After nearly a decade of dormancy, Eastern’s yearbook, The Milestone, has been brought back to life, successfully publishing its first volume last fall.

The road back was not an easy one, as students and others involved in its production can attest. But its return also brought about significant changes in the way the yearbook is produced, a fact that has many in the Department of Communication crossing their fingers in hopes it will flourish and thrive in coming decades.

Interest in bringing back the yearbook, which had last been published in the late 1990s, rekindled in early 2007, when several Eastern administrators, including Dr. Skip Daugherty and Dr. James Coneely, threw their support behind the project. The yearbook company, Jostens, agreed to come on board as the printing and promotional company.

When the Department of Communication faculty heard the yearbook was being resuscitated, Dr. Renee Everett commented, “It’s an adventure.”

Broadcast professor retires after 21 years

Renaissance man Rogers ‘always had a soft spot in his heart for students’

By Casey Kurtis

Last year, after more than 21 years of educating countless students, Doug Rogers retired from the Department of Communication. Rogers, a broadcast professor who specialized in cinema history, video production, radio, and just about everything else, said his decision to leave Eastern was not an easy one. But he said he believed it was the right decision to make, as he believed the future of the department was left in very capable hands.

Former students and faculty say Rogers often referred to himself as a “curmudgeon”—someone who is irritable or stubborn. However, those who know Rogers say that definition is a far cry from their description of their former teacher, colleague and friend.

“We lost a good friend of the department as a whole,” said Dr. Renee Everett, the department chair. “Everyone misses the camaraderie, and Doug was always there to crack a joke.” Rogers, she added, “always had a soft spot in his heart for students in need or those who had any issues. He was very selfless.”

Steve Hensley, an Eastern
Rogers alumni have fond memories of retired professor

From Page 1 broadcasting graduate who now works as the lead anchor and executive producer for WYMT-TV in Hazard, Ky., said his memories of Rogers still put a smile on his face.

“When I think of Doug, I remember his awesome radio voice,” Hensley said. “He was very easy to listen to. He could be hilarious at times and wasn’t boring in class. I remember that he always used to remember every student’s name and he is certainly one I remember fondly.”

Although Rogers left the world of teaching communications, he hasn’t exactly left the field. He currently operates two low power radio stations in Lexington, which offer light jazz fare. And in addition to his writing hobby (he’s written ten 17 novels), he still finds time to offer light jazz fare. And in addition to his writing hobby (he’s written ten 17 novels), he still finds time to operate a computer repair business and he is certainly one I remember fondly. “I stayed with teaching more than twice as long as I did anything else I’ve done with my years on earth,” Rogers said. “And I did something I did or tried to do that was never anything I did because there was never anything I did or tried to do that was ever a total failure.”

“Lasting Impressions.” But many of the same challenges remain. In its first year, The Milestone struggled with its sales, selling only around 100 copies. Students made their graduation preparations and visits with university vendors for rings and other college mementos. In addition, Thornberry said having an actual yearbook to place in students’ hands so they can witness the final product should also help bolster sales.

Success meant that the book’s editors had to continue to gain recognition among students.

So staffers are working to get the word out about the yearbook, and they’ve secured a place in the university’s annual Grad Fest meeting, where students make their graduation preparations and visits with university vendors for rings and other college mementos. In addition, Thornberry said having an actual yearbook to place in students’ hands so they can witness the final product should also help bolster sales.

“‘It’s a professional product,’” she said. “‘And I’m sure once people see it, they’ll have a greater appreciation for all that it includes.’

Currently, the yearbook staff, which includes 10 paid editors and a stable of freelance writers and photographers, is gearing up to finish this year’s volume. They hope to finish production by the end of June, with the volume scheduled for August delivery. Copies of the book are $60 and are available for purchase through the yearbook company’s Web site, www.jostensyearbooks.com.

To order a Milestone
Visit: www.jostensyearbooks.com

Copies are $60. They may be delivered by mail or picked up at the university in the fall.

