LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As an aspiring young REES-area specialist in the 1970s, I heard about the exceptionally strong program at the University of Kansas. I admired the publications of Oswald Backus and William Fletcher, and they shaped my thinking. My own work shares Ozzie Backus’ focus on Muscovite society, and Bill Fletcher’s interest in Orthodox religion. Little did I imagine that I would someday sit in their chair, as the (acting) director of KU’s Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies.

Mariya Omelicheva, like her predecessors in the CREES directorship, maintains an active scholarly life. So while she is on sabbatical leave in Spring 2015 to pursue her research full-time, I am assuming responsibility for the Center’s operations.

I begin in a time of mourning at CREES. In December we unexpectedly lost three of our faculty affiliates. William Fletcher passed away on December 14. Bill became the Director of Soviet and Eastern European Studies at the University of Kansas in 1970 and retired as the Director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies in 1992. We owe him a great debt of gratitude for shepherding our program through some of the biggest historical moments in REES-area studies in the 20th century, and for meeting the needs of over 2 decades of experts. Anna Cienciala, professor emerita of history, passed away on December 24. Even in retirement, she remained an active scholar, working in recent years to recover an accurate history of the Katyn massacre of Polish officers by Soviet agents during World War II. In recognition of her scholarship, the Polish government had recently awarded her one of its highest honors, the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit. Alexander Tsiovkh, associate professor in CREES and director of our Ukrainian studies program, perished in an automobile accident on December 23. As the instructor of CREES’ methodology and research courses, he mentored all of our students. Alex also attended nearly every CREES brownbag presentation, offering perceptive comments with his characteristic humor, enthusiasm, and respect. I will miss having our colleagues at my side as I take up my new duties.

Even without Title VI funding, CREES will continue with its dizzying array of programs. Please watch our website, crees.ku.edu, to find the details of upcoming events. Thanks to the efforts of Assistant Director Bart Redford, we have a full schedule of weekly Brownbag presentations, at noon every Tuesday during the semester. Students, faculty, and visitors take turns bringing to the public their newest research findings. I myself will be speaking later in the semester about health care economics, 17th century Muscovite style. The Friday Night at the Kino showings of REES-area films attract an enthusiastic following as does our Russian Film Series at Johnson County Community College. The U.S.-Russia Eco-Reps Project, a State Department funded initiative, continues this spring. A joint undertaking of American and Russian young adults, this project features the sharing of ideas about how to design and implement efforts to preserve the natural environment of our planet. We look forward to hosting the Russian contingent in Lawrence this spring. We will also host a number of eminent speakers, workshops, and conferences, often in collaboration with other KU centers and departments.

CREES is also involved in programming off-campus. In collaboration with the other KU area studies centers, we will continue to offer World Wednesdays at the Lawrence Public Library. These free, one-hour, interactive programs are designed to help participants enhance their global awareness. Again this year, on February 22, CREES will host its fabulous Spring Festival at the Carnegie Building downtown, inviting our affiliates, colleagues, families, and community friends to join us in an afternoon of regional food, music, and camaraderie.

Even our friends at a distance from Lawrence can share in CREES programming. Thanks to Outreach Coordinator Adrienne Landry, the CREES Facebook page posts interesting new tidbits about life in our world area, and about the REES-related activities on campus and around the world. We invite you to share your own news as well. Through our CREES webpage, you can view videos of on-campus lectures, including highlights of our weekly Brownbag presentations, and listen to our podcasts that were produced behind the scenes of CREES public programs, faculty and staff devote much time and energy to mentoring our students. For many years, CREES has offered an undergraduate co-major in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. In recent years, the co-major has been joined by an Honors co-major and a Minor. This year, we are in the process of converting the co-major to a full-fledged major, which will allow our students greater flexibility in determining their academic careers. Our REES MA program has been enhanced also. Recent new options include an MA/JD track, which allows graduate students to complete a master’s degree in REES area studies and a doctorate in Law simultaneously. We have also added a compressed, 12-mo FAST track designed particularly for Foreign Area Officers (FAOs). Each student receives individual guidance from Associate Director Vitaly Chernenkov and the faculty members in their areas of concentration. These consultations often become occasions for extensive intellectual exchange, in which teachers learn as much as students do.

As Acting Director, I will be participating in ongoing discussions in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences about the mission and organization of international components at KU. While the sharp decline in Title VI funding has spurred these discussions, we will not only
devise strategies to cope with the fiscal realities. Even more, we will consider what kinds of programs KU can and should develop, and what kind of administrative structures will best facilitate them. We hope to enhance the visibility of our area studies centers, identify new sources of support for them, and multiply our impact inside and outside the university.

When I entered the field of Russian, East European, and Eurasian area studies 40 years ago, I did not imagine all the changes that have occurred since then. The political systems across our world area have been transformed; the cultures have developed in unforeseen directions. Opportunities for communication and intellectual interchange are much enhanced as a result of the technological revolution of the past four decades. Throughout all the transitions, upheavals, and innovations, KU CREES has remained a leading source of information and insight. May it always be so!

Eve Levin
CREES ACTING DIRECTOR

Antony Polonsky is the Albert Abramson Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University specializing in Near Eastern and Judaic studies. He is a leading expert on Polish-Jewish history, and the editor of “Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry.” He is the author of many significant historical books and articles on Jewish history including the acclaimed three-volume work, The Jews in Poland and Russia.

On the KU campus, Professor Polonsky will also speak at:

KUCREES BROWN BAG LECTURE SERIES
“WRITING THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF RUSSIA AND POLAND”
TUESDAY, MARCH 24TH, 12PM IN 318 BAILEY

These lectures are made possible by the Oswald P. Backus Memorial Fund, which supports visiting lecturers specializing in Polish studies.

Eve Levin
CREES ACTING DIRECTOR
Alex Tsiokk was a true Renaissance Man. He had a broad knowledge of history and an intellect that could make connections between seemingly unrelated events that were often separated by time and geographic distance. He also had a warm personality that fostered connections with both students and colleagues. On bad days, he could make you feel better with a joke or a casual comment, and on good days he was able to lift spirits even higher. He will be greatly missed by all whose lives he touched.

