School of J&B Graduate tells what it is like covering

The Mighty Forces of Nature

"Although Floyd was the third hurricane I've covered since being in Myrtle Beach, S.C., at The Sun News, this one was definitely different."—Tonya Root ('97 Print Journalism)

EXPANDING OUR GLOBAL VIEW

Avalanches
• Earthquakes • Floods
• Wildfires • Drought
• Hurricanes & Tornadoes

...Risks you take when you decide to become a journalist
...situations you hope you never have to face.

Yet, our graduates say it's also one of the exciting things about being a journalist.

Broadcasting & Mass Communication
Kristi Runyon, a 1999 graduate, won a 1998 Mark of Excellence award in television spot news reporting for her coverage of the 1998 hail storm here in Bowling Green.

Photojournalism
Dave Smith, director of photography for a newspaper in Taipei, was in Taipei during the September 20, 1999 earthquake.

Eye WITNESS

• FOCUS:
Print Journalism.............. 1-2,4-5
• Professional Advice.............. 3
Expanding our Global View

By Tonya Root

Tonya Root ('97 print journalism graduate) is the crime and courts reporter for The Sun News, a daily newspaper with a 50,000 circulation in the Myrtle Beach, S.C. area. She has been there more than a year.

The image of another hurricane pounding the Grand Strand sends most residents shaking their heads at Mother Nature, but for me it's another exciting news opportunity.

Hurricane Irene will probably dump about 5 inches of rain in the Myrtle Beach area, which has been recovering from Hurricane Floyd and its record-breaking flooding. My nickname for the newspaper is now "storm team." And that's not because of my wishes for a really good hurricane, but more for my continual coverage of the ever-changing weather in the area. When I arrived at The Sun News, in addition to my daily police and court duties, I somehow picked up the weather beat, which has included tornadoes, a rare appearance of snow, flooding, bacteria contaminating ocean waters and hurricanes.

Covering such events are unlike any other and can be taken for granted or viewed as just another weather story. For me it's become a challenge to talk with folks we normally don't include in a weather story and to find interesting angles such as a story about the modified C-130 "Hurricane Hunter" airplane. But as the latest hurricane heads for the area, memories of Hurricane Floyd and its aftermath are fresh and vivid.

I started watching the storm via several web sites on about Sept. 4, almost 10 days before it made landfall, and have continued to check the sites every day since just to see what tropical storm activity is brewing in the Atlantic Ocean. Hurricane Floyd's most treacherous effects lasted for about four hours with intense rain, wind gusts that rattled windows and twisted awnings and trees like curvy mountain roads. But the aftermath of the storm was where the most exciting stories were to be found. The county seat was flooded in areas that were never flooded before and residents, some of them angry at times, have been displaced for more than a month. Cleanup has just begun where homes are being ripped apart as residents replace fllors, cabinets and memories.

Hurricane Floyd has become a conversation topic that will last for years to come and as Hurricane Irene threatens the coast, I suspect many residents won't easily forget the hurricane season of 1999 that included nine named storms to date (And we still have more than a month left until the end of hurricane season on Nov. 30).

NATURAL DISASTERS ON THE INCREASE

EARTHQUAKES
- There were only 2119 Earthquakes recorded in the entire 19th century
- A recent U.S.G.S report shows there were 4,139 earthquakes in 1970 alone.
- Since 1987 the number of earthquakes has nearly doubled.

TORNADOES
1950's - 4796
1960's - 6813
1970's - 5850

KILLER TORNADOES
DEATHS
1996 - 13
1997 - 22
1998 - 28

These numbers only represent the most violent-still a significant increase.

Tornado info compiled from the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK.

Reprinted with permissions from STOP THE PRESSES!

College Media Should Train for Digital Era

By Steve Oatling

Steve is well known internationally as an expert in interactive publishing and online news media. He writes and speaks frequently on online services/online news applications and is a consultant, consultant and entrepreneur. Steve is a veteran newspaper and magazine editor. Other articles by Steve can be found at http://www.plane:"}

...
FOCUS ON PRINT JOURNALISM

The Journalism and Broadcasting Department's Visiting Professionals program will give Western students an opportunity to interact and learn from four editorial staff members of The St. Petersburg Times.

