
In the Beginning:

Reviving Scholastic Journalism, School by School



Foreword

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund started its high school journalism program almost by chance and certainly without a grand plan. One of our alumnae, Barbara Martinez, now a reporter at The Wall Street Journal in New York, came to us with a proposal to start a newspaper at her alma mater, a struggling Roman Catholic high school in Newark, New Jersey.

It was an offer we couldn't refuse. Barbara would do the work, she promised, if the Fund would donate some computer equipment, give the school a small stipend to pay for expenses and - this turned out to be key - provide the institutional backing for the project. Barbara was a known quantity at the school, but having the Fund's name behind her made an important difference in how she - and the student newspaper - were treated. And so was born The Counsel Tribune, the student newspaper of Our Lady of Good Counsel High School.

This was 1997. In the next few years, the Fund helped to start up or re-energize four more high school newspapers - in Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Lafayette, La.; and Los Angeles. Like Our Lady of Good Counsel, each school we supported was located in a poor, urban district; in each instance, the student body was largely minority, in a couple of cases made up of students whose first language wasn't English.

These are grassroots operations; each high school is different and each journalist-adviser played a different role in the startup. But along the way we discovered that while there was no precise blueprint for success, there are several factors that were crucial. The purpose of this manual is to describe our experience, in the hope that it will assist other individual journalists or newspaper organizations that want to help establish newspapers in high schools in their hometowns.

The mission of the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund is to help student journalists, especially minorities, prepare for careers in newspapering. Since studies show that a high number of journalists got their start by working on their high school papers, we believe that encouraging the development of newspapers in high schools that educate minorities will go a long way to encouraging minorities to enter our business.

Albert R. Hunt
President

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund
Princeton, New Jersey

Introduction

Welcome to *In the Beginning: Reviving Scholastic Journalism, School by School*.

We hope that you will find this a useful manual as you consider starting (or restarting) a newspaper at your school. Many small-business startups fail within a year, and we don't want that to happen to a new high school newspaper. By following the guidelines in this publication, you should get off to a good start.

This manual will give you the nuts and bolts of what goes into starting a newspaper, from dealing with reluctant students to determining the minimum equipment you will need. It will also spell out specific duties that should be assigned to students who are working on the newspaper. And it will provide checklists as you prepare for publication.

You will see that there is no one, absolute way to go about starting your newspaper. Rather, we have presented comments from a number of teachers, some with contrasting views. By adapting their observations to your particular circumstances, we are confident that you will succeed in your task.

Special thanks go to Barbara Martinez, a reporter at *The Wall Street Journal*, and Tim Layer, the *Journal's* technology editor, who provided much of the material in this publication. Thanks also go to Melanie Kirkpatrick, associate editor of *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial page, who organized and edited the material. Both Barbara and Melanie are members of our board of directors.

These days there is much talk about how newspapers have become "irrelevant," how they are dinosaurs in today's world. We beg to differ. "Outcomes-based education" is a popular theme in the scholastic world today. What better "outcome" is there than producing a newspaper and getting it into the hands of readers? We hope this publication will help you reach that outcome.

Richard S. Holden
Executive Director

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund
Princeton, New Jersey

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High School Newspapers
Supported by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund

The Counsel Tribune
Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
Newark, New Jersey

The Viking Scroll
Northside High School
Lafayette, Louisiana

The 'ORR' ACLE
Rezin Orr Community Academy
Chicago

The Colonial Gazette
Fairfax High School
Los Angeles

Carroll Crescent
Archbishop Carroll High School
Washington, D.C.

What We Learned

Five High School Newspapers, Five Startup Stories

The following “how-to’s” are based on information provided by Fund staff, journalist-volunteers, teacher-advisers and others closely involved with the five high school newspapers supported by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund.

HOW TO CHOOSE A HIGH SCHOOL

We admit it. We came to this project with a prejudice against public high schools, which we feared would be captive to their own bureaucracies. That proved to be a mistake; we found three public high schools that turned out to be receptive to us and supportive of their student newspapers. But our anti-bureaucracy instinct nevertheless was right on the money: This project won’t work in a school that isn’t flexible to new ideas—such as welcoming a professional journalist into the classroom. In selecting a school to work with, bear this principle in mind.

As in any endeavor, that’s mostly a question of leadership and our experience is that starting up a newspaper won’t work without the enthusiastic support of the CEO, which is to say, the principal. He or she is the one who can ensure that the student newspaper gets the support it needs—starting with providing a classroom and a willing teacher.

Second, and equally important, our experience also teaches that a startup newspaper in an inner-city high school won’t work as an extracurricular activity. “The paper should absolutely be a for-credit class,” says one teacher in words that are echoed by virtually everyone else we interviewed. If the high school you’re considering isn’t willing to make the newspaper part of a journalism course, we suggest you look elsewhere.

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Think of the principal as the publisher of the student newspaper. Like publishers of commercial newspapers, publishers of school newspapers will want to exercise different levels of control.

One teacher we interviewed says: “My principal reviews each edition of the paper before it is published.”

Another tells a different story: “My principal plays an indirect role with the newspaper. He is concerned with the academic development of the students and the improvement of their computer and language art skills.”

And a third teacher reports: The principal “has never asked to see any copy or final proofs and has trusted my judgment. Recently there was some controversy surrounding a poorly written and highly negative sports story. Even then, she showed her faith in ‘the learning process’ and my judgment. I think it helps that she was a student journalist herself.” In our experience, the strongest clashes with the principal tend to come not with the teacher or students but with the volunteer journalists, who sometimes have a hard time leaving their usually admirable aggressiveness back in the newsroom. While we rarely encountered instances of outright censorship by principals, we did find examples of principals who imposed restrictions on student papers that would be unacceptable at a professional paper. For example, a Roman Catholic high school paper was told not to write about abortion or homosexuality.

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund strongly discourages censorship; we believe that making judgments about what to publish—and not publish—is part of the learning process for high school journalists. Helping the young journalists work their way toward responsible decision-making is an important aspect of the teacher and volunteer journalist’s work.

At the same time, we recognize reality. The schools where we operate usually have no newspaper tradition, and a wary administration might seek to impose controls. It is often a principal’s first experience with a student newspaper and it helps to remember that there’s a learning curve for him or her, too.

After much discussion on this issue, the Fund has developed a rough set of guidelines: We don't demand a no-interference pledge from the principal before starting up a school newspaper. We defer to the teachers in the trenches, who are in the best position to make judgments on individual cases. But, all that said, if, in our evaluation, the administration is still censoring a school newspaper after three years in our program, we will cut off funds.

A final word: In our experience, many if not most battles over perceived censorship can be "won" by all sides with a bit of creative thinking - and here the volunteer journalist can sometimes help. To give one example: We know of an inner-city school paper that planned a story on fighting in the school; it was killed by the principal, who feared it might incite more violence. One of our board members debriefed the adviser and suggested ways of rewriting the rejected story that might take the principal's worries into consideration but would still let the school newspaper cover the topic.

