Ball State’s homecoming week is always a big time and the 2012 festivities were no exception. The weekend weather was picture perfect, the Cardinal’s overtime victory over Western Michigan was thrilling, and the students’ and alumni spirits were high. And of course, there were the bed races, which rank right next to Air Jam as one of BSU’s “must attend” Homecoming traditions. This year the bed races took place on Friday, October 12th at noon. As always, officials shut down traffic on Riverside Avenue between New York and McKinley Avenues so that the approximately 1,000 BSU boisterous students attending the event could cheer for friends who competed in this wacky Homecoming ritual.

To participate in the bed races, student and/or faculty groups must register to see who can push a teammate riding on a rolling bed down the street and across the finish line. This year, the Communication Studies Department was well represented with COMM Club’s (nearly!) winning entry: “Comm.in’ At Cha,” which was operated by a number of COMM Club officers and members, including President Michael Hole, Events Chair Renee Cirone, Publicity Chair Kimberly (Kimi) Holmes, Secretary, Sarah Brown, and new member, Kayla Elliot. A big part of “Comm.in’ At Cha” Tears up the Track at BSU Bed Races!!!
JOHN BARRETT (B’04; M’07) - is Division Chief of Training, and Department Spokesperson, for the Westfield Fire Department in Westfield, IN.

BLAKEY CLEMENTS (B’06) - is the South Central Community Action Program, Inc. Head Start Director in Bloomington, IN. The mission of the Head Start program is to promote school readiness for children by enhancing their social and cognitive development. In his spare time, he raises competitive Boer Goats and Hereford Cattle and judges county fair sheep, cattle, goat, and round robin showmanship contests.

BRENDAN DURKES (B’12) - is currently a Member Service Representative for Angie’s List in Indianapolis, IN. His position involves troubleshooting for members who have difficulty with their accounts, providing other needed service to clients, along with selling, canceling, and renewing subscriptions.

CRYSTAL LANE (B’12) - is the Leadership Development Program Associate and Streamline Coordinator for Lincoln Printing, a part of Consolidated Graphics Network, in Fort Wayne, IN. She also owns her own design and photography business called Ink Bound and will be getting married to Kyle Coleman in July 2013.

If you are an alumnus of the Department of Communication Studies and would like to contribute information about yourself for a future issue of COMMentary, please contact Glen Stamp at: gstamp@bsu.edu or Beth Messner at: bmessner@bsu.edu.

Please note the year you graduated and whether you received a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree, and any information about current employment, involvement in the community, awards/honors, or other life events that you wish to share.

Editor’s Note

Alumni notes are based on information received from the Alumni Association and individual e-mails. The Department of Communication Studies apologizes for any omissions or changes that have occurred since receiving this information.

Communication and Community

By AnnaBeth Fish
Graduate Student

For many people, an education in Communication Studies doesn’t include courses focused on making a difference in the greater community. But thanks to Professors Beth Messner and Peggy Fisher, BSU students are getting new opportunities to better themselves and their communities at the same time through interdisciplinary immersive learning courses. Last semester Dr. Messner and a team of students from many majors, including Communication Studies, launched a mentoring program called “Pathways Out of Poverty,” a project that has continued into this semester. Likewise, this semester, Dr. Fisher and her students enrolled in the “Innovation Connector” immersive learning course began working to develop a mentoring program for small business owners in the local community.

For many people, poverty is something that affects many aspects of their lives. While some understand that poverty is an issue in their community, many others are unaware that poverty also exists in their neighborhoods. Another common misconception about poverty is that it is just about money. However, poverty takes a much greater toll and it impacts how people live, what kind of food they have access to, even their transportation and ability to get an education. As respected community leader Hurley Goodall pointed out to Beth Messner, one of the best ways to break the cycle of poverty is for individuals to obtain a higher education. That conversation over a cup of coffee eventually led Dr. Messner to the development of the Pathways Out of Poverty immersive learning project.

The Pathways Out of Poverty immersive learning project was designed to create a mentoring program for Muncie children living in poverty, with a focus on providing the children with information on how to get into college as well as how to be successful once they got to college. The project started in the 2012 Spring semester and continued this Fall. Each semester, the lesson plans have been tweaked to fit the needs of the children the project is serving, as well as the BSU students taking the course. Some of the program’s highlights include field trips to visit classrooms and dorms on the BSU campus. The program ends with a career fair and an awards ceremony for the children.

