

THE GUARDIAN

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WHAT ABOUT CAPTIONING? HOW TO PREP FOR CAPTIONING JOBS

BY MEGAN ROGERS

Prepping for a captioning job – whether CART or broadcast – comes down primarily to content, which further comes down to proper nouns and general background knowledge. Mark Smith, RPR, a broadcast captioner from Baton Rouge, La., points out: “We as captioners are creating that transcript on the fly to the best of our ability, and I think the only way to ensure we can do that is to thoroughly prep for each individual job.” He continues: “If crucial information in the form of names was paraphrased or omitted, it isn’t necessarily going to show up in the accuracy percentage; it’s simply going to be lost on the viewer. So I think captioners basically have to police themselves in this regard, since for a live event, there is no ultimate, verbatim transcript floating around out there and no real way to quantify the presence or absence of content without such a transcript.”

Fortunately, there are a variety of ways to gather the necessary content prior to a captioning job. “The type of prep I do depends on the type of job. For instance, if it is a business meeting/teleconference, the prep is mainly from the consumer and consists of names of participants, who is leading the meeting, and perhaps a list of words that will be used. It is also important to have the title of the meeting. If the job is a class, I will look at the syllabus, go online, and see if there are any class notes. (That is assuming I have the privilege of going onto their online class Blackboard type system.) If it is a conference, I will go and get the program online, get the abstract for my particular sessions, get the bios of speakers, look all over the website for sponsor names, Board members’ names, keynote speakers’ names,

etc. If I am captioning an entertainer, I will Google them and watch video clips in order to get a sense of their show and their cadence,” says Patricia Graves, RDR, CRR, CCP, a CART captioner from Monument, Colo.

For jobs like talk shows or sports broadcasts, after gathering proper nouns, the best method of prepping involves doing some background research. “A celebrity is usually on a talk show to promote their latest movie or some other endeavor. Be sure to also research the celebrity’s past movies/TV shows, spouse(s), children, or any other current events surrounding that celebrity,” says Darlene Parker, RPR, a broadcast captioner from Reston, Va. “With professional and college sporting events, captioners are usually on their own. Once the captioner has the names of the teams, s/he can find the rosters online. As with celebrities, it’s important to be up on the latest news surrounding the players and teams. Is the team headed to the playoffs? Is there a controversy surrounding the team or a particular player?”

“Visit relevant websites and use search engines. If an initial search doesn’t turn up anything, keep trying with other search terms,” recommends Smith. “Something like a sports roster tends to be readily available and usually in one place, but information for a local news-cast can be a tougher job, since names are spread across many different stories on the website.”

However, Parker points out that captioners have a legal right to get content ahead of time from the content providers. “Local news stations have an Electronic News Production

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.”

-H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

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STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Valerie Melkus

Valerie is a very dedicated student. She has just fulfilled her 10-page graduation requirement. Congratulations, Valerie!

You are going to make a great court reporter!

Brief of the Month

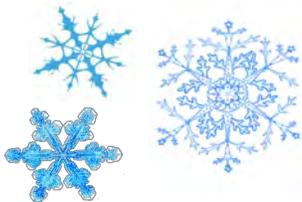
How many times:

HOUUMTS

Claire Baldi

Claire is a wonderful student. She has great attendance and participation. She is an all-around great student. You are making such great progress, Claire!

Keep up the hard work!



(continued from pg. 1)

system, which contains the rundown and most scripts of the upcoming newscast. Although some stations are reluctant to grant the captioner access, it is important to make a case to the station that the captioner can only provide the best captions possible if he or she is allowed access to the rundown and scripts. Be sure to explain that providing access is the only way the captioner can program his or her dictionary in order to be sure all proper nouns or unusual terminology is spelled correctly. It's also important to emphasize that access should be 'read only.' We don't want to accidentally change or delete a script. This will hopefully ease any anxiety that they station may have," Parker adds. "If stations or content providers are still reluctant to provide prep, you can gently draw their attention the FCC order of March 2015 stating that prep should be provided when possible."

Once all the proper nouns and background information is gathered, both Smith and Graves recommend having the necessary notes at hand. "It may be useful to have a physical printout of the names in case there isn't enough space on the computer screen, particularly if there are many different names involved in the job," says Smith.

