

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION ARTS

Alumni & Friends

FALL 2006

ALUMNI PROFILE George and Pamela Hamel

Hamel Family Professorship: Investing in the Future

George (BA '80) and **Pamela Hamel** have generously donated \$750,000 to the Communication Arts Department, establishing the Hamel Family Professorship. Last fall, a group of alumni posed the question "what do you need most?" to a group of young Comm Arts faculty. Their unanimous reply was additional faculty, so they could spend more time working with undergraduates. George says, "That sentiment both impressed and stayed with me. Our middle son, John, was a freshman last year at UW-Madison, and as parents, we were already focused on the quality of the undergraduate educational experience. When Pam and I decided that we wanted to do something for the department, my meeting with the young Comm Arts faculty members months earlier came to mind. Our hope was to try to do our small part to immediately enhance the quality of the undergraduate experience in Comm Arts."

When asked why alumni support of the department is particularly important at this time, George responded, "The days of the state being the primary source of funds for the university, with annual increases in those funds, are only a distant memory. If anything, the absolute dollars continue to decline. To



Pam and me, it seems that the university has two choices in this 'new' world: either compromise the quality of the educational programs due to a lack of funds, or seek alternative funds and strategies in order to keep the quality of the education high. We are fortunate to be in a position to do our small part to help the university continue to thrive."

George added, "We also feel that the Comm Arts

Department has a unique opportunity today.

Communication in all forms has never been more critical and, with the rapid pace of technological advances, is changing at an unprecedented rate. With its longstanding tradition of excellence in all its disciplines, and an increase in interest in the various Comm Arts disciplines by the undergraduate population, Pam and I believe that Comm Arts has the opportunity to become one of the truly bright lights within the College of Letters and Science, and indeed in the country. The potential to be widely considered as one of the best communication programs in the country is very exciting to me personally and something I believe to be worthy of our support. We hope other alumni will express their support by giving at a level that is comfortable for them."

STUDENT PROFILE Meredith Weinberg

Trial Run

During the summer of her senior year, Meredith Weinberg (BA '06) served as a public service intern with Judge Melissa C. Jackson at New York City Criminal Court, one of the busiest criminal courts in the country. Meredith worked with Judge Jackson on responses to a variety of press inquiries about specific cases, as well as statements explaining the processes, concerns, and public policy goals of the court. For example, Meredith helped to write a media advisory for a felony narcotics case in which all the defendants were remanded to custody. The case involved the possession of large quantities of cocaine with the intent to sell and more than a million dollars stored in cardboard boxes at an apartment controlled by the alleged drug dealers.

According to Meredith, the most rewarding aspect of the internship was "the opportunity to observe and work with a very experienced trial judge and to assist her in the decision-making process. To see her deal with life and death and public safety issues throughout the day in a calm, reasonable, fair manner was invaluable. The opportunity to understand her decision-making process was remarkable."

Meredith is currently living in New York, preparing for graduate school.



Judge Jackson and Meredith Weinberg



David Bordwell and Debbie Hanson

Debbie Hanson Retires

After 38 years of service to UW-Madison, 34 of which were in the Comm Arts Department, Debbie Hanson has retired. Known for her dedication, professionalism, poise, and those daily trips to the gym, Debbie was a remarkable member of the department. She is shown here with Professor David Bordwell.

Visit us on the Web at:
<http://commarts.wisc.edu>

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A MESSAGE From the Chair

UW–Madison is in the fourth year of the most difficult budget cycle in its modern history.

Deep cuts in the state's higher education budget and rising tuition rates concern faculty and students alike. Yet the university meets its mission with renewed energy. A successful capital campaign has set in motion a building program on the science and engineering campuses, with plans to upgrade social science and arts facilities over the next decade. Annual applications for both undergraduate and graduate study continue to climb, and the admission standard for incoming students is the highest in recent memory.

The Communication Arts Department faces the challenges of the current educational budget with the same sense of commitment. Despite a shrinking faculty roster and limited resources during this budget crisis, we remain one of the most



sought-after majors in the College of Letters and Science, graduating 250–300 students annually. Our own exacting admission standard yields a talented and motivated group of majors who enliven the classroom. The intellectual excitement that I

experience while interacting in class with excellent Comm Arts majors increases each year, which speaks to the high quality of our students.

