

Slavic Languages and Literatures

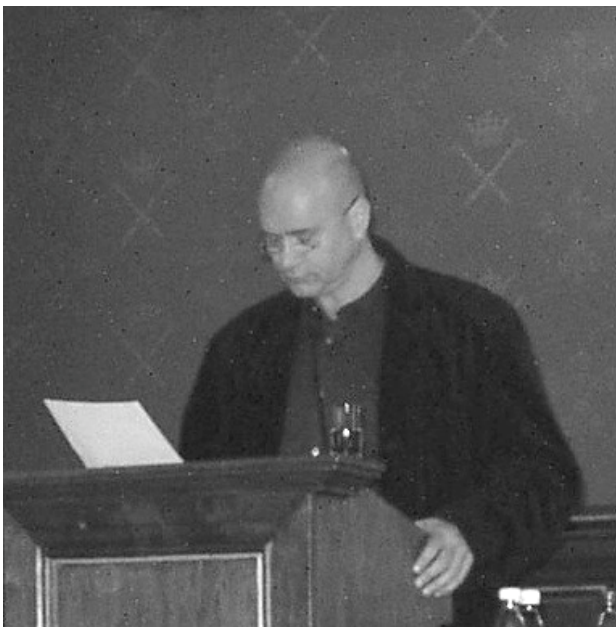
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Department Newsletter

Volume 10

Summer 2009

Letter from the Chair Toma Longinovic



Professor Toma Longinovic lecturing at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

It seems as if another academic year has just whizzed by, this time against the background of shrinking budgets and serious challenges to the mission of the humanities in general and foreign languages in particular. Yet, Slavic Languages and Literatures at Madison has coped with the overall atmosphere of crisis with a sense of optimism and resilience characteristic of our growing community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and benefactors. It was with particular joy that I handed out an astounding number of awards to the members of our small but vibrant Madison Slavic Community in late April 2009. Sensing almost palpable excitement in our

legendary 1418 Van Hise seminar room overlooking Lake Mendota, I came to the conclusion that despite the challenges, our department will remain strong and healthy in the days ahead.

Here are just few of the highlights of the past year – more from individual members of our community is to be found on the pages of the newsletter that follow. We have managed to hire one new faculty member last year and one this year and would like

to welcome Irina Shevelenko and Karen Evans-Romaine to our department and wish them much happiness and success in Madison. Our graduate students have done very well both locally and nationally, with Naomi Olson winning the Early Teaching Excellence Award at UW-Madison and Molly Thomasy landing a stipend from Fulbright to carry out her research on Russian theater in Moscow. Brian (a.k.a. Rufus) Johnson, Molly Peeney and Matt Walker have secured teaching positions for next year, a formidable achievement in this lean year on the job market. Judith Kornblatt's book *Divine Sophia* just came out from Cornell University Press and our faculty have continued to publish and deliver lectures at national and international conferences and universities. Our Polish program continues to grow and prosper thanks, in large part, to the generosity of Gasiorowska, Lapinski, and Zawacki families.

We have a Japanese post-doctoral scholar, Dr. Shunichiro Akisusa, visiting the department during the next academic year on a prestigious fellowship provided by the government foundation of Japan, a fact that will further increase our visibility and reputation in a global context. Our new class of graduate students looks very promising indeed and we hope to make their graduate school experience at the Slavic department a worthwhile and meaningful one. I am personally looking forward to the next year and am confident that we will maintain our high standards of scholarship, teaching and service. I would like to thank the faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters for making 2008-2009 yet another successful year at the Madison Slavic department.

Have a great summer!

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In Memory of Yuri Konstantinovich Shcheglov



We are extremely saddened to report the passing of Yuri Konstantinovich Shcheglov, professor, mentor and friend. On behalf of the entire Slavic family, we extend our sympathies to his widow, Lera Shcheglov. Below are reminiscences and remembrances of Yuri Konstantinovich from eleven former graduate students.

Dan Ungurianu (PhD 1995)

The news of Yuri Konstantinovich Shcheglov's death came to me with a substantial delay. It was Good Friday, and I had just finished discussing "The Death of Ivan Ilych" in my Tolstoy class. As always happens on such sad occasions, one's memory begins to extract reminiscences of the departed from one's personal archive. Here is the first episode.

Fall of 1990. The elevator doors on the fourth floor of Van Hise Hall open to let out Yuri Konstantinovich with his eternal briefcase and a gaze fixed beyond the concrete confines of the building. As he encounters something familiar amid the scenery (me), his face brightens: "Dan, do you know where is the exit here?" (By then he had worked in Van Hise for over a year.) Yuri Konstantinovich's good-natured absent-mindedness became the stuff of graduate student lore. (In life, he could afford to be absent-minded and impractical, since his wife Lera took care of all every-day matters.)

His erudition was even more legendary. I remember that once, when he entered the classroom, the blackboard was still covered with

inscriptions from a previous class.

