Department Graduates Thirty in May

By: Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall

They will be missed. On Saturday, May 17, 2008 thirty Communication Studies majors moved on to the next phase of their professional careers. Their contributions to the Department were unique, many, and enduring.

“This was a particularly impressive class,” said Dr. Mark Stine, Department Chair, when asked to comment of the impact of the class of 2008. Their hard work and leadership roles were impressive. Thirteen of them graduated with academic honors. They distinguished themselves not only as leaders within the Department, but in many campus activities.

Perhaps more than previous classes, they accepted challenges, took risks, including out of the classroom experiences. “Many of them had high profile internships,” noted Stine. And, “they have the potential to go out into the industry and make a difference that will reflect back positively on their experiences at Wilkes,” he added.

Many took on mentoring roles that helped programs like Wilkes University Television, WCLH 90.7, Zebra Communications, The Beacon, and the Speech/Debate Team grow in exciting ways.

The Department’s faculty, staff and remaining students wish them all great success. We dedicate this edition of The Medium to the Class of 2008. See pages 5-8, our special Graduation Insert. Congratulations!

Two Communication Students Obtain Olympic Internships

By: Jamie Gwynn

Two students in the communication studies program recently traded in their summer of relaxation for internships that only come once every four years.

Alyssa Koncelik and Xiaoqiao Zhang, both of whom have concentrations in telecommunications, worked in their respective fields for more than three months for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Koncelik interned in Colorado Springs, CO with the broadcasting department of the official United States Olympic Committee, while Zhang was a reporter for CCTV-5, the main sports broadcaster in the People’s Republic of China.

Both students put in long hours preparing for the summer games in China. Koncelik put in at least 40 hours per week with her internship, while Zhang worked at least 60 hours per week.

According to Koncelik, who was the only intern at her company, her job duties included, “editing on the Avid DS, going out on shoots with athletes, working the audio mixer, meeting with clients, making master and screening reels, making logs, and meeting many new people.”

Zhang’s job duties included “researching all the athletes’ personal profiles, editing, helping my teammates translate some English documents, going out on video shoots, and during the games, being the translator for certain athletes.”

However, they didn’t mind the hours one bit since they learned valuable lessons that can’t be achieved in a classroom setting.

“We can learn a lot of information and knowledge [from class], but we really [need to be] hands on with all the machines and interview people face to face,” said Zhang about the importance of internships.

Koncelik added, “You really do not learn about your career

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LeeAnn Searfoss Awarded Department Scholarship

By: Christine Zavaskas

Communications studies junior LeeAnn Searfoss received a pleasant surprise before heading home from Wilkes for the summer. Searfoss was notified via email in May that she was chosen as the 2008 recipient of the Communication Studies Department’s Family and Friends Scholarship.

“I knew that this was the one and only scholarship from the Department, and I knew I needed money. I was very grateful that the professors noticed that need in my application,” said Searfoss.

Dr. Bradford Kinney, Searfoss’ advisor, recommended her for the scholarship because: “She is the hardest worker who motivates others.” Kinney added that he respects how well LeeAnn manages to work under considerable pressure. “She never complains when she faces personal pressure. Even then, her work is exceptional.”

On campus, Searfoss is an active member of the department, serving on the board of Zebra Communications and as Assistant Lifestyles Editor of The Beacon.

In addition to being a scholar, Searfoss is also an athlete and plays for the University’s volleyball team along with holding the position of secretary for the Student Athlete Advisory Committee. Searfoss is also the Vice President of the Letterwomen’s Club.

Upon graduating in May 2009, Searfoss is interested in becoming a speech writer. “My plans post-graduation are always changing. Currently though I have my sights set on doing something involving speech writing. I took Dr. Kinney’s Advanced Public Speaking last fall and loved it! So, hopefully I will be able to get my hands dirty doing something in that area,” said Searfoss.

Congratulations LeeAnn!
Candice Halliday Gives Insight into Semester Spent Abroad

By: Amanda Cawley

Senior communication studies major Candice Halliday studied abroad at Frei Universitaet in Berlin, Germany during the spring 2008 semester. Here she shares some experiences and advice from her trip overseas.

Cawley: How did campus life differ from life at Wilkes?
Halliday: Many students at FU begin in their early to mid twenties. It isn’t uncommon for older people to be in school; therefore the campus was made up of a variety of different age groups. The campus was also a lot bigger, with 32,000 students, which needless to say coming from Wilkes was a little intimidating at first. I remember walking around Berlin the first week for 45 minutes trying to find the building our orientation was being held. Working with the German I knew, I eventually found my way, a little late, but I made it.

