

# MITTEILUNGEN

AUS MADISON

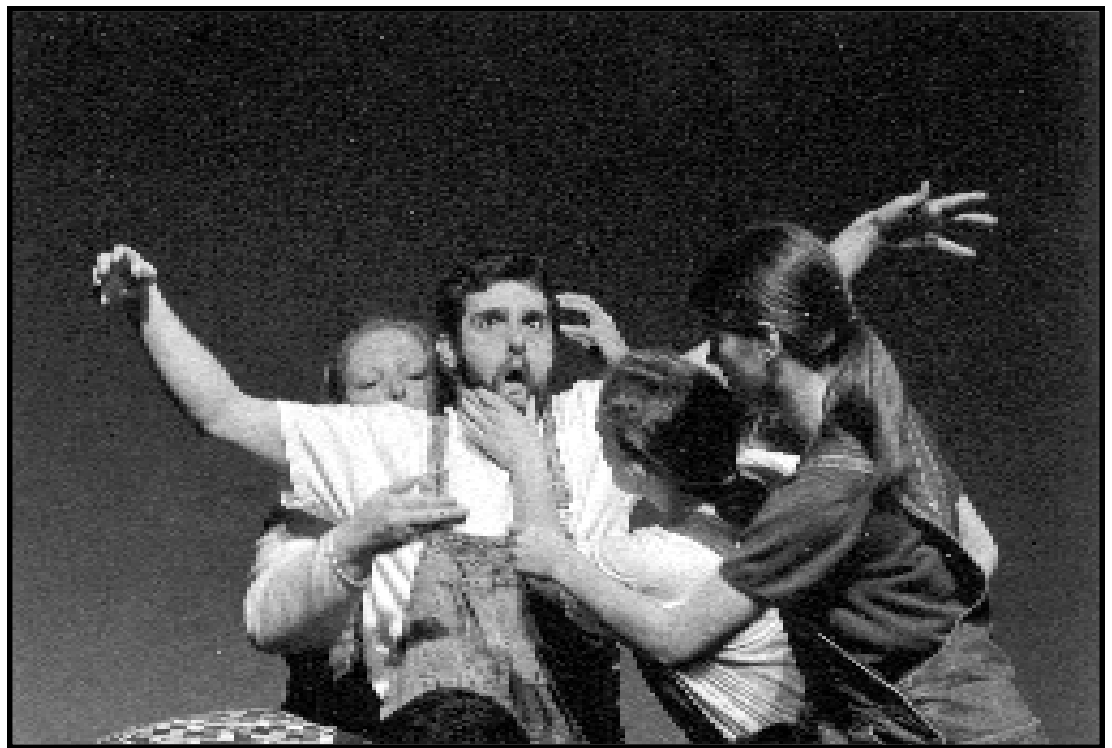
2001

## Slapstick Baroque?!... UW German Department Theater Group Performs *Absurda Comica, oder Herr Peter Squenz*

By Jeannette Squires

A semester's worth of seminar discussions, acting workshops, and play rehearsals culminated during the week of April 23–28, 2001, when the UW-Madison German Department Theater Group performed Andreas Gryphius's Baroque comedy *Absurda Comica, oder Herr Peter Squenz* to four enthusiastic audiences. Work on the play began in January under the auspices of Professor Sabine Groß's seminar "The Theory and Praxis of German Theater." The undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in this course first faced the formidable task of discussing Aristotle's *Poetik*, Lessing's *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, Gottsched's *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst*, as well as scholarly articles on Baroque comedy, on Brecht's anti-illusionist theater, and on his school of acting. Just as the theory was starting to become too "heady," the students headed to Lathrop Hall for a dance/movement workshop with Martina Rumpf, a dynamic guest artist from Switzerland. The two-hour workshop loosened everyone's physical inhibitions and provided the first sparks of inspiration for the physical characterization of Gryphius's characters.

After a thorough discussion of the text, students began to present various scenes from the play and to suggest possible



*Members of Peter Squenz's acting troupe want to know: Does Meister Klotz-George have what it takes to play Thisbe? For the answer, see p. 2.*

ways of staging it. Before long, acting roles were cast, stage crew positions were assigned, and rehearsals were underway in Van Hise Hall. A March workshop with the New York-based actor Rinde Eckert inspired an improvisational "Vorspiel" which included storytelling, cartoon sketches, and puppetry. By early April, a talented and funny guest director, Manfred Roth, had arrived from

*(continued on p. 2)*

### INSIDE

- News from the Max Kade Institute
- Discovering European History at the UW- Madison Libraries
- Grad School in the 1960s

- The Dutch Program
- A Writer's Vision: Prints and Drawings by Günter Grass
- Honoring Mildred Fish-Harnack

- Eindrücke von einer Gastprofessur
- German Honors Convocation
- Letter from the Chair
- And More . . .

## Chronik 2000–2001

MKI = Max Kade Institute  
CGES = Center for German and  
European Studies

## Fall 2000

- Sept 7–9, MKI conference: “The German Experience with the Land in Wisconsin,” Joseph Salmons (UW-Madison), Heike Bungert (Universität Köln), Helmut Schmahl (Universität Mainz), Johannes Strohschänk (UW-Eau Claire), Anke Ortlepp (Universität Köln), Ute Langer (Universität Köln), Ulrich Sängler (Universität Köln), Suzanne Townley (UW-Madison), Kevin Neuberger (Lawyers Title Insurance Corporation), Beth Schlemper (UW-Madison), Scott Moranda (UW-Madison), Robert Ostergren (UW-Madison), Cora Lee Nollendorfs (UW-Madison)
- Sept 11, MKI lecture, Klaus Dehne (Universität Passau): “German Immigration and Its Influence on Knox County, Indiana”
- Sept 14, Shareen Blair Brysac reads from her book, *Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra*; “Honoring Mildred Fish-Harnack: Dedication of the Mildred Fish-Harnack Human Rights and Democracy Lecture,” co-sponsor: International Institute
- Sept 15, University Lecture, Jack Zipes (University of Minnesota): “The Contamination of the Fairy Tale after 1945”
- Sept 15, 22, 29, UW-Madison Cinematheque film series, “Strangers in a Foreign Land—Vernacular Cinema in Germany,” with guest Kutlug Ataman, director of *Lola and Bilidikid*,

*Slapstick Baroque, cont.*

Frankfurt am Main to co-direct with Sabine Groß and Angelika Czekay, and rehearsals had moved into the actual theater space, the Fredric March Play Circle in the Memorial Union. Rehearsals now focused on fine-tuning the rhythms of character interactions, comic action, body language, and speech. Fight scenes, love scenes, disgust, and laughter... all of these needing to be portrayed with precise, ironic humor.

*Absurda Comica, oder Herr Peter Squenz* was written by Andreas Gryphius, one of the most famous German Baroque playwrights, around 1650. Based on a subplot of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, the play depicts a group of working-class stiffs whose ambition it is to perform “Piramus and Thisbe” for the King and Queen, Prince and Princess. (“Piramus and Thisbe,” as told in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, is a love tragedy very similar to *Romeo and Juliet*.)

In Act 1, Peter Squenz, a village teacher and self-declared genius, gathers together his group of friends and proposes the play performance. The others like the idea—not least in hopes of making some money—and they discuss how this play should be developed. For example, they decide that they need not only a Piramus and a Thisbe, but also that actors, and not props, must perform the duties of the moon (Meister Krickes), the fountain (Meister Lollinger), and the wall (Meister Bulla-Butän). Moreover, the man with the thickest beard (Meister Klotz-George) has to play the part of the woman, whereas the lead role goes to the court-jester himself (Pickelherring). In particular, they worry that the lion—as played by the carpenter Klipperling—might be too scary for their audience.

In Act 2, the marshal of the royal court, Eubulus, greets the members of the royal family and presents Peter Squenz and his idea of a play performance to them. While Eubulus is appalled at Squenz’s swagger, lack of etiquette, and downright rudeness, the members of the royal family conduct a detailed investigation of this self-proclaimed well-rounded teacher and decide to allow him to perform the play.

In Act 3, the actual performance takes place. After Squenz presents a brief prologue and summary of the action (interrupted by derogatory



Meister Klotz-George (John Baumgaertner) as Thisbe.

remarks from the royal family), he assumes his role as director. The performance runs less than smoothly, and Squenz has to contend with a series of problems and mistakes (so-called “Säue”). From two fights to characters forgetting lines to drunk actors, the tragedy of Piramus and Thisbe is presented in hilarious, novel format, until finally, the actors receive the hoped-for reward—if only for their “Säue” rather than for their dramatic talent.

The audiences at UW-Madison and at UW-Green Bay, where the group traveled to perform on April 28th, would agree that what sounded like a fairly outdated comedy on paper became a hilarious slapstick comedy on stage. Playgoers left the theater still laughing at the over-the-top carryings-on, and many “Squenz” moments of absurdity will stick forever in the minds of the cast and crew.

