



IL

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COURT
REPORTERS
ASSOCIATION

www.ilcra.org
ad infinitum

WINTER

2018

President's Message



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This month we're highlighting our state lobbyist, Dan Hamilton, of Brown Hay + Stephens in Springfield. You may remember him when he spoke at our annual seminar last year and answered questions. Our lobbyist keeps on top of happenings in Springfield and various things we as an association need to be aware of. And he is more than worth what we pay.

I confess that before I joined the board, I had no idea just how integral our having a lobbyist is to our goals as an association. Having a lobbyist is one of the most critical benefits to ILCRA membership there is, and yet I didn't see how critical it was. Now I do.

When the CSR Act was first passed, having a lobbyist was absolutely crucial to helping us get it through the legislature and passed, and it was crucial to KEEP it enacted when sunset time came.

In 2016 Dan notified us of HB 4672, a proposed bill that would reduce the CSR test to have a passing rate of 85% accuracy, and thus we were able to submit to the committee that we were NOT in favor of this bill before it advanced through the process. The legislator who submitted the bill was then educated about the value of stenographic reporters, and she is now a friend of court reporting. Having a

lobbyist enabled us to maintain the high standards for certifying court reporters.

Dan also monitors the state budget and how it impacts court reporters.

He also alerts us to any legislation that, while not directly affecting court reporters, may affect us anyway, such as new notary laws.

Dan is a source of counsel to the ILCRA board when issues like these come up and really for any other questions we may have. I certainly don't have a political science degree, and I definitely don't have time in my schedule to keep on top of things in Springfield. We need someone who knows the ins and outs and nuances of state legislature, and our lobbyist is just that person.

Your membership means that we can maintain our strong presence in Springfield. The more members we have, the healthier our budget, and we will be unstoppable. Encourage your colleagues to join ILCRA if they haven't, so we can continue our effectiveness in Springfield.

~ Kathryn Thomas, RDR, CRC, CSR

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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.

National Court Reporting and Captioning Week

It was great to see so many people celebrating the profession at the beginning of February. Different groups of court reporters celebrated the week in different ways! One very unique thing we all can share is that ILCRA was able to get a proclamation from the Governor's office acknowledging the week and the important role we all play in the industry.



STATE OF ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, National Court Reporting and Captioning Week is designated each year in February, designed to celebrate court reporting and captioning professions, and to help raise public awareness about the growing number of employment opportunities these careers offer; and,

WHEREAS, court reporters, captioners, CART providers, state court reporter associations, and court reporting schools around the country will participate in the week-long event by hosting an array of activities such as visits to high schools to showcase the profession, open houses, veterans' history project interviews, and more; and,

WHEREAS, stenographic skills translate into a multitude of career options, including court reporting, live-event captioning for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, captioning for broadcast, and specialized videography; and,

WHEREAS, the strong marketplace demand means court reporting offers an abundance of long-term career opportunities, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics noting a 14 percent growth in the court reporting profession expected by 2020; and,

WHEREAS, the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) has designated February 10-17 as the 2018 National Court Reporting and Captioning Week;

THEREFORE, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim February 10-17, 2018, as **NATIONAL COURT REPORTING AND CAPTIONING WEEK** in Illinois.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.



Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield,
this SEVENTH day of FEBRUARY, in
the Year of Our Lord, two thousand and
EIGHTEEN, and of the State of Illinois,
two hundredth.

Deese White

SECRETARY OF STATE

Bruce Rauner

GOVERNOR

Where It Begins: DACUM and the Building of Court Reporting Curriculum

By Deborah Cohen-Rojas

Last fall, an invitation was extended to court reporters from across Illinois to participate in a two-day workshop at Lake Land College in Mattoon, Illinois. The workshop was entitled DACUM, or Developing a Curriculum. The staff at Lake Land had been hearing about the current – and ever increasing – shortage in court reporters, and they were interested in hearing about what a court reporting program curriculum would entail. And here's where DACUM comes in.

