

Letter from Chair Galya Diment



This is one of the last letters I will be sending you as chair. After 12 years I am stepping down to give someone else a chance to lead and shape the department while I focus more exclusively on my teaching, scholarship, and writing. We don't know yet who the next chair will be – a chair-search committee will be set up in winter — but we do know that the collective will and wisdom of the department will produce a great new chair!

I have been spending these last months of my chairmanship spearheading significant changes in our curriculum to make our courses more attractive and accessible to students at all levels and of all majors. We are streamlining our survey courses and introducing new introductory courses, like Bojan Belić's SLAV 110: SLAVS AND THEIR TONGUES: WHOS, WHATS, WHERE, WHEN, WHYS, AND HOWS OF SLAVIC LINGUISTICS and Katarzyna Dziwirek's SLAV 210: WAYS OF BEING (to complement her courses on WAYS OF MEANING and WAYS OF FEELING). Barbara Henry's always blockbuster course, RUSS 110: INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION, has just been accepted as a College Course (a College Course is defined as meeting not only departmental learning goals but also divisional and/or college learning goals and is a large lecture, resource-efficient, topical or thematic course compelling to freshmen and sophomores). All in all we

are applying for seven new undergraduate Literature, Film, and Linguistics courses, and revising the old ones. We are also exploring ways to teach Russian to students at the Bothell and Tacoma campuses, something our Languages Coordinator, Bojan Belić, will be working on this summer. Please check out our course offerings for next year once they are available. I dare you not to be impressed!

As I am writing this letter, it is only a week away from our welcoming the MLA and AATSEEL conferences to Seattle. In addition to faculty participating in those conferences and our graduate students volunteering at registration and other functions, the Slavic Department and the Ellison Center (REECAS), as host entities, are throwing a cocktail cum food party for the AATSEEL participants (Jan. 7, 6 pm).

Then, in March, we are looking forward to welcoming a Balkan and South Slavic linguistics conference, organized by Bojan Belić (see page 5).

We have a very strong cohort of five new graduate students this year. One of them, Nicole Page, interviewed me for an article in this newsletter. Our continuing students are very ably represented here by Timothy Ott, who wrote about his experience with the UW early fall program in Prague (led by Jara Soldanova).

We also welcomed Megan Styles, our new and terrific Program Coordinator who started working in the department in September. Her smile and friendliness definitely brighten the windowless front office! Her interview with our Fulbright Lecturer, Adam Kożuchowski, is also featured on these pages.

During autumn quarter we were also

happy to welcome back one of our most illustrious undergraduate students, Roy Chan, the 2002 Dean's and President's Medalist, who now teaches at the College of William and Mary. He gave a talk on "Homeless in the World: War, Narrative, and Historical Consciousness in Eileen Chang, Gyorgy Lukacs and Lev Tolstoy."

Given all that, and despite the bleakness of public university budgets all over the country, including the UW, we are still quite bullish on our future. In large part this is also due, of course, to the generosity and goodwill of all of you, our alums and friends!

Wishing you a very Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Joyful New Year!

Contents:

1	Letter from the Chair
2-3	A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury
4	Prof. Emer. Davor Kapetanić
5-6	Polish Fulbright
6	Balkan & South Slavic Linguistics Conference
7	Early Fall in Prague
8	Polish Studies
9	Ukrainian Studies
10	STARTALK
11	Films & Novels
12-13	News from You
14-15	Gifts

Galya Diment's Latest Book, *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury* – Nicole Page

This past October Professor Galya Diment published her latest book, "A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury: The Life and Times of Samuel Kotliansky," with McGill-Queen's University Press. It is a cultural biography of Samuel Kotliansky, a Russian Jew from the Pale of Settlement, a large area of Imperial Russia where Jews were allowed to live. Kotliansky immigrated to England in 1911, to escape anti-Semitism and the pogroms. In the same year the Russian Imperial Ballet came to England on tour, stirring up a Russian cultural frenzy. This concurrence of events allowed a provincial Russian Jew with no name of his own to be swept into the upper echelons of British cultural and literary society. Although he produced only a limited amount of translation work, he greatly influenced the literary elite's understanding of Russian culture. Kotliansky befriended writers such as D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and worked with them to produce translations of Russian literature, most notably for the Woolfs' Hogarth Press. Despite being known as a difficult man and the presence of anti-Semitism in British society, Kotliansky managed to gain the respect of the British literary elite. Diment argues that his life was devoted to the philosophizing of "sacred books," which for him were those of authors such as Chekhov and Tolstoy.

Diment was excited to frame her research as a cultural biography so she could compose a

significant academic contribution and at the same time pursue her love of writing and biography as a genre. She was inspired to write this book in part because it served as a vehicle for three of her many passions: English literature, Russian literature, and the Pale of Settlement. Diment has a very personal connection to the Pale of Settlement, as her grandfather was a rabbi in a town near Vitebsk and her father was born there.

