

## Make a Contribution to CREECA

### What your gift can do

Every gift enables CREECA to do something we could not otherwise have accomplished, whether it's support for undergraduate and graduate students, an additional lecture, or a course development grant.

### Make a Donation to CREECA

**By Mail** - If you would prefer to make a tax-deductible donation by standard mail, fill out and mail in this page. Please make checks payable to "UW Foundation" and include "12544273 CREECA" on the memo line of the check.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my contribution of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

University of Wisconsin Foundation  
 Gift Processing Department  
 U. S. Bank Lockbox  
 P.O. Box 78807  
 Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

**Online** - To make a secure gift online using your credit card, please visit [www.creeca.wisc.edu](http://www.creeca.wisc.edu)

For more information about making a gift to CREECA, please contact **Ann Dingman** at UW Foundation (608-265-9954, [ann.dingman@uwfoundation.wisc.edu](mailto:ann.dingman@uwfoundation.wisc.edu)).

## CREECA Staff

### Director

Ted Gerber  
[director@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:director@creeca.wisc.edu)

### Associate Director

Jennifer Tishler  
[assocdir@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:assocdir@creeca.wisc.edu)

### Outreach Coordinator

Nancy Heingartner  
[outreach@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:outreach@creeca.wisc.edu)

### Financial Specialist

Maki Raymo  
[finance@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:finance@creeca.wisc.edu)

### Events Coordinator

Julia Vasylenko  
[events@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:events@creeca.wisc.edu)

### Office Coordinator

Naira Ovsepyan  
[info@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:info@creeca.wisc.edu)

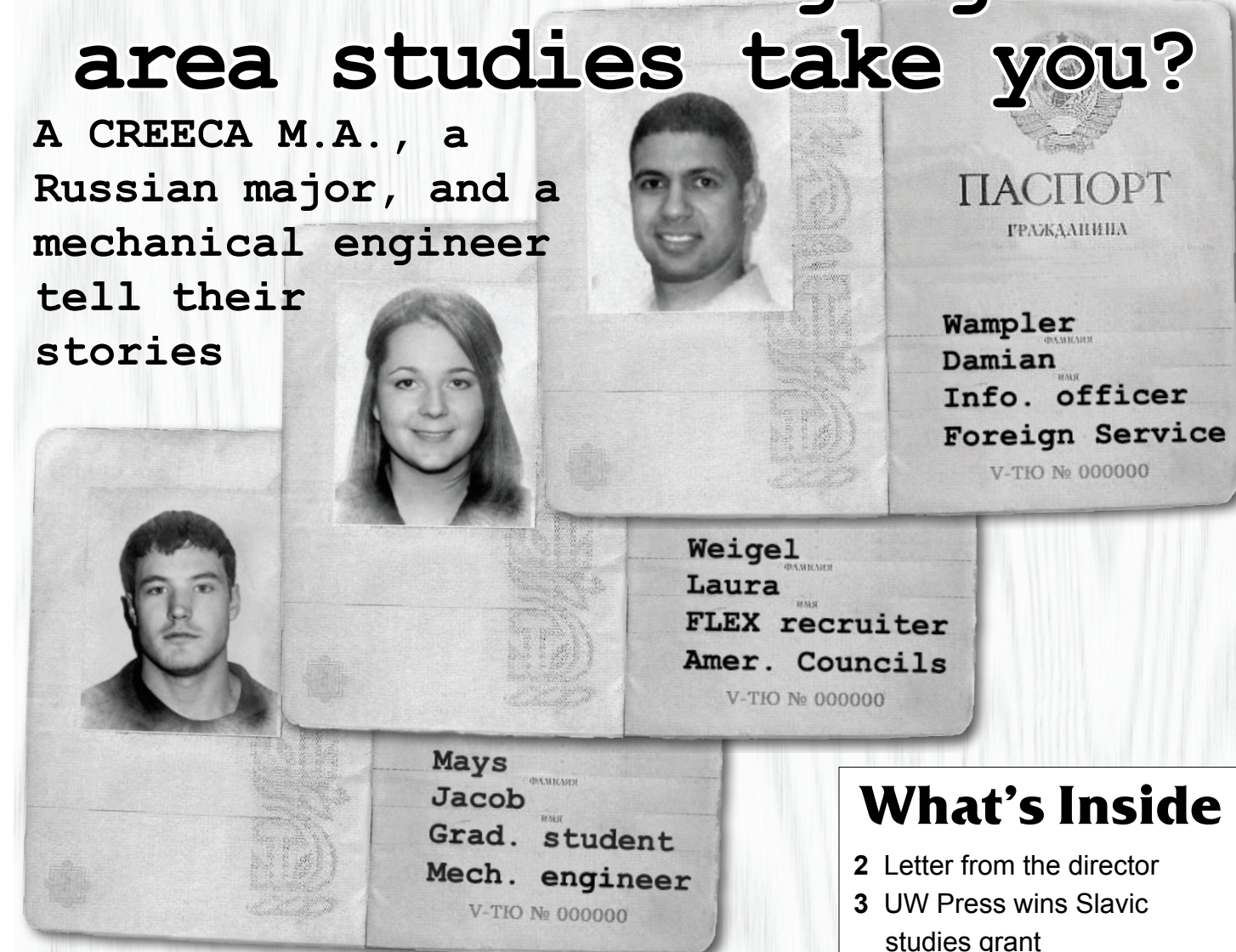
### Web & Publications Assistant

Alec Luhn  
[webmaster@creeca.wisc.edu](mailto:webmaster@creeca.wisc.edu)



