

# ComMuniTy

Department of Communication, Media and Theatre

2011-2012

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

Welcome to the third 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.



*Wilfredo Alvarez, Katrina Bell-Jordan, and Mark Orbe (Western Michigan University). Dr. Orbe visited campus to discuss his recent book, "Communication Realities in a 'Post-Racial' Society: What the U.S. Public Really Thinks About Barack Obama" (Lexington Books).*

## PROGRAM UPDATES

We had another strong year in the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre. We were named as one of the top ten majors at NEIU. Students interned at a variety of venues. Renovations happened in the Stage Center Theatre. We continued relationships with Redmoon Theatre, KBC-TV, and WBEZ, and we collaborated with the Sociology Department to produce "Flavors of Albany Park," a film that showcased the diversity of Albany Park through the provocative lens of food. We also expanded the curriculum with five new courses, and CMT faculty conducted significant research and service.

Throughout much of the year we also engaged in Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) program review, which is required every eight years. Dr. Martha Einerson (University of Wisconsin-Superior) served as our external reviewer. She offered positive feedback about the department and program, referring to our major as "thoughtful, interdisciplinary, and innovative," observing that faculty are "deeply committed to the institution and student success," and noting that the major was diverse and "applicable to the real world."

We were also joined by two new faculty, **Wilfredo Alvarez** (Communication) and **Shayne Pepper** (Media), whose contributions to the program have already been felt. Given the approaching retirement of **Anna Antaramian**, we hope to soon hire another faculty member in theatre.

## FACULTY/STAFF/EMERITUS UPDATES

**Katrina Bell-Jordan** was elected to a second term as chair of the CMT Department and elected to the Skokie Board of Education (District 68) for a four-year term. She also published a book chapter in *Masculinity in the Black Imagination: The Politics of Communicating Race and Manhood* (Peter Lang). On the home front, she enjoys time with her husband, as well as the continued effort to keep up with their energetic fourth-grade son.

**Edie Rubinowitz** presented her Chicago Public Radio documentary "Global Immigrants: Beyond the American Dream" at the Central States Communication Association (Milwaukee, WI) and talked about "Audio Documentary in the Age of *This American Life*" at The Broadcast Education Association's conference in Las Vegas. Her son, Max, is now 2 and can successfully say "How you doing?"

**Nanette Potee** is excited about the new faculty who have joined our CMT family. Welcome Wilfredo and Shayne! She is looking forward to a sabbatical in the fall to complete research that has been on hold for the past... Hmm... 8 years. Oh yes, and Danielle is turning 9 in May (any correlation?).

**Wilfredo Alvarez** presented research at the NEIU Faculty Symposium and at the National Communication Association (New Orleans, LA) and participated in the Partners for Success Mentoring Program, the Latino Heritage Committee, and the University Honors Program.

**Anna Antaramian** will be retiring this year after 22 years in the CMT Department. As always, this year involved teaching theatre literature grad and undergrad classes and acting classes as well as directing a few shows. She will miss NEIU but believes the next step holds something exciting and interesting.

**Seung-Hwan Mun** had a very special year: Last summer, he became a father for the first time.

**Rodney Higginbotham** now serves as the Artistic/Managing Director of the Stage Center Theatre. He has also cast his production of Moliere's *The Misanthrope* and is looking forward to the start of rehearsals in March.

**Cyndi Moran** taught her first First Year Experience course in the fall, *Chicago on Video*, and learned a lot from the experience...hopefully the students did too. She continues to work on short films promoting research towards a cure for epilepsy, and, with co-producers Eric Scholl and Peter Kuttner, will be re-examining the use of police torture in Chicago.

**Tony Adams** has been busy talking with classes about his book *Narrating the Closet* (Left Coast Press). Thus far, he has talked with classes at the University of South Florida, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Alabama, the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, the University of Missouri-Colombia, and the University of South Carolina-Upstate.

**Shayne Pepper** joined the CMT department from North Carolina State University. In addition to enjoying his first year at NEIU, he has been exploring all that Albany Park has to offer.

**Karol Bayley** continued as the Administrative Aide to the department.

**Bruce Alan Mace** joined the department as the Office Support Specialist.

## FACULTY/STAFF/EMERITUS UPDATES (continued)

**Bernard Brommel** moved into an independent living condo in an all green community in Kalamazoo, MI. Highlights from 2011 included returning and teaching a few courses he developed at NEIU, and working with the NEIU Foundation to add more scholarships for students (including a special one to honor Dr. Katrina Bell-Jordan and Dr. Tony Adams). He says that life is good, even now among people his own age.

**Melanie Bujan** continues as an instructor in the department. While she already has a M.A. in CMT from NEIU, she is pursuing an additional M.A. at NEIU in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. She was also a cast member of the crowd-pleasing *Around the World in 80 Days* (Fall 2010) and, in Fall 2011, received a university-wide Teaching Excellence Award.