A former CREES student assistant wrote that she could generally tell when Alex was so impressed by Alex's enormous range of knowledge, his professionalism, his work ethic, and his manners that I was determined to find a way to get him to KU and into CREES. Without Alex and his enormous range of abilities, we could never have built the Ukrainian program here. He was its heart, mind, and soul. "As the organizer of KU’s Summer Institute in Lviv, Alex took students each year to his hometown to study Ukrainian language and culture. To see Alex in his boyhood home was really something extraordinary. David Watson and Sheri Deeter, former Lviv program participants, wrote that “his wit and charm translated into any language, and his passion and energy were unparalleled.” Alex received the CREES Faculty Appreciation Award in 2013 and KU’s Teaching Excellence Award in 2009.

Colleagues knew Alex for his warm humor and collegiality. Marc Greenberg, who knew Alex since he came to KU two decades ago, described him as a “courty old-world gentleman, an empathetic listener, and a man with marvellous sense of humor. He channeled the best of his native Ukraine, a sensibility that was a product of a crossroads of civilizations, Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish. (Alex’s family and mine both originated in Volyn.) He also loved his new home in America. I have the impression he would have chosen to be a southerner in the US, too, as he enjoyed performing southern wit with a native accent (something that we native-born American northerners could hardly have done as successfully)." Former CREES director Maria Carlson first met Alex in Lviv at the end of 1989, when she visited the University there as the leader of an AASCU delegation of college and university presidents. “I was so impressed by Alex’s enormous range of knowledge, his professionalism, his work ethic, and his manners that I was determined to find a way to get him to KU and into CREES. Without Alex and his enormous range of abilities, we could never have built the Ukrainian program here. He was its heart, mind, and soul.”

A former CREES student assistant wrote that she could generally tell when Alex had dropped by to talk to Bart Redford, as she could hear Bart chuckling all the way down the hall. Bart added, “Our talks have been a bit more serious over the last year, as we discussed the staggering events going on in Ukraine. Still, he continued to be one of the most upbeat people I have ever known, quick with a word of praise or encouragement. As quick as he was with a joke or a punch, Alex was also a good listener, and I was often floored when he would mention something seemingly inconsequential (to me) that I had said months or even years earlier.”

Alex Tsiokk was a true Renaissance Man. He had a broad knowledge of history and an intellect that could make connections between seemingly unrelated events that were often separated by time and geographic distance. He also had a warm personality that fostered connections with both students and colleagues. On bad days, he could make you feel better with a joke or a casual comment, and on good days he was able to lift spirits even higher. He will be greatly missed by all whose lives he touched. The CREES community mourns the untimely death of Dr. Alexander G. Tsiokk, who was tragically killed in a car accident in Lawrence on December 23, 2014. Alex is survived by his beloved Yaroslava (Yasya) Tsiokk and daughter Lena. A scholarship/memorial fund is being set up by the KU Endowment Association. If you would like to contribute to this fund, donations in his name may be made to CREES at: crees.ku.edu/give-crees.

One of Alex’s favorite CREES events was the annual Spring Festival. Many of us remember his poetic descriptions of Maslenitsa and the importance of family, friends and community when celebrating holidays from the REES world area. At the upcoming Spring Festival on February 22, 2015, a book of memories will be available to you for writing your thoughts and sharing your condolences. This book will be given to Yasya and Lena, Alex’s wife and daughter, so that the memories of Alex’s place in our community will always be with them.
CREES REMEMBERS: WILLIAM C. FLETCHER (1932-2014)
BY BART REDFORD & ALAN HOLIMAN

The CREES community mourns the death of Dr. William “Bill” Fletcher, who passed away December 14, 2014. Dr. Fletcher was the Center’s longest-serving director (1970-1992). He took the helm of CREES at a critical moment, navigated it through treacherous straits, and then turned it over to a worthy successor to captain it through the turbulent 1990s and into the new millennium. As a naval veteran of the Korean War, he would likely be both amused and appalled by the nautical metaphor.

As an administrator, Fletcher oversaw the expansion of the Center and its activities. He did this with the invaluable dedication and work of Darlene Heacock, as well as several generations of student assistants. Darlene, aside from her administrative prowess, acted as “den mother” to all CREES students. Often, a new CREES student’s first contact with the Center consisted of Darlene sitting down with him/her to offer a gentle caution that Bill was a force of nature, to be endured and appreciated for his quirks and intelligence, but that student should not take “too personally” anything he said. Alan Holiman, who worked with Bill for several years, recalls that he took Darlene’s advice to heart and was able to give back as good as he got, an approach that seemed to work best with “the Gang of One.”

Holiman also notes that in 1984, when the Center’s application for designation as a National Resource Center was unsuccessful, Fletcher was the one who visited DC, read through the winning NRC proposals, and figured out what needed to be done to develop a more competitive application for the next grant application cycle. In the interim Bill had to guide CREES through some lean years, but he succeeded in creating a winning grant application and the Center regained its NRC status in 1988.

Maria Carlson, in her remarks at the CREES 50th Anniversary Celebration, noted that “Bill always was a complicated man and hard to pin down, and he liked to pretend he was dumber than he was; he said he knew he was giving pleasure to his colleagues by allowing them to think that they were smarter and better than he was.” In like vein, Marc Greenberg remembers Bill for his “wit, lightning-fast analysis of problems, and irreverent take on institutions.”

Most students remember Dr. Fletcher as the administrator of that extended torture session known as the CREES Capstone Seminar, or just Capstone. He assumed responsibility for teaching the Capstone in 1984, taking on a course that until then had been entirely team-taught, without a central figure to act as coordinator. Bill took seriously his responsibilities as a gatekeeper, of sorts, for those (almost) ready to venture into professional or academic fields. He required all students to learn the skill of peer review and to experience a rigorous critique of their research by another student in the seminar, a practice common in the region under study but “novel” to most students. The aim, as he described it, was to teach students to think critically, to develop a coherent thesis, to include only claims that were supported by facts and analysis, and to look for weaknesses in their own work by anticipating likely “attacks” on their seminar paper. He made better thinkers, better researchers and better writers of generations of students who completed the seminar and in so doing made the Capstone an institution.

