



SLOW DOWN AND SAVOR LIFE

By Ashley Dickey • President-Alabama Court Reporters Association

To all our readers, I hope this edition finds you all well. In my house, we have been working to settle into our back-to-school routines of getting up and out the door early, completing homework, and attending extracurricular activities every afternoon. While I miss the long, lazy days of summer, I must confess I was ready to see routine return to our household.



Ashley Dickey
ACRA President

It is not yet fall but I am already seeing Halloween decorations displayed in stores. It has made me realize yet again how fast we move through the seasons and occasions in our lives. I feel like I blink and miss so much. No wonder I feel this way when stores are pushing us to rush time ahead from one event to the next. Do you take time to slow down and savor your life? Are you present in the moment you're living in or are you rushing through it to get to the next thing? I think it's natural for us to feel rushed to complete tasks without feeling anything as we do it. If you were fortunate enough to take vacation, did you unplug from devices and truly see your surroundings? I'd like to challenge all of us to resist the urge to rush "until life's no fun" as the song goes. I am guilty of doing things by rote and realizing later that I never took the time to enjoy the season I was in.

Speaking of things rushing by, NCRA's annual convention in New Orleans was last week. I was very pleased to hear that Alabama's

attendance was high. President-Elect Cindy Greene and Treasurer Cyndi Tumlin served as ACRA's delegates at the National Committee of State Associations. As you read through the newsletter, you will be able to enjoy articles that give you their perspectives on NCRA's convention. Debbie Isbell and Sabrina Lewis from our board also attended this year. You have an awe-inspiring board. I can tell you how busy they are and yet they still make time to get out and set a great example of being involved in our profession on the state and national levels. They expend countless hours of their personal time volunteering any way they can to further court reporting. I am so proud to be able to serve alongside these fabulous individuals. Thank you for everything you do!

President-Elect Cindy Greene is busy planning our 2019 annual conference. We plan to be at the Lodge at Gulf State Park next January. It is a brand-new facility! I can't wait to tour the grounds for myself. I encourage you to go ahead and make plans to attend ACRA's conference. You will get CEUs and I can promise Cindy has some excellent sessions in store for us.

Hopefully you have already renewed your ACRA membership and are now focused on renewing your ABCR license. Don't forget that these are two separate fees. Your ACRA membership is voluntary. It allows us to mentor students, plan conferences so you can obtain CEUs in a cost-effective and efficient manner, participate

Slow Down and Savor Life continues on page 6.

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2018 - 2019

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CHAIR: Amy Holland, CCR • awholland22@outlook.com

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

CHAIR: Pat Higgins, RPR, CCR • phiggins1967@yahoo.com
Sabrina Lewis, RDR, RMR, RPR, CCR • sabrina.lewis@bellsouth.net
Stacey Johnson • stenostacey@yahoo.com

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Felicia Blake, CCR • feliciablake@hotmail.com

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CHAIR: Cindy Greene, RPR, CCR • greenecourtreporter@gmail.com
Karen Strickland Planz, CCR • karenstricklandccr@gmail.com
Ashley N. Dickey, RPR, CCR • abdickey@bellsouth.net

WEBSITE

CHAIR: Karen Strickland Planz, CCR • karenstricklandccr@gmail.com

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CHAIR: Cornelia Baker, CCR • cornelia.baker@bakerrealtime.com
Greta Duckett, RPR, CCR • greta.duckett@bakerrealtime.com
Shannon Yost, CCR • spyostccr@gmail.com

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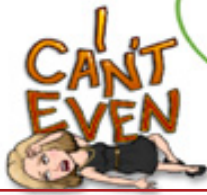
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I want to be...

STRESS-FREE

By Janet Chambliss-Smith, CCR • Director, District 3 - ACRA

I always say I am so stressed, but I never do anything about it (except say I am stressed). So I have decided to try to become stress-free. But how?

I have been reading up on it, and have found some tips. One is to always follow a routine. Be structured. Pick a time to go to bed the same every night and pick a time to wake up the same in the morning. Write down a to-do list for what you want to do the next day or the week (and follow it). Find a solution to a problem. When you do, write it down and you will have it for next time.

If you have a bad day or a bad experience, learn from it and move on. You can always call a friend that will give you their opinion. (It will make you feel better to get it off your chest, too).

Take care of yourself and relax. If you are stressed, take a walk around the block or around in your office. Check your list at the end of the day. What you don't get done that day, move it to the next day's list. Don't put things off. If you have a transcript that is due on a certain day, sit down and focus, or do a little bit every day so the due date won't sneak up on you. Here are some things to say to yourself if you are stressed. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "I am what I am today because of the choices I made yesterday." Or Take time to do what makes your soul happy. Relax, take a deep breath, everything will be fine. (Or pick your own saying).

I did see somewhere it said avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. I can pass on the third. But the first I need to function. The second I don't need but it is enjoyable at times. But do drink lots of water. Don't use too much refined sugars.

Exercise. If you can't go for a walk every day, just walk around your house, or clean. (I occasionally do a DVD called Walk Off the Pounds --I put it on silent cause the woman's laugh drives me nuts). It's great because you can walk in one spot while you are watching it and can walk one, two or three miles.

Get lots of sleep (sure, if you don't have a rush job). Once you are through with the rush job, take a nap (or glass of wine).

Call a friend. Call someone in your court reporting association, who probably has been there and done that, and will be glad to work you through whatever it is.

Rest, take care of yourself, and sometimes learn to say no. Stress sometimes gets you out of control in your mind. Remember we have all been there.

Seek
The
Right reaction
Earlier.
Smile.
Stomp
Failure Away.
Rest and
ENJOY
EVERYTHING!



A to Z Nationally

By Debra Amos Isbell, CCR, RDR, CRR, CRC

At this year's NCRA Annual Business Meeting, the nominees were all asked the question: What is the most important issue confronting our association? The overwhelming majority answered the present shortage of reporters and the lack of new people entering the field. So the A to Z Programs across the country have been targeted to help solve this shortage by spreading the word about this great profession and inspiring participants to enroll in court reporting schools.

I had the pleasure of speaking at the A to Z Panel seminar during the convention in New Orleans about our experiences here in Alabama. The room was packed with potential new leaders, and more chairs had to be brought in to accommodate the crowd. Cynthia Andrews, NCRA's senior director of education and certification, headed up the seminar, shared statistics, and touted the new online program introduced this year. Karla Sommer from Wisconsin and Mary Berry from Texas spoke as well. They both act as managers for their states and orchestrate A to Z Programs statewide. Each speaker gave a unique perspective of their personal experiences.

