

SCOOP

Magazine

**Personally
yours,**
iMedia

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Another Saturday Night



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**Can you
hear me now?**

**Tune in to travel
technology**

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outside classroom comforts**

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Out with the Old and in With the New

There's no such thing as a 9-to-5 day when you're a journalist. The news never stops, and neither does the blinking of your BlackBerry. Add to that today's shifting economic landscape, and you may consider yourself lucky to survive. However, as technology begins to reshape journalism, and the pressure to rethink traditional media is mounting, the industry is also rife with possibility. And we're not about to be left behind.

Here at Scoop, we've adopted a grab-the-bull-by-the-horns attitude, and as tough economic times force journalists to adapt, we realize producing quality content is more important than ever. We've made it our mission to create a refuge where you can weather the economic storm, if only for a moment. Whether you're job hunting or climbing the career ladder, Scoop is your go-to source for all things journalism, written with you — JEM students, faculty and alumni — in mind. Beginning next semester we're broadening our scope to include all schools within the College of Communication and Information. As they say, "Bring it on!" It's a fast-paced field, but we're ready for challenges, too.

In this issue, join us as we explore the new technologies— everything from personalized media to tools for travel — that are driving journalism and keeping us connected. You'll also see how current and former students are carving out their places in the world. We hope you'll feel invigorated.

So go ahead. Take pause from the pressure of a changing industry and get the scoop on the place you can always call home: the University of Tennessee's School of Journalism and Electronic Media.

Laura Roberson

Editorial Philosophy

Scoop magazine is a magazine made for journalism and electronic media alumni, students and faculty that strives to keep its readers up to date with what's happening around campus and at The University of Tennessee's School of Journalism and Electronic Media. This is the reader's magazine, a magazine that celebrates JEM students past and present. We spotlight the faculty and other numerous ventures of the School of Journalism and Electronic Media, including campus media outlets and organizations.

In addition, Scoop keeps its eyes on the media, always covering — and uncovering — the latest trends. We represent a journalism school that is preparing students and alumni for a changing job market, and we will be there to explain how and why the world of mass media is changing in an effort to best serve our readers.

More than anything, Scoop is exciting. We are motivated by our mission and we want our readers to be able to take the same pride in their work and the work of their colleagues. This magazine not only functions as one of the first truly converged ventures of the JEM school following its restructuring, but it also builds on all the exciting changes that came along with it. It's an ideal time for fresh outlook, and Scoop stands prepared to deliver all that and more.

SCOOP

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University of Tennessee

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..... “You know, in ancient times they used
boiling oil to make people talk.”

“It still works today.”



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SCOOP

Spring 2009

Issue 8



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Sink yourself into the Saturday night mix with snapshots from campus hotspots.

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They Now?

Read and find out...

Robin's nest, uncovered

WBIR-TV news anchor Robin Wilhoit mixes news and novelties.

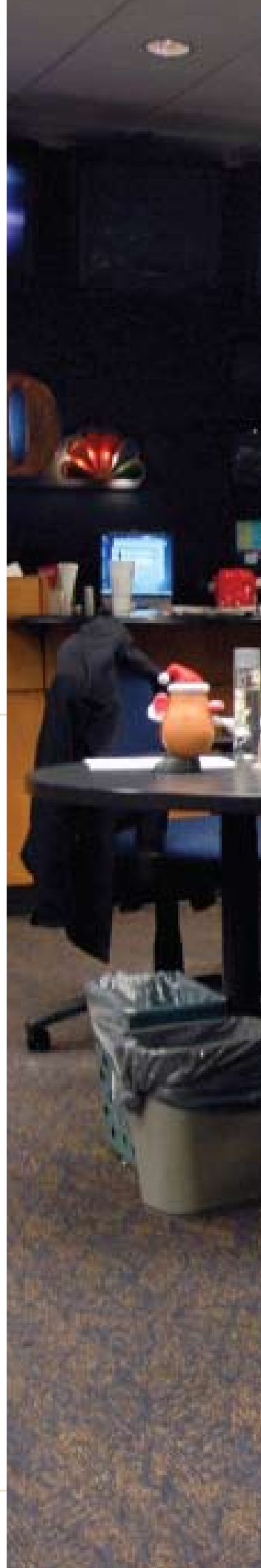
by ERIN HATFIELD

Robin Wilhoit has worked at WBIR-TV since 1992, and has since become a news anchor for many of the daily shows. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which she acknowledges with a Tarheels pin she keeps on the wall next to her desk, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism with an emphasis in political science. She and her husband Brent have two children, Katherine, 10, and Brandon, 8.

She's been in her office space for a while, speaking fondly of the dust bunnies under her desk and the "eternal pile that will never go away."

"I'll have to admit I tidied up a little [for your interview]. I don't know how many people in this office actually have an organized desk. We're just by nature a little messy. The thing is we learn to function, and we know where everything is. That's just kind of the way it is, you know."

- 1 These are tapes. I do a segment called "Go Green." Whenever I need to refer back, the tapes are right here.
- 2 Funny story here. My fortune is, "Nothing can keep you from reaching your goals, do it." The reason why I kept this is about two weeks ago I went out to a Chinese restaurant and got a cookie that did not have one of these in it. I had gone with a friend, so she sent me a fortune cookie that had this in it. So I've been saving it for good luck.
- 3 I have to show off my lucky bamboo! It looks like a corn stalk, but I'm counting on it to give me good luck. My coworker John Becker actually gave it to me for my birthday last year. Mine has surpassed his by just a little bit. I think I'm luckier!
- 4 Of course, I am still stuck in the 1980s, '90s. Even though I do have a Blackberry, I do still have a calendar that I write my appointments on. I don't know, I just need to see it all in one big picture.
- 5 I think you can go around to every desk here, and you will not find a phonebook. Like I said, I'm still stuck back in the 1980s and '90s. I like it. It's there for security reasons. I'm happy to say I still use it. I still look people up in the phone book. I need to get with the times, but I'm slowly getting there I guess.
- 6 Oh, the Christmas tree. Yes, well, it was the "pod" Christmas tree, and this is the second year for it. Every "pod" has a Christmas tree and ours came down maybe a week and a half ago. We just wanted to celebrate well past Christmas. I haven't found a place for it, so I just stuck it there. It may end up there until next Christmas, I don't know. So yeah, that's the story of the Christmas tree.
- 7 Oh, this is just junk that I don't have space for. Two weeks ago I did a story on the fly ash spill in Roane County. I actually did a live shot there on the side of it, and they said immediately that I had to wear a hard hat, goggles and a vest. At least they were nice about giving me a green one since I'm doing that "Go Green" thing, you know. I just haven't found a place for it. It may just end up in my kids' toy box or something.
- 8 That's my son's artwork. He made that for John Becker. He was about 6 when he drew that. He's quite the artist.





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Music appreciation

How do student and faculty iPod playlists compare?
Hear for yourself.

by KATIE HOGIN

Billy Joel once said, "I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music." Whether your musical tastes are contemplative or quirky, serious or fun, upbeat or down, they help us get through our days and make up the soundtracks of our lives. Two members of the School of Journalism and Electronic Media, one student and one professor, allowed us a glimpse at their iPod playlists to see what gets them in the mood for life.



Trend-O-Meter

New around here?

Allow us to school you.

by KATIE NIEHAUS



ONE.

Knoxville runway

It's all about leggings. So long as they are worn with something over them, that is.



TWO.
Vroom, vroom.

Motorcycles are the new horse (power). Who cares about having helmet-hair when the parking is so easy?

Top10 JEM Essentials

Congratulations! You've been accepted into the School of Journalism and Electronic Media. We've come up with the top 10 must-haves and must-knows to keep you ahead of the class.

by KATIE NIEHAUS

- 1 Keep a flash drive with you at all times. Save anything and everything to it.
- 2 Back up all of your documents on an external hard drive. You never know when your computer might crash.
- 3 Carry around a digital camera, spare batteries and an extra memory card. You might stumble across the perfect opportunity to snap news in action, and you want to be prepared.
- 4 You can only check out video production equipment for 24 hours during the week. However, if you check it out on Friday, you get to keep it the whole weekend.
- 5 Purchase a digital audio recorder. You can download your interviews straight to your computer.
- 6 For reasons unknown, the women's bathroom on the second floor of the Communications Building has a cot inside. So if you're ever feeling under the weather, stop by for a snooze.
- 7 Set your Facebook page on private unless you want the whole world to know your business. Do you really want all of your teachers and future business employers stalking your every move?
- 8 Read your textbooks. Most teachers are the authors of the books they assign and having a full understanding of the text can be a lifesaver when examination time rolls around.
- 9 Get advised early and sign up for classes as soon as possible. The number of hours you have taken determines how soon you can register for classes.
- 10 Have a current resume on hand. You never know when a guest speaker or visitor might be interested.

Essential Software

- *Audacity* — audio editor and recorder.
Free download at audacity.sourceforge.net/download
- *Soundslides* — software for storytellers.
Free demo at soundslides.com
- *Adobe Creative Suite 4*.
Design Standard is \$236 at the University Center Computer Store: <http://utbookstore.tennessee.edu/uccs/index.php>



THREE.

Make orange green

The campus' Switch Your Thinking energy saving campaign helped reduced energy consumption by 5 percent and has saved more than a half-million dollars. That's some serious green.



FOUR.

Stimulating thoughts

Caffeine isn't exactly a new concept, but ways of getting massive doses into the body sure seem to be.



Building multimedia momentum

Weston Wamp steers his father's campaign for governor onto the information superhighway

by GEORGE BROWN

Although he just graduated, Weston Wamp is already using what he has learned at the University of Tennessee to help his father, U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, launch his 2010 gubernatorial campaign. Weston, a spring 2009 communication studies graduate, is supporting his father's bid for Tennessee governor by helping develop the campaign's Web site, ZachWamp.com.

"The way I see it, the most effective and far-reaching statewide Web campaign, maybe in our country's history, is going to be run by a young graduate from the communication studies program here at the University of Tennessee," Weston said. "That says a lot about the program that Dr. John Haas has run over the last several years."

Rep. Wamp will run for governor in the Republican primary against Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam and Shelby County District Attorney General Bill Gibbons. As an example of

the Wamp campaign's digital drive, Weston pointed out that although his father was the third to announce his candidacy for governor, he was the first to launch a campaign Web site. Weston said he wants to use technology to make the campaign more interactive and more personal for voters.

"I directed the design and creation of our Web site with new media being the focus. The site is designed around a high quality, 16x9 widescreen video on the home page that tells my dad's story," Weston explained. "The site is fully interactive and includes a regularly updated blog from my dad, Twitter and Facebook functions, the ability for visitors to sign up for text updates, an 'ask Zach a question' form that allows Tennesseans to voice their concerns and a YouTube integrated ZachTV section."

All of these features are intended to make it easier for voters to get to know Rep. Wamp, especially those in Middle and

“The way I see it, the most effective and far-reaching statewide Web campaign, maybe in our country’s history, is going to be run by a young graduate from the communication studies program here at the University of Tennessee.”

— Weston Wamp

West Tennessee who might not know much about him.

Weston said the Wamp campaign hopes to use the Internet to keep supporters informed, engaged and actively participating in the campaign, in much the same way the Obama campaign did in the 2008 presidential race. Although his father is learning quickly, he sometimes needs a little guidance with these technologies, including the occasional reminder to update his Twitter feed, Weston said. The elder Wamp is very enthusiastic about the advantages new technologies can bring to his campaign.

“By connecting to Tennesseans with new technologies, statewide candidates can be more accessible than ever before, which is the way politics should be,” Rep. Wamp said. “The Web has changed the political landscape significantly since I first ran for Congress in the early 1990s, and as we saw in the last Presidential Election, one of the benefits of the web is that it is beginning to bring young people back into the political process.”

Rep. Wamp has represented Tennessee’s 3rd Congressional District, which includes Chattanooga and Oak Ridge, since 1995. Weston, a Chattanooga native, said that growing up the son of a congressman has its advantages, including meeting notable people such as former presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and Weston’s personal hero, Michael Jordan. Weston plans to start a career in sports management after he graduates, but has not ruled out following in his father’s footsteps with a career in politics someday.

Right: The Zachwamp.com homepage features links to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as well as links to articles from the campaign blog and local media. Zach Wamp currently has about 5,000 friends on Facebook and 2,000 followers on Twitter.

The image shows a screenshot of the 'BACK ZACH ACTION CENTER' website. The header is 'BACK ZACH ACTION CENTER'. Below it is a vertical list of buttons: 'CONTRIBUTE NOW' (red), 'VOLUNTEER' (dark blue), 'GET EMAIL UPDATES' (dark grey), 'GET TEXT UPDATES FROM ZACH' (dark grey), 'TALK TO ZACH' (dark grey), 'JOIN ZACH'S FACEBOOK GROUP' (light grey with Facebook icon), 'FOLLOW ZACH ON TWITTER' (light grey with Twitter icon), and 'ZACH TV' (light grey with YouTube icon). Below the buttons is a section titled 'WHAT THEY ARE SAYING' with a quote from Business TN Magazine about Zach Wamp's political prospects and a 'more...' link. The bottom section is titled 'CAMPAIGN UPDATES' and lists several headlines: 'Campaign Veterans Tout Top Ten Reasons Zach Wamp will be TN's Next Governor', 'Top Ten Reasons Zach Wamp will be the Next Governor of TN', 'Lebanon Democrat: Wamp Wins Wilson County Straw Poll', 'Watch Zach on Good Morning Memphis', and 'Watch Zach on CNN with Rick Sanchez', followed by a 'more ...' link.

BACK ZACH ACTION CENTER

CONTRIBUTE NOW

VOLUNTEER

GET EMAIL UPDATES

GET TEXT UPDATES FROM ZACH

TALK TO ZACH

JOIN ZACH'S FACEBOOK GROUP

FOLLOW ZACH ON TWITTER

ZACH TV

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

"Prominent GOP candidate for Tennessee governor in 2010...Wamp is revered by East Tennessee leaders and widely credited with the creation of the highly successful and significant Tennessee Valley Technology Corridor."

-Business TN Magazine

more...

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

Campaign Veterans Tout Top Ten Reasons Zach Wamp will be TN's Next Governor

Top Ten Reasons Zach Wamp will be the Next Governor of TN

Lebanon Democrat: Wamp Wins Wilson County Straw Poll

Watch Zach on Good Morning Memphis

Watch Zach on CNN with Rick Sanchez

more ...

G.I. JEM

Early mornings, physical training, drill sergeants—balancing ROTC and classes is no boot camp for wimps.

by NANCY ROBINSON

Amanda Hollis huddles up to four people for warmth, a tiny cluster among thousands. It's one of Washington, D.C.'s busiest days and also one of its coldest.

