

## The Herald Never Gets It Right: A Letter from the Editors

Ashleigh Phillips and Emily Gamiel, Editors

Dear readers,

Serving as Herald co-editors this semester, we have learned a lot about newspaper production. In learning, we have made mistakes, but they were not purposeful errors, and it was never our intention to offend members of the Meredith community. What you are reading now is the Meredith Herald: a student run, bi-monthly publication that is dedicated to its mission of "representing our diverse community by publicizing local events, by addressing controversy, by cultivating civic engagement and by empowering women." This publication is produced by students and will continue to exist only if it has support from the community that it represents.

Our writers, copy-editors, layout editor, and operations manager are students. Their common experience is the completion of English 111, but that is the only prerequisite to be on the Herald staff, because we hope students from all academic backgrounds will join us. Interested students come to the Herald to gain experience in publication and in most cases have not taken relevant courses (e.g. Professional Writing, Eng 358; Intro to Journalism, Eng 245; Advanced Grammar, Eng 275). As co-editors, we are not trained to teach our staff. With every issue, we learn and develop along with them.

We acknowledge the criticism we have received this semester and welcome continued commentary in the spring. However, we would like for all Herald readers to know that we are a student newspaper staff at a school with no journalism department. This semester our staff consists of two editors, 10 consistent writers, two copy editors, one layout editor, and one operations manager. And all of those staff members deliver the best work they can to the Herald and the Meredith community for every issue.

A Herald readership poll from September 29, 2010 received 100 responses. Readers indicated that their favorite columns were Whines and Gripes, What's Up in Raleigh, and Ask Gigi. The least popular sections, Science and Technology, Sports, and International/National news, were eliminated soon after the poll. Readers requested more Local and Campus news that was relevant to students. Those sections have doubled in size since the survey. As co-editors this semester, we have done our best to print articles that our readers asked for.

Another direct effect of that survey was the creation of an online portal for the Herald (which you can visit at [issuu.com/themeredithe-herald](http://issuu.com/themeredithe-herald)). According to the number of visits to our account, readership this fall has greatly improved from previous semesters. The average number of times our account was accessed last spring, based on the last four issues of the semester, is 41. The four

issues published this semester hold an average of 183 reads. This average is from our online readers only and does not include those who read a hard copy.

This is an example of our effort to reach out to the Meredith community. In hopes of gaining more feedback, we've created another readership poll so that we can use the responses to improve our issues for the spring semester. Changes in the Herald are implemented only if feedback is provided for the staff. You can access the poll and help us improve, by sharing your thoughts at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/BQYGKNK](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BQYGKNK)

The Herald production process is not as simple as it may seem. The staff meets every week, and writers bring forth ideas for articles and an issue outline is constructed. Writers have one week to complete research, interviews, and drafts of their articles. And from 10 writers, 17 articles are needed to create one issue of the Herald. Articles are assigned 15 days before their

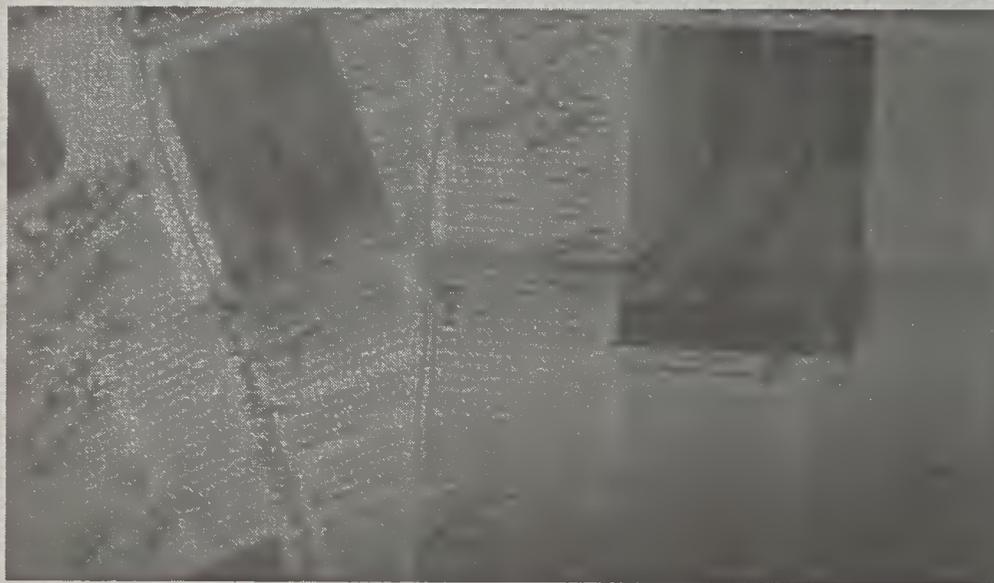


image via Ashleigh Phillips

publication date--making it impossible for the Herald to cover breaking news. This is a reality our small staff cannot avoid and an issue that we have embraced, making the sometimes difficult task of improvisation one of our more frequently performed jobs. While we cannot cover the most recent news, by focusing on Meredith students and faculty members, women's issues, and events that happen in the local community, we have made a paper that is immediately relevant to our college.

After articles have been submitted, copy editors have at most four days to complete editing. The edited articles are then reread and organized by the editors and sent to the layout editor. She completes the layout the weekend before the issue hits stands, and the editors make revisions as needed until the night before publication when the paper is submitted to the printer. In all, we estimate that writers contribute 3 hours per week; copyeditors contribute 1; layout editor contributes 4 hours an issue; and editors contribute 12 hours per week to the Herald. That adds up to more than 115 hours of work to produce each issue of the

paper.

That said, we love the work we do, and the Herald is for anyone who has sat in President Allen's office, dirtied their hands in our sustainable garden, cursed the stubborn geese, found a book in Carlyle Campbell, or slept on third Poteat. The Herald is dedicated to representing this shared Meredith experience of our diverse community. As co-editors we acknowledge that this community is made up of professors, policeman, groundworkers, and cooks, but we also know that Meredith College is here only because of the

students; therefore, the Herald is *their* paper.

We ask that you embrace the Meredith Herald as your community's paper. It is a reflection of your campus. It is a chronicle of your college. It is a record of the events and atmosphere of the

time you've spent at Meredith. And it cannot exist without you. Send us letters to the editors, send in your submissions, tell us what needs to be covered, and tell us what we have done wrong. This is when the Herald will start getting it right.

Thank you for reading, and we look forward to hearing from you,  
Ashleigh Phillips and Emily Gamiel

(Remember to take the readership poll at [surveymonkey.com/s/BQYGKNK](http://surveymonkey.com/s/BQYGKNK))

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