



*Aishkho Pass, Caucasus Mountains,
photo credit Ilya Bunin*

FALL 2021

CREES COURIER

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CREES Team

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American Studies

From the Director...

On behalf of CREES, I am excited to welcome new students, faculty, and friends to our community, and to welcome back those of you returning to KU after what I hope was a restful summer. You've probably noticed that our newsletter has a new name: the CREES Courier. That's not the only change you'll see at CREES this year. We are getting ready to launch a new website with helpful information on funding opportunities for students as well as alumni-related features; we are also launching a new grants program to support faculty research and partnerships with community colleges and minority-serving institutions.

Because we still find ourselves living amidst a global pandemic, we're planning for a "hybrid" semester consisting of a blend of in-person events (when possible) and robust online programming. All of the in-person events will also be streamed for those unable to attend, since we want to ensure that everyone feels safe and are eager to stay connected with the sizable national and international audience who joined our online events in the last academic year. We look forward to connecting (and reconnecting) with you in both formats. We have a fantastic lineup of events scheduled for the fall, starting with an outdoor mixer and a visit from the Consul General of Bosnia and continuing with the "Legacies of the Cold War: Russia, the United States, and the World" lecture series. The series, supported by a grant from the US-Russia Foundation, will bring in some of the world's leading experts on the Cold War's aftermath. Speakers include: Fiona Hill, the former US National Security Council

official, scholar, and well-known-commentator on US-Russia relations; Kate Brown, the MIT-based environmental historian and prize-winning author; Sergey Radchenko, an expert



on the Cold War's global legacies and a frequent contributor to *The New York Times* and other news outlets; and Bruce Berglund, a University of Kansas alumnus whose work examines the globalization of sports during the Cold War and after. We're also looking forward to welcoming Chad Bryant, who will be discussing his new book, *Prague: Belonging and the Modern City*, and we hope to host at least one film screening during the coming semester.

These events, along with our new initiatives, are supported by the hard work of our CREES team. We're delighted to have Peter Bobkowski continuing as Associate Director and Undergraduate and Graduate Adviser for the year ahead; we're also grateful for the tireless efforts of Lisa Giullian, whose work as Outreach Coordinator includes producing the CREES Courier.

In addition, we're fortunate to welcome two new members to our team: Esra Predolac, Assistant

Director (who is splitting her time between CREES and the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures, where she teaches courses in German and Turkish language and culture), and Amanda Hill (who we are thrilled to have back as Office Manager and liaison with the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies). This past summer, we were fortunate to have History PhD candidate Adam Rodger assisting us in our outreach and Title VI efforts, along with undergraduate student Alyssa Gonzales, who has played a crucial role in developing our new website. In the 2021-2022 academic year, incoming CREES MA student Kevin Thomas will help bolster our outreach activities as Graduate Assistant. Last but not least, CREES is thrilled to announce the arrival of Valery Dzutsati, an expert on Russian and Eurasian politics, as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science. Please join me in welcoming them all to our community.

While many of us have not been able to travel to the region during the pandemic, CREES remains committed to connecting KU and the Great Plains to Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia. Read on to learn about creative ways to explore the region's history, culture, and politics without getting on a plane, the innovative work CREES is doing with local teachers, the activities of our talented alumni, and the impressive accomplishments of our students, faculty, and community members, including Mehrangiz Najafizadeh's Fulbright Scholar Award to teach and conduct research in Azerbaijan. As the new academic year gets underway, their stories are an inspiring reminder of the strength of courage, curiosity, and creativity, even in difficult times.

Erik R. Scott
Director, CREES

Welcome to Valery Dzutsati, Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science



Valery Dzutsati holds Ph.D. in Political Science from Arizona State University, Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park, and B.A. in History from North Ossetian State University, Vladikavkaz, Russia.

Previously he held visiting positions at Arizona State University and the University of Colorado, Boulder. Valery also has substantial journalism experience, including time spent at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague, Czech Republic. Valery's research interests span civil and interstate conflict, collective action, religion and politics, and research methods with an empirical focus on Russia and Eurasia. His work appears in *Caucasus Survey*, *Nationalities Papers*, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, *Politics and Religion*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, and *Social Science Quarterly*.

Center for Russian, East European
& Eurasian Studies

FALL
MIXER

SEPT.
10
5-8PM

CENTENNIAL PARK

Centennial Park, East Shelter
2124 W. Ninth St., Lawrence, KS
66049

For more information regarding the Fall Mixer, contact CREES, crees@ku.edu. We ask that individuals wear masks unless eating and practice safe social distancing.

Alaina DeLeo and Aylar Atadurdyeva Win the Laird Essay Contest

The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies at the University of Kansas has announced that this year's Roy D. and Betty Laird Essay Contest winners are Aylar Atadurdyeva in the undergraduate essay category for her essay "Kosovo-Turkey Relations and the Ottoman Legacy" and Alaina DeLeo in the graduate essay category for her essay "Not Your Kyrgyz Kelin: How Local Activists are Changing Opinions on Bride Kidnapping."

Now in its 27th year, the annual essay contest is named after the late Roy Laird, a longtime member of the Russian & East European studies (REES) and political science faculties, and Betty Laird, whose support makes this prize possible. A committee of three REES-affiliated faculty independently rated the essays submitted for the contest.

According to the reviewers, Atadurdyeva's essay provided "an overview of important historical moments linking Kosovo and Turkey and demonstrated the enduring influence of the Ottoman Empire in the contemporary imagination. The paper also explored differing attitudes toward this historical relationship as well as ongoing exchanges and projects such as the building of mosques. The author covered a rich history and area of contestation in a concise and engaging fashion."

The reviewers stated that DeLeo's essay was "well documented



CREES Welcomes Kevin Thomas, new REES MA Student



I am a first-year graduate student at CREES. I completed my BA in history and economics at The City College of New York. My primary area of interest is in Russian intellectual thought. I am particularly intrigued with the conceptualization of human rights and national identity.

I am originally from the Hudson Valley, just north of New York City. I fell in love with Russian literature while in high school after reading

Tolstoy. It influenced me to move to St. Petersburg, Russia, where I lived for a year studying Russian and teaching English. I am incredibly excited to continue my education in Russian studies at the University of Kansas.

and brought to light an important issue, otherwise not widely known or understood outside the region, to the attention of readers of English. It combined an anthropological survey of the practice with a legal and public policy analysis of how to address the issue. The essay contributes to the resolution of a pressing problem that has come to light in the clash of tradition with modernity."