Now that Alabama has had three such programs, I have learned how to divide the responsibilities into committees:

1. **Marketing committee** – collecting participants by contacting high school counselors, attending career days, posting on Facebook, and talking it up everywhere you go.
2. **Membership committee** – receiving inquiries and communicating with the participants, filling out NCRA paperwork.
3. **Steno machine committee** – reaching out to reporters to donate/ lend their old, unused machines.
4. **Location committee** – obtaining a meeting place for the sessions.
5. **Lessons committee** – becoming familiar with the lessons, breaking them up into workable six- or eight-week sessions, and soliciting two reporters to help with each session.
6. **CR schools committee** – researching a few schools, finding out info on tuition, schedules, etc., and sharing what you've learned with the class. Encouraging outstanding participants to apply for Project Steno tuition assistance.

A to Z Nationally continues on page 5.

A to Z Nationally

continued from page 4.

The A to Z Program is a wonderful opportunity for students or career changers to become acquainted with the court reporting profession. I think everyone involved will tell you it is an extremely rewarding experience, and it can be quite easy and pleasurable when teamwork is involved. The distinct pleasure that I did not foresee was the camaraderie we experienced working with fellow reporters. I would encourage you to consider hosting your own A to Z Program. The groundwork is complete. Can I help you start the process? If you're not ready to take on the task, you can support the cause just by sharing your enthusiasm for your profession with your fellow citizens.

Court reporters and captioners, be silent no more!



Veritext announced the acquisition of Alabama-based court reporting firms Freedom Reporting in December of 2017 and Henderson & Associates in August of 2018.

NCRA CONTEST QUALIFIERS

Congratulations to Alabama reporters for qualifying in this year's NCRA speed/realtime contests!



Melanie Wilkins - 96.267% accuracy, 225 wpm Q&A real-time competition. Melanie is a federal official in Mobile.



Sabrina Lewis - 95.182% accuracy, 220 wpm literacy speed contest. Sabrina is a federal official in Birmingham and ACRA's District I representative.

Slow Down and Savor Life

continued from cover article.

in NCRA leadership trainings and programs, share the newsletter with members, and many other services we provide to support court reporters. ABCR is for the public consumer who uses court reporting services. ABCR also supplies your license yearly. Now is the time to renew your license. You have until September 30th to renew your license in order to avoid late fees. Many people have already renewed their licenses and were randomly selected for an audit of their CEUs. Members of ACRA enjoy the benefit of having all their CEUs retained by ACRA on our website. This makes it simple for you to send your proof of CEUs to ABCR.

That is yet another reason to make sure you're a member of ACRA from year to year. We work hard to make sure your membership is valuable to you.

The next time we will meet within these pages will be right before our January 2019 conference. I look forward to meeting you here and there. Remember to contact your district directors at any time if you have questions, comments or concerns about ACRA with which we can help. We are here for you always!

6

On behalf of all Alabama Official Court Reporters and Merit Reporters,

*Thank
You*

to Karen Strickland-Planz, Cindy Greene, Ashley Dickey, Celeste Riddle,

Representative Paul Lee and Senator Clyde Chambliss

and EVERYONE else who was involved for your time and energy

given to seeking and successfully receiving a pay raise

for the first time in over 20 years

and being eligible for future pay increases as state employees!

I encourage everyone to reach out to these individuals

and express your appreciation!

PROJECT STENO ALABAMA

Alabama has raised \$5,200 for Project Steno. A big THANK YOU goes out to contributors. Please consider giving a donation to this worthy cause of providing tuition assistance to new court reporting students.

ELITE DONORS:

ACRA • Bain & Associates Court Reporting Service, Inc. (Sandy Bain Moon)
Baker Realtime Reporting (Cornelia Baker)

PROFESSIONAL DONORS:

Alabama Court Reporting, Inc. (Lori Sizemore-Warren) • Caption It! (Alan Peacock)
Isbell & Associates, LLC (Debbie and Roy Isbell) • Robinson & Associates (Lois Robinson)

SPONSOR DONORS:

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PROJECT STENO

Creating A Bright Future

"We have the most desirable career you've never heard of!"

This is a great time to become a stenographic court reporter. Young people can have a white-collar, six-figure career without taking on crippling student loan debt. Who else can promise such a rewarding career without a four-year college degree? But the reporter shortage is upon us. We must figure out how to get students into school and graduate them in a timely manner so our beloved profession won't fade into history.

The Project Steno Plan

To address the challenge and seize the opportunity, leaders from the court reporting profession have established "Project Steno," a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is providing resources and tuition assistance for stenographic reporter training. NCRA's A-to-Z Program has taken off like wildfire across the country, including Mobile and Birmingham. The Project Steno Program will develop a pipeline of pre-tested candidates for court reporting school from A to Z "graduates" and provide tuition assistance to students who agree to ongoing monitoring and meeting program milestones, leading to graduation in two years. This bold initiative addresses head-on the urgent need to get students into reporting schools in numbers and graduate them into the field.

And we already have a recipient of this scholarship here in Alabama!



Become a Project Steno Supporter

Project Steno has a plan to turn the tide. Will you support us? ACRA has a goal for our state to raise \$10,000 for this cause. To make this happen, we need your financial support. The future of our profession depends on it!

Please make your tax-deductible donation to Project Steno and mail to Project Steno Alabama, 505 20th Street North, Suite 1215, Birmingham, AL 35203.

DONOR LEVELS

- FRIEND \$1-99
- SPONSOR \$100-499
- PROFESSIONAL \$500-999
- ELITE \$1000 - UP
- PLEDGE - \$_____ per month for _____ months. Email pledges to projectstenoalabama@gmail.com.

Realtime Coach will match funds up to \$50,000.
To find out more about Project Steno, visit www.projectsteno.org.



Alabama's Third A to Z Program

By Roy Isbell, CCR, RDR, CRR

The A to Z Program returned to Mobile on Saturday, June 2, 2018, with ten participants meeting in the conference room of Isbell & Associates. Debbie Isbell was the leader.

Alan Peacock took the role of the lesson committee chairman, studying the lesson handbook and soliciting reporters to help. Teri Stewart headed up the steno machine committee, assigning machines and making sure the NCRA-required paperwork was signed. For the first lesson the participants were shown how to attach the tripod to the steno machine, after which Debbie gave a brief introduction and turned the dictation over to the instructors, Teri Stewart and Jennie Talbot Brown.

NCRA's A to Z handbook is divided into 26 lessons, so the instructors at this summer's program dictated five lessons per class, covering fewer lessons on the first and last days. About halfway through we stopped for a snack provided by the instructors. Before wrapping up the session that first day, Teri and Jennie shared their personal court reporting stories and were joined by Carol Cook, who also spoke to the group.



Jennie and Carol have both worked as state officials in Mobile County and now freelance. Last year, at the final session of the 2017 A to Z program, I had demonstrated realtime, which the audience seemed to enjoy. So this year I realtimed every lesson on the big screen, usually displaying steno only or with a smaller font for the English translation. I'd

Alabama's Third A to Z Program continues on page 9.