Diment's goal, reflected in the book's style, was to create a portrait of the age, building out this universe with Kotliansky as the center. This book took roughly ten years to complete, both because of the relative obscurity of Kotliansky, and also because Diment's professional schedule mostly allowed her to spend summers collecting materials. She started with the sources at US and UK university and library archives and then proceeded to map the locations of materials, descendants, and relations who would be willing to be interviewed and share their personal collections. To her delight the meetings she arranged not only provided priceless unpublished letters, documents, and photographs concerning Kotliansky and his famous friends, but Diment also cultivated meaningful friendships with those interested in sharing the memory and significance of his life. For instance, she spent

several weekends during two summers with the granddaughter of H. G. Wells and her family in Oxford, combing through her private Kotliansky collection and developing a friendship. In Montreal she met with his remaining relatives and their descendants. They greatly aided in the research process and were personally invested in revealing the story of their family member to the world. Diment also went to Kotliansky's hometown of Ostropol (now in Ukraine), in what had been the Pale of Settlement. She coordinated with local guides and met with the only remaining Jew in Ostropol and his family. To make these trips and coordinate with many others, Diment was funded by the American Philosophical Society (Franklin Research Grant, 2003), the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (2004) and the Modern Language Quarterly (Library Research Grant, 2005).

The most unexpected aspect of Kotliansky's life that Diment discovered was the depth of Kotliansky's sadness. She was prepared for the trials of a life withstanding pogroms and anti-Semitism in both Ukraine and England, but there was a larger loneliness to his life. Diment, through the letters of his

acquaintances, describes him as an uncomfortable, tragic, and complicated man. He was very hard to get along with, and people either flocked to him or hated him, but he was very loyal to those friends he had. Diment said that Koteliansky's descendants had a similar reaction to this news upon first reading her manuscript. They knew and were proud of what an influential figure he had been in the British literary circles, but they were not aware of his personal melancholy.

On a lighter note, the sheer number of people Koteliansky affected also amazed Diment. She explained that since his English was not good enough to produce a complete translation, he would work in collaboration with another writer and they would weave it into a readable and quality translation. Soon after one such collaboration with Virginia Woolf, she went on to write her essay "The Russian Point of View" (1925).

I asked Diment whether, over the course of her research, she had come across a topic to which she felt she could devote a whole other book. She told me of a digression that was edited out of the final manuscript, which will likely be the core of Diment's next project. In 1925 the Lawrences parted with Koteliansky and moved to an artist colony in Taos, NM. Here they met Leon Gaspard, an artist and Jew who

also came from the Pale of Settlement. Gaspard had diligently hidden his Jewish identity from the Taos community, spinning a web of lies and half-truths regarding his origins, as well as his relations to the great European masters. For example, Gaspard would talk of how Puccini would always consult him before embarking on a project. By and large, Gaspard got away with these fabrications, even amongst the 'in-the-know' artists at the colony. Of particular interest to Diment were the lengths to which Gaspard went to mask his Jewish identity, even painting over signatures with his original Jewish last name, Shulman, on his earlier canvases. In her next book Diment wants to look at three Russian-Jewish artists from Vitebsk: Yehuda Pen, Marc Chagall, and Leon Gaspard, and follow their varying 'degrees of separation' from the Pale of Settlement. This time she hopes to finish in less than ten years.

Diment's book tour is taking her back to those places and communities where she conducted her research. In January Diment will be giving a reading and signing of her book at the Elliott Bay Book Company at 7:00 pm on January 24th, and at the University Bookstore at 7:00 pm on January 30th. In February Diment will be going to Montreal to give a talk at the Jewish Community Center,

"Samuel Koteliansky: A Russian Jew in Bloomsbury and His Montreal Connection," at 7:00 pm on February 13th and probably another talk at one of Montreal's universities. In March Diment will be heading to England to give a lecture at the University of Surrey, Guildford, "Samuel Koteliansky: A Journey from the Pale of Settlement to the Heart of Bloomsbury," at 5:00 pm on March 19th. And on March 21st from 1:00 to 3:00 pm she will be giving another lecture at the University College of London, "Bloomsbury's Little-Known Russian Jew and His Not-So-Little Influence on the Woolfs, D. H. Lawrence, and Katherine Mansfield," and from 6:00 to 7:30 pm she will be doing a reading and signing of her book at Gower Street Waterstones in Bloomsbury, London.

Nicole Page is a first-year graduate student.

Professor Emeritus Davor Kapetanić – Naomi Berkowitz

When I was asked to write something about Professor Davor Kapetanić, I really was not sure where to begin. He was born in Zagreb on June 26, 1928. He graduated received a Ph.D. from the University of Zagreb in Philology.

Professor Kapetanić came to the University of Washington in 1974. He had previously been at the University of Washington on a Fulbright. I had just come from Columbia University and a Fulbright in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. At the time, I was the only student with a major in Yugoslav Literature. My experience as a graduate student with Professor Kapetanić as my advisor was unique and personal. Since I was the only student working on a Ph.D. in the area, my classes generally consisted of Professor Kapetanić and me. We met in his office, or for coffee, and spent countless hours discussing literature, philosophy, history and whatever struck his fancy. Everything struck his fancy. I would describe Professor Kapetanić as a Renaissance man, someone with a broad point of view and insatiable curiosity. Everything was within his interest of study.

Although a Croat, he helped me to find the subject of my

Ph.D. dissertation, the Serbian author, Miodrag Bulatović, whose work was based on irony and satire, and frequently showed the absurdity and horror of war. We developed a reading list to expand to other Slavic, as well as Western European authors who wrote about the same topics. Professor Kapetanić also helped me to submit my own papers in order to present them at scholarly conferences.

After I left the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Professor Kapetanić continued to publish textual and bibliographic material on Croatian writers, including a large descriptive bibliography on Miroslav Krleža.

I lost contact with him a few years after I left the Department. I went to law school and lived in Tacoma. I am very grateful I was asked to write about him, as we have renewed contact.

