

She also has a story to tell



Above right: looking over wire copy and trying to write a story that sounds right takes up much of Robbie Timmons' time. She must be able to write a story that not only pleases her viewers, but herself. Above: Smiling, well, it is part of the job.

Staff photos
by
Craig Newman

Writing, rewriting, when to emphasize a phrase or underplay another are some of the problems that Robbie Timmons must deal with every day as a journalist. Her part of the job of broadcasting the news in the most professional way begins with how she phrases her questions in an interview, continues with writing what will sound good and have impact in a broadcast, and ends when, having pored over it and polished it, she delivers the report over the air.



Between commercials, the news team really doesn't have much time to relax. They usually are busy organizing their reports or reading their copy.



Joe Weaver, special projects editor, discusses a story with Robbie Timmons before air time.

By SHIRLEY EDEN
and CRAIG NEWMAN

Her name is Robbie Timmons, and she's one of a new breed of electronic journalists. Ask her what turns her on and she'll tell you: "Everything."
"Every single person you meet has a story to tell," she says.
You can catch her five nights a week on Channel 10 news, but often, when you see her reporting a story, she's really on tape because Robbie Timmons runs a lot.
"Typical day" Well, there's no such thing, not in the news business.
Robbie, who lives in Farmington Hills so she won't be far from the Southfield studio, reports to Channel 10 at 3 p.m.

THAT'S THE WAY it was one afternoon, not long ago. She strode into the large, bustling newsroom, ready for anything. She's a tall girl, 5-4 or more with pale blue eyes and medium length dark hair. She's a gregarious person and she smiles a lot.
It was like going in and out of a revolving door that day, she was in the newsroom a scant five minutes, got a mini briefing and was dispatched with a sound and camera man out on assignment.
"You picked a good day," she said to the Observer & Eccentric reporters. "I'll be doing 10 things at once."
Once in the station wagon, Robbie talked about the news business.
"The entire news business, to be successful, depends on the viewers," she said.

Every station spends lots of money on surveys and market research, talking to viewers, asking them who they like to see on TV and what they want. Those ratings show that viewers watch someone that enjoys their job, someone that is relaxed and gets along with other anchor people.

"THEY LIKE TO watch a learn. At TV 2, we are friendly on and off the air." Robbie says she's interested in people and what's going on which is the basis of reporting in her opinion.

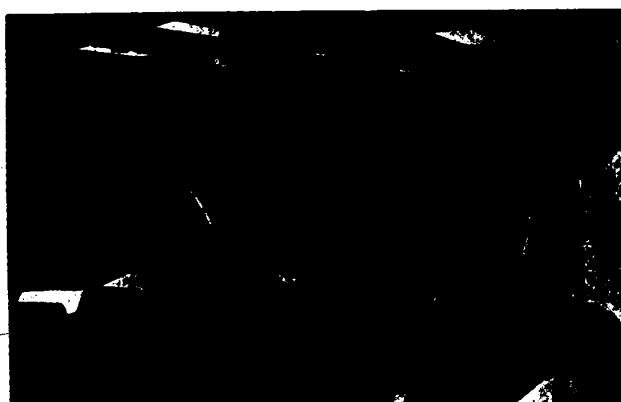
"Detroit is a big city with lots of stories," she said. "But some stations get too show busy. They want to get more viewers so they try a lot of new gimmicks. I don't like show biz in news. The newscasters should be themselves, get along and carry the message to the viewers."
Robbie qualifies as one of "the new breed of electronic journalists" because she is familiar with both the front and back ends of a camera. Versatile and knowledgeable, she knows how to operate the ENG mini cam, can edit film and often writes her own copy.

"THE OLD BREED were the newspapermen who made the transition into electronic media right from their news desks into TV and radio," said Richard Graff, news director for WJBK.
At the station wagon made its way out of Southfield and onto the Lodge Freeway, she explained that she was on her way to Recorder's Court to interview Chief Judge Don Leonard.

"They're having problems because of the police layoffs," she said.
Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Robbie has worked in the Lansing-Jackson area for four years.
"I was the first woman anchor in Michigan when I began anchoring the news there," she said. "My journalism began in Columbus when I was an editor of a company publication. In Jackson I was a street reporter and also did radio and anchored a morning news show."

SHE ALSO PRODUCED the news. She's a graduate of Columbus University and also attended Ohio State University. "I had TV experience from the advertising business and from high school drama," she said.
"When Channel 10 in Lansing hired me, they were specifically looking for a female reporter to anchor the news," she said. "And I wasn't afraid of a TV camera and had the writing experience."
"In this job, everyday's different and I like the variety."
Robbie finds her personal life as exciting.

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After the 11 p.m. news, Robbie Timmons headed out to Metro Airport to do a story on balloonist Karl Thomas. Thomas' plane arrived at 2:30 a.m.