

CCRA *online*

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Season Greetings
to Everyone



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The Electronic Magazine of
the California Court Reporters Association

CCRA Online Committee

Lesia J. Mervin
Debby Steinman
Connie Parchman, Editor
3275 Royalton Court
Pleasanton, CA 94588
Tel: (510) 853-5260
parchman1@aol.com

Main Office

CCRA
65 Enterprise
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
Tel: (949) 715-4682
Fax: (949) 715-6931
Email: staff@cal-ccra.org

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President

Carolyn Dasher
300 East Walnut Street
Pasadena, CA 91101
Tel: (626) 356-5015
carolyn.dasher@cal-ccra.org

Secretary-Treasurer

Kristi Garcia
Tel: (559) 488-3332
kegarcya@comcast.net

President-Elect/ Vice President Officials

Debby Steinman
OCSCRA
700 Civic Center Drive West
Department C32
Santa Ana, CA 91701
Tel: (714) 834-7426
debby.steinman@cal-ccra.org

Past President

Sheri Turner Gray
601 University Avenue
Suite 148
Sacramento, CA 95825
Tel: (916) 649-1060
Fax: (916) 649-1061
sheri.turner@cal-ccra.org

Vice President Freelance

Natie Alvarado
2420 W. Carson Street
Suite 210
Torrance, CA 90501
Tel: (626) 938-0042
alvaradocr@aol.com

CCRA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the California Court Reporters Association is to advance the profession of verbatim shorthand reporting by promoting professional reporting excellence through education, research, and the use of state-of-the-art technology; establishing and maintaining professional standards of practice; and advocating before legislative and regulatory bodies on issues which impact the judicial system and others served by the court reporting profession of California.

BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN YOU...Rejuvenate and Resonate!

By Debra Dupree, MFT #23250, CEES



Removing Barriers to Quality, Productivity, and Human Performance

What we do at work substantially impacts how we feel...not only physically but mentally and spiritually as well! Considering that most of us spend the majority of our time at work, how we work and how we function becomes critically important to our daily well-being!

Taking a look at ERGONOMICS in your work environment can significantly influence how we feel, how we perform and what we produce. The California Court Reporters Association (CCRA) did exactly that when a program on ERGONOMICS was included in its annual conference at the Miramonte Spa & Resort in Indian Wells, CA. Talk about rejuvenation! I was delighted to be part of that program to share the many tips and strategies available. For those of you unable to attend the conference, here's an opportunity to learn a few of the things that the Conference attendees had an opportunity to experience!

Let's first take a look at what is ERGONOMICS! According to Wikipedia,

"Ergonomics is concerned with the 'fit' between people and their work. It takes account of the worker's capabilities and limitations in seeking to ensure that tasks, equipment, information and the environment suit each worker.

To assess the fit between a person and their work, ergonomists consider the job being done and the demands on the worker; the equipment used (its size, shape, and how appropriate it is for the task), and the information used (how it is presented, accessed, and changed)."

In short, Ergonomics focuses on achieving a natural or neutral posture when working to avoid the effects of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and repetitive motion injuries (RMI) that can otherwise lead to carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, bursitis and many more. As our society becomes increasingly mechanized and our jobs become more intense, people are suffering from MSDs and RMIs from all walks of life. As we grow older, we also experience the natural effects of aging, ones that affect the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints and disc space. From debilitating carpal tunnel syndrome and tendinitis, to the chronic neck pain and tense upper back that most everyone who works at a computer takes for granted, we are all showing the effects. In short, we need to learn how to counteract the impact of muscle tension build-up, nerve and blood vessel compression, and compromised disc space in our spinal column.

While much can be done to improve the work environment, the most ergonomic environment in the world will not make as much difference as changing the way we think about how we work. As living beings, we have the miraculous ability to constantly repair and recreate ourselves. Much of it happens without our even thinking about

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BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN YOU...Rejuvenate and Resonate!

