

# DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN & RUSSIAN

## Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends of the German and Russian Department,

The German and Russian Department has experienced some major changes. Three of our members have retired: Ken Nalibow, David Scrase, and Beatrice Wood. We have two new lecturers in German: Adriana Borra and Kate Kenny. We are in the process of hiring a Visiting Assistant Professor to replace Professor Nalibow, and will be starting a national search for his permanent replacement in the fall of 2010. And lastly, I was appointed the new chair of the department.

I am sure many of you cannot imagine the German and Russian Department with a chairperson other than Wolfgang Mieder. Wolfgang Mieder was truly an exceptional chair and our department prospered under his leadership. He was a champion of the collegiality that characterizes the Department, always insisting on fairness, professionalism and mutual respect, and, most importantly, modeling this behavior for us. Because of his creative and wise management of the department's budget and his ability to work with every administration, Wolfgang Mieder has steered the department safely through many challenging times these past thirty years. Moreover, Wolfgang Mieder has not only supported the department as a whole but us individually as scholars, teachers, and colleagues. All of us—faculty, students, and staff—have turned to him with professional as well as personal problems and he has never disappointed us. He is a true role model for all of us: a devoted and inspiring teacher, a wise mentor, a generous colleague, an effective leader, and a world-class scholar. I speak for everyone in the department—faculty, staff, and students—when I express our sincerest gratitude for his leadership. Most of all, we are happy that he still remains with us as a member of the department.

I am happy to report that we are currently experiencing a new interest in both German and Russian. Our enrollments and our numbers of majors have grown over the past couple of years, and more students are interested in studying abroad. In addition, we have new colleagues in the Departments of History and Art History whose area of expertise is in German and Austrian Studies. This should lead to very interesting collaborations and joint projects for both faculty and students.

All in all, we had another busy year. Wolfgang Mieder's "big" birthday (he turned sixty-five last February) was celebrated with a "Festschrift", i.e. a celebratory volume of essays by friends and colleagues from around the world. The book was edited by Prof. Kevin McKenna with the title of *The Proverbial "Pied Piper." A Festschrift Volume in Honor of Wolfgang Mieder on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Wolfgang Mieder was especially pleased that the book includes essays by many of his UVM professorial friends like Kevin McKenna, Dennis Mahoney, Adriana and Antonello Borra, Juan Maura, Robert Gordon, and myself. True to form, he himself has been prolific and peripatetic—this past year he published four books (one of them on President Obama's use of proverbs) and ten articles. His travel included trips to Lisbon, Athens, and Los Angeles. Dennis Mahoney has returned from his sabbatical which he spent in part in Germany and Switzerland where he co-taught a graduate seminar on "Ethics, Power, and Art in Literature" for the University of Augsburg at its "Maison Blanche" retreat in Sion. Theresia Hoeck is adjusting admirably to teaching large beginning classes of German. Kevin McKenna as well has had to contend with large language courses and has been the major force behind our five-fold increase in Russian majors since 2005. Gideon Bavy had another successful year of teaching Hebrew. Janet Sobieski is as kind and helpful as always, and keeps busy staying on top of all new administrative procedures and implementations.

The highlight of our programming was undoubtedly a lecture by a graduate of our department, Doug Smith, based on his third major book on 18th century Russian culture. *The Pearl: A Story of Opera and Forbidden Love from Catherine the Great's Russia* appeared with Yale Press in 2008. In addition we hosted two lectures on German literature and culture. Professor Gudrun Clay, Metropolitan State College of Denver spoke on "1000 Jahre deutsche Literatur: Zur Integrierung von Geschichte, Sprache und Kultur im Literaturunterricht," and Professor Primus-Heinz Kucher, University of Klagenfurt, Austria entertained his audience with "Living in Two Languages, Emigrantwatch oder Schreiben im Niemandsland?"—a talk examining language change and writing in exile.

Please turn the pages for more information about the Department and the accomplishments and success of our students and alumni.

As always, thank you for your continued support of and interest in the Department of German and Russian. We hope hearing from you, too.