Tip for volunteer journalists: Keep the principal informed of the paper's progress through periodic meetings and/or memos. If you get a donation of computers, write him a note providing him the details. If your newspaper donates a subscription, tell him. If the students visit your newsroom, give him a written report. If you can get your editor to write a thank-you note, so much the better. The goal here is to keep the principal in the loop; it's not good for him to hear about the paper only when a problem comes up.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER/ADVISER

Al Hunt, president of the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, puts it this way: "If you don't have a good adviser, it won't work. If you do have a good adviser, there's a good chance it'll work."

It's not the aim of this manual to list all the qualities that go into making a good journalism teacher and newspaper adviser. But here's what Erik Travis of Fairfax High School in Los Angeles has to say. It's as good a summary as we can imagine:

"The adviser has two roles to play ...

"First, the teacher must assess the students' prior knowledge, if any, and to design a curriculum to meet their needs. Typically, this means teaching the basics of reporting, writing, editing, etc., as well as the study of journalistic ethics and the history of journalism. Instruction on using computers and software is also part of the curriculum.

"The second role differs from that of a teacher in that the adviser is a coach, mentor, and resource as students learn and contribute to the class production. The adviser encourages and guides the creativity, but does not direct except when absolutely necessary. Ethics are the primary concern, and the adviser should exercise editorial oversight when students are inclined to go too far. Aesthetic concerns of design and layout are mostly taught 'on the job.'

"Additionally, the adviser must organize and plan field trips and other activities, including fund-raising with students, write grants, order equipment and supplies, interact with printers and other vendors, and generally oversee all aspects of newspaper production, directly, and through the editorial staff."

One of the facts of life of starting up a newspaper at a school that has never had one or hasn't had one in a long time is that there often isn't a teacher with experience in journalism or putting out a paper. While a veteran English teacher can do a fine job of teaching the nuts and bolts of journalism (reporting, writing, editing), our experience shows that the production side of things can be daunting. This is especially true in schools with students who don't have a lot of computer experience and/or don't have computers at home. There may be plenty of high schools where the students know more about computers than the teachers do, but that wasn't the case in the schools where we operated.

Ideally, as one teacher tells us, the adviser "teaches the students how to use the various computer programs and layout techniques necessary to produce a successful newspaper." In reality, our experience is that a teacher who is new to journalism may be overwhelmed by the technical demands of putting out a newspaper and may wish to rely heavily on the volunteer journalist for technical assistance in the first year or two of a paper's existence.

TIP FOR THE VOLUNTEER JOURNALIST: Take your cues from the teacher, but don't be afraid to propose specific things you might do. To take just one small example, one DJNF volunteer clipped model newspaper articles for a teacher to use in class when she discovered that the teacher didn't have the time or the resources to track down articles from a variety of papers.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER JOURNALIST

Coach, mentor, resource. Those are the words Mr. Travis uses above to describe the second part of a teacher-adviser's job; but they might just as well apply to the journalist who's volunteering in the classroom. That's especially true when the teacher is new to journalism and relies heavily on the professional.

Barbara Martinez, in this manual, describes in detail her role at Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, where she and other volunteers from The Wall Street Journal's New York bureau devoted hundreds of hours to helping get a newspaper started and continue to help out today. Their startup experience was as intensive as it gets, and her article describes most of the key issues that are likely to come up in any school.

The other end of the spectrum is described by Cindy Duhon, former newspaper adviser at Northside High in Lafayette, La. The adviser from the local paper played a minimal role. She "made it possible for the students to tour the printing press and the newsroom. She also visited my classroom and spoke to the students about job opportunities in the industry."

Most volunteers will probably end up with an amount of work that falls somewhere in between these two extremes. Marc Kravets, dean of students at Orr Academy, describes the role of the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund at his Chicago school:

"They come by and work with the students in developing newspaper stories. They show up an average of once a month. Volunteers are necessary when the program first starts. As the program progresses, the volunteers are not as important. If they participate, they should come on a scheduled basis.

"Also, we are quite fortunate to have tech support from the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund. The tech support is the most important. If the computers go down, the newspaper comes to a standstill."

In putting together a team of journalists to work at a high school, our experience teaches that it's important to have a volunteer who is technically savvy—who can lay out pages, use Photoshop, build tables. It also helps to have reporters and/or editors who are willing to work with students from beginning to end— that is, from the time they start thinking about what to report to the time they hand in their final drafts. This process is greatly facilitated if the journalist can communicate by e-mail with the students, but e-mail isn't available in many schools.

One more thing: Back at the office, the volunteers will need a supportive editor who is willing to grant them some flexibility in their own work hours. While much of the volunteer work can be done after hours, there will be times when the journalist will have to be present in class—and that can mean time off from his own work day.

STUDENTS—How many do you need? What grade level? What time commitment? What skills?

Orr Academy:

"Eight to twelve students. Tenth to twelfth grades. With a time commitment of approximately one class period per day and time before or after school near deadlines, or when needed.

"Students should be average to above-average writers, and have average proofreading/editing skills. They should also have basic computer skills and the desire to improve those skills. Students are selected by their desire to lead other students, an aggressive attitude, grade point average, and attendance. The newspaper should be part of a for-credit class. Students who already have received credit should be allowed to receive service learning credit or extra credit."

Fairfax High School:

“I understand that at some schools, there is competition to get into Journalism class. That is not the case at Fairfax. Currently, I cannot refuse anyone access, so I have to take whatever new students I can get: freshmen and sophomores with lower basic skills, (but a great deal of energy) and seniors who want to get away with as little work as possible. Twenty to thirty students would seem a good number to have on the staff.

“Juniors are best for Journalism 1. They have a higher level of competency than younger students and they are most likely to return next year as well-trained and motivated seniors for Journalism 2. Fortunately, this year most of my students have been Juniors.

“At Fairfax, the program attracts both the high-achieving college bound students (the editors) and the lower performing ones as well. Some are English Language Learners (ELL) and occasionally in Special Education. Currently I have a student who is legally blind and who needs an aide to be in my class. The fact that many of the AP students are “too busy” and that I have to accommodate such a wide variety of students makes the task even more difficult. Some come to the staff with some writing or computer experience, but few students possess high ability levels with computer applications we use. Generally editors are chosen for their writing and leadership potential, or experience. Reporters are assigned to cover areas, which they select according to their interests, or are assigned to, by the editors or the adviser. At Fairfax, the class is taken for credit.”

Northside High School:

“The paper should absolutely be a for-credit class. In order to have a successful staff, I think you need at least six dedicated students, but not more than 15. I currently have 21 and that is far too many. Students should be interviewed by the advisor and a committee of fellow teachers the previous year. They should apply for positions and they should have a letter of recommendation from their previous English teacher”

EQUIPMENT

Fairfax High School:

“Essential items include: a telephone and telephone books, 35mm camera equipment, at least one computer (preferably Apple Power PCs) for each section or page—a minimum of four, a scanner, network printer, SuperDrives, Ethernet hub. Not necessary but very helpful would be digital cameras which in the long run will save big money on film and processing. Internet access is very helpful, and convenient if it is in the classroom. Email is a great tool. The “School Newspaper Advisor’s Survival Guide” is a wonderful resource.

