



## Letter from Chair Katarzyna Dziwirek



Dear Friends of the Slavic Department,

The passing year has again brought changes to the department. In June we left Smith Hall, which had been our campus home for 25 years, and moved to Padelford Hall. The move was a big undertaking and I would like to hereby express my enormous gratitude to **Shosh Westen** and **Eloise Boyle** for all their hard work during and after the move. **Thank you!!!**

Besides hard work, settling into our new space involved considerable costs and forced us dip into our discretionary funds. Thus, any gifts that would help us replenish our modest coffers would be appreciated this year more than ever.

This fall we sponsored several events. In October we hosted Maria Kisel from the University of Dayton who gave a talk entitled *The End of Bourgeois Emotion: Animal Selves in Early Soviet Culture, 1917-1930*. We also held a screening of the movie *Jurek* about the Polish mountain

climber Jerzy Kukuczka.

November was a very busy month. We presented four talks: *Authenticity, Complaint, and the 'Russianness' of American Jewish Literature* by Gabriella Safran of Stanford University, and *Creating a Slovene Literary Biography in English: Vladimir Bartol* by our own Dr. Michael Biggins. Professor Piotr Nowakowski from Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski in Poland talked about *The Controversies Surrounding Polish Youth Magazines*, and Professor Ron LeBlanc from the University of New Hampshire gave a talk entitled *The Mikoyan Mini-Hamburger, or How the Socialist Realist Novel About the Soviet Meat Industry Was Created*. Also in November we were proud to be a co-sponsor of the second Romanian Film Festival *One Eye Laughing, One Eye Crying: Tales of Resistance*.

In early December, Dr. Michael Biggins organized a very successful campus visit for the Slovenian Prime Minister. Prime Minister Miro Cerar met with President Ana Mari Cauce who praised the department and expressed interest in future cooperation between UW and academic institutions in Slovenia. **Congratulations, Michael!!**

The fall quarter also brought some deserved recognition to two of our faculty. Prof. **Galya Diment** began her three-year term as the Joff Hanauer Distinguished Professor in Western Civilization, and Dr.

**Valentina Zaitseva** was nominated for the fifth time for UW's Distinguished Teaching Award, the university's most prestigious teaching award. We are hoping that the fifth time is the charm!

I want to close by wishing you all a very good New Year: much success in your professional endeavors and much happiness, joy and fulfillment in your private lives. I hope you will stay in touch with us in 2016.

All the best!

Kat Dziwirek

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# LEARNING RUSSIAN IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Michele Anciaux Aoki and Svetlana Abramova

For five years the University of Washington STARTALK Russian Program has tackled the challenge of connecting the study of Russian language to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). For Russian, it turned out to be a natural connection through the theme of “Russian in the Sky and in Outer Space” («Русский язык в небе и космосе») carried out in partnership with the Museum of Flight in Seattle. Add to that a focus on heritage Russian speakers (of which there are many in Washington state), and we found this STEM connection to offer a strong cultural component, as well as context for interviews with local Russian-speaking experts in engineering, technology, math, and science from Microsoft, Boeing, Philips, and the University of Washington itself.



The UW STARTALK Russian Program, funded by the US Department of Defense STARTALK program for critical languages, is a four-week intensive language program for high-school to early college age students who already have strong oral proficiency in Russian, but vary in their ability to read and write it. Over twenty students have participated in the program each summer.



The STEM focus was selected for this program in order to go beyond elementary language learning to a student-centered curriculum driven by problem-solving, discovery and exploratory learning where students would expand their linguistic skills in Russian by actively engaging in a situation in order to find its solution. For example, students participated in lessons about Mars exploration and completed the “Voyage to Mars” simulation at the Museum of Flight where they demonstrated their ability to understand spoken and written technical instructions, effectively solve life support problems, and communicate in Russian even in a high-stress (simulated) setting.

During “The Space Race” lesson, students discovered the long and complex history of Russian and US competition and collaboration in space exploration. They had to use authentic Russian artifacts, texts, and websites to find answers to essential questions, such as,

- When were different spacecraft and sputniks launched?
- Which astronauts and cosmonauts (including animals) were in space?
- What achievements (discoveries) were made during these flights?

Creating a timeline of Russian and American space exploration involved the students in comparing Russian and American points of view about the most important events of space exploration, using critical thinking and comprehension of non-fiction text, while being introduced to academic vocabulary on space topics.

At the Aviation Learning Center of the Museum of Flight, the program instructors facilitated exploratory learning centers and provided materials (charts, diagrams, computer visual presentations, etc.) and guidance for students to immerse themselves in training to be “pilots for a day.” Flight simulation followed aerodynamic labs, preflight checking of a real Cirrus-SR 20 airplane, and





completion of a navigation chart. The hands-on learning at the Aviation Learning Center gave the students the ability to understand and effectively participate in an interview about plane aerodynamics in Russian with a Boeing engineer when they returned to class.

Communications tasks followed the lessons and field trips to show how problem solving, expository writing and analysis, and critical thinking fit in. After the Museum of Flight simulations, the students talked about their roles/jobs, their activities, findings and feelings. They took brief written notes, based on which they then developed rough drafts and final versions for the written essay about their experiences. The whole range of tasks included narration about the events of space exploration and aircraft building, description of Earth and Mars as planets of the Solar system, comparison of different types of aircraft, and a persuasive essay based on comparison.



Integrated Performance Assessments, called “The Sky without Boundaries” («Небо без границ»), clearly linked to the STEM content and Museum experiences. Students were divided into groups of two or three and given a short video (with no sound) about one particular event of space exploration or airplanes that they became familiar with in the program. During the working process, students were expected to interpret the content of the short videos, discuss it in their groups (in Russian), find and choose additional information from the collection of texts related to their video topics using internet resources, then develop brief written notes, a rough draft, and final version for oral presentation in a formal style. After the presentations, the

students asked and answered questions (in Russian) and made notes about the other groups’ presentations.

