

Published bi-monthly since 1984, *American Songwriter* magazine is dedicated to exploring “the craft of music” across a myriad of genres spanning from folk and country to hip-hop and R&B. The magazine includes interviews with artists —both well-established and previously unknown—including talents such as Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Neil Young, Garth Brooks, Wilco, Willie Nelson, Billy Joel, John Mellencamp, Drive-By Truckers, Paul McCartney, Elton John, Beck, and Dolly Parton. The magazine also serves as a resource for music business professionals and hosts a bi-monthly lyric contest.

The full-time staff of the office is composed of only four people: publisher Albie Del Favero, editor-in-chief Caine O’Rear, managing editor Evan Schlansky, and operations manager Carrie Acree. Although the office has a small staff, *American Songwriter* maintains a readership of nearly 100,000 readers per issue and over 300,000 unique visitors per month on the magazine’s website. The intimate office environment provided the incredible opportunity to witness a variety of aspects of the publishing process and become a crucial part of the magazine’s editorial team. The magazine also relies heavily on a host of talented freelance writers and designers, but a lot of the magazine comes together through the work of the five summer interns.

The interns at *American Songwriter* are split into two categories: editorial and marketing. I worked as an editorial intern for the magazine, and my primary duties included writing pieces for the magazine’s website, transcribing interviews, and fact-checking articles for both the website and print version of the magazine. Since many of the magazine’s freelance writers

work off-site, it is the duty of the editorial interns to copyedit the articles sent to the office and format the pieces on Wordpress for the magazine's website. The marketing interns handled most of the office's social media, but I also was responsible for writing some of the content for the magazine's Twitter, Pinterest, and Tumblr profiles.

The news pieces I wrote for the magazine's website covered a variety of topics from song premieres and interviews to music industry developments and debates over songwriters' rights. Many of these pieces had a word limit and required a pithy, non-academic style of writing, so it was a serious adjustment from the many lengthy papers I was used to writing at Sewanee. At first it was difficult to convey all that I wanted to say within the allotted word count, but with some practice I was eventually able to confidently write in the concise style that the editors were looking for. My supervisors often asked that I finished many of the articles within an hour or so, and this required me to write very quickly without hesitation. This was very stressful for me at the beginning of the internship, but after I finally learned to trust my own writing I was able to go with my instincts and have an article ready in a matter of minutes.

A high point of my time at *American Songwriter* was definitely the release of the July-August issue of the magazine. I was trusted with the cumbersome task of copyediting and fact checking the entire issue, and my eyes were some of the last ones to look over the issue before it went to print. The edits that the interns made were all taken very seriously, and it was reassuring to have seasoned industry professionals consider my suggestions and thank me for pointing out subtle mistakes. It was also satisfying to see the edits I had made in the final print issue of the magazine, and it was really great to see the final product of our hard work with all of our

names on the masthead. Since the interns were in charge of managing most of the magazine's social media, we got to watch our followers respond to the new issue over Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Watching the responses unfold taught me a lot about the reciprocal nature of social media and how it can serve a company as not only a promotional tool, but as a space for perpetual dialogue between a company and its clients.

It was a tremendous experience to work at a publication such as *American Songwriter*. The close-knit office fostered a fun and cordial atmosphere, and I could not be more thankful to have four mentors such as Albie, Caine, Evan, and Carrie. I learned a lot about working for a national music magazine, but I also learned that what makes a job truly gratifying is having a great team to share your successes with. I acquired a set of skills that I had not anticipated going into this internship, but I am extremely grateful for everything I learned while working at *American Songwriter*. I had not seriously considered journalism before this internship, and the entertainment industry was far from my radar, but I definitely think that my experience at *American Songwriter* has lead me to change my path and pursue a career in either journalism, publishing, or artist management.