



# E/SKREUPT

## President’s Message

by Christine Taylor, RPR - NCCRA President

Greetings fellow reporters!

We had an awesome conference in Raleigh! Thank you to all who attended. We missed those who couldn’t make it and look forward to seeing you next time!

We have lots of exciting things happening. Our virtual conference will be on September 14, 2024, featuring Allison Hall as our speaker. She has a wealth of knowledge to share with us. You won’t want to miss it!

We are implementing a new quarterly get-together called “Court Reporter Chats” that have gotten underway.

Updates will be sent via e-mail and posted to Facebook. Our membership drive has begun for 2024-2025. If you haven’t already, get your application in today to join or renew. There is so much happening right now in the world of court reporting that we all need to come together. We are stronger together than we are alone!



## 2023 Board Members

President:	Christine Taylor	Directors	
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# 2024 NCRA CONFERENCE & EXPO

By Cynthia Boyd

The 2024 NCRA Conference & Expo will be taking place August 1-3 in Louisville, Kentucky at the Galt House Hotel, which sits downtown beside the Ohio River. In the event you have never been to one of NCRA's national conventions, you should consider attending. Besides, Louisville is not too far away from home.

My father was a court reporter and we were lucky enough to have had the opportunity to tag along many summers as he was attending what we simply referred to as "National." My sister and I both followed in his footsteps, and I am convinced part of why we were drawn to the profession was our interactions with his colleagues and friends, many of whom became like part of our family. We rubbed elbows with the giants of the profession and it left a lasting impact on us.

Of course, many of us make plans to go to National to knock out our CEU points. Then there's always the specials they have for writers and such. However, I maintain the greatest gift you will receive is a renewed love for this amazing profession we enjoy. The bonus is a beautiful array of friendships you will leave with. If you're considering registering, I say GO FOR IT!! You won't regret it.



<https://www.ncra.org/home/events-news/ncra-conference-expo/registration>

# Choose wisely: You become who you hang out with!

By Amy Brauser, RPR RMR CRR

As court reporters, we are isolated from other reporters on a daily basis. I'm sure reporters long to see another friendly-faced court reporter from time to time. Why is that? Because we always have questions. Questions about our software, questions about transcripts, questions about writing realtime, and the list goes on.

Just like those in other professions, in order to be successful, we need to surround ourselves with colleagues who are rockstars or at least those on their way to being a rockstar. How do we do this in our lone and segregated career? There's only one true answer. You must join your state association!

When I moved to North Carolina in 2002, I was one of these isolated reporters. I felt somewhat abandoned in my own profession. I had my RPR, but I knew I needed more to become that "rockstar" court reporter. Little did I know that joining NCCRA was the first step in getting me where I am today. I surrounded myself with reporters full of knowledge and experience, ready and willing to share their knowledge with me. Thank you, Evon Pepin, for the little nudge.

If you are one of those reporters who find no value in joining your state association, I can assure you that you are missing out on something that could very well be the best thing for your career. If you are a current member, thank you for supporting us with your membership. If you are not a member, join us today. We are well worth it, and so are you!

Membership application link: <https://ncreporters.org/about-nccra/forms/>

# INTRODUCING COURT REPORTER CHATS

By Renee Habrack

## **Court Reporter Chats? What are they and why are we doing them?**

As we may all know by now, if we've been in the business or school for even a little while, many people have no idea what it is that we do. They may think that we just "type" all day, but they truly don't realize the roles we take on quite like another stenographer understands it. We are there on sometimes the most stressful day of someone's life if they are being deposed, or part of a long process of someone seeking justice for a perceived wrong. We come into a space that isn't always joyous. They aren't usually situations we want to discuss when we go home, and, quite frankly, they aren't necessarily things we need to discuss.

How is this related to "Court Reporter Chats"?

