



IL

CRA

WINTER

2023

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ad infinitum

ILLINOIS
COURT
REPORTERS
ASSOCIATION

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President's Message



What happened to 2022?

It seems like weeks ago it was Labor Day, and here we are after the holidays. This time of the year our thoughts not only turn to family, friends, and festivities but also reflection on the past year's successes and challenges. There is an old proverb that says, "may you live in interesting times," and let me tell you, as President of ILCRA, we sure have done that in 2022.

In my role as President, I am grateful beyond words that I have the support of great colleagues and ILCRA staff assisting me navigate territory I am unfamiliar with, to say the least. It does take a village to protect and advocate for this profession, and now more than ever we need everyone working together as one to keep our profession relevant and our licensing requirements mandatory. Keeping the truth front and center to counter the smoke and mirrors from outside and inside forces is crucial.

That is where you come in. If you are interested in a specific committee (convention, legislative, finance, membership, etc.), please send an email to contact@ilcra.org and help create the future you want.

2022 was a year of victory. ILCRA was successful in beating back a digital threat to our CSR act in the legislature. Thank you for all of you that made calls and emails (and stayed on message) to our legislators. We stopped that action dead in its tracks. Our success is now a how-to case study on starting a grassroots campaign. While all that is a plus, we must never forget that the digital threat is not going away. In fact, the forces in favor of putting us under the same umbrella

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PRESIDENT

Mary Ann Casale
mac@casalereporting.com

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Stephanie Battaglia
battcsr@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Vacant

SECRETARY

Lori Kennedy
lorie2925@gmail.com

TREASURER

Tammi Sefranek
tammi3@comcast.net

REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVE

(Official)
Angela Miller
miller32010@gmail.com

REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVE

(Freelance)
Greg Weiland
gweilandcrr@gmail.com

REGION TWO REPRESENTATIVE

(Official)
Samantha Brown
sbrown@peoriacounty.org

REGION TWO REPRESENTATIVE

(Freelance)
Isaiah Roberts
isaiahpaul94@gmail.com

EDUCATION LIAISON

Bernice Radavich
bercaptions@sbcglobal.net

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

Catherine Rajcan
efficiencyrptg@cs.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

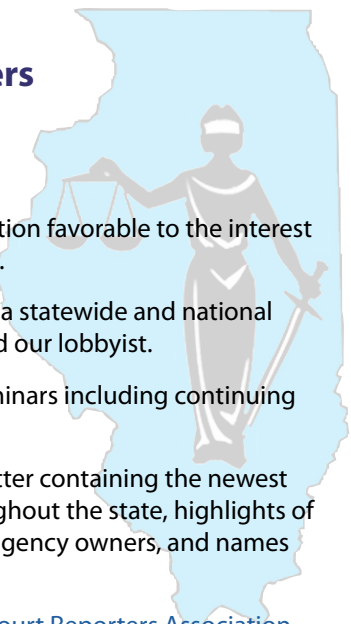
Georgia Long
gb.rollins17@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dave Wenhold,
703-927-1453; Ashburn, VA
contact@ilcra.org

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.

President's Message

continued from front page

are getting louder and more aggressive every year. We need everyone to stay vigilant and to be ready to act on a moment's notice.

Our convention in Springfield this past October was a success. We had amazing speakers with informative and thought-provoking presentations. Our dance-themed welcome reception was a blast, and there were no injuries on the dance floor. It was so nice to see folks together again. Our Marathon Seminar and Annual Convention will be in the Chicagoland area, so please watch your email for notifications. If you would like to speak at one of these or know of a great speaker with excellent content, please let us know at contact@ilcra.org. This is how we can bring you the best conventions in the country, so please let us know what you want your next convention to look like. Also, do not forget to renew your membership and encourage others to support their state association. We are stronger together.

Finally, I want to wish you all a happy and successful New Year!

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

Interview with a Champion

ILCRA's Past President, Georgia Northway's interview with ILCRA's own legend, Donna Urlaub.

GN: First of all, how does it feel to have turned in back-to-back perfect papers in a speed contest?!

DU: Surreal.

At National in Orlando, Donna Karocik, in announcing the results, gave such an exciting leadup to my perfect 280 Testimony, she impressed even me LOL. Then to go on stage and see everyone standing and applauding, wow! The icing on the cake was my husband, daughter, son-in-law, and two grandkids had come in from the pool and were standing in the back during the results, experiencing the countdown excitement. When I came off the stage, they were waiting for me up front -- in their swimwear. My 9-year-old grandson excitedly declared me to be "perfect." My husband told me it brought tears to his eyes, he was so proud. Having everyone there to experience easily the highlight of my career was really something.

In Springfield, although a smaller group, these are my people, and hearing Rita Corson throw out that word "perfect" again -- I was gobsmacked. Winning both speed and realtime was the icing on the cake, proof that I/we can continue to evolve and improve no matter our age.

GN: How did you get started in court reporting?

