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Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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INSIDE JOURNALISM

MAY, 1992

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

J-PROF HANDLES CTA HOT SPOT

"It ain't dull," says Rosemarie Gulley, a CC j-instructor for 14 years, about her position as Chicago Transit Authority director of media relations. She's been doing the job since 1987.

She is at the center of dispensing information to the media regarding all CTA activities, including the service interruptions that keep officials awake at night.

The good part for Gulley is providing a major service that affects thousands of lives throughout the year.

When the media call, Gulley is the first point of contact. If reporters get to the scene of the disturbance first, they'll still call her for the CTA's response to the interruption. Her mode of operation is to gather information from the CTA control



center and put it together for the press. Like the CTA, a round-the-clock operation, she is on 24-hour-call, seven days a week, to respond to any CTA-related issue.

Gulley and her staff write a lot of transit information for the media, including articles for national transit publications such as the **Railway International Gazette** and **Passenger Transport**—the **Wall Street Journal** of the public transit industry.

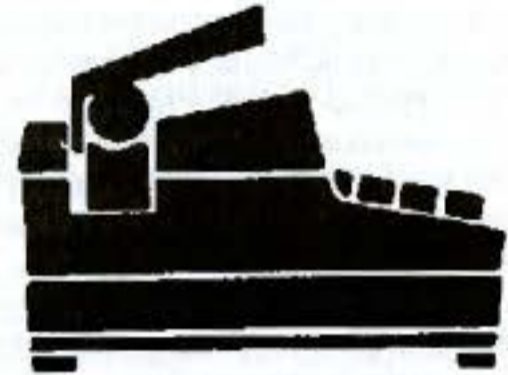
Gulley and her staff also write releases for the press to publicize all service-related information, such as monthly pass and transfer purchases. "My office," Gulley says, "is a clearinghouse for all media-related activity."

Gulley has ample background for this challenging job. She began her journalism career in 1972 as an overnight WLS radio talk show host and general assignment reporter. She covered numerous beats over the years, including politics, government, health and education.

She entered TV as host of a WLS-TV show on public affairs and women's issues while her radio show was still on the air. Her radio career only lasted six months, but, says Gulley, "It was one of the highlights of my career. People would call from all over the world."

WLS-TV, eager to keep Gulley in the newsroom, invited her to continue as a general assignment reporter for Channel 7 News while she still hosted the TV show.

She left the station in 1985. Gulley, who has a masters in sociology from Roosevelt University, concludes, "I am going a lot of other



places. I just haven't decided when or where."

—Rick Techman

J-DEPARTMENT TUTORING

"Journalism students do a special kind of writing that the writing center isn't geared to teach," says Norma Green, journalism tutor.



That's why the journalism department developed its own tutoring section, now managed by Green.

Green's concern is that students are not aware that help is available.

She says that the most common problems occur in journalism fundamentals. "Many students don't understand what a lead is, and have difficulty with basic news structure," she explains. "Students also have problems determining what is important news and what is not."

There is usually a flurry of activity at the j-tutoring center during mid-terms and finals, when students first begin to realize a problem exists. Green suggests that students employ some preventative therapy, and get to the center before they're about to flunk an exam.

Green said that in many instances she can give students more help than their instructors, because her

teaching is individualized, and because she'll devote as much time to the student's problem as necessary. "I can also be less judgmental than the instructors," she says.

Green's tutoring hours are one to five, on Wednesdays, in the journalism department.

—Melinda Austin

N.Y. MAGAZINE INTERNSHIP PAYS OFF

When Muriel Whetstone plants an idea in her head, there's no stopping her. From the moment she heard about the *Essence* internship, Whetstone was determined to pack her bags and head to New York to learn the tricks of the magazine trade.

That's exactly what she did during the summer of 1991 when

she spent five weeks interning for *Essence* magazine. Not only did she work at the magazine but, in the March 1992 issue, she published a piece in its "Interiors" column.

"The first time I ever heard about the *Essence* internship was during a journalism department orientation prior to my starting here. One of the speakers was a female African-American student who had just spent the summer at *Essence*," Whetstone says.