# How far can language and area studies take you?

A CREECA M.A., a Russian major, and a mechanical engineer tell their stories



**Jacob Mays** entered the graduate program in mechanical engineering at UW-Madison in fall 2009. He earned a B.S. in chemistry and physics from Harvard in 2007, but also studied Russian. After graduating, he worked for a year at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. He's now continuing his study of Russian and hopes a career in developing power projects will take him abroad again. **See his story on page 5.**

**Damian Wampler** earned an M.A. in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies from CREECA in 2005. Since then, he's done Fulbright research and worked in New York as a Peace Corps recruiter. He was recently accepted into the U.S. Foreign Service and is leaving for Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on February 15. **See his story on page 6.**

**Laura Weigel** graduated from UW-Madison in 2009 with majors in International Studies and Russian Language and Civilization. In fall 2009, she worked in Russia as a recruiter for the American Councils' Future Leaders Exchange Program. Weigel is currently looking at new job opportunities in Russia, preparing for the GRE, and planning to apply to graduate school in the fall. **See her story on page 7.**

## What's Inside

- 2 Letter from the director
- 3 UW Press wins Slavic studies grant
- 5-7 Mays, Wampler, and Weigel take off with language and area studies
- 8 Profile of new faculty
- 9 News from faculty and students
- 11 Events calendar

# Letter from the director



By Ted Gerber  
CREECA DIRECTOR

Dear friends of CREECA,

I trust that most of you are staying warm and upbeat this winter. Lest you despair at the sight of the seemingly eternal ice cover on Lake Mendota, take heart that February is International Opportunities Month (IOM) on the UW-Madison campus. CREECA has a long tradition of active participation in this program of lectures, presentations, and other events that teach students about global issues and opportunities for travel, work, study, and volunteer service abroad.

In the spirit of IOM, this issue of the CREECA newsletter features several stories about our students and recent alumni who have used their language and area studies expertise in diverse and interesting ways at UW-Madison and beyond. Laura Weigel, 2009 B.A. in Russian and International Studies, recently returned from a 4-month stint in Russia as a participant recruiter for the American Councils for International Education FLEX program. Damian Wampler, 2005 M.A. in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, has served as a Peace Corps volunteer and Fulbright scholar, and is departing this month for a new position in Dushanbe as a Foreign Service Officer with the US State Department. Jacob

Mays, currently working on an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, received a FLAS fellowship for advanced study in Russian in 2009-2010. Zachary Kelly, 2008 B.A. in Russian and a student in the Baltic Studies Summer Institute (BALSSI) here last summer, has an internship at the U.S. Embassy in Tallinn lined up for next summer. I know you will enjoy reading about the successes of this sample of our many impressive students.

CREECA has also recently learned that we will be hosting BALSSI again not only during the coming summer, but also for a third summer in 2011. Please help spread the word to anyone potentially interested in studying Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian language and culture.

Hosting BALSSI has helped CREECA rejuvenate the University's commitment to Baltic studies. We have developed a strong and continuing working relationship with Madison-Vilnius Sister Cities (MVSC). We obtained additional funding for Baltic programming at UW-Madison through grants from the American Council for Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Lithuanian Foundation. Recently we received a sizeable donation from a Wisconsin-based Latvian-American to support Latvian-related programming at UW-Madison in the future. Two more summers of BALSSI on our campus are sure to offer further opportunities to solidify and expand Baltic-related research, teaching, and programming at UW-Madison.

One upcoming event illustrates our partnership with Madison-Vilnius Sister Cities: we are jointly sponsoring a celebration of Lithuanian Independence Day on February 16, 2010, featuring a lecture by eminent UW-Madison history professor emeritus Alfred E. Senn, who will receive a commenda-

tion from the office of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz recognizing his many years of service to the city and the University.

Another event to look forward to is our March 24 "Day in Eastern and Central Europe," when high school students from around the state will come to campus to learn from UW faculty, graduate students, and staff about the politics, culture, and societies of the countries in that region.

**CREECA has also recently learned that we will be hosting BALSSI again not only during the coming summer, but also for a third summer in 2011. Please help spread the word to anyone potentially interested in studying Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian.**

This year's Romanian film festival will take place March 18-20 in the auditorium of the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Finally, keep in mind that our lecture series is back in full swing, and we feature the usual rich assortment of topics and speakers every Thursday at 4:00.

Okay, so it would be a stretch to say that we're not looking forward to the arrival of spring. But I hope you will agree with me that these CREECA activities will certainly help the winter pass more easily and quickly. May you all have a productive spring semester, and I look forward to seeing you at CREECA events.

