



FALL 2002

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION ARTS Alumni & Friends

ALUMNI PROFILE Ben Karlin

NOW & THEN

In 1972, the Communication Arts Department relocated from Bascom Hall to Vilas Hall. A lot has changed in the 30 years since Vilas Hall opened its doors to classes for the first time.

1972: The *Godfather* was the highest grossing film that year, taking in \$244 million in box office receipts.

2002: Before the year has even ended, *Spiderman* has earned over \$800 million, one of the highest grossing films ever.

1972: Students could be seen running from department to department registering for classes.

2002: Students can register online from any computer in the world, anytime of day.



In spring of 2002, The Center for Communication Research established the Frank & Mary Bava Summer Scholarship. The scholarship provides support for a graduate student to engage in collaborative research with one of the Communication Science faculty. The award commemorates Frank and Mary Bava's long-standing relationship with the UW. It is made possible by the generosity of our alumni. Kendra Stuber was the first recipient of the award.

The Daily Show

Ben Karlin (BA '93), head writer for the *Daily Show* with Jon Stewart and former editor of the *Onion*, visited the Communication Arts Department in April of this year for a meeting with students, faculty, and fans. During the 90-minute session, Karlin discussed a wide range of issues and showed a couple of compilation reels of his television work. He also fielded questions from an audience of close to one hundred, many of them interested both in his creative work and his experiences in the television industry.



Although the *Daily Show* is one of the most popular and profitable programs on Comedy Central, Karlin talked about some of the ongoing challenges facing the production staff. Compared to *Leno*, *Letterman*, or *Saturday Night Live*, the

Daily Show operates on a modest budget with a relatively small staff of writers. For Ben, that means a lot of pressure to come up with timely comedy material based on daily headlines four nights a week. The Presidential election in 2000 eased these pressures a bit, since, he says, "There was just so much material to work with." Indeed, the show turned out an impressive run of comedy sketches, from the party conventions in the summer up through the controversial Florida vote count, earning the *Daily Show* a prestigious Peabody Award. Karlin says he enjoys working in New York, but he looks back to his time in Madison at the *Onion* and at the University as central to his professional development. He says that both experiences gave him the opportunity to develop a distinctive perspective, one that ultimately made his work more attractive to media executives in both New York and Los Angeles.

STUDENT PROFILE Gina Walejko

Locally Grown

Travel not too far away from campus and you find yourself in a different world. Take University Avenue out of downtown Madison, and, eventually, it will turn into Highway 14. Shops and stores fade into sprawling farmland, six lanes merge into two, and the biggest fixture on the horizon is no longer the Capitol but the large, forested hills that the glaciers left behind some 15,000 years ago. This new scenery, so close in distance to Madison, tells a story much unlike that of the city.

In December of last year I received the Lynne Rhodes Mayer and Harold Mayer Documentary Production Award to make a film or video that would "be a contribution to the public's understanding." I grew up in a rural community in southern Wisconsin where I developed a deep respect for farming, so I decided to produce a work that would be aimed at educating youth about agriculture. This summer I have been in production for a video entitled "Locally Grown," a short documentary about local Wisconsin farming and the lives of the families that still work the land for their livelihood.

Since June I have been visiting and videotaping three farms—an apple, a potato, and a vegetable farm—located along Highway 14. In the process, I have been able to practice what I've learned from the production courses that I have taken at the university. I have had experience



with documentaries before, but, to be quite honest, I wasn't prepared for my first interview.

I arrived early and tracked down my vegetable farmer. While she ran inside to change her clothes, my crew and I set up, and, in fifteen minutes, things were rolling. The picture was great and the sound was good...until the tractor started up. Even a mile away a tractor is loud. We waited patiently and it became quieter in a few minutes, though, by then, the dog had discovered our little operation. My sound person had fun trying to keep the panting inaudible while I, nervous on the inside, kept cracking with the questions.

