

SLAVIC NEWS

WINTER 2004

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LETTER FROM CHAIR GALYA DIMENT

First of all, I would like to wish a Happy and Joyful New Year to all our current students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends.

To give you just a taste of how exciting it has been around here so far this academic year, here is a partial list of courses, many of them new, that were taught autumn quarter: Russian Writers and Filmmakers of the Last Decade (Jose Alaniz); A Travelogue Through the Intellectual and Cultural Landscape of the Former Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States (Gordana Crnkovic); Bilingualism (Katarzyna Dziwirek); The Image of the Caucasus in Russian Literature (Aida Lominadze); Czech Literature and Its Banned Writers at Home and in Exile Since 1948 (Jitka Ryndova); Reading the Face of Russia: Land and People in Image and Description (James West). The same diversity and richness are on display for winter quarter, when we will be offering several new courses: Russian Death (Jose Alaniz); East European Jewish Literature and Culture (Barbara Henry); Georgian Language and Literature (Aida Lominadze); Czech Women's Literature (Jitka Ryndova).

Our language classes are also going really well, with Seth Graham doing a terrific job as the first-year Russian language coordinator and Jose Alaniz and Barbara Henry proving themselves as masterful language teachers to boot. We will miss Seth next year but wish him the best of luck in getting the job of his dreams where he can use all his talents and expertise.

We continue to welcome new or returning people to our department. Professor Aida Lominadze comes to us from Moscow and the Institute of World Literature. Our Romanian Fulbright, Professor Ileana Marin, arrived from Romania December 15, and our very own alumnus and 1995 Ph.D., Hyung-Goo Lee, who now teaches at Sung-Kyun-Kwan University, is returning to the department as a Visiting Scholar.

As we look beyond winter, there is an exciting, revised and re-invented Cyril and Methodius Day to contemplate. On Saturday, May 15 SlavFest will include workshops during the day and the traditional C&M celebration in the evening, and on Sunday a parade of children in ethnic attire carrying national flags around Red Square (UW's, not Moscow's). The new format is the brainchild of Mary Sherhart, a dear friend of the department and a very active member of our Advisory Board.

Speaking of re-inventions, check out our new, much improved web site (thanks are due James West and Michelle Foshee); we are also changing the format of our newsletter somewhat. Now and then we will still tell you about faculty publications and presentations, but we will also be featuring their academic and non-academic book and film recommendations. This issue will feature Professor Ryndova's picks in Czech literature and culture.

We also find ourselves in the position of having to re-invent how our regular business is conducted. As you must have noticed, the department is devoting increasingly more time and energy to fundraising. Like everyone else at the university, we are on the one hand confronting constantly diminishing state funding for higher education (taxpayer dollars now cover less than 11% of the UW's operating costs), and, on the other, rapidly growing enrollments. We are also no longer guaranteed that when a retirement occurs, we can maintain our offerings by hiring another faculty member to teach similar courses. We are grateful, therefore, to all of you out there who are helping us to stay afloat and even dream a little. Among our most recent and welcome gifts are those given to Czech, Polish and Balkan Studies. We are also working on making several big endowments a reality, and in all of that the creative energy and enthusiasm of our Advisory Board and devoted alumni are priceless.

STUDENT NEWS by Michelle Foshee

Our Undergraduates

Q: What's **B**etween the **O**der and the **B**ug?

A: **BOB**, a new student organization on campus.

Some time ago, a group of enthusiastic students, alumni and faculty got together to address the need for a fun, but scholarly avenue for those interested in all things Central European. From this meeting came BOB, the UW's only Central and Eastern European discussion group. You can find BOB members huddled over their beers every Thursday at 7 p.m. in the College Inn discussing "The Life and Times of Jan Huss" (presented by Clayton Hanson), "Czeslaw Milosz and Phenomenology" (Artur Rosman), "Identity Issues in Poland" (Kate Zawadzki) or "Topics in East European Film" (Voytech Ryndov). If you miss the two best things about college--sitting in a bar and hashing out 'The Big Questions'--come to a BOB meeting. All are welcome. Contact Clayton Hanson for details (chanson@u.washington.edu).