Cawley: How was the social atmosphere/dating/meeting friends?
Halliday: The social atmosphere was fantastic. Like NYC, they call Berlin the city that never sleeps. Fortunately, I was placed in a host family with host siblings around my age. I went out in Berlin on several occasions with my host sister Anika, 21. Hanging out with her was a great way to learn the city from a young Berliner’s perspective. The University also arranged a mentor program where you can sign up to hang out with a native German student who attends Frei University. I opted to do this and was paired up with Davit. We went out to pubs, cafe’s, and clubs. Going out with him was also a great way to experience Berlin and learn some “cool” German slang. You don’t learn that in textbooks.

Cawley: How do European media differ from media in the U.S.? 
Halliday: European Media differs from the U.S. mainly by catering to different languages. The one news station I toured in Berlin, called Deutsche Welle (German Wave) broadcasted in over 16 different languages. It even broadcasts late at night in the U.S. I was surprised on how much German newspapers focused on what’s happening in the U.S. Almost everyday there was Hillary and/or Obama’s face slapped on the front of a tabloid, magazine, or newspaper. On my way to Germany I had a layover in Dublin, Ireland, which so happened to be the day Hillary had her first victory in the preliminary race. It was their lead news story for the six hours I was there.

Cawley: How did you adapt to the teaching methods of a different country?
Halliday: Adapting to the teaching methods at Frei Universitaet wasn’t as difficult as I had anticipated. Aside from my German class, much of the requirements for my two content courses took place outside of the classroom. The syllabus of my Human Totalitarianism class was mainly composed of trips through museums throughout Berlin alluding to Hitler’s rule. Interestingly one of our class sessions was held by a holocaust survivor at the workshop she hid in during WWII. This was one of the most moving experiences in my life. Another one of the requirements for the program was attending our class trip to Hamburg and Copenhagen. The goal of our program was to immerse us into Berlin’s, Germany’s and all of Europe’s life, culture, and history, which made adapting to the new curriculum much easier. There was always something new to explore.

Cawley: What was the most interesting thing that happened to you while abroad?
Halliday: I had so many great experiences on my trip abroad, but I would have to say one of the most interesting things that happened to me was when I took the train from Berlin with my real sister to Freiburg, Germany which is at the southwestern tip where France, Germany, and Switzerland meet. For the first time, I got to see where my grandfather lived before he came to the United States right before WWII. We toured the city and got to climb to the top of the Black Forest. Mmm, there is nothing like a piece of warm apple strudel in Southern Germany.

Cawley: Any advice for other students interested in doing a semester abroad?
Halliday: For those even thinking about studying abroad I say, just do it! It is one thing to visit a country, but a completely different thing to live and study there. You learn so much about yourself and how other parts of the world view our lives as Americans. There are some times where you may ask yourself “what did I get myself into?”, like I did when I found out my host family didn’t speak English, but that is all part of the adventure! I especially recommend staying with a host family. This helped me on so many different occasions. Although it can be a gamble, my experience in Germany would not have been nearly as rewarding if I lived in an apartment by myself. It is also a great opportunity to see other cities and countries. While I was abroad, I traveled to 9 different German cities, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, and Sweden. Whether it be Spain, France, Switzerland, Australia, you choose to study in, you will have the time of your life!

Communication Studies Annual Colloquium

Date: August 28, 2008
Time: 11am-12:45pm
Place: Henry Student Center Ballroom
Attendance is mandatory for all Communication Studies majors!
From Wilkes-Barre to Beijing: Eleven Communication Students Intern During the Summer

By: Amy Fusco

As many people enjoyed their summer vacations at the beach, eleven Communication Studies students were developing their skills by interning around the United States and even the globe.

Several students found opportunities in their areas of interest right here in northeastern PA. Lauren Salem, junior, worked as an intern for “The Independent” magazine, where she wrote articles about the local culture. Another intern who was placed locally was Alyssa Shilinski, senior, who helped produce, edit, and assemble the weekly radio show “Outlook on Northeast Pennsylvania” during her internship with Entercom Communications.

Three public relations students also found internships in the area. Amy Fusco, junior, spent the summer working with the Administrative Coordinator in the office of the Mayor of Wilkes-Barre. During her time there, Amy was busy helping to plan the 5th Annual Party on the Square, which brings together the local colleges and universities. Christine Zavaskas, senior, helped handle constituent relations as well as write press releases and website material in the district office of PA State Senator Lisa Baker, and Michele Flannery, junior, wrote press releases and legislative correspondence for the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Wilkes-Barre.

“After winning SBDC intern of the month for May, Michele Flannery (second from right) poses with fellow Wilkes-Barre SBDC staffers during a trip to Harrisburg.”

