United Kingdom: London Summer Internship Program
Of trash bins and today’s realities
By Zina Kumok
June 21, 2009

It happened the first time I rode the tube. I had finished drinking my coffee and tried to throw it away. But when I looked around, I couldn’t find a trash can. I couldn’t find one at the next stop or inside the tube station.

One of the first things I noticed on the tube was its lack of trash cans.

I didn’t understand it. The tube is clean, for the most part free of litter. And there are plenty of bins outside.

I asked my co-workers why, and one of them said the IRA used to place bombs in trash cans. While the IRA is no longer a major threat, the bins haven’t been put back. The relatively new emergence of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups has replaced the IRA in the news.

It made me think about how terrorism affects daily lives. In America, I only notice any changes caused by terrorism if I’m traveling in an airport. Other than that, the threat of Al Qaeda doesn’t touch me in Memphis or in Bloomington.

And while not having a trash can isn’t a major inconvenience, it’s just one example of how a city has to adapt to the reality of bombings.

Comparing Brit and U.S. Reporting
Newspapers in London more like broadcast in U.S.
By Sarah Brubeck
June 18, 2009

Reporting in the states is simple. It’s familiar and comfortable, and reporters always strive to be ethical, or at least that’s what we’re supposed to accomplish.

But in London, the rules aren’t as hard and fast. Brits pose photographs, pick political sides in their coverage and use PR representatives as common sources, all in the name of journalism.

My first assignment involved a protest with the Guide Dog Association in London. While reporting on the protest, I was surprised to see how posed the photographs were. Action shots were taken, but the first thing the protesters did was stand for several group shots from several different news organizations, definitely not something we do in the states.

I’ve also discovered that PR representatives are more aggressive. Whenever I’ve reported in the past, PR representatives send out a press release and help with contacts, but in London, they are more involved. For instance, before any protesters arrived on the scene, I was shaking hands with a councilman’s PR representative and scheduling an interview with the man of power.

. . . The writing style is different, too. For my internship at a weekly regional paper, the stories are quick and to the point. The writers don’t waste time writing catchy leads. They get the news to you and move you on to the next story.

It’s refreshing, though, to see so many news outlets in one city. At the same time, the newspapers in London are more like broadcast in the states. They have a political viewpoint and all their readers are aware of it. They openly show their biases with no shame and many of the designs are in a tabloid format.

Though I’m adapting to the differences, as an American journalist, I still yearn for a clean design with less biased reporting (though I’m giving American journalists more credit than they sometimes deserve).

Sarah Brubeck experiences navigating the streets without sight during a demonstration she covered for her internship job. Caroline Weston (right) of the Guide Dog group is with her. Brubeck is finding differences in how British media cover events.
Chile: Media in Latin America: Messages & Moguls: Dictators & Democracy
Exploring Chilean journalism: CNN and Paula magazine

By Samantha Felix
May 19, 2009

We rose early and, dressed to the nines in business attire, all 18 of us met in the lobby to discuss the day’s events. With butterflies in my stomach, hearing “CNN Chile” both excited me and made me nervous. Having just written a 12-page paper on CNN and CNN Chile, it was my duty to fill everyone in on CNN before we left.

When we arrived, we were introduced to two men on staff at CNN Chile. The first man, Rodrigo Fernandez, is the director of technology and operations for CNN Chile. He was followed by CNN veteran, Rolando Santos, the senior vice president for Turner Latin America and the senior strategic adviser in charge of supervising the launch of CNN Chile last December.

Hearing these men speak their names, I recognized them from my research paper as two of the most important men related to the launch of CNN Chile. They are real, I thought to myself.

Regaining composure, I listened to Santos explain why he and Fernandez chose the Latin American country of Chile over others. He said three vital factors must come into play: finding good partners who know they are solely there to fund the project and not control it; the ability to do CNN style news without a lot of censorship; and a high interest in media. Chile provided these three things and much more.

Santos also began handing out advice like the free pens we received at the end of the visit. He spoke of experience and literacy, but more important, education. Santos told us everything we would learn today about technology would be obsolete in five years, but not to worry because we should learn what we need for the present and keep moving forward.

