



IL

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ILLINOIS  
COURT  
REPORTERS  
ASSOCIATION



FALL

2017

## President's Message



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Honor tradition; embrace change.

This is Buffalo Trace Distillery's motto. They're the oldest continually-operating distillery in the United States, and they make my favorite bourbon, Buffalo Trace, as well as Van Winkle, Weller, and Blanton's.

When you are in business for over 200 years, you know when to stay the course and when to adapt. Or to adapt the course.

That's us, isn't it? That's what we've historically done, and that's what we always do. When machine shorthand emerged as a record-making alternative to the pen, we as a profession implemented it and mastered it. When computers became mainstream, we began to use CAT software. When the internet became open to all, we ditched our analog dictionaries and old phone books and enjoyed a quicker, more up-to-date search. When laptops became more affordable, we realtimed not only for ourselves, but for attorneys and judges and those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

And all this time we have been and are devoted to one thing: Accurately preserving what was said. And that does not change, regardless of whether it's pen shorthand or machine shorthand. This will never change.

Often change is uncomfortable. When I went to Sparks College in the '90s, you had to go to a physical location and spend thousands of dollars to not only learn steno, but to START learning steno. And if someone couldn't make it through school for whatever reason, they lost that investment, and contributed to the dropout rate that discourages some colleges and universities from offering it as a program.

Nowadays most schools are online, and more and more autodidacts are entering the profession. If you know a tech-inclined individual (since stenography is a very technical profession) who is interested in dabbling in steno, send them to [openstenoproject.org](http://openstenoproject.org) where they can learn how to get started in steno with very

minimal financial obligation.

If you're a working reporter and love those impromptu demos where someone asks you at a job, "How does that work?" start a Steno A to Z class to help prospective students get a taste of whether stenography is for them while incurring NO financial obligation.

With open-source steno tools and the Steno A to Z program, future court reporting and captioning students can begin attending a school of court reporting already knowing that it's the skill for them, and thus help to decrease the dropout rate, which in turn encourages more schools, whether brick-and-mortar or online, to offer court reporting programs -- which will bring more people to this wonderful profession!

This is change. This requires us to change. This requires us to re-think how we bring in new students who become new reporters and new captioners. This requires our industry to change as new professionals enter and lead who haven't begun their careers with the same paradigm held by many of us have who attended brick-and-mortar schools and have always lived and worked in our steno circle of colleagues.

The Steno A to Z program and the Open Steno Project are two new ways that aren't the traditional recruitment model, and they're growing.

"Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature's inexorable imperative." – H.G. Wells

The stenographic world is changing with every new reporter who joins our wonderful profession. It's a new year for ILCRA, a new era for stenography, and it's exciting!

~ Kathryn Thomas, RDR, CRC, CSR

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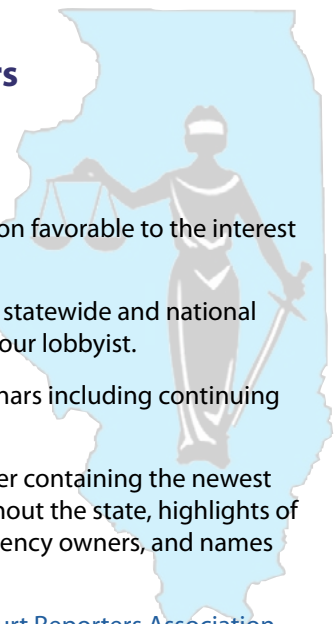
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For a listing of all **committees and current committee members**

[CLICK HERE](#)

## 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.***

# ILCRA's Annual Conference is a Smashing Success!

**By Rita Corson  
RMR, CRR (Retired), Realtime  
and Speed Contest Chair**

Once again, some of the greatest reporters in the country gathered for the Annual ILCRA Conference that was held on September 14-16, 2017 in Springfield.

The speaker line up was fabulous, the networking was outstanding and speeds and accuracy that some of our speed and realtime contestants achieved was out of this world. Please check out some of the pictures below to see what you missed if you couldn't attend.

