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By Holly Kapacinskas, RPR, CRR, FPR,  
2014-2015 President



# Eating the (Certification)Elephant

The only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. We all know the saying but often fail to apply the lesson in our lives. When we view the elephant as one giant goal that our whole life depends on, not only can the goal seem paralyzing and insurmountable, but it can never be accomplished quickly enough. Disappointment becomes inevitable. The key, of course, is to set small goals that give us something concrete to focus on, provide feedback to let us know where to focus next, and give us the satisfaction of achievement and confidence to take the next bite.

When I started my presidency in Sanibel last June, it was looking like there were only a few more bites left before certification would come to fruition. FCRA leadership had convinced the Florida Supreme Court (FSC) of the need for certification of court reporters, and leadership in the Florida Bar had indicated to both the FSC and FCRA a willingness to administer the certification program. It appeared as though certification was going to be attainable within a year, and we shared the good news with you, our members.

As we got further down the road this year with the Florida Bar, it became increasingly evident that the Florida Bar did not want to administer our program. They had no precedent to regulate an outside profession, and they didn't seem interested in much input from FCRA, even though we were the ones with the knowledge of the reporting profession. With our focus on the giant goal, this was a big disappointment. In hindsight, it turned out to be a blessing. This was an important step because it cemented in our minds that the right place for certification is through OSCA (Office of the State Courts Administrator), the administrative arm of the FSC. Climbing up the hill gave us a better vantage point.

So that is how we have landed back in front of OSCA, the place we were positioned the last time we were close to certification a decade ago; however, the atmosphere seems to be much more positive and cooperative this time around. PK Jameson is the new head of OSCA, and she and her staff were gracious enough to set aside over two hours to meet with us in Tallahassee a few weeks ago. The tenor of the meeting was very informative, cooperative, and sincere on all levels. We had an open exchange of questions, an-

swers, and ideas. We are very much impressed with Ms. Jameson and her very professional and knowledgeable staff and the spirit in which they received us.

Through our meeting with OSCA, we agreed that certification would need to be a two-step process, the first step being a mandatory registration for all reporters. A registry would: allow us a way to start to build the framework for certification to follow; help us get a true picture of the demographics of reporters throughout the state so we can gauge reporting needs into the future; provide a way to track reporters and their transcripts when they leave the state; give us a reliable number on which to provide cost estimates of administering the certification program. Our next course is on the plate and in focus. Your FCRA leadership will be working diligently in the next few months to provide information and assistance to OSCA in accomplishing this key step on our path to certification.

Believe me, I get it that many of you want certification right now. You want to know what it will look like and when it will happen. As my presidency comes to a close in Ponte Vedra in just a few short weeks, I would like nothing more than to announce that certification is on the very immediate horizon and outline every detail. The truth is this meal has more courses than we could see a year ago. The biggest mistake we can make is to be so focused on the elephant that we fail to take the necessary steps to lay the groundwork that will ensure our success.

It has been an honor serving FCRA. I am proud to have worked with so many dedicated professionals in moving the association forward in a positive direction. We were founded over 50 years ago with the goal of achieving certification for court reporters and raising the standards of the profession. Every bite of the elephant has been necessary. We may be farther away, time-wise, from where we thought we were last year, but I am very confident that we are actually in a much better position to accomplish our certification goal in the right way. With the help of Justice Major Harding, Hank Coxe, and The Fiorentino Group, we are forging key relationships with OSCA and are poised to tackle our biggest bite yet -- the registration component. With that in place, the elephant will become much smaller. Let's continue to build on every bite we take.



**By Sharon Pell Velazco,  
FCR Online Editor**

## Insomnia, the Accuser

I am lying there in the darkness, anticipating what I hope will be a restful sleep. My previously troubled stomach has finally been quieted with an AlkaSeltzer concoction. I had just completed an eventful, educational day attending a realtime seminar, hoping to advance my skill of writing in my chosen profession, court reporting. Sighing, I exhaled a deep breath of exhaustion, knowing that I also had a full day planned for tomorrow.

As I am starting to drift off to sleep, I suddenly find myself in a courtroom, and it looks like I have been the one on trial. I am staring straight ahead, and I can see the redheaded, dreaded Judge Conscience sitting at her high, weighty bench of condemnation. Her off-the-record reputation is whispered among the local court staff, and she is commonly referred to as "the hanging judge."

She is well known for summarily convicting the unfortunate pro se defendant with the felony of Lack of Self-Confidence.

I start stammering excuses as to why I am there, but all my lame pleas and vague reasons are stricken before I can begin fully dreaming.

I stand there nervously, waiting for sentencing. The judge is holding up a large, heavy Noose of Fear in one hand and a tightly rolled Scroll of False Accusations in the other. With a quick flourish and flick of her wrist, she gives a slight toss in my direction, unfurling the newly printed document. It is apparently fresh off the presses, inked especially for this evening's pronouncement.

As her hand travels down the official paper, I look down at my own and see that the blue smudges I noted on the parchment have somehow transferred to the tips of my trembling fingers.

In a sonorous voice, Judge Conscience begins rattling off my crimes in a matter-of-fact, rapid, ratatattat staccato.

I glance over at the poor stenographer, who is looking at me, her eyes widened in a desperate panic. She helplessly shrugs her shoulders, and finally throws her hands up into the air because she just can't keep pace with the accusations that are being hurled out faster than her fingers can input them into her fancy

machine. Strangely, she bears an incredible resemblance to myself...

I peer closer at her visible screen and am puzzled by the mishmash of letters and odd non sequiturs that have flashed across the digital display. Whatever my punishment is to be, I hope it doesn't fit the crimes of the record she has apparently taken down.

I turn my attention back to the judge, who is still droning on, and she appears to be a third of the way down my list of transgressions... "Not practicing, further not practicing, incompetence, INCOMPETENCE."