Before erasing them Yuri Konstantinovich paused for a moment: "This is in Swahili. It says..." He then proceeded with his lecture on eighteenth-century Russian literature, freely drawing parallels between Russian, French, German, Greek, and Latin subjects. As much as we were awed by his tremendous erudition, I cannot recall a single instance when he tried to impress the audience. It was, rather, something that came as naturally as breathing and was always directed towards one goal: to elucidate the material in question. Equally memorable were his modesty, tactfulness, and respect for the interlocutor, although Yuri Konstantinovich did not hesitate to express substantive criticism of our work wherever necessary. He remained in his role of teacher outside the classroom as well, sharing his love for rare books and recordings, travel, and good cuisine.

In the same way, his attitude to literary texts was always tactful and gentle, characterized by a kind of genuine and quiet friendliness. It was as if he were conversing with good friends or old acquaintances. With some of

them he would become more animated. (A random recollection: Yuri Konstantinovich brightened up whenever he encountered the Dativus Absolutus construction in Old Russian). His focus was not on the transient but on the unchanging; it is reflected in his search for invariants that underlies much of his scholarly work and also goes beyond it. I remember him discussing with me (in the early 1990s) the raging pandemic of "political correctness." "In essence," he said, "there is nothing new about this, it is all very much reminiscent of the Soviet *Proletkult* of the 1920s..." Instead of irritation, there was a joy of recognition, perhaps even a somewhat "childish" joy, since his take on "nothing is new under the Sun" was devoid either of Ecclesiastes's existential despair or of any mysticism in the vein of quasi-Symbolist "correspondences."

His immersion into the universe of culture seemed to have given him genuine pleasure. Perhaps it also increasingly became a refuge from impinging reality after the tragic death of his and Lera's only son, Roman. Confronted with a loss, we inevitably try to compensate for it with notions of immortality and eternity. Let me try to offer one that Yuri Konstantinovich might have appreciated: to wander in the infinite spaces of world culture, but this time without the need to look for a way out.

Memory eternal!

Shannon and Dima Spasov (PhD 2007 & ABD Emeritus)

We remember Yuri Konstantinovich for his amazing breadth and depth of knowledge, his talent for

lecturing, his sense of humor, and his love for his subject. We, along with all other students of Russian language and literature, will miss him.

Ann Komaromi (PhD 2001)

Yuri Konstantinovich was my advisor, and I initially planned to write about a few late Soviet novelists, including Vasilii Aksenov. Yuri Konstantinovich was probably not obliged to spend long sessions going over the minutiae of cultural material in Aksenov's prose with me, but he did. We spent a lot of time on the allusions in *Surplussed Barrelware*, which he liked, and even more time on *The Burn*, which he did not. "These are very obvious referents," he would point out. He would add, "This is popular cultural material." That was helpful to learn. I was humbled by the amount I didn't know, and challenged to imagine a world whose most basic texture still eluded me, despite years of studying Russian language and literature. "Aksenov's prose is like jewelers' work," Yuri Konstantinovich would say. May the memory of his careful, appreciative attention be an inspiration for my work and that of all his students.

Megan Dixon (PhD 1999)

Yuri Konstantinovich will remain my idea of what a perfect scholar is—and I mean "scholar" in an older, more universal sense than we generally mean now, although he was in what we call "academia." But Yuri Konstantinovich clearly did not read books or write articles or teach because he had his career in mind—he read and

wrote and taught because this came as naturally to him as breathing. He had that gentle preoccupation with words and books that I know sometimes would drive Valeria Alexeevna kind of crazy, but was so humane and kind and endearing. I remember that there were so many books in the house that many of them had to be moved to the basement, so that they wouldn't warp the floor. Somehow I heard that he read Horace before bed, in the original, just for the delight of it. He would talk about visiting book fairs all around the world, down some narrow street in Denmark or Germany or Austria, in search of one more book to fill out his rich library.

My favorite class with him was a seminar on 20th century Russian literature; his own intimate knowledge of communal apartments from childhood in Moscow tempered Zoshchenko's furious satire, and we got the sense of the gentler niches in Soviet life that could produce such a person. I think the gift I treasure most is that of Soviet-era songs that he played for me during visits to his house: later I learned to sing "Dark Night," still one of my favorites, that I think was performed by Mark Bernes. Playing these songs for me reflected Yuri Konstantinovich's care that students understand something of the whole cultural fabric of Russian and Soviet life, its human touches, and the full dimensionality of cultural knowledge that a "native" would learn. For that reason, we all had him to thank for the section of our preliminary exams that required us to identify famous quotations. Those will still keep me reading and searching through Russian literature of all periods, trying to acquire

the friendly intimacy with the texts that Yuri Konstantinovich demonstrated.

Alice Harris (ABD Emerita) and Clint Walker (PhD 2006)

As a teacher and scholar Yuri Konstantinovich inspired and enriched us with his far-ranging and deep knowledge, but it was his soft-spoken, gentle nature and his unassuming modesty in the face of such erudition that stood out more than anything else in his person. He helped generations of graduates and undergraduates understand Russian perceptions of themselves and the world, and many of his former students who have since become professors in their own right continue to draw on his insightful lectures on Russian literature and culture. One thread which ran through a number of his courses was the strong tragicomic element in Russian literature hidden under the surface of picaresque buffoonery and hyperbole. He encouraged his students to visualize the sobering realities behind the humor, but always with a glimmer in his eye and a slight grin playing on his lips.

