

REECAS NEWSLETTER

JACKSON SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES | UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Letter from the Director

BY STEPHEN HANSON

The 2007–08 academic year is proving to be another busy one for the Ellison Center. We kicked off the fall in dramatic fashion, hosting the international Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) conference from Oct. 18–21, when nearly 300 prominent scholars from around the world arrived on campus to discuss and to debate nearly every conceivable aspect of Central Eurasian affairs. The keynote address by renowned UCLA sociologist Rogers Brubaker on the theme of “Nationalizing States Revisited” was extremely well attended and generated intense debate and discussion. After the CESS conference, we



Professor Rogers Brubaker giving his keynote address on the theme of “Nationalizing States Revisited.”

One of the most exciting things about my job is the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with so many members of the local community who share our passion for Russian, East-Central European and Central Asian affairs.

looked forward to a whole series of other exciting events, including a lecture in November by former Polish Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz on “Post-

communist Transformation in Central Europe”; a speaker series on “Russia after Putin’s Second Term” including the well-known Russia specialists Andrew Kuchins and Maria Lipman; and our annual Donald W. Treadgold Lecture, to be delivered in April by Professor Jan Kubik of Rutgers University.

One of the most exciting things about my job is the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with so many members of the local community who share our passion for Russian, East-Central European and Central Asian affairs. Our bond with the UW Polish Endowment Committee here in the Seattle area continues to grow ever

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stronger, and we are very grateful for its support not only in organizing Leszek Balcerowicz's visit to the UW campus, but also for bringing Polish Fulbright fellow Dr. Artur Grabowski to teach courses on Polish culture this year. We also continue to enjoy wonderful cooperative relationships with our friends in the Baltic, Czech, Ukrainian, Russian, Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian heritage communities of the Puget Sound region. Meanwhile, our ties with Central Asia remain as vibrant as ever, and the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association is now nearing its 35th anniversary. Our partnership with the National Council for East European and Eurasian Research (NCEEER) is now entering its second successful year, and once again we have the pleasure of welcoming NCEEER's latest group of Russell Fellows to campus: Natalia Maltseva and Oleksandr Androshchuk. Thanks to the remarkable generosity of many private donors, we have recently established new endow-

ments to support undergraduate and graduate travel to the REECA region; combined with the major endowment established to found the Ellison Center in 2004, our overall endowment funds are now over \$2.5 million. We are grateful for all of your generosity!

We continue to add outstanding new members to the growing REECAS faculty, which now includes well over 60 scholars. Elena Campbell, our new historian of Imperial Russia, joined us this fall, and Scott Radnitz, a specialist in Central Asian politics and societies, will begin teaching for us in the winter quarter. Welcome, Elena and Scott! We are also conducting a search for a political scientist specializing in the comparative politics of postcommunist Europe and Eurasia to begin the tenure-track in fall 2008. Sadly, we must also bid farewell to two true legends who are retiring from the University of Washington after decades of service: Willis Konick of the Department of Com-

parative Literature, whose lectures on Russian literature have been beloved by generations of UW students, and David Fenner, Assistant Vice Provost and Director of International Programs and Exchanges, whose fluency in Russian (as well as Arabic) and intimate knowledge of the REECA region have made him utterly invaluable to our program. We will miss you both, but we wish you every success and happiness!

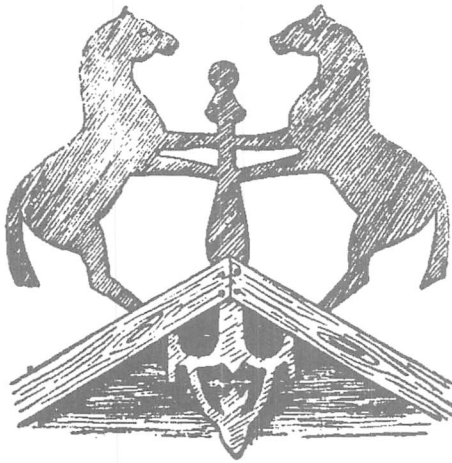
As is the case with every successful organization, the Ellison Center is blessed with a wonderful staff. Associate Director Marta Mikkelsen, Assistant Director for Outreach Allison Dvaladze and Program Coordinator Carrie O'Donoghue have all been with the Ellison Center for many years now. I truly do not know where we would all be without them, and I thank my lucky stars every day that I get to lead such an incredibly dedicated, professional and enthusiastic team. ♦

REECAS 2007

MA Graduates and Thesis Titles

- > **Roger L. Bowman** – The South Ossetian Conflict: Possible Solutions within the Context of Georgian-Russian Relations
- > **Kuei-Yu Chen** – Mass Media Campaigns against HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation
- > **Nathan R. Hamm** – Threats from Within: Regionalism and Foreign Policy in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan
- > **Leah Jones** – “Mother Heroines” and “Maternal Monsters:” Motherhood as Portrayed in the Literature of Soviet and Post-Soviet Russian Women Writers
- > **Alla Golovina Khadka** – Putin's Federal and Constitutional Reforms and Democracy
- > **Livia Kidd** – Remembrances and Commemorations: The Hungarian Revolution of 1956
- > **Lauren N. Lafaro** – On The Ground: The Geopolitics of Civil Society in Tajikistan
- > **Jenny MacTaggart** – Erasure from the Permanent Registry: Slovenia's Stateless Population
- > **Karin Northcott** – Degrees of Freedom in Ukrainian Mass Media
- > **Brenda L. Schuster** – Gaps in the Silk Road: An Analysis of Population Health Disparities in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China
- > **Brian M. Stephan** – Building Trust and Cooperation in Central Asia and Beyond: The Developing Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

CALL FOR PAPERS



The Fourteenth Annual Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies Northwest Conference

Saturday, April 12, 2008

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
PORTLAND, OREGON

We are soliciting papers, panels or roundtable presentations for this one-day interdisciplinary conference. Proposals from faculty, graduate students and members of the general public are all welcome.

Contributions are encouraged on literature, the fine arts, the environment, post-Soviet foreign policy, historical research, economics, national identity or any other relevant subjects. Papers related to the theme "Nations, States, and Identities in Russia, East Europe and Central Asia" are especially welcome.

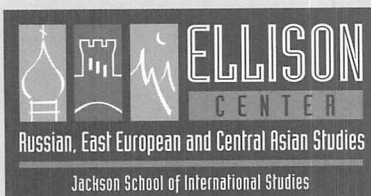
Small travel stipends may be available to graduate students and faculty traveling from the Pacific Northwest. Funds are

not available for scholars outside of the Pacific Northwest or residing outside the United States.

If you would like to present at the conference, please reply via e-mail or regular mail by Tuesday, January 22, 2008 with your name and contact information, a paper title and brief abstract to:

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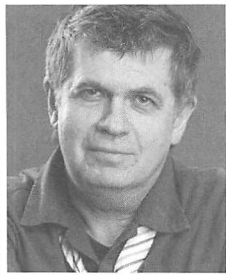
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Judith Thornton, *Professor*
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Mark Weil, Renowned Ilkhom Theater Director, Mourned

BY MARK JENKINS

On the night of September 6, 2007, Mark Weil, 55, internationally known director and leader of Tashkent's renowned Ilkhom Theater was murdered in front of his apartment building by two unknown men after the final rehearsal of his latest production, Aeschylus's *The Orestia*. The play was to open the 2007–08 Season, marking



© ILKHOM THEATER
Mark Weil

Ilkhom's 31 years of existence. He died on the operating table. Members of the company refused to speculate on the motivation of his assailants. His last words were reported to be, "We open a new season tomorrow and everything must happen." The company went ahead with the plans to open *The Orestia* as planned the next evening.

He lived part time in Seattle, where his wife Tatyana and daughters Julia and Alexandria reside today. Memorial services were held in Tashkent, Moscow and Seattle.

The motive, circumstances and many details of the assault and the following emergency response are unknown. According to the anonymous Ferghana Information Agency reportage of September 9, 2007, there has been a media blackout in Uzbekistan regarding his death, and there has not been any official word on the details of the crime or of any investigation.

Within days of Weil's death, the surviving members of the company (about fifty actors, designers, technicians and business staff) committed to continuing Ilkhom and its training program. Boris Gafurov, a leading actor in the company who has in the past served as assistant artistic director, has been appointed temporary leader of the company.

Four days after Weil's death on September 11, 2007, Eurasia Net posted an anonymous commentary that said in part, "While the motive and precise circumstances surrounding the murder of promi-

nent theater director Mark Weil remain murky, his death has had an immediate impact on freedom of expression in Uzbekistan." The writer continued, eulogizing the life of the prominent member of the Uzbek artistic community and speculating as to the motives behind his murder while citing local opinion.

"As head of...Ilkhom, Weil enjoyed a reputation for staging provocative productions that subtly challenged both existing political practices and social customs. Accordingly, those who knew him tend to suspect that his death was somehow politically related. However, some reports have attributed the death to a random act of violence perpetrated by drug addicts. Whatever the case, Weil's passing will have a long lasting impact on Uzbek cultural life, according to members of Tashkent's embattled intelligentsia. 'Mark Weil

To those who knew Mark Weil and experienced Ilkhom's singular and powerful productions, there is no choice but to carry on with the work and ideals he passed on to so many fellow human beings.

was not just a theater director,' said one Tashkent artist who spoke on condition of anonymity. 'He was a pillar of western culture in Uzbekistan, one of the key columns supporting it. His death — be it at the hands of special service murderers, religious radicals or mere robbers — has political ramifications because Weil's death caused irreparable damage to the enclave of western culture and values in our country'...Among the company's most sensitive productions...was one titled *White White Black Stork*. The play explore(s) homosexuality in a Muslim society."

