



IL

CRA

SPRING

2026

www.ilcra.org

ad infinitum

ILLINOIS
COURT
REPORTERS
ASSOCIATION

In this issue

- 4 Speed & Realtime Contest
- 5 Boot Camp
- 6 Season of Renewal
- 8 Certification Test
- 9 Back In My Day
- 11 Spotlight
- 14 Let's Talk Briefs

Advertisers

- 3 Worth Business Equipment
- 4 L & L Reporting
- 7 Lake Land College

President's Message



Spring is a Time of Plans and Projects

Spring is here, the flowers are blooming, and ILCRA's garden is starting to bloom, too. I'm thrilled to be the one to share some of our early-season blooms with you so far, so let's get started.

In February, ILCRA hosted a CSR prep course for seven students led by our Education Liaison Laurie Kornmuller. Laurie took an off-the-cuff idea and made it into a reality, and I wanted to highlight a few of my takeaways from purely a support role for the CSR prep. ILCRA had two generous sponsors for this event covering the room fee and any associated costs, so I wish to express a very heartfelt thank you to them. With each ILCRA event that passes, I'm even more impressed with how generous our membership is. It is absolutely clear that ILCRA isn't just a collection of professionals. We are a support system, too.

Each student took very seriously this prep course, and I was thrilled to see how eager each one was for any tips or guidance or assurances they could get before the big day. My heart was warmed watching seven students from different court reporting programs get the chance to meet and get a peek at the different writers and equipment

each participant had. I also witnessed two students who met that day exchange phone numbers and make plans to meet before the CSR exam to go into testing together. I feel confident I was witnessing the start of a long friendship, and I don't think it's too much of a leap to say that you all will meet them at a future convention, too. The CSR was held April 4th, so the candidates will still be waiting on results when you read this, but we can still wish them luck.

As of the time of this writing, IDFPR informed me they had issued 27 new CSR licenses in 2025 and ten new CSR licenses for 2026. Our hard work recruiting students is starting to show returns, but let's keep the momentum going. We're well on the way to doubling our newly-licensed numbers this year, and that's a number we can all be proud of. Also, please feel free to forward us any information you may

Continued on page 3

PRESIDENT

Lorie Kennedy
lorie2925@gmail.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Brad Benjamin

VICE PRESIDENT

Andrea Jent

SECRETARY

Zeke Alicea

TREASURER

Saralyn Hicks Britt

REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVE

(Official)
Heather Perkins-Reiva

REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVE

(Freelance)
JoAnn Losoya

REGION TWO REPRESENTATIVE

(Official)
Sara Sapp

REGION TWO REPRESENTATIVE

(Freelance)
Vacant

EDUCATION LIAISON

Laurie Kornmuller

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

Kirstie Anderson

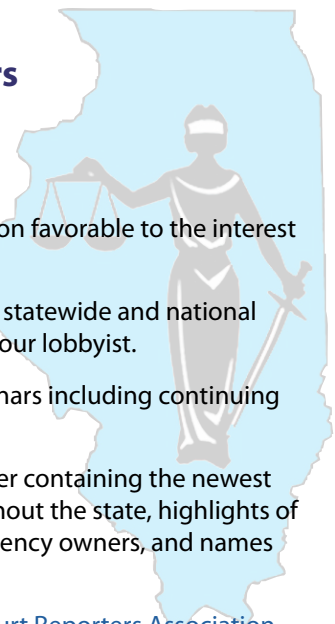
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Greg Weiland

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Dave Wenhold & Georgia Northway
contact@ilcra.org
703-927-1453

What ILCRA Does for Illinois Reporters

- 
- **Works** to maintain your right to be certified.
 - **Monitors, promotes, and lobbies** to pass legislation favorable to the interest of court reporters, captioners and CART providers.
 - **Monitors** legislation affecting our professions on a statewide and national basis through both our Legislative Committee and our lobbyist.
 - **Sponsors** an annual conference and one-day seminars including continuing education and the latest in reporting technology.
 - **Publishes** *Ad Infinitum*, a quarterly online newsletter containing the newest up-to-the-minute reporting developments throughout the state, highlights of board meetings, advertisements of vendors and agency owners, and names and telephone numbers of ILCRA officers.
 - **Serves** as an affiliated state unit of the [National Court Reporters Association](#).
 - **Offers** members significantly reduced rates for the conventions and seminars.
 - **Awards** Student Scholarships, a Distinguished Service Award, an Award of Excellence for an Outstanding Educator, and conducts [speed contests](#) each year.
 - **Provides** resources on the ILCRA website, including the CSR Act, Court Reporters' Act, Rules and Regulations of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Transcript Act, and ILCRA Bylaws. It also includes officers' names and contact information as well as Committees and Committee Members. ILCRA Member Information is included on the website under "Find a Reporter."
 - **Offers** an Online Student Mentor Program.
 - **Promotes** student recruitment.
 - **Organizes** letter-writing campaigns on issues affecting our professions.
 - **Sends** representative members to legislative boot camps, leadership conferences, and the national convention for training and education.
 - **Provides** reporters for demonstrations on request and attends career days throughout the state.
 - **Provides** free CART brochures to its members.
 - **Provides** a court reporters network through Constant Contact which allows ILCRA to immediately be in touch with members via email.
 - **Serves** the membership with the phone number 703-729-4861 and a [website](#).
 - **Provides** an association management company to assist members.

ILCRA MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain standards of excellence in verbatim shorthand reporting, to provide continuing educational opportunities and advocate technological advancements, and to promote a spirit of mutual assistance between the profession of verbatim shorthand reporting and its consumers.