## News from the Max Kade Institute

By Mark L. Loudon

This past academic year has been one of the richest in the eighteen-year history of the Max Kade Institute for German-American studies here at UW-Madison. The first major event of the fall (September 7–9) was a working group meeting at the MKI on the theme “The German Experience with the Land in Wisconsin.” This meeting, originally conceived by the late Professor Jürgen Heideking of the University of Cologne, brought together a number of researchers from Germany (specifically, Cologne and Mainz) and Wisconsin to share their insights on the experiences of German immigrants settling and farming in Wisconsin, mainly in the nineteenth century. Coinciding with the visit to UW-Madison of Dr. Hans G. Hachmann, president of the Max Kade Foundation in New York, the meeting was very productive. Plans are now underway to produce a monograph, *The German Experience with the Land in Wisconsin*.

On October 26–28, the MKI hosted another conference, “German-Jewish Identities in America: From the Civil War to the Present.” Co-sponsored with the MKI and the Friends of MKI by the German Historical Institute, as well as by the George Mosse/Laurence Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies, the Center for Humanities, and the Department of German (all at UW-Madison), this conference welcomed participants from a broad range of fields, all sharing an interest in the experience of German-speaking Jewish immigrants to this country in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As with “The German Experience with the Land in Wisconsin,” a collection of edited papers from this conference is foreseen.

Other scholarly activities of note included the visits in the Fall of two European linguists, Tonjes Veenstra from the John F. Kennedy Institute for American Studies at the Free University of Berlin, and Peter Wagener, the director of the German Language Archive at the Institut für Deutsche Sprache in Mannheim. This past spring, Peter Wagener was also a Max Kade Visiting Professor in the Department of German. Many of the students in his dialectology seminar presented papers at the 4th Annual Mini-Conference on German-American Dialects held at the MKI in April. And also on the topic of German-American dialectology, the MKI’s ongoing project to digitize analog recordings going back over fifty years continues apace. A major addition to the MKI Sound Archive this spring came in the form of reel-to-reel tape recordings of Texas

German made over thirty years ago and now generously donated to the MKI by Professor Glenn G. Gilbert (Southern Illinois University-Carbondale).

As central to the mission of the MKI as scholarly research is, equally important is promoting outreach to the broader community, especially to schools, in the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea. A key player in this regard this year has been a new member of the MKI staff, Antje Petty. Antje brings to her new position as outreach specialist considerable experience as a teacher of German at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Together with Emily Engel and Pamela Tesch, Antje has already developed and tested a set of educational resources on the topic “Family and Immigration” for teachers at the middle and high school levels. Antje, Emily, and Pam also shared their experiences with the German Immigrant Teaching Resource project at the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Association of Foreign Language Teachers in Appleton. For more information on Antje Petty’s growing outreach projects, visit [http://www.wisc.edu/mki/k-12\\_projects.html](http://www.wisc.edu/mki/k-12_projects.html).

Finally, one of the most exciting developments at the MKI this year has been the creation of a new research center at UW-Madison with which the MKI will be formally affiliated, namely the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures (CSUMC). This center, presently housed at the MKI, will eventually serve a five-state region (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri) as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities’ planned creation of ten regional humanities centers across the country. Under the leadership of UW-Madison folklorists James P. Leary and Ruth Olson and MKI director Joseph Salmons, the mission of CSUMC will be to study the languages and expressive cultures of the various peoples, indigenous and immigrant, in the upper Midwest region. This past spring, CSUMC submitted a winning proposal under UW-Madison’s cluster hiring initiative that will fund the creation of three new faculty positions to explore upper Midwestern material culture, ethnic performance, folklore research and education, and cultural studies and tourism. The formal association of the MKI with CSUMC will facilitate the integration of research on the German-American immigrant experience into broader intellectual contexts. Feel free to visit the CSUMC and MKI websites frequently for regular updates on their various activities (<http://www.wisc.edu/csumc/>, <http://www.wisc.edu/mki/>).

co-sponsored with Communication Arts

- Sept 22–24, International Sociology Symposium: “Economy and Society: Max Weber in 2000,” co-sponsored with German Department & CGES

- Oct 3, Roundtable, Bernd Schirmer and Matthias Biskupek (satirists from eastern Germany) read from their works

- Oct 12, Linguistics Colloquium, Mark Loudon (UW-Madison): “Colloquial and Nonstandard Speech and the Syntax/Semantics Interface,” sponsored by Dept. of Linguistics and the Linguistics Students Organization

- Oct 19–21, 33rd Wisconsin Workshop: “Aesthetics and Aisthesis: Sensate Cognition, Art, and Literature,” Barbara Stafford (University of Chicago), Hans Adler (UW-Madison), Hinderk Emrich (Medizinische Hochschule, Hannover), Sabine Groß (UW-Madison), Jochen Schultes-Sasse (University of Minnesota), Christoph Weber (UW-Madison), Steve Krause (UW-Madison), Ivan Soll (UW-Madison), Wolfgang Welsch (Universität Jena), Carsten Zelle (Universität Bochum)

- Oct 26–28, MKI conference: “German-Jewish Identities in America: From the Civil War to the Present,” Joseph Salmons (UW-Madison), Christof Mauch (German Historical Institute), Henry Feingold (CUNY, Baruch College), Leah Hagedorn (Tulane University), Anke Ortlepp (Universität Köln), Karla Goldman (Jewish Women’s Archive), Gerhard Grytz (University of Nevada), Tobias Brinkmann (Universität Leipzig), Ruth Goldman (UW-Madison), Cornelia Wilhelm (Universität München), Derek Penslar (University of Toronto),

Mitch Hart (Florida International University), Bobbie Malone (Wisconsin State Historical Society), Harley Erdman (University of Massachusetts), Thomas Kovach (University of Arizona), Monika Schmid (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Manfred Kirchheimer (filmmaker), co-sponsored with the German Department and German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C.

•Nov 7, Roundtable, Alexander Košenina (Freie Universität Berlin): "Schönheit im Detail. Mikroskop und Guckkasten als poetologische Metaphern"

•Nov 7, film showing of *Burning Life* (Peter Walz) sponsored by the UW-Madison German Club

• Nov 15, Roundtable, author Alissa Walser reads from her works, co-sponsor: CGES

•Nov 21, Roundtable, Rudolf Drux (Universität Köln): "Goethes Homunkulus und seine Nachkommen"

Dec 6, Roundtable, Mara Wade (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign): "Die Nürnberger Friedensprobleme 1649/50"

### Spring 2001

• Jan 31, MKI lecture, Peter Wagener (Institut für Deutsche Sprache and Deutsches Spracharchiv, Mannheim): "Languages in a Virtual World: German and German-American Dialects on the Internet"

•Feb 2, Roundtable, Venkat Mani (Stanford University): "Phantoms of Gastarbeiterliteratur: Three Turkish-German Texts and a Critique of Identity"

•Feb 9, Roundtable, Kelly Barry (Johns Hopkins University, "The Dramatization

## Discovering European History at the UW-Madison Libraries

By Barbara Walden

Since the fall of 1998, it has been my great pleasure to be the European history librarian at one of the nation's foremost European studies libraries: Memorial Library on the UW-Madison campus. After many years as history bibliographer and Western European studies librarian at the University of Minnesota, I made in many respects a leap into the unknown in coming to a new position in Madison. Now that I have been here for a while, the initial delights of uncovering the similarities and differences between two sister institutions and their library resources have given way to an almost daily pleasure in getting to know the uniqueness of the Madison collections in depth.

Even if I had had no idea of Madison's progressive tradition, I could have inferred this emphasis from the strength I have found here in German socialist and labor publications. Diplomatic and institutional history are represented in remarkable depth in our collection of German-language parliamentary and legal materials. For the social scientist, a current statistical collection is supported by a correspondingly strong retrospective collection encompassing all of German-speaking Europe. The institution's abiding interest in the diversity of German-speaking Europe is reflected in an outstanding and ongoing collection of regional and local historical serials, which is unusual at the end of an era in which libraries nationwide have been slashing foreign-language serial subscriptions. The collection of serials about the history of German-speaking Europe still maintained in Madison is a significant national resource.

Other notable strengths include a fine collection of historical primary source materials from Germany of the 1930s and 1940s, some of which are in the process of transfer to Special Collections. Another unique collection consists of travel materials from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including pamphlets, brochures, train schedules, and travel guides, unusual for an American collection in its depth. These receive significant use by faculty, graduate students, and other researchers interested in an array of such subjects as the growth of capitalism, the representation of national identity, and the social history of travel and tourism.

In addition, I am currently working with the preservation and conservation staff on an excellent

collection of European ephemeral materials and pamphlets from World War I, which will become available in Special Collections after they are stabilized. Working with these fragile and ephemeral materials has increased my appreciation of the care and resources devoted to preservation, conservation, and digitization in the UW-Madison libraries. Many of the above-mentioned materials represent part of the library's original collections and reflect the broad vision of the library's founders. Other significant German historical resources are found in an impressive microforms collection, which supports programs and research in Reformation studies, early modern European history, German social history, and Jewish studies.

