



## COURT REPORTERS – PACKING YOUR STENO MACHINE, TRIPOD AND “STUFF”

MAY 6, 2011

The court reporters I work with in San Diego met for a Summit last week. On the agenda was a “show-and-tell.” The court reporters were asked to bring their court reporting gear to the meeting as if they were going to a deposition, arbitration or hearing.

The exercise was fascinating. The goal of almost every court reporter in the room was downsizing and getting the weight down. Two of the court reporters actually had wheeled their old bags into a luggage store, one to a Samsonite distributor and the other to Kohl’s, fully packed with steno machine, tripod, Stenocast gear, file folders for exhibits, et cetera, eyeballed new bags that might be suitable to carry their gear (with features such as fancy turning wheels, being lightweight), took out all of their gear and checked to see if it would fit in the new bag. As one of the reporters stated, “I just sat there on the floor of Kohl’s taking everything out of my old bag and packing the new bag to make sure everything fit.”

Two other reporters had bought their bags from Stenograph at a conference, and one of them was able to open her bag from a side zipper, and never had to lay her bag flat to unpack.

Another common theme was “how to go to a deposition without a purse.” Reporters are packing their I.D., cash, and credit card in a little wallet that they would carry in their steno bag. One reporter had a sealed water bottle with a straw she fits into her steno bag. She fills up the bottle at home every morning before she leaves for her job. “Some places it’s hard to get water,” she told us. “It’s true,” we replied, “some places have yucky water.”

But the winner of the smallest gear contest would be Veronica. I’ve written about Veronica in a past blog. She had her little black backpack on her shoulder that carries all of her equipment.

Organization is one of the most important aspects of our job, and I believe court reporters inherently have the personality of wanting to be organized. The court reporters use plastic color-coded clear folders to hold exhibits, exhibit stickers, stickies, cards. Two reporters use a Depobook and three of them use notebooks to keep job notes.



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The show-and-tell segment of the Summit inspired me to go through my steno bag and computer bag to clean it out and think, "How can I be more efficient with my stuff?" I plan on walking the aisles of Staples, Frys, and the Container Store to get ideas. My computer bag is super heavy, and I am tired of lugging it around. I know I can find extension cords, USB organizers, and exhibit holders. (One of the reporters I work with bought a folding plastic, lightweight laundry bag that can be opened up to create a box-like contraption that is perfect for voluminous exhibits.)

Court reporters are incredibly smart and innovative. I suggest if you get a chance, check out how other court reporters are packing. Mike Miller, Depoman, is someone that packs incredibly smart. Look at his pack if you get a chance. If you have a great solution or ideas that you use to carry your gear, please leave a comment. We can't wait to hear what you have to say.



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