Naomi Berkowitz (Ph.D. 1977) has been practicing law for over 20 years. She currently works at Lombino Martino in Lakewood, Washington.

A Recent Conversation with Adam Kożuchowski, Visiting Fulbright Lecturer – Megan Styles

The Slavic Department is proud to host Adam Kożuchowski, our visiting Fulbright Lecturer for the 2011-2012 academic year. Adam joins us from the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, where he is currently researching the comparative historiography of Poland and Germany. This Autumn 2011 he taught a course on the urban history of Russia and Poland. In Winter 2012 he will be teaching a seminar entitled “The Phantom if Intelligentsia: Russia and Poland.” Students in the Slavic Department are also looking forward to his Spring 2012 course on nationalism and ethnic conflict in Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries.

On a recent blustery December day, Adam sat down with Megan Styles, the Slavic Program Coordinator, for a short conversation about his impressions of Seattle and his plans for his Fulbright year.

MS: *Welcome, Adam! Why did you choose to do a Fulbright year in Seattle?*

AK: I had always wanted to come to America for a while, and professionally this was a good moment for me because I could easily take some time away from my academic duties in Poland. Seattle was familiar to me because of [the band] Nirvana and things like that, but I didn't know much more about the city. Geographically, it is the most remote place I have ever been, the farthest I have ever been from home. That sounded kind of exotic and exciting for me.

MS: *Why had you wanted to come to the United States?*

AK: First, America is the empire of our times. Much of the culture in my life - movies, music, and so on - is

American. I wanted to see how it really works. Also for scholarly reasons. The academic system here is very different but also very influential. It is good to publish in English, and the best way to do that is to learn from the natives. I wanted the opportunity to work on my language skills and to learn from others.

MS: *How does the University of Washington compare to your home institution in Warsaw?*

AK: In Warsaw I am affiliated with the Academy of Sciences, which is a research institution. There are no students, and, until recently, I was one of the youngest guys around. So it is a very different kind of place. If I compare the University of Washington to my own studies, I spent a year at the Central European University in Budapest, which is actually an American university. Officially, I was registered in the State of New York. The university was founded after the fall of Communism with the idea of promoting democracy and an open society. It was not that much different from here, but I do think that students at the University of Washington, for example, have more flexibility in their coursework. Our degree programs were designed by the professors, and there was not much choice. The breadth is nice for students, but for professors, you never know what level the students will be at. It has been a challenge for me to adjust to this as a teacher.

MS: *What do you miss most about home?*

AK: The people and the language. This is why I can't imagine immigrating to the US for a long time. I know I would miss speaking,

reading, and hearing Polish.

MS: *Many of our alumni and supporters are interested in reading popular and academic books published by authors and scholars living in Eastern Europe, but it can be difficult to follow the latest publications from afar. Can you recommend any recent books or authors that you find interesting and enjoyable?*

AK: I don't really follow contemporary Polish writers that closely, but my favorite author is Eustachy Ryski. I really enjoy his style. He writes with beautiful prose. Maybe I'm kind of an old-fashioned guy, but it's typical for contemporary writers to try to be modern and imitate the way people speak. He is more literary, and it is a pleasure to read his work.

In terms of scholarly books, I really enjoy the work of my tutor, Jerzy Jedlicki. He has written several books, two of which are translated in English. His most recent is on the history of the Polish intelligentsia.

MS: *Many of our readers are also interested in Eastern European cinema. Can you recommend a recent film or a particular director whose work you think our readers will appreciate?*

AK: It's not recent, but one of my favorites is Krystof Krauze's *Debt* (Dług) [1999]. It's a very dark movie. He specializes in these. It's very moving but very sad. Those are the ones that I always remember. I'm terribly old fashioned, and I definitely prefer the black and white classics, such as the films of Billy Wilder (who

was born in the little town in southern Poland where my father was raised!). I think the best Polish director ever was Wojciech Has. And I love historical movies, regardless of their artistic quality!

MS: *Where would you most like to travel in the United States and why?*

AK: I've been to New York City, and I'd like to return as many times as possible. It's one of the most vibrant and lively cities in the world. I like that. I'd also like to go to California. I don't know anything about it, but it looks beautiful in the movies! If I had company, I'd like to take a car and see all of the US. Except for Chicago, I don't really know anything about the middle of the country. But I imagine that the landscape is incomparably beautiful. The Rocky Mountains, the Great Plains. Again, I only know these from the movies, but I would love to see these places.

MS: *What's next for you? Where are you headed after the fellowship year?*

AK: I don't have much of a plan yet. I'll go back to Poland, of course. I'd like to find a permanent academic position, preferably in Warsaw. At the moment, it's hard to find a job in teaching because of the demographic crisis. After 1990 there was a huge explosion in the education business, and schools really flourished. But now there are too few students and very many schools for them to choose from. I also think that the academic job market here in the US is a bit different than in Poland. In Poland, your personal connections are sometimes as or more important than your academic qualifications, but I am hopeful that I can find such a position.

MS: *Thanks, Adam, for your time and your candid answers to my questions! We're very happy to have you here. Our students appreciate the time and work that you have put into your courses, and our faculty enjoy having you here as a fellow scholar.*

AK: Thanks, Megan. I'm very happy to be here, and I am very grateful to the Slavic Department, the Polish Studies Endowment Committee, and everyone else

who has made this Fulbright year possible.

