Winter 2014

SCOOP magazine Winter 2014

College of Communication and Information

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Scoop magazine is a magazine made for College of Communication and Information 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, School of Advertising and Public Relations, School of Communication Studies and School of Information Sciences.

This is the reader’s magazine that celebrates CCI students past and present. We spotlight the faculty and other numerous ventures of CCI, including campus media outlets and organizations. In addition, Scoop keeps its eyes on media, always covering – and uncovering – the latest trends. We represent a college that is preparing students and alumni for a changing job market, and we will be there to explain how and why the world of communication 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 also functions as an educational tool for JEM students interested in magazine journalism and it celebrates all the exciting changes within the publishing industry. It’s an ideal time for a fresh outlook, and Scoop stands prepared to deliver all that and more.
Teeter’s law of relativity

Don’t call this JEM professor’s office cluttered, describe it as full of great stories.

Story by: ALEX THOMASON
Just as legendary writer Virginia Woolf encouraged women to have a room of one’s own to write and think, JEM professor Dwight Teeter commands his own office on the fourth floor of the Communications Building.

Teeter’s tucked away in his corner office that offers glorious views of Neyland Stadium and the river, and his eyes are trained on his desk and office door. While the occasional passersby may wonder how safe this canyon of an office space might be, Teeter seems quite in his element. He’s surrounded with loads of work to do, yet chooses instead to talk with a student about a recent press predicament and its fallout.

Teeter, leans back in his chair and howls with laughter, all the while comparing the current situation with relative and relevant events culled from his lifetime dedication to communication law. After you bid farewell, you might walk down the hall until reality hits you: You learned so much about other fascinating events, you didn’t have time to ask him for specifics about the room.

A clean office, full of up-to-date story-telling supplies and accompanying USB cards: how typical for the ever-evolving journalism professor. But what type of story do such supplies imply? Might someone infers tales of prolonged effort, personal identification or advancement of journalism? Perhaps. But that setup is more likely to document a journalist’s valiant effort to update and prepare for the next phase of evolution.

The office of professor Dwight Teeter (JEM) appears the opposite of modern, offering refreshing, albeit cluttered, insight into the often-overlooked world of journalism history and law.

Teeter has had 23 years of University of Tennessee experience packed into his belongings with 12 of those years stationed in Com. 430 and the previous 11 years as CCI dean.

The smell of sentiment penetrates the senses upon entering the office, where three academic degrees hang from the walls alongside numerous accolades and plaques. Floor-to-ceiling bookcases house an assortment of media law, media history and journalism texts. Teeter is named as co-author in five of these.

On the academic’s desk, floor and shelf lay piles of student papers and miscellaneous print-offs, some held captive from semesters past, waiting to be recycled, thrown away or scribbled on. “There are many candidates for the least important item in my office,” Teeter says. Although many items may not be of utmost caliber, “I can attach some value to everything in here, or else it wouldn’t be here,” Teeter says.

Why not clean this congested office? Well, “there’s a certain amount of inertia in this place,” Teeter says.

While students might be wont to describe Teeter’s office as a black hole where papers have vanished from the physical plane of human existence, there is more to the documents, books, photographs and scribbled notes than meets the eye. These are stories about a man, an academic who loves to write, read, learn and help others.
One thing commuting students might all agree on is that the problematic parking situation at UT is not a laughing matter.

Well, it actually is a joke on the University of Tennessee memes page. One that stands out is a picture of a truck being towed with text in typical meme diction reading, “No more parking passes they said / Free parking on Lake Avenue they said.”

The long-lasting Internet trend (pronounced ‘meem’) stems from a concept coined by British biologist Richard Dawkins, who defines the term as a symbol for carrying cultural ideas, symbols or practices. Humorous memes are not as serious as that definition would imply, but it’s helpful to know the starting point.

What started out as two students’ idea for a UT memes page on Facebook in Feb. 2012, now has more likes than the official University of Tennessee page, garnering nearly 14,000 likes within its first year. The page parodies campus life using the various and rapidly changing lenses of Internet humor.

A third student joined the team as the page gained popularity. The three administrators wish to remain anonymous, although one agreed to tell us about the site's inception.

“There is a UTK Class of 2015 group on Facebook where people post about selling books and stuff like that, and last year people started posting memes. Other people were getting really mad about it posting, ‘Why don’t we just use this page to sell books?’ so I thought, ‘Why don’t we just go ahead and make a UTK Memes page? Everyone else has one,’” she says.

UTK Memes literally became an overnight sensation.

“In the first day we had 5,000 likes,” she says. “I remember sitting in my room with my roommate and we were just looking at each other like, ‘Oh my God, this is really happening.’”

Meme content ranges from inconsistencies of Knoxville’s weather to disappointment in UTK sports to cracks about the lack of student parking, and those posting the memes are quick to address other unusual local news.

“When the bear was on campus over the summer, I was on that in five minutes – done, made and on the page,” she says. “I guess it’s really easy to do quickly with social media, like people tweeting about things or posting on Facebook, and then the UT Alerts really help.”

