Icarus in Kazakhstan: The Remarkable Journey of Gabriel Al-Salem

Margarete Dorsch and Viktoria Olskaia
(Parts of this story were told to Marc L. Greenberg by Margarete Dorsch)

Gabriel was born in Oakland, California on February 1, 1967, the son of Bader Al-Salem, Kuwait, and Margarete Dorsch, Lindsborg, Kansas, originally from Germany. Already as an infant he had lived on three continents.

In August of 1968 he returned, together with his mother, to the United States. He spent the following three years in Springfield, Missouri, where she taught at SMSU. For the next seven years he resided in Columbia, Missouri, while his mother completed graduate studies at MU. There, he started kindergarten and elementary school, attending the University Lab School. In Columbia, Gabriel and his mother attended many student theater productions and concerts, hiked in the surrounding forest, built waterwheels in the nearby creek, or watched the bats flying on warm summer evenings.

In 1978 Gabriel and his mother moved to Lindsborg, Kansas, the town that he would always call home. He held many odd jobs as a boy, working in a restaurant as a salad bar attendant and waiter; he also enjoyed working as projector operator at the (now defunct) Plaza Theater. He became a lifelong friend to Professor John (Hans) Newfield (1905–1987), Chair of Fine Arts at Stony Brook University and also the Head of the Theatre Department at the University of Kansas, and his wife Linda Newfield-Stormont, both of whom retired to Lindsborg. Confirmed in the Bethany Lutheran Church, Gabriel
Gabriel Al-Salem (continued from page 1)

found his spiritual community there. He participated enthusiastically in various theater productions and enjoyed playing the string bass in the orchestra, first under Mrs. Kathleen Robinson and then under Mr. Dan King. Often, he would leave for school early and return home late after practicing the bass. He did not take direction well, when Mrs. Robinson said: “You basses, just play the beat!” He wanted to have sectional rehearsals for the bass players too! Making music and playing the bass was so important to Gabriel that he had an instrument wherever he lived. And even now, there is a lonely instrument sitting in his last home in Kazakhstan.

At KU Gabriel pursued a number of interests, including taking French and Russian, as well as playing bass in the KU Orchestra, and performing in University Theatre. His first interest was in studying Germany, the country of his mother, and he was intrigued by the political divisions into West and East. After a summer in Middlebury, where he finished second-year Russian, he spent a formative year (1987–88) at two study-abroad programs, one interning with the Social Democratic Party in Bonn under Egon Bahr, the other at Leningrad State University on the Semester Russian Language Program. His native German, learned from his mother, helped him make the most of his time in Bonn. His rapid acquisition of Russian fluency helped him land a job in his senior year at KU as interpreter for cosmonaut G. M. Grechko and Soviet aeronautics inventor G. I. Severin during their visit to the Kansas Cosmosphere, where they donated a Soviet flight suit. The Soviet dignitaries insisted that Gabriel serve as interpreter on the continuation of their trip to Houston. His professors gladly accommodated his request to rearrange his finals schedule so that he could make the historic trip.

After KU, Gabriel was set to attend Georgetown for graduate study in foreign relations. However, the Gulf War prevented his Kuwaiti father from transferring the tuition money and so he deferred his admission, taking a year off to pursue his passion for children’s theater. With his earnings he spent a semester attending a seminar on the European Union at Tilburg University, Netherlands. At Georgetown the following year, he served as a GTA in Russian and later as a research assistant for Prof. Angela Stent.

Gabriel’s family life, career, and hobbies

As a student of KU Gabriel traveled the world and lived in various countries. In 1987 he first came to Russia. Those were the first years of perestroika, and Gabriel, who loved politics, was fascinated by the changes happening in the former Soviet Union. It was at the University of Leningrad (today St. Petersburg), where he met Viktoria, his future wife. After the semester in St. Petersburg he fell in love with Russia and everything that was connected with Russia. As a result, Gabriel became a graduate student at the Russian Area Studies Program at Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

In May 1992 Gabriel and Viktoria were married in a small ceremony near Lindsborg, Kansas. After finishing graduate schools, the newlyweds moved first to Berlin and then to Almaty, Kazakhstan for a six-month stint on a USAID privatization project. They ended up staying for several years working on various economic development and reform projects. Besides Kazakhstan, Gabriel and Viktoria lived and worked in Mongolia, Vietnam, former Yugoslavia, Germany and Russia. During his consulting continued on page 18
Chair’s Corner
Marc L. Greenberg

