

Connections

Department of Communication Studies Alumni Newsletter
Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA 23606

Fall 2010

Entrepreneurs!

Although I started at Christopher Newport as a business major in 2002, I quickly changed my major to Communication Studies. I'm so glad I changed majors, because what I learned in the "Comm" department has served me in every facet of life – especially in operating my event planning business.

In my sophomore year at CNU, I worked in a bridal shop as a registered bridal consultant. It was here that I first experienced the joy of working with brides and sharing in the excitement of their special day. I always knew that I wanted to own a business, but working in the bridal shop really got me thinking about event planning as a career.

After graduating and moving to Florida in 2006, I spent time at large corporations such as Walt Disney World, Dillard's, and Ethan Allen, learning hospitality, service and sales. I moved back to Virginia in early 2009, and was inspired a by a friend to (finally!) start my own event planning business; **Voila! Event Studio, LLC** was born in June 2009.



I offer an array of event planning services from weddings to birthday parties to corporate outings. All of my services are highly customizable and my pricing is very competitive as well. To date, I have completed two weddings, as well as several other successful projects. I'm very passionate about my business and providing the best experience possible to all of my clients and their guests. Every day I use information that I learned while studying Communication, including my senior research project which was about, you guessed it, the wedding industry.

I also use interpersonal communication, to ensure positive relationships with my clients; mass communication, when reading event publications, and persuasion when making deals with vendors. Family and intercultural communication become important in event planning, especially weddings, because I have to determine the dynamic that will affect the atmosphere of the event, who the decision makers are, and so on. Communication Studies and the department professors at CNU prepared me well for the business world, and I will continue to reap the rewards of a major that spans all business fields and all types of people.

In addition to maintaining my website and facebook page, I attend trade shows and conferences, read event publications, and network with other industry vendors. I love meeting with clients, organizing details, and all of the hours of work that go into making an event a spectacular occasion. I have a plethora of goals and dreams for Voila!, and fully intend on achieving all of them in the near future.

Tyler FitzHugh '06
<http://www.voilaeventstudio.com>

[editor's note: Tyler also is employed by
Stoladi Property Group, Washington, DC]



Looking back, I cannot believe how quickly my tenure at CNU flew by and how much I learned in that short amount of time. Anyone who knows me, knows that my fervor in life is animal rescue, and I have made it a goal of mine to contribute to different animal rescue organizations any way that I can.

In an effort to combine my desire to make a difference and save the lives of homeless animals, with my passion of marketing and public relations, I sought an internship with the Peninsula SPCA in Newport News during my senior year. Throughout my time as a marketing intern, I was afforded the wonderful opportunity to get the hands-on experience of working behind the scenes in animal rescue, while utilizing my communication skills in event planning, public relations, and basic marketing tasks.

Fundraising is pertinent for all non-profits, and it was helping plan events like the annual black-tie gala, Fur Ball, which furthered my interest in staying with this industry. After graduation, I landed right back in the lap of another SPCA in Stafford, VA. This allowed me to play a key role, as Marketing/PR Director, in founding a brand new SPCA, and the first one for Stafford.

The struggles that come with beginning a new non-profit organization are endless, but as we grow, each challenge serves as a catalyst to continue our effort. I am fortunate to have this chance to utilize my education while making a difference through fundraising events and gaining and maintaining donors.

Drue Brownback '09
<http://www.staffordspca.org>



New Website!

Visit our updated
Communication Studies
website!

<http://communications.cnu.edu>

See photos of friends and
faculty!

Check out our archives of
Alumni Newsletters!

And keep up with
department news!

Career Connections Career Connections



Your Online Identity... Surprise!

IF YOU have ever said to yourself, "Okay, I'm profiled online. So what?" It's time to rethink that. The answer to the question "who is looking at this stuff, anyway?" may surprise you.

If you have searched for your own name, for instance, you are probably not the only one. According to a Pew Internet study, seven in ten adults who use the Internet have searched online for information about other people. Your namesake probably did a search, as well, and found you!

In less than ten seconds, anyone can find your name, age address, phone number, and possibly where you work – without you ever knowing. As you read e-mail, check utility statements, or post a status update on Facebook or Twitter, you leave invisible tracks on the Internet.

Your current or potential employers. Don't think your boss is bright enough to do an online search for you? Guess again. According to a 2010 Microsoft study, 79% of recruiters and hiring managers in the U.S. have reviewed online information posted to social networking sites and blogs in order to screen job applicants.

This same study also revealed that 86% of U.S. hiring

managers have informed candidates they were rejected based on what had been found online about them.

If someone posts a comment about you (accurate or not), it could affect your reputation. Even something as seemingly innocent as a silly photo can make a difference.

It DOES matter. Since the Internet is so convenient, free, and accessible by anyone with a connection, your online profile is quickly replacing background checks, credit reports, references, and many other tools previously used to obtain information about you. Those older methods provided you with more control over the results.

Michael Fertik, founder and CEO of **ReputationDefender** has spoken on Good Morning America, Fox News, CNN and other national programs. He believes "this is an area that requires, if not regulation, then the use of caution and awareness."

Your online reputation is your "new credit score." Stay alert and protect it.

source: "What People Can Find Out About You Online"
AOL.com/articles

Meet the New Folks...

Welcome to Dr. Rebecca DiVerniero who joined our faculty this fall! She received her Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Dr. DiVerniero graduated with a secondary emphasis in instructional communication.

This semester, she is teaching Family Communication and Public Speaking. Among her research interests, Dr. DiVerniero includes interpersonal/family communication,



with an emphasis on stepfamilies, and instructional communication with a focus on instructor-student privacy issues.

