

# Scholarship winner prepares for PR future

By Marisa Schwimmer

Most would agree it isn't easy being a college student. The demands of school, work and a healthy social life can be hard to balance with feeling pressure to excel.

For some, it's normal. Brenna Robinson, a senior in the public relations option with a minor in marketing, is one example of the many journalism students who go above and beyond.

Robinson works at Chico Performances where she does public relations and marketing. She also refines her public relations skills as a member of Tehama Group Communications as an account executive.

"She's been working in PR for two years, while balancing a full course load and mentoring other



Brenna Robinson accepting her scholarships at Celebration of Excellence

PR students in classes," said Debra Johnson, professional-in-residence and adviser to Tehama Group. "She is also a leader in TGC and a great role model for younger students in the program."

Robinson is also supporting herself financially more than she

has in the past.

Her efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Robinson is the recipient of two scholarships for the 2007-2008 school year: the Moyna O'Rourke Public Relations Scholarship and the Tehama Group Communications Award.

"It's a great honor to win scholarships, especially from the journalism department," Robinson said. "All the help I can get is greatly appreciated."

As for life after Tehama Hall, Robinson hopes for a job in Los Angeles at a public relations firm doing consumer public relations and/or brand marketing, she said.

"It's been a blast," Robinson said. "I hope a real-world PR firm is as much fun as TGC has been."

# Journalism Times

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## Hall of Fame recognizes best in journalism

By Dana Pelfini

The stage is set. Tables, chairs, linens and flowers check. Alumni, students, faculty, family and friends reminisce about old times and pose for pictures as they wait to celebrate excellence.

The second annual Celebration of Excellence inducted alumni and past faculty into The Orion Hall of Fame and Public Relations Hall of Fame Friday, Oct. 5. Sixty guests attended the Chico Women's Club to recognize Hall of Fame inductees and scholarship winners.

"These awards are about excellence, not just excellence, maintained excellence, I would say longevity," said alumnus Zuri Berry who introduced Art Thompson III, The Orion inductee Berry nominated.

While attending Chico State, Thompson acted as staff writer, sports editor and associate editor. He is a sports writer for The Orange County Register.



Debra Johnson congratulates Sharon Yoder at the Celebration of Excellence

continued on page 3

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In this edition of

Celebration of Excellence ..... 1  
PRSSA ..... 1  
Alumni in DC ..... 2  
Inductees and Winners ..... 3  
Johnson in China ..... 4  
A Taste of Journalism ..... 5  
Student Profile ..... 6

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## Waddell: A Winner Behind the Scenes



Working behind the scenes, Dave Waddell is continuing to make diversity a priority.

Waddell's efforts have been recognized by Chico State through a campuswide "Behind the Scenes" Conversations on Diversity Achievement Award. Waddell visited 37 schools when he took a sabbatical last spring to help with the foundation of the MediaNews Group Journalism and Diversity Partnership.

Under Waddell's leadership, the partnership has now seen its first class of interns at big city newspapers including The Salt Lake Tribune and the San Jose Mercury News.

## PRSSA needs alumni support

By Carly Smith

While The Orion staff is up to its ears in awards such as the National Pacemaker Award and first place in Best of Show, public relations students have no choice but to sit back and anxiously wait to be recognized on the same level.

Public relations students may soon have their chance to compete on a national stage. Faculty is working hard to bring a Public Relations Student Society of America chapter to Chico State.

PRSSA offers many benefits such as giving public relations students a chance to compete against other schools, attend national conferences and interact with professionals in the work field. It also gives student-run agencies, like

Tehama Group Communications, a chance to be recognized by potential clients.

Debra Johnson, professional-in-residence and current member of Public Relations Society of America Sacramento, has already taken the

initiative in this process.

"A number of things need to happen to get a PRSSA chapter," Johnson said. "First and foremost, we have to get a new course approved."

The major obstacle the department faces is the PRSSA's five-course requirement. Chico State offers all but one, "Public Relations Research."

continued on page 4

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# Despite odds alumni follow dreams to D.C.

By Marisa Schwimmer

At 1 a.m. most people are snuggled up, warm in their beds, dreaming of exotic beaches, far-off lands and winning a Pulitzer Prize. At 1 a.m. most people aren't finishing editing the sports section or waiting for the Senate to adjourn.

But Greg Finley and Jen Scholtes aren't most people. These two Chico State alumni graduated in May 2007 and uprooted their lives for a shot at making it big in the nation's capital.

The Washington Post and Congressional Quarterly are where these 20-somethings reside in the hustle and bustle of political life in Washington, D.C.

It wasn't an easy battle, but with a dose of determination and a sense of patience, two high-spirited personalities found their way to working for publications that some thought were impossible to work for at such a young age.

"It wasn't anything magical," Finley said modestly about his road to Washington, D.C.

He set his sights on Washington, D.C., got on a plane and was there, he said.

**"I stayed up until 4 a.m. every night for a week editing every single comma of that cover letter."**

- Scholtes

Finley started at The Washington Post with a three-month internship during the summer, he said. When the internship was over he was offered a job.

But before getting on that plane, many people made the statement, "You know this is a long shot?" while trying to be supportive when Finley asked for letters of recommendation, he said.

He didn't let other people's opinions of his ambitious goal

## Journalism alumni in Washington, D.C.

Greg Finley and Jen Scholtes are not the only journalism alumni in Washington, D.C.