Bill Fletcher embraced not only CREES’ educational function but also its public service mission. Under his leadership CREES forged close academic links with the US Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth and saw more Foreign Area Officers earn their MA degrees at KU than at most other area centers. Bill Slayton noted that Fletcher was “a strong advocate for so many army officers that passed through KU for regional studies, en route to worldwide assignments and particularly assignments in Europe and Central Asia.” The relationship was a symbiotic one, with fellow CREES students gaining much from the impressions and analysis of the Army officers, many of whom had already served in the REES world area.

Bill stepped down as director in December 31, 1992, ending 22 years of continuous service. According to Dr. Richard De George, who also spoke at the CREES 50th Anniversary Celebration, in his letter of resignation Bill reminded his colleagues “All of our previous assumptions, our models and our paradigms, are now history.” During his last year as director, Maria Carlson was appointed associate director of the Center and succeeded him on January 1, 1993.

Dr. Fletcher published twelve scholarly books, dozens of major scholarly articles and was the only scholar in his field to have been published by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. His most important contribution to the field, however, was surely his influence on several generations of REES students. REES Alum James Beale noted that Bill “could be cantankerous at times, but he really was at heart a great advocate for the program and those of us working with him.”

Dr. Fletcher’s obituary, as well as a forum for condolences and remembrances, can be found at http://obituaries.ljworld.com/obituaries/ljworld/obituary.aspx?pid=173504124
CREES REMEMBERS: ANNA M. CIENCIALA (1929-2014)

BY BRUCE BERGLUND

Obituary

On Christmas Eve 2014 Professor Anna M. Cienciala passed away in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, on her way back home to Lawrence. Professor Emerita of History and Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (REES) at KU, Anna Cienciala has been an outstanding scholar and a highly respected representative of the University of Kansas. An expert in the fields of diplomacy in Eastern Europe and wartime relations in the 20th century, Professor Cienciala experienced as a child much of the turmoil that she has been teaching and writing about. She has been recognized for her work internationally.

Born in the Free City of Danzig (Gdansk, in Poland after WWII) on November 8, 1929, she attended middle and high school in England; and university studies in England, Canada, and U.S. (B.A. Liverpool, 1952; M.A. McGill, 1955; Ph.D. Indiana, 1962). She taught at the University of Ottawa and the University of Toronto before coming to the University of Kansas in 1965.

Professor Cienciala retired in June 2002, but remained strongly involved in the educational mission of the History Department and CREES.

Specializing in 20th century Polish, European, Soviet, and American diplomacy 1919-1945, Professor Cienciala published extensively, her total output, as of January 2014, amounting to 202 publications. Her latest major work is Katyn: A Crime without Punishment (Yale University Press, 2007, reprint with some corrections, 2009). Some of these publications are accessible online via KU Scholar Works. She is also the author of an internet course (“Nationalism and Russian, European and Eurasian Studies” at KU, 2013), utilized in Wikipedia and other online sources: http://acienciala.faculty.ku.edu/hist557/index.htm

Professor Cienciala is listed in The Who’s Who of American Women and the Złota Księga Nauk Humanistycznych 2013 (The Golden Book of Humanities Studies, Poland). In 2000, she was honored by the History Institute of Gdansk University and the City of Gdansk. She was also awarded the Polish Cross of Merit by the President of Poland. In 2007 she received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America.

Most recently, Professor Cienciala was presented with the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland with Star, conferred on individuals who have rendered great service to the Polish nation.

Anna will be greatly missed by anyone fortunate enough to have made her acquaintance. Her generosity, sense of humor, compassion and humanity, complemented a critical and open mind. She is survived by a sister living in Canada and by Roma Boniecka, companion of her life.

Twenty years ago, I arrived at KU to begin my PhD program in history. That first semester, I was enrolled in Professor Anna Cienciala’s colloquium on Eastern Europe. There was a large group, perhaps 12 or 13 students, and we met in the basement of her house – all of the students around a long table, surrounded by shelves and shelves of books. In assigning readings to us, Professor Cienciala typically drew a book directly off her shelf, rather than having us get the volume from the library. In reading her personal copies, we discovered that reading for her was a conversation. The margins had exclamation points, question marks, and stars. She reprimanded authors for errors of fact, and for errors of interpretation. I learned from reading her books and her marginalia that the history of Eastern Europe was a subject not to be taken lightly.

Professor Cienciala was part of the generation of émigré scholars who helped establish East European studies in North America. Like her contemporaries, such as her adviser at Indiana University, Piotr Wandycz, Anna Cienciala was born in the region during the interwar period—in her case, in Danzig, which was an autonomous city under League of Nations protection at the time of her birth. Her family left at the start of the Second World War, and she attended high school and university in England, before moving to Canada and the United States for graduate work. The scars of emigration were evident even a half-century later, when I was a student in her classes. Professor Cienciala had great loyalty and attachment to Poland, and her research aimed to understand the events that forced her family to leave.

Professor Cienciala’s passing is part of a turn from one generation of scholars to another. In most cases, the scholars of my generation do not have the longstanding family connections to the region that our teachers did. Professor Cienciala once explained to us the origins of her Italian family name—her ancestor was one of the many Italian scholars invited to the Kingdom of Poland during the Renaissance. In contrast, I discovered this region as a college student, while following the news of the revolutions of 1989.

My colleagues and I—along with our own students—bring a different perspective to the history of Eastern and Central Europe, in that we do not have the same emotional attachments and scars as our teachers. But something is lost with the passing of Professor Cienciala and her generation. As I tell my students when teaching, the terrible events of the twentieth century affected real people. My understanding of this region’s history—its turmoil, its tragedy, its divisive questions and heroic moments—has been shaped by a teacher who lived it.