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it. As human beings, we can override our instincts, override pain and discomfort, override hunger and thirst and fear — all in the interest of staying focused on accomplishing our work or not disrupting the work in progress. This is a tremendous benefit but to what expense? When we consider RMLs, we seldom recognize that performing the same motion over and over again can cause strain that leads to injury. The immediate impact may be minimal, but over time, the constant straining from repetition and impact of compression causes damage.

So it's time to take a look at our work habits. Are we perhaps the culprit? Or, is it a combination of the work environment and our work habits? Most likely the answer lies in a combination of the two. Our "natural" and "instinctive" behavior may seem logical and has become habitual, however, combined with the working conditions, i.e. prolonged periods of sitting and repetitive keystrokes during court hearings or depositions, prolonged use of viewing small print and computer screens, and inappropriate chairs, all take their toll.

As we seek to implement a change through Ergonomics, it is important to consider three aspects for intervention: 1) Work Station and work environment, 2) Employee behavior and habits, 3) Work process – techniques and tools. And, within these three elements, the following factors play themselves out in terms of creating risk for injury:

- Awkward Postures
- Forceful exertions
- Repetition
- Duration
- Contact Stress
- Faulty Technique(s)
- Work Habits
- Bad Work Stations
- Cold Temperatures

So think about it...what factors play a role in your level of discomfort? Good ergonomics focuses on improving productivity and quality, reducing risks, and eliminating wasted effort. Research shows that improving ergonomics actually results in fewer errors - accuracy can actually improve by 38% and performance is enhanced by anywhere from 4-19%! *SOURCE: Dr. Jeffrey Anshel, National Ergonomics Conference & Exposition, Nov '05*

Here are two key tips to start creating your own ergonomic environment.

The 20/20/20 Rule for Self-Management: How to avoid the effects of prolonged sitting and muscle tension build-up. Here's what to do:

- Every 20 minutes
- For at least 20 seconds
- With your eyes, look at least 20 feet away
- Stand up, allow muscles and joints to return to neutral — take a deep breath!
- Once per hour, perform a stretch or two

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BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN YOU...Rejuvenate and Resonate!

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Palming: An activity to do to relax your eyes periodically throughout the day. Here's how it's done:

- Cover your closed eyes with your hands, so that the palms are over (but not touching) your eyelids. Your fingers should overlap above your nose on your forehead;
- Take several deep breathes and take in the complete darkness (or visualize a relaxing setting);
- After 20 seconds or so, uncover your eyes and allow them to refocus. You're ready to continue your day!

Increasing awareness is KEY to injury prevention. Change your habits...change your LIFE!

Why do we need to know something about Ergonomics? Through ergonomic awareness, we can better manage ourselves and our work environment; we can apply essential ergonomic principles to everyday living; and we are equipped to apply sensible solutions to our work processes to work smarter...not harder! Here are a few things to get started:

- 1) A supportive ergonomically designed chair with a seat pan that fits YOU AND provides appropriate back support to avoid leg compression and low back discomfort.
- 2) Appropriate height and distance to keyboard tray to avoid shoulder and elbow extension to avoid strain to the neck, upper back and shoulders.
- 3) More frequent micro-breaks to avoid the effects of prolonged sitting and repetitive keying. See the 20/20/20 Rule.
- 4) As part of your work contract, specify the "tools of the trade" to achieve timely, accurate and efficient production of work.

Put to use these tips and strategies designed to put you back in charge of your life at work and at home! Rejuvenate and resonate with energy! Try it and you'll quickly see the difference!

Author & Professional Speaker Debra Dupree is a Certified Ergonomic Evaluation Specialist (CEES), a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, a Credentialed Mediator, and a Certified Coach. To schedule your on-site ergonomic evaluation or to obtain a FREE Comfort/Discomfort Survey, contact Debra Dupree at 1-800-743-1973 or write info@relationshipsthatmatter.com.

