



IL

CRA

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ASSOCIATION

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ad infinitum

WINTER

2020

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## President's Message



"New year, new me!" How many of us have said this, either out loud or quietly to ourselves, around this time of year, every year, only to end up feeling disappointed a few weeks later? That's because change is harder to accept and even harder to employ than we give it credit for.

I'm even watching a docuseries on change right now, and so far I've learned that once you're past the age of 35, your brain is pretty well hardwired in its programming to think and react and feel the exact same, day in and day out.

It takes going beyond the body and the repetitive thought processes of the brain and the feelings of "I can't" or "I'm not good enough" or "it's my husband's/boss's/family's/ whoever's fault" to cultivate real change in our lives. Because when we get past the excuses and the blame and the feelings of inadequacy, the only ones holding us back are ourselves.

That's a lot of responsibility to take on. Change in itself is a weighty and burdensome task that maybe we initiate with little to no friction but does not last; or can bring us to tears as we muscle through the discomfort for a short period of time until we decide it's not worth it.

A lot of things get in our way when we are trying to create change in our lives, especially our brains, because of that hardwiring and a profoundly strong desire for the predictable; even if it's not necessarily good for us.

It takes seven times to hear something before it gets transferred to your long-term memory bank. It takes 30 days of consistency to create a new habit. Are we giving ourselves enough time to fully immerse in these changes we want to make? Are we taking on too much too quickly and then blaming ourselves for not being superhuman? Or is the idea of real, transformational change so threatening to the status-quo monotony our brains crave that we don't even try?

As we all know, these are trying and desperate times we are facing in our profession. It is going to require all of us being in action in order to

*continued on page 5*



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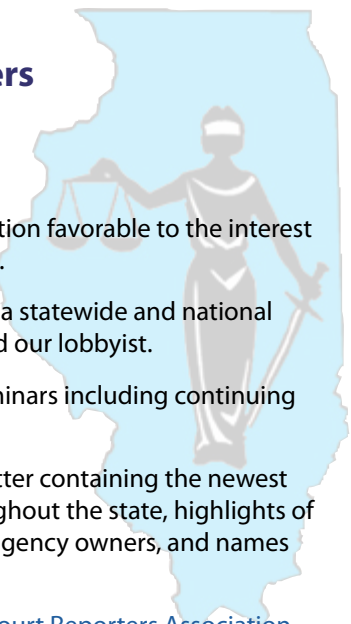
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For a listing of all **committees**  
and  
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## What ILCRA Does for Illinois Reporters

- **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.*

# Superheroes

By Kim Cottrell  
ILCRA President-Elect

Over the past few months, I have been wondering why court reporters seem to not receive due respect in some of the places we go to work. There are situations where we are talked down to by those we come across whether it be in and around the courtroom or at a deposition. Why aren't we treated as the hard-working, dedicated professionals that we are?

Then my "Deadpool Revelation" hit me. Hang on for a second and I'll explain. It has nothing to do with red spandex, Ryan Reynolds, or leaving your bag of ammunition at home.

We are superheroes. You heard right. We are. We capture the human voice at incredibly high speeds. We untangle the jumble of a multitude of human voices trying to talk over each other. We bring order to chaos. If that last sentence doesn't qualify you as a superhero, I don't know what does.

As the movie "Deadpool" says, you don't have to be a superhero all the time. It only takes four or five moments. And I got to thinking how can we apply that to our profession.

What I came up with are a few ideas that we can put in place to improve the perception others have in our working circles. Some or all of these may be something you already do. And by no means do you have to try them all. You may have other ideas, and I'd love to hear what those are because I'm always looking for ideas for myself. So as the movie goes – let's count them down.

Five – Join a practice group. Working on improving your craft should be at the top of your list, actually. Whether you're doing it for achieving a pay step, cutting down the need to spend as much time proofing, or sharpening the skills to allow you to land your dream job, practice groups provide motivation and encouragement to work daily to become a better court reporter. We all have busy lives both professionally and personally but many groups ask for as little as 15 minutes a day.



Four – Dress for success. People do prejudge you by how you look. Don't be fooled by thinking otherwise. Look at your work wardrobe. Does it say you are a professional? Clothes are expensive and for a while I was reluctant to invest in clothing but I learned a lesson from my husband. His attitude is spend good money on good clothing, take good care of them, and they'll last forever. Plus you'll build a work closet that makes people take you seriously. So how can you do it? My way was to purchase two or three suits a year and add a few different tops for variety.

