

## Indiana University Department of Comparative Literature

College of Arts &  
Sciences Alumni  
Association

# Encompass

Summer 2008

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## Alumni Newsletter

### What's new in comparative literature

## Maintaining and advancing innovation, excellence

It has been an honor to serve as chair of the Indiana University Department of Comparative Literature. My term began in January 2007, just after the retirement of **Oscar Kenshur** who, with a one-year hiatus, had served as chair since 2001.

It has been a challenging and busy year and a half. The faculty and I have worked to maintain and advance the reputation for innovation and excellence that this department at Indiana has always known. It is a difficult environment. Public universities face the daunting challenge of competing with affluent private institutions as public resources dwindle. But the Department of Comparative Literature looks forward.

My tenure thus far has coincided with a period of great transition in which we have sought to uphold our traditional strengths and develop new ones. Given my own field of specialization — 20th century literature and culture, especially of Africa, the Americas, and Europe in their relationships to one another — I have taken the department's support of my chairmanship as an affirmation of a collective desire to live up to the name of this newsletter, *Encompass*.

At the end of academic year 2006–07, the department lost four faculty to retirement: **Peter Bondanella**, a scholar of the Renaissance who became a seminal figure in the study of Italian cinema; **Sumie Jones**, whose research focus is the comparative study of early modern Japanese literature and arts; **Oscar Kenshur** who examines the complex interplay of literature and philosophy in the age of the Enlightenment; and **Giancarlo Maiorino**, a Renaissance scholar with particular interest in the comparative study of art history and literature. You will find interviews of and reflections by Bondanella, Jones, and Kenshur on pages 6 and 7.

Though these retirements mark the end of an era, we have been joined by a talented

and congenial group of new junior faculty of great breadth, who are poised to assure the department's future. **Akin Adesokan**, a journalist and novelist, studies literature, film and the new video production in Ghana and Nigeria and studies the cultural and literary consequences of the decline of the nation state. **Eyal Peretz** works on 19th- and 20th-century European and American literature and culture, with an emphasis on philosophy, psychoanalytic, literary, and film theory. **Kevin Tsai**, a translator of Chinese poetry, does comparative research about ancient Chinese, Roman, and Greek literatures. **Sarah Van der Laan**, a Renaissance scholar whose dissertation focuses on early modern adaptations of the Homeric epics, will join us in 2009–10.

Meanwhile, our faculty are busy garnering awards and grants. In spring 2007, **David Hertz**, who was recently re-appointed to a term on the National Council on the Humanities of the National Endowment

for the Humanities, organized a conference on *Modernity and the American Experience in the Arts* with Maiorino and still another in October 2007 on Beethoven. Also in spring 2007, the Project on African Expressive Traditions, housed by this department, organized the international symposium *Literature and the Arts in Senegal: Birago Diop and Léopold Sédar Senghor, Then and Now* with the support of other campus units and the New Frontiers Arts and Humanities Program.

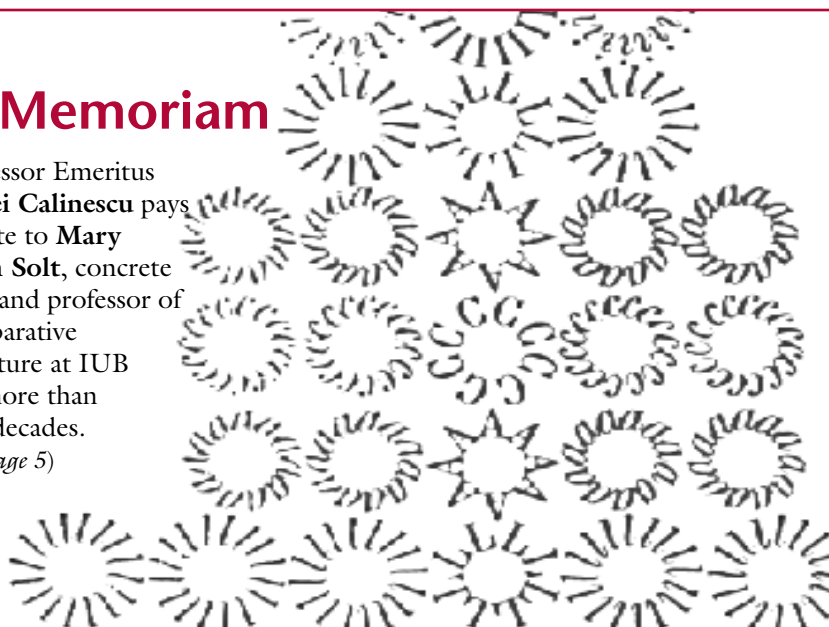
**Miryam Segal** spent 2007–08 as a fellow in the Harvard Divinity School Women's Studies in Religion Program. **Bill Johnston** has just been named the first winner of the "Found in Translation" award, to be presented yearly to the author of the finest Polish-English literary translation of the year. His translation of Tadeusz Różewicz's *New Poems* was also nominated

(continued on back page)

### In Memoriam

Professor Emeritus **Matei Calinescu** pays tribute to **Mary Ellen Solt**, concrete poet and professor of comparative literature at IUB for more than two decades.

(see page 5)



# Faculty News

## Faculty

**Deborah Cohn** published an article “U.S. Southern and Latin American Studies: Postcolonial and Inter-American Approaches” in *Global South* 1.1 (Winter 2007): 38–44. Along with Matt Guterl, Cohn received an award from New Perspectives, a New Frontiers in the Arts & Humanities program, for a conference, Globalizing American Studies. She gave the keynote speech at the fifth International Conference on “English and French Literatures and the Hispanic World: Faulkner,” held at the University of the Republic in Montevideo, Uruguay, in June 2007. Cohn’s speech was titled “From Faulkner’s Excesses to the ‘Excess’ Faulkner: The Nobel Prize-winner as Cold War Cultural Ambassador to Latin America.” Cohn presented a paper, “The Cold War and the Arts in Latin America” during the American Studies Association meeting in Philadelphia in October 2007, and in April 2007 she served as co-chair and session co-organizer for “P.E.N. and the Sword: U.S.–Latin American Cultural Diplomacy and the 1966 P.E.N. Club Congress” at the American Comparative Literature Association annual meeting in Puebla, Mexico.

**Patrick Dove** published “Metaphor and Image in Borges’s ‘El Zahir’” in *Romanic Review* 98:2 (March–May 2007): 169–87. He was awarded a Summer Faculty Fellowship and was co-recipient of the Multidisciplinary Ventures and Seminars CAHI Conference and Workshop Grant for his workshop on “Political Imaginaries in Latin America” (IU Bloomington, May 2007). He presented papers at the Poynter Center Faculty Fellows Colloquium, the Latin American Studies Association (Montreal), the American Comparative Literature Association (Puebla, Mexico), and the Conference of the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland (Aberdeen, Great Britain).

