Graduate Group for German & Austrian Studies
State University of New York at Buffalo
Fall 2008 / Winter 2009 Newsletter

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Fall Reception and Welcome of Richard and Barabara Jurasek

The Graduate Group's ninth annual fall reception took place on November 1, 2008, at the home of Prof. Andreas and Mrs. Daum, who kindly hosted this year. The guests of honor were the German Studies scholars **Richard and Barbara Jurasek**. Richard Jurasek is also the new president of Medaille College.

Both professors trained at Ohio State. Also, both taught for many years at Earlham College, a selective liberal arts college in Indiana in the Quaker tradition. One of the important joint projects they had there was the publication of their German language textbook, *Sprechen wir deutsch*, which was very successful. At Earlham, Barbara was very involved with the study abroad program. In 1998, she was named an "Outstanding German Educator" by the American Association of Teachers of German.

At the same time, Rick began his interest in college administration, not just at Earlham, but later at Augustana College in Illinois and then a short stint at Antioch College. When he took over at Medaille in the summer of 2007, Barbara became an *emerita* in order to join him here in Buffalo. We're thrilled to have them in Buffalo, and not just because Germanisten make good administrators but because their presence enriches the community of scholars in Western New York interested in German studies in the broadest sense.

Visit by Artists and Design Team Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock March 26-27, 2009

Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock exploded onto the international art scene in the 1990s with their work on holocaust memorials, and, in particular, two provocative projects, *Places of Remembrance in the Bavarian Quarter* (1992) and *Bus Stop* (1995), which fundamentally changed the discourse on the politics and policies of memorialization. The questions they ask about how collective memory is encoded in the landscape of daily life have caused politicians and artists to rethink the concept of the memorial, moving from a centralized, monolithic monument to the embedded and dispersed fragment.

Since these seminal projects, they have gone on to address issues of how memory functions in the social sphere and in the spaces of the city with projects such as *The City as Text: Jewish Munich* (2007). Their most recent work has shifted to the policies and politics of collecting. They view art collections as places of collective memory, which they have explored in exhibitions such as *The Art of Collecting: Flick in Berlin* (2004). *Show Your Collection*, an art documentation project in collaboration with major museums in Munich, opened this past fall.

Renata Stih is a professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, working in painting, drawing, art and technology, pop culture, theatre, film, and media. Dr. Frieder Schnock is an art historian, critic, and curator, with a wide range of interests ranging from eighteenth century landscape gardens and photography to curatorial projects involving museums, private collections, and galleries. Their work has met with critical acclaim as "radical" and "historically illuminating" attempts to provoke discussion about the immediate but often obscured relationship of the German past to its present.

Stih and Schnock will be presenting a public lecture at UB's School of Architecture and Urban Planning on Thursday, March 26 at 5:30pm in 301 Crosby Hall. This will be followed by a colloquium at the Baldy Center on Friday, March 27 from 12:00 to 2:30pm. All events are free and open to the public. To RSVP for the Baldy Center colloquium and lunch on March 27, please e-mail Despina Stratigakos at dms58@buffalo.edu These events are sponsored by the Graduate Group for German and Austrian Studies, the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy, and the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University at Buffalo.

Film Series Organized by Michael Frank

Michael Frank, a doctoral student in Linguistics, will be organizing a series of three German films for the latter part of the spring semester to be shown on the UB North Campus. For more information, please contact him at mgfrank2@buffalo.edu.

News from DAAD and Fulbright Award Recipients

Wiebke Bartsch observes, the typical first question I heard from people whom I told I studied at UB was, "Isn't Buffalo in the Midwest, where you see cowboys riding horses?" Although I knew better than this, I have to admit that when I made the decision to study for my Master's degree in Buffalo I had no idea what really to expect. I had heard of the tough winters, but I did not imagine that the snow would almost hinder me from going home for Christmas. Also, I knew about the rarity of sidewalks or bike passes in the United States, but I would never have expected to turn into a person that could not live without a car. I was aware of the high standards in graduate education in the US, but would never have guessed that the first semester would be tremendously hard.

During my Master's studies in Political Science at UB under Dr. Claude E. Welch and Dr. Michelle Benson, I have had many experiences. Most have been great, but some have been challenging. Among the latter has been that my credit card identity was stolen at the end of my stay. However, such experiences could never make the good ones vanish. As a DAAD scholarship holder I was not only able to take advantage of the excellent classes offered by my department; I also found new friends that will last for a lifetime. I managed to visit many beautiful landscapes the region around Lake Erie has to offer. Trips have taken me to the Niagara Falls, Letchworth State Park and the Finger Lakes. During my stay of three semesters I have also been to the American East and West Coast, to Toronto and to many of the very exciting sports events around Buffalo. Today I have to admit that I became a hockey fan in the US! Let's go Buffalo!

Now that I am back in Germany I miss the American way of life a lot. I wished Germans would sometimes have such a "laid back" mentality and would be as friendly and willing to help as the Americans have been that I have encountered during my stay.

Three semesters at UB have not only taught me Political Science, I also fell in love with a country. I managed to grow as a student and as a person. Although I had lived in other countries than Germany before, there has never been a stay that has made such a tremendous impact on me. Therefore, I am incredibly thankful for the help I received especially from UB faculty members that have made my life in Buffalo such a once in a lifetime experience.

