

# AD INFINITUM

*President's Message*

Winter 2008



## A New Year, A New You



President LeAnn M. Hibler

I love starting a new year. Oftentimes we feel like we are in a never-ending cycle of the same old thing every day, but a new year presents us with a fresh, new beginning, and I love it! I don't convince myself to participate in a New Year's resolution program because we all know that we fail miserably at them. But I do remind myself that it is a new year of renewing myself, of new spring flowers, of a new summer to enjoy the outdoors, and then a new season of fall colors and, gratefully, a new Chicago Bears football season. I feel lighthearted and want to spread the joy of starting a new year to everyone.

Since this edition of the *Ad Infinitum* comes out in January, I thought it the perfect opportunity to try to convince you, the members of ILCRA, to think of 2008 as the year of making a difference in your

careers. I'm talking about working on your realtime skills. I've geared this edition towards encouraging you to make up your minds that you will improve your realtime skills this year. I've provided articles written by your peers about how they made the change to writing realtime and what motivated them to do it.

I have included information from the Illinois court reporting schools and the programs they have available to help working reporters hone their skills. (See [page 13](#)). I know, I know, some of you are saying you'll never be able to do it. Some of you are saying you don't want to do it. Some of you are saying, if I can just retire before I have to do it, that would be perfect, too.

Let me say to you folks, it is realtime that makes our case for a live court reporter being better than another method. It is realtime that sets us apart as the only truly accurate voice-to-text translation. But the reality is, if our profession was called to the mat to produce such services statewide, we would fall far, far short of our claims, thus opening the door for other technologies to take our place.

The reality also is that only a small percentage of court

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## ILCRA 2007/2008 COMMITTEES

### **STANDING COMMITTEES:**

#### **Auditing Committee:**

Carole Bartkowicz, Chair; and Rita Corson

#### **Budget Committee:**

Lyn Grooms, Chair; Nancy Davis, Jill Layton, LeAnn M. Hibler, and Nancy LaBella

#### **Continuing Education Committee:**

Nancy C. Davis, Chair; Dee Doubet, and Bonni R. Shuttleworth

#### **Freelance Committee:**

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#### **Legislative Committee:**

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#### **DSA Committee:**

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**Elections Committee:** To be activated when necessary

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#### **PR/Marketing Committee:**

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#### **Speed Contest Committee:**

Bonni R. Shuttleworth, Chair; Teri Gaudet and Theresa Hovick-Thomas

**Student Scholarship Committee:** Bernice Radavich, Chair; Nancy McClarty, and Retha Meyerhoff

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Winter	January 15	December 15	Summer	July 15	June 15

## President's Message

*(Continued from page 1)*

reporters can call themselves realtime reporters. NCRA says that only 10% of their membership are realtime writers. Of course, that is measured by how many of their members have their CRR, CCP, or CBC, but it's the only true way we have to measure it right now.

Now, most certainly there are reporters in our state that write realtime on a daily basis but just can't get the darn CRR test passed. Testing is a pain for most of us, but it's something we have to keep trying. Having a certification is proof to the rest of the world that you are a realtime writer.

Fortunately, NCRA is brainstorming ideas of how to make the CRR more passable. No, they aren't going to make it easier. It really is as easy as it can get. They don't write the test in a way to trip us up. But maybe they will give us more opportunities to take it. It's just those test nerves that get in the way for all of us. Myself included. I took it five times! But I never gave up and I finally achieved the certification.

For those reporters who haven't jumped on the realtime band wagon yet, get out from under the wheels! This is a very important issue for our profession. I'm sure you've heard all the reasons why you need to write realtime.

And I understand all the reasons why you don't want to. But I'm telling you, start saying "maybe I can" and stop saying "I can't." Our minds are very amazing things. We really can train them to do new tricks. Sure, realtime seems overwhelming

when you think of all the things you need to change, but changing one or two things at a time is not so daunting of a task. Now is the time to start when you can do it at your leisure. No one is giving you a deadline that you have to become realtime proficient by, say, May or you'll lose your job. But start now and you'll get hooked.

Personally, I took my time. I was comfortable as a freelance reporter in a busy agency. I attended realtime seminars. Some ideas worked for me. Some ideas didn't work for me. We all know writing on the steno machine is not a one-size-fits-all. Our thought processes are different. We have different sized

hands. So find the realtime styles that work for you and incorporate them into your writing.

I had the good fortune of attending a seminar that used a book called "Real-Time Writing. The Court Reporter's Guide for Mastering Real-Time Skills," authored by the National Captioning Institute. It's a thin book. I haven't followed it to a tee, but I was able to incorporate their ideas on prefixes and suffixes so I can "build" my words. It's available through the NCRA store at <http://ncraonline.org/Products/P-20.htm>.

So how about it? Ready to start fresh for the new year? Ready to get excited about your writing skills again? Remember how cool it was to actually learn the steno keyboard and write what people said? The same excitement can be yours again as you watch your writing turn into English text on the computer. And as for being nervous about someone reading it while you are practicing, simple. Just close the screen. I think they will get the hint. Now, ready, set, go realtime! And have a very Happy New Year!

—LeAnn M. Hibler

### IMPORTANT ILCRA DATES

**FEB.24-26:** NCRA Legislative Boot Camp, Alexandria, VA

**MARCH 15:** Continuing Education Seminar, Oak Brook

**APRIL 4:** Midyear Conference, Boston, MA

**APRIL 11:** Continuing Education Seminar, Springfield

**APRIL 12:** Executive Board Meeting, 11:00 am, Hilton Hotel, 700 East Adams St., Springfield. Special Meeting at 10:30 a.m.

**APRIL 26:** CSR Examination, Chicago and Southern Illinois Area. Application filing deadline: February 27, 2008.

**MAY 2:** Continuing Education Seminar, Holiday Inn, Mt. Vernon.

**JULY 24-27:** NCRA Convention, Anaheim, CA

**OCT. 3:** Illinois Annual Convention – Great Lakes Convention, Schaumburg



# Executive Director's Report



by Nancy C. Davis

I always hope that my convention report to the members will be on a happy note. However that is not to be this year. All the figures are now in, and I have to report that we lost almost \$10,000.

It is very difficult to budget for convention, although we make every effort to do that. We have to contract with the hotel two to three years in advance in order to get the dates we need. We always just have to use past years' figures

in estimating attendance, etc. Because of the increased costs in the Chicago area, we need to have a minimum of 200 attendees to make a small profit. In the southern Illinois area, we need to have 100 attendees.

This year we only had approximately 100 attendees in the Chicago area — hence the loss.

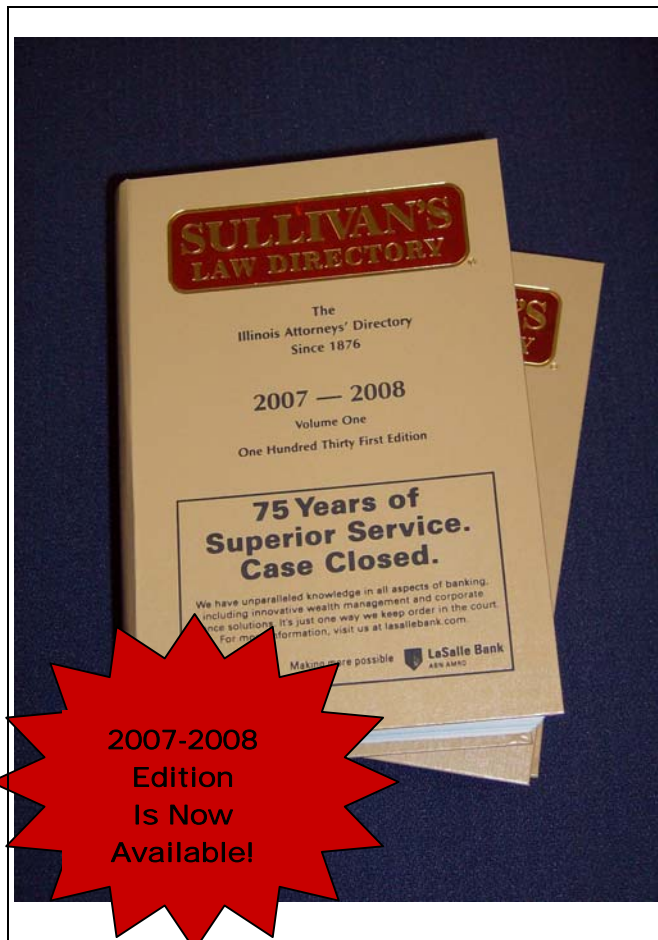
Your association needs your support. Attending conventions not only gives you your CEUs, but is also an opportunity to network with other reporters, to share ideas, problems, solutions, and to meet students who are your prospective employees.