Once all the proper nouns and background information is gathered, both Smith and Graves recommend having the necessary notes at hand. "It may be useful to have a physical printout of the names in case there isn't enough space on the computer screen, particularly if there are many different names involved in the job," says Smith.

"I print the materials in a font that is easy to see when I am writing," says Graves. "I go through the printed materials and the online materials and I like to make lists of words and names based on the printed materials or online materials. I like to alphabetize those lists and I put my steno next to the names and can quickly refer to that on the fly. I also write the steno on my printed materials for quick reference. When writing, I have all these papers within eyes' or hands' reach!"

Even with all this content prepping, be prepared to make any necessary adjustments during the job itself. "I have also had the experience of entering an unusual or foreign name into my dictionary only to have it come up in the show and realize it was being pronounced very differently than I had entered it according to my steno theory. Since it may be difficult to determine how these names are pronounced beforehand, fingerspelling may be a useful alternative in these cases, instead of hoping to remember on the fly the exact steno you used to enter it," says Smith.

Of course, the next step of prepping is making sure the content will get to the viewer. The other piece to prepping for a captioning job is making sure the hardware and software are ready to go. "For each and every show, it's very important to test the connection between the writer and CAT software and also between the CAT software and caption delivery program, if applicable, to ensure captions are flowing. Also, make sure all of the dictionary prep work you do counts by enabling whatever dictionaries are applicable to the show. The last thing that needs to happen is forgetting to enable the dictionary you just spent significant amounts of effort creating," says Smith.

Parker also points out that it's important to perform regular dictionary maintenance. "Clean out old briefs. Do not get burned by using the same brief form for two different people – and forget which one is in your top dictionary, which is the one that will translate," she says.

"Of course, the biggest and most important factor is the decision to do the prep in the first place," says Smith. Graves confirms this: "Prepping also takes away a degree of anxiety." After all, the point of prepping – gathering proper nouns, being familiar with background knowledge, and testing the technology – is ensuring that the captioner is able to perform as a top-notch professional.

Where will our profession go next?

By Steve Zinone

What an incredibly diversified industry our profession has become over the years. I've heard of members captioning the pope's visit here in America, and others working in Cuba and London or covering arbitrations in South Africa. Some members are commuting on a client's personal jet from Colorado to D.C. for deposition work and returning home that afternoon. And others are providing access in the New York Giants' stadium on a Sunday afternoon during an NFL game or covering press conferences after the Masters Golf Tournament to provide a transcript so that the news columnists have direct quotes for their stories. It reminds me of the quote from Pablo Picasso: "I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it."

Over the past few months, I had the opportunity to speak to several past presidents of NCRA. Some of those past presidents were the very same people who paved the way in many of the different facets of our profession and have enabled all of us to succeed. One of the best comments that came out of those conversations was this: Back in the day, the only person who had a computer in the courtroom was the court reporter.

That statement said it all to me. Even back then, court reporters embraced technology. We took risks and created our own high-tech future. And, throughout the years, we remained the guardians of the record and the providers of access. And I look forward to seeing where this will all lead in the years to come.

Happy holidays to everyone, and I wish you and your families and your loved ones a joyous, happy, and safe holiday season.

NOVEMBER EVALUATIONS PASSED

These students have all passed one or more SAP evaluations during the month of November.