Sincerely,

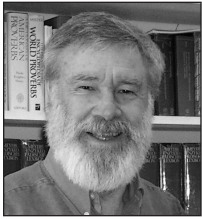
*Helga Schreckenberger*  
Helga Schreckenberger

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## Saying Good-Bye



### David Scrase, Professor of German

Professor Scrase joined the Department of German and Russian in 1971. Along with his Ph.D from Indiana University he brought with him a deep appreciation and keen understanding of German language, art, culture, and literature. He combined intellectual excitement and enthusiasm

with a strong belief in serious scholarly work that inspired both his colleagues and students. In 1993, he founded the Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont and served as its director until 2006.

David Scrase ended his career a nationally and internationally recognized scholar in the fields of German poetry, modern German literature, and Holocaust Studies. He was honored with an Alexander von Humboldt fellowship as well a Fulbright Scholarship. His well-received publications include works about German authors Wilhelm Lehman and Johannes Bobrowski; he collected personal accounts of Holocaust survivors and documents about rescue and assistance efforts during this period. He taught numerous students both at the University of Vermont and at high schools throughout the state about the legacy of this terrible period in history.

His love and gift for language manifests itself in his many outstanding translations of German poetry and novels. He was able to transfer his deep care for language and for precision in style and grammar to his students and challenged them to do their best work.

David has inspired us over the years with his high standards, his love for knowledge, his intelligence, his generous personality, and his wry wit. We will miss him tremendously, and wish him much joy in his new vocation of artisan wood-turner.



### Kenneth Nalibow, Associate Professor of Russian

Professor Nalibow retires as the longest serving member of the German and Russian Department. He joined the University of Vermont in 1970 after completing his Ph.D. in Balto-Slavic Philology at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a gifted linguist who amazes his colleagues and students with his flawless pronunciation in Russian. He served as Director of the Russia/East European Studies Program from 1981 to 1992 and from 1995 to his retirement.

Ken Nalibow's professional interest was particularly focused on language pedagogy and he presented numerous papers on this topic at the national and regional meetings of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. At UVM, he was twice nominated for the Kroepsch-Maurice Award for Excellence in Teaching. From 1980-1988, he served as the book review editor for the *Slavic and East European Journal*.

His second passion was new technology and the use of media in the classroom. Ken Nalibow was actively involved in upgrading the UVM language resource center for which he served as interim director from 1997 to 1998. He also turned his great interest in contemporary Russian film into a successful course.

For his younger colleagues, Ken Nalibow served as the institutional memory. Having received his B.A. at UVM in 1964 and teaching at this institution for thirty-nine years, he certainly knows our university well. We will miss his great stories and wish him a long and joyous retirement.



### Beatrice Wood, Senior Lecturer of German

A native of Switzerland and fluent in French, German, Italian, and English, Beatrice Wood started her career at UVM in the Department of Romance Languages where she taught French from 1977 to 1978. Since 1978 she has been an

invaluable member of the German and Russian Department, teaching German at the elementary and intermediate level. Soon she added upper level courses to her teaching repertoire. She created the third-year "Composition and Conversation" course and put her own stamp on the department's "Culture and Civilization" course. In addition, she offered a course on German Women Film Directors which was cross-listed with the Women's Studies Program. She presented her use of film in the language classroom to the New England Chapter of the American Association of Teachers in German, and created a web page for teachers with exercises, cultural and historical background for the film *The Boat is Full*.

German students at UVM loved "Frau Wood." They extolled her patience and availability, appreciated her pedagogical abilities and her concern for their welfare. The following comment on last year's teaching evaluations says it all: "Frau Wood is one of the most genuinely nice people/instructors I have ever met. Cares about her students and wants us to succeed. Wonderful person/course."

We thank her so much for all her hard work and her dedication to teaching and her students. The department is losing a wonderful citizen. We wish her much joy in retirement—of course, Beatrice is going to be very busy stepping up her volunteer work as an English instructor for new immigrants.

## Faculty Honors

**Professor Wolfgang Mieder** was selected as the 2009 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award in the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University.

**Professor Kevin McKenna** received the 2009 Robert V. Daniels Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of International Studies.

**Professor Dennis Mahoney** was selected to deliver the Fall 2008 Dean's Lecture. He spoke on "Rings and Precious Things in German Literary and Musical Culture."

**Professor Helga Schreckenberger** received a stipend from the National Endowment of the Humanities to participate in a seminar on German Exile Culture in California at Stanford University.



