



Polish Studies Initiative

By Jordan Peters

The Polish Studies Initiative at the Ohio State University kicked off its inaugural semester with two exciting events that brought together the Polish community on campus and throughout Ohio.

On Tuesday, October 9 the Polish Studies Initiative was honored to host Joanna Regulska, Ph. D., professor of women's and gender studies and vice president of international and global affairs at Rutgers University. Dr. Regulska spoke to an audience of nearly eighty OSU faculty, staff, and students and community members at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies about the progress of democracy in Poland twenty years after the fall of the communist regime. Following Dr. Regulska's intellectually stimulating lecture, the Slavic Center hosted its annual autumn reception to welcome back students, staff, and faculty and to recognize Foreign Language and Area Studies fellows for the 2012-2013 academic year and 2012 summer fellows.



Later in October, PSI partnered with the Polish Cultural Institute of New York to present the annual Found in Translation Award to Joanna Trzeciak, Ph.D. of Kent State University for her translation of Tadeusz Rozewicz's *Sobbing Superpower*. The Found in Translation Award is presented annually to the best English translation of Polish Literature. To recognize Dr. Trzeciak's outstanding achievement, a roundtable discussion on the challenges of translating poetry and the mentality of the translator was held at the John Glenn School of Public Affairs. Russell Valentino from the University of Iowa moderated the conversation. Following the discussion, a reception was held at the Faculty Club to formally present the award to Dr. Trzeciak. Guests of the event included members of the Polish Cultural Institute, the Polish American Club of Columbus, and the Ohio chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation.

More Polish Studies Initiative events will be held during spring semester, including during the 2013 Midwest Slavic Conference. PSI is currently accepting applications for faculty research grants and student scholarships. For more information about the application process and eligibility, please visit http://slaviccenter.osu.edu/psi_scholarships.html or contact Jordan Peters at peters.398@osu.edu. Information about future events and PSI news will also be posted on the website at <http://slaviccenter.osu.edu/psi.html>.

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From the Director

Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Friends of Slavic,

2012 is almost behind us and the Center for Slavic and East European Studies at the Ohio State University continues to provide support and innovation

for the advancement of interdisciplinary knowledge on Central and South-Eastern Europe, Russia, and Eurasia at OSU, in the state of Ohio, and beyond. I genuinely appreciate the efforts of all faculty who work with us and whose brilliance and commitment to all things Slavic and Eurasian have created numerous highly successful programs (conferences, symposia, and seminars) with lasting impact. I sincerely admire our students whose intellectual curiosity and passion for the study of our areas of the world matches that of our faculty and promises further exchange of ideas and celebration of diverse cultures.

As a National Resource Center and Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) grants awarding unit, we continue to seed language and area studies courses, sponsor visiting scholars and instructors, organize conferences and events, and administer one of the largest FLAS grants in the country. This calendar year, 468 students took courses fully or partially funded by us and 27 students further developed their language and area studies knowledge through FLAS fellowships.

In times such as ours, when OSU strives to foster interdisciplinary research and teaching, the Slavic Center is uniquely positioned to facilitate interdisciplinary projects, to enhance collaboration between our affiliated units and to maximize the use of available resources. We not only fund collaborative projects but also provide a supportive and creative environment for initiatives that study our regions.

Moving forward to 2013 with renewed energy and dedication, we invite you to share your ideas and to work with us for the continuous growth and inspiration in the study of our areas.

With deep gratitude to our sponsors, I ask you to give today and support our students and programs!