This excellent learning environment was reconfirmed in the spring when our colleague J.J. Murphy was awarded the highly selective Distinguished Teaching Award. An incredibly dedicated teacher, J.J. richly deserves the honor. He is the sixth Comm Arts faculty member to win the award in its recent history, a remarkable record for such a small faculty. In addition, seven Comm Arts TAs have received teaching prizes in the last

six years. Our course evaluations confirm that both the faculty and TAs contribute to the department's record of teaching excellence. On our seven-point evaluation scale—and who among the alumni does not recall filling out those evaluation forms with a #2 lead pencil—the department's most recent overall mean score, combining faculty and TAs, was an impressive 6.02.

It's especially gratifying in the context of this reflection on teaching to acknowledge the wonderful gift of George and Pamela Hamel. Their generosity has established the Hamel Family Professorship, which will allow us to recruit new faculty who will continue to develop our undergraduate curriculum. That kind of support, along with the day in, day out dedication of our faculty and TAs, assures that the department's instructional mission will remain paramount.

Your Gift is Appreciated

The Department of Communication Arts has a tremendous number of exciting programs, initiatives and research under way. 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:

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608/262–6242, Anne.Lucke@uwfoundation.wisc.edu

If 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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Smith Joins Faculty

Jeff Smith (MA '89, PhD '95)



How many of you avoided Friday courses? Professor Jeff Smith's five-and-a-half-hour Friday afternoon class filled within minutes of its announcement. The topic is film music. The course focuses on the historical development of

particular compositional trends and techniques in film scoring, from the synchronized scores of the silent films to the pop/classical hybrids of today. A film historian, Smith's primary focus is post–1950s American cinema with interests in film music, film sound, cognitive film theory, historical poetics, and the economic and industrial contexts for Hollywood film production. He is also teaching a course on world cinema. Prior to joining the faculty this fall Smith was the Director of Film and Media Studies at Washington University.

Kevin M. Anderson Memorial Film Mentorship



The **Kevin M. Anderson** (BS '98) Memorial Film Mentorship offers a UW student the opportunity to learn about the film industry through a variety of internships arranged by three of Kevin's colleagues: Roni Menedez, Katie L. Fetting, and Meta Valentic. Evan Foster (BA '05), the first to receive the mentorship, interned for four

very different companies. At Craftsman Film and Bull's Eye Entertainment, Evan wrote script coverage. He served as a production assistant for *Wristcutters: A Love Story* and also helped out on the reality television show *Urban Jungle*. When asked if he would have been able to gain this experience without the mentorship, Evan responded, "Not a chance. It's hard enough to get an internship at one film company, let alone four.

Furthermore, the mentors introduced me to dozens of people working in the industry."

Andy Schlachtenhaufen is this year's recipient. You'll be able to read about Andy's experience this fall on our Web site.

If you would like to support the Kevin M. Anderson Memorial Film Mentorship, please send your contribution to University of Wisconsin Foundation. Please indicate the name of the fund on the memo line.

"Film in Paris" Study Abroad Program

"We'll always have Paris," one of cinema's most famous lines, no longer refers only to Bergman and Bogart's torrid love affair in *Casablanca*. It also now applies to the exciting three-week study abroad program led by Professor Kelley Conway. In June 2005 and 2006, Conway took twenty students to Paris to study French film history, aesthetics, and the industry. Highlights included a conversation with director Agnès Varda, a tour of an important art house in the

Latin Quarter, a conversation with the film critic for *Variety*, and class visits from film historians Noël Burch and Richard Neupert (PhD '86). The program focused on two particularly rich periods in French film history: the 1920s avant-garde and the New Wave. Students also enjoyed rare silent films accompanied by live music at the Musée d'Orsay and the Louvre, as well as classical Hollywood films such as *Mildred Pierce* and *Gilda*.