Having overseen the changes of the Slavic Department since 2000, I am stepping down from the Chair position this year. It has been quite a ride—there have been many changes with both faculty and students having come and gone—with many successes to our collective credit. Over the course of the last several years our senior faculty earned four national prizes for their contributions to the field (Profs. Maria Carlson, Prof. William Comer [two prizes], and the undersigned) and all of our faculty have garnered national and international funding to further their research. Even as the book begins to disappear as a format, our faculty produced several of them (including three by Prof. Edith Clowes). We built a fine departmental library, the Parker Slavic Library, which has become the hearth of our academic home. We have a new (seems like 1917 was just yesterday!) mascot, the “Russian Jayhawk” (or “Hoffman’s Hawk,” also dubbed the “Bolshevik Jayhawk” by the Kansas City Star in 1921), about which you may read in this issue. We established our first privately-funded award for students, the Joseph L. Conrad Memorial Award and made significant progress on several other fundraising initiatives. Under the able leadership of our faculty, CREES, our area studies center, has continued to compete successfully for Title VI support, most recently under the leadership of Prof. Edith Clowes. (I began my chairmanship while Prof. Carlson completed her decade as CREES director; Prof. Comer also served as interim director for a year.) Our faculty took the lead as an early adopter of the KU Open Access Policy and we regularly deposit our articles to the KU Scholarworks digital repository. Since 2007 our works have been downloaded more than 41,500 times by readers worldwide (and viewed more than 72,000 times), leading to higher citation and impact. This year Prof. Stephen J. Parker, my predecessor as Chair and also the colleague who hired me, retired. You can read about his long and illustrious career as a former student of Nabokov in the previous Chronicle. We are pleased that he will now serve the Slavic Department as the Chair of the Friends of Slavic, which is charged with proffering external advice and coordinating fundraising for the department. More than half of our current faculty joined us in the last decade: Profs. Stephen Dickey, Ani Kokobobo, Renee Perelmutter, and Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova. While I am very proud of the fine, dynamic young talents we have been able to attract, who represent the future of our department, I still find it jarring to realize that I have entered the senior generation. But don’t put me out to pasture just yet: as I write this, I still haven’t reached the half-century mark!

The faculty keep the shop running, but our students and our alumni are our real treasures, doing myriad good works in the world. In this issue you will read about such fine examples as senior David Samms, who volunteered this summer with two other KU students, Jenna DeGennaro and Mychal Augustine, to serve in Vladivostok in state-run orphanage and hospice facilities through FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. Our alumni, too, are doing amazing things, from teaching to advising presidents to presidents-to-be. Nicole Schmidt, who completed an MA in Education last year while studying advanced Slovene, now teaches high school in Radovljica, Slovenia. REES MAs (2004) Kristina and Jeb Adams continue to run a thriving private elementary school in Macedonia, working to help underprivileged children from the Roma and Albanian minorities, to attend their school through private funding. Stephanie Smiros (BA 09) is moving up in the officer corps of the US Navy and rubbing shoulders with the top brass of the Russian navy. Anatoly Vishnevsky (PhD 85), professor of Russian at Grinnell College, published a new book on Russian detective novels. Howard Solomon (PhD 97), having served in numerous high-level diplomatic roles, including as advisor to President Obama on Russian affairs, has been serving since summer 2010 at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow as the Deputy Minister Counselor for Political Affairs. And this year fully four students of Slavic languages received Fulbright Fellowships for the 2011—12 academic year. Zhulieta Kaludova (MA 09) is helping Meglena Kuneva become president of Bulgaria.

Sadly we lost one of our most illustrious alumni, Gabriel Al-Salem (BA 89), the subject of our lead article in this issue. Gabriel’s loss is mourned by us all, but continued on page 4
Chair’s Corner (continued from page 3)

with the help of his family, his wife Viktoria Olskaia and mother Margerete Dorsch (German and French instructor at Bethany College), his legacy will live on with the work of the [Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation], which will create opportunities for young people following in his footsteps as business consultants, including a scholarship for students of Russian at KU.

In short, the department is in fine shape and well positioned to meet future challenges. I am looking forward to my own next challenge, especially the challenge of finding more time to return to unfinished projects that had taken a back seat to my chairing duties. I am also glad that the department will have excellent leadership and continue to thrive under the watchful eye of our Russian Jayhawk.

Honors Reception 2011

Prof. Maria Carlson presided over the Honors Reception

A visit to the Slavic Department in August 2011, when Viktoria (center) and Margarete (right) talked to us about Gabriel’s life and work and Viktoria’s work for the Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation.

Emily Krampe, voice and David Chavannes, piano perform songs by the 19th century female Croatian composer Dora Pejačević
First-year Polish student Alex Skelnik playing the role of the Armadillo in Stanisław Barańczak’s Zwierzęca Zajadłość z zapisków zniechęconego zoologa (Animal Ferocity: From the Notes of a Discouraged Zoologist)

First-year Polish student Trey Giesen playing the Tapir

Second-year Polish student Vanessa Dalberg playing the role of the Raccoon

Second-year Polish student Chelsea Steel as the Turtle

The Polish students and their instructors perform the song “Niech mówi, że to nie jest miłość” (“Let Them Say That It Isn’t Love”), by Zbigniew Książek (words) and Piotr Rubik (music)

Award for excellence in elementary Polish (L to R): Trey Giesen; Emma Yaffe; Professor Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova; Alex Skelnik; Sarah Willenbrink (instructor)
Award for excellence in intermediate Ukrainian: Dr. Yaroslava Tsiovkh, lecturer (L); Dezere Hodish (R).
Not pictured: Charles Novak

Award for excellence in intermediate BCS: Mylisa Jones (L); Marta Pirnat-Greenberg, lecturer (C); Holly Glasgow (R).
Not pictured: Charles Novak

Award for Intermediate Slovene: Nichole Schmidt (L); Marta Pirnat-Greenberg, lecturer (R).

Award for excellence in elementary Ukrainian: Hunter Wilson (L); Dr. Yaroslava Tsiovkh, lecturer (R).

Award for excellence in intermediate Ukrainian: Dr. Yaroslava Tsiovkh, lecturer (L); Dezere Hodish (R).