Adding to the outpouring of praise and tribute to Mark Weil was a recent op-ed piece appearing in the September 23rd issue of the *International Herald Tribune*. Alain Deletroz commented,

"Uzbekistan lost more than a cultural icon. His murder extinguished a flame of human decency in one of the darkest dictatorships on earth...That Mark Weil died under the blows of two murderers is both tragic and highly symbolic." He also described Weil's work and impact in Tashkent. "The subtle political messages of their work, delivered with humor and a pinch of pepper, revealed an overwhelming passion for the theater, for the soul and for everything that would help people transcend the meanness and masquerade of everyday life...(n)either Mark nor the Ilkhom ever pretended to be outright political, but the harshness of Karimov's regime made the theater one of the few places where a free spirit could still relax in the evening in Tashkent."

A September 22nd obituary in the *London Times* described Weil as "...a champion of free speech," adding, "Through his theater group he promoted creativity and innovation. He remained in the country while others left, fearing (for) their safety."

Mark was universally known for his humor, his warmth and his generosity. With those qualities, he refused to have his artistic visions censored or to be told he could not do things important to him.

Weil was the son of Ukrainian Jews, born in Tashkent. He studied theater in Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg). With other graduates of Tashkent's Theatrical Institute, he began the Ilkhom Theater in 1976. Ilkhom roughly translates from Uzbek as "inspiration." He founded this independent theater when there were none in the USSR.

Weil claimed that he did not set out to be nor did he think of himself as a dissident per se but, rather someone who strived for free and authentic artistic expression. The popularity of his productions, the devotion of Tashkent's audiences and his international reputation, which increased every year, are thought to have protected him and Ilkhom from government suppression. His repertory ranged from a light hearted and very funny musi-

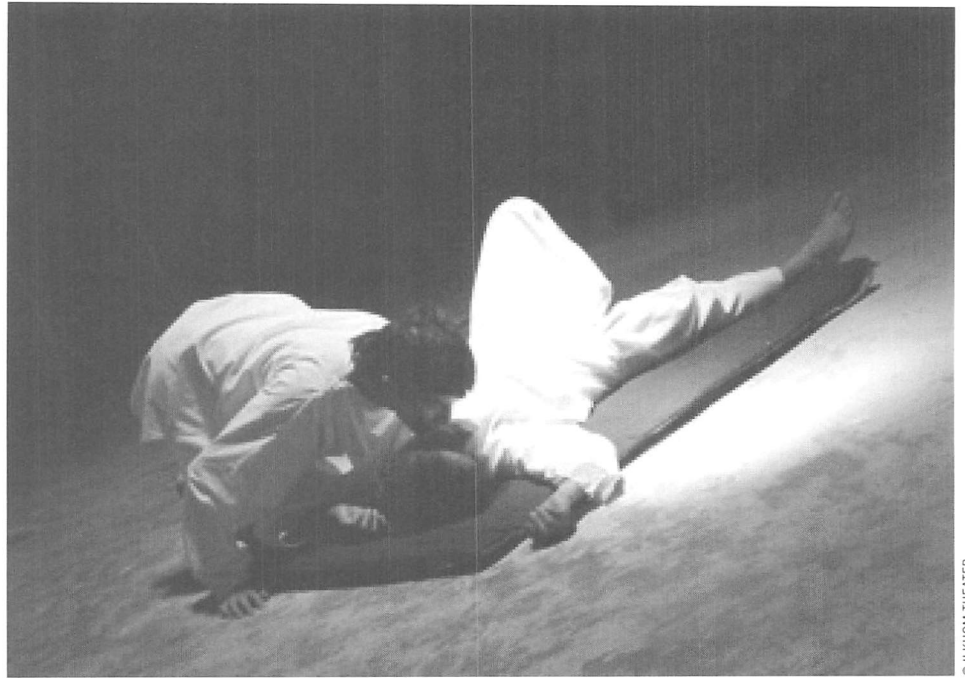
cal adaptation of John Steinbeck's *Tortilla Flat*; to a fiercely theatrical, high-tech adaptation of Pushkin's *Imitation of the Koran*; a madcap adaptation of a Goldoni farce set in Samarkand during the fall of Communism; to his last and perhaps most ambitious undertaking — a multi-media, rock and roll scored, expressionistic and absurdist version of the sweeping, epic Greek Tragedy, *The Orestia*.

Ilkhom has toured in over twenty countries, most recently to great acclaim in Jerusalem, Vienna, Tokyo and London's Barbican Theater. In 2002, Weil directed Nikolai Erdman's *The Suicide* as a guest director at the University of Washington's School of Drama.

Weil founded an acting school in the 1980s as part of Ilkhom in order to feed new actors into the company. His current (sixth) class of about eighteen young adults is as ethnically diverse as is the population of Tashkent. Uzbek, Kazak, Russian and three Americans (one Vietnamese born) from the University of Washington are among the class in the current three-year program. Actors from the company and some outside specialists make up the faculty.

Since 2005 when Kurt Beattie, Artistic Director of Seattle's ACT Theater, along with Sarah Nash Gates and I visited Uzbekistan, faculty members of the UW School of Drama have traveled to Tashkent to see Ilkhom for themselves. We have been making plans for the company to come to the US in the spring of 2008 for a month long residency at ACT. As part of the residency, the School of Drama is planning acting workshops, campus and community forums and cross cultural events at the University of Washington.

I spent several weeks in April of 2007 working with the Ilkhom and was fortunate to be present at several early rehearsals of *The Orestia*. During my visit, Weil stated his ambition to present authentic tragedy in today's context. He acknowledged the difficult challenge that lay ahead of imbuing the company with a genuine sense of war, domestic murders and revenge. He relied on his actors to bring their own ideas, improvisations and "riffs" from which he would build the mise-en-scene of the production. During the time I was in resi-



From *White White Black Stork*

dence, he spent about a third of his time working on the script, cutting and shuffling scenes and incorporating actors' ideas; another third rehearsing with the actors; and final third attending to scenic and technical issues. I have no idea when he slept.

In August, Mark Weil gave me a DVD of scenes from a preview performance of the production. He clearly achieved a powerful, tragic, comic, horrific and, in light of his own murder, a painfully ironic theater event. At times live video-feeds project actors' faces onto large pieces of the stage set as if some of the events were being reported (and hyped) by CNN or Al Jazeera reporters. In this highly kinetic production, the gods are depicted as powerful but irresponsible buffoons. At certain points as violence is described rather than shown (keeping true to tradition), blood seeps through cracks in the walls. In one sequence, the character Orestes, hounded by the Furies, runs off stage. Covered by live cameras he rushes down the hallway into the lobby of the theater and outside. Seamlessly, pre-recorded footage takes over, following him outside, up a ladder onto a roof, leaving him as he jumps from a building.

Weil's ability to create both continuity and disorientation, to mix live and recorded

performance without puncturing the "suspended disbelief" of the audience illustrates one aspect of his genius. His actors are a force of nature. They can be highly sensitive and perceptive at one moment and ferocious and unpredictable the next. The performances are notable for weaving together disciplined structure and what sometimes feels like near anarchy. How he was able to create surprise that is logical is another aspect of Mark Weil's singular talent. His productions make theater *important*.

To those who knew Mark Weil and experienced Ilkhom's singular and powerful productions, there is no choice but to carry on with the work and ideals he passed on to so many fellow human beings. ♦

Mark Jenkins, associate professor and head of the professional training program (acting and directing), has had an extensive professional acting career in New York, Hollywood, on and off Broadway, in regional theatres in Seattle and around the country and in film and television. He is a member of the famed Actors Studio and has taught in Russia, Japan and Uzbekistan working most recently with Mark Weil.

Recent Acquisitions to the REECAS Outreach Collection

The Ellison Center is pleased to present a selection of the most recent additions to our outreach materials collection. Films, teaching guides, educational software packages, reference texts and other resources are available for two-week checkout to students, faculty, staff and K-12 teachers. For more information, including a complete listing of available materials, visit the Ellison Center in 203B Thomson Hall, University of Washington; telephone us at (206) 543-4852; email reecas@u.washington.edu; or check our website: <http://jsis.washington.edu/ellison>.

Russian Language Curriculum

Children's Illustrated Russian Dictionary

(GRADES K-4) 1999

Designed to be a child's very first foreign language dictionary. 500 words central to a child's everyday life — animals, flowers, people, colors, numbers and activities — teach even the youngest readers Russian. Each word is illustrated and accompanied by a phonetic transcription.

Kids Stuff Russian

(ELEMENTARY RUSSIAN) 2001

Easy Russian phrases for you and your kids. This language book is for parents, children, teachers and anyone who wants to teach or share Russian with children. Conversational sentences and short practical phrases directed to children while they are at their everyday busy activities.

Russia ABCs: A Book About the People and Places of Russia

(GRADES 5-11) 2004

Privyet! Welcome to Russia! Come along on this ABC adventure through the biggest country on the earth. Read about diamond-studded eggs, the deepest lake in the world and other fascinating facts.

