

1-1-1992

# Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside\\_journalism](https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside_journalism)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

---

## Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "Inside Journalism" (1992). *Inside Journalism*. 24.  
[https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside\\_journalism/24](https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/inside_journalism/24)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in Inside Journalism by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. For more information, please contact [drossetti@colum.edu](mailto:drossetti@colum.edu).

# INSIDE JOURNALISM

December, 1991

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

## THERE'S TROUBLE ON THE HORIZON

Just when it seems that things can't get worse for journalism grads, more bad news comes in. Massive layoffs and early retirements are becoming the norm and newspapers, like other businesses, are in the middle of one of the worst financial periods to hit this country. The future looks bleak indeed for those people trying to find a job in journalism.

According to Ohio State University's annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication graduates, things are going to get worse before they get better.

The study reports that the number of unemployed graduates in 1990 nearly doubled the figures from the previous year — 16.8 percent of 1990 graduates had not found work six to eight months after commencement, compared with just 8.9 percent for 1989.

Unemployment or underemployment jumped from 19.1 percent in 1989 to 28.3 percent in 1990. These are hardly figures to cheer about if you're just entering the job market.

Here's some other bad news:

- Fewer graduates in 1990 than in 1989 or 1988 said their jobs required the use of specialized skills and knowledge they had obtained in college.
- Graduates' salaries leveled off in 1990, and although wages had increased at a rate greater than inflation in previous years, figures for 1990 indicate salaries no longer keep pace with consumer prices.
- Fewer students in 1990 than in 1989 said they chose their job because it enabled them to do what they wanted. More of those surveyed indicated they had taken the

job because it was the only one they could find.

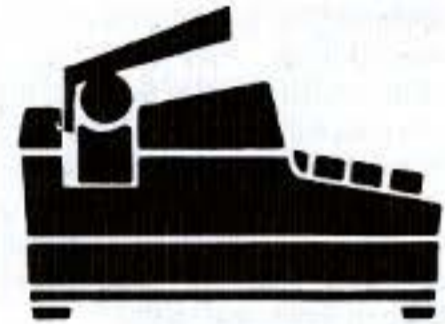
J-department Chairman Nat Lehrman, with his usual smile, said these trends and statistics are sobering, but he pointed out that writing is still a highly sought-after skill in the business world. "It's always been difficult to get jobs at the big papers or broadcast stations," says Lehrman. "But anyone trained in journalism can surely find work in the corporate world, where there continues to be a communications explosion — house organs, newsletters, speech writing, public relations, trade magazines, et cetera."

Lehrman says he's confident that if you work hard in your course work, and do the internships, and build the clips, the doors will eventually open for you. (See "Two Alumni Hit the Big Time" further on.)

—Steve Crescenzo

## NEW LOOK FOR THE CHRONICLE

It happens every year — a new staff and a new way of editing the paper. But this year, the *Chronicle* is getting



noticed. The new attitude has sparked remarks from students and faculty alike.

This year's new attitude concerns the readers; the staff is interested in what students want to read. "The old paper was not that bad," says Art Golab, editor of the *Chronicle*. "We just wanted to change the focus from a training ground for student journalists to a paper that serves the market.

"We want to reflect the attitude of the school," continues Golab. "We want to review movies, plays, et cetera, and give news about topics that students at an arts and communications school are interested in. We want to print student art, student writing, the whole ball of wax.

"We're making the paper open to more students, not just j-students," says Theresa Volpe, features editor.

The ideas for the changes came from reporters on last year's staff. "The biggest change we implemented was the change in layout," says Nancy Thart, news editor. "We've tried to spice up the layout — make it more appealing to the students."



Art Golab, editor of the *Chronicle*.

"We want to improve the look of the paper," says Golab. "We hope eventually to find some budget for an art intern."

Another change within the paper is the addition of two columnists. These columnists, Steve Crescenzo and KJ Zarker, help to create the controversy that keep students interested.

"Students like the controversy," says Golab. "Crescenzo is the most read feature of the paper because he creates disagreement. A lot of people hate his stuff — but then again lots of people support it."