Since then things have gotten better. Every interview seems to run a bit smoother. "Locally Grown" has taught me much about the documentary video-making process, but the farmers who I have had the opportunity to work with have reminded me of valuable lessons that seem just as, if not more, important: food doesn't come from the grocery store, working on a farm is still a noble vocation, and the length of this year's growing season is quite possibly more important than the number of degrees behind a person's name. I am reminded that not too far away from campus lies a different world.

A MESSAGE From the Chair

This has been a very exciting time for Communication Arts. The biggest challenge facing the Department has been the incredible growth in the number of undergraduate majors over the past several years. A year ago the number peaked at 802, including double majors. In some sense, Comm Arts has become too popular, given the relatively small size of our faculty and the strain such a large number places on our resources. In an effort to cope with the increase in majors, we have had to raise the GPA entrance requirement to 3.0 and restructure parts of the curriculum.

The Comm Arts Department has had many positive developments. We added two new junior faculty members this fall, raising the number of faculty to 24. Erik Doxtader has joined the Rhetorical Studies area from the University of North Carolina. His areas of expertise include South African reconciliation and politics, rhetorical theory, and critical social theory. Lisa Nakamura joins the Media and Cultural Studies area from Sonoma State as a Visual Culture cluster hire. Her research areas include the Internet, new and emerging media, as well as race and gender. In the past two years, we have actually added seven new faculty: two in Communication Science, two in Rhetoric, two in Media and Cultural Studies, and one in Film. Although many of the old



J.J. Murphy

faces are still around, the make-up of the Department is definitely changing. I'm happy to report that babies and young children have become a common sight in the halls of the sixth floor.

There have been other recent significant achievements. Mary Anne Fitzpatrick is now Deputy Dean of the College of Letters and Science. The

Rhetorical Studies program has reconstituted its graduate program after a ten-year hiatus. We now have two new faculty who teach courses on the topic of the Internet. We have added several prominent scholars whose teaching and research deal with international issues. We have managed to recruit our very top choices in faculty searches and fend off raids on our faculty by other leading universities. Documentary filmmaker Tony Buba (*Lightning Over Braddock*) and director Stuart Gordon (*Re-Animator*) recently spent semesters in residence, courtesy of the Arts Institute.

An increasing number of our alumni have returned to campus to give talks to our students on topics that include such issues as career prospects in various fields of communication. I am happy to report that 100 percent of our recent PhD students have found teaching jobs at major colleges and universities. In the past several years, we have increased the number of awards, fellowships, and scholarships to both undergraduate and graduate students. Our facilities have greatly improved. The Center for Communication Research is currently being upgraded with new computers. The production courses have new

HONORS & AWARDS

Two faculty members received the National Communication Association Golden Anniversary Award: Professor **Jim Dillard** for Communication Science and Professor **Erik Doxtader** for Rhetoric. The NCA gives out up to three awards each year, two of which our faculty won.

Professor **Kelley Conway** received a Fulbright Senior Scholarship Grant, which involved giving a series of lectures at the University of Liege, Belgium.

Thank You

The Communication Arts Department would like to express our appreciation to everyone who has contributed to the University of Wisconsin through the UW Foundation.

A special note of thanks to those of you who have asked that your donations be directed to the Communication Arts Fund. You play an essential role in funding new instructional initiatives and research within Comm Arts.

digital equipment, new editing suites, as well as a new screenwriting lab. A number of our main classrooms, including 4070 Vilas, have been re-equipped.

In addition to these accomplishments, our faculty and staff have received numerous awards. David Bordwell received a Hildale Professorship in the Humanities, Stephen Lucas a Evjue-Bascom Professorship in the Humanities, Jim Dillard in collaboration with faculty in the Medical School received a large grant from the National Institutes of Health, Jim Ferris won two major teaching awards for academic staff members, Lea Jacobs received a Guggenheim Fellowship, and Zhongdang Pan received a Vilas Award.

