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Hilltop

extensions

Vol. 1

October 27, 1989

Number 1

Come
Inside
This
House

The Hilltop

THE NATION'S LARGEST BLACK STUDENT NEWS



About EXTENSIONS...

Welcome to *EXTENSIONS* and the beginning of a renaissance of sorts for *THE HILLTOP*. *EXTENSIONS* was used by past Hilltop administrations as an additional means of informing the Howard University community.

It returns this year to hold true to the tradition of *THE HILLTOP*—the nation's largest black collegiate newspaper.

EXTENSIONS will publish periodically and focus on topics relating to Howard with a more scrutinizing eye and hopefully produce in-depth coverage of the university as never before.

It seemed only appropriate to mark the return of *EXTENSIONS*, after an eight-year absence, with an up close and personal look at *THE HILLTOP*.

Being a tenured Hilltopper myself, the idea of showing Howard University what "The Top" is all about seemed simple, but after diving into the task, uncovering 65 years of history amounted to more than a stroll across The Yard.

Because of the richness of *HILLTOP* history and the limited space here in the *EXTENSIONS* supplement, many things will have to be left out.

It seems a shame to discuss *HILLTOP* history without mentioning, in detail, the story behind the formation of the Hilltop Policy Board—the administrator, faculty and student group regulating *THE HILLTOP*.

The paper has been censored by the administration, its legal publisher, broken stories *THE WASHINGTON POST* was forced to follow and has even been the site of a couple not-so-bad parties.

The pages of *THE HILLTOP* have told students of corruption in student government, administrative failures and triumphs, and even what fashions were in for the year.

The history of the university is intertwined with the paper. Problems with *THE HILLTOP* produce problems with Howard—as was seen in the student protest of 1983 when a *HILLTOP* editor was expelled because she did her job.

EXTENSIONS won't be able to tell every story, such as how the paper gained a staff advisor, but it will be a combination of history and current events to convey the importance of *THE HILLTOP* to Howard University.

You'll see what *A Day In The Life* is like at "The Top," get a glimpse of some distinguished *HILLTOP* Alumni (a glimpse because the list is too numerous to mention), hear what professionals from the mainstream press have to say about the paper, get a detailed history of "Hilltop Happenings" since 1923 and even learn some *HILLTOP* secrets that some staffers won't admit to.

This should not be seen as an attempt to unnecessarily glorify *THE HILLTOP*, rather it is an expose of the inner workings and history of an institution that is sometimes more "Howard" than Howard University itself.

The staff of *EXTENSIONS* and *THE HILLTOP* hope this premier issue meets up to the standard of past Hilltopers and Howardites young and old.

ROBERT J. VICKERS

Hilltop Special Projects Editor



EXTENTIONS

Publishers
 Alonza L. Robertson
 and
 Donald Christian

Executive Editor
 Robert J. Vickers

Copy Editor
 Lori Buckner

Artists
 Paul Davies and Lisa Lightfoot

Special thanks are due to: Keith Leadbetter (Hilltop photo editor) and the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Stance Neal and Paul Woodruff.

Extentions is a periodical supplement to The Hilltop

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Assistant Campus Editor
 Eric Smith.



Former Editor-in-chief,
 Janice McKnight.



THE HILLTOP



Founded in 1917

ALONZA ROBERTSON, Editor-in-Chief
 ZACKERY P. BURGESS, Managing Editor
 LORI D. BUCKNER, Associate Editor
 D. MALCOLM CARSON, Editorial Editor

SHELLIA MAXWELL, Campus Editor
 SHIRONA FOREMAN, Asst. Campus Editor
 ERIC SMITH, Asst. Campus Editor
 SHERRILL NIER, Asst. Editor
 LENORA F. HARRIS, National Editor
 TINA TRAVERS, International Editor
 STACEY PHILLIPS, Health and Fitness Editor
 KEITH L. ALEXANDER, Temp Editor
 DORA STEWART, Asst. Temp Editor
 JEANNIE MOORE, Sports Editor

DESIREE ROBINSON, Asst. to the Editor
 ROBERT J. VICKERS, Special Projects Editor
 REBECCA LITTLE, Chief Copy Editor
 DONNA T. LEE, Copy Editor
 DARREN MICHAEL NORMAN, Copy Editor
 SERETIAN CORBS, Graphics & Production Director
 LISA LIGHTFOOT, Production Asst.
 KEITH LEADBETTER, Photography Editor
 PAUL DAVIES, Asst.

GENJI SAMPSON, Advertising Manager
 DONALD CHRISTIAN, Business Manager
 DANIEL J. PONDER, Business Asst.
 TAMMY ENGRAM, Office Manager

Each school and college within Howard University is allotted a student representative to the Hilltop Policy Board — the governing body of the newspaper. Comments and suggestions about THE HILLTOP should be directed to the respective representative on the board.

College of Fine Arts
 Mark Hall

College of Allied Health
 Sciences
 Danise Heath

College of Nursing
 Adrienne Hendricks

College of Liberal Arts
 Malieka Mosely

School of Law
 Donna Mullen

School of Education
 Rose M. Patrick

School of Business and
 Administration
 Garfield Swaby

School of Communications
 Leona D. Willis

School of Human Ecology
 Lisa Woods

Graduate Representative
 Michele Lewis

HUSA
 Daniel Goodwin

According to the Office of Student Activities, the following schools and colleges have yet to appoint representatives:

Architecture and Planning, Dentistry, Divinity, Engineering, Medicine, Pharmacy and Social Work. The University Senate also has not appointed a representative.

From The Hill... To The Top

By ANDREA MOREHEAD

They are people born with the quest for knowledge and share that knowledge through the written word—for all to see and for all time.

