Dear readers,

We are pleased to present the third issue of our joint newsletter. There is a lot to report since we released our last issue in August. In fact, there are so many things to share that we could not fit all of them into this newsletter. One of them is this year’s Undergraduate Career Night that was held on November 16. If you want to know more about why studying languages provides important skills for jobs outside of academia, please visit http://germanicandslavic.uwaterloo.ca/courses/WhyStudyLanguages.html.

We hope you enjoy reading about the latest news from the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies and the Waterloo Centre for German Studies.

Happy holidays and a happy new year!

The editorial team
On October 18, we were thrilled to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the thought-provoking film *Letztes aus der Da-Dae-R* (Latest from the Da-Da-R) together with film director Jörg Foth. Community members, faculty, and students alike attended the intriguing depiction of the final days of East Germany. In scenes that provide both a commentary and criticism of the German Democratic Republic, the clowns, Meh and Weh, are observed in their journey to find freedom after having been released from jail. Depicting an array of locales and imagery – an obscene breakfast scene, followed by a misty journey down a river, continued later by a visit to a slaughterhouse – the viewer is not simply taken aback by pervasive images, but pulled into retrospection of what the agenda of East Germany at the time might have been. Cleverly embedded clues into the period’s popular culture and song-and-dance in the cabaret style provide constant amusement for the general audience, while those with a keen knowledge of German literature and film are sure to recognize the facets of intertextuality to be found throughout the piece. Simultaneously, the actions of actor and writer Steffen Mensching and singer-songwriter Hans-Eckardt Wenzel mirror the essentials of the Dada artistic movement, a wave of art meant to ridicule the accepted conventional art. In parallel to this, the audience engaged in a conversation with the director following the screening and discussed the manipulation of political correctness that the film undertook. A brave and unique feature for its time, and in pre-production before the fall of the Berlin Wall itself occurred, *Letztes aus der Da-Dae-R* pushes the appeal of the eccentric and gives a premature view into the predicament that would follow Germany after reunification.

Azra Zurkan and Kyle Scholz

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**Jean Snook honoured**

A 1993 PhD graduate of UW’s Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures (now Germanic and Slavic Studies), Jean M. Snook returned to campus in October on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of our Faculty to receive the distinguished Arts Alumni Award. Dr. Snook is now a long-serving professor of German at Memorial University, St. John’s, Nfld. and was honoured for her teaching, scholarship and national service in the profession. A highly active researcher and translator, Dr. Snook has written, edited, and translated books on and by Heinrich Heine, expressionist poetry, Else Laske-Schüler, Luise Rinser, and Evelyn Grill, in addition to many scholarly articles on literary topics, dozens of entries in literary encyclopaedias, and nigh to a hundred scientific works associated with forensics and allied subjects. On the occasion of receiving this distinction she was also ‘welcomed home’ by the department and invited to read from her most recent translations of two Austrian novels, *Kahn and Engelmann* (Biblioasis, 2009) by the late, celebrated Canadian Germanist Hans Eichner, and *The Distant Sound* (Champaign and London: Dalkey, 2010) by Gert Jonke. The forty colleagues, students, and members of the community present, including some of Dr. Snook’s former professors at Waterloo (Manfred Kuxdorf, Wilbur Maust, Manfred Richter) first heard current UW German professor Barbara Schmenken read excerpts from the original German texts, followed by Snook’s translations, delivered with flair. Libations, a lively reception, and a book-signing opportunity followed.

David John
Ireneusz Szarycz is Associate Professor of Russian and Polish literatures and languages in our department. He teaches a broad range of courses on all levels: Old Russian literature, 19th century Russian literature, contemporary Russian literature, and Russian folklore and mythology as well as all levels of Russian language courses and beginner and intermediate Polish. Prof. Szarycz’s Polish language courses enjoy great and ever-growing popularity among students. He sees many reasons for this trend. For example, Poland’s EU entry in 2004, making Polish an important language for business relations. There is also a new generation of Polish immigrants to this area, joining an already flourishing Polish community. Especially to those children who may not speak Polish at home, he thinks that language courses play a vital role in teaching and maintaining their knowledge not only of the Polish language but also of its culture and history. Prof. Szarycz is a very involved member of Kitchener-Waterloo’s Polish community. Alongside opening speeches and invited talks, he has conducted lectures in Polish on Polish language, culture, and history in the local Polish language radio program for two years, attracting many interested listeners.

