

# Commraderie



## Going Live from the Yellow Room

Sarah Goldy-Brown

Radio, social media, print, web, and now a recording studio... The Pulse continuously seeks to provide more opportunities for students to gain experience. The media hub recently added a recording studio to its repertoire of media offered on campus. "Live from the Yellow Room," a new initiative by Messiah students, allows artists to record music and feature in a 20- to 30-minute video on The Pulse's YouTube channel. The show provides musicians with the opportunity to record music for free and students with the opportunity for hands-on experience.

The idea started two years ago when broadcasting major Dylan Kalogris '14 realized he wanted something similar to [NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts](#) at Messiah. These concerts feature independent artists like Macklemore or Kishi Bashi playing a 15-minute acoustic concert that NPR then uploads to its website. Kalogris wanted to adapt this idea to give local artists the ability to record their own material and then receive video and audio content comparable to other recording studios.

This year, the timing for the project finally made sense. Kalogris saw availability in his schedule and signed up for a Pulse practicum to receive credit for carrying out his idea. Two other seniors, Caroline Phillips (film) and Jeremy Zimmerman (broadcasting), also came on board to execute the project. Phillips does most of the video recording and editing while Zimmerman primarily works with audio and taking still shots. "There is definitely a strong team at play right now. I

knew if this was going to work at all, we needed to get the right people involved," says Kalogris.

For its first session, the team filmed and recorded Nashville folk duo [Rough and Tumble](#). Kalogris made the connection with the band through Dr. Ed Arke, his academic advisor. The second session featured [Andrew Brubaker](#), a 2013 Messiah graduate who Kalogris met during his campus events work-study. Kalogris wants to use Messiah and local connections to bring in artists that will provide The Pulse with unique audio content for the radio that students will want to listen to.

Next semester, Kalogris hopes to invite more independent musicians from the area and region that pass through to come in for an afternoon and record a set. The group will also find Messiah alum and students who write their own songs and want to start marketing themselves and their music. Finally, B-Sides artists will also come into consideration depending on their availability and style of music.


Although in its initial phases, Kalogris believes the project will have great success. "It encompasses all kinds of media. I think that's why Dr. Arke, the faculty advisor for The Pulse, has been so excited about



Editors:  
Emily Carter  
Sarah Goldy-Brown  
Jodie Howard

In This Issue...  
Yellow Room 1  
Faculty Scholarship 2  
Bitstrips 3  
Alumni Spotlight 5  
Miles For Smiles 6  
Homecoming Queen 6  
Senior Film Project 7  
COMMunity Christmas 7

it, about what The Pulse is trying to do, and what Messiah is trying to do,” he says. “It is an exciting project that has a lot of potential.”

Kalogris, Zimmerman, and Phillips all graduate this year, but they hope for the project to continue after they leave. “We want to make this something that becomes part of the regular programming of the Pulse. We are not just looking at the radio station here. We are looking at material for the website, all social media, and our YouTube page. There is so much potential. Next semester we are going to hone in on how to use the material and spread it around the local area. Once we get there, we are going to figure out how to create it as a program to make it last and make it something that other people can do.” 

---

## Faculty Present Scholarship Projects

Emily Carter and Sarah Goldy-Brown

*Faculty scholarship projects not only bolster a professor's teaching ability, but they also contribute knowledge to their respective fields. Recently, three professors in the department pursued projects to do just that.*

### YouTube, Digital Humanities, and Italian Cinema

Professor Fabrizio Cilento travelled to Atlanta, Ga., with senior digital media major, Alex White, in November. The pair presented their paper, “What Julian Smith Hates (and Loves) About Facebook: Social Media Parody as Self-Promotion,” at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference. Released in 2009, comedian Julian Smith’s video, “25 Things I Hate About Facebook,” parodies annoying features of the social media site. Cilento and White’s study argues that Smith’s generational target and recognition of social networking dynamics make the video successful, generating more than 7 million views on YouTube.



Cilento recalls, “When I started working with Alex last year we were complete strangers, but we soon found out that we had a genuine passion for YouTube and humor in the digital age in common. We were committed to blending together theory and practice, academic rigor and innovative research.” Part of a collaborative digital humanities project, “Pioneering YouTube,” the study aims to investigate and analyze YouTube comedians and entrepreneurs.

