



## Fall 2016 e-Newsletter edition



## President's Message - STARCON16 — Your Recipe for Success

By Shelly Hunter



My Grandma Mae made wonderful molasses cookies every year. These cookies had key ingredients with just enough molasses and the perfect amount of cinnamon. She would make some with frosting and some without frosting so that everyone could indulge in their personal favorite. These cookies would melt in your mouth.

Like I said at the outset of my year as STAR president, I believe success in any industry is a matter of having just the right ingredients much like those melt-in-your-mouth molasses cookies. Through its conferences and member benefits, STAR delivers key ingredients to be successful. With two tracks at a STAR conference, professional development and Case CATalyst — or let's say frosted or unfrosted — it is guaranteed to have the right something for everyone.

I know you have received the emails and heard the buzz, but let me personally invite you to attend STARCON16, October 20-22, 2016, in Scottsdale, AZ, at the Firesky Resort & Spa. I have stayed at this resort and can tell you firsthand that it is a beautiful location to work on your "Recipe for Success."

Through the work of our committee members, Christine Randall and Rosalie Kramm, and the amazing staff at STAR Headquarters — thank you, my superstars — STAR has designed a program that provides all the key ingredients for a successful professional life. You know, just the right amount of this and that.

On the Case CATalyst track we have SEVEN — YES, SEVEN — Case CATalyst training seminars. For the low price of \$550 — that's the early bird rate or \$590 after September 9 — you can have the ever-popular Cindi Lynch train you on everything from the new features on manage jobs and edit in CATalyst to custom realtime editing, and there is so much more in between. This is a great value for reporters looking to learn more about their software.

On the professional development track, we have lined up top-notch speakers. I will be moderating a panel discussion on

technologies in the deposition and trial settings. Industry experts will discuss trending legal technologies, how they are being marketed, and their clients' responses. And back by popular demand, we also have two sessions with Randy Dean who will go over how to get the most out of your smart device and taming the e-mail etiquette beast. Also returning are Attorneys Renee Schor and Cindy Freeland to discuss your new hire process and how not to doom the relationship from the beginning.

Pat Carl and Ruth McCurdy will teach us how to reduce stress, anxiety, and anger while increasing joy, happiness, and confidence. Those are definitely ingredients for my success. I will not miss this seminar.

And how about a sunrise nature hike or a sunrise yoga class? What better way to start the day! There is yoga on Friday and an early morning walk on Saturday.

Networking is also a key ingredient to any STAR conference. STARCON16 is no different. Thursday afternoon we will enjoy the casual TED Talks-style session which is sure to be informative and entertaining. Friday afternoon we will debut Stenograph Speed Dating. Get your questions answered in this fun and fast-paced interchange with our friends at Stenograph.

We have a special event at STAR that has been hosted for years by the heart and soul of our STAR family, Mr. Irv Starkman. Even though Irv cannot join us, he is sending some mystery bartenders to mix up some magic once again in the STAR Lounge both Thursday and Friday evening. If you are new to STAR, this is the perfect way to meet new friends and to get Irv'd.

My Grandma Mae's cookies conjure up great memories for me growing up and it even makes me smile thinking about it. STAR's "Recipe for Success" also conjures up some great memories, memories of past conferences, memories of great speakers, memories of wonderful experiences I have had both inside and outside the meeting rooms, and, of course, memories of lots of laughter. Thank you for a wonderful year as your president, and I hope to see you in Scottsdale to make some new memories.

## Technology: The Great Connector... or Creating an Anti-Social Society?

By: Angie Ballman Punton

Texting and phone apps and games...oh, my! What has the world come to? I feel like I'm the only person in it not playing Pokémon Go. (And by the way, I'm okay with that.) As my husband busily collects Pokémon from "PokéStops" during our leisurely evening strolls around our local lake relegating me to Official Stroller-Pusher (and by the way, I'm okay with that, too), I can't help but take note of all the heads buried in phones. And it's been long in the making with the advent of texting, but the Pokémon Go phenomenon may have put civilization over the edge, never to return to the days when we actually made eye contact with human beings as we passed them, let alone greet them with a smile or a "hello."

While some of us have somehow managed to remain disengaged from the craze, Pokémon Go has clearly created addiction in others... and the addicts know no age, race, shape or size. Hipsters, athletes, tweens, even fellow parents pushing their strollers... they're all out in droves trying to "catch 'em all." And it's not just around the local lake, either. Golf courses, shopping malls, state parks and ball parks are all seemingly "Poké-Hotbeds!"