She glares down at me and emphasizes the last word again. And again. And again.

Standing on my tiptoes and leaning in, I get a glimpse of the rest of the charges and see that that same word is repeated all the way down the page. She repeats it for the last (and I think probably hundredth) time, "INCOMPETENCE," and is ready to pronounce my predetermined verdict. "GUILTY by reason of incompetence due to not practicing."

Clearing her throat, she gives an exasperated "harrumph" and rolls her eyes. Turning, she grimly tosses the ever-growing noose to the bailiff. He walks over and promptly places that fatal instrument around the neck of the frightened court reporter, who then keels over onto her writer, falling off her chair. It is then that I collapse, as well, feeling the oxygen leave my body.

Fade to black...

I gasp a huge gulp of air as I sit up in bed. Now fully awake, I toss back the covers and head to the kitchen. For the second time that evening, I find myself preparing a dose of AlkaSeltzer.

A few moments later, here I sit, alone in the dark stillness of my study, the only light being that which is emanating from my computer. It is one in the morning, and I am confessing my semiwakeful nightmare to you, my Dear Reader.

Heaven help the characters in this nocturnal drama; the harsh judge, the hapless victim, doomed by an incompetent attorney, observed and recorded by the timid stenographer, the recorder of my own fate... all roles played by myself. Caught up in the reverie of

*Continued on page 6*

# In the Thick of It...Life, That Is

By Ruth Esparza

There is a time in life anytime post-college to pre-retirement years where we're **in the thick of it all**. Up to this age, we're children, adolescents, teens, then young adults; we are learning about the world and life, then creating our identity as an adult, whether by default or design (most of us definitely by default!)

As we enter the thick of it all in life, there are **critical decisions to be made**: career, marriage/significant other, children (or not), our relationships with our family of origin, friends, colleagues, etc.

Once we're smack-dab in the thick of it, the conveyor belt that is our path in life speeds up. It gets tough; it gets blurry; it gets overwhelming for sure. But it's also a time in life for THE most **spectacular life events** you'll experience!

For most of us, when and if we get a chance to pause and consider our life during these crazy years, it can feel like an uncomfortable blur. The feeling of contentment and being grounded can be an elusive longing, seemingly just beyond our grasp. And for **women especially**, this time of our lives is where we **give, give, and give** some more to all those around us. We fill up our profound desire to be **whole** with caring for others. We have a deep longing to be the **best versions of ourselves**, and we're told we need to take time for self-care, self-love, but there does not seem like any practical way of doing this with any consistency while we have so much to do for others, all the time, constantly, nonstop!

So we put our heads back down and carry on. There are always crucial things that need our atten-

tion right this moment, necessary things: our work, managing our home lives, our bodies/health, our finances.

Well, I'm here to tell you there is a way to do it by design rather than default. It is possible to **find your flow** through these years and not look back feeling as though life passed you by in a blur.

I love this quote: "Your outer journey may contain a million steps; your inner journey only has one: the step you are taking right now."

—Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*

**One great tool to use today is to begin to live in the Now.** If you're fully present in the now, giving your attention to this moment only, you have the luxury of giving your full attention and energy to one thing. What a concept; right? We have so many different areas we're trying to balance in life. We all know that juggling all the balls in the air gets precarious. What if we only had to juggle one ball at a time? Imagine throwing only one ball up and then catching it, instead of five or six or 99 balls all at once!

**An easy way to begin to live in the Now is to practice Presence.**

This is where we get out of our head and into the moment as many times as we possibly can throughout the day. This is not easy! We have so many thoughts running around in our heads every day, it does take work to slow them down, bring our minds

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## Insomnia, the Accuser

*Continued from page 5*

despair, I anxiously wonder what will become of me? What will be my ultimate fate?

Just as I am teetering on the edge of despondency, I come to the realization that I had just spent most of the waking day in a realtime seminar, part of the seemingly never ending, further pursuit of perfection in my craft. I smile in satisfaction as I acknowledge that I am the one in control of my dream and destiny. With that awareness also comes the determination that I will never again allow myself to be imprisoned by a self-imposed fear of failure, and I welcome the freedom that comes with my newfound resolve. I make

the decision that I will practice and make a diligent, conscious effort to improve my skills by implementing what I learned at the seminar that very day!

And so, Dear Reader, as I reach over to turn off my computer, I can't begin to describe the peace that overcomes me, knowing that I NOW can go back to bed and fall into peaceful slumber. From here on out, I will make it a point to be rising an hour earlier than usual so that I can practice, and every hour spent practicing will bring me that much closer to my goal of becoming a perfect realtime writer.

Good night!

# Student Corner: What's In Your Bag?

By Robin Merker

As students in school, you know exactly what supplies you need. After all, your school gives you a supplies list to follow, you obtain your supplies and you're off and running. But once you graduate and are out taking jobs, your supplies list is something that develops over time – so here's my version to give you some ideas on what you may want in your bag. For a way, way, way more complete version, go to YouTube and check out FCRA Past President Rick Greenspan as he unpacks his bags – yes, I said bags! If it's not in his bags you are never going to need it. **Part 1:** <https://youtu.be/PCynerBX7KA>

**Part 2:** <https://youtu.be/o8--XFJ-LUC>

The basics:

Of course, you know you're packing your machine, tripod, and charger. But what about connecting to your laptop? Along with your laptop, you need a laptop charger, and a method to connect to the writer, be it cable, wifi, or Bluetooth. You may want to tuck an extra cable into your case – cables can go bad! Then, there's the microphone for the writer, and possibly another one for the laptop, depending on the laptop's audio recording quality. What about an extra SD card, in case the writer's card fills up or decides to not work that day? You also need to think about power and how to get to it. You too may find yourself in a conference room with no available outlets and end up snaking a 20-foot extension cord out of the room. In my rolling bag I carry a six-foot extension along with two 4-plug connectors. I keep the 20-foot extension cord in the car just for those situations.