The UW Russian STARTALK program itself is in a process of “continuous improvement,” expanding from the voyage to Mars unit in year 1 to space and a new unit on airplanes in year 2. Every year we offer three different elective projects such as Linguistics, LEGO Robotics, Russian History, Media Literacy, and Digital Storytelling.

Because the UW STARTALK Russian Student Program is closely linked to the STARTALK-funded Teacher Program, we can offer a wealth of lesson plans and videos on the UW STARTALK website. The primary pedagogical focus is on problem-solving, collaboration in groups, and research and sharing of information both interpersonally and through presentational writing and speaking. Tapping into community resources, such as museums and local native speakers for interviews, brings the program to life and makes the learning of complex vocabulary and language structures worthwhile.



For more information about the UW STARTALK Russian Programs with a STEM focus, visit <http://depts.washington.edu/startalk> or email [startalk@uw.edu](mailto:startalk@uw.edu)



On October 28, 2015 *Jurek*, a documentary about Polish mountaineer Jerzy Kukuczka (1948-1989) inaugurated the 2015/16 Distinguished Speakers Series. The movie JUREK is a fascinating and touching story of Kukuczka as a climber, husband, father, and friend, and provides a glimpse into Poland and the high-altitude climbers' world of the 1970s and 1980s. During Q&A following the screening, Paweł Wysoczański, the film's director, was joined by Dr. Sławomir Łobodziński (by chance attending a conference in Seattle) who personally knew and climbed with Kukuczka. The movie and the guests were cordially received and roundly applauded. The event was co-sponsored by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles.

**On Saturday, February 20, 2016**, the UWPSEC is planning a fundraising dinner with guest speaker Professor **Leszek Balcerowicz** and silent auction. The event will take place at the University of Washington Club on the UW campus. More information coming soon.

During winter quarter Professor Kat Dziwirek will be teaching **Ways of Feeling** (TTh 2:30-4:20) and in spring **History of the Slavic Languages** (TTh 12:30-2:20). Krystyna Untersteiner will return to the department to teach Polish 402 and 403.

**Plan to stop by the Polish booth at FIUTS Cultural Fest on Friday, February 12, 2016**, between 10:30 and 3:00 at the HUB Ballroom on the UW Campus. The booth will be organized by the Polish Society, a UW student organization. The festival celebrates the diversity and talent that international students bring to the campus and our region. This annual FIUTS community event welcomes thousands of globally-minded visitors of all ages and backgrounds to the UW for cultural exploration and learning.

To stay informed about our events, visit our website [www.polishstudiesuw.org](http://www.polishstudiesuw.org) or/and subscribe to our monthly newsletter [contactus@polishstudiesuw.org](mailto:contactus@polishstudiesuw.org)



## ROMANIAN STUDIES – Ileana Marin

We delivered on our promise made last year. The Romanian Film Festival, second edition, was fantastic. ARCS (American Romanian Cultural Society), in partnership with the Romanian Cultural Institute and the “Romanians Everywhere” Division of the Romanian Government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the UW departments of Germanics, Slavic, and the Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies Program, succeeded in bringing to Seattle great movies and their stars: *Aferim!* and

scriptwriter Florin Lazarescu; *A Love Story*. Lindenfeld and director Radu Gabrea

with lead actress Victoria Cocias; *Crulic* and animation artist Neely Goniodysky; as well as film critics Maryna Ajaja and Monica Filimon. Our 2,000 spectators enjoyed the screenings and Q&A sessions, and had the opportunity to establish a more personal connection with our guests at the opening and closing galas.



Monica Filimon and Jim Augerot at the gala opening



Maryna Ajaja and Florin Lazarescu in conversation with enthusiastic spectators

ARCS’ partnership with the UW Slavic Department and REECAS has once again been proved mutually beneficial. Our book club, “The Caravan of Eastern European Books,” presented Kiki Munshi’s novel, *Whisper in Bucharest*.

Kiki Munshi, a former diplomat in communist and post-communist Romania, shared her experience in and love for Romania with a warm and select public. She is currently working on a sequel, and we hope to have her again in Seattle.

Working together, we will continue promoting

Romanian film and culture. Starting next year, ARCS, in collaboration with the UW and RO-WA, will initiate a program for students of Romanian descent to receive language competence tests that can serve them at the university level wherever they want to pursue their studies.



UW students at the gala opening



Dr. Ileana Marin introducing the novelist Kiki Munshi. April 19, 2015.



From left to right, Sanda Maicaneanu, Monica Filimon, Radu Gabrea, Victoria Cocias, Ileana Marin and Otilia Baraboi.

Please join ARCS in donating to the Romanian Studies Fund at the UW

<https://slavic.washington.edu/funds/romanian-studies-fund>. This is the season of giving when we all feel reconnected to our roots. We all know how important it is to preserve our native identity and language. Our children should have the opportunity to do this as well.

### Highlights

- *Cyrus Rodgers participates in the UW-University of Ljubljana exchange of scholars*
- *UW-University of Primorska joint research project in Slovene literature and ecocriticism*
- *Visit to UW by Slovene prime minister and ambassador*
- *Seminar in Slovene to English Literary Translation – spring quarter 2016*

Over the past year UW continued to function as a prolific incubator for new discoveries in Slovene studies by students and faculty alike. Cyrus Rodgers (PhD student) spent close to four research months mainly in Ljubljana, but also in the Slovene coastal city of Koper, from July to mid-October 2015, under a variety of auspices: as an advanced-level student at the summer intensive Slovene language school in Ljubljana, as a participant in the UW-University of Ljubljana Faculty and Scholar Exchange, and finally as one of several UW scholars participating in a two-year joint research project with the University of Primorska in Koper on ecocriticism and Slovene literature. Cyrus presented a series of invited public lectures at both universities, met with and interviewed prominent Slovene writers, consulted with specialists in art history and literature, and did field work on the art of prominent Slovene painters Stane Kregar and Lojze Spacal, viewing their work *in situ* throughout Slovenia.



