

ComMuniTy

Department of Communication, Media and Theatre

I L L I N O I S U N I V E R S I T Y

Welcome to the eighth issue of **ComMuniTy**, the official newsletter of the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre (CMT) at NEIU. **ComMuniTy** allows us to maintain contact with CMT alumni, inform alumni and current students about the CMT program, and celebrate our successes as students, alumni, faculty, and as a department.

CMT is the 7th most popular major at NEIU. CMT has consistently been in the top ten majors since 2010. We owe this distinction to the interest and enthusiasm of our students, as well as the talent and dedication of our faculty and staff.

CMT continues to excel with student and faculty research and creative activities. In 2017, **Ann Hartdegen** participated in the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Symposium and **Nancy McVittie** had her book *Fade to Gray: Aging in American Cinema* published by the University of Texas Press. Professor **Edie Rubinowitz** and two of her journalism students, **Maria Xoy** and **Jason Merel**, presented at the Illinois Humanities People-Powered Publishing Conference with a panel titled "Educational Impasse: Teaching and Learning Storytelling When You Are the Story." In 2017 and 2018, four CMT students—**Laura Wagner**, **Samantha Sepulveda**, **Liz Varnecky**, and **Elise Taylor** each presented at the NEIU Annual Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium. **Edie Rubinowitz** attended the Solutions Journalism Academy Conference in Portland, Oregon and also published a book review in *Electronic News Journal*. **Sarah Fabian** had her scenic design work featured at Chicagoland theaters and had great reviews by the *Chicago Tribune* among others. **Matthew Sage** created the sound design and played guitar in Pope.L.'s "The Escape" at the Art Institute of Chicago. **Leslie Hull** participated in a gallery installation titled "Outcry" by Whitney Bradshaw at DePaul University Museum.

Our faculty have also been recognized with several awards recently. **John Bliss** and **Kate Kane** each received an Excellence Award for Teaching. **Lizz Otto-Cramer** was awarded a semester-long Educational Leave, and four CMT faculty members were awarded "Senior Instructor" status: **John Ross**, **Dan Wirth**, **Kate Kane**, and **Bob Ritsema**. **Sarah Fabian** received a Faculty Excellence Award for Research and Creative Activities and both **Bob Ritsema** and **Dan Wirth** received Instructor Excellence Awards. **Sarah Fabian** was also recognized by her alma mater Hope College with the "10 Under 10 Award," which honors emerging leaders in their field.

There have been noteworthy changes to CMT faculty lately. Our former Department Chair, **Katrina Bell-Jordan** moved from Associate Dean to Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Nanette Potee retired after 18 years at NEIU, and **Tony Adams** moved to a position as the Chair of the Communication department at Bradley University. **Wilfredo Alvarez** moved to a position at Southern Connecticut State University. In 2018, we also welcomed a new tenure-track faculty member in theatre: **Adam Goldstein**. Adam's areas of expertise are in performance and directing, and we are excited to have him join the CMT faculty. We have also welcomed **Leslie Hull** and **Matthew Sage** as new instructors in the department. We have plans to hire new Communication faculty members in upcoming years.

There are changes in our office staff as well. **Linda Leyva** retired in December 2017, and **Peter Goldman** and **Jeff Wade** are now our CMT Office Administrators.

Thanks to **Edie Rubinowitz**, NEIU and the CMT Department have received a \$35,000 grant from the Online News Association to produce the "DACAmentation Project," a series of podcast episodes on Dreamers. These will be produced by DACA students and recent alumni, and the episodes will air on Spanish Public Radio (an international online radio station with headquarters in Chicago).

Our successful partnership with the **Chicago Film Society** continues. We celebrated our eleventh season of screening 35mm prints of classic and rare films in the NEIU Auditorium. We have also created a new course, CMTM 390: NEIU Cinémathèque, where students attend these film screenings and learn about the materiality of analog film archives, preservation, and restoration.

Sarah Fabian has secured NEIU as the host of the 2019 Chicago Youth TheatreFest where over 200 middle and high school CPS students will come to campus to compete, attend workshops, and network with theatre programs.



Cyndi Moran, Katrina Bell-Jordan, John Bliss, and Adam Goldstein representing the CMT Department

IN MEMORIAM - DR. BERNARD BROMMEL

Dr. Bernard J. Brommel, Professor Emeritus of Communication at Northeastern Illinois University, died September 22 at his home in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was 88 years old.