The ILCRA Executive Board is having a board meet-

ing in April in Springfield on Saturday and the following day will be devoted to a Strategic Planning meeting. Among other issues, we will be addressing conventions/seminars to try to come up with some ways to continue to provide this service to our members without losing money.

If you have any suggestions, criticisms, or ideas, we would welcome hearing from you. You can e-mail me or any member of the Executive Board (e-mails are listed on our website [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org) on the Officers page and on [page 2](#) of this newsletter.)

I trust that you all had a happy holiday season and are now ready to take on the new year. Best wishes to you all.



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# COURT REPORTING SERVICES — STATE OF ILLINOIS AND ILLINOIS COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION 2008 COURT REPORTING SERVICES SEMINAR

**MARCH 15, 2008**

Marriott, Oak Brook

**APRIL 11, 2008**

Crowne Plaza, Springfield

**MAY 2, 2008**

Holiday Inn, Mt. Vernon

## PROGRAM AGENDA

**8:00 - 9:00 a.m. REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

### CONCURRENT A.M. SESSIONS:

**9:00–10:30 a.m. REALTIME** This session is designed for the busy reporter wishing to get more done in less time. Topic includes speed building, a/k/a cleaner, faster realtime, a/k/a increased productivity. Presenter: Melanie Sonntag, a Registered Diplomat Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter, and a Fellow of the Academy of Professional Reporters.

**9:00–10:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.–noon FINANCIAL PLANNING** This session is designed to assist reporters in compiling strategies for their financial futures. Presenter: Rik Stone, a financial advisor from the firm of Robert Gordon and Associates.

**9:00–10:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.–noon PERSONAL EFFECTS OF TRAUMA/STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES** This session is geared to the everyday stresses of reporting and will cover management techniques to combat the effects. Presenter: Sandra K. Vicari, Ph.D., LCPC. Dr. Vicari is a Clinical Assistant Professor with the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry.

**10:30 a.m.–noon FILE BACKUP, STORAGE & ORGANIZING** This session will review the best ways to manage, backup and store steno notes for both paper notes and paperless writing. Presenter: Pam Szczecinski, Stenograph.

**9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. COACHING, MENTORING & TEAM-BUILDING SKILLS (all day session, Oak Brook only)** This session will help supervisors gain the tools and skills needed to become a stronger, more confident leader who gets exceptional results through others. Presenter: Lisa Walker, Rockhurst University Continuing Education Center.

**12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m. GROUP LUNCH**

### CONCURRENT P.M. SESSIONS:

**1:00–2:30 p.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. Presenters: Hon. S. Gene Schwarm, Chief Judge, Fourth Judicial Circuit; Tammy Bumgarner, CRS Program Coordinator.

**1:00–2:30 p.m. & 2:30–4:00 p.m. FELONY DUI** This session will cover the process involved from arrest through sentencing in cases involving felony DUI convictions. Presenters: Office of the DuPage County State's Attorney, Office of the Sangamon County State's Attorney, Office of the Jefferson County State's Attorney.

**1:00–2:30 p.m. & 2:30–4:00 p.m. COURTROOM SECURITY** This session will cover issues of safety for reporters prior, during and after being in the courthouse. Presenter: Deputy Cory Orphan, Illinois Sheriff's Association

**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 Felony DUI or Courtroom Security. Presenters: Pam Szczecinski, Stenograph; Julie Samford Davis, Eclipse.

**4:00 p.m. SEMINAR CONCLUDES**

**FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION** see the ILCRA website [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org) or call ILCRA headquarters at 1-800-656-2467.

# ILCRA BYLAWS PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

This typeface indicates language remaining the same. ~~Strikethrough type indicates language deleted~~  
**Boldface type indicates language inserted.**

## **ARTICLE III. OFFICERS:**

SECTION 3. ELECTION The President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Legislative Representative, and Regional Representatives of this Association shall be elected by secret ballot or, if the candidacies for all offices are unchallenged, acclamation at the Annual Meeting. Officers shall hold their offices for ~~the a~~ term of **two years as delineated in Sections 5-11**, or until their successor is elected or appointed, **with applicable term limits as delineated in Sections 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11**; and shall assume the duties of their respective offices at the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

### SECTION 4. VACANCY AND REMOVAL OF OFFICER

A. A vacancy in any office, except that of President **and President-Elect**, shall be filled by the Executive Board. In ~~ease-the~~ **event of a vacancy in the office of President, the President-Elect shall assume the office of President until the expiration of the term. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President-Elect, the Vice President shall assume the office of President-Elect until the expiration of the term.**

### SECTION 5. PRESIDENT

- A. The President shall **be elected to** serve one two-year term.
- B. The office of President cannot be challenged in an election. Any election contest must be made at the President-Elect level.
- C. If there is a vacancy for any reason in the office of the President, the President-Elect shall succeed to the office immediately and shall have all the powers and perform all the duties of the office.
- D. In the event of a vacancy and subsequent succession, the successor shall be eligible for election pursuant to Paragraph A of this section.**

### SECTION 6. PRESIDENT-ELECT AND VICE PRESIDENT

A. President-Elect: The ~~term-of-the~~ President-Elect shall be **elected to serve for one two-year years term**. There will be

an automatic succession from President-Elect to President.

1. The office of President-Elect can be challenged in an election.
  2. If there is a vacancy for any reason in the office of the President-Elect, the Vice President shall succeed to the office immediately, and shall have all the powers and perform all the duties of the office.
  3. **In the event of a vacancy and subsequent succession, the successor shall be eligible for election pursuant to Paragraph A of this section.**
- B. Vice President: The ~~term-of~~ Vice President shall be **elected to serve for one two-year years term**.

1. The office of Vice President can be challenged in an election.
2. **In the event of a vacancy and subsequent appointment, the appointee shall be eligible for election pursuant to Paragraph B of this section.**

### SECTION 7. SECRETARY

A. The ~~position~~ office of Secretary shall be limited to two two-year terms.

### SECTION 8. TREASURER

~~A. The Treasurer shall serve a two year term.~~

### SECTION 9. LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

~~A. The Legislative Representative shall serve a two year term.~~

### SECTION 10. REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVES

A. The ~~position~~ office of Region One Representative shall be limited to two two-year terms.

### SECTION 11. REGION TWO REPRESENTATIVES

A. The ~~position~~ office of Region Two Representative shall be limited to two two-year terms.

*Rationale: These changes are proposed to help define, give more guidance for the terms of office, clarify, and provide consistency with other wording in ARTICLE III.*

*[See special meeting notice on page 7](#)*

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING TO AMMEND BYLAWS

Notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting has been called for the purpose of amending the following sections of the ILCRA Bylaws:  
Article III: Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11

**This meeting will be held on**

**Saturday, April 12, 2008, at 10:30 a.m. at the Hilton Springfield, Springfield, Illinois, 700 East Adams Street, in the Conference Center 3.**

The proposed changes define terms of office for members of the Executive Board, and will clarify and give more guidance for the terms of these offices.

## Good News!

### HB4163 Passes, Unanimous Vote

ILCRA has good news. HB4163 passed out of the Appropriations Committee and was voted on by the House, Jan. 10, 2008. The bill passed with a unanimous vote. HB4163 basically corrects a mistake that was made in the budget which would have meant a 4% decrease in the salaries of Official Court Reporters. In order to put OCRs in line with other employees of the Comptroller's Office, it was decided that OCRs should make their own pension contributions instead of having the State of Illinois contribute, as was the practice for approximately 20 years. A 4% increase was to be added to OCRs' salaries and then taken out as their contribution to the pension fund. Gov. Blagovich instead had cut that line item from the budget, which would have meant a 4% decrease in salary. HB4163 fixes that mistake.