Special thanks to our exhibitors and sponsors who help make the event possible. Please remember to thank the following people and companies that helped make it a great convention:

**Gold Sponsor:**

Depo International

**Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest:**

Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag from Planet Depos

**ILCRA Realtime Contest:**

Donna Urlaub from Urlaub Bowen & Associates

**Exhibitors:**

Stenograph, ProCAT, Worth Business Equipment, The Varallo Group



## Speed and Realtime Contests at the Convention

ILCRA's 2017 Speed and Realtime Contests were held Thursday and Friday, September 14th and 15th, at the Wyndham City Center in Springfield.

We had eight contestants sit for the Realtime Contest and five sit for the Speed Contest. Just to have the fortitude to practice and sit for these tests makes them all winners in my book.

First of all, I want to thank Donna Urlaub of Urlaub, Bowen & Associates for sponsoring the Realtime Contest.

Thank you also to Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag of Planet Depos for sponsoring the Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest.

I want to thank my committee and dictators, Margaret "Peg" Sokalski, Judy Lehman and Teresa Ozuna, who did an awesome job. Special thanks to Deb Cohen-Rojas who helped in many ways both days and at the awards luncheon, and for all of you who stepped up to be my graders and monitors! I couldn't have done this without you guys!

Well, my biggest thank you goes to the contestants who make these contests so much fun and exciting.

*continued on page 4*



going on the year I went to court reporting school, so I got lots of TV practice with all those hearings. And many may wonder how I still happen to have this speech. Well, my husband will tell you I'm a hoarder, but an organized one!

In the 180 Literary, the qualifiers were:

1. Bernice Radavich, 95.33%
2. Melanie Sonntag, 96.11%
3. LeAnn Hibler, 96.11%
4. Stephanie Battaglia, 96.22%
5. Ann Marie Hollo, 96.44%
6. Judith Walsh, 97.56%
7. Laura Kooy, 98.67%
8. Donna Urlaub, 99.22%

The 200 wpm Testimony was about a slip and fall outside a hardware store. To qualify you had to have 50 errors or less. Those contestants who qualified were:

1. Bernice Radavich, 95.2%
2. LeAnn Hibler, 96.7%
3. Laura Kooy, 97.6%
4. Ann Marie Hollo, 98.1%
5. Stephanie Battaglia, 98.3%
6. Judith Walsh, 99.3%
7. Donna Urlaub, 99.5%

By averaging both of the scores from the 180 Lit and the 200 Testimony, I determine first, second, and third place. Medals are awarded to those contestants, and the

## Annual Conference

*Continued from page 3*

Here are the results of this year's contests:

### Realtime Contest

There were two parts to this test – 180 wpm Literary and 200 wpm Testimony. It takes 95% accuracy to qualify. That's only 45 errors on the 180 Lit and 50 errors on the Testimony. For any of you who have taken the CRR test, you will appreciate what these gals have accomplished with their test results. You will be amazed when you hear some of these percentages. These reporters blow me away.

The 180 Lit was President Nixon's resignation speech he gave in 1974. I had taken this down as practice from TV. Yes, I'm dating myself. I had just graduated from court reporting school. Watergate was





first-place winner is awarded the Bonni Shuttleworth traveling trophy.

The third-place medal went to Laura Kooy with an overall score of 98.13%.

The second-place medal went to Judith Walsh with a score of 98.43%.

Our first-place medalist had only 12 errors – that was on both tests! The first-place medal and the winner of the Realtime Contest and receiving the Bonni Shuttleworth Realtime traveling trophy with a score of 99.36% went to Donna Urlaub.

### **Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest**

We had five contestants participate in the Speed Contest. They worked very hard to be able to take home the Sally Cochran Speed Contest trophy. They are such dedicated competitors! I admire their hard work and dedication!

The Speed Contest consisted of three takes - 220 wpm Literary, 230 wpm Legal Opinion, and 270 wpm Testimony.

The 220 Lit was a speech given by President Jimmy Carter in 1975. To qualify, our contestants had to have 55 errors or less.