Cilento also presented his essay, “One Hundred Steps: Marco Tullio Giordana, Sicily, and the Flow of Universal History,” during the Italian Cinema Session at the 2013 Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association conference in San Diego, Calif. Directed by Marco Tullio Giordana, “One Hundred Steps” is an Italian film that details the life of Giuseppe “Peppino” Impastato, a political activist who opposed the Mafia in Sicily. Cilento’s essay “presents a conceptual map of the relationship between the film and its precursors and contemporaries.” His work was chosen for an upcoming volume, *The Cinema of Marco Tullio Giordana*.

In addition, Cilento’s article, “The Missed Encounter with the Actor-Poet: Carmelo Bene and Vittorio Bodini According to Ruggero Jacobbi,” is awaiting publication in the *California Italian Studies Journal* issue on “Italian Sound.”

### A Winning Angle

Professor Nathan Skulstad recently received word that *De sones y Memorias*, a film he did camera work on, received first prize for Best Short-Local Documentary at the Rodando Film Festival San Luis Potosí, Mexico. Directed by Adonay Guerrero, the film tells the tale of artist and musician Alec Dempster, examining the relationship between his work and his personal life. Skulstad, who assisted with adding to the visual storytelling and b-roll in the film, expressed, “We had many discussions about how to capture footage that would add to the story and highlight the relationship between the characters in the piece.”



Continued on [Page 3](#)

He recalls director Adonay Guerrero's strong vision for the project. "When you are working with directors who are creative, collaborative, kind, and hardworking, it makes your job easy." Skulstad explained, "The fun thing about documentary is you have to try to see things before they happen and watch for patterns and details while trying to stay a step above the subject. You basically try to think like an editor, imagining how shots and sequences will cut together."

### **Media vs. PR Education**

Dr. Nance McCown and PR senior Sarah Doucette headed to the 2013 PRSA International Conference Educators Academy in October to share a poster presentation. Their project sought to examine the relationship between media, PR education, and the perception of PR professionals. "I wanted to try to understand whether PR education and experiences actually mediated the negative influences that students get from films and movies about the profession," said McCown.

The project idea originated from a graduate school project McCown began in 2006, but due to time constraints and resource limitations, she could not conduct the experiment until 2012. To begin the process, McCown created two research practicum positions for Doucette and 2013 Messiah alum Emily Mohler. She wanted to provide students with research opportunities that would count for credit.


Doucette, Mohler, and McCown, along with a few other student volunteers, ran the experiment last spring which required volunteers to watch movie clips featuring professionals in the field of PR and then to complete a brief survey. The survey contained opposite word pairs from which a student had to choose the one that they believed most accurately described a PR professional. Students then answered questions about their level of PR experience including coursework, internships, seminars, and volunteering. McCown teamed up with Associate Professor of Education Jennifer Fidler to analyze the data. Findings showed a correlation between the amount of PR education and the perception of PR professionals.

Looking towards the future, McCown hopes to repeat the experiment with a larger sample size by collaborating with scholars from other institutions. "PR education does make a difference. We have the



*Sarah Doucette '14 and Dr. Nance McCown at PRSA.*

opportunity when educating PR students to help them change the way PR is perceived. There are so many good things about how PR can help organizations that have nothing to do with bad effects shown in media," said McCown.

Along with continuing this project, McCown hopes to develop other research projects at the same level with which students can engage. 

---

## **Bitstrips: Lasting Sensation or Fading Trend?**

Emily Carter

What's one of the hottest trends in Facebook right now? "Friends" turning into comic book characters through the phenomenon known as Bitstrips. First launched in 2008, the Bitstrips website and app allows users to design comic scenarios, transporting themselves and friends into the action.

In an interview with The Baltimore Sun, Jacob Blackstock, the company's chief executive and creative officer explains, "Basically, it's an app that turns you and your friends into a cast of cartoon characters. Then you can take those characters and put them into crazy scenes."

Users design their avatars by selecting physical characteristics such as, skin color, hair style, and body shape. Dr. Nance McCown, Chair of Messiah's Communication Department, explains, "I got into Bitstrips because I just wanted to create an avatar,

Continued on [Page 4](#)

and I was fortunate enough to have the tools in the program to make one that people say actually looks like me.”

Users can then place their doppelgangers into one of thousands of scenes, add a caption, and share their creation on social media sites.