As the undergraduate recipient of the award, Atadurdyeva will receive a \$250 award; DeLeo, as the graduate recipient, will receive a \$500 award and a book budget of \$75. Atadurdyeva is from Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. At KU, Atadurdyeva is pursuing a triple major in global & international studies; molecular, cellular and developmental biology and political science; with

...continued on page 4

Piekałkiewicz is Awarded the Krzyz Walecznych (Cross of the Brave)

Jaroslaw (Andrzej) Piekałkiewicz, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Russian and East European Studies at the University of Kansas, was awarded the Krzyz Walecznych (Cross of the Brave) by the Polish government. Piekałkiewicz earned the award for his bravery during World War II, but is only receiving it this year after a long delay caused by the tumultuous events that followed the war.

Piekałkiewicz was 13 years old when World War II broke out. After experiencing Nazi occupation in Poland, Piekałkiewicz felt the urge to take a more active role in fighting the Nazis. He became a resistance fighter at the age of 15. When he was 18, he fought for 63 days during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. During the war, he was repeatedly captured by the Nazis, escaping three times as a POW and later joining the Polish II Corps that was formed under the auspices of the British Army.

For his bravery, he was promoted to the rank of Platoon Sergeant and awarded the Krzyz Walecznych. In the chaos of combat, the actual medal could not be awarded, though notice of the award was transmitted to the Polish Government In Exile in London. After the war, Poland's communist government refused to decorate many Polish insurgents like him. Piekałkiewicz emigrated to the United States, earned his doctorate in political science from Indiana University, and then came to KU in 1963 because of its Center for Soviet and East European Institute, the predecessor of the current Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (CREES).

He played a crucial role in developing East European studies at KU and served as Assistant Director of CREES. He retired in 2000, yet according to current CREES Director Erik R. Scott, Piekałkiewicz "remains a very engaged scholar as well as a living link to the harrowing experience of life under Nazi occupation."

Piekałkiewicz recently published a book entitled *Dance with Death: A Holistic View of Saving Polish Jews during the Holocaust* (Hamilton Books, 2019).



The book is about Polish Christians helping Polish Jews during the Holocaust – a very dangerous endeavor under Nazi occupation. It provides insight into the events leading up to the 1939 invasion of Poland that ignited World War II.

At the time, one-third of the world's Jews lived in Poland. The book also gives a harrowing account of his fellow insurgents and their bravery, as well as his own personal tale of survival. Piekałkiewicz gave a

virtual talk this Spring 2021 on his newly published book, which is available for viewing on the KU CREES YouTube channel.

After many years, his nomination for the Krzyz Walecznych was discovered in the archives of the Polish Ministry of Defense, which delegated the Polish Consulate in Houston to present the physical award to Piekałkiewicz. The award ceremony took place at the Piekałkiewicz residence in Lawrence, Kansas on July 24, 2021, Dr. Piekałkiewicz's 95th birthday. Members of the press were invited to attend.

Laird Essay Contest Winners continued...

minors in German, psychology and Russian & Eastern European studies. She is interested in the issue of authoritarian rule and public opinion. Her future plans will most likely involve graduate education in public policy.

DeLeo is from Omaha, Nebraska. She graduated in May with a master's degree in Russian, East

European & Eurasian studies. She received her bachelor's degree at KU in the same field, as well as in global and international studies. Her academic interests are in political science and security in the Central Asian region. While at KU she had the chance to travel to Kyrgyzstan and Russia, which she said inspired her to learn Russian and use it in her future career.

CREES Alumni Make a Difference in the World

By Gloria Funcheon

I completed the CREES MA 2011-2013, with several interests: civil society, civil-military relations, Soviet urban planning, Central Asia, and human geography. It was difficult to land on a capstone topic, but I ultimately selected to research Russian urban/rural feminist anti-war movements in relation to Chechnya in the 1990s. Other major research was regarding the Government of Tajikistan's public relations campaign in pursuit of constructing the Rogun hydroelectric dam, a paper which I was pleased to present at ASEES in Boston.

Since finishing, I have mostly worked in education and international development in Central Asia. I started out as a volunteer for a grassroots NGO in Georgia, advocating for greater integration of Abkhazian refugees and persons with disabilities within the local community. I spent the next few years between several short-term contracts: program implementation and proposal development for ACTED in Tajikistan, US student exchange recruitment in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Tajikistan

for American Councils for International Education, public relations for Save the Children in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and preparing secondary students in Ukraine for university in English-speaking countries.



I even came back to KU to work for the Eral Garinger Academic Resource Center (EGARC) and to administer Project GO, a ROTC critical language and culture training program. I have also developed an interest in electoral integrity, and have served as an election observer in Armenia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and the UK. After a few years of

work experience I decided to go back to higher education, for a MSc in Development Studies at SOAS in London. While in London I worked as a Program Officer for Mercy Corps, supporting administration of a portfolio of European-funded humanitarian programs in Central Asia and the Caucasus. I currently work for Mercy Corps in Uzbekistan, managing external and internal communications for a USDA-funded early childhood education and nutrition program.

At KU CREES I learned from an expert teaching staff, who presented unique and nuanced perspectives on the region. They actively encouraged students to ask deeper questions, and how to critically analyse research and contextually locate key evidence and its place within currents of thought. The area studies approach encouraged students to see geographic and thematic linkages, gaining a more holistic understanding of the region's history and trajectory. The KU CREES program allowed me to turn curiosities into a career by honing my writing, research, and analytical skills.





By Ylham Jorayev

I graduated from KU with a Bachelor's in REES and International Studies. While at KU, my studies primarily focused on Russia and Central Asia. I took various classes focusing on the region ranging from politics to sociology to history to literature. After KU, I continued my studies at Georgetown University.

This breadth of knowledge prepared me well for my career. Receiving a holistic education about the former Soviet states allowed me to easily adapt to the various needs of different jobs. The availability of classes on different subjects at KU shaped my understanding of the region and prepared me well for post-academia life.

