

# Three Summer Interns Find Themselves Working Hard—And in Love With the City

By NAN ROBERTSON

"I find myself walking down the street talking to people, telling them to smile," Austin Fitts said. "I tell them, 'You know, you really could smile; it's not that tough.' Hardly anybody smiles back. In New York, it's just not kosher. I'm always doing something to make somebody laugh. One morning going to work on the subway I sang 'Yes, We Have No Bananas.' The faces were deadpan."

Miss Fitts, a Philadelphian, is a summer intern in New York, as are her roommates, Californian Gayle Butler and Sharon Cohen, who grew up in West Hartford, Conn. Contrary to the deadpan New Yorkers, they think Austin is a scream, the one who can always get off a perfect wisecrack on anything.

All three see the flaws in New York (tension, dirt, noise and air pollution) and all are hopelessly in love with it. When they are graduated with their masters' degrees from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania next spring, where they met, they are virtually certain to pursue their careers in New York.

Are they the 1970's version of "My Sister Eileen," Ruth McKenney's classic story of two sisters from Columbus, Ohio, who come to New York in all innocence to seek their fortunes? That zany saga was immortalized in a play, a musical and two movies in the 1940's and 1950's.

No. Because Austin Fitts, 26, Gayle Butler, 23, and Sharon Cohen, 24, are already sophisticated beyond their years, have seen and done more than most people in their brief lives and have jobs in their fields that their elders would drool over.

## Beyond the Dream Stage

The imaginary but prototypical Ruth Sherwood yearned to become a writer in New York and her sister, Eileen, wanted to go on Broadway.

The real Austin Fitts and Gayle Butler and Sharon Cohen are beyond the dream stage. This summer, the first two are being groomed for the higher levels of investment banking at Goldman Sachs & Co. Sharon Cohen is working on "real-life deals in real-estate finance" for the Bankers Trust Company.

They arrived in New York trailing not only academic glories behind them (dean's lists, honor societies, cum laudes) but job credentials and skills truly too numerous to mention in toto. Just briefly:

Miss Fitts, a surgeon's daughter, learned Mandarin at the Yale-in-China Language Institute while running a nightclub called Thingummy's in Hong Kong and helped manage an equally prosperous restaurant in Philadelphia.

Miss Butler, daughter of a Navy jet pilot who has moved himself and his wife 19 times in 16 years of marriage, got an award for an outstanding performance in running the officers' swimming pool snack bar at Annapolis and was part of a team that conducted a management audit of the controller's office at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Mass.

## A 'Semi-New Yorker'

Miss Cohen, a dentist's daughter, says she's the only one of the three who is "a semi-New Yorker because I've worked here before and explored the city since I first put myself on a train when I was 10 to visit my great-aunt and uncle in Brooklyn."

She later organized housing cooperatives in West Harlem, is "street-wise



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From top, Gayle Butler, Sharon Cohen and Austin Fitts, Wharton School of Business, students, working in New York this summer.

in Spanish," was an economist and demographer for the Metropolitan New York Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty. Her first interests have long been real estate, architecture and city planning, and it was she who easily found the huge West Side apartment with four bedrooms, four bathrooms and a tangerine living room the three are sharing. "I'd be ashamed if I couldn't, with my experience," Miss Cohen said.

They all know the length and breadth of this country; they are young superstars at their specialties; they have earned their keep from girlhood; they are supremely self-confident.

"And, when we say we've worked most of this summer we mean worked most of this summer," they chorused.

## The Days Are Long

Street workers' jack-hammers chatter them awake at 6:30 A.M. Miss Cohen and Miss Fitts jog along Riverside Park—"Have you ever tried to jog talking about how to establish a loan loss reserve?" Miss Cohen asked rhetorically.

By 8:30 A.M. they have read the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times and are at work. They come home between 8 and 9 o'clock at night. Their "coffee-table book" is "The Complete Bond Book" by David M. Darst. Copies of Baron's, Forbes and the Real Estate Review are also "must" sources.

Do they go out on dates? Ironic laughter.

Miss Fitts was married two months ago to MacDonnell Gordon, a poet who is currently living on a Vermont farm. "I am paying three rents this summer and I resent it," Miss Fitts said. "The Philadelphia apartment that Mac was going to live in before he decided to go to Vermont costs \$265; my share in this gigantic pad is \$200 and it's \$100 for the farm."

Miss Cohen and Miss Butler are single. "Why don't you ask us if we go to swinging singles bars?" they jeered. They hardly touch alcohol and all three are Tab fiends.

## A Party for 200

They threw one party four days after their arrival at the West Side apartment to wipe out all social obligations. Two hundred young friends came and were gone before midnight because they, too, work long hours. It took the hostesses 10 minutes to plan the party. Miss Cohen did the invitations, Miss Fitts bought the liquor and Miss Butler bought the food.

They were home by 7:15 that evening; 35 minutes later, the first guest walked through the door and "we were ready."

Nobody cooks: it's too hot, they say, so it's "salad city or borscht." Miss Butler handles the money, Miss Cohen waters the plants and Miss Fitts goes out on frequent Tab runs.

They don't like the city's dirtiness, its polluted air or their gulping of junk food in New York's frenetic rhythms. In different ways, they expressed their excitement, their awe, at New York's diversity, its mixture of languages, cultures, experiences.

"Austin, tell your description," said her two apartment mates. Miss Fitts complied.

"When you live in the Village, you come home and bump into a magician," she said. "When you come home to the East Side, you bump into a doorman. When you come home to the West Side, you bump into a fruit stand. All things considered, I'd rather rub elbows with a magician."