



**Winter 2018 e-Newsletter edition • Christine Randall, *Editor***



## **President's Message**

By: Susan E. Ingraham

My grateful list begins with thanking all of you for providing the opportunity to lead STAR this year. It is a most humbling and exciting privilege that I do not and will not take lightly as we are on the front lines helping to shape the future of reporting, CART, and captioning. STAR has a board of hard-working people who are energetic, creative, realistic, and wanting to move the profession and business of reporting ahead so that the record is always captured by those who are skilled and professional, using the best tools available.

It was with sadness, but joy and fun as Mike Miller opened the newly-named STAR Lounge as Irv's Lounge in honor of the best and most fun bartender ever – Irv Starkman. I say sad because Irv was not there to be a part of the renaming festivities, but joy and fun as we all raised a glass to the incomparable Irv who made the Lounge a place of comradery, fun, networking and THE place to be at a STAR conference. Thank you, Irv!

The list continues to thank Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag, whose leadership this past year was just what we needed. We are now an organized organization, able to look ahead with a plan and with confidence as we go into the future. Her energy and wise counsel – yes, it was all there. Thank you for letting me learn from you!

Another thank you on this list goes to Karen Tyler, Marjorie Peterson, and staff, Dave Wenhold, Kathy Thompson and Lyndsay Nicholson, who heroically and tirelessly put together STARCON18 in New Orleans following NCRA's annual conference in the same city just a few short months before STAR. Tina Kautter can certainly be proud that the legacy of successful STAR conferences lives on.

Yes, Lagniappe - something extra we experienced here in New Orleans! From the second line musicians led us to Irv's Lounge and stayed to entertain, to the fun and emotional experience of our keynote speaker, Mark Yarbrough, to the training Cindi Lynch provided, and let us not forget Mad Max nor the Realtime Unicorn. It was something extra, extra special in NOLA.

Again, thank-you to the Board as they served unwaveringly this past year – I witnessed a lot of going-above-and-beyond in order to bring you, STAR members, an organization of which you can be proud. Thank you, Max Curry for being a STAR member. You returned home to NOLA to represent NCRA to us and to show us your lovely city.

Thank you, Nancy Bistany, for installing the officers for 2018-2019. It was very appropriate and to the point – the only way to be!!

This year's "It's all about Relationships" theme is not a new concept – in fact, it's been around since people have inhabited the earth. Relationships, in all their many and varied forms, serve as the link for everything STAR stands for – Stenograph/Technology/Agencies/Reporters.

Without Stenograph, there would be no STAR – without STAR and its passion to see court reporting grow and become all it can be, there would be no Stenograph. Without technology, there would be no new software or steno machines that

serve as the growth and vision for both Stenograph and STAR. Without agencies and reporters being in relationship with one another and with STAR and with Stenograph, court reporting would have died a long time ago.

Why do we need these relationships? We are responsible to bring new reporters into the business of reporting; we must keep the rising stars, together with Stenograph's bright and innovative programmers, to continue to improve the software and machines. The result? We can always make the record for the legal community, for the deaf community, and for the captioning community.

Relationships, however, are not easy, but they are always rewarding. Real relationships begin when you allow yourself to actively listen. Agency owners, reporters have a story; reporters, agency owners have a story. STAR has a story, and, of course, Stenograph has a story. You and I have a story.

How each of us arrived at this point where we are today is because someone else valued a relationship with us. Nancy – you were the first person to introduce me to the possibility of serving out of my comfort zone in DC so many, many years ago and so in Vancouver where STAR was born, I was there, maybe kicking and silently screaming, but there. And Vancouver is where I met Mike (before Susie, and what a value-added relationship that's been!) From that experience, I've come to know many of you and I look forward to meeting many more of you as this year rolls along. I have had the privilege of meeting the incredibly bright and talented engineers at Stenograph. It is my hope that you all are afforded that experience in the future.

Until and unless we listen as each story is told, we are losing out on the value that relationships bring. As I mentioned earlier, relationships are not easy, they take work, they take commitment, they take putting our own interests and wants aside for the betterment of the whole. In this instance, the whole is STAR.

