



DEPOSITION
REPORTERS ASSOCIATION
OF CALIFORNIA, INC.

Student Newsletter – August 2011

Lorrie L. Marchant, Editor – studentnewslettereditor@caldra.org

Reporter and Student Events:

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors will be meeting in Northern California on August 27th, 2011. Do you have anything you'd like us to discuss? Your district rep is your voice. Send them an e-mail with your questions or concerns.

CEU Grab 'N Go

Date: September 24, 2011

Start Time: 9:00 a.m. **End Time:** 5:00 p.m.

Location: The Handlery Hotel and Resort
950 Hotel Circle North
San Diego, CA 92108

[The Handlery Hotel and Resort](#)

Mention DRA to get special room rate

More Info: <http://www.caldra.org/GrabNGo.asp>

CORE Curriculum – Module I of IV

Date: Saturday, October 8, 2011

Start Time: 9:00 a.m. **End Time:** 1:00 p.m.

Location: West Valley College
Business Division Building, Room 9

[14000 Fruitvale Avenue](#)

Saratoga, CA 95070

Parking Lots 4 or 5 – \$2.00 (8 quarters or 2 one-dollar bills)

Cost: \$99 for reporters \$49 for teachers
\$29 for students

More Info: <http://caldra.org/CORE.asp>

DRA's 16th Annual Convention

Date: February 24 - 26, 2012

Location: Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa
400 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA
Monterey, California

More Info: <http://www.caldra.org>



Current Legislative Update:

Continuing Ed Bill Update:

In the March 2011 newsletter, we advised you that The Deposition Reporters Association is co-sponsoring California legislation with CCRA to enact continuing education requirements for court reporters, something that is long overdue and was one of the priorities set by you, our members, in DRA's "There Oughta Be A Law" fall 2010 seminars. The continuing education legislation is Senate Bill 671, authored by Senator Curren Price.

In the May 2011 newsletter, we advised you that on April 25, 2011 the bill passed out of the Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development by a vote of 8 to 1. That hearing was attended by three DRA committee members and our lobbyist, who were there to represent you, our members.

GREAT NEWS:

On July 5, 2011, our bill successfully passed out of the Assembly Business, Professions and Consumer Protection Committee with a bipartisan 8-to-1 vote. Next it will go to the Assembly Appropriations Committee and then the Assembly floor. We will keep you advised of the progress as it unfolds.

The goal of continuing ed programs is to raise the level of competence and professionalism of the practitioners in the industry. As technology continues to change rapidly, as litigation grows more complex and the judicial system becomes more sophisticated, effective preparation and continuing education and development to meet the changing demands of the profession proves even more critical. In addition, it is paramount to stay abreast of the changing laws governing court reporters. Currently, the only licensees in the legal profession in California who are not required to take consumer-protecting CE are freelance deposition professionals. Our official colleagues have been benefiting from CE for years. The only reason we haven't had mandatory CE thus far is because people don't understand or truly appreciate what we do and how important it really is. Getting broader respect and recognition in the legal and policy-making community is a long fight, and SB 671 is a key part of it.

To that end, DRA will continue to endeavor to ensure that California reporters are at the top of their game, which is critical in this time of rampant and continued threat of replacement by electronic recording.

The World's Gone Paperless, So Why Not The Classroom

by Sandra Natale, CRI

One of the fastest growing trends in the 21st century has been the almost universal professional adoption of the “paperless” writer as the tool of choice for judicial reporters as well as CART providers and captioners. It is now estimated that over 92 percent of all new professional steno machines sold today are “paperless.” It isn’t hard to see why. Paperless writing technology offers a writing platform that allows reporters to write more comfortably for longer periods of time, permits cleaner writing through the use of on-board software that more accurately tracks keystrokes, and requires less mechanical maintenance and adjustment.

Yet while the professional world has enthusiastically adopted paperless technology, the educational infrastructure of our profession has been generally far more reticent to embrace or even permit the use of “paperless” writers by students, particularly those in the early stages of training. A rough survey of the approximately 80-90 institutions teaching in our profession in 2010 revealed less than 50 percent recommend or allow the use of a paperless writer in classroom training.

On the surface, these numbers seem rather surprising. Academic versions of the major paperless writer brands now available offer students important advantages in training. It is unquestionably less fatiguing to write the lengthy hours of practice a steno student needs on a machine which does not “push paper around a platen” than on one that does. It is also advantageous to students to practice on a machine with a “touch” that can adapt to their developing writing style progressively without repetitive and extensive contact adjustments. It is also important that the machine a student uses in training has the capability to replicate as closely as possible the professional “touch” they will need to be comfortable with on the job. Today’s paperless machines offer a “touch” which is both adaptable throughout training and which is virtually identical to the “touch” of the professional paperless machine the student will eventually take to work. Several student paperless machines such as the Stenograph Wave also offer features like instant feedback through onboard screen displays of notes. With such feedback, fingering errors, misstrokes, and other writing issues common to learners can be immediately detected and much mistake repetition avoided. That is a huge advantage, especially to beginning students.

So why have schools who teach machine stenography been generally so reluctant to embrace paperless writing?

On the whole, teachers who do not embrace paperless writing seem to have four major concerns: ability to interpret and analyze writing issues via notes, cost, reliance on a CAT system, and premature introduction of realtime “feedback” to beginning students. These are all important concerns. However, today’s paperless writer technology can and does provide attractive answers for

all these concerns. Let’s take a moment and explore each one and how paperless writing technology addresses each.