## Departmental News



**Gidon Bavly** has started his 13th year teaching Hebrew at the University of Vermont, and also continues with his sailing business on Lake Champlain in the summers. He continues adding personally composed stories to his Hebrew text book. His most recent one is the translation of the following: *Recently a client made a reservation to go out for a 4 hour cruise on my sailboat. On the day of the sail two men arrived at the dock next to the boat and the client said: I am Ben and this is my friend Jerry! Vermont's famous Ben and Jerry! After getting the boat underway the small talk was rolling and Jerry asked: So Gideon (he used the English pronunciation) what do you do in the winter? I told him about Hebrew teaching and so forth and when I finished and after a pause and as casually as I could, trying not to sound nosy I said: So what do you guys do in the winter? Jerry again (not wasting a second) said: We are working on our Hebrew too: Mishpacha (family) Shalom (peace) Mazal Tov (good luck)... (he gave an example to prove it)... we all burst out with a loud laugh. In 3 1/2 hours of sailing together we did not say a word about ice cream but at the end of the day I got some free ice cream coupons.*



**Adriana Borra** is very excited to be back teaching German after 8 years. Attending the 2nd Symposium for Contemporary German Culture (Teaching Cultures), held by the Department of German at Middlebury College in the Spring of 2009, proved to be a helpful preparation.

She is also very happy to be at the last stages of a collaborative dictionary project on which she has been working with Silvia Verdiani since 2003. In fact, the Italian/German-German/Italian dictionary for young learners is scheduled to be published by Loescher Editore, Torino in the Fall 2010.

In March 2009 Adriana was invited as a Keynote speaker for the workshop of the NJAATG (New Jersey American Association of Teachers of German) at their annual meeting at the Delbarton School in Morristown, New Jersey to present her book "German through Film".



**Theresia Hoeck** pursues her two passions with undiminished fervor: teaching and traveling. What makes her most happy is when students study German not only to fulfill a course requirement, but go on to develop genuine interest in and lasting enthusiasm for German language and culture.

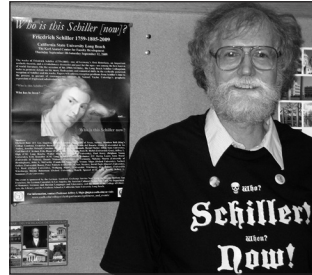
In the summer of 2008 she explored the Hawaiian Islands on less traveled paths; during the Christmas break she celebrated a special birthday riding a camel in the Sahara. In the summer of 2009 she rediscovered her native land, where she gathered the impressions of contemporary Austria that help create a relevant context for her language classes.



**Kate Kenny** has just started teaching at the University of Vermont this semester. With a background of teaching in England, Germany and Japan, she is thoroughly enjoying the experience of teaching German language and grammar in an American University.



**Kevin McKenna** devoted most of the past year to writing and editing a Festschrift volume of essays commemorating the sixty-fifth birthday of Wolfgang Mieder. The Festschrift volume was formally presented to Mieder on his actual birthday (February 17th) at a surprise reception in his honor, hosted by UVM President Daniel M. Fogel and attended by more than one-hundred-twenty-five guests. He is currently preparing a series of lectures that he has been invited to deliver this coming summer at Irkutsk State University (Siberia) and Saratov State University (on the Volga River). His lectures will be on the topics of a novella written by Vladimir Nabokov, and the use of Russian proverbs in the fictional and publicistic works of Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Finally, Professor McKenna continues to serve as Director of the Living/Learning "Russian House," now in its fifth year of existence.



**Dennis Mahoney** enjoyed a productive sabbatical which started with a visit to the University of Augsburg, co-teaching a seminar with Hubert Zapf on "Ethics, Power, and Art in Literature" whose students included former UVM and Augsburg exchange students from our respective universities. This course, in turn, gave him ideas for his subsequent contribution to the (surprise) *Festschrift* for Wolfgang Mieder – on the use of proverbs and anti-proverbs in Richard Powers' novel *The Time of our Singing* (2003).