<p><u>16 SAPs</u> Yvette Granados</p> <p><u>12 SAPs</u> Jamie Bleicher</p> <p><u>10 SAPs</u> Jennifer Hall Madeline Lauer Nicole Miller</p> <p><u>8 SAPs</u> Geneva Wildcat Julie Domanico</p> <p><u>7 SAPs</u> Kiana Luke Paulina Alanis</p> <p><u>6 SAPs</u> Amanda Vernon Daisy Tamez Erica Jenkins Jamie Johnson Jessica Frizzell Lindsay Heaton Megan Reeves</p> <p><u>5 SAPs</u> Ashley Wilson Darby Valle Julia Haven Kathy Bruner</p>	<p>Lucetta Robertson Sarah Hamilton Taisha Herr</p> <p><u>4 SAPs</u> Ashleigh Huston Carol Casstevens Debra Selsavage Elise Townes Holly Harris Karina Hannah Kathleen Steadman Nicole Wicks Robin Willey Sara Galante Victoria Huntley</p> <p><u>3 SAPs</u> Allison Allen Barbara Ufer Brandi Smith Christine Angel Jamie Dorgan Jessica Wills Kayde Rieken Kristen Stegeman Kristine Rebar Lexi Klasing Lindsey Young</p>	<p>Melanie Segalla Nicoline Dominguez Stephanie McGinnis</p> <p><u>2 SAPs</u> Adam Marcus Alisa Church Ashley Guillermo Brette Dardeau Casi De La Torre Christil McAllister Christine VanDam Claire Baldi Erin Claybrook Heidi Masters Holly McKay Holly Reese Kelly Garland Kimberly Murphy Laura Beasley Lisa Major Martha Obstalecki Mary Margaret Hurst Nadine Golden Najah Danner Summer Vaughan Thomas Herman Valerie Melkus</p>	<p>Veronica Stewart</p> <p><u>1 SAP</u> Abby Crouse Amanda Olivares Amy Powers Angela Viray Ashley Privett Carolyn Collins Cassidy Johnson Christine Obermeyer Daniella Savidge Deborah Pascal Denise Kurdziel Haley Both Jennifer Macdonald Joan Yeatts Katelyn Berch Kathy Stempeck Katie Jaraczewski Kelsey Kerwell Kimberly Wilkerson Kirstie Anderson Leslie Macias Lisa Jay Melissa Hicking Natalie Sandi Onni Beene</p>	<p>Priscilla Romans Berarducci Rachel Quinn Sarah Fitzgibbon Season Young Sheila Sinclair Shery Skeen Shivone Latortue Taifa Stephenson Tami Taylor Taylor Behnke Tracie Blocker Tyler Adkins Yolanda Pena</p>
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JOB OPENINGS

Position: Official Court Reporter

Salary Range: \$78,696-\$83,083

Job Location: Any Orange County Court Facility, California

Position Type: Part-Time Regular

Experience: Two years Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR) experience including at least one year in a court environment.

General Summary: Under general supervision, an Official Court Reporter reports and transcribes the verbatim stenographic record of official court proceedings, prepares and certifies transcripts, and at the direction of the Court, reads the record aloud in court in accordance with the law. Official Court Reporters are responsible for providing their own computer equipment and software. Preparation of transcripts is accomplished outside of regular working hours.

Qualifications:

APPLICANTS MUST POSSESS **ALL** OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A current Certified Shorthand Reporter's (CSR) license
- Successfully passed the Registered Professional Reporter (RPR) examination OR other comparable examination as determined by the Orange County Superior Court
- Computer Aided Transcription (CAT) capability
- Realtime certification (CRR) or capability
- At least two years of Certified Shorthand Reporter experience including at least one year in a court environment
- Acceptable history with the CSR Board of California and the District Court of Appeal, as determined by the Recruitment Committee
- Possession of or ability to obtain a California driver's license by date of appointment and own transportation or other Court approved means of transportation to travel between Justice Centers

Examples of duties:

1. Reports verbatim testimony and court proceedings using stenographic equipment and/or Computer Aided Transcription (CAT); asks Judicial Officer for clarification of instructions, orders, or takes other actions to properly note the official court record.
2. Reads back all or portions of the official court proceedings.
3. Prepares transcripts; reviews and certifies transcripts of court proceedings.
4. Maintains a variety of electronic and paper files of the court record for which the court reporter is directly responsible; prepares daily transcripts as needed; and provides transcripts of proceedings on request of parties or by the court, pursuant to applicable codes.
5. May be required to change assignments on short notice or work temporary assignments at other Justice Centers.



SPEEDBUILDING: Getting motivated

By Sarah E. Vestrat

Like running a marathon, speedbuilding requires a fiercely determined attitude that can only be accessed beneath our sometimes whimsical desires for pleasure and accomplishment. Pushing to the next speed level demands strength, drive, tenacity, and courage – those character traits that can make us uncomfortable, yet focused and forceful. Those traits emerge when we have a goal that we feel is really worthwhile, and when we find that goal, we can find motivation.

