



IL

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SPRING

2023

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ad infinitum

ILLINOIS
COURT
REPORTERS
ASSOCIATION

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President's Message



My Trip to Capitol Hill Via Legislative Boot Camp

"Do it," they said. "It will be a great learning experience that will take you out of your comfort zone," they said. Truer words have never been spoken!

What is it all about, this Legislative Boot Camp? I would describe it as an intense training that teaches you how to effectively advocate for your industry from a grassroots level. The tools learned and used throughout the process can be used not only at the federal level but also state and local associations. Our goal was (and still is!!) to obtain funding for the Training for Realtime Reporters Act. The "ask" is \$50 million over 5 years. Your mission is to convince the legislative powers that be that funding for this bill is necessary in order to comply with ADA mandates. For example, captioning for the hearing impaired will provide equal access in an educational setting, courtroom setting, and public events. All in all, it is about helping others and helping ourselves in the process.

Day 1 of Boot Camp is the nuts and bolts of legislation and how it all works in government. You are separated into groups with folks not from your state. It's a wonderful way to collaborate with fellow reporters and hear how other states are combatting the same challenges and make new friends in the process.

Once you learn the mechanics, it's time to put your knowledge into play. Each group comes up with a "cast of players" who will present before a mock U.S. Senate Committee hearing. Each group strategizes as a team how they will obtain support for the funding by presenting the people that will directly benefit from the funding for the Training for Realtime Writers Act. The group as a whole comes up with its pitch to request funding for

Continued on page 4



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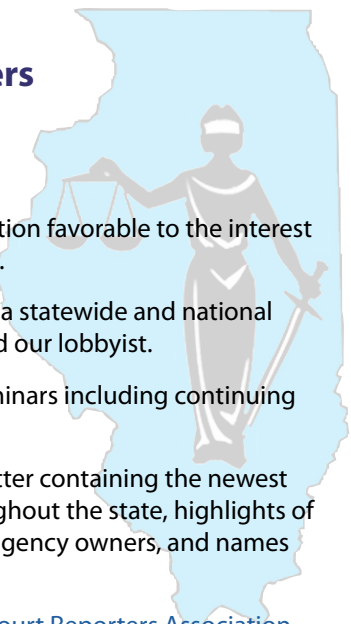
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What ILCRA Does for Illinois Reporters

- **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.

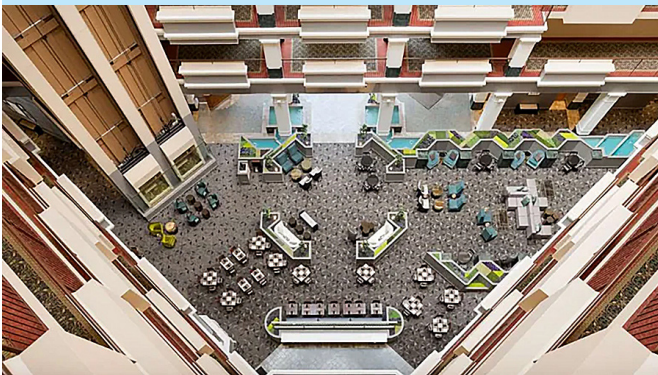


ILCRA MISSION STATEMENT

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.

Save the Date

ILCRA's Annual Convention Oakbrook Terrace September 21-23, 2023



ILCRA is excited to announce our annual convention date and site has been set and are building the agenda now. If you have a speaker or topic you would like to suggest or would like to serve on the convention committee, please send an email to contact@ilcra.org.

President's Message

continued from front page

the Act. You are now role-playing from this point forward, a bit out of your comfort zone, to say the least. On Day 2, still role-playing, each group meets with six different "representatives," ranging from a conservative senator who is anti-court reporting, to a news reporter unfamiliar with our industry, as well as the owner of a major captioning firm. The groups' messages are tailored to appeal to each different personality. The final scenario is testifying before a U.S. Senate Committee. The panel participants were engaging, funny, and challenged us in our pursuit. The bottom line is when you finish Day 1 and Day 2, you couldn't be more ready for the real deal on Day 3.

