



# The COMMunity Buzz

News for the Department of Communication Studies



## Chair's Corner

November marks the month when the National Communication Association (NCA) holds their annual meeting. In fact, each academic discipline holds similar conventions. These meetings are opportunities for faculty to interact with colleagues from other universities to discuss research, teaching, and other issues related to faculty life.

NCA was founded in 1914 as a way to bring together professors of public speaking. Since its inception, it has provided opportunities for faculty development, which allows professors to bring the cutting edge research of the discipline back to students at USD.

Lambda Pi Eta is the official undergraduate honor society of NCA. The honor society became part of NCA in 1995 and now has over 400 chapters. Contact your advisor to learn if you qualify for the honor society.

USD Communication faculty have been very active at NCA. Each year a number of faculty attend the annual meeting and utilize the opportunity to learn more effective ways to teach communication. So, if your class was canceled for NCA, be sure to ask your professor what they learned!

## Department Announcements

First you liked us on Facebook; now you can follow us on Twitter! The Department of Communication Studies has established an official departmental Twitter account. By expanding our social media reach, we hope to help students, alumni, and the community stay informed about departmental events, campus happenings, and issues relevant to those with an interest in communication studies. Log on and follow us: [@USDCommStudies](https://twitter.com/USDCommStudies)

Esteban del Río, PhD, published the lead article in the July 2012 issue of the *Journal of Communication Inquiry* entitled "Accentuate the Positive: Americanos and the Articulation of Latina/o Life in the United States." The piece features a textual, contextual, and extra-textual analysis of an effort by the Smithsonian Institution and Time Warner to articulate a celebratory Latinidad and U.S. national imaginary. It argues for a relational and radically contextual approach to the politics of representation and the construction of unity and difference.

A full PDF version of the article can be downloaded free from on-campus or with Copley Library access here: <http://jci.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/09/24/0196859912455362.abstract>



Congratulations to Leeva Chung, PhD, who was honored at the 2012/2013 Mortar Board Faculty Appreciation Dinner on November 1st.





*Día de los Muertos – Day of the Dead*



*by Antonieta Mercado, PhD*

The Day of the Dead (“Día de los Muertos”) celebration is a syncretic mix of Latin American pre-Hispanic indigenous practices and Catholic spiritual tradition. The celebration takes place on November 1 and 2 (usually to celebrate the All Saints Day in the Catholic Tradition). Families and communities honor the spirit of the dead by creating altars or ofrendas (offerings), and placing favorite foods, photos, special bread (“pan de muerto”) and other items associated with the ones who are gone. The traditional cempaxúchitl flower (marigold) that is used in altars symbolizes the color of death (yellow).

This spiritual celebration has also been used as a communication device, and a channel for sociocultural expression and political criticism. During the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, Mexican political cartoonist Jose Guadalupe Posada published drawings of skeletons dressed very elegantly (as the “catrines” or the aristocrats would do) to criticize the extreme economic and social polarization that led to the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

The tradition of criticism that Posada inaugurated has prevailed and grown in recent times, making the

Day of the Dead a time when journalists, artists and the public write satirical poetry and draw cartoons about the rich and famous (celebrities, politicians, etc.). The satire implies that a particular figure has been taken by “la muerte” (death) as punishment for his or her bad deeds. The poems offer the reasons why the person has been taken: because they are evil, boring, stupid, or guilty of misrule. The verses can be short (one octave of a sonnet, etc.) and may rhyme or not; they may be about one person, a type of person (politicians, academics, Hollywood figures, etc.), groups of people, a whole country, or something happening (war, natural disasters, etc.). It is also common to exchange these poems with candy, in the form of sugar skulls, among friends.

This type of social criticism and art associated with the Day of the Dead keeps evolving, and, with increased migration and global flows of communication, it now has become popular among different communities in California and other parts of the US. Once a folk custom now rapidly becoming “mainstream,” the Día de los Muertos “tradition” is becoming more and more syncretic with new elements added to it by the cultures that adopt it.





Professor Mary Brinson, PhD, has a new co-authored article in the October 2012 issue of *Communication Currents*. The article is entitled "Does Watching the News Change our Attitudes about Political Policy: A Terrorism Case Study," and was co-authored with Michael Stohl, PhD, University of California, Santa Barbara.

