

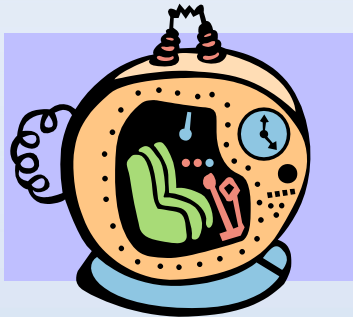
August 2013

Student Newsletter

Michael G. McMorran, CSR 13735, Editor
studentnewslettereditor@caldra.org

DEPOSITION
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION
OF CALIFORNIA

GOING BACK IN TIME



By Mikey McMorran, CSR 13735

When I was a student, one of my biggest fears was always how would I transition from student to reporter. Whenever I would talk to working reporters, I would simply be blown away by how much professional knowledge they exhibited as it related to court reporting, and it only caused me to be even more intimidated about how I would be able to deliver the same quality of service to my clients as a brand-new reporter fresh out of school.

After being in this field for about nine months now, I've discovered the answer to one of the great mysteries of court reporting, which is no matter how many hours you attend in school or how well you do in all of your academic classes, there is going to be a steep learning curve as a new reporter no matter what.

However, with that being said, if I was to go back in time and tell Mikey the student one thing about his future as a court reporter, I would tell him that the steep learning curve isn't something to fear but rather something to embrace as there are those who have

been reporting for 20 years who still find themselves learning new things about this profession on a daily basis.

As new reporters, we all have something that we wish we could go back in time and tell the student equivalent of us, so I thought it would be interesting to poll several first-year reporters and find out what they would tell the student version of themselves if they could go back a year or two and talk to their student counterparts.

"Become familiar with all the common proper nouns in the area that you will be working (main highways, counties, stores, and cities) and define them so that they will translate properly. It will boost your confidence and save you time once you start working." Melody Among, RPR

"I would have to go with practice (which I never really did outside of school) and learn briefs for phrases." Stephanie Poster, CSR 13775

"Network!!" Kylie Evans, CSR 13756

"If I could go back and tell my student self something, I would tell her that she needs to start briefing RIGHT after theory. I didn't start briefing until 170 and I feel it could have helped my progression during school go a lot faster. I would
(cont'd on Page 2)

DRA 2013-2014 Board of Directors

President – Vicki Saber - president@caldra.org

Vice President - Monyeen Black - vicepresident@caldra.org

Secretary - Kimberly Durso - secretary@caldra.org

District 1 – Lorrie L. Marchant – district1@caldra.org

Counties Represented: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma

District 2 - Robin Riviello – district2@caldra.org

Counties Represented: Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz

District 3 - Diana Sasseen – district3@caldra.org

Counties Represented: 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 - Rich Alossi – district4@caldra.org

County Represented: Los Angeles

District 5 - Kristi Johnson – district5@caldra.org

County Represented: Orange

District 6 - Linda Nelson – district6@caldra.org

Counties Represented: San Bernardino and Riverside

District 7 - Vanessa Caparas – district7@caldra.org

Counties Represented: San Diego and Imperial

District 8 – Cheryl Haab – district8@caldra.org

Counties Represented: Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura and all Professional Members residing in counties or states other than California or the USA.

GOING BACK IN TIME

(cont'd from Page 1)

also tell myself to stop procrastinating and practice, practice, practice because it will pay off in the end." Jennifer Degenhardt, CSR 13740

"If I could go back and tell myself to do something differently in school, it would be to get a mentor. As a new reporter, I am learning something new on almost every job I take. I think that if I had joined a mentorship program or put more effort into my internship hours, it would have better prepared me to understand the deposition process. When students are sitting in on depositions or court, I would encourage them to ask lots of questions, because there is so much to learn!" Danielle Garafola, CSR 13765

"If I could go back in time and tell student Nina one thing to do differently, I would tell her, 'Transcribe more!' and 'Set up a place at home to transcribe at home to get you used to the transcribing you're going to have to do when you start working.' At school I was focused on writing a lot and transcribing a little. Now that I'm working, I write a little and

transcribe a lot. The total opposite! Transcribing at home is one of the biggest things I've had to get used to. It's so easy to get distracted by things like cleaning, laundry, TV....FACEBOOK! Ha ha. I think if I had practiced transcribing at home while I was at school, it might have made it a bit easier to get used to transition into working at home."