Now SB1871 is before the Senate. It basically provides the same "fix" that HB4163 does. Please contact your Senators immediately and request their support of SB1871. A heartfelt thank you to your local Representatives for their support of HB4163 would also be appreciated.

## ILCRA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

### NEW PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS:

Christine Basis-Prinze, *Frankfort*

Cynthia Jarz, *Minooka*



### NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBER:

Natalie Mikolajczak, *Student*

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# Are You a Future Leader?

By LeAnn M. Hibler, President

Once again, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend NCRA's Leadership Conference held November 15-17, in McLean, Virginia which is close to their headquarters in Vienna. This year there were 70 state leaders in attendance from 40 states.

"Leadership," what does that word bring to mind when you read it? Some people may think it means the ability to tell others what to do. Apparently that's what my sister thinks since she told my mom I must be teaching the course. But the reality is that NCRA provides the state leaders this opportunity to learn many things, none of which is how to tell people what to do.

NCRA's Leadership Conference teaches us how to run a court reporting association from budgets to convention planning to board meetings. It helps us learn about different

personalities and how to bring out the full potential in people. We did a lot of brainstorming in breakout groups on topics such as how to increase membership in our associations which is an issue for all states as well as NCRA, how to recruit new students into our court reporting programs, and how to engage the members we already have in our associations, just to name a few topics.

I believe this year was the last Leadership Conference I will be attending on behalf of ILCRA. I have attended three times during my time on the Executive Board. Each time, I have come away with a renewed sense of excitement and a head full of ideas on how to better our association. It has given me the confidence in myself to decide to move up to President of the Illinois Court Reporters Association. I believe it has really helped me

grow as an individual and as a leader. I had a sense of sadness as I was heading to Virginia because I knew it would be my last Leadership Conference. I have made some great friends from around the country and also learned tons about our profession, but I truly believe that other members of your Executive Board should have the chance to go to this valuable conference to enhance their own abilities. Many of your current board members have expressed the desire to one day be President of ILCRA. Each and every one of them should be afforded the opportunity to attend this training. It will benefit them as well as all of us who are members.

One thing I had set out to do while I was at the conference was to meet the state leaders from Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan, which I did and you can see our photograph on [page 10](#). I felt it was important because in October 2008, Illinois is participating in and hosting a joint annual convention with these three states ([see page 11](#)). There is quite a buzz about this convention. Many states would like to try it themselves with their neighboring states. NCRA thinks the idea sounds like a lot of fun and many of the directors, including President DiLorenzo, are planning to attend. I think of it as a "mini NCRA convention". Attendees will be mixing and mingling with reporters

*(Continued on page 9)*



*ILCRA Past President Amy B. Haught (second from left) on the National Committee of State Associations panel during Leadership Conference*



## Are You a Future Leader?

*(Continued from page 8)*

from other states which will afford them the opportunity to make great friends and learn what is going on in our surrounding states. One thing that's unique about court reporting is that all of our jobs are very similar. We can strike up a conversation about work and talk for hours because there is that much commonality. Please mark your calendars for October 3-5, 2008, and come out to Schaumburg and join your peers for a fun, learning experience.

I want to leave you with one tidbit of information that I learned while I was at the conference regarding name badges.

I believe name badges are a very important marketing tool. When you have a name badge on, there is no question what your name is. People see it, they use it, and they remember it. Your ILCRA Executive Board now has official name badges, and I ask that they wear them whenever attending an event representing ILCRA. But it's the placement of the name badge that I want to educate you on. Wear them on your right side, ladies and gentlemen. I realize it is a pain for us ladies who carry a purse on the right shoulder, but here's the reason.

You shake hands with your right hand. The person you are

greeting can shake your hand, move their eyes up your right arm, read your name badge, and then on to your face while using your name. Their eyes don't have to make a deviation to search your body and find your name badge. How many times have you worn the name badge on a string only to hold it up like a mug shot so the person you are speaking to can read it? So remember, right shoulder with the name badge.

ILCRA Members, thank you one and all for being members of your state association. I say this to you because it is only with dues money that

*(Continued on page 10)*



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For more information, please contact Peggy at (312) 236-6926 or email [Peggy@cudareporting.com](mailto:Peggy@cudareporting.com)

## Are You A Future Leader?

*(Continued from page 9)*

ILCRA can afford to send your Executive Board members to trainings such as this.

We want great state leaders in Illinois. Leaders are made, not born. Well, maybe they are born with the personality traits, but it takes learning opportunities such as NCRA's Leadership Conference to pull those traits to the forefront and realize them to their full potential. So, again, thank you for helping me become a better leader.



*State Leaders from Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois (ILCRA President LeAnn M. Hibler on left) show off their Great Lakes 2008 Convention shirts at Leadership Conference.*

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*This just in from the Shelbyville Daily Union...*

## Grant to Expand Closed Captioning at Sparks College

*by John Carswell, Daily Union Staff Writer*

Congressman John Shimkus (R Illinois) was on hand Thursday to present Sparks College with a check from the Department of Education in the amount of \$191,593.

"This is a big day for Sparks College and a big year as well," said Board President Frank Dove.

The grant will allow further development of their Closed Captioning Project which has its roots in court reporting.

Acting Director of Sparks College, Judy Lehman said, "You are probably familiar with court reporting and the steno machines they use to write in characters or code to provide court transcripts. We have software and computers that translate that coding into English. That happens in less than one second. It is very, very fast. We call it an Instant Translation or Text to English. When you see closed captioning on your TV screen, that is actually done by people with court reporting skills."

However, reading closed captioning can often be a real chore, with scrambled text leaving much to the imagination of the reader.

A survey conducted by the National Captioning Institute revealed that while audiences are aware of closed captioning and think it is important, they also believe that captions contain too many mistakes or moves at a pace that is not comfortable to read.



*Congressman John Shimkus (L) presents a Department of Education check to Sparks College Acting Director Judy Lehman and Sparks Board President Frank Dove in the amount of \$191,593.*

Lehman said that scrambled or illegible text is often due to poorly trained personnel. "Sometimes the people who are doing that job haven't been properly trained. Because there is such a shortage of skilled personnel, people are often put into that role before they are ready. That is one of the critical things related to our funding. It concerns having graduates properly trained. You will see some captions that are absolutely perfect and some that aren't. They just don't have enough experience before they are put on the job."

Closed captioning expands the career opportunities for captioners' or realtime writers to go beyond the courtroom and into the media and other areas, maybe even into a sports stadium.

"One of our graduates, Patty White from Hillsboro, went into the judicial reporting arena and moved to St. Louis.

She now captions the Jumbotron for the St. Louis Cardinals and did the captioning for the World Series."

CART is another application of captioning which is usually used in a classroom or one-on-one situation.

Congressman Shimkus emphasized his interest in the CART program and also in the possibilities that realtime translation provides. Shimus also credited senator Barack Obama, "We jointly share in this project," said Shimkus.

According to the Communications Access Information Center, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and realtime software. The text appears on a computer monitor or other display. This technology is primarily used by people who are late-deafened, oral deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have cochlear implants. Culturally deaf individuals also make use of CART in certain situations. CART is also often referred to as realtime captioning.

Lehman commented, "There is a great demand for closed captioning. There are nearly a million deaf or hard-of-hearing people in Illinois alone and something like 28 million across the US. That is a significant part of the population that is under-served when we can't get

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Grant to Expand Closed Captioning at Sparks College

*(Continued from page 12)*

captioning to them. In the school system, we have an increasing number of CART writers who are sitting one-on-one with hearing-impaired students so that they can be fully mainstreamed.”

Lehman said they originally applied for the grant back in their fiscal year of 2005. Thanks to the efforts of senators Barack Obama (D Illinois) and Richard Durbin (D Illinois), the grant finally came through. “They were very receptive to the project and I have been in contact with them multiple times over the past three years, both in their offices in Illinois and in Washington, D.C. They were instrumental in helping us secure this grant.”

