

Student journalists bring new perspective

Being a student newspaper journalist can be a lonely experience these days.

Your classmates draw most of their news and information from the Internet and television. They have little idea where it all comes from before it enters the maze of Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube.

A newspaper? A reporter? Many students don't think about those institutions or people when they're scrolling their iPhones or learning about politics from humorist Jon Stewart.

"My friends don't seem to know what I do and what journalism is all about," says Kyle Yasumiishi, editor of Clark College's student newspaper *The Independent*.

Gordon Oliver

Strictly Business



Those are hard words for veteran journalists to hear, yet they are hardly surprising. Our world's been changing for a long time. But we can hope that even as the sources of news become blurred in the digital world, people still understand the important role journalists play in informing them.

Yasumiishi, a 19-year-old Clark College sophomore and Union High School graduate, is among the young people who still dream of entering the challenging profession. He likes to find stories and then paint a picture with words to make them interesting and understandable. Other student journalists at Clark feel the same way, yet they worry about what work they might find in the industry beyond college.

I recently met Kyle and other staff members of *The Independent* at the newspaper's office on the Clark College campus. Cami Joner, a business reporter at *The Columbian*, joined me to talk with the students about a journalistic collaboration between our publications.

Here's our arrangement: *The Independent*'s writers will report and write business-related stories that will be of interest to readers of both newspapers. We'll edit those stories at *The Columbian*, and both papers will run the stories on the same day. *The Independent* is published every other Wednesday during the school year, so readers of *The Columbian* can expect student-written stories on most or all of those days. The student writers also are discussing writing at least one other set of stories just for *The Columbian*.

The collaboration began last week with a story about plans for a new science, technology, engineering and math building on the Clark campus. It gives students an opportunity to work with news professionals and brings more readers to their work. *The Columbian*'s readers benefit from stories by young writers with fresh story ideas. At our meeting, we talked about ideas for stories about business, careers, and money management; deadlines and editing logistics, and — of course — the state of journalism in the future.

The college newsroom brought back memories of my own time as a college newspaper journalist, in an era when words were pounded out on typewriters and photographers produced black-and-white photos from film in a darkroom. Print had no rival in those days — we sneered at the quality of television news. Ambitious, talented journalists plotted career paths from small-town dailies to the few metropolitan dailies offering decent salaries.

These days, there are fewer print jobs at both ends of the scale, but new opportunities as our industry adapts with improved online and smartphone products and new digital outlets compete for audiences. After all, people have yearned for information and stories since the beginning of time. Yasumiishi and journalists of his generation just need to figure out how to get their attention.

Mutually beneficial

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