Orr Academy:

“Computer equipment with Internet access and e-mail is essential. Often it is necessary to contact sources for news stories and do research on the Internet. There should be at least five computers per class with a laser printer that can handle 11-by-17 paper. There should also be a scanner and at least one CD-rewrite drive. At least two of the computers should have QuarkXPress (it is the easiest to learn and it is the industry standard), Photoshop, and Adobe Illustrator. Also students should have a copy of MSWord to work on their stories. All schools should have a 35mm camera. Digital cameras are expensive and do not give the sharpest quality when imported into the desktop publishing program. The textbook that gives the greatest aid to students and teachers is “Press Time” by Julian Adams and Kenneth Stratton; it is published by Prentice Hall. There is also a workbook that helps the students write leads, newspaper stories, and other facets of journalism.”

Northside High School:

“All students should have an e-mail account to keep in touch with the instructor. A phone/fax machine is a must! Students need to be able to contact businesses regarding ads or to contact and set up interviews for articles they are writing. At least six computers are necessary, and they need to be networked. I prefer Macs. I currently have two Macs and that is not nearly enough. Students are always waiting around to get to the computer to type in their articles.”

COSTS

Fairfax High School:

“The Fairfax High School Journalism Program gets money from several sources. There is the bi-annual support from Student Body Funds of \$1,500 for printing and supplies. The Melrose Trading Post, a campus-affiliated swap meet, is another potential local source, if students and the adviser volunteer to work on Sunday. The MTP provided the initial \$4,400 to fund the start-up in 1999. Two large grants were received last year. The Times-Mirror Foundation contributed \$13,400 and Dow Jones Newspaper Fund gave \$3,500. The adviser gets a \$1,200 differential from the Los Angeles Unified School District.”

Orr Academy:

“The school was awarded a \$3,500 grant from the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund. Without this grant and the computers from the fund it would be quite difficult for the school to maintain a high quality production. The adviser for the program gets one less class. This is the extra time used to work on newspaper production. The printing price of the newspaper varies by school. Some schools have a print shop and can print their own newspaper. If the newspaper is not tabloid the printing cost is reduced. The cost for an 8-page 1,500-copy newspaper ranges from \$350 to \$500 per issue depending on the amount of desktop publishing the company does versus the school’s own production abilities.”

Northside High School:

“Our newspaper was funded by DJNF. Without that grant money there is no way we would have a school newspaper. No, the adviser does not get extra money. It costs us about \$200 to print an eight-page issue of the newspaper with no color.”

PAGE LAYOUT/DESIGN

Fairfax High School:

“The editors do page layout, with the page editors doing most of the work for their respective sections. As adviser, I’ve done a fair share of design myself at times, especially near deadlines. We use Adobe PageMaker and Photoshop, as well as MS Office and AppleWorks for word processing.”

Orr Academy:

“Page layout/design is done by the newspaper adviser and several students. The desktop publishing program that works best for the students and adviser is QuarkXpress. It is easy to learn and is the industry standard. Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator are also important.”

Northside High School:

“We use Quark Xpress and Photoshop.”

PRINTING

Fairfax High School:

“So far, the Glendale Rotary Press has been the printer. Located in Glendale, Calif. Lately we have been printing 2,400 copies every four to six weeks. I would like to find a local printer who lets schools e-mail the files to them.”

Orr Academy:

“The newspaper is published by DesPlaines Publishing, 1000 Executive Way, DesPlaines, IL 60018. Turnaround time is 24 hours and 1,500 copies are printed.”



Northside High School:
J & S Printing, Inc.
P.O. Box 94688
Birmingham, AL 35220
1-800-677-1368 Fax: 800-299-1813

“We usually print about 1,100 copies. If we put it in the mail on Monday morning, it is usually delivered back to us by Wednesday afternoon.”

DISTRIBUTION

Fairfax High School:

“After the papers arrive, members of the staff (usually during our Period 6 class) count copies and put the appropriate number of copies into the teachers’ mailboxes for distribution in Period 2 homeroom class the following day. This ritual is repeated every four to six weeks. We also exchange papers with other high schools. “

Orr Academy:

“The cost of the newspaper is part of the student fee that is collected from each student. The newspapers are distributed in the morning before homeroom. They are passed out by the teacher to the students in homeroom. There are between 6-8 issues a year. They are distributed usually within the first two weeks of the month they are printed.”

Northside High School:

“Yes, the paper is free. There is no way we could sell it. The students just won’t buy it. We distribute it after lunch seventh hour (because that is the hour our journalism class meets.)”

ADS

Fairfax High School:

“Vendors usually come to us, and students often do not fulfill their obligation to solicit advertising. I may just drop that requirement and make it the job of just one or two students. We get our best ideas for hot business leads through the exchange papers. Generally we only have a few ads per copy, and since the school provides most of the funds needed for printing, we are not forced to rely on advertisers. The downside of this is we have a difficult time expanding beyond our current 4-page format. Only once in two years have we published an 8 pager.”

Orr Academy:

“None.”

Northside High School:

“Yes, students are required to sell ads. They have to sell so much each six weeks for a grade. For example, if they are required to sell \$100 worth of ads and they only sell \$50 then their grade will be a 50%. If they sell \$80, their grade is 80% and so on. This is not their only grade for the six weeks. However, if they get a zero out of 100% there is almost no way they can get an A. It drops them about a letter grade. That seems to motivate them.”

BARBARA MARTINEZ: STARTING A SCHOOL NEWSPAPER AT AN URBAN SCHOOL

When the Newspaper Fund first talked about starting school newspapers at urban high schools that couldn't afford one, I volunteered my own impoverished alma mater, Our Lady of Good Counsel High School in Newark, N.J. It hadn't had a school newspaper for decades. This fall, we entered our fourth year, publishing five issues of the Counsel Tribune annually since the 1997-1998 school year.

It was and is a rough road. I don't say this to discourage anyone from embarking on this journey. I only wish to prepare those who commit themselves to run a project like this that it's rarely easy. If your experience will be anything like mine, you will find that just as things seem to start to go smoothly, something else always seems to become undone. Things will go wrong very often.

My trick for staying in the game is to let the many little disappointments just roll off your back and, instead, focus on the little triumphs.

For me, the triumphs include one young student who proudly told me her mother took the first issue of the Counsel Tribune to her job to show off her daughter's story to co-workers. I've been told that when the latest issue of the newspaper is distributed at lunch time, the normally rowdy cafeteria quickly hushes down to read their paper. I remind myself of the Filipino child, once shy and embarrassed by his accent, who ultimately found a confident voice as a newspaper reporter who wouldn't take no from his evasive principal.

