

Capitol Weekly Summer 08

Coming to Sacramento I wanted to work for a fast paced daily paper because I've interned for small weekly papers before and wanted a different experience. When I got here and was informed of the course expectations I felt as if a daily would be overwhelming and opted to work for a weekly, Capitol Weekly.

Interning at Capitol Weekly was nothing I expected. Other weekly papers I've interned for mostly used me for tasks that other staff members did not want to do. However at Capitol Weekly I was able to get a more hands on experience.

My first day at Capitol Weekly I was thrown into a story without even expecting it. The day before I started I received a phone call asking me to research a press release. The next day I was sent to the Capitol to listen and interview people at a press conference about building a toll road over a national park. When I got back to the office I was told to write a 300 word piece on the press conference. After getting a few more quotes the story became bigger than expected. After five hours of my first day I had written a 700 word story that was published on the front page of the B-Section. Then I was sent to the governor's office to take photos of him and his cabinet discussing what to do with last year's bond money.

The following week I was sent a press release on the reopening of Lake Davis. Again, the story was supposed to be about 300 words but turned out to be another front page 700 word piece. This story is significant to me because it was the turning point of realizing what makes a good story. Writing for the other weeklies at home, was more on the lines of writing reviews than hard news stories. This story I realized what makes a news story and what captures the audience.

The next few weeks were not as exciting as the first two because I had caught a cold and was continually sent home by John Howard. I really felt horrible about going home because I knew that my time here was limited and wanted to make the best of my internship here. In any case John wouldn't let me work and sent me home.

The last week I was able to work with John on breaking a story about a rule change in the 30 day waiting policy after a bill is introduced in the assembly. It was exciting to write a story no one really new about and the whole experience of being on the forefront of information in a world of high speed information exchange was really exciting.

All in all, my internship experience was one of a life time. I've never had the chance to work with such a dynamic team. Learning from experienced beat reporters is something that I will carry with me throughout my career. Although I was extremely intimidated in the beginning, the staff's guidance and support gave me the confidence I needed.