## EVENTS SCHEDULE 2010 WINTER ♦ SPRING

*We welcome suggestions from our faculty and students for speakers in the Thursday CREECA lecture series. Please send recommendations for the fall 2010 lecture series to Jennifer Tishler (assocdir@creeca.wisc.edu).*

Paul Valliere, Butler University  
4 p.m. 206 Ingraham Hall

**Thursday-Saturday, March 18-20**  
Romanian Film Festival  
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art

**Wednesday, March 24**  
Day in East and Central Europe  
8:30 a.m. Great Hall in Memorial Union

**Thursday, March 25**  
*Bride Abduction in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Marking a Shift Towards Patriarchy through Local Discourses of Shame and Tradition*  
Cynthia Werner, Texas A&M University  
4 p.m. 206 Ingraham Hall

**Thursday, April 8**  
*Legends of the Underground: Ivan Jirous, Egon Bondy, and the Prehistory of Czech Dissent*  
Jonathan Bolton, Harvard University  
4 p.m. 206 Ingraham Hall

**Thursday, April 15**  
*Islamic Political Culture in Central Asia: Roots and Historical Legacies*  
Elyor E. Karimov, Uzbek Academy of Sciences  
4 p.m. 206 Ingraham Hall

**Friday, April 16**  
Russian Music Concert by Zolotoj Plyos  
Venue TBA

**Thursday, April 22**  
*Stalin and his Team: A New Look at Stalinist High Politics*  
Sheila Fitzpatrick, University of Chicago  
4 p.m. Curti Lounge, 5243 Humanities

**Thursday, April 29**  
*Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine*  
Tanya Richardson, Wilfrid Laurier University  
4 p.m. 206 Ingraham Hall

**Thursday, May 6**  
*The Difference a Babushka Makes: The Relative Success of Single-Mother Families in Russia*  
Jennifer Utrata, University of Puget Sound  
4 p.m. 336 Ingraham Hall

### Save the Date!

June 21-24, 2010  
"Security and Conflict in Russia & Eurasia"  
A workshop for K-12 educators  
Sponsored by CREECA & Global Studies  
Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 W. Dayton St.  
For more info: outreach@creeca.wisc.edu

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.

supplement classroom or independent learning, CAILS lessons are free online at [www.languageinstitute.wisc.edu/cails](http://www.languageinstitute.wisc.edu/cails).

CREECA off-campus affiliate **Tomasz Inglot** (Minnesota State University-Mankato) reports that his book *Welfare States in East Central Europe, 1919-2004* received the 2009 AAASS/Orbis Books Prize for Polish Studies, for an outstanding English-language book on any aspect of Polish affairs. Professor Inglot also published a chapter titled “Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia: Adaptation and Reform of the Post-Communist ‘Emergency Welfare States’” in Alfio Cerami and Pieter Vanhuyse, eds., *Postcommunist Pathways: Welfare Adaptations and Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke UK: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2009.

**Greg Gaut** (St. Mary’s University of Minnesota), together with his wife, Marsha Neff, published an article in the Winter 2009/10 issue of the Minnesota Historical Society’s quarterly *Minnesota History* about the visit of Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev to Minnesota on June 3, 1990. Titled “Red Stars over Minnesota,” the article discusses the preparation for the visit, the events of the day itself, and recalls the prevailing mood of optimism in 1990 about the possibilities for international cooperation between the US and USSR.

## Alumni

The American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) has a new representative in Yerevan: **Richard Antaramian** (’05). Richard, who earned a B.A. in Political Science as well as the undergraduate certificate in REECAS, is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in history at the University of Michigan. Richard will be providing guidance to U.S. scholars on how to conduct research in Armenia, including information on libraries, archives, local scholars and permits. Richard will also be coordinating several lectures and events in Yerevan sponsored by ARISC.

**Zachary Kelly** (’08, B.A. in Russian) is pursuing a master’s in Russian and East European Studies at Indiana University. Zach returned to Madison for BALSSI 2009, studying intensive elementary Estonian. He plans to intern this summer at the U.S. Embassy in Tallinn.

Although many of his fellow English editors stayed on, Mays left after the year-long contract ended, wanting to focus on more technical work. He described his time in Moscow in terms of a love-hate relationship.

“I think there are a lot of things that make it not an attractive city, but it’s a fascinating place,” Mays said. “There’s a lot of stuff going on all the time, as in Russia in general.”

After taking a job with the Obama campaign in Chicago for four months, Mays spent a semester as a special student at UW-Madison and then entered the graduate program in mechanical engineering in fall 2009. For the 2009-2010 academic year Mays received a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship to continue his study of advanced Russian language and area studies, which he combines with his challenging engineering course work. He focuses on power generation and plans to work in developing power projects, which will likely take him abroad again. His Russian will be useful, Mays suspects, since Russia is a major exporter of civilian nuclear power, and power projects are cropping up in Ukraine and Central Asia.

Mays’s advisor Michael Corradini said he was initially most impressed with Mays’s interest in energy analysis and policy. He noted Mays’s language skills give him an edge because he can read Russian scientific literature.

“He can go into a literature base that no one else can read,” Corradini said.

Once Mays graduates from UW, he’ll be able to use his expertise to work on energy policy issues important to Russian society, he added. According to Corradini, not enough engineering students study a foreign language.

Extensive prospects exist for Russian-speakers in any field, Mays noted.

“What I’ve discovered is that there are a whole lot of opportunities for people who study Russian and not a whole lot of people who take advantage of them,” he said.

“I was basically testing my thesis every day as a Fulbrighter,” he explained.

Without background knowledge from REECAS, “My Fulbright would have been a lot weaker and a lot less informed,” Wampler added. “It would have lacked the theoretical base and I wouldn’t have had the skills to do research without CREECA.”

He plans to draw on his REECAS skills once again for his Foreign Service posting in Tajikistan. According to Wampler, his knowledge base has given him a firm grasp of all the topics involved in serving as an information officer. Wampler said that most people don’t “realize how important Central Asia is going to be in the next couple years.”

For this reason, he predicts broad opportunities for those studying Central Asia and Russia. Wampler called Russia’s future “unclear” in light of its deteriorating democratic situation.