They are not overzealous, but they demand the truth.

They are *THE HILLTOP* staff.

Since the weekly, student-run newspaper began publishing, some 65 years ago, the reporters, editors and administrative officers of *THE HILLTOP* have been dedicated to campus journalism.

But what happens to the diligent reporters who skipped a class to cover a story?

What happened to the campus editors who stared into glaring computer terminals for hours on end, checking for mistakes?

And what happened to the editors-in-chief whose position literally became a full-time job?

In line with Howard University's producing some of the most influential blacks in the world, the legacy of *THE HILLTOP* lives on as well.

Former *HILLTOP* staffers have moved on and taken bigger jobs in print journalism, broadcasting and even the government.

Stephanie Stokes Oliver, a former *HILLTOP* feature editor and reporter from 1970 to 1974 is now an editor with *ESSENCE* magazine.

A Seattle, Wa. native, Oliver said her experience writing and editing for *THE HILLTOP* prepared her for her first job at *GLAMOR* magazine.

"The hands-on experience in publishing was the best experience I could have ever had," said Oliver. "To have the responsibility and freedom to write and get paid was great."

THE HILLTOP was the first place Oliver told a reporter an article "just didn't work" and she concedes even as an editor of the nation's premier magazine for "today's black woman" she still tells reporters the same thing.

She said her most memorable experience working for the newspaper was interviewing Stevie Wonder after a concert on campus.

"After I interviewed him, I knew I would like journalism," she said. "And *THE HILLTOP* was a great way to get my feet wet. It gave me a lot of confidence."

Another confident *HILLTOP* alumnus is Jawana Solomon McIntyre, editor-in-chief of the paper in 1975.

"I had to learn how to handle problems in budgeting and run my paper with an allotted amount of money," said McIntyre, now a sales manager with *THE ATLANTA JOURNAL AND CONSTITUTION*.

Alumni of THE HILLTOP make their presence known as journalists, businessmen and politicians.

He contends his experiences at *THE HILLTOP* allowed him to "work with some good minds and write things about my people."

McIntyre said he is impressed that the tradition of *THE HILLTOP* lives on.

"*THE HILLTOP* is a wonderful place for young black intellectuals to get that real world atmosphere," he said. "It produces great minds."

Because of *THE HILLTOP*, "I will always be a writer," said McIntyre. "It's in my blood."

Valca Valentine also has writing in her blood because of *THE HILLTOP*.

Now a feature writer for *THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER*, in Charlotte, N.C., Valentine acted as a business reporter and local/national editor during her time at Howard—from 1979 and 1987.

She said working for *THE HILLTOP* allowed her to learn from her mistakes.

"I learned the importance of meeting deadlines which is a habit now," said Valentine. "I also learned to get two sides of a story."

She said she learned this lesson when Janice McKnight, 1983-84 *HILLTOP* editor-in-chief, wrote, what Valentine considered, one-sided articles about sexual discrimination in Howard administration.

"The administration and (former university) President James Cheek would not allow us to print certain administrative rules and policies, so our paper was censored" by the administration, she said.

Valentine is confident, though, because of such experiences.

"Howard will let you know you can do anything," she said, adding that one of her favorite *HILLTOP* administrations was that of the 1981-82 Editor-in-Chief Isabel Wilkerson.

"We wanted to give the paper a professional look (that was) distinctive," said Wilkerson, now a rising reporter with *THE NEW YORK TIMES*.

Under Wilkerson's leadership, *THE HILLTOP* placed second in the Society of Professional Journalists' regional collegiate competition.

"It was the first time for *THE HILLTOP* and we paved the way for acceptance of future *HILLTOPs*," Wilkerson said.

Her managing editor, Joseph Perkins, who now serves as deputy assistant to U.S. Vice President

Dan Quayle, said he will always hold his experiences at the paper close to his heart.

"*THE HILLTOP* is preparation for what goes on in the real world," he said. "Students don't know what it takes to put out a paper. There is nothing like *THE HILLTOP*. It is more an integral part of Howard than most student papers."

Perkins, who was an editorial writer with *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL* before joining the Quayle staff, added: "In my five years at *THE JOURNAL*, there was nothing like my time at *THE HILLTOP*."

Wilkerson agreed: "There were 12,000 people out there waiting for me to do my job. And if I didn't get the paper out I let them down."

"It's the best journalism experience you can get on this campus if you want to be in journalism," she added.

Darryl Richards credits his current success as a sports writer with *THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS* to his past success at *THE HILLTOP*, under the 1983-1984 administration of then Editor-in-Chief Henry Hall.

The former *HILLTOP* sports editor said he was able to get his first journalism internship with "my first six clips (articles) which were published in *THE HILLTOP*."

"*THE HILLTOP* made me excited," said Richards. "I began living to write. I have a lot of pride (in that work) and enjoyed working there," he added.

Richards said *HILLTOP* staffers earned respect among professionals because of the number of former Hilltoppers who have gone on to make an impact in professional journalism.

"It makes me feel so good to know (Hilltoppers) are getting their first jobs after graduation and are having really good careers," he said. "To know that blacks have conquered many odds because of the experience gained at *THE HILLTOP* is wonderful."

But Richards contends: "We need to produce more talented black writers and I know *THE HILLTOP* is helping in that effort."

"*THE HILLTOP* prepared me very well for the real world and it gave me the opportunity to grow and build, both as a writer and a person," added Richards.

"When I think of Howard, I think of *THE HILLTOP*."

Alumni on The Top



HODRI ALI:
Former Hilltop Editor-in-Chief 1975-76.
Current Co-owner of Pyramid Bookstore.