Our Graduate Students

Do you remember writing those long papers or, even worse, that thesis or dissertation? Several of our ABD graduate students thought of starting a support group to help them through the dissertation process. Their initial meeting proved such a success that the group has morphed to include Slavic L&L graduate students from beginning Master's students to advanced Ph.D. candidates. Next quarter's topics include: how to submit book reviews and journal articles, opportunities for translating, resume building, tips for passing your exams with flying colors and even the daunting task of choosing a dissertation or thesis topic. If you have any tidbits to pass along to this group, please contact Lynne Walker at dlwalker@u.washington.edu

New Students

Jared Carter comes to us from Central Washington University, where he earned a B.A. in Russian language, with a minor in history. Living in Russia for two years gave him a love of the language and the people and a desire to pass along the things he has learned.

Veronika Egorova received her B.A. in Russian philology from the Moscow State Pushkin Russian Language Institute. While pursuing her M.A. she plans to focus on issues of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

FACULTY & STAFF NEWS

Assistant Professor Jose Alaniz received a Curriculum Transformation Award to develop his course on "Death and Dying: A Transnational View."

PROFILES by Michelle Foshee

The department is delighted to host **Dr. Jitka Ryndova**, a Fulbright scholar from Charles University in the Czech Republic. In Prague Jitka teaches Czech as a foreign language, but here she is enjoying her assignment as a literature instructor. Teaching Central European and Czech literature is giving her new insights into a literature she knows well but has never seen viewed as an outsider.

I asked her what surprises she had encountered during her first quarter here. She never expected that her students would be from fields as diverse as biochemistry, political science and art. At Charles University departments tend to remain insular. She loves the open feeling of the university. She foresees Charles University's heading in this direction with the addition of a Humanities Department, so she hopes that her experience here will serve her well when she returns to her home university.

Jitka's road to the UW is sprinkled with Seattle references, so it's easy to see her assignment here as meant to be. She remembers fondly a UW student in Prague during a semester abroad in 1999. Jitka heard Jaroslava Soldanova's name for the first time that summer, and for some reason the name stuck with her. Last year Jitka spent a few days in New York. The experience (especially her first Starbucks coffee) encouraged her to apply to the Fulbright Program. The rest is history...

Sharing an office with Jitka are **Ileana Marin**, a Fulbright scholar from Romania, and **Aida Lominadze**, a scholar of Russian and Georgian literature from Moscow. Ileana arrived only a few days ago and will be with us through spring quarter. She looks forward to teaching Romanian language and literature and getting students interested in her country's history and culture. Her research interests lie in iconography. Judging from the library books already stacked in her office, she's a diligent scholar and will accomplish a lot here. During autumn quarter Aida very successfully conducted a seminar in Russian on the Caucasus in Russian literature. She will continue the seminar in winter quarter and also teach a course in Georgian language and literature.

POLISH LECTURE SERIES by Michelle Foshee

The Polish Lecture Series resumed with a twist in October. Taking a break from the lecture format, we offered a night of Polish avant-garde film shorts from the 1930s and 1940s. What this genre lacks in quantity, it more than makes up for in range. These shorts offered impressionism, surrealism and documentary footage. One included the music of Karol Szymanowski and the poetry of Anatol Stern and Julian Tuwim. Also present was a healthy dose of anti-Nazi propaganda. These films were shown in only a handful of American cities, and we were fortunate enough to be one of them.

The series continued in December with a return visit by film director Agnieszka Holland and will conclude in March with a lecture by Przemyslaw Grudzinski, the Polish ambassador to the United States. Be sure to save the date: Friday, March 12 at 7 p.m. in the Ethnic Cultural Center.

VISIT BY CROATIAN AMBASSADOR by Gordana Crnkovic

On October 13 the Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Ivan Grdesic gave a talk at the UW. Introduced by Associate Professor Gordana Crnkovic, Ambassador Grdesic is a respected and much-published professor of the University of Zagreb's Department of Political Science; his talk thus combined in the best way academic information and clarity of thinking with a politician's more engaged attitude towards his audience. Dr. Grdesic's talk focused on the processes of Croatia's present and future integration with the European Union, neighboring republics, NATO and WTO. The talk provoked a lively discussion and Dr. Grdesic entertained questions for almost an hour from current and past UW students, Slavic and REECAS faculty, and many guests from the Croatian community. All seemed to have had a good time and to have learned something. Special thanks are due Marija Grgurevic, who acted as a liaison between the local Croatian community and the Slavic Department, and to Shosh Westen and Michelle Foshee, who took care of the much-appreciated refreshments following the talk. Ambassador Grdesic, with his knowledge, grace and good humor, indeed presented Croatia in the best light.

