

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION ARTS Alumni & Friends

SUMMER 2003

ALUMNI PROFILE Jerry Zucker

## NOW & THEN

**1973:** Professor David Bordwell joins the Comm Arts faculty.

**1983:** Students currently applying for the Comm Arts major are born.

**1993:** The band Garbage, which includes alumni Butch Vig (BA '80) and Steve Marker (BA '89), is formed.

**2003:** Five Comm Arts courses with an Internet focus will be offered during the Fall 2003 semester.



Professor Susan Zaeske (BA '89, MA '92, PhD '97) and Adam Lee (BA '03) at this spring's commencement ceremony.

## FEATURED ALUMNI UPDATE

**Mark Samels** (BS '78) was appointed executive producer of the award-winning series *American Experience*. Samels will supervise the daily operations, as well as work with independent producers on future programs of television's longest running history series.

We want to hear from you. Visit <http://commarts.wisc.edu> to add your information to our web site and reconnect with your friends from college.

## Welcome Class of 2002–2003!

This newsletter was printed through gift funds administered by the UW Foundation.

## Of Speechmaking and the Silver Screen



Jeff Miller

"Life *should* be unpredictable," Jerry Zucker (BS, '72) told University of Wisconsin–Madison graduates during the address he delivered at four commencement ceremonies held in the Kohl Center, May 16–18. And Zucker surely has followed that advice. Growing up in Milwaukee, he traveled the unpredictable route from studying to be a public speaking teacher at UW–Madison to becoming a movie director in Hollywood, to returning to Madison to use his public speaking skills.

"Jerry was highly unpredictable and lots of fun to have in class," said Professor Emeritus Ron Allen, who directed Zucker's undergraduate course of study in communication education. Allen recalled how he came to class one day to find Zucker wearing a gorilla suit. Another day, Jerry came to class wearing an orange jumpsuit and backed his way into the room as if directing an airplane on a runway.

His unpredictability and sense of humor, said Allen, made Zucker "successful and popular as a student teacher." This winning humor dominated Zucker's address, in which he urged graduates to think big, to be creative, and to allow themselves to make mistakes. "Everything you have acquired of value is locked inside you," he said. "If you have a dream, now is the time to pursue it, before you buy furniture."

## STUDENT PROFILE Christy Carson

### To Nag Or Not To Nag

Our friends, family members, and others who make up our social network regularly influence our lives in numerous ways. People who are diagnosed with a disease, such as diabetes, may need to make changes in their lifestyle to improve their health and to manage the disease. Family and friends can play an important role in helping them to implement these changes. Diabetics, for instance, typically need to change well-established diet and exercise habits. Assistance from a spouse, roommate, or sibling can be helpful, but the effectiveness of the assistance most likely depends in part on the type of message being used. Nagging your loved-one to exercise daily, for example, may not be as

Zucker himself pursued his dream of making movies and is now regarded as the scion of a comedy filmmaking empire. He directed the blockbuster movie *Ghost*, and along with his brother David and friend Jim Abrahams has been responsible for such comedy classics as *Ruthless People*, *Top Secret*, *Airplane*, and *Kentucky Fried Movie*, as well as the television series *Police Squad*. During his 30 years in the movie business, Zucker has worked with such A-list talent as Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg, Patrick Swayze, John Turturro, Leslie Nielsen, Robert Stack, and Lloyd Bridges.

Even before graduation, Zucker pursued his dreams. As a communication education student in the '70s, he also dabbled in a variety of other courses in the Communication Arts Department, including those in radio, television, and film. At the same time, Jerry was writing and producing comedy with Kentucky Fried Theater, an improvisational group founded by Jerry, his brother David, and Abrahams. They rented a vacant storeroom at 1330 Regent Street where they rehearsed and staged comedy shows on weekends.

Perhaps with this experience in mind, he told the graduates that it is great to plan for the future, "just don't live there, because really nothing ever happens in the future. Whatever happens happens now, so live your life where the action is — *now*."



effective as a gentle reminder.

As a Communication Science PhD student, I am attempting to identify which types of messages received from family, friends, and other social network members are most

helpful to recently diagnosed diabetics as they try to carry out important lifestyle changes. Should certain types of messages prove to be more effective than others, then training family and friends to use these kinds of messages would be important to help a loved-one improve his or her health.

If you would like to learn more about the research being conducted by Comm Arts faculty and graduate students at the Center for Communication Research, visit our web site: <http://commarts.wisc.edu/cfer/>.

## A MESSAGE From the Chair

This has been an extremely difficult year in higher education. Due to cutbacks in state funding, UW–Madison finds itself in the midst of a huge budget crisis. As a result, we have just submitted a priority list to the Dean’s Office for a 10% reduction of our budget, with the exact percentage of the permanent cut to be announced in October. Yet, despite the current environment of fiscal gloom, there have been many positive developments in Comm Arts this past semester.

