

*Flagpole* Magazine is an Athens, Georgia-based publication that has been locally owned since 1987. While it's true that newspapers and other forms of print media are becoming obsolete thanks to the availability and convenience of Google, under the right circumstances, niche publications such as the *Flagpole* have remained relatively unscathed. The *Flagpole* covers the music, art, fashion, and food that makes Athens so unique, and this summer I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to work with Gabe Vodicka, the *Flagpole's* music editor. I worked four days a week, and had a number of responsibilities in addition to the normal intern duties, such as getting the mail. I was primarily in charge of the online calendar, which is a very important part of the magazine's drive to connect the Athens community. Every morning I would go through the venue checklist and add the shows that were playing the following week. I also checked the calendar email regularly for any last minute changes and emails from venues that do not have their events posted online. Often times, new bands would pop up and there would be no existing description of them in the system, so it was my job to find out about them and create a description for them myself. I worked closely with the ad department, as well, as they double-checked the calendar once I had added everything and submitted changes for me to make. I also helped compile the annual Guide to Athens, a reference for local musicians that lists everything from recording studios to agents. It was really interesting to learn about the inner workings of the industry in that way.

In addition to maintaining the calendar, I was also fortunate enough to have my writing published. I first wrote a short, 125-word review of a band that was doing a show

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in town and later wrote a much longer, 700-word opinion piece for the back-to-school edition. For days after its publication, I had people emailing me and telling me how much they loved my article and how they sent it to their daughter/son at the University of Georgia to read. I was so flattered by everyone's kind words and the impact my words had made. I can honestly say it was one of my biggest accomplishments and one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

There were many other high points while working at the *Flagpole*, such as AthFest, our annual music festival. Being a *Flagpole* employee, I received free access to all concerts, which was very fun and exciting. I also was able to participate in the Flagpole Awards, which are essentially the Grammys of Athens. It was my job to tweet updates from the Flagpole Twitter account, which you can safely say I had a great time doing. However, there were also a few low points while working there as well. Being an intern is never glamorous, and I think that was something I was unprepared for going into the experience. The work was tedious and dull at times, but that is truly the most negative thing I could say about the entire experience. Overall, the pros outweighed the cons and it was a really amazing, eye-opening experience for me.

At one point in the course of the internship, when things were slow around the office, I began to reconsider my career path perhaps in favor for something more exciting. I felt confined in the office and at times very overwhelmed, especially when reading the articles my boss had written. He is so knowledgeable and a very talented writer, and I began to worry that my skills would never be up to his standards. However, I eventually came to my senses and decided to instead let this fear motivate me to learn

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more about the fundamentals of music and truly hone in on my writing ability. I am thankful to have had the opportunity for Gabe to read my work and critique it himself, because I admire him as a journalist. Overall, I consider my summer at the *Flagpole* to be a success, because the experience I gained is truly invaluable. I am grateful to have experience in my desired field, and to have formed bonds with those that I worked with that will ultimately be of benefit to me. I would not trade my experience for anything, and I am so thankful to have been able to have it.