DU: I was a 17-year-old high school grad in 1967, with absolutely no idea what to do with my life, no money for college, working full-time at the Certified grocery store where I had been part-time in high school. In February of '68 my mother brought home a tear-off card from the bus for Bryant & Stratton business school. I sent it in, got a call for an interview, and took the "L" downtown (but first my two-years-younger sister with a sense of direction accompanied me to the "L" to make sure I got on the right train). The salesman was charming and good looking; I was smitten. He showed me some readable steno, told me court reporters made good money, and just like that, I signed a 14-month contract. But first I needed a down payment of \$384 -- no small feat on my \$1.50 per hour job -- and \$80 per month once I started school, which I did in September 1968. Thinking back, being 17 years old, I don't know how they could have enforced that contract, but that wouldn't be the first time my ignorance



served to my benefit. I got a part-time job downtown paying \$25 a week, out of which I paid my \$80 tuition. Things were tight, for sure, but I didn't question the reality of finishing in 14 months; my situation was such that I had to, there were no other options. Around the spring of '69 I started at Sullivan Reporting, typing for court reporters, while waiting to take the CSR in September. Here I am 53 years later.

GN: Did you ever get stuck at a speed like so many of us do? Do you remember what strategies you used to overcome it?

DU: We tested in 25 wpm increments. I recall 175 wpm being my plateau, as we called it. My strategy was simple: practice. But it was also enforced. We had to write 5 pages three times every day from a very dense law book of some kind (all I remember from it was the expression: Where there's a will, there's a family), and turn in the notes/homework. School was 6 hours a day; first 3 hrs steno, last 3 hrs typing. After I tested out of typing class, those three hours were spent alone in a room with a very limited amount of recorded material and a reel-to-reel tape recorder. This forced me to practice whether I wanted to or not. Maybe writing the same material over and over developed muscle memory and helped me to be a clean writer; who knows.

GN: What would you say are some of the most important keys to your success when it comes to writing?

DU: Besides practicing 30 min a day every day, I practice 24/7 in my mind. In the car, listening to the radio, I think of how I would write words I hear. I practice to podcasts of experts (Dax Shepard Armchair Expert), also World News Tonight (5:30 ABC), TED Talks, which makes you ready for anything, as opposed to practicing the same material over and over. I write the pharma commercials, sometimes succeeding in writing the long, long list of possible side effects. I've developed simple briefs like cancer SKER, breast cancer BRER, metastatic MEFK, lymphoma FLOEM, acid SID, diabetes DAOIBTS, tuberculosis TURB, pneumonia NAOUM, heart attack HARK, blood (sugar) (clot) (pressure) (flow) (vessel) BLAUG, BLAOT, BLAOP, BLUFL, BLEFL.

If you notice you struggle with an outline (I hated TKPOFT deposit, it was the TKP part of it) try something else. For me, POFT works. The other outline I didn't love was the hump -MGS in determination DERMGS. Tip I learned from Bill Cohen: switch to -NGS, DERNGS, determining DERNG. From that, I went to SUNGS assumption. Two high frequency words now written solidly every time. Another favorite is TRIF alternative TRIFL alternatively. I write mindfully, thinking about words/outlines that bother me/slow me down, and how I can change them. This equals faster, cleaner writing, and a better awareness of my steno outlines.

***GN: Do you have any advice:
a. for students?***

DU: Join your state and national associations. It's crazy cheap for students, and you will learn so much/make great connections/maybe even win stuff, get money!

Make it easy to practice. Have your machine set up at all times so there's no obstacle to practice. You're watching TV, have your machine at the ready. Just write.

Don't waste your practice. Write realtime for yourself, then go through it and define everything. If you didn't write to a file (your laptop), scroll through your notes, open your dictionary, and add the entries. If you write a poor outline, and it can't be something else, define it. There's no harm at all in defining less-than-perfect outlines.

Make practice a priority, make practice mindful. Don't fall prey to the misguided advice of just write something no matter how ugly, and your notes will clear up later.

Strive to write clean and short, and to keep up as long as you can.

Try low, tilted-machine writing for better ergonomics. I can write all day without stress on my arms/wrists.

What I learned from Ed Varallo: practice for the test, meaning no more than 10 wpm over. Another test tip from Ed: strategically drop, meaning better to drop one word and get back on that speeding train, than fall apart and drop 8 to 10, and not be able to read what's before and after.

My tip for test takers: it counts as one error whether a



three-syllable word or one, whether plural and should have been singular or vice versa. That word that you wrote with a shadowy "s" on the end is still an error even though you wrote the root word correctly. That four-syllable word that you got a piece of counts as one error, just as the four one-syllable words that you dropped after that. And proofread your test paper against your notes. This can -- and will -- be the difference between pass and fail. I've seen that many times in students who kept failing and didn't know why. It's a heartbreak to fail simply because you didn't proofread.

The more you read, the more words you've encountered and know, which means fewer words to get stopped in puzzlement in your brain, and not come out your fingers. The same with writing steno: the more and varied words you write, the less chance of that pause/stop when it hits that amazing computer called your brain.

b. for new reporters?

DU: See above. And seek out a mentor. There are lots of us out there who would be happy to fill this role. Also, wherever you choose to work should have a training program.