“It’s a really exciting time to be studying Russia, maybe even more so than in the Cold War era,” Wampler said.

After his two-year post in Tajikistan ends, he plans to return to the region periodically. As always, he’s pursuing a variety of endeavors, such as getting his photo exhibit “Darfur in Brooklyn” into a permanent collection and finishing his second play, but Wampler’s Central Asia focus will remain in the forefront.

“I’ll continue to promote understanding between the U.S. and Central Asia for the rest of my life,” he said.

they discussed the publication process and fielded questions from prospective authors.

The UW Press has used its share of the initiative’s publishing funds mostly to keep prices on the books to between \$26.95 and \$29.95 in a bid to increase sales. In the past, the same books might have sold in hardcover-only editions for \$45 or more.

“The initiative has allowed us to publish in paperback and e-book simultaneously,” Walker explained.

Mellon Slavic Studies books are available from the press ([uwpress.wisc.edu](http://uwpress.wisc.edu)) and other booksellers online.

# UW Press wins Slavic studies grant

Mellon Foundation initiative awards \$390K to publish 18 books by first-time authors

By Alec Luhn  
WEB AND PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT

The University of Wisconsin Press, long respected for its series on Alexander Pushkin, has been adding Russian cultural and intellectual history to its Slavic studies list through a new publishing initiative.

In cooperation with Northwestern University Press and the University of Pittsburgh Press, the UW Press launched the Mellon Slavic Studies Initiative in January 2008 with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The initiative provides \$390,000 to publish 18 scholarly first books over five years on topics related to Russia, East Europe, or Central Asia.

“During the Cold War ... a lot of publishers were publishing in that area,” said UW Press acquisitions editor Gwen Walker (Ph.D ’03), who was the chief author of the proposal for the initiative. “In the post-Cold War era, it dropped off, but we made the argument in [our] proposal that this continues to be an important area, even though sales tend not to be very high.”

So far, Northwestern University Press has published two books by emerging scholars through the initiative, and the UW Press has published three: Otto Boele’s *Erotic Nihilism in Late Imperial Russia: The Case of Mikhail Artsybashev’s* Sanin, Tim Harte’s *Fast Forward The Aesthetics and Ideology of Speed in the Russian Avant-Garde, 1910-1930*, and Benjamin Sutcliffe’s *The Prose of Life: Russian Women Writers from Khrushchev to Putin*, which *Choice* magazine recently named as one of its Outstanding Academic Titles of 2009. The UW Press will publish two additional titles, *Brodsky Abroad* and *From the Shadow of Empire*, in May and August 2010.

Besides promoting scholarship in Russian, East European, and Central Asian studies, the initiative aims to give authors a chance to break into an increasingly impenetrable field.

“The fact is, for career advancement in the humanities, publication of books is very important,” but it’s often challenging for publishers to put out these books, Walker said.

“From a publisher’s point of view, books from emerging authors often represent fresh perspectives and recent research,” she added, even though editing and marketing first-time authors can be difficult.

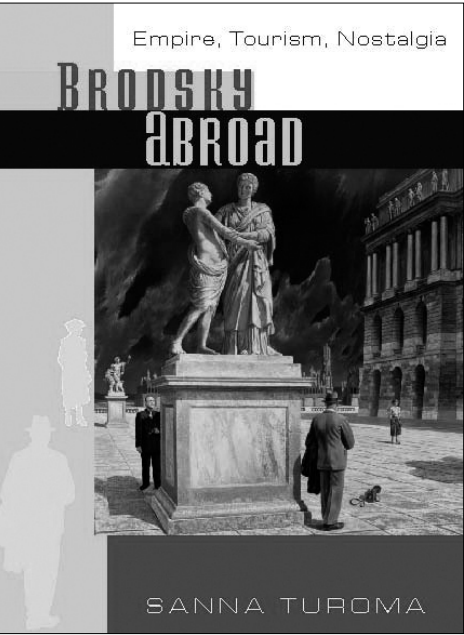
Increases in interlibrary loans and the sale of used books on the Internet, among other factors, have cut into the number of new books purchased. As a result, emerging scholars in the humanities have found it difficult to put out books because publishers are worried about recouping costs, Walker said.

The initiative grew out of a call by the Mellon Foundation in 2006 for collaborative projects to publish first books in “underserved areas.” The UW Press immediately identified Slavic studies, a smaller market it has long published in—the press began publishing books by UW-Madison’s Pushkin specialist J. Thomas Shaw in the 1960s and Brown University’s Victor Terras in the 1980s— as a prime area for collaboration. In recent years, the press has brought out the Publications of the Wisconsin Center for Pushkin Studies series, with UW-Madison Department of Slavic Languages and Literature professors David Bethea and Alexander Dolinin acting as series editors.

*“In the post-Cold War era, [publishing in Slavic studies] dropped off, but ... this continues to be an important area, even though sales tend not to be very high.”*

“We also saw this as an opportunity to expand (our Slavic list) gradually into a few areas related to literary studies,” Walker said.

Therefore, for the Mellon initiative, the UW Press chose to concentrate not only on literary studies, but also on cultural and intellectual history, film studies, anthropology, and human rights in Russia and East Europe. Walker called intellectual and cultural history a “natural subfield” for the press, which already publishes books in this area through its George L. Mosse, Studies in American



Thought and Culture, and History of Anthropology series. The press is also launching a new series called Critical Human Rights.

