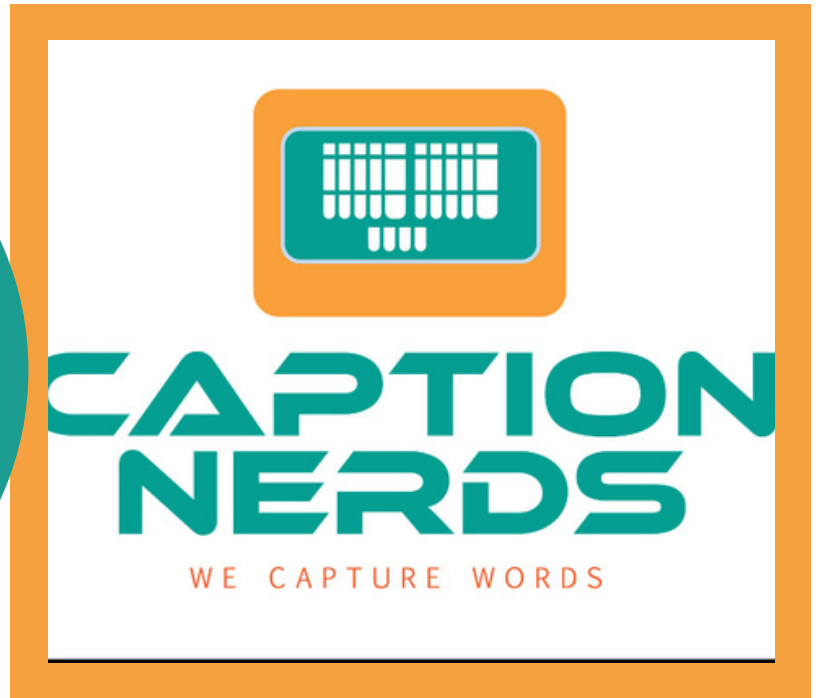


# CAPTION NERDS

PRESENTS...

THE TEA, AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER



## A Word From Thomas...

When Caption Nerds started creating newsletters and engaging in social media in 2022 to promote my small business, and more broadly promote things that are important to me: stenographers/captioners, accessibility and/or accommodations, equality, inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing folks and disabled folks in public spaces, and professional representation where everyone can be their authentic selves in professional settings, I never thought I'd get the views or interactions I have from students to colleagues to clients and advocates! It's been really nice connecting with folks with similar passions.

In addition to my shock at the number of eyes on The Tea, a 2022 post of a captioning video on Caption Nerds' Instagram account has almost 9K views. We love sharing what human skills and human cognition can provide to folks who use captions. With all the interest in our little corner of social media, Caption Nerds is taking special care, and including other voices too, in our first 2023 issue of The Tea. Special thanks to Rikki Poynter for the assistance with creating this edition. We hope you enjoy The Tea!



Thomas

*Image Description:*  
A white man with short dark hair, and grey facial hair. He is wearing black rimmed glasses and a black t-shirt. He is sitting in front of a wall with words written in various languages.

# Social Media Shenanigans

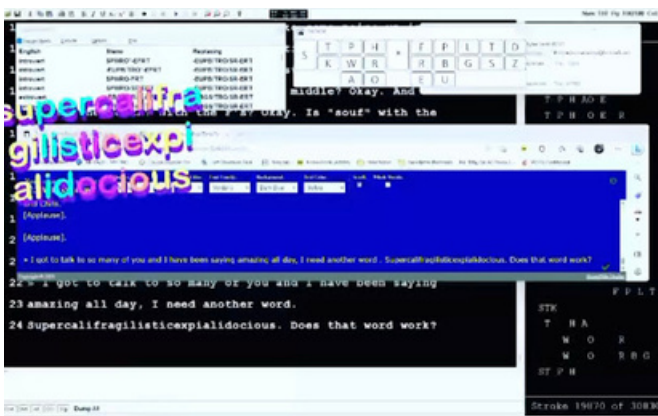
We often share screenshots or reels when we can on Instagram. A recent conference client, which is the perfect example of a captioner using an overlay software available for free to consumers, to provide captions on the bottom of almost any screen, so users of captions can view open captions on the same main screen the presenter is using for their slides, on top of social media live feeds, and more. Check out the pics below.