DACUM is the first step in beginning a new program in a college setting, with the idea being people work more effectively in groups and teams where they can generate new ideas based on each other's feedback. Expert workers are the best source for task analysis, and any occupation can be effectively described in terms of duties, tasks, knowledge, skills, and traits.

The DACUM workshop consists of several people who have very specific assignments. First and foremost are the panel of workers/professionals that are enlisted to lend

their expertise towards the building of a curriculum. The workshop also has a neutral facilitator who directs the workshop and keeps everyone focused on the current subject. A recorder takes down all the input that the professionals provide about the duties and tasks within their profession. Observers may attend the workshop, but they are not allowed to speak during the workshop or contribute in any way to the proceedings.

DACUM takes the unique approach of recording general duties, and then more specific tasks within

continued on page 7



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Where it begins

Continued

those duties, in a storyboard format. For instance, the most obvious duty a stenographic court reporter has is to record the verbatim, spoken word stenographically. However, there are many tasks accomplished in the process of this duty, such as setting up equipment, gathering job or case information, identifying speakers, programming dictionaries with case-specific terminology, possibly administering the oath to witnesses, reading back the record as requested, and requesting clarification when needed for spellings and inaudible words.

Many different duties were identified and organized into their specific tasks within the two days of the workshop last October. Freelancers, officials, and firm executives from across the state each contributed their experiences and knowledge to form a complete picture of the general knowledge, skills, equipment and tools, worker behaviors, and future trends and concerns that compose our profession. These attributes are all included in the final DACUM Research Chart for Court Reporting that was composed as a result of

the workshop, a hard copy of which was mailed to each participant after the completion of the workshop. In addition to the extensive list of court reporter attributes, the chart comprises possible job titles for graduates, acronyms associated with the field, and the completed duty-and-task storyboards that the DACUM panel compiled.

To an outsider, court reporting can appear very straightforward and simple: Court reporters write down what everyone is saying, period. But after two days talking with the reporters, the staff and facilitators at Lake Land College expressed repeatedly their amazement at just how much we need to know, just how great our skills, and really how vital we are in our field. Even as a seasoned reporter, I have to admit that seeing my profession mapped out in such a comprehensive and all-inclusive way lent a renewed sense of pride in my profession, as well as the dedication of the wonderful professionals who generously gave their time to come to Lake Land College.

Sadly, it is much more frequent that we witness the closing of court reporting schools than the beginning

of new programs. Attending DACUM was a unique and fascinating experience I feel privileged to have been a part of. It was truly a celebration of our profession. The feedback from Lake Land College staff and faculty was very positive about the viability and interest in beginning a new court reporting program, and they are hopeful to have a program in place within the next couple of years.

Special thanks go out to the attending court reporters and firm executives: Melissa Clagg, Laurie Clancy, Karen Crisel, Mary Danley, Nancy Hopp, Amy Richardson, Judie Roberts, and Holly Wingstrom. Thank you so much to our facilitator, Lisa Madlem, and our recorder, Dr. Lynn Breer, as well as the other members of the Lake Land staff and faculty we met during our stay. These folks were so very welcoming and hospitable, and I hope to work with them again in the future to build a long-lasting partnership between their impressive school and our profession.

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A Collection of Letters from a Gaggle of Court Reporters

By Georgia Long

The day after ILCRA's 2017 annual convention, I went home and wrote this letter to Michelle Grimes in anticipation of wanting to follow up with our mutual friends, and Kara Yocum; the student and lucky recipient from Toledo, Illinois, of Michelle's Diamante steno machine. And I was also hoping to feebly capture the emotion of this weekend to share with you in this article.

Rereading my own synopsis and receiving the contributions from Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag and Kara Yocum, these words have brought back the emotion of that weekend. For a convention, it was very unconventional.

I'm sure watching pieces of Michelle's professional life auctioned off was hard for those that knew her at all; but harder yet was to ignore the delighted faces, the inspired smiles on the recipients' faces. Even after she had left us here, she was still encouraging. She was still generous. She was leaving a legacy for the next generation of court reporters; the generation we as a profession so desperately need.