Those contestants who qualified were:

1. Ann Marie Hollo, 97.18%
2. Bernice Radavich, 98.45%
3. Melanie Sonntag, 98.91%
4. Donna Urlaub, 98.91%

The 230 Legal Opinion was an argument before the Appellate Court of an appeal in a reckless homicide case. Legal Opinions are always so hard that you can't even imagine, but we did have two qualifiers. They could only have 58 errors:

1. Melanie Sonntag, 98.09%
2. Donna Urlaub, 98.35%

The 270 Testimony was testimony about a robbery where they suspected the man who managed abandoned properties. Our contestants learned all about bump keys and other burglary tools. We again had two qualifiers who had fewer than 68 errors:

1. Melanie Sonntag, 95.63%
2. Donna Urlaub, 97.11%

Again, I averaged the scores of all three

contests in order to pick the winner. In order to win a medal in the speed contest you have to qualify in all three areas, and since we just had two qualifiers in two of the legs, there was not a third-place medal awarded.

Second-place medal with a score of 97.54% went to Melanie Sonntag. First-place medal and the winner of the Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest and receiving the Sally Cochran Traveling Trophy with a score of 98.12% went to Donna Urlaub.

I am so in awe of all of these contestants. Just sitting for these contests makes them winners in my book. They made me proud to be a part of this contest experience.

If you have never attempted a speed contest, why don't you sign up next year. It's exhilarating! And practicing for this contest can only improve your skills as a court reporter.



# A Student's View of Court Reporting

By Bria Jones

I had the pleasure of interviewing Mary Trezzo, Official Court Reporter for the Kane County and is also on the Board of Directors for the Illinois Court Reporters Association.

I chose to interview a court reporter because I was curious to know how they fine tune their listening skills, and I also wanted to know how they interpreted the law and the officials of the court. Mary was more than I could hope for. She was knowledgeable in her field and encouraging. She shared so many vital nuggets of information and made it possible for someone with little to no knowledge of that field to be able to understand how the wheels turn in the courtroom. I am grateful for her candid stories and her contagious laughter.

Please read the interview below:

## Q&A with Mary Trezzo

### What motivated you to choose this career?

I attended Triton College in River Grove. It just clicked and everything just fell into place and I really enjoyed it. In my early twenties I graduated with an associate's degree and took the Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR) exam and was fortunate to pass it the first time.

I started as a freelance court reporter in the city. I wanted to experience proceedings in the courtrooms and depositions working for private attorneys. I later on became an official court reporter in Cook County for three years. During that time I worked in the juvenile court and was exposed to a lot of brutal and hard cases that were laced with abuse and neglect. It was an adjustment, but I adapted.

In 1992 I transferred out to Dupage County and covered civil, divorce, juvenile, and criminal courtrooms before

transferring to Kane County. I never went into broadcasting or captioning, but I have friends that did and love it because some work at home. I make fun of them because they get to wear their PJs and fuzzy slippers to work. Actually, the joke is on me because they save lots of money not having to buy professional work attire. The difference is that you don't have a community of friends to socialize with, but all of my friends love it. You must be a self-starter because you work out of your home when you do captioning. Some start work as early as 3:00 a.m. when working on closed captioning for an east coast based television show.

There is a definite demand for court reporters. A lot of reporters are retiring and that is creating job openings in the State of Illinois.

### What was your Plan B if this career hadn't worked out?

I wanted to be either an attorney or a paralegal. I debated about going to law school but then changed my mind due to finances at that time.

### How rewarding is your position?

I love my career. I'm always trying to clean up my work, perfect my skills and stay on the cutting edge of technology. It has been very rewarding for me.

### What are the education requirements to become a court reporter?

After graduating from Triton College, I went back to get my bachelor's degree while working full-time. It was just a personal goal I wanted to achieve.

If you are in your early twenties and you want to go to college to get your associate's or bachelor's degree, that's fine but it is not required. You don't need either of those degrees to become a court reporter. Usually when I present at the high school career day, I explain that if you can't afford to go to a four-year college and would like to make a good living to

provide for your family, you do not need to accumulate college debt at \$40,000 or even more. Court reporting school is somewhat less expensive and can help you gain experience and skills that will provide for a long and rewarding career.

When you take the classes, remember that it will be progressive. You learn the theory and how to write and then practice, practice, and practice. When you reach the speed of 225wpm and pass the test for the CSR (Certified Shorthand Reporter) you are now eligible to become licensed in the State of Illinois. You also have to be proficient. It normally takes a minimum of two years to get your speed up. Others have completed the courses in less time, with lots of practice. Scholarships are available through court reporting associations. You have to invest in computer equipment and the steno machine. When you are a student you can qualify for student scholarships through the Illinois Court Reporters' Association. Through court reporting associations you can find a mentor who may have access to someone who may be able to donate a steno machine.