France: From London to Paris: In the Footsteps of Ernie Pyle
Meeting a legend in Paris

By Kevin Pozzi
March 20, 2009

Our first full day in Paris began with a breakfast of chocolate croissants, slices of ham, Swiss cheese and a machine to squeeze oranges into fresh juice.

Following that indulgence, our group boarded the Metro for downtown Paris. After emerging from the mess of tunnels, we found ourselves in one of the older sections of the city. We paused briefly for reflection and photography at the oldest square in Paris, the Places des Vosges, but the children and couples lounging around the park benches added a youthful touch to the historic place.

Our journey continued down a few small alleys to the home of our guest speaker, John G. Morris. At 90 years old, Morris energetically detailed his life experiences in the journalism world—as well as his firsthand interpretations of various 20th century wars.

Morris, who met Ernie Pyle during WWII when he was his tent mate one evening, said, “Ernie was especially nice to me . . . he was the only correspondent to say goodbye.”
Korea: Technology, Change & the News
The DMZ: A close look at history—and the present
By Riley Visiting Professor Dennis Elliott
March 19, 2009

Today was filled with a step back into history through a trip to the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ.

Although faced with rain and fog, the students learned much from the guide about how South Koreans view the DMZ today. The weather prevented a look at North Korea, but below ground was a different matter. The students followed one of five tunnels that were discovered in the late 70s that were clearly intended to be used as means to invade South Korea. The trip down the tunnel was difficult but the walk back up was even more so. Nevertheless, all survived and appreciated the seriousness and significance of their walk.

While in the DMZ area, the students also visited the last train station stop in South Korea, Dorasan Station, which boasts a modern appearance and expectations of handling a large volume of traffic eventually (“when the country is unified” once again). Included on the tour was a stop at the Freedom Bridge, which has been the scene of much emotion over the years as prisoners were exchanged following the war and South Koreans returned to their homeland.

Japan: International Public Relations
Learning at Nissan
By Anna Schilawski
March 18, 2009

After spending yesterday sightseeing at Nikko, we were ready to get down to business at one of the world’s renowned automobile manufacturers, Nissan. From the agenda, we knew we were scheduled to tour one of the three Nissan plants in Japan, the Oppama plant. However, we did not realize the royal treatment that was in store for us.

Nissan’s team members Yoshie Yamasaki and Kyoko Kushida welcomed us to the plant around 9:30 a.m. It was there we took pictures with the newest car models and viewed a short video. As we toured the plant, we saw Nissan’s vehicle assembly line operate firsthand. I quickly realized why this is something many people dream of seeing in their lifetime. From the detailed inspection of the specific vehicle bodies to the test driving, our class witnessed it all. We learned how Nissan’s synchronized production system functions in a strict manner to uphold standards. The morning ended with a Q & A with one of the highest executive members. Then we had a traditional bento box lunch. We then were ready for the second half of the day at Nissan’s Global Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility Division headquarters, in the Ginza area, a 30-minute train ride from Tokyo. General manager Okamura began the afternoon presentation, followed by Pauline Kee, Caroline De Gezelle and Kyohei Noguchi. Each talked about sectors of the Nissan headquarters including global, alliance and brand communications. Even though the economic crisis was mentioned, the tone throughout the presentation remained hopeful for the automotive world.

Our day came to an end around 6 p.m., and we toured Ginza, about 30 minutes from Tokyo station. Known for having the world’s most expensive real estate, Ginza also features expensive shopping. We saw melons going for hundreds of dollars, along with the best looking desserts in Japan.

The day would not have been possible without our Nissan tour guides and Hiromi-san. We owe them a big “Arigato” or “thank you” for all their efforts to make the day possible. It truly was a once in a lifetime opportunity and a great learning experience.

Chip Cutter at the end of the Freedom Bridge walkway with a backdrop of messages to relatives of South Koreans trapped in North Korea and remembrances to those lost. Photo by Dennis Elliott