She also left us with no excuse not to practice.
None. At. All.

I want to take you back first to my stolen observations of the weekend.

September 18, 2017

Dear Michelle:

Hi, there. My name is Georgia, and I don't believe we really knew each other in this life. I do remember you though. I always admired your edgy haircut, short and kind of spiky. It was a style I was never brave enough to attempt myself, but a style I always admired on others. It wasn't until much later I discovered that wasn't just a contemporary 'do, but also a badge of honor, the symbol of a warrior.

It's almost strange to not have known you in the physical world. But I feel like, after this weekend, I got to know your spirit. You were a court reporter, just

like us. Your dedication, commitment, and passion for the profession was obvious to all of us. The way your friends speak of you, there is no question of their love and adoration for you. I think it's hard for any of us to comprehend how others see us in this life. But there was no question that those who knew you knew that you were wonderful, and talented, and just simply fantastic.

It's amazing to think how your generosity will have a ripple effect throughout so many others' lives. The books you donated are going to educate so many students coming up through school. The tapes you donated are going to give a reporter the practice, thus the speed they need to attain certifications.

And your machine... you changed a life this weekend, forever. There was a young lady at convention, a student, who had a rough couple of years in her life. After being dealt blow after blow, including being laid off from her job, she decided on a career path instead of a job and chose court reporting.

The trials and tests of life could not dim her spirit either, Michelle. She is bright and enthusiastic, and I immediately sensed her resilience. Sometimes I think you can just look at people and know they have what it takes to make it, and I believe this young lady has exactly that. She was the recipient of the Diamante machine that you donated. And I think it's fair to say she was not just grateful, but I saw a profound appreciation come over her as she went and accepted your steno machine (presented by your friend, Melanie), which may last her the first decade of her career.

And I know you were with us this weekend. I know you saw the look on her face and felt those feelings of humility, of relief, of disbelief, of overwhelming happiness in the notion that things are happening, and they're happening for the better.

We grieve the loss of your presence in the only way we've ever known you; with you standing right in front of us, smiling, laughing, talking. Your physical presence is missed at a palpable level. But I saw you this weekend. I saw you in the lit-up faces of those who received your generous gifts. I watched as a life changed, dramatically, forever. And I watched your books go out into the world to educate those who may otherwise have never seen such a book. What a butterfly effect you have had.



Even in the afterlife, you are resilient. You are enthusiastic. You are generous. And you will never be forgotten.

Sincerely,
Georgia Beth Long
President-Elect, ILCRA

Kara Yocum was kind enough to take a few minutes of her precious student time to tell me a little bit about her background, how she found court reporting, and what it's meant to her to go to convention as a student; and what's more, to take home Michelle's Diamante:

I'm a single mom going on 10 years now. I always thought that someday I would go to college, I just never knew when that "someday" would be, or even what I wanted to do. I only knew that living paycheck to paycheck would not get us by forever. I had a pretty decent factory job and planned to stick it out there. It had benefits, and I made enough to get the bills paid.

Then, they downsized. I was laid off. Back to square one.

God just threw Himself into this opportunity, and through a random encounter with my county's local Official Court Reporter – the one and only Jill Layton, [and 2017's DSA winner] I was prompted to consider pursuing a degree in court reporting. As soon as Jill told me about this career path, about this school that offered online courses, it just snuggled into my heart and felt so right! I had to do it! This was my time. This was my chance to follow a career that would provide for my son, and fulfill my desire to feel accomplished at the end of the day.

I snagged a part-time job and got started at the College of Court Reporting, taking their online program for my Associate's Degree of Court Reporting. Jill became my personal mentor, and got me set up to attend the ILCRA Convention in Springfield.

I was so nervous to attend, but also more excited than I remember being in a very long time about anything. At that point, I was only in my first semester of theory, and I envisioned all of these professional people staring and

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wondering what I was doing at such an event.

