRR, CLR

There are some annual events (including birthdays and anniversaries) that are just an automatic rollover and must-attend dates on my calendar every year, such as Petaluma's Butter & Eggs Days Parade, Salute to American Graffiti, and, of course, the Deposition Reporters Association convention.

I had so much fun at the 2016 convention! I often bring my biological family with me to the conventions (husband, Dale; daughter, Sophia; and son Cooper), but this time I traveled solo and was able to room with one of my best friends and mentor since 1997, the fabulous Holly Moose. This year I was able to really focus on my beloved DRA family and the seminars. I had the honor of assisting with the proctoring of both the California Realtime Competition as well as the California Certificate in Realtime Reporting test, and I was one of nine graders for the CRC. I am always in awe of the reporters who sit for the CRC, and I always glean invaluable knowledge during the grading process, i.e., words not in my dictionary that need to be, brief forms, and the various physical writing styles. I found it so interesting to see how the various reporters positioned their writers -- some were positioned low and tilted back away from them, while some were tilted towards them, and some were completely flat; some fingers were flaying while some barely moved at all. I sure was glad that I wasn't sitting for this competition, because I think that I would have been blown out of the water like a 120-word-per-minute student sitting in qualifying class. I give major kudos to everybody who sat for the competition.

I bought numerous raffle tickets and assisted with the raffle tables a bit, but I didn't win a darn thing. Congratulations to everybody who did win something, though.

I loved all of the seminars that I attended. I only attended the professional track. Mike Miller is always a wealth of knowledge and such a colorful, funny speaker. John Squires and Katherine Wayne had their audience captivated, in tears and side stitches from laughing so dang hard. Oh, boy, do they ever have some hilarious depo war stories!

Thank you to all of you roadrunners who joined Cheryl and me on the Sunday morning fun run/walk. It was an absolutely gorgeous morning in San Diego, and it was such a fantastic way to kick off the morning and week.

Networking is always so much fun. The Friday night social and the Saturday luncheon offer quite a bit of networking time. I always remember to stock my purse with a sizeable stack of my business cards so that my new friends/colleagues will know how to contact me in the future.

This year is just flying by so fast already, and I'm sure that it's going to be a great one. I know that Monyeen is going to be a fantastic president, and that the Board and executive officers will do a fabulous job of representing DRA. I thank everybody who is and has ever been on the executive team, the Board, past president, committee members, volunteers, and the devoted members for everything that you have done and that you do on an ongoing basis in order to preserve the integrity and dignity of our profession. I always have to reiterate that if not for Holly Moose and DRA, I would not be the reporter that I am today.

Here's looking to 2016 and what it has in store! I'm already very much looking forward to the 2017 DRA convention. Hopefully I will see you there!





# 2016 DRA CONVENTION







## SMILES FOR CALDRA'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

“Once again, DRA did an amazing job putting on a convention. All the seminars were very informative. Depo War stories was my favorite. We work in such a serious field, so it was nice to add a little humor to it. It is also always great to see and reconnect with fellow colleagues that you don't get to see very often. I always leave the conventions feeling inspired. I am looking forward to what DRA has in store for next year.” - *Elizabeth Mesa*

“I came home from the seminar totally excited about all the great things I learned. I am thrilled to be a new member of DRA, and I am grateful for the new friends I made and for connecting with friends I haven't seen in forever. Thank you, Deposition Reporters Association, for all you do.” - *Stephanie Vonnie Ruff Bryant*

“The session on ‘War Stories’ was absolutely fabulous. We had such a great time telling stories, but John Squires is beyond funny. All of the things that have happened to him in and around depositions are really amazing and very funny. We need something like this at every convention to lighten the load of all of the other technical seminars. We laughed and laughed, and it truly confirmed that ‘Laughter is the best medicine.’” - *Althea Miller*

“I really want to thank you DRA for a wonderful convention this past weekend in San Diego! I am proud to be a part of this wonderful organization of amazing professionals who bond together and inspire one another. Had a great time and came back excited to be an even better court reporter and to tackle my fears!! From the bottom of my heart... Thank you!” - *Kellie Summers*

“First-timer at the DRA Convention, and I was super impressed and very happy I went. There was a lot of helpful information presented in an often hilarious and inspirational way. Many thanks to all the volunteers who worked so hard to put together a really nice and well organized event. And the location and weather were perfect!” - *Julia Lennan*

# DRA'S THIRD ANNUAL REALTIME COMPETITION

The 2016 California Realtime Competition consisted of two legs - one Q&A (testimony) at 190 wpm, full of realtime zingers to test for accuracy, and one Q&A (testimony) at 230 wpm to test for speed. Each leg consisted of a one-minute lead-in followed by five minutes of testimony, after which the contestants cannot touch their file; they must turn it in as is. Ten brave people competed.

In order to qualify, the contestants had to score 95% or better. Three qualified for the 190 test.

In third place, with 47 errors, 95.05 percent accuracy, Rich Germosen;

In second place, with 37 errors, 96.11 percent accuracy, Clay Frazier;

In first place, with 27 errors, 97.16 percent accuracy, Mark Kislingbury.

Only one person qualified for the 230 test, and that was Mark Kislingbury, with 47 errors, 95.91 percent accuracy.

In order to determine the overall winner, there is an averaging of both legs. In first place overall, with a score of 96.54, Mark Kislingbury was the overall winner!

Congratulations to all who competed. These reporters work very hard to improve their skills and are inspiration to all of us. They are all winners!



## DEPO DIVAS – SHOES OF THE 2016 CONVENTION

Forget diamonds. Shoes are a woman's best friend, as so amply demonstrated by the fashionable ladies of DRA. Here are some snaps of the rockin' footwear that some of our convention attendees were sporting at our latest shindig. Did your shoes make the cut?





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# DRA Student Corner

## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE



VERONICA GUERRERO

Not all conventions are created equal, a fact especially true when considering attending an association's student track. Like most students, I've attended many of the court reporting-related student seminars and conventions hosted by the major reporting associations. I always leave motivated and excited about my future in this industry, but sometimes I leave wanting more. That was not the case when I attended my first DRA Annual Convention this year. Their student seminars were presented in a completely soon-to-be-CSR-friendly way.

A couple of friends and I were fortunate enough to be able to splurge and attend the full convention -- something I highly recommend. The three of us were just weeks away from the CSR and in need of some distraction. The pressure of those last few weeks can be unbearable. I also found myself in the precarious position of not quite being a student, but not quite being a professional yet either. I was out of school and attempting the CSR test, again. It had become difficult not to associate steno with some negativity after getting those "No Pass" letters in the mail. And since my school closed, the only real interactions I have with the reporting world is when I'm involved with the reporting associations. That's why DRA's Annual Convention was the best of both worlds: It allowed me to interact with working reporters and also commiserate with students who were facing those same steno demons.