Day 3 takes you to Capitol Hill where you put everything you have learned and practiced intensely for two days into play. Nerves are high and adrenaline is flowing. It's exciting to walk through the halls and see where history was made. One common theme we heard from spending time on Capitol Hill is we are valued and needed.

I had the privilege to meet House and Senate court reporters and see how they do what they do every single day. It's amazing the magic they perform!! They were so welcoming and eager to answer any questions we had.

One tidbit of advice I found interesting, and enlightening is when going to meet with a Member or their staff, upon arrival, do not knock on the door. You walk right in. It's the People's house!

Boot Camp reveals your true passion, sometimes one you didn't know existed. I left thinking, "This lobbying stuff is kind of cool." If you're on the fence about it, just do it!! You will not be sorry you did.

*Mary Ann Casale
CSR, RDR, CLVS, CMRS, CLR*

Summer Deadlines

Notable Deadlines for the summer for ILCRA members. All forms will be on the ILCRA website and are due no later than the dates listed below.

ILCRA Call For Nominations

Nominating Committee Chair, Georgia Northway, is now accepting nominations for ILCRA Board member offices. Please consider nominating a colleague or yourself to help lead the organization.

- [Call for Nominations \(July 1, 2023\)](#)

ILCRA Distinguished Service Award

It is our pleasure once again to seek nominations for the ILCRA Distinguished Service Award.

The purpose of this award is to encourage and recognize work amounting to distinguished service for the benefit of the court reporting and captioning industries by an individual of ILCRA. That may include work as a member, committee member, officer of the Association, for Ad Infinitum, in state or local affairs, or public relations.

We are seeking someone who has added to the quality of our profession, improved the way it is perceived by other professionals or the general public, or who has helped our fellow reporters and captioners to focus on how they can better meet the demands of technology and the changing judicial and captioning industries.

Take time now to nominate that special person who deserves to be the next DSA award winner.

- [DSA Nomination Form \(July 1, 2023\)](#)

ILCRA Award of Excellence

Do You Know an Outstanding Educator?

It is time once again to call for nominations for the ILCRA annual Award of Excellence to an outstanding educator.

The guidelines are:

1. The nominee must be or have been on the faculty of a court reporter training program.
2. Nominations must be received by July 1, 2023.

Although not required, it is helpful in the selection process if the nominee is an associate member of ILCRA.

Nominations may be submitted by students, fellow faculty, administrators, or ILCRA members to: dwenhold@kmgnet.com

- [Award of Excellence \(Teacher\) Nomination Form \(July 1, 2023\)](#)

Other Important Dates

- Student Scholarship Registration Form (August 15, 2023) *Please check website and Summer Ad In for more information.*
- Seymour Wolfe Student Scholarship (new scholarship August 1, 2023) *Please check website and Summer Ad In for more information.*

Notice of ILCRA Board Meeting at Convention

The ILCRA Board of Directors will have their in-person Board meeting at 7 pm on Thursday, September 21, 2023, at the Hilton Oakbrook Terrace Hotel. ILCRA members in good standing are welcome to attend.

New ILCRA Scholarship Created

ILCRA has been fortunate to be gifted a very generous donation from Melinda Wolfe and Fred Rosenberg in honor of Seymour Wolfe. Many of you knew Seymour as a constant contributor to ILCRA. In memory of his work, Melinda and Fred have created a \$1,000 yearly student scholarship that will last for years to come. One student will receive the award at the annual convention. The criteria will be announced in the next month but will include the student's commitment to community service.

Oh, The Humanity!

By Catherine A. Rajcan, CSR, CRR, CRC, RDR

On January 28, 2023 I was working at a Historic building in Chicago, and upon returning home in the suburbs my husband asked if I had received his text about the bank calling – one of my credit cards had suspicious activity.

I immediately went to my purse and dumped it out. My wallet was gone! Lost or stolen? To my way of thinking, even if it was technically initially lost – falling out of my purse – because my credit cards were used to make purchases at Target, less than a block away from the venue I was at, ultimately it was stolen.