YEARBOOK | Revised Milestone is produced entirely by

From Page 1 errett, Dr. Elizabeth Hansen and Deborah Givens realized that a yearbook would complement the department’s journalism and design courses, offering a good fit for students looking to get hands-on experience in putting out a publication. So they contacted the administrators, who ultimately agreed it would make sense to move the yearbook’s production from the office of Public Relations and Marketing—where it had been produced in the past—and place it in the hands of students, who would do all the writing, photography and design and be provided with an academic adviser to help oversee the project.

But getting The Milestone off the ground proved to be a challenging task. For starters, when the yearbook’s new adviser, Deborah Givens, convened the first yearbook meeting in the fall of 2007, some key ingredients were missing—there was no staff, no office in which they could work and no computers to work on.

“We basically didn’t have anything,” Givens said. “We were starting completely from scratch.”

Over time, some of those pieces began to fall into place. They began assembling a staff in September, chose an editor in October, received computers in November and took over a small office in the Combs Building in December. Jostens, the yearbook company, also donated several digital cameras, and the staff got to work.

By the end of the spring 2008 semester, the handful of yearbook staffers were scrambling to meet their deadlines—writing and designing late into the night. Their hard work paid off. In August, the first boxes of the new yearbook arrived. And a few weeks later, the university held a celebratory gathering to mark The Milestone’s return, with the first volume weighing in at more than 300 pages and exhibiting a fresh, new design with full-color spreads.

With its return volume now under its belt, the yearbook staff is once again hard at work on its 2008-2009 volume, which sports the theme “Lasting Impressions.” But many of the same challenges remain. In its first year, The Milestone struggled with its sales, selling only around 100 copies.

“We’re new and still relatively unknown to students after having only around 100 copies,” Givens said. “We were still new and unknown to students after having only around 100 copies.”

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Communication department lowers number of hours for CMS degree to 120

By Alicia McCarty

For many students at Eastern, the road through college often takes a lot longer than expected. One reason for this: most Eastern students must complete a total of 128 credit hours to obtain a degree—a figure that amounts to some 16 credit hours per semester if a student is going to graduate within a four-year period.

But a new initiative by the Communication Studies faculty, which takes effect next semester, will change that, making it easier for students to get through school in a timely fashion without having to resort to a fifth or sixth year.

Beginning in the fall of 2009, new majors in Communication Studies will have their total required hours reduced to 120. The move, said Dr. Amy Thieme, an associate professor in communication studies, was designed not only to give students a better chance of getting through school in four years, but also to streamline their class schedules, eliminating one general education requirement that essentially duplicated work they were already doing in their major.

Thieme said the change will specifically eliminate Block IC from CMS students’ general education requirements: those classes geared toward oral communication, which is already a large part of what the students learn in CMS. Additionally, the new program reduces free electives by two credit hours and requires one less class within the major.

“The new curriculum maintains the integrity of the program while eliminating redundancy,” Thieme said.

The move was taken after much consideration and approval by the Council on Post-Secondary Education, Thieme said, as she and her colleagues wanted to ensure that the new CMS major retained all of its substance. So the CMS faculty reviewed what was happening at other universities and used their findings to develop a curriculum change for their own program.

Their work not only drew the approval of faculty and university administrators, but it also served as a model for how other majors, both within the Department of Communication and university-wide, might likewise streamline their credit loads, making it easier for students to get through school within a manageable time period.

“I believe other programs might make this move as well; we just happen to be the first,” Thieme said.

Current CMS majors will have the opportunity to switch to the new curriculum requirements if they choose, but they do not have to do so if they don’t wish to, Thieme said.

Journalism teacher named Foundation Professor

By Katie Whittemore

Dr. Elizabeth Hansen, who has taught journalism courses at Eastern for more than 20 years, was recently awarded for her talent and dedication to her craft: she was named Foundation Professor, the university’s highest honor for teaching excellence.

The award recognizes those faculty members who have demonstrated outstanding performance as teachers and have been recognized by their colleagues as exemplifying outstanding qualities relating to the university’s mission in teaching, service, and scholarship. The award also provides a salary supplement for two years.

Hansen was nominated by Dr. Renee Everett, the department chair. And after an interview with other Foundation Professors, Hansen received an e-mail from Doug Whitlock, the university president, telling her she had been chosen for 2008-2010.

