Greetings from the Chair

Greetings all, and welcome to the Fall 2009 Department of Communication newsletter. We had a remarkable year in 2008-09 in the Plaza Building, so I want to share some of our exciting news with our extended community of friends, families, students, staff, alumni, and donors.

First, we are thrilled to announce that the Department is growing in exciting ways. As a first step in our multi-year strategy, we have completed two searches for assistant professors and hired a new part-time instructor.

Dr. Hamilton Bean (Ph.D., UC Boulder, 2009) brings to us many years of experience doing public relations work in Washington, D.C., where he held positions with various defense and intelligence firms (he assures us that he is not a spy, but we have our doubts). In addition to his grant-getting powers and research excellence, he will help us offer a full slate of courses on public relations and will spin them in ways that focus on civic engagement and community building.

Dr. Lisa Keränen (Ph.D., U. Pittsburgh, 2003) brings to us many years of experience serving as a medical ethicist in hospitals and writing about health care communication. Her research and teaching address the rhetorics of science, medicine, and health care; her book Scientific Characters: Rhetoric, Politics, and Trust in Breast Cancer Research is forthcoming from the prestigious Rhetoric, Culture, and Social Critique series from the University of Alabama Press.

Dr. Yvette Bueno Olson (Ph.D., University of Miami, 2009) will be teaching classes on communication and diversity in the fall and hopes to develop service learning related to health care and bilingual communication in the spring. Her background is in health communication and intercultural communication. Recently she won a top contributed paper award from the Western States Communication Association’s intercultural communication division.

These three new hires will help the Department grow into the future as a first-rate research collective, a site of outstanding teaching, and a hotbed of new means of pursuing social justice and community service. Please join me in welcoming Hamilton, Lisa, and Yvette to the team.

Second, we are equally thrilled to announce that we have completed a major overhaul of our undergraduate curriculum, including launching a new required class for all majors entitled Communication and Citizenship. The details of this curricular transformation (and a syllabus for the new class) are available on our Department Web site, www.cudenver.edu/communication. These changes will enable first and second year students to have much more contact with professors; will enable all students to plot a course of study that focuses on career development; and will enable all majors to engage in internships, travel study, community service, and other forms of experiential learning. Because of these curricular transformations, our pedagogical offerings have never been so flexible, while our commitment to serving students and broader community needs has never been stronger.

Third, we are delighted to invite everyone to come down to the Plaza Building to see the magic Sally Thee has worked upon our physical space. The once-drab mail and photocopy room is now painted in cheerful blues and greens, while our work spaces have been upgraded to sleek, natural wood cabinets with a gorgeous, fire-truck red counter. In that same vein, our Department foyer has also been spruced up with a new information board, a faculty publications space, a new paint job, and a welcoming area full of arts magazines and intellectual journals. As she has done for years, Professor Sonja Foss continues to bring us fresh flowers from her garden whenever they are in season. All of these changes indicate how we continue to try to make our Department an inviting space where everyone feels appreciated and surrounded by art, flowers, respect, and intellectual energy.

Fourth, via collaborations with the UC Denver Center for Public Humanities, I am pleased to announce that we have co-sponsored cultural events that have drawn attention to our campus. To mark the six-year anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, we sponsored a showing of Eyes Wide Open, a heart-breaking art installation where all Colorado soldiers who have died in the war are memorialized by a pair of boots bearing their name, rank, age, and hometown. When we displayed the show in March, hundreds of people stopped by the exhibit on the quadrangle to pray for the dead and to share stories about the war. The next day, we hosted a debate about the future of the “war on terrorism,” and this too led to rousing discussion. Back in November, 2008, we marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln by re-staging parts of his famous debates with Senator Stephen Douglas. This raucous affair landed us on local television, in local print outlets, and even in the International Herald Tribune, the newspaper of record all across Europe. A friend was attending a conference in Amsterdam at the time and called the next morning to say, “Hey, man, we’re in Europe, and you folks are all over the paper!” And so it goes: communication in action, celebrating the past while re-inventing the present, acting locally while also thinking globally.

