



## Letter from Chair Galya Diment

Have to say goodbye to yet another academic year as we look forward, with some trepidation but also excitement, to the next one. Trepidation is understandable: all public universities are experiencing significant cuts and live in fear of even more cuts. We are no exception. And even some of the more positive solutions to the bleak economic situation are double-edged swords. It was good that the legislature finally gave the university tuition-setting authority, so that we can now compensate some for the rapidly dwindling support from the state. Yet we also realize that for many of our students who are putting themselves through school, especially at the time when their parents are experiencing economic hardships as well, a 20% hike in tuition is very hard to deal with.

We also said goodbye to some of our personnel and teaching staff. Tyler Browne, who started last autumn as our Program Coordinator, left in the spring for a full time (and therefore better-paying!) job in a community college. Our 2010-11 Fulbright from Poland, Tomasz (Tomek) Lysak, who taught courses on Polish Culture and Holocaust, left to spend the summer months in

Edinburgh as an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow. We will miss them both but are also thrilled to greet in the autumn their replacements. Our new Program Coordinator, Megan Styles, comes to us from Anthropology, where she served as an undergraduate advisor while completing her Ph.D. Our 2011-12 Polish Fulbright, Dr. Adam Kożuchowski, a historian, will be teaching three courses next year: "Legendary Cities: Polish and Russian Urban Mythologies," "The Phantom of Intelligentsia: Russia and Poland," and "Eastern Europe and Nationalism."

As to faculty news worthy of celebration, two books by us have reached the catalog stage since the last time I wrote: Barbara Henry's *Rewriting Russia: Jacob Gordin's Yiddish Drama*, published by University of Washington Press, — and my *A Russian Jew of Bloomsbury: The Life and Times of Samuel Kotliansky*, published by McGill-Queen's University Press. Both are coming out in the last quarter of 2011.

As you will see in the following pages, we have also started a new series of interviews with our august emeritus faculty, the first two installments of which are interviews with Professors Herb Coats and Karl Kramer conducted by our illustrious Ph.D.s, Timothy Riley (1999) and Ron LeBlanc (1984). Our intent is to feature interviews with other emeritus faculty in subsequent issues.

Professor James West and Lecturer Jara Soldanova will both once again be leading Exploration

Seminars in late summer, the former to Georgia and the latter to the Czech Republic.

Lecturer Valentina Zaitseva will be busy with the STARTALK project for much of the summer. To find out what this is, be sure to check out the write-up by alumna and affiliate faculty Michele Anciaux Aoki, who is serving as the program's director.

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## A Memorial Day Chat with Herb Coats – Timothy Riley

First of all, Herb looks better now than he did in 1999, when I last saw him. He actually looks younger now. Obviously retirement is working for him. I started with some biographical questions, then moved into more interesting ones.

Herb Coats was born in the Greater Metropolitan Area of La Jara, in the San Louis Valley of Southern Colorado in the 1930s, where his family made a living raising Hampshire pigs. They often had over 300 pigs at a time. Herb still has many anecdotes about the intelligence and charm of Hampshire pigs.

Herb attended the University of Colorado in Boulder in the 1950s, where he majored in geology. While he was studying geology, he became interested in Russian, having happened upon a book in the library - the *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyklopedia* - the alphabet of which fascinated him. This happenstance changed the course of his life.

Herb's intellectual curiosity led him to study Russian for two years at UC Boulder with a Russian emigré, who struggled with teaching her students proper Russian. In those days, there were very few Russian emigrés in the US and the methodology of teaching Russian had not yet been developed beyond translation and memorization. Herb's instructor and her husband may have been the only Russians in all of Colorado at the time.

Herb majored in geology in the 1950's and gained employment conducting seismic surveys in Utah, Alabama, and other states for the oil industry. He held the illustrious titles of 'jug hustler' and 'powder man' - the guy who

prepares the dynamite for blowing holes in huge rocks in search of oil. This lasted about two years before Herb felt the calling to continue with his Russian studies. He enrolled at Fordham College in the Bronx, New York in the early '60s. There he met and married a fellow graduate student and started teaching Russian at the college and at a local high school. Herb continued his Slavic studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he completed his Ph.D. in Slavic Languages in the late '60s.

At that time, Noam Chomsky, one of the fathers of modern linguistics and transformational grammar, had revolutionized the study of linguistics. There was almost a feverish interest in linguistics at the time; for the first time, linguistics was recognized as a real science; many of the mysteries of language and universal grammar were finally being revealed. Herb's influence at the time was Professor Theodore Lightner.

Upon completion of his Ph.D. in 1968, Herb was hired at the University of Washington. At that time, there was no Slavic Department; it was merely an adjunct to the East European Institute. Herb taught Slavic Linguistics at the UW until he retired in 2001. Since his retirement, he has been very busy practicing yoga three times a week, painting landscapes and portraits, doing housework and yard work, and writing his memoirs about his childhood raising Hampshire pigs.