"Isn't it great?" my husband exclaims! "It's getting people off the couch and moving!" That's one way to look at it, I suppose. But there's one big problem with this this trendy game that's getting people out and about: It requires no human interaction at all. To quote STAR's own Rosalie Kramm, "zero point zero." So when you happen upon a group of people herded together staring at their phones like zombies, not speaking a word, here's my question: Is this good or bad? Is technology like Pokémon Go, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and texting connecting us and bringing us together... or is it turning us into socially inept, autonomous, poor-spelling recluses?

It doesn't seem that long ago that it was considered pompous, if not completely inappropriate, to be on your phone while on the golf course, at a table in a nice restaurant, during a business meeting, in church, or while in conversation with another human. Talk about a paradigm shift! Where can you go anymore where most everyone doesn't have their phone, if not in hand, then close by and at the ready to be snatched up at first ring, ping or zing? Does such a sacred place even exist anymore?

And you know what strikes me as odd? Instead of being present in any given big moment, we use our cell phones to take pictures to post instead of engaging all our senses and taking in the moment live. What's wrong with this picture? And no one uses cell phones to TALK anymore. Case in point: The other day my husband yelled, "Sarah is calling!" Sarah is my best friend. I sprinted to my phone, leaping over toddler toys and dodging my cat to try to catch the call before it rolled to voicemail. Something must be wrong, I worried, because Sarah never calls; we always text. Turns out everything was fine. Sarah was on her way home and wanted to chat about weekend plans. After we hung up, I wondered why a phone call from my BFF would send me into such a panic. What has the world come to...and how did we get here?



One thing I know for sure: 18-month-old Sweet Caroline is watching everything I do with great interest and soaking it up like a sponge. Funny...she already has shown a great interest in my phone. She knows when she does something cute (which is always), I will have it in my hand. She knows it's how she can see Papa and Gamma talk to her. And she knows Elmo is only a few screen touches away. I don't want her to grow up in a society where family dinners consist of perusing social media feeds, sending Snapchats and texting friends. I just don't. We must stop the madness, and it must begin with me — the social media maven.

I hereby challenge myself and others to put the phone down and “resocialize.” Enjoy our family's company, our friend's faces, the breeze off the lake, the sound of silence! I challenge myself and you to NOT to reach for our phones when we hear the ping of a text or the chime of an email. And please! Let's let Pokémon Go-away...or at least clear the walking path for my stroller.

## Building — and Surviving — a Career as a Freelance Court Reporter

By: Kim Neeson



Freelance court reporting sounds so tempting. You control your whole working life: who you work for, when you work. You get to set your own limits and ultimately you only have to answer to yourself. But it's not that simple. Being a freelance court reporter has many perks, but there are skills you'll need to develop to ensure your success — and your sanity — along the way.

**1. Say “Yes!” (to almost everything):** Availability to provide your services is key. The freelancer who moves mountains to accommodate a request, whether it be covering a last-minute deposition, or getting in that transcript a couple days early, is always remembered and appreciated. Those who are inflexible go straight to the bottom of a client's list. Another compelling reason to say “yes” is the fact that freelance court reporting is a “feast or famine” kind of business. It's important to earn as much as you can when the business is flourishing because there will be a time when it's not. Why “yes” to almost anything? Because if you overload yourself with deadlines that you can't possibly meet, you'll

be finding yourself on the “don't call” list very quickly. A few things to consider when you're feeling overloaded and asked to work: Inquire if another transcript deadline can be pushed to a later date so you can accommodate the new request; use a scopist (or two!) to ensure your work continues to be completed while you perform another court reporting job; and say “no” with an explanation: “I don't want to compromise the work that is already due and risk disappointing you and your clients” is the type of statement that show your commitment to the entirety of your workload.

- 2. Be a Team Player:** “I'm an independent contractor, the only team I'm on is my own!” Is naïve thinking. If you're working with an agency, you are most certainly part of a team. From working with the scheduler and representing the brand to the agency's hard-won clients, to providing your transcript on time to production and carefully invoicing for your work — all these components are driven with the word “team” in mind. Behaving like a lone wolf by being a poor communicator, not following instructions or acting as if your work is the only thing that the agency handles will not put you in the best light.
- 3. Think About Your Financial Future:** Court reporters who work freelance need to put aside for a rainy day. When you enter the field in your 20s, you might not think about retirement, or maternity/paternity leave, or what happens if you end up with a broken bone. Life happens, so be prepared by setting up a self-inflicted, mandatory savings plan. Perhaps you have a set amount deducted from your earnings by the bank every month. Or personally commit to setting aside a percentage of your wages every paycheck. Every little bit counts and it's extremely important to have a plan that you can stick to.