Here are some other suggestions from our experience in Newark.

THE BUDDY SYSTEM

I suggest going down this road with a trusted colleague in the newsroom. Before even beginning this project, I enlisted the help of my former boss, Tim Layer, a person who I knew would be passionate and generous in a program like this. Tim also knew a lot about computers and taught himself the publishing program.

We hit snags quite often. Some of our problems were technical - which Tim was great at figuring out how to fix. But most of our troubles had to do with people. Sometimes we felt the students lacked the enthusiasm we needed to make this program work. The value of having two people on The Wall Street Journal side totally committed to this is that two people are much better at coming up with creative solutions than one.

HARD TO FIND THE RIGHT TIME

For the first two years, the newspaper group met as a club. Today, it's a regular journalism class where the kids meet every day in a classroom and get a grade. As a club, however, it was tough.

There are many things competing for these kids' attention - and writing and re-writing after school isn't one of them. Some have to rush off to sports practice or jobs or home to take care of younger siblings.

Then we tried meeting once a week very early in the morning, about an hour before school started - about 7:15 a.m. The handful of kids who managed to show up that early barely had a pulse. Nothing could really get done that way.

We also tried Saturdays, another failure as many of the kids had other responsibilities, and those who didn't, certainly didn't want to come to school on the weekend.

As a result, by year two, we were down to only three or four steady kids. Tim was pulling all-nighters to lay out the paper at home. We ran big pictures to make up for the shortage of stories. It was grim, but we managed. The two teacher-advisers at the school were instrumental in getting some kids to contribute stories.

THEFT

Things get stolen. You have to live with it.



The Publishing Plan

How do you go about assembling the equipment needed to put out a high school newspaper? At Our Lady of Good Counsel, we didn't go by the three R's, but the three B's: beg, borrow, and when those failed, buy.

The plan for the Good Counsel project B—and probably a good idea for those starting up such projects—was to create a newspaper operation that was separate from, and not reliant on, the school's already-burdened resources. Our target school was already struggling as far as computers and technology went, so we needed—and wanted—to set up a system that was independent from their infrastructure. Though we had some startup funding from the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, we tried to find whatever free or nearly free equipment we could get our hands on to spend the least amount of money possible.

At the startup, we figured we'd have about 10 students involved in the newspaper, so we'd need a minimum of a half-dozen computers. These would be loaded with a word-processing program for the students to compose and edit their stories. We would call these the “composing” computers. In addition, we knew we'd need at least one more-powerful computer with a larger monitor and with a scanner and printer hooked up to it—this would serve as our “publishing” or layout and production, computer.

Lacking any real technological know-how and not wanting to spend large amounts of money, we decided to keep the computer setup simple. We decided against hooking up the computers in a network because it would be too expensive and complicated to set up and maintain. We figured that the students could save their stories on a floppy disk, and when they wanted to print them, they could do so on the publishing computer that was hooked up to a printer. Also, if they needed to give their story to an editor, they could hand him the floppy disk with their story. Sounds easy, but things didn't always work exactly the way they were supposed to: Floppy disks tended to disappear, and the publishing computer got backed up with students who couldn't print out their stories because someone was using the computer to do layout.

After four years on the Good Counsel project, we still are not on any network—we still don't think a network essential. That said, if you have access to the technical expertise and have computers with network cards and the other networking hardware to link the computers, then a network could be very helpful in the editing and publishing process. (The “What's Needed” section has a list of required equipment.)

In the Beginning...

We originally started in 1997 with five old Intel 486-chip computers, running Windows 3.1, that had 2 megs of ram and a floppy disk drive, and well-used 14-inch monitors—dinosaurs by today's standards. The computers were donated by Dow Jones & Co., which publishes *The Wall Street Journal*. We asked managers in the computer department of the company if they could provide us with some computers that were no longer being used. We explained what they'd be used for, and they were eager to help. As with many companies, Dow Jones has a department that sends computer equipment that's no longer in use to various outside causes. The company sent five PCs to our school. The computers, which were stripped of any software—including operating software, weren't pretty and obviously had seen many hours of use. But at least they came to life when we flipped on the power switches. The monitors, meanwhile, were pretty fuzzy and had lines burned into the screens, but we could live with that for the time being.

We used Windows 3.1 operating software. We also used Microsoft Word and loaded that onto the computers for our word-processing program. For some reason the computers came without mice, and we needed some extension cords and floppy disks. All that was purchased at the local Computer City. We negotiated with school administrators for space to set up our computers, and we ended up along a back wall of the school library—there was no separate room available.

The computer set-ups were fine for word processing but had nowhere near the power to handle any publishing or photo-editing software. We had no desire, nor the budget, to lay out the money to buy a powerful computer setup. But we still wanted to be able to put together a newspaper from start to finish—from story idea, to reporting, writing and editing, to photos and headlines, to laying out and putting the paper together.

I had a fairly decent computer at home with a scanner, so I volunteered its use. We purchased QuarkXpress publishing software and the Newspaper Fund purchased a copy of Adobe Photoshop. The software was loaded onto my home PC. The students would get up to the point of putting together a layout on paper, then they'd hand over their story disks and photos they had taken and I'd put it together for them from home. The completed product was saved onto a floppy disk and mailed out to the printer. It wasn't an ideal situation, and it's not recommended (unless one of your volunteers is a production fanatic who doesn't mind spending hours putting together a student newspaper). At this early point in the program, we were more focused on teaching the students good journalism, and the production aspect could come later.

The morals of this section are:

Try to get whatever donated equipment you can get your hands on. It will save money and will put to use some of the thousands of computers that are discarded every month by corporations.

If possible, choose quality, reliable equipment and software tools like Microsoft Word, QuarkXPress and Adobe Photoshop. Nothing is worse than wasting yours and students' time trying to figure out technical problems with computer equipment.

If you have to make the choice early on between teaching the students good journalism or teaching them production, choose the former. If production matters are going to compromise the teaching of journalistic skills, then either use production volunteers from your newspaper to put the students' paper together or select a printing company that will put the paper together for you.

Introduce the production aspect when the time and the equipment are right.

UP AND WALKING

It turns out we were so busy trying to teach the students how to report and write newspaper stories that it's a good thing they didn't have to worry that much about layout and production, or learn how to use fairly complicated programs like Quark or Photoshop. We would teach them the finer points of layout after they learned the finer points of being a journalist.

So for the first year of the Counsel Tribune, the students reported and wrote their stories, the Newspaper Fund volunteers worked with the students on their stories through several drafts on the computers set up along the back wall of the school library. (That is, when the students actually made the effort to type their stories onto the computer. Fact of life: Some high school students either don't know how to type, pretend they don't know how to type, or just hate to type.) Various students took photos to accompany the stories-another piece of essential equipment: a staff camera.