Alabama's Third A to Z Program

continued from page 8.

never been taught the number bar in school, so I took this opportunity to learn it along with the class, and the participants got a big kick out of seeing me struggle alongside them. Upon finishing each Saturday, the participants were urged to review the completed lessons at home daily for two hours. New lessons would be emailed to them each Thursday to be printed before Saturday's class. We always had several copies on hand for those who forgot to bring them. NCRA's intention in sending the lessons incrementally is to deter participants from skipping ahead and to keep them on track.



The second meeting was June 9th. Debbie gave a review of the previous lessons and was joined by freelance reporter Deborah C. Murphy of Bay Area Reporting. Alan Peacock had been scheduled to participate but was called out of town for several weeks for a daily copy trial. This last-minute change of plans emphasized to all involved the importance of teamwork. Everything worked out perfectly. Participants liked the steady rotation of guest instructors and guest speakers with varied teaching styles and personalities, which also ensured that no instructor was burdened with too much work.



Birmingham. Crowe works as a scopist while attending school, and she had some great information to share with the participants.

June 23rd the instructors were Baldwin County officials Shelagh McClain Dunckley and Paula Morgan Price. Federal official Melanie Wilkins and Mobile County official Cindy Greene also dropped by to share their career journeys. For this session we had on display a rare 1873 model steno machine patented by Miles M. Bartholomew from the collection of federal reporter Cheryl King Powell.

On June 30th the instructors were Mobile County official Travis Atkins and Anna Ruffin, a current reporting student from Gadsden and a member of last year's A to Z program. I

Alabama's Third A to Z continues on page 10.

Alabama's Third A to Z Program

continued from page 9.

can't overemphasize the interest that participants had in hearing from students enrolled in court reporting school.

For the last session held on July 7th, Teri Stewart returned, and Alan Peacock was able to join to share his fascinating history of receiving a degree in education of the deaf with the intention of teaching, thereafter discovering court reporting and changing career paths, and then becoming a freelancer, CART, and broadcast captioner.



In the end, the participants could confidently write almost every letter and many one-syllable words. We celebrated with a pizza party and awarded eight participants with certificates for completing the program. Two of those immediately enrolled in online court reporting schools.

Many thanks to all of the Alabama reporters that helped out with this year's A to Z Program. I think everyone would agree it is a personally rewarding experience and, in addition, we all received personal development credits from NCRA for our participation.



**WHAT DOES A THESAURUS
EAT FOR BREAKFAST?
A SYNONYM ROLL.**

ADD YEARS TO YOUR EARS



By Sabrina Lewis • District 1, Director




Hearing loss affects 1 in 10 Americans. When is the last time you had an ear checkup?


Basically, there are two types of healthcare professionals that treat problems related to the ear.


A Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.), or an Audiologist, can identify and treat diminished hearing and provide hearing aids and other assistive listening devices. An **audiologist** is a hearing doctor that handles the **nonmedical** side of hearing problems.


An Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) physician, or an Otolaryngologist, is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating diseases of the ear, nose, mouth, and throat, as well as the head and neck. An **ENT** takes care of the **medical** side of hearing issues.


Conditions to see an Audiologist for:


-  **Excessive earwax**—An audiologist can remove earwax to ease problems with hearing.
-  **Decrease in hearing**—These are hearing problems that have been ruled out as having an organic or physical cause. A comprehensive audiology evaluation can examine nuanced ranges of hearing loss.
-  **Constantly asking to have things repeated**—Because of embarrassment, many people will try to ignore or cover up this sign of hearing loss.

 **Inability to understand in crowds**—Not being able to hear what people are saying in a crowded restaurant or room could be a sign of hearing loss which can be treated with a hearing aid.


 **Inability to hear female or child voices**—Women and children speak in a higher register, and one of the first signs of hearing loss is the inability to hear these higher-pitched voices. If you routinely feel that women or children are mumbling, consider seeing an audiologist.

 **Tinnitus**—A high-pitched ringing or buzzing in the ears, either intermittent or constant, tinnitus is generally associated with hearing loss issues that can be addressed by an audiologist.

 **Inability to hear high-pitched sounds**—A phone ringing, a shrill whistle, squeaks and squeals – the ability to hear these types of high-pitched sounds can begin to fade as a person develops hearing loss.

 **Age-related hearing loss**—Hearing loss that has slowly progressed over a lifetime can often be treated with a hearing aid rather than through surgical or medical intervention.

Conditions to see an ENT for:


 **Autoimmune Problems**—An autoimmune disease is a condition in which your immune system mistakenly attacks your body. There are over 100 types of


Add Years to your Ears continues on page 12.


Add Years to your Ears


continued from page 11.


autoimmune diseases. Some common disorders that can affect the ears are allergies, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis. People who have hearing loss related to an autoimmune disease need to be evaluated by an ENT.


 **Ototoxicity**—Some patients may have hearing loss caused by medications.

 **Balance**—Any balance issues related to movement of the head requires medical evaluation.

 **Otosclerosis (fused bones)**—Hardening within the ear can be a sign of bone growth that is impeding or fusing the normal movement within the ear. This may be best handled through surgery.

 **Dizziness**—Any unexplained dizziness that may or may not be related to head movement needs to be evaluated by an ENT.

 **Ear Pain**—Any ear pain is a sign that you need to consult a medical professional.

 **Pediatric Hearing Problems**—Children are more likely to experience medically treatable reasons for hearing loss—like ear infections, sinus, or allergy problems—and so should first be evaluated by an ENT before being referred to an audiologist.

The next time you schedule your annual medical checkup, make an appointment to see an ear and hearing professional. You could add years to your ears.

Protect your ears when using listening devices and accessories

By Sabrina Lewis • District 1, Director

Improper use of listening devices and accessories could pose a threat to your hearing. Experts suggest these three tips to help prevent hearing loss:

1. Limit the volume. Some experts advocate the 60/60 rule when using a listening device: Keep the volume setting at less than 60 percent of the maximum volume.

2. Limit the time. The longer you expose yourself to loud sounds, the greater the damage could be. Following the 60/60 rule, you should listen to no more than 60 minutes a day at 60 percent of the maximum volume. Lower volumes can handle longer listening times.

3. Choose the right accessory. To preserve your hearing, doctors recommend headphones, which sit on your head like earmuffs, rather than earbuds, which fit inside your ear. Earbuds naturally add volume because they are closer to the ear canal. If you use headphones in a noisy environment, noise-cancelling headphones may be best for you. If background noise is mitigated, it should not be necessary to increase the volume.

Schedule a visit to your hearing healthcare professional. Be sure to ask for tips on protecting your hearing.

ONE - STROKE BRIEFS : dictionary building exercise

By Sabrina Lewis - District I Director

This article is from the January 12, 2017 Congressional Record. I was reading the text and “shadow-writing” when I realized that there is a one-stroke brief form for nearly every word or phrase here. You can use this article to build your one-stroke briefs:

Create a Job dictionary. Devise a one-stroke brief for each of the proper names.