I had 2 credit cards, 2 debit cards (different accounts), and 1 Health Savings Account debit card in my wallet. The credit cards were denied for suspicious activity when the thief/thieves tried to make purchases of over \$600 each. The regular bank debit cards were also denied for suspicious activity. My Health Savings Account debit card was successfully used for two separate purchases of over \$400.00 each. This card is with an out-of-state bank which I use basically never. The Health Savings Account of course is meant to be used only for qualified health-related expenses. A couple weeks after reporting the theft to the HSA bank, they notified me that the investigation into the theft was complete and the funds that were credited back to my account will permanently remain on my account.

Here are some pointers to avoid the time consuming, bothersome exercise of getting yourself back to “whole.”

Generally Speaking and In Advance:

- Make a list of everything in your wallet – credit and debit cards (Health Savings Account card), driver’s license, train ticket, healthcare insurance card, health club card, library card, car insurance card, personal I.D.s, pictures.
- Write down a description of your wallet – color, size, estimated value.
- Purchase a wallet that is a bright color so it visually stands out easily.
- Carry a purse that zips or fastens closed, and make sure you close it at all times while you are outside of your home.
- Always be “present in the moment” when you pull out your wallet for a purchase, make sure you close your wallet, put it back in your purse, and fasten it closed, and visually scan the counter before leaving the Point of Purchase.
- Do not carry all your credit and debit cards with you. Choose perhaps one credit card and one debit card to carry (if you do not use a phone app for banking). [Losing your cell phone would be a whole other article!]
- Do not carry your Health Savings Account card unless you are going to a medical appointment at which you will use it or making qualified medical purchases.

When You Discover You Have Lost Your Wallet (Or One Or More Cards):

- Immediately pull out your safely stored list of wallet contents. The list should include for each card: Company Name, Phone Number, Company Address, Account Number, Security Code Number, Expiration Date.
- Immediately call each company and inform them your card was lost or stolen.
- Immediately call a credit reporting agency – Experion, TransUnion, Equifax. Once you call one, they will report your information to the other companies. Consider putting a free credit freeze on your account for 1 year because sometimes thieves will hang on to your card or information for months before using it; and request a copy of your credit report.
- As soon as possible visit the local Police Department and report that your wallet was stolen. Make sure you tell the police officer unequivocally that your



wallet was stolen, and make sure they will include in the report that your license was taken due to theft. (More on this below*.)

- Obtain a copy of the Police Report as soon as possible and bring a copy of the police report to a Secretary of State's Office. (For persons in the western suburbs, I recommend the St. Charles office because you don't have to make an appointment in advance, and there was little waiting on the weekday I was there.)

Liability for Purchases on Your Cards:

Thanks to the Fair Credit Billing Act, as long as you act quickly you could avoid being liable for any financial losses due to the theft and use of your card or card number. Based on my experience, all the banks and credit cards were available by phone 24/7.

- For credit cards, your liability cannot be more than \$50.
- For debit cards, if you report the loss of your card before it is used, you will not be liable for a fraudulent purchase.
- If your debit card number is used (rather than the physical card), you are not liable for fraudulent purchases if you report it in less than 60 days.
- If your debit card is used and you report it in less than 2 days, you may be liable only up to \$50.
- If your debit card is used and you report it in greater than 2 days but less than 60 days, you may be liable up to \$500 of the fraudulent purchase.
- If your debit card is used and you report it in more than 60 days, you may be liable up to the entire purchase amount.

Thanks to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, an account holder who reports a credit card theft has the right to place a fraud alert on their credit file, request free copies of your credit report, obtain documents relating to fraudulent transactions made or accounts opened using your personal information, obtain information from a debt collector, block information in your credit

report resulting from identity theft, stop a company from reporting information resulting from identity theft, and place a security freeze on your credit report free of charge (if too many credit reports are requested within a certain time frame, it can adversely affect your credit rating).

