



President's Message

by Lisa Wheeler

Hello, friends and colleagues! I hope this newsletter finds you and your families doing well. When asked to write something for the president's corner, I struggled with what to say. There are so many things I could say, want to say, but the real question is, what should I say? In this season right now with Thanksgiving being just around the corner, thankfulness is first and foremost in my mind and heart. I'm so thankful for this profession. Are there rough days? Of course. In my almost 30 years of reporting, looking back, I think of what amazing opportunities this profession has given me. I've been able to help provide for my family. I've been available for my kids' field trips and school functions. I've been able to take vacations and days off when I want and need

to. I've also been able to give back. Serving on the board has been rewarding. I've been a part of something bigger than me. Working a booth for a school counselor conference or a career day at a high school has been rewarding. Telling people about this profession and seeing the reactions of, "Wow, I had no idea," is rewarding. We have started a spark of interest in this state for the court reporting/captioning profession. The time is now to give of your time and talents in our schools and at conferences. Your input is invaluable. We need you to help fan that flame.

GET INVOLVED
Make a Difference!



Board Happenings

Your board has had a busy term! So much has been accomplished. Your \$80 membership dues and your attendance at conferences have allowed us to reach milestones. Some of these things are:

- ◆ Getting a workaround after three years to the "no government ID" issue most of us have experienced
- ◆ Having national speakers and fantastic topics at our annual conferences to continue educating reporters
- ◆ Registering and manning booths at high school career fairs and North

Carolina School Counselor Conference to bring awareness to the profession

- ◆ Registering and manning booths in conjunction with other associations at the North Carolina Advocates for Justice and the North Carolina State Bar Association conferences to promote the live reporter
- ◆ Donation of \$2,000 to Project Steno to sponsor a steno machine to be used by a student in the Project Steno program

Inside this Issue:

President's Message	1
My Quest to be a Better Realtime Writer	2
Meet a Fellow NC Court Reporter	3
NCCRA Membership Benefits	4
Tips from TALLsmall Productions	5
Phrases/Phrase-enders and Briefs	6



My Quest to be a Better Realtime Writer!

by Amy Brauser, RPR RMR CRR

I've been reporting for almost three decades. Good grief, that's a long time. And I have raised four children and kept a husband happy for 27 years; so I can't be too hard on myself. Just recently, though, I've had a strong desire to become a better realtime writer. I was a writer-outer for the most part, and after attempting the CRR twice and not succeeding, I knew I needed some professional help. Just like athletes get professional training, I knew that's what I needed to be successful in my quest for better realtime.

While sitting in my own office chair here in North Carolina, I worked remotely with a great trainer out of California, Jenny Griffin, CSR, RMR, CRR, CCRR, CRC. It was not every day, more like once a month. She would give me things to work on, and I did exactly that. Slowly but surely, I worked on getting my frequently used three-stroke words down to one stroke. This helped a bit, but I needed more phrasing, phrases that I would see over and over while I was proofreading jobs.



I'm old school when it comes to proofreading, and I still print out a hard copy of my transcript to proof. Knowing my writing style, I could easily detect the phrases that I kept writing out all day long, and I would make notes next to these phrases and write down what my new brief would be for them. I then would grab a handful of these pages and my iPhone and make a short five-minute recording of them. This little five-minute recording would be what I would warm up to before depositions. Once I had those phrases memorized, I'd start with a new recording.

Jenny also taught me to start editing from my writer. WHAT? I can't do that! So I've learned to take baby steps and then more baby steps, and in the end what I was seeing was great strides. I can now add entries to my main and job dictionaries, fix mistranslates, and jump all around in my transcript, all from my writer.

See Amy's favorite phrases and phrase-enders on Page 6.

Another hurdle I had to attempt was to change the way I wrote "and" to SKP-. It wasn't easy and it did take practice, but the results are so worth it. SKP- phrases are fantastic!

Not only was Jenny's training a huge benefit to me, but I've also been a member of Mark Kislingbury's Magnum Steno Club for the past twelve months. This is when things really got serious in my efforts to write shorter. I was very skeptical to join. Heck, I was a seasoned reporter. Did I really need this extra expense? Let me tell you that the answer was YES. In a sense, court reporting is like being a professional athlete. Would any athlete show up to a game without practicing all week? I'd say they wouldn't! So just like athletes practice every day for their profession, court reporters need to practice too.