You invested time and money in your membership with STAR. When you attend a conference, you invest further time and money. Continue that investment in yourself, in your business, in this profession – make sure you renew your membership in STAR – we so appreciate it. To that end, make a commitment to attend STARTECH19 in Nashville. You will be glad you did!

So let's get past the misconception that STAR is a clique-ish organization, let's get past the misconception that making the record is going to become archaic, let's get past the misconception that STAR is a firm-owners only group, or a reporters-only group, or any other misconception that can get in the way of being in a real relationship.

As this article ends, it's only the beginning of what we, STAR, can do with this year, and all the STARCONs and STARTECHs to come. It really has everything to do with relationships. So Let's do this together and see what exciting things can happen when we truly value the relationships that have been made and those that wait just around the corner – as in Nashville, April 12-14, 2019, at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel. You won't want to miss it!

## How Podcasts Changed My Commute and My Life

By: Angie Ballman Punton



As a mom of two children, ages 3 ½ years and 5 months, I have a newfound appreciation for riding in a car, alone. In fact, just the thought of an opportunity for a solo commute has me hearing angels singing The Great Hallelujah. This is a recent paradigm shift. It wasn't long ago that my commute to and from work was often cause for aggravation, agitation, consternation, and if I was being totally honest, borderline road rage. I'm not proud of it, but it's unfortunately kinda true. Like many places across the country, there are two seasons in the Twin Cities – Construction and Winter. Some folks deal with the resulting heavy stop-and-go traffic, let alone law-breakers and crazy drivers, with much more patience than others. Indeed, Traffic Patience was a virtue I never cultivated, and as a result I was not a happy camper. I mean, commuter. Until one fine day a few weeks ago when my life was changed by a client lunch.

While I certainly hope our client can say the same due to my introducing her to amazing proprietary time-saving litigation support technologies that will make her life at work much dreamier, the fact is, she truly rocked my world when, while talking about how challenging it is as moms trying to “balance it all,” she shared with me The Secret of Podcasts.

Sure, I had heard of podcasts. Who hasn't? But truth be told, I was a Millennial very late to the great podcast game. For those of you in a similar boat, here's a quick Podcast 101. The word itself is a portmanteau of “ipod” and “broadcast,” also known as audioblogging. While podcasts have been around for at least a decade, they saw a dramatic increase in popularity with the advent of portable audio devices. Typically, a podcast will consist of either dialogue between a speaker and a guest, or a monologue by the podcast host. Podcast topics are as limitless as the number of books in a library.

Now....back to how they changed my life.

I know I'm not alone when I say that I love to read, I love to learn new things, I love to stay current on topics about which I'm passionate, but there are only so many hours in a day, and when you have little kids, a full-time job, a husband and a household, who has time to curl up with a good...anything? “Family First” trumps “Me Time” every time. That said, my recent introduction to podcasts was an absolute game-changer. Remember that annoying daily commute to work? Well, I have converted that precious alone-time into listening only to content that enriches my life and improves my mental health.

My commutes went from awful to joyful! I arrive at work and back home with a renewed state of mind. It's the ultimate in multitasking and a huge #momwin. And did I mention that they are FREE and have limited commercials?!

It's been totally fun and uplifting deciding which podcast will be the daily winner. Some of my favorites so far include: "Goop," "The Minimalists," "Oprah's Super Soul Sunday," and "Mindful Parenting in a Messy World."

So, friends, if you have yet to discover podcasts, I'm here to inspire you to go out and give a listen. I think you'll find that taking in fascinating content, especially while commuting, makes time fly and will help you #liveyourbestlife. And if you're already ahead of the game and a connoisseur of fine podcasts, please Tweet your favorites at me - @angelanicoleBP!

## **Top Takeaways from STAR...Developing the Next Generation of Reporters**

By: Max Curry, BCR, RPR, LCR, CRI, CCR, NCRA President-Elect 2018-2019

STAR, as always, was an awesome experience, but even better it being in my hometown of NOLA where I can show off my sweet lady to all my colleagues and friends and let them experience what it is I love about New Orleans!

