

A Lighter Side...

Guess My Age

www.canadianaconnection.com

A Newfoundlander working in Toronto decided to visit the zoo one Saturday. While there, he saw a man with an elephant act. The man claimed the elephant could look at a person and tell that person's age. The Newfoundlander was very skeptical and said so, in no uncertain terms.

The man had the elephant look at a small boy and the elephant stamped its foot 9 times. "Is that right?" he asked the boy.

"Oh, yes," the boy said.

The Newfoundlander was very loud in his not believing that this was true.

The man asked the elephant to tell the ages of several people, and each time the elephant stamped his foot and the people said he was correct.

The Newfoundlander got even louder and more abusive toward the man. Finally the man could take it no longer and wagered the Newfoundlander that the elephant could look at him and tell him his age. The Newfoundlander took him up on the wager.

The elephant looked real close at the skeptic, turned around, raised his tail and broke wind like you wouldn't believe, turned back

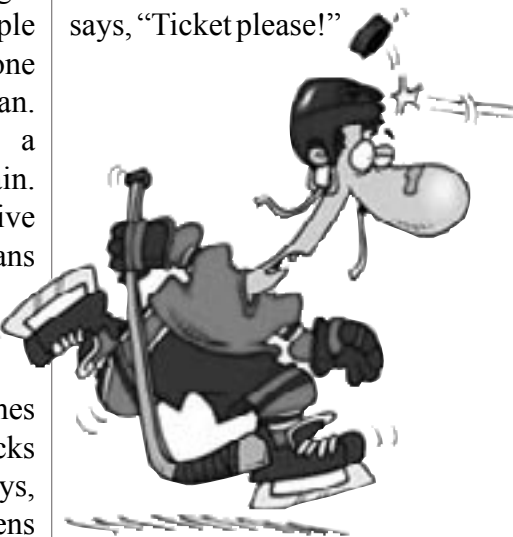
around and stomped his foot twice. The Newfoundlander stumbled back amazed and with a sound of disbelief in his voice cried, "Gud Lard, me son, he's right... I'm Farty-two!"

Going To A Hockey Game...

www.canadianaconnection.com

Three Canadians and three Americans were travelling to a hockey game. The three Americans each buy tickets and watch as the three Canadians buy only a single ticket. How are the three people going to travel on only one ticket?", asks an American. "Watch and you'll see," says a Canadian. They all board the train. The Americans take their respective seats but all three Canadians cram into a bathroom and close the door behind them. Shortly after the train has departed, the conductor comes around collecting tickets. He knocks on the bathroom door and says, "Ticket please!" The door opens a crack, a single arm emerges with a ticket in hand. The conductor takes it and moves on. The Americans see this and agree it was quite a clever idea. So after the game they decide to copy the Canadians on the return trip and save some money. When they get to the station, they buy a single ticket for the return trip. To their astonishment the

Canadians don't buy a ticket at all. How are you going to travel without a ticket?" asks one perplexed American. "Watch and you'll see," replies a Canadian. When they board the train the three Americans cram into a bathroom and the three Canadians cram into another bathroom nearby. Once the train leaves the station, one of the Canadians leaves and walks over to the other bathroom where the Americans are hiding, knocks on the door and says, "Ticket please!"



Mail Bag

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Captioning Downunder

by Mary Dowds



In August of 2002, after four or five years of remote captioning from my home in Victoria, B.C., I headed Downunder to caption in Sydney, Australia.

The differences between Canadian and Australian culture and lifestyle are numerous, as one might expect. There are also vast differences in the way live TV programs are captioned.

In Sydney, captioning is performed at the TV stations, rather than remotely. Captioning staff work on each program in teams. Most of the captions are prepared prior to the commencement of any program, including live newscasts. Very little is actually written live.

The captioning teams are comprised of a steno (that's me – what we here in North America call a "captioner") and one or more captioners (like subtitlers, I suppose) whose job is to put all the prepared captions together and send them out in two- or three-line blocks during the broadcast. Prior to the newscast, the captioner creates a "rundown" for the program – a framework for the show, into which prepared captions are inserted, to be sent out live



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during the newscast. Since all captioning is done at the TV studio, captioners are able to access the anchor's scripts prior to each show (that is, the material that the anchor will read from the teleprompter or autocue.) The captioner copies these scripts into the rundown, splits the text into blocks of captions and verifies spellings. Captioning staff also often has access to scripts or videotapes of news stories prepared by in-house journalists. Tapes of stories from overseas news agencies are also usually available.

Prior to the newscast, the steno (that's me) inputs these stories into the rundown. The captioner takes this translated steno and, as with the anchor's scripts, splits it into blocks of captions. Aside from weather segments, occasional live sports hits and any breaking news, the captions for the entire show

are complete prior to the commencement of the program.