There is much more to say, but little space available here, so I will close by inviting everyone who reads this newsletter to drop by the office to say hello or to send us an email telling us about your triumphs and adventures.

We are proud to be members of team UC Denver and hope you will keep in touch. As my man Ben Franklin used to say at the close of his letters, I remain your humble servant, with all best wishes and high regards,

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Stephanie Webb Named Outstanding In CLAS

When Stephanie Webb received the phone call that said she had been named the outstanding B.A. student in the College of Arts and Sciences (CLAS) for the graduating class of December, 2008, she was shopping for shoes. Those around her were puzzled when the shopper next to them started jumping up and down in glee. But we can excuse Stephanie her unusual behavior because the award was the culmination of years of hard work on Stephanie’s part.

Stephanie knew she wanted to do something with communication even when she was in high school, although she didn’t yet know what to call the field in which she later majored. She was interested in journalism and worked on the yearbook in high school because that came closest to her interests at the time. As part of a leadership program that introduced students to various occupations, Stephanie met the person who was in charge of public relations for Jefferson County Schools. He became her mentor, and she ended up completing an internship in public relations with Jefferson County Schools in the summer of 2006. During her internship she worked on public relations for a bond levy to support the construction of new schools. She helped create the video that introduced citizens to the new schools being built; helped launch a public relations campaign to let the public know about the schools; and coordinated communication among the architects, the community, and school personnel. “I attended more ground breakings and ribbon cuttings than most people do in a lifetime,” Stephanie laughs.

Stephanie loved her communication courses. But she did much more than simply complete her courses in communication. She earned a double degree, so while she was studying communication and earning certificates in mediation and public relations, she was also studying English literature and completing a thesis project.

Stephanie somehow found time to do things other than study. She was president of UC Denver’s chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, a national honor society, and she was active in Chancellor Scholars and Leaders and in the Global Alliance Project. She was also the Communication Department’s research assistant for two years, working with the faculty to conduct research on projects such as public relations in China, publishing, and mentoring.

Stephanie now has two jobs. One started with an internship in public relations with the Orbis Institute in the fall of 2007, where she designed the pamphlets for five programs and maintained the network database for fundraising. The internship became a full-time job in January of 2007, and she is now the project director for development of Orbis in charge of fund raising and grant writing. She maintains the fundraising database, brands and describes new programs, provides support for recruitment and program projects, generates Website material, and documents Orbis’s programs. Stephanie also taught English in China with representatives of Orbis in the summer of 2007.

Stephanie’s second job is doing public relations for an online business, Greenlighted Public Relations and Marketing, which sponsors the Web site Greenlighted.com. The site allows customers to engage easily in socially responsible online shopping by ranking companies according to socially responsible standards. Stephanie developed the public relations and marketing campaigns for the launching of the Web site and branded Greenlighted.com by designing its logo and the related marketing materials. Her focus now is on raising funds for seed and development compensation, which she is doing by making use of Flicker, Yammer, and Twitter. This kind of public relations is very different from the kind of PR she’s used to doing, where the primary job is meeting people and going to physical locations. Instead, she is building relationships online. She is finding this job “really engaging and entertaining” because she gets to innovate much of what she does because much of it hasn’t been done before. Her supervisors “put a lot of trust in her” to create her own effective way of approaching the job.

Stephanie has no trouble articulating the benefits of her communication degree. It gave her, she explains, “a perspective on things that is different from my peers. I look at things like social experiments and am always analyzing the messages and interactions going on around me and trying to figure out how they might have been done better.” Our congratulations to Stephanie, who is a superb representative of our Department and our discipline.

Communication majors do great things after they graduate. One of our graduates, who is working her way up as a reporter, recently had one of her stories aired on CNN news for the first time!

