

# Links

A Production of Wittenberg University's  
Department of Communication

HOLLENBECK HALL

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## Letter from the Editor...



A FEW MONTHS AGO I was faced with writing my first issue of *Links*, I was filled partially with excitement, but partially with anxiety. After all, my task was to keep my eyes open

for news in the department (which is sometimes difficult for those unaccustomed to seeking details about departmental tidbits) and the lines of communication open between myself and the alumni (which is sometime difficult for those with no established alumni relationships).

Little did I know, however, how easy it would be to do both of these tasks. Departmental news, from colloquiums to staff additions, happens—it's a reality of time and change.

But as for alumni relations—what a wonderful experience. The Communication alumni must be the most personable Wittenberg graduates as they, in my humble production experience, have been not only helpful, but truly enthusiastic about keeping in touch with the department as well as each other. I hope this newsletter reflects their enthusiasm as well as mine, and I hope they will continue their gracious support.

Warm regards,

Kari Phelan '08

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## New Faces in Communication

BOOKSHELVES LINED WITH COMMUNICATION texts, green plants adorning the window sill, and hidden corners housing departmental props mark the new office of Visiting Professor Amanda Karel's Wittenberg home.

Karel, an All-But-Dissertation Ph.D. candidate from Ohio State University, replaced the vacancy left by Dr. Jerry Jordan in the fall. Originally from Portage, MI, Karel attended Eastern Michigan University for undergraduate degrees in communication and history and a master's degree in communication.

Karel is no stranger to teaching. At Eastern Michigan she taught a variety of courses, including Public Speaking, Intro. to Persuasion, Advertising and Society, an upper level Persuasion Theory, Research Methods, Research Methods for Industry, and Media and Society. Her specialty, however, is in interpersonal and family research, which has led her to teach three communication courses at Witt: COMM 270s—Interpersonal Communication, COMM 322—Interpersonal Conflict, and COMM 300—Research Methods.

Karel heard about the opportunity to teach at Wittenberg through her advisor at Ohio State, who had been in contact with OSU alumnus Dr. Stephne Broz.



*Photo: New Communication Professor Amanda Karel in her office*

"I wasn't prepared for how sharp everyone is as students. [At Eastern Michigan] I had gotten used to arguments over side points rather than theoretical elements. It's made me really be on top of my game. I really enjoy it. Everyone's been so welcoming and supportive, but the students are just phenomenal...doing interesting research projects and quick to think about the larger social picture, which is excellent."

Witt alumni "are very lucky to come from such a unique program that allows them to explore different angles of communication," Karel said. "It's very clear they got an excellent education."



"I applied and came over and fell in love with the campus on site," Karel explained, smiling. "Everyone's so friendly and excited about their teaching. It's a good fit."

The faculty are not the only people Karel is excited about at Wittenberg.

Karel likes to spend time with her family, garden, shop, and read. She also enjoys watching movies and TV, especially shows on her TiVo, which she jokingly claims will "be the death of me."

—Kari Phelan

# The Wilderness Challenge

AS HE SITS COMFORTABLY IN AN OVERSIZED chair neatly tucked away in Hollenbeck's hallway nooks, it seems nearly impossible that this clean-shaven young man wearing the typical jeans and t-shirt uniform of a college student could just have finished a 175 consecutive day hike.



*Photo: Gallatin at the edge of McKafee's Knob in Virginia. With 360 views, Gallatin says it's the most picturesque point on the trail*

And yet with only a backpack, the clothes on his back, and nearly six months and 2,174.6 miles ahead of him, Andy Gallatin '05 braved the ultimate rustic challenge—hiking the Appalachian Trail. From April 1 to September 22, 2006, Gallatin, along with 3000-4000 other hopefuls, hiked from Georgia to Maine, only to be one of 300 or 400 to finish.

After working at Citigroup for a short time after graduation, Gallatin felt suffocated by the structure and schedules of corporate America. He also realized he “didn't want to grow up right away,” as he recalled. So, he returned to an inspiration that came from his

freshman year English 101 project for Professor Michael McClelland—a research project that he did on hiking.