For more information about Adam's research and his upcoming course offerings, read his recent interview in the REECAS newsletter:

<http://depts.washington.edu/jsish/elpl/ellison/2011/fall/bios> or contact him at ak65@uw.edu.

18th Biennial Conference on Slavic Linguistics, Literature, and Folklore

At the very end of March 2012 (March 29-31, 2012, to be exact) the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Washington will host the 18th Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature, and Folklore. This will be the very first time that our department will serve as host for this event, which showcases research in Slavic (Bulgarian, Macedonian, Slovene, Ukrainian, Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian), Romance (Dacoromanian, Aromanian, Meglenoromanian, Judezmo), Greek, Albanian, Romani, and Turkic (Turkish and Gagauz) languages, literature, and folklore. The series of conferences on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics, Literature, and Folklore was initiated in 1978 by a small group of Balkan linguists at the University of Chicago. A conference has been held every two years since then: University of Chicago (1978, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996), Indiana University Bloomington (1982, 1986, 1994), University of Toronto (1990), University of Arizona, Tucson (1998), University of Kansas (2000), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2002), University of Mississippi (2004), University of California, Berkeley (2006), Banff, Canada (2008), and The Ohio State University (2010).

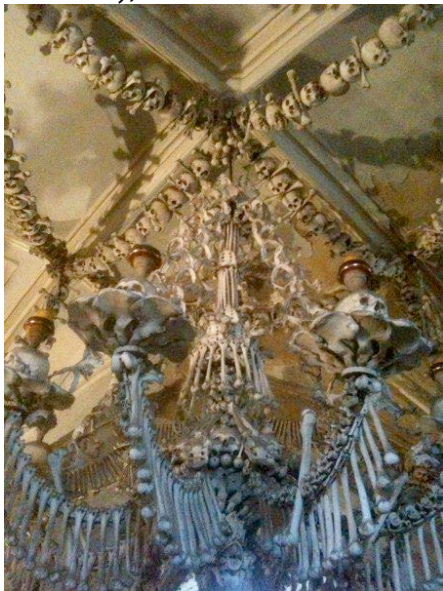
The conference, which is open to the public, will feature leading world scholars working on all matters Balkan, as well as introduce members of the local community, who have been dealing with the Balkans in various capacities. The conference has been made possible by the generous support of the following:

- Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Washington;
- Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington;
- The Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington;
- Department of Linguistics, University of Washington.

Early Fall in Prague - Timothy Ott

Towards the end of August, immediately before starting the fall quarter at University of Washington, seven other students and I briefly escaped rainy Seattle for three weeks of studying Czech language and culture in Prague. Our group was a mix of students who had completed anywhere from one to three years of study of the Czech language, and we left Prague with our Czech skills sharply honed. Our schedule was as follows: every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday we had Czech class all morning taught by Charles University faculty. Every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon we had tours or events either in Prague or in the nearby countryside.

We visited all the famous sites of Prague: Prague Castle, St. Vitus Cathedral, where we saw the tombs of many medieval Bohemian kings, and Prague's oldest brewery. We saw the city of Kutná Hora, with the famous bone chapel (a chapel whose interior is decorated with a multitude of human bones dating as far back as the 14th and 15th centuries), and took a tour into a



former silver mine. We also went to the former Nazi concentration camp of Terezin (Theresienstadt in German). A number of days after that Dita Kraus, a survivor of both Terezin and Auschwitz, told our class her story of suffering through and surviving the Holocaust. These two experiences combined for a very powerful experience.

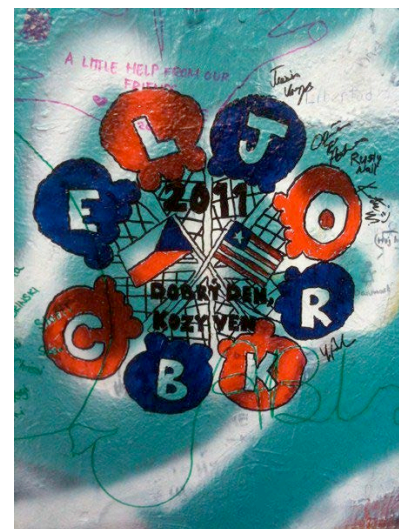


We were also very fortunate to visit the headquarters of RadioFree Europe, where we received a tour and had a discussion with one of the senior administrators. RadioFree Europe had been one of the most powerful weapons combating communist propaganda during the Cold War. Today RadioFree Europe broadcasts through radio, TV, internet, and other forms of media not only to some places in Eastern Europe (including Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine), but also to Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other countries in Central Asia. In many of these places, RadioFree Europe is the best -- even the only -- source of unbiased and accurate news. President Karzai of Afghanistan claims he starts each day by listening to RadioFree Europe.

The last experience I will

mention is the Lennon Wall in the neighborhood of Malá Strana. This is a wall which young Czechs began covering with Beatles-inspired graffiti in the 1980s as a form of rebellion against the communist regime. Today the communists may be gone, but the youth of the city continue to decorate the wall with song lyrics, messages of peace and harmony, declarations of undying love to their soulmates, and other spontaneous forms of self-expression. Today the police do not mind, and it is a city tradition—no more illicit than the Gum Wall of Post Alley here in Seattle. We walked past the wall several times, and on our last night together several of us returned and drew our own design on the wall, which included each of our names. We felt that this was a wonderful closing ceremony to our trip, and that by writing on the wall we formed a great connection with the city—although our design is probably covered by someone else's art by now, somewhere underneath our names are still inscribed on the city of Prague.