Editing, Persuasion, and Screenplays: Visiting Instructors

Juliana Parroni (BA '83)



Accomplished freelance editor Juliana Parroni is teaching courses on editing and advanced video production this year. She has served as the editor for several nationally televised documentaries and worked with many notable industry professionals, such as Peter Jennings, Charlie Rose, Francis Ford Coppola, and Bill Moyers. In 2001, Parroni won the American Cinema Editors Award for Best Edited Documentary. Her latest project, editing the first episode of a two-part profile of Andy Warhol for the PBS series *American Masters*, aired in September. Parroni has lectured at NYU.

Joshua Morrill (MA '99, PhD '04)



After completing his doctorate degree, Joshua Morrill turned his attention to research full-time. As a member of the Learning through Evaluation, Adaptation, and Dissemination (LEAD) Center, Morrill provided evaluation services for programs in education, technology, health, and social services. In addition, he runs his own consulting business, Morrill Solutions Research. We are excited to welcome this gifted teacher back for the 2006–2007 school year. He is teaching Introduction to Interpersonal Communication and Theory and Practice of Persuasion.

James Hirsch (BA '69)

James Hirsch returns to campus to inspire young screenwriters. Before becoming one of Hollywood's most inventive and successful writer-producers, he was a student in Jerry McNeeley's screenwriting course. Like McNeeley, Hirsch commutes from Los Angeles to teach. Drawing from his experience as the producer or writer of more than 40 television movies, series, and miniseries, Hirsch emphasizes the practical realities of writing and marketing professional screenplays. Students complete a full-length screenplay in this advanced screenwriting course.

HONORS & AWARDS

Professor J.J. Murphy received a 2006 Distinguished Teaching Award in recognition of 25 years of excellence. J.J.'s unique style, which blends filmmaking, scholarship, and mentoring has inspired, nurtured, and educated many at the university and in the community. As one student wrote, "J.J. is a worldly and knowledgeable sage. Shine on, you crazy diamond."

Ben Karlin (BA '93), executive producer of *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*;

winner of nine Emmy Awards; winner of a Grammy Award for Best Comedy Album of the Year; and co-founder of an independent television production company, Busboy Production, has added 2006 Distinguished Young Alumni Award recipient to his remarkable list of credits. Congratulations, Ben!

Professor Mary Beltrán received a Faculty Diversity Research Award from the UW Institute on Race and Ethnicity for her proposal entitled "Lessons in Hollywood

Latinidad: Latino/a Stardom and the Evolution of U.S. Racial Borders."

In recognition of his continued excellence as a scholar and teacher, **Professor Stephen Lucas** has been reappointed Evjue-Bascom Professor in the Humanities for an additional five years. This named professorship is among the most prestigious professorships at the university.



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Get Connected



Hollywood Badgers:

www.hollywoodbadgers.com

Formed in March 2005, Hollywood Badgers is an organization of UW-Madison alumni working in the entertainment industry. This energetic group is establishing a strong Wisconsin presence in L.A. Through these connections they help each other network, find jobs, and establish new friendships.

The Hollywood Badgers are also creating a home base for current UW-Madison students and recent grads who are interested in pursuing careers in the entertainment business. Hollywoodbadgers.com provides a

primer on Hollywood, resume tips, an optional student e-mail list, and much more. Members have assisted new grads with their job search, helped students find internships, and held workshops on campus.

How can you get connected with the Comm Arts Department and other alumni?

- Contact Mary Rossa (merossa@wisc.edu), the undergraduate advisor, about internship opportunities you have for Comm Arts majors.
- Send us an alumni update for the Web site at commarts@wisc.edu.
- Sign up for a free UW Alumni e-mail account. This is a Web-based account that is free to all UW alumni. See www.uwalumni.com for details.
- Connect with a college friend through the Wisconsin Alumni Association Directory (www.uwalumni.com). Be sure to update your contact information while you're there.

Alumni Survey

As part of our desire to maintain the excellence of the Comm Arts undergraduate program, we are asking alumni to respond to a brief survey about their experience as an undergraduate in the department.

The survey will be emailed to alumni for whom we have an email address. To update your email address, please go to the UW Alumni Directory at www.uwalumni.com. You will also be able to respond to the survey through the alumni section of the Comm Arts Web site. The survey will be online through November 13. All responses will be anonymous. We thank you in advance for your participation.