From the Chair

It seems good news is in short supply these days, but LLC is delighted to share the following. Our Assistant Professor of Spanish search ended successfully with the appointment this fall of Dr. Ilka Kressner, currently a Visiting Assistant Professor. Born and raised in Germany she is a specialist of Latin-American literature. Congratulations Ilka! Many thanks to Dean Wulfert who managed to secure this much needed position despite a hiring freeze.

While performing their teaching duties, faculty continue national and international travels, engaging in research and presenting scholarly papers at academic conferences. Of particular note, Mary Beth Winn (French) has spent the semester in research at the Newberry Library in Chicago on a Northeast Modern Language Association Fellowship and in Germany on a Herzog August Bibliothek Fellowship.

Some LLC activities of note this semester include:
- Professor Pap Ndiaye (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris) gave a well-attended presentation on “Blacks and Blackness in Contemporary France” co-sponsored by the Department of History and the French Embassy.
- SUNY-Plattsburgh historian Mark Richard lectured on French-Canadian Identity.
- Algerian poet novelist and sociologist Habib Tengour (Université d’Evry Val d’Esson) presented “The Current State of Literature in North Africa” and provided a bilingual poetry reading, co-sponsored by the English Department.
- For the first time this spring we offered 4 courses in the Arabic language sequence and an Honors course taught in English by Lotfi Sayahi on the languages of North Africa.
- Thanks to Ilka Kressner, LLC’s annual conference this year “Texts on Texts: Relations between texts (Inter-, Pre-, Subtexts, Palimpsests)” was a great success and was the first year it was open to those outside UAlbany (3 others schools were represented). Topics ranged widely from Blok to Borges and from media to opera and there was an exclusive showing of the Fall 2008 NYC Latin American Poetic Short Film Festival.
- Francophone House held a Mardi Gras Ball and traveled to the Toulouse-Lautrec exhibit at the Clark Museum in Williamstown, MA.

Continued on page 2

LLC Emeriti, Alumni and Former Instructors Fondly Remember Madame Catherine Wolkonsky

In this newsletter, LLC pays tribute to the Slavic and Eurasian Studies Department by remembering its first chair, Catherine Aleksandra Wolkonsky through the eyes of her former colleagues and students. Catherine, who preferred to be addressed as Madame Wolkonsky was born in 1885 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, the daughter of a general in the Russian imperial army. She learned to speak French at the age of 5 then went on to speak English, Italian, German and Serbo-Croatian with native fluency. She fought against the communists during the Russian Civil War after the revolution of 1917, was wounded in action and later served as a nurse and translator. Catherine immigrated to the US with her husband, then divorced in the late 1930’s.

Continued on page 2

Ronald Bustin (Russian BA 1964, MA 1968) attributes much of his success to Madame Wolkonsky. His fondest memory of her was, “I had to take a mid term exam, but was so ill that I thought I would miss it. When she found out how ill I was, Madame Wolkonsky brought me tea and checked up on me to make sure that I was okay. She even brought me to the exam to ensure that I got there. She was instrumental in keeping me in school.” After graduating with his MA, Ronald had a successful career as a Russian teacher in the Watervliet School District. He became chairman of the Foreign Language Department at Watervliet High School. Year after year, Ron’s students were successful at winning local competitions based on their language skills, including the Olympiada of Spoken Russian. During his career in education, his commitment to the Russian language as well as to foreign language acquisition was well known in the Capital Region. Several articles were written about Ron and his students’ success in the local newspapers.
2009 Excellence in Teaching Awards

Congratulations to Dr. Aida Torres-Horwitt of Hispanic Studies who received this year’s UAlbany award for Excellence in Teaching by a Part-Time Instructor and to Elise Boulet, Teaching Assistant in French Studies, who received the award for Excellence in ‘Teaching by a Teaching Assistant!’ The awards are a nice external reaffirmation of the quality of instruction provided to LLC students.