What the Audience sees is above...

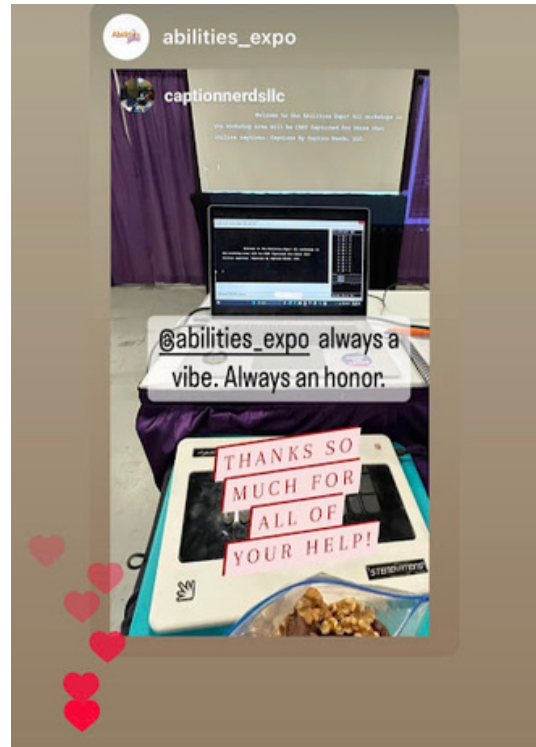
*Image Description:*  
Cut off image of woman speaking to a camera. Text says, "I got to talk to so many of you and I have been saying amazing all day, I need another word"

What I see on the captioner's end is below:



Steno peeps, I use SPR/SPR for supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, what do you use for this word?

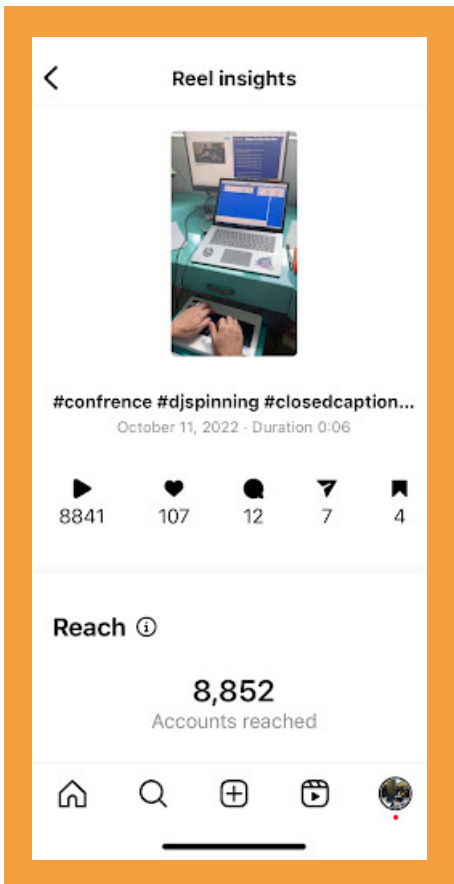
*Image Description:*  
Screenshot of stenography software.



*Image Description:*  
Screenshot of Instagram Story. CART caption setup at a conference.

Now, a picture of an on-site, projected CART caption set up for a client that likes captions delivered via a projector for their workshops. Also, a bag of snacks to nibble on between sessions.

It's nice to show the difference between delivery methods that clients can select, from just a few lines of text on the bottom of a screen, to full paragraphs of text being displayed on large screens. Captions can also be deployed subtly to one-on-one consumers as well via Wifi, Bluetooth, or old school hard-wired connections as well for CART consumers that don't want to be front and center, or for organizations that don't prefer open/projected captions for their events. Human captioners do a lot more than just type fast, we can adapt to various other client requests, work in noisy environments, control the speed and spacing of live captions on the screen if there are other graphics going on, and so much more.



