

Mary Mashburn, 1961-
Colorado College Class of 1983
Editor, Catalyst 1981
Editor, Critique, 1982

SIDE ONE - CASSETTE ONE

HALL:

This is tape recording number 44 of the Colorado College Oral History Project. The date is March 4th, 1982. I am Sherri Hall, interviewing Mary Mashburn in Tutt Library. Mary was born April 20th, 1961, in Albany, Oregon. She is presently a junior at Colorado College pursuing a major in political economy. Mary is a member of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority. She has been most active, however, in publications at Colorado College. As a freshman, she was a reporter and the arts editor for the Colorado College newspaper, the Catalyst. In her sophomore year, she was the general editor, in addition to continuing as the arts editor for the Catalyst. Now as a junior, Mary is co-editing the Critique, an academic journal containing work done by students for professors in every department at CC. Mary has worked for the local newspaper, the Colorado Springs Sun, in several capacities. She plans to pursue a career in journalism.

I'm here with Mary Mashburn again. I interviewed Mary on December 4th, I think. The tape was blank. Mary was kind enough to come back and let me re-interview her, and I'm very glad, because I thought it was really a valuable interview. So we'll start all over.

Mary, what brought you to Colorado College in the first place?

MASHBURN:

I think most people would say the block plan, and that certainly a factor in coming. It's nice to be able to concentrate on one thing at a time. Also, I had lived in Colorado Springs when I was younger, and took drama lessons here. And so I was familiar with the campus, and with some of the professors, and I liked the atmosphere. I liked the feeling of a small college. Also a college that's liberal arts, you know, that I wouldn't have to be specialized in one field, so I had a chance to learn more things.

HALL:

Uh-hum. So how old were you when you moved to Colorado Springs?

MASHBURN:

Originally I was here when I was eight and nine and ten, and then moved back again when I was a junior in high school.

HALL:

Oh, oh. So you were pretty small when you took drama lessons here?

MASHBURN:

Right, right.

HALL:

Were you acquainted with professors at that time that you know now?

MASHBURN:

There were a couple of them that worked with the program, and many of them have left. Professor McMillen, Miss McMillen, and . . .

HALL:

Did she leave?

MASHBURN:

Yes, she left a couple of years ago.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Describe Jean McMillen. What did she look like?

MASHBURN:

Well, since I was little, it's--[laughter]

HALL:

[laughter] Okay! Well, okay!

MASHBURN:

She was short, kind of wiry. She was always direct in a very dramatic way, very appropriate to the theater, with fascinating jewelry, especially necklaces, and kind of short, wiry hair. It kind of stood out all over her head, and very expressive hands. She waved her hands around a lot when she talked. And a very warm person--you wanted to do well to please her.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And she was good with children--

MASHBURN:

Oh, very good--

HALL:

--as well as college students?

MASHBURN:

Uh-hum.

HALL:

That's unique, I'm sure. Back to your first impressions as a college student. What were your first impressions of the classroom situation?

MASHBURN:

It seemed to me very much like high school. It was not intimidating at all, because about the same number of students, or--I guess my very first class, Renaissance Culture, it would be--had the same number of students that we'd had in high school. Except for calling the instructor "Professor," instead of "Mr." or "Mrs." it was very much the same, and the people seemed the same. So it was not that unique.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And the setting was--you didn't have to adjust to being away from home and that type of thing?

MASHBURN:

Right, right. So it was not that big of a transition. But of course, the class structure--that was very different. I'd say that was the biggest change.

HALL:

The way they taught?

MASHBURN:

Right, freer expression of ideas--

HALL:

Oh!

MASHBURN:

--the subject matter wasn't quite as limited. When you discussed the subject, it was discussed in depth, not just a kind of smattering of information here and there.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Do you recall your impressions of the quality of the students?

MASHBURN:

Um . . . let's see . . . many of them to me seemed very young. I had an impression in my mind that when you came to college, everyone would just miraculously grow up! [laughter] And I think that was a surprise to me, that they were just like in high school! [laughter] Some of them looked like they were straight from junior high! [laughter] And everyone was pretty shy, but very willing to talk because--in my first class, we were all freshmen--

HALL:

Right.

MASHBURN:

--and very much wanted to fit into the campus, and get to know other people quickly, so that it would like campus.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What about socially--what were they like?

MASHBURN:

Well, we had a lot of parties with the class, and I think socially, I realized that they were more mature than people in high school, because they were more willing to sit down and talk about heavy subjects, and not just light kind of chatter--"Where did you go skiing? Where did you used to live?" But a little more in depth, getting to know people a little bit quicker than usual.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Do you--I know I find that conversations, when one is at a loss for conversation at CC you get--"What are you in this block?" "I'm in this; what are you in?" And I've found some superficiality.

MASHBURN:

Sometimes if you--I think most of the time they start out kind of superficial, but it seems to be easier to move to a little bit more detail. "Why do you like the class, what are you learning in it?" Discussing some of the ideas in the class--

HALL:

Yeah. Yeah.

MASHBURN:

--instead of just, "Oh, that's nice!" [laughter]

HALL:

Uh-hum. Uh-hum. Can you give me a list of what organizations and committees have you been involved with at CC?

MASHBURN:

Let's see . . . I was kind of the founder of the off-campus student group, and a member of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority. I've worked on the Catalyst since I was a freshman, and in the second semester of my sophomore year, I was the editor of the Catalyst. And then this year, I'm working on the Critique.

HALL:

Okay. Your off-campus student group was a group for students who lived at home?

MASHBURN:

Not really lived at home, because there're not that many. But rather, it's for students who have never lived on campus. We have transfers from Pikes Peak Community College, and they live in apartments, or they're married, or whatever.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And so they've never--anyone who has never lived in a dorm and is living off-campus. Those are the people we try to reach, because they've never had the dorm life experience, and learned to get around the campus through the dorms, the way that most students--

HALL:

Uh-hum. Right, right. So what activities did you organize to help these students, and what were your aims?

