The Baltic Studies Summer Institute, BALSSI, offers students in the U.S. the only domestic opportunity for intensive study of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages during the summer. Founded in 1993, BALSSI is sponsored by a consortium of American universities and rotates regularly among the sponsoring institutions. In summer 2009, under the direction of Tom DuBois, professor of Scandinavian studies, UW-Madison was the enthusiastic host of this impressive program.

From June 15th until August 7th, fourteen dedicated students and three intrepid instructors (Piibi-Kai Kivik—elementary Estonian, Dzidra Rodins—elementary Latvian, and Daiva Lirvinskaite—elementary Lithuanian) spent four hours a day in class and more time on their own studying and preparing lessons. The intensive pace of classroom learning was supplemented by a series of Baltic-related lectures and cultural programs including films from all three countries. Lectures were given by Robert Kaiser, UW-Madison professor of geography, “Post-Soviet Borderlands as Diaspora Spaces: The Case of Setomaa, Estonia,” Alfred Senn, UW-Madison history professor emeritus, “What Is Lithuania?”, Rudra Vilius Dundzila, Harry S. Truman College, City Colleges of Chicago, professor of history.

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Letter from the director

Dear friends of CREECA,

I hope that the fall semester has been productive and enjoyable for all of you. Now that (also) winter is almost upon us, it is a good time to look back at some of the major events that CREECA has sponsored since last spring. During the summer of 2009, we hosted the Baltic Studies Summer Institute (BALSSI), which provided courses in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian along with a series of cultural events. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Tom Duflois, professor of Scandinavian studies, who played a leading role in getting BALSSI to Madison and served as faculty director. The other major CREECA event of the summer was our teacher workshop on the theme of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall (co-sponsored by the Center for European Studies). The annual teacher workshops are one of our most important outreach activities, and this year we lived up to the high standard we have set in the past, in terms of providing a program that was both stimulating and useful for the teacher participants. I will take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Nancy Heiniger, CREECA's outreach coordinator, for her tireless efforts organizing both BALSSI and the summer teacher workshop at the same time. Nancy's energy and determination were indispensable to the success of these programs. Nancy also deserves kudos for braving to our campus Jon Bendaik's photo exhibit, “Satellites” during the fall 2009 semester. The exhibit remains at the Porta Bells Gallery at the Memorial Union until November 10. If you have not yet had the chance yet to view these stunning photos of peripheral areas of the former Soviet Union, I encourage you to do so.

Some of you may have noticed new faces in the CREECA office, and that of course means some familiar faces have moved on. Laura Weigel, our events coordinator last year, completed her graduate degree with minors in Russian and international studies in May and moved in what has become quite a tradition of CREECA student staff finding exciting jobs in the field: she is currently working in Russia as a recruiter for the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX), at the American Councils for International Education, which means she is based in Moscow and makes frequent trips throughout the Russian Federation. Tarah Haack, who as our webmaster last year did an outstanding job in revamping CREECA's Web site, received her bachelor of science degree in life sciences communication. We wish both of them success in their new endeavors. We are very fortunate to have found two great replacements for Laura and Tarah. Naira Ovsepian, who has joined the team as office coordinator, is majoring in political science, international studies, and Russian. Alee Luhn, just back from a year studying and working abroad in Russia, has taken over as web and publications assistant. I am very impressed by the enthusiasm and efficiency with which they have jumped in to these positions, and their efforts have been vital to the smooth functioning of the CREECA office despite the departures of their predecessors. Julia Vanylenko, who has now shifted from office coordinator to events coordinator, and Maliki Raymo, our financial specialist, round out the staff, and I am grateful to them for their fine work in keeping the ship running so tightly.

I also have the pleasure to welcome new members of the faculty and teaching staff to the CREECA community at UW. Mark S. Johnson has joined the Department of Educational Policy Studies in the UW School of Education as an assistant professor. Look for the full profile of Johnson's research on higher education in the former Soviet Union in this newsletter. Karen Evans-Romaine, now an associate professor of Russian in the UW Slavic department, specializes in early 20th-century Russian poetry and German-Russian literary relations. Katja Fisernetto, a new assistant professor in political science, has conducted research in the former Yugoslavia. We are also fortunate that Marzhan Ananova has come to us from Kazakhstan to take the position of lecturer of Kazakh in the department of Languages and Cultures of Asia. I hope you will introduce yourselves to these new members of our community and help them feel at home in Madison.

Our lecture series continues to take place on Thursday at 4:00 pm, and this year we have had strong turnouts to our diverse program. I look forward to seeing you at upcoming lectures, and in particular at our end-of-semester reception, which will take place on December 10 following Professor Robert Kaiser's presentation on “Estonia's Bronze Night: Reassembling the Event.”

