Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism offers Certificate in Narrative Journalism

By Sarah Perry

Good journalism means good writing and good writing will likely rescue print journalism as will good storytelling, taught at UNT’s The Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism. The school offers a Graduate Certificate in Narrative Journalism – something a little different from what other schools are doing.

Prof. George Getschow, lecturer in journalism at UNT, said no other journalism program in the United States offers this certificate. He believes narrative writing will attract readers back to the industry.

Narrative allows writers to tell the story through the subject’s eye, to let the reader experience the story as it happened, piece by piece. Many newspapers get hung up on the inverted pyramid and forget the art of storytelling, he said. Because the industry is in such a bind right now, good writing is exactly the kind of medicine so many news outlets need.

This spring, Getschow is teaching Narrative Writing at the Universities Center at Dallas, and professionals such as Dave Tarrant, the narrative writer for the Dallas Morning News, and Quinton Crenshaw, a public relations manager for JC Penney, are enrolled.

Tarrant said narrative writing allows him to write about “real people,” and is taking the courses to enhance his writing.

“It felt like the perfect fit,” he said. “I can see how the graduate certificate… will have an immediate impact on my

Mayborn Magazine success continues

By Elise Brooking

Mayborn magazine celebrates its second year this spring, churning along at full speed.

The graduate class, taught by Cathy Booth Thomas (former bureau chief and writer for TIME magazine) and produced by students in the Mayborn School of Journalism, offers students the possibility of their bylines getting published alongside renowned professional writers.

About a year ago, the idea of a student-run publication took root in the mind of journalism lecturer George Getschow.

Preparations were in swing for the annual Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference, and Getschow remembers thinking how the Mayborn name was becoming a brand throughout the working world.

The Mayborn School was already producing

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Welcome to the Mayborn, Julie and Jo Ann!

We are delighted to welcome Jo Ann Ballantine and Julie Scharnberg to the Mayborn School family. Jo Ann Ballantine is now Program Coordinator for the Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism. She holds a graduate degree in Journalism and recently completed the graduate program in UNT’s School of Library and Information Sciences. Jo Ann is thrilled to be employed by her alma mater and hopes to make a significant contribution to Journalism’s blueprint for the future. Jo Ann is active in her church, Denton Benefit League, and with various community projects. The people in her life are husband, Roy Busby and five grandchildren, plus a dozen nieces and nephews with whom Jo Ann has learned to text!

Julie Scharnberg, the new Mayborn Administrative Assistant, comes to the program from the Greater Denton Arts Council. A proud graduate of the University of Iowa, Julie has made Denton her home for 25 years. Julie was a free-lance professional musician and mother of two busy children who are now responsible thriving adults. She has donated many hours to volunteering in the community – the Denton public schools, Keep Denton Beautiful and her latest endeavor, Music Theatre of Denton. Julie is happy to be at the Mayborn and finds working with the students, staff and faculty at UNT an incredible experience.

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Cover, a magazine with a similar student-run concept. However, with a desire to move forward on the Mayborn brand, Dr. Land retired Cover magazine, and Mayborn magazine emerged, carrying the namesake of the school and the conference.

Certainly the primary focus is the success of the Mayborn students.

“That was the quest – we want our students to rise to the level of the finest nonfiction storytellers of the century,” Getschow said. “Dr. Land [Mayborn Director and Department Chair] wants to attract the finest students.”

The concept for a student-centered magazine that featured the likes of professional writers such as Bob Shacochis and Ken Wells came to life. And just like that, the Advanced Magazine Production class was born.

Cathy Booth Thomas, instructor for the class, is looking forward to what the future has to offer.

“I hope we go twice yearly. A second issue – open it up and make it a lively forum for all – all writers who want to tell a story. Specifically, give it a southwestern voice, which is underserved by the New York-centric media.”

Getschow notes the importance of Mayborn magazine.

“We are creating a publication that rivals other schools,” he said. “Year after year, we’re getting winning students published. It’s pretty exciting.”

Classes are held at the Universities Center in Dallas. The class hone students’ writing abilities as well as fine-tunes their design skills, laying out pages with the latest InDesign software.

The next issue of Mayborn is expected to come out this spring and can be purchased online at www.themayborn.com or at The Mayborn Graduate School, GAB 207.

NARRATIVE CERTIFICATE
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job at the News.”

