



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

- Henry Ford



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# THE GUARDIAN

College of Court Reporting

Issue 8

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## CONFESSIONS OF A STUDENT INTERN

BY VALERIE MELKUS

I could never have predicted how difficult and frustrating court reporting school would be. I also could never have predicted how rewarding it has been for me. There’s a saying that goes something like this, “Nothing that’s rewarding and worthwhile is ever easy.” This has become my motto throughout school. It is not easy, but if it were, would it be as rewarding an accomplishment to graduate and to work in the profession? I think we all know the answer to that question is “No way!”

My name is Valerie Melkus, and I am an online court reporting student at the College of Court Reporting (CCR). This is my second year at CCR, and I am currently working on my exit speeds. My educational background before enrolling in court reporting school includes a bachelor’s degree from the University of Northern Iowa, which I obtained in 2004 with a major in Spanish and a minor in criminology, as well as a semester spent studying at The University of Valladolid in Valladolid, Spain. I’ve always been interested in the criminal justice system. However, I didn’t think I could flourish or be of service in any of the careers in the legal field until I learned about court reporting. The role of court reporter fits me perfectly, and I am thrilled to be so close to graduating and becoming a working reporter.

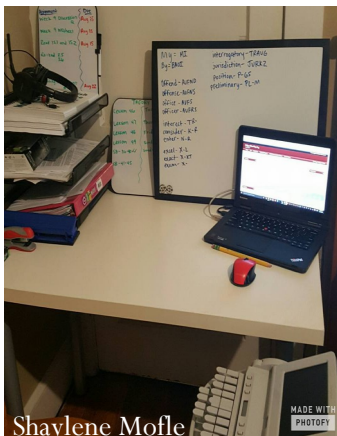
When I first became interested in court reporting, there were no court reporting schools in the state of Iowa. After briefly attending a part-time online program through a school in Georgia, I realized that I wanted to find a school that offered a full-time program. An associate professor at the part-time online program suggested the College of Court Reporting (CCR). I learned that CCR is well-regarded and that they have an accredited, full-time online program. I contacted CCR, loved what I saw, and I’ve been there ever since. I’m expected to graduate, if all goes as planned, this August.

I’m often asked what it’s like to go to school online. Like anything else, it’s what you make of it. You have to be 100% committed whether you’re going to a physical classroom or logging into class from your computer at home. I think that court reporting is one program where online schooling makes sense because what it really comes down to is you and your machine. No amount of face-to-face interactions with

## Student of the Month

### Kristine Rebar

Kristine was nominated as student of the month by her instructors because she is doing a great job in all areas of class: attendance and class participation, completion of homework, great quiz scores. She is described as “just an all-around great student.” Keep up the great work, Kristine!



CCR Student Shaylene Mofle recently shared a photo of what her work space looks like. It's important for online students to have a quiet place devoted to practice time. What does your work space look like? Share a photo of your setup on our Facebook page, and you might see it here next!

classmates or faculty is going to be as valuable to a student as sitting down and writing on their machine, and then writing some more. The faculty at CCR is fantastic. Each of the instructors I've had have gone above and beyond to ensure that I have everything I need to do well. They have talked me down from the ledge, so to speak, when I'm frustrated and feel like I'll never reach that next speed. I've never before attended a school where each and every instructor is wholeheartedly rooting for my fellow students and me every step of the way.

My experiences meeting working reporters have only reinforced my excitement to be going into the field of court reporting. I was introduced to my wonderful mentor while volunteering at the Animal Rescue League of Iowa (ARL) one evening. I had worked there many years ago and was catching up with Tom Colvin, the executive director, and I mentioned to him that I was in school for court reporting. Later that evening while in a volunteer training, Tom introduced me to my future mentor, Sheryl Culver, who was also a volunteer at the shelter and a working reporter. It was kind of Tom to introduce us, and gracious of Sheryl to agree to be my mentor and open up the world of working reporters to me. Sensational Sheryl has helped me through school every step of the way, even taking time out of her busy schedule every few months to proctor speed tests for me. Everyone I've met in the profession, I've met thanks to Sheryl.

