Slavic Department Welcomes New Assistant Professor

Professor Ani Kokobobo joined the Slavic department in Fall 2011. She graduated with her Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literature from Columbia University, where she completed a dissertation entitled “From the Pastoral to the Grotesque in Late Russian Realism, 1872-1899”. Professor Kokobobo’s research interests include nineteenth-century Russian literature, as well as contemporary Balkan literature; she has published articles on Tolstoy, as well as on the works of Ismail Kadare and Ivo Andrić. In Spring 2012, Professor Kokobobo also served as an Acting Director of Undergraduate studies. I talked to Professor Kokobobo about her research, experiences at KU, and plans for the future.

RP: You came to the University of Kansas shortly after completing your dissertation on the grotesque in late Russian realist novels. Would you please tell us a little bit more about your project, and what attracted you to this topic?

AK: I was really interested in the Russian literary scene during the fin de siècle (1880-1900). This time marks the “death” of the Russian novel, that great bulwark of nineteenth-century Russian literature, so I started my research with a very ambitious and virtually unanswerable question: what happened to make Russian writers stop writing great novels like Brothers Karamazov or Anna Karenina? As I tell students, it is always good to have an ambitious start. Eventually, after I attempted (and failed) to answer this question, I decided that I should probably resign myself to the (admittedly no simpler) task of describing what happens to the Russian novel during the late nineteenth century. Over time, I discovered that the Russian novel took a darker turn during this period, casting a dejected look at Russian reality that seemed to mirror some of the violent and disturbing rhetoric disseminated in manifestoes by underground radicals and revolutionaries of the time.

Chronologically, my dissertation began with Dostoevsky’s Demons and ended with Tolstoy’s Resurrection.

In that period Russian writers went from thinking that the revolutionaries were to blame for the terrible state of affairs in Russia—they are the demonic others in Demons—to seeing them as would be saints, the only ones with real convictions in a morally dissolute world. What I argued in my dissertation was that the evolution we witness in late nineteenth-century Russian literature continued on page 11

Editor’s Corner

The Slavic department began producing this newsletter, simply called Newsletter, in 1975; for the next 14 years, it was edited by professor Stephen Parker, who put out his last issue in Fall 1989. In 1991, then assistant professor Marc L. Greenberg took over the editorship, restarting the newsletter under a new name, Lawrencian Chronicle (the name references the Laurentian Chronicle, one of the two sources for the Russian Primary Chronicle). Professor Greenberg edited the newsletter for ten years, improving and expanding its scope, and eventually producing an e-version to supplement the dead-tree version. When professor Greenberg stepped down as an editor in Fall 2011, assistant professor Renee Perelmutter took over the editorship. This is her first edited newsletter!
It’s been a year of transitions for the Slavic Department. In December 2011, Marc L. Greenberg moved over to the College Office as Acting Associate Dean for the Humanities during Ann Cudd’s sabbatical semester. I want to thank Marc for his long service to the Slavic Department. His twelve years brought many new people to the department, and the Department is left in a strong and vibrant position. I will try to continue his efforts in building the department’s research profile and in meeting its teaching mission for both graduate and undergraduate students.

Other transitions this year have included the arrival and acculturation of our new faculty colleague Ani Kokobobo. In the spring semester, she stepped into the role of undergraduate major advisor while Professor Dickey was on his research grant at the Center for Advanced Studies in Oslo, Norway. I’ll wait until the end of this column to mention two of the sadder transitions.

This year’s crop of undergraduate majors was exceptionally large and talented. At the Spring Honors reception, we reinstated our tradition of inducting our top majors into Dobro Slovo, the National Slavic Honor Society. It was a great pleasure to bestow this recognition on David Samms, Rhianna Patrinely, Anastasia Metzger, Eva Rosenblumova, Zachary Early, and Jenni Kornfield. We wish all of them the best as they start down new paths in life.

At the graduate level, the department awarded three MA degrees this year—to Tim Kenney, Alexei Telegin, and Brad Reynolds. We had a very good year recruiting graduate students, and Elizabeth Burkum, Jaron Castilleja, and Anna Karpusheva will start the MA program in the fall and Olesya Shtynko will begin doctoral studies.

Students in our programs were very successful in getting support for summer study abroad. Amy Sinclair, a student in advanced Russian, was chosen to participate in the Biotechnology and Russian Program at Moscow State University, which is supported by The George Washington University’s FIPSE grant for Russian and science education. Our graduate student Megan Luttrel studied at Moscow State University on the American Council’s Program for Teachers of Russian, and Aric Toler’s Critical Languages Scholarship took him to Kazan, Russia. Laura Dean (doctoral candidate in Political Science) and Alex Melin (an SLL alum, and now in KU’s Law School) also received Critical Languages Scholarships to continue their study of Russian.