**David Hertz** was nominated by President George W. Bush to serve a second term on the National Council on the Humanities, a board of 26 private citizens responsible for advising the chairman of the National Endowment on the Humanities on the choice of grant recipients. The Senate confirmed this nomination, and his six-year appointment began in January 2008.

For the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association in Puebla, Mexico, **Ingeborg Hoesterey**

organized a seminar for 12 participants on the topic of “Crossover Arts, Intermediality.” The group met on three mornings; Hoesterey gave a paper relating to the seminar material.

In 2007 **Bill Johnston** published five book-length translations. Andrzej Stasiuk’s *Nine* (Harcourt, 2007) was reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review* and the *New York Review of Books*. Tadeusz Różewicz’s *New Poems* (Archipelago Books, 2007) is a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Poetry Award for 2008. Johnston also published two other translations of novels: *Flaw* by Magdalena Tulli (Archipelago Books, 2007), and *The Coming Spring* by Stefan Zeromski (Central European University Press, 2007), a translation supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship; and lastly *The Envoys*, a verse play by Jan Kochanowski (Księgarnia Akademicka, 2007). During the last year, he has given readings from these translations at Columbia University, the University of Virginia, IUPUI, the University of Pittsburgh, and in Dallas, Texas, and Krakow, Poland.

Professor **Eyal Peretz** published two books in 2007, *Becoming Visionary: Brian De Palma’s Cinematic Education of the Senses*, and a book he co-edited, *The Claims of Literature: A Shoshana Felman Reader*. Peretz is also the new editor of the *Yearbook of Comparative Literature*.

**Anya Peterson-Royce’s** book *Becoming an Ancestor: The Isthmus Zapotec Way of Death* is in production with University of Nebraska Press. A Chinese translation of her book *The Anthropology of Dance*, is currently being prepared by Wang Jian-Min. It will be part of a series of books on the Anthropology of the Arts, four of which are already translated and published. In 2007, Peterson-Royce presented papers at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, the Couper Scholar Lecture at the University of Houston, a lecture at California State University at Fullerton, and a lecture at the Young and Laramore Advertising Agency. In 2008, she was also an invited speaker at the International Seminar of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, Limerick, Ireland, entitled “Stepping Stones Towards the New Vision.” Royce won grants from New Frontiers, New Perspectives for “Bringing Worlds Together around the Genome: Campus and Community Conversations Across the Arts, Sciences, and the Field of Ethics,” and a New Frontiers, Visiting Visionaries grant for “Bringing Worlds Together Around the

Genome: A Residency at Indiana University with the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange,” in January. In 2007 she directed, scripted, and filmed *Homenaje a Hebert Rasgado*, a documentary of a Zapotec musician. Peterson-Royce also directed and filmed *The Art of Being Zapotec*, a documentary film set in Juchitán, Oaxaca; the expected date of completion for this project is August 2008.

Assistant Professor **Miryam Segal** was on leave for 2007–08. She was a research associate of the Women’s Studies in Religion Program and a visiting assistant professor of women’s studies and Judaism at the Harvard Divinity School. Her current project is on authorship and gender in modern Hebrew literature. Segal’s book *A New Sound in Hebrew Poetry: Poetics, Politics, Accent* is to be published by IU Press at the end of the summer.

## Emeriti Faculty

Several publications by **Salih Altoma** appeared in 2007: “Ahmad Shawqi’s Elegy ‘Umar al-Mukhtar’ and Evans-Pritchard’s Forgotten Translation” in *First Issue*, January–March 2007; “Mohammad Ali Shams Al-Din. [Translation of] Five Poems” in London’s *Banipal* No. 28; “Ghaib Tu’ma Farman: Baghdad 1927–Moscow 1990: Writing Iraq from Moscow” in *Banipal* No. 29; “Lami’ah Abbas Amarah: Elegiac Reflections on the 1991 Gulf War” in the *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 1; “Arabic Literature in English Translation: Positive but Partial Progress” in the *WATA Journal of Languages and Translation* 3; “‘Master of the White House’ a poem by Amal al-Juburi” and “Iraqi Memories: Selected Poems from Iraq,” a collection of poems by Abd al-Razaq Abd al-Wahid, Zaki al-Jabir, Khalid al-Khazraji, Dunya Mikhail, Mujbil al-Maliki, and Ali-al-Shilah (December) in the *WATA Journal of Languages and Translation*.

Altoma presented a paper “Shawqi wa ‘l-Gharb: 1894–2006,” [Shawqi and the West] at the Shawqi and Lamartine Forum, held in Paris in fall 2006 and sponsored by Kuwait’s Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Foundation. He presented “Promoting the Translation of Modern Arabic Literature with Special Reference to the United States,” at the Next Page Foundation Panel of the second International Translation Conference held in Amman, Jordan, in April 2007.

Indiana University Press published **Ernest Bernhardt-Kabisch’s** translation from  
*(continued on page 4)*

# Spring 2007 reception celebrates 'year of transitions'

The Department of Comparative Literature 2006–07 spring reception was held in the Hoagy Carmichael room of Morrison Hall. Current and former faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and friends of the department gathered to celebrate the year and honor students, faculty, and retirees. Department Chair Eileen Julien labeled 2006–07 a year of transitions.

**Angela Pao**, director of graduate studies, presented awards to several deserving graduate students. The Associate Instructor Award for Excellence in Classroom Teaching went to **Olga Volkova**. **April Witt**, MA'06, won the Gilbert V. Tutungi Award for the best master's project written in 2006. The Newton P. Stallnecht Memorial Essay Prize for best essay written in a comparative literature course in 2006 was awarded to **Genevieve Oliver**. **Kate Johnston** won the C. Clifford Flanigan Memorial Colloquium Prize.

**Vivian Halloran**, director of undergraduate studies, awarded **Meredith Morgan**, BA'07, the Outstanding Senior Award.

**Anna Piontek**, BA'07, now a graduate student in the department, received the Ann Geduld Award for Interarts Study in Comparative Literature.

Julien recognized **Ed Chamberlain** by presenting him with the Outstanding Service Award. She also announced **Ioana Patuleanu** as the winner of the first Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston Memorial Award, given annually to a student on the basis of GPA, breadth of interests, originality, academic or creative achievement, and overall promise.

The presentations for the afternoon concluded with an outpouring of thanks and best wishes for retiring professors **Peter Bondanella**, **Giancarlo Maiorino**, **Oscar Kenshur**, and **Sumie Jones**. Each was toasted by colleagues, students, and friends.



*Eileen Julien, Ioana Patuleanu, and Professor Emeritus Peter Boerner*



*Vivian Halloran, with son Billy, and Ed Chamberlain*



*Above, students Ya Chu Yang, Cathryn Knoles Daniels, Genevieve Oliver, and Chia-li Kao take in the reception from a window seat.*

*At left, Selah Wyche, Professor Rosemarie McGerr and Margot Behrend.*

*Students Wendy Hardenberg and Sara Van Den Heuvel, at right, enjoy a laugh.*



*David Hertz and Douglas Hofstadter*





# Faculty news

(continued from page 2)

the German *Alban Berg and Hanna Fuchs: The Story of a Love in Letters*, by Constantin Floros, in December 2007. Bernhardt-Kabisch has translated several radio plays for West German Radio (WDR) and North German Radio (NDR), including “A Zero Sum Portrait of Life,” “Glamour,” and “Zahah Leander: Honey from the Lions’ Mouth.” He also translated two German poems, Paul Boldt’s “Young Horses! Young Horses!” and Paul Zech’s “Ballad of a Blind Pit Horse,” for C.E. Greer and Jenny Kander’s collection, *Say This of Horses*, published by University of Iowa Press (2007).