Because my birthday was coming up a couple months after my wallet was stolen, the Driver's License that was stolen was a Safe Driver replacement license that I received in the mail the week before the theft. When I visited the Department of Motor Vehicles, bringing the Police Report and my soon-to-be (old) expired license, I quickly made it through the short queue to the check-in desk. I explained what happened, the clerk looked at the police report, and the report did not include the words "theft of property" or "theft of license."* The clerk told me because of the report not containing those words, I would need to pay for a replacement of my license – a whopping cost of \$5.

Then the clerk directed me to the blue sheet taped to the wall and asked me to stand there to have my picture taken. Oh, the Humanity! I thought I was going to have another Safe Driver replacement license made and mailed to me, not having to have a picture taken; thus I had shown up at the DMV with no makeup on – insult to injury!

Then I was asked to sit down in the empty chairs; and within a few minutes – (I had brought some proofreading for the wait and never got to it) – I was called up to another desk where they verified my personal information. Finally, I was directed to the cashier counter, checked out, and told it will be just a minute and she would give me my new license. Being the honest Officer of the Court I am, and an honorable citizen, I asked if I can pay \$5 cash for the new card, or would she like a debit card. She said: Oh, because of your age, you do not have to pay anything!

Are you kidding me?

My first senior citizen discount was awarded at the DMV!

Oh, the Humanity!

ILCRA Goes to Washington

By Greg Weiland

On February 26, 2023, four ILCRA members joined other state association leaders from across the country to learn how to advocate for stenography at every level of government. Mary Ann Casale, (ILCRA President), Catherine Rajcan (ILCRA Legislative Representative), Brad Benjamin (ILCRA Member) and I (ILCRA President-Elect) participated in NCRA's Leadership & Legislative Boot Camp in Alexandria, Virginia.

My stomach had been in knots for weeks. There were so many things about this boot camp that were outside of my comfort zone – working with people I didn't know, role playing, public speaking, to name a few. And to



add another layer of anxiety, I'm embarrassed to say I had never visited or even spoken to one of my elected representatives, so the fact that we would be visiting our representatives was causing great stress. I knew I needed this experience, though, to become an effective leader for ILCRA.

The boot camp started bright and early Sunday morning. We were separated into teams of eight. The Illinois people were scattered into separate groups. I knew casually one member of my team, but everyone else was a complete stranger to me. We were presented with A LOT of information that day and the next

day. We were taught Politics 101, the nuts and bolts of association work, maximizing the effectiveness of grassroots advocacy. We learned about the history of the Training for Realtime Writers Act since its introduction in 2008. We went through two days of intense role playing and team building. Then, as a team, we made our pitches to mock senators, representatives, and other industry stakeholders in government, by making a request for funding for the Training for Realtime Writers Act 2023.

Tuesday, February 28, was Hill Day. The Illinois contingent was teamed with the leaders from Wisconsin



Court Reporters Association, and your ILCRA reps along with the WCRA reps visited the offices of Mike Quigley (IL-5), Glenn Grothman (WI-6), Ron Johnson (WI), Tammy Duckworth (IL), and Dick Durbin (IL) to advocate for stenography and to request funding for the Training for Realtime Writers Act 2023. We were all super nervous, and let me tell you, just navigating the halls of Congress should have had its own training session, but we found our way eventually. The staff of the reps were gracious and listened to our pitches for funding. By the end of the day, I had forgotten all about my stomach being in knots in the buildup to boot camp. I was energized with the boosted confidence this experience gave me.

I can't say enough about the leadership provided by Dave Wenhold and Jocelyn Moore in conducting the boot camp. The knowledge they bombarded us with those first two days was overwhelming, but that's the whole purpose of a boot camp. Many thanks to all from NCRA who organized this event. I would highly recommend it to everyone, even those who have no interest in leadership. The confidence you build from this experience can be used in any facet of your life.



