

The Blue Banner

Special Supplement

April 30, 1987

The process: how we do it

The school year 1986-87 will go down as a banner year for the Blue Banner.

The purchase this month of new software and a new printer has enabled the staff to initiate in-house production of headlines and marked the last step in a long struggle to obtain a complete desktop publishing system.

The realization of this goal was accomplished through the combination of greatly increased ad sales, management's excruciatingly tight belt and the staff's and advisor's commitment.

Desktop publishing means that the Banner staff does everything except actually print the paper.

Reporters create their story at the keyboard of one of four IBM personal computers purchased last summer. After the 6 p.m. Monday deadline, editors transfer the stories from the reporters' personal disks to a departmental disk for future editing.

The paper is actually laid out on Wednesdays. Editors, assistant editors, reporters seeking extra credit and photographers all converge on Carmichael 208 to vie for computers and space at the light tables.

Early in the afternoon the photography editors begin the process of producing half-tones in the Banner's darkroom. Working from a print of available negatives called a contact sheet, editors make photo selections and approximate the needed size.

Because commercial equipment to produce half-tones is extremely expensive, the Banner produced a homemade version. A staff member borrowed a vacuum cleaner from his mother (who probably assumed the machine would be used to clean the floor) and proceeded to dissect it, extracting the machine's vital organs.

The process begins when the negative is projected onto a gridded, hole-speckled piece of wood. Special photographic paper is placed on the board, and an 84-line screen (an expensive piece of plastic covered with tiny dots) is placed over the paper, the vacuum is turned on, and the suction tightly adheres the

screen to the paper as the negative is exposed.

Finally, the photographic paper is exposed to yellow light for a few seconds, so no area of the print will appear white. The paper is then developed in the usual photographic process.

Amid the intermittent roaring of the vacuum, the motion of bodies moving from the printer to the cutter to the waxer to the light tables and the intermingling of a blaring box, melodious singing, curses and laughter, last minute stories are written and the editors read and correct each other's copy.

Coded to a print format (developed through WordPerfect software) that accommodates the page layout, the laser printer produces camera-ready copy with a newsprint-style font.

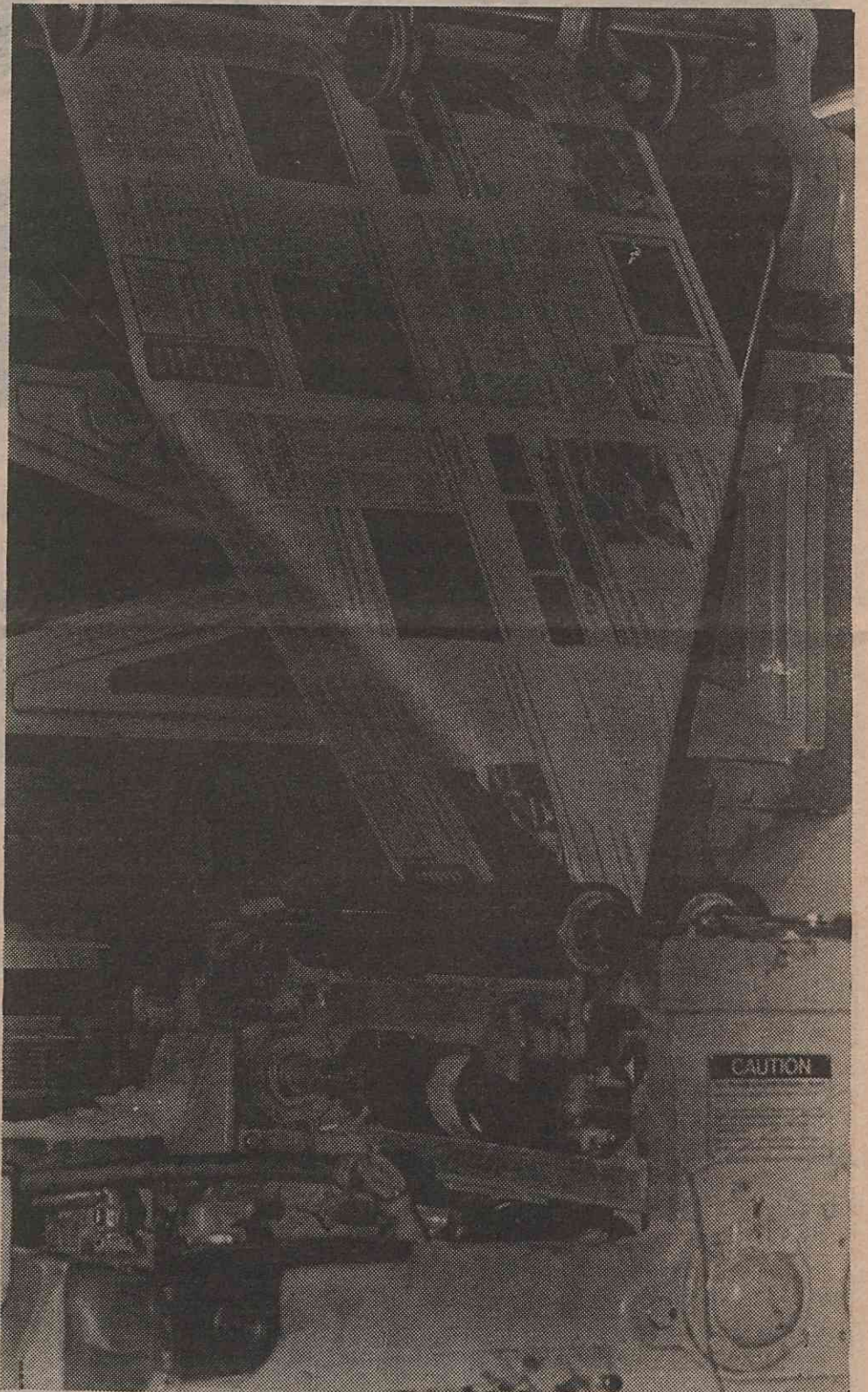
Don't breathe a sigh of relief. The story still must be molded to the appropriate size (depending on its newsworthiness) and available space.

During the Monday editorial board meeting, the editor decides how many pages to run. The decision is based on the number of stories and photographs assigned, which in turn is based on what's happening in the UNCA community. The amount of ads sold by ad representatives is also a determining factor in this decision.

Finally, with photographs in place and the pages laid out, editors and their assistants screw up their faces and stare dazedly into space, occasionally muttering an active verb. A newcomer might think one too many brain cells took flight, but this is actually the beginning ritual of headline composition. After determining whether a headline will fit in the space provided, the editors give them to the editor, who prints them out and returns them.

In the meantime, with exacto knife and the dreaded blue pencil in hand, the copy editor makes the rounds. Reading the laid-out copy for the first time, the copy editor looks for typographical and other errors that have slipped by unnoticed.

No matter what time, the staff



Staff Photo--Adam Brooks

One of 2,700 copies of the Blue Banner rolls off the presses. Each Thursday morning Mountain Reach Publishing, which produces the IWANNA shopper's guide, prints the week's issue.

limps home, the editor must deliver the camera-ready copy to the printer bright and early Thursday morning. Generally around noon Thursday, the Blue Banner is ready for delivery by a staff member to stands scattered throughout the UNCA community.

Tonight as the staff puts the Banner 'to bed' for the last time this semester, we especially appreciate our advisor, Greg Lisby, who has worked beyond what is expected of his position to bring about the realization of the desktop publishing system.