Awards for Excellence in the Languages

LLC congratulates this year’s winners of the following academic Awards for Excellence in the Languages:

- Eleanor Rosalie Bazzoni, Class of 1906 Fellowship to Kyle Scott, French Studies
- Frank Carrino Memorial Scholarship to Megan Ollendyke, French Studies
- The Guy A. Enfanto Memorial Award for Excellence to Danielle Grasso, French Studies
- Anthony M. Gisolfi Scholarship to Patricia Keyes, Italian Studies

LLC would also like to congratulate the Frank Carrino Memorial Scholarship finalists, Eric Allen Dohner of Russian and Megan Nicole Nelson of Hispanic Studies for their excellence in academic achievement.

From the Chair

Continued from page 1

- LLC’s first “Evening of the Arts” showcased the department’s many artistic talents in an evening to remember. Faculty, staff and grad students celebrated with song, dance (belly, cumbia, tango), poetry recitation, jewelry making, wood working, painting, sketching, hair cutting, and henna body art.
- On Francophone Day 80 high school students engaged in a French language and culture immersion day, starting with a tour of the campus in French, a French treasure hunt, talks by French speakers and an authentic French-Canadian live music and dance session at lunch followed by a French dessert competition (schools made desserts, judges included our dean and chair).
- 100 students from across the state converged on the podium for the 14th Annual Olympiada of Spoken Russian—an immersion experience and regional competition. Winners will go on to national and international competitions and summer study in Russia.
- In partnership with the UAlbany Russian Learners’ Club and the New Russia Cultural Center, LLC hosted folk Russian folk music played on folk instruments performed by the Moscow group, Rzadolie who also performed at the sold-out Russian Winter Festival. A superb performance that our Russian faculty declared 100% authentic and a rare opportunity!
- Excellent foreign films series in German, Danish and Arabic were enjoyed this spring.
- Ongoing Foreign Language Tables in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish help students with conversational experience.
- Through a new program with the university’s bookstore faculty were able to award several scholarships for free books to LLC students.
- Thanks to contributions from our alumni and friends, we are able to again offer scholarships to exceptional LLC students this May.
- A French chorus that debuted at the LLC Holiday Party continues to meet and perform.
- Professor Robert Summers will leave us next fall for the University of Alabama where he will be Assistant Professor of Second Language Acquisition and Director of International Programs in the College of Education. Professor Summers has been the main force behind the development of the CLIC during the past two years. Thank you Robert for having brought this university forward into the 21st Century. We wish you well in your new position.
- Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish, Jacinto Fombona will be leaving us this summer. The department wishes to thank him for his contributions the last three years and we wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Please visit our website (www.albany.edu/llc) for more news about LLC and our various programs.

Best wishes to all for a fruitful and enjoyable spring and summer!

Jean-François Brière
Chair

Madame Wolkonsky

Continued

She and her daughter were taken in by the Clarks of Cooperstown, NY. Catherine decided to pursue teaching as a career as she had a natural ability to teach others. Both she and Vladimir Nabakov (best known for Lolita) were finalists for the teaching position at Vassar, but Catherine was chosen.

After retiring from Vassar in 1962 and teaching at Reed College for a year, Catherine made her way to the University at Albany. In 1963, Phil Fossa, pictured below, came to SUNYA to get teaching certification in Russian. He established a relationship with Madame Wolkonsky and left Albany to travel. He received a call from Catherine in 1965, asking him to teach Russian in the Slavic and Eurasian Studies Department, then known as the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures. He was hired on as Assistant Professor in Romance Languages and Russian. He worked at the University for seven years then went on to the Tarrytown School District. He retired in 1980, moving to Italy. Phil fondly remembers Madame Wolkonsky as being, “...a wonderful woman who was passionate about language.”
Emeritus/Alumni News


Alumnus **Andrew Nygard**’s (BA - Russian, 1991) opinion on how language study affected his life:

“I do believe strongly that [my background] in languages…has fundamentally formed a portion of my worldview… I believe that the door to cultural understanding, and subsequently to a lasting world peace, comes from an understanding of another language (or two or twelve). This understanding brings with it an awareness and appreciation of other cultures and an awareness and understanding that there truly are many ways to view and act in the same situation.”

Comments, Feedback, Replies and Updates

LLC thanks everyone who has taken time to write us. We always appreciate your feedback! Contact us at:

Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
University at Albany
Humanities 235
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12222

or email to: languages@albany.edu

We look forward to hearing from you!