Although BSU’s part of this project is complete at the end of the semester, one of the overarching goals of the project has been to create a curriculum that can be replicated by other universities around the country. With the help of the Muncie based organization “Teambuilders for Quality Living,” the curriculum will be available as an online resource that can be accessed by other universities and organizations looking for ways to break the cycle of poverty in their communities.

While Dr. Messner’s classes have been working with local children, Dr. Fisher’s students have been working hard to develop a new mentoring system for local small business owners. The Innovation Connector project runs for two semesters, Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. According to second year graduate student Amy Fusco, the students enrolled in the course are spending most of this semester researching the local economy and the needs of small business owners in the Muncie area through a variety of means, including interviews.

According to Dr. Fisher and Amy, the
of the bed racing fun includes enjoying the teams’ outlandish
costumes. The COMM Club did not disappoint spectators, who
got to witness the “Comm.in’ At Cha” team decked out like
silly superheroes, wearing their team logo, colorful capes, and
“tighty-whities” over black lycra leggings.

Although, as Kimi Holmes observes, participating in the
bed race was “incredibly fun” and “exhilarating,” the team
experienced a few setbacks. First, although the women on the
team did all of the pushing while Michael rested “comfort-
ably” on the bed for the duration of the ride, because there
was a male on the team, “Comm.in’ At Cha” had to register as a
“mixed-gender” group. This meant that “Comm.in’ At Cha” was
competing against teams with as many as four men pushing
the bed. Additionally, as Renee Cirone recalls, “Our bed spun
around backwards halfway through the race so for a while
Kimi and I were running backwards and pulling the bed!” The
calamity, which Holmes characterizes as “mildly terrifying,”
failed to stop this group of COMM superheroes, however. As
COMM Club Faculty Advisor Professor Kendra Tarr remem-
ers, “even going backwards, they nearly won, and everyone
was cheering so loudly for them!” Despite the setbacks, the
experience was great. Cirone stated proudly, “[W]e didn’t let
[the backwards bed] slow us down. It’s safe to say that we
crossed the finish line laughing all the way.”

Professor Tarr noted, “This event was a great way for
COMM Club to become more visible on campus and to connect
with classmates. In fact, just walking around at the races, I ran
into lots of Communication Studies students from all kinds of
teams. It was just a terrific day!” Cirone adds, “Bed races were
a blast and I’m very happy Comm. Club decided to participate
this year. Hopefully the superheroes in Comm. Club next year
will keep ‘Comm.in At Cha’ during bed races for Homecoming
2013!”

Superstar Graduate Assistants Facilitate Political Discourse Via “Twitter™”

By Laura O’Hara
Associate Professor

The “grad bullpen” in the Letter-
man Building was hopping on Tuesday,
October 16th between 9:00 and 10:30
p.m. However, the action wasn’t caused
by a looming project deadline or stacks
do speak of grades. Rather, it came
from a dedicated group of 10 gradu-
ate assistants and their faculty mentor,
who were facilitating a live Twitter™
dialog of the second presidential debate
among the students enrolled in COMM
210, Ball State’s basic public speaking
course.

It worked like this: The debate was
broadcast on the big screen TV in the
bullpen where all the graduate assist-
tants could see and hear the action. As
the debate progressed, Dr. Kathy Den-
ker, Director of COMM 210, posed ques-
tions via Twitter™ to the hundreds of
COMM 210 students who were respond-
ing, using hash tags that cor-
responded with each student’s COMM
210 section.

Although the experience was enrich-
ing for the graduate students, keeping
up with the large number of tweets was
extremely challenging. Dr. Denker ac-
nowledged that “the flood” meant that
the graduates had to miss important
parts of the debate, which “was a big
sacrifice for some of them.” Jon Conway
recalled that each time a new question
was posed, “things got hectic. How-
ever, once the initial rush of responses
passed I was able to refocus on the
debate.” Summers reflected that, “with
so many students tweeting, it was crazy
trying to monitor everything, but we all
worked together, had fun, and it went
fairly smoothly.”