Cyrus Rodgers (UW Slavic L&L PhD student), Dr. Naja Ferjan Ramirez (UW Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences), Dr. Nina Bednaršek (UW College of Environment), Prof. Michael Biggins (UW Slavic Languages and Literatures). Photo - Piotr Horoszowski

UW's joint project (with the University of Primorska) on ecocriticism and Slovene literature will continue through 2016 with research visits to Koper by PhD student Veronica Muskheli, myself (Michael Biggins), and project co-PI Prof. Nives Dolšak. Also during 2016 UW will host multi-week visits by one senior and one junior Slovenist from the University of Primorska.



Veronica Muskheli, UW Slavic L&L PhD student. Photo - Piotr Horoszowski

In late fall 2015 UW hosted a brief but productive visit by Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia Miro Cerar and other government members of a larger Slovene trade delegation visiting five U.S. IT hubs in little over one week. Prime Minister Cerar's meeting with UW President Ana Mari Cauce concluded on a mutual agreement to explore ways of intensifying ties between UW and Slovene

institutions. You can read more about that event and view over 150 photos on the Slavic Department's [news page](#).

Looking ahead to spring quarter 2016, UW will be offering a seminar on Slovene-English Literary Translation (SLVN 499), which will be open to qualified students throughout the U.S. via distance learning. The course prerequisite is intermediate-high proficiency in standard Slovene. Because of the highly specialized topic, all of UW's content courses in Slovene studies (about one per year) will continue to be open not just to UW students, but



Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia Dr. Miro Cerar, UW President Ana Mari Cauce. Photo - Piotr Horoszowski



through distance learning to students nationwide, as we aim to educate new cohorts of young American Slovenists.

Also during spring quarter, as part of the UW-University of Ljubljana Exchange, the UW Slavic Department will host a month-long research visit by Prof. Milena Mileva Blažič of the University of Ljubljana, a specialist in Slovene literature pedagogy. I look forward to consulting with Prof. Blažič about crafting the ideal curriculum in Slovene studies for students in North America – and learning from her about her late father-in-law, one of Slovenia’s most remarkable 20<sup>th</sup>-century prose writers, Lojze Kovačič, whose first book in English translation will be published by [Archipelago Books](#) in spring 2016.

In autumn 2016, after I return from 6 late-summer weeks in Slovenia completing archival research in preparation for writing a biography of Slovene novelist Vladimir Bartol, best known as the author of *Alamut*, we will start up UW’s 5-quarter accelerated Slovene language sequence again, beginning with SLVN 401 (elementary Slovene 1, autumn 2016) and culminating in SLVN 406 (intermediate Slovene 2, autumn 2017) and SLVN 499 (advanced Slovene, winter 2018). Departmental alumni or friends, as well as others with a background in another Slavic language and an interest in learning Slovene, are welcome to enroll.

Amid all of our campus-based teaching and research, one of UW’s greatest assets for students of Slovene is our close connection to the greater Seattle Slovene-American community, as organized under the auspices of [Slovenska miza](#) (Slovene Table). Each year Slovenska miza brings our students together with local Slovenes and friends of Slovene culture for a variety of holiday celebrations and social activities, from St. Martin’s Day in the fall to Prešeren Day (Slovene Culture Day) on or near each February 8, to Slovene Statehood Day around June 25. Anyone with an interest in Slovenia or Slovene is welcome to join us – keep an eye out for the announcements.

Our efforts to build endowments that will support Slovene studies at UW in perpetuity continue. UW is uniquely placed among universities in North America to function as a major force in Slovene studies for decades to come – in fact, thanks to the exceptionally bright, intellectually curious students that UW naturally attracts, we’ve been doing just that for some years now. But in order for UW to continue in that role beyond the next few years we will need help. If you have questions or suggestions or want to contribute, please contact me at [mbiggins@uw.edu](mailto:mbiggins@uw.edu)



Professor and Slavic Librarian Michael Biggins  
Photo – Piotr Horoszowski



Photos of Suzzallo Library courtesy of Piotr Horoszowski

## VORONEZH ODYSSEY – Scott Brauer

I had no idea what was going on. Two men jumped out of an unmarked van with AK-47s and riot gear, rushing into a jewelry store. We--three other UW students and I--had been in Voronezh for only a day or two and everything about Russia was still confusing and a little scary. But this seemed altogether different. These men had guns and they were in a hurry. I was the first one to see the guns, and I told the rest of the group that we should just hold back for a minute in case something was about to go down. I later learned that this was how armored cars operated in Voronezh...the men were either picking up a deposit or delivering some cash. We continued down the street, probably ending up at a Robin Robin, Voronezh's answer to McDonald's where French Fries were served with sour cream and eaten with a fork.

We spent the next 4 or 5 months in Voronezh in a customized language and literature course at the Voronezh Institute of Law and Economics, which I've since learned has folded. Our instructors were the three Olga Vladimirovnas and two others. OV Zagarovskaya was a well-respected professor of philology at Voronezh State University, and the rest were her grad students, curious to teach a strange collection of American students of varying abilities: four students and five instructors. I still think about my time in Voronezh, by far the most memorable experience of my time as an undergraduate at UW.

It all started when a few other students and I started talking about wanting to study in Russia. We'd investigated the opportunities available through UW's study abroad office, but none seemed interesting. The only options were Moscow or Saint Petersburg and they cost more than a couple semesters at UW. We wanted something a little more interesting and which would really test our language skills. One of our language instructors, Masha Reichert, had been spending summers in the Voronezh region and knew a school that wanted foreign students. We made a few calls, sent a few emails, started talking with Shosh and Zoya Mikhailovna and the study abroad office, and thought we could make this work. We had to get a couple documents translated and made official through the Secretary of State's office in Olympia. And Zoya Mikhailovna wouldn't let us go unless she could personally meet the instructors and review the syllabus. We pooled our money together and bought Zoya Mikhailovna a ticket and then we were off.

