



IL

CRA

ILLINOIS  
COURT  
REPORTERS  
ASSOCIATION

www.ilcra.org

ad infinitum

SUMMER

2015

## President's Message



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Within the last week I saw an article in our local newspaper titled "Illinois Courtrooms Facing Shortage of Court Reporters Statewide." This appears to be the topic throughout the state right now, and a challenge for our superiors to replace those who will retire in the next few years. According to the information printed, there are currently 42 court reporter vacancies in Illinois, with 20 positions that need to be filled immediately. In addition, with the age of many of our current reporters near retirement, the need for new faces is not going away. This article is a reminder that if we don't encourage new students to enter school and take our positions, it will undoubtedly lead to more electronic recording devices being installed and something we hope to avoid. In many ways the responsibility falls on our shoulders to fix. We need students, and we need them now!

This will be my last article as ILCRA President, and no doubt there have been challenges and issues faced by many reporters. All facets of reporting have dealt with changes and frustrations, and I learned more than I could imagine about the profession. I've met many wonderful people and have gained what I know will be lifelong friendships. At times it was a rollercoaster, but I'm thankful for the opportunity. I believe this profession will continue to thrive, but we need to make it happen.

I want to share a story of a scene I watched at a small country market a couple months ago. A grandfather was in the checkout line with his granddaughter and she was not a happy camper. She was unhappy because her grandfather didn't buy her what she wanted, and she was

doing what my mother used to refer to as "throwing a fit." The grandfather was doing what he could to keep the toddler happy and to divert her attention, but it just wasn't going to happen. It wasn't pretty, and the reasoning attempts were a waste of time. You've all seen or experienced this situation before, so it's no surprise.

What struck me more than anything about the situation was not the behavior of the child. What was interesting was the chatter in the line after he walked out. I heard more than one time "In the old days kids didn't get by with that," and "When I was a kid we weren't allowed to behave that way, because it was worse when you got home." I could go on with a few more, but you get the picture. I couldn't help but think that while discipline was certainly different when I was growing up, there have been many progressions with raising children and dealing with behavior and education; some good things, and, yes, some not so good, but everyone seems to adjust.

My point for bringing this up is to remind us that for many reporters the good old days are behind us and things have changed since the beginning of our careers. Just like parenting skills have evolved through the years, so has our profession. And even though we think the good-old worked just fine, we need to embrace new changes and face them head-on. We have to keep up with the ever-changing technology and equipment and the industry as a whole. If we don't do

*Continued on page 9*

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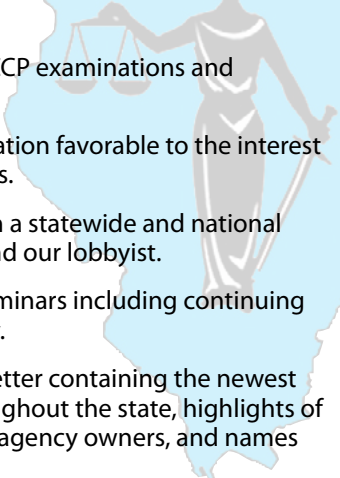
### EDUCATION LIAISON

Nicole Napoli Cleary  
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For a listing of all committees and current committee members

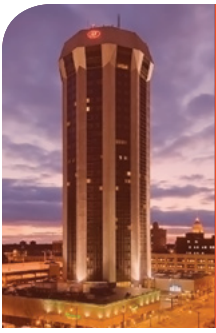
[CLICK HERE](#)

## What ILCRA Does for Illinois Reporters

- 
- **Works** to maintain your right to be certified.
  - **Administers** the RPR, RMR, RDR, CRR, CBC, and CCP examinations and publishes the dates of the tests in *Ad Infinitum*.
  - **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.**



# 2015 ILCRA Annual Convention

September 10 – 12, 2015

Hilton Springfield | Springfield, Illinois

## Notice of Annual Meeting

The Illinois Court Reporters Association Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, September 12, 2015 at the Hilton Springfield in Springfield, Illinois, during the ILCRA Annual Convention. During the annual meeting, committee and other reports will be given. The meeting will be held in the Ambassador Ballroom from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. during breakfast. Annual awards and the Realtime and Speed Contest winners will be presented at the luncheon from 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. in the Rendezvous Room.

