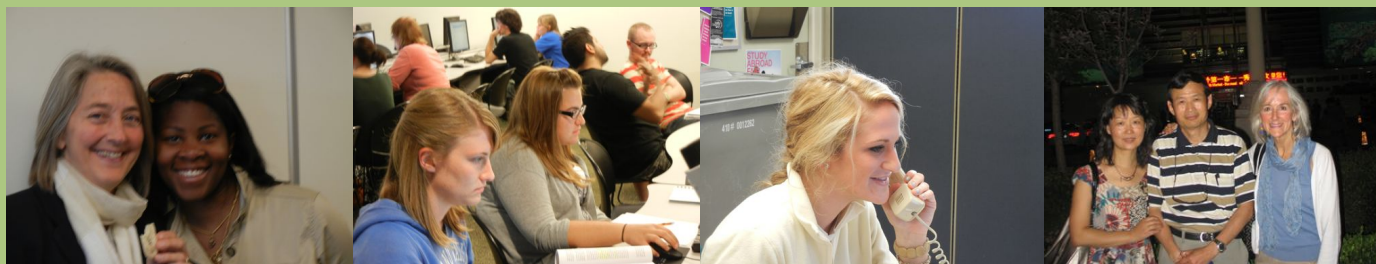


English Matters



October 29, 2011

This edition of our department's newsletter includes our students' activities and graduates' successes, visiting international scholars' participation in the department, as well as faculty scholarship and related interests. Collectively, our work demonstrates the variety of ways in which English matters within and beyond our department.



Visiting Scholars Provide International Perspectives

This fall our faculty includes two

international visiting scholars, Professors Reiner Kornetta and Junxia Che, both of whom we welcomed with a reception in October. Reiner is visiting from Pädagogischen Hochschule in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany where he teaches English pedagogy courses, including literature, writing, American studies, short stories, postmodernism, and political systems of the US. His research interests center on the short stories of Edith Wharton. At GVSU Reiner combines his research and teaching in a course on Edith Wharton and demonstrates his expertise in English language pedagogy in teaching an ESL course. Junxia is visiting from Xi'an, China where she teaches college English courses in the College of Foreign Languages at Northwest University. Junxia came to GVSU specifically to study applied linguistics in our graduate MEd TESOL program. Her coursework includes Sociolinguistics of Language Teaching, Second

Language Acquisition, and Second Language Assessment. Both Junxia and Reiner provide us the unique opportunity to exchange perspectives on international approaches to pedagogy and scholarship.



Professor Schneider Serves MDE Advisory Committee

The Michigan Department of Education invited Professor Barbara Schneider to serve on the Basic Skills-Writing Content Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification program. CAC members meet to review draft test frameworks (including the subareas, objectives and descriptive statements) and test specifications. Aspects of the test frameworks that will be considered include significance, accuracy, freedom from bias, and job relatedness. All candidates for a Michigan provisional teaching certificate must pass the Basic Skills test.



Linguistics Students Attend Lecture at MSU

On October 3rd, linguistics students and faculty attended a lecture at

Michigan State University by renowned sociolinguist, William Labov, best known for his pioneering work on language variation and change. His talk, "What is to be learned?", examines the relationship between cognition and language acquisition in children and the process of becoming local dialect speakers, a process which ultimately affects language change.

Graduates Successes

Adele Jones, a 2011 graduate in Applied Linguistics and secondary English education teaches in Arao-shi, Kumamoto, Japan for the prestigious Japanese English Teaching program, which is administered by the Japanese embassy. Adele is our second graduate to be accepted into this competitive program.

English major alumna **Sheila Marckward** earned a PhD from MSU following an MA TESOL at Saint Cloud State in Minnesota.

Wei Zhang, an MEd TESOL graduate, completed her PhD at Purdue last year and received a job offer at the University of Akron.

English Language and Literature graduate and recent Writing Department Distinguished Alum **Suzanne Rivecca** won a Rome Prize this year from the American Academy in Rome.

Eli Barsy, a 2010 English secondary English education and history graduate, teaches 6–8th grade reading, writing, and history for the Lower Kuskokim School District in Atmautluak, Alaska.



Patricia A. Mathews, a 2004 MEd TESOL graduate, recently completed doctoral coursework in Composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She currently is on the faculty at Kirtland Community College, where she teaches composition, technical writing and ESL. Patricia previously taught at GVSU, Aquinas, MCC, and Slippery Rock University. Her dissertation, *Positionality, Social Context, and Languages in Research on Forced Migration*, explores researcher positionality, the indexicality of languages in the genre of research papers in the discipline of forced migration, and how refugees are discursively constructed in the genre.