Russian Picture Word Book

(GRADES: PRESCHOOL-2) 1993

Fun-filled, effective way for students of Russian to learn over 500 commonly used Russian words through pictures. This book contains 15 scenes of home, school, farm, beach, park, classroom and other common environments — with more than 500 objects labeled in Russian. Complete list of Russian words and English translations included at back of book.

Teach Me Russian & Teach Me More

RUSSIAN (AGES 2-12) 1997 (W/CD)

A musical journey through the day. Learn useful words of everyday life, including greetings, numbers, colors, days of the week, family members, body parts and more. This series includes an illustrated book with song lyrics and translations in English. Teach Me More...continues with an advanced vocabu-

lary, celebrating the seasons, holidays, a birthday party and introduces you to the beach, the zoo and a museum.

Vocabulary Builder Russian

(GRADES: PRESCHOOL-6) 2000

Primarily for children from ages four to 12, this package has proved popular with adults too! The illustrations will improve your whole family's language skills with words and phrases such as "the gorilla is in the car", "the duck is under the desk" and "the frog is on the lily pad". With its three main options; learn, games and record, Vocabulary Builder is intuitive enough for children to use and to enjoy on their own. Features on the disc include: 100+ words, nine games of varying difficulty and a chance to record cartoons and to play them back.

Children's Literature and Non-Fiction

Angel on the Square

(AGES 10+) 2001

By Gloria Whelan. In the fall of 1914, safe behind palace walls, Katya Ivanova sees St. Petersburg as a magical place. The daughter of a lady-in-waiting to the Empress, Katya spends all her time with the Grand Duchesses; the royal family feels like her own. But outside the palace, a terrible war is sweeping through Europe, and Russia is beginning to crumble under the weight of a growing revolution. Now, as Katya's once-certain future begins to dissolve, she must seek to understand what is happening to her beloved country and, for the first time in her life, take charge of her own destiny.

Endless Steppe: Growing Up in Siberia

(AGES 10-14) 1968

By Esther Hautzig. The true story of a Jewish family uprooted and exiled to Siberia. Esther Rudomin was ten years old when, in 1941, she and her family were arrested by the Russians and transported to Siberia. This is the story of the next five years spent in exile, of how the Rudomin's kept their courage high, though they went barefoot and hungry. A magnificent and moving book.

Impossible Journey

(AGES 10+) 2003

With her signature spare language and luminous detail, award-winning author Gloria Whelan delivers the gripping companion novel to her Russian saga, *Angel on the Square*. One night in 1934, Marya and Georgi's parent's disappear. The children, alone and desperate, fear the worst. But one crumpled letter gives the children hope and sends them on a difficult mission — to escape the city and find passage to the great Siberian wilderness. This is the story of their journey, one both perilous and transforming.

Central Asian Feature Films

Aksuat (1997) 78 MIN., DIR. SERIK APRYMOV

Angelochek, sdelai radost' [*Little Angel, Make me Happy*] (1993) 78 MIN., DIR. USMAN SAPAROV

Belye gory [*White Mountains*] (1964) 63 MIN., DIR. MELIS UBUKEYEV

Khasan-Arbakesh [*Hasan-Arbakesh*] (1965) 92 MIN., DIR. BORIS KIMYAGAROV

Kosh ba kosh (1993) 92 MIN., DIR. BAKHTIYAR KHUDOINAZAROV

Nevestka [*Daughter in Law*] (1971) 75 MIN., DIR. HODZHAKULI NARLIEV

Ty ne sirota [*You are not an Orphan*] (1962) 75 MIN., DIR. SHUKHRAT ABBASOV

Voiz [*The Orator*] (1998) 84 MIN., DIR. YUSUP RAZYKOV

Zemlia ottsov [*The Land of the Fathers*] (1966) 86 MIN., DIR. SHAKEN AIMANOV

Conference on DVD

Islam, Asia, Modernity

(2005) 6 VOLUMES

(Presented by the Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington). A three-day conference to explore the changing politics, practices and representations of Islam in Asia; how these changes are studied, documented, taught and represented in the academy and the media; and how these practices affect politics, society and culture in Muslim Asia. Please visit our website for more information in the coming months.

Vokrug Sveta: From the Russian Far East to Odessa and Back

BY SHOSHANA BILLIK

This summer I made an amazing journey around the world: I flew across the Pacific from Seattle to Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East. I traveled across Russia to Moscow on the Trans-Siberian Express and visited Kiev, the Crimea and Odessa in Ukraine before flying back to Seattle over the Atlantic. I embarked on this five-and-a-half week trip across the great expanse of Russia and Ukraine for several reasons: to learn how Russia had changed in the two years since I had last been there conducting a videoconference for disabled Russian and American children; to see the Russian Far East and Ukraine, places to which I had never been; and to compare Russia with Ukraine — the “little Slavic brother” next door that has of late stepped out of its larger brother’s shadow.

In Russia, I found a country reinventing itself as an economic power after the chaos and rampant inflation of the 1990s. I was impressed by how much more orderly, clean and prosperous Russia has become in the last two years. New cars and build-

My first thought when I arrived in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk...was, “Am I really in Russia?” Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk’s streets are lined with giant, leafy, tropical lapukha and borshevik plants that look like they could be found in Hawaii, and the weather was similar to here in Seattle — cool and overcast — unlike the hot, dry summer weather I had encountered in other parts of Russia.

ings are sprouting up everywhere, the streets are swept and free of garbage, and a strong police presence monitors the roads and performs crowd control. I have never felt as safe in Russia as I did during this trip. As a foreigner, I am usually on my guard that someone will try to rip me off



New friends of varying heights on the Trans-Siberian Express (author third from left)

or take advantage of me, but on this trip, I was not concerned at all! It seems to me that in many aspects the standard of living in Russia is approaching that of the West. While President Vladimir Putin may be criticized for his anti-democratic actions and heavy-handed foreign policy, his strongman policies, combined with Russia’s newfound oil and gas wealth, are perhaps ironically benefiting many living in the Russian Federation.

My journey began on Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East, where I worked as a translator for the Kuril Biocomplexity Project — a dynamic multi-year, multi-disciplinary, international project run by the UW Archaeology Department. The project studies the nearby Kuril Islands — a volcanic archipelago stretching between Russia and Japan¹. My first thought when I arrived in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the largest city on Sakhalin and the base of operations for the project, was, “Am I really in Russia?” Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk’s streets are lined with giant, leafy, tropical lapukha

and borshevik plants that look like they could be found in Hawaii, and the weather was similar to here in Seattle — cool and overcast — unlike the hot, dry summer weather I had encountered in other parts of Russia.

Both the Kurils and the lower half of Sakhalin were under Japanese administration until WWII. As part of the Yalta Accords signed by Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt in 1945, these territories were to be given to the Soviet Union. When Japan signed the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951, it renounced its claim to the Kurils and Sakhalin. However, the Soviet Union chose not to sign this treaty, insisting that additional islands it had occupied during the war — that were not commonly regarded as part of the Kuril chain — must also be annexed.² The result was an ongoing territorial dispute that lingers still today in which Japan still claims sovereignty over the southernmost four Kuril Islands.

Despite this political dispute, Japan’s geographic proximity to the Russian Far

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© SHOSHANA BILICK

Tropical lapukha and borshevik plants on Sakhalin Island in the Russian Far East

East has led to close economic ties, especially in the automobile industry. Here there are no boxy Soviet-era Lada or Zhiguli cars — only shiny new Japanese ones. In Vladivostok, a formerly closed military port, I saw enormous tankers shipping Japanese Hondas, Toyotas and Nissans. There is much money being made importing cars from Japan and driving them across the country for sale in other parts of Russia.

I was blown away by Vladivostok: it is a lovely, hilly city that reminded me of San Francisco. I was amazed that such a beautiful, open city used to be a closed military port. There is something new to discover on every street, from old tsarist architecture to art tucked away in parks to a vegetarian restaurant run by Hari Krishnas. I arrived fortuitously on the city's 147th birthday and was greeted by a rock concert in the main square; a play put on by local youth about Vladivostokites moving to St. Petersburg and Moscow; a folk group performing Cossack songs and dances; and a nighttime fireworks display. Two US

navy ships had also arrived in Vladivostok the same day, and their crews wandered the streets in their starched white hats and uniforms, promoting Russian-American relations by drinking Russian beer, buying maritime souvenirs and flirting with the locals in simplified English. They were pleased and amazed to meet another American, especially one traveling as a tourist. I told them that I thought Vladivostok is a beautiful city definitely worthy of being a tourist site.

I also visited Birobidzhan, the capital of the Jewish Autonomous Region. As a Jew, I was excited to see the famed "Jewish socialist paradise" that Stalin had created to discourage emigration to Palestine; to re-fashion the Jews into "good farmers"; and to encourage settlement in the Russian Far East. After arriving, I went straight to the synagogue, where I knew I would find my fellow Jews. A group of old men were sitting outside, and when I said I was a Jew from America, they were very excited to see me. They took me to meet Rabbi Mordechai, a young Orthodox rabbi from

Chabad — an international religious organization that promotes outreach to unaffiliated Jews. Mordechai was from Israel and studied in a Brooklyn yeshiva for four years, but never really learned to speak English. However, after seven years of living in Russia, he spoke very good Russian, so we both communicated using Russian as a second language — definitely a unique experience for me!