It is, of course, a constant pleasure to work on a campus with one of the finest American history collections in the country: the library and archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, which provide the Germanist interested in foreign affairs with a broad array of resources. In addition, the presence on campus of the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, with its library of German-American imprints, adds a further dimension for the historian. And the rare materials in Special Collections include an outstanding collection of materials in the history of science, as well as original historical resources for the study of the Reformation.

In addition to the delights offered by new collections and the growth of my own knowledge, I have found myself part of a group of colleagues who provide a breadth of subject knowledge and skill in collection development for Western Europe that other libraries can only envy. My work as European history librarian, which encompasses Western Europe (including Great Britain) from the beginning of time through 1945, is complemented and enriched by that of my colleagues Vicki Hill, who covers post-1945 Western European social sciences and contemporary history and has responsibility for one of this country's most important collections of materials from the German Democratic Republic, and John Dillon, who is responsible for European humanities: linguistics, literature, theatre, cinema, philosophy, and religion, including a wealth of resources in Germanic literature and culture from all periods.

## Grad School in the 1960s: A Reminiscence

By Robert D. King  
(University of Texas-Austin)

Graduate-school days, German Department, Madison? My immediate association is: *glückliche Erinnerungen*. There I was, new in the fall of 1961, explaining to the graduate advisor, John Workman, that I had come to take courses on Mann, Kafka, and Rilke. Period. I thought, you see, that that was the way it worked: you went to graduate school in German to take courses on the writers you liked to read. Yiddish, they say, has a word for everything, and it has one for me then: a *griner* 'greenhorn,' cf. German *grün*, English *clueless*.

Always patient with the young, Professor Workman pointed to certain, let us say, insufficiencies in my record—like the fact that I had never had a single German course in my entire life (I had majored in math)—and so I had lots to make up; and in any case every new graduate student was required to take Middle High German, Phonetics, and Introduction to Scholarship. I toned down to reality very quickly.

In those days literature students and linguistics students took almost equal doses of literature and philology/linguistics. So everybody had a year of Middle High German, the first semester from Merrill Heffner, the second from Martin Joos, and that was the course that got me into linguistics. "I knew," as Leonard Bloomfield famously said, "that I should always work in linguistics."

Irmengard Rauch and Evelyn Coleman, *Neulinge* then, added to the mix on the language/linguistics/philology side, and Lida Kirchberger taught medieval literature. (Very British: I remember Professor Kirchberger pondering in a seminar on *Tristan*: "One wonders how Isolde managed never to get pregnant.") And then there was Smoky Seifert, History of the German Language, Dialectology—kindest man who ever lived—and his beloved Mamie.

And what parties! We drank martinis then, students and faculty alike. Faculty-student relations were remarkably egalitarian.

Jost Hermand was largely responsible for literature at the time. I learned more from his "Deutsche Literatur um die Jahrhundertwende" seminar than he knows, and not just about Loie Fuller and Ruth St. Denis. Theodor Fontane enlarged my Mann-Kafka-Rilke canon under the aegis of Walter Gausewitz, funny, wise, endearing. Not that much of it, the literary thing, stuck, *tant pis*. The lapidary faculty verdict on my qualifying

exam in literature *schmerzt noch*: "Sie haben uns sehr enttäuscht, Herr King; jedoch...." Martin Joos was my *Doktorvater*, eventually almost a surrogate father actually, and that was odd because Joos was odd. He looked somewhat Martian with that great domed forehead and pronounced supraorbital development, the dolichocephalic skull; and he



talked the way Martians talk. (Professor Heffner, who didn't like him, told us, "Martin speaks like no one living or dead.") In Old High German class Joos once asked me whether I found the OHG word *hella* 'Hölle' amusing. God knows what I answered, but I knew then that I would die for this man if necessary or, failing that opportunity, write a dissertation for him.

Nature was a big part of the Madison appeal, too. The lakes, sailing, ice-skating in Vilas Park, Picnic Point, the Arboreteum, my *Hütte* in the apple orchard, New Glarus, Horicon Marsh, *Wanderungen*. Such, such were the joys of early 1960s Madison. A substantial chunk of me was formed by those Madison years, by Bascom Hall, by my teachers and fellow students, and a piece of me rests there still.

of Boredom in *Leonce und Lena*'

- Feb 12, 14, 15, Martina Rumpf (Basel, Switzerland): Movement workshops co-sponsored with Dance Program (Knapp Fellow)
- Feb 22, Roundtable, Rudolf Hoberg (Universität Darmstadt): "Sprechen wir bald alle Denglisch oder Germeng?"
- Feb 23, Thomas Kniesche (Brown University): "Günter Grass's Drawings," co-sponsored with Elvehjem Museum
- Mar 1, Sabine Groß (UW-Madison), Thyra Knapp (UW-Madison), Rebekah Pryor (UW-Madison), Hans Adler (UW-Madison): "Reading from Günter Grass's Works," co-sponsored with Elvehjem Museum
- Mar 6, CGES lecture, Imke Lode (Universität Halle-Wittenberg): "Coming to Terms with the Past: The Joschka Fischer Debate in Germany"
- Mar 22, Mark Aronoff (SUNY-Buffalo): "The ABC's of Language," co-sponsored with Linguistics Department
- Mar 24, Patricia Herminghouse (Rochester University): "Shifting Curricular Boundaries: The German Studies Model" (Global Forum lecture)
- Mar 23–25, Third Annual Graduate Student Conference: "Bratwurst und Döner: Perspectives on German National Identity"
- Mar 30, Carol Poore (Brown University) reads from *The Bonds of Labor: German Journeys to the Working World 1890–1990*
- Apr 1–23, Manfred Roth (Detmold): Brittingham scholar, guest dramaturg for German play production,

co-sponsored with Theater & Drama Department

- Apr 5, German Day brings students from 57 Wisconsin high schools and middle schools to campus for a day of competitions.

- Apr 18, Sander Gilman (University of Illinois, Chicago): "What Makes a Jew? Jewish Identity and Communism: The Case of Jurek Becker" (Center for the Humanities lecture series)

- Apr 19, Sander Gilman (University of Illinois, Chicago): "Learning a Foreign Language in a Monolingual World" (Global Forum lecture)

- Apr 19, Friedemann Weidauer (University of Connecticut): "The Challenge of Minority Literature to the Concept of National Literature," co-sponsored with CGES

- Apr 23–25, German play, Andreas Gryphius's baroque comedy *Absurda Comica, oder Herr Peter Squenz*

- Apr 24, University lecture, Lars Lönnroth (Göteborgs Universitet): "The Art of Carl Michael Bellman," co-sponsored with Scandinavian Studies

- May 4, University lecture, Beatrice Hanssen (Harvard University): "Memory, Extension, Void: The Jewish Museum in Berlin"

- May 10–15, Dutch film series, *Another Mother* by Paula van der Oest, *Little Sister* by Robert Jan Westdijk, and *Last Words—My Sister Yoka and Lucebert—Time & Farewell* by Johann van der Keuken

- May 12, 4th Annual MKI Mini-Conference on German Dialects in the Midwest.

## The Dutch Program—These Students Volunteer for a Test!

By Jolanda Vanderwal Taylor

The Dutch program has once again offered new courses this year: 19th- and 20th-Century Dutch Culture in the fall, and 20th-Century Dutch Literature in the Spring semester. Several dissertators continued to work away at their projects, and some finished. We were pleased to show four hard-to-find Dutch films during the Spring semester (see "Chronik" entry for May 10–15). But perhaps the most remarkable event was the *Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal* exam in early May. As you probably know, the Dutch program has been an official "test site" for this exam for many years, offering students and non-students alike (the Wisconsin Idea at work!) the opportunity to get a standardized assessment of their Dutch skills, one that is recognized around the world. The test is offered at three levels and evaluates proficiency of the "four skills" (and they don't mean smiling, pointing, shrugging, and nodding). Perhaps you

knew all this already, and are now wondering why this event is even worth reporting on in this publication. The reason is that nine students participated in the exam this year; I think our previous "record" (though we never thought of it that way before) was three. We are, of course, still waiting for the results. We are also eagerly waiting to hear what will happen to the exam, as it may be completely overhauled one of these years. It's possible that our gang of nine took the last "old style" *Certificaat* exam. In any case, we put on a good show.

For more information about the exam, see <http://www.taalunie.nl/%5Ffolders/default.html>.

If you would like to take the exam next year, please contact me by email at [jvtaylor@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:jvtaylor@facstaff.wisc.edu) by February 2002, and look for announcements on the Dutch Program website (<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/german/dutch/>).

---

## The Third Annual Graduate Student German Studies Conference: "Bratwurst und Döner: Perspectives on German Identity"

By Rebekah Pryor and Jill Twark

What does it mean to be "German" today? How have Germans in the distant and more recent past constructed their own identity, both within Germany and abroad? How do immigrants in Germany deal with their own unique identity issues? How have the various struggles to develop and assert one's German or non-German identity been expressed in German-language literature, film, music, art, history, and popular culture? How should we, as scholars and teachers of German language and culture, convey these struggles to our students? These are the questions the sixteen presenters (two from the UW-Madison, and others from as far away as Berkeley, Austin, Boston, and New York City) addressed at our third annual UW-Madison German and Dutch Graduate Student Association's Conference, this year entitled "Bratwurst und Döner: Perspectives on German Identity." Conference presentations covered the dual citizenship debates, language and identity attitudes in the former West and East Germany as displayed in jokes, teaching about identity issues in the classroom, and depictions in German films of the 1950s and 1990s of identity formation processes following World War II and German unification.