"We are trying to take a lot of risks," continues Golab. "We do fall flat on our faces sometimes, but we are getting more responses now," said Golab. "We get eight to ten letters a week. Last year we went weeks without getting one letter. We tried to make the Chronicle a place where students could express themselves freely and easily."

Even teachers and staff members have voiced their opinions on the expanded Op-Ed pages.

"I've gotten lots of comments that the feature pages look good, that the feature designs carry the paper," says Volpe.

With the increased feedback and the new attitude at the Chronicle, the atmosphere has been one of hard work. "The new attitude does seem to boost morale around the Chronicle because we get to do more of what we want to do—all of us are headed in the same direction," says Golab.

"This year we have a lot more freedom. There's a lot more work, but that's good because there is more attention paid to details and design," Volpe said. "When I'm not here at the Chronicle, the paper is always on my mind. I'm always thinking of new ideas and different ways to do things. We put a lot more thought into the paper now."

As for the Chronicle's goals for the future, its size and writing are on the top of the list. "We would ultimately like to expand the size of the paper," Golab said. "We're working on more advertising. The business side of the paper has improved tenfold this year — we now have invoices and billing. And we're going after new business."

"When we expand, then we'll be able to cover everything that goes on that interests teachers and students. We want to improve the quality of writing,

and the reporters are getting better. Hopefully some will stick with us next semester."

—Kimberlee Ehrenhaft

## BLACK STUDENTS SEEK EACH OTHER OUT

One day not so long ago, a few young college students got together and decided that Columbia's black j-students needed an organization. After a number of discussions and explorations, they decided to affiliate with the Chicago Association of Black Journalists (CABJ).

"The black journalism students at Columbia need to have a support system to see people who have made it and network with them," says Natalie White, a magazine major and one of the organizers.

In spite of this affiliation, the students think Columbia needs its own organization. "We still have hopes of starting our own group at Columbia. Many avenues that are available for other students are not available to us," says White, stressing the importance of black j-students sticking together.

The reason a separate black organization is vital is that while all of the students in the j-department receive excellent training, something is still missing for black students. "Many of the black students I have spoken to feel they don't get enough motivation from the instructors. We don't want to be taken by the hand, but we do want to be taken as serious as the other students. We want our comments taken to heart,"

says Deborah Hinton, a broadcast j-major.

It's very important to not only understand the need for a black support group in terms of networking and trading ideas, but the need for a separate black association. Someone had written on the bottom of one of the posters announcing the initial meeting: "What about an association for white people?"

One of the organizers responded that the whole industry is made up of white people who help white people. "It's no secret that blacks have to work twice as hard if they want to succeed in the business. The students who have organized want a structure in which black people can help black people."

Another organizer pointed out, "One of the ideals of a black j-club will be to encourage freshmen and sophomore j-students and to provide them with junior and senior level mentors so that when they enter their third and fourth years they won't be left high and dry."

—Dionna D. Bolar

## TWO ALUMNI HIT THE BIG TIME

In an era when it's a lot easier to get laid off a job in journalism than it is to find one, two former Columbia j-students are making bright names for themselves.

Both Jacqui Podzius (Fall, 1990) and Julie Sacharski (Spring, 1991) have launched very promising careers.

Even though the two women took the same classes, completed the same major, and even became friends outside of



Julie Sacharski and Jackie Podzius

school, their career fields couldn't be further apart. Podzius, a news and reporting major, is currently working for the Associated Press' Indianapolis Bureau, where she handles the night rewrite desk. Hers is a world of fast-paced deadlines and furious writing.

Sacharski, on the other hand, who combined journalism with P.R., currently holds the title of Communications Coordinator at the Stone Container Corporation, a job she is "thrilled" with.

Although their careers are headed into different areas, there are some striking similarities between how they got where they are. Both women took Carolyn Hulse's Senior Honors Seminar, both served as editor of *Inside Journalism*, both worked hard at internships, and both had extensive clippings files.

Podzius thinks the similarities go beyond that, though. "You have to identify what you want to do early on, and then work toward it," she explains. "Both Julie and I knew what we wanted to do, and we took everything Columbia had to offer — especially internships!"