Throwback to my 2022 Instagram post that somehow got over 8K views! Thanks to everyone who checked it out or shared it!

Check out our [Caption Nerds, LLC](#). ([@captionnerdsllc](#)) | [Instagram](#) for more posts and behind the scene pics.

*Image Description:*  
*Screenshot of Reels Insights for an Instagram reel/post. 8841 views. 107 likes. 12 comments. 7 shares. 4 saves. Accounts reached: 8,852.*

# ASL Interpreters & CART Captioners Like Peanut Butter and Jelly

A QUESTION AND ANSWER BY THOMAS HERMAN AND LINDA SOKOL



Linda Sokol has a degree in Sign Language Interpreting and has been interpreting for over 25 years in a variety of settings. She has also worked as a VRS and VRI interpreter for many years. Throughout her career Linda has attended numerous professional development workshops and conventions. She holds the RID Certificates of Interpretation and Transliteration, CI and CT, as well as the Educational Interpreter K-12 certificate.

Q: Linda, thanks for taking time for a quick Q&A for The Tea, I know how busy you are. You have a passion for, and business model based on, providing reasonable remote ASL interpretation. Tell us what you are most proud of about your business?

A: Thomas, it is my absolute pleasure to take some time to explain a little about my business. You are correct in that Virtual VRI was born from my passion to provide communication access to the Deaf community in a way that was both economically feasible for the client while still providing outstanding interpreters for their clients. We started from scratch almost 15 years ago and have grown immensely. I believe the reason for this success is largely due to our team of extraordinary interpreters, captioners, and staff as well as our attention to detail. Additionally, we put top priority on providing very personalized and prompt customer service to everyone. These are what I'm most proud of.


Q: I know you're an ASL interpreter yourself; any career highlights you'd like to share?

A: There are way too many to list! A few very memorable highlights would be that I was able to travel to Syria to interpret for a Colorado High School student who attended a disability forum there. I have been fortunate enough to interpret about a dozen cruises to wonderful places like Alaska, the Panama Canal, the Caribbean, etc. Best of all I have had the privilege of meeting many Deaf individuals from all walks of life in a huge variety of settings.

Q: So to the yummy peanut butter and jelly part, tell us about your experiences combining ASL and CART captions for clients? Did that happen organically for your company?

A: My passion and experience has always been related to Sign Language interpreting. I never had any knowledge or personal experience with captioning. After a few years of running Virtual VRI some of our clients began asking if we could provide CART for their clients who preferred captioning over ASL. They were looking for a company to provide both services versus utilizing services from two different companies. And Virtual VRI wanted to make this happen. Captioning was a whole new concept for me but fortunately I had you Thomas, and a few others introduced me to the world of remote CART. I rely on them heavily when questions arise that I am unable to answer and would not be able to provide this wonderful service without their continued help.

*Image Description:  
Photo of rice cakes cut into a heart shape covered in peanut butter and jelly, sitting on a dark surface.*



Q: I've captioned clients of yours that host webinars regularly where they provide CART captions and ASL concurrently for their audience. Can you explain why this is beneficial for organizations to consider providing both options?

A: Within the Deaf community there is a wide range of language diversity and language preferences. Some Deaf people have grown up with an emphasis on speech and lip reading. They may be hard of hearing or have had success with cochlear implants and never mastered or even learned ASL. There are also late deafened adults and learning ASL would not be appropriate for them. These are some of the situations where Deaf people would most likely prefer captioning over Sign Language. When webinars or meetings are providing CART captions and ASL concurrently it means access is provided to a much broader audience of the Deaf community. It gives them a choice as to which accommodation best fits their needs.

Q: Thanks for explaining that so well for readers. I know you have a CART Captioner currently working with one of your ASL providers for a college student's current semester; can you share about that experience and the benefits for the consumer?

