



# OCA Conversation

Ohio Communication Association

May 2007 Vol. 3, No. 1

## Nominations due for 2007 OCA awards

The Ohio Communication Association is seeking nominations for its annual awards, which will be presented at the conference

Members are urged to recognize the accomplishments of the students and colleagues by nominating them in one of the following categories:

- Distinguished Teacher
- Distinguished Coach
- Distinguished Student Organization
- Distinguished Service to Speech Communication in Ohio
- Distinguished Graduate Student
- Distinguished Undergraduate Student

**Dr. Jeffrey Tyus**, immediate past president, is chairing the awards committee. He asks that nominations be sent to him at Sinclair Community College, 444 W. Third St., Dayton, OH 45402-1460. He may be contacted by e-mail at [Jeffrey.tyus@sinclair.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.tyus@sinclair.edu) or by telephone at 937-512-3119

Additional information is available on the OCA website at <http://www.ohiocomm.org/>

## Conference Oct. 6 at Boardman 'Change, Challenges and Opportunities'

"Change, Challenges and Opportunities: Communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" will be the theme for the Ohio Communication Association's 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, planned for Saturday, Oct. 6, 2007, at the Holiday Inn in Boardman, Ohio. The deadline for submissions of scholarly work is 5 p.m. May 26.

Conference coordinator Adam Earnhardt of Youngstown State University said submissions are encouraged in the following areas:

- Debut presentations by faculty and student
- G.I.F.T.S. (Great Ideas for Teaching Speech)
- Demonstrations of innovative instructional methods
- Teaching or research challenges
- Program assessment and issues of accreditation
- Statewide issues or concerns for the discipline
- Further developing OCA to meet the needs of its constituents
- Specific university, private college, community college, or high school issues or concerns
- Workshops for undergraduate or graduate success in the discipline
- Hands-on workshops on topics relating to research or to specific topic areas (technology in the classroom, the basic course, developing critical thinking, the at-risk student, etc.)

Earnhardt urges OCA members to share the Call for Papers with their colleagues and graduate and undergraduate students. Full details of the conference, including an online Call for Papers, will be found on the conference website, <http://www.ohiocomm.org>.

## Scholarship is an investment Speakers point to impact, relevance of research

Four distinguished Ohio communications scholars offered advice to colleagues at the 2006 OCA conference on the importance of making research relevant. Here are some notes on the highlights of their remarks:

- **Dr. Alberto Gonzales**, Vice Provost for Academic Services, Bowling Green State University: Ohio is an under-educated state. State support for public institutions of higher education is declining. "We are reaching a point that we have to look at the implications for scholarship." Ohio has fewer graduate programs and fewer doctoral programs, and is graduating fewer people. State funding is going to hard sciences, natural sciences. OCA must work to establish the value of communication scholarship as central to the lives of

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[OCA Profile](#)

# Matthew Smith likes the life of a small-campus professor

*This is one of a series on leaders of the Ohio Communication Association. Matthew J. Smith is vice president/president-elect.*

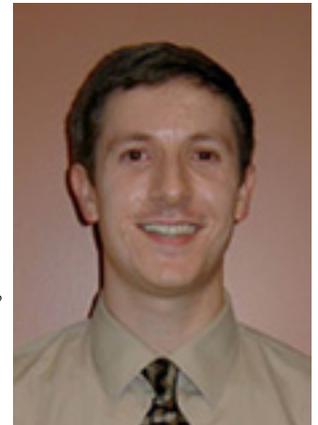
**What is your job and employer and what do you teach?**

I am an associate professor and chair in the Department of Communication at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. I regularly teach a course in Media Literacy and another in Critical Methods. I am teaching our Senior Communication Seminar this spring, and last fall I piloted a course in Comic Books as Culture. In the past I have taught Media Law, Introduction to Communication Studies, and Computer-Mediated Communication.

**Tell me an interesting fact about you.**

Hmmm . . . take your pick:

- I am the first person in my family to graduate from college.
- I graduated from college alongside country music's Brad Paisley. Then, I was commencement speaker and he was not. Today, he is a music superstar and I am not. ;-)
- I've taught classes at four different Ohio campuses: Ohio University Athens, Ohio University Chillicothe, Miami University-Hamilton, and now Wittenberg University.



**SMITH**

**What was your first job?**

My first full-time teaching position was at Miami University-Hamilton. I found that I really enjoyed the camaraderie found across disciplinary boundaries at such small campuses. After a couple of years at Indiana University South Bend, I wanted to return to Ohio and the small campus environment, so I accepted the position at Wittenberg.