Three – Form relationships with other court reporters. I got this tip from a journal from another profession. Teaching doctors at Johns Hopkins Medical Center had a practice of eating lunch with other specialists each day to learn what was going on in their worlds. In return, it broadened their own knowledge. We are not doctors, but we should learn from each other. Machine writers, voice writers, freelancers, officials, captioners, or CART providers, each of us have a variety of challenges and a variety of ways to meet those challenges. There may be a tip that applies to your particular situation. It also promotes understanding and unity as we fight against digital reporting and all the other problems facing our industry. The original man from Illinois said it best, "A divided house cannot stand."



Two – Promote the future. Participate in a job fair at a high school in your area. Contact the counseling office and see what it takes to get a spot. Bring in your machine and show students what our profession has to offer. I have said before I wish I had known about this career while I was in high school. Don't be intimidated at this undertaking. I was overwhelmed going into my first one, but I found that I had a great time. Yes, there are a multitude that are going to stop by to only raid the candy basket. However, there are four or five that are going to stick around, ask questions, try out your machine, look you in the eye, and then come back for a second helping. Without those, where will we be in 10 years? NCRA has great ideas to do this. Want to talk to someone who's been there? Drop me a line or call. I'll share everything I have.

One – Be an active participant in ILCRA. There's more to us than just getting together for continuing education. You can participate in a speed contest. You can assist in producing a speed contest. Put on a presentation at one of our conventions. You can serve as a regional officer. This organization is always looking for people who are energetic and excited about what they do. Also, this is the one-stop shopping place for any of those others items that I listed. It really is true. You get out of something what you put into it.

As I said before, these are only my ideas and they are not the only ones. If you have others, please share them with me. If you're doing something to be a court reporter superhero, take a photo of you in action and send it to me at kimrcottrell@icloud.com. If you're willing we'd love to share that with the rest of the organization.

So back to Deadpool, "Now, let's get out there and make a difference!" Or, impression as the case may be.

## President's Message

*Continued from front page*

create the change necessary to swing that pendulum back in the direction of saturating the labor market with skilled and educated court reporters and captioners. We can no longer shut ourselves away and say, "There is nothing I can do to contribute." That's your brain on fear, my friends. The trick is finding something you're already good at.

As I've said in the past and as I try to reiterate to our board members, you possess talents and gifts that are already within you. They are your strengths, and they make you shine. Public speaking and career fairs are not for everyone. Sitting behind a computer screen and writing articles or social media posts is not for everyone. But what are your joys? What are your strengths? And how can you utilize what you already have to create change in our profession?

I think we get caught up in this idea that change has to be grand and elaborate in order for it to be real or worthwhile. But what if we started with the small things instead? It could be a commitment to posting about court reporting once a week on social media. It could be saying "yes" to that career fair that your fellow reporter has been asking you to attend. It could be telling anyone about court reporting as a career when the opportunity presents itself. There are so many subtle invitations for you to create change that they can be easy to miss. I hope you may be inspired to look for the ways where you can make a difference; where you can create small, waterdrop-sized changes that will eventually ripple out far beyond your witnessing.

Happy New Year to my entire ILCRA family. I do hope 2020 brings you all the desired change you're asking for. Be patient, be kind, be compassionate – not just with others, but with yourself as well.

*~ Georgia Long*

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# Thank God for GPS

**By Pam Taylor  
ILCRA Secretary**

I have absolutely no sense of direction, THANK GOD FOR GPS.

When I started this career in '73, the downtown agency that I worked for, 99.9 percent of their jobs were downtown, and literally if the job was more than two blocks from our office, I took a cab (what can I say, those were the days, we actually CARRIED our steno machine, not rolled it).

Consequently the only downtown streets I knew were within a block, maybe two.

After three years I became an Official. That was a no brainer, I was assigned to one building to go to everyday, the car could drive me to work.

After 37 years I retired and decided to freelance again and boy had things changed, but THANK GOD FOR GPS, because half of the jobs are now in the suburbs. As for the downtown jobs, remember I only know about two or three streets and I drive, so again, THANK GOD FOR GPS.

I'm not ashamed to say sometimes when I parked in the garages downtown, walked outside only to not have a clue where I was going. THANK GOD FOR GPS, gave me my walking directions straight to my job.

Court reporting has come a long way since 1973 in many ways, but THANK GOD FOR GPS.

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# Choose Your Own Adventure

**By Kathryn A. Thomas**  
**Immediate Past President**

New Year's is a good time for reflection, so I feel it's a good time to come clean with you all. Here goes...

I am a hardcore, dyed-in-the-wool geek. (Shocking, I know.) Name a nerdy fandom, and I've likely been obsessed with it at one time or another. I'm an OG Star Wars fangirl as well as a "Weird Al" Yankovic superfan but I've also been a fan of the Walking Dead, Harry Potter, Star Trek, Doctor Who, Firefly, the 100, Arrow, most recently Lucifer, of course Supernatural, others I'm sure I've forgotten, and I have managed to become addicted to Arrow this past holiday season. I haven't gotten to Battlestar Galactica yet, but it's on my to-watch list.<sup>1</sup>

What do all these movies and television shows have in common? Individuals are thrust into extraordinary circumstances.