Melissa Garcia is a crime and courts reporter and Telemundo Anchor for KTXS-TV and KTES-TV in Abilene, Texas. She graduated with her communication degree from the Department in 2007, and she credits two internships with helping prepare her for her current position. She was an event coordinator at T3Naviant, a corporate travel provider, and she also served as a news intern at CBS4 News. Her story was about an extraordinary increase in rattlesnakes in a residential neighborhood in the Abilene area. We’re confident we’ll be hearing more from Melissa in the future.
A top-ten urban communication program and a national leader in social justice pedagogy and scholarship: This is the vision for the Communication Department of our new Department chair, **Stephen John Hartnett**—social justice scholar, professor, poet, prison activist, and former professional musician—who joined us last fall from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Dr. Hartnett’s path to the communication discipline and our Department was not a conventional one. In the middle of earning a Ph.D. in English literature at the University of California at San Diego, he asked himself why he was getting a degree in literature, which seemed to have little relevance to what was happening in the world. He finished up the degree but chose to pursue a musical career instead of an academic one, touring the country playing in rock bands. Although his heart and soul were in fronting large political rock bands, Dr. Hartnett admits with an embarrassed laugh that he made much more money during those years singing in barbershop quartets for corporate events. After six years as a professional musician, Dr. Hartnett retooled himself as a communication scholar, seeing in the communication discipline a site where all of his interests—intellectual, poetic, and activist—could come together and where he could apply his expertise to solving real world problems.

Dr. Hartnett’s scholarship and community activities revolve around a commitment to social justice, which for him means a commitment to sharing resources and knowledge, enabling the voiceless to speak, and empowering the disempowered. His book titles show his commitment to these processes in his research: *Globalization & Empire: The U.S. Invasion of Iraq, Free Markets, and the Twilight of Democracy; Democratic Dissent & the Cultural Fictions of Antebellum America; Sweet Freedom’s Song: “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” and Democracy in America; and Incarceration Nation: Investigative Prison Poems of Hope and Terror.*

Dr. Hartnett’s current research project is a two-volume history of the death penalty, The first volume, *Executing Democracy: Capital Punishment & the Making of America,* will be published in 2010, and the second volume will be published in 2011, both by Michigan State University Press. He wanted to write about this topic because, as a death-penalty activist, he was tired of hearing bad arguments on both sides of the issue. He thought it would be “cool public service to figure out historically what the best arguments have been against the death penalty.” He uncovered a series of economic, moral, religious, and even comedic arguments in his search.

Dr. Hartnett’s many articles on topics such as prisons and activism, presidential discourse, the death penalty, national security strategy, sentimental rhetoric, and the drug war have been published in journals such as *Communication and Critical Cultural Studies, Cultural Studies & Critical Methodologies, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Rhetoric & Public Affairs,* the *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* and the *Journal of Applied Communication Research.*

Dr. Hartnett’s commitment to social justice extends to work in the community and particularly to prison activism. He has been teaching writing—both fiction and nonfiction—in prisons for 20 years and is currently working with a team of students who are conducting a creative writing workshop at the Denver Women’s Prison. He credits his leadership style to his work in prisons. “My sense of how one is a leader actually evolved from doing community work and working with prisoners,” he says, “who taught me the power of working collaboratively towards collective empowerment and enlightenment.”

Dr. Hartnett chose to go into administration because he saw an opportunity at UC Denver to lead a department in which social justice could be institutionalized. He believes our Department is an excellent candidate because it is housed in an urban institution, has the capacity to forge strong community bonds, serves first-generation college students, and is flexible because of its relatively small size. He also believes that the strengths of the Department provide an excellent foundation for building: “Our major is drawing great students who mix engagement and scholarship with real-world experience. We have the world’s best program administrator, Sally Thee, and we have strong senior leadership in Barbara Walkosz, Jim Stratman, Brenda J. Allen, and Sonja Foss. And we have the support of the dean in developing a social justice mission.”

