Calendar of events

**National Theatre Live: The Habit of Art**
December 10, 7 p.m.
Josephine Louis Theater

**National Theatre Live: Hamlet**
January 14, 7 p.m.
Josephine Louis Theater

**Aimee and Jaguar**
*by Lillian Groag*
Based on the book by Erica Fischer
Directed by Joseph Hanreddy
January 31–February 9
Josephine Louis Theater

**Cabaret**
Music by John Kander
Lyrics by Fred Ebb
Book by Joe Masteroff
Based on a play by John Van Druten and stories by Christopher Isherwood
Directed by Nick Bowling
February 14–March 2
Ethel M. Barber Theater

**Danceworks 2014: Hot Buttons**
Artistic direction by Susan A. Lee
February 28–March 9
Josephine Louis Theater

**Moby Dick**
Adapted and directed by David Catlin
Based on the novel by Herman Melville
Presented in collaboration with Actors Gymnasium
April 25–May 4
Josephine Louis Theater

For more information or tickets for these and other school events, see www.communication.northwestern.edu.

In this issue

2  The future of communication and health
18  Faculty focus
22  Alumni achievements
28  Communicating gratitude

*Julia Louis-Dreyfus (C83)* stars in *Enough Said*, which premiered at this year’s Toronto International Film Festival. The film costars James Gandolfini in one of his final screen appearances. Louis-Dreyfus has had a great year. She won her fourth Emmy Award as outstanding lead actress in a comedy series for *Veep* after receiving her 14th individual Emmy nomination, surpassing Lucille Ball’s longstanding record as the most nominated comedic actress in Emmy history.
Throughout the School of Communication’s history, its faculty and alumni have made significant contributions to improving health and healthcare. Faculty researchers in the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, for instance, have advanced knowledge of hearing, language, and learning and have educated generations of doctors, nurses, speech therapists, audiologists, and healthcare administrators. Many faculty in the Departments of Communication Studies, Performance Studies, and even Theatre and Radio/Television/Film have improved our understanding of how individual health is shaped by communication and culture and how healthcare systems can function more effectively. Until recently, however, we have not made the study of global health and healthcare a school-wide priority.

In 2012 the University’s Strategic Plan prompted us to do just that. It marked out 10 critical areas in which Northwestern has the opportunity to advance knowledge dramatically and, through its research and education programs, have a significant impact on the lives of people around the world. Two of these, global health and biomedical science, are areas where we believe the School of Communication can do a great deal more. And so we set out to pull together and enhance the programs that have or could have a major global impact on health and healthcare.

We also see that School of Communication researchers have been quite effective at adding to the larger conversation on health information, health disorders and interventions, and more. But they have often achieved their greatest successes when working in large, collaborative teams that are interdisciplinary and interinstitutional. In a convergence of great thinkers with different approaches, the sum, as the saying goes, is often greater than the individual parts.

In this issue of Dialogue, we introduce you to our own convergence of great thinkers in health communication and explore how their collective efforts will shape the future of the school. We’ve also highlighted the ways our faculty members are already influencing health behavior, policy, institutions, and outcomes.

Few topics are as timely as this one. Health is a key to happy living, and finding ways to achieve and maintain health (and pay for it) is a worldwide preoccupation. We still have much to learn about the complex issues in global health, but we believe Northwestern and the School of Communication are already well situated—in fact, uniquely situated—to have a far-reaching impact on how we protect and care for ourselves, our families, and our communities for generations to come.

Barbara J. O’Keefe
Dean, School of Communication
Start a dialogue: dialogue@northwestern.edu
The future of communication and health
GLOBAL HEALTH

Our research in global health involves collaboration among business, engineering, education and social policy, anthropology and sociology, communications and journalism, and naturally medicine. Our faculty and students work together on a global scale on issues ranging from HIV in Africa to nutrition, obesity, and diabetes in the United States to collaborative ways to respond to a natural disaster.

—Northwestern University’s 2011 Strategic Plan
Developing an agenda for communication and health

In April the School of Communication invited a group of health leaders from across the country to campus to discuss the school’s new initiatives in health communication. The agenda for the two-day Lambert Family Communication Conference was to identify an agenda for research and education for a new Center for Communication and Health (see page 7). The conference—“The Science and Practice of Health Communication: Innovative Interfaces to Improve Health”—assembled experts to discuss issues and opportunities for communication and health and how Northwestern’s already substantial investments in the area could best advance the field. Three participants in the conversation sum up the conference’s discussion.

ELLEN WARTELLA (above left) is the Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor of Communication in the School of Communication’s Department of Communication Studies as well as director of the Center on Media and Human Development. She researches the effects of media on children and adolescents and the impact of food marketing in the childhood obesity crisis.

DANIEL O’KEEFE (above center) is the Owen L. Coon Professor of Argumentation and Debate in the School of Communication’s Department of Communication Studies. His research focuses on organizing and synthesizing the substantial body of work derived from persuasion studies—the effects of messages on persuasion and the distinctive problems associated with the development of dependable generalizations about persuasive message effects.

BRUCE LAMBERT (above right; no relation to the benefactors of the Lambert Family Communication Conference) is a professor in the School of Communication’s Department of Communication Studies and director of the new Center for Communication and Health. He researches health communication, drug name confusion, patient and medication safety, health literacy, health information technology, prescribing behavior, pharmacoepidemiology, pharmaceutical promotion, medical liability reform, and health outcomes associated with provider-patient communication.

WARTELLA I think this event was a tremendous achievement: two days of highly concentrated expertise from a broad range of health and healthcare organizations and backgrounds. The attendees were of such a high caliber and were so engaged and enthusiastic about the questions put before them: where they saw opportunities for improvement in healthcare and health communication, and how Northwestern could go about answering those needs.

O’KEEFE The group had a lot of ideas about ways communication skills could be leveraged to improve patient care and medical education and training—but it was all to the same end. How can communication help keep people healthy? There are issues of message development and dissemination but also of patients adhering to medical advice, being able to

(continued on page 6)
Lambert Conference attendees

Thomas Abrams (RPh, MBA), Director, Office of Prescription Drug Promotion, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration

David W. Baker (MD, MPH), Chief, Division of Medicine–General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, Michael A. Gertz Professor of Medicine, Professor in Medicine–General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics and Center for Healthcare Studies, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

David Bates (MD, MSC), Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Professor of Health Policy and Management and Codirector, Program in Clinical Effectiveness, Harvard School of Public Health; Medical Director of Clinical and Quality Analysis–Information Systems, Partners HealthCare System

Larry Boress, President and CEO, Midwest Business Group on Health

Dina L. G. Borzekowski (EdD), Associate Professor, Department of Health, Behavior, and Society, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University

David Cella (PhD), Professor and Chair, Department of Medical Social Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

William L. Galanter (MD, PhD), Medical Director, Center for Education and Research on Therapeutics and Clinical Information Systems, College of Medicine, University of Illinois at Chicago

Sheldon Kong (PhD), Executive Director, Health Economics and Outcomes Research, Novo Nordisk

Bruce Lambert (PhD), Professor, Department of Pharmacy Administration, University of Illinois at Chicago; Professor, Department of Communication Studies, and Director, Center for Communication and Health, Northwestern University

Donald M. Lloyd-Jones (MD), Senior Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research and Chair, Department of Preventive Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University; Director, Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute

Timothy B. McDonald (MD, JD), Professor, Anesthesiology and Pediatrics, College of Medicine, University of Illinois at Chicago; Chief Safety and Risk Officer for Health Affairs, University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System

David C. Mohr (PhD), Professor in Preventive Medicine, Medical Social Sciences, and Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

Barbara O’Keefe (PhD), Dean and Annenberg University Professor, School of Communication, Northwestern University

Jean Slutsky (PA, MSPH), Director, Center for Outcomes and Evidence, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, US Department of Health and Human Services

Bonnie Spring (PhD), Professor in Preventive Medicine, Psychiatry, and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

Christine Stencel, Senior Media Relations Officer, Institute of Medicine, National Academies

Richard Street (PhD), Professor of Communication, Texas A&M University; Director, Health Communication and Decision-Making Program, Houston Center for Quality of Care, Baylor College of Medicine

Ellen Wartella (PhD), Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor of Communication, Department of Communication Studies, School of Communication, Northwestern University

Michael Wolf (PhD, MPH), Associate Professor of Medicine and Learning Sciences and Associate Division Chief–Research for General Internal Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University
make decisions for themselves and their families, and being able to find information they can understand and trust, as well as problems of coordination and navigation. Some of these issues are already research topics for our faculty, but we also added a great many areas of inquiry to our research agenda.

WARTELLA They mentioned research topics like communication strategies and cognitive science in the same breath. I think that’s why the School of Communication is the right place for this kind of ambitious endeavor.

