



IL

CRA

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ad infinitum

SPRING

2020

President's Message



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At the time of writing this [1], there are almost 1,670,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide. The U.S. now leads the world in confirmed cases at over 490,000. Spain is in a distant second place, at 157,000 cases. At the time of writing this, COVID-19 has killed about six percent of those affected. Still; that actual number comes out to be 101,732 members of Planet Earth who have lost their lives in the last month due to this infection. [2] Hitting closer to home, Illinois' numbers total about 17,800 confirmed cases, with 596 deaths. [3]

The news shouts at us: You must stay at home, wash your hands, don't touch your face, socially distance, wear masks, homeschool your kids, work from home, stay away from friends, stay away from family you don't live with. Sanitize, sanitize, sanitize.

Social media shouts at us: Stay positive, wear a smile when you don't feel like it, live your best life while quarantining ("because look at what I'm doing!"), be thankful for your kids at home 24/7, be thankful for everything, get creative, start a new hobby, start a new workout, eat better than ever, fill your days with everything you've put off your whole entire life while you've been

too busy; wash your hands, don't touch your face.

Our brains shout at us: What's wrong with you? Why aren't you doing more? Why can't you appreciate all this extra time? You should be grateful for this quality time with your family. You should be happy to have a chance to get so much accomplished. You should be eating better. You should be moving more. You should be getting more done. Why haven't you lost weight? Why aren't you doing better? You should be doing more, creating more. You should be, you should be, you should be...

Enough. Just, stop. Full, hard stop. First, let's start with the obvious. We are part of a living history that is experiencing "unprecedented times." Have you sat with the meaning of that phrase and fully taken it in? One of the last times we were living in "unprecedented times" was 9/11.

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For over 35 years, **Lexitas** has been providing the very best in court reporting services to our clients. To meet ever-increasing demand, we are always looking to add talented, professional, and highly motivated reporters to our team.



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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.

President's Message

Continued from front page

The stress of being in a global pandemic is real, and it looks different for everyone. There are those of us who mostly coast along and who are otherwise unaffected. There are those of us who experience the stress on a much deeper level, to where depression and anxiety are heightened, eating habits become erratic -- running the full spectrum of overindulging to nonexistent. Focus and concentration become compromised. Some may experience mild to severe mood swings. Others may find it hard to sit still -- or the opposite, to get up off the couch. Preexisting health conditions may worsen. We may be more inclined to abuse alcohol or other substances.

Second and equally obvious, we are living in a time of great change: great, huge, sweeping change. And it is uncomfortable and sad and there is a real loss of our "normal" life happening. If it feels like grief, it is.

Change is not easy to create, let alone maintain. All you have to do is reflect on the start of every new year and the resolutions that get sidelined after a few weeks. It's not because we're failures; it's because real, true, lasting change requires your hardwired brain to rewire. And, fun fact: to change is harder as we age.

And while the experience and the handling of ourselves during and through COVID-19 is going to greatly vary from person to person, there seems to be a common thread that ties us all together: our world is completely changed, and we've lost our balance. Imbalance and change. No wonder we sometimes feel awful.

As a fixer, I'm a little hardwired for finding solutions to problems and resolving untenable situations. Feeling helpless is not my strong suit. So what have I done through this? I'm practicing being my own safe harbor. I try to find the balance as much as possible. I listen to myself first. I watch the news when I feel strong enough, and I watch Bob's Burgers when I need to laugh.

This week, I walked seven miles over the course of a day. Another day, I responded to every call, text, e-mail, and invitation for virtual socializing I had. Yesterday, I didn't get off the couch. Did I try to beat myself up for "being lazy"? You bet. But I had the thought, and

then I let it go. This is not a stay-cation. This is a global pandemic; and I'm allowed to feel like crap about it for a day if I need to. And so are you.

We can't control what the news is reporting or how social media is telling us to be, but we can control how we talk to ourselves, how we treat ourselves, how we accept ourselves exactly as we are from one moment to the next.

