



IL

CRA

SUMMER

2016



ILLINOIS
COURT
REPORTERS
ASSOCIATION

President's Message



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Greetings, ILCRA members. From the balmy 74 degrees I noted this morning on my way to the courthouse, it would appear summer temperatures have finally arrived. By the time you're reading this, the official first day of summer will be in the past. With another season upon us, I'd like to focus my message on some of the opportunities for professional development ILCRA members will have during NCRA's Convention & Expo hosted in Chicago, August 4-7 at the Chicago Hilton.

As professional reporters, we all know the importance of staying on top of changes in our chosen profession. So how do you keep plugged in? What steps do you employ to make sure you're "in the know" as a licensed CSR in Illinois? Have you attended any conventions with vendors present or scheduled a one-on-one software training session to maximize the wonderful software you use? No? You're not alone. But summer is here and NCRA will be in Chicago and I encourage you to attend. (Additionally, our ILCRA Board meeting will be held on Friday, August 5, 7-9 p.m. in the McCormick Board Room in the Chicago Hilton. The ILCRA Annual Business Meeting will be held on Saturday, August 6, 8-9:30 a.m. in the Boulevard B meeting room and all ILCRA members are invited to attend both meetings!)

After 30 years of reporting, I can honestly say I have enjoyed every single convention, seminar, and marathon session I have attended. Even before becoming a member of the executive board of ILCRA, I attended conventions. Meeting reporters from other states, listening about a pressing issue they may be facing or recently solved is cathartic for me. I've learned to be a

kinder attendee. I smile, nod, and refrain from carrying on a conversation while a speaker is making a presentation. Having stood in their shoes, I know it's not an easy task to speak to a room full of court reporters.

If you are unable to attend NCRA's Convention & Expo this year, I hope you have the opportunity to visit one of the court reporting programs, speak with the students, or maybe take an online class. During ILCRA's September 2015 convention I had a moment to speak with Teresa Ozuna about Midstate's bachelor program designed to give you credit for the time you spent in court reporting school earning your AA degree. What an opportunity for those who wish to pursue a bachelor's degree.

If you're not keen on the idea of attending a convention, visiting a court reporting program, or going back to school, maybe with the longer daylight hours you'll get back into speed building. I hope I'm not alone when I say: Is it me, or are attorneys speaking faster? Okay, maybe it's me. So what am I going to do about it? Practice, practice, practice, because I know there is a need for speed in the courtrooms I presently cover.

Hopefully, reading this message has planted a seed which you will cultivate during the summer and reap the harvest of your efforts come fall. In the meantime, I wish you and your families' good health, peace, joy, and a fun summer.

~ Vernita Allen-Williams

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

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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.

The Dog Days of Summer

Dave Wenhold, CAE, PLC
ILCRA's Executive Director

As we enter into the summer months, everyone is thinking of beaches, lakes, or other vacation spots and time spent with loved ones. Years ago in Washington, D.C., Congress used to take months off, and the entire city lost most of its hustle and bustle; but times have moved on, and now their recess is limited to a few weeks where they are often working from their home districts. Most of us are in the same boat and with good reason! Technology, accessibility, and responsibility have moved our society from one of "gone fishing" to one of "gone fishing...with my iPhone or Android!"

For the reporting industry, the summers have historically been slower months because judges and lawyers usually take vacations. However, now that lawyers are constantly plugged into their offices, they still expect instant results from their court reporters. Additionally, as the need for captioning and CART grows, so does the need for providers to provide services, regardless of the season. Fortunately, most of the captioners and remote CART providers I know can do their work from a hotel room in sunny San Diego just as effectively as they can work from their home in Chicago or

Springfield. Technology is a blessing and a curse sometimes.

For officials, the summer months can be a good time to catch up on those backlogged transcripts and look for other ways to add value. With most states facing severe budget deficits and mandatory furloughs, every state employee needs to be adding value! For example, a recent severe budget issue in a state resulted in an eight-week furlough for every judicial employee (except judges) over the past year. Also, that time could not be taken as vacation time (which makes no sense to me!) Can you imagine not being paid for two months out of the year? Yikes!