LAMBERT The education agenda they set for us was ambitious as well. They had a lot of specific ideas on how to train the professionals they saw a place for in the healthcare industry, from communication theory and methods to opportunities for actual clinical experience. The group’s experience with other educational models assured us that there are people out there who are hungry for this kind of knowledge, as well as employers who are ready for this kind of specialty—and that perhaps no other institution is better suited to build a lead program.

O’KEEFE We asked them why Northwestern should be developing this program. The attendees from other corners of Northwestern knew precisely why: Northwestern’s scale, our partnerships with other institutions, our multi-disciplinary nature, and the Northwestern network that embraces alumni after they finish their degrees.

LAMBERT In the end the attendees reaffirmed our belief that there are tremendous research and educational opportunities in the area of health communication, as well as funding opportunities that will allow us to implement this program quickly—with the first class of students expected in the fall of 2014—and, we hope, expand it into a premier research enterprise making a vital contribution to improved quality, safety, and efficiency of healthcare in this country and beyond.
New center addresses healthcare’s challenges

**BRUCE LAMBERT** likes big problems. He’s chosen possibly the biggest of them all: American healthcare. And while he’s as interested as anyone in our country’s current debates over availability and cost, what truly interests him is what happens at the point of care—where debates are moot, and where a lot of things can go wrong.

“Healthcare is unsafe, costly, and often of low quality,” said Lambert. “Healthcare is much more dangerous than most people realize, until they get older and need more interventions.”

Lambert is one of the School of Communication’s newest faculty members (see page 20), but he’s bringing a lifetime of research and results to a new area of inquiry for the school: health communication. He’s the director of the new Center for Communication and Health, a program that will begin accepting master’s-level students within the year; within a few years, the one-year residential program may lead to a doctoral program. Lambert predicts the program’s students will be a mix of communication professionals looking to enter one of today’s fastest-growing industries and healthcare professionals ready to solve some of their field’s lagging problems.


Each of those categories offers endless areas for improvement. Take the issue of patient safety, one of Lambert’s topics of interest. There are issues of compliance, of error, of confusion. Drug names that are too similar. A prescription system dependent on one person’s ability to read the chicken-scratch handwriting of another. We’ve heard the horror stories: surgeries performed on the wrong side of the body, surgical tools sewn up inside the patient.

“The science of safety has not progressed enough to keep all errors from happening,” said Lambert. “So we have to look at both the things that cause harm and also what happens after harm is caused.”

The Center for Communication and Health will support interdisciplinary, high-impact research into these and other issues, concentrating on the design, production, analysis, and evaluation of messages, interfaces, interactions, media, audiences, and networks—and on research into social influence and human-centered design. In both those areas, Lambert sees the results quickly becoming useful on the ground. “It is our goal to be the premier health communication program in the world,” said Lambert. “Healthcare is so fragmented, complex, and dysfunctional—but we think we can have a huge impact on its future.”

---

*Image description:†*
EARLIER THIS FALL a team of researchers received notice of a $2.5 million National Science Foundation grant to fund their five-year project studying how children’s media characters (like Elmo or Dora the Explorer) might help young children develop skills in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The research subjects may be small—the children in the study range in age from 18 months to six years—but the potential impact is huge. How can children’s media help promote knowledge, and eventually career choices, in these areas of vast economic opportunity and societal need?

The research team is also large, consisting of scientists at three universities across the country. They are led by Ellen Wartella, Northwestern’s Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor of Communication and director of the Center on Media and Human Development in the School of Communication’s Department of Communication Studies; principal investigator Rebekah Richert, associate professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside; and Sandra Calvert, director of the Children’s Digital Media Center and professor of psychology at Georgetown University.

“We believe that young children think of media characters they like as important social friends and that this parasocial relationship can set the stage for utilizing such characters to encourage young children’s learning about science and math education,” said Wartella. “We hope to stimulate interest in using media characters to promote STEM education in the preschool and early elementary years.”

Wartella also serves on the steering committee for Northwestern University Interdisciplinary Innovations in Developmental Education and Science (NUIIDEAS). This new University-wide initiative was designed to bring together Northwestern’s rich and diverse community of scholars who focus on early human development and its scientific, educational, health, and policy implications for lifespan trajectories. In October the group hosted a symposium on stress measurement and intervention. “It’s an interesting approach to organizing,” said Wartella, “so that researchers across the Northwestern community can find collaborators and carry on a dialogue on the issues we’re all working on.”

In addition to these efforts and her project on reproductive health issues in young cancer survivors (see page 10), Wartella has garnered worldwide attention for the research generated by her center that detailed how many hours children of varying races spend in front of visual media and how much—or how little—parents think “screen time” is a problem.

Wartella is also highly involved in the School of Communication’s new health communication initiative (see page 4). “There’s a pretty restricted view of what health communication can mean, and then there’s our view,” said Wartella. “How can care be more patient centered? How can we help develop new kinds of healthcare workers? How can technologies like monitoring systems and sensors help provide better care? At Northwestern we have people working in all of these areas.”

In addition to Wartella, many other School of Communication faculty members are in the forefront of assembling large-scale collaborative research teams that bridge disciplines and academic boundaries to address today’s large and complex research problems in health science.

CYNTHIA THOMPSON: GATHERING EXPERTS IN LANGUAGE RECOVERY

In March, Cynthia Thompson, the Ralph and Jean Sundin Professor of Communication Sciences in the School of Communication’s Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, landed a $12 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study aphasia—a devastating disorder, often linked to stroke, that robs the brain of language abilities. The grant will help fund the new Center for the Neurobiology of Language Recovery, which brings together the top aphasia researchers at Northwestern, Johns Hopkins, and Boston Universities. Thompson directs the center, which has the potential to challenge existing clinical practices for aphasia as well as promote treatment availability. “In the United States alone, more than a million people suffer from aphasia, rendering normal communication impossible,” said Thompson. “For the first time, the best researchers in the field will work together to find biomarkers that can predict language recovery.”
CHARLES LARSON: TEAMING UP TO STUDY THE VOICE AND WIELD RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SPEECH SCIENCE

Charles Larson, professor in the Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, studies the neural mechanisms controlling the voice and the larynx—voice production, voice control, and how brain disorders create communication disorders. Larson is at the helm of several large, collaborative, cross-disciplinary projects. In a study funded by the National Institutes of Health, Larson’s lab is using EEG and fMRI techniques to model brain function that is related to control of the voice. His team experimentally induces unexpected errors in subjects’ vocal production and then measures brain activity as subjects try to correct the error. Larson and his colleagues are also looking at how the brain’s processing of voice control differs in Parkinson’s disease patients, whose voices are often low and monotonous; the eventual goal is to develop improved treatments for voice control in these patients. In another project, Larson tracks brain activity in young adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. “Children with ADHD don’t have abnormal voices, but they are impulsive,” said Larson. “We’re hoping to establish a biomarker for impulsivity.” In addition to his research grant, Larson leads another large federal training grant that funds PhD students and postdoctoral fellows to apply basic research skills toward treating a variety of communication disorders.

KNOWLES HEARING CENTER: SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND MENTORSHIP

Northwestern’s Hugh Knowles Center was established to foster research, clinical training, and community service by pulling together a pool of interdisciplinary researchers who study hearing. In addition to funding faculty research, providing seed grants for pilot data, and granting scholarships to audiology graduate students, the center fosters a dialogue in the hearing research community. It hosts a seminar series and an annual fall symposium (this year’s topic: “Noise in Hearing”) and gives a prize for major contributors to the understanding of hearing, hearing disorders, or clinical approaches to audiology. “In the Knowles Center, we have people who are actively engaged in research that supports student education,” said director Beverly Wright. “We find that faculty members who are active in the lab are better teachers in the classroom, and of course the students themselves become engaged in research in the process.” (See page 28 for more information about the Knowles family and its establishment of the Knowles Center.)
Preparing for life after a childhood health crisis

A health concern for young people has inspired a longstanding collaboration between faculty members in the School of Communication and the Feinberg School of Medicine: hormonal and fertility issues for young cancer survivors. Years ago, Theresa Woodruff, now the director of the Women’s Health Research Institute and the Thomas J. Watkins Memorial Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, sought the assistance of Barbara J. O’Keefe, dean of the School of Communication. The problem? Childhood cancer survivors were glad to be alive but far too young to understand the long-term effects on their chances of conceiving later in life. Their families didn’t understand the implications, either. It was not an issue anyone knew anything about.

“Barb really helped us position the problem,” said Woodruff. “And now we have the OncoFertility Consortium, and it’s identified as a medical specialty.”

An ongoing problem, however, is that few people understand the long road young cancer patients face. Two collaborations between Woodruff and School of Communication faculty members continue to develop solutions.

HELPING FAMILIES TALK
Kathleen Galvin, professor of communication studies, was called on to develop what she calls a “decision aid” for families whose children face cancer—and possible loss of fertility—at a young age. “Boys, if they’re old enough, can have their sperm banked,” said Galvin, “but a fertility-saving procedure for girls requires surgery. So a parent has to make a decision very quickly about whether or not to opt for that, which would put off the cancer treatment.”

