Hi Colleagues,

As you know, the School of Communication is unique in its inclusiveness. We provide instruction across Media, Public Relations, and Strategic & Organizational Communication, as well as General Education Speech. President Scarborough has recognized potential in our distinctiveness in his plan for a new and strategic direction for the university, particularly with his bullet point: Create a Center of Communication and New Media and grow enrollments.

Discussion has focused on defining the terms of this statement. At the College faculty meeting, the president told us that a Center can be a corridor. While the concept of a Center is shifting as it moves forward, two aspects seem stable: It is an interdisciplinary endeavor with Communication at its hub.

In the digital age, New Media is becoming synonymous with Media, adopting characteristics of its historical, albeit lower case, use, which was to describe emerging media. In other words, joining newspapers and magazines, new media helped shape 20th-Century American mass culture with their moving pictures, disembodied voices and a small screen that captured both sound and images and fit into the living room. New Media today signify the shift from the mass media to individualized and interactive mediated communication.

Communication. Has a term that’s more ubiquitous than Media become invisible even to us? The School’s transition to a new curriculum provides an excellent opportunity to help determine a key strategy for the University through our ability to define not only Media but Communication.

The School of Communication is well positioned to define a new model of Communication and Media in the University’s move toward claiming flagship status in the region. In this age of branding, we are presented with the challenge of representing Communication. From legacy products of newspapers, magazines and film to New Media’s mobile technology, simple props have sufficed to symbolize Media. While a media team producing a documentary is easy to represent with such props, how do we symbolize the Communication aspects of the equation, for example, the essential qualities of small group decision-making that will enable the team to successfully create its media product?

Zippy represents The University of Akron. Put Zippy in a radio booth and she also represents Media. But what props should she use, in what context should she be depicted in order to represent Communication?
I invite you to share your thoughts on branding Communication. Graduate assistant Leyna Chovan is leading the News & PR Team’s effort in asking Zippy to help us represent the School of Communication. Please share your ideas with Leyna at lkc28@zips.uakron.edu.

Thanks,
Terry
Interim Director

LIVING THROUGH THE DIRTY WAR

Sunlight may be the greatest disinfectant. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of Los Ninos Desaparecidos, or the children who were born to parents kidnapped during Argentina’s Dirty War.

In 2012, The University of Akron screened the documentary “Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo: The Search for Identity” as part of the Rethinking Race initiative. The School sponsored the premiere of this documentary, which shed light on the struggle of a group of Argentinian grandmothers seeking answers to the fates of their children and the whereabouts of their grandchildren. The School has been asked to host a screening of the updated version of this documentary later this semester.

In 1976, Isabel Peron was ousted in a coup d’etat by the right-wing military junta. The junta, led by General Jorge Videla instituted “The Process of National Reorganization,” which cracked down on dissidents and “subversives” in an attempt to quash any opposition to the ruling party. The government used kidnapping, torture and murder as tools of political repression. Often, children of the murdered or imprisoned were given to loyal supporters of the government to be “adopted” and raised as their own.

To a teenager living in Argentina, it was a very confusing time.

Dr. Maria Zanetta, department chair of the Department of Modern Languages, is from Argentina. She grew up in a middle class neighborhood in Buenos Aires, attended an all girls Catholic school, and like most of the population, was unaware of the abuses of the government. “I guess if you were already with the right or the left, you knew,” Zanetta says, “but if you were in the middle, it was not published in the paper, it was not on television, so how can you know?”

But Zanetta said that even if you were not targeted as a subversive, you were not exempt from harassment from the military or the police. “You took it as part of a military dictatorship.”

While most people were aware of the widespread corruption and the erosion of political freedoms, the subject of “Los Desaparecidos,” was still not widely known. “I don’t remember people talking about ‘the disappeared’ until the 80s,” said Zanetta.

"By 1983, when we had our first democratic elections and after 2 years of attending the School of Fine Arts at night and being in contact with classmates that had friends or family members who were missing, I already realized that the abuses were bigger than I imagined. When the
report Nunca Mas, requested from the newly elected President Raul Alfonsin, came out in 1984, it was a complete shock not just to me but to most Argentinians,” Zanetta said.

The full picture of what was happening in her country was surreal. “It was like Alice in Wonderland because it was like you had crossed to the other side,” she said.

Once Zanetta peered back through the looking glass, she came to realize why many in Argentina were either unaware or silent in the midst of government brutality. “The government took any type of excuse to erode civil liberties, and anybody who was against the government was an enemy of the state,” she said.

That is why the struggle of Las Abuelas and the reconciliation of the missing children are issues that must be recognized and something that people can relate to, according to Zanetta. “I think that the iconic image of suffering mothers is very ingrained in the collective psyche. That image of a mother looking for her missing son is very powerful and is an image anybody can identify with.”

