



Welcome to the premiere edition of our new electronic CMS Newsletter! This endeavor has been a few years in the making, but we are thrilled to be able to bring you more up-to-date news, as well as to save trees.

With each issue we will try to bring you a variety of information: news about the program; information about our courses, internships, and events on campus and around the country; and profiles of alumni who are doing interesting things (both those of you who graduated a while ago as well as those who are more recent Jumbos). In subsequent issues we hope to introduce a section where alums and friends of CMS can post job opportunities in media fields. If there are other things you'd like to see in the newsletter, let us know – we are very open to your ideas.



Filmmaker Joshua Seftel (A90) visited Tufts in October for a screening of his film “War, Inc.,” a political satire starring John Cusack and Marissa Tomei. (See page 7 for details.)

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Send us your news!

Changed jobs? Gone back to school? Moved? We want to hear from you. Email us at cms@tufts.edu.

Do you know someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter? Feel free to pass it along.

And please visit our Web site at <http://ase.tufts.edu/cms>

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CMS News

Fundraising

Academic year 2007-2008 proved to be particularly fruitful in terms of grant activity. CMS Director Julie Dobrow applied for and received a \$125,000 grant from the Hearst Foundation, a \$10,000 grant from the Academy of Film Arts and Sciences Foundation, and a Diversity Fund grant from Tufts.

The Hearst Foundation grant will pay for a new film editing lab that will be located in Braker Hall, as well as significant upgrades to our stock of cameras, sound and lighting equipment. The location of the new lab is optimal, since for the first time it will allow for Tufts ITS support. In other words, when students experience computer problems in the middle of the night when editing their films, someone from the ITS Support Center located in Eaton Hall will be able to walk across the quad to help. We are also thrilled that this grant will enable us to purchase our first high definition cameras.

The Academy of Film Arts and Sciences Foundation grant paid for a short-term residency of a prominent filmmaker. Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Freida Lee Mock spent two days on campus in mid-October, speaking to classes, meeting with both beginning and more advanced filmmaking students, and also with faculty. We also screened Freida's film, "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision," which won the 1995 Academy Award for Best Documentary.

The Tufts Diversity Fund grant will pay for a panel in January that CMS is co-sponsoring with the Child Development Department. "Superheroes in a Globally-Connected World" will explore the burgeoning ethnic and racial diversity in comics and its possible effects on children's ethnic awareness and identity.

Did you know that any donation you make to Tufts can be designated for CMS? We need your help to continue offering a high quality and up-to-date program for our students. Donations to help us offer new classes, continue to offer high profile events like the annual Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism, and support for student projects would be most appreciated.

Courses

We are always trying to innovate. This year, CMS has launched a new option for students doing a CMS Senior Project: instead of writing about their projects in traditional paper format, they can blog about it. We're hoping that especially for students doing projects such as films, websites, screenplays and ad campaigns, blogging will enable them to document their creative processes in a contemporaneous and thoughtful way.

During the fall semester, we've offered four classes, several of them in conjunction with Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service: Media Literacy and Social Change, History of Documentary Films, Social Marketing, and Producing Films for Social Change. Some highlights from each class include:

Media Literacy and Social Change: In addition to examining different genres of media, learning to deconstruct their explicit and implicit images and exploring their socio-cultural impact, students in Julie Dobrow's class, Media Literacy and Social Change, partnered with Peter Levine, Director of CIRCLE (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement) to pilot the Youthmap project – software that enables individuals and organizations to create an electronic map providing information and connections. We're hoping that Youthmap will eventually reach over 250,000 college students.

History of Documentary Film: From Nanook to the Real World was taught for the third consecutive year by Tufts Alum Don Schechter (LA 01, GSAS 03). The course covered the development of various styles of American documentary film since its inception. At the heart of the class was the debate to define the term "documentary." The class also explored the nuances of and between "Direct Cinema" and "Cinema Verite." Students attended a screening of Joshua Seftel's "War, Inc." and were visited by filmmaker Freida Lee Mock.

Social Marketing: In Marketing for Social Change, Dorie Clark (Clark Strategic Communications) had students write a 15 page marketing plan for causes ranging from the prevention of teenage drinking and driving to stopping female genital mutilation in Egypt. Reading business literature influenced by theories from psychology and sociology, the class has (following Malcolm Gladwell) tested their "connectedness" by evaluating how many people they know with any of 100 names taken from the Boston phonebook, brainstormed in small groups about solving public health problems in Ghana and the European low-birthrate crisis, and heard from guest lecturers such as state transportation officials, AIDS outreach workers, and the founders of "Socializing for Justice," a "Meetup" group that connects advocates from across issue boundaries.

Producing Films for Social Change: Students in Margaret Lazarus' class, Producing Films for Social Change, spent an intense semester learning how to pitch, write, shoot and edit a short film on a social topic. These amazing advocacy films were screened on December 9 at Tufts, and will soon be up on the Tisch College Web site at <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/?pid=23>.