We can also take responsibility for restoring a little bit of balance in our lives. Have you watched the news incessantly? Give your poor self a break and turn it off. Find something uplifting: an old favorite movie, a walk in the park (where possible and with the right precautions, of course), a podcast, a book, anything that delights and uplifts. I don't disagree, being informed is important. But so are doing the things that feed your joy. **You are not betraying reality by allowing yourself to be happy.**

On the flipside, if you need to expend some pent-up negative energy, maybe instead of providing yourself a distraction, allow yourself to cry or scream or punch a pillow -- just be really careful with those hands! It's not only okay to be angry and sad, it's human nature. Forget "good vibes only" and the "positivity all the way" garbage. Try "this sucks and I hate it," or "I'm going to pretend this [super soft object that won't destroy your moneymakers!] is my life and throat punch it." Better to take it out on inanimate objects rather than your family.

Speaking of family, have you had about enough quality time? Do you need a break? Did you know it's okay to need a break?! Is it possible to shut yourself away and take some "me" time? How can you make that a priority? What if you took that alone time without a clock? **You are not betraying your family by giving yourself what you need.** In fact, you become a better caretaker when you take care of yourself.

Are you lonely, sad, missing the comfort of friends and family? Now is the time to reach out. Call, text, FaceTime, Zoom, Skype -- we are fortunate to have so much technology to support us right now. **You are not betraying your strength if you don't want to do this alone.**

President's Message

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And if you are one of the ones who feel otherwise unaffected, maybe now is a good time for you to take that strength and reach out to your people. You have the power to do a lot of good right now.

In these times of extremes, try to find your balance. You may have days where you are sailing smoothly. You may have days where the heaviness of our reality brings you to your knees. Give yourself the patience to move through those days without expectation of what you "should" be doing. Rather, just let yourself be.

Please remember this is simply an article through the lens of my experience and what I've learned and how I've managed. If my truth doesn't resonate with you at all, that is totally okay. More than anything,

I hope you are finding your way and being safe.

I wish you all an abundance of health, patience, acceptance, and joy where you find it.

~ Georgia Long

[1] Stats were updated three times over the course of 4/10/20. That's how fast our world is changing.

[2] Source: COVID-19 tracker: <https://www.bing.com/covid?form=M401EC&OCID=M401EC>

[3] Source: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus>

Source Note: there are various sources that are tracking and aggregating coronavirus data. They update at different times and may have different ways of gathering data.

ILCRA 2020 Convention Update

As of right now, ILCRA is still planning its 2020 convention as best we can as though we will be getting together in person. Those that have planned events know the contractual obligations the organization has and we are working to make sure we can reschedule, if possible, without bankrupting the organization with contractual penalties. If we have to cancel the in-person event, contingencies are being made in the event we are unable to host a live event. We are considering webinars or other virtual options on how to help you earn your needed CEUs properly and efficiently. Our first priority is our members and attendees health and safety in holding any type of event so we will continue to update you as our world situation changes and as we learn more every day. Stay tuned!

Helpful links regarding the impact of COVID:

<https://www.ilcra.org/assets/docs/Executive%20Order%202020-14%20-%20Illinois.gov.pdf>

<https://www.ilcra.org/covid-19-financial-overview>

ILCRA's website will be updated with new information as it becomes available. Please check back regularly for the latest.

Court Reporting in the Time of COVID-19

By Rhonda V. Jensen
CSR, RDR, CRR, CMRS, CME
President, Midwest Division
Lexitas Legal

Before COVID-19

The technology and ability to conduct depositions remotely has been around for many years; but prior to COVID-19, a remote deposition typically meant the court reporter, witness, and most attorneys were in the same room with just one or two parties attending from a remote location. These depositions were straightforward and required little adjustment to normal reporting practices; and State rules typically allowed for remote attendees, if the reporter was physically with the witness during the deposition. At Lexitas, we proactively built a robust remote proceeding solution, which we call LegalView. But for most attorneys, the need to conduct or attend depositions remotely was infrequent. Then the pandemic hit and, almost overnight, we had to change our model to respond to the shelter-in-place orders while continuing to meet the needs of our clients.

Pandemic Realities

We had to simultaneously coordinate three major initiatives in a matter of days:

- Instantly moving over our office-based Lexitas employees to remote-based workspaces
- Deploying detailed information to our independently contracted reporters regarding new remote proceeding attendance practices
- Communicating a well-articulated outreach program to our client base to let them know that depositions could still be conducted remotely by Lexitas using well established web-based technologies

Our Response

As metro areas around the country began to shut down, we received many cancellations and saw a dramatic drop in the number of new jobs scheduled each day. Our first priority was to get jobs back on the calendar so that reporters would have enough work and our clients' cases could proceed. We conducted a sustained client education program utilizing email, social media, and many hundreds of personal phone calls. Our staff worked tirelessly to provide live web-based demos to many of our clients.