Hansen said she was surprised and touched by her selection.

“It’s one of those things that you always think would be nice, but figure you probably don’t have much of a chance of winning,” Hansen said. “So I was a little flabbergasted to be selected the first time I was nominated. It’s a huge honor.”

Hansen, who specializes in journalism ethics and also teaches one of the department’s capstone courses, Community Journalism, took a sabbatical leave from 2007 to 2008 to be a visiting scholar at the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky.

She worked with the director of the institute, Al Cross, researching editorial page content of Kentucky newspapers.

In all, Hansen has won more than 50 awards for her writing, editing and photography. She is on the national board of the Society of Professional Journalists and is head of the Community Journalism Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

She also chairs the Steering Committee of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues. She has served as the journalism education representative on the board of the Kentucky Press Association, from which she received the 2004 Russ Metz Most Valuable Member Award for her work on a statewide public records audit.

Alumni updates

Todd Marshall, BEM 1984, is a freelance camera operator and director of photography based out of Atlanta, Ga. He’s worked on such films as Conjurer, Our Child is Missing and Fire From Below, which will be aired on the SCI-Fi Channel.

Gary A. Means, BEM 1987, is the Executive Director of the Lexington & Fayette County Parking Authority in Lexington, Ky.

Perry Goldfarb, BEM 1988, is a senior sales executive with Pro Specialties Group in San Diego, Calif.

Terry Sebastian, JOU 1992, is the communication director for Kentucky State Auditor Crit Luallen.

Kevin Wathen, BEM 1994, is the creative services manager for Meridian-Chiles Advertising in Lexington, Ky.

Steve Hensley, BEM 1999, is the lead anchor for the 6 p.m. newscast at WYMT-TV in Hazard, Ky.

Deschanda Stroud, BEM 2002, is the postproduction supervisor for “Bridezillas” in Los Angeles, Calif. She previously was a postproduction supervisor for Ryan Seacrest Productions, also in L.A.

Kasey Mills, BEM 2003, was promoted to 11 p.m. news producer at WLEX-TV in Lexington, Ky.

Jon Walker, BEM 2003, is the video studio manager for Moore and Scarry Advertising in Fort Myers, Fla.

Zach Tucker, BEM 2004, was named AP Television News photographer of the year for 2008. He is a news videographer at WLEX-TV in Lexington, Ky.

Amber (Jones) Kennoy, CMS 2004, is a marketing consultant for FOX 56 WDKY-TV in Lexington, Ky.

Greg Burress, BEM 2004, is an award-winning news videographer at WLKY-TV in Louisville.

Will Dawson, BEM 2005, is a producer and reporter for the Christian Broadcasting Network in Virginia Beach, Va.

Alumni updates continued, page 5
Communication professors produce best short film at 2008 movie expo

By Jordan Collier

Two of Department of Communication professors, Chad Cogdill and John Fitch III, recently won the Best Short Film Award at the 2008 Cinefest Movie Expo and Festival in Louisville for their work on a short film they did called The Library. The duo wrote, directed, produced, shot, and financed the film in the summer of 2008 with six student interns.

The Library is a comedy about a shy college student living out his dreams in his head, and what happens when those dreams confront reality.

The origin of The Library can be traced back two years ago, when Fitch first wrote the screenplay for students in his class who didn’t have a film they wanted to shoot. It was intended as an exercise for them, but two years later he found himself coming back to produce and shoot it himself.

Fitch was also in charge of directing, sound design and editing.

“I was talking to Professor Cogdill about it, and we were tossing around a couple of ideas,” Fitch said. “I said, ‘Well, I do have this one script that maybe I can dust off and it might just work.’ He and I collaborated on the script, dusted it off, rewrote it a little bit, and decided to go ahead and go for it.”

They already had the basic frame work down for the story, but they wanted to make some revisions in order to make the film have as much impact as possible. Fitch said revising the script with a writing partner was both fun and liberating, allowing him to share some of the burden of revisions with someone else.

Cogdill handled all of the cinematography, and his goal was to make sure he never deviated from the script itself so the comedic aspect of the script could come through clearly.