In order to communicate better with our many alumni, Comm Arts created a new web site (www.commarts.wisc.edu) and this newsletter. We would like to hear from you so that we can all keep abreast of your many accomplishments. We also want to keep you better informed about all our new initiatives within the Department. While there have been recent cutbacks on the state level that create a challenging environment, we have every intention of building on our recent successes. I know we can count on your generous support to help us achieve our goals.

Your Gift is Needed

You can pledge your support online using a secure server at <http://commarts.wisc.edu/> or use the donation form below:

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Jim Ferris, a Faculty Associate in Rhetoric, was awarded the Alliant Energy Underkofler Excellence in Teaching Award. The accolade is intended to recognize teaching of outstanding quality and an uncommon commitment to education.

Professor **Susan Zaeske** won the Mark H. Ingraham Distinguished Faculty Award from the College of Letters and Science. This award is given to a newly-tenured faculty member who excels in three areas: scholarship, teaching, and service.

Rhetoric in Retrospect

by Professor Stephen Lucas

When I arrived at the University of Wisconsin in August 1972, Richard Nixon was President of the United States, the break-in at the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate complex had occurred two months earlier, and the last units of U.S. ground combat forces were withdrawing from Vietnam. Also in 1972, J. Edgar Hoover died, the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty can constitute cruel and unusual punishment, the initial issue of *Ms. Magazine* appeared, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above 1,000 for the first time in history.

My colleagues in Rhetoric included Fred Haberman, Ed Black, and Lloyd Bitzer. Another colleague, Donald K. Smith, was vice president of the UW system. Tom Farrell (PhD '74) was nearing the end of his days as a graduate student. Kathleen Jamieson (PhD '72) had completed her dissertation the year before. Vilas Hall had just opened for business, and Theatre and Drama was still part of the department (it would split off the next year).

When I think back on the 30 years that have transpired since then, I am struck both by a profound sense of change and an equally profound sense of continuity. I realize how fortunate I was to be part of what was, for many of those 30 years, the foremost Rhetoric program in the United States. The intellectual atmosphere was charged with excitement, major publications were produced one after another by the faculty, and seminars were filled with graduate students of exceptional ability—a great many of whom have gone on to become major scholars in their own right. The program was also enriched by Michael Leff, Dilip Gaonkar, and Michael McGee—all of whom served on the faculty at one point or another. If one were studying rhetoric, Wisconsin was the place to be.

Today, of course, the faculty is different. Fred Haberman died in 1995, Don Smith in 1999. Ed Black and Lloyd Bitzer both retired in 1994. My colleagues today are Susan Zaeske (PhD Wisconsin), Rob Asen (PhD Northwestern), Rob Howard

(PhD Oregon), and Erik Doxtader (PhD Northwestern). After suspending graduate admissions for several years until the faculty was back to critical mass, we have a splendid class of new grad students that began this fall.

I am also confident that we have in place a faculty that will sustain the lustrous tradition of rhetorical studies at Wisconsin. Indeed, members of the Rhetoric faculty have recently received a number of important honors for teaching and scholarship, including NCA's Golden Anniversary Monograph Award in three of the past four years. We have developed a curriculum that builds on the traditional strengths of the program while simultaneously moving into such areas as feminist theory and criticism, critical theory and the public sphere, rhetoric and the Internet, and the discourse of truth and reconciliation in South Africa.

So, while things have changed a great deal since 1972, it is once again true today, as it was then, that Wisconsin is a great place to study—and to teach—rhetoric.

ON CAMPUS

Tamara Goldworthy, cinematographer on the Academy Award winning documentary short, *Big Mama* (2000), lectured in Tony Buba's documentary-production class in Fall 2001.

John Greene (PhD '83), communication science professor at Purdue, and **Gerard Hauser** (PhD '70), professor of rhetoric at the University of Colorado, participated in last year's colloquium series.

