



created by current students for former students

déjà vu for a former football player

By Alexander Barton,
BS 1998

The experience of déjà vu evokes memories that seem so familiar that they could have happened in another lifetime, or even in a dream. Some think it is a look into the future, like Nostradamus' foresight or a fortuneteller's crystal ball.

Déjà vu engulfed me when I was recently invited back to Madison for the Centennial Celebrations of the Department of Life Sciences Communication (LSC), my alma mater.

The centennial offered an experience that was eerily familiar. It involved retracing my steps up Bascom Hill as an undergrad, eating ice cream cones at Babcock Hall, listening to music with libations at Memorial Union -- and running out of the tunnel onto the football field at Camp Randall.

Fortunately, it did not involve streaking or an arrest, but please allow me to explain: I was a Badger football player as an LSC undergraduate when Barry Alvarez was coach.

Very few people have earned the honor of running onto the football field at Camp Randall with 80,000 Badger fans screaming at the top of their lungs. The experience has been described by a few as a combination of running with the bulls in Spain, charging a hill, or storming a beach during battle. The trick is that you have to keep up and stay with the pack, or you risk getting run over.

As an LSC alumnus and new member of the Dean's Club, I was invited by LSC Chair Jacquie Hitchon McSweeney to join her as Guest Coach for the Wisconsin/Marshall football game on September 6, 2008. The student athletes on the team nominated her as a revered professor.

As a player, being around Coach Alvarez was a unique opportunity. You literally felt like you could reach out and touch greatness. He had an aura surrounding him that was truly amazing and this transcended to his players. Running out of the tunnel behind him as a Badger football player was one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had.

On Saturdays when I was on the team, we all made our way out of the McClain Center filled with adrenalin. You could start to feel the building shake from all the people jumping up and down. Then, as you turned the corner, everyone on the team started running up the tunnel to enter the stadium. The noise of the crowd seemed palpable.

When you exit the McClain Center onto the street, there is a gauntlet of fans all screaming at each other and everyone is wearing red. "Let's go red!" is all you can hear. You are surrounded by giant athletes, and so you are forced to keep up with the pack or face getting tampled.

As the entire unit of players and coaches makes its way to the field, it enters another tunnel, which slopes downward, and it becomes really dark. This is usually about the time you start to lose your breath, but at the end of the tunnel you glimpse the bright green turf and beautiful sunlight, which pull you forward.

The echoes of the band playing "On Wisconsin" are deafening. As you reach the end of the tunnel, you spill out onto the field and are greeted with screams of passion from a sea of red. It takes your breath away.

On this particular Saturday, more than a decade later, I was reminded of the feeling I had the first time I ran out of the tunnel to face the Colorado Buffalos in 1995. It all came back -- it was déjà vu.

As I was running out on the field



as a Badger alumnus, I was taken back to a time when I was just a bright-eyed undergraduate wondering what the future had in store. Various thoughts and voices raced through my mind:

“

As you reach the end of the tunnel, you spill out onto the field and are greeted with screams of passion from a sea of red. It takes your breath away.”

Was this just a dream or is this actually happening again? Keep running I thought...

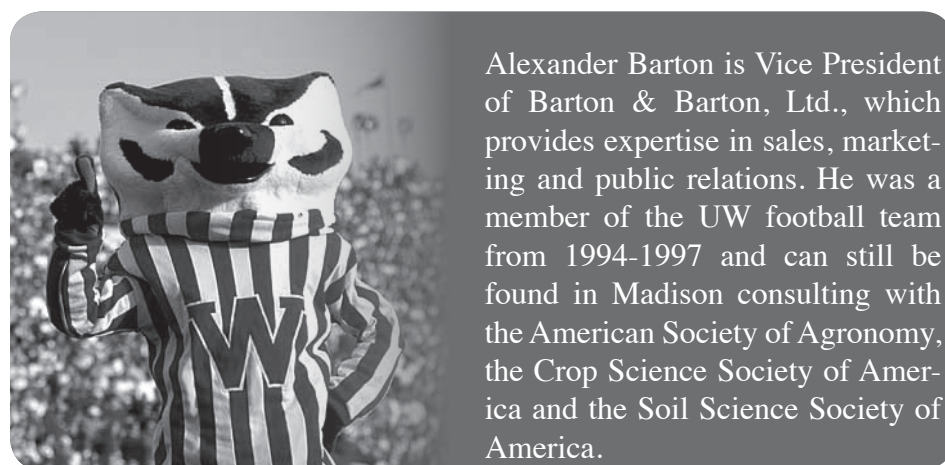
Would I be great like the fine men on the Wall of Fame? Keep breathing I thought...

