



**IL**  
**CRA**



**ILLINOIS  
COURT  
REPORTERS  
ASSOCIATION**

**WINTER**

**2016**

## President's Message



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Happy Holidays, ILCRA Members.

In the midst of holiday preparations and parties, 2015 is winding down. Hopefully if you wanted to be busy workwise, you were. If you were wishing for work to slow down a tad to allow you time to decorate your home, do your shopping, take that quick trip, you were able to get that breather. But before the year is wrapped up nice and tight, I always take a few minutes to reflect on the past year before making proverbial New Year's resolutions.

During 2015 ILCRA provided freelance and official members with two continuing education opportunities. Both the marathon session in the spring and our annual convention in September were great successes. I'd like to thank each attendee for your support and continued dedication to embrace technology, remain in the know with our profession, and maintain professional credentials. 2016 will offer two CE opportunities I'd like to highlight. If you know someone who is not a member of ILCRA or NCRA or STAR, take a minute and encourage them to attend with you.

Hopefully you received and read the eBlast announcing ILCRA partnering with STAR in 2016 for STARtech16 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago March 11th through the 13th. The executive board of ILCRA during our September board meeting discussed offering a one-day technology-based seminar to members knowing that it's a nonrenewal license year. We also discussed not having an annual convention in September in light of NCRA's annual convention being in Chicago in

2016. Partnering with STAR in 2016 solves the executive board's desire to providing continuing education opportunities and professional development networking to ILCRA members. I'm looking forward to attending and I hope to see you there.

Another upcoming event to put on your calendar is National Court Reporting & Captioning week February 14-20, 2016. Have you given any thought to how you'd like to participate? If you're an official, for example, do you want your chief judge to acknowledge your hard work? Maybe have a small luncheon for the officials in your circuit? If you work as a freelancer, do you want the agency owner to thank you for your stellar performance and maybe toast your continued success? This is the time to celebrate our profession as well as let others know what we do, which is why the ILCRA board members will again visit the court reporting schools in the area to offer encouragement, share a few war stories, and enjoy cookies and cupcakes. Please let us know if you'd like to join a board member during a visit. Each of you has a unique perspective to offer, and the students enjoy having professional court reporters visiting their classroom.

Before I sign off for 2015, again happy holidays to you and yours. May 2016 bring you success, professional growth, good health, peace and joy.

—Vernita Allen-Williams

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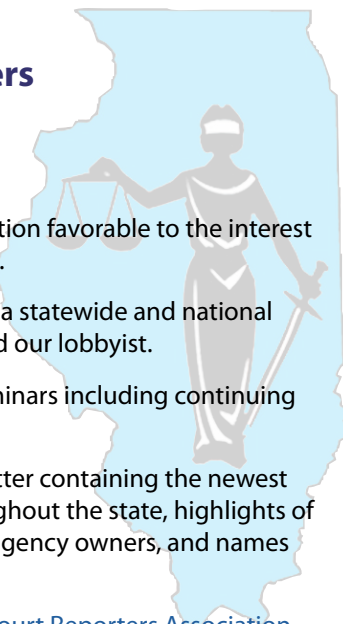
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For a listing of all committees and current committee members

[CLICK HERE](#)

## What ILCRA Does for Illinois Reporters

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



## ILCRA MISSION STATEMENT

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

STAR and the  
Illinois Court  
Reporters  
Association  
present

# STARtech16



The Drake Hotel \* March 11-13, 2016 \* Chicago, IL

ILCRA and STAR are thrilled to announce

## STARtech16

March 11-13, 2016

at The Drake Hotel in Chicago

[CONFERENCE REGISTRATION](#)

Register Online Today!

[HOTEL REGISTRATION](#)

## Schedule

*This program is APPROVED by NCRA for a maximum of 1.2 CEUs  
Schedule of seminars subject to change without notice.*

### Friday, March 11, 2016

8:30 AM - 1:00 PM  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

11:00 AM - 7:00 PM  
**Registration Desk Open**

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  
**Lunch on Own**

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM  
**NOT Your Father's Elevator Speech  
"A One Minute Ride That Can Last Forever"**

During this interactive session, Nancy and Rob will help you create your own from-the-heart company message so you can take advantage of everyday "sales" opportunities. Reporters, gain the confidence you need to get the jobs you want. Firm owners, proper preparation for telephone, in-person, or trade show encounters will make all the difference in your results! Engage in role playing to practice handling objections. Hone your presentation and selling style. Don't have a "style"? No problem! We'll work together to develop yours.

