

# The Story Of A Story



Carter and Dale struggle trying to read type, which is upside down and backwards to us, so they can put in corrections. In the background Janet is spacing out the editorial page.

by Joan Carter Read

When we say that we are up at the Sun, we don't mean that we are out sunning ourselves by the pool. What we do mean is we are about to get another issue of the *Salemite* out to you regardless of homework, broken fingernails, headaches, grease and grime, linotype machines that break without the slightest provocation, lack of news, nasty tempers, or anything else that may occur on Thursday afternoons. But way back before all this the story of the story began.

## In the Catacombs

Before we can really begin to plan our paper for the week we have to check with the advertising staff who decide how many pages we will have. They, under the direction of Squeaky Carson and B. Mac, wear out shoe leather, spend time hounding the stores for ads, make several trips up town a week without going to the show and finally come up with the necessary money to put out a paper. Records of these ads are kept by Betty, until she gives them to Joyce Privette, who sometime when she is not practice-teaching, makes out the bills.

On Monday mornings sometime between 10:20 and noon you've seen Mary Lib, Clara Belle, Ione and Bitsy dashing around getting their "beats" in; or in non-journalistic language digging up what news they can from campus dignitaries. Sometime Monday afternoon Bitsy and Porter sit down with all sorts of lists and make out news and feature assignments respectively. Then notes are written to members of the staff giving them stories to write for the week, deadline for Tuesday or Wednesday night at 6:00 sharp. If they aren't in then, you'll see Carter and Clara Belle chasing them down with dire threats and usually good results.

In the *Salemite* office we have all sorts of signs that keep our morale up. On the door you'll see "Put In One Cent For Fresh Nuts" and if you don't believe it, come in some Wednesday night. Our language is far from lady-like, our eyes watery from smoke, our patience exhausted from trying to find a short synonym for "feature", but we try to be gracious to visitors.

In the midst of a rare thoughtful silence, Betty Biles suddenly screams "What time is it? I've got to take another picture of those Bluefield girls." Ione comes dashing in to use the typewriter to do her Modern World parallel and is swiftly told to use the one in the Annual office. No, it's not a very journalistic atmosphere; there are no teletype machines clicking away, no copy boys running around, no "stop the presses", no men with hats on the back of their heads chawing on cigars, only a bunch of gum-chewing, Chesterfield-smoking girls trying to

edit another paper.

Anyone would think that once all the copy was in, it would be a cinch, but take our word for it and read on to see that it isn't. Around 5 o'clock Wednesday, the "battle" begins over the make-up. Will a 2 column by 4 inches Mother-Daughter ad come in, or will Sneed-Craven insist on running a 3 by 7 in a four page paper, thereby omitting Frances Reznick's book review? Only Betty McBrayer can tell and she never knows until the last minute. Meanwhile still gnawing our stubs we decide to run a streamer head on the front page and to try a new slant on our make-up for the editorial page. By this time Carolyn's curls are shaking and Helen is going blind trying to decide whether to put the lecturer's picture on the front page or the back, and it all hangs on the length of Ronnie's interview. Usually before dinner, some form of rough draft is completed and we wander toward the refectory still not sure that Betty Biles has sketched in all the ads in their correct places.

That night surrounded by Chesterfields, Mac and Janet, pounding away on their trusty typewriters, Porter's punning headlines, Bitsy's mathematically correct ones, and

first line) and our headaches begin again. About 10 o'clock we put the *Salemite* copy neatly in the basket and retire to do our comp, with Clara Belle and Carter still arguing over who is going to forfeit sleep and walk up to the Sun Printing Company at 8:30, Thursday morning.

We too are members of the international teachers and students society, T. G. I. F., Thank Gosh It's Friday! But we have a hard day at the Sun before we can yell this.

## At the Sun

Promptly at 1:30 Thursday afternoon those who think they know what they're doing dash up to the Sun to put their precious *Salemite* to bed and this is where the fun begins.

Just to get you located let me explain that the Sun is this side of the next stop light going towards town on Main Street. It is housed in a little lopsided building divided into the office and shop. In the office we are greeted by Mr. Russ who always has a good stock of jokes and pencils to supply depending on which we need at the moment. The smiling man moving boxes, furniture, or machinery is Mr. Henry better known as the "Mover". Bending over the linotype machine which resembles a typewriter on a larger and more complex scale is Francis, the man responsible for each word you see printed in this paper. There are several other men up there: one always smokes a cigar, another watches all the presses and the others seem to do most anything and we still don't know their names. The best known of them all is Mr. Cashion, the shop boss and the best-tempered man we know. With pertinent comments about each of us and our appearance he tells us to get busy reading the galleys (first printed copy of the story) that he and Francis have spent all morning getting ready for us.

