

THE WATERFRONT

A Quarterly Newsletter of Loyola University Chicago's Chapter of
The Society of Professional Journalists

LUC student gets byline for Obama inauguration

By Sarah Marbes

Loyola junior Catherine Kessler covered President Obama's Jan. 20 inauguration for the News Herald, a daily newspaper in northern Ohio. The Waterfront sat down with Kessler to find out how she got her byline.

How did you get into writing for the News Herald?

Writing was something I always liked writing in school, and I went in not knowing anything. I didn't know what a copy editor was, a managing editor was. I didn't know all the basics. I covered the debate between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in Cleveland. I was really lucky that I got to do that. Tim

Russert was there! He was so nice and I got a picture with him. When the debate came to Cleveland I was in Chicago and I was like "I have to find away to go." You had to have press credentials and go through Secret Service clearance and stuff like that. By mere luck and lots of begging, I got my press credentials. I believe that's how I got to do the inauguration because I put myself out there. That's what I've learned writing on deadline. You have to take your notes and make it make sense to someone who has no understanding of what you are talking about.

How did you get to cover the inauguration?



A lot of friends of mine live in Washington D.C. and I was going to the inauguration anyway, but I thought "Why not make a story out of it?" So I talked to one of the managing editors and said, "I'll be in Washington, if you want me to do something I can send it in." Little did I know the experience I would have there. I thought I was just to go in

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Editor's Note

Kristen Thometz, *Editor-in-Chief*

As the new Editor-In-Chief of *The Waterfront*, I would like to commend my predecessor for her ambitions and for launching the first issue of this publication. I would like to thank all of the writers, layout editors and our SPJ faculty adviser, Professor Beth Konrad, for their hard work and advice. *The Waterfront* is a magazine produced by members of Loyola University Chicago's chapter of Society of Professional Journalists. *The Waterfront* features articles about changes occurring in journalism, advice from professionals in the field and highlights exceptional journalism students and journalists. We strongly encourage students to write for *The Waterfront* and submit questions they have about the field of journalism. To suggest issues you would like to see addressed in the next issue of *The Waterfront*, please send an e-mail to kthometz@luc.edu. Enjoy!

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KESSLER: Student covers Jan. 20 inauguration events

and be one of those people at the Reflecting Pool and standing in the Mall, but as it turned out I got Congressional seats, I got to go to the Ohio inaugural ball and I worked with MTV to do the MTV youth ball. We repaired an elementary school in Washington, D.C. Toby McGuire came. Brandon Routh came. Oprah did a live shot. Usher was there. It was on national news. So when [the News Herald] asked me, "Would you write three day piece on it?" I was daunted by it because I didn't know what my day-to-day experiences would be. I wanted to give readers a really good visual of what it was like. Sure,

they could turn on CNN or Fox and see the parade route, but I wanted people to know how cold it was there, or that everyone had been standing out since four in the morning and they haven't eaten, just things like that that make you feel familiar, like you there. I was really lucky. I got to do an open-ended piece where my editors didn't give me a specific direction to go. I got to tell my experiences and one of the pieces was on the front page and they put it on the Internet and I got phone calls about it. Someone wrote a letter to the editor about me. They didn't like what I wrote. But I am glad because

that means people really read what I wrote.

What advice do you have for fellow students interested in journalism?

If you feel you have what it takes, go and get it. If you really want to do something, put yourself out there. No little task goes unnoticed. If go in and are willing to work and say, "I really want to learn to be a journalist" they respect that. Go out there and do it. No one is going to come to you and say "please write for us" you have to go out and do it.

Here's What's Going on in Freelance

By Kristen Thometz

Professor John Slania, the journalism program director at Loyola University Chicago, has been freelancing for the more than 10 years. As a freelancer he has written for numerous publications, such as *Crain Chicago*, *USA Today*, *People Magazine*, *Money Magazine* and many more. Up until about three years ago, Slania was a full-time freelancer. Since accepting his position at Loyola, Slania has scaled back to freelancing part-time. When Slania began freelancing, he started from scratch.

"I basically just tried to send out my query letters, résumés and clips to publications that might need freelancers," said Slania.

In order to determine which publications might need freelancers, Slania consulted *The Writer's Market*, and browsed through his local library's periodicals for publications.