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Winternships

Our January Winternship (aka the Communications Career Connection) program has been so successful the past few years that this year we've expanded it. This January, 30 Tufts students will participate in intensive one-week internships at 24 different media companies in New York, Washington D.C., Boston and Los Angeles. Students will shadow a Tufts alum and learn what it would be like to work in a particular media industry. We run the program with help from Career Services and the Office of Alumni Relations.

But most of all, we depend on alums and friends of CMS to offer these opportunities and supervise our students. We can't thank everyone who sponsors a winternship student enough. The impressive list of sites this year includes:

Boston

Arnold Worldwide (Meg Siegal J99)
Boston Globe (Neil Swidey A91)
Boston Magazine (Julie Suratt J94)
 Walden Media (Micheal Flaherty A90)
 WBUR (John Davidow A77)

Los Angeles

Bona Fide Productions (Albert Berger A79)
 Outlaw Productions (Mike Glassman A01)
 PRbuzz (Jann Berman)
 Ted Schachter Entertainment (Ted Schachter A76)
TV Guide Network (Matt Singerman A88)

New York

All You Magazine (Diane Oshin J77)
 Fred Friendly Seminars (Barbara Margolis/Ruth Friendly)
 KP Communications LLC (Kimi Puntillo J79)
 Lookalike Productions (Lisa Lax and Nancy Stern J86)
 Random House (Amanda Munoz A04)
 Seftel Productions (Josh Seftel A90)
 Trickle Up (Bill Abrams A75)
 TruTV (Wendy Whitman J76)
 Univision (Steven Wolfe A95)
 WNET (Neal Shapiro A80)
 World Leaders Entertainment (Ben Stein A01)
 WW Norton (Leo Wiegman A80)
 Young and Rubicam (Belle Frank J76)

Washington D.C.

Roll Call Magazine (David Meyers A96)

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CMS News

Fall Alumni Events

What an amazing time to be examining the way the press covers politics! We took full advantage of this, as well as the expertise of some of our alums, and co-sponsored two outstanding alumni events this fall.

On October 14 at the National Press Club, CMS and the newly formed Alumni Journalism Society put on a panel that explored and critiqued press coverage of the presidential campaign. CMS Director Julie Dobrow moderated a panel that included print journalists Marie Cocco (J78), *Washington Post* columnist, and David Meyers (A96), managing editor of *Roll Call*; broadcast reporter and producer Kirit Radia (A05), ABC News; internet guru Simon Rosenberg (A85), founder and president of the New Democratic Network; and former print/broadcast writer/producer Tara Sonenshine (J81), Institute for Peace. Some of the lively discussion focused on whether online media actually bring new perspectives and new voices into the conversation and the extent to which they are changing print and broadcast journalism.

Two weeks later, as the presidential campaign neared its climax, CMS, the Office of Alumni Relations and the New York Tufts Alliance teamed up to put on a similar panel in New York. Held in the offices of *Newsweek*, Julie Dobrow posed questions to a panel consisting of print journalist Dan Klaidman, managing editor of *Newsweek*; broadcast journalist Marian Porges (J82), NBC News; Chad Matlin (A07) from slate.com, who represented the online perspective; and Steven Wolfe (A95), vice president of Univision, who discussed the role of the Spanish speaking press in covering the campaign.

Mark your calendars for some exciting CMS events that will happen in the spring semester:

- **January 26, 2009: “Superheroes in a Globally-Connected World”**
- **April 13, 2009: Fourth Annual Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism**
- **May 7, 2009: Fifth Annual P.T. Barnum Awards for Excellence in Entertainment (to be held in Los Angeles)**

More events to come. Please check the CMS website often for updates at <http://ase.tufts.edu/cms>



CMS Director Julie Dobrow met with Alumni Board members in Los Angeles in January, 2008. Pictured left to right are Jon Levin, Creative Artists Agency; Jeff Greenstein, Consulting Producer, “Desperate Housewives”; Julie Dobrow, CMS Director; Jeff Strauss, Jeff Strauss Productions; Ted Schachter, Schachter Entertainment; Todd Kessler, television writer and producer; and Albert Berger, Bona Fide Productions.

News from Alumni

Send us your news!

Changed jobs? Gone back to school? Moved? We want to hear from you.
Email us at cms@tufts.edu.

Lauren Alpert (A06) is an editor at Bloomberg News' headline desk in New York.

Albert Berger (A79) produced a series of short films across America chronicling Obama supporters throughout the campaign. These "Postcards from Battleground States" were posted on the internet, and recently were featured in *The Huffington Post*: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/albert-berger>.

Daniella (Baider) Berkson (J96) is a senior producer for News Broadcast Network, a New York-based broadcast PR and video production company.

Cristina Calzadilla (A07) is an assistant account executive at Cone in Boston.

Tia Kaul Disick (J98, G00) has recently had her second child, moved to Florida and continues to work for *Scholastic* via telecommuting.

Hannah Erlich (A08) works for Lee and Low Books in New York.

Marissa Forman (A08) is an account associate at Google in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

James Gerber (A08) is a reporter for Politicker in Los Angeles.

Jennifer Gerber (A07) has been hired by Abt Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jennifer Gerson (A06) is the Women's Fashion Editor at ralphlauren.com.

Heather Hauswirth (A07) is a producer for NHK, Japan's public broadcaster, based in Washington, D.C.

