

Letter from Chair Katarzyna Dziwirek



Dear Friends of the Slavic Department,

The passing year has again brought changes to the Slavic Department. As we mentioned in the July letter, Jaroslava Soldanova retired after 16 years of teaching Czech, and Maria Rewakowicz, our Ukrainian specialist, left for New York. We miss them both! This summer our Coordinator/Undergraduate Advisor Teresa Ta, who replaced Megan Styles, left us for a full-time advising position elsewhere on campus. We were very fortunate that our former colleague, Eloise Boyle, was looking for a job in academic services after an eleven-year hiatus spent raising her sons. Eloise was a lecturer and faculty undergraduate advisor in the department from 1995 to 2003. She has joined us again this fall and is busy advising students and working on a number of outreach initiatives, of which we hope to tell you more in the spring.

Megan reports that she is really enjoying her new position as an

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield, and she returned to her field site in Kenya to conduct research this past summer. However, she writes that she misses everyone in the department, especially our marvelous undergraduates, and sends her greetings to all.

In September the department hosted the 9th Slavic Linguistics Society Conference, which was attended by top scholars from several continents as well as numerous younger scholars and graduate students. The conference was a huge success thanks in no small part to the tireless work of the organizing committee and the staff of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, which was one of the sponsors of the meeting.

Also in September we welcomed this year's Polish Fulbright lecturer, Dr. Jakub Tyszkiewicz. Dr. Tyszkiewicz is an historian from the University in Wrocław. He taught 1000 years of Polish History and Culture in the fall and will teach History of Poland in Polish Film in the winter.

The fall quarter also brought some very deserved recognition to two of our lecturers. Dr. Bojan Belić won the Excellence in Teaching at the Postsecondary Level award. This is a national prize presented each year by American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. Dr. Valentina Zaitseva was nominated for UW's Distinguished Teaching Award, the University's most

prestigious teaching award. We are very proud to have such excellent teachers as members of our faculty!

I want to close by wishing you all a very good New Year: much success in your professional endeavors and much happiness, joy and fulfillment in your private lives. I hope you will stay in touch with us in 2015. All the best,

Kat Dziwirek

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SLAVIC LINGUISTICS SOCIETY CONFERENCE

On the weekend right before classes started for the 2014/2015 academic year (September 19-21, 2014), the University of Washington's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Department of Linguistics, with a great help from The Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities and assistance from UW Office of the Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, and the Slavic Linguistics Society, organized the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Slavic Linguistics Society. This annual conference's main goal is to bring together academics from North America, Europe, and Asia bound by their interest in the Slavic languages. The goal was easily reached in Seattle with participants coming from all over the globe, from Japan all the way around to South Korea. In addition to the variety, richness, and depth of the field of Slavic linguistics reflected by all the different papers delivered at the conference, the different approaches to the study of Slavic languages was exemplified by the three invited speakers as well: Greville Corbett (University of Surrey), Olga T. Yokoyama (UCLA), and Roumyana Pancheva (University of Southern California).

FACULTY NEWS

During autumn quarter **Professor Galya Diment** was voted in as Affiliate Faculty in Jewish Studies. Her article, "Katherine Mansfield's Russian Healers," appeared in *The London Magazine* (October-November 2014), 31-35, based on a talk she gave at the "Mansfield in France" conference at the Sorbonne University, Paris, at the end of June. The full 25-page version will be coming out next year in *Katherine Mansfield's French Afterlives*, eds. Claire Davison Pegon and Gerri Kimber, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

UW-UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA EXCHANGE NEWS

In 2014, for the thirty-sixth year running, UW's exchange of faculty with the University of Ljubljana brought campus visits from two Slovene scholars: Prof. Vesna Hadži, a BCS specialist from Ljubljana's Department of Slavic Languages, and Prof. Tanja Pak, who directs the glass arts program at Ljubljana's Academy of Fine Arts and Design. Professor Hadži met with Bojan Belić's BCS classes, consulted with students on research projects and delivered a lecture on BCS sociolinguistics at an April meeting of the UW Linguistics Forum. In October Professor Pak, Slovenia's most prominent glass artist, renowned for her installations [in Slovenia](#) and throughout Europe, collaborated with UW colleagues and students of glass arts and other media in the School of Art's 3D4M program. Established in 1978, the UW-University of Ljubljana Scholar Exchange is one of only a handful of exchanges that exist between U.S. and Slovene universities. – *Michael Biggins*

LATE IMPERIAL-EARLY SOVIET RUSSIAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS EXHIBIT IN UW LIBRARIES

From the Lowly Lubok to Soviet Realism: Early Twentieth-Century Children's Books From Russia was the title of an exhibit on display in the UW Libraries Department of Special Collections from June 30 to October 24, 2014, featuring more than one hundred rare specimens of the genre published in Russia from the 1890s to 1930s. The exhibit comprised almost exclusively the collection of the late Pamela K. Harer, a Seattle area book collector whose interests in recent years focused on Russian children's books. Supplemented by rare holdings from the UW Libraries, the exhibit outlined the emergence of a distinctive Russian children's book style beginning in the 1890s under the influence of the Russian revival and the artists around *Mir iskusstva*, the radically creative reshaping of the genre in the 1920s under the influence of Constructivist artists, and its gradual absorption in the 1930s by the Soviet Union's new official aesthetic, socialist realism. Original editions of children's books created by author/artist pairs including Vladimir Mayakovsky and El Lisitsky, Samuil Marshak and Vladimir Lebedev, Evgeny Charushin and Vitaly Bianki and many more were included in the exhibit, which was curated by Ms. Harer in collaboration with Sandra Kroupa, UW book arts librarian. – *Michael Biggins*

An 'Unappetizing' Lecture on Vladimir Sorokin

José Alaniz

In an event sponsored by the UW Slavic Department, Professor Dirk Uffelmann, Chair of Slavic Literatures and Cultures at the Universität Passau - Philosophische Fakultät in Passau, Germany, delivered a lecture on the contemporary Russian writer Vladimir Sorokin at the Suzzallo Library's Allen Auditorium on September 29, 2014.