Will you have a seat at the table? That's not always a given. I love, love, love my laptop table that fits on an extra tripod. Both fit in my case as well. Sometimes, when you're taking a video deposition, there just isn't enough room on the table for your laptop to stay out of sight – or you're in a courtroom that never took into account that the reporter might need more than a chair to do the job.

Above and beyond: What you carry in your case may give you the opportunity to shine!

Because I also do realtime on occasion, I carry my own hotspot, cable, and charger. The hotspot cable can be used to charge Android and Windows phones as well. I carry two older iPads in case I need to supply the attorneys. Because realtime via the iPad does drain the iPad battery more quickly than regular use, I carry cables and chargers for them.

And, while I personally don't need it, I also carry one charging cable for the new iPhones. I ordered several online for my family and popped an extra one in my case. So now, if an attorney needs to charge their phone, I can help them out, no matter what kind they have. Talk about making a good impression!

You need a way to mark exhibits, either an exhibit stamp or labels. I've learned to carry both. If you end up marking photographs – the exhibit stamp will smear and you need your stickers! There are attorneys who prefer the stamp because it cannot be removed. And while it may seem silly to mention – have extra pens, not just for you, but for the attorney(s) who once again forgot to bring one. If you're feeling especially nice, stick a highlighter or two in your bag as well. Some attorneys like to use them. Personally, I like to give them odd colors, like lavender and teal, instead of yellow just for my own amusement. J

Carry your notary stamp with you, and you may be the one who saves the day – not only in depo, but even in court! During a hearing recently, the judge required that a certain document be notarized before he would accept a settlement. No one in the courtroom had their notary with them except me. So we went off the record so the document could be signed and notarized. The judge then noted on the record that without the reporter's help, they could not have accomplished what they wanted to do that day.

Weather related: Underneath my machine in the case I carry several neatly folded plastic garbage bags big enough to slip over my case if it rains. Thanks go to Joyce B. for that tip. I trimmed them shorter so they don't drag on the ground when in use. There's also a rain poncho on the side where I put my laptop charger. On the other side, where I keep my writer and laptop tripods is a compact umbrella.

And, of course, plenty of business cards – because when attorneys realize you're the Mary Poppins of court reporting, always able to pull everything they need out of your bag – they're going to want you on every job!



# SLEUTHING THE NET



## HISTORICAL MUSINGS

### (IN OTHER WORDS...I CAN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING ELSE!)

By Donna M. Kanabay, RMR, CRR, FPR • [donna@kanabay.com](mailto:donna@kanabay.com)

Well, here I am, with one deadline extension already given by our ever-patient <nagging>, gracious <seriously nagging> editor, and I'm still completely blocked.

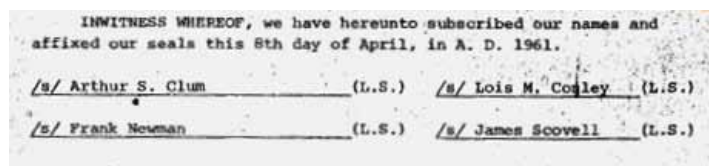
By coincidence, just yesterday I had a reason to pull up my detailed notes on the history of FCRA, deeply researched (and yet unfinished) for the celebration of FCRA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011. If you weren't at that AMAZING convention at the Altamonte Springs Hilton, you have no idea what you missed.

As often happens when I'm simply looking for something specific, I head off down rabbit trails, and I couldn't resist revisiting my notes on the early days of our association. So, while completely off topic (the topic of my column is, after all, "Sleuthing the Net,") so as to placate our <really getting annoying with her nagging> editor and have SOMETHING to hand in, and with the completely altruistic purpose of imparting some interesting historical facts to our members ...

Our Articles of Incorporation were signed on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1961. I can't describe the thrill I felt as I very carefully held the original in my hand:

*"We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves together for the purpose of becoming incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida applicable to corporations not for profit, under the following proposed Charter"*

Here is a screenshot of the original signature page:



I knew Lois personally. Mom and Dad worked for Conley & Swain when we first moved to Florida in the early 70s.

And I was privileged to meet Art in person once, at a funeral of one of our members, around 2009 or so. He introduced himself and said, "I was the first president of FCRA." Art and I had many enjoyable e-mail exchanges after that, and then-president Rick Levy did a delightful video interview with him to be shown at our anniversary convention. Art had planned on coming to the convention, but unfortunately his wife had health problems that prevented his attendance.

Art graciously recounted for me his recollection of how the ball got rolling:

*"Jim Scovell and I had back-to-back desks. I told Jim that Florida had no court reporting association, and why don't we start one? Jim said to me he has a law degree from New York and that he'd draw a charter and submit it to the Secretary of State."*

*"We needed to get the word out, so I and others in our office were soliciting as many names as we could, and mailing them penny postcards, informing them of our new chartered association. This was back in the days of ditto copies. I'm not sure which one of us it was, but we bought a hand-operated ditto copier and went from there. On the postcard we asked the people we sent the announcement to any court reporters they knew. The cards had a date in Orlando for an organizational meeting and the choosing of permanent officers, and the rest is history. It was kind of a snowball effect."*

I also had e-mail and phone conversations (as I followed rabbit trails) with Taylor Reese, who, at that time, at least, was still alive and well, and had actually written a book about his career. Taylor was a member of our first ELECTED board, being elected to the position of vice president at our first Annual Convention in November of 1962, which took place in Pensacola.

