

11-1-1993

## Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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### Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "Inside Journalism" (1993). *Inside Journalism*. 34.  
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# INSIDE JOURNALISM

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

## J-Students Hit the Airwaves

### Caught in the "LUP"

You click on your favorite morning radio show only to hear the host—your idol—asking listeners to come down to the station and help him out for a day. Immediately you start dialing, knowing your chances of getting through, let alone getting picked, are slim. Suddenly the very voice you've listened to every morning for years is asking for your name and your assistance.

Sounds like the plot of "The Secret of My Success, Part 2"? Maybe someday Christina Hahn could write the script.

Christina, a senior majoring in broadcast journalism, got the opportunity of her life when WLUP's Jonathon Brandmeier needed someone to fill in for his newsman, Buzz Kilman. Apparently, few listeners were brave enough to "Be Buzz for a Day," because, for the first time ever, Christina's call went right through. Johnny B. himself answered, and said in his characteristic fashion, "Christina, my queena, could you help me out?" Christina, of course, was happy to oblige.

"I've always been a big Brandmeier listener," Christina says. "I've even gone to his concerts—the whole bit."

Like most Chicago pop-cult heroes, Jonathon Brandmeier has a devoted following. Christina, a die-hard fan, was awake, alert and ready every morning by the beginning of Brandmeier's 5:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. "show gram" to enjoy it without any interruptions. She never dreamed her ideal internship—broadcasting news on her favorite show—would become a reality.

At first, Christina was only supposed to help out for one day until Kilman returned. But over a year later, and despite the fact that Brandmeier's show has moved from mornings on FM to afternoons on AM, Christina and Johnny B. are still working

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### Going Live at WCRX

Thump, thump, thump, thump. The music on the seventh floor of the 600 S. Michigan building vibrates through the floor and walls as the WCRX news team prepares for the afternoon news drive.

The news and sports reporters are both Columbia students, trying to learn the operations of a radio station while building their resumes. WCRX offers them an ideal opportunity.

It is strange that more broadcast journalism students aren't aware of the college radio station and the chance it affords to learn radio news. One of the major problems with casting WCRX news is simply getting the word out that they have positions available.

"It's been challenging to get qualified people to do the news," says Randy Schrieder, WCRX news director. "Why? I don't know. It's a great experience."

It is actually fairly easy to land a spot as a newscaster. They ask that you have a 3.0 GPA, some newswriting experience (in the classroom is fine) and a sense of responsibility.

"All I ask is that if students make the commitment, they maintain a certain standard," says Karen Cavaliero, general manager of the station. "They do need to know how to write news, but the main thing is that they show up and are reliable."

To apply for a news reporting position, students must submit a

resume, fill out an application, and of course turn in an audition tape, which should be a three-minute newscast.

Students sign up for WCRX news, just like a class, and receive credit. They also receive a grade at the end of the semester, reflecting not only how well they wrote and performed, but also how much they improved and how much effort they put into their

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Broadcast journalism students like senior Leslie Cummings write the news for WCRX, Columbia's radio station, and then go on-air to deliver it.

## WLUP continued from page 1

together at WLUP.

"That first day I came in, I read the early news and then Ron Magers (from Channel 5) was there to take over. I was hoping to talk to him (Magers) about getting an internship," Christina says. But what started as an on-air bit at WLUP turned into a long-term relationship.

"Johnny tried to fix me up on the air with one of his producers, John Swanson. Instead, 'Swany' got me an interview with Bill Holub, WLUP's news director. I interviewed with Holub twice and got the internship, even though I had no production experience," Christina says.

Four semesters later, Christina is still writing news stories for Buzz Kilman and Kevin Matthews, another WLUP shock jock. She also does on-air public affairs interviews on Sunday mornings and covers press conferences and various events for the station.

"I was at Carol Moseley-Braun's cam-



"Christina, my queena, could you help me out?" asked Johnny B. of broadcast j-major Christina Hahn.

paign headquarters and got to see the first black woman get elected to the Senate. That was a real thrill," she says.

In addition to her regular duties, Christina has been asked to do everything from smelling men's cologne samples for a Brandmeier bit to getting Kilman's lunch. "They use me as the warm body that I am,"

Christina says. "But everyone always treats me as a colleague, not a gofer."

The internship is unpaid, but the perks, such as Bulls and Blackhawks tickets, are unbeatable. Plus, says Christina, "all the players know me by name."

Brandmeier's penchant for celebrity interviews brings in lots of big names to WLUP's studios. In one week Carl Reiner, Mickey Rooney and Tina Turner could all be found roaming the halls. Christina also met presidential candidate Bill Clinton on one of his Chicago campaign stops.

The best perk of all, says Christina, is the chance that she may be hired to work at WLUP after she graduates in May, doing the same job, only with the added plus of a paycheck.

And is Christina still the same Johnny B. fanatic, now that she knows the man behind the myth?

"I still love the show," Christina says. "But the passion I had just isn't the same because the show's become my job. It's where I work." —Wendy Wollenberg

## WCRX continued from page 1

newscasts.

In return, broadcast j-students learn how to pull actualities, use carts, use the AP Wire Service, as well as perfect broadcast writing skills and on-air performance.

"Students are nervous at first, because some of them have never been on-air," says Schrieder. "That's okay, though, because this is where they should make their mistakes before going out into the working world."

It is, after all, a learning experience. Not all broadcast j-students know the inside of a radio station, although they may know how to write broadcast copy.

