Stammler Library Dedicated
CREES Toasts a Lifetime of Extraordinary Achievement

The Center for Russian and East European Studies (CREES) held a library dedication for Professor Emeritus Heinrich Stammler on 10 November, 2003. Professor Stammler has generously donated hundreds of editions, some very rare, from his personal library to help make the CREES library a focal point for Slavic studies research. During the dedication, about 75 guests had the opportunity to listen to Professors Maria Carlson and Edith Clowes, who spoke about just some of Professor Stammler’s achievements, and to the guest of honor himself, as he shared some of his pearls of wisdom gleaned from over 50 years of academic study.

Backus Lecture Fund Established
New Fund Honors a KU-CREES Founding Father

A generous donation of $5,000 has created a new lecture fund, dedicated to the memory of Prof. Oswald P. Backus, III (1921-72). Backus was an early driving force behind the development of KU as a nationally-known center for the study of Russia and Eastern Europe. In the 1960s, he helped form the Slavic and Soviet Area Studies program, now known as Russian and East European Studies. He taught history, law and Slavic and Soviet area studies during his 22 years at KU and helped build KU’s Slavic library into one of the finest in the nation.

This donation will enhance REES programming at KU, clearing the way for strengthening the REES lecture series. The anonymous donor hopes this gift will encourage others to contribute to maintaining the tradition of excellence at CREES. Proposals for funding of guest lectures should be directed to Paul D’Anieri, Director, CREES.

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www.ku.edu/~crees

‘04 Summer FLAS App’s Now Being Accepted
KU-CREES is now accepting FLAS applications from qualified applicants for Summer 2004. All necessary details and forms are available at the KU-CREES website at www.ku.edu/~crees/funding.shtml or by calling 785-864-4236. Deadline is 1 March.

Prof. Emeritus Heinrich Stammler speaks at the dedication of the REES Library (318 Bailey) in his honor; he shared with guests the history of his books and their story, as it intertwined with his career.
Recent Events

Alum Englund Speaks on WMD

Douglas Englund, alumnus of KU-REES in 1973, is now Director of the Iraq Weapons Elimination Directorate for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). On 10 Nov., he spoke on Cold War Legacy, New World Threats at KU.

Englund described the mission of his organization, and related challenges and successes to date. The DTRA has helped reduce dangerous weapon stockpiles among the countries of the former USSR. While the mission in Iraq has presented some challenges, Englund was confident his agency would bring the same level of expertise characterizing operations among former Cold War foes. Englund also traveled to Kansas State, where he gave a similar lecture to select faculty and alumni.
American voters are following polls and primaries as potential presidential candidates compete to run in November’s election. But one KU professor also has been watching elections in the former Soviet republic of Georgia.

Erik Herron, assistant professor of political science, spent 10 days in Georgia as an observer for presidential elections that were sparked by protest over fraud-ridden parliamentary elections last November.

Herron, whose main area of research is in electoral politics in former communist states, has prior experience as an election observer with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Russia and Ukraine. He was eager to participate again.

“That experience was rewarding personally and professionally,” he said. “It gave me a deeper appreciation of the importance of impartially administered elections.”

Herron was among about 400 observers who were briefed in Georgia’s capital city of Tbilisi in early January and then deployed to various regions across the country for the Jan. 4 elections. Herron observed polling sites in Kutaisi, the second-largest city in Georgia.

Throughout the day, Herron and his team traveled from site to site writing reports on how voting was conducted. The team stayed at the final polling site to watch how the votes were counted and then followed the ballots to the district electoral commission, where the final results were recorded.

Herron said that although the January presidential elections were better regulated than the November parliamentary elections, there was room for improvement. For example, he said, many polling stations were decorated with roses—a symbol of the “Rose Revolution” that ousted former president Eduard Shevardnadze and of the coalition supporting opposition candidate Mikhail Saakashvili.

After watching several elections in former communist countries, Herron said he has concluded that although the American system of voting is generally more reliable, it too is subject to errors.

He said the fallibility of the polling process makes him wary of future plans to offer electronic voting and voting via the Internet.