**Kate Harris** received a prestigious Jeff Award for her role as Fräulein Schneider in The Hypocrites' production of *Cabaret*. She will also appear in Eclipse's production of Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*, a Pulitzer-prize-winning play that is rarely produced (March 18-April 22, The Athenaeum Theatre).

**James Blair** will have two of his one act plays (*Early Retirement*, *Buds*) produced this July. In addition, one of his radio scripts will air some time in 2012 at WGTD, the NPR affiliate in Kenosha, WI.

**Ron Mace** recently appeared in Citadel Theatre's (Lake Forest) productions of *A Christmas Carol* and *Johnny Appleseed*. He also directed *Rosie, The Rocketeer* at the Prop Thr (Chicago).

**John Bliss** had four books for young readers published in August. Three are about the experiences of young people who have migrated to other lands, and the fourth examines the "hot topic" of designer babies. He had two similar books published in the fall of 2010.

## STUDENT UPDATES

In 2011 CMT undergraduates completed internships with Radio Cosmos (Spanish Public Radio), WTTW, Chicago Bandits (a professional softball team), Atomic Imaging, and ABC-7/WLS. Other student highlights:

Four CMT students—**Janet Bar**, **Angelica Echon**, **Carrie Robertson**, and **Patryck Szwankowski**—spoke to Vocolo, an affiliate of WBEZ, about the history and evolution of flash mobs and about a Flash Mob video they completed in **Edie Rubinowitz's Multimedia Storytelling** class.

**Carolyn Bernal**, **Susana Luna**, and **Evelia Moreno** were all featured in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities first-generation college students project ([www.aascu.org](http://www.aascu.org)).

**Julie Wight** published an article, "Facing Gender Performativity: How Transgender Performances and Performativity Trouble Facework Research" in *Kaleidoscope: A Graduate Journal of Qualitative Research*. She also presented research at the Central States Communication Association (Milwaukee, WI) and at the National Communication Association (New Orleans, LA).

**Nicole Kashian** defended her master's thesis, *The Effect of Integrative Negotiation Training on Cognitive Complexity, Goals Plans and Goal Achievement*. She also presented research at the Central States Communication Association (Milwaukee, WI).

**Lori Mages** defended her master's thesis, *Once Upon a Time in A Tim Burton Fairy Tale*.

**Dennis Sagal** defended his master's thesis, *Independent Film: A Model for Creating a Business Plan for a Low Budget Film*.



Images from NEIU's Fall 2011 Commencement, held at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion. Congratulations to all CMT graduates!

## U P C O M I N G E V E N T S

### GRADUATE PROGRAM OPEN HOUSE

Informational Meet & Greet for Prospective Students  
Thursday, April 19

6:00 pm

Student Union - NEIU Main Campus

### NORTH BY NORTHEASTERN

Media & Performance Festival  
Wednesday, April 25

7:30 pm

Stage Center Theatre - NEIU Main Campus

### CHILDREN'S THEATRE

*A Toby Show* by Aurand Harris

March - April, every Monday, Wednesday, Friday

10:30 am

Visit [neiu.edu/~stagectr](http://neiu.edu/~stagectr) for more information

**Fuddy Meers**

March 1-3 and March, 7-10 @ 7:30 PM

**The Misanthrope**

April 12-14 and April, 18-21 @ 7:30 PM

**Censored on Final Approach**

June 7-9, June, 14-16, and June, 21-23 @ 7:30 PM

**A Man's World**

July 19-21, July, 26-28, and August 2-4 @ 7:30 PM

# Stage Center Theatre

## Spring-Summer 2012 Schedule

**STAGE CENTER THEATRE UPDATE**

The Stage Center Theatre continues to be an integral part of NEIU's liberal arts education. All productions involve students from the CMT department, community members, and actors from Chicago's professional theatre world. 2011 main stage productions included *Twelfth Night* (William Shakespeare), *The Odd Couple* (Neil Simon), *You Can't Take It With You* (George Kaufman & Moss Hart), *As You Like It* (William Shakespeare), *Bleacher Bums* (Organic Theatre Company), and *Emma's Child* (Kristine Thatcher).

In 2011, we also saw significant changes to the Stage Center Theatre. **Rodney Higginbotham** became the Managing and Artistic Director of the theatre, returning to a position he held in previous years. The flooring, carpet, and seating in the theatre were replaced, making for a more attractive and comfortable experience. The actors and crew benefited from the installation of a backstage bathroom in the green room. The lobby, box office, and F-109 classroom had new floor tiles installed. Photo banners of past Stage Center Theatre productions, produced by former theatre student **Dave Ropinski**, now line the F-wing lobby. And the installation of new lighting should be completed in 2012.