He returned to Germany for the June 2009 conference of the International Goethe Society on the subject of "Goethe, the World Citizen" in Weimar, Germany, to lecture on the topic "‘Ubi bene, ibi patria’ oder: Amerika, hast du es besser?" Making a subsequent visit to Augsburg, where he visited with present, past, and future exchange students, he was invited to give not only this Goethe lecture but also "The bird and the fish can fall in love...: Proverbs and Anti-Proverbs as Variations on the Theme of Racial and Cultural Intermingling in *The Time of Our Singing*." Finally, as both the grand finale of his sabbatical and as a preparation for the senior seminar on Friedrich Schiller that he is currently teaching, he wrote a paper on "Maria Stuart Adaptations in the 20th and 21st centuries: from 'Classical' Parodies to Contemporary Politics" that was delivered at the September 2009 International Symposium "Who is this Schiller [now]" at California State University, Long Beach, whose celebratory t-shirt he is proudly wearing in the picture.



Even though **Wolfgang Mieder** has turned sixty-five, he has *not* retired and has no intentions to do so in the foreseeable future. In addition to publishing numerous articles here and abroad, he edited the twenty-sixth volume of *Proverbi-um: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* that is published right here at the University of Vermont. Together with Professor David Scrase he also edited *Reactions to the Third Reich: Then and Now. Harry H. Kahn Memorial Lectures (2005-2009)*. His many additional book publications are noted later in this newsletter, under "Publication News from UVM Today."

His various lecture trips took him to national and international meetings at Louisville, Kentucky; Los Angeles, California; and Athens, Greece. His favorite lecture topic was the proverbial rhetoric of President Barack Obama. This semester, he delights in teaching his favorite subject, "The Nature and Politics of Proverbs," in English to over fifty students.



**Janet Sobieski** has completed her 25th year at UVM in the Department of German and Russian. She fondly remembers many former students, and loves when people drop in to visit. The current students are a wonderful group as well, and she enjoys supervising quite a group of work study students. She continues to take photographs and paint in her free time, and encourages former students and friends to stop by the department when they are in the Burlington area.



**Helga Schreckenberger** survived her first year as Interim Chair thanks to the support of everyone in the department. This gave her the courage to accept the chairship for the next five years. In the past year, she presented papers at the *Modern Language Association Conference* in San Francisco, the *Exile Studies Conference* in St. Louis, and the *Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association Conference* in Atlanta. She also took part in an international workshop at Trinity College, CT that analyzed the first correspondences "Home" by Austrian and German exiles. Moreover, she was the proud presenter of this year's Harry Kahn Memorial Lecture.

## Publication News from "UVM Today", 2008-2009

**Wolfgang Mieder**, professor of German and Russian, is the author of "*Nieman hat an arebeit wistuom*". *Sprichwörtliches in mittelhochdeutschen Epen*, a study of the use of proverbs in the major German mediaeval epics. In addition to identifying proverbial expressions and explaining their origin and history of usage, Mieder analyses their specific function in each work. They are used as commentaries, to characterize protagonists, or to express the main idea of the work. The book also contains a detailed review of the thirteen-volume *Thesaurus proverborum medii aevi*. Mieder also published "*Yes We Can*". *Barack Obama's Proverbial Rhetoric*. In this book, Mieder shows Barack Obama's rich knowledge and appreciation of proverbs and proverbial expressions in his two books *Dreams from My Father* (1995) and *Audacity of Hope* (2006) as well as in his campaign speeches, news conferences, radio addresses, and interviews. In addition to detailed analyses of Obama's proverbial rhetoric within the context of the respective works and speeches, the book contains a comprehensive contextualized index of 1714 proverbial expressions found in Obama's writings and speeches.

**Ken Nalibow**, associate professor of German and Russian, has published the article "The USSR and LGBT Intolerance" in the essay volume *The Queer Community. Continuing the Struggle for Social Justice*. The article chronicles Nalibow's experiences of hostility and violence in the Soviet Union during the eighties where homosexuality is a criminal offense carrying a prison sentence.