Having spent a few days attending the full convention, I had big hopes for the student track, but kept my expectations in check. I anticipated the usual: 75+ attendees, speakers bombarded with questions about how or what to practice, and students looking for advice on how to stay motivated and get through school. All things I could relate to at one time, but this time, weeks away from the CSR, my needs and questions were much different. I needed some working, applicable knowledge. After all, I'm going to be a real reporter soon!

Imagine my surprise to be seated in a warm, sunny conference room with a small group of fewer than 30 well-dressed, like-minded soon-to-be reporters. Yep, high-speed, qualifier, and excited CSR takers -- people who see the light at the end of that dark tunnel, school, and are focused on the next challenge, transitioning into reporting.



*And the winning bid for  
ProCAT's Impression writer  
at DRA 2016  
went to:  
The beautiful Natalie Simon!  
Congrats Natalie!!!!*



## NATALIE SIMON WINS BIG AT CALDRA'S 2016 CONVENTION

A big THANK YOU to ProCAT for collaborating with CalDRA at our annual convention by providing a brand-new ProCAT Impression for our annual silent auction. The lucky winner this year was DRA's own Natalie Simon. Thank you, Natalie, for playing! Enjoy your new machine.

Sunday's student track was a call to action. Time to create a plan that ensures our success as new reporters. Instead of the usual spiel on the importance of interning and networking, the focus was on the often forgotten and not so glamorous everyday things that can make or break any reporter, but especially new reporters. And due to the small size of the group, interacting with presenters and asking question as they came up was so much easier. No holding your question for ten minutes and then forgetting by the end. No being intimidated or overwhelmed by a large room of zealous students with tons of questions, just a small group taking in all the trade secrets that these accomplished reporters were willing to impart on us.

Of particular importance to me was the subject: How do I get paid? I know I send an invoice, but then what? They

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

send me a check, I cash it, and pay taxes on it at the end of the year; right? Well, kind of. That's where "Record-Keeping for New Reporters" comes into play. As reporters, we have to keep track of billed/paid amounts and continue to track and bill for copies not yet paid. It's easy to see how items not paid from months ago could be missed and forgotten. Equally important is how all those unpaid services add up, a fact easily lost on a new and overwhelmed reporter. As one of the speakers, Andrea Rinker, pointed out, "I can't imagine how much money I lost that first year."

"Research, Research, Research" was chock-full of useful tidbits and handouts. And then there was my personal favorite, "You Don't Know What You Don't Know." It was comforting to hear seasoned reporters retell their funny stories of easily confused terms and phrases. Not to mention, that list has been invaluable in dictionary building. It was also very cool to get an up-close look at some of the search tools and sites available, especially SearchMaster. It was something I had heard of but never really understood. It was exciting to learn about the tools that will make our working life that much better.

The day concluded with a return to reality, the mocks, something my little group was excited about. We were going to use this opportunity to figure out where those testing nerves pop up and take over. Really, we were getting our money's worth out of this weekend. We were taking every bit of knowledge, motivation, and experience from that weekend and becoming reporters!

Of course, the entire weekend wasn't all work. As students, Friday's Luau and Saturday's al fresco lunch offered plenty of opportunities to get some sage advice and motivation from seasoned professionals and even instructors. An especially worth-the-price-of-admission moment came when an instructor suggested tucking hand warmers in my pockets before the big test. Why hadn't I thought of that?

Yet another memorable moment came during the al fresco lunch when those circling seagulls left me a little present on my head at a table full of people I admire. Talk about a lasting first impression? Thankfully, in typical court reporter

fashion, these ladies were prepared. Without skipping a beat, there was a table full of hand wipes, sanitizer, and even a lovely DRA representative scrubbing my head clean -- that's a full service DRA board -- followed by hoots of "It's good luck. You're going to pass now."

So many of the anxieties concerning being a new reporter dissipated after spending a full day listening to knowledgeable reporters addressing topics I had never even thought of. I left that weekend feeling relaxed about testing. My new focus needed to be on guaranteeing a long and successful life as a reporter. The work would come. I could stop allowing that nagging fear to dominate my thoughts. And when the work comes, I have the tools I need to be successful.

For any students looking to attend the DRA's Annual Convention in the future, GO! It helped me put less pressure on that one test that's standing in my way and to be able to be excited about all the new things reporting is going to bring into my life. You're cheating yourself by not taking advantage of a golden opportunity to learn from others' mistakes and rediscover those warm and cozy feelings that can get lost in the mire of school and tests. Treat yourself to that kick in the butt we all need sometimes. Meet new people who can share new approaches to get you where you want to be. Not to mention, DRA members are some of the MOST accomplished and respected professionals in the business. When they offer up their time, your answer should always be "yes!"





# DRA Student Corner

## ATTENDING MY FIRST DRA CONVENTION



**ELIZABETH CHARNESKY,**  
*Court Reporting Student*

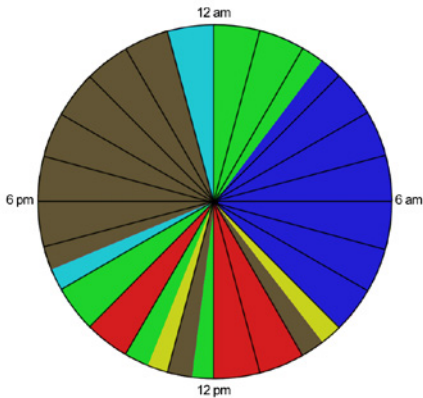
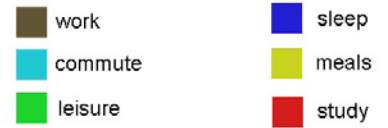
This year I decided to attend my first court reporting convention. I am so happy that I decided to attend the DRA Convention in San Diego. I am currently a student in the higher speeds and wanted to learn more about the profession I am about to enter. DRA did such a great job presenting current information about court reporting. I learned so much about my future career.

The whole convention was full of different seminars with experienced speakers giving great information on how to make this career fun and current with new technology. What I really appreciate about DRA is that they are always student friendly. Throughout the whole convention they had a good schedule for students to attend. On the last day I felt like it was completely set up for students. They gave great information on what we need when we first start. I also ran a 5K with other reporters, which was very fun.