Write the article.

Use the Brief Suggestion feature of your software for any words or phrases that you do not already have briefs for.

As you create or decide to accept a brief, remember Ed Varallo’s advice: “If you design good briefs, you will remember them.”

Add your new briefs to your Personal dictionary.

Mr. Speaker: Since its implementation in 1965, Medicare has excluded coverage for hearing aids and related audiology services, routine dental care, and routine eye exams and eyeglasses despite the fact that large numbers of older Americans need these essential items and services. Today, with well over 100 original cosponsors, I will be introducing the Seniors Have Eyes, Ears, and Teeth bill, which will lift these terribly unfair restrictions on the population most in need of these services.

We know that hearing loss affects more than 40 percent of persons over 60 years old, more than 60 percent of those over 70, and almost 80 percent of those over 80 years of age. Yet, sadly, only one in five seniors currently diagnosed with hearing issues uses a hearing aid, which can range in cost from \$1,000 to \$6,000. For the more than half of Medicare beneficiaries who live on incomes below \$24,150 per year, these high out-of-pocket expenses are out of their reach.

We also know seniors account for approximately 80 percent of the 2.8 million Americans with low vision. Routine eye exams for these seniors can cost from \$50 to \$300 or more, and the average cost for a pair of prescription glasses is \$196.

Mr. Speaker, it is increasingly well documented that untreated vision and hearing loss not only diminishes quality of life, but also increases the risk for costly health outcomes such as falls and resulting disability, depression, and dementia.

Also tragic is that nearly 70 percent of older Americans currently have no form of dental insurance. This lack of insurance has been identified as the major barrier to accessing dental care for seniors. It is a well-known fact that neglect of oral health can result in the deterioration of overall physical health and that the lack of access to even routine dental exams and cleanings can exacerbate serious and complicated overall health problems that increase with age.

One Stroke Briefs continues on page 14.

One-Stroke Briefs

continued from page 13.

Expanding Medicare to cover vision, dental, and hearing services is a cost-effective intervention because it will prevent healthcare costs due to accidents, falls, cognitive impairments, and increases in chronic conditions and oral cancer. But most importantly, giving our seniors the gift of hearing, vision, and oral health will go a long way toward helping our seniors enjoy their golden years free from depression and social isolation.

Mr. Speaker, few bills are ever introduced with this overwhelming support. Additionally, it has the strong support from the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. I invite my colleagues to join me and the over 100 original cosponsors of this legislation in supporting dental, vision, and hearing care for our seniors.

14



At the July 28, 2018 ACRA Board Meeting held in Montgomery, Alabama, the drawing was held for the 2018 Membership Drive.



The winner of the \$150 gift card is **Nancy Pannell**.
The winner of the \$100 gift card is **Julia Isenhower**.
Congratulations Nancy and Julia

Thanks to everyone who renewed their membership or became a new member of Alabama Court Reporters Association!!!

Have you visited the ACRA Website lately?

Please visit us at www.alcra.org. We are working on adding lots of information for our members. Visit the ACRA store to purchase ACRA merchandise, buy or sell equipment, and advertise scoping or proofing services.

We welcome any suggestions you have for content on our website.

What do we do anyways?

By Jennifer L. Kissic, CCR • ACRA Vice-President

I first served on the board of ACRA as a district director. I felt honored and couldn't believe that I was asked to serve on the board. After serving for at least two terms as the District 4 director, I became the secretary. After serving as secretary, I felt overwhelmed at the idea of moving up on the board and had a lot going on in my personal life, so I decided to step down. I later regretted my decision. I missed being involved and helping. Last year I was asked to come back on board (rim shot) as the secretary. I know you are probably skimming through these details and thinking, "blah, blah, blah, who cares." Well, I am sharing my story to explain why I serve on the board of the Alabama Court Reporters Association so that you might consider doing the same.

Every person on the board volunteers and sacrifices their time and energy towards trying to help out our profession as a whole in the state. We are striving to not only make our board work more efficiently, but also to do whatever is necessary to benefit the court reporting profession as a whole in the state of Alabama. ACRA provides members with current information and updates on issues concerning our profession. We all try to stay current on legislative issues affecting the court reporting profession, whether it be officials, freelance reporters, CART providers, or captioners. The fact is that even though you might be in one branch of the profession now and the issue doesn't affect you, it may several years down the road when you choose or are thrown into a different side of our profession.

How do we do this? We send representatives to the NCRA convention and NCRA Leadership Conference to get ideas on how our board can function more efficiently and work more effectively for our members. The board is constantly watching and listening for legislation that affects our profession and looking for ways to advocate. The board is always trying to think of ways to make conferences not only interesting for all members, but also the best educational experience to help us get those CEUs that are so valuable. I have always enjoyed the networking opportunity at conferences and learning new ways to improve how I do my job. I am already trying to come up with ideas for the conference that I will be over and that is over a year away!

Recently board members and members of our association have sacrificed their personal time to be involved in the A to Z program through NCRA. The A to Z program is a free 8-week introductory program for people who are interested in becoming a court reporter. They borrowed and were donated machines for use in this program. We only have one court reporting school in Alabama and the number of students enrolling and graduating is dwindling. Several members of the board regularly attend career days at local schools to spread the word about court reporting. If you've never done this, I encourage you to. It is very rewarding.

Last but not least, Alabama Court Reporters Association is YOUR organization, so get involved. You can volunteer to be on a committee or let someone know you're interested in being on the board! However you choose to be involved, you will not only gain tons of insight on how the board works and what all they do, but you'll make a difference for all the reporters in the state.



Conference News

By Cynthia Green • ACRA President-Elect

ACRA will hold its 2019 “Writing with the Waves” Conference on January 24-26, 2019, at The Lodge at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama, which is the newly built state-of-the-art facility that is located on the beautiful white sandy beach next to the Gulf State Park Pier – the same location where the Convention Center used to be before it was demolished after being damaged by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

The Lodge at Gulf State Park is a Hilton Hotel and will be the first of its kind in the world, with environmental sustainability being the prime focus. Governor Ivey recently referred to The Lodge at Gulf State Park as “a world class facility” and “a crown jewel...a destination point like no other”. Bill Bennett, General Manager with Valor Hospitality Partners, also explained that “the buildings were all positioned on the footprint here to maximize the gulf breezes, but also your sunrise and sunset views”. The ballroom in the conference center is the largest gulf-facing ballroom on the Gulf Coast, and has the most incredible breath-taking views.

The guest rooms in The Lodge at Gulf State Park also have spectacular views. The Gulf View looks out over the sandy white beach and Gulf of Mexico, and the Park View has an amazingly tranquil view



of beautiful oak trees and Lake Shelby (not a parking lot). There will be a special ACRA rate for registered guests who are also conference attendees. However, there is a possibility that the room reservations could fill up fast, so be sure to register for the conference as soon as registration opens in November and make your hotel reservation at the same time.