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Pam Katros
Tel: (916) 408-6133
pam.katros@cal-ccra.org

District D

Therese K. Claussen
Tel: (562) 491-6177
TKClau@AOL.com

District B

Early Langley
Tel: (510) 451-1580
early.langley@cal-ccra.org

District E - (At Large)

Brooke Ryan
Tel: (916) 397-6706
burgundy.ryan@sbcglobal.net

District C

Kim Thayer
Tel: (559) 221-9000
kim.thayer@cal-ccra.org

District F - (At Large)

Wendy Arlen
Tel: (916) 303-0918
wendy.arlen@cal-ccra.org

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Windows 7 Tips

Q. Now that Windows 7 has been released, what's your impression of it and do you have any new-user tips?

A. I've been using Windows 7 since its initial beta version and I remain impressed. I would characterize it as Vista, but without the quirks. (I'm being diplomatic.) Bottom line, Windows 7 is a good, solid operating system and at least at this stage, Microsoft appears to have redeemed itself from its V-word debacle.

If you are using Windows 7, or if it's in your future, I added a new Windows 7 section to my weekly "Ask Mr. Modem!" newsletter (www.MrModem.com). Heading into its tenth year of publication, each week I deliver helpful, easy-to-understand tips for all versions of Windows, as well as prompt, personal responses to subscribers' questions by email.

As far as Windows 7 tips, here are four little "teaser tips" from my newsletter:

1. The Show Desktop feature that was used to minimize all open windows in XP and Vista has been replaced by Aero Peek. Peek is enabled by mousing over a "glass" rectangular area in the lower right-hand corner of the screen, to the right of the time display. When you mouse over this little panel, all open windows are hidden and replaced by window outlines. If you prefer the older style "Show Desktop" effect, click the little panel instead of mousing over it and all open windows will minimize.
2. Gone, too, is the Quick Launch bar in Windows 7, but the new Taskbar effectively

serves the same function. If your Win 7 Taskbar is taking up too much room because of its large icons, right-click the Start orb, click Properties > Taskbar > Use small icons > OK.

3. If you drag one window to the left side of the screen and another to the right, the windows will instantly resize, each filling half the screen, so you can easily use them side by side. Love it!
4. Windows 7 includes a number of new keyboard shortcuts. A few of my favorites include: The Windows (Logo) Key + G displays gadgets in front of other windows. The Windows Key + Up maximizes the current window, while the WinKey + Down minimizes the current window. The WinKey + Spacebar causes all windows to become transparent so you can see through to the Desktop, and the WinKey + (+ or -) will zoom in or out.

Q. I downloaded a font that I like, but I can't figure out how to install it in my word processor. I followed instructions, but the font doesn't appear in the list of available fonts. Can you help, Mr. M?

A. In this instance, don't install your new font into the word processor itself, install it in Windows where other programs can then access it. To do this, using Windows Explorer, for example, copy the font file into your C:\Windows\Fonts folder, or whatever folder is appropriate for your system if it's configured other than in this manner, which is typical.

Then go to Control Panel > Fonts > File > Install

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New Fonts. In the Add Fonts dialog box, navigate to the C:\Windows\Fonts folder, or whatever folder is appropriate on your system. Double-click to open the folder.

Under “List of Fonts,” click to select your new font, then click OK. Restart your computer and the font will then be available for use in all Windows programs, including your word processor.

Q. I understand there are methods and devices that can transfer 35mm slides to a hard drive or CD. What can you tell me about them and where can they be purchased?

A. There are a number of methods for converting slides to digital images that are described in detail in the following articles: “Converting Your 35mm Slides to Digital Format,” at <http://tinyurl.com/tze8j>, and “How to Convert 35mm Slides to Digital,” at <http://tinyurl.com/yjofq6j>.

There are also devices that can perform the conversion (<http://tinyurl.com/yl6oedl>), or you can use any number of professional services, such as Larsen Digital Slide Scanning at www.slidescanning.com/slides.htm.