The idea led him to the Appalachian Trail, to be one of only hundreds a year to complete the long trek on foot across 14 states.

The typical day on the trail for Gallatin included waking up at daybreak with the nourishment of a Pop Tart, packing up the “mobile home on [his] back,” and starting the day's 15-20 mile hike around 9 a.m. Of course all the walking was broken up by short breaks for snacks or water taken directly from streams along the way. Some days even included the occasional hitch-hike into a small town for

more necessities. Once evening fell, picking a place to set up camp and dinner-cooking commenced. Next day, repeat.

Gallatin felt like he was “doing an ethnography out there” of all the different cultures and people that he saw and met while on the trail. “In the South everybody’s real nice. Then you can see the farther you get north life speeds up. But once you get into Maine it gets slower again. People are more secluded and keep more to themselves.” Gallatin also quickly learned that “religion’s a big thing. You can’t talk about that or politics” with many of the people he met.

While he was alone most of the time, there were opportunities to meet up with other people at shelters throughout the trail that act as gathering points. “You could be in North Carolina and meet someone there and then see them again in Vermont. It’s like a long lost friend.”

But with the isolation comes a lot of thinking time. Originally traveling the trail to figure out what he wanted to do with his life, Gallatin said being alone so much made him thinking about “everything from [his] first grade girlfriend to anything—regrets.”

Some of his favorite memories from the trail include hitchhiking. “Sometimes [the trail] will go right through small towns, and when you need to do laundry or get a beer or something, you have to hitchhike into town. That was my favorite

“People stared at you with this big beard, think you’re homeless. It’s like hey, I’m educated! I have a Wittenberg degree!”



*Photo: New friends*

part. It’s like gambling—you never know who’s going to pick you up. I actually had a guy with leather pants and heels pick me up once. It was pretty scary.”

But despite the characters that picked him up during his hikes into town, Gallatin learned not to judge people because of



*Photo: Katahdin, the highest Mountain in Maine and the end of a long trip*

the way they often stared at him.

“People stared at you with this big beard, think you’re homeless. It’s like hey, I’m educated! I have a Wittenberg degree! Although, he did note that “nothing I ever learned in Research Methods I ever used at all.”

One of the other important lessons Gallatin learned while on the trail is thankfulness, as he recalls: “whenever I think [life is] so bad, I think about how it rained 28 days straight and everything I owned was wet.”

Because of the “six month blackout” from current events, Gallatin noted that it was a little difficult coming back to reality. However, he’s “always been one to handle things well.” As for figuring out what to do with his life, Gallatin finds that he is “more confused when [I got] done than when [I] started.” But he is looking into eventually tour guiding or leading outdoor trips.

—Kari Phelan

## Graduate Reflection...

**A**fter a second place title at the 2006 NCAA Division III Championship, raw athletic talent and the rowdy cheers of the 3000 home court fans were no the only factors that fueled Witt's basketball success. As '06 alumni communication majors Dan Russ and Phil Steffes say, communication between players, both on and off the court, holds the team together.

Communicating begins outside of practice by forming friendships and becoming comfortable with each other, said Russ. Once a comfort level is established, then players can start to learn others' tendencies. Then at practice, added Steffes, many of those tendencies are translated to the court.

"Verbal communication is very important, especially defensively," Steffes said. "You have to talk a lot," to "hold people the shot clock violations," for instance.

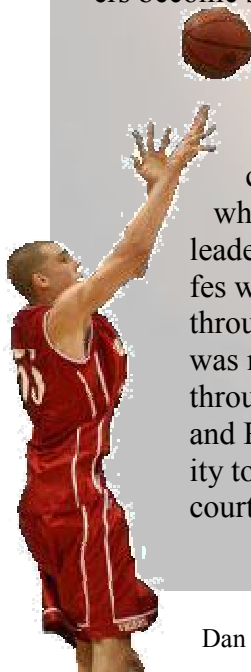
Talking does not necessarily come in words, however. Russ said eventually players become so "fluid" in their playing tendencies that simple noises can signal when a player is open for a pass or shot.