Even so, a pulsing crowd has gathered at the National Mall to watch the inauguration of Barack Obama.

Hollis, a junior in journalism and electronic media at the University of Tennessee, is commander of ROTC's color guard, and she traveled to the nation's capital to march in the 2009 Inaugural Parade behind UT's renowned Pride of the Southland Band.

"There were only five of us chosen from ROTC to go, and we traveled with the band on buses. Friends told me they saw me on TV," she says, her eyes lighting up with the memory. "It was an experience I will never forget, and it will be something I can tell my grandchildren about. It was once in a lifetime for sure."

Back at school, Hollis makes her way across campus in her green and khaki uniform and combat boots with her hair pulled back in a ponytail. While most students are still in sweat pants,

Hollis is anything but camouflaged in class. It's only 8 a.m., but she's already exhausted, having just finished an hour of intense physical training. But, that's nothing new. Hollis and other ROTC cadets begin every morning in Stokely Athletic Center, where ROTC offices and classes are located.

"I rarely ever have free time," she says. "You have to prioritize study time and ROTC time and balance the two." Hollis manages 19 to 20 hours per semester, a mix of journalism classes and ROTC electives, which include outdoor training in ropes courses, combat simulation and land navigation.

Ever since Hollis was editor of her high school yearbook, she has considered pursuing a degree in journalism as a path to opportunities later.

"I think I want to teach middle school, but of course that all depends on how long I plan on staying in the Army," she says. "As a teacher, a journalism degree allows me to teach English, communications and social studies." Her journalism degree may also help her in the Army. "It depends on the job I get, but it will help with communication skills."

Upon graduation in May 2010, Hollis will be commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and will owe eight years of military service.

"This is my country. Why not serve?" she asks. "Most of us (in ROTC) want to do it." Hollis pauses, then makes an observation only a journalist would. "Everyone has his own story why he's here."

The low down on being an ROTC student

Required ROTC Military Science and Leadership Courses:

- 101 "Leadership and Personal Development"
- 103 "Army ROTC Fitness Program"
- 200 "Leader's Training Course"
- 201 "Innovative Team Leadership"
- 202 "Foundations of Tactical Leadership"
- 301 "Leadership and Problem Solving"
- 302 "Leadership and Ethics"
- 400 "National Advanced Leadership Camp"
- 401 "Developing Adaptive Leaders"
- 402 "Officership"
- 430 "U.S. Military History"

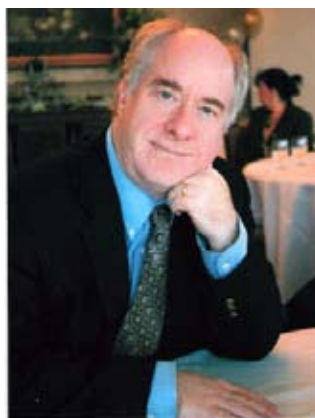
Average ROTC student course load per semester:
19 hours plus Physical Training (PT)





Head of the class

UT professor takes education by the reins
by LAURA ROBERSON



Mark Harmon walks both sides of the education line. He has been a journalism and electronic media professor for 10 years, but has also served as a public education advocate as one of 19 Knox County Commissioners since 2006. He discusses everything from life as 2nd district commissioner to his passion for politics.

First off, give us the basics about the commission.

At full capacity we are at 19. That will be reduced to 11 thanks to one of the charter amendments. Now, there are two from each district, one has three. We are going to have nine, plus two at large.

What area does your district cover?

District 2 is mostly between the interstates. It covers some really great neighborhoods: Fourth and Gill, Old North Knoxville, North Hills, Bell Springhill, Woodland Park area, a little bit of Fountain City, the Inskip area and the Edgewood Park area.

What is the commission's purpose?

It is a rather significant and sometimes frustrating body. It deals with an approximately \$640 million budget. We fund Knox County schools, some local roads, county engineering projects, the Sheriff's Department, libraries, parks and the health department.

Why did you want to be a county commissioner?

I thought our county's priorities were wrong. We weren't doing right by our schools.

What did your campaign look like?

It was a very successful under-the-radar effort, mostly run by my friends and me. I don't think we spent more than \$6,000, probably much less. I walked the district to nearly every household with voters. My first campaign speeches were all about the three S's: school, sprawl and sheriff.

Explain the three S's.

We say great things about schools. Let's give them money as well. For the future of the community, we need better schools and less sprawl. Our whole sense of land use is just encouraged sprawl. And there is too much empire building – excessive gathering of resources, excessive staffing, excessive number of vehicles – especially by the Sheriff's Department. The exercise of power by certain commissioners who were always favorably disposed to a particular department was not being checked.

What was your campaign slogan?

"Because better schools are everybody's business." I mean that literally in every sense. In Knox County, we take a backwards look. We say we'll attract business and then we'll be able to afford good schools. No, you get the good schools first.

How are you improving Knox County schools?

Every commissioner has some discretionary money. I have traditionally given some to schools. In the last budget cycle, I tried to freeze the Sheriff's Department at last year's allocation. Every other office came in at less than last year's, except the Sheriff's Department. I said, "Why don't we freeze you at last year's level, so we can get \$2 million and shift that to the schools?" I was not successful, but I tried desperately.

What are your past experiences in politics?

Many and strange. I've been a political person all my life. At 15, I worked for presidential candidate George McGovern as a youth volunteer. Later in Texas, I became active in the Democratic Party, and I was elected county chair. Then I decided to get crazy, and I made a run for the U.S. Congress 13th District of Texas. I wasn't successful but had a great time trying. I couldn't quite overcome being outspent 28 to 1. Shortly after that I moved to a better job here at the University of Tennessee, helped out a few campaigns and decided to run for the county commission.

How has your media experience affected you as a commissioner?

I'm aware of the gaps in reporting on the county commission. Media are how most people learn about local government. Media affects politics by the things they fail to cover, the stories they miss.

What is the most challenging aspect of being a commissioner?

Trying to move my fellow commissioners to see some of the future challenges that I worry about, especially the sprawl problem. They're just not ready to see it as a major concern.

What is your favorite part of the job?

Those rare moments when someone calls and I can immediately get help to them.

For more information about Harmon or the commission: www.knoxcounty.org/commission/commissioners/mark_harmon.php

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Bright lights, big schedule

Forget the makeup chair, here's a broadcast training reality check.
by SARAH BAKER

Think being a broadcast student is all glamour and glory? We asked journalism and electronic media senior Melissa Priode, president of The Volunteer Channel – University of Tennessee's student television station – to give us a behind-the-scenes peek at her job.

Melissa's typical workday

- A 9 a.m.** After my 8 a.m. class (senior year, lovely) I make my way to the TVC office, which is actually more like a big closet. I usually spend some time answering e-mails before beginning to write the newscast and looking over the CNN feeds we use in our newscast. I will admit this: I have an addiction to checking my e-mail. I probably do it 10 times a day. I am also pretty hooked on Twitter.
- B 11 a.m.** I am taking JEM 460, and we produce "UT Today," a weekly Saturday show on WBIR. I am one of two sports reporters, and I am trying my best to cover obscure UT sports, get personality profiles from athletes and interview people for my sports packages. I have several friends who are in upper-level video production classes. They sometimes need a female for their projects, which means I put my not-so-great acting skills to use. I have found that I am much better at reading a teleprompter than memorizing lines!
- C 12 p.m.** "Hello, and thanks for watching TVC News. I'm Melissa Priode." It's time for the news. If it's a good day, we are on the set early, but most of the time it is a rush to get rundowns finished, scripts printed and the teleprompter ready. I have been doing news since my sophomore year, but sometimes I still get nervous when the red light comes on. I used to get flustered when I messed up, but I have gotten much better about keeping right on going. I always joke with TVC vice president Lauran San Roman that she has to help me out if I start stuttering because it's over after that!
- D 2 p.m.** When I'm not on-air, I help produce our other shows and sometimes direct. My favorite show to direct is "Orange Juice," a show that spotlights student organizations that normally may not get a lot of attention. I also help produce "Hot Topix," a call-in panel show that discusses anything from politics to superpowers!
- E 3 p.m.** I am doing my second practicum at a nonprofit organization, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, in downtown Knoxville. I film and edit videos for its Web site and YouTube page. I would love to have a job exactly like the one I am shadowing: communications and media relations for a nonprofit organization.





E



D



C



A



B

Beltway boogie

Producing for MSNBC keeps JEM alum moving to the media beat

by KATE McCLASKEY

It's been a whirlwind year for Nina Golgowski, a December 2008 graduate of the University of Tennessee's School of Journalism and Electronic Media. A former intern for Knoxville's WVLT-TV and CNN in New York City, Golgowski was prepared to take the media industry by storm, so just one month after graduation, she moved to Washington D.C. to work for political correspondent Norah O'Donnell at MSNBC. Now her days are spent helping with production of the show "MSNBC Live," constantly scanning news headlines and grabbing fish sticks in between. It's all about the details.

7 – 9 a.m.

I wake up and shower, fighting with the broken shower head, which sprays violently in my face. Then the usual morning ritual begins: put up hair in ponytail, take hair down, re-do hair, run through closet, turn on steamer while still fighting with hair and steam pants and shirt (wrinkle free!) I scarf down oatmeal while watching the clock and cleaning up my kitchen. By this time I'm running late because of my hair. After a 20-minute drive listening to Louis Prima and Rihanna, my car stalls because of all the stopped traffic. Finally, I get to work where I print out MSNBC's "First Read" and Mike Allen's "Political Playbook" for Norah O'Donnell. I'm also watching the TV on my desk, reading the show's rundown and scanning through headlines online: some of my favorites are The New York Times, Politico.com, Washington Post.com. I guess you see the pattern.

10 a.m. – noon

Check the rundown for changes and look up wires and online articles to support the stories that will be run in the show. Lunch time -- I eat while I work. Norah surprises me and asks for all my information on the stimulus package. The thing is, I usually present this to her by 1:15 at the latest. Agh!

1 – 3 p.m.

I get the stimulus and economy information to her in time and finish putting together her usual A-F blocs, time segments on the show. Phew! But then I realize more information is needed for the F bloc where Norah has two guests ...so I keep looking online. Meanwhile, I receive two great articles by a woman who contacted me a little while ago, a poll by The Washington Post and a chart comparing the House and Senate's bills in by Congressional Quarterly. In the process, I also learn how to use the photocopier. Then, using Excel, I create a program rundown that I will distribute upstairs to floor staff.



That's where the makeup, floor director, audio, etc. are. Norah asks me to escort her upstairs. Of course I'm not ready to head up there, so I dash back down to my office to finish my work once she's situated in makeup. I hurry back up to the studio to get the scripts for the A and B bloc printed on time. At 2:50, the scripts are printed and put in labeled files on the anchor desk and Norah's on air! I watch the wires to see if there's anything important coming through, and during commercials I take her the next bloc's scripts.

4 – 5 p.m.

I escort Norah back to her office, carrying her purse and research from the show. Once back in her office, we discuss a story she's doing for the "Today" show tomorrow morning on Jill Biden, so I go collect some additional articles on that. About an hour later I update the program's rundown to show the schedule we followed, and I then place this copy with the day's research in an "organized" stack. That's the last step of my day. I should be able to leave now... but where's Norah? She's not in her office so I don't feel safe to get up and leave. Finally at 5:30 I hear from Norah and a producer who say I can leave! So I pack up my desk, exit the building to the parking lot and finish the remainder of the Rihanna CD on my drive home. Traffic's horrific and this man in a Jaguar cuts me off.

6 – 8 p.m.

Once home I boil water for pasta and, yes, make fish sticks on the side (I eat what I want). After I finish my meal and clean up, I head downstairs to my bedroom where I get on the floor with my laptop to finish writing the last portion of an essay for graduate school. It's due tonight at midnight! Bret, my boyfriend, picks me up at the house at 8 p.m. and takes me to the movie "Slumdog Millionaire." Now I'm on a date. What I do here is none of your business!

Three's Company

New developments at CCI provide students tools to converge
by LIZ PEACOCK

With today's plummeting economy and expanding technologies, journalism and electronic media students are facing a new type of test: can they rise to the challenges of an increasingly demanding journalistic world? Three recent developments at UT point to "yes."

iTunes U and Blogs

Technology specialists at the University of Tennessee's Innovative Technology Center are working to provide JEM students with the precise, up-to-date technology they need to succeed in and out of the classroom. Case in point are the new features that have been added to Blackboard, a Web site that allows faculty to distribute assignments, materials and online activities to students. Students can access iTunes U, a Blackboard-linked Web site that houses podcasts and allows teachers to post audio links recorded during class. Gina Phipps, manager of instructional design and development at ITC, says some students use this feature to share their work with each other. "Journalism students who are studying broadcast can put their videos on [iTunes U]."

Such additions give students the convergence experience happening in today's newsrooms. Michael Burke, technology integration specialist at ITC, says because technology and media are always growing and changing, "journalists are no longer writing for print or the Web, but doing both." Blackboard's new blog feature allows students to gain valuable experience writing for the Web, making them more well-rounded, technologically relevant journalists.

Intercollegiate Online News Network (ICONN)

JEM students at UT also can utilize invaluable tools from the Intercollegiate Online News Network (ICONN), a wire service and network of campus news Web sites founded in January by JEM professor Jim Stovall. After creating the School of Journalism and Electronic Media's online news Web site, the Tennessee Journalist (TNJN.com), and establishing Ochs as its content management system in 2006, Stovall decided to share the university's growing Internet success with other universities. "What's happening here isn't happening in many other places," Stovall explains. In January, he met with a group of professional and academic journalists from around the country to develop and implement ICONN. Stovall thinks

the creation of a network like ICONN will advance both the students' and the educators' journalism capabilities. "It would give these people who exist on journalism faculties an organization they can join and come together," Stovall says.

The Scripps Convergence Lab

After recently receiving a grant from the E.W. Scripps Co., the College of Communication and Information brainstormed to come up with the idea of the Scripps Convergence Communication and Information Lab, a space for undergraduate students to work on converging media. John McNair, director of technology for CCI, says the college is trying to use the initial grant to provide a space and infrastructure conducive to media convergence. "The brainpower, the successes, the innovations, will come from students and faculty," McNair says. "The specific devices will be constantly changing as we use laptops and iPods and audio and video recorders and GPS tools and things we haven't seen yet."

The lab will be housed on the third level of CCI, which McNair says would provide a view he hopes will inspire students. "The top floor space with views out onto Circle Park and to the football stadium and river help reflect the importance of those initiatives and the work done, and yet to be done," he says. McNair hopes the lab will be available to JEM students by this fall.