Realtime to yourself every single job. The time saving is invaluable. Get there early and create the title page, make job defines (or you've hopefully done it already), use the recesses or pauses in proceedings to clean up/job define/get clarification on something you flagged as you were writing.

Question/check and double check everything. No matter how confident you are, Google it. Put the whole sentence in and see what you get. You don't know what you don't know, and you'll often be surprised when you find out.

Strive for higher certification. Nothing boosts your confidence like knowing that you've passed (fill in the blank). Many a time I have consoled myself, after a fast-talking expert witness, with the knowledge that I have proven myself to be a fast writer; in other words, it's not me, it's you! And, whether you believe it or not, you are writing faster -- even though you feel like you're getting killed -- because you've put in the work to earn the certs.

Learn your software early and well. Invest in yourself; schedule time with a trainer (Pam Szczecinski for CaseCATalyst). There's so much she can help you with that will save you editing time which = money, and will help you to not develop bad habits which also cost time which = money. All of this circles back to the value of mindful writing, clean writing, tweaking your dictionary, more job enjoyment.

c. for people thinking about entering a speed and/or realtime contest?

DU: Just do it! You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain. You'd be amazed at how fun it is, the reporters you'll meet and get to know, the sense of camaraderie, and the surprise and excitement when you turn in that paper and eureka! you qualified! Then you're hooked. Everything you do to prepare for the contests boosts your confidence, ability to achieve higher certifications, and performance on the job.

d. for seasoned reporters?

DU: Don't let age/time you've been reporting be an excuse for: fill in the blank. "I've always written everything out; I'm not going to change now." "I can't shorten my writing; I'm too old." "I don't need to learn that; I won't be doing this much longer." "I'm not going to invest in a writer that will admittedly lessen wear and tear on my body, help me write better, is the single most important tool of my trade, because I'll be quitting/retiring in five years."

Yes, you can make changes no matter your age. I practice -- there's that word again -- what I preach, and believe it keeps me sharp. You might even call it a hedge against -- I'll be kind here -- loss of brain power, in whatever form it takes. One can only hope. But I do know that giving in is a lose-lose, so why not give winning a shot?

**Donna M. Urlaub, CSR, RPR, RMR, CRR
Certified Realtime Reporter
Illinois Speed and Realtime Champion
2021 National Speed Contest Champion**

What a Convention!

By **Stephanie A. Battaglia, CSR, RMR, CRR**

Oh, my, what a great weekend we had at ILCRA's annual conference that was held in Springfield, Illinois, October 6 – 8. It was great to see so many familiar faces as well as meeting a few new faces. And of course a shout out to Ms. Cooke who brought seven students from South Suburban College! I think we had a few other students from different schools as well. Amazingly, Abe Lincoln made an appearance at the Friday night festivities.

Our sessions were great. Donna Urlaub and Kathy Grove's Weird Al Yankovic's Word Crimes video really hit the spot! The whole time I really thought Donna and Kathy put together the video... Check it out. It's worth it for sure.

MaryAnn Casale and I presented our A to Z of Steno and had great audience participation coming up with lots of positive and negative words in our profession. Kathryn Thomas delivered a fantastic finish to our weekend with her Ultimate Dictionary Challenge. I actually had enough words to take a third place finish.

And to have the chance to rub elbows with our National President of NCRA, Jason Meadors, is truly a moment that was worth going to the conference! He always has words of wisdom and guidance to our members.

And shout out to Donna Urlaub who scored another PERFECT paper on the 180 Literary leg of the speed contest. I'm always in awe at being able to stand with her, truly one of the best reporters in our profession. If you haven't participated in a speed contest or realtime contest before, come join us next year. It's really a lot of fun. We had medalists in both contests this year that were first-timers!!! Funny how those I encourage to participate always seem to score higher than me... It truly is good-natured competition.

We did get to hear from our lobbyist who gave us great ideas of what we can do to get to know our elected officials and be seen, be heard, be known.

And a big thank you to our vendors and those who donated, every bit helps ILCRA continue our work.

But, bottom line, we cannot continue our dedication to protect our profession without members. We really need to encourage our colleagues to be members of ILCRA and to come to the conferences. Our dues are low compared to other states, \$110 for the entire year. And we are your only organization in the State of Illinois who is fighting to keep the CSR at the level it should be, the gold standard of our profession. We all worked very hard to attain that CSR, we should all be working to keep it intact.

Please, join us, get involved. Volunteer. Reach out to us and ask what you can do. We cannot do it alone.

Looking forward to a very positive next year!

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Lisa Earp
Business Instructor
Director of Court Reporting
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Court Reporters Have My Heart

By Patti White (Fuller)

If ever there was a group of people that I admire and love, it's court reporters! "Who are they?" you may ask. Well, they're the hardworking individuals you see in courtrooms or in deposition hearings, screaming their little fingers off on those crazy-looking machines that look similar to an old-fashioned adding machine but with unmarked keys. That's a stenography machine and it's the technology that has been used for over 100 years to "capture the record" of important meetings and is used today to produce closed captions that are seen on television or in sports venues. It's a profession that some liken to a glorified secretary, but we know we are much more than that.

