



Speaker Bass (Pictured with CCRA President Carolyn Dasher)
Her vote saved our profession!

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CCRA Online Copy Deadlines

The deadline for ad and article copy for CCRA Online is the first of the month prior to the scheduled publication date. Articles, ad copy, changes of address, complaints of nondelivery and subscription requests should be directed to CCRA, 65 Enterprise, Aliso Viejo, CA 95656 or call (949) 715-4682. Advertising inquiries also should be directed to the Association office. Photographs accompanying articles should be RGB color JPEG files with a resolution no less than 120 ppi.

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the California Court Reporters Association

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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.

President's Message — Layoffs! What Can We As Reporters Do?

*By Carolyn Dasher, CSR, RPR
CCRA President*



At a time when layoffs are happening all around the state, know that CCRA is here and working on your behalf doing everything we can to protect our profession.

Courts are losing funding due to the catastrophic shortfall of money in the State's budget. Our officials are seeing furloughs once per month, amounting to a 3 percent decrease in pay.

Many of us ask ourselves why new court buildings are being built when employees are being laid off and other courthouses are closing.

What can we as court reporters do? It's all about the money. Are you a better value than the next reporter? What do you offer that makes you stand out? Why are you better than a taping machine? Is it cost effective to employ court reporters rather than a digital taping device?

CCRA is committed to educating our members on issues such as these that affect our profession. A couple weeks ago, CCRA hosted its second California Action Team Training, an intense two-day seminar that teaches the basics about grassroots lobbying.

I would like to personally thank each and every attendee for taking that first step in educating themselves so they can make a difference. I feel confident in saying most participants left feeling recharged and empowered. Reporters from all over our state attended — freelance and official — as well as a few reporters from other states.

Special thanks go out to the reporters who came from Texas, Washington, Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. Their presence shows that preserving our profession goes beyond the boundaries of our state.

Our CATT training helps you identify what role you can play as we move forward educating others. Whether it be talking with your work associates, attorneys, judges, court supervisors and administrators, or your local legislative staff, each attendee learned more about the facts — why a live stenographic reporter saves the courts money. We also learned about the unfair gift giving the big firms are participating in and how we can make a difference for the smaller freelance agencies.

In talking with leaders around our country, I've come to believe that one of the main reasons California stays successful in protecting our profession is the members who belong to our state organization. Can you encourage others to belong so we can be stronger together?

CCRA has been leading the way by introducing legislation that protects stenographic reporters for over 100 years. Our 100th Annual Convention is October 15th–17th in beautiful Sacramento. We have special events planned at the State Capitol. We'll outline all the legislation that has been introduced on your behalf to protect our profession.

We rely on you, our members, to let us know what's happening around the state. Please let us know if there are changes occurring in your courts or firms. We want to help. We can help.

Go forward. Stand tall. You are all highly trained professionals doing a job that is integral to the judicial process – freelancers and officials. We will work together and show our value.



Front Cover — Speaker Bass! Her Vote Saved Our Profession!

By Carolyn Dasher, CSR, RPR
CCRA President

The past couple years' legislative seasons, Court Reporter elimination and ER/DR implementation was recommended by the Legislative Analyst's Office multiple times. Lesia Mervin, then CCRA President, had to testify at a couple hearings to urge the legislature to rethink that decision and save our jobs.

In December of '08, CCRA held a reception for Speaker Bass at the Jonathan Club in Los Angeles. We were to present her with a steno machine, thus making her an "Honorary Court Reporter", because she held firm and did not vote for the Court Reporter elimination and the ER/DR implementation.

HER VOTE SAVED OUR PROFESSION!

Unfortunately, because the budget issues were still happening in December of '08, Speaker Bass was unable to attend the reception. We finally had an opportunity to meet with Speaker Bass and present her with the steno machine.



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Dear CCRA,

As a recognized advocate for the interests of the court reporting profession, we hope you will be able to help us with a very serious issue. As an association with a large membership, you and your members have the ability to reach a wide audience.