**Helga Schreckenberger**, professor and chair of German and Russian, published "Literarische Reaktionen zur ostjüdischen Zuwanderung nach 1918," in the essay volume *Österreich 1918 und die Folgen*. The article provides an examination of the literary representation of East European Jewish emigrants in post World War I Austrian literature. It shows that the figure of the Eastern European Jew is used to expose the alienated and ambivalent existence of the assimilated Western Jew. Schreckenberger also published "Aimless Travels: Deromanticizing Exile in Irgmar Keun's *Kind aller Länder*" (1938) which appeared in *Exiles Traveling. Exploring Displacement, Crossing Boundaries in German Exile Arts and Writings 1933-1945*. Schreckenberger argues that by focusing on the constitutive aspects of traveling, like class privilege, means of conveyance, agents, frontiers, documents and gender, Keun exposes the differences between the privileged, voluntary travel of tourists and the forced wanderings of refugees.

**Dennis Mahoney**, professor of German, published "'Tails of Hoffnung': Transatlantische Metamorphosen unterdrückter Menschlichkeit in Marc Estrin's *Insect Dreams: The Half Life of Gregor Samsa*" in *Kulturökologie und Literatur. Beiträge zu einem transdisziplinären Paradigma der Literaturwissenschaft* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2008). Mahoney analyzes Marc Estrin's creative "recycling" of possible variations of Kafka's works in his novel. Relating American and European cultural, social and scientific history of the first half of the twentieth century from the perspective of the man-turned-insect Gregor Samsa, Mahoney argues, allows Estrin to combine culture-critical meta-discourse with ecological counter-discourse.

**Wolfgang Mieder**, professor of German and Russian, published "New Proverbs Run Deep: Prolegomena to a Dictionary of Modern Anglo-American Proverbs" in the proceedings of the 1st Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs. In the article, Mieder presents the procedures for putting together the first comprehensive collection of modern Anglo-American proverbs for which he and his collaborators, Frank Shapiro, Jane Garry (both Yale University) and Charles Doyle (University of Georgia) secured a contract with Yale University Press. The collection will include 500 proverbs that originated after 1900, contextualized references from literature and mass media as well as illustrations in forms of cartoons, advertisements or caricatures. Professor Mieder is also the author of "*Sein oder Nichtsein*" *Das Hamlet Zitat in Literatur, Übersetzungen, Medien und Karikaturen*, a book that traces occurrences of the famous quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "To be, to be or not to be, that is the question," in translations, parodies, poems, advertisements,

graffiti or headlines. Mieder not only documents the continued use of the original quote over the centuries but also the attempts of translators, writers and cartoonists to revitalize the much-used phrase and give it new meaning.

**Helga Schreckenberger**, professor and chair of the German and Russian department, is the author of "Heimat, Exile, and Modernity in Carl Zuckmayer's *Vermont Roman*." Schreckenberger reads the novel as Zuckmayer's literary exploration of the existential consequences of exile for individual identity. Rural Vermont, where Zuckmayer spent the majority of his years in exile, serves as model for the idea of "Heimat," a counter image to urbanization, industrialization, transience, relativity and self-reflexivity associated with modernity and exile. Schreckenberger also published "The Destruction of Idyllic Austria in Wolf Haas's Detective Novels," in *Crime and Madness in Modern Austria: Myth, Metaphor and Cultural Realities* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). She argues that Wolf Haas masterfully appropriates the formal and thematic conventions of the traditional detective story for his satirical criticism of Austrian society.

**Wolfgang Mieder**, professor of German and Russian, published "Proverbs Speak Louder Than Words" *Folk Wisdom in Art, Culture, Folklore, History, Literature and Mass Media*, a collection of ten essays illustrating the significance of proverbs in the past and present. Mieder documents their multifaceted use and occurrence in literature, politics, art, folklore, mass media, and popular culture including comic strips and bumper stickers. Each essay demonstrates the communicative value of proverbs, their versatility and universality, which makes them an inevitable prerequisite for cultural literacy. In addition, Mieder contributed an article to a volume dedicated to the Nobel Prize-winning German author Günter Grass. His contribution, "'Vermont.' Günter Grass' grünes Gelegenheitsgedicht," presents an analysis of Grass' poem on Vermont and its different translations into English provided by UVM German students.

**Kevin McKenna**, professor of Russian, published "Didactics and the Proverb: The Case of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Literary Memoir, *The Oak and the Calf*." McKenna examines how Solzhenitsyn uses proverbs to illustrate and underscore the message of his five-hundred page memoir about his experiences as a writer in the Soviet Union during the tumultuous period from 1962 to 1974.