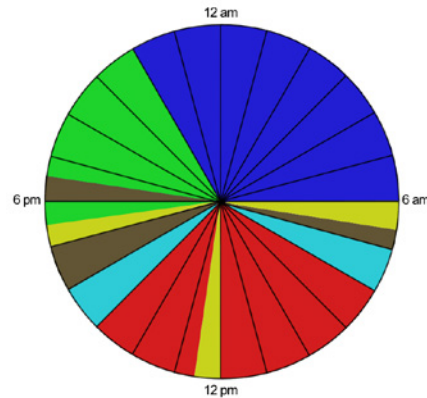
Attending the DRA Convention in San Diego this year was the best decision. I spoke with so many different working reporters that gave me great advice. I felt so motivated to come back to school and practice. I can't wait to graduate and start working. Thank you DRA, for working so hard to present conventions like these to reporters and students. I'm ready for the next event.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

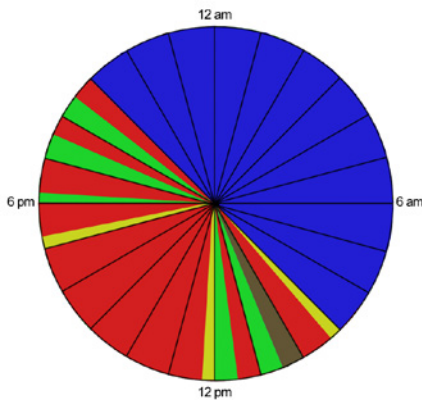
If there's one cardinal truth in court reporting school, it's that time on your machine is the only way to make progress, but there are only so many hours in the day. We asked a handful of students at all different stages of their student career and different walks of life how they spend their average day. Check out the results and see how your own day compares to them!



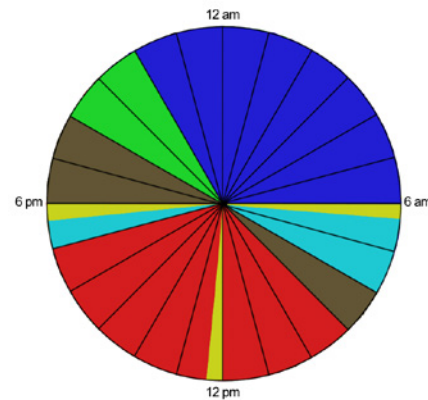
Christie – Brick-and-Mortar, Theory



Olivia – Brick-and-Mortar, 200



Deb – Online, 180



Tami – CSR



DEPOSITION  
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION  
OF CALIFORNIA, INC.



The nation's largest trade association dedicated to the freelance deposition reporter.

**Come join the fun at DRA's**

# **Annual Student Picnic**

**FOOD!**

**GAMES!**

**RAFFLE!**

**NETWORK!**

**Saturday, May 14, 2016**

**Cerritos Regional Park**

**Lakeside Location**

**19800 Bloomfield Avenue**

**Cerritos, CA 90703**

**BIG RAFFLE ITEMS: 1 CaseCatalyst Student Software, 1 Eclipse Student Software & 1 ProCat Student Software!**

**11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**\$5 members/\$15 nonmembers**

**To RSVP, please visit our website:**

**[www.caldra.org/student-picnic](http://www.caldra.org/student-picnic)**

**\* credit cards will be accepted on-site**



DEPOSITION  
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION  
OF CALIFORNIA, INC.

The nation's largest trade association dedicated to the freelance deposition reporter.





## INTRODUCING SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANDY RODRIGUEZ:

Andy Rodriguez is currently a student in qualifiers at Downey Adult School, where he began his court reporting education in 2012. When he is not scoping or proofreading, he spends his spare time learning everything he can about this great profession and the issues that face it. He has had the privilege of learning from some of the finest freelancers in the business about topics ranging from the importance of continuing education to the duty a reporter has to give back to their professional associations. Attending DRA board meetings, organizing school functions, and volunteering with DRA has instilled in Andy a work ethic and a sense of community that he carries with him each day as he works towards his license and looks ahead to his career.

### Andy's Statement:

My sincerest gratitude goes to DRA for selecting me as a scholarship recipient from what was undoubtedly a pool of qualified applicants. As a struggling student, I'm extremely appreciative of any financial assistance that can help me make it through what I anticipate will be my last few months in school, and this generous award will certainly go a long way towards my remaining tuition payments. Even greater than any monetary benefit, though, is the feeling of validation that comes from having my efforts recognized by reporters for whom I have such a great deal of respect.

I strongly encourage any students who aren't sure about applying for the scholarship in the future to do so. I applied and was not chosen last year, but I decided to apply again this year because I felt the volunteer experience I had gained since then gave me a better shot at being selected this time around.



## INTRODUCING SCHOLARSHIP WINNER KATHERINE SCHILLING:

In addition to volunteering her time in many court reporting activities, Katherine is a strong advocate of keeping abreast of technology, even as a student. She beta tested NCRA's online certification process, was an assistant instructor for her school's dictionary building and realtime class, with a focus on Eclipse, and creates video tutorials that she uploads to YouTube. Katherine enjoys volunteering for mock trials, student committees, and frequently attends court reporting seminars and conventions. Her favorite quote is: *Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.*

### Katherine's Statement:

Thank you, DRA, for selecting me for the Zandonella Scholarship of 2016. Being chosen as a recipient is without a doubt the highest honor I have received during my student career. The application and interview process were very thorough, but it showed me just how seriously the scholarship committee takes its job in screening the applicants, and that the committee members look over each candidate with a very discerning eye. After all, if DRA's track record of past recipients is any indication, they are considering some of the most qualified students in our field.



I'd first learned about the scholarship through a previous recipient, Michael McMorrin, who is a committed advocate of students and new reporters, and it was his encouraging words that inspired me to apply. I have looked up to those who have been selected before me, each one outstanding in his or her own right, and I am now extremely proud to have the privilege of being named among them.

Now to make a confession: This was actually my second time applying for the scholarship. So what's the lesson to learn here? Don't give up, and trust that things always happen for a reason. Having that extra year in between applications allowed me to learn even more and strengthen my resume.

I plan on putting the scholarship money towards future conventions; namely, the NCRA Annual Convention being held in Chicago this summer. Hope to see some of you there!

# DRA Student Corner

## POP QUIZ



### ROB LEIFER

School Attending: College of Court Reporting (CCR)

Current Speed: 225!

Time in school: Four years.

#### What made you want to become a court reporter?

I was a professional musician for most of my adult life. I was fortunate enough to be one of the few that actually made a living playing music. I played in the American Idol house band for four years and spent a lot of time touring with various pop acts. As my age started increasing, however, the amount of work I was being called for started diminishing. It got to the point where it became apparent that, in order to make a living in music, I'd have to spend the bulk of my time on the road, not exactly a conducive lifestyle for a married man who wanted a family. As the music industry became a more volatile industry, my interest started waning, and I began looking for a new career to transition into.

My mother and uncle are both court reporters and have been for my entire life. For some reason I never considered court reporting as an option or a career path that would be right for me. My mother suggested looking into it one day, and I immediately dismissed it. But as I started researching it more, I was immediately struck by the similarities between court reporting and music, the big difference being that the world actually considered it a job worthy of payment -- real U.S. currency! I loved the fact that I would still be working with my hands, that as a depo reporter I could work freelance and not have to report to a boss, and that the opportunity to travel again would be an option that I could eventually take advantage of.