Anny Kim (A05) is a research assistant at "The Late Show with David Letterman in New York."

Lisa Lax and **Nancy Stern (J86)** recently produced "Let it Out," a documentary that premiered at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. See a trailer for this film on their website: <http://lookalikeproductions.com/>

Tony Massarotti (A89) is reporting and writing commentary on sports for *The Boston Globe* and Boston.com.

Chad Matlin (A07) is a staff reporter for *The Big Money* in New York.

Meghan McElheny (J01) is executive assistant to the Creative Director of *W* magazine.

Aaron Mehta (A07) is working for the Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C.

David Polk (A05) is a radio producer for WFMT radio in Chicago.

Marian Porges (J82) recently accepted a new position as Director of the new broadcast/digital journalism program that NBC created in affiliation with the New York Film Academy. She is responsible for the curriculum, teaches the core journalism course and coordinates all NBC involvement in the program.

Simone Press (A08) works as an assistant with the Inside Track at *The Boston Herald*.

Kimi Puntillo (J79) has a new book coming out next March, titled "Great Races – Incredible Places, 100+ Fantastic Runs Around the World."

Kirit Radia (A05), state department producer for ABC News in Washington D.C., has also been doing some on-air reporting stints, including this stand up in front of the White House: <http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=6302895>

Jillian Russo (A08) is an editorial assistant at Cengage Learning's Academic and Professional Group.

Kat Schmidt (A07) is business reporter for *The Courier*, a small daily in southern Louisiana.

Neal Shapiro (A80), President of Thirteen/WNET, has been named to the Board of Trustees at Tufts.

Michael Skocay (A08) is a Research Assistant at Thirteen/WNET in New York.

Brittany Sommer (A08) is a research assistant at Nickelodeon in New York.

Amanda Sung (A08) is a marketing associate for TripAdvisor in Newton, MA.

Neil Swidey (A91), *Boston Globe Magazine* writer, published "[The Assist: Hoops, Hope, and the Game of Their Lives](#)" in 2008. Among other recognitions, Neil was a new featured author on the Great Writers podcast.

Jeffrey Vanderkruik (A07) is a writer's assistant at NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

Laura Willcox (A08) is an assistant to filmmaker Josh Seftel (A90) in New York.

Jimmy Young (A79) is the founder and president of Young Sportscasters of America.

Luke Yu (A07) is a research and marketing associate at Howcast Media, an online video startup for instructional videos.

Eileen Zhou (A08) is an analyst at Digitas in New York.

Spotlight on 2006 Graduate Leah Tucker

Leah Tucker knows what it's like to work for MTV. The CMS minor snagged a coveted spot working at MTV's TV Land as a production coordinator. Despite a long-term interest in television and film (aside from a brief stint at TUTV), her first hands-on production experience wasn't until the fall of her senior year, when the course "Producing Films for Social Change" altered her world.

"That class was huge because it was the first time I'd ever used a camera or Final Cut – it was an amazing experience. It basically taught me the entire process and confirmed that that was what I really wanted to do."

The intensive class was similar to a "journalism boot camp—more exhilarating, more of a challenge," the 2006 graduate said. Tucker credits the class with opening many doors for her and helping her make connections. Tucker also recognized the real world applications of Neal Shapiro's news journalism course, which tied guest lecturers' personal experiences into the academic material. CMS guest speakers demonstrated to her that dream jobs really could be attainable. She did an internship at TV Land/Nick at Nite the summer after her sophomore year.



Leah Tucker

The experience gave her a window into the creative side, screening tapes and working with producers and writers. She earned herself a spot as a production assistant at Nick at Nite the following summer, which led her to a job after graduation at TV Land. Tucker is now in charge of coordination and production management of big shoots, and often has two to ten smaller projects in the works at the same time. One of her first shoots was the launch of the "Cosby Show" on TV Land. She redid the opening by bringing in real people and cutting it together with animation to make TV Land's new opening scene for the show. She believes the new opening demonstrates how iconic the show is, as everyone remembers the way the Cosbys dance on the original opening. Keep an eye out next year for Tucker's current project, the promotions and opening sequence for the second season of "She's Got the Look," a modeling competition for women over 35.

Spotlight on 2006 Graduate Leigh Simons

When Leigh Simons was a Tufts student, she never would have guessed that she would be climbing over physical obstacles to cover a story. After an internship in Senator Ted Kennedy's offices, Simons expected to work in a politician's press office—but Robert Oster Sachs's "Producing Film for Social Change" class changed that.

"They give you a camera, you have a story idea, and you just go with it. It's a very creative process, unlike anything I've ever done before, and it really fostered my interest in film and telling a story and politics," the 2006 graduate said. After this experience, Simons chose to do a film for her CMS Senior Project. "I did a film about a Tufts student who was elected to the New Hampshire statehouse when he was 19. It was easy to find yourself jumping in and finding yourself completely taken over by it...My whole senior year revolved around it."

