



communication studies
THE MEDIUM

A quarterly newsletter serving Wilkes University students, faculty, alumni, and friends.

Department Welcomes Area High School Students to Bigler Conference

By: Amanda Cawley

The communication studies department would like to welcome over 200 high school students to the 8th Annual Tom Bigler High School Journalism Conference. This year's theme is "Watchdogs of Democracy: Press Responsibility in a Presidential Election Year." The keynote speaker for this year's conference is Melinda Wittstock, Bureau Chief, Capitol News Connection, Washington D.C.

High schools attending the conference are as follows: Tunkhannock Area, Wyoming Valley West, Hanover Area, Wyoming Seminary, Montrose Junior/Senior High School, Blue Ridge High School, Wyoming Area High School, Pittston Area High School, GAR Memorial High School, Forest City and Holy Redeemer High School.

The Tom Bigler Journalism Conference allows students interested in the various aspects of the communications field to gain the insight and information they need to begin their careers. Students will take part in hands on workshops conducted by Wilkes University students in public relations, print journalism, radio and telecommunications.

"I'm particularly excited with this year's conference as it coincides with breaking events. Press responsibility in a presidential election year affects everyone, not just journalists," Dr. Andrea Frantz, conference coordinator, said.

Melinda Wittstock Announced as Keynotes for 2008 Bigler Conference

By: Amanda Cawley

This year's keynote speaker for the 8th Annual Tom Bigler High School Journalism Conference is Melinda Wittstock, Bureau Chief and Executive Director of the Capital News Connection based in Washington, D.C.

With the 2008 Presidential election nearing, and the Pennsylvania primary right around the corner, Wittstock is a perfect choice to explain the press's role in a presidential election. The theme for this year's conference is Watchdogs of Democracy: Press Responsibility in a Presidential Election Year.

Dr. Andrea Frantz, coordinator of the Tom Bigler Journalism Conference felt someone with an immense amount of experience in political reporting, like Wittstock, would be most appropriate to engage the nearly 200 high school students attending the conference.

Wittstock's 15 years of experience in political journalism ranges from the BBC in London, and ABC News, to National Public Radio (NPR) and MSNBC/CNBC. She is also the mind behind the Capital News Connection (CNC), and developed the concept and business plan for the radio station.

After graduating from McGill University with an honors B.A. in political science, Wittstock moved to London where she landed a job as a correspondent with the London Times at age 22. After five years with the London Times, she began working with the BBC and became a primetime news anchor for the network in 1995. In 1998, Wittstock returned to New York City where she anchored World News Now and World News This Morning for ABC news while continuing to report for BBC radio. She moved to Washington D.C. in 2000 to host a show on NPR for Sirius, but left shortly after when launching was delayed. Wittstock launched the Capital News Connection in 2003.

The Capital News Connection (CNC), according to their website, "brings national political coverage 'home' to the local level- from Washington D.C." Frantz described the approach of the CNC as hyper-local, which is localizing national and international issues and making them relevant to the 220 radio markets across the United States.

Wittstock's experience in media and politics make her a particularly wise choice for the conference this year, being that the 2008 Presidential election is one that can make history. Frantz believes Wittstock will create an interactive keynote speech in which students will be engaged throughout the entire session.

"I am excited to welcome Ms. Wittstock to the Tom Bigler Journalism Conference as our 2008 keynote. She is certainly a national leader in the civic journalism movement, as CNC works hard to ensure that community members are truly informed about the decisions their government officials and would-be officials are making on their behalf. Ms. Wittstock's vision for media that educates and advances is something I'd love to see in all news media," she says.

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8th Annual Tom Bigler Journalism Conference Schedule

Academic Session A: 10:00-10:45 a.m.

Academic Session B: 11:00-11:45 a.m.

Academic Session C: 12:00 – 12:45 p.m.