The importance of the documentary is not limited to just the plight of Las Abuelas, according to Zanetta. “Once independent journalism disappears and the justice system disappears, so does democracy,” she said.

Zanetta will introduce the 2015 screening of the updated documentary “Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo: The Search for Identity” at 7 p.m. on April 7 in the Daum Theater.

--Bob Vaia

**ZIP SPOTLIGHT:**

**Kathleen Endres, Distinguished Professor**

**History, or rather,**

History, according to Merriam-Webster, is “a chronological record of significant events.” It is often an oral or written account of who we are and where we have been.

For one professor here in the School of Communication, it is so much more. Distinguished Professor Kathleen Endres is an antiques aficionado.

Her office is decorated with antique pictures, advertisements and devices. Seeing pieces like an antique telegraph box or an early 20th-Century Underwood typewriter is to look back at our history.

Endres, who began teaching at the University of Akron in 1987, started antiquing in high school. “I started at garage sales and worked my way up,” she said. Now, in her spare time, Endres can usually be found at area estate sales.

“Sometimes I will see something that I desperately want, and I try to get it,” said Endres. Pointing to a “Nelly Bly:
Around the World in 80 Days” board game, Endres recalls one such instance as an example of the lengths she will go to acquire a coveted piece of Americana.

“We went out in the middle of a snowstorm, because we saw that in an ad. My husband asked ‘Why are we going here?’ and I said because I want the Nelly Bly game,” Endres said with a laugh. “We were the fourth people in line, and they had already sold it to the first person,” Undaunted, she and her husband Fred offered the person double the price. Endres got the Nelly Bly.

Antiquing can also be a profitable experience. Endres recalls a trip to a Tallmadge garage sale. “Fred got a government report without a cover. It was about the Blimp,” she said. The price at the yard sale was fifty cents. They sold it online for $500.

To Endres, each antique photograph is a treasure, and each piece of memorabilia is a link to our past. While she claims the early 20th Century as her favorite period in American history, she cannot say which piece of her collection is her favorite: “Each piece has its own personality.”

--Bob Vaia

Announcements & Reminders

Beate Gersch is leading a UA team in a year-long professional development program by the Association of College & Research Libraries to pilot the institutional assessment plan described in The University of Akron’s revised general education curriculum.

She serves as the subject liaison to the School of Communication and the Modern Languages department. Her research interests include information literacy, library instruction and assessment.

Gersch is the Coordinator of Instruction Services and Undergraduate Outreach Librarian at Bierce Library. She holds a Ph.D. in Media Studies from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oregon, an M.L.I.S. from Kent State University and an M.A. in American Studies from the Freie Universität Berlin.

• The School of Communication will sponsor a national premiere of the documentary “Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo: The Search for Identity” at 7 p.m. on April 7 in the Daum Theater. This is an updated version of the documentary that the School debuted at the University in 2012.
• Points of Pride Reminder: Let Brenda Reichert know about your former students who are working at the university, so she can add “point of prides” to our campus map.

• The Speak Off will be April 14 and the Speech Contest will be April 22 at the Quaker Square Grand Ballroom. The prizes will be: $1,000 for first place, $750 for Second, $500 for Third, $250 for Fourth, and $250 for Fifth. Those working the event will have an opportunity to win a gift card.

From the UA Digest:
Jenna Payne, a Business and Organizational Communication—Public Relations major, and Sport Management minor, will receive one of 24 William N. Wasson Student Leadership and Academic Awards in April from the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association. The award recognizes students for outstanding leadership, involvement, and contributions to collegiate recreation and academic achievement.
Payne, an Intramural Sports supervisor and official, and OASIS office assistant, is the first Student Recreation and Wellness Services student employee to receive the award.

Spring 2015 Calendar

March 2: Last day for course withdrawals
March 13: Senior Day A to Zip
March 20: Noon faculty meeting
March 20: Graduate Theses due to School Director
March 23-29: Spring Semester 2015 recess
April 1: Undergraduate graduation applications due for Summer 2015.
April 3: Graduate Comprehensive Exam
April 6: Final submission of theses to graduate school for Spring 2015 graduation
April 7: “Las Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo: The Search for Identity” 7 p.m., Daum Theater
April 18: Spring Visit Day
May 1: Noon faculty meeting
May 4-10: Final exams
May 8-10: Spring 2015 Commencement

Faculty Matters Submissions

After a presentation, faculty should submit the presenter name/s, the title of the presentation and the venue at which it was presented.
After a manuscript has been published, faculty should submit a copy of the article along with the bibliographic citation.
Corrections for the current issue along with new information intended for publication in future issues of Faculty Matters, should be emailed to Bob Vaia: rv38@zips.uakron.edu
The interim director takes full responsibility for any errors or omissions in this e-newsletter. Thank you!