Wilson Kessel, a senior studying architecture, says he checks the page regularly. “One of my favorites was definitely the one with all the photos of completely different weather environments,” says Kessel. “It’s so true!”

But the page also acts as repository to other Internet trends, such as the viral YouTube “Harlem Shake” videos, and UTK Memes links to myriad UTK groups who uploaded their own versions. In this case, administrators added to the parody mix by recording a large scale video on the front lawn of Ayers Hall on Feb. 15, 2013.

However, page administrators hope to expand beyond parody to philanthropy.

“I’d love to do something to raise money for the Pat Summit Foundation, she’s one of my biggest role models. I absolutely adore her,” says the anonymous administrator. “How can you go to UT and not love her? At this point we have so much influence that I think we could do something awesome.”
Nash...Angeles?
by Ross Stansberry

We’d like to blame Australian actress and Nashville resident Nicole Kidman for Hollywood training its lens on our state capital. Except given that movie director Quentin Tarantino routinely slips references to Knoxville and other Tennessee cities into his films, so maybe primetime was just a matter of, well, time.

ABC’s TV show “Nashville,” nominated for two Golden Globes, bases its narrative on the country music capital, following the fictional lives of up-and-coming artists and long-established icons of the legendary scene. Rayna Jaymes, played by Connie Britton who previously starred in “Friday Night Lights,” is an established country music star whose fame is fading. To regain popularity, her record label suggests that she go on tour opening for the young artist Juliette Barnes, played by Hayden Panettiere, the former star of the hit TV show “Heroes.” This matchup leads to a power struggle between the two personalities, always fighting for top billing.

For many UT students, the series shoots close to home. “I’m from Nashville, so I like to see the places,” says studio art major Lily Chappell. “There’s a location called Hillsboro Village, which is where my friends and I hung out a lot in high school, and they always film them there walking around. It’s weird.”

Psychology major Kelsey Tanner was home for winter break last year and was cast as an extra in a concert scene. “It was at a warehouse in metro Nashville. I saw so many people I knew from high school. There were probably 150 people,” says Tanner, offering some insider scoop. “I was surprised at how well the girl who plays Juliette can sing. It was actually pretty good.”

Chappell watches the show with her friends on Wednesday nights. “I feel like my house kind of roots for Rayna over anyone else to do well, and we love Deacon. We’re team Deacon.”

Viewers have yet to witness how the characters’ lives will pan out, but with the series’ above average ratings, the drama is likely to continue for seasons to come.
InHouse GFX - Creating the dream, from scratch

Want a primer in entrepreneurialism?
Meet public relations alum Anthony Smith.

Story by: SARAH BRADSHER

The entrepreneurial bug is not picky and sometimes, it strikes people like Anthony Smith (PR 2013) at an early age. Smith’s dream of owning a business goes as far back as he can remember, and three years ago he established himself as an entrepreneur. As founder and CEO of Inhouse GFX (www.inhousegfx.com), a graphics, web and screen printing business catering to college students, Smith has created a business that has been steadily growing since its launch.
It's a commendable feat to create a business from scratch during college, but perhaps even more impressive is that Smith is completely self-taught in all of the services his company provides, thanks, in part, to YouTube.

Smith's graphics education began in high school, when a friend declined to teach him how to learn graphic design. So Smith took matters into his own hands, and by watching video tutorials about Photoshop on YouTube, he laid the foundation for his design skills. He took these skills and began creating flyers for nightclubs and album covers for local musicians in Knoxville.

Despite the steady income from these design jobs, Smith wished to further expand his creativity. He again visited YouTube, and this time learned web design. His next step was to team up with a business partner to enter the market of screen printing.

Apart from the company name, not much stuck during the first year of Inhouse GFX, including the business partnership. “After about three months, our initial vision tanked,” Smith says. The differing business ideals forced the partners to split ways, and though his dream was derailed, Smith was not deterred.

But this setback only increased Smith’s focus. With no equipment and no manpower, he again had to start from the ground up. “That was when I made the company into a brand and solidified three services — graphic design, web design and screen printing, and defined a target market,” Smith says. “So it wasn’t a scattered brand anymore.”

Creating a cohesive brand takes time and attention. “When you look at a company it's kind of like a kid, it has to be raised, and at that time it was like a newborn; we were just crawling all over the place not going anywhere, but now we're like elementary school — we’re walking and stuff; we have friends.”

His relentless efforts to “raise” his company did not go unnoticed. In the fall of 2012, Inhouse GFX was awarded a $10,000 grant from the Boyd Venture Fund, which each semester awards grants to UT student-owned businesses. Smith says this recognition finally gave his business the legitimacy he craved. “I didn't even care about the money,” Smith says, “I liked it for the clout and being able to show that someone believes in us.”

During the last year months, Smith has worked to expand brand identity. “You work all day, pretty much for free, based on achieving a dream; I have a lot of motivation to not let people down,” he says. While Smith says he dreams of international recognition of Inhouse GFX, he won't forget his former path. “We have so much further to go,” he says, “but just seeing where I’ve come by myself, that's the most rewarding part.”