But most important, says Cavaliero, is the willingness to learn.

"There have been semesters where it's all seniors and that's great, but I'm not concerned so much with performance," says Cavaliero. "Some semesters, like this one, we have more beginners, but that's okay, because I know they will learn."

In addition to the regular newscasts, students are expected to do two 15-minute interviews for WCRX's "To the Point" and "Mixed Reactions." These are public affairs shows which give students the

chance to learn interviewing skills.

"They give students the chance to see what it's like doing radio interviews," says Schrieder. "I like them to be more community-oriented, not just a student interviewing his friend."

At the end of each newscast, students record their top stories of the day on cart

**It's been challenging to get qualified people to do the news...I'd like to see more j-students involved. —Randy Schrieder**

for WCRX's "News Scene," which is a weekly wrap-up of what happened in the news for that week.

"People actually think it will be easier than it is," says Schrieder, "but it turns out to be more work than they thought it would be."

Many students have little or no on-air experience. WCRX news is another notch in their belts and line on their resumes.

"It's a good resume booster to tell people

you've been on-air in radio news, especially in Chicago," says Schrieder.

Cavaliero, who has been with WCRX for eight years, thinks that anyone who is serious about a broadcast career should consider doing the news at WCRX for at least one semester. She has had the opportunity to research what other general managers are looking for when they hire on-air talent.

"Eighty-percent of the general managers say it is desirable, almost essential, for students to work at their own radio station, if they have one," says Cavaliero.

Currently, only half of the news anchors at WCRX are j-majors, with the other half being radio majors. But Schrieder would like to see that change.

"I'd like to see more j-students involved. It doesn't seem like the three journalism areas communicate enough," said Schrieder.

Any student who wishes to be considered for a news or sportscaster position should apply at the radio station on the seventh floor of the 600 S. Michigan building in room 701, or call Karen Cavaliero directly at ext. 424.

—Leslie Cummings

# Ready... Set... REPORT!

It's live, it's deadline, and there is only one chance to get it out and get it right. The name of the class is "On Camera Reporting For Television" and it's a simulation of live reporting on a breaking story.

Roger Schatz, who has been teaching the class for seven years, says, "When this class first started it was called 'Hard Deadline Reporting For Live Television' and only four people showed up." Since then, he adds, the class has been renamed and has had a steady flow of students who are trying to sharpen their abilities to present breaking stories accurately and concisely.

"This class throws you out there and you have to do it, because that's how it is in the real world," says Tandra Tate, a broadcast j-major.

Posted on the wall of his classroom, Schatz has a list of 16 "absolutes" of live deadline reporting. The three most important are: "What is the story?"; "How much time do you have?"; and "Concentrate." Schatz stresses these three points at the beginning of every class.

Each student is given a different story and five to 10 minutes to prepare it before going on camera. "If they can present the story accurately and use the language well on deadline, imagine what they can do when they have a lot of time," says Schatz.

Broadcast j-student Denise Ablin says, "This is the most realistic class I have taken since I've been at Columbia. This class puts you under the same pressure as reporters who do this everyday."

Besides simulating the real world of broadcast news, the course includes critiques of each student after his or her performance. Schatz praises improvement, but is also quick to point out weaknesses that need to be worked on.

"The criticism that we get is important," says broadcast j-major Sherese Dover, "Schatz lets you know what is good about your presentation and what isn't, and that kind of criticism is also part of the real world."

—Arbin Smith

## Job Search

By Paula Eubanks



**F**irst, the bad news: The competition for journalism jobs is stiff. Now, the good news: If your resume is well written and well designed, it has a very good chance of landing on top of the pile.

Whether you are updating an old resume or writing one for the first time, start with careful consideration of the resume's content—and keep in mind these new standards of excellence:

- The competitive resume's content now must be "tailored" to each position for which you are applying, or—at least—to each broad category of work you are seeking. Dispose of the idea that a "generic" resume will suffice.

One reason for new expectations is simply that word processing technology has made adapting resumes quick and easy. Without access to the technology, creating a targeted resume is challenging. However, if meeting the challenge means beating the competition, tailoring your resume becomes essential.

- Develop the content of your resume to meet its readers' needs. Ask yourself, "What do editors or managers reading my resume need to know?" One answer: They need to know what you can do for them on the job.

One of the most common signs that a job-candidate isn't paying attention to the resume readers' interest is a "Job Objective" fashioned like this: "To obtain a position that will be interesting and lead to my career advancement." A job objective that considers the readers' need to hire someone who will perform a specific job well sounds more like this: "To use my political science education as well as my strong reporting and writing skills to cover county government accurately, fairly and with insight."

- Add details to your resume content that make it stand out from the competition. Understand that most candidates for the reporting job you want have also studied news writing, written for the school paper or radio station, and done internships. What details describe the

ways in which your experience and skills are unique and valuable? Which professional and personal qualities would make you special as an employee?

For example, are you known for your accuracy, for your editing skill? Do your stories capture people's "voices" through effective use of quotes, and do you build strong relationships with sources? Are you bilingual? *This* type of detail will make your resume memorable.

After developing the content of your resume, turn to its graphic presentation.

- Your resume, to be on the cutting-edge, must look "typeset." Using a type font that looks typewriter-produced is passé. Today, typical resume fonts are "Times Roman" or "Helvetica."