The St. Petersburg Times is a daily newspaper in Florida, with an average daily circulation of 355,000 that competes with The Tampa Tribune and The Citrus County Chronicle. The St. Petersburg paper is one of Florida's largest and is independently owned. Writers and reporters in the print journalism program talk about two of the visitors and how their visits on campus will enhance The College Heights Herald.

Jack Sheppard
Jack Sheppard, assistant managing editor of sports, visited Western last month. He attended a Friday night football game to help teach The College Heights Herald's sports writers. Sheppard reviewed writers' clips and helped them develop stories.

He talked with students in several classes about how his 45-member staff comes together every night to get the section published. Sports is the most demanding section due to live stories, he said.

"A problem many sports writers and editors encounter is when promoters flood the office with free food, clothing, etc., to gain attention," said Sheppard. "Every year one tortilla chip company sends a crate of colored chips to promote the football bowl it sponsors. And every year the chip company gets a note saying its product was sent to a local food bank."

St. Petersburg Times' policy is to donate all promotional food items. Accepting free merchandise from promoters is considered unethical, as lost in newsrooms. Accepting promotions can get a reporter fired. So the paper keeps non-food promotions, ranging from pens to jackets, in storage and sells them each year at a public auction to raise money for charity.

Joe Childs
On Monday, Oct. 25, Joe Childs, managing editor of the Charwater News, will spend a week in much the same way as Sheppard did: talking to students, helping the staff of The College Heights Herald on one of their production nights, and meeting with journalism faculty members.

Childs said Florida is a great place for journalists because "Florida has a terrific open records law." Government in Florida is more accessible to reporters and to the general public, he said.

Childs began his career at St. Petersburg as a general assignment reporter. After this he was promoted to an editor's position and has been one ever since. "Being a city editor is the best job possible," Childs said. He enjoys working with reporters in order to "help them grow."

Some of Western's journalism students will soon start searching for a summer internship at St. Petersburg. Interns are valued for their ability to "bring a lot of energy and a lot of creativity to their work," Childs said. His paper seeks writers willing to write on a daily basis and who aren't afraid to tackle any story.

In looking for an internship, Childs advises Western students to be aware that not all newspapers look for and hire only those students with the best grades, the most clips or the most experience.

Editor's Note:
Al Tompkins, former news director at WSMV in Nashville, who now teaches at the Poynier Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg, Fla., will spend a week at WKU Nov. 15-20. He will speak to classes, attend the newscast and critique tapes.

For many students in the Broadcasting and Journalism School fall is the time of year to remake the old resumes and to gather examples of hard work together. Internship hunting season is quickly approaching.

Students should make the first move to the office doors of Professors Harry Allen and Bob Adams to find out when editors from newspapers will be interviewing students. Signing up is a must in order to get an interview.

Students should be prepared to bring a resume and examples of work to their interviews. Professor Allen has applications and will soon be administering the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund test for copy editing and online internships. The newspapers owned by Dow Jones, such as The Cape Cod Times in Mass., require internes to complete the test before they can be hired. Interns who are chosen and who will be returning to college are eligible to receive scholarships.

Here are some of the newspapers in the Ohio Valley seeking interns for reporting, art and design positions. All information is provided by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Kentucky
The Daily Independent
P.O. Box 311
Asheville KY 4110-0331
Contact: Paul Gottsman
Deadline: Jan. 15

The Lexington Herald-Leader
100 Midland Ave.
Lexington KY 40508
Liz Petros
Deadline: Nov. 15

The Courier-Journal
P.O. Box 740031
Louisville KY 40201-7431
Merv Aubein
Deadline: Nov. 20

The Messenger-Inquirer
P.O. Box 145
Owensboro KY 42002-1480
Sue Trautwein
Deadline: Feb. 15

Indiana
The Herald-Times
P.O. Box 225
Bloomington IN 47402
Contact: Bob Zaltsberg
Deadline: March 1

