

The Deposition Reporter

DEPOSITION
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION
OF CALIFORNIA

FALL 2023

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

STEPHANIE LESLIE, CSR #12893, RPR, CRR, GCRR,
REGAL COURT REPORTING PRESIDENT

Hello again, Steno Family:

What an incredible six months it has been leading this fantastic organization! We have been hard at work organizing and attending numerous career fairs to promote the "best career you've never heard of" as well as gearing up for the upcoming legislative season. We have also hosted a few key events for our members: a Voice Writing Seminar on Zoom, our annual Student Picnic, and several district social meet-ups. Any opportunity we reporters and students can find to get together with each other to network, commiserate and share tips, we love to take advantage of!

Have you heard about our new StenoSeekers committee? At the helm of this exciting new endeavor is our Immediate Past President Jamie Asbury, who has been acquiring a variety of resources from groups like NCRA and Project Steno, as well as creating a how-to guide from our own personal experiences of sharing court reporting at numerous career fairs and schools over the years. Our goal is to make the process of presenting our career as easy as possible in order to encourage each of you, our members, to step up to help in your local community.



THE NATION'S LARGEST TRADE
ASSOCIATION DEDICATED TO
THE FREELANCE
DEPOSITION REPORTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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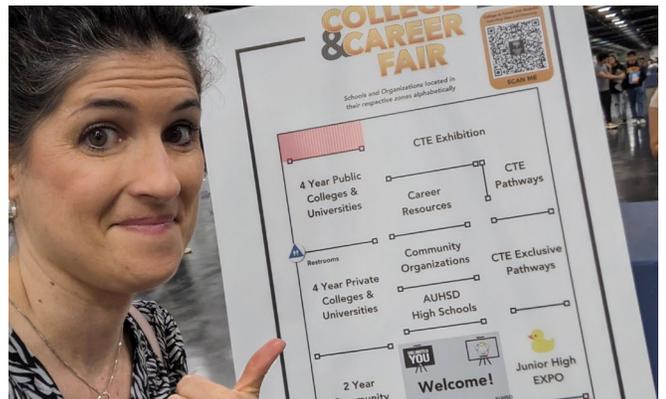
Recently, two CalDRA members filled a need we had in their area of Oxnard to share at the local school district. Neither of them had ever helped at a career fair before, but despite their uncertainty of the unknown, they were able to use our how-to guide and add their own creative flare to it and did a fantastic job! In fact, they are excited to do more of them in the future. We hope you will do the same. We would be happy to give you all the tools you need. It's easy!

We feel passionately that the solution to almost every challenge our industry is facing is to recruit more students into our schools. With your help, we are committed to investing consistent effort each year toward exposing as many high school students and their families as we can to our fabulous field, thereby creating a sustainable pipeline of future licensed stenographers to meet the demand now and for years to come (www.stenoseekers.com).

In addition to recruitment, last month we hosted an educational Voice Writing seminar on Zoom and had a great turnout. Our panel of three fantastic speakers in the voice writing community provided excellent perspectives, allowing our membership to get all their questions answered about this method of taking down a certified verbatim record that is new to California. Their enthusiasm and candor in sharing their personal stories and why they chose to be voice writers was very enlightening, as well as their illumination of the similarities and differences between machine and voice steno for those of us who were less familiar. We strongly believe that the introduction of voice writing in California is a wonderful solution to our need for more licensed CSRs, and we hope their words and demonstrations were enlightening to all who were able to attend. If you have any additional questions or concerns about it, I welcome your feedback: (president@caldra.org).

As we enter the holiday season, we wish you and your loved ones blessings, and we look forward to your continued support and help in 2024!

STEPHANIE LESLIE
2023-2024 President



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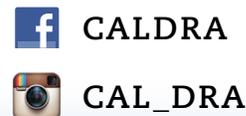
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THE VOICE IN THE STORM

ANDREW HA, CSR 14537, SARAH MAKSIM CSR 14053

We are at sea, and the persistent tempest of the reporter shortage batters us continuously. As we navigate this storm, an unknown voice cuts through the wind and rain. Is it a siren calling us to the rocks or a life raft guiding us out of treacherous waters?

As steno reporters, we are here to share what we have learned about voice writing. We hope those who disagree or are skeptical will be convinced that voice writing is here to help save us from the perils of digital recording.