I enrolled in court reporting school on a "trial basis" to see if I'd like it. Within two weeks, I was completely obsessed with the machine, very much in the same way that I was with my guitar when I was 15 years old. There was no looking back after that. As I've progressed through speed, I have found the physical act of performing machine shorthand more and more similar to that of playing music. I even find it fulfilling from a creative standpoint because I love how one's writing ultimately becomes one's personal style and is completely unique to all of us.

#### How do you get motivated when you feel like you're "stuck" at a speed?

My main motivation these days is my family. I have two little kids at home, and being able to provide for them and give them everything that I was given as a child is what ultimately keeps me going in the face of the incredibly frustrating journey that is court reporting school. This is the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. There have been times when I've felt it was hopeless; times I've wanted to throw in the towel; and times I've considered throwing my machine into a pit of hot lava, playing a fiddle and dancing a jig as I watched it burn! As cliché as it sounds, I keep a picture of my family on my computer desktop and look at it whenever I'm having one of those days.

In addition to the emotional and sappy motivation, I also always switch up my practice regimen when I'm feeling stuck at a speed. I think that has been very important for me.

#### What are your ultimate career goals?

My career goals are simply to make a good living as a deposition reporter in California. I don't necessarily desire to be a speed champion or be the fastest and cleanest writer in the world. I just want to wake up every day and go to a job that I'm passionate about and that affords me the ability to provide a good life for my family. With that said, once the kids are out of the house, I would love to spend the bulk of my time doing international work!

#### What do you do to unwind when you're not practicing?

I would say that I hang with my kids, but that is hardly an activity that I would consider "unwinding." So I cook. Cooking is my other passion. It's my release. It also gives me an excuse to be in the kitchen while my wife does the bath and bedtime routine with the kids; so that's an added bonus!

#### If you weren't in court reporting school, what discipline would you pursue instead?

Deep down I will always consider myself an artist. That spirit never goes away. I do consider court reporting to be akin to proficiency in the arts. It's definitely the same part of the brain. If I wasn't doing court reporting, I'd probably be cooking for a living or doing some other "fringe culture" profession -- anything that would keep me out of a cubicle and/or pouring coffee for a boss.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 19



# DRA Student Corner

## POP QUIZ: ROB LEIFER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

**What do you think is the biggest challenge facing court reporting students today?**

Time and organization. I've heard a lot of people say that it generally takes students longer to finish school nowadays than it did 40 years ago. I think this is directly related to the fact that our lives are much more complex than they were before the internet age. There was a magical era, once upon a time, when a student would sit down to practice without simultaneously texting, surfing the internet, posting on Facebook, and purchasing new shoes on Amazon. We are certainly much more distracted in this day and age. This is why it is so important for students to manage their time and commit themselves to a practice regimen that fits into their schedule but also allows them to focus exclusively on court reporting for the duration of that time period.

**If you could go back and do one thing differently in your court reporting journey thus far, what would it be?**

More analytical practice and less mindless dictation practice. I have been guilty of putting on dictation and zoning out under the guise of "I'm practicing." The theory behind this is that as long as I have my hands on the machine, it's better than nothing. I have realized that this is incorrect. A student has to learn how to practice smarter and not harder. We need to make time for practicing and addressing every element of machine shorthand -- speed, accuracy, identifying hesitation words, numbers, briefs and phrases, dictionary building, etc. -- otherwise, we're just going through the motions and not addressing what we actually need. If I could do it all over again, I would have been a lot more diligent from the beginning about making every practice session useful and worthwhile.

## Dress Me Up!



It's the paper dolls you used to play with as a kid, upgraded for the digital age!

Check out the link below to dress up Mr. and Ms. Court Reporter into a snazzy, work-appropriate outfit, then grab a screenshot and upload it to your social media outlet of choice with the hashtag #DRASStudentPicnic2016! Get fun, get creative, get professional! But do it soon, because one lucky winner will be selected to get a free pass to the DRA Student Picnic at Cerritos Regional Park on Saturday, May 14th!

[Click Here](#)



# BILL WATCH

ANTONIA PULONE, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

The second year of a two-year legislative session is now underway, which means we are continuing to follow bills introduced last year which have survived so far, along with some new submissions, bills that have been significantly amended to address different issues than they originally dealt with. As always, this article means to update our readers on all the legislation that has the potential of impacting California reporters, both freelancers and officials. Our Legislative Committee, led by your DRA lobbyist, Ed Howard, closely watches all the bills introduced in Sacramento, and the legislation included here is being focused on as having the most direct bearing on our profession and livelihood.



Please note that “AB” indicates a bill introduced in the Assembly, “SB” stands for a Senate-introduced bill; “ACR” stands for Assembly Concurrent Resolution. The name in parentheses that follows the bill number is the legislator or committee carrying the bill. The status of the bills below is current as of April 24, 2016.

## AB 1709 (GALLAGHER)

**Summary:** Would redefine “hearing impaired” as “hard of hearing,” but most of the original language has been amended out of the bill. We understand it may be amended further to include the requirement for CART providers in court proceedings, so we are following it to see what develops.

**Support/Opposition:** None known at this time

**Status:** Hearing by the Assembly Judiciary Committee was postponed by the committee. The author submitted amendments, and the bill has been referred again to the committee, but no date set for hearing yet.

## AB 1834 (WAGNER)

**Summary:** Would allow for the use of ER in family-law cases if no official reporter were available. This is the same language that the author introduced last year as AB 251, which failed passage, in large part due to opposition from DRA, COCRA, CCRA and the unions representing official reporters. At the Assembly Judiciary Committee hearing on March 29th, we all offered opposition again. The Committee Chair, Mark Stone, urged that the bill be amended to require reporters in family law proceedings versus ER. The author, unwilling to accept that amendment but seeing that the bill would otherwise fail to pass, accepted the Chair’s offer to hold the bill and postpone the vote to allow further discussion.

**Support:** Conference of CA Bar Assoc. (Sponsor), Assoc. of Certified Family Law

Specialists, Bar Assoc. of San Francisco, and three others.

**Opposition:** DRA, CCRA, COCRA, SEIU, AFSCME, and numerous county official reporter associations, local unions.

**Status:** No new hearing date set yet, but clearly the bill will not pass from the Assembly Judiciary committee with the current language/concept in place.

## AB 2192 (ASSEMBLY MEMBER SALAS AND SENATOR HILL, CO-AUTHORS)

**Summary:** Would extend the life of the Court Reporters Board with the Dept of Consumer Affairs from the current sunset date of January 2017 to January 2021.

**Support/Opposition:** None officially registered, but DRA and CCRA both spoke in support at the Sunset Review hearing on March 9th.