Cogdill said he tried to make the film even-keeled and realistic throughout, noting that the dream sequences were the exception. “I tried to reflect the mood of that particular moment,” he said.

This was the second film the two collaborated on with students at Eastern, having previously worked on Just Yesterday. Early on they decided that since they had a much smaller budget to work with this time, they were only going to shoot on campus or in Richmond, and they would only use equipment available here on campus or out of Cogdill’s personal collection.

“This is one of the smoothest shoots I’ve ever been on,” Cogdill said. “The students really worked hard and really pulled their weight, and if something needed to be done, nobody hesitated to get it done.”

The shoot itself was thoroughly planned out. They had a lot of equipment to move each time they changed location, so they tried to limit the number of moves they had to do. In comparison, Just Yesterday was a much bigger affair in terms of production scale and required more moves to more locations.

Fitch said it was fair to call The Library a labor of love, as the two professors financed the production entirely out of their own pockets, with the exception of donations of food from Giovanni’s Pizza Hut, and Cici’s Pizza.

The two hope to continue developing films during the summer months, which they said offers a great outlet for film students to learn their trade and get experience on a real world project.

Students get insider’s view on 2008 presidential election in COM 400

By Bryce Seals

It’s offered only once every four years. Students who enroll will be immersing themselves in the trenches of hardball public relations tactics and strategies. And it all takes place on the biggest stage in the business: the U.S. presidential campaign.

The class, called COM 400, is taught by Dr. Mike Hesse, a public relations professor who serves on a handful of national subcommittees for the Republican Party, where participants hash out political strategies and comb over the latest research and polling numbers.

The students who take the course track every movement of the political jockeying, looking beyond the numbers and examining the issues and accompanying public relations spin that translates to gains and setbacks on the campaign trail.

“We examine everything from a public relations viewpoint,” Hesse said. “What was done or often what wasn’t done that contributed to a candidate’s climb or slide in the national polls.”

Along the way, students conduct their own local polling, examine the issues of the day and how they’re portrayed in the nation’s most influential newspapers and magazines, and track how the candidates’ strategies play out on the trail.

This past year, students focused on the two leading candidates: former Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. John McCain. And the lessons came pouring in. One big one: It’s not as easy as it looks.

“Even the best laid plans can get wiped out by variables outside of one’s control,” Hesse said. “And during this campaign, we found that the economy was just such an issue.”

Students said they watched how Obama’s numbers surged as the economy fell into a tailspin, all while McCain did his best to distance himself from the White House and hammer away at his opponent’s perceived inexperience.

But Hesse said one of his favorite parts of the course is watching the students pick up things they wouldn’t normally notice.

“It really involves them more in the election process,” he said. “And by election time, I think every student in the class voted, and that’s a good thing to see.”

Students said the class helped open their eyes to the subtle movements and tactics employed in the campaigns, deepening their appreciation for the complex political process.

“I have a better understanding of the actual strategies used by both political parties,” said Jessica Drake, a public relations student. “And it’s not just politics but a more in-depth knowledge of how each party plans to win the campaign.”
Broadcasting professor covers journalism in Kentucky for KET

By Casey Tolliver

An Eastern professor is putting his years of broadcast experience to good use, as the new host of KET’s longest running television program.

Ferrell Wellman, who has been a broadcast professor at Eastern for the past 15 years, is putting his years of broadcast experience to good use, as the new host of KET’s longest running television program, Comment on Kentucky. Wellman took over for Al Smith, the creator and 32-year host of the show, who retired in November, 2007.

“Al Smith is the highest profiled journalist in Kentucky,” Wellman said. “To take his place is an honor.”

Wellman, a Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame member, is no stranger to broadcasting, or even appearing on Comment on Kentucky for that matter.

He was a reporter at WAVE-TV in Louisville from 1973-1991, has been the election-night analyst for WLEX in Lexington for the past eight years and has appeared on Comment as a guest or guest host more than 500 times.

His first appearance on the show was as a guest in January, 1976.

In fact, nobody else has been on the show more times than Wellman.

Comment on Kentucky is a news commentary program that features journalists from across the state discussing the state’s biggest news events.