While the main research expertise of Prof. Szarycz is in contemporary Russian literature, it is the teaching and research of Russian folklore and mythology that are nearest to his heart. “Without understanding folklore you cannot understand contemporary literature,” he says. Because the Russian language is very rich in idioms and sayings, having a grasp of their nuances is crucial to interpreting Russian language literature. While the research of Russian folklore is rather neglected at Canadian universities, Prof. Szarycz’s Russian folklore course is and has been very well-attended by undergraduate and graduate students, also from other disciplines, such as Psychology. He hopes that interest in the Russian language, culture, and history will continue to grow. He was intrigued by Disney’s first locally produced Russian film, The Book of Masters, based on some of the most famous Russian fairy tales. “I hope this is not the end of it but that there will be more.”

Myriam Léger

Successful PhD defenses

This fall term two of our PhD candidates in German, Tetyana Reichert and Peter Wood, defended their dissertations successfully. Congratulations!

Tetyana’s dissertation is entitled An Analysis of Peer Activities to Inform Foreign Language Learning: Word Searches, Voice, and the Use of Non-Target Languages. In her project, Tetyana focuses on language learning in peer-to-peer small group interactions in pedagogy-related contexts. She recorded and transcribed data gathered from German beginner language courses, which she analysed to better understand the social, linguistic, and cognitive elements of learning in social interaction.

Peter Wood’s dissertation is entitled QuickAssist. Extensive Reading for Learners of German Using CALL Technologies. Peter developed a computer program that allows students to work with complex German texts. The program provides many tools that facilitate this learning process, for instance an electronic dictionary, a thesaurus, and a program for the analysis of German compounds. The computer program is available online:

http://linguistics.usask.ca/quickassist/German.wt

Myriam Léger
On November 18, the Centre was proud to present the first Jakob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm Lecture, an annual event devoted to the presentation of interdisciplinary perspectives on topics that fall within the broad range of German Studies. The inaugural speaker for this newly conceptualized lecture series was David Blackbourn, Coolidge Professor of History at Harvard University. The topic of his talk was German environmental history since the eighteenth century and it was entitled *Nature and Environment in Modern Germany: A Difficult History*. After introductions by Dr. Mathias Schulze, Director of the WCGS, and Dr. Gary Bruce, Professor of History at the University of Waterloo, Blackbourn spoke about the way in which Germans have shaped their environment over the last two hundred years and how this process has in turn shaped them. Taking this particular place and period as a point of departure, Blackbourn explored a variety not only of historical but also of historiographical issues. In particular, he posed questions concerning the approaches historians may take when writing about interactions between humans and their natural – or not so natural – surroundings. One of the main themes of his talk was the close connection between a society’s appropriation of its environment and the subjugation of the people living in it. In so doing, he was able to sketch the complexities inherent in a specific culture’s dealings with what it perceives as the natural world and its constituent parts. After his talk, Blackbourn answered various questions from the audience that shed further light on modern German history as well as contemporary Germanist historiography. At the reception following the lecture, audience members once more had the chance to pose questions and engage in discussions. The event was attended by a wide variety of faculty members, students, and community members who showed great interest in this first Jakob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm Lecture. We look forward to next year’s lecture and hope it will continue to be a forum of information, education, and critical engagement.

Mario Rewers

Research Roundtable

The research group *Waterloo Applied Language Studies* (WAPPLS) of the WCGS hosted its first research round table discussion on November 3rd. Christine Kampen Robinson led the round table discussion on research she conducted at a German bilingual school in Manitoba for her M.A. thesis project. The attendees, including WAPPLS members, members of other WCGS research groups, and students from the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, were eager to hear about her project. Many provided her with feedback on her preliminary results and brainstormed with her about theories and perspectives from which to interpret the phenomena she observed in her study.

After the round table, Christine remarked that the discussion was very helpful as she continued working on her project, and that she would integrate many of the points brought up by the attendees into her analysis. One attendee observed how beneficial it can be when researchers get together to discuss a topic that is of interest to them and to which each can bring his or her own knowledge.

All those doing research in Applied Language Studies are invited to contact Allison Cattell, this year’s project coordinator, by e-mail at acattell@uwaterloo.ca if they wish to discuss their current project at the next round table event, which will take place in Winter 2011.

Allison Cattell
German Canadiana

Helena Calogeridis, our GSS liaison librarian at the Dana Porter Library, and History and Political Science librarian Jane Forgay recently completed the German Canadiana in Ontario Bibliography (GCO). GCO is a new open access resource to help researchers identify sources relating to the experiences of German speakers and their descendents in Ontario.

“The GCO is of potential interest to researchers in a range of disciplines, as well as those with an interest in local history or the local community,” Helena explains. It contains records of historical, literary, cultural, linguistic, and biographical interest. A large number of these relate specifically to the German speaking community in Waterloo region.

