

SPECTRUM

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Creative students write for recognition

By Lynn Martin
Staff Writer

Feel you have a story in you, or a poem, sketch or play? Now's the time to get that story written, maybe even published. The student editorial staff of *Firstdraft*, Grossmont's annual creative writing magazine, is now accepting manuscripts (MSS) from any current or former student of Grossmont or Cuyamaca Colleges for consideration.

The magazine, first published in the spring of 1978, was initiated by Verana Anderson, a part-time English instructor. Having recognized a need for a showcase of campus writers, she said, "I had taught several creative writing classes and I felt that it was a shame that an outstanding student writer didn't have a wider audience. The drama department puts on plays for the public and the music department puts on concerts and the athletic department puts on games, so why couldn't the English department publish writings for the public?" The first issue, then 75 cents, showcased 51 pages of quality writing.

Firstdraft at first was published at the end of each semester, but due to the expense and the workload imposed on graphics and printing just before finals, Anderson later elected to make the magazine an annual publication. The only problem inherent in this change, she said, is the fact that those writers whose MSS are accepted

in the Fall won't see them published until the following May.

Since the fall of 1979, Anderson has taught the editing of *Firstdraft* as a class. A student can repeat the class for up to four semesters. This fall, nine have joined, five of them returning. The veterans teach the newcomers, some newcomers will become veterans the following semester, and they in turn continue the cycle. Because *Firstdraft* editing occasionally falls under the minimum student load, Dr. Carl Clark, dean of humanities, has allowed the class to be protected.

As the MSS come in, Anderson reviews the intricacies of poetry and fiction to establish guidelines in the decision process of acceptance or rejection. The students read and discuss every MSS, then vote on their fate. The class on average receives 150-200 MSS per semester and accepts 10-15 pieces of prose and 40-60 poems. Totalling both Fall and Spring acceptances, *Firstdraft* publishes 110-125 MSS annually. Last Spring, competition stiffened as *Firstdraft* accepted 12 prose and about 49 poems out of 175 submissions.

The writer's experiences vary from the 10-minute inspiration to the long, metered-out perspiration. The majority share one common characteristic: they all practice procrastination, submitting their MSS a week before the deadline. The staff makes up for the

burden by meeting on occasional Saturday. Many MSS are submitted by creative writing and poetry classes. This semester, Anderson will also expect MSS from the newly reinstated Fiction Writing class, taught by Doug Zoffel.

After Steno Services typesets the accepted MSS, the staff proofs them and returns them for printing. Graphics finishes the magazine, pasting up the final copy and artwork. Always giving credit to others, Anderson appreciates the help of Adrienne Dyson and Lynn Wilson for typesetting, Roz Scott for printing and Jim Ney for production and cover design.

Students submit all MSS anonymously, their names with MSS titles attached separately, through an English instructor to ensure impartial judging. Writers may submit up to three short stories, plays or sketches, maximum word length 3,000 words and 10 poems, each no longer than 50 lines.

In addition, the student editors select drawings and photography submitted by art students to complement the accepted poetry and fiction. Anderson credits Irenna Gronborg, Suda House and Chairman David Wing for their cooperation within the art department.

The current issue of *Firstdraft* is on sale for \$2 in the bookstore. Deadline for submission for this semester is October 28.