Six students in our language courses received summer FLAS awards, and three—REES MA candidate Jared Warren, History doctoral student Drew Burks and undergraduate Chris Oblon—studied in Poland this summer. REES MA students Matthew Cotton and Amy Murphy took classes in Russia and Ukraine, respectively. History doctoral student Allison Schmidt studied in the Czech Republic.

Kudos are also due to Marta Pirnat-Greenberg and the Intermediate Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian class, who wrote and illustrated an article on the Croatian folk-art painter Marijana Grisnik, from Strawberry Hill, KS. The article has appeared in the Croatian diaspora magazine Matica. Drawing on interviews with the artist, the students detail Grisnik’s painting and her connections with the history of the Croatian community in Kansas City, Kansas.

In early June, the department received word that KU’s application to the Institute for International Education for Project Global Officers was recommended for funding. This is a four-year federal grant to encourage
undergraduate ROTC students to study one of six critical languages (Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Farsi, and Turkish) during the academic year or summer, both on campus and abroad. As Principal Investigator for the grant (whose writing required a large-scale collaborative effort), I look forward to seeing the increased participation of ROTC students in language and culture courses across the languages. I also hope that the increased focus on critical languages will have a spill-over effect on the civilian population at KU.

In addition to kicking off Project GO, the department will start off the new academic year by hosting the Slavic Linguistics Society Conference in August 2012. Professors Greenberg, Perelmutter and Dickey have been working hard to put together a rich and engaging set of papers that are topped off with three keynote talks to be presented by Alan Timberlake (Berkeley/Columbia), Brian D. Joseph (Ohio State), and Catherine Rudin (Wayne State College).

My excitement for next year’s activities is dampened, however, by the sad transition that the Department faces in saying goodbye to two colleagues. After 13 years at KU, Edith Clowes is leaving to take a named professorship at the University of Virginia. We will all miss her energy in working with students, organizing special programs and speakers, and in presenting and publishing her research. At the same time we also say good-bye to Abbas Karakaya, who has been teaching Turkish in the department since 2008. He is leaving KU to return to Turkey, where he plans to work full time on his poetry and next book project. We will miss him and the way his poems would make unexpected appearances on the department’s bulletin boards.

I especially encourage all of our former language students, majors and graduate students to write to me and the department and let us know what you are doing and where your studies at KU have led you. Your stories about how studying Slavic languages, literatures and cultures has enriched your lives and modified the trajectory of your career plans help inspire today’s students to think about the world in a broader more global framework.

WJC: You’ve been asked to take on other administrative positions as you leave the chair of the department.

Greenberg Takes on New Challenges

by William Comer

Professor Comer took advantage of the occasion of Marc Greenberg’s move into new administrative roles to ask him to reflect on his years as chair of Slavic.

WJC: What do you think of as your three greatest accomplishments as Chair of the Department?
MLG: I believe my major achievement during the twelve years of my tenure as chair was to maintain a collegial, creative, and forward-looking departmental culture as SLL changed academic generations and the University of Kansas entered a new phase in its own evolution. This would not have been possible without the support of colleagues in the Department and in the College; I am grateful to each and every one of them for their patience and support.

More specifically, during my time in the chair we were able to make four hires of talented tenure-track faculty as well as excellent lecturers, who represent the future of our unit. Their addition to our faculty makes KU SLL one of the strongest groups of specialists in Slavic studies in the United States. We were able to build and maintain capacity in the languages, literatures, linguistics, and cultures of most of the Slavic-speaking world, as well as add Yiddish and Turkish to our programs in support of the Jewish Studies and CREES programs, respectively. Second, we initiated fund-raising campaigns to raise money to enrich our students’ experiences and to support the activities of the Department in general. Through the generosity of the Parker family and with other private funds, we were able to build a library that has become the hub of the Department’s activities. Third, during my time as Chair our departmental work spaces, offices, and the Parker Library became vibrant, lively places to work as morale rose and our GTAs physically joined us in the Department, where the faculty can more easily work with and mentor them.

WJC: What do you think of as your three greatest accomplishments as Chair of the Department?
What motivated you to continue your administrative service in the College Office and then in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures?

MLG: When I was asked in 1999 to take the SLL Chair I did not want to take it—I had a very clear vision about what I wanted from my career, and administrative work was not a feature of the “film” in my head. Over time, however, I discovered that building and maintaining a high quality program can be rewarding, almost in the way that seeing a complex research project come to fruition from an initial concept can be satisfying. I “trained” to be chair in the same way I trained to be a scholar, except that I now was working for “us” and not just for “me.”  

The time I spent substituting for Ann Cudd as Acting Associate Dean for Humanities during her sabbatical in Spring 2012 gave me a taste of higher administration, which was satisfying insofar as I was able to make some tangible contributions to advance humanities and the cause of liberal arts. I took on the job of chairing the German Department as a continuation of my service to the College for exactly the same reason—I feel I can make a positive contribution to the humanities at KU and I hope that I can develop the same kinds of constructive initiatives with this unit as I did with Slavic. I like my colleagues in the German Department and have a genuine interest in the work that they do, even if I am not a specialist in their area.