Herb's favorite Slavic language is Lower Sorbian, AKA Lower Lusatian, primarily because it retains many original Slavic forms, such as the dual. His favorite writer at present is George

Lakoff, cognitive linguist and author of "Metaphors We Live By."

Herb's greatest accomplishment is having raised three well-adjusted, happy, productive children - two sons and a daughter. Herb has four grandsons, with whom he loves to spend time. His ideal day is simply one in which the sun shines.

Herb's advice for students of Slavic languages is the following - "If you love Slavic culture, don't let anything get in your way." His best memories from the UW are from teaching graduate courses and having coffee with his students. Herb's present motto is "Remember to breathe" and "Keep moving." Herb is grateful to all his colleagues at the UW Slavic Department; he wishes all students success in their studies and good luck in their professional and personal lives.

Herb, we all wish you many, many days of sunshine!

*Timothy Riley (Ph.D. 1999) is a Senior Intelligence Analyst and Subject Matter Expert on Eurasia for the Seattle FBI.*

# A Conversation with Karl Kramer

- Ron LeBlanc

Professor Emeritus Karl Kramer is a Seattle native who earned his B.A. (English, 1955), M.A. (Comparative Literature, 1957), and Ph.D. (Comparative Literature, 1964) all at the University of Washington. As a participant in one of the first – and, in those early days of the Cold War, extremely rare – academic exchanges in the former Soviet Union, Karl attended Moscow State University as a doctoral candidate in 1959-1960. He then went on to teach at Northwestern University (1961-1965) and the University of Michigan (1965-1970) before coming to the UW, where he taught jointly in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and the Department of Comparative Literature (1970-1999) until his retirement. In addition, he chaired the Slavic Department between 1988 and 1998. A world-renowned Chekhov scholar, Karl taught a wide variety of courses during the nearly thirty years he spent at the UW. He also became actively involved – mainly as a translator and consultant – in a number of theatrical productions of Chekhov’s plays staged by local directors and actors in the Seattle area, especially those connected with Intiman Theatre. When I interviewed Karl recently, I asked him to reminisce about his experiences in both these areas.

## Teaching at the UW

When I asked Karl about some of the more memorable teaching experiences he had at the UW, he related a number of humorous episodes. There was, for instance,

the time in a rather large undergraduate course on Tolstoy when he was – in his words – “ranting on” about some supposedly major issue in Tolstoy. He was about to say something that he obviously considered of enormous importance, when he looked out at the students: all he could see in front of him were pencils and pens poised to catch the Delphic oracle’s overwhelmingly significant comment, and he started giggling. The absurdity of the importance of his next pronouncement, Karl noted, had overwhelmed him. He could not remember now whether or not he managed to make the monumental statement they were expecting. He also recalled the time, very early in his teaching career (he was a T.A. in an English class), when he discovered just before class time that the fly on his trousers was malfunctioning. He called his wife, Doreen, to tell him what he should do. Oblivious to his sense of crisis, she started laughing raucously. Karl could not remember how the affair was resolved, but he believed he somehow made a respectable appearance in class. Another early time in his teaching career, Doreen appeared in class to observe him. Later she said, “You were fine, but your jacket collar was turned up the whole hour.” And in an introductory course on the Soviet Union, Karl prepared to enter the classroom one day, several weeks into the course, when he noticed that an elderly gentleman was standing at the podium reading his notes on poems by Tennyson. Karl looked at the students and, yes, they seemed to be those in his class. So he entered the room via a back door and approached the aged professor. By the time Karl reached him and whispered



Doreen and Karl Kramer

something about a possible mistake in room number, the latter said, “Oh my God – I’m in the wrong room!” The students applauded vociferously as he left.

On a more serious (or at least less humorous) note, Karl fondly remembered an undergraduate course on Tolstoy that had a dozen students in it (I was fortunate enough to be one of them) and was thus taught more in a discussion than a lecture format. During this ten-week course, the students were reading and discussing *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. Karl said that the course brought back very pleasant memories for him, especially the instance when he showed up late for class one day, only to find that all the students were already deep into an animated discussion of one of the novels. Karl sat down and listened and observed quietly for a while, but eventually he wanted to provide some input of his own, only to be told laughingly by one of the students: “No, you can’t join us: you were late, so you don’t get to say anything!” What struck Karl as important and meaningful about this anecdote is that the students had attained what should be the ultimate goal of every teacher: namely, to make his or her role superfluous. Karl’s recollection of this episode focuses on the high level of engagement on the part of the students, but for me – not so much as a student in that Tolstoy class many years ago, but now after years of teaching

Tolstoy myself – this story speaks volumes about just how good and wise a teacher Karl was. If I have come to learn anything about teaching, I have learned how challenging it is to get students engaged and inspired in discussing a work of Russian literature without succumbing to the temptation of doing most of the work for them (especially the critical analysis). In retrospect, I now appreciate and admire more fully the enormous skill it takes for a teacher to teach without making it look like he or she is actually teaching at all. Karl had that great skill as an educator.