ACRA Conference News continues on page 17.

ACRA Conference News

continued from page 16.

We are also excited to announce that there will be software training sessions offered at the conference – Digitalcat, Eclipse, Procat, and Case Catalyst. So make plans to bring your fully charged steno writer and equipment to the conference to get some great training from some of the best certified software trainers in the business. ACRA is also making plans to hold its first “ACRA Realtime Competition” at the conference. Start practicing now to be part of this exciting and fun portion of the conference and possibly be named the first “ACRA Realtime Champ”.

The conference agenda will consist of a fantastic lineup of speakers – one of which



"WAVES ARE INSPIRING,
NOT BECAUSE THEY
RISE AND FALL,
BUT BECAUSE
EACH TIME THEY FALL,
THEY NEVER FAIL
TO RISE AGAIN!"

Ralph Waldo Emerson

is Dave Wenhold, PLC, CAE, who has been an advocate for the court reporting profession for over 20 years. Dave has led many NCRA Legislative Boot Camps and Leadership Workshops, and gives an engaging, empowering, and entertaining presentation that you don't want to miss!

There will be vendor booths at the conference that will offer attendees opportunities to obtain information, demonstrations, promotions, etc. And, of course, there will also be the ever-so-popular Basket Bonanza!

So mark your calendars now to attend the ACRA 2019 “Writing with the Waves” Conference January 24-26, 2019, at The Lodge at Gulf State Park in beautiful Gulf Shores, Alabama, and register early to get great rates! You don't want to miss this opportunity to network with colleagues and friends where, together, we will learn, share, and give back to this wonderful profession!

See y'all at the beach!

Cindy Greene, CCR, RPR
ACRA President-Elect &
Convention Chair



JAZZ IT UP!

WRITE YOUR NEXT STORY



By Cyndi H. Tumlin

Can I just say, “WOW”!?! From our first meeting as Alabama delegates to the NCRA business meeting and National Committee of State Associations (NCSA) conference to the closing reception in New Orleans at the NCRA National Convention Jazz It Up *Write Your Next Story*, Cindy Greene and I were thoroughly enthralled. You know that feeling you get when you attend our state conference each January and you’re around court reporters, you talk court reporting, you get energized about court reporting, you learn new technologies and techniques in court reporting, and you get fired up and ready to go back to your court reporting job? (Maybe we’re just CR geeks :) NCRA National Convention is like that ... times a thousand ... court reporting on steroids ... the superhero of court reporting!

Our adventure began by attending the annual business meeting. NCRA has many issues currently in the works, and we were able to watch and listen and gain some first-hand knowledge of what is happening. We listened to the discussion and participated in the voting process from the floor. Chris Willette revealed NCRA’s strategic plan. What an experience! So many people feeling strongly about their position with such varied viewpoints. Following the business meeting, our delegates attended the NCSA conference where we heard from several NCRA staff, representatives, and incoming president Sue Terry regarding the vision for the coming year and how the state associations, as well as NCRA, can better work together and share thoughts and



NCRA National Convention continues on page 19.

NCRA National Convention

continued from page 18.

ideas with each other in more of a support role. Positivity was the theme. President Terry shared her goal on the formation of a Congress of Court Reporters to carry out these goals and communicate effectively. The states were then divided geographically into groups where we discussed current issues impacting each state, issues each state would like NCRA to lend support and address, and present personal stories involving issues within our associations that might help others. Participating and interacting with delegates from each state represented was a very rewarding experience.

Alabama had multiple participants in the Realtime and Speed Contests. Congratulations to our very own Sabrina Lewis, who placed in the Literary Speed contest, and Melanie Wilkins for her place in the Q&A Realtime competition. Kudos to all those from Alabama who practiced, prepared, and competed in the contests. Your Awesome was definitely Obvious in NOLA!!



Friday began the conference agenda with speakers on a great variety of topics. We heard from Lt. General Russell Honore' at the Premier Session, who inspired and energized us all. From that point, we began to pick our topics of interest and attended sessions for the next three days. Debbie Isbell, Alan Peacock, and Jordan Groves of Alabama were all presenters of various sessions during the convention. Alabama is definitely fortunate to have such wonderful, top-notch reporters/captioners. Session topics ranged from ethics, certification, punctuation, captioning and the future of court reporting, dressing for success, the A to Z Program, anxiety strategies, becoming realtime ready, and financial wellness, just to name a few. Tough Love from Depoman Mike Miller was an interesting session. Mike presented

NCRA National Convention continues on page 20.

NCRA National Convention

continued from page 19.

a very frank and straight-forward assessment of court reporting. He spoke very candidly on Dos and Don'ts of transcript preparation that applies to both freelance and official reporters using his own unique brand of humor and sarcasm. Nothing he said was a novel approach or something we've never heard, but everything he presented was well worth the stern reminder. The Innocence Project was very enlightening. Software training was also available. Every relevant topic or area for discussion regarding court reporting or captioning was addressed somewhere on the agenda.



Cindy and I attended the Opening Reception in the Vendor Hall and were literally blown away by the exhibits. There may be a court reporter shortage, but court

reporting is definitely right at the forefront of technology and the industry is expanding every day. It was so exciting to see and hear the vendors talk about their products and learn where technology is leading our industry next. One highlight of the trip was meeting and comparing notes with court reporters from Europe and Australia. They were fantastic!! Best quote, "Oh, where are you from? I love your accent." Response: "I was going to ask you the same thing."

Gadsden State instructors and several students attended the Instructor and Student tracks available. It was wonderful to see ACRA and Gadsden State working together to make sure there is a future for court reporting in Alabama. More than 35 Alabamians from every area of reporting attended the convention. There is no doubt that Alabama is home to some Rock Star court reporter/captioners and is highly respected by other states and our national association.

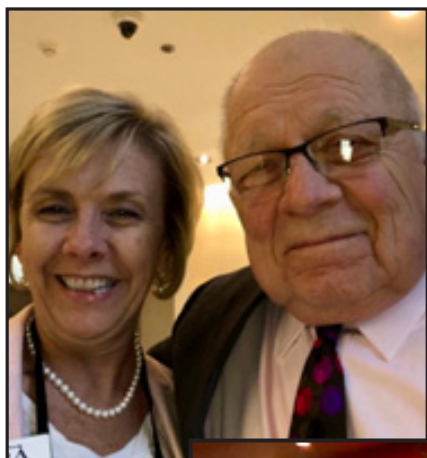


Ohio Court Reporters Association sponsored a SUEperStar reception for their very own Sue Terry, incoming president of NCRA. I think Cindy and I both decided that Ohio would be our choice if Alabama wasn't an option. They are such fantastic, fun-

NCRA National Convention continues on page 21.

NCRA National Convention

continued from page 20.



NCRA NATIONAL CONVENTION

JAZZ IT UP!