As students, you must find this motivation to succeed *within yourself*. And you cannot do that unless you have first considered other options and goals, weighed the pros and cons, and have decided that for many reasons court reporting and/or captioning is the career you want to pursue. These reasons are *your* reasons. No one else can make you want to reach your goal badly enough to make sacrifices and to discipline yourself to achieve it. So when you feel your ambition draining, review the reasons why you are in court reporting school. Consider writing down your reasons and putting this list in a prominent place where you will see it and can read it every day to give yourself a motivational boost. It is nice to have others encourage you, but do not rely on others to give you your motivation. Only you can do that.

Visit working reporters

Visit the professionals in the field. Freelancers, officials, and captioners will each have their own unique perspective and advice to offer you. Observe them as they work, if possible. Ask them about their job, what they like and what they do not like about it. Learn all you can about the day-to-day duties of the profession. This will help you to affirm your reasons and decision for pursuing this career and can help you to develop a strong commitment to your goal. And the more professional contacts you make, the easier it will be to see yourself as a working reporter and feel that you, too, are a member of the court reporting community.

Remember the great things about being a court reporter or captioner

1. **Many job opportunities.** You can enjoy the flexible hours of being a freelance court reporter. You could even own your own court reporting firm. Or you can become a broadcast captioner and work for a captioning company. Or you can have the stability of being an official court reporter and working in court. You could also provide CART for the deaf or the hearing-impaired. Court reporters are also needed to report meetings for state and national conventions. Congressional reporting is yet another field a student may pursue. You could even consider teaching court reporting.
2. **The money.** Most court reporters are well paid and can increase their salaries by gaining further certification and by taking more jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual earnings for a court reporter were \$49,860 in May of 2014. The highest paid 10 percent earned more than \$94,140 in 2014. Some court reporters make over \$100,000 per year. Check www.bls.gov for their latest update on earnings.
3. **Interesting work.** Reporting for depositions, court, education, meetings, or broadcasting involves a wide variety of subject matter. You will meet many people in different occupations and situations. You will learn a great deal from this exposure.
4. **Comfortable working conditions.** You can make your workspace as enjoyable as you desire if you freelance or become a broadcast captioner and work at home. If you report depositions, they are usually conducted in pleasant surroundings at the attorney's office or the office of the witness. Official court reporters have their own private offices at the courthouse. CART providers work in various locations, such as classrooms, meeting halls, courtrooms, and businesses. You will work with other professionals, many of whom are at the top of their fields.
5. **Respect from others.** The court reporting and captioning field is well-respected. People are fascinated by the job and will inquire about the details of what you do. "Certified Shorthand Reporter," "Registered Professional Reporter," and all of the other specialty certifications reporters can acquire take tremendous effort and skill to attain, which makes the reporting field a unique and respected niche.
6. **Self-respect.** Your desire to improve your life and achieve your goal can help to bolster your self-esteem and self-respect. A worthy achievement is a source of pride.

Review often the reasons that have made you decide to pursue this career and add to those reasons whenever you can. When you fully understand this profession and what it takes to succeed in school, and when you have truly made up your mind that this is what *you* want — to become a court reporter or captioner — you have already taken some very crucial steps towards reaching your goal. Hard work, perseverance, self-discipline – and motivation — can then follow.

COLLEGE OF COURT REPORTING

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ANY SUGGESTIONS?

*Your CCR newsletter is always changing.
 Contact Jen at jen.lewis@ccr.edu with
 any ideas that you may have for the next
 one. It is much appreciated!*



Birthdays are in bold print! Happy birthday, CCR students and faculty!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Years Day 	2
3	4 Debra Selsavage Tracie Blocker- Classes Resume 180-200 Multivoice	5	6 Alisandra Zerillo	7	8	9
10	11 Dawn Molina	12	13	14 Justina Foster Taifa Stephenson Finals Prep Speedbuilding	15	16 Kristine Rebar Nicole Miller
17	18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Finals Prep Speedbuilding	19	20 Alice Leonard	21 Live I-class Finals D&E	22 Live I-class Finals D	23 Baley Sargent Elizabeth Meek
24 Karen Copeland	25 Opposite Day Live I-class Finals D&E	26 Cathryn Good Live I-class Finals D&E	27 Michelle Jones SAPs close 11:59 p.m.	28	29 Coursesites Close 11:59 p.m.	30 Allison Allen Semester Break
31 Casi De La Torre Amanda Olivares Leslie Macias						