Some of Sparks’ long range goals include further expansion in the field of closed captioning, “Our dream and our goal is to set up a lab which looks like a broadcast studio so the students can learn the nuts and bolts of exactly what it takes to do the set up.”

During the press conference, Lehman announced that the lab would be called the John M. Shimkus Broadcast Lab . Shimkus responded, “I really don’t want having things named after me. Maybe we can negotiate this. After all, this isn’t my money. It is the money of the taxpayers like you who helped make this possible.”

Lehman added, “We are also hoping to offer some scholarship funds for people who might not otherwise be able to attain post-secondary education.”

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# Be Early, Be Nice, Be Awesome!

by Jennifer L. Dunn

**H**mm...realtime writing, where to start? Many years ago when I first heard of the technology, I was a new reporter, fresh out of school with lots of bad habits and lots of conflicts. My shoulders ached from writing so many steno strokes and with all of the endless editing, I sometimes felt like my eyes would crack open and bleed! I gave up time with my small children to spend hours perfecting my transcripts when I should have been perfecting my writing! But when you're not watching the translation happen in front of your very eyes, it's easy to forget about all the little errors passing you by.

After fixing my outlines for time and money and printing off my conflicts in my dictionary and whittling them down with endless sticky notes on my machine, I realized I was still a long way from realtime ready. The biggest obstacle to being a realtime writer comes not in writing correctly what is already in your dictionary, but writing things that are not in your dictionary and getting them to translate correctly every time. That is what brought me to Ed Varallo's guide, *10-Steps to Realtime Writing*. I cannot recommend this book enough. With Ed's help (unbeknownst to him) I completely revamped my prefixes and suffixes, and I learned one very important lesson. You have to write the same way all the time. That's why they call it theory. It's a way of thinking.

Perhaps you're one of those reporters who writes the same word three or four different ways throughout a job and you find yourself globaling the same things over and over. *Stop!*

**"...if you never experience problems, you're never going to learn the solutions"**

*Know your writing!* If you're an advanced writer with a lot of free time on your hands, work on perfecting your finger-spelling. The more you finger-spell, the easier it gets. The look on attorneys' faces when they see all the unique names in their case come up properly is worth the effort!

When you're marking an exhibit, make sure to take a glance at any names you can find because that's who they're going to be talking about next! Be nosy! We need every advantage we can take and I say "take" because we all know attorneys are not going to offer information to you unless you ask for it.

Today's students are taught a lot of the same principles I learned from the 10-Steps, so they are actually coming out of school with an advantage. They know the theory, but they need the experience. There is nothing that can take the place of experience and we all know that.

For many reporters who never bring their computers to their jobs, becoming a realtime reporter can seem a rather daunting task. When will I ever

be good enough to let others see my rough work product? What if the job is over my head or, God forbid, what if I drop something in front of everyone? While those are valid concerns, when it comes to being a realtime reporter, those are the least of your worries. You need to perfect your writing to an acceptable level — as a guideline I like to see reporters translating at better than 99% to do rough ASCIIs and I like my reporters to be certified realtime reporters before going on hookup jobs. And...I do not want a transcript going out at the end of the day with an untranslate in it. If you can't global from your machine, then you should be working through your breaks and getting rid of the untranslates and preferably spell checking as well. If there are too many untranslates to take care of while on your job, perhaps you're not as realtime ready as you thought and you need to put more effort into your writing.

It's unfortunate that reporters who are already writing realtime cannot take the plunge because they have never connected to anyone else before. They may hookup for themselves but never output to anyone else. Wouldn't it be nice if your mentor would escort you to a realtime job and make sure you hookup successfully yet be ready to jump in on the job if you can't get the connection? I agree. That's how it should be done. That's how I train my new

[\(Continued on page 16\)](#)

## Be Early, Be Nice, Be Awesome!

*(Continued from page 15)*

realtimers. We do mock hookups in our conference room and troubleshooting before we go on the job so that when we get there, hopefully all the kinks have been ironed out. But if you never experience problems, you're never going to learn the solutions.

There are cables to buy, ports to configure, baud rates to consider, PDAs which create com port conflicts and seeming "deadspots" in certain conference rooms which cause intermittent connections. What with the orange adapter, the blue one, the black one — does it really matter which end is connected to which computer? Perhaps the computer you're attempting to connect to doesn't even have a serial port. What then? Are you carrying a spare USB to serial adapter as well? If you're not, you should be. If there's a choice between two hookups or three, I'd always prefer three and if that means bringing a spare laptop along, then so be it!

Now, we all know as court reporters that we must occasionally perform miracles. On top of

having the hearing of a dog, we must be able to interpret multiple dialects at a feverish pace, understand the intricacies of medicine only a doctor should/could know, carry tissues for crying witnesses and understand them through their tears, bring staplers for exhibits and spare pens for everyone, and now we're expected to carry spare laptops and USB converters? What next? With the progression of technology, one can only imagine. But when the time comes, we must be prepared and we must be the best option for voice to text translation.

As I have heard many times, we are only as good as our last bad performance and that means all of us. No one remembers when everything goes smoothly, do they? And, we must, above all, maintain the integrity of our profession through the quality of our work product and the reasonableness of our prices, not to mention our appearance and attitude because attitude is everything. Be early, be nice and be awesome!

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# Why Bother with Realtime?

by Amy B. Haught, CSR, RMR, CRR, Immediate Past President

I am a good reporter. I get my work out on time. I write clean and have no difficulty reading back or resolving conflicts when transcribing. The judges and attorneys are pleased with my work. I don't make enough money on transcripts to justify the expense of purchasing CAT software. Why in the world would I need to buy CAT software or work on my writing skills when everything is just fine here at work. Why bother?

The above statements couldn't possibly have been made by someone who is an RMR and CRR...or could they? Yes, that would be me. In 1999, I had been an official court reporter for 16 years. Other than a six-month period on a lemon CAT system in 1990, I typed and then did word processing to produce all of my transcripts during the first 16 years of my reporting career. I filed all of my transcripts in a timely manner, and I think I was a good reporter. But now, I'm a better reporter.

My co-worker, Melinda Fowler, gets the credit for jumpstarting me. She kept giving me a gentle nudge about getting a CAT system, asking me why I was killing myself by using all of my time and energy preparing transcripts when I could do it in half the time on a CAT system. I finally took the plunge in the fall of 1999 and bought a CAT system, and I didn't stop there. The CAT system was new and fun and motivational. Within a year of purchasing the CAT system I passed the RMR. I spent the next several months working on my dictionary and my writing. A year after I passed the RMR, I passed the CRR with a 23,000-word dictionary. I didn't stop there, either. I still work on building my dictionary and perfecting my writing skills.

So why did I bother? I wish I could say it was entirely about helping to preserve the profession, but it wasn't. It was partly about me, making me [\(Continued on page 18\)](#)

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## Why Bother with Realtime?

*(Continued from page 17)*

feel good about me. After passing both of those certification tests, I felt a great sense of accomplishment and pride in myself and my work — something I hadn't felt in years.

After receiving the CRR, I felt confident enough in myself and my writing to demonstrate those skills to others. In that way, I have tried to preserve and promote the profession. I wish I could say that I write realtime every day for my judges, but I don't. Despite my efforts, I have failed to get any of my judges "hooked" on realtime. The first time I wrote realtime for a judge was in a murder trial. Sometimes I think I must thrive on stress. I still can't believe I did that.

Realtime skills are what set us apart from digital recording. A recording can't produce an immediate word-to-text translation. Only a live court reporter can do that. As another reporter so aptly put it, realtime is the golden standard. I learned at the NCRA Convention in Dallas that only 10% of reporters hold the CRR. That is a disturbing figure when our greatest argument against ER is realtime.

My hope for all court reporters is that we won't be complacent. Digital recording is not only a threat in the court system but is now nosing its way into the freelance arena as well. We should all want to have the skills necessary to set ourselves apart from electronic recording and continue to work to refine our skills.

This may be an unpopular view, but I am not of the opinion that you must possess a CRR certificate if you want to continue to be a court reporter. I do believe, however, that we should all be working on our realtime skills.

So don't let the next realtime seminar pass you by without participating in it.

