

# AD INFINITUM

## President's Message

### Go Ahead — Take Advantage

It's that time of year again. True to form, I have procrastinated and still have half my Christmas shopping to do, and as I write this, Christmas is only ten days away. One reward for last minute shopping is finding bargains that you won't find any other time of the year. Of course, being a typical woman, I get a little excited when I see the word "Sale." I enjoy looking through the flood of fliers I receive this time of year for that special bargain present. I definitely like to take advantage of what I think is a deal.

I also admit that I like to gamble at the riverboat casino. There just happens to be one in my hometown. I don't get down there very often, but I still receive brochures in the mail every month for promos and vouchers for a certain number of dollars in casino chips or cash, which I like to refer to as "free money." I don't make a special trip to the casino to cash in my "free money," but if I'm in the area, I definitely take advantage of the offer.

Then there was that special offer of zero percent interest in purchasing a new steno machine that I couldn't resist. I mean, after all, if I didn't spend some money on business equipment before the end of the year, I was going to be paying that



*President Amy Haught and her dog George get ready for Christmas.*

money over to Uncle Sam anyway, right? So, of course, I just had to take advantage of that offer, and, while I was at it, treat myself to some accessories. Merry Christmas to me!

So call me a sucker for a deal. Well, ILCRA has some "deals" available for you of which you may not be aware. Your membership dues are first and foremost an investment in your profession. However, there are also other personal benefits if you choose to take advantage of them. I encourage you to start taking advantage of ILCRA's member benefits, a/k/a "free money," if you are so inclined.

I invite you to visit our Benefits web page at [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org)

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Winter 2007



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## ILCRA 2006/2007 COMMITTEES

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**Student Scholarship Committee:** To be appointed

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Fall	October 15	September 15	Spring	April 15	March 15
Winter	January 15	December 15	Summer	July 15	June 15

## President's Message

*(Continued from page 1)*

where you will find some special member benefits. NCS offers special rates for ILCRA members on collections. Pengad also offers discount pricing for ILCRA members. Remember that ILCRA also offers reduced member rates for registration fees at our continuing education seminars, and we include a special goodie bag in members' convention folders. You won't receive these discounts or perks when attending other continuing education seminars.

We have a new member benefit that I am very excited about. ILCRA has partnered with RealLegal to provide Official Court Reporter ILCRA members a free subscription to RealLegal's e-transcript software. Illinois Court Reporters Association is the first state association to offer this benefit to its Official Court Reporter members. Details on

this new benefit are also found on our Benefits web page.

As you are finishing up your online shopping, move on over to [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org) and make sure you haven't been missing out on anything. ILCRA is here for you and so are these member benefits. I guess you could say this is our Christmas gift of appreciation to you, our members. We hope to expand our membership benefit offerings in the future, so if the items on the Benefits page don't interest you now, keep checking, because there may be a new offering in the future. It's there for the taking. So what are you waiting for? Go ahead — take advantage!

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very safe, happy and healthy 2007.

— *Amy B. Haught, CSR, RMR, CRR, ILCRA President*

**“People are so worried about what they eat between Christmas and New Year, but really, they should be worried about what they eat between the New Year and Christmas.”**

— *Unknown*



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### CHARMING GIFTS NOW AVAILABLE FROM ILCRA'S ONLINE STORE!

Just click this link or go to the  
ILCRA store at [www.ILCRA.org](http://www.ILCRA.org)



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## F.Y.I. WHAT'S HAPPENING...

We extend our deepest sympathy to ILCRA webmaster, **Chris Dittmeier** of Sirius Programming who's mother recently passed away. Chris also lost his father in June, shortly before they would have celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.



### IMPORTANT ILCRA DATES:

**FEB. 15:** CSR Application Filing Deadline

**MAR. 3:** ILCRA Marathon Seminar (get all 10 points in one day) at South Suburban College, Chicago area.

**MAR. 10:** Joint ILCRA/Court Reporting Services seminar (6 points), Oak Brook, Marriott.

**MAR. 11:** ILCRA Executive Board Meeting 9:00 a.m., Oak Brook, Marriott.

**MAR. 23:** Joint ILCRA/Court Reporting Services seminar (6 points), Peoria, Holiday Inn.

**MAR. 30:** NCRA Midyear Conference, Vancouver.

**APRIL 13:** Joint ILCRA/Court Reporting Services seminar (6 points), Fairview Heights, Four Points Sheraton.

**APRIL 14:** CSR Examination: Chicago Area, Southern Illinois Area

**MAY 5:** RPR, RMR, RDR (written); CRR, CBC, CCP, CLVS (written); South Suburban College, Court Reporting Institute, Chicago, and Sparks College, Shelbyville.

**AUG. 9-12:** NCRA Annual Convention, Dallas.

**SEPT. 7-8:** ILCRA Annual Convention, Tinley Park (Chicago suburb).



## Readers Write:

Dear ILCRA Executive Director:

Please publish this response to Dr. Gayle Marquette's letter in the Summer 2006 issue.

Dr. Marquette makes it sound like I made baseless claims about his organization. In fact, prior iterations of his website clearly support the information that I disclosed and that he disclaims. After my article was published in NCRA's JCR in February 2004, the American Guild of Court Videographers ("AGCV") removed website language below that was blatantly offensive to reporters.

Right now, forty-two states do not require that there be a stenographic court reporter present in the taking of testimony under oath to be used in court, which simply means the video court reporter, if a notary public, can swear in the witness and take the testimony, thereby saving the attorney's clients considerable expense. (AGCV website, 2003/04, emphasis supplied.)

Since my 2006 article was published by ILCRA, the AGCV has again changed its website language. Dr. Marquette replaced the term "video court reporter" with the term "videographer." He

claims I used an "acronym" "throughout" my article incorrectly describing his organization. That "acronym" could have only been "video court reporter." Not only is this term not an acronym, but it is a term coined by the AGCV specifically designed to make a point. Ordinary people who read the term will conclude "not a court reporter", but "a video court reporter"! It is disingenuous for Dr. Marquette to claim that I used an "acronym" to improperly describe his association when that term was made up and used by him on his website as a marketing tool and then removed only after my article was published. He claims no knowledge of his own "acronym" and then accuses me of unethical conduct. Other points and comments made by Dr. Marquette in his letter are baseless or self serving and this format does not allow me the space to address them.