One of my classmates in that course was my good friend David Fenner, who went on to become Assistant Vice Provost for International Studies at the UW. When I asked David to share his thoughts about Karl as a teacher and about his experience in that memorable Tolstoy course, here is what he had to say:

Karl Kramer is easily one of the best teachers I've had. My abiding image of him is that of a guide in a dense forest, a *литературовед* who didn't so much lead, as indicate paths of inquiry, exploration, and analysis. As we babes in the woods stumbled through the thicket, in turns frowning at Levin, propelled by Anna, and (happily?) manipulated by Lev Nikolaevich, we truly appreciated Karl's deft and subtle guidance. Through the *берёзовые ветки* of this forest, I can just see Karl sitting on a boulder at a fork in the path, one leg tucked under, listening to the discussion with an eyebrow raised, a knowing glint in his

eyes. Then he'd drop in a word or two, and we were off in a new direction. Somehow unseen, he would bound ahead of us, and appear at the next turning point – wondering perhaps what took us so long, but never letting on. Karl encouraged us to consider, metabolize and challenge scholarly viewpoints but at the same time gently insisted that we discover the novels ourselves. As Steve Jobs has said, "Nothing is more interactive than curling up with a good book!" Facilitating this interactivity was clearly Karl's goal and, I suspect, the secret to his success. The results of Karl's pedagogical approach were phenomenal. The wondrous, tendrilous works of nineteenth-century Russia became a part of us and greatly expanded the depth of field with which we viewed the world. And for many of us, Karl Karlovich helped guide what kind of readers, teachers, writers, parents and human beings we became.

I am sure that David's fond memories of his formative experiences as a student are shared by many other UW undergraduates who had the good fortune to take a class in Russian or Comparative Literature with Karl Kramer.

### Staging Chekhov

The other rewarding aspect of his academic career that Karl broached during our conversation was the collaborative and consultative work he performed with Intiman Theatre. This remarkable Seattle theatre was founded in 1972 by Margaret ("Megs") Booker, who first studied theater as a Fulbright Lecturer in Sweden and later returned there (at

the invitation of the Royal Dramatic Theatre) on a Ford Foundation Fellowship to study with Ingmar Bergman. Booker founded the Intiman Theatre (named after the small *Intima Teatern* created by August Strindberg in Stockholm) with the aim of producing international dramatic literature – including works by Chekhov – on an intimate scale. Karl started working with Megs Booker in 1977, when she was about to stage Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. In conjunction with this production, Booker held a special presentation of new plays and Karl acted as panel leader in post-play discussions with the audience. In 1980, when she decided to stage *The Cherry Orchard*, Booker approached Karl about the possibility of him providing her with a new translation of the play and he accepted the challenge, although it was the first time he had ever translated a Chekhov play.

The first thing she said was, "What if I don't like your translation?" Naturally, I said if that were the case, then she could reject it. Instead, she ended up going over the translation word by word, indicating what she was not satisfied with and I would proceed to re-write. In the end, I felt that she had given me so much help that I proposed that we say it was a joint translation. I believe she actually contributed only one line, but her advice had so altered (for the better) my original version that I thought she should get some credit for it.

In 1983, Booker staged her final Chekhov play at Intiman, *The Seagull*, and Karl once again assisted her, as he had in the two earlier Chekhov productions, as a technical advisor. Two years later, Booker left

Intiman and Seattle to become artistic director at the Hartman Theater in Stamford, Connecticut. Booker continued to stage Chekhov plays in her new position, and Karl flew back East in his accustomed capacity to help her out in those productions (including a staging of *Three Sisters* that featured an all-Asian cast).

In our interview, Karl noted that the experience of working with Megs Booker re-energized his interest in Chekhov: he had already written a book on Chekhov's prose fiction and taught his works (fictional as well as dramatic) for years in his literature courses, but he had never before been involved in the production of any of his plays. Attending rehearsals and working with theatre people at Intiman who were staging Chekhov plays, Karl observed, gave him an opportunity to consider anew what things in the plays truly meant. Reading a Chekhov play (for a class he might be teaching) is a rather passive activity, he noted, but watching and rehearsing a play involve a much more active engagement with the text. "My experience in the theatre taught me one pretty obvious truth," Karl said,

but one that can easily be forgotten, too: a play is not meant to be read; it is meant to be enacted on a stage by people who momentarily try to be the characters in that play. It is somewhat analogous to solving a Sudoku. The author gives us a certain amount of information and from that the actors are expected to interpolate the rest. The

main difference is that a Sudoku has only one correct answer, while a play in performance can have a number of plausible answers. The fact is that, though I often taught Chekhov plays in the past, I really did it very poorly. It was only after my brief work in the theatre that I gained some insight into what kinds of questions should be asked when considering the text of a play.