WRITE YOUR NEXT STORY



loving people. We were able to offer ACRA's congratulations and support personally to Sue. She is such a humble, caring person, and an absolute SUEperStar court reporter.

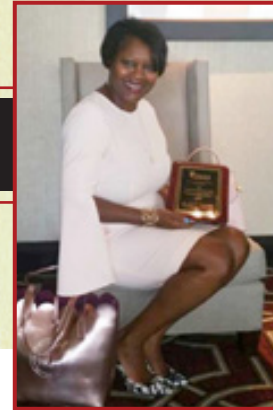
One of our favorite experiences during the entire week revolved around relationships we had established from prior attendance at NCRA events that carried forward and to the new relationships built on this occasion. We found that, in a sea of court reporters from across the nation, we actually knew quite a number of people. We quickly became known as the Cindy/Cyndi's from Alabama. It was refreshing to see past and present NCRA representatives who have attended ACRA's annual conference who recognized and spent time with us. It was such an honor to attend such a well-planned event, network and gain insight from fellow court reporters, and just get to know and mingle with birds of the same feather. The closing Gala: Unmask

your Potential was the icing on the cake with dinner, laughter, and dancing. I dare say court reporters in general can "cut the proverbial rug."

No trip to New Orleans would be complete without a stop in at Café Du Monde for coffee and beignets. And, with that, we bid NOLA, our new friends and colleagues from across the nation, and each other farewell to return to our respective opposite ends of our great state. We came home with fresh energy and excitement about the future of court reporting. We have a renewed love for our profession. And we are thankful to ACRA for allowing us to represent our association and attend this amazing convention.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Linda McSwain, RPR



Greetings Alabama Reporters.

It has been an honor serving as a director on the Board of the National Court Reporters Association. It would be practically impossible to put all of the many wonderful experiences I enjoyed in serving on the Board in one article, but I will attempt to highlight some of my endeavors as briefly as possible. Serving on the NCRA Board was a very exciting and, on some occasions, challenging experience. To serve on any board you have to have a servant's heart. I first served on the Alabama Court Reporters Association. I can't recall the exact date. I guess time really does fly! During my tenure I had the opportunity to attend Boot Camp. There I met so many wonderful people that are still in my life today. I learned so much not only from the workshops but from the many people that were there.

I attended my first NCSA (National Committee of State Associations) meeting as a leader for the state of Alabama where Dave Wenhold and Adam Finkel taught me so much about leadership. I was elected as a representative for NCSA and co-chair soon after. It was there at one of our NCSA meetings that Nancy Varallo heard me speaking and asked Past-President Steve Zinone why wasn't I serving on the National Board? I had been asked on two occasions to interview for a director's position, but I turned it down both times. The third time I was asked I was about to say "no," and someone stated that: If I were you, I would just interview for it just for the experience. Rarely does someone get picked the first time, and eventually they will stop asking. Well, I guess I was that rare person. I interviewed and was selected the first time.

I have loved serving on the NCRA Board as a director. Many people stopped me in the hallways at the convention to inquire why I didn't move up. I've received calls from so many asking the same question and how disappointed they were to hear that I wasn't moving up to the next level. My response to them is that you never know what tomorrow may bring. It actually warms my heart to feel so much love from all of these court reporters.

When I look back to 1998 when I first moved to Mobile, Alabama and started working for Past-President of ACRA Shelagh McClain Dunckley and saw how she was preparing for an ACRA convention, I was helping her stuff folders and I was in awe. It was game on. I have been serving on the state and national level ever since. I wanted to be a part in making decisions for our profession. I didn't want to be that person on the sidelines wondering when and if I can have a say-so in our profession.

Spotlight On Linda McSwain continues on page 23.

Spotlight On Linda McSwain

continued from page 22.

I remember Alan Peacock telling me that you are working for the judge that is giving us such a hard time in getting our state license. We need for you to go and speak to your judge. Well, it was my time to be front and center. The ball was in my court. After explaining to my then judge, the Honorable Ferrell D. McRae, about how important it was for Alabama to have certified reporters and how we desperately needed a license, he gave us the okay. It was a slam dunk.



Now, please don't think that it's all glorious. While serving on the state and national level, one thing that I have encountered is that you will run into some challenges where people will disappoint you one way or the other. People can sometimes hurt you to the core of your being. My advice to you would be to not take it personally. Surround yourself with positive people. Life is too short.

So if you are not serving on the board or on a committee, I urge you to start. We have the power to make a difference in our profession. The only way to do that is to first serve but serve willingly.

CEU's in a Nutshell

1. Licensees are required to obtain and keep record of their continuing education units (CEU's).
2. 5 continuing education units (.5 CEU's) are required to renew your license.
3. CEU's obtained anytime during the 36 months prior to renewal are accepted.
(For example: For this year's renewal date of September 30, 2018, all CEU's obtained from September 30, 2015 through September 30, 2018 are acceptable.)
4. Once a CEU is applied to a renewal, it cannot be used again.

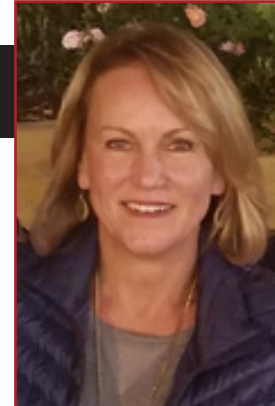
QUESTIONS:

Please call the Board of Court Reporting office at: (334) 215-7232 and their staff will be happy to answer any questions you have.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Lynne Frantz

By Teri Stewart



District 4 recently had an outstanding, wonderful, and down-to-earth court reporter retire in May of this year. Her name is Lynne Frantz. Lynne was an Official Court Reporter working in the 13th Judicial Circuit Court for the last 29-plus years. She started out as a Special Roving Court Reporter, and, subsequently, was offered an official court reporter position when Judge Robert L. Byrd's court reporter retired back in the early 90's. After Judge Byrd retired, Lynne remained the Official Reporter for Judge Rusty Johnston and Judge Jay York. Lynne shared with me that throughout her years of service, everything just seemed to always fall in place.

Lynne was what I would consider a "late bloomer" when she decided to go into court reporting. At that time, she was divorced, raising three little girls. She attended Prince Institute back when there was a school in Mobile. While at Prince, she began to intern with another reporter that worked at the courthouse and was eventually offered a job as a rover.

Sometime later, Lynne remarried and was blessed with a great husband and a blended family of six children until in 1995, when Lynne and her husband had a son, who just this past May graduated from college.

I asked Lynne if there was anything that nudged her into deciding it was time to retire, and she said that she had been thinking about it, and that, after taking a week-long cruise with her siblings and having time to ponder, she knew it was the right decision. Also, she said that this was one of those times where "things just kind of fell into place."

In April of 2018, Lynne was offered a part-time rover position that, even after retiring from her permanent job as an Official Reporter, she would still be able to come to work three days a week to fill in and would still be able to work with friends and colleagues. It was the best of both worlds!