Dr. Hartnett is an avid skier, hiker, and biker. He is the proud father of Anya (7) and Melia (5), and his life partner, **Dr. Lisa Keränen**, fortunately for us, joined our Department this fall.

**Sally Thee Wins Staff Award**

We know what a wonderful program assistant we have in the Communication Department, and it was confirmed when **Sally Thee** was presented with the Outstanding Staff Award for the year at a ceremony in May. Those who nominated Sally noted that she has always been “a dedicated, enthusiastic employee and colleague. In addition to being an outstanding program assistant for the Department of Communication, she has gone above and beyond her duties to help program assistants and administrative assistants establish better relationships with one another and with entities such as the Procurement Service Center, Human Resources, and the Auraria Higher Education Center.” We could not agree more. We congratulate Sally on her award and express our gratitude to her for everything she has done, since she joined us in 2000, to make the Department run smoothly.

**Suzanne Stromberg Receives Service-learning Grant**

**Suzanne Stromberg**, our Department’s internship coordinator and instructor of our senior capstone course, is fast emerging as an expert in service learning on our campus. She received a 2009–2010 CLAS ACT grant of $3500 for her project, “Advancement of Service Learning Curriculum,” and will make use of the funds to investigate best practices in service learning. The end result will be transferrable recommendations for departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, including the development of an electronic dossier of service-learning resources such as sample syllabi, assignments, and articles to help faculty integrate service learning into their courses. Service learning is an important part of the CLAS strategic plan and our Department’s revised undergraduate curriculum, so we are delighted that Suzanne has taken the lead on our campus in developing resources for service learning.
Preventing Skin Cancer through Communication

"WEAR SUNSCREEN, SUNGLASSES, AND A HAT!"

Did you know that skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the United States and that the number of new cases per year continues to rise? The American Cancer Society now reports that over one million new cases of non-melanoma skin cancer and 60,000 cases of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, are diagnosed annually. These numbers approach the number of all 200 other types of cancers combined.

Unprotected exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, or, to put it simply, going out in the sun without any protection, is the primary cause of skin cancer. Both sunburns and tanning that result from unprotected exposure to the sun can cause skin cancer.

In Colorado, sun-safety programs are particularly salient because Coloradans are at increased risk for skin cancer because of our high number of sunny days (300+) and our high altitude. For every 1000 feet above sea level, UV intensity increases by 5%; in Denver, at 5280 feet, we receive approximately 25% more UV radiation than most cities do, and for those who work or recreate in the mountains at 10,000 feet, the UV dosage increases by 50%. In fact, the Colorado melanoma rates for both men and women are 30% above the national average.

Fortunately, there are a number of things people can do to protect themselves from the harmful rays of the sun. To help people understand their options, Dr. Barbara Walkosz and her colleagues have received multiple grants to fund and implement several sun-safety educational programs that offer simple sun-safety practices that can be put into action.

One of these grants is Sun Safe Colorado, funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, which teaches sun-protection practices to outdoor workforces, elementary and middle-school children, and patients in adult and pediatric clinics. Recently, the program expanded to include teaching sun safety to preschool teachers across the state via Sun Safe Colorado Preschools. You can learn more about this program and its work in Colorado at www.sun safecolorado.org.

The Go Sun Smart Program, supported by the National Cancer Institute, was a 10-year project that promoted sun safety to outdoor workers and guests at high-altitude ski resorts. The program partnered with the National Ski Areas Association and disseminated sun-safety materials and education to over 350 locations in the United States and Canada. Guided by communication theory, Go Sun Smart used signage, training, and electronic communication channels to reach its audiences. Overall, the program increased sun-protection practices for employees and guests (including children enrolled in ski schools) and reduced sunburning for employees.

Take some tips from Dr. Walkosz and her research to protect yourself from skin cancer:

- Limit your unprotected time in the sun, especially during peak UV hours at midday in the summer.
- Find shade, or bring it with you.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher every day.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours.
- Wear cover-up clothing, hats and sunglasses.
- Don’t use tanning beds or lamps.
- Check your skin every month for any changes.

