



ARTIFACTS

A Journal of Undergraduate Writing

A History of the Maneater

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In 1955 when Joel J. Gold, better known at the time as Joe Gold, was approached with the opportunity to become editor of The Maneater, he was unaware of the change he was about to make. He was also unaware of the impact he was about to have on the student body of the University of Missouri-Columbia. He was your average Joe trying to make his way through college. A sociology student, Joe Gold had little experience with newspapers. At the time he was the editor of ShowMe, which was the University's humor magazine. Although Gold was new to the idea of a student newspaper, the University of Missouri-Columbia was not.

The Missouri Student

In 1926 the University of Missouri-Columbia had created its first student publication called The Missouri Student. By the year 1950, the publication had developed into a Greek Town rag and society paper. From 1950 to 1955, six members from the Delta Upsilon Fraternity controlled The Missouri Student (UMC Archives, C: 1/141/2). The Missouri Student was slowly veering off the path of a typical newspaper and had turned into an extra long gossip column. Not only was The Missouri Student publishing useless information, but the circulation of the paper had been poor. Also, not many students were interested in working for the publication (UMC Archives, C: 1/141/2). When Joe Gold realized what was happening to his distinguished University's newspaper, he spoke up with the idea that he could possibly improve it.

The Maneater

A picture paints a thousand words, but is it possible that a name could also? When I discovered The Maneater two years ago, the first thing I wondered was, What is with the name? What exactly is a maneater? I immediately thought of Nelly Furtados rendition of Maneater and sang the lyrics in my head. Shes a maneater, make you buy cars, make you cut cords, wish you never met her at all. Then I realized that the name obviously did not come from that song. I jumped at the opportunity to research and write about my University's student newspaper. The first thing I researched was the reasoning behind the name.

The name travels all the way back to the year 1955 when Joe Gold became founding editor of The Maneater. Even though the student newspaper had been around since 1926, I write founding editor because Joe Gold is the one that changed the name from The Missouri Student to The Maneater.

The name Missouri Student, the first Maneater said, reflected the editorial policy of the former paper quite

well. It signified nothing (UMC Archives, C: 1/141/2). Every five years The Maneater produces a commemorative anniversary issue with a few articles about the history of the publication. Thirty years had passed since 1955 and The Maneater had asked Gold to write an article for the special edition. The topic was, of course, how he chose such a unique name for the newspaper. Five years earlier The Maneater had done a special twenty-five years anniversary issue. The staff produced a story about the origin of the name, except they published the wrong facts. When Joe Gold wrote his story for the thirty year anniversary issue, he corrected their mistakes and explained the whole story. He wrote:

The reporter had opened his story with a snappy lead, based somewhat loosely on what I had told him: A tiger becomes a maneater when it is too weak to hunt for tougher prey. That was the reasoning The Maneaters first editor, Joe Gold, used when he renamed the UMCs campus newspaper. Reasoning? Certainly not. I didnt plan it that way. But what did a lad from the suburbs of New York City know about tigers? I thought maneater sounded dangerous-bold, fearsome, watch-your-step-in-my-jungle tough. Oh, I was really proud of that name.

Joe Gold was later corrected by a University physician by the name of Dr. George X. Trimble (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). Dr. Trimble played an important role in Golds epic tale of the origin of the name. Gold continued his story:

About a week into the spring semester, though, I learned the truth. Painfully. Too much extra-curricular work, too little sleep, and too many drafts in Read Hall had sent me over to the University Health Clinic with a mild case of pneumonia. It was a place I usually tried to avoid-for all the reasons students do well to steer clear of university health services and for a special one of my own. The previous year I had been an editor of ShowMe, the notorious and later banned, campus humor magazine. In one memorable issue (a number of them had been memorable enough to have me on the brink of expulsion) we had immortalized Dr. George X. Trimble, director of the University Clinic, as Tiny Trimble in our parody of Dickens Christmas Carol. As I recall it 31 years later, we had Tiny Trimble being eaten up by a terminal case of athletes foot. The past panel in our cartoon strip showed Tiny Trimble only a severed head on the mantelpiece, saying, God bless us, every one. Well, you can see why I had my personal reasons to stay out of the clinic if I possibly could.