I always enjoy my attendance at STAR, and always walk away having learned more than I brought. This session as NCRA Rep to STAR made my experience even better, advocating for two professional groups I personally hold dear and who have helped me develop into the real-time reporter and firm owner I am today!

I gave a presentation at STAR about the development of our next generation of reporters... court reporters, CART reporters, Captioning reporters, etc. My presentation highlighted and expounded upon the following areas:

1. Changes in educational techniques and how we are training the current and future generations of reporters to not fear real-time reporting, but to embrace it. They're learning revised and enhanced theories that will make them better writers, developing speed and accuracy even faster than our generation of reporters did. What they're accomplishing in shorter periods of time is nothing short of amazing!
2. The Millennial Generation of future reporters (by 2030 they will be 50% of the workforce) and how they will be different from us... better in some ways, and in some ways facing more challenges. Some of the challenges we will be able to help them with through our shared experience and knowledge. However, the Millennials are going to challenge us to have to evolve ourselves in how we manage people and what the expectations will be.
3. The final overall element of my presentation dealt with the future evolution of our profession through what we've done all along... adapted, learned, evolved, and most importantly, we've embraced technology at every turn and have made it work for us. AI (Artificial Intelligence) will be no different. In the near future, evolutions in our software paired with AI will be able to do somewhat miraculous things with regard to enhancing a great reporter's skill set, creating an almost instantaneous transcript near the conclusion of the court hearing or deposition. Sounds like STAR Trek, and it kinda is... but it's our future! I'm ready for it... and I hope you are too! Isn't technology and our embracing of it a big part of what STAR is all about?!?
4. Lastly, we talked about the bright future of our profession and that I absolutely feel and believe our best days are ahead, not behind... if we will join forces and work together for the betterment of our entire profession!

I hope you will join STAR in my adopted hometown of NashVegas in the spring of 2019! It's gonna be a honky tonk rockin' time in Nashville!

## **Recap of the What's New at Stenograph Session at STARCON18**

By: James Kuta, Senior Product Manager

Representatives from Stenograph are invited to speak to STAR members each year at STARCON. The STARCON 18 convention in New Orleans this past October was no exception. Star Levandowski – Vice President of Corporate Strategy & Business Development, Brian Clune – Vice President of YesLaw, Gail Abraham – Director of Sales, Cindi Lynch – Training Program Manager, and James Kuta – Senior Product Manager, had exciting news to share about the latest product features

and updates coming out of Stenograph. The following is a recap of what was shared with those in attendance on the 10th floor of the Loews New Orleans Hotel.

### **Stenograph is celebrating its 80th Anniversary**

Stenograph and the court reporting industry have come a long way in the past 80 years, and Stenograph is here to stay. The employees of Stenograph have a renewed customer focus and want to learn more about your needs, what else they can do for you, and how Stenograph can be a better partner to you. Another aspect of growing Stenograph beyond the past 80 years is the recent acquisitions of YesLaw and Reporter Suite.

### **YesLaw**

Stenograph will help grow the YesLaw products and brand. Evidence of this growth is the newest YesLaw feature introduced at STARCON. YesLaw is now able to create PTX file types! Reporters already using any of YesLaw's transcript production, delivery, video synchronization, and online storage tools will continue to receive the same great support they're already familiar with.

### **New Luminex Writer Colors**

The three newest Luminex writer color options were shown. The Blue Carbon Fiber is a new incarnation of the carbon fiber pattern Stenograph introduced last year, this time in a rich, classy blue. The Aqua Edition is a white-shelled Luminex with an aqua-colored LCD backplate. The color combination is memorable and elegant. And finally, there is the Platinum Edition, featuring a platinum-colored shell with a brushed metal look. Combined with the white LCD front and keys, the Platinum Edition offers a timeless sophistication.