Not only was the part-time rover position a benefit to Lynne, it opened up a position for an Official Court Reporter, Rhonda Herndon, who had been having to travel to and from other courthouses on a daily basis, to be able to obtain Lynne's position, which was a blessing for her and all of us as well!!

We are all very happy for Lynne. She is a very sweet and caring friend and fellow court reporter. She is a great listener too (even when not on the record!)

Good luck Lynne. We are all so happy you're still part of the 13th Judicial Circuit Court!

Captioning in the Convention Setting

By Alan Peacock, FAPR, RDR, CRR, CRC



I was honored to be asked to speak on the topic of Captioning in the Convention Setting for the 2018 NCRA convention. For those that were in New Orleans and came to the seminar, thank you for your support! However, for those that could not make it to New Orleans this time, I thought it would be informative to sort of break down the presentation into a few key points and present those points here in article format. So I will do my best to do that for you now.

First it's important to break down the definitions of "captioning" vs. "CART" vs. "realtime." In the past, NCRA has always considered those as three main disciplines for reporting students to consider as a career. However, over time, the differences have become clear for some and vague for others. So in an attempt to be as transparent and clear as possible, NCRA's new message is that we can consider "captioning" and "realtime" as the same thing. Previously, we have defined captioning as broadcast captions only. However, since most people think of captioning as voice-to-text, why not just use that term to be all inclusive?

So when we speak about captioning in the convention setting, we're referring to producing realtime on a screen, whether it is just text on a screen by itself (*previously known as CART*) or whether you are sharing the screen with video or a PowerPoint presentation.

If you elect to take an assignment of this nature, your first objective is to find out two things: What are the display settings and what are the audio settings that the captioner will need to use? There are a multitude of ways to connect to a screen, and it takes experience and time to be prepared and familiar with them all. Your best advice is to always find the AV liaison at the center hosting the event well in advance and go over your needs and ensure that you both have your bases covered.

Other considerations that you will need to consider are location of the captions. Do you want to display at the top or the bottom of the screen? Will you be covering up vital information on a slide? How many screens will you need? What are the colors of the background and the characters that you will display? There are so many questions that can pop up at the last minute. That is why it is important to plan well in advance.

Also you need to understand your audience. Sometimes a hotel will call a captioning service simply because they know there will be deaf people in the audience. However, you must ask about the demographics of the audience. Are they culturally Deaf, meaning they identify with Deaf culture and prefer to use ASL (American Sign Language) as a first language or means of communication? If so, they may prefer to have an interpreter on site in addition to (or in lieu of) captioning. The goal is to meet the communication needs of the consumers. And if they prefer sign language interpreting, then you may need to suggest that you bow out of the assignment and explain the reasons why.

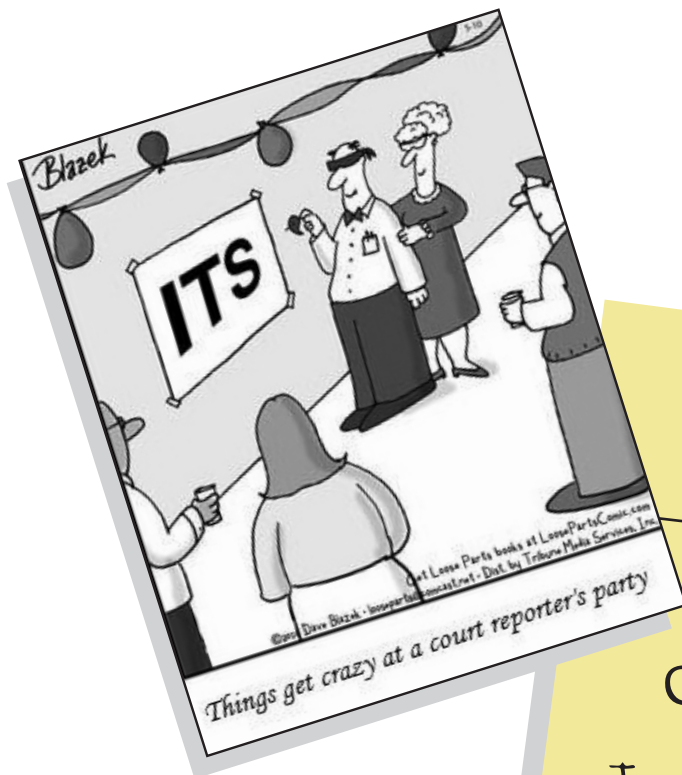
Captioning in the Convention Setting continues on page 26.

Captioning in the Convention Setting

continued from page 25.

And there are many times that you will work in conjunction with an ASL interpreter. It is always wise to get to know your friends in the interpreting community. They will receive prep in advance, just like the captioner. However, they may have material that you do not. Also they can help the captioner with information about the topics presented and deaf culture. The captioner can also help the interpreter in many ways. I think it is worthwhile for a captioner who plans to work in this setting to take at least a basic sign language class and learn fingerspelling of words if nothing else. You will be surprised how much the clients appreciate your efforts, and you can also communicate across the room with the interpreter and no one can hear you. It's a wonderful skill to add to your communication workbox.

These are only a few of the topics that you must consider when accepting an assignment in the convention setting. If you would like more information, you should reach out to captioning agencies that provide this service and let them know you are interested. Stay on top of technology and know your computer settings and how to troubleshoot quickly, and you will be ahead of the game!



Reminder:

ACRA
Conference

January 24-26, 2019

Montgomery, Alabama

THE HILL



By Karen Strickland Planz

This bill was a long-time coming for the hardworking court reporters for the state of Alabama. Official court reporters have not seen a raise to their base salary in 20 years, other than occasional cost-of-living raises given to State employees. When everyone else was receiving merit raises, official court reporters were always excluded. Every effort to get a raise was quickly halted by the saying, “We don’t have any money.”

The approach this time was very different. Cindy Greene, now President-Elect of ACRA, and I, Karen Strickland Planz, now Immediate Past President of ACRA, sought legislation providing that official court reporters be brought into the system like every other judicial employee – so that we could receive raises when everyone else receives them under the Alabama Unified Judicial System (UJS).



Chief Justice Lyn Stuart and AOC Director Randy Helms listened with open minds as we laid out our plan. After hearing us, they offered their support with three conditions: (1) we would have to find the funding for our bill, (2) we would have to “carry” the bill, meaning that we would be responsible for any lobbying and legislative contact necessary to promote the bill, and (3) we would have to obtain the support of the Alabama Circuit Judges Association. If our bill was successful, we would never again have to seek a pay raise from the Legislature and we would be on equal footing with all other UJS employees as to merit raises.



The Hill continues on page 28.