As an added bonus for STAR/ILCRA members, Nancy and Rob will offer 15-minute private training sessions to personalize your message. There will be sign-up sheets at their booth. Be sure to take advantage of this

offer and pave your pathway to sales success.  
(0.15 CEUs)  
*Speakers: Nancy Varallo, Rob Deziel*

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM  
**Refreshment Break**

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM  
**STENOtalks  
"When Faced With Six Forks in the Road ... Take Them All"**

Kick back with a cocktail and explore both historical and futuristic pathways in this casual TED Talks-style session, quick moving, informative, and entertaining. Our friends from Stenograph will share embarrassing service calls, where-are-they-now stories, e-mail/Smartphone tips and tricks, backup options, engineering developments, and much more.  
(0.15 CEUs)

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM  
**Welcome Dinner with Exhibitors**

You'll have unlimited access to explore today's technological and productivity tools with our exhibitors. Come hungry - here will be plenty of heavy hors d'oeuvres to eat and a hosted bar to enjoy while socializing with your colleagues.

6:30 PM - 10:00 PM  
**STAR Lounge**

Stroll the red carpet to sparkle with your host, Irv Starkman, the heart and soul of STAR, with an open bar with open conversations in the inimitable STAR Lounge. Admission is included with your conference registration, so be sure to stop by for some of the best networking opportunities in the reporting business.

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Register Online Today!**

## Saturday, March 12, 2016

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

### Breakfast Worth Getting Up For

This ain't your typical runny oatmeal and English muffin hotel continental breakfast. Be sure to rise and shine early for a real, honest to goodness, just-like-Mom-makes hot breakfast with the exhibitors and all the friends you made the night before in the STAR Lounge.

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

### Registration Desk Open

#### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

### Case CATalyst Training - Translate Options

The term artificial intelligence is sometimes used to describe something that appears to happen automatically or magically, but when you look a little closer you'll see what the mechanics were behind the scene to make the action happen. In this class we will look closer at the translate options available in CATalyst to help you get a cleaner, more accurate translation of your steno notes whether to your screen, the attorneys viewing or the CART window.

- Drag & Drop Analysis & True Stroke Drag & Drop
- CART View
- Smart Parens
- Conflict Resolution
- Case Specific Number Conversion File
- Number conversion options

(0.15 CEUs)

Speaker: Pam Szczecinski

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

### New Exhibits & Technology Panel "Same Highway ... Brand New Cars"

This panel of experts will focus on new technologies in the video and paperless exhibit arenas, including picture-in-picture video and the newest paperless exhibit products and how these technologies interact.

(0.15 CEUs)

Speakers: Jason Richmond, Jim DeCrescenzo, Kathleen Dominiak

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM

### Refreshment Break

#### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

### Case CATalyst Training - Brief It & Live Suggestions

Almost every reporter could use a good brief when they're writing. The more you write, the more you write. Learn about the most common words and phrases most reporters brief. Maybe you have a good brief in your dictionary but you don't always use it. Sometimes you just need a brief for a long name like Szczecinski. In addition to a list of great briefs your software will display for you, CATalyst will also keep an eye out for untranslated steno and offer you suggestions to what it could be. Clean up the untranslate quickly without ever having your fingers leave your steno machine.

- Personal Briefs
- Reminder Briefs
- Suggested Briefs
- Replacing untranslates using Live Suggestions
- Defining untranslates using Live Suggestions

(0.15 CEUs)

Speaker: Pam Szczecinski

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Register Online Today!