Nina Hansen, CSR 13781

"I would definitely sit out on a variety of different cases above the hours requested. Focus on building a dictionary with specialties like patent law, doctor terms, workers' comp terminology. Practice more realtime and hooking up to others to make it natural. I would work at an agency and learn about how a transcript comes together. Learn about types of proceedings that happen in a deposition setting. I would talk to agencies and ask how they like their transcripts formatted, get samples, and play around on my own. I would practice writing from 160 and jumping to 250 instantly."

Shirley Lynn, CSR No. 13784

(cont'd on Page 3)



GOING BACK IN TIME

(cont'd from Page 2)

"If I were to go back in time and tell myself to do one thing differently in school in preparation for a career as a court reporter, I could tell myself to practice more, build my dictionary more, intern more, and any number of other things. But in reality I wouldn't change any of that. Everything I did in school allowed me to complete school in a very short period of time. Instead, I would prepare to ask more questions once I started working.



I knew I had a lot to learn, but I didn't realize how much. If I were to go back, I would tell myself to be prepared to ask questions upon questions upon questions. You can prepare as much as you want in school, but it is almost guaranteed that you will have a million questions about everything from how to get into the courthouse, how to fill out forms, how to bind a transcript, how to bill transcripts, and everything else. These are all things that I could not have known or learned in school.

The only way to learn certain things is to ask questions. Don't ever be afraid to ask questions, and don't feel silly or dumb about any question. I have asked my fair share of ridiculous questions, and every reporter has been ready and willing to help.

Court reporting is a profession that is heavily dependent on word of mouth. Many things cannot be written down; instead, you must actually talk to someone. So to all students and everyone in court reporting, don't ever be afraid to ask questions. Learn as much as you can and ask if you don't know."

Lindsey Sill, CSR 13764

"If I could go back and tell myself one thing to do differently in court reporting school, it would be to sit out with working reporters way beyond the time required by my school for graduation. There are many things about this career that schools simply cannot teach, and the only way to learn is through experience. The more you know before you are the one solely responsible for the record, the better off you will be when you do start working." Rebecca Staines, CSR 13737 (cont'd on Page 4)

THANK YOU TO OUR DRA CORPORATE SPONSORS!



GOING BACK IN TIME

(cont'd from Page 3)

"As much as we try to strike the perfect balance in school of building our speed and maintaining our accuracy, the one thing that I would like to tell Angela the student to have done differently is to try to read her notes more. This could have ranged from reading class notes between classes instead of just forgetting about them to reading homework dictation notes to just practicing at higher speeds and looking at what kind of writing is produced in high speed situations.

Knowing what your notes look like and knowing what habits you have can go a long way in helping you improve your writing and improve your readback. I've had situations at jobs where my realtime translation is not completely clean which leaves me needing to rely on my notes to figure out what was said. I am working on perfecting my readback skills every day and while this is an area that I did not worry about too much in school, it can be a major part of the job!

It is important to be able to piece together your notes during read back. For me, this includes reading my notes even when they are messy while still maintaining an assertive readback voice without any inflection in my tone. This is because the way you do readback can go a long way in whether or not attorneys trust that you can get the record down even when you are not getting things perfectly. It may be a cliché to say fake it 'til you make it, but that's essentially what I'm trying to do every day until I feel comfortable reading back.

Court reporting is not just about the skill of taking down the spoken word and guarding the record. It is also in some ways a customer service job where you want to give the client as professional an experience as you can. This most assuredly will include read back and that is why I would advise Student Angela to get familiar with her writing through continued assessment of her notes and continued practice of read back in an assertive and calm manner." - Angela Pourtabib, CSR No. 13714



I think I can safely speak for all of the new reporters who contributed to this piece that while it may be impossible to do everything listed above on top of everything else that can come with being a full-time CR student, if you, as a student, find yourself severely lacking in one specific thing that was discussed above and you focused just on improving that aspect of your scholastic career between now and the time that you become a working reporter, you will find yourself being all the better for it as a brand new reporter. *Michael G. McMorran, CSR 13735*

California Court Reporting Students

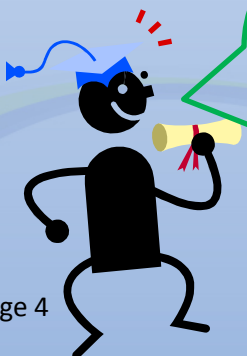
Get ready for the DRA 2014 Scholarship!