- The way you graphically display information on your resume must demonstrate that you understand how to move a reader's eye through the page. Purposefully use graphic elements such as bold face, italics and underlining. Employ white space and copy blocks to help the reader quickly absorb the information. And, yes, it's OK to go to two pages if it helps the clarity of your design.

An effective way to create a well-designed resume is to leaf through many resume-writing books at the Harold Washington Library and look for elements of resume design and format that you like. Also be alert for phrases that capture what you'd like to communicate about yourself in your resume.

Once you've put the content and design in place, seek feedback on your resume. One good place to find feedback is in the free half-hour workshop on resume and cover-letter writing held every Tuesday at 1 p.m. in Room 303 of the Wabash building. Also, I am available to coach both current students and alumni. Call me at ext. 284.

*Paula is the j-department's career advisor. Seek her out in Career Planning & Placement, Wabash Suite 300.*

# '93 Grads Wary But Hopeful



Graduating j-majors Tom Hallissey and John Thompson smile now, but know they will soon face one of the worst job markets in two decades.

As this year's graduates face one of the worst job markets in 20 years, Columbia's j-grads are hopeful that they will be among the fortunate ones.

"I have a commitment to excellence, and whatever I do, I put in all my effort," says Pat Reilly, a print j-major who would like to write for a daily newspaper. "And I will get a job. I'm not worried about it. I don't want to sound cocky, but I'm too good not to have a job."

Some students, like Nadine Arroyo, are lucky enough to have a job waiting for them after they graduate. Nadine was offered a job as assignment editor of Channel 26 News, following a stint as an intern.

"I did my internship with them last summer, and I guess they liked the way I work," Nadine explains. "I was very pushy, kept up my contacts, and called every so often. They called me back for freelance work."

Other graduates are also hopeful that internships will turn into jobs.

"I have an internship this summer with *Essence* magazine, and hopefully that will turn into a job," says magazine major Audarshia Townsend. If that doesn't work out, she says, she has a lead for *The New York Times Magazine*.

But if their dreams fail, some grads may

have to settle for something that's a little easier to get into, like public relations.

No way, says Pat. "I don't want to be a flack. I want to be the one who communicates to the mass audience."

Some seniors, however, may have no choice but to settle. "My father is giving me 30 days after I graduate to get out of the house," says print j-major Trevor Curtis. "I'm just going to have to find a job, hopefully in my profession, even though the job market is grim for journalism students."

"I'll just have to spend 40 hours a week, giving it all I've got," says Trevor. "One thing about the program here is that it teaches you to be career-minded. By the time you get out of here, it's job, job, job."

The faith of grads in the current job market runs the gamut from upbeat to pessimistic.

"I have confidence that if you work hard, you get what you want," says Marcia Reed, who plans to pursue an M.B.A.

"It's probably going to take a little more ingenuity on all our parts," says magazine major John Thompson.

"I think there are a lot of jobs out there. I really do. I just think that if you're going

to be very picky, it's going to be harder for you to find a job," says Cristina Romo, a broadcast j-major.

Print major Tom Hallissey has a different approach: "I have confidence in my ability; that makes me confident in the job market."

Fran Willoughby, also a print major, says that sometimes students have to make their own opportunities. "I'm interested in doing self-employment projects, things that I can do myself, as opposed to looking for a job that doesn't exist."

One way of "being employed" after you graduate is to continue doing things that you did while in school. "I'm probably going to do an internship over the summer," says John.

While Tom says, before he starts a serious job search, he's "going to take a few weeks off just to relax."

—Hayley Carlton

## Survey Says: J-Salaries Static

Most of us were forewarned that journalism is not the best way to make a buck, and an annual survey of 1991 j-grads by the Ohio State School of Journalism backs that claim up.

When it comes to negotiating a salary, beware, because in 1990 journalists' salaries failed to keep up with the rate of inflation for the first time in years.

In addition, a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund survey in 1991 found daily newspapers offering 21.3 percent fewer internships in '91 than five years earlier.

According to the Ohio State study, bachelor's degree recipients found that a full-time salary with a daily newspaper

averaged \$348 a week. The survey also found that weekly salaries at TV stations were \$289 a week and radio stations were \$254 a week.

Phil Robbins, j-director at George Washington University, was quoted in the *Washington Journalism Review* as saying, "Graduates can do \$5,000 to \$10,000 [a year] better at entry-level trade association jobs or in public relations."

Still, salary should not be the only consideration when evaluating jobs.

"If I were a student going out for a job," says Paula Eubanks, the j-department's career advisor, "I'd be more concerned whether I'm getting an offer and what the

quality of that job is going to be. After that, look at benefits: healthcare, disability, vacation pay, and any savings plans the organization may have.

"Then I'd be looking at the salary range. First, can I live on it? When you're entering the job market, it's very important that you get that job and start working to get experience—establish yourself."

Eubanks' advice is to prepare a budget before negotiating a salary. "Grads need to know how low they can go," says Eubanks. "That's important because you can't accept a job in which the pay is lower than your living expenses."

—Chris Dolack

# Desktop Publishing a Plus for Grads

What do titles such as Pagemaker, Quark XPress, Photoshop and Word mean to you? If they mean user-friendly computer software that make publishing a cinch, you're on the right track. Desktop publishing enables any computer user to quickly and efficiently create graphically sophisticated publications. It requires minimal work space, a large-brained personal computer, and a high quality printer.