“The show is a platform for journalists to analyze and explain stories they don’t have time or a place for in regular broadcasts,” Wellman said.

While at WAVE-TV, Wellman served as the station’s Frankfort reporter and covered news in all 120 counties in the state. He also has experience in radio broadcasting, and has worked at radio stations in Paris, Ashland, Lexington, Louisville and Norfolk, Va.

A winner of numerous broadcast awards, Wellman most recently won a regional Edward R. Murrow Award for his radio coverage of the crash of Flight 5191 at Blue Grass Airport.

Wellman, a Pikeville native, received his bachelor’s degree in broadcasting from Eastern Kentucky University and his master’s degree in journalism and communication from the University of South Carolina, or “the real USC,” as he calls it.

Comment on Kentucky, which is taped at KET studios in Lexington, airs Friday nights at 8 p.m. on KET1.

Ferrell Wellman is the new host of Comment on Kentucky, the longest-running show on KET, Lexington’s PBS station. Wellman took over for Comment on Kentucky’s original host, Al Smith, in November 2007.

CMS student selected to speak at graduation

By Karmen Vaughn

While most students tend to admit to being slightly nervous come graduation day, Taryn Edington had a little more cause to have the jitters. That’s because the CMS student was one of two students chosen at Eastern to be the student speaker at the graduation ceremony.

“I was really excited and honored,” Edington said. “And there were many hours involved in that speech. It was a lot of writing, proofreading, and rewriting.”

Edington has been a standout during her tenure at Eastern. She is a member of Kappa Alpha Theta and served on the 2008-2009 Executive Committee for Communication Studies Student Association, also known as CSSA.

But despite the high-profile stage that Edington would be speaking on, she said she opted to ignore any thoughts of being nervous, instead choosing to revel in the moment.

“I was ready to be done and enjoy my last moment at Eastern,” Edington said. “This was like the icing on the cake.”

Edington said she wascomforted by the fact that she had taken many communication courses, including some on public speaking, which she said prepared her for her day in the spotlight.

And she encouraged others to make the most of their time at Eastern, joining student organizations and seeking out opportunities to get involved and meet other students and faculty.

“This is a great opportunity for any type of student to leave their own mark at Eastern,” Edington said.

Alumni updates continued, page 7
New studio will support students’ creative efforts

By Vanesa Killen and Jesse Hood

Need a place to think critically and creatively? Eastern’s campus will soon offer a new outlet for just such activities.

The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, a renovation of existing space in the Crabbe Library, is slated to open in 2010. The new $2.8 million studio space is designed to offer students a place where they can work comfortably, while also receiving guidance on their oral and written communication and research skills.

Dr. Renee Everett, chair of the Department of Communication, said the primary goal of The Studio is to help students integrate three aspects of their daily academic lives: research, writing and speaking.

“This will help students to develop these skills they will need for the workforce once they graduate,” Everett said.

At The Noel Studio, students will work directly with faculty and coaches one on one to improve their writing, speaking, and research skills. They also can have their speeches or group presentations videotaped, allowing them to receive feedback on their delivery and to help them connect with their audience. In addition, students will have access to private studio spaces, where they can work on papers, projects or other group assignments.

Services offered at The Noel Studio are in direct support to EKU’s Quality Enhancement goals involving information literacy and the development of critical and creative thinking among students.

The Studio draws its name from Ron Noel, an Eastern alum, and his wife, Sherrie Lou, who donated a gift of more than $1 million—one of the largest financial gifts Eastern has ever received. The donation helped ensure that the venue will be available to students without requiring an increase in their tuition or student fees.

The Noel Studio will be located in a portion of the library that hasn’t been renovated in years. To provide additional room, several walls will be razed, although the building’s skylights will be retained, allowing natural lighting to illuminate the space.

Teachers introduce Web-focused courses

By Matthew Turner

With traditional printed products giving way to the efficiency of the Web, journalists and public relations professionals increasingly are being asked to possess technical and computer skills beyond those that their jobs required just a few years earlier.

To that end, the Department of Communication has begun revamping its upper-level journalism and public relations classes, giving students more opportunities to learn the fundamentals of Web publishing and multi-media design.