Plenary Speaker Sessions

- ___ Political Reporting (newspaper): Borys Krauwzeniuk, Scranton Times
- ___ Television News: Erik Schrader, News Director, WNEP news
- ___ Press Conference: Melinda Wittstock, Bureau Chief, Capitol News Connection, Washington D.C.
- ___ Radio News & Commentary: Steve Corbett, WILK FM
- ___ Wilkes University Communications Tour

- ## Plenary Speaker Sessions
- ___ Photojournalism: Gary Fabiano, White House Press Corps and SIPA Press
 - ___ Newspaper Reporting: Rebecca Bria, reporter, Times Leader/Dallas Post
 - ___ Television Reporting: Andy Mehalschick, WBRE Ch, 28 evening news anchor, Wilkes-Barre, PA
 - ___ Public/Media Relations: Kristin Hake-Klemish, Community Relations Coordinator, NRCI
 - ___ Wilkes University Communications Tour

- ## Plenary Speaker Sessions
- ___ Television reporting: Mike Trim, WBRE television, Wilkes-Barre, PA
 - ___ Radio: Tommy "McFly" Pavlik, Mix 107 morning host/producer, Washington D.C.
 - ___ Public Relations: Adrienne Richards, Public Relations Coordinator, NTF, Washington
 - ___ Television: Tom Lavan, Producer, ESPN, New York, NY
 - ___ Publication Design & Editing: Myles Rumbel, Hazelton Standard Speaker
 - ___ Wilkes University Communications Tour

Hands-On Workshops

- ___ Print Journalism
- ___ Television
- ___ Public Relations
- ___ Radio

Hands-On Workshops

- ___ Print Journalism
- ___ Television
- ___ Public Relations
- ___ Radio

Hands-On Workshops

- ___ Print Journalism
- ___ Television
- ___ Public Relations
- ___ Radio

Sgobba and Gwynn Win Keystone Press Awards

By: Lauren Salem

Christa Sgobba and Jamie Gwynn, two juniors majoring in communication studies, won awards at the Keystone Press Award ceremony in Hershey, PA on March 12th. Gwynn received a first place plaque in the news photo category, while Sgobba received a second place plaque in the personality profile category.

"I knew what kind of competition The Beacon was up against—daily college newspapers from schools like Penn State, Temple, and Pittsburgh," Sgobba said. "It was very validating to place in a competition among these large daily papers."

Sgobba wrote a personality profile about Namorah Gayle Byrd, a Native American singer and storyteller, who came to Wilkes University in November as a part of Native American History month. The article reflected on how Byrd first learned to embrace her cultural heritage and how she shared those traditions with students from across the nation.

"I think it helped me build confidence in my own writing," Sgobba said. "It kind of pushes me to submit my writing out to more places, whether it is for freelancing opportunities or internships."

Sgobba has been writing for The Beacon since the spring of her sophomore year and she is currently the Lifestyles Editor. Previously, she worked as a staff writer for The Triboro Banner, a community newspaper affiliated with The Scranton Times.

"It was a great opportunity to showcase the talent that Wilkes University students have learned inside the classroom," Gwynn said. "I was actually stunned because I didn't even

Gwynn took a photo of a burning house on New Fredrick's St. in Wilkes-Barre on the way home after eating dinner at Lone Star. When he saw the fire, he said he remembered a lecture by Andrea Frantz, a communications professor, who asked: If there



Keystone Press Award winners Gwynn and Sgobba with Professor Andrea Frantz

was a catastrophic accident, would you go towards it or would you run away?

"I said I would run away and get help," Gwynn said. "But on that Monday night I saw a fire and I wanted to cover this story because no one else was there at the time."

Currently, Gwynn is a Public Relations intern at the Mayor's office in Wilkes-Barre, the host of "Wilkes World", and is enrolled in the Washington Semester program. He was also a correspondent for The Beacon last semester and the Citizen's Voice from December through March as well as Board member of Zebra Communications.

"I personally benefited from winning this award, because not only do I get to put this on my resume to show employers that I am doing well in my field," Gwynn said. "But I also am doing well in other areas such as photography and that I can think outside the box and do various tasks."