Our first elected board at that convention:

Cliff Gaffney, Pres.  
Taylor Reese, VP  
Comptroller, Frank Sarli  
Treasurer, Frank Newman  
Executive Sec'y, Isidor Bakst  
Corresponding Sec'y, Marjorie Canonic  
Recording Secretary, Norma G. Sams

Directors:  
Northern District, Mary Geus  
Central District, Art Clum  
Southern District, Ed Gilbert

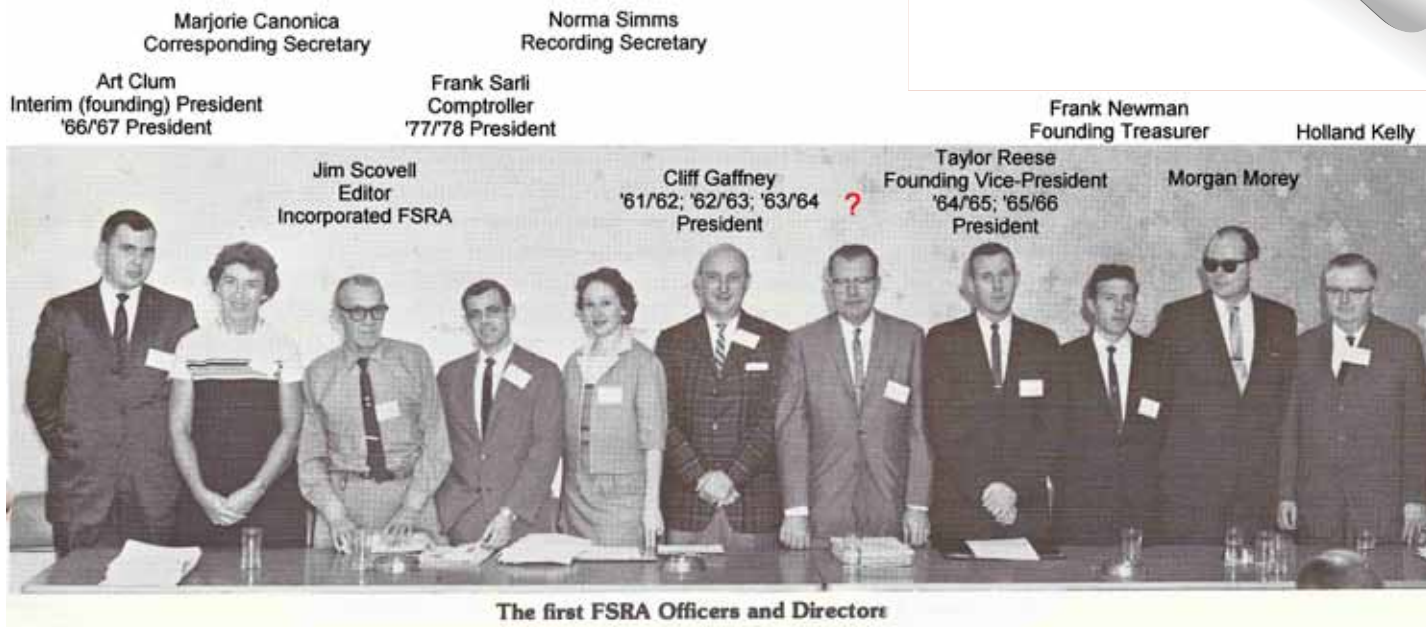
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# SLEUTHING THE NET

ON THE JOB

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I'll bet some of those names are familiar to ... some of us. To my extreme regret, I've never been able to get my hands on any of the early issues of our magazine, originally called *The Symposium*. But as I studied minutes and what magazines we do have, I found this delightful tidbit in the 1981 May-June issue of our magazine (the name had then been changed to "Shorthand Notes,") where our founding is recounted by 1961-1962 editor Jim Scovell:

*"Over the years, some say 25 years, attempts have been made to form a Florida shorthand reporters organization, and all have foundered, I am told, on the rocks of local animosities, suspicion, irresponsible control procedures, and, it must appear, lack of know-how to achieve the common goals."*

*"The organizers were all members of the official set-up of reporters in St. Petersburg, and they found it necessary to assure the field of their unselfish interest by promising that at the first organization meeting the membership would take over 'lock, stock and barrel,' and that they merely acted in what is known in legal parlance as 'dummies.'"*

The article goes on to mention that first-year dues were \$10, and the first meeting was attended by about 80 people.

*"The meeting was presided over by the person who had initiated the organization, and while some mutterings and criticism and mistrust inherent in such a personal venture oozed to the surface, a free and untrammled election of officers and directors was held."*

One thing that struck me as I read the early minutes was how eloquent and quaint the language was:

*"Mr. Jim Scovell moved that the body representing the officers of the corporation extend their very sincere thanks to Miss Lois Conley for her splendid generosity in volunteering to take a verbatim record of the first meeting of the Association, and that any bill she may submit as a result of such service*

*will be paid by the Association."*

A Code of Ethics was adopted at the meeting in Miami in 1962:

## FSRA CODE OF ETHICS

*Cheerfulness and courtesy to Court and Counsel, litigants and witnesses, even under the most trying circumstances.*

*Promptness in attendance on sessions.*

*Decorum and dignity in dress and deportment befitting an honorable and learned profession.*

*Respect for and obedience to laws without as well as within the halls of justice.*

*Absolute impartiality, precluding any hint of impropriety or suspicion of lack of integrity attaching to his conduct.*

*Honest and fair dealing with clients, associates and fellow reporters.*

*Insistence upon such just compensation and fair laws as will attract and hold educated and talented men and women in a work arduous in the extreme.*

*A constant striving for self-improvement; and diligence, exactness and painstaking care in the preparation of the transcript – the finished product by which the shorthand reporter is judged – thereby reflecting credit not only upon the individual but upon all similarly engaged.*

Back then we had a "Necrology Committee," whose task it was to track and report on members and colleagues who had passed away.