**Claus Clüver** spent June 2007 through February 2008 as a visiting professor at the Escola de Belas Artes, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. In addition to teaching a graduate course on “Intermedialidade,” he gave six public lectures and conducted research on avant-garde poetry and visual arts in that state. In July, he was an invited keynote speaker at the eleventh Regional Meeting of the Brazilian Comparative Literature Association in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where he spoke on “Intermedialidade e Estudos Interartes.” At the Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association in Rio de Janeiro, a special workshop on Interarts Studies was held in Clüver’s honor on the occasion of his 75th birthday, and at a banquet he received a mock-up of a Festschrift, organized by **Stephanie Glaser**, PhD’02, with contributions by friends, colleagues, and former students from three continents. It is due to be published in 2008.

Clüver’s recent publications include “The ‘Ruptura’ Proclaimed by Brazil’s Self-Styled ‘Vanguardas’ of the Fifties,” in *Neo-Avant-Garde*, in 2006; “Iconicidade e isomorfismo em poemas concretos brasileiros,” in *Dossiê: 50 anos da poesia Concreta*; “The Creative Flow of a Musico-Verbal Collage: Section III of Luciano Berio’s Sinfonia,” in *Creations: Medieval Rituals, the Arts, and the Concept of Creation*; and “Intermediality and Interarts Studies,” in *Changing Borders: Contemporary Positions in Intermediality*. He is co-editor of *Intermedialidade*, vol. 14 of *Aletria* (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais), published in March 2008.

In April 2007, Clüver gave an invited lecture on “Brazilian Concrete Art and Poetry of the ’50s and ’60s” at University of Texas at Austin’s Blanton Museum of Art. In October, he participated in

“Imagine Media! Media Borders and Intermediality” at the University of Växjö, Sweden, presenting a paper on “‘Transgenic Art’: The Biopoetry of Eduardo Kac.”

In October, Professor Emeritus **Eugene Eoyang** published *Two-Way Mirrors: Cross-Cultural Studies of Globalization* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books). A second book, *The Smile of a Crocodile: Rhymes for Chloe (and Kyle)*, illustrated by Sam Harper, was published in December. It is now available on Amazon under the BookSurge imprint.

**Henry Geduld** published *Dogspere: Thirty Short Stories* in 2007. “Unfinished Business,” one of the stories in *Dogspere*, concerns a professor of comparative literature who specializes in comparing literary works that were never written (e.g. Shakespeare’s “Pygmalion”) with works that should have been (e.g. Bernard Shaw’s “Hamlet.”) Geduld’s next book, *The Final Solution of the German Question*, was scheduled for publication in April. *Dogspere* is available for purchase from amazon.com.

At the symposium “Monsters and the Monstrous in Premodern Japanese History and Culture,” held in Bloomington in March 2007, **Sumie Jones** presented the paper “Monsters, *Ninjô*, and the Return of Narrativity: Representations of the Weird in Late Edo Arts.” In fall 2007, Jones acted as interpreter for Toru Takahashi, professor at the University of Nagoya in Japan and a distinguished specialist of ancient courtly literature and arts, who gave a Horizons of Knowledge lecture co-sponsored by Comparative Literature, Gender Studies, and East Asian Studies Center.

Jones has also served as one of the two consulting editors for four volumes of *The Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, edited by Fedwa Malti-Douglas and published by Macmillan (2007). Jones’ article, “Japan: Erotic Literature,” is included in Volume 2. Forthcoming in *Travel in Japanese Representational Culture: Its Past, Present, and Future* (PJLS, vol. 8) is Sumie Jones’ paper, “Lying About Flying: The Invention of Science Fiction and the Fictions of Colonialism in Modern Japan.” Part of the paper was presented as a lecture, “Lying About Flying: The Invention of Science Fiction in Japan,” at the East Asian Studies Center’s Colloquium on October 5, 2007.

IU’s Center for 18th-Century Studies announced a book prize to honor the work of **Oscar Kenshur**. The prize will be awarded annually for an outstanding monograph of interest to 18th-century scholars working in a range of disciplines. Kenshur is one of the founding members of the center.



## New Faculty

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new faculty members.

- After teaching at Oberlin College, **Kevin Tsai** joined the IU Department of Comparative Literature in fall 2007. Last fall he published “Hellish Love: Genre in Claudian’s *De Raptu Proserpinae* [On the rape of Persephone]” in *Helios*, as well as translations of Li Qingzhao’s (1084 – c. 1151) poetry in *Fields*. Tsai’s research interests include “East–West” comparative studies as well as issues of gender and genre, fictionality, and literary historiography in Chinese, Roman, and Greek literatures. He is currently working on the comparative development of narrative in traditional China and in the classical West. Tsai is also a faculty member of the Program in Ancient Studies and of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures.

- **Alina Sokol** will join the department in the fall of 2008. Sokol has an undergraduate degree from Moscow State University and a PhD from Yale University. She is interested in literary forms, poetry, and poetics in 16th and 17th century Spain and 19th and 20th century Russia. Sokol has published articles on Spanish and Russian poetry and taught literature at Yale University, Dartmouth College, and the University of Toulouse.

- In fall 2007, **Johannes Türk**, assistant professor in the IU Department of Germanic Studies, joined us as adjunct assistant professor. Türk studied comparative literature and philosophy and, for a short period, medicine at Freie Universität Berlin, Paris 8 and Yale University. He is currently revising his dissertation, “Immunity: Archeology of a Paradigm,” which explores the history of the term “immunity” and the formation of immunological knowledge from Thucydides’ first observation of acquired immunity to the biomedical sciences.

Although much of Türk’s research focuses on German literature, he is a comparatist at heart. His fields of interest are: literary and aesthetic theory, rhetoric, philosophy, the history of the German and European novel, modernism, literature and life sciences, and trauma and literature.