Our association is a great place to find others who understand the challenges of our unique gift of stenography! We wanted to set up a space for us to come together in our regions to meet and get to know other reporters, whether we need to find those funny moments that come up in depositions or whether it is to just have someone that understands the stressors around what it is that we do day in and day out. Are these supposed to be complaint sessions? No. These are real-life discussions among working professionals who work in a profession that not many others understand the demands of. It's a place to find like-minded individuals to find casual conversation and possibly to share stories about what it was like way back when you began your career. It's a place to potentially find solutions to the challenges that our field faces and maybe brainstorm on what we want our association to look like moving forward. A way for us to help each other be successful.

So, please come on out and support your regional "Court Reporter Chat." We'd love to share a cup of tea or coffee (and maybe a pastry) and share some time together. These events are casual with no specific end times; however, please check in with the "lead" for your region to let them know if you are attending so they can have enough seating set aside. If the "lead" doesn't hear from anyone, no one may be there when you arrive, so please communicate your attendance. We can't wait to see you!

Next reporter chat: [Wilmington area—July 19, 2024](#)

# Let's Talk Mentoring

by Faith Pitino

The NCCRA is starting a new Mentoring Committee. The goal of this committee is to connect current professionals with students and/or new professionals, to offer support, encouragement, and assistance with the challenges they face while in school and/or starting their career.

## Why Become a Mentor?

Mentors share their knowledge of this great profession by passing along their knowledge to those just starting out.

Mentors provide Mentees the opportunity to see the different avenues available to take in this profession (i.e.: Freelance, Official, CART, etc.).

Mentoring provides a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction of knowing that you are nurturing the future of the profession.

Mentors gain a feeling of purpose by volunteering their time to help others.

## What are the Mentee Benefits?

Gains a support system.

Develops a relationship with a role model that allows them insight into the working world.

Can discuss how they're feeling and ask questions without the pressure of being embarrassed.

Creates the opportunity to build a professional network.

## How Do You Get Started?

If you're interested in becoming a Mentor or a Mentee or have questions about the benefits of this program, please send an email to [NCCRATreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:NCCRATreasurer@gmail.com).

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## My Mentorship Story

When I first learned that my husband and I were moving to North Carolina back in 2009, I had no idea where to begin. I was fresh out of court reporting school in New York. Luckily, I found my mentor, Tori Pittman. We had chatted online and through email before we moved, and as soon as we got here, I met Tori in person for the first time. We hit it off immediately!

Tori was kind enough to show this old gal the world of court reporting through her eyes. This was a second career for me that I was only starting at the age of 44. It was scary. But Tori showed me what an amazing group of people court reporters are and how supportive of each other they are. She was also kind enough to take me to court with her and introduce me to so many wonderful people.

She has helped me to become more proficient using my Eclipse software, has offered many, many, many brief suggestions over the years, has taught and guided me on producing transcripts, and even helped me get my very own clients. And to this day, I can ask her any question, no matter how silly it seems to me, and she gives me her opinion/suggestion on how to deal with whatever crazy thing I throw at her. After 15 years, not only are we Mentor/Mentee and colleagues, we are the best of friends!

Over the last two years, I have now become a mentor myself. I currently work with six mentees of my own. How can that be??? Not only have I helped these students/new reporters with their journey, but they have helped me become a better reporter as well. I may not always have the answer to their questions, but I have built a network of my own that I can reach out to, to point them to or find the answer they need.



# What I Wish My Friends and Family Understood About Court Reporting School

by Liane Hatch

Fun fact: I was seven months into court reporting school, about halfway through theory, before I'd ever actually met a court reporter in person. I'm not sure whether that makes me sound brave (for jumping right in at the NCCRA conference in 2022) or stupid (for choosing a whole career path without having actually ever consulted a real, working court reporter), but that's what happened. And for most "seasoned" reporters, that might sound unfathomable. But the days of brick-and-mortar court reporting programs are, well, maybe not *entirely* behind us, but they're fading fast. I even looked it up: of the 22 NCRA-approved court reporting programs, the closest one to me that utilizes a physical classroom is the Community College of Allegheny County. Yeah – in Pittsburgh. Not Pittsboro (though wouldn't that be nice?)