The article may be viewed online at the link below:  
<http://www.natcom.org/CommCurrentsArticle.aspx?id=2822>

The Department wishes to make special acknowledgement and thanks to the amazing supportive group who worked on the Communication advising video:

Justin Edleman, Film Director  
Dave Downes, Audio Director  
Marina Howell, Cast Member  
Delaney Kepple, Cast Member  
Travis Weger, Cast Member

and to our alumni: Alex Bryan, Daniel Jaimes, Victoria Johnson, Monica Lim, Nate Martinez, Lindsey Morr, Gyno Pomare, Mari K. Raftopoulos, and Christina Woodward.

The advising video may be viewed online under "Info for Majors" on the department's webpage: <http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/commstudies/>



Hello world! My name is Meredith Relyea, one of two work-study employees in the Communication Studies Department and I'm here every weekday. As a Communication Studies major at USD, I am very glad to be working in this department. My cuter half is Sagan, a black Labrador, who is training to be a guide dog for people with visual impairments. He is adorable and very friendly, but please remember he is a working dog, not a pet, and requires very specific training. Hopefully you'll get a chance to meet us here in the office or around campus! If you get the chance, "like" the Communication Department on Facebook and stop by for a kiss! (from Sagan, not me). Have a great semester!

## 13th Annual San Diego Asian Film Festival



The San Diego Asian Film Festival is an annual event of Pacific Arts Movement. Our mission is to connect audiences to the human experience through the Pan Asian media arts. We've been around since 2000, premiering films from around the world. We showcase Asian American, international films, shorts, documentaries, and animation. With over 150 films from over 20 different countries, there is something for everyone. Along with films, patrons will be able to meet with great filmmakers and actors, engage in panel discussions, hear live music, and enjoy special events. Most of all, we pride ourselves in being a well-organized, friendly festival made of people who are passionate about life, learning...and having FUN!

The award-winning documentary, *Don't Stop Believing: Everyman's Journey*, about the all-American rock band Journey's search for a new lead singer, opened this year's festiva. The festival will close on November 9 with the West Coast premiere of *Love Strikes!* a Japanese romantic comedy for all the neurotics, the romantics, and the new media junkies.

\*\*Event Date/Time: November 1, 2012 to November 9, 2012

\*\*Cost: \$11.50 Regular, \$8.00 Member, \$9.00 Student/Group/Military, \$60 6-pack of tickets

<http://festival.sdaff.org/2012/>

## **Nate Heinz ('13) - Border Immersion Trip Reflection**

Recently, outstanding Communication Studies Senior Nate Heinz went on the Social Justice Living-Learning Community's Border Immersion Trip, where he served as a student leader on the day-long immersive experience for students and faculty. Nate is a Preceptorial Assistant for Dr. Bowman's Introduction to Human Communication freshman preceptorial, and had much to reflect upon after the social justice-themed immersion trip:

*The immersion trip was simply a one-of-a-kind experience. We first visited the breathtaking Friendship Park, which was not breathtaking for any aesthetic reasons (although the park does overlook the ocean), but because we saw, up-close and personal, the fence that has become the root of so much tragedy and strife within the United States and Mexico. Even more surreal however, was seeing the interaction of family members who were unable to fully greet and embrace each other personally, and instead did so through on either side of a thin, metal fence.*

*We then traveled to the parking lot of a Home Depot and actually met some of the workers who had been ripped apart from their families in order to find work in*

*the United States. Some of them left home and traveled on their own to the U.S. at the young age of 8 years old. I thought back to my childhood, and recollected the terror of being lost inside of a Wal-Mart at that age, let alone travelling to another country on my own. I'll never forget what one of the workers said in regard to idea of finding a better opportunity in the U.S. I'll never forget what one of the workers said in regard to idea of finding a better opportunity in the U.S. He said, "the American dream is just that- a dream."*

*Lastly, went to a local church that many workers attended and had sought refuge in in the past. After spending the kind of day that we had, and experiencing the emotionally affecting events that we did, the ceremony was nothing short of extraordinary. It was a beautiful way to end an incredible day. Afterwards, we said our goodbyes and headed home physically exhausted, but emotionally (and perhaps spiritually) uplifted.*

*For anyone who is open to new experiences, and would consider opening their heart and mind in an eye opening, emotionally confronting way, I cannot recommend an immersion trip any more.*