All of those worries were put to rest as soon as I saw those first smiling faces at convention. Everyone I met was so extremely kind, and everyone seemed to be genuinely interested in my stage of study and my plans for the future. There were so many who offered to answer questions, provide me with resources, grant me cherished advice; I truly felt like Cinderella at the ball. Jill was right—these people were incredible!

When it was time for the drawing to determine the recipient of the Diamante, I had been so caught up in all of the excitement of just BEING THERE that I didn't even realize that I was in the drawing. When my name was called, I actually had a mouth full of my dinner. (Graceful isn't often used to describe me.)

Aside from my personal awkwardness, this was such an amazing moment. I didn't have the opportunity to know Michelle Grimes, but in my very short time within the world of court reporters, I had already heard so many great things about her and the person she was. I could tell how deeply rooted she was in so many hearts of the people surrounding me.

It's a great honor to win any sort of gift, but this was such a huge part of Michelle's life, of who she was. I am learning the further I go into this career path, this isn't just a job or a degree; it is more of a lifestyle.

When I made it home after the convention, I was certainly "on fire" for stenography. It was so empowering to meet everyone, to see the kinship, and to have so many who understood all that goes into learning this amazing skill.

I didn't even unpack my "Michelle Machine" for a few weeks. It was like a sacred object that I gently placed in my office and was afraid to touch. I didn't want to break it, or get a smudge on it, or adjust it in any way.

Eventually, I decided that, from what I had heard about this awesome lady, she would not want her machine sitting there doing nothing. So I unpacked it slowly and gently from the case. I laid out all of the cords and wires and the tripod. I saw that there were a few other things in the bag. Some pens, some post-it notes, some hand sanitizer, paper clips, notes that she had written herself. Michelle's things. I just broke down into tears. It all seemed so personal, so private, such an intimate thing. I turned on the machine, and I saw Michelle's beautiful face looking back at me. So I said, "Okay, girl. Let's do this."

I cannot begin to say how thankful I am to her family

for this gift, and how completely humbled I am to carry on in my endeavor with Michelle's machine (which I refer to as Marsha). As a single mother, knowing that the first order of business after school would be to purchase a professional machine was pretty intimidating. But through this blessing, I have a huge weight lifted; and I have this encouraging smile on the screen every time I turn the machine on, reminding me to keep going and make it happen!

On a personal note, classes are great! I love CCR so much! My theory instructor, Mrs. M. Abernathy, is one in a million. If she's not an angel in disguise, I don't know who is.

I'm approaching third semester, so I'm nearly done with my actual theory courses. I'll be heading into mostly speed and skill building soon. I am exhausted—and I love it! This stenography is addicting. It really just roots into your brain, and it sort of takes over a big part of you. I have begun to "think in steno." If someone is talking to me or if I'm watching TV, my mind is picturing the words being stroked out on the machine.

[Court reporting] will challenge you physically, mentally, and even emotionally at times. It is not something you can save up and cram for on the weekend. You will likely have to give up much of your social life, and even parts of your family life for a while. It is a big part of your everyday life.

And it's amazing. Anytime I'm not on my machine, in the back of my mind I'm thinking about being on my machine. It's a real love affair, I suppose.

I am so glad that I said yes to this. On the nights when I'm up until 2:00 a.m. finishing my homework and practicing, I want to cry because I'm so tired, and I LOVE it.

So, I am pressing on. Marsha and I are holding steady.

Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag has been in touch with Kara and Michelle's family, and wanted to share this with our community:

I actually came across a last-year's Christmas card from Michelle recently. Her passion for reporting was so infectious. She spoke in the card about how happy she was to be back in the field after a hiatus and was eager to improve her skills. She was in our Facebook practice group and was actually practicing right up to the end. She posted to us two weeks before her death and was texting with me – with perfect grammar and punctuation! -- two days before. She finished her last 100 consecutive days of



practice in December 2016 and was up to 30 days on a new round when she stopped practicing in April 2017, before her death in May. She was a fierce warrior.

Looking through her post, this struck me: "I've had lots of good luck throughout my life." She also made her own luck, being much harder on herself than on anyone else, to whom she always offered support and a sympathetic ear.

