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Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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INSIDE JOURNALISM

JUNE, 1990

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

FOUR TRIUMPH AT THE TRIB

Working at the **Chicago Tribune** is a dream for many j-students. Today four former Columbians are fulfilling their dreams with jobs at the hallowed Tribune Tower.

The four—John Kass, Lynda Horton, Shirley Henderson and Brenda Herrmann—play very different roles at the **Tribune**, but all say their Columbia education paved the way.

John Kass is the most visible. As the City Hall reporter, his byline appears regularly on the front page and in the Chicagoland section.

Kass says an internship he received while a Columbia student led him into the **Tribune** newsroom. The internship, a reporting job at the **Daily Calumet**, gave him the chance to write labor, political and investigative stories. Kass soon left college to work full-time at the paper.

He caught the attention of the **Tribune** with a series of investigative reports about no-bid contracts in

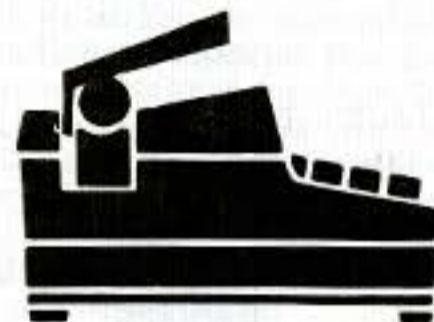
Chicago. Later, a story on the dirty dealings of a former aid to Harold Washington clinched the deal.

"If you can write good stories in a large market, you can move to a major metropolitan paper. If they pick up enough of your stories, you have a chance at a job," says Kass.

Kass also advises students to finish their education. "The way I went about getting my job here was unorthodox, and I wouldn't recommend it. Finish your education and get an advanced degree in a different field," he says.

Lynda Horton, an '89 Columbia grad, works in the internal communications department of the Trib. "It's kind of like public relations inside the paper," she says. Horton writes stories and edits for Datalink, the weekly **Tribune** newsletter, and works on other departmental publications. Each individual department of the **Tribune** has its own publication that is produced by the internal communications department.

Horton landed her job after spending seven months as a reporter with the Associated Press. She says her two months working in employee relations



have given her a new perspective on her career. "Being a reporter is great, but I'm really fascinated by PR. It utilizes writing skills, but it also utilizes your imagination and your coordinating skills as well," she says.

Horton adds she plans to go back to school to get her master's degree in public relations.

Another 1989 grad, Shirley Henderson, says she hopes to keep advancing at the **Tribune**. Henderson, an editorial assistant, clerked in classified advertising at the Trib while she was studying at Columbia. She saw a notice for an editorial position in the Datalink newsletter, applied and was hired. "Really, it helps to know somebody to get a job," she says. "I think they gave me a break because they knew me and I presented myself as a person who will go forward."

Currently, Henderson writes occasional stories for the Style and Home sections, and compiles the calendar of events and best seller list for the book review section. She also edits, works on the "Friday" section and has some responsibility for regional sections.

"Ultimately, I want to become a feature writer," Henderson says. "They see my work all the time, so maybe when a position opens up . . ."

Brenda Herrmann, another 1989 grad, supplements her job as an associate editor for **Downbeat** magazine with weekend work at the **Tribune**.



Jacqui Podzius, a junior in News Reporting and Writing, will be editor of **Inside Journalism** next semester. She's looking for a good managing editor. Drop us a note if you're interested.

Herrmann works as the weekend communications coordinator, and writes regular record reviews and occasional entertainment features. She used to help edit the "Friday" section before her duties at *Downbeat* dominated her days. Herrmann's most recent story was a lengthy interview with guitarist Joe Satriani. She says her *Tribune* stories will help her advance her career, although she doesn't want to work on a newspaper.

So there you have it. Living proof that someday you too can work at a major city newspaper. All you need is a little ingenuity, some contacts and a lot of talent. All of these are available at your local college.

—Sheridan Chaney

THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS

Is its size or content that dictates the definition?