A Tribute to Tom Bigler From His Wilkes Communication Studies Family

By: Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall (Originally written March 2007)

Tom Bigler, legendary journalist and community leader, passed away on March 2, 2007 at the age of 85. Those of us who knew him as a colleague, professor, friend and mentor of Communication Studies at Wilkes University will be particularly aware of his loss today. It was Professor Bigler who organized the first journalism conference for high school students eighteen years ago, in 1990.

When the newly organized Department was looking for ways to strengthen the journalism component, Mr. Bigler volunteered to contact some "friends" to speak at a special journalism event. That first year, three guest speakers included an Executive VP for News at ABC, the Editor of The Journal of Foreign Affairs, and the Sports Editor at The Philadelphia News. Each year, Mr. Bigler used his amazing network of friends to serve as keynoters. Today, the annual conference bears his name and draws over 200 students from schools throughout the region.

Tom joined the Wilkes faculty in January 1986, after retiring from an illustrious career as a broadcast journalist and news director at WBRE-TV. For fifteen years he taught fulltime, bringing a lifetime of professional experience and insight into every class. From 1987 – 1991 he was also advisor to the Wilkes campus paper, The Beacon.

He was a man who loved learning, and the thought of working with students excited and puzzled him. Dr. Bradford Kinney, Professor of Communication Studies and long-time friend, recalls exactly what Professor Bigler said during his first week at Wilkes: "He told me that becoming a teacher at age 65 was like learning to walk and talk all over again."

Immediately, he brought strength to the journalism curriculum, teaching basic and advanced news writing, feature writing, editorial writing, mass media in society and a seminar in ethics in communication. Because of this determination, the course in ethics remains a requirement for all majors in the Department. Beginning with cast-off electric typewriters, eventually his News Writing classes were taught in "smart" classrooms with computers. With his help, private funding was secured for the Shelburne Television Center, which enabled Wilkes students to learn in a professional quality studio. When it was obvious that the campus paper needed guidance, he took over as advisor and spent many hours on Sunday nights with the student editors to achieve one goal—to make sure each issue was better than the last.

Kalen Churcher, class of 1997, was present for an incident that became legendary in the Department. Students in the senior ethics seminar had very definite ideas as to what should be done with illegal immigrants. "Their harsh words and inflexible minds infuriated Mr. Bigler...who picked up his class materials and headed to the classroom door. In a raised



The annual journalism conference is named after Dr. Tom Bigler.

voice he said, "I've never been so disappointed in a group of students." The students were shocked. "The last thing anyone wanted to do was disappoint him because he cared so much about his students and our development into educated leaders and journalists," said Churcher.

Tom Lavan, class of 1999, said Mr. Bigler "was very influential in helping me make the life decisions which have gotten me where I am today, working my dream job at ESPN." Mr. Bigler taught by example. "No textbook ever came close to teaching journalism the way Mr. Bigler did," added Lavan.

So tightly was Tom Bigler's personal integrity woven into the fabric of Communication Studies at Wilkes, that it has been difficult for students and colleagues who knew him when he taught fulltime to think of the program without him.

His former students said it best. Kerri Gosling Fasulo, class of 1998, wrote: "We were so fortunate that we had the opportunity to know Dr. Bigler. He touched all of our lives in such a beautiful way." Lavan adds, "He promoted freedom of speech and the freedom to explore the world of broadcast journalism like no one else. I wish everyone had the opportunity to learn from Mr. Bigler as I did."

Occasionally we are fortunate enough to know a remarkable individual who shapes our lives by their example. Today, to the hundreds of students enjoying the 8th annual Tom Bigler H.S. Journalism Conference, know that its founder would be very proud to help inspire another generation of journalists.

Communication Studies Department Prepares Hands on Workshops for Upcoming Bigler Conference

By: Katie Marzzacco

It's that time again. The Communications department is buzzing with excitement for it's annual Bigler Conference which is held in memory of Wilkes' own Tom Bigler. The conference always features several workshops that are comprised of all the important areas of communication.