The ILCRA Executive Board meeting will be held Thursday, September 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the ILCRA President's Suite at the Hilton Springfield in Springfield, Illinois, during the ILCRA Annual Convention. The room number will be posted at the convention.

## Slate of Officers

The ILCRA 2015-2017 Slate of Officers was announced in an August 10, 2015 e-blast to the membership. Below is the Nominating Committee Report.

### Nominating Committee Report

*Nancy LaBella, Nominating Committee Chair*

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate of officers for the 2015-2017 Executive Board of ILCRA:

President: Vernita Allen-Williams  
President-Elect: Kathryn Thomas  
Vice President: Georgia Rollins  
Secretary: Deborah Cohen-Rojas  
Treasurer: Kathleen Grove  
Legislative Representative: Sarah Paszkiewicz  
Region 1 Representative (Freelance): Pamela Taylor

Thank you to Nominating Committee members Lori Eder, Pat Houlf, Jill Layton and Joe Rickhoff.

### President Vernita Allen-Williams

Vernita has been an Official Court Reporter in the 19th Judicial Circuit since September, 1997. Prior to that, she was an Official Court Reporter in Cook County since September, 1996, and a freelance reporter since May, 1986. Vernita received her education through Madison Business College and Triton College. She holds the following licenses: CSR, RPR and RMR. The professional organizations to which Vernita belongs are the Illinois Court Reporters Association and the National Court Reporters Association. Vernita has been very active with ILCRA serving on the following committees: Past Secretary, Circuit Rep for Lake County, Region One Rep, Member of the Illinois Supreme Court's Court Reporter Committee, Member of the Form Book Committee, PR/Marketing Committee

## Stenograph Luminex Auction

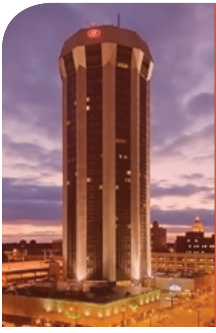
Are you in the market for a new writer? If so, hold off on making your purchase and bring your checkbook or credit card to ILCRA's Annual Convention!

Once again, Stenograph is offering a writer for ILCRA to auction off at convention. This year they are offering the new Luminex! The retail value of the machine that will be provided as well as the minimum starting bid will be announced at convention, but the winning bidder is sure to save hundreds of dollars!

The winning bidder will be announced Saturday afternoon and payment is due at that time. [CLICK HERE](#) to check out this new writer. Good luck!

## Worth Business Equipment at Annual Convention

We are pleased to announce that Worth Business Equipment will be an exhibitor at ILCRA's Annual Convention and is now scheduling appointments for writer cleaning/servicing. Please contact Steve Worth directly to schedule your writer maintenance by calling 773-777-1474 or emailing [worth4154@msn.com](mailto:worth4154@msn.com).



# 2015 ILCRA Annual Convention

September 10 –12, 2015

Hilton Springfield | Springfield, Illinois

## **Nominating Committee Report**

*Continued from page 3*

Chair. Vernita has attended many career days at local high schools and is a VHP volunteer committee member. Her hobbies include singing, training for her second Chicago Marathon, Hustle Up The Hancock participant, and action movies. Vernita says her passion is being a good mother to her son.