### Where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years?

I plan on retiring in ten years but I have an option of retiring sooner, this one of the perks of working for the State.

### What would you like to see future students in this field concentrate on?

I urge students to concentrate on learning the theory. The schools are teaching Realtime Theory so that you can become proficient from the beginning. Always train yourself to write faster and cleaner. Concentrate on speed. You MUST practice, practice, and practice. Train to get up to 240wpm so that when you go to take the certification test you will not have "your nerves" bothering you and you can just concentrate on being proficient. Try to take all of your certifications tests early in your

career, so that later on in your career you will have fulfilled all of the requirements so that you can take advantage of the options to go into broadcasting and work wherever you want until you find what clicks.

**Do you have any advice for other fellow court reporters? Do you guys meet up and bounce off ideas that would make the job so much easier?**

Yes, there are annual conferences through different associations that we attend and we discuss new material and methods.

**Has this position made you more alert in your personal life?**

Absolutely. I have been working in criminal courts for many years and have heard so many real stories that seem completely unreal and it can be gruesome. I do not watch any kind of court television and very seldom do I watch the news. I do this in order to detox from what I hear at work.

**Based on your experience, how are women treated within the workplace? Equal pay?**

This is a predominately female based field, however, there are many men that are court reporters and have become very successful. I am good friends with a male court reporter who has since retired after forty years with the state. The field shouldn't be female dominated because men are able to do this job efficiently and are well-received in the field as well.

**Based on your position, do you feel obligated or politically pressured to support certain changes within the community?**

As an Official Court Reporter, I have to remain impartial to all parties. I cannot get involved in campaigns or run for any kind of political office. I am not allowed to accept gifts or bonuses from attorneys.

**What are your thoughts on rebuilding/strengthening community relationships? Are you able to volunteer your talent/time/skills to the community? Church? Pro bono cases?**

Court reporters can do volunteer work for hearing-impaired individuals at churches. There is usually somebody else that will tag team with you, so that your hands do not become too fatigued during the whole sermon. Volunteering your skills at city council meetings is also another way to give back to the community.

To promote the profession, myself and many other court reporters will volunteer to present and demonstrate at job fairs at local high schools to educate students about the rewarding aspects of our career. We've also presented at court reporting colleges to encourage the students to stay committed and focused on their achievements of their hard work and where it will lead.

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**CHICAGO-AREA REALTIME**

**» LED BY COURT REPORTERS**

Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag, President, is pleased to announce that Chicago-area Realtime & Court Reporting has been acquired by Planet Depos, LLC, a global court reporting company.  
*Committed to your success, NCRA-credentialed leadership team with 100+ years in the business. Unlimited opportunities to make as little or as much as you want. Experienced, friendly back-office support.*

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Contact: [kathy.dilorenzo@planetdepos.com](mailto:kathy.dilorenzo@planetdepos.com)



**What mistakes have judges/attorneys/cops/clerks made in the courtroom?**

During a bench trial, there was a witness that spoke Spanish and was assisted with an interpreter. When he answered the question in Spanish, his attorney who also spoke Spanish would continue asking questions and would not wait for the interpreter to translate the answers in English and the attorney just went on with the conversation in Spanish. The judge had to interrupt to correct the attorney to make the record clear.

**What irritates judges in the courtroom?**

The judges I work with are very supportive in making sure no one is talking on top of each other or interrupting each other.

**In your personal opinion, do you feel like there is a visible bias among how different people from different backgrounds are treated?**

So far I have not seen any unfair sentencing

from the judges that would make me think that different groups receive favor over another group. I actually walk away impressed each day by the fact that the judges are able to be impartial after hearing their cases.

**How do you feel about cameras in the court?**

I'm indifferent to cameras in the courtroom. I experienced it once here in Kane County. People act differently when there is a camera in the room.