The lecture, titled “Sorokin’s Cuisine,” delved into depictions of food in the writer’s oeuvre, many of the most unappetizing sort – no surprise, given Sorokin’s status as one of the most controversial figures in contemporary Russian letters. But as Dr. Uffelmann showed, along with the graphic violence and strident anti-Putin critiques, Sorokin is also an ardent lover of food, his works often focusing on the sensuous physicality of eating – and other things that bodies do to comestibles. Food represents a key aspect of how the material and the philosophical overlap in works such as the novella “A Month in Dachau,” the short story collection *The Feast* and the novel *Norma*. For many readers, the effect is far from pleasant.

“Disgust is only one facet in the wide spectrum of functions food performs in Sorokin’s works, ranging from political allegory through ethical solidarity and intercultural stereotypes to fantastic incorporation,” Dr. Uffelmann explained. “A common underpinning is the metadiscursive – or in this case, metaculinary – nature of Sorokin’s food fictions, a feature which connects the early Sorokin of late-Soviet Moscow Conceptualism with the allegedly post-conceptualist author of the 2000s.”

Some 15 people attended the talk, at the conclusion of which Dr. Uffelmann answered audience questions, which ranged from the role of disgust in Sorokin’s work; the literary depiction of the body; and the current political climate in Russia (which in part led to Sorokin’s decision earlier this year to emigrate to Germany).

Dr. Uffelmann studied Russian, Polish, Czech and German Literature at the Universities of Tübingen, Vienna, Warsaw, and Constance. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Constance in 1999 and defended his second thesis (Habilitation) at the University of Bremen in 2005 before teaching as Lecturer in Russian at the University of Edinburgh. He was visiting professor at the University of Bergen, Norway and Western Michigan University, USA, as well as visiting fellow at the University of Cambridge and the University of Munich.

At present, he is full professor of Slavic Literatures and Cultures at the University of Passau and research fellow of the joint Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies of the Universities of Munich and Regensburg. From 2011 to 2014 he served as Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. His research interests include Russian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Central Asian literature, philosophy, religion, migration, masculinity and internet studies. He is co-editor of the journal Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie as well as of the book series Postcolonial Perspectives on Eastern Europe and Polonistik im Kontext.

He is co-editor of a collection of essays, Vladimir Sorokin’s Languages (Ed. Tine Roesen and Uffelmann. Bergen: University of Bergen, 2013), which includes a contribution by UW Slavic associate professor José Alaniz. The volume contains the proceedings of a 2012 conference, “Vladimir Sorokin’s Languages: Mediality, Interculturality, Translation,” held at Aarhus University in Aarhus, Denmark, which Sorokin himself attended as guest of honor.

ROMANIAN FILM FESTIVAL – Ileana Marina

The First Romanian Film Festival in the Pacific Northwest was a great success. It was organized by the American Romanian Cultural Society in partnership with the New York Romanian Cultural Institute, and sponsored by Smart Ventures, the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and REECAS. Three films, five shorts, and one documentary were brought to the SIFF Film Center between November 7 and 9. All films, irrespective of their genre, shared a bittersweet tone which, in the end, left open the possibility of redemption and hope even in the most desperate situations. This is precisely this trait of Romanians who make fun of their misfortunes and come up with unexpectedly funny solutions that inspired the title of the festival “One Eye Laughing, One Eye Crying”.



Opening with Otilia

The opening film, Stere Gulea’s *I’m an Old Communist Hag* (2013), was sold out. Hoping to see something that would make them laugh at communism, spectators enjoyed an almost implausible story. A mixed couple of a Romanian woman and American man, who needed \$15,000 to pay their mortgage in the US, get the money from her parents, who barely survive on their low pensions. Ironically, the mother-in-law, a former worker and devoted communist member party played skillfully by Luminita Gheorghiu, tries to revive the old plant in order to earn more money. While her plan does not convince any of her fellows, it does bring back memories from her “golden age”. The archival footage added to the comic effect and, for some, recalled the old joke: “How do we know that capitalists are on the rim of the abyss? Because we [communist Romanians] are already in it.” The film, as well as Dan Lungu’s novel that inspired it, puts both ideologies in the same abyss. In the end, the parents mortgage their apartment to a Chinese loan shark who gives them the \$15,000 they need to save their daughter’s house. The Q&A session that followed the screening was mainly focused on Romanian nostalgia, family dynamics, and political context.



Dr. Ileana Marin and Professor José Alaniz

The second day of the festival presented a collection of internationally acclaimed shorts and a three-time award winning documentary. Ioana Uricaru, the director of two shorts: *The Legend of the Activist* and *Stopover*, and Oliver Tataru, the director of the documentary *Anatomy of a Departure*, talked about their works, answered questions, and shared their future plans with the generous Seattle public.