I was impressed by what Chabad and the larger Jewish community supporting it have accomplished in Birobidzhan. Both the newly built synagogue and its adjoining community center are clean, spacious and well lit. There is a giant menorah, a large library with books about Judaism, Hebrew and Birobidzhan and a museum in which they teach visitors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, about Jewish customs and traditions. The rabbi and his wife host a weekly cable television show in which they explain Jewish customs to the predominantly non-Jewish population. In the tradition of Jewish hospitality, he invited me to Shabbat dinner at his home. On the way

there, he explained that there had been a revival of interest in the Jewish community in Birobidzhan, despite the fact that Jews living there today number only 4,000 out of a total Russian Federation population of 75,000. The Rabbi also showed me relics of Birobidzhan's history as an intended Soviet Jewish homeland: the train station with its Hebrew lettering; the statue of Sholom Aleichem, the great Yiddish writer; and stores with Jewish names like "Dovid".

From neighboring Khabarovsk, the overland transport hub of the Russian Far East, I boarded the Trans-Siberian Express to Moscow — a five-and-a-half day train ride across the length of Siberia and the Urals. I had never been on a train for that long a period of time, and I was concerned about being uncomfortable in the crowded, *platskart* (second-class) train car. I was pleasantly surprised that I enjoyed the bulk of the trip! I liked watching the scenery go by — from the rolling hills and cute villages of Siberia to the calm waters of Lake Baikal to the birch-covered Ural Mountains. I made lots of new Russian friends. I got a shower by paying the *provodnitsa* (the train attendant) in the neighboring car 80 rubles to let me use a hose attached to the bathroom faucet. I brought my laptop along and used it to watch DVDs, play music and show pictures. Prior to going on the trip, I had been concerned that someone on the train might try to steal it, but no one seemed to pay much attention, and there were even outlets to recharge my laptop's battery. I liked this new Russia!

After arriving in Moscow, I joined up with an eco-tour run by Biointensive for Russia, an organization that promotes organic farming in Russia and the former Soviet Union.³ I walked through the vast Botanical Garden, which stretched for acres near our hotel. There were very few signs describing any of the plants, many of which were overgrown, and I understood where all the money was going when I saw the gargantuan, Soviet-size greenhouses that are being built there. I also wandered through the VDNKh⁴ (Exhibition of the Achievements of the National Economy), an exhibition center formerly devoted to showcasing the glory of socialist workers' output and now showcasing the glory of the capitalist enterprise!

I also visited my host family in Ryazan, an old city located about three hours southwest of Moscow. This was my third visit with this family, with whom I first stayed in 2004 while teaching computer classes to disabled children through a program called the US-Russia Volunteer Initiative.⁵ My host parents, a school-teacher of English and an industrial engineer, are members of Russia's small middle class, wedged in between a tiny group of fantastically wealthy oligarchs and a much larger lower class. They are definitely not wealthy, but make enough to support themselves and their young grandson, whom they are raising. They took me to

their dacha in a village outside Ryazan, where I spent a relaxing weekend picking berries, drinking vodka and playing with their grandson.

Back in Moscow, I rejoined the eco-tour on an overnight train to Ukraine. I was surprised to find that Ukraine seemed more similar to the other former Soviet republics I had visited than to Russia. In Ukraine, there are still many Soviet-era cars and a feeling of post-Soviet malaise. In particular, I was surprised by the shabbiness of the overnight train I took, especially compared with the Trans-Siberian Express in Russia. I had thought Ukraine would be more westernized due

(continued on page 10)



Author at a Synagogue in Birobidzhan

(continued from page 9)

to its close proximity to Europe and to the repercussions of the 2004 Orange Revolution, which galvanized hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens to mobilize for transparent presidential elections. From my interactions with environmentalists in Ukraine, I learned that the country has indeed become much more westernized than Russia in terms of its civil society development and political openness since the Revolution. This, however, has not translated to greater material wealth for all sectors of Ukrainian society.

In Kiev, the capital city, I was excited to visit the site of the 2004 Revolution, *Maidan Nezavisimosti* (Independence Square). Today the only visible reminders of the historic events that transpired there are the vendors lining the square selling Yushchenko pins and orange t-shirts. As a result, I had to content myself with picturing tens of thousands of people filling the square and with humming the tune to "*Razom Nas Bohato*" (Together We are Many), the anthem of the Orange Revolution.

I also visited Babi Yar, the site of the brutal WWII massacre of 100,000 people, including more than 33,000 Jews. It is scary to me that without the giant bronze statue of twisted people overlooking the ravine where the bodies were thrown, Babi Yar could be just another idyllic, grassy park. I also visited a memorial museum to another manmade disaster that affected

thousands in the former Soviet Union: Chernobyl. Although the museum pays tribute to those who died from radiation fallout, it also provides hope for the future by displaying photographs of the radiation survivors' children.

From my interactions with environmentalists in Ukraine, I learned that the country has indeed become much more Westernized than Russia in terms of its civil society development and political openness since the Revolution. This, however, has not translated to greater material wealth for all sectors of Ukrainian society.

From Kiev, I took a train south to the Crimean Peninsula, which was part of Russia until Soviet leader and native Ukrainian Khrushchev bequeathed it to his home republic in 1954. Crimea is predominantly Russian speaking, which is convenient for me, since I do not speak Ukrainian! While in Crimea, I visited some of the major tourist sites, including Lavardia, the palace site where Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt signed the Yalta accords. I had the sense that I had come full circle, since as part of these accords,

the Soviet Union got the southern half of Sakhalin Island and the Kurils, the former of which was the starting point of my trip!

But I had one more place to visit before returning home, and that was Odessa, a port on the Black Sea and formerly thriving center of Jewish cultural life. Odessa had been famous for its Jewish comedians, musicians, writers and other artists, but pogroms in the early 1900s and the Nazis' Final Solution in WWII decimated the Jewish population there. Today, there has been a slight resurgence in the Jewish population, which now numbers about 3% of the total inhabitants.

My paternal grandparents had lived near Odessa, so I visited the Jewish historical museum there to see if their names were listed in the register the museum keeps of local Jews. Their names were not in the book, but I was surprised and pleased to find that the people running the museum are young. In the US, it is most often the older generation which is interested in tracking down its roots.

I also visited the underground catacombs near Odessa, where partisan soldiers lived and fought the Nazis during WWII, and strolled the city streets, admiring the classic tsarist-era architecture. From Odessa, I took a bus back to Kiev and from there flew back to Seattle, the conclusion of a very exciting trip around the world! ♦

Shoshana Billik is a UW REECAS MA candidate. Her research has focused on the Internet in Russia and Central Asia, and her goal after graduation is to help expand the Internet in the former Soviet Union. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, dancing and bowling.



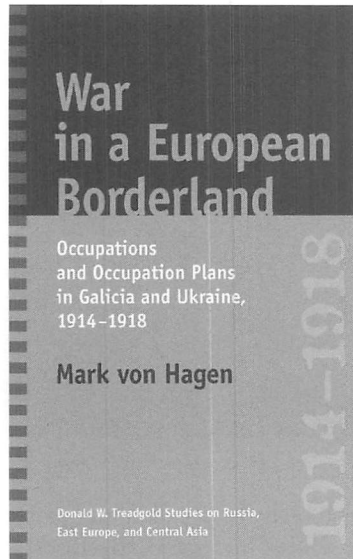
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Blood for blood — Death for death — Partisan graffiti in the Odessa catacombs

- 1 For information on the project, see <http://depts.washington.edu/ikip/index.shtml>.
- 2 Ellman, Bruce. A Historical Reevaluation of America's Role in the Kuril Island Dispute, *Pacific Affairs*, 71(1998): 489-504.
- 3 (For information on the organization, see <http://biointensiveforrussia.igc.org>.)
- 4 Formerly an exhibition praising the achievements of Soviet agriculture, the exhibition was renamed as it came to house more and more exhibits devoted to other sectors of the Soviet economy. Currently, the center is also known as the "All Russian Exhibition Center."
- 5 For information on this program, see www.irex.org/programs/usrvi.

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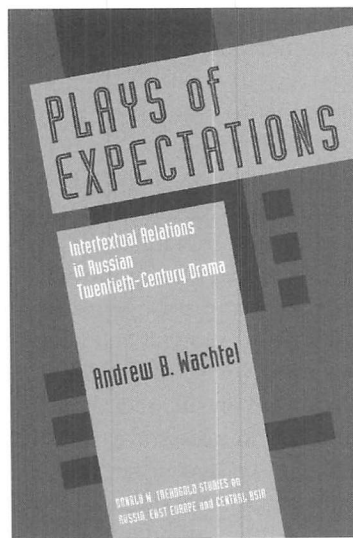


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UW Students Explore Changes in Russian Cities

BY CHRISTOPHER D. CAMPBELL

Anyone who has recently been to Moscow can see how Russia's new economic wealth is rapidly transforming the urban environment. Colossal billboards, traffic jams, a proliferation of high-end restaurants and boutiques, not to mention swank new apartment complexes and sleek new skyscrapers have profoundly altered the look, feel and social life of this metropolis. On the edges of the city where most ordinary people live, the changes are even more profound. New boxy looking storefronts and the incessant expansion of single-family suburban developments are gobbling up land and resources and demanding massive investments in new infrastructure and roads.