Author of the definitive Family Communication: Cohesion and Change (soon to appear in its ninth edition), Galvin is an expert on modern families—or what she has termed the “discourse-dependent family.” These include stepfamilies, transracial adoptive families, and families with gay or lesbian parents. Her signature research has expanded over the years to include how family members in general communicate about health.

For the fertility-saving study, she spoke with parents of girls who had been treated for pediatric cancer some 16 years prior and hadn’t had the option of surgery. “We asked them how they would’ve reacted,” she said. “What would they want to know? What would help them make their decision?” Galvin and her colleagues took these answers and created a clear and comprehensive guide for parents navigating these new and choppy waters.

Over several years, Feinberg School of Medicine faculty member Theresa Woodruff has relied on a number of School of Communication collaborators, including Dean Barbara O’Keefe, to frame complex issues in oncofertility for better communication with patients and their families.
ILLUSTRATING THE PROBLEM

It’s not just parents who need to understand the situation. So Woodruff called on Ellen Wartella, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication Studies, and Eric Patrick, an associate professor in the Department of Radio/Television/Film. The two are developing a series of short videos to teach children as young as six or seven years old about their own bodies and reproductive health.

No small order, Woodruff admitted. “People put their hands up and say, ‘Just don’t talk to me about that,’” she said. “Because it’s tied to sexuality, they somehow think it’s dirty.”

There’s nothing dirty about the excitable Olivia the Ovary (above left), star of the prototype video developed by Patrick and his students—including Andrea Schmitz (C14), who designed Olivia and her flippy fallopian-tube ponytail. Patrick’s seven years as an animator for the children’s show Blue’s Clues has come in handy, making Olivia (and her twin, Olga) childlike and not, well, gross.

“What we’re working on is, can it be fun as well as useful?” said Patrick. “Quite frankly, can it not be creepy? We’re talking to girls at the age where there’s been very little research on kids’ conceptualization of their bodies, and they’re also children, so we have to think about the principles that help direct their attention and help with retention of information. It’s an interesting set of problems.”

“We want people to understand reproductive health more fully so that they can make good decisions,” said Wartella. “Our hope is that if we develop good communication strategies, we’ll help a much wider audience than the kids and their families. We’ll help far more people understand reproductive health as part of their overall health.”

School of Communication faculty members Ellen Wartella and Eric Patrick (seated) discuss their joint project in reproductive health communication for the OncoFertility Consortium with lecturer Alexis Lauricella (center). The three faculty members’ students in two undergraduate radio/television/film and communication studies courses have also contributed to the project.

Kathleen Galvin talks with doctoral student Esther Liu.
Making healthy choices about philanthropy

Health is wealth, as the expression goes, and for those whose health is in short supply, life can get very expensive. The same applies to health-related nonprofits. Whether it’s a biggie like the American Cancer Society or a lesser-known local like the Austin Foundation for Eating Disorders, there is always a need for what Blanche DuBois famously called “the kindness of strangers.”

Communication studies associate professor and National Science Foundation CAREER Award winner Michelle Shumate explores nonprofits and their relationships with other companies and organizations. While the scope of her research extends to nonprofits of all kinds, she frequently focuses on health.

In a recent study Shumate made some fascinating findings about which nonprofits receive the most philanthropic donations from Fortune 500 companies. Health nonprofits scored high. “Women make about 80 percent of the purchasing decisions in American families,” said Shumate, “so you see issues that affect women—and children, in particular—being given a lot of oomph from these particular companies. St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is a great example.”

But if your nonprofit deals with health on the margins, you’re a lot less likely to attract corporate support. “Elderly issues? Things like dementia? They’re not well represented at all,” said Shumate. “The nonprofits I talk to are well acquainted with this story. They’ll joke, ‘Yeah, it’s really easy if your mission is cute puppies or cute kids.’”

As director of the Network for Nonprofit and Social Impact, Shumate ultimately hopes to take her work to a policy level—in part, to help nonprofits hovering on the margins. “There’s a lot of talk today about leaving philanthropy to the private sector,” she explained, “but if we continue to scale government away from these less recognized nonprofit issues, nobody will be there to step up.”

Checking up on Dr. Google

Like it or not, we’re living in an age when “the majority of American adults have used the Internet to get health information,” said Eszter Hargittai, the April McClain-Delaney and John Delaney Research Professor of Communication Studies. This would have been unthinkable 25 years ago, but now that we find ourselves in this brave new world, it’s important to learn more about how these self-guided searches are conducted. After all, said Hargittai, “when it comes to health-related questions, getting the wrong answers could have some pretty serious consequences.”

Director of the School of Communication’s Web Use Project, Hargittai is one of the nation’s leading experts on social media research. In one of her recent studies, funded by Google, she and her colleagues asked 76 adults to sit down at a computer and answer nine different complex health questions: You suddenly notice a red spot on your eyeball. You have no idea what it is. How do you figure it out, and what is it? Or, your pregnant friend decides to have a glass of wine. Should this be a concern? Why or why not?

The study’s findings were intriguing. Many participants acknowledged their reliance on user-generated content—sites like Wikipedia and Yahoo Answers—with only a portion of them questioning the sites’ credibility. “Very few participants considered the date of the content,” said Hargittai. “In health matters, you don’t necessarily want to be looking at something too old.”

The study supported earlier work suggesting that there is still a lot of room for improvement when it comes to honing web-use skills. Hargittai continues to be driven by this challenge. “One of the things my work has shown is that people from more privileged backgrounds tend to have an online advantage,” she said. “While changing people’s socioeconomic status is a very complex matter, building their Internet skills could go a long way toward leveling the playing field. And that’s my overall goal.”
Illuminating autism

Autism, a complex neurological disorder that seems to be on the rise (with a tenfold increase in reported cases over the past 40 years), has baffled sufferers and scientists alike. But for all its growing visibility, the disorder—which affects behavior as well as social and communication skills—remains mysterious and hard to understand. “We know there’s a strong genetic contribution,” said Molly Losh, the Jane and Michael Hoffman Associate Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders, “and there are environmental risks that probably interact with the genes. But the disorder itself, the clinical presentation of it, is so complex. There’s a saying: If you’ve met one child with autism, you’ve met one child with autism.”

Undaunted by the disorder’s complicated nature, Losh and her colleagues in the Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Lab have set out to find its causes. They are currently conducting two sets of studies—one focusing on language and social functioning, the other on genetic factors, particularly a gene linked to a condition called Fragile X.

Ultimately Losh hopes her findings will help unlock what causes the disorder—a discovery that could lead to better interventions for the people who have it.

Building a better hearing test

A staggering number of older adults are turning deaf ears (if you’ll pardon the expression) on their own hearing health. Almost 80 percent of people in their 70s and 80s have significant hearing loss, but only a quarter of them end up getting help. And those who do usually wait seven to ten years after the onset of the problem—“a time when a lot of damage has already happened,” said Sumitrajit Dhar (above, right), a Hugh Knowles fellow and professor of communication sciences and disorders.

Those aren’t rosy numbers. And today’s hearing tests haven’t done much to help improve them. “The first was developed in the 1940s,” Dhar explained, “and it’s still the mainstay of hearing evaluation.” The test only measures the lower part of a person’s hearing range—where the early signs of hearing loss aren’t even detectable.

To help put this right, Dhar and associate professor of communication sciences and disorders Jonathan Siegel (above, left) have teamed up to build a better hearing test. The two are developing a system capable of measuring the entire 20,000-hertz human hearing range—a feat that, until now, has been elusive. (“Jon’s been trying to solve this for a long time,” said Dhar, “and I think we’re very close.”) The research team is focusing on practical fixes, such as measuring patients’ otoacoustic emissions to help detect the earliest hearing changes. Together they’ve created a clinical tool that is sure to blow today’s hearing tests out of the water. Already used by clinicians at the School of Communication’s Audiology Clinic and at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the machine will become more widely available in the next year or two. For the hearing impaired—and the healthcare industry at large—that’s welcome music to the ears. ♦
Treating swallowing disorder

Jerilyn Logemann, the Ralph and Jean Sundin Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders, has a knack for doing things in a big way. As a speech pathologist she’s treated more than 20,000 patients. As one of the nation’s leading swallowing-disorder specialists, she’s looked at the role that many diseases—Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, head and neck cancer, stroke—play in dysphagia (swallowing difficulty). And she’s conducted almost 200 studies as the director of the Swallow Physiology Lab.

Logemann also pioneered the modified barium swallow test, a less stressful alternative to an x-ray study that until the mid-1970s was the only available option for patients with swallowing problems. And while the new test had quaint roots (“I took a sugar cookie recipe and put in some barium powder in place of the flour,” she said), it’s now the standard diagnostic tool in many clinical environments.

