

THE CENTER FOR RUSSIA, EAST EUROPE, AND CENTRAL ASIA

University of Wisconsin - Madison

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Newsletter of the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia

210 Ingraham Hall 1155 Observatory Drive Madison, WI 53706

Phone: (608) 262-3379 Fax: (608) 890-0267 Email: info@creeca.wisc.edu Find us on the Web at http://www.creeca.wisc.edu

A Trans-Siberian Odyssey

Andrew Grant (BA 2006)

angrant@uwalumni.com

Andrew Grant graduated in 2006 with a major in geography and a certificate in REECAS. He studied in St. Petersburg in spring 2005, and in November 2006 returned to Russia following a summer studying in China. "Traveling alone in Russia was either intrepid or very stupid, but certainly exhilarating," relates Andrew. Currently, Andrew teaches English and geography in Xining, China through VIA, an organization that places foreign teachers in schools in Asia. See more photos from Russia and China at Andrew's Web site http://www.cameralumina.com/

Modern-day Russia undoubtedly can be a risky place for an unprepared tourist. One can find black-clad national extremists, high prices, a strong drinking culture, and customer service that can be just plain rude. Outweighing these inconveniences, however, is the romance in traveling through this land to discover what is uniquely Russian and to see how the people of Russia view their national culture. Armed with a little Russian, lots of bread and sausage, a sailor's knit cap, and my camera, I spent last November 2006 riding the Trans-Siberian Railway from Vladivostok to Moscow on one of the world's longest and most daunting train routes.

My Chinese visa expired on a Sunday so I had to cross the border into Russia on a train filled with Russian day traders. I was the only foreigner on the train and wound up sandwiched between large plastic bags of stuffed animals and a small boy who stared silently at me through his tinted eyeglasses for several hours. The mood on the train was jovial, dozens of Sadkos returning home triumphantly with magnificent plastic Chinese wares.

I ended up marooned in a small border town named Pogranichnyi (literally "on the border"), not at all within walking distance from Vladivostok. Luckily, a magnanimous carpenter from the town took pity on me and brought me to his mother's home for the night.



Letter From The Director

September 2007

Dear friends of CREECA,

I am pleased to welcome everyone back from what I hope was a productive but relaxing summer break. Let me begin by offering heartfelt thanks on behalf the entire CREECA community to Kathie Hendley for serving as CREECA director for the last two years. Kathie graciously took on the directorship in addition to her other



important administrative duties at a time of crucial need for CREECA. Her experience and vision not only proved vital in securing the renewal of our Title VI center grant in 2006, but also made for two wonderful years of diverse and stimulating activities, such as our ongoing Thursday lecture series, a range of musical, artistic, and film events, and scholarly workshops. I am fortunate that she has left CREECA in such good condition.

I am sad to announce that Lara Kain is leaving her position as CREECA outreach coordinator after three years of dedicated service to take on new responsibilities as the assistant director of the Center for the Humanities. We appreciate her innovative and energetic work in building our outreach program. In addition to organizing key activities such as our annual summer teacher workshop, Lara initiated a new program for middle-school students (World Cultures Day) and forged stronger ties with teachers and administrators in the Madison Metropolitan School District through weekly classes on "hot button" world and regional issues. Lara emphasized the true meaning of outreach – getting our resources out into the community. She brought many of our major speakers and performers to give presentations in Dane County schools (Kyrgyz Cultural Performances, Bulgarian Bebop, Stephanie Griest). We will miss her. We also will miss Maki Raymo, who put in several years as our financial specialist, as well as Laura Weigel, our former events coordinator, who received a Boren NSEP scholarship to study in Moscow for the year.

Of course, the departure of these valuable staff members gives us the opportunity to greet some new faces in the CREECA office. We are lucky to have Jean Hennessey join us as our new financial specialist, Nancy Heingartner as outreach coordinator, Drago Momcilovic as events coordinator, and Matthew Maus as office coordinator. We are also in the happy position to offer a warm welcome to two new faculty members: Yoshiko (Yoi) Herrera in political science and Ipek Yosmaoglu in history. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Jennifer Tishler for her outstanding work and steady stewardship as associate director of CREECA during this time of transition.

I wish everyone the best for the coming year and I hope to see you at our Thursday lectures and the many other exciting CREECA activities on the calendar.