MASHBURN:

When I first started, the aim was, I think, simply for me to get to know people who were living off campus better, and see if we couldn't form a group to help us feel like Colorado College was also our campus, even though we didn't live on it. And so the first year was primarily social.

And the next year we decided that we could use our experience to help people who were going to be on campus for the first time--like us--and so we had special meetings and special introductions--orientation week functions--to show them all those little, kind of insignificant, but really they are important things that help you get to know the campus, where to find things, where to buy your books, where to get

your whistles--you name it. Small things.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Would you say you almost played the role as an RA for these students?

MASHBURN:

In a sense, but more than an RA, friend, because it gives you--an off-campus group give you your very first special contact, so at least you have, oh, ten or 12 people that you know, that you can see on campus and say "Hi" to. So that then you feel more confident to branch out and meet people who live on-campus.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And did you, as the sort of head of this group, did you attend orientation week?

MASHBURN:

Well, we worked closely--the past two years, we've worked closely with the dean's office to plan special events specifically for off-campus commuter students, and those have been included in the orientation schedule. And so it's worked better since we've kind of meshed with the dean's office.

HALL:

And they have supported you? They think it is a good idea?

MASHBURN:

I think the deans and most of the people in the administration have a hard time identifying with the dilemma, because it is such a residential campus, and it's hard to understand how really alienated off-campus students, who have never been on campus, feel. But whenever someone has had a suggestion, whenever I've gone in and talked to them about the problem, they've been very receptive and done what they could to help.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Well, that's great.

MASHBURN:

It's a matter of letting them know.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Okay. And you are a member of the Gamma Phi Beta sorority. First of all, why did you decide to join a sorority--perhaps it was the reasons you were just describing?

MASHBURN:

Right. Part of it is that--I had no intention of joining a sorority. I went through rush, number one, just to see how it worked, because I wasn't at all familiar with the Greek system. And also because I thought it would be a good way to meet people. It really isn't. You see a lot of people, you might learn a few names, but it's rather superficial.

HALL:

Can you--well, I don't know if you want to enlarge your--. Describe rush, the whole process.

MASHBURN:

Well, it was a lot like being in a dressed-up herd of cattle! [laughter] Which is a very unpleasant way to think about it! But I don't think it was my favorite experience, except for finally choosing a sorority that I was very comfortable in. But everyone kind of rounded up in a central room, and got your name-tags pasted on, and I was amazed at how many pearls, and velvet dresses, and pumps, and very dressed up--more dressed up than I'd seen people all year! [laughter]

And then you made the rounds to each of the four houses, stayed for a certain amount of time, I think about 40 minutes, and mixed around meeting the people that were in the house. And they always gave you something to drink or something to eat, and then when your time was up, you moved on to the next house, always staying with the same group of rushees.

HALL:

Uh-hum, uh-hum. And then after that series of parties, you were invited back to the house?

MASHBURN:

Let's see, there were two . . . I think it's two [can't understand] where everybody went. And then you had parties where you received an invitation. Well, you put in what houses you'd like to go back to, and they put in who they wanted to come back, and then they kind of matched up. The process is unknown, except to a few people--it's so strange. But I think then they had two, kind of, I think they called them preference desserts.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And what the rush counselors usually say is, "It's your chance to select them, and their chance to select you."

Mutual selection." So it's--it kind of is, it's a fairly open system, not at all like at most universities, where it's very selective.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

Because there're not that many women going through.

HALL:

Right, right. And many go through who have no intention--

MASHBURN:

Right. Many go through who are purely there to meet people and eat their food. And so I think very often people get into sororities that they want to get in, although I know there have been some hard feelings.

HALL:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, rush must have impressed you some way or another. What made you--what did you think a sorority would have to offer you, back to why you wanted to join?

MASHBURN:

At that time, when you go through rush, you get very caught up in it, and everyone talks about it, and my year it was on a block break, so everyone kind of ate and drank rush for several days. That was the conversation. But I think that had a lot to do with pledging, because you get so caught up in it you just really can't bear not to become a part of it.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

More than that, however, I think because I was off-campus, I wanted a place on campus where I could go to study and relax, have people over to talk to, and not to have to rely just on the library and Rastall, neither of which are very conducive to having a good, relaxing time. Or even a good place to study. And this also was a way to meet more people, and to have a group of people that I could feel comfortable with and knew would always be there for activities.

HALL:

And you did have a sense that that would be achieved--

MASHBURN:

Uh-hum.

HALL:

--definitely throughout your four years?

MASHBURN:

Right. Because the people in the house, I felt very good about, and also I felt that I would be a part of it, because they were very individual.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What is your assessment of the role that, well, the Greek system--sororities and fraternities--play on the Colorado College campus?

MASHBURN:

They're always trying to say that it's--oh, philanthropic, and intellectual, and I think primarily it's social. And it always has been, and there's certainly nothing wrong with that. And the fraternities provide parties for the campus. The sororities don't. Their special functions are more limited to the people in the houses and then the people that they choose to pull in.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

I'd say the sorority function, especially, is a lot more restricted to being in the house. But it's a way to have friends, a way to make new friends, have formals to go to.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Have a sense of belonging to a special group of people outside of, say, your dorm, or your group of off-campus friends, or whatever.

HALL:

Uh-hum. So for those who are not Greek, it's the fraternity parties.

MASHBURN:

And I agree that--

HALL:

I think definitely--

MASHBURN:

--it is an important part of the weekend. [laughter] Every weekend on the campus! And of course, the sororities and the fraternities do support their own philanthropies and charities in town and in the nation.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What are Gamma Phi Beta's philanthropies?