This is something we should want to do, not be forced to do. When you write cleaner and with less conflicts, it reduces your editing time. Now, who among us couldn't use that extra bit of time for buying shoes? So work on writing realtime and treat yourself to a pair of Jimmy Choo's.



## The Realtime Fear Factor...

by Debra Musielak

When approached to write an article about why I do realtime, a multitude of thoughts came to mind. Is it because I thrive on challenge, because I'm driven to learn new things, because I have an interest in technology? *Yes*. On a recent drive home from a seven-hour realtime, video, rush in a patent case, a new thought crept wearily into mind. *Am I crazy?* Perhaps an emphatic *Yes!*

In all honesty, the most accurate response to the question is fear. Not fear of doing realtime, but fear of not doing realtime. During my 30 years of reporting, 15 as an official and 15 freelancing, the number of times I have been told that court reporters will lose their jobs to electronic recording is innumerable. It's a looming threat. One way to combat electronic recording is to offer services that cannot be provided by a tape recorder.

Will beads of sweat rise upon your brow? Will your hands get clammy and your heart have palpitations? *Absolutely.*

Realtime reporting services can be offered not only in the litigation arena, but to the hearing-impaired community as well. I have had the opportunity to provide realtime services to many attorneys, and on one occasion to a 13-year-old hearing-impaired child who had witnessed a fatal accident and could not understand the sign language interpreter. When the depo was about

to come to a screeching halt, I flipped my laptop around and the witness was able to read the questions from the screen. It brought on a host of accolades from the attorneys and a genuine sense of pride in the job I had done.

In addition, realtime reporting has given me the opportunity to write at a convention of hearing-impaired attendees, the satisfaction of assisting a mainstreamed hearing-impaired college student, and the excitement of captioning the in-house announcements to the scoreboard in a major league baseball stadium.

If you think you never want to realtime to an attorney, consider the benefits of realtimiting to yourself. It allows you the ability to complete title pages, make dictionary entries and edit on breaks or when exhibits are being reviewed. It also presents the opportunity to review your writing instantaneously and immediately make adjustments to improve writing skills. And just maybe it will lead you to a point in time when you will feel comfortable flipping the screen around.

Realtime reporting is not a perfect science. Every attorney who uses it regularly understands the process. Will there be comments about untranslates? *Yes*. Will you get over it? *Definitely*. Will it present new business opportunities and create the possibility at longevity in your career? *Without a doubt!*

---

## MONDEGREEN — What Is It?

by Lyn M. Grooms, CSR, RPR, CRR, CCP, CBC

I have just been alerted to a new word for my vocabulary and thought it "shareable." There are probably several of you who already know its meaning. My thanks go to Nancy Davis, Executive Director of ILCRA for educating me about this wonderful new word which I've added to my mind's dictionary as well as my computer dictionary!

The word is "Mondegreens." Hmm, sounds interesting, intriguing, perplexing. In my reality and vocabulary, I call it (or them) "bloopers." The following appears at Wikipedia:

"A Mondegreen is the mishearing (usually accidentally) of a phrase as a homophone or near-homophone in such a way that it acquires a new meaning." That makes sense to me.

I am the first to admit that I have written some doozy Mondegreens either because, as Wikipedia puts it, of mishearing what was said or through misstroking or word boundary problems. Writing realtime, for one's self, in CART usage or closed captioning, oftentimes can produce these wonderfully wacky outcomes. If we are on our toes and have time, of course, we will and should correct these bloopers at the time of writing them.

I suppose I could give you a list of some of my "WOW, did I really write that?" Mondegreens, but that would take up too much space and time, and laughter on the part of the reader. You can sit back and imagine what I can do with an

*(Continued on page 20)*

# MONDEGREEN

*(Continued from page 19)*

aeronautical engineering class, a library and information sciences class or any other setting I or anyone else could be in. Suffice it to say, they do exist in my CARTing and closed captioning work and until I write the perfect set of notes (oh, were it only so), they will continue to do so.

That does not mean that I or anyone else should not strive for those perfect notes or the cleanest set of same, the most readable screen for my student who is deaf or other person to view. I have said many times that the more I have done CART and closed captioning work, the better my writing has become.

I think it is an innate sense of professionalism that encourages — and yes, even forces — me to endeavor to make sure it comes out accurately. Our profession as Court Reporters, CART providers and Closed Captioners by definition gives us the impetus to provide a perfect product. The end result of better writing is, if you are providing transcripts, less editing time; and if you are not providing transcripts, gives your screen reader the best possible sense of what is being said in whatever environment they are in.

Wikipedia provides some rather “cute and cuddly” examples of Mondegreens:

“Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey”; which should in fact be “Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lambs eat ivy”. I said they were cute and cuddly didn’t I?

“Dawnzer lee light”? Yes, as you are saying it to yourself, you do know it should be “dawn’s early light”. How about “gladly the cross-eyed bear”? Bet you’ve got that figured out too...“gladly the cross I’d bear”.

Not all Mondegreens are necessarily of the cute and cuddly type. Some can have an adverse effect on the true words that are said, even giving an opposite meaning to the spoken word. The notion of the spoken word appearing in opposition on the screen should give each of us pause. We need to continually be aware and vigilant in producing our product. After all, we are the professionals providing an accurate product to the courts, to people who are deaf, any and all users of our end product. Our work ethic should be almost automatic in this endeavor.

To learn more about Mondegreens, visit: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mondegreen>. You will find a host of information, a great many examples of what I have always called bloopers, a bit of history of the word, and generally a good read.

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# McCorkle Court Reporters to the Rescue!

By Seymour Wolfe, Region One Representative

Every year the Illinois Court Reporters Association works in conjunction with the National Court Reporters Association to administer the RPR, RMR, and now the CRR testing in Illinois.

For many years, testing for the immediate Chicago area had been administered at one of our premier court reporting schools, the Career Colleges of Chicago (CCoC), located in the Chicago Loop area. The accommodations they afforded were always outstanding.

However, as many of you might know, CCoC closed their doors and went out of business approximately a year ago. MacCormac College, the only remaining school offering a court reporting program in the Chicago Loop, refused our plea to use their facilities as a testing site. This meant that a good many prospective test takers would not be able to take their tests in the Chicago Loop area.

As a result of my professional working relationship as an administrative assistant at the reporting office of Charles and Kathy McCorkle, I explained these dire circumstances to them. I inquired as to

whether ILCRA could use their office and conference room as the testing site for the November 3, 2007 tests. Kathy McCorkle's immediate response was, "Yes, of course ILCRA can conduct the testing here in our offices and we're more than glad to do whatever we can to accommodate ILCRA in appreciation for all this association does on behalf of Illinois court reporters."

On November 3, the testing was held at the offices of McCorkle Court Reporters, Inc. Melanie Sonntag was Chief Examiner; assisted by: ILCRA Education Liaison Bonni Shuttleworth, Joe Rickhoff, Glenn Sonntag, Bob fields, Denise Mills, and Seymour Wolfe. ILCRA sends a special thanks to Chuck McCorkle, Jr, who was there to make sure all of our needs were met.

How fortunate that we were able to meet our responsibilities to conduct all of the examinations! I am delighted to report that everything went quite well.

As my wife Muriel has always said, "If life deals you a lemon, make lemonade." ILCRA surely followed the axiom and made lemonade.

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# CART Reporter Makes Law School Accessible

By Elizabeth Gastellum

I clearly remember the day I first walked into a classroom and understood every word. I was 28 years old and sitting in Contracts I at Southern Illinois University School of Law. This was the day that the academic world became, for the first time, clear and accessible for me. I owe it all to Christine Simpson, as well as the School of Law for being willing to provide her services.

Christine is a certified court reporter. She received additional training to provide access to individuals with hearing loss. Some call these unique providers "CART Reporters." Others call them "Real Time Captionists." I rely on Christine's services to receive the same information that the other students are hearing the professor speak aloud.

Christine entered my classroom with a dictionary fit for the legal world I was about to learn. Her database contained the terminology that I needed to see. She is able to type, in a matter of a few strokes, complex legal terms. Because learning how to pronounce new ter-

minology is a challenge for me, she has cued me in by typing in parenthesis (sounds like "fish") or (Justice Scalia... "scay lia").