Writing on the job is not practicing. Practicing is when you are digging deep on a quest to write shorter, writing the same words in fewer strokes, avoiding word-boundary issues that writing out creates. This is the key to being a better realtime writer.

After retraining and coaching and focused speed-building, I achieved my goal of becoming a CRR. My confidence has skyrocketed, and the level of jobs I am offered is more lucrative. When it comes to steno, old dogs *can learn new tricks!*

Meet a Fellow NC Reporter

Q&A Interview With Liz Ellsworth and Judy Reins

Judy Reins, RMR, CRR - Freelance stenographic reporter in Winston-Salem, NC
Graduated from Roberts-Walsh Business School, Union, NJ (now defunct)
Rutgers University, New Jersey - BA, English

Q. Why did you choose court reporting as a career?

A. I was taking a Gregg shorthand class in high school, and our teacher told us she invited someone from a court reporting school to talk to us on Career Day. I knew after listening to the speaker that court reporting was something I wanted to pursue because I always liked typing, shorthand, and English.

Q. What has been your biggest reward being a court reporter?

A. I especially like freelance court reporting because of the work variety and travel. I took a deposition on a boat with a cussing sailor and nude pictures in his room; I took a deposition at Esther Williams Swimming Pool Company in NJ; I took John DeLorean's deposition; I've traveled to various cities in the U.S. reporting depositions in the Agent Orange litigation; I went to Paris for a government hearing. Every reporter has their own interesting stories, and we could probably spend a day sharing some highlights.

Q. What do you find to be the biggest challenge being a court reporter today?

A. It seems that people talk faster today than when I started reporting in the early '80s, so you have to keep your speed up. Another huge change over 30+ years is technology. You have to be a mini IT expert. Realtime is a useful tool for many attorneys, but you have to stay current on all the available tools and resources.

Q. You were very instrumental in getting a bill to the Governor to sign giving freelance court reporters a workaround when deponents do not have a government-issued photo I.D. What did you learn from the experience?

A. See enumerated items below:

- 1) I learned that there are important deadlines in the Legislature, and you don't want to miss them.
- 2) I learned that there is something called "crossover" week when a bill passes from the Senate to the House (*a bill can die if it does not "cross over"*)
- 3) I learned that you need bipartisan support if you truly expect to get a bill passed.
- 4) I learned how important it is to know who the legislators are in the specific section of the county you live in. Some legislators represent more than one county, but some cover only a part of the larger counties. You need to connect with the correct person, and your colleagues need to do the same.
- 5) I learned a lot about how to use the NC Legislature's website: <https://www.ncleg.gov>. I would highly recommend reviewing the website and devouring all information before ever trying to pursue getting a bill passed.
- 6) I learned that you might want to consider using a lobbyist, depending on what it is you are trying to achieve.

Q. Best advice to becoming a more proficient court reporter.

A. Always continue learning brief forms so you can write 250+ wpm when needed. Use an auto-brief program in your software, such as Eclipse has. All court reporting software programs should have something to help you with creating briefs on the fly. Learn macros to help you be more efficient with realtime.

My favorite briefs: AUFD – off the top of my head TPHAUFD – not off the top of my head SKAEUPBD – asked and answered

Funny Tidbit by Shari Rogers

THE COURT: All right.

MS. SMITH: And I'm a notary, so I'm not going to lie to you. I want you to know that.

NCCRA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

We provide continuing education at a reduced cost for members:

- * *Professional tip and tricks to enhance your skills*
- * *Networking opportunities with your peers*
- * *Renewed inspiration and enthusiasm for our great profession*
- * *Silent Auction and free give-aways*

Current national court reporting information brought to you locally.

Facebook presence to answer your questions and provide information.

E/SKREUPT newsletter

We provide a voice at NCRA conferences and meetings.

Every member counts—strength in numbers.

Join Today!



NCCRA Spring Conference

Wilmington, NC

April 18-19, 2020

More details to come

TALLsmall Productions

Keith Scott & Rebecca Klein Scott

TALLsmall Productions leads communications training workshops for court reporter associations across the country, Fortune 500s, trade associations, and individuals. The duo launched in 2014 and frequently make TV appearances, weighing in on the impact of communication in politics, news and daily life. They give back to the community by emceeding fundraising galas and leading pro-bono workshops. And, yes, the company name is a nod to their heights— Keith is 6'9" and Rebecca is 5'2".



Instantly increase your credibility by tossing these 12 words and phrases from in-person conversations and emails.