Regardless of his amendments, the plain meaning of the language still present on his website continues to teach that videographers should proceed without reporters.

In fact, right now there are forty-two states that do [ ] require that there be a stenographic court reporter present in the taking of testimony under oath (depositions). This simply means the videographer, if a notary public or if the videographer is named in the Notice of a Deposition, they can swear in the witness and "take the testimony". (AGCV website: w, November 21, 2006, emphasis supplied.)

Dr. Marquette has apparently made several mistakes since again rewording this paragraph on his website. He has omitted the word "not" before the word "require" in the first sentence, therefore the added brackets [ ] where the word "not" used to appear. The omission makes the true meaning of the first sentence nebulous and specious. Or did those 42 states change their laws that fast? In addition, new language about the videographer being named in the Notice of a {sic} Deposition giving the videographer authority to administer the oath is incorrect. See Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 28(a) and 29. Also, he now has an error in syntax with the word "they".

The new 2006 language is clear even with an

*(Continued on page 5)*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This column is primarily for reader feedback on topics published in these pages. Items published here may be edited for such requirements as available space or to avoid duplication with other submissions. Please limit your submission to a maximum of 300 words. Submitting feedback to Ad Infinitum does not guarantee it will be published. Send comments for publication here to the editor or ILCRA's executive director as shown in the box on [page 2](#).

Please note: we do not print anonymous submissions. If you would like your name withheld from publication, simply advise and we will do so. But you need to provide your name so we can verify that your submission is authentic.

## Readers Write:

*(Continued from page 4)*

illogical omission and mistakes. The average person applying the plain meaning of the words will readily conclude “you don’t need court reporters for depositions.” Despite Dr. Marquette’s assertions, there is no verbiage describing an exception as to how a videographer “...can swear in the witness and ‘take the testimony’” when the reporter fails to show up.

The public statements Dr. Marquette makes in his letter are clearly inaccurate when paired with his past and present website language. Based on information on Dr. Marquette’s website over the years, the average person can easily conclude that he created his association and its training program, in part, on the proposition that his videographers can and should proceed without reporters as a way to create more business! He has since discovered that reporters do not like this policy. He knows his videographers need reporters to survive in the profession.

Instead of changing policy to satisfy reporter concerns, he claims the only reason he trains videographers to take testimony without a reporter present is to cure a problem created by reporters. It stands to reason that his training program would be remiss if it did not address this national problem caused by reporters not showing up for assignments. This reasoning is not credible in light of his past and present public statements and it is a slap in the face to the intelligence of reporting professionals who strive to never miss and to never even be late to an assignment. Dr. Marquette has failed to prove through his actions and public words that the AGCV does not train videographers, in part, as “video court reporters” (his term). Court reporters live by the plain meaning of spoken and written words, and Dr. Marquette’s words are illogical and conflict.

—*Brian P. Bruce, Sr., J.D., CLVS*



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# NCRA Leadership Conference 2006

by Amy B. Haught, President

On November 16, 2006, Vice President Jill Layton and I boarded a plane to Washington, D.C. en route to NCRA Leadership Conference in Tysons Corner, Virginia. Normally, boarding a plane and traveling are just routine matters in the grand scheme of things, but with all the things that had gone wrong in my life in the weeks immediately preceding the flight, I have to say that Jill gets the “Brave Soul of the Year Award” for sitting next to me on an airplane.

My home was burglarized on my birthday; I trashed my best friend’s laptop computer; and I hit a deer and did \$6,000 damage to my vehicle. All of those things occurred in the span of a week. Despite all of that, Jill never even flinched, and we

made it safely to D.C. and made it safely back to our families!

On the evening of the 16th, Jill and I attended an opening reception at NCRA Headquarters with other state leaders and NCRA staff. It was a great chance to get acquainted with the NCRA Board of Directors and staff and with leaders from across the nation. Touring the NCRA headquarters and observing part of that operation is an eye-opening experience. From time to time you will hear your peers say that they are considering letting their NCRA membership lapse because it is too expensive. Well, as I learned during the keynote address on Friday, yes, it is a lot of money, but you receive a huge return on your investment. That return is never more evident than

when you make a trip to NCRA headquarters and see a very small part of what NCRA is doing for this profession.

The next two ten-hour days were filled with informative sessions to make the state leaders and the associations they represent more effective. The keynote address on Friday dealt with membership recruitment. We received valuable insight into how to keep our members and how to recruit new ones.

That session was followed by NCRA Executive Director Mark Golden’s presentation on organizational skills, which I hope to put into action. I was amazed to learn all the things Microsoft Outlook can do for you, and I am sure Mark would be pleased to know that I have at least opened Microsoft Outlook on my computer now, even though I still haven’t taken the plunge to start using it. There was also a session on negotiating hotel contracts that will hopefully be of benefit to our association when planning conventions and seminars.

The balance of the day on Friday was spent dealing with electronic recording issues and how to market ourselves in the fight against ER. Before our trip to Leadership, Jill Layton very graciously agreed to be the “ER Champion” for Illinois. Jill will work with NCRA’s ER Task Force. She and the other ER Champions received some special training from a marketing and consulting firm on how to apply practical tactics to tackle

[\*\(Continued on page 7\)\*](#)



*Pictured from left to right, at the Leadership Conference are: NCRA Director Melanie Sonntag, NCRA President Reesa Parker, ILCRA President Amy Haught and ILCRA Vice President Jill Layton.*



## NCRA Leadership Conference 2006

*(Continued from page 6)*

ER issues in our state.