“The most memorable moment I had was going to the SBDC expo in Harrisburg on May 13. Pennsylvania SBDCs get together at this annual event to showcase their success stories,” Flannery said.

A few communications students left the area for the summer to pursue opportunities in other states. Kathy Dalton, senior, worked at Press Communications LLC, a New Jersey based company that owns and operates four different radio stations. Also working in radio promotions was Maureen Iskra, who interned with WSIX, the leading county station out of Nashville, TN. In the area of fashion, Alison Woody, senior, held the position of visual merchandising intern at the American headquarters of Burberry in New York, NY.

“I had input on planning events and setting up for them, helped pull clothing samples for Demi Moore, and made a guideline standards book that will go out to every Burberry store across North America.” Woody explained.

Juniors Andrew Seaman and LeeAnn Searfoss both headed to the nation’s capital for their internships. While Seaman worked at the news desk of USA Today, Searfoss helped with public relations at the office of U.S. Representative Charlie Dent.

Traveling the farthest for their internships were two communication studies students who were involved with the Summer Olympic Games. Alyssa Koncelik, senior, traveled to Colorado Springs, CO to work in video production for the United States Olympic Committee, while Xiaoqiao Zhang, worked for CCTV5 Olympics in Beijing, China. (For more on their internships please see page 1)

From Wilkes-Barre to Beijing, these communication students represented Wilkes University across the world this summer while gaining invaluable real world experience in their fields.

Andrew Seaman Named Intern of the Month for May

By: Christine Zavaskas

Andrew Seaman stands at the news desk of USA Today.

For the second year in a row, summer for communication junior Andrew Seaman was spent interning in the heart of the nation’s capitol. After working at the national desk of The Washington Times last year, Seaman returned to the political epicenter in May as a news intern for USA Today. Seaman quickly fell back into the role of national reporter and was able to gain multiple bylines in the Nation’s Newspaper.” His work was impressive enough for Seaman to be named Intern of the Month for May 2008. Dr. Andrea Frantz, Seaman’s advisor, nominated him for the award.

“At the time I nominated him, Andrew had already placed three bylined articles in a national publication and contributed to a number of others. He was already making himself pretty invaluable at one of the foremost publications in the nation,” said Frantz.

Working at USA Today has allowed Seaman to have some great experiences, but his favorite so far was being able to work with Susan Page, Washington Bureau Chief for the news outlet, as they provided coverage of Hillary Clinton’s concession speech.

“Susan blogged about the event from home while I provided live updates for USAToday.com from the actual event...I was the only reporter there covering the story for USA Today. To make it even better, my story was the top story on USAToday.com for the rest of the day, and I think it had about 5,000 comments on it,” said Seaman.

While Seaman’s experiences at this internship will undoubtedly be valuable to him in his future, Frantz also thinks his work will open doors for other Wilkes students.

“I would argue that anytime a student goes off to a national media outlet and really impresses these people, it makes Wilkes look great and really opens doors for other students,” said Frantz.
Communication Seniors Honored by Department, University

By: Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall

Communication Studies’ class of 2008 left an impression on every program in the department. The first thing that changed was a reduction in the noise level—the 30 graduating seniors were lively and loud. But, the noise was a result of amazing energy and productivity. No one who worked with the 2008 graduating class will be surprised to know many were honored for their academic and co-curricular achievements on campus.

Thirteen of our graduates received academic honors, with Dana Lehman, David Sebelin and Stephanie Yachim earning Summa Cum Laude, the highest academic award. The quality of their research brought honors to four seniors this past year. Nicole Zatsko and Dana Lehman presented their original research papers at DePauw University’s National Undergraduate Honors Conference in Communications in April. And, Cheryl Gressley and Stephanie Yachim presented their research project at the Eastern Communication Association’s conference in Pittsburgh in May.

Their work was not limited to the classroom, however. Members of this class were willing to take an adventurous approach to learning—by studying abroad or going out of town to intern. Andee Scarantino spent a semester studying in London. Others took on high profile internships, including Raquel Wheby’s D.C. semester with America’s Promise, Stephanie Yachim at 4Girls in Boston, Sam Clarke at The Rachel Ray Show in NYC, Cheryl Gressley at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville and Andee Scarantino at MTV. Not surprisingly, communication students were frequently selected for Intern of the Month honors, including Sam Clarke and Stephanie Yachim (twice honored).

For her excellent work at three different internships, Stephanie Yachim was also selected the University’s “Intern of the Year for 2008,” receiving nominations from both Communications and Business.