HOMECOMING 2004 by Michelle Foshee

Homecoming this year was the usual fun evening, attended by a record-breaking, standing-room-only crowd. More exciting than the actual event, though, were the behind-the-scenes disasters that plagued the organizers.

With years of tradition on our side, we reserved the Urban Horticultural Center. The month before Homecoming we learned that the space was double-booked. In the flurry of emails, voice mails and wrangling that followed, we were relieved to find that our reservation had priority. But how could we enjoy our event knowing that we'd displaced a group celebrating their 50th college reunion? People who need wheelchair access more than we do? We let them have the reservation, knowing that the good karma we earned would serve us well.

Not exactly...two weeks before Homecoming, we realized that we hadn't secured a band. A Slavic Homecoming without music? Never! Back to another flurry of frantic emails and phone messages. Soon we'd found the Folk Voice Band. Another crisis averted.



On the actual day of the event, October 24, our Czech lecturer Jaroslava Soldanova and members of the Czech community



outdid themselves preparing a smorgasbord of open-face sandwiches and Czech pastries that were quickly gobbled up by the crowd. Our engaging speaker, Professor James Felak of the History Department, simultaneously informed and entertained. And then the police showed up! And that's - almost - the end of the story, as past AAFSD president Paul Kriloff talked them out of issuing more than 50 parking tickets to our guests. A big thanks to Paul and all the other event organizers.



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (reprinted here with the kind permission of the author)

September 19, 2003 (I shall begin this letter in the Russian way!)

Respected friends:

Everything in Russia is built at the extreme inconvenience of everyone. A door too narrow to fit through opens on the right and the next door is two feet to the left. Because the bathroom light switch is six feet off the ground outside the room, you expect the same of the living room; instead, the living room light is controlled at knee level behind a door. The window through which you conduct business at a kiosk, without fail, is a six-inch square two feet too low or one foot too high. In the spirit of this inconvenience, I shall breach my self-imposed restrictions and provide a short account of my experience in Russia.

Most important of all, I must stress the extreme strangeness with which everything has presented itself to me. I did not ever expect to sit in a room with a nationally revered teacher of Russian language and explain in Russian why it is that I am here. I did not ever expect to see a 12-piece string ensemble playing for change in an underground crosswalk near the old Arbat in Moscow. I did not ever expect to drink voda in the Russian countryside with a drunken policeman trying to remember lyrics to a Gorillaz song.

I have seen remnants of the old Russian ways, rather, of the old communist ways. At a theatre in Moscow, we waited with our tickets in a crowd outside the door. Fifteen minutes after the show was to start, we were still jostling our way to the front door. The theatre official controlling (that word has seen fairer uses than its current employment) the crowd assured us, the esteemed theatre going public, he called us, that the show would not start without us. In through the first door, step left, in through the second door, and there's another group crowding around--the Russian verb here provides a harsher, connotative sound where the English cannot--a second window. Here sits a second official, younger and more stern, collecting tickets and redistributing the seats. Our 200-ruble tickets in row six became 50-ruble tickets in row 16, but we saw no refund. Others were understandably angry; I was just confused.

I am amazed at the availability of American products in Russia and, especially, in Voronezh. Gillette shaving products seem to be experiencing something of a renaissance in Russia; their billion dollars of research into the Mach 3 were apparently well spent. *Maxim, Elle, Playboy, XXL, Cosmopolitan*, and the rest of the usual magazines have achieved near saturation of the Russian reading market. Every corner, alcove, market stall, and kiosk carries the latest in these and a host of other American throwaways, though here everything but the title appears in Russian. The United States is well represented on television, too. Thus far I have seen "Jerry Springer," "Friends," and "Married with Children" translated; they all appear nightly in Voronezh. The schedule says that "The Simpsons" airs nightly, too, but, like most things in Russia, where a map or schedule exists, nothing exists to match it.

My classes, the reason I am here, and my teachers here are wonderful. Of the five teachers we have, four are named Olga Vladimirovna (this is very funny to Russians), all are specialists in philology, and all have a few years of experience in teaching aspects of the language in a university setting. None, however, have experience teaching Russian to Americans, and none know much more than a few words of English, usually specialized pedagogical terminology and the occasional "pumpkin" or "excuse me."