By then, Simons was hooked on film and television. And when she found an opportunity to work as a production associate at ABC's "Nightline," she snagged it. "Nightline" sent Simons out to Denver to cover the Democratic Convention, which she describes as "the biggest highlight" of her job so far. At the end of the event, Simons and her coworkers went back to the convention hall to follow up on earlier interviews of Clinton supporters. The venue was in lockdown mode, forcing Simons to get creative. They decided to climb over the building's rafters in order to gain access to the convention hall. The group managed to do several interviews before running through the crowds in time to air that night's show.

But not everyone gets an inside view of politics by climbing into the Democratic Convention. Simons's advice? "Reading and watching as many sources as possible is really important. Everyone is going to do it a little differently, so it's important to get more than one person's outtake on what they're covering, sometimes you'll come out of it with two completely different angles. Broadening your media intake is the best way to keep well-informed."



Leigh Simons at Denver's INVESCO Field, one of the sites of this summer's Democratic National Convention.

- Sarah Fleischmann (A08)

Joshua Seftel brings “War, Inc.” to Tufts

Joshua Seftel (A90) visited CMS in late October and presented his feature-length film, “War, Inc.,” to the Tufts community. While the film takes a scathing look at the innumerable ways that war can wreak havoc on the human condition, such dark sentiments are cleverly buoyed by the film’s use of satire, morbid humor, and uproarious performances from John Cusack (who co-wrote the script) as a conflicted war profiteer, Hillary Duff as a confused, Middle Eastern pop star, and Dan Ackroyd, whose hawkish “Mr. Vice President” character is a dead ringer for Dick Cheney. Other cast members include Ben Kingsley as a Strangelovian CIA boss, and Marissa Tomei as the embedded journalist trying to sort through the chaos.



For Seftel, bringing “War, Inc.” to the big screen was not without its challenges. As he explained prior to the Tufts screening, when the script was first conceived in 2003, Hollywood was far more reluctant to voice dissent toward the Iraq War (readers may recall the reaction to filmmaker Michael Moore’s comments about President Bush during the Academy Awards ceremony in March of 2003). As a result, said Seftel, the script came across as somewhat daring for the time, and was thus considered a risky commercial proposition.

Seftel and John Cusack (above), working on the set of “War, Inc.” The film was also showcased during a “special Tufts University screening” at New York’s Tribeca Theater (right) on May 19, 2008. (Click on photo to visit the film’s Web site.)



Joshua Seftel’s filmmaking has brought him to Romania, Bosnia, South Africa, Costa Rica, Iceland, and across the United States. At age 22, he received his first Emmy nomination for the documentary “Lost and Found,” about the plight of Romania’s orphaned and abandoned children -- which estimates placed at over 100,000 at the time. Made for only \$2,000, “Lost and Found” helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars and served as a catalyst for significant social action, spurring American adoptions of hundreds of Romanian orphans.

Elsewhere in his career he directed the films “Old Warrior,” and “Taking on the Kennedys,” which was chosen by *Time* magazine as one of the ten best films of 1996, and the HBO-produced film “Ennis’ Gift,” made in memory of Bill Cosby’s late son, Ennis.

- John Ciampa

Shades of a Tufts Alum

By Sarah Fleischmann (A08)

Jaffar Mahmood (A00) is not your average Tufts graduate with an economics major. The 2000 Tufts alum is currently a writer, director and producer in Hollywood. Although he had always loved movies and earned a reputation as his friends' movie trivia source, he never thought about creating his own films. That all changed during his junior year abroad at Tufts-in-London when he took his first film class: an art history course that focused on Hitchcock and "The Birds." Once he experienced film through this academic lens, Mahmood realized that he wanted to pursue a career in film.

Back in the U.S., he jumped at every film opportunity Tufts had to offer. The fall of his senior year, he joined the 16 mm Club and produced the club's annual short film. He registered for every Tufts film class, including an SMFA course that used 8 mm film. By this point, he explains, he was "bitten by the writing and directing bug" and applied to a master's degree program at the University of Southern California that combined film and business. Mahmood was struck by USC's emphasis on producing commercially viable films that are easy to relate to, and this influence is apparent in his latest film, "Shades of Ray." The film is about Ray Rehman, a half-Pakistani and half-Caucasian male who has just proposed to his Caucasian girlfriend, Noel. Soon after, Ray's parents separate, and his father shows up at his door. Ray's father encourages him to marry a Pakistani woman, so Ray consents to meet his father's proposed female, Sana. She is of mixed descent, like Ray, and he quickly realizes how much they have in common. Meanwhile, as he attempts to reconcile his parents, Noel agrees to marry him, so now he must decide between the two women. The film puts a new spin on the romantic comedy by threading Ray's struggles with his mixed identity into the plot.

The film was influenced by Mahmood's own experience - his father is a Muslim raised in Pakistan and his mother is a Catholic from New Hampshire - but he tried to "put together a relatable package for everyone; everyone wants to find love. Most people want to please their parents while trying to do what is best for themselves." He hopes that these themes will give the film a widespread appeal, and cites "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" and "Bend it Like Beckham" as examples of ethnic or cultural films that everyone can relate to. Mahmood says, "I want to take the audience on a ride and make them laugh," but he also slips in important messages about race and identity. "It's



Left: Mahmood talks with members of the audience in Braker Hall, following the screening of "Shades of Ray" at Tufts on November 20, 2008.

all about the characters," he adds. "A guy choosing between two girls has been done before, but the characters are original and what they do is original because of their race and upbringing. You can understand what the characters are going through - you're with them for the ride."