Captain Janeway goes on a standard search-and-rescue mission and finds herself and her crew tugged over 70,000 light-years from home.

Privileged billionaire Oliver Queen is shipwrecked on a (supposedly) deserted island.

Luke Skywalker just wanted to go pick up some power converters from Tosche Station.

Detective Chloe Decker meets her new partner, Lucifer, who claims to be the Devil.

Cameron Frye drags himself off of his sickbed to meet his best friend Ferris, who is playing hooky.

"Dad's been on a hunting trip, and he hasn't been home for a few days."

"Don't open. Dead inside."

"Yer a wizard, Harry."

"Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans," says John Lennon in his song Beautiful Boy. We figure out what we'd like our life to be, but things never turn out the way we'd thought. Our world shifts, and life is no longer what it once was.

We're staring at the futuristic-sounding Year 2020. Y2K was twenty years ago. What challenges have you faced in these first two decades of the 21st century? Or has anything changed? If nothing has changed, then perhaps it's time. In weightlifting, muscle growth doesn't happen until the muscle undergoes stress. Athletes don't win the gold medal until they undergo rigorous training. The CSR, CRR, or RPR won't pass itself.

If a major challenging event hasn't come to you yet, either you're due OR you need to create one for yourself. It may be comfy and cozy in a rut, but "A rut is a grave with the ends kicked out."<sup>2</sup>

You don't have a great story without great challenges. What if Ferris Bueller decided to actually go to school on that fine spring day? Would Lord of the Rings be half as memorable if Gandalf had called the Great Eagles right off the bat to pick up Frodo and FLY the kid over Mt. Doom to chuck in the One Ring and be done with it? What if Indiana Jones said, "I've got exams to grade. Marcus Brody can go search for the Arc of the Covenant. I'm too busy. I need to make time for self-care."

Sometimes we can "busy" ourselves to the grave, so much that we miss adventures along the way.

But we're all busy. We're overworked in this age of a reporter shortage, and it's hard to stay afloat sometimes.

This is our extraordinary circumstance. What do we do to meet the challenge? This past year at Marathon and at our annual convention, we heard from Doreen Suttan about Project Steno and their efforts to bring more qualified students into the fold. We're in the midst of a continuing discussion on how best to begin certifying voice writers. The Steno A to Z program is finding new students nationwide. More media articles are popping up about stenography as an integral profession.

That's our extraordinary circumstance en masse; but it takes individuals to act. One person cannot do it all, but one person can do SOME.

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## Adventure

Continued from page 7

A large amount of us discovered steno because we knew someone who worked in stenography. When you strike up a conversation with someone unhappy with their job, see if you can't plant a seed for steno.<sup>3</sup> Do you have a young loved one who is unsure of what to do next in life? Plant a seed for steno. At the courthouse water cooler? Plant a seed for steno and educate your fellow legal professionals about this amazing profession. Print flyers, put them up where you can, and teach a Steno A to Z course.

This column has been rather bloggy and stream-of-consciousness because it's what's on my heart at the moment.<sup>4</sup> Each of us is the protagonist of her life's story. What will the next page say? Are you waiting to see what will happen TO you, or are you going to happen TO it?

Taking a risk is scary, but it's how adventures happen. Luke Skywalker could've simply stayed home, repaired the farm he grew up in, and never have become a Jedi. Cameron Frye could've told Ferris Bueller that he was too sick and needed his rest. Harry Potter could've trusted his teachers, been a model student, and never had the experiences that molded

him to become a worthy foe of He Who Must Not Be Named.<sup>5</sup> Frodo could've decided that this funny-looking ring was Not His Problem, given it to Gandalf, and unleashed a Middle Earth apocalypse.

Take a risk. Go for it. You may fail, but you also may succeed. Either way, you'll definitely have an adventure. This is the only life we have, so let's make it epic.

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." -- Ferris Bueller, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*<sup>6</sup>

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1 Where is Game of Thrones, you ask? Books > HBO.

2 I want to cite this as quoting Zig Ziglar, but it could also be Earl Nightingale or a host of others.

3 As I'm writing this, it occurs to me that "Plant a Seed for Steno" would be a neat tagline. I Googled it to see if it's been taken. It is not, and ILCRA calls dibs. Also, there is a cactus called the stenocactus. "They are mostly small globular cacti, of very variable characteristics, generally below 4 inches (10 cm) in diameter, often solitary, but sometimes clustering as they age." [www.worldofsucculents.com](http://www.worldofsucculents.com)

4 Also, I like footnotes.

5 And then You-Know-Who would've been Neville Longbottom's problem.

6 "You're still here? The [column] is over! Go [read the rest of the Ad In]! Go!" -- Ferris Bueller (artistically edited by the author)

## The New ILCRA Website is Live

After hearing feedback from our members, the ILCRA Board has changed to a more modern look for our website. This website will be easier to navigate and allows us to process conference registrations and memberships faster.