Another thing that gave me a huge thrill was when I came across this, from the 1963 Board of Directors meeting:

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*“Isador Bakst reported on his recent bout in court on the topic of ‘attorneys’ responsibility to reporters for their fees,’ with final determination being in his favor.”*

That case is the very cornerstone of our Florida collection case law and I cite it to this day in my collection letters.

And of course the minutes, and the magazines, from day one through today, continue to discuss our quest for certification.

In 1964, the minutes state: *“Morgan Morey and Thyra Ellis are giving some thought to working on a handbook for reporters.”*

And of course, today, thanks to the hard work started by Shirley King and Judy Everman, we have our Florida Manual and FPR. What would our founders think if they saw what this early effort has evolved into!

And perhaps this is the root of our many awards: *“Frank Newman moved that a Certificate of Appreciation be issued by the Board of Directors to any person worthy of same at the instance of any member in good standing, as approved unanimously by the Board of Directors.”*

At the annual convention in October of 1965:

*“Our Lobbyist, Steve Fisher, gave a report on the passage of Chapter 457 ‘Certified Shorthand Reporter Statute,’ as well as the defeat of the proposed Chapter 29 revision on statutory rates.”*

FSRA had gotten a certification bill passed in four short years since its founding! We would be under the Department of Business Regulation. (This was a voluntary CSR that was later sunsetted and is no longer in effect, of course. I believe I took, and passed, the last one that was offered, in 1977.)

From Taylor Reese’s autobiography: *“The law was passed, not because of some special talent on my part, but because I just didn’t realize it couldn’t be done, so I plowed ahead. The CSR law gave us status and standing and made it possible for anyone using a court reporter to know that he or she had the training to do the job and do it right. It was a great day in our state association’s history and for the profession in general when our mission was finally accomplished. Literary was 160, Jury Charge, 180, and Q/A 200.”*

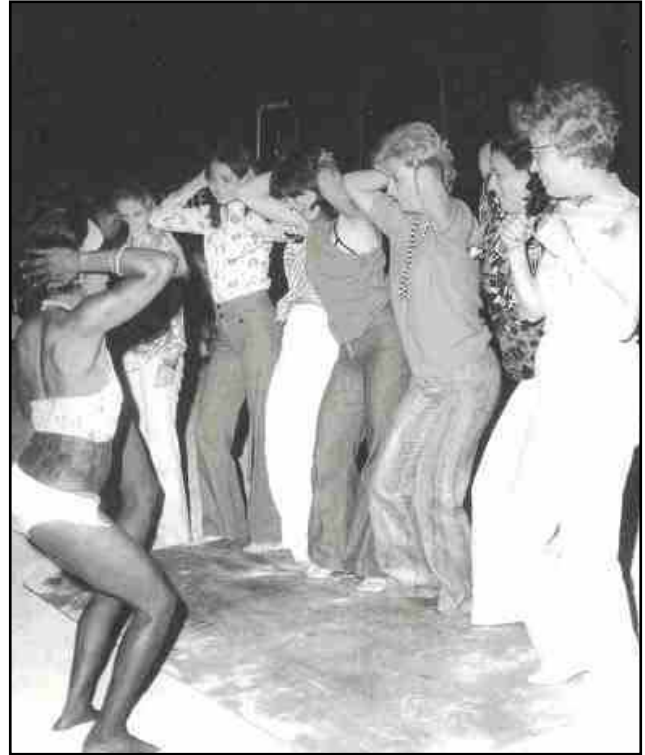
*“By the time we got the CSR law on the books, we were a rock-solid organization, with functioning committees and midyear meetings and annual conventions. We were a going concern, an Association that exists to this day.”*

By the way, that convention was held in ... Jamaica.

In 1967 we were 170 members strong.

Everything old is new again. In 1968, future president Donald Bell wrote, *“As an Association, we are going to have to be constantly alert at every session [of the Legislature] as to anything which might affect reporters throughout the state.”*

Who doesn’t remember the relatively more recent JAC rate debacle, successfully overcome in a drawn-out, expensive



battle, by several hard-working members, and, thanks to the generous donations of many members, the hiring of the best lobbyist we could find. Those members, and the lobbyist, continue to work very hard these several years later, continuing to work on protecting our interest and advancing our goals.

In 1969, former FSRA president Taylor Reese became president of NSRA. He wrote in his book, *“Our National organization wanted to have their annual convention in Florida. I became co-chairman of the Steering Committee with the very competent Doris Mauldin. That successful conference brought me to the attention of the National organization, and subsequently, at their conference in Boston in 1969, I became president. That honor remains, to this day, the highlight of my career.”*

*“It was also during this era that some ‘technologists’ even predicted that ‘in the future,’ **the spoken word at trial would come out instantly as a written word.** (Really! I mean, how bizarre can the mind become before institutionalization is considered for the wizards who come up with such cockamamie ideas?)”*

Realtime, anyone?

Our 1969 Annual Convention gave us a profit of \$520.

The October 1971 convention was the celebration of our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with 74 attendees.

Continued on page 11

# SLEUTHING THE NET

ON THE JOB

Continued from page 10

Cecil Noel submitted a report regarding the Membership Committee: *"The task of attracting new members to an organization, actually, should not be a difficult one. I will be the first to admit, however, that it does take a more concentrated effort than your chairman for the past year has put forth."*

Anybody that's ever been Chair of Membership knows the feeling.

Our first female president was elected, Aetna Jones, with Doris Mauldin as president-elect.

The Billie Mendenhall Trio provided the evening's entertainment. (Anybody recognize the last name?)

And so ended our first decade. I hope you've found some

interest in this trip down memory lane. I'm struck again, as I was when I started the research project, about how so much that happened back then relates to today, 54 years later (goodness, we're nearly halfway to our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary!) And how much has changed, yet how much has not.