Roma Boniecka receiving Anna Cienciala’s posthumous award of the Republic of Poland’s Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit with Star from Maciej Pisarski, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington, D.C., and Robert Rusiecki, Deputy Consul, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago. KU Memorial Service and Award Ceremony, 22 January 2015.
2015 PALIJ LECTURE
presents:
WHO KILLED
THE SOVIET UNION?
REVISITING THE FALL
OF THE USSR

Serhii Plokhi

MYKHAILO HRUSHEVSKY PROFESSOR OF UKRAINIAN HISTORY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Author of THE LAST EMPIRE: FINAL DAYS OF THE SOVIET UNION

MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2015 @ 7PM
KANSAS UNION MALOTT ROOM

Serhii Plokhi is the Mykhailo Hrushevsky Professor of Ukrainian History at Harvard University. A leading authority on Eastern Europe, he has lived and taught in Ukraine, Canada and the United States. He has published extensively in English, Ukrainian and Russian, and for three consecutive years (2002-2005) his books won first prize of the American Association for Ukrainian Studies.

For those unable to attend the Palij Lecture, Professor Plokhi will also speak at:
KUCREES BROWN BAG LECTURE SERIES:
TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH, 12PM IN 318 BAILEY

These lectures are made possible by the Palij Family Fund, which supports visiting lecturers specializing in Ukrainian studies.
“What does sustainability even mean?” That thought crossed my mind as I read the job description for the Graduate Assistant position on the Eco-Reps Peer-to-Peer Sustainability Outreach Project. I will be the first to admit that, when I began working on this project, I had very little experience with anything related to sustainability, apart from participation in a local cleanup group throughout junior high and high school. Four months later, I can tell you about sustainability in my sleep! I have learned so much, both through collaboration with our partners in St. Petersburg and through the information presented in our various webinars, and I look forward to the things still left to learn as we enter the second half of our project.

The U.S.-Russia Eco-Reps Project is the result of collaboration between CREES and the Russian NGO, The Center for Transboundary Cooperation (CTC) in St. Petersburg. We work with CTC representatives, Maria Zhevlakova and Eduard Podgaiskii. “The mission of our NGO is to help people erase boundaries and find each other for ideas exchange and development of environmentally sustainable systems on different levels,” said Eduard. “We were keen to develop a proposal for a project that would allow young people from Russia and the U.S. to exchange their views on sustainable living, eventually meet each other, and work together to make our common world a better place to live.”

The project’s proposal came to life in February of 2014, but had been in the works much longer. In 2011, Maria Zhevlakova visited Kansas as part of a CREES-hosted Open World program that focused on the topic of environmental resource management. There she met CREES Assistant Director Bart Redford, the local organizer for her group. “We had so many discussions, and I realized that we have a common understanding of various issues, including sustainability and approaches to working with people. When I was leaving Lawrence, both Bart and I expressed a vague hope for collaboration in the future,” said Maria. “After I studied the requirements for an Eco-Reps project, I immediately thought of inviting KU and Bart to join the partnership.”

CREES was interested in participating in the project for a variety of reasons. As a general rule, the Center tries to function as environmentally as possible. For its efforts, CREES was recognized as a Green Office Level 3 Member by the KU Center for Sustainability back in 2012. Environmental sustainability is a particular passion of CREES Assistant Director Bart Redford who designed the environmental Open World program in June 2011 to highlight sustainability innovations throughout the state of Kansas.

But CREES’ decision to participate in this project, in particular, had another element. According to CREES Director Mariya Omelicheva, “the topic of sustainability falls outside of my expertise, but the idea of peer-to-peer exchange seemed very appealing on the backdrop of souring relationships between the U.S. and Russia.” At this time when international politics seems to be widening the gap between our two countries, maintaining academic relations and exchange of thought is vital for our collaborative future.

The U.S.-Russia Eco-Reps Project is composed of five main stages, the first of which was the application process for Eco-Reps in Russia as well as here at home. The project was open to anyone between the ages of 18-30 – and prospective participants didn’t have to be students; in fact it was preferred we have a group that included non-students from local businesses or NGOs. Applicants were chosen based on their interest in educating peers about environmental issues, advocacy for sustainable living, and leadership in previous sustainability projects. For state-side Eco-Reps, knowledge of Russia and Russian was preferred but not required.

Once Eco-Reps were chosen in both Russia and in the U.S., we began the second stage of the project, which included four educational webinars that were designed to teach our Eco-Reps about the various aspects of designing a successful sustainability project. The topics included information about the circular economy; examples of successful projects at other universities in the U.S., as well as in various cities in Russia; and in-depth coverage of the managerial aspect of designing sustainability projects. The second stage ended in December 2014, just after finals.

We are currently in the third stage of the project where our Eco-Reps, using the information they learned during the webinars, have begun developing proposals for their individual or team environmental sustainability projects. Their proposals are due on January 10th, after which they will begin implementing their projects.

Stage 4 will take place throughout January and February. During this time the Eco-Reps will implement their environmental sustainability projects. Our Eco-Reps will have advisors available to guide them in bringing their projects to life, and will also have the opportunity to discuss problems they may run into with their peers both in the U.S. and in Russia. At the end of project implementation, the Eco-Reps will have their projects judged by an independent expert committee.

This brings us to stage five: the peer-to-peer exchange portion. During the judging process, the committee will select those projects they believe most effective or successful. The Eco-Reps responsible for these projects will be recommended for participation in a peer-to-peer exchange. Russian participants will visit Lawrence, KS in early April 2015, where they will have the chance to meet their peers and learn about previously successful sustainability projects here in Lawrence. In early May, Eco-Reps from the U.S. will visit St. Petersburg, Russia, where they will have the opportunity to give presentations on their projects at the annual Sustainability EXPO.