MASHBURN:

Well, it's Easter Seals, and some local ones. They worked on--we worked on Easter Seals--Jerry Lewis Telethon, things like that. And then nationally it's Gamma Phi Beta Camp for underprivileged children or handicapped children.

HALL:

Oh, uh-hum. And what does the Colorado College chapter do specifically?

MASHBURN:

Primarily fund-raising, because for the camp, there are so many things you can do physically, like put together camp kits, and knit, or whatever--

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

--so the big project this year was a fashion show, to raise money from the ticket sales for the fashion show, and that money went to the camp. And then there was an Easter Seal Walkathon, and so it's primarily raising money and sending it to the different charities.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Also, sometimes it's nice to, oh, for instance, we've gone to hospitals on Halloween, or Christmas, or holidays when children are in the hospitals, and it's kind of dreary to be there, and cheer them up. And that puts you in touch with people, which is a little bit more fulfilling than simply raising money and sending it off.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

You never really get to see what work it does.

HALL:

Yeah. And these children--is this still connected with your specific--

MASHBURN:

No.

[both talking at once--can't understand]

MASHBURN:

Right. Going, for instance, walking down to Penrose in costume on Halloween [laughter]

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And passing out candy if they're allowed to eat if, and--telling stories or whatever--

HALL:

And it's fun for you too?

MASHBURN:

Oh, sure!

HALL:

What are some of the problems that the, well, the fraternities, specifically, have encountered with the administration?

MASHBURN:

I think there's always been a concern about alcohol abuse, and drug abuse. Of course, pranks have been a problem off and on over the years. But I think the administration views much less seriously, because they're mainly internal.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But there is a lot of drinking at fraternity parties, and I the administration is concerned that it gets out of hand.

HALL:

How do they crack down?

MASHBURN:

Well, with the Beta House, there were several parties, and several warnings; finally, after one final party, where there was charging at the door for alcohol, which of course, was against state law, the house is--

HALL:

--revoked the charter, or . . . um . . .

MASHBURN:

I don't think they can revoke their charter, but they kicked them out of their house and put them on a probation.

HALL:

Right, right.

MASHBURN:

And they will be reinstated next year.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But--

HALL:

Has it been decided whether they'll be in their house?

MASHBURN:

No. It's still up in the air, because at this point, the house was the one-year [can't understand] living, and then it's residential. And surprisingly, the damage has been about the same as when the Betas lived there.

HALL:

Oh, that's interesting.

MASHBURN:

Uh-hum. Because I think everyone always blamed the Betas for the terrible, trashy condition of the house.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

And it's looked just as bad with the other students, which is a shame, such a beautiful house.

HALL:

Uh-hum, yeah. Well, that's interesting, because they tried to figure, in dollar figures, how much damage they had caused.

Describe a typical sorority dance, the whole process.

MASHBURN:

Let's see. Well, the opportunity, first of all, for young women to get up their courage and ask young men out to a party. I think that's quite a change, and something that you never had to do except on Sadie Hawkins Day, in high

school!

HALL:

Uhhhhh-hummmmmmm!

MASHBURN:

Also, everybody puts down names of friends that they'd like to be invited, so that it's not just exclusively the sorority. You could invite several of the other women on your wing to bring a guest, too. And that makes it a little bit more exciting, and you meet new people.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Anything on the evening--

MASHBURN:

--the women would ask them out to dinner, and then to the dance. And you'd have the option either of taking them out to dinner by yourself, or going out as a group. Because to get--usually the dances are held at the Antlers or the Four Seasons, or the Broadmoor, and they usually have a catered dinner beforehand, and so many couples were supposed to attend that. To help kind of pay for the dance later on.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And then after dinner, it's usually a rock band. It's been interesting, because when I was a freshman, everyone wore long dresses, and over the years the dresses have gotten progressively shorter! So we see a lot more short dresses now.

HALL:

Less formal?

MASHBURN:

No. Still very expensive or very attractive, very feminine dancing dresses, but nothing casual like skirts and shirts or anything, by any means.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

And high heels, little strappy sandals, but just fewer very formal, long dresses. So it doesn't look quite so much like [can't understand]

HALL:

Yeah, yeah.

MASHBURN:

And the men wear--well, certainly not tuxes or anything like that, just suits. But these people--

HALL:

No costume--

MASHBURN:

Oh, dinner jackets, a sweater, oh, anything's fine. Because it just depends on what they have here at school to wear.

HALL:

Right, right. Does the woman pay for the whole evening?

MASHBURN:

Yes. I think it's been sort of established tradition that a date will buy drinks or wine for dinner, or whatever.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But for dinner, certainly, and the cost of the dance, because usually it's very minimal, it's the woman's responsibility.

HALL:

Uh-hum. That makes sense.

MASHBURN:

And then there are fraternity dances--

HALL:

Right. Which are probably--

MASHBURN:

Very much the same.

HALL:

Right, yeah.

MASHBURN:

And then, of course, he can always buy you a corsage, although that, too, fortunately has been dying out.
[laughter]

HALL:

They're expensive.

MASHBURN:

And they're so awkward to wear. [laughter]

HALL:

Yeah. They get wilted.

MASHBURN:

Yes, and then look terrible! [laughter]

HALL:

Yeah. Well, getting away from the Greek system, how would you rate the overall social atmosphere of the campus?

MASHBURN:

Ummmm . . . it's a very social campus, and I think that's good, because--it's good and it's bad. It's rather unusual. CC certainly is not as into dating as it into kind of groups.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Groups out to go bowling; groups go out to see movies, go out for happy hour, whatever.

HALL:

Even to dances.

MASHBURN:

Even to dances. But it's very unusual to find men and women dating just as a pair. And depending on how you look at it, it's either very comforting or not so much fun.

HALL:

It also depends if you're a senior or freshman.