The overwhelmingly academic nature of most of our interactions with Yuri Konstantinovich make certain less scholarly moments stand out in particular. His undergraduate Tolstoy class was very surprised, for example, to hear someone with as encyclopedic a knowledge of *War and Peace* as Yuri Konstantinovich begin a lecture praising the potential benefits of Cliffs Notes. An almost unbelievable lack of pretentiousness in the face of vast erudition—this is undoubtedly the most precious lesson he conveyed to his many

students, and he did so as naturally and unaffectedly as if he were one of Tolstoy's peasants harmoniously mowing in the fields. Perhaps for this reason, Yuri Konstantinovich's anecdote about how he literally fell right out of his seat laughing the first time he watched Stanley Kramer's "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" will always remain as dear in our memory as his rich, insightful lectures on Ilf and Petrov, Chekhov, Tolstoy and Kantemir.

A gentle smile, slightly sad eyes with a soft twinkle, and a quiet but steady voice that made you strain your ears so as not to miss a single word about Kantemir's allusions to classical myth, Tolstoy's conception of childhood, or Mel Brooks' film version of "The Twelve Chairs." We feel tremendously grateful to have had courses with such an astonishingly broad scholar and such a wonderfully humble, humane and endearing human being.

Peyton Engel (ABD Emeritus)

It was at least a decade ago when I last spoke to Professor Shcheglov, but the years I spent in his classes had a profound effect on me. I took as many of his classes as I could, because I found his particular style of lectures to be so engrossing. Every class would begin with a statement that seemed either obvious or trivial, and the discussion that followed seemed to take baby steps at first. As he developed the idea over the remainder of the class, though, the implications of what he had said would become more involved, and the idea would take on greater importance. The period would end essentially with a restatement of the original proposition,

but by that point I would have a completely new appreciation for it, and a more intense experience of whatever poem or book we were discussing.

My career has taken me far afield from Russian Literature, but I draw on Professor Shcheglov's example whenever I give a lecture or do any public speaking. His ability to find importance and profundity in whatever was before him, and to explain it in ways that the listener could hardly fail to accept, remain an inspiration to me.

Angela Brintlinger (PhD 1994)

Yuri Konstantinovich arrived at Wisconsin when I had been in graduate school for some years already. In some ways he personified the "absent-minded professor." I remember asking Jean what she was up to one day in the office, and she replied "Ordering a stapler for Yuri. Again." This made me curious, and I interrogated her until she admitted that about once every week or two, Yuri Konstantinovich would come in and ask her sheepishly for a stapler. His kept getting lost. We graduate students began to wonder... where were they going? Was there a closet-full of staplers somewhere? No one ever found out.

I am fortunate to have studied with Yuri Konstantinovich in a number of courses: 18th century Russian literature, Formalism and Structuralism, the 1920s. I still use many of my notes and knowledge from those courses in my own teaching today, and I retain some of my favorite expressions as well (such as referring in Russian to copies as "*khandauty*"). His brilliant commentaries to Ilf and Petrov's *Twelve Chairs* still amaze me, and I once tried to convince

him to publish a selection in English translation so that my undergraduates would be able to benefit from them. The most wonderful thing Yuri Konstantinovich did for me as a student was to advise my independent work on Yuri Tynianov's fiction, a project that eventually morphed into my dissertation and first book. We met weekly over the course of a semester to discuss the three historical anecdotes ("*Podporuchik Kizhe*," "*Maloletnii Vitushishnikov*," and "*Voskovaia Persona*"): their stylized language, their structure, scholarship about them. After each of our very intense sessions ("you'll need to write a paper at the end," he told me, "at least 20-25 pages"), Yuri Konstantinovich would pull out his dog-eared copy of the novel *Silence of the Lambs* and ask me one or two questions about the English. Living in the United States, he wanted to get a sense of what native speakers saw as normal expressions and what seemed stylized; but he didn't want to interfere with my education. He would save up any further questions for the next session. Yuri Konstantinovich was a kind, brilliant, inspiring teacher and scholar. I will treasure these memories and more in the years to come.

Mary Petrusiewicz (PhD 1996)

I took a class with Yuri Konstantinovich my first semester as a graduate student and remember that after the first meeting he asked about my family background. He apparently knew the city in Belorussia where my father was born. He was a kind, gentle, thoughtful man, and a fine scholar who was all substance and no show. In his seminars, each of us was required to lead

the class through our analysis of a text, and they were thus valuable opportunities for individual thought and expression. They were also wonderful opportunities to study the lesser-known works of major writers. I shall always remember Yuri Konstantinovich with the greatest respect and regard. The world has lost a unique and irreplaceable soul.

Alyssa Gillespie (PhD 1998)

In thinking through how I would set about writing my memories of Yuri Konstantinovich Shcheglov, I was moved to return to the notes I had taken in the many courses he taught me during my time in graduate school. Sheathed for a decade now in tidy rows of forest green file folders confined in a steel cabinet, the words I had transcribed years ago, capturing them like birds in flight as they left his lips, had lain silent for too long. So I went to the cabinet and retrieved folder after folder: I had not remembered there were so many. Old Russian Literature, 18th-Century Russian Literature, 19th-Century Russian Poetry, Tolstoy, Chekhov. Professor Shcheglov was able to teach practically every course in the curriculum, and he did. I took more courses with him than with any other professor; and he served on my dissertation committee too, offering spare but always discerning commentary on my manuscript—with an emphasis on the goal of, as he phrased it, “philological perfection” (i.e., the accuracy of my poetic translations), which he viewed as his particular responsibility.