He notes that the key to a successful film is honest characters with honest voices, and as the screenwriter, director, and producer, it's all in his control. Mahmood struggled to find the right tone for the movie because he wanted it to be entertaining, but also wanted to tackle serious issues about race and identity. He approached the film as a comedy infused with drama, and understands the importance of including "broad fun moments that let you realize that the movie doesn't take itself too seriously."

One of Mahmood's goals is to use film as a vehicle to dispel stereotypes. "I want to show Americans that Muslims can be like everyone else - not just a terrorist or cab driver." The universal themes of love, family, and humor give the film a broader appeal while also exposing mainstream audiences to non-stereotypical Pakistanis, encouraging greater racial acceptance. "My original intent was to get a production company. I got good reactions, but people didn't want to finance a movie about a half-Pakistani, because who's going to see it?" he says. One producer even

suggested that Mahmood change the main character to a Latino or black male because that would appeal to an already established audience. This clearly contrasts with Mahmood's underlying purpose, so he dedicated himself to securing funding elsewhere. After 18 months of fundraising outreach, he had 38 individuals on board, many of Indian and Pakistani descent who felt that they should use their position to help break stereotypes and give Pakistanis a voice. "Race is always interesting when handled properly," he says, but notes that he does not want Hollywood to box him into race movies. "You need to be passionate about the story and want to share the story -- you've got to be excited about it," noting that this is true for all aspects of filmmaking, not just for the screenwriter.

Mahmood's other projects focus on lighter issues - his current project is a high school teen comedy set in Pakistan about a boy who tries to throw a party for his girlfriend, which he describes as "'Superbad' set in Pakistan." While it seems that Mahmood is intensely ambitious for writing, directing, and producing his first film, he explains that the best way to assimilate yourself into Hollywood is to write your own scripts; in order to get work and begin to make a name for yourself, you need to create your own project. His advice: "Write what you know - write about yourself."

"A guy choosing between two girls has been done before, but the characters are original and what they do is original because of their race and upbringing. You can understand what the characters are going through - you're with them for the ride." - Jaffar Mahmood

Mahmood credits his Tufts experience with his discovery of his identity. He grew up in a Catholic/Italian/Jewish town in New Jersey, and was one of only two South Asians at his high school. Since there was no minority community for him, he identified entirely with his white classmates because, like many high school students, he just wanted to fit in and be like everyone else. It wasn't until he experienced a bit of culture shock at Tufts that he realized that he had been blocking out half of his identity.

When he arrived at Hill Hall for his freshman year, he had a Korean roommate, and Arab and Indian hall mates; he describes this as "classic Tufts - like a Benetton ad." As his classmates asked him about his name and ethnicity, he became curious about his own background and realized that he had a cool story that he had ignored for the first 18 years of his life.

Mahmood has an insatiable passion for film, but he admits that the movie business is "sexy and horrifying all at once - anyone can become wealthy, famous, or successful, whether they are from a bad neighborhood or wealthy and well-educated. There's no formal way of command and no set path for becoming

'someone' in Hollywood. He continues, "A master's degree in writing and producing doesn't guarantee higher money or a job, unlike any other degree."

Mahmood notes that graduate school was the right choice for him because he loves to learn and it gives him more options now -- he teaches film directing in Los Angeles -- but points out that graduate school isn't right for everyone. In the entertainment industry, everyone must make his or her own path, and some people get started by jumping into the business as assistants, and their careers explode from there.

The filmmaker is thrilled at the way Tufts has supported him. "Tufts is embracing film and media. I love the profiles and updates in *Tufts Magazine* - there are so many great Tufts alums, and the support and camaraderie from Tufts has surpassed USC's support, where I'm a dime a dozen. I'm really excited to be included in this, and I appreciate that Tufts is helping me get the word out."

He expressed interest in returning to Tufts to do a film project featuring alumni in the film industry, but doesn't have a Tufts-related plot yet. If anyone knows of Tufts lore or legend that could be transformed into a film, Mahmood is all ears.

Right: Publicity photo for "Shades of Ray."

Click on the image to access the film's Web site.



Burke Internships – Kelly Rizzetta and James Gerber

By Sarah Fleischmann (A08)

This year marked the first year of the David Burke Media and Public Service Internship Program, which gave two 2008 graduates the opportunity to intern at major news organizations. Alumni John Davidow (A77) of WBUR and Neal Shapiro (A80) of WNET generously hosted the interns at their respective organizations during the summer. The program is a collaboration between the Communications and Media Studies Program and the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, in honor of Tufts alumnus David Burke, former president of CBS News and former vice president of news at ABC.

Kelly Rizzetta, who spent 10 weeks at Boston's WBUR, found that the internship altered the way she now interacts with media. She has a new awareness and appreciation of media techniques, which turned listening to baseball games into a different experience.