Award for excellence in intermediate Russian (from L to R): Wayne “Jimmy” Sloan; Mylisa Jones (instructor); Taylor Broadfoot; Lillian Kopaska-Merkel; Brad Reynolds (instructor); Zhulieta Kaludova (instructor); Alexei Telegin (instructor); Dr. Irina Six (program coordinator). Not pictured: Natalie Roper.
Awardees for excellence in intermediate Russian (from L to R): Harrison Smith; Seth Wiley; Amy Sinclair; Zhulieta Kaludova (instructor); John Korba (instructor)

Award for excellence in advanced Russian: Dr. Irina Six, lecturer (L); Patrick Callen (C); Sarah Bazih (R)

ACTR Post-Secondary Russian Scholar Laureate Harrison Smith (L) with John Korba, instructor (R)

Outstanding Junior awardee Anastasia Metzger (L) presented by Prof. Stephen M. Dickey (R)

Galina Conrad (l) and Belinda (Conrad) Schuman (r) bookend Conrad Memorial Award recipients Sidney Dement, Sarah Willenbrink, Zhulieta Kaludova, and John Korba
Four Slavic students receive Fulbright Fellowships

John A. Biersack, a doctoral student in geography, received a Fulbright grant to spend an academic year at L’viv National University, a KU partner institution, in Ukraine. Utilizing primary materials in libraries and archives, as well as surveys and interviews, Biersack will examine Ukrainian Eurasianism, both in the past and present, to elucidate the larger geopolitical narrative and power throughout Ukraine. John studied both Russian and Ukrainian in the KU Slavic Department, including two years as a FLAS recipient.

Cody Brown, a doctoral student in political science, received a Fulbright grant to Croatia, where he is examining the motives and circumstances behind individuals’ participation in Croatian paramilitary organization during the Yugoslav wars (1991–95). Using interviews and surveys with former members of paramilitary organizations and regular army soldiers, Brown will attempt to ascertain their motives for participating in this ethnic war. A three-time FLAS recipient, he studied Croatian in the KU Slavic Department.

Sarah Willenbrink, who graduated in May with an MA in Slavic languages and literatures, is spending her Fulbright year in Warsaw, Poland. As a Fulbright teaching assistant, she will teach English classes at the University of Warsaw. She concentrated on studying Polish language and literature.

Shay R. Wood, a doctoral student in history is using his Zagreb, Croatia, where he will conduct research on the development of intercity and cross-town soccer rivalries in Communist Yugoslavia to ascertain the ways the citizens of the former Yugoslavia determined their national identities. He will analyze news coverage, footage of games and team biographies as well as interview fans and members of the Yugoslav sports media. Shay studied both Croatian and Slovene in the KU Slavic Department.

Mission of mercy to Russia

By David Samms (SLL BA 11)

Most students in our department experience Russia through a study-abroad program. Being a senior going on super-senior, I decided to experience Russia in an entirely different way. From mid-July to early August, I volunteered in Vladivostok in state-run orphanage and hospice facilities. I volunteered along sixteen other students (three of us from KU), on a summer program through FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students.

Getting to Russia took longer than expected. We were stranded in China for about a week after a canceled flight and a forged flight confirmation given to us by our airline. This, however, made our arrival in Russia much sweeter. We stayed with an American priest, Fr. Myron Effing, who has been rebuilding the Catholic church in the Far East since the fall of the USSR. Fr. Myron and his seminarians focus on social justice in Primorskiy Krai, and as a part of their charism, volunteer at the orphanage and a city hospice.

In both the hospice and orphanage, I witnessed enough to fill books, however I’d like to share two stories with you.

In the orphanage there was a girl named Sofia. She has spinal problems that, in turn, cause respiratory problems. When she is fed, she aspirates some of her food. I could hear her in pain, listening to her laborious attempts to get the food out of her lungs. One of my teammates wrote her mom about Sofia, who forwarded the e-mail to family and friends. It was received by a man who had an adult daughter he adopted from Russia. His daughter was leaving
for Moscow the next day, and so he forwarded the e-mail to her. She read it on the flight, and when she landed in Moscow, she immediately booked a ticket to Vladivostok to see what she could do for this girl. Long story short, her family wants to adopt Sofia, so she can receive the surgery she needs and live a normal life! There is only one obstacle: Sofia’s birthmother has yet to rescind birthrights. Once that happens, though, Sofia should be adopted swiftly!

The hospice was very difficult for me. It was a building off to the side of the hospital. I didn’t see any beds, medicine, or medical equipment. I saw beds with people waiting to die. A teammate, Morgan, came to me with a note to translate: Я Вас люблю. It was written by a woman appropriately named Lyuba. I followed Morgan and translated for a while. After talking about family and friends, Lyuba stared at me with tears in her eyes and said “Не забывай меня.” I took a notepad by her bed and wrote “Мы Вас никогда незабываем.” Lyuba gave her only possession, a prayer card of the Resurrection, to Morgan.

I had tried to go to Russia through study-abroad several times, and it always fell through. After this summer, I’m glad it did. I went when I was needed: to help a girl be adopted, and to be a woman’s dying comfort.

Student News

Undergraduate Students

Colin Chilcoat studied abroad in St. Petersburg this summer. He attended Russian language classes for five weeks at Saint Petersburg University.