Prior to moving to Australia, I studied maps, street directories, lists of Aussie slang, rosters of sports teams, lists of members of parliament and input a lot of these names and words into my dictionary. This was merely the tip of the iceberg, though. In my first few months I made hundreds, if not thousands, of new dictionary entries – nicknames for teams, players, regions and towns, short forms for oft-repeated weather terms, etc. Unlike in North America, captions in Australia are written in upper- and lowercase. For a North American captioner accustomed to captioning in all-caps, this is a massive challenge. As an example, using my Canadian captioning dictionary, I'd require 19 additional strokes to write the following sentence:

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General Ray Chapel, Minister Bob Green and Professor Lily King met in front of the Black Forest Bakery at the corner of Knight Street and Tulip Avenue near the entrance to Beacon Hill Park.

At 250 words per minute with an Aussie accent... well, I break into a sweat just thinking about it.

Speaker designations are not used in Australian

captions. Rather, the captions change colour for each speaker. Four colours are used: white, yellow, blue and green. In a news story, for example, I'd write the reporter's words in white. If two passersby were interviewed, I'd write the first interview in yellow, the second in blue, and back to white for the reporter.

Captioning sports in Australia was difficult at first, but once I became familiar with the names and terminology, I really enjoyed it. I still don't understand Aussie rules football (and likely never will). But I've become a rugby fan – both League and Union (an incomprehensible combination to those Aussies who love the sport – kind of like being a Republican-Democrat!) Ah, well – as a foreigner, I suppose I can be forgiven.

The most wonderful change for me, after captioning alone at home for so many years, was being in an environment with real live human

beings! Co-workers – what a concept!! While I disliked having to commute to and from the TV stations, I really enjoyed the camaraderie at work and I met some wonderful friends.

I've been back in Canada for over a year now. I was surprised at how seamless the transition back to captioning here was. I'm really glad to be back, although I think of my Aussie mates every day. A change is good, I guess – but there's no place like home.



PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS?

Tell us your biggest pet-peeves with relation to closed captioning?

email us:
feedback@captioning.com

Industry News

“CLOSED CAPTIONING PLANNED FOR NEWS, EMERGENCY BROADCASTS”
www.deaftoday.com

It wasn't until the 11 o'clock news that James Pedersen understood exactly what had happened during the Interstate 95 tanker truck accident that shut down a section of the highway for a week.

The fiery crash, which occurred just before 8 p.m., was being

broadcast live on television. But Pedersen, who is deaf, couldn't find any closed-captioning until nearly two hours later.

“All we saw were pictures of the bridge and the fire,” Pedersen said. “We didn't know what was happening.”

Connecticut television stations were expected to transmit all emergency information broadcasts in closed-captioning format by April 2005, the Connecticut Broadcasters Association announced last year. The Federal Communications Commission have made it mandatory for the stations to provide closed-captioning for all programs starting January 2006. A bill was recently passed by a legislative committee that would comply with the FCC's January deadline.

But in the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, it was imperative to work toward having emergency broadcasts in the closed-captioning format as soon as possible, said Harvey J. Corson, executive director of the American School for the Deaf.

“We are very happy to work with the deaf community and to ensure that everyone in the state has access to all the information, all of the important news, weather, emergency information,” said Elden Hale, vice president and general manager of WFSB-TV in Hartford. “In working out this agreement, we have, I think, set the stage for everyone in the state to see and hear all the information

CAPTIONING FAQs

How are live programs captioned?

Real-time captioning couples the skills of a court stenographer with computer technology. Stenographers type words as they are spoken, producing captions which are broadcast simultaneously with the live program. Some local news programs are using automated electronic newsroom systems to caption, a less expensive though less comprehensive alternative to stenocaptioning.

How do you know if a program is captioned?

A or are symbols commonly used in television listings to indicate that a program is closed captioned. Another symbol, a small TV screen with a small tail at the bottom, is also used to denote captioned programs.

The Power of Words - Do you know what the following phobias describe a fear of?

1. batophobia

2. hippophobia

Part 4:

The Steno Machine - A Look Back

Courtesy:
 National Court Reporters Association

The Stenograph Shorthand, 1879- Miles Bartholomew invented the first successful shorthand machine in 1877. Improvements were later made to the machine and patents obtained for it in 1879 and 1884.



It was manufactured by Bartholomew's company, the United States Stenograph Corporation of East St. Louis, Illinois, and was used as late as 1937 by official reporters. The ten keys could be depressed one at a time (a letter at a stroke) to create a series of dots and dashes, much like Morse code. A native of Belleville, Illinois, Bartholomew was an official court reporter and is considered the “Father of the Stenograph.” The *Bartholomew Stenograph* was the first machine to attain a degree of success in the reporting field. Many machines were manufactured and some schools taught its operation. The venture was not a financial success,

however, but Bartholomew remained supportive of machine shorthand. In 1883, he wrote, “The old prejudices against machine stenography are giving way to confidence in, and acknowledgement of, its superiority over the pen, and the tide of public favor is raising rapidly in the front.”



Words of Wisdom

The difference between fiction and reality? Fiction has to make sense.”

- **Tom Clancy**

Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something.

- **Plato**

Did You Know?

More than 50% of the people in the world have never made or received a telephone call.