Other indicators also appear on the screen that differ from a court reporters transcript such as (door opened) or (speaking

**"Because of her skill, I am as much a member of the classroom as my hearing peers."**

with sarcasm) or (loud thunder outside). In this way, I receive more than just cold verbatim access by also experiencing the sound occurring in the room. Because of her skill, I am as much a member of the classroom as my hearing peers.

There is a demand for Christine's services. As many as one million Illinois citizens live with

some form of hearing loss. Not every individual with a hearing loss uses American Sign Language. Even individuals who do use American Sign Language may find they prefer the services of a real time captionist because of the accuracy that results when the English language is made visibly present. Rather than a translation between two languages, the word for word rendition of spoken English into its written form occurs with amazing accuracy.

Of course, it would not be possible at all if it were not for the skill and speed of the captionist to provide real time verbatim. And I wouldn't be about to graduate from law school if it were not for Christine Simpson and Southern Illinois School of Law. They both have my biggest and fondest "Thanks!"

## STOP BY FOR A 'VISIT'

Visit 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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\* *Cancer Facts & Figures, American Cancer Society, 2000.*

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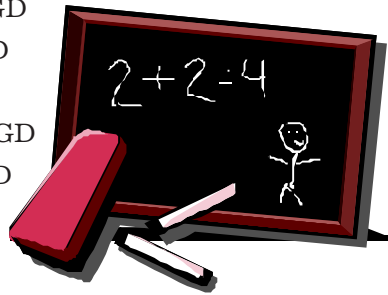
*for what happens next*

## AMY'S BRIEFS

by Amy B. Haught, CSR, RMR, CRR  
Immediate Past President

### LET'S GO TO SCHOOL

grade school .....GR-S	high school .....H-S
kindergarten.....K-RND	freshman.....FROM
first grade .....FIRGD	sophomore .....SOFM
second grade ....SEGD	junior .....J*R
third grade .....THIRGD	senior .....S*R
fourth grade .....FOURGD	college.....KLEJ
fifth grade .....FIFGD	
sixth grade .....SIGD	
middle school ....M-S	
seventh grade ....SEFGD	
eighth grade .....AIGD	



## Text Radio Unveiled

A new technology, unveiled recently at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, shows what's being said on the radio using a screen that scrolls text much like closed captions roll by on TV. No manufacturer has yet committed to bring the technology to market. It is backed by National Public Radio and Harris Corp., a major supplier of broadcasting equipment, as well as a new research center at Towson University near Baltimore.

The new service would use the extra broadcasting capacity available through HD Radio, but instead of broadcasting music it would send out streams of data that would be converted to scrolling text on a screen.

Initially, the radio text service would operate like closed captioning, where someone types what's being said on the radio into a computer system in realtime. The consortium hopes to find software that will translate speech to automate the service and make it less expensive

The text-scrolling feature is one of several technologies that NPR, Harris and the new research center at Towson University are developing to make programming more accessible to deaf and blind people.

NPR: [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org), Harris: [www.harris.com](http://www.harris.com).

Source: SETH SUTEL AP Business Writer

## What About CART Training Seminars?

By Lyn M. Grooms, CSR, RPR, CRR, CCP, CBC

The Illinois Court Reporters Association always tries to provide services in all avenues to its members, oftentimes in response to requests for specific seminars or other requests. In this instance, we want to ask our members to address CART specific training.

We'd like to be able to offer whatever specific training for CART providers or prospective CART providers that you members feel would benefit your CART services. Please take a few minutes, and make a list of the things you believe you need in the way of further education in the field of CART. If you would inform us of what your specific requests are in this area, we can and will certainly address those issues and hopefully be able to plan for future seminars in the field of CART.

Take those few minutes to think of those things you want to see on a CART seminar agenda, and send those requests to ILCRA either by snail mail or e-mail. Contact ILCRA at 41 SW Crescent Drive, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 or at [ilcraoffice@aol.com](mailto:ilcraoffice@aol.com), or if you'd prefer to submit your requests directly to me as chair of the CART Committee, you can send your ideas to me at 431 South Tower Road, Dawson, IL 62520 or at [grooms@midwest.net](mailto:grooms@midwest.net).

We are always open to requests by our members, and we hope, by this solicitation of your thoughts and ideas, to be able to fulfill our obligation to you — in this instance to be able to provide you with further education and information in the field of CART. We may not be able to provide you with everything on your wish list, but we will do our best to cover as many of your needs as we can.

### FIND A 'BACKUP FRIEND'

Find a friend and exchange backed up files at least once a month. You must know someone with high-speed Internet and an external hard drive. Send your dictionaries and user settings to a friend, and offer to keep a copy of your friend's files on your external drive. This will give you piece of mind for sure. Losing a month's worth of dictionary entries is not as bad as years' worth.

— A tip from *The Record Times*





# STUDENT CORNER

## High School Career Day Provides Inspiration

At the age of sixteen, I was introduced to the interesting field of court reporting. As a child, and up to this point in my life, I had dreamt of becoming a veterinarian. A career day that I attended my sophomore year of high school made me re-think that idea.

I completed the court reporting session on that day in 2003, where I was in awe. I found the skills of a court reporter to be amazing! After extensive research in this field and a conversation with Jill Layton, CSR, RPR, I decided that court reporting would be something that I would enjoy doing for the rest of my life. I found Sparks College, a business school relatively close to my hometown, where I would start after graduation in 2005.

Upon attending Sparks, I have met so many gifted people. I was able to be present for ILCRA's very educational convention in Tinley Park, thanks to the help of L & L Reporting. Being a student at Sparks College has allowed me the opportunity to sit through several intriguing court cases, one of which was a highly publicized murder trial.

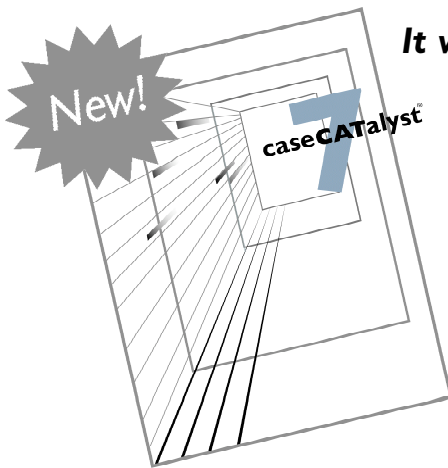
There are so many possibilities in the court reporting field: an officialship in a courthouse, freelancing with a firm, broadcast captioning, and even CART. I am excited about my future in court reporting and all of the life-changing experiences I will encounter.

—Jaclyn Padrick Sparks College in Shelbyville

### ILCRA OFFERS ONLINE MENTORING

If you are student who would like an online mentor; or a court reporter who is interested in becoming an online mentor, go to [www.ilcra.org](http://www.ilcra.org) and click on the online mentoring link, or just click here.

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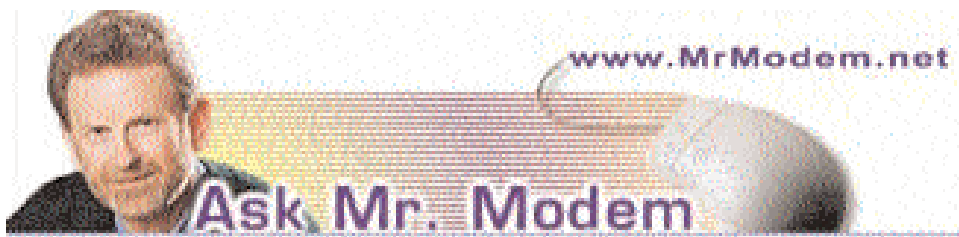
• Updated icons make it easier to see the function you want when you need it.

• 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!

• Macros editing means you can record macros with abandon and edit them with ease! Delete steps or insert new ones by selecting from a convenient list. You'll never have to re-record a macro again!

• 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.



by Richard A. Sherman

## **EASY ON THE EYES: LARGE-PRINT PRINTING\***

**Q. I received a CD from a friend who told me that it has some .JPG photos on it. When I insert the CD into my CD-ROM drive, nothing happens. How can I see the pictures on the CD?**

A. Most CDs, when inserted into a CD-ROM drive, will start or open automatically, but if yours is just sitting there like a passive, plastic pancake, double-click your My Computer Desktop icon. If you're using Windows XP and you don't have My Computer on your Desktop, click Start > My Computer.

