

Slavic News: Summer 2021



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR, KATARZYNA DZIWIUREK

Dear Friends of the Slavic Department,



I do not think that I have ever awaited the end of the academic year with such eagerness, as I did the end of AY 2020/21! It has been a difficult year for students, faculty and staff. Teaching and learning remotely presented us with many challenges, and the efficiencies

introduced by the college (closure of the Testing Center, centralizing Humanities departments' advising) made running the department more difficult. However, we persevered, this year is finally over and UW president Ana Mari Cauce's recent announcement that the fall quarter will be taught in person, was greeted with much joy and relief by everyone.

The pandemic disrupted our plans concerning departmental visitors, but our Ukrainian FLTA Marta Tomakhiv made it to the US and taught second year Ukrainian. Marta organized a number of very successful online events promoting Ukrainian culture and we are very grateful for her ingenuity and resilience.

Next year, we are looking forward to hosting three visitors. Wiktor Gardocki from the University of

Białystok in Poland will join us as a visiting scholar in August. Wiktor studies Polish literature and censorship, and will be with us till November. Our new Ukrainian FLTA will be Sofiia Fedzhora. Sofiia is a graduate of Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv and a specialist in language teaching. In the spring, Dawid Junke, the Polish Fulbright Lecturer who was supposed to come this year, will teach a course entitled *Cinematic Metamorphoses: Polish and American Cinema after 1989*. Dawid's home institution is the University of Wrocław.

I hope everyone reading this has a relaxing and restful summer. We need it!! Please stay in touch with us, as always.

All the best,

Kat Dziwurek

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2021 SLAVIC CONVOCATION

On June 11, 2021, faculty, staff, students, and guests met online to celebrate the accomplishments of our 2021 graduates and award winners.

Chair and Professor, Dr. Katarzyna Dziwirek, opened the ceremony with a warm welcome and introduction of this year's keynote speaker, Dr. Mark Preslar (Ph.D., Slavic Languages & Literatures, University of Washington,

1994). Dr. Preslar, chair of Russian at The University of the South in Sewanee, TN, impressed



upon our graduates the importance of resilience—a skill they have gained from their liberal arts major—especially during times of disruption.

The ceremony concluded with recognition of the award winners and graduates, who were given the opportunity to share what studying in the department means to them. Although we are sad not to have been able to celebrate in person this year, we are so proud of all of the accomplishments of our students!



Congratulations to the class of 2021. We cannot wait to hear where your lives take you!

2021 Graduates and Award Winners

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Hailey Elena Hollingsworth
Nick Zorin

MASTER OF ARTS

Taylor V. Wilson

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Veronica Muskheli

AWARDS

Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Melinda J. Whalen

Outstanding Graduate Student

Biljana Konatar

Slavic Excellence Prize

Natalia Owen (undergraduate)
Biljana Konatar (graduate)

Outstanding Student of Polish

Lani Phillips

Outstanding Students of Russian

1st Year: Melinda J. Whalen

2nd Year: Gretta M. Woodall

3rd Year: Joshua Swynenburg &
Jordan T. Zaugg

4th Year: Alexa Ryer

2020-21 Chester William Fritz Scholarship

Joshua Swynenburg

2020-21 Antoinette Wills Endowed Scholarship

Nathan A. Marks

2021 A&S Dean's Graduate Medalist (Humanities)

Veronica Muskheli

FACULTY NEWS

Assistant Professor Sasha Senderovich spent Winter and Spring 2021 quarters as a fellow at the Frankel Institute for Judaic Studies at the University of

Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he was part of a group of scholars working on projects related to the Institute's theme, "Translating Jewish Cultures." While on the fellowship, he began working, together with his co-translator Harriet Murav (University of Illinois), on a new translation project tentatively titled "In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Short Stories by Jewish Writers from the USSR." The pair intends to publish their book of translated literary works by three Yiddish writers and three Russian writers from the Soviet Union, who wrote after and in the shadow of the Second World War, in 2023 or 2024.

STUDENT NEWS

Biljana Konatar, Ph.D. candidate, was recently featured in the Odegaard Writing & Research Center's podcast on graduate writing, [Write for You](#). The podcast features open, interdisciplinary conversations about writing in graduate school from experienced graduate writers across disciplines, programs, and stages of writing. Each episode of the five-part series brings together two graduate writers to share their graduate writing experiences, strategies, and encouragements for graduate students across campus. Anyone interested in listening to the podcast can find it on major streaming platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and Spotify.