“When you look at a company it’s kind of like a kid. It has to be raised, and at that time it was like a newborn; we were just crawling all over the place not going anywhere, but now we’re like elementary school — we’re walking and stuff; we have friends.”

-Anthony Smith (PR 2013)
It’s not hard to imagine college boys lounging in their home, watching MTV on a Wednesday night. They’re done with today’s classes and work, so they sprawl out on couches, attempting to stay awake. And, just when it seems slumber is near, they slowly migrate to a cramped back bedroom. Here, the furniture is pushed aside for a drum set and guitar stands.

Over two hours later, they emerge, discussing changes to a certain song and asking one another if they remember the chords and drum beats improvised during the practice session. The group of friends seamlessly switches from musical collaboration to male bonding.

Lions is a Knoxville indie rock band manned by guitarist Josiah Smith (AD, 2013), guitarist Jeremy Tisdale (Material Sciences, 2013), bassist Richard Jeffords (Computer Science, 2014) and drummer Nathan Larson. While Lions has only been
a band for a couple years, Smith and Jeffords have been working together since before the group established its final formation. Acquaintances since middle school, their relationship didn't start out on the best of terms. “He would chase me around after football games and tell me I sucked at bass,” Jeffords remembers.

They crossed paths once again after high school and immediately clicked. “I think it’s more fun to play music with Josiah because he’s bound to be a front man,” Jeffords says.

Smith’s leadership shaped Lions into its current form. “I guess I was always bound to start a band,” Smith says. “I’m the dad.” While the former statement may seem strange coming from a 22-year-old, Smith played a large part in bringing Tisdale and Larson on board. After playing in a post-hardcore band, Larson and Tisdale had no qualms about jumping into an indie pop/rock sound. “It’s a different kind of fun,” Tisdale says. “It’s more pleasant,” Larson adds. “It’s more pleasant to play and listen to.”

Indie labels seem to agree, as England-based Enjoyment Records signed Lions last year and produced the band’s first record, “MNTZ.” Such early success might seem an unlikely prospect for many young bands, but Lions captured a fan base the Web 2.0 way: Internet and social media strategy. The foursome says the website Bandcamp is behind their discovery and their growing listeners; they currently have over 2,800 downloads between their two albums. Bandcamp.com allows bands to upload their music, and visitors can preview and download any song or album. The website showcases Lions’ first eight-song album, “MNTZ,” a name they took from Jeffords’ Tumblr. The vinyl produced by Enjoyment Records added two tracks only available by purchase.

Their second album, “Roosevelt,” features five new songs, and is sentimental for Larson, who was not a part of the first album’s production. “He’s always talked about starting a band called Roosevelt, so that’s where the name came from,” Smith says. “This album is the first one to him; he’s really proud of it, so we named it for him just like we named the first one for Richard, because he pushed me to write and sing these songs.”

So what’s next for these cool cats? According to the band’s Facebook page, www.facebook.com/LionsTN, “In more Lionsy type news; we as a band have decided to begin writing a full lengths worth of material (12-14 songs is the goal). We are taking this semester/next couple of months away from shows to focus on this. We’ve never really done that, taken time to really write the best stuff we think we can.”

We guess that means that somewhere, right now, these four bandmates are also enjoying a lion’s share of laughs, too. “We have more fun than most bands do,” Smith says. “We’re four guys in a band, and we love our band, and we foster it like we should.”

Let there be LIONS on social media

Tumblr: http://lionstn.tumblr.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LionsTN
Twitter: https://twitter.com/Lionstn
As we settle into the age of web 2.0, when the majority of Americans have at least one social media account, classroom walls increasingly exist only in the physical form. In these cases, social media and its accompanying technology allows students a direct window into our global media society.

A key player in this transition is real-time social media service Skype, a software application released in 2003 and bought by Microsoft in 2011. A registered Skype user can make a free video call, voice call and instant message with another user who has similar technical capabilities.

Given the global reach of the service (http://about.skype.com/ cites 40 million users online during peak hours), educators such as CCI doctoral candidate and graduate teaching associate Ivanka Pjesivac are introducing journalism students to international networks well beyond Vol Nation.

Such media networks, which include Al Jazeera Balkans, based in Sarajevo, CNN International, headquartered in London and Paris's daily paper Le Monde, might be considered the heart and soul of Pjesivac's special topics course in international reporting (JEM 494).

Pjesivac, originally from Serbia, says she created her interactive course plan after considering the many international journalists she met during her years working in the field. “I can bring people with live voices to share what's going on in London, the Middle East, Paris and the Balkans — and all for free,” says Pjesivac.

However, it might otherwise prove quantifiably difficult to put a pricetag on this type and caliber of professional feedback. The spring 2013 semester's Skype lineup included: Lamija Aleckovic, executive producer of Al Jazeera Balkans, who shared her experiences from the budding network and advised students on how to climb the journalism ladder; CNN International's Stephanie Halasz, who explained the challenges at the CNN International assignment desk; and Le Monde's Stephanie Maupas, who explained the workings of the newspaper, including her experience reporting from The Hague at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Criminal Court (ICC).