WJC: Is there anything else you’d like to add, as you transition out of your leadership role in the Slavic Department?

MLG: We are now in an era when the study of language, culture, and the humanities in general is frequently questioned. Yet I believe they have never been more important to forming an educated person. I sincerely hope that ten years from now high-quality liberal arts education remains accessible to as many people as have the will to pursue such an education. Whatever I do, I will continue to do my part to contribute to this endeavor.  

There is plenty of work yet to do. The newest “cause” I have embraced is the Open Access (OA) Movement. Free open access to scholarly literature is an imperative for higher education. Not only does the public and the scholarly world deserve unfettered access to the research that they themselves fund through tax dollars, but the costs of publication have skyrocketed almost entirely due to private rent-seeking, which in turn raises the costs to students and taxpayers for higher education. The knowledge created at (especially public) universities is a public good and OA promises to make this public good truly public, as it should be. With this in mind, the College and the Libraries are sending me this November to the Berlin 10 Conference in Stellenbosch, South Africa, where I will update myself on current work on OA and report back to my colleagues here. I also continue to work closely with my colleagues Ada Emmett (Center for Digital Scholarship) and Town Peterson (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology) in writing on this topic to help our colleagues and the public better understand the issues in academic publishing. In the Slavic field I have co-founded two journals that are both print and open access and I continue to co-edit one of them. This work allows me to lead by example.  

I also look forward to moving ahead with my own research program. I have several projects that I am working on, including completion of a book on the Prekmurje dialect. I am also collaborating with two scholars in the Czech Republic on two different, but interrelated projects, one (with Zbyněk Holub) on a remarkable prosodic phenomenon in south-western Czech that validates a hypothesis I proposed about Common-Slavic prosody. The other is a long-term project to produce the volume A Historical Phonology of the Czech Languages (with Roman Sukač) for the prestigious Carl Winter series on Slavic historical phonology (my Slovene volume appeared in 2000 in this series). The excitement of discovery has kept me involved in research, despite the time and energy I have been diverting to administration, and I look forward to finding ways to engage even more with the topics that interest me.  

Last, but not as an afterthought, I would like to thank Prof. Stephen Parker for his generosity in mentoring me into the chair’s job and to wish our new chair, Prof. William Comer, success in meeting the challenges of his new role in our Department.

Imagined Geographies, ... :  
Professor Edith Clowes leaves KU
by Renee Perelmutter

Edith Clowes joined the KU Slavic department in 1999 after working at Purdue University, University of Michigan, and University of Virginia. Professor Clowes holds a Ph.D in Slavic languages and literatures from Yale, where she wrote her dissertation on the early reception of

Since 2008, Prof. Clowes served as the director of CREES. In the Fall of 2012, Prof. Clowes will join the Slavic department at the University of Virginia, where she will hold the Brown-Forman Chair. I chatted with Professor Clowes about her years at KU, and plans for the future.

RP: You joined the KU Slavic department in January, 1999; during your almost 14 years at KU, you published two books in addition to numerous scholarly articles; have been a recipient of NEH, ACLS, and other grants; and since 2008, served as a director of CREES. Now that you are leaving KU, we’d love to hear about what you consider to be the highlights of your time here.

EC: Even from the start, just the act of joining the Slavic Department at KU was a high point. It made a great difference in my career to become a member of an excellent, comprehensive Slavic department—one of relatively few in the US—and to help the department build new strengths. Working with PhD students on their dissertations, and seeing those dissertations take shape, develop, and eventually turn into publications has been a true pleasure. Another highlight has been developing a methodologies seminar for SLL graduate students. Even in my graduate school days, oddly enough, I have not experienced a truly useful methodologies seminar, so the process of developing a seminar that forms the groundwork for theoretical study in other seminars has been a very satisfying challenge. I’m getting closer, though not quite there yet!

Probably the highest point for me in my Slavic Dept. life has been developing the West Slavic Program and the Czech Program in particular. First, I had to start the process of learning Czech—which I pursued quite well till I became director of CREES in 2008. Marc Greenberg was my first (and very effective) teacher in spring 2000. Since then we have had two Fulbright scholars (Jana Cemusova and David Skalicky) who have helped the Czech program along by offering courses in language, literature and culture. Dennis Christilles (Theatre) and I developed an introduction to Czech culture (taught at KU) and the Prague Winter Institute in Theatre and the Arts, which ran from 2002 to 2008 and sparked interest in the Slavic world among KU students. Andrzej Karcz and I developed a course in totalitarianism and literature in Central Europe. Since 2005, I have been working on fundraising for a lectureship in Czech language, since private funds are the only way we will be able to afford to offer courses in another less commonly taught language. We are not far off, at this point. Two fundraising trips to Prague and the Czech Republic in 2005 and 2008 have been a great deal of fun and have allowed me to build a network of people interested in supporting Czech language and culture at KU. Finally, it was a tremendous stroke of good luck in 2006 to hire Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova to anchor the West Slavic Program. She’s the rare person with an excellent command of both Czech and Polish.