President's Message

continued from front page

have about students ready to test or any support ILCRA can give to our students. We feel our prep class was a huge success and want to continue. The input guiding this last CSR prep came from current mentors in ILCRA's online mentor program, but any information you can share will be helpful in our search for future locations or possibly tailoring any presentations. "It takes a village..."

In March, ILCRA hosted our virtual AI Symposium seminar. The board worked long hours putting this seminar together. The goal of the symposium was to leave you with a better understanding of AI and how to use it as the tool it was developed to be. Artificial intelligence is on the heels of everyone, not just court reporters; but keeping our members informed of the current climate in the industry was the reason for focusing on artificial intelligence. We knocked that goal out of the park with our speaker lineup. I still get excited thinking back to right before the AI Symposium. I couldn't wait for you all to experience these industry experts lined up together to speak to our members. Kofi Annan has said, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family." So ILCRA really came out swinging strong in 2026, and we are very proud of this presentation.

Planning has officially begun for our fall convention. Mark your calendars and save the dates of September 11th and 12th so you can be sure to join us in Rosemont, Illinois. We will be at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare and will put out the room block information with registration. To quote the city's website, "Rosemont...It's all here," and ILCRA feels you will find that, too. Rosemont has endless restaurants, lots of shopping, and plenty of things to do outside of convention. Take a minute to check out the area around the Hyatt so you can plan to come early or stay a little longer. I think you'll be glad you did.

For those participating in the real-time contest, plan to come on the afternoon of the 10th. If you've ever considered being a part of ILCRA's real-time contest, now is a great time to jump in. I'd encourage everyone to test your skills. You don't know what you can do until you try, and the real-time contest is a great way to measure progress from the work you put into your writing every day. Being able to document

improvement is winning, even if it's just for you. Also, as a participant myself, I can truly attest to the encouragement of each other and the camaraderie before, during, and even after the contest. We really have a good time and truly welcome everyone. Come one, come all.

Of course, ILCRA's speed contest will be held in the morning of the 11th. In my opinion, this is where the fun really happens. Words are flying by at lightening speeds and pulling from deep within yourself to capture those words is truly an exciting experience. For me, there's a strong sense of freedom to writing without being tethered to a computer. There's freedom to brief in new ways, shorten strokes on the fly, see what works or doesn't, and really get creative in your approach to handling high speeds. I guarantee you will learn at least one new thing about yourself after participating, and those lessons are the most valuable in life.

Our seminar lineup, which will start Friday afternoon, is currently in the works. The board has already made huge strides in securing informative and relevant speakers for our attendees; but if you have an idea for a speaker or topic you would like to see addressed or want to present a session yourself, we'd love to hear from you. After all, ILCRA is its members, so just send us a note to contact@ilcra.org. All input is welcome.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in Rosemont and catching up with all of you, if I don't see you sooner. For now, I will send you my best wishes for a happy and healthy year ahead.

Lorie

LEO
J **WORTH** BUSINESS
EQUIPMENT

Steven Worth

4154 W. Barry Ave
Chicago, IL 60641
(773) 777-1474
WorthStenoService.com
Worth4154@msn.com

Attention All Fast-Fingered Folks!

ILCRA Speed and Realtime Contests

20TH ANNIVERSARY

 **Realtime Contest**
Thursday, September 10
5:30 p.m.

 **Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest**
Friday, September 11
9:00 a.m.

 www.ilcra.org



The ILCRA annual convention is coming up Sept 10-12, 2026, in Rosemont, Illinois. It's time to sign up for the Speed and Realtime Contests.

The Realtime Contest will be Thursday, September 10 at 5:30 p.m., and the Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest will start at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 11.

The Realtime Contest consists of two takes: Literary at 180 wpm and Two-Voice Q&A at 200 wpm.

The Speed Contest has three parts: Literary at 220 wpm, Jury Charge at 240 wpm, and Two-Voice Q&A at 270 wpm.

Winners will be announced at the luncheon held on Saturday, September 12, and trophies and medals will be awarded.

We encourage you to sign up for one or both of these contests when you register for the convention. The price is \$60 for each contest, \$110 when you register for both – challenge yourself while saving money. You will also earn PDCs for each section of the contest in which you qualify (except 270 Q&A).

Visit <https://www.ilcra.org/ilcra-realtime-contest-rules> for contest rules.

We welcome our favorite and familiar contestants, as well as new faces and first-time participants. It's a fun and friendly competition to test your skills and your speed while seeing old friends and making new ones.

We always need help grading tests, so if you can help grade papers, contact Laurie Kornmuller at lkmulle@gmail.com. ■

E-TRAN • Conference Room Available



Lori A. Eder, CSR, RPR, RMR

847-623-7580

fax 847-623-7597

LLReporting@sbcglobal.net

L&L REPORTING
SERVICE

www.LandLCourtReporting.com

9 North County St., Suite 102 • Waukegan, IL 60085

From Boot Camp to Capitol Hill: Our Experience at NCRA Leadership & Legislative Boot Camp 2026

Andrea Jent, CSR, ILCRA Vice President

**Kirstie Anderson, CSR, ILCRA Legislative
Representative**

We were honored when the Illinois Court Reporters Association asked us to attend NCRA Boot Camp this year. Boot Camp is more than a conference. It is an intensive, hands-on session that prepares us to lead, influence, and advocate with confidence, and that's exactly what it did. It reminded us why maintaining the integrity of the record, advocating for the judicial system, and supporting our professional community matter so much.