MASHBURN:

Right, right. The freshmen probably will never have a date! I think it's disappointing that so much of the social life has to be geared around alcohol, because there's been a lot of alcohol abuse, and I've noticed that in the last couple of months, a lot of the sororities--especially sororities, more than fraternities, have started talking about the alcohol abuse, and have been worried, because people in the sororities have gotten drunk and have had problems. And I think that people are beginning to realize that you don't have to get drunk to have a good time.

HALL:

Uh-hum. When you talk about alcohol abuse, are you talking specifically about a lot of people drunk at a party, or habitual type abuse?

MASHBURN:

I think that when you have someone who goes out every Friday night, and gets totally smashed--every Friday night, that's alcohol abuse.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And that's happening. And I think people are finally catching on that when you have to get drunk every Friday night, you've got a problem.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Or sometimes every Friday and every Saturday night, and you're really not up for class on Monday.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

Or you've got to spend all day Sunday recuperating, and can't study. And people are finally recognizing that there's some problems with that.

HALL:

Do you think that perhaps there aren't many alternatives to what one might do on a Friday or a Saturday night? Is that maybe the reason?

MASHBURN:

Well, no, I don't think so. I think the problem is simply--it's become the ritual to get drunk Friday and Saturday, and they're getting drunk at parties. And there have also been parties--and very successful parties--theme parties put on by residence halls, where either it was just beer, or absolutely no alcohol served, and they have been equally successful, and people have said that that was a lot more fun.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

It was nice not to have to dance with someone who was so drunk they couldn't remember your name the next day.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

And I think it's simply what's being offered, and if all that's being offered is a chance to go down and stand around in the frat house and get drunk, that's what people are going to do.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

I find it tiresome.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Well, then, moving away from social life on campus, how would you rate the intellectual atmosphere of the campus? You talked about it briefly earlier.

MASHBURN:

You mean classes?

HALL:

Just basically, I think that people have their classes, they have clubs and political groups, and do you find the atmosphere intellectually stimulating, to be around campus?

MASHBURN:

Off and on, and it kind of varies from class to class, because I think classes are still the basis for intellectual life. They've established political action groups, and very often those are still very social-oriented.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And you can get into stimulating intellectual discussions in the library, in the Hub, but it's so much easier if you're both in the same class, and you've got a common point of reference to talk from.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

The last class I was in was very intellectual, and it was exciting to sit around and discuss the things we brought up in class and to apply those things to current events.

HALL:

What class was that?

MASHBURN:

It was political theory, with Professor Tim Fuller.

HALL:

Oh, yes! Describe Tim Fuller.

MASHBURN:

Ummmmm . . . he's tall, and rather stern-looking at first glance. I think nearly everyone in the class was intimidated for three days. [laughter] But he's got a very attractive face, I think, because of very nice cheekbones, aquiline nose, piercing eyes--kind of what you'd expect of the romantic villain! [laughter] Twirling a smile! [???] But he's an excellent teacher. I think he's acquired quite a reputation on campus as being a very tough teacher.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And a rather intimidating man. But I think most of the class found him to be witty. He has a kind of cynical, sarcastic humor, and extremely intelligent. It was very inspiring to be in a class with a professor who didn't need copious notes to teach from; who could apply Socrates to currents very easily, and who could draw students into the discussion and not talk down to them. It was a fascinating class.

HALL:

Uh-hum. I guess he intimidates freshmen.

MASHBURN:

I would imagine he does, but I think a lot of students found that he was rather shy, and finds it kind of hard to talk to students, except in class, so perhaps it isn't so much intimidation.

HALL:

Yeah. Yeah. You're a political econ major?

MASHBURN:

Right.

HALL:

Describe the requirements for a political economy major.

MASHBURN:

It's a mixture of economics--the economics is principles of economics and then macroeconomics, and more of

an emphasis on political science. Everything from theory, political analysis, and then more current courses--public policy. And then also history; you're required to take, I think it's three history courses.

HALL:

Oh.

MASHBURN:

So that you get a good--it's a very liberal artsy degree, because you're combining three different disciplines--very interesting.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Yeah. Well, I think they're all combined.

MASHBURN:

Uh-hum. They interrelate so neatly!

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And it's fascinating to sit in different classes and tie it all in together.

HALL:

Yeah. Who is your advisor?

MASHBURN:

Michael Bird.

HALL:

Have you had any classes from Mike Bird?

MASHBURN:

I've taken Principles of Economics, and also an urban politics class with Professor Bird and Bob Loevy.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What kind of professor is Michael Bird?

MASHBURN:

Very much an economist. His lectures aren't dry, because he pulls in so many current events, and relates it so well. But they're very specific and very structured, very easy to follow, concise, illustrated with a lot of graphs and charts, and visual aids, and he's very likeable.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Is he still the vice-mayor of Colorado

Springs?

MASHBURN:

He was, up until, I think, two years ago. It's been two years now.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Did you know him at that time?

MASHBURN:

Let's see . . . I . . . no, I think he . . . yes, he was vice mayor when I took Principles of Economics with him, I believe.

HALL:

Yeah. I wonder, do you have a feel for how consuming that job was for him?

MASHBURN:

He talked a little about that it was very time-consuming, and that to do a good job with it, and get to know the people, and talk to his constituents, required a lot of time, that he also wanted to devote to talking with students and running the class. So he said it was a relief to leave the job, and to have more time to devote to his own personal study and to Colorado College.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But I think he managed to strike a balance pretty well between the two when he did hold the job. And he also--I think it's been beneficial to students, because he's tied in a lot of events in Colorado Springs with, for instance, urban politics. He has so many "ins" with people in the city, that we could go to City Council meetings; the mayor came to the class, and things that were very informative.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Can you describe Bob Loevy?

MASHBURN:

He also, like Professor Fuller, has kind of a quiet, cynical, sarcastic humor, very witty, very funny. The classes with Professor Bird and Loevy were stimulating, very stimulating. They work well off of each other, and crack jokes, and poked fun, and I think that's what put the students at ease and made the class a lot more interesting. They also managed to play devil's advocate with each other, and brought up different points of discussion. But he's also a very stimulating professor.