After a few days of tourism in Moscow--one image burned indelibly into my mind is of leaving Zoya Mikhailovna on the steps of the GUM on Red Square with all of our bags as we went to stand in line for Lenin's mausoleum; another was pushing through the worst crowd I've ever seen to get into Vysotsky's Theater on Taganka for a play that none of us could understand--we boarded a sleeper train to Voronezh, not knowing exactly what we'd find on the other end. And, to be honest, I can't really remember what happened when we arrived. We found a hotel, got in touch with the school, and then grabbed a newspaper to find apartments for the duration. We split up--Liz and I in an apartment across from Lenin Square and next to the state theater of opera and ballet, and Brad and Eric in an apartment a couple blocks away--and bought a few essentials like laundry soap and dishes. We, the four students and Zoya Mikhailovna, met with the three Olga Vladimirovnas and two others and discussed the plan for the next few months. They assessed our Russian through nerve-wracking oral examinations, and that was that. A few days later Zoya Mikhailovna took off and we were on our own.

I still can't believe anyone let us do this. I think if my parents or the university or I now or really anyone knew how hacked together this whole program was at the beginning, no one would have let us do it. But I learned more of the language and culture in those few months than I think I could have anywhere else.

The teachers were phenomenal, each dedicated to language and literature in their own way, but also just as curious about us as we were about them. Olga Vladimirovna Zagarovskaya told us stories about her parents' time with the Mandelshtams and other dissidents who formed a sort of salon in their apartment. There was a plaque on the outside wall of Zagarovskaya's apartment building, in fact, talking about her father. She was contemplating a run for the state Duma, if I remember right, and had recently published a book on some of the stickier points of Russian grammar. Her brother, a respected historian of Stalin's purges, gave Liz and me



private lectures on history in his apartment. Olga Vladimirovna Palii had a curious selection of friends--there was a memorable long day of barbecue and vodka in a forested park talking with a self-proclaimed antiglobalist and a man that looked a little like Isaac Babel--with a keen interest in literature and music and film. We'd talk about Faulkner or Bulgakov or Tarantino or Kino. Olga Vladimirovna Grigorenko, in my memory, was a jester. Always laughing and joking and wondering. It was one of our first visits to her apartment that she pulled me aside and said, all in Russian, of course, "I've heard of this American holiday Thanksgiving. I understand most of it, but I don't get 'pumpkin pie.' I know what a pumpkin is. And I know what a pie is. But I don't know how anyone could make a pie out of a pumpkin." We had a good laugh, but later, when I told Liz about the conversation, we thought it'd be a good idea to cook Thanksgiving dinner for everyone.

Have you ever tried to find a whole turkey in Russia? What about a pumpkin? And nutmeg? And sage? I knew words for some of the necessary ingredients, but we had to look up a lot. I think it was Liz who found a poultry seller in the central market who thought he could find us a turkey. We paid in advance, and gathered everything else we could find. When we finally picked up the turkey, it was much bigger than we'd anticipated, and it still had some feathers on it. We had thirteen people invited for the meal and none of us had ever actually cooked Thanksgiving dinner. Our oven didn't seem to work--I remember talking about cooking one evening with OV Zagarovskaya and her husband and they were surprised that I liked baking; "We keep towels in our oven!"--but Brad and Eric's would at least heat up. There were no temperature markings, just numbers from 1 to 10, and it was half the width of any oven I'd seen in my life, but it would have to do. I'd figured out how to make pumpkin pie from scratch and we'd found frozen corn, made mashed potatoes, and gotten some bread, and we all figured that'd be good enough. People started arriving, each with bottles of vodka or cakes, and somehow, it all worked out.

In mid-December, it was time for us to take off. We'd scheduled a week in Saint Petersburg before flying back to Seattle, but I think we all wished we'd spent another week in Voronezh. I'm sure I wasn't the only one whose eyes teared up as we got into the train back north and waved out frosty windows to friends we'd probably never see again. I've tried getting in touch with them over the years, but nothing has ever come through. We were there just before Facebook and vkontakte and other things that might have helped us keep in touch.

Even thinking about it now, twelve or so years later, I'm overwhelmed with emotions. I think about our instructors often. I remember Zagarovskaya's daughter asking us to translate American pop songs into Russian. I remember the street kids I befriended in one of Voronezh's old neighborhoods who'd go to a neighborhood *produkty* and race the clock to down three cups full of vodka. One of their mothers asked me to meet her one weekend and gave me a presentation on a pyramid scheme she'd fallen for.

I remember walking through frozen forests between the *marshrutka* stop and an acquaintance's apartment building. I remember Grigorenko's fretting about a new job she'd been offered in Moscow while her son wasn't given official permission to move from Voronezh. I remember singing karaoke and playing Russian billiards. I remember losing Brad after a night at the bars and hearing a story the next day involving a lost key, the police, and a few AK-47s. I remember many evenings in a cafe called Malvina. I remember countless hours trying to improve my pronunciation of words with the soft sign.

When I'd first gotten to Voronezh, after four years of Russian at UW, I could barely understand what people were saying in the market and on the street. In our first week, an egg seller with a thick Ukrainian accent asked me how many eggs I wanted, and I thought she'd asked me what my name was. I had no idea what I was getting into, but by the end I could *speak* Russian.