Alison Christy, a first-year doctoral student in the Department of Theatre, received the Kuhlke Fellowship to study Russian Theatre. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, she holds a MA in Theatre Studies from the University of Houston, and a BFA in Theatre and a BA in Slavic Studies, both from Wayne State University. Last season she served as the Dramaturgy Fellow at the Alley Theatre, working on Peter Pan or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up and the world premiere of A Weekend with Pablo Picasso. Research interests include late imperial Russian theatre, Soviet theatre, cultural memory, documentary theatre and dramaturgy.

Harrison Smith was awarded an ACTR Post-Secondary Russian Scholar Laureate prize in the spring of 2011. He also won an Undergraduate Research Award and is currently working with Professor William J. Comer on Dostoevsky’s The Idiot.

Graduate Students

Mylisa Jones, a second year PhD student, studied abroad on a Summer FLAS with KU’s Language and Culture Program in Zadar, Croatia. It was her second year with this program.

Tim Kenny, a second year MA student, received a summer FLAS through KU and studied Russian
Brad Reynolds in front of the famous “Bronze Horseman” monument to Peter I in Saint Petersburg. Brad Reynolds, a second year MA student, received a summer FLAS from KU. He spent the summer in St. Petersburg through CIEE studying advanced grammar and phonetics, and attempting to get a better grasp and understanding of early nineteenth-century Russian literary texts. Brad also received an academic year FLAS award for the 2011–12 academic year for Polish.

Mylisa Jones at Krka National Park

Mylisa Jones on the Kornati Islands

Brad Reynolds in front of the famous “Bronze Horseman” monument to Peter I in Saint Petersburg

Becky Stakun enjoying some Russian village life in Aigir, Bashkortostan

grammar through the SWSEEL program in Bloomington, Indiana. He spent 8 weeks studying with Dr. Olga Thomason at the University of Indiana.

John Korba, passed his PhD comprehensive exams in June. Fellow PhD candidate Erin Moulton and John will present their paper, “Verbs of Communication in Russian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, and Czech: A Comparative Look at Pragmatic Contract and Verbal Aspect” at the 9th Graduate Colloquium on Slavic Linguistics at Ohio State University in October.
Rebecca Stakun, a first-year PhD student recently returned from her second summer in Ufa, Russia. She spent the summer teaching English language and intercultural communication at the Bashkir State Pedagogical University’s summer English camp in Aigir, Bashkortostan. This semester Rebecca was fortunate enough to receive her second Academic Year FLAS to continue her study of BCS at KU.

Alumni News

Natalie Bazan (MA 09) is now the Director of the Hopkins Public Library, Hopkins, Michigan.

Sidney Dement (PhD 11), after graduating in May, is now teaching Russian language and Slavic folklore as a lecturer in the Department of German and Russian Studies at Binghamton University in Binghamton, NY. Before moving to Binghamton in August, Sidney contributed three modules to the website “Russia’s Great War and Revolution.” Next semester Sidney will continue to teach Russian as well as a course on Moscow in Russian literature.

Halina Filipowicz (PhD 79), Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has recently accepted an affiliate appointment in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies. Her article, “Pułapki, paradoksy i wyzwania gender studies,” was published in Polonistyka bez granic, ed. by Ryszard Nycz, Władysław Miodunka, and Tomasz Kunz, 2 vols. (Kraków: Universitas, 2010).

Kurt Harper (BA 75) continues to participate in a variety of programs involving Russia through Rotary. Rotary District 5690 (located generally in southern Kansas and the Oklahoma panhandle) is participating in a Group Study Exchange, in which one Rotarian serves as team leader for a delegation of young professionals from one Rotary district, visiting another. Kurt will lead District 5690’s team on a visit to Russia west of the Urals, Rotary District 2220, for 3 weeks beginning April 29, 2012. This is an outgrowth of Kurt’s participation in the Rotary International US-Russia Inter-Country Committee on behalf of the district, which also took him to Moscow and Novosibirsk in 2009 for an inter-country meeting.

Zhulieta Kaludova (MA 09) recently joined the Public Relations team of Meglena Kuneva, a candidate in the 2011 Bulgarian Presidential Elections, as media liaison.
for Shumen and the surrounding region. She also works for Biserka Yovcheva, candidate for mayor of Shumen, as a member of her PR team. Additionally, Ms. Kaludova is working on her first academic publication for Brown University’s Single Slavic Journal due to be published in April 2012 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. In April 2011, she presented her research paper “Negotiating Civilizational Boundaries: The Cyrillic Alphabet Controversy in the Context of Bulgaria’s Integration In the European Union,” at Brown University’s Conference on Estrangement.

Conor Klamann (MA 09), now PhD candidate at Northwestern University, writes from Moscow that he has been focusing on prose written between 1928–34, addressing questions of historical continuity and cultural preservation in works by Boris Pil’niak, Andrei Platonov, Konstantin Vaginov, and Vladimir Nabokov. He is spending six months working primarily at RGALI and the Lenin Library.