Even though we have only completed half of the project, some of the long-term benefits are already being seen. Dr. Omelicheva has said, “The work on the application and, later, implementation of the project turned out to be very rewarding; I learned about the work of the KU Center for Sustainability, a variety of sustainability initiatives in Lawrence, and eco-reps programs at other schools.” Maria Zhevlakova wrote, “I feel that we at CTC are really lucky, because our project idea—training young people from the U.S. and Russia on strong sustainability and circular economy issues and running a micro-project competition—was fully accepted and developed by our partners!” On the other hand, the things that everyone involved in this project have learned up to this point are nothing compared to what we all will learn by the time the project is seen through to completion. As the great Frank Sinatra once sang, “The best is yet to come.”

Kayla Grumbles is a first-year graduate student in the Slavic Languages & Literatures Department. This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of State’s U.S.-Russia Peer-to-Peer Program (award # S-R5500-15-GR-124).

For more information, go to: crees.ku.edu/eco-reps-project
Gabriel Al Salem (SLL BA ’89), whose incredibly story is featured in the Fall 2011 Slavic Department Lawrencian Chronicle, hailed from Lindsborg, Kansas to a German mother and Kuwaiti father. Hardworking and charismatic, he pursued a number of interests at KU, such as Russian and French, theater, and cello. As one of KU Slavic Languages and Literatures (SLL) Department’s most distinguished alumni, his post-graduate career spanned Central Asia, Russia, Yugoslavia, and Mongolia, as he became a driving force behind business advisory services in the era of privatization in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

After his untimely death in 2010, his wife Viktoria Olskaia, close friends, and colleagues established the Gabriel Al Salem Foundation (ga-foundation.org), aiming to promote best practices in management consulting in emerging economies in Central Asia and other post-socialist countries.

SLL faculty members Marc Greenberg, Irina Six, and undergraduate intern Taylor Broadfoot (SLL BA ’14) traveled to the third annual conference in Kyiv, Ukraine to work with the Gabriel Al Salem Foundation to develop an experiential learning program for students of SLL. Following the conference, Broadfoot and Greenberg worked with Viktoria Olskaia and other Foundation colleagues to develop an experiential learning program in Gabriel’s adopted hometown, Almaty, Kazakhstan. The program will allow KU students to work in a Russian-speaking environment and learning the cultural context to operate in post-socialist economies.

The true test would be traveling to Kazakhstan to solidify the relationships with trusted Kazakh partners and build the foundation of the program. Thanks to the funding from Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies Ann Cudd and a generous travel grant from the University Career Center, Taylor worked closely with the chair of Certified Management Consultants of Kazakhstan and foundation treasurer, Gulsum Akhtamberdieva, to meet and exchange ideas with governmental and non-governmental agencies throughout Almaty.

Several Kazakh firms and institutions are eager to work with KU students for an 8-week internship. Partnerships have now been formed with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, a government organization developed to support local business and entrepreneurship, the Kazakhstan Press Club, a close partner of the GASF and one of the largest PR firms in the country, and Paragraph Company, a large and competitive information systems firm that aims to become the largest in the country amidst the growing tech-boom.

The first cohort of interns will travel to Almaty in the summer of 2015. Students will be housed and enrolled at KIMEP University, one of the oldest and most prestigious American-style business schools in Almaty. In addition to taking Russian language classes in the World Language Center at KIMEP, students are encouraged to enroll in English-language business and journalism classes at no additional charge. Located in the heart of downtown Almaty, KIMEP University has all the amenities a student would expect from an American college: renovated dormitories, laundry facilities, three dining halls, a medical clinic, and a caring, English-speaking staff.

Almaty is an elegant, culturally diverse, modern, and extremely cosmopolitan city with a thriving business community and breathtaking natural scenery, crowned by the majestic Tien Shan mountains. Given Kazakhstan’s growing economy (the 3rd fastest in the world), the wealth of experience from this program will benefit students pursuing an international career. Whether a student is looking to learn the Russian language, work actively with local businesses, or participate in international journalism—there is something for everyone in this program!

To learn more about the internship program, please visit the webpage: https://slavic.ku.edu/experiential-learning-and-internships-almaty-kazakhstan-0

Scholarship funds for KU students are now being raised. Those interested in donating to the Gabriel Al-Salem Memorial Student Opportunity Fund may go to this secure website: http://goo.gl/LLT074

Please contact Professor Marc Greenberg (mlg@ku.edu) for other giving options.
All University of Kansas students actively pursuing interests in Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies in any KU academic program are eligible to submit an essay of approximately 2,000 words on any topic dealing with the region.

The essay should be a “think piece,” not a formal research paper. It should explore a key issue in any discipline relevant to the region. For example, students might explore the causes and consequences of recent political changes in the region, discuss the implications of the post-imperial order for national languages and literatures, the role of religion today, or compose an essay on another topic. Students may rework papers from KU classes, but submissions must be reformatted to meet the competition criteria (2,000 words, 12-pt font, double-spaced). See examples of previous winners on the CREES website.

DEADLINE
MARCH 27, 2015

The Laird Essay Competition is supported by the Professor Roy D. and Betty Laird Endowment

Undergraduate Award:
$250 cash prize

Graduate Award:
$500 cash prize & $75 of books

All essays must be 12-pt font, double-spaced.

Submit an anonymous version of the essay to the CREES office or email to crees@ku.edu (subject header: “LastName Laird Essay”). Please include whether it is a graduate or undergraduate essay.

Winners may be invited to present their papers at the final CREES Brownbag of the academic year and may have their papers posted on the CREES website.

If you have questions regarding the topic or submission, please contact:
Vitaly Chernetsky
CREES Associate Director
vchernetsky@ku.edu

The Laird Essay Competition is supported by the Professor Roy D. and Betty Laird Endowment
On October 24, the Fall 2014 Oswald P. Backus Lecture featured researcher Krystyna Piorkowska, author of “English Speaking Witnesses to Katyn.”

In January 2014, Piorkowska made international headlines for her discovery of a hidden document, lost in the archives of the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), which reveals the sworn testimony of a U.S. officer who in 1943 was forced by the Nazis to watch as they exhumed thousands of Polish officers killed on Soviet leader Josef Stalin’s orders.

