

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 fourth issue of **ComMuniTy**, the annual newsletter of the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre (CMT) at NEIU. **ComMuniTy** serves three purposes: (1) to maintain contact with CMT alumni, (2) to inform alumni and current students about the CMT program, and (3) to celebrate our successes as students, alumni, faculty, and as a department.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CMT is proud to report that we are still ranked as one of NEIU's **top 10 majors** (#8). This is the third year we have maintained a top-10 distinction. We owe this distinction to the talent and dedication of our faculty and the interest and enthusiasm of our students.

This year, we realized a long-term goal of developing a **Minor in Journalism** and a **Minor in Communication**. Additionally, we made important revisions to our **Minor in Communication, Media and Theatre**. Along with our **Minor in Theatre** and our **Minor in Media**, we now offer five minors, each of which provides students with an opportunity for more focused study in one of our areas.

In 2012, we developed **seven new courses**, including *Studies in Television*, *Seminar in New Media*, and *Chicago on Video: One Pixel at a Time*, a NEIU First-Year Experience course that provides students with hands-on video production experience. Two of our existing courses—*Communication, Gender, and Identity* and *Gender and Media*—are now also cross-listed with NEIU's new LGBTQ Studies Minor.

CMT students held **internships** at a number of locations, including ABC-7 Chicago (Windy City Live), Radio Cosmos, Telemundo, Univision, Georgia Nut Company, Giachello Consulting, Walker Sands Communications, and NEIU's Office of Public Relations. We support the professional development of our students and are proud of these internship achievements.

The CMT Department's **Media Lab** continues to be a tremendous asset to our media production curriculum, providing students with necessary hands-on experience in audio and video production. In May 2013, all computers in the lab will be replaced with updated software that accommodates changes in digital technologies.

We continue to excel in the area of **student research**. Four of our recent M.A. program graduates are enrolled in doctoral programs, and CMT students regularly participate in the annual NEIU Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium. A few students have even had their research published in respected academic outlets.



Members of the CMT community celebrate **Katrina Bell-Jordan's** Faculty Award of Excellence (2012), an annual award given by NEIU's Black Heritage Committee

Faculty members also have some noteworthy achievements from the past year. **Seung-Hwan Mun** received a NEIU Faculty Excellence Award for Teaching, and **Tony Adams** received a NEIU Faculty Excellence Award for Research. **Katrina Bell-Jordan** was given a Faculty Award of Excellence by the NEIU Black Heritage Committee. CMT faculty members **John Ross** and **John Bliss** each published multiple books, and **Lisa Cantwell**, **Anna Antaramian**, **Ann Hartdegen**, **Rodney Higginbotham**, and **Dan Wirth** directed productions for the Stage Center Theatre.

In 2012, we experienced changes in faculty as well. Professor **Anna Antaramian** retired, and we welcomed two new members of the CMT community: **Angela Sweigart-Gallagher** and **Richard Helldobler**, NEIU's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. We are also sad to report the passing of **Robert Walker**, **David Jordan**, and **John Powers**, all former faculty members in the department.

In spring 2013, we will host the fourth annual **North by Northeastern Media and Performance Festival**, and introduce **CMT Day**, a yearly event to celebrate the accomplishments of our community. We will continue to fundraise for the Stage Center Theatre, as well as engage in further community outreach and alumni relations.

FACULTY-STAFF-EMERITUS UPDATES

Katrina Bell-Jordan continues as Chair of the CMT Department and recently served as co-chair of the Screening Committee for NEIU's Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs. She is currently working on the College of Arts and Sciences initiative, "Public Universities, Social Solutions," and continues serving her community on the Skokie, Illinois Board of Education (District 68). The home front continues to be busy—and exciting—as her 5th-grade son heads to junior high school next year!

After receiving tenure, **Edie Rubinowitz** was granted a sabbatical leave. She'll miss everyone but will wisely use that time to dive back into "doing" journalism and brushing up on her digital storytelling skills. She'll be happy to share what she's learned with her classes in Spring 2014!

Jim Blair recently wrote two plays: *Designer Genes* and *Lounging*, a two act drama. In addition, he occasionally does standup comedy with a group called "Loose Chicks." He refers to himself as the "Loose Goose."

Dan Wirth is pleased that his directorial efforts with the NEIU production of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (2012) proved successful. His son Ian continues film studies at Columbia College and his daughter Kailey nears graduation at Niles North High School.

Angie Sweigart-Gallagher is preparing for her NEIU directorial debut with *How I Learned to Drive*. Her article on the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street protests will be published in an upcoming edition of *Youth Theatre Journal*.