Over the course of Boot Camp, we didn't just talk about advocacy; we learned how to do it. We dove into real strategies for engaging with legislators, understanding how laws are created, and learning how grassroots efforts can truly make an impact. The classes also walked us through everything from building an effective message to mobilizing our state associations. We also participated in a mock U.S. Senate committee hearing, where we practiced testifying and refining our message in real time, an experience that pushed all of us outside our comfort zones.

One of the most impactful components of Boot Camp was the focus on leadership. We were challenged to rethink what leadership truly means, not just as influence or authority, but as self-awareness. Instead of asking whether we have a powerful voice, we explored the idea that leadership is composed of multiple "voices," each with distinct strengths and ways of connecting with others. Through guided discussions, we worked to identify our own foundational voice and how we can use it to build stronger, more effective relationships. Within our groups, we held up a figurative mirror, taking an honest look at ourselves, including the strengths we rely on, the areas we struggle with, and even the parts we tend to hide. That level of reflection was both challenging and empowering, and it provided a clear path forward for becoming more intentional, authentic, and effective leaders in our profession.



After two full days of preparation, we went to Capitol Hill to put everything we had learned into action, meeting directly with the offices of Senator Tammy Duckworth and Representative Sean Casten.

We had conversations about the "Research and Oversight of Potential AI in Courts Act of 2026," which would establish a dedicated federal task force to examine how artificial intelligence could impact the official court record and the broader judicial system.

Our focus was on ensuring Congress understands the serious

Continued on page 6

Spring Forward, Steady On: A Stenographer's Season of Renewal



**By Georgia Northway,
(Training) Executive
Director**

The clocks have sprung forward for Daylight Savings Time, and each morning promises a few more minutes of sunlight every day. There is an unmistakable shift in energy – and maybe you've felt this in the recent weeks. Those tasks that are always on the to-do list don't seem so daunting anymore, and there's a joy in realizing at 5:00 p.m., there's still plenty of sunshine overhead!

Spring arrives every year with an invitation to start fresh, to begin

again. For stenographers, whose work demands both precision and endurance, this season offers something especially valuable — a chance to reset, refocus, and renew our rhythm.

It's tempting, of course, to greet spring with full acceleration. The extra daylight feels like permission to do more, take on more, maybe it even feels like pressure to be more. We tell ourselves we'll reorganize our offices, refine our realtime accuracy, maybe finally tackle those problematic areas in our dictionary, or fix editing problems that we've toughed out for a while. Maybe it's even time to pick up a new certification. The urge to hit the ground running is real.

Boot Camp *Continued from page 5*

legal and ethical risks associated with artificial intelligence in this space, including declines in transcript accuracy, threats to privacy and data security, increased costs for litigants, and the risk of bias or discrimination against individuals with accents, disabilities, or unique speech patterns.

The goal of this legislation is not to halt innovation, but to require thoughtful oversight, identify regulatory gaps, and protect the integrity of the record, due process, and the rights of everyone who relies on our justice system.

What stood out to us most is how critical this moment is for our profession. With ongoing legislative challenges and conversations around technology and AI, it's never been more important for court reporters to have a seat at the table. Boot Camp reinforced that advocacy isn't optional; it's essential. We came home from Boot Camp feeling energized, refocused, and, most importantly, prepared to advocate, lead, and speak up for our profession. We are ready to take what we've learned and share it with others, whether through our jobs, our legislative work, or our involvement with ILCRA.

State associations like ILCRA play a critical role in advocacy

by bridging national efforts and local impact. While federal legislation sets the broader framework, state organizations mobilize members, educate stakeholders, and maintain ongoing relationships with legislators long after events like Boot Camp end.

ILCRA and similar groups ensure that the voice of working court reporters is consistently heard, emerging issues are identified early, and advocacy remains grounded in professional realities. That's why being a member of your state association is so important.

Membership strengthens our collective voice, amplifies our impact, and ensures our profession has a seat at the table when decisions are made. This grassroots involvement is essential to protecting the integrity of the record and sustaining meaningful, long-term change.

If you've ever considered attending NCRA Boot Camp, we can confidently say this: it is one of the most impactful experiences you can have as a court reporter. It doesn't just give you information, it gives you a voice. And right now, that voice matters more than ever. ■



But spring is not a sprint; it's a beginning. In stenography, we understand better than most that speed without control leads to error. The same principle applies beyond the machine. The transition into a new season — especially one marked by the jolt of springing forward one hour — requires adjustment. Our internal clocks can lag behind the external change, fatigue can creep in, focus may waver – and all of that is okay!

Instead of racing ahead, consider approaching this season the way you would a challenging job: with intention, pacing, and awareness.

Start small. Whether it's getting a head start on switching out your winter clothes for springtime apparel, having your machine serviced (finally), backing up your files and computer, or practicing those briefs that don't quite stick but are really good, taking on smaller tasks will help build momentum without overwhelm.

Reconnect with your vision for your life. Spring is a natural time to “plant your seeds” for the year with intention. It's also the time we clear out what's ready to go – whether that's old clothes, old habits, or leftovers from the garden, the motivation can be easier to find with warmer temps and more sunlight. Side note: if your new year's resolutions were a nonstarter, now is a great time to revisit what you set out to do for this year. It says nothing about your determination or your self-discipline if you didn't “succeed” in your resolve to change during a natural period of hibernation. Maybe you'll find change is easier when you align your intentions to the natural rhythm of the world. And remember, success is only defined in getting back up one more time than you fall down.

Give yourself permission to ease in. Losing an hour of sleep is no small thing. Be mindful of your energy levels, especially in the first few weeks after the time change. A well-rested stenographer is a sharper stenographer!