"When I went home to New Jersey in the middle of the summer and was listening to the WCBS broadcast of my beloved Yankees, I found myself paying attention more to the editing and engineering of the program than to the game itself," said Rizzetta. "Suddenly, I was picturing the announcing duo, John Sterling and Suzyn Waldman, in Studio 1 at WBUR and trying to guess how they received their cues to fire certain elements, how they communicated with their producers, and how many people were supporting them with statistical and historical research throughout the program."

Rizzetta participated in every step involved in radio broadcasting.

"Learning to reduce nuanced, complicated stories to 25- or 40-second spots has entirely revamped the way I approach a writing task." - Burke Intern Kelly Rizzetta

She also learned a vital skill for any reporter: being succinct. "Learning to reduce nuanced, complicated stories to 25- or 40-second spots has entirely revamped the way I approach a writing task. More than even my style itself, working in a broadcast environment has retrained my brain to more quickly and accurately identify the most crucial bits of a story, compile them in a logical manner and transmit them to a listening audience in the most comprehensible way possible."

Rizzetta's field knowledge improved dramatically over the course of the internship. At an early assignment covering Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's appearance at a swearing-in ceremony, Rizzetta missed the opportunity to set up her recording equipment on the stage, and had to crouch by the podium attempting to capture just a few minutes of coherent speech; the story never ran.

As she gained experience, she found other people turning to her for the answers.

"When I went out a month later to cover John Mellencamp's announcement that Farm Aid 2008 would take place in Massachusetts, it was a whole different story. The press people who were in charge of checking in the representatives from the various media outlets and helping them set up weren't very knowledgeable about radio reporting, so I sought out the "mult" box (a device that splits audio signals to multiple recipients) on my own, got plugged in, hit 'record' and took care of it myself!"

Rizzetta will bring her new skills to her next journalistic endeavor at the *Coast Star*, a weekly newspaper on the Jersey Shore.



Kelly Rizzetta (left) and James Gerber: Recipients of the 2008 David Burke Media and Public Service internships .

"I understand the hierarchy of the news staff, the division of labor, and (with the exception of one or two missing links in my comprehension of the technology) the process by which a story idea is transformed from a mere thought into a broadcast," she said.

Rizzetta's surprising advice for budding field reporters? "My favorite - and the most useful - 'trick of the trade' I picked up was reporter Bianca Vazquez-Toness' advice to seek out television camera guys when reporting in the field, because in a pinch, they'll always have a roll of duct tape on them. This, of course, can come in handy in a variety of ways, from repairing broken equipment to piggy-backing your station's microphone on top of another station's when the microphone stand at a particular event is full."

James Gerber discovered that ABC's political unit does not give interns special treatment - instead, interns are respected and expected to perform like any other employee.

"My first day at ABC, another brand new intern and I were accompanied by a veteran intern, and we were working the late shift with Teddy Davis, the deputy political director," said Gerber. "Every night, the political unit produces a "sneak peek." It often includes original reporting, and gives a preview of the next day's important political events. Teddy asked us to read what he was writing and contribute ideas and essentially edit his writing. This being our first day, I was shocked that he would trust us enough already to ask us to edit his writing and treat us as partners in the project."

Although daunting for the ambitious 2008 graduate, he seized the opportunity to learn. "I came to ABC News with relatively little experience in the world of political journalism and expected to have few opportunities to do any of my own reporting, but I was immediately asked to attend events in Washington D.C. and report on conference calls. It was, to a certain extent, trial by fire, but I also had a great amount of support from the people in ABC's political unit."

Gerber learned through his own experiences - at his first press conference, he watched other reporters dash up to the podium to place their tape recorders in front of the New York delegation while he continued to hold his. He has since adjusted his techniques and won't have a problem with recording again.

Another lesson he learned is that teamwork is key in reporting. "I was truly lucky to work with some of the sharpest minds in political journalism at ABC. They involved me in their conversations and debates, and invited me to voice my opinion on editorial decisions," Gerber said.

The 2008 graduate had a hand in many projects through his role in conference calls, a vital step in the political reporting process.

"There were sometimes up to a dozen of these conference calls a day. They're the primary means (after the candidates themselves, that is) by which the campaigns disseminate their message to the media. So it is quite a significant responsibility," he said. "The interns are in charge of setting up each conference call so that ABC records it, as well as taking diligent notes during the call itself. After the call ends, we would circulate a short write up of what we thought were the most important parts of the call. So we played a really big role in shaping the editorial content of the political unit."

Gerber credits his Burke internship in helping him secure a job reporting for PolitickerCA.com, a website that gives the scoop on local and state politics for political insiders.

"I came to ABC News with relatively little experience in the world of political journalism and expected to have few opportunities to do any of my own reporting, but I was immediately asked to attend events in Washington D.C. and report on conference calls. It was, to a certain extent, trial by fire." - Burke Intern James Gerber

"A Strong Clear Vision"

Filmmaker Freida Lee Mock presented "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision," which won the 1995 Academy Award for Best Documentary Film, to Tufts students on October 23. The film chronicles the career of Maya Lin, an architect and sculptor who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as an undergraduate at Yale University. The film also charts the controversy surrounding the wall's design. It's a bracing portrait that focuses on Lin's courage, determination, and the unflinching belief she had in her work.