Northwestern and Pittsburgh chose to focus, respectively, on Slavic literature, art, and culture, and on the social, political, environmental, urban, and cultural history of the former Soviet Union. Walker, who holds a Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literature from UW-Madison, spearheaded the joint proposal. The Slavic initiative was one of four collaborative initiatives the Mellon Foundation selected out of over thirty proposals, she said.

The initiative aims to increase the number of first monographs, improve the quality of these works, and expand their potential audiences. Each of the three presses receives an equal portion of the funding for publishing expenses, and all three streamline costs by sharing marketing funds. Northwestern does much of the advertising, Pittsburgh created the initiative’s Web site ([mellonslavicstudies.org](http://mellonslavicstudies.org)), and the UW Press has created the fliers announcing the books in the series. The three presses held a reception at the last two national meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies for accepted authors and others interested in having their work considered for publication under the initiative. At the 2009 conference, the presses organized a roundtable where

*Continued on page 10*

# Children's lit fest crosses borders

Annual meetup of teachers, librarians, students features books about other cultures



Photo by Nancy Heingartner

Grinnell professor Kelly Herold discusses borrowings from Russia in children's literature.

By Nancy Heingartner  
CREECA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The eighth annual Children's and Young Adult Literature Celebration, sponsored by the Wisconsin International Outreach Consortium, was held in the Memorial Union on the UW-Madison campus on Saturday, November 21, 2009.

This program, which aims to present unbiased and informed literature about cultures from around the world, attracts teachers, school and public librarians, and students and faculty of education and library science. Megan Schliesman, librarian at the UW-Madison Cooperative Children's Book Center, welcomed the sixty participants, mainly K-12 teachers and librarians, to the all-day event. Rachna Gilmore, an award-winning Canadian author whose works, including *Mina's Spring of Colors*, *A Group of One*, and *The Trouble with Dilly*, often reflect her experiences growing up in India, led off the presentations with a talk titled "Stories without Borders."

The next speaker was Kelly Herold, associate professor of Russian at Grinnell

College in Iowa and author of several children's books. Herold gave an engaging presentation about literary borrowings from Russia, and how the often terrifying Russian witch Baba Yaga undergoes a softening of her personality when she crosses the ocean and starts appearing in American children's literature, something she has begun doing not infrequently.

Participants then had a break for lunch and took part in a writing exercise led by Gilmore. The afternoon session began with a talk by Sylviane Diouf, a New York-based author and historian, titled "Beyond Lions: Re-presenting

Africans and Africa." Diouf, who works at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, is the author of numerous books for both adults and children, including *Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship Clotilda and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America*, *Kings and Queens of West Africa*, and *Bintou's Braids*.

James Rumford, a children's book author and illustrator, whose works include *Silent Music*, *Traveling Man*, and *Calabash Cat*, gave a dynamic, illustrated presentation on how his art has been informed by his experiences with world travel. The day concluded with a roundtable discussion on literature for children and young people that allowed for a lively exchange between the authors and the audience.

Plans are already underway for the ninth annual Children's and Young Adult Literature Celebration, which will take place on the UW-Madison campus on November 20, 2010. For more information, please visit <http://wioc.wisc.edu/chlldlit/>.

## Lodi holds int'l day

By Nancy Heingartner  
CREECA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

On November 24<sup>th</sup>, Lodi High School hosted its fourth annual International Festival. More than thirty-five speakers from around the world gave presentations. The CREECA region was well represented by Katie Wirka, a UW-Madison graduate student in geography who has studied in the Czech Republic, and by Žaibas, the local Lithuanian dance troupe.

Janel Anderson, a Lodi high school social studies teacher, is the founder and organizer of this event.

"I really think of [this day] as a seed that we can plant for kids," said Anderson.

A brief interview with Janel Anderson and a few highlights of the day can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb-8vruVZZY>



Photo courtesy of Janel Anderson

Michael Etwiler, of the Lithuanian troupe Žaibas, dances with Lodi students.

## News & Updates

### Undergraduate students

CREECA would like to extend its congratulations to four students who received the **Undergraduate Certificate in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies** (REECAS) in December 2009.

**Samuel Balistreri-Daum** completed a double major in French and History, with a strong interest in Eastern European and Russian history. After graduation, Samuel will be working and preparing to take the LSAT; he plans to attend law school in the next year.

**Samantha Ringer** studied Arabic and Russian at UW-Madison. Her senior thesis, written under the direction of Professor David McDonald in History, examined the Armenian genocide of 1915, looking at the Dashnaks (a nationalistic group formed in Russia) and their influence on the Ottoman Armenians. Samantha plans to pursue graduate-level work in museum studies, with an eye towards an eventual career as a museum curator. She is currently applying for museum-related positions in Washington, DC.

**Lauren Thorpe** majored in History, but took several classes in Russian and Central Asian literature and culture. Lauren notes that "the courses and professors in these fields, specifically for Russian and Central Asian topics, are the most interesting and well taught classes I've had while in school." Lauren plans to pursue a career in marketing and public relations.

Proving the old adage "It never hurts to ask," **Alexis Schrubbe** '05 received her certificate in December 2009, three years after graduating from UW-Madison with a major in Political Science. Upon receiving her diploma, Alexis lived and worked overseas, including some time in Russia. When she started to explore graduate programs back in the US and reviewed her UW-Madison transcript, she realized that she had already fulfilled the requirements for an undergraduate certificate in REECAS—including classes in Russian film, history, politics, and literature—save for actually having declared the certificate. Now that we have the approval of the Registrar's office, we are pleased to recognize Alexis's receipt of the certificate in REECAS, effective August 2005!