Workshops will be held in the areas of Public Relations, Journalism, Radio, and Television. The various clubs put on these workshops accordingly: Public Relations is run by Zebra Communications, Journalism is done by The Beacon, Radio by WCLH and Television by the members of Wilkes World. Like every year, the workshops hope to provide a taste of communication to the high school students.

For example, Wilkes World Producer Wilfredo Mercado gave a bit of a preview as to what the television workshop will be like. According to Wil, high school students will first be given a short lecture about the magic of television production. They

will then learn about the various jobs and tasks that go into producing a finished project. After the students understand the jobs, they will be asked to choose one and actually use the television studio to come up with their own production.

Zebra Communications who is in charge of the Public Relations workshop will be putting on a mock presidential election in which two Wilkes students will be running for president. The high school students will be separated into two groups and will be in charge of running each of the two candidates campaigns which will include slogans, posters, and other aspects involved in Public Relations.

These are just samples of the interesting learning opportunities that will be provided for the attending high school students. This, as every other year, will definitely prove to be a great success!

Controlling Spin's Cross-Generational Focus Group on Voting Makes News

By: Raquel Wheby

On Tuesday, April 8th Wilkes hosted two focus groups on the upcoming Presidential Election in the Shelburne Television Center. But they weren't your normal college focus groups with uninformed students talking about who their parents told them to vote for. Instead, 15 students in the "Controlling Spin: News, PR and Politics" course were joined by a group of senior citizen "partners" from the local Jewish Community Center. The life-long voters and first-time voters have been meeting on a bi-weekly basis to discuss what issues they wanted to have discussed in the PA Primary election on April 22.

What was especially unique was the cross-generational nature of the participants, who ranged in age from 19-95. For most of the Wilkes students, 2008 will be the first time they will vote in a presidential election. Several of the JCC senior partners remember voting of FDR in the 1930's.

"We have five men who are World War II veterans. They don't agree with each other on how or when the U.S. should withdraw from Iraq. It was interesting listening to their unique perspectives on this issue," explained Dr. Elmes-Crahall, who organized the project. The generations learned a lot from each other throughout their discussions, including discovering similar concerns

for the same issues: the war in Iraq, the economy, education, health care and the role of character and leadership among the candidates.

What stands out most for Christine Zavaskas, junior Communications major, was a conversation she had about education with two women, Roz and Mildred. "I never expected them to be so passionate about these issues. I think a lot of people don't realize that there are many senior citizens who are still very much involved in current events."

David Lewis, sophomore and one of the first-time voters in the class says, "It has been a great experience, especially to know that there are people who are as concerned as I am over the welfare of this country." Lewis added: "differences between generations...can be conquered through the simple task of conversation."

Dr. Elmes-Crahall is pleased with the focus group discussions. "Our life-long voting "partners" have become mentors for the students. And the students have earned the respect of the senior citizens. They are finding common ground on which issues concern them, even if their reasons for being concerned vary based on generation," said Dr. Elmes-Crahall.

Tape of the focus group will be provided to CSPAN and PNC. Exact airing dates have not been set yet.



Participants addressed the issues, the candidates and the historical significance of this election with the first woman and black man to actually win presidential primaries, as well as the oldest candidate to run in a major party nomination.

The students have watched debates, checked candidate websites, and analyzed campaign tactics. Most attended at least one campaign visit to Wilkes-Barre. They also regularly write for the student-run blog, freshink300.blogspot.com. Several blog entries by the students included ideas from the discussions, including one by Christine Zavaskas. About the senior citizens, Zavaskas says, "Their voices need to be heard more often, so I was glad to be able to help do that by incorporating Roz's opinions into my blog."

This is a project that the students and senior citizens have thoroughly enjoyed. Check the C-SPAN and PCN listings in coming weeks and catch the "Cross-Generational Voting Focus Group on the PA Primary." You might recognize some of the faces.