Two comedies closed the festival: *Sundays on Leave* by Nae Caranfil and *Of Snails and Men* by Tudor Giurgiu. Spectators who attended both screenings that day got a great perspective on the Romanian cinema of the last

twenty years. Caranfil's comedy of 1994 presented three characters' stories from three different points of view with minimal technology. In spite of the fact that the pellicle has not yet been restored, the story's point is enhanced by the archival looking image. It makes the destinies of the high-school girl, the actor, and the soldier belong to a past that cannot be recovered otherwise but imperfectly. Even though all three escaped what seemed to have been a pre-established life, their future did not look promising, especially after watching Giurgiu's comedy of 2014. With a crystal clear image, *Of Snails and Men* tells the humorous story of some 300



Q&A with Ioana Uricaru

men, workers in a car factory, who want to save their jobs by buying the company using the only asset they can sell: their sperm. Needless to say, irony hits again and their low education makes their offer unattractive. The workers, led by their union leader, could not raise the money, yet they succeeded in having a job in a French snail processing plant. The allegory of the slow-paced transition from a controlled economy to a free market is wonderfully captured in the image of the snail crawling on a leaf. The last Q&A session identified one of the most recurrent themes of the Romanian cinema: the struggle of strong women to make things work. The public showed a great interest in learning about Romania's current state and its position in the EU. Through humor and wonderful scenery, the last two films of the festival succeeded in triggering further discussions during the closing gala.

All in all the festival was a huge success; for next year's festival, organizers hope to add animation to the range of genres and to offer multiple screenings of each film.



Oliver Tataru and public

Back to the Cold War?

A group of Americans, including several alums of the UW Slavic Department, revisited the Russian Far East last summer to celebrate the history of a unique joint fishing venture that employed many local Russian speakers during its tenure from the late 1970s until 2001.

By Tony Allison

*Note: a shorter version of this article, with photos, appeared on the KUOW web site in late August of this year:
<http://kuow.org/post/back-cold-war-seattleite-s-anxious-return-russia>*

One of the most astounding and little-known stories of the Cold War is that thousands of Soviet and US fishermen worked together on the high seas of the Pacific Ocean, trawling by day and sharing Russian bread, vodka, and off-color jokes in the evenings, while their governments maintained a posture of pure hostility toward each other. During the period from 1978 to 1990 this unique Seattle-based joint venture, called Marine Resources Company, or MRC, accounted for some 1.5 million tons of fish caught and processed at sea off the coasts of Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. At the time it was the largest fishing operation in US waters.



The venture endured ferocious storms (political as well as meteorological), overcame cultural and language barriers, forged personal friendships across ideological lines, and made money for all sides. In its later phase, from 1990 until its closure in 2001, MRC (by then called MRCI) conducted repairs and modernization of the Russian fleet, often in Seattle shipyards, and assisted the Russian fishing industry in pioneering new fisheries and new technologies to improve its seafood production. In this post-Soviet period MRCI operated offices in Moscow, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Sakhalin, Vladivostok (which replaced its earlier Nakhodka office), and Busan, South Korea as well as Seattle.

Many of the managers and staff who ran MRC's business over the years were trained in Russian at the UW. A large number of other students of Russian from UW, perhaps over one hundred, served as MRC representatives and interpreters on the Soviet vessels that worked with American fishermen, playing a crucial

role in coordinating fishing operations, bridging cultural differences, and translating those off-color jokes.

On the trip to Russia in early July of this year were Kit Adams, who holds a Master's degree in Slavic linguistics from UW, and Michael Stevens, Stowe Talbot, and I, all alums of the outstanding UW Russian language program in the 1970s and 1980s. Kit, Michael and I later served as Office Co-Director in Nakhodka, in the Russian Far East for two years each during the height of the Cold War. Stowe's father Jim – a UW grad – was the founder and president of MRC, and Stowe has now replaced him as the head of the Talbot family's ongoing Bellingham-based businesses. Walter Pereyra, MRC's first CEO, who also travelled with us, holds a PhD from UW's School of Fisheries, but doesn't speak Russian, so the rest of us translated for him at the many celebratory events, dinners, informal gatherings, and sightseeing tours in Russia.

Some of the trip participants had not been back to the Russian Far East for several decades, while others had been there more recently. On the whole we found that many things have changed – but some things haven't. What follows is a brief account of the trip and some personal impressions drawn from encounters in Russia.

The big moment had come, and I was nervous. As white-haired, 79-year-old Anatoly Kolesnichenko, wearing a military-style jacket bedecked with medals and epaulettes, led our group of Americans toward a room full of senior Russian fishing captains and executives, I felt apprehensive about how we might be received. We had requested this opportunity to meet with Russians who, back in the 1970s and 1980s, had worked with our Soviet-American joint fishing venture. We had prepared a slide show of the history of MRC, which I would try to narrate to them in Russian. Six of us had flown across the Pacific Ocean from Seattle to the Russian Far East to do this, in part because we felt that the example of working successfully together during the Cold War is still relevant today, and we hoped that the Russians would respond positively to encountering us again. But over the past several months things had turned ugly between the US and Russia over events in the Ukraine. Members of our group felt strongly that Russia was in the wrong and supported sanctions imposed by the US Government on Russia. Meanwhile, we knew, most Russians were angered by the sanctions, and anti-Americanism was on the rise among the Russian citizenry. At one point we considered canceling the trip. Many commentators, both in Russia and the US, were speaking of a return to the Cold War.

