



**Tom Riordan**

Executive Editor

## Are you willing and able to write a column?

One of the fun parts of newspapering is column writing.

At least it is for me.

When doing a column, you start from a point of absolute freedom of topic and merrily roll along from there.

But folks actively working for newspapers aren't the only ones who enjoy and are capable of writing columns.

Occasionally, there are doctors, sales people, insurance men, athletes, entertainers and blue collar workers (let's toss in Indian chiefs) with writing talents in their fields of expertise.

This week's offering is directed mainly at such folks. They make their homes in the suburbs and regularly read this paper or one of the other 11 Observer & Eccentric newspapers.

A FASCINATING STUDY entitled "Changing Needs of Changing Readers" was recently written, based on a series of interviews regarding newspaper reading habits in a dozen cities.

Results of the study are packed in 44 pages and touch everything from the "reader-editor gap" to crime stories, from "new social contact with readers" to the positive side of local news.

What caught my eye were the references to good local columns and the columnists who care and pro-

vide "more service information to help readers in their daily lives."

The study reported that "for many readers, 'self' is an important news beat not being adequately recognized or served by editors."

### THE "SELF BEAT" is defined as:

Physical fitness, diet, nutrition, creativity, pop psychology, handling emotional problems, looking good and feeling good, understanding yourself, understanding others and self-improvement.

Many others, of course, could be added to that, like sex, which in the past decade became an accepted topic for the public prints. The main problem is finding a writer who can handle this area tastefully.

"Changing Needs for Changing Readers" author Ruth Clark said, "The indications are that the social trends, 'Focus on Self,' will continue to grow — and that newspaper readers will want their newspapers to play a more assertive role in helping the individual reader in the quest for self-fulfillment."

All of which gave me an idea — how about more regular columns of this type in our newspapers?

AS OF THIS WEEK, the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers will begin a search for half a dozen

new columnists. We want to find them among the ranks of our regular readership.

That would mean each would live in one of our communities. (Which reminds me of a call I got several months ago. The conversation went something like this:

(Woman: "I want to write a column for your papers.")

(Me: "That's interesting, how about putting together three samples and mailing them to me?"

(Woman: "What do you want me to write about?" (Me, slightly confused: "Er, I figured you already had a topic. You do live in our area, don't you? And, of course, you read one of our newspapers."

(Woman: "I live in Fenton. I don't believe I've ever seen your papers. But I've heard about them. How about sending me three or four?"

(Me: "You mean you don't live around here, never see our papers and want me to send you some?"

(Woman: "If I were to write a column, what would it be about and how long should it be?"

(Me: "Thanks for calling.")

Now comes the key question: Are you able to write a column?

Are you willing to belly up to your typewriter

week after week, keep coming up with something interesting and useful for your fellow readers?

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED and reasonably certain you would want to take on this challenge, here's what to do:

Prepare three sample columns on the topic about which you are well versed, one you'd like regularly to have printed in our papers.

In a covering letter, tell us a little about yourself. Mail your packet to me at 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

All samples will be read and evaluated.

There is no guarantee that any of them are going to be printed. Publication rests entirely on quality of writing and the interest that topics will evoke among people living in suburban Detroit.

Would you get paid? Yes. It would be a weekly stipend of modest proportions. Say, enough to treat your spouse to dinner at a modestly priced restaurant.

AS YOU MIGHT GUESS, this is not the usual way newspapers find folks who can create columns. So what? It strikes me as an approach that could just turn up half a dozen capable columnists.

We're willing to devote the necessary time on the evaluation and examination process.

So now, you potential columnists, start writing.



**Dr. Joseph DeFrancesco**

## Trench mouth nasty but quickly cured

In the disease trench mouth, the gums are swollen, spongy and inflamed.

If the disease has advanced far enough, the gums may exude a thick, yellow pus which has a foul odor. There may be ulceration of the gums and growth of a thick, grayish membrane.

The disease may spread to the tonsils, throat, bronchial tubes and lungs. Gangrene may occur from the disorder in the lungs and bronchial tubes. In this dead tissue, numbers of spirochetes and fusi-

form bacilli may be found when such tissues are examined under the microscope.

THESE TWO microorganisms are the ones involved in the production of the disease. Ordinarily the body has an extremely high resistance to them, and they are found in the mouths of more than 80 percent of all adults, even those in good health.

Apparently it is the poor nutritional status of the gums and nearby tissues of the mouth which permit

the organisms to become more virulent or more invasive.

Although many cases of trench mouth have been completely cured with niacin, the modern treatment emphasizes the use of penicillin. The disease may be treated by penicillin, applied directly to the diseased tissues, or mouth sprays. There is usually a rapid clearance of the disease. Within 12 to 36 hours, the patient is without symptoms.

IN SOME CASES, large doses of vitamin C may

be necessary, especially when there is severe bleeding of the gums.

Old toothbrushes should be discarded, excessive use of alcohol and tobacco isn't advised, and general mouth hygiene should be improved. If you have the symptoms, see your dentist immediately.

The writer is a retired suburban dentist. He will answer questions of general interest in his column. Write to Dr. DeFrancesco care of this newspaper.

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