All that preamble to say, for most of today's court reporting students, we're online. We *might* log in to a live class once or twice a week, cameras and microphones off, while we communicate through the class's chat box. Or we might not. We might just complete our assignments, turn them in, and get our feedback with as little human interaction as possible – a far cry from the "back in the day" stories I've heard from the era of replacing ribbon and rewinding dictation tapes.

And as privileged as I am to learn machine steno from the comfort of my own home, it's *lonely* sometimes. A lot of the time, actually. That's why I love conferences so much – I absolutely light up when I get to talk to people who actually *get it*. They've been there. They've done that. They're doing it. And they know *exactly* what I'm talking about. Shoot, I don't even have to put my hands out in front of me and mimic writing to get them to understand what I'm even talking about!

Unfortunately, when it comes to my family and friends, that's not how it goes. They don't get it and I can't expect them to – but there *are* a few things I really wish they knew:

## 1. I don't know when I'll be done with school (and could you please stop asking?)

Look, we all probably know (or know of) at least one or two people who somehow miraculously went from theory to certification in a year or less. I aspired to be one of them. I was going to be a natural, an inspiration. I was fully prepared to be different – not like *other* court reporting students who got *stuck*. I wrote "Why not me?" and put it on my mirror to remind myself that I can do it, too.

Well, here I am today, about 30 months in, desperately clawing my way through my 200s. If this were law school, I'd be almost done. But I didn't go to law school; I went to court reporting school. And court reporting school is *skill* based, not academics based. So when you ask me when I'll be done, all I can say is "who knows?"

What I *want* to say is "Do you play any instruments? No? Okay cool, so how long do you think it would take you to become a professional concert pianist?"

I know you mean well. I know you're invested in my success. I know you want to see me graduate and move on. Trust me – I want that too! I just wish you'd stop asking.

## 2. I fail almost all of my tests –

I've always thought of myself as a perfectionist and a high achiever, so it was a huge blow the first time I failed a speed test, even though I *knew* I was going to fail speed tests. I mean, that's really just what we do in court reporting school. We fail and fail and fail and fail again, until eventually, weeks or months or however long into whatever speed it is we're tacking, we pass. Once. And then it all starts back over at a new speed, where we fail. And fail. And fail. If court reporting school has taught me anything, it's failure tolerance . . . well, failure tolerance and that HRAEURPBLG = "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury."

## 3. – even if I get a 94%

# BRIEFS/PHRASES

by Joann Bunze

While I too fall prey to the ease of arbitrarily adding words to my dictionary just because I'm in a rush or it seems to make sense at the time, the fact of the matter is, I'm well aware that learning briefs in groups is a more efficient use of my time and chances are, those "group" briefs will stick around for the long haul.

So when you add words, see if there's a family you can add as well. For example, the "for" family:

forgave	FRA-EUF	forgive	FO-EUF
forgiven	FO-EUN	forgiveness	FO-EUNS
forget	FO-ET	forgot	FO-GT
forgotten	FO-EGT		

Another family I like to use is the "a" family:

await	WA*EUT	awake	WA*EUK
award	WA-ERD	awhile	WHAO*EUL
arraign	RA*EN	appeal	PA*EL
apparel	PA*ERL	amaze	MA-EZ
among	MAO-NG	apart	PAO-RT
aloud	LO*UD	along	LAO-NG
alone	LAO-N	allow	LO-U
alarm	LA-ERM	attack	TA-EK

But if you're just looking for a few arbitrary briefs of phrases, here are a few of my favorites:

Google Maps	GAO-MS
parking lot	PLA-RT
Raleigh Police Department	R*PD
RPD	R-PD
community college	KM-EJ
Community College	KM*EJ
accommodate	KO-MD
employment	PLO-EUMT
erroneous	AO*ERNS

When trying out new words or phrases, less is more. Trying to memorize a whole bunch at a time is a recipe for disaster. Write down five or six, practice them daily, and try to incorporate them into your job when you can. Once those are solid, grab five or six more. You'll learn more in a shorter time and your writing will be faster. Remember the shorter your writing, the longer your career.