Of course, much had changed in Russia, and in the world, since the distant years of joint fishing during the Cold War. For a while it was unclear whether a group of Russian participants could even be found for us to meet with. The chaos following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s had caused large numbers of residents of the Russian Far East, a vast area on the edge of Siberia bordering China and the Pacific Ocean, to depart for more prosperous locations in European Russia or abroad. The Russian fishing industry had been “privatized,” and then was inundated by foreigners, including Americans, looking for financial opportunities presented by Russia's new openness and its raw version of capitalism. Many Russian fishing companies, plagued by corruption and mismanagement, had gone bankrupt, been reorganized, shrunk to a fraction of their former size, or disappeared. Stocks of high-value species such as king crab were overfished and illegally exported, and a select few Russian individuals amassed fortunes. Bitterness and regret about Russia's difficult post-communist transformation, some of it aimed at the US, found expression in the increasingly nationalistic and anti-Western policies of Vladimir Putin, who came to power in 1999 and never left.

Still, we felt, the mutual success, intense friendships, and shared memories deserved to be recalled. Several years ago, when we first began to think about preserving the history of the joint venture, we were motivated in part by the crucial role MRC played in the development of fisheries in the North Pacific, but also by how the company – the only jointly owned and operated Soviet-American enterprise – had touched people's lives on both sides of the ocean, serving as a reminder of what can be achieved even when two sides are divided by ideology, politics, and the mutual hostility of their governments. We gathered photographs, articles, and other memorabilia, and created explanatory panels to go with them. Then we staged exhibits of MRC's history at the Whatcom County Museum in Bellingham, the Nordic Heritage

Museum in Seattle, and the new Maritime Museum in Newport, Oregon – where the exhibit opened in the fall of 2013 and is currently still on display.

As we mounted and showed these exhibits to US audiences, we concluded that we should bring the story to the Russian Far East as well. In particular we wanted to show the exhibit in Nakhodka, the home port of most of the Soviet fishing vessels that fished in the joint venture, and the place where many MRC employees, both US and Russian, had worked in MRC's branch office during the Cold War. Shipping the exhibit to Russia, however, would be complicated and expensive, so we decided to bring it in the form of a slide show we would narrate for targeted audiences of former joint venture participants. The biggest challenge would be to locate those who had worked on the Soviet fleet or on shore with MRC some 25 to 35 years ago, especially given that the average life-span of Russians, especially males, is much shorter than that of Americans.

Just before leaving Seattle we were informed by Nakhodka city authorities, who were coordinating our visit, that about 25 elderly Russians who had worked in the joint venture had been located in Nakhodka. Now they were gathered in the cafeteria of the largest local fishing company, called BAMR, and were waiting for us. It turned out that Anatoly Kolesnichenko, who had headed BAMR way back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the era when Michael, Kit, and I had been stationed in Nakhodka, was not only alive and active, but was still BAMR's titular head, representing the company at city functions and receiving delegations such as ours, and advising the younger executives who run the company's day-to-day business. Dignified and somber, Anatoly shuffled ahead of us toward BAMR's cafeteria. The meeting we had built our long journey around was finally going to take place. But what would our reception be like?



As we walked into the cafeteria, 25 elderly Russians rose as one and began applauding. Many were in their captain's uniforms, with epaulettes on their shoulders indicating their senior rank. The applause continued as some of us recognized old colleagues and shipmates, and embraced. Tamara Dregval, the telex operator for the entire 15-year duration of our Nakhodka office, who had worked closely with eight

different American co-directors, including Michael, Kit, and me, was standing off to one side in tears as she hugged us in turn. We made our way to tables that had our names on them – the organizers had spread out our group so that each of us was sitting with several Russians. Following more embraces and hand-shaking the reminiscences began. The Russians produced old snapshots of joint fishing operations and of American fishermen and MRC employees they had met so long ago. They told stories of encounters at sea and in West Coast ports such as Seattle, Portland, or Astoria, where their vessels would call at the end of the fishing season each year.

Together we recalled people, ships, and fishing adventures, answered queries about long-lost shipmates as best we could, and snacked on cookies and tea. Then it was time for me to give the slide show. During the 40-minute presentation, which included vivid shots of Russian and US fishermen working and relaxing together at sea, the room was mostly quiet, except when a Russian would pipe up with the name of a boat or a person that I could not remember or had misidentified. When it was over we all stood for a moment of silence to honor the many Russian and American participants who are no longer alive. Then we posed for a group photo outside the cafeteria, and said farewell until a banquet to be held by the City of Nakhodka the following evening. The banquet, as it turned out, provided a chance to converse more informally over drinks and a sumptuous meal, and went on, in Russian style, for several hours; it was capped by one of the senior captains, a vigorous man in his mid-70s, singing Russian folk songs at the top of his lungs, while others joined in.

The initial meeting at BAMR turned out to be characteristic of our group's reception throughout our stay in Nakhodka and also in Vladivostok, the much larger regional capital city located down the coast three hours away (Vladivostok was off-limits to foreigners during the Cold War, so while based in Nakhodka Michael, Kit and I had never visited it until the 1990s). Meetings in both cities, some with high-level authorities, were conducted in a tone of gratitude for our mission of recalling the joint fishing venture and the long-term ties it had facilitated between the US Northwest and the Russian Far East – for example, the founder of MRC, Jim Talbot, whose son Stowe was with our group, had initiated a "sister-city" relationship between Nakhodka and Bellingham in 1989 that endures to this day and was celebrated during our visit. In Vladivostok I gave the slide show to another appreciative group of retired fishermen and other colleagues with ties to MRC. The US Consul-General in Vladivostok hosted us at his residence, attended the slide show, and seemed to find our story an intriguing example of successful joint business that is rare today. Our visit was highlighted on the Consulate's web page, and was featured in the local Russian press.