The records are derived from a wide range of sources, including Elizabeth Bloomfield’s Waterloo Regional History Bibliography System, catalogues from around the world, and other research databases. Helena and Jane have customized each record to highlight its relevance within the collection and implemented a flexible search system that allows for searching by keyword, author, title, journal title, descriptor, and publication year.

Creating the GCO has been a “labour of love” for Helena and Jane, who began the project in 2007 after conceiving of the idea while part of the Research Advisory Group for the Waterloo Centre for German Studies (WCGS). “We wanted to build on our print bibliography of the same topic to create something larger and more interactive,” Jane says. Following through on their interactive aim, the GCO has a prominent feedback feature in the interface for users to suggest records for inclusion in the database.

Looking to the future, Helena and Jane agree that, although the database is primarily retrospective in nature, new records will continue to be added as they are identified. The newest record to be added was Nikolai Penner’s PhD Thesis entitled The High German of Russian Mennonites in Ontario.

The GCO is a collaborative project between the Library and the WCGS. Helena and Jane would like to acknowledge and thank Adrian Kemp and Bill Oldfield for devoting many hours developing and fine-tuning the current interface. Additional thanks to the many individuals who have supported and provided input into the GCO over the past three years.

This is a modified version of an article that originally appeared in news@yourlibrary.

Talk by Dr. Margaret Derry: Franklin Wellington Wegenast: The Life of a German-Canadian and his Impressions of Germany in 1938

It is a rarity to receive first-hand information on pre-war Nazi Germany that has not already been well researched. It was therefore of interest that new material unearthed by the University of Guelph’s Margaret Derry has come to light. On September 21, Dr. Derry gave an outline of the impressions recorded in a diary by her grandfather, lawyer Franklin Wellington Wegenast. A second generation Canadian of German descent, his affiliation to Germany and its culture was evidently strong as he travelled to Germany in 1938 to contact family and friends and learn of their experiences.

Travelling through south-western Germany, Wegenast noted that many of his contacts privately held the Nazis in contempt but publicly showed fealty. The Nazi salute and the “Heil Hitler” greeting were loathed, but seemingly ordinary Germans put up with these displays of loyalty out of fear rather than conviction. This point, made repeatedly, suggests that the support for the Nazi regime was not as strong as may have been thought. This is anecdotal evidence, but it does lead to the question of just how much popular support the Nazis in fact had. There seems little doubt that Wegenast wanted to gather information to provide the English-speaking world with an assessment of contemporary Germany. Wegenast appears torn by his affiliations and was attempting to reconcile both his German roots with his Anglophilia. He had a reverence for British institutions and may have wanted to show that a Nazi state posed no threat to the British Empire.

Dr. Derry is to be congratulated for bringing this personal voice to light. The more primary evidence on this state, the more accurate our assessment about its true nature and influence. She is encouraged to publish what is available to make this information available to all scholars.

Dr. Sebastian Siebel-Achenbach
German Research in Motion Series

The first speaker in this series is Christine Lehleiter (University of Toronto) whose talk is entitled "Heredity: Determinism and Creativity in German Romanticism". The talk will take place on **Wednesday February 16 at 4pm at the University of Waterloo, Hagey Hall 123**. If you have any questions about this talk, please contact Prof. Alice Kuzniar by e-mail at akuzniar@uwaterloo.ca.

The second speaker is Heidi Schlipphacke (Old Dominion University, Virginia). Her first talk is entitled "Masculinity and Nationality: Robert Menasse’s Don Juan de la Mancha oder die Erziehung der Lust" and will take place on **Monday February 28**. Her second talk will take place on **Tuesday March 1** and deals with Nationalism in Recent German and Austrian Film. **Times and locations tba.** If you have any questions about this talk, please contact Prof. Michael Boehringer by e-mail at mboehrin@uwaterloo.ca.

The third speaker is Magda Stroinska (McMaster University). Her talk is entitled "The Second Displacement: L2 Attrition and Loss in Aging Immigrants". It will take place on **Thursday March 10, time and location tba.** If you have any questions about this talk, please contact Prof. Grit Liebscher by e-mail at gliebsch@uwaterloo.ca.

On **Saturday March 19**, there will be a symposium on “Romantic Ecology” with guest speakers Ian Balfour (York University), Joan Steigerwald (York University), and David Clark (McMaster University). The call for papers will be out shortly and invites interested graduate students and faculty to participate. If you have any questions, please contact Prof. Alice Kuzniar by e-mail at akuzniar@uwaterloo.ca.