

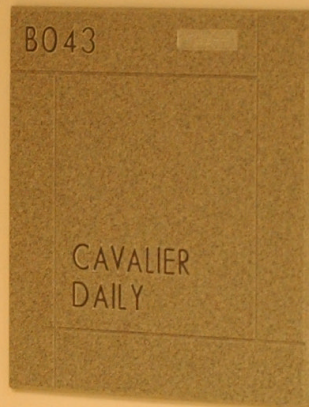
SHARON BRADLEY LEAVES THE CD

By **LIZ SZABO**
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The past 16 years have seen enormous changes at The Cavalier Daily.

In 1990, journalists produced The CD on the fifth floor of Newcomb Hall. Photographers developed their pictures in the dark and stored them in filing cabinets. Designers cut stories out of paper and rolled them onto flats. And editors tried to stay ahead of their competition, The University Journal.

The University Journal disappeared years ago. So did the non-repro blue pens and hot wax machines. Operations moved to the Newcomb basement. When current staffers occasionally unearth relics of the



Where is Sharon Now???

Before she left the paper, Sharon Bradley said her boyfriend bought a Winnebago, and she wanted to travel with him. Some alums have heard this as a joke for years.

We may never know.

Sharon initially phoned the paper a few times to answer “how-to” questions from current staffers, but now she’s vanished. Liz Szabo called every Bradley in Charlottesville after Sharon’s phone number was out of service. Dan Oakey (’93, business manager) even knocked on the door at her last known address.

And nobody seems to have a picture of her. A dozen phone calls or emails to some of her favorite alums produced not a single party photo or snapshot of her in the office.

You couldn’t even go see her postcard-filled office if you wanted. Not long after she left, the University tore apart her office to look for asbestos in the carpet.

—Will Morton

old days—like one of those rollers—they say they aren’t quite sure what to make of them.

Amid all this change presided one familiar face.

Sharon Bradley, The CD’s longtime receptionist, saw it all. She arrived in Newcomb Hall in 1990 on a temporary assignment, intending to stay only a few weeks. CD alumni say she provided a welcome, steady presence for generations of young journalists at an organization where even seasoned veterans had been around for only three years.

Bradley “was an absolutely critical source of institutional memory for an organization with a very steep learning curve, very little formal instruction for its leaders, and no faculty adviser,” said Justin Bernick (’04, editor-in-chief).

Future generations of CD staff will have to get by without Bradley’s calming influence.

Bradley, 54, retired in July.

True to form, Bradley helped the staff manage the transition to life without her, and assisted The CD in taking over her duties, said Mike Slaven, The CD’s current editor-in-chief. Although the newspaper plans to hire a replacement, the new employee’s duties won’t be exactly the same. Classified ads, for example, are now handled electronically.

“Sharon was a great resource and a great friend to many Cavalier Daily staffers over the years,” Slaven said. “It has been difficult—and it’s ultimately impossible—or us to duplicate her.”

Like many who knew her, Bernick said Bradley will be missed.

“She was also a friend, mentor, counselor and mother figure for the hundreds of students that spent their free time in the Newcomb Hall basement,” Bernick said. “She had an extraordinarily high tolerance for the rambunctious antics of CD staffers with pent-up stress. Although I remember clearly her unapproving looks when we discussed such juvenile behavior as office chair races and late night aerosol-deodorant battles with the Declaration’s staff, her primary concern was always for the welfare and safety of her children—the CD staffers. She will be sorely missed—both by the current staff which has lost the best source of institutional guidance the paper

has had in recent memory, and by alums, like myself, who could still find comfort, years later, in a trip to visit Sharon in the office.”

Matthew Trott (’93, assistant managing editor) remembered Bradley’s kindness.

“She always had a smile for you and she knew my name, which can’t have been easy given all the people passing through The CD,” Trott said.

Pat Harvey (’06, editor-in-chief), recalled how Bradley “took a real interest in all the students at The Cavalier Daily, and she cared about the staff of The Cavalier Daily very much.”

Harvey said, “as much time as many of us spent in the basement of Newcomb Hall, it was comforting to have someone there to support us day after day.”

Bradley was “unassuming and always reliable,” recalled Lisa Guernsey Krupicka (’93, executive editor).

“I remember her often telling me not to work too hard or too late,” Guernsey said. “She was a mother hen looking after her flock. Hers was often the first face I saw when I came to The CD offices in the mornings, and she always had a sweet, genuine greeting of hello with a wide smile. She knew more about The CD than most CDers.”

Despite being such a familiar and friendly face, Bradley was a guarded person, said Nicola M. White (’01, assistant managing editor).

“We blabbed our secrets to her, but I don’t think we ever let Sharon tell us about herself,” White said in an email.

Writing an appreciation of Bradley’s years at The CD is obviously incomplete without a word from Bradley herself. By the time this story went to press in November, however, College Topics was not able to locate her at her previous address and phone number.

In a first-person column written for College Topics in 1999, Bradley described watching “hundreds of bright, talented people grow up in front of my eyes. Some gracefully, some kicking and screaming all of the way. The paper has grown in size and the technology has advanced, but the staff whose heart and soul go into it remain the same.”

(Liz Szabo, ’93, Life editor, is a reporter at USA Today.)