Equally rewarding were the opportunities, in the late evenings or early mornings, to see old friends on an informal basis. In Nakhodka we spent several nights eating and drinking in the cramped, music-filled apartment of Georgii, a photographer several of us have known for many years, who was celebrating his 80th birthday. At 7 am each morning in Nakhodka I would drag myself out of the hotel to run in the hills, or go to a gym with Sasha, a 55-year-old who was captain of the basketball team I played on when I lived in Nakhodka some 35 years ago; Sasha, who retains his vibrant energy and athleticism, has had a successful career as a gym teacher and coach, and his wife operates a small retail business. In Vladivostok we toured the spectacular new suspension bridges, built largely with federal funds, which now dominate the city's skyline, and dined on seafood and pilmeny with former MRC colleagues in the city's fine restaurants.

The turmoil in the Ukraine occasionally entered into our conversations. The Russians I spoke to, some of whom have extensive experience in the West, were virtually unanimous in their support of Russia's position, including the takeover of Crimea, which they view as historically part of Russia. They were critical of the US, and even more critical of the current Ukrainian government in Kiev, which they see as an anti-Russian tool of the US and NATO. In general they seem to see the problems in the Ukraine as the result of encroachment by the West into an area that has always been Russia-oriented in its politics and culture, and has served as a buffer between Russia and the West. Watching Russian television in my hotel room, I saw constant reporting about the Ukraine that focused mostly on refugees fleeing to Russia after becoming "victims of violent policies" carried out by the government in Kiev. The coverage mirrored, or

more likely shaped, the views I had heard from Russian colleagues and friends. As one friend admitted, most Russian journalists now practice self-censorship in their reporting on major national and international issues, especially those connected with the Ukraine.

And yet, my overall impression of Russia was different from what I had anticipated based on media reports in the US. Granted, in the Russian Far East we were several thousand miles from the violence in the Ukraine, about as far away as one could be and still be in Russia. The public mood on the streets, in stores, in restaurants – even in TV programming not devoted to the Ukraine or to other major political issues – was relaxed and civil, not militaristic, strait-jacketed, or jingoistic, as it was in Soviet times. In Vladivostok several public monuments have been erected recently which include statues of Yul Brynner (who spent his early childhood there before emigrating); of Eleanor Pray, an American woman who lived in Vladivostok from 1894 to 1930 and wrote volumes of letters describing, and often criticizing, life in the city; of Vladimir Vyssotsky, a much-idolized semi-dissident folk singer from the Soviet era who is shown clutching his guitar as his gritty voice booms from nearby speakers; and of an unnamed “distant-water” sailor from the 1970s or 1980s cockily posed on a downtown street corner in a jeans outfit, holding a Led Zeppelin album acquired in an overseas port call. While such monuments can certainly coexist with the chauvinistic nationalism championed by Putin, they do not exactly reek of militarism, and even less of a return to a Soviet mentality.

Our trip began with apprehensions of returning to the Cold War. A week after our trip ended, the downing of a Malaysian passenger jet became the single greatest tragedy caused by the conflict in eastern Ukraine, riveting the world’s attention on Russia’s role in inspiring and supplying the rebels. References to a “new Cold War” have become, understandably, more frequent than ever. But it is important to see Russia as an entity distinct from, although historically connected to, the USSR.

My stay in the Russian Far East left me with deep concerns about widespread anti-Western opinions held by Russians, especially in regard to Ukraine. Yet I also returned home with a sense that Americans as individuals are not widely shunned or scape-goated, that old friendships endure, and that memories of joint enterprise are still valued by both sides. It seems clear to me that ongoing contact between citizens of Russia and the US today, just as during the Cold War, can help to moderate negative and inaccurate stereotypes, overcome limits on free and accurate information, and demonstrate our similarities and shared interests as well as our substantial and growing differences.

Tony Allison, who holds Master’s Degrees in International Studies and Marine Affairs from UW, began working for Marine Resources Company in 1978, and served as the company’s General Manager from 1990 to 2001. He currently teaches high school history in Seattle and is working on a memoir about the joint venture and the Cold War, and the legacies of those years.

Seeking a Career and a Friend in D.C. – Bud Bard

In my first reminiscence about my college years at the University of Washington which I titled: Bud Bard's University of Washington Days: The Yellow Room, I am now moving on to an earlier time. A lot happened between my freshman year and the defense of my Master's Thesis in The Yellow Room in 1966 in the presence of Professors Robert Abernathy and Willis Konick. After my decision to move from Fisheries to study Russian language and History, I studied Russian and also what I considered a very fascinating era of Russian history, the pre-Communist society under the Tsars, and the Soviet Union under the Bolsheviks. The professors that I mentioned in my earlier story titled "The Yellow Room" were interesting and excellent and, in many cases, renowned scholars. This helped me immensely, and I was able to focus on my studies despite many distractions, as I had joined a fraternity, which is another story. I did well in these studies as I did in Liberal Arts in high school and found out I was not a scientist!