Two seniors, Dana Lehman and Mark Congdon, Jr. were named to Who’s Who Among Students at America’s Colleges and Universities. Student Government recognized the leadership contributions of Mark Congdon, Kristina Erat and Alison Woody. Mark Congdon was also recognized for his contributions to advancing diversity on campus.

The faculty in the Department selected Wil Mercado to receive the “Outstanding Leadership Award” for his contributions to “Wilkes World,” WCLH 90.7 and Zebra Communications.

Carlton Holmes, a December 2008 senior, received the Bigler Scholar Award for exemplifying the highest ethical standards in journalism. He received his award at the Senior Academic Honors Dinner.

At that same dinner, Dave Sebelin received the “Outstanding Senior in Communication Studies Award,” based on both academic excellence and clear leadership in the program’s co-curriculars, including Zebra Communications, the Student Advisory Board, and “Wilkes World.”

David Sebelin is Department’s Outstanding Graduate 2008

By: Christine Zavaskas

Although David Sebelin admits that graduating from Wilkes University last spring was bittersweet, he definitely ended on a high note by receiving the communication studies department’s “Outstanding Graduate Award.”

The award, which according to Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall goes to someone with “the total package: brains, energy and creativity,” was well deserved by Sebelin.

“Dave’s leadership style made him a clear choice. In every activity he took on while in the Department, he demonstrated intelligence, hard work, professional style and willingness to volunteer incredible energy,” said Elmes-Crahall.

During his time at Wilkes, Sebelin was involved in a wide variety of extracurricular activities including serving as a member of the communication studies department student advisory board, a student ambassador, and a correspondent for The Beacon. In his senior year, Sebelin also served as co-chair of Zebra Communications, a tech for Wilkes World, and as co-host for Media Fuse.

Since graduating, Sebelin has been busy interning in the Carbon County Courthouse and making preparations to attend Widener University School of Law in Harrisburg this fall.

When asked if he had any advice for current seniors, Sebelin said, “My best piece of advice is to get involved with programs or activities you were always afraid or unsure of participating in. This is your last year at Wilkes, you should make sure you have no regrets when you leave.”
Wilfredo Mercado Given Leadership Award

By: Matthew Gogas

Wilfredo Mercado’s true passion has always been his work in the television studio. His focus was always towards telecommunications and he did not think that he had much talent or interest with other aspects of communications. He worked as the producer of “Wilkes World” and had a tremendous amount of fun doing it. When he found out that he was was a unanimous choice for the “Outstanding Leadership and Service Award” in the Department, he was both shocked and confused. He did not understand why he was a better candidate than the others until Dr. Stine gave a speech and presented him with the award at the Senior Awards Luncheon in May.

Dr. Mark Stine, Department Chair, feels Mercado was an “extremely deserving choice” for the leadership award because he “distinguished himself as a leader at “Wilkes World, Zebra Communications, and became an integral part of our Department’s co-curriculars.”

Carlton Holmes is 2008 Bigler Scholar

By: Michele Flannery

After four years of dedication to the study of communications and honing his skills as a journalist, Carlton Holmes is the 2008 recipient of the Bigler Scholar Award.

This award is named in memory of the late Tom Bigler a broadcast journalist, who made great strides in local journalism and was a professor emeritus of Communications Studies at Wilkes.

Each spring the Bigler Scholar Award is given to a graduating communications senior who has exemplified professionalism in telecommunications and outstanding ethical conduct in the field of Journalism, which is a reflection of Mr. Bigler’s work during his successful and distinguished career.

Dr. Andrea Frantz, Holmes advisor, nominated him for this award because of outstanding qualities Holmes exhibits that merit this award including honesty, a great work ethic, selection of good sources, and most importantly, exercising good ethics in all of his work.

Holmes uses these good qualities in the many activities he is involved in on campus, which include editor-in-chief of the school newspaper The Beacon for the Fall 2008 semester, a leading sports writer for The Beacon, working at the campus radio station, WCLH, a resident assistant, and member of the National Honor Society.

After graduation, Holmes intends to pursue a master’s degree in journalism, specifically sports journalism, at Northern Arizona University, UNC, or Syracuse University.

“I want to be the best journalist in my field, sports. I’m far from that goal but as I continue to study, write and work on my flow, I’m sure I’ll get there. I go hard. And if readers stop reading, my universal soul will find another field where I can influence the masses.” Holmes said.

The Department congratulates Carlton on this award and wishes him much luck and success in the years ahead.
Graduation Special Insert

Stephanie Yachim is Intern of the Year
By: Matthew Gogas

Congratulations to Stephanie Yachim for receiving Wilkes University’s Intern of the Year Award. After graduating in May 2008, she left Wilkes with a world of accomplishments under her belt and the dedication for a successful career. She received the Intern of the Year Award for completing three internships between her sophomore and senior year at Wilkes.