In an effort to close the budget deficit of \$30 million, Adult Education in the Sacramento City Unified School District is facing huge cuts, and possibly even complete closure. Our court reporting program (which has been in existence since 1964) is one of 16 programs at the CAJ Career and Education Center. The fees for court reporting students increased from \$600/year in 2008-2009 to \$3,300/year in 2009-2010. This drastic increase was done in all of the programs here in an attempt to become a self-supporting school.

In our program alone we have 100+ students training to become official reporters, deposition reporters, closed-captioners, CART (Communication Access Realtime Transcription) providers for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, as well as other related jobs. The Occupational Outlook Handbook for 2010-2011 states “job opportunities should be excellent” with “employment projected to grow by 18 percent” in this profession.

Please help us get the message to the SCUSD Superintendent of Schools, Jonathan Raymond, and Board of Education Member, Gustavo Arroyo, that adult education is a necessary, thriving, and effective method through which adults are entering the workforce even in the most trying of economic times. I have included their contact information for your convenience.

On behalf of the instructors at Argonaut, your assistance and suggestions will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me at ldoll@caj.edu or 433-2600 x 1218 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lorri Doll, CSR #8555
Instructor
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By Arnella Sims

Los Angeles Times

Failure to divert available funds to avoid layoffs and closures would have catastrophic effects on our economy.

Economists, law enforcement officials and political and business leaders all agree: A healthy economy and our civil society depend on having timely, reliable access to our justice system. But you wouldn't know it reading The Times' Feb. 10 editorial, "Rebuilding California's courts."

It's true that California's aging courts infrastructure must be upgraded, which is exactly why it makes no sense to lay off 30% of Los Angeles' court employees, who collect parking tickets, criminal fines and other fees — in other words, dollars that are necessary to retrofit aging and unsafe courthouses. Nor does it make sense to close courthouses while constructing new halls of justice in an effort to improve public access.

The Administrative Office of the Courts, or AOC — which oversees court operations statewide — has already forced closures of Los Angeles County courts one day each month. Anyone who has visited a courthouse knows the impact these closures have had on our system of justice, with longer wait times and more crowded courtrooms. Consequently, children in foster care, victims of domestic violence and other crimes, families trying to adopt children and others who rely on timely resolution of their cases are denied the justice they deserve. Imagine how much worse the impact will be when one-third of court workers and 30% of courtrooms operating now are gone.

Closing about 180 Los Angeles county courtrooms over the next few years, which the budget cuts require, would have a devastating effect on our local economy and impact even those who never set foot in a courtroom. A Dec. 2009 study by a local economic research firm found that if court closures continue, 150,000 people could lose their jobs and the state would suffer from \$30 billion in lost economic activity.

Without the certainty that cases will be resolved in a timely manner, businesses that rely on our courts don't have the assurance they need to operate normally. Litigation delays

tie up economic resources. Whether a dispute involves a payment, land development or another matter, the financial and other assets in question cannot be put to use when caseloads pile up and resolutions are delayed. This is the last thing we need with unemployment in Los Angeles County already sky high and our families and businesses still facing economic uncertainty.

With the potentially catastrophic effects of court closures and layoffs on our economy, you'd think that the Judicial Council, the statewide body that oversees courts, and its administrative agency, the AOC, would make solving this problem their top priority.

Unfortunately, the AOC and the Judicial Council have busied themselves with other tasks. An unfinished, \$2-billion IT project, for example, has mushroomed over the last several years to more than five times its originally projected cost. There's no direct oversight of AOC's budget, no independent audits, no access to its internal records and no whistle-blowing protection for staff. In short, it's an entity that receives special legal protection by the state to operate outside the realm of public scrutiny and accountability, a status the justices who oversee it fiercely protect. The problem is so bad that in just one year, and with no staffing or budget, an organization of dissident judges who want more accountability for the AOC and Judicial Council has already signed on more than 10% of all state judges.