One of Mme Wolkonsky’s favorite Tolstoy Tales

“Practicing his religious philosophy of simplicity, Tolstoy often traveled in peasant garb. Once, in a train station, a fashionably dressed lady approached Tolstoy and asked, “Little peasant, little peasant, please put my bags on the train.” Tolstoy did so and the lady gave him two kopecks. The conductor approached, flustered, and said, “Are you insane? That is the great Tolstoy!” At hearing this, the woman too became flustered and demanded Tolstoy return the money.

Tolstoy refused. “I earned them, didn’t I?” he said.

*Contributed by Paul Marr,*
*Mme Wolkonsky’s grandson*

Gwynneth in Yosemite National Park

Examples of California’s landscape. Realizing that the demands of full time corporate life would never completely align with creative needs, Gwynneth became a contract financial analyst at Microsoft three years ago. Project-based work still maintains her hard-won skills but allows compromise by offering several weeks per year for artistic ventures. In addition to her photography, (www.studiogphotos.com), Gwynneth now writes a research blog on historical cemeteries and is currently working on a photo documentary about Seattle’s pioneer graveyards (www.geanderson.wordpress.com). Gwynneth calls the Pacific NW home. As for her Russian language skills, she did use Church Slavonic skills for about 10 years when singing at various Orthodox church services in Washington, DC and in the Bay Area. She is currently writing a book proposal for an introduction to the prison camp literature genre. This collection of prison camp memoirs will be marketed to both Russian literature/history students and the general reader looking to learn more about survival of the human spirit.
Michael “Misha” Norton (Russian/French BA, 1972) shares a few memories of Madame Wolkonsky

“O

e one wonderful memory we may all share was of her unique dual-keyboard, flip-top typewriter. She was resilient about making her own exams and quizzes through her very last days at Albany. This special typewriter with its English keyboard on one side and Cyrillic on the other, both sharing a single platen, was how she assembled those visually pleasing pages. Ah! the memories of Wolkonsky’s wonderful co-existing of English and Russian. We students never let Mme Wolkonsky carry her (many) books or her (heavy) briefcase. On the walk from the department to her car, a vintage Rambler (if I recall correctly), she often told stories from long, long before. Never was there a feeling that we were walking with a doddering older person, though her gait was slow, and winter walkways were treacherous; always, the many minutes it took to reach to the safety of the building or of the car were positively short, we would say this in awe to one another; we wondered how she did that, how she made time go so fast when we were doing something so monotonous. In 1969, she and a dear friend, Marianna Poltoratzky had collaborated on a reference book published with Columbia University Press, titled A Handbook of Russian Roots, which in my opinion is still a marvel of a book concept and design. It is still a book to be well-thumbed through if you’re a Russian student. I remember Wolkonsky chuckling at the memory of Columbia’s editor’s insistence that there was no such word as ‘semelfactive,’ a word she and Poltoratzky used in their book to describe a momentary action verb form. Proudly, Mme Wolkonsky wrote a letter to the editor, citing the page and column of the Oxford Dictionary where the definition could be found. Of course, there are many, many other memories. The three above are ones I’ve related to friends over the years of teaching; in fact, I think she’d have been happy to know: sometimes Russian (when there was a demand); sometimes French (a language she and I often spoke together); forever ESL. Often ready at day’s end to retire earlier than I should, I no longer teach, though I work with the National Writing Project, a national organization of teachers teaching teachers about teaching writing.”

LLC Faculty Outreach

Albany Tula Alliance and the School of Social Welfare

Timothy Sergay (Russian) attended a dinner in March 2009, honoring two guests from Russia’s Tula State Pedagogical University, Vladimir Fokine, a specialist in gerontology and the chair of the Department of Social Pedagogy and Social Work and Maria Filatova, a Kandidat of Sciences in the area of multicultural education of preschool-aged children. Their visit to upstate New York and to the United Nations was sponsored by the Albany Tula Alliance and UAlbany’s School of Social Welfare. A few weeks prior to their visit, Dean Katharine Briar-Lawson of the School of Social Welfare and Barbara Jancar-Webster, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Political Science and International Studies of SUNY Brockport, asked Professor Sergay to consider ways to include contacts with the Russian language program at LLC on the Tula guests’ agenda. Professor Sergay suggested a visit to the Russian Learners Club, which just launched its new format—a weekly informal Russian tea. So on April 3, Drs. Fokine and Filatova shared tea and refreshments with about ten RLC members, including LLC Russian-language students from first-year through fourth-year levels, and discussed in Russian their teaching interests and the recent history of social work in Russia. That evening, Professor Sergay and his wife Jennifer Hixon (who holds an MA in Russian language and literature from Yale) hosted the visitors for dinner at their home. The evening’s highlight was a mini Beatles music marathon, which is Dr. Fakin’s favorite band. Here’s to US/Russian relations!