In the '60s, they called it the "underground press." Now it flourishes, like so many individual flowers, above ground, and it's called the "alternative press."

Columbia j-students need only roam about the city to find an abundance of local alternative publications.

New City and the Reader are so common, they are a regular supplement to the mainstream diet of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. But what exactly is the difference between one stream and the other?

"The alternative press gives expression to those dissident or disenfranchised voices of society that are often ignored by mainstream media," says Salim Muwakkil, Columbia's "Alternative Press" instructor and senior editor of *In These Times*, a weekly with a socialist viewpoint.

A different kind of voice is represented in *Heartland*, which emphasizes physical, emotional, spiritual and social health. The award-winning *Chicago Reporter* is an investigative monthly with a focus on race and poverty in the city.

But not every small publication thinks of itself as alternative. The debate lies in the general assumption that the mainstream media have a monopoly on legitimacy and authority in their news coverage; whereas alternative newspapers are "lumped" into

the category of "special interests."

Michael Brown, PR Director of the *Chicago Defender*, says, "We're not a 'special interest.' We seek advertising from anyone. We have a market and we are a legitimate press."

"The alternative press can be very mainstream inside the community it serves," explains Tracy Baim, publisher and managing editor of *Outlines*, a paper for Chicago's gay and lesbian community. "Then it is not an alternative, but rather a core of that community."

Edith Herrera, classified editor of Chicago's largest Hispanic weekly, *La Raza*, agrees with Baim.

"We don't look at the Hispanic community as separate from Chicago. We are not an 'aside,' but rather a part of Chicago's progress," says Herrera.

Hermene D. Hartman, Publishing Editor of *N'Digo*, a "Magapaper for the Urbane," embraces the term for her monthly publication.

"We speak to an audience that is often ignored by mainstream media and other alternative papers," says Hartman. "We focus on black middle class interests with stories that are untold, mistold, and sometimes need to be retold."

So, the term alternative really exists in the eye of the editor. It all depends on whether that editor is supplementing the major media, or offering a true al-

ternative to their point of view. As a description of content, "alternative" is frequently a misnomer. Indeed, it may have more to do with size than anything else. This generation's offspring may well regard the Reader as that "fat, establishmentarian organ of the '80s."

—Karen Zarker

NEW FACE IN JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT

Since January of this year, there has been a new face in the j-department. Lena Renteria, while new in the j-department, is no stranger to Columbia College. She has been here for close to four years, and until recently, worked in the Academic Affairs Department.

She prefers the j-department, however, because "there is more contact with the students. They are the reason why this college exists."

Students drop in for a variety of reasons with questions ranging from what prerequisite classes they should take to tuition costs. She feels the department is run efficiently because of the professional attitudes of the people she works with. Of Nat Lehrman, she says, "He's witty, he's smart, and he doesn't put on airs." She adds that she receives a great deal of positive feedback from students who go to Carolyn Hulse for counseling.

Nat Lehrman returns the compli-

GET A JUMP ON THE BAND WAGON

J-students interested in entertainment reporting should check out the *Chicago Rocker*, a newsletter that focuses on Chicago-area rock bands. The *Rocker* was founded in February, 1988, by publisher Tony LaBarbara, who has been involved in the Chicago music scene since 1980.

The *Chicago Rocker* provides an opportunity to get published and start a clip file. LaBarbara says the *Rocker* looks for stories from people who are interested in the bands they write about. "If someone writes a story, we'll use it," he says.

Article length desired is between 700-900 words. LaBarbara suggests that writers try to obtain a picture from the band's promotional package to include with the article. Pictures taken at live shows may also be accepted. It takes one to three months to get a story published once submitted.

Since the *Rocker* is a newsletter, LaBarbara says, "We want people to write about positive things; the stories always have a positive bent to them."

He adds, "We gear ourselves towards Chicago/midwestern hard rock/heavy metal." To get an idea of types of bands that fit that category, try checking acts that play at clubs like the Metro, Avalon or Thirsty Whale.

