

Student Newsletter

March 2014

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DEPOSITION
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION
OF CALIFORNIA



A Change of Heart

By: Lisa Spencer



Two short weeks before moving away to pursue a degree in Journalism, I had a change of heart. The deposit for my dorm room was in, as well as a plethora of intern hours that I had worked hard to obtain from news outlets in the area. Previously being the editor of my community college newspaper, I felt confident in my abilities. My future career opportunities? That was another story. Things were moving rapidly and I dreaded every minute of it. To say the least, I had cold feet, and they weren't warmed by the fact that I had been researching court reporting late at night leading up to the big move. Oops.

I had always kept court reporting on my not-so-subconscious list of potential fields to enter into. The curiosity was always there, but it was the poor timing that is my specialty that led me to investigate further and finally make the decision to pursue this career instead. I didn't know what I was getting into.

I didn't do a very good job with the investigation process. Long story shorthand: EU KHOEZ T- WROBPBG SKAOL.

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DRA_TWEETS



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The online program I chose stretched theory into a year-long process that was nonnegotiable. Though I was a committed student of the virtual classroom and exceeded the hours of practice needed a week, I couldn't excel to my full potential. But instead of looking into other online programs, I got complacent. I got a job. Job asks for more working hours, unchallenged student says yes. Who would have guessed I would lose track for an entire year. But it all turned around eventually. I made the truly great decision to transfer to West Valley College in Saratoga. Thankfully, I hadn't lost speed in that year. But still, I felt like a measly 100 wpm student who had lost all inspiration for steno. Thankfully, I moved quickly in speed classes. Circa one year later, I was a 200 wpm student.

So what now? Should I share practice tips you've heard many-a-time from successful students before me? That's old news. No one likes a plagiarizer. My advice: Don't let yourself think or talk about practice more than you actually sit down and do. Instead, should I share dates that I've passed and failed tests? dates that I started and finished school? That way you may choose to compare our journeys and either feel accomplished for a minute or defeated for a day? That's no fun.

The only thing I really want to share with you, my friends, are a few positive words on how to put to sleep the mind games we sometimes allow into our psyche. A healthy mindset is essential for court reporting. I encourage you to remember these ideas whenever you doubt yourself.

1. Forgive yourself frequently

We have all made mistakes in our journey to today. Although you may be quick to blame yourself when things go haywire, most often feelings of regret are given the wrong reaction. Stop punishing yourself with the past. Whenever you dwell on regrets that start with, "I should have" tell yourself this instead: "I didn't have the tools to know better."

As much as you can blame yourself, there are some things you have no control over. Don't take the burden. There are many potential setbacks in school: Life events such as family needs, your availability for practice, time-management skills, the school you are able to attend, money problems, theory issues. Please stop yourself from giving the past any more energy. For the things you had control over, you simply didn't have the tools to know better. Move on. Those life events were out of your hands, or you didn't know what your fingers were capable of yet. Be proud that you're learning something new every day. Better late than never!

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2. Discipline is freedom.

When I first started on the machine, my enthusiasm was strong. Sometimes I would have to make myself take a break. Ain't that a feeling! I remember going over to a friend's house one night after an all-day practice session, and immediately thinking, 'I could be practicing right now' and feeling proud that I had accomplished so much. By no means has my enthusiasm for practice sustained itself on a daily basis; however, I did learn one valuable lesson during those months. When you are doing well in your scholastic efforts you have more energy and enthusiasm for the rest of life. Why? Because you don't feel guilty for the reward when you practice first. You will feel like you get double the reward, I promise!

3. It's your journey: no clones allowed.

Comparing yourself to others is easy to do, but try to think of your peers as inspiration rather than competition. Track and Field's most notorious barrier: the 4-minute mile. For years, athletes tried and failed to run a mile in less than four minutes. By the 1950's people actually made it out to be physically impossible. However, In 1954, Roger Bannister beat the world record and accomplished what he set out to do. Guess what happened next? His world record did not stand long. In fact, his record was beat after just two months! When something is accomplished by one individual, it becomes possible for all to obtain it. Be thankful for those who excel, for we know how far we can go, if not further. We're not being trained in a field they only need one of, so let go of competition like it means something. We all have the opportunity to thrive. It's easier to be joyful for others than it is to be pensive. You can be fast because others have proved it possible. Tomorrow is for those who want it. Run like you mean it.

4. Network: The road to connections doesn't end at LinkedIn or Facebook. Anyone can 'like' a status, it's not going to land you a job. Focus on your weaknesses. There's a misconception that if you're a quiet individual you will somehow succeed in this field. You can be plenty quiet while editing, but you have to be personable otherwise. Offering a confident handshake, remembering people's names, possessing good manners, being comfortable talking to strangers, frequently asking questions – all of these attributes can be strengthened in your day-to-day interactions. Moreover, these skills will help you be memorable in the workforce. Attend conventions. Become a member of all the great associations, like DRA. Get a mentor. They will help you help yourself!