**Wolfgang Mieder**, professor of German and Russian, who stepped down as chairperson after 31 years, is the editor of the English translation of Lutz Röhrich's seminal work on fairy tales titled, *And They Are Still Living Happily Ever After: Anthropology, Cultural History, and Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. Mieder also edited the 25th volume of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. The volume contains Mieder's article "Let Us Have Faith that 'Right Makes Might': Proverbial Rhetoric in Decisive Moments of American Politics," an examination of proverbs in American political discourse. He traces the use of proverbs in the political speeches of American presidents from Abraham Lincoln to George W. Bush as well as in those of political activists like Frederic Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Martin Luther King Jr. In addition, Mieder is the author of "Don't Swap Horses in the Middle of the Stream: An Intercultural and Historical Study of Abraham Lincoln's Apocryphal Proverb," which traces the origin of the proverb and documents its subsequent use throughout different centuries and cultures.

**Helga Schreckenberger**, professor of German and Russian, published "Joseph Hahn: Kunst als Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben," illustrating the influence of the exile experience on Joseph Hahn's poetry. Hahn, a refugee from Nazi Germany, lived in Middlebury for the past eighteen years. He died on October 31, 2007. Schreckenberger argues that the experience of exile impacted not only the thematic aspect of Hahn's work but also its language.



Your donations mean a lot to us in the department! They make such a big difference in what we can do for our students. We value each and every one of them and hope you continue your generous contributions to our Gift Fund.

Please make your donations payable to: *German and Russian Materials Acquisition Fund*, and send them to: The University of Vermont, Grasse Mount, 411 Main Street, Burlington, VT 05405.



## Honoring the 'Proverbial Pied Piper'

Release Date: 02-18-2009

Author: [Thomas James Weaver](#)

University Communications,  
University of Vermont

**Professor Mieder** was honored this week by his colleagues with a *festschrift*, a celebratory book reserved for only top veteran scholars. "For a little professor like me," Mieder said, "it is about the ultimate thing." (Photo: Sally McCay)

On his sixty-fifth birthday, Professor Wolfgang Mieder's friends and fellow faculty surprised him with a Tuesday afternoon event that was both professional tribute to one of the world's leading folklore and proverb scholars and personal celebration of a man who has been a warm, collegial presence on the UVM campus for nearly forty years.

Mieder was feted in Memorial Lounge, where President Daniel Mark Fogel presented him with a book produced in his honor, *The Proverbial "Pied Piper,"* a *festschrift* edited by Professor Kevin McKenna and published by Peter Lang.

In an interview last week, McKenna explained that the *festschrift* is a tradition of the academy, a celebratory book reserved for only top veteran scholars. Self-confessed instigator of a year-long web of white lies designed to keep the project a secret, McKenna drove the Mieder collection from start to finish.

"Wolfgang is no dummy," McKenna said, describing the challenge he knew he'd face in pulling off the surprise. When he ran the idea by Barbara Mieder, Wolfgang's wife, she told him the couple had vowed 30 years ago never to subject one another to a surprise party, but she agreed to look the other way. She wasn't planning the event; technically, her hands were clean.

McKenna swore the volume's twenty-three contributors, many of them on the UVM faculty, to secrecy. He juggled schedules to make sure Mieder, President Fogel, Provost Hughes and other key players would all be in town on Feb. 17. He even concocted the ruse of his own lecture on "The Role of the Russian Proverb in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Fictional and Public Works" to lure Mieder into Memorial Lounge at 4 p.m. on Tuesday.

Mieder thought he was there to introduce McKenna's talk. But as he launched into his comments, McKenna stepped up and revealed the day's true intent. The doors of Memorial Lounge swung open and special guests led by President Fogel and Rachel Kahn-Fogel streamed into the room.

McKenna suspected (and worried) that the surprise would have a strong emotional impact on Mieder, a sentimental man. Though he pushed up his glasses and rubbed his eyes, the professor handled the moment with good humor. Following tributes from a number of colleagues, Mieder took the microphone. "Would you like me to give my introduction for Kevin now?" he quipped. Mieder then thanked those who had made the day and paid tribute back to those who honored him. "When you work someplace you want to be, it makes you a happy trouper," he said. "UVM is a damn good place to dedicate a life to."