To give, click [here!](#)

With season's greetings,

Yana Hashamova

Habitat for Humanity

by Jessi Jones

It has been a busy semester for the Slavic Center graduate students, but we managed to set aside some time for community engagement and to execute our civic duty (besides voting in the election of course!) On November 3rd a group of 9 volunteers from the Center, including our assistant director and an alumnus who graduated last year, participated in a home building project with Habitat for Humanity. We arrived in the cold, early hours of a Saturday morning to the site and had our orientation with an energetic Habitat site manager named Christina. She introduced us to the work that Habitat for Humanity does in the Columbus community: Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple houses through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials. In addition to a down payment and monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

Christina put us to work right away; most of us spent the entire day high up on ladders, nailing siding on the exterior of the house, doing our very best imitation of a legitimate construction crew. We worked tirelessly for about 6 hours with one 45 minute break for lunch, which we



Photo by E. Kunkler

shared with Christina, courtesy of the Center. We peppered her with questions about the nature of Habitat's work and continued our task. It was a terrific hands-on experience and we all were happy to contribute to the house building process and learn about the work that is being done to combat homelessness in our city.

CSEES Director: Yana Hashamova
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Outreach Coordinator: Jordan Peters
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ANGELA BRINTLINGER WINS 2013 FULBRIGHT AWARD

by Maryann Walther-Keisel

Angela Brintlinger, Associate Professor of Slavic and East European Literature and Culture, won a 2013 Fulbright Award to Poland to do research on her project "World War II, Afghanistan, and Chechnya in Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture." She expects to spend five months next year based at the University of Warsaw Center for East European Studies pursuing research as well as travelling throughout the country and forming contacts with colleagues at other Polish universities.



In an interview by her home department, Brintlinger summarized her project as follows: "War was a central experience of the Soviet 20th century. If the Revolution and Civil War were the 'founding' moments for Soviet culture, and Stalin's terror and World War II its most defining events, then the war with Afghanistan was a fatal step that helped bring the Soviet Union down. Since the 1980s, though, Afghanistan has not been nearly as central to Soviet and post-Soviet cultural production as World War II, which continues to fascinate Russian readers and viewers to this day. Afghanistan carries a stigma in representation similar to that experienced by veterans of the American war in Vietnam; the war ended in defeat, and the many veterans returned downtrodden and damaged by their experiences."

Brintlinger chose Poland as the center for her research rather than Russia, although the latter country was most directly involved in Afghanistan and Chechnya. She is looking forward to a European perspective on the research topic and, since she is considering literary and film artifacts, she doesn't need to be located in Russia to do the work.

During her stay in Warsaw, she proposes to map the post-Soviet military landscape as reflected in the literature and film of the 1980s to the present. She finds the opportunity to work on the topic of war and the nation in Poland exciting. The history of the Polish people's own experiences in war, including World War II, will inform the project. She feels that the Center for East European Studies, with its focus on the culture, history, and politics of the region, will add immensely to her understanding of the relationships between authors, directors, and audiences as they struggled to depict the complexities of war while also themselves functioning in variants of repressive political regimes.

SARAH COWLES TRAVELS TO THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

by Maryann Walther-Keisel

Sarah Cowles, Assistant Professor in the Knowlton School of Architecture, received a Fulbright award for her project "Mapping Urban Landscapes in Georgia to Envision Green and Healthy Cities" at the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts (TSAA), Tbilisi, Georgia.

Cowles was first invited to Tbilisi to participate as an artist in the Artisterium arts festival in 2010, and in 2011 led students from the Knowlton School of Architecture to develop a master plan for an artist residence in Akhalkalaki in the Shida Kartli region. Drawn to the rapidly changing and diverse landscapes of mountainous Georgia, she returned to Georgia and began research into the ecology of former mining and industrial cities such as Tkibuli and Chiatura.

In September of 2012, she led Art Academy students in a 14-day residential program of landscape analysis in Chiatura, Georgia. Chiatura is located in western Georgia on the Kvirila River. It is both a center of maganese ore mining and a gateway to the mountainous wilderness of the Racha-Lekhumi region. The figural and literal landscape of Chiatura served as both the campus and primary text. Participants analyzed the urban, historical, ecological and extractive landscapes of Chiatura. In October 2012, Cowles and the students participated in the first Tbilisi Triennale, exhibiting "We Come in Peace: The Chiatura Paradox" at Europe House in Tbilisi.