Picking our way precariously through fierce-looking machinery at the Sun, our attention is divided between watching someone run a perforation press and seeing Bitsy whiz through two pages of putting in corrections, deleting paragraphs and spacing out before she leaves for her art lab. If we don't know where to find something and can't find Mr. Cashion, Bitsy can always tell us where the proper column rules are or what to do in an unusual case. She really is the print shops second-in-command when we take over the whole place to put out one



Carolyn, Mr. Cashion and Francis re-read some copy as it is being fixed for corrections.

a stack of "bibles" hanging over our desk. In reality, these are bound copies of the issues of the *Salemite* for the past twenty-nine years. Each new editor is threatened with her life if she dares to cut anything out of these, but they are a wonderful backlog for ideas and laughs about what they did in our mother's day.

After everything has been read at least three times by astute members of the staff then it goes back to Francis for corrections with Carolyn and Mr. Cashion supervising (see cut) although they don't always look so glum.

Finally corrections are made and the type is put on the page in its correct place. Then comes the problem of making it fit either by deleting some paragraph, adding a few lines, or spacing it out with blanks put in between the lines to make it easier to read but most important making it fit. This tricky little process is being performed by Dale, Carter, and Janet, in the cut.

When a whole page is completed then a page proof is done. This is Dale's favorite occupation in which she inks the page, holds a piece of paper over it and lets someone else bang it with a hammer and a block just missing her fingers (we hope). This is read by the staff for more

afternoon for a manicure just blame it on the girls who work at the Sun. No matter how hard we try to wash off the ink and grease we pick up there, we never are successful and it takes a professional to restore our hands to some natural state. The Sun provides a wash basin with a powerful soap just for this purpose, while it takes the dirt off, it fails to leave any skin on our hands.

## Last Minute Headaches

Suddenly someone notices that this week's pictures have not yet arrived from Piedmont Engravers or the mats from the Journal-Sentinel. Ronnie dashes to the phone and calls Miss Gabriel at the J-S morgue to be greeted by "Good afternoon, morgue, can I help you?" Porter checks with Piedmont to find out that the delivery boy has disappeared but our cuts will be sent down soon. The worst part of this waiting is that there is no one to blame it on, because Hersch or Jane got the pictures to the engravers on time and all we can do is wish the engravers would cooperate more quickly.

When the pictures and mats finally arrive, Mr. Cashion disappears into a little room to cast them and we think we are finished for the week. Then Clara Belle begins to notice mistakes in the headlines which Mr. Cashion has to change. This does not make for friendly relationships as it is a loss of time and money just because we strive for perfection. The crowning blow is finding mistakes in the copy that has been read on the first galley. When we ask to have these corrected Francis' hair begins to curl, Mr. Cashion storms around snorting like a bull, Mr. Russ lectures us about sloppy proof readers, but they make the changes. As soon as possible after this we quietly take our leave hoping that the *Salemite* will arrive as usual in Bitting at 5 o'clock on Friday afternoon.

## Paper Is Out

The minute the papers get here Janie Fowlkes and her capable circulation staff take over in getting a copy to each one of you.

Perhaps you don't realize how much work the circulation staff has by this room to room delivery. Just try carrying 40 six page *Salemites* up to third floor Clewell some night and putting two in every room, we think that you'll agree that is isn't play. Some of the girls fold and mail *Salemites* to alumni, advertisers and other schools. It takes lots of tongue power to lick all those stamps not to mention lugging the paper to the Post Office.

Then it's all over except for Joyce Privette paying the bills, and we begin to think about what to do for next week while awaiting Miss Byrd's comments in Comp class on Saturday morning.



Wednesday night, neatly posed for a picture of what we'd like to look like, when we live in the cata-

combs editing a *Salemite*. Ann McConnell at the typewriter, while Ronnie translates her handwriting to her. Porter, Clara Belle and Bitsy, at the table, ponder on a headline—Carolyn supervises.

issue.

The Sun has a mysterious little place where they keep cokes. A chart hangs by it with names of all those who work there including the *Salemite* staff. Who pays for these we never have found out so we attribute it to another one of the Sun's courtesies. If Mr. Cashion is feeling particularly sweet after one of his ornery spells, he offers to buy us all short beers, but somehow they are always in the form of a coke!

If we get desperate for a check on facts about the faculty or alumni at the last minute, Mr. Cashion has

corrections while they sip cokes and all try to sit on one of the two chairs provided for this purpose.

As editor-in-chief of the *Salemite*, the current editor is required to give Mr. Cashion her picture. Memories of things past can be found by looking around at Martha Boatwright hanging in the thermometer, Peggy Davis over a Varga Girl calendar and Carolyn just in a frame right now, but next year we are plotting to put her by the stuffed fish that hangs over our desk.

If you can't get an appointment at the local beauty shop on Friday