On Saturday, October 21, 2023, we attended the voice writing webinar hosted by CalDRA. We heard from the following voice writers: Tori Pittman, RDR, CRI, Chair of NCRA's Intersteno Task Force, and a working voice writer; Heather Bonds, California's third-ever-to-be-certified voice writer; and Judy Moreno, a California CSR and instructor of voice writing at Poway Adult School. They offered their insight into how voice writing can steer us to safer waters.

Let's start with the facts. What is voice writing? It is the creation of an accurate, verbatim record of proceedings by capturing the spoken word through the reporter's voice and converting it into text by computer-aided transcription software. Voice writers create and edit their own personal dictionaries through words and verbal sounds, much like stenographers do with letters. Is the quality of the transcript worse than stenotype? No. The National Verbatim Reporters Association upholds and maintains the gold standard for voice writing and is equivalent to the National Court Reporters Association. In addition, the Court Reporters Board of California has allowed voice writers to sit for the CSR exam and become licensed as California CSRs.

Is voice writing easier to learn than steno writing? Yes. Steno students typically spend over a year learning theory and then must train their brains to build speed. Voice writing is much less complicated since we learn to talk when we are toddlers. This enables students to fly through the program in far less time.

If voice writing technology had been available back when steno machines were taking over the pen writing method (Gregg, Pitman, Teeline), it is easy to imagine that most students would choose the path that took the least amount of time without sacrificing technical ability or accuracy. Voice writers are graduating within a year of starting their programs, both stenotype students switching to voice and students with no experience in any type of shorthand.

Is voice writing going to cause competition for machine writers? No. There is more than enough work for both.

Our technologies and training timelines differ, but we take the same exams and reach the same levels of accuracy, the same gold standard. We have all gone through the same hellish exams to achieve that standard and should be treated equally. Digital recorders, however, have gone through no such training. In the eyes of our profession, stenographers and voice writers are equal. It is now time for that to be recognized in the eyes of the industry and the public at large.

We must remember that reporters are the commodity, not the machines. When pen writing was replaced by machine writing, the technology changed but the reporter did not. Change is scary, and as such, it is tempting to turn a blind eye or vilify it, but that change is here. Uncharted territory in the form of SB 662 threatens to bring digital reporting into all California civil proceedings to make up for the shortage of court reporters. The only thing that can stop this is adding more reporters to the ranks, and that is where voice writing helps us escape the storm. The California Court Reporters Association was right to advocate for this over a year ago. The courts have long needed a surge of new reporters, and voice writing is the solution to filling this hole.

Is there anything in voice writing for me, a veteran stenographer? Yes. You can save our industry by saving your body. How many times have we heard during workers' comp and personal injury cases about back-breaking labor and getting injured on the job? How many times have we recorded their list of aches and pains and doctors' visits? If we were in their position, we'd have much to say, too: stiffness, tremors, arthritis, back pain, exhaustion, sciatica. We fear for our hands and our bodies. We fear activities that could hurt them. You know what's much easier to protect? Our voices. Voice writing offers all of us a much-needed improvement in how we create the record, while keeping our bodies healthier and freer.

Do I have to learn voice writing? No. At the end of the day, what matters is the accuracy of the verbatim record. However we choose to achieve and maintain it is up to each of us. Voice writing is yet another potential tool in our belt.

The shortage storm rages on. We have the opportunity to embrace a wonderful resource to help us on our long voyage in these rough seas. Voice writers are here, they are ready to work, and it is up to us to support and embolden each other. If you know a voice writer, invite them to shadow you on a deposition or trial and demonstrate your skills. Ask to shadow them on one of their jobs. We may use different machines, but we are equal guardians of the record. It's time to come together for the good of the profession.

LOS ANGELES & SAN FRANCISCO

Daily Journal

www.dailyjournal.com

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

PERSPECTIVE

A better solution than resurrecting SB 662 is on its way

By Mary E. Pierce

Earlier this year, State Senator Susan Rubio authored SB 662, a bill which proposed the option of electronically recording court proceedings if a Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR) could not be found to make the record for a hearing or trial. While those of us who are working in this profession recognize that there is indeed a tight supply of licensed court reporters in California, I would not yet call it a shortage. With advance notice, a trained and highly qualified professional stenographer can almost always be secured, and the potential threat to the accuracy of the record demands that every opportunity to ensure that accuracy be explored.