In 2012, we will also see the retirement of Professor **Anna Antaramian**. Anna has been a faculty member in CMT since 1990. She served as the Artistic and Managing Director of the Stage Center Theatre for many years. She has taught thousands of students and more than a dozen different courses. She has also directed more than 50 productions. Needless to say, she will be greatly missed.

If you would like a Stage Center Theatre brochure sent to you, or if you would like to contribute suggestions or sponsorships for the theatre, or if you would like to contribute to the Stage Center Theatre or the Communication, Media and Theatre Foundation, please email **Rodney Higginbotham** (r-higginbotham1@neiu.edu).



S T A G E C E N T E R T H E A T R E

Reservations: (773) 442-4274

[www.neiu.edu/~stagectr](http://www.neiu.edu/~stagectr)Like us on **facebook**

"Stage Center Theatre of N.E.I.U."



Tony Adams and graduate students Carolyn Bernal, Vita Schweighart, John Firak, Patricia Stephens, and Yelitza Hernandez celebrate the end of the semester.



Anna Antaramian, Rodney Higginbotham, and Cyndi Moran conduct department business...in the hallway, on the floor, next to the trash can...

## ALUMNI UPDATES

**Nicole Kashian** (M.A., 2011) is in her first year of the doctoral program in Communication at Michigan State University.

**Paulina Kowalczyk** (B.A., 2010) works as a Family Resource Specialist at Illinois Action for Children.

**Nancy Greco** (M.A., 1996) works as a professional actress. She taught Theatre and Humanities at Moraine Valley College. Nancy does a lot of medical acting/communication teaching for most of the medical schools in Illinois and Indiana. She will be appearing in *The Ritz* at Circle Theatre through April 1. Since obtaining her M.A. at NEIU, Nancy has been able to support herself as an actress/performer.

**PJ Randhawa** (B.A., 2008) graduated with a masters in Journalism from DePaul University. She works as a TV News Reporter for ABC in Rapid City, SD.

In 2011 **Vershawn Ashanti Young** (M.A., 1998) published two books: *From Bourgeois to Boogie: Black Middle-Class Performances* (Wayne State University Press) and *Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance* (National Council of Teachers of English). He has fond memories of the former Speech and Performing Arts Department, particularly studying under James Barushok, Rodney Higginbotham, Harold Hild, and David Unumb. He is the host of the New Books in African American Studies podcast (<http://newbooksinafroamstudies.com/>).

**Denise Dear** (B.A., 2004) received her Paralegal Certificate from Loyola University (2005). She is currently employed with the Chicago Park District but is seeking a paralegal position.

**Mark Clover** (B. A., 2009) received his M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Roosevelt University (2011).

In 2010, after 19 years at the University of Missouri, **Michael W. Kramer** (M.A., 1982) took the position of Chair of the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. He also published his second book, *Organizational Socialization: Joining and Leaving Organizations*. He continues to teach and research organizational communication. With his current emphasis on volunteers in organization, he has a third book under contract for 2013.

**Cat Gleason** (B.A., 1995) received an M.F.A. in Directing (theatre) from Southern Illinois University Carbondale (1999). In 2010, she completed a PhD in theatre research at the University of Wisconsin—Madison (dissertation: *Mapping the Lincoln Park Nexus: Historiography and the Origin of Chicago's Off-Loop Theatre Movement*). She is currently an Assistant Teaching Professor at the University of Missouri—Columbia.

**Patricia F. Shaw-Liggins** (B.A., 2007) is a 5th grade facilitator at Chavez Elementary School (Chicago). She received her M.A. in Counseling from St. Xavier University (2011), and was a member of Saint Xavier University's Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education. In 2008, she married the loving Mr. Hillard Liggins. In the future, she hopes to work with a CPS high school or an out of state high-need school.

**Alexis Waters** (M.A., 2011) is in her first year of the doctoral program in Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

**Kimberly Podgorski** (B.A., 2010) is employed as web editor for NBC Chicago, and was recently hired as a WGN assignment editor.

**Christina Keasler** (B.A., 2011) is finisher her degree in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Illinois. In 2011, she also married.

### Interested in the Graduate Program in Communication, Media and Theatre?

For more information, visit [www.neiu.edu/~cmt](http://www.neiu.edu/~cmt)  
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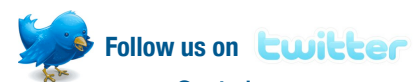
### Do you have news you'd like to appear in the next issue of ComMuniTy?

Contact **Tony Adams** ([a-adams3@neiu.edu](mailto:a-adams3@neiu.edu)) with the following information:  
 Name  
 Graduation Year  
 Updates (career news, family news, awards, etc.)



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