KU’s Hall Center for the Humanities was a welcome resource and, for a time, a second home on campus. The Hall Center offers more than just fellowships, it offers fellowship itself, a creative community for scholars in and around the humanities. Founding and running the Faculty Seminar in Philosophy and Literature from 2001 to 2006 made a real difference in writing my first KU book, Fiction’s Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy. The seminar brought together scholars from many fields, including art history, math, religious studies, anthropology, as well as philosophy and various literature departments. All of us in the seminar benefited greatly from the community that we formed. High points were extended workshops on “Postmodernisms” and “Origins: Evolution and Abortion in the Bible.” The second topic was deemed so “hot” that KU’s Public Relations insisted on a police patrol. Promotional materials on that workshop were hardly disseminated, so that, in the end, very few people came. The discussion, however, was excellent. Finally, and most importantly, through their leadership both Janet Crowe and Victor Bailey prompted me to articulate as precisely as possible a definition of the humanities and think about the contribution that the humanities make to the intellectual and scientific life of the university. That exercise has helped me subsequently to promote the humanities in the context of area studies, particularly, but in the context of various curricula of KU’s professional schools, as well.

RP: Your research tackles subjects as diverse as Gorky, philosophy, utopia, and post-Soviet literature; your last book, Russia on the Edge, deals with imagined geographies and the post-Soviet period. What’s next on your research to-do list?

*continued on page 15*
Honors Reception 2012

Prof. Bill Comer presided over the Honors Reception. In his welcome address, Professor Comer recognized both students and colleagues for investing in foreign language study—an endeavor that requires both time and focus, which is increasingly difficult in this age of instant communications.

Entertainment

Jenni Kornfield (cello, pictured) and Tzu-hwa Ho (piano) performed Rachmaninoff’s “Vocalize”

First-year Russian students performed Aleksei Tolstoy’s “The Giant Turnip” with Zack Gutkowski (l) as narrator.

Awards

Award for excellence in Elementary Polish:
Prof. William Comer (l), Drew P. Burks (c-l), Chris Oblon (c-r), Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova (r)

Award for excellence in Intermediate Polish:
Chelsea Steel (l), Professor Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova (c), Jared N. Warren (r)
Awards for excellence in the study of BCS:
Ms. Marta Pirnat-Greenberg, lecturer (l), Eva Rosenblumová, Andrew Bledsoe, Becky Stackun, and Erica Stevanović (r).

Award for excellence in the study of Slovene:
Ms. Marta Pirnat-Greenberg, lecturer (l) and Holly Hood Glascoe (r).

Award for Excellence in the study of Elementary Russian:
Prof. William J. Comer (l), Mr. Nathaniel Pickett, Mr. Aric Toler, Mr. Alexey Telegin, Logan Bayless, Matthew Franklin, Catherine Lees, Austin Lentz, Ms. Megan Luttrell

Award for excellence in Intermediate Russian:
Prof. William J. Comer (l), Ms. Deborah Brigmond, Taylor Broadfoot, Lillian Kopaska-Merkel, Wayne (Jimmy) Sloan (r)

Award for excellence in Advanced Russian:
Irina Six (l), Jenni Kornfield, Natalie Perry, Seth Wiley, Deborah Brigmond (r)
Student News

Undergraduate Students

Natalie Perry (SLL and REES major) received a FLAS award to study abroad in Saint Petersburg, Russia for the following academic year. She has also received a departmental award for excellence in advanced Russian. In addition, Natalie recently returned from the annual Midwest Slavic Conference at Ohio State University where she presented her research on the fluctuations of Russian gender roles throughout history.

Jenni Kornfeld and Dave Samms have been inducted into the Slavic Honor Society Dobro Slovo this semester. Dave will also be attending law school this fall.

Graduate Students

John Korba presented his paper “Alphonse Mucha and The Slav Epic: An Imaginative Text of a New World” at the Mid-America Humanities Conference in March. He also received a Fulbright research grant to conduct dissertation research in Prague for nine months beginning in September 2012. His dissertation examines some differences between the systems of verbal aspect in Czech and Russian using psycholinguistic experimentation.

Megan Luttrell received a Russian FLAS for summer 2012 and will be attending the American Councils Summer Russian Language Teachers Program in Moscow. Becky Stakun received a FLAS for summer 2012 (BCS) and academic year (2012-2013) for Turkish. She also received a departmental award for excellence in intermediate BCS.