She says that "I'm very excited to work in an environment where teaching is a top priority, collegiality is ubiquitous, and being a crazy cat lady is not only accepted, but encouraged."

Dr. DiVerniero can be reached at rebecca.diverniero@cnu.edu

...on the Block!

And this fall, we also welcome Dr. Daniel Rex Bernard!

Dr. Bernard completed his Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Oklahoma.

He is currently teaching classes in Communicating Identity and Communication Theory.

Dr. Bernard's research interests include social influence in health contexts (including HIV/AIDS, malaria, and cancer), nonverbal detection of deception, risk and crisis communication, and development of technology in theoretical and applied communication studies.

As a new resident on the east coast, and an avid pet owner, Dr. Bernard says that he is "excited to see my dog Finny's reactions to seeing the beach for the first time!"

Dr. Bernard can be reached at daniel.bernard@cnu.edu



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Jenn (Mandler) Belman '06 Virginia Beach, VA is the Office Manager for INNOVATE Architecture & Interiors. She announces her marriage to Dave Belman on June 11, 2010.

DeMarius Bryant '10 Newport News, VA is a 2nd Lieutenant, US Army Chemical Biological Nuclear Radiological Officer. He is completing chemical school in Missouri.

Savannah (Johnson) Cook '08 Lynchburg, VA announces her marriage to David Cook (CNU '07) on June 26, 2010.

Krista (Jones) Eutsey '02 New Kent, VA is the Executive Assistant to the County Administrator of New Kent. She announces her marriage to Michael Eutsey on March 25, 2010.



Zach Fauver '08 Newport News, VA is employed as a Business Development Account Executive for MYMIC in Portsmouth, VA.

Britney Fitzgerald '10 Astoria, NY is employed as a Sales Professional for Bloomingdale's in New York City. She is pursuing a master's degree in Publishing from Pace University.

Ashley Forish '07 Chesapeake, VA is the Director of Recruiting for Centura College. She is currently enrolled in an MBA program at Averett University.

Jessica Gaffney '09 Charlottesville, VA is a Marketing Intern for Kid Pan Alley. She is nearing completion of a master's degree from Ohio University.

Annie Geczi '09 Midlothian, VA is enrolled in a master's program in Special Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Kate (Potter) Hailey '08 Roanoke, VA is pursuing a Masters in Teaching from Hollins University. She announces her marriage to Scott Hailey on August 21, 2010.

Justin Harrah '10 Manassas, VA is the Human Resources Specialist for the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) in Herndon, VA.

Megan (Fogarty) Heidt '06 Silver Spring, MD announces her marriage to Brian Heidt on October 31, 2009.

Alencia Johnson '09 Alexandria, VA is a Communications Specialist with GEICO's corporate office in Chevy Chase, MD. She has been appointed to diverse positions, including a City of Alexandria committee.

Katie Johnston '08 Vernon, CT is enrolled in the Higher Education and Student Affairs master's program at the University of Connecticut, and was also awarded a graduate assistantship.

Lisa Lazzari '10 Carmel, NY is the Coordinator, National Youth Leadership Development for the March of Dimes national office in White Plains, NY.

Sarah London '07 Raleigh, NC is pursuing an MS in Communication Studies at North Carolina State University where she was awarded a teaching assistantship.

Julie (Helveston) Martin '06 Newport News, VA is the Director of Member Services for Premier Fitness. She is also pursuing her own photography business. www.juliemartinphoto.com

Robert May '05 Potomac Falls, VA is the Program Manager for Akimeka, Government IT & Software Development Solutions. He is enrolled in the MBA program at Liberty University.

Jennifer MacGregor '08 Lakeland, FL received the ACA (Accredited Claims Adjuster) designation and was awarded a promotion at GEICO in Lakeland.

Jamie Oliver '08 Charlotte, NC is employed as the Communications Coordinator for Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC).

Samantha Pelstring '07 Cairo, Egypt recently completed a tour with the U.S. Peace Corps in Ukraine, and is now a pre-school Teacher with the American International School of Egypt.

Katie Reagon '05 Woodbridge, VA is employed as the Marketing Coordinator for Rinker Design Associates, PC, in Manassas, VA.

Tamsen Sapp '10 Strasburg, VA is employed as the Graphic Designer and Video Editor/Designer for Osbourn Park High School.

Jessica Schach '08 Fairfax, VA is a Paralegal for the law firm BuckleySandler LLP in Washington, DC. She is pursuing a master's degree in Legal Administration and a Paralegal Certificate at Marymount University.

Jamel Seward '06 Los Angeles, CA was awarded an MA degree in Media Arts from Long Island University. He is an Administrative Assistant for BET Original Programming and Creative Development.

Sarah Stinebaugh '09 Raleigh, NC is employed as the Assistant Manager of two stores for Enterprise Rent-a-Car in Raleigh.

Brian Stroup '10 Newport News, VA is the Assistant Football Coach – Defensive Tackles and Video Coordinator for Christopher Newport University.

Katie Sutton '02 Franklin, VA has a new position as the Material Coordinator of Purchasing for Ashland, Inc./Courtland, VA.

Caitrin (Cowan) Tarnovsky '08 Manassas, VA is enrolled in the Masters in Special Education at the University of Virginia. She and husband Eric announce the birth of their son, Evan Timothy Tarnovsky, on April 25, 2010.

Lauren Walters '09 Hampton, VA is employed as an Account Executive for Enterprise Holdings, Inc., the parent company of Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

Taylor Whitehead '09 Aberdeen, SD is an Admissions Representative for Northern State University. She is pursuing a master's degree in Education at NSU.

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