Mark Richard Lauersdorff (PhD 95, with honors), Associate Professor at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, was awarded sabbatical leave for the academic year 2011–12. His primary project during this period is the conceptualization and initial steps toward construction of a historical/diachronic digital corpus of Slovak, in collaboration with Mária Šimková, director of the Slovenský národný korpus (Slovak National Corpus) in the Ludovít Štúr Linguistics Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia. In preparation for this corpus project he has been networking with colleagues and gathering information through participation in various international events in the areas of historical corpus linguistics and historical sociolinguistics, including: the conference “New Methods in Historical Corpora” at the University of Manchester (April 2011); the 5th Historical Sociolinguistics Network (HiSoN) Summer School on Lesbos, Greece (August 2011); and the Helsinki Corpus Festival at the University of Helsinki, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Helsinki Corpus, the first comprehensive historical corpus of the English language (Sept.–Oct. 2011). He has also been invited as keynote speaker for the Ohio State University’s 9th Graduate Colloquium on Slavic Linguistics in October 2011, and for the 10th International Conference of the Asia Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning (AsiaCALL) in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2011. He has also assisted the Linguistics Editor of Slavia Centralis, Marc L. Greenberg, his erstwhile dissertation mentor.

Tilen Saich, heir to the StudioInglese fortune and a lifelong Jayhawk fan, starts each day with in his KU chair and a hot beverage in his SLL mug.
Yuki Onogi (SLL BA 09, REES MA 11) is now studying at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, at its Bologna, Italy campus, specializing in Energy, Resource and Environment (ERE), as well as International Economics. Yuki writes that his professors are impressed with his BCS and Russian. “The professor for the Russian language at SAIS thought that I took Russian for 4–5 years, while I took this language only for 2 years. She even told me that I would not have issues passing an oral proficiency exam for SAIS standard of Political Russian. I appreciate Professor Six for accelerating my proficiency in Russian. [Another] had heard about the strong Slavic language programs in the Mid-West (OSU, Chicago, Indiana, Michigan, and Kansas). Though he didn’t believe this during his undergraduate studies, he got to know me at SAIS and is now convinced of the excellence of the Slavic programs.”

Jesse Saich (REES MA 04) continues to run StudioInglese School of Languages (http://www.studioinglese.it) in Padua, with his wife Andrea (and heir, Tilen), which is now moving into increasing on-line instruction. The logo of StudioInglese (§) refers also to the ISO 3166-2 country code for the Republic of Slovenia, whither the Saiches will relocate shortly.

Nicole Schmidt, who in the spring completed her M.A. in Education while also studying Slovene on a FLAS fellowship, received a one-year teaching position at an elementary school in Slovenia as a native speaker English teacher. She works with Slovene teachers across curriculum in teaching English as a component of several subjects. She is not only enjoying her work, but just as much her new temporary home: she is located in the quaint town, Radovljica, a short bike ride from famous Lake Bled.

Stephanie Smiros (BA 09) shakes hands with Russian Fleet Admiral at the International Maritime Exhibition in Singapore.

Howard Solomon (PhD 97) served at the White House on the National Security Staff (National Security Council) as Director for Russian and Eurasian Affairs in 2009–10. Since August 2010 he has been serving at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow as the Deputy Minister Counselor for Political Affairs.

Anatoly Vishevesky (PhD 85), professor of Russian literature at Grinnell College, Iowa, published a book Сквозь призму детектива. Мир романов Б.Акунина и Л.Юзефовича (Moscow: RGGU) in June 2011. The book compares the novels and heroes of two Russian writers in the detective genre—Boris Akunin and Leo-
Yuzefovich. Akunin came to literature from literary and Yuzefovich from historical studies. Writers’ “civil” professions also leave an imprint on the historical epoch that they bring to their stories. Since the writers are from the same epoch, comparing their stories opens a perspective on different views of history in literature. First, both coincide in striving to attract the reader’s attention to historical events and to enter into a dialog with them, but not in the concrete details or possible parallels in their novels. Akunin’s hero is meta-literary, incorporating traits and biographical details of the characters from Russian and world literatures; Yuzefovich’s originates in history and can be traced to a Russian detective at the end of the 19th c. Under closer examination it becomes clear that the relationship between history and literature in the characters as well as the stories of two writers is more complicated. On entering into a dialog with their respective readers, Akunin and Yuzefovich also establish their perspective of the events they describe. This perspective is directed to historical events as well as to numerous cultural stereotypes connected to them.

Laura Wilhelm (PhD 94), president of LauraWil International, writes that “This summer my company provided talent and institutional support to a non-profit called Finding Freedom International that seeks to combat human trafficking both locally and globally. Russia and Eastern Europe are among the world regions most heavily affected by human trafficking, and these issues carry over into émigré communities across the globe. FFI will soon circulate a multilingual public service announcement shot on Hollywood Boulevard and other prominent Los Angeles locations. On September 8th my company served as a media partner to the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce for Fashion’s Night Out, a global economic initiative sponsored by VOGUE Magazine for the past three years. I attended an American-Russian Business Council seminar on social media and ethnic communities at Romanov Restaurant in Studio City on the same evening. On September 27th I will give a presentation called ‘Working With the World Market: Émigrés, Ethnic Communities, and International Clients’ at the WH Job Fair. For the past several months I have been endeavoring to secure Job Fair participation from the ARBC and other international organizations. My new publisher, DEBACLE magazine, has agreed to print a series of my articles on urban existentialism beginning with ‘Los Angeles: The End of the World’ in their upcoming HEAT issue. I am in negotiations with the family who founded DEBACLE to assist them with editing and promotion of the magazine. I also stay in touch with several of my international ESL students and just hosted one during her return visit to LA from Turkey.”