Mr. Modem’s DME (Don’t Miss ‘Em) Sites of the Month

Roadside Peek

Get comfy and enjoy an open-road journey back through time. Travel old routes (including the legendary Route 66) across America. See the old motels, bowling alleys, drive-in theatres (remember drive-ins?), neon signs, petrol pumps, tacky tiki villages, and other roadside treasures. The site’s default font is a bit small for my trifocals, so if you want to enlarge the font, click View > Text or Zoom in your browser or press CTRL and the + sign. www.roadsidepeek.com

Shakespeare Insult Kit

Shakespeare was, of course, a brilliant writer, but he also had a cutting wit that could skewer an adversary faster than you can retort, “Says who, thou fobbing, earth-vexing dewberry?” Use this site to create your own Shakespearean insults. Choose an entry from each of three columns, string them together, precede the phrase with “thou,” and you’ve got an insult worthy of a 17th century poet, thou calumnious, muddy-mettled mumblemeaws.

<http://tinyurl.com/yez5m9v>

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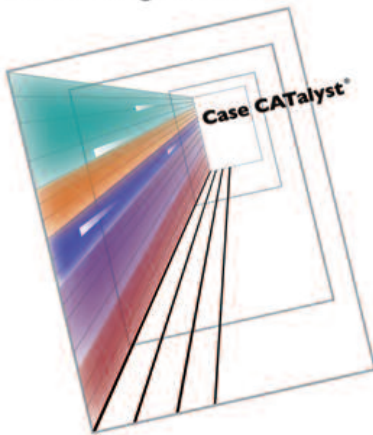


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*By Anthony G. Jordan
Stenograph Corporation*

As the National Major Accounts Manager for the Stenograph Corporation, I became aware of a planned pilot project to replace reporters with digital recording (DR) at the New York State Workers' Compensation Board (NYSWCB) late March 2009. The program came out of nowhere. At the time, New York State (NYS) was reeling from the Elliot Spitzer scandal, which then led to Lieutenant Governor David Paterson's lucky day, St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2009, the day of his inauguration. I have been working with the NYWCB reporters for the past 15 years, and they are an exemplary group with an excellent skill set providing a valuable service, critical to an injured worker's proceedings.

The new regime decided to pursue budget cuts by eliminating reporting jobs and implementing digital recording systems with no regard for the integrity of the record. Unlike the failed attempt to replace reporters in 1995/1996 with electronic reporting, this new so-called pilot project was not a feasibility study with accurate comparison, but an installation and conversion attempt that would have undoubtedly failed and cost jobs and money. Concurrently, the NYWCB had a Request for Proposal (RFP) in place, and was in the vendor selection process.

The Civil Servants Employees Association (CSEA) along with the New York State Court Reporters Association (NYSCRA) and reporters across the state reached out on several levels to government officials. Senator George Onorato, Chairman of the Committee on Labor, scheduled a public hearing on October 6, 2009, to investigate the proposed use of digital recording by the Workers' Compensation Board for its proceedings.

As part of the hearing, public input was requested concerning:

1. The accuracy of digital-audio recording systems to record and transcribe witness testimony.
2. The experience of other jurisdictions that have used electronic devices to record witness testimony.
3. The impact on attorneys, judges, and witnesses if a stenographic reporter is not present during a workers' compensation hearing to record testimony.

4. The impact on New York's court reporting profession from proposed use of digital-audio recording for workers' compensation hearings.

I contacted Senator Onorato's office and was welcomed to testify and told to supply 10 copies of my testimony for the hearing. The Senator's aide indicated that 16 senators sat on the committee but usually that many did not attend every hearing. I began preparing my testimony and solicited several individuals in both the reporting and legal community to gather evidence. I had been challenged with these questions many times before about competing technologies from students and would-be reporters, but never in front of a senate committee. The California Court Reporters Association's (CCRA) Web site was a wealth of information and CCRA's past president, Lesia Mervin, was kind enough to share her experience in California.

I arrived armed with 19 years' experience and 10 copies of my testimony to find I was the only reporter-based vendor in attendance. Disappointed, but not surprised. I was placed on Panel 4, the Technology Panel, with the two DR vendors, and James Bouchy from CourtSmart and Brian Green from Jefferson Audio Systems. There were seven panels in all, and 22 people were scheduled to testify. We had 10 minutes to summarize our testimony and then the Senate committee questioned our testimony.