Now, as I open the thick files of notes, his words again take careful,

poised flight, and the image of him rises anew before me: a gentle giant with always-smiling eyes no matter how much sadness was in his heart, dressed in a warm sweater, slightly hunched in concentration, a shabby briefcase by his side and a stack of note cards covered in tiny writing before him on the table. He was eloquent beyond belief in a language that was not his native tongue, and he had an ear and a knack for the subtlest twists of linguistic humor. At once modest and exalted, he was graced with the unassuming, unalterable dignity of the true Russian *intelligent*.

We who were his students were fortunate to encounter such a man, and to be taught by him. As I read through my notes today, a phrase here and there takes wing, as I recognize in Yuri Konstantinovich's observations on literature, dispassionate and meticulous though they be, fleeting glimpses into both the depth and the humor of his own soul: "Aphorisms were very popular in 18th-century Russia, and this was not a tedious genre by any means; it is insensitive not to value their wit and beauty"; "Baratynskii's '*Nedonosok*' is at base about the fateful intermediacy of human nature; the human is conscious of the futility of his attempts to fuse with higher entities"; "Words in Chekhov's stories are often inadequate for expressing how people think and feel; there exists a basic, universal obstacle to human communication"; "Tolstoy's sympathetic heroes gradually free themselves of superficial barriers; this exorcism of false values that are deeply inculcated in people is an excruciating experience with an uncertain outcome that occurs sometimes at great personal cost"... Professor Shcheglov's keen

words, always beautifully crafted, sprang from a winning combination of unmatched erudition and a deep wellspring of exacting intellectual and personal integrity. His lectures shaped my understanding of the vast expanse of Russian literature and my immeasurable respect for the life of the dedicated scholar.

In later years, I came to know Yuri Konstantinovich outside the classroom, too. He and Valeria Alekseevna generously took me into their home on several occasions during a difficult period in my life; in their own grief, they only increased their generosity and openness to me and to others. I shared many glad moments with them at their table; Yuri Konstantinovich, disarmingly charming in his sincere joy at the little things in life, was as eager as a child to share his various culinary pleasures: pickled eggs, caviar, choice liqueurs, fine cheeses. His love for his little dog Fritz was childlike, too, in its delight and unrestraint, and he indulged him shamelessly. He was kind and often wryly funny; I remember his telling me that perhaps it was for the best that he had never learned to drive a car, as it had saved him from the temptation of drunk driving! Above all, he was even-tempered and serene and had a knack for taking refuge from the coarseness and cruelty of real life in the comforting sphere of literature. I heard him express anger on only one occasion: in response to an overenthusiastic telemarketer.

Yuri Konstantinovich cherished his books and loved to display the most precious among them, rare and old editions, gently caressing their pages. (When I stayed with the Shcheglovs with

my then nearly two-year-old twins when I returned from Boston to Madison to defend my dissertation in December 1998, I lived in terror that those two rambunctious little boys, who in those days enjoyed nothing better than pulling books off shelves and building giant forts with them, would do irreparable damage to his collection; in reality, thankfully, all the damage they did was confined to their spilling a bottle of cough syrup on the rug of the basement guest room.) He was also fond of his collection of travel post cards and enjoyed showing them off and telling me their histories; his erudition in regard to his hobbies was no less than his scholarly erudition, and here, too, his humble enthusiasm was impressive and inspiring.

Even Yuri Konstantinovich's thorough impracticality was immensely endearing. Once when I planned a visit to Madison at a time when Valeria Alekseevna was away from home visiting her sister in Yalta, he wrote to me as follows: "I would be very glad to see you, Evan and the boys if you come to Madison. You can stay with us; the only thing I feel a bit uneasy about, is the logistics of your visit (finding the bedclothes for all the family; it's Valeria Alekseevna's domain, in which I am not an expert), but hopefully I'll solve this problem if I start working in advance (probably by calling Valeria at Yalta to ask her about the whereabouts of everything)." Needless to say, my husband and I decided not to take Yuri Konstantinovich up on his selfless offer to accommodate us at his home in his wife's absence, but we did spend a lovely, peaceful afternoon sipping wine with him in the garden while watching

the children run wild with his beloved little dog, Fritz's successor. As dusk began to fall, the three small creatures chased fireflies together at the base of the hill, much to Yuri Konstantinovich's delight.

Now I am even more grateful for the memory of that afternoon, as it turned out to have been my last meeting with dear Yuri Konstantinovich. The relentless numbing burdens of daily life intervened during these last years, and, sadly, my contact with him grew sparse. A silence came between us; a silence that I had hoped was temporary. The last letter he wrote to me, in response to my congratulations on his retirement, was unfortunately swallowed up by the void when my computer hard drive crashed last summer—but I remember that on that occasion, as always, his words were warm, measured, and full of kindness. Shining golden birds in flight...

Yuri Konstantinovich, in his simplicity and his profundity, embodied perhaps the greatest human goodness of anyone I have ever known. He was a powerful teacher, not only of literature, but also of life. I will miss him always.