“This would be comparable to polling stations in the U.S. being decorated with elephants or donkeys—recognizable symbols of a political party,” Herron said. “Polling stations are supposed to be neutral, but many stations in Georgia implied partisanship by showing these symbols.”

Herron also said there were some discrepancies between the number of ballots cast and the number of final votes counted. Although Georgian officials in the region downplayed the importance of the discrepancies—Saakashvili won 96 percent of the vote—Herron said such oversights could pose future problems.

“The problem with the decision is that officials did not determine how or why there were discrepancies,” he said. “A few votes may not have been important in the presidential race, but they could matter in the upcoming parliamentary elections.”

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“While these processes supposedly simplify the voting process, they introduce new possibilities for error,” he said. “Elections are error-prone enterprises. Some errors are unintentional and random, other errors can systematically affect results. It is a mistake to think that we can eliminate all errors from the casting and counting of ballots.”

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Upcoming 2004 Brown Bags

Brown Bags meet from noon to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays in 318 Bailey.

24 Feb - Michael Palij, Phd, Librarian (ret), KU; The First Experiment of National Communism in Ukraine in 1920s and 1930s

2 Mar - Richard Halford, independent researcher; Business and Corruption in Kazakhstan: The Exxon-Mobil Scandal

9 Mar - Dennis Karney, KU CIBER Assoc. Faculty Director; Initial impressions of Business in Russia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic.

16 Mar - Erik Herron, PoliSci, KU; A Tale of Two Elections: Russia and Georgia, 2004

30 Mar - Nurjigit Kadyrbekov, Junior Faculty Development Program Fellow; Freedom of Speech in Kyrgyzstan

6 Apr - Clara Morris and John Goodrick, Peacecorps Volunteers, 2001-2003; Moldova-2003: A Peace Corps Experience

Faculty & Fellow Highlights

Assoc. Prof. William J. Comer (KU-Slavic) was named co-recipient of the annual book prize in language pedagogy awarded 28 Dec. by AATSEEL. His contribution is a major portion of the book The Russian Context: The Culture behind the Language, (ed. G. Gerhart and E. Boyle).

Adjunct Prof. Dale Herspring (Political Science, K-State) signed a contract with University Press of Kansas to publish a book tentatively entitled Admirals, Generals and Presidential Leadership; From Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush, scheduled to be available this summer. Prof. Herspring is a KU-REES fellow.

Assoc. Prof. Barbara Phipps (Director, KU Center for Economic Education) was in Bratislava, Slovakia, 5-14 Dec. to teach an intermediate economics seminar for 35 Slovakian educators. This seminar was conducted by the National Council on Economic Education’s Civics and Economic Education Program.
Clockwise, from top left:
1. Gerald Mikkelson (KU Slavic) spends time with visiting fellows at the REES holiday party.
2. Edith Clowes (KU Slavic) speaks on Constructing the Memory of the Holocaust: Babii Yar
3. Don Wright (Ft. Leavenworth) spoke on Remaking Political Identity: Official Efforts to Cultivate Values in the Last Decades of the Tsarist Regime
4. Prof. Emerita Anna Cienciala (KU History) speaks on Covering up the Katyn Forest Massacre
5. Brad Schaffner, KU Slavic Bibliographer, preparing to speak on Slavic E-data Assets
6. Anastasia Varnavskaja (IFDP Fellow-Russia) spoke on Trends in Russian Higher Education
On 2 February 2004, the Center for Russian and East European Studies, the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and the Department of History sponsored a roundtable discussion on the topic “The New East-Central Europe in the European Union: Building the Curriculum.” The event was moderated by Dr. Edith Clowes, Slavic Languages and Literature. Other speakers included Dietrich Earnhart (Economics), Diane Fourny (European Studies), Marc Greenberg (Slavic), Andrzej Karcz (Slavic), Eve Levin (History), Sharon Valasek (Consul, Consulate of the Czech Republic, Kansas City), Jim Woelfel (Humanities and Western Civilization). The discussion centered on how KU can best cover this vital region in light of the continuing political, economic and social changes.