Desktop publishing is becoming the publishing tool of choice for large and small publications alike, and j-majors would be wise to learn its techniques. They can learn by working on *Inside Journalism* or the *Columbia Chronicle*, two student-run publications which use desktop publishing.

Omar Castillo, *Chronicle* photo editor, uses Pagemaker and Photoshop in his work, which involves scanning, sizing and cropping photographs for the upcoming week's issue. He does similar work with ads placed in the *Chronicle*.

Chris Dolack, editor of *Inside Journalism*, uses Pagemaker to create the newsletter. "Desktop publishing is the electronic way of creating a publication. You can see the final package on the computer screen before it's sent to the printer," says Chris, who learned desktop publishing while interning at *Inside Sports* magazine.

Paula Eubanks, j-department career adviser, also uses desktop publishing in her work with students and internship coordinators. "I use the software to write letters, messages and memos that I send to the department administrators that I work with. It makes things a whole lot easier."

PageWorks, a communications firm in Lincoln Park, uses desktop publishing daily to put out its own magazine, called the *ThePage*, with do's and don'ts, pros and cons of desktop publishing.

"People can do a lot of things now in terms of publishing that they were not able to do before," says Joe Grossmann, associate editor of *ThePage*. "This is where we come in, because we deal with it everyday. We make a living doing it and writing about it. If you don't actually know how to do something," he adds, "you will spend twice as much time trying to figure out the 'right way.' And if you are being paid by

a customer, you have to bear a loss of time and money."

You can learn more about desktop publishing by subscribing to *ThePage*. The cost is \$65 a year. For more information, call PageWorks at (312) 348-1200. —Tariq Ali

Joe Grossmann, associate editor of *ThePage*, a magazine about desktop publishing, is working on the next issue. The magazine is created in minimal space, using the same software as *Inside Journalism* and the *Chronicle*.



## Grad Audit a Must

If you are planning to graduate in August '93 or January '94 and have not yet applied for a graduation audit, or if you have over 88 credit hours, you'd better blaze a trail to Academic Advising on the third floor of the Wabash building.

Your first stop should be the office of Ruby Turner, Graduation Audit Coordinator. She will bring your record up and tell you exactly how many credit hours you need to graduate. Make sure you fill out a graduation application in the Records Office, too.

The next stop is the office of j-department academic advisor Harry Parson, who will give you a breakdown of your remaining credit hours and the classes that you need to fulfill both major and college requirements.

According to Janet Talbot, Director of Academic Advising, when a student has amassed 88-plus credit hours, a

letter is sent out to them, encouraging the student to go to the Records Office on the sixth floor of the Michigan building and fill out a graduation application. The information is entered into the computer and then sent to Ruby Turner.

"Even though we only send the letters out twice a year, students are applying for graduation all the time and advisors and auditors are working with the students everyday," says Talbot. She advises students to take quick action after they receive the letter from Marvin Cohen, Director of Records.

To refresh everyone's memory, the journalism major requires completion of 42 j-credits for print majors; broadcast majors with a TV emphasis need 30 credits in journalism and 25 in TV, while a radio emphasis requires 30 credits in journalism and 22 in radio. Students need a total of 124 credits to graduate.

—T.A.

# The Chicago Reporter: A Columbia Shop

*The Chicago Reporter* has a reputation as one of this city's most distinguished journalistic endeavors. From its beginnings in July of 1972, this award-winning monthly has specialized in tough, no-nonsense reporting.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that seven Columbia j-students and grads hold positions at *The Reporter*. Alumni Paul Caine, Helena Sundman and Muriel Whetstone, and interns Joanne Esters-Brown, Marvlyn Reed, Tom Shea and Burney Simpson give Columbia a strong voice in the day-to-day operations of the award-winning publication.

"We're into our 20th year of investigative reporting, and Columbia students are playing a major role in our success," says Laura Washington, editor and acting publisher of *The Reporter*.

*The Reporter* covers a wide range of social, economic, and political issues, with a special focus on race and poverty. Recent stories have reported on AIDS and its effect on Chicago's minority neighborhoods, the lack of trained interpreters for non-English speaking people at city hospitals, and hate crimes against minority groups. This editorial diversity, and the originality of its approach, are major factors behind its success.

"If you look around at other papers, you see the type of hit-and-miss coverage they have when it comes to these issues," says Washington. "The coverage is inconsistent. They might have special investigative pieces every few issues, but that's what we're all about."

Some see the world of investigative journalism as an exciting alternative to straight news reporting. And Washington feels Columbia students are well-suited to the task.

"The students I get from Columbia are a lot tougher and more directed career-wise than students from other schools," says Washington. "They're mature and serious about their work. I've been very impressed with what I've seen."

Alumna Muriel Whetstone (*see sidebar*), who started with *The Reporter* as an intern in February of 1990 and is now its healthcare reporter, says it took her awhile before she became comfortable with her new job.

"*The Reporter's* reputation is such that when you say you work for them, people can suddenly get very uncooperative. It took me awhile not to take it personally. But it's a rewarding experience."