All of the questions Dr. Denker
tweeted to the COMM 210 students
related to the public speaking process,
and required students to comment on
such elements as candidates’ organiza-
tion, non-verbal messages, delivery
skills, and the credibility of their argu-
ments. As Dr. Denker noted, the experi-
BACK HOME AGAIN | continued from page 1

her Bachelor’s degree from Yeungnam University in Korea in 2005, but attended Ball State as an exchange student during her senior year. Each of them based their decision to continue at Ball State for their graduate studies on their experience as undergraduates. Young Ju indicated that she “really liked the professors in the Department of Communication Studies (as they were) approachable and supportive for student learning.” Similarly, Kyle indicated that he “was comfortable with BSU, had a great undergraduate experience, and knew many people who had gone through the program successfully.” While Young Ju moved straight though her BA, MA, and PhD programs, Kyle took one year off after his undergraduate degree and four years off between his MA and his PhD. He had the opportunity to move to California when he first graduated from Ball State; while he enjoyed the West Coast, he found the job unfulfilling and decided to come back to school. After receiving his MA degree, he had the opportunity to teach and coach Speech for a few years. Both Kyle and Young Ju, however, knew that they ultimately wanted to obtain their doctorates in Communication Studies and be teachers and researchers—albeit in very different areas of the discipline.

The choice of a doctoral program was based on their very different academic interests and shows how important “fit” is when choosing where to study. Young Ju wanted a program that was strong in Health Communication and where she could be part of a National Institute of Health Research Team—Penn State fulfilled both qualifications. Because Kyle had participated in Forensics as an undergraduate, and coached Speech while a Master’s student, he wanted a doctoral program where he could work with a Speech team as well as study Rhetoric. For him, Wayne State was a natural choice. Though their academic interests greatly differ in terms of method and area, each felt they had received a solid foundation for their doctoral education while at BSU. Young Ju noted the emphasis on “academic writing and critical thinking” as a valuable part of her MA program, while Kyle noted that he received a “well-rounded understanding of the discipline” while at BSU.

Both Kyle and Young Ju had excellent experiences in their doctoral programs, receiving the educational training they wanted. Each of them also had the opportunity to work with esteemed scholars in the discipline. Young Ju had co-advisors for her dissertation in Dr. Michael Hecht and Dr. Michelle Miller-Day as she investigated “Youth Anti-Drug Socialization Processes.” Kyle worked with Dr. Kelly Young while he examined the “Colonial Rhetoric of Fantasy Football.” Both of them successfully defended their projects at the end of the Spring 2012 semester. Even in a very tight job market, because of their experience at their respective programs and the training they received, each was able to obtain the position they desired beginning in Fall 2012. Kyle is now an Assistant Professor of Communication and the Assistant Director of Forensics in the Department of English and Communication at Marian University teaching classes in Rhetoric and Cultural Studies. Young Ju is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at IUPUI teaching classes in Health Communication and Quantitative Research Methods.

Though their journeys have differed in where they have traveled and what they have studied, both of them could not have been more pleased with their paths through Ball State, to their very different doctoral programs, and both Kyle and Young Ju are glad to be, once again, “back home in Indiana.”

TWITTER | continued from page 3

ence “gives undergraduates a chance to apply classroom concepts to an important venue and rewards them for being engaged citizens.” Similarly, Assistant Basic Course Director and second-year graduate student Morgan Summers observed, “It was fun to see students really get into it and apply what we have been teaching them in COMM 210 to the debate.” Second year graduate student Jon Conway added that “This activity is awesome. It encourages not just awareness of political issues, but also encourages critical analysis of the political events.”
The 43rd Annual “Age of Aquarius” Speech Tournament was held on the Ball State Campus on October 21-23. As a “swing tournament,” BSU hosted on Friday and Saturday, while Illinois State hosted on Sunday. For the “Speech” part of the tournament, the novices on the BSU team participated on Saturday while the entire team participated on Sunday. Part of the reason the novices participated is that the host school typically does not compete for team awards. In addition, Mary Moore, the Director of the Individual Events Team, indicated “The host school novice students usually compete at the tournament because any chance they have to participate is a benefit to their career.”

So, for the novice Speech Team students, this was a special occasion since it was the first time that they were participating in the “Age of Aquarius” Tournament, and for some, it was their first tournament overall. The novice students who competed were: Rob Fucela, Bri Kirkham, Louis Lin, Marcea McGuire, Ankit Patel, Brooklyn Schreier, and Lauren Seitz.