Pjesivac says the ultimate goal of these conversations is for students to learn about foreign correspondents and gain perspective about the world. “Critical thinking is vital in every field, especially journalism,” she says.

In addition, student Hannah Cather (JEM, 2014), cites what many might consider an equally important outcome, finding a professional ideal. “I have female role models in the journalism world after Skyping with the people from abroad,” Cather says. “Lamija from the Balkans had a great personality, and Skype was a great way to meet her.”

Given Cather’s comment about meeting this journalist, who during this conversation sat in front of her computer webcam thousands of miles away, a new education adage might read, “It’s not where you go, it’s who you know.” As such, without leaving their nook of the world, students worldwide now have an opportunity to embark on their own international learning experience.
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For every season, there is a sport. And for every sport, there is an audience. If the sport is men’s basketball, baseball, football or hockey, it seems a given that it’s audience is tuned in to ESPN’s myriad platforms.

The 35-year-old company with the tagline, “the worldwide leader in sports,” boasts an impressive media track record, launching ESPN2 in 1993. The expansion introduced to sports fans a fleet of young talent, including unknowns Rece Davis, Stuart Scott and Mike Tirico, broadcasters who continue to be mainstays in millions of American living rooms.

But this success was hardly overnight, and it was anything but surprising to those on the inside. The few, the proud, the Three Musketeers of CCI – they saw it happen firsthand.

CHARTING INDUSTRY CHANGE

Chris Low, Ryan McGee and Mike Moore all JEM alum (1987, 1993, 1984, respectfully) watched the media industry develop and experienced the effect of these developments on the sports industry.

Low (JEM, 1987) is an online content producer and blog manager at ESPN.com. Until four years ago, he attended and covered SEC sporting events and it consisted of jotting notes during the game, getting an interview afterward and developing an article summarizing the highlights. The structure changed in 2008 when the blog network (http://espn.go.com/blog/sec) started and chat rooms, video pieces, podcasts and debates among the online content writers became integral pieces of the new medium.

McGee (JEM, 1993) started with ESPN in 1994, and now is a producer and blogger for ESPN. He has won two Emmy’s as a writer (2006, 2007).

McGee cites the introduction of social media as the biggest game change, “We now have a one-hour news cycle,” says McGee, who offers an example, “You have a sensational video that a kid takes at a game. The kid posts the video to Twitter. If it’s trending nationally within an hour or two, we find the kid who the story is about. If it’s a good story, he’s on SportsCenter the next day and off the air by noon.” Seems like the kid was famous for about 12 hours, right? Wrong. “My bosses promise me there will always be written content to supplement any story,” McGee says. “You have to be more in-depth, you have to be more detail oriented, and you have to get the story that’s going to tell the whole story.”

Mike Moore (JEM, 1984) is a Senior Coordinating Producer for ESPN, responsible for producing ESPN’s syndicated networks like the SEC Network and the Big 12 Network. He cites conversion of analog to digital as ushering in a faster-paced environment so the transmissions of images could be executed more swiftly. With these high definition developments, easily transferrable images and editing software, “We now have things like the first-and-10 line on the football field. These things are implemented for the enjoyment of our viewer,” says Moore.

Another challenge Moore notes is different audience viewing habits. “We talk a lot about best available screen,” says Moore. “That’s one big change. Viewers are going to watch our content on the best available screen, so we have to make sure that it works on whatever screen they may have in their hand. We’re very aggressive in authentication, trying to get our content out there in all the ways that we can.”

One assured mode of authentication is Twitter and SportsCenter regularly broadcasts tweets from athletes. Tweeting is unformulated and unregulated, and there are no filters. An athlete can say anything at any time, and this is a platform with which the audience can relate and engage in. The sports industry changes as journalists are gathering exclusive information about players’ emotions on the Internet.

Psssst...What’s the secret to these three sports broadcasters ongoing success?

Practicing journalistic principles and scoring professional credibility.

Written by ALEX THOMASON

INSIDE THE LINES

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<th>NAME</th>
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<td>Mike Moore</td>
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<td>Ryan McGee</td>
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<td>Chris Low</td>
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While many organizations take to hiring a social media expert to sort through the talk, McGee says ESPN’s job might just be too large, “No one has figured this thing out yet,” he says. Though sorting through the waves of online content can be time consuming, it is also beneficial for relaying, retrieving and reporting information.

**FUNDAMENTALLY UT**

So how did these three successful professionals train for such challenges? They says they applied fundamentals they learned here to help them through their formative industry years.

Chris Low cites Ed Caudill, Paul Ashdown, and Jane Pope as the CCI faculty that best served his education. “These three people taught me what it was going to take to succeed,” says Low, “You have to actually go into the world and get experience and work for newspapers, radio stations, and magazines.” Low emphasizes this tangible experience as necessary for today’s young journalist. “You have to gain credibility,” says Low. In a world where anyone with a smartphone is a journalist, credibility has become one of the only characteristics distinguishing true journalists from someone else with a smartphone.