For reporters, we created a comprehensive help guide on exactly what the remote deposition process looks like, how to participate in the proceedings, new exhibit handling practices, and more. We've also worked closely with reporters unfamiliar with our LegalView solution, testing our technology with their equipment prior to their first remote proceeding. In addition, we provide technical support on every remote deposition to troubleshoot, if needed, and ensure that proceedings begin on time.

The "New Normal" and Beyond

As the weeks pass, we continue to see a steady increase in new bookings, and feedback from our clients and reporters has been very positive. We feel incredibly fortunate to be partnering with wonderful reporters, employees, and clients - all working so hard to keep legal proceedings moving forward. It is too soon to tell what exactly the "new normal" will be post COVID-19, but we anticipate that the demand for remote proceedings will remain robust for at least the next six months. Even once travel limitations are lifted, we believe that many law firms will continue to embrace remote proceedings due to the increased efficiencies they provide. Remote deposition expansion will further allow us to provide our independent contractors with work that best fits their schedules and lifestyles. Ultimately, our company is being strengthened throughout this process, adding even more value for reporters and clients in a post-COVID world.

What Makes You S.P.E.C.I.A.L.?

By Kathryn A. Thomas
Immediate Past President

The post-apocalyptic computer game known as Fallout, as well as its "S.P.E.C.I.A.L." character development method and the image of Vault Boy are trademarks of Bethesda Softworks LLC, and used here with love via the Fair Use Act for educational and parody purposes. Neither I nor ILCRA are making any money from the use of these trademarks.

Role-playing computer games involve character creation, in which you determine what your character is like before beginning to play. Such creation greatly determines your gameplay experience. Who is your character going to be? Is she incredibly strong, or agile and swift? Charming or rude? Skilled with weapons, or adept at magical defense? Likely you will build a character that is some combination of all of these traits.

In real life, we need to work on our own character development. Therefore, in this time of proving our superiority to digital recording methods or auto-captioning apps, the responsibility of excellence will fall... to you.

You are the first stenographer many people meet, and it's likely you will be the last stenographer they meet for a while. Ensure that they remember an up-to-date, technologically savvy, and EXCELLENT reporter or captioner. A S.P.E.C.I.A.L. stenographer, if you will.

What makes you S.P.E.C.I.A.L.?

- S - STRENGTH
- P - PERCEPTION
- E - ENDURANCE
- C - CHARISMA
- I - INTELLIGENCE
- A - AGILITY
- L - LUCK

STRENGTH

How much groceries can you carry to the house in one trip? How

many words can you fit in one stroke? I'm a glutton for right-hand phrase enders, and even more so since Stenograph added the Phrase Maker function. (It's under Options/Translate, right below the EZ link entry.)

There are many books on briefs out there. Open it to a page that features some of your tricky challenge words, and drill yourself on a few of them every day. When you have those briefs securely under your fingers, drill yourself on some different ones.

Develop your strength just like you would if we were allowed to go to the gym -- gradually. Learn one or two briefs and phrase enders here and there, and you'll slowly increase strength. Your hands will be less tired when you need fewer strokes. And tuck your suffixes!

PERCEPTION

Can you see what's coming? Have you updated your technological savvy? Is your CAT software up to date, and have you

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S.P.E.C.I.A.L

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learned about its bells and whistles?

Are your troubleshooting skills handy? We're a solitary lot; especially now that we're almost all working remotely. It's up to us individually to read the owner's manual for our equipment and our software. If something goes wrong on the job, it's our duty to use our logic and problem-solving skills to narrow down what could be the problem and how to fix it. And if we can't fix it, it's up to us personally to find a way to work around it until we can get help from tech support.

ENDURANCE

How long can you write? While we need not apologize for needing a short break after an extended writing time, unfortunately sometimes the break will be long in arriving. If you can write skillfully for longer periods, your transcript or your captions will be of higher quality and you'll be in greater demand. Physical fitness and proper ergonomics can help with this too. If you're working remotely, like most of us are nowadays, be sure the volume in your headphones is loud enough that you can hear clearly, but soft enough that you don't risk hearing damage.