Aric Toler received a US State Department-funded Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) for Russian. He will be spending eight weeks in Kazan, Russia at the Kazan Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Finally, congratulations to Tim Kenny, Brad Reynolds, and Alexei Telegin who recently passed their MA exams and to Viktoria Pottroff who passed her MA exam and will continue on to PhD studies in the fall!
Alumni News

Craig Barto (BA 76) works as a professor of English at the Charleston Southern University, a private Baptist college near Charleston, SC. His specialties are manifold: composition/rhetorics, linguistics, ESL, developmental writing. The focus at CSU is on preparing students for ministry; most graduates go to seminary or directly into some aspect of ministry that does not require an advanced degree (such as a youth pastor, worship leader, Christian educator, church management). Professor Barto still uses his Russian on a regular basis—Charleston has been called “West St. Petersburg” for a good reason.

Gregory P. Christiansen (MA REES 03), has been serving as an USAF officer since 1994. Before and during active duty military service, he has taught Russian a total of eight years, including four years at the USAF Academy. Between 1997 and 2004, he accompanied military delegations as an interpreter and cultural advisor during approximately 25 events with the Russian and Ukrainian military. More recently, he has secured grants to take two groups of USAF Academy cadets on cultural immersion trips to Ukraine and the Former Yugoslavia in 2009 and 2010 respectively. In 2011, he served as one of three military panelists on a panel of 22 representatives from academia and government performing Standards Setting for the Russian Defense Language Proficiency Test. Currently, he works as a Dean of Students and Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). Mr. Christiansen is the senior military officer responsible for student policy for 3,700 military service-members from all branches of military service in basic language acquisition courses studying 25 languages in eight schools with over 1500 faculty and staff.

Elaine Fitzback Davies (MA 73) received her PhD in Theology from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David this January. Her dissertation was titled “I Came to Guard You: the Use of Marian Icons for Protection.” She attended the graduation ceremony on July 13th in Lampeter, Wales, during which she sang the Welsh National Anthem (in Welsh, of course!)

Halina Filipowicz (PhD 79), Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has developed a new course, “Gender in Polish Literature and Culture,” which she will teach in the spring semester of 2013. In a recently published article, “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Adam Mickiewicz’s Forefathers’ Eve, Part 4 and the Art of Transgressing the Private/Public Divide” (in the volume New Perspectives on Polish Culture: Personal Encounters, Public Affairs [2012], ed. by Tamara Trojanowska et al.), she offers a new interpretation of this masterwork of Polish drama and a classic of European Romantic literature. She is currently completing the final chapter of a book titled Taking Liberties: Patriotism, Transgression, and Polish Drama, 1786-1989 (under advance contract with Ohio University Press) and is also working on a new book, Post-Holocaust Debates and Theatre: The Case of Poland, 1945-2010.
**Jon Giullian** reports that the newest Slavic librarian, Christian Henry Giullian, was born on Cinco de Mayo 2011. May 1 or May 9 would have been more fitting for the Slavic regions, but at least Mexico will throw a party for him every year.

**Kurt Harper** (BA 75) was selected to lead a team of delegates to Russia April 29-May 21, 2012, for a Group Study Exchange sponsored by Rotary International. Kurt is in Rotary District 5690, which is generally southwestern and southcentral Kansas, and part of the Oklahoma Panhandle. The team visited Rotary District 2220, which is generally Russia west of the Urals. The team had the opportunity to visit Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ivanovo, Yaroslavl, Rybinsk, and Cherevopets, and included a mix of hotel and home stays. This is Kurt’s third Rotary-related trip to Russia. District 5690 hosted the corresponding exchange team last fall.

**Yuki Onogi** (BA 08) completed his first year at SAIS Bologna, and reports that his BCS and Russian improved significantly. At SAIS, he has studied political economy in Asia and Eurasia, international relations, and energy security across Europe, Russia, Eurasia and Northeast Asia. Yuki is planning to combine his interests in REES and Asia-Pacific areas in the context of energy security and geostrategy. He is currently working at the United Nations University Institute for Sustainability and Peace in Tokyo, Japan, where he supports editorial work for one journal, conducts research on Africa’s sustainable development, and carries out scenario analysis on energy production in the post-Fukushima Japan. Yuki hopes to contribute to this program and learn as much as possible.

**Maria Carlson** spent Spring 2012 on a Hall Center Research Fellowship, making progress on her continuing Vampire Project. Her book on the origins of the belief figure known variously as the undead, the walking corpse, the unclean dead, and a score of other names, culminating in “the vampire,” is coming along steadily. She shared some of her more interesting findings with KU alums at the CLAS Mini-College in early June. Prof. Carlson has also translated some 50 memorates, fabulates, and legends about the corporeal revenant from various Slavic languages into English. These items are unknown in the Western literature on the vampire and show the belief figure in various stages of conceptualization. In summer 2012 Prof. Carlson worked on this project in Helsinki’s Slavonic Library, using their excellent collection of late nineteenth century Russian and Ukrainian ethnographic journals.