# In Memoriam: Mary Ellen Solt

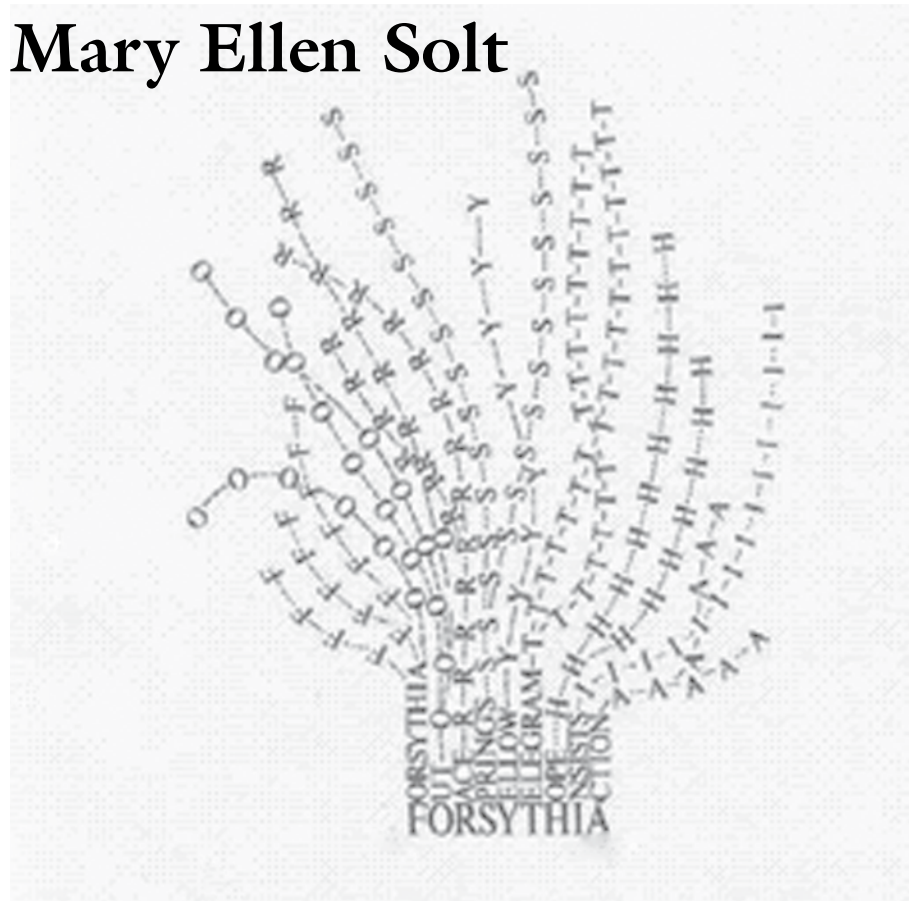
Mary Ellen Solt, professor of comparative literature and a well-known author and teacher of concrete poetry, died June 21, 2007, in Santa Clarita, Calif. Solt's friend and colleague Matei Calinescu offered the following tribute at a late-summer memorial service at IU Bloomington's Lilly Library.

Mary Ellen Solt was/is a great avant-garde poet whose interest in poetry — in poetic innovation and invention — was so genuine and exclusive that it did not combine, as it often does in many poets, with unrelated interests, mostly egotistical and having to do with the degree of their recognition.

After her recent death, reading the obituaries in *The New York Times*, in the *Los Angeles Times* or in the *International Herald Tribune* (accompanied by a reproduction of her beautiful visual poem *Forsythia*), even people who were personally close to Mary Ellen and knew her work were surprised to find out how famous she really was. She was indeed famous, but this did not preoccupy her and she never talked about it: there were always, for her, more important subjects.

As I knew her, from the beginning of my career at IU in 1973, Mary Ellen was at once an exemplary colleague, friendly, helpful and generous and, as a poet, entirely focused on the *craft of poetry*, including her own visual poetry. She saw it as her main task to penetrate to the deepest level of understanding of the nature and function of the poetic sign and, obviously, this had little to do with the way she was perceived socially as a “poet.” I remember the passionate seriousness with which she approached the question of the poetic sign, within the larger question of semiotics in general. For years, she steeped herself in the study of Charles Sanders Peirce, the founder of philosophical semiotics, and, as I was also reading Peirce, we had frequent discussions about “firstness,” “secondness,” and “thirdness” and about the types of signs, “icon,” “index,” and “symbol”, not seldom with reference to Peirce's *Letters to Lady Welby*, whom we both admired.

Warm-hearted but unsentimental, Mary Ellen was so dedicated to her poetical researches – I use the word “researches” in its most precise sense — that she seemed to forget about her reputation. This was refreshing. Poets — good and bad, great



“Forsythia” by Mary Ellen Solt, *Flowers in Concrete* (Indiana University, 1966)

Concrete poetry asks us to look at the word: at its esthetic properties as a composition of letters, each of which is a beautiful object in its own right. ... We must be prepared to contemplate poems as constellations of words, as ideograms, as word pictures, as permutational systems. By discovering the meaning of the poem as it emerges from the method of its composition, the reader becomes in some sense the poet. — Unpublished essay, *Words and Spaces*, Mary Ellen Solt (© 1985)

and minor — not only have outsized egos, which is natural, but often tend to display them socially, sometimes pathetically, without any discretion. It so happens that I met here, in Bloomington, in contrast with Mary Ellen, the greatest living poet in the English language! He was slightly but proudly embarrassed by his exalted status — although nobody else was aware of it — and went on sharing his “secret” with whoever was willing to listen to him.

In matters of poetry, Mary Ellen always tried to discern between what was “done well,” as opposed to what was “done beautifully.” She instinctively felt that what was “done beautifully” (in the conventional sense) came close to kitsch and I think that she would have shared Hermann Broch's definition of kitsch as “the element of evil

in the value system of art.” The art system, according to Broch, issues an ethical injunction: “Work well!” Mary Ellen's fascination with the avant-garde came from her organic rejection of kitsch (she was in agreement with Clement Greenberg, the art critic, on the irreducible enmity between avant-garde and kitsch).

During my first years at IU, I devised a course on the European avant-garde in 20<sup>th</sup>-century literature, offered at first during summer sessions and later developed into a seminar which I taught intermittently. I was gratified and honored to have as an auditor, in my first two summer courses, my distinguished colleague Mary Ellen. It was the start of an intellectual friendship that made me feel at home in Bloomington.

Of course, she was attracted to my course  
(continued on page 10)

## Peter Bondanella's lasting legacy

"It's OK to change your mind." These are the words I remembered when I saw Peter Bondanella walking into the multimedia section of Borders four years ago. That was the advice he had given us when I first started graduate work in comparative literature at Indiana University in 1996. I was working. This is where I'd been taking my yearlong leave-of-absence from my doctoral degree program.

Bondanella explained to our C501 class that the smartest thing he had ever done — albeit a bit late in the game — was to change his field of interest to Italian cinema, a hard decision because he had to work in a field that was quite unfamiliar to him. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that in six years, I would be at that very juncture amidst the DVDs at Borders, reconsidering my own position. At the time, I was becoming curious about media studies, especially electronic media.

That day, he didn't ask me what I was doing in retail, nor did he mention that he hadn't been seeing me at the university lately. Instead, we had a brief chat about the recent book that came out on James Bond movie posters and I suggested that I should work on an independent study with him, forgetting that about a half an hour earlier, I was determined to quit it all. I never did start an independent study with him, but rather came back to school and revised my entire reading list for my comprehensive exams to include readings on the novel, film, and new media.