Language arts alumna **Jennifer Perkins** is currently director of professional development of teachers for National Heritage Academies (NHA), a charter school management company with 71 schools in eight states and over 40,000 students. Her role in the Coaching and Learning Department is to oversee the delivery of professional development opportunities for 3,000 staff. Development programs include Virtual Instructor Led Training, Instructor Lead Training, and self-paced E-learning. Several English Department faculty have collaborated in these professional development programs.

Off-Campus Activity Risk Reduction

Faculty who organize off campus events for students must have students complete waivers. Guidelines can be obtained from Brian Hatzel, chair of the CLAS Risk Reduction Task Force. After drafting a waiver specific to an event, faculty need to have it reviewed by University Counsel, Mick Doxey.

Professor Pearson Presents at MITESOL

In October Professor Christy Pearson presented at the Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MITESOL) conference, held at Western Michigan University. Her presentations were part of two sessions: “I’ve Learned the Language – Now What Do I Do With It?”—Supporting the New Horizon of Pragmatics” and “Bullying, ELLs (English Language Learners), and the Additional Confound of Disabilities.”

Professor Masko Voted President-Elect of AATC



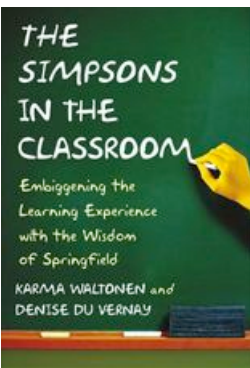
Earlier this fall Professor Amy Masko was voted President-elect of the American Association of Teaching and Curriculum. In August she presented the keynote address, “Poverty and Schooling,” to the Heritage Academy National New Teacher Orientation in Grand Rapids. Amy also presented a paper, “Whose Accountability? A Cross-cultural Analysis of Teacher and Student Accountability in the United States and Ghana,” in October at the American Association of Teaching and Curriculum Annual Conference in Denver.

Scholarship Unites Professor Tucker and Former Student



In August, Professor Veta Tucker participated on a panel at the Atlanta Public Library with former English Department student, Christina Triezenberg, who is pursuing her PhD in English at Western Michigan and who has researched Margaret Mitchell. The panel was part of the library’s 75th anniversary celebration of Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*. Panelists each responded to the question “Is Margaret Mitchell’s beloved bestseller still worth reading?” The panel was organized by Dr. Kathleen Clark, Associate Professor of History at the University of Georgia-Athens.

A Perfectly Cromulent Teaching Resource by Professor Kathryn Remlinger



The Simpsons in the Classroom: Embiggening the Learning Experience with the Wisdom of Springfield by Karma Waltonen and Denise DuVernay (2010) is a teaching resource for a range of subjects, from literature, to linguistics, to composition and sociology. The authors suggest ways to integrate *The Simpsons* into lectures and assignments and also provide a sample syllabus for a *Simpsons*-based course. Because *The Simpsons* is familiar to most students, instructors can use this familiarity to scaffold course material, to encourage critical thinking, to develop cultural literacy, as well as to foster active viewing and learning by linking academic subjects with example episodes. The goal of the book is for faculty to connect with students and their ways of knowing to more effectively teach and also to develop students’ cultural literacy. (A complete review is forthcoming in American Speech.)

Linguistics Faculty Travel to Beijing



Professors Shinian Wu, Laura Vander Broek, and Colleen Brice traveled to China in August to participate in the 16th World Congress of the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), held at Beijing Foreign Studies University. Their presentation, “Demarcating teacher certification tests vs. teacher qualifications: Curricular challenges for TESOL education,” delineated the difficulties TESOL educators face when trying to balance the conflicting expectations for instruction held by government agencies. They also attended valuable presentations on major issues in Applied Linguistics, met old friends and colleagues from around the world, sampled a variety of Chinese cuisine, and experienced life in a city whose size and history dwarf all

major cities in the U.S. One of the colleagues with whom they reconnected was Wenjie Liu, our department’s Fall 2010 visiting scholar. Together with Wenjie and Shinian, Laura and Colleen were able to get a sense of the local culture by visiting a traditional Chinese teahouse and exploring hutong-style neighborhoods. They also toured the Forbidden City, home to China’s Imperial families and built at a time when Middle English was just developing on the other side of the world. Overall, it was a cultural whirlwind of a week.