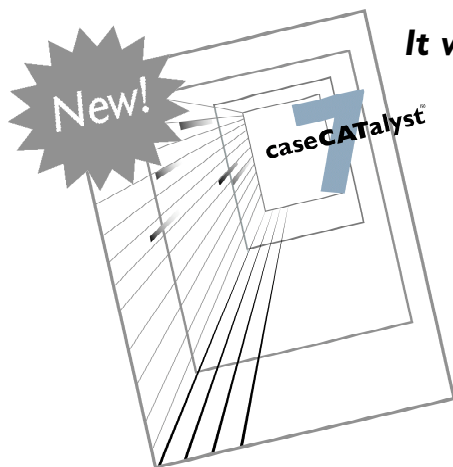
On Saturday, sessions included subjects such as creation of legislation, fiscal responsibility of your associations, association management companies, National Committee of State Associations (NCSA) and a very interesting presentation by NCRA's Dave Wenhold on "Left Brain/Right Brain."

The two sessions that are of most import to you as members of NCRA and ILCRA were sessions on Direct Member Voting and State of the Nation Activities Report (SONAR).

Robert Bramanti, Chair of NCRA's Constitution and Bylaws  
*(Continued on page 8)*



*ILCRA President Amy Haught (left) and ILCRA Vice President Jill Layton enjoying the Leadership Conference in Washington D.C.*



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- Updated icons make it easier to see the function you want when you need it.

- Float or dock your color-coded speaker list where you want it; set it to auto-hide or don't show it at all. Insert speakers, create new, modify, change color, sort order or delete using either the keyboard or mouse.

- Query realtime translation is not just for realtime anymore! Find out which dictionary produced the resulting translation, even in edit!

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- Save transcript views for cursor size, display font, color selections and more; you'll save time by simply selecting a view for realtime, editing, proofreading or CART.

## NCRA Leadership Conference 2006

*(Continued from page 7)*

Committee, made the presentation on Direct Member a/k/a online voting. The C&B Committee has put a lot of thought and effort into making online voting a reality. The proposal would include secure online voting, wherein the member would have a certain number of hours (12 was suggested) after the close of the business meeting to make their vote online. This would require a username and password and, obviously, the system would be set up to only allow one vote per username/password.

The most exciting revelation of this year's Leadership Conference was SONAR. First off, before I forget it, I would like to thank LeAnn Hibler, who has served as our SONAR contact for Illinois. NCRA has been gathering information for this SONAR web page from each state. In a couple of months when SONAR is up and running, all of the important information from each state will be displayed on the SONAR web page.



*ILCRA President Amy Haught sings "Somethin' to Talk About" to NCRA Director Rick Greenspan at the NCRA PAC karaoke fundraiser.*

You can click on an individual state's link to get information such as contact info for the state association's executive director or president, licensure information, number of licensed reporters and association members, and information on court reporting schools. All of this information will be available at the click of the mouse in one central location on the NCRA website.

Well, that wraps up the seminar sessions, but it hardly wraps up Leadership Conference. Now comes the part where you have fun and raise money for a good cause all at the same time. At this year's conference, there was an NCRA PAC karaoke competition fundraiser on Saturday evening. Ten singers (or in some instances "acts") took the stage after individuals sought donations on their behalf for NCRA PAC. The "Top Ten" was determined by the amount of money raised. Your President finished at #3, so late in the evening I took the stage with a little assistance from NCRA Director Rick Greenspan and sang Bonnie Raitt's "Somethin' to Talk About."

Thank you to all of you who contributed to NCRA PAC to secure my place in the Top Ten. The contributions made on my behalf totaled \$695. A very special thank you goes out to Patti White of St. Louis, Missouri, who made a very generous contribution to NCRA PAC in honor of our St. Louis Cardinals winning the World Series!

It was a wonderful conference, and I am sure Jill learned as much as I did. Sending your leaders to conferences such as this is a worthwhile investment. It not only equips presidents like myself with the tools necessary to discharge their duties, but also grooms your up and coming leaders.

Jill and I both thank you for the opportunity to serve you and for allowing us to participate in this year's Leadership Conference with other state leaders.

### **STOP BY FOR A 'VISIT'**

**V**isit the ILCRA forum at [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org) and read any of the threaded messages, reply to any of the threaded messages with your own message and/or start a new thread with a message of your own!



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# AMY'S BRIEFS

by Amy B. Haught, CSR, RMR, CRR, ILCRA President

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justification .....	JUFGS
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modification.....	MOIFGS
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qualify .....	KWAUFL
qualification.....	KWAUFLGS
specify.....	SPEF
specification.....	SPEFGS
verify.....	VEFR
verification.....	VEFRGS

## NUMBER SLASH

My new favorite realtime stroke is a number plus WR- and -RB to get that number with a slash to hook dates together with a slash. I know most softwares now have a stroke for you to hook them all together, but this theory will save you a stroke. Here's how it works:

1-RB.....	1/<del space>
2-RB.....	2/<del space>
3-RB.....	3/<del space>
4-RB.....	4/<del space>
5-RB.....	5/<del space>
WR-6 .....	6/<del space>
WR-7 .....	7/<del space>
WR-8 .....	8/<del space>
WR-9 .....	9/<del space>
10-RB.....	10/<del space>

**ILLINOIS COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION  
CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR FOR COURT REPORTERS  
MARCH 3, 2007**

**SOUTH SUBURBAN COLLEGE, MAIN CAMPUS  
15800 STATE STREET, SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS**

**7:00-7:30 Registration/Coffee**

**7:30-9:00 SEMINAR 1**

**GET CONNECTED IN REAL TIME** (Patti White)

This seminar will demonstrate how to set up your computer to enable realtime, for yourself, or for other consumers, whether in a courtroom or deposition setting, for CART consumers, or closed captioning. Hardware requirements will be discussed and tips for transitioning into new markets will be shared by the group.

**9:00-9:15 Refreshment Break**

**9:15-10:45 SEMINAR 2**

**WISCONSIN WORD GAME** (Bonni R. Shuttleworth) Use your collective knowledge in this group game to expand your vocabulary and spelling talents – and get to know each other better.