**What is the craziest case that you have ever had to report on?**

There was a criminal case where an attorney was trying to complete jury selection and the defendant was surly and was talking loud instead of whispering. When the attorney told him to lower his voice, the defendant began to punch the attorney. The attorney had to fight back but the deputies interceded to subdue the

defendant and get him back to lockup. The judge had to call a mistrial.

**What is the most exciting case you have ever seen?**

In Dupage County there was a criminal cold case that was over 30 years old. It was very interesting to hear how the detectives cracked the case. As I listened, it was unbelievable as to how the detectives were able to put the pieces of the story together 30 years late and finally put away the defendant for the murder.

**Do you ever worry about the physical aspect of the job? Do you worry about your hands failing you? Early onset of arthritis?**

This position requires a lot of sitting and could create some issues for your back and hands. I developed carpal tunnel in both hands but had corrective surgery in 2008 and have not experienced any problems since the surgery. But the judges

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give decent breaks after a couple of hours on grueling long days. The judges are cognizant of the physical demand that this position places on court reporters. They take pretty good care of us.

**Do you have insurance on your hands?**

Not on just my hands, but I have medical insurance through my job. Supplemental insurance is not required for this position.

**While attending court reporting school, was the course more independent or structured? How did you stay motivated to complete the course and graduate on time?**

When I attended college, in addition to my court reporting classes, I had to take different courses to qualify for my degree. The more disciplined you are to practicing and progressing through your speed classes, the sooner you'll get out of school. You have to be dedicated to practicing to get your speed up and develop your skills.

**Do you feel like your job as a court reporter will ever become obsolete? How do you stay ahead of technology?**

Every since the 80's there has been a threat about the profession being replaced with technology. Thirty years later it has not happened. Dragon software is a voice recognition program that can type the words into the computer. However, most software programs are not able to distinguish the difference between voices like a court reporter can when present live in the courtroom.

Currently, there is a demand for Official Court Reporters in the state of Illinois.

It's a very versatile job. There are official Court Reporters, freelance reporters, broadcasting, CART (communication access realtime translation). CART deals with hearing impaired individuals in court, students at school or other situations where there's a need for assistance. For example, a court reporter has to take their machine and sit next to a student and the student reads along in the classroom at college. Many find this very rewarding. Closed captioning is similar to Realtime writing in court. I use it all the time just to clean up and improve on my skills.

**Is it easier to gain your bachelor degree before attaining a court reporting license? Or should it be the other way around? Does it have an effect on salary?**

If you plan on working in the state of Illinois, you must have a CSR (Certified Shorthand Reporter) license and there is a base pay rate for new hires. Then if you are looking to increase your salary, you will need more advanced certifications. After showing proficiency and being able to produce those results in a Realtime test, then you will get a bump in salary of 5%.

**What is the base salary?**

Without experience, the base salary starts at \$46,000/yr with step raises. In addition to your salary, there is the opportunity to get paid to transcribe transcripts and that income is claimed on a 1099 as independent income. Working for the state, you are entitled to health insurance benefits, contribution to a pension and

being able to contribute to deferred compensation investments.

**Is licensing different for every state?**

Yes, not all states require you to be certified. I have a CSR and RPR (registered professional reporter) which allows me to work in other states that recognize an RPR instead of a CSR license.

**Have you ever worked out of the country?**

No. But I know many freelance court reporters that are hired by law firms to travel to different countries where they have cases and need a reporter for depositions.

**Do you feel emotional when hearing cases? Has there ever been a time where you felt like you wanted to speak out even though you are supposed to be composed?**

Yes, there have been many times I've wanted to interject my feelings during some court proceedings, but, of course, court reporters do not have speaking roles and have to maintain impartiality. The most difficult cases for me to hear about are crimes against children and the elderly.

Also, I'd like to speak up if there is extra background talking while court is in session, but I usually quietly speak to the judge. Or in extreme situations, I gesture with my hands so the judge knows that I am not able to report because people are interrupting each other or talking at the same time, and the judge will intercede to correct the situation and admonish the parties.

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## A Student's View

Continued from page 9

### **Are you fearful that you could be attacked while in court? Have you had any close encounters?**

There was a bench trial for a murder case and on the witness stand was a former gang member who had turned to testify as a witness for the prosecution. There were other gang bangers in the courtroom audience that were making threatening gestures to the witness while he was on the stand. I reported it to the deputy. They brought in additional court security to stand watch over the people who were making the gestures. Also, the judge made an announcement that if they didn't control themselves, the deputy would escort them out of the courtroom. The defendant was found not guilty. I was a little apprehensive and fearful when I walked to my car that night.