Timothy Ott is a third-year graduate student in the Slavic Department.



UW POLISH STUDIES



Photo by Piotr Horoszowski

In October Polish mezzo-soprano **Małgorzata Walewska** graced the stage at the Seattle Opera in the title role in Bizet's *Carmen*. The following day a sparkling reception with Ms. Walewska was graciously hosted by Koryn Rolstad. It was Ms. Walewska's fourth Seattle visit. All proceeds from the event benefited the UW Polish Studies.

From November 16 through December 9, 2011, the UW PSEC hosted the exhibit **Two Nobel Prizes-The Power of One Woman: Marie Skłodowska-Curie**, honoring the 100th anniversary of Polish scientist Marie Skłodowska-Curie's Nobel Prize in chemistry. The exhibit was presented by Musée Curie in Paris and co-sponsored by Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in LA, French Consulate in LA and the UW PSEC.

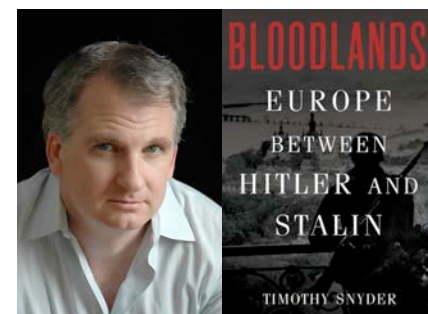


Poster designed by Sarah Petkus



In celebration of Milosz Year, on January 11, 2012, **Robert Faggen**, the Barton Evans and H. Andrea Neves Professor of Literature at Claremont McKenna College, will give a lecture entitled "Milosz and the American Poets He Loved . . . and Hated" at 7:30 pm in the Walker-Ames Room, Kane Hall, on the UW campus."

On May 23, 2012 in Kane Hall 120 we will be hosting **Prof. Timothy Snyder** from Yale University who will be talking about his recent book, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*.



We are pleased to announce that the Polish Studies Endowment Fund reached \$175,000 this year. Our next fundraising goal is to reach \$200,000 by the end of 2011/12 academic year. Please help us in this effort. Polish has been taught at the UW for almost 60 years. Your tax-deductible gift will ensure that future generations of students will thank YOU for giving them an opportunity to study Polish and learn about the Polish culture. Thank you!

To give, go to <https://www.washington.edu/giving/make-a-gift>, Keyword: **Polish**

Zyczymy Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!!

UW PSEC <http://www.polishstudiesuw.org/home>

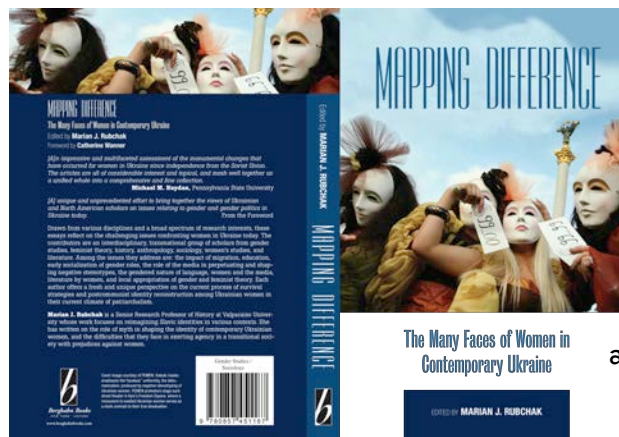
UKRAINIAN STUDIES ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE (USEC)

Dnipropetrovsk Delegation

We began the 2011-12 academic year with the three-day visit of a four-member delegation from Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (Central Ukraine). The official group included Parliament Speaker Yevhen Udod, Vice-Speaker Andrij Muksimov, Serhij Milyutin (Director, Dept. of Information), and Tatyana Shapovalova (Director, Information Technology for the Oblast). The delegation's goal was to establish relationships between the State of Washington and the Oblast, envisioning cooperation in many different areas, including education. Planners and hosts for the group's Seattle visit were Mr. Michael Zhovnir (Director, Alpha Tech Co.) and Prof. Eugene Lemcio, Co-Chair of the UW Ukrainian Studies Endowment Committee. The delegation visited such companies as Microsoft and Boeing and met with business leaders and government officials in Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia. On Sept. 13 the delegation visited the UW campus and met with faculty, staff and students in Gerberding Hall. Participants of this event explored various ways of cooperation between the Oblast, Dnipropetrovsk National University and the UW, including support for the Ukrainian Studies Endowment. This campus meeting was coordinated by Ms. Diane Adachi, Assistant Vice President and Special Assistant to the Provost, International Relations and Protocols.

Prof. Marian J. Rubchak's Lecture

On Nov. 8 USEC hosted a talk by Prof. Marian J. Rubchak, Senior Research Professor of History at Valparaiso University, entitled "Charge of the Pink Brigade: Women's Resistance to Patriarchy in Today's Ukraine." Prof. Rubchak, who has written extensively on the role of myth in shaping the identity of contemporary Ukrainian women and the difficulties they face in exerting agency in a transitional society with prejudices against women, focused in her lecture on FEMEN, an opposition movement of young, university-educated women founded in 2008. Their youthful protest against patriarchy, endemic corruption and abuses targeting women is often described as the most radical feminist movement in today's Europe, even though its members reject feminism as a self-descriptor. They convey their opposition to the hegemonic male social codes through daringly creative scandalous demonstrations, bizarre street theater, and half-nudity. Prof. Rubchak argued that even though FEMEN's primary target is the rapidly escalating sex industry, their ultimate goal is gender justice and sufficient political power to achieve it. The lecture was followed by a lively discussion, which also included a presentation of Prof. Rubchak's most recent book *Mapping Difference: The Many Faces of Women in Contemporary Ukraine* published by Berghahn Books in 2011. This event was co-sponsored by the Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies Program, the Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies Department, and the Slavic Languages and Literatures Department.