YouTube for Public Speaking

With the demise of VCRs and the rapidly changing format of digital recording equipment, communication departments around the country are looking for ways to record speeches in public speaking classes. After looking at a number of expensive options, Dr. Barbara Walkosz dropped into the Office of Academic Technology to find out if its staff had any ideas. “Going local” was definitely the best solution to the problem, and a team effort evolved, sponsored by a technology grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Our Department, the Office of Academic Technology, the Media Center, and AHEC Facilities Management worked together to create a system to record students’ presentations in our Presentational Speaking courses, taking advantage of Web 2.0 technology. Installed in Plaza 116, the system consists of Adobe Connect Software, a computer station, and an Elmo camera. Faculty record speeches from the computer and send electronic links to students so they can review their presentations in a You Tube-like format on any computer. There’s another benefit as well. Student assistants in the Presentational Speaking classes receive training in presentational software that they are likely to encounter at their workplaces in the future. In this case, “buying local” has had benefits all around.

The value of the new technology for recording and reviewing presentations was highlighted when an international student was able to send the URL for her presentations to her parents in Bulgaria. Mila Shontova was nervous about taking the Presentational Speaking class and had shared her trepidation with her parents via email and during phone conversations. Her parents, however, encouraged her to give it a try. According to Mila, “they have pushed me since I was little to pursue my education, and they paid for my English lessons.”

Because Mila’s parents have never had the opportunity to visit the US, they haven’t had the chance to see her in an English-speaking environment, so Mila sent the first speech to her parents to watch. They enjoyed it so much that they asked for more, and she continued to send links to all of her speeches to them during the semester. Mila ended up as a finalist in a class speech competition and excelled in the course far beyond her initial expectations. “This experience was their achievement as well,” Mila reports.
At Home with Service in Senior Seminar

Research indicates that a degree in communication is an increasingly marketable commodity, and the range of job titles reported by our alums continues to broaden. As a result, our undergraduates are sometimes overwhelmed by the broad menu of options available to them after graduation. For the past eight years, the Department has offered a Senior Seminar course, taught by Suzanne Stromberg, to assist our majors in the process of transitioning from college to career. Students develop skills for their lives after graduation in various ways.

At the beginning of the course, students reflect on their academic careers and how their coursework and communication principles have prepared them for the work world. They examine their ideas about professionalism and spend time discussing the Department’s mission of civility and the influence this lens has had on their education.

Students then tackle the nitty gritty of the job search. They develop their personal marketing collateral, producing business cards, professional resumes, and digital portfolios. Each student creates a Web site that features work samples, a personal statement, letters of recommendation, internship and/or service experience, and contact information. In other words, students are able to showcase their abilities to potential employers in a “one-stop shop.” The range of communication products featured in these portfolios suggests the wide-reaching talents of our graduates—animation projects, research papers, Web sites, videos, ad copy, and press kits. Several alums have reported that their portfolios were instrumental in obtaining a job after graduation.

In the past few years, a service-learning component has been included in the Senior Seminar that helps students enact our mission statement of civility as they exit the program. As students engage with individuals and organizations in the community, they begin to see the value that their degree can have not just in their professional lives but in ways that advance social justice.

Last spring, students in the Senior Seminar focused on the issue of homelessness. The first component of their campaign involved organizing a drive to collect clothing and toiletries. The students collected over 300 T-shirts and a multitude of personal toiletry items from corporations, peers, and family that were distributed at the St. Elizabeth’s Church Sandwich Line on campus. Students braved a very rainy day to make this event happen, and, in a very brief span of time, new relationships were formed and the donated items found new homes.

The second component of the campaign was the collection of funds to contribute to Denver’s Road Home (DRH). This program is part of Mayor Hickenlooper’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and is a “comprehensive, integrated plan that blends a ‘housing first’ solution with responsibility, self-reliance, and accountability.” One of the ways in which DRH raises funds is through red parking meters placed at various sites in downtown Denver. Rather than give money to panhandlers, donors can drop money into the designated parking meters, with the proceeds going directly to services for the homeless. About $100,000 per year is raised for the homeless through these meters.