Today Logemann is studying aging and how it affects the swallowing function of people 50 and above. In her clinical work she treats patients whose neck and throat cancer often requires severe treatment. Logemann says these patients need to exercise their throat and tongue muscles before radiation because it can damage the tissue, making swallowing difficult. In extreme cases, 10 years after surgery some patients find themselves unable to eat. “But when we stress the importance of the exercise program,” she said, “we find that half or fewer of our patients say they’re willing to participate.” This has inspired her current focus: “How do we provide patients with the best counseling and information to help them make the best possible healthcare decisions?”

Mobilizing help for depression

A therapist who never leaves your side? Thanks to the work of associate professor of communication studies Darren Gergle (left) and his colleague David Mohr, the notion isn’t nearly as far-fetched as it might sound. Gergle and Mohr, director of the Center for Behavioral Intervention Technologies at the Feinberg School of Medicine, have teamed up to create a phone app that measures the mood of people who are clinically depressed.

Mobilyze! uses data from sensors already embedded in your phone—such as GPS, Bluetooth, WiFi, and accelerometers—to help identify your location, activity level, and social context. Suddenly your smartphone isn’t just smart. It’s sensitive, too—attuned enough to monitor your mood if you’re struggling with depression and even to send you a text message encouraging you to get up, out, and into the company of a friend.

Gergle and his colleagues in the School of Communication’s CollabLab first developed the technology as a general way to measure behavior through sensor data from smartphones and laptops. “Then I talked to David Mohr,” he said, “about how this system could be used to provide a richer understanding of behavior and activity as they relate to people with severe depression.”

The app is still being tested, but a small preliminary trial has shown that after two months, patients who initially scored high on a test for major depression no longer met the criteria. Journalists have taken to calling it a pocket-sized therapist. Diminutive though it may be, however, its potential is outsized. “The technology is flexible,” Gergle explained, “so it could be used in similar ways to support things like exercise and nutrition.”
Singing the praises of musical training

A lot of male rock stars, when asked why they took up music, say they did it to get girls. But it turns out that learning how to play an instrument—and practicing it consistently—got them much more than that. In groundbreaking research over the past decade, Nina Kraus and her colleagues in the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory have found that people who play a musical instrument have brains that are better wired for sound. This advantage affects language skills, such as listening to speech in noise and reading, and can even offset communication difficulties that often accompany aging. These findings are sure to influence the study of dyslexia, autism, aging, and other conditions, and many in the medical world have already taken notice.

In two inspiring new educational initiatives, music educators in Chicago’s public schools and the LA-based nonprofit Harmony Project are providing kids with free instruments and lessons while Kraus and her team study their brains. What’s different about these tandem studies is not just the test subjects (most of whom have no prior musical training) but also the setting. “It’s ‘real world,’ school-based instruction that represents a new direction for research on the impact of musical experience on the nervous system,” she said.

The Hugh Knowles Chair in audiology and professor of communication sciences, neurobiology, physiology, and otolaryngology, Kraus recently discussed her research in a webinar for the Federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development. And while much of the work is still ongoing, she’s certain the data will yield further insights on the effects of musical experience on brain development. “Our early findings,” she said, “have been extremely encouraging.”

Studying persuasion and health decisions

How do you convince a person to stop smoking? Wear sunscreen? Vaccinate a child against hepatitis B? If these questions had easy answers, the world would be a much better place. Daniel O’Keefe, the Owen L. Coon Professor of Argumentation and Debate, studies persuasion: “I’m interested in how and why persuasive messages have the effects they do.” And though he looks at appeals of all sorts, his research often focuses on health-related messages.

O’Keefe recently zeroed in on attempts to promote vaccination. He set out to learn which sorts of appeals were more convincing: gain-framed (vaccinating yourself against the human papillomavirus will greatly reduce your risk of getting HPV-related cervical cancer) or loss-framed (4,000 US women die of cervical cancer each year; you could be one of them if you don’t vaccinate yourself against the human papillomavirus).

It’s widely perceived that gain-framed appeals are more persuasive in promoting disease-prevention behavior, said O’Keefe. “But what we found was surprising. There was no difference at all. The messages were equally effective. Our results did contain a hint, though, that parents might be more persuaded to vaccinate their children by loss-framed appeals.” Subtle though these distinctions may be, they have huge implications for message makers, Mad Men, and the research community at large—which in the world of health communication could be a matter of life and death.
Approaching hearing-device development from every angle

If you don’t wear one yourself, chances are you know someone who does. Hearing aids and cochlear implants (surgically implanted devices playfully referred to as bionic ears) are a lifeline for millions of people across the planet. At the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, three lab directors are hard at work on research to make these devices even better.

Professor Pamela Souza (below) runs the School of Communication’s Hearing Aid Laboratory. While she’s very well versed in the mechanics of hearing aids themselves, that’s not where she’s focusing her attention these days. In a break from traditional research approaches, she is working with a cognitive psychologist to measure not just how individual listeners hear but also how they think. “When you are trying to listen to someone in a noisy restaurant,” she said, “that’s a cognitive process. And the better we can understand all aspects of a person’s hearing ability—cognition, auditory responses—the better we can customize hearing-aid technology to suit them. So that’s really what we’re after right now. And what we’re finding is that it’s not just about the ear. It’s about the brain, too.”

Assistant professor Jason Tait Sanchez—see photo with student Suzie Labelle (C16) on page 3—has set his sights on the brain, as well. But the brains he’s looking at are much, much smaller: they belong to chicken embryos. A quick chat with the director of the Central Auditory Physiology Lab will quickly convince you that “birdbrain” is a misnomer. “Birds are precocious when it comes to hearing,” he said. “Their sensitivity to sound is really quite good.” By studying the embryos’ neural activity (which closely mirrors our own), Sanchez hopes to unlock mysteries about how the auditory brainstem develops—findings that could

Rethinking social media for seniors

You can think of Anne Marie Piper as a cross between an inventor and the daughter you’d really want as you head into your golden years. The assistant professor of communication studies creates computer-based games and applications to help people with communication-related disabilities, and while her work benefits people of all ages, lately she’s spent much of her time thinking about the Greatest Generation.

Take Ethel, a 105-year-old great-great-grandmother who has become increasingly withdrawn. To help improve Ethel’s interaction with her nearby family and care staff, Piper designed an audio-enhanced interactive photo album. By using custom-developed Tap & Play software on a digital pen, Ethel was able to press the stylus
ultimately affect how hearing devices are designed. “Once we better understand how the auditory system codes sounds,” he said, “we can establish a template for engineering hearing devices that would mimic the speed and precision of what happens biologically.”

Assistant professor Tina Grieco-Calub (left) studies very young children, particularly those who use cochlear implants. As the director of the Hearing and Language Lab, Grieco-Calub has studied how cochlear implants influence language use and the potential benefits of using two implants versus one. She is now looking further back to the period before children receive their implants. “I’ve been working on a project with other Northwestern researchers and the Cochlear Implant Program at Lurie Children’s Hospital,” she said. “We’re looking at pre-implant factors that may relate to later language outcomes and influence how well children will do once they receive an implant.” Like Souza’s work, the focus at this point is more on the person than the prescription. “Being able to identify children’s cognitive and language skills at the time of implantation and the type of intervention that will best promote language acquisition in an individual child,” said Grieco-Calub, “that’s the holy grail.”

Making social media more present

“People are getting so many emails these days,” said assistant professor of communication studies Jeremy Birnholtz, “that a common way of coping is just to ignore them.” This leads to all kinds of problems—such as the one that inspired Birnholtz’s current research. In 2004 he was living in Geneva, Switzerland, studying the massive collaborations among scientists at the CERN particle physics laboratory. “There would be three thousand coauthors working on the same paper,” he said, and often the email between them would get lost down the proverbial rabbit hole. “Many of them told me they found it necessary to get on a plane and fly thousands of miles to Geneva, just to get answers to questions they had. This got me thinking about the idea of being there, how it commands attention in a way that online interaction can’t.”

Today Birnholtz runs the Social Media Lab and looks at how these same benefits of face-to-face interaction can be incorporated or mimicked in digital communication. In one of his studies he interviewed seniors with chronic pain. “Many of them talked about days when they had things scheduled but just didn’t feel up to doing them,” said Birnholtz. “They wanted to be able to convey this to family and caregivers but also maintain their sense of independence.”

So Birnholtz and his colleagues developed Open Messenger, a software program that allows users in remote locations to keep tabs on each other using eye-tracking technology. The lab is exploring new phone and tablet interfaces that let a caller check a person’s availability before placing a call. “We want to give seniors face-saving ways of communicating,” said Birnholtz, “easy ways for them to say, ‘Not now, please. I’m OK, but this is not the best time for me to talk.’”

Tip against paper photos and suddenly hear her family members’ voices describing each scene. For a centenarian who’d never used a computer or a cellphone, the technology was a revelation. “Her family members told me that having the album helped spark conversation and memories from the past,” said Piper.