-Ted Gerber

Cover Story Continued

There I was pleased to find her bookshelf packed tightly with all the greats of Russian literature. A veritable shrine to Chekhov, Pushkin, Tolstoy, and other classic writers can be found in even the most modest Russian home.

Early the next morning the carpenter dropped me off outside the Vladivostok train station. I spent the entire day wandering the city and relishing the peculiarity of the country I had left nearly a year and a half before. When I finally boarded the first train of my journey I was shocked to find that despite the bustle of the station, where many had holed up to escape a cold winter night, I was the only one in my train car. I fell asleep fearing that my trip might turn out to be a bit tame.



But my car filled up quickly and I was treated to a wide array of *sputniki* (fellow travelers) also traveling in second class. There was a factious teenage wrestling team from Krasnoyarsk, a soldier who initially befriended me and eventually stole my MP3 player, a dainty ice princess often besieged by her drunken comrades, and the hard-drinking daughter of a Siberian police captain. The four days we spent together were both melodramatic and tense, accentuated by the boys' hormones, the soldier's naïve pride, and the police daughter's remarkable ability to stay more or less sober, even as she censured the poor soldier for retching all over my bed roll.

After a chaotic, cold, and simply crazy two-night foray in Irkutsk I boarded another west-bound train to complete my trip. For my own sanity, I decided to buy a soft sleeper ticket, expecting to finish my trip with quietude, lemon tea in a metal and glass mug, and the copy of Lolita that I had lugged with me for six months for the express purpose of reading it on this train. I succeeded in doing all of those things, but they proved to be my only respite from four days of the most nerve-racking travel I had ever experienced.

There was a pair of hardened hooligans on that train, and I, of course, became acquainted with them. The next three nights were marked by knocks on my berth door, crying children, greasy cups of beer I refused, vodka and tomato juice chasers, police visits, drug searches, racial slurs, and my nightly escapes once the two of them had finally blacked out.

One night after the dubious duo vanished in search of more vodka, a Bulgarian businessman who saw the precariousness of my situation asked me, "Why did you come to Russia?" How could I explain the joys of such masochism? I just shrugged, and promptly cowered when my masters got back.

After eight days of train travel and my cold adventures in Irkutsk and Vladivostok, I had accumulated a pocket full of addresses and invitations for dacha stays in remote cities I had never heard of, as well as enough complementary alcohol to keep me perpetually inebriated. I left the train with a feeling of both relief and the lingering notion that I had not nearly seen enough. This was, without a doubt, the most interesting train ride in the world.

CREECA Feature

Putting Your Major to Work: The World of Academic Publishing

Is it a mere indulgence to learn a Slavic language? Or can it actually make a difference in the dreaded job hunt we face upon leaving college?

According to UW-Madison alumnus Robert E. Lee, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in



World language study enhances international travel - and culinary experiences. Here, Lee samples *gochu pajeon* in Seoul, South Korea.

Russian language and literature in 1993, knowing Russian and other foreign languages has led to countless educational and professional opportunities after graduation. As Robert explains, "my study of language has been the single most important determining factor in my career choices and the opportunities available to me."

As a student of Slavic languages, Robert took full advantage of the opportunities Wisconsin and other universities have to offer. He complemented his study of Russian at Madison with coursework in Polish and German. He also enrolled in study abroad programs in Moscow at the Thorez Institute (now called the Moscow State Linguistic University) and the Moscow Higher Party School – experiences he regards as essential for developing a strong command of the language. Following graduation, he earned a master's degree in Russian translation from Columbia University. During his stint as a graduate student, he continued studying Polish and took additional coursework in French and Korean.

Robert's specialized training helped prepare him for

projects and job opportunities that allowed him to work directly in those languages. "I knew early on that I wanted to find a very hands-on use of my language skills, and in a field that wasn't 'just about money," he comments. While at Columbia, Robert found work as a Russian-English interpreter for the New York court system. He also took on higher-profile assignments from publishing and media companies, serving as translator for visiting Olympic athletes and even famed cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov. In addition, Robert landed an opportunity to assist in research for a 1999 biography on Vera Nabokov, wife of the famous novelist. Robert's work on the project included translating years of personal correspondences from Russian as well as German.