It is impossible to acknowledge all the impressive accomplishments of CREECA students, faculty, and staff, but I do want to offer congratulations for some especially noteworthy recent achievements. Two of our graduate students, Maya Lisa Holzman (history) and Nikki Kraus (sociology) received international field research awards from the Division of International Studies (you can read about how they used these awards on page 6). Marion van de Water was promoted to professor in the Department of Theatre and Drama. Jennifer Tishler also received a much deserved promotion to the rank of associate faculty associate, in recognition of her remarkable job in teaching, advising, and providing kudos, oversight, and support in everything the center does.

In closing, I would like to note that CREECA appreciates private support from alumni and friends. Gifts of any size help make possible outreach events, lectures, and cultural programs, curriculum enhancements, books and media collections, and other activities of the Center.

CREECA is a Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center. It was established in 1993 to unite the efforts of two long-standing University programs—Russian and East European Studies and Central Asian Studies. CREECA consists of roughly 100 members including many nationally and internationally known experts in their fields.
Master’s students welcomed to CREECA

CREECA is pleased to welcome four new students into its interdisciplinary master’s degree program in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) in fall 2009. Rebecca (Becca) Schulz, graduated from UW-Madison with a major in political science. She is interested in the politics and culture of Russia and East Europe, and is taking Sorbo-Croatian.

Ryan Goodwin comes to us from Portland State University, where he studied both Russian and Turkish. With an interest in the media and in the intersections of Turkish and Slavic languages, Ryan is now learning Kazakh. Returning to UW-Madison is Johnathan Krause, who took classes here as an undergraduate student and graduated from Western Carolina University with a major in political science. John wants to pursue issues of democratization in Afghanistan and is studying Pashto.

Daniel Cline graduated from Bard College. He is continuing his study of Russian and is furthering his exploration of the connections between Russian history and literature.

Although Johnson admitted he never thought he’d return to UW-Madison, he said the chance to come back to “one of the leading communities of experts” on the former Soviet Union has once again inspired him. Johnson is currently teaching Educational Policy Studies 675. “Introduction to Comparative and International Education” and will be teaching EPS 608. “Unite States International Education Policy and Public Diplomacy” in the spring. He’ll be proposing a course, most likely for spring 2011, on education in Russia and Central Eurasia. With this class, Johnson can finally teach students about the work he’s doing for 20 years, allowing him to combine the research and teaching sides of his profession. “I’ve always been kind of going in two different directions,” he said. “Now—and I’m really just now seeing the beauty in this—I am able to put the two together.”
Venturing into Moscow archives

History graduate student researches gender in WWII Soviet partisan movement

By Mayalisa Holzman

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

I arrived in Moscow in June 2009 with the aim of conducting exploratory research for my master's thesis regarding identity, power dynamics, gender, and nationality in the Soviet partisan movement on the Eastern Front of the Second World War. I additionally hoped to discover a dissertation topic somehow prepared me for the actual experience. The fact that I had spent the past year studying Polish and forgetting Russian did not help me feel confident in my ability to interact with exhausted archivists who deal with a barrage of foreign visitors each June and July.

At UW-Madison, I have been fortunate enough to meet historians who have conducted research in the former Soviet archives... I listened to their warnings, hoping that their advice somehow prepared me for the actual experience. However, instead of encountering the legendary cranky babushka rumored to yell at American scholars, I found the staff to be energetic, professional, and surprisingly pati- ent, contrary to the horror stories. After we resolved a few issues and communication problems regarding their entry pass, I spent about a week at GARFI reading a collection of special radio programs created between 1942 and 1943 and intended specifically for partisans. However, it was at GARFI (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii, or Russian State Archive of Social and Political History) that I began to formulate new research questions based upon the documents I located within the archive. The Central Historical Archive of the Partisan Movement (TsShPD) for nearly seven hours a day, I sat in front of a microfilm reader, often experiencing headaches and fatigue. Un fortunately, the unglamorous nature and difficulties of reading microfilm, I quickly became excited upon finding documents pertaining to the question of women in the partisan movement. Reports of im moral activity among partisan commanders and efforts to reeducate them, and the need for mass political propaganda among non-party members. The role of the Russian Orthodox Church in partisan divisions, concerns rarely referenced in the secondary literature.

