

Communications: Potential unlimited

A job with growth potential...

Grassroots News, N.W. — The field of communication is one career with infinite possibilities for the 1983 graduate. This is the conclusion reached by KXL news reporter, Michelle Gerald. "Being a news reporter is my career. It is something in which I can continue to grow and progress. This is what makes it a career. It's a career where you aren't expected to do the same kind of job for the rest of your life. I can learn new techniques and constantly improve."

A career in communication affords its members opportunities as vast as the universe. "You never know where this medium will take you. It takes you through a lot of different modes. I had never planned to be in radio, and here I am. I had never even planned to be an "On Air" person. I felt I could be content with just being behind the scenes and making it work from there. I really never had planned to be in news. So, there is no telling where I could be five years from now. I could be editor of a newspaper or an anchor with NBC news. Those aren't things that I'm planning to shoot for, but they could happen. Right now, I'm satisfied with radio."

KXL is an all news radio station, A.M. 750 and F.M. 95. "What we have are news blocks and for a good four hours it's just news. At other times it is information — blocks of interviews for the public's information."

What kinds of stories does Ms. Gerald cover? "A little bit of everything! I cover some political issues like decisions made by the County Commissioners and City officials or a press release by some group who is angry at the Public Utility Commissioner. And even some kids at a playground who decided to send little messages in balloons in hopes a pen pal writes them back. It is a wide variety of people and issues." Currently, Michelle Gerald is working on a story about a new organization that will try to educate the public about Indians' treaties.

She says her professionalism keeps her from getting too involved in her stories. "Sometimes it is hard when I cover issues and events that



Michelle Gerald on the air...

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

hit close to home. Occasionally, I might cover a story and if I were in the audience I would have a different attitude about this person. The information given and the way it is presented may be racist and sexist. As a reporter, I can just ask so many questions and they can keep giving me the same answers. If I was a spectator, I would leave with the impression that this person doesn't know what he or she is talking about." Gerald says this doesn't happen too often.

News communication is developing, technologically speaking, at an ever increasing rate. What forte should the youth of '83 develop to prepare themselves for a slot in this

profession? "A heavy concentration is needed on English, language and writing. Regardless of how many fancy tape recorders, satellites or production equipment, it is still important for our youth to learn to read and write. They could be getting these skills reinforced if parents would help. I, myself, believe that one teacher with thirty kids with different values and attitudes can just do so much. Especially when those kids come home and watch TV all day. If the parent is not going to push them to get some reading done, or take them to the library, a child can only do so much. Both sides need to reevaluate what they are supposed to be doing and go

from there."

What are her future plans? "My future plans are to become a good news reporter. I want to be able to go into an interview and come out with all the information there was to get, to conduct an interview where the subject is at ease, and to write it so the public can understand and learn from it."

Ms. Gerald highly recommends a career in communications. "It is a lot of hard work. Glamor is a weird word to use for this kind of business because news can sometimes be so harsh. It never stops. I put in ten hours a day; when I go home I still watch the news. I have become an information junkie. This is good

because when you ask people questions, you want to base your information on many different sources."

Her advice to the graduating class of '83 is to take whatever profession they choose seriously. "If you are a communicator your purpose is to let people know what's going on. If you are serious about that purpose you will progress faster than a person who thinks he will do good in front of a camera. It is not that hard to learn because you are right in the midst of it. I also recommend any type of job in communication as a stepping stone in your career. You learn as you go and if you stick with it you will always improve. Just don't ever give up!"

Technical writers

With the advent of technological innovations in communications, technical writers are needed so that scientific and technical information can be readily understood. They research, write and edit technical material. Also, they may produce publications or audio-visual materials.

Command of the language and versatility of style are tools of the trade that enable technical writers to convey information in a way that is helpful to people who use it—scientists, technicians, executives, sales representatives, and the general public. In addition to their primary function, technical writers are often involved in marketing, advertising, and public relations work.

Many technical writers prepare reports on research. By communicating research developments to other scientists, engineers and technicians, these reports help prevent duplication of effort and speed scientific and technical progress. Proposal preparation is another important duty of technical writers.

There are no rigid requirements for entry into the field. As a result, people having a variety of backgrounds find jobs as technical writers. Employers seek people whose educational background, work experience and personal pursuits indicate they possess both writing skills and appropriate scientific or technical knowledge. Knowledge of graphics and other aspects of publications production may be helpful in getting a job. An understanding of current trends in communication technology is an asset, and familiarity with computer operations and terminology is increasingly important.

For information on careers in technical writing and illustrating, contact: Society For Technical Communications, Suite 506, 815 St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

For information on careers in business communication, contact American Business Communications Assn., c/o University of Illinois, 911 South 6th St., Champaign, Ill 61820.

If you are interested in aptitude or interest tests, career or financial counseling, contact your school counselling office.

Summer School registration open now

Portland Public Schools' regular summer sessions will begin June 27, with registration materials now available through June 13 at all elementary and secondary schools.

The summer sessions, scheduled to run from four to six weeks in length, will offer basic, remedial and enriched elementary and secondary programs plus a driver-education program for high school students.

Maralyn Turner Helzer, assistant superintendent for special programs, said the six-week-long secondary session ending Aug. 5 will be held at Lincoln High, with two shop courses offered at Benson Polytechnic.

The four-week-long elementary session ending July 22 will be offered at Hollybrook Primary (kindergarten through Grade 3), Grant High (Grades 4-8) and Wilson High (K-8).

Elementary summer school hours will be 9 a.m.-noon weekdays, summer high school 8:30 a.m.-noon weekdays.

Resident and non-resident tuitions for the summer school programs are \$70 for elementary students and \$90 for secondary students. Resident and non-resident students taking classroom driver education will pay \$45, with behind-the-wheel instruction costing an additional \$40.

No tuition refunds will be made after June 29.

Further information may be obtained from the summer school office (249-2000, Ext. 212) or from neighborhood schools.

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