Keeping our courts open need not come at the expense of making the most pressing improvements to our court facilities. There are sufficient leftover funds in the judiciary budget to keep courts open without tapping into funds slated for construction this year. In addition, the amount of fees the court system collects far exceeds the amount of money immediately needed to proceed with the construction slated for next year. The Legislature can, and must, move swiftly to redirect funds that will protect our economy and public safety by keeping our courts open.

Arnella Sims is a Los Angeles County court reporter and member of the SIEU Local 721 executive board.



Times are Changing! Just Ask The Marin County Court Reporters

By Lesia Mervin, CSR, RMR, CRR
CCRA Past President

Times are changing. The California budget crisis has required courts and other governmental agencies to take a hard look at where they can cut costs. In February, four Marin County reporters were abruptly laid off, which is roughly one third of their reporter workforce. Over the same weekend, DR machines were installed in all courtrooms. A few weeks later, the reporters were all notified of a change in their judicial assignments. In the same memo, the Marin County court has decided not to provide official reporters in unlimited civil, family law, and probate matters unless a reporter is available.

As if this news wasn't enough of a blow to the Marin County reporters, another memo was sent that changes their folio calculation for transcript fees, which will likely result in a reduction of their transcript income.

What can you do? Notify CCRA of changes made in your courthouses, such as layoffs, reporter staffing changes, types of proceedings electronically recorded, etc. It is important that we all stay abreast of changing situations in other jurisdictions, be equipped to know the law, and be able to answer questions pertaining to court reporters when it is necessary. Knowledge is power!

KNOW THESE FOUR THINGS:

1) Government Code 69957: This section tells you where electronic recording is allowed. ER is allowed in all misdemeanor, infractions, and unlimited civil proceedings when a reporter is not available. That's it; not even for notetaking purposes. **ALL felonies, juvenile, and LPS conservatorship proceedings are to be reported, regardless of the type of proceeding.** For instance, a continuance motion is required to be reported. There is no provision for a "waiver" of the reporter in a felony proceeding. Speak up if this occurs. Notify CCRA if illegal activities do occur, such as waiving a reporter in a felony matter, electronic recording of felony proceedings, etc.

- 2) Government Code 69958: Any purchase of ER machines must be approved prior to purchase by the legislature. If new ER machines are purchased in your county, let CCRA know.
- 3) What is happening in YOUR courthouse? Make it your business to know what changes are being contemplated for reporters. Ask questions. Give input when necessary. Notify CCRA.
- 4) Familiarize yourself with the various Justice Served reports on the CCRA Web site. You never know when the opportunity will arise that you may be placed in a situation to talk with an administrator, judge, or fellow employee regarding any of these issues. Know your facts.

As California continues to battle the budget crisis, many counties are facing serious deficits. Layoffs, court closures, and additional furlough days are being contemplated in some courts. Reporter jobs are no exception.

CCRA continues the battle, but we can't do it alone. We need YOU. Talk to your fellow reporters. If your fellow reporters are not members, please ask them to join now. Now is the time for all of us to stand united. As always, CCRA, our lobbyist, and the labor union lobbyists are feverishly working behind the scenes on all these issues to protect our profession.