The skill, concentration, and aptitude necessary to become a working reporter is really off the charts. But the final result is worth the effort of these tireless workers: Transcripts of trials that make history or closed captions for people who can't hear a television, meeting, or classroom.

I've had the PLEASURE of working in this profession for over 40 years and I can honestly say I still love what I do. But how do you become a court reporter or captioner? You can get a great start by attending Hillsboro (Illinois) High School! Why HHS? Because there are a multitude of graduates of our local school who have become court stenographers, as they're also called.

So why are there so many court stenographers from Hillsboro? Is there something in the water, or in those lush green fields that surround this community? I don't know one single stenographer from Litchfield. Enough said.

I've often wondered what the common denominator

is in this group, because frankly, our profession needs people to fill jobs. Many people have the idea that you can just flip a switch and record proceedings. Well, what happens if you need a transcript or if the recording media becomes outdated? Only a trained certified stenographer can make a record that lasts forever.

So I've counted 23 reporters who graduated from HHS between the years of 1962 to current. I've talked to a number of these reporters and would like to share my findings. I've numbered the reporters, not in any specific order, but the lower numbers we can thank for guiding the rest of us to this great profession:

#1 Gary Maninfor was one of the first in my research to graduate from HHS. He had a successful freelance company that still operates out of Mattoon, IL. He mentioned many others from Montgomery County, but my interest is specifically in Hillsboro, so he listed **#2 David Dobrinic** and **#3 Gary Traylor** were both in the profession. Dave worked with Gary for a bit in the freelance world, then he eventually was asked to become an official reporter by Circuit Court Judge Paul Hickman, who also interested several others to become reporters, including this author.

Previously, the court had used the services of part-time but very-fast shorthand reporter **#4 June Traylor**, but Judge Hickman's docket had some lengthy, convoluted trials upcoming and he needed someone on a full-time basis and Dobrinic fit that bill, having finished his training at Sparks College and gaining experience in freelance.

I attended HHS in the 70s and the newest building on campus was the business education building, and I loved it there. The shiny slick floors of the hallway, offering dual access in front and back, made getting to class easy from the main part of the campus. And we could make a quick escape via the rear to the football



fields and gym!

The excellent teachers were SO HAPPY in that building, with their new typewriters, desks, and easy-to-clean blackboards -- the latest and greatest technology. By the time I finished my courses, there were even a few IBM Selectrics in place, with that new-fangled globe of a font! Most of my friends were in the old building, studying the hard-core subjects of chemistry, geometry, and biology, which were always lost on me. I'm sure my parents were thrilled that I was able to find an area where I could excel.

I was also a musician but the HHS band didn't offer the opportunity to play the organ, so my mother made arrangements for private instruction by Irma Waddington, a skilled organist in Pana. I got to skip out that back door one afternoon a week and drive to Pana for tutoring!

When it came time for post-secondary education, my dad Bruce White had learned about the court reporting field through Dave Dobrinic. He told us about Sparks Business College in Shelbyville, and I was off to the races, literally! The last and most difficult part of training was to become fast enough for certification, ultimately achieving steno speeds over 200 words per minute. I was very competitive and each speed take was a race for me!

My parents shared my enthusiasm for attendance there, though being the last of six children, it was expected I'd attend a four-year university like the rest of my siblings. That was always in the back of my mind, and after a job change, I resumed studies at SIU Carbondale, and freelanced my way through school, taking depositions and statements while studying business and experiencing the fun campus life of a Saluki.

Many more HHS students would learn of this court reporting profession and eventually attend Sparks College:

#5 Barb Boston, who freelanced in metro St. Louis

#6 Julie Milanos Satterlee, official court reporter

#7 Jill Milanos Tippet, official court reporter

#8 Paula White Shofroth

#9 Anna Sanders

#10 Angie Satterlee, official court reporter in Montgomery County

#11 Michele Davidson Pachesa, official court reporter in Montgomery County

There were many others who attended Sparks as well, but were not successful in the intense speed training. They've built successful careers in other areas. Court reporting is not for everyone because it is quite challenging, but Jody Downs Schnarre, Jody Vandever Dunn, Denise Billington, Barbara Jagosh, Donna Beeler Funderburk and others also attended Sparks for business study.

Springfield, Illinois offered Brown's College and several HHS students attended there, since it was an easy commute:

#12 Connie Conway Lopinot, freelance in Metro East

#13 Carol Jo Caulk Hempten, official court reporter

The court reporting program at SIU Carbondale was in full swing by the time I decided to restart matriculation. Already having my court reporting skills made me a great role model at the two-year School of Technical Careers program and they had wonderful instructors. But my focus was on being the last sibling to get a bachelor's degree, which I ultimately obtained in 1982. But several reporters graduated from their excellent program as well:

#14 Sherri Gad, freelance in Metro St. Louis and official in Montgomery County

#15 Lori Deluka Speiser, freelance in Metro St. Louis and official in Montgomery County

#16 Molly Sheridan Hobbie, freelance in Springfield

#17 Kelley Olroyd, freelance

There are other HHS grads that have attended schools outside those I've listed and still others that completed

a program but found that working in the field wasn't the right fit. Several of my colleagues helped me recall names, so I thank Lori, Barb, Angie, Gary and others for their help.