Embrace growth, but organically. Like any good transcript, growth unfolds line by line. You don't need to overhaul everything at once. Choose one area to improve this season; speed, accuracy, formatting, or even work-life balance, and give it your focused attention. Whether it's the satisfaction of capturing the record with accuracy, or the quiet pride of mastering a complex skill, grounding yourself in purpose can re-energize your work.

And when you can, take yourself outside! If your schedule allows, take advantage of the season itself. A short walk

between jobs, on a lunch break, or even a few minutes of fresh air can reset your mind and improve concentration. Sometimes the best way to sharpen your focus is to briefly step away from the screen. And I say this to you as much as to myself – there is no need to deny yourself a restroom break while working on transcripts only after you have reached a certain page number or an actual break in your transcript!

There's also something to be said for patience. Spring reminds us that progress is often invisible at first. Seeds don't sprout overnight, and neither do meaningful improvements in our craft. But with consistency and care, growth is inevitable.

So yes, spring forward! Embrace the longer days, the renewed energy, and the opportunities ahead. But do so with the same steady discipline you bring to your work. Pace yourself. Trust your process. And remember: this is just the start of the season. There's plenty of time to bloom. ■

COURT REPORTING AND CAPTIONING

- Online classes with Zoom component for theory and speedbuilding courses
- Self-paced speedbuilding classes
- Rent-to-own steno writer option
- Textbook rental program
- Core classes taught by court reporters
- Special admission process includes tests in English grammar, keyboarding, and interest inventory
- Affordable, pay as you go tuition



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lisa Earp
Business Instructor
Director of Court Reporting
Office Professionals Program Coordinator
217-234-5356
learp@lakelandcollege.edu

LAKE LAND
COLLEGE



<https://www.facebook.com/LakeLandCollegeCourtReporting>

No Certification Test?! What Happened?

**By Laurie Kornmuller,
Education Liaison**

Put yourself in these shoes – a place you may have already been: You are a student or an individual who is ready to take the Illinois CSR and get certified in the State of Illinois. You get on your computer and learn from your search or perhaps a stenography friend to go to the website with a title of Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR). There, you can click around until you find

where to sign up for the next CSR to be held on April 4, 2026. But when you get there, you cannot find anything about stenography or court reporting certification. Panic sets in.

At this point, the participants reached out to ILCRA, and we got to the bottom of what was happening. ILCRA did their own research by going to <https://idfpr.illinois.gov/> to also find that it was not offered. We then reached out to a few stenographers on the Board who directed us to Kari.Roseberry@illinois.gov. She explained that they were re-doing the certification and they would

re-instate Continental Testing Services to handle the testing.

Within a few weeks, the State got Continental Testing Services back on their website to sign up for the CSR. The way you access the test is by going to the website listed above, > Help Center > Apply for License > General Professions > Shorthand Reporters > Certified Shorthand Reporter Examination. You can also go directly to Continental Testing by going here: <https://www.continentaltesting.net/> We wish all the candidates great success on becoming an IL-CSR! ■



ILCRA 2026 FALL CONVENTION

Early-Bird Registration will be opening soon! Please check back on our website in early May. Our website will also have nomination forms for ILCRA's Distinguished Service Award, Teacher's Award of Excellence, Student Scholarships, ILCRA Board Nominations, and Speed and Realtime Contest registration! We look forward to seeing you in September!

Back In My Day...

By Brad Benjamin, CSR, RPR,
ILCRA President-Elect

On February 22, ILCRA hosted an in-person CSR prep session. The attendees represented a wide range of experience levels, from high-speed students preparing for the CSR exam to mid-speed students seeking improvement, a professional reporter pursuing Illinois licensure, and even a student who had already passed the speed portion and was now focused on the written exam.

Alongside ILCRA President Lorie Kennedy and Laurie Kornmuller, ILCRA's education liaison, I helped proctor a mock CSR exam that included both written and speed components. Although it has been some time since I was a student, reviewing the tests and finding the same common mistakes I made during training brought back memories of how challenging reporting school can be.

I left the session feeling very optimistic. The students demonstrated strong potential for reporting. However, one common factor stood out that concerned me: most of the students had never used their machines outside of their homes. Today was their first time packing up their equipment to write in a live, in-person setting.

While the new generation of prospective reporters might thrive in virtual settings, I believe the lack of in-person experience might be detrimental. It might stunt the progress for those aspiring to be court reporters. Even though methods of instruction have changed, I believe the types of stu-



dents training to be reporters have not. In my experience, there are three types of court reporting students:

The first type is the rare natural. These students grasp theory quickly and fly through speed levels with ease. Like a prodigy picking up an instrument, they rarely fail a speed test and achieve near-perfect accuracy. By the time they become licensed, they are often close to real-time ready. I sat next to a student like this one semester and found it discouraging to compare our progress, especially when she admitted to hardly practicing outside of class.

The second type may not have natural ease but compensates with dedication. These students put in long hours practicing and reading their notes. They come to class prepared with

extensive materials, whether stacks of paper or digital files. And, while they may repeat some speed levels, their persistence leads to success.

The third type lacks both the natural ability of the first group and the work

Brad Benjamin, "back in the day"





ethic of the second. They treat the program like any regular class, generally taking weeks off completely from practice at a time during scheduled semester breaks and then struggling to catch up after. These students often leave the program within the first year or so.

I fell somewhere between the second and third types. What ultimately helped me succeed was not just persistence, but immersion. For me, it was essential to not be isolated behind a computer screen. I actively sought out real-world experiences.