These students joined the Speech Team for a variety of different reasons and arrived through different routes. Lauren and Bri went to high schools without a Speech Team and wanted to compete at the college level. Conversely, Ankit was the Captain of his High School Team and wanted to continue to participate. Louis saw competing as an opportunity to both work on his English and be more comfortable in public speaking situations. Rob, however, was actually approached by his Speech Teacher -- Ashley Coker, who also happens to be the Assistant Director of Individual Events – who asked him if he would like to join the Individual Events Team.

These novices competed in many different events, though their reasoning for choosing their events varied. Both Lauren (Informative Speaking) and Rob (Persuasive Speaking) chose their events because of their interest in the topics. Ankit chose one of his events (Extemporaneous Speaking) because he had competed all 4 years in high school. For his other one, the choice was because “Impromptu is a learning experience for me.” Bri, however, indicated the influence of her teammates and coaches:

“One of my teammates suggested that I speak in Informative rather than Persuasion because I was ‘charming’ . . . (and) originally, for my second event I had tried Impromptu in coaching sessions but I was having a difficult time

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greatest challenge of this project is that since they’re starting from the ground up to create this system, there are so many options and opportunities that it can be overwhelming to make decisions about how the program is going to work. However, while this may be a great challenge, it is also an incredible opportunity for the team to be really creative. This semester’s students include a range from freshmen through second year graduate students, with many different majors, which really gives the program added flexibility and offers a range of opinions and talents to aid in the successful completion of the program.

The end goal of this project is to create a mentoring program that is self-sustaining so that the community can continue to benefit from the work of these students after the end of the course. The current plan is for the students to draft the components of the mentoring program this semester, and then begin implementing the program at the beginning of the Spring 2013 semester.

Thanks to the hard work and vision of Dr. Fisher and Dr. Messner, the students of BSU are getting new experiences and gaining first hand knowledge that is sure to help them succeed in the future while giving back to the Muncie community.
The Speech Team and the Debate Team have each been very busy during the Fall Forensics Season, traveling to 5 tournaments in late September and October.

A small group of Speech Team students traveled to Western Kentucky University on September 24, resulting in the following individual placements:

- **Andres Neylon**, 1st Place in both Impromptu and Informative Speaking
- **Kate Roesch**, 6th Place in Prose Interpretation
- **Meg Mosche**, 6th Place in Persuasive Speaking

Overall, the Speech Team took 5th Place out of 15 schools.

The Speech Team next traveled to the University of Cincinnati on October 6, resulting in the following student achievements:

- **Lauren Chapman**, 1st Place in Extemporaneous Speaking and 4th Place in Impromptu Speaking
- **Bri Kirkham**, 5th Place in Informative Speaking
- **Louis Lin**, 3rd Place in After Dinner Speaking
- **Meg Moshe**, 3rd Place in both Program Oral Interpretation and Persuasive Speaking
- **Grey Harris**, 5th Place in Extemporaneous Speaking
- **Bree Nelson**, 1st Place in Extemporaneous Speaking and 4th Place in Impromptu Speaking

As a result of their fine efforts, the Speech Team took 3rd Place out of 9 schools.

The Debate Team traveled to Anderson University on October 5-6 for a NEDA tournament, coming away with the following individual achievements:

- **Kristen Seidner** and **Alyssia Haymond**, 2nd Place Public Forum Team
- **Mark Rose** and **Lucas Blauvelt**, 3rd Place Public Forum Team
- **Elizabeth Hibbler** and **Dakota Wappes**, 3rd Place Varsity Value Team
- **Lucas Blauvelt**, 1st Place Public Forum Speaker
- **Alyssia Haymond**, 3rd Place Speaker Public Forum
- **Kristen Seidner**, 4th Place Speaker Public Forum
- **Dakota Wappes**, 4th Place Varsity Speaker

As a result of the students’ achievements, the Debate Team finished 3rd in the Team Sweepstakes.