A strong understanding of communication on the court is what made both Russ and Steffes leaders on the court. Whereas Steffes was more of a vocal leader through encouragement, Russ said he was more of a nonverbal leader through actions on the court. Steffes and Russ attribute much of their ability to communicate effectively on the court to some of the concepts they

learned in their communication classes. Russ said Conflict Management, with its emphasis in critical thinking, was a good class that helped him understand how to control nerves and not make irrational decisions.

Steffes also noted that the theory of groupthink, discussed in COMM 200: Introduction to Communication, is a big part of basketball. When the team rose to the number one ranked team in the division, Steffes said they started thinking "we're so good" so much that they stopped caring and became too comfortable. But the Class of 2006 players tried to break that mentality, he said, and tried to "get them out of being satisfied" so the team could move forward.

—Kari Phelan



Dan Russ



Phil Steffes

# Wittenberg Sports Stars...Where are they now?



Photo: Russ and teammates in Leeuwarden

During the 1990s age of Chicago Bulls basketball domination, many of us grew up wanting to “be like Mike.” For most, “being like Mike” ends after the fateful cut by the Varsity high school team. But for some athletes, college opportunities can develop the skills necessary for a chance at playing professionally. Such is the case with 2006 graduate Dan Russ, the basketball prodigy that not only helped lead the Witt team to the Division III NCAA Finals, but also went on to play professionally in Holland.

After working for some time with an agent in Los Angeles, soon after graduation Russ signed a contract with a team called Woon!Aris. The team, which is composed of seven Americans and five Dutch players, is currently 1-4, but as Russ says, “we do have a talented team... and I think we are just getting used to playing with each other.”



A typical day for Russ includes practicing twice a day, eating, sleeping, and getting to know his new home, Leeuwarden, which is about an hour and a half north of Amsterdam. Certainly Leeuwarden is quite a change from Russ’ hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. Another drastic change for Russ also includes getting used to Dutch, which he admits is a “pretty tough language.”

While Russ is thrilled to be playing basketball and getting “paid for what [he] love[s] to do,” Russ ultimately may want to pursue a career in sports broadcasting.

Fantasy football, little league, NASCAR, NCAA, the Masters, the Olympics, three variations of ESPN 24-hour sports channels. Sports encompass a vast (and arguably the biggest) realm of American lifestyle, entertainment culture, and personal passion. Yet, with sports so prevalent in our lives it seems strange that more people don’t attempt to pursue careers in the field. But some Communication alumni are breaking that mold to follow career dreams that stem directly from their passion for sports.

While some may think that graduate school is just an extension of Research Methods, 2006 graduate Emily Hiscar is actually using her grad school experience at Ithaca College in New York to pursue an MS in Sports Management and Media. Aside from taking classes like Sports Law, Sports and Society, and (yes) Research Methods, Hiscar is also a grad assistant for Ithaca’s women’s lacrosse team and eventually hopes to pursue a career in marketing or media relations for a Division I college or a major league sports team.

What best illustrates Hiscar’s passion for sports is the award she received from the NCAA—a \$6000 scholarship—for a female scholar in a sports-related field. Hiscar was one of only 13 to receive the national award. When applying Hiscar was able to demonstrate that as a successful two-sport athlete (soccer and lacrosse), not only was she good at her sports, but she also had a “well-rounded attitude and passion for sports.”