Sheryl also introduced me to another official reporter, the marvelous Megan Hague, for my internship. I was quite nervous on my first day. As I walked up the steps of the Polk County Courthouse, I thought my heart was going to pop out of my chest. I was sweaty and shaky, and I had no idea what to expect. I'm pretty sure my voice cracked like that of a pre-pubescent boy when I introduced myself to Megan. I now wish I could go back and tell myself that I needn't have worried. Megan was, and continues to be, supportive, friendly, and helpful. I probably asked her at least 75 questions during my first week of interning. Was I pesky? Yes. Did it bother her? Not at all (or at least not that she ever let on, thank you, Megan.) I wasn't trying to be pesky; it's one thing to learn about court procedures, transcript formatting, and speaker symbols in a classroom, but quite another to actually apply and use that knowledge in the courtroom. It has been fascinating, to say the least.

My internship is only about halfway done, and I have already learned a wealth of information from sitting with Megan. I've also noticed quite a transformation in regards to my confidence as well. Sitting in the courtroom with another reporter and observing how it all works has relieved a lot of the “fear of the unknown” anxiety that I'd been experiencing. I still have a lot to learn before I'll be a court reporter, but I know that with the help of my school, all the great reporters I've met, and my perseverance, I'll be there very soon.

# DIDN'T MAKE IT TO CONVENTION?

Check out our Facebook page and the National Court Reporters Association's Facebook page to see photos from convention weekend!



## June Evaluations Passed

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

<b><u>12 SAPs</u></b>	<b><u>5 SAPs</u></b>	<b><u>3 SAPs</u></b>	Jessica Bustos	Jennifer Wesner
Gabrielle Mosher	Brittany Moore	Amanda Vernon	Karina Hannah	Jessica Frizzell
<b><u>11 SAPs</u></b>	Kristine Rebar	Angela Viray	Kayde Reiken	Karen Copeland
Donna Alexander	Linda Day	Barbara Ufer	Kendall Willis	Kate Bush-McKee
<b><u>9 SAPs</u></b>	Lori Sanders	Erin Claybrook	Kimberly Wilkerson	Katelyn Berch
Dacaree Jacobson	Michael Roberts	Jennifer Macdonald	Kolby Garrison	Kristi Hendrick
Lisa Major	Taisha Herr	Katherine Evangelou	Makeba Flanigan	Lexi Klasing
<b><u>8 SAPs</u></b>	<b><u>4SAPs</u></b>	Kiana Luke	Rhonda Wentzell	Lucetta Robertson
Baley Sargent	Brian Nelson	Kristina Meseck	Sara Vaughn	Najah Danner
Christine Angel	Cassi Knight	Madeleine Lauer	Tyler Adkins	Sarah Hamilton
Clara Brooks	Debra Selsavage	Martha Obstalecki	<b><u>1 SAP</u></b>	Sindee Baum
Geneva Wildcat	Jamie Bleicher	Nicole Wicks	Amy Powers	Stephanie McGinnis
Oanh Dang	Jamie Johnson	Shana Jones	Ashley Davis	Tammy Burk
<b><u>7 SAPs</u></b>	Jessica Vanatta	Valerie Melkus	Ashley Guillermo	Veronica Stewart
Shannon Gallo	Jessica Williams	Victoria Huntley	Brandi Smith	
<b><u>6 SAPs</u></b>	Kathy Bruner	<b><u>2 SAPs</u></b>	Casey Cunningham	
Ashley Wilson	Lauren Mancusi	Ashly Richter	Darby Valle	
Kathleen Steadman	Nicole Miller	Carol Casstevens	Dawn Molina	
Morgan Goodman	Tracie Blocker	Casi De La Torre	Jalene Hutseal	

## TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES RESTORE ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE

By: Nancy Coltun Webster

A one-time court reporter has used her skills to bring live entertainment to hearing-impaired people joining movie theaters and other venues to be more inclusive.

"Real-time captioning has its roots in court reporting," said Kathy Cortopassi, president of Voice To Print Captioning of Crown Point. She got her start as a court stenographer and today Voice to Print provides real-time captioning in a variety of settings, including live theater.

Cortopassi said that more than 25 years ago, after a family member developed hearing loss, she decided to use her court reporting skills in a new way.

"As quickly as people can speak, I can type on the steno machine and I can send words through the internet to a screen or tablet," she said, explaining the process.