Cowles' landscape architecture students from the Tbilisi State Academy of the Arts are currently developing proposals for the Hippodrome, a 60 hectare open green space in the densely populated Saburtalo district. Students' proposals include new sports and festival facilities, reviving and replacing plantings, and designing new earthwork, hydrological, and circulation systems.

She hopes to bring Knowlton School of Architecture students to Chiatura in the next year to work with TSAA students to design proposals for a water filtration landscape for Chiatura and the Kvirila River, which is polluted with tailings sediment from the maganese mines.

Cowles' travel, research, and Georgian language studies are also supported by an OIA Foreign Affairs Travel Grant.

Niagara Foundation Internship

by Daniel Purdy

I recently have had the opportunity to begin an internship with the Niagara Foundation in Columbus, OH. The Niagara Foundation is a non-profit organization, with a Turkish background, whose mission is to promote understanding and respect between the diverse groups of Central Ohio by creating peaceful settings for interaction. With the help of leaders in the local community, the Niagara Foundation was founded in 2003 as a means to aid the community through education, dialogue, and community service.

Niagara Foundation believes that the solution to fostering understanding in a diverse world is through peaceful dialogue. To help promote a world where people respect one another for their views, religion, and culture the Niagara Foundation organizes a variety of events such as monthly luncheon forums and dialogue dinners. Each year the Niagara Foundation hosts an awards ceremony for community leaders, as well as an intercultural reception at the Ohio Statehouse. Over the last two years, the Niagara Foundation has led trips to Turkey, Russia, and Central Asia for local politicians, educators, and members of the business community.

Upon starting my internship, I began working with leaders in the various religious communities in Columbus. My goal is to develop personal relationships with these leaders, enabling a dialogue on the similarities between different cultures and religions, while also learning about how the Niagara

Foundation may be able to help the local communities. I am currently helping to plan our annual awards ceremony, where several individuals and businesses from Columbus will be honored. Also, I am in charge of planning an Abrahamic Traditions Dinner to bring together leaders from the Christian, Islam, and Judaic religions for the purpose of strengthening friendship and understanding. In the future, I may be organizing and leading dialogue trips to Turkey, Russia, or Eastern Europe for these religious leaders as a means of strengthening friendships between the East and the West.

Overall, this internship has been an excellent opportunity for me to develop knowledge about how non-profit organizations operate, as well as learning and developing numerous practical skills, such as event planning, media relations, and fund raising that will be applicable in my career. Working with the Niagara Foundation is allowing me to not only challenge myself, and to give back to the local communities, but to work in the international environment that I enjoy.

2012 Central Eurasian Studies Society Conference

by Derek Peterson

Over the weekend of October 19th, I had the opportunity to attend and present a paper at the Central Eurasian Studies Society Conference at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. The paper I presented was titled “‘Ideological Opportunism’ and the Cotton Scandal: An Examination of Soviet Corruption and Economic Policy in Uzbekistan.” The Cotton Scandal, which occurred in Soviet Uzbekistan during the reign of Party leader Sharaf Rashidov, was the culmination of years of Uzbek party leadership swindling Moscow out of billions of rubles. In the paper, I explained how policy directives from Moscow beginning in the Stalin era shaped a relationship between Moscow and Tashkent as one of “ideological opportunism.”

The chance to share my research with fellow scholars from both domestic and international institutions was incredibly helpful as I received valuable feedback from my panel. This paper is part of my larger master’s thesis project and the feedback given to me was rich with new ideas and different perspectives to consider as I continue my research and begin outlining and writing, ultimately making the finished material much stronger. At the conclusion of my master’s program I intend to continue my career in academia and am currently applying to Ph.D. programs to further study Soviet history.

I was also able to attend panels throughout the weekend on a variety of subjects, from Central Asian politics and nationalism to religious practices and modern literature, and meet with other scholars specializing in a wide range of fields. This exposure to such a large assortment of subjects is incredibly worthwhile to young scholars, in that by attending such an array of panels, they will gain a more complete understanding of a very complex and fascinating region. Whether a student plans on continuing in academia or pursuing a career in the public or private sector, conferences like the Central Eurasian Studies Society are a great way to expose oneself to new thoughts and ideas about an intriguing part of the world.