Veronica Muskheli, 2021 Ph.D. recipient, was named the 2021 A&S Dean's Graduate Medalist in the Humanities. This award recognizes an outstanding graduate student in each Arts & Sciences division. In addition, On June 3rd, Veronica presented online her talk "Sex, Seeing and S Juzhet: Slavic Tales of Amor and Psyche Type" at the 12th Grošljev simpozij in Ljubljana, Slovenia, a conference of Slovenian Classical scholars. Her presentation consisted of a comparative analysis of Resian/Slovenian, Russian, and Ukrainian tales and the "Cupid and Psyche" tale from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. Based on the structure of the tales, she argued that the invisibility of the husband is a metaphor for the heroine initially not knowing the man in arranged marriages (characteristic of both ancient Greek and old Slavic traditions), and that the heroine's quest describes the difficulties of learning to know and love another person--her new husband.

Svetlana Ostroverkhova, M.A. student, was in the difficult position of beginning her program during the pandemic. Here she provides an update on her experience thus far.

What are you studying here? Are there any particular faculty members whose areas of expertise are of specific interest to you?

Despite my field of study being Russian literature (I'm specifically interested in the oeuvres of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Alexander Solzhenitsyn), I find exciting the areas of expertise of the faculty members I have met so far. I have had courses in linguistics with Katarzyna, in BCMS with Bojan, and taken some independent studies under Jose's supervision. I was not much into linguistics before I came here, but the courses taught by Katarzyna, which I took as a student and TA'ed, made me discover how much a language can tell us about what we think if we apply specific tools to uncover it. The BCMS class helped me systematize and improve the knowledge I already had, and Bojan's jokes have filled me with energy even on the busiest days! I also TA'ed Gordana's class on East European literature and cinema, and that was another treasure trove of concealed masterpieces shedding light on the (often tragic) history of that part of the world. I am grateful to Jose for letting me work on the research topic I wanted and sharing so many hints and tools to improve my writing and research skills and Michael Biggins for looking for literary material for my future thesis.

What has it been like to begin your studies during the pandemic? What are you looking forward to as things begin to return to "normal"?

Starting my program in a new country remotely was not easy. It definitely slowed down the process of my getting adjusted to these new conditions. But the faculty and staff were so helpful that everything went smoothly. I am looking forward to meeting everyone in person in a couple of months!

Before this year, had you been to Seattle before? Any "must see" destinations for you as things start opening up?

I hadn't been to Seattle before I came to study at UW. I have already seen quite a lot around the country and enjoyed it a lot. My "must see" destinations in Seattle are jazz places, people say that the music here is great!

In Autumn Quarter 2021, we are pleased to welcome two new graduates students to the department. Get to know them now!

Meet Allison Hartley, M.A. Student



Allison is a longtime resident of Whatcom County. She completed a bachelor's degree in linguistics prior to enrolling in the M.A. Program in Slavic Languages & Literatures at the UW.

Why did you choose to apply to the UW Slavic Department?

Russian literature and poetry (as well as poetry by authors of other nationalities) is one of my primary extracurricular interests, and I hope to conduct comparative research in this field. I also believe that the Slavic program will provide me with the resources needed to gain skills and knowledge applicable in foreign language instruction.

What do you hope to study you are here? Are there any particular faculty members whose areas of expertise are of specific interest to you?

I am interested in comparative literature as well as language pedagogy, and hope to learn one or more Slavic languages in addition to Russian.

Do you have any experience studying abroad?

I have studied abroad virtually at a Russian university.

Have you ever been to Seattle before? Any "must see" destinations for you?

I have been to Seattle before and even spent an afternoon on the University of Washington campus. One destination which I would certainly like to visit again is the Suzzallo library.