The conference was started two years ago by Kristin Lovrien-Meuwese and Sara Young, and this

year's conference organizers, Rebekah Pryor and Jill Twark, expanded and changed its format. For the first time the conference took place over two days instead of one, allowing for wider participation and enabling out-of-state speakers to get to know the UW-Madison campus and the city of Madison. The conference opened with a reception on Friday evening, featuring a solo violin performance by Mark J. Schuppener, a UW-Madison music student. Also new this year was the idea to invite a keynote speaker. The keynote address by Professor Pamela M. Potter of the German Department and School of Music, entitled "Music and Identity: A Task for German Studies," traced German national identity issues in music history, emphasizing music's central role in German society and culture. Additionally, a screening of Thomas Hausner's 1997 film *Made in Germany* added a dynamic perspective to current and past German identity issues as well as comic relief on Saturday afternoon.

The conference was a great success, and the conference organizers are particularly grateful to the German Department and the Associated Students of Madison for their generous financial support.

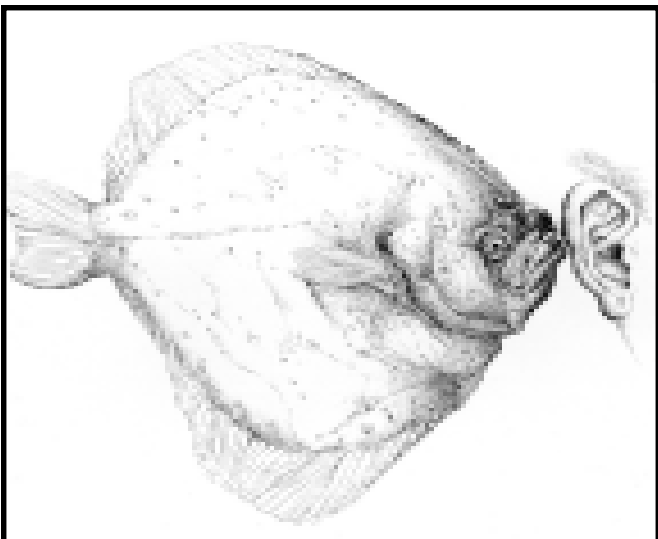
## A Writer's Vision: Prints and Drawings by Günter Grass at the Elvehjem Museum

By Christoph Weber

From February 17 through April 15, 2001, the Elvehjem Museum of Art in Madison exhibited artworks by the 1999 Nobel Prize-winning German author Günter Grass. On display were drawings, lithographs, etchings, and etching plates Grass created between 1972 and 1997. They are from the collections of the Ludwig Forum in Aachen and of the Museum Würth in Künzelsau.

Many are unaware that Grass is not only an internationally acclaimed author but also an accomplished artist. Before publishing his first novel, *The Tin Drum*, in 1959, he was a student of painting and sculpture at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art and the Academy of Fine Arts in West Berlin. Grass has stated that his novels originate from pictorial ideas and that the writing process and the process of creating an artwork go hand in hand.

When entering the exhibit, one was struck by Grass's ability to transform narratives into visual metaphors. Viewers familiar with his novels *The Flounder* (1977), *The Rat* (1986), and *Call of the Toad* (1992) could recognize the author's unique animal symbolism here in their visual representation. The *Flounder* print cycle, for instance, shows the gradual stripping away of the fish's meat until only the bones and the author's thick glasses are left. The etched flounder is depicted with loving detail that attracts the viewer's gaze.



From The Flounder series.



*Self and Hat with Toad, 1992*

Another outstanding series of etchings, *Requiem of a Glove* (1981), depicts the destruction of the environment and the demise of communism. The cycle corresponds to Max Klinger's series *A Glove* from 1881. The print "Shifted Symbol" depicts a decrepit old glove—a far cry from Klinger's romantic symbol of sexual yearning—together with two discarded tools: a hammer and a sickle.

The exhibition was accompanied by a slide lecture entitled "Distrust the Ornament: Günter Grass and the Textual/Visual Imagination" by Thomas Kniesche, associate professor of German studies at Brown University. Our own German Department, in cooperation with the Elvehjem Museum, organized the event "Readings from Günter Grass" on March 1, 2001, in which professors Hans Adler and Sabine Groß, together with graduate students Rebekah Pryor and Thyra Knapp, read from works represented in the exhibition. During the readings, illustrations of artworks by Grass were projected onto a large screen, highlighting once more the interrelationship between the narrative and visual representation in Grass's oeuvre.

### New Faculty:

- Assistant Professor Venkat Mani joins German Department in Fall 2001

### Recent Appointments:

- Assistant Professor Gerhard Richter promoted to associate professor
- Gerhard Richter selected as affiliate professor by the Department of Comparative Literature
- Mark Loudon appointed to faculty and Executive Committee in Jewish Studies
- Pamela Potter, elected director at large, American Musicological Society

### Recent Faculty Awards:

- Marc Silberman, Summer 2001 Travel Grant, Center for European Studies (UW-Madison) and AATG-DAAD Summer 2001 Research Grant

### Faculty Sabbaticals:

- Nancy Kaiser 2001–2002 (end of three-year tenure as chair of Women's Studies Program)
- Cora Lee Nollendorfs 2001–2002
- Carla Love Spring 2002

### Recent Visiting Faculty and Scholars:

- Rudolf Drux (Universität Köln), Fall 2000
- Stephan Jaeger (Universität Gießen), visiting scholar, Spring 2001
- Alexander Košenina (Freie Universität Berlin), Fall 2000
- Peter Wagener (Institut für Deutsche Sprache and Deutsches Spracharchiv, Mannheim), 2000–2001

**New Books by Faculty:**

• Hans Adler, guest editor of *Herder Jahrbuch / Herder Yearbook 2000*, Stuttgart/Weimar 2000

• Klaus Berghahn, *Grenzen der Toleranz. Juden und Christen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2000); *Friedrich Schiller: Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, new edition with commentary and essay (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000)

• Salvatore Calomino with Charlotte Brancaforte, German text and libretto translation, Gustav Mahler, *Die drei Pintos: Based on Sketches and Original Music of Carl Maria von Weber*, edited by James L. Zychowicz (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 2000).

• Jost Hermand, *Rethinking Peter Weiss*, edited with Marc Silberman, 2nd ed., (New York: Peter Lang, 2000); *Formen des Eros in der Kunst* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2000); *Karl Emil Franzos: Der Pojaz*, editor, 4th ed. (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 2000); and *Mit den Bäumen sterben die Menschen. Zur Kulturgeschichte der Ökologie*, (Tokyo: Tsukiji-Shokan, 2000), in Japanese.

• Pamela Potter, *Die deutsche Kunst. Musikwissenschaft und Gesellschaft von der Weimarer Republik bis zum Ende des Dritten Reichs*, translated by Wolfram Ette (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 2000).

**PhDs Awarded 2000–2001**

- Jennifer Bjornstad
- Jules Gliesche
- Meredith Hassall
- Ralph Morris
- Ted Rippey
- Regina Smith

## Honoring an American Victim of National Socialism: Mildred Fish-Harnack, Class of 1925

By Pamela Potter

“And I have loved Germany so much.” These were the final words of Mildred Fish-Harnack—UW-Madison graduate, professor of American literature, and the only U.S. citizen executed for treason by the Nazis.

In September, Mildred Fish-Harnack was honored by the University of Wisconsin with the dedication of the Mildred Fish-Harnack Human Rights and Democracy Lecture Series of the International Institute, planned in cooperation with the Department of German. This annual lecture series, sponsored by the Office of International Studies and Programs, deals with human rights issues worldwide and is designed to educate students on the importance of such issues. The dedication was inaugurated by a talk by Shareen Blair Brysac, herself a UW-Madison alum and author of the recently published book *Resisting Hitler: Mildred Harnack and the Red Orchestra*, and was accompanied by an exhibit in the lobby of Memorial Library.

Mildred Fish was born in Milwaukee in 1902 and came to the UW-Madison in 1921. In 1929, she left for Germany to join her husband, German native Arvid Harnack, after having received her B.A. and M.A. in English literature. She earned her doctorate in Germany and taught American literature at the University of Berlin.

Mildred and her husband got to witness the demise of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler up close. Arvid, an economist who had studied at the UW-Madison on a Rockefeller fellowship, held an important post in the Nazi Ministry of Economics, shocking some of their American friends into thinking the couple had sympathies for Hitler. In reality, they were organizing a leftist resistance group that helped Jews and dissidents escape Germany and passed economic secrets to the Americans and Russians. During the war, their group managed to carry out industrial sabotage, incite protests among foreign slave laborers working in munitions plants, disseminate anti-Nazi literature, and convey military intelligence to the Soviet Union. The Gestapo became aware of these activities and

referred to the group as the “Red Orchestra” (*Rote Kapelle*) because of the “concerts” they were transmitting by radio to Moscow.