5. Don't create stressful expectations: one day at a time.

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I'd like you to add the word "day-nightmaring" to your dictionary. Okay, okay, it's not a word yet. But who knows, maybe I'm not the only one afflicted with the habit. What it entails is frequently allowing yourself to day dream about the future, but instead of thinking positively, you expect Armageddon out of every situation, especially tests. This is a problem for me because 100% of the time things are not as stressful as I expected. Try to not concentrate on future scenarios. They will come and go and you will survive. If anything, stress the importance of being present. School and tests won't last forever. Eureka!

I am a mock away from state certification. Sometimes I feel closer to Mars than I do to the CSR. Sometimes I'm even scared of success. Yes, I play mind games. But today I have a better understanding of how to defeat them.

Although my journey to court reporter has been rocky, I'm still glad to be reaching for this career. In the end, journalism and court reporting are both careers that appreciate words. I chose the field that gave up my own words. But then again, here I am, fortunate to be writing you. Thank you for reading. Now tame those thoughts and focus on your potential!

[For the Record Trailer #1 - Court Reporting Documentary - YouTube](#)



Trailer #1 - Six amazing court reporters go for the title of World's Fastest Court Reporter, as presented by Guinness, and highlight the career of court reporting.

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CR Students are not alone

By Mikey McMorran, CSR No. 13735

When I think back to the things that got me through court reporting school, the one thing that really stands out to me is the support system that I was blessed with as a student.

Most of us have dealt with friends and/or family who did not understand our schooling and how a 94% grade on a test wasn't considered a passing test. I was by no means an exception to that rule.

That all changed the first time I went to a DRA seminar in 2010. The experience was a life-changing one. I had no idea what the reporting world was like outside of dictation, steno, and typing up tests prior to this event. I had no idea that there were so many talented, professional, motivational, and amazing individuals who seemingly picked up right where they left off conversation-wise from the last event while at the same time welcoming those new reporters and students to their inner circle.

From that moment on, I made it a point to attend every DRA event I could. In doing so, a strange thing began to happen: The more and more events I attended, the more and more familiar faces I began seeing at each event in addition to coming away from each event meeting new faces who would go on to become familiar faces at the next event.

Perhaps the greatest thing to come from networking with more and more reporters every time I attended one of these events, whether as a student or as a reporter, was the knowledge and the motivation that came from conversing with each one. I always found myself passing tests on the heels of attending a CR-related function, and so it became my goal of this article to reach out to some of your DRA 2014-15 Board of Director nominees and ask them for a few words of wisdom that they would impart upon the court reporting student community.



Students, I promise you, hard work pays off. Continue to put forth hard work and you will be rewarded with an amazing career!

Monyeen L. Black

CSR 10574, CCRR, CLR

District 8 Representative

Each and every one of you have the ability to become a certified shorthand reporter. Never give up on your dreams. Be patient, work hard and the rewards will come. Best wishes!

Jodi Monroe

RPR, CLR, Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 13010

District 5 Representative

CR school is like art school. Art students aren't expected to be painting Picassos at the end of two years, so stop beating yourself up for not being at 225. The skill will come. It just happens at different times for all of us.

Jessie R. Waack

RDR, CRR, CSR #13102

DRA Secretary

Hello, CR students!

Being a fairly new reporter myself, I remember vividly what it was like to struggle through court reporting school. I know that school sometimes feels like an interminable series of obstacles, but with your continued hard work and dedication, your CSR license will be in your hands before you know it. Four years ago, I was an online student in my 180s, and today I have a thriving career and a spot on the board of directors of DRA. The best job in the world is out there waiting for you... so come and get it!

Cheryl M. Haab

CSR No. 13600, RPR, CLR

District 4 Representative



One thing we can all relate to is everyone asking us: "How much longer are you in school for?" Or my favorite: "You're still in school?" It's hard enough that we struggle with this dialogue in our own minds, let alone the outside world. My advice would be to stay focused on the end result when it gets tough, but also allow yourself a day off when you just need it. School is the toughest part. Focus so you can start getting paid for a talent that not everyone can do. It's well worth it.

Vanessa Caparas

CSR No. 12231, RPR

District 7 Representative

Two things I love about being a Court Reporter

1. My steno machine - such a mystery to attorneys.
2. Being a fly on the wall - observing and learning.

I have been reporting since 1982. Still love it.

Diane Freeman

CSR No. 5864, RPR

District 1 Representative

There was a time that I didn't know if I wanted to finish court reporting school. I struggled with the notion that this field was an outdated, boring field. But when I persevered and finally graduated and passed the CSR, I realized that this is an amazing career that provides opportunities for learning something new every day, for making a great living for one's family, for being an integral part of the legal process, and for being at the very center of advanced technology that is completely useless without me behind the machine. If I could go back and change anything, I'd have gone to school more often and graduated sooner!