And I'm wracking my brain to find some pathetic way to tie this into the supposed theme of my column, Sleuthing the Net. The best I can come up with is that a lot of e-mail was involved in gathering this information. And some of the e-mail addresses that I was able to track down as I tried to locate our association ancestors was done through ... what else.... Google.

## NVRA NOW OFFERS REMOTE TESTING FOR CART AND CAPTIONING

Beginning in March 2015, the National Verbatim Reporters Association is offering CART and captioning testers the option to test remotely. Testers will have the choice of taking the Registered Broadcast Captioner and Registered CART Provider skills test on-site or from the comfort of their home or office. The written knowledge test can be taken on-site or online at one of the approved testing centers.

This new procedure will allow the CART and captioning candidates to earn national certification with the expense of traveling to a test site. For more information or to register, contact Member Services at [membership@nvra.org](mailto:membership@nvra.org).

These tests are given six times a year at various locations throughout the country. Visit [nvra.org](http://nvra.org) for NVRA's 2015 testing schedule or to download a testing packet.

## Realtime Contest at Convention!!!!

Join us for the annual realtime competition. Highest combined score wins the 2015 Realtime Speed Contest! Prizes awarded for Literary at 200 wpm and Q&A at 225 wpm. So tweak that dictionary, work on those difficult fingerings, practice accuracy at speed, and come compete in a "fun run" with your peers! Be able to output ASCII to a flash drive. Results will be announced during the Saturday luncheon.

Visit [www.fcraonline.org](http://www.fcraonline.org) to register for the 2015 Annual Convention TODAY!



# In the Thick of It: Life, That Is

*Continued from page 6*

to the present moment. The goal is to ultimately be conscious of being in the present moment, or having the ability to pull ourselves back into the present moment, for the majority of our waking hours.

**A baby step to begin practicing presence is to consciously listen when speaking with another.**

Look into their eyes, HEAR them; stop the mind chatter and really listen. You can use this trigger to snap into the moment; it's easy because of all the conversations we engage in in any given day. This goes for conversations with our colleagues/co-workers, family, friends, and even our children.

As a former court reporter, I'd say this is just like the difference between taking testimony where you're on autopilot, planning the rest of your day, versus tough technical testimony where you literally don't have a second to think about anything but the next word spoken from the witness' mouth.

Think about what normally goes on in any given verbal exchange with another.

As we listen, we have an agenda: We're simultaneously crafting a response, what we're going to say back; we listen in a reactive state, again, constructing our reaction/response to what the person is saying.

Try listening with no thought in your head; clear your head, stop analyzing, stop mentally reacting. Concentrate solely on the person's words, their expression – their eyes, voice, mannerisms. At first it's difficult, but with practice, it becomes actually a relief. You begin to notice how taking your guard down and not being ready to react feels like a reprieve...*Oh, wait, I can just listen here. I can pretend I'm watching a video and there's no need for me to respond. Wow, how freeing is this?*

You'll be amazed at the sense of freedom this gives you, after the initial discomfort. You'll also be amazed at getting to the end of the other person talking and then just responding or answering from a pure, natural place. It's really the *art* of listening. The beauty of being a reporter is we master the art of listening in our professional lives; so we can simply transfer this skill to our non-reporting interactions to begin being fully conscious and present in the now.

Ultimately, this practice allows us to be so much **more effective and confident** in our exchanges with others. By practicing presence, you'll see how your response to others becomes natural, meaningful.

You give your brain time to relax, and that's when a sort of magic happens; you become much more effective conversing with others. You are empowered. You feel confident.

Learning to live in the now, in the present moment, slows the conveyor belt down a bit, and with practice actually gives us access to a sense of control of our lives. We can **find our flow** while being right **in the thick of it all!** The roses no longer rush by in a blur with the thought "Some day I'll be able to stop and smell them." You can see, smell, touch, and fill a lovely vase full of them for you to enjoy every moment of every day.

*Ruthanne gained and honed her coaching skills by being trained, certified, and asked to work as a coach-advisor for the Robbins-Madanes Coach Training Program. This program is Tony Robbins' only coach training program, developed along with world-renowned psychotherapist Cloe Madanes. This experience has enhanced her ability to work with clients from all over the world with varied backgrounds and cultures.*

*«Coaching is not a path I saw coming, but I have always had faith that if you continually grow and move forward, your life will reveal itself.*

*I knew from a young age that I would be a career woman. Working for over 25 years in the legal field, juggling a demanding job, a marriage and raising three children, including one with special needs, I knew intimately the challenges of keeping all these balls in the air. All until one day, a neck injury forced me to retire.*

*Through grieving the loss of my career, I learned that much of those 25 years were spent coaching, giving people a perspective that they could not easily see. While healing I discovered my passion to help others improve their life.*

*I used to feel a rush of excitement being involved in a new court case; now my feeling of accomplishment and success comes from being in the service of others and seeing how helping one person improve their life has a long-lasting effect on the legacy of their entire family.*

*Contact Info: [RuthanneEsparza.com](http://RuthanneEsparza.com); facebook.com/RuthanneLifeCoach; linkedin.com/in/ruthanneesparza/*

# Facebook is an “Open” Book

By Lisa Selby-Brood, RPR



I’ve been chewing on this for a while, ever since a couple months back when I saw something on TV. The news report was about medical students having to be instructed and even warned not to post things on Facebook. They were talking about posting pictures of actual medical procedures. That, in itself, sounds bad enough to me, but the problem came in when, as the report stated, “Say you’re posting the picture of an operation on someone’s arm, and say in the picture you can clearly see a very unique tattoo; a tattoo that could certainly identify that particular person. Well, guess what? You’ve just violated HIPAA regulations. Unless that patient gave you permission to post that, it’s like opening up their medical file to the whole world that sees that post.”