A Summer in Russia

by Alex Radsky

This summer, with the help of CSEES, a Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship, and the Office of International Affairs, I spent two months in Moscow, Russia enrolled in an intensive Russian language study program directed by American Councils. Upon arriving in Moscow, I quickly realized that in a city of this size and diversity, I would have to develop a focus in order to avoid getting lost among the endless possibilities. Along with my main goal, language study, looking for uniquely Russian experiences led me to exploring the arts as an attempt to find my own interpretation of Russian culture.

Inspired by a course on Russian art that I took in spring quarter at Ohio State, my explorations of the arts taught me a lot: that I love ballet, that the two main art museums of Moscow, the Tretyakov Gallery and the Pushkin Museum of Art are amazing, and that Moscow has more great theatres than even Ohio State has parking garages. But it wasn't the usual landmarks that left the deepest impact on me, nor the most famous artistic venues that were the most formative of my experience.

Although Red Square is a must-see, and the Bolshoi Theatre's performances did completely change my opinion of the performing arts, the Moscow that most captivated me is hidden in the side streets, where a back entrance to a building completely covered in scaffolding hides the jewel within, a tiny theatre specializing in creating documentary performances that discuss issues of contemporary Russian society. I was there for two events, the screening of a new documentary film "Winter, Go Away" and a documentary monologue play, "The Kidnapping." The documentary film was a collaborative effort among 10 students in film school and showed flashes of the absurdity of Russia's political reality. The play, a monologue performance that simultaneously showed the personal story of a young aspiring actor and engaged in a discussion of the essence of the Russia in which he lived, captivated me due to its unconventional performance, and its message that the line between good

and bad is especially thin in modern Russia. In the post-play discussion I was called upon to share my ideas about the play. Although my Russian isn't bad, from the first word out of my mouth everyone in the room stared at me, not listening to what I was saying, but wondering who I was and where I was from. My non-nativeness instantly brought up the question- did I even understand the play? In my momentary isolation as an outsider, I gained insight into how a place that is potentially unique in all of Moscow exemplifies an aspect of Russian culture. Although I heard the words of the actor, and was moved by them, I knew I could not truly relate to them in the way that others in the audience could. After all, although I could experience Russian culture through the arts, I could not live the reality described by those performances.

Another Russian experience involved standing in line for student tickets (only 100 rubles, or about \$3) at the Bolshoi theatre ticket office, watching and participating in the fight over places in line for the allotted 30 tickets, and relying on a hand-written list that had been passed from hand to hand, starting at dawn all the way to 5:00 pm. In an entirely student run affair, while the ticket office manager stood by watching, the line order was 'established' by a girl who had taken a picture of the sign-up list on her iPhone, which is significant because the actual list was thrown away during the day. In such moments I saw not so much 'culture', but a lack of it; yet, at the same time, it revealed a certain way of communicating that was slightly, yet unmistakably different, or I can say, Russian.

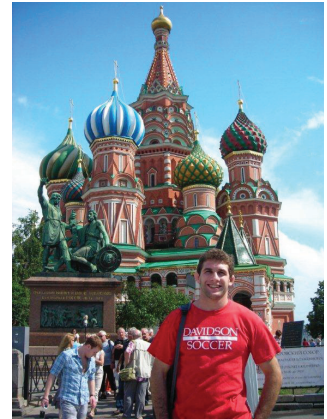


Photo by A. Radsky

CSEES Expands its Ties in the Ohio Region

by Eileen Kunkler

As part of its work to expand access to and the knowledge of Eastern European and Eurasian languages and cultures, CSEES worked with two community colleges this fall. The first is Sinclair Community College in Dayton. Sinclair is attended by more than 20,000 students in the Dayton region. Currently, Sinclair is in the process of starting a new Global Studies program for students interested in international issues. CSEES' outreach coordinator, Jordan Peters, and assistant director, Eileen Kunkler travelled to Sinclair in October to talk to students and faculty about opportunities for students to study languages and take international courses and how this might be beneficial for their careers. This upcoming spring, CSEES & Sinclair will offer similar presentations and also will expand into offering a lecture series.

