

The Newsletter of the Grinnell College Russian Department

Congratulations and Farewell from the Russian Department and the Russian, Central and Eastern European Studies Concentration!

In this final issue, we are pleased to congratulate our graduating majors and concentrators, and wish those continuing a restful and productive summer, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

Please read on for news of what soon-to-be alumni have planned as they leave Grinnell, what Russian and RCEES faculty have planned for the summer, as well as for information and announcements.



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Congratulations!

Heartiest congratulations on completing their studies at Grinnell go to the Russian majors and RCEES Concentrators of the class of '07 who will receive their degrees next week:

Russian Majors and/or RCEES Concentrators in the Class of 2007:

Alicia Assini (Russian/
Lindsey Martin (Russian/History)
Robyn Repko (Russian/Psychology)
Jacob Schneider (Russian/RCEES)
Amanda Smith (Physics/Russian)

Leann Wilson (Russian/RCEES)

Julia Yansura (Russian)

Sophie Church (History/RCEES)

Esprit Eugster (English/RCEES)

Kate Francis (Political Science/RCEES)

Awards

John Mohan Russian Study Award

The purpose of the Russian Study Award is to provide students who have seriously pursued the study of Russian with an opportunity to develop their language skills in the Russian speaking world. The Award is intended to enable Grinnell College students to pursue a study program or a project of their own design after graduation. The study program or project must be initiated within the year following graduation.

The Award is drawn from funds raised by three devoted friends of the Russian Department: **Diane Fisher Perkinson '82, Sharon McKee '82** and **Emily Silliman '81**.

This year's Mohan Russian Study Awardee is **Alicia Assini '07**, who will travel to Vera Bobkova's hometown of Bijsk, Russia during the 2007-08 academic year to teach English at the university there. We wish her the very best!

Anne K. Hanson '86 Memorial Award

This endowed scholarship was established in 1989 in memory of Anne K. Hanson '86 by her friends and family. Anne Hanson was a Russian Studies major who went on the Grinnell College Interim Tour of the USSR during her senior year. The Award will be used to partially fund at least 1 student who wishes to take a Russian Summer intensive language program. This year, the Anne K. Hanson '86 Memorial Award goes to **Mikel Shybut '09** and **Claire Comstock-Gay '09**. Both Mikel and Claire will study at the Beloit College Summer Intensive Russian Language Program. We wish them the best as well!

Farewell to our 2006-2007 Russian Language Assistant

Vera Bobkova has been invaluable in countless ways, from her teaching in our first-year Russian courses to her work in our Russian Conversation class and Russian Lab, to her many independently organized cultural events in Russian House—evenings of Russian cooking, fortune-telling, and others. We have all enjoyed having Vera in the department, bringing boundless energy and enthusiasm to our Russian-language community, and we will miss her very much. We wish her every success in the future.

Vera graduated from the Biysk Teacher Training State University named after V.M.Shukshin in May, 2005. She received her diploma with distinction and earned the profession of teacher.

She started her teaching career long before graduation. In 2001 she started working as a private tutor, teaching English to school children, students and adults. In 2004 she was invited to teach English to the professors of her university. In addition, in 2005 she started working at School of Foreign Languages teaching English to teenagers, and also together with two friends she began a series of private courses of English called 'ANGLOMANIA,' where she also teaches English to teenagers and adults.

Her own research work at the University was connected with teaching methodology, especially in the area of lexicology. Her current interest is in second language acquisition (which is why she took German and Arabic here in Grinnell).



Farewell to our Moscow Friends

We would like to bid a fond farewell to our friends **Anton Matros** of Vladivostok and **Katya Pankova** of Moscow, who have completed their year of study at Grinnell under an exchange agreement previously sponsored by ACTR, and now by the International Research Exchange Board (IREX) and Grinnell College. Since academic year 1988-89, over 62 students from Russia have studied at Grinnell as part of this exchange.

Good Luck to the New and Continuing Majors and Concentrators!

The Russian Department wishes a pleasant summer to our ongoing majors and concentrators, **Claire Comstock-Gay '09, Gwen Hildebrand '09, Ashley Cunningham '08; Wyatt Montague '08, Connor Savage '08, Emma Silverman '09, Morgan Wajda-Levie '08 and Claire Wenngren '08.** Some of you are in the process of declaring, so if we've forgotten anyone, let us know!