In the second year of the Good Counsel project, we made a new request to Dow Jones for more computers (two of the original computers died, the monitors were worse than ever, and we had the prospect of more students becoming involved). Dow Jones quickly came up with six computers that were much more powerful, with 8 megs of RAM, CD players, and had better monitors. Dow Jones shipped them directly to the school and they came carefully packed and organized. These ones even had mouses!

The newer computers were powerful enough to run Quark, so we began introducing the students to publishing. Since younger minds usually are able to figure out computers and software quickly, the students dove into it and in no time were becoming quite good at working with Quark and Photoshop. Scanning photos seemed to be the favorite activity for several students. They were now putting together a newspaper from start to finish. The only thing they weren't doing was actually printing the paper, which was, and is, being done by a printing firm. (See "Fit to Publish" section.)

THE FINAL COMPUTER EQUIPMENT TALLY:

In the fourth year of the Good Counsel program, we have a dozen computers (for about 15 students in the program this year, which became a formal journalism class at the school in the third year instead of an after-school club or activity). All the

computers are powerful enough to run Quark, so all students are involved in the technical production aspect.

- More than half of the computers have 17-inch monitors, which really are a necessity for laying out a newspaper on the computer.
- We have three different printers, two inexpensive ones bought and one donated by Dow Jones. This makes it a lot easier for students to print out stories and newspaper pages.
- We have one scanner, which is hooked up to what's known as the main publishing computer, where the completed pages of the newspaper are assembled.
- An internal Zip drive was put onto the main publishing computer. Early on, we were publishing four-page papers and not using many photos, so computer files for the whole paper fit onto one floppy disk barely. The Zip disk allows us to use bigger photos and do larger editions (several editions in the third year were eight pages) and save it onto a 100 meg Zip disk to be mailed to the printer. (The printer sends the Zip disk back to us with the papers, so it can be reused.) If your computers will be hooked up to the Internet, it's possible to send out the paper over the Internet using file transfer protocol, which some printers use. (See "Fit to Publish" for a printer that uses an Internet program to accept the newspaper files.) If you can send the paper to a printer company over the Internet, then you don't need a Zip drive.

We built up to this point in computing at Good Counsel. If you can get your hands on powerful computers, software, printers, or a network from the get go, then all the better. But the Good Counsel experience shows that it is possible to put out a newspaper with some fairly basic equipment.

WHAT'S NEEDED

Here's a list of the minimum equipment needed to successfully start up a high school newspaper operation. We used PCs running the Microsoft Windows operating system for the Good Counsel project. Apple Macintosh systems would work as well, if not better.

We emphasize that at this writing, this is the minimum needed. Anything over and above this level will obviously work better and may make yours and the students' lives easier. For example, if every computer is hooked up to a printer, good. If the computers can be hooked up in a network, great. If you can get 19-inch monitors, fabulous. If you get your hands on the latest Dell 800 mhz speed demon computers with 128 megs of RAM and 20 gig hard drives, wonderful. Do you need all of those extras to successfully put out a newspaper? No, you can do it with the minimum equipment listed below.

HARDWARE:

Enough PC set-ups for at least two-thirds of the students involved in the program.

Simple "composing" computers—those only running word-processing software such as Microsoft Word for writing and editing—can be bare-minimum donated PCs that are slow speed (minimum 90 or 100 mhz), with a small amount of RAM (8 megs minimum) and limited hard drives (1 gigabyte). They should have floppy drives and CD players (to load word-processing and anti-virus software if they're not already on the computer). 15-inch monitors are fine for these composing computers.

Several, if not more, of the PCs need to be more powerful ones to run the publishing software. At least one has to be powerful enough to run photo-editing software. The more of these more-powerful computers, the better, because more students can work simultaneously on the publishing aspect. These "publishing" computers should be running at a minimum speed of 166 mhz (though we worked for awhile on slow 100 mhz PCs), have a bare minimum of 16 megs RAM (again, the higher, the better), and have hard drives of at least several gigabytes. These computers should have floppy drives and CD players. Computers used for publishing should have at least 17-inch monitors, though early on we were forced to have students use Quark on 15-inch monitors, but it's very difficult laying out a full newspaper page on such a small monitor.

TWO PRINTERS

A computer running the publishing and photo-editing software must be hooked up to a printer, so stories and headlines can be printed out in newspaper type, full pages can be printed and so can photos. The other printer can be hooked up to one of the other computers, allowing students to print out hard copies of their stories—or headlines and pages if this computer is running publishing software.

A SCANNER

The scanner is hooked up to the main publishing computer. This can be a fairly bottom-of-the-line scanner because photos are scanned at only 200 dots per-inch or lower. Drawings, artwork or sports schedules should be scanned at higher resolutions to maintain clarity (usually 600 dpi minimum). A 24 bit or 30 bit scanner can be found usually for less than the price of a printer. The more important aspect of the scanner is that it should come with a software program that makes it easy to use and understand.

A STAFF CAMERA

Any medium-quality 35 mm automatic camera with flash will work for basic indoor or outdoor/people or places photos. The camera probably should have a zoom feature (a second lens that brings things closer) because one of the biggest problems is that photos often are taken too far from the subject. While that can be fixed in Photoshop, there is a loss of quality. (For group shots, the standard 35mm to 50mm lens is good; for portraits, an 85mm to 100mm lens is considered best; for outdoor sports, 200mm and higher is best.)

Photos are an extremely important part of the newspaper. Not only do they make the paper look better, but students, like anyone else, like to see theirs and their friends' pictures in the paper. Blurry and under or overexposed pictures really can make a paper look bad, while crisp, relevant pictures can make it look very professional. While it's good to have a camera on hand for all staff members to use if needed, the best scenario could be to find a student who already has an interest and a talent in photography, and who has some equipment, including telephoto or zoom lenses for sports photography.

A ZIP DRIVE

If there's no Internet connection on the main publishing computer, a storage device such as ZIP drive that uses 100 meg disks should be gotten. A complete paper needs to be sent to a printing company, and unless it's a 4-page paper with few photos, it won't fit on a normal floppy disk. In Quark, the finished paper, along with separate files for each of the photos or scanned art, is accumulated and saved in a folder such as Issue 1. The folder is saved onto the ZIP disk and mailed to the printing company. Some printing companies have Web sites with programs that allow newspapers to be sent to them over the Internet. This is a big advantage in that it eliminates mailing time and postage expenses. (See publishing section)

MISCELLANEOUS TECHNOLOGY-RELATED EQUIPMENT OR SERVICES THAT ARE NICE TO HAVE BUT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY

- A network. Computers hooked up on a network would make editing and communications easier. Each computer would need a network card and a network hub device. Not for the technically challenged.
- Internet access. This can be a big help for research or sending the paper by FTP to a printing firm.
- A telephone. Depending on the types of stories being done and if people need to be reached outside the school community, a staff phone might be needed.
- A fax machine. Again, depending on the types of stories, or if you are setting up a business department that will handle outside advertising, this could be useful.