She spoke with the student who then explained what the internship was like. "When I started at Columbia I learned more about the specifics. I knew that I really wanted to do the internship," she says.

To qualify for the *Essence* internship a candidate must be an African-American female with good academic standing. From there j-chairman, Nat Lehrman, selects one appropriate candidate and suggests that person to *Essence*, who then makes the final decision. Columbia helps the intern with dorm housing. But on Whetstone's trip, she stayed with her cousin in Brooklyn and commuted to Manhattan.

During the five week internship, Whetstone performed a number of duties—answering phones, typing—a "glorified gofer," she calls it. "It took them three to four weeks to realize that I could do something. But in the last weeks someone gave me the chance to edit the 'Say Brother' column," she says.

Whetstone also attended editorial meetings and headline meetings, article meetings and staff meetings. She says that the editors would often listen to her suggestions and, on occasion, use them.

"I feel I learned a lot at *Essence*. And I realized that what I've been taught at Columbia is exactly what you do in the real world. I was happy to find out that I was being taught the right things," she says.

From the experience Whetstone

WRITING CAREER PANEL

It's getting to be that time of year, when fresh graduates are launched into the professional world armed with degrees, new suits, briefcases and big ideas. And no jobs.

To help j-students stand on their own two feet, the placement department is hosting The Writing Panel on May 14th. According to Sharon Williams, of Columbia's Placement Department, the focus of the workshop will be on how to find a job.

The workshop is scheduled to begin registration at 10 a.m. in Ferguson Hall, and the panelists will begin their discussion at 10:30 a.m.

J-chairman Nat Lehrman will moderate the panel, and he says he expects an impressive selection of media professionals. They work in: news reporting (Mary Johnson, Sun-Times education writer and Columbia grad); magazine freelancing (Bill Brashler, who teaches magazine article writing at Columbia); book publishing (CC English Department chairman Phil Klukoff); corporate writing (Scott Powers, editorial director of custom publishing at Hill & Knowlton and j-department instructor); science writing (Jeff Lyon, Tribune editor and coordinator of Columbia's science writing program); and broadcast (Lester Holt, news anchor for Channel 2).

A question and answer session will follow and at noon there will be a lunch reception in the Follett Cafe (a.k.a. the Underground Cafe). "During lunch you guys can mingle and bug the panelists as much as they'll let you," says Williams. That's her way of saying "network."

—Monica Brandt

Chicago Tribune's Trib News, an eight-page weekly containing information about the various departments at the newspaper, says it is important to learn about the business from someone with experience.

"With a hundred other people inquiring about the same job, it is a plus to have a little more knowledge and practice," she says. "Students should not be afraid to ask for advice.

"There are working professional j-instructors at the college. This can be beneficial to the students who take advantage of their knowledge and know-how," Horton says.

She cited Les Brownlee as the person who guided her toward journalism and Nat Lehrman, chairman of the j-department, and her mother, as people who gave her encouragement and advice.

Horton joined Trib News in February of 1990. She said it's an alternative to field reporting, and she enjoys it.

"It is important that students not limit themselves to a set agenda. All options should be explored," she says. "I also write brochures for ChildServ, a non-profit child and family service agency, which is a great opportunity for gaining more experience."

Her advice to students pursuing a



TIME TO APPLY FOR SENIOR HONORS SEMINAR

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.

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 in fall 1992 (Thursdays, 10-12:50) should see Carolyn Hulse in room 800-M or call 663-1600 ext. 426. Written permission is required before registration.

—Carolyn Hulse

career in journalism is to be patient, stay focused and volunteer to get extra work from teachers or bosses.

"Try different internships and decide what interests you the most and go for it. Believe in yourself, and don't let anyone discourage you," she concludes.

—Marvlyn Reed

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS FOR BROADCAST STUDENTS

Apart from the abundant internships that Columbia offers in the broadcast journalism field, the school is bursting with opportunities on student-run productions. According to Rose Economou, broadcast journalism coordinator, there are many ways to gain experience while in school.