At her first internship she worked as a PR/Marketing manager in Boston for a company that donated used dolls to child labor victims overseas called Dolls 4 Dreams. Her team created the name of the company, promotions, and organized donation drives.

She brought that same success and confidence to her second internship with FOX56 where she worked as a Promotions Intern in May 2006. Yachim worked on creating PSAs and assisted in filming commercials and local programming. For her accomplishments, Yachim became the first Wilkes student to be named Intern of the Month on more than one occasion. She was also nominated for the award by two Departments—Communication Studies and Business.

“It says a lot about Stephanie’s work ethic that faculty advisors in both programs recommended her for this award. She found a way to link her organizational communication skills with marketing and that has worked well for her,” said her advisor, Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall.

In February 2007, Yachim worked as a Human Resources Assistant at Pepperjam which made her responsible for hiring, recruiting, and employee relations. “This position was very different from all other positions I held and my education background. However, I felt this experience led me to a field that truly fit me and is what I should be doing,” says Yachim.

Currently, Stephanie is working as recruiter/staffing consultant for an agency in Kansas City, MO. “I absolutely love it because I meet new people everyday and work very hard in finding them jobs all over the Kansas City, MO area. “It’s very rewarding when you can help someone in that manner,” says Yachim.

She attributes most of her success to the internships that she worked on while at Wilkes.

“I truly believe internships are the best experience to have in college because hands on experiences allow you to learn from mistakes, work under pressure and find your true passions,” says Yachim.

Graduates Present Research at ECA Convention

Stephanie Yachim and Cheryl Gressley partnered up to complete an intensive research project last spring for their Communication Research Methods course. However, what they didn’t know at the time was that they would later receive the opportunity to share their research findings beyond the Wilkes University community. In early May, the two recent graduates had the opportunity to travel to the Eastern Communication Association Convention in Pittsburgh, PA and present their project to communications professionals and students from across the region.

Above, Gressley and Yachim are shown in front of their poster with Dr. Andrea Frantz during the convention. Best of luck to both of them!

Two from Class of ’08 Join Teach for America
By: Alissa Lindner

Mark Congdon, Jr. and Dana Lehman were recognized for their many leadership contributions while enrolled at Wilkes when they were selected for inclusion in Who’s Who Among Students in America’s Colleges and Universities, 2008. But what distinguishes them from their peers is also their career choice. Both were selected to be part of the Teach for America program.

Lehman and Congdon entered careers in education shortly after their May graduation. Congdon was accepted to the Teach for America program, through which he taught 8th grade math in Georgia over the summer. This fall he will be an inclusion special education teacher and begin working toward a teaching license in special education at East North Carolina University. Lehman is currently teaching 6th grade science at New Orleans College Preparatory Academy.

Both alumni credit experiences at Wilkes as helping them to prepare for their current positions. According to Congdon, the high standards Wilkes professors hold for their students pushed him academically and allowed him to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. He now holds similar expectations for the students he teaches. Lehman credits Rhetoric with being most helpful upon graduation.

“Public speaking and developing/articulating thoughts and ideas are crucial to your students’ success,” she explained.

Instead of taking a job with a newspaper or handling the public relations at a corporation, both Lehman and Congdon have used to their communication studies degrees to help the youth and future of our nation.
On April 30, over forty Communication students and faculty gathered for Zebra Communications' 9th annual awards dinner at the Arena Bar and Grille. It had been the busiest year ever for Zebra and everyone was ready to celebrate.

Seventeen Board members graduated in May, the largest mass exodus ever, including: Katie Cappelloni, Sam Clarke, Mark Congdon, Jamie Gibson, Matt Gobbler, Cheryl Gressley, Gerard Hetman, Jack Lasky, Dana Lehman, JR Lombana, Julia Marranca, Wil Mercado, Lyndsey Phillips, Dave Sebelin, Josh Sperling, Raquel Wheby and Stephanie Yachim. Among the seniors were the 2007-08 Executive Staff: Cheryl Gressley and Dave Sebelin, Board Co-Chairs; Dana Lehman and Gerard Hetman, Operations Co-managers and Mark Congdon, Assistant Office Manager.

Carrying on a tradition that began in 2000, at Zebra’s first awards banquet, several students were given a special award for their growth as professional public relations managers. This year, for the first time, “Jane’s Awards” for leadership went to both seniors and remaining students, including: Dave Sebelin, Cheryl Gressley, Wil Mercado, Gerard Hetman, Christine Zavaskas, Michele Flannery and Jamie Gwynn.

