Failed at Physics, Successful in Publishing?

Allie Bochicchio, Editorial Intern

Editor's Note: Allie is our summer intern, and I asked her to write us an essay on the experience for us.

While a student at Susquehanna University for the past 3 years I have often had reservations regarding my decision to major in creative writing. The inevitable question ‘What am I going to do with my degree?’ has been on my mind more intensely as I approach my senior year. Many of my peers in the writing program will be prepping their portfolios this year and applying to graduate schools in hopes of pursuing their MFA’s in prestigious writers’ workshops like the University of Iowa’s, with the ultimate goal of getting published. At one time, I guess that was my ultimate goal too.

My sophomore year, I took a class called Editing and Publishing, which focused on literary magazines. We learned to use InDesign and editor’s marks and I realized I wanted to be an editor, a career that seemed to be a good fit for the skills I was learning in my major. That year, my professor took us to New York City to tour the offices of Random House and I discovered what kind of editor I wanted to be: a book editor. Despite my newfound conviction, there was still deep-seeded uncertainty nagging at me: a biology major becomes a doctor; a business major goes into business; an education major becomes a teacher; an engineering major becomes an engineer. A creative writing major becomes unemployed?

When I’m at home on breaks my dad usually tries in various ways to bolster my confidence, convince me I will find a job after graduation, and show me the broad range of options before me. He often sends me links to articles and brings home glossy publications he receives at work like annual reports and industry magazines. My dad tells me over and over he just wants for me to see the great writing and editorial opportunities beyond publishing houses and the typical popular magazines and newspapers. After working for ECN this summer as an editorial intern. I have to admit he’s right.

In my senior year of high school I had minimal success in physics class fashioning a cocoon-like enclosure to protect the egg which would be dropped 50 ft from the science wing’s highest stairwell (The first egg broke. The second egg only sustained a small crack to give me at least a passing grade). I completely failed at

building a contraption made of mousetraps, string, Velcro, and empty thread spools that could propel itself up a ramp while pushing a ball as well. Upon arriving here at ECN I rediscovered dreaded words like ohms, conductors, voltage, and current.

The press releases I was to edit into new product pieces to be posted on the ECN website were indeed daunting. And at first, my new products would come back to me with red cross-outs glaring at me on the computer screen. But as I've practiced and gotten to understand some of the products, it has become much easier writing about them.

I was able to learn how important the magazine and the new products section in particular are to readers by doing reader calls. Some of you may have been graced with a phone call by me, a lowly editorial intern. I really thank those of you who answered my reader poll and/or didn't hang up on me. Making cold calls is always an enlightening and challenging experience. I learned while many readers are very loyal to the magazine, they just don't view our website. In the age of technology, I must say it is somewhat comforting to know that people still enjoy getting their information from something they can hold in their hands and turn the page. However, I hope more readers will see how much the online content has to offer.

As my first experience in publishing, this has been a good introduction into what I can expect. Working at ECN has convinced me that there will be a future for me in publishing once I graduate. And even though I couldn't propel mousetraps up a ramp, I can write about electronic components.

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