For the Russian urban planner, these developments, while often welcomed, also bring new problems, complexities and questions. Housing, transportation, infrastructure, environmental preservation, regulation and a host of other issues continue to challenge and even to over-

In Krasnoyarsk, an entire new city center is being built several miles from the old center. It is still largely a construction zone with a forest of tower cranes and acres of cleared space, but dozens of huge new apartment complexes and business centers are already completed or near completion.

whelm the planning system. At the same time, the profession itself is being forced to evolve. New federal regulations and organizational structures are altering the practice of urban planning and the role of the planner in ways that promise to be as profound as the changes to the built environment. Even the educator is not immune. Across Russia, curricula and schools of architecture are being re-imagined as faculty race to prepare students for a new professional environment that did not exist



Booming construction in Krasnoyarsk

10 years ago and that continues to change at a rapid pace. Given all this, what is the future of the Russian city, and what role will Russian planners and architects play in this city's development?

To find answers to these questions, this summer I traveled with nine students to Russia as part of the University of Washington Exploration Seminar program. The seminar was also supported by the Ellison Center, which helped make the trip affordable to students who might not otherwise be able to go, and by the College of Architecture and Urban Planning and the Department of Urban Design and Planning as part of its research and exchange agreement with Siberia National University.

Our program was ambitious. We first flew from Seattle to Krasnoyarsk, a city of one million people located in the heart of Russia, where Siberia and the Russian Far East meet. Here, we were joined by three faculty members and eleven students — our colleagues and traveling companions from Siberia National University, School of Architecture. From Krasnoyarsk, the entire group headed west on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Along the way, we stopped in six cities: Novosibirsk, Omsk, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Moscow and finally St. Petersburg. In each city we studied the

local architecture, land use patterns, public spaces and parks, transportation systems, infrastructure, housing as well as planning and design practices. We also met with local planners and architects, academics and government officials who gave us tours, answered our questions and invited us to study their planning documents and processes.

The purpose of the trip was to learn broadly about Russian urban planning and the direction that Russian cities are heading. We wanted to know what planners, developers and policy-makers are doing, how they are doing it and what challenges they face. We also wanted to learn about Russian urban life and about the lives of our fellow Russian travelers. What is it like to live in the new urban Russia, and what hopes and worries do new urban planners have as they consider their professional careers and the changes coming to their cities?

What we learned is that what is happening in Moscow is also happening in the smaller regional cities across the country, though with important local variations. In all of the cities we visited, there are building booms. In Krasnoyarsk, for instance, an entire new city center is being built several miles from the old center. It is still largely a construction zone with a forest of



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Moscow gridlock

tower cranes and acres of cleared space, but dozens of huge new apartment complexes and business centers are already completed or near completion. Similarly, in Yekaterinburg, new zones to the north and south are being developed for housing. There are also plans for a new airport and, in response to changes in Russian higher education, work is underway on a massive new Eurasian university with a 2,000+ hectare campus that will provide housing for faculty and complete facilities for more than 70,000 students.

As we talked to urban planners across Russia, several common problems emerged as popular topics of discussion. Two of the most common problematic issues we encountered were those relating to housing and transportation. Despite Russia's recent population decline, several cities are predicting large population growths as more people move into urban centers from outlying towns and villages. Krasnoyarsk, for example, is planning to accommodate an additional 200,000 people by 2020 and, according to leading planning officials, the city is building the largest percentage of

new housing per capita of any city in Russia. But other cities are building as well. Novosibirsk's last city plan predicted 1.3 million people; the new plan calls for 1.7 million.

Yekaterinburg is also expanding outwards. Moreover, as the old housing stock — the grey, monolithic, panel-constructed structures built during the Khrushchev era — fall into greater disrepair, successful young professionals are beginning to demand improved housing with more space and more amenities. As a result of high demand for new housing, even cities that do not predict population growth are building. Last year in Omsk, despite a stable population level, 750,000 square meters of housing was constructed to replace outdated "Krushchoby" apartment blocks. Notably, although the average size of new apartments has increased from 20 square meters to 30, they are still well below European and American standards.

With new wealth, larger populations and the outward expansion of cities has come a rapid rise in private automobile ownership and with that, traffic. Trans-

portation is one of the most common and difficult planning problems facing Russian cities. Krasnoyarsk officials listed transportation as one of the two top problems facing their city, and in Novosibirsk an official told us that in regards to transportation "Novosibirsk is in collapse." According to him, the last Soviet city plan factored in seven cars per 1,000 people. Today, however, there are more than 250 automobiles for every 1,000 people, and the rate is increasing at 10% a year. Such statistics are not unusual for Russia. The response has been to focus on building more roads. Though every city we visited has a subway or one under construction, paid for primarily by federal funds, the city planners emphasized the need for new bridges, ring roads and connective arterials.

Compounding the transportation problem is what appears to be an emerging tendency for private developers to build housing, but not other facilities, such as schools, grocery stores and other commercial and public service oriented structures. This means that as people move into these new housing complexes, they be-

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come more auto-dependant, even as it becomes more difficult for public transportation to service many of the new outlying areas adequately.

There are other challenges facing Russian urban planners that are also common in the United States. Some Russian cities are focused on replacing or building new infrastructural elements: water, sewers, power, as well as roads, bridges and tunnels. Addressing pollution and other environmental concerns is also a focus of some city plans. But other problems are more uniquely Russian. Krasnoyarsk and other cities farther east are struggling to replace the remaining neighborhoods of traditional log houses, because the planners say they are too substandard for human occupation. Likewise, the charming community gardens that ring the city and for decades provided ordinary citizens with a second source of food as well as a reprieve from urban life are now under threat from development. Figuring how to control this development, much of it undertaken by the owners of the gardens themselves, is proving to be a particularly difficult regulatory problem.

Finally, one of the most interesting challenges facing Russian urban planners is the decentralization of the planning process itself. Historically, the planning for Russian cities was done in Moscow or St. Petersburg. Recently, the responsibility for planning has been moved to the cities themselves. Some were prepared for this, others less so. Compounding this problem has been the privatization of land and development. Whereas planning officials used to be able to design large sections of a city and then dictate how and when they would be built, today it is private developers that call many of the shots. This situation is further complicated by a still very immature legal and regulatory environment. In many cities, for example, land still has not been plotted. Without clear lot lines, it is often impossible to tell clearly who owns and is responsible for what. Moreover, without clear lot lines it is difficult to enforce basic land use codes. Setbacks, for example, which regulate how close one structure can be to another, cannot be easily determined if the property area is not clearly demarcated.

For the professional planner, this has all led to tremendous strain and long working hours as officials struggle to adapt to the new processes, to develop new regulations and to keep up with the backlog of permit applications and design review requests. City architects and planners also question their own role in this new para-

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digm. Many still seek influence through professional unions and fiery language. For the young planner or architect, however, the more common route to professional acknowledgement is to join a

private firm and to be ready to compete for contracts.

For the American students, learning about all of this as we traveled across the country was exciting and eye-opening. But, interestingly, the trip was just as illuminating for the Russians themselves who were a part of our group. Many had visited Moscow and St. Petersburg, but few had been to any of the other mid-size cities in between. For them too, this trip was an opportunity to explore and to discover Russia, to make new contacts and to learn more about their own chosen profession.

Sometimes I am asked why American urban planners should care about what is happening in Russia. Alternatively, I am sometimes asked by people who watch Russia why we should care about planning. For me, this trip helped solidify answers to both these questions.

For the academic involved in urban planning, there are many interesting intellectual questions pertaining to the Russian situation waiting to be investigated in more detail. How does a national planning system transform itself, for example, or how will changing land use patterns impact the long-term development of local Russian economies? Equally, for the professional planner and architect there are



UW and Russian students at the train station in Krasnoyarsk embarking on their exploration seminar across Russia (author center in white shirt and blazer)

opportunities in Russia — opportunities for collaboration, for mutual learning and even for entrepreneurial activity. Already at least one local architecture firm has established itself in Moscow. Crossing the vast Russian expanse, it is clear that opportunities are not limited to the capital alone.

For the Russian scholar, it makes similar sense to pay attention to urban planning. How cities develop in Russia will have deep implications for how the country as a whole evolves. Take, for example, housing and the question of who gets the new housing and at what cost. In the US, the rise of the middle class following WWII was closely tied to the development of expensive suburban housing and a federal loan program that made it possible for

ordinary citizens to purchase homes. What impact will housing have on the rise of a middle class in Russia? Similarly, in the US, urban planning issues are one of the most common entry routes into civic participation. Neighbors complaining about potential development; debates over new use regulations; funding initiatives for parks, libraries, rapid transit, roads and the like all spur ordinary people to become involved in the management of their city. Is it possible that in Russia, similar urban planning issues might also inspire civic participation and the rise of an increasingly vocal civil society?

Clearly the list of important questions surrounding the development and transformation of Russian cities and Russian

urban planning is long. But this is good. It means that there is plenty of opportunity for people working to answer questions related to urban planning in Russia. And perhaps it means that we need another exploration seminar. ♦

REECAS faculty member Christopher Campbell is an assistant professor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning. He studies community planning and place making and is the co-founder (with Professor Frank Westerland) of a research and exchange program between the UW College of Architecture and Urban Planning and Siberia Federal University (formerly Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Architecture and Civil Engineering). If you are interested in traveling to Russia on a program like the one described above, please email him at ccamp1@u.washington.edu.

Application to Take a Less Commonly Taught Language

FOR UW STUDENTS AND FACULTY

The REECAS Program offers instruction in many languages from the region, but we have found that there is the occasional need for a graduate student to take a less commonly taught language (LCTL) not available at the university or to attain training at a more advanced level in one of our regularly-taught regional languages. Often, students will enroll in summer language programs for this sort of LCTL or advanced training, but that provides only one year of study, and many students would prefer to take LCTLs or advanced language courses during the regular academic year.