Advancements in technology have the potential to destroy jobs, but those who recognize technology’s other potential — to create jobs — thrive in constantly evolving mediums. Ryan McGee credits his ability to diversify and adapt the skills he learned from Dr. Sam Swan (JEM). “One of the things that Dr. Swan kept hammering on the first day of class was ‘Be diverse,’” McGee says. “Don’t just say, ‘I’m going to be on TV.’ Also look into radio, newspaper and magazines. He talked about the Internet. This was in the 1980s, before any of us knew what the hell it was.”

But diversity in skill demands an education equally distributed in all facets of journalism. “It’s not really about learning the technology; it’s about learning the business. The classes that most resonated with me were ‘Broadcast Law,’ sales classes and TV management classes,” says Moore. The combination is sympatico, with the business side of journalism focused on the ability to adapt to a story, the creative side focused on the ability to adapt to different platforms of storytelling.

ESPN’s adaptability, alongside continual exploration of social media platforms, put it in a position to maintain prominence as the worldwide leader in sports. Some of the talent who help implement such corporate strategy once walked CCI’s halls as students, and these individuals, Low, Moore and McGee, all attribute their success to one key factor, as stated by Low: “You have to be able to write.” Noted.
What first attracted you to your major?
I liked the fact that I was not just a number, my professors and classmates knew me by name, and they cared about what I was learning and how that would impact my social and professional life. I decided I wanted to work in either a PR firm setting or for an external communications sector after my internships with two firms in the Knoxville area.

Who in your field inspires you most?
I have become really close to my internship mentor, Erin. I enjoy working with her at my internship through Ackermann PR because we are very similar in our thought processes — we are creative people with a strategic eye and close attention for detail. She has been huge in my job search and helping me make the transition from my academic to professional career.

What is your favorite aspect of public relations?
Every day is different. You have the ability to be creative, but you must remain realistic and have a strategic plan for every move you make. You are not just working for yourself or one other person; you are representing an entire company or client, and that's important to me. I also love the competition! People in this industry are innately competitive, and they not only work hard, but they play hard.

Describe your senior dream.
Ideally, in 15 years, I will own my own communications firm, or act as the chief marketing officer at a large, successful business. But more importantly, I want to run to work everyday with joy, not run away from my desk at the 5 o'clock hour. I would like to stay in the Southeast. I love it here! I was born and raised in Tennessee — I love the hospitality, the food and the weather.

What are your post-graduation plans?
I have been interviewing like a madwoman. I ultimately see myself in the Knoxville or Nashville area. I have been interviewing with two large companies in Knoxville with their marketing departments and a large PR firm in Nashville, so hopefully something positive will come out of that, and overall, I am trying to stay positive and just go where my seed is planted! With a little luck and a lot of faith, I'm sure everything will work out just how it is supposed to!

WHERE SHE IS TODAY: Public relations coordinator at Regal Entertainment Group, Knoxville
Jeremiah Muhammad
Communications Studies

What first attracted you to your major?
I was initially attracted to Journalism my freshman year because I thought I had this intense passion to be a sports broadcaster, but that changed when I took my first communications class and learned how to apply the theories to my actual life.

Who in your field inspires you most?
I would say Dr. Catalina Toma, she is currently an associate professor at The University of Madison. She was my biggest inspiration in communications because once I started my research about online deception and relationships; she was the only person that had really researched the topic. She motivated me to further expand on the topic she is known for in the communications world. Someone at UT would most definitely be Dr. Teeter, I have learned so much from taking his JEM 400 course and just from visiting him and talking to him for hours in his office.

What is your favorite aspect of communication studies?
I love the diversity of the topics offered in the courses. For example, I’m in a Political Persuasion class taught by Dean Rice, the Chief of Staff for Knox County, Mayor Tim Burchett. I absolutely love it. We are tasked with running a mock political campaign. It shows us how our communication skills can be used to possibly get us to win elections.

Describe your senior dream.
In a perfect world, I would want to work for Def Jam Records in New York City as an artist and repertoire associate. I will actually be interning for them towards the end of the year.

What are your post-graduation plans?
I’m actually debating on going back home to Chicago to take up an offer in the promotions department for 107.5 WGCI, or I can stay in Knoxville until the end of the year and work for the Journal Broadcast Group as a promotions assistant.

Where he is today: Marketing and promotions intern at The Shrine, Chicago.
What first attracted you to your major?
I started off in graphic design and didn't get into the program. Advertising was the only other thing that was creative. Switched. I'd never done anything like that before. I was looking through the catalog and I knew I wanted to be in a creative class. I was doing Adobe. It's business-y, there's more group work than being on a computer by yourself designing. I like the client work. I like people.

Who in your field inspires you most?
Blakeman. She's the creative teacher. Because she graded us really hard, and we were upset at first. But if we are going to turn campaign components into clients it needs to be perfect. I like that she tells us how to fix things, not just telling us off. She helps us understand why we are doing what we are doing, not just giving us the assignment.

What is your favorite aspect of advertising?
I like that we do a lot of group work, and we can all do what we like because everyone has a different strength. My strengths are in the creative, the organizing, keeping everyone in line.