After my studies, I worked for various companies, both in the private and public sectors. At the Library of Congress, I provided research on Soviet law. At my current job, I focus on cyber threats emanating from Russia. My day to day responsibilities at Recorded Future include writing intelligence reports for public and private sector clients on cyber security and geopolitics, with a specific focus on Russia and Eastern Europe. I also conduct research on Russian information operations, primarily disinformation and misinformation targeting US elections.

By Stephen Riegg

I had the privilege of being an undergraduate student at KU in 2005-09, during which time I double-majored in History and REES. Fascinated by the world's largest country, I was attracted to REES because of its interdisciplinary approach to studying Russia and the other successor states of the Soviet Union. Classes in literature, sociology, geography, political science and other fields augmented my main focus on history, which gave me not only a taste of those disciplines' unique perspectives on Russia's past and present, but also enabled me to consider distinct career opportunities to pursue after graduation. The classes I took as part of my REES degree requirements were some of my favorite in college: challenging, engaging, and fun!

The professors, building on years of in-country research experience, were dedicated to not simply teaching us, but inspiring our own passions for whatever avenue we wanted to pursue. No less important was the fact that the CREES staff and advisors were caring and knowledgeable. I remember vividly the patience with which Mr. Ray Finch guided me through the curriculum.

My training at CREES equipped me to pursue MA and PhD degrees in modern Russian history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The interdisciplinary nature of my undergraduate education armed me well for a rigorous graduate program. At UNC I honed and expanded the skills I had picked up at KU. After earning my doctorate, I became an assistant professor of history at Texas A&M University, where I research and teach modern Russian history with the enthusiasm I first encountered from faculty on Mount Oread. My professional achievements, including my award-winning book, *Russia's Entangled Embrace: The Tsarist Empire and the Armenians,*



1801-1914, and articles in scholarly journals (such as the wonderful, KU-based *The Russian Review*!), stand on the foundation that is Bailey Hall. Thus, the education I received at CREES led directly to my successful career. And while I cheer the Tar Heels and Aggies when they play other teams, my original loyalty never wavers: Rock Chalk, Jayhawk!

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CREES Alumni Make a Difference in the World

My name is Alexis Baich, and I am a proud graduate of the Center for Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies. I completed my master's program with CREES in May of 2017 and can honestly say that I am truly thankful for my experience at The University of Kansas. While with CREES my studies focused on the history, politics, culture, and religion of Serbia and the Serbian entities of Southeastern Europe. I came to CREES immediately after completing my Undergraduate degree in Secondary Education – History with a minor in Slavic Studies from Arizona State University. I knew when deciding on grad schools that I wanted my program of study to be content based. I knew I wanted to be able to provide my future students with a wide depth of knowledge and I knew exactly what part of the world I wanted to focus on.

A high school history classroom might seem like a strange stage for such a concentrated degree, on the contrary, my degree has given me professional opportunities that otherwise might not have been available. During my last four years in the classroom, I have been able to provide often unknown facts and stories with my students, I am able to present new perspectives on world history and events, and I have been able to provide my students with more facts about Serbia than they will probably ever need.

I also felt a sense of responsibility to the history of Eastern



Europe as well as to my own people. The nations of Eastern Europe and Eurasia have an extremely rich and proud history and culture that is often overlooked. My degree in REES allows for a special and unique opportunity to bring recognition of this part of the world every day.

CREES Welcomes Alevtina Kakhidze - Visiting Artist from Ukraine



CREES would like to welcome Alevtina Kakhidze, a multidisciplinary artist from Ukraine, for a 5-week residence at KU through CEC ArtsLink. She will be hosted by the KU Department of Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures from October 4 to November 17, 2021. Alevtina Kakhidze is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice encompasses performance, drawing, time-based media, curation and collaborative works and investigates complex issues from consumerism to plant culture, and from feminism to life in conflict zones.

She was born in 1973 in the town of Zhdanovka in the Donetsk Oblast of Ukraine, then part of the USSR. She currently is based in Muzychi, Ukraine, 26 kilometers from Kyiv, the nation's capitol. As part of her social engagement efforts, she has taught art to elementary school children in Muzychi (who were fortunate to have a major internationally recognized artist as their elementary school art teacher).

Having grown up in the region of Ukraine known for coal mining, she has experienced Ukraine's abrupt and chaotic changes from the days of the USSR to the imbalanced environment after, including undeclared war between Russia and Ukraine that it is going on today.

Alevtina Kakhidze attended the National Academy of Fine Art and Architecture in Kyiv (1999-2004) and the Jan van Eyck Academy in the Netherlands (2004-2006). She is a United Nations Tolerance Envoy in Ukraine since 2018, the Kazimir Malevich Artist Award winner in 2008, and the first prizewinner of the Competition for Young Curators and Artists, Kyiv, Center for Contemporary Art at NaUKMA in 2002.



FALL 2021 EVENTS CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

FRI
10

CREES Fall Mixer — 5-8 pm

Venue: Centennial Park, East Shelter
2124 W. Ninth St., Lawrence, KS
Please wear a mask unless eating and
practice safe social distancing

TUE
14

“Bosnia: A Unique Country in the Balkans” — 4-5 pm

Elvir Resic (Consul General of Bosnia in
Chicago)
Venue: Centennial Room, KU Memorial
Union

THU
30

“Are We Living Through a New Cold War? Philosophical Reflections of a Cold War Historian” — 4-5 pm

Sergey Radchenko (JHU)
Lecture Series, *Legacies of the Cold War: Russia, the United States, and the World*
Venue: Forum A, Burge Union
*Livestream available

OCTOBER

THU
14

“The Great American Experiment: Nuclear Testing in the American Heartland” — 4-5 pm

Kate Brown (MIT)
Lecture Series, *Legacies of the Cold War: Russia, the United States, and the World*
*Virtual Talk

THU
28

Film Screening of “Volcano” (2018, Ukraine, directed by Roman Bondarchuk) — 6 pm

Presented by Vitaly Chernetsky (KU) and
Alevtina Kakhidze (KU Visiting Artist)
Venue: Alderson, KU Memorial Union

NOVEMBER

THU
04

“Putin Plays the Puck! Hockey and Politics in Post-Soviet Russia” — 4-5 pm

Bruce Berglund (Gustavus Adolphus College)
Lecture Series, *Legacies of the Cold War: Russia, the United States, and the World*
Venue: Forum A, Burge Union
*Livestream available

DECEMBER

WED
01

“Prague: Belonging and the Modern City” — 7:30-8:30 pm

Chad Bryant (UNC - Chapel Hill)
Book Talk
Venue: Forum A, Burge Union

WED
08

“Dealing with Putin: Domestic and Foreign Policy Challenges” — 4-5 pm

Fiona Hill (Brookings Institution)
Lecture Series, *Legacies of the Cold War: Russia, the United States, and the World*
*Virtual Talk

*Virtual meeting links will be released via the CREES Facebook page and the CREES weekly email.

Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies



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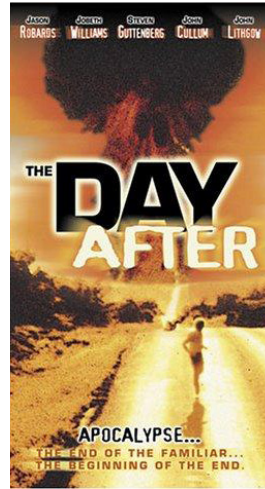
How to Explore Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia Without Leaving the Heartland

During the pandemic it has been difficult to travel domestically, much less internationally to Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Fortunately, there are still some great ways we can explore the region, broaden our knowledge of its languages and cultures, and connect with colleagues and friends miles away.

One way is to explore the new Cold War in the Heartland website, <https://coldwarheartland.ku.edu>, a web resource for those interested in discovering the intriguing history of this global conflict, learning about how the conflict profoundly affected the Midwest, and understanding the ways the Cold War's legacies impact us today. For instance, *The Day After*, a 1983 film depicting the devastating impact of a potential nuclear war on a heartland city and its residents, was filmed in Lawrence, Kansas, and viewed by millions across the United States. As part of the nation's defense against the Soviet Union, Kansas had the distinction of being home to the most intercontinental ballistic missile sites. In the 1950s, the Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka sent the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, a US Air Force unit, to perform thousands of nighttime "ferret" missions over the Soviet Union and other socialist nations, in order to collect intelligence on Soviet air defense radar networks.

The Cold War in the Heartland website also features the memories of Heartland residents, including an account by Dr. Irina Six, a faculty member in KU's Department of Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures, who grew up and lived in Moscow, and later immigrated to Topeka, Kansas in 2000. Another account is provided by Darrell Wilham, a farmer and U.S. Navy officer, who was positioned off the coast of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and remembers when the potential attack on Cuba was called off. The Cold War in the Heartland website brings together primary source documents, landscape case studies, and oral interviews. It also provides tools for teachers and students to learn more, with guided discussions, activities, and an interactive timeline.

To explore the connection between Russia and Kansas, you can visit a new online exhibit, *From Far Away Russia*, organized by the Kansas Museum



of History. The exhibit documents the story of Russian-Germans in Kansas. In 1763, Catherine the Great of Russia issued a manifesto encouraging immigration to Russia from the German lands to help colonize land along the Black Sea and Volga River. Soon after, over 25,000 Germans immigrated to Russia and Ukraine, where they established close-knit communities and enjoyed an exemption from



Churches were one of the first structures built in Russian-German communities in the US. The Alexanderwohl Mennonite church was built in Goessel, Kansas

taxes and military service. In 1871, Tsar Alexander II revoked their exemption from military service, which prompted a mass exodus to the Midwest. The first group of settlers from Russia and Ukraine arrived in Topeka in 1875. Check out the exhibit by visiting <https://www.kshs.org/p/museum-exhibits/10668> (scroll down and click on "Online Exhibits").

A visit to the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum in Goessel, Kansas provides another way to continue learning about the journey German-Russian immigrants took from Ukraine and Russia to settle in Goessel and the surrounding areas in Kansas. The museum consists of nine historical buildings and many personal artifacts that the immigrants brought with them. Perhaps most importantly, they brought Turkey Red, a Hard Red Winter Wheat variety, to the Kansas prairie at a critical time in the state's history. Kansas had just suffered a depression, severe drought,

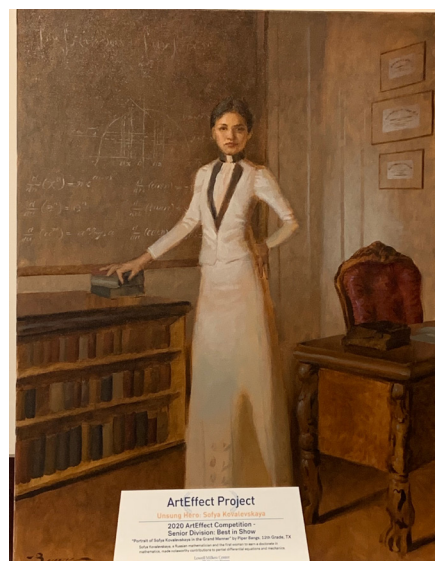
and a grasshopper infestation, and the local farmers were struggling greatly. These German-Russian immigrants were credited with turning Kansas into the nation's breadbasket, in part thanks to the variety of wheat they brought with them from Russia. Their success in farming was written up in a Topeka Daily Capital article from March 20, 1890, which stated: "Whereas 200 years in Russia left them unchanged from what their fathers were -- less than ten years in the great state of Kansas finds them with landed estates, herds of cattle and horses and finer houses than they or any of their fathers ever hoped to occupy in Russia."

Learn more at <https://www.goesselmuseum.com>

Another gem in the Heartland to explore is the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, Kansas where visitors can take a tour of the largest combined collection of U.S. and Soviet space artifacts outside of Russia. Delve into the fascinating history of the early manned space-flight programs – the Vostok (Soviet Union) and Mercury (U.S.) programs -- and learn about the men and women (and animals too) whose sacrifice and dedication led the way for space exploration. Many of the exhibits contain the real satellites, rockets, and other probes that were used during the Space Race. Learn more about the Cosmosphere by visiting <https://cosmo.org>

A trip to the Lowell Milken Museum for Unsung Heroes in Fort Scott will be sure to inspire any visitor. The museum works with educators and students to identify "unsung heroes" to research and showcase for their bravery and extraordinary deeds. Four of these "unsung heroes" hail from Armenia, Poland, and Russia, including the dedicated efforts of Irena Sendler, who along with her underground network rescued more than 2,500 children from the Warsaw ghetto during World War II. Emma Darling Cushman was a nurse who turned her hospital into an orphanage, saving thousands of orphans from the Armenian genocide in 1915. In addition, a beautiful

portrait of Sofya Kovalevskaya (featured right), an accomplished mathematician from Russia, is displayed in the museum. Kovalevskaya overcame great obstacles to become the first woman to receive her PhD in Europe.