Before coming to Northwestern, Piper was a user-experience researcher at Microsoft and Leapfrog, and she’s brought a lot of what she learned there to her work as director of the Inclusive Technology Lab. Her latest endeavor? Engaging older adults in social media. “Many of them willfully abstain from things like Facebook and Twitter for intuitive reasons, like privacy,” said Piper. “But the older adults we study really want to connect with the younger members of their family. So our goal is to hone in on today’s interfaces but rethink them in a way that makes them comfortable and relevant for people in their 80s or 90s.”
Faculty focus

Pablo Boczkowski (PhD, Cornell University) and doctoral student Eugenia Mitchelstein have co-authored The News Gap: When the Information Preferences of the Media and the Public Diverge (MIT Press).

Thomas Bradshaw (MFA, Brooklyn College) was commissioned to write a new work for Blues for Smoke, an interdisciplinary exhibition at New York’s Whitney Museum last spring that explored the enduring legacy of the blues in contemporary music and performance.

Laura Schellhardt (MFA, Brown University), a lecturer in the Department of Theatre and a Northwestern alumna, received a top Northwestern teaching honor this spring. Schellhardt (above, second from right) was named a Charles Deering McCormick University Distinguished Lecturer in a ceremony with (from left) Northwestern President Morton Schapiro, Charles Deering McCormick family representative Kathleen T. McCormick, and Provost Daniel Linzer. The award recognizes individual faculty members who have "consistently demonstrated outstanding performance in classroom teaching or who have developed significant innovations that have also influenced the methods and teaching effectiveness of other faculty."

Clayton Brown (MFA, Northwestern University) and Monica Long Ross directed The Believers, a documentary about the discovery of cold fusion. The film was screened at Northwestern’s Block Museum in May.

Scott Curtis (PhD, University of Iowa) gave the lecture “Rough and Smooth: The Rhetoric of Animated Images in Scientific and Educational Film” at Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, Germany, this spring. He was this year’s Fulbright-Innsbruck Visiting Professor in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Innsbruck.

Sumitrajit Dhar (PhD, Purdue University), Jonathan Siegel (PhD, Washington University), and their colleague David Klodd of the University of Illinois at Chicago received an American Hearing Research Foundation grant to study the effects of their new test to discern very-early-stage hearing loss in patients exposed to certain chemotherapy drugs (see page 13).

Happy Camp, a debut screen-play by Zayd Dohrn (MFA, New York University), was sold to Bedlam Productions this spring. The noir thriller will be directed by Peter Webber (Girl with a Pearl Earring, Hannibal Rising). Dohrn’s play Muckrakers premiered at Massachusetts’s Barrington Stage in June.

Paul Edwards (PhD, University of Texas at Austin) won a 2013 non-Equity Jeff Award for his adaptation of Peyton Place, which ran at Chicago’s City Lit Theater earlier this year.

Henry Godinez (MFA, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee) was named a 2013 University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Alumni Fellow. The award is a lifelong designation recognizing outstanding alumni. Godinez is a resident artistic associate at Chicago’s Goodman Theatre, where he directs the Latino Theatre Festival.

Belma Hadziselimovic (MS, Columbia University) and Aaron Wilkins (BA, Elmhurst College) presented “Outcome Measures for an Intensive Aphasia Treatment Program” at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association convention in Chicago. Wilkins and Hadziselimovic supervise clinical services at the School of Communication’s Speech, Language, and Learning Clinic.

Kyle Henry (MFA, University of Texas at Austin) edited the PBS documentary Before You Know It, which screened at New York City’s Lincoln Center in June as part of its “Art of the Real” film series.

Nina Kraus (PhD, Northwestern University) has joined forces with the Harmony Project, an award-winning research-based nonprofit that targets at-risk youth in underserved areas of Los Angeles. Kraus and her colleagues in the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory are doing longitudinal studies on 80 of the program’s school-aged children. They are also conducting a sister study that measures the neurobiological development of 150 adolescents in Chicago public schools. Earlier this year Kraus received the Gene Cohen Research Award in Creativity and Aging from the American Gerontological Society.

Jerilyn Logemann (PhD, Northwestern University) received a Developmental Research Grant Award from the National Institutes of Health to study the progression of feeding and swallowing disorders in Alzheimer’s disease. She was also awarded an honorary fellowship by London’s Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists for her distinguished work in speech and language therapy.
Molly Losh (PhD, University of California, Berkeley) received a 2012 Doctoral Student Mentoring Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Professor emeritus John McKnight (BS, Northwestern University) was awarded an honorary doctorate by Canada’s University of Waterloo. He was recognized for his research and outreach related to marginalized populations, improving social service delivery, and combating racism and other forms of discrimination. McKnight is a founder of Northwestern’s Institute for Policy Research.

Eric Patrick (MFA, California Institute of the Arts) was awarded a School of Communication Innovations Grant and a University Research Grants Committee grant.

Gayla Poling (PhD, Ohio State University) received a Clinical Research Grant from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation.

Janice Radway (PhD, Michigan State University) gave the Evanston Northwestern Humanities Lecture at the city’s public library in April. Her lecture, “Debating the Meaning of Girlhood in the 1990s: How Girls Talked Back and What It Means Now for Their Futures,” explored the phenomenon of self-published girl “zines” and the state of girlhood at the very end of the 20th century.

Ramón Rivera-Servera (PhD, University of Texas at Austin) won the 2013 Lambda Literary Award in the category of LGBT studies for Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics. The book also won the Latin American Studies Association’s Latino/a Studies Book Award, the 2013 Outstanding Publication Award from the Congress on Research in Dance, and the Special Citation for the 2012 de la Bueno Torre Prize in Dance Studies from the Society of Dance History Scholars.

An article by Aaron Shaw (PhD, University of California, Berkeley) and Yochal Benkler that was published last year in American Behavioral Scientist won the 2013 Best Published Article Award from the Information Technology and Politics Section of the American Political Science Association.

Mary Zimmerman (C82, GC85, GC94), the Jaharis Family Professor of Performance Studies, adapted the new stage musical The Jungle Book from the Disney animated film and the stories of Rudyard Kipling for Chicago’s Goodman Theatre this summer. The production featured lush costumes by Mara Blumenfeld (C92), sets by Daniel Ostling (GC96), and new musical arrangements by music director Doug Peck (WCA03). The cast included Anjali Bhimani (C96) and (far left) Govind Kuwmar (C08).

David Tolchinsky (MFA, University of Southern California) was awarded a School of Communication Innovations Grant. His “Where’s the Rest of Me?,” a reflective humor piece about Spalding Gray, was published in Paraphilia magazine.

Mimi White (PhD, University of Iowa) wrote the article “Gender Territories: House Hunting on American Real Estate TV,” published in Television and New Media, and the chapter “Barry Chappell’s Fine Art Showcase: Apparitional TV, Aesthetic Value, and the Art Market” for the book After the Break: Television Theory Today (Amsterdam University Press, 2013).

Professor emerita Laura Wilber (PhD, Northwestern University) received a Distinguished Achievement Award from the American Academy of Audiology.
New faculty

TENURED FACULTY

Bruce Lambert is a professor in the Department of Communication Studies and director of Northwestern’s Center for Communication and Health. His research focuses on health communication, drug name confusion, patient and medication safety, health literacy, health information technology, prescribing behavior, pharmacoepidemiology, pharmaceutical promotion, medical liability reform, and health outcomes associated with provider-patient communication. He is currently the principal investigator for a five-year center grant, funded by the US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, to study techniques for optimizing medication safety. A faculty member at the University of Illinois at Chicago for 22 years, Lambert is a founding member of the UIC Institute for Patient Safety Excellence. He is also president of BLL Consulting and Pharm I.R., firms that specialize in problems involving health, communication, and technology. Lambert received his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

Megan Roberts is an assistant professor in the Roxelyn and Richard Pepper Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Her work focuses on family-centered early communication interventions for young children with language delays. This clinically based line of research examines variations of parent-implemented communication interventions tailored specifically for different populations of children with language delays. Her research has been funded by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders and the Institute of Education Sciences. Roberts earned her PhD from Vanderbilt University.

Clinic, lab, and research center cohost aphasia discussion

In July the Northwestern University Speech, Language, and Learning (SLL) Clinic, the Aphasia and Neurolinguistics Research Laboratory, and the Center for the Neurobiology of Language Recovery—all housed in the School of Communication—hosted a screening of the documentary After Words. The film explores the lives of people with aphasia, a communication disorder that commonly results from stroke or other neurologic events.