I have enjoyed my career as a court reporter, and I really, really love this job, but I have sat on the sidelines my entire career when it came to advocacy and association work. This experience taught me the importance of being involved. To borrow a quote from Oprah, no one is coming to save us. We must advocate for ourselves. And here's the deal: We need you, E-A-C-H of you. A small group can't carry this burden. Talk to me or any other ILCRA board member to find out ways you can get involved. If you don't have the time to get involved, donate to our PAC. Don't be like Greg and sit on the sidelines for years. You will be so glad you got involved. I can guarantee it.

Pictured in the photo: Greta Pedersen (back left), Catherine Rajcan (back right), Meredith Seymour (middle left), Brad Benjamin (middle right), Mary Ann Casale (front left) and Greg Weiland (front right).

United We Stand

By Dave Wenhold

Legislative victories are tough to come by. In the past 12 months, ILCRA and our members have been able to beat back a backdoor challenge to legislation that would have swapped out the current CSR language and replaced it with pro digital language. Additionally, with the help of court reporters and captioners in Illinois, language that would have prohibited stenography (how insane is that to even consider) in our neighboring state of Indiana was beat back as well.

These positive outcomes just didn't happen. It happened because people in our community came together and realized that if they did not take immediate action, their lives could be immediately affected. This was no joke. No crying wolf. No overreaction. It was a realistic reality.

Fortunately, your leadership at ILCRA and NCRA put together effective, logical, cohesive, and easy to implement grassroots campaigns that worked. One of the reasons they worked was because it was a concerted message and directions. Candidly, as a federal lobbyist and one-time President of the national association of lobbyists, these campaigns were case studies in how to put together a truly effective grassroots campaign.

Because of your efforts we were able to beat back the proponents of these ill-conceived and shady end runs. The opposition was counting on the reporters, captioners, educators, students, and firm owners in our state to be passive and sit on our hands while they rammed these anti-steno campaigns through. They were wrong, dead wrong.

That being said, the opposition will try and rally and

come at this from a different angle, so we need to be prepared. One of the reasons these campaigns worked was because people did not go rogue, verbally attack the legislators, or become too emotional in their communications. Any one of those things can ruin an entire campaign. All it takes is one well-intentioned but too emotional person to ruin a whole campaign. One hot head can doom a thousand good letters, phone calls or emails. As I like to say, crazy will ruin any good campaign!

So, the next time a legislative challenge comes up, let's all continue to work together for the common good. United we stand, divided we fall.

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Grassroots 101

By Georgia Northway

Feeling powerless and wanting to effect change in your area? Never underestimate the impact of writing to your state senators and congresspeople. Below, Georgia Northway (CSR, RPR) has put together a letter to get you started.

Some of the important things to remember:

- Be sure to include your name and address so your recipient can be sure you are a constituent.
- State your purpose for writing at the very beginning.
- Try to keep it **positive**, but don't be afraid to

address challenges.

- Make it personal; how has court reporting benefitted you as a career and also your family, your community, etc.

Don't forget to join us on April 22 for our virtual marathon, where Georgia will also talk about how to easily find your representatives and the positive impact letter writing can have on the entire profession!

Here is a sample letter (of course you would add the pertinent issues you were advocating for or against)

[To your local State Representative/Congressperson:]

I am one of your constituents in the [#] District, and I am writing you today to tell you about the importance of court reporting in our region and in our state.

Since the beginning of recorded history, humankind has valued the ability to document what has happened in our past for multiple reasons. We value impartiality, accuracy, and reliability in our pursuit to memorialize history so that we may learn from it.

At the heart of our judicial system is this notion of recordkeeping in a way that is impartial, accurate, and reliable; in fact, it so reliable that judicial precedent, case law, and many other governing factors affecting our everyday lives is determined by what is transcribed.

[Mr./Mrs. Rep], I write to you today as a proud member of this small but dedicated community of transcribers called court reporters, or stenographers. We are a highly skilled group of individuals whose sole charge is to capture every word spoken during depositions and court proceedings. It is intense and demanding work, and not everyone who sets out to be a court reporter completes the program. But those that do take their charge very seriously. We call ourselves the Guardians of the Record.

