

THE AMBASSADOR

SUMMER-FALL 2008

VOLUME II

World Languages and Cultures

This issue begins with the announcement of an important change that came about in the Spring 2008 semester when the department voted to change its name from **Foreign Languages and Literatures to World Languages and Cultures**. Department members felt that the word "foreign" no longer accurately describes all our language course offerings, since Spanish is widely spoken in the United States and is not a foreign language for all of our students, many of whom are native or heritage speakers of Spanish. Further, though literature remains an important

part of our curriculum, it is only one aspect of the broader category of culture, which we teach from the beginning through the most advanced levels and which we feel is fundamental to both the process and the purpose of language learning.

2008-2009 is expected to be a transition year for the department: **Sergio Ramírez-Franco**, who has been with the department for the past three years, has accepted a position at Temple University. He will be replaced this year by **Jaime Milán del Río** and a national search for

the position will be conducted in the fall.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Meet the Professors
- ◆ Faculty led study abroad programs
- ◆ Familiar faces in new places
- ◆ News from alumni
- ◆ Teacher Assistants



Overseas volunteer work in Madagascar

In 2005, I left my job as Africa Regional Assistant at USAID and joined the inaugural group of volunteers in the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) volunteer program. There were 13 of us who were assigned to 10 different countries. I was the first and only CRS volunteer to be assigned to Madagascar.

I worked with ODDIT, a sustainable development office that is part of the Diocese of Toamasina, Madagascar. I assisted the office with general institutional development and capacity building (looking at employee performance, internal and external communication, strategic planning, etc.) I also got involved in food security, since the office's main focus right now is a project to reduce hunger and malnutrition that also incorporates maternal and infant health, agricultural marketing, community infrastructure improvements, and disaster preparation. I enjoyed this work, because I lived in the city of Toamasina, (the second largest city), but had the opportunity to travel to rural areas. I got to know both urban and rural realities of life in Madagascar. Also my office provided food aid to Safety Net centers supporting orphans and vulnerable children and prisoners. The last big task I had was to teach English to the diocesan seminarians, who were of high school age. I actually lived at the seminary, so I got to know the seminarians all very well. Proving how small the world really is, while traveling with colleagues to visit a Safety Net Center in another city and waiting to board our plane, I took a photo of a boy who was probably 5 years old. He's wearing a University of Scranton hat! How it got to Madagascar, I'm not sure! I didn't get the chance to ask him or his mom, but maybe there is an alumni around who has also spent time there.

My experience at Scranton is what really propelled me to seriously consider overseas volunteer work, though I'd had the desire for a long time. As I considered programs like Peace Corps versus CRS, it was a no brainer for me to choose CRS with its focus on living your faith in solidarity with those less fortunate, Catholic Social Teaching, etc. Best wishes for a successful Fall semester. Kind regards, Celeste Gregory Class of 2001.



World Languages and Cultures Staff



GRANADA, SPAIN: ISLAMIC GARDEN 2

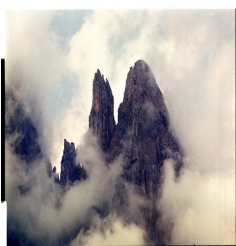


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Jamie Trnka, Assistant Professor of German, completed her second year of service in 2007-2008. Trnka has been very active in organizing co-curricular activities. She was responsible for organizing, planning, and advertising a film series and guest lecture in honor of the late Jurek Becker, an event that was co-sponsored by Judaic Studies and the Center for Ethics Studies. One of the films screened (*While the Germans Sleep*, directed by Frank Beyer 1994) had its U.S. premiere in Scranton. All events were well attended by students and community members alike. Trnka also worked in close collaboration with the Jane Kopas Women's Center and Multicultural Affairs to further connections with students, faculty, and staff across the university. She offered two well attended lunch-time talks at the Women's Center series on women and violence, one on women terrorists and one on Afro-German women. Her mini-seminar on "Criminal Seduction, Melodrama, and the Femme Fatale Women in Weimar Film," held at the Women's Studies Program's Spring Foundations in Feminism workshop, was received enthusiastically by students and faculty in attendance. She also continued to organize bi-weekly German conversation meetings throughout the academic year.

Dr. Trnka was awarded a Faculty Development Grant for research on the cultural production of Chilean exiles in Berlin. She conducted extensive archival research and interviewed a number of prominent East German film makers. She is currently at work on a manuscript entitled "Choreographing Exile: Lothar Warneke's and Omar Saavedra Santos's *Blonde Tango*" She will present a preliminary version of the paper at this year's annual convention of the German Studies Association in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Last Spring Dr. Trnka was invited to speak on her research in the field of transnationalism at Penn State: "A Rhetoric of Walking Around: Pablo Neruda, F.C. Delius, and a New Genealogy of Antifascism," Pennsylvania State University, State College, March 2008.