Getschow said the best part of the classes is that students and professionals are working together, collaborating in the same setting. Dianna Wray, Mayborn Scholar, and journalism graduate student, said she’s excited to be in the same classroom with real-world journalists.

“It’s great to be able to learn it from people who write really well,” she said. “And you’re working with someone who’s actually doing it and still learning.”

Wray thinks that narrative writing is what so many newspapers are missing, noting that “Narrative is the future for journalism,” she said.

Getschow agrees.

“The differences between writing a news story, fiction and narrative are the differences between running, walking and sprinting,” Getschow said. “We’ve created a culture of storytelling that didn’t exist before in the Southwest.”

Other courses included in the certificate are Magazine Writing and Publishing, Advanced Reporting Techniques, Literary Journalism, Advanced Feature Writing and Writing, Editing and Publishing for the Literary Market. Publishing for the Literary Market is scheduled for this Maymester.

All certificate credits will transfer to a master’s degree.

For more information, contact the Mayborn Graduate School at 940-565-4564.
Students write and design for Denton Live

By Rebecca Hoeffner

Mayborn students dived headfirst into the world of magazine journalism last semester producing Denton Live, the magazine featuring events and activities in Denton from cover to cover. Students wrote stories, took photographs and designed layouts for the magazine with a circulation of 80,000.

Previously, the magazine was produced by American Airlines Publishing for the Denton Convention and Visitors Bureau. Now the talent that produces the magazine are students who earn class credit and gain great experience at the same time.

“Local production means we support local business keeping in line with our goal of shopping Denton first,” said Kim Phillips, vice president for the Denton CVB.

The class was taught by long-time magazine veteran, Cathy Booth Thomas (former bureau chief and writer for TIME magazine).

“Denton Live is what we call a two-fer,” said Thomas. “The magazine is now written, edited and printed completely in Denton, benefiting the local business and arts community. But in addition, thanks to the involvement of The Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism at UNT, we’re training the next generation of journalists in a real-world crucible, requiring lively writing to attract readers, fact-checking for accuracy, and a deadline that meant we’d face financial consequences if we failed to meet it. We did!”

“The launch of Denton Live magazine set a new precedent,” Dr. Mitchell Land, Journalism Chair and Director of the Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism at UNT said.

“Working on Denton Live gives the students a chance to do something meaningful for the City of Denton while at the same time learning about many of the events and activities Denton has to offer.”

The magazine project provides students with hands-on production opportunities in publishing including design, storytelling, interviewing and photography, all of which meets a curriculum goal of measurable outcomes.

Jayme Rutledge, a Mayborn graduate student who took the course in the fall, was happy to be a part of this opportunity.

“The class provides what graduate students need most –real world experience. The big bonus for me was being able to add a professional clip to my portfolio at the end of the semester. All in all, Denton Live is a necessary class for any student planning to take on the magazine industry.”

December Graduates!

Suzanne Emile Desmond Rice
Ellen Rossetti Marie Williams

Congratulations from the Mayborn!
Michael J. Mooney writes about the people and places that populate the unseen margins of our society. A former Mayborn Scholar and student of George Getschow’s, he once took a series of prostitutes out on “all American” dates to places like the bowling alley, a miniature golf course, and ice cream parlor, and wrote about the horrifying stories that comprise their daily lives. During his reporting, he has lived in a bed bug-infested homeless shelter for addicts, crashed with depraved college Spring Breakers, and mingled with real life blood-drinking vampires. While at The Dallas Morning News, he carved out a beat that consisted of punk-rock evangelicals, gay rugby players, stand-up comedy, classical music, and a Klingon prom. He won 2008 Florida Press Club awards for Best Sports Writing and Best Health Writing, as well as honors from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association. In 2006 Mooney won the Hearst Newspapers Nonfiction Award for Literary Excellence for a story about the improbable dreams of the women working in a rundown Fort Worth strip club. His writing has appeared in Condé Nast Portfolio, D Magazine, Associated Press and other newspapers, magazines and literary journals. One of Mooney’s narratives published in D Magazine, The Day Kennedy Died, will appear in the 2009 anthology, The Best American Crime Reporting, edited by Jeffrey Toobin. Mooney is a staff writer at New Times, a Village Voice Media alt-weekly based in Fort Lauderdale.

“I Owe Everything to the Mayborn!”
~Michael Mooney~

Mooney will be speaking at The Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference this summer with a lecture title ‘Infiltrating Subterranean Subcultures: Getting in good with those seedy groups your mother warned you about.’