**Status:** Passed unanimously from Assembly Business & Professions Committee, referred to Appropriations Committee with recommendation to consent calendar.

## AB 2217 (HADLEY)

**Summary:** Would raise the maximum fees allowed to be charged by notaries for given services. It would amend Government Code 8211, which includes fees that may be charged for services rendered in connection with the taking of depositions, fees which CSRs are entitled to charge per CCP 2093(b), in conjunction with a CSR’s authority to administer oaths and affirmations and perform the duties of a deposition officer.

**Support/Opposition:** None known at this time (though DRA will likely support)

**Status:** Referred to the Assembly Business & Professions Committee, but no hearing date set.

## AB 2629 (HERNANDEZ)

**Summary:** Would amend the Government Code to raise the rates for court transcripts prepared by official reporters and reporters pro tempore employed by the courts. Transcripts would still be based on the folio (100 words), and the folio rates set by each county would presumably still apply. As the bill was originally written, the rates would be raised incrementally over a three-year period, starting January of 2017, and from 2020 on would be subject to ongoing increases per increases in the Consumer Price Index (“CPI”). The daily-copy expedite rate would remain at 50%, but the bill would allow that to be charged in criminal cases, not only in civil cases as the law currently allows.

As a result of opposition by both the plaintiffs and defense bar, prior to the bill being heard in the Assembly Judiciary Committee, the author agreed to amend the bill to stretch the fee increases over five years and to eliminate the ongoing rate increases per the CPI.

**Support:** CCRA (sponsor), SEIU, and several local associations of official reporters.

**Opposition:** None on file (Opposition removed as the bill is proposed to be amended).

**Status:** Heard in the Assembly Judiciary Committee on April 19 and passed as amended. Re-referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



# BILL WATCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

## AB 2859 (LOW)

**Summary:** Would authorize the boards, bureaus or commissions within the Dept of Consumer Affairs to establish a retired category of license for licensees no longer actively engaged in their profession. Would also prohibit the holder of a retired license from engaging in any licensed activity, unless criteria for a retired licensee to practice were included.

**Support:** CA Association of Psychiatric Technicians, Contractors State License Board

**Opposition:** None known at this time.

**Status:** Passed unanimously from Assembly Business & Professions Committee and referred to Appropriations Committee and recommended for consent calendar

## ACR 131 (PATTERSON)

**Summary:** Would simply “encourage,” as it says, the Dept of Consumer Affairs and all of its board and bureaus – so would apply to the CRB – to create policies that would guarantee that licensees pay a fair amount for licensure, both for the initial license and for ongoing license fees.

**Support/Opposition:** None known at this time

**Status:** Passed unanimously from Assembly Business & Professions Committee, referred to Appropriations Committee with recommendation to consent calendar. Referred to Appropriations suspense file.

## SB 270 (MENDOZA)

**Summary:** Currently this would authorize the CRB to bring a civil action against any person, CA corporation or foreign (non-CA) corporation rendering CSR services in CA without a CSR license or without authorization to render CSR services in CA. It would also require the court to impose monetary penalties against the person or corporation.

The sponsor, CCRA, has proposed significant amendments to this bill, which were presented and discussed at the CRB meeting held on April 8th. Some concerns raised by the CRB, DRA and others at that meeting regarding the amendment language caused the CRB to suggest another meeting be held in May to discuss the amendment language further, and CCRA offered to consider changes to that language based on the concerns raised.

**Support:** CCRA (sponsor), DRA, Orange County Superior Official Court Reporters, and six individuals.

**Opposition:** Esquire Legal Support, Magna Legal Services, US Legal Support Services, Veritext Corp.

**Status:** Passed by Senate committees and Senate floor. In Assembly, when heard by Business & Professions Committee, was opposed by four national reporting firms, which resulted in the bill not passing, but was granted reconsideration, so will be scheduled for rehearing, probably with amendments, either those proposed currently or other language.

## SB 1007 (WIECKOWSKI)

**Summary:** Would provide that a party to an arbitration has the right to have a CSR transcribe any deposition, proceeding or hearing as the official record. The party requesting the reporter will incur the expense of the CSR, except as specified. Also, it would require the court to vacate an arbitration award if it found that an arbitrator had refused a party's request to have a CSR transcribe any deposition, proceeding or hearing.

**Support/Opposition:** None known at this time.

**Status:** Amended April 13 by author. Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee; set for hearing on April 26.

## SB 1155 (MORRELL)

**Summary:** Would require every board within the Dept of Consumer Affairs to grant a fee waiver for the application and issuance of the initial license to any honorably discharged veteran.

**Support:** California Association of Licensed Investigators, Military Officers Assoc. of America- CA Council, Veterans of Foreign Wars- Dept of California, and three other veterans associations

**Opposition:** None known at this time.

**Status:** Passed the Senate Business, Professions & Economic Development, passed the Veterans Affairs Committee. Referred to Appropriations; set for hearing on April 25.

# Ask DRA

## DEAR DEPO DIPLOMAT:

I have been asked to specifically not provide realtime on a job and to also refuse to offer it to anyone else. It just seems a little odd, and it seems to me that it at least might appear to compromise my impartiality. I suspect this is not the only time that this has come up. Also, it is an interpreted depo in a patent matter, and often the interpreters depend on a realtime feed. I just reread the practice guidelines published on the CSR Board website and thought I'd run this by you. I've also downloaded the wonderful DRA handbook and perused the relevant portions but not really digested it yet.

They have told me that "contrary to our standing order, (Taking Attorney) has specifically requested that there be no livenote available for either party at the depositions" of two interpreted witnesses. "So, in addition to removing Interactive Realtime with Laptop/Livenote with one loaner laptop from our order for these two depositions, please also make sure that if anyone requests realtime/livenote during the deposition, they will be denied. This is very important to our attorney. Please confirm this is possible."

I would appreciate any feedback or advice you could offer. Thank you.

## DEAR DRA MEMBER:

This feels as odd to me as it does to you, and it feels completely out of order. I don't think anyone has ever asked us a question quite like this before, and I'm not sure that the Federal Rules would provide us any guidance in this regard. Even the CCP, which wouldn't apply here since it's a Federal case, would not be of much help. We are clearly required to make available the same services to all parties, which this strange request actually does in a backhanded way by not providing realtime to anyone, but there's no language in either Code about refusing to provide a service to a party specifically at the request of another party.

Like you, I suppose, it would seem that this attorney wants the interpreter and witness to not see your realtime feed, perhaps because the printed English would be helpful to his testimony. But if any other party should ask for a hookup, knowing that you're capable of providing it, I think you would not be able to conceal the fact that you've specifically been asked not to provide that service and by whom. In any event, I don't believe you can ever refuse to provide a service that you're capable of providing and have available because one party doesn't want it to be available to his opponent. While this doesn't appear in any Code per se, one party cannot prevent another party from receiving some reporting service they need and want and is available. This would be tantamount to telling one party that they could not have their transcript on an expedited basis or not receive a rough draft because one of the other parties wasn't ordering either and didn't want them to have that benefit. One party can't dictate what services another party can have access to.