Another troubling element of SB 662 is the cost for what even the bill's author has termed a "short-term fix." A temporary solution to a long-term issue may not be the most prudent use of taxpayer money that could otherwise be spent solving this staffing problem. First, the equipment and installation alone would be a significant expenditure. Prior to purchase, court personnel would be tasked with educating themselves on different equipment options and would then be required to undergo training on the equipment, not to mention arranging for equipment upgrades and maintenance, on an ongoing basis. Additional full-time staff to monitor this equipment might need to be hired so that court staff with other full-time duties are not also tasked with preserving the record. In contrast, a Certified Shorthand Reporter

bears the cost of their equipment, maintenance and technical support, eliminating these additional expenditures for the court system.

Do you know that California courts have experimented with electronic recording several times in the past and determined it a failure? A 2009 report by Chris Crawford of Justice Served stated, "In our analysis, the cost savings assumptions attributed to DR (digital recording) are not true, as they have been proven to be untrue in the preceding dozen or more efforts in California, and as the federal courts and other state trial courts have learned the hard way."

While prior experiments with electronic recording in the California courts were undertaken in an attempt to save money, not only were savings not realized, but there were many other shortcomings that resulted from the process, from delays to receive transcripts to the often inferior quality of those transcripts. This can be due to the minimal training of transcribers, flaws in the quality of the recording itself, or a combination of both.

The accuracy of the transcript should be of the highest concern to any litigant and to the court system as a whole. A transcript produced by a minimally trained individual not certified by any State board, over whom there is no meaningful oversight or regulation, is a poor substitute for that produced by a professional guardian of the record. Certified Shorthand Reporters in California undergo years of training, are then tested, licensed, and regulated by the California Court Reporters Board (CRB) under the umbrella of the Department of Con-

sumer Affairs. Their licenses are hard-earned, and those who attain the distinction of licensure have a vested interest in abiding by the laws, professional ethics codes, and court rules in the performance of their duties.

So if a new version of SB 662 were to be enacted, who would prepare the transcripts from the audio recordings? While the first version of the proposed law provided that the first right to transcribe the recordings would be offered to a licensed Certified Shorthand Reporter, the CRB has confirmed that any transcription of these recordings would be subject to statutory court transcript rates and that no per diems for performing this work could be added. When you consider that it takes a trained court reporter roughly three times as long to transcribe from audio recordings than it does to report a live proceeding in real time, this means they would be paid not even the same amount, but substantially less for a tripled investment of their time. I doubt that many licensees would be interested in doing that work for the capped pay alone.

And since estimates are that it takes four or five transcribers to do the work of one stenographic court reporter, it may even prove difficult to get the work done by gig workers here or even in other countries at the historically below-market statutory rates that are offered for these assignments.

So if professional court reporters will not be producing the transcripts and gig transcribers cannot service the workload, what method steps in? Likely, it will be AI/ASR (artificial intelligence/automatic

speech recognition) producing the bulk of the transcripts.

Step back. Pandora just opened the box.

The list of troublesome issues with AI/ASR transcripts is substantial and only continues to grow. A perfect example of these shortcomings was on display earlier this year at the Alex Murdaugh trial in South Carolina, where the attorneys discussed the rough draft they had received from a company that produces transcripts using these methods, calling it "a deficit product" and "not of much use." Had a stenographic court reporter produced that rough, it would likely have been 99% accurate, a common standard in the industry. Court reporters can also provide real time text streaming during a proceeding, typically at a minimum accuracy rate of 95%.

Mary E. Pierce, CSR 6143, is past president and co-legislative chair of the Deposition Reporters Association of California.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON SB 662

CONTINUED

And accuracy is only one major issue with AI/ASR transcripts. ASR works by providing predictive answers, not always definitive or even accurate answers. And speaking of predictive answers, it is not difficult to guess who is most likely to be impacted by the inadequacies of these transcription apps. It is oftentimes the most vulnerable members of society – minorities, those with disabilities, an accent or a speech anomaly, women and older individuals – who are most adversely affected by inaccurate transcripts in litigation matters.

