Dear readers,

The 7th issue of Wat’s In-Sight takes a closer look at some of the people and projects that make the Waterloo Centre for German Studies – as well as the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies – the dynamic and innovative community it is today. You will read articles that highlight aspects of community life related to personnel changes and long-term planning, visions for future research, community involvement, and interdisciplinary and international collaboration. You will hear directly from members of the centre on these and other topics in this issue of the joint newsletter, which in many ways embodies the reflective tone the summer months can afford. At the publication of this issue, we are already looking ahead to an exciting fall schedule, and we invite you to join us at the events, lectures, and exhibitions described on page eight.

Happy reading!

Allison G. Cattell, editor
As an applied linguist with a special interest in discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, she loves to explore the relationship between language and identity, the way people – especially Canadian German immigrants – are using and are talking about languages. She teaches graduate courses on language, identity, and migration as well as undergraduate courses in and on German language, society, and media. Outside of work, she is always up for a good game of tennis – both playing and watching. But her favourite activity, together with her husband, is watching her two girls grow and explore the world in multilingual ways.

Professor Liebscher was born and raised in Leipzig and did her undergraduate studies and her diploma at the Leipzig Karl-Marx-Universität, as it was then called. She then pursued her PhD at the University of Texas at Austin.

Interview with Grit Liebscher
Chair, Germanic and Slavic Studies, University of Waterloo

Greetings, Dr. Liebscher!

What are you most looking forward to in your new position as GSS chair?

I look forward to working with a fantastic group of people, including students, faculty, staff, and others who are connected to the department. Working with these people, exploring ideas together, and shaping our disciplines are aspects of my position I will enjoy the most.

Which challenges do you anticipate the department will face over the next few years, and which strengths of the department will help it to meet those challenges?

There are many challenges a department like ours faces these days. While some are related to funding, others have to do with society’s perception and (un)awareness of our disciplines; and, of course, the two may be related. We will need to continue to explain to the world what we are doing and why we think it is important. Our success will be measured by the students we teach and graduate, the research we undertake and develop, and the impact we make in Canada and beyond. If GSS continues to be a lively and vibrant department, where ideas emerge and where people trust each other for the work they are doing, I am very positive that we will continue to make a difference for Germanic and Slavic Studies in Canada and worldwide.

Can you tell us about some of the recent changes and current events in the department?

This year has seen some personnel changes in the department as a result of its life cycle. There are the retirements of Profs. Zina Gimpelevich, David John, and Ireneusz Szarycz, the leave of Prof. Sarah Turner for England, and the hiring of two new colleagues, Profs. Emma Betz and Tetyana Reichert. Prof. John starts his retirement after almost 38 years at the University of Waterloo as Professor of German, former Chair of the department, and as the Founding Director of the Waterloo Centre for German Studies. Profs. Szarycz and Gimpelevich retire after 26 and 22 years as Professors of Russian literature, respectively. Prof. Szarycz also taught Polish and Professor Gimpelevich taught Russian for many years. We wish them well in this new phase of their lives! A new life at the University of Waterloo has begun for our colleague, Emma Betz, who joined the department in August as the successful candidate of a search for an Assistant Professor in German Applied Linguistics. Prof. Betz came with some years of experience at Kansas State University and a research interest in the analysis of current-day German language as well as Transylvania Saxon. Last but not least, Prof. Reichert, a recent graduate of our department, has started a lecturer position in Russian this fall. We welcome both of them and wish them all the best in their professions!

Interview by Allison Cattell
Reflections on my first semester as 
Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker Memorial Chair 
in German Literary Studies
by John H. Smith

Upon taking the position of Diefenbaker Chair, I planned to undertake the mission of promoting interest in and study of German literature, thought, and culture by proceeding in four expanding concentric circles, from the University of Waterloo campus, to the Canadian academic community, to the Kitchener-Waterloo non-academic community, and finally to a broader Canadian public sphere. In my first months at UW, I have tried to make headway in the first two areas. On campus I have established working ties with the departments of Philosophy, English, and Religious Studies (esp. Jewish Studies). We plan a number of joint activities in the coming year or two, including reading groups, jointly sponsored public lectures, and a conference.