I hope to create awareness of our profession and the importance it plays at every level of government, from our great state's hearings in Springfield to our local city council meetings.

For over two decades, companies and reporting firms alike have been utilizing a system called digital audio recording (or as they have coined themselves, "digital court reporting") to make a record of deposition proceedings and court hearings. They have purposely and intentionally misappropriated our



certification title to deceive and defraud the public of the actual service they are providing.

As a Certified Shorthand Reporter in Illinois, I am especially concerned with the misuse of my designation. The term “digital court reporter” gets used with regularity, and our efforts to stop the misuse of our designation have been ignored.

Over the last few years, several complaints have been filed with the IDFPR, and those complaints have gone unanswered. Digital audio recorders continue to practice in Illinois unlicensed and unregulated. They pay no licensure dues in Illinois and are not subject to the same continuing education requirements as CSRs, or any other regulated profession in this state. When something goes wrong with recording equipment, it is hard to understand who is held responsible – the equipment or the operator.

The Illinois CSR Act of 1984 is the public’s last line of defense to ensure they are getting what they expect and what they are promised. The Act itself, which has been in existence for almost 40 years, starts with: “The practice of shorthand reporting in the State of Illinois is hereby **declared to affect the public health, safety and welfare and to be subject to regulation and control.**”

While court reporting has experienced a shortage of available stenographers to fill every vacancy, Illinois is incredibly unique in that on-site training is actually expanding across the state to many community colleges. Stenographic court reporting is a doorway for underserved and less privileged individuals in more rural settings to learn an amazing skill that will pay them well their whole career. They can go to work at their local courthouse, or travel the state to work anywhere there is a need.

[Mr./Ms. Rep], I thank you so much for your time today, and please reach out to me with any further questions you may have about stenographic court reporting. I ask that you keep stenography in mind in the coming months and years as we strive for the preservation of our profession and the quality of recordkeeping in a way that is unique to the stenographic court reporter.

Sincerely,
[your name]
[your address]
[phone + email]

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Every Stroke Matters

By Greg Weiland

Let me just start by saying I am lazy. It's true. However, I try to channel my laziness into something productive, and what motivates me is working less and freeing up more time to be lazy. Thus, I am always on the hunt for stroke savers.

I've added a few things lately that have been working out nicely. I've started using the final -Z as sort of a wildcard in phrasing. This works very well for two-word combinations that are said together a lot, like "make sure." Below is the first group I did, and the first one especially comes up in just about every job. In this grouping, the final -Z stands for "sure."

Here are a few strokes that I've been using that are as smooth as butter.

make sure	MAIKZ (comes up A LOT)
making sure	MA*IKZ
made sure	MAIDZ (I use the asterisk for maids, which comes up almost never)
for sure	FORZ
be sure	BEZ
I am sure	IMZ
I'm sure	AOIMZ
I am not sure	IMTS (the -Z doesn't work in this stroke and the next)
I'm not sure	AOIMTS
are you sure	RUZ

You can also use your imagination on the final -Z wildcard. I was working on a case where "crime scene" was coming up so much. I write crime KRAOIM, so I started adding the final -Z and defined it as "crime scene." This is so easy to remember that I've added it to my main dictionary.

I would love to hear about your shortcuts and the creative ways you eliminate strokes. Send your shortcuts to me at gweilandcrr@gmail.com, and I'll share them in the next Ad Infinitum.

Happy writing!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE! *Spread the word!*

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

Lake Land College*

5001 Lake Land Blvd, Mattoon, IL 61938
217.234.5253 www.lakelandcollege.edu

MacCormac College*

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Ad Infinitum is published quarterly by the Illinois Court Reporters Association, 43150 Broadlands Center Plaza, 152-269, Ashburn, VA 20148. ILCRA assumes no responsibility for statements or claims made in Ad Infinitum. Subscription is included in annual membership dues paid by a member.

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ISSUE	PUBLICATION DATE	DEADLINE
Spring	April 15	March 15
Summer	July 15	June 15
Fall	October 15	September 15
Winter	January 15	December 15