Ohio
The Cincinnati Enquirer
312 Elm St.
Cincinnati OH 45202
Jim Smith
Deadline: Dec. 1

Tennessee
The Tennessean
1100 Broadway
Nashville TN 37203
Catherine Mayhew
Jerry Brewer (Print Journalism) received a 1998 Mark of Excellence award in sports writing for his story titled "An Urban Renewal."
Integrated student media
What's different on college campuses today than a decade ago is the need for student media to work together. A campus online news operation will want to have a strong relationship with the newspaper and broadcast stations - taking their content and reformatting it for the online medium. Likewise, the newspaper should have the opportunity to use the Web site for publishing supplemental material that's not appropriate for print.

All the student media forms should promote each other. This might be as simple as a cross-marketing arrangement, where the newspaper runs ads for the online operation; the Web site includes a daily promotion highlighting the top stories in the newspaper; the radio station runs a contest in which entries are accepted on the Web site, etc.

Original content a must
While the online-exclusive news/information service will utilize "shovelware" from the campus newspaper and broadcast outlets, the emphasis should be on creating original online content. On most campuses, there's plenty of available talent within journalism departments, which a student newspaper typically can't absorb. An online site should attract some of the best students, too, because interactive media is clearly a hot career choice right now.

The site should encourage production of original content, in all forms possible online. Thus, the campus online site can become a venue and showcase for a wide variety of student talents.

Original content needn't be traditional story-telling journalism. The campus online service can showcase computer-assisted reporting techniques, telling a story through innovative use of databases. It can invite user participation, in the form of interactive elements like surveys, live chats, and discussion forums. It can engage in community publishing activities, allowing campus organizations to self-publish on the Web. It can invite students to submit video clips ("Send us video of your wildest campus party!") and craft them into an online package. It can conduct online surveys of student satisfaction with professors and rank the school's faculty.

In short, it should push the envelope and encourage new ideas about what is online content.

A new type of campus media
A pure online campus site needn't - indeed shouldn't - mimic traditional campus media. It shouldn't be a newspaper online, although it may have some elements of an online paper. The campus Web operation can take a cue from what professional news/information Web sites have done, such as creating a campus business directory; hosting an online relationships/dating service; accepting online classified ads (perhaps in competition with the student newspaper); providing a campus/city entertainment guide and calendar; designing and hosting Web sites for student groups; etc.

Obviously, some of these ideas are not exactly "journalism." But new media is not just about journalism, and students should be encouraged to build new interactive services - and test out their entrepreneurial skill as well as their communications abilities.

Reach out to other departments
A campus online site also teaches journalism students the realities of working with programmers and designers. Such an operation will require talent from several disciplines, most notably programming. Students participating in campus new media ventures (including online operations of student newspapers) will learn how to work in a team environment.

Just as campus media often have at least a loose affiliation with college journalism departments, campus online sites will want to work with computer science and art/design departments in order to identify appropriate student talent.

Radio, TV advice
Broadcast media increasingly will find their audiences listening and watching on the Web - especially as broadband Internet access is made available to a larger consumer market. Campus broadcast outlets should be experimenting with live Web streaming video (for all, audio, or Webcasting).

Their students need to be prepared for a career of broadcasting on the air and online.

Continued on page 8
Continued from page 3

College Media
Should Train for
Digital Era

Paying for it all

There is the small mat-
ter of paying for online
media in the above sce-
nario. The simplest
solution is for campus media to
offer advertisers
package deals,
where online placements are
included along
with newspaper
ads, etc. A
campus online-
only site also
would be
well advised
to have an
exclusive
salesperson or two.

It may be that for a particular
campus, the economics of an
online-only, student-run operation
don't map out adequately to sup-
port creation of a new media enti-
ty. If such is the case, the jour-
alisim department or school is well
advised to create one on its own.
Either way, a modern-day college
or university that trains journalists
must provide the means for stu-
dents to gain experience in pure
new media settings.

School of Journalism &
Broadcasting
Western Kentucky University
304 Gordon Wilson Hall
Bowling Green, KY 42101