At the invitation of Prof. Skidmore, I presented a guest lecture to some 50 students and campus colleagues as part of the 2012 Arts Lecture Series in April. The topic of that lecture, “Why Humanities Scholarship in Uncertain Times,” was likewise the topic of the keynote address I gave to the CAUTG (Canadian Association of University Teachers of German) at this year’s Congress at the end of May. That lecture gave me the opportunity both to meet a considerable number of Canadian Germanists (thus moving into the “second circle”) and to make the case that precisely the German philosophical tradition can offer powerful arguments for defending the Humanities. I look forward to working with departments and scholars across Canada to promote the study of things German. (I was invited to present this paper at a workshop of the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Study of the Free University, Berlin, this past July and we had a lively discussion of the fate of humanistic education and Germanistik.)

Further expanding my connections to academic colleagues in Ontario, I have offered a seminar at McMaster University at the invitation of Prof. Dana Hollander (Religious Studies), begun a collaborative project with Prof. John Bell (Philosophy, University of Western Ontario) as part of a SSHRC grant application, and become involved with the group known as the “Ontario Hegelian Organization.” At the latter group’s yearly conference in Peterborough, I proposed that UW might host a future meeting (tentatively Fall, 2013), perhaps together with our English Department on the topic: “Hegel, Media, and Mediation.”

Finally, together with a graduate research assistant (Antje Riethmüller), I have been gathering materials for a larger conference that would be of wider interest to the public on the topic: “How Multi- is Germany? Religions, Cultures, and Languages.” This conference responds to Chancellor Merkel’s provocative statement before parliament on October 16, 2010, that “Multi-Kulti ist gescheitert” (“Multiculturalism has failed”) by exploring the reality of Germany as a pluralistic society. The questions raised and realities explored should be of interest for Canadians facing many of the same developments. Such a conference would move the activities of the Diefenbaker Chair into the broadest of the communities it is meant to address.
On May 1st, 2012, the Waterloo Applied Language Studies research group was delighted to host a research talk by Dr. Françoise Blin, who is a senior lecturer in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies at Dublin City University, the current president of the EUROCALL organization, as well as the editor of the academic journal ReCALL.

Her talk was entitled “Rethinking Language Learning and Web 2.0”, which encouraged a new approach to understanding language learning in digital contexts due to innovations with technology and the internet in particular. Blin explained that there is a tendency to simply reproduce face-to-face interaction when trying to develop language proficiency using the affordances of the internet.

Expanding upon this, she explained there are three metaphors which help to understand how second language proficiency can be developed. The acquisition metaphor assumes a monological-mind model, where language acquisition occurs only between the learner and the material being studied. The participation metaphor expands this concept to dialogical-interaction where two individuals communicate with one another to develop proficiency.

Finally, with the affordances of the internet, a knowledge creation metaphor can be applied where individuals not only interact with one another, but can create information, thereby once again expanding the concept to one of trialogical-developing collaboration. Ultimately, Blin argued that language learners should question our accepted practices for developing second language proficiency, and strive towards what she calls expansive learning. The lively discussion that followed the talk showed that Blin’s research resonates with many of the issues we face as instructors when incorporating technology in our language courses.

Kyle Scholz

On June 5th, 2012, the Waterloo Applied Language Studies research group welcomed Sarah Boye, a PhD candidate at the Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München, to talk about her current research project, which centres around how German students’ intercultural communicative competence is affected by and changes through an experience abroad. The participants in her project are all Education students, studying to be English teachers, and it is a requirement for them to spend at least six weeks abroad in an English-speaking country. Through administering questionnaires, in-depth one-on-one interviews with the students, as well as final reports about their experiences that students submit at the end of their sojourn, Boye hopes to be able to chart the development (or non-development) of various aspects of students’ intercultural communicative competence. One of the nice things about round tables, as opposed to a straight research talk, is that the subject is a work in progress, and the presenter wants questions and input from the participants in order to push his or her research further. We were able to have a stimulating discussion about the design of the presenter’s project, help her make effective changes to the questions she was using in her questionnaire, and add various points for consideration in going forward with the project. We look forward to a potential second visit from Boye to discuss some of her findings.

Christine Kampen Robinson
Wilfrid Laurier University Press (WLUP) and the Waterloo Centre for German Studies (WCGS) are pleased to announce the inauguration of a new and improved version of their book series in German Studies. Under the auspices of WLUP, the WCGS Book Series aims to publish two volumes per year in the field of German Studies understood to include German applied linguistics, German cultural studies, history of German-speaking countries and peoples, German literature and film studies, German intellectual history, and theory. Senior editor John H. Smith (Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker Memorial Chair in German Literary Studies, University of Waterloo) and an editorial board of internationally recognized scholars in the field of German Studies plan to make this series a premiere publishing venue in the discipline. Book monographs and edited volumes that discuss original scholarly research of high quality can be published in the series. The WCGS will continue to produce edited volumes of selected papers from conferences hosted by the WCGS. Unedited doctoral dissertations and conference proceedings will not be published.