Back in my day everything was conducted live. Frustrated by repeated failed speed tests while practicing alone, I made a deliberate shift. I surrounded myself with reporting in every way possible. I audited both higher-speed classes to challenge myself and lower-speed classes to refine accuracy. I worked as a scopist, focusing exclusively on proofreading professional reporters' work. I shadowed reporters, writing alongside them whenever possible. One instructor even offered extra practice sessions on evenings and weekends; I attended every one.

While some students succeed in fully online programs, I'm not sure I would have. I feel most students would benefit greatly from in-person experience. I've seen talented students struggle in real-world scenarios despite excelling in the classroom. Situations involving attorneys, judges, deadlines, and the pressures of in-person proceedings can be difficult to navigate without prior exposure.

My experience with in-person learning prepared me for these challenges. I practiced readbacks in front of classmates, tested alongside peers in conditions similar to the CSR exam, and gradually built the resilience needed to succeed. These are experiences I hope future reporters will also have, as they are essential for long-term success.

To support that goal, ILCRA is taking steps to better prepare students. We plan to continue offering CSR preparation sessions and strongly encourage mid- to high-speed students to attend. We have also worked with the Illinois CSR Board to have Continental Testing reinstate the exam on a triannual basis after a period of inconsistent offerings. Additionally, many board members serve as mentors, and we are actively seeking more professionals to guide emerging reporters.

The time of learning only in isolation has passed. Success in completing the program and thriving in this field requires engagement, collaboration, and real-world practice. Let's show up, not just for ourselves, but for each other. ■

Illinois Court Reporters Association

WE RISE BY LIFTING OTHERS

BE A MENTOR

JOIN ILCRA'S LIST OF MENTORS FOR OUR ONLINE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

- Many mentors report high levels of job satisfaction and a sense of purpose from "paying it forward."
- Mentors often learn about new technologies and fresh perspectives from their mentees.
- Mentoring ensures that critical knowledge is passed on, allowing senior reporters to leave a lasting impact on the field.
- Send a quick note to the address below about your interest in participating as a mentor, include your contact info, whether you are a freelancer, official, or CART captioner, and we'll be in touch soon.

CONTACT@ILCRA.ORG



SPOTLIGHT



By Greg Weiland, CSR-IL, RDR, CRR ILCRA Immediate Past President

This is the second installment in a new series for Ad Infinitum to honor and highlight ILCRA's amazing members. Many thanks to superstar Kathryn Thomas for agreeing to participate and share her story. If you know of an ILCRA member who should be featured, please email me at gweilandcrr@gmail.com.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Kathryn "Captain" Thomas

Stenographer since 1998
ILCRA Member since 1998
Born in Effingham, Illinois
Resides in Caseyville, Illinois

"Day one in theory and I was hooked."

Greg: Where did you go to high school?

KATHRYN: Effingham High School, class of '91 (go Flaming Hearts!)

Greg: How long have you been a stenographer?

KATHRYN: Started as a freelancer in 1998, all captioning after 2011.

Greg: Did you have a career before stenography?

KATHRYN: I worked a couple of years as an office clerk at Fedders in Effingham, which made room air conditioners.

Greg: Do you play a musical instrument? If so, do you think it helped in wiring your brain to adapt to a steno keyboard?

KATHRYN: I played a lot of music but haven't in years. I played piano as a kid, which I'm sure helped. After steno school I played guitar, bass, mandolin,

and I'm most fluent on the drum kit.

Greg: Do you have pets?

KATHRYN: Cats: Luna Williams-Pond, TIEM KITTEH; Sen. Abraham Heisenberg; and Dr. Eleven Winchester.

Greg: What is your favorite TV show?

KATHRYN: The Monkees and WKRP in Cincinnati. Don't make me choose.

Greg: What is your favorite movie?

KATHRYN: Top Five: Jurassic Park, Poltergeist, Spaceballs, and Inside Out 1 and 2.

Greg: What is your favorite music genre? Favorite band/singer? Favorite song?

KATHRYN: My tastes are all over the place -- my Spotify "likes" range in time from Nat King Cole to Sabrina Carpenter and in genre from Bette Midler to Biggie -- but I've seen "Weird Al" Yankovic in concert seven times and met him five times, if that gives you a hint.

Greg: What are your hobbies? What do you do in your downtime?

KATHRYN: Pole dance.

Greg: What was your first contact with the court reporting world?

KATHRYN: My mom finished the court reporting program at Sparks in the late '60s but then went on a different path, so we had a manual Stenograph machine in the closet.

Greg: What was it about the court reporting industry that appealed to you and encouraged you to pursue it?

KATHRYN: I just fell into it. I'd just finished with my associate's degree in Bible at Johnson Bible College (now Johnson University) in Knoxville, TN,



which didn't open up my job prospects one whit. I didn't want to move away again but found out Sparks was still open. I chose court reporting because it included all the secretarial classes, so I figured it would give me more work options. Day one in theory and I was hooked. AND it turns out the director at the time was also a JBC alumna, which felt like a heckuva sign!

Greg: When did you go to court reporting school?

KATHRYN: From 1993-1995, and then 1997-1998. Total time was about two years and three quarters. I dropped out and worked at the aforementioned Fedders for a couple of years, then came back.

Greg: What theory did you learn? Are you still using this theory today in your work?

KATHRYN: Stenograph Computer Compatible. Over the years it's morphed into a combo of that and Magnum Steno and my own stuff.

Greg: Did you pursue further education after court reporting school?

KATHRYN: In 2021 I started taking classes to get my bachelor's in whatever, but the college ran out of night classes, so that's on hiatus.

Greg: Did you ever work as a freelancer or official? If so, how long? When did you transition to CART and captioning?