Held at the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, the event welcomed people living with aphasia and their family members as well as students, practicing speech-language pathologists, and interested community members. After the screening a panel discussion shared research, clinical strategies, and real-life experiences of people living with aphasia. The panel included faculty members Cynthia Thompson, the Ralph and Jean Sundin Professor of Communication Sciences and a leading aphasia researcher, and Belma Hadziselimovic, clinician and lecturer in communication sciences and disorders, along with an SLL Clinic client living with aphasia. Moderator for the panel was Steve Bynum, a senior producer at Chicago public radio station WBEZ.

“An important component of the clinic’s mission is to serve individuals with communication and related disorders through treatment, education, and translational research,” said Thompson. “This collaboration between the SLL Clinic and the Aphasia and Neurolinguistics Research Laboratory is an outstanding example of translating that mission into practice.”
Promotion and Tenure

Sumitrajit Dhar, promoted to full professor of communication sciences and disorders

Eszter Hargittai, promoted to full professor of communication studies

Viorica Marian, promoted to full professor of communication sciences and disorders

Pamela Souza, promoted to full professor of communication sciences and disorders

Ana Kuzmanic, promoted to associate professor of theatre

Jacob Smith, promoted to associate professor of radio/television/film

Molly Losh, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, granted tenure

Book on organizational change wins prize

Communication studies professor Paul Leonardi has received the National Communication Association’s Diamond Anniversary Book Award. Established in 1994, the award recognizes the most outstanding scholarly book published by an NCA member during the previous two years. Leonardi was honored for *Car Crashes without Cars: Lessons about Simulation Technology and Organizational Change from Automotive Design* (MIT Press, 2012), which examines why workplace innovation is often stifled by inside-the-box thinking.

Leonardi also teaches in Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management and is the Pentair–D. Eugene and Bonnie L. Nugent Associate Professor in Manufacturing in the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science.

Alumni achievements

Class notes are selected from alumni submissions to Northwestern magazine at www.northwestern.edu/magazine, stories of alumni featured in the media as identified by the University’s Office of Alumni Relations and Development, and updates sent to Dialogue by mail or by email at dialogue@northwestern.edu.

1960s

Sherry Lansing (C66, H95) received the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award at the 27th annual Israel Film Festival in Beverly Hills in May.

1970s

Jeff Ravitz (C72) designed the lighting for the PBS special Il Volo, filmed before a live audience at the Jackie Gleason Theatre in Miami. He also lit the fourth annual All Star Comedy Jam, hosted by Shaquille O’Neal.

Screenwriter and filmmaker Jeff Baron (C74), whose credits include The Tracey Ullman Show and Sisters, has written his first book, I Represent Sean Rosen, published in March by HarperCollins.

The Wild Roses, a novel by Robert Eisberg (C74), was published by Third Road Press this summer.

Hudson Fair (C76, GC79), a Grammy Award–winning music engineer and producer, was named Tube and Tape Supremo by Fluffy Package Records and Tapes Foundation in February. His company, Atelier HudSonic, is headquartered in Chicago.

Bill Melamed (C79) was promoted to chief marketing and development officer for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago in July.

Eric Fingerhut (C81) was appointed president and CEO of Hillel, the international foundation for campus Jewish life.

Marg Helgenberger (C82) stars in the new CBS drama Intelligence. Helgenberger returns to the network after a 12-season run on CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.

Kat Falls (GC83) is the author of Inhuman, a young adult dystopian-romance novel issued by Scholastic Press in September.

Screenwriter John Logan (C83), a three-time Oscar nominee, is developing Penny Dreadful, an eight-episode drama for Showtime that will weave iconic monsters like Dracula and Frankenstein into its storyline. As the project’s writer and executive producer, he will collaborate with Academy Award winner Sam Mendes and producer Pippa Harris.

1980s

Eric Fingerhut (C81) was appointed president and CEO of Hillel, the international foundation for campus Jewish life.

Marg Helgenberger (C82) stars in the new CBS drama Intelligence. Helgenberger returns to the network after a 12-season run on CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.

Katie Falls (GC83) is the author of Inhuman, a young adult dystopian-romance novel issued by Scholastic Press in September.

Screenwriter John Logan (C83), a three-time Oscar nominee, is developing Penny Dreadful, an eight-episode drama for Showtime that will weave iconic monsters like Dracula and Frankenstein into its storyline. As the project’s writer and executive producer, he will collaborate with Academy Award winner Sam Mendes and producer Pippa Harris.

1990s

Carolyn Barth (C90) was promoted to director of media relations at the American College of Prosthodontists in April.

Cowboy Christmas, a feature-length documentary by H. D. Motyl (GC90) about professional rodeo cowboys in the western United States, received its world premiere at Spain’s Madrid International Film Festival in July.

Andrew Ross (C90), formerly the chief operating officer for Illinois governor Pat Quinn, was appointed managing director of media relations at Northwestern.

Alumni Jed Feder (C11) and Matt Deitchman (C12), performing as Late for Lunch, were part of this spring’s Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriters Project, a weeklong songwriting workshop hosted by the School of Communication’s American Music Theatre Project. This year’s master teachers included Tony-nominated composer-lyricist Craig Carnelia, three-time Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Lari White, and award-winning songwriter Jon Lind, senior vice president of artists and repertoire at Hollywood Records.

Paul McComas (GC84) premiered his indie film Time Trek at Milwaukee’s Shank Hall in August as part of a fundraiser for the Humane Society. His comedic horror novella Fit for a Frankenstein (Walkabout Publishing) was issued in March.

Debby Belt (C85, GJ87), a real estate agent based in Newton, Massachusetts, is now affiliated with Hammond Residential Real Estate.

Annie Dye (C87) is the head of the English department at Saint George’s School in Bogotá, Colombia.

Daniel G. Guyette (C87) became the dean of Western Michigan University’s College of Fine Arts in July.

Stephanie Rogers (C89) is the vocalist and leader of the Stephanie Rogers Band and the owner of Hip Chick Records.

Alumni Jed Feder (C11) and Matt Deitchman (C12), performing as Late for Lunch, were part of this spring’s Johnny Mercer Foundation Songwriters Project, a weeklong songwriting workshop hosted by the School of Communication’s American Music Theatre Project. This year’s master teachers included Tony-nominated composer-lyricist Craig Carnelia, three-time Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Lari White, and award-winning songwriter Jon Lind, senior vice president of artists and repertoire at Hollywood Records.
director at Clayco, a Chicago-based design-build and construction firm.

**Traci Paige Johnson (C91),** cocreator of the children’s television show *Blue’s Clues,* founded the interactive children’s media company Yummico, where she oversees creative vision and curriculum.

**Lisa J. Matyas (C92, L99)** became an associate in the corporate group at Chicago’s Goodsmith Gregg & Unruh earlier this year.

**David Chalian (C95)** became the supervising producer for the CNN television series *Crossfire* in July.

**Jason Akel (C96),** cofounder of the San Francisco–based restaurant group New Food Ventures, is launching Rival, an interactive food event where restaurant guests are the honorary judges in a chef-versus-chef cook-off. More than 100 executive chefs have signed on to participate.

**Tom Arvetis (C96)** is the founder and producing managing director for Adventure Stage Chicago, which produces theatre for children. He directed ASC’s world-premiere production of *Augusta and Noble,* a play about a young Latina girl in Chicago that was based on stories collected from the Northwestern University Settlement House in the city’s West Town neighborhood.

**Seth Meyers (C96),** head writer for *Saturday Night Live,* will become the host of NBC’s *Late Night* in February.

**Kim Heiting (C98),** the chief marketing and communications director at NW Natural, was appointed to the board of directors at LifeWorks Northwest, a nonprofit mental health organization.

**Robert Kreamer (C99),** the president and CEO of Clean Power Finance, is vice chair of the Solar Energy Industries Association and serves on the executive committee of its board of directors.

**Tamara Roberts (GC03, GC09),** an assistant professor of ethnomusicology and performance studies at the University of California, Berkeley, coedited *Yellow Power, Yellow Soul: The Radical Art of Fred Ho,* published in May by the University of Illinois Press.

**Erika Schmidt (C05)** won the *Chicago Tribune’s* 2013 Nelson Algren Award for Short Fiction for her “Story about a Family.”

---

**The 2013 School of Communication Writers Panel**, hosted by the Office of External Programs, Internships, and Career Services, featured Hollywood TV veterans (from left) David Levine (C97), vice president of original programming at HBO, whose current projects include *Game of Thrones;* Eric Charmelo (WCAS95), who with Nicole Snyder (C97) is coexecutive producer of the CW series *Supernatural;* Melanie Marnich, who has written for *Big Love;* and Angela Robinson, coexecutive producer for *True Blood.*
Maggie Wartik (C05), a communications and community manager with the Chicago Tribune Media Group, was included in Editor & Publisher’s 2013 “25 under 35,” a list of young news-industry professionals recognized for commitment to their craft.

Megan Sieberg (C07), the culinary arts program manager at Chicago’s Center on Halsted, was one of this year’s Windy City Times “30 under 30,” which honors the best in LGBTQIA activism, business, culture, and nonprofit work.