### Graduate students

**Stephanie Richards**, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, received the J. Thomas Shaw Prize for the best graduate student paper presented at the October 2009 Wisconsin AATSEEL conference for her presentation, "Na trone on sidel i vdruk upal: Rumor and Oath in Pushkin's Treatment of Boris Godunov."

**Jambul Akkaziev**, a graduate student in the Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia, has been awarded a Graduate Student International Field Research Award from the Division of International Studies. The award provides funding for students who have not yet reached dissertator status to conduct preliminary field research as they develop their dissertation topics. Jambul will spend part of summer 2009 conducting research in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

### CREECA faculty, academic staff, and honorary fellows

CREECA would like to offer its congratulations to **Scott Gehlbach**, associate professor of political science, whose book *Representation Through Taxation: Revenue, Politics, and Development in Postcommunist States* was awarded an honorable mention by the committee of the AAASS Davis Center Book Prize in Political and Social Studies (for an outstanding monograph published on Russia, Eurasia, or Eastern Europe in anthropology, political science, sociology, or geography). Professor Gehlbach was recognized in November 2009 in Boston at the 41st National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

**Halina Filipowicz**, professor of Slavic languages and literature, gave an invited lecture at an international conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Titled "After the Wall Was Over: Performing the New Europe," the conference was organized by the University College Drama Program at the University of Toronto in November 2009.

**Kathryn Hendley**, the William Voss-Bacom Professor of Law and Political Science, has been honored for her prolific and significant scholarship with a Kellett Mid-Career

Award from UW-Madison. Professor Hendley, who also serves as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the University of Wisconsin School of Law, has published extensively on law in post-Soviet Russia.

From November 16-18, 2009, **Milan Hauner**, an honorary fellow in the Department of History, gave a series of presentations on his research to audiences in Philadelphia, including a lecture titled "Munich 1938: New 'Revelations' from Czech Archives" at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. In attendance was the former US ambassador to the Czech Republic, Adrian Basora.

On October 22, 2009, the NGO Friends of Chernobyl Centers, U.S. (FOCCUS) held its annual fundraiser at the Inn on the Park in downtown Madison. FOCCUS paid tribute to **Norma Berkowitz**, the founder of FOCCUS and a clinical assistant professor emerita in the School of Social Work. Also recognized by FOCCUS was CREECA associate director **Jennifer Tishler**. In the past ten years, CREECA has assisted FOCCUS with planning and implementing two national conferences, a study tour of Ukraine, and workshops for Open World delegations on community and health issues in Ukraine.

At the end of the fall 2009 semester, three instructors in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature were named Honored Instructors by students living in University Housing: **Ewa Miernowska** (senior lecturer), **Naomi Olson** (PhD candidate) and **Jennifer Tishler** (CREECA associate director). The three were recognized for having a positive impact on UW-Madison undergraduate education and fostering student engagement and connectedness in their classes.

A three-year effort to develop online modules targeting advanced-level listening proficiency in Kazak and Uzbek has come to close with the completion of the Central Asian Interactive Listening Series (CAILS). Supported by a grant from the Department of Education, housed in the Language Institute, and directed by Professor **Uli Schamiloglu** (Languages & Cultures of Asia), the CAILS project consists of ten online lessons each in Kazak and Uzbek. Lessons target advanced-level listening and are based on video interviews with experts in history, music, biotechnology and other areas of scholarship. Designed to

*Continued on next page*

you can function in a foreign country, especially Russia, shows any employer that you are ready. It gives you an edge in your job search domestically ... For example, with public speaking skills, saying I gave a speech to Russians in Russian proves you can do that easily, go above and beyond.

7. Have you noticed any qualities that people who study Russian seem to share?

Everyone studies Russian for a different reason, but then they come together and form a tight-knit community. They're people that are open and curious about the world. A love for Russia really unites people. Russia really sucks you in. It's like a black hole for me, it was a snowball effect; I wanted to know more and more about the place.

8. What's the most interesting experience you've had in Russia?

Interviewing all these Russian teenagers, half of them just say what they think you want to hear ... one tiny little Russian girl went on and on about how much fun mowing the lawn is. Then we asked, "Do you know what a lawn-mower is?" and she said, "No."

9. What advice would you give students considering CREECA languages or area studies as an academic focus?

[T]ake advantage of every (language-study) opportunity you have as an undergraduate. It really prepares you for being able to speak the language when you graduate ... Also, start early, start when you're a freshman if you can. I totally loved every minute of majoring in Russian. And there's more job opportunities with Russian than you would think when first considering it.

10. What advice would you give students who already study Russian, East Europe or Central Asia on how to put their degrees to work in the real world?

Don't be afraid to just go to Russia, Poland, etc., and spend time there, even if you're not doing something super serious. Living and functioning in a country will be beneficial to any career you might have. Being there every day helps language skills and just improving your language will help in the future ... you'll learn the language and meet people.

# City, students at UW impress Kazak teacher



Photo by Alec Luhn

Marzhan Arenova with students of Kazak.

By Jennifer Tishler  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Marzhan Arenova is a lecturer in Kazak language in the Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia. She arrived in Madison in August 2009, having taught for several years at the Kazak University of Humanities and Law in Astana, Kazakhstan. From 2000-2009 she was the head of the English department of that university, where she taught courses in cross-cultural communication, sociolinguistics, and English.