Ukrainian Fulbright Scholars at UW

Following the successful visit of Prof. Olena Haleta of Lviv University at UW in January 2011, this year USEC will host two Fulbright scholars from Ukraine, Prof. Valentyna Kharkhun of Mykola Hohol State University of Nizhyn and Prof. Victoria Sukovata of Kharkhiv National Karazin University. Prof. Kharkhun, who is currently a Fulbright scholar at Columbia University, will give a talk on February 28, 2012, at 3:30 pm in Thomson Hall, titled "Museumification of the Soviet Past, or Communism in Museum," and Prof. Victoria Sukovata, currently at University of California at Berkeley, will guest lecture in Prof. Laada Bilaniuk's class "The Anthropology of the Post-Soviet States" in early March. Prof. Sukovata's talk on queer and disability images in the popular Soviet and post-Soviet culture will be open to the general public.

STARTALK

- Arina Abbott

This past summer, I participated in STARTALK's four-week "Russian in the 21st Century: Language, Drama, and STEM" intensive program along with about 20 other students. The course targeted high school and college students looking to expand their Russian language skills, integrating science, technology, engineering, & math (STEM) and drama. While our skill levels ranged from one year of Russian study in school or university, to years of speaking, reading, and writing at home or in a Russian-speaking community, by the end of four weeks we had jelled into a congenial group. We ended the program by successfully staging a two-hour collection of scenes entirely in Russian called "*Love, Russian Style*" before a large audience at Kane Hall.

The course provided an opportunity to converse in Russian with students my own age, as well as a chance to observe the role played by Russian culture in the lives of my fellow classmates. Students were drawn from all over Washington State, and even from Alberta, Canada, to participate in the course. Many, like me, were striving to uphold our Russian heritage and language in an English-speaking environment. I admired the few students who did not come from Russian-speaking homes, but who had found an interest in Russian

culture and dedicated themselves to learning proper pronunciation, grammar, and ultimately their lines in the production. Regardless of skill level, or preference between



engineering and the arts, we bonded through our mutual love for Russian language.

The program's intensive, five-hour-a-day structure consisted of grammar and speaking lessons with UW's Valentina Alekseevna Zaitseva, exercises with drama coordinator Aleksey Pavlov, STEM lectures by guest instructors from the STARTALK teacher program, and individual assignments with self-assessment. Each student acquired various tools with which to develop our Russian proficiencies. Interviews with Russian professionals from Microsoft, Boeing, UW's Mathematics Department, and UW's Slavic Department allowed us to apply our capabilities while simultaneously learning about each of these fields. We concluded our interviews and STEM curriculum with a simulated "voyage to Mars,"

which we conducted in Russian at the Museum of Flight, along with an interview with American astronaut Bonnie Dunbar.

"*Love, Russian Style*" marked the incredible progress of each student, and of our group as a whole. The production included classic poetry, modern plays, Pushkin, and even tongue twisters. Nerves and chatter raged backstage, but as I peeked through the set to watch my classmates perform their pieces, I couldn't have been more impressed by the results of my friends' hard work.

Valentina Alekseevna once told us "you are the architect of your own knowledge," and while I believe we embraced this in our learning, thanks must be given to those who organized and aided us in the process: Michelle and Paul Aoki, Valentina Alekseevna, Aleksey Pavlov, Matt Boyd, instructors from the STARTALK teachers' program, and our parents and friends.

RECENT POPULAR FILMS & NOVELS OF INTEREST TO SLAVIC SCHOLARS

In the Land of Blood and Honey [Film in theaters December 23, 2011]. This soon-to-be-released film marks the directorial debut of Angelina Jolie, who also wrote the original screenplay. The plot centers on the relationship between Danijel, a Bosnian Serb police officer, and Ajla, a Bosnian Muslim artist, during the Bosnian War in the 1990s. According to online promotional materials, the film explores “the incredible emotional, moral, and physical toll that the war takes on individuals as well as the consequences that stem from the lack of political will to intervene in a society stricken with conflict.” The film features Zana Marjanović, the star of Bosnian films *Snow* (2008) and *Summer in the Golden Valley* (2003). Both Marjanović and her co-star Goran Kostić, who portrays Danijel, are natives of Sarajevo. Well-known actor Rade Serbedžija is also in this film. Although the film has not yet been released, its storyline has been the subject of great contention and controversy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Official Website & Trailer: <http://www.inthelandofbloodandhoney.com/>.