Can paperless writers provide the same level of “information” on writing issues such as drags, drops, stacks, fingering errors, misstrokes, pivots, timing issues, shadows, and other writing “flubs” as traditional paper notes? The answer might surprise many instructors. Current paperless writers such as the Diamante or Stenograph Wave, when used in conjunction with the free, non-CAT-system-dependent software download, TruView™ available from Stenograph can not only do as good a job as traditional machine-printed paper notes, they actually do it better. Not only does TruView allow Diamante/Wave users (students and professionals) to see drops, stacks, drags, stacks, pivots, shadows, misstrokes, and combinations of these types of errors easily, it also allows writers to see “timing errors.”

By timing errors, we mean problems in left-right hand coordination which are not only errors in themselves, but which also can be contributing causes to other types of errors such as stacks and pivots. The reason we can see these types of errors in writing generated from the Diamante/Wave is because this technology actually was designed to replicate the stroke-recording technique of the pre-realtime “manual writer,” recording the end of the stroke on the downward motion rather than the upward release. Previous generations of electronic machines had recorded the end of stroke on the release or upward motion of the end of the stroke, thus making the electronic notes unable to reflect timing errors between when the left hand and right hand fingers began or ended strokes.

While it is true that today’s paperless writing technology generally carries a higher retail price than purchase of older, used machines, the actual cost of ownership of a paperless machine can be quite attractive to students. For example, let’s say a student purchases a “used electronic steno writer” for \$800. That does compare favorably to the \$1995 retail price of a Stenograph Wave. However, on average a typical full-time student uses three to four 50-pad boxes of steno paper in a year when writing 25-30 hours per week. At today’s prices, that paper costs the student typically between \$300 and \$400 per year, depending on whether he or she buys in bulk or not. The paper cost alone of ownership of a machine generating paper notes is thus \$900-\$1200 over a three-year training period, actually exceeding the cost of the machine itself. The cost of printing paper notes from TruView, however, is much less for several reasons. First, ordinary copy paper can be used and notes can be printed multiple columns to a page and on both sides of the paper. At today’s prices, paper costs to a Stenograph Wave User are approximately \$75-\$135 per year or \$225-\$435 for a three-year period. Thus over a three-year training period, the costs of using the older writer and the costs of using the Stenograph Wave are actually very similar. And when you factor in the increased trade-in value of the Wave (currently \$1200 when traded in against the purchase of a professional writer from Stenograph within three years of original purchase) the true cost of ownership and use of a Wave

may actually be substantially less than that of the older technology.

Many teachers are also concerned about requiring students, especially beginning students, to acquire or use a CAT system too soon in their training. In part, some of this concern is cost based. The TruView option, however, is offered free of charge, so this should not be an ongoing issue. The way in which TruView displays notes, furthermore, should also address concerns of those teachers who argue that introducing CAT-system feedback too soon in training will discourage some students from developing the strong read-back and note-reading skills they will need to succeed in school and as professionals.

TruView is designed to provide feedback on any suitable computer screen after the file has been written.

Therefore, such feedback cannot distract the student while writing. And since the note displays are easier to read than traditional steno paper notes, both on-screen and in printed format, use of TruView is designed to actually promote more frequent read-back and accurate note interpretation. Further, since the electronic note files can be emailed, teachers can coach and mentor

Don't Forget about DRA's mentor program:

DRA is committed to ensuring that the shorthand reporting profession remains a viable and integral part of the legal system. To this end, we have designed a Mentor Program that will meld the enthusiasm of new reporters and students with the maturity of the more seasoned reporter. New reporters and students will be matched up with experienced reporters in the state of California in order to provide them with relevant guidance, support and encouragement during the beginning stages of their new careers.

Do you need some extra help, personal attention, or have questions regarding reporting? If so, then sign up for our mentoring program and receive guidance or help from a professional working court reporter. Working reporters understand what difficulties you face as students and new reporters. We are willing to volunteer our time to get to know you, praise you for your achievements and lend encouragement for those tough times when you take the CSR, attend your first deposition, or are making the switch from being an official to freelance reporter.

If you are a current student at the 140-level speed and above or any reporter that wishes to be mentored, and you are interested in participating, please go [read more](#), or fill out the [Mentee Application form](#). If you have further questions, we can be reached at 925.905.2611 or email the Mentor Program coordinator at: jcain@meritreporting.com. Once we receive your application, we will endeavor to make the best match possible for both mentor and mentee.

students quickly without the cumbersome process of physically exchanging note files.

Teachers and students can also be assured that note errors revealed in TruView files are truly representative of the students' writing and not just the result of inadequate machine maintenance. Today's paperless technology does not require the level of mechanical maintenance or adjustment that paper machines do. In other words, for example, a shadow on notes generated by a Stenograph Wave and viewed in TruView is far more likely to be a writing issue than a "shadow" generated by a machine that pushes paper but has not been serviced in several years.

When you consider the advantages of more comfortable writing on a platform that adapts to meet the student's developing writing style until a professional touch is achieved "naturally," the true cost of ownership, AND the benefits of printable notes that more accurately represent virtually ALL writing issues, bringing paperless writers into the classroom just might be a big step toward giving more students a better chance to graduate and join this great profession.

DRA's Mission Statement:

DRA represents Certified Shorthand Reporters who report depositions and out-of-court proceedings in the State of California, as well as captioners and CART providers. DRA strives to preserve and enhance the stenographic reporting profession, ensure its integrity, and maintain its high standards and impartiality wherever stenographic services are required. DRA is committed to ensuring that the stenographic reporting profession remains a viable and integral part of the legal system.

Did You know??

- DRA has an annual scholarship for students?
- A DRA Student Membership is **ONLY** \$30 annually?
- DRA has eight district reps to serve you, covering every county in California?
- DRA's Mentor Program is FREE?

Is there an issue you would like to know about? Have a question or a story to share?

Write to studentnewslettereditor@caldra.org



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