Rich Alossi

CSR No. 13497, RPR, CCRR, CLR, RSA

DRA Vice President



I would encourage all students to practice, practice, practice. I realize you hear these words often from your teachers, but make it a priority. Force yourself to sit down in front of your machine, before you put a load of laundry in, before you empty the dishwasher, before you vacuum or change the sheets, because once you sit down with your machine, you will be more inclined to take that 30 minutes and practice. This is the ONLY way you will pass the test! Don't give up hope, don't get discouraged, there will be good days and bad days, but practice, practice, practice and you will succeed!

Lisa McMillan

CSR No. 10383

District 2 Representative

Your Mentor is Waiting!

The Deposition Reporters Association of California is committed to ensuring that the shorthand reporting profession remains a viable and integral part of the legal system. To this end, we have designed a mentor program that melds the enthusiasm of new reporters and students with the maturity of the more seasoned reporter. Reporters (must be a student at or above 160-level speed or a new reporter within the first year of reporting and a member in good standing with DRA) and students will be matched up with experienced reporters in the state of California in order to provide them with relevant guidance, support and encouragement during the beginning stages of their new careers.

Do you need some extra help, personal attention, or have questions regarding reporting? If so, then sign up for our mentoring program and receive guidance or help from a professional working court reporter. Working reporters understand what difficulties you face as students and new reporters. We are willing to volunteer our time to get to know you, praise you for your achievements and lend encouragement for those tough times when you take the CSR, attend your first deposition, or are making the switch from being an official to freelance reporter.

If you are a current student at the 160-speed level and above or any reporter that wishes to be mentored, and you are interested in participating, please go to <http://www.caldra.org/get-mentored>



DRA Board of Directors 2014-2015 SLATE OF NOMINEES

POSITION NOMINEE

President

Kristi Johnson

CSR No. 12585, CCRR, CLR, Reporter since 2002, started my agency, Foothill Court Reporters, in 2011

Kristi's statement: It has been a privilege to serve on DRA's Board of Directors for the past two years and I am honored to be considered for the presidency this upcoming year. It has been a wonderful experience working with this group of volunteer board members who are committed to upholding the integrity of this great profession. I look forward to being the voice of DRA's devoted members as we continue our efforts to promote the values and ethics of our profession. To be entrusted with the leadership of this amazing organization would be a privilege and I will work hard to continue the path and goals of all those who have served before me.

Vice President

Rich Alossi

CSR No. 13497, RPR, CCRR, Freelance deposition reporter

Rich's statement: Serving on the Board of the Deposition Reporters Association has been the greatest honor of my career. This association and its membership are the ones who step up to meet the challenges facing the reporting profession today. I will continue the work we've done so far to encourage advanced reporter training, educate our elected officials on the value of steno in the legal profession, and to ensure a level playing field that benefits all working reporters.

Secretary

Jessica Waack

CSR No. 13102, RDR, CRR

Jessica's statement: I am excited to serve on the DRA board. For the past six years, I have served on the Wisconsin Court Reporters Association board, where I learned a lot regarding our profession. I look forward to taking the experiences I have gained from being the Association Convention Coordinator in addition to my board duties and bringing them to the DRA. In addition, I am brand new to California, and I would really enjoy getting to know my peers in wine country!



DRA Board of Directors 2014-2015 SLATE OF NOMINEES

POSITION NOMINEE

REPRESENTS COUNTIES OF

**District 1 Director
Diane Freeman**

CSR No. 5884, RPR

Diane's statement: I have lived in Novato for 17 years. I received my CSR license in July of 1982. I received my RPR certificate in November of 1996. I am currently an owner of Freeman Reporting and a freelance reporter..

I have been a member of DRA since its inception and regularly attend its conferences and seminars. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve on the DRA board representing District 1. My career as a freelance reporter and now a firm owner has been very rewarding. I care about the future of court reporting and wish to give back. I welcome the opportunity to serve the board, the members, and continue to contribute to our great profession.

**Alameda
Contra Costa
Mendocino
Napa
Solano
Sonoma**

**District 2 Director
Lisa McMillan**

CSR No. 10383

Lisa's statement: My name is Lisa McMillan. This January will be my 20th year of court reporting. After being laid off from the courts in 2010, I bought a firm in Santa Cruz, and shortly thereafter, I joined DRA at the request of my friend Robin Riviello. Since becoming a member, I am very grateful for the hard work DRA has done to continue to educate us with very informative seminars, and to help us fight to preserve our jobs in this very important and integral part of our legal system. I look forward to giving back to a profession that has given me so much.