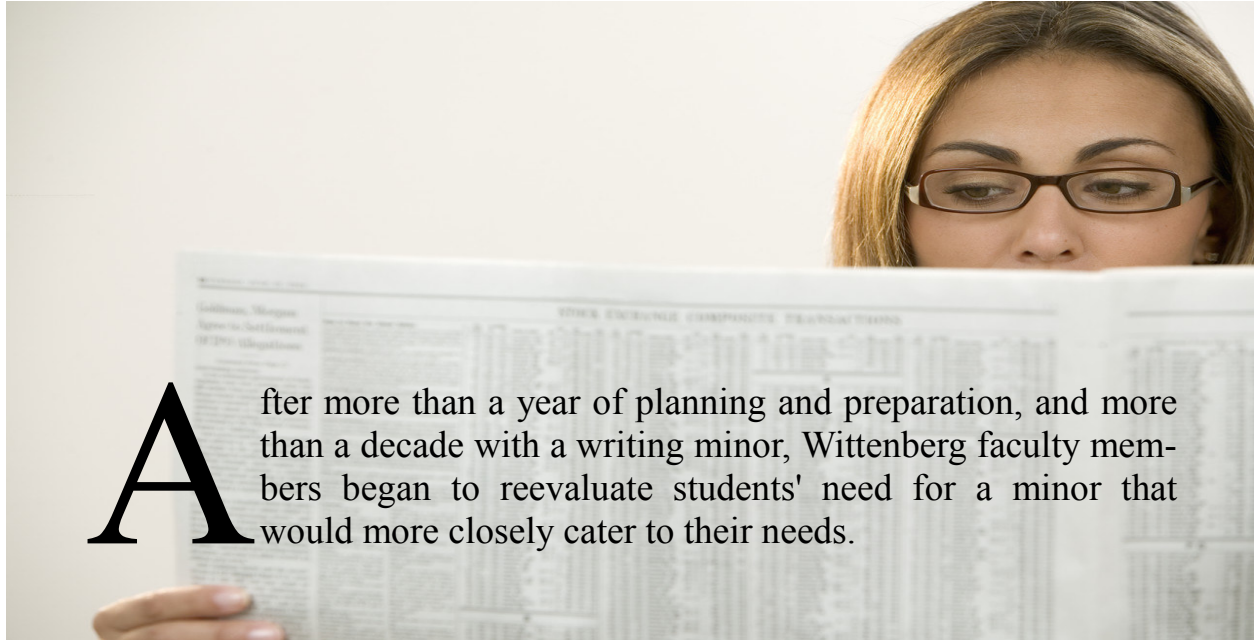


Photo: Hiscar at Taughannock Falls in Ulysses, NY

More importantly, however, Hiscar feels passionate about women and sports. “It’s something I care about a lot,” she said. “Sports has been so influential in my life and my successes and I hope other women find that as well. I think it’s really important to enforce Title IX, just a better balance of athletics as a whole. Title IX has been the middle of this battle between men and women, but both male and female sports should find [Title IX] a positive thing. Athletic departments need to be aware of including women and seeing the benefit of having strong women’s sports.”

—Kari Phelan

## Finally! A Journalism Minor at Wittenberg



**A**fter more than a year of planning and preparation, and more than a decade with a writing minor, Wittenberg faculty members began to reevaluate students' need for a minor that would more closely cater to their needs.

With interest in the field of journalism growing everyday, Wittenberg's departments of English and communication have collaborated to form a journalism minor. Associate professors of English D'Arcy Fallon and Michael McClelland, professor of English and department chair Robin Inboden and Dr. Matthew Smith, professor of communication, came together to combine their different areas of expertise to create a journalism program that would provide a thorough and diverse foundation of the field.

Smith, whose role was to contribute communication courses to the minor's formation, as well as plan the inaugural colloquium for the program in September, credits Fallon and McClelland with spearheading the proposal and Inboden with overseeing the entire operation.

Even during its first semester, the journalism minor gained popularity among students from a wide range of disciplines.

"We've had about a dozen students declare so far," Fallon said, adding that more students show interest everyday.

Forming a course load that would embody the breadth of knowledge needed to perform in the journalism profession did not prove to be too challenging, as many of the

required courses were already staples within the curriculum.

"Lots of pieces were already in place," Fallon said. "Classes such as Beginning Journalism, Advanced Journalism, and Media Literacy were already being offered."