Russian and Philosophy

LLC Russian faculty had the honor of assisting UAlbany’s Philosophy Department with Russian language segments at a conference coordinated by Philosophy Professors Robert Howell and John Mandle. The idea for this video conference stemmed from time both professors spent in Russia at Moscow State University (MSU). Professors Charlie Rougle, Hilde Hoogenboom, Timothy Sergay and Robert Summers helped them find interpreters, translators and assisted them with technology needed for what turned out to be according to Robert Howell a “...lively exchange of views...on the topics related to our areas of research. Members of the Slavic program and especially Professors Rougle and Hoogenboom helped us greatly in our struggles to learn the language...”

SPRING/SUMMER 2009

LLC News

4

LLC Congratulates the Finalists of the 2009 Olympiada of Spoken Russian

- Tami Hartshorn from Shaker High School was a finalist in the regular category (non native speakers).
- Rotem Rusak also from Shaker High School, Andrew Chang from Staten Island Technical High School, and Alberto Squattrito from West Babylon High School, were the alternates in the regular category.
- Yuliya Kinash also from West Babylon High School was a finalist in the heritage category.

We wish them a safe trip to Russia this summer!

Galina Kats directing Olympiada participants.
Emeritus/Alumni News continued

16 years after she withdrew from UAlbany to start a family, Alice Halbeisen is proud to say that she has a BA in French (Fall 2006). She was determined to obtain her degree from Albany and to do it before her high school daughter entered college! Since leaving Albany, she taught herself to knit. She was able to merge her newfound hobby with her love of the French language by knitting from commercial French sweater patterns (Bergere de France). She has also had her own original designs published in magazines and books (see the Manchester Jacket, designed by Alice for Interweave Knits Magazine at www.interweaveknits.com/preview/2008_winter.asp). When not knitting or crocheting, she tends to an organic garden. This fall, she plans to go back to being a substitute teacher in her district after taking a break to finish her degree. She took a part-time job at a yarn company in Lowell, MA during her break from studying. “I’m looking forward to being called in to sub in French class!”

Alumnus Alex Shurchin, from Business to Language

Since graduating in 1997 from the Albany Business School with a minor in Russian, Alex Shurchin wore many hats in the financial industry as project manager. After seven years in management, he found his calling in the language industry. In 2004, he found himself working for Legal Interpreting Services, a full service language company specializing in document translation and multilingual interpretation. He helped the company grow their government sector language services over 300% and has become its Chief Operating Officer. “Throughout my years after graduating from UAlbany, I have leveraged my language skills in many different business situations. Working with people from all over the world and having a good understanding of foreign cultures and speaking a different language really helped me excel and grow not only in the business world, but in my personal life as well. Today, I am happily married and have a beautiful 4 month old baby, who I hope will be able to speak Russian.”

Professor Emeritus Alex Shane (Slavic and Eurasian Studies Department) on Catherine Wolkonsky

“Catherine Wolkonsky was extraordinarily dedicated to her students and sought to imbue them with a love for the Russian language, literature and culture. She was equally dedicated to the Russian faculty she had assembled during her years at the University.

Upon arriving in Albany in the Fall of 1961 I heard the following apocryphal story of her dedication. A few years earlier as a winter storm approached Albany, Catherine Wolkonsky spent the night on a couch at the university so that she would be able to conduct classes and meet with her students the following morning.”

Professor Shane currently lives in Las Vegas with his wife. He travels the west coast and teaches Tai Chi for fun.

Professor Emerita Toby Clyman (Slavic and Eurasian Studies) adds

“After coming to SUNYA in the 1960s an independent Russian department was established with Mme Wolkonsky as its first chair. Incidentally, hiring procedures were uncomplicated in the 1960s, so a recommendation from Mme Wolkonsky would often suffice to be hired to teach in the department. Most speakers knew of Mme Wolkonksy’s high social status in Russia before the Revolution of 1917. Hence, they would, in private and in correspondence, refer to her as Princess Wolkonsky.