The Opportunist, a short film written and directed by David Lassiter (C08) and produced by Alberto Roldan (C10) and Cate Smierciak (C08), was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in May. It was one of only 10 films selected—and the only American submission—for the festival’s Short Film Corner competition. Also contributing to the film were director of photography Mike Fuchs (C08), editor Chris Amos (C10), gaffer Travis LaBella (C11), colorist Tyler Roth (C08), best boy electric Stephen Ling (C12), and featured actress Katy Yoder (C09).

The Burden of Not Having a Tail, a play by Carrie Barrett (GC09), was premiered by the Sideshow Theatre Company at Chicago Dramatists this summer.

Julia Beck (C09) was named director of academic programs at Chicago’s Snow City Arts in May.

Lighting designer Sarah Hughey (C09) won the Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award at this year’s Merritt Awards in Chicago. She was also nominated for a Joseph Jefferson Award.

In August the first annual Gary Garrison Playwriting Festival in Beaumont, Texas, featured writing by Ashley Richard (C09).

Fat, a play by Ethan Kass (C12), was given a staged reading by Chicago’s American Theater Company in February.

The play 12th and Clairmount by Jenni Lamb (GC12) was given a staged reading by Houston’s Wordsmyth Theatre Company in April.

Forked, a film by Dan Ochwat (GC12), was screened at the Boston International Film Festival in April.

You, Me, and Tuno, a play by Milta Ortiz (GC12), was given a staged reading at Chicago’s Black Box Theatre in May.

Samira Anderson (GC13) received the 2012 Doctoral Scholarship Research Award from the Illinois Academy of Audiology.

Costume designer Stephanie Cluggish (GC13) won the Northwestern University Prize at this year’s Merritt Awards in Chicago.

Victor Fanucchi (GC13) is a full-time lecturer in the department of screen arts and cultures at the University of Michigan, where he teaches screenwriting and production courses.

Alexandra Parbery-Clark (GC13) received the Midwinter Meeting Audiology Award from the Association for Research in Otolaryngology earlier this year.

Alvaro Saar Rios (GC10) is a tenure-track theatre faculty member at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

Andy Miara (GC11), the head writer for the Onion News Network, is cowriting the sitcom pilot Schlub Life for Comedy Central.
Health takes the stage

Portraying life—not death—with disease

In the affecting play *Still Alice* by Christine Mary Dunford (C87, GC09), as produced by Chicago's Lookingglass Theatre Company, the protagonist—as played by Eva Barr (C88)—talks to herself. But “herself” was played by actress Mariann Mayberry. The public face–private face interaction and the homey set’s unexpected movements were just two approaches used by Dunford (left) and her Lookingglass collaborators to turn Lisa Genova’s Alzheimer’s disease novel into a fraught night at the theatre.

Director of the new School of Theatre and Music at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Dunford worked with Lookingglass and the Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center (CNADC) in Northwestern’s Feinberg School of Medicine to cofound the Memory Ensemble, an improvisational theatre experience for people with memory loss. Why improv? Because there are no lines to remember. Dunford recalled hearing a lot about people “dying from” Alzheimer’s. “But that didn't match my experience working with these people in the early stages of the disease and those who work with them,” she said. “It was ‘living with’ I wanted to learn about and write about.” The production ran this summer, accompanied by free community discussions with experts from CNADC and other Chicago organizations. The cast also included Christopher Donahue (C85), Tracy Walsh (C89), and founding Lookingglass ensemble member David Kersnar (C88, GC08).

Bringing playfulness to tough talks

A group founded by School of Communication alumni treats sex as a classroom subject. For Youth Inquiry (FYI) is a collective of artists, educators, and activists who seek to engage young people on the topics of sexual health and sexual violence. Using games, role playing, and other participatory theatre techniques, FYI members prompt young people to ask questions they wouldn’t normally feel comfortable bringing up. “A sense of pretend is very liberating,” said founding member Jacob Watson (C11). “And the novelty of an outside group coming in—this is not their biology teacher,” said Alison Lehner (C08). “There’s a sense of playfulness. We want it to be fun, not drudgery.” The group also includes Nikki Zaleski (C08), Shannon Oliver-O’Neil (C11), Alyssa Ramos (C11), and Abby Zan Schwarz (C12).

Since its founding in 2011, FYI has grown and stretched in new directions, such as eight-week residencies that send members into schools as teaching artists and a collaboration with the University of Chicago Medical Center. Members are also becoming a creative-capacity resource for the community, training other advocates and educators to adopt methods that will make their own classroom or social-justice youth programs more effective. Recently Watson won an Individual Artists Program grant from the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events to facilitate a 10-week FYI residency at Crown Community Academy. As the group has matured, its members—already a few years out of college—have started sharing the stage with younger adult performers to help keep in tune with today’s youth. What better way to stay young?
NUEA West

NUEA West held its first storytelling event, Love & …, featuring stories written and performed by Jessica Cluess (C07), Marcus Folmar (C96), Lindsay Gelfand (C04), Naomi Grossman (C97), Rati Gupta (WCAS06), Joe Hauler (J98), Robby Karol (C07), Kevin Martin King (C80), Dava Krause (C01), Jenn Ludwigsen (C99), Puja Mohindra (J00), and Matt Shore (WCAS08). The group also hosted a reading of faculty member David Downs’s play Vag and the Boys, featuring the talents of Harry Lennix (C86), Kerry Bishe (C06), Dillon Porter (C06), Marc Naggar (C06), Andrew Perez (C05), and Downs himself. NUEA’s Indie Film Spotlight Panel featured producer-actress Michelle Lang (C04) and was moderated by April Wright (KSM92), an independent filmmaker who programs for Sundance and AFI Fest. Other recent group events included a postproduction panel featuring sound editor Jackie Johnson (C86) and music supervisor Amanda Krieg (C07), and a short-film night with work by David Anderson (C00), Kristin Chirico (C08), Eric Choi (C12), Michael Cotter (C98), Diane Carol Harder (GC09), Travis LaBella (C11) and Matt Litwiller (C11), Dan Ochwat (GC12), Carol Rhyu (WCAS05), and Andy Wolf (C94).

In May, NUEA West teamed with the Kellogg Alumni Club of Los Angeles for a Speed Networking and Elevator Pitch Workshop with Matthew Temple (KSM93). Another event, “The Pitching Game,” offered pitching tips from writer-producer Harry Werksmann (WCAS87), producer Jennifer Stempel (C04), TV literary agent Jordan Cerf (C05), and professional pitching coach Heath Corson (WCAS95).

The annual LA-NU Showcase in June featured pieces written, directed, and performed by Cat Alter (C12), Todd Aaron Brotze (McC97), Cara Danielle Brown (C09), Danielle Calvert (C11), Kale Clauson (C12), Dan Eder (J05), Erica Everage (C10), Josh Fingerhut (C05), Lindsay Gelfand (C04), Naomi Grossman (C97), Katie Hall (C04), Briggs Hatton (C05), Leigh Hyser (GC10), Robby Karol (C07), Stephanie Kornick (GC10), Dava Krause (C01), Jackie Laine (C08), Steve Marvel (C84), Tucker May (C12), Greg Porper (C12), Arnie Rotkin (L77), John Ruby (WCAS00), Sasha Salinger (C07), Joel Sinensky (C09), Scott Speiser (C00), Jake Suffian (SESP96), Melli Vytlacil (C03), Isabella Way (BSM01), and Tenere Williams (WCAS99).