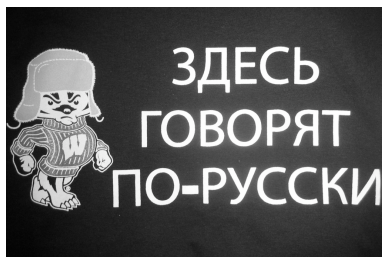
T-Shirt Fundraiser a Rousing Success Supporting the Slavic Department has never looked so good!

Naomi Olson



The Slavic department appreciates the financial assistance it receives from graduate alumni, former staff, faculty, and our undergraduate students. We would like to thank you for your generosity with a token of our appreciation –a Slavic department t-shirt!! Starting in 2009, we will offer certain donors a departmental t-shirt of their choice:

We have two options for shirt-styles: The black “Bucky” shirt, with Bucky Badger in a Russian-style hat, which reads, “Russian is spoken here!!” on the front, and “UW Slavic Department” on the back.



Also available is the “Slavic” shirt, which features a Russian student carrying wheat and her Russian textbook in front of the capitol building in Madison on the front, and lists all of the Slavic languages taught at the University of Wisconsin. These shirts vary in color so please call the Slavic department to inquire!



Both shirts come in either a men’s and women’s style in sizes S through XL.

Thank you for your support!!

Please make checks out to:
Slavic Graduate Student Organization
University of Wisconsin - Madison
1432 Van Hise Hall
Madison, WI 53706

*We welcome donations in all amounts, but to cover costs, we request a minimum of a \$30 donation per single shirt request. If you would like two shirts, a donation of \$50.00 would cover costs.

Joining the UW Madison Slavic Department Family

Karen Evans-Romaine



Misha and Kira (Karen Evans-Romaine) at Lake Mendota

In last year's spring departmental newsletter, Irina Shevelenko made a mysterious reference to a third member of the family she hoped would join her and Misha in Madison in the next academic year. Well, here I am! I am delighted to be joining Irina and Misha in Madison after a long period of virtual life-by-phone, as I listened to Misha's Russian and especially English develop and blossom mostly by long distance. He calls me "2-Mom."

I am also thrilled to be joining what already feels in many ways like another family, the UW Madison Slavic Department. I have gotten to know many of you in a variety of professional capacities over the past two decades: I had the honor to study with Yuri Konstantinovich Shcheglov at Norwich Russian School in 1988 and feel a Pasternakian turn of fate in his having passed away the same day as my mother, this past April 6. I have long followed and admired, along with his work, that of Russian literary scholars whom I can now proudly call my departmental colleagues, including David Bethea, Alexander Dolinin, and Andrew Reynolds – as well as, of course, Irina Shevelenko. Over the past nine years at the Middlebury School of Russian I have worked side by side with UW Slavic grad students and recent alumni, including Stuart Goldberg, Vika Ivleva, Brian Johnson, Laura Little, Kat Scollins, and Molly Thomasy. I have had the great pleasure of watching Kat,

Molly, and other UW Slavic graduate and undergraduate students make great progress in their Russian through Middlebury's intensive program – so many students, in fact, that I am afraid to try to name them, lest I leave someone out. Through Middlebury I also began to work with Anna Tumarkin, with whom I corresponded for years on matters related to our testing programs, and I look forward to collaborating more closely with her. Middlebury is, as Norwich was, a great and growing family, and I feel profoundly blessed to have played a part in its development, following as well as I could in the footsteps of such distinguished predecessors as David Bethea and Benjamin Rifkin. Ben and I studied together at the University of Michigan: he was my first TA coordinator, my first teaching mentor, and my first co-teaching partner, so I am happy to be able to continue his legacy in mentoring teachers at Middlebury and now at UW Madison. Finally, on the AATSEEL Program Committee, which I chaired for several years, I worked closely with UW Madison Slavic Department alumnae Angela Brintlinger and Alyssa Dinenga Gillespie. Thus I feel truly fortunate to join a department with whom I have been linked in so many ways for so many years.

For those of you who don't know me, I'll say a little about myself. I graduated with two bachelor's degrees in Russian and Soviet Studies and Piano Performance from Oberlin College & Conservatory of Music. My MA and PhD are from the University of Michigan, where I wrote on "Pasternak and the Tradition of German Romanticism" under the direction of

Omry Ronen. I completed my dissertation while working for three years in Moscow as Fulbright Representative to the Russian Federation, following in the footsteps of UW Madison Slavic Department alumnus Eliot Borenstein, whom I had known since we studied Russian at Oberlin. During my three years running the Moscow Fulbright Office, I was fortunate to travel all over Russia, from Petrozavodsk to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, during a very exciting period in Russia's history, 1993-96. After defending my dissertation in 1996, I joined the Department of Modern Languages at Ohio University, where I have regularly taught first-year Russian, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature in translation, and twentieth-century literature and Russian cultural history in Russian to third-year students. I also directed a biannual ten-week study abroad program in Moscow every even spring.