22 *Britannia Road* [2011]. Amanda Hodgkinson’s debut novel, which Kirkus Reviews deems “strikingly mature,” centers on the experiences of a Polish family torn asunder during World War II and later reunited as immigrants in the UK in 1942. The husband, Janusz has experienced combat and spent time in the arms of a French lover. His wife, Silvana, survived the war by foraging in the forest and living in terribly deprived conditions with their young son, Aurek. Haunted by these experiences and the secrets that they keep from one another, they struggle to establish a “normal” life in suburban Suffolk. Prof. Dziwirek praises this book as “meticulously researched” (other than the author’s choice of Silvana, a strange and unlikely name for a Polish peasant). She writes, “The characters really grew on me: the heroine, who is an incredible survivor but is living with a secret that is tearing her apart; the hero, who abandons a woman he deeply loves to fight for Poland, a country he later finds out he can never return to; the feral child who slowly grows to love his father.” <http://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/amanda-hodgkinson/22-britannia-road/>

The Tiger’s Wife [2011]. This debut novel from author Tea Obrecht is listed as a 2011 National Book Award Finalist and the Winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction. Set in an unnamed Balkan country, the novel follows a young woman’s attempt to “unravel the circumstances surrounding her beloved grandfather’s recent death.” The novel shifts between a present-day plot surrounding the young woman’s search and a recounting of the many stories that her grandfather told her as a young girl. Although the novel is critically acclaimed, our own Prof. Dziwirek found it disappointing. In a review written for www.goodreads.com, she explains, “This book never really found its narrative core. It was a collection of stories, some real, some allegorical, very loosely connected. Part of the problem was that the setting was unnamed in an effort to make it seem universal. But the novel is set in the former Yugoslavia, so why be coy? Making it less specific makes it less believable and makes us readers less invested. We are not allowed to form connections to any of the characters, as the minute we feel something like empathy/interest, the book shifts to a different story.” <http://www.teaobrecht.com/>

My New American Life [2011]. Publisher Harper Collins describes this novel by Brooklyn-based author Francine Pose as a “darkly humorous” portrait of the life of a twenty-six-year-old Albanian woman living in New York City on an expiring tourist visa in the aftermath of 9/11. The narrator, Lulu, finds a job as nanny for a New Jersey family, and enlists the help of her employer, who idealistically assumes that she is a Balkan War refugee, to help her negotiate her immigration status. The plot thickens when her Albanian “brothers,” members of an organized crime syndicate, demand that she obtain legal help for a fellow immigrant involved in a criminal case. Our own Prof. Dziwirek warns that, although lightweight on the surface, this is actually “a very sad book” populated by “wounded” characters that manipulate, betray, and disappoint one another at every turn. She writes, “It seems like the author is saying that America is a hopeless, immoral place; those who have been here for a while are twisted, and those who have just arrived are on the make.” This is a dark, satirical look at America in the aftermath of 9/11, when a culture of fear, suspicion, and cynicism further eroded the myth of the “American Dream.” <http://www.harpercollins.com/books/My-New-American-Life-Francine-Prose/?isbn=9780061713767>

NEWS FROM YOU

Alida (Purves) Abbott (BA 2000) reports that she is still homeschooling her four children ages 3-9. "This year we have enjoyed gardening and learning Latin, Spanish, and history. I really want to start learning Hebrew and Greek with them also...but all things will come in time. :) I guess I still love dabbling in languages. I had a fun experience with an acquaintance at church. His mother speaks Croatian and was visiting for three months. She was feeling a little lonely because she didn't speak any English and didn't know anyone here who spoke Croatian. I happened to meet her at church and we were able to converse a little bit...I only speak Russian. But the look on her face when she found out that I spoke a Slavic language just warmed my soul. She got this huge smile and we were able to talk back and forth for a few minutes catching most of what each other said. It was a golden experience and a reminder of how grateful I am for the opportunity I've had to study Russian."

On December 27 **Gray C. Church** (BA 1977) and husband Al celebrated their ninth wedding anniversary.

Carol Davis (MA 1979) has a new collection of poetry coming out February 1, from the same publisher, Truman State University Press. "It's called *Between Storms*. I'll be reading at Open Books in Wallingford on Thursday, March 29, in the evening."

John Givens (PhD 1993), Associate Professor of Russian at the University of Rochester, received two teaching awards in 2011: the UR Student Association Professor of the Year in Humanities award in March; and the Goergen Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching given by the College of Arts and Sciences in October. He is currently completing work on his second book, *The Image of Christ in Russian Literature*, and is in his fourteenth year as editor of *Russian Studies in Literature*, a quarterly journal of translations of current Russian literary criticism.

David Graber (PhD 1996) is teaching Russian and German at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington. Last summer he was awarded a Fulbright/Department of Education grant to take part in a 6-week American Councils summer program for teachers of Russian at Moscow State University.

Serge Gregory (PhD 1977) is writing a book on Anton Chekhov and the landscape painter Isaac Levitan.

"I (**Jean McCollister**, MA 1982) write from Slovenia, where I've been living since the mid-1980s. Herb Coats is partly responsible for that--his offhanded mention of Slovenia as a land best known for its mountains and lyrical poets (in a course I took over three decades ago) turned out to be fateful. Based on that association, I leapt at the chance to spend part of the summer of 1985 in Triglav National Park, and Slovenia has been my home ever since. Currently I live in a small village in the southwestern Karst region, not far from the Italian border, working mainly as a translator and teacher of English, and walking the local trails when I'm not hiking in the more distant mountains. Daughter Monika is preparing for A-level exams and hopes to study English, film studies, and psychology at a Scottish university next year. Somehow we ended up with three dogs (the original plan was to raise and train horses), and their activities keep me busy, fit, and happy. (And broke.) Our main sport is discdog, which we compete in all around Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic and Poland, with outstanding results. Border collie mix Lyra, now 8, is something of a celebrity here and among other things has been the subject of an in-depth profile by award-winning photojournalist Luka Dakskobler. Australian shepherd Olivia, 6, won the Czech Discdog Cup in 2011 and finished third at the European Championship. Border collie Bamm Bamm, besides being a talented athlete,

is also a certified therapy dog and accompanies me on visits to schools, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers as part of his mission.