The document provides evidence of Soviet responsibility for the 1940 murder of some 22,000 Polish officers now known as the Katyn Massacre.

The CREES Backus Lecture is dedicated to the memory of Professor Oswald P. Backus, III (1921-72), and is made possible by the Oswald P. Backus Memorial Fund. This fund is made available through a generous gift from Anna Cienciala.

**FALL 2014 SEMESTER SNAPSHOTs**

- Multicultural Story Time: Russian w/ Prof. Mariya Omelicheva
  16 August 2014

- “Healthcare Around the World,” Joe Gillespie at JwB Club
  31 October 2014

- “OSCE Observers Perspective on Ukraine,” Matt Schmidt
  1 October 2014

- CREES Halloween w/ Vladimir Putin
  Redford 31 October 2014

- “East European Democracy & Russian Reemergence,” Ivan Vejvoda at Dole Institute
  2 December 2014

- Public Lecture w/ Russian political analyst Andrey Piontkovsky
  6 October 2014
CREES Faculty Service Award
At the CREES Fall Mixer on September 5, Slavic Prof. Renee Perelmutter was awarded the 2014 CREES Faculty Service Award. CREES thanked Prof. Perelmutter for for her service as the CREES Associate Director (2012-14) and for spearheading the creation of two new degree programs: REES MA FAST Track and the REES Major.

PUBLIC LECTURE: RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES, IMAGES OF EACH OTHER IN THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS

On November 18, Dr. Victoria Zhuravleva presented on “Russia and the United States: Images of Each Other in the Ukrainian Crisis.” Zhuravleva is a Professor and Director of the Program on American Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow. Professor Zhuravleva’s research interests focus on American history, with a specialization in U.S. foreign policy and Russian-American relations. In her latest book, Understanding Russia in the United States: Images and Myths, 1881-1914 (2012), Zhuravleva analyzes the ways in which Russia was portrayed in United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her work for this book included close inspection of not only diplomatic material, but also portrayals of Russia and Russian ideals in political cartoons, American textbooks, tourist guides, and other primary sources.

CREES thanks Dr. Norman Saul for his generous support in bringing Zhuravleva to the KU campus.
16TH C. SOUTH SLAV MANUSCRIPT IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

On October 21, 2014, doctoral candidate Gwyn Bourlakov (History) discussed her discovery of a Slavic manuscript mislabeled in the manuscript collection at the University of Kansas Spencer Research Library. Spencer Library is not generally recognized to be a repository of Church Slavonic texts in North America, however a small number of Cyrillic manuscripts are located within its walls. Acquired by KU and misidentified as a “Russian Prayer Book” sometime in the 1950s, MS A22 is a small leather-bound book with 224 folia (448 pages), and is written in a skilled, semi-uncial scribal hand. After careful research into its origins, Bourlakov identified the manuscript as having 16th century, South Slavic or Ottoman origins. She concluded that a close reading of this particular manuscript not only produces a glimpse of the life and practices of Orthodox clergy in the Balkans for some 200 years, but also lends itself to analysis as an artifact of Christian pilgrimage in Ottoman lands.

TAKING STOCK: 25 YEARS SINCE THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL

On November 11, 2014, KU History Professor Nathan Wood referred to photographs, architecture, statistics, and political cartoons from the early 90s and the last few years—along with his personal experience living in Poland and visiting other east central European states since the early 90s to the present—in order to take stock of the changes in the region since the collapse of state socialism. When he first lived in Poland from 1991 to 1993 he witnessed the effects of “Shock Therapy,” including crippling inflation. Now Poles and other Eastern Europeans have more consumer goods and nicer living conditions, as evidenced by the proliferation of cars and cleaner, more attractive cities, but there are certainly those for whom the shift from communism to capitalism has been extremely difficult. Wood expressed optimism for the overall trajectory of change in the region, but concluded that the triumph of capitalism in the region means that increasingly the problems people face there are the same ones that menace us: economic inequality, global climate change, and geopolitical instability. This lecture was part of the CREES “Fall of the Wall Week,” commemorating 25 years since the fall of the Berlin wall.

INFLUENCE OF CORRUPTION ON INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

On November 25, 2014, doctoral candidate Daria Milakhina (Economics) shared her research on the effect of corruption on subjective well-being using data from a Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey that followed over 8,000 respondents in all parts of Russia over the course of many years. While subjective well-being has been used by economists to study social welfare, this was the first study that examined the impact of corruption on the subjective well-being of individuals. What she found was that while corruption in general hurts the economy, policies to decrease the level of corruption are difficult to implement because being corrupt is beneficial (unless caught). The study also showed that people who work in highly corrupted occupations (legislators, police officers, judges) have higher levels of subjective well-being compared with those in non-corrupted occupations. Milakhina concluded that the current anti-corruption policy in Russia that started in 2007 has not decreased the positive effect on subjective well-being of working in a corrupted environment.
For over 30 years, the CREES Brownbag Lecture Series has been an informal forum for KU and the surrounding community to discuss general topics related to Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

From the arts and literature to political science and current events, the CREES Brownbag Lecture Series continues to educate and inform all those interested in this diverse and dynamic area of the world.

318 BAILEY HALL
TUESDAYS
12:00 PM (NOON)
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
GAP CREDIT AVAILABLE
Vitaly Chernetsky (SLL, CREES Associate Director) fielded numerous media requests to comment on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and its impact, both globally and in our region, including a large interview in the Kansas City Star. In October he traveled to Greifswald, Germany to present a paper at the conference Postcolonial Slavic Literatures after Communism. In November, he guest-taught a class on the crisis in Ukraine at Ft. Leavenworth. In December, he gave a lecture at the Ukrainian Museum in New York, part of their series of events commemorating the bicentennial of Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine’s national poet.