- 1. Honestly:** Using this word achieves the opposite of its meaning and makes people question our honesty. Same of truly, truth be told, and to tell the truth.
- 2. Just:** The ultimate doormat word. This downplayer makes what we are saying less important. Saying "I just have a question" makes the question seem insignificant.
- 3. I was just thinking:** This double whammy includes the weak "just" and then tells people we are thinking. When are we not thinking? It makes our thoughts sound less important.
- 4. Sorry:** There is a time and place for apology. Too often this word is used in emails and conversations before asking a question or for a favor. Over apologizing turns us into doormats.
- 5. I will say:** This phrasing is overused in presentations. It takes away from a profound message. Why tell someone what you will say. Say it. The cousins of this phrase include: in conclusion, I will start by telling you, etc.
- 6. I want to start by:** Similar to #5. This weakens the messaging and kills the pacing. This useless phrase creates an exit ramp for people to tune out of what you are saying.
- 7. I will try:** This leaves room for doubt. Say what you will do. Stay away from telling people what you hope or aim to accomplish.
- 8. Should:** This is another doubt creator. It leaves people unsure.
- 9. Actually:** This breeds the same distrust as honestly. It creates a snag in conversations. Picture someone telling you that they actually liked your idea. How would you feel?
- 10. I'm not sure if this is right but....** This hedging style phrase shows that you question your own wording. It's often used when someone doesn't want to be blamed or held accountable for a thought or action.
- 11. And so on and so forth...** Let go of all phrases that don't add anything. If you wouldn't pay for the words in a 30 second Super Bowl commercial, drop them. Other similar ones include, as a matter of fact, case in point, etc.
- 12. You know what I mean:** Opens up the door for people to think that no, they do not know. Violators of this phrase tend to use it to punctuate sentences.

Amy's Favorite Phrase/Phrase-enders

It's hard to come up with my favorite phrases or phrase-enders because I love so many of them, but here are a few.

"Understand" in phrases:

-PBDZ - understand
-*PBDZ - understanding
TKAOUPBDZ - do you understand
STHA*URPBDZ - is that your understanding

"Mention" in phrases:

-PLD - mention
-PLDZ - mentioned
SOUPLDZ - so you mentioned
SKPUPLDZ - and you mentioned
I've got 53 varying dictionary entries of the phrase "you mention" -- so you mentioned, when you mentioned, what you mentioned earlier, now you mentioned, that you mentioned -- and the list goes on.

"Agree" in phrases:

-*RG - agree
TKAO*URG - do you agree
SKP*URG - and you agree
SKPWAO*URG - and would you agree
TKPWHR*URG - but you agree.

"Document" in phrases:

-UPLT - document
THUPLT - this document
THAUPLT - that document
WHAUPLT - what document
SPHUPLTS - some documents

Same concept for "exhibit" in phrases:

-BT - exhibit
THBT - this exhibit
THABT - that exhibit
WHABT - what exhibit
SPHBTS - some exhibits.

"Page" in phrases:

#-PBLG - page
#TP-PBLG - first page - OR 1-PBLG
#S-PBLG - second page - OR 2-PBLG
#TH-PBLG - third page - OR 3-PBLG
#TPOUPBLG - fourth page - OR 4-PBLG
HR-PBLG - last page
PH-PBLG - middle of the page
PW-PBLG - bottom of the page
TPH-PBLG - next page
TH-PBLG - this page
THA-PBLG - that page
WHA-PBLG - what page

Same concept for "sentence" in phrases:

-Z - sentence
TP-Z - first sentence - OR 1-Z
S-Z - second sentence - OR 2-Z
TH-Z - third sentence - OR 3-Z
HR-Z - last sentence
And so on.

Same concept for "paragraph" in phrases:

-R - paragraph
TP-R - first paragraph - OR 1-R
S-R - second paragraph - OR 2-R
TH-R - third paragraph - OR 3-R.

Brief Corner

DOUDZ - do you see that
DRAK - did I read that correctly
add an asterisk to define with a new paragraph

TAEUB - take a break
PAUFRG - pain and suffering
NURP - in your opinion
WOFRP - workers' comp
WOFRPGS - workers' compensation

UFLS - under the influence
KROPBG - correct me if I'm wrong
RUPFL - are you familiar with
PEFD - preponderance of the evidence
HO*UFS - how fast
PWO*UFS - about how fast



Do you
have a
brief for