HALL:

Uh-hum. How many--are many classes at CC taught with two professors?

MASHBURN:

Well, I've taken Western culture, which had two, three, four . . . seven professors over a period of three blocks, and then urban politics with two professors. But I think most classes are solo professors.

HALL:

Yeah. And there are limitations on the number of students, smaller, when there's only one professor?

MASHBURN:

Right, right.

HALL:

But they're always small--

MASHBURN:

So it balances out.

HALL:

Yeah. I wanted to get into the Block Plan, which is something significant to Colorado College. What, in your view, are the pros and cons of the block plan?

MASHBURN:

For me, the pro--one of the major pros is that you can concentrate on one area at a time. You delve into a subject a lot more, and really enjoy something, really think about it, and spend the time that it deserves, and not have ten million different kinds of subjects running about in your head.

It also allows you to get to know the people in the class better, because you're with them more often; you can have class parties; you get to know the professor better, because he sees a certain group of students for three and a half-weeks.

Of course, the same thing applies as a con, because as soon as you're out of that class, you may never see the students again; you may not have the professor again, and it can be very hard to make the transition from one kind of class to another kind of class.

HALL:

Suddenly.

MASHBURN:

Uh-hum. Because the class--Tim Fuller's class was very structured, compared to the class I'm in now, expository writing. It's been hard to make the adjustment.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Also, it's hard to do things like languages and sciences, because they require so much time out of the day.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And it's hard to remember over a period of time what you learn.

HALL:

Yeah. And something like languages requires practice. And so you have practiced so much in three and a half weeks.

MASHBURN:

And you have to make an effort to take an adjunct, and if you don't have time for a language adjunct, you're likely to lose it. I remember very little from my language class.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Well, for our people twenty years in the future, what are adjunct courses?

MASHBURN:

They are taken--they are afternoon courses, usually, a couple of hours in the afternoon, or sometimes in the evening, even, either in physical education, or dance, or music or something more academic, like language, taken for usually a fourth of a credit, over the period of a block. And I think students use it as a way to expand their horizons a little bit. So after you get done with your English course, you can go to lunch and then go to a dance class.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Uh-hum. And they are for credit, right?

MASHBURN:

Not all of them, but most of them are for credit.

HALL:

Yeah, yeah. How do you find student-professor relations at Colorado College?

MASHBURN:

They vary. Sometimes they are very much student-professor relations; sometimes it's more relation of friend to friend. Of course, it depends on the professor's personality, and how close they want to get to the students.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But most of the professors that I've had have been very concerned with the students, and very concerned with the college and with the events that are going on, and not just with their class, but with the college as a whole, with their department, and it's been nice to be able to approach professors with any kind of problem, especially with academic problems, and get such a good response, and quite a bit of help.

HALL:

Uh-hum. So they really are helpful?

MASHBURN:

Very helpful. I think there are some that would be exceptional.

HALL:

Yeah. Yeah. Probably typical of a small college, perhaps, with the classes--

MASHBURN:

Right. But overall, they are much more interested in their classes and students than in working on their own essays or whatever, or doing their own reading or research.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Back to block break, what have you used your block breaks for--typically, what do CC students use their block breaks for?

MASHBURN:

Mine have been pretty tame, mainly skiing, resting, going shopping, catching up on friends and family, and occasional trips, but primarily ski trips. And I think for most students, it can be a lot broader than that. Some students, of course, stay on campus almost every block break, and just enjoy relaxing and having more people gone from their dorm. Others have taken off to Puerto Rico, or [can't understand]--you name it.

HALL:

Depends on how much money a student has.

MASHBURN:

Right. And there are some very wealthy students here, and they can fly home, or go somewhere more exciting for a real vacation for a couple of days.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What is the function of a block break? Or, I don't know if there's a prescribed function, but what have you found that the block break is good for?

MASHBURN:

Probably it's best for the professors to have a chance to grade papers! [laughter] But it's nice to be able to have a space between blocks, because I think if you had blocks right on top of each other, it would be hard to jump from one class into another, without have a few days clear, to clear out your notes, and reorganize your life, and spend a little time pampering yourself, and not thinking so much about studies.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Some professors contend that you should spend your block break pursuing intellectual things. And perhaps--some people get a head start on the reading for the next class.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

But I think it's good to get a little physical exercise, if you've been sitting around for a week and a half working on a paper--do your laundry, whatever. [laughter]

HALL:

The laundry [can't understand] [laughter] Yeah. I think they're wonderful. I'm rested, I know, after a block break. A big question at Colorado College is, has to do with the liberal arts ideal, and CC really has a reputation for sticking to the--successfully sticking to the traditional notion of liberal arts. How do you define liberal arts, or a liberal arts education?

MASHBURN:

I think, personally, liberal arts has meant not having to focus on one special area, not coming in as a freshman and saying, "Well, I'm going to be a psychology major," and being stuck with that for four years, and then deciding your senior year that you hate it. But it's a chance to take courses in

every discipline, to learn a variety of things, and to synthesize those things together, so that it's fun just to learn, for the sake of learning. You don't have to go through every class and say, "Well, what will I gain from this?" But a chance to learn and enjoy learning, and then use that learning later in life, but also just now, for the enjoyment of it.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Do you feel that liberal arts has a future in this society?

MASHBURN:

I think so, because people are looking more and more-- employers are looking more and more for people that can do a variety of functions, and the managerial opportunities have become so wide. To be a good manager, you need to have broader contacts with people, and understand more things, and not be so narrow.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

So I think that it will be very necessary, especially for politics, too.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Do you feel that business and politics are recognizing--at this point in time, are recognizing liberal arts as being--

MASHBURN:

I think so. Studies have shown that more and more liberal arts graduates are being hired, that they're being sought, because the numbers are shrinking, as the number of colleges shrinks, and I think that, hopefully, the trend will continue that way. Certainly CC graduates have had good experiences in finding a job.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Uh-hum. As a CC student who wants to pursue journalism as a career, well, I guess my real question is, how do you interrelate the strict liberal arts with journalism, which you hope to pursue as a career?

