

The Red and Black Newspaper

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Hot Off the Press

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The Red & Black is W&J's own newspaper organization that was founded in 1909. Student-based, the organization is responsible for producing its own content, photos, and layout. The newspaper consists of five main sections : News, Opinions, Arts, Campus, and Sports. All sections are designed to present the student body with new and interesting information that is related to the college campus. The newspaper continues to strive for excellence, and in 2005, the Society of Professional Journalists named the Red & Black one of the "best overall nondaily student newspapers in the northeast in 2005."

The group holds staff meetings every Wednesday in the Red & Black office in the Rossin Campus Center. Staff meetings give the students a chance to share information, assign stories, and collaborate on new ideas. To encourage writer's participation and success, meetings always begin by awarding the "Red & Blacker of the Week," who has recently shown outstanding membership, either through writing a popular article, or taking on more responsibility within the organization. The Editor-in-Chief awards the winner with a press hat to wear for the rest of the meeting.

All section editors are given a chance to assign their stories for the week. To aid in this process, most section editors forward their assignments to an e-mail list-serve of staff members days before the meetings. This way, writers who want specific articles are able to claim them in advance, reach sources sooner, and produce more successful articles. All articles that remain unassigned must be assigned to writers during the Thursday meetings. For this reason, staff meetings are mandatory for both writers and section editors.

Though the Red & Black is constantly recruiting new members, the group usually has over fifteen writers, five section editors, two copy editors, one editor-in-chief, and Dale Lolley, the group advisor who is also a Sports writer for The Observer-Reporter.

Even You Can Become A Writer

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Throughout my experience as a Red and Black staff member, I have collected some tips that have helped my writing the most. The most important ideas to keep in mind when writing a newspaper article are relatively simple: include credible sources, analyze audience as knowledgeable college students and professors, and write articles with the "layering method" of presenting most important information first. Articles that interest the writer are easiest to create, as most newspaper articles present limited background information. Sports articles require prior knowledge and sports lingo, opinions articles require arguments founded on specific events or ideas, and arts articles require an ability to critique productions. Reading a previous article from the Red & Black or any other newspaper will present a structure for the format of your article.

To create a successful article, first gather information. Talk to everyone: students, professors, townfolk. Gain a general knowledge of your subject, acquire opinions, and understand how your event came to be. Include quotes from these sources in your article. After creating your article, take time away from writing. Next, proofread your article for typos, formatting errors, and sequencing information. To be printed, all articles must be submitted by 8pm, Monday before each Thursday publication. All staff members are available for assistance through personal e-mail, and also through their office hours in the Red & Black office.

Report from the Reporter

Based on an interview with Drew Schroeder on 11/6/2007

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As a Senior at W&J, I am participating in my third semester as a writer for the Red and Black. A friend of mine invited me to a meeting one week, and I came to see what it was all about. As soon as I saw how simple it was to get involved, I decided to try writing an article as a visiting writer. After three weeks of writing articles, I was considered a staff member. I never wrote for my highschool newspaper, but catching on to the journalist style of writing wasn't very difficult.

Each article I write is unique; my writing process depends on responses from my sources. Since I am assigned most of my articles each Thursday, I try to reach my sources by Friday afternoon. That way, I catch them before they take a weekend vacation from e-mail. In my e-mails

to them, I include some questions on what I am researching. Next, I give the source an opportunity to meet with me in person, or simply respond by e-mail. Most of my sources find it easier to just respond to my first questions through e-mail, and if I need to send some follow-up questions, I will. Since I try to reach sources who are involved in my topic, most of them respond fairly quickly. Sometimes, I have to send multiple e-mails to potential sources to make sure I have my article ready by 8pm Monday. Once I have gathered all my information, articles never take me more than 40 minutes to an hour to write.

Typically, I write one or two articles a week. This semester I am taking my English Seminar, so I usually only have time for one, and I've even taken a couple of weeks off. It is definitely important to be wary of schoolwork when claiming articles. When writers can't get an article done on time, they have to gain permission from the Staff Manager and the Section Editor to get an extension. If they don't finish it at all, the Section Editors' layouts can get thrown off, and it's really inconvenient.

I also find it extremely important to correctly separate misinformation from true facts. Writing reflects on the newspaper, which in turn reflects on our school. Sometimes, my sources can throw me off-topic. Other times, my sources' information conflicts with each other. You just have to be careful. Good sources can come from anywhere; one of my most reliable and generous sources is a member of the psychology department. I received the Red & Blacker award twice for reaching good sources and also for my succinct writing.

The Red and Black is definitely a great opportunity for freshman to get involved in the campus and meet some new people. Our newspaper gets better all the time. Our new Editor-in-Chief is very thorough and involved, and he is always coming up with new ways to recruit writers and improve the newspaper.

Where to Start



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Anyone interested in writing for The Red & Black is welcome to attend any Thursday meeting in the Red and Black office. The meetings begin at 5pm and usually last until 6pm. New members are encouraged to relax and listen during meetings and to take on stories with limited guidance from section editors or other writers. Information sheets are dispersed before new writers take on their first stories, including "Writing Do's and Don'ts" and "Steps to a Successful Newspaper Article."

Other Links

[The official Red and Black site](#)

[The Observer-Reporter](#)