My publications have continued to focus on Pasternak, particularly with regard to intersections in his work with both German Romanticism and with music. I have also worked in language pedagogy as co-author of the two-volume Russian language textbook *Golosa*, together with first author Rich Robin and Galina Shatalina. We are now working on the fifth edition. With Tatiana Smorodinskaya and Helena Goscilo I co-edited the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture*, published in 2006. Thus my writing and teaching have spanned language pedagogy, literature, and culture, and I look forward to working in all of those realms at UW Madison.

Notes From the 14th Floor

Faculty/Staff News

In February 2009, **Jennifer Ryan Tishler** offered a continuing-education course through the UW-Madison Department of Liberal Studies and the Arts. "Introduction to Russian Orthodox Art and Architecture" presented an overview of icons, church architecture, early Russian history, and discussions of folk tales on religious themes.

David Bethea says hello to all his former and present grads and wishes them well. Don't be strangers! His new book, *The Superstitious Muse: Thinking Russian Literature Mythopoetically*, is coming out this summer at Academic Studies Press. Despite all the bad financial news facing the state and country, he reports there is an excellent feeling of positive energy lately in the department – a good sign for the future.

Irina Shevelenko reports that she has been actively researching toddler film and literary culture in the US lately, and that Misha, now three but still red-haired, has been extraordinarily supportive in that. He says, "hello peoples," and commits to be as instrumental in Mom's future research endeavors as he has been before. He is excited about having his "two moms" in place soon, and so is Irina who plots to switch her research focus a little bit on this occasion.

Jean Hennessey has been named Emerita staff, and she has her wisc.edu email for life: jlhennes@wisc.edu.

Judith Deutsch Kornblatt is delighted to announce that her book, *Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov*, has been published this year by Cornell University Press. She recommends that you all go out and buy a copy!

David Danaher's article "Framing Václav Havel" was published in the journal *Slovo a smysl/Word and Sense*, and he has a forthcoming article, "Translating Havel: Three Key Words" in *Slovo a slovesnost*. See his website for pdfs of his main publications, <http://cokdybysme.net/publicatinos.html>. David is looking forward to an October 2009 conference in Prague that resulted from his Fulbright stint at Charles University in 2006, http://ucjtk.ff.cuni.cz/sclc/sclc_eng.htm.

Halina Filipowicz was on a year-long sabbatical doing research for her new book, *Drama After Auschwitz*. In October, she gave a keynote lecture at the 4th International Congress of Polish Studies that was held at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. While in Krakow, she also led workshops in scholarly methodologies for interested students and faculty members.

Congratulations to **Toma Longinovic and Djana Mitrovic** on their marriage!

Congratulations to **Ewa Miernowska** for Department Recognition for the Nomination for UW Madison Academic Staff Excellence Award.

Congratulations to **Anna Tumarkin**, for Department Recognition for the L&S Early Career Award.

Grad News and Awards



Lara Alexandra McGarry

On April 9, 2009, Lara Alexandra McGarry was born to proud parents **Matt and Nadya McGarry**. Congratulations!

On June 17, 2008, **Vika Thorstensson** gave birth to her second son, Steven (Stiva) Lukas. Congratulations, Vika, Martin and Stiva!

Matt Walker accepted a position at UPenn as a visiting lecturer for the 2009-2010 academic year. In addition to teaching Russian language classes, he will teach surveys of nineteenth and twentieth century Russian literature as well as a course on Dostoevsky.

On June 14, **Darya Ivashnova and Aaron Schuck** were married. Congratulations!

In October, **Erik McDonald's** article "Russia's Juvenal or Russia's Horace? Nekrasov's Satirical Personae" was published in Russian Review.



Molly and Keith Blasing

On May 24, 2009 in a ceremony at Forestall's Gallery in Middleton, WI, **Molly Thomasy and Keith Blasing** were married.

Molly plans to spend the summer teaching at Middlebury before flying off to Moscow to conduct dissertation research on a Fulbright fellowship. In addition, thanks to support from a Vilas Travel Grant Molly traveled to Boston for the Northeast MLA conference in late February and gave a paper called "Joseph Brodsky and the Poetics of Photography." **Stephanie Richards** was also on the panel with her paper "*JA POET!* Koz'ma Prutkov As Literary Reformer."

On May 15, 2008, a baby boy named Luke Gideon Townsend was born to **Emily Shaw and Gideon Townsend**.

Brian Johnson has accepted a three-year visiting assistant professorship in the Russian Department at Swarthmore College beginning fall of 2009. The position may be renewed for another three years upon review. Brian will be teaching first-year Russian and a variety of literature courses, including The Russian Novel fall of 2009 and Dostoevsky spring of 2010. Swarthmore's Russian department offers a major in Russian Language and Culture, along with a wide variety of courses in literature, language and culture. Congratulations, Brian!



Mary Violet Minier



Brian as Stalin in an adapted version of Olesha's play "A List of Good Deeds" at Middlebury 2008

At 1:41 pm on May 13, 2009, Mary Violet Minier was born, coming in at 7 pounds 14 ounces and 20.5 inches. Congratulations, **Kat, Brian, Ivan and Mary!**

Molly Peeney accepted a teaching position at Notre Dame. She will be "Special Professional Faculty," and her duties will include teaching three courses per semester as well as various administrative and programming responsibilities such as being the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Russian program and coordinator of Russian-related events (films and the conversation table). Molly was also awarded an ACTR Flagship Fellowship to study in St. Petersburg for the academic year 2009-2010, and Notre Dame has granted her leave to do so. Congratulations, Molly!



