

Telling It Like It Is

Julie Thomas

Who says you can't have it all? "Scope" out what these two Southern belles have done!

Let's begin by defining what "scoping" is so that you can see the Big Picture. Scoping is the process of editing legal transcripts (depositions, hearings, trials, and the like) for court reporters. Those who scope are known as scopists, and they work as independent contractors. Basically, what you need besides a burning desire to work from home is a computer, transcriber, Internet connection (preferably broadband), computer-aided transcription (CAT) software, reference books...and scoping training. Enter Judy Rakocinski and Cathy Vickio, who founded BeST Scoping Techniques on March 1, 2002!

But wait a sec...before getting into the business end of things, let's "scope out" these two gals and see what all the "fuss" is about.

Judy Rakocinski and Cathy Vickio hail from Bonita Springs, Florida, and Sugarland, Texas, respectively. Is that HOT or what?? Judy is happily married to a swell guy named Chuck, who is employed at a "regular" job (LOL!), and they have three children, ages 16, 15, and 12, who are the loves of their lives. Cathy is happily married to a swell guy herself, namely, John, who is self-employed as a scopist/proofreader after having been an IT professional for several years. Judy and Cathy have so much in common that it's easier to "view" it in an outline form:

- ! Both put God and family first, which is why working from home is a perfect "fit."**
- ! They both enjoy computers and all sorts of high-tech peripherals and serve dual roles as scopists/instructors, which they consider to be their "dream" jobs.**
- ! Cathy and Judy are SSG (ScopistsSupportGroup.com) addicts, with Cathy and Judy being the list owners. "Scope" that out at your leisure. It's a Yahoo! group.**
- ! The pair began offering web design services in 2001 under the name of Websites by Mazco, and they regularly support Christian ministries with a portion of this income.**
- ! And if that's not enough for ya, in February 2003, ReporterSupport.com was added to their list of services. It matches up the needs of reporters with the services of scopists and/or proofreaders within 24 hours of their post. After all, the scopist-to-**

court reporter ratio is about 1,000 scopists to 60,000 reporters!!

And would you believe it? These two business partners have only met face-to-face on ONE occasion. Their communication has all been over the phone, e-mail, and IM ever since they met online.

Want to know a little more about BeST Scoping Techniques? It's a fun course designed to get new scopists out in the world in as little as eight weeks. The course is self-paced and can go as fast or as slow as you need, but two to three months has been an average completion time. It's definitely not your run-of-the-mill, boring home-study program. This program even includes fun "paks" to keep students excited about their new venture! The majority of their lessons are downloaded from their web site as Adobe Acrobat documents. Of course, there are the traditional study materials like textbooks--three shipments of them, in fact. Shucks, ma'am, there's even an online graduation ceremony! And Judy and Cathy provide each BeST graduate with his/her own complimentary Web site and matching business cards to market scoping services, plus the first opportunity to respond to work leads generated by their site at [ReporterSupport.com](http://www.ReporterSupport.com).

After graduation, BeST students receive ongoing support, and there is no time limit on professional advice and expertise. BeST graduates stay as busy as they want to be and know that if they ever need anything, they can always count on Judy and Cathy to be just a click away.

The future of scoping is ever-changing, but it's here to stay. Rapid advances in technology are producing CAT systems that are more user-friendly and more flexible (albeit more sophisticated) with each new update. A recent arrival is AudioSync, an integrated sound file that allows the scopist to listen to the audio of the proceedings without the reporter having to send audiotapes. We sometimes hear from people who are worried about the future of court reporting (and thus scoping) with the advance of "electronic" courtrooms and voice-recognition software, but none of these can produce a written transcript without a human involved. With the proper professional training, a scopist will continue to be a vital part of the process reporters rely on to keep their production high and turn out accurate verbatim transcripts.

Whatever your career path in life, Judy and Cathy wish you the BeST!!

Links:

<http://www.BestScopingTechniques.com>
<http://www.ReporterSupport.com>
<http://www.scopistsSupportGroup.com>