#18 Aimee Lingle, freelance in the Metro East and captioner

#19 Robin Adams Enstrom, freelance in the Springfield area

#20 Marcia Fox Liebscher

#21 Lori Huber Rogers, freelance in Southern Illinois

#22 Wendy Smith Reeves

#23 Patti White, Official Court Reporter in U.S. Federal District Court, freelance and captioning

If there are any names I've missed, I apologize and please reach out to me so I can add you to my list for the next edition. Sadly, all of the schools I've listed have closed their doors. There are many programs now that offer an online learning option and I'm happy to report one of the newest "brick and mortar" programs is operating at Lakeland College in Mattoon. I understand they offer a virtual program as well. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have about the profession. If you'd like to work in an exciting, room-for-growth field, court reporting and captioning are for you!

Reporters reading this article should pass this on to anyone they think might be interested in the profession.

2022 Realtime and Speed Contests Report

By Rita Corson, Chairman Realtime and Speed Contests

*Printed version of speech given at
ILCRA Convention.*

It was so nice to see eight people sign up for the contests this year. We even had a couple of new faces! I know my contestants take this contest very seriously. Some of them have been practicing daily for this. Our committee tried to make this the best contest ever for you guys, and I think we pulled it off.

We couldn't have these contests without our wonderful sponsors.

Thank you to Donna Urlaub of Urlaub Bowen and Associates for sponsoring the Realtime Contest. And thank you to Melanie Humphrey-Sonntag and family for sponsoring the Speed Contest.

As always, I had my three dictators who never say no when I ask them, Judy Lehman, Teresa Ozuna, and Peg Sokalski. Thank you, ladies, for always being there for me. I also had many helpers who helped monitor the room and grade tests. I couldn't do this without my great helpers. If you helped with the contest in any way, would you please stand and be recognized.

Well, let's find out who this year's speedy fingers are!

Realtime Contest:

There are two parts to this test – 180 wpm Literary and 200 wpm Testimony. It takes 95% accuracy to qualify. That's only 45 errors on the 180 Lit and 50 errors on the Testimony. These contestants nailed their homophones each and every time! They never cease to amaze me, and you will be amazed when you hear some of these percentages. These reporters are amazing and their daily practices really paid off!

The 180 Lit was Taylor Swift's commencement speech she gave to the Class of '22 at New York University. I bet when some of



Donna Urlaub, realtime champion

these contestants get home, they will be putting glittery leotard in their dictionaries. Not to make fun of any one contestant, as I would never do that, but all but one of my 8 contestants need to put those two words in their dictionary. We had Lee tard, glatterly lee tarred, Getry Low tarred, and Glitterilio tarred.

To qualify you must have fewer than 45 errors. In the 180 Literary qualifiers that receive a certificate are:

The 180 wpm Literary:

1. Greg Weiland, 95.44%
2. Lorie Kennedy, 95.56%
3. Stephanie Battaglia, 96.44%
4. Donna Urlaub, 97%
5. Tamara Sefranek, 97.78%
6. Kathryn Thomas, 98.44%

The 200 wpm Testimony was about an intoxicated driver of an



ATV. This defendant didn't know his ABC's very well. To qualify you had to have 50 errors or less and the take has to be written in upper and lower case, which makes it so much harder. Those contestants who qualified and receive a certificate are:

200 wpm Testimony:

1. Kathryn Thomas, 95.1%
2. Bernice Radavich, 96.3%
3. Tamara Sefranek, 97%
4. Stephanie Battaglia, 97.9%
5. Greg Weiland, 98.2%
6. Donna Urlaub, 98.5%
7. Lorie Kennedy, 98.9%

By averaging both of the scores from the 180 Lit and the 200 Testimony, I come with up a first,

second, and third place. These contestants will receive medals, and our first-place winner will take home the Bonni Shuttleworth Realtime traveling trophy. With a score of 97.23%, the third-place medal goes to Lorie Kennedy.

With a score of 97.39%, the second-place medal goes to Tamara Sefranek.

Our first-place medalist and the winner of the Realtime Contest and receiving the Bonni Shuttleworth Realtime traveling trophy with a score of 97.75% goes to Donna Urlaub. Congratulations, Donna.

Next we have our winners of the Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest.



2nd place Realtime Tamara Sefranek. 1st place Donna Urlaub. 3rd place Lorie Kennedy.

Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest:

I had eight contestants participating in the Speed Contest. They worked very hard to be able to take home the Sally Cochran Speed Contest trophy. I think everyone had a good time all the while being very competitive! I admire their hard work and dedication!

The Speed Contest consisted of three takes - 220 wpm Literary, 230 wpm Legal Opinion, and 270 wpm Testimony.

The 220 Lit was Ryne Sandburg's speech when he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Ryne had respect for the game of baseball and our contestants learned all about that. To qualify, our contestants had to have 55 errors or less.