"I took whatever I could to build clips and get my name out there," said Slania. For one publication he accepted an offer of receiving a penny a word as compensation for a 3,000-word article.

"If you want to make a living, write for anything for any price," Slania said.

Slania's advice for anyone trying to get into freelancing: "Approach it like a business. If you want to do it full time, figure out what you need to make in a year and plan how you are going to make it."

He recommends the three-legged stool approach. "Get three accounts as a minimum because checks aren't regular," said Slania.

In addition to this, he says to develop a specialty. "You don't have to be an expert, but be willing to go in and ask those questions and write those stories" said Slania. Freelancing takes time. "It will take a couple of years to get the momentum going," said Slania.

Since the economic downturn, Slania has noticed that fewer publications are using freelancers. When the economy goes down, "the first cutbacks are in the freelancing budget," said Slania. If these cutbacks are not enough, then full time reporters are laid off. When this happens, the freelance budget "re-emerges because freelancers are cheaper," said Slania.



However, Slania said this increases competition because former full time reporters and freelancers are competing for freelancing opportunities. Despite the financial crisis, Slania said, "There's always going to be a need for freelancers."

According to Slania, the emergence of online publications did not have a huge impact on freelancers, but it also hasn't created a lot of opportunities for freelancers because blogs by reporters fill the Web sites. Despite the lack of opportunities online, there will be chances for freelancers in print. "Everyday that news hole has to be filled," Slania said.

A tale of two journalists abroad at the John Felice Rome Center

By Molly Aronica

My study abroad experience in Rome opened my eyes to a whole new world, both literally and figuratively. Stepping off the Alitalia group flight on August 28, marked my first entrance into another country. Completely overcome with fear and excitement, I saw the four months ahead of me as an opportunity to immerse myself in the vast array of foreign cultures I had only ever related to from across the Atlantic Ocean.

Apart from being a journalism major, I am also working toward a minor in political science. One of the most frustrating aspects of studying abroad during this particular semester was being so far removed from the presidential election. In an attempt to combat my frustration, I began to take an interest in the ways media in the countries I visited covered the election. Despite the obvious language setbacks, I found the general outlook of European reporters tended to favor Obama without much shame. Perhaps most shocking to me was the sheer volume of information surrounding the election. Even as an unwavering lover and defender of American journalism, this made me feel for the first time like I was actually a member of the global community. In the United States we, as contributors and consumers of media, simply do not cover international affairs as extensively as foreign nations cover ours. European reporters seem so eager to publish any shred of information they could dig up about the candidates, no matter how far-fetched. But then again, Italy is well-known as the birthplace of paparazzi, and England as the land of tabloid journalism.

I am learning to navigate the world with the eyes of a journalist, constantly attempting to gather information and ask many questions. These are the skills that helped me the most during my time in Rome.



By Alysse Dalessandro

Before I studied abroad, one of my best friends told me, “Studying abroad changes you.” She has traveled pretty extensively and yet, I still did not trust that studying in Italy would somehow “change” me. From the first night I arrived in Rome and found the Vatican until the last night when I had dinner among my new group of friends at a restaurant overlooking the city, my experience in Rome impacted me and my view of journalism. Before I went to Italy, the only country I had ever been to other than my own was good ol’ Canada. I was afraid to step outside my comfort zone. After my semester abroad, I had traveled to nine different countries and more than 15 cities. Traveling Europe became something that I found easy. With only a short plane ride, I was immersed in a whole different culture with new language, customs, food and people.

This experience showed me how important it is to have a world view. Journalists are responsible for being the eyes and ears of the people – to inform people on what they cannot see. Although I did not have a medium to write to the masses, I felt compelled to tell my family and friends who had never been to Europe about what I was observing. While I connected to my new home, I became disconnected from the States. Opportunities to watch broadcast news and read newspapers were rare so the Internet became the easiest and often only way to obtain news. It was hard to be in another country with a seven hour time change for the election; Rome Center students, faculty and staff gathered around the one television and watched the results, but I could not help but wonder about the excitement of being in Grant Park.