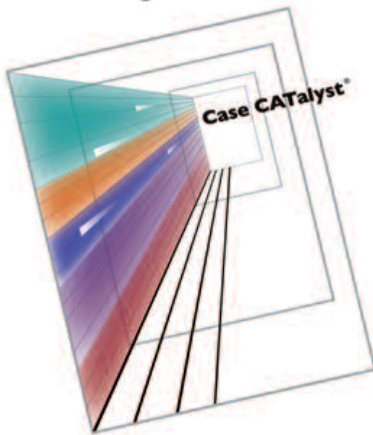


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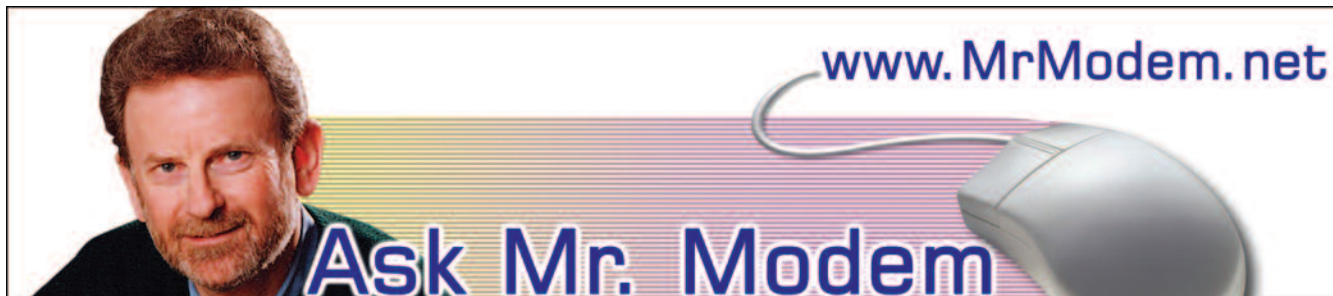
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Emailing to the Masses

Q. Is there a program you can recommend that will help me with my non-spam mailings to approximately 160 addresses? My current email service provider limits me to sending to 25 recipients at a time, so I have seven different mailing lists that I have to use.

A. Any mail service is going to have some limitations on the number of addresses you can send to at one time, though most will allow more than your current provider. Gmail (www.gmail.com), for example, is a free, Web-based mail service that lets you send to approximately 100 addresses in a single mailing.

Be sure to double check email addresses of recipients before clicking the Send button, though. Your account will be disabled if a large number of “undeliverable” mail bounces back as a result of incorrect, invalid, or nonexistent email addresses. You don’t want to be branded as a spammer. (What would the neighbors think?)

There are also mass-mailing software programs such as YL Software (<http://tinyurl.com/yj4cool>) and DynamicMailer (<http://tinyurl.com/yl26jj5>), or if you run a Google search for “mass-mailing software,” you will find other options. Since you only have 160 names on your list, I would suggest trying Gmail. That will save you the expense of purchasing additional software and reduce the number of mailing lists you’re using from seven to two.

Q. I need to look in my Windows Registry to check something. The instructions I have tell me to go to the Start button, choose Run, and

type in “regedit.” I can't do that with Vista because there is no Run option. Can you help me, Mr. M?

A. In Vista, right-click the Start Button or orb > Properties > Customize. When the Customize Start Menu screen appears, scroll down and place a check mark beside the “Run command” checkbox, followed by OK > Apply > OK. That will add the Run command to the Start menu. In Windows 7, type the command (in your case, “regedit”) into the Start > Search field and press ENTER instead of using the Run command line. You can also press the Windows Logo Key + R to display the Run dialog box.

Q. When I open JPG attachments, they default to Microsoft's Photo Editor instead of Picasa. What do I need to do to change from Windows Photo Editor to Picasa?

A. Right-click any JPG image file and choose the “Open With” option from the menu that appears. You will be presented with a list of installed programs that you can use to open JPG images. Select Picasa from the list and check the box next to “Always use the selected program to open this kind of file,” followed by OK. If you don’t see Picasa in the list, click the Browse button and navigate to your Programs folder. In the Picasa folder, click to select Picasa.exe or Picasa2.exe (the name may vary slightly), then restart your computer.

The next time you encounter a JPG file, Picasa will spring to life and display the picture. You can also use Google's Picasa to edit a photo, post it on a Web site, print it, or email it to someone else.

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

Clumsy Crooks

Who doesn't enjoy a story about a crook doing something incredibly stupid? For example, there's the would-be purse-snatcher who grabbed a bag from a lady walking her poodle and made off with a bag of poop. Or the doofus who offered two undercover cops crack cocaine if they would give him a ride. (They did.) Or how can it not warm the cockles of your heart to read about the bank robber who ran out of a bank and was run over by his getaway-car driver? You'll find many similar heartwarming stories at the Clumsy Crooks Web site.

www.clumsycrooks.com

Hand Lines

According to this site, hand lines are a reflection of the experiences of the central nervous system, and the lines and grids on your hands are a way for one's brain to express itself. I checked out my hand lines and apparently my brain is telling me, "Your hands are old and wrinkly." I thought that was a bit harsh. If you're into this kind of thing, break out the granola

and the wind chimes and have fun.