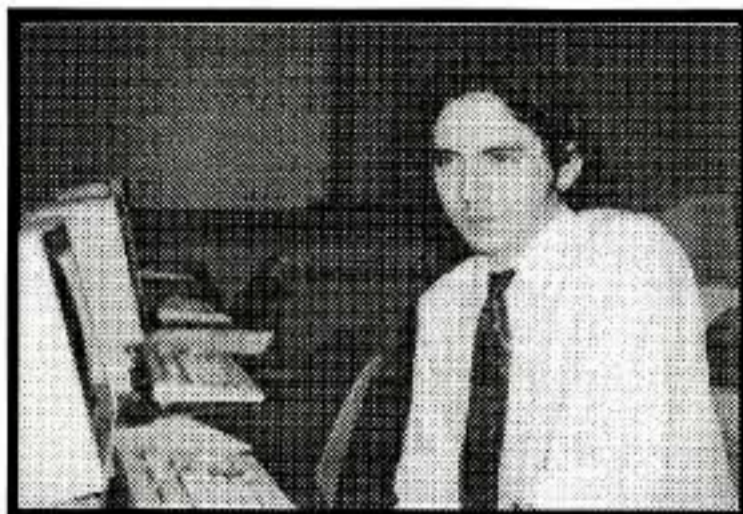
Intern Tom Shea agrees. "I've been learning to do a lot of things that I don't do everyday in class," says Shea. "I've been doing a lot of fact-checking and proofreading. The most important thing I've learned is how to deal with people in a working environment."

Another alumna, Helena Sundman (*see sidebar*), is currently a research

assistant for *The Reporter*. She says the education she received at Columbia was a major factor in her getting the job.

"The work I did at Columbia was as close to the real world experience as I could get," says Sundman. "I was a bit overwhelmed at first, but my Columbia education was a definite advantage. All my hard work is finally paying off."

Hard work is paying dividends not only for Sundman, but for the other Columbia



Tom Shea, one of four Columbia interns working at *The Reporter*, says the most important thing he's learned is how to deal with people in a working environment.



Laura Washington, editor of *The Chicago Reporter*, says Columbia j-students play a major role in the publication's success.

students as well. Their dedication is not lost on Washington.

"Columbia students are unique," she says. "Columbia is a gritty, urban-oriented institution. Because of that, students are more sensitive to many of the issues we report on."

"When you're on a budget and commuting back and forth, you don't have time to lollygag. Students know this and come prepared to work. I appreciate that. In the end, everyone benefits."

Evidence of Columbia students' hard work was found in two recent issues of *The Reporter*. In February, Whetstone and Sundman wrote a front-page story, entitled "The Business of AIDS," which focused on AIDS and the various organizations set up to help minorities afflicted with the disease.

They also wrote two accompanying sidebars. The first dealt specifically with The Hispanic AIDS Network and its current lack of funding. The second focused on Jose Candelas of the Pilsen/Little Village Community Mental Health Center and his efforts to stop the spread of AIDS in the Hispanic neighborhoods.

"I'm very proud of the work we did on those stories," says Whetstone. "I was relieved when it was finally published. To see all your hard work get the attention it deserves is very satisfying. The fact that Helena and I both worked on the story was

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# The Reporter Profiles

## Helena Sundman '92

Barely a year past graduation, Helena Sundman is busy establishing herself as a hard-working, dedicated journalist. While becoming adept at writing and reporting as a research assistant at *The Chicago Reporter*, she recently tried her hand at broadcasting. And her experiment met with considerable success.

Sundman was one of a handful of reporters participating in a series of programs that deal with racial problems in the Chicago public school system. The project, entitled "Chicago Matters," was funded by the Chicago Community Trust, WTTW (Channel 11), and radio station WBEZ. Reporters throughout the city were invited to submit ideas for consideration before the project began.



Helena Sundman

"Laura Washington [*The Reporter's* editor] told us about the project and encouraged us to submit ideas," says Sundman. "She felt that investigative reporters could add a lot of depth to the project. I saw it as an opportunity to expand my horizons a little bit, so I submitted two story ideas, and I was fortunate that they liked one enough to use it."

Sundman's show, which aired April 9, was called "School Openings and Rivalries." It examined the tension between African Americans and Latinos in the community of Lawndale in Southwest Chicago.

"I received a lot of positive response to the piece," says Sundman. "My friends and family were so surprised to hear my voice on the radio—they didn't think I had any interest in broadcasting. I also received compliments from my peers, which was quite nice."

Although her debut in the broadcasting arena was a success, Sundman is content, for now, to stick with print journalism.

"I did it to try another medium, and because I thought that type of program would be fun and interesting, but it was a luxury," says Sundman. "If you went into broadcasting full-time you wouldn't expect to get those types of assignments all the time. You would probably spend 5 percent of your time doing investigative pieces, and the other 95 percent would just be straight news reporting."

After her adventures in broadcasting, Sundman offers the following advice to Columbia j-students: "I think it's a good idea for students to keep an open mind when it comes to their journalism careers," says Sundman. "If I had focused just on writing, this opportunity would never have come up. Always keep your options open—don't be afraid to try new things. I know someday the fact that I've done the radio show will lead to more career opportunities. Any experience you get can only help you down the line."

—Gino Carlino

## Muriel Whetstone '92

*The Chicago Reporter's* Tom Corfman says his colleague Muriel Whetstone has the ability to take intricate subjects and get them across to her readers.

"She's a talented writer with a real flair for descriptive detail," says Corfman. Apparently her peers agree, because Whetstone, a 1992 j-grad, recently won a Peter Lisagor Award, Chicago's most prestigious print journalism award.

Her story, an investigation into government funding of a sexual abstinence program for teens, was written when Whetstone was an intern at *The Chicago Reporter*, where she now works as the publication's healthcare reporter.