Such professional opportunities led Robert to the world of academic publishing, which he regards as compelling and rewarding work. He began his career with a company that specializes in collaborative preservations of texts, including the diary of Peter the Great, and develops partnerships with some of the leading libraries, archives, and museums in Eastern Europe. Robert currently works as Director of Online Publishing for East View Information Services in Minneapolis, a Russian-American company that supplies books, periodicals, microfilm, and digital collections from Russia and China to libraries in the West. "It's a multilingual environment," Robert says, "not just the content, but the staff, too. Chinese and Russian are Continued on next page

CREECA Feature continued

spoken in the office here all day." And while he works in Minneapolis, "much of my staff is in Russia and Ukraine. We communicate daily by e-mail and conference calls, pretty much exclusively in Russian." The technological and legal aspects of his work strengthen and challenge his knowledge of Russian on a daily basis: "Since the topics tend to things like Java programming, digitization technology, and negotiating legal terms with the Russian publishing community, it's been a great stretch of my skills and a very rewarding

experience." Robert continues to work closely with libraries worldwide and travels to Europe to attend academic conferences as his company's representative.

With a career in academic

"My study of language has been the single most important determining factor in my career choices and the opportunities available to me."

publishing, Robert has been able to find new and challenging uses of his undergraduate and graduate training in Russian and other foreign languages. But professional development and personal enrichment are only part of the picture. Now more than ever, as access to Russia and its cultural resources becomes increasingly available to the rest of the world, businesses and academic institutions are coming to rely on the expertise of area specialists who have studied Russian language and culture. As Robert sums up, "there is no shortage of problems to be worked out in this emerging and very exciting part of the world,

"there is no shortage of problems to be worked out in this emerging and very exciting part of the world and the careers associated with that change will create many satisfying opportunities for those with the right skills."

Contact Robert at robert.lee@eastview.com.

UW Students Complete Summer Internships with Friends of Chernobyl Centers, U.S.

The International Academic Internships Initiative (IAII), a joint initiative of the Division of International Studies and the School of Business, aims to provide UW-Madison students with a unique opportunity for professional development by placing them in internships with international companies and NGOs throughout the world. Students selected to participate in the program not only gain professional experience in a global setting, but also work with a faculty director and earn three credits of independent study or directed study in their department or field.

In summer 2007 students Jennifer Acker, a sophomore majoring in psychology and Stanley Makarenko, a junior majoring in international studies, participated through the IAII in a summer internship with Friends of Chernobyl Centers U.S. (FOCCUS). FOCCUS works to strengthen recovery efforts of individuals and communities in Russia and Ukraine that have been severely affected by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident by supporting a network of community centers in those localities. Under the supervision of Norma J. Berkowitz, president of the FOCCUS Board of Directors and a clinical assistant professor emerita in the School of Social Work, Jennifer and Stan worked with officers and committees of FOCCUS and received valuable insights on how an international non-governmental organization functions.

Each student had individual assignments based on their interests and designed to fit the required 21 hours

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Faculty Update

CREECA Faculty Focus Robert J. Kaiser

Robert J. Kaiser is a professor of geography whose research interests include the geography of nationalism, cultural politics of memory, border studies, and post-socialist space. As of late, he has been particularly interested in the relationship between power, place, and identity, as well as the power relations behind the social constructions of places and identities.

Professor Kaiser is currently involved in two book projects. One focuses on the new bordering discourses and practices in post-socialist spaces, while the other deals with the cultural politics of memory. The second book project relates directly to the research he has undertaken in the borderlands between Russia and Estonia during the last five years.

As part of this work, Professor Kaiser received an exploratory research grant from the National Science Foundation to spend summer 2007 in Estonia examining the impact of Estonia's decision to move a statue commemorating the Soviet liberation of Tallinn from fascist forces during World War II. The relocation of the statue from Tonismagi Square in central Tallinn to a war cemetery three kilometers away sparked a wave of protests from Russians in Estonia and Moscow. This touches on the ongoing tensions between Estonian nationalism and Russian "otherness" in current Estonian national policy and in spatial constructions of Estonian national identity. Professor Kaiser has written editorials about the event for the New York Times and the Social Science Research Council Web site. He will continue to explore the event's impact on bordering processes and practices during the next three years of his field research.