This anecdote shows Peter Bondanella's personable attitude, outspoken and frank nature, and his genuine care for his students. These qualities make him an invaluable mentor for his students.

Bondanella's research over the years has made cinema an integral component of Italian studies curricula across the United States. However, as I mentioned earlier, his initial focus in the early years of his career wasn't cinema studies. It was shortly after his arrival to Indiana University in the '70s that Bondanella became interested in Italian cinema and wrote important works such as *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present* (1983), *The Films of Federico Fellini* (2002), *Hollywood Italians: Dagos, Palookas, Romeos, Wise Guys, and Sopranos* (2004), in addition to translating works of Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Cellini, and Vasari, and editing Dante. (continued on page 8)

## Q&A: an interview with Sumie Jones

### Q. What attracted you to IU's Comparative Literature Department?

A. I grew up as a comparatist when the discipline had graduated from the focus on influence/reception study into the directions of Freudian analysis and Structuralism. At the same time, world literature was mapped by languages, periods, and movements. The mapping was Euro-centric: other literatures were relegated to the periphery by such artificial concepts as baroque, romanticism, etc.

My frustration lifted as I heard Henry Remak's lecture at the University of Washington in 1978. Remak described the emphasis on East/West, comparative arts, and psychoanalytical applications as characteristics of the work of his department at Indiana University. The program seemed to point the way to a freer and more democratic understanding of our discipline. Actually, when I came to IU for a campus interview, I was asked this very same question. I said, "in America, comparative literature is led by two separate schools of thought — Yale and Indiana." And I believed the latter would lead us farther. Perhaps this remark got me hired. Another reason why I chose Indiana is the large number of articulate faculty and graduate students whose ideas fascinated me.

My position at IU was challenging and interesting. I maintained a 50/50 split appointment between the departments of comparative literature and East Asian language and culture. I always enjoyed teaching and organizing IU events and projects. Like all large institutions, IU has its faults, but our university is smart to let faculty teach a small number of courses each semester and often small size classes. This is the only way to maintain close interaction with students. I also enjoyed the C145/146 directorship, where I could talk with graduate assistants about the fun of literature as well as the joys and tribulations of teaching.

By taking advantage of IU's encouragement of innovations in teaching, I invented many courses with generous grants. A seminar on courtly love, which I taught with the late C. Clifford Flanigan,



Jones

and the course on Akira Kurosawa's films, which I taught with Jurgis Elisonas in history and David Newmeyer in music, were among my favorites.

### Q. During your IU career, what have been the most exciting departmental changes?

A. The department has become much smaller over the years particularly in the areas of my speciality: East/West and interarts. Still, our department has always stayed abreast with new currents in theory and teaching by adding faculty and courses in new areas.

Soon after I came to IU, the study of comparative literature at IU headed in two directions. One was semiotics. When then-chair Breon Mitchell spoke of the importance of this new theory and solicited volunteers to teach it, none of us raised a hand.

I, for one, had never even heard the word *semiotics*. I then stumbled on Umberto Eco and was hooked. My courses became influenced by his ideas of reading. At about the same time, the department made an agreement with the Kinsey Institute to offer a graduate course on sexuality and arts. Senior faculty members were in favor of this new topic but none was willing to teach it. So, as a beginning assistant professor, I was appointed to the rank of an associate member of the graduate faculty and taught the seminar in its first year. It was a daring topic at the time,



# A letter from Oscar Kenshur

Aix-en-Provence  
11 September 2007

so I received requests from all directions for copies of my syllabus and invitations to give lectures at universities and museums.

During the first years, the students were so shy that they avoided any mention of a sexual organ or a direct quote from a pornographic text. Some would giggle. Over the years, the students' increased maturity and ease in talking about sexuality was really exciting. Sex is a great topic because you can test any kind of theory.

The course explored many approaches: Freudian, Barthesian and Deleuzian, and finally inter-culturally feminist, until I became a bit bored by culture and gender theory. When I felt that I could no longer provide students with an edge, keeping them up-to-date with theory, I decided to retire.

Another exciting change is the expansion of the program's translation component to include distinguished translators as faculty and more courses on theory and practice of translation. Although I am not a translator, for the past five years, I have co-directed a seminar on translation supported by the Institute for Advanced Study and Lilly Library with the great and prolific translator Breon Mitchell.

## **Q. You have such an extensive body of work. Of which project are you most proud?**

A. I coordinated a series of *Tale of Genji* events in 1982 with colleague Eugene Eoyang. This is something that makes both of us proud. The event was the first and is, so far, still the largest international conference on the subject, and was complemented by a special art exhibition for which many outstanding museums and collectors sent pieces. I believe it generated a lot of academic interest in the *Tale of Genji* and classical Japanese studies in the U.S.

(continued on page 10)

My first face-to-face contact with members of the Indiana Comp Lit faculty was in 1977, at my MLA job interview in Chicago. I was struck by the rather large number of faculty members – nine or 10, I would say, although my memory, like most memories of traumatic experiences, may be playing tricks on me – who were there hurling questions my way. I was also struck, on the basis of names and accents and the questions themselves, with the heavily Germanic valence of Indiana comparative literature faculty; when I wanted to talk about Cervantes, Hobbes, or Diderot, they seemed more interested in what I had to say – which was precious little – about Schleiermacher and Dilthey. (This was before the present era, when an interviewee, having diligently Googled, knows not only the scholarly profiles of his or her interviewers, but also what they had for breakfast. I knew virtually nothing about Horst Frenz, Ulrich Weisstein, and the other luminaries marshaled before me.)

When I got back to Iowa City, Iowa, and shared my impressions with a couple of friends, what I focused on was not the interview itself, but the appearance of two other interviewees that I had seen, the one who left the hotel suite as I was waiting to be called in, and the one who was waiting outside as I left my interview. The first was a nerdy-looking fellow, who, as he walked out of the suite on the twentieth floor of the hotel, had his frayed topcoat buttoned to the neck. The second was a slick, Mediterranean-looking fellow with a shiny, flamboyantly angular suit that might have been worn by someone interviewing for an entry-level position as a pimp. When my friends heard my description of the two rivals, they leapt up in jubilation. "You've got it!" they declared, "the job is yours." A couple of days later, I learned that I, and no one else, was being invited for a campus interview. Whether I actually got the job on strictly sartorial grounds – my wool flannel suit was impeccable – or whether intellectual criteria played a role, I cannot say. I hesitate, though, to discount the opinion of those two friends, who were keen observers of human nature and knew what often lurks beneath high-sounding principles. (One of them, Jane Smiley, has since gone on to achieve fame and fortune as a novelist.)