CHARISMA

How are your people skills? Do you have the "soft skills" of reading a room and determining how charged the atmosphere is? Can you be assertive without being aggressive? Flexible without

being a doormat? Do attorneys or consumers LIKE seeing you arrive? Do you inspire confidence in your clients and consumers, or do they figure you're simply "good enough for now"?

INTELLIGENCE

Do you have a strong vocabulary? Do you read a lot? Do you keep up with current events, slang, and notable names? If we don't know what the word IS, we're less likely to get it correct the first time around. Feeding your vocabulary with a variety of books and news articles will increase your accuracy on the first pass. And if you don't get it quite right, you'll probably get it closer than you would before. If we want to create an excellent output, we need to have good input by feeding our brains on a regular basis.

AGILITY

How fast can you write? When I was at the gym (back in the days when we could go places), I watched a trainer work with a few young men who, I figured, were training for football. He laid what looked to be a long fabric ladder on the floor, and the young men were running through it as fast as they can, putting one foot in between each "window" and one foot outside of the ladder. They did this over and over again until they got it right and fast. When you're running a play, you need your feet to go EXACTLY where you want them to go, automatically, rather than having to

think about where to step.

When the material suddenly speeds up, will your fingers go where they need to be, rather than flopping around? We know the pitfalls of audio recording, and how it can fail without notice. We shouldn't rely on our audio recordings either. If you're often finding yourself asking people to slow down, try working on your speed.

LUCK

Are you looking for opportunities or looking for negativity? Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn says, "Your focus determines your reality." If you smell poop everywhere you go, it may NOT be because everyone else stinks -- check your own shoe. Maintain an expectation of positivity and luck, and you'll likely see results.

Easier said than done. I'm writing this as we are well into the multi-week shutdown of Illinois in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease. Remote work has slowed to a trickle, and it's likely my graduation ceremonies will cancel. And since bars and restaurants are closed to dine-in until probably the end of April, my husband's functionally laid off as well.

So where's the positive? We'll be in financial straits, but so will the rest of the country. We're all in this together.

Carbon emissions are down due to more people staying home. Venice's canals are crystal clear. China's air is cleaner. It's like the

S.P.E.C.I.A.L

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planet is taking a breath.

I'm finally getting around to going through the self-training materials on my "new" CAT software, which I migrated to in 2016. We've cleaned out our house and gotten rid of a LOT of junk.

More people are realizing it's not about the individual but everyone working together.

So as we self-isolate to keep ourselves healthy, therefore helping those with compromised immune

systems to stay healthy, let's do something similar in a professional light. The more we improve ourselves professionally, the more we lift us ALL up. Now is the time to work on our own character creation, and when we go back to work, we'll be so much more S.P.E.C.I.A.L. than we were before.

1 While my inspiration for this article is the Fallout game series, it borrows some of the attribute mechanisms from Elder Scrolls as well, so for my fellow gamers who may spot inconsistencies with Fallout's system, yes, I know.



Living in COVID-19 Times

By Brenda Tannehill
ILCRA Director

Are we living in the Twilight Zone or a Stephen King novel perhaps? The past three or four weeks certainly have made me feel that way. It is all so surreal.

March 5, 2020 began a series of strange events for me personally. That morning, I awoke feeling the lightness of being caught up on pages and the prospect of a bright, sunny, breezy morning. I traveled downtown for a deposition with a very nice client. I was looking forward to a pleasant day. My train arrived on time and I had a nice hour to kill so I decided to treat myself to a warm breakfast at Corner Bakery. After my leisurely breakfast, I happily walked to my job location only a

few blocks away. As I entered the building, I received a message on my phone letting me know something was wrong. Once I got in touch with my stepmother, I was informed that my beloved father had just passed away.

The following week to ten days was filled with the sorrowful days we experience in planning a funeral and visiting with loved ones. That kept me busy enough that I didn't really notice much about the news surrounding the Covid-19 situation. Once family members returned home and I was left to navigate back to real life, the shelter-in-place orders hit the Chicago area. Now I felt more lonely than I ever have.

At this point, I'd already been out of touch with my office and clients and "real life" for about two weeks and was really starting to feel like I was ready to get back because I needed to be busy. It's almost as if the universe knew that I was not ready, however. I spent

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Living

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the following week scanning old family photos and found myself “ugly crying” a lot, but I also found a lot of healing there while pouring over those old memories.