Professor Clyman says on the morning after the winter storm, a custodian saw a little old woman in Mme Wolkonsky’s office eating her dry cereal, he thought she was the cleaning woman and offered to take her home. Of course, Mme Wolkonsky thanked him, and told him, she is not going home, because she has a class to teach in the afternoon.”

Former student

Nina Reich (Russian BA, 1964, MA 1965, DA 1971) remembers Madame Wolkonksy for her strength and dedication to her students. She recalls that when Madame Wolkonksy retired from the University in 1972, she became secretary to Alexandra Tolstoy, youngest daughter of Leo Tolstoy. “She helped Alexandria finish writing her memoirs. She wrote as Alexandra dictated.”

After graduating from the Russian program, Nina went on to teach Russian at Sage College, where she is now Professor Emeritus. In 1972, she married Professor Emeritus of Germanic Studies Warren Reich. While at Sage, she also taught French, Spanish, Comparative Literature (English), History and Geography. Her teaching encompassed everything but Math and Science. Nina currently works closely with The Albany Tula Alliance, a non-for-profit organization dedicated to maintaining ties between Russia and Albany. Warren composes crossword puzzles for the New York Times and spends his time enjoying his retirement.
Student News

Eizabeth Kane, graduate student in the UAlbany Russian program, applied for the CAORC (Council of American Overseas Research Centers) Critical Language Scholarship, funded by the United States Department of State, for further intensive study of the Russian language and was admitted to the 10-week Summer 2009 program in Tomsk, Siberia. Terms include accommodation with a host family, visa, insurance, paid travel expenses, a modest stipend, and full-time study of Russian at Tomsk State University (TSU). Congratulations!

Perspectives on Tunisia from French Major Grace Rectra

“I went with a group of SUNY Potsdam students who are studying the Arabic language, along with their professors, Drs. Lora and Richard Lunt. We spent a week in Tunis learning about the Arabic language in relation to other languages. We were also lectured on Islam and orthodox vs. folk religion since this is the principal religion in Tunisia. We had the opportunity to explore ancient Phoenician and Roman ruins, haggle for souvenirs in the Medina, visit other universities such as L’école Supérieur de Gestion and eat authentic Tunisian cuisine. The highlight of the trip was riding camels at sunset and spending a night in the Sahara desert. This was something truly unique and memorable. We and two locals built a bonfire in the desert and shared stories under the stars. The quiet of the desert and the sparkling spectacle that was the night sky made us all feel connected, both to each other and to nature. It was an amazing trip and I encourage anyone who may be considering doing it next year to please do so. You will not regret it!”

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In addition to being enrolled in the Master of Science in Secondary Education program here at the University at Albany, LLC Lecturer and Alumnus (BA Spanish 2008) Steven Lopez is also pursuing a Master of Arts in Spanish Linguistics at Middlebury College. He has received a full academic scholarship to study at Middlebury’s program site in Guadalajara, Mexico this summer. Congratulations! During his six weeks in Guadalajara he will be taking courses that focus primarily on Mexican literature and culture and will be living with a local family. He hopes that by living, studying, and meeting new “Tapatíos” he will gain insight into their way of life. He plans to share this experience with future language students.

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French major Humberto Salgado who comes from a Colombian background, recently won the Pi Delta Phi Yedlicka Scholarship for summer study in France.

Faculty quote Spring 2009

“If theorists are into demystifying culture, I’m into demystifying theory.”

—Hilde Hoogenboom
(during her ARUS 546 – Russian Realism course)
Spring 2009 Book Scholarship Award Recipients

LLC faculty got to choose students from language programs to receive a Bookstore Scholarship for spring 2009. Students were awarded free books for the semester. LLC would like to thank Paul Mueller, Textbook Manager and Dixie Botts, Bookstore Manager, and the University at Albany Bookstore for making this opportunity available to our students. Not pictured: Rose Landau (German), Michael Romano (Italian), Kaitlin Costello (Russian) and Adrian Lopera (Spanish).

