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Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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Inside Journalism

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College Chicago

May/June 1999

CNN's Kaplan: Quality newscast simple as 1,2,3

By Jaime Elich

At first he seemed intimidating—not because of his appearance, but because of his power and status. Yet CNN President Richard Kaplan—make that Rick—turned out to be warm, personable and genuinely interested in the up-and-coming generation of broadcast journalists.

So interested, in fact, that he set aside time last month to conduct a five-hour workshop for journalism students at Columbia, on how to produce an evening newscast.

Kaplan broke the ice instantly by insisting everyone call him "Rick," adding that failure to do so would result in a \$5 fine. By day's end, senior Todd Hofacker had to slip Rick a five, making good on his end of the bargain.

"He wasn't what I expected, and I couldn't help calling him 'Mr. Kaplan,'" said Hofacker. "At least

now I have a good story to tell."

By the time the workshop was over, all the participants had good stories to tell, and Kaplan listened intently while each person spoke about educational achievements and career goals.

Despite the eclectic mixture of experience and ambition among workshop participants, a passion for good journalism was shared, and Kaplan's motivational messages reached everyone.

"Don't be discouraged," he advised. "I got my start as a copy boy at WBBM. You've got to get your foot in the door...I don't care if it's rudely, crudely, nicely or politely."

It's hard to imagine a person this thoughtful and generous ever having to push and shove his way to the top. Perhaps it was his incredible wealth of knowledge that helped him get there. Regardless, Kaplan has never forgotten his

roots; in fact, he honors them by opening himself up to students, hoping they may learn from his experiences.

"If there is one thing that students take with them, I want them to understand the importance of writing," said Kaplan. "You have to master writing. I don't care what aspect of journalism you are in, your ability to write will absolutely guarantee your success."

Keeping with the theme of the workshop, Kaplan also discussed the qualities that make a good producer. "The art of producing a show is learning how to exclude things...not include things," he said.

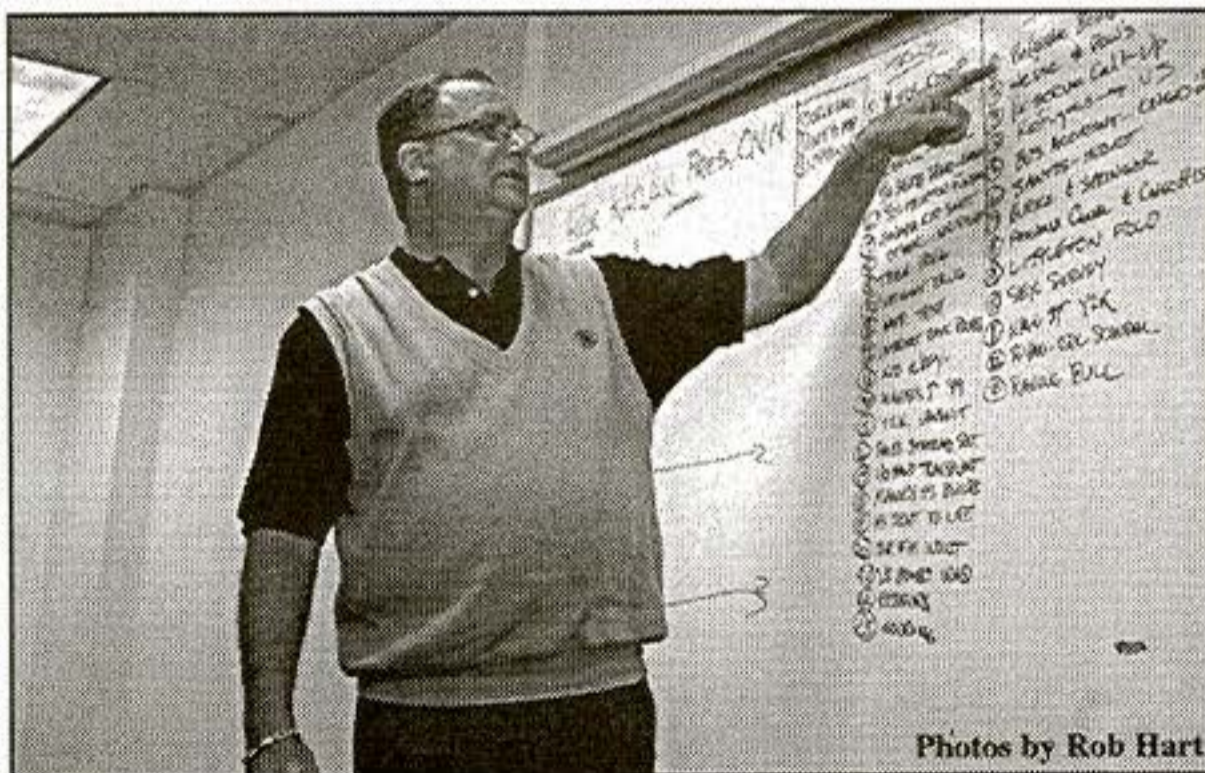
He suggested beginning the day by listing all possible story ideas, then using what he refers to as the "three decision-makers" to eliminate stories that don't fit in the newscast. Kaplan demonstrated the process so vividly that what initially seemed like an impossible list to edit ended up as a sensational newscast.