**Monterey
San Benito
San Francisco
San Mateo
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz**



DRA Board of Directors 2014-2015 SLATE OF NOMINEES

POSITION NOMINEE

REPRESENTS COUNTIES OF

District 3 Director

OPEN

Alpine, Amador,
Butte, Calaveras, Colusa,
Del Norte, El Dorado,
Glenn, Humboldt, Lake,
Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer,
Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin,
Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou,
Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama,
Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo and
Yuba

**District 4 Director
Cheryl Haab**

CSR No. 13600, RPR, Freelance deposition reporter

Los Angeles

Cheryl's statement: After completing my second of two successful terms on DRA's Board of Directors, I was pleased to learn that I had been nominated to a third term, this time to serve as your District 4 Los Angeles County director. It has been such a pleasure this past year acting as a liaison between the board and the members of District 8, and I look forward to continuing that tradition as I step into my new role in 2014. As a newer reporter, I truly appreciate the trust that has been placed in me to fulfill such a great responsibility, and I hope to continue learning and growing in my profession as I surround myself with the best in the field. I am confident that 2014 will bring many great things for DRA and the reporting profession as a whole.

**District 5 Director
Jodi Monroe**

CSR No. 13010, RPR, CLR

Orange

Jodi's statement: I am honored to be considered for the position of District 5 Representative. As a current freelance reporter and teacher, I look forward to working with DRA's devoted group of volunteers in continuing its efforts to fight for our profession. As your District 5 Representative I will work hard for you to promote the values and ethics that we, as reporters, all cherish. Thank you for considering me.



DRA Board of Directors 2014-2015 SLATE OF NOMINEES

POSITION NOMINEE

REPRESENTS COUNTIES OF

**District 6 Director
Linda Nelson**

CSR No. 11795

**San Bernardino
and Riverside**

Linda's statement: *It has been a great privilege to serve on the Board of Directors for DRA as the District 6 Representative these past two years. DRA has long strived to preserve, enhance and ensure the integrity of stenographic reporting. Great things are already in the works for 2014 and I'm looking forward to being an integral part in developing and initiating those plans and making DRA the number one source to turn to for working reporters everywhere. Thank you so much for this opportunity.*

**District 7 Director
Vanessa Caparas**

CSR No. 12231

**San Diego
and Imperial**

Vanessa's statement: *I'll never forget having my taxes done my first year as a court reporter. The CPA said, "Start thinking about what else you'd like to do because most likely you'll quit after five years. I see it all the time." Well, as I go into my 15th year reporting, I can honestly say it's still a challenge but also an adventure. I love this career, and I've really enjoyed working with the other directors and members of DRA these past two years. I'd like to continue to serve as your District 7 representative and really work towards involving San Diego and Imperial Valley more. Thank you.*

**District 8 Director
Monyeen Black**

CSR No. 10574, CCRR, CLR

**Fresno, Inyo, Kern,
Kings, Madera,
Mariposa, Merced,
Mono, San Luis
Obispo, Santa Barbara**

Monyeen's statement: *I am once again honored to continue on the Board of Deposition Reporters Association of California for another term. It has been a privilege to hold the position as Vice President (2012-2013), District 8 Representative (2011-2012) and Secretary (2010-2011). To be back in District 8, I appreciate the opportunity to be your representative once again. I look forward to working with our new Board and DRA's continued growth and new endeavors on behalf of our dedicated members.*



Deposition Reporters Association of California
Student/First Year CSR Membership Application or to join online, [click here](#)

Mail Application to:

DRA, 112 Harvard Street, #34, Claremont, CA 91711

Fax to: 916.487.7105 E-mail to: memberservices@caldra.org

Name _____ CSR # _____
Firm/School _____ NCRA Member # _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

E-mail _____ Website _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Office Phone _____ Fax _____

Referred by _____ **OR** Facebook

Direct Mailing Internet search

Have you ever been a member of DRA before? Yes No

**** I certify that the contents of this application are accurate and complete and will advise the association of significant or material changes to the membership information. I agree to abide by the DRA Bylaws, the written policies of the association, and in the decisions of duly constituted DRA Committees. I agree that my membership may be terminated immediately if this application contains false or misleading statements.**

Initial

Student and first year CSRs \$ 30

Check # _____ enclosed (payable to DRA) in the amount of \$ _____

Charge \$ _____ to my: VISA M/C Discover AMEX

Sign me up for automatic Renewal

Account Number _____ Expiration Date ____/____/____

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CC Billing Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
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*(Membership is for one year from the date dues are received. A portion of your dues will be used for lobbying activities as defined by the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993. For this year's dues it is estimated that the percentage used for such purposes will be 29%. This portion of your dues is not deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense. **NOTE: Checks returned from the bank for any reason will be assessed a \$25 service fee.**)*