When I think of the Comparative Literature community during my first years in Bloomington, my recollections center not on sartorial, but on gastronomic matters. The department picnics – which have happily been revived of late – stand out in my memory. On the basis of my MLA interview, one might have expected the picnic table to be groaning under the weight of schnitzels and sausages, but, in fact, the array of food, like the array of cultures and conversational topics, was diverse and delicious. And, in my memory, the picnic weather was as consistently perfect as the weather in Provence – where I write these words – with one exception: my very first Comp Lit picnic, which was held at Yellowwood Lake on a cold and blustery October day. I have no memories of food or conviviality on that occasion. In fact, I remember only a handful of hardy picnickers and myself – they having been foolish enough to come out on such a day, and I, in my first semester at IU, having felt obliged to do so. I brought along a flask of strong whiskey with which to fortify myself against the chill. I picture myself ducking behind a tree to take a swig, and perhaps being spied by a colleague, who might have observed that I was better prepared for the picnic than I had been for the interview, or who, conversely, might have suddenly had second thoughts about having chosen the flannel suit.

— as told to James Rasmussen

# Bondanella

(continued from page 6)

During his IU tenure, he was conferred the title of distinguished professor of comparative literature, films, and Italian. He was also appointed chairperson of the IU Department of West European Studies and the director of the West European Studies National Resource Center from 1992–2001.

## Advice and reminiscences

Seeing the wide range of interests now represented in our department, my main interest was to find out how much the field of comparative literature had changed over the years.

Recalling the early days, Bondanella says the discipline was far more interesting in the late '60s than it is today. He said that the field was “far more centered upon the Western tradition of literature and upon literature, [and] not all sorts of theory.”

In his eyes, the best thing about comparative literature before theory took over was that it encouraged a person to pursue all kinds of interests. He admits that he

cinema by Americans.” He is proud that his career aimed to fill this gap by making Italian cinema an integral part of Italian studies across country.

During his frequent visits to Italy, Bondanella met some of the most influential figures in the field, including Umberto Eco, Federico Fellini, Bernardo Bertolucci, Denis Mack Smith, the Taviani brothers, Nanni Moretti, and Ettore Scola. Bondanella considers the International Film Conference that he organized at IU in 1992 to be the most memorable event of his career at IU.

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the European invention of the cinema, this conference brought together famous directors such as John Landis, Peter Bogdanovich, and Ettore Scola and a large collection of the best international film scholars from the United States, England, France, Germany, and Italy.

## Moving on

Sad to see him retire, I was curious about his future plans. He told me that he plans to complete his fourth and last revision of his history of Italian cinema, *Italian*

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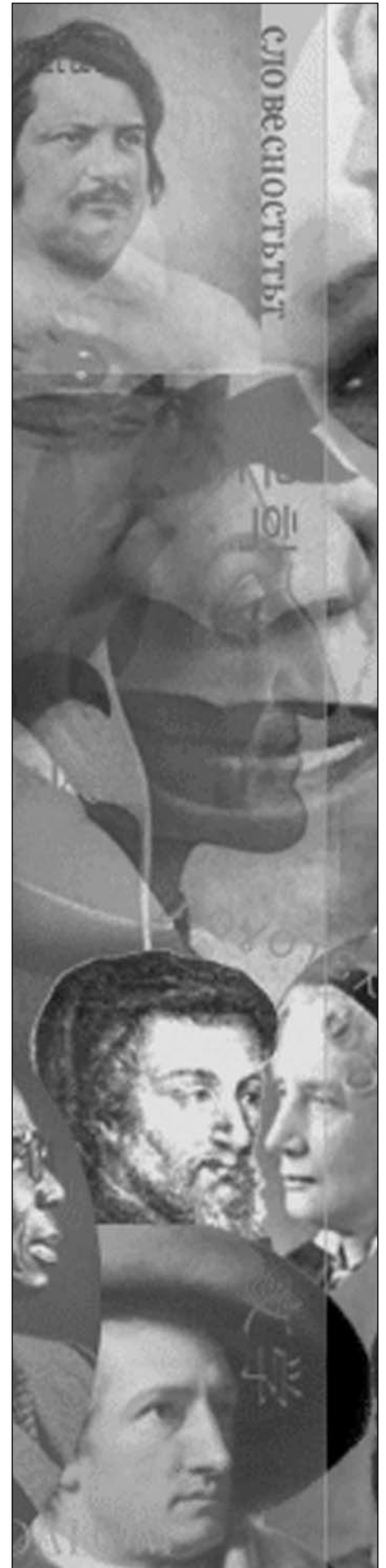
may never have tried his hands at cinema studies if that hadn't been so, but he does think that students today are facing similar problems that he experienced as a young scholar: teaching too much, not enough support for research, and too many reading lists that may or may not be relevant.

Throughout his years at IU, Bondanella says he met fascinating people and had memorable experiences that influenced the direction of his academic career. These experiences transformed him into an engaging conversationalist.

He considers Harry Geduld, former chair of comparative literature and the founder of film studies at IU, to be the most influential figure in his academic career. He explains that Geduld's “unfailing sense of humor, generosity, and helpfulness as a colleague and later as a chair” was really the push he needed to do film studies when he began to be interested in adding film to his research profile. He notes that at the time “there were virtually no Italian film courses in the entire country and certainly no film books written on Italian

*Cinema from the Silent Era to the Present*, in addition to completing *The Cambridge Companion to Umberto Eco*. After finishing these two projects, he claims that he will stop writing, unless, of course, “someone pays [him] a lot to do so.” He has a few dissertation projects to see through in comparative literature (one of which is mine) and communication and culture. After that, he hopes to spend most of his time in his house and cabin in Utah hanging out with his new Mormon friends, riding his Harley Davidson, and spending time with his lovely wife, Julia, and their two Italian greyhounds, Dante and Gianluca.

As a graduate student of this department, I would like to thank him for his dedication and contribution to the field of comparative literature and wish him a pleasant retirement. More importantly, I would like to thank him for his continuing support of his students. — *Burcu Bakioglu, MA'99*





# Student News

## Graduate news

**Ed Chamberlain** received a FLAS Fellowship through the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies for 2007–08. His essay “Queering the Space of Home” was also published in the winter 2007 issue of the journal *English Language Notes*.

**Yu-Min (Claire) Chen** presented her paper “Ping Chong’s *Chinoiserie*: A Transcendental View on Historical, Cultural, and Racial Boundaries and a Search for Reconciliation toward Human Conflicts in Art” at the Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston Colloquium in the fall of 2006. She also presented her paper “Body, Money and Power: Ideological Mutation in Eileen Chang’s *Golden Cangue*” at the Southeast Conference Association for Asian Studies in January.

**Ju Young Jin** was selected as the 2007–08 Society of Friends of Korean Studies at IU Fellowship recipient. This award covers tuition and fees and comes with a stipend.

**Larisa Privalskaya** presented her paper “From Diglossia to Poliglossia: On (Un)Translatibility of Soviet Literature” at the Ilinca Zarifopol Johnston Memorial Colloquium in February. Her work “Is a Nose Ever a Nose? (Reflections)” is forthcoming in *Moon City Review*.

**Kristin Reed**, MA’04, presented her paper “The Power of Babble: Moscow Conceptualism and Post-Modern Language Critique” at the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages Annual Conference in Chicago in December 2007. In April 2008 she presented her paper “The Road to Ethos: Brodsky and Classical Myth” at the American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference in Long Beach. Reed also received a FLAS Fellowship to study Russian and the 2008–09 Louise McNutt Graduate Fellowship.