"We used to take advertising funds and make what we called 'excursions' to other schools and businesses outside of the District."



LESLIE HARRIELL-LEWIS:
Former Hilltop Staff Reporter 1977-79.
Current Assistant Director of Student Activities at Howard University.

"The Hilltop was a very bourgie place. You didn't even think about writing for it until you were a junior. Now it's more cohesive, there's a sense of team, family and of what happens in the house stays in the house."



HENRY HALL:
Former Hilltop Editor-in-Chief 1984-85.
Current Deputy Director of Outreach Communications for the Republican National Committee.

"I got a lot of flack for some of the people I hired, but I surrounded myself with the people I knew would get the job done and they did."

Throughout the history of *THE HILLTOP*, many writers and editors who have gone on to make their mark in some of the most prestigious newspapers in the country.

Most of them will say, without hesitation, they got their start at "The Top" and learned more there than in their classes.

But what do the professionals in the mainstream press think of former Hilltoppers who now work on their staffs?

-Compiled by George Daniels

Pros on



THE TOP



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"We have had several *HILLTOP* editors work for us as summer interns. We are delighted when former *HILLTOP* staffers become part of our staff."

—Lawrence O'Donnell
WALL STREET JOURNAL Associate Editor



"*THE HILLTOP* doesn't have much of an impact with Howard graduates. I can't really see a major contribution that *THE HILLTOP* makes to the careers of the graduates of the journalism school."

—Alice Bonner
GANNETT Recruiter and Howard Alumnus

Chicago Tribune

"It is really good that students at Howard have an excellent school paper that gives budding journalists a chance. The school can be very proud of the paper."

—Sheila Wolf
CHICAGO TRIBUNE Recruiter

The Boston Globe

"I've found (Hilltop Alumni) to be above average reporters."

—Greg Moore
BOSTON GLOBE

The New York Times

"We've had several former *HILLTOP* staffers who have excelled as journalists. (Hilltoppers are) mainstays on our staff. We've been extremely pleased."

—Paul Delaney
NEW YORK TIMES

Life on The Hill:

A day in the life

It seems common to hear Howardites complain on Friday mornings.

"Why is *THE HILLTOP* out so late?"

"We haven't gotten a issue at the College of Dentistry for three weeks now!"

Or the staff favorites: "You spelled my name wrong" and "I didn't say that!"

What follows is an inside look at what the staff goes through - one day out of their seven-day production schedule.

So the next time the paper comes out late, or someone's name is spelled wrong, think about walking a mile in a Hilltopper's shoes.

By ROBERT J. VICKERS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1989

It's 6 p.m. This week, *THE HILLTOP* is budgeted for 16 pages—predetermined by the amount of advertisements sold for the week.

Only the Local section, one section out of 10 is completed.

At 6:25 Editor-in-Chief Alonza Robertson walks into the third-floor typesetting room to talk with Chief Copy Editor Rebecca Little. He enters to chart the progress of the remaining sections, amounting to more than half of the paper.

Little oversees three copy editors, who revise articles to conform to the newspaper's style, and then to electronically "send" the edited "copy" to the typesetting machine in the basement.

Since the facilities are limited to three computer terminals and only one of them can send copy to the typesetter, Little has compiled about 12 stories to send, but can't.

"How can I send stuff when they put the machine on pause," she screams out in frustration.

Section editors and and production staff place the typesetter on pause to remove a canister containing light-sensitive paper. It must not be exposed to light until it is stay inside the canister until it is processed through a "developer" machine, containing three different chemicals to develop the copy like film.

"It's always the little things that get us."

—Alonza Robertson
Editor-in-Chief

the house and prompts her two assistants to work faster.

"I want to be home before the sun comes back up," she says.

Downstairs in the basement, the Hilltoppers must be laid out again because of last minute changes. This holds up the section editors from completing their pages.

At 7:10 Robertson is told most of the stories for this week are in the system, but need to be edited. He does not look pleased.

Attempting to retrieve a strip of copy from a wax machine, National Editor Lenora Harris burns her fingers on hot wax. The production staff pays little attention since they often burn fingers and get jabbed with razor blades, used to cut strips of copy.

Robertson returns to the basement production area to see if International Editor Tina Travers has finished her page. She tells him what she is waiting on.

"Let's get going and get international out of here," Robertson screams.

He moves to the developer machine to check copy as it rolls out, still dripping wet with the pungent chemicals. He notices streaks of grey residue on the

copy and knows the residue will reproduce when printed.

He grabs a towel and to wipes off the residue within a few minutes. Robertson says the developer is more than four years old, it breaks down frequently and rarely works properly.

He makes a quick decision and stops all stories being sent to the typesetter. He

begins to make, what amounts to, several attempts to fix the developer.

He instructs Cobb to cut up a sponge and deposit the pieces in a basin with soapy water for editors to use when wiping the residue from the copy.

At 7:20, Maxwell is planning the layout of front page. Seeking a moment of refuge to gather her thoughts, Buckner sneaks away to the editors office and sits alone with the lights off and door closed in silence.

Down the hall in the typesetting room, Little must re-send the 12 stories she was trying to send earlier, because of the problems with the typesetting machine.

Section editors call her from the basement complaining that they have been waiting for headlines, cutlines and copy for an hour.

"I'm sending in between editing," she responds in frustration.

Robertson returns to the typesetting room and begins to personally edit the editorials for the week.

Since the editorials represent the formal stance of the newspaper, Robertson reviews the work of Editorial Editor, Malcolm Carson.

In the hallway, Kim Johnson, assistant photo editor, confers with section editors on which pictures have been taken, which pictures have not been developed and which pictures were not taken at all.