Mieder called the *festschrift* "one of the joys in the academic tradition. For a little professor like me, it is about the ultimate thing."

The Mieder *festschrift* drew contributions from scholars in Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, Israel and the United States. Though most of the essays are in English, there are also pieces in French, German, Spanish and Russian. As McKenna writes in the collection's preface, the essays "treat a vast number of folklore and proverb themes, ranging from puns and anti-proverbs to urban legends revolving around the zipper; from a paremiological study of the treatment of racism in an American novel to graphic proverb depictions in a set of seventeenth-century playing cards."

In making the volume possible, McKenna cites the support of the president and provost's office; Joan and Eugene Kalkin; Jerold Jacobson and Gertrude Holle-Suppa Jacobson; Douglas Smith and Stephanie Ellis-Smith; and the Knight Vision Foundation.

In addition to McKenna, UVM faculty contributing essays to the book include Rob Gordon, Dennis Mahoney, Helga Schreckenberger, Juan Maura, Antonello Borra, and Adriana Borra.

In his essay, "A Few Remarks on Piedmontese Proverbs," Antonello Borra, associate professor of Romance Languages, delves into well-known proverbs in his home region of Italy. Lamenting that the clandestine nature of the project means he can't seek advice from the master, Borra soldiers on with a piece focused on proverbs about friendship, study, teaching, and work — all themes that resonate with the life of Wolfgang Mieder.

In his research, Borra happened upon one particular nugget of wisdom that he felt captured the spirit of unflagging curiosity that has driven UVM's "proverbial pied piper" to write some 150 books, more than 300 articles, and influence thousands of students.

As they say in northern Italy's Piedmont:

*Tut ij mèis a fà la lun-a e tut ij di as n'ampara un-a.*

Every month there is a new moon and every day one learns something new.

## Alumni News

**Monika Shepherd** (class of 1988) has been program director of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology & Policy (ISCIP) at Boston University for the past three years. Most of her job entails researching, writing, and editing articles on current events in Central Asia. These articles are posted on their website ([www.bu.edu/iscip](http://www.bu.edu/iscip)) and are also available through their electronic mailing list. If anyone is interested in current events in the former Soviet Union, she invites you to check out their website and join the email list, which is free. Monika notes that her classes at UVM gave her an excellent foundation in Russian, an abiding interest in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet countries, as well as the opportunity to study in Tashkent for nine months, and this background plays a significant role in her current position at Boston University.

**Darrah Lustig** (class of 2008) is working as an English Language Teaching Assistant in Wolfsberg, Austria for a second year. She accompanies teachers to their English conversation classes and generally does her best to facilitate English conversation. The topics are usually up to her discretion and so far they have had great success in discussing advertising, stereotypes, the US Presidential election process and the history of slavery in the US. She's also spent time teaching an American cooking class to some eager 10 year-old girls who have taken particular pleasure in pancakes and french toast! The position continues to be exciting and fun for both Darrah and her students.

**Jennifer C. Smith** (class of 1999) graduated from UVM with a double major in Environmental Studies and Russian language, and went on to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor from 2000-2004, where she earned an M.S. in Natural Resources and Environment and an M.A. in Russian and East European Studies. Since December 2005 she has been at the Tahoe-Baikal Institute based in South Lake Tahoe, CA, where she is Programs Director. She supervises their exchange programs between Tahoe and Baikal, most of which are focused on watershed management. There is a Summer Environment Exchange Program in which UVM students could participate. (The program website is [www.tahoebaikal.org](http://www.tahoebaikal.org).) Jennifer got married in August 2008 to Do Lee, with whom she shares a great passion for travel and the former Soviet Union. Their wedding was at Kingsland Bay State Park on Lake Champlain, and she notes that although she doesn't get back to Vermont very often these days, being here for the wedding especially made her appreciate Burlington and her home state.

