

# Veteran journalist talks modern media, death of print

## Conversation with PSC alumni, PNJ writer Troy Moon

By Sarah Richards

Pensacola News Journal (PNJ) writer, Troy Moon, spoke to journalism students and others, on Friday, February 10, to provide insight into the world of journalism. Moon, an alumni of Pensacola State College, wrote for *The Corsair* in the eighties back when stories were written on a word processing machine.

Moon has written for the Pensacola News Journal (PNJ) for a quarter of a century. His first beat there was entertainment news and reviews, or what he calls “cool writing.”

While, niche journalism and boutique journalism are becoming more popular, Moon believes that within 20 years the press will be available mainly in a digital format.

Headlines will become increasingly important as websites get paid per click. “You got web pages that look the same all day, you’re in trouble....we’re adding new information all day long. Even the same story will get updated, always being reconditioned to reflect the latest facts.”

The newspaper business never sleeps. “You’re always on call, twenty-four hours; I eat when I can; I’ll be home when I can; circles under my eyes are called deadlines.”

Moon has his decompression tools: “I started playing guitar at 53, that’s how I kinda mellow out.”

Moon gave perspective, advising that in today’s journalism you don’t often get a chance to “love your story” before moving on to the next one. The PNJ, for example looks for more straight news pieces and less commentary.

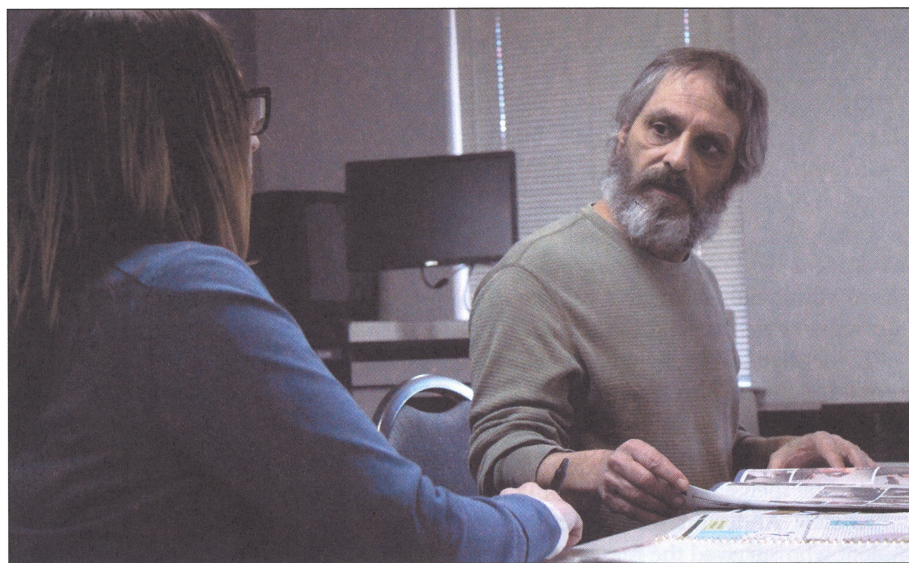
“Pure writers,” said Moon, “[if] you like caressing words, making them shine—write a book, write a screenplay, write your own thing.”

However, it is through feature writing that Moon feels you really get to know the motives of people. “I’ve done a million little stories, that aren’t ground-shaking, but they can affect one or two people in a positive way. Those are the kinds of stories that I like to do,” said Moon.

With all the talk of “fake news,” Moon’s admonition is simply, “Don’t get your news from Facebook. I remember the Walter Cronkite days. Those were people you trusted.

“If you expose yourself to a lot of stuff, you’ll be able to filter out what’s not true. Get a balance of material.”

Moon finds information gathering to be the hardest part of his job, but if



Becca Carlson interviews Troy Moon about his thoughts on being a journalist in the modern age.

PHOTO BY SEAN MINTON

he has the facts, he can string together a story. “You have to write fast,” said Moon. “We call it the paragraph factory—we’re cranking it out.”

Moon feels that to work as a journalist, you have to know how to take photos, as well as shoot, edit, and produce. You can’t just be a “one-trick pony.” Multi-skilled is the new multi-tasking.

One piece of advice he gives to

burgeoning journalists: “Anytime you can break down a big topic to a local level, it’s always best.

“If I had known in the eighties what I know now, I probably would’ve gone into the priesthood, but I like girls too much,” said Moon. Even those who may disagree with Moon’s commentary would probably be glad he didn’t.

# Volunteer: Head Start program for preschoolers, parents

By Sarah Richards



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXBAY

Head Start (HS) is a preschool program for pregnant mothers, and for homeless, foster or children of

low-income families. HS helps children grow physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

Additional services are offered for children with special needs. Schools are in 17 different locations, and transportation is provided to some children. Nutritious breakfasts and lunches are included, along with a daily dose of indoor and outdoor play.

HS prepares children for kindergarten and helps parents nurture that readiness at home. Teams of social workers serve as advocates for parents when it comes to nutrition, healthcare and interacting with teachers and pediatricians.

For parents, educational and career goals are provided, and a plan is mapped out. HS also refers to other services and alters parents to career opportunities. Furthermore, HS assists parents with resume skills, job interview tips, and at times, may even offer aid to help them obtain their GED, the last requirement

one must fulfill if they want to pursue a college degree. Parents can also volunteer in their child’s classroom.

“One of the staples of HS is that involvement piece,” says Crystal Scott. “The most important thing is seeing that progression.”

There are many ways students can volunteer. An early childhood education major could participate in the literature program, Reading Pals, in which a volunteer reads to a child in a cubby during school hours, giving that one-on-one time.

There are social work internships, event coordinator positions and even guest speaker spots for those who would like to advocate for the program.

Health screenings for vision, hearing, hemoglobin (to screen for lead), blood pressure and body mass index are also offered.

“Whenever you see a child who’s failed their hemoglobin, and then see

them pass the next time, it’s a great feeling because you know that HS is helping them grow. It’s nice to see those measurable things. I’m glad I chose to come here for my preceptorship and have thoroughly enjoyed it. It’s a different experience than the hospital and the kids are so stinkin’ cute,” said Shannon Hyatt, a nursing student.

“Having nursing students helps tremendously to meet deadlines,” says Scott, because 955 kids have to be processed in 45 days. This is just one of the many examples of how volunteers can help the organization save money, as for every dollar in government funding that HS receives, they must make twenty percent back through discounts from vendors, donations of school supplies and book donations for drives.

Those interested in volunteering can contact Crystal Scott at [c.scott@capc-pensacola.org](mailto:c.scott@capc-pensacola.org), or call 850-432-2992 ext. 446.