Looking ahead to 2008-09, the new Zebra staff was announced: Amanda Cawley, Board Chair; Christine Zavaskas, Office Manager and Editor of The Medium and Michele Flannery, Operations Manager. First on the agenda for the new year—planning Zebra’s 10th anniversary celebration for 2009. Can’t wait for that party!
Christine Zavaskas, senior communication studies major, was recently awarded the 2008 Pennsylvania Public Relations Society’s scholarship. This is the second year that a Wilkes University student has won the scholarship, which is open to all Pennsylvania college seniors interested in a career in public relations.

Zavaskas, who is also pursuing minors in political science and international studies, is a dean’s list student with an impressive 4.0 GPA. She was nominated for the scholarship by Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall.

“Christine stands out from other PR students because of the complete commitment she brings to every project,” said Dr. Elmes-Crahall.

Dr. Elmes-Crahall also highlighted several qualities Zavaskas possesses in order to survive in public relations, such as being “thorough and professional,” remaining patient when working with demanding clients, and having “outstanding” writing skills.

“I knew she would be a strong candidate for this scholarship because of the excellence of her work and the uniqueness of Zebra here at Wilkes. Clearly the Pennsylvania Public Relations Society agrees,” Dr. Elmes-Crahall said.

Zavaskas was recently appointed the 2008-2009 Office Manager of Zebra Communications, the student-run public relations firm at Wilkes, and Business Manager for the university newspaper, The Beacon. Over the summer, she interned with Pennsylvania State Senator Lisa Baker.

After winning the scholarship, Zavaskas said, “It’s an honor to receive this scholarship from PPRS. The hands-on experience and opportunities that I have received both in the classroom at Wilkes and through extracurricular activities have truly opened doors for me already.”

Upon graduation in May, Zavaskas intends on pursuing a career in political public relations.

Communication Faculty Present at AEJMC Convention

Drs. Estwick and Frantz Take the Windy City by Storm

By: Michele Flannery

Hold on to your hats! Dr. Frantz and Dr. Estwick presented at the 2008 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference in the windy city, Chicago, Illinois August 6-9.

AEJMC’s annual convention featured sessions on teaching, research, and public service in all areas of communications from print and broadcast journalism to public relations, advertising and much more. Also offered are workshops that dealt with all areas of teaching communications in various communications fields.

One of Dr. Estwick’s many roles for the conference was presenter on a teaching panel titled, “Whose Learning Curve Is It? How Technological Advances Have Changed How We Teach Journalism.”

Dr. Estwick filled the role of presenter for a second time with a paper entitled, “Deal or No Deal: A Critical Perspective of Product Integration in Reality Television.”

“This paper analyzed the increasing occurrences of product placement in reality television and the effect or influence these product placement has on the audience,” explained Dr. Estwick. Amy Fusco, junior Communication Studies major helped as a research assistant for this panel presentation.

Dr. Frantz was panel organizer and moderator for two divisions of the conference, as well as presenter on a panel titled, “Sustaining Innovation in Journalism.”

She was kept busy at the conference with meetings for the Community Journalism Interest Group and Civic and Citizens Journalism Interest group, of which she was a former chair. She also enjoyed seeing past Wilkes students who are now making waves in the communications community.

“I really enjoyed experiencing AEJMC with Wilkes alumni. Teaching is about planting seeds and seeing what has sprung up from them. Seeing them was really exciting,” Dr. Frantz said.

AEJMC is a national association that promotes and upholds the highest standards for education in both mass media and journalism, encourages wide-range communication research as well as multicultural society in the classroom, and defends the everyday freedom of expression, according to www.aejmc.org.
Communications and History Faculty to Teach Two Study Abroad Courses

By: LeeAnn Searfoss

Several Communication Studies Department faculty will be dropping their books and replacing them with passports as they prepare to travel to two culturally-diverse and historically-significant corners of the world. Two separate study abroad trips to London, England and Istanbul, Turkey are planned for the 2008-09 school year. The trips will be open to all Wilkes students interested in learning about the historical origins of several communication-related sites.

For the fourth year in a row, “The History of Communications” trip to London, England is being led by Dr. Mark Stine and Dr. John Hepp. The professors will lead a group of up to 14 students through several historical communications-related landmarks in and around London.

“To see the Rosetta Stone that unlocked centuries of history, to see the earliest form of writing, to visit one on the premier broadcasting companies in the world, and to see actual books and folios with Shakespeare’s signature is simply remarkable,” said Andrew Seaman, a junior communication major who took the course in 2008.