Though the company’s Facebook app launched in 2012, Bitstrips has exploded in popularity in recent months due to the release of its mobile app for iOS and Android devices. With more than 10 million users, the app earned top ratings in the free-apps section of iTunes Charts and Google Play.

Sarah Newton, a junior communication major, affirms, “I find Bitstrips really funny and amusing. I love that I can put my friends into these situations that are lifelike but more extreme. Bitstrips takes sayings and makes the comic ironic.” Similarly, McCown conveyed, “I have grown to enjoy Bitstrips as a creative way to express feelings about my day or quirky situations.”

At the same time, some Facebook users have grown wary of the comics which have flooded their news feeds. Adjunct professor Christopher Markley pointed out, “I created an account and posted one or two of my own, but very quickly lost interest, since I began to see them too frequently. The novelty wore off quickly.”

In an article posted on News Thump, a UK Spoof and Satire News website, social media analyst Simon Williams commented on the frustration caused by the “endless stream” of comics. “What Facebook users need to understand is that the person most amused by any single Bitstrip is the person who created that Bitstrip.”

Dr. Kate Simcox recognizes, “I think some people might like the idea of sort of starring in their own little



**Nance and Kate solve the world's problems.**


story, which is the only aspect of Bitstrips that kind of bothers me; it feels narcissistic, like ‘hey, look at me!’”

McCown identified another bothersome feature. “I don’t like most of the ‘friend’ scenarios, and I particularly don’t like it when someone Bitstrips me in an awkward situation,” She noted. “I once had a casual Facebook acquaintance Bitstrip me doing something rather strange, and it just felt wrong. I actually deleted that comic from my newsfeed.”

“I don’t like when friends make strange Bitstrips about you and then have the ability to tag you in the photo. Although you can take the tag off, the photo is still on that person’s account, and it’s not always very entertaining,” said Jen Morgan, a sophomore communication major.

Tired of scrolling through the barrage of Bitstrips? You can remove them from your Facebook news feed by clicking “Manage Blocking” under Facebook Account Settings. Simply scroll to “Block Apps” and type “Bitstrips.”

Despite Bitstrips’ mixed reviews, the question remains—will the app maintain its popularity, or is it simply a passing trend? Morgan predicts, “I don’t see the popularity of Bitstrips lasting for too much longer, since I think people are going to start to get bored or annoyed with the comics clogging up their newsfeeds.”

Newton adds, “I think that Bitstrips will lose its popularity over time, but for now it is definitely one of the more popular apps out there. It is fun because you can add a more personal touch to the comics that feature you and your friends.” 



---

## COMM Alum Excels in Television Industry

Emily Carter

For Keith Blaisdell ('82), a member of Messiah's first graduating class of communication majors, a passion for television and communication has driven his career steps near and far. Currently, as Director of Broadcast Operations at ABC27 News in Harrisburg, Pa., Blaisdell supervises news, engineering, and production at WHTM TV. "I am responsible for providing insight and vision for our technical infrastructure design, broadcast operations, and news and lifestyle programming."

Blaisdell says the most rewarding part of his job is working with a great crew of broadcast and internet professionals. "Our team's creative energy and dedication to creating great local television energizes me each day." Using his experience and technical knowledge, he seeks to enhance operations, serving Central Pennsylvania and ABC27's viewers. Blaisdell adds that the 24-hour nature of the industry keeps him on his toes, noting, "We must always work on the future, without interrupting our round the clock broadcast and digital platforms."

Blaisdell recalls, "I have always felt that communication is core to our essence as humans." As a child, he remembers being captivated by the medium of television. "My work in this medium combines my love of the creative development of content, with a fascination of advanced technology that is ever changing. There is never a dull moment in our business."

During his senior year at Messiah, Blaisdell interned at WHTM ABC27. After graduation, he landed a position as a part time photographer with the company. "Photojournalism taught me the technical side of electronic news gathering, with the fundamentals of great storytelling," he says. Climbing the ladder, he advanced from photographer to chief photographer, to news operations manager, to assistant news director, and eventually news director. With 24 years invested into the business, Blaisdell took




advantage of an opportunity to work with engineers in the United States and the United Kingdom to develop High Definition television equipment. In 2011, he returned home to WHTM ABC27.

A five-time Emmy Award winner from the Mid Atlantic Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Blaisdell has received numerous Associated Press Awards and National Press Photographer Association Awards. In addition, he is a two-time National Press Photographer Association Photographer of the Year, and he earned an International Association of Broadcast Manufacturers (Europe) award for product development for a miniature HD transmitter.