We’ve all heard the reports about the teachers who have lost their jobs because they started ranting on Facebook about their students. We’ve heard about it in other businesses too, where people just divulged a bit too much information. We’ve heard that the police are now picking up violators of all types because they are stupid enough to post things on Facebook.

I’ve got to tell you, about six months ago I was about ready to drop my account. Things going on in my own little corner of the world that I really thought should have remained private were somehow getting posted by other people, and it really got me to thinking.

And someone said it on Facebook just recently, “what you ‘like’ on Facebook really says a lot about who you really are,” or words to that effect.

Let’s talk about our profession for a minute.

Say you did a depo and you really impressed this attorney. Somehow or another, he lost your card, but he remembered your name. So he thinks to himself, hmmm, I wonder if I can find her (him) on Facebook?

So he does a quick search, and he finds you. And I know, I know, people who are not your “Friends” are not supposed to be able to “see” your page, but like I said, we keep hearing reports of it all the time. And there you are, splashed all over your Home Page, “Oh, going out clubbing with my girls tonight!!!” Dress slit up to your navel with a margarita in your hand.

Look. I’m in no position to tell anybody how to live; that’s not what this article is about. What I’m saying is this: First impressions may be misleading, but they are lasting. If that did happen, is that the type of impression you would want to leave with a prospective client?

I’m speaking mostly to students and young reporters; the old guard really should know better.

What does your Profile picture look like? What types of things do you regularly “post”? What kind of LANGUAGE do you use when you do post things? Do you really think dropping the F-bomb is appropriate?

Your life is an open book on Facebook, and you need to remember that at all times.

And speaking of what we post, one quick note that I think bears mentioning, and that is content.

Back to the example of the medical students, be very, very careful about your content, and even getting too specific about work.

“Man, you should have seen the depo I just did! This stupid doctor, works in Tampa he’s a.....”-- STOP. Stop right there.

You really don’t need to be saying anything more about that deposition. (I had to catch myself doing it just the other day, and I thought to myself, what the heck am I doing???)

I deleted the post quickly, and tried to keep my comments very general for the rest of the conversation.

Please, if you feel you need to vent about a job, or if you have questions, do it by Message or by e-mail.

Again, you don’t know WHO could be looking at that post. The attorney, or worse, the deponent.

I personally think Facebook has done more harm than good. Yes, I suppose in a hurricane or an earthquake, it has been a tremendous help in locating people. But the lives that have been wrecked and the damage done by unthinking, unfeeling people -- well, I think we all have a story to tell.

Try to remember with every picture, with every post, would I want my mother looking at this? (That does it for me.)

# FCRA WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

*(Includes all members who joined as of May 5, 2015)*

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

NAME	CITY	SPONSOR
Andujar, Jackie	West Palm Beach	Christine Phipps
Boone, Terri	Orlando	Melinda Traeger
DeLong, Lisa	Fort Lauderdale	Christine Phipps
Dohack, Christine	Benton	Holly Kapacinskas
Emons, Chelsea	Orlando	Bobbie Barrett
Evatt, Lindsey	Ft Lauderdale	Bobbie Barrett
Griffith, Conor	Fort Lauderdale	Christine Phipps
Kiley, Barbara	Tampa	Melinda Traeger
Martinez, Carmel	Royse City	Holly Kapacinskas
Meltzer, Karen	Boca Raton	Aurora Joslyn
Stafford, Melodie	Harrison Township	Susan Wasilewski
Tabares, Nelly	Fort Lauderdale	Christine Phipps

## PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Andolpho, Julie	Boynton Beach	Ann Marie Pleasanton
Davis, Marie	Miami	Rosa Naccarrto
Ellis, Kelly	Miami Shores	Rick Levy
Ervin, Tammy	St Cloud	Nikki Peters
Feliciano, Deana	Port Saint Lucie	Michael Benowitz
Finan, Tracy	Tallahassee	Brenda Douglas
Jenkins, Tamara	Pompano Beach	Christine Phipps
Johnson, Candice Griffin	DeLand	Elizabeth Pearson
Klein, Angela	Ft Myers	Susan Wasilewski
Louis, Katiana	Miami	Jennifer Gaul
McTaggart, Susan	Big Pine Key	Suzanne Ex
Ona, Marion	Davie	Holly Kapacinskas
Percy, Lorie	Orlando	Holly Kapacinskas
Prichason, Lynne	Aventura	Susan Wasilewski
Wolk, Molly	Orlando	Elizabeth Speer
Zischka, Patricia	Tavernier	Sandra Estevez

## STUDENT MEMBERS

Barrios, Erica	Miami Gardens	Aurora Joslyn
Freeman, Tishana	Jacksonville	Susan Wasilewski
French, Michael	Jacksonville	Melissa Meisterhans
Neifeld, Shelby	Pembroke Pines	Susan Wasilewski
Orozco, Jared	Miami Gardens	Aurora Joslyn
Roy, Laura	Pompano Beach	Susan Wasilewski
Walters, Jennifer	Lake City	Susan Wasilewski
Zalewska, Jillian	Lake Worth	Robin Merker



# Musings from Vana Lou



## A Haiku by Vana Lou - "My Mommy's Job"

Her hands move so fast,  
Writing spoken history  
the stenographer.