Two lucky winners will receive

\$1000 scholarships

Join our [past winners](#) by applying soon!

(Applications will be accepted starting September 1, 2013)



Save the Date! February 21-23, 2014

DRA's 18th Annual Convention - Palm Springs



The [Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort & Spa](#) is a Palm Springs resort and hotel where the picturesque mountain views and secluded location create the perfect escape. This Palm Springs hotel is the perfect place to unwind. Enjoy the best Palm Springs Golf on one of three championship courses, lounge at any of our three pools, splash down our 60-foot waterslide or enjoy a delectable meal at one of our Palm Springs restaurant options, all without ever having to leave land. Catch up with friends poolside or make new business connections over a round of golf or set of tennis. Just looking to relax? A soothing sanctuary awaits those looking for a rejuvenating desert retreat.

Why DRA's conventions?

Earn the most CEUs of any California convention and have the time of your life doing it. DRA's conventions are peppered with enlightening and motivating, top-notch seminars led by the leading professionals in your industry, all designed to hone your professional skillset. Own or manage a firm? DRA's firm owner track is loaded with informative sessions tailored to help you grow and manage a more profitable business. Our student attendees will have access to a dedicated block of uplifting and educational seminars, including a mock CSR test, all geared to help you accomplish your goals. Whatever you need, whoever you are, we have something for everyone, all in the outstanding setting of Palm Springs.

So don't miss it! February 21-23, 2014



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

DRA - WE GET YOU BECAUSE WE ARE YOU!

Welcome Home. Welcome to DRA!



The Value of a Mentor

When students ask me what was the biggest contributing factor that got me through court reporting school, the first thing that always comes to mind is becoming a member of DRA. With that being said, I would have never learned of DRA if I had not been assigned a mentor through the NCRA Virtual Mentor Program. Learning about DRA was only one of the many benefits that I found from having such a wonderful mentor, Rebecca Cleaves, past DRA District 7 representative, as I progressed through court reporting school.

When I was nearing exit speeds, Rebecca asked me to work as a production associate in her firm, an experience that would become so pivotal to some of the early success that I've enjoyed as a new court reporter, as it taught me how hard the production team of every court reporting firm works and how important it is to be on the same page with them once you are a reporter as it ultimately makes everyone's, the reporter's and the firm's, life easier.

Whenever I needed a sounding board in school, Rebecca was there for me and she taught me the value in not wasting too much time feeling sorry for myself or giving myself a pity party when I didn't pass a test, but rather to just have a short-term memory and move on.

After I received my first paycheck as a California Certified Shorthand Reporter, I had the first dollar of that check framed with a small inscription of gratitude etched in as a thank-you gift to the person who I attributed so much of my success to, my mentor.

For every student and new reporter reading this article, if you do not have a mentor, I highly, highly encourage you to sign up for DRA's Mentee Program. When

you really think about it, what do you have to lose versus what do you have to gain? The bottom floor of it is you lose nothing by trying it. The ceiling of it is it can make the difference between dropping out of court reporting school and graduating from it, as was the case with me.

In the event that you need further convincing of the value of a mentor, I've asked two students nearing the end of their court reporting school journey and ready to embark on their careers in court reporting what kind of an impact having a mentor has had on their scholastic careers.

Mikey McMorran, CSR 13735



My name is Shannon Riddell, and I just graduated from South Coast College of Court Reporting. The whole journey through school has been an experience, and when we were asked to go in front of the rest of our classmates to reflect on our time at school and to give advice, I had one major piece of advice that I wanted to pass on to my friends and colleagues: GET A MENTOR. A lot of students don't know where to start with getting hooked up with a mentor. The Deposition Reporters Association (DRA) is the best place to start!

I went to a student DRA barbeque a few years back and the Grand Prize in the raffle drawing was Eclipse software, which was mind-blowing to me at the time. I was the most fortunate person that day to have won that grand prize of Eclipse software, but the real "win" of that event was my being hooked up with my mentor and my Court Reporting Steno Mama, Anastasia Swinkles. She has been my mentor ever since, and I could not have graduated without her help

(cont'd on Page 8)



The Value of a Mentor

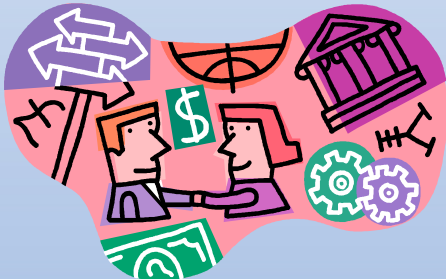
(cont'd from Page 6)

and support. I had a student machine for years, and Anastasia hooked me up with a reporter who was selling her Passport steno machine. As soon as I got this professional machine, I started turning in 200 wpm tests, and I was at a goal speed of 180.