### **President-Elect Kathryn A. Thomas**

Kathryn A. Thomas, RDR, CCP, CSR, Caseyville, Illinois, started working as a freelance reporter in 1998 and has since transitioned into full-time CART. In addition to serving ILCRA as Region 2 Representative and Vice President, she has also served on several ILCRA and NCRA committees. She has presented seminars about the Internet and CART to ILCRA and NCRA members and attended NCRA's Legislative Boot Camp and Leadership Conference. In 2013 she attempted to break the Guinness world record for stenographic speed at the NCRA annual convention and was a panelist in NCRA's 2015 Premier Session. She is a proud gamer geek, sci-fi nerd, Trekker, Ravenclaw, and Whovian. Follow her blog at <http://www.stenoray.com>.

### **Vice President Georgia Rollins**

Georgia's education began in 2002 and resulted in her touring almost every downstate court reporting school there was back then. She graduated from Sparks Business College, earning her Scapist Diploma in 2007 and her Class A Restricted License. Before she finished the Judicial Reporting program there, she was hired on in the 11th Circuit, assigned to McLean County. In December of 2010, she earned her CSR and continued to work towards her RPR. She worked for the 11th Circuit in McLean County until just two weeks shy of her five-year anniversary, when she moved closer to home. She's continued her Officialship in the 4th Circuit, assigned primarily to Shelby County. Over the last decade, she's enjoyed attending seminars and conventions, participating in career days, community open houses, sitting in on mock trials, and even giving demonstrations to the public who happen to stop by to see what the court system is all about.

Georgia hopes to make a difference every time she steps out of her comfort zone to talk with a stranger about what she does, because people cannot be court reporters if they don't know the profession exists. Public relations and professional awareness are

near and dear to her heart, and a passion she hopes to continue to pursue with more determination as she gains more experience.

### **Secretary Deborah Cohen-Rojas**

Deborah Cohen-Rojas has been an official court reporter with the 19th Judicial Circuit Court in Waukegan, Illinois, since 2009. She obtained her CSR in 2007 and her RPR the following year. Deborah received her Bachelor's in English from Carthage College in 1998, began her court reporting training at MacCormac College, and completed her training in the College of Court Reporting's online program. Deborah is a member of ILCRA and the NCRA, and she is a member of ILCRA's Veterans History Project committee. For the past several years, Deborah has volunteered and helped to coordinate the 19th Judicial Circuit's VHP annual event. Primarily for her service in this program, Deborah received the 2014 December Employee of the Month and 2014 Employee of the Year Awards. She has volunteered as a mentor through NCRA, and she has also spoken at high school career days, as well as the College of Court Reporting as a returning alumnus. In her free time, Deborah enjoys reading, crocheting, knitting, and spending time with her wonderful husband, without the support of whom she could never have made it through court reporting school.

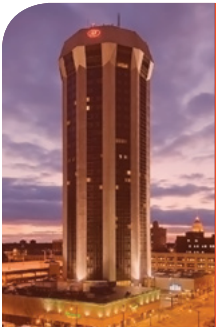
### **Treasurer Kathleen Grove**

Kathleen Grove, CSR, RPR, CRR, CLVS, has been a reporter for over 35 years in the Chicagoland area. Kathie has been both a freelance and official reporter and is currently the President of Grove & Associates Reporting and Video Services located in Wheaton, Illinois.

Kathie is a member of ILCRA, NCRA, and STAR and has served as the ILCRA Treasurer since 2011. In her free time she dreams about sleep but loves spending time with her two grown children and her puppies. Her creative outlet – aside from putting together a 400-page Chinese expert on biofuels – is sewing. She loves to hike, bike, kayak and canoe and often finds herself up a creek without a paddle.

### **Legislative Representative Sarah Paszkiewicz**

Sarah has been reporting since 1996 as a freelancer. She holds the following certifications: Illinois CSR, Missouri CCR, NCRA RDR and CRI. Sarah graduated from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She currently serves on the Freelance Committee for ILCRA. Sarah lives in Chatham, Illinois, with her husband, Derek, two sons, Peyton and Nicholas, and daughter, Alexis.