In broadcast, students can get involved at WCRX radio station, the

600 South television news program, or Music Alive, a program that showcases musical talents in Chicago.

"WCRX is always willing to listen to air-check tapes of students who want to get on-air experience. We also employ print majors to re-write stories from the wires for the on-air talents," says Renee Calomino, assistant news director at WCRX.

In order to prepare an air-check tape, students need to first pick up a guideline sheet from the station. This will outline exactly what should be included on the tape. After the tape is made, then it has to be submitted to the news director along with a resume and cover letter pitching for the position at the station.

Sara Livingston is the faculty member in charge of the television department's 600 South program. Students need to enroll in the TV department class, Television News Practicum, to be a reporter for the

show. Auditions to anchor the program are held at the beginning of each semester. The class produces three programs per semester that air on cable television.

Another opportunity for broadcast students comes through the television department's **Music Alive** program. "Journalism students could get involved in **Music Alive** by auditioning to host one of the four segments of the show or by auditioning to be the studio host during the wrap-around session where all the segments are put together," says Joan Beaudoin, faculty advisor of **Music Alive**.

A television production class produces the show by taping bands that the Mayor's Office of Special Events suggests. Usually two bands come into the studio and then crews go to clubs to tape other bands around Chicago. After all of the segments are taped, the class has a wrap-around session in which they put these segments together. The class produces one show a month, and it airs on cable television.

—Monica Brandt

THE ART OF SCIENCE WRITING

"It is no secret that society is in need of scientific literacy," says Jeff Lyon, Columbia artist-in-residence and director of the Science Writing and Reporting program. Lyon is an editor on the **Chicago Tribune** magazine section, and was the recipient of a Pulitzer prize for science writing.

"The world has become a bewildering place with technical advancements surpassing people's abilities to understand them. There is a great need for the media to start supplying the information that will help people get a grip on their surroundings."

Training j-students for the "noble" calling of reporting science-related news is just what the program aims to do.



"Science is inescapable. Sooner or later all reporters will have to do a science-related story. The goal of our program is to prepare students to guide readers through this brave new world," adds Lyon.

The program was started four years ago and currently has an approximate enrollment of about 25 students. Lyon admits the program suffered with the turmoil in the Science and Math Department last year. But now with everything settling, he hopes the enrollment will continue to increase.

He believes there are two other reasons for the slow enrollment: students are not aware the program exists and there is still a fear of math and science in our society.

"People think science and math are for nerds and they are put off by it. But an astronaut, for example, is not a nerd. Science is the engine that moves modern life. It has its own language, but once you master the language, it becomes easy."

Lyon plans to increase awareness of the program by going out into the high schools and recruiting students who already have an interest in science. "This is a unique program. To my knowledge, there is no other undergraduate program in the country that teaches science writing for the lay press."

The program consists of a journalism major combined with 24

hours of science and math courses, which includes the nine General Studies credits required for the degree. Lyon believes that the key to the success of the program is to get students involved in their freshman and sophomore years.

This spring, the program will introduce a newsletter, **Warp 10**, and in the fall, Lyon will teach a new j-course entitled "Science In The Media." Lyon also hopes to restore a lecture series this fall that invites top scientists, and he plans to schedule various field trips.

Lyon adds that there are endless benefits for j-students who become skilled science writers. "There is a demand for this skill. It is good job insurance to have a specialty. It pays well, it is endlessly fascinating and you are constantly on the cutting edge."

— Laura Ramirez

INSIDE JOURNALISM

A newsletter produced by and for students of the journalism department

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

EDITOR

Kimberlee Ehrenhaft
MANAGING EDITOR

Melinda Austin
ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Monica Brandt
Carrie Napoleon

Laura Ramirez
Marvlyn Reed

Lisa Song
Richard Techman

Theresa Volpe
ADMIN. EDITOR

Lena Renteria
FACULTY ADVISOR

Carolyn Hulse
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Nat Lehrman

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