<http://tinyurl.com/yejvabr>

WebCrosswords

Crossword puzzle enthusiasts won't want to miss this site. You can play in either "Regular" or "Master" mode (if you dare), and in the likely event you get stuck, stymied or flummoxed, click the "Solve" tab to reveal a letter, a word, or the entire puzzle. These daily, theme-oriented crossword puzzles are fun and will keep the old neurons humming. A little timer in the upper right-hand corner is informative, humiliating and stress-inducing.

www.webcrosswords.com

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Cal-e-licious

By Yvonne Fenner, taste tested by Gerie Bunch, SOS Committee Chair

MANDRIN WALNUT SALAD

Ingredients:

- 1 head red leaf lettuce
- 1 head green leaf lettuce
- ½ cup walnuts (caramelizing optional)
- 1 lg. can mandarin oranges (drained)



Dressing:

- ¼ c. olive oil
- ¼ tsp. salt
- Dash of pepper
- 1 tbsp. dry parsley
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tbsp. rice vinegar
- Dash of Tobasco

Mix the dressing in a small bowl then toss with the first four ingredients. This salad is a great compliment to your favorite wrap.

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Hyphenating Direct Adjectives

*By Margie Wakeman Wells
College of Court Reporting*

This is a problem that many of us worry over but that, in reality, doesn't have a lot to do with readability of the transcript. There are authorities that make this very complicated, wanting to use different rules for different parts of speech, et cetera.

We are going to make the rule simple:

- **When two or more words in front of the noun form a unit, they are hyphenated.**

He has long-range plans.
She was driving a light-gray Toyota.

He had a long difficult day.
There were several male suspects.

The way to test to see whether the words form a unit is to use them separately in front of the noun.

Are they long plans? Are they range plans?
Was it a long day? Was it a difficult day?

If they work individually to modify the noun, the words are not hyphenated; if they do not, the words are hyphenated.

- **When these words come after the noun, they are not hyphenated.**

The plans were long range.
The Toyota was light gray.

There are other aspects to this rule, which we can discuss at another time.





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Digital Recording: Changing Times for Making the Record

By Carolyn Dasher, CSR, RPR
CCRA President

LETTER TO

Steven C. Hollon, President
Conference of State Court Administrators
c/o Supreme Court of Ohio
65 South Front Street
Columbus, OH 43215-3431

February 21, 2010

Dear Mr. Hollon:

I am in receipt of your 16-page report entitled Digital Recording: Changing Times for Making the Record. I am questioning why COSCA did not ask major stakeholders, i.e., court reporting associations, lawyers, and judges to join in your research so you could utilize updated and accurate reports to help in your findings.

Although there are varying methods nationwide for making the record, experience tells us that the most accurate and reliable method is a stenographic or voice-writing reporter. Machines cannot replace human beings.

Your report cites many studies, most of which utilize outdated material. The demographic study quoted utilizing reporters in Wisconsin and Iowa does not accurately reflect the reporting workforce throughout the country, definitely not the median age of court reporters in California.

Page 5 of your report cites recording technology that has the ability to continue recording while playing back previously recorded proceedings. While that technology may exist, I wonder what percentage of courts use such equipment. Certainly courts cannot afford to fund such costly technology in this economic climate. Certainly California does not have the funds available to buy such equipment nor can California afford to put more people into the unemployment category.

Page 6 of your report states: "A proceeding annotated and monitored by a trained person is a cost-effective means to obtain the record. A recorder's annotations of the recording provides for easy playback and review and improves access." COSCA also recommends that the National Center for State Courts develop national standards on the preservation of digital media. I venture to guess that such standards would require a monitor who is present in a courtroom just like a court reporter.