KATHRYN: Worked as a freelancer since 1998, then did my first CART captioning job in 2009, and took my last depo in 2011. All captioning since.

Greg: On average, how many days per week do you work?

KATHRYN: Five during the school year.

Summers are for stadium captioning, so then there are no average weekly days.

Greg: Tell us about a typical assignment.

KATHRYN: Typical for academic CART, I log in to Canvas to see if there's any PowerPoints to prep. Ten minutes before class time, start Streamtext and log in to Zoom. Do the thing. Send the caption file (it is NOT a transcript) to the student who needed the service.

Stadium captioning - make sure I have team rosters prepped, rundowns received, script made. Twenty minutes or so beforehand, connect to stadium and audio feed, write all the things, game over, disconnect when done.

Greg: What are your favorite types of assignments?

KATHRYN: Stadium captioning. I like to be part of the show.

Greg: What is the frequency of remote assignments versus on-site assignments?

KATHRYN: Probably 15:1 remote versus onsite.

Greg: What equipment is necessary for the types of assignments you cover?

KATHRYN: Besides the laptop and steno machine, I also have an external monitor, extension cords, noise-cancelling headphones, tablets, Text on Top, portable amp box (for when I'm onsite and get a direct audio feed from the tech crew), spare everything.

Greg: What is your favorite go-to gadget that helps in your work specific to CART/captioning?

KATHRYN: Text on Top.

Greg: What CAT software do you

use? Please tell us about any other software or apps or devices you use in your daily work as well and what their function is.

KATHRYN: BCS/Case Catalyst. I also use Text on Top for onsite CART. Remote CART or captioning I use whatever the agency requires for connection, whether it's iCap, Streamtext, 1CapApp, or an internet IP address connection.

Greg: Do you ever provide rough drafts to your clients?

KATHRYN: They're not rough drafts (because that assumes there's going to be a fully-edited transcript). I send the FILE (again, not "transcript") to the Deaf, deaf, or hard-of-hearing student afterwards. I have a CART disclaimer at the beginning and end of the file, which you can find on NCRA's website, and I go through my "oops" strokes and run a spell check, and that's it. I don't record audio at all. No line numbers; no time stamps.

Greg: Have you encountered any celebrities in your work?

KATHRYN: I've met John Maucere (Deaf comedian), been backstage with John Goodman (didn't meet him, but he totally looked at me once), and I got to briefly chat with Tan France (Netflix's Queer Eye) over Zoom just before a webinar job. I've written several celebrities live and in person, but didn't get to meet them. For example: Jon Hamm, Cory Booker, Bob Costas, Ozzie Smith, and others.

Greg: How do you handle speaker identification when you have many speakers?

KATHRYN: Oftentimes I don't know their names, so just a generic will do. I do have several ready-made speaker IDs in case I do learn their name



over the course of a job, like GREG or GEORGIA.

Greg: Can you describe a typical day or week of work? How are you assigned to jobs? How far in advance is your schedule set?

Do you do prep work for assignments? What is involved in preparing for assignments?

How early do you typically try to arrive at your assignments? Are you required to work irregular hours, such as evenings or weekends?

KATHRYN: The answer to all of these bolded questions is "It depends." Each of these questions would take forever to answer, depending on if it's academic CART, stadium captioning, my rare television captioning job, remote, onsite, theater, classroom, seminar, what have you.

Greg: What do you like most about the work you do?

KATHRYN: What I like: Steno-wise, it's more challenging and difficult than doing depositions, but it's much less draining on the psyche. And I never get that call on Thanksgiving Eve or right before I leave on vacation that "they need the transcript ASAP!!"

Greg: What do you like least about the work you do?

KATHRYN: What I don't like: People who tell students, "just do CART. It doesn't have to be verbatim." CART captioning and captioning is hands down far more difficult than judicial reporting. Get out of here with that "iT dOeSn'T hAvE tO bE vErBaTiM" bullshit. You're insulting and diminishing your captioning consumer.

Greg: What certifications do you hold?

KATHRYN: RDR, CRC, IL CSR, and I had the MO CCR but dropped it.

Greg: Do you believe certifications are important? If so, why do you believe certifications are important?

KATHRYN: Yes, because we need an objective, baseline measure of competency. Idiots that tell students to "just provide CART" apparently don't believe that Deaf, deaf, or hard-of-hearing people deserve quality captioning.

Greg: What skills do you think are most critical for success in your job?

KATHRYN: Empathy, perseverance, pride in one's work

Greg: When did you start competing in speed and realtime contests?

KATHRYN: Entered my first National speed contest in 2009, been a regular ever since. After I got my RMR, I started with National because that was the first competition after I got my RMR. Then ILCRA.

Greg: When was the first time you qualified in a competition?

KATHRYN: In 2009 I qualified in ILCRA testimony and never qualified in ILCRA testimony again until 2025 (and got third place). First and only NCRA medal was 3rd place LO in 2023. ILCRA, 2025 first place realtime, third place speed. 2024, first place testimony realtime (with Lorie).

Greg: What about the speed and realtime contest appeals to you? Do you consider yourself to be a competitive person?

KATHRYN: I'm a jock, so I love competition. But it also keeps me practicing and keeps my skills up when I have something specific to work towards.

Greg: What are your beginning and ending dates of service on the ILCRA board?

KATHRYN: 2011-2021

Greg: Who recruited you for board service? Why did you decide to join the board?

KATHRYN: I joined so Jill Layton would leave me alone. She was tenacious about getting me to join and now here we are.

Greg: What was your first position with the board?

KATHRYN: Region 2 rep-freelance. Then VP- PE- P - IPP, two years each.

