



AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION OF  
ELECTRONIC  
REPORTERS AND  
TRANSCRIBERS

## SOUNDBYTES

*Your Monthly Glimpse of Everything You Need to Know About  
What's Happening at AAERT*

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### From the President's Desk

As members of AAERT, we are all experiencing personal and professional disruption of such magnitude that no one could possibly have been prepared for the impact this has had on our lives. We are concerned for each and every one of you. No one has escaped the effects of the pandemic, not even us. We are riding this stormy wave together.



The shelter-at-home orders have required most of today's workforce to learn how to work remotely, without warning, without training and without a dedicated space. The transition for many has been frustrating and challenging. For our members who work remotely though, the shelter-at-home mandate may not have seemed like much of a change. We were already there.

A scramble in the legal community ensued to obtain and learn remote recording technologies. Remote hearings, telephonic and/or video appearances, and the ability to integrate the technology into existing systems is really a relatively simple step with digital recording equipment. To a great extent, we were already set up.

This is not to say the impact hasn't been severe in every other aspect of our lives. It has been devastating and disruptive. We did not anticipate COVID-19, but as digital reporters/transcriptionists, we are actually more prepared than most. With everything feeling so uncertain, it is easy to "pause" and wait for COVID-19 to pass before feeling comfortable enough to proceed. However, this is not the time to adopt a wait and see approach. This is the time to adopt new ideas and implement changes. The window for opportunity is wide-open, old rules are changing quickly and new ideas are welcome.

This is the time to take advantage of being a step ahead. Stay ahead and continue taking steps to ensure you are ready for the predicted surge in workload due to backlogs, and

new case filings which will undoubtedly exacerbate the shortage of available reporters. Take advantage of the time to learn a new product or service to add to your offerings. Reach out to your network, both new and old customers to market your services and availability for when they need it. Anticipate your next steps and when the wave of work comes... and it will... and you'll be ready, again.

Janet Harris, CER, CET, CCVS  
President

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## Save the Date:

**Notice of Annual Meeting:** Thursday, June 25, 1pm, EST - 2pm, EST

Where: Virtual ZOOM meeting

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## AAERT Begins New Webinar Series



### ***Digital Reporting - Changes/Trends/Annotations w/AI...and... Digital Reporting for Remote Proceedings***

Join us on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm EST for the first installment in AAERT's 2020 Webinar Series. Two speakers and two timely topics.

**This first webinar is free and offers CEU credits** toward your re-certification.

[Registration](#) is open until April 28, 2020.

#### **Presenter: Jim McMillan**

Digital reporting for courts and the record will see massive changes in the near future. The COVID-19 virus has forced the courts to change how they have traditionally done business, moving from in-person to electronic communication. Digital reporting, digital transcription, e-signature, and support for web conferencing will all be increasingly used and enhanced by the application of artificial intelligence. This session will discuss what the courts are already doing but also what is being planned.

#### **Presenter: Lisa Dees**

Necessity is the mother of invention. A need or problem encourages creative efforts to meet the need or solve the problem. The problems that the legal field has faced with the current COVID-19 crisis is forcing us to all look at how we conduct legal proceedings in a different way utilizing video conferencing. It is not completely uncommon to have one or more participants in a legal proceeding appear by video or telephone, but how about having everyone appear remotely? States have responded by lifting in-person

requirements for administering the oath. Courts have responded by coordinating remote hearings via video conferencing. Now we, the court reporting community, must respond by becoming experts on reporting these new proceedings while maintaining the quality of the record and the production of the verbatim transcripts. We will be breaking down the different components of this process and guide you through the best practices and approaches to apply.

**Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm ET. [More information and registration.](#)**



**About the Presenters:**

**James E. McMillan** (above left) is one of the world's leading court technologists with 40 years of experience in the field. He directed the Court Technology Laboratory and was co-founder of the Courtroom 21 project at William and Mary School of Law. McMillan has provided consulting expertise in all 50 state courts in the USA and

internationally to courts in more than 20 countries along with UN International Criminal Tribunals in The Hague, Netherlands and Arusha, Tanzania. He is currently editor of the Court Technology Bulletin blog for the NCSC. (<http://courtechbulletin.blogspot.com/> )

**Lisa Dees**

Lisa began her career as a stenographic court reporter. After being introduced to digital reporting in the late 90's, she immediately saw the roll that this was going to have in the future of court reporting. From 1998 through 2006 she worked for the 9th Judicial Circuit Court in Florida where she worked as a digital court reporter and later



became their support special, focusing on design and implementation of new reporting technologies. Lisa spent the next 7 years in product development for Veri-Core, designing and creating digital court reporting software. She has spent 6 years in the freelance world of court reporting, and worked for eScribers as their Reporting Business Development Specialist. Currently, Lisa is Program Director for JAVS for the Notewise product line. She is looking forward to taking the experience that she has gained over her long and eclectic career to work at bringing digital court reporting of the future to the present.

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## Meet Our New Communications Team

We are pleased to introduce our new communications team, Benjamin Jaffe, Kenneth Katz and James Salandro. One of their focuses will be facilitating and moderating AAERT's Facebook group, posting articles of interest and using their expertise to answer questions in the forum. They will also be monitoring the group discussion to ensure that the feedback is constructive and is advancing industry professionalism. Eventually, they will migrate and invite members to a private group that is currently under development.