As Web-based journalism and expanding technologies permanently alter traditional media, UT is working to provide its JEM students with the tools they need to succeed in tomorrow's media.



JEM students learn the cyber-ropes of a live broadcast with TNJN Radio's Triple Threat Sports Talk..

A hitchhiker's guide to the cyber-galaxy

Don't panic! Traveling abroad doesn't mean unplugging. It's a chance to expand your technology horizons.

by JOHN FAULKNER

The arrival of the 21st century signaled more than the beginning of a new millennium. It ushered in an era of technological takeover, as innovative media outlets blossomed and people became constantly connected on a global scale. With this technological boom came an unforeseen side effect: a drastic change in the way we travel.

Blogging

Scrapbooks and photo albums are no longer the only ways for travelers to tell their stories. Internet blogging is being embraced by tourists, students studying abroad and mobile journalists as a way to let the world know about their adventures. "I loved blogging...If people wanted to see what was going on in my life, they could do so on their own time," Emily Brewer, a Maryville College student who has studied abroad in Malta, Tunisia and Belfast, says.

Blogs offer a way to reach a much larger audience than traditional storytelling. "It gets tiring telling the same stories over and over again to different people," Brewer says. Not only are travelers using blogs to keep friends and family posted on their experiences, students studying abroad are using them for educational purposes. Mobile journalists have even found them to be an outlet for posting stories while miles away from a newsroom.

"We're moving towards a pervasive information world," John McNair, director of technology for the University of Tennessee's College of Communication and Information, says. The tools used by journalists are the same tools used by a vacationer. Anybody can start a blog, for whatever purpose, be it for news, travel or both. Many Web sites designed for posting blogs can be accessed for free.

Facebook

While some travelers prefer blogging, others may struggle to keep their sites constantly updated. "I did have a blog, but I must admit my blog entries weren't very consistent," Anne Whitworth, a senior in journalism and electronic media at UT who studied abroad in Austria, says. "I just couldn't get in the habit of updating often enough for it to really [be] a good method of communicating."

For travelers like Whitworth and Brewer, online social networking Web sites like Facebook.com offer a more casual, use-at-your-leisure mode of communication. A user can

post digital photos on Facebook, and the site alerts friends and family via the "newsfeed" of any new material. "I posted all of my pictures on Facebook," Brewer says. Photos can be organized into albums, and anyone who appears in the picture can be identified by "tagging" that person. Facebook also offers a messaging service similar to e-mail that allows users to communicate back and forth. There is even a chat function that allows users to talk to one another with text messages in real time.

New technologies also are making it easy to access sites like Facebook from anywhere at anytime. Wireless Internet access is just as good as wired, McNair says. Most hotels in the U.S. offer free Wi-Fi (wireless Internet) to their guests. Across the pond, Brewer says some hostels offer communal computers, or travelers can gain access at Internet cafes.

Skype

Before the development of the Internet, an international phone call was a tedious and expensive undertaking. With the release of Skype in 2003, phone calls all over the world are easy and cheap. Skype is software that allows the user to make phone calls over the Internet to other Skype users using landlines and mobile phones. "I would say Skype is a must for people going away for any length of time," Brewer says. "It's good to hear familiar voices and see familiar faces." In addition to the calling features, Skype offers video calls and instant messaging over the Internet, but some of the additional Skype options do have minimal fees. Skype's programming is cross-platform, meaning it can be used on a variety of operating systems, including PCs, Macs, mobile OS for smartphones and even Sony PSPs can run Skype.

Skype is not the only Internet phone line. "My friend set up a GrandCentral phone number for me," Whitworth says. GrandCentral is an Internet-based phone service owned by search-engine giant Google. The service functions much like Skype and offers the ability to forward phone calls to computer terminals. "I was able to reach my family members at times that were convenient for them, and it didn't cost me a dime," Whitworth says.

Smartphones

Sometimes when traveling it is just as difficult to



Twitter allows your fingers to do the talking to friends and family across the globe. Did we mention, it's fast and free?

communicate with the locals as it is to stay in touch with the folks at home. However, handheld devices, like Apple's iPhone, are helping bridge language gaps and navigate foreign lands. Apple offers a variety of programs, or "apps," to customize the device.

Can't find a cab? Download the Rocket Taxi app and search from a database of nearly 20,000 taxi companies. If you hail a cab and don't speak the driver's language, download the Babelingo app. Babelingo translates simple phrases and displays them in large text on the phone's screen. Just show the screen to the taxi driver and you're on your way. Also available are apps for tracking flight departure and arrival times, a Wi-Fi finder, and GPS maps and directions.

"I used my cell phone a lot," Brewer says. "It was nice to have [it] for when [my group] got separated and needed to meet up again, which happened a lot."

Still to Come

All of these devices and programs are offering modern solutions to various problems with communication away from home, but these new technologies do have their drawbacks. While Skype is very popular, "Most of the people I know used Skype, and though it's cheap, it does cost money," Whitworth says. Furthermore, Whitworth and Brewer expressed problems with using handheld GPS devices in foreign cities, but both found them useful for European road trips. So while the Internet has sped up communication from pony express rates to real time, there is room for improvement. Travelers still will get lost or lonely. Perhaps the tech masterminds bringing us all these new devices and programs can find a way to transport our friends and family to join us in our international adventures. To paraphrase Captain Kirk, "Beam us up, Scotty!"



The Science of Journalism

Dr. Mark Littmann takes his students where the action is: outside the classroom.

by NANCY ROBINSON

It's a Thursday afternoon in mid-February, and Mark Littmann is driving a UT van packed with 10 of his students down a gravel road in the backwoods near Kingston, Tenn. In his khaki jacket and glasses, Littmann looks more like a detective than a science journalism professor. Eager, concentrated, resolute.



The scene at the Kingston Plant: two months after the largest fly ash spill in America's history.

Photo by Katie Hogin



You've heard the expression that journalism is the first rough draft of history," Littmann says. "So we reach for a little part of the truth and try to get it right."

Some of Littmann's "Environmental Writing" and "Writing about Science and Medicine" class field trips:

- Zeb Mountain Coal Mine
- TVA Wind Turbines on Buffalo Mountain
- TVA Bull Run Fossil (Power) Plant
- TVA Coal Ash Spill
- University of Tennessee Medical Center
- University of Tennessee Veterinary Teaching Hospital
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory
- Hiwassee Bird Refuge
- Royal Blue Chip Mill
- Whitaker Water (Purification) Plant
- Kuwahee Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Chestnut Ridge Landfill
- Rock-Tenn Recycling Facility
- Second Creek as it flows into the Tennessee River
- Ijams Nature Center

Nothing is stopping this van—not the missing back seat that warrants a visit to the maintenance staff, not the guide who's gone missing in action, not the fluorescent "Do Not Enter" signs Littman and his students pass, and definitely not any of the health risks said to be looming in the air.

No, Littmann, with his students bouncing in the seats behind him, is determined to get his "Writing about Science, Technology and Medicine" class to the coal ash spill, Tennessee Valley Authority's freshly famous catastrophe at the Kingston Fossil Plant just west of Knoxville in Harriman, Tenn.

"We're adventurous!" he says, before turning right when the van reaches a fork in the road.

Talking about the field trip, Littmann says: "If I don't hear from TVA—because they're just overrun by all kinds of governmental and official visitors demanding to see the site—Chris Martin knows the back roads, and we're going to get in a van and use his knowledge and navigate in and see what we can see without official guides."

Chris Martin is a community organizer, one of Littmann's advisees and a respected science journalism student.

Martin himself said of Littmann and the coal ash spill trip: "He wants to figure out a way that we can go. TVA won't let him. And the group I work with, United Mountain Defense, is saying they wouldn't let anybody in without double filtration gas masks and everything."

And so here they are, with Martin sitting in the front seat, holding a map while deciding both impulsively and instinctively which roads Littmann should follow. No one in the van is pushing a double filtration gas mask to his or her face, but tension is in the air and it never really goes away.

"I think I'm getting a headache," jokes journalism student Nate Metcalf before they've even arrived. When they do, another student tugging at the scarf around her neck pauses before opening the van door. "You first!" says classmate Shane Morton. "I can feel a difference," one student with asthma says seriously.

All the while Martin is delivering a pre-arrival speech. "Residents are experiencing a whole range of respiratory problems. They call it the 'Harriman Hack' and the 'Kingston Cough.'" Then Martin says something about "nuclear waste" and whoever has been looking out the window turns his head as Martin concludes with: "Nobody seems to understand coal is just as toxic and coal is just as deadly."

So what about the passengers? "A few hours of exposure won't be that bad," Martin says. And it's all in a day's work for Littmann.

The Dr. Mark Littmann Show

Littmann, who is the Julia G. and Alfred G. Hill Chair

of Excellence in Science, Technology and Medical Writing and director of the University of Tennessee Science Communication program since 1991, has taken his three science journalism classes—"Writing about Science, Technology and Medicine," "Environmental Reporting" and "Science Writing as Literature"—on field trips since he began teaching.

His science writing courses are legendary for their unique complexity. This intricacy derives from the genre's requirements to use both the left-brain and the right brain at the same time. "I've never met somebody who's so interdisciplinary. He's into sciences, he's into letters...He loves old English poetry. In some of the classes he would recite some old ancient Anglican verse. I like how he can bring all this thought about literative narrative to science reporting, like how you can make this a compelling story instead of just the hard facts," Martin says.

While Littmann got his bachelor's degree in chemistry and literature, his master's degree in creative writing and his doctorate in English, it was his experience as director of Hansen Planetarium in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he wrote star shows for 18 years, that fueled his passion for science writing. "I always thought that a lot could be done with the theatricality of planetarium star theaters—it's dark, there are stars, people 'ohh' and 'ahh.' They can still be educational and inspiring," he says.

Science journalism is nothing new, but it's rare and oftentimes uncharted territory. "You see attempts at science writing throughout American history, but it's sporadic. And sometimes it's good and some-

times it isn't," Littmann says. "People began to realize as America became a scientific and engineering giant, particularly in the early days of the 20th century, that they were going to have to do a better job explaining science to the public."

The Science Communication program at UT, established in 1987, owes its existence primarily to the rich environmental and scientific opportunities around East Tennessee, such as the Appalachian Mountains and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Covering such a broad spectrum, Littmann's courses attract students of all majors and require no prerequisites. "So many students know that there's writing, but they don't think much about writing about something they love, like science," he says. He considers this and leans forward. "Imagine an engineer in this group who knows how to write? I mean it's so rare. [Non-journalism] students feel very nervous about their science writing coming in, yet at the same time a lot of the journalism students feel nervous about their knowledge of science. You put the two of them together and all of a sudden magic happens. They help each other."

The essence of science journalism—taking the complicated nature of the fields of science, medicine and engineering and helping the public understand it—is what Littmann hopes his students capture. Field trips, where they can see, hear and question for themselves, are one of the ways he does it.

Littmann takes his classes on various trips each semester. "We've been to all kinds of places," he says. "We try different things, a little different each year." Past field trips have

"We want to go there and see for ourselves. We don't want to sit in our offices and make telephone calls and write e-mails," Littmann says.





"I will never forget Buffalo Mountain because of how the clouds began canvassing the landscape, creeping ever so slowly as they attempted to consume the turbines one at a time," former student Beverly Adams says.

included visits to a bird refuge ("Watch the Sandhill Cranes come in on their migration, numbers of them like you didn't know existed"), Royal Blue chip mill ("It doesn't seem to be so controversial anymore"), a sewage treatment plant ("I mean it's not exactly what you spend all your life craving to do, but we take it for granted don't we?"), and a garbage dump and landfill ("Ha ha, what glorious other places do you have in mind?").

Littmann's annual trips are taken right in Knoxville's backyard and include Oak Ridge National Laboratory, UT Medical Center, Zeb Mountain and Buffalo Mountain.

Beauty in the Wind

Littmann's class has gone to Buffalo Mountain, home to TVA's 18 wind turbines, four times over the past several years. "The first time we went there were only three [turbines]," Littmann says. "[Buffalo Mountain] is positively awesome. Particularly because we always seem to get up there and the weather is a little odd." Indeed, the weather seems to be the most memorable experience on Buffalo Mountain.

Martin describes the journey. "It was rainy, misty, and the

wind was moving all these clouds. The wind turbines, they make a sound like whales when they turn back and forth, and they have sensors that tell them which way the wind is blowing," he says. "So you've got all these different windmills that are turning really slowly. I remember coming up in a little UT van, and suddenly we get to the top of the hill and it's like the wind turbines just swooped up. It was just the most surreal thing because they were making that whale sound and turning back and forth and there was all the mist."

Other students also remember the experience with reverence.

"I will never forget Buffalo Mountain because of how the clouds began canvassing the landscape, creeping ever so slowly as they attempted to consume the turbines one at a time. It was almost right out of a horror movie," says Beverly Adams, who took science writing with Littmann in fall 2008.

But poetics aside, it's the science professionals who give the trips an element of realism, and an important part of each field trip is communicating face-to-face with professionals. At Buffalo Mountain, both TVA's communications direc-

tor and wind engineer have taken the class on tours. “You can tell the wind engineer just had this twinkle in his eye and was so in love with the concept of how this could be the future,” Martin says. And this is Littmann’s teaching goal for his students: to recognize passion, be inspired by it, and react in a spirit of understanding.

“We want to go there and see for ourselves. We don’t want to sit in our offices and make telephone calls and write e-mails,” Littmann says. “Because if we go to see for ourselves we know more questions to ask. And that’s the heart of, it seems to me, any kind of reporting, and certainly environmental reporting and science reporting: that we see for ourselves and ask the people involved in it.”

Confronting Controversy

It’s all about objectivity through experience. Almost all of Littmann’s field trips are to controversial places in East Tennessee. Take Zeb Mountain coal mine for example, which Littmann has taken his Environmental Reporting class to for four years.

“I think our most notable field trip, in terms of controversy and in terms of seeing things other people don’t get a chance to see, is probably the Zeb Mountain coal mine,” Littmann says. Operated by the National Coal Corporation, Zeb Mountain in Campbell County is the largest surface coal and mountaintop removal mining site in Tennessee. It’s the source of heated, publicized dispute between citizens, environmentalists and the coal mining industry in Appalachia. Even actress Ashley Judd has raised awareness on mountaintop removal and discussed the issue with Oprah and Anderson Cooper.

“They take the mountaintop and move it. Then when they’re done mining the coal, they pick it up and put it back. And the weird thing about it is, because it’s not very firmly packed before they mine, when they put it back the mountain is actually taller than it is before.” Littmann raises an eyebrow and leans forward. “Isn’t that weird?” he says. “And the mountain is in the same contours, every little boulder exactly where it was before.”