My language is improving, though I still speak slowly and brokenly. I can converse, I have the words for, a great number of topics, but the Russians want to know about their conceptions of America. In two weeks of classes, I have attempted to lead my teachers through a history of states' rights, racism, the death penalty, feminism, credit and debit, and real estate. I don't know that I can do this in English, but their questions are never ending. Many people my age learn contemporary English through imported movies and music. To those who might be offended at the next, I apologize. Try explaining "Would you fuck me for blow?", a lyric heard on the local radio station, to someone who knows nothing of the language or the United States' narcotic situation, and you will know my difficulty.

I have been taking pictures, of course, but it will likely be another year before I see any results. The average Russian does not like having his picture taken, and the working Russian thinks I'm an official hell-bent on exposing their nonpayment of eggplant tax. I have heard my share of Russian obscenities. Our friends here have taught us the responses. Of the people I have befriended, however, all love to have their picture taken. I have met an Azerbaijani banana salesman who may prove to be a good source for pictures. I must be patient. That, above all, has been my lesson in Russia. If there is not a line for something, you wait until one forms behind you.

Voronezh, as the political and economic center of the Voronezhskii oblast', serves also as its cultural center. The Saint Petersburg Opera is spending the next couple weeks in residence at the opera house next door to me. I will be going to a jazz club sometime next week, and at the end of October I'll likely see a play with Oleg Tabakov as the lead, a name that may or may not be famous to those of you involved with drama but which represents close to the height of film and theatre acting in this country.

I know a journalist here who seems willing to show me around the town, to tell me about the local situation. He wrote an article last winter questioning the economic policy of the local political machine. The paper didn't have electricity or heat for the next four months.

It is a difficult life here. Money exists for the Russians, but it is controlled by a few, the new Russians, the Russians who are building four-story brick houses outside the city who have made their money in agriculture, real estate, the mafia. My friend Vadim, an economist whom I met in the forest, expressed his difficulty with the Russian experience. One hand on a bottle of vodka named in honor of Peter the Great, one hand on a bottle of alcohol-infused orange soda, and head spinning from the two liters of beer he'd just finished, Vadim managed a short sentence in English. "I am not the winner in the life game."

From Russia with love,
Scott

December 4, 2003

Promise, promise, promise, and what do I do? I break them all. Here, then, is what I intend as the penultimate letter from Russia, the last falling sometime next spring. In a word or two, Russia's been good to me. I love it here, and I don't want to leave. In a few more words, well...

I wrote one night on a napkin "This country doesn't like to guess" and now I have no idea what it means. Likely it has something to do with the absolute absence of ergonomics, average sizes, and standard methods of construction. I had no idea how much my general expectation of the world depended on the tactile, but staircases here have made obvious my dependency. With what seems like intentional arbitrariness, individual step heights vary by as much as four inches. This is manageable on the trip upward in the light. On a darkened, banisterless flight carrying a box, however, things have a tendency to fly. I suppose my coordination will have improved upon my return to the U.S., but that doesn't make things any easier.

As the months have gone by, wandering at first and now flying, the weather has grown less interesting. My mien has yet to suffer, but I do long for the sun to reappear. We have been socked in under a month or so of overcast skies, "bitter cold," as one fellow student termed it, although I disagree, and fog morning and night. We've had some snow, of course, but not enough to call it snow. Precipitation in general has been sporadic, wind virtually nonexistent, and the days without particular reason to distinguish one from another weather-wise. The locals say the non-having-been-received snow (this is a construction allowed by Russian grammar) is strange and extraordinary, but for the Seattle-weary heart in search of white-flecked fur hats among a flurry of snowballs and troika sleds, it has proven disappointing. I am happy to say that this is the only real disappointment I've met with while in Voronezh. Well, not being able to find maple syrup was pretty big...