Staff Profile: Michele Geiser

By: Matthew Gogas

The Communications Department is proud to welcome the new office assistant, Michele Geiser. Michele replaced the former office assistant of two years Sandy Williams this past March. Michele is a former computer teacher who started her adult career out as an assistant in the computer lab at Dallas Middle School. She excelled at her job there so much that she decided to go back to school as an adult to get her certification in microcomputers after her boss and mentor saw great potential in her. Michele left the Dallas School District shortly after receiving her certification because she received a teaching position offer at Bishop O'Reilly. When Bishop O'Reilly closed in June 2007, Michele jumped head first into travel tour business with her sister Judy Smith in July 2007. The business is cleverly named, My Sister's Excursions, LLC. Michele decided that this was something that she always wanted to do, but did not have the time to do it. Since she was not teaching full time anymore, she started the business with her sister. "I love to travel because of my passion to see the world," said Michele. In addition to her love of traveling, Michele also enjoys reading, a wide variety of music, and floral gardening.

She decided after a few months to go back to work and took the office assistant job in the Communication Department here at Wilkes. "I miss teaching. I accepted the position at Wilkes to remain in the education field," said Michele.

In addition to all of her professional responsibilities, Michele has managed to marry happily and raise two children. She is also proud to say that she is a Grandmother of one, but hoping for more.

Michele could not be happier with her time at Wilkes so far. "I have had a wonderfully warm welcome. I feel very comfortable due to the fact that the faculty, staff, and students have made me feel welcome," said Michele.

Welcome to the Communication Studies Department Michele!

Dr. Estwick to Speak at Texas Conference On Media Stereotypes

By: Alyssa Shilinski

Dr. Evene Estwick presented a research paper at the 29th Annual Intercultural Communication Conference, on April 10-12 at Texas Southern University. The event was sponsored by the Tavis Smiley School of Communication and the Mickey Leland Center on World Hunger and Peace.

The theme of the conference was "The Changing Same: The Politics of Stereotypic Images and Perceptions in Mass Media and Popular Culture".

The conference consisted of presentations that addressed social, political and economic issues that are associated with the impact of images produced by the mass media and entertainment industries.

Dr. Estwick paired with Dr. Kandace Leigh Harris, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication

Arts at Johnson C. Smith University, to present their paper, "Reality or Familiarity: The Contextualized Stereotype of the African American Women in Tyler Perry's Movies." She is pleased to take part in the conference. "It is an opportunity to keep abreast of the research in an area I find very interesting," said Estwick.

Other themes what may be discussed are: The Commodification of Black Athletes, Corporate Media and the Production of Rap, Pop, and Soul Music and Media Ownership by Women and Minorities Forty Years after the Kerner Commission Report. The TSU research paper is one of several that Dr. Estwick will be presenting in the next semester on various intercultural communication issues.

The Medium is now online!
Check it out at
www.wilkes.edu/themedium

Alumni Update: Tom Lavan '99

By: Julia Marranca

Hard work does pay off and plus, who wouldn't want to win a few Emmy awards? Just ask Thomas Lavan. Lavan, a Communications major, graduated from Wilkes University in 1999. While at Wilkes, he was part of the Wilkes World staff, wrote some stories for the Beacon, and stepped in as a DJ on WCLH. While he interned with one of the local radio stations, 97 BHT as promotions coordinator, it was the experience he had with WYOU and WBRE that proved to be more worthwhile. "Although it was fun driving the radio van around to different local bars and giving t-shirts and hats

away, TV was the way to go for me."

For the past eight and half years, Lavan has been the Coordinating Operations Technician in the Production Department for ESPN, which is located in Connecticut. He is that behind-the-scenes person working on studio lighting, video shading, and audio for ESPN's Sportscenter, Sunday NFL Live, College Gameday, Baseball Tonight and many more. Lavan has won numerous Emmy Awards for the technical work and special effects. Some of those awards include the 2003 Technical Emmy Award for Sportscenter for outstanding studio

show daily and more recently the 2006 award for Sunday NFL Countdown.

Currently, Lavan is in the process of receiving his Masters degree in Organizational Behavior from the University of Hartford this coming May. After graduating with honors, he plans on continuing his higher level education, a doctorate. Lavan's hard work and dedication stood out in college and continued to do so throughout his career. Winning the Emmys isn't too shabby, so you could say that his hard work did pay off.