Muriel Whetstone

In addition, Whetstone won a Minority Scholarship to attend the Investigative Reporters and Editors National Conference in New York this month.

Through dedication and hard work, Whetstone has come a long way. At age 30, while raising two children, she quit a well-paying but unsatisfying job to go back to school and follow her dream of becoming a journalist. She finished her B.A. at Columbia in three years, while juggling home life, internships and part-time jobs.

"The first semester I taught here, she was in a class of mine," says Don Gold, Whetstone's former Magazine Editing teacher. "I noticed immediately that she was somewhat older than most of the other students in the class. But she had a sense of determination about her that impressed me immediately. She listened to everything that was said in the classroom by everybody, not just by me but other students."

Gold was so impressed with Whetstone, that he appointed her editor of the first issue of Columbia's student-run magazine, *Chicago Arts & Communication*.

"We had to create our own rules and figure out how to put this magazine together," says Gold. "Muriel was a real driving force. The people on the staff respected her. They followed her instructions. She had an uncanny ability to manage."

In addition to being editor, Whetstone wrote a profile of photographer John White for the magazine. That issue of *Chicago Arts & Communication* eventually won a journalism award from Columbia University. "I am immensely proud of the magazine," says Whetstone.

Laura Washington, *The Reporter's* editor and acting publisher, says as an intern Whetstone was dedicated to the publication. "She was really committed to the work we did. She went the extra mile."

When a reporting position opened, Washington realized there was a perfect match between Whetstone's interest in women's

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# Chicago Magazines: A mixed bag

Magazine editing majors often hear about the many job opportunities on consumer publications in New York. But what if you want to stay in Chicago? If you are unsure where to look for magazine jobs, here are a few clues.

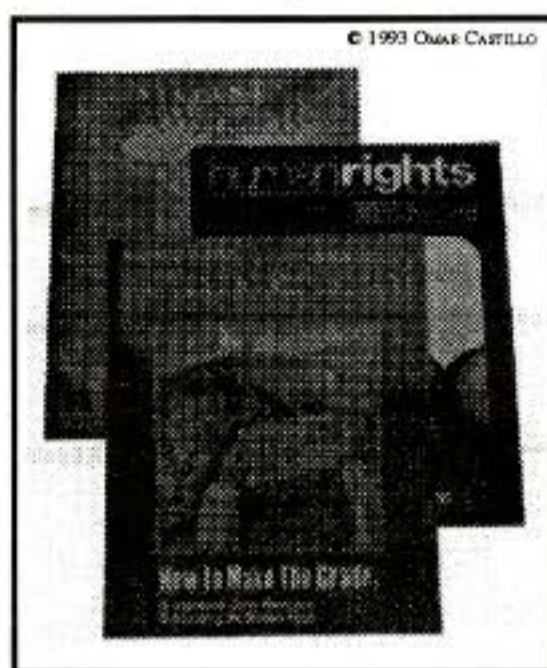
Chicago is home to hundreds of magazines which serve every trade you can think of. There are magazines about baking, marketing, real estate, management, maintenance, physiology, zoology, religion, laundry service, dry cleaning and garbage. There are special interest magazines about handwriting analysis and *Dog World* for the animal lover. Industrial magazines cover railroads, packaging, steel and steel design, concrete, foil materials, mining, coal, building renovation, plastics, plumbing, piping and more.

Sarah Hoban, who teaches Special Interest Magazines at Columbia, began her editing career at Allstate Insurance Co., even though she had no insurance background. Now she is editor of *Student Lawyer* magazine, published by the American Bar Association. The lesson? Don't fret if you're not a lawyer, doctor, librarian or specialist in a certain field. Most of the journalists working in these publications aren't. They learn as they go. The important thing is to have top-notch editing and writing skills.

In Chicago more than 200 magazines are published, and as many as 500 if you include the suburbs. Some of the major publishers are Crain Communications, Cahner's, Delta Communications, Putman Publishing, and Chicago Publishing. In addition, *Playboy* and *Ebony* have their headquarters here. *Newsweek* also has an office here and so does *Hispanic USA* and *The Black Writer*.

Aim publishes a magazine called

*America Intercultural* that promotes intercultural awareness and understanding. Maclean Publishing Company produces a magazine about antiques and hobbies. Delta Communications prints 17 magazines on different topics, such as food,



ABA publications: *Student Lawyer*, *Human Rights* and *Barrister*.

airplanes and cheeses.

Putman Publishing's magazines include ones on chemical processing, food processing and plant services. Chicago Publishing produces *Chicago Magazine* and Crain Communications publishes magazines on business, advertising, insurance and city and state government.

Magazines are also published by large companies with many clients and customers. They include: Allstate, Amoco, General Motors and Ford. The American Medical Association publishes 12 magazines, with topics as broad as medical news, to specific subjects, such as neurology or dermatology.

The American Bar Association publishes 14 magazines for lawyers and student lawyers, news in the field of law and in the area of human rights. The American Library Association publishes 20 magazines for librarians, researchers, library reference, adult and youth services.

There are public works magazine such as *Attention Traffic Safety*, published by the National Safety Council, *The Neighborhood Works*, a magazine about community development, and the *American Public Works* magazine.