On the days that RGASPI was closed, I rode the metro to the southern district of Moscow to GARFI's reading room for the history of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. In my attempt to articulate my project verbally in Russian first during a phone conversation and then in an interview with Alexander Kovalchuk, Director of GARFI for his outstanding achievements in the international arena and contributions to Turkish and Ottoman studies. This project is the highest priority to successful researchers.

Alfred E. Semn, professor emeritus of history, has been working on an edition of the diary of American diplomat Robert Heingartner. Heingartner's observations, working on an edited version of the diary written by the famous American diplomat Robert Heingartner. Heingartner served as American consul in Prague, 1926-1928, and as consul in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1928-1939 and kept a diary from his arrival in Lisbon until the end of 1937. Heingartner's observations are published, with an introduction and commentary by Professor Semn, will be published as a book, "Lutonin's In the 1903: A Diplomat's Diary, in 2010.

Graduate students

Lauren McCarthy, a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science, has written an article "Stenfini: analis praksiiteli rossiiskikh i amerikanskikh pravokhranitelnykh institutov v protivodeistviu togovoye liad" ("A comparative analysis of Russian and American law enforcement practices in human trafficking") in "V tovorstan: Torgovye liadni i razlichni trud: novye staroynye derykli stropilsi v mejno mexodov problemei" published in Russian, Vladivostok, 2009.

Naomi Olson, a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, was awarded a HEX (Humanities Exposed) grant by the UW-Madison Center for the Humanities. Naomi is organizing a literature discussion group with inmates at the Oakhill Correctional Institution in Oregon, Wisconsin.

Katja Weigl, graduate student in Slavic Languages and Literature, has been awarded a Lapinski Fellowship for Polish Studies for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Alumni

Viktorija Ivleva received her PhD in Slavic Languages and Literature in May 2009. Viktorija teaches Russian at Vassar College.

Anna Turanhans, who earned her master's degree in Russian, Eastern European, and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) in May 2009, has been working on a dissertation in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature. Anna's dissertation is titled "Political Language Program Director in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, where she also teaches and advises students in the Russian and Polish majors.

Congratulations to recent graduates Matthew Larsen and David Dettmann, who earned master's degrees in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) in May 2009, and to Claire Schachter, who earned her RECAS MA in August 2009. Matthew is currently a sales associate for the language-learning software Rosetta Stone. David is the new active as- sociate for Advanced Russian Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for foreign language and area studies during the 2009-2010 academic year. FLAS fellowships are awarded on the basis of a competitive application process to graduate and professional school students who are enrolled in a program that combines modern foreign language training with area or international studies. Applications for summer 2010 and the 2010-2011 academic year FLAS will be available on the CRECA Web site by mid-November 2009.
Ten of the 2009 BALSSI participants were graduate students, two were undergraduates, and two were community members. The student participants hailed not only from UW-Madison, but from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Kentucky, Xavier College, Indiana University, Ohio State University, and University College, London. In general, the students and instructors alike were very pleased with their BALSSI experience at UW-Madison. Noted some of the students: 

"I am really surprised and happy [by] how much we were able to cover in such a short time. I went from hardly speaking/ knowing anything about Latvian just 8 weeks ago to feeling comfortable enough to continue on with it. I am grateful for this experience."

"I never thought I could have learned this much about a language [Lithuanian] over just one summer."

"The language skills I garnered from BALSSI will be invaluable to me when I'm in Estonia"

Continued from page 1

Photos from the fringes

By Nicole Butkovich Kraus

CREECA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

O n Oct. 9, CREECA held a reception celebrating Jonas Bendiksen’s photographic exhibition in the Memorial Union, “Satellites: Photographs from the Fringes of the Former Soviet Union.” Professor Robert J. Kaiser, the chair of the Department of Geography and former CREECA director, began the event with a set of remarks drawing on his expertise in geography and nationalism in Russia and Eastern Europe. The reception honored not only Bendiksen’s striking photos, but also the dedication of the CREECA staff in bringing the work of this renowned photographer to campus.

This exhibit would not have been possible without the support of the UW-Madison Russian Student Association, the Central Asian Student Association, the WUD Art Committee, the Anonymous Fund of the College of Letters & Science, the 2008 National Geographic Photography Grant, the 2007 ASME National Magazine Award, the 2007 Freedom of Expression Foundation Grant, the 2007 Award of Excellence, Pictures of the Year International, and the 2005 Alicia Patterson Fellowship.

Based in Oslo, Norway, Bendiksen photographed some of the least-known areas of the Russian Federation and Eurasia over a seven-year period. Bendiksen has already received numerous prestigious awards for his work, including the 2008 Telenor International Culture Prize, the 2008 National Geographic Photography Grant, the 2007 ASME National Magazine Award, the 2007 Freedom of Expression Foundation Grant, the 2007 Award of Excellence, Pictures of the Year International, and the 2005 Alicia Patterson Fellowship.