Karl claimed that he learned enormous amounts from Megs Booker about what goes into putting a play on the stage, and she, for her part, had the advantage of being able to pick his brain for information about Chekhov. Karl believes that both he and Megs Booker thought that theirs was a very fruitful relationship, but what he did not realize at the time, he admits, is just how rare this kind of harmonious, mutually beneficial working relationship between a theatre director and an academic specialist generally is. "I later had brief contacts with other directors," he said, "and discovered that the very last person they ever wanted to have in the rehearsal space was an academic type. I can see why they feel that way . . . but I believe it is a very great shame that this kind of cooperation is so rare. The director and the academic really have a great deal that each can give the other."

Indeed, Karl came to learn this lesson – that, as a rule, theatre directors do not want to have an academic specialist involved in rehearsals of their stage productions – the hard, experiential way, when he had occasion to interact with one of Megs Booker's successors at Intiman Theatre in two subsequent productions of Chekhov plays (specifically, *Three Sisters* and *Uncle Vanya*). The director decided to

eliminate one word from a crucial scene in the latter play: after Vanya fires his pistol at his rival, Serebryakov, and misses, he says, "Bang!" The director felt this word would undercut the scene. Karl pointed out that the exclamation "Bang!" does indeed undercut the drama, but this was, of course, precisely Chekhov's intention and was thus totally necessary. The director, however, apparently thought that he knew better than Karl – and Chekhov – what was best here. Curiously enough, the actors in that production of *Uncle Vanya* came to side with Karl (and Chekhov), and the director was eventually convinced to reinsert the "Bang!" And, yes, Karl assured me that he did indeed get a bang out of that turn of events himself!

In addition to his productive decade-long partnership with Megs Booker, another collaborative experience with members of the theatre world that Karl looked back upon fondly was his participation in "Chekhov Seen and Reseen." This was an outreach program, funded by the Washington State Commission for the Humanities in the 1990s, whereby a director, two actors, and a Chekhov specialist, who served as discussion leader, would travel to various sites across the state to present an evening program on Chekhov. The idea was to take a scene from a Chekhov play and to stage it in several different ways to show the audience how, by emphasizing or de-emphasizing certain aspects of the scene, one might come out with several different but equally plausible versions of that one scene. Karl recalled that the audiences were generally quite responsive to the performances and actively engaged in the discussions that followed, many of which became, in his words, quite "red-fisted." Usually the



presentations were made at community colleges, but a unique and memorable one took place at the Monroe State Reformatory. “The inmates at Monroe really got into the scenes,” Karl noted, “especially the one involving Konstantin Treplyov and his mother in *The Seagull*.” Karl offered a few humorous reminiscences about that presentation of “Chekhov Seen and Reseen” at the prison in Monroe. One involved the prison officials becoming quite alarmed when they accidentally discovered that the actors who were playing Liubov Andreevna and Trofimov, in a scene from *The Cherry Orchard* where the two characters are drinking shots of vodka, were actually drinking some vodka themselves – and this is in a penal facility where the presence of alcohol, let alone its consumption, the actors were promptly reminded, is strictly prohibited! My favorite anecdote, however, concerns what happened immediately following the presentation: as the inmates were filing out of the room and returning to their jail cells, one of them thanked Karl for coming, to which Karl responded, “Thank you for being here.” I am sure that Chekhov, with his wry sense of humor,

would have been pleased . . . and greatly amused.

After the academic year that my wife, Lynda, and I spent at Moscow State University on an IREX/Fulbright fellowship (1981-1982), we came to know Karl and Doreen on a personal basis. Doreen, an expert on native American art from the Pacific Northwest, was working as a professional framer at the time, and she agreed to frame a dozen or so original works of Russian art that a Moscow friend of ours had given us at the end of our stay in the Soviet Union. From that time forward, we started regularly to attend theater and have dinners together with Karl and Doreen. A few years later, Lynda and I even drove back a few times from Pullman (my first academic job was at WSU in the mid-1980s) to housesit and cat-sit for them during periods in the summer when they were away, traveling abroad. In the mid-1990s, by which time Lynda and I were now living in distant New Hampshire, the four of us arranged a rendezvous at an international Chekhov conference being held in Ottawa, where we hung out together the whole time. By day, Doreen and Lynda would visit the terrific collection of native American art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, while Karl and I, as

dutiful conferees, would listen to riveting papers being delivered on such arcane topics as the function of ellipsis in Chekhov’s writing and the role of Epikhodov in *The Cherry Orchard*. In the evening, the four of us would regroup and head out together for dinner together and a night of lengthy conversation. For the past ten years or so, Lynda and I have been able to visit Karl and Doreen much more frequently because we have been spending at least a month or so each summer in Seattle, where our son, his wife, and our darling little granddaughter now live. It was a very enriching experience for me to have had Karl as a teacher back when I was a student at the UW (1976-1983), but it has been even more enriching to have come to know him even since that time as both a friend and a fellow scholar of Russian literature. Indeed, it has been a real treat for Lynda and me these past several years to see him enjoying retirement with Doreen at their beautiful Lake Forest Park home, as he listens to his beloved jazz albums, reads his own personal book-of-the-month selection from world literature, and further develops his gourmet cooking skills . . . Chekhov, I think, would have approved.