We all long for those good ole days where we go camping, fishing, or sunbathing for days and never hear a phone ring, answer 400 emails or worry about needing to get something done for the office. Unfortunately, time moves on, a reality that we all face. We live in a world that expects us to be available at a moment's notice, and if we are not, the depo, captioning or CART job will simply go to someone who is.

I truly hope you can find a way this summer to unplug and unwind a little. Spend time recharging your batteries and with your loved ones. Try to regain some of the work/life balance because you know after Labor Day, it will be full steam ahead until the holidays. For me, it's time to try and go fishing...with the iPhone, of course ;-)

Veterans History Project at National

NCRA and NCRF are seeking volunteer interviewers and transcribers to participate in a special Veterans History Project held during the 2016 NCRA Convention & Expo, Aug. 4-7, at the Hilton Chicago, Chicago, Ill. The VHP event, scheduled for Aug. 7, will include participation by members from several local chapters of the Military Order of the Purple Heart serving the Chicago area. There will be two sessions, the first from 10 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. and the second from 2 p.m.- 3:30 p.m. Six veterans will be interviewed concurrently during each session.

Charged by Congress in 1958, the Military Order of the Purple Heart is composed of military men and women who received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds suffered in combat. Although membership is restricted to the combat-wounded, the organization supports all veterans and their families with a myriad of nationwide programs held by chapters and national service officers. Its mission is to foster an environment of goodwill and camaraderie among combat wounded veterans, promote patriotism, support necessary legislative initiatives, and, most importantly, provide service to all veterans and their families.

NCRA members interested in volunteering to participate in the event can contact April Weiner, NCRF Foundation Manager, at aweiner@ncra.org or 800-272-6272 ext. 152. Please note your availability for the sessions and if you are interested in transcribing the interview, interviewing the veteran, or both.

ILCRA Board & Business Meeting

All current members are welcome to attend!

The **ILCRA Board Meeting** will be held on Friday, August 5, 7-9 p.m. in the McCormick Board Room in the Chicago Hilton.

The **ILCRA Annual Business Meeting** will be held on Saturday, August 6, 8-9:30 a.m. in the Boulevard B room.

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Junior Achievement Career Day at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Waukegan, IL

Vernita Allen-Williams
ILCRA President



On May 20 I attended my first Junior Achievement Career Day. Paperwork has to be filled out beforehand if you've never been a speaker for Junior Achievement. Upon my arrival I was treated to a continental breakfast, met some of the other speakers, and then headed to my first classroom.

If you've never attended a career day for junior high school students, you may want to bring another court reporter with you.



The noise level was unexpected, and the teacher present when I arrived was not the regular teacher...okay. First impressions are important. It's natural for me to remain calm and NEVER let them see me sweat.

With a smile, I told the substitute to continue while I set up my machine and handed out fliers before beginning. While setting up my machine I listened to two students present storyboards describing their goals and how they planned to achieve them. When I was ready, I let the substitute know.

One of the young men shocked me knowing not only what a court reporter is but also the difference between official, freelance, captioner, and CART. Wow, I guess someone's spreading the word. Was it you?

If it wasn't you, invite me to attend a career day at your local high school or community college. Together we can educate the public: Court reporting is still a viable career choice and Illinois needs court reporters!

Comfort is Fatal to One's Career

18-Year Experienced Newbie

Kathryn Thomas, RDR, CCR

ILCRA President-Elect

It's raining work. Hallelujah! And it's NEW work, work that I've not done so far. Some of this work doesn't fit in the handy freelance-official-captioning box in which we like to categorize our steno work -- or categorize ourselves.

How is this happening? Not because I'm special or lucky. It's because I'm willing to change.

Comfort is fatal to one's career.