*Please send us your news! We would love hearing from all of you.*

## Student News

The following students received **scholarships for studying and travel abroad**: Elizabeth Petow, Brendan Hamilton, and Jonathan Mandel (year or semester study at St. Petersburg University, Russia); Taylor Nischan (study in Cracow, Poland); Megan Luttrell (summer study at St. Petersburg University, Russia); Lindsey Weger (study at IES Vienna [International European Studies] in Vienna, Austria; Tamara Popovac (Mieder Scholarship: summer travel/study in Hannover and Hameln, Germany); Kim Cornett (Mieder Scholarship: summer internship at the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin, Germany); Anne Venezia (summer study at the Herder Institute at the Universität Leipzig, Germany).

Through the **Truman and Selina Webster Scholarship Fund** (which was set up in honor of and in memory of these two outstanding University of Vermont professors) we were able to give a \$2000 scholarship to our German M.A. student Anne Venezia, to assist with her graduate studies here at UVM in our department.

## Student Awards



**Megan Luttrell**, Russian Major and History Minor, received the UVM Kidder Scholarship for Juniors. The scholarship is awarded for demonstrated commitment to both academic and campus community activities.

**Andrew Crampton**, Chemistry Major and German Minor, received a two-year full scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to complete a Master's degree in Chemistry at the Technical University of Munich.



## Departmental Honors Awards, May 2009

### Outstanding Senior in German: Erika Wolffig



In addition to nineteenth century German literature, **Erika Wolffig** enjoys all aspects of language acquisition, and has achieved great proficiency in German. She plans to attend medical school.

### Outstanding Senior in Russian: Arseny Knyazev

**Arseny Knyazev** is mostly interested in the Russian poet, Vladimir Vysosky, who is the subject of his honors thesis. He plans to work towards a Ph.D. degree in Russian literature.



## Gift Fund Report (2008-2009):

Thank you all for your very generous donations in this difficult economy! We received \$15,365 in total gifts of which we spent \$14,265. Here is how:

\$ 6,750	nine study abroad scholarships of \$750 each [The Nietsch/Mahoney and Veronica Richel Scholarships will be reported in next year's newsletter.]
\$ 1,200	new books for seminar room library
\$ 1,300	instructional materials
\$ 2,150	partial payments for speakers and events
\$ 850	book stipends for students
\$ 1,000	Mieder book publication partial payment for "Medieval Reports," from specially designated gift
\$ 245	periodical subscriptions
\$ 650	outstanding senior awards
\$ 120	senior reception

**\$14,265 total spent**

## Visiting Scholar



**Dr. Anna Konstantinova** from Krasnodar, Russia, is spending the fall semester 2009 as a Fulbright scholar in the Department of German and Russian at the University of Vermont. She has come to make use of Prof. Wolfgang Mieder's International Proverb Archives that are housed in the Waterman Building. She is working on various aspects of modern paremiology (the study of proverbs). Dr. Konstantinova is especially interested in Anglo-American proverbs and their use and function in popular songs, newspapers, movies, and political discourse. Her article on "Individual Authorial Expressions on the Basis of Traditional Paremias in the Modern Anglo-American Press" has just appeared in *Proverbium*, the international yearbook of proverb scholarship published right here at the University of Vermont. Currently, she is working on a book-length study entitled "Cognitive-Discursive Functions of Proverbs and Sayings in Different Types of Discourse in the English Language." Prof. Mieder's Proverb Archives have much to offer in this area, and Dr. Konstantinova is hard at work every day. Moreover, she is taking part Prof. Mieder's large course on proverbs which he happens to be teaching in English this semester. When at home, Dr. Konstantinova is an Assistant Professor of English at the Kuban State University of Technology.

*The Department of German and Russian proudly presents*  
**20 Years After the Fall of the Berlin Wall**  
**A Lecture Series**

**Monday, October 5, 2009 4:00PM**  
*"Memories of Berlin, 1989/90"*

**Prof. Alan Steinweis,**

**Director of Holocaust Studies and Department of History**

**Monday, October 26, 2009 6:00PM**  
*"Good-Bye Lenin?"*

**Prof. Susanna Schrafstetter, Department of History**

**Monday, November 9, 2009 4:00PM**  
*"From Revolution to Revolution:  
 November 9 in Modern German History"*

**Prof. Frank Nicosia,**

**Department of History and Holocaust Studies**

All Lectures Take Place in 427 Waterman. UVM

Information: (802) 656-3430

[www.uvm.edu/germanrussian](http://www.uvm.edu/germanrussian)



DEPARTMENT OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN

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