In order to augment our offerings, REECAS has received funding from the US Department of Education to support LCTL/advanced language tutorials. Thus, we are inviting applications to propose such tutorials for the 2008–09 academic year. A fellowship committee composed of REECAS Program faculty will meet in April 2008 to consider applications. We expect to make our decisions as expeditiously as possible so that announcements of the awards can be made by the end of April. During specified quarters of 2008–09, successful applicants will be provided with a tutor from the appropriate native-speaker community in the Puget Sound region, and a faculty member to oversee the tutorial, in order to provide necessary language skills. We will consider the following factors in making our decision: the importance of the tutorial for achieving students' professional/academic goals; the number of other students interested in the same language or language level; and the availability of appropriate native-language tutors.

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If you are currently enrolled in the university, please submit an unofficial transcript and letter of recommendation along with your essay. If you are an applicant, we will review these documents in your application.

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Central Asia's New Trade Capital: Urumqi and China's Place in the Regional Economy

BY BRADLEY JENSEN MURG

Walking down the streets of Urumqi (pronounced oo-room-chee), the capital of China's largest and westernmost province of Xinjiang, one views various and sundry institutions familiar to any resident of the eastern half of the country: the ubiquitous branch offices of the Bank of China, roads full of black Audis and Volkswagens (the car of choice for well off Chinese), outlets of China's largest appliance retailer Guomei; newsstands selling the full range of periodicals published in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou; and men gathered on street corners around two players of Chinese chess pointing out potential gambits and betting on the outcome — all universal facets of life in urban China. However, there are also some rather glaring differences.

The first thing most visitors notice are street signs and billboards printed in both Chinese characters as well as the Arabic-style script of Uighur, the lingua franca of the eponymous, Turkic ethnic group

While groups of men still gather on street corners watching games of chess, the game being played is the one that is familiar to westerners rather than the Chinese version. This is 21st century Urumqi — a truly multi-ethnic city in a province where two of the oldest cultures on earth, Turkic and Chinese, meet.

which has called this area home for over a millennium. The further one walks into the Uighur quarter of the city, the more headscarves become de rigueur for older women; vendors of bread and lamb replace non-halal, pork-oriented Chinese food stalls; and minarets (primarily built in the 1980s after the overturning of the anti-religious campaigns of the Cultural Revolution era) peak up from behind six-story, Maoist era apartment blocks. While



Urumqi bazaar

© Mehmed Abiz

groups of men still gather on street corners watching games of chess, the game being played is the one that is familiar to westerners rather than the Chinese version. This is 21st century Urumqi — a truly multi-ethnic city in a province where two of the oldest cultures on earth, Turkic and Chinese, meet. Although it maintains a population of only 3.5 million and is considered to be relatively small by Chinese standards, after a multitude of fits and starts it is now enjoying double-digit growth rates. Urumqi has become a key regional economic center. While the Nursultan Nazarbayev government in Kazakhstan laid the groundwork for Astana to serve as the financial capital of Central Asia, the Chinese have put Urumqi on a sound footing to act as the region's trade capital.

Economic development in China until the late 1990s was largely a phenomenon of the eastern, coastal provinces, which left behind those geographically less fortunate regions possessing poor infrastructure and high transport costs. Agricultural

products from Washington and Oregon arrived in eastern Chinese ports faster and at lower cost than those sent from Xinjiang, while the central government's policy of "letting some get rich before others" significantly limited the amount of investment entering the region. Concomitantly, revenues from the extraction of Xinjiang's significant oil and mineral reserves were sent back to Beijing. Recognizing the threats to long-term national stability that such evidently unequal development was causing, the administration of Chinese President Jiang Zemin launched the "Great Western Development Program" or *Xibu Da Kaifa*, an initiative remarkable in both scope and cost.

This program, the cornerstone of Chinese government policy in Xinjiang, has entailed the transfer of billions of dollars in tax revenue for the construction of airports, highways and railways. At the same time, private investment has also increased — the province is viewed as a potential giant of China's rapidly growing domestic tourism industry. Already popu-

lar among eastern Chinese eager to experience their own country's so-called "wild west," Xinjiang's pristine nature reserves are being developed for eco-tourism while the Tianshan mountains are now hosting the construction of China's largest ski resort. At the opposite end of the environmental spectrum, widely anticipated revisions to national fiscal policy will entail the Xinjiang provincial government's retaining of a significant portion of the tax revenues from the province's large oil industry and burgeoning mining enterprises. Still, at the end of the day, it has been the provision of infrastructure in tandem with the ability of Chinese firms to draw on the nation's significant supply of investment capital and the panoply of cheap consumer goods produced back east that is turning Urumqi into an economic hub for Central Asia.

As opposed to the commercial cities of eastern China such as Shanghai, Shenzhen and Wenzhou where the English-speaking American, Australian or European executive is the norm, the western language of international trade in Urumqi is Russian, reflecting the area's history. Over the past two centuries, Xinjiang has had a close relationship with its Slavic neighbor. The province's southern city of Kashgar served as a key listening post during the Great Game where British and Russian diplomats both scrambled for influence. In the 20th century, a large White Russian émigré population fled the Bolshevik revolution and scattered throughout the region

— at present Urumqi possesses one of China's only Russian Orthodox churches and Russians comprise one of the country's 55 officially recognized minority groups. During World War II, the northwestern portion of the province was for a brief period governed by a Soviet-backed regime separate from the government of Chiang Kai-shek. Lastly, throughout the Mao Zedong era and still today, many Uighurs have close relatives living just across the border in Kazakhstan — home to over one million of their ethnic kinsmen.

However, the Sino-Soviet split of the late 1950s resulting in the stationing of huge numbers of Chinese People's Liberation Army troops in Xinjiang's border counties and a very frosty view of all things Russian, makes Xinjiang's recent achievements even more remarkable. Today, the city's international trade centers, markets and hotels teem with business people from across Russia and Central Asia ranging from shuttle traders from Bishkek to small businessmen from Novosibirsk to millionaires from Astana all seeking low-priced, consumer products for sale back home. Of late, even the comparatively far off Caucasus has been represented with growing business from Georgians and Azeris. Central Asian resources, particularly Kazakh oil and gas, are increasingly vital to the preservation of China's economic growth. The completion of a new airport, as this trade continued to expand, has developed Urumqi into a hub for flights to major cities throughout Central

Asia, Siberia and Pakistan. Along these lines, recent interviews conducted with members of the Pakistani business community in Urumqi and Kashgar have indicated the potential role the city could play in furthering the integration of the South Asian and Central Asian economies.

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However, while Russian is omnipresent in Urumqi today, its days seem to be numbered. A visit to any of the city's multiple universities tells the tale: thousands of Russian and Central Asian students diligently study Mandarin following in the footsteps of many members of Central Asia's diplomatic corps, most notably Kazakhstan's ambassador in Beijing, who possess fluency in the language. University

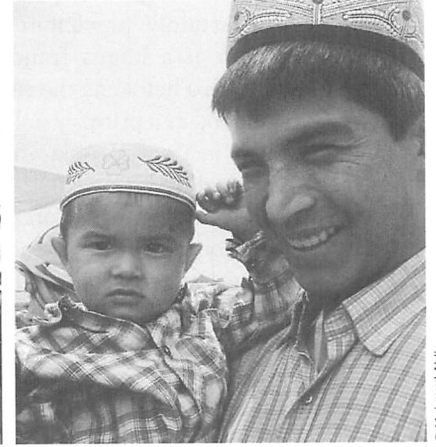
(continued on page 18)



Uighur dancers at local festival



Uighur women chatting



Father and son

(continued from page 17)



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Uighur children

graduates from across the region flock to Xinjiang after the completion of their degrees in their home countries to learn the language which is increasingly viewed as vital to engaging with the region's economic giant. Although the spread of Mandarin will certainly precipitate the decline of Russian as a lingua franca in western China, it also betokens the rise of Urumqi and Xinjiang as a primary pole for economic growth in Central Asia and as the center of regional trade.

While economic integration and extensive cross-border trade is indeed impressive, the growth of the study of Mandarin does also raise some interesting questions. Most notably, why Mandarin? Why not Uighur? According to Chinese government figures, the majority of the province's population is Uighur. As Uighur is a Turkic language, its speakers are

such as Korla and Aksu. Moreover, Uighurs can claim a leading cultural heritage for the region which links them to the Central Asian states and boasts of individuals such as Mahmud Kashgari, the 11th century scholar who completed the first Turkic language dictionary and a host of other impressive figures from across the gamut of philosophy, literature and science. Nonetheless, despite this heritage, today a majority of China's Uighur population remains in rural areas engaged in agriculture rather than business. In the southern portion of the province, 13 predominantly Uighur counties are counted among the 25 poorest in China. To alleviate this situation, the aforementioned Western Development Plan has targeted funds toward these areas aimed at raising the standard of living of families in the poverty-stricken regions and visits to these



Old City in Kashgar

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able to converse with Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks — each in his own language. Presently, there is a significant and growing Uighur middle class in Urumqi and in provincial cities

areas confirm the government's direct provision of money and material for the construction of new homes and the overall amelioration of the quality of life. Still, the full incorporation of Uighurs into the economic development of Xinjiang and its increasingly important role in Central Asia remains a work in progress. China has yet fully to take advantage of the enormous benefit its Turkic-speaking, Uighur population can provide for the region's long-term role in building Urumqi as an economic center.

