

UPCOMING & ONGOING EVENTS

Workshop in Spanish Sociolinguistics

The first International Workshop in Spanish Sociolinguistics (WSS1) was conceived by Professor **Lotfi Sayahi** and held at UAlbany in 2002. The objective of the workshop was to provide a forum for researchers interested in sociolinguistics using Spanish language data (or languages in contact with Spanish). Researchers participating in the Second and Third Workshops, held in 2004 at UAlbany and 2006 at Temple University, respectively, presented papers in a single focused session, thereby facilitating an effective interchange of findings.

Several UAlbany graduate students in the Hispanic Linguistics program have presented at these workshops. Four members of the program attended WSS3 at Temple University, in Philadelphia, PA. **Dora Ramírez** spoke on one aspect of her dissertation research, "Subject personal pronouns and impersonal sentences in adult Colombian immigrant's Spanish" and **Juan Thomas** discussed "El uso de la gheada en tres generaciones de mujeres de Carballo, A Coruña." The workshop has become an important international forum for the communication of new investigation in the field of Spanish Sociolinguistics. Leading figures in the field gave three plenary lectures: Dr. Ricardo Otheguy of C.U.N.Y presented a summary of his groundbreaking and comprehensive study of the Spanish spoken in New York City; Dr. Carol Klee of the University of Minnesota shared her research team's recent results regarding the contact between Andean Spanish and Limeño Spanish in Lima, Perú, and Dr. Richard Cameron gave a thought provoking talk that challenged some fundamental assumptions of the field of sociolinguistics. The Keynote speaker, Dr. William Labov of the University of Pennsylvania, the founder of the field of American Sociolinguistics and a pioneer in variational sociolinguistics, discussed how recent work in Spanish sociolinguistics is impacting and will continue to impact general linguistic theory. The selected proceedings of the third workshop have been published by Cascadilla, and are online at www.lingref.com/cpp/wss/3/index.html.

Given the success of the first three encounters, the Fourth International Workshop in Spanish Sociolinguistics (WSS4) is being scheduled for April 2008 at UAlbany. Drs. **Lotfi Sayahi**, **Augusto Lorenzino**, and **Maurice Westmoreland** are organizing the event. Papers and presentations will be delivered in Spanish or English. As in the first three workshops, selected papers will be published by Cascadilla Proceedings Project. For more information, see the LLC website, www.albany.edu/llc.



Lou Stelling and Cynthia Fox presenting research findings

The Franco-American Project

July 6 marked the opening of a month-long exhibit "Le français en Nouvelle-Angleterre/The French Language in New England: Notes from the Franco-American French Project" at the Jacob Edwards Library in Southbridge, Massachusetts. Designed by **Cynthia Fox**, Associate Professor of French Studies, the display presented the results of a multi-year, collaborative project funded by the National Science Foundation during which some 275 French speakers from New England were interviewed by researchers from UAlbany and the University of Maine. Fox highlighted the findings from four communities in southern New England where she and doctoral candidates **Louis Stelling** and **Véronique Martin** conducted fieldwork: Southbridge and Gardner, MA, Woonsocket, RI, and Bristol, CT. Fox and Stelling also made a formal presentation at the library, discussed the contributions of local residents, and answered questions about the French of New England today and in the past. Activities were funded by a grant Fox received through the New York State/United University Professions Individual Faculty Development Awards program. As a result of the field research and language recordings, Fox and her collaborators have much data to review and publish. Most recently published was a paper in the French Review, Special Issue on La Francophonie aux Etas-Unis titled "Franco-American Voices: French in the Northeastern United States Today," Volume 80, No. 6, May 2007: 1278.

For the latest LLC news, visit www.albany.edu/llc
Coming soon:

- Spring Film Festivals (fall's included Arabic, French, German, and a medley of international comedies in The Global Giggles Film Festival coordinated by TA's Elise Bouhet, Alice Krause, and Amy Savage)
- Guest Speakers
- Conferences
- Language Conversation Groups (language at all levels are invited)
- Language Clubs
- New classes (including classical Greek in Fall 2008)



*Graduate students **Vanessa Fondeur**, **Carla Santamaria**, **Diana Aldrete**; cast of *Coser y Cantar*.*

LLC held its Second Annual Research Conference November 1-2, which was dedicated to the intriguing ambiguities of the short text. Many thanks to Ilka Kressner of Hispanic Studies, who coordinated this well attended conference. The conference was offset by bi-lingual play *Coser y Cantar*, written by Dolores Prida. LLC TAs **Diana Aldrete** directed and **Vanessa Fondeur** co-starred with **Carla Santamaria** in this fantasy about a woman questioning her dual identity as a Latina and American living in a New York apartment.

STUDENT NEWS

● Congratulations to **Anoumou Amekudji** for being awarded the Diversity Fellowship Award to assist in the completion of his graduate studies at UAlbany.