A rut is a grave with the ends not filled in yet. The only thing constant is change. The platitudes seen on cross-stitched pillows on Pinterest boards worldwide.

They're true! No matter how successful you are NOW, if you don't think you need to change in order for your career to keep or increase its momentum, you're going to be disappointed.

HERE ARE THE KEY REASONS I'M GETTING THESE JOBS: I stay open to new opportunities. I'm willing to upgrade my equipment. I'm willing to drastically change my work setup. I PRACTICE.

I've done my share of depositions, a few hearings and grand juries, and a lot of CART. Last month (was it only last month?) I said YES to three jobs that I didn't envision myself doing when I passed my last 225 Q&A nearly two decades ago. In short, last month I captioned three university commencement ceremonies, provided in-stadium captioning for several baseball games, and provided instant transcripts for a nationally syndicated political radio talk show.

That's key reason #1! Stay open to new opportunities. "No, I've never done that work." For cryin' out loud, if you say that, you'll NEVER do that work!

We do CART for a large university, which had several commencement ceremonies this year, so I upgraded my regular CAT software to the full captioning suite. (Might I add, I completely changed software providers at this time, so I had an additional learning curve). We captioners set up in the AV/media/tech room, next to the camera and sound operators. I watched the ceremonies from the backstage monitors. One of the tech staff set a camera to point at the Titantron or whatever the big stadium overhead is (I don't know what it's called. In the WWE it's called the Titantron, so there you are) so I could see the actual captions. We did NOT caption each student's name as they walked across the stage. Everyone has a program with the students listed, so they can follow along. I did have scripts for the ceremonies, as well as some of the speeches that were made, which helped greatly.

That's key reason #2. Be willing to upgrade your equipment. That job can't be done by regular CAT software.

Let's talk about baseball. I got offered the chance to provide in-stadium captioning for some of Wrigley Field's home games! No, I don't drive up to the friendly confines every once in a while -- it's done remotely at my coworking space in O'Fallon, Illinois. My only internet service option at home is substandard, so I rented some space from a friend of mine who has his own office. I've got my captioning going and my little mini-MLB Game Day window up so I can see how the game is progressing. It's fun to be part of the show! I grew up Cubs but have since moved to Cardinal Nation, so it's quite nostalgic for me to be rooting for the Cubs again. I don't know who I'll cheer for when I caption a game that's Cubs v. Cardinals. I'll just have to root for whichever team plays someone I have a crush on. (spoiler alert: Jake Arrieta)

That's key reason #3. Be willing to change your work setup and think outside the box. If you've got to take major steps, and it will be worth it to do so, for heaven's sake, DO SO.

My next assignment came from an agency new to me, but I'd developed a friendship with the owner over the years and they know I got the chops, so they invited me to help with an ongoing assignment on an as-needed basis. This agency provides instant-delivery transcripts for a daily national talk show, and they need another person to help out. It's challenging, because it's wall-to-wall colloquy, multiple speakers, and they talk FAST. When they have guests, they talk FASTER. Every hour on the hour I send a rough draft to the show's staff, and at the end of the three hours I clean it up and send the final out. What helps is that the show is on for 20 minutes, then there's a commercial break for a few minutes, then the show, then commercials, etc. so I do have some time to clean it up, but I need to write well and fast in order for it to work.

Key reason #4. Keep improving your skills! PRACTICE. That work requires SPEED. Ten or even five years ago, I wouldn't have been able to handle this assignment.

Were these changes EASY? Was I COMFORTABLE? Absolutely not! I stumbled! I panicked at times! Last month my stomach was tense more than it was calm! Heck, at the time I'm writing this we're trying to figure out why I'm not able to connect through a modem. Isn't troubleshooting a big bucket of enthusiastic joy?!

But let me reiterate: Change is constant. Reporting and captioning today is not like it was five years ago. Reporting and captioning five years from now will not be the same. If you choose to do things exactly like you did ten years ago, you've already fallen behind.