Shayne Pepper presented research at the 2012 National Communication Association conference and at the 2013 Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, and he published a book chapter entitled "Public Service Entertainment: HBO's Interventions in Politics and Culture." He also recently embarked upon the exciting journey of homeownership.

Alan Mace is serving in his second year as the Office Manager.

John Bliss had a young adult novel, *Time With Leo*, published by Gemma Open Door in February. It's the story of a teenager who travels back in time and meets Leonardo da Vinci. After eight volumes of nonfiction, this is his first novel.

Cyndi Moran is working with NEIU staff and administration to bring much-needed updates to the CMT video production tools and digital editing lab. She is also making sure that students will continue to make good use of them! On her own production front, she's currently co-producing *The Quality of Mercy*, a documentary that focuses on sentencing issues for juvenile offenders.

Tony Adams' book, *Narrating the Closet: An Autoethnography of Same Sex Desire* (2011), received the 2012 National Communication Association Ethnography Division Best Book Award and the 2012 Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender Outstanding Book Award. His next book—the *Handbook of Autoethnography* (co-edited with Stacy Holman Jones and Carolyn Ellis)—will be published in May 2013.

Although he now resides in a senior living facility in Kalamazoo (MI), near longtime friends who teach at Western Michigan University, **Bernard Brommel** misses NEIU and Chicago. He has had a series of health issues in the last year that have left him less able to do all of the things that he would like to do. However, he actively participates in community meetings that focus on important issues that plague our country, and he tries, at least once every semester, to visit CMT classes.

Seung-Hwan Mun received a NEIU Faculty Excellence Award in teaching for the 2010-2011 academic year. He also won the top research paper award for his recent study entitled "A Tale of Two Worlds: A Comparative Historical Analysis of Authorship" in the Communication and Law Division at the 2012 National Communication Association Convention.

Wilfredo Alvarez had a busy, but exciting year presenting his research at local and national conferences. He presented his research at the Central States Communication Association conference and the National Communication Association conference. Wilfredo also had a book chapter published last fall. In addition, and most importantly, Wilfredo stays very busy raising Davis, his Rhodesian Ridgeback/Pitbull.

Kate Harris performed in *Sweet and Sad*, a production that Chris Jones (*Chicago Tribune*) listed as one of the top 10 shows to see. She was also listed as one of the top five female theatrical performers of 2012 by New City Newspaper. Currently, she is working on the first live comic book reading of *Kill Shakespeare*, produced by Strawdog Theatre.

Despite a few challenging life events, **Karol Bayley** looks forward to a productive and positive year.

Between November 23 and December 30, **Ron Mace** acted in 27 performances of a professional production of *Little Women* (as Mr. Lawrence). He recently voted on the Screen Actors Guild Awards which featured Best Actor and Best Film categories. He is currently working on publishing some of his poetry and short stories.



CMT faculty members **Tony Adams**, **Wilfredo Alvarez**, and **Shayne Pepper** at NEIU's commencement (Spring 2012)

C + M = T

Elizabeth Krahulec

When math started using acronyms like “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally,” I argued with my mother about the importance of math. “I’m going to be an actress,” I told her, “I don’t need math.” But I soon conceded to my mother, kept my head down, and learned things about Pi that left me hungry.

When I came to NEIU, the advisor told me that my major would be Communication, Media and Theatre. “I don’t need Communication and Media,” I replied. “I’m going to be an actress or a director or a producer. Can’t I just do Theatre?” But I soon conceded to the advisor, kept my head down, and mulled over the course catalog.

I took two classes that summer: *Microeconomics* (for my mother) and *Persuasion* (for the advisor). Neither class disinterested me in the course catalog, but I couldn’t believe that either would help my theatrical visions. Before I even began the two classes, I yearned for fall and all of the theatre classes it held for me.

It was during the middle of a *Persuasion* class that the math started to make sense. The professor was talking about the use of fonts and what people may think and feel about seeing them. I started to see how I could improve the posters I was making for the upcoming plays simply by making choices based on this information. I was learning what typefaces might attract an audience to my show. “Okay,” I thought, “maybe this class wasn’t a total loss.”

That fall, I added *Communication, Gender and Identity* as well as *Voice and Diction* to my class schedule. It was apparent what *Voice and Diction* would do for me as an aspiring actress, though it was listed as a communication class. I couldn’t determine the value of my gender class as quickly. That changed after the fall auditions for the Stage Center Theatre. I was cast not in the Neil Simon comedy, nor the Shakespearian one. I was cast in a new play, written by one of my peers, which centered around two brothers who had differing ideas about lesbian and gay equality.