Also this fall, CSEES worked with Owens Community College in Toledo. CSEES staff delivered a similar presentation to that at Sinclair, but also helped to highlight local employment opportunities to Toledo area students at global companies. Owens Community College offers several study-abroad programs for students, in countries such as China, Belgium, and Spain. At both events, CSEES developed resources to help them write resumes and advertise their skills. Building on these events, the Center will expand its work with community colleges in spring 2013. Plans are in place for a spring lecture series at Lakeland Community College in the Cleveland area. Check the spring newsletter for more updates!

Faculty Updates

Nicholas Breyfogle (Department of History) published "Russia and the Race for the Arctic," *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*, 5, no. 11 (August, 2012), <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/origins/article.cfm?articleid=71>; and "Smena religii v pravoslavnoi imperii: politika religioznoi prinadlezhnosti v Rossii XIX veka." ["Switching Denominations in an Orthodox Empire: The Politics of Religious Affiliation in Nineteenth-Century Russia"], *Tataria Magna*, 1, no. 2 (2012): 16-47. He also presented the following papers at conferences: "Baikal: The Lake and its People, A Brief History," at the Tahoe-Baikal Institute, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, June 20, 2012; "Russia and the Race for the Arctic," and "Sustainability and Economics in the Circumpolar Region," at Gustavus Adolphus College, MN, part of the Global Insight, Circumpolar Region Program, April 19, 2012; and "Place and Space in Siberian History," "Wrangling Space into Russian Imperial History: Agendas for Digital and Collaborative Scholarship," Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, February 24-25, 2012.

Angela Brintlinger (Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures) was a member of the selection committee for the SSRC Eurasia Program fellowships in March and participated in the SSRC Dissertation Fellows Workshop as resource faculty in October. She was also appointed to a special assignment in the Graduate School and became a Faculty Fellow there in autumn semester. In 2013 she will head to Warsaw, Poland on a Fulbright grant at the Center for East European Studies.

Danielle Fosler-Lussier (Music) Publications: "Instruments of Diplomacy: Writing Music into the History of Cold War International Relations." In *Music and International History*, edited by Jessica Gienow-Hecht (Oxford: Berghahn Books, forthcoming 2013); "Music Pushed, Music Pulled: Cultural Diplomacy, Globalization, and Imperialism." Contribution to the special forum "Musical Diplomacy: Strategies, Agendas, Relationships," *Diplomatic History*, 36, no. 1 (January 2012): 53-64; presentations: "The Diplomatic Record: William Strickland's Recordings of American Music in Japan and Poland." Presented at the conference "East-West Cultural Exchanges and the Cold War," Jyväskylä, Finland, June 2012; "Postwar Aspirations and Government Support for Jazz: Writing the History of the State Department's 'Jazz Tours.'" Presented at the University of Chicago Sawyer Seminar at the Franke Institute for the Humanities: "Around 1948: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Global Transformation," 27 April 2012. She is also the recipient of the following grants: Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Faculty Research Grant, 2012, and a National Endowment for the Humanities, Fellowship, 2011-2012.