### **The Luminex Tension Toggle**

The Tension Toggle allows Luminex users to decide if they want to be able to adjust how much tension (resistance) will be applied to the keyboard while writing, or if they want no tension from the universal bar to be applied to the keyboard. This is a great option for reporters who like a light touch, are already using the lowest tension setting possible, or don't want to feel any bounce back from the universal bar. What's great about the Tension Toggle is that you can choose between having tension applied to the keyboard or not – completely on the fly – without needing to make any other key or tension setting adjustments.

### **StenographHelp.Askbot.com (Askbot)**

The goal of Askbot is to give Case CATalyst users an effective online place for asking and answering Case CATalyst questions. Unlike Facebook groups, Askbot makes it easy to find the most common questions and the correct answers to those questions without all of the unrelated chatter. Since Askbot is for Case CATalyst users with and Edge for CATalyst support plan, you can be sure the questions and answers apply to the most recent versions of Case CATalyst, not versions that are years out of date and no longer apply to you. Speaking of the latest version of Case CATalyst...

### **Case CATalyst Version 19**

Version 19 has great new features designed to make writing and editing easier for you!

- Hotspots categories – The Hotspots feature is already a great timesaving tool for transcript editing, but now you can have items you want to check in the transcript categorized by name and color inside of the Hotspots pane. Whether it's to check the spelling of a name, a reminder to listen to the audio, or a mark for a scopist, you'll be able to quickly find those items in the transcript.
- Phonetic steno for Brief It – You might find it more natural to think about steno phonetically. In Version 19, Brief It gives you the option to see the steno suggestions made by Brief It phonetically.
- Cloud Backup status – It's now easier to know when Cloud Backup has safely stored your files to the cloud. A green dot will appear in Manage Jobs to show when a file is backed up. If the file has changed and is waiting to be backed up, a yellow dot will appear.
- Characters Per Line Assistant – The Characters Per Line Assistant will help you with one of the most frustrating aspects of page layout creation. If you know what your left margin should be, CATalyst will automatically figure out the correct right margin to achieve your desired characters per line for each paragraph style.
- Dictionary Builder speaks – Hear the words and phrases, and then write them phonetically when creating dictionary entries. Dictionary Builder can speak the words from Case Prep lists or any ASCII list.

### **CaseViewNet Browser Edition Chat**

The new Chat feature in CaseViewNet Browser Edition can be used by local and remote attorneys to communicate individually with another attorney and/or with everyone currently connected to your realtime feed. CART providers and their customers can easily communicate throughout the session by using Chat.

If you'd like to learn more about what's new at Stenograph, please visit [Stenograph.com](http://Stenograph.com), or give Stenograph a call at (800) 323-4247.



## **Tough Love, Part Deux - Myth Busting— With Mike Miller**

**By: Linda S. Fifield, MBA**

How refreshing to hear Mike Miller, a/k/a Depoman, talk about subjects that are often difficult to hear for many people in our profession. As a non-court reporter, my outlook on the profession is starkly different than those of a working reporter. As a firm owner, my job is to run a business. What independent court reporters often misunderstand is that each and every reporter out in the field is also a business.

As a firm, we handle scheduling, billing, accounts payable, collections, marketing, advertising, production, payroll, taxes, healthcare, etc., on a daily basis. You, as an independent contractor, feel your job is to go to your assignment and take down the testimony. You don't want to work with one firm because you can make more money on your own. Your primary responsibility is to take down the spoken word. However, did you ever think about your day at the conclusion of the deposition? Your job doesn't end there. You need to produce the transcript. That means doing the work yourself, or you hire a scopist and proofreader. If you choose the latter, you are now an employer. Next comes production. Do you print out the transcript and produce the litigation support, or do you have someone else do it for you? If you do it yourself, you're responsible for printers, scanners, copiers, software, paper, ink and toner, to name a few things. Then comes the billing and collections. If you do it yourself, guess what? Now you're involved with accounting. Simply put, you are a business of one.