Sarah Willenbrink (MA 11), after being awarded a Fulbright award in Spring 2011, is currently an English Teaching Assistant at the University of Warsaw for the 2011 – 2012 academic school year. She recently presented her paper „Życie na poziomie (The Classy Life): Underage Prostitution in Recent Polish Cinema” at KU’s CREES conference on Identity and Community after the Cold War Era in August.
Faculty News

Maria Carlson’s focus this past year has been on graduate education as KU revamps every aspect of the graduate student experience from the application process to final dissertation rubrics. As the Department’s Director of Graduate Studies since Fall 2008, she has participated in the development of many of these new policies (through her service on the Provost’s Graduate Education Work Group and in her work on the KU Executive Council of the Graduate Faculty). Beginning in Fall 2011, Prof. Carlson will oversee a new Responsible Scholarship Seminar for SLL graduate students; the goal of the Seminar is to acquaint students with the ethics, responsibilities, activities, and key issues of our profession. The series begins with a look at the academic conference and the role it plays in the profession. Future Seminars will look at types of research in the humanities, details of the research process (data acquisition, data management, data ownership, sharing data), evaluation, peer review, academic misconduct, research methodologies, publication practices, copyright, open access, conflict of interest, and other important features of our profession. Prof. Carlson is impatiently looking forward to Spring 2012 and her Hall Center Humanities Fellowship, which frees her from teaching for one semester to work on her study of the Slavic history of the folkloric personage today called the “vampire.” One of the pleasures of working on this topic has been an opportunity to collaborate with her colleague, Prof. Marc Greenberg, in tracking down the contested origin of the word “vampire” and providing a credible history for the word and the phenomenon. (There are times when it is simply impossible to move forward in a research project without a noted historical linguist at your side!) Thus everything else is on the back burner as Prof. Carlson pursues the research threads that have led her into medieval history, Catholic and Orthodox theology, dual faith, ancestor veneration, ancient Greek cults, Scandinavian draugar, obscure pagan death rituals, Slavic peasant funeral customs, the physiology of inhumation, folklores East and West, heresy, weddings of the dead, archaeology, and the moral, ecclesiastical, and legal consequences of spontaneous but unsanctioned exhumation. As an intellectual and cultural historian, she is having a very good time indeed with this topic, but she asks her colleagues to stop with the “undead” jokes already, and no, she has no plans for fieldwork in the mountains and forests of Transylvania (although the Carpathians remain “ground zero” for remnants of mythology and folklore about corporeal revenants)—Prof. Carlson’s is a serious, not a popular, study. She expects the project to produce three items: a deep study of the corporeal reventant of folk belief that would be transmuted during the European eighteenth century into the literary (and eventually into the cinematic) vampire; an anthology of historical vampire tales, memorates, and legends, translated into English from the Slavic languages for the first time; and, eventually, a study of the vampire character in Russian literature from 1800 to 1920.

William Comer’s sabbatical in academic year 2010–11 was very productive. His book chapter on “Communicative Language Teaching and Russian: The Current State of the Field” will be appearing in the collection Russian Language Studies in Canada and the USA: The New Focus that should be out from Anthem Press in late 2011. He coauthored the article “Processing Instruction and Russian: Further Evidence is IN” that has been accepted for publication in Foreign Language Annals in 2012. Professor Comer spent most of the year working on his research project into how non-native readers make sense out of authentic non-fiction texts in Russian. A first part of these research results “What Happens When Learners Meet Russian Texts? Evidence from Think Aloud Protocols” was presented at the AATSEEL Conference in January 2011 in Los Angeles. As he spent more and more time looking at the student data, the analysis outgrew one article and mushroomed into three separate ones which tackle questions of how readers inferring the meaning of unknown Russian words and how they use grammatical knowledge in building their comprehension of a text. Interested in exploring the other Europe, Professor Comer spent July in Krakow, taking Polish language classes. It was a well-timed trip, since his revived language skills are being put to the test as he teaches first-year Polish in AY 2011–12.

Edith W. Clowes’s new book, Russia on the Edge: Imagined Geographies and Post-Soviet Identity, appeared with Cornell University Press. The book has attracted quite a bit of attention, including an interview on Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) [http://www.svobodanews.ru/content/article/2438466.html], aired 25–26 September 2011. Other recent publications include a long encyclopedia article on the twentieth-century Russian novel for the new Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Novel and an article
Stephen M. Dickey continues to analyze the development of Slavic aspect, writing directly for a new book as well as publishing articles on the subject. His article “On the Development of the Imperfective General-Factual in Russian” is forthcoming from *Scando-Slavica*, and “The Varying Role of *po-* in the Grammaticalization of Slavic Aspectual Systems: Sequences of Events, De-limitatives, and German Language Contact” appeared in the *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 19(2). Ever one to push the envelope, he presented “Sometimes Things are the Complete Opposite of What Everyone Says: The Prefixation of Motion Verbs in the History of Slavic” at the department’s Faculty and Graduate Colloquium (20 April 2011). In preparation for his coming research stay at the Centre for Advanced Study in Oslo, Norway, he participated in *Time and Variation in Cognitive Linguistics* at Tromsø, Norway as an invited speaker with the paper “Metonymy and Verbal Nouns in Old Church Slavic” (29 April 2011). In the spring of 2011 he had a delightful and fascinating time teaching the first run of a new course, SLAV 316: The Peoples and Cultures of Southeastern Europe Through Film. His translation of Miljenko Jergović’s *Ruta Tannenbaum* was published by Northwestern University Press in the summer of this year.