"Most pictures have been taken," she says. "Soccer pictures still need to be developed and Shelia (Maxwell) still needs seven pictures developed."

It's 7:25 and Travers is on her way out the door. "I'll be back after the Cosby Show," she says smiling. "The developer isn't working anyway."

After Travers leaves, Cobbs sits lamenting on the

Close to the Edit

Lori Buckner, Hilltop associate editor, assists Rebecca Little, Hilltop chief copy editor, with revisions in articles, headlines and cutlines.

couch.

"One of the (developer) chemicals is defective," she says. "We just got a new batch in this morning, but the whole batch must be bad because the (developer) filter continues to clog every 20 minutes."

Five minutes later, in the adjoining typing room, Shrona Foreman, the other assistant campus editor, begins editing briefs for the campus page.

With a fan blowing on high, she struggles to keep the typewritten briefs on the table.

Fans are used in the house because only two of seven air conditioners have worked in the last year.

Robertson, apparently finished with the editorials, tells Foreman to allow another section to use the terminal. Foreman does as he says.

Moments later, Maxwell instructs her to continue typing. Foreman does as she says.

Meanwhile, Harris is frantic. She can not find a picture she had planned to use with her story on the Black Panthers. She has begun a desperate search on all three floors.

A reporter enters the house. Astonished at the serious nature of business and perhaps not wanting to get involved, he locates Stacey Phillips, Health and Fitness editor, and inquires about an assignment.

At 7:35, Maxwell and Foreman are having trouble retrieving the campus briefs from a computer disk. Maxwell works to retrieve the file and gives up 15 minutes later.

"Type them over," she instructs Foreman.

Foreman shrugs, smiles and starts over.

By 8 p.m., Carson enters the office and sits down with Artist Paul Davies on the couch. They confer on the editorial cartoons for the week.

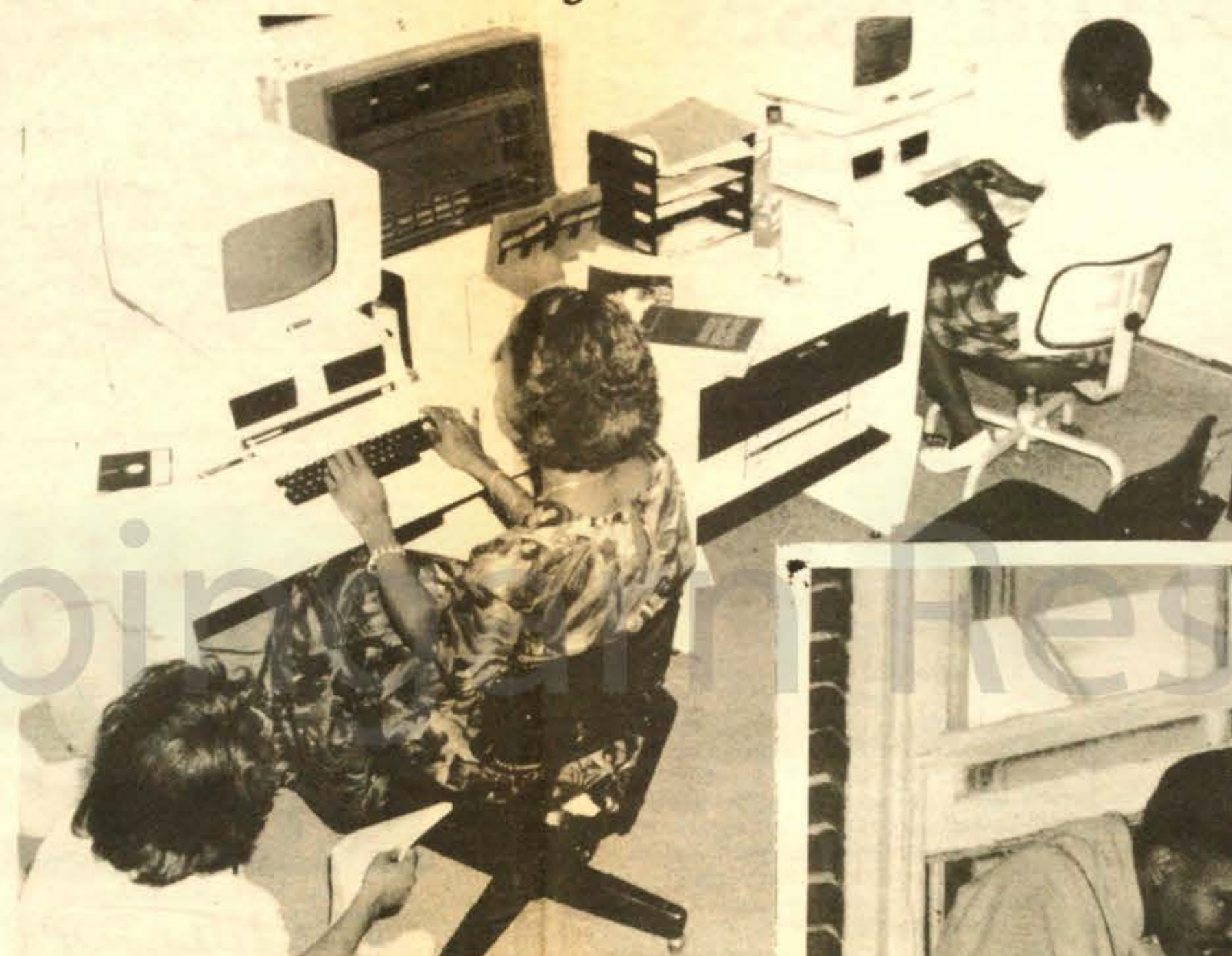
Robertson is concerned. An hour has passed, Burgess has not returned from *The Record* and his equipment isn't working.