Greg: What are some of the accomplishments during your board tenure that make you proud?

KATHRYN: Just making it through without f@#\$ing everything up.

Greg: What was the most frustrating part of your board tenure? (Go ahead....vent!!)

KATHRYN: When board members say they'll do something and then flake because "I didn't have tiiiiime." Or "I didn't see the email." Or "you didn't personally delineate the exact steps I need to do for this and I forgot Google exists."

Greg: What board member did you like the least? Lol Just kidding. You don't have to answer that.

KATHRYN: I love alllll my board members equally because they're all dedicated, shining stars willing to exert blood, sweat, and tears for the benefit of the steno profession.

Greg: Can you explain in layman's terms what "The Happy Dance" is?

KATHRYN: You're referring to The

Continued on page 15

Let's Talk Briefs!

By JoAnn Losoya, Region 1 Freelance Representative

Such a tired subject. Right? Yada, yada, yada.

I was just reminded the other day of just how far my writing has come since I first started in 1981. I was and still am a write-it-out writer. That's how I learned. Briefing wasn't, at least for me, something I concentrated on. I just wrote like crazy. But recently, I had the word reconciliation come up. Maybe you already have a brief for that. I didn't. I was writing REK/KON/SIL/YA*GZ (gz is my "shun") What in the what? I'm old and this kid was belting it out 450 WPM. That may be a SLIGHT exaggeration, but you get my drift. So I went to my trusty brief sites -- Brief Exchange on FB and Briefpedia.com -- to try to find an alternative. They're my go-to when I want to shorten a word or a phrase. I tried to force a brief from my software. Brief-it wasn't giving anything that I liked. Nothing was sitting right with my fingers that day, but the Light Bulb Moment came when I realized YA*GZ was not translating as anything. Henceforth and forevermore YA*GZ is now my reconciliation. It came up in a job again, and I was positively giddy with shaving those four strokes into one. (Steno geek moment! LOL)

About 15 years or so ago, I started shortening my writing. I was killing myself trying to write everything out, and I was just plain tired of doing it. My chubby fingers didn't want to work so hard. I had to pivot. I started noticing

I was stacking the same things over and over. (UGH-STACKING!) Thank you, Stenograph Elan Mira! So I morphed those into the stroke for the word. Why try to reinvent the wheel? My hands and my machine were speaking to me, telling me, hey, Doofus, why do you keep doing this? Why not just use that stack as a word? A brighter light bulb moment for me. My new obsession began.

I tried going through my dictionary to find examples of stacking that turned into a brief, but nothing stood out to me. It's happened to all of us. Just look at the repeat offenders. You'll have your "brief."

Next, I tackled multi-stroke words. Two strokes became one. Three stroke words were on the chopping block first! Looking through just the "A" in my main dictionary to find examples. I was SHOCKED to see how many there were. I kept the old entries in there because sometimes in the heat of the moment I still write things out, and I rely on my software to say, HEY, THERE, use this outline instead. Here are a few just to show you what I'm talking about. A*/KWA*N/TANS became KWAINS -"acquaintance." Something as basic as "actual," AC/TUL is now TWAL, TWAEL for actually. Acute - A*/K*UT is now KAOUT. Addict, AD/DIKT is now DAIKT. DAIKGZ addiction. (Another game changer is tucking that A)

Some of the more recent - Memo. MEM/*O went to MOEM, '20. Memorialize - MORLZ, '21. Conform went from two strokes to KWOIRM in '23. Electrical went from four strokes (E/

LEK/TRIK/AL) to TRAL in '15. Exposed became KPO*FD from EX/PO*Z/D. Oh, yeah, that too. I was coming back for all the endings, G, D, ER, OR. That had to change too.

I know you're looking at those outlines and scratching your head. Some of you are saying "but, but, that's my fill-in-the-blank." I'm a Hedman writer (IYKYK) so my long vowels are A*, O*, *E, *U, *I. I use alternatively the combo of vowels to get rid of conflicts and to make briefs. A lot of these specific outlines might not translate to your writing. The point behind all this is to learn to write shorter no matter what your path is. I had an epiphany one day after I got through one of Donna Urlaub's excellent brief seminars: Hey, I can do that, I just might have to tweak it to the way I write. All that to say, whatever I'm saying here, YOU DO YOU, as they say. We all DO write differently.

I thought I had died and gone to heaven when I hit on KROENG for correct me if I'm wrong, and SKUND for asked and answered, and my favorite is DURL - Did I read that correctly? (Almost always no, but I digress.) Y*K for you can answer, and I use *UKZ that I defined to be paragraph you can answer.)

I went to every brief seminar anyone gave and took away tips that I could incorporate in the way I write. Adding the F for last, past, most, based, etc. OMG. I was writing LAS/T. Coming back for the T. Based went from BA*S/D to BA*FD. Adding the F for S also meant no more coming back with the D for ED. MOST is now MO*FT. Game



Spotlight *Continued from page 13*

changer. I love the F for S sound.

Tucking the L for LY. Tucking the G for ING. Tucking the R for ER, OR. I was like Cookie Monster gobbling it all up.

And I'm still in the process of shortening my writing. The abovementioned "reconciliation" is an example. "Explicitly" is another one off the top of my head that I shortened to KPLIFLT in '23. That was a four-stroker. My fingers are so happy!

And some words I just made up something easy. My favorite is "perspective." Again, it was a three stroker. Now it is PIF. Prospective is SPOF, add the L for LY.