Helena Goscilo (DSEELC) produced the following publications: *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon* (Routledge 2012); *Embracing Arms: Cultural Representation of Slavic and Balkan Women in War* (Central European Univ. Press, 2012)—co-edited with **Yana Hashamova (DSEELC)**; "Slotting War Narratives into Culture's Readymade" *Fighting Words and Images. Representing War across the Disciplines*, Eds. E. Baraban, S. Jaeger, A. Muller, Toronto: U of Toronto 2012, 132-60; "The Affluent Global Provincial: American Reception of Polish Cinema," *Beyond the Border: Polish Cinema in a Transnational Context*, eds. Ewa Mazierska and Michael Goddard, New York: U of Rochester P, EDP 2013, 28 pages [in press]; "Texting the Body: Soviet Criminal Tattoos," *Cultural Cabaret: Russian and American Essays in Memory of Richard Stites*, eds. David Goldfrank and Pavel Lyssakov, Washington DC: New Academic Press, 2012. 203-230. She also presented the following: keynote address "Two-Way Traffic: the East-West Connection" at the conference "Russia, Eastern Europe, and the West" Oregon U, May 2012; keynote address "Criminal Inversion: Tattoos and Taboos" at the workshop "Punishment as a Crime? Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Russian Prison Culture," U of Uppsala, Sweden, August 2012; "Selling Points: Marketing Gender in Ads" Neoformalist Circle Conference on "The Russian Hero, the Russian Heroine" Oxford U, Oxford, UK, September 2012.

Brian Joseph (Departments of Linguistics and Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures) presented his research and gave the plenary talk at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Slavic Linguistics Society, August 25-27, 2012, at the University of Kansas.

Scott Levi (History) ran the National Endowment for the Humanities-sponsored summer institute "Central Asia in World History" for middle and high school teachers at OSU from July 15-27, 2012.

Dr. Allan Lines (Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics), assisted by OSU Extension faculty, led training for a study tour of 11 Cochran Fellows from Armenia and Georgia hosted by International Programs in Agriculture (IPA) (College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Science) June 18-29, 2012. IPA received funding from the United State Department of Agriculture Cochran Fellowship Program to lead the two-week program on "Sustainable Approaches to Agricultural Extension."

Irene Masing-Delic (DSEELC, emeritus) edited *From Symbolism to Socialist Realism. A Reader*, Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012; and will have the following article published in SEEJ: "Wagner, Lang and Mythopoeic Muddle in Pnin's German Department", October 2012, 56:3.

Andrea Sims (DSEELC) had a review of the book *Defective Paradigms: Missing Forms and What They Tell Us* appear in the journal *Morphology* and presented her research at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Slavic Linguistics Society, August 25-27, 2012, at the University of Kansas.

Jennifer Suchland (DSEELC) published an online essay: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/08/28/contextualizing-pussy-riot-in-russia-and-beyond/> and has a forthcoming essay: "Double Framing in *Lilja-4-Ever*: Sex Trafficking and Postsocialist Abjection," *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2013.

Richard Yerkes (Anthropology) participated in the spring 2012 field season of the *Körös Regional Archaeological Project*, an ongoing investigation of early farming societies in Hungary 7000-6000 years ago, with funding from the National Science Foundation and OSU, along with Dr. Julia Giblin (OSU Ph.D. 2011) and five Ohio State undergraduate students, Megan Luthern, Jackie Lipphardt, Alexis Niekamp, Patrick Druggan and Kyle Olson. His recent publications include the following: Duffy, Paul R., William A. Parkinson, Attila Gyucha, and Richard W. Yerkes. 2012. *Coming Together, Falling Apart: A Multi-Scalar Approach to Prehistoric Aggregation and Interaction on the Great Hungarian Plain*; and *On the Shoulders of Giants: Regional and Micro-Regional Studies in the Prehistoric Carpathian Basin*. Both are accepted abstracts for invited papers at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Memphis. Gyucha, Attila, Parkinson, William, Richard Yerkes, and Paul Duffy, 2012, *Neolithic Nucleation on the Great Hungarian Plain: The Szeghalom-Kovácsalom Microregion*, was an invited paper presented at the International Workshop, "Chronologies, Lithics and Metals in the Eastern Part of the Carpathian Basin and in the Balkans," March 30-April 1, 2012, Budapest.

OSU was robustly represented at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Slavic Linguistics Society, August 25-27, 2012, at the University of Kansas, where seven DSEELC graduate students (**Yuliia Aloshecheva, Mike Furman, Nina Haviernikova, Jeff Parker, Lauren Ressue, Monica Vickers, Kate White**) presented their research.