There were four senators present — Senators George Onorato, Diane Savino, Joseph Addabbo and Bill Perkins. The very first individual to testify was Robert Beloten, Chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board, who explained that as the new chairman, he had inherited this project from his predecessor, Zachery Weiss, and felt compelled to explore DR because of the "74%" turnover rate among reporters in the last four years. He argued ER/DR was successfully in use in Oregon and in Nevada.

Chairmen Beloten was questioned regarding the cost savings and bidding process, and was unable to supply any information, citing that he did not want to prejudice himself to the vendors. He was not in contact with the reporters or anyone involved with procurement, and could not answer any questions about savings. When

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questioned if any hearing was not able to take place because of a lack of a qualified reporter, he replied, "Not to my knowledge."

After his brief testimony, he left the proceedings. The next six hours of testimony provided no other viewpoint in favor of the pilot project except for the DR vendors, the gentlemen I had to debate. The list of witnesses ranged from union representatives to former hearing judges and attorneys to compensation reporters and court reporters in the NYS official system. When my panel was called about half way through the hearing, I stepped up to the table with my opponents and was selected to go last.

Mr. Bouchey stated that he had been a court administrator in Dutchess County prior to selling for CourtSmart and used ER/DR successfully in his court. When questioned as to cost savings, he refused to respond and could only give a range on the cost of equipment, and stated that he was instructed by the NYSWCB not to comment on his pricing. The bid was closed on May 5, 2009, so I was a bit surprised by his lack of disclosure. Senator Perkins asked if his system had ever failed. Mr. Bouchey replied that it had never failed. Senator Perkins repeated his question "Never?" Mr. Green also could not comment other than to claim that he

thought it really was about the level of professionalism of the transcriptionist and hinted that they may be the real problem with unreadable/inaudible transcripts. Senator Savino took exception and showed her disbelief with Mr. Green's implication that a transcriptionist might be lazy and intentionally sabotage a transcript. Their defense got almost silly.

I summarized my testimony using several incidences of failed installations and courts turning back to reporters after costly retrials and lost testimony. In short, I professed that shifting ownership of the record from the reporter to a machine does not provide hard cost savings and results in substantial negative consequences that impact accuracy, timeliness and integrity.

Given the opportunity to testify on behalf of our industry was an honor. The commitment of Stenograph and our reporting peers should be recognized. On October 8, 2009, Senator Onorato issued a press release indicating his findings stating that the Board may not proceed on its own to fund a pilot project to investigate DR, and that the hearing provided important information for the Committee and the Legislature to consider in any future deliberations to modify the required use of court reporters at workers' compensation hearings.





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Thank You! — Distinguished Service Award Appreciation Letter

By Candace M. (Rees) Sharkey, CSR (CA), FAPR

November 21, 2009

California Court Reporters Association
65 Enterprise
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

Dear Gentlepersons:

I would like to offer my most humble thanks to, first, the members of the Distinguished Service Award committee – the very distinguished last five recipients – and the officers and members of the board of directors who accepted the committee’s recommendation, which resulted in my being given the DSA at the convention in Palm Desert last month.

It is without question the highlight of my work with CCRA to get the award, and I couldn’t be more proud to be in the company of prior recipients, people I have admired and respected throughout my career for their dedication to our profession and their unflagging support of this association’s cause.

I would appreciate it very much if you would distribute this letter to the members of the DSA committee and the board since I wasn’t able to thank each of them personally and don’t have email addresses for everyone. I’d like them all to know how profoundly grateful I am.

I look forward to the convention next October when CCRA celebrates its 100th year. Won’t *that* be a blast!!