**M.Scott Brauer earned double degrees in Russian and Philosophy in 2005 and is a photojournalist with work from China, Russia and the US. His work may be found at <http://www.mscottbrauer.com>.**

## NEWS FROM YOU

**Burton E. Bard** (BA 1955, MA 1966) writes, "It is really hard to believe that another year has passed! So much has happened this year in the world, as social media and news coverage brings everything so much closer, and almost instantaneous, as we watch events unfold. However, Molly and I hope that this coming year brings everyone connected with the Jackson School; Alumni, Students. Faculty and Staff a wondrous New Year! I walk a lot, and a few weeks ago, while walking, a car came too close to me and hit my forearm with the mirror on the passenger side. The car did not stop (a hit and run!). For some time I thought that it was just a bad bone bruise, but then Molly insisted that I see her sports medicine specialist and it turned out the large bone, the Ulna, was broken. It is healing, but probably will take another six weeks. Fortunately I can walk without it bothering me, but I am not able to play tennis, as I usually play twice a week. So I just have to grin and bear it and know it will take time.

"I still am involved in international activities and am president of the Seattle Sister Cities Association. I co-chaired a conference for Washington State's Sister City members in September at Seattle's Nordic Heritage Museum. We had great attendance and some lively discussions relating to Sister City programs. Seattle has 21 Sister Cities, and our state, 120 Sister City programs. I maintain good contacts with our Japanese Consulate and worked with Consul General Omura to arrange a reception at his residence for the 36 Washington Sister Cities that have a Sister City in Japan. This was a follow-up to the Consulate's reception in 2010."

**Carol V. Davis** (MA 1979) is currently teaching at Antioch University in Los Angeles and will have an artist's residency in Boise in January.

**Sarah Cunningham Garibova** graduated with a double major in Russian and European Studies (REECAS concentration) in 2009. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate in Russian Jewish history at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. January-August 2016, she will be in residence as the Sosland Research Fellow at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. In 2015, she was awarded a research fellowship from the Brandeis-Genesis Institute for Russian Jewry and was honored with the Marshall Weinberg prize in Judaic Studies in recognition of her dissertation work on Soviet Jewish mourning practices after the Second World War.

**Serge Gregory** (PhD, 1977) will give a reading and have

a book signing at the UW Bookstore on the Ave. at 7:00 pm on January 27th to launch the publication of "Antosha & Levitasha: The Shared Lives and Art of Anton Chekhov and Isaac Levitan."

**Mica Hall** (MA 1994, PhD 1997, Slavic Linguistics) is now Dean of the School of Persian-Farsi at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California.

**David E. Hopper** (BA 1979) "I don't usually comment on my own personal life, but here I'm wanting to make an exception. Right now, I am doing well on a material level. Not rich, but I'm getting ready for retirement and am not fretting too much. Now I digress....in my life, at least the first half or so, my connection with the Russian language has taken me on some fascinating journeys. It took me from high school, to college, then joining the military. Knowledge and use of the language also led to me meeting my wife. In 1974, I was trained (Military Intelligence school and Defense Language Institute) to spy on the Soviets in Germany using my Russian skills. After my tour of duty was over, I came back to the US and got a degree in Russian from the UW. Then, in 1980 life bifurcated.....or more accurately I was offered some new directions. After graduating, I relocated back to the SF Bay Area where I began to discover what I will call tuning into my spiritual essence. Through numerous inner discoveries, I discovered there's much more to life than the materialistic focus. Although I did not pursue any further Russian studies, a career, or other such pursuits, I still had to find work to pay bills. Even though I never used my Russian skills professionally (except in Moscow for 8 months) it was a means for meeting certain people and places, and as a result certain things happened.

"So philosophically and at the deepest personal levels I began an inward journey to discover who I am. Note, I am not a religious person, and was raised basically agnostic. BTW, my approach to life is in my book "The Soul Source - A Primer for Living as a Soul" available on Amazon. So my inward journey was to reveal to me that I have a Soul, and much more. But to come to the point about this digression, I began and continue to tune into this subjective essence, which reveals to me my conscious awareness of my "self", the world knows as "David Hopper". The other, and greater part of me is the "greater Self", or my Soul (and beyond). My connection with my Soul, as much as I can connect during meditation, gives me a relative sense of life purpose and



direction. So to make a long story short, I'm currently doing well on many levels, but unsettled (still in the discovery phase) on the "next" chapter in my life. None of this is a bad thing, but an inner process I'm already feeling on the fringes, but not conscious of "how" and in what direction I'm changing. Life will be revealed in the fullness of time.

"I say all this for any of you reading this might also be "looking for direction" or more accurately in my case "new direction" in life. It's nothing bad, or distressing, it's just sensing what's next. This urge comes to us all at different times in our lives, if we could but tune in. For me I call tuning into the intuition. A place of "knowingness". Anybody reading my book will get a glimpse into the process I'm describing. For me in my process, it's a frequent or continual path of discovery of "what's up or what's new" for me to engage.

"I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year. In Russian: Ya zhelayu c rozhdestvom Khristovim e s novim godom!

**Charles Mills** (BA 1987, MA 1989, PhD 2004) is now Associate Professor of Interpreting in DTRA, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

**Sunny Otake** (MA 1994) writes, "Our news is short and bittersweet--we've had a bunch of deaths in our family

since the week before Thanksgiving, but are not letting it get us down. I graduated from the nursing program this year and am now working as an RN at a local community hospital. I had the privilege of spending Christmas Eve with patients, who were kind enough not to complain about my Christmas hat and necklace with multicolored chasing lights. ;)"

On November 17 **Bob Powers** (BA 1978) "married my Ukrainian love Olga Kravtsova (co-author of "*Ukrainian Phrasebook, Dictionary, Menu Guide & Interactive Factbook*") in Honolulu, after she had arrived in the States on November 4th from Sumy, Ukraine. She and I are now working on Italian, French and Macedonian phrasebook projects of our company, Rodnik Publishing, and on beefing up our website [www.phrase-books.com](http://www.phrase-books.com). For those who might be interested, we have not only new Russian phrasebooks, but also a treasure chest of new and used Russian books at garage sale prices. Plus 28 other languages.