"Messiah taught me to seek excellence and to always integrate my faith in my daily work. I am a Christian, and I believe deeply that truth is at the foundation of my service," Blaisdell notes, adding that his faith reminds him to use his journalism skills to give a voice to those who may not otherwise have one.

While at Messiah, Blaisdell participated in activities with the campus radio station and communication department. His favorite memories here include bonding with his brothers on the second floor of Miller and meeting his wife, Lorrie. In his free time, he enjoys photography, watching movies, and Indy Car racing.

Speaking to current students, Blaisdell encourages, "Seek out an internship. Be prepared to work very hard. Life is not a 9 to 5 job. Never compromise your faith, family or integrity. Do what you love, and love what you do!" 

---

## PRSSA Hosts "Miles for Smiles"

Sarah Goldy-Brown




*Pictured above: PRSSA president Brittney Radford and Cheryl Hornung, founder of Caitlyn's Smiles.*

On Saturday, Nov. 9, runners took their mark as they raced to help the Messiah College Chapter of PRSSA raise money to bring smiles to kids' faces. As a service project this semester, PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) planned and executed a 5K to raise money for Caitlin's Smiles, a non-profit organization in Harrisburg. Caitlin's Smiles seeks to bring joy and smiles to the faces of sick children delivering "Bags of Smiles" to more than 90 hospitals in and around Pennsylvania. The bags contain markers, coloring books, stuffed animals, Play-Doh, crafts, and journals.

Members of PRSSA began planning in early September. Students broke into four teams to prepare for the event: donations, logistics, advertisement/promotion, and media relations. The teams worked to gain media coverage, gather food and race prize donations, spread the word to the local community, and secure a location.

After two months of planning, PRSSA launched the event on Nov. 9, 2013, on the property of West Shore Evangelical Free Church in Mechanicsburg, Pa. The event, Miles for Smiles, consisted of a 5K race, a 1-mile family fun walk, and a fall festival for the kids. More than 40 runners and their children came out to

run and donate money to Caitlin's Smiles. Runners ran the course while kids painted pumpkins, ate snacks, and made cards for the "Bags of Smiles."

Following the race, runners came inside and the charity's founder, Cheryl Hornung, shared a [video](#) showing the mission and goals of the organization. After presenting the race awards, PRSSA handed Hornung a sizeable check. "The event went great," says PRSSA President Brittney Radford. "We raised almost \$800 for such a worthy cause and gained invaluable experience that you can't get in a classroom. Even though it was a lot of work, it was all worth it knowing we helped make a difference in the lives of children." 

---

## Rachel Scarborough Crowned Homecoming Queen!



*Congratulations to Rachel Scarborough '14 (public relations) for being crowned Homecoming Queen during this year's festivities. Your COMMunity is proud of you!*

## COMMunity Christmas Celebration

Department faculty went all out to transform their offices into welcoming havens as they “treated” COMMunity students with goodies, arts and crafts “therapy,” Christmas music and décor, and the gift of time. Equipped with treat bags they decorated themselves, students progressively visited faculty offices on Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 4, to enjoy a wonderful time of Christmas COMMunity.



*Pictured above: COMMunity students hold up their decorated goodie bags. Pictured below: Professor Mary Holloway with her hand-crocheted ornaments.*



## Senior Film Project Pairs Sci-Fi Action with Drama

Emily Carter

Film and media arts major Mitch McClure has begun work on *Downward*, his senior film project. A 20-minute sci-fi short film, *Downward* tells the tale of a soldier’s widow, who is forced to solicit help from a bio-engineered warrior to track down her husband’s body. The story unfolds in the *Dragoon* universe, a world crafted over the past decade by executive producer and Messiah alum, Mike Ortiz ’09.

McClure serves as the film’s director and cinematographer, while Messiah alum Rolando Vega ’13 acts as producer. Mainly composed of underclass students, the enthusiastic crew has volunteered their time to assist on set and behind the scenes.

McClure says, “Projects like *Downward* are necessary for showcasing the strength of Messiah’s film program. My goal is that projects like *Downward* will motivate underclass students to take on even more ambitious projects in the future.”

Funding for the film will largely come through donations. For more information on how you can help, visit the [website](#). 