New and continuing RCEES Concentrators include **Christy Boeckholt '08 and Sheahan Virgin '08.**

New Faculty in Russian/RCEES in 2007-08

The editors of Novosti would like to take this opportunity to welcome two new members of our community next fall: Sara Stefani and Ed Cohn.

Sara Stefani comes to Grinnell from Yale University, where she is completing her Ph.D. Her scholarly interests include early 20th-century Russian and Soviet prose; avant-garde Russian art; British modernism; Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov. She also has interests in feminist theory, women's writing, multicultural exchanges, and cultural history. Her dissertation is entitled "Constructing the Other: Empire, Nationhood, and Self-Definition in Soviet and British Modernist Prose."

writes from New Haven:

Sara writes from New Haven:

As the spring semester winds to a close, I should be focusing my undivided attention on the stack of papers and exams that are sitting on my desk waiting to be graded, but all I can think about is next fall! As many of you know, I will be leaving Connecticut this summer and moving across country in order to join you at Grinnell for the 2007-08 school year. In the midst of exams and papers, next fall might seem like a million years away, but I am already getting excited and looking forward to joining the department. I had the chance to meet the faculty and several students when I visited in April, so I am grateful that there

will be some familiar, friendly faces to greet me when I arrive. For now, my advice for all of you is not to live for next fall, but to enjoy the present moment: congratulations and best of luck to all the graduating seniors! Good luck to everyone with exams, and have a wonderful summer! If you have any questions for me, or advice, or just want to say hi, please feel free to send me an e-mail. You are always welcome to e-mail me at either sara.stefani@yale.edu or at stofie2@hotmail.com/.

I am really looking forward to meeting all of you! In the meantime, I'll try to finish my grading and enjoy the summer!

Ed Cohn writes from the University of Chicago:

I'm a grad student in Soviet history at the University of Chicago, and in June I'll be defending my dissertation, which looks at the Communist party's expulsion and censure of members accused of misconduct after World War II (from 1945-1961); I did research for it in Moscow, Tver', and Perm', with a little bit of work in Saratov. At Grinnell, the Russia-related courses I'll be teaching include a class on Russian history before 1917 (in the fall) and a spring course called "Who Killed Kirov?", which will use the 1934 assassination of Leningrad party chief Sergei Kirov as a window into some larger themes in Soviet history.

What are Russian/RCEES faculty doing this summer/next year?

Kelly Herold

NB: Kelly is on sabbatical, and we don't want to bug her... (But she will be back in the fall, and will be chairing the Russian Department; the editors of Novosti and her students have missed her this year!)

Raquel Greene

I'm going to Moscow next month to work in the Lenin Library and the Russian State Children's Library. My project focuses on visual depictions of Africans and African-Americans in Soviet popular print culture and children's literature, the premise being that the illustrations may be read as "texts." I'll also be working with Galya Aksenova on developing next fall's Russian seminar on contemporary Russian film.

Helen Scott

Helen will be moving to Senior Faculty Status next year. While she will no longer be teaching in the Russian Department, Helen will be working on Russian Department projects in the coming year.

Anatoly Vishevsky

I will go to Prague for my sabbatical year. There I will work on a collected volume that came as a result of the Grinnell Russian Department Symposium "The Politics of Russian Popular Culture." I will also contribute an article on Timur Shaov, our Artist

in Residence. Later in the year I will go to Moscow for a short trip to meet with several Russian detective stories writers to take interviews as part of continuous work on a book on contemporary Russian detectives. I will take part in two conferences, in Berlin and in Ohrid, and I will come back for a short trip to New York in December for an invited talk at Columbia University on "Ironic Prose in 1970s Russian press."

Todd Armstrong

I will be leading a faculty development seminar on genocide and the Holocaust to Berlin, Germany, and Warsaw and Krakow in Poland in the first weeks of the summer. We have a number of meetings and talks planned, and will have a chance to see **C. Cain Elliott '06** and last year's Heath Professor **Konstanty Gebert** in Warsaw, as well as **Pawel Jedrzejko** (who was here last fall as an International Fellow) in Krakow. Later in the summer, I plan to revise a paper on Polish literature and the Holocaust that Cain and I presented last year. I'll also have time to travel west to Montana with my sons. Next fall, I'm very much looking forward to stepping down as director of the Center for International Studies and returning to the Russian department. My sabbatical will be occupied by my ongoing research on Polish Jewish writer Hanna Krall and curricular development, including a team-taught course (with Dan Marek of Palacky University, who is scheduled to

be the 2008-09 Heath Professor) on Central European culture and politics.