Littmann remembers a time the environmental director took them on top of the mountain to observe the mining going on all around. “We stand up there, surrounded by 100-ton dump trucks whose wheels are taller than this ceiling, giant shovels and bulldozers, and here’s this denuded land and mountaintop that’s flattened and so forth. And he says, ‘Look around. Isn’t it ugly?’” He pauses, adding an air of significance to his words. “And it is. And his point is that they’re responsible for, by Tennessee law, being very careful about things. And so they do rebuild the mountain.”

Throughout the years, Littmann and his class have observed changes at Zeb Mountain. “Before, if they were going to do any restoration, they just threw some grass seeds out and that was it. But now they’ve got little plantations with trees growing, testing to see what trees grow best, using native trees, native grasses and so forth. So it’s all being documented very scientifically.”

Suddenly Littmann realizes he’s talking about something extreme-

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ly contentious. “Well, I mean, am I trying to make a case for mountaintop mining? No, I’m not trying to do that,” he says. “Now what’s interesting is that there are a lot of protesters, and they are confined to standing outside screaming, and sometimes chaining themselves to equipment and blocking the gate and that sort of thing, which is their prerogative,” he says. “But what’s really neat for my students is that we can go up the mountain with experts, we can talk to the miners, we can see the blasting going on, we see for ourselves, we take pictures, we ask questions.”

One of those protesters is Martin, who’s taken three science communication courses with Littmann. Sitting at a table in the back of The Golden Roast coffee shop, Martin sips on a latte and flips through The New York Times. It’s Monday and nearly 11 a.m. but Martin moves slowly, his eyes still heavy. He frequently rubs his goateed chin, as if lost in deep thought.

“Dr. Littmann knew that the previous summer I was arrested at a protest there, so he [began emphasizing] that we get much better access if you go as a journalist instead of an activist.” Now Martin’s been both, but only as a journalist did he get to meet the site manager. Of the encounter, Martin said, “I think he may have recognized me but he didn’t say anything.”

He remembers the ground shaking. “They were blasting when we were up there. It feels like an earthquake, really weird. Because they plunge however many tons of nitroglycerin down like, I don’t know, 20 feet, 20 yards under the Earth and then just detonate it.” He makes an exploding sound to demonstrate. “It’s the weirdest feeling.”

Still, Martin’s favorite trip is Buffalo Mountain and the wind turbines “because I’d already been to Zeb Mountain several times.” Enter the protest and arrest.

That noted, an athletic-looking young man stops at the table. “Did I overhear that you’re doing a story on mountaintop removal?” He introduces himself as Sam, and he and Martin engage in small talk about an upcoming bike ride to lobby for the Tennessee Scenic Vistas Protection Act, a bill to end moun-

taintop removal coal mining in Tennessee. They shake hands, and Sam leaves. Martin is rubbing his chin again, staring off. “It’s a huge thing.”

And now, back at the Kingston Plant coal ash spill, Littmann and his class are on perhaps the most controversial, exciting, privileged trip yet. The van whizzes by signs that read “Free Water Testing” and “Affordable Health Insurance.”

“Now look to your right here folks,” Littmann says. “You can see some of the equipment. You can see the big pile of coal right over there.”

Soon, the van approaches a road blocked by a truck. The driver, in a lime green vest and yellow hard hat, gets out and strolls up to the van. Littmann rolls down his window. “Hi. We’re from the University of Tennessee. We’re a group of science writers. We’d like to just look and come right back out.”

The man shakes his head. “Can’t let you go.”

“Ah, too bad. Is there a good viewing point nearby?” Littmann asks. Saying nothing, the man points to a hill, and before long they are there.

Atop the hill sits a little white Methodist chapel, empty and silent. In front of it is a graveyard—where the class stands, looking out at numerous yellow machines swiveling about a massive clump of gray, less than 100 feet away. There’s something eerie about viewing the ash spill from a graveyard, and everyone seems to notice. It’s silent, except for the wind, which is blowing unusually hard.

As the group stands overlooking the spill, something Littmann said a month before the trip seems prescient:

“A scientist will tell you he never knows the absolute truth, he’s just reaching towards it, finding little pieces of it that seem to be the truth. And probably journalism is that way, too. You’ve heard the expression that journalism is a first rough draft of history. So we reach for a little part of the truth and try to get it right.”

“A scientist will tell you he never knows the absolute truth, he’s just reaching towards it, finding little pieces of it that seem to be true. And probably journalism is that way, too.”



The UT grads stop to take a group shot the day before they depart Kauai, Hawaii, for the mainland. From left to right: Tracy Sabo, Rob Turner, Risa Saslow, John Wood, Gina Jones and Mark Jones.



Keeping it together

A group of broadcast alums don't stop believing in journeys together

by ASHLEY J. CERASARO

Big Bunny Bond

Tracy Sabo, a senior producer for CNN's Dallas bureau, is covering a vicious hurricane on the Texas coast when she receives an e-mail on her BlackBerry. John Wood, the vice president of celebrity booking at E! Networks, and Risa Saslow, a producer for "Extreme Makeover Home Edition," are worried about celebrities who cheat on their partners and are wondering if Sabo has heard about the latest scandal. They're also curious if she's seen "The Young & The Restless" in the last 10 years, because they don't think it's what it used to be. Sabo stands in jealous awe of how removed they are from this personal nightmare she is witnessing. She responds to the e-mail explaining she hasn't slept in 48 hours, eaten in 15, and has no idea where she will be sleeping that night. She ends the e-mail, "Who's in for a virtual Big Bunny Run?"

In the early 1990s, a half dozen University of Tennessee students regularly drove 30 miles to buy a drink they called the Big Bunny. It was Wood, a Maryville native, who introduced the Mountain Dew and Pepsi combination slush to his broadcasting buddies. Sabo worked with Wood at All News 850, UT's AM radio station, and she says he frequently talked about needing a Big Bunny. One day, he took his friends along to the South Knoxville BP gas station's Kenjo Market where they sold the 32-ounce syrupy beverage. "It became something the rest of us couldn't live without, either," she says.

Thus became the ritual of friends piling into a car and driving to Kenjo Market to satisfy their Big Bunny craving. These Big Bunny Runs, as they were later coined, helped shape the relationship these journalism alumni still share today. "It was just to get away from what was a lot of work and a lot of studying," Sabo says, "but looking back on it, I think ... the really important thing was that we were all doing something that was just



Award-winning athlete Jangy Addy takes a moment to stretch before hitting the track. Could a 2012 Olympic bid be in the works? GKAG

The Travelers

1. Tracy Sabo--“The Organizer” lives in Dallas, Texas and works in CNN’s Dallas bureau as a senior producer. Tracy has been obsessed with travel since the 10th grade, and now she travels for both leisure and breaking news coverage.

2. Risa Saslow--“The Social Butterfly” has been known to sport a temporary butterfly tattoo on her ankle on beach vacations. Risa lives in Los Angeles and produces the family vacation segment of “Extreme Make-over Home Edition.”

3. Gina Jones--“The Enthusiast” recently moved to Los Angeles with her husband, Mark. Gina is a director of broadcast marketing for Walt Disney Records and has won an Emmy for her work on the Disney Christmas Parade that airs on ABC.

4. Mark Jones--“The Karaoke King” is married to Gina Jones. Mark is the manager of services for the Guests with Disabilities Department at Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. He has performed karaoke in cruise ship talent shows as well as at neighborhood bars in Hawaii. His friends are his biggest fans.

4. John Wood--“Mr. Laid Back” lives in Los Angeles. He is the vice president of the celebrity booking department at E! Networks. John is always the first person on the dance floor to break out a move he calls “The Helicopter.”

5. Rob Turner--“The Photographer” lives in Los Angeles. John was president of AERho his senior year, and now he is an account executive at CBS. On group vacations, John takes pictures every day and posts them online immediately.

A Conventional Beginning

fun and just camaraderie-building.”

Those convenience store trips were the first of many travel adventures together. In the fall of 1990, the friends were active in AERho, UT’s chapter of the National Broadcasting Society, and they traveled to conventions in Los Angeles, Atlanta, Washington and St. Louis. “We went on these trips together as a chapter, and it was a blast,” Saslow says. “I mean, what’s better than chilling with your friends? It was both school and fun at the same time.”

Journalism and electronic media professor Sam Swan, the group’s adviser, organized trips for them to New York to visit the networks and to Atlanta to tour CNN. “I think our group was so eager and so excited to be successful,” Sabo says. “Dr. Swan was a great leader to recognize that excitement and to not squash it by keeping us locally in Knoxville to do internships.” Sabo says they soaked up every opportunity Swan gave them to share their common passions: broadcasting and travel. “The access that Dr. Swan provided was fantastic, and we all bonded as a result of that,” Sabo says. “I think that’s what got us all traveling together.”

In fact, the broadcasting buddies enjoyed traveling together so much they started taking trips apart from AERho in 1990. “We realized we could travel so easily together that we start-

ed thinking, ‘Why are we only limiting this to broadcasting trips? We ought to go somewhere fun together and forget about work for awhile,’” Sabo says.

The friends started going on weekend camping trips or renting a chalet in the Smoky Mountains. Sabo remembers getting lost on the way to their first camping trip, because they were talking and missed the turn. “We were in Cherokee, N.C., by the time we realized we passed it. So after turning around and going back, it was dark, and we had to put up the tent in the pitch black.”

When holiday breaks rolled around, the friends went on longer trips, such as beach vacations at Hilton Head, S.C., a trip to Saslow’s hometown of Cincinnati, visits to New Orleans and several trips to Florida for Tennessee football bowl games.

Sabo says her older sister lived in New Orleans, so she grew up going to Mardi Gras and was always begging the crew to go with her, which they finally did. She says she thinks Wood got the biggest kick out of the celebration. “He fit in really well with the character of Bourbon Street when he broke out the ‘helicopter’ dance move in the middle of the street - or in any bar that we entered with music, for that matter.”

Keeping the gang together

As the friends began graduating in 1992 and their career paths led them in different directions, their college trips came to an end. However, Sabo says their strong bond and love of travel kept them close. And group vacations were also the easiest way to maintain their friendship. “We still live our separate lives, and we have our separate careers, and we touch base at least several times a week on e-mails,” she says. “But to really keep up with each other and ... to stay current with everything that’s going on in each other’s lives, that’s what’s important. And I think travel is the best way to do that.” So in 2000, when Sabo invited some of her friends, including her old college pals, to join her in Cancun, Wood hopped on board. He had never been to Mexico and knew he would have a good time since Sabo was planning the trip. “Unfortunately, the whole gang didn’t make the Cancun trip, but the idea was born: annual reunion vacations.”

Sabo says the friends try to make reunion

trips a priority every year now. She says Gina Jones, director of broadcast marketing for Walt Disney Records, and Rob Turner, an account executive at CBS, usually begin the process by e-mailing the group to see if they want to go somewhere warm or cold. After tossing around destination ideas, Sabo takes the top three picks and starts looking at specific properties for pricing. “There are jokes that I am their best travel agent,” she laughs.

In 2006, the UT alums chose to visit Hawaii and made new memories hiking down a treacherous waterfall trail, zip lining and taking a helicopter tour of the island. They spent their last night at a luau drinking, dancing and laughing. As they watched the luau dancers perform, Jones turned to Saslow and burst into tears. “I thought, ‘What is the matter?’” Saslow says. “And Gina says, ‘I’m just so happy just being together with all of my friends. I wish we all lived together again.’” Jones says her tears were genuine. “I just got really emotional be-

cause [of] the thought of having to leave all my friends. ...We have a very special bond and connection, so it was just a bittersweet moment for me, because we had so much fun, and we were having to leave the next day.” Saslow says the luau is one of her fondest vacation

memories. “It was like no time had passed, and the emotion from Gina was just so meaningful,” she says. “Because we do love being together, and that’s why the trips are so fun, and that’s why everybody shows up.”



Rob Turner and Tracy Sabo admire Kauai's green mountains while on a helicopter tour of the Hawaiian island.

Some *Destinations*:

- Cancun, Mexico--2000
- Caribbean Cruise--2002
- Knoxville, Tennessee--2003
- Dallas--2004
- Dallas--2005
- Kauai, Hawaii--2006
- Palm Springs, Florida--2006
- Alaska Cruise--2008
- Costa Rica--2009?

Perils of Professionalism

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the entire gang can't make every trip. “Every once and awhile, we lose one [person] for a year for various reasons,” Sabo says. Saslow adds, “Everybody has different jobs, and our industry is very demanding. I’m one of the most difficult ones. I’m the least able to commit that far in advance.”

Sabo says she is lucky because CNN gives her a lot of vacation days, but her job is a 24-hour commitment. If breaking news happens, she has to be there to cover it. For instance, when the friends reunited in Knoxville for Alumni Weekend this past fall, Sabo had to back out at the last minute to cover Sarah Palin in Alaska during campaign season. “I actually had the travel booked, and I was ready to go,” she says. “[But] this business, especially the news and entertainment business, is a 24/7-commitment, and holidays are not always holidays, and even these vacations I take can be taken away in a minute, if something big breaks and I have to fly back home.”

Despite these hurdles, Sabo says they are lucky because everyone considers their reunion vacations a priority. And if someone chooses not to go for a particular reason, Sabo says that person will be so annoyed by Turner’s daily dissemination of vacation photos that they’ll make sure to come next time.

While the group hasn’t chosen its next destination, Turner says there has been some discussion. “Someone has talked about going to Costa Rica this year,” he says. “So a few of us are like, ‘Oh wow, we’d like to go there.’ We’ve never been there, so we might...”

But the friends aren’t as concerned with the destination as they are about the people who go. “It doesn’t matter where we go as long as we’re all together,” Saslow says. “I swear I don’t say that just to sound cheesy. It’s the truth.” Wood says they can have fun anywhere

“You could put us in middle America, Boringsville, USA, and we would find fun in it,” he laughs.

In fact, the friends have so much fun on their vacations they say the most difficult part is when the trips end. “It’s tough to say goodbye,” Wood says. “You get really attached to everybody again.”

While their vacations must end, they know their friendship never will. “If we’re having a bad day at work, we would e-mail each other, ‘Virtual Big Bunny Run: how about now?’ And everybody would respond back, ‘I’m in. I’m in. Let’s go,’” Sabo laughs. “It was just something to get through the day, and something we all shared that kind of brought us back to youth when life was simple and a Big Bunny could solve all the world’s problems.”



The traveling alums let ‘er rip at a recent homecoming game.