Meet Dasha Prokhorova, Ph.D. Student

Здравствуйте! I was born in Moscow, I grew up in Pittsburgh, PA and my family is now based in Williamsburg, VA. I've lived in New York City for the last five years, and it was a fantastic city in which to spend this period of my life. My research interests are



quite broad and include literary and media representations of everyday life and cultural memory during post-revolutionary and post-Soviet periods, hybridity of language in émigré literature, bilingualism, and second language acquisition and code-switching. University of Washington's Slavic Languages and Literatures program greatly appealed to me because of its interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and culture, as well as its excellent faculty. I plan to focus my research on late 20th-century Russian literature, particularly those narratives where late Soviet and émigré experiences intersect. I would especially like to focus on Sergei Dovlatov's narratives of immigrant experiences, both in his fiction and in his autobiographical works. I look forward to working with Professor Galya Diment, whose research on 20th-century Russian literature and life writing would provide me with an invaluable framework for my analysis of émigré writing. Professor José Alaniz's work on contemporary Russian prose and visual culture would be similarly useful in my investigation of the discourse around post-revolutionary life through both literary and media lens. The program also really appealed to me because of the faculty's expertise in linguistics, an area that I am excited to learn more about. To this end, I look forward to working with Professor Katarzyna Dziwirek, whose research on bilingualism aligns with my interest in linguistic patterns in émigré literature.

I spent time both studying and teaching abroad in college and during my early professional life. During my undergraduate studies at the University of Virginia, I participated in the University of Pittsburgh's Summer Language Institute and spent five weeks studying in Moscow and St. Petersburg. I also studied Spanish and had the privilege of studying in Lima, Peru for six weeks during the summer, as well as traveling to Cusco and Iquitos. The summer after graduating, I taught English in Voronezh, Russia, as part of an internship through Crossroads Eurasia. After obtaining my TEFL Certification, I also spent a year and a half teaching English in the Czech Republic in 2014-15.

I visited Seattle for the first time this past June! While I only scratched the surface of the city, I really enjoyed the mountain views, the waterfront and the seafood. I am excited to continue exploring and seeing everything that the West coast has to offer. My fascination with volcanoes has led me to ambitiously add hiking Mt. Rainier to my Seattle to-do list. In addition to Russian, I am also passionate about the Spanish language and Latin American literature and plan to continue pursuing these interests during my time at the University of Washington. Outside of my studies, I love to dance and am currently very immersed in salsa dancing. I have been very spoiled by the dance scene in NYC and am looking forward to exploring everything that Seattle has to offer!

FULBRIGHT NEWS

We were so happy to have our Fulbright FLTA from Ukraine, Marta Tomakhiv, join us this year (even if most of the department was only able to meet her via Zoom!). Here Marta tells us about her experiences during this unusual year.

Getting started, or 'smoke on the water' welcomes you

My arrival to Seattle for my Fulbright FLTA Program was a bit rough. The west coast was in thick fog because of the fires in California. All the pressure of doing my program during COVID was hanging heavily upon me. Nevertheless, I was genuinely happy—I made it to the US! My lifelong dream of doing Fulbright came true, and I could not be luckier for being placed at the University of Washington. First, I was placed in

a big city, which values rain and coffee culture. Second, I was not afraid of feeling lonely because, surprisingly, I had some acquaintances in the city and the area. Third, the State of Washington, in my opinion, is one of the most picturesque states across the US. Given all



that, most of all, I appreciated this opportunity to be able to teach and study online at least from the same time zone. Also, even though sparingly, I still could learn more about the US culture by

physically being present in the country. Following one of my life principles to look at everything from the bright side, during September, I was getting prepared to set off for the biggest adventure in my adult life—working and studying at the UW, and the format of it didn't matter to me.

'Living on my own' in Zoom

I remember my first Ukrainian class of the fall quarter—I was intimidated by teaching my mother tongue. How will it go? Will students understand me? Will they like me? Will Zoom format work well? The first classes went good enough, I sighed with relief, and later on I enjoyed each and every class.

This was the smallest group of students I have ever worked with: a group of four during the fall quarter, and a group of three during the winter and spring ones. Such a small grouping (though, I bet, it's a large one for learning Ukrainian in the US!) gave me more flexibility in planning lessons, allowed me to spend more time and attention on each of them, and created more opportunities for a quality practice of all four language skills. Also, it allowed me to learn more about them as people. I appreciate their efforts, attention, energy, and enthusiasm, and I can say a personal 'thank you' for that to each of them - Taylor Wilson, Maria Burgess, Viktoriia Svyrydovska, Sophie Clemmons, and Michael Bondarenko, and also for being responsive, understanding and very responsible students.