Those contestants who qualified were:

220 Lit:

1. Tamara Sefranek, 96.82%
2. Stephanie Battaglia, 97.64%
3. Bernice Radavich, 98.1%
4. Greg Weiland, 98.55%

5. Amy Doman, 98.64%
6. Lorie Kennedy, 98.91%
7. Kathryn Thomas, 99.45%
8. And with a perfect paper, Donna Urlaub, 100%

The 230 Legal Opinion was an argument before the Appellate Court of an appeal in an aggravated unlawful possession and use of a firearm. Legal Opinions are always so hard you can't even imagine, but we did have four qualifiers. They could only have 58 errors:



Winner of Speed Contest Donna Urlaub.



3rd place Speed Amy Doman, 1st place Donna Urlaub. 2nd place Lorie Kennedy



*Qualifiers in 200 Testimony in realtime:
Lorie Kennedy, Stephanie Battaglia, Tamara Sefranek, Bernice Radavich, Greg Weiland, Kathryn Thomas and Donna Urlaub.*

230 wpm Legal Opinion:

1. Amy Doman, 95%
2. Kathryn Thomas, 95.22%
3. Lorie Kennedy, 99.3%
4. Donna Urlaub, 99.57%

The 270 Testimony was testimony about an elderly gentleman who changed his will, giving all his money to the Shriners and leaving his children without any of it. We again had qualifiers who had fewer than 68 errors:

270 Testimony:

1. Amy Doman, 95.04%
2. Lorie Kennedy, 97.41%
3. Donna Urlaub, 98.07%

Again, I average the scores of all three speed contests in order to pick

the winner. In order to win a medal in the speed contest you have to qualify in all three areas, and we had three qualifiers.

The third-place medal with a score of 96.22% goes to Amy Doman. And our second-place medal with a score of 98.54% goes to Lorie Kennedy.

And the first-place medal and the winner of the Gary L. Sonntag Memorial Speed Contest and receiving the Sally Cochran Traveling Trophy with a score of 99.21% goes to Donna Urlaub. Congratulations, Donna, and to all our contestants.

I am so in awe of all of these contestants. Just sitting for these contests makes them winners in my

book. They made me proud to be a part of this contest experience.

If you have never attempted a speed contest, why don't you sign up next year. We had two new people this year and they both qualified on several legs of the tests, and one won a medal. So don't be intimidated by all this talent. You have this talent too. Sign up next year and show us your talent that you've been hiding. As you practice for this contest it can only improve your skills as a court reporter and make your job easier.



*Qualifiers in 220 Literary in Speed:
Amy Doman, Bernice Radavich, Stephanie Battaglia, Tamara Sefranek, Greg Weiland, Donna Urlaub, Lorie Kennedy, and Kathryn Thomas*



My graders and dictators: Peg Sokalski, Judy Lehman, Dee Doubet, and Teresa Ozuna.

Let's Keep It Brief!

By Georgia Northway

Georgia Northway's favorite family court briefs:

[Colloquy] THE COURT: Yes.	STKPWHREFRPBLGTS
[Colloquy] THE COURT: No.	STKPWHROFRPBLGTS
[Colloquy] THE COURT: Okay.	STKPWHROEFRPBLGTS
[Colloquy] THE COURT: All right.	STKPWHRAFRPBLGTS
401(K)	FOIRK
supervised visitation	SPR*FGS
custody and support	KUPT
custody and visitation	KUFGS
domestic violence	DM*EV
domestic abuse	DM*BS
temporary support	TRORPT
child support	KHORT
financial affairs affidavit	FA*IFD
guardian ad litem	GLIGT
ground rules	GROURLZ
irretrievably broken	R-FRN
irretrievable breakdown	R-FRBD
irretrievable	R-FRBL
irreconcilable differences	RIFRNS
tax return	TAURN
income tax return	NAURN
tax refund	TRUFND
income tax refund	NAUFND
fair and equitable	FRAEBL
fair and reasonable	FAIRNL

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Court Reporting for the Silver and Small Screen in the 21st Century

By Brad Benjamin, CSR, RPR

When I was young, the rare appearance of a court reporter on television in a courtroom scene fascinated me – that odd, narrow paper ticking out of their machine that certainly couldn't be English; yet they could read from it. It gives me no pleasure to say that was quite a while ago, and obviously, the profession has evolved tremendously over the past few decades. However, the usual portrayal of court reporters in movies and television does not reflect the many advances in our field.

We see actors portraying reporters still use paper writers that don't even have a tray to catch the paper, leaving their notes to spill sloppily to the floor. They

position their writers to incredibly awkward heights that I guarantee would give the best of us carpal tunnel in about five minutes. And don't even get me started on that weird slow-finger-crawl excuse for writing, it creeps me the hell out!

Last year an actor friend forwarded a casting notice to me for someone to play a court reporter on a television series. The show was *Bosch: Legacy*, a reboot of the Amazon Prime series *Bosch*. If nothing else, I thought I could parlay the trip to LA into a visit with my friend, and I could also take real jobs while I was there thanks to Zoom.

When I reached out to the casting director, his first question to me was "Do you have your own equipment?" It turns out none of the real actors auditioning had their own machines, and, really, this



is what the casting directors were looking for. They needed me – and my machine – there yesterday, so I bought a one-way ticket to LA and took off.