In addition to the accolades afforded this film, Mock is also the recipient of four other Oscar nominations, and won best film honors at the Cleveland International Film Festival for her 1998 film "Return with Honor."



Freida Lee Mock takes questions from Tufts students prior to the screening of "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision."

Going Public

By John Ciampa

Following lengthy, distinguished careers in commercial television, both Neal Shapiro (A80) and John Davidow (A77) seem to have found a home working in public broadcasting. But while the reasons why anyone makes the leap from commercial to public media are often varied and personal -- be it Bill Moyers, Charlie Rose or Lowell Bergman -- many cite an attraction to how the medium allows for programming that focuses on depth and analysis, and is largely unbound by commercial constraints.

"There was a lot about public television that intrigued me," said Shapiro during a recent telephone interview. "But it was also great not to find myself having to look at ratings."

As president and CEO of WNET, a Public Broadcasting Service network centered in the New York metropolitan area, Shapiro spearheads the nation's largest public television station. Similarly, Davidow heads the news division at Boston's WBUR, a key northeastern affiliate for National Public Radio and the production headquarters for such nationally syndicated shows as "On Point," "Here and Now," and "Car Talk."

Prior to joining WNET, Shapiro spent 13 years in the news division at ABC, working alongside such notables as Peter Jennings, Diane Sawyer, Sam Donaldson and Ted Koppel, and covering many of the major events of the era, including the Phillipine Revolution of 1986 and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, among others. Following his stint at ABC, Shapiro moved over to an executive post at NBC, becoming president of the network's news division, a tenure that culminated in his stewardship of the top-rated television news magazine "Dateline NBC," and his oversight of the network's global news division. Before leaving NBC, he was also tasked with the unenviable job of finding a replacement for Tom Brokaw, the popular face of NBC News who had been a fixture in

"There was a lot about public television that intrigued me. But it was also great not to find myself having to look at ratings." - Neal Shapiro

American households for more than three decades, dating back to his days as a White House correspondent during the Watergate scandal.

Shapiro, of course, selected Brian Williams as Brokaw's successor, and in December of 2004 publicly announced that Williams would take over as anchor of "NBC Nightly News." Shapiro's insight in selecting Williams has had a profound effect on the national evening news landscape, with Williams proving to be both a successful and capable successor to Brokaw.

"Brian was devoted to news and cared about it passionately -- but he also had a knack for anchoring and reporting from the desk," said Shapiro. "The transition was important; it took both Tom and Brian to make it work. Brian wanted to be sensitive to Tom, to give him his due and to allow for a well-deserved victory lap. I think that everyone throughout the newsroom both expected and embraced the change."



Above: Shapiro speaking at the 2006 Edward R. Murrow Forum at Tufts University

Like Shapiro, Davidow enjoyed a highly successful career in television before making the leap to public broadcasting, albeit on a smaller, more regional scale. His career began with a brief internship at Boston's WBZ Channel 4 in the late-1970s, an opportunity that would open doors for him in the television world and would ultimately pave the way as he moved into production at a neighboring station, WCVB Channel 5.



Left: Davidow discusses careers with a Tufts student at the annual CMS networking night in November, 2007.

“It was a time of high inflation and unemployment, so I took that internship and moved into a position,” said Davidow. “It was an exciting time to move into media, a time when a lot of talented people with a lot of energy were heading into the field, and at the time Channel 5 was recognized as sort of the station of record in the region.”

It was the 1980s, an era when large market regional stations devoted greater resources to international news coverage. Within that environment, Davidow relished the opportunity to cover many of the same events for WCVB as Shapiro did for the national news.

“I produced coverage of Nelson Mandela’s visit to the U.S., the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Japanese economic miracle that was gathering a lot of coverage at the time, and Corazon Aquino’s ascendance in the Phillipines...it was a great ride,” he said. “There was also the coverage of presidential elections. During Michael Dukakis’ run in 1988, I worked on a series that followed five American families and tracked how they were responding to the election, families from different locations that took me all across the country.”

By 1990, Davidow’s role at WCVB grew into an executive producer post, with responsibilities he described as “putting out the paper, so to speak.” He remained at WCVB until 1998, returning to WBZ (which by then had become an affiliate station for CBS) as the station’s assistant news director. During his tenure at WBZ, the station’s newsroom garnered the Radio and Television News Directors Association’s Edward R. Murrow Award for Outstanding News Station of the Year for coverage of the John F. Kennedy, Jr. plane crash and the Worcester Cold Storage warehouse fire.



John Davidow

Davidow enjoyed his time in television, but after spending more than two decades in television newsrooms, felt that certain aspects started to change. He said there was a concerted effort by the industry as a whole to focus more on hyper-local coverage in lieu of more in-depth national and international news. Changes in ownership and philosophy played a part in this, he noted, but ultimately the decision to leave was a personal one, as he felt he could no longer make the impact he desired. But rather than actively seeking a change, he said, change came to him.

“I actually got a call from WBUR, and they explained to me

that they wanted to energize their local coverage,” he said. They already had a very active national programming lineup, but also needed to beef up the local newsroom.”