Jeff Friedman graduated from Chico State in fall 2003 from the news-editorial option with a minor in international relations. Once in Washington, D.C., Friedman began interviewing and eventually landed a job at Congressional Quarterly. After three years at Congressional Quarterly, Friedman has moved through the ranks and is now the homeland security deputy editor.

Rebecca Hanks-Fisher graduated in 1999 with a double major in journalism and political science. Hanks-Fisher worked her way from press aid to press secretary for Sen. John McCain. She became the director of the Senate Commerce Committee while Sen. McCain was the chairman. She is currently the Federal Communications Commission Media Bureau's communication director under Sen. John Ensign.

get him down.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in three years, Finley sits at a desk "smack dab" next to Bob Woodward's office at The Washington Post, where he copy edits the financial and sports sections of the paper, Finley said.

He admits to having become mildly interested in Washington, D.C.'s sports teams, he said. Having to edit the sports section he's come

to know the quarterback's name.

"I'm still a Padres fan, though," Finley said. "I watch the games at 1 a.m. if I have to."

Both sections have their perks, he said. The financial section can be slow at times, but the sports section makes him want to rip out his hair at other times because of the rush to get the story online.

So what does a 21-year-old do next when already working at his dream job?

Finley is happy where he is, he said. But there is a chance he will go back to school to study economics.

"There are really ambitious people here," Finley said. "People in their 50s do the same job as me and are happy as clams."

Scholtes is another 21-year-old, three-year graduate with dedication engraved in her mind.

Her road to Congressional Quarterly began in the spring of her first year as a Chico State student, she said. Scholtes wrote an article on Rep. Wally Herger for Leslie Layton-Flores' "Magazine Writing" class, which was then published as a cover story for the Chico News & Review.

A LexisNexis search by Congressional Quarterly found Scholtes' article, and she was contacted by an editor, who then encouraged her to apply for a job when she was done with school, Scholtes recalled.

When she was ready to apply for the job she "kind of got the cold shoulder" from the publication, she said.

But it only made her work that much harder to get an interview.

"I stayed up until 4 a.m. every night for a week editing every single comma of that cover letter," Scholtes said.

# Alumni land jobs at Washington Post, CQ

from page 2

Her hard work paid off as she earned an interview with Congressional Quarterly, she said. There were no positions open at the time, so she took an internship with the Oakland Tribune.

A few months later Scholtes received a call from Congressional Quarterly. A position opened up, and they wanted her to interview again.

She flew to Washington, D.C., on a Wednesday, she said. And within a week and a half she had a full-time position at the publication tracking bills, reporting actions on floor votes, writing summaries and sometimes writing up to 15 leads a day.

Sometimes it's surreal realizing the access she has and the excitement of her job, Scholtes said.

That access had her 10 feet

from Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama while they were casting votes.

"It's like in the movies when you see reporters running down the halls after people," she said. "I've been the one in heels, running down the hall."

Being the "crazy dreamer" that Scholtes is, she isn't sure if she'll stay at Congressional Quarterly forever, she said. She wants more creativity out of a job - maybe freelance, while following a project, such as the rodeo, for a year.

If there is one thing Finley and Scholtes agree on, it's that Wash-

ington, D.C., is a great place. There is an abundance of resources and always something going on: from the culture, museums and art

**"It's like in the movies when you see reporters running down the halls after people. I've been the one in heels running down the hall."**

- Scholtes

openings to celebrities and movies being filmed, there are always places to go and people to see.

"It's a great place to be young," Scholtes said.

## A Taste of Journalism

### Glen Bleske's Vegetarian Chili

#### Everything You Will Need:

- 2 28-ounce cans of diced tomatoes
- 1 15-ounce can of kidney beans, rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can of rinsed black beans
- 2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 celery stalks, diced
- 1 large diced white onion (or any onion)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 3 to 5 tablespoons of mild chili powder
- 2 teaspoons dry oregano
- 2 chopped chipotle peppers from the can
- 1 bottle of Sierra Nevada Pale Ale
- 1/8 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 1/4 cup of chopped cilantro
- 1 6-ounce can of whole green chilies (do not rinse, chop into strips about one-inch long)
- lots fresh ground pepper (NOTE: most chili powders have lots of salt, but no salt was added to this recipe)
- 2 teaspoons of adobe sauce
- 1 tablespoon of ground cumin

#### Method (Serves 12):

In large soup pot, saute onions in the oil. After onions start to turn brown on edges, add celery and garlic powder. Cook over medium heat for a couple of minutes. Add chili powder (begin with 3 tablespoons), oregano, pepper and cumin. Stir constantly for a couple of minutes until you can smell the spices roasting (do not BURN).

Add beer, juice from the canned tomatoes, cinnamon, adobe sauce and chipotle peppers. Bring to a gentle boil, cover and simmer for about 20 minutes. Add rest of tomatoes. Bring to a boil and reduce heat. Simmer for 30 minutes. Add the beans and chopped chiles. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cover.

Simmer for about 30 minutes or until the celery is cooked but not mushy. Make sure heat is low enough that it does not burn; stir often. Taste and decide if you want more chili powder. Add chopped cilantro about five minutes before serving.

Great to make a day ahead of time. Usually improves in the refrigerator. Freezes well. I store in small containers that hold two servings. Enjoy!



continued on page 5