Dr. Brommel taught at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) for 28 years and in retirement became one of the institution's most generous donors. Dr. Brommel was born in 1930 in St. Marys, Iowa, south of Des Moines, one of nine children who grew up on the family farm.

He earned his Ph.D. from Indiana University in Communication, with a minor in Education and Theatre, and later earned a Master of Science from Northeastern Illinois University in Counseling and Family Therapy, and a post-doctorate degree from Northwestern.

His important early research focused on American labor movements, and he published an award-winning biography of Eugene Debs. He was a foundational scholar in the discipline of family communication and co-authored the textbook *Family Communication: Cohesion and Change*, which continues to be used today. He was a counselor and worked in private practice in individual and family therapy for 25 years. As a teacher, scholar, and philanthropist, Dr. Brommel shaped NEIU and the field of family communication. NCA named the Bernard J. Brommel Award for Outstanding Scholarship or Distinguished Service in Family Communication after him.

He is survived by his partner of more than 20 years, Carl Ratner, as well as his children Michaela, Brian, Debra, Brent, Brad and Blair.



Dr. Brommel's philanthropy to NEIU was vast. Read more about his initiatives online:
<https://www.neiu.edu/alumni-and-giving/giving/impact-your-gift/dr-bernard-j-brommel-initiatives>

RECENT ALUMNI UPDATES

Samantha Sepulveda (B.A. 2015, M.A. 2017) is now a Ph.D. student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she is taking a mixed-methods approach toward the study of Intercultural Communication.

Elise Taylor (M.A. 2017) is now a Ph.D. student at Purdue University.

Devin Pickell (B.A. 2017) joined the Jerry Thomas public relations firm after graduation before moving into technology marketing as a Content Specialist at G2 Crowd.

Selena Alvarado (B.A. 2017) was hired as the marketing coordinator at the event planning/design company Lil Epic Design after completing an internship with the company.

Javier Aquino (B.A. 2015) went on to complete a master's degree in Educational Leadership at Concordia University Chicago and then entered a doctoral program in Interdisciplinary Leadership - Higher Education Administration at Governor's State University.

Taylor Seletos (B.A. 2015) is an account manager for LaSalle Network.

PJ Randhawa (B.A. 2008) is an investigative news reporter for NBC5 in St. Louis, Missouri, and she just won a Mid-American Regional Emmy Award in the "Health and Science" category for her story on pharmacy medication errors. (Pictured below receiving her Emmy Award.)



We are beginning a big project to reach out to CMT alumni for updates. If you would like to be included in our next newsletter and on our website, or need to update your contact info, please email us at cmt@neiu.edu

CELEBRATING CMT WEEK (APRIL 17-20, 2018)

In April 2018, the department enjoyed “CMT Week” with quite a few events celebrating the past, present, and future of CMT.

We kicked off the festivities on Tuesday, April 18th with the CMT Day awards ceremony and the North by Northeastern (NxNE) Media and Performance Festival. At this event, our scholarship and award-winning students were presented with their certificates. Then our theatre students performed a short play written by Becca Peterson. The night was capped off by a number of video production projects presented by the CMT students who created them.

On Wednesday, April 18th we had two big events. First was the “Communication Studies Legacy Panel featuring Dr. Bernard Brommel, Dr. Arthur Bochner, Dr. Michael Kramer, Dr. Tony Adams, and Dr. Jimmie Manning. This was followed by the 2018 Brommel Research Award Lecture titled “Narrating Forgiveness” presented by Dr. Tony Adams.

Thursday included a CMT Alumni/Faculty/Student Networking Event where current and former CMT students were able to mingle and get to know one another. Students discussed job opportunities, graduate school, and other ways to connect with one another and with the department. This was followed by the 2018 Brommel-Hahs Lecture given by Dr. Jarice Hanson. The topic of her talk was “Telling Our Stories in the Age of Social Media.” Dr. Hanson graduated from NEIU with a B.A. in Speech and Performing Arts and English and is now Professor Emeritus in the Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst.

Thanks to everyone who took part in CMT Week!