"My Russian language proficiency has sadly been completely lost through disuse, but I am of course fluent in Slovene, and trying to pick up some conversational Czech since I travel there so frequently."

In September **Allan Mustard** (BA 1978) arrived in New Delhi to become minister-counselor for agricultural affairs at the U.S. Embassy, covering India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Sunny Otake's (MA 1994) big news is that she and husband Steve were married at Castaway Cay in the Bahamas on August 14. "We had a small, quiet ceremony on the beach, with just our immediate families in attendance. We then went back aboard the boat, changed into our beach-wear, and sailed a catamaran for the rest of the afternoon. As a way to tie the knot, I highly recommend it! :)"

"Hi! Not so much happened with me since last year, except my wife and I (**Lee Pickett**, BA 2006) had our first child (a girl) in February, and I started this fall at Cardozo Law School in New York. Finals are coming up, so hoping for the best..."

Robin Reagan (BA, REEU, 1979) participated as an ambassador in her company's international volunteer program in northeastern Ghana November 26-December 10. As part of their corporate social responsibility commitment, Eli Lilly and Company inaugurated the Connecting Hearts Abroad (CHA) program in 2011, sending 200 employees for 2-week volunteer stints in schools, orphanages, nursing homes, community organizations and health care sites around the world. Ghana was one of 10 countries that employees were sent to over the course of 2011, including Yaroslavl, Russia, China, India, Thailand, Costa Rica, Brazil and Tanzania. Lilly paired with Cross-Cultural Solutions, an international non-profit that operates short-

term volunteer programs, in order to tap into their extensive network of community partnerships. Cross-Cultural Solutions set up the 2-week volunteer placements and coordinated additional cultural, language and immersion experiences. Robin is a 22-year veteran at Lilly and has found her UW REEU Studies and Germanics degrees very valuable over the course of her international pharmaceutical marketing career.

“**Anthony Schlumpf** (BA 2011) here, I moved to Moscow on September 1st and have been teaching English for the company called 'English First' ever since. It's pretty funny when my students address me as 'Anthony Mikhailovich'. I'm also in the Russian premier baseball league again and trying to learn better Russian so I can start coaching the kids soon. Besides all that, I've just been tutoring English on the side, keeping busy as always. I'm actually thinking of staying in Moscow for at least a few years now. Everything is well here. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone back at UW :)”

Michael Seraphinoff (PhD 1993) has been working as Principal Examiner responsible for Macedonian literature for the International Baccalaureate Organization for fifteen years now. “So, as unlikely as it seemed years ago pursuing a PhD in Macedonian studies through the UW Slavic Department, I really did find work in my obscure chosen field. So those of you who fear that pursuing your dream subject may not earn you a living, take heart. I also wanted to mention that I have made a number of articles and a new book available as free downloads at my website, MacedonianLit.com. The book is my translation of a Macedonian professor's memoir of his nearly three years as a political prisoner at Goli Otok prison in Yugoslavia in the late 1940s, *Mislata i dushata vo obrach*, by Toma Batev. I have also posted free downloads of my translation of the folktale, *Silyan the Stork*, and articles I wrote about a visit to Mt. Athos and my time teaching at a college in Siberia in 1993. There is also a link to my quarterly reviews of Macedonian literature

in the AMHRC online journal.”

Marilyn (Hoogen) Sizer (PhD 1997) writes, “I'm continuing to take advantage of UW Access classes, more Russian language and literature, too. I enjoy seeing faces from the past and meeting the department's newer faculty, too. My non-Russian-speaking husband Myron and I visited Russia this past summer for almost a month. We were hosted by friends and their families in Komi (Syktyvkar and Ust Kulom), St. Petersburg, Semkhoz (near Moscow), and finally spent a week in Moscow itself on our own. Highlights were banyas, dachas, fresh berries, shashlik and lots of toasts and laughter PLUS the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow where a science "geek" could lose himself if it weren't for his hungry wife. On the silly side just now, we're Captain Hook's pirate crew in the Fremont Players Panto, 'Peter Pan.' Aarrrrrgh!”

Jared West (MA 2003) has taken a new position with US Airways – “and I'm back teaching! I am in the Leadership Development Department, and I facilitate courses to improve leadership skills. I've only been here since the beginning of November, but I'm really enjoying it.”

Upcoming Events:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Jan. 5-8 | AATSEEL Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bellevue |
| Jan. 11 | “Milosz and the American Poets He Loved...and Hated” |
| Jan. 12 | “Poland: A New Growth Pole in Europe,” World Trade Center, 7:30-8:30 a.m. |
| Feb. 26 | Maslenitsa |
| Feb. 28 | “Museumification of the Soviet Past, or Communism in Museum” |
| Mar. 29-31 | 18th Biennial Conference on Balkan and South Slavic Linguistics |
| Mar. 31 | Olympiada of Spoken Russian |
| May 4 | World Languages Day |
| May 5 | Slavic Student Symposium |
| May 23 | “Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin” |

If you would like more info, please call 206-543-6848 or email slavicll@u.washington.edu.

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Wayne and Stacey Jehlik

In 1981 the *Russian House Fund* was established to provide general support for the Russian House. We still have hopes of reestablishing the Russian House at some point in the future:

David R. Grant

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