"The first rule is, you have to understand who your audience is," said Kaplan. "What's their age, what's their economic level, what are their cultural interests? You have to know who you are talking to."

According to Kaplan, it's a question you cannot ask yourself enough, since your audience is generally the deciding factor when choosing one story over another.

The next decision-maker is determining the program's placement in the daily news schedule—literally, what time of day is the program on?

"If you are doing an evening



CNN President Rick Kaplan arrived in casual attire last month for a five-hour workshop with Columbia College journalism students on how to put together a quality tv newscast.

Continued on page 3

Echo 2000 features more student writing

By Gina Leyba

The Journalism Department's magazine program is proud to announce the imminent arrival of the millennial issue of *Echo* magazine. The student-produced magazine, focusing on Chicago arts and communication, is the largest issue ever, with 80 full-color pages.

"It will also be the best," said Barry Rice, faculty advisor for the magazine's design, who helped design the 1997 *Echo*, which won first place in a major national competition.

Magazine Program Director Scott Fosdick agrees that the new *Echo*, due out in early summer, will be the best ever. What makes this issue stand out, he said, is the superior quality of its content and the hard work and devotion of the entire staff.

Despite the 2000 date on the cover, the millennial theme was not one of the choices for the new issue, according to Editor-in-Chief Elke Oberg. "We did not want to use that theme because everyone else was doing it," she said.

"This issue is different because we increased the amount of student writing, which was possible due to the efforts of last fall's College Magazine Workshop, as well as several contributing writers."

Oberg added that the increase in writing was also beneficial as an additional way for journalism students to add clips to their portfolios. "Students can get a great opportunity



Echo provides students a unique opportunity to get their work published in a full-color magazine.

through *Echo*," said Oberg.

"A lot of students, however, don't know about *Echo*, and that it provides a unique way to get published in a full-color magazine." The magazine staff, she added, always encourages the submission of writing and photography from students throughout the Columbia College community.

A sampling of the magazine's content includes a



Faculty advisors Barry Rice (left) and Scott Fosdick say Echo 2000 will be "the best ever" because Editor Elke Oberg (center) kept the production process running smoothly and helped contributors meet deadlines.

special section on jazz, including jazz fiction; features on the Trinity Irish Dancers, how to become a radio personality, and life and art in Pilsen; and a photo essay on the Maxwell Street Market.

According to Fosdick, "This issue has certainly been the easiest to process, despite an \$11,000 budget cut last year that affected printing costs." Fosdick said students in the Marketing Department deserve some of the credit for their help in selling advertising.

But the main credit goes to Editor-in-Chief Oberg, said Fosdick, who kept everything running smoothly and aided the staff in meeting deadlines. He also noted that Rice's addition to the full-time faculty this semester has "made a world of difference, because he has more time to meet with students one-on-one and between classes."

So long, Scott! We'll miss you.

The faculty, staff and students of the Journalism Department would like to extend our best wishes to Magazine Program Director Scott Fosdick as he takes up his new position at the University of Missouri at Columbia. His contributions to the department and the magazine program have been many, and we will miss his dedication to students and his enthusiasm for journalism.

—Carolyn Hulse, Acting Chair

Kaplan

continued from page 1

newscast," he said, "you are expected to be conscious of what has gone on prior to it during the day. But if it is a morning program, your job is to take note of what happened overnight.