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

### **Walking With Your Head in the Clouds, With Your Feet Planted Firmly on the Ground**

Are you trying to decide whether you should stay with the tried-and-true in-house server infrastructure or subscribe to a hosted cloud server? 80 percent of the market still relies on in-house server infrastructures, but is that the best solution for an office or an individual working reporter? Dan Bistany will give us the pros and cons of both services and educate us on which service might be best for you. He will also discuss backup service and data recovery in the event the unthinkable happens. You don't want to have your head in the clouds when it comes to your infrastructure.

(0.15 CEUs)

*Speaker: Dan Bistany*

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

### **Lunch On Own**

### **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

### **Case CATalyst Training - Case Preparation**

The goal is to keep your untranslates to a minimum. If you're lucky enough to know what's coming like your speakers' names, witness, plaintiff or defendant's names, the case prep feature will give you a heads up and a tool to build dictionary entries so you're better prepared. If you don't have time to define it before the proceedings, begin to do it as you write.

Defining on the fly keeps your hands where they need to be, on the writer! Scan back to the last untranslate and define or replace the untranslate. Get your attorneys' names into colloquy or by line format whenever time permits. Have your defines global

forward as well as backward. In case someone else is watching your screen, they'll see it cleaner and clearer.

- Case Preparation
- Scan Define
- Power Define
- EZ-Speaker define

(0.15 CEUs)

*Speaker: Pam Szczecinski*

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Paralegal & Lawyers Panel

### **"Your Litigation Techfinders"**

Moderated by Firm Owner Shelly Hunter, these high-tech consumers will share their insights into how reporting and peripheral services complement their trial preparation and presentation pathways, what they look for when choosing providers, and how we can continue to enhance our benefit to the bench and bar.

(0.15 CEUs)

*Speakers: Jeff Ingraham*

3:30 PM - 4:00 PM

### **Refreshment Break**

4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

### **Aurora Theater Shooting Case: Navigating an Unexpected Journey**

Joyce Martin led the reporting team, following the tragic 2012 mass shooting inside a Century 16 movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. Joyce will talk about providing realtime during the trial, the reporting team's many challenges, and what it was like to manage such a high-profile case, from both technical and emotional viewpoints.

(0.15 CEUs)

*Speaker: Joyce Martin*

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Register Online Today!**

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

**“That’s A Wrap!” Cocktails in the Palm Court  
“Reaching the Libation Station”**

Join us in the Palm Court for cocktails to wind down your day. Enjoy a tour and let the haunting beauty of the historic Drake Hotel remain as you venture out for Saturday night in downtown Chicago, just steps away from renowned restaurants and shopping.

The party doesn’t stop here - be sure to stick around for Sunday morning tech sessions, and even more networking opportunity!

## Sunday, March 13, 2016

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

**Continental Breakfast**

8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

**Registration Desk Open**

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

**Tech Tips & Tricks for All!**

Far beyond Catalyst, our featured presenter has a road map of tools to make everyday computer life easier, from Windows 10 to shortcuts to updates to backup protocols and more. This session is geared for firm owners, reporters, schedulers – anyone who uses a computer will benefit from Pam’s remarkable expertise honed for the reporting profession.

(0.15 CEUs)

*Speaker: Pam Szczecinski*

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM

**Refreshment Break**

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

**Case CATalyst Training - Best of Edit Commands**

Save time editing by using fast and effective edit shortcuts. Explore the global options, punctuation shortcuts and the transcript corrections tools the software offers.

- Punctuation shortcuts (and custom options)
- Global shortcuts – personal globals, selective globals and more
- Homophones
- Macros
- Mistran Minder
- Restore the Extras.ZIP file to your user
- Create your own AccelerWriters
- Create dictionary entries for AccelerWriters
- Use AccelerWriters during realtime

(0.15 CEUs)

*Speaker: Pam Szczecinski*

12:30 PM

**Conference Adjourned**

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION Register Online Today!**

# Veterans' History Project

**Jill Layton**  
ILCRA VHP Chair

The court reporters of the State of Illinois have been very generous this year with volunteering for the Veterans' History Project. ILCRA has worked hand-in-hand with Cheryl Walker, the Illinois Veterans' History Project Coordinator with the Illinois State Library.