Marc L. Greenberg spent the summer of 2011 working on several overdue projects and made good progress. One of them was completion of “The Writing on the Wall: The Russian Orthographic Reform of 1917–1918” for the *Russia’s Great War and Revolution* project. Together with partner Marko Snoj, Head of the Institute for Slovene Languages of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Sciences, he handed the editorship of the journal they co-founded, *Slovenski jezik / Slovene Linguistic Studies*, to younger colleagues, Kozma Ahačič (Ljubljana), and Grant H. Lundberg (KU PhD 99; Assoc. Prof., Brigham Young University). He continues as Linguistics Editor of *Slavia Centralis*, another “gold” open-access and print journal, this one with a mission to publish high-quality research in Slavic linguistics with an emphasis on central-European Slavic languages and their relations with other language (Slavic or otherwise). He continues to work to promote KU’s Open Access policy, serving on the Advisory Board for OA under Lorraine J. Haricombe, Dean of Libraries. With a subset of this group, headed by Scholarly Communications Librarian, Ada Emmett, he was involved in the formation of the Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions (COAPI). In November 2011 he will do collaborative work and guest lectures at the Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic, with the support of a fellowship from the Moravian-Silesian regional government. In spring 2011 he will move temporarily to the College as Acting Associate Dean for the Humanities while Dean Ann Cudd takes a sabbatical.

Ani Kokobobo defended her dissertation *From the Pastoral to the Grotesque in Late Russian Realism, 1872–1899* this summer. This fall she is teaching two courses at KU and enjoying getting to know KU students and faculty. She published an article in *Slavic Review* (“Bureaucracy of Dreams: Surrealist Socialism and Surrealist Awakening in Ismail Kadare’s *The Palace of Dreams*”), and one of her articles (“To Grieve or Not to Grieve: The Unsteady Representation of Violence in Ivo Andrić’s *Na Drini ćuprija*”) has been republished in Serbo-Croatian in *Sveske Zadužbine Ive Andrića*. She is currently working on two article manuscripts, the first an article on Aleksandr Radishchev’s rebellion against neoclassicism in his travelogue *Puteshestvie iz...*
Peterburga v Moskvu; the second an article co-authored with Emma Lieber (Columbia, Harriman Institute) on contemporary translations of War and Peace. She will be attending the ASEEES conference this fall, where she has organized and participate in a panel “Tolstoy and the East” and a roundtable “Homelessness in Nineteenth-century Russian Literature and Culture.”

Renee Perelmutter continues to study Russian online discourse. She presented a talk on (im)politeness and power at the Anthropology department’s Discourse Seminar series, and is finishing up an article on this topic. She is working on her monograph project on Russian women’s online discourse, and will deliver a talk on this project at the upcoming AATSEEL meeting in Seattle. Her article on predicative adjectives in affirmative and negative contexts was recently accepted by Russian Linguistics. Prof. Perelmutter also continued her Jewish Studies work on the heresy of the Judaisers; an article on deixis in medieval Slavic translations from Hebrew is currently in press. This summer, Prof. Perelmutter attended a by-invitation conference on medieval Hebrew-Slavic contacts held at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, where she presented her research on another text associated with the Judaizers, the bilingual translation of the book of Daniel; she is currently reworking her talk as an article.

Marta Pirnat-Greenberg completed the audio portion of the new Slovene volume for the Routledge Colloquial language series. Colloquial Slovene—The Complete Course for Beginners is scheduled to appear on September 30. In May she attended four-day Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) tester training, organized by CRES.

During the summer she began a project of developing on-line BCS teaching materials for intermediate to advanced levels, based on a short contemporary Croatian novel. The project, for which she was awarded a CRES grant for Curriculum Development, continues during the fall semester and is scheduled to be completed by the spring semester.

Irina Six participated in 2011 CIBER Business Language Conference “Bringing Languages and Business Together: New Directions for a Critical Need,” hosted by the University of South Carolina CIBER in Charleston, South Carolina, March 23-26, 2011. Her presentation, “Business Russian for Intermediate Students: Developing Data-Driven Teaching Materials,” focused on elaborating the pedagogy that must be embedded in a business language course so that it will be truly accessible to students of Russian after two years (4 semesters) of usual college language training.

In May Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova attended an OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) workshop organized by CRES and familiarized herself with the basics of the increasingly popular language testing technique. She spent the summer in Lawrence completing her book Communism through the Eyes of a Child: The Post-1989 Polish Initiation Novel and preparing the manuscript for submission to Rochester University Press. Recently she was awarded the Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena Fellowship, which will allow her to spent two months at Friedrich Schiller University (Jena, Germany) next summer working on the final revisions of her book. Her review of Robert Rothstein’s book Two Words to the Wise. Reflections on Polish Language, Literature and Folklore came out in Slavic and East European Journal 54.4 Winter 2010. Currently she is working on an article entitled “Poland’s Last Communist Generation: Lost or Found in the Transition” and on the introduction to an article cluster The Socialist Prefabs after Utopia (co-edited with Prof. Nathan Wood) to be published in the journal Eastern European Politics and Societies.
career Gabriel was an employee of Ernst & Young, KPMG Consulting (Barents Group), and AT Kearney.