**Tell me about your education.**

I completed my doctoral degree at Ohio University in 1998. My dissertation advisor was Ray McKerrow, who provided me with as good a model as can be found of what an academic life should look like. My master's degree is also from Ohio University (1995), but actually in English. My undergraduate degree (1993) is from West Liberty State College.

**What was your dissertation topic and what is your current research focus?**

My research very generally focuses on visual communication phenomena. My dissertation, "E-merging Strategies of Identity: The Rhetorical Construction of Self in Personal Web Sites," focused on how web site creators used appeals to entice visitors to establish connections with them. This early work in computer-mediated communication contributed to the development of Online

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## KSU's Carole Barbato 2006 OCA 'Distinguished Teacher'

Dr. Carole Barbato, an associate professor of communication studies in the Kent State University regional campuses system, was honored as "2006 Distinguished Teacher" by the Ohio Communication Association.

Dr. Barbato, of Poland, OH, teaches classes at the East Liverpool campus on basic communication, interpersonal communication and teambuilding and a class at the Kent campus on on the May 4, 1970, KSU shootings. Dr. Barbato has published several books and book chapters and numerous journal articles, and has served on editorial boards of several communication journals.

After graduating from Kent State in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in speech and theater education, Barbato spent a year teaching English and coaching the forensic team at Newfield High School on Long Island, NY. She returned to Kent to study for a master's degree, which she earned in 1975. Hired by the KSU Regional Campus System, she began teaching full time and working for her doctorate, which she won from KSU in 1994.

Dr. Barbato and her husband of 24 years, Patrick, have a daughter, Alissa, who is a graduate student in higher education and student affairs at Youngstown State University.

**BARBATO**

## Earnhardt is conference coordinator

**EARNHARDT**

Adam Earnhardt, instructor in the department of communication at Youngstown State University, was recently elected the Ohio Communication Association conference coordinator. Earnhardt will plan the 2007 and 2008 OCA conferences. The 2007 conference will be held in Earnhardt's backyard, Boardman, a suburb of Youngstown.

Earnhardt brings a unique combination of both professional and academic experiences. After earning a bachelor's degree in communication from Clarion University of Pennsylvania in 1995, he worked in radio (WDVE, WJFK) and college recruitment (Pitt, Clarion). He moved back to Clarion University and earned his master's degree in communication with an emphasis on training and development in 1999.

While working as an admissions recruiter at Clarion, Earnhardt began his doctoral studies at Kent State University in the College of Communication and Information Science. The working title of his dissertation is *Exploring Possible Predictors of Television Viewer Judgments of Athlete Behaviors*. His primary research interests include media use and effects, sports media, and computer-mediated communication.

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Communication: Linking Technology, Identity, and Culture (2001 & 2005), one of the earliest textbooks on computer-mediated communication, which I co-wrote with Andy Wood of San Jose State University (and also another OU alumnus). Since then, I have written and spoken on reality television and am currently developing a book on graphic novels with Randy Duncan of Henderson State University.

**What do you like about your job and your workplace?**

Being a college professor is life goal realized. I love working alongside folks who are intelligent and giving of themselves, and I take great joy in seeing our students discover the rewards of their own intellectual pursuits.

As for working at Wittenberg, I feel blessed to work with a talented and dedicated set of colleagues. Beginning in 2001, we had the unique challenge, and opportunity, to build a communication program from scratch at Wittenberg. I'm very proud of the program that we've developed and prouder still that we are all still talking to one another. ;-) Seriously, we have worked very hard and very well with one another.

**Tell me something about your personal life (such as family).**

My wife Susan and I have been married for over six years now. In 2002, we welcomed twin sons, Trevor and Kent, into our family. Susan, a graduate of Capitol University's communication program, is a Sunday school teacher and runs a small business from our home. Trevor and Kent attend preschool.

**What other significant achievements have you had?**

Professionally, I'm fortunate enough to have collaborators who have invited me to contribute to texts that may have helped some students learn more about communication phenomenon.

Andy Wood of San Jose State University in California and I co-wrote two editions of Online Communication: Linking Technology, Culture, and Identity (2001 & 2005), and we edited Survivor Lessons: Essays on Communication and Reality Television (2003). In addition, Sue DeWine of Marietta College and Melissa Hancox of Edinboro University and I co-authored Exploring Human Communication (2000), a textbook for the basic communication course.

**What are your goals now?**

My eyes are firmly fixed on my very first sabbatical leave this coming year when I plan to complete my portion of a book about graphic novels called, The Power of Comics: An Introduction to Graphic Storytelling. Once again,

I'm lucky enough to have a talented collaborator in Randy Duncan of Henderson State University in Arkansas. We hope to have the book finished in early 2008.