Students have the opportunity to tour museums and archives that relate directly back to history and communication studies.

“We start out with the British Museum to look at two eras of communication, as well as the development of speech and language,” said Dr. Stine.

Dr. Hepp and Dr. Stine work in a curriculum during the trip, lecturing at each site visited.

The second trip, led by Dr. Stine, Dr. Dennis Hupchick, and Dr. Evene Estwick, will travel to Istanbul, Turkey and cover three separate aspects: history, religion, and mass media’s influence. The trip to Istanbul is entitled “East Meets West: Communications and Culture”, and will focus more on the cultural aspects of colonized civilizations.

Both “The History of Communications” and “East Meets West” will be structured similarly. Both trips will commence with one lecture before leaving for the destination. Each location will include two sessions relating to the material of the class and the significance of the historical location or architecture.

The trip to London will run January 3-10, 2009, and the trip to Istanbul will run February 28-March 6, 2009. Each trip is $1,999 per student, including all ground travel, breakfast each day, and lodging in four-star hotels. For additional information, see Dr. Stine.

Alumni Update: Rebecca Bria ‘07

By: Christine Zavaskas

If anyone knows the value of a good internship, it is 2007 Wilkes Alum Rebecca Bria. Bria, who graduated with dual concentrations in journalism and organizational communication, attributes the fact that she was able to start as a reporter for The Times Leader only a month after her graduation to the time she spent interning there and at The Weekender during college. This is why the first piece of advice she has for this year’s seniors is, “Do an internship, if not five of them. It’s really what got me my job…You have to know how the real world works.”

Although Bria, who was Co-chair of Zebra Communications, says that she misses Wilkes and the people here, she also feels comfortable in her job as a reporter. Her typical day revolves around writing articles and doing interviews, often in Dallas since she writes many articles for The Dallas Post, which is owned by The Times Leader.

The best part of this job according to Bria is being able to meet a lot of new people. “It can be a little overwhelming at times when people call back and say this is so and so, and I have to think about it for a minute and try to remember who that is, but it’s very exciting,” she says.

However, the job is not without its challenges. Bria notes that being on strict deadlines is difficult, especially since she always has several articles to work on at any given time. In addition to this, she says it can be difficult to write every day, “Even though it’s my favorite thing to do, there are days when something’s going on maybe in my own life and I’m expected to produce, even though I’m not all there.”

Bria feels that her time at Wilkes prepared her to handle the job she has now. She specifically noted the importance of being taught how to work with others. “Jane was very big on group work, and it’s so important because you learn to get along with everybody…I think that Wilkes really prepared me for that,” says Bria.

Some other advice that Bria had to share with this year’s graduating class was to be prepared to talk about what you learned from and did at your internships when you go on interviews. She also recommended starting the job search as soon as possible, in fact she says right now is not too early to start handing out resumes.

As for Bria’s future, she says, “I hope to keep moving up within my current job. I’d love to someday be an editor, or maybe in the future I’d look into doing public relations, but for right now I am content where I am.”
Zebra Contributes over $23,000 to Local Nonprofit Organizations

By: Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall

Zebra staff members learned just how much their hard work was worth to nonprofit clients last year. Two of Zebra’s clients, George Spohrer of the Vulcan Pride, Ltd. and Anne Kelley of Candy’s Place, asked Zebra to determine how many hours of in-kind professional work they contributed while working with their agencies. Both organizations will use the value of Zebra’s contributions to qualify for matching grants and donations.

Zebra members who worked with Vulcan, Candy’s Place, Salvation Army and Volunteers in Medicine last year made a total contribution of $23,205, including actual money raised and the value of their in-kind professional work. It was a very productive year for Zebra, with fifty-seven PR students working with just these four clients. Zebra actually hosted fundraisers for the Salvation Army, Candy’s Place and Vulcan. The total raised by Zebra at these events was $6,969. But, when asked to put a value on the hours of work and materials contributed, that total grew.

Zebra contributed $4,600 of in-kind donations to Candy’s Place, $11,000 to Vulcan and $636 to Volunteers in Medicine. That, added to the money raised, totaled $23,205.

When asked to comment on this achievement, Dr. Mark Stine, Chair of the Department of Communication Studies said, “Zebra Communications is one of the crown jewels in the Department and it exemplifies community involvement. The fact that they contributed $23,000 of in-kind work epitomizes what we as a Department instill in our students in terms of professional service.”

Christine Zavaskas, who worked on the Vulcan projects and co-managed the Volunteers in Medicine account said: “I was surprised to find out the total value was so high…hopefully that total will continue to grow each year.”