I think that you must notify this attorney that you cannot comply with his request, but I wanted to find some Code section that you could cite if necessary to back you up. While these are not specific to this strange request, I think you can point to the Business & Professions Code, Section 8025 (d), which defines "unprofessional conduct" as including "acts contrary to ...impartiality" and also "availability, delivery... of transcripts." (You can find this on page 98 of the new, 2016 DRA Code Book.) You can also cite the Code of Regulations, Section 2475, which is where the Professional Standards of Practice appear (Page 132-133 of the DRA Code Book), and subsection (b)(6) requires that we "Act without bias toward, or prejudice against, any parties and/or their attorneys." I think denying service to one party at the insistence of another party would easily be seen as bias. And (7) goes on to say we must "not enter into, arrange, or participate in a relationship that compromises the impartiality of the CSR," so that prohibition would also apply to this request, I believe, if it could be loosely considered a relationship, at least for the purposes of these depositions.

This attorney may not be very happy, I would suspect, with your refusal to refuse, so to speak, but perhaps if you remind him that you would tell any attorney making such a request that you could not comply, he'll recognize that he is equally protected by your duty to remain impartial at all times. And if it helps, you could always volunteer that you won't offer a realtime hookup to any other party at these depositions, but should they request that service, you will have to provide it. And then, of course, you would be happy to

.....  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

make it equally available to him, should he wish. I'm just trying to find the nicest, most polite way to explain to him that he's asking you to do something you may not do, so the answer has to be no.

I really hope this helps you. Saying no to a client's request is never very pleasant. The only other way around this, practically speaking, would be to send another reporter who simply does not do realtime and could not provide a hookup to anyone who asked for it. That might be the one rare situation where being less skilled could be a benefit to a reporter.

## SPRING FORWARD & TAKE ACTION



Hone your skills & earn CEUs

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
SPRING SEMINAR  
SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2016  
(.6 CEUs)**

**Walnut Creek Marriott  
2355 North Main Street  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
(925) 934-2000**

**\$199 - DRA member**

**\$359 - Nonmember**

**\$100 - DRA member first Year CSRs / Students  
/ Instructors**

**\$155 - Nonmember first year CSRs / Students /  
Instructors**

## THE "MIRACLE BRAIN" OF THE COURT REPORTER



**HOLLY MOOSE, CSR**

*RDR-CCRR-Fellow of the Academy of Professional Reporters*

Below is an excerpt from a real deposition I reported of a lightning-fast neuropsychologist expert witness. It was a grueling day, and I was worn out by 2 p.m. Just when I thought I couldn't hang on any longer, it was over, and the witness offered as his final opinion the following tribute to the amazing skills court reporters possess. Take heart, my fellow colleagues: There are people who do notice and appreciate what we do.

Q. Any other opinions?

A. No, except the court reporter, I forgot to mention, has a miracle brain.

Q. I'm not sure what that means.

A. Well, you're looking at a healthy brain here. She's been sitting here since 9:00 this morning, right. She has to have auditory verbal memory. It has to go to a prefrontal lobe. She has to be able to exercise her frontal function of working memory. She has to hold what I'm saying. Then it has to go back to her cerebellum, and she has to execute all those little squiggly things you see and do it all spontaneously, you know, at the time that it happens.

You were sitting here for the same five hours, and you're not even aware of what a miracle it is. I just love it when people say their dogs are so smart. Anyway, that's it for today.



# PUZZLE ME THIS



## LET'S GET MEDICAL

R A D I C U L O P A T H Y P Z T  
H E M A T E M E S I S D I L S Y  
R N O P R B A Y D C Y D D I M J  
A A M O M A N I I Y I B G R W B  
U R L R P C L R M O S O L S D S  
S N K U O H R U P H L T I M I K  
C R E P C H O A C O T S O S D A  
U T E U O S T R M O E Y O N U Z  
L X R S R H A L E H A L H T I I  
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idiopathic  
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intraocular  
cirrhosis  
arrhythmia  
auscultation  
tricuspid  
prosthesis  
ophthalmologist  
ischemia  
cardiovascular  
radiculopathy

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for your chance to receive a \$25 credit towards your next DRA event!

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# YOU CAN NEVER ASK FOR TOO MUCH



KYUNG LEE-GREEN, CSR

So I got a call the other day from a colleague. She was worried that she was asking for too much. I've had this call off and on throughout the years. I've even received judgment from fellow court reporters on my practices of actually asking what the rate is and turning the agency down if the rate is too low or I'm asking for "too much." The term "greedy" has even floated past my ears along with the "B" word.

I think we need to get rid of this notion that we are being greedy when we ask for more than they're offering. That's kind of an insane concept, if you ask me. On the whole, I think that most court reporters are too eager to sell themselves short. They're afraid that they'll never work again, so oftentimes they'll accept the first job offer they get and don't bother to check the rates.

Or maybe they hear the rates, but don't realize that they're very low. Or maybe they're desperate for work. The agency will call and say, "Hey, I've got a great job. There will be tons of copy orders, and there's going to be 20 depositions. I'd love for you to cover them. BUT the rate is going to be lower than what you're expecting. We had to give them a 'good deal' so that we could get all the work."

Hmmm. Let me think. I'll be working harder and making less? Sounds awesome. Let me sign up.

STOP RIGHT THERE. Is this great for you? How will this impact your industry? Is this a downward spiral? Well, we told them that for this case, they'll be getting realtime and roughs and a five-day turnaround for one low, low price. But you'll still be getting volume and making a ton of money.

I feel that I am being sold a used car, and they don't want me to check under the hood. I feel like this is how Orange County ended up being in the state it is with regard to lower page rates.

But back to my main point. Asking for more is not a crime. It is not something that you should be afraid to do or feel that it will reflect badly on you. In fact, let's get rid of this term "asking for more." You're not asking for more like Oliver Twist asking for more pudding. You are "negotiating."

You are a businessperson and you are negotiating your rates. The agency has their rates. You have your rates.

Sometimes you will accept their rates; sometimes they will accept your rates. And sometimes you two will negotiate to come to a mutually satisfactory agreement. Sometimes you will not come to an agreement, and then both sides will walk away. No harm, no foul. Just because you asked for more does not make you greedy. Just because they didn't meet your rate doesn't make them a "bad" agency.

If you hear the agency say, "We just can't pay your rates because they're too high," STOP. Do not take this as a reflection on yourself that you're "asking for too much." It is a reflection on the agency that their salespeople did not properly negotiate a rate that takes into account that they will need to hire a third-party independent contractor who actually has to do the work, and that we have worth. That's not your fault. You don't need to "help" them out to cover the job. The agency can look around for someone who will do it cheaper (yes, there will always be someone). Or you guys can "negotiate" a rate that will work for both of you.