Kaplan was quick to note that the story which leads the morning news won't necessarily lead, or even appear, in the evening news.

"The final decision-maker is determining the show's mission," Kaplan said. "If you are doing a magazine program, you are probably out to educate. If you are doing an evening news program, then you are out to inform."

Aside from the three decision-makers, Kaplan stressed other categories of appropriate new stories: crucial news, interesting and important news, and optional news.

"Crucial news is news that has to be told. This is news which you judge to be necessary to your audience, whether you like it or not," he said. "These are stories which, when we put them up on the board, are going to be put in the show, even if it fills the entire 22 minutes."

Kaplan emphasized the importance of recognizing these stories, suggesting that these are the ones which will establish your reputa-

tion and reflect the quality of your news judgment.

While ratings/commercial interests should not be factors with crucial news, they can play a role in the next news category.

"Interesting and important news is the second cut of stories...the ones where you won't die if you don't put them in," Kaplan said. "But they are good news stories and they ought to get in, so this is when you can pick and choose based on your audience and mission."

Jokingly, Kaplan compared the two categories, suggesting that crucial news is where one earns one's journalism stripes, while interesting and important news is where a producer is pegged to be "creative" and "understanding of his or her audience."

With those news picks decided, Kaplan said, the final category—optional news—are the least important stories but involve the most important judgments a producer must make.

"Optional news stories are a matter of taste...they are there to fit your production needs," Kaplan



"Don't be discouraged," Kaplan advised. "I got my start as a copy boy at WBBM.... You've got to get your foot in the door."

said. "They are stories put in to make a better program, and they are often the ones people remember most because they are witty and human."

Using these news values and categories, Kaplan claimed, he can always determine whether a news program is a good one. Perhaps Nielsen better watch out!

"As uncreative as this will sound," he said, "I can tell you how good a newscast is if you are able to tell me how many times in the newscast viewers say to themselves, 'I didn't know that.' Basically, if you can tell your audience one thing a minute that they didn't already know, the program is going to be better."

If the same holds true for a workshop presentation, then Kaplan's rated high indeed.

"It's nice to get an outside, real-life perspective on what we are learning here at Columbia," said senior Jonathan Arnold. "Sometimes when you are working on a project for school it's just homework; but Rick Kaplan showed us the real-life application of what we are learning."

"His visit had a huge impact," said junior Sheryl Tirol. "For someone in such a high position to take time out to come and speak to students is incredible. We are getting a life experience lesson, firsthand, from someone who worked his way up from the bottom to the top."



Kaplan told students that an ability to write well will be the most important skill they bring to journalism. It will "absolutely guarantee your success," he said.

Latin America program blends culture, int'l reporting

By Gina Leyba

Attention journalism students interested in Latin America, travel and the opportunity to do international reporting! A proposal recently funded by the college's Faculty Development Awards Committee could make the dream a reality by the summer of 2000.

An award of \$1,500 was given to Broadcast Journalism Coordinator Rose Economou to develop the program, which she described in her proposal, "Beyond the Mercator Projection: Covering Latin America and the Caribbean—An Intensive Cultural Experience."

The program, according to Economou, will offer students from diverse cultural backgrounds an intensive experience in international reporting, because students who participate will get to live in the communities they are covering.

The program will be open to 10 to 15 students per year and will last eight weeks, the length of the summer semester. "We have many Latino students interested in Central and South America, who know that as reporters, they will have to cover the Southern Hemisphere as well as the U.S.," said Economou.

She went on to say, however, that the program is open to—and will encourage participation by—students from all backgrounds. To prepare for the experience, students will take a new class, called "Spanish for Journalists," consisting of intensive language training in writing and conversational skills.

"We want to encourage non-Spanish-speaking students to participate in the language training," said Economou, who added that such instruction is essential for an experience in another country where little or no English is spoken.

The pilot site for the Latin American project will be Puerto Rico; the program will continue each subsequent summer in a different Latin American location. Future sites will include Chile, Argentina and, possibly, Ecuador. Eventually the program will expand to Mexico and the *barrios* of major American cities.

Economou said that a growing number of journalism students are aiming for careers in Latino print and broadcast media. But, she said, many of these students are limited in their knowl-

edge of Hispanic history, politics and cultural background important to developing news stories.

So in addition to language training, the first program in Puerto Rico will include seminars on the history, politics, economics and cultures of Latin America, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. The seminar, combined with local housing arrangements, will help students become immersed in the life and culture of Puerto Rico.