Cortopassi will provide captioning for a special performance of "The Odd Couple," at 3 p.m. Saturday at Theatre at the Center in the Center for Visual and Performing Arts, 1040 Ridge Road in Munster. The captions will appear on a single flat-screen TV monitor near the stage and audience members can follow the play's dialogue in real time.

Cortopassi suggested to the theater the idea for providing the captioned service during a performance of "The Odd Couple," said Linda Fortunato, artistic director at the theater. Fortunato said she's been a part of multiple shows where there are signers, but never part of a show that's had captions like this. "We don't change the performance," when the captioning is provided, Fortunato said. Though most of the audience expected to be present won't necessarily be there because of the accommodations, "it might be interesting to see how many people will be interested in this service going forward."

Not all theaters provide captioning service, Cortopassi said, and as a result, those with hearing impairment are often unable to conveniently enjoy live theater.

One in six adults aged 18 and older in 2014 reported they had trouble hearing without a hearing aid, according to National Center for Health Statistics. Those more likely to use assistive technology are between the ages of 18 and 39. Adults 70 and older are more likely to have used a hearing aid.

Theater at the Center has about 15 assisted listening devices on hand to amplify sound for those who have some hearing.

Cortopassi points out not everyone with a hearing impairment can take advantage of amplification devices. Some have cochlear implants that may conflict with the use and others' auditory nerves are dead and amplification won't help.

Captioning works for those with deafness of all levels and for those who might otherwise not expect to request an accommodation at the theater.

Cortopassi has provided caption services for performances at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Steppenwolf Theater and Victory Gardens and the Chicago Film Festival. She said she has also captioned for the Indiana Repertory Theater in Indianapolis.

"The most exciting thing is including people in a more complete way," said Fortunato. "Ultimately, that's why we are doing this, to bring live theater to people."



**Position:** Official court reporter

**Location:** Fourth Judicial District, Manitowoc, WI



**Position:** Freelance reporter

**Location:** Holm Reporting, Fort Wayne, IN

**Position:** Transcriptionist

**Company:** Athreon, remote

If you would like more information about any of these positions, please contact

*Natalie.Kijurna@ccr.edu*

## CCR Launches Free Hooked on Court Reporting Course

Are you tired of bobbing and weaving through life? Get HOOKED on Court Reporting today. We have created a free five-week introductory course to allow you to learn more about the profession without any initial investment. Our goal is to increase public awareness about the career options in captioning and court reporting. There will be a new session starting in August!

Contact Nicky Rodriquez at *Nicky.rodriquez@ccr.edu* to get more info!

AGENDA

**HOOKED ON COURT REPORTING**



*Session I: August 22 to September 26  
(All Classes are CDT with Recordings Available)*

Date	Time	Topic
August 22	7p.m.	Q&A on Court Reporting and You
August 25	9 a.m.	Introduction to Voice Writing History of Court Reporting and CCR
August 29	7p.m.	Machine Shorthand Theory Basics
September 1	9 a.m.	Machine Shorthand Theory
September 5		Labor Day - no class
September 8	9 a.m.	Machine Shorthand Theory
September 12	7p.m.	Machine Shorthand Theory
September 15	9 a.m.	Machine Shorthand Theory
September 19	7p.m.	Machine Shorthand Theory
September 22	9 a.m.	The Importance of Academics in the Field of Court Reporting
September 26	7p.m.	Career Paths and Tools for Your Success

**Presenters:**  
Kay Moody, Tim Moody, and Lynette Eggers





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# AUGUST

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

Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday

	1	2	3 Erin Claybrook Graduation Ceremony	4 Alisha Peterson Donna Sykes NCRA Convention	5	6 Hilary Franco
7	8 ← BACK TO Class	9	10 Lois/SH Presentation	11	12	13
14 Katie Vettickal	15 Mock 10-Page	16 Natalie Sandi	17 Ashley Guillermo Daisy Corpus	18 Faculty Meeting	19	20
21	22 Sara Vaughn 180-200 Multivoice	23	24	25	26	27 Kathleen Steadman
28 Erin De Leon	29 Keely Nelsen Tammy Burk 140-160 Multivoice	30 Tyler Adkins	31 Lois Schoenbeck Jessica Wills Clara Brooks			