Here was her last [message] to us ... to which we cling: "I appreciate the amazing support I get from this group. It really means a lot to me. I am so grateful for each of you." Others later explained to newcomers: "Michelle passed away soon after this post. We've been practicing in her honor since then. She inspired us when she lived, and she still inspires us as an angel."

Another: "She inspired us with her amazing will and determination to practice while fighting cancer. I would have NEVER dedicated 30 total minutes before Las Vegas AND practicing during the convention after the contests. I'm dedicating my 2nd place Q.A. Realtime contest medal to Michelle. I am confident I would not have done it without her. Thank you, MG."

There are about 100 people in the practice group. So far, more than 20 have done 100 days of additional practice for her. She made us better than we were without her influence.

Her wife Kate is doing well, missing her but adjusting. Having a long-term sickness gives you time to make plans and say good-bye. Kate and her brother are planning a trip to Italy, and it's great to see Kate enjoying life after being so devoted to Michelle during her illness. As she described Michelle the other day, "She was such a sweet soul. And super thoughtful." That is just so fitting for Michelle; and also Kate's generosity in donating her machine to Kara. I think Michelle is traveling along the journey, too.

Kate says Michelle's dad and brother, wife, and beloved nieces are making progress, too, and they're all preparing for Michelle's second Ride to Remember on June 10.

Her Facebook page is still up if you want to stroll by. She was such a beautiful girl, inside and out. She was in a clinical trial for breast cancer research and, although it damaged her heart irretrievably, she helped further the study.

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Although cancer riddled her entire body, she was able to designate her eyes to be donated, and Kate has received a grateful letter from the recipient.

As far as our practice group, several are still adding her 15 minutes to theirs – even those who didn't know or meet her in life -- and I think the streak of the Michelle Memorial Challenges will go on for a very long time.

Dedicated. Generous. Inspiring. Motivating. Kind. Beautiful. Helpful. Life-changing. Warrior. Wonderful. Talented. Amazing.
May we all aspire to live as Michelle was described in life.

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Making the Record

By Hon. Kevin T. Busch

This February 10 thru the 18th is national court reporter week and although many of us deal with court reporters daily, the week typically passes us by with little fanfare. Having been married to an official court reporter for over 30 years however, I know how hard they work and their dedication to ensuring that we, as judges and lawyers, have the best record of the proceedings as is possible.

Unfortunately, we often take for granted what goes into the *making* of the record. While the reporter has a duty to take down all that is said, the true burden of making a record rests with us, the judges and attorneys. So what can we do to make a better record? Well, having spent a career in the courtroom, and having eavesdropped on more than one court reporter's conversations, I think I can pass along a few suggestions.

You may ask, "Why should we even care?" After all, isn't what happens in court what really matters? While the battle at hand may be your focus, a complete and accurate record may mean the difference between success and failure in future proceedings, or on appeal. So while you may win the battle, your lack of diligence in making your record, could result in your losing the war. To borrow a phrase from computer programmers: "garbage in-garbage out!" In other words, your record is only as good as you make it! It would not be the first time that a well thought out ruling or argument was overturned on appeal because the court or counsel failed to perfect their record.

So what makes a good record? Simply put. Clarity! There should be only one voice speaking at a time, in an easily understood and audible tone. If it is worth saying, say it so that everyone in the courtroom can hear and understand it. While it sounds simple enough, in practice, it is not always so easy.

So what are the basics? Start with always identifying yourself and your client, "for the record." Don't assume the reporter knows you, or knows how to spell your name. Be aware of where the reporter is seated. They will usually be situated so that conversations and testimony directed to the judge or jury can be easily heard. Avoid turning your

back to the reporter or the trier of fact. Resist the urge to keep talking as you scan the courtroom for your client, or search for that document in your brief case. The judge, jury and the reporter will appreciate it. Remind your witness to speak up, and avoid situations that result in the witness turning their back to the reporter.