*Ron LeBlanc (Ph.D. 1984) is a Professor of Russian and Humanities at the University of New Hampshire.*

## CLASS OF 2011

On Friday, June 10, the department honored this year’s graduates at its annual Convocation ceremony in Parrington Hall. As this year’s keynote speaker, REECAS alumna and Executive Director of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation Lara Iglitzin spoke about “Slavic Studies, 20 years after the fall of the USSR.”

Graduates were then introduced individually by faculty members who had worked closely with them during their time at the UW. Awards were later presented to five outstanding students: junior Connor Lynch was honored as an ACTR Russian Language Laureate Scholar; graduating senior Cyrus Rodgers was the recipient of the Outstanding Undergraduate Award for his academic excellence; Kendra Ellis was awarded the Asante Outstanding Paper Prize for her research paper entitled “The Chekhovian Character Sketch;” MA student Tyson Sadleir was recognized for his excellence in teaching first-year Russian; and Johanna Gawronski was presented with the Best Polish Student of the Year Award by Wanda Cieslar-Pawluskiewicz, on behalf of the Polish Home.

The class of 2011 includes BA recipients Jacob Barr, David Feldman, Connor Hobby, Yuliya Mailyan, Steven Mataya, Jasmina Meskovic, Kathryn Moffat, Elena Ogden, Jan Pawluskiewicz, Jamilia Popov, Cyrus Rodgers, Anthony Schlumpf, Ekaterina Shilkina, Anna Shishlova, Jordan Swarthout, Nora Vralsted, Katie Wigginton, Carly Willis and Jennie Wojtusik, MA recipients Tyson Sadleir and Zhen Zhang, and PhD recipient Anna Glazkova. Congratulations to all of them for their hard work and achievements!

## UW PSEC: Looking back at the past academic year

### - Krystyna Untersteiner

2010-11 has been a busy and successful year: four lectures, a discussion panel, two fundraising events, and an exhibit. We co-financed the nine-month stay of a Fulbright Lecturer, awarded a student scholarship, and augmented the endowment fund... All of these were accomplished through the dedication of our members, the continued financial support of our generous donors, and collaboration with different UW departments and programs. Together we are fulfilling the UW PSEC's mission of **Bridging Cultures through Education!** Dziękujemy!

The 2010-11 Distinguished Speakers Series continued in winter quarter with a lecture by noted physician and Chopin expert **Dr. Steven Lagerberg**, accompanied by musicologist and pianist **Fred Kronacher** who together presented *Chopin - Mortal Man, Immortal Genius*.



Dr. S. Lagerberg, F. Kronacher and Ewa Poraj-Kuczevska, photo by P. Horoszowski

Changing the mood, in February, we listened to **Professor Piotr D. Moncarz's** lecture on the energy challenges facing East-Central Europe.



Prof. P. Moncarz, photo by P. Horoszowski

Spring brought us **Ryszard Horowitz** with *Expanding the Imagination*, a lecture and a month-long exhibit of his works at the Odegaard Library.



Horowitz Exhibit at Odegaard Library, photo by R. Budzianowski

Two Polish opera singers performed last season at the Seattle Opera: **Aleksandra Kurzak** and **Malgorzata Walewska**. Both divas delighted us not only with their performances but also with their warmth, accessibility and humor during our private receptions.

We would like to thank the following organizations for their help and co-sponsoring of our events this year: Department of Earth & Space Sciences (ESS), Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Evans School of Public Affairs, Jackson School of International Studies/Russian, East European, Central Asian Studies (REECAS), Odegaard Library, Pacific Northwest Seismic Network (PNSN), Polish American Chamber of Commerce Pacific Northwest (PACC PNW), Polish Airlines LOT, MillionZillion Software, Inc, and the School of Music.

Other 2010/11 academic year successes:

The UW PSEC **Endowment Fund** reached **\$170,000!**

**Anna Grzankowski** is the recipient of the 2010-11 UW PSEC Student Scholarship. Anna will pursue her studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow this summer.