MASHBURN:

Probably attending a liberal arts college is a thousand times better than going to a journalism school, because journalism school can teach you how to write a lead, and how to copy-edit a story, and a lot of technical things, but--and

then, of course, also, journalistic writing and reporting skills. But I think you can pick up the most important functions of journalism at any good college, and at a liberal arts college, you've got a broader base of knowledge to work from. So when I go out to cover a study about politics, I'll understand politics, and not just how to listen to someone talk about politics.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

I'll understand economic trends, rather than having to get that information from someone else, and not knowing how to interpret it.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And I suppose you'll be much more interested in your interviews as a journalist if you know, if you're excited about the subject matter yourself.

MASHBURN:

Right. And if you have some basis, you can ask better questions, you have a better understanding, you can write a better story. It's terrible to go to a story and be completely in the dark.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

And a liberal arts education teaches you how to synthesize and organize a lot of information, and that's vital for journalism, to reporting.

HALL:

Uh-hum. You've been involved at the Colorado Springs Sun newspaper for awhile. How did you get started, and what positions have you held, or what have your functions been at the Sun?

MASHBURN:

Well, I came up with the idea for a section for teenagers, a page for teenagers that would be written by, and have the photographs done by, teenagers for teenagers to read, because the newspaper had children's pages, senior citizen things, but it seemed one area that's always left out are the teenagers, and those are certainly your readers of the future, that you have to get now.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

So I took the idea to Charlie Dennis, who's has been the editor of the Sun and he decided it was good idea, and I started working with the people at the Sun, learning how to work on a video display terminal, and how do the editing, do the headlines--all the technical things that I hadn't had much experience with until that time. And gradually worked up so I was capable of editing the stories, writing the headlines, laying out the page, the whole bit. And then working--so I've been editor of the Tempo page.

HALL:

Is that--

MASHBURN:

That's the teen page, right.

HALL:

Oh, okay, okay.

MASHBURN:

And I did an internship this past summer, as a reporting intern, and the summer before that, did an internship as a copy desk intern, writing the headlines, editing the stories, doing some layout.

HALL:

So, as an intern, did you go out on your own as a reporter, or did you accompany someone?

MASHBURN:

Well, the main reason for having summer interns is because people always want to take vacations--

HALL:

Oh!

MASHBURN:

--so you become a reporter in full whether it's a murder, or a feature story, or a traffic accident--you name it, we covered everything, because we were fulfilling the duties of someone who was gone.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Kind of pinch-hitting in whatever department they needed someone.

HALL:

Great! Do you feel that you worked up to par with the full-fledged reporters?

MASHBURN:

I think that there were certainly some people I would loved to have been more like, because some of them have very highly developed styles for interviewing, they are very effective, and beautiful styles for writing.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But I think that Liz Biddeck, also a CC student, was an intern, and I think that we certainly held our own, and did a good job, and I think they were very pleased with what we'd done, so it was a good feeling.

HALL:

Yeah, that's neat. Has your work with the Sun consumed much of your time and taken time away from your studies? Have you found that to be a problem?

MASHBURN:

It is occasionally a problem, because it's terrible to have to put a job before studies, but when it's Wednesday night, and it's deadline at the Sun, you can't say, "I have a test tomorrow, and so I can't get my page in."

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Their deadlines are strict; it's a business; it's professional. And I'm the employee, and I gotta do the job. So there have been times when it was very difficult. Economics tests always came on Thursday, and I had to have the page ready on Wednesdays, so [both talking at once] -- dilemma--

HALL:

--time, right.

MASHBURN:

It takes about, oh, ten hours a week and a lot of phone calling as a reporter, so it can be very time-consuming, very frustrating.

HALL:

But rewarding, it seems.

MASHBURN:

It's good to have the pay check, and it's good to have the experience, and it's very stimulating to be down there with real, live journalists, and see the activity at the news room, and come in contact with people outside of the ivory tower of Colorado College.

HALL:

Yeah, yeah. Well, you've been involved with journalism on the campus, too. Describe the history of your involvement with the Catalyst, the college newspaper.

MASHBURN:

I had worked on my high school paper, and I was eager to work on the Catalyst, and I was a reporter for the first semester of my freshman year, then the arts editor for the second semester of my freshman year, arts editor for the first semester of my sophomore year, and then finally editor the second semester of my sophomore year. Then this year, I've been doing the Critique, I haven't worked for the Catalyst at all.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What were your duties as editor?

MASHBURN:

Everything! I was responsible for picking a staff, all the second editors, the photographers, and figuring out what kind of a paper we wanted to build, after we picked the staff, whether it was going to be professional, and picking different kinds of styles. And then responsible just for the production of--getting stories assigned, editing them--

HALL:

[both talking at once, can't understand]

MASHBURN:

--making sure they went on the page, yeah.

HALL:

Uh-hum. What image did you wish to--what style of paper did you want to have, as editor?

MASHBURN:

I think I wanted a paper that would be as professional as it could be, professional in a limited sense, because we certainly didn't want to bring in national news or anything. It was a college paper, with college subjects, or subjects that would be of interest to college students, and college professors.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

But more than anything, to have a paper that was objective, and well-written, and very professional, instead of kind of a high-schooly, gossip columny sort of paper.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And were you on your own in instilling this in your staff?

MASHBURN:

Definitely. Because Cutler Board is the publishing board for all the publications on campus, but it's always had a very limited role in how much instruction it gives to the editor, so that they select you, and they give you a budget, and then you're kind of pushed out of the nest on your own, and it's up to you to pick the staff, and they're certainly there as a backup, but it's the editor's responsibility.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And the Catalyst is pretty strictly student run?