Such a monitor would require a salary plus 35% benefits. Once you add in transcription costs, which are more than what a licensed CSR can charge, the costs exceed that of a licensed CSR who already functions as the official reporter. Why fix something that isn't broken?

Although the report contradicts itself stating that the digital method of capturing the record shifts the responsibility for the record to other court staff, including the judge, it would be unrealistic and burdensome for the judicial assistant and/or the judge to annotate the record, transcribe the recording, retrieve and prepare copies upon request, and archive the records with appropriate indexing and labeling. As such, you are now talking about a second individual to transcribe, index, and archive. How many people does it take to replace a trained court reporter?

In the nationwide economic climate we see ourselves in, I believe it is unrealistic for courts to begin hiring, training and defining roles and responsibilities for recorder monitors and transcriptionists.

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Digital Recording: Changing Times for Making the Record

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Certified Court Reporters absorb the cost of their personal steno machine, as well as all equipment necessary to produce an original and all copies of a transcript. For the courts to take over the transcribed record, they would need to absorb the technological costs that court reporters utilize and upgrade constantly. Will the recording monitors purchase their own recording equipment?

The privacy issues not explored by the COSCA report have damaging HIPPA as well as identity-theft issues replete with a digital recording.

Only a trained human being can address those issues.

Technology utilized by a CSR writing realtime provides an instantaneous transcript which can be reviewed as the proceedings occur. Reviewing a taped proceeding takes more time, and the time required is money better spent on operational costs for the courts.

In California, the court reporting school enrollment rate has increased 24% in the past few years. The only schools cited in your report were NCRA accredited schools. There are many stellar schools teaching court reporting that do not have the funds necessary to be "accredited" by NCRA. For instance, community colleges that provide a court reporting curriculum could never be accredited by NCRA, although they produce students who pass CSR certification with a high pass rate.

I believe the findings in your report to be biased, unfounded, and full of contradictions. While CSRs continue to be faithful to our judicial system providing the latest technology at our expense, I find it disgraceful that our very employers find it necessary to degrade and downplay the necessity of an accurate official record.

In the future, CCRA would love the opportunity to provide accurate information to COSCA in the production of its reports.

Sincerely,



Carolyn J. Dasher,
President, California Court Reporters Association
Carolyn.dasher@cal-ccra.org

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Would You Like to be Part of the Fun?

By: Gerie Bunch, SOS Committee Chair

You are hereby invited:

- WHO:** The Support Our Students Committee and YOU
- WHAT:** Be a presenter about Court Reporting and CCRA
- WHEN:** When it's convenient to you and the school
- WHERE:** Your local area CR School
- WHY:** To give back to the profession, encourage and inform

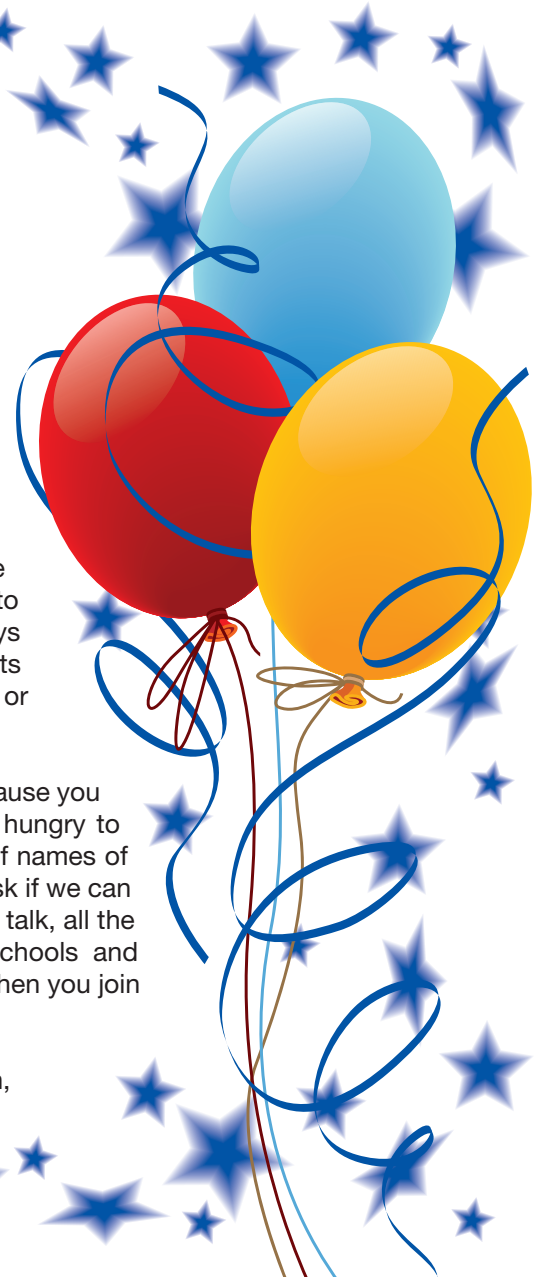
The SOS Committee is trying to build a roster of reporters who are ready, willing and able to spend a few hours every so often to present to their local court reporting school. Schools are always looking for working reporters to come and talk to their students about their profession, whether it's freelance, official, CART or captioning.