For the fifth year, the UW PSEC hosted

a Fulbright Lecturer of Polish Studies. This year, **Dr. Tomasz Lysak** taught three courses: *Representations of the Holocaust in Polish and European Literature*; *Polish Culture and Society 1944-1989 in Film and Polish Culture and Society after the Fall of Communism*. After leaving Seattle, Dr. Lysak will spend the summer months in Edinburgh as an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow, working on his project, "Narratives of the Sonderkommando." He will return to the US in winter as a Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation Visiting Scholar at the University of Chicago, to work on research and pedagogy in liberal arts.

In September, we will welcome **Dr. Adam Kożuchowski**, adjunct professor at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences who will be the UW PSEC Fulbright Lecturer for the 2011/12 academic year. Dr. Kożuchowski graduated from the University of Warsaw and the Central European University in Budapest. He is a former Koerber Fellow of the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna and the author of *Posthumous Life of Austria-Hungary* (2009). He specializes in the history of Central Europe, Russia and Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the history of historiography.

Fulbright Lecturers' stays are made possible through the ongoing cooperation and financial support of Poland-US Fulbright Commission, UW PSEC and the UW College of Arts and Sciences.

We are planning an interesting program for the 2011-12. We look forward to seeing you at our lectures and other events! Please check our website [www.polishstudiesuw.org](http://www.polishstudiesuw.org) for news about upcoming events.

# UW STARTALK Russian Programs Summer 2011

- Michele Anciaux Aoki

For the first time, the University of Washington is hosting two STARTALK\* programs this summer, and they happen to be in Russian language. This is the first year that STARTALK has offered Russian language for students and only the second time that they've offered a Russian program for teachers. At the spring STARTALK meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we learned that there are 13 Russian programs across the U.S. this summer. While this is small compared to the Chinese "footprint" in STARTALK, it's an important milestone for Russian in the 21st Century.

Indeed, that is the theme of our **UW STARTALK Russian Student Program -- Russian in the 21st Century: Language, Drama, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)**. The Student Program, running from July 18 to August 12, has enrolled about 20-25 high school and college Russian heritage students in a four-week intensive language program meeting five hours a day for a total of 100 instructional hours. Students will be introduced to language self-assessment and goal setting through LinguaFolio Online and language learning through social networking via [www.LiveMocha.com](http://www.LiveMocha.com). They will be able to earn five UW credits by enrolling in RUSS 499 and also have an opportunity to complete the ACTFL OPIc (Oral Proficiency Interview computer-based) and WPT (Writing Proficiency Test). High school students may be able to use these results in order to receive high school credit for proficiency. All students will receive placement results for future study of Russian at the UW.

Several powerful components will be woven into this program, including content-based learning in the Arts (Drama) as well as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), through a partnership with the Museum of Flight. The drama component will break the traditional American reticence to speak publicly. In addition, it will expose students to the rich drama heritage of Russian culture and give them tools to express themselves well beyond memorized phrases. The STEM-based lessons will be taught primarily by teachers in the STARTALK Teacher Program and will be designed to prepare students for the culminating trip to the Museum of Flight where they will be able to use Russian as they participate in the "Voyage to Mars" simulation -- in Russian.

Russian-speaking professionals at Microsoft, Boeing, the UW, and a local Russian newspaper printing company will share their disciplines in Russian with the students, with the goal of inspiring some of them to pursue double degrees in Russian and other university majors. Students will have access to interactive web resources for blended learning, learning outside of class and on-going language maintenance after the summer program.

The **UW STARTALK Russian Teacher Program -- Preparing Russian Teachers for the 21st Century**, which runs from July 11 to July 22, has enrolled about ten teachers who are working toward obtaining a P-12 World Language Endorsement in Russian for teaching Russian language in

Washington K-12 public schools. The program is designed to teach them the content knowledge needed to pass the Washington Educator Skills Test - Endorsement (WEST-E) for World Languages and the pedagogical experience that would prepare them for the Performance-Based Pedagogical Assessment (PPA) for those teachers for whom it is required for state endorsement, and to provide scholarship assistance to complete the required assessments (WEST-E and ACTFL OPI and WPT).

This Teacher Program will prepare native (or near native) speakers of Russian to teach in a standards and content-based program, focused on developing communicative proficiency and accuracy in heritage speakers of Russian. A special focus on integrating Arts (Drama) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) into language instruction will prepare teachers to work effectively with today's students. The program includes an intensive first week for teachers alone followed by one week of practicum experience working with students in the STARTALK Russian Student program as well as Intensive First-Year Russian taught by Nika Egorova. Participants will have the option of an additional three weeks of practicum experience where they will be observing and reflecting on the Student Program each day and presenting lessons related to the Drama and the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) topics included in the Student Program. Teachers will receive 5 credits for EDC&I 495 from the University of Washington College of Education. There will be an



option of an additional 50 practicum hours during Weeks 2-4 of the Student Program for which Teachers could earn 3-5 credits in RUSS 499 from the University of Washington Slavic Department.

