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Message from the Executive Director

Eight years ago, the first students entered a new school in Manchester, unsure what to expect as they began classes in journalism, photography and the First Amendment. Their teachers really didn't know what to expect either.

That inaugural class began an experiment to help realize the dream of Union Leader Publisher and President Nackey S. Loeb. She founded our school the previous autumn to encourage young writers and to foster a better understanding of the First Amendment. Mrs. Loeb died in January 2000, before the first class entered her building, but she would be proud of what she began.

Since opening, more than 2,500 people have taken part in classes, workshops and other school-sponsored or co-sponsored events such as First Amendment forums and discussions on the role of the media in the age of bloggers. The first group of faculty opened the door to instructors from New Hampshire media outlets including the New Hampshire Union Leader, the Concord Monitor, The Telegraph, New Hampshire Public Radio, WMUR-TV, The Boston Globe, The Citizen and The Associated Press.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and interest from our students, teachers now know to expect students of all ages who travel to class after a work or school day excited to learn about important topics. Students know they can expect engaged and interested teachers who are eager to share their knowledge and first-hand experience.

Our winter session includes two new courses reflecting the core changes rocking the media _ changes that are enabling anyone with a computer to join in discussing, reporting and commenting on the news that once was the domain of newspapers and radio and television stations.

In InDesign and Photoshop, teacher Debi Rapson of Desktop Training Professionals in Bedford covers the basics of the two popular photography and production programs. The course is ideal for anyone who helps produce newsletters or who would like to learn how to integrate photos and the printed word.

Also new this semester is a course to help citizen journalists, letter writers and anyone with an opinion. Columns and Blogging is being taught by Nashua Telegraph columnist and blogger Stacy Milbouer and Boston Globe columnist Tom Long. Stacy and Tom are passing along tips on writing the personal essay/columnist/blog.

Back by popular demand is Broadcasting, taught by WMUR General Manager Jeff Bartlett, Reporter Andy Hershberger, Assistant News Director Alisha McDevitt and Director of News Operations Jim Breen. While producing broadcast news stories, students are learning about where broadcast news fits in the changing world of news reporting, the technical magic behind getting the news on the air and the nuts and bolts of covering stories and writing and editing copy.

In March, we will offer our third annual "Telling Your Family Story" workshop. It's a very popular program in which award-winning story-tellers Fritz Wetherbee and John Clayton share their tips on gathering and telling stories. The program also will offer students instruction in research, preserving family photos and documents and telling the story on video. See our Workshops and Classes section for more details.

And in April, we'll present our first Public Speaking workshop with Instructor Andrea Bard from Southern New Hampshire University.

More new programs are in the works, so stay tuned.

We invite all members of the public to take advantage of our classes and workshops or to stop in for a visit. (Just call ahead first). Most classes are free of charge. Workshops have a modest registration fee.

See you at class!!

David Tirrell-Wysocki
Executive Director