Local Students “Dodging” for a Good Cause

By: Leeann Searfoss

Zebra Communications, the student-run public relations agency of Wilkes University, will be forming and hosting a dodge ball tournament to raise funds for Candy's Place, a local cancer resource center. The “Dodging for Dollars” dodgeball tournament is open to all members of the community.

Candy's Place has become a staple in the Wyoming Valley for cancer patients and their loved ones. The mission of Candy's Place is to provide a safe, non-threatening, loving, home-like environment to those affected by cancer. Candy's Place has recently been relocated to a new, state-of-the-art, 3,800 square foot building in Forty-Fort.

Zebra is looking for teams of 6-10 people, with members being at least 16-years old. Each team member is asked to give \$10 for registration. All proceeds of “Dodging for Dollars” will go directly to Candy's Place.

“Dodging for Dollars” will be held Saturday April 19, 2008 in the University Center on Main's (UCOM) Recreation and Athletic Center (RAC). The tournament will be held from 11 a.m. until approximately 5 p.m. Registration will begin at 10:00 a.m. The first 100 registrants will receive a free t-shirt.

Anyone interested in registering for “Dodging for Dollars” can get a registration form and information on the 1st floor of the Student Union Building Tuesday, March 25, 2008 and Thursday, March 27, 2008, as well as Tuesday, April 1, 2008 and Thursday, April 3, 2008 between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

There will be a registration table available for information during club hours. There will also be an opportunity to sign-up for “Dodging for Dollars” during the Bigler Journalism Conference for all interested participants.

If anyone is interested in signing up for the “Dodging for Dollars” dodge ball tournament and cannot visit the SUB between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on those dates, please contact Zebra Communications at zebra.communications@gmail.com or call (570)-408-4158. Registration forms are asked to be filled-out and returned to: Zebra Communications no later than April 14, 2008.

ATTN: Dodging for Dollars
c/o Jane Elmes-Crahall
84 W. South St.
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766



**Members of the Candy's Place
account team with “Shadoe
Steel”**

Engine #4385 and Vulcan Iron Works: Zebra Working to Take Pride in Downtown Wilkes-Barre

By: Michele Flannery

When someone mentions “Vulcan Iron Works” or “Engine #4385” what comes to mind?

For a group of Zebra Communications students and some business students those names are filled with history, fun, and a lot of hard work.

It all started last semester when Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall's COM 302: Fundamentals of Public Relations class organized an event to help restore an old train, Engine #4385. Little did they know at the time that the engine's number would be forever engraved in their memory.

Mr. George Sphorer asked Zebra Communications to help raise money to restore Engine #4385. This engine was made locally in Wilkes-Barre in 1942 at Vulcan Iron Works, a once thriving business that began in the late 1800s. Vulcan Iron Works once employed thousands of people in Wilkes-Barre and produced many trains and other iron products that aided the troops in World War I and II. As the students interviewed past employees (who are now in their 80s-90s) they discovered how much pride there was in Wilkes-Barre and how important these jobs were to the employees.

“The Restoration of Vulcan 4385 is important give the people of the Valley, a living, working example of what the shops in Wilkes-Barre, West Pittston and Hanover produced. The 2,500 men and women at Vulcan produced world famous products

for 105 years. An important part of our heritage will live again” said George Sphorer, Project Manager of Vulcan Pride, Ltd.

The first fundraiser that the public relations students planned was “Vulcan Train Day.” Students planned a fun-filled day that included a reading hour for children, Color the Train Contest, Name the Train Contest, and the “Chew-Chew Bubble Blowing Competition,” along with the sale of cookies, t-shirts, and raffle tickets. The total amount of money raised exceeded \$1100. Media coverage was excellent.