The program will also include an internship at a Puerto Rican print or broadcast news outlet, where students will learn how to cover international stories, and become familiar with the demands and obstacles faced by Latin American reporters and writers.

Economou hopes Columbia students studying in Puerto Rico will develop an electronic magazine based on their experiences, and will write for U.S. media, such as *La Raza* or Channel 66. She also believes, that by training students to work as international correspondents, the program will provide experiences j-majors need for future careers at major global media outlets, such as CNN.

The grant money that was awarded will help Economou develop a budget that reflects all expenses for the program and for the students who participate. For the Puerto Rican program, students may use their Pell Grants, and much of the remainder, Economou hopes, will be raised from public and private funding organizations.



Rose Economou

Inside Journalism

Chronicle web site blazes new trail

By Mike Smith

Inside Journalism

Padilla: Reporting is what I love best

By Gina Leyba

The author of "Beyond the Mercator Projection: Covering Latin America and the Caribbean—An Intensive Cultural Experience" is Rose Economou. She is the Broadcast Journalism Coordinator at Columbia University. She is also a member of the Faculty Development Awards Committee. She is currently working on a proposal for a new program in Puerto Rico.

"I'd rather be out in the field than inside the studio... even if it means being in the rain, snow, cold or heat."

—Rose Economou

Be a part of Inside Journalism!

Sign up for the 2-credit Journalism Newsletter Workshop (53-3020-01) next fall, and guarantee yourself at least three bylined clips for your portfolio. Learn to write a newsletter feature, think graphically and develop production skills which prepare you for work in one of the fastest-growing areas of journalism job opportunity. The class meets Monday afternoons, from 1:30 to 3:20 p.m.



Life in the Journalism Department



Asian American Institute Executive Director Juju Lien (*right*) was lecturing in Norma Green's Alternative Press class last month when a fire alarm sounded and the class had to evacuate the building. Juju and students trooped down 13 flights of stairs and continued the class in the alley. Her *alfresco* commentary attracted other students and faculty intrigued by her discussion of stereotypes and newsroom diversity. Juju, who grew up in Taiwan, brought daughter Amy along for the discussion.



Four journalists from Kenya visited Lillian Williams' Broadcast Journalism II graduate class (*above left*), where they had an opportunity to compare and contrast American politics and media with that of their African homeland. To the left of Lillian (*third from right*) are graduate students Cherie Richardson and Sam Zabadne. Pictured (*above right*) in the graduate newsroom are (*l to r*): Catherine Njeri Rugene of Nation Newspapers; Cherie Richardson, grad student; Daniel Kiptoo Korir of Kenya Broadcasting; Dorothy Jebet Chepkok of the Kenya Times Media Trust; Meshak David Okwembah of the East African Standard; and Anna Kiss, grad student.



Bette Cerf Hill (*above center*), retired founder of the South Loop Planning Board, brought a group of Columbia College journalism students on a walking tour of the college's neighborhood as part of this semester's topics course in Community Journalism. The course is taught by Thom Clark and Hank DeZutter of the Community Media Workshop.

Faculty excel in many journalism activities

Here's a sampling of recent activities and accomplishments of Journalism Department faculty:

Chuck Epstein published articles on a variety of financial topics in Barron's, Wall Street & Technology Magazine, and Interactive Financial Services. He also addressed meetings of the Public Relations Society of America and the National Investor Relations Institute on using the Internet for business...

Scott Fosdick served as chairperson of the Teaching Standards Committee for the Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication...



Norma Green lectured in April on newspapers of the homeless at the University of Wisconsin at Madison's Center for History of Print Culture in Modern America.

Culture in a Diverse America" (Univ. of Illinois Press, 1998). Norma also contributed an essay on the journalistic origins of "Bohemianism" to the "Encyclopedia of Urban America: The Cities & Suburbs" (ABC Clio Books, 1998)...

Norma Green, recently granted tenure at Columbia, is the 1999 recipient of a Mate E. Palmer Communications Award of the Illinois Woman's Press Association, as well as a first place journalism research award from the National Federation of Press Women, for her chapter on the history of StreetWise newspaper in the book, "Print

Clare LaPlante published "Wall Street on a Shoestring" (Avon Books, 1998), which was selected by Doubleday for its financial book club. Her second book, "Heaven Help Us: The Worrier's Guide to the Patron Saints," will be published in November by Dell...