The 19th Judicial Circuit's third VHP was a huge success. There were 28 histories recorded by 28 court reporters with five judges participating. The Quilt of Valor was displayed and additions were accepted. Volunteers were from the Lake County Bar Association, State's Attorney's office, Public Defender's office, Lake County Sheriff, Armark, Antioch School District, Waukegan Art Council, and Waukegan Council representative Barry Burton.

At the American Legion State Convention in Springfield in

July, a VHP booth was manned by court reporting volunteers. Information was distributed to veterans to make them aware of this awesome program. There were several veterans whose stories were recorded and preserved. Following the convention, many of the veterans contacted Chairman Layton to schedule a VHP in their home post.

In LeRoy, Illinois, a VHP was conducted when the Vietnam Wall was there. What an incredible experience for the court reporters as well as the veterans.

Our current contact with the Illinois Veterans' History Project is Sue Burkholder, [sburkholder@ilsos.net](mailto:sburkholder@ilsos.net).

ILCRA has a very [informative link](#) with the necessary forms on the website. If you have a veteran in your life, please consider recording their piece of history.

Thank you to all of the court reporters who have taken part in this rewarding project.

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We Make It Happen **>> Anywhere**<sup>™</sup>  
**CHICAGO-AREA REALTIME**

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Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag, President, is pleased to announce that Chicago-area Realtime & Court Reporting has been acquired by Planet Depos, LLC, a global court reporting company.

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



# Court Reporter Hears It All During Career

**Don O'Brien**

**Staff Writer**

Reprinted from the Herald-Whig, www.whig.com

Kent Evans has seen it all inside the various courtrooms in the 8th Judicial Circuit in his nearly four decades as a court reporter. He is the fly on the wall, taking down everything that is said for the official record. He rarely speaks, yet is a vital cog to what happens in court.

As you would expect, Evans could write a book. Times when people haven't acted like they should certainly stand out. One of his favorite stories comes out of Schuyler County and a day he was working in the courthouse near Rushville's town square. Carson Klitz was the presiding judge. He had a distinct look about him, Evans said.

"He had a long beard, was a motorcycle rider and was an old Navy guy," Evans said.

One day, a prisoner decided he had enough and bolted from the courtroom. As the Schuyler County Sheriff's deputy chased the man into the streets of Rushville, four other prisoners sat motionless in the front row.

"(Klitz) pulled his glasses down and looks out into the well of the courtroom, and the prisoners were sitting out there," Evans said. "There was no security. He looks out over his glasses and says to one of the defendants, 'If you have a hankerin' to run, I'm reckonin' there is no one here who is going to stop ya.'"

None of the prisoners flinched. Eventually the deputy came back with the would-be escapee in tow.

"I thought that was hilarious, and they all sat there," Evans said. The job of a court reporter -- or stenographer -- is fascinating. They

sit near the bench and take down every single word, including all of the "ums" and "ahs" and every other sound that is made. They bang out the words on a 22-button keyboard with amazing accuracy. Anyone who has transcribed knows how tough it is.

Evans hears everything, but he might not be listening all of the time. When people start talking fast, there isn't much time to pay attention to what is actually being said.

"I think of myself as a conduit for words coming in my ear and going out my fingers," Evans said. "The faster they go, the less I am able to listen to what is really happening. We get to hear details, but we don't get to hear it all."

The job of a court reporter isn't easy. You need a special type of resolve. While most of what they hear and see is mundane, there are times when it gets gruesome. Evans has been part to many murder trials. Some training he took early in his career helped prepare him for what was to come. He attended to a seminar in Chicago where graphic images were displayed to get a group of young court reporters to help toughen them up.

"As much as you can shut it down, you do," he said.

Evans will wrap up a 39-year career as a court reporter Thursday. He plans to spend plenty of time with his wife, Donna, and their two grown children, both of whom still live in Quincy. He also wants to spend time with his 90-year-old mother who also lives here. A survivor of throat cancer, Evans has learned to live each day to its fullest.

"I learned through my bout with throat cancer that each day we walk this earth is a free day -- a day that is somehow given to us and not one that we've earned or are entitled to," he said. "So I just hope to share what free days I have in retirement with people who mean the most to me."