**Mira Rosenthal** published her first full-length collection of translations, *The Forgotten Keys* (Zephyr 2007), a selection of poetry by the Polish author Tomasz Rózycki. Her own poetry has recently appeared — or is forthcoming — in the journals *Prism International*, *AGNI Online*, and *The Cincinnati Review*, and in the anthology *Best of the Midwest*. In the summer of 2007, Mira received a fellowship from the Lilly Library to participate in the Banff International Literary Translation Centre residency program. This past July she married Greg Domber. They will be moving to Jacksonville, Fla., where

Greg will teach in the University of North Florida’s Department of History.

**Matt Rowe** was chosen as an ALTA Fellow to attend the 30th annual conference of the American Literary Translators Association in Dallas, Nov. 7–10, 2007. He read from his translation of “The Blue Orchid” by Brazilian author Machado de Assis.

**Olga Volkova** published two articles in 2007. “The Beheading Game in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and The Green Helmet” was printed in *NTU Studies in Language and Literature* (2007), and “Besy: Dostoevsky’s Devilish Godgame”

was included in the electronic journal, *Toronto Slavic Quarterly* (2007).

**April Witt**, MA’06, was recently accepted as a double major with the IU English Department. A version of her thesis, “Critiques of Courtly Love: Mirroring and Refiguration in Jean de Meuns’s *Le Roman de la rose* and Umberto Eco’s *Il nome della rosa*,” is being published as chapter five in Part II of *Postscript to the Middle Ages: Teaching Medieval Studies through Umberto Eco’s The Name of the Rose* (forthcoming spring 2008). In November, her second son, Jackson Witt, was born.



## Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston Colloquium puts us in dialogue

As academic coordinators for the 2006–07 comparative literature student advisory board, **Kristin Reed** and **Rebecca Disrud** organized the Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston Memorial Colloquium. The annual series of lectures honors the memory of the late Professor Ilinca Johnston and provides a forum for students to present their work and to interact with faculty outside the classroom.

Members of the department gathered on four Friday afternoons throughout the school year to hear papers from students on topics such as inter-arts studies, translation, and cross-cultural approaches to literary analysis.

In 2006–07, the series welcomed 14 student presenters and four faculty moderators from the department as well as audience members from at least six other area studies departments. The colloquium fostered inquiry and dialogue in both formal discussion sessions after the panels and in more casual moments over refreshments.

### 2006–07 colloquium series

#### September: Inter-arts studies

Giancarlo Maiorino, faculty moderator  
Presenters: Erin Plunkett, Anthony Lichi, and Rebecca Disrud

#### October: Cross-cultural approaches

Jeff Johnson, faculty moderator  
Presenters: Laila Amine, Burcu Karahan, and Larisa Privalskaya

#### January: Translation

Bill Johnston, faculty moderator  
Presenters: Mira Rosenthal, Wendy Hardenberg, and Sheila Akbar on the theory of translation, Matt Rowe and Genevieve Oliver for the translation workshop

#### February: Genre studies

Eileen Julien, faculty moderator  
Presenters: Kristin Reed, Raina Polivka, and Joe O’Neil

## Jones

(continued from page 7)

and other countries. The conference I organized in 1995 on “Sexuality and Edo Culture” was a much larger project, with four years of workshops and conference panels leading to it. I believe it inspired many books, exhibitions, and conferences on the topic that had been a taboo in academia.

I like working with people. My current project of compiling an anthology of early modern Japanese literature is even larger than the last as it involves more than 70 contributors, co-editors, and consultants. I am hoping that the anthology will familiarize English-speaking audiences with Japanese literature of the period.

— *Julia Whyde, MA'04*

## Solt

(continued from page 5)

because she wanted to have an opportunity to delve into the origins of concrete poetry. I remember many discussions we had in class but mostly outside the class, only the two of us, about Apollinaire and his *Calligrammes*, about the various aspects of the Dada movement in Zürich in 1916 and afterwards, and certainly about the so-called *lettrisme*, which took to its last consequence the futurist notion of “parole in libertà” or “words in freedom,” namely to what we could call “letters in liberty,” from alphabetic characters (Jewish, Arabic, Greek, Roman, etc.) to ideograms, from hieroglyphics to pictographic signs. As Dada had among its founders the young Romanian émigrés Tristan Tzara and painter Marcel Janco, so the new movement of *lettrisme* had been launched by another Romanian émigré, Isidore Isou, immediately after World War II in Paris. It was later to become part, although for only a short time, of the Situationist International created in 1957 by the French anarchist Guy Debord.

In my turn, in the rewarding role as a “taught teacher,” I learned a lot from Mary Ellen, about the new attempts to break away from discursive linear poetry, about the contemporary varieties of concrete poetry (of which I was at the time unaware), and about its theoretical underpinnings, so convincingly explained in her article on “Charles Sanders Pierce and Eugen Gomringer,” published in *Poetics Today* (1982). The article was based on a paper she had presented at the 1976 Budapest Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association. I learned from her, and from her book *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (1968), about such major visual poets as the de Campos brothers (Haraldo and Augusto), the great sculptor Ian Hamilton Finlay, a close personal friend of hers, and many others. I still remember the long discussions with the Brazilian poet and architect Decio Pignatari, who had been invited by Tom Sebeok’s Institute of Semiotics at the prompt of Mary Ellen, who knew his work.

As an “escapee from the future,” as I liked to call myself (at the time, the future from which I had escaped, radiant of course, was supposed to be Communism) I didn’t attend the Budapest Congress of 1976. But I knew from personal experience that many great artists and many wonderful writers lived behind the “Iron Curtain,” and that they were eager to have contacts with intellectuals from the West. Mary Ellen, generous as ever, accepted an invitation to teach a course on American poetry at the University of Warsaw in the academic year 1976–77. Subsequently, she became director of the Polish Studies Center at IU, a post she held until 1984. She visited Poland frequently

and established personal connections with Polish academics and poets — it was from her that I first heard of Adam Zagajewski, one of today’s major poetic voices, who left communist Poland in the early 1980s. He also escaped from the future, until the future became less “radiant” but more hopeful for Eastern Europe, for that part of the world so much tortured by history.