Robert Grey

This summer I will be a) revising a piece on the impact of public opinion on the future of democracy in Russia, b) revising for publication a student (**Sean Miller**) MAP on the determinants of non-voting in Russian politics, c) writing a paper on the growing militarization of U.S. Policy toward Africa, and d) attending a conference on interdisciplinarity in Granada, Spain. I'll be doing my Russian politics class fall semester and, as it wasn't offered this year, I will be revising the syllabus to take into account both new literature and new developments.

Daniel Kaiser

Much of the summer and my sabbatical leave next year I will spend in Grinnell, continuing revisions on my book manuscript on early modern Russian domestic life. So, at this point I have planned no trips to Russia. However, my wife and I plan a couple of trips to see our kids. In June we'll spend a few days in San Francisco where our daughter, who recently successfully defended her PhD dissertation at Purdue, graduates from her clinical psych internship at UCSF. Later in the summer (or perhaps early autumn) we plan to fly to China to see our son who is teaching English in the Peace

What are Russian/RCEES faculty doing this summer/next year? (cont.)

Corps in Chongqing, but also to do some tourist travel. During my sabbatical year I am committed to giving papers at conferences in Germany and Hungary, and plan to return to Ukraine at some point as well.

John Rommereim

This summer, I will be planning a new course to be team-taught in the spring of 2008 with **Ralph Savarese** in the English Department, titled "Music and Text." We will be combining the advanced music composition course with the advanced poetry seminar. The composers will be writing music to texts that the student poets write. I'll also be preparing for my tutorial called "coexistence" which takes as a starting point the intermingling of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian cultures in medieval Spain. In the spring of 2008, I'm planning on bringing a professional choral ensemble to Grinnell, the Rose Ensemble, to perform a concert of music from renaissance Poland and Russia. Musico-slavophiles take note: the 17th century is particularly fertile ground for study in Russian and Polish music (concentration project anyone?). I will be visiting my daughter Helen in Moscow in October, where she is spending the semester abroad (she attends Oberlin College). My translation of Pavel Chesnokov's book on choral conducting will be published soon by Musica Russica.

What the Future Holds for our Russian/RCEES Seniors

The editors of **Novosti** thought it might be interesting to share with the Russian/RCEES community the culminating work of our seniors—as well as an idea of future plans. Below some departing members of the class of '07 shares the titles of senior theses, seminar papers and MAP projects. They follow with word on what they'll be doing in "the Future"...

Lindsey Martin '07 (Russian/History) Lindsey worked on two MAPs, one in history, (Household and Family in an Early Modern Russian Town (Widows and Widowhood in Tula, 1780-1800—published in Russian in Известия Тульского государственного университета (История). [Proceedings of Tula State University (History)]) and one in Russian (Youth Advertising at the Russian Academic Youth Theatre). Next year, Lindsey will be a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Russia, teaching and studying at Mari State University in the Mari-El Republic.

Lindsey shares some words of wisdom for future majors: "Never pass up an opportunity to eat food made by one of the Russian professors. And always arrive early for Slavic Coffeehouse. Very early."

Robyn Repko '07 (Russian/Psychology) Robyn participated in the Russian MAP seminar, writing a paper entitled "Toys, Guns, and Reactions: The cultural and personal roots of adult themes at the Moscow Youth Theatre"

Robyn writes: I am going to be doing psychology research at the local university (YSU) for a half year in addition to studying for the GRE and applying to clinical psychology graduate programs. I want to eventually pursue a clinical psychology PhD (hopefully in Australia) and become a clinical/community/health psychologist (not sure yet). I would like to use my Russian, if possible, working with immigrants in some large, exciting city.

Robyn's advice: "Go to Russia, if you can. It's a really interesting experience, during which you will learn a lot about yourself."

What the Future Holds for our Russian/RCEES Seniors (cont.)

Leann Wilson '07 (Russian/RCEES concentration) Leann's Russian MAP focused on the apoliticization of the Satire Theatre, and her seminar paper was on the role of food and drink in Master and Margarita. Leann also did a History MAP "on dead people in Tula" ("Mortality in Tula: An Environmental Analysis of Parish Register Data, 1780-1804"). Leann's paper has also been published in Russian in Известия Тульского государственного университета (История). [Proceedings of Tula State University (History)]. Leann will be spending next year in St. Petersburg, studying advanced Russian and Russian as a Foreign Language (RFL) pedagogical methods at St. Petersburg State University under the auspices of a Fulbright grant. After that, she is thinking about pursuing an advanced degree in Russian history.