Program Director (for both programs): Dr. Michele Anciaux Aoki, World Languages Program Supervisor, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [michele.aoki@k12.wa.us](mailto:michele.aoki@k12.wa.us)

Student Program Lead Instructor: Dr. Valentina Zaitseva, Russian Lecturer, UW Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures. Drama Consultant: Aleksey Pavlov

Teacher Program Lead Instructor: Dr. Bridget Yaden, Associate Professor, Department of Languages and Literatures, Pacific Lutheran University. Heritage Language Consultant: Galina Zakashanskaya

In addition, the STARTALK grant is funding two graduate students from the Slavic Department, Matt Boyd and Lena Doubivko, to support STARTALK this summer.

### Please Save the Date!

On Thursday evening, **August 11**, the students will hold a culminating drama performance on campus. This promises to be an amazing original performance prepared by Aleksey Pavlov, reflecting the depth of classical works of Russian literature with a contemporary flare. We hope that many alumni and friends of the Slavic Department, as well as members of the local Russian community, will come out to support our students in this performance.

If you have any questions or would like to visit the program, please email [startalk@uw.edu](mailto:startalk@uw.edu).

-- Michele Anciaux Aoki, PhD, 1991 (MA, 1975)

\*In case you are wondering what STARTALK is...

**STARTALK** was launched as a new component in the programs of the [National Security Language Initiative \(NSLI\)](#) announced by former President Bush in January of 2006. The initiative seeks to expand

and improve the teaching and learning of strategically important world languages that are not now widely taught in the US. Other programs under the NSLI umbrella include Title VI/Fulbright Hays programs of the US Department of Education, The National Security Education program of the [National Defense University](#), and study abroad and exchange programs of the [US Department of State](#).

STARTALK's mission is to increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching critical need foreign languages by offering students (K-16) and teachers of these languages creative and engaging summer experiences that strive to exemplify best practices in language education and in language teacher development, forming an extensive community of practice that seeks continuous improvement in such criteria as outcomes-driven program design, standards-based curriculum planning, learner-centered approaches, excellence in selection and development of materials, and meaningful assessment of outcomes.

<http://startalk.umd.edu/about>

## IN MEMORIAM

After earning an MA in 1991, **Dmitry Danchev** continued to live and work in Seattle. He was just 34 years old when he died.

**Gordon McDaniel**, friend, colleague, and Slavic Department alumnus (Ph.D. 1980), died of cancer in NYC on 4/27/2011. He is greatly missed by all who knew him. Although buried with full honors in Forest Lawn Cemetery in NY, friends and family joined together to celebrate his life here in Seattle as well. On June 10th a group of 40 gathered at Demetrios Moraites' Philoxenia restaurant to toast and roast Gordon. It was an evening of camaraderie, good food, good wine, and great, lusty singing -- an evening that Gordon himself would have hated to miss. Rest in peace, old friend. (Bob Ewen)

**Tom Podl** (1938-2011) was co-founder, co-chair, and an invaluable member of the UW Polish Studies Endowment Committee. Tom was an avid collector of paintings by late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish-born artists, who, after immigrating to France, created the School of Paris. Tom's collection, "Colors of Identity," has been exhibited in museums across the U.S. and Poland, and Tom's presentation, "Colors of Identity: Discovering Polish Heritage through Art," gave rise to the Distinguished Polish Speakers Series, now in its seventh year. A great friend and supporter of Poland and Polonia, Tom was the recipient of the Gloria Artis Medal for distinguished contributions to Polish culture and Polish heritage.



*Tom Podl receiving Gloria Artis Medal from Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Janusz Reiter*

## NEWS FROM YOU

**Heather Caturia** (BA 2008) completed 27 months of Peace Corps service in Kryve Ozero, Mykolayivska Oblast, Ukraine, as a TEFL volunteer.

**Julian Chan** (BA 2007) writes, "A lot has happened since I graduated. After graduating, I traveled around Nepal and Tibet, saw the sunset at the Mt. Everest base camp, bathed an elephant, rode a motorcycle, and did a bunch of other fun things.

"Then I got my TESOL from Seattle University and set out to St. Petersburg, Russia on a tourist visa. I literally just dropped by a language school I saw on the street, put down my resume, had an on-the-spot interview, and managed to convince the director that I can teach (ha!). And hence began my career as an ESL teacher in Russia. I taught a pretty diverse set of students of different levels, but mostly children and teenagers. The first few months were filled to the brim with adventures, new experiences, and cultural shock. It's a period of my life that I will look back at fondly for the rest of my life.

"During my stay in Russia, I worked on some software projects on the side and released an application for the iPhone with a designer I met there. It was quite an experience to collaborate with someone on a software project entirely in Russian. It was then that I realized my passion was really in software engineering. Having to teach rowdy kids every day also started to wear me out. The best software jobs are all in the US, so I decided to come back.