**10:45-11:00 Refreshment Break**

**11:00-12:30 SEMINAR 3**

**WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD COMPUTERS?** (Scott Rhine) Everything you wanted to know about viruses, worms, spyware, etc. but were afraid to ask (or didn't know enough to ask.) Different forms of malware will be discussed (both symptoms and solutions) and tips will be shared on how to be safe and avoid most common problems.

**12:30-2:00 Lunch w/speaker SEMINAR 4**

**PROOFREADING, SCOPING, CONSULTING, LINGUIST, EDUCATOR — TAKE YOUR PICK** (Mr. Robert Fields) This seminar will amaze attendees as the speaker shares his educational background, his introduction to court reporting, his experience as a proofreader, notereader, scopist, consultant and teacher.

**2:00-3:30 SEMINAR 5**

**HOW TO BE AN EDUCATED CONSUMER IN THE DIGITAL WORLD** (Scott Rhine)

In this seminar you will learn how to buy a new computer (pricing, choosing specs, etc.), how to optimize and upgrade your existing computer hardware and operating system and what to know to stay up to date in the constantly changing world of technology.

**3:00-3:45 - Refreshment Break**

**3:45-5:15 SEMINAR 6**

**REALLEGAL E-TRANSCRIPT MANAGER, ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES, AND EXEMPLARIS ONLINE REPOSITORY — TOOLS FOR REPORTERS IN THE DIGITAL AGE** (Judy Lehman)

This seminar session will feature information useful for freelance and official reporters regarding electronic transcript management and formatting, digital signatures, secure electronic delivery, electronic filing considerations, internet storage and archiving, and ways to increase transcript sales via internet repository.

**5:15-5:30 Refreshment Break**

**5:30-7:00 SEMINAR 7**

**HOW TO HANDLE STRESS AND PREVENT CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME FOR COURT REPORTERS** (Dr. Jeffrey Smith)

In his usual entertaining fashion, Dr. Smith will show you how the most common condition for court reporters, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, can be prevented; how to move yourself toward wellness and happiness and away from stress and sickness. What is the most appropriate lifestyle for you?

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# NCRA Newsflash

## MEMBERS FAVOR ONLINE VOTING

In October, NCRA's Constitution and Bylaws Committee sent a one-question survey to all voting members for whom the Association has e-mail addresses asking whether they would favor a Bylaws amendment that would allow all eligible, voting members who may not be present at NCRA's annual meeting to vote on Bylaws amendments and contested elections via a secure Web site, with the results verified by an independent third party.

The survey results: 87.3 percent (1,847) favored an amendment to allow for online voting. 4.9 percent (103) opposed such an approach. 7.8 percent (166) weren't sure.

Based on the 2,118 responses (16.5 percent return), the results of this survey are projectable to the entire membership at an error rate of plus or minus 2.1 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

Because of the strong member interest in online voting, the C&B Committee will continue to explore this issue and prepare a proposal for Board review in February 2007.

## NCRA PAC MEETS WITH SUCCESS AT THE POLLS

Congress experienced great change as a result of the recent elections, and your PAC dollars had the maximum impact. Your PAC had a 90 percent success rate at the polls this November. That means that 90 percent of the incumbents or challengers whose campaigns we contributed to this cycle were elected or re-elected. Those are excellent results for NCRA PAC and for NCRA as a whole. To those who contributed to the NCRA PAC, thank you very much!

These PAC contributions will allow NCRA to protect and promote the court reporting, captioning, and CART professions on Capitol Hill. These dollars will allow the Government Relations Department at NCRA to develop and retain solid relationships with the key decision makers in Congress and their staffs who help move our efforts forward on legislation pertaining to the training of more realtime writers, court security, federal electronic access to transcript issues, Small Business Health Plans, and funding for reporting schools.

*[\(Continued on page 12\)](#)*

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## NCRA Newsflash

(Continued from page 11)

### STATE LEADERS FOCUS ON ER ISSUES

Dealing with issues posed by alternative methods of preserving the record was a main topic for the more than 80 state reporter association leaders at the recent State Leadership Conference at Tysons Corner, Va. The conference is held each fall to provide state leaders with training on how to maximize the effectiveness of their volunteer organizations.

Three of the sessions on electronic recording were conducted by consultants who are working with NCRA's ER Task Force. Representatives of The Haefer Group provided an overview of a project to market official court reporting services to more effectively compete with tactics used by ER equipment vendors. THG also conducted a workshop for people assigned to be the ER project contact in each state.

State leaders also heard a status report on an ER cost study currently underway. Results are expected next spring.

Other conference topics included board leadership and committee management; creating and promoting the case for association membership; negotiating a hotel meeting contract; budgeting,

tax reporting, and other association financial requirements; marketing yourself and your association; drafting legislation; and much more.

### VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT LAUNCHES 'THOUSAND VOICES' INITIATIVE

Thanks to the efforts of NCRA members, the number of veterans' stories that have been transcribed in support of the Veterans History Project stood at the eerily symbolic total of 1,111 on November 11, Veterans Day. The Library of Congress and the National Court Reporters Foundation had set a goal of having 1,000 veterans' stories transcribed by that date.

NCRF is joining forces with the Library of Congress to launch a new initiative related to the Veterans History Project wherein NCRA members collect and record the stories of the veterans in their lives: family members, neighbors, colleagues — really, any veteran you know or meet. We are calling this the "Thousand Voices Initiative."

Court reporters have been very responsive in volunteering to transcribe tapes already in the Library of Congress archives. But about 1,700 veterans are dying each day, so the real priority is getting the stories recorded.

Participating is as easy as having a conversation, and your service is nothing short of patriotic. To learn more, e-mail Beth Kilker at NCRF or call her at 800-272-6272.



