



Acting

From the Desk of the Associate Dean

Perhaps we should call this issue of the Grad Newsletter "People." While the colleagues and students featured aren't movie stars, they certainly have star quality. The range of interests, accomplishments, and adventures is astonishing.

Faculty and alums published two notable books demonstrating diversity of interests and viewpoints. Glen Cameron, Dennis Wilcox ('74), Bryan Reber (01) and Jae-Hwa Shin (03) published *Public Relations Today*, an introductory PR textbook. And *What Good is Journalism? How Reporters and Editors are Saving American's Way of Life* is a vibrant collection of essays by twelve Missouri faculty members who eloquently defend journalism's role in democracy and civil society. Strange bedfellows? Maybe, but both represent excellence in professionalism and journalism education.

As you'll see in this newsletter, our new faculty and staff members are significantly adding to the richness and diversity of our School. Welcome to Andrea, Janet, Karon, Keith, Jeanne, Liz and Dorothy. We're so glad to have the benefit of your experience and knowledge.

Students and faculty are far afield—literally. Ag Journalism students led by Professor Bill Allen were on the road across Missouri learning how to report on agricultural and environmental issues. Our new study abroad program in Brussels is set to debut in January.

We hope you enjoy reading about the adventures and accomplishments of our colleagues and students and we hope you'll let us know what you're up to these days.

New faculty and other changes greet the new academic year

By Jeremy Littau

Several new faculty and a few administrative changes can only mean that it's a new school year at the MU School of Journalism

Andrea Heiss has joined the school as an assistant professor in the magazine sequence and director of the Arts-In-Depth Program. The latter is a joint program with the College of Arts and Sciences dedicated to encouraging journalism students toward fine arts study. Heiss will teach "cultural reporting" in the magazine sequence.



Andrea Heiss

Also new to the faculty is Barbara Ifshin, who is a strategic communication assistant professor and account director for Mojo Ad, which is the School of Journalism's advertising and PR agency staffed and run by students. Ifshin spent several years in the Disney company as well as other major companies, including AT&T.

Karon Speckman also has joined the faculty and will serve a dual role for the school. She will coordinate the online masters program, which is a growing area of interest in the school



Karon Speckman

and has been capturing quality students that add to the distinctiveness of MU's program. In addition to her duties with the online program, Speckman will be coordinating the News 2100 class, which serves as one of the key introductions that undergraduates have to both the craft of news production and the news business in general. She takes over these duties from Brian Brooks, who has helped turn the class into one where the students think more about convergence journalism than ever before.

Janet Saidi, who is an assistant professor, also will serve as KBIA news director. She actually has been with KBIA since last year, when she worked on a series on American health care that gained national acclaim on PBS. Saidi has diverse experience, both as a writer and producer for radio as well as for The Los Angeles Times, San Diego Union-Tribune, and Christian Science Monitor.



Janet Saidi

Masters student Karen Mitchell also has joined the convergence faculty by appointment to a temporary position in the department. The Missourian also has an influx of new talent. Keith Claxton is the new Harte fellow in infographics. Jeanne Abbott

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Film series explores politics and religion

Hosted by MU's Center on Religion & the Professions

By Amy White

The Center on Religion & the Professions

Politics and faith are hot-button issues as the nation gears up for the 2008 presidential election. Candidates of both parties are describing their faith in debates and weighing in on topics from abortion to same-sex marriage. But religion informs culture, conflicts and political choices beyond the United States as well.

A free film series at MU aims to explore the intersection of religion and politics through films that depict a variety of scenarios, political parties and national contexts.

The series is sponsored by the MU Center on Religion & the Professions, an affiliate of the Missouri School of Journalism. The Center aims to increase awareness and knowledge of religion in professions, including journalism.

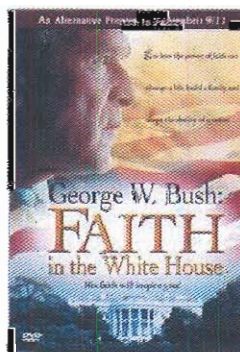
"It is essential for journalists to have a deeper understanding of religion and politics today," said Maria Len-Rios, assistant professor of strategic communication in the Journalism School. "Religion intersects with so many stories – education policy, the Supreme Court, civil rights, definitions of marriage and family, international politics – just to name a few."

If journalists don't learn to "get" religion, it does a great disservice to readers, added Len-Rios, who teaches public relations, mass media and cross-cultural journalism.

The next film in the 16-film series is "George W. Bush: Faith in the White House," a documentary about the significant role Christianity plays in the life and presidency of George W. Bush. The film will be shown at 7 p.m. Oct. 17, in Fisher Auditorium, Gannett Hall-Room 87. Admission is free.

Films in the series include the genres of documentary, drama and biography.

"Films and documentaries use creative techniques to teach, inform and engage people – often about religion," said Debra Mason, director of the Center on Religion & the Professions. "A film series about religion and politics is an entertaining yet memorable way to remind people about the roles faith and spirituality play in local, national and world political events."



The Center chose an eclectic group of films involving diverse faiths and political scenarios from around the world, said Mason, an MU professor of journalism who teaches religion reporting and researches religion and media.