●● **NEW** ●●

### **FCR Online Deadline Dates**

(FALL) AUG/SEPT/OCT/NOV  
Article Submission — July 5  
On-Line Publication — August 12

(WINTER) DEC/JAN/FEB/MAR  
Article Submission — November 5  
On-Line Publication — December 12

(SUMMER) APR/MAY/JUNE/JULY  
Article Submission — March 5  
On-Line Publication — April 12



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

## Florida Court Reporters Association

\*Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_ NCRA # \_\_\_\_\_ NVRA # \_\_\_\_\_

\*Company \_\_\_\_\_  Owner  Co-owner  Manager

\*Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

\*City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\*Telephone: Home (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Office (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK ONE:  OK to publish home phone number in directory.  DO NOT publish home phone number.

\*Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

\*METHOD OF REPORTING:  Stenographic  Voicewriter  Gregg  Pittman  Other \_\_\_\_\_

\*TYPE OF REPORTER:  Freelance  Official  Deputy Official  Federal  Teacher  Student  Other \_\_\_\_\_

\*DESIG:  CSR (List State(s) other than FL) \_\_\_\_\_  FAPR  FPR  RPR  RDR  CMRS  RMR  CLVS  CRI  CRR  CPE

\*Asterisk indicates required information.

I make application for Membership as a: (CHECK ONE)

**PARTICIPATING MEMBER** .....\$300.00  
Open to anyone engaged in active practice of official or general court reporting by either stenographic or voicewriter method. (Please indicate method above.) **PAYMENT PLAN AVAILABLE**  
 \*Pre-Authorized Payment Plan Attached (Participating Members Only)

**STUDENT MEMBER** .....\$35.00  
Open to any student of shorthand reporting who is endorsed by a court reporting training program instructor or director.

**RETIRED MEMBER** .....\$45.00  
Open to any participating member in good standing who has retired from the active practice of shorthand reporting.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER** ..... \$90.00  
**This category is open to the following (please check one):**  
 Teachers of shorthand reporting  
 Individuals officially connected with a school or college conducting shorthand reporting course - **School Name & Location** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-member individuals retired from active shorthand reporting  
 Anyone professionally associated with or employed by a member of FCRA whose application is endorsed by a participating member in good standing (**please print sponsoring member's name below where requested**)  
 Anyone qualifying for Participating membership, but residing outside of Florida - State of Residence \_\_\_\_\_

**VENDOR MEMBER**.....\$500.00  
Open to any firm or corporation engaged in selling products or services to FCRA members.

**PRO BONO:** Are you interested in donating time to the Pro Bono Program?  
 Yes  No

**FLORIDA MANUAL:** The guide to court reporting in Florida — sample forms, guidelines, and rules of court. Cost for members: \$75.00. Subscription to updates: \$25.00.

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY:** Searchable geographical and alphabetical members' listing in Member's Only section of our website.

**The dues year is November 1 through October 31.** Annual dues must accompany application. Those joining in August, September, or October of a given year will be paid through October 31 of the following year. Dues payments are deductible by members as an ordinary and necessary business expense. In accordance with Section 6033(e) (2)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, members of the FCRA are hereby notified that an estimated 10% of your FCRA dues will be allocated to lobbying and political activities, and therefore is not deductible as a business expense.

I hereby make application for membership in the Florida Court Reporters Association and pledge myself, if accepted, to abide by the requirements of the Bylaws and Code of Professional Responsibility of the Association as they are now and as they may be amended in the future.

I understand that all applications are subject to review and approval by FCRA. All applicants must be sponsored by an FCRA member in good standing per FCRA bylaws.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Sponsoring Member (Please print or type)

How did you hear about FCRA? Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT ENCLOSED FOR:

Membership Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Florida Manual on CD:  
 \_\_\_ copies @ \$75.00 each  
 (Includes 7% sales tax + handling) \_\_\_\_\_

One-year subscription  
 to Florida Manual Updates  
 \_\_\_ subscriptions @ \$25.00 each  
 (Includes 7% sales tax + handling) \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_  MasterCard  VISA  AmEx

Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount to charge: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\*Participating Members selecting the pre-authorized payment plan option will need to sign and complete the payment section of the pre-authorized payment plan form.

**For Administrative Use Only**

Date Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_ Ref # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Computer \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to FCRA and mail to FCRA Headquarters, 222 S. Westmonte Dr, Ste 101, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714  
Telephone 407-774-7880 • FAX 407-774-6440 (for charge payments only) • www.fcraonline.org

Rev 11/2014



# Pre-Authorized Payment Plan Form

## Participating Membership Only

Please complete and return payment plan form and membership application to:

FCRA Headquarters  
222 S. Westmonte Dr, Suite 101  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714  
Fax: 407-774-6440

The FCRA payment plan is available only through submission of this form and is not available online.

**INSTALLMENTS:** Plan is payable by credit card only. Check payments will not be accepted.

All payments will be automatically processed as outlined below.

First Payment	Processed upon receipt of this form	\$100.00
Second Payment	Processed 30 days after first payment	\$110.00
Third/Final Payment	Processed 60 days after first payment	\$110.00

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Terms of the Agreement: I hereby authorize FCRA to process the fees for my participating membership in three credit card transactions. All transactions will be processed to the credit card provided on this form. The first payment in the amount of \$100.00 will be processed upon receipt. The second installment in the amount of \$110.00 will be automatically processed 30 days following the first payment. The third and final installment in the amount of \$110.00 will be automatically processed 60 days following the first payment. Check payments will not be accepted under this agreement. I understand there will be NO REFUNDS for any installment (partial payment) processed under this agreement. I also understand that FCRA membership will not be considered active until all three plan payments have been processed successfully. The full amount paid under this plan for my FCRA Participating membership dues will be \$320.00 which includes a \$20 administrative fee for processing multiple payments.

Please enroll me in the payment plan. I have included credit card information for all three installments below. I fully understand and agree to the Terms of the Agreement as stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Payment Method:

Master Card  Visa  American Express

Submit by Email

Billing Address: *(If different from above)*

Print Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cardholder's Name / Signature

Payment plan effective 10/20/13 for Participating Members only.