SOFTWARE

Microsoft Windows for PCs, Windows 95 or later is the operating software for all computers. Donated computers may or may not have it already loaded.

ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE

This is a must, and the software should be loaded on all computers. Occasionally students work on their stories at home and they can bring viruses on their floppy disks into the newspaper computers. Any good anti-virus software, such as Norton or McAfee, is good.

MICROSOFT WORD

This is the word processing program that students use to write stories and headlines, keep files of interviews or questions, sources, etc. It should be loaded on all computers.

QUARKXPRESS

This is the publishing software that's loaded onto the main publishing computer and any other computers that are powerful enough to run it. This is expensive, professional publishing software. There are other types of publishing software available, but Quark is powerful, easy to use and gives great results.

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

This is the photo and image-editing software and should be loaded onto the main publishing computer that has the scanner hooked up to it. It can also be loaded onto other computers that are powerful enough to run it. Photoshop is expensive, professional software, and there are many other types of image-editing software that can be gotten cheaper and will work. Photoshop is the standard for this type of program-it is powerful, versatile and a lot of fun. Budget-conscious programs should investigate the lower-priced alternatives, but don't skimp too much on this vital piece of software.

FIT TO PUBLISH

In the Counsel Tribune project, one of the things we decided early on was that we wanted the paper to look and feel like a real newspaper-a tabloid printed on real newsprint with ink that leaves your fingers black. We never really considered doing the paper in color, mostly because we felt it was more important to publish a newspaper with good stories that had meaning for the writer and reader, instead of something that looked colorful and pretty. There's certainly a way to have both meaningful stories and do it in color, but our main mission was to teach journalism. We wanted to make the paper attractive through its stories, not necessarily through its look, though layouts that made the paper readable and approachable were always very important. Another consideration about color is that it's much more expensive to print than black-and-white.

After the paper has been completed in the publishing software, it's time to send it off to a printing company. This can be a local printer or one farther away. We selected a printer that met our basic requirements: that the paper be printed on newsprint, and that it was inexpensive. We found both in a printing company based in Birmingham, Ala., called J&S Printing.

The Zip disk containing the complete newspaper and photo files can be mailed or hand-delivered to the printer. One bonus with the printing company we've used is that we can send the newspaper files to them over the Internet. They have custom software that can be downloaded from their Web site (www.jsprinting.com) that collects the publishing files and transfers them electronically. The advantages of this method are speed of getting them the files, and savings on postage to mail a Zip disk. A higher-speed Internet connection on the main publishing computer allows a fairly quick transfer of the complete newspaper.

STAFF MANUAL

Mission Statement
Publication Policies
Journalism Office Etiquette
Job Descriptions & Organizational Chart
Reporting Guidelines & Copy Preparation
Reference Materials
Design and Layout Guidelines
Sample Forms Used by Staff
 Beat Update
 Story Progress Sheet
 Photo Assignment Sheet
 Story Grading Sheet
 Issue Work Summary
 Dummy Sheet

1. Mission Statement

Called by our interest in journalism to share the news we obtain, we, the Counsel Tribune staff, accept all obstacles. We are committed to informing the reader.

We believe that news should be reported to its fullest extent. We draw in energy from the readers that inform us of what they want. We try to reach out and support, as well as encourage and congratulate. Yet, we are willing to bring out a more controversial side of an issue. We believe there are many sides to a story, and we conduct all interviews thoroughly and with utmost objectivity. We value the readers' opinions and are open to comments by way of Letters to the Editor and Guest Editorials.

We are united under pen and pad. We work together and strive to achieve true journalistic excellence.

2. Publication Policies

Editorial Policy

1. The Counsel Tribune intends to be a public forum for student expression and encourages all sides to voice their opinion.

2. Journalists will honor Our Lady of Good Counsel community and the journalistic profession by putting truth, accuracy and objectivity first.

Editorials and Letters

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of at least two-thirds of the staff. Columns with bylines reflect the opinions of the writer. The newspaper will try to publish all letters to the editor within the constraints of space limitations. The staff reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, but without changing the letter's original meaning and tone. Letters shall be printed without reply or rebuttal.

Letters to the editor should all be signed, and, when published, the writer's name and identity should appear after the letter.

Reporting Practices

- Editorial and opinion articles will be clearly distinguished from news reports, which must be free from editorializing.
- Reporters should check and substantiate facts - especially vital ones - two times with two independent sources.
- Reporters will confirm all quotations with their sources during an interview. Vital or controversial quotations must be rechecked later.
- Reporters will not falsify information, invent quotes, quote out of context, or deceive people in their purpose as a reporter.
- Poll takers will gather a scientifically fair, adequate and accurate sampling and will print with their poll

results how many people were surveyed, the date of the survey and other appropriate information regarding the method of collecting poll data.

- Reporters will strive to get all sides of an issue, no matter how difficult, even if the issue is controversial, even if they have to go off campus to fully cover a story.
- Reporters will do whatever is necessary to get a story right, even if it means revising it more times than they want to, interviewing someone they don't know, or making phone calls during the evening or the weekend.
- Reporters should avoid quoting their friends unless they are vital for the story. They should seek to get a variety of sources, including students from other grade levels, teachers, administrators and outside sources.

Photos

Photographs with news value will not be altered electronically or through traditional means so as to misrepresent the actual event, persons, or setting. Photographs that cannot be confused with real-life candid photos may be electronically altered for use as a photo illustration.

Conflicts of Interest

Journalists must avoid conflicts of interest that may not allow them to be objective in their reporting. If a staff member is closely involved with a club; organization or team or is directly involved in a news incident, it may be difficult for him or her to remain objective in his or her reporting. Another staff member should cover this story.

3. Journalism Office Etiquette

- During class, do not speak when someone else is speaking.
- During class, raise your hand when you have something to say.
- Treat the Journalism Office as if it was your own room (i.e., clean up after yourself, handle computers and supplies carefully).
- Respect the opinions of others.
- The phone in the Journalism Office is for business ONLY. You are not to make personal calls on the journalism phone without permission.
- Food is allowed after school and when planned for all staff.
- Don't eat or drink near computers.
- Store diskettes, pictures, and stories in your box when you aren't using them.
- Properly shut down all computers by exiting document, software application and Windows application.
- When working with a document saved on a diskette, be sure to close document before you remove diskette.
- Don't take any photos, software diskettes, software manuals or journalism books out of the Journalism Office.