When the students in the Senior Seminar learned that businesses and organizations can sponsor a meter at a cost of $1,000, they went to work. Working with St. Elizabeth’s Church, they raised funds for a meter, and a $1,000 check was presented to Mayor Hickenlooper at a DRH event last April on the DU campus.

Students in the Senior Seminar were overwhelmingly positive about the experience. Tim Townsend explained the greater understanding that resulted for him as a result of the project: “By involving ourselves in the lives of others, we develop a great understanding of how community, accountability, and respect are key to increasing the overall level of civility in our culture.”

For Frank McCarthy, the experience was a reminder of what is important: “As our busy lives consume us, we forget about our responsibilities toward our communities and our identity within our society. This project in itself was a community, within it we shared a common goal to better individuals who clearly needed the help.”

Jon Zucco came to see this kind of service as an obligation: “It is our moral duty as members of this society to face its problems as truth, and it is our privilege to have the capacity serve those who cannot serve themselves, therefore; it becomes our obligation.”

GRADUATE STUDENTS ROCK

We’re proud of our graduate students and what they accomplish in our program and after graduation. Current graduate students are presenting their research at conferences, thus serving as ambassadors for our program and for the kind of work that we do. Rob Jenkins and Lacey Stein presented a paper, “They are the Enemy: The Application of a Burkean Rhetorical Framing for Creating an Enemy in Environmental Narratives,” at the Western States Communication Association convention in Laramie, Wyoming, in February, 2009. Ryann Dubiel and Dave Strousberg presented “Dialectical Interpretations of Environmental Sustainability: A Communication Perspective” at the same conference. Both papers were written in Dr. Larry Erbert’s course on qualitative methods.

Other graduate students, Shannon Daut, Vanessa Delgado, and Ryann Dubiel, authored papers that were accepted as part of the panel, “A Multi-Channel Analysis of Political Discourse: Speeches, Newspapers, and Political Blogs,” for the Rocky Mountain Communication Association conference in Laramie, Wyoming. The papers were written in Dr. Barbara Walkosz’s Political Communication course.

We’re also bursting with pride over the accomplishments of Maisha Vogel, who graduated from our department with an M.A. and is now working on her Ph.D. in communication at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Maisha just won a 2008-09 Graduate Teaching Excellence Award from the Graduate School. This is a very competitive award, with only a few given each year. The committee doing the selecting observed Maisha teach on several occasions and, like us, came to the conclusion that she is a committed, superb, provocative, and fun teacher. Congratulations, Maisha!
International College at Beijing Resumes

The Communication Department once again has an international presence. The International College at Beijing (ICB), begun in 1994 as an educational partnership between China Agricultural University (CAU) and UC Denver, was among the first bilateral educational programs authorized by the Chinese government. It was closed in 2003 because of the SARS epidemic, but the program was re-started two years ago, and ICB is once again offering a carefully designed program leading to a baccalaureate degree from UC Denver with a major either in communication or economics. The courses are taught in English and cover the same subject matter as the courses taught on the Denver campus.

Our very own Deborah Burgess has been teaching in the program this past year as well as serving as the faculty coordinator. She taught at ICB in the spring of 2003 and is delighted to be back in Beijing, working with ICB students again. “I feel that I am part of this new educational global partnership. The Latin root for education is educare, which means to draw out. So I see educating students as drawing out their greatness and exposing them to infinite possibilities that they can give the world,” Deborah explains. She continues: “The UCD program is very important in this new wave of global educational partnerships. In other words, it is a “win-win” situation for the university and the Chinese students who value an American degree.”