So far, it’s been an ideal fit. Davidow notes that, contrary to many of its media brethren, WBUR is currently in what he calls an “expansive mode,” adding staff and programming at a time when most news outlets are cutting back.

“Since I’ve been here, we’ve gone from four to eight local reporters,” he said. “We’re also pushing very hard on our Web presence and expanding our content online, where we produce multiple podcasts and some video. We’re also publishing a daily newsletter that’s sent out to over 16,000 recipients.”

Over at WNET, Shapiro is enjoying similar success. As the network’s president, he oversees a station with a viewership in excess of 8 million, and watches over a diverse slate of in-house productions, including such nationally syndicated shows as “Nature,” “Now,” “Charlie Rose,” and “Great Performances” -- the kind of acclaimed programming that has made the station a beacon for PBS.

Both Shapiro and Davidow manage hectic schedules, with each citing early mornings and a steady diet of the day’s news and information in preparation for each shift. But despite their commitments, they remain closely tied to CMS, and find time to contribute frequently to the program’s periodic lectures and events. Both took the stage at Tufts together last year, for instance, to take part in a special forum dubbed “The Future of Public Broadcasting.”

“We’ve hosted the Burke fellowship (see page 10-11 for details), and we’ve had a number of Tufts students who have interned or worked in a freelance model,” said Davidow.

“I’m so delighted to work with CMS,” added Shapiro. “I think it’s the secret weapon that Tufts has -- you can pick up a lot through the program for what it takes to be a good journalist.”



Above: Shapiro enjoys a laugh after receiving the Tufts University P.T. Barnum Award. This year’s ceremony was held in New York City.

CMS guest speakers for Fall 2008

Each semester CMS lines up a diverse schedule of guest speakers for the various courses it sponsors.

This fall included the following lineup:

Brian Jones, editor, *The Providence Journal*

September 18

Stacey Kabat, co-founder, Battered Women Fighting Back!

September 23

Judy Richardson, senior producer for Northern Lights Productions

September 25

Peter Levine, director of CIRCLE

September 29

Andrea Ranger, Somerville Climate Action

September 29

Lori Fresina, M&R Strategic Services

October 6

Sandy Hessler, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government

October 20

Nicole Riales, coordinator, Shape Up Somerville

October 27

Anthony Everett (A84), co-anchor, WCVB Channel 5 Boston, and co-host of "Chronicle"

November 3

Kay Carson, MassRIDES

November 3

Stephen Wilmarth, president and managing director of New School Ambassadors Inc.

November 24

Mindy Nierenberg, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service

December 1

Tony Benis (A79), founder and president, Synergy Media Partners

December 8

Film Screenings and Special Events - Fall 2008

"The Virtual Horse Race: Presidential Campaign Advertising and the New Media"

October 1

Panelists: Professor Jeffrey Berry, Tufts University Department of Political Science; Harold Kaplan, Republican advertising strategist; Dorie Clark, Clark Strategic Communications and former communications director for Howard Dean's presidential campaign; and Mark Tomizawa, president and CEO of SMASH Marketing.

"Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision"

October 23

"War, Inc."

October 29

"Shades of Ray"

November 20

"Producing Films for Social Change" — An evening of student films

December 9

Four student-produced films, dealing with African refugees, Somerville's Honkfest, Tourette's Syndrome and street art. These films were developed during the fall semester by students studying **Producing Films for Social Change** through the Tisch College Media and Public Service Program (MPS) in partnership with the Communications and Media Studies Program. Film titles and brief descriptions are listed below.

"Falling Through the Cracks: Mapendo and Africa's Forgotten Refugees" — Many slots for resettlement in the United States for refugees are not filled because the United Nations is overwhelmed by the current wars and displacement in Africa. UN refugee camps are places of despair and sometimes the sites of massacres. A Tufts alum started an organization to help the refugees that have fallen through the cracks and are not served by the UN. The film features some of the refugees that Mapendo has brought to the U.S. and explores the role that nonprofit organizations can play in alleviating the suffering of people devastated by war and conflict. Producers: David Axelrod, Alison Fisk, Jeremy Hirsch.

"HONK! No Noise is Illegal" — The Honkfest, held every year in Somerville and Cambridge, is an explosion of music, dance, pageantry and politics. This documentary explores the relationship between music and political expression and shows the deep need we all have to express our concerns about the economy, the environment and other social issues through music and art. Producers: Sara DeForest, Deborah Neigher, Jane Ottensmeyer, Chloe Zimmerman.

"Tourette's: What Makes You Tic?" — Marc Elliot just graduated from college and has a complex form of Tourette's Syndrome. He makes sounds and says words that he cannot control. This year he has embarked on a tour to talk about how his behavior challenges people's tolerance and what we can learn from that. Producers: Alison Barash, Julie Bourque, Lily Safran, Megan Terraforte.

"The Art of Delinquency" — Today's generation of artists sees street art and tagging as their form of expression. It is available free to the public and much of it is designed to provoke comment and discussion. However, building owners and the police see it as a felony. Producers: Andrea Abarca, Charlotte Huffman, Moon Kim, Ariana McLean and Nabila Santa Cristo.