At our classes and the Ukrainian Conversation Club, we covered so many exciting topics. Ukrainian Food, contemporary music, Ukrainian Wedding traditions, modern Ukrainian music, and many other themes. Together with the students and representatives of the Ukrainian community, we celebrated many significant events online. For instance, Christmas, Easter, Vyshyvanka Day, International Mother Language Day, marked birthdays of Shevchenko, Lesia Ukrainka, commemorated the Chernobyl Tragedy and Holodomor, to mention but a few. Virtual learning environment encouraged using as many authentic resources as possible. We watched Ukrainer episodes, learned recent news from Toronto TV, listened to Ukrainian performers like alyona alyona and old-school but always good Mertvyi Piven, and did many other things to know more about Ukraine.

Actually, Zoom created more occasions for bringing Ukraine closer through Ukraine NOW talks on literature, Malanka traditions, Shevchenko, and drawing pysanky. How else would our Ukrainian speakers be able to join us from the other side of the globe?

Never too much knowledge

My studies at the UW are a whole different story. In the first quarter, I would sign up for three courses (with a requirement to do one), just because I couldn't choose from the variety of subjects so interesting to me! Overall, I took five courses as a student on language teaching, pedagogy, linguistics, and literature. My favorite one was The Craft of Verse. During this course, I tried my hand in writing poetry in English! Surprisingly for myself, in my poetry, I reflected on the experiences and hardships people encountered in Ukraine through the perspective of the lives of my close and distant family members. It was so empowering, and I was thrilled to share some insights from Ukrainian history and life with the professor and my fellow students at the course.

Moreover, the final project from The Craft of Verse inspired a topic for further academic research. With that topic, I was accepted to deliver a presentation Ukrainian American Authors: Fiction, or Poetry? at the 27th REECAS Northwest Conference. Another lifetime event of presenting at an international conference! With the poems written during The Craft of Verse course, I got a partial scholarship to participate in the

2021 Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing Summer Writers' Conference, with the additional support by the Slavic Languages and Literatures Department and the Ukrainian Endowment Committee.

'You can't stop me now' when it comes to meeting people

I was aware that my experience would not be complete as I could not communicate and network with other people that often. No public gatherings in Seattle, no events on campus, no museums open in winter. I was blessed to make friends with my fellow Fulbrighter Gizem Yolcu, a Turkish Fulbright FLTA at the UW. We would set daily Turkish Coffee time, study time, complaining time, walking to campus time. We shared adventures visiting neighbouring islands – Bainbridge, Vashon (don't ask me why), and... Oahu. Yes, we treated ourselves to a Hawaii trip during our well-deserved break from work and studies!



Life was fair to me by letting me connect in person with fellow grad students from the department, especially Nathan Marks and Stefana Vukadinovich. We shared many simple but joyful moments talking about life, exploring the city, campus, and museums. Vaccination, though, opened more opportunities to meet up. Right before my departure, I was honoured to meet offline faculty members and colleagues from the department: my supervisor, Professor Kat Dziwirek and Graduate Program Adviser Lani Phillips; I paid visits to Professor Laada Bilaniuk and Professor Eugene Lemcio. I must point out that my colleagues have been very supportive during my whole time working for the department.

I was lucky enough with my previous life experiences— I have friends across the US, and working with the American Councils before, I acquired many meaningful connections. And many of them were generous enough to welcome me to visit them. In such a way, I travelled to and explored the states of Arizona, North Carolina, Florida, cities of Chicago and New York. I had

friends who took me on dozens of hikes in Washington. I remember each of the hikes vividly because you can never forget the rich green moss, the waterfalls and the evergreens of WA. One of my dreams—Alaska, has not come true yet, but hopefully, it will be an adventure for some other time.



I was never alone during holidays—I was invited by my former teacher from my alma mater back in Ukraine, Oksana Richter (the world is small), who happened to live in the area. I engaged with the

Ukrainian community at Our Lady of Zarvanytsia Ukrainian Greek Catholic church, and Plast—National Scouting Organization of Ukraine in Seattle. Thanks to all these interactions it felt like home all the time.

COVID didn't hold me back from meeting many wonderful people outside the university. I immensely enjoyed their company, they showed me around and helped a great deal.