Marzhan brings to Madison a wealth of varied professional experiences. Not only does she hold a doctorate in linguistics from the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana, but she has also received advanced-level training in translation and interpretation. To top it off, she is a professionally trained singer.

In the 2009-2010 academic year Marzhan is teaching three levels of Kazak language. When asked about her Kazak classes, Marzhan expresses enthusiastic pride for her Madison students, who hail from departments such as Geography, Languages and Cultures of Asia, and REECAS. "As I teach my native language to American students, I am happy to see how passionate

they are in studying [Kazak] and [their] desire to be aware of my culture and country," Arenova reported. "They are eager to know more and more about the Kazak language. For me, one of the surprising and unusual aspects of teaching Kazak was that some of the American students have a rather profound background [in] it. I was really surprised by it. I could not have ever imagined that in America I would be able to meet such students."

Faculty Profile

In addition to her busy schedule of teaching, Marzhan is also writing a book on the topic of "communicative and pragmatic aspects in emotive and evaluative discourse." Marzhan names Memorial Library as one of her favorite places to spend time on the UW-Madison campus. "Nothing is more pleasant for me than to sit there [while I] enjoy myself reading or digging out some interesting material for my [...] research work." Marzhan has also enjoyed getting out to take in the sights of campus and the city of Madison. "When I arrived in Madison I was so fascinated by the vibe of the University campus and its huge size," she says. "I was excited about [the] diverse student community [and the] libraries, museums, gyms, cafes and shops. And so many bicycles around!"

Marzhan has also enjoyed interacting with her new colleagues in the Department of Languages and cultures of Asia and CREECA noting her professional connections with "the most talented and skillful pedagogical staff." We at CREECA are extremely grateful for Marzhan's dedication to her students and to her energy in promoting Kazak studies at UW-Madison.

# Mechanical engineer builds on Russian study, Moscow job experience

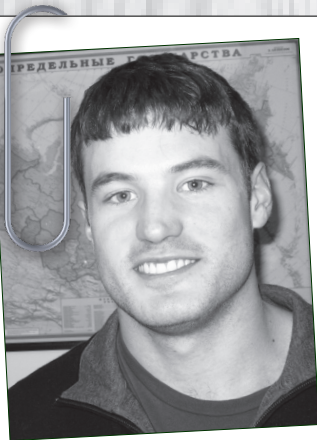


Photo courtesy of Jacob Mays

Jacob Mays visits a honey market in Moscow.

By Alec Luhn  
WEB AND PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT

UW engineering graduate student Jacob Mays is, by his own admission, a grammar freak, a trait that's greatly aided his study of the declension-heavy Russian language.

"I actually like grammar a lot, which I realize disgusts most people," he added. "Russian is sufficiently different from English and Latin in that there's a new set of constructs and rules to learn, which I enjoyed."

Mays currently studies mechanical engineering but has also been keeping his Russian skills sharp this year in fourth-year Russian and a Russian culture class. He plans to eventually work in the development of power projects in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Mays can talk about his plans with an air of experience: unlike the other students in his Russian class, he has worked pro-

fessionally in Russia. After graduating from Harvard University in 2007 with majors in chemistry and physics, Mays took a job at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, where he edited English-language articles for many of the Academy's 154 publications. Mays's work experience in Russia lends credence to his assertions that numerous opportunities are available to those who acquire proficiency in one or more languages of Russia, East Europe, or Central Asia.

"It was a perfect confluence of skill sets," Mays said about his Academy of Sciences job. "I know Russian and my background is in science, which is pretty uncommon even [as an undergraduate]."

Mays has found that his twin interests in languages and science not only complement one another, but also aid his ongoing study of Russian. Mays started learning Russian at Harvard University, where he first chose the language for its uniqueness and went on to study it for three years.

"I wanted something a bit non-standard, but not something so far out it wouldn't be useful at all," he explained.

Other motivating factors included affinities for the music of Modest Mussorgsky

(Mays is a classical music fan), Georgian food (a popular ethnic cuisine in Russia), and Russia's strong scientific tradition.

Upon graduation, Mays started searching for a job in Russia that wouldn't involve teaching English. Since few businesses were hiring people fresh out of college, Mays said, a year-long position in an academic setting, with the possibility of extended employment, presented the perfect opportunity.

Job offer in hand, Mays moved to Moscow, where he stayed for the first three months in an apartment with a Russian-born friend from Harvard. The pay was decent: Mays estimates he made more than he would have teaching English, although he "wasn't rolling in cash."

More important, Mays said, he vastly improved his Russian reading skills while working with Russian scientists to edit English translations of scientific articles. He also developed an acute understanding of what he calls the "dismal" state of the Russian scientific community: although the theoretical work is still strong, he explains, experimental work has been limited by funding problems, making it difficult to attract students.

In his free time, Mays befriended other foreigners and got to know the city. "I thought it was interesting how quickly you're able to form bonds with foreigners in Russia," he said. "It's very easy to meet people from Central Asia, Moldova, etc. You kind of think of Russia as homogenous, but Moscow has an incredible amount of diversity."

Continued on page 10

# How far can language and area studies take you?

## Renaissance man/CREECA grad joins Foreign Service

By Alec Luhn  
WEB AND PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT

If Damien Wampler were to teach a seminar on what you can do with an area studies degree, it would be tough to decide which department should host his course.