"If any of you Slavic Department veterans would care to discuss Russian or Ukrainian languages, publishing, e-book production, book marketing, travel in Ukraine or Macedonia, or marriage/visa processes (Boy, are they expensive!), feel free to drop us a line at [rodnik2@comcast.net](mailto:rodnik2@comcast.net). Would love to talk with you.

"С Рождеством Христовым и счастливого Нового года!"

## RECOLLECTIONS

**Russian language instruction was first offered at the University of Washington in the 1915-1916 academic year. That means that as a department we have now embarked on our second century! We reached out to alums to ask them to share reminiscences of their time as students in the department. Thanks so much to those who responded!**

**Jan Anderson** (BA 1968) - The photo of Denny Hall that you posted on Facebook brought back happy memories of 1965. I majored in Latin for my first 4 quarters at UW because it was a condition of a scholarship. I won a competition, and the prize was tuition for four quarters - at \$115/quarter. Based on my test scores, they threw me into Third Year Latin. What a shock, to jump from Julius Caesar to Plautus, Cicero, and Ovid!

I also enrolled in First-Year Russian,

where my instructors were the cream of the crop. I remember well instructors Novikov, Pahn, Gross, Holdsworth. The summer between freshman and sophomore years, I took the Second-Year Intensive Russian Course, and lived in Russian House. Russian, Russian, Russian, all day, every day, until I even dreamed in Russian. In Thomson Hall, we had three hours of classroom daily, one of which was devoted to grammar, and in our free time were expected to drill ourselves by listening and repeating

taped conversations in the basement of Denny Hall. We regurgitated the memorized conversations and then the instructors helped us to turn the phrases and vocabulary into genuine conversation. Jack Haney supplemented the conversation lessons with singing. To this day, I remember the words to "Moscow Nights," and the unusual archaic ending for 'garden' and other ancient words. Back at Russian House, Nina Nikolaevna continued the teaching, serving it up with her blini, borshch,

and piroshki. I took several classes from Willis Konick, and still remember the vivid mental image he made for me of The Nose's walking along Nevsky Prospekt. Many years later the UW Law School offered a Continuing Legal Education class in (I think) Literature and the Law. Fortunately for Ann Rule, she presented first, because nobody could follow Willis. Among other stunts, he leaped to the top of a desk. While everybody else was stunned, I just sat back and beamed.

Demetrius Koubourlis was the director of the Second-Year Russian Intensive Course in the summer of 1966. I lived in Russian House that summer, and it was a fabulous time of excellent teaching 3 hours a day and not too much work, other than the hours in the language lab or practicing dialogs with each other. Dr. K had such vitality and enthusiasm, it was exciting to be in his classes.

The Classics Department was a small family, like the Slavic Languages Department, but the Russians made the learning a lot more interesting and fun. I took classes in language and literature for four years, even through one winter of never-ending rain and Dostoevskiy. It was the best of times.

**James Bartee** (BA 1972) - Wow, a centennial — that's impressive, all right.

I joined the program in 1965, finishing in 1969. Looking back, I think those years from the mid-60s through the mid-70s were a watershed period for the department. All the "greats" were at the heights of their powers.

The language instructors included grammatically correct Nora Holdsworth, Vadim Pahn, Ilya [Elias] Novikov, Natalie Tracy; Vladimir Gross. Jack Haney, and the incredibly cultured Pavel Gribanovksy, whom I heard chanting The Easter Service at

St. Nicolas many times. We also had several notables such as Imre Boba, Lew Micklesen, Willis Konick, Donald Treadgold, Harold Swayze, and George Taylor working in their areas of specialty.

The Russian House was also in its heyday, with the redoubtable Nina Nikolaevna as house mother. I served as the house manager there for a year and learned the incredible story of her life and that of Ono San, her Chinese-speaking, Japanese-born husband. I made life-long friends there, as well as learning to speak Russian everyday whilst being constantly corrected by Nina Nikolaevna. However, it was working as she asked me to her interpreter for various business and government issues she had to deal with at times.

The Cold War was in full swing, and so information and people out of the former Soviet Union were hard to come by. The first Soviet ship to dock at a US port took place sometime around 1966-8, and many of us from the Russian Department were invited on board to meet some crew members, watch a movie on deck and have some tea. The language skills I had acquired from the program were such at that point that I could converse fully and easily and got the more rare opportunity to go below decks and have a snack in the crew's quarters where they plied me with questions about the "real America."

One year a Russian folk ensemble and dance group came to town, also a first, and I got to be an interpreter for a bus tour around the city. I remember overhearing one of the tour guides telling the troupe members that the tour was all arranged to go through the richest neighborhoods so as to give a good

impression— this as we drove to the U-District and around the very much pre-gentrified Pioneer Square.

I can see that the department has evolved and grown many times since what I sort of regard as its Golden Age, which I suppose is just my incredible fondness for the faculty, and gratitude for the program that I had the chance to be a part of.

I also apologize for an additional dozen or more people I left out of my "memoire," but I wanted to keep this to a few paragraphs. I'll close with one final tale from our reading of Nekrasov's "Two Captains" with Nora Holdsworth. A student earnestly wanted to tell us about a letter the main character was writing regarding the orphans camp he was staying in, and the hideous soup they served known as "otrava or mogila." Unfortunately, and to both the vast amusement and chagrin of Ms. Holdsworth, the moveable stress on the verb pisat' got away from him. The soup took a decided turn for the worst.