Here's a secret. The reporters who ask for more are never the reporters without jobs. Wow!! Whoa!!! That seems entirely counterintuitive. If you're asking for more, aren't you working less? Nope. If you ask for more, you can work less, and still make the same amount of money.

The reporters who take the lower paid jobs never seem to quite be able to make ends meet; right? Think about it. They have to work five days a week to make the same amount as the reporter who negotiated a higher rate. They're maybe doing less lucrative work. They're having to produce more pages to make the same dollar amount. Of course, I am assuming that you are a decent reporter and that you have agencies who call you and ask you to cover jobs for them. If you only work with one agency or never take overflow from other agencies, it's very hard to negotiate.

I mean, there's always the chance you'll price yourself out of the market, but I have not seen that happen yet with any of the reporters that I know. And I know many of the "high-end" reporters. In fact, I know some reporters who are raising their rates this year. I even know one who says they raise their rates every year. Wow!! They get some pushback at the beginning, but then the agency still comes back to them. That's because they put out a great product and the agency knows they can depend on them to cover the technical cases.

So you need to build that into your rate. When you are negotiating your rate, they're not only paying you to sit

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 27



# YOU CAN NEVER ASK FOR TOO MUCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

there and take down the depo. They're paying you to control proceedings, interrupt when necessary, have a certain skill level in terms of vocabulary and expertise in order to take the material down, provide realtime, provide a rough, get the transcript out. Remember, you spend more time out of depo than in depo. Plus you must pay scopists and proofers. You have to factor your costs into that rate you are negotiating.

Just like the expert witness depo they're taking, they're not paying the rate they pay because he's a nice guy. They pay it because of his expertise. We are professionals and should also be paid for our expertise. You rarely hear of an attorney or doctor or expert witness saying, "Well, you'll get to work on 20 surgeries or 20 cases, but we'd like you to drop your rate because we have to give the client a really good deal." I think most doctors and expert witnesses would laugh their heads off. Most of the expert witnesses I know raise their rates.

The goal here is not to work more, but to make more.

## REPORTER OR BUST



**CALLIE BLACK, CSR**

I've known that I wanted to be a court reporter since I was 14 years old.

Independence has always been a priority to me. I was in a race to grow up and began planning my future early.

Oddly enough, I owe my decision to begin court reporting school to my mother's manicurist/ guru. Her daughter Tally happened to be a court reporter, and she openly discussed how much she loved her job and the lifestyle it had provided her. It all started for her when she was meeting some girlfriends for lunch. One of them brought a friend she had not met before. The woman arrived in a Mercedes and stepped out with designer heels and a designer bag. Tally asked her, "What do you do for work? Whatever it is, sign me up." When the woman answered that she was a court reporter, Tally signed up the next day for court reporting school, despite not even understanding what it was. She is now a successful court reporter working in Arizona. Tally and I had very similar personalities, so both my mother and hers urged me to become a court reporter.

I began researching court reporting on my own. I was lured in by the income, flexibility, and especially the idea that I could graduate and begin my career in less time than the average four-year university process. I loved the thought of being able to hear interesting cases and work in different environments. I knew it was a career I could be proud of and a career that would provide me independence and stability. It wasn't long before I called South Coast College and asked to take a tour.

I was so excited and wanted to start right away. They asked me when exactly I wanted to start, at which point I explained I was only 15. "But don't worry! I am taking double the course load, and I will be back in less than a year with my diploma in hand." They laughed a little, but encouraged me to do so.

I might have been the youngest student at South Coast at just 16 years old. It felt surprisingly natural, both being around students older than me and learning steno itself. I was determined to be the youngest court reporter ever, but life had other plans.

Instead, at age 18 I became one of the youngest people to develop carpal tunnel. I had been passing test after test and felt unstoppable, until the pain started. I ignored it for quite a while, but it ultimately slowed me down tremendously. Suddenly I wasn't passing test after test, it was hard to make it through classes, and I was losing motivation to show up. I wondered if I wasn't really meant to do this. I thought about giving up daily.

I couldn't keep up in school, and it got to the point where I had no choice but to drop out. I grieved for the long hours I had put in, and I grieved for the career I had been working so hard for. It was a depressing time. After so long of being in pain and struggling through class, I had grown to resent court reporting, so it was surprising to me that it felt like such a tremendous loss.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

# REPORTER OR BUST

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Eventually, I was lucky enough to find a doctor who took my claims seriously, despite my age. Upon further examination, he realized I had very severe carpal tunnel and approved me for surgery immediately. It was just two weeks before my 20th birthday. The only thing that gave me the strength to face surgery for the first time was the thought of being able to return to court reporting. It took a while to regain feeling in my fingers after surgery, but I immediately started imagining the steno outlines in my head to whatever words I heard. I imagined the muscles in my fingers moving as if I was typing. I was more determined than ever to get back.

Five months later I started school again. Having the dream of being a reporter taken away from me once, this second chance made me grateful every day I woke up and got to go to class. I had never written with such fervor. I began passing tests even quicker than before. I attribute this to my newly-found outlook and appreciation for my second chance. Seven months after starting again I was at the CSR.

As I look back, I am just so grateful I happened to be steered in the direction of court reporting. I can't imagine my life any other way, and I wouldn't want to. Court reporting has provided me the life I dreamt of, and it has introduced so many inspiring people into my life. I love my career, and I appreciate it even more because of what I went through to get here.



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# BREAKING DOWN THE MYSTERY OF REALTIME

TAWNY LABRUM

## iPads, Tablets and Smartphones, Oh My! – Realtime Technology in a World of Mobile Devices

It's a digital world out there, a world dominated by iPads, tablets and smartphones. Think about it. When was the last time you were at a restaurant or out shopping and you didn't see someone playing Candy Crush Saga or reading their favorite news site from their mobile device? Mobile technology has embedded itself deeply into our everyday lives and there are no signs of it letting up any time soon. In the legal industry, an industry known to be sticklers of tradition and objectors of change, mobile technology has revolutionized the way litigation professionals practice law.

Having a cool new tablet or smartphone is no longer just a fashion trend; they have become must-have tools used on a daily basis by almost all attorneys. From sending and receiving emails, scheduling appointments and reviewing documents, to onsite or offsite deposition and courtroom proceeding participation, mobile technology allows litigation professionals to be more flexible, more informed and more profitable.

With an increasingly high number of attorneys already using mobile devices and a younger, more technological savvy group entering the workforce, the demand for applications and services accessible from any smartphone or tablet is immense. Being equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to meet this demand will allow you to secure higher-paying jobs, impress new and existing clients, and build your credibility in this exceedingly competitive industry.

