By Mike Mooney

As the fierce July sun began to set, strangers arrived one by one at an empty hotel in Archer City. The strangers, 18 in total, were all students in George Getschow’s Literary Nonfiction class. For three weeks, the students lived, attended class and wrote at the historic Spur Hotel in the center of the small town, a two-hour drive from Dallas.

The class was a component of The Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference of the Southwest. Susan Orlean, author of *My Kind of Place* and *The Orchid Thief*, upon which the movie *Adaptation* was based, was the first keynote speaker at the conference, held at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine. She read from her works and discussed the process of writing and rewriting.

Orlean was joined by Pulitzer Prize winner Sonia Nazario, Ken Wells (*Travels with Barley*), Paul Hendrickson (*Sons of Mississippi*), Alex Kotlowitz (*There Are No Children Here*) and Gary Lavergne (*Bad Boy*), all giants in the world of literary journalism.

Hendrickson discussed drinking beer with an old, racist police officer while writing *Sons of Mississippi*. Lavergne talked about sitting across a table from Texas’ most infamous serial killer, Kenneth McDuff, only months before he was executed by the state. Wells engaged the room full of aspiring writers with the story of how he pitched a book about driving across America in search of “the perfect beer joint.”

Nazario described clinging to the top of a freight train and watching people get robbed as she researched her award-winning feature series, “Enrique’s Journey.” She told of a Honduran boy as he searched for his mother who had migrated to the United States. Nazario said she filled 110 notebooks while researching but feared for her life. “I didn’t do this story for two years because I was scared.”

Norm Pearlstine, the head of Time Inc., which publishes *TIME* magazine, *Sports Illustrated* and many other magazines, spoke frankly about the highly publicized confidential source incident that landed *The New York Times* reporter Judith Miller in jail. *Times* reporter Matt Cooper was hours away from the same fate when he announced he would testify before the grand jury.

Pearlstine said the decision to hand over Cooper’s notes, which contained the name of a confidential source, White House Senior Political Adviser Karl Rove, was not easy. His initial reaction was, “Of course we’ll resist, and of course it’ll be thrown out.” He later changed his mind.

He said that several people throughout Time knew who the source was but that Cooper still disagreed with the final decision. “We live in a different world than the 70s,” Pearlstine said. “Neither the *Washington Post* nor its reporters were ever subpoenaed over [Watergate].”

Each student in Getschow’s Archer City class was matched up with a successful writer at the conference. The students sat with the authors during the speeches and ate dinner with them in the evenings.

An eclectic group ranging in age from 22...
I became interested in broadcast journalism while studying at the Mayborn. I knew I didn’t want to be on TV, but the more I learned about the role of a producer, the more I became interested in this form of media.

When I started looking for a television internship, I applied at TV stations and magazines all over the country. Last November, I sent off a resume and an essay to FOX News Channel saying why I wanted to be a future news professional and why they should pick me for their program. In February, they called me and scheduled an interview, and by April, I was making plans to move to the Big Apple.

I was assigned to work on the Big Story with John Gibson. Since I had specified in the interview that I wanted to be a producer, the majority of my day-to-day duties revolved around that goal. I booked guests, did research for Gibson and my senior producer, Chris Lemire, and greeted any guests who came to the New York studio.

The most exciting part of the day-to-day work was sitting in on the morning editorial meetings and pitching story ideas. I was able to improve my news judgment that way, and eventually they took a few of my suggestions.

Probably the scariest part, at least in the beginning, was having to call important people, like senators and famous authors, and actually convince them to be on the show without sounding like a moron.

All of the interns attended weekly seminars. We had FOX News CEO Roger Ailes, Shepard Smith, Neil Cavuto, Judge Andrew Napolitano and Rick Leventhal speak, among others. It’s always beneficial to hear about the personal experiences of professionals in the business, and I felt fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from people who are undoubtedly the best of the best.

My advice for someone looking for an internship is something Advanced Reporting Techniques professor Dan Malone told me last year. When I asked him the same question, he said, “Hitch your wagon to a star. You’ll never get anywhere by thinking small.”

Dear Nancy,

What advice do you have for students looking for an internship?

Ask Nancy

Nancy Eanes, Career Specialist, left, Ryan Rhodes ('05), right

Sending out packets cold to potential employers usually won’t help land that important interview. Competition is stiff. Some companies get up to 1,500 resumes and cover letters per day.

- Use your network. Faculty, alumni and students are potential network resources. Having a name will usually help open the door to an interviewer.
- Spend time on the phone. Call potential employers and introduce yourself before sending your packet.
- Or use email to make the introductions. Then send your packet. Follow up with a phone call.

Job fairs allow you to meet folks in your industry. Joining professional organizations helps determine where the jobs and internships are.

Get to know your professors. When you’re asked to supply letters of reference this final piece of advice is critical. Professors will gladly write letters to those students who have gone the extra pica.

Send your questions to Nancy Eanes, Career Development Specialist for the Mayborn Institute, at neanes@unt.edu or (940) 565-4778.
to 56, the budding writing community explored Archer City, the hometown of Texas’ most prolific author, Larry McMurtry. McMurtry, author of Lonesome Dove, The Last Picture Show, Terms of Endearment and Texasville, no longer resides in the town that inspired much of his work, but his stamp on the town is obvious.

McMurtry owns an enormous antiquarian bookstore there that fills four storefronts. Booked Up Inc. is the largest used bookstore in America and houses more than 400,000 books with prices starting as low as $5 and peaking in the thousands of dollars.

Mitch Land, Mayborn Director, selected the Archer City site for the course because of the bookstores and the town’s status as a literary haven. Getschow, the conference writer in residence, said, “We’re really trying to create tomorrow’s generation of Larry McMurtrys.”

“You can feel his presence,” said journalism senior Brantley Hargrove. For Hargrove and several others, the class inspired new career paths. Most of the pieces produced for the class will be anthologized in the first Mayborn Literary Review. The title of the first review’s issue, Spurs of Inspiration, references the nights students and teacher spent discussing creative nonfiction on the front porch of the Spur Hotel.
Real Music Now

By: Tricia Dameron

Recent Mayborn graduate Christiana Onita joined DoveDirect International Radio as program director and production manager in July.

Her voice addresses the globe via short-wave radio and Internet. She is looking for interns, but for now, she is the radio station.

Upon being hired, her responsibility was to build the station. Because of her past jobs and internships, she is versatile and experienced.

“This is my first real job and every single internship that I’ve had has gone into this somehow. Everything from PR, putting together brochures, production and being on air - I understand every aspect of how this works.” At a previous internship with the Dallas Cowboys, she had worked with Internet radio and learned the manual equipment.

“I really learned it from the backend. There was no automation system,” she said, “so I had to do everything by hand.”

She always thought that she would be the on-air personality, so she did not foresee doing her own editing. But she enjoys doing it now except that she has her hands quite full.

The Broadcast I class was her first foray into the radio field, and she learned she had a natural voice for radio.

“I didn’t even like radio until I got to North Texas.”

Her pet project at DoveDirect is Real Music Now, which is broadcast on radio and television. Onita creates a relaxed atmosphere for new musicians to talk about their music, play samples and take calls. At the end of her show, Onita asks the guests to talk about whatever is on their mind. The position gives her liberty to experiment with what works and what could be better.

“I always wanted to be in a position where I would have creative liberty. In this situation, it is a little more entertainment-based and more opportunities come to me. Where else would I have the freedom to create my own show?”