But walking pneumonia overcame even a nervous editors reluctance. I checked into the clinic, and the next thing I knew Dr. Trimble stood poised with a long, sharp-needled syringe of penicillin above my bared bottom. That was the moment he chose to ask me about the newly renamed newspaper. Why maneater? I explained all about fierce and bold, watch-your-step-in-my-jungle, and all that neat stuff. This, mind you, over my shoulder to a man with a legitimate grudge and a sharp needle ready to plunge in.

Do you know, he asked, expressing the last drop of air from the syringe, when a tiger becomes a maneater? I did not, and, frankly, with the cool breeze wafting across my buttocks, I didnt care all that much. But Tiny Trimble was in his element.

It becomes a maneater, he said, about to take the plunge, when it is too old and too feeble to catch its regular prey. There! And then he stuck the other needle in.

After I read Golds article it all made sense to me. These past few years I thought that The Maneater was a random name chosen without thought, and when it comes down to it, it is not random at all! A maneater is a tiger who is too old to catch its own prey. Our mascot is a tiger. The name of our student newspaper really does relate back to our mascot, even if Gold just chose the name to sound dangerous-bold, fearsome, watch-your-step-in-my-jungle tough.

The Maneater Policy

When Gold became editor of The Maneater, there were many things he wanted to change. For starters, he created a new policy. This policy was published in the first issue of The Maneater on February 18, 1955 (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). Gold wrote:

A newspaper has a personality of its own. That personality dictates the editorial policy, and the writers, from the editor on down, must melt their individual differences into the personality of the paper itself.

The maneater by its very name cannot content itself with merely presenting the news. For a newspaper to attempt to walk the fine line of impartiality or to present both sides without indicating where it stands is to commit suicide both in circulation figures and in the minds of its writers.

The maneater is a tiger with fangs bared and claws sharpened ready to analyze the facts and then to pounce. A tiger exists because it is, and not for one group or another.

The maneater recognizes no vested interest, no political party, no group, no matter how powerful. As a publication of the student body of the University of Missouri, the vital consideration must ever be to the entire student body of this university.

The editorials will be aimed toward what is right and against what is wrong. They will be the results of staff fitting themselves to the personality implied and evident to the vital name of the maneater.

Gold opened many doors for the University's student newspaper. He was willing to give not only students, but readers, a chance to express their thoughts. Gold once said, The paper had been in a lot of trouble. It had to be rescued. We weren't trying to be responsible journalists; we were trying to save

the paper (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). The goal of the paper was to inform the students and the faculty of the University of Missouri of the events that were taking place on campus and around town. Gold had succeeded with creating a new face for this striving student newspaper.

Gold gave a voice to a silent campus. Barb Burlison, member of the first staff and The Maneater's advisor from 1985 to 2000 wrote, Back in those days, there was no such thing as freedom of the press for students. You were a part of the University and you did what they wanted. When it was restarted, Joe went to the dean and said he would be editor, but it had to be independent and fierce (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). Gold wanted change to happen on his campus. He was not looking for popularity or credentials. He wanted to create a paper where his fellow classmates could express their voices. By restarting the University's student newspaper that is exactly what happened.

Berry Vs. Kirchhoff

The year was 1957 and Robert Berry had just been named editor of The Maneater for the 1957 to 1958 school year. Berry was a junior, a Political Science major, and a member of the fraternity Beta Theta Pi. He had little experience with The Maneater before taking his role as editor. Former editor Glenn Kirchhoff felt that Berry was extremely unprepared for this role. Kirchhoff disagreed with the Board of Student Publications decision to elect Berry as editor. With any type of publication that involves large amounts of people working together there will always be disagreements. The staff of The Maneater was no exception. Two years prior the

newspaper began publishing again after a short break. There were many problems at hand to work through. Kirchhoff was afraid Berry would not be able to complete the many tasks still at large. Kirchhoff stated, The selection of an editor should be taken in the same view as an immediate appointment. For if the new editor does not possess these understandings and the ability to replace immediately, then he should be ruled out as a possible editor (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). Kirchhoffs other major concerns with Berry were:

Berrys lack of qualifications

Staff problems

Production

Costs

Tradition

Kirchhoff took these concerns to the Board of Student Publications and argued them in a two hour protest! The Board of Student Publications took no action on the protest and kept Berry as editor of The Maneater for the 1957 to 1958 school year. I believe that everyone has to start somewhere. Look at Gold, he had little to no experience with newspapers and he created a newspaper that is still in circulation to this day! It is important to learn the history of The Maneater to appreciate its value even more.

