James Best

Prof. Fink

Internship Program I

May 11th 2016

Working for the Pleasantville Examiner

During my first semester of my Sophomore year, I was at a crossroads. In early September I was forced out of one position and searching for another. I decided to attend Pace University with the intention to follow my dream, become a Sports Broadcaster and work on ESPN. However, through my research I discovered that it was not going to become as easy as walking up to the front door in Bristol, Connecticut and asking for a job. I knew I would have to get my feet wet and get started in an industry full of Communications major just like me. The research that I conducted in my field helped me come to the realization that the only way to efficiently build up the skills necessary to one-day work for a professional company, such as the World Wide Leader in Sports was to start writing for my local newspaper. It is a path that many famous sports broadcasters such as Stephen A. Smith, Adam Schefter, and Michael Smith started on in their beginning years. And so I dedicated most of my first semester of Sophomore year to writing for my school newspaper, The Pace Chronicle, hoping to gain some experience into how to write effective news and sports stories. The things I learned through working with the Chronicle, along with my work in my Writing in the Print Media class gave me the confidence to publish my work and be proud of the things I wrote. The support I received from my Professor Kevin Czerwinski and the Editorial Staff of the Pace Chronicle helped me realize how truly magical of a medium writing for a newspaper is and the amount of people you can reach through writing. I wanted to continue to write in a professional setting for a different newspaper but didn’t know where to start. During my time covering the Pace Football team for the Chronicle I met a reporter for the Examiner Newspaper. The reporter said he got started just like me writing for his school newspaper and moved up here to write local news. I networked with him a little bit and took his business card just in case I ever needed a contact in journalism. Turns out about a month later I received an email from a professor in the Communications department asking if students wanted to apply for a journalism internship with the Examiner. I thought it would be interesting to inquire about and see if I could actually work for a professional newspaper. With only a year in the field I was very nervous on whether or not they would actually take me. I decided to give it a shot. I sent the Editor in Chief Martin Wilbur an email with an introduction of myself and a link to some of my published articles in the Pace Chronicle. It was because of my work published in the Pace Chronicle and the work I had put in over the course of the semester that I had a solid foundation of displaying what I could do if given the opportunity. I knew how to write, I knew the Associated Press format for journalists in and out and I knew how to conduct interviews and get good quotes. My passion and love for sharing the stories of the wonderful things around Pace campus was what ultimately led to the Examiner offering me an intern position with them for the Spring 2016 semester. I was extremely thankful for this opportunity to show what I could do out in the journalism and reporting field.

Building relationships, gathering news and capturing the best moments of events were my favorite parts of working with the Examiner. I got the opportunity to tell important stories of 30 year disputes and stories of communities coming together to stop environmental damage. Even though I did not know these people personally I felt a certain connection to them as I gathered information. I wanted to understand the importance of all these events and tell the world. That’s one of the reasons why I absolutely love journalism. There is nothing like it in the world. One of my skills is my ability to communicate with other people. I realize that by becoming a journalist I have become a better listener than ever before. I now think objectively in everything I do to try and find the most important information in a conversation and story and have it resonate in my mind. The technical things like setting up a story, writing in the Associated Press format and finding a lede were all great but it was covering these events that was the greatest experience.

Often times during this internship I got stuck on figuring out who my audience was. When I was at Pace I knew clearly who my audience was because I was a part of the community. Working for the Examiner I had to put everything into perspective. Martin Wilbur is one of if not the best supervisors I have ever had the pleasure of working for. He always was willing to help me and was understanding. He would let me know the questions that need to be answered and help me understand what the public wanted to know. That ultimately helped me understand how to write an effective article. A lot of the things I wrote and sent to Martin looked different in print because one thing I realized I need to work on is my organization in stories. When I cover stories and write them up the information is clearly there, but the most important information could be buried or the most important quote wasn’t at the front. I really thank the editors at the Examiner for helping understand what I could do in my writing to really engage readers and audiences.

I have made a significant mark on Westchester County during my 4 months working for the Examiner. My name is printed in 10 different editions of both the Northern Westchester and Pleasantville Examiner. These newspapers and those articles will be on the Examiner archives forever. They never go away. That is what is the best about journalism. Journalism will never die. For as long as we live we need news reporters to tell us the news and inform us on the things happening around us. No one can ever take away the efforts I have made to do my best with this newspaper. Now I have 10 printed documents that I can go to another employer and display to show that this is my body of work and this is what I can do. This is what internships are for, experience and now that I have that experience and confidence I believe I am ready to move onto bigger and better things. Still, I’ve found a love and care for local news and I hope to find another job where I can cover local news and sports. I can’t wait until I can cover sports out in the world. Then I can bring my two passions together, football and journalism.