Around the junior year in college, one generally begins to think about what career to pursue. I certainly began to wonder what I could do with the Russian language. I was far from proficient, but I could get by. The US and Soviet Union were pretty much at a standoff, and the opportunities that I could pursue pretty much revolved around teaching Russian, and for that I would need an MA and a Teaching Certificate – more tuition expenses. I had already taken out a loan for tuition. About that time I noticed a brochure in Thomson Hall on a bulletin board about a test to be given by the US State Department for governmental positions in the State Department. This sounded interesting and exciting, offering opportunities to travel, and I applied to take the test. I had to fill out a long form with personal history, academic interest and grades. Also I had to list several references, and as I found out later on, they all were called asking about my character, background, and whether or not I was a loyal citizen. Being selected to take the exam was no sure thing, and the room was filled with eager applicants. I anxiously waited to find out if I had been selected to fly back to Washington D.C. for further tests and verbal screening. I had! I passed muster and was selected for the next step. A lifetime of exciting travel awaited me!

I was excited to visit Washington, D.C., never having been to our Capitol. Also, I had a high school friend living in Washington, and I was eager to see him. I overpacked, took two suitcases and a heavy coat, not having any idea of the weather, but prepared for any eventuality. Wow, was I loaded down. The cab driver looked me over once or twice and thought that here were good pickings. I gave him the address of my friend, and he only had a vague idea of where it was. He let me off in what he said "was the vicinity" and I was on my own, loaded down, wearing a suit, carrying two bags and a heavy coat. As it turned out, it was a hot evening and in a questionable area that seemed not very nice. People were sitting out in front of their brownstone apartments eyeing me as I had never been eyed before. I am not prejudiced, never was, never have been, but I knew I was in a place where I should not be. Very soon someone said, "You better get out of here." I did, never found my friend, and quickly found a cab to the hotel. This experience taught me a lot, something a classroom cannot teach, about societal issues.

That was not a very good start to my trip! The next two days were filled with a welcoming party, visits to the State Department and lectures by officials who made a lot more money than I could ever hope to. I found out the positions available were not all that exciting to me and that if accepted, a new Foreign Service Officer had no control over his or her placement. And the exciting travel was only in my dreams. Returning to the UW, I still did not know what my future might be, but I knew that I did not want to work for the government. So I stayed put, studied and graduated with a BA in Russian History and Language from the Far Eastern and Russian Institute in 1955, and then later, an MA in 1966 in Slavic Linguistics.

MACEDONIAN FOLK POETRY – Michael Seraphinoff

Macedonian folk poetry has ancient roots and is represented in hundreds of beautiful, moving folk songs. Their themes span history from ancient times to recent times. They include the lyric and the epic, the ode to joy and the tragic lament. They contain almost all of the elements we associate with fine poetry, the epithet, the rhyme, the repetition, the metaphor, the simile, and more. And fortunately, we have a substantial body of such folk songs preserved from past generations due to the diligent collecting of foreign scholars such as Vuk Karadzic, Stefan Verkovic and native born collectors such as Kuzman Shapkarev, Marko Cepenkov and Konstantin Miladinov, and others in more recent times.

Konstantin Miladinov, in his remarkable collection of Macedonian folk songs, published in Zagreb in 1861, (a collection with the inappropriate title, due to the times and a portion of the contents, Bulgarian Folk Songs) summed up the essence of what makes these songs meaningful in his introduction to that collection:

"Folk songs portray the intellectual development of a people and reflect its life. In songs a people shows its feelings, in them it immortalizes itself and its feats of old, in them it finds its spiritual food and sustenance; thus, in happiness and sadness, at weddings and dances, at harvest and grape gathering, at embroidering and spinning, in fields and forests, it pours forth songs as from a rich spring. Therefore we can say that a people is always a great poet."

This rich tradition in Macedonia cannot be divorced from the daily life of the Macedonian people. It developed out of the age-old agrarian village life of the people. Songs abound about work, love, marriage, birth, death, nature and the supernatural, and foreign servitude and resistance to foreign oppression, almost always in the context of village life.

The beauty and imagination of so many of these works of the anonymous folk creator over the ages is readily apparent. Take, for example, this excerpt from the Miladinov collection, translated into English by Macedonian scholar, Tome Sazdov:

The young fairy was out dancing,
was out dancing on the mountain.
Her mother-in-law called to her:
"Oh dear fairy, daughter-in-law,
leave your dancing, come home quickly
for your baby boy is crying."
"Mother-in-law, Oh dear mother!
I will send a ewe for milking,
to suckle my dear baby boy;
I will send a gentle shower,
to bathe my darling baby boy;
I will send a gentle zephyr,
to sing a lullaby to my baby boy."

Although it is true that we cannot experience everything we desire in life, and I am a great believer in the value of fine literature to provide a window into a wondrous world beyond our direct knowing, there is no substitute

for direct experience, whenever possible. It may be possible to enjoy a folk song, for instance, that lets us imagine the white slopes of a majestic Macedonian mountain range and tragic history that once unfolded there, but without direct experience of such places, our imagined experience of what the song describes is impoverished.

There is a beautiful Macedonian folk song (I encourage you to look up the version sung on internet youtube by the group Belo Platno) with the following words:

Што се бели, горе Шар планина?
Да л' је снегче, ил' је бело стадо?
Нит' је снегче, нит' је бело стадо.
Да је снегче, би се растопило,
Да је стадо, би се растурило.
Веч тој беше Милкино чадорче,
Под чадорче болна Милка лега.
Брата и гу Турци заробили,
Заробили, пај га обесили.