Happy briefing!!!!

# About the word “so”

by Karen Kidwell

Thanks to Margie Wakeman, Margie Holds Court

The word “so” has two meanings and takes different punctuation depending on what it means:

So that, in order that – implying the reason for doing something

Therefore

When so means “so that” or “in order that” and implies the reason for doing something ...

Rule: When so starts a dependent clause, answers the question why, always implies the reason for doing something, it doesn’t take a comma in front of it.

I left early so I could stop by to see her in the hospital.

She went through San Diego on her way to Yuma so she could have dinner with her brother.

He called so he could tell me the news.

When so means “therefore” ...

Rule: When so means therefore and starts a new sentence, it is a conjunctive adverb. It takes a period or a semicolon in front of it and no comma after it because it is one syllable.

I had a cold, so I stayed home that day.

The bank was foreclosing, so we had no alternative.

She had been fired, so there was nothing we could do.

Rule: Do not put a single separating comma after the word so.

So she promptly quit.

So I didn’t respond to her.

Trailing off. Correct usage:

I had already left the residence, so --

I had already left the residence, so...

We continue to struggle with this word "so" -- so little and so much trouble!!

When "so" means "in order that" and implies the reason for doing something, it is a subordinate conjunction that begins a dependent clause, and there is no punctuation.

...walking slowly so I wouldn't miss anything...

...going to see her so I could give her the forms...

When "so" means "therefore," it starts a new sentence and takes a semicolon or a period in front of it.

...I had to leave early; so I missed the announcement...

...The doctor was in surgery; so he wasn't available...

The problem is that many people think "so" is like the word "and." But "so" is an adverb by nature.

When it is pulled out to the front of the sentence and made into a conjunction, it behaves like the words "then" and "still" and "hence." It starts a new sentence.

There is no comma after it because it is one syllable.



# ECLIPSE TIPS

by Kristy Clark

TO AI OR NOT TO AI .....

That is the question. As I was told and as most reporters heard in school, Why become a stenographer when you are going to get replaced with a tape recorder, video recording, etc.? And now AI? Our profession fights this battle every day. If you are an Eclipse user, you may be aware that Advantage Software finally asked the question "How do we stop fighting against AI and use it to our benefit?"

Eclipse introduced Boost software not too long ago. If you are unfamiliar with the Boost feature, it works through an internet connection that allows Google to listen in to your audio and help your translation rate. I decided to try it out. I indeed tried it, with absolutely horrible results. So that was it. Tried, didn't like it, moving on. Never a second thought to it. That is until an old friend and Eclipse trainer, Michael Starkman, gave me a call and asked if I had been using the new Boost on demand feature. After a quick retort of "no way, never again," he convinced me to do a training session with him so I could learn what the feature really was capable of. The feature now allows the reporter to ask Google to listen in only on the portion they request through a stroke on the machine. So now instead of dropping that portion that wasn't properly heard or said too fast, the reporter can use a designated stroke to prompt Google to listen and fill in the missing section of testimony.

I have been using Boost on demand now for around four months with pleasantly surprising results. Of course, there are the proper circumstances to utilize the feature and a small amount of setup in the software, but it is well worth the effort, especially when the doctor talks about a hysterosalpingo oophorectomy and I simply write the stroke "SO\*S." Go ahead, AI, and make me look great in my transcript and shorten my editing time.

So, if you haven't tried out Boost, maybe take a look and put AI on your side!

*Fall into Better Writing  
with Allison Hall, RDR, CRR, CSR*

**North Carolina Court Reporters Association  
2024 Fall Virtual Conference  
Saturday, September 14, 2024  
9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  
Total Credits 0.30 (pending)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ NCRA ID # \_\_\_\_\_

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# Job Opportunities

State of North Carolina is looking for officials. Click link for more information.

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/northcarolina?keywords=court%20reporter>