The films are part of a series of events in 2007-08 hosted by the Center on the theme of "Religion & Politics." Events

included a lecture by Boston University professor Stephen Prothero on "Religious Literacy and American Politics" in September; as well as two upcoming faculty and student research forums, and a spring lecture by former Wall Street Journal reporter Paul Barrett on "American Muslims and U.S. Politics During Troubled Times."

The topics are more in play than ever, Mason said. Current examples include sectarian violence in Iraq between Sunni and Shia Muslims and ongoing conflict and negotiations between mostly Muslim Pakistan and mostly Hindu India – both nuclear powers.

In Myanmar (Burma) in recent weeks, thousands of Buddhist monks have marched in protest against the military government. Many have been beaten and arrested.

But the series does not focus exclusively on stories of religious conflict or oppression. Two films look at the relationship between President Bush and evangelical Christi-

FILM SCHEDULE

Films are at 7 p.m. at Fisher Auditorium, Gannett Hall-Room 87, Missouri School of Journalism, unless noted. Admission is free.

Oct. 17 – "George W. Bush: Faith in the White House"

Nov. 14 – "Lake of Fire" (shown at 5:15 p.m. at Ragtag Cinemacafé, 23 N. 10th St., Columbia, \$6)

Nov. 28 – "Seeing Red: A Journey Through the Moral Divide"

Dec. 12 – "Waiting For NESARA"

Jan. 23 – "My Mother India"

Jan. 30 – "With God On Our Side: George W. Bush and the Rise of the Religious Right in America"

Feb. 13 – "Amazing Grace"

Feb. 27 – "No More Tears Sister"

March 5 – "Earth"

March 19 – "Romero"

April 16 – "The War Within"

April 30 – "The Great Warming"

See film summaries and more at <http://corp.missouri.edu/events/films2007.shtml>. For more information, call 882-2770 or e-mail whiteab@missouri.edu.

Brussels Program

The Missouri School of Journalism welcomed Gareth Harding, the director of the school's new Brussels study abroad program, to Columbia this week.

Harding was in town to promote the new Brussels-based program, which will provide students the opportunity to learn about and report on issues related to the European Union and to the broader European continent.

The program will be launched this upcoming spring semester (January 2008). Graduate and advanced undergraduate students are eligible to apply for the program. The program will be offered every fall and spring semester. The total cost for the program will be \$3,750 (room and board). Students will have to pay for airfare to and from Brussels, transportation in Brussels and tuition.

The program, which will be managed by the School's International Programs Office, will be similar to the journalism school's Washington program, where students work for a media organization four days per week and attend a seminar class one day per week. "Structurally, the programs are nearly identical," said Fritz Cropp, Director of International Programs.

The purpose of the program, Harding said, is to integrate more American journalists into Brussels, a place

where there are virtually none formally represented.

"We need more American journalists in Brussels," Harding said. "As European Union powers increase, the number of American journalists in Brussels is decreasing."

Harding, who has been working as a journalist in Brussels for the past 14 years, has designed a Friday seminar that will include sessions on EU/US relations, immigration, integration, social issues, the environment and welfare, among others. Students will also be required to take French, as language understanding is a key component to effective journalism in Brussels.



Gareth Harding

Additionally, students will become immersed in European life, learning about, reporting on and experiencing culture such as: sporting matches, festivals and cooking.

For more information on the Brussels program and/or to apply, visit the International Programs Office at 76 Gannett Hall or visit the study abroad website at <http://journalism.missouri.edu/study-abroad/>. The application deadline for the spring 2008 semester is November 1, 2007.

Film series

(Continued from page 6)

anity in the United States. One film describes the role of religious believers in finding ways to address global warming. Another – shown in collaboration with Ragtag Cinemacafé – presents two sides of the abortion issue.

Films also portray how religious convictions have inspired people to create social and political change, from Islam in the life of Malcolm X to Christianity's role in William Wilberforce's quest to end the slave trade, depicted in the film, "Amazing Grace."

It will be interesting to observe how religious beliefs and rhetoric are used in the upcoming U.S. presidential campaign, Mason added, as both sides try to win "values voters" and define leadership in a complex time.

"We hope to broaden our students' and the public's understanding of the role of religion in politics," she said. "And to promote discussion of this relationship, which is vital to understanding today's world."

Amy White is outreach coordinator at the Center on Religion & the Professions

A wise guy, indeed

By Jeremy Littau

The famous inscription "Wise shall be the bearers of light" over the j-school arch between Neff Hall and Walter Williams Hall took on a whole new meaning last month.

A group of new MU undergrad students were sent on a scavenger hunt on the first Friday in September to get to know the campus, and one of the clues used the aforementioned famous phrase and gave a second clue to check the j-school. Naturally, the technically savvy ones turned to the Internet.

Talk about misinformation, as a Google search of the phrase plus the keyword "journalism" apparently first yielded the name of faculty member Kevin Wise. And so a steady stream of groups of students were trudging into the PRIME Lab looking to Wise for answers to their hunt.

"I rarely use Facebook but I happened to log on a couple days later and there were a ton of messages for me on there," Wise said.