On October 13, 3 students traveled to Northwestern University to compete, resulting in the following individual awards:

- **Andrew Neylon**, 6th Place in After Dinner Speaking and 2nd Place in Impromptu Speaking
- **Berkley Conner**, 5th Place in Dramatic Interpretation
- **Andrew Neylon** and **Huy Pham**, 8th Place in Duo Interpretation

On October 26-27, the Debate Team traveled to the University of Dayton with the following student results:

- **Alyssia Haymond** and **Kristen Seidner**, 1st Place Team Crossfire
- **Lucas Blauvelt** and **Mark Rose**, 2nd Place Team Crossfire
- **Cassie Lovitt** and **Alana Horner**, 4th Place Traditional Debate
- **Alyssia Haymond**, 1st Place, Open Speaker
- **Lucas Blauvelt**, 2nd Place, Open Speaker
- **Mark Rose**, 5th Place, Open Speaker

As a result of their achievements, the Debate Team finished 3rd in the Team Sweepstakes.
A Speech and Debate Update

On October 19-21, the 43rd Annual Age of Aquarius Tournament took place on the BSU campus. On the first and second day, BSU officially hosted a Parliamentary Debate competition on Friday and a Speech tournament on Saturday, comprised of our novice Speech Team members. On the third day, the host duties switched to Illinois State University. As the host school, the Speech Team didn't participate in team awards; for the third day, the Speech Team came in 4th out of 9 schools in attendance. The students who placed on each day are as follows:

October 19, 2012
Lucas Blauvelt and Dakota Wappes, Semifinalists in Team Debate
Lucas Blauvelt, 2nd Place, Open Speaker
Lauren Chapman, Parliamentarian
Debate Speaker Award

October 20, 2012
Rob Fucela, 1st Place in Novice Persuasive Speaking
Bri Kirkham, 1st Place in Novice Informative Speaking
Louis Lin, 4th Place in After Dinner Speaking
Ankit Patel, 5th Place in Novice Extemporaneous Speaking

October 21, 2012
Kate Roesch, 6th Place in Prose Interpretation
Meg Moshe, 3rd Place in Program Oral Interpretation
Bree Nelson, 2nd Place in Informative Speaking
Andrew Neylon, 3rd Place in Impromptu Speaking
Kate Shaffer, 1st Place in Rhetorical Criticism
Andrew Neylon and Huy Pham, 1st Place in Duo Interpretation
Kathryn Overn, 5th Place in Persuasive Speaking
Louis Lin, 3rd Place in After Dinner Speaking
Meg Moshe, 6th Place in Persuasive Speaking

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Exploring Non-Verbal Communication
Dr. Fisher’s COMM 370 class explores non-verbal communication on “Odor Identification” Day.

Submitted Photos
LEFT — Nonverbal Communication Students on “Odor Identification” Day.
RIGHT — Nonverbal Communication Students McKenzie Imbro, Rachel Fern and Jason Pinkston identifying odors.
AQUARIUS | continued from page 5

with it. I talked with one of my coaches and she suggested I try Prose Interpretation and I’ve been enjoying it so far. I really appreciate the guidance of my teammates and coaches.

Competing in the “Age of Aquarius” tournament was a remarkable experience for these competitors. Ankit indicated: “It was awesome. My teammates and coaches did a heck of a job” while Rob thought “Age of Aquarius’ was a blast. Having the coaches and team members running all around working the event and supporting us novices meant a lot. I wish I could do it for the first time all over again.” Lauren also noted the responsibility of the tournament being at BSU: “Hosting a tournament at your own school is very different from competing at another location; you feel responsible for all the competitors there and you want to leave them with a good, lasting impression of Ball State.”

The students did very well at the tournament, placing in a number of different events, and winning two events. Mary Moore spoke about their performance:

“We were excited about how well our novice students did at the ‘Age of Aquarius.’ This was the first tournament that we participated in this fall that was large enough to have novice divisions. Our incoming members have been working very hard and we are excited to see them continue to grow. Unlike other years, much of our novice class joins us without any high school experience. This is a new game for many of them and their success at our tournament was motivating to them.”

Now that “Age of Aquarius” is in the past, it is time for these competitors to look to the future. Louis wants to “be competitive, and at least win one trophy in every tournament I go to” while Lauren wants “to create a specific speaking style for myself so that I stand out from other competitors in the future.” Bri, Rob, and Ankit all have a goal of having at least one event qualify for the National Forensics Association National Tournament. Based on their sterling performance at “Age of Aquarius” and their goals for upcoming tournaments, the future indeed looks bright for the BSU Speech Team.

Faculty Halloween Costume Highlights

Submitted Photos

RIGHT — Communication Studies Instructor Ashley Coker

LEFT — Communication Studies Instructor Kendra Tarr

COMMENTARY

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