Lapinski scholarship recipient Nick Rampton with Dr. Elsie Lapinski

On October 9, 2008, **Anna Guigauri McGill** gave birth to Alice Polina McGill. Congratulations, Anna and Alice!

Ben Jens and Vika Thorstensson received Dissertator Fellowships.

Naomi Olson was awarded an L&S Early Teaching Award.

Nick Rampton and **Katie Weigel** received Michael and Emily Lapinski Scholarships.

Lisa Woodson is the 2008 winner of the J.T. Shaw Prize-AATSEEL Wisconsin.

Naomi Olson and **Jesse Stavis** will be participating in ACTR's Summer Teaching Program in Moscow.

Molly Thomasy was named an Alternate 2009 L&S Teaching Fellow.

Congratulations to **Nick Rampton** and **Odette van Velsen**, who completed their MAs.

Congratulations to **Naomi Olson** on passing prelim exams and successfully defending her dissertation proposal, "Law and the Self: Legal Encounters in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature."

In August, **Anna Tumarkin** will defend her dissertation. **Erik McDonald** will also defend his dissertation "Nekrasov and Russian Modernism."

Congratulations to **Brian Johnson** on defending his dissertation, "The Art of Dostoevsky's Falling Sickness," and completing his PhD!

Congratulations to **Vika Ivleva** on defending her dissertation, "Fashion and Sartorial Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture," and completing her PhD!

Viktoria Kononova received the Zawacki Award for Outstanding Achievement in the study of the Polish Language, Literature and Culture.



Janice Zawacki with Adam Pankratz and Viktoria Kononova, winners of the Zawacki award

Undergrad News and Awards

Edward Chien completed his Senior Thesis entitled "Looking for Love Lost: Lermontov's Laments of Loneliness" under the direction of Andrew Reynolds.

Tyler Henderson was awarded the J.T. Shaw Prize for Undergraduate Excellence.

Congratulations to **Magdalena Bojda, Catherine Kuzmicki, Elizabeth Mowinski** and **Tomasz Samek**, winners of the Michael and Emily Lapinski Scholarship.

Hannah Calkins and **Maoria Kirker** received the November Fund Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Achievement in Czech.

Dmitry Svetlov placed 2nd in the ACTR National Post Secondary Russian Essay Contest.



Tyler Henderson, winner of the J. Thomas Shaw prize, and Anna Tumarkin



Dr. Elsie Lapinski with Elizabeth Mowinski and Catherine Kuzmicki, undergraduate winners of the Lapinski scholarship

Matthew O'Brien and **Laura Weigel** were inducted into the *Dobro Slovo* National Honor Society.

Ryan Prinz placed 3rd in the ACTR National Post Secondary Russian Essay Contest.

Virginia Armour received Honorable Mention in the ACTR National Post Secondary Russian Essay Contest.

Margaryta Bondarenko was recognized for Outstanding Beginning Polish.

Meagan Parrish was recognized for Outstanding Progress in Advanced Russian.

Ryan Prinz was recognized for Outstanding Progress in Intermediate Russian.

Adam Pankratz received the Zawacki Award for Outstanding Achievement in the study of the Polish Language, Literature and Culture.

News From Former Students

Evan Parks, who studied Polish at UW-Madison, is currently living and studying in Poland and was awarded a Fulbright to Poland for 2009-2010.

Amanda Volbert, a Czech student who graduated in 2008, has completed a Fulbright over the academic year 2008-2009.

Wendy Johnson and Jillian Bau are featured in a UW-Madison Language Learning Video, available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQb2x6C_tGA. Wendy (narration) is a former PhD student in our department who now works at UW's Language Institute. Jillian, a former Russian major, appears in the video starting at 3:00.

Frank Poulin (PhD 1995) writes David Bethea in response to last year's Letter from the Chair:

I have three children now. Charles is almost 5. James is 3, and Florence is 1. My wife once worked at Hughes Networks as an analogue circuit designer for satellite communication systems. But now she's busy with our three children. It's an enjoyable life. We live in Germantown, Maryland, which is part of the Washington DC area. I'm working for Unisys. My specializations are in large-scale infrastructure computer network testing, computer network security and project management. Work is fun, interesting, rewarding and rarely exceeds 45 hours a week. So I get to keep up somewhat

with Russian literature, as well as with much history and other literatures whenever I'm not trying to corral the kids. Recently I've been re-reading a lot of Turgenev – obviously in Russian. I still have about 600 books I bought in Moscow.

Your letter at the front of the newsletter talked about fragile morale in the face of budget cuts. I wish I could provide better input than just stating the obvious – that the department does important work. Everyone in the department already knows that. I often find myself reflecting on the importance of literature, history, classical music, and the humanities in general – when all the while I'm struggling in the commercial word with day-to-day technical issues that must be resolved quickly. I've found that people with broader minds tend to solve problems more efficiently. And I've found that a strong foundation in the humanities helps develop a broader mind. The research and writing aspects of the Slavic program were very rewarding to me personally. So every day before work for about 30 minutes in my car in the Unisys parking lot, I find myself reading chapters from Turgenev, or Chekhov, or Tolstoy, or Dostoevsky. And then I rush into our building, where I direct a team of 10 test engineers and begin solving problems that demand immediate attention. It's a strange combination of interests.