Describe your senior dream.
Ultimately, I'd like to be the creative director of an agency or work as an art director for a magazine doing layouts. The only reason I'd move to the client side is if it were Nike or a client I'd really like. Other than that I would like to climb the agency ladder.

What are your post-graduation plans?
I want to be a creative assistant; our program is geared toward account management. I like aspects of account management because you learn how to communicate between the client and the agency. Plus, you keep everyone on deadline. A creative assistant does that within the agency. Working with all the creative teams in the agency would allow me to have access to all the creative work of an agency. I'd like to work at a big agency either in Chicago or California. I have an interview tomorrow for a position in San Fran, and I've had a few in Chicago.

WHERE SHE IS TODAY: Account coordinator at GS&F, Nashville
What first attracted you to your major?
I knew that I really loved TV and at first I thought I wanted to do news. But then I saw I could specialize my major, so I work less with actual journalism and more so with media in general. It allows me to be more flexible and pursue my passion of TV production. My uncle used to work on TV sets in Dallas.

Who in your field inspires you most?
Probably from a news perspective, Anderson Cooper, and then from a production perspective Jerry Bruckheimer. They are both at the top of their fields, and they work so hard. Anderson Cooper didn't use his family's wealth, and Jerry Bruckheimer built his career from the ground up. And they are both so incredibly successful.

What is your favorite aspect of journalism?
The environment. My favorite part of being in this major is the people. I am working with people that I feel will be my peers in the workforce ten years from now. So I am establishing connections and friendships for the future.

Describe your senior dream.
Production for Saturday Night Live in New York City.

What are your post-graduation plans?
Yeah, I’ll have get back to you.

WHERE HE IS TODAY: Production assistant at Love Is Strange Productions, New York City
Viola Gienger (Journalism, 1984) can personally attest to our increasingly global society, as she’s had a front row seat for some of the world’s most significant policy shifts during the last three decades.

For example, after the break up of the Soviet Block (1991), she trained, advised and consulted with newly independent eastern Europe. “One of the things that I was struggling with was to try to relate the American experience and the American history of journalism to what they were experiencing in their transitional period.” Gienger says she reviewed American journalism history for guidance, and she was able to draw more commonalities than she anticipated.

Gienger has reported on conflicts in various countries, writing about foreign policy, government and national security. She currently writes for the United States Institute of Peace, a Washington D.C. based conflict management center that, according to its webpage, works to avert international contention without violence. “I focus on foreign affairs: conflict and peace-building,” she says.

Though this area of reporting is certainly complex and requires knowledge about international information dissemination, Gienger cites journalistic and life principles she acquired at UT as invaluable assets to her career. Such narrative strategies include noting precise chronology of events, a task that she says can be difficult in the “whirl of the event.”

Today, Gienger helps with the daily management of the United States Institute of Peace’s Olive Branch blog (http://www.usip.org/olivebranch). The institute’s website distinguishes the organization as an independent collector of information, relying on its own personnel for accurate reports from abroad. Gienger echoes this statement, noting, “I work in a building that is just full of tremendous expertise. People are traveling constantly to the conflict areas we work on; doing research and analyzing and implementing programs there. I do some travel myself to see situations firsthand.”

“We can just never have enough information about the most pivotal areas that affect us like education, foreign policy and national security,” Gienger says. “Some people think of foreign policy as something that somebody else worries about, but I think of it as very central, particularly as the world becomes more connected.”

Gienger at a Glance

Senior Writer, United States Institute of Peace: Washington D.C., 2012–Present


Media Advisor/Deputy Director, IREX ProMedia: Sarajevo, Bosnia-Hezegovina, 1999-2001

Resident Advisor, IREX ProMedia: Minsk, Belarus, 1997–1999


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Look closely at Josh Lay’s (CS, 2005) Paul Bunyon-esque headshot and you can see the telltale signs of a smile, as if he’s thinking of the punch line to the funniest joke on the planet. And for all we know, this New York City resident could actually be doing just that. After all, writing, producing and starring in Blip.tv’s comedy “Model Wife” is how this Knoxville native is finding fame.

But ten years ago, Lay enjoyed a different kind of celebrity in East Tennessee, as the University of Tennessee’s beloved mascot Smokey, a job in which he jokes, “There’s nothing sexier than a man that wears a furry outfit, tosses T-shirts, and sweats uncontrollably for hours at a time.”

Lay, who minored in broadcasting, says, “I chose to don the fur because it paid for school … a job that requires you to be athletic and animated was perfect for me.” Lay speaks of his days, “There’s no describing running through the ‘T’ every Saturday for four years. It never got old. Competing in Nationals — yes that is a real thing — and the people I met in the process are some of my closest friends today.”

As a new college graduate, Lay was primed for new big-league challenges, and he moved to New York City, where he worked in a bookstore for $8 per hour. In addition, he parlayed his Smokey experience to land a mascot gig for the New Jersey Devils from 2005 to 2007. The next year, Lay put his mind (and humor) to work for VH1’s show “Best Week Ever,” where he produced a nightly podcast, guest blogged and occasionally hosted.