Nonetheless, with China as the region's economic giant and Urumqi serving as a key growth pole, it will be increasingly vital to understand China's economic interests in the region and intentions towards its western neighbors. ♦

Bradley Jensen Murg is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Political Science and FLAS fellow in Uighur language focusing on the comparative political economy of economic growth and development in China, Russia and Central Asia. He speaks Chinese, Russian and Uighur.

Uzbek Ambassador Meets with UW Faculty

BY CHARLES CARLSON

On April 13–14, H.E. Abdulaziz Komilov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United States, and his wife, Dr. Gulnara Rashidova, visited the University of Washington campus. During his visit, the Uzbek Ambassador spoke with faculty and students of REECAS and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization. He discussed with UW officials possible future joint projects between the UW and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Washington, DC, and suggested ways his embassy could support projects now underway at the UW both in Seattle and in Tashkent.

After being introduced by Professor Steve Hanson at a briefing, the Ambassador gave the evening of April 13th at Par-rington Commons to students and faculty of the university. He spoke about efforts being made by his Embassy in Washington, DC to make the American general public aware of reforms now being made in Uzbekistan, especially in the area of education, and pledged his embassy's support in embarking in joint projects with the UW. He then referred to significant events and anniversaries in his country and gave a brief overview of the present state of US-Uzbek relations.

In his briefing, entitled Uzbek-American Relations in the Context of Uzbekistan's Regional Policy, the Ambassador referred

to the US State Department funded UW-Uzbekistan Educational Partnership grant for Cultural and Comparative Religious Studies that was then in its final year, and extended his greetings to the six Uzbek scholars who were visiting the UW during that week in the context of the grant.

The Ambassador attributed the deteriorating state of US-Uzbek relations to "misunderstandings" without going into much detail. When asked why there has been such a large migration of specialized Russians from his country, the Ambassador referred to the right everyone has in his country to emigrate.

Significant Uzbek anniversaries the Ambassador mentioned included the 1000th anniversary of the Ma'mum Academy in Khiva, a celebration for which was held in early November 2006, and the 2000th anniversary of the ancient Silk Road capital of Marghilan. He also spoke about some of the significance of important historical figures like Amir Timur (better known in the English-speaking world as Tamerlane), and the poet and statesman Alisher Navoi, whose 566th anniversary was celebrated

in Washington, DC at a conference his embassy organized in March 2007 and to which he invited UW Professor and Uzbek scholar Ilse Cirtautas to participate.

The Ambassador attributed the deteriorating state of US-Uzbek relations to "misunderstandings" without going into much detail. When asked why there has been such a large migration of specialized Russians from his country, the Ambassador referred to the right everyone has in his country to emigrate. He added that improvement of the human rights situation is now a top government priority in Uzbekistan, and that the Uzbek government has taken steps through a broad range of activities in the last three years to strengthen the legal basis for human rights practices.

The Uzbek Ambassador's visit to the UW coincided with two important events: a conference devoted to the 60th anniversary of REECAS, held on April 15th, and the second International Conference on Issues of Comparative Religious Studies in Central Asia held under the auspices of the US-Uzbekistan Educational Partnership Grant for Cultural and Comparative Religious Studies, held on April 16th. The Ambassador attended both events, as well as the 60th Anniversary REECAS reception held by the Ellison Center on the evening of April 14th. ♦

The 19th Annual Nicholas Poppe Symposium Convenes

BY WILL LASKY

Last May's Annual Nicholas Poppe Symposium on Central and Inner Asian Studies was the stage for the presentation of a diverse array of subjects by experts from the Pacific Northwest and from around the globe. The 11 lectures delivered at this year's symposium covered topics ranging from environmental concerns in Central Asia to traditional Central Asian medicine. Additionally, the more familiar terrain of

Central Asian history, politics and literature was also discussed in depth.

The symposium began on May 12th with a welcoming address delivered by professor Ilse Cirtautas, entitled "Remembering Nicholas Poppe." Cirtautas' address offered a tribute to the renowned University of Washington professor and Altaic Scholar Nicholas Poppe, who passed away in 1991 at the age of 94.

The opening address segued into a lecture on environmental issues of the Altai region, delivered by Kathleen Braden of Seattle Pacific University. After Braden's talk, Yevgeny Kashkarov, a visiting scholar at the University of Washington from Altai State University in Barnaul, Russia, lectured on endangered animals and environmental concerns in Kyrgyzstan. The interim period between presentations afforded

(continued on page 20)



(continued from page 19)

those present to engage in discussions of the topics presented.

The afternoon session was marked by a common anthropological theme uniting lectures delivered by scholars from universities including Ohio State, the National University of Uzbekistan in Tashkent and the UW. Hamit Zakir, Uighur language and culture lecturer at the UW, gave a talk entitled "Observance of Everyday Customs and Traditions among Uighurs," and Maureen Pritchard of Ohio State

University lectured on "Roles and Realities for a Bride in a Kyrgyz Household."

Additionally, memorable lectures included that delivered by UW PhD student Stefan Kamola, entitled "Such Classic Ground: Remembering Alexander the Great in 19th century Afghanistan," and "Conceiving Anthropomorphism in Eurasian Image Stones: Okunev, Early Nomadic, Early Pontic and Scythian Stelae," delivered by independent scholar Katrina Swedseid-Ang of Eugene, Oregon.

This year's Poppe Symposium marked the 19th meeting of scholars gathering at the University of Washington to discuss issues pertaining to Central and Inner Asia. The symposium, created in 1989 by a group of UW graduate students of Central and Inner Asian Studies, continues to evolve and to expand, representing one of the countries premier conferences on a growing field of academic interest. ♦

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Boba Research Fellowships

The Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies Program would like to request applications for the annual Boba Research Fellowship for exceptional REECAS students to travel to Eastern Europe or Central Asia between June 2008 and May 2009. Only first year students are eligible to apply.

Priority will be given to those conducting research or holding internships in one of these regions, but participating in advanced language training in an accredited program will also be considered.

Two awards of up to \$1000 will be offered toward airfare or lodging.

TO APPLY:

Submit the following required material: (1) a 2-page essay, double-spaced, 12 font (Courier, Arial or Times New Roman), with 1 inch margins on all sides, in which you explain your summer plans and how these funds will assist you, (2) a budget outlining your expenses, (3) one faculty letter of support, and (4) an unofficial copy of your transcript.

Applications are due February 29, 2008. A decision will be made by April 4, 2008.

Please send application materials to:
Marta Mikkelsen, Associate Director
REECAS Program, Box 353650
Seattle, WA 98195

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Budlong Research Fellowship

The Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies Program would like to announce the annual Budlong Research Fellowship for an exceptional first year REECAS graduate student to travel to Russia between June 2008 and May 2009.

Priority will be given to those conducting research on topics in Russian history, but those interested in holding internships or participating in advanced Russian language training in an accredited program will also be considered.

One award of up to \$1000 will be offered towards airfare and/or lodging.

TO APPLY:

Submit the following required material: (1) a 2-page essay, double-spaced, 12 font (Courier, Arial or Times New Roman), with 1 inch margins on all sides, in which you explain your summer plans and how these funds will assist you, (2) a budget outlining your expenses, (3) one faculty letter of support, and (4) an unofficial copy of your transcript.

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The Ellison Center Welcomes a New Faculty Member and Visiting Scholars



Elena Campbell arrives at the University of Washington from Harvard, where she lectured on her specialty — later 19th and early 20th century Russian history. She received her PhD in 1999 from the Russian Academy of Sciences at the Institute of Russian History in St. Petersburg. Her doctoral dissertation covered Islam in Russian imperial policy. In addition to lecturing at Harvard, she has taught and pursued research at the University of Michigan and at Albert-Ludwig University in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany. She has presented at numerous American and European universities on a wide range of topics.

With academic interest in Russia declining since the end of the Cold War, Campbell says she is happy to start work at a university that still pursues a large amount of research into Russia and the former Soviet Union. “It’s a luxury,” she said.

While she never envisioned herself moving to the Pacific Northwest, the change in geography has unexpectedly peaked her interest in the Russian Far East and in the history of Russian activity in North America. She also looks forward to exploring the mountains and forests of the Pacific Northwest for herself.

Campbell’s honors include a Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, a research grant at the University of Helsinki and a fellowship at the European University of St. Petersburg. She is currently working on a book entitled *Toward State Unity: The ‘Muslim Question’ in Late Imperial Russia*.



Oleksandr Androshchuk joins us as a Russell Fellow from Kyiv, Ukraine where he is a research fellow in the Department of Contemporary History and Politics at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. In 2004, he defended his PhD thesis on the history of territorial reform in Soviet Ukraine. His current research interest pertains to historical and cultural preconditions and political models of regionalism in contemporary Ukraine. To date, Androshchuk has published in numerous scholarly journals and participated in large-scale inter-institutional research projects titled “A History of Ukrainian Peasantry,” “Ukraine: The Chronicle of 20th Century” and “The National Atlas of Ukraine.”

His present project, entitled “Ukrainian Regionalism: Political Representations and Public Attitudes (1990s–2000s),” deals with the ideological forms and political models of regionalism and variants of their implementation in the Ukrainian political and public space. At the UW, access to relevant university library resources, which he says are virtually unattainable in Ukraine, has given Androshchuk an opportunity to study Ukrainian regionalism within the context of similar phenomena in the post-Soviet and post-Communist space at large.