Without the news, I would have been disconnected from the election completely, but what about if I was in the States and I wanted to see the results of a European or South American election. Chances are those events would not receive the same coverage. The people that I encountered knew the ins and outs of U.S. politics, but I did not even know the name of the president of Italy and I was living there. As foreign news bureaus shut down because of failing newspapers, I now see how important it is to have access to news and to people across the world. Now that I am back in Chicago, I miss my immersion experience, but I can strive to educate others about the importance of learning and experiencing a culture outside one’s own. It turns out my friend was right: studying abroad *did* change me and the way that I think about the purpose of journalism.

School of Communication begins partnership with Benito Juarez high school journalists

By Laura Burns

In a bustling classroom in Pilsen, a neighborhood half an hour south of Loyola's Water Tower campus, a dozen young journalists scramble to meet the deadline for their newspaper.

Senior journalism major Will Barrett and I hovered behind their computer screens editing the article as part of the School of Communication's new partnership with the Benito Juarez newspaper class.

We are setting up a schedule

so Loyola's journalism students will be in the classroom with these students every day of the week.

The students recently visited the SOC, sat in on classes and reported from the streets of Chicago with Loyola students.

So far, we've had a great start to creating a partnership to bring mentors from our SPJ chapter and from the SOC to the aspiring journalists at Benito Juarez.



Starting Thoughts: LUC's annual chapter project

In Response to the Columbia Journalism Review's (CJR) invitation for aspiring journalists to share their starting thoughts, our SPJ chapter was thought who better than Loyola's journalism students to explain why they want to be journalists when they grow up.

Here are some excerpts/findings from our chapters submissions:

Why you wanted to get into it:

"Journalists have the privilege to access information most people cannot, so with this privilege comes the responsibility to distribute it among the people." Kristen Thometz

"The ability, through reporting and writing, to spread knowledge and uncover unknown stories is truly remarkable." William Barrett

"The fast-paced atmosphere, the last-minute glitches we scrambled to fix, and the sense that I was doing something important and worthwhile,"

Laura Burns

"I am interested in sticking with the journalism business not only because I love to write (that passion will not sustain me alone) but because this is one field that allows me to continue hearing people's stories and learning about new developments in fields that I am pas-

sionate about also," Alysse Dalessandro
Hearing people's stories was also a common theme.

Reasons for Optimism:

"Information will always need to be disseminated to the general population in an unbiased, objective and enjoyable way," Julie Lavelle.

"Whether online, in print, or through broadcast, journalists are still able to report happenings in their community and keep the public abreast of news going on around the world," Molly Aronica.

Complaints about the Journalism

"I worry about the industry being sucked completely onto the Internet because it offers various Web sites, often alongside distracting ads and hyperlinks that allow readers to only read what they want to." Jessica Cilella

"Scare tactics prevail in this industry and it is scaring talented individuals into doing what they do not really want to do." Alysse Dalessandro

"So there I was, a sophomore on the newspaper staff and one of the leaders in the journalism program, telling two representatives from the *Chicago Sun-Times* that my generation wants quick, watered-down news." William Barrett

"I hate the diminished attention span, the lack of funds for investigative reporting, the layoffs everywhere including foreign bureaus and the quick and dirty all-consuming consumer journalism." Laura Burns

An Invitation to Readers:

What do you see in this business that makes you still want to pursue it? Why did you want to get into it in the first place? In what areas or ways are you optimistic about journalism? What are some of your concerns with the current state of the media industry? What is your ultimate goal in the field of journalism? What field you want to go into and why do you think it's still possible in the industry?

This project is called Starting Thoughts after the CJR prompt. If you'd like to write an essay (or know young reporters or journalism students who would), we invite all of you to submit your starting thoughts to us at williambarrett87@gmail.com by March 13.

We're looking for anything from 600 to 1,200 words. Please put "Starting Thoughts" in the subject line of the e-mail.

What's Race Got to Do With It?

Elizabeth Oliver

On December 3rd 2008, Loyola's Society for Professional Journalists co-sponsored an event with Chicago's Headline Club. The panel was composed of Loyola's journalist-in-residence Don Wycliffe, scholar Ava Greenwell, Loyola's own Dean of the School of Communication, Don Heider and TIME contributor Steven Gray. Moderated by Craig Dellimore, they discussed the issue of race as it was covered in the political election and where do we go from there, in terms of media coverage with a newly sworn-in black president.