For the past five years, Gail Armstrong has served as the communications committee chair. Gail was conferred the Wagner-Fuss Award two years ago for exceptional volunteer time over the past five years. We appreciate the great amount of time she has spent posting articles and creating fruitful discussions. Thank you Gail!

## **Benjamin Jaffe**

Benjamin Jaffe is the Manager of Digital Training and Development for BlueLedge, a legal classroom. In his role at BlueLedge, he spreads the careers of digital court reporting and legal transcription by helping students get AAERT certified. Before joining BlueLedge, Ben was the Manager of Legal Technology at Orange Legal, a legal support company based in Orlando, Florida. As the Legal Technology Manager he oversaw the departments of Digital Court Reporting, Legal Video, Trial Technology and eDiscovery. Before coming to the legal industry Ben worked as a manager, director, producer and videographer for broadcast television stations and video production units in Florida and Washington D.C.

Ben has been an AAERT member since 2018 and is a Certified Electronic Reporter (CER) as well as a Florida Professional Reporter Instructor (FPR-I) from FCRA.

Get to know more about Ben by reading some of his articles:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/two-truths-lie-court-reporting-benjamin-jaffe/>

<https://www.legalmanagement.org/2019/november-december/columns/5-innovative-legal-support-careers>

## **Ken Katz**

Ken is an independent contractor with Veritext Legal Solutions, and has been a digital reporter for almost a year. He recently earned his CER certification in Jan. 2020. In his free time, Ken loves to practice watercolor painting techniques as well as photograph out and about in New York City.

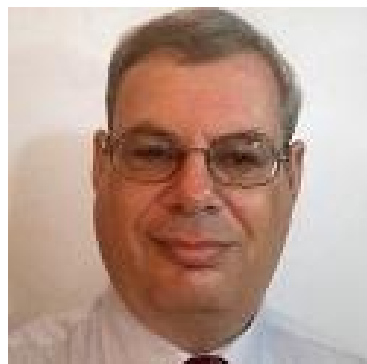
## **James Salandro**

James started in the electronic reporting field in 2006. Since then he has served clients ranging from the State Department, Department of Defense, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the United States Congress, Executive Office of the President, Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Communications Commission, National Institutes of Health, Department of the Treasury, and various agencies of the District of Columbia. Serving some of these clients required the holding of a security clearance. He has also managed and trained reporters and proofreaders.

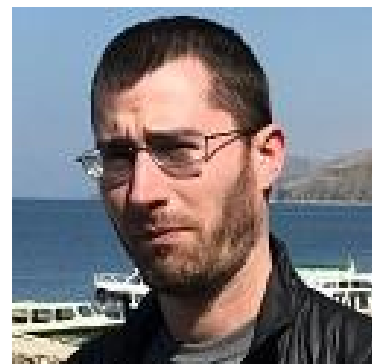
James currently works in client services for a family-owned court reporting agency in the Washington, DC area.



**Benjamin Jaffe**



**Ken Katz**



**James Salandro**

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## Certification Exams Update

In February, 2020, AAERT adopted concurrent testing for CER and CET exams, moving away from the previous testing cycles, allowing a more convenient means of scheduling. On March 22nd, we were notified that our testing vendor had suspended their proctor centers due to a government shutdown of all non-essential facilities in India due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this time we are actively working with the vendor to determine our next steps. They are trying to secure a number of proctors for a work at home solution. For this, they need to provide a computer and all the necessary equipment to make this happen. We feel confident with the integrity and security of the exams and the recording process that we have in place (of both candidate and proctor).

We have been advised that we can open up the scheduling dashboard on April 20th, 2020. We are limited to 5 slots per day at this time until our proctors are back to normal capacity. We expect to receive a follow up to the status of the lock down in India in the next few days to determine when they hope to be back to normal capacity. At this time, we will begin scheduling the CER and CET knowledge exams.

If you have any questions, please email staff at: [aaert@aaert.org](mailto:aaert@aaert.org)

### **Congratulations to our newest certified members:**

Sameen Shabbir, CER - Louisville, Kentucky  
Jesse Harp, CER - Tampa, Florida  
Fabiana Barham, CET - Millersville, Maryland

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## Election Update

We are pleased to announce that the board nomination period has ended and our nomination committee is in the process of vetting this year's nominees for two open board seats. Pursuant to association by-laws, a ballot list will be sent out to members Monday, April 27. Electronic voting will begin on Tuesday, May 26, 30 days before the annual membership meeting, and conclude on Monday, June 1, 2020. The candidate with the largest number of votes wins and will take office at the conclusion of the annual meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions and forced closures, this year's meeting will occur virtually on Thursday, June 25 from 1pm, EST to 2pm, EST via ZOOM meeting.

Please be on the lookout for voting and meeting instructions, coming soon to your email.

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## **We would like your feedback for the upcoming webinar series... Please take this short survey**

What kind of webinar content would be valuable to you and your professional

development? Take this short survey and let us know.

[Take Survey Now](#)

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**Stay Safe**

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