By 8:35, he moves on to check the progress of layout in the basement. Five minutes later, Cobb comes from the basement and announces to the staff that the copy must be washed before it is laid out.

Upstairs, in the typesetting room, it is 8:55 and Foreman has been moved again.

Now she's writing headlines for the campus section, but is having trouble making them fit into the allotted space.

At 9 p.m., Davies sits at the receptionist desk,



(Above) Managing Editor Zack Burgess and Associate Editor Lori Buckner review a page layout and (Right) Production Manager Serrita Cobb and Burgess place special inserts into *The Hilltop* before it is distributed.

on the first floor, drawing artwork for the editorial pages. To him, the tension is commonplace. As the senior staff member, Davies has seen firings, arguments and walkouts.

"But the paper always comes out," he says as Burgess enters from *The Record*.

It's now 9:10 and then-Sports Editor Charissa Holloway is pleased to hear from reporter Bruce Speight. Speight has telephoned her and says he will turn in a preview of the football game against Bethune Cookman College.

Robertson, who's mood has worsened, picks up the line and asks Speight if he could include information from the previous football game against Grambling State University.

After Robertson explains how a mixup on his part caused the designated reporter and photographer to miss their transportation to the game, Speight agrees to include the information.

Robertson is satisfied, but still angry.

For the rest of the night, section editors struggle against the clock trying to make the midnight deadline.

Headlines are sent and sent again, copy is lost and found, and some pages are finished—others are not.

Robertson has been checking the time all night. Lifting his wrist to his face, he reads the time.

He has lectured the staff many times on the time every Thursday night when an hour's worth of work turns into three hours of work. So far his words have fallen on deaf ears.

Dragging with exhaustion, Robertson peers up to the clock and reads the time as 6 a.m.—the sun will be up soon.

"It happened again," he grumbles. He and his remaining staff, about eight people, continue to

work despite their exhaustion.

When the production is done and taken to the printer, it is approaching 10 a.m. Robertson shakes his head in disgust, but he is glad it is done—for this week.

"It's always the little things that get us," Robertson later said. "The headlines, cutlines, jump heads and corrections always seem to make it drag on forever."

"Plus, there is always that time everyweek when the staff starts chillin'. An hours worth of work takes three hours," he noted.

By 9:30 a.m., the Hilltoppers who were lucky enough to finish before dawn begin to trickle onto campus. Plagued by lack of sleep, they stumble around campus.

Some have homework due, others have exams. The lucky ones were able to scan a chapter or two before catching three hours of sleep. The unlucky have not seen their bed for 24 hours, are wearing yesterday's clothes and have not studied for their midterm exam that started 20 minutes ago.

Robertson is nowhere to be found. At *THE HILLTOP* offices, the phone begins to ring off the hook at about 10 a.m.—when the paper started being printed.

"When is *THE HILLTOP* coming out," several callers ask. The receptionist can't answer honestly. Generally there is an eight hour turnover time before the paper comes back from the printer.

Other callers are more abrupt: "We haven't gotten our *HILLTOP* in three weeks! What's the matter with you people, don't you know how to put out a simple newspaper?"

For Robertson, there is no such thing as a "simple newspaper." While his staff struggles to go to classes and his receptionists are bombarded by the weekly Friday campus-wide harassment, he searches in vain to find a moment to sleep.

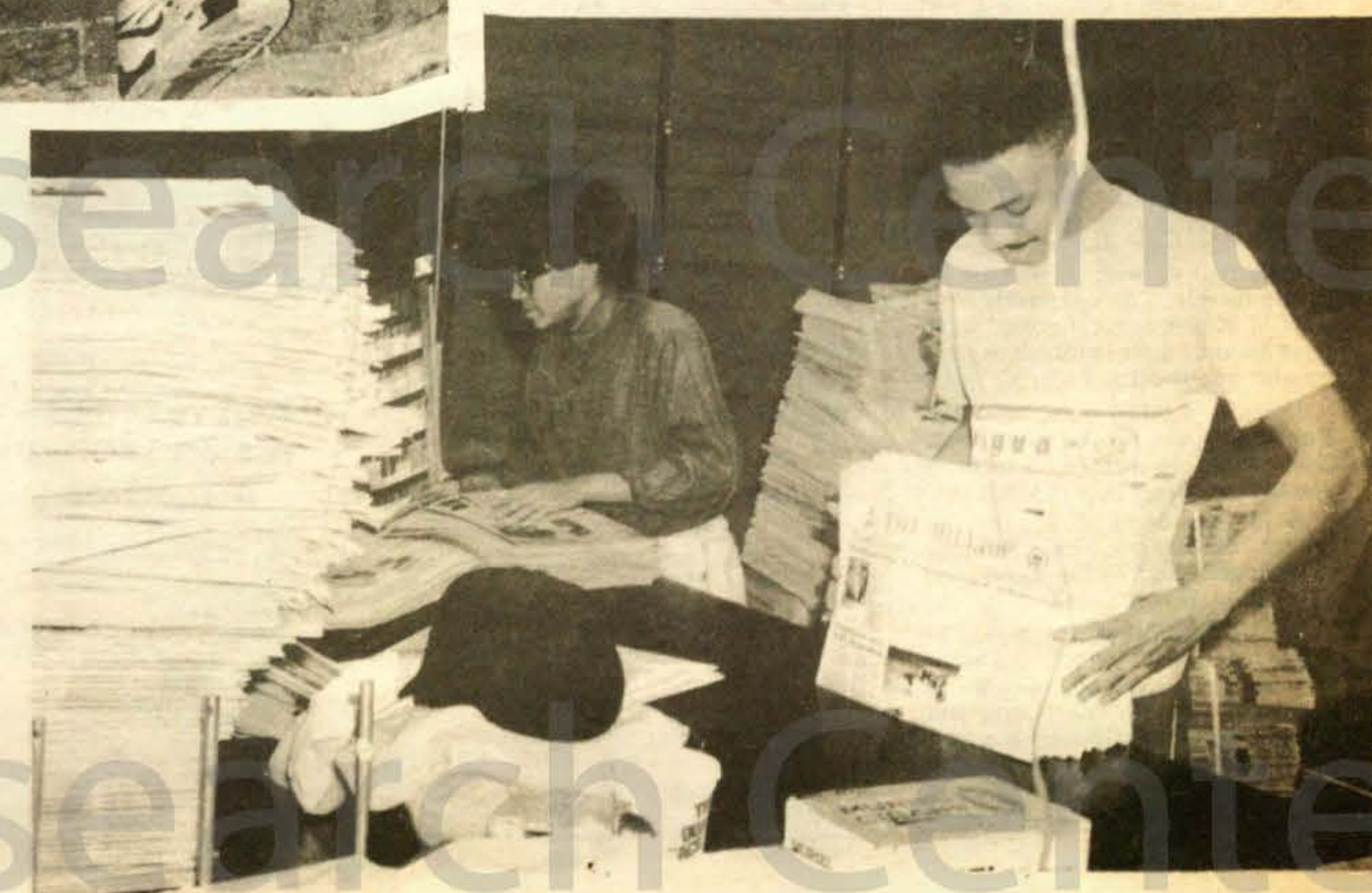
Duties as *HILLTOP* Editor-in-Chief do not stop once the paper has been "put to bed."