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## ILCRA WELCOMES 14 NEW MEMBERS

### NEW PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS:

**Pamela J. Brewer**, South Chicago Heights

**Teresa S. Grandchamp**, Naperville

**Tracy Lybarger**, Edwardsville

**Lynette Neal**, Warrenville

**Martina Manzo**, Chicago

**Emily Perez**, Chicago

**Mary C. Redmon**, Willow Springs

**Ernest C. Scola**, Glen Ellyn

**Elaine Sellas**, Palos Heights

**Debra Jean Smith**, Edwardsville

**Deanna L. Tufano**, Melrose Park

### NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

**Maureen Earley**, Student

**Kathleen M. Heyer**, Student

**Rita Luckett-Hoffman**, Instructor

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\* Growth figures represent a ten-year period ending 2012. Source: "National Industry–Occupation Employment Matrix," a publication of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# We've Come a Long Way Baby

Jill M. Layton, CSR, RPR Official Court Reporter



I was cleaning out my office and office closet (not by choice!), and I found a book printed by Sparks College in Shelbyville in approximately 1950, telling of its programs and school activities. Both of my parents graduated from Sparks College, and it was a book they had acquired during their attendance at Sparks. The following is useless but interesting information from the book.

Sparks had the following school activities: The Ten Hour Club — to qualify as a member, students should work outside of school hours on school work at least 10 hours a week.

They had *Theta Pi Gamma* Sorority (giving girls an opportunity for working out problems of personality and personal advancement.) The book included pictures of the Sorority teas they held (with their hats, gloves, and fine china).

They had Girls' Club (where girls may reduce living expenses by doing their own cooking in

good surroundings), and also Future Executives' Club (young men who look forward to the possibility of being executives).

The school had a gymnasium and a good basketball team (that played some of the best teams in the country each year), a volleyball team, indoor baseball and table tennis.

A little bit of their info on machine shorthand: "By Stenotype, we mean machine shorthand. There are three stenographic machines being manufactured by three different companies — the Stenotype, the Stenograph, and the Brevotype. The operation of the first two named machines is practically the same....Machine shorthand bears about the same relation to pencil shorthand as the typewriter does to longhand. The notes are plain letters. The system is simply a code. Notes cannot get cold. You cannot scribble. Practically all convention reporting is done with machine shorthand — and convention reporting is the highest paid of all stenographic work. With the

*(Continued on page 15)*

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## We've Come a Long Way Baby

*(Continued from page 14)*

machine the day's work is easier. Less nervous energy is expended. Sparks College is a pioneer in machine shorthand, being one of the first thirty schools in the United States to teach it."

The reporting course was an estimated 15 months with the ability to take dictation at 200 wpm and the ability to write 75 wpm on the typewriter. Subjects consisted of 1089 clock hours of Stenographic Course I (which included the shorthand, typewriting, English, spelling, office machines, penmanship, personality development, accounting, and stenographic office practice), 120+ clock hours of Shorthand Dictation of 150-175 wpm, and 120+ clock hours of Shorthand Dictation 175-200 wpm.

"Possibilities for Advancement: We remember very well a young man — a Sparks graduate — who went to work at \$40 a month but he was headed somewhere. His salary now is more than \$40 a day, and he is still a young man. A young lady — another Sparks graduate — took a job at \$10 a week but she outgrew it and is now collecting \$200 a week. "

There is a full page picture of Clem Boling, World Champion Stenographer, from Cincinnati, Ohio. "By contest, Clem won the World Championship for speed and accuracy in the National Shorthand Reporters Contest. He is the fastest record of human speech in the world. Mr. Boling operates the stenotype."

There are pages of pictures of graduates of Sparks College and their employment. For example, Civil Service Court Reporter in Washington, DC; Director of Industrial Relations for the Container Corporation of America (started as stenographer); reporter for Farm Bureau and State Insurance Company; Convention Reporter in Michigan City, Indiana, and Chicago — spends the winters in the south; Executive Secretary for the President of the Voss Printing Company -the largest printing establishment in the country. They had a list of Sparks graduates that earn an average annual income of \$10,027.77.

All I can say is that we've come a long way!

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**APRIL 13**  
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**PROGRAM AGENDA:**

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.            **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

*Concurrent Sessions*

9:00 - 10:30 a.m.        **COURT REPORTING SERVICES INFORMATION SESSION**

This session will have information updates on court reporting services issues. Registrants for this session should submit any questions in writing prior to the seminar on the form enclosed in the registration packet.

*Presenter:*    Court Reporting Services Staff  
                    Tammy Bumgarner, Program Coordinator

9:00 - 4:00 p.m.        **MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR FIRST-TIME MANAGERS**

(All Day)  
This session will cover management and leadership issues for the first time manager as well as those seasoned supervisors.

*Presenter:*    Lisa Walker, Rockhurst University Continuing Education  
                    Center (Oak Brook Only)

9:00 - 10:30 a.m.        **INTERNET PREDATORS**

10:30 - Noon  
This session will cover information on crimes committed by internet predators and ways to keep yourself and your family safe while being online.

*Presenter:*    A Safety Education Officer of the Illinois State Police

9:00 - 10:30 a.m.        **IDENTITY THEFT**

10:30 - Noon  
This session will cover prevention tips, steps to take if you become a victim, and the ways that law enforcement can address these types of complaints.

*Presenter:*    Wanda Shipp, Postal Inspector and Public Information Officer  
                    at the office of the U.S. Postal Inspector.

10:30 - Noon            **BEGINNING REMEDIAL REALTIME**

This session is designed for the busy reporter wishing to get more done in less time. Topics include basic computer equipment setup, prefixes, suffixes, conflict resolution, speedbuilding, and smart briefing-on-the-fly techniques.

*Presenter:*    Melanie Sonntag has been reporting since 1979 as an official, freelancer, and firm owner in three different states and has competed in speed contests on the state and national level since 1980. She has placed as high as 3rd three times at NCRA and won ILCRA for a second time this year and Colorado several times. She placed 20th in the NCRA Realtime Contest for the first time last year, after trying since its inception in 1999. She is a Registered Diplomate Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter, and a Fellow of the Academy of Professional Reporters. Ms. Sonntag served on several state and NCRA committees in various functions over the years and is currently a director.

*(Continued on page 17)*

## 2007 COURT REPORTING SERVICES SEMINAR

### PROGRAM AGENDA *(Continued from page 16)*

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.          Group Lunch

#### *Concurrent Sessions*

9:00 - 2:30 p.m.