**Roy Chan** (BA 2002) - Who would've thought that the best place to fit in for an Asian American student of working class immigrant parents would be the Slavic Department? But that was indeed the case for me, and Slavic was home to a lot of inquisitive misfits. For our generation, of course, what bound us together was the tireless work of Shosh, who created a true communal space that welcomed all comers. I still remember cooking countless bliny with her in preparation for Maslenitsa. It was only after I visited and worked at a number of schools post graduation that I discovered how rare it was for a department office to be a meeting



place where everyone came together and said hi. Rare, but so special. The vast campus of UW didn't seem so unfathomably big when you had a home in Slavic. While I dabbled in Comparative Literature, the Honors Program, and Asian Languages Cultures as a college student, Slavic was always my home, and always will be. Galya Diment, Gordana Crnković, James West, and Willis Konick all served as mentors whose lessons still stick with me, both as a scholar and as a teacher. Language classes with Zoya Polack and Galina Samoukova built confidence in my Russian skills. The formative years I spent in UW Slavic paved my way to become a graduate student and, eventually, a professor, even though I mainly teach Chinese literature these days. As a child from straitened circumstances, my time in Slavic gave me confidence that the rich cultures of the world were within my reach. That is such an important discovery, and I'm so glad that Slavic continues to make that experience possible for students. I can't overstate the key, formative influence that Slavic had for me, and how very thankful I am for my time there.

**Sarah Cunningham Garibova** (BA 2009) - I am so grateful to all of the faculty and staff of the Slavic Department for the linguistic and cultural lessons they taught me. But most of all, I'm in awe of the deep humanity that they bring to the pedagogical and intellectual community. My advanced Russian teachers, Zoya Polack and Michael Biggins, taught me the rich nuances of Russian and made it possible for me to conduct archival research and oral history interviews in Russian. None of that would have been possible without Valentina Zaitseva's innovative and rigorous curriculum for intermediate Russian though. Her system for learning Russian morphology taught me to process the language like a native speaker and has benefited me

beyond measure. I also can't believe what a rare treat it was to take multiple classes in Slavic linguistics with James Augerot. Those courses taught me how to think about linguistics and how to process the phonetic and morphological components of any language (and I'm accumulating quite a few, including Hebrew, Yiddish, and most recently, Ukrainian and Belarusian). I often joke that literature just isn't for my brain, but the truth is, I gleaned invaluable cultural and methodological wisdom through my classes with James West, Jose Alaniz, and especially Barbara Henry. Barbara nurtured my interest in Russian Jewish studies and patiently mentored me through research projects, grad school preparations, and life in general. I'm forever in her debt. Heartfelt congratulations to the Slavic Department on reaching this milestone, and may you continue to provide undergraduate and graduate students with an exceptional and vibrant home for Slavic languages and cultures.

**Mary Kruger** (BA 1970) - Just got back from observing two rounds of local elections in Ukraine for the OSCE. Had a chance to hear many viewpoints on developments in Ukraine and with its neighbor, Russia. As for my recollections from my undergrad studies in the Slavic Department, there were many excellent classes and instructors, but two who stand out for me were Prof. Paul Gribanovsky and Nora Holdsworth. Both tied our daily Russian language lessons to the culture: Prof. Gribanovsky as a dignified representative of old Russia and Nora Holdsworth as an energetic explorer of everything new. They offered a tantalizing glimpse of the world we could discover once we finally mastered the endless grammar drills. I am also grateful to Prof. Swayze for invaluable advice that helped me win a scholarship to study in the USSR. That experience led to

a 40-year career in diplomacy where my language and regional knowledge were put to daily use.

**David Miles** (BA 1974) - I first joined the Slavic Department as a transfer student in 1971, starting in second-year Russian. Then I worked in the office from 1975 to 2001. Students went by Russian names in class, and as a commuter student I didn't really get to know my fellow students outside of class. I do remember a lot of instructors and staff.

**Nora Gerbertovna Holdsworth** taught intensive third-year Russian the summer I took it. Years later I told my Spanish instructor that the Spanish instructor reminded me of my favorite teacher of Russian and she said, "Was that by any chance Nora Holdsworth?" The Spanish instructor had modeled her teaching after Nora's.

**Vadim Ottovich Pahn** was a fun teacher, full of stories. I heard that he played classical music albums at home so loudly that his neighbors complained.

**Pavel Viktorovich Gribanovsky** taught fourth-year Russian beautifully. He was an amazing person who went on to become a Russian Orthodox priest.

**Jim Petermann** worked in the Slavic Department office while I was a student, which gave me the idea that a male could be a secretary, an unusual idea at the time. After I graduated and spent about a year in Philadelphia, I returned and applied for a half-time job that the department advertised for a Secretary II. **Veleda Kashpureff**, the Administrative Secretary at the time, hired me after a Russian typing test. When she left to work on a major grant, the Chair, Jack Haney, hired

me to her position after *Mary Frisque*, now in New York, said that she didn't want the job.

*Masha Marjanovich* was another half-time Secretary II, who started a little before I did and stayed on a while after I got promoted. As I remember the story, her mother picked her name out of a Russian novel, so her formal first name was Mashenka. Once she and David Russell put on wonderful slide show party. They asked people to bring at most ten of their favorite slides. Someone, I think *Jim Hoath*, brought some great ones of Indonesia. Masha was an artist and did an art installation at the Boys and Girls Club near where I now live. She and David moved to Australia years ago.

*Elizabeth Loudon* worked in the office for a while. This was in the early days of personal computers, and the office staff shared one. Elizabeth made up the wildest file names--names that had nothing to do, as near as I could tell, with what was in the files. Elizabeth improved the office environment by insisting that we do something about the air in the room where we had both the computer and a Ditto machine (spirit duplicator). She got the environmental health people to install a powerful exhaust fan. I haven't seen a Ditto machine in years.

*Scott Leopold* also worked on that computer. He made up some good office procedures using it. Last I heard he was working for Microsoft and organizing a fund-raising Microsoft employee swim across Lake Washington.

*Jon Persson* worked in the office as a student employee. He also played the accordion with the Seattle Balalaika Trio and still teaches accordion in Seattle, I think.