Today court reporters have the advantage/disadvantage of being in a career where there's a crippling shortage in the industry. How should this affect you? Most people understand the rules of supply and demand. The more there is of "something," the lower the cost. The less there is, the higher the cost. Simple economics. However, court reporters fail to see how this relates to them. How many of you have enjoyed a meaningful rate hike in recent years? In addition, since there is a shortage, are you educating your client that they need to work with you if you are to cover their assignments? You are an integral part of their team.

At the same time, you need to treat the shortage with professionalism. There should be a mutual respect for all parties concerned. We're all out there trying to provide quality service to counsel. That means showing up on time, providing the best services possible to the client, while charging a fair rate. No gouging the hand that feeds you. Guess what? You do that and they probably won't want you back. Should I also mention that you should be respectful of other court reporters/firm owners? I heard one story where a reporter took an assignment and then canceled at the last minute because she got a better offer. This is professionalism at its worst. Don't forget, your reputation is on the line as well as the reporter/firm that you slighted. That's not good for any business.

Next question: Do you market yourself? You should. You should educate your clients about the technology available to them so that they can do their job better and more efficiently than what they're doing now. You also need to share with them your credentials and certifications. Show pride in your accomplishments because nobody else will. You earned your certifications. Advertise them.

My sister Connie and I recently attended the graduation ceremony of a Harvard Medical student. Amongst them were graduates receiving their M.D. degrees along with a Master's or Ph.D. It was quite humbling. Then Connie thought, no one can do what I do as a court reporter. She was absolutely correct. Do you know how special you are???

How many of you know your cost per page?? It's amazing that people have no clue about what it costs them to produce one page of transcript. Simple math example: You take a job and bill \$8.00 a page. You hire a scopist and a proofreader. Say it costs you \$1.50-\$2.00 per page. You hire out someone to do your production and billing. That's another out-of-pocket expense. You still haven't figured in taxes, commission, the software, writer and computer expenses, transportation, medical insurance, retirement, etc. Then I hear, "Well, I do everything myself to keep my expenses down." As Lisa Knight once said, "I'm only making money when my hands are on the steno machine." Know your cost per page. Can you afford to take that job because it's better than nothing, or do you hire the scopist so you can take more pages, or add realtime and expedited services to your arsenal to increase that page rate?

Time is running out. If you want to survive, status quo no longer cuts it. You're hurting yourself and the profession by not pushing the envelope to be better. If this profession is dying, look at yourself. Are you being the best that you can be? Are you representing yourself and your business as a business, or are you "just a body" looking for a paycheck at the end of the day?

It's time to rethink the way you run your business. Maybe you should work for a firm that takes a commission but also takes care of the "business" that you don't want to deal with. Maybe you should sit for that CRR so people will seek you out

for those realtime jobs. Think outside the box. Push the envelope. What kind of “business” do you want to be?

Thank you, Mike, for another great seminar.

NOTE: Many of these thoughts are my interpretation of Mike’s bullet points.

## Handling an R&S When the Party Refuses to Buy a Transcript

By: Linda S. Fifield, MBA

How many of you have lost the sale of a transcript because the other side refuses to buy one knowing that he’s entitled to the transcript for reading and signing? Since most transcripts are now being delivered digitally, securing a PDF to “read only” was the best option. When you provide a READ-ONLY PDF, you are pretty much blocking the print and copy-and-paste features. A big disadvantage to us is that they still have a copy of the transcript.

Have you heard of box.com? The principle is pretty much the same as creating a READ-ONLY PDF; however, box.com takes it one step further. The upload of the PDF file is encrypted as it’s sent to a folder where you LOCK the file. The lock feature prohibits printing, downloading, and copying. You give the user(s) rights as a “Viewer.” A link is made which you email to the respective parties.

After a determined amount of time, say 30-45 days, you can delete/disable the link so they no longer have access to the file. If you choose the free download, you need to remember to delete/disable the link manually. The purchased version allows you to put in a date of expiration.

We’re excited about having the ability to better control how our transcripts are being used and shared.