#### **ADVANCED/INTERMEDIATE REALTIME**

This session builds on the basic premise of writing shorter, faster, and with less fatigue for maximum productivity. Topics include families of shortcuts, formatting quick punctuation, basic techniques and troubleshooting for interactive realtime hookups, testing techniques, and a freewheeling stenoswap.

*Presenter:* Melanie Sonntag

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

#### **FBI CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION**

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

This session will be covering techniques and procedures of crime scene evidence collection.

*Presenter:* Special Agent Melanie A. Jimenez  
Special Agent Jimenez is the evidence response team leader from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

#### **WEAPONS**

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

This session will describe and display information on various weapons.

*Presenter:* Special Agent John Jimenez  
Special Agent Jimenez is a firearms instructor and a member of the SWAT team from the Federal Bureau of Investigation

2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

#### **COMPUTER SOFTWARE TRAINING**

This session will allow reporters with the same software to get together and share tips to best utilize the software. Each group will have an appointed instructor or moderator. Bring your computers for the full benefit of this session. NOTE: Due to the different software that is utilized, only the groups with sufficient registration will be scheduled. If your software group is not available, you will be registered for either FBI Crime Scene Investigation or Weapons

*Presenters:* Pam Szczecinski, Stenograph  
Julie Samford Davis, Eclipse

4:00 p.m.

Seminar Concludes

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**Please watch your mail for registration brochure.**

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# Vendor News...

## PDF TRANSCRIPTS — NEW TOOL PRODUCES TRANSCRIPTS IN UNIVERSAL DOCUMENT FORMAT

OMTI, Inc., developer of ReporterBase, announces the release of a new productivity tool for creating PDF transcripts.

RB PDF-Transcripts are the first digital transcripts that use the universal format type, Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf). Other transcript formats have problems ranging from security flaws, which may prevent them from being accepted through computer firewalls, to proprietary formats, which limit their usefulness for documents of record meant to be stored for long periods of time.

PDF is now the standard for the federal courts and widely

used in law offices around the country. According to the U.S. Courts website, 98% of the federal courts use case management and electronic case files system which accept and store case and related info in the PDF format. And more than 200,000 attorneys have filed documents with the courts via the Internet. (See [www.uscourts.gov/cmecf/cmecf\\_about.html](http://www.uscourts.gov/cmecf/cmecf_about.html).)

With a single click, a court reporting firm can produce a PDF transcript from a reporter's ASCII file with a custom start page, custom formatting and pagination, and a hyperlinked word index, in addition to its case and job information. Other options include setting security access, attaching hyperlinked exhibits

and the original ASCII.

Lawyers receiving RB PDF-Transcripts can take advantage of built-in PDF features, such as condensed printing, advanced search options like Boolean and proximity searches, document commenting, metadata removal, and true redaction capability. (See [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/solutions/legal/](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/solutions/legal/).)

The new RB PDF-Transcript tool is part of the RB8 office management system, not a stand-alone product. RB8 is available for purchase or on a subscription basis. A single user can subscribe to RB8 for \$100/month. Additional users are \$25/month.

See websites, [www.omti.com](http://www.omti.com) and [www.ReporterBase.com](http://www.ReporterBase.com), for more details.

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# 'Plutoed' Picked as 2006 Word of the Year

Pluto is finally getting some respect — not from astronomers, but from wordsmiths.

"Plutoed" was chosen 2006's Word of the Year by the American Dialect Society at its annual meeting.

To "pluto" is "to demote or devalue someone or something," much like what happened to the former planet last year when the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union decided Pluto didn't meet its definition of a planet.

"Our members believe the great emotional reaction of the public to the demotion of Pluto shows the importance of Pluto as a name," said society president Cleveland Evans. "We may no longer believe in the Roman god Pluto, but we still have a sense of personal connection with the former planet."

"Plutoed" won in a runoff against "climate canary," defined as "an organism or species whose poor health or declining numbers hint at a larger environmental catastrophe on the horizon."

Other words considered: nurse (man's purse), flog (a

fake blog that promotes products) and macaca (an American citizen treated as an alien).

Republican former Sen. George Allen (news, bio, voting record) was ahead in his re-election campaign when he said "macaca," which some regard as a racial slur, and "welcome to America" in referring to a U.S.-born man of Indian descent who was volunteering for Allen's opponent. Allen lost to Democrat Jim Webb.

The 117-year-old American Dialect Society comprises linguists, grammarians, historians and independent scholars, among others. Members conduct the vote for fun and not in an official capacity to induct words into the English language.

The society chose "truthiness" as its top word last year. The word is credited to Comedy Central satirist Stephen Colbert, who defined it as "truth that comes from the gut, not books."

Last month, an online survey by dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster declared "truthiness" the word of the year for 2006.

— Source: Associated Press

## COURT FUNNIES!

The names have been omitted to protect the stupid ...

Q. All right. And then the street in front is East Eighth Street; is that right?

A. Correct.

Q. And that street, does it run east and west?

*Submitted by Amy Haught  
Official Court Reporter  
Benton IL.*

Q. What was the date of death for Sally?

A. Well, the date of my autopsy was January 9th of 1999, and I believe she died the day previous to that.

Q. I think the record would show the 7th.

A. January 7th? My records maintain primarily the date of the autopsy, but it's probably in there somewhere, her date of death.

Q. We are reasonably confident that your autopsy was performed after she died?

A. Yes, sir.

MR. SMITH: I will stipulate.

*Submitted by Robin O'Neal  
Official Court Reporter  
Olney, IL*

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by Richard A. Sherman

## **BEWARE OF BOGUS WINDOWS UPDATE NOTIFICATION!**

The bad guys are at it again, this time emailing fake Microsoft Windows Update notifications. If you click a link in the message, as requested, you'll be taken to a site that looks like Microsoft's security update site, where you'll be invited to download a fake security patch. If downloaded, the bogus update will install a program that may enable the ne'er-do-well perpetrators to remotely take control of an infected computer. That's the bad news.

The good news is that avoiding this potential problem is easy! All you have to do is remember that Microsoft does not issue update notifications by email. Ever. If you want to check the availability of Windows updates, go directly to the Microsoft Update Web site at <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>.