The presenters tell us that this is a song from the village of Štrpce on the Šar Mountain that forms the border between Kosovo and Macedonia. The song begins with the use of Slavic antithesis, a figure of speech frequently used in Slavic folk songs, when the folk singer asks himself:

"What is so white atop the Šar Mountain?
Is it snow, or a white flock?
Neither snow, nor a white flock,
If it were snow, it would melt,
If it were a flock it would flow around.
That is Milka's tent
in which Milka is grieving and mourning for her brother,
whom the Turks captured,
Captured and hung."

No doubt, one can take some pleasure in this song if one has at least seen pictures of snow and of white flocks of sheep grazing on a picturesque Macedonian mountain, or better yet, stood somewhere in the shadow of such a mountain and gazed up at the sight of it in wonder. Better yet, after a delicious meal with some of Macedonia's delicious sheep milk cheese, work some of that off on a good walk on some village or mountain trail. Nowadays, even in Macedonia, Eco-tourism is growing in popularity. It involves opportunities to engage in activities that put the tourist in close connection to wild nature and the rural countryside.

Worldwide, humanity is becoming ever more divorced from the natural world, the one that village folk often know so intimately. Today some 90% of us live in urban centers. Access to the countryside is far more limited than it once was, and with modern transport most of us don't even have to walk much further than to and from our car each day. In such a world, organized efforts to reconnect to rural life and the natural world make perfect sense. Check the possibilities in Macedonia at some of the following ecotourism websites: [gomacedonia](http://gomacedonia.com), [travel2macedonia](http://travel2macedonia.com) and [whereismacedonia](http://whereismacedonia.com).

I was privileged even before the advent of ecotourism, back in the spring of 1975, to accompany my uncle and cousins when they moved their sheep from a winter pasture in Lower Polog, in the Vardar River valley in the Tetovo region, to the mountain meadows of the Shar Planina. Uncle Stole, at that time, in cooperation with an

Albanian partner and his family, maintained a flock of some hundred sheep.

We stayed in a bachilo, a shepherd's hut, with walls of field stone and a corrugated metal roof. We slept on heavy woolen blankets on beds of woven tree branches and maintained a wood fire in the center of the hut with a cauldron of boiling water for milking purposes. We ate tender young onion greens with bread, and salted mutton, and the milk of the sheep in a variety of forms, as yogurt, as fresh cheese curds and as soft and hard cheeses.

Various family members would come and go on horseback, leading donkeys that brought in supplies and transported wooden barrels of cheese down to the valley below to sell at the pazar. Besides uncle Stole and cousin Zhivko I remember a somewhat slow witted man named Manol, who was often the butt of jokes. And I remember Refik, a rather proud young man who wore traditional woolen shepherd's pants and carried a traditional wooden staff and a simple shepherd's flute with him when he went off to tend the flock of sheep. He was friendly enough with Uncle Stole, but he viewed me, the Amerikanets, with a bit of suspicion.

Uncle Stole and his son, my cousin Zhivko, seemed to have very good relations with their Albanian family partners. Most of my cousins were wary and distant with Albanian neighbors. Uncle Stole did not share their frequently negative view of Albanians. He remarked to me one day, that they were more trustworthy than many of our own as partners, and that their sober, industrious ways had also earned his respect.

When I wasn't asked to help with chores, I was free to roam the mountain. With a sturdy staff in my hands to ward off wild creatures or more likely the big, strong Shar Planinets guard dogs that every shepherd on the mountain had by his side, I set off on long hikes on the mountain trails. From the top of the mountain I could see the city of Tetovo, and from other vantage points I could see the distant town of Prizren, over in Kosovo.

So much on the mountain agreed with me, the fresh mountain air, the clean cold water from little springs and brooks, the picturesque mountain meadows and forests and the grand vistas that afforded long distant views of the countryside. And the ancient ways still practiced by the shepherds - that included long distance calling to fellow shepherds far off on the mountain at sunset - I can still hear my uncle calling a long, drawn out: "Eeeeeeh, morriiii Muraaaat!" That would then be answered by a far off echoing call from a distant, lonely shepherd in some other hut with an accompanying flock of sheep and dogs.

Should we lament the passing of these old ways, practiced for some ten thousand years or more by our Neolithic farmer ancestors in the Balkan lands? Nowadays, even in Macedonia, and even in the villages, I am more liable to encounter young people dressed in jeans and colorful shirts sporting company logos, armed with cell phones and never too far from their electronic devices. It is the way of the world. I certainly can't turn back the clock, nor, if I thought about it very much, should I want to.

Yet, there are certain things that I would urge the young to hang on to from our cultural past, that are not meaningless relics or quaint artifacts, but timeless, meaningful pleasures and occupations. These would include a walk in the mountains, the taste of nature's bounty in a handful of fresh wild blackberries, the call of the mourning doves at dawn and dusk, and so many other eternally satisfying connections to the natural world. And some old ways of human devising: the oro, the sound of the traditional kaval flute, and Macedonian folk poetry in lovely old songs such as the one I have quoted above. Even far from the source, we are all nowadays just a mouse click away on the Internet with YouTube access to some of the most beautiful works of our folk heritage. If you haven't listened to the song I cited, try it now: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?sns=fb&v=mLNpe4jYzxs>. Then shut down all of your electronic devices and take that walk in the wild.

NEWS FROM YOU

“Ahoj! In August, **Gray Church** (BA 1977 and Russkii Dom alumna) and husband Capt. Al Church successfully launched their new side business - Someday Charters - offering custom yacht cruises in and around San Diego Bay (<http://somedaycharters.com>). Discounts gladly offered to Slavic Lang and Lit professors, staff, alumni, and students; for details, call Captain Al at (805) 312-8687. Come cruise with us next time you are in SoCal!”