Another faculty member who teaches the communication courses at ICB also has ties to Denver. Patrick Shaou-Whea Dodge is a doctoral student in Human Communication Studies at the University of Denver. He has taught for us for almost two years. His great enthusiasm about this program comes through when he talks about his many experiences there: “My time in China has been so inspiring and challenging at times. The students continue to amaze me with their dedication and hard work. Each day that passes brings me new insights, and I’ve made many new friendships that will last a life time. I’m just grateful to have this opportunity!”

April Snow Showers Bring Flowering Of Communication Days

Those of you who graduated from our Department in the last 10 years will remember Communication Days, an annual celebration of the Department and the communication discipline. It continues, and those of us in the Department always appreciate the chance to come together as a community to celebrate the role of communication in our lives and to advertise our Department’s presence on campus. This year’s event followed a weekend snow storm in Denver, with the skies and roads clearing just in time for the festivities.

As part of Communication Days, professors arrange for guest speakers in their classes who are academic or professional experts in the subject matter of the course. This year, our guest speakers were as provocative and stimulating as ever, speaking on topics such as “Power Interviewing,” “The F Word: Feminism Reconsidered,” “Strategic Communication in Non-Profits,” “Rhetorical Criticism of Science and Medicine,” and “The Centrality of Communication in the Field of Law.”

Another highlight of the keynote event was Dr. Garrett Albert Duncan, chair of the Department of Education and an associate professor in Education, African & African American Studies, American Culture Studies, and Urban Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. His presentation was “Communicative Structures, Research, and Social Justice: Implications for Schooling in a Prison Society.” He discussed various communicative means by which the United States creates disposable or superfluous populations—often the poor and African Americans—and then contains those populations, normalizing oppressive ways of treating them in all sorts of realms, including courtrooms and schools. When the prison mentality is expanded to inform conceptions of the people in these populations, they “can’t call the shots on their own lives,” Duncan asserted.

Communication Days is also an opportunity to recognize those who are making significant contributions to our community. At this year’s keynote celebration, Dr. Mary Coussons-Read, associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, was recognized as a Friend of the Communication Department. Denise I. Adamic, who graduated with her M.A. from the Department in 2008, was presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award, which honors an alum who is practicing her knowledge of communication in her professional life in exemplary ways. Denise is using her expertise in communication to help the Bureau of Land Management manage and protect wilderness and other federal lands throughout the United States.

The keynote speaker for this year’s event was Dr. Garrett Albert Duncan, who earned both her B.A. and M.A. degrees from our Department. Accompanied by guitarist Charlie Nilan, she sang excerpts from abolitionist, suffrage, labor, and Gilded Age versions, giving all of us a new appreciation for the song and the way it has been used throughout history as a way to empower marginalized groups. The performance ended with the audience singing along to Samuel Smith’s original version from 1831.
**Faculty Notes**

**Brenda J. Allen** was appointed Associate Dean of Planning and Initiatives in UC Denver's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the fall of 2007, so she’s not around our Department as much as we would like. We missed her even more in the spring semester of 2008, when she served as a visiting professor at the University of North Carolina—Charlotte. We’ve always known Dr. Allen was an excellent teacher, and we were delighted when she was named a Master Teacher by the Western States Communication Association, the professional organization for university professors of communication in the West. Her current research focus is a second edition of her book *Difference Matters*. Dr. Allen is also enjoying catching up with old friends and new acquaintances on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter and working out on her Wii Fit.

**Hamilton Bean** joins the Department after recently earning his Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Hamilton’s research focuses on post-9/11 U.S. intelligence reform, homeland security information sharing and preparedness, and citizen participation in national security affairs. This year he will be conducting grant-funded research for FEMA and teaching the Department’s Principles of Public Relations and Advanced Public Relations courses.

**Larry Erbert** published an article in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* this past year and continues to be the associate editor of the same journal. He is currently working on a research project on environmental sustainability with four graduate students in our Department. Dr. Erbert is also a faculty member of the new minor in Sustainability and will be teaching a course in the University Honors and Leadership program called Leadership, Communication, and Conflict. Dr. Erbert has set an ambitious goal for himself this year—to run 1200 miles. Run, Larry, run!

