

College student gets published

by Janet Singleton

(CPS) If there was a lot of noise in Lorri Hewett's dormitory one morning last November, she's the one to blame.

She ran down the halls of Emory University's Hopkins Hall screaming "I got published!"

after the news came that Holloway House in Los Angeles, Calif., accepted her novel *Coming of Age* for release this summer.

The achievement defies conventional wisdom in the publishing industry.

First of all, college students don't get novels published — that's for seasoned writers, their roads to success paved by rejection slips.

Secondly, Hewett didn't have an agent; she sent her manuscript by mail. Editors at some publishing houses won't talk to authors who don't have an agent. And thirdly, Hewett's novel was accepted by the first company she contacted. Often even manuscripts submitted by agents get passed from one publishing house to another for a year before one says yes.

So what happened here? "Perseverance and luck," says 18-year-old Hewett, now a sophomore.

Hewett is no naive literary romantic. She learned

the ropes by pounding out two other books. The first was a 100-pager, about pioneers in the 1800's she wrote at age 9.

"I had just finished reading *Little House on the Prairie*, and wanted to write something just like it." At 15, she wrote a novel about

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— Lorri Hewett

high school racism and submitted it in pursuit of the Delacorte First Young Adult Novel Prize. Her book didn't win, but the editors were encouraging.

"They wrote me and said they thought I had a real future in writing," Hewett says.

Not everything the editors said was complimentary, though. "They said I had a lot of stylistic problems," she says. Hewett remembers she didn't even know what style was, but she was going to find out. So she found a copy of Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*.

By her last year at Chatfield High School in Littleton, Colo., she

was ready to give novel-writing another try. "I was in the second semester of my senior year," she said. "I was just sitting around waiting for my life to begin, so I thought I'd write a book about people at this point in their lives."

She wrote the first draft of *Coming of Age* in long-hand in six weeks. Then she revised it on her computer.

The book's three characters are all black high school seniors at crossroads in their lives. She wrote of teens who don't know whether to embrace their African-American identities to the exclusion of all else or to reject their heritage altogether. "Identity," Hewett says, "is the theme that runs throughout the book."

Hewett, whose middle-class parents brought her up in a predominantly white suburb, has things in common with each character, she says. "There are times I felt I didn't know how to fit in. I wanted to write about young blacks who were going through what I was going through."

Media images stereotyping African-American teens as drug dealers or young mothers frustrate Hewett. So does any brand of Afro-centrism that sacrifices individual uniqueness for strict unity.

"There isn't one single black identity," she says. "For every black person in the country, there's a different black experience."

Now that Hewett is at Emory, she may write about the college experience. She is working on another book, but declines to say much about it.

Hewett still sees herself more as a student than a writer. She doesn't have any illusions of fleeing Emory, sans diploma, for the writing life. "Unrealistic," she says. The day she received the advance copies of her book in the mail, she "was excited for about an hour."

Then she put the books back in their box and returned to her course work.

BEER from page 1

In past years, concessionaires could sell two beers to an individual who visited their stands. They sold beer throughout the entire game and people were allowed to bring their own alcohol into the stadium.

"We'll have a review committee at the end of the year. We're moving one step at a time," Miger said. "If there is any escalation of our

alcohol problems of the past, we will halt the sales immediately."

Colorado State is one of only a handful of universities that allow beer sales in stadiums. Some others include the University of Colorado, University of Hawaii, San Diego State University and the California State University-Fullerton.

Debate to focus on planned parenthood

A debate focusing on planned parenthood will be held on Sept. 19, 7 to 9 p.m. in Room 116 in the John S. Wright Hall.

The debate is entitled, "Planned Parenthood: A Force for Good or Evil in the Community?" and will deal with teen-age pregnancy, access to contraception and abortion information, and parental and individual rights.

Carrol Steedman, continuing education rep-

resentative, said the debate will be in the "traditional format," with opposing participants striving to influence both the judges and the audience.

"The audience will be assured of no hidden agendas, and both sides of this issue will be fully addressed," Steedman said. "As a result those who attend will be a more informed public regardless of their own views."

The university's rapidly improving debate team placed 11th overall in 1990 and 1991 among the 50 colleges and universities in the Southwest Region of the National Cross Examination Debate Association.

Barbara Pickering, director of forensics will serve as moderator for this formal debate, which is free and open to the public. For more information, call 739-3394.

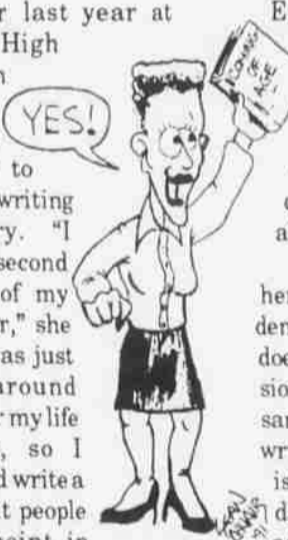
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