Carol V. Davis (MA 1979) reports, “I do have big news. I have received a Barbara Deming Memorial/Money for Women grant and will use it to go to Germany for the first time to do some research for a new book. After that I am going back to St. Pete for a few weeks. The big news is that a university in Siberia is bringing me there! I haven't been back to Russia since 2007. The grant is teeny, but it provided the ticket to Berlin and so I thought I'd go back to St. P. I am going to Buryatia State Univ. in Ulan-Ude to teach the first week of Feb. I'll be lecturing on contemporary American poetry and fiction and giving poetry readings. Feb. in Siberia should be a little chilly. They're going to lend me a coat and boots, as I don't think my Petersburg stuff will cut it in Siberia.”

In October they made it official: **Lisa Frumkes** (PhD 1996) is now the head of Language Learning Products at Rosetta Stone. “I'm fortunate enough to still be in Seattle.”

Serge Gregory's (PhD 1977) book, "Antosha and Levitasha: The Shared Life and Art of Anton Chekhov and Isaac Levitan," is being published by Northern Illinois University Press. "I would not have been able start this

project without the existence of the UW Libraries' extensive Slavic collection," said Gregory. "Also, Professors Galya Diment and Katarzyna Dziwirek were kind enough to provide me with letters of introduction that were crucial to gaining access to three Moscow archives."

Mary Kruger (BA 1970) writes, “Retirement is wonderful from a personal standpoint, but the troubles between Russia and Ukraine underscore the continuing importance of bringing new Slavic specialists into foreign affairs work. Keep up the good work at the UW. I stay in touch with the region through part-time work at the State Department and professional gatherings. Went to Ukraine in May as an election observer.

“Am hoping for a more peaceful world in 2015.”

In the last year **Gwen (Mitchell) Kersey** (BA 2009) had a change of career: I left my job in patent law in 2013 and am now involved in health care. I started working as a CNA in mental health/long term care this past January and just recently completed my first year volunteering with Evergreen Healthcare's Inpatient Hospice Care Center. I have also returned to school with intent of pursuing nursing as a new career and am slowly but steadily plugging along through my pre-requisites. If all goes well I'll be applying to programs next fall to start nursing school either summer or fall 2016. In non-career related news I've taken up the guitar and am working on learning Farsi.

On November 19, 2014 the U.S. Senate confirmed President Obama's nomination of **Allan Mustard** (BA 1978) to be U.S. ambassador to Turkmenistan.

According to **David Nemerever**, (BA 1976) “Not much to report here. I was preparing to make a career change into Russian-English translation in case my job here at the U came to an end. Now things are looking hopeful as far as the job is concerned. I have renewed my interest in Russian literature and am actively working to improve my spoken fluency.”

“My news for this year is that I (**Lee Pickett**, BA 2006) moved to Baltimore and started working as an attorney for the Social Security Administration. It's a great job, though it unfortunately has absolutely nothing to do with Russian or Slavic Languages. Or with Korean television shows for that matter.”

In addition to continuing to work for the International Baccalaureate Organization as their Examiner responsible for Macedonian Literature, **Michael Seraphinoff** (MA 1987, PhD 1993) writes a column in the quarterly Macedonian Human Rights Movement International journal (see pages 12-14).

Alumni Spotlight

– Eloise Boyle

Imagine working as a translator on a Russian trawler in the Bering Sea. Imagine being a radio operator in the South Pole Station in Antarctica. Imagine writing several books and articles on the workings of the human brain. **Dr. Barbara Oakley** (BA, Slavic Languages and Literatures; BS, Electrical Engineering; MS, Electrical and Computer Engineering; PhD Systems Engineering), an alumna of the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures at the University of Washington, has done all this – and much, much more.

While in the Army, Prof. Oakley studied Russian at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA. She furthered her mastery of the language here at the University of Washington, graduating with a B.A. from our department.

Prof Oakley sees clear benefits in language learning:

“... once I decided to try to learn math and engineering, my language-learning skills proved immensely helpful. Becoming fluid with verb conjugations shares a lot in common with becoming fluid in the various permutations of problem-solving. Practice in language is a lot like practice in math and science. The great thing about having a language background is that in language study, teachers continually emphasize practice, repetition, and memorization... neuroscience itself is showing how important practice, repetition, and memorization are in acquiring expertise in *any* topic.”

Barbara Oakley is a multi-faceted academic. One of the most fascinating areas of her research is in pathological altruism and altruism bias. Out of this research came the book *Evil Genius: Why Rome Fell, Hitler Rose, Enron Failed, and My Sister Stole My Mother's Boyfriend*. “It’s amazing how much harm naïve, well-meaning people can do—their actions can result in exactly the opposite effect of what they intend.”

A distinguished academic career has led to her latest undertaking: a massive (over 325,000 students so far) open on-line course, “Learning How to Learn: Powerful Mental Tools to Help You Master Tough Subjects.” Dr. Oakley and her colleague Dr. Terrence Sejnowski impart simple, but powerful tools to help us all learn as effectively as possible. The course gives students insight into the structure of clear thought: when we toggle back and forth between focused, analytical thinking and diffuse, creative thinking, we optimize our learning. Once we optimize our learning we can master even the most difficult subjects. This technique is also explored in Prof Oakley’s new book *A Mind for Numbers* (Tarcher, 2014).

Remember Professor Oakley’s words the next time you face a particularly challenging subject. “It’s really persistence and application that are what ultimately count--far more than “natural ability.”

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