Owing to a lapse in Soviet intelligence in 1942, the identity of the leaders of the Red Orchestra became known, and the Gestapo rounded up and arrested more than 100 of its Berlin members. Seventy-five of them, including the Harnacks, were tortured and put on trial. Arvid was hanged, while Mildred was initially sentenced to six years hard labor. Following Hitler’s own review of the case, however, she was retried and sentenced to death. After more than five months of imprisonment and grueling interrogation, Mildred Fish-Harnack was guillotined on February 16, 1943—the only American to be executed by the Nazis as an underground conspirator. She spent her last hours scrawling an English translation of Goethe’s “Vermächtnis” on the walls of her cell.

Mildred Fish-Harnack was honored after the war in the Soviet Union and in East Germany, where a school and a street bore her name and a stamp was issued with the image of her and her husband, but her courage and sacrifice were downplayed back home. Here at her alma mater, there was interest in establishing a memorial for her, but a commission headed by Helen C. White decided against it at the height of the McCarthy era, owing to suspicions that Mildred had had communist affiliations. Eventually, in 1986, the Wisconsin Legislature designated September 16 as “Mildred Harnack Day,” a day of special observance in the public schools, and in 1996 the Wisconsin Community Fund established a scholarship in her name for outstanding students at the High School of the Arts in Milwaukee. A campaign is underway in Germany to stop the renaming of the Berlin street bearing her name, and the dedication of this lecture series at UW-Madison is one more positive step toward redeeming the reputation and honoring the memory of Mildred Fish-Harnack.



## News from the German Club

By Corina Petrescu

The new German Club was started in the fall of 1999 and involves all students interested in any types of activities that supplement their classroom studies. Its current activities and long-range plans include regular showings of German films, working with local schools, an international cultural fair, study groups, roundtable presentations of senior theses, a student-based lecture series, and other activities and events. This year it launched its first essay contest, "Kreativ auf Deutsch," designed for students in beginning or intermediate levels of German language study who wish to practice their language skills in a more creative and informal manner. The idea for this competition came from the organizers' wish to encourage students in their German language studies by demonstrating to them just how much they can achieve after only one, two, or three semesters of German. With the support of the German Club and Professor Sabine

Mödersheim, this idea was realized for the first time in Spring semester 2001.

Instructors announce the event in their classes and encourage students to write essays on different topics, either related to their class work or based on their own interests, and to submit these essays for the competition. At the beginning of March all essays are collected and evaluated by other instructors. The best three essays from each level are selected and rewarded with prizes of books, tapes, or compact discs, acquired with the help of sponsors such as the German Department, the German Club, the Goethe Institute in Chicago, or the General Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany in Chicago.

The German Club plans to continue this essay contest in the future and hopes to attract more participation, particularly by students at the beginning level.

## German and Dutch Graduate Student Association

By Felecia Lucht and Rebekah Pryor

This year the GDGSA worked hard to continue the tradition of maintaining an active voice in our department. The GDGSA co-sponsored two lectures—one by Prof. Jack Zipes of the University of Minnesota (thanks to Kaela Lang's hard work!) and one by Prof. Mark Aronoff of SUNY-Buffalo. Graduate students got involved in graduate student recruitment this year by organizing a party for visiting prospective students to help them get to know the department better. The GDGSA also helped out with German Day and with the new faculty hire, and our third annual graduate student conference on German identity was a great success.

Co-presidents Felecia Lucht and Rebekah Pryor introduced several new projects: Kaffeestunde this spring was hosted by TAs and their classes, increasing the coffee-drinking

enthusiasm among both graduate and undergraduate students; the new GDGSA website ([www.sit.wisc.edu/~gdgsa](http://www.sit.wisc.edu/~gdgsa)), designed and maintained by Steve Krause and Matt Lange, includes a calendar of events, minutes of meetings, and information about graduate students, and is continually expanding (!); and finally, the Brownbag Lunch Series, which featured discussions led by faculty members about preparing for the profession, was successfully launched by poster and email humorists Thyra Knapp and Shawn Severson.

As the Spring semester drew to a close, GDGSA members were making plans to keep busy during the summer. Goals include improving the graduate student offices, increasing access to computers, and strengthening the organizational structure of the GDGSA with the introduction of bylaws.

### Ph.D. Prelims Passed 2000–2001

- Tina Gerhardt
- Kaela Lang
- Mary O'Brien
- Kristen Reifsnnyder
- Sara Young
- Christoph Weber
- Matthew Lange
- Steve Krause

### MAs Awarded 2000–2001

- Heather Kinkade
- Andrew Ganaway
- Sandra Kohler
- Rita Morandi
- Jeannette Squires
- Sarah Thorndyke
- Miranda Wilkerson

### Graduate Student Awards

- Nathan Hillman: Barbara Morgridge Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship, Dept. of Scandinavian Studies, 2001–2002
- Eric Jarosinski, Laura Smith: UW-Madison Dissertation Fellowship Awards, 2000–2001
- Jennifer Kapelanski, Antje Krüger: Edith Deuss Fellowships, 2001–2002
- Ingrid Kemp, Jeannette Squires: Edith Deuss Fellowships 2000–2001
- Kaela Lang, Mary O'Brien: Freiburg Teaching Awards, Fall 2001
- Kristen Reifsnnyder: Fulbright
- Nicholas Ryan-Lang: University Fellow (UW-Madison), 2001–2002
- Laura Smith: French-Felton Teaching Assistant Award, Fall 2000
- Peter van Suntum: Foreign Language and Area Studies Program Fellowship, 2001–2002
- Miranda Wilkerson: Fulbright (Austria), 2001–2002

At the April 24, 2001 **Undergraduate Awards Banquet**, the following students were inducted into Delta Phi Alpha, the German national honors society:

- Robert Baillie
- Andrew Borchardt
- Eric Danielsen
- Jo Ellen Drury
- Emily Engel
- Sara McGuire
- Lina Monten
- Laura Nikstad
- Joshua Stuewer
- Daniel Swain
- Justin Sydner
- Thor Templin

The following undergraduate students also received awards this year:

- Brice Cantrell: Hilldale Undergraduate/Faculty Research Fellowship with Professor Gerhard Richter, Summer 2000
- Aris Seferović: Undergraduate Writing Award, Spring 2001
- Linnea Vedder-Shults: Undergraduate Writing Award, Spring 2000
- Karla Vehrs: Undergraduate Writing Award, Spring 2000
- Lynn Wolff: Hilldale Undergraduate/Faculty Research Fellowship with Professor Hans Adler 1999–2000, Undergraduate Writing Award, Spring 2000, and Dr. Karl Oscar and Theodora Pisk Award, Spring 2001
- Justin Drees, Anthony Drendel, and Benjamin Fuller: Scholarships for the Internationale Sommerschule für deutsche Sprache, Literatur und Landeskunde at the Universität Bonn

## Eindrücke von einer Gastprofessur im Herbst-Semester 2000 in Madison, Wisconsin

Von Rudolf Drux  
(Universität Köln)

Dass für einen Aufenthalt in Madison der Herbst die beste Jahreszeit sei, hatten meiner Frau und mir Wisconsin-Kenner schon früh in Deutschland versichert. Unsere dadurch hoch gestimmten Erwartungen wurden nicht enttäuscht; von wenigen trüben Tagen abgesehen, erwies sich die Sonne als zuverlässige Begleiterin, und da rechtzeitig im frühen Oktober einige Nächte Frost brachten, erlebten wir auf unseren Streifzügen durch Wisconsin, vom Mississippi im Westen bis zum Michigan-See im Osten, einen Indian summer, der seinen Namen wirklich verdiente und uns die Fauna und Flora des Landes in einem wahrhaft günstigen Licht präsentierte.

Außerdem erstand ich bei der Heilsarmee (!) ein altes Damenfahrrad, das mir die so sportliche wie naturnahe Erkundung des Campus, der ihn begrenzenden Seen oder des Arboretums erlaubte. Und als Literaturwissenschaftler habe ich auch noch die Lektüre auf der sonnigen Parkbank am Ufer des Lake Wingra zu erwähnen, die ich allerdings ab und zu durch einen sehnsüchtigen Blick auf die Fußball spielenden Kinder unterbrach. Dennoch musste ich das mit dem freundlichen Hinweis auf "the long tradition of soccer in Germany" begründete Angebot eines Vaters, mich als Coach anzustellen, bedauernd, aber bestimmt ablehnen, indem ich mich auf eine noch nicht auskurierte Meniskusverletzung berief.

So konnte ich meine didaktischen Energien ohne Ablenkung durch ein Traineramt ganz in die akademische Lehre einfließen lassen. Diese nimmt sich doch recht anders aus als an Universitäten in deutschen Ländern, was nicht verwunderlich ist: Schließlich handelt es sich bei den Germanistikstudenten in den USA in der Regel nicht um 'native speakers', weshalb Bemühungen um die Sprachkompetenz naturgemäß fortwährender Bestandteil ihres Studiums sind. Anders gesagt: Verständnis und Kommentierung der Primärtexte selbst verlangen zwangsläufig so viele Anstrengungen, dass für die Auseinandersetzung mit der Sekundärliteratur nur wenig Raum bleibt.