When I arrived at the set in an abandoned courthouse, the director informed me that, in addition to playing a court reporter, I would be serving as the technical adviser on court reporting. A real actor would take the role of the court reporter on a different day, and I was to teach her how to look like a real court reporter.

Being on set is a lot of fun. I worked with actors I grew up watching in movies and television, and to be able to take down what they were saying felt like a court reporting dream. Unfortunately, it was over in a second since these shows film at breakneck speed. Actors also seem to talk at breakneck speed since, unlike real life, they have memorized all of their lines. If you want to take down what they are saying, good luck. Like most things in court reporting, it is slightly more difficult than it looks.

What I learned while on set is the crew of a television show are handling a million tasks at once. Apparently, what the court reporter does in the background of a courtroom scene is not their top priority. So, it is up to us to, once again, make accurate record.

Several months after Bosch, I was cast as a court reporter on Chicago P.D. I was thrilled to be on a show about Chicago that takes place in Chicago – no last-

minute commute to LA required. I have now appeared on the show twice and have had two different experiences.

The first time the set was a fake courtroom built in a rec room on the city’s west side. However, there were two technical advisers there to greet me with many questions about how I do what I do.

My second experience, the courtroom was real, but nobody knew why I was there or what I should do. I sat where I thought the court reporter should sit and started taking down what the attorney and his witness (Adam Ruzek, if you’re a fan of the show) were saying.

When Bosch: Legacy and my episodes of Chicago P.D. aired, I could see myself in a number of shots. I looked calm, cool, and confident behind my Luminex II, a modern stenographic machine that does not spit out paper all over the floor. My machine was at appropriate height for optimal writing. And, most importantly, since I was actually taking down what was being said, it looked more authentic, at least in my opinion, than the weird finger crawl of an actor who is not a court reporter.

Should you have a chance to work on a television or streaming series, a movie, or anything else, I would highly recommend it. It is a wonderful way to represent our profession. Although we are cast as background performers, we can use this as an opportunity to bring court reporting on the silver and small screen into the 21st Century!

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Illinois Court Reporters Tour de Force: Protecting Litigants' Confidential Information Under Supreme Court Rule 207

By Catherine Rajcan, CSR, RDR, CRR, CRC

All Illinois CSRs are the collective eyes and ears of our profession with an aim of protecting the veracity of the verbatim record and the confidentiality of testimonial evidence for all litigants in our state. The Chicago Freelance Reporters private FB group, in addition to helping CSRs network to cover reporting assignments, has recently been a medium by which reporters have informed one another of issues or developments important to CSRs and licensure in Illinois -- case in point last month with a proposed amendment to Supreme Court Rule 207(a) Signing and Filing of Depositions. The proposal was submitted based on one attorney's familiarity with one nonparty witness allegedly being asked to pay for a copy of his deposition transcript to review.

Reporter Anna Leonard posted on August 6, 2022 about her incidental discovery on the Illinois Courts Online Case Information Portal of the proposed rule amendment and a public hearing to be held on October 5, 2022. On September 23 ILCRA President Mary Ann Casale tagged me on the post and asked if I had seen it. I hadn't.

On September 24 I did a lot of research and information gathering; and being on the ILCRA board as Legislative Liaison I emailed the board a "Call to Arms" action plan and attached the current Rule 207, proposed Rule 207(a) change, current Rule 208, and a copy of the Illinois Supreme Court Rules Committee Notice of Public Hearing. The notice included six proposed

rule amendments, including Proposal 21-06 [Rule 207(a)] affecting how court reporters make depositions available to witnesses when signature is reserved and whether or not court reporters can continue to be paid for the transcript that is provided for reading and signing. Then I slightly modified my email and sent it to every court reporter in my database with the same ask: each reporter to immediately email the Rules Committee that the reporter will be submitting a written comment and/or will be providing live oral testimony at the October 5 Public Hearing; and asking each reporter to pass the "Call to Arms" email on to every reporter they know. Anna and I both immediately signed up to provide testimony.

Also on Saturday, September 24, I posted on the Chicago Freelance Reporters FB page the same ask as a "Tour de Force Needed." Within a few days several reporters indicated they shared the email, signed up to submit written comment, and/or signed up to provide live testimony. Reporters went on the FB page or emailed each other and shared proposed language for the written comments. Anyone wanting to submit written comments or provide testimony had to inform the Rules Committee of their desire to do so by September 28. Written comments had to be submitted by September 30.

The Rules Committee sent to all those who were going to testify a grid of what order the six Proposals would be addressed, the chronological order of the speakers on each proposal, and the names of each speaker. I created a group email to coordinate the testimony of the six court reporters speaking on the



proposal, in part because the Committee asked that the speakers avoid redundancy in their comments. Proposal 21-06 was the last of the six proposals to be addressed, and it had the largest number of speakers on this proposal – two attorneys followed by six reporters: Anna Leonard, Laura Czarnecki, Catherine Rajcan (on behalf of ILCRA), Robin Chimniak, Dyann Berndt, and April Metzler. (April ended up having a deposition scheduled and was unable to attend the Public Hearing.)