Since receiving his master of arts degree from CREECA's interdisciplinary Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) program in 2005, Wampler has become a published playwright with a work that draws on his experience volunteering and conducting research in Central Asia. He's professionally exhibited his photographs from the Kyrgyz Republic and elsewhere. He's worked as a recruiter for the Peace Corps in New York City. Most recently, he's been accepted to the U.S. Foreign Service and is departing for the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on February 15.

Wampler says the skills he learned from the master's program in REECAS helped him earn admittance to the Foreign Service. More broadly, Wampler used his time at CREECA to develop a big-picture understanding of Central Asia, a region Wampler maintains will grow in geopolitical importance in the near future.

"The cool thing about CREECA is that you can create the degree that you want," Wampler said in a recent phone interview from Washington, D.C. "I liked the ability to tailor it to my own needs, which I couldn't do at other schools."

Even before he enrolled in the REECAS program, Wampler had accrued extensive experience living and working in Central Asia. After graduating from Boston University in 1999 with degrees in English and anthropology, he taught English as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Kyrgyz Republic until 2001.

From there, he went on to teach English in Slovakia and then to work as a recruiter for an exchange program in Uzbekistan.

Wampler's Peace Corps experience piqued his curiosity in Central Asia. He applied for the REECAS master's program to place his personal experience within a more comprehensive understanding of the region.

"I had very local experiences and I wanted to get a bigger picture," he said. "I wanted to see if what I was seeing in my Peace Corps village was part of a larger trend."

At CREECA, Wampler chose geography as his department of concentration, working mainly with Professor Robert Kaiser, but also took courses in anthropology and history. His additional exposure to political science coursework—an entirely new field for him—gave Wampler a different approach to employ when thinking about culture, one that he is confident will prove useful in his new Foreign Service position.

In fact, Wampler credited the area studies skills he developed in the REECAS program with helping him earn acceptance into the Foreign Service. Although he is an accomplished playwright—last year saw the debut of his play *Twin Towers* about the friendship between a soldier and a Peace Corps volunteer back from different experiences abroad—Wampler said that his weekly response papers and master's thesis enhanced the writing skills needed for the Foreign Service.

"I wanted to join the Foreign Service since childhood, but it took me three tries to pass the [Foreign Service exam]," he said. "Having an area specialization helps in passing the test."

During his time as a graduate student Wampler took a class on how to write a research proposal and collect data for social science research, which he said aided him in his work as a project manager for a Web site on Central Asian history and in his Fulbright research project. He went from a master's thesis on religion in Kyrgyzstan to a Fulbright project on the topic.

*Continued on page 10*



Selections from one of Wampler's series of photographs taken in Kyrgyzstan.

## Ten questions for Laura Weigel

Laura Weigel graduated from UW-Madison in 2009 with majors in International Studies and Russian Language and Civilization. From August to December 2009, she worked as a Participant Recruiter for the Future Leaders Exchange Program (FLEX) as part of American Councils for International Education.

**1. What drew you to study Russian language and culture? Did you ever think you would someday work in Russia?**

In my high school [Stratford (Wisconsin) Jr.-Sr. High School] there was a girl studying from Russia on the exact same exchange program I was just employed by. I thought, "Russia, that's neat." Then I worked on the program last year, so it's like I've come full circle ... But no, not at all, [the possibility of someday working in Russia] never crossed my mind.

**2. How do you use your Slavic degree in your work and life?**

Studying Russian at UW prepared me for the job I just did in Russia. Knowing the language was critical, even just in everyday life. I studied abroad through UW-Madison in Russia (Moscow), and that ... helped me more than anything. It gave me the confidence to really speak Russian, not just kind of speak it.

**3. How did you get your job in Russia? What was your favorite part about it?**

I saw it on the American Councils Web site. After I came back from study abroad, I started to always watch that. I really liked the chance to work with Russian youth. Part of it was interviewing students for a scholarship, and it was interesting to hear their opinions about what they would like to show American students and what they thought about America, just general cultural exchange stuff, their view of the world ... It was nice talking to teenagers



Photo courtesy of Laura Weigel

Weigel administers a test to high schoolers in Penza.

ers because they're very honest, especially Russian teenagers. They're not shy at all. And I got to travel all over. I saw tiny little Russian cities I never would have gone to otherwise.

**4. How did you like living in Russia? How would you characterize the culture and the people?**

I absolutely loved living there, but at the same time, it's a different world ... All the (Russian) people I worked with were friendly, hospitable and open. Also at times they were very honest; sometimes they say exactly what they're thinking without taking your feelings into consideration. What I like about Russia is its extremes. Life is always up and down, but it's always interesting. It's an adrenaline rush just being there.

**5. In your opinion, what distinguishes Slavic studies at UW-Madison?**

The cool thing about studying Russian is that not everybody studies it. It's a small world ... but those are people I've crossed paths with again and again, even those from other universities. I'm always able to stay friends with them and run into them in Russia. For my last job, at first I was nervous because a lot of the other recruiters had a master's ... but compared to my four American co-workers, I was surprised at how well I did. I was totally prepared; a degree from UW-Madison in Russian really laid the foundation well. I had a lot of experiences just as an undergraduate that people from other universities hadn't had.

**6. What have been unexpected benefits of a Russian degree?**

I feel like ... having a specialization in Russian makes [another degree] stand out even more, as opposed to just international studies ... Proving

*Continued on next page*