



MARYLAND COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE By Esther Thompson

MCRA is on the move! There is so much going on in our organization I would like to share with our members.

On November 18, 2011, during the Prince George's County Education Day, the court reporters put on a real time demonstration.

Also, on November 5, 2011, MCRA gave the tests for NCRA in Baltimore. MCRA would like to thank Gore Brothers Reporting for the use of their facilities for the testing. These tests are given twice a year, in May and November. Sherry Meredith does a great job in organizing and administering the tests. NCRA is now working on taking our tests on-line.

The MCRA Convention was held in Ocean City

on September 23rd and 24th. During this conference we had the opportunity to meet and talk with Tom Silva, a court reporting student studying on-line. In our discussions we found out that the reason he was studying on-line is MCRA is not advertising our Maryland school through NCRA, therefore, he thought we did not have a school. MCRA is looking into paying to advertise the school in Baltimore on their website and in JCRA. Of course, there is a fee for this, but to promote students and reporters in Maryland, it is a necessary fee.

The vote is in, but Annapolis and Baltimore were just one vote apart, so we are going to go with the best site

financially for the location of the 2012 convention. We are looking at an all day seminar on Saturday, September 22nd, 2012, and a half day seminar on Sunday, September 23rd, 2012, with a Saturday evening happy hour.

It is January and time to join MCRA. We need to keep the Association alive to promote our court reporting profession in Maryland. Even if you don't need the CEU credits, please join MCRA to promote our profession through advertising our school, administering tests, and sponsoring local conventions. We need reporters willing to perform these functions, and if you can't help by being on a committee, please help monetarily. Thank you for your support.

We Need Your Help!

We are now selecting speakers for our September convention. If you have been to a seminar

and you really enjoyed the speaker, email his or her contact information to Evadney Key at

andrine59@msn.com.

Thank you.

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How would you like to receive newsletter

We want your input as to how you would prefer to receive our Newsletters. One option is the paper copy like you are receiving now. The second option is through emails.

We also post our Newsletter on our MCRA website at MCRA.org, so if you would prefer not to receive e-mails or paper copies, you can let us know you don't want either one. Please email me at: esther.thom@yahoo.com

2011 Convention News

Our Annual Convention for 2011 was held in Ocean City, Maryland, on September 23rd and 24th of 2011 at the Grand Hotel on the Boardwalk in Ocean City.

The convention was a great success! Diana Wakefield, as President, scheduled all the speakers and made sure all ran well. She really worked hard and it was the reason all went like clockwork.

MCRA would also like to thank Art Miller for sponsoring 4 students to attend the convention. We only had one student, but have set up an account with the balance to sponsor students for our 2012 convention. We are going to get the word out that student sponsorship is available on the website and through the court reporting school in Baltimore.

Thank you, also, Joe Grabowski and Gore Brothers for sponsoring our Happy Hour. It is always a great time to get reacquainted with our fellow court reporters in a relaxed atmosphere.

MCRA would also like to thank everyone who donated to the silent auction. Our contributors are too numerous to name here, but your donations help keep the Association growing.



Carla Sinclair, Sherry Meredith and Valerie Dawson



Diana Wakefield, President, 2011

Sherry's Corner By Sherry Meredith, Chief Examiner

In May our registration was 9 for RPR, 5 for RMR and 9 for CRR. In November it was 12 for RPR, 3 for RMR, 10 for CRR and 1 for CCP. I want to thank Joe Grabowski for letting us use his offices and a member of his staff for the testing. I also want to say thank you to Esther Thompson, Sherry Knox, Carla Sinclair, Alice Welsh and Joe Koluch for helping me administer the tests. You made my testing days much easier. As Chief Examiner, I would love to develop a list of volunteers so we can rotate. It is a wonderful way to help your association and your fellow reporters and only give up one or two days of your time each year. Contact me at slmeredith@cablespeed.com or in my office at 301-952-3461

EDUCATION DAY

On November 18, 2011, during the Prince George's County Education Day, the court reporters put on a real time demonstration for other departments in the courthouse. This proved to be a huge success and created an understanding of just exactly how difficult our job can be and how the cooperation of their departments can enhance our ability to produce transcripts.



Evadney Key making presentation.



Debbie Klapaska writing real time.



Phyllis Hernandez and Debbie Burrell making presentation with the help of an interpreter to demonstrate an added aspect of our job.

DEBBIE'S CORNER—Let's Lighten the Workload in 2012

By Debbie Klapaska

Court reporters have a knack for multitasking. Whether we started out that way, or learned out of necessity to adapt, we really should strive for synchronicity so we're not just doing multiple things at once.

So with that in mind...