In addition to missing a few classes Friday, he doesn't make it to his weekly 5 p.m. meeting, but Buckner and Burgess do.

Although the paper is not yet available for critique, the two talk candidly with staffers. They commend those who finished their work on schedule and criticize those who did not.

After the meeting, assignments for next weeks stories and photographs are made, and another week of *HILLTOP* production is underway.

THE HILLTOP hit the campus at about 6 p.m. Friday evening—24 hours after this look inside the final night of production madness began.



State of The Hilltop Addresses

Zack Burgess

Hilltop Managing Editor

I can vividly remember coming to Howard University with no direction. A new person in a new place. I can recall walking past this little white house at 2217 4th St., N.W. and immediately becoming proud that my college newspaper was the nation's largest black student newspaper—with no idea what this place was about or the work that people put into it day after day.

Then, there I was sophomore year, quite bored with my student activities and decided I was going to give journalism a shot. The first story I wrote was for the International page of The Hilltop.

Here I was thinking the story was really good, then again, that story had no quotes and I didn't interview a single soul. I have since forgotten what the story was about.

Then there was the following year and The Hilltop was without a Sports Editor—so I lied my way into the job. Here I was begging Ms. Leslie Lewis, university advisor, and then Editor-in-Chief Naomi Travers to give me a shot, constantly talking about what a great job I could do with the sports page. Well, was I in for an experience.

That first week I didn't leave The Hilltop until seven o'clock Friday morning, and I argued with this girl who knew nothing about sports almost everyday that year.

Well today things are quite different. I get mad at people who lie to me about their qualifications and extremely angry with people who don't think enough to ask questions when covering an event.

Then there was my second year as Sports Editor. Man was I excited. I walked around The Hilltop with a little chip on my shoulder, because I thought no one on Howard's campus could tell me anything where sports was a concern (sometimes I still have a tendency to think this way).

But, former Editor-in-Chief Suzanne Alexander crushed that little ego, dismissing me from my duties, sending me packing. Yes, my ego was crushed and I felt as if I had lost my girlfriend.

Well, today I'm back at The Hilltop, but this time in a totally different capacity—I'm Managing Editor this year and the responsibilities that go with the job are insurmountable. You constantly see a staff of 70 people get flustered when there are only three terminals to work on and one is often broken.

The job is taken quite seriously. I'm sure I speak for the entire staff. Each week these people try to bring you the best paper they possibly can.

A lot has been learned in this house: hard work, unselfishness, togetherness and love for people, you never thought you could.

Many of us are stressed, trying to juggle our books, school, and what little social life we can manage to come up with. So, next time you wonder where The Hilltop is....just think about the people down at that little house on 4th and Bryant, and remember that we are people too.



Current Hilltop Business Manager Donald Christian (Near Right) and current Editor-in-chief Alonza Robertson inform the Hilltop Policy Board of the "extreme situation" facing the paper's immediate future.

Lori Buckner

Hilltop Associate Editor

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for a staff of sleepless would-be professional journalists to assemble the 'Nation's Largest Black Newspaper' in an old and possibly haunted house, you can be sure The Hilltop is alive and well.

"Well" may be a bit strong, but we're doing the best we can. Sometimes I think the newspaper is produced on luck and perseverance. Working here is what your mother calls a "character-building experience."

Computers—the few we have—break down regularly. Long, irregular hours give way to a revolving staff box. The first few weeks of each year are like journalism boot camp: little sleep, bad food, no social life and an average of 16 credit hours to squeeze in somewhere in between. To date, we have lost four staff members.

Still, as far as I am concerned, you've got to love it. Call me a newspaper nerd (occasionally, I've been known to walk around with line tape stuck on my shoe), but I get a rush with each Friday's issue.