One volume, *Liberty is Dead: A Canadian in Germany, 1938*, the fascinating autobiographical account of Franklin Wellington Wegenast’s travels through Hitler’s *Reich* (edited by Margaret Derry), is already in print. Another, the timely and relevant *Traditions and Transitions: Curricula for German Studies*, edited by John L. Plews and by Barbara Schmenk, is in production.

*John H. Smith*
Remembering Paul Tuerr
Founding donor, Waterloo Centre for German Studies

From very early on, Paul Tuerr was centrally involved in setting up the Waterloo Centre for German Studies. He was a member of the Steering Committee who put the infrastructure and resources in place that made the founding of the Centre in 2004 possible. His continued generous support set an example for many other German Canadians in the community.

On behalf of the graduate students and colleagues in the WCGS, I would like to express my sincere appreciation of the munificent support Paul and his family have given us. It is through magnificent gestures like these that we can improve and expand our work on German Studies at the University of Waterloo, educate younger generations, and promote German culture and society in Waterloo Region, Ontario, and beyond.

To honour and remember one of the major donors of the Waterloo Centre for German Studies, we are publishing his daughter’s eulogy with Helene Schramek’s permission.

We will remember Paul as a steadfast and generous supporter of the Centre and a promoter of things German.

Mathias Schulze, Director, WCGS

Dear friends,

My name is Helene Schramek, and I am the youngest of Paul Tuerr’s daughters. We’ve gathered here today to remember and celebrate the life of our father.

He was born August 30, 1920 in the German-speaking town of Miletic, Yugoslavia, the youngest of three children and the only son. When he was 19, dad’s independent nature led him to leave his home and family in June of 1939 to pursue an education and a better life. His first destination was Leipzig, Germany, where he landed a job as a journeyman, but it was not until February 1941 that his plan to study as a Structural and Architectural Engineer at The Stuttgart Staatsbauschule (State Construction Academy) would be realized. In the Spring of 1948, equipped with an engineering degree in architecture and construction engineering, he landed a job with Kuebler AG and even though work was plenty with Germany being in the process of reconstruction after the war, he decided to leave the old world behind and join his parents and immigrate to Canada.
In September 1948, he arrived in Canada on a one-way ticket from Germany. After 11 days on the Atlantic, the SS Beaverbrae docked safely in Quebec City; boarding a train for Toronto, his final destination was Kitchener, where his sister Mary lived. Upon arriving at Union Station, he and his parents were picked up by his brother-in-law Mike Langenecker and Joe Huck, a family friend. Dad would always remember the “Huck boys” for welcoming him to Canada and despite a language barrier, it was only days later that they whisked him off on a fishing excursion to Honey Harbour, a place that so impressed him that later in life it became a second home. Three days after arriving in Kitchener, he had started working for Dunker Construction, initially unloading cement, then as a carpenter for Frank Neibert Construction. With money he saved, he bought a drafting board and began drawing house plans in the evening to supplement his income. He’d been in Canada for seven months when he borrowed $1000 from a family friend and started his own construction company. Like himself, most of dad’s workers were Volksdeutsche (ethnic German) immigrants and from his earliest days as an entrepreneur, dad took his social responsibility very seriously.

Owning and operating a successful business meant much more than merely earning a comfortable living for himself and his family. Over the years he was approached by many of his workers to sign employment guarantees for relatives back home. In all, he enabled 36 families to immigrate to Canada. At one point an official from the Federal Immigration Department called dad and asked him whether he was aware of his legal responsibility and the potential financial repercussions. He assured the caller that he firmly believed these ethnic Germans were of good character and that none would take advantage of him. He was right and never regretted his decision to help these newcomers make Canada their home.

Dad went on to develop more than 1000 acres across the Region and built many homes and apartment buildings. Work was like a hobby for dad and he truly enjoyed it and was involved with the business on a daily basis until a few short weeks ago. Dad was also involved with many German Clubs and organizations in the area. It was at the Schwaben Club in December of 1948 that he met our mother Anna; by early 1950 he’d proposed but was disappointed that she wouldn’t agree to enter the marriage until she’d paid off the debt of her passage to Canada; she was too proud to enter the marriage with debts. By 1951 the loan was repaid and on July 21st they were married here in St Mary’s Church. Soon after they started a family – my sisters Ingrid, Pauline, and myself – three girls. He also has three lovely granddaughters: Jennifer, Katherine, and Claire.