MASHBURN:

Definitely! There are no faculty advisors at all.

HALL:

Well, that's a neat responsibility, it seems.

MASHBURN:

It was a good learning experience. And also, it's not being totally alone, because when you pick a staff that you're comfortable with, you've got a group of about eight people, who work together as a team, and direct the other students, and help make all of the decisions together.

HALL:

What issues or subjects did you seek to emphasize as editor? Did you want campus political issues, or social issues, or a balance?

MASHBURN:

I think the news section tried to keep a balance of things that were going to happen, things that had happened--the kind of events that you cover, no matter what--and then trying to do a little bit more investigative reporting, so that we focused on the budget cuts, and on transfer of credits, and on the curriculum, on the Beta House affair, and lots of different issues that--Selective Service was another

one. They wanted to open the files for the draft.

HALL:

Oh.

MASHBURN:

And then the feature section just more with student life--anything that would be entertaining, interesting--whatever students were doing on campus, in and out of the classroom, because it's so limiting just to say it can't be intellectual.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

I think we emphasized sports the least.

HALL:

Oh. Was that purposeful?

MASHBURN:

Not really, but since the sports editor had limited time, the major sports were covered, but they certainly weren't covered in an in-depth sort of way.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

And I don't think that sports are as vital at CC as they are in other schools. Other schools tend to emphasize sports quite a bit more. And the editorial page was very strong, because it dealt with national, international and then CC affairs. I think it was a nice forum for students who were interested in El Salvador, and Poland, or whatever, to voice their concerns.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Did a student commentary exist? I--maybe this was after your time, but much of the paper was devoted at one time to long student commentary on political issues, and social issues.

MASHBURN:

I think we usually had--Wade Buchanan was the editorial editor, and was very interested in getting [can't understand] defense, ultra-conservative and ultra-liberal, to spark a little debate and make it more exciting. So we tried to have several very varied guest commentaries each week, probably two each week. Also, kind of a pro-con debate between a Libertarian and an almost-Socialist, which was quite interesting--

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

--on issues like busing, and discrimination, and stuff like that.

HALL:

Well, I know that I miss that guest commentary section in the paper now. I thought--

MASHBURN:

It's great!

HALL:

--it was stimulating.

MASHBURN:

I know that it had a good response from the campus, people liked it. And there was some debate over--[laughter] Some of them--we've had a lot of very needed letters. One young man wrote in about woman's place is in the home, and women shouldn't have abortions, and that certainly got quite a bit of--

HALL:

Oh, I remember that. All the publications at CC are under the auspices of the Cutler Board.

MASHBURN:

All student publications.

HALL:

Okay, right. Tell me about the Cutler Board--how does it work, and what is its function?

MASHBURN:

It was started--let's see, I think in '69, because they had a--I believe it was a violence symposium--and several of the speakers were for that time very liberal, and inflammatory, and there was quite a bit of hoopla in the community about these terrible radicals who are coming to CC and filling these poor children's minds with nonsense. And also, some of the speakers used "fuck" and "shit" and "damn" in their speeches, in public, and really set the community on a big roll.

And so in response to this, the editor of the Tiger then published the entire transcripts of the speech in the Catalyst and it included swear words. And so the administration got a lot of flack from the community, from

alumni, and instead of simply crushing the paper and saying, "This is what you can and can't do," Lloyd Worner worked with Ruth Barton, Professor Ruth Barton, to set up Cutler Board.

So Cutler Board is autonomous from Colorado College. It has its own constitution, its own bylaws and charter, and the whole bit. And it's a non-profit organization, and its sole function is to oversee the Nugget yearbook, the Critique, for academic papers, Leviathan for creative writing and politics, and then the Catalyst. And I think it's been a very exciting thing to have it be separate from the college, and to have a body of students and two professors making all of the decisions, without being hampered by, or without the administration coming to worry about what's going to happen when it comes out.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Yeah. And that's probably a big relief for them.

MASHBURN:

It's a relief for them, and I think it's always good for students to have to deal with something that's a little bit more professional, and a little bit harder, too.

HALL:

Uh-hum. So Ruth Barton runs Cutler Board?

MASHBURN:

No, she serves as a faculty advisor.

HALL:

Oh.

MASHBURN:

There's a chairman who runs it, who's a student, and is elected by the members of the board at the end of the year.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

So this year Lucky Smith is the chairman.

HALL:

And what has been your involvement, specifically, with Cutler Board?

MASHBURN:

Well, each member--Cutler Board has two elected members, that the student body elects by popular vote, called

members-at-large. Then the chairman of Cutler Board, which was elected by the members of Cutler Board at the end of the year, and then each of the editors of the publications sit on the board.

HALL:

Oh.

MASHBURN:

So because I'm on Critique this year, and because I was on Catalyst last year, I'm on the board. And then two faculty advisors, and a comptroller.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

To take care of finances.

HALL:

And your budget for Critique or for Catalyst comes from Cutler Board and not from Colorado College?

MASHBURN:

It's kind of sticky, but to maintain an autonomous status, we get our money, our funding, from Triple-CA. Triple-CA contracts with us to produce publications for the campus. That enables us still to be a separate entity, even though the money, that they receive comes from Colorado College, because we're going through the Triple-CA, it makes it legal.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

[laughter] It all seems rather silly--

HALL:

Because it goes away from CC, and back to CC.

MASHBURN:

Right. So it really is student fees, money from the administration, but it's being contracted out from the Triple-CA, and that makes it a little bit easier to maintain a separate status.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Because if we got it directly from the administration, then no matter how separate we said we were, we wouldn't be in a legal status.

HALL:

Uh-hum. Okay. So in putting out an issue of the Critique, do you have to go to Cutler Board? Do they edit it at all?