Read Professor Kaiser's recent news essay "Estonia: The Mouse that Roared" at the SSRC Web site: http://www.ssrc.org/features/estonia061807/

News from Faculty and Off-Campus Affiliates

Scott Gehlbach, assistant professor of political science, is in Moscow 2007-08 on a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellowship. His book manuscript, Representation Through Taxation: The Political Economy of Postcommunism, has been accepted for publication by Cambridge University Press and related work from this project has recently been published in the American Journal of Political Science and Economics and Politics.

Jeremi Suri, professor of history, has published a new biography Henry Kissinger and the American Century (Harvard UP, 2007). In fall 2007 he will be teaching a new online course—The United States and the World: The History of American Foreign Relations since 1941—through the Wisconsin Alumni Association and the Division of Continuing Studies.

H. Richard Friman, professor of political science at Marquette University, has published a new book Human Trafficking, Human Security, and the Balkans (U of Pittsburgh P, 2007).

CREECA is a Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center. It was established in 1993 to unite the efforts of two longstanding 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.

Graduate and Alumni News

2007-08 FLAS fellows

CREECA wishes to congratulate the following recipients of the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for summer 2007 intensive language study and for foreign language and area studies during the 2007-08 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 international or area studies. Applications for summer 2008 and the 2008-09 academic year will be available in November 2007.

News from Grad Students

Kelley Cormier, a doctoral candidate in development studies, received the NCEEER Ed A. Hewett Policy Fellowship for postdoctoral research in Kazakhstan.

Timothy (Jack) Rowe (LCA) has new position in Washington, D.C. as a student trainee with the State Department. Following his training, he hopes to be posted somewhere in Central Eurasia, in order to put his language and area studies knowledge to work.

Three new students joined the master's degree program in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) this fall. We extend a warm Wisconsin welcome to **Natalie Knight**, **Matthew Larson**, and **Martha (Claire) Schuchard**. Natalie graduated from the Evergreen State College and is interested in the intersection between arts and politics in Central Asia. Matt and Claire are both graduates of St. Olaf College and have extensive backgrounds in Russian language and Russian studies. This year Matt is studying intensive Serbo-Croatian and Claire is taking Russian and Uzbek.

Summer 2007 Intensive Language Study: Naomi Bethel (Slavic) – Russian, Sean Gillen (history) – Russian, Jacob Fleming (geography) – Kyrgyz, Lauren McCarthy (political science) – Russian, Stephanie Richards (Slavic) – Russian

FLAS Fellows for the 2007-08 Academic Year: Sara Brinegar (history) – Turkish, Jacob Fleming (geography) – Uzbek, Heidi Herschede (sociology) – Czech, Sarah Kapp (Slavic) – Serbo-Croatian, M. Claire Schuchard (REECAS) – Uzbek, Steve Lied (REECAS) – Turkish, Jessica Mason (anthropology) – Russian

We extend our congratulations to several recent bachelor of arts recipients who completed the undergraduate certificate in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (REECAS).

Mirela Hadzic graduated in December 2006 with majors in international studies and political science. Mirela is currently living in Chicago and works as an admissions advisor for American Intercontinental University Online. Matthew Zelle also graduated in December 2006 with majors in history and political science.

Our May 2007 REECAS certificate graduates were Nicholas Barbash (political science), Elizabeth (Libby) Dahlstrom (international studies and political science), Jason Karnosky (history), Angela Kilsdonk (history), Elizabeth Klink (political science), Barbara Luberadzka (Polish and Russian), and Evangeline (Eve) McGlynn (cartography and geographic information systems).

CREECA-affiliated students and alumni are doing amazing, innovative things all over the world. If you would like to share your story with our community, we at CREECA would love to hear from you. For more information, or to write an article for our newsletter, please contact Associate Director, Jennifer Tishler at assocdir@creeca.wisc.edu

Outreach News

2007 CREECA Teacher Workshop: "Children in Conflict: War, Work, and Human Rights"

by Lara Kain, former CREECA Outreach Coordinator

During the week of June 18-22, 2007, CREECA held its annual summer teacher workshop on the UW campus, partnering with four other Title VI centers: the Center for South Asia; the African Studies Program; the Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Program; and Global Studies. Thirty-nine elementary and secondary school teachers representing disciplines as diverse as social studies, art, and ESL joined us for this week-long exploration of the issues concerning children caught up in political violence around the globe. Participants also attended sessions on curriculum resources and were given ample time to develop new and updated lessons for their classrooms on the theme of children in conflict. Examples of these lesson plans have been posted to the CREECA Web site http://www.creeca.wisc.edu.