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# No Interpreter? No Problem

**Mary Schenk**  
Staff Writer

Reprinted from The News-Gazette, [www.news-gazette.com](http://www.news-gazette.com)

URBANA — Kelly Burwell heard barely a word of a trial in a Champaign County courtroom Thursday. But the juror didn't miss a minute of the testimony or deliberations, thanks to the skills of a veteran court reporter.

"I was surprised to be chosen," Burwell said of her selection as a juror in a domestic battery trial.

The 56-year-old Urbana woman has been severely hearing impaired since age 3, when an illness robbed her of that sense. She can only make out sounds with her hearing aids.

The wife, mother of two sons and former carpenter reads lips proficiently and knows sign language.

But when no certified sign language interpreter was available to help in court during jury selection Wednesday and the trial

Thursday, Laurie Workman was pressed into a slightly different kind of service.

Workman, 49, has been a court reporter for 29 years, most of them at the Champaign County courthouse. Normally, her responsibility is to record the official record inside the courtroom.

This week, she was assigned to do real-time translation for Burwell during jury selection, the trial, and for the first time anyone can think of, inside the jury room.

"I have to write so she can understand. It doesn't all come up completely translated. Most of it comes up correctly but it's not edited," Workman said.

The court reporter uses a steno machine — she calls it her writer — to record every word spoken, using shorthand with symbols that are nonsensical to the untrained.

In days of yore, court reporters had to look at those symbols on a strip of paper, go back to their desks and type the words they meant on a typewriter.

Computer software now allows those symbols to



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For nearly 30 years, Jensen Litigation Solutions has been providing the very best in court reporting services to our clients. To meet ever-increasing demand, we are always looking to add talented, professional, and highly motivated reporters to our team.

Based out of our beautiful office space in the heart of the Chicago Loop, we provide top-of-the-line resources to all of our reporters. At Jensen you can expect to benefit from flexible scheduling, competitive compensation, extensive training/educational opportunities, outstanding amenities, and facilities that are second to none.

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## Scheduling & Compensation

- Flexible Schedule - Bi-Weekly Paycheck Via Direct Deposit -
- Pay Incentives Based On Degrees & Certifications Earned -

## Training & Programs

- Complimentary CEU Courses - CaseCatalyst Training Workshops -
- Mentoring Program For Brand-New Reporters -

## Amenities & Facilities

- Complimentary Workspace Available - Rentable Private & Semi-Private Office Space -
- Spacious Kitchen With Complimentary Beverages - Fun Extracurricular Company Events -
- Positive Work Environment With Familial Atmosphere -

automatically translate into recognizable — for the most part — words on a computer screen.

“Real time is live, word for word, like closed captioning on TV,” said Workman’s supervisor, Melissa Clagg.

“In the reporter world, we say it’s like standing naked because everyone can see your mistakes as you are writing,” Workman said.

Clagg, Workman and their fellow court reporters have to record 225 words per minute to be state certified. But most in Champaign County have a “merit” designation, meaning they can record at least 260 a minute.

“In real time, you have to have everything translate clearly because you can’t go back and edit it. The software translates but we have our own dictionaries to tell it how to translate,” Clagg said. “When we take the speed test, we can make mistakes and go back and edit later. With real time, you have to be on your game.”

And Workman was, according to Burwell.

“It was good. She was with me the whole time,” said Burwell.

### **Difanis: A county first**

After jury selection on Wednesday, Workman said, Burwell “gave me a big thumbs up and a smile and said I did a good job.”

Presiding Judge Tom Difanis said this is the first time in his 40-year career he can recall having a hearing-impaired juror actually deliberate. Real-time translation by court reporters has happened many times for parties in litigation or defendants, but not deliberating jurors.

The Americans with Disabilities Act spells out that “reasonable accommodations” have to be made for those with special needs.

“We do things on the fly around here in Champaign County,” Difanis said.

He learned of Burwell’s need for assistance on Wednesday afternoon when the pool of potential jurors was brought to his courtroom. Since no sign language interpreter was available, Clagg tabbed Workman to assist her.