I wondered why people associated Gray with Russia, why this motif shows up in literature and films, and now I know. Fall and winter here are Gray and nothing else. I had always associated Russia with the greens and purples and ambers of its steppe, but that's all in pictures and movies. But Gray shows up everywhere in the city. A building may be painted pink and green and yellow and blue, but it's always somehow a Grayer pink-green-yellow-blue. Clothing is black, dark brown, Gray, or Gray versions of maroon or purple or orange. Cars, busses, trams, and trains are made Gray in spite of their vibrant paint jobs by the splashing of mud and wet sand used everywhere in place of sidewalks, streets, and gutters. And there is one other source of Gray: shadows. This is the first place I've been where buildings consist of, on average, five or six stories. For miles and miles, the apartment buildings reach into the sky, but not too far. This is nothing new; I'd always heard of the Soviet penchant for upward residential construction, but I had had no idea of the completeness with which it has saturated the Russian urban and suburban landscape. These five- or six-story buildings, sometimes up to 10 or down to three stories, line every street and alley, may not be fully constructed, and always, always, cast their shadows over everything. Add to this trees in every courtyard and along every sidewalk, and it's such that when there is sun (and we did have a little today), one must stand in the middle of a long street oriented directly parallel with one's shadow in order to catch even a glimpse of its rays. Things are Gray and dark. For the camera-minded, an example: On an average day at the height of the light, I meter

my hand around f/5.6 at a sixtieth. This does not make for a lengthy day of no-flash photography.

I have been using my film. Most days I walk around the town and have been lucky to run into patient, friendly people who want to talk and show me their lives. There's a group of kids, and their respective families, whom I've befriended over the past few months. They live in the oldest part of Voronezh--that part that used to be a fortress that was founded in 1585 and where Peter the Great built the Russian navy and which was wholly destroyed during World War II and which now is one of the few places to see the old Russian wooden style of homes--and spend most days, after school, running around the old and falling apart houses, playing games with soccer balls on the banks of the local river, and talking about all the things 15- and 16-year-old boys generally talk about. We run around and talk about differences between Russia and America and I take pictures every so often. It is through this that I fell into the strangest experience thus far. By way of 16-year-old Petrukha's mother, who assured me that she was very interested in international business opportunities, I found myself in an office on the first floor of an apartment building in the western region of Voronezh listening to a two-hour presentation on the opportunity to join an exciting worldwide network of vitamin/perfume/self-help compact disc/shampoo sellers. It was a pyramid scheme to make Amway look paltry, complete with trips to Egypt, a seminar I was invited to in Belgrade, and thousands and thousands of dollars. I had no idea how to respond, not really expecting any of it, so I said something to the effect of "Uh, interesting. Now, no."

Since my last letter there have been a couple of American holidays: Halloween and Thanksgiving. Halloween was basically uneventful, by which I mean spent at a night club after it closed and singing contemporary Russian pop songs with exotic dancers, having helped in the drinking (sorry, folks) of three or four bottles of vodka and a few liters of pineapple juice. Second was Thanksgiving, which succeeded on nearly all accounts. We invited all of our teachers and some friends, 13 or so in total, over for turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and pumpkin pie. It was my first time cooking Thanksgiving, but in spite of that and a thermometer-less gas oven, the meal turned out not awful. As those of you have been to Russia may know, Russia, as a country, does not understand how pumpkin could come in a can. I did not know this when I began asking people around the local markets and in the stores. On the other hand, I did not understand how a pumpkin pie could be got out of a whole pumpkin. Everyone learnt something. That Wednesday night I sat on my living room floor, watching "Scream" dubbed into Russian, painstakingly forcing the pumpkin through a strainer by means of a pestle found in a pantry. It made me feel like a monkey. I generally enjoy those sorts of reminders.

My return to the U.S., as expected, will be by way of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Seattle on Amtrak, and through on to Shelby, Montana in the hands of Amtrak. We will be spending a couple of days at the end of December seeing our way around Moscow, where the ponds are under construction and the museums close on Tuesdays, and a few days in St. Petersburg, where prostitutes wait in hotel lobbies and where TATU (Russian super-mega-world dominating pop group) will be holding their "Return to Russia" opening concert on December 18. I am currently working on securing tickets for this concert; seats are not expensive, but they are in demand. Time is getting short and may no longer be on my side. On leaving Russia I can say only that I'll be sad. I'm ready to leave Voronezh or, rather, just to get on the road again.



So I have some more travelling. I've a spell in Montana--15 days or so--and then off from Chicago or Calgary to Lilongwe, Malawi. I haven't purchased the plane tickets yet (working on that right now), but it looks as though I'll have a transfer in London enroute. Then a month or so later, it's off to Bombay, India, likely by way of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. From Bombay to Moscow and then Siberia, depending on which way is cheaper, then Frankfurt, and back again to the U.S.