Alexander Diener (Geography) is in his third year on the KU Geography faculty. In 2014, he published a chapter entitled “Russian Re-Positioning-Mobilities and the Eurasian Regional Concept” in the volume Corridor of Interconnections: Eurasia from the South China to the Caspian Sea and “Performing Post-Socialism in the Urban-scape of Bishkek” in the American University of Central Asia’s Working Papers Series. With his colleague Joshua Hagen, Alex co-edited the book From Socialist to Post-Socialist Cities: Cultural Politics of Architecture, Urban Planning, and Identity in Eurasia (Routledge 2014) and also produced several encyclopedia entries and book reviews. His classes have ranged from introductory courses such as World Regional Geography, to area studies courses on Central Asia, to a seminar on Borders, Territory, and Sovereignty. Alex was awarded KU New Faculty General Research Funds (2014-2015) to support his work in the Kyrgyz Republic. He has presented papers at a number of professional conferences and was invited to speak at George Washington University, the University of Upsala, and Oklahoma State University. During the 2014 academic year, Alex was proud to serve as a peer reviewer for the South and Central Asia Fulbright, as well as on the CREES Executive Committee.

Marc L. Greenberg (SLL) served as chair of the Executive Board of the Slavic Linguistics Society through the Seattle meeting in Sept. 2014. Among his work was negotiating the venues for the next three meetings: Heidelberg 2015, Toronto 2016, and Ljubljana 2017. He was recently appointed to the editorial board of the Moscow-based periodical focused on scholarly communication, Научная периодика: проблемы и решения. In October 2014 he was recognized, with Dist. Prof. A. Townsend Peterson (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology) as one of the two first recipients of the Shulenburger Award for Advocacy and Innovation in Open Access. In November he was given the Outstanding Freshman Seminar award by the Honor's Program for his seminar Introduction to Comparative Linguistics and Indo-European (F 14). His most recent publication is “George L. Trager’s Field Notes on the Prekmurje Dialect Spoken in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA” in a Festschrift for a colleague in Graz, Austria. Trager, who worked closely with other American structuralists (Bloomfield, Sapir, Whorf), was best known for his work on American Indian languages and this publication presents previously unpublished Slavic material, collected in the late 1930s.

After 48 years teaching at KU, Gerald Mikkelson (REES) is retiring in May. He has already begun his second teaching career at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He taught his first course in Fall 2014 on “Origins of Russian Civilization: 982-1672,” which was filled with 60 students. He has plans to continue with a second course, “Russian Civilization II: Peter I to Pushkin.”

Mehrangiz Najafizadeh (Sociology) has had her article, “Poetry, Azeri IDP/Refugee Women, and the Nagorno-Karabakh War,” accepted for publication in the Journal of Third World Studies. This article is an analysis of women’s narratives based on Mehrangiz’s field work in Azerbaijan, as well as Mehrangiz’s translation (from Azeri to English) of poetry written by war refugees and internally displaced persons from the Nagorno-Karabakh War. Mehrangiz was a recipient of a 2014 Mortar Board Outstanding Educator Award. This major teaching award from the Mortar Board senior honor society was presented by Chancellor Gray-Little on November 14 during halftime at the KU and UC--Santa Barbara basketball game in Allen Field House. She was also the recipient of The University of Kansas Panhellenic Association Faculty Member of the Month Award, November 2014, an award that is presented to faculty who have assisted students in reaching their academic potential.

Mariya Y. Omelicheva (Political Science, CREES Director) completed work on her new edited volume, Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions (forthcoming with Lexington Press), in which she also authored a chapter, “Eye on the International Image: Turkmenistan’s Nation Branding.” She presented a new research paper on the nexus of organized crime and terrorism at the annual meeting of the Central Eurasian Studies Societies (Columbia University, New York) and took part in the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College National Security Roundtable (NSRT) at Ft. Leavenworth. She was invited to speak at the Countering Violent Extremism research conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Jonathan Perkins (EGARC Director) was a 2014 College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Appreciation Awardee for his exceptional work over the past year.

Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Foreign Policy, a new book by Norman Saul (History, Emeritus), was published in December by Rowman & Littlefield. He also had several book reviews published throughout the fall in Diplomatic History, Slavic Review, American Historical Review, and Kansas History. An article, “George Macartney’s An Account of Russia in 1767 as an Introduction to the Study of Russian History with a Failed Project, and the Beginning of the Study of Russian-American Relations,” was included in a memorial volume to Russian Academician Alexander Fursenko, edited by Vladimir Noskov in St. Petersburg. Saul chaired a session and was a discussant for another at the November ASEES meeting in San Antonio. He also wrote an introduction and compiled an index for the electronic publication of the Memoirs of Charles R. Crane to be released by Columbia University Libraries in February 2015.


Mehrangiz Najafizadeh

CREES NEWSLETTER

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STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

Drew Burks (History PhD) received a Norman Saul Travel Award to participate in the October 2014 “‘Na Wschodzie bez zmian?/All Quiet on the Eastern Front? World War I in Central and Eastern Europe through the experience of soldiers, social groups and local communities” research conference and workshop at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. At the conference he presented his dissertation research into the trends in advertising in newspapers in Krakow and Lviv during WWII.

After much success setting up the new experiential-learning program in Kazakhstan, Taylor Broadfoot (SLL BA ’14) was hired by Mir Corporation, which specializes in bespoke tours of Central Asia. Rebecca Stakun (SLL PhD) will now manage the program and lead the first group. The new program was created in a partnership between SLL/SLLC and the Gabriel Al-Salem Foundation, which fosters educational and economic development opportunities in C. Asia and the former Soviet space (see page 8 of this newsletter for more info).

Deepak Jayaraj (REES MA) received a Norman Saul Travel Award to present at the 2014 Central Slavic Conference in St. Louis, MO, this November. His paper was titled, “The Role of Clans in the Politics of Kazakhstan: A Case Study of Kazakhstan.” Deepak will be on temporary leave this Spring semester.

Megan Luttrell (SLL PhD) received a Norman Saul Travel Award to present her paper, “Discipline and the Docile Body in Tolstoy’s Childhood Boyhood Youth” at the January 2015 AATSEEL conference in Vancouver.