Summer Mass Media Class Visits Washington, D.C.

By: Michele Flannery

Just because a student chooses to take a summer class doesn’t mean it is going to be boring! Just ask the students that attended Dr. Estwick’s summer session COM 124: Mass Media and Society class.

One day after a weekly test, Dr. Estwick came up with the idea of visiting Washington D.C. to see the Newseum, an interactive museum about the evolution of mass media. The students latched onto the idea and soon the hotel was booked, tickets were bought, and on July 10 the class set off for the nation’s political communications hub.

“The Newseum is a remarkable display of historical as well as contemporary developments in the areas of news and journalism.” Dr. Estwick said.

At the Newseum, students got the opportunity to see a piece of the Berlin Wall, witness the evolution of news from ancient times to the present, experience a 4-D movie about the importance of news, pay tribute to fallen journalists at the Journalist Memorial, play games that test their knowledge about ethics, and much more.

“The Newseum was obviously the best part of the trip because it was such a unique, interactive learning experience that you can’t find in any classroom.” Kristina Erat, senior, said.

It might not have been the beach, but the trip to Washington DC was a welcomed mini-vacation from the ordinary. Surrounded in history and the glare of city lights the students got to explore the city and experience all that DC had to offer. Some may call it a “hands-on” educational experience, but for the most part it was just plain fun.
Jamie Gwynn Uses Public Relations Skills to Keep a Promise

By: Amanda Cawley

Senior communication major Jamie Gwynn probably learned more this summer than any academic class could ever teach him. He learned the ins and outs of public relations, the need to know of event planning and most of all, how to keep a promise.

In April 2008, Gwynn’s life would be changed forever. His four-year-old niece, Kiele Sierra Sofa passed away suddenly from undiagnosed Type I diabetes, often referred to as juvenile diabetes. It was that day that he made a promise to his niece that he would take her passing and use it to help another person. That promise turned into the hugely successful “Walk 4 Kiele”- a juvenile diabetes awareness walk.

All proceeds from the walk benefited the Juvenile Diabetes Organization of NEPA. This organization sends a portion of their donations to finding a cure, while the remaining proceeds are used to send children with Type I diabetes to camps to help them learn to better manage their diabetes.

“I really wanted to take Kiele’s passing and turn it into something positive for the community while utilizing the skills that I’ve learned at Wilkes,” said Gwynn.

“Ike’s big brother, Kobe Sofa led the supporters on the nearly 2 mile walk through Kirby Park.

Gwynn’s original goal was to raise $2,000 and community awareness about the disease. He raised nearly $7,000 from the event, all of which will benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Organization of NEPA. Since Gwynn tripled his goal, he painted his face, as promised, like a fairy princess, and greeted walkers at the finish line.

Gwynn admits that he had some ups and downs in the event planning process, but learned that it does not help to stress about every detail. Having his family there to help was also beneficial for Gwynn, who credits his mother for most of the business sponsors.

“Wilkes University has really prepared me to the point that I am confident in doing anything. When you have an idea, and you know how to do it, you can do anything; what else can I ask for?” said Gwynn.

Congratulations, Jamie!

California, Here We Come!

By: Shauna Strellish

A few members of the Communication Studies department will be packing their bags and heading to San Diego, California this November. However, they won’t be spending their days on the sandy beaches. Dr. Estwick, Dr. Elmes-Crahall, and senior, Christine Zavaskas will be participating in the National Communication Association’s 94th Annual Convention.

The National Communication Association is the oldest and largest national organization serving the academic discipline of Communications. In the Public Relations division, Dr. Elmes-Crahall and Zavaskas will present a paper that they are co-writing about managing difficult clients in a student-run PR agency. Dr. Estwick will also present a paper which explores the success of professors and relationship costs. In addition to presenting their papers, both Elmes-Crahall and Estwick will chair separate panels in different divisions.

All three women are very excited about their trip out west. The convention will provide Zavaskas with a great experience to add to her resume.

“This will be an amazing opportunity to meet professionals in the communications field. There is also a large grad school fair that I am excited to see,” said Zavaskas.

The convention will highlight some of Zavaskas’ major strengths and give her the chance to take advantage of the grad school fair that will feature approximately 150 grad schools.

The convention gives Estwick the chance to continue her career and make even more contacts. Elmes-Crahall is also jumping at the chance to fly out to California because she had the opportunity to review some of the papers that may have made it to the convention level.

The ladies will be putting Wilkes University on the map again this November and the Department wishes the three the best of luck.

Congratulations!

To all 2007-2008 staff of The Beacon for receiving a first place rating for the seventh year in a row in the Scholastic Press Association Competition!