Matthew Scott Brauer, a senior honors student with a double major in Russian and philosophy, is a recipient of the Bonderman Honors Travel Fellowship. The fellowship enables recipients to extend their experiences and expand their cultural horizons by seeing different parts of the world before they commit themselves fully to their future academic and professional plans. Bonderman Travel Fellows have the opportunity for an imaginative and focused Wanderjahr of their own devising--a time in which to explore a particular passion or curiosity, to be open to the unexpected, and to come to know the world in new and wondrous ways. The Bonderman Honors Travel Fellowships were created through a gift from David Bonderman, who received his undergraduate degree in Russian from the UW in 1963. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he received a Sheldon Fellowship that allowed him to travel internationally, an experience that had a profound impact on his life. Now a successful investment advisor, Mr. Bonderman provides opportunities to current UW students for similarly transformative travel experiences.

ALUMNI NEWS

Michele Anciaux Aoki (Ph.D. 1991) writes, "This has been a year with a truly international focus for me. I was invited to represent Washington State at the States Institute for International Education last fall in D.C. That led to applying for a grant from the Asia Society to organize a Preschool-Graduate School International Education Summit, held at the UW on September 18, 2003. Along the way, we began organizing the Washington State Coalition for International Education (see our web page: <http://internationaledu.org>). At this year's States Institute in D.C., the John Stanford International School in Seattle won the Goldman Sachs Award for Excellence in International Education. I've been consulting on planning, implementing and assessing the language immersion program (for Spanish and Japanese) at John Stanford for almost five years, so this was very exciting news.

"In June my husband, cousin, daughter and I traveled for ten days with a group of students from Garfield High School to St. Petersburg, Russia. We brought donated computers that the students had rebuilt at Garfield to install in two schools for orphans. As the only experienced traveler in Russia and speaker of Russian, I became the de facto tour guide for the group. With the assistance of Miramed, we had wonderful accommodations in a communal apartment--just a 15-minute walk from the dormitory where I lived when I studied in Leningrad with CIEE in 1972 and 1974. Brought back lots of memories."

Steve Crown (B.A. 1980) works as Associate General Counsel for Microsoft Corporation.

Carol Davis (M.A. 1979) dashed off an email while grading finals at Santa Monica College. On February 1 she leaves for St. Petersburg to finish her poetry manuscript: *Into the Arms of Pushkin: Poems of St. Petersburg*. While there she will teach at the newly renamed Petersburg Institute for the Study of Judaism, now a part of Petersburg State University.

Emily (Fields) Saunders (M.A. 1997) (emilka@mac.com) writes, "Got married on May 10 and new husband Will got a job offer at the end of June. So here we are in Moscow--with high speed internet and all of the luxuries the capital now offers. I'm doing some part-time English teaching and may end up doing some projects for MIR--they have yet to contact me with anything specific--so if anyone is headed this way and would like a crash pad or just to go out for coffee... Will and I have been seeking out coffee houses that make okay cappuccino (lattes just don't work here)."

After teaching at Marlboro College in Vermont during the '90s, **Dick House** (M.A. 1976 REECAS) moved to Wabash College in Indiana--quite a jolt for a New York/New England boy, and a far cry from Puget Sound. In the summer of 2002, I returned to New England and the University of New Hampshire, where I am now director of a small, but well-outfitted language resource center (AKA "language lab"). This spring I am slated to teach only one fourth-semester Russian class, but the chance to incorporate all of the newfangled video and networked video into a course is one not to be missed."

Mary Kruger completed her tour of duty as Country Public Affairs Officer in Brazil and now works in Washington, D.C., at

the Board of Examiners giving the Foreign Service oral exam. "I hope to see some good candidates from the UW. Best news this year: promotion to Minister Counselor level."

From **Dwight Roesch** (M.A. 1982) : Hi and Happy Holidays! I have no major news to report except that 2003 included three interesting trips to different islands where UN conferences were being held: Okinawa, Jamaica and Cuba. Even saw Fidel in person! All the best for 2004!

Brianna Sieberg (B.A. 1999) reports that not much has changed in the last six months. "I moved into my own apartment--a nice change! I also went on a road trip: Oregon Coast, Redwood Forest, San Francisco, Yosemite, Zion and Grand Canyon! I have also taken up knitting, which is my new favorite hobby."