Jeff Lyon edited Chicago Tribune Architecture Critic Blair Kamin's Pulitzer Prize-winning series,

"Reinventing the Lakefront," which ran during November 1998. Jeff, by the way, is a Pulitzer Prize winner himself...

Terry Sacks will have three books published by Vocational Guidance Manuals, a division of National Textbook Company, by year's end. They are: "Opportunities in Paramedical Careers," "Careers in Cartooning & Animation" and "Careers in Osteopathic Medicine." He also is writing a history of Norwegian American Hospital from 1893 to the present....

Ellen Shubart is writing a monthly column on co-branding for Franchise Times magazine, a bi-monthly column on franchising for Franchise Times Japan, and four columns a year for the franchise advertorial section of the Wall Street Journal. She also is editing a catalog for an exhibition of "Frank Lloyd Wright and His Colleagues in Indiana," a show which opens July 24 at the John G. Black Center for the Arts in Michigan City, IN...

Lillian Williams appeared as a panelist on March 23 at an Association for Women Journalists Chicago Chapter event, entitled "Is there life after journalism?" Lillian, and two other journalists who recently left fast-track news jobs, offered advice to others on how to find fulfillment in new careers...

A final note...The Journalism Department faculty recently donated approximately 100 journalism textbooks to the newly-formed Journalism Department at Vyautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, where many students share outdated books or are without textbooks of any kind. The books were given to former Liberal Ed part-time faculty member Antanas J. Van Reenan, who is teaching in the new journalism program.



Congratulations, Steve Corman!



The Journalism Department congratulates former broadcast journalism director Steve Corman, who was recently nominated for his ninth Emmy Award.

The nomination was for a feature on a toymaker/entrepreneur, which Steve wrote and produced for

KCOX (Channel 4) in San Diego. We'll be rooting for you on June 19, Steve!

—Carolyn Hulse, Acting Chair

UPI history showcases major events of 20th C.

A Columbia College journalism instructor who preaches brevity to his students says he's struggling to keep his latest literary project under 300,000 words.

Bill Ferguson, who teaches Introduction to Writing and Reporting and Copy Editing, is co-authoring a history of United Press International, and he's under the gun to beat the millennium deadline.

"Doing a history of UPI is very much like doing a history of the 20th century," Ferguson said. "The first United Press (UP) logotype appeared in 1907; today's UPI, now struggling and on life-support, will carry its logo into the year 2000."

He said the men and women who worked for United Press and United Press International actually wrote the history of the 20th century. "They covered the major news around the world and they competed with the Associated Press every minute of every day."

Ferguson, who spent 40 years with UPI and retired as the news service's managing editor in Washington, D.C., in 1990, is collaborating on the history with Richard Harnett, another retired UPI veteran and a published historian. "It's our job to document how these dedicated men and women chronicled the 20th century on a running basis, under the pressure of a 'deadline every minute,'" Ferguson said.

He began his career with United

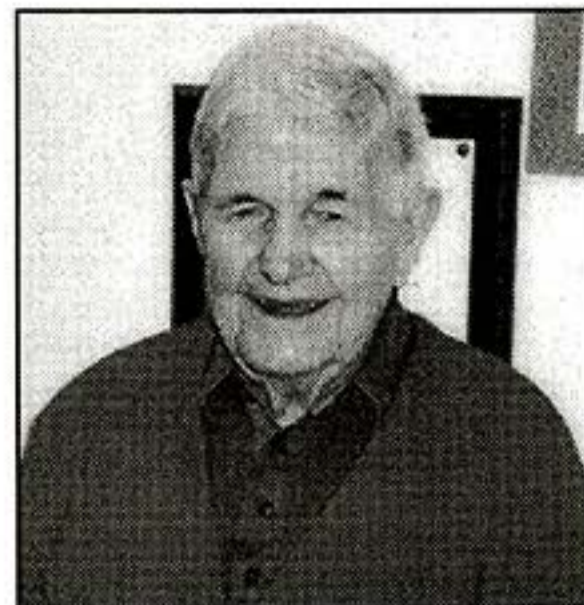
Press in Atlanta in 1950 and wound up in the center of America's burgeoning racial upheaval. "I went from the horror of covering the Mississippi lynching of a black teen-ager named Emmett Till, to the elation of several interviews with a young preacher in Montgomery, Ala., named Martin Luther King Jr.," Ferguson said.