For **Matthew Boeckmann**, it has been an honor and a privilege to be working as an English Teaching Assistant in Germany for the past five months. To begin, it is important to explain where I am, how I got here, and what exactly I am doing. I was fortunate enough to win a Fulbright grant to Germany to work as an English Teaching Assistant. The city that I have been working in is Halle, Saxony-Anhalt. Halle is located about 25 miles to the west of Leipzig and it is the largest city in Saxony-Anhalt with roughly 230,000 people. The school that I was placed in is a vocational school located directly in the center of the city. In my school, the students learn particular trades and then, ideally, they will get jobs working in their specified areas once they have finished with school. The trades that my school offers are hotel management, gastronomy, students interested in working at travel agencies, fashion design, graphic design, event technicians, fitness training, and the list goes on. I work 12 hours every week mostly in English classes but I have also occasionally given presentations in German classes. My duties are essentially to assist the teacher with the lessons and I am used in a number of different ways in doing so.

Not only do I work as an English Teaching Assistant, but I have also kept myself busy by doing some other activities as well. For instance, I volunteer as a soccer coach for children in a day care. The children range between 7 and 9 years old and I meet with them once every two weeks for two hour sessions. It has really been a fulfilling experience doing this and I have truly learned a lot from the children, as I am sure they have learned some things from me. I have also been able to wow many of them with American money. On top of that, I have been giving free "nachhilfe" to a couple of students of mine in the school where I work.

The culture shock that I experienced when I first arrived in Halle was fairly large. I had the opportunity to stay with a host family for two weeks, and they spoke very little English, which was great for me. I have noticed that my German has improved tremendously since I have been here because of it. Besides the English teachers in my school, none of my other colleagues speak English, so I am constantly bettering my German conversational skills. Also, for most, I am the first American that they have ever met and they are normally very interested in what I have to say and have questions about the US and so on.

Since the beginning of my scholarship, I have also had the opportunity to do some traveling. I have been to Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Cologne, Quedlinburg, many small towns near Halle, and almost every part of England. I am also really excited some upcoming travel plans. In the spring, some family of mine are coming to visit and we are going to journey to the hometown of my grandfather, which is near Münster, North Rhine-Westphalia, and we then intend to visit some of the beautiful castles that lie on the Rhine.

I find that I have adapted really well into the culture now and I cannot express how much I am enjoying working here. I am seriously considering staying yet another year working either as an English Teaching Assistant like I am now or finding a job in a language school. With that being said, I am really looking forward to the many new experiences that are still in store for me here in Germany.

News from Graduate Group Members

Wesley Boling (graduate student, political science) reports that he took part in the Internationales Parlaments-Stipendium des deutschen Bundestages in the spring and summer of 2008. It was a five-month scholarship program that allowed 115 students from 26 different countries to work in the Berlin offices of Mitglieder des Bundestages. It was a fascinating experience, providing him the opportunity to witness and take part in the day to day work of a German parliamentarian, in this case Friedrich Merz.

Wesley Boling (right) meets Chancellor Merkel

Andreas Daum (History) tells us that this year one of his books came out in English translation: *Kennedy in Berlin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). He will be on sabbatical next year.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the admission of women to German universities (Prussia in particular), **Patricia Mazón** (History) was invited by the Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies at the Humboldt University, Berlin, to give a talk at a conference on "The Sex of Education: Hegemony and Dissidence." Mazón's talk in November 2008 was on "The First Generation of Female Students and the Admission of the 'Better Elements,' 1890-1914."

Elizabeth Otto (Visual Studies) co-edited a book, forthcoming in 2010: *The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film, 1890s-1930s*, co-edited with Vanessa Rocco and with a foreword by Linda Nochlin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010). She also has several articles forthcoming in 2009 and 2010: "Schaulust: Sexuality and Trauma in Conrad Veidt's Masculine Masquerades," *The Many Faces of Weimar German Cinema*, Ed. Christian Rogowski, Suffolk, U.K.: Camden House, forthcoming 2010; "The Secret History of Photomontage: Fragmentary Soldier Portraits from the Later Nineteenth Century through the Weimar Republic," *Weimar Publics – Weimar Subjects*, Eds. Kerstin Barndt, Kathleen Canning and Kristin McGuire, Oxford: Berghahn Books, forthcoming 2009-10; "Play Time in Dessau: Bauhaus Photomontage and New Visions of Masculinity," *Bauhaus Palimpsest: the Object of Discourse*, Eds. Robin Schuldenfrei and Jeffrey Saletnik, New York: Routledge, forthcoming 2009; "A 'Schooling of the Senses': Post-Dada Visual Experiments in the Bauhaus Photomontages of László Moholy-Nagy and Marianne Brandt," *New German Critique*, forthcoming 2009; and "'With All Ten Fingers': Marianne Brandt and Gender at the

Bauhaus," *Model Bauhaus*, Munich: Prestel Verlag / Bauhaus-Archiv, Bauhaus Dessau, Weimar Bauhaus, 2009.

Professor Otto is also working with Dr. Robin Curtis to plan a conference on theories of montage in film and photography for the fall of 2010. Dr. Curtis, a film scholar in the Department of Theater Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, is a Feodor Lynen Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation being hosted in the department of Visual Studies for three consecutive fall semesters (2008-10).

Despina Stratigakos (Architecture) published a book this year entitled *A Women's Berlin: Building the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). The book's website is www.upress.umn.edu/Books/S/stratigakos_women.html. The Institute for German Cultural Studies at Cornell University invited Professor Stratigakos to lead a colloquium on her book on August 29, 2008.

Professor Stratigakos also published an article: "The Good Architect and the Bad Parent: On the Formation and Disruption of a Canonical Image," *Journal of Architecture* 13.3 (2008): 283-296.

Contact Us

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Listserv information: Our group's listserv is an open one, meaning that any member can post to it from the e-mail address that the listserv has on file for him/her. Send any listserv messages to gggaas-list@listserv.buffalo.edu

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