**What goal do you have for the Ohio Communication Association?**

First of all, let me say what an amazing job the recent executives of the Ohio Communication Association have done in reviving this organization. Under the leadership of President Jeff Tyus, VP Candice Thomas-Maddox, Executive Director Sheida Shirvani, and many others, this organization has been revitalized. And I say rightly so. Given the number and diversity of institutions for higher learning in this state, we *should* have one of the premiere state professional associations in the country. We have some of the nation's leading community colleges, truly remarkable liberal arts colleges, and highly respected Research I & II institutions here in Ohio. So, I think one of my priorities is to be a good steward and cultivate the work they've already begun.

Another priority is to include representatives from even more Ohio colleges and universities. One of the recent hallmarks of the organization of OCA has been its priority to make educator/scholars across Ohio feel welcomed into the organization. Our last two conventions have been held in locations around the state and our recent restructuring to include district representatives speaks to the renewed inclusiveness. I'd like to see our organization reach out even further to individuals and institutions who have not yet discovered this invitation. There are institutions with communication programs, some big and some small, that we have not seen represented at OCA of late.

I'd also like to see us encourage greater undergraduate participation, perhaps by tapping into our Lambda Pi Eta chapters or other student organizations and inviting them to convene at our conference. I love to see the turn out we get from graduate students at the OCA convention, and I think we could help a lot of our gifted undergraduates explore the scholarly life more by making the conference accessible and attractive to some of them.

**If you had to describe yourself, what words would you use?**

Adjectives? ;-)

My favorite quotation comes from Sir Winston Churchill. After the Battle of Britain, he said, "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." Not only do these words reflect a defiant optimism in their historical context, but also there is an innate wisdom in recognizing that endings and beginnings are not so cut and dried. If it could be said of

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## ‘District reps’ created for Executive Board

In a vote at the fall 2006 conference, the Ohio Communication Association has changed the structure of its Executive Board to designate five “district representatives” in place of “college representatives.”

The conference then elected two of the representatives – for the Southeast and Northwest districts, for two-year terms, and the other three – for Southwest, Northeast and Central districts, for one-year-terms.

The conference also designated a new business manager, Stefve Lenzmeier Broz of Wittenberg University, Springfield, and new conference coordinator, Adam Earnhardt of Youngstown State University.

This newsletter was edited by Dr. Richard D. Hendrickson, an assistant professor of communications at John Carroll University, using InDesign CS2 software. If you have corrections or suggestions, write to [rhendrickson@jcu.edu](mailto:rhendrickson@jcu.edu).

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me that I learned to live my life in a way that made new beginnings out of seeming endings, that would be a pretty flattering description.

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He brings extensive professional experience as a web developer and e-marketing director. He is responsible for maintaining eight web sites. He is redesigning the communication studies part of the department web site.

Earnhardt has earned several awards for his research and has held several leadership positions in national associations. In 2004, he was awarded the Duquesne University Graduate Student Fellowship at the National Communication Ethic Conference for his research on the use of minority student images. He earned the top student paper in the training and development division of the National Communication Association (NCA). In 2005, he served as chair of the NCA student section and was a member of the legislative assembly in 2005 and 2006.

He is publication editor for the NCA mass communication division. He is the webmaster for the Society for Collegiate Journalists (SCJ). The SCJ national executive council recently tapped Earnhardt to serve as editor for an online publication entitled *The Collegiate Journalist*.

Earnhardt’s wife, Mary Beth, is a journalism instructor in YSU’s English department. They reside in Clarion, PA with their daughter, Ella, three dogs and two cats.

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Ohioans. “We must make our scholarship relevant outside the discipline.”

-- **Dr. Andrew S. Rancer**, Professor in the School of Communication at the University of Akron: Communications scholars must recognize the benefit of engaging in a focused programmatic inquiry. It will help them get published and be better recognized for their work. They should also see the importance of finding a mentor to advise them in graduate school and beyond.

-- **Dr. Matthew J. Smith**, Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Wittenberg University: “I wish people to devote their attention to areas of research that make them curious. I worry that some in a highly market-conscious state make selections on what is hot. ... Look at your bookshelf. What books are you reading? Look at your calendar. Where do you invest your time? Look to your life. Who are the people you chose to share it with?”

-- **Dr. Sue DeWine**, Provost for Marietta College: “Do research that matters, that makes a difference. Know what you want your audience to think or do differently as a result. Collaborate. Many tenure processes don’t give full credit for collaborative research. Don’t forget why we are in this field. We want to be teachers. Research must benefit the students. It has to come back to the classroom.”