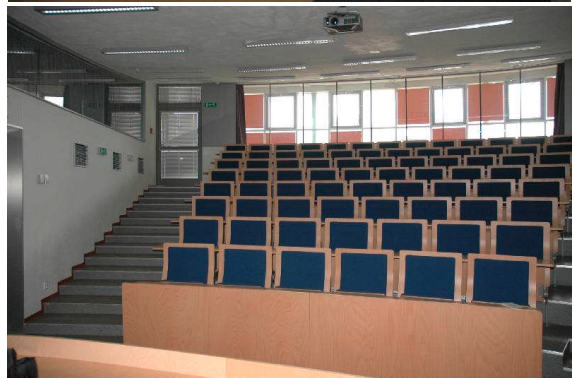
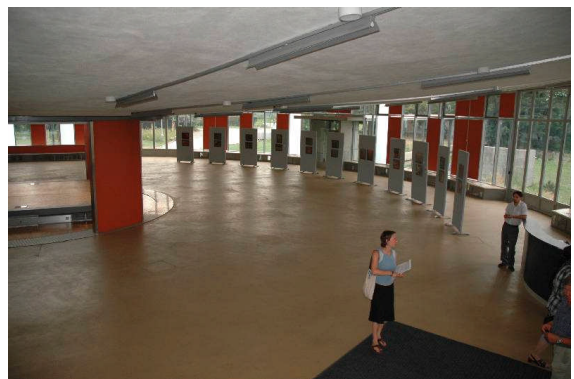




This newsletter is published under the responsibility of the Board of the International Federation for Information Processing - Intersteno - and sent to all e-mail addresses of persons participating in the work of the members of Intersteno known to the Board. Contributions to the newsletter can be sent using the form on the web site www.intersteno.org.

Publication will take place at the discretion of the Board.

◆ **In less than one year we will meet in Prague, hoping everybody will join us!** ◆



At that time, the magnificent hall and rooms of the University of Agriculture (see e-news n. 13) will be crowded with competitors and participants to the 46th Congress.

A first, although provisional, interesting programme has been prepared by the Czech organisation. **See the menu Prague 2007 on www.intersteno.org for additional information** and timely plan your attendance at the best.

Thanks to *Jaroslav Polacek* for these good photos.

❖ The 107th Annual Convention of NRCA ❖

The National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) held its 107th Annual Convention from Thursday August 3 till Sunday August 6 2006 at the Hilton Hotel New York.

Since 1977 NCRA is Intersteno's National Group of the USA. The Board of Intersteno was invited to send a representative to this Convention. Cees van Beurden attended the Convention and witnessed how successful it was: more than 2000 participants and apart from the official gatherings 48 seminars and an exhibition with about 40 vendors. The Hilton Hotel provided all necessary facilities.



The Hilton New York where the NCRA meeting took place

Two days before the Convention the annual **National Speed Competition** was held and on Thursday the annual National Realtime Competition took place.

The winners were honored during the Award Luncheon on Saturday. J. Edward Varello of Grafton, Mass, won his sixth National Speed Championship. His overall score of 99,43% (20 errors) topped a field of 29 competitors. Douglas J. Zweizig of Philadelphia won the realtime competition with a overall score of 98,944% (23 errors).

On Thursday the Members Business Meeting was held, during which Cees van Beurden addressed the members of NCRA, followed by the Opening Reception. On Friday there was the Premier Session and Installation of NCRA's Board of Directors. NCRA is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of five officers (the president, the president-elect, the vice-president, the secretary-treasurer and the immediate past president) and nine directors. These are unpaid volunteers elected by the membership. The officers serves one-year terms and cannot be re-elected to consecutive terms in the same office, with the exception of the secretary-treasurer, who can serve up to three consecutive terms. Directors are elected to three-years terms, with three directorships elected each year. The executive director and chief executive officer, Mr. Mark Golden, is an ex-officio member of the Board.

On Saturday a special general session, the Awards Luncheon, a reception given by the incoming President, Ms. Reesa Parker, honouring the past Presidents, especially Ms. Marilyn Marquardt-Sanchez, whose year-long term concluded at the end of the Convention, and a big farewell party took place.

In his speech Cees van Beurden stipulated that NCRA and Intersteno are old organizations (NCRA 107 years and Intersteno 119 years) but that they have renewed themselves continually, adapting themselves to the ongoing sociological and technological developments.

He stressed the importance of the competitions for both organizations, national for NCRA and international for Intersteno, and he paid attention to the other organization of court reporters in the USA, the National Verbatim Reporters Association (NVRA) - its members are using speech recognition - which is an individual member of Intersteno.



The president of NCRA, Ms. Marilyn Marquardt-Sanchez, addresses the members. Next to her Ms. Reesa Parker, the president-elect.