Remember the rule, *only one voice at a time*. While it may be necessary in limited situations to interrupt a witness to prevent inadmissible testimony from being heard, it is generally never a good practice to speak when someone else is. Whether interrupting a witness or opposing counsel, it is a bad practice and poor form. Remember, when making the record you want the reporter to hear and understand what is being said. When two or more voices are speaking at once usually none of them are heard, or understood. Moreover, do not assume that the reporter understands what is being said. While reporters are taught to interrupt witnesses or counsel when things get out of hand, they may not always be able to do so. The responsibility rests with the court and counsel to ensure that there is only one person speaking at a time. Be patient, you will get your chance to speak. Not only will the reporter appreciate it, but you will also win points with the trier of fact.

Be aware of *what* you are saying. Many names for example sound alike: Petersen/Peterson, Mariann/Maryann/Marianne, and Hoffman/Aufman. So spell the words slowly. But be aware that many letters sound alike: M and N, B and D and V, F and S, and P and T may all cause confusion. So sometimes, it may be necessary to use identifying words such as: "the letter M as in Mary" or "the letter N as in Nancy." Also, take greater care when you are talking about numbers. While it may sound perfectly natural to say "twelve forty-five," what were you actually talking about? Is it an amount, dollars and cents, or is it time? There is a big difference between 1,245 and \$12.45; or, 12:45 AM and 12:45 PM. So use the correct identifying language to make your numbers clear. The same can be said for dates. When you say "January twenty fourteen," did you mean January 2014 or January 20, '14?

Pay attention to the actions of your witness or the exhibits that you are referencing. If a witness demonstrates something with their hand while saying



“and he did this,” how will anyone reading the transcript know what “*this*” is unless you describe the action “for the record?” Ask the court: “May the record reflect that the witness was pointing her finger in front of her in the shape of a pistol?” Or, when the witness says, “she slapped me here,” you must say something like: “your Honor, may the record reflect that the witness is pointing to an area on the right side of his cheek?” When you show the witness an exhibit, remember to identify it. Don’t say: “Mr. Jones do you recognize this?” Instead say: “Mr. Jones, I’m showing you Plaintiff’s Exhibit Number 1, do you recognize it?” Or, when a witness who is identifying an item in a photo says: “that’s it right there,” don’t forget to describe what happened for the record. For example: “Mr. Jones, are you pointing to the red car that appears in the lower right-hand corner of Plaintiff’s Exhibit 1?” Descriptions such as these will never leave a reader of the transcript wondering what actually occurred in court.

Remember, you and your witnesses need to speak words instead of using sounds or gestures. While some

reporters may note that a witness nodded in response to an answer, not all reporters will. More importantly, the reporter cannot interpret gestures. It is the responsibility of the attorney or the court to remind the witness to answer yes or no. Similarly, while reporters will take down all sounds that they can hear, sounds that are not words or that have no meaning will remain meaningless, unless you clarify them. So while you may think you understand the witness when they say “uh-uh,” anybody reading the transcript would only be guessing. Ask the witness: “did you mean yes or no?”

The use of interpreters also poses unique problems. The interpreter is not the witness but merely a translator of everything the questioner says, and the answers that are given. Never say to an interpreter: “ask her to state her name.” Instead, have a conversation directly with the witness, just as you would any other. Speak slower to give the interpreter time to understand you, and then wait for the interpretation and the translation to be completed before you ask your next question. Also, if your interpreter

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starts the translation with the phrase “she said...,” then either you or the court must stop the interpreter immediately and remind them to repeat what the witness said verbatim.

Sometimes it is necessary to read or quote something from a text or a prepared script. Keep in mind that when we do so, we have a tendency to speak faster than we would if we were choosing our words as we speak. Slow down and be mindful of your pace when you are reading, quoting something, or merely reciting a prepared monologue. Also be aware of your normal speech patterns and habits. If you talk fast or if you drop off at the end of your sentences, your every word might not always be heard. If you speak in low or soft tones, you may often be misunderstood. The proceedings are not a secret. They are for public consumption. You want to be understood. So speak up, speak clearly, and make sure your reporter is able to hear and understand you.