# 2015 ILCRA Annual Convention

September 10 – 12, 2015

Hilton Springfield | Springfield, Illinois

## Region 1 Representative (Freelance) Pamela Taylor

Pam has been reporting since 1973, first as a freelance reporter for three years and then became an Official Court Reporter in 1977 in Cook County where she retired after 37 years in 2014. While an Official Pam became an Assistant Supervisor and then became Assistant Administrator of the Criminal Division. Also while an Official Court Reporter, she held the title of Vice-President and President of the now defunct Illinois Official Court Reporters Association. After 39 years Pam has returned to freelance reporting. Pam is a member of the ESP Network (Eclipse) and is a long-standing member of National Court Reporters Association and currently serving on the Officials' Committee for NCRA. Pam has her CSR and CRR from Illinois and RPR from NCRA. Pam lives in Darien with her fiancé Keith and enjoys her family and especially her four grandchildren. After all these years, court reporting is still fascinating and Pam desperately tries to keep up with the latest and greatest of all things court reporting.

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## Making a Difference – Where and How to Advocate for ILCRA

*Daniel L. Hamilton, Attorney with Brown Hay & Stephens, LLP*

This is a great opportunity to find out exactly what is going on with the state and how the legislators feel about court reporters. Our Illinois lobbyist will be here to give us an update on the budget crisis and everything else you need to know to protect YOUR JOB!

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## Is Your Dictionary Interfering with Realtime?

*Anissa R. Nierenberger, RPR, CRR, CBC, CCP, CRI*  
Wish your editing time was faster? Think your dictionary needs help? Interested in different types of reporting? Realtime is impossible without a well-developed dictionary. Anissa will show you how to clean out the gunk while you tune up your translation. Boost Realtime, Cut Editing Time! This session is also great for those reporters not doing realtime who need to work on their dictionary too!

5:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

## Networking and Vendor Break

– Beverages in Exhibit Area  
Refuel and reenergize with our exhibitors and learn about the latest advances in technology and products.

5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

## U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services – What's That All About?

*Stuart L. Kamrath, Supervising U.S. Probation Officer; Lynea Turner, U.S. Probation Officer*  
These officers will provide an overview of the pretrial, investigation and supervision units, and discuss overall operations. They will share interesting case details and the agency's goals and challenges. They will discuss location monitoring and demonstrate how this technology works, as well as demonstrate the remote alcohol testing device.

## Tentative Schedule

Hilton Springfield  
700 East Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701  
217-789-1530

*Schedule of seminars subject to change without notice.  
CEUs have been approved.*

### Thursday, September 10, 2015

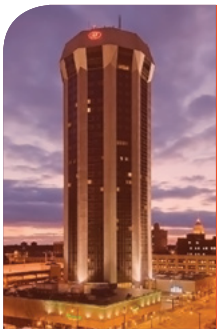
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.      **REALTIME CONTEST**

### Friday, September 11, 2015

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.      **Gary L. Sonntag Memorial  
SPEED CONTEST**

2:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.      **Convention Registration Open**

2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.      **Exhibit Area Open**



# 2015 ILCRA Annual Convention

September 10 – 12, 2015

Hilton Springfield | Springfield, Illinois

6:15 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

### State of States

*Adam Finkel, NCRA's Director of Government Relations*

This seminar will provide you with great insight as to what is going on in other states and how this can affect your job! They say that knowledge is power, but that is only half the battle. Knowledge PLUS action is true power and Adam will show us how to create that action.

7:15 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

### President's Reception/Meet and Greet Students

Join your colleagues for a meet and greet reception that will connect you with old friends and, hopefully, introduce you to new ones! Join us, and the first drink is on us!

8:00 p.m.

### Dinner on Your Own

Check activity board at registration area to make new connections and for a list of local restaurant options.

*For Friday, 4.0 Illinois hours or .40 NCRA CEUs available.*

## Saturday, September 12, 2015

7:00 a.m.

### Convention Registration Open

7:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

### Exhibitor Area Open

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

### ILCRA Business Meeting and Breakfast Buffet

Time to get energized for a great day of seminars. Prepare to be amazed and fuel up for a day of learning and networking.