Another area where I've seen freelance court reporters get into trouble is either not paying their income taxes, or paying too little throughout the year and then being hit with a huge tax bill at the end of the year. If you live in an area where sales taxes are also collected, be sure you remit in a timely way. The penalties on taxes owed can be staggering, and you'll end up working for the government just trying to pay off the debt.

You'll have to keep track of your finances. After all, you are a small business. Make sure you stay organized. Keep track of your receipts, billings and collections from clients, deposits from agencies, etc. There are many online programs that can help manage the accounting aspect of your business.

- 4. Invest in Yourself:** In order to be successful, you have to be competitive. Do not shy away from developing your skills or the technological enhancements that will put you at the top of the heap. Don't become complacent just

because the jobs seem to be rolling in right now. When the going gets tough or when the better jobs come along, clients and agencies will always first consider their most talented reporters. The most talented reporters are, more often than not, the reporters who put in the effort in to improve their skills. And I know you've heard this before, but being a realtime-ready court reporter is your best bet for a hugely successful career. This skill sets you up for just about any job: expedites, rough drafts and of course realtime.

5. **Market Yourself:** By this I don't mean you should take out a billboard ad that says "I'M THE BEST!" The most effective marketing strategy I can impress upon you is: be where other court reporters are. The agency you like working with today may not be who you want to work with three years from now. Maybe you want to expand your horizons or perhaps the market changes and you need to move. The best ways to market yourself include: Attending professional events both locally and nationally (e.g. state/provincial associations, STAR, NCRA); volunteer at your local association – get on a committee or on the board, help out at an event, attend seminars; set up a professional-looking LinkedIn profile that is kept up to date and showcase your skills, ability and contributions to your profession; and introduce yourself to firm owners at events, or through sources such as firms' Facebook pages or Twitter feeds. All of these will contribute to your "brand" of competency, professionalism and commitment.

#### 6. Honour Yourself

Court reporting is a tough job. The level of concentration, skill and patience required is unique to our profession, and no one understands what we do truly. Your body and mind need to be looked after, so you can be your very best. That means taking time to look after yourself — whether it's going to the gym, getting a massage, going to a long walk, taking time with family...it's important to try to have balance in your life. Take vacations. Recharge your batteries. Look after yourself...no one else will do it for you!

Our next article will focus on what firm owners need to do to engage and support their freelance court reporters. *(Kim Neeson, FAPR, RPR, CRR, CSR (RSA) is a realtime court reporter and owner of Neesons Court Reporting in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.)*

## Cloud Backup for Case CATalyst

By: Justin Sieger, Support Technical Advisor, Stenograph



Online storage systems are becoming an increasingly popular way of storing data. Uploading files to the cloud gives customers confidence that their files are secure and can be retrieved anytime, anywhere. That's why Stenograph is proud to announce our newest feature in Case CATalyst, Cloud Backup. If you haven't already downloaded Case CATalyst V17.50, do it today!

Cloud Backup is a free service for customers on who have Edge for Case CATalyst. Cloud Backup automatically backs up your files to the cloud making them available whenever, wherever you need them. With the easy to use interface, users are able to add or remove users and cases, exclude certain file types, i.e., audio files, restore, and delete files from the cloud. Since the interface is built into CATalyst, no separate program is needed when you want to make changes. Cloud Backup is HIPAA compliant

and the data is compressed and encrypted so all of your files are secure.

To get started with Cloud Backup, you simply need to create an account in Case CATalyst. Once your account is created, you select the user or users to be backed up. Simply check the box next to the user, click Next, and you're done. CATalyst will automatically begin backing up all the files contained in the user(s). Once the initial backup is complete, Cloud Backup will automatically, at regular intervals, check your files for changes and, will automatically back up those files.

Cloud Backup works with and for you! The service automatically pauses when you are writing realtime and does not attempt to back up an open file. Once you close realtime or an open file, Cloud Backup does its job. The Cloud Backup service is always running, even when Case CATalyst is closed so there's no need to manually start or stop the service, although you can pause Cloud Backup if you want to. If you shut down your computer while Cloud Backup is backing up files that's ok, it will resume once the computer is turned back on and connected to the internet.