Am I great now and if not, is there still time? Keep running and breathing I thought... and don't fall down.

Then, all of the sudden, it was over and I was standing on the

sidelines watching my team like so many lucky Saturdays before. I noticed the names and retired numbers of the great players of the past. I noticed the players on the field who might achieve the same recognition

one day. I also noticed how young the players were and I saw the look in their eyes which was all too familiar: aspirations of greatness. So, as I soaked all this in, more than 10 years later, as a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I had some clarity. I remain part of this great endeavor, and I wanted to scream it at the top of my lungs. I felt pride in my University and in myself. On Wisconsin!



Alexander Barton is Vice President of Barton & Barton, Ltd., which provides expertise in sales, marketing and public relations. He was a member of the UW football team from 1994-1997 and can still be found in Madison consulting with the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America and the Soil Science Society of America.

a word from **the chair...**

Dear LSC alumni and friends,

The year 2008 has delivered an extraordinary centennial. Of course, any centennial is remarkable! Yet, the year began with the happy coincidence of moving into Hiram Smith Hall in January 2008 rather than December 2007, because of a delay in construction. The department's new quarters, cloaked in 116 years of architectural history, brought home to all of us in the most concrete of ways the importance of legacy in assessing past, present and future.

LSC was the first department of agricultural journalism 100 years ago. It was also the first department of communication on campus. Today our joint doctoral program with the School of Journalism & Mass Communication has been identified as first in the US in placing graduates in faculty positions in research institutions. In this arena and others, we are proud to continue our legacy of leadership.

Faculty member, Dietram

Scheufele, serves as another example of LSC's prominence in our discipline. His article on the framing of messages, published in the flagship *Journal of Communication*, is the most cited article in the past decade. Several of his other publications are currently among the top 10 most cited in *Political Communication*, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *Mass Communication and Society*, *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, and *Communication Research*. He has attracted over \$2.5 million in NSF funding as PI or Co-PI, and his work on public opinion of nanotechnology is frequently referred to in the mass media around the world. The Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication recognized the excellence of his teaching with a national award, and he serves on the Nanotechnology Technical Advisory Group to the US Presidents' Council of Advisors on Science and

Technology. We were fortunate to be able to retain him this year in the face of competing offers from other research institutions.

In contrast to this year's opening, 2008 closes in a struggle to maintain faculty strength, up-to-date computer labs, new opportunities for students, and many other indices of excellence -- in the dire economic crisis that constrains our nation. Sustaining LSC in these difficult times are many precious memories from this year's events, when alumni and friends gathered to recommit to the ideals that have fueled 100 years of excellence.

The bedrock that supports LSC's achievements is its familial culture, as this issue's articles reflect. It was humbling for those of us with relatively recent histories in the department to witness alumni reconnecting who bonded 40 years ago --- and who continue to cherish their years as students as being some of the most formative, important, and en-



Jacquie Hitchon McSweeney

joyable of their lives. Their insights into the essentials of LSC community help us plan for the future.

Those of us who now steer the department (Larry Meiller as Director of Undergraduate Studies, Al Gunther as Director of Graduate Studies, and I as Chair) will strive to protect LSC as much as possible from the impact of budget cuts. If you feel that you can help support your department, please let me know at jhitchon@wisc.edu or 608-262-0184.