A: For many Deaf their native language is ASL and they prefer classes to be presented in Sign Language. However, when a student is in a very technical or perhaps a doctoral program, having specific language is of the utmost importance to their success. This is where CART comes in. ASL does not have a sign for every English word and both languages have completely different grammatical structures. Concepts are what we interpret, not word for word English. When both CART and ASL are provided at the same time the student will have access, both real time and also after class, with a verbatim transcript of everything said during the class.

Q: To wrap up our sandwich analogy, would you mind sharing your experience with working with me as a CART captioner and the value it adds for your clients?

A: I would love to take this time to express my appreciation for Thomas and all the help he has generously offered through the years. Remote CART and all it entails has been somewhat difficult for me to grasp. Captioning in Zoom or using a 3rd party URL delivery method, captioning in YouTube or FaceBook Live, and the confusing list goes on! Thomas is always available to answer my questions and has even explained things to my clients. All my clients absolutely love working with him and I do as well!

Q: Now that I'm blushing, we'll wrap this up. Thank you for always being a pleasure to work with, and thank you for taking time to be involved with our newsletter!

# Client Feedback



*Image Description:  
A pile of puzzle pieces in a corner.*

Captions can be a significant piece to your accessibility puzzle. Here at Caption Nerds, we pride ourselves on being a small piece of your bigger puzzle. Whether your organization is new to providing accommodations, or an organization working on shifting from accommodations to engrained accessibility, we're here to help you! With that, our shameless plug with some client feedback.

*"Captioning is something that we just can't do without at our events. Thomas was and continues to be such a delight to work with. Very professional, always bringing more to the table, and extremely detail oriented. Thomas is the best!"*

*-Recurring client, Amy Production Coordinator (Conferences)*

*"Caption Nerds has played a key role in creating a more inclusive meeting experience. Closed captioning is not only a critical service to provide to deaf or hard of hearing people, but to the community at large. People may need captioning for a variety of reasons, and offering this one simple service to the meeting experience ensures a broader range of people can participate in the way that works for them. Thomas is a captioning expert, and we trust him fully with our events!"*

*-Kathryn, DEI Lead Corporate Setting*

*"Great job, Thomas! Also, thanks for getting the file to me so quickly."*

*-“J” Professor (workplace/academic CART Client)*

*"Thanks for all you do!" - College Student who utilizes captions*

Captions can be delivered remotely, or on-site; we are experienced with open/projected captions, as well as one-on-one services as well. We can use standalone software or can embed captions into many platforms such as Zoom. We at Caption Nerds thank you to those who contributed to The Tea, and we appreciate the support and business!

# In The News...

Human captioners in the news. In the White House. Yay. We're here! The NCRA'S Digital magazine recently featured talented stenographer and CART provider Carmen Cromartie providing captions at the White House Correspondents' Dinner. Check out the link for all the details. [CART and comedy at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner \(thejcr.com\)](https://thejcr.com)

Last year we highlighted rock band Coldplay having sign interpreters and assistive tech at their concerts and we're happy to report several social media posts have been showing Taylor Swift's The Era Tour is also having ASL Interpreters! Go, Taylor!

In other steno news, StenoMasters an online community of steno folks, will be celebrating AAPI month with a panel of amazing stenographers from various Asian and Pacific backgrounds via Zoom on June 26th 2023 at 8:30 EST. I'm so excited to see the representation, as I know a few Asian American stenographers. You can check out StenoMasters on their socials to get links, et cetera if you'd like to attend. The panelists are all Asian, but everyone is welcome to join in celebrating AAPI month and enjoy the representation of some great stenographers and share in their lived experiences.