Notes from the Field

Jennifer Ede, a former Russian undergraduate major, develops online language-learning tools

I've partnered with an entrepreneurial software developer and together we're developing a site, langolab.com. The site is designed as a supplement to help ourselves and others learn foreign languages with the help of L2 texts and L2 videos. The idea behind the site is that the endless supply of authentic cultural material from the web (texts, videos, and people) can be leveraged to provide foreign language students with endless input in the foreign language they're learning. At this point, we are developing tools (one-click dictionary lookup, flash cards, notes, and a foreign language Q&A feature) to allow even beginners to approach and learn from the media easily and without being intimidated.

I have taken responsibility for the Russian language portion of this site and have already uploaded and captioned numerous linguistically-useful videos. I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a look at our website and, if you like it, please feel free to use it and recommend it to your students. I intend to send the same proposal to MAPRYAL and ACTFL in the hopes of getting a dialogue going. We have a lot of great ideas, but we would love to connect with other foreign language teachers, advisors, and mentors who might wish to take an active interest in the project. Use of the site is totally free, and we intend for all non-premium content (at this point, this means everything except video we license from broadcasting

companies) to remain free. The site is currently in beta, so it might have some bugs and quirks. If you find one, or if you have any suggestions whatsoever, please leave feedback for us at the site. You will never find ears more open than ours.

Notes from Abroad

Magdalena Bojda (Polish major who studied abroad spring 2009)

When I chose Warsaw, Poland as my Study Abroad destination six months ago, I had no idea that my study abroad experience would be as rewarding as it was. I was born in Poland, but my family moved to the US when I was very young, so it was important for me to uncover the history, culture and traditions of my birthplace. I participated in courses that were taught by dynamic professors that offered a personal narrative of events I had only read about in books. Hearing the first-hand accounts of Poles who survived the communist period and were involved in the solidarity movement was inspiring. I did not only learn in the classroom, but I learned by traveling around the country as well. Poland is a beautiful nation filled with many lovely parks, romantic castles and gorgeous churches that I was lucky enough to see. I have also learned that it is a country filled with strong and dedicated individuals who have had downfalls in their history but who have constantly persevered. I am proud to call myself a Pole. This experience has helped me fill in the gaps in my origins, and in myself as well. I recommend this program to anyone.

2008 AATSEEL- Wisconsin Conference

Viktoriya Kononova

The annual AATSEEL-Wisconsin Conference was held on October 17-18, 2008 at UW-Madison's Pyle Center. The keynote speaker for the event was Dr. James Bailey, Professor Emeritus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who spoke on the topic "Memories of a Career in Slavic." The program featured a diverse set of panels, with paper topics including exile in the writings of Bunin, Nabokov, Akhmatova and Brodsky, creative dialogue and appropriation in Slavic literatures, transcending boundaries of genre, medium and gender in works by various Slavic authors, and exploring the un/real in Russian and Polish literature and post-Soviet television. As part of the conference weekend, current grad students had an informal meeting with UW-Madison alumnus and professor of Russian at Vassar College Dan Ungurianu; Dan also delivered a paper on the theme of waxworks in the literature of Russian modernism. The 2008 J. Thomas Shaw Prize for best graduate student paper went to Lisa Woodson for her presentation entitled "Living Martyrdom in Anna Akhmatova's *The Way of All the Earth*."

2009 AATSEEL-Wisconsin Conference Call for papers

Abstracts for 20 minute papers on any aspect of Slavic literatures and cultures (including film, music, the visual arts, and language pedagogy) are invited for 2009 conference to be held on October 16-17. Comparative topics and interdisciplinary approaches are welcome.

Recent conference programs and guidelines for preparing abstracts are posted on the AATSEEL-WI website at http://slavic.lss.wisc.edu/new_web/?q=node/7

To present a paper at the AATSEEL-WI conference, please submit a proposal by **31 August 2009**.

A complete proposal consists of:

1. Author's contact information (name, affiliation, postal address, telephone and email).
2. Paper title
3. 300-500 word abstract
4. Equipment request (if necessary)

Please send proposals by email to:
Melissa Miller, mmiller8@wisc.edu

All submissions will be acknowledged.

First-Year Funnies

Some of the more hilarious bloopers from first and second-year Russian



Q: Who was Alexander Pushkin?

A: Chekhov



Q: List vocabulary nouns related to studying:

A: Стипенд, твойка, зачерт

Q: What do you wish for?

A: Я хочу есть собака.

Excerpts from essays and homework:



Вот моя кредитная картошка.

--Чье это домашнее животное?

--Это мой словарь, Спот.

Я хочу стать историей.

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You may choose to support one of the following Slavic Department activities:

- ☐ Russian Language and Literature Fund
- ☐ Polish Language and Literature
- ☐ November Fund for Czech Language, Literature & Culture (novemberfund.org)
- ☐ Serbo-Croatian Language and Literature
- ☐ Jean's Fund for Community Building
- ☐ Fund in support of graduate student conference travel.

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