On Wisconsin!

centennial greetings

and a visit **from finland**

By Anssi Siukosaari,

Communication Educator & Entrepreneur
MS 1968, Commencement May 2008

When I arrived in Madison in August of 1967, I was amazed to be met at the airport by Professor and Chair Dick Powers. My family and I were obviously hungry travellers and so he took us immediately to McDonalds for a hamburger. What a warm welcome for just one new student, even one from abroad!

The next surprise occurred when I asked about his weekly office hour for students, a routine among our professors in Helsinki.

"What? An hour?" asked Powers. "I always keep my door open when I'm here. Please come in any time."

Soon I noticed that he could identify his students by their footsteps along the corridor, so he could greet us by name before we even came into sight.

It was wonderful that at UW I could take lessons from across the entire campus in creating my MS program. This multi-disciplinary approach was a revelation to me. I



Anssi Siukosaari

was interested in journalism, mass media and public relations, and so I took classes in LSC, Communication Arts and the School of Journalism & Mass Communication. I studied interesting subjects taught by such excellent professors as Powers, White, Sorenson, Lawson, Jackson, Cutlip, Ross, Klee, and Bostian.

It was new to me to write so many papers and participate in so many seminars, reading and referring to books and articles, and savouring such lively discussions. I benefited from Maury White who served as advisor, and also from the insight of fellow students, Gordell Hatch, Gene Kroupa and Larry Meiller. I

also very much appreciated the assistance of our department secretaries, Tina Mara and Roberta Simons.

For the past 40 years, my family and I have remained grateful to the Kellogg Foundation for the grant that enabled us to live in Madison and explore the US.

My highly respected MS degree from LSC gave me a new start in Finland and fueled a lifelong career in mass media and corporate communications. In LSC, I grasped what communication is all about; I became inspired to develop more effective communication in Finland, to teach it and to serve as a consultant.

I was invited to teach at the University of Helsinki and at four other universities. I served as a consultant to over 350 companies, associations and public institutions. I also wrote two textbooks on the subject.

After running my own communications agency for 18 years, I sold it in 2005 to my son, who now continues my work with 20 other professionals. Among them there are six in Tallinn, Estonia.

Despite these achievements, I

knew that I would remain dissatisfied with my life if I did not complete something that I had started at UW. I asked last winter if it would still be possible for me to attend commencement -- 40 years after graduation!

Joe Farrenkopf of Bascom Hall, Jacquie Hitchon McSweeney and Larry Meiller coordinated my attendance in May of 2008.

Those events in the Kohl Center were truly fascinating and memorable. My family back home in Finland was able to follow the commencement ceremony live on the internet.

At the reception held by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, the Dean started her speech by welcoming me as a remarkable example of an alumnus who "travelled from the other side of the globe" to attend the ceremony. I felt guilty about not being a very active alumnus thus far, and felt motivated to become better! I had come home among so many Badgers.

Yours Anssi Siukosaari,
Espoo, Finland

anniversaries

within anniversaries

By Mark A. Larson

Department Chair & Professor of
Journalism, Humboldt State University
MS 1971, Ph.D. 1980

Returning to Madison for the 100th anniversary of the Life Sciences Communication Department on September 4-7, 2008 was a wonderful chance to revisit memories.

My own “anniversary” within the LSC anniversary involved arriving in Madison 39 years ago this fall for a Master’s degree in environmental communication. At the time I thought graduate school would be a great way to extend my adolescence for a while longer, and expand my skill sets in science journalism and photography.

The realities of the passage of time since the fall of 1969 set in, however, on my first night back in Madison for the LSC Centennial Celebration. My wife, Sydney, and I went out for a late night dinner on State Street. Afterwards, on our way back to our Fluno Center hotel room, we mingled with the Thursday night sidewalk crowds of loud, inebriated UW students. One drunken young man emerged from a crowd and confronted us, waving a long flexible pole across our path commanding, “Time to limbo!”