Sacharski couldn't agree more, saying, "Listen, my internship at the *Chicago Tribune*, that I got through Carolyn Hulse, GOT me my job at Stone. The only thing I regret is that I didn't start doing internships earlier." The one that she did do was apparently enough. There were 600 resumes sent in for her position at Stone, and Sacharski says her supervisor told her that it was the internship that put her over the top.

What put Podzius over the top was... well, once again, Columbia.

"Thanks to Columbia, I received a Pulliam Fellowship in the summer of 1991, and that really got me started," she explains. The Pulliam Fellowship is a prestigious award that allows someone to work for ten weeks on a major daily newspaper. Podzius was sent to the *Indianapolis Star*, where she was so good that she caught the eye of the local A.P. people. So impressed were they with her skills that they waived their standard requirement of a previous six months on a major daily.

Now, says Podzius, she's "living her dream!" She covers everything from the Mike Tyson trial to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney's recent speech at the Republican State Dinner.

Sacharski's star is right next to

Podzius' in the success orbit. As Communications Coordinator at Stone Container Corporation, she's responsible for three sections of the company magazine, where she regularly puts to good use the writing, interviewing and editing skills she learned at Columbia. She's also responsible for writing internal promotions/appointments that come up, and Sacharski says the best thing about her job is the diversity. "I'm never stuck doing one task forever, and that really makes the time fly by."

Ever the conscientious editor, Sacharski has some tips for Columbia students. "Although the newspaper and newsletter can be a real pain — especially when it comes to meeting deadlines — that is what the real world is all about," she says. "Writing for the school publications teaches you how to be responsible, how to meet deadlines, and how to accept criticism."

If you are starting to think about a job, then Podzius and Sacharski represent excellent role models.

—Steve Crescenzo

## FREE PAPERS OFFER OPPORTUNITY

In case it never before crossed your mind, free papers can be a great opportunity for j-students to freelance, intern, or even land that first job.

Bill Petacque, editor and publisher of *River North News*, says "having interns is a charitable act for us; it costs us money, but we are more than happy to have interns. Interns have to come to



Bill Petacque, *River North News*

us. We find our freelancers by resume or word of mouth," he says.

In fact, the paper has only had one intern, Julie Stein, a recent graduate of Columbia's j-department. Julie approached *River North News* about an internship on her own. "The better background and experience a person has, the better his or her chance of getting a job here," claims Petacque. He added that the paper's experience with Julie went very well and they would welcome another intern.

*River North News* has a circulation of approximately 25,000 and a readership close to 80,000. Like most free papers, it's a neighborhood newspaper. The paper mainly focuses on charity and society functions in the city. It also devotes a small amount of stories to state and local news — mostly congressional and state issues relating to the *River North* area. They do have a wide variety of theater reviews and columns ranging from humor to business.

*The Reader* is probably Chicago's best known free paper. It doesn't have interns but will accept stories from anyone. "We like to run stories that might not get a voice elsewhere. Our only criteria for choosing a story is if we like it," explains Catherine Cox, special projects coordinator at the paper. "We feel anyone can come up with a great story idea but not always a great story," she says. So if you would like to see your story published in the *Reader* all you need to do is send it in...and pray.

Many of the *Reader's* regular columnists are freelancers — in fact according to Cox, 90 percent of its writers are freelancers, including the *Our Town*, section which features stories focused on the Chicago area, and the *Straight Dope* humor column by Cecil Adams.

The focus of the different free papers varies from publication to publication. Some deal strictly with neighborhood news, while others cover a broad range of subjects. The focus depends on what type of market they target though ad sales.

According to Cox at the *Reader*, their paper is "marketed to predominately young professionals." The *Reader* comes in three sections: the first covers weekly events not to be missed via a calendar format; a weekly front page magazine length feature; movie, art, dance, and theater reviews; humor columns; and more features.

The second section lists what seems to be every restaurant, nightclub and bar in the city, detailing their entertainment lineup for the week, while also throwing in more reviews of theater and the silver screen. This section is a virtual bible to the young and trendy.

The third section of the *Reader* is the key to its success. The entire section is devoted to ads — from personals to rentals. A weekly column in section three by Chuck Shepherd, *News of the Weird*, is definitely just that. Shepherd lists what he labels "Creme de la Weird" and "Inexplicable Crimes." The November 15 issue included stories of a couple charged with stalking a woman, stealing her underwear, and placing them in labeled plastic bags, as well as a woman who wanted sympathy from her boyfriend so badly she faked having cancer for two years, going as far as shaving her head and dieting to appear sick.