Delight Your Palate with International Recipes

East Syracuse Minoa Central High School students Cassandra Kovaes in grade 12 and Michael Guisson in Grade 11 won the Francophone Day “concours de desserts” competition with this superb dessert:

tarte frangipane aux poires

1 (8 oz.) pastry crust
½ c. of butter
½ c. of sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk
3½ ounces of ground almonds
1 can of pears (about 14 oz.)
3 Tbsp of apricot jelly
1 Tbsp of lemon or orange juice

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place the pastry dough onto a mold. Beat the butter and sugar together until the mixture is soft. Add the egg, the egg yolk and the ground almonds. Mix until well blended. Pour the entire mixture onto the pastry dough. Place in the fridge for 10 min. Cut the pears into thin strips. Remove the tart from the fridge and arrange the pears on top of it. Place in the oven for 1 hour. Once cooked, allow to cool. In a small saucepan, heat the apricot jelly and the lemon or orange juice. Pour over the tart. Bon Appétit!

Former LLC Arabic instructor Darius Jonathan tantalized our palates at the annual LLC Holiday Party with Grandma Raile’s Soup, a must try recipe to bring out the spicy side in you:

2 c. red lentils
1 tsp coriander
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp dried mint
½ tsp black pepper & salt
2 onions or 1 large, diced
1½ Tbsp butter
1½ Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp chopped garlic
6 oz feta cheese
Lime juice

Soak lentils in cold water. Stir. Remove what floats up and drain. Repeat. Put lentils in heavy pot and add 5 cups water. Add spices, onion, butter and olive oil. Bring to gentle boil; stir often. After 10 minutes add 1-2 more cups water. Soup turns yellow and creamy. Sauté garlic in a little oil; add to soup. Add 6 oz crumbled feta. Gently boil another 5-10 minutes. If you like, puree the soup in a blender. Add lime juice to taste. Serves 8.
Faculty News

- French major, Megan Ollendyke, who won the President’s Award for Leadership in spring 2009 for Outstanding Senior, recognized Susan Blood as the faculty member who was instrumental to her success as a student.

- Brett Bowles (French) guest-edited a thematic issue of Historical Reflections, a journal dedicated to articles of wide-ranging interest. His piece is titled “The Politics of French and German Cinema, 1930-1945.” Slated for publication in July 2009, it features articles from scholars in the US, UK, France, and Belgium. In late 2008 he began working with International Historic Films in Chicago as academic advisor and co-producer of DVDs related to France during the Second World War. He has contributed multi-media essays for two forthcoming DVDs: Forces Oculutes, an anti-Semitic, anti-Masonic propaganda film made by French collaborators in 1942 and Salut à la France, a short docudrama Jean Renoir made for the American Office of War Information in 1944 to promote American-British-French solidarity just prior to D-Day.


- Joana Sabadell-Nieto participated in two events sponsored by the University of Barcelona, Spain in December 2008: a lecture on gynotopies and feminist science fiction at the Women and Literature Research Center (University of Barcelona) entitled “Speculative Fiction and other (im)proper universes” and in “(Im)proper Worlds: Utopia and Feminist Science-Fiction,” a seminar at the UNESCO Center for the Development of Women and Cultures. She will return to Barcelona in April, part of the Masters program for professoors and professionals at the Institut Interuniversitari d’Estudis de Genere (a Research Center with 20 research groups from 7 Catalan universities and “invited” scholars from abroad). It will be on “Feminism(s) and Literary Criticism.” Also in April, she will present a paper in the Kentucky Foreign Languages Conference on Spanish poet Ángel González during an homage on the anniversary of his death.

- Hilde Hoogenboom (Slavic) has been awarded a Nuala Drescher Leave Grant that will allow her to devote the fall 2009 semester to research. Congratulations, Hilde! Hilde will attend a working session in October 2008 for the research group New Approaches to European Women Writers (NEWW) in Montréal, of which she is a member. This is a database project at the Universiteit Utrecht, the Netherlands, to catalogue the reception of women writers before 1900. At the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) in Philadelphia in November she organized a panel, “Reanimating the Past: Excavating Nineteenth-Century Views of the Eighteenth Century,” and presented a paper, “Sentimental Realism: Rejection as Appropriation of ‘Sentimental Slop.’” As President, Hilde led the annual meeting of the Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies Association. She gave a lecture, “All Gender and No Politics: Representations of Empresses, Queens, and Princesses,” at the Universiteit Groningen, in the Netherlands, in November, presented her work, “From Bibliography to Canon: Classifying Women in France, England, Germany, and Russia, 1700-2005,” at a workshop with NEWW and the Huizinga Institute, Amsterdam, at the Universiteit Utrecht in November and gave a lecture, “Catherine the Great’s Memoirs: Of Horses and the Political Animal,” at Smith College in February.