### **Q. How can I find out what's filling up my hard drive?**

A. Spacemonger ([www.sixty-five.cc/sm/](http://www.sixty-five.cc/sm/)) is a utility that creates an intriguing graphical display of the space consumed by data on your hard drive. It's fun to use because it displays each folder in a manner that's proportional to the space it consumes. The

program is a svelte 103KB (kilobytes), and works with all versions of Windows. It's very easy to use: Simply download the executable file and double-click it. Try it for free for 30 days, or purchase it for \$19.95.

### **Q. When I'm working on a document and I need to make a change, my Word program sometimes gobbles up characters making it impossible to type in corrections. Is there any way to prevent this from happening?**

A. When composing or editing a document with Word or any other program, you can work in one of two modes: Insert or Overwrite. If you're in the Insert mode, text to the right of where you're typing will be shoved farther to the right and your new text will be inserted into the word or sentence. If you're in Overwrite mode, any text entered replaces text that already exists, and that's what you're referring to as gobbling up characters.

You can quickly toggle between the two modes by pressing the Insert (INS) key on your keyboard. When you're in Overwrite mode, you may see the letters OVR in the area above and to the right of the Taskbar.

### **Q. Maybe this is a crazy idea, but wouldn't one way to stop spam be to reply to it and**

**sound interested in whatever they're pitching or place a phony order? If enough people did this, the outfits sending spam would be inundated with fake requests and stop spamming. Does that make any sense to you, Mr. M.?**

A. You may be comforted to know that there is a semi-organized group/subculture of individuals who do respond to spam, an activity known as "spam-baiting." But while the idea sounds good in theory, if you start responding to all the vitamin, Viagra, mortgage, and adult-type spam received, you're going to be the recipient of even more spam. Replying to spam lets the sender know that their message reached a valid email address and it was actually viewed by a "live body." That makes your email address more valuable and it will be sold to other spammers at a premium.

I applaud your creative thinking, but when all is said and done, it's best not to respond to spam in any manner, and that includes not clicking links that say, "Click here to be removed from our mailing list."

### **Q. I want to build a Web site, but I spoke with one company that wanted \$12,000 to build it. I don't have that kind of money, so what would you**

*(Continued on page 21)*

# Ask Mr. Modem

*(Continued from page 20)*

**suggest? I just want a simple Web site, nothing fancy.**

A. One of easiest ways to construct a Web site is to use a service such as GoDaddy ([www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)), Depending how sophisticated you want your site to be, prices start as low as \$9.95/month. You can do everything from registering your domain name, to creating your Web site, to gaining exposure for your site through GoDaddy. For starters, I'd suggest visiting the GoDaddy Help Center at <http://tinyurl.com/ce8hd>, and reviewing their Web Site Builder information at <http://tinyurl.com/dnca6>. You'll also find contact information

for telephone and email support, both of which are excellent. Other popular build-your-own Web site services are [Homestead.com](http://Homestead.com) and [BuildYour-Site.com](http://BuildYour-Site.com).

**Q. I have a lot of bookmarked Web sites that I know don't work anymore. Is there any way to find out which sites are working and which ones aren't, without having to visit each site individually?**

A. AM-DeadLink ([www.aignes.com/deadlink.htm](http://www.aignes.com/deadlink.htm)) is an excellent little utility that does exactly what you want: It not only detects dead links, but it also detects duplicate links. AM-DeadLink is free and

works with Internet Explorer, Netscape, Firefox, and Opera.

**Q. I've been told that no matter who sends me an email attachment, I should save it, close my email program, then go to the file, right-click and scan it with my anti-virus program. Would one way to avoid that be to have my family members put a little code, like their initials, in the Subject line which would confirm the email was really from them? One of my friends suggested that and I thought it was a pretty good idea.**

A. Your friend's suggestion is well-intentioned, but it contains a fatal flaw in that the person  
*(Continued on page 22)*



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# Ask Mr. Modem

*(Continued from page 21)*

placing initials on the Subject line might not know if his or her computer is infected. If you then observed the initials, you might incorrectly conclude that the message was safe, open it, and presto, infecto! The suggested “secret code” would only let you know that the message is from the designated sender. So will looking at the From: field.

Any good anti-virus program is going to check all incoming email, which is the best way to protect yourself. My favorite anti-virus program is AVG Anti-Virus. It’s available in both free and paid versions, and most people do just fine with the free version, at <http://tinyurl.com/kco2f>.

**Q. I’ve got several hundred photo slides that I took through the years and lots of old family vacation photos. I don’t have a slide projector anymore, but was curious if I could transfer my slides to a CD? Thanks for being there, Mr. M. My subscription to your weekly newsletter is the best five bucks I spend each month.**

A. Thanks very much. Yes, you can definitely put those old slides and photographs on a CD. The two devices you’ll need to accomplish that are a scanner, to convert the slides into digital images, and a CD burner.

Some scanners can handle slides and even photo negatives. The Epson Perfection 2480 Photo Scanner (<http://tinyurl.com/y51fqk>) is one such device, and its \$99 price is excellent considering that just a few years ago this same type of scanner was in the \$500 range.

After you scan your slides and save them to your computer’s hard drive, burn them to CD using your CD-burning software, and you’re done.

There are also professional services that will convert your slides and photos to digital format and place them on CD for you. [DigMyPics.com](http://DigMyPics.com), for example, will digitize photos, slides, film negatives, film cartridges, and large-format film. You will be notified by email when your project is completed and you can then view the results on the Web.

**Q. I’m using Outlook Express, but it seems to automatically add names to my address book, which includes many names that I don’t want to include. Do you know what’s going on or how can I stop it?**

A. One of the options in Outlook Express — some call it a feature — automatically adds the names and email addresses of people you reply to by email. If you prefer a more discriminating approach, you can disable that option by clicking Tools > Options > Send tab. Under the “Sending” section, remove the check mark beside “Automatically put people I reply to in my Address Book.” Click Apply > OK to save and exit.