Susan Zaeske (BA '89, MA '92, PhD '97), **Stephanie Kaplan** (BA '90), **Kyle Knoeck** (BA '93), **Steven Harris** (BA '89), **Bill Cosh** (BA '90), **Chris Tobison** (Lamers) (BA '92), **Eric Nelson** (BA '93), **Eric Ostermann** (BS '94), **Jennifer Waak** (BBA '93), and **Eric Seagal** returned to Madison last spring as part of a forensics reunion.

With the help of alumni, the first Careers in Communication Series was a success:

Jim Brooks (BA '79), Producer, Madison Productions, Inc.

Kerman Eckes (MA '84), Sound, Wisconsin Public Television

Jeffrey Kurz (BA '83), Producer, Belle City Pictures

John Steele (BA '83), Unit Manager for Wisconsin Stories, Wisconsin Public Television

John Winter (BA '94) Producer/Production Manager for commercials and music videos in New York stopped by to offer advice about the TV/film business to eager production students.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Carolynne Bernard (BA '00) is a consultant with Communication Research Associates. Her main focus has been working with corporate communications functions in designing communication strategies and strategic messages, and designing and implementing strategic communication campaigns.

Peter Deming (BA '80) is a cinematographer. Recent films include *From Hell*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Austin Powers in Goldmember*. See his filmography (including upcoming releases) at <http://us.imdb.com/Name?Deming,+Peter>

Plumer Lovelace (BA '87) is the Director of Training Technology for the Center for Professional Development at CUNA & Affiliates.

Cecil Martin (BA '99) is a fullback with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Deanna Tillisch nee Strain (BA '84) is the Director of the Generation 2001 Study at Northwestern Mutual. The study, conducted by Harris Interactive and commissioned by Northwestern Mutual, provides an in-depth look at the first group of college graduates of the new millennium.

Mark Hahm (BA '95) writes and produces on-air promotions as an associate producer for the Starz! movie channel.

IN MEMORY

With sorrow, we announce **Kevin M. Anderson** (BS '98) passed away unexpectedly last May. Kevin's family and friends are establishing The Kevin M. Anderson Memorial Film Mentorship program. Additional information is available at www.inmemoryofkevin.com/scholarship.php.

New Laptops

The Department has acquired laptops to aid classroom instruction. When connected to one of our new video projectors, they can project websites, documents, or images on the wall for all students to see. They have been used for PowerPoint presentations, video editing program instruction, and in courses about the Internet. The Department hopes to add more laptops in the future and make them available to students in speech courses.



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The Gleaner Visits

French filmmaker Agnès Varda, one of the most innovative filmmakers working today, visited the UW–Madison campus for “Landscape & Portrait: The Cinematic Geographies of Agnès Varda,” a symposium and film retrospective on her work. Organized by Assistant Professor Kelley Conway and co-sponsored by the Comm Arts Department, the symposium brought the filmmaker and leading international scholars to campus to discuss her work. Agnès Varda introduced many of her films, answered questions on her compelling experiments with visual style and narrative structure, and made presentations on her use of landscapes and portraiture during her five day stay. Film Professor Conway was awarded grants from the Anonymous Fund, Wisconsin Humanities Council, the UW Lecturers Committee, the International Institute, and the Center for European Studies for the symposium. The films were presented courtesy of UW Cinematheque. For more information on Cinematheque events, please see their website at <http://cinema.wisc.edu>.

HIGH TECH COM SCI

Professor James Dillard is conducting research on how medical personnel communicate with families whose newborn has tested positive for cystic fibrosis. The research has been advanced by the use of a digital double-camera setup. While one camera captures medical professionals conducting tests and providing counseling, the other camera records the families’ reactions and questions. In order to study the extent to which the two parties engage in synchronous behaviors, the images are displayed (to the research team) using a split screen similar to those used in television when two characters are talking to each other on the phone. Dillard’s research team hopes to learn how medical staff can improve information retention and reduce negative emotions, such as fear, anxiety, and guilt, among family members by altering aspects of the interaction.

For the latest on Comm Arts alumni, friends, and news, visit our website at <http://commarts.wisc.edu>