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

### You Want Me to Use a Comma There?

*Margie Wakeman Wells, CRI*

Just how many comma rules are there?

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

They can all be boiled down and put into two categories. And then how do we use them to put sentences together? Then just what is the difference between a phrase and a clause? Does it matter? It certainly matters for punctuation. So we will clear this up and take a look at punctuation for each one. And while we are at it, let's get this "nonessential" thing squared away so that we know the "real" meaning of that term and how to apply it to punctuation and don't have to rely on those explanations on Facebook.

### Congress and Court Reporting

*Congressman Rodney Davis*

Ever wonder what it is like to be a Member of Congress? Well, now is your chance to find out. Congressman Rodney Davis from Illinois' 13th District will be letting you know what Washington is really all about, his interactions with the court reporting industry and how you can make a difference!

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

### Networking and Vendor Break

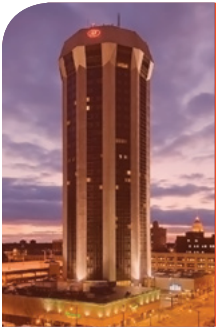
– Beverages in Exhibit Area

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

### Terminate Transcript Turmoil

*Anissa R. Nierenberger, RPR, CRR, CBC, CCP, CRI*

Are you tired of seeing the same untranslates and stacking issues when you edit your transcripts? Anissa will show you a method for editing your transcripts that will also help you improve your dictionary as you edit. As you use her method, you will see your common problems disappear, you'll reduce the amount of time you spend editing transcripts, and it will make your realtime cleaner. You don't have to change the way you write, just how you approach editing. Are you ready to start editing for your dictionary?



# 2015 ILCRA Annual Convention

September 10 – 12, 2015

Hilton Springfield | Springfield, Illinois

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

## **Luncheon and Networking Opportunity with Vendors**

Annual Awards and Realtime and Speed Contest winners will be presented.

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

## **The Questions Every Reporter Has**

*Margie Wakeman Wells, CRI*

In this session, we will look at some of the “hurdles of punctuation”: What about that word “so”? Is there a comma or a semicolon before “right” at the end of a question? Do you always use the apostrophe with complete confidence? And what about the hyphen with compounds? For the newbie or the seasoned veteran, there is always something to learn about this crazy, convoluted language we are asked to punctuate.

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

## **Networking and Vendor Break**

– Beverages in Exhibit Area

3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

## **From the Coroner’s Office**

*Cinda Edwards RN, BSN, D-ABMDI, Sangamon County Coroner*

This session will outline the structure and duties of the Coroner’s Office. Ms. Edwards will present statistics and the most common types of deaths encountered in her office. She also will address the emotional aspects of notifying and communicating with families.

4:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

## **Wrap-up, Silent Auction and Raffle Winners**

*For Saturday, 7.0 Illinois hours or .70 NCRA CEU available. Total for both days, 11.0 Illinois hours or 1.10 NCRA CEU available.*

# Attention All Fast Fingered Folks! Announcing ILCRA’s Annual Realtime Contest and Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest

*By Rita Corson*

**Chair, Realtime and Speed Contests**

If you’ve never sat for either of these contests, why don’t you consider doing it this year at our annual convention held Sept. 10-12 at the Hilton in Springfield? You will come away from the experience a faster writer and having made new friends! We would love to see you improve your skills and have some fun too!!

The Realtime Contest consists of two takes, Literary at 180 wpm and Two-Voice Q & A at 200 wpm. The Realtime Contest will be held Thursday, September 10th from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., with warm-up at 4:30 p.m.

The Speed Contest has three parts, Literary at 220 wpm, Legal Opinion at 230 wpm, and Two-Voice Q & A at 270 wpm. The Speed Contest will be on Friday, September 11th from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. with warm-up at 8:00 a.m.

Winners will be announced at the luncheon held on Saturday, September 12.