During the week, teachers attended lectures and discussions led by University of Wisconsin faculty and scholars and practitioners from around the nation. Brian Barber, director of the Center for the International Study of Youth and Political Violence at the University of Ten-



Theoneste Rutagengwa, UW-Madison visiting scholar and activist, speaks about "Children and Conflicts in Africa."

nessee, spoke on "Adolescents and War: How Youth Deal with Political Violence." Dr. Barber researches adolescent development in social context in Africa, Asia, the Balkans, Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America, specializing in the study of adolescent development in the context of political violence. UW-Stevens Point professor of history Sally Kent presented on children and art in the Thieresenstadt ghetto. Kent also gave a lecture on the war in the former Yugoslavia, examining the profound effects of this conflict on children. The director of War Child USA, Betsy Small-Campbell spoke about the work of this non-profit group to ease children's pain and suffering from their experience of war. UW-Madison scholars Sumudu Atapattu, Theoneste Rutagengwa, and Claudia Catota presented three case studies from Sri Lanka, Rwanda, and Latin America.

Representatives from the American Red Cross presented the curriculum, "Exploring Humanitarian Law," which provides lessons and guidance for educators to teach the Geneva Conventions. Social studies teachers Mandi Erickson (New Richmond High School) and Kendra Parks (Madison Memorial

Outreach News



UW-Stevens Point history Professor Sally Kent lectures on the Balkans.

High School) shared their own classroom experiences with teaching "Exploring Humanitarian Law." Our speaker series wrapped up on Thursday afternoon with a lecture by Dr Susan McKay, professor of women's studies at the University of Wyoming, titled "Former Girl Soldiers and Their Children in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia: Challenges of Reintegration."

Besides the content sessions, participants also attended two presentations designed to assist them in building their curriculum and sharing resources. Jim Jonas, a librarian from the UW School of Education and CIMC (Center for Instructional Materials and Computing) offered

an informative session on internet resources for curriculum development. Later in the week outreach specialists Rachel Weiss and Lara Kain gave a presentation on enhancing student curricula by incorporating literature for children and young

adults on the theme of children in conflict.

The teachers ended the week inspired, full of new ideas, and ultimately charged to create lesson plans which will engage their students in studying these important and timely topics. As one teacher wrote in the final evaluations, "I will work harder to expose my students to the world, moving them beyond just their world."

For more information on the resources noted above, including "Exploring Humanitarian Law" and "War Child," please visit http://wioc.wisc.edu/childreninconflict.



Heather DuBois Bourenane, former outreach coordinator from the African Studies Program, presents her teacher resource guide on Africa.

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CREECA

Outreach News

CREECA Welcomes Nancy Heingartner as New Outreach Coordinator

We at CREECA are pleased to welcome **Nancy Heingartner** as our new outreach coordinator.
Nancy, who holds a PhD in Slavic languages from
Brown University, brings to CREECA extensive
experience in education, grant writing, study abroad,
government service, and community outreach, and
will be using her considerable energy and talents to
further develop our program of outreach to K-16,
business, the media, and the greater community.
Nancy worked for several years at UW-Whitewater,
both as a lecturer in Russian and as the interim
assistant director for education abroad in the International Education and Programs Office.



Nancy can be reached at 608-265-6298 or by email at **outreach@creeca.wisc.edu**. If you're in the neighborhood, please stop by and say hello to Nancy at the CREECA office, 210 Ingraham Hall.

Chernobyl Centers Summer Internships continued

per week of service. Stan used his Ukrainian language skills to work on the FOCCUS Web site. He also analyzed the results of a skills survey used for maximizing interests and talents of FOCCUS Board members. Jennifer sharpened her interest in fund raising by working with the FOCCUS fund raising committee and organized her own fund raising event. The student interns also participated in structured research to identify foundations which might provide support to the mission of FOCCUS.

At the conclusion of the program, Jennifer commented that her work with FOCCUS was educational, allowing her to learn about Ukrainian culture. She also felt that her summer internship was personally rewarding, noting that she "had the opportunity to make just a bit of difference in people's lives a world away."