He said that the technology of speech recognition is still young, but that undoubtedly it will be developed further. He trusted that NCRA will follow this development carefully. Proof of this was given already, because one of the seminars was dedicated to this subject. He announced that he will propose to the Board of Intersteno to undertake an enquiry about the position of court reporting in other countries.

An enormous amount of work has been done to organise this Convention. The organizers can be satisfied: all went very well. Intersteno congratulates NCRA with this result.

Cees van Beurden

Short history of NCRA

The original name of NCRA was NSRA, the National Shorthand Reporters Association. It was founded in 1899. Talks about forming a national organization for reporters started within individual state associations of which there are many in the USA. NSRA grew steadily, although it had its ups and downs during the First World War, the Great Depression after "Black Thursday" (the panic on the stock exchange on October 24, 1929) and the Second World War. In the beginning NSRA was an association of reporters using shorthand. Most of them used Pitman or Gregg but a large number of other systems was used as well. In the 1930s, controversy swirled over which system of shorthand reporting was superior, and the membership divided itself into two camps, the pen writer vs. the stenotypist.

NSRA always has highlighted the importance of professional education. The most important accomplishment in this respect was NSRA's creation of the Committee on Certificates of Proficiency. The first CP test was given in 1937. In that year 27 members passed the test and became the first CP holders in reporting history. Today, more than 12.000 reporters hold the RPR (Registered Professional Reporter), which replaced the CP.

The eighth decade of the last century saw two of the most dramatic changes in the history of NSRA and the reporting profession: the transformation from a volunteer group to an organization with a full-time executive director and staff, and the advent of computer-aided transcription (CAT). The Registered Professional Reporter designation went into effect on July 1, 1975. After that date, anyone who wanted the RPR designation would have to pass a shorthand skill test at CP speeds and a written knowledge test. During the 1980s, NSRA's long-range planning committee instituted a five-year plan to get the majority of official reporters on CAT and a three-year plan to convince the courts, attorneys and decision makers that CAT was the reporting system of the future. CAT technology was on a collision course with audio recording in the courtroom.

In 1990, NSRA established a task force to select a new name for the Association. After extensive research, the membership overwhelmingly accepted the name National Court Reporters Association, NCRA. In 1991 NCRA developed a new logo and renamed its magazine. The National Shorthand Reporter now was named the Journal of Court Reporting. In 1999 NCRA celebrated its 100th anniversary. The development went on. NCRA now has about 24.000 members, living and working in all the states of the USA, but a number of them also outside the USA, in countries like Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Ireland and the Virgin Islands.

NCRA offers its members a range of educational programs, accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET). NCRA's convention education mission is to provide accredited continuing education programs for the attendees. There are Student Seminar Programs, Certification Seminars and Special Programs and Instructor Seminars. In this way the members are kept up-to-date. They can earn CEUs. The CEU (Continuing Education Unit) is a nationally recognized method of quantifying the time spent in the classroom during professional development and training activities. Ten hours of instruction = 1.0 CEU. NCRA certified members are required to earn 3.0 CEUs (30 hours of continuing education) every three years. NCRA offers also other services to its members, like group insurance programs, the Journal of Court Reporting and a large number of publications.

The major focus of NCRA's activities involves student education. In 2005 and 2006 NCRA's Reporter Education Commission researched and recommended action in more than a dozen areas to secure a steady supply of real-time reporters for court and deposition work, broadcast captioning, and communications access for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. The Board of Directors has approved programs and projects that will involve a significant portion of NCRA's budget for the current and future years. Programs are underway to enhance the training program approval process, share best practices among schools, recruit students to reporting schools, build stronger relations with school owners and administrators, enhance professional development opportunities for reporting educators, and develop new tools to assist in stenographic speed building, among others.

◆Secrets from the past discovered!◆

In the previous number we have announced a request for transcribing steno-signs accompanying a drawing. The secret of these signs has been discovered nearly at the same time by **Riccardo Bruni** of *Turin* and **Erminio Soldati** of *Milano*. These gentlemen have participated at Intersteno congresses and competitions. The signs were written using an adaptation of the English system of Samuel Taylor to the Italian language at the beginning of 1800. This adaptation was made by Mr Filippo Delpino, who organized the first reporting service at the Parlamento Subalpino, the Italian parliament in Torino before the Italian unification. The Taylor system was used for several decades till the beginning of 1900 at the Italian parliament, even if superseded by Gabelsberger-Noe. The Taylor-Delpino was also the base for an adaptation to Latin used for taking notes during the Vatican I council

in the middle of 1800.