Suddenly, the math made sense again. I absorbed all that I could (in the name of acting research, of course) from *Communication, Gender and Identity* and became a better performer. I added layers to my character that I wouldn’t have known existed until I took that class.

And now, I don’t have any problem seeing the math. Each class I take in the CMT department has at least one direct effect on another. I told better stories through film in *Introduction to Video Production* because of *Children’s Theatre*. I worked better in *Children’s Theatre* because of the systems theory I learned about in *Family Communication*. I wrote more engaging and insightful papers in *Family Communication* because of *Acting 2*. I condensed scenes better in *Acting 2* because of *Digital Editing*. Each class feeds off of the next.

I will graduate in May (2013). While I still have high hopes that my theatre career will explode, I know that it wouldn’t be possible if it weren’t for the classes I had to take. Not only do I have a well-rounded education, but I also had the opportunity to experiment in areas in which I initially had no interest. My limited view of my future has expanded into numerous paths—all exciting, all incredible, and only a third of them strictly theatre. And while my mother will be happy that I finally figured out why I should know the Pythagorean theorem, she’ll also be happy knowing that my experience in the CMT department opened up the world to me.



Elizabeth Krahulec, Mark Dodge, Jeff Wade, Tony Gasbarro, and Daniel Ochoa in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Fall 2012)



Jill Matel and Blake Malley in The Misanthrope (Spring 2012)

*An enormous amount of dialogue
Enough to choke a full grown hog
We must give kudos to the cast
They had the fortitude to last*

*They had the courage, heaven knows
To memorize verse instead of prose
This performance should give them hope
They know how to portray a misanthrope.*

Virginia and Al Walker
Community Patrons, Stage Center Theatre



The cast of A Man’s World (Summer 2012)

NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. ANGELA SWEIGART-GALLAGHER

Dr. Sweigart-Gallagher completed her BA from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, VA where she graduated with a double major in English and Theatre and completed coursework in Spanish. Dr. Sweigart-Gallagher then attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she earned her MA and PhD in Theatre Research.

Dr. Sweigart-Gallagher has had a longtime interest in teaching. Before deciding to attend graduate school, she pursued a teaching certificate in order to teach English and Theatre, and while writing her dissertation, she taught English in New York City as a part of the New York City Teaching Fellows program. Although she gave up the opportunity to become a high school teacher, she has found much satisfaction in teaching at the college level. Dr. Sweigart-Gallagher accepted the faculty position at NEIU because she clicked with the CMT faculty and loved the idea of working in a theatre-rich city. After traveling worldwide with her military family throughout the course of her childhood, she considers herself lucky to finally call Chicago and NEIU her home.

Dr. Sweigart-Gallagher currently serves as the Education and Development Director for the Endstation Theatre Company in Amherst, VA—a vibrant theatre company with wonderful internship opportunities. She is also a co-founder of The Wandering Uterus Project, a multimedia performance project focused on women's healthcare and reproductive rights. She is excited to take on her first directing role at NEIU this spring and to add to the positive and creative energies in the CMT department.



REFLECTIONS ON A CAREER: ANNA ANTARAMIAN, PROFESSOR EMERITUS

I have always felt privileged to teach, direct, and work at NEIU. My tenure included a variety of classes to teach, full and active days, creative and challenging nights of rehearsals, dedicated faculty comrades, and students who wanted to learn. There is no doubt that everyone knew where I was on campus and that my family knew I would be either working in my office, in class, or in the theatre. After twenty-two years of working year-round full days and nights, it is novel to have time to do projects around the house and meet with family and friends for lunch. I've made a dent in my mystery/espionage fiction collection, done some crocheting, caught up on the photo albums (25 years worth), gone through boxes of papers in the house, etc.

As part of the effect NEIU had on me, was the effect it had on my family. The children always saw my shows and thus learned to respect the hard work that goes into theatre and all the arts. They also learned the art and value of criticism (they are sometimes my hardest critics). They also had examples of dedicated teachers and learners. They often spent time at the University on their days off. The faculty in the CMT, Art, Music, University Without Walls and Women's Studies Departments (my office used to be in the "Beehive" on the 5th floor with those Departments) chatted with them about their homework and extra-curricular activities and encouraged them in their plans. Many students have remained our friends after their graduations and continue to correspond and meet, not only with Patrick and me, but with all of our children.