In 2000 the couple returned to the US, where their daughter Anya was born. However, they always wanted to go back to Kazakhstan, where they felt at home. An opportunity came in 2001, when Gabriel was invited to take a position with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as Director of Business Advisory Services (BAS) Program in Central Asia. The program’s headquarters was in Almaty, Kazakhstan, but Gabriel extended the it to five countries of Central Asia. He became the driving force for the development of business advisory services in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. He made the BAS Program one of the most effective and innovative programs for the development of consulting industry. Now consulting services often include a complex series of measures addressing enterprise’s needs. For example, the BAS Program supported over a hundred of ISO implementation projects, which is important for the countries of Central Asia in their effort to join the global marketplace. Under Gabriel’s leadership the BAS Program became actively involved in the promotion of kaizen (‘lean manufacturing’) in Central Asia.

Gabriel placed a special emphasis on developing high professional standards for consultants. This effort was important to him both professionally and personally. He was the first to bring training on business ethics to the consultants of Central Asia. In September 2010 Gabriel helped seven consultants from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to apply and receive the Certified Management Consultant (CMC) professional qualification from International Certified Management Consultants Institutes (ICMCI), having passed comprehensive exams to earn the title. Gabriel’s approach was that professionalism has no borders and the global consulting industry is not a closed society of selected individuals. He proved that for Central Asian consultants, and, after his death his friends and colleagues have felt the strong need to carry on what he had started.

Gabriel was an outstanding diplomat, a charismatic man, and a kind person with a big heart, who did his utmost to support causes to which he was committed. A colleague from Canada, Heather Osler, wrote that “he was larger than life. He adored life and lived it to its fullest. And he always seemed to find the sunny side of every moment, even when there were problems.”

Gabriel loved and adored his family and always insisted that his time with the family was the most precious. He travelled frequently for work, but he was always eager to come back home. Gabriel loved the outdoors and enjoyed mountaineering, skiing, and paragliding. In 2002 he climbed Khan Tengri (the famous and beautiful 21,000-foot peak on the border between Kazakhstan and China) and was the first in the world to fly down on a paraglider from Talgar, a 15,000-foot peak in the mountains near Almaty. He flew over France, Turkey, Switzerland, USA, the Dominican Republic, and Taiwan. He even flew over the Great Wall of China. An adventurer, Gabriel always loved to land in new places.
and meet new people. While paragliding is a dangerous sport, he loved being airborne and reveled in the many facets and beautiful colors of life from above.

Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation and Award Initiative

After Gabriel’s tragic death in a paragliding accident on November 2010, his friends and colleagues felt the need to honor his memory and to continue his legacy. Three days after the accident they created the Kazakhstan Chamber of Management Consultants (CMC Kazakhstan), a professional association promoting best consulting practices and high professional standards. The idea of the award named after Gabriel came from Valeria Della Rosa, Gabriel’s colleague from the TAM/BAS team of the EBRD, who was visiting Almaty at that time. CMC Kazakhstan eagerly supported the idea.

When Viktoria came back to Almaty from the funeral in the United States, she met with CMC Kazakhstan to discuss the award and how they could attract funding for it. This led Viktoria to consider establishing the foundation.

Viktoria and her colleagues launched the Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation and the award officially at a press conference at the Kazakhstan Press Club on February 1, 2011, Gabriel’s birthday. They organized further presentations in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan. Viktoria registered the foundation as a non-profit corporation in California, where Gabriel was born and where Viktoria’s parents currently live.

Ultimately, the Foundation aims to support sustainable economic growth, reduce poverty, and promote social integration in its countries of operation by equipping citizens with access to innovations and best world practices through training and scholarships. The foundation’s first countries of operation will be in Central Asia, where Gabriel worked before his tragic death. However, the foundation is considering expanding its work to other parts of the globe.

The very first project of the foundation is to establish and support the Gabriel Al-Salem International Award for Excellence in Consulting. The goal is to recognize outstanding achievements for consulting services and to promote high professional standards in the industry.

More concretely, there are five award nominations to recognize various aspects that help advance the development of the consulting sector. The nominations include an award to the best consultant of the year as well as awards for the best consulting project. An award will also be given for consultants’ volunteer work that makes a significant contribution to the development of consulting as a profession. Furthermore, there is a nomination for an award Consultancy Without Borders, reflecting Gabriel’s personality and rewards outstanding transborder, multinational projects. Finally, there will be an award for the most dynamic professional organization in the consulting sector.

The deadline for submissions is November 30 of each year and prizes are awarded to the winners on February 1, Gabriel’s birthday date. To be as objective as possible, the foundation will engage an independent research agency to conduct interviews with clients and gather feedback on the consultants and firms proposed for the award nominations. Finally, an international committee which includes leading experts from the consulting industry will judge the submissions and choose the winners.

In addition to the Award, the Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation will also provide various types of training for consultants and entrepreneurs, for example, on business ethics, which is essential for creating a civilized market, or on core consultant skills, which was Gabriel’s favorite training course. Moreover, the Foundation will work in the area of education by providing scholarships and creating internship opportunities for talented students, including those from the USA, and Central Asia. Viktoria has met with the faculty of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at KU and discussed possibilities for establishing a Gabriel Al-Salem Scholarship to support young talents who will follow in Gabriel’s footsteps in foreign language studies and international development work.

Visit the Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation website: http://www.ga-foundation.org
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