*Chicago Advertising and Media* is a magazine reporting on current ideas affecting media and advertisers in Chicago. *Chicago Film and Video News* promotes communication between corporate and independent producers and film and video professionals. There are literary magazines, such as the *Chicago Review*, poetry magazines, magazines for journalists, TV magazines (*Eleven Magazine*) and theater magazines.

*Chicago History* is published by the Chicago Historical Society and it contains articles, photos and book reviews. Magazines are also published on philology, black history, British history and Ukrainian history. Some magazines remind us of the diverse ethnic groups in Chicago; they are about Lithuanians, Poles, Swedes and Anglo-Jews.

If sports is what you like, there are magazines for tavern sports, bowling, amateur sports, outdoor sports, skiing, climbing, kayaking, camping and cycling.

One advantage of these magazines is that they are all published here in Chicago. This means you don't have to look for work in another city or state, unless you want to. The opportunities are here, just search for them. —Susan Olavarria

## *The Reporter* continued from page 6

great—it gives Columbia a little boost.”

Helena agrees. “Doing this article has been one of the more important things I’ve done since entering the real world,” she says. “I learned a lot doing research for it. Working here has helped me open my eyes a little bit as to what’s going on in the

city.”

Interns Joanne Esters-Brown and Marvlyn Reed saw their names in print in the March issue. Both were credited with helping to research major stories.

After working with seven Columbia j-students every day, would Washington

have any doubts about hiring future interns from Columbia?

“No, definitely not. Being from Columbia doesn’t mean you’re perfect, but I believe it’s a definite advantage, especially in a city like Chicago.”

—Gino Carlino

# Fiction Skills Assist Journalists

A reporter trying to learn the origins of a fire found that his source, a volunteer fireman, was giving vague, unclear answers. But he also noticed that the fireman was unconsciously using his hands to describe the movement of the fire.

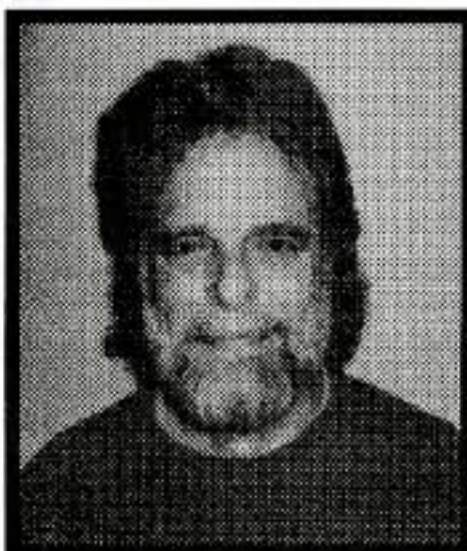
Using his experience from fiction writing workshop, the reporter coached the fireman, step-by-step, through the process of visualizing and describing the movement he was expressing with his hands. Before he realized what he had done, the fireman had accurately recounted the action of the blaze.

That reporter was Fiction Writing teacher Eric May. After working as a reporter for the *Washington Post* from 1987 to 1991, May feels fiction writing and journalism are similar.

"I found the two feed off of each other very well, even though they're not the same," says May. "[As a reporter], I began to recognize the need to use basic forms of journalism together with fiction. News reporting helped me use fiction skills, in terms of story movement and transition. In my mind, they were very close."

May says a background in fiction writing also helps journalists recognize sequence and put events "in correct chronological order." For example, he says, fiction skills come in handy when writing obituaries.

Opinion Writing instructor and *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter Mary Johnson was a fiction writing major at Columbia before



**In non-fiction you can use scene summary to bring dramatic flavor to your writing.**

—Craig Vetter

switching over to journalism. A 1991 grad, Johnson says she doesn't write fiction anymore and she doesn't see much connection between her fiction training and her present journalism career. But, she admits, she does see a relation between journalism and poetry.

"I'm drawn more to poetry," says Johnson. "It's more direct. Five words can tell a whole story. With fiction, it's necessary to slow down."

Mark Giardina, *Columbia Chronicle* news editor, says taking fiction classes has helped him "not be afraid to try new things."

"In journalism," says Giardina, "you're not always following the rules you learned in English composition. It's the same thing in fiction writing. The first thing they make you do is break some of those rules."

Magazine Article Writing teacher Craig Vetter says that a background in fiction writing can help in writing non-fiction for magazines.

"The techniques used in non-fiction are very much like those of fiction," says Vetter. "The only difference is that in non-fiction, you can't make anything up, but you can still use scene summary to bring dramatic flavor to your writing."

Don Gold, magazine program director, agrees: "As long as you remember that what you write is supposed to be true, the tools of fiction are all effective in writing for magazines."

—Tom Shea

## Whetstone continued from page 7

and children's issues and *The Reporter's* need for a strong healthcare reporter. She was hired immediately after graduation.

Washington says that Whetstone uses her personality to advantage. "Muriel's very good at the subtle approach. She keeps people off-guard because she's so unassuming and so quiet in her personal nature. People don't necessarily take her as seriously as they should," says Washington.

Washington and Corfman both agree that regardless of her laid-back nature, Whetstone is a persistent and dogged re-

porter. "She keeps pushing," says Corfman. "She's not afraid of calling back to ask additional questions. She's not afraid to

**Muriel's very good at the subtle approach. She keeps people off-guard because she's so unassuming and so quiet in her personal nature.**

—Laura Washington

keep asking for documents when she's not getting them. She just keeps pushing."