This is Androshchuk’s first trip to the US. He has enjoyed learning about American scholarly culture through discussion with professional colleagues from the United States and from other countries. He hopes that studying at the University of Washington will help further the implementation of his future projects and enhance his research upon his return home.



Natalia Maltseva joins us from Russia as a Russell Fellow pursuing research into early childhood bilingualism, its advantages and mechanisms of enhancing second language learning at a young age. While at the UW, she is interested in working with speech and language pathologists as well as accessing resources at the UW Institute of Learning and Brain Sciences.

She received her PhD in English Philology from Saratov State University in 2002 where she is now an assistant professor of English. Additionally, in Saratov she currently does consulting work as a speech language pathologist. Courses she has taught include: Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Methods, Teaching English as a Foreign Language Practicum and a seminar on early childhood language acquisition.

Maltseva was a finalist in the British Council Contest of Contemporary British Poetry Translation in 2005 and has published on a wide range of topics relating to her discipline in Saratov State University and St. Petersburg State University journals.

Maltseva loves the University of Washington’s libraries and Washington State’s natural attractions. “I am a steppe person and that’s why these huge trees and big mountains and lakes just enrapture me,” she said. Professionally, she admires and is interested in ways the United States educational system promotes cultural diversity. Upon her return home, she hopes to further the cause of tolerance for multilingual education in Russia.



ELLISON CENTER NEWS

SCOTT RICHARD ANDERSEN, who earned his Juris Doctorate in Comparative and International Law from the University of Washington and a Master of Arts in REECAS, has become the National Democratic Institute's resident director in Romania. Before joining the Institute in 2006, Scott worked on political and academic outreach initiatives with the European Union, clerked in the field of international business and commercial litigation in Brussels; and undertook legal assignments on the accommodation rights of transnational migrants at the Free Legal Advice Centers in Dublin. Mr. Andersen also assisted the EastWest Institute with gathering testimonials. Traveling to more than 20 countries, he authored *Working in a World in Transformation: Twenty Stories for Twenty Years*. Additionally, he served as a legislative aide on rural economic development initiatives and constituent outreach with the Washington State Senate; worked as a program officer for the Soros Foundation in Siberia; and served as a business recruitment and retention specialist at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

ALAMUT, the 1938 classic Slovenian novel by Vladimir Bartol which melds the early 20th century rise of European totalitarianism with 12th-century Persian legend, and which was first translated into English by *Michael Biggins* (Head, Slavic and East European Section, UW Libraries) and published in 2004 in hardcover by Seattle's Scala House Press, is scheduled for its first release in a paperback edition with North Atlantic Press in November 2007.

SCOTT DAVIS, professor and chairman of the UW Department of Epidemiology, has led a team of investigators working in the former Soviet Union since 1990 in areas that were contaminated by radiation from the Chernobyl accident in 1986. To date, their efforts have been successful in establishing methods and procedures to identify, to locate, to enroll and to examine relatively large numbers of persons exposed to Chernobyl radiation, to estimate radiation doses they may have received and to engage in molecular characterization of specific

tumor types of interest. Current efforts are focused in the Bryansk region of Russia.

BENJAMIN FITZHUGH, professor of Anthropology, leading a team of University of Washington professors and students this past year, participated in the second field research season of the Kuril Biocomplexity Project (KBP) in the Kuril Islands of the Russian Far East. The KBP is a National Science Foundation-funded research project conducted by a team of American, Japanese and Russian scholars and students who are examining a 5000-year history of human-environmental interactions along the Kuril Island chain in the northwest Pacific Ocean. International institutions partnering with the UW on this project include the Hokkaido University Museum, the Historical Museum of Hokkaido, the Sakhalin Regional Museum and various institutes of the Russian Academy of Science, Far East Branch.

KAREN J. FREEZE, Affiliate Lecturer at the Jackson School, represented the UW with the cover article of the April 2007 issue of *Technology & Culture* entitled, "Innovation and Technology Transfer during the Cold War: The Case of the Open-End Spinning Machine from Communist Czechoslovakia." This is now part of her larger project, entitled, "The Permeable Iron Curtain: Cases of Innovation and Technology Transfer from Communist Eastern Europe to the West." This project constituted a panel of case studies from Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary at the October 2007 meeting of the Society for the History of Technology in Washington, DC. Dr. Freeze's newest project addresses technology in theater arts. Also, in June 2007, she contributed a paper titled, "Czechoslovak Theater Technology under Communism: Ambassador to the West," for the Third Plenary Conference of the "Tensions of Europe" Network in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

STEVE KERR, professor in UW's College of Education, continues an ongoing multi-million dollar project jointly funded by the World Bank and the Russian Ministry of

Education and Science. The aim of the "E-Learning Support Project," as it is titled in English, is to increase the effectiveness of Russia's schools and the economic competitiveness of their graduates by introducing more contemporary, flexible learning materials (i.e., computer-based digital materials), more preparation for teachers in the flexible use of those materials and a network of regional and local resource centers to show teachers how to cope with technological changes. The project is under way currently in seven regions of the Russian Federation: Karelia, Kaluga, Stavropol, Perm, Cheliabinsk, Krasnoyarsk and Khabarovsk.

DANIEL WAUGH, Professor Emeritus, and his wife Charlotte are spending a second year in Uppsala, Sweden, where he is working on a book about Muscovite history with a member of the Uppsala University Slavic Department. The Waughs participated in a summer archaeological program in western Mongolia in 2007, co-sponsored by the Silkroad Foundation and the National Museum of Mongolian History. The excavation uncovered several skeletons and interesting artifacts of the Xiongnu, the nomadic confederacy that existed in the region some 2000 years ago. The summer program also included an epic drive across most of the western half of the country with visits to important archaeological sites along the way.

GLENNYS YOUNG, Associate Professor of History, chaired a search committee for a new historian of Imperial Russia. The search resulted in the hiring of Professor Elena Campbell (see interview on page 21). Young published articles in *Russian Review* and *Ab Imperio*, and she traveled to Spain this fall to conduct research on a book-length project on Republican children evacuated to the USSR during the Spanish Civil War.



CAMPAIGN UW: CREATING FUTURES

The Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies at UW is one of the oldest and most prestigious programs of its kind in the country, promoting in-depth interdisciplinary study of all major post-communist regions.

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UPCOMING ELLISON CENTER EVENTS

JANUARY 14: Speaker Series: State Conflict, Disintegration & Self Determination – “The Disintegration of Yugoslavia, 1991–1996: a Look at Bosnia-Herzegovina and Current Conditions in the Region.” Fredrick Michael Lorenz, JD, LL.M., Senior Lecturer, Jackson School of International Studies (JSIS). Communications 120, 7:00–9:00 pm.

JANUARY 16: Ellison Center Lecture Series – “Natural Law, Intellectual History and the Zeitgeist - Essential Elements in Eastern European Democratization.” Dr. Josette Baer, University of Zurich. Thomson 317, 2:30 pm.

JANUARY 17: Speaker Series: Russia after Putin's Second Term – “Vladimir Putin and the New Russian Nationalism.” Dr. Stephen E. Hanson, Director, Ellison Center. Kane 120, 7:00–9:00 pm.

JANUARY 28: Speaker Series: State Conflict, Disintegration & Self Determination – “Kosovo and the Road to Independence.” Fredrick Michael Lorenz, JD, LL.M., Senior Lecturer, JSIS. Communications 120, 7:00–9:00 pm.

FEBRUARY 23: Newspapers in Education – Exploring Asia Series. Seattle Times Auditorium, 4:30-8:00 pm.

FEBRUARY 25: Speaker Series: State Conflict, Disintegration & Self Determination – “Georgia and Abkhazia : A Frozen Conflict?” Fredrick Michael Lorenz, JD, LL.M., Senior Lecturer, JSIS. (Location TBA), 7:00–9:00 pm.

FEBRUARY 27: Sultan Memet and the Music of the Uyghur Nation – Exploring Asia Series. Ethnic Cultural Theater, 6:00 pm.

MARCH 10: Speaker Series: State Conflict, Disintegration & Self Determination – “Nagorno-Karabakh and Self Determination.” Fredrick Michael Lorenz, JD, LL.M., Senior Lecturer, JSIS. Communications 120, 7:00–9:00 pm.

MARCH 22: K-8 Art Mosaics – An event for K-8 educators. Thomson Hall, 9:00-4:30 pm.

APRIL 2: Jackson School Outreach Centers: Hot Spots in Our World “Russia, the EU and the United States: Soul Mates?” Darryl Johnson, American Ambassador, Retired. Walker Ames Room, Kane Hall, 7:00–9:00 pm.

APRIL 12: 14th Annual REECAS-NW Conference at Portland State “Nations, States, and Identities in Russia, East Europe and Central Asia.” Portland State University, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm. A reception will follow. (See page 3 for Call for Papers.)

MAY 7: The Donald Treadgold Memorial Lecture – “Postcommunism as a Rorschach Test: Sources and Consequences of Various Models of Post-1989 Transformations.” Dr. Jan Kubik, 2006–07 Distinguished Fulbright Chair, Warsaw University Associate Professor of Political Science, Rutgers Recurring Visiting Professor, Centre for Social Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw. University of Washington Club, 3:30 pm. A reception will follow.

MAY 15–17: The European Union after Enlargement: Policies and Politics in a New Context, UW Campus.



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