Heather Thorne (B.A. 1994) left McKinsey & Co. in September and joined Microsoft, leading the Russia market development program for the Windows desktop division.

After ten years of fundraising in Washington, D.C., first for IREX and ACTR, then for the Holocaust Museum and NARAL Pro-Choice America, **Dana Weintraub** (M.A. 1992) uprooted her life once again. In August she moved 3,000 miles to San Diego to become Director of Development for UCSD's Department of Neurosciences. Her goals: to raise millions of dollars for endowed chairs, new talent, and a Neurosciences-dedicated building. She's "thrilled about being near her family AND back in the sun, having access to outside pools, and having her wonderful partner, Leonard, join her."

JITKA'S BOOK AND FILM PIX

City Sister by Ilwylachym Topol. This has been favorably compared to *The In Drum* and *Midnight Children*. Expect a dark, satirical and mind-bending look at post-Communist Central Europe.

War with the Newts by Karel Capek. A post-modern satire of 20th century-isms, employing a clever range of stylistic devices. Also of note by this author is the sci-fi work *R.U.R.* and *the Insect*, notable for, among other things, the creation of the word "robot."

The Poetry of Jaroslav, the first Czech Nobel Prize winner. In its high praise of the 1998 Catbird Press translation of his poetry, *The Library Revue* describes him as a "straightforward, direct, accessible poet who speaks of common human concerns: aging, lust and longing, reminiscing, love for his homeland, grief for dead friends."

Also recommended is anything by Josef Skvorecky, Milan Kundera, as well as that beloved classic, *The Good Soldier Svejk* by Jaroslav Hasek.

On the film front, you can now rent *Spring@utumn*, starring Vlastimil Brodsky in his last role. A Czech tragio-comedy with a delightful blend of humor and pathos.

GIFTS

Gifts to the Department play an important role as we try to build and develop new programs in the face of ever shrinking financial support from the state. Below we recognize the generosity of individuals and companies that have made donations in the past year.

•The *Friends of Slavic Languages and Literatures* fund is made up of gifts to be expended at the discretion of the Department Chair. Gifts to this fund are invaluable, allowing the department to allocate funds as needed. Among other things, the *Friends Fund* supports the publishing of this newsletter. In addition, special subsets have now been created in the hope of establishing endowments in Balkan Studies, Czech Studies and Polish Studies.

Contributors to Czech Studies include:

Milos Forman
Minar Trust

David and Mara Pitkethly

Jaroslava Soldanova

Contributors to Polish Studies include:

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Sheila and Marcus Charles
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Contributors to the general fund include:

Gray Carpenter
Lisa Frumkes
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George W. Grantham
Ann Maltzoff
Bruce McKinney

Stewart Parker
John Brady Richards
Susanna Westen

Brian Bershad, an associate professor of Computer Science and Engineering here at the UW, a devoted Russian language student and a big fan of Zoya Polack, made a generous contribution to the general fund, requesting that it be administered by Zoya to enhance the Russian language program. To date, Zoya has used some of the money to purchase supplementary teaching materials from Russia for use in the third- and fourth-year Russian language classes.

•Each summer since 1989 the *Vadim Pahn Scholarship* has been used to pay tuition for one student to attend the intensive Russian Language program.

Bruce McKinney

Susanna Westen

•In 1996 a special subset of the Institutional Allowance was used to create the *Nora Holdsworth Scholarship* which has been awarded each year since then to the top place finisher in the ACTR Olympiada of Spoken Russian. The 2003 winner was Shannon Schmoll of Foss High School, Tacoma. Now a freshman at the UW majoring in Russian, Shannon plans to use the scholarship to study third-year Russian in summer 2004.

Thomas Nims

Steve Watkins

Susanna Westen

•The *Lew R. Micklesen Graduate Fund* was established to support graduate student programs in the Slavic Department. In recent years it has been used to support graduate student travel to present papers at conferences.

Hyung-Goo Lee
Lew R. Micklesen

David R. Miles

Susanna Westen

•The Ukrainian Studies Endowment was created to endow a chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Washington.

Russell W. Ayers
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We would like to keep in touch with you, as we hope to share news of our alumni in next July's newsletter. Please fill out the form below, clip and send to us: Slavic Department, Box 353580, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195-3580. At the same time, please make any needed changes on your label below. Thank you. ***You can also contact us by email at *slavicll@u.washington.edu*.***

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