Whetstone has written a total of five

articles since she has been at *The Reporter*. She says that she feels comfortable there because she wants her writing to benefit African Americans and women. "I'm very passionate about the two subjects," says Whetstone.

When asked where she sees racism in the media, Whetstone says, "It's partly the writers, but a lot of it is the editors. What kind of stories do they assign? How do they edit them? What do they ask to be changed? How much leeway do they give writers to tell the story accurately, as opposed to what their readers would be most comfortable hearing?"

"Despite the rhetoric about journalists being objective," adds Whetstone, "we are still human, so we are, to a point, subjective." —T.S.

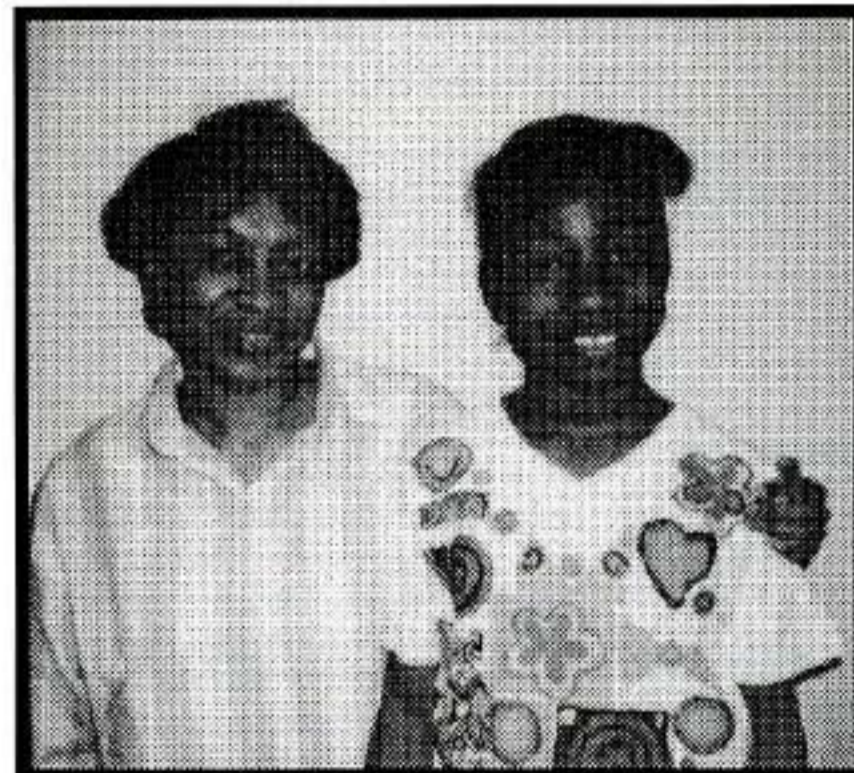
# No Excuses for J-Moms

Although many women with children can't imagine taking on the added burden of college classes, others are revelling in the challenge. In fact, say three j-majors, their split lives keep them focused and motivated.

Junior Joanne Esters-Brown, 42, who interns at *The Chicago Reporter*, works on the science newsletter, *Warp ten*, and maintains a 4.0 GPA, jokes that she and her daughter will get back to routines, such as eating, after the semester is over.

After years in the work world, Joanne went back to school with the hope that getting a degree would enable her to control what she does with the rest of her life.

"The difference between the kids in college and me is that I don't want a job when I graduate. I've already been in the corporate world. I want to do freelancing so that I can have more control," Joanne says.



**T**he difference between the kids in college and me is that I don't want a job when I graduate. I've already been in the corporate world. I want to do freelancing so that I can have more control.

—Joanne Esters-Brown (with daughter Katherine)

In the classrooms at Columbia, Joanne feels comfortable and tries to answer as many questions as possible. She says, "I enjoy learning. I like the tid-bits teachers give us about the real world."

Being away from school for 20 years didn't stop senior Ablah Farahid, 46, from returning to college either. She was encouraged by a group of women who were going back to school at Moraine Valley College in Palos Hills.

As a broadcast j-major, Ablah had already experienced the real world of journalism in her native country, Jordan, where she worked in television and radio for 20 years. But, Ablah says, "I wanted to learn the American way."

Ablah's husband and five children, whose ages range from 6 to 23, lend support to her academic endeavors. "They are very understanding," she says. "They tease me and say, 'the doctor has come in.'"

Also supportive of Ablah are the students and teachers at Columbia. Ablah says, "I get equal respect and nothing more. I don't feel like an old lady."

Ablah is not planning on stopping either. After her graduation from Columbia, she might go on to earn a post-graduate degree. She also plans on continuing work at Maljack Productions, a company that produces shows and light documentaries.

Younger j-mom Marvlun Reed, 23, a senior, didn't use her children as an excuse to quit school. In fact, she says, she uses them as her "inspiration." Marvlun has taken only one year off

from school and had two of her three children during semesters and one while she was on break. She also says her grades haven't been affected either. During the semester in which her son was born, she almost got straight A's.

Because of Marvlun's "really good support system," she is also able to intern at *The Chicago Reporter* and work part-time at the *Southtown Economist*.

Marvlun says being a mom "encouraged [her] even more to go to school; I wasn't serious about school before I had children. They gave me what I needed."

—Bridget Connelly

**INSIDE JOURNALISM**  
A newsletter produced  
by and for students of the  
Columbia journalism  
department.

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June 1993 Vol. 8, No. 3