Students interested in internships through IAII should visit **iaii.wisc.edu** to learn more about upcoming opportunities. Employers seeking an internationally-minded student for their organization should contact Loren Kuzuhara, faculty director, **lkuzuhara@iaii.wisc.edu** or (608) 262-4453. To learn more about the mission and work of FOCCUS, please visit **www.friendsofchernobylcenters.org**.

Bulletin Board

Fall Events Schedule

10.19.07 4:00pm Pyle Center: Writing the History of East-Central European Literary Cultures, Dr. Marcel Cornis-Pope - Virginia Commonwealth University

10.19.07 8:45am-4:30pm Pyle Center: AATSEEL-WI Conference panels

10.25.07 4:00pm 206 Ingraham:

Balkanology and EUrology: Recent Developments and Future Changes, Victor Friedman -University of Chicago

11.01.07 4:00pm 206 Ingraham: The Last Soviet Dreamer: Encounters with Leonid Potemkin, Jochen Hellbeck - Rutgers University

11.08.07 4:00pm 206 Ingraham:

Innovation within Tradition: Women Ashiqs of Azerbaijan, Anna Senarslan - UW-Madison

11.11.07 8:00pm Music Hall: Kalman Balogh Gypsy Cimbalom Band

11.15.07 4:00pm 206 Ingraham:

Justice Sector Reform in a Post-Conflict Environment: A Case Study from Kosovo, Suren Avanesyan - Project Director, National Center for State Courts

CREECA Podcasts

Starting Spring 2007, many of our lectures will be made available through Podcasts. For many iPod users, our lectures will automatically upload weekly for your enjoyment. Link to our feed.

http://www.creeca.wisc.edu/resources/lectureslecture.xml

11.29.07 4:00pm 206 Ingraham: Transforming Bureaucracy: Conditional Norms and the International Standardization of Statistics in Russia, Yoshiko Herrera - UW-Madison

12.06.07 4:00pm Alumni Lounge, Pyle Center: Witness: One of the Great Correspondents of the 20th Century Tells Her Story, Ruth Gruber - Journalist and Human Rights Activist

12.13.07 4:00pm 206 Ingraham: *The Putin Generation: Political Views of Russian Youth*, Ted Gerber - UW-Madison

CREECA Hosts On-Line Bulletin of Central Eurasian Studies

As of summer 2007 CREECA is hosting the *Central* Eurasian Studies Review (CESR), the online bulletin of the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS). The new Web site for CESR is www.cesr-cess.org. Led by chief editor Virginia Martin, an honorary fellow in the Central Asian studies program, the other local members of the CESR team are webmaster Michael Albrecht, a senior majoring in Russian and history, and copy editor Amy Forster Rothbart, a doctoral candidate in political science. CESR is sent to individuals through membership in CESS and to institutions through subscription. CESR will be published in November 2007 as Vol. 6, No. 1/2, and thereafter, twice a year in spring and fall. The editorial staff is seeking contributions to each of *CESR*'s three sections: 1) Research Reports, 2) Conferences and Lecture Series, and 3) Educational Resources and Developments. Please consult the CESR Web page "Information for Contributors" at http://www.cesrcess.org/CESR contribution.html for guidelines and submissions, or write to the chief editor at vmartin2@wisc.edu with specific questions. For information on joining CESS, pleas see www.cess.muohio.edu/.



CREECA 210 Ingraham Hall 1155 Observatory Dr. Madison WI 53706

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CREECA STAFF:

Director

Ted Gerber director@creeca.wisc.edu **Associate Director**

Jennifer Tishler assocdir@creeca.wisc.edu

Outreach Coordinator

Nancy Heingartner outreach@creeca.wisc.edu

Financial Specialist

Jean Hennessey

finance@creeca.wisc.edu

Events Coordinator

Drago Momcilovic events@creeca.wisc.edu

Website and Technology

Scott Resnick

webmaster@creeca.wisc.edu

Office Coordinator

Matthew Maus

info@creeca.wisc.edu

Contributions to the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia are always appreciated. If you wish to join in supporting CREECA, please send your contribution to:

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Please indicate that it is intended for CREECA. For more information about making a gift to CREECA, please contact Betsy Liotus at the UW Foundation by e-mail (betsy.liotus@uwfoundation.wisc.edu) or at (608) 265-9955.