Contests will be graded using the most current “What is an Error” put out by NCRA.

You can sign up on our website when you register for convention. The cost of each contest is \$60 each, or \$100 if you sign up for both contests, plus you earn PDCs for each section of the contest in which you qualify. Check out our website for contest rules.

If you’re not interested in signing up for the contests, would you consider helping grade tests? We always need graders. Let me know by sending me an email at [racorson@yahoo.com](mailto:racorson@yahoo.com).

I am looking forward to seeing some new faces at convention!



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## President's Message

Continued from front page

these things our careers could be in jeopardy. We don't always like many of these things, but these changes are happening and as a group we need to pick our battles carefully and thoughtfully.

Next time you find yourself wanting to say, "In the good old days," remember the changes that have happened in this business and focus on the positives that we have seen. Sure, there are some changes that haven't been for the better, but we have to remind ourselves of the good things that have happened with our careers. Look back at the changes and remember the days when you first started working. Ask yourself if you have the same attitude today as you did then. The past is gone and we have to keep moving forward, believing in this profession. The empty reporter seats fall on our shoulders, and our attitudes and how we embrace the changes and challenges of our professional lives will determine if we are going to continue to be a thriving and strong profession.

—Stephanie Rennegarbe

## New NCRA Certifications

Congratulations to Illinois reporters with new certifications from NCRA!

ILCRA would like to congratulate members **Lisa E. Hibbs** of Homewood, who became newly certified as an RMR, and **Nancy E. Sivertsen** of Champaign, who became newly certified as a CRR, after the May Skills tests, and **Ann Marie Hollo** of Litchfield, who became newly certified as an RDR after the May Written Knowledge test.

We also congratulate Illinois reporters **Teresa Sue Grandchamp** of North Aurora, **Juliana Frances Zajicek** of St. Charles, and **Dana Kohls Ziering** of Chicago, all newly certified as an RPR; and **Jennifer L. Bernier** and **Pamela M. Terry** of Chicago, **Angela Marie DiNino** of Lansing, **Gina M. Hefflefinger** of Morton, **Anca Hrisca** of Lincolnwood, and **Lisa Ann Larsen** of St. Charles, all newly certified as a CRR. All these reporters earned these certifications after the May tests.

Congratulations to all for your achievements!

**JENSEN**  
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# Veterans' History Project Update

*By Jill Layton, ILCRA VHP Chair*

The Illinois Court Reporters Association had a Veterans' History Project booth at the annual Illinois American Legion convention in Springfield July 8th - July 11th. Court reporters who volunteered their time to work the booth, passing out information to the Veterans, educating the Veterans on this incredible project, and recording these treasured interviews were: Therese Stevens, Lyn Grooms, Michelle Marvin, Tammy Wagahoff, Ann Pellican, Kerri Borelli, and Pam Wixom. Tim Wagahoff and Matthew Pellican volunteered to be interviewers. Seven interviews were recorded with one hero having been a Vietnam POW for five years. VHP information was passed out to many Veterans -- some who have already called ILCRA VHP Chairman Jill Layton to schedule VHPs at their home Legion Posts!

ILCRA also provided court reporters for an incredible event in LeRoy, Illinois on Saturday, July 25th as a Veterans' History Project booth was set up for Veterans' interviews during the celebration of the Vietnam Traveling Wall being in LeRoy. What an amazing event to take part in as a court reporter!

If you are interested in getting involved in this worthy endeavor, please contact ILCRA's VHP Chairman Jill Layton at [Jill.LaytonCSR@gmail.com](mailto:Jill.LaytonCSR@gmail.com).



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# Career Day Adventure

By Vernita Allen-Williams

On May 18, 2015, I had the opportunity to speak at the Lake County Technology Campus to the criminal justice students. The students can earn college credit for successful completion of the course, which is awesome. Their teacher, Jennifer Krueger, reached out to ILCRA via our Facebook page in April. Thankfully my schedule and my supervisor allowed me to attend. I spent about an hour between looking at the ILCRA career day kit and creating an outline to be used at all three sessions. My solo presentations are 30-45 minutes.