### **How did you develop accurate listening skills?**

It is a skill that you learn to perfect with experience and it's imperative in order to do your job efficiently.

### **How often do you upgrade your machine?**

Technology is always changing. Some of the new steno machines use SD cards instead of paper. I believe that in this field you should stay on top of new technology because it helps to make your job easier. A majority of court reporters have to buy all of your own equipment and software. You also have to provide and maintain tech support for yourself.

### **Are there any internship opportunities that you could share with me?**

As a student is progressing in their studies and would like to intern, they can call and set up an appointment to come in and shadow a court reporter in court, just as you made the request to interview a court reporter. I am part of the Board of Directors for the Illinois Court Reporters Association and we offer mentoring programs from fellow members.

# Transitioning in Court Reporting

*By Pam Taylor, CSR/RPR*

July 2017 I will have been a court reporter for 44 years. The first three I was a freelance reporter, then I took almost a year off after having my daughter, after that I became an official for 37 years. After officially retiring I took a year off, and since that time I have been freelancing.

Transitioning from freelancer to official was relatively easy in the 70's. Really the only difference was the paid benefits; i.e., holidays, vacation, sick days. They were both literally jobs that you had to show up at 8:30 or 9:00 in the morning and, depending on your job, you were there until the evening.

But as with any transition, there is always a learning curve. It wasn't so bad from freelance to official, but what a difference when you stay somewhere 37 years. Forget the learning curve. Technology is something you must stay abreast of.

During my career as a Cook County Official, I started out as a reporter, I then became an Assistant Supervisor, and I ended my career as the Assistant Administrator of the Criminal Division. In that last managerial position it wasn't feasible for me to go to court, so my last decade of reporting was literally PAPERWORK. But I always knew when I retired I was going to continue to work as a reporter, so in the last few years as an official I did the following to prepare myself.

I became more than a dues-paying member of ILCRA and NCRA. I began to attend seminars and conventions keeping up with the latest technology and actually reading the articles in the magazines. They provide a wealth of information, especially in their Jobs Section, local and nationwide, familiarizing myself with who and what is available out there.

CHOICES, this little machine has and continues to afford us with many choices. When you leave the officials or, quite frankly, any court reporting job that you have, you can transition into a different type of court reporting. You can be the no-write deposition reporter or the real time reporter or the closed captioning reporter or the CART reporter. I know some reporters who like the familiarity of being in one place who have become Federal Reporters.

But with those choices you need to decide on whether the equipment and/or software you have is sufficient, or maybe it's time to purchase new for your next endeavor. Purchasing new equipment while still working full-time was a great help for me as that was one less payment I had to make once I retired.

For me, as I was not going to court, I had to practice. I just set my machine up at home, and it was always at the ready when I decided to practice. If you decide to go into something different than how you normally write, such as CART or closed captioning, you might want to educate yourself with up-to-date information and practice those different set of skills as well.

Lastly, if possible, TAKE SOME TIME OFF. It can be a month, six months, a year, but decompress because you are about to start on a totally new adventure.

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# Veterans' History Project — No Story Untold

*By Deborah Cohen-Rojas*

From the perspective of a Veterans History Project volunteer, there are three different types of veterans: those who would rather not talk about their experiences, those who are willing to share their stories, and those who, when asked, will insist, "But I don't really have anything to say." I have been volunteering for the VHP for almost ten years now, and I can say unequivocally that any veteran -- whether or not they've seen combat, whether or not they were ever sent overseas, whether they're 19 or 90 -- any veteran has a story to tell.

Neither of the two interviews I transcribed from the Foreign Legion Convention, held in Springfield on July 14th, 2017, contained any stories of hand-to-hand combat, explosions, or helicopters getting shot down in enemy territories. Yet they were two of the most memorable stories I and my husband, Kwame Rojas -- who served as the interviewer -- have ever heard, and we feel honored to have been able to share their experiences.