Both Gloria Funcheon (REES MA 2013) and Amy Murphy (REES MA 2013) worked as participant recruiters for American Councils for International Education’s FLEX program. Amy recruited in Georgia, Armenia and Ukraine, while Gloria was based out of Tajikistan.

Michael Rose (REES MA) and Adam Croft (REES co-BA) were awarded CReES/FMSO Security Analyst Internships for Spring 2015. The internship is a new opportunity for REES students to develop their professional skills in military operational environment analysis, deepen their knowledge of a particular region or topic, and provide an opportunity for students to apply their target language skills in the research and translation of foreign language materials under the guidance of REES analysts and experts.

Eliška Valehrachova (BA REES/History 2011) and her husband Martin Peña Gonzalez (MBA/Latin American Studies 2010) stopped by the CREES office in December. It was great to see them and we wish them all the best success in Paraguay!

UPDATE ON THE NEW SCHOOL FOR LITERATURES, LANGUAGES & CULTURES

In Fall 2015 the Kansas Board of Regents approved the new School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, a new entity that unites the departments of East Asian, French & Italian, Germanic, Slavic, Spanish & Portuguese, as well as closely affiliates African & African-American, Anthropology, Classics, Linguistics, and the area-studies programs.

The School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures is the hub of foreign language and cultural study at the University of Kansas. Within the School students will have the opportunity to study more languages than at any other university between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River. The school helps them navigate and explore their options across nearly 40 language offerings as well as to take part in new interdisciplinary tracks and certificates. As a School, KU’s national leadership in foreign languages will gain greater visibility as well as reach the critical mass needed to fundraise for student support and advocate for foreign-language and cultural knowledge as a key component to career opportunities in the global marketplace.

The first director is a member of the CREES Community: Prof. Marc L. Greenberg, a specialist in Slavic linguistics who served as chair of the Slavic Dept. (2000--12), Chair of Germanic (2012--14), as well as acting Associate Dean in 2012.

NEW SLLC STAFF

My name is Christian Beer. I am the new M.O.R.E.D. Coordinator (that’s short for Media, Outreach, Recruitment, Events and Development) for the School of Languages, Literatures and Cultures. So, I handle “all things Marketing” for the SLLC and the core departments; and I serve as a resource to all affiliated departments and centers.

I was born and raised in Wunsiedel, Germany, a very small town about 3.5 hours north of Munich. My father is originally from there and my mother was born and raised in Prague. Needless to say I was brought up bilingually, speaking both German and Czech.

I came to The University of Kansas in 2004 and obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in May of 2008. I then moved to Denver for a year of OPT, managing an iconic bike shop and learning the ropes of retail. Fun! I moved back to Lawrence in the summer of 2009 and started on my MBA at Washburn University. I graduated with Honors from Beta Gamma Sigma late spring 2011, after a brief study-abroad trip to China. I got married a week after I returned and began my professional career in sales (and later marketing) with a high-end cycling apparel manufacturer.

I have been with the SLLC for only about six weeks now, but I can already tell that there is an immensely positive atmosphere and I am ecstatic to be part of it. I am looking forward to share my international background, my languages, and my professional experience with you and with the students we will be working with. I know first-hand the importance of knowing several languages, as it has opened many doors for myself. Through extensive travel throughout Europe, Indonesia, China and Morocco I was also lucky to experience many different cultures first-hand. My goal is to help create a meaningful experience for our students, and make them feel welcomed and cared for at the SLLC.

If you have any ideas on how my outreach or development work can better benefit the new SLLC, I would love to brainstorm with you. Send me an email at christian.beer@ku.edu. And I hope you begin following @KU_SLLC on Twitter and Facebook.
The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies (CREES) has been a national leader for the study of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since 1959. The Center is a degree-granting program within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas. Many of our activities are enhanced through private donations to the Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies. Special events, guest lecturers, scholarships and study abroad opportunities are just some of the ways your donation can help us ensure our Center’s vitality. We hope that you will contribute generously to strengthen the Center’s programs by sending your gift today. Your gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law. Thank you for your support!

**CREES GENERAL FUND**
The CREES General Fund supports a wide range of educational and outreach activities on campus and in the wider community. Among its dedicated sponsors are the Oswald P. Backus Memorial Fund for visiting lecturers in Polish Studies, the Bramlage Family Foundation Fund, which provides scholarships to KU REES MA students who have strong connections to the state of Kansas, and the Norman E. Saul Fund. Named after KU History Emeritus Professor Norman E. Saul, the Saul fund supports REES students with travel grants to collections or to REES-related conferences for professional development.

**PALIJ FAMILY FUND**
The Palij Family Fund supports visiting lecturers specializing in Ukrainian studies. The fund also supports the Ukrainian Studies Prize for an outstanding student specializing in Ukrainian.

**GEORGE C. JERKOVICH FUND**
The mission of the Jerkovich Fund is twofold: 1) to support the development of KU’s South Slavic library collection; 2) to provide awards to outstanding students who have demonstrated an interest in the study of Croatian or Serbian history, literature, folklore, or culture.

**ROY & BETTY LAIRD FUND**
This fund is named after the late Professor Roy D. Laird, a longtime member of the Russian and East European Studies (REES) and Political Science faculties, and Ms. Betty Laird, whose continued support of CREES activities includes sponsoring the annual Roy & Betty Laird Essay Contest. Monies donated to support this fund will primarily contribute to the advancement of Russian Studies.

**JAROSEWYCZ FAMILY FUND**
The Jarosewycz Family Fund provides scholarships for graduate students who have shown commitment and scholarly interest in Ukraine and Ukrainian Studies.

**FOR ONLINE DONATIONS**
A secure online donation can be made to CREES via the KU Endowment website at: crees.ku.edu/give-crees

**FOR DONATIONS BY MAIL**
If you would like to make a donation by check or money order, please make your check payable to KU CREES and mail your donation to:

Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies
Bailey Hall, 1440 Jayhawk Blvd., Room 320
Lawrence, KS 66045-7574

THANK YOU