

7-28-2011

Happy summer to everybody! The Realtime Task Force will be holding a training session in Glenwood Springs on Saturday, August 6. I'm not sure yet what time. If you are planning on attending, please send me a quick e-mail so we have a count of how many will be attending. Don't forget, we have a special door prize for one lucky reporter who attends. That time is fast approaching, so let me know as soon as possible. I'm shocked that July is almost over. I'll be sending out an O-Blast as soon as we have a time that we are starting. It should be a beautiful weekend to be up in the mountains!

I also wanted to give you a couple more responses from some reporters who were successful in taking the CRR or the FCRR and passing at either the state level or the national level. They are imparting a little bit of their insight on what it took for them to pass.

**One reporter said:** "To prepare for the FCRR and CRR, I practiced to CRR takes. After each take, I would analyze my writing on the computer. I was able to see my trouble spots and come up with brief forms or adjust the keys on my machine to try to solve the problem I was having with a certain word or words. I also added to my dictionary numerous misstrokes that I have continued to write over the years but haven't put them in my dictionary because I just 'knew' I would write them 'perfectly' someday. Not! I finally gave up that dream and put in all the garbage.

"It sounds tedious (and it was), but I practiced each take over and over again until I had less than 36 mistakes on every test. This may sound pointless because it's not going to be the same take for the real test and there comes a point when you almost have it memorized, but I think it helps you to focus on clean writing versus just getting every word.

"For the FCRR, we were given the information ahead of time that it would be about a murder on an Indian reservation and also given the proper names that would come up in the test. I dictated my own take using those names and words that might be used when talking about a murder or an Indian reservation and practiced to that take. In that take, I also included some of the words from the list that was sent out by Mary George of words commonly used on the FCRR."

**Kelli Bartolini said,** "I did practice. I practiced, for the most part, the FCRR speed contest tapes and the FCRR past realtime exams. I felt that it really helped to boost the speed up – just like we did in school – and then come back down. I also practiced at slower speeds in order to fully perfect my writing and keep it on track. I forced myself to drop, instead of trying to

write something for everything, which was extremely challenging for me, an old Brenner writer! I didn't practice as much as some of the other girls did, but when I did practice, it was intense. I managed to get in 45 minutes about three times a week. I definitely had to change some of my writing, and to do that, I had to change the way I THINK about writing. Constant imagery, picturing it over and over and then writing it without thinking. I also concentrated on my suffixes and prefixes more than I ever have. If I was challenged by a particular take, I wrote it over and over until I got it right.

"Also, I printed the practice tests out and graded them. Then I took them again to see if I corrected the places that I struggled with. So I did all of these things, and I'm sure it helped tremendously; however, the one common denominator that I see with the majority of reporters is not the way they write, but the test anxiety that prevents them from writing the way that they should. I am one of the fortunate ones that doesn't experience test anxiety, certainly not to the degree that my friends and co-workers do. That particular piece of this challenging test has become my challenge. I've promised my fellow reporters that I'm going to research and do as much work as I can to help them with this most difficult prong of test-taking.

"I can tell you that I was honored to be in a testing room filled with so many gifted and incredible reporters. Everyone in that room has the ability to pass the test. EVERYONE! We've got to figure out a way to calm those fingers and have these reporters write for the test the way that they do every single day in court or on depositions. So that is my personal challenge!"

I will have more of these from other reporters in O-Blasts to come. I certainly see a recurring theme here about practicing.

Also, now that the next training session is coming up, I need your advice. What do you want to see/hear/talk about? We will, of course, be giving a practice CRR exam, so bring your computers, writers, etc., to practice writing for the exam, which is actually coming up in a couple of weeks.

If anyone has ideas or information that you want to share with the other officials, please send it to me and I'll send it out. I love sharing ideas and thoughts from all the reporters.

I also need your ideas for brief forms and steno swap to share with the officials as well, so send them on. We looove brief forms.

Thanks, everybody. See you soon!

Mary George, CRR, RMR  
19th Judicial District  
Official Court Reporter  
970-351-7300, Ext. 5656