Me

In today's fast-paced world, media for the masses are no longer enough. Many media consumers demand their technologyies know and match their every mood, ushering in a new era of news capitalizing on the "me" in media. "[Personalization] has been a long time holy grail for news media sites...It's the idea people should have the ability to choose,"



Jack Lail,

director of news innovation at the Knoxville News Sentinel, says. "A lot of people say 'no pickle' when they order a hamburger. People have different tastes."

Pickle or no pickle, the media menu appears to have gone completely a la carte. Thanks to the Internet, the practice of waiting for the newspaper to arrive on your doorstep or even for breaking news to race across CNN's crawl seems almost

**KEY
TERMS
you
should
know**

Beta — software that has completed its alpha testing stage and has been released to users as a prototype before its official unveiling

e-reader — a device that uses electronic-ink technology on a low power screen to deliver digital content in a style similar to print media

Media

It seems Burger King was right. You can

“have it your way,”

at least when it comes to media consumption.

by LAURA ROBERSON

a nostalgic notion. Yes, people still want to know, but they want to know now. “I literally don’t read print any more because I don’t have to,” Scott Taylor, a 1990 University of Tennessee graduate, says. “There’s literally nothing I can read in the newspaper...or in a magazine that I can’t get online.” And with the introduction of more individualized media technology, news consumers want their media catered exactly to their liking.

What began as a trend towards customization — selecting homepage preferences, adding local weather to your Web site, changing the color of your Internet background — has evolved into something far more involved: full-scale media personalization. “Customization is giving users what they’ve told you they want,” Cormac Foster, an analyst for

the Knoxville-based Jupiter Communications research firm, said in an interview with The New York Times. “Personalization is anticipating what they want.”

Lower overhead means Internet Web sites have led the way in media personalization, but a profit-driven market has forced even traditional media outlets to jump on the personalization bandwagon. Welcome to the era of iMedia.

Feed-ing Frenzy

Internet news Web sites have kissed the traditional concept of gatekeeper goodbye. Instead, readers are playing editor, choosing what they want to read and when they want to read it. “It is not going to be us and them,”

Widget — (window + gadget) a portable sequence of code embedded in an HTML-based Web page that activates user-selected applications, like page hit counters, games or news feeds

Aggregator — a Web site collecting syndicated Internet content in a single location from multiple Web sites

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) Feeds — Web-based news feeds providing subscribers frequently updated content



Jigsha Desai,

continuous news editor for the Knoxville News Sentinel's Web site knoxnews.com, says. "It's going to be us helping to foster the conversation."

Media powerhouses like The New York Times are taking charge. The Times' Web site (www.nytimes.com) offers a personalization platform called MyTimes, still in its Beta stage, which allows users to choose headlines from a number of news Web sites and arrange them on a single page. However, because most readers say they do want to know what Times editors consider newsworthy, a totally customizable homepage is not an option.

Although the media personalization conversation initially focused on customized homepages, Desai says it has since taken a different direction. The push for personalization is now centered more around personalized content rather than personalized presentation. News Web sites allow the reader to take control through comment features, such as search alerts that notify them when an article about a specified topic is posted or through Really Simple Syndication feeds.

Free, user-selected RSS feeds provide content or summaries of content, often with links to full versions of the stories, and are constantly updated as new articles become available. "We're creating the tools that allow you to create your own homepage wherever you want, instead of having to go to our site," Lail says. "That page might be Facebook. It might be Google. [The RSS feed] is a pretty old tool, but it has turned out to be a pretty effective tool."

Knoxnews.com offers RSS feeds for each of its sections and also has feeds specifically for video, photography and each reporter's stories. These feeds may be posted on blogs, social networking sites or Internet homepages like iGoogle or My Yahoo. By subscribing to multiple RSS feeds, Internet users are able to find exactly the news they want from sources they trust. "You can't link in a paper. Whatever's there, you consume it, read it and move on," Stephen Townsend, former editor of the student-run online daily newspaper the Tennessee Journalist and 2009 University of Tennessee graduate, says. "The Internet's able to give you news and information from multiple sources."

Taylor says he began checking his Google Reader RSS feeds "hundreds of times a day" on his iPhone and laptop after totally abandoning print media nearly two years ago. "It's not so much that it's personalized for me," Taylor says. "It's the fact that I used to have to check 30 Web sites that I like regularly, and now instead of having to actually go to those Web sites...I use Google Reader."

Some Web sites like DailyMe (www.dailyme.com) have totally foregone traditional news and only offer a personalized platform. On DailyMe, users select which news feeds they want (categories range from "National News" to "Natural Medicine"), and their content will be e-mailed to users, sent to their cell phone, sent directly to their printer or made accessible through an outside RSS feed.

While aggregators like DailyMe and Google Reader draw from a number of Internet news Web sites, Townsend says they have hurt smaller, more localized sites like TNJN. "You're put there in a big sea

against these big fish, The New York Times and papers like that. Those are what are in the big aggregators."

Desai and Lail also express concerns about overly personalized news Web sites. Both say the personalization trend has carved out niche audiences, allowing readers to focus on extremely narrow fields of information and perhaps causing them to miss the broader picture. "You're interested in a certain rock band, and you miss completely that we declared war on somebody because that's all you read about," Lail says. "Media's fragmented. The Internet didn't do that, but it certainly accelerated it."

A revved up push for personalization means one thing: print media have been forced to follow.

Pushing the Print Envelope

To some extent, readers have been personalizing print media since its inception. "Readership studies have shown that people didn't read every story in the paper... They browsed. They skimmed the headlines," Lail says. "They did primitive personalization." But because of higher costs of production and limited output and space, print publications were never entirely suited to Internet-style personalization. "There's a lot more friction involved in [personalizing print] than there is online."

For most print publications, personalization stopped at specialized circulation. Newspapers might offer subscribers extra paid content like weekly TV guides, or they might give advertisers the option of sending circulars only to certain zip codes. Until recently, that is.

As more readers abandon print in favor of new media, some print outlets have begun borrowing ideas from the Internet. "The print industry is struggling so much right now that I'm sure they'll try anything to see what works...to retain some ground again," Desai says.

In March, Time Inc. did exactly that. With Lexus as its sole advertiser, the print media giant broke new ground with mine, a five-issue experimental magazine allowing readers to choose five Time Warner/American Express Co. magazines to be combined into a single print edition. The first 31,000 respondents received the print edition for free, while 200,000 others received an online version of the personalized magazine.

Other print outlets are taking a different approach. Magazine and newspaper publisher Hearst plans to launch a handheld gadget called an e-reader, similar to Amazon's Kindle, allowing readers to peruse print content electronically on a screen the size of a sheet of paper.

However, personalized news Web sites and print publications are only the beginning of the iMedia story. New technology is extending the trend to mobile devices through personalized media applications and to social networking Web sites through widgets and RSS feeds.

The media have just skimmed the surface of the potential for personalization, but in a media landscape where new almost always means better, more and more outlets are expected to start innovating. "If you don't get on the bandwagon, you'll get left behind. The public wants to be part of the conversation. People want to share an opinion," Desai says. "[Personalization] is here to stay."



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Goodnight, **UT**



Last spring, Scoop gave readers a beautiful birds-eye view of UT in the morning. This fall, we've gone dark. That is to say, we're bringing to you snapshots that capture a typical Saturday night on UT and the Strip. All the photos, captioned in the order they were taken, were snapped between 10 pm - 2 am.

1.



1. On weeknight, Hodges Library is packed, but not on Saturday night. Its computer screens shut off as students set their studies aside.

Photo by Whitney Smith

2. Two students make their way down a placid Pedestrian Walkway after a weekend study session at the library.

Photo by Erin Hatfield

3. Care for a lift? The T bus loops across campus and down the Strip in search of partygoers who need a late-night ride (free of charge).

Photo by Erin Hatfield

4. Despite the club's thumping music, two New Amsterdam patrons attempt some small talk.

Photo by Whitney Smith

5. Holy light show! The dance floor at the New Amsterdam Nightclub pulses to the beat of hip-hop music.

Photo by Erin Hatfield

2.



3.



4.



5.







6. UT students wrap up their night with a laid-back round of drinks and old-school arcade games at The Fort Sanders Yacht Club.

Photo by Erin Hatfield

7. Even a rainy night doesn't stop hungry students from ordering a Sackful at Krystal's walk-up window.

Photo by Erin Hatfield

8. Last stop before home. At Jimmy John's, sandwiches (accompanied by the ever-present cell phones) will appease appetites.

Photo by Erin Hatfield



Big Ears Festival serves up sensory delight

Downtown concert extravaganza debut delivers aural experiences to Knoxville venues

by SARAH BAKER

What does Bonnaroo founder and president of AC Entertainment Ashley Capps do when he doesn't see cutting edge music coming to Knoxville? He personally delivers it right to our doorsteps.

Capps sponsored the first Big Ears Festival, held Friday, Feb. 6, through Sunday, February 8, and featuring more than 25 international artists.

Capps' inspiration for his "boutique" festival was rooted in his enthusiasm for ultramodern sounds and experimental artists. It was a passion he discovered as a 23-year-old college student and part-time DJ for the University of Tennessee campus radio station WUOT 91.9 FM. While working there, he became a fanatic for contemporary jazz, punk, international and new wave music.

In 1991, Capps founded the eponymous AC Entertainment, a leading concert promoter in the Southeast. Although he is no stranger to scouting out top-of-the-line artists from around the globe, Capps chose a more unconventional approach for this festival. He sought out there music with a funkier vibe.

It's safe to say Capps has "big ears" for avant-garde melodies. According to Capps' assistant Laura Sohn, the festival title refers to "someone who is really in tune with music sonically more than the average person."

While Bonnaroo is a "mega-festival" suited to a wide range of concertgoers, the event's Web site explains Big Ears was aimed at a more focused audience, one open to a "dynamic platform of musical and artistic discovering." The festival's concerts carried a common theme: a break from the mainstream. There were "exploratory concerts and performances, installations, discussions and interactive experiences by artists possessed of singular and unique visions."

With its unique lineup, the local festival garnered national attention. "Big Ears was for concertgoers who appreciate not hearing a lot of introductions and context and sponsor announcements before the music even starts...In other words, at times it was heaven." Ben Ratliff of The New York Times said in his Feb. 9 article entitled "Slow down, music fans, for singular visionaries."

It wasn't just the music that was unique. Capps took a fresh approach

to the venue selection, too. Instead of setting up in one open area, several venues, including the Bijou Theater, the Knoxville Museum of Art and the Pilot Light hosted separate acts with ticket prices ranging from \$20 to \$50 per concert. The intimate setting of the venues matched the boutique atmosphere Capps sought.

According to the festival's Web site, the Bijou Theatre, among other small venues, was chosen to showcase specific artists. In this case, because the Bijou's management emphasizes delivering unique cultural and entertainment events to East Tennesseans, festival organizers knew it was a perfect fit for Big Ears' array of artists.

A couple of Knoxville's



Philip Glass, a thrice-nominated Academy Award composer, brings beautiful minimalism to the hushed audience.



newest venues, The Catalyst and The Square Room, also featured artists. Hailey Johnston, a junior in finance at UT, attended the midnight Dan Deacon show featuring Baltimore Round Robin at The Catalyst. "They did a great job of involving the crowd and entertaining us. It was unlike any show I have ever been to before," she said.

Individual tickets were reserved and of limited availability, and concertgoers were encouraged to purchase their tickets early. All tickets were available through the Tennessee Theatre box office.

One of the weekend's main attractions was Philip Glass, a critically acclaimed New York City-based composer who has scored numerous operas, film soundtracks and symphonies over the last 35 years. "Glass' music draws from the complex use of repetition and iteration that collectively expands and develops, involving the listener in an environment crammed with aural textures," said Metro Pulse writer John Sewell.

However, not all aspects of the festival involved performing artists. The Mooglab, an all-weekend session led by the Bob Moog Foundation at the Woodruff Building, featured open synthesizers set up for anyone to try, free of charge. The foundation travels to regional festivals to lead demonstrations with hopes of expanding knowledge of sonic waves and electronic music.

Other interactive events included Deep Listening with Pauline Oliveros, Ampient Cafe, Nicolas Collins and Shaking Ray Levis' Drum Workshop and Talk. Philip Glass even held a public question and answer session.

The successful launch of Big Ears proved there are plenty of ears for Capps' funky favorites, and the festival is expected to be even bigger and better in years to come. Capps also says he hopes to take the Big Ears concept to other cities.

Capps made sure Big Ears kept its promise to satisfy experimental and futuristic music fans. According to Liz Stinson, writer for Paste Magazine, "There's yet another reason to save up your hard-earned cash and travel to the musical state of Tennessee. Only this time, don't expect bars full of cover bands, hippies or the CMT (Country Music Television) headquarters."



Cellist Wendy Sutter accompanies Glass on their musical journey.

Old town, new downtown

The redevelopment and revitalization of downtown North Knoxville

by KATE McCLASKEY

A stroll down North Knoxville's Central Avenue makes it instantly apparent the Old City has kissed its down-home Southern roots goodbye. Instead, it has evolved into Knoxville hipsters' downtown haven, full of artsy cafes and offbeat boutiques. By day, shop doors are open wide, their colorful awnings winking in the sun, and by night, the street is filled with the subtle, whining strains of jazz music from nearby pubs. Today's Central Avenue speaks of decades past, when it was downtown Knoxville's cultural epicenter.

However, this isn't the North Knoxville familiar to most. Just a few years ago, Central Avenue's 19th century brick buildings wore tired expressions, crumbling from neglect or abandoned entirely. When Interstate 275 was built in 1958, Central Avenue businesses made a sudden and mass exodus. And the neighborhood never fully recovered -- until now.

"I think each area of Knoxville has its own stigma of sorts attached to it, but North Knoxville is a foreign country to me," Lacey Reynolds, a Knoxville native and University of Tennessee senior in communications, says. "I heard it used to be a cool place."

Which is exactly the vibe area developers now hope to recreate.

In late 2006, the beginnings of a plan to revitalize the North Knoxville area emerged, and last year a redevelopment team officially devised the Downtown North I-275 Corridor Redevelopment and Urban Renewal Plan. After Mayor Bill Haslam and the city council formally adopted the "Downtown North" plan, redevelopment director Bob Whetsel began initiating projects he hopes will transform the area into a thriving commercial and residential district.

Bounded by Depot Street to the south, I-275 to the west, Woodland Avenue to the north and Hall of Fame Drive to the east, Whetsel calls his team's undertaking "the second largest redevelopment area ever identified in the city." The redevelopment zone includes Emory Place, Happy Hollow, Fourth and Gill and Old North Knoxville Historic districts.

Parts of Downtown North have already undergone minor changes. Late last year, the redevelopment team restriped a short stretch of Cen-

tral Avenue to incorporate new turn lanes and on-street parking. "We changed the three-lane configuration for parking, with the intent to go the full length of Central into the city," Daniel Schuh, president of Knoxville Preservation and Development, LLC, says. "Why is that a good thing? Because when people see cars stopping on the street, they stop in themselves."