- Eloise Brière (French) was a guest speaker at The Haiti: Why Should You Care Forum in February 2009. She spoke about the first encounter between what is now known as Haiti and the Europeans of Hispaniola before Columbus’ men exterminated them to underscore the violent nature of this and all subsequent encounters with Europeans on the island. She also described how the enslaved were able to wrest the power from Europeans to start the nation of Haiti, but showed how impossible the task was when the entire world was against the Haitian experiment. The presentation ended with a description of how neocolonial ties to France made development so challenging that the “Haitian experiment” was never able to truly get off the ground, explaining to some degree why things are the way they are today.
Faculty News continued

LLC Slavist and Family Survive Ice Storm the Old-Fashioned Way

Tim Sergay (Russian) reports that the December 2008 ice storm left his rural home without power, heat, water, and phone service for five days, but reliable 1970s-era iron stove technology and a lot of hard work kept the place habitable and plunged him into the wintry conditions of two of his favorite Russian novels.

“Our house was built in 1861. My wife inherited it jointly with her mother from a late aunt and uncle, who installed a good cast-iron wood-burning stove in a central parlor in the early 1970s. There were no hotel rooms left in the area, and the road that led to our home was impassable anyway. So our best bet was to stay put, shut off the front part of the house and keep a fire roaring in the stove. I could get the parlor temperature above 80º, hot enough to keep our boys’ rooms upstairs in the upper 50s for most of the night. We hauled buckets of water from streams that flow a few yards from the old front doors, and occasionally the hand pump in the yard thawed enough to work. We stored perishable food in containers in the snow. For light we used kerosene lanterns, candles and flashlights, all of which delighted the boys. The main problem was a supply of dry wood, which I maintained with the help of two neighbors, one of whom is a freelance handyman who helped the family maintain the property for many years. I learned a great deal of wood lore and chainsaw skills from them. We harvested dry ash and cherry by felling standing dead trees and sectioning them. I split log sections on a convenient tree stump with a sledge hammer and wedge, then later with a maul, which proved much more efficient; for larger batches we used a power splitter. The boys helped stack firewood. My wife boiled us a chicken on the wood stove in a cast iron pot; we ate a lot of sandwiches and hot dogs. Spirits were high. The beauty of the woods thickly glazed with ice, the crack and crash of falling branches that landed with great whumps and clouds of fine snow, the need to focus on physical life and immediate needs – all this put me in mind of the winter interlude of Varykino in Boris Pasternak’s novel Doctor Zhivago, and also the “frontier” conditions depicted in the historical novel by Aleksandr Chudakov that I am translating, A Gloom Is Cast Upon the Ancient Steps. I found myself living the lifestyle like the father in that novel, a history instructor in an isolated town of political exiles of Soviet Northern Kazakhstan in the 1930s, maintaining a homestead with decidedly nineteenth-century technology. He prepares his lectures late at night by the light of a prized hurricane lantern, and when he returns to the family house, he can’t resist the urge to clear more snow away from the doorway before entering. I thought of Chudakov every time I found myself repeating those very motions myself. For a translator or literary scholar, it’s always lucky when life invites you to walk directly into the pages of the books you prize the most.”

Ilka Kressner (Spanish) has written two articles that have been accepted for publication. “Poemas del caer – el motivo del vértigo en las obras de Edgardo Dobry, Roxana Crisólogo y Ylonca Nacidit-Perdomo,” will be published in the Hispanic Review and is on the motif of free fall in contemporary Spanish American poetry. The second, “Space as a Metafictional Marker: Borges’ “Tema del traidor y del héroe” and Bertolucci’s Strategia del ragno,” will be published in the Bulletin of Hispanic Studies and is a comparative study of space in Jorge Luis Borges’ short story and Bernardo Bertolucci’s cinematic version of it.