The Stenovations.com blog is also reporting that Mark Kislingbury Sets New Speed Record – 370 WPM – Using LightSpeed at the Steno in the City event. Click on the link to see pics. This is the same steno writer Thomas of Caption Nerds uses as well. Historic. Congratulations to Mark on setting another record! Click the link for pics from Stenovations blog of the LightSpeed in action. [Blog \(stenovations.com\)](https://stenovations.com)

The Denver Post is reporting a Deaf/HOH attorney Spencer Kontnik who responded for jury duty and then was removed from consideration as a juror despite being willing to be a juror, can move forward with his discrimination lawsuit. Check out the link for more information. [Deaf juror can sue Denver court for discrimination, judge rules \(denverpost.com\)](https://denverpost.com)

Sadly, in other discrimination news, a Deaf woman named Kaylah Vogt just received 180K settlement for discrimination as well, as reported by the Star Tribune. click the link for the story. [Deaf woman denied a job at North Memorial agrees to \\$180K settlement \(startribune.com\)](https://startribune.com)

In other discrimination news, and we'd be remiss not to address this as Caption Nerds is a Miami-based company, that Hamburger Mary's, a LGBTQ+ restaurant franchise with a location in Orlando which is suing Ron DeSantis and the State of Florida. For further details, check out the link below. [Hamburger Mary's sues DeSantis over law they say targets drag shows \(usatoday.com\)](https://usatoday.com)

They do have a GoFundMe link on their social media if anyone would like to contribute to their legal fund, and support their business as they deal with everything going on in Florida: [Fundraiser for Mike Rogier by Michael Vacirca : Legal Defense Fund for Hamburger Mary Orlando! \(gofundme.com\)](https://gofundme.com)

*Image Description:*  
Red background. Gold font says, "Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Monday. June 26, 2023. 8:30-9:30pm EST.

Zoom Meeting ID: 633 066 9418  
Passcode: 332512

# In The News...

The NCRA's May 2023 JCR magazine featured an article about some wonderful stenographers in their magazine for participating in a "Steno Karaoke" event in February hosted by the wonderful Margary Rogers to show steno students to see examples of different writing styles and various software options.

It was such an honor for Thomas to be included amongst these amazing stenographers. Click here to see the article: <https://www.thejcr.com/2023/03/22/crcw2023-students-love-steno-and-karaoke/>

Legend, icon, and mutha –can you tell I'm a fan? – Ms. Jackson will be providing CART Captions for some of her concert dates in 2023 as well. I'm so proud that this legend who has always been inclusive to all folks continues to expand her inclusive mindset. Captioners are part of the Rhythm Nation!

In other stenographic news, I'm proud, honored, humbled, and shocked to be included in the first-ever Pride Feature of the NCRA's magazine, The Journal of Court Reporting. I am proud of the professional organization for more accurately representing more of its active members, in all our infinite diversity. There are a few articles on the LBGTQ+ experience and members, and calls for tolerance and allyship, something I would have loved to have seen when I was a stenographic student not seeing any public-facing articles about people like me. I used my opportunity to mention that LBGTQ+ members are here, but majority of article explained very briefly what DEI is and can be, including people with disabilities, BIPOC, AAPI, veterans, various religious backgrounds, ageism and women speaking of their lived experience all need a seat at the steno table as well. Special Thanks to Chris DeGrazio for getting this ball rolling. This is historic, and I'm proud and honored to be featured in the first ever, but hopefully not last, Pride segment of the JCR. #Historic



# Steno Corner

A lot of stenographers work in silos. Some monetize their ideas and tutor or train. No judgment at all on getting paid for your skills or expertise but sharing in a community can be fun too. So let's open source some of our collective knowledge. I've added some easy strokes to improve my real-time captions. I tried learning ultrashort theories, and it was not for me. Despite being a clean writer, when speakers get going, I still have some common words and phrases still stack now and then, so instead of committing more briefs, or deleting and rewriting, which would be at least three strokes, I'm using a fast way to correct stacks with one stroke.

Best of all, this method can all be done by adding a single stroke to entries rather than significantly modifying your current writing style. I think this could help students as well as seasoned writers alike, hopefully someone will benefit from trying this.

I'd like to clarify that all of these tools can be deployed in real-time without the client ever seeing anything but the word they should see, thanks to output delay settings. I personally use one-word delay to catch whoopsies. All CAT software offers options for how to transmit your live feed, usually by milliseconds. This can work if you write short, write out everything, or if you're somewhere in the middle like me. This also works as real-time alternative words lists, or whatever your particular software calls it, for words that can be correct but spelled more than one way, Kristina and Christina, or Carey, Carrie, Kianna and Quiana, for examples.