My wife hastily moved out of harm’s way while I ducked stiffly but safely under the limbo pole. I then raised my hand to the young man for a high five – he slapped my raised hand, grinned, and yelled to his companions, “Old people rock!”

Ouch! A lot of aging Baby Boomers like myself (now age 61) hold a youthful self-image, an illusion apparently not shared by these young college students! My wife and I laughed and went off to bed while my thoughts turned back to the fall of 1969.

Coming to Madison from conservative and rural South Dakota, I often joked at the time that I felt like an “international” student. Madison seemed like a foreign country to me with its turbulent politics, incredible music scene and expanding “hippie” social life. In Madison, my political and social beliefs were no longer considered to be politically liberal; rather, I found myself in the moderate center and was regularly challenged to defend my political beliefs and expand my worldview.

One of my most vivid memories of LSC took place in the spring of 1970 when the university was shut down with political unrest after the invasion of Cambodia. I recall the

day all of us grad students sat down with the faculty (Lloyd Bostian, John Ross, John Fett, Dick Powers, Fritz Albert, Nellie McCannon, Marion Brown, Claron Burnett and others) and had a lively, wide-ranging discussion of what political action under those circumstances meant to each of us. The room was spiced with the smell of tear gas that had drifted into the department of-

“The room was spiced with the smell of tear gas that had drifted into the department offices.”

fices (then located in Ag Hall) from nearby efforts of National Guard soldiers to protect the ROTC building on the corner.

LSC faculty were great role models for me in many ways, including how to be inclusive and effective in my future career as a journalism professor.

My cohort of grad students included a wide range of young, and not-so-young, mid-career peers with widely varying academic and professional backgrounds. Most of us thought in 1969 that the “environment” would be a big issue -- some day. Few of us anticipated that the effort to create Earth Day in the spring of 1970 by Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson and others would revolutionize the way Americans thought about the “environment” and environmental journalism in less than one year!

After finishing my Master’s degree in 1971 and my US Army Reserve duty (narrowly avoiding a tour in Viet Nam), I was accepted into the UW-Madison Ph.D. program in Mass Communication. Professor Bostian remained my faculty adviser and offered me a half-time editing job in the publications offices housed in Hiram Smith Hall from 1972 to 1975.

On the LSC 100th anniversary weekend in 2008, I was led through Hiram Smith Hall on tours by Jacquie Hitchon McSweeney. There I met an old friend, Larry Meiller, who was also celebrating an anniversary: his 40th year as a teacher in LSC! He and I had funky office spaces down the hall from each other in the old Hiram Smith Hall back in 1972-75 while working on our Ph.D. degrees.

My favorite memory of Larry from that time involved cockroaches. Hiram Smith Hall was infamous

at the time for being infested with non-native giant brown cockroaches that had escaped from some UW science research project. One morning from down the hallway I heard Larry release a loud curse when he entered his office. He’d discovered that a giant cockroach had climbed into his coffee cup overnight and drowned in the dregs.