What we would like is your input on what you would like to see on the website for content. This is your professional association's website and is a resource for you but for it to be a great resource we need your opinions and input on what you would like to see on the site.

We also need you to update your profile to make sure it is accurate. You will be receiving an email from Headquarters asking you to update your login information and change your password. This will give you all access to all areas of the members only website.

If you have ideas on additional content you would like to see on the site please email us at [contact@ilcra.org](mailto:contact@ilcra.org).

Thank you for being a member of ILCRA and being part of your professional association.



# 2020 The Year of Living

By Dave Wenhold

It's the new year and everyone has a resolution they want to try to obtain so they can live their best life. I am no different. While I live and breathe court reporting as an advocate and your Executive Director, I also am an adventurer. Or at least I was one before as Kathryn's article talked about 'life getting in the way'. It's time to find time and spend that time living!

We all can fill our hours with work, it's always there and never stops it seems. While that is important and necessary it cannot be all that we are about. If it is, then you can put on your tombstone 'I was really good at working' which is kinda a sad way to be remembered. I am very proud of the work that I do and the work ethic that my parents instilled in me but that does not help fill your soul. Currently, the thing that I love to do is fish in the Florida Keys and that is my passion but doing it a dozen days out of 365 is simply not enough!

So in 2020 I have decided to live intentionally and experientially! Most of our life we hear from other people say 'don't do that or you won't like it' and we

more than often take their advice because we trust their judgment or candidly are afraid to try something new. Why do we do this? How do they know what we will or will not like? Just because it isn't for them why can't it be EXACTLY what we are looking for or want? By trying something new we may find the perfect thing that fills you up and recharges you for the work that you need to do to pay the bills.

Fortunately as an adventurer I have tried many things that people would think would be crazy like skydiving, swimming with sharks, or jumping from a perfectly good 900 foot building in Las Vegas with your current ILCRA President and another reporter, etc. but there is always more that can be done because at the end of the day and when we are leaving this world the one thing that remains are the memories we make and the spectacular times that sets those moments apart from every mundane day.

I am going to challenge you today to live your life to the fullest and leave no adventure on the table. I will leave you with this thought. One of my best friends is a year younger than I am and was a Wall Street guy.

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## Year of Living

Continued from page 9

He worked hard and had enough money to live comfortably and was waiting for 'someday' to start living because he was busy making money for eventual adventures. He came



down with a terminal illness and will never get to his 'someday'.

It stinks for him but he said something profound to me when I was visiting with him recently that I have taken to heart. It was this, when we commit to work, we are literally selling our individual finite amount of time we have on this planet to someone for whatever dollar amount we agree to. Think about that, we are willingly giving away our life so we can have a better car, bigger house, more STUFF that in the end means very little. Chances are you will not remember that car payment but you will remember your trip to Greece, or the sailfish you caught, go skydiving, learn



something new, or truly be in the moment when you are with your family.

So for 2020 let's all live intentionally. Laugh, love, and dance like no one is watching!

# save the date

**ILCRA 2020 CONVENTION**

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## In The Spotlight

On December 30, 2019, Nell Gilpin of Tuscola, IL officially retired after 50 years of service to Douglas County. More impressively, Nell was the last known pen writer in Illinois.

Nell enjoyed a full and rich career in this small county seat, nestled in the east central part of the state, almost due south of Champaign, Illinois.

After high school graduation, Nell worked for five years for a local lawyer until she was brought on full-time to the courthouse in 1968. In 1969, she was officially certified as a pen writer.

Perfection. Stickler. Patient. Dedicated. These are words that have been used to describe Nell in a 2009 expose by her local newspaper. She was also an incredible baker and was lauded for her pies, especially lemon meringue.

Though the population of her county has remained steady, hovering just below 20,000 people for the last 40 years, she has reported many memorable and heart-wrenching cases: custodies, civil suits, murders, and jury trials; the latter being her favorite. "They're all organized and run smooth... They flow so nicely."

ILCRA congratulates Nell Gilpin on this milestone and thanks her for her decades and decades of service and dedication. Enjoy your hard-earned retirement, Nell!

Do you know someone ILCRA could feature "In the Spotlight?" Submit their name and a brief biography and we will publish your submission in future Ad Infinitum editions!

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ad infinitum

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