He said that King was organizing the famous Montgomery bus boycott sparked by Rosa Parks. According to Ferguson, Dr. King "was so aware of the need to get the story to the world that he called the Atlanta bureau nearly every weekend to report on the boycott's progress."

"The next decade, the '60s, tested the mettle of UPI and all the news organizations, as earth-shaking news became almost a daily reality," Ferguson said.

"It reached a watershed in 1968 with the Tet offensive in Vietnam, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy, Russia's invasion of Czechoslovakia, the urban racial riots, President Johnson's decision not to seek re-election and the violent demonstrations that marred the Democratic National Convention in Chicago," he said.

Ferguson said the high point for him came when he helped cover the Apollo 11 launch and man's first visit to the moon. Ferguson covered the story from Cape Kennedy and, later, the Houston



Bill Ferguson

Manned Spaceflight Center. "It seems strange to be 'covering' an event that's happening a quarter of a million miles away," he said. "But I'll never forget the excitement of it."

He said the UPI history is about 75 percent done but that the last 25 percent may be the toughest. Ferguson and Harnett hope to get the book completed and published before the year 2000. Several publishers have expressed interest in the history, but Ferguson said no decisions have been made because so much remains to be finished.

Ferguson, who is also the Journalism Department's tutor, said, "Dick and I were both trained to write bright and tight at UPI, but the history forced us to go long and strong on detail. Now the big job is cutting this back and making sure we come in under 300,000 words."

Don't miss these journalism electives next fall...

53-2201-01 **Sports Reporting**

Monday, 5:30 to 8:20 p.m.

53-7022-51 **Covering Religion**

Tuesday, 1:30 to 4:20 p.m.

53-2240-01 **Producing Issue-Oriented Documentary**

Tuesday, 2 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.

53-9610-01 **Online Publishing & Production**

Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.

53-9900-51 **Topics: The International Story**

Thursday, 1:30 to 4:20 p.m.

53-2230-01 **Writing Reviews & Criticism**

Friday, 10 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.

J-Grads: Electronic resume will speed job search

By Len Strazewski

Automated human resource databases that digitize, analyze and summarize your job qualifications are fast replacing human recruiters as the first readers of job applications and resumes. Here are three tips for seducing the computers and getting your first interview:

1. Write what computers read. Prepare your resume using word processing software, but save your file in ASCII or "text" format that can be read by all computer systems. Avoid boldface, bullets, italics and tabs that might confuse dumber computers. ASCII files can be e-mailed directly to HR databases or posted to corporate Web sites. Hard copies can be scanned into the database programs with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, if they are clean and simple. For more advice on creating an ASCII resume go to CareerMosaic (<http://www.careermosaic.com>).

2. Tell computers what they want to hear. Human resource source databases search digital resumes the same way Internet search engines scan the Web. They look for keywords they are taught to recognize. Use lots of recognizable nouns, especially computer applications you know like QuarkXPress, Excel, Access, Netscape and Explorer. Journalists should list beats such as "business," "education," "Congress" and "computer-assisted reporting." Buzzwords rule.

3. Treat computers like machines. Be specific about what you have done with words like "on-air reporting," "copyediting," "publication design." List awards, not vague personal qualities like "creative" or

"innovative." Computers don't appreciate cleverness and they don't respond to heart-warming anecdotes. Save those for your interview.

For practice creating a digital resume, go to The Monster Board in Australia ([URL at left](http://microsoft.monsterboard.com.au/pf/resume/build.htm)) and use Resume Builder, an online database used to

capture employment information. Pay close attention to the kind of information the online form requests, but don't submit the finished resume unless you want a job in Australia.

For journalism job leads, you can also check out The National Diversity Newspaper Job Bank (<http://www.newsjobs.com>) and J-Jobs (<http://journalism.berkeley.edu/jobs>), the job service provided by the University of California at Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism.

Len Strazewski is Coordinator of Computer-Assisted Reporting in the Journalism Department. He also writes regularly for the Chicago Tribune Jobs Section and is a contributing editor for Human Resource Executive.



Inside Journalism

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<http://microsoft.monsterboard.com.au/pf/resume/build.htm>