MASHBURN:

No. No, they--it's very much up to the editor, because after the editors are selected, and they are selected by the members of the board at the end, for the Nugget and the Critique and Leviathan, they're selected at the end of the year, in April. The Catalyst is selected twice a year, once at the end and then once at mid-year.

HALL:

Right.

MASHBURN:

And after they've been selected, help is given, guidelines are set down, and then finally, they are very much on their own.

HALL:

Uh-hum. I think that's probably--it seems to be working.

MASHBURN:

It's a good experience. It can--it has problems. We've had editors that couldn't fulfill their responsibilities, and when that happens, the board simply has to get rid of the editor, because the editor isn't fulfilling the contract.

HALL:

Uh-hum. But the board is there to do that?

MASHBURN:

Right! That's precisely the board's function, to make sure that the board runs smoothly, with the typesetting program, and then finally that each publication, the editor fulfills their responsibility.

HALL:

Uh-hum. You're co-editor of the Critique. Who is the other editor?

MASHBURN:

Bob Bach.

HALL:

Bob Bach. And that's been all this year, your junior year?

MASHBURN:

Right. And his senior year.

HALL:

What exactly is the Critique? What type of--

MASHBURN:

Critique is a collection of student papers--primarily student, although we've run a couple of faculty papers, too--written in class, on academic subjects. It can be anything from a science paper on quarks to an English paper on Chaucer. We've run computer papers--you name it--even math.

But it's just a good way for students to see what other students are writing about, thinking about, what other classes have to offer, what the assignments are like, what other students' style of writing or of thinking is like.

HALL:

How do you choose which paper to put in an edition?

MASHBURN:

It varies always from editor to editor. Last year, I think they were more concerned with style of writing and content, so that there were fewer science papers, more history and English papers, because those tend to emphasize writing more than research.

This year, we're trying to get a very broad scope of papers, so that even if the writing isn't quite as professional on, say, a business paper, it's still worth reading, because it has interesting ideas. And then on an English paper, we might be more selective about the writing, rather than the ideas.

HALL:

Yeah. Uh-hum. How many students work on the Critique?

MASHBURN:

Two! Mary and Bob!

HALL:

And the students on campus submit their papers to you, and the two of you choose them?

MASHBURN:

Well, it can work two ways. The students can submit their own papers, if they feel they're, you know, worthy of being read by other students. Or faculty can recommend the papers to the Critique.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

In the past, some of--last year, Bob Lockyer was the Critique editor, and he had a group of about five people who helped select the papers. However, it turned out to be rather unwieldy, because there simply isn't enough for five people to do.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

Bob is an economics major, and I'm political economy, and since he's taken many economics and business courses, and I've taken political science and history and English courses, and he has contacts in the science department, we felt that we had the different departments well covered, and would be able to reach out to different professors for papers. So far, it's worked very well.

HALL:

Yeah. I want to have you compare the experience of editing a news journal with that of editing a literary journal, or whatever the Critique is-- [laughter]. It's not literary, but--

MASHBURN:

With the Catalyst, there's a lot more editing, because the students had varied styles, and the styles had to mesh with the style of the newspaper.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

So I think, between the section editors and myself, we did a lot of editing on the student for the Catalyst. But on the Critique, the only things that we'd ever change would be improper punctuation or grammar.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

So when I was editing the Catalyst, there was a lot more subjectivity, what we wanted to include, what stories we would choose, how they would be edited, how they would be displayed. The Critique leaves a lot less leeway to do anything very creative, except picking creative papers.

HALL:

Right.

MASHBURN:

So the most creative things we can are pick interesting, creative papers, and then after that, it's mainly a matter of typing them up and pasting them down on paper.

HALL:

Do you and Bob do all that--the typing?

MASHBURN:

No, it's done through the typesetting program.

HALL:

Oh.

MASHBURN:

[can't understand] have the typesetter! But we do the pasting up, and putting corrections on, and--

HALL:

Uh-hum. But what you said about there's more room for creativity in working with the Catalyst, I suppose that [can't understand] the purpose of what the Critique, what you want the Critique to be to students--

MASHBURN:

Right! And not reflect Bob and Mary's styles, or anything.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

Because it's so much more interesting to see the different styles of different students.

HALL:

Yeah. Yeah.

MASHBURN:

Of course, it becomes our creation, in that we choose certain kinds of papers, but we're both different enough, and we argue enough, so I think the papers have been pretty broad.

HALL:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I'm ready to start finishing up. What are your plans after graduation?

MASHBURN:

Hopefully to find a paper in Colorado to work on. I

think I'd like to work as a reporter for several years, and develop my writing, and my confidence in reporting, in going out and doing interviews.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

Perhaps public relations, but I rather doubt it.

HALL:

What kind of--how are you going to go about finding a job with a paper?

MASHBURN:

Sending out resumes!

HALL:

Uh-hum. Are you going to have to go interview all over?

MASHBURN:

Well, I will probably put an application in at the Sun, interview at the Sun. There are a lot of smaller papers in Colorado, some of them pretty good, that would be worth sending resumes to, and perhaps travelling up to see them.

HALL:

Uh-hum. And you're not specific as to where you live--

MASHBURN:

No.

HALL:

--after graduation?

MASHBURN:

No, it might even be in another state.

HALL:

Uh-hum.

MASHBURN:

It seems so far off, even now!

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

I'm still more interested, I guess, in getting through the last year, learning as much as I can learn, then worrying about it.

HALL:

Yeah.

MASHBURN:

In spring, next year.

HALL:

I'm sure you will be worrying!

MASHBURN:

Right, right.

[both talking at once--can't understand] [laughter]

HALL:

I don't have any more questions to ask. Is there anything you wanted to add that you had on your mind?

MASHBURN:

I can't think of anything.

HALL:

Okay. Thanks for doing it.

END