Visitors to the Cosmosphere can enjoy this beautiful mural depicting space exploration

Last, but not least, the Strawberry Hill Museum and Cultural Center will reopen in November, offering their Olde World Christmas tour to guests on the weekends. The museum is dedicated to the preservation of Slavic heritage in the Kansas City area and has many interesting exhibits. The museum's main building was built in the Victorian Queen Anne style in 1887, and it operated as an orphanage from 1918 until 1988.

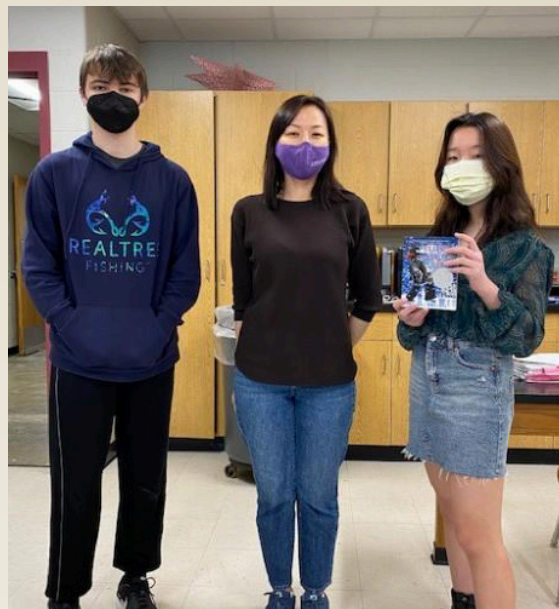
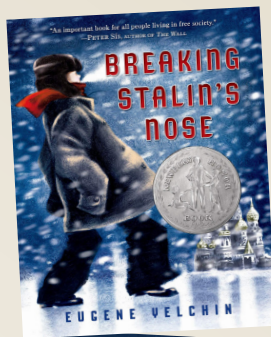
The Strawberry Hill Ethnic Cultural Society later acquired the building and dedicated the site as a museum. Visitors can visit the museum and its website to learn more about Kansas City's many communities with roots in the region, with materials on the cultures and holiday traditions of Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Russia. For more information, visit www.strawberryhillmuseum.org

Engaging Global Literature and History for Today's Classroom

This spring, CREES held a virtual K-12 Teacher Workshop entitled “Engaging Global Literature and History for Today's Classroom” virtually on March 20, 2021. The main goal of the teacher workshop was to help educators incorporate quality literature and history on Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia into their curriculum.

Educators were pleased to hear a variety of presentations from KU faculty and staff. Ani Kokobobo presented background information on the children's novel *Breaking Stalin's Nose*, an excellent read for upper elementary and middle school students about a ten-year-old Soviet boy whose father is arrested on the eve of his induction into the Young Pioneers. She also spoke about her personal experience as a child growing up in Albania under communism. Erik Scott gave a presentation on the historical context of the Stalinist era and shared the Cold War in the Heartland website. Thanks to funding from the U.S. Russia Foundation, educators had the opportunity to receive a stipend for teaching lessons on *Breaking Stalin's Nose* in their classrooms.

Nathan Wood gave historical context for *The Safest Lie*, a children's novel set in Poland in the 1940s. *The Safest Lie* is an inspiring account of nine-year old Anna Bauman, one of thousands of Jewish children rescued from the Warsaw ghetto. The novel is based on the life of Irena Sendler, who along with her underground network rescued more than 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto during World War II.



Saya, a KSU graduate student from Kazakhstan, leads a discussion of *Breaking Stalin's Nose* with 8th grade students in Dr. Lisa Bietau's class in a Manhattan middle school.

Cathy Werling, an award-winning elementary educator and author, shared information about a special exhibit on Irena Sendler at the Lowell Milken Museum of Unsung Heroes in Fort Scott, Kansas. Educators learned about several high school students from Uniontown, Kansas who discovered Irena Sendler's story and put together a play entitled *Life in a Jar*, based on Sendler's life. These students had the opportunity to travel to Warsaw several times to meet with Irena Sendler before she passed in 2008. They have helped make Irena Sendler's story known throughout the world by performing *Life in a Jar* for hundreds of audiences and have inspired many to be courageous in their own communities.

In the afternoon, KU faculty and staff from other Area Studies Centers, including Professor Liz MacGonagle, Amanda Snider, and Betsaida Reyes, gave presentations on various books and resources

that educators could utilize to teach about Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. These books can help inspire students to make a difference in their communities, advocate for social justice, and become a global citizen.

In a post-workshop survey, many of the educators commented that they plan to read *Breaking Stalin's Nose* with their students. One remarked, "Over lunch I just shared the curriculum materials with my staff and with my colleagues at the other three middle schools. I already teach a unit on *Animal Farm* and am planning to add *Breaking Stalin's Nose* to that book/history/culture study." Another educator stated, "I am excited to be able to use these texts in the classroom to diversify what my students are learning. I love to help them gain more perspective in the world, and literature is an amazing way to do this."

...continued on page 13

Liberation, Activism, and the Power of the Media

On June 5, 2021, the Kansas African Studies Center held a virtual educator workshop “Liberation, Activism, and the Power of the Media” to explore themes of liberation, activism, and the power of the media globally to make connections with current anti-racist movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement. Experts from the KU Area Studies Centers discussed instances where iconic photographs have documented how people around the world continue to valiantly struggle against oppression. This was through examination of case studies from South Africa, Guatemala, China, and also Lithuania.

Educators had the special opportunity to hear from the children’s author and illustrator Adrienne Wright, who examined the inspiring story of student protests that occurred across South Africa in 1976. Wright’s book, *Hector: A Boy, a Protest, and the Photograph that Changed Apartheid*, is based on the story of Hector Pieterse and recounts the heart-breaking events that woke up the world and helped end apartheid in South Africa.

On June 16, 1976, Hector Pieterse lost his life after getting caught up in what was supposed to be a peaceful protest. Black South African students were marching against a new law requiring that they be taught half of their subjects in Afrikaans, the language of the white government. The story’s events unfold from the perspectives of Hector, his sister Antoinette, and the photographer Sam Nzima who captured their photo in the chaos. The book serves as a

pertinent tool for adults to discuss the global history of race and racism with children.