More recent 'secrets' were discovered by me transcribing texts of short messages exchanged from **September 2005 till January 2006**. These messages were written using the Italian system called 'Stenografia nazionale' i.e. 'National shorthand' by Erminio Meschini. This system is one among the 4 ones approved by the Italian Ministry of Education and taught in the Italian schools since ten years ago. Once again shorthand proves to be useful!

gpt

◆ **Wireless Speech Recognition by David Rogala** ◆

On Friday, September 1st, Sprint Nextel launched a new service which allows a mobile worker to press a button, say a recipient's name, and **dictate messages of up to 20 words into thier BlackBerry's receiver**. A minute later, the full message appears on the screen, which can then be sent with one keystroke.

MobileVoiceControl, Inc., is one of a number of companies developing voice control systems as consumers increasingly use mobile devices to to access online content and services.

IBM and Nuance Communications are also working with wireless carriers on similar products. Motorola is also planning to sell a voice control-enabled phone later this year.

A Reuters reporter tested MobileVoiceControl on a Sprint Treo 700p Smartphone, which produced 100 percent accuracy on 10 e-mails entered by voice.



MobileVoiceControl does not require any user voice training. Most users are up and running in minutes.

The system's response times ranged from 30 seconds to 2 minutes, with an average of 53 seconds. U.S. telecommunications carriers have spent billions of dollars upgrading their high-speed data networks to accommodate these products.

The service is presently available on high-end Sprint and Nextel Smartphones on the Sprint Nationwide PCS Network for \$6 a month and offers about 15 voice command functions, including e-mail, text messaging, calendar entries, address book searches, Google searches and weather reports. It can be downloaded to a BlackBerry over the air.

Forrester Research analyst Charles Golvin said it will take three to four years before mainstream mobile phone users embrace voice controls because "it's not 100 percent."

Good thing NVRA's Realtime Verbatim Reporters are experts at the voice writing of input and know how to achieve 96% accuracy at 180-200 words per minute!

◆ The 40th NVRA Convention 2006 ◆

The National Verbatim Reporters Association (NVRA) held its 40th Annual Convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, July 26th through 29th, 2006. Members and guests from across the United States and abroad attended educational seminars and technology demonstrations.

This year NVRA offered a concurrent educational seminar track, allowing attendees the opportunity to choose between intensive speech-recognition vendor training and educational topic sessions throughout the three-day program.

On Thursday morning, NVRA held its **annual business meeting and election of officers**. This event includes an NVRA tradition, "Breakfast with the Board," where during breakfast, **every member has an opportunity to speak to the Board, make suggestions and voice their concerns**. NVRA's Board of Directors is comprised of five officers and six directors, all working court reporters who volunteer their time to the association. The officers serve two-year terms.



Joh Wheat - President Elect of NVRA and Jennifer Smith - President. The President Elect will be on duty from next year.

Three directors serve one-year terms and three serve two-year terms. During the business meeting, **Don Scott (director), Diann Holt (director), and Pam Gray (secretary)** were unanimously elected to the NVRA Board of Directors, joining the current board consisting of Jennifer Smith, President, Jo Wheat, President-elect, Mike Ashcraft, Treasurer, Kyle Thomas, Director, Annette Myers, Director, Suzette Magee, Director, Beth Vint, Director, Anita Glover, Director, and Linda Drake, Immediate Past President.

A keynote presentation by Al Betz, author of "Polishing the Pearl," began Thursday's educational sessions. A 28-year veteran court reporter, Mr. Betz communicated the art of professional performance for court reporters using the concept of "silent marketing." Speech recognition vendor Advantage Software conducted a full-day, intensive training seminar featuring sessions by Jim Bouck, RVR, Bettye Keyes, RVR, Julie Samford, CSR, and Chris Ales, CSMR.

The first day of convention is usually quite busy for NVRA's education and testing staff. This year, NVRA's first Realtime Verbatim Reporter workshop, conducted by Bettye Keyes, RVR, was filled to capacity with reporters wishing to upgrade their skills. NVRA's Testing Chair, Annette Myers, also conducted its Certified Verbatim Reporter workshop for persons wishing to attain NVRA's basic certification. The **National Speed Championship** was held, living up to founder Horace Webb's "Fast as Heck" description: **350 words per minute for 5 minutes**. The RVR test drew a record number of participants.

Bettye Keyes, RVR, author of "Voice Writing Method," conducted the General Session on **how to make a transition from standard voice writing to speech recognition-enabled voice writing**. A very informative seminar, "Tax Planning for the Freelance Reporter," was presented by a Certified Public Accountant. The evening concluded with a Welcome Reception, held at the Knoxville Emporium Center for Arts and Culture. Another NVRA tradition, the Annual Auction, was observed, with the incomparable Annette Myers, CVR-CM, reprising her role as commissaire-priseur extraordinaire. A grand time was had by all.

Friday was a very busy day, beginning well before 7:00 a.m. for NVRA's education and testing staff, as they conducted the **Certified Verbatim Reporter testing**.