While these tips should go a long way in helping you build a better record, even the most practiced of us misspeak from time to time. In fact, in the heat of

battle, we may misspeak and not even realize it. We may ask questions and not obtain or even wait for an answer. We may intend to ask a question and forget to.

Remember the reporter can only take down what he or she hears. That includes all of the false starts, misstatements, ums, and uhs. So the next time you read a transcript, avoid the urge to grade your reporter since it is most likely they took down everything that you said, and only what was said.

Taking a moment to become and remain aware of your reporter will go a long way toward helping you build a better record. Keeping these tips in mind the next time you’re “on the record” should result in a clear and more complete report of the proceeding. So in honor of the hard work that our official court reporters do, join me in thanking them, and let us all make a better record!

This article was originally published in the June 2014 issue of the Kane County Bar Association Bar Briefs, and in the January 2018 issue of the Illinois State Bar Association’s Family Law newsletter

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Why Do We Need a Presence at the State Capital?

*By Dan Hamilton
ILCRA's Legislative Counsel*

It is important to have a lobbyist to ensure that the standing priorities of the organization have a watchdog in the capital to alert the association of any action that would threaten those priorities. The standing priorities that we are always on the lookout for include the following:

- Protecting the Illinois Certified Shorthand Reporters Act of 1984 and the high standards for court reporters to be licensed.
- Promote the profession and encourage participation in the profession.
- Encourage lawmakers to maintain high standards for court reporters and provide opportunities to strengthen and grow the profession.
 - In 2016 we were able to defeat legislation that would have reduced testing requirements that would have degraded the standards of the profession (HB 4672).
- We are always on the lookout for State Budget impacts on court reporters.
- Keep ILCRA informed with Legislative Updates regarding legislation that may be important to Certified Shorthand Reporters.
- Monitor the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation rules and regulations for court reporters.

Promote legislation on an as-needed basis.

LOBBYING 101

Back in 1869, a newspaper correspondent published a vivid description of a monster in the US Capitol building: "Winding in and out through the long, devious basement passage, crawling through the corridors, trailing its slimy length from gallery to committee room, at last it lies stretched at full length on the floor of Congress—this dazzling reptile, this huge, scaly serpent of the lobby." What was this awful creature? It was intended as the

embodiment of lobbyists, who were proliferating in the years after the Civil War and who, many believed, were corrupting the Congress.

Even today, the media tend to portray legislative lobbyists as some form of monster. And yet, lobbyists play an important and essential role in the legislative process. In simple terms, lobbyists represent you and your interests, helping you advance topics that are important to you within the government.

Citizens in Illinois, whether as individuals or in organizations, have both direct and indirect interest in legislation considered by the General Assembly. They make their interests known by electing sympathetic senators and representatives and by advocating for or against specific legislation. This is a right guaranteed them by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Who Are the Lobbyists?

Many lobbyists are people who used to work in government, either as elected officials, political appointees, staff for elected officials, or state employees. Their experience in their previous position(s) gives them a great deal of knowledge of how the government works, and a long list of personal contacts – especially in the area of government they used to work in.

Beyond their background, many lobbyists also share social and family lives with people that still work in government. They often live in the same neighborhoods, go to the same churches, send their kids to the same schools, take classes at the same gyms, and eat at the same restaurants. So lobbyists often know a lot of people in government from their personal social circles. Lobbyists are often good friends with a lot of the people they lobby, and those personal relationships are a commodity that people who come from outside the beltway simply can't duplicate.

What do Lobbyists Do?

Although lobbyists can open doors for you, a good lobbyist will do a lot more than that. Lobbyists can offer a whole range of services, including:



Set Goals

You really should already know what your goals are before you talk to any lobbyist, but lobbyists can help translate your goals (which may be business-oriented or end-results-oriented) into goals that make sense in the context of the government.

Strategy, Timing and Focus

Help you develop a strategy and focus your efforts where they'll be most successful at the proper time.