What you get – you should give back

It was sad to leave my work at the UW and Seattle. I have this strange ability to adjust quickly to new circumstances, and I truly feel I am a citizen of the world. When I was asked what I missed about my home in Ukraine, I thought for a while: I was so immersed in the US experience, I couldn't think of anything. But now I am back in Kyiv, full of energy and inspiration to share the experience I got during my Fulbright Program with others. And I do realize I missed many things, many people and places, and now I am delighted to reunite with them.

I can boldly call the US my second home. For almost a year I lived there—and this is the longest time I have spent abroad! I am grateful to so many people behind the scenes who made this experience possible for me and to those who were with me along the way. I am grateful to The Fulbright Program and Fulbright for entrusting me to be a Ukrainian "ambassador". I am thankful to the Slavic Languages and Literatures

Department for letting me become a part of the faculty during this challenging and very unusual academic year.

I like the saying that there are times to say 'hello' and times to say 'goodbye'. My utterance is 'see you later', because my life has the magic to bring me back to places I visited before and people I met. I hope it will be the case this time. More is yet to come!

-Marta Tomakhiv

POLISH NEWS

We congratulate Lani Phillips, our Administrator, for receiving the 2021 Best Student of Polish prize awarded by the Polish Home Women's Club - Koło Pań. Lani has studied Polish for the past two years, doing it with dedication and passion, and achieving great results. Gratulujemy!

Despite challenges presented by this difficult year, the Committee stayed active and brought great lectures to our community.

In February, **Professor Beth Holmgren** from Duke University gave a lecture entitled *Interhuman History: How Magdalena Grzebałkowska Rewrites the Aftermath of World War II in "Poland 1945: War and Peace"*. Magdalena Grzebałkowska, an award-winning author of Polish reportaż, has produced a 21st-century *War and Peace* strikingly different from Lev Tolstoy's great 19th-century novel.

In March, **Anna Cholewinska**, who knew Fr. Twardowski personally, shared her stories about a priest, a poet, and a person, in her talk *Fr. Jan of the Ladybug: A story of Fr. Jan Twardowski*.

In April, **Marek Wieczorek**, professor at UW of Modern and Contemporary Art History, gave a fascinating lecture about the art and life of Polish sculptor Katarzyna Kobro who, between 1925 and 1933, made a series of groundbreaking abstract Spatial Compositions.

Looking Forward

On September 26, 11:00AM (PT) we will be hosting (on ZOOM) [Dr. Justyna Budzik](#) & [Dr. Jacek Mikołajczyk](#), our

former Fulbrighters, who in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Polish—US Fulbright Commission, will be talking about their experiences as visiting scholars at the UW.

In October (date TBD), [Professor Neal Pease](#) from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and President of the Polish-American Historical Association, will give a talk about the history of Poles in American sports, including Zbyszko, professional wrestler and a three-time World Heavyweight Champion during the 1920s.

On November 17, [Professor Grażyna J. Kozaczka](#) from Cazenovia College will give a talk based on her recent book *Writing the Polish American Woman in Postwar Ethnic Fiction*, in which she traces the evolution of women's efforts to construct gendered and classed ethnicity.

And there will be many more events coming up next calendar year.

ZOOM links to the lectures will be accessible later on the Slavic Department's website.

Wishing you a joyful, healthy, and sunny summer!

-Krystyna Untersteiner

NEWS FROM YOU

Michele Anciaux Aoki (M.A., 1975; Ph.D., 1991) writes: "This year of the COVID-19 pandemic turned out to be a fruitful one in relation to launching a new project funded by the Legislature in August 2020 through the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Together with four other Slavic Department part-time and affiliate faculty (Ileana Marin and Otilia Baraboi for Romanian, and Svetlana Abramova and Veronica Muskheli for Russian), we developed a remote learning, project-based language program for high school Heritage Language speakers of Romanian and Russian to earn the Global Seal of Biliteracy and prepare to earn the Global Competence Certificate from the World Affairs Council. (Two other K-12 instructors worked with Spanish.) June 29, 2021 was the final awards ceremony, hosted by the World Affairs Council (on Zoom, of course). Most of the students managed to fit in remote-proctored language

proficiency testing in the three heritage languages (plus English to qualify for the Global Seal of Biliteracy) at the end of the school year in June. Their perseverance was impressive, and their insight into their identities as heritage language speakers was inspiring and touching. To learn more about the grant project, [click here](#). Students are still posting some of their projects to [this website](#).