A favourite spot for our mother and dad was the family cottage situated on an island in Honey Harbour. Honey Harbour was a special place for them. They’d spent their honeymoon there and I will always remember on special occasions like mom’s birthday or their anniversary, dad would paddle out in the canoe along the shoreline, picking a bouquet of wildflowers and water lilies for his Medy. The cottage was a place where all the family was gathered under one roof, and nothing made mom and dad happier. Dad didn’t have many hobbies, but his love of the rugged scenery of Georgian Bay led to an addition of a Studio where he’d spend countless hours painting his impressions of these stunning landscapes.

We were extremely proud of dad in 2002 when he was presented the Golden Jubilee Medal (created for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth’s Golden Jubilee), an award to honour citizens who had made significant contributions to Canada, their community, or to their fellow Canadians. In 2003, dad’s initiative led to the founding of the German-Canadian Remembrance Society, whose goals are to document, maintain and represent the achievements and legacy of German immigrants in Canada as well as support projects which help to remind German Canadians and Canadians at large of the significant contributions pioneers of German background have made over the last 300 years in Canada. I always remember that dad seemed to have a 20-year plan – always looking to the future – so many things he still wanted to do. He had endless energy; the words “can’t be done” did not exist in his vocabulary. His expectations of others were high; he was demanding, but nothing he wouldn’t expect or demand of himself. In his 92nd year, he is finally resting peacefully. He is in good hands. Today we say goodbye to a father, a grandfather, a friend. On behalf of my sisters, myself, and our families, I thank all of you for taking the time to celebrate our dad’s life with us, and for having shared with us your thoughts and memories of how dad touched your lives.
Wat’s Upcoming

Friday, September 21st, 2:00 – 4:00 pm, EV3, room 3412, refreshments to follow
**Dr. Alexander Freund** speaks on “Salvaging History: Can We Learn Anything From (Really Bad) 1970s Oral History Interviews?”

While most researchers prefer to do their own field work, it is becoming increasingly difficult if not impossible to find eyewitnesses for research about the first half of the twentieth century. Thus, there is much (or at least some) value in extant oral history collections, collections that now include tens of thousands of hours of recordings. Researchers confront great obstacles, however, when working with older collections. Using one of the largest and, to put it generously, “problematic” German-Canadian oral history collections in Canada, this presentation attempts to show how history may be salvaged from oral history collections, even in the face of what seem to be insurmountable hurdles. Warning: Audiences may be subjected to several minutes of severely awful oral history recordings. Ear plugs are recommended.

Saturday, October 20th, 4:00 pm, EV3, room 1408, reception to follow
**Dr. Claire Kramsch** speaks on “Symbolic Competence: A New Goal For Global Times”

Given the increasing importance of language in the global economy both as a mode of communication and as the power to make and impose meaning on others, foreign language learners need the ability not just to express conventional meanings and solve communicative tasks but to interpret what is meant by what is said, to understand how people use symbolic systems to construct new meanings, and to imagine how the other languages they know might influence the way they think, speak and write. This paper will explore the concept of symbolic competence both in the theory and the practice of foreign language teaching and learning. As a highly acclaimed professor of Applied Linguistics in North America and world-wide, Claire Kramsch (pictured right) will be conferred the title “Doctor of Letters”, an Honorary Doctorate, from the University of Waterloo at Arts Convocation on October 20th.

The visiting exhibition **Names Instead of Numbers** will be displayed from September 24th to October 17th in the Modern Languages Building at the University of Waterloo. Mark your calendars and plan to visit this international travelling exhibition, which shows a selection of twenty-two biographies from the Dachau Remembrance Book project.

**Tuesday, October 23rd, 7:00 – 9:30 pm, HH, room 1106**

**Grimm Lecture 2012: Dr. Ruth Wodak** speaks on “Recent Developments in post-war Austrian German (Österreichisches Deutsch): A case study on genre-related language change”

Dr. Wodak is Distinguished Professor of Discourse Studies at Lancaster University, UK, since 2004 while she has remained affiliated to the University of Vienna as full professor of Applied Linguistics.

Contact information

Kotja Czarnecki kotja.czarnecki@uwaterloo.ca
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
Waterloo Centre for German Studies
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1
Canada

Editorial information

Editor: Allison G. Cattell
acattell@uwaterloo.ca

Contributors: Christine Kampen Robinson, Grit Liebscher, Kyle Scholz, Helene Schramek, Mathias Schulze, John H. Smith