For the second phase of the fundraiser, students in COM 352: Advanced Public Relations Campaigns are planning a 1940s theme gala called “Spotlight on Pride: A 1940s Gala” on April 12th from 5-10pm at Genetti's Best Western Hotel. The night includes a cocktail hour and open bar from 5-6pm, dinner, recognition of businesses that have existed in or before the 1940s, a swing dance instruction and demonstration, the “Boogie Woogie Dance Competition,” and music by “The Statesmen.” Guests are encouraged to dress in 1940s attire, but are not required. The students are hoping to raise enough money for the Vulcan Project to qualify for grants.

For more information about the Gala, to make reservations for the Gala, or if you would like to donate to help restore Vulcan Train Engine #4385, call Dr. Jane Elmes-Crahall, Director of Zebra Communications, at 408-4162.



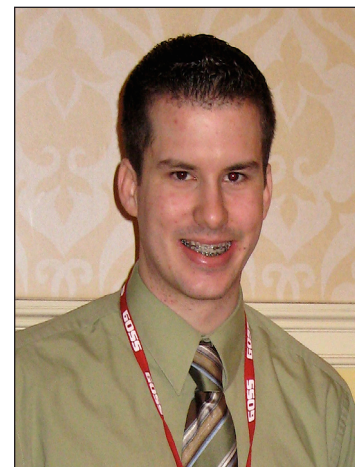
Jamie Gwynn Named Intern of the Month

By: Brittany Williams

Managing college demands and a five-day a week internship keeps Jamie Gwynn busy this semester. But he manages the workload well. Recently, he learned his hard work paid off when he was selected Intern of the Month for January by the Wilkes Cooperative Education Office. He was honored for his current public relations internship at the office of the Mayor of Wilkes-Barre.

His internship consists of working from 9 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday, when he works writing press releases, drafting speeches and completing other projects. He is currently working on two projects. One project, CGI Com, consists of putting one minute videos on the City's website to attract people to live in Wilkes-Barre. The second is Down Town Dollars, which is a campaign to raise money for health awareness.

As a junior Communication Studies major with concentrations in Organizational Communication/PR and Rhetoric, learned that what he gets from classes, along with the advice given to him, has helped him succeed so far. About the intern award, Jamie stated: "It's not the classes that make the student; it's the professors that do, because if not for the Communications Department, and the extra push from professors Elmes-Crahall and Frantz, I would not be where I am." Congratulations, Jamie.



Jamie Gwynn, named January Intern of the Month for his internship at Mayor Leighton's office.

Alumni Update: Gabe Ladonne

By: Mike Williams

The Communications Studies Department is always proud of its graduates and all they achieve; and University alum Gabe Ladonne is no exception. A native of New Brunswick, NJ, and a graduate of Wallenpaupack Area High School, Ladonne, 27, graduated from Wilkes University in 2005 with a double major in Communications, with a concentration in Journalism, and English, with a concentration in writing. Like most journalism students, Ladonne aspired to find a career that would allow him to pursue his passion for reporting the news; however, unlike most students in his concentration, Gabe had found such a vocation well before he graduated. After interviewing with SNL Financial during spring break of senior year at Wilkes, Ladonne was offered a position with the company, which they were gracious enough to hold for him until after he graduated.

Following two years of working at the SNL Financial headquarters in Charlottesville, Virginia, Gabe was offered the amazing opportunity to work for the company's newly formed London branch. Now living in the United Kingdom, Gabe works as the company's

senior financial editor, reporting specifically on the financial services and real estate sectors in Europe and Asia, attending seminars and company press conferences, both to report on the event itself, as well as introducing himself and SNL Financial, making contacts throughout Europe.

In terms of adjusting, since moving to London four months ago, Gabe is doing well. Since relocating, he's even done some traveling, visiting Edinburgh, Scotland and Athens, Greece, and plans on doing more in the future. However, his time in the UK hasn't been all sight-seeing and tea, as he has encountered some difficulties. Mainly in finding the basic necessities of existence, taking him weeks, literally, to find such things as clothes irons and sewing kits, as there are no Wal-Marts or K-Marts in England. In the same vein, though he may be able to assimilate to absence of American department stores, there are a few aspects of America that he does miss, including U.S. currency and a good cup of coffee. However, it is his

family and friends living back here in Pennsylvania that he misses the most, forced to communicate with them only through email and the occasional phone call. However, there is an upside, as the distance has forced Gabe to truly appreciate the time he does get to spend with his loved ones.