Now, several of us from [SEETAW](#) are embarking on a new project for the YCRED Conference, a free international online virtual one-day event on Thursday, October 14, 2021. "Y" Cred is an event especially designed for "Youth" that will include opportunities for bilingual conversations with classrooms around the world, interactive learning activities, exciting live presentations, on-demand sessions and much more. We have been invited to organize about 6 hours of engaging content for students from anywhere in the world who are learning any of the Slavic and East European languages that are interested in participating. We have Romanian (Otilia Baraboi) and Bulgarian (Angela Hasheva) on board already, but we have room for all languages from this region. Please contact me at michelea@uw.edu if you'd like more information. (Or we'll be contacting you!)

On a personal note, my life is now stretched between Seattle and Jacksonville, FL, where I am taking care of Paul's and my granddaughter, Ruth Emiko Cooper, who is almost 8 months old. It's a delight to have this experience of getting to know her so well, while also observing the astonishing pace of her development physically, cognitively, and linguistically. Thanks to Zoom, I can still keep connected with family, colleagues, and projects in Seattle, or... anywhere.

Finally, I should mention that I was pleased to be invited to join the Board of the American Romanian Cultural Society (ARCS) this year. I hope I can contribute to this worthy organization. And I must also add that I participated in many of the Readings from the Heart of Europe series this year and enjoyed them tremendously. Thank you so much to the organizers!"

Carol Davis (M.A., 1979), has recently been given a Fulbright Specialist grant. Previously she has had two Senior Scholar grants from Fulbright. The grant was supposed to be for fall, but due to the pandemic she expects will turn out to be for spring. She will be going

to Northern-Eastern Federal University in Neryungrī Sakha Republic, and is thrilled.

Jake Hansen (B.A., 2018) writes: “I haven't submitted an update since graduating in 2018, so there's a lot to catch up on. After completing my English-teaching Fulbright grant in Omsk, Russia in 2018–19, I moved to Moscow, where I taught English in an after-school program and took private students through the end of 2019. I then returned to the States and applied to an MA program at The University of Chicago beginning in autumn 2020. I was accepted, but deferred my entrance until autumn 2021 due to classes moving online for the pandemic. In the meanwhile, I have been living in Colorado working remotely as a freelance Russian–English translator and editor for a number of companies, including Yandex, Positive Technologies (cybersecurity), and Levsha (video games), among others. This year I also joined the Colorado Translators Association and have volunteered a small number of hours doing Russian–English interpreting for the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN).

In my remaining hours I have been working part-time as a gardener, backpacking when the weather allows, catching up with friends and family, and doing everything else I can to squeeze the most out of this strange, protracted 2-year lead-up to grad school.

Wishing you all the best!”

Mark E. Kiken (B.A., 1972) writes: “The four years I spent at the UW were among the most memorable of my life. Intellectually, academically, and socially I quickly went from adolescence to early adulthood. During my senior year I took the Department’s first year course in Slavic linguistics with Jim Augerot. Those three quarters, as well as my overall education in the Slavic Department, positioned me incredibly well in Brown’s Ph.D. track. At Brown, I found myself in a “first year” class of one. That afforded me the opportunity to work closely with some giants in the field: Henry Kučera (my future dissertation advisor, who went on in the early eighties to create the spell checker we all use today; he and I took a course together in *The Physics of Memory*, taught by Leon Cooper, who had won the Nobel Prize for his work in superconductivity) and Antonín Dostál, at that time perhaps the world’s preeminent scholar in Old Church Slavonic (toward the end of grad school, Dostál and I put together an OCS

reader for future publication). I became close personal friends with Dostál and his wife, resulting in my frequently driving with them down to NJ, where their son taught mathematics at Stevens Institute of Technology, while I visited cousins a few miles away in Jersey City. Without the UW experience I would never have been in a position to take full advantage of the people and educational opportunities at Brown.

Sometime during the 1975-76 academic year, I approached the dean in charge of university housing about creating a Russian House on the Brown campus for the 1976-77 academic year, my last on campus. I was successful to the point that he gave the new House an entire section of a new dorm on the Pembroke Campus (Pembroke had been a women’s college, which merged with Brown in the same way that Radcliffe merged with Harvard). I was appointed the *house father*. For my services I received a single room—free of charge—in the House. Even though I left Brown in 1977, I still have friends from that time in the Russian House. After my departure from Brown, other grad students became heads of the House.