Clagg noted there is a dire need for professional sign language interpreters and court reporters, both being under-chosen careers.

Difanis had Workman set up her steno machine and laptop computer on the counsel table next to the assistant state’s attorney. Burwell sat next to her, instead of in the jury box, watching Workman’s computer screen.

After the trial was over, Burwell graciously answered questions about her experience for Difanis and Judge Heidi Ladd, Clagg and The News-Gazette. The court folks were anxious to find out how they could improve the process for the future.

Burwell and Workman agreed that one of the downsides of the real-time translation is that the faster someone is speaking, the faster the computer screen scrolls. That made it a little difficult for Burwell to be able to look up from the screen at the speaker to pick up facial and body expressions.

### **Lessons learned**

Burwell would have preferred a sign language interpreter who could stand next to the witness so she could watch the witness’ face while taking in the signing.

Jurors are instructed at the end of a trial to consider the manner in which witnesses testify in order to weigh their credibility.

In Thursday’s trial, the opening statements and testimony took only about an hour while the deliberations lasted closer to two.

Workman was a little nervous about how to handle the deliberations. She had never been present during deliberations before, either as a reporter or a juror.

When someone spoke, she wrote the word “Juror” and Burwell was able to look around the table to see who was offering an opinion.

Asked if she thought her presence in the jury room slowed the deliberations, Workman said: “In my opinion, everybody needs to slow down a little more in life. Everyone started talking at once. I stopped (them) and said, ‘It would be helpful if you could speak one at a time and thereafter, they tried very hard, which was helpful.’”

“It was interesting,” Workman said of the normally sacrosanct deliberations. “I would say everyone was polite.”

The jury acquitted the defendant of striking his girlfriend.

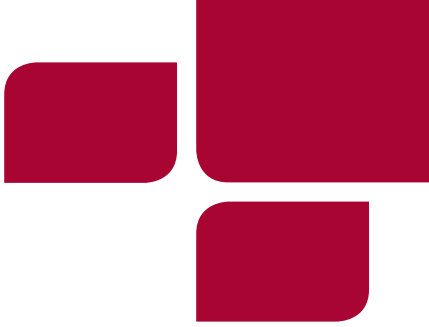
Both Workman and Burwell, who hugged as they parted, admitted being pretty tired after the long day but agreed they would repeat their respective roles if asked.

“If no interpreter is available, I’m glad to have that,” Burwell said of Workman’s effort.



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# “Sometime / Some Time”

*Margie Wakeman Wells*  
[www.margieholdscourt.com](http://www.margieholdscourt.com)

Some extra hints about the differences between one word and two: “Sometime” as an adjective means “occasional” or “here today/gone tomorrow.”

...He is a sometime friend.

“Some time” is an adjective and noun combination. “Time” is the noun. There are times when it has to be two words because the grammar calls for a noun.

Here the word “time” is the main word in the expression. We don’t say, “Ago I saw him.”

...some time ago...

...some time back...

Here it is the object of the preposition, which always has to be a noun.

...for some time...

...in some time...

...at some time...

Otherwise, “some time” is two words when it means “a period of time.” Often, with this meaning, the word “some” can be left out.

...I have some time tomorrow.

...We spent some time discussing it.

...There will be some time for that later today.

“Sometime” is an adverb and means at “a point in time.” “Time” doesn’t work by itself here. And here the whole word can be left out.

...I will see you sometime this afternoon.

...We met sometime last week.

...She will be here sometime later.

Happy punctuating!

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# Dear Nancy

**Nancy Varallo**  
*thevarallogroup.com*

**Dear Nancy:** Is there a rule for the use of the trademark or registered symbol after the brand name of a product or medication? If so, do you use it only on the first mention but not throughout the transcript? Please help.