Furthermore, authenticating a transcript that was produced by artificial means down the line is likely to be impossible. After all, you can't have an app prepare an affidavit to attest to the transcript's bona fides. What sort of information would it take to potentially audit the accuracy of such a transcript? Well, to start, you would need to know the ASR engine that was utilized, the date of processing through the app, the accuracy of the app on the date processed and the last calibration or accuracy rating at that time, as well as the chain of custody and names of all transcribers that were involved in preparation of the transcript. Typically, it is not even disclosed that any artificial method of transcription was used. I certainly have never seen a transcript that did so.

In fact, transparency is lacking even when human transcribers are used. When a file is of any significant size, it is customarily split into a series of clips and distributed to multiple transcribers, then assembled into a transcript when all the files are returned. Yet even when this practice is utilized, there is just one certificate of transcription, signed by just one individual, that is affixed to the back of the transcript. And as I have mentioned, many of these recordings are sent overseas for transcription. How are these individuals to be tracked, never mind held accountable and questioned, in the event that their inaccurate transcriptions materially affect the potential outcome of a case?

And you can't necessarily rely on a company providing these types of transcription services to authenticate it either, as they merely process the work product of others. As my article *"Make Sure Your Court Reporter Is Really A Court Reporter"* (Daily Journal 4/13/22) illustrates, in that particular instance the agency declared for months that the transcript that was missing 55 pages of testimony was complete and accurate.

Don't despair because help is on the way!

So what is the solution?

Yes, we need more court reporters, and many of us in the profession are working toward that goal. In our spare time, when we aren't reporting a proceeding, producing transcripts, upgrading our equipment or learning new software, getting continuing education or booking our calendar, we are promoting the profession online and at job fairs, trying to get programs in court reporting established at community colleges and even introductory classes in high schools.

Our efforts are already producing results. Many of the court reporting schools in California now have waiting lists to get in, another reason to expand the number of schools in the state. We've lost so many court reporting schools in California in the past 20 years that it hobbles the effort to replenish the workforce. A potential short-term goal is to work in concert with the Department of Education or the Court Reporters Board in this effort. Preserving the accuracy of the record is too imperative to the justice system, and it is a daunting challenge to conquer alone.

The statistics from the two most recent state tests are very encouraging. There are three examinations given each year. In the three tests given from November 2020 to July of 2021, 41 applicants passed the test in that 12-month period. In the three most recent exams, given from November 2022 through July of this year, 86 applicants were successful and earned their California license. We need to expand those results exponentially, which

means getting more students in more schools and giving them every opportunity to succeed. Don't hinder these efforts by supporting a plan to eliminate or greatly diminish the need for their chosen profession.

Voice stenographers, also called voice writers, can also now test for licensure in California. This is an exciting development in that the schooling process is 30% to 50% quicker for most voice writing students when compared to stenographic students, and the success rate is nearly 10 times as high. It may be a different method of capturing the record in California, but it has been in use for decades in other states. Voice writers must pass the same test as stenographic applicants and meet the same accuracy standard of 97.5%, so you can rest assured that your record will be protected by licensees using this new method.

In the meantime, let's consider some other short-term fixes that promise quicker interim solutions and give us more time to bolster the workforce with new professionals.

The National Court Reporters Association conducts testing for entry-level court reporters and issues the RPR (Registered Professional Reporter) certificate, which is recognized nationally. The Court Reporters Board considers the RPR as a qualifying certificate for testing admittance to our state exam. The most recent test statistics demonstrate that this is a highly qualified pool in that roughly 62% of test applicants with this certification passed the state exam to attain their California license. The only group that surpassed that statistic for the July 2023 exam was the voice writers, who achieved a 75% pass rate. RPRs who tested in March 2023 passed at the same impressive rate of 75%.

While the proposal in the original version of SB 662 allowed for provisional licenses for holders of the RPR certificate for a single three-year period, during which they would need to pass our state exam in order to continue working here, this promising element

was removed during the debate process due to concerns about a lack of guardrails, including background checks and other things. Serious consideration needs to be given to addressing any concerns about this proposal and clearing the way for it to be implemented.

In fact, I found it quite alarming that there was almost no discussion of guardrails during Senate committee meetings when it came to anyone other than a CSR producing a transcript from the recordings. In truth, it should be of the highest concern if minimally trained transcribers or apps and machines are left to perform the crucial function of a highly trained court reporter, who is the custodian of the record from start to finish and produces a verbatim transcript that can be relied upon.