## Talk Steno to Me

By: Donna Urlaub

I’m wrapping up a two-week medical negligence trial; lots of infectious disease terminology. Most of these were already in my dix, but a few that I came up with – and of which I’m most proud – erythema, sepsis, soft tissue, culture, Staphylococcus, and Streptococcus. I credit Brief It for necrotizing fasciitis. Necessity: it’s the mother of invention!

N\*F = necrotizing fasciitis

SPIS = sepsis

TIRB = tissue – STIRB = soft tissue

SDAIR = standard of care

SPEM = specimen

KLURT = culture - KLURD = cultured

BAIN = obtain

AEBT = antibiotic

MAOM = emergency room

M-PT = emergency department

BRAKT = bacteria

KED = educate – KEGS = education

PR-FL = professional

KRIFM = criticism

S-RG = surgery – SAOURL = surgical – SAOURG = surgeon

N-FK = infection – N-FKS = infectious – N-FKZ = infections

SDAES = disease - N-FKDZ = infectious disease

STAF = staph – STA\*F = Staph – STAFL = Staphylococcus (staff would be STAUF)

STREP = strep – STR\*EP = Strep - STREPT = Streptococcus

DMIT = admit - DM-R = administer – DM-GS = administration – DM-F = administrative

D\*D = differential diagnosis

THRAOEM = erythema

FANT = infant

PLIBL = applicable

LABT = laboratory

BLURT = blood culture

VAOINS = vital signs

PAIRBT = patient – NAIRBT = inpatient

PRAOM = operating room

YAOIF = I.V.

BLAOEM = bloodstream

REFNT = resident – RAEFD = residency

LIRT = literature

SKULT = consult – SKULGS = consultation

# You Can't Write It If You Can't Hear It!

By: Linda S. Fifield, MBA

As we get older, we're always looking for tools to make our job easier. Here are a few hot products for sound management as only Mike Miller a/k/a Depoman can find, use, and explain. Thought I'd share a few of his great finds designed to make your job easier.

- Bose QC 25 (wired) ~ \$200 - or - QC 35 (Wireless) headsets ~ \$350.00
- Stereo-to-mono earbud – Far End Gear XDU ~ \$20.00
  - o Many like having an earbud in one ear leaving the other ear open to hear other sounds. These stereo-to-mono earbuds do the trick.
- USB Soundcard by The Sound Professionals
  - o SP-USB-SA-HG ~ \$80.00 - or - SP-USB-MIC-MODEL-6 ~ \$200.00
  - o Use the software that comes with the USB to enhance your sound.
  - o Hooks onto your laptop with a microphone and earbud attachment.
- SP-USB-Court-Boundary Microphone from The Sound Professionals ~ \$200-\$400
  - o Expensive but the microphone has a long cord and amplifies great sound.
- Cables2Go 25' Velocity Stereo Cable for audio
  - o Link ~ \$30.00
  - o Use this cable to hook into the videographer for best sound. It's thicker than most cables so the wires inside are better protected from snapping.
- Sescom SES-MKP-27 Professional Stereo 3.5 mm Volume Control
  - o Link ~ \$36.00
  - o Use this adapter to increase/decrease volume control with a simple turn of a button.
  - o Mike attaches this to his writer so it's right at his fingertips.
- Headphone splitter
  - o Link ~ Buy them in bulk and share it with your videographer to get great, direct sound live from his equipment. Don't know if the link shared is a good one. Just wanted to give you the concept of what a splitter looks like.
- Diamante/Luminex
  - o Use the microphone and headphone feature on the writer. It's a game changer!!
  - o Codecs on the writer – the sweet spot is 80 MB/hour.
  - o Auto pause on the writer actually holds five seconds of "sound" from when you hit the keyboard. You should not lose your audio.
- Audacity – free tool
  - o It's a compressor, equalizer, handles noise reduction, and exports to .WAV.
  - o Amazing tool for improving your audio.

Mike got pretty technical as only Mike can, and so I skipped a few techie gadgets because I simply couldn't grasp his techie, geeky speak. Good luck trying out these great tech tools. Life changing!!!