Education

- Educate you on government processes, regulations, & potential traps.
- Educate legislators and staff on your issue – a legislator is required to know a little bit about a lot of issues, and they rely on lobbyists to supply information, both to legislators and to those interested in stopping or promoting a bill.

Representation

- Represent you and your interests to the government, so you don't have to be there in person doing it yourself most of the time.
- Simply put, the lobbyists are in the Capitol, talking with lawmakers, their staff, and everyone else involved in the process, day in and day out. Everyone working in the Capitol has so much work to do and so many people talking with them all the time that, even if your issue is very important to someone, it probably won't get enough attention without someone there to remind them about it.

Relationships

Help you develop relationships with people in government that can help you achieve your goals.

Champions

Find and support "champions" within the government who are willing to push for your objectives from within.

Legislation

- Support your legal and political interests in new laws considered and enacted by the General Assembly.
- Lobbyists do a lot of work writing actual legislation. They often propose text for new laws and give it to legislative staffers. So a good lobbyist can help get laws written with specific language that meets your objectives.

Appropriations

Seek state funding for specific projects or interests – like a building on campus, or, unfortunately these days, money for college operations.

Delivery

Navigate the processes, politics, and regulations to successfully deliver a project after you've succeeded in getting it.

In my experience, the 3 most important of these are (in order):

1. Strategy, Timing, and Focus
2. Representation
3. Relationships – I just want to expand on relationships a little bit – because you can develop the strongest strategy for a popular idea, like testing the water in schools for lead – and the idea may not go anywhere.
 1. This is where their contacts come in. Typically, lobbyists know enough people that, even if they don't know the specific person you really need to talk to, they can get introduced to them through someone else they know. Often all it takes to get a meeting with a lawmaker who hasn't returned your calls is a call from another lawmaker mentioning your name. The six degrees of separation are at work here, except it's usually more like 2 or 3 degrees of separation – it's a pretty tight club.
 2. Quality of contacts is the next most important, so the lobbyist who goes on vacation a few times a year with the Chair of the Appropriations Committee is probably going to be able to help you get more done faster than the lobbyist who plays poker twice a week with a first-term lawmaker in the minority – seniority matters (a lot).
 3. Knowing specifics about what is important to a legislator is also important. Some lawmakers should not be approached about some issues – for example, a legislator who represents a district where a large insurance company is located is not likely to be supportive of an initiative that benefits the consumer. On the other hand, certain aspects of an issue should be highlighted to gain support.

Several years ago, United States Senator Bob Byrd, the longest-serving member in the history of the United States Congress at the time of his death in 2010 with 57

years (he was surpassed in 2013), undertook to introduce the public to the inner workings of the legislative process by launching a series of one hundred speeches and publishing a four-volume series on Senate history. In a lengthy commentary on lobbyists, Senator Byrd concluded his thoughts by stating:

“Congress has always had, and always will have, lobbyists and lobbying. We could not adequately consider our work load without them. We listen to representatives from the broadest number of groups: large and small; single-issue and multi-purposed; citizens groups; corporate and labor representatives; the public spirited and the privately inspired. They all have a service to fulfill. As for the lobbyists themselves, they would probably agree with Sam Ward, the nineteenth-century King of the Lobby, that the disappointments are greater than the successes. They spend many hours and considerable shoe leather trying to convince 535 members of Congress of the wisdom or folly of certain legislation. They face vigorous competition. They still bear the brunt of press criticism and take the blame for the sins of a small minority of their numbers. But they have a job to do, and most of them do it very well indeed. It is hard to imagine Congress without them.”

ILCRA 2018

Save the Dates

As your professional association we want to let you know of some important dates that you can put on your calendar.

ILCRA Board of Directors Meeting

April 7, 2018 from 1-5 p.m.
Midstate College, Peoria, IL

ILCRA Annual Board of Directors Meeting

September 20, 2018 from 6-9 p.m.
Hilton Doubletree in Oak Brook

ILCRA Annual Conference

September 20-22, 2018
Hilton Doubletree in Oak Brook

ad infinitum

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