My warmest regards,



Candace M. (Rees) Sharkey, CSR (CA), FAPR
P.O. Box 3089
Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067



Court Reporters Board Dictation Examination Statistics

October 2009

School Name	Total # Apps	Overall # Pass	Overall % Pass	First Time Applicants	First Time # Pass	First Time % Pass
Argonaut	11	8	72.7%	5	5	100.0%
Bryan College – LA	4	3	75.0%	1	1	100.0%
Cerritos	4	0	0.0%	0	0	N/A
College of Marin	2	0	0.0%	0	0	N/A
Cypress	1	1	100.0%	1	1	100.0%
Downey	7	3	42.9%	3	1	33.3%
Golden State	4	0	0.0%	1	0	0.0%
Humphreys	1	0	0.0%	0	0	N/A
Sage – Moreno Valley	12	8	66.7%	7	5	71.4%
Sage – San Diego	4	4	100.0%	4	4	100.0%
Sierra Valley	13	8	61.5%	7	7	100.0%
South Coast	19	11	57.9%	13	8	61.5%
Taft	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
Tri-Community	4	0	0.0%	1	0	0.0%
West Valley	1	1	100.0%	0	0	N/A
School Totals	87	47	54.0%	43	32	74.4%
Closed Schools	8	1	12.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Five Plus	10	1	10.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Out of State	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
RPR	2	1	50.0%	2	1	50.0%
State Hearing Reporter	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
Working Reporter	7	1	14.3%	5	1	20.0%
TOTALS	114	51	44.7%	50	34	68.0%



Cal-e-licious

By Gerie Bunch, SOS Committee Chair

PORK MEDALLIONS WITH STUFFED APPLES

Ingredients:

- 4 1" to 1 1/2" thick pork loin steaks
- 4 apples, peeled & cut in half, core removed
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 c. chicken broth
- 8 pieces of Laughing Cow "Light" cheese,

Cut pork steaks in half lengthwise. Heat skillet with a small amount of olive. Brown steaks nicely on sides, adding salt & pepper. Be careful not to over cook. Place filets in an oblong glass pan in a single layer, keep warm. Sauté green onions & garlic in skillet until tender, then add chicken broth. When the broth starts to simmer, add apple halves cut side down at first. Simmer to reduce the broth by half and turn the apples half way through cook-down time (about 10 minutes). Turn on broiler.



Place apples cored side up on top of each filet and fill with a wedge of the Laughing Cow cheese. Pour broth over all. Broil for 5 + minutes, until cheese is slightly melting and browning. Enjoy.

Creating a Great Working Relationship with Attorneys and Judges

By Anita Paul Johnston, CSR-CCR-CRR-CRI-CPE-CSP

Are you a reporter who enjoys excellent relationships with attorneys and judges? Do you get treated with respect? Do you control the proceedings with ease and grace if a situation becomes unreportable? Do you suffer when attorneys talk on top of each other, speak too fast, slur their words, speak with a heavy accent? Worst of all, are you treated rudely; do you feel victimized?

When you speak to attorneys, think about THEIR perspective, what will benefit them. They don't necessarily want to hear how to make the life of a court reporter easier. They want to win their case. They want to win over the jury. They want to look good on appeal. When you communicate with attorneys, use comments that will benefit and be supportive of them, such as: Counsel, you do want the jury to understand and absorb your words, don't you. Counsel, if this goes up on appeal, you do want your record to be accurate and complete, don't you. I do too. We can work together to create an excellent, accurate record.

Let's look at possibilities — how you can not only survive, but thrive and build a great attorney-reporter and judge-reporter relationship.

In my opinion, the single greatest thing you can do costs no money and is more powerful than any other strategy. And that is to adopt a strong, professional, pleasant attitude. Know your job. Know what is reportable and what is not reportable. Don't allow yourself to be thrust in a situation that does not work for you. Act with clarity and calm professionalism.

Why do attorneys talk on top of each other?

In a deposition, if an attorney constantly interrupts and talks over the witness or opposing counsel, sometimes it is an intimidation technique. They want to make the life of the witness so miserable that the witness will not want to testify at trial. Other times they simply want to interrupt the witness so that the comments by the witness will not appear on the record. I heard one attorney suggest to another attorney that if you interrupt and speak loudly

enough, your comments will appear on the record. I don't know about you, but I don't record the proceedings based on volume and bully tactics. Sometimes an attorney is inexperienced and simply speaks without thinking about the record.

