

Brown brimming with bad news for aspiring young journalists

Rose Crawford and Mike Guy
For those of you aspiring toward a career in journalism, listening to Toronto Star reporter Louise Brown is enough to make you toss your typewriter out the window.

Speaking on the subject of careers in journalism as part of the Career Centre's Wednesday afternoon speaker series, Ms. Brown painted a pretty bleak picture for the thirty or so people present.

"Your chances of getting a job with one of the big newspapers, even with a journalism degree, is zero. Your only chance is one of the small town papers. And there you have to be willing to work sixty hours a week at practically minimum wage. It's a rude awakening," she said.

She added that with the recent folding of a number of major newspapers, the job market is flooded with many experienced journalists, making for fierce competition. The Watergate scandal has also glamorized journalism to the point where schools are overflowing with would-be Bernsteins and Woodwards.

However, for those who want to put their journalistic talents to work, there are other alternatives. Public relations, radio,

television news and freelance writing are all possible avenues.

Realizing that they can't keep up with radio and television news, newspapers feel that it is no longer enough to tell people what happened—they must also explain why it happened. The trend has been away from hard news to soft news; more interpretive writing and feature writing.

"Newspapers are moving toward having experts on their staff. People who can go to a nuclear physics conference and truly understand what is being said and write the story so that the average person will understand," said Brown. A graduate of economics, provided he is willing to put up with the competition, can make it in journalism as the "resident expert" in his area.

Brown graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in German, "because girls are supposed to be good at languages, so that's what I went into." Realizing that a degree in German would not take her very far, she enrolled in Western's one year, post-graduate journalism programme. After receiving her degree she gained a position on the staff of the St. Thomas Times Journal. She soon after applied to the Toronto Star and was hired as a general news reporter.

That was four years ago, and as she admitted in her talk, Brown has since learned a lot about the hassles and tricks of the newspaper business.

"From day to day you never know where you're going to be and you have to be able to switch gears at the drop of a hat. One minute you may be writing about the woes of teenage unemployment and the next minute they may send you to write a story about a guy doing a hand stand on the CN Tower.

"In a way you're a writing machine. They put their nickel in and they want their story out. Whether or not you like the story is quite irrelevant."

As tough as she made a journalism career sound, Brown also spoke of its rewards.

"Journalism has a lot of instant gratification. Journalism is not glamorous, but it is very rarely boring."

Toots stays at the heart of Reggae

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Jerry Mathias) to form the Vikings that his musical career took off. Their first single, "Halleluyah" reflected the deep religious roots of the trio. (Toots himself is a direct descendant of Nathaniel Joseph Hibbert, founder of the Ethiopian Coptic Faith and one of the earliest proponents of Rastafarian philosophy in Jamaica in the 1930's.). Eventually the Vikings changed their name to the Maytals and soon became one of the most popular vocal trios on the island. They have spanned the terrain of development of the popular Jamaican song starting out as they did with gospel renditions and imitation Rhythm and Blues (R&B). They also witnessed, and were popular, during the transitions to Ska and then to Rock Steady, and again in the late sixties when the music started to take on its present form of the more rhythmically energetic Reggae. In fact, it was the Maytals who first mentioned the word in their music on the single "Do the Reggae".

Hey, Doug! What the hell is that thing there? Oh, geeze, it's like our fans, you know? Like, I guess they're sorta wondering when we're gonna announce the winners of the Bob and Doug Essay Contest, you know? Right, like, we just wanna remind all you hoses out there that the contest due date is, like, this week, you know? So get all them entries in real soon! Geeze, like, times running out... Sorta like in Mission Impossible, you know? Geeze, I wonder what Mr. Phelps would have done in a case like this, eh?

Hold it, Bob! Like, we're gonna extend the contest, you know? He's loaded, eh? Like, he's pissed so, like, he don't even know what he's saying, right!

No, you hose! We're gonna extend the contest until November 30, 1981, okay? Like, we've had such a demand for entries we gotta give some extra time to get them in, okay? So tell all the people what to do to get them in. Okay, you hosebag?

Right. Okay, like the essays gotta be on "What Canada Means to Me" the way we might have written it, right? Like, throw in all kinds of 'likes' and 'you knows' and 'take-offs', okay? So, like, it's gotta be about 1000 words long and it's gotta be good, eh, cause our first prize is a case of beer with the runner-up gettin' some back bacon, okay? Okay, and this contest is, like, better than the one in the Star that the Salem guy is running so, like, enter ours. Besides, it'll help you with your other essays for school, okay?

Yah, so take off and go write one.
Right. Take off!
You hose!
I'm walkin'!

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