The infusion of the English and communication departments almost seemed natural when working on bringing a formalized study of journalism to the forefront.

Composed of 20 semester hours, the journalism minor will provide the specialization students need who are planning careers in the demanding field. Core courses will include Introduction to Journalism, Advanced News or Feature Writing, and Media Literacy. The additional eight required hours allow students to further their writing skills through additional journalism-centered English courses, a photography course, Media Law, or an internship with the *Torch*.

Although many schools have incorporated journalistic studies into a major, Wittenberg faculty felt that a minor supplemental to a different major would best suit students' interests for the time being.

"We're absolutely thrilled about [the minor]," Fallon said, a sentiment that can be felt by both faculty and students.

—Erica Strauss



## An Undergraduate Debut, An Extreme Honor



Photo: from left, Josh Cohick, Abby Hurt, Melissa Crosby, Katie Karsnak, and Ashley Petersen at their OCA panel

**W**hen 6:30 a.m. graces the clocks of most people on a Saturday, the last thing they feel like doing is waking up. But by 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 7, 2006, five wide-eyed communication scholars and one communication professor armed with coffee, paper presentations, and a mini-van, traveled wayward to Perrysburg, Ohio, for the 70th Annual Ohio Communication Association Conference. The conference, which allows scholars from big name Ohio schools to talk about their research and rub elbows with the brightest in their fields, was quite significant for these undergraduates since they were among the only few there.

Josh Cohick, Abby Hurt, Melissa Crosby, Katie Karsnak, and Ashley Petersen—all class of 2007—were chosen out of numerous graduate student and faculty submissions to present, an honor that signifies an outstanding accomplishment not only for these undergraduates but for Wittenberg as well. Not only was Wittenberg the only institution honored with its own specific undergraduate panel within the conference, but undergraduates are typically not presenters even within other association-organized panels.

Their papers, which, according to Dr. Smith, “grew out of essays written in last spring’s section of COMM 301 Critical Methods: Television Criticism are not only interesting but very intelligent.” Of course, only in communi-

cation studies can papers on female representation in *Family Guy* or a values analysis of *Grey’s Anatomy* really be taken seriously.

And yet not only did insightful analyses grow out of these shows, but an entire realm of communication scholars came to hear what Wittenberg students had to say about them.

The conference was not only a success for these students. Laura Russell ‘04 received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Dr. Broz was elected Journal Manager, and Dr. Smith was named Vice President Elect of OCA.

“It’s a great opportunity that people shouldn’t shy away from, even outside of the Comm. department,” Hurt said. “Wittenberg students are smarter than they think,” she added.

—Kari Phelan



Photo: Dr. Smith and Laura Russell after receiving the grad student award

# Japan and the Golden Beaches of Honolulu



*Photo: Dr. Broz and Japan's language professors in Hawaii*

WHEN YOU STEP INTO A CLASS TAUGHT BY Stephne Broz, you immediately notice how her thirst for knowledge rubs off on her students. This affinity for enriching her mind and the minds of others led her to apply for a selective summer program that is breeding a new curiosity among Wittenberg students.

"Instead of saying why apply, I said why not," Broz said of what guided her decision to apply for the Freeman Institute for Infusing Japan Studies into the Undergraduate Curriculum grant. Though Japan Studies weren't necessarily on the radar for Broz, her love for intercultural communication fueled the fire to not only apply, but become one of only 20 people in the entire country that were selected for the prestigious program.

"I've always been interested in other cultures," she said. "I never thought specifically about Japan, but I saw the announcement and decided to apply. I even started learning Japanese on my own before the conference."

Held May 21-June 9, 2006, at Tokai University in Honolulu, Hawaii, The Freeman Institute provided three weeks of intensive training to scholars with little or no background in Japan Studies, but who are interested in implementing the study into their courses. Conference participants also had the opportunity to enjoy Hawaii's beautiful scenery and attractions during the conference.