The history of using audio recordings across the country is replete with caution signs. Flaws or gaps in the recording, cross-talk, a mumbling witness, an audience member coughing, a speaker's microphone not being activated, or the recording never being turned on, or perhaps being left on and capturing a protected conversation are just some examples of significant issues. And any shortfall of the recording cannot be corrected afterwards.

In contrast, a licensed court reporter has multiple backups of their record and is trained and even required by law in California to interrupt the proceeding when circumstances merit it. We speak up when there is a potential compromise of the record, whether it be to have something repeated so that it can be captured, or to admonish participants to speak one at a time.

The fact that Certified Shorthand Reporters are mandated in criminal courts should not be overlooked. In criminal proceedings, a person's life and liberty are on the line. In these instances, the law recognizes the importance of the record being accurate by mandating that there be a CSR to capture the proceedings. Is your case any less important?



CALDRA'S annual student picnic was once again a smash hit!

Saturday, November 4, 2023 | 11:30 a.m.
Don Knabe Community Regional Park

All theory & speed levels were welcomed.
Food, games & prizes were offered.
Insights were provided to students by licensed CSRs.
Fun was had by all!



CALIFORNIA JUDGES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

BY CINDY VEGA, CALDRA PRESIDENT ELECT, CARLSBAD

California Certified Shorthand Reporter 6640
Registered Professional Reporter Registered Merit Reporter
Registered Diplomate Reporter
California Certified Realtime Reporter 95
Nevada Certified Court Reporter 559
Washington Certified Court Reporter 21001436
San Diego Superior Court Approved Reporter



CalDRA wanted to go the highest level we could think of to attend a convention and be a vendor. The California Judges Association conference in San Diego was the right choice! This event was held at the Marriott Hotel the weekend of September 22-24. We attended two days, Friday and Saturday. This was our first time attending the CJA conference but not our last! CalDRA set up a table in the vendor hall. Along with myself representing CalDRA were District 5 Director Stephanie Bryant, District 4 Director Molly Cooper, and Past Presidents Mary Pierce and Cheryl Haab. Our goal was to make the judges aware of the pitfalls of digital recorders and having electronic recording equipment set up in the courthouses. We also wanted to make them aware of voice writers now being certified in California. However, each judge I spoke to had a different thought. Most of them wanted to know how we, as an association, are addressing the reporter shortage. That was their main concern. They also know that the freelance market is thriving and lucrative, but still, they need and want reporters in court. We assured them that we are working on many different avenues for recruiting reporters to our field: career fairs, mentoring students, certifying voice writers, and talking to anyone and everyone who may have an interest. One judge I spoke to does her own advocating for our career. She goes to schools and speaks on the career of court reporting. She told me she tells many people she comes across to go into our field. Her clerk's daughter is currently in school. She is a great advocate for stenographers. A few thoughts from our volunteer attendees:

Molly Cooper - The California Judges Association conference was a great opportunity to make judges aware of voice writing and the increasing number of CSRs entering the field. As a reporter who primarily works in depositions, I don't often work alongside judges. I enjoyed having the chance to interact and represent my profession.

Mary Pierce - I was only able to attend the CJA for about four hours and I only interacted with one judge, Lance Ito. However, I had a very promising conversation with Jennafer Wagner, one of the family law and low-income litigant advocates who was on the panel for the seminar, about the perceived shortage of court reporters for hearings and trials. While she supports SB 662 rather strongly, she was open to what I had to say and stated she would like to bring us to the table in the future to try to rectify the coverage issue. We have exchanged emails since then, and that contact alone was worth the time and effort.

Cheryl Haab - It was incredibly fortunate for CalDRA to have a presence at this important event, especially in light of the increasing shortage and SB 662's impending reappearance in the California legislature. By attending this conference, we were able to listen firsthand to the concerns of our colleagues in court to help better understand how to serve their needs, as well as the needs of litigants who are affected by these issues. We were also able to provide a better understanding to the many judges who attended regarding our efforts to improve our numbers in the workforce. With the knowledge collected from these important brainstorming sessions, I am confident that CalDRA is better equipped to help mitigate the problems the shortage has created going forward. I hope to see our continued presence at the Judges Association conference.