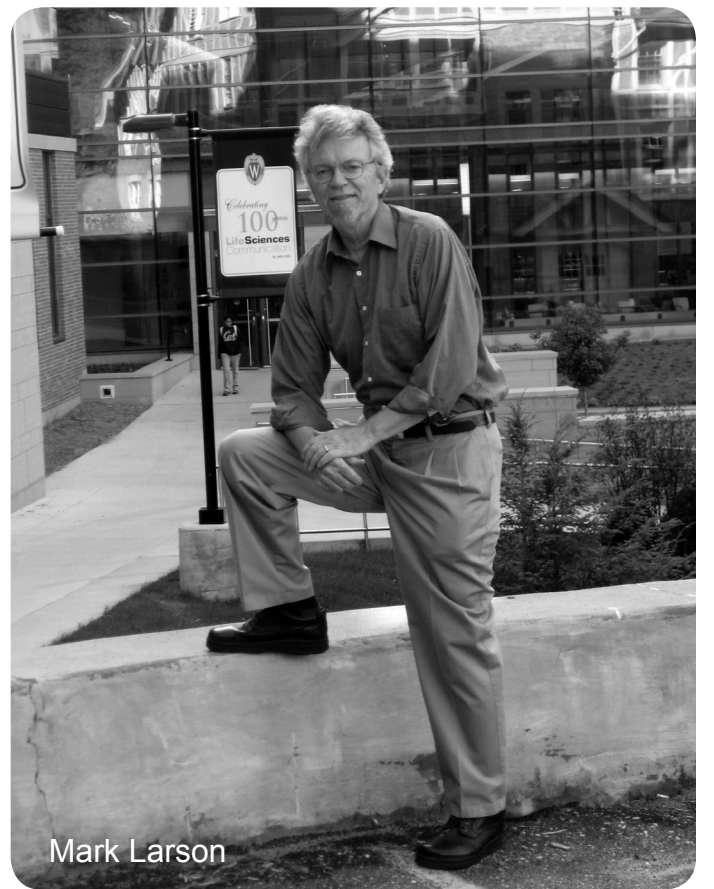
As a practical joke, fellow grad student Glen Broom and I hatched a plot: for the next few days, we planted another dead cockroach in Larry’s coffee cup each morning before he arrived. We got the expected results! After a couple days, Larry announced in his frustration to Glen and me that he had a plan to prevent cockroaches from getting into his coffee mug:

“Coming to Madison from conservative and rural South Dakota, I often joked at the time that I felt like an ‘international’ student.”

from now on, he’d leave his mug on his desk turned upside down. As he left the office that night, we watched him carefully make the arrangements.

After he left, we then captured a few live cockroaches and carefully placed them under Larry’s coffee mug to await his arrival the next morning. Needless to say, his reaction was priceless — and he also realized from our laughter what was up.

It was very special to see the LSC faculty, staff and students housed in their remodeled office and classroom space in Hiram Smith Hall — and not a single cockroach in sight!



Mark Larson



Mark Larson, Ellen Maurer, Lloyd Bostian, Jacquie Hitchon McSweeney

department of **life sciences communication**

centennial speech

By Abdul Khan
Assistant Director-General for Communication & Information at UNESCO
Ph.D. 1973

Ladies and Gentlemen,
It is a great honor and privilege to be invited to participate in and to say a few words at the Life Sciences Communication Centennial Celebration. At the outset I would like to congratulate the faculty, staff and students of the department and pay my tribute to founders—Professor Sumner, Professor Hopkins, and Professor Bry Kearl.

I am overwhelmed with emotion.
I am overwhelmed because the University of Wisconsin means a lot to me and it has played a transformational role in my life. From a remote village on the Indo-Nepal border to where I am today, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information at UNESCO, it has been an exciting journey, to say the least.

This journey would not have been possible without my University of Wisconsin experience. I am not talking from a purely educational perspective with my Masters and Ph.D. degrees, but also from a more personal aspect with the great human beings who transformed me as a person during my time here.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the faculty and staff of the department of that era. I was very fortunate to have such distinguished professors as Professor Nellie McCannon, Lloyd Bostian, John Ross, Dick Powers, John Fett,

Claron Burnett, Marian Brown, Fritz Albert, Herman Felstehausen, Maury White, and Hans Groot.
I would also like to thank my fellow students Larry Meiller, Norma Simpson, Jean Fewster, Shawki Barghouti, Cessar Mercado, Suzanna Amaya, Roberto Cobe, Mark Larson, Romy Gecolia and others for their collegiality and friendship. What a wonderful bunch of people!
Since the wonderful years we spent together in Madison, I have met many of them during my travels, and I am happy to say that they are all in top leadership positions within their organizations.