An NU Authors event in July with the NU Club of LA featured published alumni authors Damona Hoffman (C00), David Iserson (C00), Douglas Kmiec (WCAS73), Jennifer Moss (BSM85), and Adam Schell (C92).
Margery Geer (C52) on April 18 at age 83 in Fort Wayne, Indiana
Franz Langhammer (G52, G56) on February 18 at age 88 in Salem, Oregon
Alice Thompson Arwezon (C53) on August 31 at age 82 in Fremont, Michigan
E. Patrick O’Brien (C53) on February 27 in Chicago, Illinois
Phyllis G. Silberman (C53) on July 2 at age 82 in Phoenix, Arizona
Edward M. Johnson (C54) on February 11 at age 80 in Chicago, Illinois
Nevis E. Phillips (C54, G59) on February 25 at age 80 in Chicago, Illinois
John Schlimmer (C54) on June 6 at age 81 in Burlington, Wisconsin
Celia L. Bay (C56) on April 6 at age 78 in Tulsa, Oklahoma
Carol A. Combs (C56) on June 1 at age 78 in Omaha, Nebraska
Edward L. Tottle (GC57) on March 10 at age 87 in Portland, Maine
Patricia Ireland Jamison (C58) on June 5 at age 76 in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania
John Palmer (C58) on August 3 at age 77 in Washington, DC
John F. Franklin (C59) on May 19 at age 76 in Westport, Connecticut
Anna Klein Pleasonton (GC59) on April 13 at age 81 in Lima, Peru
Kathleen Buck Bryant (C62) on March 11 at age 72 in Evanston, Illinois
Linda Gates Vandivier-Sabo (C62) on February 20 at age 73 in Indianapolis, Indiana
Barbara L. Nichols (C63) on April 12 at age 73 in Whittier, California
John B. Brannon Jr. (GC64) on May 17 at age 82 in St. Louis, Missouri
Virginia Johnson (C64) on June 1 at age 87 in Dover, New Hampshire
Judith Wiedemer Parker (C64) on April 5 at age 71 in St. Augustine Beach, Florida
Hubert V. Taylor (GC64) on June 2 at age 90 in Atlanta, Georgia
Rev. Richard B. McCafferty (GC65, GC69) on March 18 at age 88 in Los Gatos, California
Jeffrey Guifford (C66) on February 20 at age 69 in Silt, Colorado
Alice Walling Snyder (GC66) on April 1 at age 89 in Cleveland, Ohio
Judith Wessing Towne (GC68) on February 16 at age 69 in Greendale, Wisconsin
Diana Goetz Bohl (GC69) on February 25 at age 69 in Erie, Pennsylvania
Harold M. Daniels (C70) on February 3 at age 64 in Springfield, Ohio
Darren Scott Bender (C75) on April 10 at age 59 in Roseburg, Oregon
Randall L. Roeh (C78, GJ79) on April 20 at age 59 in Statesville, North Carolina
Martin A. Powers (C85, GSESP89) on June 23 at age 50 in Elgin, Illinois
Janet Ryan (C85) on August 23 at age 68 in Wilmette, Illinois
Elspeth Kydd (GC92, GC96) on April 9 at age 46 in Edinburgh, Scotland
Robert Schneideman (C48, GC49, GC56), professor emeritus of theatre in the School of Communication, died on February 24 at age 86 in Evanston. A director and scholar whose roots were deeply embedded at Northwestern, he was well loved by his students and enjoyed a rich and varied career. Schneideman was instrumental in establishing the Chicago office of the Shakespeare Globe Center and wrote the book A Guide to Ezra Pound’s Cantos (VII). He mentored countless young theatre artists, among them the actor Robert Conrad, who came to Northwestern specifically to study with him. A sometime magician, Schneideman encouraged his students to look at the world in new ways, assigning new acting students to visit the Lincoln Park Zoo and return to class with their impressions. “He opened my mind to the thrilling option of directing,” said one former student, “and my college trajectory took a critical turn for the better.” Another added, “Every time I walk into a directing room, I use what he taught me.”

Karen Black (C61), one of Hollywood’s most vivid character actresses, died on August 8 at age 74. She was best known for her roles in such movies as Easy Rider, Nashville, Family Plot, The Great Gatsby, Airport 1975, and Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean. For her performance in Five Easy Pieces she received an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe Award. Black entered Northwestern at age 15 and studied drama for two years before moving to New York, where she was seen on and off Broadway. She went on to perform in nearly 200 television and film roles. “I like to wear sunglasses when I go out and just observe people,” she once said. “Nobody understands that except those who write, direct, and act. It’s just about being enthralled by people: how they think, how they talk, how they gesture, the relation between them all.”
Supporting pioneers in hearing science

Breakthrough work at the Knowles Hearing Center mirrors its donors’ enterprising spirits.

To boldly go where no scientific researcher has gone before? It may sound a little grandiose, but there’s no denying that the work being done at the Hugh Knowles Center for Clinical and Basic Science in Hearing and Its Disorders is pushing new boundaries in audiology. It’s a fitting legacy, too, considering the center’s namesake had an innovative way of thinking that helped take his work to the moon and back.

Hugh S. Knowles was an acoustical engineer and inventor who founded Knowles Electronics, the nation’s leading manufacturer of microphones and subminiature electronic components, the hardware used in hearing devices. In 1988, the year he died, the company made a gift to establish the Hugh Knowles Center in his honor.

“Helping to further advancements in communication was always very important to him,” said his widow, Nancy Knowles (née Welch) (below, with Hugh Knowles in the 1980s), the chairman emerita of Knowles Electronics and current president of the Knowles Foundation. A pioneer in her own right, she went to work at Knowles Electronics in the mid-1970s, starting in the marketing department. Through hard work and persistence (“I learned and I grew,” she said, “I paid attention”), she rose to become a vice president. She and Knowles married in 1979. After his death, she assumed chairmanship of the company, a position she held until Knowles Electronics was sold to Doughty Hanson & Company in 1999.

Today the company is still headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, near O’Hare Airport—a location Hugh Knowles chose in 1954 to help speed international deliveries. “We were a global company before the word ‘global’ was used the way it is today,” said Nancy Knowles. “We were doing business in Taiwan when it was still called Formosa.”

She recalled when NASA called looking for communications equipment to help facilitate a trip to the moon. “They had very complicated specifications for what they needed,” she said. “We turned around and took one of our microphones off the shelf, described it to them, and said, ‘Will this do?’ They said it was perfect. When you heard Neil Armstrong say, ‘That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind,’ that was on our microphone.”

Today Nancy Knowles concentrates on her family’s foundation, which helps support the arts, education, health, international development, and social services, in addition to the Knowles Hearing Center. Through its continued generosity, big strides in audiology research are still being made: two Knowles Center fellows are developing a new cutting-edge hearing test (see page 13), and studies conducted in the Hearing Biology and Auditory Neuroscience Laboratories—to name just two of the center’s busy labs—are helping unlock mysteries about the inner ear and the auditory brainstem. These are big leaps on a broad landscape. “Our hope,” she said, “is to keep pushing new frontiers.”
Braff visits as Abelson Artist

Actor-director-producer-writer Zach Braff (C97) returned to campus in May as the 2013 Hope Abelson Artist in Residence. The Abelson program began in 1990 with a gift from the late Hope Altman Abelson (CB30), who studied theatre at Northwestern and became a Broadway producer.

Joined by faculty members Mary Poole and David Downs, Braff (right) gave an acting workshop using scenes from his play All New People. Best known for his film Garden State and his long-running TV show Scrubs, Braff most recently appeared in the Disney film Oz the Great and Powerful and will soon begin making the sequel to Garden State, for which he ran a successful Kickstarter campaign.

“You’re going to have reviewers say you’re a genius,” Braff told students. “You’re going to have a reviewer say you should quit. And I just want to come back to students to say: you’re not going to be able to escape it. And now more than ever, you have to go and be fearless and be yourself.”

Health agenda at Lambert Conference

In April the School of Communication hosted the 2013 Lambert Family Communication Conference (see page 4). “The Science and Practice of Health Communication: Innovative Interfaces to Improve Health” was the seventh such event made possible by the Lambert Family Foundation and Bill and Sheila Lambert. The Lamberts are highly involved members of the Northwestern community. Bill is a member of the Northwestern University Board of Trustees, while Sheila is a member of the School of Communication National Advisory Council. They are also Northwestern parents; their son, Phineas Lambert (C04), graduated from the Department of Communication Studies.

This year’s conference was a two-day think tank exploring the School of Communication’s potential to advance Northwestern’s goals in global health and healthcare, especially in graduate education and research. Communication faculty members Ellen Wartella, Daniel O’Keefe, and Bruce Lambert (no relation) collaborated in bringing health and healthcare experts from around the country to the Northwestern campus. Previous Lambert Family Communication Conferences have been leveraged to cultivate opportunities for early-developmental-stage growth in areas of faculty interest, including issues of children’s health, media, and race; rhetoric and political theory; innovation in society; and team science.

Nixon Festival offers script credit

The Agnes Nixon Playwriting Festival had a new plot twist this year. Sponsored by Agnes Nixon (C44), who as the creator of All My Children and One Life to Live is known as the first lady of daytime television, the festival celebrates the emerging writing talent of School of Communication students. This year, in addition to seeing their work staged at the two-day festival on campus, the winning writers—Emily Acker (C13), Hilary Flynn (C14), and Benjamin Sullivan-Knoff (C15)—were given the chance to collaborate on a script for All My Children. The iconic soap opera recently relaunched as a weekday web series on Prospect Park’s Online Network, run by alumnus Jeff Kwatinetz (C87).

Schwimmer speaks as Wirtz Artist

Actor-director David Schwimmer (C88) spoke on campus as the Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Visiting Artist in May. This visiting-artist program was established through a gift by Wirtz’s grandson, Chicago Blackhawks chair and Wirtz Corporation president W. Rockwell “Rocky” Wirtz (C75), who was a communication studies major at Northwestern.

Schwimmer was in Chicago to direct Big Lake Big City for Lookingglass Theatre, where he is a founding ensemble member. Urging students to lead a creative life outside auditions, he said, “The more you can control your creative life, the more you’ll be able to handle the brutal task of going out there and putting yourself on the line every day, because you’re being fed in other ways.”