Visiting instructors Jim Gleason and Reggie Beehner recently introduced two new classes, which will be rolled out in the Spring 2010 semester, that are geared at teaching students the skills they need to build their design skills and produce a functional, standards-driven Web site.

The changes stem largely from the fact that the communication industry has changed, Beehner said.

“Everything has shifted dramatically,” Beehner said. “Where a printed publication used to be the end product, now the Web has become the most efficient means of communicating, and we needed to have some courses that addressed that.”

Not only that, but employers these days are looking for graduates who have a specific set of Web skills, Gleason added.

“That’s the first question employers are asking: ‘What can you do with the Web?’” Gleason said. “If you can do things on the Web or use these design programs, such as Photoshop, you will already be a step ahead of anyone else competing for the job. These are crucial skills in this day and age.”

The new offerings include a set of introductory desktop publishing courses, one geared toward the public relations field and the other toward the journalism field. After students get through those, they’re free to enroll in the upper level Web design courses, which also are tailored to the public relations and journalism fields. The courses will begin being offered in the Fall 2009 semester.

International society of editors plans to visit Eastern next year

By Matthew Turner

Editors from newspapers around the world will descend upon Eastern next year. They’re coming for the annual conference sponsored by The International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors, which chose Eastern’s campus as its location for its 2010 meeting. The ISWNE, an organization that seeks to improve the standards of editorial writing and news reporting and “encourage strong, independent editorial voices,” is bringing in a full line-up of speakers, including at least one from overseas. The five-day conference is scheduled for June 23 through June 27.

“The historic main entrance to the library, currently used as an emergency exit, will become a second entrance, reopened for general use.

Construction for The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity is slated to begin this summer, with an opening planned for fall of 2010.
New faculty profiles
The Department of Communication continues to grow, adding four new faces to the department over the past two years.

**Dr. Kathy Keltner** joined the public relations faculty last year as an assistant professor after earning a Ph.D. in Communication from Ohio University's Scripps College of Communication in 2007. She holds a B.A. in Communication Studies from Virginia Tech and an M.S. in Mass Communication from Middle Tennessee State University.

A former Guggenheim Fellow with the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, Dr. Keltner has published several articles on the role of communications in public opinion, presidential rhetoric, and how NASA and scientists are portrayed in popular media.

In addition, she has taught at Charleston Southern University, Lipscomb University and Vanderbilt University. At Eastern, Dr. Keltner teaches Public Relations, PR Writing, and Event Planning classes.

**Chad Cogdill** joined the broadcast and electronic media faculty in fall 2007 as an assistant professor after working as a freelance cinematographer, filming short narrative and experimental films as well as music videos. Cogdill holds an M.F.A. in film from the Savannah College of Art and Design and a B.S. in Media Studies from Missouri Western State University. His graduate thesis film, “Ma Chere Petite Maxyme” won the 2005 award for the best graduate student film and best cinematography.

At Eastern, Cogdill teaches a variety of video production and film studies courses.

**Jennifer Thornberry** joined the journalism faculty in 2008 as a visiting instructor after more than ten years working at a variety of Kentucky newspapers and magazines, including the Richmond Register, The Winchester Sun, The Lane Report, and The Bluegrass Horseman.

She has worked a variety of newspaper jobs, including feature writer, copy editor and page designer. Thornberry holds an M.S. in journalism from Ohio University and a B.A. in journalism and radio/television from Morehead State University.

At Eastern, Thornberry has taken the role of academic adviser to the university's yearbook, *The Milestone*. In addition, she teaches feature writing and reporting classes.

**Jennifer Fairchild** joined the communication studies faculty as a lecturer in fall 2007 after earning an M.A. in communication from the University of Kentucky and a B.A. in English from Georgetown College. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in communication from the University of Kentucky and is writing her dissertation about miscarriage narratives and the social support available to women who have suffered a miscarriage.

Fairchild teaches a variety of communication classes, including Intro to Human Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Public Speaking and Family Communication, among others.