During this past year Prof. Carlson, in her capacity as Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER), devoted much of her time to the Council following the untimely death of its president, Dr. Robert Huber in June 2011. She chaired the selection committee that identified a new president, oversaw the annual audit, and worked with a variety of constituent entities to promote the interests of NCEEER.

As KU approached the end of the spring semester and this year’s Commencement ceremonies on 13 May 2012, Prof. Carlson completed her three-year term as The University Marshal; May 2012 also marked the end of her twenty-fifth year of research, teaching, and service at the University of Kansas.

**William Comer** has had a year of changes and new opportunities. After a summer study program in Poland in 2011, he expanded his teaching profile in the department taking on first-year Polish in the 2011-12 academic year. It has been an interesting experience to teach another Slavic language and to work with an enthusiastic set of students, two of whom had summer FLAS scholarships to study in Cracow. In December 2011 Comer and Lynne deBenedette (Brown U) published the coauthored article “Processing Instruction and Russian: Further Evidence is IN” in Foreign Language Annals. The first of his articles on reading “The Role of Grammatical Knowledge in Reading for Meaning in Russian” has been accepted for the Slavic and East European Journal, and should appear in the fall issue. Beginning with January 2012, Comer has taken over the responsibility of chairing the Slavic Department, and in late spring he found out that his promotion to full professor was approved effective
August 2012. His plans for the summer include getting back to a book manuscript *The Structure of Russian: A Guide for Beginning Teachers* which he is coauthoring with David Birnbaum at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Stephen M. Dickey** was one of three speakers invited to the Third Conference of the International Commission on Aspectology of the International Committee of Slavists held in Padua, Italy from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4; the title of his talk was “Towards a Comparative Analysis of the Development of the General-Factual Function of the Imperfective Aspect in Slavic.” He also gave a CREES brownbag lecture, “How Do You Do Things with Words and Who Tells You How to Do Them? Slavs, Their Performatives, and Germans,” on Nov. 1, 2011. Since January 2012 Prof. Dickey has been at the Center for Advanced Study in Oslo, Norway working as a member of the research group in Time is Space: Unconscious Models and Conscious Acts. There he has given several talks, including “Auxiliated versus Unauxiliated 3rd-Person Preterits in Old and Middle Czech Correspondence” at the CAS conference in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Mar. 29. His article “On the Development of the Russian Imperfective General Factual” has just appeared in *Scando-Slavica* 58(1), and another, “Orphan Prefixes and the Grammaticalization of Aspect in South Slavic,” is appearing any day in *Jezikoslovlje* 13(1). Last fall Prof. Dickey gave SLAV 508: South Slavic Literature and Civilization as an online course for the first time.

**Marc L. Greenberg** stepped down from the chairmanship of the Slavic Department, having served since fall 2000, at the end of the fall 2011 semester, in order to take a temporary position as Associate Dean for the Humanities in the College, substituting for Ann Cudd during her sabbatical. Part of his assignment is also chairing the German Department, which he finds a great pleasure. In October 2011 he served as a consultant to the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana, and from there also participated in a roundtable discussion for graduate students at KU (via Skype) on open-access publishing as part of Open Access Week events. In November 2011 he spent several weeks as a visiting scholar, with a grant from the Moravian-Silesian Region, at the Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic, where he conducted dialectological fieldwork with Zbyněk Holub and collaborated on a book project with Indo-Europeanist Roman Sukač. He gave guest lectures at the Silesian University as well as at the Masaryk University in Brno. From there he also Skyped in his participation on a panel “What is an Open Access Policy? Why should Purdue faculty care?” at Purdue University with KU colleagues Ada Emmett and Town Peterson. In celebration of Lange Nacht der kurzen Texte, held at the Obecní dům and sponsored by the German Department there, he read the first few pages of the *Dobrý voják Švejk* in Yiddish (with coaching from colleague Renee Perelmutter). He published two articles: “The Illyrian Movement: A Croatian Vision of South Slavic Unity” in Joshua Fishman and Ofelia García’s *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: The Success-Failure Continuum in Language Identity Efforts*, vol. 2 (Oxford University Press) and “Balkanizem v srednji Evropi? Realni in nerealni naklon v odvisnikih v prekmurščini” in *Az igaz tanár üzenete: Šporočilo iskrenega učitelja* (=

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Prof. Dickey giving a talk at the CAS conference in St. Petersburg

Prof. Greenberg giving a lecture at the Silesian University. Note the rapt attention of the students to Facebook

Abbas Karakaya has been working on two projects and looks forward to spending more time on them over the summer break. His second volume of poetry will be entitled My Sister’s Book and his research project focuses on representations of the other (i.e. religions and ethnic minorities) in the Turkish novel.