The L&S Academic Planning Council just gave Comm Arts a glowing academic review. As Dean Certain wrote: “Your department fields an undergraduate program that is among the most popular in the college and that, within existing resource constraints, each



J.J. Murphy

semester effectively delivers a high quality educational experience to hundreds of majors and nonmajors alike.” The graduate program also received extremely high praise: “It has a long-established tradition of excellence in training and typically places the vast majority of its graduates in tenure-track jobs in respectable departments and schools at major colleges and universities.”

We hired two new faculty members this spring. Mary Beltrán joins the Media and Cultural Studies area as a joint hire with Chicana/o Studies. Mary received her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. Chris Garlough, a cluster hire in the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Culture, will teach in the Rhetorical Studies area. Chris recently received her PhD from the

University of Minnesota. In the past two years, our faculty has grown from 18 to an all-time high of 26. Comm Arts is one of the few departments experiencing such growth.

Our faculty and staff once again won a number of awards, giving us increased visibility within the college. Susan Zaeske won a Distinguished Teaching Award and a Vilas Associate Award. Michael Curtin also received a Vilas Associate Award; Nietzsche Keene received the 2003 Creative Arts Award; Shanti Kumar received a Research Service Award; and Erik Gunneson received an L&S Mid-Career Achievement Award.

My three-year tenure as chair is coming to an end, but I am happy to report that my area colleague, Vance Kepley, has been elected as the new chair. This will be Vance’s second stint as chair, and I leave knowing that the Department is in good hands. While it has been a great thrill to lead the department, I very much look forward to teaching a full course load when I return from a one-year sabbatical.

I encourage you to visit our newly designed website, which contains information on the latest developments regarding the department, friends, and alumni. We will be counting on increased generosity of alumni and friends as we navigate through difficult times over the next several years. Given the decrease in state support, your financial support will become even more crucial to the continued vitality of the department.

### Your Gift is Appreciated

The Department of Communication Arts has a tremendous number of exciting programs, initiatives and research underway. Opportunities are plentiful for you to participate in the life of the Department by staying in touch with us, providing student internships with your company, and donating to the Department. Private gifts are increasingly critical to ensuring our excellence. Your gifts help us attract top faculty and graduate students, provide scholarships to outstanding undergraduates, upgrade our technology/facilities, and so much more.

Please consider a contribution today. For more information on making a gift to the Department of Communication Arts or including the Department in your estate plans, please contact:



**Maureen Brady**

University of Wisconsin Foundation  
1848 University Avenue, P.O. Box 8860  
Madison, WI 53708–8860  
608/265–9793  
maureen.brady@uwfoundation.wisc.edu

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

I/we would like to join other alumni and friends in their commitment to the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Communication Arts:

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My/our contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed

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**Please make checks payable to The UW Foundation – Department of Communication**

**Arts**, P.O. Box 8860, Attention: Maureen Brady, Madison, WI 53708–8860.

You will receive a receipt for your gift. We appreciate your support!

### Computer Lab Remodeled with L&S Grant

This state-of-the-art computer lab, funded with an L&S grant, now serves many important teaching functions. In the lab, instructors can demonstrate web pages and statistical analysis on the screen while students follow along. The instructor’s screen image can be projected and student screens can be monitored individually from the instructor’s computer. All of these abilities are very useful for courses such as Professor Zhongdang Pan’s introductory course on quantitative research in communication. In addition, the lab is used by students in the group communication class for on-line learning activities and to simulate computer-mediated group interaction. The lab is also being used for presentations on media and computer technologies that benefit both the faculty and students.

## Taiwanese Film Gift by David Bordwell

Taiwanese filmmaking is barely known in this country, but on the international scene, it has been a major force since the 1980s, routinely scooping up major prizes. One Taiwanese-American director, Ang Lee, has broken through to commercial acclaim with *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and has moved to the mainstream with *The Hulk*. Less well known are the master filmmakers Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang, who have been festival prizewinners for two decades. Yang's recent *Yi-Yi* won a major Cannes prize and got significant U.S. distribution.

For these reasons, the Center for Film and Theater Research was delighted when the Taiwanese Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago offered us a collection of over 120 films from the 1970s to the present. This rich collection—the largest of any outside Taiwan—will help historians to trace how

Taiwan became one of the region's "Four Tigers," with its energetic economy and expanding prosperity. Film researchers will have unprecedented access to original prints of some of the most important films produced in the country.

The gift was formalized at a ceremony held on March 7, 2003, attended by Mr. Antonio Chen, head of the Office, and Information Officers Ben Shao and Carol Li. The signing coincided with a weekend Taiwanese film festival at the Department's Cinematheque, which included a screening of Ang Lee's *Eat Drink Man Woman*.

The films are currently being catalogued by Dr. James Udden (MA '97, PhD '03), a specialist in Taiwanese film. The collection will be stored on campus in the Wisconsin Historical Society, where it will be available for individual viewing.



## HONORS & AWARDS

Graduate student **Joseph Abisaid** received the Frank and Mary Bava Summer Fellowship which will allow him to collaborate full-time with **Professor Zhongdang Pan** on research on the third-person effect.