● Two former students who had traveled to Haiti with **Eloise Briere** experienced a unique opportunity to return and work for the Foundation of Reproductive Health and Family Education in Haiti. FOSREF is a Haitian Non-governmental Organization (NGO) with a Project Lak ay component designed to help reduce the incidence of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among sex workers in Haiti. It has served more than 50,000 sex workers, and has developed sites in 8 locations across the island. FOSREF has done a remarkable job in helping to alleviate the burden of HIV/AIDS and other STIs in the Haitian population. One of the challenges of the program is to pique the interest sex workers when they are introduced to the program so that they take advantage of all of the services that FOSREF has to offer. Currently, this is done verbally by outreach workers in the field and counselors in the centers.

Asante Shipp (2005 BS in Human Biology and currently at UAlbany working on an MS in Epidemiology) spent six weeks in Haiti this summer using her French skills and creating a database using the Center for Disease Control EPI INFO. This project collects individual level clinical, behavioral and demographic data from commercial sex workers who receive services from FOSREF. Data will allow them to ultimately develop treatment algorithms for STIs among these young women and will allow them to gauge the dollar amount that sex workers earn so that they can be offered alternative income generation practices. "Seeing these young women full of potential moved me and sparked a desire to continue to serve this population. This will definitely not be my last trip to Haiti."

Zara St. Croix also traveled to Haiti to help FOSREF. She was there for six weeks to assist in the collection of video footage on Project Lak ay for the purposes of developing an educational and informative video for the Lak ay Centers. She traveled to six different centers in Haiti to videotape activities and service available. She also conducted interviews with the women from the different centers to better understand the factors that influenced them to participate in the program, and to do sex work. "The information gained from the interviews was incredible. I interviewed women who started sex work at the age of 14...women that have been raped repeatedly throughout their life...women that were thrown out of their households at the age of 13 because their mothers lacked resources to care for them and their other siblings...women that were trying to provide for their families the best way they know how. It was difficult not getting emotional throughout the process involved with collecting the footage, but I was able to uphold my composure by feeding off of the strength of these women. They were so resilient. I could not imagine having to live through half of the things that they shared with me. My Haitian experience was indeed extraordinary, and will forever be embedded in my mind."

The United Nations Meet Switzerland



Janna Harton, our new department administrator, comes to us with experience from four major academic institutions across the country. With a Swiss mother and an Air Force father, she claims to have had the best of both worlds--the benefit of travel and living overseas and across the US with a genetic predisposition to appreciate travel and cultural variety. "Joining

LLC has been a real pleasure--the faculty, staff and students are fantastic and a delightfully diverse group. I look forward to learning something new each day," says Janna. With such a wonderful variety of united nations represented in LLC, it seems somehow fitting to have a bit of Switzerland in its midst!

Stay in TOUCH!

What have you been up to?

Send your updates to:

Languages, Literatures and Cultures

University at Albany

1400 Washington Avenue, Humanities 235

Albany, NY 12222

Re: Stay in Touch

518-442-4222/4100



Amy Savage (above right) is currently a Teaching Assistant in LLC completing her M.A. in Spanish Literature. Savage is quite active in humanitarian causes and travels extensively using her foreign language skills to provide assistance to those in need.

LLC grads spend time away from UAlbany continuing to broaden their horizons and use their language skills in unique and interesting ways...

From the Diary of LLC Grad Students:

A Valentine and a Machete

by Amy Savage

July 2007, Honduras

I am hacking away at brick with a machete. My nostrils burn from sifting ashes and my hands are peeling from mixing cement. The brick splits nicely into thirds when Doña Moncha, a local woman, comes out of her concrete block home with an offering of floral honeyed pancakes. My function as a chaperone-translator for New York-based youth group, Powell House, was to assist in producing the Estufa Justa stove. The model is named after Doña Justa Nuñez, a woman from Aldea Suyapa, located in the outskirts of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. She improved the original stove design of Dr. Larry Winiarski of the Aprovecho Research Center in order to suit local Honduran women's needs. The stove uses 70% less wood than traditional stoves and its chimney system cuts down by 95% the toxic gases that lead to pulmonary ailments. Not only does it reduce health risks to the women who use it, but it helps to reduce

the deforestation of regional areas and lowers basic household costs.

We had the honor of meeting Doña Justa when she welcomed us into her home and told us how she had always dreamed of traveling the world, but with such poverty, what could she do? So, her home became an embassy of sorts, allowing the world to come to her via several groups from the Americas and Europe.

We stayed in a Catholic retreat center with cold showers, flushing toilets, and hospitable nuns who tried to keep me on as a missionary. The local children in the plaza played tag, soccer and Frisbee with us before dinner every night. A 9 year-old boy crafted a pink construction-papered valentine for me, his bilingual words "te amo, I love you, te love you" penciled in his childish scrawl. We were joined by two local college students, one of them being Doña Justa's son, and two Honduran technicians from AHDESA (Asociación Hondureña para el Desarrollo), who joined us for our work project in Aldea Suyapa. One teen in our group climbed a precariously perched half-homemade ladder to pull what we believed to be a 2-foot long rebar off the roof. He continued pulling for about ten seconds before we realized it was approximately 30 feet long, L-shape and resting on live electrical wire. He miraculously managed to get the rebar off the roof without getting electrocuted, and relieved, we all had a good laugh.

Our hearts full from making new friends and neighbors, humor makes the hard work a joy, and we leave the project feeling accomplished and content, knowing, as one of the youth said, that we made dinner that much easier for someone tonight!