

## Q&amp;A

*Work Smarter, Not Harder*

I think that the best tip for working smarter, not harder, would be to use your networking abilities. After 27 years in this field, all working within the court system as an official in Illinois, I have been helped countless times by fellow reporters I have gotten to know through seminars, associations, etc. I use the NCRA Online Forum and the Illinois Court Reporters Association discussion forum to get fast answers to any questions I may have that relate to any number of areas in court reporting. In addition, from time to time I have been known to Google other court reporting state associations for answers to court reporter issues. The best part of this tip is you often look very smart, and it also appears as if you can get the answers you need for yourself and others in a very short period of time. As an added bonus, you get to meet exceptionally bright people who share similar interests with you.

*Kristin Ashenhurst, RDR, CRR  
Macomb, Ill.*

As a working reporter, I found I wrote a fast and accurate record by writing several strokes without hesitation rather than trying to memorize every brief form that was available. I believe that as a student it slowed my progress to try to make sense of briefs that were not natural to me.

*Anonymous*

Know when to call it quits for the night. Choose a time when most jobs let out — maybe between 4 and 7 p.m. — close your home office door, don't take any more work-related calls, and leave your work load to be picked up again in the morning.

*Courtney Sowards, RPR  
Warren, Mich.*

I live by the rule: Don't try to reinvent the wheel. I proudly claim that I copy from the best.

*Virginia Kling  
Long Beach, Calif.*

al Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Supported by technology leaders Microsoft and GeoTrust, the NNA has developed the components of the system: an Electronic Notary Seal and a National eNotary Registry.

As the nation's first statewide, operational eNotarization network, the system is expected to serve as a working model for the nation. Notaries are official, state-appointed witnesses for important transactions, and they provide a critical service in protecting the public against forgeries, mortgage fraud, and, increasingly, identity fraud.

The NNA is the nonprofit professional association for America's 4.5 million Notaries Public. Please visit [www.nationalnotary.org](http://www.nationalnotary.org) for more information.

**JUDGE TO CONSIDER NEW EVIDENCE IN CASE AGAINST COURT REPORTER**

A Colorado Supreme Court judge refused the prosecution's request to jail a former court reporter for refusing to produce transcripts for multiple cases from 1999 to 2002. The Supreme Court also refused to take up Barnes' appeal on the case. The proceedings regarding the transcripts included attempted murder and sexual assault convictions. The court reporter, Valeri Barnes, stopped working on the transcripts in August 2004 when she left her job and began employment in the federal courts and has since refused to complete them. She cited that she was not legally obligated to complete the work and that health concerns related to breast cancer treatment prevented her from doing so. A June 3 hearing has been scheduled to consider new evidence regarding Barnes' health problems and to formally hear the Supreme Court's decision on reconsidering an appeal submitted by Barnes.

**TEXAS APPROVES CHANGES TO ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES POLICY**

The Texas Court Reporters Certification Board has approved the following changes/additions to its policy on electronic signatures:

1. Modify the previous policy by eliminating the keys requirement for encrypted digital signatures. At the September 17, 2005, board meeting, the board approved encrypted digital signatures with keys as a secure method for court reporters when using electronic signatures. It was later determined that the keys requirement may be too onerous and subsequently, the board approved encrypted digital signatures (with no keys) as a secure method for electronic signatures on the first certification (i.e., to

certify the accuracy of a transcript).

2. Power of attorney and faxed signatures were determined to be unacceptable methods for electronic signatures on the first certification (i.e., to certify the accuracy of a transcript), to become effective 90 days hence from the January 28, 2006, board meeting.

For more information, please visit [www.tcra-online.com/](http://www.tcra-online.com/).

**PENNSYLVANIA LAUNCHES ELECTRONIC NOTARIZATION SYSTEM**

The National Notary Association, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of State and a special team of the Commonwealth's county recorders, launched a statewide electronic notarization system on February 2, at the Nation-

## STENO BRIEFS

*Court Briefs*

BY PATRICIA NILSEN

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