TIPS/TPR/T/TPROPBT/LAOEUPB

BY LINDSAY PINKHAM, CSR 3716, GCRR 17

READING AND SIGNING PER CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE – A CLOSER LOOK

Every now and then I read Facebook posts in which reporters are asking about reading and signing procedures. There are two reasons we should pay attention to these procedures: (1) Until a few years ago, in Southern California we allowed attorneys to waive our CCP duties and stipulate to the contrary; we were therefore off the hook and didn't have to pay attention. Now we do. (2) With the influx of hundreds of new start up agencies in our state, a lot of them have no background in the California reporting industry and have to depend on employees who may also lack comprehensive knowledge. They're called "agencies" for a reason. We give our duties over to them to perform as our agent. But they are not the "deposition officer" named in the Code. We are. So we should understand what our duties are and make sure the agency is performing them according to current regulations.

CCP 2025.520 states:

"(a) If the deposition testimony is stenographically recorded, the deposition officer shall send written notice to the deponent and to all parties attending the deposition when the original transcript of the testimony for each session of the deposition is available for reading, correcting, and signing, unless the deponent and the attending parties agree on the record that the reading, correcting, and signing of the transcript of the testimony will be waived or that the reading, correcting, and signing of a transcript of the testimony will take place after the entire deposition has been concluded or at some other specific time."

Note that the operative word is "shall." That means it's mandatory. ("Must" is even more clear, and that is the word used in the Federal rules.)

Notice must be sent to the witness as well as all parties. That's why you should make a habit of always trying to get the witness's information before the depo begins, street address and email address. Many times if the witness has counsel, the attorney will step in and say you can send the notification to him. That's fine, but since it is a departure from the Code, it's a very good idea to get that on the record to protect yourself if later on someone should claim the witness was not timely notified.

The Code says notification must be made "in writing." From my conversations with agencies, most of them interpret this as snail mail or email.

I did a query among the 40 or so agencies I've worked with, and it seems most of them will send the transcript in the form of a "locked" PDF. I myself have concerns about that, because depending on what program is used to generate it, it can be unlocked. I know with YesLaw you can send a link for them to read it online that expires in a certain number of days. That seems to be the safest. I'm pretty sure a locked PDF created through Adobe Pro is also unblockable. As an experiment, I sent a PDF to an agency "locked" through Case Catalyst, and they were able to print it and copy and paste from it in a few minutes.

We should all be cognizant of what goes on behind the scenes with the transcripts we turn in for which we legally bear ultimate responsibility from the moment we put the witness under oath to the time the original reaches the taking attorney's hands.

And here's another fun fact re notification. If sending via email, CCP 1010.6(a)(3)(B) says you must add on 2 court days. If sending via US mail, CCP 1013(a) says add on 5 business days if within California, 10 if outside California but in the US, and 20 if outside the US.

POP QUIZ!

WHAT IS THE FUNNIEST
THING THAT'S EVER
HAPPENED DURING
ONE OF YOUR COURT
REPORTING JOBS?

Best answer wins **\$25 off**
your next CalDRA event.

Congratulations to the
winners of last issue's
pop quiz:

Jess Munoz, Betty Salois

Don't forget to redeem
your credit!



Respond to
Holly Moose,
Newsletter Editor:
holly@hollymoose.com

NOTE IT!

SAVE THE DATE
DRA'S 27TH
ANNUAL CONVENTION

April 26-28, 2024
San Diego, CA

ATTENTION STUDENTS:

Applications now being accepted
for The John Zandonella
Scholarship Award

[Click Here](#) for more information
Applications must be received
by Jan. 31, 2024

BOARD MEETING
Saturday - Dec. 2, 2023
10:00 am Via Zoom

CCRR EXAM DATES
Stay tuned for future
online & in-person testing dates

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VOICE WRITING DEMO

BY STEPHANIE BRYANT, CSR NO. 13160



This past September, District 5 invited Judy Moreno, former San Diego Superior Court official and Director of the Poway School, to provide a Voice Writing Demo for our reporting community. Accompanying Judy were newly licensed CSR Steph Cole and Kat Keenaghan, who will be taking the November CSR.