If you are interested in submitting anything, the number is (312)736-8701; ask for Tony or editor Barry Waterman.

—Cheryl Steffens

SENIOR HONORS SEMINAR TO CONTINUE IN FALL TERM

Continuing next fall, outstanding senior journalism students are invited to participate in a Senior Honors Seminar that can lead to graduation with honors in the major.

The three-credit course, which will have an enrollment limit of 12, offers students the opportunity to do a significant piece of professional-level writing, suitable for publication. Students receive guidance at every stage of their projects from Carolyn Hulse, Director of the News Reporting and Writing program. They also receive feedback from a wide array of top media professionals who run "clinics" on topics relevant to student work.

An important advantage of the seminar format is the opportunity it affords each student for "brainstorming" about his or her ideas with other honor students who are similarly motivated and equally talented.

Depending on individual interests, seminar students may write a magazine article, a feature or interpretive story for newspapers, or a piece intended for broadcast.

Any first or second semester senior journalism major who has completed the core of j-department requirements and has a GPA of 3.0 or better is eligible to apply for admission to the seminar. Students who meet these qualifications and are interested in taking the seminar fall, 1990 (Thursdays, 10-12:50) should see Carolyn Hulse in room 500-M or call 663-1600 ext. 426. Written permission is required before registration.

—Carolyn Hulse

ment. He describes Lena's relationship with students as "tough but fair," and he adds she's "hard-working and dedicated." He says that Columbia's journalism department had "one of the school's best assistants in Bobbi Rathert. We were sad to see Bobbi go, but happy she got a promotion to the advising department. Lena came in, and even though she had an incredibly complex job to learn, she hasn't missed a beat."

Lena encourages students to seek her out, especially "if they have a complaint. I can't know where the problems are if I don't have any feedback."

She finds the j-department atmosphere stimulating because "it keeps you in touch with ideas and people. You see the various problems as they unfold and it's very gratifying when you're able to help."

—Cheryl Steffen

SENIOR HONORS PROGRAM

Ten j-students faced the challenge of putting together a significant professional-level piece in the Senior Honors Seminar this semester, and they rose to the challenge like pros, says instructor Carolyn Hulse.

"It was wonderful to watch them discover the thrill of a full range of tasks,"

Hulse says. The challenges included developing a source list, doing interviews and extensive reading on a subject, and, finally, putting together a publishable piece of work.

Students chose topics in the first week and, each week thereafter, they completed a step in researching those topics.

Hulse says ideally the topics are supposed to be original and issue-oriented; also they should explore human consequences and question assumed values. Topics of pieces include the displacement of residents near Comiskey Park, environmental management problems in Wauconda Township, the trauma-network crisis and adult illiteracy.

At the end of the semester, students are judged on the quality of their articles as well as such aspects of discipline as attendance, weekly progress and preparedness before writing their articles.

Students who excel graduate with honors in journalism.

But the class offers much more than just "honors" stamped on a student's transcript; it offers j-students a unique chance for critiques by their peers and professionals.

Various clinics are held to give students insight on such things as how to improve leads, refine sources and focus on a topic. Often, Hulse says, students

are there for each other, "to answer questions, give reinforcement and offer sympathy."

Honor student Mitch Hurst, whose topic is Christian feminism, says this aspect is what he enjoyed most about the class. "It was a relief to have a class with a uniformly high intellectual capacity; I liked going to class just because I could get nine intelligent opinions."

Poul Freitag, whose topic is unprosecuted police brutality, says the class boosted his confidence as a journalist. "I was able to prove to myself that I could take on a tough topic and write a pretty good piece," says Freitag.

He adds that he likes the step-by-step structure of the course because it pushed him to keep up with the project instead of hurrying to research and write at the last minute.

Hulse says, "This kind of in-depth reporting is essential to today's journalism." Although students "kicked and screamed all the way," after about twelve weeks they saw the process come together and realized their stories had formed. "It's a rare opportunity for j-students."