There is a host of small neighborhood papers that could serve as opportunities for aspiring journalists to get their names in print. For example, *North Loop News* gives more local coverage relating to the 42nd ward (primarily the North Loop) and surrounding neighborhoods.

It covers many local stories such as the city remap plans and how they will affect the North Loop, and weekly police blotters for the entire neighborhood.

There are also free papers devoted to specialized groups. *Outlines* is a free paper focusing on the gay and lesbian community in Chicago. The paper contains humor columns, "National News Roundup," made up of news relative to the gay and lesbian community, articles on health issues, entertainment and local news sections.

There are also free papers targeted to many specialized groups from professional women to college students. The suburbs have their share of free papers as well. *Skyline*, a free paper here in Chicago, is owned by Lerner Newspapers, which publishes free papers throughout the suburbs, from the *Times* out west to the *Market Journal* up north.

Free papers can be picked up almost anywhere. Stacks are dropped off in the lobbies of Columbia weekly. Local supermarkets, stores, and restaurants are also a good place to look for them. Free papers offer a great opportunity to gain

experience for both commuter students and city-dwellers.

— Elizabeth Eaken

## COLLEGE NEWS HITS CHICAGO

A new paper, the *College News*, has emerged to serve Chicago-area colleges.

Founded by Doug Haddad, the paper incorporates ideas and writers from 16 schools in Chicago.

Haddad had friends at Northwestern University and DePaul, and would pick up their school newspapers. He found the different styles of these papers interesting.

"I thought it would be a neat idea to have a newspaper combining the different ideas from the different college papers," Haddad says. "I wanted to put out a paper, independent of any school, that reported on issues, so students from one school could read about what is going on at a different school without having to pick up that school's paper."

Haddad got the word out about his idea through friends at different schools. He also called the j-departments of all the area schools so they would know about the paper and recruit student volunteers.

The paper is published on a monthly basis, and dropped off at 16 colleges in the Chicago area. Approximately 15,000 copies are published, but the readership is estimated to be higher.

"A student may pick up the paper and take it home where his or her roommates will read it, or the student might leave it in the cafeteria where other students will pick it up and read it. We judge the readership to be about 40,000 right now, and we hope it will continue growing," says Haddad.

The paper has eight permanent staffers that write and help with production and advertising. Freelance writers from various schools are used for a majority of the articles.

One Columbia j-student, Mindy Austin, is the articles editor of the *College News*. She is responsible for deciding what the stories should be, assigning the articles to writers and reading over the articles before they are copy-edited.

"I get topic ideas from whatever is up and coming in the news, but I try to

come up with an angle that applies to college students in the Chicago area," Austin says.

"I like to have people come to me with ideas rather than generating them all in the office," Haddad says. "We try to get ideas on what we believe the students are concerned about and what they are interested in. We try to give them useful information."

The first issue, which was published in September, contained an article by an attorney that told students how to get their security deposits back when renting an apartment. The issue also contained an article on preventing date rape.

The next publication will feature articles on affirmative action, the increasing role of religion in college careers, and a piece on the Illinois student loan action which includes an interview with Paul Simon.

Two or three law pieces will help students to know their rights and what they can do when faced with various problems.

"We try to achieve a different slant than any other publication," says Haddad.

If you are interested in writing for the *College News* or have any article ideas, you can contact Doug Haddad at 8 S. Michigan, Suite 1406, (312) 973-6784.

—Kimberlee Ehrenhaft

### INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the journalism department

COLUMBIA COLLEGE  
CHICAGO  
600 S. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60605

#### EDITOR

Steve Crescenzo

#### MANAGING EDITORS

Kimberlee Ehrenhaft

Karen Sobus

#### ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Dionna Bolar

Elizabeth Eaken

#### ADMIN. EDITOR

Lena Renteria

#### FACULTY ADVISOR

Carolyn Hulse

#### CHAIRMAN

Nat Lehrman

Dec. 1991, Vol. 6, No. 2