Exploring the workshop’s themes in the region CREES focuses on, Stephen Wolgast from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications gave a presentation on the Soviet attack on the Vilnius TV tower on January 13, 1991. As the USSR started unravelling in the late 1980s, civil unrest began in the Baltic States. In January 1991, Lithuania was separating itself from Moscow’s rule, which led to Soviet troops being deployed at civilian sites around Vilnius. A face-off at the TV Tower turned violent when soldiers

Breakout sessions provided the opportunity to explore rich and meaningful curriculum development around themes related to liberation and activism, such as youth protests, police/state brutality, and responsible journalism. Participants were introduced to engaging books and photographs that can help students to learn more about the world and consider their potential as a force for change. CREES and other Area Studies Centers created a list of **Educator Resources on Activism, Liberation, and the Power of Media**, which can be found on the CREES website, crees.ku.edu/k12-resources



Loreta Asanavičiūtė dies when Soviet troops advanced on a crowd at the Vilnius, Lithuania, TV Tower on Jan. 13, 1991.

advanced on protesters who were attempting to protect the tower from Soviet control. When a tank advanced on the crowd, it crushed Loreta Asanavičiūtė. She was one of 14 Lithuanians to die that night, but a photograph of the tank as it drove over her made worldwide news. It was not long after that the three Baltic countries would be recognized as independent nations.

Engaging Global Literature and History continued...

Explore our **Global Literature and History List 2021**, which contains over 100+ titles from around the world that can be read and enjoyed by children and adults. The reading list can be found on the CREES website, crees.ku.edu/k12-resources.

CREES-Supported Fellowships Help Students Achieve their Dreams



Trena Tackitt is awarded the Clowes Russian Language Award for the 2021-2022 AY

By Trena Tackitt

A lot of students were left facing financial uncertainty after 2020, myself included, so I was very excited (and surprised!) to learn that I had been awarded the Clowes Russian Language Award. I am tremendously grateful to both Edith W. Clowes for her generosity in providing this opportunity, and to the department for selecting me as a recipient for this award. It will be of tremendous help, not only because it will assist with covering my expenses, but also because it will enable me to worry less, which will in turn allow me to better focus on my studies.

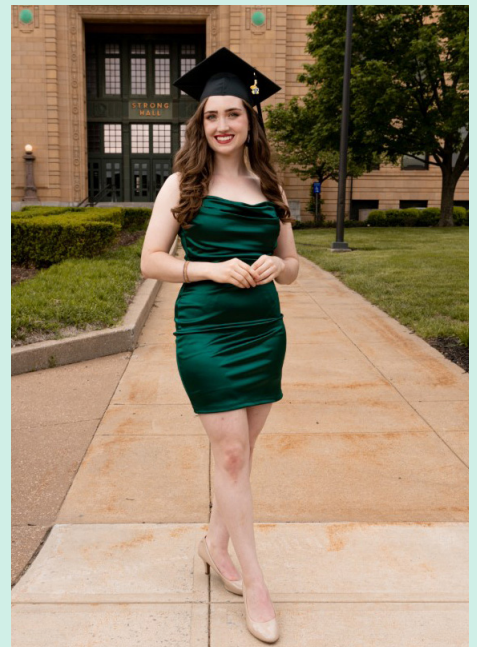
I am also very thankful for all the opportunities that I have had through CREES, most notably my job at *The Russian Review*, and I am proud to be involved with such an amazingly supportive community. In the future, I hope to put the skills and knowledge that I am acquiring through both my employment and my graduate program in Slavic and Eurasian Languages & Literatures to use in an internationally focused career. My goal is to continue expanding my professional and Slavic speaking skill sets so that I will be able to find work in a field that will be both meaningful and of personal interest to me. This award will greatly assist me in achieving that objective.

By Alaina DeLeo

After completing my undergraduate degrees with CREES and the Global Studies department, I knew I wanted to specialize further. I decided to pursue an M.A. with CREES to specialize further in Russia, Central Asia, and Political Science. I am extremely passionate about the Russian language, and I knew I wanted to use my language skills to do research and learn about the various Russian speaking regions in depth. I am extremely grateful for the Bramlage/Willcoxon scholarship which drastically aided me in paying for school. Without this generous scholarship I would have difficulty paying off high student loans and focusing on my future career.

The Bramlage/Willcoxon scholarship prepared me for my future career by aiding me in my education and allowing me to focus on my studies and Russian language acquisition rather than struggling to supplement loan payments. I had the opportunity to focus on my research and apply for a broad range of jobs, learning where I fit best. It is difficult to express how much of an impact the scholarship has on me, and the financial and personal stress reduced. I am extremely grateful for this scholarship, allowing me to learn and foster my interests and skills

in the CREES regions. Thank you!



Alaina DeLeo graduated with a MA degree in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies in May 2021



Mehrangiz Najafizadeh Receives Fulbright Scholar Award



Mehrangiz Najafizadeh, associate professor of sociology, has received a Fulbright Scholar award to teach and conduct research in the Republic of Azerbaijan during the spring 2022 semester. The presidentially appointed J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board selects Fulbright Scholars.

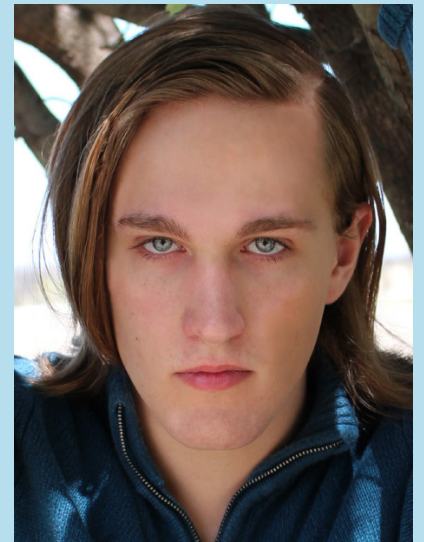
During her time in Azerbaijan, Najafizadeh will teach courses and interdisciplinary seminars on gender in the global context as well as sociological theory. She also will conduct research pertaining to gender issues in Azerbaijan, both in social historical and contemporary contexts.