In the My Computer window, you'll need to identify your CD-ROM drive. Usually it's the D, E, or F drive, represented by an icon that looks like a round CD on top of a hard drive. Double-click that icon to display the contents of the CD, then double-click any .JPG image file to display a photo.

**Q. I'm using the Firefox browser, thanks to your recommendation, and I really like it. Can you tell me how I can print Web pages in a larger font?**

A. The process of large-print printing is virtually identical for Firefox, Internet Explorer and Netscape. Click File > Print Preview, then in the Scale field at the top of the screen, adjust the percentage accordingly. Try

125 percent for starters. The larger the font, the more skewed the printed page may appear, but try a few different percentage increases and see what best suits your peepers.

**Q. I frequently have to type the same phrases and the same paragraphs at work, plus my employer's name, which is long and difficult to type. Can you recommend a program that will automate that for me? Your newsletter tips and advice have really helped me, Mr. M. Keep them coming!**

A. The best program I've found for entering frequently used words, phrases, paragraphs or even documents is TypeItIn [www.wavget.com/typeitin.html](http://www.wavget.com/typeitin.html). It enables you to designate buttons that will enter any information into any program or Web site. You can create groups of buttons for work, home, or specific topics. With TypeItIn, you can also automatically type in the time, date, month, or day of the week. The program acts as a macro aggregator in that each button is really a macro that will "play back" whatever text is "recorded." Type your text in once to create a button, give the button a name, then click it whenever you need to enter that text again. You can try TypeItIn for 60 days and purchase it for \$19.95. I wouldn't be without it.

## **SAFELY DELETE RESTORE POINTS**

**Q. I've had my PC since January of 2007. Using XP's System Restore, when I click "Previous Month," I can only go back to October 2007. Does this mean that all restore points from January to October, including the original restore point, no longer exist? How do I delete previous restore points that I no longer need?**

A. There aren't any "hidden" restore points, so what you see is what you have to work with. Restore points created in the past, if they no longer appear, are gone forever. There are two primary ways to safely delete restore points from your system:

1. Disk Cleanup – Launch the Disk Cleanup tool (Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Cleanup). After running Disk Cleanup, select the More Options tab. If you press the Clean Up button in the System Restore section, Windows will delete all Restore points except for the most recent one.

2. Briefly Disable System Restore – By turning off System Restore, all your Restore points will be deleted. To disable System Restore, click Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools > System Restore. Click the System Restore Settings

*(Continued on page 27)*

# Ask Mr. Modem

*(Continued from page 26)*

link and you'll see the "Turn off System Restore on all drives" check box. Don't forget to enable System Restore again when you're finished.

**Q. I'm using Thunderbird as my email program, thanks to a recommendation in your weekly newsletter, which I really love. When looking at my Inbox in Thunderbird, there is no Date column. How can I add that, Mr. M?**

A. Thunderbird ([www.mozilla.com/thunderbird](http://www.mozilla.com/thunderbird)) provides a variety of columns for sorting and organizing your email. To view available columns, including the Date column, click the button at the far right of the column header bar. A drop-

down menu will display 16 possible column headings you can click to display. Bonus Tip: Click any column heading to sort the items within each column. Click again to reverse sort. This works in any Windows program, so give it a try!

**Q. I just got high-speed cable access to the Internet, but the dial-up connection box keeps popping up when I click Outlook Express. I can live with it if I have to, but it is annoying. Any suggestions?**

A. Go to your Control Panel and double-click the Internet Options icon. (Hint: In XP, you have to click Network and Internet Connections before you get to Internet Options.) In the

Internet Options window, click the Connections tab. You can then click to select "Never dial a connection," or you can select your old dial-up connection, then click the Remove button. Since you're not likely to be using the dial-up connection again, I'd suggest clicking the Remove button, followed by OK. That will resolve the case of the intrusive pop-up.

**Q. I primarily use Firefox, which has a keystroke to put the cursor on the Address line. Sometimes I use Internet Explorer and I wondered if there's a similar keystroke that will also take me to the Address line?**

*(Continued on page 28)*

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# Ask Mr. Modem

*(Continued from page 27)*

A. Surprise, surprise! The same ALT + D keystroke combo will place your cursor in the Address field in both Firefox and Internet Explorer.

## **IS SKIPPING "OK" OKAY?**

**Q. When I change settings, at the bottom of the screen it has the OK and APPLY buttons. I always click APPLY, then OK, but when I skip APPLY and just click OK, it seems to do exactly the same thing. Can I save a step and just click OK without clicking APPLY?**

A. Depending what you're doing, there may be a valid reason to use APPLY versus OK, or both in concert, so let's take a look at what each button does:

APPLY saves any changes you make without closing the dialog box or window. So you would click APPLY and not click OK if you make changes and need to make additional changes on the same screen.

Clicking OK saves any changes and closes the dialog box, so you would click OK if you're making one change and then want to exit.

Most people click APPLY > OK out of habit, as a two-step operation to save and exit, but technically, it's not always necessary — again, depending what you're doing at the time.

**Q. I've been to the AVG Web site, but I can't find the free version you're always talking about. They must have it pretty well hidden. Can you point me to it, Mr. M?**

A. The free version of AVG AntiVirus continues to be my favorite anti-virus program. It automatically updates daily,

has a scheduler so you can run full system scans in the middle of the night, and you can't beat the price. Most vendors do tend to hide their freebies, and the good folks at AVG are no exception, but you'll find the free version located at <http://tinyurl.com/yo9nnpk>. A paid version is also available, and you'll find a features comparison of the free versus paid versions on the site, as well.

**Q. Can you explain the difference between "Read Only," "Hidden," and "Archive" options for files?**

A. When you right-click a file and select Properties, near the bottom of the Properties dialog box you'll see the Attributes section. The items you refer to are three check-box flags or what are called file attributes that describe various characteristics of a file. Technically, it's a bit more complicated than that, but for our purposes, and so my head doesn't explode, I'm going to keep this as simple as possible.

The Read-Only attribute, as its name implies, causes a file to be "read-only," meaning that you can view it, but you cannot edit or delete it.

The Hidden attribute causes a file to be invisible under certain circumstances, such as when lists of files are displayed or when there's a full moon. For example, there are certain files within Windows that most of us have no business using, so those are typically hidden. No good can come from most of us tinkering with hidden files, so to protect us from ourselves, Microsoft designates certain files as "hidden." System files are generally hidden files, as are files that are

critical to the performance and operation of Windows.

The Archive attribute was created by Microsoft to allow developers to quickly determine whether a file requires a backup (archive) copy. The Archive attribute is established whenever an existing file is either overwritten or modified. The idea, in general, is to signal a backup program that a certain file needs to be backed up. A backup program may not know to save a new or modified file without the addition of the Archive attribute.

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## A TINY TRIVIA TEST:

1. If you were to spell out numbers, how far would you have to go until you would find the letter "A"?
2. What do bullet proof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers all have in common?
3. What do 100% of all lottery winners do?
4. What separates "60 Minutes," on CBS, from every other TV show?
5. Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of what?
6. What is the most popular boat name requested?