However, the developers' have encountered one significant roadblock. Because of the homeless shelters on nearby Broadway, the area has attracted a growing transient population in recent years, compromising safety and causing concern among business owners. Even so, the developers remain optimistic. "Once there is more traffic, also with more people, you get more police patrols, and I think that's something that will happen," Schuh says. "I think people will feel safe up here."

As safety improves, the developers are working to establish Central Avenue as a destination location, known for its unique hipster atmosphere. "It's different, that's for sure," Reynolds says. "It's not as close to things that are really associated with Knoxville." The team specifically hopes to draw arts-and-entertainment-related businesses, an initiative Schuh is spearheading. "That's part of the street scheme of adding lighting in areas, making the point of the whole redevelopment zone to get new businesses and to make it a pedestrian friendly environment," he says. "We're trying to attract people with an open mindset. The type of [business] that is successful over here is a little outside the box."

Last year, 8 Shooters Studio opened, followed a few months later by the vintage accessory store The Relix Variety, both of which fit perfectly into Schuh's vision for the area. And Schuh isn't the only one who is pleased. The new tenants couldn't be happier.

"We wanted to move because we needed more public exposure," Ken Marine, owner of 8 Shooters Studio says. Last winter, when he tired of his old location, he came across the empty storefront on North Central Street. Just a few months later it was his gallery's new home. "[We] were a little surprised. We've been a lot busier than anticipated. It was like it was sitting there waiting for us."

Veg-O-Rama, a new vegan restaurant, opened last May next to the gallery after prolonged construction. A new bar with a country and

A few places to check out on

Central Avenue →

8 Shooters Studio
1202 N. Central St.

*This tiny gallery offers a unique blend of art and photography with a personal touch.

Toots Little Honky Tonk Bar
114 E. Anderson Ave.

*An old staple, this bar continues to be one of the liveliest places in North Knoxville.

B W's
141 W. Anderson Ave.

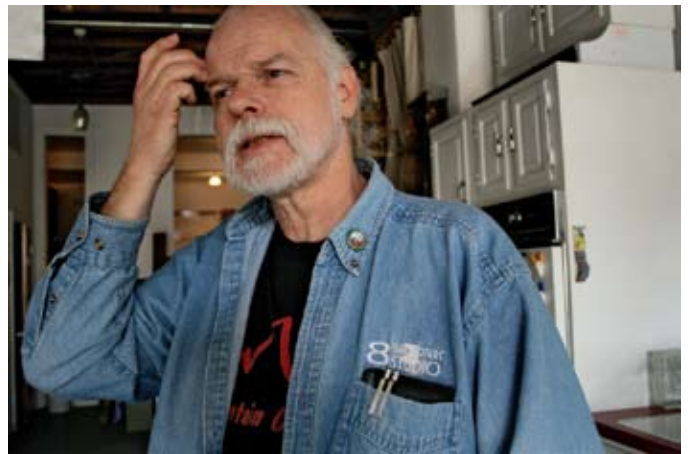
*This hole-in-the-wall pub is well worth an evening visit.



Hands up! Relix is a treasure trove of collectibles and novelty items.

western theme called Southbound Bar also opened around the same time. Schuh says he hopes the new enterprises will attract more UT students to the area, a trend many Central Avenue businesses already have noticed. Toots Little Honky Tonk bar, a North Knoxville staple once popular with the older crowd, has evolved over the past year, Schuh says. "It's packed with younger folks and has become a hip little spot."

Even with the minor changes already occurring, the Downtown North project will not be an overnight transformation. Depending on the budget, further improvements may begin late this year, and other projects, like making the area more bike-friendly, establishing streetscapes and improving the wastewater situation, will kick off next year. Schuh says he is optimistic about the project's time frame and believes the area will flourish. "Everything is already here. All we have to do is make it attractive to people. I believe in North Knoxville, and I can see the potential here."



8 Shooters photography studio owner Ken Marine says the business's move to North Central Street has meant more exposure.

Time Warp Tea Room
1209 N. Central St.

*Step into this laidback lounge, order a cup of Joe and prepare for a blast to the past.

The Relix Variety
1208 N Central St.

*From handcrafted goods to antique furnishings, who knows what you'll find in this store.

Veg-O-Rama
1204 N Central St.

*Stop by for some mind and body nourishment, with vegan delights and desserts.

Southbound Bar and Grill
106 S. Central St.

*Three floors for dancing and a VIP area can satisfy your desire for glamour.

Sorority Village delivers on pledge

Sure, it took a while. But Greek women will soon have their own isle.

by SARAH BAKER

Sweaty, exhausted, but well-dressed women stomp their feet, clap their hands and scream chants about why they are right for you. It is sorority recruitment time, which means do or die. Fainting, optional.

For nearly 50 years, the University of Tennessee's Panhellenic Building on Cumberland Avenue has been home to thousands of young sorority women gathering for weekly meetings, rituals and recruitment. The building houses suites for 15 of the 18 social sororities at UT, but as soon as campus shuts down for the night, the lights go out. The building is not a residence hall facility; each sorority suite consists of only a large living room, a kitchen, an office and a storage area.

Panhellenic is the largest women's organization on campus and is constantly growing. According to Alpha Omicron Pi's Web site, when the Panhellenic Building was built in the 1960s, each suite was meant to accommodate chapter memberships of roughly 50 women. However, many Panhellenic groups boast membership rosters nearly three to four times that number.

Ann Wallace, an Alpha Omicron Pi alumna, recalls her time at the Panhellenic Building. "When I came in 1974, it was way too small. At that time, we had about 100 members. The building was 10 or 11 years old and was already too small."

She says the suites lack the space needed for meetings and are entirely dysfunctional during recruitment. The fire marshal has now limited the number of girls allowed in the suites during each round.

Members have to rotate when potential members are coming through, thus limiting the number of contacts both sisters and sorority hopefuls make. "Each suite can have a maximum of 70 chapter members per skit and preference round, which is less than half our sorority," Zeta Tau Alpha Housing Manager Caroline Anderson said.

And it's not just the girls who are noticing the effects of overcrowding. The building itself is wearing out, one corner of it visibly sinking. However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Groundbreaking for a community of UT sorority houses took place in March. The houses will replace



the Panhellenic suites and the current sorority housing in Laurel Hall.

Over the years, students have constantly speculated about why UT was one of few actively Greek universities without sorority houses, especially since Fraternity Park was constructed in 1966. One nagging rumor suggests sorority houses are brothels according to Tennessee law. Others even claim an elderly woman made a generous donation to the university with a catch: no sorority houses were ever to be built on campus. However, according to Jeff Maples, UT's senior associate vice chancellor for Finance and Administration, nothing in the university's bylaws or Tennessee state law says there cannot be sorority houses. Simply put, lack of funding and space meant the project was never pursued.

Frustrated with the failing facilities, sororities have been actively soliciting alumni, fundraising on their own and seeking the aid of their national headquarters to fund the housing project. Some chapters are raising dues to prepare for the upcoming budget increases.

The community of houses is being constructed on the corner of Kingston Pike and Neyland Drive, on an approxi-



Looking north on Neyland Drive toward Kingston Pike

mately 12-acre plot called “Morgan Hill” located across from UT’s Visitor Center. Wallace said the site was named after former UT president John Harcourt Alexander Morgan, whose house once stood on the land.

Leveling, creating space for parking, dividing up the land and securing bids from contractors have already begun and will take approximately six months to complete. “We hope to be finished with preparing the site by the end of this calendar year,” Maples said.

In the meantime, chapters are working with architects to design their houses.

Maples hopes the impact of the development on the campus and the surrounding community will be immense. He explained the sorority village will give each chapter the chance to expand its philanthropic endeavors and will give UT’s campus added aesthetic appeal. “It’s going to be a beautiful area- well-landscaped, well-maintained and kept, and a nice way to present the campus.”

Above all else, it’s a project sorority sisters and campus officials alike consider long overdue. “It’s going to be nice and safe and something we are proud of,” Wallace said.



KEY to the housing sketch

- A: Delta Zeta**
- B: Kappa Kappa Gamma**
- C: Pi Beta Phi**
- D: Alpha Delta Pi**
- E: Sigma Kappa**
- F: Kappa Delta**
- G: Alpha Omicron Pi**
- H: Zeta Tau Alpha**
- I: Phi Mu**
- J: Delta Delta Delta**
- K: Chi Omega**
- L: Alpha Chi Omega**
- M: Delta Gamma**
- PH: Alpha Kappa Alpha upper floor and UT lower floor**

Cha-Cha-Ching!

Spirited students hit the jackpot with UT's social dance class.

by LEIGH IMHOFF

Social dance: the only University of Tennessee class that can single-handedly transform a gym into a ballroom and students into dancers.

"Everything short of booty dancing is fair game," says dance instructor Charles Gibbs. The goal of the class is to bridge the gap between standard ballroom, a style he says no one uses anymore, and current partner dancing. "The end result is to stay current while still teaching the classics."

Because the social dance course is part of the physical education program and not the dance minor concentration, which is being phased out, it survived the 2008-2009 budget cuts, says Emile Catignani, the physical education and activity program director.

Every semester about 100 students sign up for the two-hour credit course, which gives them 130 minutes of practice every week at the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Building. The men and women learn the basic six ballroom dances: waltz, Foxtrot, tango, swing, cha-cha and rumba. But Gibbs also mixes in a few modern dances keep his students' attention. "I've added a lot more Latin and club dancing, because this isn't social dance for our grandparents, this is social dance," he says.

Jose Chavez, a senior in electrical engineering originally from Ecuador, says he especially appreciates the addition of Latin dancing, but his main objective is to learn the technical rules of dance. "Trying to learn dancing by the steps is more difficult for me, because my legs like to go everywhere that the music goes."

Chavez jokes that before he took the social dance class one of his friends, who is a competitive ballroom dancer, tried to teach him the steps. "But I'm too much of a macho man to let her. I'm a Latin guy. We are supposed to be good at dancing."

Hannah Kesler, a senior in exercise science, says although she had no previous dance experience before taking the class, Gibbs makes that experience unnecessary. "He's awesome. He's very good, and he's very patient. He realizes that not everyone's perfect at it. And he doesn't care that we're not perfect."

Even though Kesler says she's many steps away from becoming the perfect dancer, she considers the subject an important art to learn. "I think it's a dying thing, you know? It's not as common anymore. And this is a free way to learn."

So what could improve this exercise in coordination? Chavez and Kesler say the class needs more male dance partners. "I'd really like to see every girl paired with one guy, because we only get to dance half as much when there are not enough guys," Kesler says.



Even for the talented Gibbs, it takes two to tango.

The Goods on Gibbs

Gibbs was an instructor at two Knoxville dance studios before he began teaching at UT last year. But it was music, not dance, that initially brought him to Tennessee. After receiving his bachelor's degree in vocal performance from Boston's New England Conservatory of Music in 2005, Gibbs came to UT to pursue a master's degree in opera. After realizing opera was no longer his passion, he changed his direction to dance. And he's not opposed to changing again, as he says he sees law school in his future. Gibbs' sense of change carries over into his dance classes. "Styles change, tastes change. It's an old art form but things still change. They are constantly evolving. The curriculum's got to be constantly evolving."

Among all that change there is one constant piece of advice Gibbs offers: "Keep dancing." And while he says his soon to be 26-year-old hips are not quite what they used to be, he will always find a way back into the spotlight. "Mainly I just like being the center of attention. I established that a long time ago. Whether that happens through singing, or dancing or lawyering, it doesn't matter."

Smoky Mountain High

Got fitness fatigue? Get hooked on one of the many adventures available through the University of Tennessee's Outdoor Program.

by JOHN FAULKNER

Finding your niche among all the extracurricular activities offered at a school as big as the University of Tennessee can be a daunting task. But if you consider yourself an outdoorsman, look no further. An adventure to remember awaits at the University of Tennessee Outdoor Program.

The program launched in 1996 with the collaboration of various university outdoor clubs. However, UTOP didn't come into its present-day form until 2003, when the 140,000-square-foot Tennessee Recreational Center for Students on Volunteer Boulevard was built.

That year, the university surveyed recreation programs across the nation. "UT's program ranked among the worst," Joey Parent, a graduate student working for UTOP and an avid outdoorsman, said. The Outdoor Program was one of a number of plans by the recreation department to improve its standing and "bridge the gap between education and recreation." Since its establishment, the Outdoor Program has steadily risen in popularity. "When we first started, nobody knew about us and we had to advertise a lot," Parent said. "Now we have almost more than we can handle."

Perhaps the program's popular trips are part of its enviable burden. "We do a lot of backpacking, but we do kayaking, cycling and rafting, too," Parent said.

Trips are not confined to local attractions. UTOP has driven as far as Utah for one of its excursions. The program also has taken students on a fly-fishing weekend trip, skiing at Ober Gatlinburg, has embarked on caving adventures and even taken students surfing in Costa Rica.

Despite nearly 30 different events on last spring's calendar, most spots were filled quickly. "We sold out of one of our trips in two days," Parent said. The Spring Break trips are among the fastest to sell out. In March 2009, a group traveled to the Florida Everglades for a week of sea kayaking through the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Combining backpacking and kayaking, the adventure let participants camp out on remote islands and experience an array of wildlife. In addition, the Natchez Trace Parkway bike tour took cyclists through Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi for scenic rides and camping.

But for those looking for immediate gratification, UTOP also



The sky's the limit for students participating in UTOP.

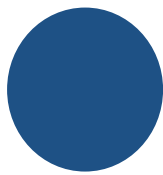
has a number of on-campus activities, such as the climbing wall, located in the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Building. "I'm here every day it's open," John Patrick Murphy, a junior in anthropology at UT, said. The climbing wall consists of 400 square feet of wall for top rope climbing and another 480 square feet of wall for bouldering, a type of rock climbing that requires no safety ropes and involves short, challenging climbs. Parent said you can find 60 to 70 climbers on the walls on any given night.

In addition, students and faculty who cruise around on bicycles may already be using some of UTOP's services. The Bike Shop, located in the Outdoor Center at TRECS, performs low-cost maintenance on two-wheelers and offers bike maintenance clinics. The shop's staff members host Friday afternoon rides consisting of road biking in the fall and mountain biking in the spring.

All services and activities are offered to students, staff and faculty, and most of UTOP's outings are around \$10 per activity, although the Spring Break trips and some of the other lengthy trips may carry a higher price tag. "We try to bring the same level of professionalism that a private outfitter would offer," Parent said. At a fraction of a private outfitter's cost, the program is not just fun, it's a bargain, even on a college budget.