I've been reporting for 40 plus years, and my writing is still evolving. You can teach an old dog new tricks if they want to learn and change. And in our fast-paced, technology-driven profession, with fast speakers who demand perfection at every turn, we need every tool in our toolbox. I hope this article inspires you to look for ways to write shorter. Your fingers will thank you for it. ■

Dance Of The Flaming Assholes? That's the celebration of ILCRA presidents when they are DONE DONE DONE managing all you dips@!ts. [saucy humor noted]

Greg: What would you say to someone to convince them to commit to board service?

KATHRYN: Yes, you're qualified. Every last person claims they "don't know enough" to serve on the ILCRA board, even if they've been working for several years. Impostor syndrome is rampant in our profession. And when I asked my dad (past president of his own state association) if I should serve, he said, "If you don't like how things are run, join so you can help change it. If you DO like how things are run, join so you can help continue it." I've also noticed that those who claim they know best how to fix ILCRA are the ones that never attend a board meeting or convention and don't step up.

Greg: What advice would you give to someone interested in pursuing a career in stenography?

KATHRYN: Be ready to pivot. Things are changing, and quickly, and none of us tell the future. And I'm not just talking about the influx of auto-captions -- I'm also referring to the technology we use to connect, the English language, everything. The only thing constant is change.

Greg: Give us your five nine top briefs that you can't live without.

KATHRYN:

SDMAKS - "Does that make sense?"

KW-BG - "quick question"

LA*RTD - "let's get started"

LA*RGTD - "let's go ahead and get started"

N*IZ - "any questions"

N*IBZ - "any questions about"

NA*IBZ - "any questions about that"

MIRMTD - midterm

RAOUBG - rubric

Greg: If there's anything else you would like to share about yourself, please feel free!

KATHRYN: Dear God, haven't I shared enough by now? ■

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Spread the word!

Encourage someone you know to explore court reporting, captioning, and CART as a career. Ensuring that qualified reporters are in the field is the only way to protect the profession and to fight digital technologies from taking over our industry.

LOCAL COURT REPORTER TRAINING PROGRAMS

College of Court Reporting*

111 W. 10th Street, #111, Hobart, IN 46342
866.294.3974 www.ccr.edu

Lake Land College*

5001 Lake Land Blvd, Mattoon, IL 61938
217.234.5253 www.lakelandcollege.edu

Generations College*

29 E. Madison Street, Chicago, IL 60602
312.922.1884 www.generations.edu

Black Hawk College*

6600 34th Ave, Moline, IL 61265
(309) 796-5000
www.bnc.edu

Court Reporting Services

FREE Two-Year Officialship Training Program
325 West Adams Street, Room 307,
Springfield, IL 62704
217-691-2950
www.ilcrs.com/training

**NCRA Certified*

ONLINE SCHOOLS

Champion Steno

www.championsteno.com

Des Moines Area Community College

www.dmacc.edu/pathways/pcs/realtime-court-reporting.html

Mark Kislingbury Academy of Court Reporting

www.mkcourtreporting.com

Simply Steno

www.simplysteno.com

Court Reporting at Home

courtreportingathome.com

Magnum Steno

www.magnumsteno.com

FREE INTRODUCTORY COURSES

NCRA A to Z Program

www.ncra.org/home/start-your-career/discoversteno-program/ncra-a-to-z-online-program

Project Steno

<https://projectsteno.org>

Join ILCRA

Your membership plays a crucial role in sustaining ILCRA's ability to retain a professional lobbyist. This lobbyist actively monitors legislative developments in real time and ensures that ILCRA receives immediate updates on any bills, policies, or regulatory changes that directly impact your professional license and long-term job security.

ILCRA's lobbyist is your voice in the rooms where decisions are made—advocating for the rights, interests, and value of all court reporters across the State of Illinois. By supporting ILCRA with your dues, your membership helps protect our profession, safeguard our standards, and promote the continued recognition of court reporters as essential to the administration of justice.

Your membership strengthens our collective influence and ensures that court reporters remain heard, protected, and respected at the state level.

Membership with the Illinois Court Reporters Association has its privileges! As a member, you receive exclusive benefits, including:

- **AD INFINITUM** - our quarterly e-newsletter
- Discounted **ILCRA ANNUAL CONVENTION** and Seminar registration fees - a savings of \$100
- **BRIEFS, BRIEFS, and MORE BRIEFS**
- **COMPLIMENTARY ADVERTISING** in ILCRA's *Find a Reporter* locator
- Exclusive use of the **ILCRA MEMBER LOGO** to highlight your professionalism
- **MEMBER-ONLY** access to the Website with the latest legislative news
- **PRIORITY RESPONSE** from the ILCRA board when you email contact@ilcra.org

JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE – <https://ilcra.memberclicks.net>

ad infinitum

Ad Infinitum is published quarterly by the Illinois Court Reporters Association, 222. S. Westmonte Drive, Suite 111, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. ILCRA assumes no responsibility for statements or claims made in Ad Infinitum. Subscription is included in annual membership dues paid by a member.

Statement of fact, opinion, and all advertisements are the sole responsibility of the author or advertiser alone and do not express the opinion or endorsement of ILCRA or anyone connected with ILCRA.

Editor: Innovative AMC, 222. S. Westmonte Drive, Suite 111, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
Ph: 703-729-4861, Email: dwenhold@kmgnet.com.

Advertising information:

Illinois Court Reporters Association,
222. S. Westmonte Drive, Suite 111,
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714
Ph: 703-729-4861
Fax: 703-935-2266
Email: contact@ilcra.org

ISSUE	PUBLICATION DATE	DEADLINE
Summer	July 15	June 15
Fall	October 15	September 15
Winter	January 15	December 15
Spring	April 15	March 15