They all agreed the issue of race was "danced around" by none other than Obama's campaign, as a tactic to get potential voters to focus on his actual qualifications rather than the color of his skin.

Professor Wycliffe said he

thought the campaign used a policy of "benign neglect", since there was more to be lost than gained if there was a heavy emphasis on race during the po-

"Race is a human creation. The media plays into preconceived notions and categories."

litical election.

Ava Greenwell said media was part of the problem, that they have an aversion to talking about race even though what she calls "white guilt coverage" exists in the newsroom today, an effort to do justice to mistakes of the past.

Steven Gray spoke briefly that it's a struggle to know when the moniker should become President Obama and not the first African-American. Dean Heider told those assembled

"race is a human creation. The media plays into preconceived notions and categories." He said the challenge to journalists now is how to cover the issue of race adequately, to represent it as it plays out in American culture. A reception followed a question-and-answer session between the panelists and audience.



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Events in April:

- April 3-4th SPJ Regional Conference in Indianapolis, IN. Our SPJ chapter will be represented.

Upcoming Events:

- March 11th SPJ Meeting at 4:30 in SOC
- March 13th All CJR "Starting Thoughts" Articles are due
- March 14th Ethical Journalism in a Digital World in Beane Hall at the WTC from 1- 4 p.m. Nationally known multimedia experts Bob Steele and Al Tompkins and top Chicago TV and radio news directors and metro daily editors will lead an audience of journalists, bloggers, and students in an interactive workshop on ethics in the changing industry.
 - Free to Chicago Headline Club and SPJ Members
 - \$5 per student
 - Seating is limited.
- March 25th SPJ Meeting at 4:30 in SOC

How To Join:

- Pick up an SPJ application from the SOC desk on the 2nd floor.
- Return the completed application to Professor Konrad



Benefits of a Membership:

- Access to SPJ and Chicago Headline Club events
- Access to an online job and internship database
- Network with professionals in journalism

School of Communication students voice their concerns

By Jessica Cilella

About 20 communication students gathered in Crown Center on Feb. 10 to evaluate the current programs offered by the School of Communication and to make various suggestions for improvement that will be presented to the school's Dean Don Heider, Ph.D., in the near future.

The student forum was sponsored by Beta Rho, Loyola's communication honor society. The group's president, junior Sophia Venetos, served as moderator.

Top on the list of concerns was a need for more digital media courses, the possibility of splitting up the advertising/public relations major, a need for reorganizing the communication curriculum and the recent closing of Damen Lab 437.

Three international film and media studies students brought the recent closing of Damen Lab 437 to everyone's attention, raising great concern among the attendees. The need for the lab to be re-opened is now on the top of the forum's priority list for improvements that need to be made.

A lack of lab monitors is the reason behind the closing. But many media and communication courses require students to use computer programs available only in this

lab.

The School of Communication has addressed the issue by saying that students should be able to access what they need from the Water Tower campus, although there are not the same programs available there as in Damen 437. According to students, it is both a hassle and a safety issue to carry heavy, expensive equipment from one campus to the other.

All of the students at the forum recognized the great need to

"For our expensive education we should feel prepared, but then we get to our jobs and we're not."

have a wide knowledge of digital media in today's communication field. This brought up requests for more classes that would teach PhotoShop and Dreamweaver, along with the purchase of more production equipment for areas like broadcast journalism.

There was great concern that upon receiving any sort of communication degree from Loyola, graduates will still be underprepared for multimedia tasks they will inevitably encounter on the job.

"For our expensive education we should feel prepared, but then we get to our jobs and we're not," one advertising/public relations major stated.

Restructuring certain classes in the communication curriculum is a concern that every student could relate to. Many of the attendees had already completed both Communication 150 and 160, concluding that the two classes were very similar and should be combined into one class that would be worth four or five credits.

There was debate on whether breaking up the advertising and public relations major would be a good thing.

"All of my professors say on multiple occasions that you need to understand public relations to excel in advertising," a sophomore said. "I like the idea of having them together because you learn about both aspects of the field, but I think that I would like it more if I could concentrate on one." The lack of availability of required courses, including Communication 101 and 217, annoyed the entire group, who ultimately suggested the option of offering more classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to ease the high enrollment demand.