**Sonja Foss’s** focus this past year has been on helping graduate students complete dissertations and faculty members publish research. The publication of her book *Destination Dissertation: A Traveler’s Guide to a Done Dissertation*, generated invitations to present workshops on writing and publishing at various universities, including Marquette University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and New Mexico State University. In addition, she co-authored chapters on writing dissertations and working with advisors for the National Communication Association’s handbook for graduate students and also presented two teleconferences for the Text and Academic Authors Association, one on writing literature reviews and one on writing and editing. The fourth edition of her textbook *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, also came out this year. In her spare time, Dr. Foss is studying Greek—she finds the future tense to be baffling.

**Stephen Hartnett** spent the year completing the first volume of his two-volume history of hangings in America. Entitled *Executing Democracy: Capital Punishment & the Making of America*, the books will be published by Michigan State University Press. Dr. Hartnett continued his editorship of *Captured Words/Free Thoughts*, a magazine of writings and art made by prisoners; he also taught a writing workshop at the Denver Women’s Prison. But mostly he tried to sneak up to the mountains for hiking and skiing days and to spend laughter-filled weekends with his darling ladies, Anya (7), Melia (5), and Dr. Lisa (who is old enough not to want him talking about her age in public).

**Lisa Keränen** spent the last year as a Faculty Fellow of the Center for Humanities and the Arts at CU-Boulder, where she laid the groundwork for her second book, *Envisioning Viral Apocalypse*. Her first book, *Scientific Characters: Rhetoric, Politics, and Trust in Breast Cancer Research*, is forthcoming in the Spring from the University of Alabama. Keränen also completed grant work concerning media portrayals of terrorism for the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and continued as Director of the National Communication Association Forum (NCA-F). This year, she took what she hopes will be the first of many trips to China, enjoyed cherished moments with her partner and beautiful stepdaughters, and added some fourteeners to her list of summited and nearly-summitted peaks.

**Mike Monsour** published two essays in the *Sage Encyclopedia of Human Relationships*—one on “Cross-Sex Friendships” and the other on “Rules of Relationships.” He is collecting data for a research project on hidden agendas and second-guessing in cross-sex friendships and for another on the traits, activities, and behaviors of gender-variant and gender-normative individuals.

**Jim Stratman** served as the Department’s interim chair for the spring and summer of 2008 but still found time to serve as an expert witness in the *Tomlinson et al. v. El Paso Corporation* case. He continues to do research on how corporations use deceptive language and has spearheaded the Department’s efforts to build a new outcomes-assessment program.

**Omar Swartz** published an edited book, *Transformative Communication Studies: Culture, Hierarchy, and the Human Condition*, and an essay on Beat author Jack Kerouac’s critical use of Buddhism in the novel *The Dharma Bums*. With Katia Campbell (former post-doctoral fellow in the Department) and Christiana Pestana (former graduate student), he published *Neo-Pragmatism, Communication, and the Culture of Creative Democracy*. The second edition of Dr. Swartz’s *Persuasion as a Critical Activity* is due out in late summer. Swartz trains with his son Avi (age 10) for their black belts in Jing Ga Quan, a Wu Dang Kung Fu martial arts style.

**Barbara Walkosz** completed a 10-year program sponsored by the National Cancer Institute with the North American ski and snowboard industry that promoted sun protection to outdoor workers and guests of high-altitude ski resorts. This past year, she and her colleagues published three articles on this work in the *Journal of Communication*, the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, and *Communication Education*. She recently presented “Mediated Constructions of Ideological Spaces During the 2008 Olympics” to a symposium on US and China diplomacy at the University of Southern California, extending the work that she and Sonja Foss have done on China’s construction of narratives of a new China. She remains an avid skier always looking for snow, and last summer she surprised herself by completing two short triathlons (emphasis on completing).

**COMMUNICATION ALUMS:**

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