We learned the ins and outs of voice writing, including the software used and the method of qualifying for the California CSR. We watched voice writing demos that included jury charge, two-voice, and literary. It was fascinating to watch the demo and learn about the way in which voice writers use brief forms.

A huge thank you to Peterson Reporting for allowing us to use their conference room and for providing the amazing catered dinner and drinks. We had a great turnout, and it was fascinating to watch steno voice writing in action.

With the passing of AB 156, the California Court Reporters Board is now licensing voice writers, holding them to the same standard of testing and licensing required by a machine stenographer. The hope is that with this new legislation and reporters joining our ranks at a faster rate, we will stave off electronic recording for good.

Stephanie Bryant,
RPR, CSR No. 13160
CalDRA District 5 Representative



Reporter Spotlight: MICHELLE C. JOHNSON



MICHELLE C. JOHNSON

RPR-CRR

CA CSR 5962

NV CCR 771

Las Vegas, Nevada

How long have you been reporting?

41 years

Where did you grow up?

Moved around a bit: SF Bay Area to Oklahoma City to Seattle to Vienna, VA, back to the Bay Area. I'm now in Las Vegas.

Tell us about your family.

My partner, Gerry, and I have been together for close to 28 years. At present, we are graced with the presence of our Maltipoo, Frank, and our two sweet but demanding cats, Bonnie and Clyde.

How did you first get involved with DRA?

It was at the beginning of its formation. I believe I learned about it at a BAGRA meeting, and am so glad I did. Just a wealth of information, and meeting other reporters who wanted to be educated in the profession led to a nice network of colleagues who helped each other out.

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

Various word games on my iPad, working out, cooking/dining out, travel.

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

Not so much exotic, but on the deck of a beautiful home in Bodega Bay, right on the water, everyone wearing sunglasses.

If you could do it all over again, would you choose court reporting as a career?

Without a doubt. With the freedom that freelance reporting provides, I can't imagine doing anything else. The good days far outnumber the bad, and I actually enjoy the difficult/technical work. Keeps me on my toes.

What is one professional accomplishment you'd still like to achieve?

At this point, I'm happy with my achievements.

What's your cocktail order? Pinot Noir.

Do you still practice on your machine? I don't.

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

Go to DRA or other associations' meetings/conferences. Not only will you gain knowledge from the presenters, but will meet your fellow reporters and network. I was fortunate to have met my good friend Holly Moose sometime in the mid to late '90s when realtime was just starting. She would set up weekly practice sessions at high-speed dictation, and we would share our briefs and conflict resolutions and solutions to issues any of us were having. Nowadays, you could do it on Zoom, my favorite way to report.

For me, without the benefit of knowledge and tips and tricks of my fellow reporters, I doubt I would have even taken the CRR, let alone passed it way back in 1998. Of course, I had to pass the RPR to take the CRR, so it was a process. But I'm so grateful to have done it, and definitely am a much better reporter.

So I guess the advice is to find reporters who inspire you and follow their lead. For this, I give many thanks to Holly.

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

Interior design.

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

Italian.

What is your favorite guilty pleasure? YouTube.

Why is DRA membership important to you?

I thank the tireless effort that so many DRA leaders put in to keep us up to date on codes and issues we face in the industry and tackling the legislature to keep our noble profession going.

We must stay vigilant and fight the constant threats from electronic media that does not and cannot hold a candle to us. Association membership is an integral part of remaining the keepers of the record.