It's an addiction. By Thanksgiving, we'll have our own chapter of Hilltoppers Anonymous: "Hello, my name is Lori and I've been a 'Topaholic for three years."

Perhaps it's more the environment than the work that has kept me here for so long.

Besides the fact that after a few months you have no other friends because you have no life to speak of, 2217 4th St. is compelling because it holds some of the best people, crickets, mice and ghosts I've ever encountered.

We keep the ghosts on staff so that we have someone to blame the typos on. The crickets have been here a while, and the mouse is new but my life would not be nearly as exciting without it. My colleagues are the big family I never had. We fuss, fight, play and work as hard as any family there is.

Masochism is in vogue here. Hilltop women have concluded that PMS affects both genders and computers too. Stress is always on the menu but there is always comradery for dessert.

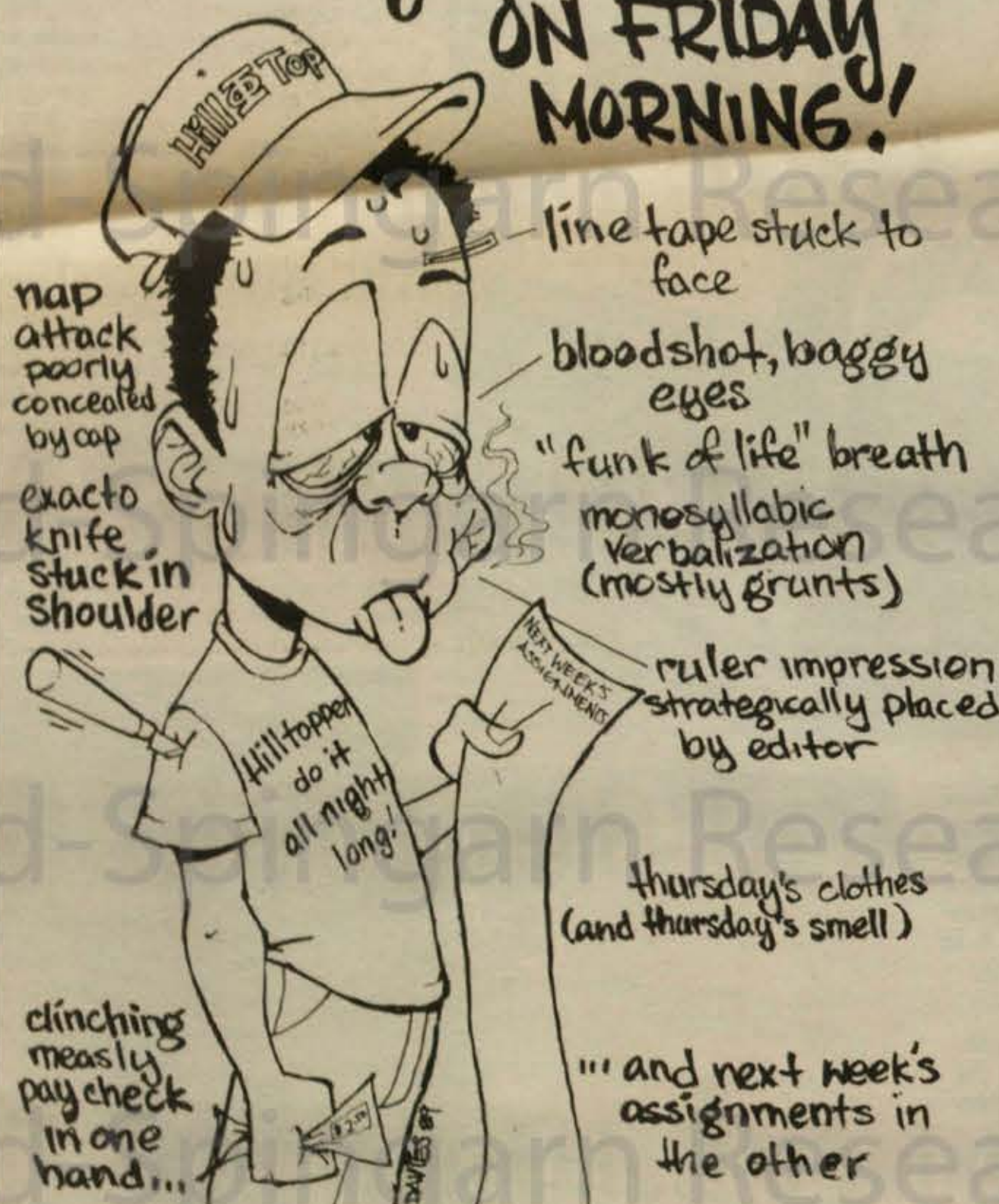
It's only October and I'm proud to have legs like She-Ra from scurrying up and down the mountain of stairs. I am inspired to keep going when I see the successes this place has produced over the years. I am even more encouraged that they are sane, contributing members of society. There is hope for me yet.

Do I worry about the future of The Hilltop? Worry, no but I will always care.

I know the paper will survive if for no other reason, because the game is not over. Despite the tough times, The Hilltop makes me laugh. Chances are that upon graduation all the bad memories will fade away. Only the fond ones will remain.

Right. Nevertheless, I love my job.

ANATOMY of a HILLTOPPER ON FRIDAY MORNING!



Once upon a time there was this house...

Follow the practical jokes, misadventures and never-before-told secrets circulating at 'The House'

By CRISTAL BARON

On any given day at Howard University you can see Fine Arts students playing music on the Yard and a crowd in the Punch Out.

But at night, you could see a student climbing on the roof of *THE HILLTOP* office building and being arrested by Howard security.

That's the type of thing Hilltoppers do after spending long hours in "The House" at 2217 Fourth Street.