Looking back on his time at Wilkes University, Gabe attributes much of his success to his instructors in the Communications Studies Department, preparing him for the professional world and instilling in him a drive to go out into the world and use the skills he developed here at Wilkes. In a final word of advice for any students looking to pursue a similar career, Ladonne recommends involvement with extra-curricular activities such as The Beacon, The Medium or WCLH, as well as internships, more than one if possible, in order to gain experience, in addition to adding a boost to any resume when attempting to find a job after graduation.



Alumni Profile: Myles Rumbel '02

By: Tim Seigfried

Every year, the Wilkes University Department of Communication Studies releases a bevy of exceptionally talented writers, editors, and public speakers into the job field.

Myles Rumbel is no exception.

Just a few years ago, Rumbel was working on the staff Wilkes University Beacon, and during that time he was also involved in Wilkes World, the weekly television program that is produced completely by Wilkes students.

When he was a student in the Communications Department, Rumbel spent a great deal of time with the professors, who he credits with influencing him in his career in journalism. "With regard to my professional life, I honestly have to say the Wilkes Communication professors, especially Andrea [Frantz] and Mark [Stine]...but all of my professors gave me the basic skill set for my job now."

After graduating with his degree in communications, with concentration in Journalism and telecommunications, Rumbel went on to work as a copy editor and page designer for the Republican and Herald in Pottsville, before moving on to the same position for the Hazleton Standard-Speaker.

For the future journalists of the world, Rumbel has a very simple philosophy: "Just get out there and do it," said Rumbel, "Actions speak louder than words."

Shauna Strellish and Lindsey White Enjoying Washington Semester

By: Shauna Strellish

Imagine attending the State of the Union address and being in the room next to where the President gives his speech. That happened early in my internship with the Washington Semester program. With two months in DC under our belts, I think I can speak for Lindsey White and myself by saying that we have already had some amazing opportunities here.

Within two weeks of arriving in DC, I was very fortunate to land a great internship at Tribune Broadcasting. I had the opportunity to receive a Capitol Hill press pass and attend the State of the Union, where I worked in Statuary Hall right next to the floor of the House of Representatives. I watched as Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama walked in front of me as they processed into the House of Representatives.



Shauna Strellish and Lindsey White with Bob Schieffer

"Being able to take part in the State of the Union was truly an amazing experience that was exclusively DC, especially seeing the President and his motorcade," said my roommate, Wilkes

Communications major Lindsey White, who's interning with ABC News in DC.

Initially, I had reservations about being away from home. But my fears quickly went away. The last month has been exciting with Super Tuesday, the Maryland, DC, and Virginia primaries, and then the Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin primaries. My internship keeps me busy. And the journalism seminar, which Lindsey and I are both in, has given us the opportunity to hear some really great speakers. For example, two weeks ago, CBS correspondent Bob Schieffer, came to speak to our class.

Aside from eating, sleeping, and breathing politics, we have managed to have some fun. At the end of February, all the interns at Tribune received tickets to the National Press Foundation's 25th Annual Awards Dinner, awarding the best in journalism. It was a Black Tie Affair and of course, as always, Lindsey was my date! We had a great time and sat in the same room with amazing journalists. Previous award winners include Tim Russert, NBC News; Dan Rather, CBS News; and Barbara Walters, ABC News.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the Pope visit the DC area as well as attending the NCAA Basketball Tournament with ABC; however, I am excited about coming back to Wilkes for the fall," said White.

Lindsey and I are enjoying ourselves and making the best of our experience, but we do miss our home. And by home, I am referring to Wilkes. Coming to American University for the Washington Semester has made us realize what a great education Wilkes offers. It is hard to even describe in words exactly how much we miss the faculty and staff, and of course the students!

It's nearly time to say goodbye to the nation's capital. Take care and see you all soon Miss you Wilkes!

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