4. Job Descriptions

Editor-In-Chief

- Creates schedule for issue with adviser
- Meets with all editors to finalize story and photo content of sections
- Monitors completion of deadlines
- Does final proofreading of entire paper
- Makes sure all editors are doing their assigned duties
- Approves headlines chosen by section editors
- Takes over layout of any page in extreme situations
- Vetoes any story due to circumstance
- Passes out Beat, Dummy Layout, Photo Assignment, Story Progress, and Issue Work Summary sheets
- Monitors fair distribution of assignments
- Keeps track of staff members who miss meetings or layout sessions

Managing Editor

- Assists the Editor
- Takes over in absence of Editor
- Ensures staff is on schedule and meets deadlines
- Keeps track of beats, timeliness, deadlines and assignment of stories
- Edits 1st and 2nd drafts of reporters' stories in conjunction with Wall Street Journal reporters and adviser
- Assists reporters with story problems
- Ensures all copy is in proper format
- Takes notice of late-breaking stories
- Keeps record of when stories come in
- Makes sure changes and corrections are made before paper gets printed for Editor-in-Chief to review
- Takes over layout of any page in extreme situations
- Designs all sheets, letterheads, and business cards

Duties of All Section Editors

- Brainstorms content of section with reporters
- Works with Managing Editor to edit 1st and 2nd draft stories
- Coordinates with Photography Editor on which pictures need to be taken
- Prepares Photo Assignment sheets for section pages
- Chooses picture/pictures for section with advice of Photography Editor
- Collects stories and photos for section
- Ensures stories and photos that are in their section meet deadlines
- Ensures headlines are appropriate for stories in their section
- Finalizes headlines for stories
- Makes dummy layout sheet prior to starting layout
- Does layout for their section including scanning and adjusting all photos
- Edits and does final proofread for pages before Managing Editor sees them
- Takes printout home for editing as necessary

Additional Duties For Specific Section Editors:

News Editor

- Is responsible for news pages
- Assists in selecting front-page stories
- Covers late breaking news
- Coordinates writing and editing of news briefs
- Double checks news stories for facts and accuracy

Opinion Editor

- Is responsible for opinion pages
- Writes staff editorials
- Finds possible byline editorials
- Coordinates brainstorming of ideas for editorial cartoons and arranges for artist to complete
- Receives and arranges to print letters to editor
- Decides which story can be a potential survey; assigns survey
- Chooses Speaking Out editorial
- Keeps staff box updated
- Publishes any corrections for mistakes made in the previous issue
- Double checks opinion stories for facts and accuracy

Features Editor

- Is responsible for feature pages
- Actively seeks and/or creates possible feature stories
- Plans and executes features layouts, including two-page spreads
- Double-checks feature stories for facts and accuracy
- Makes feature pages stand out by use of art, graphs, liftout quotes etc.

Sports Editor

- Is responsible for sports page
- Works with Photography Editor to make sports page visually appealing
- Keeps track of sports teams' records and schedules
- Double checks statistics in stories
- Attempts to include all school sports over course of school year
- Ensures sports stories use a variety of angles to create interest
(Ex: analysis stories, features on a single player or coach)

Photography Editor

- Meets with section editors to determine what photos need to be taken
- Gives photo assignments to photographers
- Ensures all photos have been taken
- Coordinates with section editors on which photos will be used in an issue
- Monitors school events for photo opportunities
- Writes cut lines
- Files photos
- Creates photo library

Business Advertising /Circulation Manager

- Solicits ads from outside advertisers and school organizations
- Designs and updates ads for every issue
- Creates eye appealing ads
- Ensures ad says what the client ordered it to say
- Works with Section Editors to determine what pages ads will appear on
- Keeps account of the ad profits
- Coordinates circulation of newspaper inside and out of school

Photographer

- Follows instructions of Photography Editor
- Takes assigned photos
- Develops photography skills outside Journalism class
- Looks for photo opportunities not assigned

Reporter

- Covers a beat
- Writes news briefs when applicable
- Must have at least one article in each issue
- Meets all deadlines
- Follows guidelines for writing a good story
- Ensures stories are unbiased
- Attends scheduled meetings
- Notifies the following people in case of a story problem, in this order: Section Editor, Managing Editor, Editor-in-Chief, Adviser
- Takes into full consideration editing suggestions given by editors, Wall Street Journal reporters or adviser
- Quotes a variety of people, not just friends or other-newspaper staff

Adviser

The adviser's role is two-fold. First, the adviser teaches the staff the fundamentals of journalism. This includes how to: write well-written articles that maintain objectivity; plan and take photographs, and plan and execute layout. The adviser imparts the skills but does not create or control the content. The adviser helps create schedules for issues and incentives for students to meet deadlines, but has to rely on the staff to actually complete the work.

Second, the adviser ensures that all journalistic, legal and ethical standards are met. The adviser may make suggestions based upon mature judgment as to content and in extreme situations may refuse to print copy and/or photos, which he or she believes do not meet these standards.

5. Reporting Guidelines and Copy Preparation

Interviews:

Interviews are a very important part of articles. They provide information and quotes. The following is a guideline to conducting smooth interviews:

- Make sure interview questions are prepared beforehand.
- Explain in full to the person being interviewed what your article will be about.
- Let the person know that you will be quoting them, so they can think about what they will say before they speak.
- Make sure to get complete names and titles for all persons interviewed.
- Write down the main points of the interview. Look for quotable sentences and write them down word for word.
- Be alert for places where you can ask follow up questions, such as when interview subjects bring up topics you didn't expect. Don't feel you have to stick to your planned questions.

After the Interview:

Look over notes immediately after interview and fill in any blank spots or clarify anything that looks confusing. Save notes from the interview until after the story is printed in an issue.

Writing Articles:

A good portion of the journalism class will include instructing students how to write different types of stories - news, features, editorials, etc. Therefore, this will not be covered here. Reporters are reminded, however, to always identify sources of information and to use direct quotes when quoting word for word from a source. Also reporters should avoid opinion except for editorials and remain objective at all times. All articles will be edited at least twice by editors, Wall Street Journal reporters and/or the adviser before final copy will be prepared for entry into QuarkXPress.

Copy Preparation:

- After an article has been edited, the reporter should prepare it for import into QuarkXPress:
- Make sure the article has a byline. The byline should be bold and in 10-point Times New Roman. Make sure the name of the reporter is spelled correctly. Staff Reporter goes under the reporter's name.

Ex: By Arelys Alers

Staff Reporter

- Make sure whole article is in 10-point Times New Roman. Do not indent (Tab) paragraphs. Do not include headline.
- Run spell check and grammar check.
- Verify all source names for correct spelling. Double check spelling of student and teachers' names against lists in the newspaper office.
- Make sure file name reflects story topic, so that it is easily located on diskette.

6. Reference Materials

Every publication staff needs three essential resources:

1. The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, which is a style guide used by many professional newspapers and magazines. This manual is helpful when dealing with situations such as whether the title of an album should be capitalized. (On desk in Journalism Office.)
2. A dictionary (On desk in Journalism Office.)
3. The publication's (Counsel Tribune) style sheet. This sheet should answer any questions that you may have concerning issues such as capitalization, abbreviations, proper fonts, etc.

Why do we need a style sheet?

It is important to show consistency and accuracy in every issue of the paper:

For example, let's say that in one article it says:

"The Student Council is sponsoring a bake sale." Then in another article it says:

"The S.C. is having a meeting after school."

People may be confused because they do not know what “S.C.” means. Consistency of words is very important. A style sheet establishes formats to be used consistently in the publication.