Najafizadeh previously received a Fulbright Scholar award in 2004 and served as a Fulbright senior specialist in Azerbaijan during summer 2005 and 2008. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The primary source of funding for the Fulbright Program is an annual appropriation made by the U.S. Congress to the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Participating governments, host institutions, corporations, and foundations in foreign countries and in the United States also provide direct and indirect support.

Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. The program operates in more than 160 countries worldwide.

By Dakota Morgan

The opportunity to apply for the Jarosewycz Scholarship encouraged me to expand my Slavic Language studies to include Ukrainian. I was initially nervous about taking it at the same time as my second year of Russian studies but received helpful feedback from the department that I could actually build on what I had already learned. I have since learned that Ukraine has played an important, but sometimes overlooked, role in global security. As a foreign diplomat in the Air Force, speaking both Russian and Ukrainian will have a strong impact on my ability to build vital relationships and understand where conflicts may arise. I am very grateful to be a recipient of the Jarosewycz Scholarship and look forward to being a part of the program.



Alumni & Student News

Aylar Atardurdyeva (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) won the undergraduate category of the Roy D. and Betty Laird Essay Contest for her essay, “Kosovo-Turkey Relations and the Ottoman Legacy.”

Tyler Bowen (REES) received the FMSO/CGIS/CREES Security Affairs Research Fellowship for Fall 2021. This internship will provide an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the global security environment and how the U.S. military determines the operational environment. Thus far, Bowen’s studies have focused on the Balkans region. He has been studying Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian under Prof. Marta Pirnat-Greenberg. He is interested in any news that pertains to the Balkans region, including news related to the American military presence in Kosovo with K-Force. He would like to thank the fellowship committee, and any faculty and staff who are involved with the Fellowship, for this amazing opportunity. He is very excited to dip his toes into analyst work.

Mariah Cady was awarded the George C. Jerkovich Scholarship for the study of Southeastern Europe and the Former Yugoslavia during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Oksana Husieva (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) taught one of the largest enrolled Russian language classes (19 enrolled students), which was a synchronous hybrid class offered in-person and online at the same time, and in January, she received the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award from the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures for successfully teaching language classes in the department since 2016. She also received the competitive Summer Research Scholarship from the Office of Graduate Studies at KU to work on her dissertation that examines how Russian women writers transform a traditional folk genre of lament into a creative tool of resistance, which enables them to assert their agency and voices in oppressive social and political circumstances. In November, she will present a portion of her dissertation research at the 53rd ASEES Annual Convention in New Orleans.

Mason Hussong (REES/Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) wrote his senior research project, which was part of the KU Undergraduate Research Symposium. His innovative project “Language Change in Central Asia: What Student Attitudes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Say about Titular Language Revitalization Efforts,” examines language usage in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Michelle Tran Maryns (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures, 2007) won a \$100,000 grant from the Bush Foundation to help expand her business, which seeks to provide AI-powered technology to entrepreneurs who are women of color. Maryns is the CEO of We Sparkle, a company that provides entrepreneurs with the AI tools they need to succeed. We Sparkle provides entrepreneurs with a digital assistant that helps business owners save time by doing administrative tasks such as scheduling appointments and answering frequently asked questions. Maryns plans to also invest in financial management training and explore partnerships with other organizations.



Dakota Morgan (Anthropology/Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) was awarded the Jarosewycz Family Scholarship to support the study of Ukrainian language for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Yuki Onogi (REES 2011/Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures 2008) started a new position as Associate Director-Equity Sales Trader at CLSA (Asia’s leading capital markets and investment group) in Tokyo, Japan in April 2021.

Matthew Pyskir (REES/Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) spent a year abroad at Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine. He completed an internship at the Anti-Corruption Action Center in Kyiv, Ukraine. He received the FMSO CGIS/CREES Security Affairs Research Fellowship for Fall 2021.

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Congratulations to our REES Graduates and Award Recipients

Alaina DeLeo (REES 2021) graduated with a M.A. in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. During her graduate studies, she was awarded the Bramlage/Willcoxon Scholarship. She was also this year's Roy D. and Betty Laird Essay Contest winner in the graduate category for her essay "Not Your Kyrgyz Kelin: How Local Activists Are Changing Opinions on Bride Kidnapping." This summer, she began a new job as a Special Agent with the United States Secret Service.

Timothy Skinner (REES 2021) graduated with a M.A. in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. He is a Foreign Area Officer.

Robert Obourn (REES 2021) graduated with a B.A. in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. After graduating, he went into the Active Duty Army as an Infantry Officer. He went to Fort Benning, Georgia to attend Basic Officer's Leader Course (BOLC).

Bramlage/Willcoxon Scholarship
Alaina DeLeo

Clowes Russian Language Award
Trena Tackitt

Jarosewycz Family Scholarship
Dakota Morgan

George C. Jerkovich Scholarship
Mariah Cady

FMSO/CGIS/CREES Security
Affairs Research Fellowship

Adam Rodger (Summer 2021)
Tyler Bowen (Fall 2021)
Matthew Pyskir (Fall 2021)

Alumni & Student News continued...

Adam Rodger (History) received the FMSO CGIS/CREES Security Affairs Research Fellowship for Summer 2021. This internship will provide an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the global security environment and how the U.S. military determines the operational environment. This is a cooperative project of the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, the KU Center for Global and International Studies (CGIS), and CREES.

John Stanko (REES 2018) will be a Fellow at the Monterey Summer Symposium on Russia (MSSR) this year. He looks forward to this amazing opportunity to further develop his research while learning from his counterparts and many experts who will be participating in the MSSR 2021.

Trena Tackitt (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) was awarded the Clowes Russian Language Award for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Alyssa Wood (REES 2017) had an article published with Nicolò Fasola entitled, "Reforming Ukraine's Security Sector" in *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 63 on March 30, 2021. Alyssa Wood is a Major in the U.S. Army. Nicolò Fasola is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK.