Auch dass im undergraduate course "Advanced Composition and Conversation" nur wenige Fachstudenten der Germanistik vertreten waren, bereitete dem deutschen Hochschullehrer der Literaturgeschichte anfangs Probleme. Die hierfür



ausgewählten literarischen Werke, die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Technik reflektieren, erwiesen sich nämlich schlicht als zu schwer—ich hatte wohl das Attribut "advanced" missverstanden. Mir kam zustatten, dass ich aus meinem Forschungsprojekt über die Geschichte des technisch reproduzierbaren Menschen rasch Texte, zumeist Zeitungsartikel, besorgen konnte, in denen aktuelle Experimente mit künstlicher Intelligenz und Manipulationen an der menschlichen Natur erörtert werden. Das stieß auf das Interesse der Studenten aller Fachrichtungen, die zu den vorgelegten Darstellungen dann eigene Recherchen im Internet durchführten und die so gewonnenen Informationen in Arbeitsgruppen engagiert dem Plenum vortrugen.

Auch eine Lehrveranstaltung wie den Graduiertenkurs 'German 612' habe ich im Kölner Uni-Alltag so noch nicht angetroffen, sollte er doch nichts weniger als einen Überblick über die Tendenzen der Literatur seit 1750 bieten. Aber ich habe die Herausforderung, Texte, die für die einzelnen Epochen seit der Aufklärung als repräsentativ gelten können, auszuwählen und zu

*(continued on p. 11)*

**Eindrücke von einer Gastprofessur, cont.**

analysieren und zugleich mit ihrer Betrachtung kultur- und sozialgeschichtliche Entwicklungen nachzuzeichnen, mit Vergnügen angenommen. Die Teilnehmer verfügten durchweg über so gute Sprachkenntnisse, dass sie meinen Ausführungen nicht nur problemlos zu folgen, sondern mit genauen Beobachtungen auch eigene Akzente zu setzen vermochten. Mit interdisziplinären Unternehmungen wie einem Besuch der Ausstellung "Americans in Paris, 1900" im Elvehjem Museum of Art, die die Stilvielfalt des Fin de siècle anschaulich machte, konnte das Kurskonzept jederzeit künstlerisch erweitert und sinnfällig konkretisiert werden. Zu seiner Umsetzung lädt das reichhaltige Kulturprogramm ja geradezu ein, das Madison mit Theateraufführungen, Konzerten, Filmreihen, Dichterlesungen und Vorträgen durchgängig bietet (und das ein wesentlicher Zerstreuungsfaktor während unseres Aufenthaltes darstellte).

Es waren also die drei großen 'Ls', denen ich mich hauptsächlich widmete: Lehre, Land und Leute. Die Forschung rückte dafür eher in den Hintergrund. In Gedanken an künftige

Gelegenheiten zur Vertiefung der angeknüpften interdisziplinären Kontakte und zur Annahme verschiedener Vortragseinladungen an Madison nahen Universitäten (aber was heißt schon nahe in den USA!) habe ich diese Gewichtung ganz bewusst vollzogen, um die besonderen Möglichkeiten auszukosten, die sich aus der viermonatigen Dauer dieser Gastprofessur ergeben, deren Zustandekommen ich Jost Hermand verdanke; dankbar sind wir aber auch allen, die zu unserer Orientierung in und um Madison beigetragen haben.

Die unterhaltsame Seite des Wettergeschehens (die höchstens noch durch die Inszenierung der Präsidentenwahl als Tragikomödie überboten wurde) habe ich schon erwähnt; sie bestätigte sich in der letzten Woche, als ein Schneesturm in wenigen Stunden die Landschaft in tiefes Weiß hüllte (für einen an milde Temperaturen gewöhnten Rheinländer ein so seltener wie prächtiger Anblick) und mit vereisten und verschneiten Startbahnen für einen spannenden Rückflug sorgte: Mit erheblicher Verspätung erreichten wir im Laufschrift durch O'Hare gerade noch den Flieger, der uns nach Frankfurt brachte.

## **"A Passion for German": A Conversation with Carley Goodkind, B.A. 1996**

**By Carla Love**

At German Day 2001 I had the unexpected pleasure of encountering one of my former students, Carley Goodkind, now a teacher herself, shepherding her students through the bustle and excitement in the halls of Memorial Union. Having not spoken with Carley since our semester together in German 226 in 1993, I drew her aside for a few minutes of conversation. I wondered, of course, what had brought her to teaching.

Carley graduated from UW-Madison in 1996 with a B.A. in German Literature and Cultural Anthropology, after spending the 1994–1995 academic year at the University of Bonn. Unsure of her precise career path, Carley knew she wanted to do *something* with German, so she returned after graduation to Bonn. While attending classes at the university, she also worked as a tutor in English for Korean students whose families were associated with the Korean Embassy, an experience that proved decisive. Here she discovered that she loved teaching and saw her goal before her: to become a German teacher.

Returning to Wisconsin, Carley obtained her teaching certification in German and ESL at UW-Milwaukee and began teaching German at Mary Bradford High School in Kenosha in 1999. Carley told me she relishes the challenge of being creative, using music, theater, and poetry "to get the kids hooked on German." She stressed the importance of German Day in motivating her students: after the school's first year of participation in 2000, several students who had planned not to go on in German

changed their minds, so that they could go back to German Day in 2001. As part of a small program in Kenosha, her students found the crowd of some 700 fellow German speakers an eye-opening experience, and speaking German on stage in their skirts made the language become "real."

The recognition that her students gain through participation in Madison's German Day and a German speaking competition at Milwaukee's Rufus King High School is crucial in maintaining her school's German program, Carley believes. German competes for students with French and Spanish, both of which—unlike German—are also offered in Kenosha's middle schools. In the coming years Carley hopes to travel with her students to Germany; in the meantime, students are avidly writing to German penpals in Frankfurt and Wolfenbüttel. Instead of using e-mail, Carley insists on exchanges of handwritten letters, so that her students experience the concreteness of German culture in the square blue airmail envelopes and distinctive German handwriting.

Reflecting on her earlier uncertainty about a career choice, Carley commented, "I knew I had a passion for German, but I didn't know how to plug it in." I found the "plugging in" metaphor apt, since Carley has clearly brought a surge of energy to her high school's German program. Our conversation ended as a group of her students, chattering excitedly about their performances, swept her off to the next competition.

## German Honors Convocation

By Salvatore Calomino

On the evening of April 24, 2001, the Department of German held its annual honors dinner to celebrate the achievements of outstanding undergraduate students in the various areas of German studies. On this occasion the following students were inducted into the University of Wisconsin's Iota Delta chapter of Delta Phi Alpha, the National German Honor Society: Eric Danielsen, Jo Ellen Drury, Emily Engel, Sara McGuire, Lina Monten, Laura Nikstad, Daniel Swain, and Thor Templin. Robert Baillie, Andrew Borchardt, Joshua Stuewer, and Justin Sydnor were also inducted into Delta Phi Alpha, but were unable to attend. A further distinction of this evening was the announcement of the first recipient of the annual Dr. Karl Oscar and Theodora Pisk Fund Award. Lynn Wolff was given the award by Professor Marc Silberman, chair of the Department of German. Ms. Wolff had also been inducted into Delta Phi Alpha in Spring 2000. Following these ceremonies and festivities Laura Nikstad addressed the convocation with her reflections on combining several undergraduate majors, her year spent at the University of Freiburg, and the role of German studies in the liberal arts (an excerpt from her address follows). The dinner and convocation were then concluded, and all participants had the opportunity to attend a performance of this year's departmental play, *Absurda Comica, oder Herr Peter Squenz*.

## Reflections on the Value of the Liberal Arts and Foreign Language Study

By Laura Nikstad

*Laura Nikstad, who majored in German literature and biochemistry, spent the 1999–2000 academic year at the University of Freiburg. The following remarks are excerpted from her address at the Spring 2001 German honors convocation.*

Why should we value and fund the liberal arts? Why are the liberal arts an integral part of a complete education? At the risk of preaching to the choir, I cannot stress enough how important the liberal arts have been in teaching me how to think, read, and write critically. The liberal arts teach students (and the future workforce) how to think and communicate, something *still* more important than computer skills or internships. A liberal arts education is about dabbling in many subjects and gaining an appreciation, not a mastery, of each. Each of these subjects influences who we are, how we think, and how we live our lives. For example, enjoying and understanding literature is a lifelong skill that stretches the vocabulary and the imagination and develops critical thinking skills. In addition to honing these skills, literature is our inheritance from past generations. Language is arguably where we develop our humanity, and literature is the record of that humanity.