Friday's seminars included a second presentation by Al Betz regarding the exceptional performance demanded of court reporters during high-profile litigation. Representatives from the Tennessee School for the Deaf discussed **Deaf Culture in America and the court reporter's role in providing Communications Access Realtime Translation (CART) services and captioning for the deaf**. Their session on the similarities between sign language interpreters and court reporters was especially informative. Caption First, which provides realtime captioning to television stations for accessibility by the deaf and hard-of-hearing, presented a demonstration of speech recognition. Additional topics included a course on Microsoft Word and effective proofreading.

Speech recognition vendor AudioScribe Corporation conducted a full-day, intensive and informative seminar, featuring sessions by CEO Chad Theriot, President Adria Theriot-Johnson, Training Program Coordinator Michelle Guilbeau and Vice President Tye Miller. AudioScribe was also joined by distinguished corporate partners Nuance

Communications and MPC Computers.

NVRA's Annual Banquet was held on Friday night, featuring a fabulous menu. A special awards ceremony celebrated members' continuous dedication and support of NVRA and each recipient was presented with a special commemorative pin. Presentations were also made to members whose actions demonstrate NVRA's values of Truth, Professionalism, Individualism, Wellness, Support, Education, and Service. The highlight of the evening was recognizing the recipient of the Horace Webb Award, NVRA's highest award of gratitude for stellar contribution, to G. Michael Ashcraft, CVR. Also recognized were past presidents, honorary members, Horace Webb Award recipients, and past recipients of Value Awards.

Saturday began with another Continental Breakfast on the Mezzanine. True to tradition, NVRA Board members attended, graciously making themselves available to converse informally with members. Speech recognition vendor ProCAT Corporation conducted a full-day, intensive training seminar, conducted by Tammy Johnson, CVR.

Michael Miller, CSR, a freelance reporter and webmaster of depoman.com, a resource for the online court reporter, provided a **broad overview of current wireless technologies and their impact on the reporting profession**, as well as the various litigation support products available. Knoxville attorney Michael B. Coleman presented an informative seminar about wills, trusts, and estate planning issues. Dr. Mei Kennedy, from Viable Technologies, showcased **remote realtime transcription services and discussed how the technology works for educational institutions**. Vendor Seminars showcasing three speech-recognition technology vendors, AudioScribe, Advantage Software, and ProCAT, provided opportunities for court reporters to learn about the latest features of realtime software, ask questions, and see demonstrations of voice-writing realtime.

NVRA's Exhibition Hall was crowded every day by convention attendees as they visited vendors of court reporting supplies, court reporting education, and speech-recognition technology. Stenograph Corporation also exhibited its speech recognition-enabled caseCATalyst VP CAT system.

NVRA's entry-level certification is the Certified Verbatim Reporter (CVR), comprised of three five-minute readings which must be dictated by the reporter (no room recordings allowed) and transcribed within a specified period of time at no less than 95 percent accuracy. The dictations are literary material at 200 wpm, jury charge at 225 wpm, and two-voice question-and-answer testimony at 250 wpm. NVRA also administers a merit examination. These dictations are literary material at 225 wpm, jury charge at 250 wpm, and two-voice question-and-answer at 300. These are the highest testing speeds for court reporters in the U.S.

NVRA looks forward to its 2007 Convention, to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Many thanks to Jennifer Smith and David Rogala for this report.

Explanation of shorthands: **RVR** = Realtime verbatim reporter; **CVR** = Certified Verbatim Reporter; **CVR-CM** = Certified Verbatim Reporter with a certificate of merit; **CSMR** = Certified Steno Mask reporter.

◆IPRS e-news◆

Intersteno releases a special e-news letter expressly devoted to Parliamentary Reporters. If you are interested, you can subscribe to get it, using the form available in our www.intersteno.org - [IPRS menu](#).

◆Intersteno e-news in Turkish◆

Our Turkish friends have released the Turkish version of the e-news n. 15. [You can see it here](#). We thank them for this very useful translation, which permits to our colleagues to have a better understanding of Intersteno activity.

◆Voluntary helpers needed!◆

Intersteno needs a few voluntary persons for translating pages of its web-site from English to German. Maximum 6 pages per year. Please announce your availability by sending a message with your full name and address at news@intersteno.org, Your name will be inserted in the credit page on our web-site and indicated on each page you will translate. Thanks in advance for your valuable help.

◆Something to tell to other Intersteno people?!◆

An important event in your country or association, competitions, meetings? Please inform us using the special forms available at the e-news menu of intersteno.org. You can inform about the dates or write directly in that page a short report which, after approval by a Member of the Board, will be released quickly or inserted in this e-news letter.

◆**This newsletter is in PDF format.**◆

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