After briefly teaching at the University of Missouri-Columbia, I returned home to Colorado and pursued a career in business. I went from teaching Russian and linguistics to being Director of Marketing for an automotive aftermarket company. Quite the perfect segue, right? From there I served as a business consultant working with banks that directed us to customers in trouble. After I told one of those customers that he should fire his sons, he hired me to run the company. During my next stint, which lasted close to fifteen years, I rose from a distribution center purchasing manager to the corporate office where I ended up in charge of forecasting / planning / purchasing in a Fortune 250 company, International Multifoods. My responsibilities included overseeing and directing activities in 20 distribution centers and annual purchases of over \$1 billion. Then, for roughly a dozen years I created and ran my own executive search company.

In the middle of my time as a headhunter, in 2000, I had a short-lived partnership with a businessman I had met here in Denver through the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce. The Russian government was allowing exploratory drilling off the northeast corner of the island of Sakhalin (Сахалин). Most of the world’s

then major oil companies wanted in and they set up offices in the capital, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (Южно-Сахалинск). My partner, two others, and I sent furniture and furnishings to Южно-Сахалинск in advance of an exposition we hosted in order to attract oil company business. My most vivid memories are flying out of Anchorage and past Denali, looking down and seeing the Aleutians, the roughest landing imaginable in Анадырь (extreme northeast Russia; the landscape looked like it was straight out of the Gulag!), flying over the Kamchatka Peninsula (a stark, snow-covered scene with smoking volcanoes), P-K (Петропавловск-Камчатский). It was a totally unforgettable three-week adventure.

In late 2006, I started a COO search for a Denver-based trust company. I ended up filling the slot with myself and becoming a partner in March 2007. In 2008, I took on a totally new role: Executive VP for Business Development (the “outside” guy, the rainmaker), parlaying the skills I had acquired in previous years as a campaign manager, then campaign chair for two successful campaigns for a seat in the Colorado House. I spent the majority of my time working with hundreds of attorneys (probate, trust and estate law) in Colorado, Washington and elsewhere and their clients. It was an incredible education in the law and an experience I truly enjoyed.

I’ve been taking photos since I was eighteen. My parents’ high school graduation present to me was a Mamiya Sekor 35mm camera. It went with me to Leningrad, where I honed my skills. Seventeen or eighteen years ago I bought my first digital camera. One of the first pictures I took with that camera ended up on the April 2016 cover of *The Colorado Lawyer*, the official publication of The Colorado Bar Association of which I was a patron member. The overwhelmingly positive reactions I received were the catalyst for my beginning to consider a career as a professional

photographer. In June 2018, I departed the trust company and set out into photography world. If you would like to see what I have been up to, please visit [my website](#). For more examples of my work you can [click here](#). I have probably taken close to 40,000 digital photographs. My overall portfolio consists of over 3,000 photographs (in nearly two dozen categories and sub-categories), which I have distilled down to 400+ photographs, my *best of the best*. I would welcome any inquiries about my work.

It would be especially nice to hear from fellow Russian House residents from the 1968-1969 academic year as well as fellow Russian majors. Please feel free to contact me: mekiken43256@comcast.net.”

Corey Krzan (B.A., 2012) writes: “Greetings from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba! Last December, the Navy moved me back to Washington, DC, to join the defense team of Mr. Ammar al Baluchi, a current GTMO detainee and one of the five co-accused in the 9/11 case of *United States v. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, et al.* (nope, this case STILL hasn't gone to trial). Thanks to improving pandemic conditions, I was finally able to travel to the island and meet with my client (as well as several iguanas, a few banana rats, and plenty of humidity).”

Don Livingston (Ph.D., 1998) continues to work at ASU, and is functioning this summer as Curriculum Coordinator and Faculty Lead in the Critical Languages Institute at the Melikian Center at Arizona State University, which mostly means he did a *lot* of classroom observation for thirteen different languages. He is quite impressed how well most instructors have adapted to distance teaching, although he is really looking forward to returning to the classroom in the Fall.

From all of us to you, we wish you a relaxing summer and fall. Stay healthy, and please stay in touch!

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