With this view of language in mind, it seems obvious that learning another language enriches our sense of humanity and should not be questioned as an important part of an education. However, sometimes a sense of humanity doesn't quite pay the rent. Businesses want students with very specific skills, and curricula are changing to offer businesses what they want. So why bother becoming fluent in a foreign language, especially since most of the foreigners with whom you will interact have been learning English since they were ten?

Because foreign languages change perspectives.

I spent eleven months last year struggling and fighting and finally succeeding and enjoying speaking German. Spending time in a foreign country is like holding a mirror up and looking deeper than you ever have before. You begin to see yourself, your family, your university, and your country in a completely different light. German students asked me why America continues to execute prisoners and fails to provide health care for all its citizens and whether I had brought my gun with me to Germany. I was equally shocked when my friends from Madison asked me if I knew any German skinheads. Stereotypes abound, and part of studying abroad was figuring out which stereotypes hide latent in me and which ones are applied to me.

Learning a foreign language helps us to define a culture on its own terms. When we describe another culture in English, our own cultural prejudices creep in with the nuances of our words. What better way to describe a culture than to use its own words? The nuances of words like *Heimweh*, *Sehnsucht*, and *Phantasie* simply do not translate. Also English lacks the formal form of address, *Sie* in German, which caused me countless social headaches as I mistakenly addressed my Freiburg professors with *du*. But after a while the social distance became comfortable and I was able to distinguish my relationship with others based on their use of *Sie* or *du*. Today I still cringe in my Madison German courses when the professor is questioned in the informal form.

I would like to stress the importance of an extended study or work abroad experience. Without the time I spent in Germany, I know my language skills would not have developed as well, since my incentive to excel changed from the academic to the personal. I watched my friendship with my roommate develop steadily with my language skills. I would never have this friendship with her today if I hadn't learned German—and she's French!

**To stay up-to-date on events  
and activities in the German  
Department, visit our website at  
<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/german>**

## Teaching in Freiburg: Three Perspectives

*Julia Karolle, Kristen Reifsnyder, and Eric Jarosinski, all graduate students in the German Department, worked as teaching interns in the Academic Year in Freiburg program in Fall semester 2000–2001.*

### Revisiting the Experience

By Julia Karolle

My decision to come to Freiburg to work as a teaching intern was one I deliberated over. An international move can be such a hassle; there are always bureaucracy and inconvenience to deal with. When I mentioned these reservations to a friend, however, she laughed, accused me of having become a slave to comfort, unmoved by the prospect of adventure ....

Those of us who have spent a number of years studying and living abroad may indeed be at risk of forgetting the adventure that life in a foreign country once promised. We may have already eradicated the memory of our own moments of euphoria, and most certainly the cultural faux-pas we committed. We may express wonder at those who come after us when they act in such a way.

Revisiting the experience of the academic year abroad has reminded me of the sport of this foreignness, of how every successful interaction with the language can represent a coup. And in a recent encounter of mine involving the men's locker room at a local swimming pool, which I can only categorize as "exchange student-esque," I was taught that even the best-developed cultural sensitivity—indeed, nonchalance—does not protect us entirely from the threat of cultural faux-pas. But it does help us laugh about it.



### The Academic Year in Freiburg Experience

By Kristen Reifsnyder

Returning to Freiburg for the third time, I expected no surprises as I started my teaching internship for the Academic Year in Freiburg. But what I learned from this brief stay surpassed all expectations I brought with me. Through this internship, I have gained valuable teaching and mentoring experience.

Although the three-week intensive language orientation course, which I team-taught with Julia Karolle and Eric



Jarosinski, was very strenuous, I was able to catch a glimpse of the normal workload of an assistant professor. Not only did we teach the students during the morning hours, we were there for them outside of class answering any questions they had (and boy, did they have questions!) or consoling them as they faced the hardship of adapting to a new culture. The proximity of our living environments (yes, we did live in the same housing complex as the students) enabled us to interact with the students on a more informal level, creating a positive teacher/mentor-student relationship.

Even though the intensive language course taught me a lot, the most valuable experience was the semester-long course I taught. For the first time in my teaching career, I was completely responsible for picking a course topic, choosing the material to be covered, writing a syllabus, and having responsibility for everything else that goes into creating one's own course. There is a certain amount of gratification that comes from not only being able to teach what you want to teach, but also watching students get excited about the material.

Through my experience as an AYF teaching intern, I feel I will be better prepared for a future position as a professor. Teaching experience is, of course, not the only advantage to this position. Looking out over the rolling hills of the Black Forest while sipping wine from the Kaiserstuhl is not a bad thing either.

### Freiburg DO's and DON'T's

By Eric Jarosinski

A funny thing happens when you put on a S(port) C(lub) Freiburg soccer scarf and hop on the stadium-bound *Straßenbahn* for your first-ever game: the otherwise reserved locals (at least those similarly garbed) can mistake even me, the paradigmatic *keine Ahnung vom Fußball* kinda guy, not only for 1) an informed fan with opinions to share about whether or not the home team will trounce or simply destroy the visiting team from Cottbus, but also for 2) an equally fluent speaker of Badisch, the local dialect and the only thing more incomprehensible to me than the appeal of a game in which you can't use your hands.

The result is the mixture of excitement and foreboding involved in anything that promises to be a "cultural experience." Both inside and outside of the classroom this was a feeling not altogether unfamiliar to me in my semester in Freiburg, and, I expect, to others who will follow me as teaching interns as well. For them, just a few Academic Year DO's and DON'Ts:

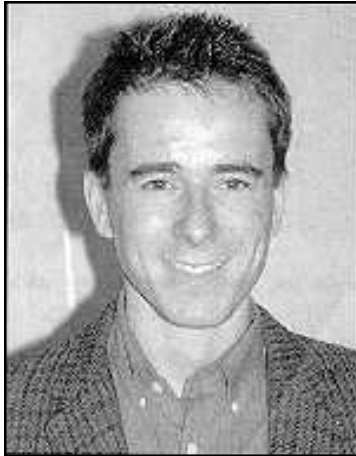


(continued on p. 14)

## "Amerika, du hast es besser / Als unser Kontinent, der alte ..."

By Alexander Košenina  
(Freie Universität Berlin)

"Ich gehe nun hinüber nach Amerika, um die guten Verhältnisse zu nutzen ..." Mit dieser Vision im Kopf versuchte vor mehr als 200 Jahren ein Abenteurer den berühmtesten deutschen Bildungsadepten zur Übersiedelung in eine bessere Welt zu bewegen. Aber Wilhelm Meister blieb, um als Held eines weiteren Romans von Goethe zu dienen. Viele seiner jüngeren Brüder "jung, heiter, voller Tatkraft" gingen indes ohne je heimzukehren. Sie brachten etwas von ihrer deutschen Kultur, Sprache und Literatur mit, die später als German Studies akademisch weiter gepflegt wurden. Eines der beliebtesten Auswandererziele war traditionell der Staat Wisconsin, wo heute kaum zufällig eines der größten und besten German departments existiert. Dorthin für einige Zeit eingeladen zu werden, um Erfahrungen mit anderen, vielleicht auch besseren Verhältnissen zu machen, ist ohne Einschränkungen ein Glück, das auch Wilhelm Meister niemals ausgeschlagen hätte.



Dieses Glückslos fiel mir für das Herbstsemester 2000 zu. Es kam aber nicht nur einfach daher, sondern gleich dreifach: als

---

### **Teaching in Freiburg, cont.**

Even for this fan of the gritty metropolis, the bucolic charm of the Black Forest is hard to resist. DO hike around to admire the mountains, the trees, the humongous cows wearing bells chilling on the hillsides. DON'T, I repeat DON'T, try to wrestle said behemoth bovines, nor should you engage them in debate about Heidegger's later works, as they will win every time.

Enjoy the local culinary specialities. DO try *neuer Süßer*, the delicious, new, still-fermenting wine for sale at the Münsterplatz. DON'T ask the sturdy farmer working the stand for a *junger Süßer*, as you'll most likely be informed with a wink that you're "am falschen Ort."

Finally, DO enjoy teaching new classes (mine was a composition and conversation course I titled "Werbung, Konsum und Kultur"), learning together with motivated students, and getting to know a beautiful city. DON'T endanger your welcome by responding to the above-mentioned brand of soccer fans that SC Freiburg "könnte ja vielleicht unter Umständen heute gewinnen." As I learned, the correct answer is more like "Ebe' joh!" Rendered properly, it's sure to go a long way.

erfreuliche Lehrerfahrung, als produktive Schreibphase und nicht zuletzt als erlebnisreicher Aufenthalt in einer anderen Welt. Der Unterricht gestaltete sich zugleich schwieriger und einfacher als in Berlin. Denn das vorgegebene Profil des Kulturkurses 1648–1918 wie auch des Literaturseminars zum 20. Jahrhundert verlangte schon aufgrund der abzudeckenden großen Zeiträume größten Mut zur Lücke, der zur legendären deutschen "Gründlichkeit" in einem Spannungsverhältnis steht. War der Mut, sich seiner eigenen Begrenztheit nicht zu schämen aber erst einmal auf beiden Seiten des Klassenzimmers gefaßt, brachten die gemeinsamen Bemühungen um die unmögliche Quadratur des Kreises dann doch neue Ideen, ungeahnte Querverbindungen und sogar allerhand Spaß. Erheblich unterstützt wurde all das durch die so "guten Verhältnisse," was die logistische Unterstützung seitens der Undergraduate-Koordinatoren sowie die Ausstattung mit technischen Einrichtungen und Unterrichtsmaterialien angeht.