The first session started at 8:00 and the students were barely awake. Rather than give in and let them snooze through my presentation, I started asking them guessing questions. How fast do you think a reporter has to write to get licensed? What percentage of accuracy is required to pass? How much do you think my machine cost? Now they're awake. Hurrah. At this point I was able to go back to my outline and cover educational requirements, typical costs, specialty choices – official, freelance, captioner, CART provider – and the job outlook for court reporters.

The second session was easier, but the third session – believe it or not – was a greater challenge than the first.

Thankfully Ms. Krueger stepped in and helped the students stay on point with my presentation. I ended up doing realtime for the third session of Ms. Krueger's questions and the responses various students gave, but I got through it.

Was it my best career day presentation? No. Acknowledging that, would I accept an invitation to attend next year? Yes. Why? Because I truly believe court reporters are the best equipped to share what we do with the public. We deal with stress and last-minute difficulties on a regular basis, so I chose to dig in and move forward. I hope if the opportunity to speak during a career day comes your way, you'll step up.



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# Time Well Spent

**By Darcy Luoma**

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I hope you are enjoying the beautiful summer we are having! I am just back from a week-long vacation in the north woods where I spent time with my family kayaking, paddle-boarding, canoeing, biking, and swimming. I also spent a great deal of time reflecting on the first half of the year and evaluating how I'm doing at achieving my intention of creating more white space in my life. The fact that I could take an entire week off with my family is a pretty good indicator that I am well on the way! (Though, admittedly, I did log in and check emails a few times. It's really hard to break old habits...)

I attribute this progress to a combination of defining what is most essential and learning to say "no"—as I highlighted in my last few newsletters. Another important change that has allowed me to create more white space has been reducing the number of meetings I request and attend. I asked myself "are all these meetings really necessary??" Sometimes I felt like I was meeting just for the sake of meeting. I can bet many of you have felt the same before. As a matter of fact, "meetings" were reported as the "top time-waster at work"—topping even the Internet!! (According to Salary.com "Wasting Time at Work" survey, 2012 and 2013).

We have such a "meeting culture" that often times the default is to have a meeting. So, I took a hard look at the meetings I was part of and started to ask myself "Do we really need to meet?" and "Can we make better use of the time?" or "Is there a

different way to take care of X?" Of course, some meetings are necessary, but I found that many were not. A lot of what was being discussed really could be accomplished via email or a quick phone call rather than a formal meeting.

While there will always be a need for meetings, my goal is to meet only when that is the best option—and then to focus on making the most of everyone's time by doing such things as:

- Define the purpose of the meeting upfront. What is our ideal outcome?
- Determine how much time is really needed for the meeting. If it's only 15 minutes, that's all I request.
- Share any necessary materials and a draft agenda a few days before the meeting, so attendees can read them ahead of time and be prepared.
- Think carefully about who should be invited and try to get the right people at the table.

My best meetings are the ones where everyone leaves feeling connected and energized, like we accomplished something and have clear action items, next steps and defined accountability.

If this sounds intriguing to you, and you would love to create more white space in your life by having fewer or more efficient meetings, join me on August 12th where I'll be sharing more on this topic at my next Brava Thrive Career Workshop Series presentation—Leading Dynamic and Effective Meetings. We'll be taking a deeper dive on how to make every meeting a great meeting. In addition, come learn more about Essentialism at the DreamBank on September 17th!

You can learn more at [DarcyLuoma.com](http://DarcyLuoma.com).



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Ad Infinitum is published quarterly by the Illinois Court Reporters Association, 43150 Broadlands Center Plaza, 152-269, Ashburn, VA 20148. ILCRA assumes no responsibility for statements or claims made in Ad Infinitum. Subscription is included in annual membership dues paid by a member.

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



## **Illinois Court Reporters Association**

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