Comfort is fatal.

Call for Articles

Do you have an interesting story about the court reporting profession that you would like to see in the Ad Infinitum? If so, please send any article submissions to dwenhold@kmgnet.com for consideration. We would like to have our members' voice and stories on the profession in future editions of the newsletter!

ILCRA, VHP and Young Marines... What a Combo!

Vernita Allen-Williams
ILCRA President

On May 16, 2016, ILCRA members and VHP volunteers Colleen Eitermann, Deborah Cohen-Rojas, and Vernita Allen-Williams joined 19th Judicial Circuit Judges Michael Fusz and Michael Betar at the Great Lakes Naval Base in North Chicago, IL to present certificates of appreciation to the Young Marines.

The Young Marines have served breakfast to VHP participants and their families at the Lake County Courthouse for the past two years during the 19th Judicial Circuit's VHP Day. The certificates of appreciation were signed by Chief Judge Jorge Ortiz. The Young Marines' discipline and spirit of volunteerism is admirable and appreciated by all VHP attendees.

ILCRA members present in the photos are Circuit Rep. Colleen Eitermann, ILCRA Secretary Deborah Cohen-Rojas, and myself.



Circuit Judge Michael Fusz and Circuit Judge Michael Betar presented the certificates of appreciation to the Young Marines signed by Chief Judge Jorge Ortiz.



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ILCRA's 2016-2017 Slate of Candidates

The ILCRA Nominations Committee has completed its review of candidates for the 2016-2017 Board. These candidates will be sworn in at the annual business meeting on August 6, 2016 in accordance with Articles III and V of the ILCRA Bylaws.

President Vernita Allen-Williams

Vernita has been an Official Court Reporter in the 19th Judicial Circuit since September, 1997. Prior to that, she was an Official Court Reporter in Cook County since September, 1996, and a freelance reporter since May, 1986. Vernita received her education through Madison Business College and Triton College. She holds the following licenses: CSR, RPR and RMR. The professional organizations to which Vernita belongs are the Illinois Court Reporters Association and the National Court Reporters Association. Vernita has been very active with ILCRA serving on the following committees: Past Secretary, Circuit Rep for Lake County, Region One Rep, Member of the Illinois Supreme Court's Court Reporter Committee, Member of the Form Book Committee, PR/Marketing Committee Chair. Vernita has attended many career days at local high schools and is a VHP volunteer committee member. Her hobbies include singing, training for her second Chicago Marathon, Hustle Up The Hancock participant, and action movies. Vernita says her passion is being a good mother to her son.

President-Elect Kathryn A. Thomas

Kathryn A. Thomas, RDR, CCP, CSR, Caseyville, Illinois, started working as a freelance reporter in 1998 and has since transitioned into full-time CART. In addition to serving ILCRA as Region 2 Representative and Vice President, she has also served on several ILCRA and NCRA committees. She has presented seminars about the Internet and CART to ILCRA and NCRA members and attended NCRA's Legislative Boot Camp and Leadership Conference. In 2013 she attempted to break the Guinness world record for stenographic speed at the NCRA

annual convention and was a panelist in NCRA's 2015 Premier Session. She is a proud gamer geek, sci-fi nerd, Trekker, Ravenclaw, and Whovian. Follow her blog at <http://www.stenoray.com>.

Vice President Georgia Rollins

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

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

Secretary Deborah Cohen-Rojas

Deborah Cohen-Rojas has been an official court reporter with the 19th Judicial Circuit Court in Waukegan, Illinois, since 2009. She obtained her CSR in 2007 and her RPR the following year. Deborah received her Bachelor's in English from Carthage

College in 1998, began her court reporting training at MacCormac College, and completed her training in the College of Court Reporting's online program. Deborah is a member of ILCRA and the NCRA, and she is a member of ILCRA's Veterans History Project committee.