However, there is a good reason why Alonza Robertson, last year's managing editor and the current editor-in-chief, was climbing on the roof.

One night last spring, the hinges on the front door of the office broke and the door was wedged shut. The staff couldn't get out.

With no other way out of the building, Robertson climbed out of the second story window, onto the roof, down the building and almost to safety.

"Hold it right there. What are y'all doing in there?" Howard University's security division was on the job.

"It must have looked pretty strange—the window wide open, the lights on, curtains blowing in the wind and me climbing on this pole," said Robertson.

Like Robertson, Hilltoppers have many tales to tell about things that have happened in and around their house.

"It's more than just a newspaper," added Robertson. "We eat, sleep and party. We do everything here."

The house itself has its own folklore. It was once thought that Charles Drew, the pioneer of blood plasma, once lived in *THE HILLTOP* house, but he lived around the corner.

Staffers have passed down the tale that when Drew was a surgeon at Freedman's Hospital, now the School of Communications, he brought hearts home to his private laboratory.

At night, as the story goes, it sometimes sounds like the walls are beating—just like Drew's hearts.

Another eerie *HILLTOP* happening occurred about three years ago when then editor-in-chief Purvette Bryant thought she found a dead body in the basement.

Paul Davies, staff artist for the last four years, said when Bryant saw what she thought was a corpse, "she came running up the stairs screaming."

Former production assistant Herb Eaton had designed a life-size mannequin of himself for a class project and had stored it at the house.

It Really Happened!

*Current Managing Editor Zack Burgess once had a gun pointed at his head when he was accosted by Howard Security officers.

Burgess, who first tried to flee, but threw his hands up when the officers caught up to him, was entering the School of Communications late at night from an unauthorized entrance.

*Film Director Spike Lee once made a personal visit to *THE HILLTOP* to correct a report that Vanessa Williams walked off the set of *School Daze*.

*The last three editors of *THE HILLTOP* were members of black greek organizations, which has led Staff Artist Paul Davies to dub the paper "The Greektop."

*During the 1985-86 administration of Carol Winn, the staff tried to remove Winn from her post. Undaunted, Winn fired most of the staff and hired a new staff composed mostly of freshman.

*When actor Eddie Murphy was rumored to have been dating a Howard coed, reporters from the tabloid press called *THE HILLTOP* looking for information.

When one reporter reached then managing editor Alonza Robertson, Robertson refused to comment on the record. The following week, *STAR* magazine quoted someone named Al Roberts, *HILLTOP* managing editor, as saying: "Eddie Murphy has not been on this campus. If Eddie Murphy was on campus I would know it."

"That thing was eerie even though you knew it was dummy," said Davies. "Purvette was acting like it was the anti-Christ."

HILLTOP stories are not always so serious. In fact, the house is rampant with practical jokes.

But the papers' most famous practical joke came with Editor Naomi Travers in the April 1, 1988 issue.

Under "THE ILLTOP" masthead, headlines read: "Hilltop sued for libel, Tuition will be free in fall," and "21 paternity suits filed against student."

Accompanying the libel story was a picture of Travers and former business manager Malcolm Carter leaving the office, covering their faces.

The paternity story picture featured staff photographer Paul Woodruff saying: "I didn't know I was so potent."

Robertson, then campus editor, said he didn't think Travers was serious about publishing that page.

Because the paper had developed a reputation on campus for breaking scandalous stories, the libel story, which led the page, received the most response among students.

That Friday, staffers said they heard responses like: "Serves them right," and "It's about time."

"People thought they were real stories," said Robertson. "We got them good that time."

But to Robertson's dismay, *THE HILLTOP* has also been on the other end of practical jokes.

"One night someone called in a cross-burning on the yard," said Davies. "You would have thought everyone on staff ran track. We flew up there."

"Everybody bolted," added Robertson. "When we got to the yard, it was like slow motion. Everyone slowed down. We looked to the right and looked to the left," but no cross.

"We even started looking for burn marks in the grass," he said. "All we could say was, 'We've been suckered.'"

In the day-to-day workings of the paper, strange things continue to happen—things disappear and equipment breaks down.

The ghost of Charles Drew gets the blame for those too.

"Something won't allow this paper to be printed smoothly," said Robertson. "I've spent four years trying to figure out what. Everything will be going well, then the power will go out, the computers will break down and the machines won't work."

Robertson added that he knows the house is haunted because he once spent the night there alone.

"I had just gotten back in town, but it was too late to move into my dorm room, so I decided to sleep in *THE HILLTOP*," he said.

Robertson said that night he heard a heart beating, chairs squeaking and doors slamming.

"I was there by myself and the phone would ring and when I picked it up, there was just a dial tone," he added. "I'll never do that again."

Current Tempo Editor Keith Alexander agreed with Robertson.

"I don't believe in ghosts, but something strange is in this house," he added.

Hilltop History Makers



In February of 1983, students staged a protest, siezing the administration building, when, then-Editor-in-chief, Janice McKnight was expelled from

Howard after she wrote articles claiming sexual discrimination in the administration.



Former Editor-in-chief Carol Winn (1985/86) once fired 14 staffers, leaving her with staff of nine.

Making It Work



Copy Editor Donna Lee (front) laments over editing a poorly written story, while sports reporter Bruce Speight puts the finishing touches on a game story.



Production Manager Sereita Cobbs (Left) helps Editor-in-chief Alonza Robertson remove jammed paper from

The Hilltop's developer, part of the paper's problem-ridden typesetting computer system.



The Campus page, edited by Shelia Maxwell, is one of the six sections designed each week in the basement of The Hilltop.

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