The Maneater Policy of 1985

In 1985, Editor Lamar Graham rewrote The Maneaters policy, but still kept Golds overall ideas in tact. The policy stated:

For 30 years, the maneater has been a publication by, for and of the students of the University of Missouri-Columbia. In that time it has evolved into a paper that serves as the most important source of news for the students of this campus.

We believe the maneater has dual roles. First, the maneater must do its utmost to present to its readers clear, unbiased, balanced reporting. An informed student body is a necessity. Therefore, we will present to our readers the news that affects them-whether it takes place on the campus, local, state, or national levels. We will seek the student angle.

To accomplish this goal, we will remain independent. We are self-supporting through advertising revenues. We recognize no special interest group-except students-no political party and no organization. Our only concerns are those of our constituents.

The maneaters second goal is to protect the interests of students. On our editorial pages, we will strive to defend the rights of our readers. As they were 30 years ago, our editorials will be aimed toward what is right and against what is wrong.

Three decades ago, the founders of the maneater gave this publication a name that implies a vital conscience. That feeling hold true today.

In order for one to appreciate The Maneater it is important to learn and compare the two different policies. The

current edition of the policy holds true for the staff of The Maneater to this day. The goals and intentions of The Maneater have been and always will be to inform the students.

Tuesdays and Fridays

A very interesting fact about The Maneater is that it is separate from the University. The University does not fund the publication. It and has no control on what the newspaper publishes. The Maneater is also completely separate from the School of Journalism. Students make all editorial, design, and photography decisions with the help of the current editor and business manager. All revenue is derived strictly from advertising sales. In other words, companies pay The Maneater to run their ads. In 1978 The Maneater earned over \$100,000! It was the first time in the history of the newspaper to ever achieve such a high amount (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). The paper is distributed on every Tuesday and Friday of the school year. In 2002, there was some talk about turning The Maneater into a daily publication. Patrick Terpstra, who was the editor-in-chief in 2002 stated, Here we are in the one of the most media-saturated towns in America and were still playing in the minor leagues (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). It is true. The University of Missouri is known for its outstanding School of Journalism. Students from across the country come to this school to be able to work with people who will teach them the ways of journalism, yet we still have a paper that runs only twice weekly. It is the one disadvantage The Maneater has.

People and Places

Over the years many students have been fortunate to write for The Maneater. Some even have been lucky enough to work for a distinguished publication after graduation. For example, Ray Hartmann, who is the founder of Riverfront Times in St. Louis, and Bryan Burrough, who is an editor at Vanity Fair. Both men wrote for The Maneater. In The Maneaters fiftieth anniversary issue, writers Derek Kravitz and Jenna Youngs decided to take a new approach on an old topic. They used quotes from past Maneater writers and surrounded their article with them. Julie Bykowicz, managing editor from 1999 to 2000 said, In the sitcom of my life, The Maneater was my Kramer. The goofy bastard kept popping up everywhere but managed to stay endearing while providing comic relief (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). Erik Peterson, staff writer and columnist from 1996 to 2000 said, The Maneater compared to other newspapers is a George Clinton album misplaced in the Neil Diamond section. It is written and edited by people who, in 20 years or so, will attend Pulitzer ceremonies and drink too much at the free bar before picking up their awards (UMC Archives, Vertical File-Newspapers). It is encouraging to read and learn about the different experiences former staff writers had working for The Maneater. It seems that the experiences of Bykowicz and Peterson were truly rewarding.

Jimmy Breslin was right when he said working for a newspaper is a special thing. The history behind The Maneater is much more than an every five years anniversary issue. It is about triumph, courage, and drive. Although many people might ignore issues of The Maneater that are distributed twice weekly I can now say I will not. After researching and learning the magnificent history behind my Universitys student newspaper I could not be more proud. If you want something in life you have to work at it. Over fifty years ago Joe Gold made a difference in the lives of the students at the University of Missouri. Thanks to him students today are still able to express their voices through The Maneater.

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