But from 2009 - 2011, Lay’s motivation was put to the test, saying he “tended bar, bar backed, catered, passed out flyers, as well as a ton of other odd jobs”, to stay afloat and pay rent, that is, until Lay’s stars aligned with a blogging and web production position at Late Night with Jimmy Fallon.

Lay says the job seemed ideal, so he wanted his application pitch perfect. “I also knew someone who worked there which always helps,” says Lay. “And by always helps, I mean is the most important thing in getting any job.” Lay’s friend encouraged him to submit original ideas for the website as well as links to his comedy work, and several weeks (and interviews) later he was hired.

Flash forward two years, two Webby Awards and one Emmy nomination later, and Lay is now creating his own comedic legacy, anchored by his web series, Model Wife, which he co-creates, co-produces, co-writes and co-stars. The series, described on its site www.blip.tv/modelwifeshow as “A web series about a normal guy, his supermodel wife, and their two neighbors” (Lay plays a neighbor), was also recently nominated for a Writer’s Guild Award for Outstanding Writing in Original New Media. Last year his writing group sold a second still-untitled comedy series to YouTube channel “Above Average,” in which he will also co-write, co-produce and co-star.

Although Lay’s upwards trajectory seems assured, he says he continues to draw on things he learned in his CS major. “One thing I learned in a public speaking class that stuck is that you have to have credibility as a speaker for the audience to be engaged,” says Lay.

So given Lay’s varied but vibrant resume, one might wonder whether he ever questioned his career choices, be it actor, writer or comedian. “No,” says Lay. “But I’m also a crazy person that wears animal costumes.”
It’s many-a-parents’ worst fear — trying to explain to a child how the stork impeccably times his nine-month flight to deliver brand new, never-been-swaddled babies to homes all over the world, never stopping to use the restroom or grab a water and some sardines.

Yet rarely do youngsters not ask how they come into this world. Humans demand self-inquiry. Indeed, something lodged deep inside human DNA desires an understanding of its origins, and Aimee Leverette (IS, 2004) is one link to finding this information. Leverette journeys around the country to teach libraries how to effectively use their genealogy databases.

“Genealogy is the fastest growing hobby in the world,” says Leverette. “It doesn’t matter who you are; you are perpetually interested in your background.”

Leverette, a Murfreesboro native (MTSU, 2001), pursued an M.S. degree because of her “inner librarian.” She trains library staff to effectively employ database resources, many of which are used by library patrons to research their own genealogies. “The ability to adopt genealogy as an area of specialty with ProQuest was really exciting,” says Leverette. “I had an interest in genealogy already because of my degree in history.”

Leverette has found a way to pursue both of these passions. “Most librarians have the same personality traits. The bottom line is that we all enjoy helping people and making sure they get what they need,” Leverette says. “When I was in school at UT, I thought, ‘Wow, this is really fascinating stuff, how databases work. If I could do this, it would be really cool.’”

Consider Leverette uber-cool, as she now works as a customer education and training specialist at ProQuest, a vendor of information and databases to libraries across the country. Leverette troubleshoots libraries’ questions about their newly acquired geneology tools. She is currently responsible for clients in Montana, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, California, Arizona and Nevada. “It really is fantastic. I get to see some interesting places, all types of libraries and communities,” Leverette says, “Libraries have seen a lot more folks coming in who are interested in genealogies.”

Folks like those fearful parents, who can now substitute a trip to the library in place of an awkward explanation.
Mayor Rogero bolsters banquet’s bloom

CCI Diversity Student Leaders Society celebrate social inclusion with Knoxville’s first female mayor

Written by ROSS STANSBERRY

When Knoxville’s first female mayor stepped behind the podium at CCI’s Experience Diversity Banquet on Feb. 22, 2013, applause from the audience yielded to a respectful silence.

Madeline Rogero was the keynote speaker at the event hosted by the University of Tennessee’s College of Communication and Information and the recipient of the 2013 CCI Diversity Award. UT acknowledged Rogero’s extensive work to promote a diverse, inclusive atmosphere in Knoxville.

Banquet attendee Dr. Erin Whiteside, who teaches “Media, Diversity, and Society” (JEM 466), in which students critique the portrayal of diversity in media attended the banquet, says Rogero is a natural fit for the occasion.

“I think she is very invested in making the community more vibrant, but also more cohesive — bringing people together,” says Whiteside. “She is not shy about sharing her progressive attitudes towards diversity, which I think is really nice to have a leader who is outspoken in that regard.”

Rogero demonstrated this attitude last year as the first mayor to walk with the Knoxville PrideFest Parade. “To take that kind of visible stance required some sort of measured political risk, and yet she was still willing to stand up for what she believed in,” says Whiteside.

Rogero’s address carried a theme of standing up for your beliefs. An eclectic audience of 250, including Diversity Student Leaders Society (DSLS) members, CCI faculty, students and other prominent Knoxville figures, sat at round tables with white table cloths as Rogero cleared her throat and began her speech:
“I read the goal statement for the Diversity Student Leaders, which is to ‘promote understanding by embracing and celebrating the dimensions of diversity within each individual. That is very much in step with my personal beliefs and what I try to do with my administration, and it’s also part of my vision for Knoxville — to embrace and celebrate diversity.’”