"Now I'm back in Seattle working as a software engineer for Microsoft. My team works on the Windows Phone, the ugly stepsister of iPhone and Android that no one's buying, yet :) We've been working very hard and soon we'll catch up though. Since we are releasing the phone to markets all over the world, I actually get to use my Russian and Chinese on the job by catching translation issues on the phone. It really is the ideal job for me.

"The last few years could have been a lot less interesting had I not taken first-year Russian back in 2003. I am really happy

about how everything have turned out."

**Carol Davis** (MA 1979) was chosen as Fairhaven College's 2011 Alum of the Year and was up in Bellingham in May for that and to meet with students and give seminars and a reading. Her new collection of poetry will be published in February 2012 by Truman State University Press and is called *Between Storms*.

After 25 years **Serge Gregory** (PhD 1977) took an early retirement from Providence Health & Services in May. "As a dilettante artist and gentleman scholar, I will be continuing to make short films (my latest, "Summer Elegy," was filmed in Ireland last year and premiered at the Frye Art Museum in March) as well as working on a book project about the life-long relationship between Anton Chekhov and Isaac Levitan."

**Rebecca Manring** (MA 1974) has a new book coming out in mid-July from Oxford University Press, *The Fading Light of Advaita Acarya*. "Other news: I'm currently serving on the South Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies; the Executive Committee of the South Asia Microforms Project; the EC of the South Asian Summer Language Institute at the other UW in Madison, Wisconsin; the Language Committee of the American Institute of Indian Studies; and am Secretary of the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies. Still teaching Sanskrit and courses on South Asian literature, cinema, and religion. And became a grandmother on the Winter Solstice (without ever being a mom - gotta love family life in America)."

As of this September **Allan Mustard** will transfer to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, where he will be agricultural minister-counselor for India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. "My wife and I will wrap up three years in Mexico this summer."

**Sunny Otake** (MA 1994) writes, "Things are moving along here in Chicago--we are pretty much ready for our wedding on August 14, just a few little details left to square away. We're doing a destination wedding with just our immediate families and getting married in the Bahamas. We are very fortunate that Steve's parents put away some money specifically for his

wedding--goodness knows we'd never be able to afford it on our own!

"Unfortunately, Steve's mother passed away on Feb 2, so she won't be there to see it, which makes the occasion very bittersweet for us. My conversion process continues and will be complete by the time of the wedding. Other than that my summer is filled with studying organic chemistry."

**Timothy Riley** (PhD 1999) is working at Seattle FBI as a Senior Intelligence Analyst and Subject Matter Expert on Eurasia. Yes, another lazy government worker devouring all your tax money! He thought he was escaping "publish or perish" when he left academia, only to discover his job role is guided by publish or perish. He commutes to work by bicycle year round, rain or shine, and spends his spare time playing with his dogs, working in his garden, brewing beer, or riding a tandem bike with his wife of 23 years. A patient woman indeed!

These past few months **Elsbeth Suthers** (BA 2004) has managed to move, get a job and get a graduate degree, though not quite in that order. "In May I graduated with my Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, then moved from the Boston area to Washington, DC to start a new job as Assistant Program Officer for Russia and the National Endowment for Democracy. I'm very pleased to be getting to use my Russian at work and looking forward to traveling back to Russia in the (hopefully) near future."

# GIFTS

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Like the Friends Fund, the *Institutional Allowance* may be used at the discretion of the department to support its various activities. The annual Outstanding Undergraduate Award and Outstanding TA Award both come from this fund.

David R. Grant

Jaroslava Soldanova

This year's recipient of the *Vadim Pahn Scholarship Fund* is Jessica Redinger, who is studying second-year Russian in the UW's summer quarter intensive Russian language program.

Mark E. Kiken

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## SLAVIC GIFT FUNDS

The Slavic Department is very grateful to alumni and friends for their generous support. Please help the department continue its efforts by giving generously whenever possible. You may send a check made out to the University of Washington Foundation with one of the funds designated on the memo line of your check. Please send your check and this form to the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Washington, Box 353580, Seattle, WA 98195-3580.

- ( ) SLADIS      Balkan Fund – Ensure the continued teaching of Balkan languages
- ( ) CZECHS      Czech Studies Endowment Fund – Support for students studying Czech
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- ( ) SLADIS      Friends of Slavic Languages & Literatures – Gifts may be expended at the discretion of the Chair
- ( ) SLAVIC      Institutional Allowance – General support for the department, including awards for undergraduate and graduate students
- ( ) MICKLE      Micklesen Graduate Fund – General support for graduate program
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- ( ) POLDIS      Polish Distinguished Speakers Fund – Showcase achievements of Poles by bringing speakers to campus
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- ( ) RUSSHO      Russian House Fund – Provide general support for the Russian House
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