The Hill

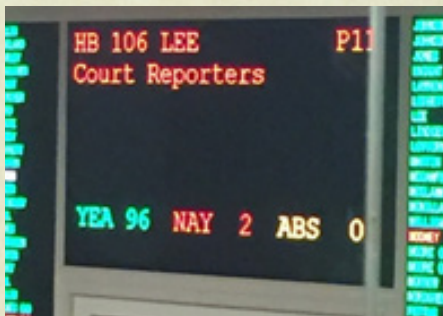
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After our first meeting with Chief Justice Stuart and Randy Helms, we opened a dialogue with those we needed to, to make this happen. Of course, it wasn't easy. It's politics, and we learned Politics 101!

First, we had to get the bill written – AOC Staff Attorney Nathan Wilson was very instrumental in the first writing. After many rewrites and rewrites (by Judge Binford – Karen's judge), we finally had the final draft to submit to the Legislative Reference Services for their review.

We also had to seek legislative sponsors for our bill, and we were very fortunate in this regard. Representative Paul Lee from Dothan was on board and agreed to sponsor our bill in the House. We were also able to meet with Senator Clyde Chambliss of Prattville due to Mary King's connection with him, and he, too, was eager to lend his support for the official court reporters. He agreed to be our sponsor in the Senate. Both Representative Lee and Senator Chambliss are highly respected and effective legislators, and we could not have had better sponsors. Mary King was our liaison to the legislators. She knew everyone there. It was great having a familiar face with us in the Statehouse.

Every member of the Circuit Judges Association at their January 2018 conference in Tuscaloosa (with one abstention) voted to support the court reporters' bill. Without the judges' support, we would not have been able to move forward. ACRA showed their appreciation to the judges at the summer conference in Gulf Shores by shaking hands and passing out goodie bags.



Representative Steve Clouse of Ozark, who serves as the Chairman of the House Ways and Means General Fund Committee, also supported our bill and allocated the money needed to put us into the pay grade system. Representative Clouse even walked onto the floor of the House to voice his support for us, which was greatly appreciated. Representative Clouse was one of many behind-the-scenes, influential people working in favor of the court reporters.

The Hill continues on page 29.

The Hill

continued from page 28.



As soon as the 2018 Legislative Session began, many of you were there with us walking the floors – meeting representatives, meeting senators and explaining our bill. The official court reporters were the lobbyists for the cause. We were greeted by everyone with courtesy and admiration. We were the fresh faces on the floor of the state building – and they really appreciated our passion and dedication to see this through.

Effective October 1, 2018, the official court reporters will be under the new pay scale – Pay Grade 77, Step 8 (<https://personnel.alabama.gov/ComPayPlan.aspx>)

We will all receive the 3% cost-of-living raise, too, given by Governor Ivey starting October 1, 2018. We are now eligible for UJS merit raises – just like JA’s, clerks, JPO’s, and others – without having to seek separate legislation.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the conference in January, as Cindy Greene and I, and a few others, will share our story live during the Town Hall (Legislative Efforts/Success & Grassroots Lobbying), along with Dave Wenhold, PLC, CAE.

Special thanks to the ACRA board for their continued support in these endeavors. Special thanks to all of you that sent emails and/or made calls to your representatives and senators letting them know we were coming. And a very, very special thank you to all that came to Montgomery to walk the floors and present HB106 and SB186 to the Alabama Legislators – Cindy Greene, Ashley Dickey, Mary King, Cyndi Tumlin, Celeste Riddle, Parian Holderfield, Scott Graham, Ricky Tyler, Sheree Cater, Renea Johnston, Janet Smith, Alex Nelson, Vickie Clark, Phyllis Simpler, Travis Adkins, Shelagh Dunckley, Sharon Pilgrim.

Also, a special gratitude to all the court reporters that were able to fill in for the court reporters that were in attendance in Montgomery. The team effort we had during all this was amazing!



HB (House Bill) 106 – passed with a vote of Yea 96 / Nay 2.

SB (Senate Bill) 186 passed by 100% vote.

See you all in January at the beach for a little celebration! - Cheers !!



MEMBERSHIP DUES RENEWAL

Professional Member - \$100 Student Member - \$15

\$ _____ Legislative Fund Contribution (ACRA is committed to protecting the court reporting profession and depends on each member individually to participate in grassroots lobbying.) To renew your Alabama Court Reporters Association membership, please complete the form below in full by June 30th, 2018, make check payable to "ACRA Membership Dues", then mail to:

Cyndi H. Tumlin
ACRA, Treasurer
Post Office Box 157
Scottsboro, Alabama 35768

CHECK IF INFORMATION HAS CHANGED FOR UPDATES IN ACRA WEBSITE

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

COUNTY: _____ DISTRICT: _____

ABCR LICENSE NO.: _____ NCRA #: _____

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FREELANCE REPORTER

CART/CAPTIONER

STATE OFFICIAL REPORTER

RETIRED REPORTER

FEDERAL REPORTER

STUDENT

OTHER

Please fill out all information completely in order to make your renewal processing more efficient – Thank you!!



New Membership Application

Name _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Date of Birth _____ Sex _____

Home _____ Office _____ Cell _____ Fax _____

Practice (check): Freelance Official CART Provider Captioner Instructor Student

Reporting Method (check) Stenotype Machine Penwriter Other _____

CAT Software _____ Services (check): Video Realtime Conference Room Notary Public

Name of firm, company, court _____

Reporting school attended/attending _____

Other Certifications _____

Are you licensed by the State of Alabama (check) Yes No If yes, ACCR # _____

Are you a current member of NCRA (check) Yes No If yes, NCRA # _____

Get involved today by serving on an ACRA Committee or Task Force (check) Yes No

APPLICATION MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED AND SIGNED FOR CONSIDERATION

Upon signing this completed membership application, I hereby agree to adhere to the Alabama Court Reporters Association Constitution and Bylaws and the National Court Reporters Association Code of Professional Ethics.

(Applicant's Signature)

(Date)

Pursuant to the ACRA Constitution and Bylaws, as a voting member of ACRA, I hereby endorse the above applicant for membership in the Alabama Court Reporters Association.

Name of endorsement (print) _____ Contact No. _____

Signature of endorsement _____ Endorsement's ACCR# _____

Note: ACRA dues may be deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense, but not deductible as a charitable contribution. A portion of your dues, however, is not deductible as an ordinary and necessary business expense to the extent that it represents the costs of ACRA's lobbying activities. The non-deductible portion of your dues (which includes lobbying expenses, as required by law) is 15%.



Amy Holland, CCR
Second Floor, County Courthouse
714 Greensboro Avenue
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401



Address SERVICE Requested



January 24 - 26, 2019 ACRA Conference

For The Record is published by the Alabama Court Reporters Association on a regular basis each year.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE FOR 2018

March 15, 2018
June 15, 2018
September 15, 2018
December 15, 2018

Deadline for articles and ads is **30 days** immediately preceding the above publication dates. Please submit articles, ads, etc., in **DIGITAL FORMAT** attached to an email to:

Amy Holland, awholland22@outlook.com

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