As a court reporter, you are already familiar with realtime reporting, i.e. instantly sending your transcribed text from a deposition or courtroom proceeding to an external computer monitor, where lawyers can then view and follow along in "realtime." In the last five years the technology used to deliver that text has changed drastically.

Today's realtime technology still allows you to deliver your realtime text to desktop and laptop computers,



but it also allows you to deliver that text to iPads, iPhones, Android smartphones or tablets and the Kindle Fire. Most local realtime systems provide a router, which allows the reporter to create their own Local Area Network (LAN). Onsite attendees can then access the reporter's router/LAN from their iPad, smartphone or tablet and review the realtime feed.

Your clients are no longer limited by the equipment or software used to view your realtime text; in fact, they don't even have to be in the same room, city, or even country as you. In addition to onsite realtime delivery, many lawyers are opting to attend legal proceedings remotely; this is known as streaming. Streaming is when the reporter sends their realtime feed through the web to offsite or remote attendees who can attend the deposition from their smartphone or tablet while they are out on the go, or from their computer at home or in their office.

Mobile devices have changed the world, affecting the way we work, where we work, and the services we offer our clients. There are more mobile devices currently in society than human beings, and approximately 91% of all lawyers are using smartphones or tablets, so the demand for mobility is greater now than ever. Be smart - educate yourself on the latest realtime technology out on the market and offer it to your clients. If you don't, someone else will.

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tawny Labrum is the Marketing Director for LiveDeposition, a provider of universal onsite and web-based local as well as remote realtime delivery and electronic exhibit solutions. For more information on LiveDeposition, please visit their website at [www.livedeposition.com](http://www.livedeposition.com) or give them a call at (888) 337-6411.



# POP QUIZ



## ERIKA SJOQUIST

CSR, RPR, CRR, CalDRA District 8 Director

### How long have you been reporting?

Since 1992.

### Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Kirkland, Washington.

### If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

My grandmother's homemade vegetable beef soup.

### Who is your celebrity crush?

I have several... but the top three are in this order; Clark Gable, Sean Connery and Shemar Moore.

### What do you like to do when you're not reporting?

My absolute favorite place to be is at my grandmother's house. She lives in Sequim, WA, a small town that lies within the banana belt of the Cascades. Her home sits above Hummingbird Hill and is incredibly beautiful, especially in the late spring and summer when everything is bloom and the fruit and vegetables are ready to be picked. It's my home away from home where I can just be and relax and eat all homegrown and fresh-caught food, visit with the woman I love the most, and fall asleep to the symphony of frogs croaking outside. It's my zen place. I also love to travel to tropical places with white sand beaches, lay out, and enjoy the sun and the ocean's waves. And if travel is not on the agenda at that moment, I like to spend time in my yard.

### What is the most exotic place you have ever taken a deposition?

I wouldn't call it exotic, but definitely not local. I've taken depositions in Taipei, Seoul, and Hong Kong. In Taipei, I was there long enough where I was able to venture out and tour the museums and gardens.

### What is your secret talent?

I'm really good at twerking... NOT! Hahahah!

### What advice would you give to a struggling court reporting student?

To coin a phrase of my favorite fish, Dory, "Just keep swimming, just keep swimming. What do we do? We swim, swim, swim." Listen, there were plenty of times I thought the next speed was absolutely unattainable. I remember spending more than 6 months in the 180s and over a year in the 200 class. Oy! Don't quit. You'll get there. What I used to do is listen to 200 audio recordings when in the 180 class and 225 audio recordings while in the 200 class. And then, just to break things up and to give yourself a lift mentally, call up a working reporter and ask to tag along at a depo or a court

hearing. You'll be excited and motivated to continue on your path.

### Who do you turn to when you're in need of inspiration?

My inspiration comes from going to the conventions and hearing people speak about the profession. Mike Miller, a director of NCRA, spoke at DRA's convention in February. He was great.

### What's your Starbucks order?

Starbucks... Grande Oprah Chai nonfat

### Do you have any pets?

Of course I do. My darling Scarlett. She's our 8-year-old Boxer. At 65 pounds, she still thinks she's a lap dog. Her favorite thing to do is run up on unsuspecting golfers and then bark really loud. Golf balls and clubs are flying in all directions. Pretty funny. The golfers are terrified until the find out all she really wants from them is for them to throw her a golf ball.

### What is your favorite thing about your job?

My favorite thing about my job is I learn something new every day and it's never monotonous. One day, I'm working in court; another in depo; another maybe in another country, or maybe my job this time is at the Academy Awards or the SAG Awards.

### What's your cocktail order?

Ketel One Dirty Martini w/ Blue Cheese Stuffed Olives

### What is your favorite brief that always saves the day?

TK\*EBG – declaration... Although, I recently bought Ed Varallo's Ed's Steno Pro, which I believe is the Holy Grail for the court reporter. So after I get myself a little more familiar with Ed's ways, which are amazing, I will have more favorite briefs.

### What is the best reporting-related technology investment you have made thus far?

Definitely, without a doubt, the wifi realtime capability. Yes, it's expensive to have every year, but I get more jobs because I will write RT and provide iPads to the attorneys for their use.

### If you couldn't be a court reporter anymore, what career would you choose?

I would love to be a judge. What do you think? It could happen. LOL!

### What is your favorite guilty pleasure?

Botox... enough said.

# POP QUIZ



## TRICIA ROSATE

CSR, RDR, CRR, CCRR, CLR,  
CalDRA District 7 Director

**How long have you been reporting?**

22 years

**Where did you grow up?**

San Fernando Valley, California

**Who is your celebrity crush?**

Dylan McDermott.

**What do you like to do when you're not reporting?**

I love to ride my bicycle at the beach, cook, travel, spend time with my sweet family, and indulge in reality TV.

**What advice would you give to a struggling court reporting student?**

Shorten your writing and push your speeds. I practice very challenging material, stop to examine my notes, incorporate briefs if possible, and I repeat the take until I master it. Accuracy is essential, but to become a faster writer, practice outside of your comfort zone. If it doesn't make you want to kick your machine over at some point, the material is too slow to build speed, in my opinion.

If a stroke, a brief, or a finger combination doesn't feel natural, change it.

Use your briefs. There's no award for the reporter who writes using the most strokes.

Try having a drink before you practice!

**Who do you turn to when you're in need of inspiration?**

My husband, the most optimistic person I know.

**What's your Starbucks order?**

Venti half-caf skinny vanilla latte, extra hot, light whip.

**What is the best reporting-related technology investment you have made thus far?**

My iPads. I am offered interesting assignments with excellent earning potential.

And, of course, my Dymo. It saves me an enormous amount of time, and my exhibit labels are clean and professional.

**What is your favorite guilty pleasure?**

The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills.

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