A style sheet is also good to save time. Instead of asking the adviser or editor every question, staff members can look up answers for themselves.

7. Design and Layout Guidelines

Photo Guidelines:

- Every photo has a center of interest:
Every photo must be focused on the main objects, so its most important elements stand out instantly.
- Every photo should look natural:
Try to catch people when they are loose, natural, or engaged in some activity.
- Every photo should be bordered:
Frame each photo with a border - a black 1 -point line.
- Every photo should be relevant:
Make sure the photo that’s taken is relevant and can connect to the article.
- Every face should be at least the size of a dime:
If you want images with impact, try to take pictures of individuals rather than crowds. Taking pictures of crowds enables the reader to overlook the center of interest.

Principles of Layout Design:

Your main guide for layout will be The Newspaper Designer’s Handbook. Copies of this handbook can be found on the shelf in the Journalism Office. The handbook presents a variety of different options for each type of story layout as well as excellent examples of strong photos, two-page spreads and creative effects.

- Stories should always be shaped into either horizontal or vertical rectangles, which encompass the headline, text, photos and cutlines.
- Text legs should be between 2-12 inches.
- Headlines should not bump up against each other. If two stories are directly opposite each other, try giving one a multiple line headline or boxing in one story to make it clear they are separate stories.
- Be careful of text leaps. It should be easy for the reader to follow text from the end of one column to the beginning of the next. For example, if you are putting a photo in the center columns of a story, you should wrap the text underneath the photo to lessen the leap for the reader.
- Photo should face text. This means that if subjects of photo are looking in one direction, those subjects should face the text rather than off the page.
- When using more than one photo for a story, always make one photo larger than the other to create dominance.
- Consider options like pull-out quotes to make layout more interesting and break up large blocks of text.
- Always prepare a dummy sheet before starting layout on QuarkXpress. Your adviser will give you the format he or she wishes you to use.

THE CHECKLIST - 1

INTERVIEWING

1. Introduce yourself as a reporter.
2. Write down your notes. Don't ever rely on your memory.
3. Ask the person you are interviewing to spell his or her name.
4. Ask them to wait for you to write things down. Ask them to repeat themselves if you didn't get all of it down the first time.
5. Make sure you have a list of questions prepared.
6. Don't just interview your friends. Talk to different types of people.

THE CHECKLIST - 2

NAME:

1. I want to write a story about:
2. This story is important because:
(3 reasons)
3. I think students will read it because:
4. I will have to interview these FIVE people about this:
5. I will find out these TEN things:

THE CHECKLIST - 3

How to Figure Out If You Have a Good Story — or NOT!

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. Why is this important?
2. How is it important to our students?
3. How many students are affected?
4. Of the students not affected, how many of them would even care?
5. Is this going to be too old by the time we publish the newspaper?
6. Do I have a bias? How do I really feel about this topic?
7. What kind of information is going to grab the reader in the first paragraph?
8. Would I read this story if I didn't write it myself?

THE CHECKLIST - 4

STORY IDEA THINK PAD

Your name:

This “think pad” will help you think out, develop and organize the idea you have for a news or feature story. Your job as a journalist is to invent new ideas for stories, do the research and interviews that will help you discover the information you need to construct the story and to organize and write the story in a way that will make your readers want to read your work. Readers aren’t stupid. They know when you haven’t done a good job, because they feel like you’ve wasted their time.

Thinking like a Genius

1. What’s the basic idea behind your proposed story?
2. Why is this important?
3. What’s new and different about your idea, compared to other stories?

Thinking like a Journalist

1. Who are some of the people you plan to interview?
2. What are some other sources for information, such as books in the library, magazine articles, museums, that you will research?
3. What “angle” will you take in writing this story?

Thinking like a Reader

1. What kinds of readers will most likely be interested in this story?
2. Why should your readers care about this story? What will they learn from your story?

If necessary, use another piece of paper to record your answers.

TIPS FOR EDITING WITH STUDENTS

The one-on-one editing component of this program is probably the most important aspect for the students. Putting out a newspaper is not the goal - that's just gravy. Our goal is to help these kids think about events as news and help them to become better writers.

To the students, we call this process "editing," to help them become familiar with journalistic words. But in truth, it's unlike the editing we're all used to, and it's more like teaching, mentoring and cheerleading. The primary goal is not to "fix" the story, but to improve the writer's vision of his own work, his own abilities and perhaps give him skills to do a story that's a little bit better the next time. To do this, it's very important that we don't just "fix" their stories, but that we show them, in words they understand, how they can "fix" their stories themselves. As a mentor you must approach each student's story differently.

Here are some tips:

- 1. READ THE STORY CAREFULLY FIRST BY YOURSELF.** If you really look closely, you can see what the student was thinking and also what the student was trying to get across. Get a feel for that. After reading the story, say something like, "This is good" and "I especially like the part where you xxx". If you're having trouble complimenting a troubled story, consider that this person has never tried journalism until a few months ago, yet is still making a courageous effort at something he knows nothing about. That's commendable.
- 2. TALK WITH THE STUDENT.** Ask the student, "what is your story about" and "why do you think it's important?" and "who do you think will want to read this?" These are questions that we've discussed during recent lectures, so they should have good answers. This will also open a dialogue between the two of you. Generally, you will pick up something that they say that is really good - that is exactly what should be in the story - or maybe even the lead. So listen carefully to what the student tells you.
- 3. TRY VERY, VERY HARD NOT TO REWRITE.** You should sit at the keyboard, but the student should sit right next to you. After you've had the broader discussion about the story, you should both tackle one paragraph at a time. If the lead is good enough, leave it alone — and tell the student you like it and tell the student exactly why you like it. Does it tell what the story will be about? Perfect. If not, tell the student exactly what you think is missing. For example, "I think this is good, but if I'm a student, does it tell me that the cafeteria's going to charge me more for food?" And let the student answer the question, sometimes they see it right away. Then say, "Ok, how do we fix it?" Prod them along, but try not to give the answers right away. Let their own words shine through as much as possible, regardless of whether you could write it better yourself.
- 4. REMIND THEM THIS ISN'T SCHOOL.** You will find in a lot of their writing that it looks like they're writing an essay for school. This is understandable, because it's all they know until now. Remind them that writing for a newspaper is **SO MUCH EASIER** than writing an essay. For starters, you can have a sentence stand alone in a paragraph, rather than having to write an opening sentence, supporting sentences and then a conclusion in each paragraph. Also, you don't need a conclusion for your story in a newspaper as you would an essay. Tell them this is more fun because you can be more conversational, as if you're talking to a friend, rather than writing for your teacher.
- 5. TRY TO RECAP AND FIND OUT WHAT ELSE THE STUDENT IS WORKING ON.** Tell the student what you think both of you together accomplished with the story. Then ask the student what his next story is about, and encourage that endeavor if it's a good one or make suggestions on what a better story must be.