What I've implemented in my writing is a "hack" to create alternative words lists or conflict resolutions that deploy in real-time. (You could also just create a conflict and then create a stroke to hit option 1 or option 2; some CAT software has gotten really good at choosing for you even, but I personally don't rely on automation as it isn't an exact science and I feel a human should be in total control of their output.) I don't like too many defined conflicts, because if they come out in real-time the client may see that, which is definitely not elegant. So instead, I use this methodology to help me with stacks and alternative spellings while doing real-time CART. Human cognition is fabulous, ya'll!



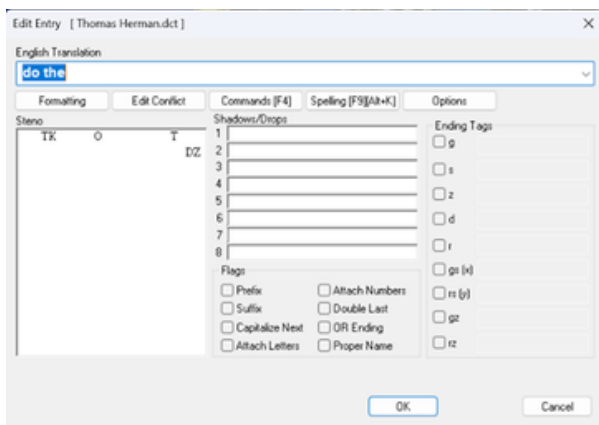
*Image Description:*  
A black and white stenography machine.

# Steno Corner

We'll use an Easy example. "Do the" for me is first stroke TKO, second stroke -T, which if a speaker is speaking very quickly can sometimes stack and translate at TKOT, or "dot" in English. Instead of having to hit delete (\*) and rewrite TKO -T, which would be three strokes to correct the one error, you can define a new dictionary entry that would correct the error in one additional stroke. The stroke can be anything you're not currently using, for me I use final -DZ. See the screenshot/video below. I use this for fort and for the, you can see that final T gives me issues sometimes, you could use it for similar-sounding bones, blue/blew/Blu the options are endless. So all I do is define a dictionary entry in my main dictionary for the stack, see screen shot below:

I write for a client who has two colleagues named Amy and Aimee, so I use this method to discern which Amy/Aimee is speaking in real-time for my client as well.

If you're a stenographer reading this little newsletter and have a "hack" or method that's improved your writing that you'd like to share via contributing an article, feel free to reach out to Thomas for the next edition is Steno Corner.



*Image description:  
A screenshot of my personal dictionary via DigitalCat by Stenovations, a court reporter-owned business, with the English translation in the upper left and the steno strokes directly below it. (Additional flags to assist in translation are to the right.)*

# About Us



Caption Nerds is a Miami-based boutique firm providing captions from everything from conferences, workplace meetings, academic settings, parties, cruise ships, webinars, nonprofit meetings, and more for the private and public sectors.

Caption Nerds is a proud member of [the Miami-Dade Gay Lesbian Chamber Of Commerce \(MDGLCC\)](#) and is a [LGBTQ+ owned business](#).

Thomas Herman is a professional member of the NCRA.  
[captionnerds.com](http://captionnerds.com)

*Image Description:*  
Graphic of steno machine in green and orange colors.

*Text says:*  
CAPTION NERDS  
WE CAPTURE WORDS



Rikki Poynter is a disabled (deaf, chronic pain and fatigue) [content creator](#), writer, accessibility consultant, and public speaker who consulted on this newsletter doing some sensitivity reading as well as putting the newsletter together.

You can find her website at [rikkipoynter.com](http://rikkipoynter.com). You can also find her on social media [@rikkipoynter](#).

*Image Description:*  
Young white woman with brown hair and neutral makeup. Her chin sits on her hands, fingers laced together.