Daß mir trotz der gegenüber Berlin etwa doppelt so hohen Lehrverpflichtungen Zeit zum Schreiben blieb, habe ich sicher den forschungsfreundlichen, "guten Verhältnissen" in Madison zu verdanken. Die allgemeine Arbeitsintensität wirkt hier befeuernd, Kollegen geizen nicht mit Anregungen und Hilfe, Reisen zu Konferenzen und Vorträgen werden begünstigt und Bibliothekare sehen ihre Aufgabe nicht darin, Bücher von Lesern fernzuhalten. Außerdem lagen Themen für Artikel in deutschen Zeitungen für mich gleichsam auf der Straße: Hier eine Aisthesis-Tagung oder rezensierbare Neuerscheinungen über Mildred Fish-Harnack oder Aufklärungstoleranz, dort eine Ausstellung in Chicago, wenn nicht überhaupt das Nächstliegende, nämlich die Situation des Faches an amerikanischen Universitäten, was für die gegenwärtig hitzigen Bildungsdebatten in deutschen Feuilletons immer interessanter wird.

Hinzu kommt der gewichtige dritte Glücksfaktor, nämlich die Beurlaubung vom hektischen Berliner Metropolenleben. Madison erlebte ich da als eine Art Sanatorium mit blauem Himmel, guter Luft, freundlich lächelnden Menschen, gemächlichem Verkehr ohne Herzinfarkttrisiko und wunderbaren Joggingstrecken in Seelage. Die Gelegenheit, für kurze Zeit dem zeitintensiven Kulturzirkus zu entgehen und das einfachere Landleben zu genießen (und nur bei bedrohlichen Entzugserscheinungen ins nahe Chicago oder ferne San Francisco zu fahren), hatte etwas von einem Arbeitsurlaub. Außer auf den Körper scheint das wie ein Steigerungsmittel auf die geistige Produktivität zu wirken, sofern es nicht viel länger als drei Monate verabreicht wird. Insgesamt wurde so der Aufenthalt in Madison zu einem willkommenen Geschenk, das mir einen Eindruck von den "guten Verhältnissen" an einer großen amerikanischen Forschungsuniversität vermittelte. Die Attraktivität liegt im Kontrast, und so wirkte nach der Rückkehr auch die berühmte Berliner Luft wieder als neuer, würziger Reiz.

**Letter from the Chair, cont. from back page**

Press. This joins our other flagship journal, *Monatshefte*, whose accomplished editor of the past five years, Cora Lee Nollendorfs, is completing her term and turning over the helm to Hans Adler in the course of the summer.

And the upcoming academic year? More of the same energy and excitement. We're looking forward to greeting our newest and youngest faculty member, Dr. Venkat Mani from Stanford University, whom we'll introduce in our next edition, after he's had a chance to settle in. Helmut Schmahl, a historian from the Universität Mainz, will be our Max Kade Professor in Spring 2002, and Ute Gerhard, the first chair of the first gender studies program in Germany at the Universität Frankfurt am Main, will be the Carl Schurz Memorial Professor in Spring 2002, affiliated with the Center for German and European Studies and housed in the Department of Sociology. Last but not least, the Department will be undergoing a regular decennial review (3 years late) in 2001–2002. This is a good opportunity to look back at our path since 1988 and at our trajectory on toward 2010. Stay tuned for a summary in the next *Mitteilungen!*

**MITTEILUNGEN AUS MADISON**

**Editors: Mark Loudon, Carla Love,  
Pamela Potter, and Marc Silberman**

**Chronik: Lisa Blochwitz**

**Design: Kimberly Miller**

**Department of German**

**818 Van Hise Hall**

**University of Wisconsin**

**1220 Linden Drive**

**Madison, WI 53706**

**Telephone: (608) 262-2192**

**Fax: (608) 262-7949**

**E-mail: [german@mhub.facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:german@mhub.facstaff.wisc.edu)**

**Web: <http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/german>**

**Upcoming Events: Fall 2001****Conferences**

September 7–9, 2001

Burdick-Vary symposium: "An Historian's Legacy: George L. Mosse and Recent Research on Fascism, Society, and Culture," sponsored by the Institute for Research in the Humanities.

This international conference features sessions on George Mosse's early scholarship on early modern Europe; Mosse and fascism; nationalism and memory; war and the body; and the Jews and the image of man. For further information contact Loretta Freiling at 608-262-3855 or [freiling@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:freiling@facstaff.wisc.edu).

September 20–22, 2001

34th Wisconsin Workshop and Center for German and European Studies conference: "Fascism and Its Legacy/ The Reemergence of the Extreme Right."

The conference will examine extreme, mass-based right-wing movements and their current proliferation by exploring contemporary contexts from a perspective informed by the history of the right in the twentieth century. For further information see the CGES website <http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/cges/> or contact the German Department.

**Roundtable lectures**

September 28, 2001

Joy Calico (Illinois Wesleyan University): "Brecht and Opera."

October 26, 2001

Marc Weiner (Indiana University, Bloomington): "Antisemitism in Recent Wagner Scholarship."

December 7, 2001

Andrew Weeks (Illinois State University): "Valentin Veigel, Jakob Böhme, and the First German Antiwar Movement."

Date TBA

Stephan Jaeger (University of Gießen): "Die Inszenierung des Vergangenen. Zwischen Fakt und Fiktion in Literatur und Geschichtsschreibung um 1800."

For further information about Roundtable lectures, contact the German Department.

**Drama and Film**

November 30, 2001

A dramatic reading of Urs Widmer's Swiss play "Top Dogs" (in English translation) by faculty and graduate students from the Departments of German and French & Italian. The former Swiss ambassador to the United States, Dr. Alfred Defago, who will be a guest professor at UW-Madison in 2001–2002, will participate in the reading.

German women filmmakers. A series of 8 films is planned for October or November. Contact the German Department for further information.

Fritz Lang films. The UW-Madison Cinematheque will be showing restored prints of several Fritz Lang German silent classics from the 1920s with live piano accompaniment. See the Cinematheque website <http://www.wisc.edu/commarts/cinema.htm> for details.

All events listed are free and open to the public.

## Letter from the Chair: Marc Silberman

Dear Friends and Alumni,

Another academic year comes to a close..., another *Mitteilungen aus Madison* beckons with news from the German Department, always a good opportunity for me to look back on what's happened and for you to renew ties. The "Chronik" you find inside this newsletter provides an overview of the many events that have enriched our academic life: conferences, lectures, film series, outreach programs like German Day for Wisconsin high schoolers, and the German play.

Many of these activities are co-sponsored with other UW-Madison departments or institutes, so we find ourselves in the fortunate position of contributing to and participating in an ever denser network of interdisciplinary contacts. The UW-Madison's "European Alliance"—consisting of the new Center for German and European Studies, the European Union Center, and the European Studies Program as well as the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies—constitutes a unique synergy of teaching and research energies on this campus. These are exciting developments for the faculty and a real enhancement for both undergraduate and graduate students.

This year we welcomed several noteworthy longterm visitors. Rudolf Drux (Universität Köln) and Alexander Košenina (Freie Universität Berlin) were visiting professors in Fall semester; Peter Wagener (Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim) was a fellow of the Max Kade Institute in the Fall and a visiting professor in the

department in Spring semester; Stephan Jaeger (Universität Gießen) has joined us for a year as a post-doc Fedor Lynen Fellow sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung; both Manfred Roth (Hochschule für Musik, Detmold) and Martina Rumpf (dance teacher from Basel) presented workshops and provided professional input for the German play production in the Spring. Needless to say, these guests not only are appreciated as intellectual partners but also are integrated into the social fabric as "friends" of the department.

And what is going on behind the scenes? Joan Leffler, our senior office staff person, won the prestigious Classified Employees Recognition Award (CERA). She was feted at a special ceremony by none other than the UW-Madison's new chancellor, John Wiley, for her long record of service to the university. Mark Mears, our graduate secretary, was promoted to a higher rank to reflect his increased responsibilities. We're all proud of the entire office staff. A large class of undergraduate majors, including many honors students who were inducted into the national German Honors Society, Delta Phi Alpha, completed their degrees in May; several grad students are waving goodbye as they launch their careers: Jennifer Bjornstad at Valparaiso University, Ted Rippey at Bowling Green State University, Denise Della Rossa at Notre Dame University, and Julia Karolle at Purdue University.

Finally, we are proud of a new publication in the department, the *Journal for Germanic Linguistics* under the distinguished editorship of Mark Loudon and published by Cambridge University  
*(continued on p. 15)*

### MITTEILUNGEN AUS MADISON

**Department of German  
818 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Madison, WI 53706-1557**

**Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 658  
Madison, WI**