What can the reporter do? Is there a great strategy to the art of interrupting?

I believe there is. You can interrupt and ask that one person speak at a time. When you do interrupt, do so with confidence and a strong voice, but not with a snotty attitude. Don't act defensive or weak, and above all, don't apologize! Don't say, "I'm sorry, but I can only report one person at a time." Why should you be sorry?

Put all parties on notice that they are to speak one at a time if they want an accurate record. The attorney, judge, or witness creates the record. The reporter simply records what is spoken TO THE BEST OF HIS OR HER ABILITY. Nowhere does it say that you are to act beyond human, beyond your capabilities.

If they continue to talk over each other, you can again stop the proceedings and either ask them to speak one at a time or ask the parties, would you like to vote or would you like me to choose whose comments appear in the record?

What if they are speaking too fast or you have trouble hearing or deciphering what is being said?

I would recommend the same technique; ask the parties to speak up, slow down, or put them on notice that you cannot hear or understand what is being said. Remember, if you don't hear what is being said, it will not appear in the record.

My suggestion is that if necessary, you interrupt for the same problem two times. Should it be necessary to interrupt a third time, you can insert your comments into the record, stand up, and simply state something like: "I will not interrupt again and from this point forward, I will certify this record to the best of my ability." Then sit down and complete your

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day with no more aggravation. Also, you will not grate on people's nerves and be perceived as an irritant.

Remember, YOU DO NOT NEED TO APOLOGIZE BECAUSE OTHER PEOPLE SPEAK IN AN UNREPORTABLE MANNER.

What if the attorneys and/or judge requests that you NEVER interrupt?

Why do you think that some judges or attorneys request that reporters NEVER interrupt? I believe it is because they have encountered reporters in the past who interrupted so often that the attorneys or judges became irritated and frustrated at the reporter for interrupting so often. It's difficult for them to concentrate and create their record. We of course have a logical reason to interrupt so often. We simply want to do our job, do a good job, and we need to be able to hear. However, the perception left in the mind of the frustrated attorney or judge leaves a far different experience, perhaps the impression — that reporter is obnoxious, irritating, too hard to work with, etc.

If you are advised never to interrupt, I would recommend that at the beginning of the proceedings, you announce ON THE RECORD something like: "My name is Anita Paul, court reporter recording these proceedings, and I have been requested by one of the parties (or all parties) never to interrupt these proceedings under any circumstances. I will comply and I will certify this record to the best of my ability."

You then proceed to write what you hear and insert dashes or "unintelligible" (whatever is your style) and WITHOUT further stress. No more ulcers for reporters!

Are you responsible to report every word spoken? Our schools have trained us to do this; however, I strongly feel that the answer is yes and no. My comments are directed to court reporters who do an excellent job and who write at an accuracy level of at

least 99% or higher (not specifically in realtime, but overall accurately capturing the spoken word). Court reporters are excellent, not perfect.

Attorneys and judges did not go to court reporting school, and they are not aware of our level of training along these lines. There are times when the party speaking is into the thought process, into a tempo, and simply does NOT want to be interrupted.

Court reporters are excellent, not perfect.

Anita Paul Johnson

Regarding an imperfect record...

My experience reveals that oftentimes attorneys and judges want a perfect record. If that is their end goal, they will cooperate with you and work with you to achieve that level of perfection. On the other hand, believe it or not, sometimes attorneys and judges really don't care if every single word is recorded. They want to do their job, and if you only capture 99% or 99.5% of the spoken word, they're perfectly satisfied with that. Many reporters take great offense to this attitude; however remember, that is YOUR attitude, not the judge's or attorney's. You are licensed to perform at 95% or 97% accuracy. If your captured record is above 99%, you are performing at a higher level than your certification requires.

If a judge or attorney wants you to capture everything 100% perfectly, then advise them that you will be glad to, and you will need to hear everything. Affirm that you are licensed to write at 225 WPM. You actually write up to 240+ WPM, which translates to four words per second, including your ability to identify who is speaking, and you insert punctuation as you go along. To speak faster than 240 WPM might earn the attorney or judge a speeding ticket, and it requires you to write possibly five or six words per second or more. That is unreasonable.