For the past several years, Deborah has volunteered and helped to coordinate the 19th Judicial Circuit's VHP annual event. Primarily for her service in this program, Deborah received the 2014 December Employee of the Month and 2014 Employee of the Year Awards. She has volunteered as a mentor through NCRA, and she has also spoken at high school career days, as well as the College of Court Reporting as a returning alumnus. In her free time, Deborah enjoys reading, crocheting, knitting, and spending time with her wonderful husband, without the support of whom she could never have made it through court reporting school.

Region Two Representative (Freelance), Sarah Paszkiewicz

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

Region Two Representative (Official), Andrea James

Andrea attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She freelanced from 2000-2013, and she's been an official reporter for the 2nd Circuit since 2013. She is currently an Illinois CSR, a Realtime Systems Administrator, and a Registered Professional Reporter. She was born, raised, and is still living in West Frankfort, IL, and has two sons, Chayton and Graham.

Slate of Candidates

continued from page 8

Andrea is also a certified personal trainer and group exercise instructor, and she currently teaches PiYo and Pound classes. She is also an avid hunter.

Legislative Representative, Isaiah Roberts

Isaiah currently works as an Official Reporter for the 11th Illinois Judicial Circuit in McLean County/ Bloomington, Illinois. Before attending Mark Kislisbury Academy for Court Reporting, he attended Illinois State University where he received his bachelor's degree in Marketing/Sales. During this time, he took multiple undergraduate legal classes as well as was a member of the Illinois State Mock Trial Team, both of which helped facilitate his interest in the legal field and showed him the importance of an accurate record. He attributes much of his love for the law to his mother, Susan Roberts, who was a court reporter for over 30 years.

In his free time he enjoys playing the piano, traveling, and challenging himself physically through running, and has completed over 10 marathons and multiple ultramarathons.

Speed and Realtime Contests for 2016

The Speed Contest starts Wednesday, August 3rd at 9:00 am, and the Realtime Contest starts Thursday, August 4th at 1:00 pm.

In order to be considered for the Illinois contest(s), you must register for the national contest(s) and pay the appropriate NCRA fee(s).

All speed and realtime tests will be graded according to NCRA standards for both NCRA and Illinois consideration for winning and placing, with the exception of the 280 Testimony (speed), 225 Testimony (realtime) and 200 Literary (realtime) contests. In those tests only, Illinois contestants will be allowed 2 extra errors above NCRA standards in order to qualify, as those tests are at higher speeds than the equivalent Illinois contests.

Illinois results will not be announced at the NCRA awards luncheon, but contestants can stop by the Illinois booth in the vendor area after the awards luncheon to check on the results and pick up the medals or the trophy. Qualifying Illinois certificates will be sent at a later date to all who meet the requirements.

For more information about NCRA's Speed and Realtime Contests or to register, click [here](#) or call NCRA at 703-556-6272. Questions about the Illinois Contests can be sent to contact@ilcra.org.



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Join ILCRA

Membership with the Illinois Court Reporters Association has its privileges! As a member, you receive exclusive benefits, including:

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SPREAD THE WORD!

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Encourage someone you know to explore
court reporting, captioning, and
CART as a career.

Ensuring that qualified reporters are in the
field is the only way to protect the profession
and to fight digital technologies from taking
over our industry.

Local Court Reporter Training Programs

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111 W. 10th Street, #111, Hobart, IN 46342
866.294.3974 www.ccr.edu

MacCormac College*

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312.922.1884 www.maccormac.edu

Midstate College*

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309.692.4092 www.midstate.edu

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Is this Your Last Ad Infinitum?

If you have not yet renewed your membership, this could be the last newsletter you will receive until your membership is current.

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ad infinitum

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ILCRA 2016 DATES

August 4-7, 2016

NCRA 2016 Annual Convention & Expo
Hilton Chicago

August 13, 2016

CSR Examination
Chicago area and Carbondale

December 12, 2016

CSR Examination
Chicago area and Carbondale

*NOTE: ILCRA will not hold an
Annual Convention in 2016*