**Casey Castle**, JOU 2007, is the sports editor at The Jessamine Journal in Nicholasville, Ky.


**Mysterie Brown**, CMS 2007, is the Communications Director at the Richmond Chamber of Commerce in Richmond, Ky.

**Bob Flynn**, JOU 2007, is an education reporter at The Jessamine Journal in Nicholasville, Ky. He also works as a news writer at The Winchester Sun.

**Amber Ungaro**, BEM 2008, is a videographer/editor for WTVQ-TV in Lexington, Ky.

**Jenna Mink**, JOU 2008, is a business reporter covering the automotive industry and local business and economic issues for The Daily News in Bowling Green, Ky.

**Melissa Mollohan**, JOU 2008, is a copy editor at The Kentucky New Era in Hopkinsville, Ky.

**Kristen Miller**, JOU 2008, is a reporter at The Kentucky New Era in Hopkinsville, Ky.

**Marty Finley**, JOU 2008, is a reporter for The News-Enterprise in Elizabethtown, Ky., covering county and city governments.

**Danielle Rader**, BEM 2008, is an associate news producer at WATE-TV, the ABC affiliate in Knoxville, Tenn.
**Professors examine media stereotyping**

By Briana Bonter

When CBS sought to find an Appalachian family in 2002 to transplant into a Beverly Hills mansion for its proposed reality series, “The Real Beverly Hillbillies,” the show’s producers were surprised by the vocal backlash the “hick hunt” raised from those in the media, government and academia.

The show and the subsequent firestorm, however, offered a compelling case-study of how the entertainment industry, in its attempts to conjure dramatic narratives, often ends up reinforcing negative stereotypes, said Dr. Elizabeth Hansen, an Eastern journalism professor.

So Hansen joined with Dr. Angela Cooke-Jackson, an assistant professor in the Communication Studies program, to more deeply examine the show and its role in shaping others’ opinions, ultimately producing a paper titled, “Appalachian Culture and Reality TV: The Ethical Dilemma of Stereotyping Others.”

The paper was selected as one of five to be presented at the 2007 Inter-cultural Intersections in Media Ethics Conference at the University of Hawaii, and a revised version of the paper was published in the 2008 summer issue of the Journal of Mass Media Ethics. Another revision of the paper will also be included as a chapter in a book on entertainment ethics, which is slated to be published next year. Hansen and Cooke-Jackson have also been invited to talk about their work as part of a panel on entertainment ethics at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention in Boston, Mass., in August.

Hansen said the paper studied a topic that hits particularly close to home for Eastern students, some of whom hail from Appalachian regions and often find themselves running up against ill-informed stereotypes in their daily lives.

“Some students open their mouths to say they’re from Kentucky, and the first thing they hear is that others are surprised they’re wearing shoes,” Hansen said. “It’s something our students face whenever they venture out of state.”

Hansen said she believes television often plays a significant role in perpetuating these stereotypes, using them as fodder for creating dramatic tension without considering the consequences that stem from the portrayals.

“Stereotypes ultimately are harmful,” Hansen said. “And the entertainment industry often doesn’t consider the impact its programs have on the viewing audience.”

Hansen said the paper sought to address this, offering an “ethical decision tree” that might serve as a guide for television producers in considering whether their portrayals of regional characters would be ethically justified.

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<th>Outstanding alumni &amp; students</th>
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<tr>
<td>OUTSTANDING ALUMNI 2008:</td>
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<td>Jason Epperson, BEM 2000</td>
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<td>Owner/Producer of Eppic Films, Inc.</td>
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<td>OUTSTANDING ALUMNI 2009:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Newton, JOU 1997</td>
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<td>Producer for 60 Minutes at CBS News.</td>
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**Scholarship recipients**

- Dan Mason Broadcasting & Electronic Media Scholarship: Randall Keith Ritchie
- Ruth C. Rogers Memorial Scholarship in Film Techniques & Technology: Geoffrey Marshall James
- Dr. Glen Kleine Communication Scholarship: Ayla Eichenhofer
- Chrisy Guttridge Public Relations Award: Kristy Hopf
- Christy Guttridge Broadcasting/ Electronic Media Award: Allison Louise Moloney
- Christy Guttridge Communication Studies Award: Stephanie West

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