*David Fenner* worked as a student

employee in the office. I remember once he got a phone call from someone at People's Bank wanting to know how to say the name of their bank in Russian. He asked me if he could tell them, "Навозный банк". I said no, of course, but still wonder what he would have done if I had said yes. He was one of several people associated with the department who ended up having kids who played in recreational sports leagues with mine.

*Ron Bell* worked half time in the office a while. The other half time he worked in UW Medicine, where his job, as I understood, was to make refunds to patients and insurers who had double or triple paid. He went on to a much higher paying job with the railroad.

While working in the Slavic Department, I took classes as a non-matriculated student. *Dora Burton* taught a reading Russian course with about nine women and two men in it, one of the men being me. At a point when we had read several Zoshchenko stories, she said that although most of the stories we had read were funny, the one we had just read, "Пациентка" was not funny but sad. All the other students but Bob and me seemed to agree. We said the opposite--it was the first one we read that was funny. The ensuing class discussion was surely good for our Russian. I just reread the story after decades. At first I couldn't see what I thought was funny, then ended up laughing out loud. Also in Dora's class we read an article translated from English on how to approach reading. Even though the article was in Russian, it seemed easier to read than other Russian writing--probably because the world-view was familiar.

*Mary (Masha) Reichert* brightened up the department. *Zoya Mihailovna Polack* put three of us together to do a reading of "Васисуалий Лоханкин и его роль в русской революции" from

Ilf and Petrov's "Золотой теленок", which was fun. Just a few years back, while I was working for the Spanish and Portuguese Department, I was in a play, this time in Spanish, which Masha's daughter was also in.

Dozens and dozens more wonderful people worked, studied, and supported the Slavic Department in the years that I was there and up until today, when the Slavic Department has moved to the same floor in Padelford Hall as the French and Italian Studies Department, where I now work. Each name brings back memories, some funny, some sad, some inspiring. I look forward to reading other people's memories.

*Sunny Otake* (MA 1994) - What I remember most about the department, besides all the terrific people I met there, is all the wise counsel I received from Galya, much of which I still bear in mind today.

*Kristine Shmakov* (MA 1993) - I can't believe the department is celebrating its 100-year anniversary! What a feat! I was in the graduate program from 1991 to 1993 and received my MA in Russian literature. The most significant event for me while I was in the Russian Department was being given the opportunity to teach first-year summer intensive Russian during the summers of 1992 and 1993. I fell head over heels in love with teaching beginning level Russian and knew that was what I wanted to do as a career. I was so crazy about my class and students that the first summer I taught, my husband Sergei asked me to limit talking about my classes and students to just one hour a day, since that's all I wanted to talk about it, and it was driving him crazy! Thanks to the invaluable teaching experience I gained at UW, I was hired right out of grad school to run the Russian



program at Portland Community College. I am the only full-time Russian faculty and I have been teaching first-year and second-year Russian, Russian culture, and Introduction to Russian Literature for the last 22 years. I love working with community college students because of the diversity and range of experiences they bring to the classroom. They range from college freshmen, non-traditionally aged students, high school students getting a head start on college, home-schooled students, veterans, and senior citizens. I can't imagine a better place to teach or a more rewarding career to have, and it's all thanks to the Russian Department at UW!

**Michael Seraphinoff** (PhD 1993) - I suppose I would have to say that my time in UW Slavic studies in the late 1980s, early '90s was a time of rich and mostly pleasant intellectual pursuit. I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the meaning of Bulgakov's Master and Margarita with Professor Kapetanić, medieval Russian literature with Professor Haney and Old Church Slavic with Professor Augerot, among other delights. And everyone was so encouraging of my odd project to pursue Macedonian studies through the department back then.

As unlikely as it seems, it did actually lead somewhere. As recently as early November of this year my employer, the International Baccalaureate Organization, flew me over to Cardiff, Wales for a program as part of my work with them as Examiner Responsible for Macedonian Literature. Later that month I also flew to Chicago to present a paper on Macedonian literature at a conference at the University of Chicago. And as I engage in this work I can't help but at times be reminded of my academic study at the UW. When I present a

paper at an academic conference I can't help but think back to the rigorous academic standards that Professor Kapetanić demanded for my Ph.D. dissertation work, or the thoroughness of research that Professor Imre Boba encouraged, or the enjoyment of the subject matter that Professors Augerot or Haney remind me to experience by their example.

**Cheryl Spasojević** (BA 1967) - I didn't really even want to major in Russian, but at that time it was the only Slavic major available. My real interest was in Serbo-Croatian. And since two years of Russian was a prerequisite, there I was. I dove right into summer intensive Russian, and almost didn't make it! But I soldiered on. I had some great teachers - Pahn, Gross, Nora, Haney, and my favorite, the avuncular Gribanovsky. I confess that I don't recall now many details from those classes - a blur of Lermontov, Tolstoy, etc. Along with taking Russian classes, I taught Russian dances once a week at Russkii Dom and remember well Nina Nikolaevna's borsht with cut up hotdogs in it. I subsequently took two years of Serbo-Croatian with Sonja Valcic, with whom I am still in contact. I have fond memories of my time in the department and still consider it my "home" at the UW.

**Jordan Swarthout** (BA 2011) recently accepted a position with the Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation as a Project Manager for the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), a multilateral organization co-chaired by the United States and Russia, that seeks to improve global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear terrorism.

"I will never forget how Bojan Belić

insisted on speaking Russian the entirety of the first day of Russian 101. I still appreciate how ever-patient Valentina Zaitseva devoted her heart and soul to her students. Her after hours movie showings introduced students to Russian film, and Ironiya Sudby continues to be a part of my New Year's traditions. Zoya Polack's thought provoking discussions pushed us both to think critically and expand our Russian vocabulary. The dedication of all the faculty of the Slavic Department is one of the big reasons why I will always look back fondly on my time at UW."

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