*Mr. Modem’s weekly computer-help newsletter provides prompt, personal answers to your computer and Internet questions by email, plus easy-to-use computer tips, including Windows Vista! For more information, to view a sample issue, or to subscribe, visit [www.MrModem.com](http://www.MrModem.com).*

## Newly Certified Illinois Reporters

Congratulations to these reporters from Illinois who achieved the following certifications in November, 2006.

### NEWLY CERTIFIED RPRs

Kerney, Tracy, *Matteson*  
McCauley, Lynn, *Chicago*  
Montini, Angela, *Naperville*  
Mullen, Chris, *Chicago*  
Williams, Jennifer, *Rockford*

### NEWLY CERTIFIED CRRs

Conforti, Cynthia, *Chicago*  
Grove, Kathleen, *Wheaton*  
Littleton, Jennifer, *Monee*  
Workman, Laura, *White Heath*

### NEWLY CERTIFIED CBCs

Breytspraak, Nicole, *Aurora*  
Habian, Deborah, *Countryside*  
Jenkins, Cindy, *Jacksonville*  
Thompson, Cynthia, *Rockford*

## Kids & The Internet:

### ACRONYMS EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

**PAW** .....Parents are watching  
**PAL**.....Parents are listening  
**POS**.....Parents over the shoulder  
**PIR** .....Parents in room  
**P911** .....Parent alert  
**ASL** .....Age-sex-location  
**MorF**.....Male or Female  
**KFY** .....Kiss for you  
**WYCM** ..will you call me  
**LMIRL** ..Let’s meet n real life  
**SYT**.....See you tonight



## Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em) Sites

**HISTORY DETECTIVES** Civil War Maps The Library of Congress has thoughtfully placed on the Web its collection of Civil War maps. Though not yet complete, when this repository is finished it will contain selections from more than 2,200 priceless Civil War maps. You can search by keyword, or browse by location, subject, creator, or title. Click the map name and you'll see a thumbnail, creation dates, and notes. Hint: The 1862 aerial map of Richmond is a sight to behold. <http://tinyurl.com/6q92u>

**CROSSWORD PUZZLES** If you like crossword puzzles... if you really like crossword puzzles, you now have access to more than 32,000 of them! Puzzles on this site are divided into four categories ranging from large to extra small. Select a category and you'll be presented with a grid with numbers on it. Select a number and you'll see another grid. Select a number in that grid and you'll get a crossword puzzle. Links to the right of each puzzle will provide a printer-friendly version as well the solution—not that you'll ever need it, of course. [www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/](http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/)

**DO YOU SPEAK AMERICAN?** This PBS site takes a humorous but insightful look at the English language as utilized

and brutalized in today's society. Included is the evolution and impact of modern American slang, the future of speech, and a map that tracks how our language changes from region to region. There are also fun games like "Test Your Vowel Power," and "Where is the Speaker From?" a regional dialect quiz. [www.pbs.org/speak](http://www.pbs.org/speak)

**BRAND NAMES SEARCH ENGINE** Have you ever tried to locate the "official" Web site for a product and couldn't find it? With this search engine, you can search more than 15,000 company and product Web sites in 11 categories, from Celebrities to Vehicles and Transportation. [www.visiobrand.com](http://www.visiobrand.com)

**SELF CHECK-UP** Here you'll find 15 online health assessments and health calculators designed to assist you in achieving your health and fitness goals. Features include two body-fat estimators (what, one body-fat estimator wouldn't be distressing enough?), an unintentionally hilarious Ideal Weight Calculator, and the ever-popular Waist-to-Hip Ratio calculator. I'm thinking this site might be a candidate for this year's "Sites-We-Could-Live-Without" award. [www.selfcheckup.com](http://www.selfcheckup.com)

**DISTURBING AUCTIONS** When it comes to bizarre auction items, this is the place to be.

This site doesn't waste time with fake auction merchandise like the infamous human kidney auction hoax, but instead the focus here is world-class tacky stuff that people really, honestly, believe that someone will buy. So if you're looking for a Clark Gable candle, a chicken hat, or a Saddam Hussein hand puppet, your search has ended. [www.disturbingauctions.com/](http://www.disturbingauctions.com/)

**ENERGY DRINK REVIEWS** Drinks such as Red Bull and Zoom are extraordinarily popular, particularly with young people today. This informative site reviews more than 100 energy-boosting beverages based on taste, cost, and "pump upedness." (Make mine decaf, please.) [www.bandddesigns.com/energy/](http://www.bandddesigns.com/energy/)

**MOVIE ORIGINS** Features the fascinating real-life stories behind many films. Read about the actual people whose lives inspired block-buster movies such as Erin Brockovich, A League of Their Own, Goodfellas, Men of Honor, The Mr. Modem Story, Boys Don't Cry, Schindler's List, and many more. [www.movieorigins.com/](http://www.movieorigins.com/)

Mr. Modem's Web CD-ROM features more than 1400 of the greatest Web sites of all time! For more information or to view an excerpt from the CD, visit [www.MrModem.com](http://www.MrModem.com)

# WHAT ILCRA DOES FOR ILLINOIS REPORTERS

- Works to maintain your right to be certified.
- Administers the RPR, RMR, RDR, CRR, CBC, CCP, and CLVS 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 two-day conference and one-day seminars including continuing education and the latest in reporting technology.
- Co-hosts and pays for NCRA continuing education units for the three Court Reporting Services Seminars. ILCRA also provides personnel in connection with those continuing education credits.
- Publishes the 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.
- Provides on the ILCRA website, a membership directory which includes the CSR Act, Court Reporters' Act, Rules and Regulations of the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation, Transcript Act, and ILCRA Bylaws, as well as member information.
- Awards a Student Scholarship, a Distinguished Service Award, an Award of Excellence for an Outstanding Educator and conducts speed contests each year.
- 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 a court reporters network through our ListServe program which allows ILCRA to immediately be in touch with members via e-mail.
- Serves the membership with an 800 phone number, 1-800-656-2467 and a website [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org).
- Provides a full-time staff person, our Executive Director, to assist members.