Fast forward two more weeks, and the Zoom depts have started to kick in and I've done a few. They've all gone off without a hitch, and I felt almost giddy to see clients over my iPad! One client must have been feeling quite isolated as well, as he offered a tour of his “man cave” to all in attendance and gave us background about his autographed guitar collection. This was a revelation because I never imagined this particular seemingly boring attorney has such a cool hobby. He had an amazing collection and taught us all a lot of great Rock 'N Roll history after the dep. I was so amused! At that moment, I had such a deep feeling that

we truly are all the same inside and are going through such an isolating time and need to see people and talk to people and share ourselves with others.

Back to matters not related to court reporting and only to make life feel more like a Stephen King novel, I had the strangest feeling after visiting my dad's grave once things settled a bit that his grave location seemed “off” from my mother's grave. I spent many sleepless nights trying to figure out how things could be so mixed up and wondered if it was just me and that I'm so out of touch right now. I began inquiring with the caretaker, and after many go-rounds and much insistence on my part, it was discovered that my dear mother had been buried in the wrong spot 25 years ago. She now had to be moved next to my dad and into

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Living

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the correct grave. What a traumatic experience, but with the reassurance and love of family, I know we fixed it and they are together where they always wanted to be. All is right in the universe.

For those fighting on the front lines with this deadly beast called Coronavirus, I can only imagine the horror stories they are living and the stress on their families. For those with loved ones infected, I can't fathom the fear and uncertainty. All we can do is meditate, pray and do whatever brings us comfort and peace right now.

Lessons I've learned or been reminded of these past few weeks besides those that include frequent hand washing and social distancing:

- Life as you know it can change in an instant.
- Hug your loved ones every chance you get; you never know when you will again.
- Always save for a rainy day so you don't have to stress so much during the "down" times.
- Remember that we're all human and we're all on this planet together.
- Things can always be worse; be thankful when they're not.
- No matter how many curve balls life throws us, we have to keep swinging, and we WILL be okay!
- One last point. Everyone please rest up and get your house in order, clean up your steno, back up your files and buckle up because when this ugly virus finally clears out of here (and it will), I think we are in for one heck of a busy time and a crazy ride!

Be well and stay safe out there, fellow stenographers!

News from NCRA

Handling of exhibits for remote depositions

As we are now entering week three of self-quarantining due to COVID-19, I know our members are gearing up and learning how to handle remote depositions.

[Read more.](#)

Has the time finally come for increased reliance on remote hearings and depositions?

An article posted on March 30 by The National Law Review addresses the increased reliance on remote hearings and depositions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read more.](#)

How to conduct depositions remotely

An article posted by Law360 on March 30 offers tips for conducting depositions remotely including setup, presentation of exhibits, and accessing realtime.

[Read more.](#)

Top legal trends going into the new decade

A blog by Kramm Court Reporting, posted March 25 on JD Supra, outlines the top legal trends going into the new decade.

[Read more.](#)

Top tips for a Zoom remote deposition

On March 25, JD Supra posted a blog that offers tips for conducting a remote deposition using the online Zoom platform.

[Read more.](#)

Pointers for taking depositions by videoconference during COVID-19

An article offering tips for taking depositions by videoconference during the COVID-19 pandemic was posted on March 30 by North Carolina Lawyers Weekly.

[Read more.](#)

News from ILCRA Headquarters

ILCRA is excited to have a new, dynamic website so please make sure to log on and update your profile. This is important so we can get you the latest information and ensure that all your contact information is correct.

One of the new benefits of the website is that it is very user friendly and ILCRA will now have the capability to have social and professional listservs (official, freelance, CART and Captioners, educators, students, etc.) This new MEMBER ONLY benefit will allow for open discussions about issues that affect each area and ILCRA members to connect with each other. This is more important now than at any other time in history. We are all in this together so please stay tuned for more information on how you can get on one of the listservs.

2020 Call for Nominations for the ILCRA Board of Directors

Please consider nominating someone (or yourself) to help lead the ILCRA Board into the future. For more information, please click [HERE](#).

Nominating Committee Chair, Kathryn Thomas, is now accepting nominations for the following open ILCRA Board of Director positions.

These positions are for the 2020-2022 two-year term:

- Legislative Representative
- Region Two Freelance
- Region Two Official

Giving back to your profession is one of the best things you can do to further the association. Thank you for your consideration.

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.

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866.294.3974 www.ccr.edu

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