Our first interview of the day was of Robert Moore, who served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army from 1983 to 2016. Mr. Moore, whose initial goal was to become a doctor, served in the 25th and 330th Medical Brigades. While serving as a Reservist, he became trained in the rendering of military funeral honors, which he counts among some of his most treasured memories. Mr. Moore was grateful for this opportunity to learn not only about the lives and families of the fallen soldiers he was honoring, but it also allowed him to learn about the different cultures and backgrounds the soldiers came from. Upon his retirement from the

Army, Mr. Moore is now a member of the American Foreign Legion and the Veterans Administration, and he also donates his time to a book bag drive, which provides supplies and book bags to children on Chicago's South Side.

Our next, and final, interview of the day was with Ms. Iris Miranda-Kirschner. A Puerto-Rican/American woman, Ms. Miranda-Kirschner served in the US Army from 1977 to 1983, and then transferred to the US Airforce, where she served from 1983 until 2001. It was while she was serving in the Army that she met her husband, Corey Kirschner, who served in the Airforce. Ms. Miranda-Kirschner joined the US Airforce, and she and Corey eloped so that they would not be separated upon reassignment. Ms. Miranda-Kirschner, upon joining the Airforce, became a Judge Advocate General. She and her husband had a joint retirement ceremony in 2001, making history at Scott Airforce Base as the first husband and wife to retire together. After 9/11, she was asked to come back to the JAG Corps, and she retired from the Airforce, for a second time, on February 18, 2017.

(In a fascinating side-note, the military was not what brought Iris and Corey together; they met in the British Virgin Islands while they were taking a tropical marine biology class, and they bonded over Iris's Zildjian Cymbals T-shirt, which was given to her by her neighbor Billy Cobham, one of Corey's favorite drummers.)

Robert Moore and Iris Miranda-Kirschner really couldn't be more different, but they have one very important fact in common; neither of them had ever seen active combat, but they both had important stories to tell. When an

interviewer digs a little deeper, asks more detailed questions, he or she can uncover a wealth of knowledge and experience that the veteran him or herself might not even consider to be very pertinent.

When a veteran hesitates to share because they "have nothing to talk about," there are lots of questions that can be asked that will prove that they have lots to talk about. Where were they born? What made them decide to join the military? Are there other members of their family that served? What was it like leaving home, perhaps for the first time? What kind of relationships did they form with the people they met? What was the world like at the time they joined, and had it changed much by the time of their discharge?

If the only veterans who shared their stories were those who saw combat, I would have missed out on the stories of Elizabeth, who served as a nurse in a Naval hospital during Desert Storm; or Albert and Craig, who both came home during the Vietnam era, neither having seen combat but both telling nearly identical stories about angry protestors in the airport; or Linda, a Navy psychologist who treated Gulf War veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder; or Robert, who, following the example of every male family member, decided to enlist and serve his country and now belongs to America's largest Hispanic veterans organization.

Every person you meet is carrying around their own story, their own perspective, and their own experience, and this is especially true of veterans, who have willingly given their time and talent, and sometimes their lives, in service to their country.

# Be Careful of Security Breaches from "Friends"

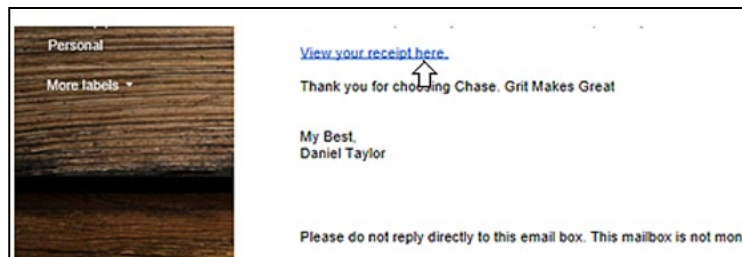
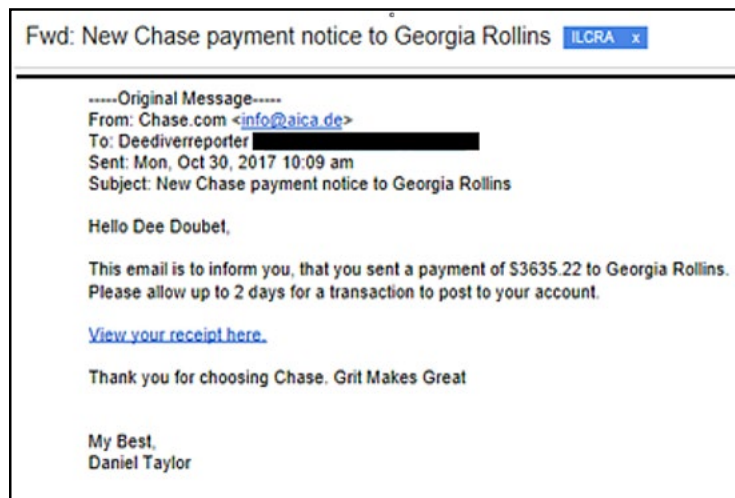
By Georgia Long