Looking recently through my lackadaisically kept diary, I found a note that somehow reflects those times. On 17 March 1979, I wrote: “Lunch at the Tudor Room with Czeslaw Milosz, Mary Ellen Solt and X. ... At the question (which I am asked quite frequently, too), “Could you go back to your country?”, Milosz answers: “Yes, but I wouldn’t.” “Why?” “Because I am allergic. ... I am extremely allergic to informers.” Surprisingly, X, who had asked the question, does not understand immediately. “Allergic to what? In what sense?” Mary Ellen smiles — she obviously knows what Milosz had meant — while I try to explain, as briefly as possible, the role played by political informers in communist countries and the general atmosphere of mistrust.” Milosz, the great émigré Polish poet, at the time teaching at UC Berkeley (he was to be awarded the Nobel Prize in literature one year later, in 1980), had been invited at IU, as a Patten lecturer I believe, to speak about Thomas Mann and give a poetry reading. By that time, having taught in Warsaw, Mary Ellen was perfectly aware of the paranoid culture of suspicion in Eastern Europe, doubled, paradoxically, by a veritable cult of friendship in personal relations. Of course, as an American intellectual, she was not only esteemed by her peers in Poland, but she represented for them a trusted link to the outside world, something of great value in a closed and tightly controlled society. She, as an open-minded, curious, sincere person, and moreover as a noted avant-garde poet from the West, was a focus of interest and genuine affection in Poland. Human relations in Eastern Europe at the time could be unusually warm, as I have already suggested, in contrast with the official ideologically frosty atmosphere and with the pervading sense of social alienation — a thing which didn’t escape an acute and sensitive observer such as Saul Bellow, who, after a brief visit to Romania, described it in his novel *The Dean’s December* (1982). Mary Ellen experienced in Poland a special kind of loyalty, cordiality, and friendliness that she could only take to heart. And hers was a big heart. Sometimes it took the unexpected form, for example, of a large, rich, spring-time *Forsythia*, whose blooms had become, by the magic of poetry, “constellations of letters,” emblems and words of hope. — *Matei Calinescu*

## Encompass

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# Alumni News

## 1960s

**C. Patricia Riesenman**, MA'61, PhD'66, MLS'77, received the 2006 William Evans Jenkins Librarian Award from IU Bloomington's Library Faculty Council. The award recognizes outstanding professional contributions. Riesenman was a reference librarian at IUB from 1977 until her retirement in 1997.

**Robert Waugh**, BA'64, is the author of *The Monster in the Mirror: Looking for H.P. Lovecraft*, published by Hippocampus. He is a professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz.

## 1970s

**Thomas G. Sauer**, MA'72, PhD'79, is the new dean of Indiana State University's College of Arts and Sciences in Terre Haute. An associate professor of English and an associate dean at the university since 1990, he has been interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences since 2005.

**Henry I. Schvey**, MA'72, PhD'77, is chair of the Performing Arts Department and professor of drama and comparative literature at Washington University in St. Louis. His play *Kokoschka: A Love Story*, about the Austrian painter and playwright's relationship with Alma Mahler, premiered in St. Louis in February.

In May 2006, **Geta LeSeur**, MAT'75, PhD'82, was promoted to full professor of Africana studies, English, and women's studies at the University of Arizona. In

2000–01, she was in Spain on a Fulbright Scholarship. LeSeur is the author of *Not All Okies Are White ... Lives of Black Cotton Pickers in Arizona*, which was selected in 2000 as a Best Book of the Southwest. She works and lives in Tuscon.

## 1980s

**Daniel H. Clark**, MA'86, is an associate professor of English at Riverside Community College in Moreno Valley, Calif. He writes that he received a PhD from University of California, Davis, in 1999. Clark lives in Moreno Valley.

## 1990s

**Nicole Wilson Denner**, BA'93, MA'96, works at Stetson University. She and her husband, Michael, BA'93, live and work in Deland, Fla.

**Elizabeth Blakesley Lindsay**, MLS'93, MA'95, is assistant director for public services and outreach at Washington State University Libraries in Pullman.

**Daniel Simon**, MA'94, PhD'00, is assistant director of *World Literature Today* magazine. He also works as an adjunct assistant professor in the Honors College at the University of Oklahoma. Simon lives in Norman, Okla.

**Brad Warren**, BA'96, MLS'99, is grants and public-relations librarian at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. His wife, Rebecca J. Olson, is a reference librarian at the law firm Alston & Bird.

Their son, Archer Lewis Olson Warren, was born on Oct. 25, 2006. The family lives in Charlotte.

**Carrie E. Donovan**, BA'98, MLS'99, is an instructional-services librarian in the information commons undergraduate library services department at the Herman B Wells Library at IU Bloomington.

## 2000s

**Joseph O'Neil**, MA'00, is a lecturer in German in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Ky. His spouse, Cristina Alcalde, is an assistant professor of Gender and Women's Studies there.



## New alumni!

*We extend our heartiest congratulations to our most recent graduates for their accomplishments.*

### 2006 MA

Chantal Carleton, MA'06  
Shawn Conner, MA'06  
Heather Haffner, MA'06  
April Witt, MA'06  
Edward Chamberlain, MA'06

### 2007 MA

Diana Dunkelberger, MA'07  
Sara Van Den Heuvel, MA'07  
Cathryn Knoles Daniels, MA'07  
Anita Valverde, MA'07

### 2008 MA

Selah Wyche, MA'08

### 2006 PhD

Raghad Al-Hussamy, PhD'06  
Mark Harper, PhD'06

### 2007 PhD

Adriana Varga, PhD'07  
Robert Kinsman, PhD'07



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# From the chair

(continued from page 1)

in the poetry category for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Professors **Herbert Marks** and **Rosemarie McGerr** have just been named Remak Professors, in honor of Professor Emeritus **Henry Remak** and in recognition of their commitment to undergraduate teaching.

Our exchanges with institutions abroad continue to flourish. In fall 2007, Professor **Fernanda Gil Costa** from the University of Lisbon taught an upper level undergraduate course on "Narratives of Evil" and gave a lecture, "Insiders and Outsiders Narrating Disaster: The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755." In 2007-08, ABD **Chantal Carleton** spent the year teaching at the University of Nanterre in Paris and has chosen to stay on for the 2008-09 academic year. As part of this exchange, we welcome French student **Laetitia Boccanfuso** as an associate instructor this fall.

In fall 2008, we will also welcome **Femi Osofisan**, professor of drama at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and one of Africa's most prolific and honored living playwrights. Osofisan has written more than 40 plays. His works have been produced across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States, and critics note a range of influences in his work, from Brecht, Beckett, Chekov and Soyinka to indigenous Yoruba sacred and secular festivals and performances. His visit is made possible by our collaboration with the Department of Theatre and Drama and with thanks, again, to the New Frontiers Arts and Humanities Program.

The *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* that most of you know will be gaining a new identity and a new editor, **Eyal Peretz**, who will initiate this new cycle with provocative reflections on literature and the world. Look for it!

There are other new faces in the department: Visiting Research Scholar **Alina Sokol**, a comparatist specializing in Spanish and Russian literatures; **Matthew Colglazier**, the new undergraduate advisor who is a wonderful resource and recruiter for undergraduate majors, and **Howard Swyers**, our new fiscal manager and administrative assistant, who is, in addition, a talented singer of religious and classical music. Mariam Ehteshami whom many of you will remember has moved to the IU Art Museum.

Over the last year we have received letters, gifts of books, and visits from several alumni. We would be pleased to hear from you and to welcome you back to the department. — *Eileen Julien, Chair of the Department of Comparative Literature*

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