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Belle Ball	Sharmaine Jennings
Jeni Bartel	Kathleen Keenaghan
Debra Cadiz	Ariela Llanos
Patricia Davis	Claudia Melendez
Tuffany Durazo	Judy Moreno
Jennifer Dykema	Reynaldo Osegueda
Kylie Feist	Chloe Saber
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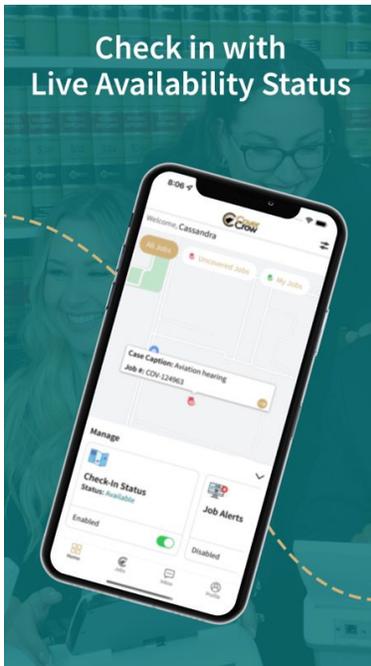
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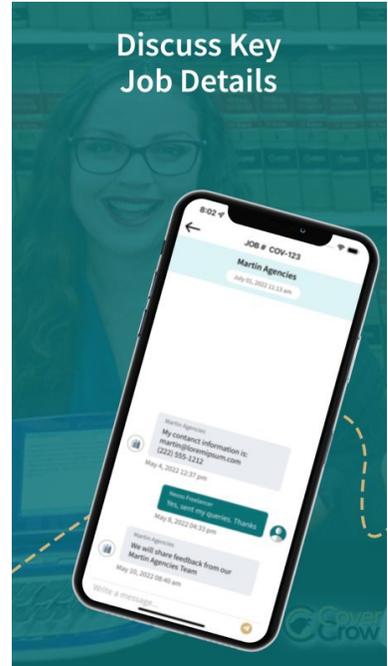
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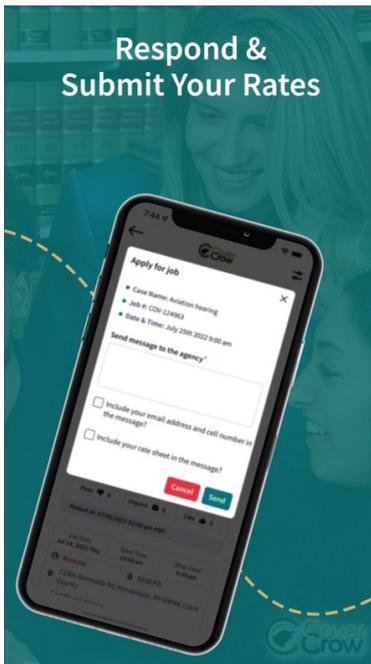
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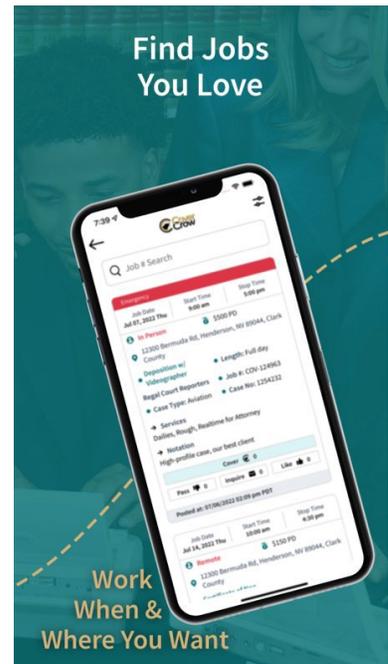
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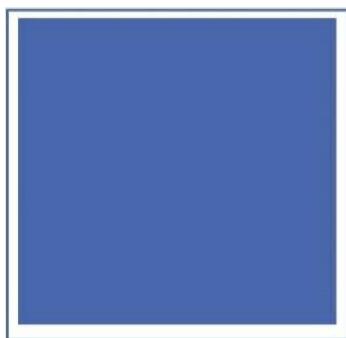
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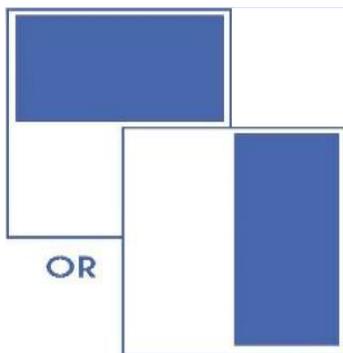
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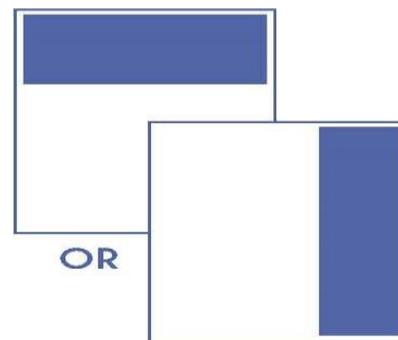
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