In other not-so court reporter related news, the internet hacks are getting better and better at trying to inflame you and get you to click on their e-mailed links. Some of you have been affected by this directly; and directly "from me." Because of that, I'm feeling a sense of duty to address this, and I want to break these e-mails down to help you recognize the difference between your contacts (like me) being hacked, and when it's okay to just delete what you've received.

First we have an email to Dee Doubet, esteemed member of ILCRA, past president extraordinaire, and dear friend of mine. This one was actually her "Chase Bank" alerting her to the fact that a payment in excess of \$3,000 was made to me. Now that's a chunk of change that would get anyone's attention, especially if you're 99% sure you didn't make that transaction! And as good of friends as we are, she's not sending me over three grand because she likes me. That's one helluva scuba diving trip she could take instead.

So how can we tell this is just a fake e-mail to get you to click on the included link? **FIRST OF ALL, NEVER CLICK A SUSPICIOUS LINK!** Never, ever, ever! And yes, this is a suspicious link. There is no logo from Chase anywhere on this e-mail. Most of the time when you get a legit e-mail from a legit institution, they will use their marketing logos on everything. There's your second red flag: the first was getting this e-mail when you know you haven't sent any money to anyone.

Second (or third?), and maybe not so obvious, take a look at the "From" line. It says Chase.com, but next to it, the actual e-mail address, is <info@aica.de>. That is **not** a Chase e-mail address. In fact, the .de is a Federal Republic of Germany domain. Do you bank in Germany? I'm going to bet the answer is no. And if I've lost that bet to someone, let me know!



"Grit Makes Great." Did you know Chase changed their slogan to match Pennsylvania's Ardent Credit Union's? Of course not. I didn't know until I Googled that for the sake of writing this. But chances are you've never heard that in association with Chase, which makes it suspect. Now "Chase: So You Can" may ring a little bell somewhere in the back of your mind. But even if they had included the right slogan, that doesn't make up for the lack of credibility everywhere else here: like that misplaced comma; saying "a transaction" instead of "this transaction;" and is Daniel Taylor the president of this establishment or is he a customer service representative? Normally, that would be specified.

Be very careful here. But if curiosity is getting the best of you, you can find out where this link is trying to take you without actually going there. Because we're not actually going to click on this link, right? Right.

So I've hovered over this hyperlink to show you where you will be directed should you click on this. And for the love of Bill Gates or Steve Jobs, I'm gonna say it again – **do not actually click any link in a suspicious e-mail.** This does not direct you to a Chase.com website, which is what the link should be reading, to view a receipt from a Chase transaction. This is a big nope.

I did some digging to provide you with as much information as possible and Googled "velo2max.com." The search yielded a result for a webpage that came up in another language. Red Flag Number – what? 7 or 8 are we up to now? Anyway, when I asked Google to go ahead and translate the page, this is what came up:

"This page was not retrieved from its original location over a secure connection."

OH. EM. GEE. RUN AWAY.

I immediately closed the browser. That is not something we're not going to investigate any further!

An actual e-mail from Chase would have their logo, their colors; and the "From" e-mail is "no-reply."

So now, what can you do about this? Sadly, not much; except to mark them as spam if your e-mail allows for that, or just delete them and move on. No one's e-mail was actually hacked, and I didn't actually have anything to do with sending this e-mail to Dee.

However, if you ever do feel like sending me a few thousand just for being awesome, I will graciously accept.

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