With all the devices available nowadays for communication, entertainment and recordkeeping, the working reporter—freelance or official—can streamline many tasks. Let's face it, while at the depo or in court we have that "to do" list hovering over us. Smartphone technology and an iPad or tablet can get that "to do" list done, or partially done, so that when we get home from court or the depo, we can actually have more free time.

Have an unexpected expedite, but you don't know if your scopists are available? While on a break, upload the file to one of the file transfer services and send out a group email to scopists you have worked with — and who have an understanding of this process — detailing the parameters of the file-at-hand; TAT, complexity, pages.

Meanwhile, at the file transfer service, set it up so that there is only one download available. Whichever scopist is able to access the file first, can then download and be editing away, while you're doing the afternoon session.

Ah, but there's no signal at your depo site, or courtroom, for you to use your computer. That's where Wi-Fi enabled devices can connect to a mobile hotspot, and will get the job done.

The bottom line is, you don't want to get home after a grueling day of writing, to then face the task of finding who among your scopists is available, or worse, facing the prospect of being up all night editing and having to take yourself off the book for the next day's schedule.

If you find yourself in the unfortunate position of not having an available scopist, then here is where your familiarity with court reporting forum sites and scopist forum sites will prove invaluable. Put up a new thread titled SOS-Expedite, Experienced [insert software name] Scopist Needed. In the message, give the details— pages/TAT/complexity.

"Smartphone technology and an iPad or tablet can get that "to do" list done, or partially done, so that when we get home from court or the depo, we can actually have more free time."

And last but not least, offer to provide a reference from a scopist you've worked with, who will attest to your credibility for prompt payment.

In an effort to address our members' questions for streamlining a court reporter's duties, whether it is from the technical computing aspects, or writing and production aspects of our profession, we would welcome your input. Let us know what your concerns are. You can email me at dklapaska@gmail.com.

Student's Corner By Tom Silva

I began my life as a student in court reporting last year. After many years as a medical transcriptionist, I decided it was a time for change in careers. I began to look into court reporting after a suggestion from a family member. After doing a lot of research about the job and speaking with many different people, I decided to enroll in court reporting school. After doing a lot of research on different schools, I finally decided on an online program at Cuyahoga Community College in Ohio. I was a little apprehensive about going to school online for this type of course, but I also found out there were not many schools in my area that offered onsite classes. After actually beginning classes, I became more comfortable with the online courses. In the end, you have to be performing at a certain level to pass the courses, so it was up to me to practice to keep pace with the courses. I have developed discipline to work at home as a medical transcriptionist, so going to an online school was an easy transition. Thus far, school has gone well and I am looking forward to every new class I begin and eventually getting out into the world of court reporting.

Another part of my education in court reporting was getting out to conferences and meeting reporters who are working in the field. I have been to two conferences in my first year. My first was the NCRA convention last March in Baltimore. I had a good time there. I met some reporters, went around to

different vendors, and got a good feel for court reporting. I also attended some very informative seminars.

My second convention was the Maryland Court Reporters Convention held last September in Ocean City. This was quite different in that it was much smaller and much more personal. From the minute I walked in I was welcomed by Esther Thompson and Diana Wakefield. They introduced me to several reporters from CART, freelance, and official reporters. I was able to have long conversations with many of these people and create very valuable contacts for the future. I believe I was the only student, and everyone made me feel very welcome. I could see many of these reporters knew each other, but I felt right at home from the minute I walked in. There were many good speakers and vendors. **Because of the small size, I got more out of this convention than I did the NCRA convention.** I found joining the MCRA to be a very important part of being a court reporter and a good way to stay in touch with peers. It was a very valuable experience. I look forward to the convention next year.

Don't forget to visit our website at MCRA.org

Education Advisory Committee Update

By Joe Grabowski, RMR, Committee Chair

Believe it or not, it has been two years this January that the reporting program started outside of Harford and Anne Arundel Community College, and 1.5 years since it began operating under the umbrella of the Maryland Community College System.

As of the end of the Fall Semester in December we had five students complete Theory I, 15 students enrolled in Speed II and III, and four students complete the program.

If you know of anyone interested in enrolling in Speed II or III, registration is now open, with a deadline of 1/6/12. Classes start 1/10/12. Theory I classes start in September, with a new class forming this summer. All pertinent information about the program is available at www.mdreportingschool.com. For your convenience, the following excerpt is from the Fees and Registration page of the site:

To Register:

BY MAIL: Send check or money order payable to Baltimore City Community College with attached form to:

Baltimore City Community College, Business and Continuing Education Division, 710 E. Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

IN PERSON: Go to above address to fill out the attached form, along with check, money order or credit card, Mon-Thu 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Their phone numbers are 410-986-5430 or 410-986-5447