I came to the University of Wisconsin almost 40 years ago, not long after Armstrong landed on the moon. To me, landing in Wisconsin was almost a similar experience. When my illiterate grandmother and mother heard that I was leaving for the USA for my studies, they were distraught and talked about me going to the “new world.” That’s how North America was known in my

“
A toast to the department and to UW, a place where you not only discover who you are, but become the person you were meant to be.”

remote village.
My father, who was a teacher, was the only person in the village who knew where America was, but he was torn between his aspiration to send his only son for higher education and the fear of losing him forever, as it was a common practice among Indian students at the time to remain in the US after completing their graduate studies.

I landed in my “new world” in the fall of 1969 and still today I have vivid memories of my arrival in Madison. I remember being astonished to see fellow students 3 to 4 times bigger than myself-- weighing in at only 110 pounds at the time. I remember seeing snow for the first time in my life. I remember experiencing the chill of Wisconsin winter. I remember my struggle to understand American English. I remember not being able to complete my first test in statistics because I was sitting close to the entrance door of the classroom and it was too cold.

But the thought that most dominated my mind at the time was how would I return to my family if I couldn’t survive in Wisconsin? I had only \$100 with me, which was hardly enough to buy a one-way ticket home. But after a few tests in the first semester, things began to change for me, largely due to the moral and social support that I received from the faculty, staff and fellow students.

When I returned home upon my graduation in 1973, India was in the midst of its Green Revolution. Facing the prospect of a massive famine in the ‘60s, the government undertook the herculean effort of changing the face of agriculture in the country.
I would be one of the foot soldiers. Armed with my degrees and dogged determination drawn from

the courage of my beloved Badgers, I charged home ready to make my contribution.

My first job on my return to India was to establish an agricultural communication center at one of the leading agricultural universities. This center was almost a replica LSC! The work carried out by the center was not only copied by other agricultural universities in the country but it was also recognized as a center of excellence by UNESCO and UNDP.

I sometimes wonder if UW President Charles Van Hise had me in mind when he postulated the “Wisconsin Idea” in 1904. At that time, India was part of the British Empire. But by the mid ‘70s, radio, the ICT of the developing world for decades, was in full use. I had the privilege of heading the national farm and home broadcasts which made significant contributions to India’s Green Revolution. The Green Revolution was a success. Rice production in India, for example, tripled from the 1960s to the 1990s. Today, India is a major rice exporter.

Another Wisconsin Idea that I transplanted in India was in the form of the Indira Gandhi National Open University which today, equipped with most modern communication technology, has 2 million students spread across India and 28 other countries. As you know, UW was



Abdul Kahn

a pioneer in distance learning and continues to play a leading role in this field.

More recently, I have been busy on a number of topics of mutual interest. Earlier this year UNESCO produced a model journalism curriculum for developing countries. This curriculum is now being adopted in many countries around the globe. We also developed a science journalism curriculum. We assist member states in developing free, independent, and pluralistic media through our International Program of Development Communication (IPDC). Development of media professionals, especially those engaged in agriculture, education, sustainable development, health and HIV and AIDS, is another important area of our work.

I would like to explore the possibilities of collaboration between the department of Life Sciences Communication and UNESCO in some of the areas that I have mentioned and beyond. Larry Meiller visited UNESCO in Paris this year and Jacquie Hitchon McSweeney attended a conference in South Africa to begin to conceptualize what such a collaboration might look like.

The world faces many challenges such as energy versus climate change, food versus fuel, rising food prices, poverty and malnutrition. None of these challenges can be met without the active involvement of people. Needless to say, science communication has to play an important role in creating awareness, changing attitudes and bringing about behavioral change. Therefore, the need for accurate and responsible science journalism and science communication has never been greater.

And so, we have rightly come together to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the department of Life Sciences Communication. A toast to the department and to UW, a place where you not only discover who you are, but become the person you were meant to be.



Abdul Kahn

The **LifeSciencesCommunicator**, a biannual alumni newsletter of the Department of Life Sciences Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, would like to thank the following:
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