While gathering materials for this collection, Bendiksen was primarily interested in the impact of rapid and sometimes catastrophic changes on the local populations. The photographs, which include a January baptism in a frozen Transdniester river, a view of the destroyed Nagorts-Kazhakh town of Aghdam, a Muslim father and son praying in the back yard of their Ferghana Valley home, and Bashobba Tanya, an elderly ethnic Russian woman who lives in a bombed-out apartment building in Abkhazia, do a masterful job of revealing the shared human condition of those living on the fringes of the former Soviet Union.

Nationalism, on the other hand, gets prime time in virtually any article about the Russian government or its well-known officials. Applied to the right and left of the political spectrum, the term "nationalism" has connotations that are virtually always negative, oppressive, and, frankly, suspicious. The inherent implication is that, in one way or another, national government is a "Russian" concept, but rather a political analysis of both regional and individual level factors influencing the development of xenophobic or prejudicial attitudes, it was important for me to try to speak with people working on these issues, both in academic and activist positions.

While in Moscow, I spoke with experts on human rights, hate crimes, migration, and the economy from well-known organizations including the SOVA center, Memorial, Human Rights Watch, the Economic School/CEFR, the Kennan Institute, the U.S. Embassy, the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy, the Carnegie Center, Human Rights First, and the Levada Center, among others. Major themes of our discussions included the historic and current tendency for non-Russians in the Russian Federation to be marginalized or blamed for increasing crime rates, for particular groups to be legally and illegally funneled into specific economic sectors such as construction or street cleaning, and an overall sense that in recent years, prejudice and racism have become more socially acceptable, both privately and publicly. Several of my interviewees provided me with both documents and data sources for analyzing these trends in my future work.

Because of the support I received from the Graduate Student International Field Research Award, I was able to speak with and learn from a variety of experts, in addition to collecting data from various new sources, including innumerable everyday conversations with acquaintances while in Moscow. I was also able to visit the city

Continued on page 10

By Nicole Butkovich Kraus

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLGY

Chaining smoking. Glancing around the room. This summer in Moscow I met an ethnic Russian woman who lives in a dormitory suburb of Moscow. She shared her smoking habits after finishing several interviews in which my respondent, seated across from me, spent an hour or two doing both.

"I am really surprised and happy [by] how much we were able to cover in such a short time. I went from hardly speaking/ knowing anything about Latvian just 8 weeks ago to feeling comfortable enough to continue on with it. I am grateful for this experience."

"I never thought I could have learned this much about a language [Lithuanian] over just one summer."
Examining causes, effects of tearing down the Berlin Wall

By Nancy Heisinger
CREECA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

From June 22-26, 2009, CREECA and the Center for European Studies welcomed twenty-three teachers from around Wisconsin to a workshop in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The workshop, “Looking Forward, Looking Back: Causes and Consequences of the Fall of the Berlin Wall,” which was held at the Madison Concourse Hotel, brought together faculty and graduate students from a variety of fields to share their expertise on the wide-ranging and earth-shattering events surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall and the destruction of the Iron Curtain. The remainder of the day was devoted to independent curriculum development.

Sally Kent, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point opened the third day of the workshop with a talk entitled, “The Wars and Post-War Period in the Former Yugoslavia.” Robert Kaiter, UW-Madison professor of geography, then presented, “One Wall Comes Down and Another Rises: Bordering Practices at the Edge of Europe,” a discussion of Estonian-Russian relations in the Narva region. A graduate student panel entitled, “When East Became West: Germany Divided in Unity” wrapped up Wednesday’s presentations. Independent curriculum development rounded out the day.

The final day of the workshop began with a wrap-up session led by Anne Hamilton, lecturer in political science and coordinator of the international studies program at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. “Twenty Years in Ninety Minutes: Old Walls, Old Borders, New States, New Identities” was a masterful summary of the presentations that had preceded it. Over a catered lunch at the hotel, workshop participants gave brief presentations about their ideas for incorporating the week’s materials into actual lesson plans that they will use with their students. Commented one teacher who participated in the week-long workshop: “You have taught me a great deal more regarding [the] causes and consequences of the Fall—more than I could deal more regarding [the] causes and consequences of the Fall—more than I could understand on my own...The presentations made it easier and more ‘real’ for me. You teach me. I teach kids.”

The workshop Web site is loaded with interesting articles and other resources related to the fall of the wall. Please visit it at: http://uw-madison.ces.org/cv/node/83.