-Madeline Rogero, mayor of Knoxville

“I read the goal statement for the Diversity Student Leader Society, which is to ‘promote understanding by embracing and celebrating the dimensions of diversity within each individual,’” said Rogero. “That is very much in step with my personal beliefs and what I try to do with my administration, and it’s also part of my vision for Knoxville — to embrace and celebrate diversity.”

Along with celebration, Rogero’s speech called the audience to “bloom where you are planted.” She explained this as a message to take a stand and make a difference where you are at the moment.

After the speech, Obe Drummers, Salsa Knot dance group and an Asian dance group from the International House performed while the audience dined on honey pecan chicken, scalloped potatoes and other side dishes.

The banquet serves as a fundraiser for DSLS, a CCI student group devoted to raising awareness and promoting diversity. The society is directed by Alice Wirth, wife of CCI’s Dean Mike Wirth. Whiteside sees the banquet as a good opportunity for the community to support the society.

“It is about the fundraising, but it is also about raising awareness and providing a public platform to show that this is something people in our community care about and support,” says Whiteside.

For information about the CCI Diversity Student Leaders Society:
http://www.cci.utk.edu/dsls
Ad Club’s NYC trip is a dynamic dose of professional possibilities and one-on-one face time

Written by HANNAH MARGARET ALLEN

Virginia Anderson (Ad, 2013) meticulously chose her business casual outfits, printed her resume on luxurious cardstock and exhaustively researched Manhattan advertising agencies in anticipation of the AD Club trip to New York City in January. She was ready to channel her inner “Girls” character Hannah Horvath and take on the professional advertising world.

CCI’s Ad Club and advertising faculty Eric Haley and Courtney Childers organize the annual trip to NYC to take students out of the classroom and into meetings with big name agencies. Haley formed the trip 20 years ago to validate what students were learning, to allow opportunities to secure jobs and internships, and to keep the classroom material current. Haley, who started the trip his first year at UTK, says this opportunity has been very successful, as the program has grown from eight students to 30.

“It was clear our students had the talent to succeed in the best advertising companies in the country, but they generally were not knowledgeable about those opportunities,” says Haley.

Last year’s junior and senior advertising majors visited

Above, CCI Ad Club members wait to meet with BBDO professionals in the firm’s midtown office.
The James A. Haslam II Business Building can seem like a daunting setting for a newly-graduated College of Communication and Information student. The HBB halls offer a sensory combination of new building smell, modern glass walls and people wearing fresh pressed suits, which might feel a world away from the essence of creative collaboration that emanates throughout CCI. But in our current age of media startups and entrepreneurism, the BS-MBA sequence is proving to be powerful.

One example is Chris Inklebarger (JEM, 2007), who, as an undergraduate, wrote stories for the Tennessee Journalist, like “Lofton For President in ’08.” After receiving his BS, Inklebarger worked in the communications industry for a year before he applied and was accepted into the MBA program.

“My biggest fear was that I wanted to do finance, and I hadn’t had a single class in business yet,” Inklebarger says. “But if you don’t know a debit from a credit, they offer classes the week before the program starts to get you up to speed.”

The 17-month MBA program offers concentrations in business analytics, entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, operations and supply chain management. The first year is an accelerated education of the business landscape, and the following summer entails a paid internship. In the fall, students begin taking classes in their specific concentrations.

The program has no academic prerequisites. Seventy-six students enrolled in the program’s class of 2013, and of those, only 32 percent had an undergraduate degree in business.

“About five percent of every class is CCI,” says Donna Potts, admissions director for the MBA program. “We’d like to see that grow.” Potts says the MBA program values these CCI graduates for their unique and specific skill sets.

“I found that things I learned from journalism, like my ability to trim down presentations and papers, made me invaluable to my groups,” Inklebarger says.

Amy Cathey directs the MBA program, and she says she’s been impressed by CCI graduates’ ability to work in groups and turn feedback into improvement. “Our students from CCI have a skill to contribute right away because the ability to communicate effectively can make or break you in business,” says Cathey.

Similarly, Inklebarger encourages CCI students, past and present, to look beyond any perceived shortcomings they might have about their abilities. “If you’re a CCI student considering the program, don’t worry about what business knowledge or skills you do or don’t have,” he says. “If you put the time in, you can succeed in the program.”
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During fiscal year 2012 your investment provided additional resources for student scholarships, faculty support, visiting professionals, experiential learning, and diversity initiatives. Your private gifts have also led to much needed improvements in the College's facilities including our state-of-the art Converged Newsroom and Video Editing Suite.

We realize that you have a variety of philanthropic options, and we are very grateful to you for deciding to generously support your alma mater! Thank you for continuing to invest in CCI and the next generation of communication and information leaders! We promise to be good stewards of your gifts as we continue to build a cutting edge college of communication and information.

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