Ani Kokobobo attended the AATSEEL conference in January 2012 where she presented a paper on sexuality and political resistance in the work of Albanian writer Ismail Kadare. She completed and submitted for publication an article manuscript on Aleksandr Radishchev’s travelogue Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow. During fall 2011 Prof. Kokobobo presented a paper at AS-EES on Tolstoy’s last story Hadji Murat and is now reworking this essay into an article. She presented her findings on the significance of Sufi Islam on Hadji Murat at the SLL colloquium this February. Prof. Kokobobo was awarded the New Faculty Research Grant and is planning a productive summer working on her book The Grotesque Moment in Russian Realism as well as on a book collection Time of Troubles: Russian Realism and the Fin-de-Siècle Mentality.

Renee Perelmutter continued to work on her monograph on Russian women’s online discourse. She presented a talk on her research at the AATSEEL convention in Seattle, and has submitted an article on Russian conflict discourse. Her article on predicative adjectives in affirmative and negative contexts has recently come out in Russian Linguistics, and another article on the medieval Slavic translations from Hebrew has come out in Translation and Tradition in Slavia Orthodoxa, a volume edited by Valentina Izmirlieva and Boris Gasparov. This summer, she is busy co-organizing the Slavic Linguistics Society meeting in Lawrence, KS and revising an article on the medieval bilingual translation of the book of Daniel.

Marta Pirnat-Greenberg’s Colloquial Slovene—The Complete Course for Beginners was published by Routledge in mid-October. She gave a presentation about the textbook and its compilation in the series of book talks organized by CREES on January 9 at the Kansas Union bookstore. During the winter break she continued to work on on-line BCS teaching materials for intermediate to advanced levels, based on a short contemporary Croatian novel. In her second-year BCS she is leading her students in a project in which they are learning about the Kansas Croatian community through the art of a couple of artists from the Strawberry Hill community. After studying about two KC Croatian-American artists and then interviewing them, the five students are now working on two articles featuring these artists, with the hope of having them published in a Croatian magazine.

The Slavic Department undergraduate students selected Irina Six to be honored at the annual Celebration of Teaching reception. The Center for Teaching Excellence solicited from the departments or divisions the names of two outstanding undergraduate students. These two met with their peers and identified a faculty member whose teaching had a major and beneficial impact on students. These students were present at the annual Celebration of Teaching reception to honor Irina Six and to share how she had influenced them.
Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova had a busy semester as an Acting Director of Graduate Studies advising MA students on course enrollments, assisting in the coordination of PhD qualifying exams and organizing on-campus visits for prospective students.

Svetlana Vassileva-Karagyozova presented the paper “The Initiation Novels of Poland’s Last Communist Generation” at the AATSEEL national convention in Seattle, WA, Jan. 5-8. In February she travelled to England to take part in the international conference Making Sense of Catastrophe: Postcolonial Approaches to Post-Socialist Experiences hosted by King’s College at Cambridge University. Her paper tackled the question “Poland’s Last Communist Generation: Lost or Found in the Transition?” In April she crossed the Atlantic again to deliver an invited talk at the German-Polish workshop The Generational Potential of ’89 at Georg-August University in Gottingen, Germany. Her paper discussed a group of post-1989 Polish initiation novels as a generation-defining project.

Prof. Vassileva-Karagyozova is very much looking forward to her two-month Fellowship at Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena, Germany this summer during which she will be putting the final touches on her book manuscript Communism Through the Eyes of a Child: The Post-1989 Polish Initiation Novel and working on a couple of articles on Poland’s generation ’89.

Ani Kokobobo (continued from page 1)

is facilitated by the grotesque style (a form of aesthetic exaggeration that, among other things, distorts our perception of the human subject, sometimes making the subject appear less human.) Through the grotesque, writers can alter our perspective of the world, sometimes dehumanizing people and making violence appear more acceptable. As I expand my dissertation into a book, I’ll be putting more effort into the political components of my study. I hope to explain the political function the grotesque aesthetic assumed during the unstable Russian fin de siècle, and how it partially justified terrorism through its dehumanization of the human subject.

RP: Since coming to KU in the Fall of 2011, you have taught the Survey of Russian Literature in Translation, 19th century Russian Prose, and the Study of the life and works of Leo Tolstoy. You also acted as an undergraduate advisor in Spring 2012 while Professor Stephen Dickey was away. Could you please talk a little about what your experience teaching and advising has been like so far?

AK: I really like advising. I didn’t know whether I would, but I enjoy getting to talk to students outside the classroom. I have really liked getting to know our majors and working with them in that capacity. Then I see many of them in my seminars too, so it is good to interact in different contexts.
I have really enjoyed teaching so far. This was a big transition year for me, and I think I have spent most of it doing teaching prep, but it has been great fun. Having dialogue with students about great books can feel very rewarding. I myself have also learned a lot while teaching. In my case, I really do study what I teach, so the overlap allows me to develop great research ideas through teaching.

In my scholarship I am always trying to come up with new things to say about great writers who have been studied for many years. I probably end up using some of the same ideas in my teaching as well, but I also have a chance to just talk about what makes Anna Karenina or Brothers Karamazov great, without worrying whether I’m being original. This has been a true privilege.