This spring Mary Beth Winn is conducting research as a fellow at the Newberry Library in Chicago and at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. Her project entails an examination of books produced between 1485 and 1512 by the Parisian publisher-bookseller Anthoine Vérard. Vérard is known for preparing deluxe copies of his books for wealthy and noble patrons, printing them on parchment and having the woodcuts hand-painted by the best artists of the day. No two copies of any edition are identical. Mary Beth is preparing a Census of Vérard edition with details about individual copies, their likely patrons, and their current location. Established in the 16th century, the library in Wolfenbüttel is an important research center for the study of the medieval and early modern period. Her article on Vérard’s four editions of the medieval prose romance, “Tristan,” is forthcoming in the journal Arthuriana.
This Year in LLC

A 2008/2009 Pictorial of LLC sponsored events:

9/08 - Francophone House visits dairy farms in upstate New York, while on a Cheese Tour. Students cleaned the soles of their shoes to protect the animals from cross contamination.

10/08 - Francophone House students and Eloise Brière spend a French immersion weekend at the Dippikill Wilderness Retreat in the Adirondacks.

10/08 - Tunisian poet, Ali Smaoui read from his collection of poetry after a discussion of La Place de la Femme dans le Discours Poétique Maghrébin.

11/08 - Language instructors from area high schools participate in the annual Teacher Workshops sponsored by UHS. LLC Alumnae Lucette Mésinèlle, who is currently working on her MA in French (left) from La Salle along with Nathalie M. Degroult, French PhD, 2004 (right) from Lake George and Eva Cagianese (center) from Haldane.

11/08 - Italian UHS Teachers meet with UHS Italian Liaison Maria G. Keyes (center). Left to right: Victoria Maiuolo from Roy C. Ketcham H.S., Paolina Fusco from John Jay Senior H.S., Joseph Pafundi from Troy H.S., Anna Barnada from Union Endicott H.S., Angelo De Michele from Union Endicott H.S., Laura Alessi from Suffern H.S., Lucie Iuzzolino from Suffern H.S., Leslie Crill from Clarkstown H.S. North and seated is Joan N. Scerbo from Pearl River H.S.

11/08 - Guest speaker, Dr. Kevin Hickey shared his adventures and photos spent travelling Europe and Africa on his 15 speed heavy duty Italian touring bike.

11/08 - Grenoble Exchange student Amandine Hot experienced her first all American Thanksgiving dinner.

11/08 - The German Culture Club held a bake sale to raise funds for their holiday party.

2/09 - The Francophone Living and Learning Community held their first Mardi Gras Ball. Costumes were mandatory.
2/08- LLC Evening of the Arts: Faculty, Teaching Assistants and Staff shared their artistic talents with invited guests.

Charlie Rougle (Russian) uses a scroll saw to create beautiful, hand painted, three dimensional wood carvings. (Replica of the illustration “Vasilisa and the White Horse-man,” from Russian Folklore tale Vasilisa, the Beautiful).

Ilka Kressner (Spanish) and dance partner Daniel Reil tangoed to Osvaldo Ruggiero’s classical “Yunta de Oro” and Apocalyptica’s version of “Fade to Black.”

Elke Kane (Russian) belly dancing.

LLC Lecturer Dora Ramirez with Raquel Sanmiguel (PhD student, LACS) and Lina Rincón (PhD student, Sociology) performed Cumbia, a folk dance of Colombia.

Karina Walker (Spanish) sang John Denver’s “Leaving on a Jet Plane”.

The LLC French Choir, composed of faculty, staff and students, performed French songs accompanied by Carrie Kuehl on guitar, (French DA, 1997).

Elizabeth Kane (Russian) belly dancing.

3/08- Traditional Russian instrument ensemble Razdol-e (Expanse) performed traditional folk songs to help launch the new Russian Learners Club.

3/08- Tim Sergay and Charles Rougle (Russian) judge Olympiada participants on their Russian language skills.

3/08 - UHS French high school students participate in Francophone Day activities.
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THANK YOU! GRACIAS! MERCI! GRAZIE! DANKE! SPASIBO! SHUKRAN! OBRIGADO! GRATUS!