



It was a pleasant coincidence that I heard from four former student editors of *La Louisiane* this week.

As regular readers are probably aware, we give students an opportunity to learn about publishing a magazine by working part-time. Each year, one is chosen as student editor; it's a paid position. He or she is involved in almost every aspect of the magazine's production, from suggesting topics for articles to checking page proofs before an issue goes on the press.

When we're considering candidates for the position, we first look for someone with strong writing skills. But the person we hire also needs to have a certain level of maturity, because the student editor has a lot of responsibility.

The student editors I've worked with over the years have represented their classmates and the university well. I've enjoyed tracking their careers after graduation and I'm pleased that almost all have stayed in touch.

Matt Tarver, for instance, was the first student editor I hired. He wrote a profile for *La Louisiane* about the Ragin' Cajuns'® quarterback at the time, Jake Delhomme. I remember that he was impressed as much by Delhomme's humility as his athletic talent. Matt and I exchanged jubilant e-mails when Delhomme took the Carolina Panthers to the Super Bowl in January during his first year as a starting quarterback in the NFL.

Matt is now director of Student Publications at Southeastern Louisiana University. From time to time, he proudly sends me samples of his students' work. I smile when I open the packages, knowing exactly how he feels.

Updates on some other student editors: Danielle Harrison is teaching in Japan, Marsha Sills is a reporter for Lafayette's daily newspaper, others are working in public relations or marketing.

Sarah Spell is a freelance writer who continues to contribute to *La Louisiane* from time to time. In this issue, for instance, she writes about the Louisiana Folk Masters series of CDs. Its first release features Varise Conner, whose music has been preserved in the university's Archives of Cajun and Creole Folklore.

The on-the-job training student editors get while working at *La Louisiane* is invaluable. The word "invaluable" seems trite and inadequate. But I've reviewed zillions of resumés and writing samples over the past 25 years and it's difficult to quantify or convey how much that practical experience is worth.

At the same time, *La Louisiane* benefits from the talent and enthusiasm of some young writers. Working with them is one of the most satisfying aspects of my job.

Current Student Editor James Savage and I hope you enjoy the Fall 2004 issue of *La Louisiane*.

– Kathleen Thames