**RP: One of your proposed courses for AY 2012 deals with the theme of violence in 20th-century Russian literature and film; violence is one of your research topics as well. Why do you think it is important to study violence in 20th-century literature in particular?**

**AK:** I initially got interested in writing about violence when I was studying works by Yugoslav authors. I have written on violence in Ivo Andrić’s The Bridge on the Drina where Balkan history is essentially represented as a history of violence. I lived through near civil war (in Albania) as a young person, so I’m interested in understanding the impact of violence on communities. Andrić’s novel covers over three hundred years of Balkan history and captures many different kinds of violence; in this novel violence can feel truly tragic, at other times it is understated and minimized, or it can assume Christological or even mythological significance for a community. Depending on how they choose to interpret an act of violence, communities can either thrive or be damaged. In that essay and in my work in general, I am interested in how the artistic medium can affect our perception of violence (how we react to it, and how much we mourn the loss of life).

When we throw the nineteenth-century into the mix, then something really worth noting is how perceptions of violence change in the span of decades. If you read Anna Karenina or Crime and Punishment, individual deaths are highly significant in those works. By comparison, in Andrei Platonov’s Kotlovan, violence is embedded in everyday existence, and there are almost no individual deaths; there are mass casualties, but individuals are entirely dehumanized. In my own work I am interested in seeing how this process of dehumanization begins with late realism and what it does to the realist novel.

**RP:** The Balkans are an additional research interest for you; you have written on the Ismail Kadare. What excites you most about the work of Albanian writers? How does your interest in Balkan literature of the 20th and 21st centuries mesh with your interest in 19th-century Russian literature?

**AK**: My interest in Albanian writers has a lot to do with my own heritage. I was born and raised in Albania and only immigrated to the US when I was a teenager. That part of the world is still very dear to my heart, so in some ways, working on Ismail Kadare fulfills an emotional need in me. When I think of how we lived, the repressive environment that defined our lives, I cannot cease to be amazed at how and why Kadare wrote the way he did in Albania. I remember that I grew up in a bubble. We thought Albania was the best country in the world and did not have a good grasp of the place we occupied in the world. But somehow all this knowledge, all this awareness of things wiped out from our lives was stored in Kadare’s oeuvre. He talks about all the undesirable, decadent influences in communist Albania—Jesus, Mohammed, Kafka, Borges, and many more.

He is a complicated figure for many Albanians, because he was not technically a dissident during Enver Hoxha’s regime. When I first began working on him, I had to work this all out for myself. Of course, we all want heroes who stand up for the oppressed. But I like to think of Kadare as a terribly prosaic hero who, through his artistic talent, makes me love my country in a way nothing else could. This is, of course, terribly snobbish, but seeing the kind of sophistication he brings to my language—a language I often associate with slogans, hollow political verses, and dirty jokes—is an incredible treat.

This interest does not mesh directly with my Russian literature interests. It is all related insofar as I probably look for the same things in literature, but conceptually they are different.

**RP:** What are your plans for the future?

**AK**: I received the New Faculty Research Grant and hope to have a productive summer working on my book. I have two articles on my hands right now, and I’m giving myself the month of May to wrap those up, and then I’ll be writing a book chapter and researching a second one. I’m also putting together a collection of essays on the Russian fin de siècle with a colleague, so I will also be spending a lot of time on email trying to solicit contributions from scholars in the field.
EC: Working from *Russia on the Edge*, I’ve moved from considering imagined geographies in the discourse of the center (Moscow) to probing how Russians inhabiting various regions and peripheries imagine their country, their region, and their local place, whether city or village. I was invited to join the editorial board of a new journal, *Region*, and have started working on the enormous topic of distinguishing imagined geographies embedded in Siberian public discourse.

Another project emerged from our area studies conference from August, 2011, “Identity and Community after the Cold War Era.” Shelly Jarrett Bromberg (Latin American Studies, Miami Univ.) and I are developing a multi-authored book on “New Approaches to Area Studies in the 21st Century,” which is designed for use in area studies methodology seminars for any region of the world. We have an exciting table of contents with chapters dealing with Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, East Asia, and, of course, the REES area. We are glad to say that Northern Illinois University Press has signed a preliminary contract with us, so we are pressing ahead with the culling and editing process.

RP: We are sad to see you go! Do you see yourself returning to KU to collaborate with faculty here, or to organize events?

EC: I certainly hope so! I look forward to various opportunities as they arise—from possibly serving on upcoming PhD committees to kicking off the new Czech Lectureship when it is ready, maybe as soon as in 2 years. A more immediate possibility would come in summer 2013, if an NEH grant comes through, on which I am co-PI with Mariya Omelicheva (Political Science). We would be teaching and co-coordinating a summer institute for college teachers on “Central Asia Past and Present: Narratives and Communities.” I hope that KU and UVA will be able to partner on some events, yet to be designed.

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