CSEES Alumni Spotlight: Travels and Teaching in Georgia

by Emma Pratt

I spent October 1 the same way I spent most of my days off in early fall—lazing in bed lesson-planning in my pajamas, playing slapjack with my host family, and alternating between reading a chapter of my novel and reading a Dr. Seuss book aloud to my host siblings. There was one thing I did differently on that day, though: I kept sneaking peeks at the TV news and checking with my Bebia (Georgian for “grandmother”) to make sure I understood what was happening. October 1 was the date of Georgia’s Parliamentary elections, though at the time I didn’t realize just how significant these elections were. I knew that changes were afoot—the protests in response to the prison abuse scandal had been going on for a few weeks (I’d driven past them in my “marshrutka” most evenings), and every conversation somehow wound its way to speculation on the outcome of the election, and declarations of support for one faction or another. When I went to bed that evening, there was a cacophony of car horns and sounds of celebration, but I didn’t know who had cause to celebrate.

The next morning I learned that the opposition Georgian Dream coalition had won far more seats in Parliament than anyone had expected, and would make up the majority of the next Parliament. The peaceful transition of power from President Saakashvili’s long-ruling United National Movement to the new Georgian Dream is generally considered a huge step for democracy in Georgia. I remain impressed by the great progress that Georgia has made, but I was also worried about the changes that the election might bring about—Georgian Dream’s election platform lacked detail beyond an anti-Saakashvili message, and its leader Bidzina Ivanishvili was a mystery. I wasn’t alone in my fears that backlash against President Saakashvili—and his emphasis on English-language education—might swiftly follow Georgian Dream’s victory and threaten my position as an English teacher, in addition to altering or abolishing other government-sponsored reform measures. The Georgian elections reminded me of the fact that in much of the world, the outcome of an election has a real and tangible effect on the everyday lives of the citizens. Despite the potential for upheaval,



Photo courtesy of E. Pratt

my day-to-day life hasn’t changed much in the month since the elections: my students are still enthusiastic about learning English and asking me questions about life in America, old women working in shops still think I should marry their nephews because I am a “kai gogo” (“good girl”) for speaking Georgian, and the khachapuri (cheese bread) is still inexpensive, plentiful, and delicious.

As I look out the window of my new apartment in Abanotubani, Tbilisi’s oldest neighborhood, I can see artifacts from many eras of Georgia’s long history: the medieval Narikala Fortress, the Soviet TV tower, and the ultra-modern Peace Bridge. President Saakashvili has left his mark on my view with the new steel and glass dome on the Presidential Palace, and new Prime Minister Ivanishvili has contributed the gold-topped Sameba Cathedral. Like the Tbilisi skyline that maintains its old-fashioned character while adding some modern touches, Georgia keeps growing and changing; proudly holding onto the past while investing in its future, and I’m glad to witness it.

Emma Pratt received her MA from CSEES in 2011. During her time at OSU, she won FLAS awards in Russian and Georgian, and served as an intern at the U.S. Embassy in



Photo courtesy of E. Pratt

Tbilisi. Academically, she is interested in Georgia’s transition to democracy, and her thesis was entitled “Georgia’s 2010 Constitution”. She currently works as an English teacher in Georgia. Last spring, she taught elementary school English in the Kakheti region, and she currently teaches English to police officers in Tbilisi. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she volunteers at an international NGO and writes a blog about her life in Georgia at <https://cookiesandthecaucasus.wordpress.com/>.

New t-shirts from the Slavic Center



As part of its development campaign, the Slavic Center will be selling t-shirts with proceeds going toward student programming and travel support for internships, research, and study abroad. T-shirts are available in S, M, L, and XL and can be purchased for \$10 at the Slavic Center office in Oxley Hall. Shirts are currently available in Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian, Czech, Georgian, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, and Russian. Additional donations are still appreciated and can be made to OSU Development Fund #313858. As always, thank you for your continued support!

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303 Oxley Hall
1712 Neil Ave.
Columbus, OH 43210-1219

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