*See answers on page 31*



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

## DAILY KITTEN

Macho, testosterone-fueled guys like me, when we're not busy brawling in barrooms, participating in tractor-pulls or eating steel, hang out at rough-and-tumble sites like the Daily Kitten. What better way to start a day full of mayhem and chaos than with the picture of a little kitty. (Puppy lovers, don't get your kibbles in an uproar: Check out [www.dailykitten.com](http://www.dailykitten.com))

**THE MOM SONG** Sung by Anita Renfroe to the tune of the "William Tell Overture," this is a YouTube must-see. Click the "more" link to the right of the video to read the lyrics. It's guaranteed to put a smile on your face. <http://tinyurl.com/2wfat9>

**BIG.COM** My trifocals (I recently upgraded from bifocals) frequently squawk about tiny text on Web sites. Big.com to the rescue! This is a high-powered version of the Yahoo! Search engine with a twist: Everything appears in a large, easy-to-read, 14pt font. This is a blessing for anybody with a visual impairment or for those who simply want to pamper their peepers. [www.big.com](http://www.big.com)

**COFFEEGEEK.COM** Whether you prefer a fancy-shmancy CapaFrappaSpresso, or just a good old cup of joe, this is the ultimate site for coffee lovers. Here you'll find a piping hot heap o' news, articles, reviews and opinions for the discerning coffee slurper. And what better way to demonstrate your devotion to the Almighty Bean than by committing the Barista Code of Conduct to memory? You never know when you'll be called upon to recite it. <http://coffeegEEK.com>

**TALL OR NOT: CELEBRITY HEIGHT** Have you ever wondered how much taller or shorter you are than various celebrities? Me neither, but this site is fun in a rather pathetic, "I-have-no-life" kind of way. I don't like to brag, but I felt pretty good when I discovered that I tower over—well, let's see here, not Babe Ruth, not Barry Manilow, not Bill Cosby, not David Letterman, not Brooke Shield—on second thought, this site isn't that much fun after all. <http://tinyurl.com/3cagxw>

**APA HELP CENTER** At varying times, many people experience some form of depression, anxiety, or other psychological

challenge(s). The American Psychological Association's Web site provides useful links to help us learn about dealing with anxiety and stress, practice techniques for healing our bodies with our minds, and when additional assistance is warranted, locate a therapist. <http://tinyurl.com/3yljbu>

**WORST JOBS IN HISTORY** The Web site behind the U.K. television show "The Worst Jobs in History," which explores the most miserable professions of the past 2000 years. If you think you've got it rough, think of laborers during the free-spirited Middle Ages or the swinging Victorian era. Good times, indeed. Each job is described in humorous and occasionally shocking detail. Fuller, Bog-Iron Hunter, Wattle-and-Daub Applier—they're all here. <http://tinyurl.com/2tmf5c>

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## WE WANT YOUR BUSINESS CARD!

**SURE!** I'd be happy to place my name prominently before my fellow ILCRA members and drum up a little business while showing support for my state association. Please display my business card in the next four issues of Ad Infinitum. Enclosed is my card and a check made payable to ILCRA for \$100.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph:( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Nancy C. Davis, Executive Director, ILCRA, 41 SW Crescent Drive, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.

# Board Meeting Highlights

ILLINOIS COURT REPORTERS ASSOCIATION • EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2007, TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS

**PRESENT:** LeAnn Hibler, President; Jill Layton, President-Elect; Nancy LaBella, Vice-President; Judy Mosier, Secretary; Lyn Grooms, Treasurer; Dolores Doubet, Legislative Rep.; Joe Rickhoff, Region One Rep.; Seymour Wolfe, Region One Rep.; Melissa Clagg, Region Two Rep.; Stephanie Renegarbe, Region Two Rep.; Amy B. Haught, Immediate Past President; Nancy C. Davis, Executive Director. **ALSO PRESENT:** Adam Miller, Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag and Judy Lehman, NCRA Directors.

**NOT PRESENT:** Bonni Shuttleworth, Educational Liaison

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING** held March 11, 2007 submitted and approved.

**MOTION MADE, SECONDED AND CARRIED** to ratify email vote to accept amendment to Policies and Procedures Manual regarding deletion of co-legislative Chair.

**DUES** Nancy Davis reported that membership renewal reminders will be sent out shortly and calls will be made to the 115 non-renewed members.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** presented by Lyn Grooms and was approved as submitted.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT** Dee Doubet reported that our lobbyist will seek a sponsor for legislation regarding pension legislation for State Officials this fall. The security report was prepared by the Officials Committee and submitted to the Legislative Committee in support of this proposed legislation.

**BUDGET** Lyn Grooms reported on the proposed 2008 budget and approval is tabled until after convention numbers are in.

**CONVENTIONS** Nancy Davis reported that ILCRA will follow NCRA's policy regarding CEUs for speed and realtime contest participants. Convention locations were also discussed. 2009 Convention will be in Springfield which is being discussed as a permanent convention location. Discussion was had regarding the 2008 Great Lakes Convention to be held in Schaumburg.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE** Nancy LaBella reported on the membership committee's efforts which will be made towards renewals and new members.

**STUDENT MENTOR REPORT** was given by Jill Layton. The need for a new student mentor chairman was discussed.

**NCRA RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Test sites and helpers discussed for the November 3 test date. Leadership Conference discussed. LeAnn Hibler will attend. Legislative Boot Camp discussed. Dolores Doubet will attend. Convention dates discussed. Midyear (Boston, MA April 4-6, 2008) Annual (Anaheim, CA July 24-27, 2008) NCSA Annual Meeting discussed (Anaheim, CA July 24, 2008)

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Student Network Report given by Amy Haught. Board will establish student scholarship essay deadline to be adhered to without any extension. If no applications are received, no scholarship will be awarded.

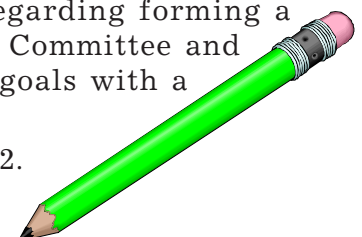
**FORM BOOK COMMITTEE FOR STATE OFFICIALS** reported that the book is three-quarters completed.

**CSR BOARD VACANCY** It was reported that ILCRA has recommended Attorney Tony Sunderman for appointment to the CSR Board to fill the vacancy of a public member.

**CAREER DAY** Discussion was had concerning a Career Day presenter information link on ILCRA website.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Various fundraisers were discussed concerning upcoming conventions. Committee Recruitment discussed. The idea of holding committee Meetings immediately prior to conventions was discussed. A discussion was had regarding forming a Strategic Planning Committee and setting long range goals with a five-year projection.

Meeting adjourned at 1:52.





## A GOOD CHUCKLE

### This Customer Really Needs Help...

If this is indeed true, it's absolutely priceless. It's supposed to be dialogue transcribed from a recording of a call to a major software company's customer support helpline. Supposedly, the employee was fired and is suing for termination without cause.

Operator: "Computer assistance; may I help you?"

Caller: "Yes, well, I'm having trouble"

Operator: "What sort of trouble?"

Caller: "Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away."

Operator: "Went away?"

Caller: "They disappeared."

Operator: "Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?"

Caller: "Nothing."

Operator: "Nothing?"

Caller: "It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type."

Operator: "Are you still in the program, or did you get out?"

Caller: "How do I tell?"

Operator: "Can you see the 'C: prompt' on the screen?"

Caller: "What's a sea-prompt?"

Operator: "Never mind, can you move your cursor around the screen?"

Caller: "There isn't any cursor; I told you, it won't accept anything I type."

Operator: "Does your monitor have a power indicator?"

Caller: "What's a monitor?"

Operator: "It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?"

Caller: "I don't know."

Operator: "Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?"

Caller: "Yes, I think so."

Operator: "Great. Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall."

Caller: "Yes, it is."

Operator: "When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?"

Caller: "No."

Operator: "Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable."

Caller: "Okay, here it is."

Operator: "Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer."

Caller: "I can't reach."

Operator: "OK. Well, can you see if it is?"

Caller: "No."

Operator: "Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?"

Caller: "Well, it's not because I don't have the right angle — it's because it's dark."

Operator: "Dark?"

Caller: "Yes, the office light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window."

Operator: "Well, turn on the office light then."

Caller: "I can't."

Operator: "No? Why not?"

Caller: "Because there's a power failure."

Operator: "A power .... A power failure? Aha. Okay, we've got it licked now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff that your computer came in?"

Caller: "Well, yes, I keep them in the closet."

Operator: "Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the store you bought it from."

Caller: "Really? Is it that bad?"

Operator: "Yes, I'm afraid it is."

Caller: "Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?"

Operator: "Tell them you're too stupid to own a computer!!!"

**“N**ever be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. A large group of professionals built the Titanic.”

— Dave Barry

**ANSWERS TO TINY TRIVIA TEST:** 1) One thousand 2) All invented by women. 3) Gain weight 4) No theme song/music 5) Their birthplace, this is called propinquity. 6) Obsession

# 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 Infitum.
- 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 Infitum, 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.