Communication Studies Legacy Panel: Michael Kramer, Art Bochner, Jimmie Manning, Tony Adams, and Bernard Brommel



2018 Brommel-Hahs Lecture: Katrina Bell-Jordan, Shayne Pepper, Jarice Hanson, Alice McGee, and Bernard Brommel

2016-2017 Student Award Winners

Brommel-Adams-Bell-Jordan Scholarship

Tatiana Villabos and Enrique Anguiano

Brommel-Denson-Everson-Snell Scholarship

Erika Rios and Sarah Giacomo

Brommel-Hanson-Ijams-Hayward Scholarship

Mary Bell

Brommel-Kramer-Barnitz Scholarship

Monzerrath Gaytan Diaz

Brommel Levy Staniec Scholarship

Kristian Garcia

CMT Distinguished Student Award

Christian Gralak, Manali Shah, Josie Rivera, Sitwat Salman, Nicole Leavey, Gaudy Cardona

Anna Antaramian Excellence in Theatre Award

David Mitchell, Nadezhda Panayotova

2017-2018 Student Award Winners

Brommel-Adams-Bell-Jordan Scholarship

Kristian Garcia

Brommel-Denson-Everson-Snell Scholarship

Monzerrath Gaytan Diaz

Brommel-Hanson-Ijams-Hayward Scholarship

Samantha Foster

Brommel-Kramer-Barnitz Scholarship

Elizabeth Varmecy

Brommel Levy Staniec Scholarship

Sarah Brooks

CMT Distinguished Student Award

Sarah Brooks, Kristian Garcia, Joe Gerber, Ariel Notterman, Maria Xoy

Anna Antaramian Excellence in Theatre Award

Kristian Garcia, Ian Williams, Marty Witkowski, Emily Hosman

Communicating Sexualities Scholarship

Lizett Galan

STAGE CENTER THEATRE - 50TH ANNIVERSARY (1967-2017)

Fall 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of the Stage Center Theatre at NEIU. Since 1967, we have produced more than 250 plays on campus. We are working on an online archive of these 50 years. Stay tuned!

The 2017-2018 academic year had great performances. There were two fall semester main stage productions: Kenneth Lonergan's *This is Our Youth*, directed by **John Bliss**, and Nilaja Sun's *No Child*, directed by **Mary Kroeck**. In the spring semester we produced Howard Korder's *Episode 26* directed by **Dan Wirth** and Jose Rivera's *Marisol* directed by **Adam Goldstein**.

Our Children's Theatre Workshop also had an exciting 2017-2018 with **Ann Hartdegen** directing two shows for local elementary, middle, and high schools. In fall 2017 it was *Faces of Freedom* written by Cynthia Mercati, and spring 2018 was *Silk Road Stories* based on tales by 13th century Persian poets Rumi, Saadi, and Attar.

This year's 2018-2019 season will kick off this fall with Bertolt Brecht's *Antigone* directed by **John Bliss**, followed by the rock musical *High Fidelity* written by Amanda Green, Tom Kitt, and David Lindsay-Abaire and directed by **Adam Goldstein**. In spring 2019, our *Nuevas Voces* new play festival returns directed by guest artist and Teatro Vista ensemble member **Nathon Santana**. We will

also see productions of Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman* directed by Leslie Hull, and a new play developed by the **spring 2018 Experimental Theatre class and Dan Wirth** called *Offended! or The Strange Case of Dr. Franken and the Frankenzone Monster* directed by Dan Wirth.

Children's Theatre Workshop is under new direction by CMT's most recent tenure-track hire, **Adam Goldstein**, and will feature Naomi Iizuka's *Anon(ymous)* in fall 2018 and Georgette Kelly's *How to Hero, or the Subway Play* in partnership with Filament Theatre located in Portage Park.



NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
STAGE CENTER THEATRE

Stage Center Theatre Productions (2017-2018)

This Is Our Youth
Directed by John Bliss

No Child...
Directed by Mary Kroeck

Nuevas Voces: 10-Minute Play Festival
Directed by Adam Goldstein

Episode 26
Directed by Dan Wirth

Marisol
Directed by Adam Goldstein

Children's Theatre Workshop

Faces of Freedom (Fall 2017)
Silk Road Stories (Spring 2018)
Directed by Ann Hartdegen

Stage Center Theatre Productions (2018-2019)

Antigone
Directed by John Bliss

High Fidelity
Directed by Adam Goldstein

Nuevas Voces: 10-Minute Play Festival
Directed by Nathon Santana

Offended! or: The Strange Case of Dr. Franken and the Frankensone Monster
Directed by Dan Wirth

The Pillowman
Directed by Leslie Hull

Children's Theatre Workshop

Anon(ymous) (Fall 2018)
How to Hero, or the Subway Play
(Spring 2019)
Directed by Adam Goldstein

If you value your experience with the CMT community, please consider a financial contribution to the Department. We appreciate ANY size donation, whether it is \$4, \$40, or \$400! For more information, visit www.neiu.edu/giving.