On October 3, Dyann Berndt let me know the link to the Rules Committee page where I could find the written comments that were submitted regarding Proposed 21-06. Two attorneys submitted written comments on behalf of two separate attorney associations in favor of the proposed amendment, and 24 court reporters submitted comments in opposition to the proposed rule change – again, the most responses of any of the six proposals. I read every written comment, and I could not have been more proud to be a member of my peer group of Illinois CSRs.

On October 5 the Public Hearing was held via Zoom. There was a light-hearted theme of the chair of the Rules Committee being challenged with pronouncing the last names of the persons signed up to provide testimony, and the court reporters' last names were each a challenge to the chair as well. Each of the court reporters who testified provided unique information and perspectives; and the chair asked each court reporter a question after their testimony regarding whether the court reporter would charge a nonparty subpoena witness a fee for providing the witness a copy of the transcript to read and sign. Overwhelmingly the court reporters stated that they have not charged nonparty witnesses for a transcript to read and sign; that the court reporters have gone to great lengths to arrange for the witness to read and sign at the witness' convenience with the court reporter maintaining custody and control of the deposition transcript; and

that since the pandemic most reporters have been offering witnesses a Zoom review via screen share of the transcript at no charge.

The court reporters provided the Committee numerous bases upon which nonparty witnesses should not be provided a copy of their deposition transcript, such as: preserving parties' confidential, private, personal information; preventing dissemination of proprietary information such as patents, HIPAA, trade secrets, and work product; maintaining custody and control of the official record; being fair to the parties as far as charging for transcripts; avoiding cost-shifting of deposition transcript costs; protecting court reporters against potential liability for releasing any of this information to a nonparty witness, which could then make it out to the public domain; and maintaining CSR ethics and professional duties.

The Committee was generous in allowing each of us court reporters to share our entire testimony in full, and our CSR colleagues were well prepared and, I believe, effective in their comments. This effort is a good example of how the Illinois Court Reporters Association and many Illinois CSRs worked together to address an issue important to CSRs as Guardians of the Record and therefore critical to parties involved in litigation in our state.

Let's keep up the momentum! We have an ongoing threat of digital audio recorders attempting to insert themselves into the CSR Act; and the CSR Act is up for sunset extension in the legislature in 2023. Join ILCRA or renew your membership in the Association today. The Association, its members, and its lobbyist are working hard on behalf of all Illinois CSRs and in the best interests of Illinois litigants.

[Addendum: Just prior to publication of ILCRA's Fall Ad In, IL Supreme Court Rule 207 has been posted online "As Amended through October 27, 2022" with the language of 207(a) unchanged.]

To What Degree Will You Agree To Disagree? Or ... Food for Thought

By Donna M. Urlaub – donna@urlaubowen.com

During a recent three-hour expert doctor deposition in which “degree,” “agree,” and “disagree” figured prominently in questions, answers, and objections, it got me thinking: Is anyone still writing “agree” and “degree” in two strokes? Worse yet, “disagree” in three?

So I took a poll of several reporters, and, sure enough, they were. Some had gone so far as to define the conflicting outline as “agree,” then change the word to “degree” when appropriate.

While I understand the logic, this kind of thing causes me to examine my writing and ask myself what words have I been tolerating/replacing/word grouping/multi-stroking, instead of making one tiny change that is both freeing and exciting. Like, wow! And to think I had been doing this for more years than I care to admit.

Roof/radiograph – **RAOF**. Now I throw a “U” in, **RAOUF**/roof.

(I understand “radiograph” is a rarely used word anymore, but this conflict was a holdover from my theory in the ‘60s, and still popped up every time the dreaded “roof” was mentioned.)

Higher/hire – **HAOEUR**. Drop the **AO** for “hire.” **HIR**.

Bank/bang – **BANG**. Throw a “U” in for “bank.” **BAUNG**. And tank, rank, sank.

A COUPLE OF OTHER RANDOM DISCOVERIES

If I’ve been writing comfortable **K-FRBL**, why am I still two-stroking uncomfortable? Why not **NUFRBL**?

Which leads me to: Why am I writing **EN/KOURJ**, when I could write **NOURJ**, **IN/KREBL** when I could use **NERBL**, **IN/KORPT** instead of **NORPT**, **NORPGS**? If supplement is **SPLEMT**; why not **SPELE** for supplemental?

So what about the degree/agree/disagree, you ask?

Degree **GRE**/agree **GRAE**/disagree **SGRAE**

In phrases:

I agree – **IRG**

you agree – **URG**

we agree – **WERG**

so I agree – **SOIRG**

so you agree – **SOURG**

will you agree – **LURG**

if you agree – **FURG**

I don't agree – **YORG**

would you agree – **WOURG**

do you agree – **DOURG**

can you agree – **KURG**

I do not agree – **DOINT/GRAE**

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Editor: Innovative AMC, 43150 Broadlands Center Plaza, 152-269, Ashburn, VA 20148.
Ph: 703-729-4861, Email: dwenhold@kmgnet.com.

Advertising information:

Illinois Court Reporters Association,
43150 Broadlands Center Plaza, 152-269
Ashburn, VA 20148
Ph: 703-729-4861
Fax: 703-935-2266
Email: contact@ilcra.org

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