**Professor Denise Solomon** participated in two panels at the International Communication Association convention in San Diego, CA where her paper, cowritten with **Leanne Knobloch** (MA '98, PhD '01), received top honors.

**Professor Kelley Conway** has been chosen to participate in the UW's new International Seminars program where she will be instructing a course on French Film in Paris, France.

Faculty Associate **Erik Gunneson** and UW Comm Arts alumnus **Eric Nelson** (BA '94) won a Wisconsin Broadcasters Association

2002 Merit Award for their PBS promo, "Jeff & Mr. Rogers."

Graduate student **Lijiang Shen** (MA '02) has received the Thesis of the Year Award from the Health Communication Division of the International Communication Association

**Professor Jim Dillard** was appointed editor of the journal *Human Communication Research (HCR)* for a three year term. *HCR* is the flagship journal of the International Communication Association.

Graduate student **Jen Theiss'** (MA '03) paper on communication and the emotional and cognitive consequences of first sexual encounters was ranked one of the best submitted to the National Communication Association's Interpersonal Division.

## UW Madison Faculty, Graduate Students, and Alumni at SCMS

UW-Madison Comm Arts graduate students, faculty, and alumni gathered at this year's annual Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference. SCMS is a professional organization composed of educators, filmmakers, and others involved in the study of the moving image. Among the presenters was graduate student Jennifer Fuller (MA '01), who delivered her paper "Gimme a Break and the Limits of the Modern Mammy." Also present were former graduate students who are now educators at institutions such as Michigan State University, University of Southern California, and MIT.

## ON CAMPUS

**Jill Wade** (BA '01), office manager for U.S. Representative James Sensenbrenner's Washington D.C. office, attended the Distinguished Teaching Award reception for Professor Susan Zaeske.

**James Hirsch** (BA '69), partner, owner, and co-founder of Papazian-Hirsch Entertainment International, spoke to undergrads about careers in the entertainment industry.

**Tim Edgar**, Health Communication Graduate Program Director at Emerson College and a visiting professor in our department in 1990, returned to provide training to UW researchers.

**Joe Beres** (BA '99), projectionist at Walker Art Center and **Wendi Weger** (BA '98), programmer for the NY Underground Film Festival, served as jurors for the Wisconsin Film Festival. They also met with production students, answering questions about career possibilities in the film and video industry. Also at this meeting was **Joey Garfield** (BA '92), director of *Breath Control: The History of the Human Beatbox* and **Bill Siegal** (BA '86), director of *The Weather Underground*. Their films were screened at the Wisconsin Film Festival as well as other festivals around the world.

**Tamio Kinoshita**, Professor of Communication at Tenrei University, Nara, Japan, visited the department to study how our oral communication curriculum is delivered.

**Mindy Hirsch** (BA '01), student life/Tzedek Hillel coordinator at University of Maryland visited faculty.

**Kyle Tusing** (BA '93, MA '95, and PhD '00) Communication Science professor at University of Arizona, returned to Madison to renew old ties.



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## Department of Communication Arts

College of Letters and Science  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
821 University Avenue  
Madison, WI 53706

# THE RADIO CONFERENCE — A TRANSNATIONAL FORUM

university of wisconsin–madison



from July 28th to July 31st, 2003

by **Professor Michele Hilmes**

Once, radio was “the shining center of the home” around which the family gathered each night to listen to their favorite programs: *Gunsmoke*, *Dragnet*, *The Baby Snooks Show*, *Jack Benny*, *The Lux Radio Theater*. During the daytime hours, 15-minute soap operas held audiences enthralled; one of them, *The Guiding Light*, began on radio in 1936 and still dispenses daily drama on television today. Television took over many of these programs, and radio changed to become today’s less prominent but even more pervasive medium that we listen to in our kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, cars, and work spaces, and take with us in portable form wherever we go. In many countries, radio is still the dominant medium, and during times of unrest and conflict becomes an important source for news and, yes, propaganda.

In cooperation with the Radio Studies Network of Great Britain, I have been organizing one of the first major scholarly conferences to be held in the U.S. since the 1940s devoted solely to radio. This summer in Madison, July 28th to 31st, over 100 researchers, educators, and practitioners from more than 12 different countries will present their work on the role of radio in today’s world. Featured speakers include Corey Flintoff, National Public Radio newscaster, and noted historian Professor Paddy Scannell of the University of Westminster, London. Topics range from history to audiences, from regulation to digitalization, from sports to politics, from talk to documentary. A few of the events, including Mr. Flintoff’s talk and an evening “Listening Room” presentation of new documentary

work in radio, will be open to the public. Check out the conference website, <http://commarts.wisc.edu/radioconference/> for more information, or contact Ron Becker at [rpbecker@wisc.edu](mailto:rpbecker@wisc.edu).

### The New and Improved Communication Arts Website!

You’ll find major changes in the Communication Arts website at <http://commarts.wisc.edu>. We have completely redesigned the look of our site and introduced pages of resources for Alumni and Friends. Check it out!