Each semester UTOP releases a program guide that outlines all the trips and activities as well as the prices for them. A print version can be picked up at the TRECS and a digital copy can be obtained at

<http://recsports.utk.edu/Programs/Outdoor%20Rec/>.



A study in English composition

A JEM student waxes poetic about her semester in Worcester, England.
by ELISA RIMALLA

Lindsey Hughes, a University of Tennessee junior in journalism and electronic media, spent her spring 2009 semester in England building a new view of the world – and of her home country. But even after traveling 3,000 miles, she found herself at home in England.

“I think me being there was more of a shock for the British students than it was for me,” Hughes said. “Most people there have lived in or near Worcester all their lives, so I must have been one of the first Americans they had ever met.”

After a childhood spent constantly moving, Hughes knew studying abroad was right for her. She was born in Bremerton, Wash. but because her father was in the Army, her family lived in eight other states before settling down in Knoxville, TN. Perhaps it was only appropriate that Hughes flew over the Atlantic Ocean last January to begin the adventure of her lifetime.

Why did you choose Worcester University?

I did not want to go through a third party to go abroad. Worcester and the University of Tennessee have a great exchange program in which I paid UT tuition and the Andy Holt apartment fee to come over here. Plus I wanted to go to a small school. There are a little more than 5,000 students at Worcester, which is about the size of my graduating class at UT.

How did studying in England differ from studying in Knoxville?

Studying in England is a lot more relaxed – no quizzes, tests or homework. Our tutors (they are not called professors there) gave us copies of the text we had to read so we did not have to buy books. The school term is a lot shorter as well. Classes started in the beginning of February, and we got two weeks off in April before the classes ended on May 10.



Hughes (kneeling) and friends spent the day penny-loafing around Liverpool, visiting a landmark made famous by The Beatles.

How were the living conditions?

A lot more relaxed! The campus is anything but dry, and I lived with the other UT girl, an English girl and two English boys. Everyone had their own room, but we shared two bathrooms, a kitchen and living area.

Is life in Worcester different from the life in Knoxville?

Once I got there I realized that Worcester does have a lot of things that remind me of home. The popular Wednesday night club, Bushwackers, is a classier version of Bar Knoxville.

The biggest reminder of home was the construction. They were building a new hall of residence literally 20 feet outside my window. They started every weekday morning at 8 a.m., just like UT!

What did you do with your time off?

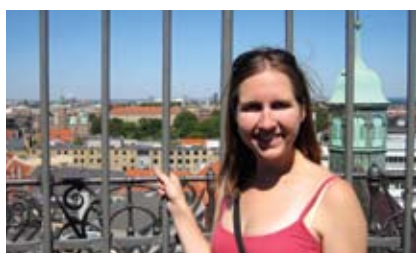
Worcester is kind of a small place, so it is pretty quiet. But in March I visited in Liverpool for three days, Dublin for four, and we went to Stratford-upon-Avon for a day and a few other places along the coast. In April I spent a few days in Amsterdam, Paris, Madrid and a few places in Italy and Germany. We also did a sort of a “Harry Potter” tour to London to see Platform 9 ¾ and to Oxford to see the Hogwarts’ interiors and did a little trip to Edinburgh. It was kind of dorky, but we figured we are here so let’s just do it!

Lost in translation

When even the right words can't save you from a comedy of errors

by KATIE LEONE

Ever mistakenly ordered a “kitten and bacon” sandwich, or found yourself at the confusing center of a group of laughing foreigners? If so, perhaps you’ve studied abroad. We asked a handful of journalism and electronic media students and alums about their more memorable international experiences (don’t worry, no translation is required).



“On our first trip, five of us girls shared a room at Danhostel in Copenhagen City. It was a nice room that we shared with one other older lady, Olga. She seemed very pleasant and didn’t seem bothered by the idea of having five college-age girls in the same room. The

next morning, one of the other girls from the class and I woke up early. We were still lying in bed when Olga walked in completely naked. She wasn’t aware that some of us were early risers, so I closed my eyes as quickly as possible. We still had to see her for the entire week.”

— **Andrea Hall, who studied at The Danish School of Journalism in Arhus, Denmark, Fall 2008.**



“Aussies have their own vernacular, which definitely takes some getting used to. Yes, you can ask them where the bathroom is, but it’s probably better to ask for the ‘dunny’ or ‘toilet’ instead. ‘Crack a tinny’ instead of open a beer. And ‘nah worries!’ is a perennial favorite phrase. It really captures the lifestyle in Oz. Also, don’t ever tell an Aussie that you ‘root’ for a team. ‘Root’ is a verb depicting intercourse there. If they ask ‘how ya goin?’ it means ‘how ya doin?’ Don’t answer ‘on foot.’”

— **Josh Richard, who studied at the University of Canberra, the capital of Australia, Fall 2007.**



“Danish has some pronunciations that seem bizarre to an English speaker. For example, Danes pronounce the vowel ‘y’ as a ‘oo’. The Danish word ‘killing’ means kitten and ‘kylling’ means chicken. So the first few times I walked into a sandwich shop and attempted to order a chicken and bacon sandwich in Danish, I actually asked for a kitten and bacon sandwich.”

— **Marshall Brown, who studied at Aalborg University in Denmark, Spring 2008.**

“When we were walking around in the city, any city, the Italians would turn and stare, and yell ‘Ciao bella!’ at me and my friends. I think the fact that we’re blonde and American may have had something to do with it. I learned another useful Italian phrase: ‘Quanto costa?’, which



means ‘How much does it cost?’. I haggled with an illegal street vendor and bought a fake Prada bag for 12 euro before the cops came.”

— **Robin Overby, who studied with the Consortium of Universities for International Business in Paderno del Grappa, in Northern Italy, Summer 2008.**

“I rode with a band [Turbowebweekend] in their van from Copenhagen to this high school two hours away in Vejle, where they were playing a concert. As the night went on, I started taking photos of the crowd and their reactions to the band. Basically, everyone was drunk, and the lighting wasn’t great, so I turned on the flash. All of these 16- and 17-year-old students (some of them basically looked like children) started coming up to me, demanding in Danish that I take their photos. They thought I was the school photographer or something! I tried to explain to them that I was busy. Some of them got the point. Others still kept



coming up, fake smiles plastered all over their faces, ready for their close-up. The bassist started cracking up and saying, ‘It’s the flash. They LOVE the flash!’”

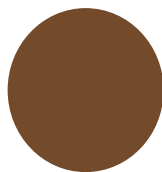
— **Katie Hogin, who studied photography at The Danish School of Journalism in Arhus, Denmark, Fall 2008.**

For more eye-opening anecdotes and travel tips from overseas, check out the following Web sites:

<http://ease.com/~randyj/blurbs4.htm>: Randy’s Travel Page, home of the Backpacker’s World Travel Handbook

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>: Lonely Planet Web site, traveler blogs

<http://www.timeout.com>: Time Out London Magazine



African harmonies

Journalism and Electronic Media senior Emily Koss uses her jazz for justice.

by ERIN HATFIELD

University of Tennessee senior Emily Koss is using her talents to heal. In early 2008, Koss was exploring several study abroad programs, but she realized her dream of a semester in Africa would compromise her graduation plans. Instead, Koss got involved with Jazz for Justice, an initiative founded in 2006 to raise funds, awareness and support for psychosocial healing in Northern Uganda through art and music. Jazz for Justice planned to send students to Uganda over Christmas break, and Koss eagerly jumped on board.

"I went there not knowing what to expect," Koss said. "It was my first time out of the country, and it was overwhelming going to a third-world country my first time." In addition, Koss found out she would be visiting Rwanda, a country still healing after its brutal genocide 15 years ago.

Koss met with UT religious studies professor Rosalind Hackett, who is in charge of the Jazz for Justice project, and began planning and working to raise money for the trip. Koss became the publicity chair for the project's benefit concert, promoting the event by contacting local newspapers for advertising and articles. Through this and other fundraisers, the group of 11 students raised about \$1,600 for the trip.

While in Uganda, some of the students visited the Mulago Hospital in Kampala to foster ties for an internship program. "We wrote a proposal for Kampala," Koss said. "If you're interested in medical school, you could intern with Mulago Hospital for the semester and basically learn from the experience and the culture."

They also worked closely with a Uganda-based development consulting agency, which is working to implement the peace recovery and development plan for Northern Uganda. The agency's current focus is to train teachers and school inspectors in the North Ugandan Gulu school district who will eventually work to improve health care and community devel-



Koss says interacting with children at the Health Education Arts Literacy Sports play therapy center in Gulu, Uganda gave her a hopeful perspective.

opment.

For Koss and other students, learning about Ugandan society and culture was an important aspect of the trip. They visited an internally displaced persons camp, where they learned about the people still residing there because of war displacement. "The actual site was apparently about 30 percent of the [size of the] original amount," Koss said. "That's very, very good because they feel safe to leave the camp."

During their stay at the Health Education Arts Literacy Sports play therapy center in Gulu, the students interacted with children participating at the center, doing art projects and spending quality time together. Former child soldier Jolly Grace Okot, who founded the HEALS center, said she believes all children should have the right to play, and HEALS gives them a place to do so. The children did a dance performance for them, which was one of Koss' "best experiences."

After leaving Uganda, Koss and the other students spent two days in Rwanda, visiting two genocide memorial sites and the Kigali Memorial Centre.

"The people giving the tour at the genocide center were there for [the genocide]. It was just a really surreal experience and was what moved me the most," Koss said.

Her visit to Africa gave Koss a new perspective on life. While she thinks Western culture portrays Africa as barbaric and sad, she tells a different side of the story. "The people there are beautiful. They're wonderful people," said Koss. "Africa has seen tragedy, but it has a lot of hope to offer, too."

Foreign aid at your fingertips

Don't let financial woes stop you from studying abroad. Look near before you go far.

by ELISA RIMAILA

It's been said that the best things in life are free, but let's face it, sometimes it's necessary to find funds to support your dreams. That's the conundrum many students face when yearning to study on foreign shores. While studying abroad can be the experience of a lifetime, it also can land you deeply in debt.

Although some universities abroad, like the University of Tampere in Finland, do not demand tuition fees from foreign students, leaving the home institution still costs students money. Students often foot the bill for their apartments, food, airline tickets, passports, visas and any of the other myriad of costs that pop up unannounced along the way.

Fortunately for University of Tennessee students, the Center for International Education implemented a plan last year to encourage undergraduate UT students to leave their home stomping grounds for a semester or two. Since fall 2008, all undergraduate students have paid a \$10 fee to help fellow students fulfill such dreams.

Senior Programs Abroad Coordinator Alisa Meador from CIE understands students' irritation at the burden of another fee but says the contribution provides much-needed aid. "The study abroad scholarship is still something every full-time un-

dergraduate student can benefit from. By using that fee and existing funds, the CIE provides scholarships totaling about \$300,000 per year. The scholarships are based on a combination of financial need and academic merit," Meador said.

Since the scholarship began, nearly 60 students have received a \$1,000 scholarship for their semester abroad. For those people spending the whole academic year abroad, the amount of scholarship remains the same, and it decreases to \$500 for the summer term, which is when two-thirds of UT students go abroad. "The amount of the scholarship isn't a lot when you go abroad, but we try to support as many students as possible," Meador said.

Despite good intentions, there is a small problem with the scholarship: Not many students know about it. "This is quite surprising. I always tell the students about the scholarship when they come to my office for counselling. I even show them on the UT Web site where they can find the application forms," Meador said as she flips the screen to show the documents.

Ricky Mula, a freshman in advertising, is planning his studies well ahead of his departure date. In fall 2010, he plans to study somewhere in Japan. "I have been talking with a couple of people from UT who have studied in Japan. If I go there through a certain exchange program, it will cost me about the same as if I spent the semester here at UT, so studying abroad won't hurt me that much financially," Mula said. He admits while he is not yet concerned about the costs of a semester spent abroad, he plans to apply for all the scholarships he can.

Students are encouraged to apply for outside scholarships, too. When Danielle Avery, junior in speech pathology and Spanish, studied overseas, the new study abroad scholarship wasn't available yet. When Avery studied in Spain in spring 2008, she had to pay some \$6,000 of the estimated \$12,000 the program cost. She funded half her study abroad experience with other scholarships.

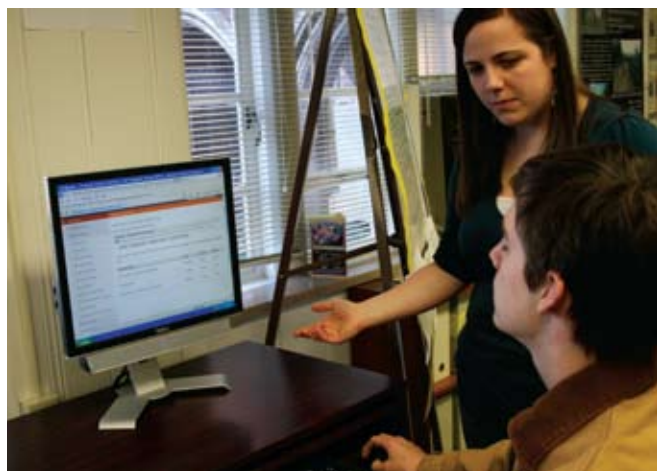
Will Giebert, a senior in history and political science, who spent a semester in England, was more fortunate.

"The only thing I had to pay out of my pocket, was the flight. And I did travel a lot. I got most of my expenses covered with the Tennessee Hope, Volunteer and First Tennessee Bank scholarships," Giebert said.

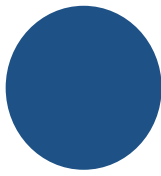
Erin Bernstein, a senior in the College Scholars Program who went all the way to Uganda, spent only \$500.

"I just budgeted my money really well. I had already been to Uganda before, so I knew what living and other necessary things cost. And Uganda is a pretty inexpensive country to live in anyway," Bernstein said.

Whatever it costs to spend a semester or two abroad, the end result will not only broaden your worldview, it also will demonstrate to future employers your ability to take on new challenges. As Alisa Meador put it: "Think outside the box and show you can cope out there."



Hunter Fox, a sophomore in anthropology, spent last summer in Denmark. The program alone cost about \$5,000, compelling him to apply for financial aid.



Crime scenes and missing persons

JEM alum promotes hit CBS crime shows
by LEIGH IMHOFF

Who knew crime scene investigations and a master's degree in communications could live in such harmony? Anne de Vega, a 1992 University of Tennessee alum who has successfully brought both elements together, promoting the hit shows "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" and "Without a Trace". As an executive producer at CBS, de Vega plays the role of creative director while overseeing the weekly promotion of "CSI" and "Without a Trace," an FBI missing persons show. She also is involved with the creative development of EyeLab, a digital lab that creates short video clips specifically for the Internet based on

CBS content.