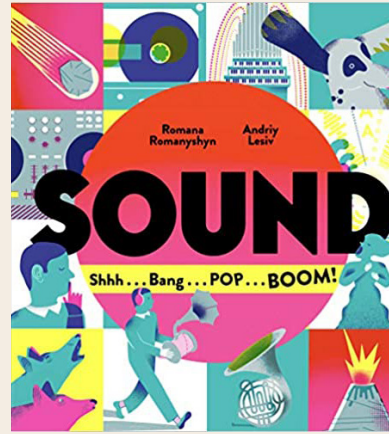


Uvs Lake Basin, Tuva Republic, Russia, photo credit Aleksandr Leshchenok

Faculty News

Vitaly Chernetsky (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) has been promoted to full professor. He received a CREES Title VI NRC course development grant in the amount of \$2,500 for Red Love: Gender, Sexuality, and Social Justice in Russia and Eastern Europe. He gave online guest lectures at Indiana and Stanford and presented at online panels organized by the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, and an IIE webinar for Fulbright scholars.

His translations of two award-winning children's books by Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv, *Sound: Shhh . . . Bang . . . POP . . . BOOM!* and *Sight: Glimmer, Glow, SPARK, FLASH!* were published by Chronicle Books. His translation of a selection of poems by the Ukrainian poet Natalka Bilotserkivets was published at the Versopolis website, and an article on the poet Alexander Averbuch was published in the Russian literary e-journal *tex-tonly*. He received a grant from the KU International Affairs KU - University of Costa Rica Exchange Support Fund for Faculty Research to support a trip to Argentina and Brazil during the 2021-22 academic year to conduct research on diasporic Slavic writers.



Vitaly Chernetsky's translations of two award-winning children's books by Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv, *Sound: Shhh . . . Bang . . . POP . . . BOOM!* and *Sight: Glimmer, Glow, SPARK, FLASH!* were published by Chronicle Books.

Alexander Diener (Geography) was promoted to Full Professor in the Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science. In the last academic year (2020-2021), he published the following articles: "The Power of Place in Place Attachment" co-authored with Joshua Hagen in *Geographical Review* 2021; "Territorial Belonging and Homeland Disjuncture: Uneven Territorializations in Kazakhstan" co-authored with Kristopher Rees & Nora Webb-Williams in *Europe Asia Studies* 2021; "Geographies of Place Attachment: A Place-Based Model of Materiality, Performance, and Narration" in *Geographical Review* co-authored with Joshua Hagen 2021; "Local Perceptions of Tourism's Effects in Russia's Altai Republic" co-authored with Ruth Remmers. In *Ustoichivoe razvitie gornyx territorii - Sustainable Development of Mountain Territories - v.12 no.3, 2020* pp. 327-338; and "Multi-Scalar Territorialization in Kazakhstan's Northern Borderland" in *Geographical Review* 2020.

Alex also published "Borders, Boundaries, and Identity in Central Asia" co-authored with Vincent Artman in Erica Marat and Rico Issacs (eds.) *Routledge Handbook on Central Asia* (London: Routledge Press 2021), "Central Asia as Place" co-authored with Nick Solly Megoran in David Montgomery (ed.) *Central Asia: Contexts for Understanding*. (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press 2021), "U.S. Soft Power in Central Asia" co-authored with Vincent Artman in Sébastien Peyrouse (ed.) *Central Asia in Context* (University of Pittsburg Press 2021). Alex was very pleased to serve as advisor to Alaina DeLeo who completed her CREES MA and Nick Shea who earned his MA in Geography and Atmospheric Science.

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Jon Giullian (Librarian for Slavic and Eurasian Studies) published a translation of a brief memoir: Veronica Ahrens-Pulawski. “A Journey from Wrocław to San Francisco: Memoir of A Bookstore Owner.” Translated by Jon C. Giullian. Slavic and East European Information Resources 22, no. 2 (2021): 235-251.

Marc Greenberg (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) had an op-ed published, “Montenegro was a success story in troubled Balkan region – now its democracy is in danger,” <https://theconversation.com/montenegro-was-a-success-story-in-troubled-balkan-region-now-its-democracy-is-in-danger-157288>

Lisa McLendon (Journalism) has been awarded a CREES Title VI NRC course development grant in the amount of \$2,500 for JOUR 201 Media Around the World: Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia.

Mehrangiz Najafizadeh (Sociology) has received a Fulbright Scholar Award to teach and conduct research in the Republic of Azerbaijan during the spring semester 2022. During her time in Azerbaijan, Najafizadeh will teach courses and interdisciplinary seminars on gender in the global context as

well as sociological theory. She also will conduct research pertaining to gender issues in Azerbaijan, both in social historical and contemporary contexts. A press release appeared in KU Today regarding the Fulbright Award: <https://news.ku.edu/najafizadeh-named-fulbright-scholar>

Mehrangiz Najafizadeh also presented a paper “Azeri IDPs and the Resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: ‘Nagorno-Karabakh is free from occupation, and we shall return to our homelands’ “ at the Central Slavic Conference, March 2021 (virtual conference).

Renee Perelmutter (Jewish Studies and Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) has been awarded a CREES Title VI NRC course development grant in the amount of \$2,500 for SLAV/JWSH 318 Jews and Slavs in Eastern Europe.

Oleksandra Wallo (Slavic and Eurasian Languages and Literatures) was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure. Congratulations!



Giving to KU CREES

The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies 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, renowned lecturers, scholarships and study abroad opportunities are just some of the ways your donations can help us to maintain 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!

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Lawrence, KS 66045-7574

SPASIBO Fund

The Gerald E. Mikkelson Fund supports and sustains the Siberia and St. Petersburg components of KU's instructional profile.

CREES General Fund

Supports a wide range of educational and outreach activities. Among its dedicated sponsors are the **Oswald P. Backus/Anna Cienciała Memorial Fund** for visiting lecturers in Polish Studies, the **Bramlage/Willcoxon 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.

Clowes Russian Language Award

Thanks to the generosity of Edith W. Clowes, a former CREES Director and now the Brown-Forman Professor of the Humanities at the University of Virginia, and with the support of the Clowes Fund, the Clowes Russian Language Award supports graduate students in REES studying Russian.

Jarosewycz Family Fund

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

George C. Jerkovich Fund

Supports the development of KU's South Slavic library collection; and provides awards to outstanding students with a demonstrated 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 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.

Paliy Family Fund

Supports visiting lecturers in Ukrainian studies, and the Ukrainian Studies Prize for an outstanding student specializing in Ukrainian.

Alexander Tsiovkh Memorial Fund

This fund is named after the late Alexander Tsiovkh, a longtime professor of Ukrainian Studies at KU. Monies donated to this fund are used to support students of Ukrainian Area Studies at KU.