I also have Anastasia to thank for involving me in DRA Events. She sponsored my going to this year's DRA Convention in Newport Beach, which was a great experience. A mentor is there to answer the questions that you don't know who else to ask; they are there to be your biggest supporter and your friend when no one else really understands what you're going through. I have no doubt that without Anastasia in my life, I wouldn't have graduated. I know that each mentor has our success in mind, and we need all the help we can get during school. Your family and friends can always be there to support you and hear you out, but they aren't involved in our profession, and they simply won't know the answers to the questions we'll have.

GET A MENTOR! Be a mentor! God bless DRA for hooking students up with these amazing veteran reporters. They're the difference between success and... well... more school!

Shannon Riddell
CSR No. Coming Soon



I have had the most amazing and life-changing experiences because I have the greatest mentor ever. I found my mentor later in school and can only imagine how great it would have been to have an official

and active mentor earlier in my schooling.

Mentors are sometimes the only people that truly understand what is going on and can commiserate or at least assure you that you are not crazy when you feel like you are. Court reporting school is an emotional roller coaster, and my mentor helps keep me sane. My mentor is exceptional in that she is engaged and invested in my success so much so that besides just giving me suggestions for briefs, she actually sends me a weekly list of vocabulary and odd words she comes across in her work which has helped me build my dictionary.

My mentor has talked me down from the ledge of frustration more times than I can count. She opened up doors for networking which led to actual working. She gave me the confidence and support to actually start scoping and proofing. She was my first client. She is always there to ask a quick question. She helped me get comfortable in my new software when I switched. She has pushed and prodded me to get out there and be proud of what I have accomplished.

My mentor has introduced me to people that have stood on stages and accepted court reporting awards and speed championships -- people I stood in awe of are now my friends and support me. My mentor has become a very close friend and is my constant sounding board. I do not know where I would be without her, nor if I would have had the confidence to do some of the things I have done.

She has provided me with limitless opportunities to better myself and opportunities that will make the transition from court reporting student to working reporter so much easier and less scary.

Thank you, Tori Pittman, for changing my life's trajectory in the most wonderful way.

Aimee Edwards-Altadonna
2013 DRA Scholarship Winner



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>

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

Mail Application to:

DRA, 1900 Point West Way, Suite 222, Sacramento, CA 95815 888.867.2074

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 ____/____/____ 3-digit pin _____

Cardholder's Name _____ Signature _____

CC Billing Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
(If different from above)

(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 55%. 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.)



PENGAD DRA MEMBER DISCOUNT

10% off all Regularly Priced merchandise for DRA members!

Pengad is proud to support both your profession and your association. We are pleased to announce that we are continuing to work with the Deposition Reporters Association to make sure you, as a member, receive the best quality products and service at the best price. Effective January 1, 2013, members of the DRA are eligible for a 10% discount on all regularly priced merchandise purchased at Pengad. To take advantage of this offer, just call DRA member services for the DRA Member Only Coupon Code. The Member 10 Buying Program terms and conditions are as follows:

- 10% off merchandise only
- Minimum order is \$25.00
- Account must be in good credit standing
- Coupon may not be transferred or shared
- Coupon may not be applied to orders already invoiced
- Coupon may not be combined with other discounts, sales, or special offers
- Coupon may be used for multiple purchases
- Coupon effective January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013

The Deposition Reporters Association of California's Mission Statement

DRA strives to preserve and enhance the freelance stenographic reporting profession, ensure its integrity, and maintain its high standards and impartiality wherever stenographic services are required. DRA is committed to ensuring that the freelance stenographic reporting profession remains a viable and integral part of the legal system.

SAVE THE DATE !

DRA Board Meeting
Oakland 9/24/13
LAX 10/19/13

DRA 2014 Scholarships
Applications accepted
starting 9/1/13

DRA Fall Seminar
"The Business of Reporting"
Napa 9/28/13

DRA Student Picnic!
FUN FUN FUN
Cerritos 9/28/13

DRA Annual Convention
Palm Springs
2/21 to 2/23, 2014
Register for Student Track!!!



888.867.2074 | www.caldra.org