"Look at it as a commercial for a TV program," de Vega says. "We're trying to sell people to watch the program, kind of the way people try to sell people to use Crest (toothpaste)."

Before being promoted to her current position in 2007, de Vega, a member of the Writer's Guild, was primarily responsible for writing, producing and editing promotions for "CSI." "We're coming up on our 200th episode this spring, and I've been a producer on it from the very beginning," she says.

Despite her newly expanded job responsibilities, she is still much involved with the promotion of "CSI". "I'm kind of the resident 'CSI' expert, if you will, at our promotions department. If anybody has a question about something or needs something, I've sort of become the go-to person for that."

De Vega says that even when she is at home "vegging out," she still cannot get enough "CSI". "I think my coworkers actually think I'm kind of crazy for this, but I TiVo 'CSI' every week. For me it's kind of a pleasure after having worked on it, just to sit down and watch it all in its finished piece. I'm sure I've seen every episode."

While her current job may be a far cry from producing television news, she says the hands-on editing and production classes she took at UT gave her the needed skills to land her first internship at WATE-TV. "Those were the main skills I brought to the table that helped me get my foot in the door."

UT JEM professor Barbara Moore, who taught de Vega, says she is happy to see de Vega use her natural creative ability to excel in her career- a creativity that has led her in many interesting directions. Moore recalls that while de Vega was working at WISH-TV in Indianapolis, one of her job assignments was to promote a story about policemen. "Of course she couldn't go out and just get a policeman to do a promotion for her news department," Moore says. Instead, Moore reports that de Vega got her footage by hiring male strippers in police uniforms to pose for her.

But TV promotion is not all fun and zany shenanigans; de Vega says anticipated pressure and stress come along with the job. "You're screening, you're giving feedback to the producers, you're usually helping write copy and going to meetings." However she says each show's directors make it entertaining. "They come up with the great scripts and shoot these great episodes. And we get to figure out...the best angle, the best hook to promote that episode."

It seems de Vega has cracked the code for getting the best results, although don't expect her to toot her own horn. She says she would not have believed anyone who predicted ten years ago she would end up at a "high profile gig" in Los Angeles. "I feel blessed to have the job that I have. I get to make little nuggets of TV for a living!"

A little bit of bulldog, a whole lot of heart

UT journalism alumnus Victor Lee goes from media to ministry.

by LAURA ROBERSON

Victor Lee was a 23-year-old sports reporter for the Jackson, Miss. Clarion-Ledger armed only with a notepad and his self-described bulldog instincts. Marcus Dupree was a 19-year-old Oklahoma State running back and one of the nation's most promising college football players. And on a winter day in 1984, Dupree disappeared, literally.

A swarm of sports reporters stormed Dupree's Mississippi hometown in what became a national media manhunt, and Lee was among them. When he spotted Dupree on the University of Southern Mississippi campus, standing outside a sports official's office at a vending machine, Lee knew his journalism career had officially begun. "I was the only reporter he would speak to for the next three years," Lee said. "Those kind of things set me up for the next job."

Lee graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1982 with a degree in journalism, but he got his start in the field five years earlier working for the Knoxville News Sentinel as a stringer for the sports section. "I was interested in writing, interested in sports, and decided to mix the two," Lee said. "I probably got into journalism for the wrong reasons - just to stay close to sports. Then I grew to love the journalism part."

After graduation, Lee took the job at the Clarion-Ledger. After marrying his wife, Judy, and spending three years in Jackson, he moved to West Palm Beach, Fla., to write for the Palm Beach Post. "In the prime of my career there, it was the fastest growing major daily in America and an Associated Press top 10 rated sports section," Lee said.

After nine successful years at the Palm Beach Post, he says he felt God calling him to ministry. Lee says he sought counsel from his pastor, began teaching at his church and started a singles ministry. Within months, Lee, Judy and their daughter Jessica had committed to serving as missionaries at a sports evangelism camp in Antigua. "We were there for 10 weeks before Hurricane Louise flattened the place...we got blown off the island," Lee said. "So we ended up back in West Palm with no house and no job."

When a job for Judy, a house and money for seminary school practically fell in Lee's lap, he knew his decision to leave his sports job for ministry had been the right one. However, Lee

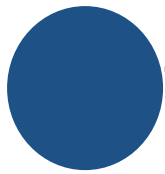


Lee (pictured with wife, Judy), says with ministry, like media, "I'm on the spot all the time."

didn't abandon journalism entirely. "I found out if you're two-thirds up the food chain in secular journalism, then you're higher up the chain in Christian journalism," Lee said. He began writing for several Christian magazines, including Christian Life, Christian Single and Sports Spectrum, and, later, for related Web sites.

Lee says he doesn't see his years in journalism as wasted time. In fact, he says many of the skills he learned in the media industry have helped him as a minister. "I loved being on deadline. I loved having 30 minutes to write an 800-word piece that would sing," Lee said. "[In ministry] I'm on the spot all the time. People call and they're in a crisis right now. Life's falling apart right now." He's a crisis player, and he still has that bulldog instinct. But now, instead of a notepad, he's armed with a Bible.

Today, Lee and his family are back in Knoxville, where he serves as minister of single adults and evangelism at First Baptist Concord. With Jessica grown and after taking in 17 foster children over the years, he and his wife have adopted three siblings - Danny, Caryn and Morgan - and have one permanent placement foster daughter, Victoria.



Major league experience

Sports journalism alum Lauren Hoffman talks about her Windy City adventures.

by JENNIFER CAMPBELL

When Lauren Hoffman graduated from the University of Tennessee in 2007, she says she didn't know where she would end up next. All she knew was that she wanted to work in sports journalism. To that end, she contacted many sports teams and finally scored a homerun with a public relations internship with the Chicago White Sox for the 2008 baseball season. She describes what it was like in the big leagues.

Working for a professional baseball team is a pretty big deal. How did you get involved with the Chicago White Sox?

After graduation, I visited Chicago to network with the professional teams. I figured if I wanted to work in sports Chicago would be a great city to live in with endless possibilities. I left my resume with numerous teams, and when the White Sox was hiring for its 2008 internships, they called me for an interview. I moved up to Chicago two weeks later and started working in the team's mass communications department. I did everything from writing and editing to developing online sweepstakes and marketing initiatives. It was the best thing I have done so far!

What did you enjoy the most working for the White Sox?

I would have to say that my favorite part was the excitement of coming to work every day. The team was expected to finish last in the division, but it made the playoffs. The energy both in the front office and in the ballpark was electric. You can't find that atmosphere in other jobs, which solidified my desire to stay in sports.

Did you find anything about your internship to be difficult?

The most difficult part of working for the White Sox was knowing that there was an end date to my job. I never wanted the season or my internship to end. It was also really hard to stay focused on days that there were home games, because a game was going on literally above my head.

So what's next for you?

I am still living in Chicago and actively searching for a job. I



Hoffman (with friend) at a Chicago White Sox game.

have focused my search here, but I am definitely not opposed to moving elsewhere, especially when the winters in Chicago are miserable! It's the only time in my life I feel like I could live anywhere, and if the job is worth it, I'd be willing to move.

How do you feel UT prepared you for this search?

I worked for the radio station, WUTK The Rock, doing everything from reporting and writing to producing and anchoring. I also worked at the television station, TVC, doing mostly behind the scenes work. Also, I did my practicum in the sports department at WATE-TV. I started in the fall and stayed through the spring. Staying offered me the opportunity to learn additional skills that will be helpful in the future.

So how does the job market look from your perspective?

To be honest, the job market is definitely not ideal. I have been trying to stay as proactive as possible. I have been doing a lot of networking. I think it is vital to meet with as many people as possible. My advice to recent graduates would be to do just that [network]. Jobs are tough to come by, but if you are out in the market meeting with people and staying proactive, things will eventually come together. I have a few things in the works, and I am confident my hard work will pay off. Additionally for those looking to work in sports, it's important not to be afraid to take a risk and do a post-graduate internship. It was the best thing I have ever decided to do both personally and professionally.

Solid as “The Rock”

WUTK's Benny Smith means business.
by LILY PALMER

UT alum Benny Smith has traveled full circle in his career, and he says he has loved every minute of the journey. Smith, who worked at UT's radio station WUTK 90.3 “The Rock” as a student from 1985 to 1991, is now the student-produced, non-commercial radio station's manager and program director. Although his work days are hectic, he somehow manages to juggle his schedule. Call it a passion for the station.

“My blood runs orange,” Smith says. “I love this university, and I know the opportunities this station can offer students, especially JEM students. It is rewarding to be able to come back to the station and improve it.” As station manager, Smith regularly works 12-hour days to keep “The Rock” running and functioning. In addition to training the students, as program director, he is in charge of what goes on the air. Although he admits he sometimes feels like an “army of one,” he says he loves what he does and is excited to go to work every morning.

“I knew the station should make a difference to the students and have a positive impact on the Knoxville community, and I wanted to help make that happen.” Smith grew up loving music and became interested in radio when he saw what an impact his hometown station, WGRV in Greeneville, Tenn. had on that community. “That’s what it’s all about—community and serving that need. That town stopped to hear the news.”

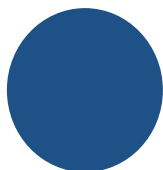
Bobby Dove, a senior in cultural anthropology and one of almost 100 students working at the station, attests to the fact Smith has plenty of support. “Benny is definitely the backbone of WUTK.”

“The Rock” has been nominated for the College Journal Radio Award for “Station of the Year” and local publication Metropulse has named “The Rock” best radio station three years in a row. “To beat some of the station we beat, it’s very satisfying,” Smith said. “And it shows how passionate our listeners are.”

“WUTK and the College of Communication and School of Journalism and Electronic Media will be trying to develop an endowment fund for WUTK in the near future,” he says. Though times are tough right now, he hopes to begin work on this project next year. “With all the accolades WUTK has earned in the past three years, it is time to go out and let potential donors know about our success.” Smith hopes his devotion to the station, along with the support of students and alumni, will help keep WUTK on the air for years to come.



Smith keeps things rolling in the station's control room, decorated by years of student deejays. WUTK is housed in the lower level of Andy Holt Tower.



Fluent in Hispanic affairs

Multicultural UT alum takes South Florida newspaper reporting in stride.
by NANCY ROBINSON

Alexia Campbell is talking about a colleague's coverage of a Caribbean voodoo ceremony, with its flying machetes and trances. In between her bouts of peppy laughter she catches her breath.

"I wouldn't dare [do that]," she says in her Spanish-tinged accent, recalling the time her co-worker was invited to cover a ceremony for a story on Caribbean teens and voodoo. "She didn't return until like 5 a.m. the next day. This is the only kind of job you get paid to do this kind of stuff."

These are the types of stories Campbell and other demographic affairs reporters at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel in Ft. Lauderdale are busy chasing. Campbell, who graduated in journalism and electronic media from the University of Tennessee in 2003, is a Hispanic affairs reporter covering trends within the Cuban, Venezuelan, Colombian, Puerto Rican and Brazilian communities in southern Florida.

"It's the most exciting job," she says. "I can't imagine getting tired of it or doing anything else." And it's a job that suits her well—she has a Mexican mother, Brazilian father, U.S./Mexico citizenship, is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, and lived in Brazil for six years until moving to Nashville, Tenn. at 16.

All this makes her remarkably empathetic when covering the harsh realities facing communities in southern Florida. "That's a hard thing about this job," she says. "I have sympathy for (sources), but I have to be objective." Campbell says she was particularly challenged by a story she wrote about immigrants who couldn't find work despite having college degrees. She recalls a man she interviewed who waited four days to get a construction job.

"I talked with him for a long time," she says, her voice becoming softer. "We had a connection—he had to go back to Brazil."

But such emotionally-charged topics are part of Campbell's everyday reality. A similar journalistic challenge derives from finding story sources. Campbell says that working in such a diverse part of the country means dealing with hesitant, sometimes unwilling sources: illegal immigrants.

"They don't want to talk to me at all or give me their information.



At the South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Circulation demographics:

Non-white: 36.0%
White: 64%

Newsroom diversity:

Non-white: 28%
White: 72%

They don't want to say anything on the record. They're just terrified immigration officers will come after them," Campbell says. "Or they think they're being spied on. But we have a policy where we don't have to use their last names. Our photographers have to be creative."

But finding stories on her beat is not so problematic. Campbell develops story ideas by talking to community leaders from organizations such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, or by calling her "Cuban contacts." Maintaining relations with her sources is key, and Campbell says she takes time to nurture those relationships. "They have an interest in our relationship, too."

Campbell, who five years ago would have described herself as "painfully shy," says she has since cultivated an uncanny ability to relate to people. She credits this skill as a natural byproduct of working as a reporter.

"It's not every day people get to talk. Sources get excited someone cares," she says. "It's about being interested in people and their lives."

Lights, Camera, Action

WBIR producer Katie Shands shows that getting the job is just the first step.

by KATE McCLASKEY

Katie Shands says she always aspired to be an actress, but she feared her dream was unrealistic. As her high school graduation approached, she shared her concerns with her mother and an alternate career path emerged: news reporting. A perfect blend of television and writing, it was a choice that combined two of Shands' greatest passions. She now works behind the cameras as a full-time producer for WBIR-TV. But it was more than a passion for the industry that got her there. In early 2008, Shands began interning at the station, and by June, her boss had offered her a full-time Web writing and production position the station was creating.

"I've always heard how hard the job hunt is after graduation, and it was such a good opportunity," Shands says. "I didn't want to pass it up."

Although she still had a semester left until she graduated, she chose to juggle both school and her new career. "On my worst days I would have class from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and then I would come [to WBIR] from 4 p.m. to 1 a.m., and then I would have homework," Shands says. "And I just kept thinking 'I can do anything just for a few months.'"

After months of long hours and little sleep, Shands knew it was worth it as she watched her peers furiously search for jobs. She already had a first job she was passionate about. "It's the first time that I actually look forward to work and I feel fulfilled," she says. Part of that fulfillment stems from the evolving nature of the news business. Like the media industry, her job is ever-changing. To keep up, she emphasizes continuing to hone her Web-related skills. After all, she says success in the field depends on keeping up with evolving technology and the increasing importance of the Web. According to Shands, acquiring a broad skills set is also important in staying ahead.

"I just try to ask a lot of questions and learn as much as I can even if it's not in my job description. And it's a job that I can grow in." Shands hopes to see even more growth in her career. Becoming a head producer would be a dream, she says. But for now, she's simply looking forward to whatever comes next.



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