—Jacqui Podzius

BROADCAST JOURNALISM INTERNSHIPS

Imagine yourself working the assignment desk at a television station or writing news for a major market radio station. If you're a broadcast journalism major, this scenario can become a reality. The requirements are simple, though not necessarily easy: A 3.0 average and 60 credit hours.

The CC internship program is designed to enhance students' skills within each department's curriculum. Students with advanced skills develop the necessary contacts, often on a non-paid basis, to get jobs. Because of this, internships have become a hot and competitive commodity.

Broadcast journalism majors currently must secure broadcast internships through either Chuck Rowell, internship coordinator for radio, or Nadine Sterk, internship coordinator for television.

However, plans are underway to hire a broadcast journalism coordinator for the journalism department. When this is accomplished, says Nat Lehrman, he expects that the internships will be handled on some kind of cooperative

basis, with Carolyn Hulse, j-department internship coordinator, having input into the system.

One change is already in effect. Broadcast journalism students are no longer required to take a course called "The Compleat Intern," a requirement for TV majors.

Students are urged by Sterk to vary their course loads and consider their internship opportunities early.

"I suggest students begin focusing on their specific skills now," says Sterk. "Broadcast stations are seeking strong writers, with excellent spelling, research and broadcasting skills."

—Angelique Creer

PICTURE THIS:

A great concentration in photojournalism

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then its value to journalism is priceless.

"The journalist sees life from birth to death with everything in between, and captures that moment of life," according to CC artist-in-residence John White, photographer for the Chicago Sun-Times and winner of a 1982 Pulitzer prize.

It is no different for the photojournalist.

Jill Dolan, a student in White's Photojournalism III class, says photos can act as a mirror of life.

"Chicago becomes a bigger classroom," White says. That is the studio he encourages his students to use. The people of Chicago become subjects — the photographer reflecting their lives.

Columbia responded to the need for photojournalists by creating a concentration within the photo department with a great variety of classes.

Yet, students must also be aware of the "journalism" in photojournalism. This means that students in the photojournalism program are also required to take the core journalism courses offered in the j-department. These include: Introduction to Mass Media, News Reporting I and II, Investigative Reporting, and Media Law and Ethics. These courses can teach the students to capture in writing the most important or exciting elements of a story.

In addition, students are required to take courses in art history and design. At the advanced level, students are as-

sisted in the compilation of portfolios — examples of work that will help lead to a first job.

Employment for photographers isn't only available at newspapers and magazines, either. Regular viewers of "The Ten O'Clock News" on channel 2 might be surprised to learn that a great deal of the material used in the Perspective segment with Walter Jacobson is comprised of 35mm slides.

White teaches his students that a photo of a plane crash is not in itself photojournalism. Rather, he believes that capturing the essence of human emotion is critical to good photographs.

White brings a great deal of real-world experience to both his classes and the department. During the recent events in South Africa, he was sent to photograph Nelson Mandela and the demonstrations that occurred after his release from prison. It was a very emotional experience for White, encompassing what he believes is the connection between reporting and photography. "Reflecting love, hate, joy, sadness . . . that's photojournalism."

—Robert Padjen

JOURNALISM GRADUATES, 1990

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Beverly Diahn Berkley
Charles Sidney Bernstein
Richard K. Bieglmeier
David Edward Bloom
Karen Brody
Keisha Chavers
Scott H. Cooper
Daniel Joseph Corcoran
Raymond Stanley Cortopassi
Angelique Creer
Trina Ann Dailey
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Evelyn Shelton
David Bertram Silbar
Adrienne Smith
Carol Ann Soldat
Mary Dominic Stockover
Lyris Demetria Wallace
Marian Williams
Michael Patrick Woods

Graduate Students

Cary Brent Eldridge
Shari L. Mannery
Eileen M. McMahon
Kerry R. O'Rourke
Samuel Eric Peterson
Phyllis M. Robinson

GOOD LUCK AND GODSPEED!

INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the journalism department

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