With top scholars in the field presenting a breadth of information about Japan's literature, history, politics, music, and arts, the daily lectures and workshops proved to be both fun and informative.

"We had the opportunity to watch a Taiko drum exhibition and participate in a Japanese tea ceremony," Broz said.

Immediately after her studies in Hawaii, Wittenberg's Freeman Grant of the East Asian Studies Department paid for Broz to go to Tokyo where she continued her studies. As a result of these training and cultural experiences, students will soon have the opportunity to participate in an abroad experience that will integrate Broz's love for culture and communication.

"Forming an abroad program has been the biggest outcome of the conference," Broz said. The abroad program will take place in 2008. "It will be Japan-specific version of my intercultural communication course, and will be held in Tokyo."

Terumi Imai, visiting professor of East Asian Studies and native of Tokyo, will be accompanying program participants and acting as a guide through their travels in Japan. Though Wittenberg is rich in its study abroad opportunities, this is a new angle that is continuing to take a lot of preparation.

"We basically started from scratch," Broz said. "We've never had a program like that at Wittenberg that takes place in Tokyo."

After such a thought-provoking and successful time at the conference, Broz hopes to pass along the announcement of next year's conference to her colleagues and encourage their participation in an activity that would not only open their minds to new teaching possibilities, but present new avenues of learning for Wittenberg students.

—Erica Strauss



*Photo: Golden Pavillion in Japan*

## *Alumni Notes*

**Todd Dillon '03**

Account Manager for Rogers Townsend in St. Louis, Missouri

**Jill Hobelman '03**

Graduate Student at Webster University, specializing in Special Education and Severally Developmentally Disabled. Also works for a Special School District in an autism room in St. Louis, Missouri

**Katy Bodey '04**

A graduate student at UNC Chapel Hill will in 2007 be working on revising the Instructor's Resource Manual for the 8th edition of "Gendered Lives"

**Tiffany Creamer '04**

Account Manager, Midwest Region, for Brightpoint, NA, in Indianapolis, Indiana

**Kristen Herpel '04**

Product Specialist, Tauck at Sea, for Tauck World Discovery in Norwalk, Connecticut

**Nancy Johnston '04**

Volunteer Coordinator,

Senior Companion Program, for Catholic Social Services (Americorps) in Columbus, Ohio

**Nina Kuhar '04**

Promotions Coordinator for Clear Channel in Akron/Canton, Ohio

**Erin Pence '04**

Associated Press named her 2005 Best Photographer in Division III, and also named her September, 2006 photo "Photo of the Month." It was also published in Brazil.

**Aubrey Anderson '05**

Employed at Oberlin College's Athletic Department

**Stephanie Beery '05**

Married Robert Herbert June 24, 2006

**Merinda Thirakornratch '05**

Just completed a master's thesis and recently began a doctoral program at the University of Bath in England

**Lara Bachelder '06**

Account Manager, Sales, for

Cox Radio in Dayton, Ohio

**Ashley Corry '06**

Graduate student at Antioch College and Employed by Colliers Turley Martin Tucker

**Alecia Dimar '06**

Graduate student at Depaul University, studying PR and Advertising

**Sarah Gearhart '06**

Assistant Editor for *STACK* Magazine in Cleveland, Ohio

**Shari Jayawardhana '06**

Medical Representative for Glaxo Smith Kline in Sri Lanka

**Brian McCoach '06**

Planning Analyst, Consumer Marketing for Hearst Corporation in New York City

**Tregg Nardecchia '06**

Employed as an assistant in an actors' talent management office in Los Angeles, California

**Lauren Wilson '06**

Technical Recruiter for Trasys in Cincinnati, Ohio



*Photos, from left: OCA conference panel, Dan Russ in Holland, Hollenbeck Hall, Andy Gallatin's view of a pond in Maine, OCA conference panel*

Have news to share? Email it to [s08.kphelan@wittenberg.edu](mailto:s08.kphelan@wittenberg.edu)