My advice to CMT students is to maintain rapport with their teachers after they have graduated. The community that is created in the classroom and in the University is a community that offers warmth, encouragement, strength, and intellectual and spiritual growth.



Anna Antaramian and CMT faculty member Lisa Cantwell at Anna's retirement party (2012)



Jill Matel, Arbella Al-Bazi, Elizabeth Krahulec, Nickolena Sellen, and Brian Rogers present Anna with a gift from the students



Members of the Stage Center Theatre community, Melanie Bujan, Dan Wirth, Brad Cantwell, and Rodney Higginbotham, perform for Anna

ALUMNI UPDATES

Nancy Greco (M.A., 1996) will be understudying two roles for Circle Theatre's remount of *When the Rain Stops Falling* at the Greenhouse Theatre in Chicago.

Rand Ringgenberg (B.A., 2011) produced *O Come All Ye Faithful* at Stage 773 in December (2012), a play that began in the Studio Theatre series at NEIU. In December, he also produced *Me and Auntie Mae* for the Studio Theatre series. Currently, he is working on *Primrose*, a play that started in a class at Chicago Dramatists.



O Come all Ye Faithful in rehearsal at Stage 773

Alexandra Maragha (B.A., 2010) is Co-Founder and Editor-In-Chief of *Today's BoomeR* Digital Magazine, a bi-monthly publication of The American BoomeR.com. She and her husband Sammy just welcomed their first child, born on January 29, 2013.

Julie Wight (M.A., 2012) is in her first year of the doctoral program in Communication Studies at the University of Minnesota. In February 2013, Julie was selected by the White House to participate on a social media panel for President Obama's 2013 State of the Union address in Washington, D.C. She will present her research at the 2013 Gender Matters conference and at the 2013 Central States Communication Association conference.



Julie Wight, social media correspondent, at The White House to cover President Obama's 2013 State of the Union address

Kyla R. Darling (B.A., 1999) has been working as a producer, director, and videographer of KRD Productions for the past fourteen years. In this time, she has produced more than sixty programs for a local cable station. In 2000, she received a video award (Cammy) from the Naperville community television, in the performance category. She is currently in the process of producing a documentary about bullying in the workplace.

Jasmin Bleu Pellegrino (B.A., 2012) is a graduate student in Photojournalism at Boston University (BU). In 2012, she received First Place for her photo essay about the current state of Gary, IN from the Illinois College Press Association. She has worked for BU News Service, and has traveled throughout New Hampshire to cover the Obama/Romney Campaign. She is currently a BU International Ambassador and a graduate teaching assistant. For more information about her work, visit www.JBPellegrino.com

Paul Clermont (B.A., 2003) and **Fred Clermont** (B.A., 2003) are both assistant principals in Florida. They also started www.teachersforhaiti.com, an organization that takes teachers and other professionals to Haiti every 4 to 5 months.

Michalina Maliszewska (M.A., 2009) is now the Coordinator of Graduate Student Activities in the College of Graduate Studies and Research at NEIU.

Susana Luna (B.A., 2011) is a Student Advocate in West 40's Project TAPESTRY. West 40 is one of 29 agencies in the nation to receive a five-year federal High School Graduation Initiative Grant designed to aid local high schools in drop-out prevention. Susanna is also completing the Improv Program at Second City. Eventually, Susana wants to audition for The Conservatory as well as apply for the graduate program in Community Counseling at NEIU.

Dale Rivera (M.A., 2011) had an article, "A Mother's Son," published in the peer-reviewed journal *Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies*. Dale wrote this article in one of his CMT classes.

Daniella Bajtner (B. A., 2012) was accepted into the Master of Arts in Organizational and Multicultural Communication program at DePaul University.

If you would like to appear in the next issue of **ComMuniTy**, send the following information to **Tony Adams** (a-adams3@neiu.edu):

Name

Graduation Year/Degree (B.A., M.A.)

Update (career/family news, awards, etc.)

2013 CMT Student Award Winners

Brommel-Kramer-Barnitz Scholarship

Colette L. Scaletta

Brommel-Hanson-Ijams-Hayward Scholarship

Glendy Mattalia

Brommel-Adams-Bell-Jordan Scholarship

Melissa DeJonghe

Vita Schweighart

CMT Distinguished Student Award

Melissa DeJonghe

James Fuentes

Mandie Prestinario

Rafal Rybak

Luke Sword

Anna Antaramian Excellence in Theatre Award

Elizabeth Krahulec

Blake Malley

Jill Matel

Luke Sword

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