

# Student editors visit *New York Times* college conference

by Jonathan Pappalardo

*News Editor*

Prior to March 19-21, I had never been to New York City (except to drive through it once on my way to a connecting flight). I had an idea of what it would be like but the city far exceeded my expectations. In town for a conference at *The New York Times* with Ashley Finethy and Professor Donna Berghorn, I was able to take a whirlwind tour of the city that never sleeps.

We visited The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Television and Radio; both were insightful and offered opportunities to gain a much needed cultural experience. The Egyptian Exhibit at the MET offers a wonderful look into the rich history of one of the most fascinating countries in the world.

At the Television and Radio Museum, Professor Berghorn had us watch the famous episode of "The Twilight Zone" entitled "Time Enough At Last," starring legendary actor Burgess Meredith as a man who loves to read. Although he is forbidden from doing so, after sneaking into the vault of the bank where he works, he hears an explosion: the H-Bomb. He escapes as the last living being and finds the books he so desperately desires in the rubble of the town library. Just as he goes to read, his glasses, (the sole producer of his sight), fall and shatter. He now has all the time in the world to read and cannot see. It's a very powerful episode that everyone should see at least once in their lives. Take it from me, "Time Enough At Last" is the most haunting 24 minutes you will ever spend watching television.

Other places of interest included visiting The World Trade Center site, seeing The Statue of Liberty standing watch over the harbor, and seeing the New York Stock Exchange- a modest building for a place that holds the American Economy within its walls.

The highlight of the trip was getting the opportunity to go "Inside the Times." Each spring *The New York Times* hosts a conference where young minds and aspiring journalists gather to soak up whatever secret may give them the edge in this highly competitive business. Sponsored by The Council of Independent Colleges, of which Colby-Sawyer is a member, the conference is a day long workshop consisting of speakers that represent various positions at *The Times* giving advice about the world of print journalism.

I learned that aspiring journalists have to be able to write well and fast. Also, an intense curiosity about the world is a must, as are foreign language skills. But the most surprising was the value of a liberal arts background over a journalism degree. I have always felt that knowing a broad and far-reaching amount of knowledge proves more beneficial because it means that you have some modicum of culture.

They started off the day honing the point that government cannot ignore people if they are informed. That is what I love about news, the ability to not only stay informed yourself but also to inform inquiring minds about the world around them. Informing people is one of the most important aspects of being a journalist.

The most useful and entertaining speaker of the day was Don Hecker, Director of The New York Times Student Journalism Institute. He led

us in a two-hour workshop where we tried our hands at both copy editing and headline writing. Hecker also gave us extremely useful handouts that will be given out to all *Courier* writers in semesters to come.

The conference inspired me to make my writing better and cemented just how fortunate the newspaper staff is here at Colby-Sawyer. Finethy and I got talking to a couple of women from Pennsylvania who said that at the start of each semester the number of interested writers is great, but that the interest dwindles as the semester progresses. The two women often write around six articles a piece just to get the issue out on time. It sounds like a lot, but they do not put out issues with the frequency that we do. As of March 20, their last issue was released around Valentine's Day.

Sometimes it takes experiencing the world outside of Colby-Sawyer to realize just how lucky we are. We have a great staff of not just writers but editors. We are doing really well and for that we should be proud. I encourage everyone to seize the opportunity, if provided for you, to go to the conference. It will end up being one of the best experiences of your college years.



Photo by donna berghorn