If you need to restore a file, Cloud Backup makes it easy to get files from the cloud to your computer.

Cloud Backup comes with 100 gigabytes of storage space. If you need more space you can easily delete files from the Cloud or purchase additional space.

Stenograph is very excited about Cloud Backup for Case CATalyst and hope you enjoy this simple and secure back-up feature. We are always looking at add value to Case CATalyst so if you think of a feature to add to Case CATalyst, please let us know.

# Talk Steno to Me

By: Donna Urlaub



Recently I've been on a series of depositions involving a bridge demolition accident where, in the beginning, the attorney carefully reads the admonition to the witness about waiting for the end of the question before answering, and not talking over each other, after which they both — mainly the attorney — proceed to break all the rules, and rack up 50-60 pages an hour for six to eight hours. I thought I'd mine the steno for the briefs that helped the most.

First I need to share two outlines that I can't believe I haven't found/thought of until now:

**1. Earlier YERL** Yes, initially I thought it would conflict with "yearly," but "yearly" gets a long e. I defined "earlier" YERL in January of this year, and have used it 343 times. And that doesn't count the times, as recently as July, when I reverted back to ERL/YER.

**2. Oppose PAOS** While for years I had patted myself on the back — with both arms — because I came up with AS/POES/D/TO, then AS/POEFD/TO, then SPAOFD (it's not necessary to write the "to"), I was still writing "oppose" in two strokes. Until now, that is. Of course, then we have opposing PAOFG.

My bridge demolition briefs:

girder – GRIRD (tuck the R)      beam BAOEM      I-beam BAOEUM      construction KRUKS

I've been struggling with how to write "regulation" in one stroke. REG does not work for me — it's "regular" — but RUG does! Of course, "rug" gets the asterisk. Why waste a great outline because it conflicts with a seldom-used word?

project PROJ, bridge project BROJ  
OSHA – HOERB, OSHA regulation(s) HOERBGS(Z)  
job site JAO\*EUT, work site WAO\*EUT (don't get me started on job site/jobsite, work site/worksite)  
parking PARG, walking WAUG, talking TAUG, working WORG  
contract K-RT - subcontract SK-RT - general contract J-RT  
contractor KERT - subcontractor SKERT - general contractor JERT  
operate PRAIT - operator PRAIRT - operating PRAIGT  
basically BAIFL  
absolute SLUT – absolutely SLULT  
semi SMAOEU  
demolition DLIRPB  
ultimate ULT- ultimately \*ULT  
total TOELT  
actual TUL - actually T-L  
closure KLUR (as in lane closure)  
owner ROERN  
worker WRORK or WROERK  
normal NORL - formal FORL  
responsible SPON - responsibility SPONT  
schedule SKED or SKELD  
(If you dare, SKED schedule – SKELD scheduled)  
scenario SNAIR  
protect PROEKT - protection PROEKS

engineer SNAER - engineering SNAERG  
general JEN - generally JAENL  
(gentle would be JENL)  
foundation FOUNGS  
perspective PREKT  
equipment KWIMT  
benefit BIFT  
placement PLAIFMT  
employee(s) PLOE(S)  
folks FLOEKS  
superintendent SUPT  
radius RUS  
occur(g)(d) KER(G)(D)  
assist SIS ("sis" would get the asterisk)  
mistake MAEK  
clarification KLAEUFK  
compliance KPLAEUNS  
aggressive GRIF  
aware WAUR  
aware of WAIFR (waiver gets the asterisk)  
process PROEFS  
middle MILD (mild MAOEULD - milled gets the asterisk)  
email MAOEL - emailed MAOELD  
traffic TRAFK  
suspend SPUND

I just became aware of using DZ for "ing." This was very helpful for: swinging SWINGDZ, rigging RIGDZ, hanging HANGDZ, planning PLANDZ, checking KHEKDZ, changing KHAINGDZ, running RUNDZ, falling FAULDZ.

And it bears repeating:  
after the accident A-FBGS  
at the time of the accident T-FKS

day of the accident DAIFKS  
before the accident B-FKS  
prior to the accident PRAOEUFKS

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1+ referrals - You Are Entered to Win One Free Year of STAR Membership.

3+ referrals - You Are Entered to Win 1/2 Off Your Conference Registration.

5+ Referrals - You Are Entered to Win a Free Conference Registration (for either Spring or Annual Meeting)

*Membership drive will conclude October 7, 2016, and winners will be announced at the 2016 Annual Meeting in Scottsdale, AZ, October 20-22, 2016.*

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