Former Faculty Member Publishes Poetry Book

Janet Heller’s poetry book, *Traffic Stop*, has recently been published by Finishing Line Press. The book reflects autobiographical themes including the assertive nontraditional woman, close relationships, nature, and death. Janet is currently the president of the Michigan College English Association.



The Universality of Translation by Professor Ivo Soljan

Literary translation, one of my favorite modes of dealing with literature and enjoying it, is undoubtedly only one small segment of the incredibly complex, rich, and widespread human activity that transfers and transforms different kinds of visions and impressions to and into the related, while seemingly disparate and very distant, ones. As for the literary translation’s “narrow” field of action, it is, among other things, an exercise in multiculturalism, linguistics, psychology, sociology, prosody and music, deconstruction and reconstruction, and dozens of other interesting human intellectual and emotional experiences. In other words, literary translation, when properly and expertly practiced, is a scholarly activity par excellence and its place among all the other literary and artistic endeavors in general, including, of course, literary criticism and scholarship, is well-established, precious, and irreplaceable. In fact, every human action or reaction is an act of translation! It occurs in the “ordinary” and everyday acts of communication at all levels, in “translating” all the natural phenomena into scientific language or mathematical formulas, in translating our endless observations of the world around us into the characteristic languages and lingos of different sciences, or into our rich world of emotions.

In that light, I am offering here, once again, a poem of my friend, poet Boris Maruna (1940-2007), which I translated into English, stressing especially its rich multicultural dimension, its exquisite wit, irony, and outright humor, articulated in a small segment of life of a Croatian political exile, trying to “swim” somehow in the fabulous Land of Opportunities and to grab a piece of the celebrated, but too often elusive, American Dream. The setting is the golden California, with its Golden Age place names. *The poem follows on Page 4.*

I, In Fact, Constantly Arrive in the Future

I entered the El Rancho in
Arcadia
In order to have a coffee and for
25 cents I got
A reasonable cup of latte
I glanced at my watch
And sat at a narrow table

The morning sun was pouring
outside
And the world looked generally
pretty terrible
I found myself surrounded with
Some retired folks
Who were also drinking coffee
Some five or six of them, mostly
Quite civilized people, the result
of numerous beef-steaks,
Lots of baked potatoes, beer, the
endless days
Fast-running years and
Loneliness

They were talking about different
diets
For slimming, about sexual
problems
With today's youngsters, about
tourist journeys to Tical
Morocco and Europe; one lady
was just
Learning French

From travels their conversation
somehow swerved
To the subject of dying; they
were talking about death
And dying

As for me, I had just arrived from
New York
In order to see some old friends

To turn the wheel of fortune once
again on this coast
To change my profession and my
wife
Or two
And I came to Arcadia to find a
job
Still relatively young and in good
condition
Only somewhat discouraged by
the thought that
Having the Argentinian
citizenship
In California I belonged also
To the minority section of the
society

You know, said one retiree with a
Jewish physiognomy,
That they have recently invented
a blanket
With which to cover graves
during the winter
So that the dead do not get cold?

We shall not have to wait long,
said a very old guy
With Parkinson's disease
symptoms
And thus hardly able to sit
steadily on his chair,
That before the funeral they will
fill our pockets with powder milk

I am only very worried about the
possibility
Of falling into the hands of the
owner of the funeral home
With the necrophilic dispositions,
Said the lady who had no
chances
To attract someone, alive
Or dead

I would not mind that
Provided that the owner is a
woman,
Said the old Jewish guy, laughing
and showing
A mouthful of perfect false teeth

I do not want to take all this
lightly,
Said the student of French, and I
have already ordered
My coffin and my flowers...

The world outside looked indeed
terrible
Arcadia – hazy, under the shower
of the morning sun
And I could not but think:
There is undoubtedly a method in
all this
Whatever I do, wherever I go,
I, in fact, constantly arrive in the
future
The future in the grave blanket
In the handful of the powder milk
And it appeared to me that my
coffee had the taste of
formaldehyde
And I glanced at my watch again
And got up from the table

Outside the world looked indeed
terrible
While I was slowly crossing the
street and approaching
The entrance of the company

And entered.

For all this
Cannot last much longer.

Translated and (C) by Ivo Soljan
(October 7, 2011)