*Signed, To Use or Not to Use*

**Dear To Use or Not to Use:** That is the question. (Pace Shakespeare)

I wasn't sure myself, so first I went to Morson's English Guide for Court Reporters. Couldn't find it referenced there, so I did a little Google investigation. (Did you catch the hint there?) What do I love best about Google? It's the great buffet, serving up all kinds of options for you: the informed, the educated guess, the custom and practice, the far out. And once you've sampled far more than you can possibly digest, it asks you to click to the next page. All the world's a buffet. (Pace again, William)

But we were talking about punctuating transcripts, not my next cruise, weren't we? Riveting, yes. From my search, I got three answers – each from a different website – and they are:

- 1) When using the name of a federally registered item or service, use the circle-r (®) mark on first use.
- 2) Try iPod as an example. Technically, you do not have to put the trademark symbol next to the iPod name as long as you make it clear that it is Apple's registered trademark. However, if you want to be a stickler about symbols, then put it in. As long as you credit Apple (e.g., by saying "Apple iPod" instead of just "iPod"), there should be no trouble.
- 3) The Chicago Manual of Style says the symbols ® and ™ "need not be used in running text."

And since I believe that the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stenos) is the

greatest principle on the planet, and since I always choose the easy way out when it's an option, I'd choose the third answer. Just KISS me and I'm yours. J<sup>®</sup>™©

**Dear Nancy:** I'm a solid writer, but haven't provided realtime for attorneys. My firm now advertises that all its reporters are realtime-ready, on any job; the lawyers need only ask. Frankly, this scares me! You never know what a job will be like, and I'm not one to provide a service that isn't "just so". But the message from the firm owner is clear: Be ready! Can you give me some advice to help me to "be ready" every day on my job? Signed, Not Ready for Prime Time

**Dear Not Ready for Prime Time:** Your question actually highlights a dilemma agencies face: how to compete. If the best reporters distinguish themselves from all others by their ability to do interactive RT, and fast-turnaround drafts, then we (the agency) want to advertise that that's who we are. Hire us!

We take it as an article of faith that stenographic writers are superior to all other forms of making the record (voicewriters and Stenomaskers in particular) because of our ability to provide quality realtime output. Realtime has been with us for two decades. (My husband, Ed Varallo, published his Realtime Writer's Manual in 1992.) Students learn RT in school. You can't escape the many RT seminars on offer. NCRA has RT certifications. So every stenographic reporter is realtime ready, every day, on every job. Right?

Well, maybe not. Maybe some of us have been happy to let the firm's all-stars do the RT heavy lifting while we set the bar lower for ourselves. But let me not place blame. Nevertheless, the uncomfortable truth is that too many reporters have not upped their game to meet the standards

of the topflight court reporters of today. The all-stars in my agency look forward to arriving on a job and being asked, "Can you hook up to me today?" You bet! Extra bucks per page!

How to be RT ready on short notice? First, of course, you need to write cleanly. Then all things are possible. You can make yourself a clean writer by practicing — not for speed, but for clean execution. Practice a bit below your comfortable speed, until you can write that speed cleanly; then notch up your practice speed a bit, not more than 10 wpm. Clean writing is an acquired skill, and you can do it! Make sure you use enough briefs to cut down the many strokes you will have to write each day. Fewer strokes = fewer misstrokings = cleaner notes. Each time you work on a job in a particular subject-matter area (accident reconstruction, asbestos, banking & finance, construction, environmental), keep a discrete job dictionary containing entries, and special briefs, specific to that subject. They are then available to be looked over before any job you go on.

Ask for a prior transcript for every job you go to. Read it, and prepare your job dictionary before you get to the job. Create easy-to-write briefs for the vocabulary you see. No prior transcript? The Internet is a great place to research the case. Can't find the lawsuit? Research the company and read about its key players. What do they manufacture or sell? Look up the witness. Is he an expert? Scholar.google.com is a great resource to find scientific articles and literature references.

I know this sounds like a lot of work, but it's what our most competent writers do. For them, preparation is part of the job – every day. You wouldn't go to bed without brushing your teeth. Don't go to a job without preparing for it. Your notes will be cleaner, your editing time reduced – and your clients will be well satisfied. If the client is happy, your agency owner is happy. Sounds like a win-win to me.

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## Illinois Court Reporters Association

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## ILCRA 2015 DATES

### **March 11-13, 2016**

STARtech16

A joint meeting between

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### **April 9, 2016**

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### **August 13, 2016**

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