Leann's advice: "I suppose I would encourage future majors to nailing down phonetics, intonation, and stress as early on as they can."

Jacob Schneider (Russian/RCEES concentration) completed a RCEES senior project entitled "The Establishment of Ukrainian National Identity: The Reaction of Ukrainian Literature to the Russian Revolution of 1917." He plans on pursuing studies in medicine after graduating.

Grinnellians in Russia and Central Eastern Europe

Fall 2007

Two Grinnellians **Christopher Farstad '08** and **Dayna Hamann '09** will head off to St. Petersburg, Russia this August in a new program in the arts sponsored by Vassar College. Good Luck to Christopher and Dayna!

Fall Semester Russian Seminar MAP

Next fall the Russian Seminar (RUS 495) will study contemporary Russian cinema under the instruction of Raquel Greene. As a part of this MAP, the seminar participants will travel to Moscow over winter break as a part of the seminar. Longtime friend of the College Galina Aksenova, currently will assist during the Moscow portion of this MAP.

Welcome back to **Morgan Wajda-Levie '08**, who writes:

After a month and a half of aimless travel in Ukraine, I am now living in Kazan, the capital of The Semi-Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan, a subject of the

Russian Federation. Here I am studying the Russian language at Kazan State University, the second oldest University in Russia, which takes pride in being the only university to ever expel V.I. Lenin. I am also enjoying the company and support of several former Grinnell students and fellow Kazanites: **Avram Lyon ('06)**, **Kyle Marquard ('05)** and **Dinara Fattakhova** (exchange, '06).

And to **Erica Garrecht-Williams '08**, who spent the semester volunteering and traveling in Russia and Mongolia. In Russia, she did a ten week internship in social service in Yaroslavl. She was working at an orphanage, a boarding school for children with learning disabilities, a hospital for kids and women with mental problems, and various day centers for low-income elderly. She traveled via the Trans-Siberian Railway to Mongolia. In Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia she is currently interning at a local TV station, TV5, where she edits English texts, teaches English lessons to the journalists and staff, and goes along with the crew to some concerts and interviews.

THANKS to the Russian Department SEPC for Spring 2007

Alica Assini '07
Robyn Repko '07,
Jacob Schneider '07,
Leann Wilson '07

Special Thanks...

Go to Russian Department Student Secretary **Leann Wilson '07** for her unflagging efforts in organizing our RUSSIAN FILM SERIES, and for her cultural bulletin board exhibits (especially Moskovskoe Metro!). We hope an able student will follow in her footsteps next year!

Upcoming next year:

RCEES/Center for International Studies lecture by **Anna Kushkova**, The Jewish heritage Center, European University at St. Petersburg, 4:15 p.m., Tuesday, November 13, Location TBA.

Ms. Kushkova, who has lectured at Grinnell in the past, will present "Jewish Field Research within the Former "Pale of Residence": Present-day Challenges. Memory of the Holocaust and Jewish Identity in Soviet and post-Soviet Ukrainian Shtetls."

Questions addressed in Ms. Kushkova's talk:

After the first systematic attempt at studying Jewish traditional life in shtetls (expeditions organized by S. An-skiy (Shloima Rappoport) in 1912-1914), Jewish field research was resumed only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. What major problems arise in connection with this broken continuity? What do we see in the present-day shtetl, and how it may be studied? What place does the Holocaust occupy in narrative practices of the Jewish population in the former shtetls? How are those practices formed and/ or modified for "external" listeners (Jewish charity organizations, local authorities, anthropologists)? Which are the principal motifs that constitute the "Holocaust narrative"? What role do practices of commemoration, both private and public, play for the construction of Jewish identity?

Russian Department Interational Fellow, Spring 2008: **Alexander Yurevich Militarev**.

Alexander Militarev is a noted scholar, translator, poet, and essayist. President of the Jewish University in Moscow and a distinguished member of the faculty there, Militarev is a world-class scholar in Semitic languages and literature, has translated poetry from many languages, written extensively on translation studies, and published original poetry. In addition, Militarev is an important figure in Russia's Jewish community and was recently lauded for "Meritorious Contribution to the Development of Jewish Community in Russia."

While at Grinnell College, Militarev will assist Kelly Herold in the teaching of Russian 498; his residency will take place in the six weeks after spring break. This year's seminar theme will be "The Other in Russian Literature." Militarev will also give a poetry reading in Russian and a public lecture in English.