I know there are many of you who already do this on your own because you love what you do and want to share that with students who are hungry to hear what it's like to be a reporter. We are trying to gather a list of names of people we can refer to the individual schools when they call and ask if we can send someone. Also, we are asking that you mention, during your talk, all the things CCRA does for the students. We are trying to make schools and students aware of all the opportunities available through CCRA. When you join this team, we'll give you all this information.

The cities that have schools are: Cypress, Covina, Downey, Dublin, Fresno, Gold River, Los Angeles, Moreno Valley, Norwalk, Novato, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, Saratoga, Shafter, and Stockton. So if you live in or near any of these cities and would like to help CCRA for this extended project, please contact me at gerie@psln.com

Once we get this roster of reporters established, I will be informing the schools about our program that they can utilize.

It's fun and rewarding!




California Court Reporters Association

Advancing our profession
for over 100 years. >>>





CCRA's CATT Program
 California Action Team Training

February 27-28, 2010
 San Diego, CA



You're a Leader Too!

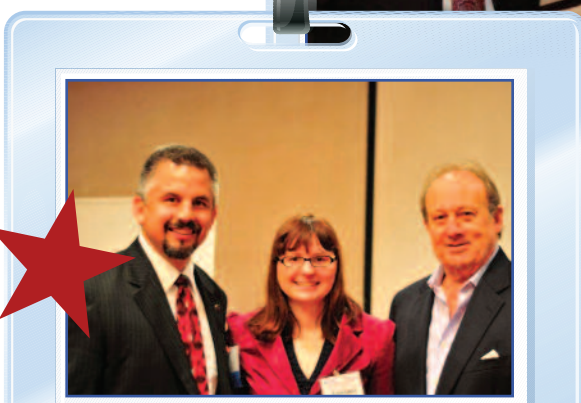


**CATT
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You're a Leader Too!

California Chief Justice Criticizes Court Closures

By Lesia Mervin

Chief Justice Ronald George addressed a joint session of the Assembly and Senate on February 23, 2010, where he criticized the closure of California's courts one day per month. He indicated that closing the state's courts should no longer be considered an option to help close the budget deficit. Instead, he urged lawmakers to impose a user fee to be paid by defendants, which he projects will raise an additional \$40 million for court-related security through June 30, 2011.

The closure of the courts and the furlough of 20,000 staff members statewide has a projected savings of \$63 million and are scheduled to continue until July 2010.

In other news, a joint legislative committee, on February 18, 2010, approved auditing the costly \$1-2 billion court computer system the Administrative Office of the Courts is moving forward with, in spite of the bleak fiscal outlook California's courts are facing. The committee directed the state auditor to look into the Court Case Management System, which would link all courts on one computer system. The AOC had objected to an audit by the state's auditor, citing it would divert limited staffing and resources.