If you are going to be working as an official for one judge, it is very wise to sit down and discuss some of these issues. My friend in Los Angeles applied for

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an officialship in the L.A. superior court. She interviewed a new judge, made an appointment, and asked 35 questions of the judge. It is totally reasonable to discuss with a judge their preference on many things, including interrupting — do you always go through the judge (the legal, correct way) or do you make your request or comments to the attorney or witness directly. My friend would not work for a judge who does not give appropriate breaks, works through the lunch hour, etc. By having a one-on-one chat, perhaps in chambers, you can create a common understanding and stronger relationship from the get-go.

Headphones

Some reporters wear earbuds or earphones while taking depositions or reporting in court. They are either plugged into a courtroom sound system, or their computer if the computer has an excellent sound card, or into a SP USB microphone (contact Anita if you are interested in further information on this SP USB mic that includes its own excellent quality sound card). An SP USB mic has a built-in adapter so that you can plug in earphones directly into the mic.

You can listen to the proceedings through this enhanced sound, thereby making your job infinitely easier. When you report with enhanced sound, that reduces a tremendous amount of stress.

Not every environment is reportable if you are treated rudely or with no respect. If you find yourself in an unreportable environment, walk out. So many reporters operate from fear — what if my agency owner will get angry at me? If you do not have a supportive agency owner, you need to move on. What if that attorney will ask me never to return? I say how wonderful; I don't want to work for an attorney who is rude or abusive.

Again, let me emphasize that I make these comments with the assumption that you are a very competent, strong, professional court reporter. If

you are weak in certain areas, such as speed, vocabulary, etc., then build your skills. However, if you feel very confident that you are an excellent reporter, your demeanor will reflect this.

In conclusion, I believe that it's vital that we treat attorneys and judges with respect and that we act like professionals. Almost always if you end up combative, distraught, etc., it doesn't result in a very successful ending. Take a moment and reflect on the attorney's perspective. Is the attorney unaware that there is a problem? Is the attorney focusing on his job and is not conscious of making an effective record? Is he or she new, untrained? Is the attorney downright rude, unpleasant, or someone who is purposely trying to sabotage the record? There's a huge difference between those two types of attorneys.

If the attorney is uneducated, you can catch that person on a break and explain how things work, again never from a position of your apologizing. If the attorney is simply rude and obstreperous, then you can call the attorney on that behavior and you can walk out, if necessary. If a reasonable attorney or judge knows you CARE and you want to work together for a quality record, that will come through loud and clear, and you can create a very successful working relationship with the attorneys and the judge.



Anita Paul
Johnston, CSR-CCR-CRR-CRI-CPE-CSP
www.anitapaul.com • email: anita@anitapaul.com
Telephone (702) 240-8455

Court reporter since 1974, worldwide leading expert in Realtime training, empowering court reporters to fall in love with their careers, and creator of Anita Paul



Earphones in Court

By Jerry Kelly, CRR

Since 2003, I have used earphones plugged directly into the sound system in the courtroom so I could hear better. (Yeah, I know, I'm old.) It's amazing what a difference earphones make. During recesses, I'm often asked how I can hear what is being spoken, sometimes by the judge.

In an effort to get rid of the wire between the sound system and the earphones, beginning this summer I tried several Bluetooth and other wireless devices, ranging up to \$250. The sound was not as good as when I used the wired earphones.

Recently I bought a set of TV Ears earphones from Radio Shack for \$100. I later found them online for \$80. I cannot believe how good the sound is, and there is no wire to deal with. You place the wireless earphones in a cradle at night for recharging.

I used a Sharpie to black out the prominent "TV Ears" logo.

Deposition reporters could use the device to connect wirelessly to the videographer's equipment for better sound.



TV Ears 2.3 Wireless Headset System

The 2.3 system is ideal for watching TV.

This system covers 600 sq. ft and, comes with a 90 day warranty.

Listen to TV at your own level...without disturbing others!

Item #10341