ITALIAN ALPS

Marzia Caporale, Assistant Professor of French and Italian, has completed her first year of service, and it was a very active year. Caporale hosted the French and Italian club meetings throughout the 2007-2008 academic year and she organized a French Instructional Film series with five film screenings in March 2008. She also held a special screening and discussion of the Quebecois film *C.R.A.Z.Y* in April. Caporale has also been working with **Dona Bauman** of the Department of Education on projects relating to children with disabilities. In September 2007 she gave a guest presentation in Bauman's "Exceptional Child" class on the topic of inclusion in pre-elementary and elementary school. Caporale and Bauman are currently involved in a research project on parents of children with disabilities around the world and they plan to present the results of their study at an International Conference on Disabilities in Summer 2009.



Sergio Ramírez-Franco, Assistant Professor of Spanish, organized both the Fall and Spring Instructional Film Series for the Latin American Studies Concentration. The Fall series was organized around the theme of "Borderlands" and the Spring series came under the theme of "Cinema and the Crisis of the Liberal State."

Marie Karam, Director of the Language Learning Center, continues to serve as Director of Bridges to El Salvador, an annual trip to El Salvador for faculty, staff and administrators to become more committed to the University mission of educating for justice. Karam works throughout the year to plan recruitment, orientation, information sessions, guest speakers and itinerary for the trip. The summer 2008 group of 12 included the first combined University of Scranton faculty/staff and alumni. Karam also serves on the Board of Directors for SCOPE (Salvadoran Children/ Opportunities to Promote Education) which she initiated as a farewell gift to Fr. Brendan Lally, the founder of Bridges to El Salvador at the University of Scranton. SCOPE is now a thriving foundation that supports an inner city school in San Salvador which educates the poorest of the poor in grades K-8. She also continues the SEED project that she founded in 2005 to educate the Salvadoran village of Las Delicias.

In addition, Karam secured an Education for Justice Grant to the newly formed Latino Student Club and organized a visit by Oscar Torres, screenwriter of the internationally acclaimed film *Voces Inocentes (Innocent Voices)*, to the University of Scranton. She also secured a diversity grant to organize the second annual TA (Teaching Assistant) TALK which featured cultural presentations by the TA's on their home countries (Argentina, China, France, Japan, Morocco). The talks, one at a luncheon and the other at a dinner, were open to members of the University community, the area community and regional teachers to increase awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity. The presentation by the Chinese TA, Huijing Wen, was selected by the Fulbright Program to be presented in Washington, D.C. to TAs from across the country and TA Mónica Morales Díaz from Argentina has had an article on her presentation accepted for publication in the Buenos Aires Herald.

Karam also continued the Community Outreach Tutoring program through the Language Learning Center. This unique service endeavor enables Hispanic adults and children to improve their English and also gives the LLC staff the opportunity to better appreciate the diversity in both the University and the local Scranton communities. This year Karam also initiated a new program "Languages to Go" for faculty and staff who wish to learn languages for travel or fun purposes. The first sessions "Spanish to Go" were held in the Language Learning Center for faculty and staff from all areas of the campus and was warmly and enthusiastically received.

Linda Ledford-Miller, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese and department Chairperson, translated the Costa Rican play *Madre nuestra que estás en la tierra (Our Mother Who Art on Earth)*, which was performed in a fall 2007 World Premiere by the University Players in the presence of the playwright, **Ana Istarú**. The translation was also used for supra titles for a Spanish-language performance in California.

Ledford-Miller also wrote and had funded four Diversity grants for international and multi-cultural events on campus that reached area high schools and the community outside the university. In addition Ledford-Miller co-authored a proposal with **Sharon Meagher** of the Philosophy department to bring the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence **Isabel Bueno Lázaro** to the University of Scranton for the 2007-2008 academic year.

Robert Parsons, working on behalf of the University of Scranton's Latin American Studies Concentration, made all arrangements for the early April 2008 concert and educational workshop "Roots of Puerto Rican Music," directed by five musicians of AMLA (Asociación de Músicos Latino Americanos) from Philadelphia. In addition, Parsons was the faculty moderator of the newly formed student club "Se habla español," which held a series of Spanish conversation meetings throughout the year.

Almost all department faculty and some advanced students did translation and interpretation for local and regional agencies, hospitals and police departments, as well as for individuals.

Faculty Activities

In May, 2008, Dr. Virginia Picchietti delivered a paper titled, "Writing the Shoah for Young Readers: The Case of Lia Levi" at the American Association of Italian Studies conference in Taormina, Sicily.



FACULTY LED STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Marzia Caporale and **Virginia Picchietti** have designed and organized a new study abroad summer program in Florence Italy which took place for the first time in June of 2008 (May 31-June 28). Caporale and Picchietti plan to offer this trip every summer. In addition to an Italian language course, the academic component of the trip includes an interdisciplinary course, Dante's *Inferno* and the Florence of His Times. Students spent a month in Florence taking language and literature courses at the *Istituto Europeo*. They also traveled to interesting sites and attended cultural events such as the opera in Verona. The second Florence Study Abroad Program will take place in June 2009.

Robert Parsons ran the eleventh annual faculty-led study abroad course to Guadalajara, Mexico in the 2008 Intersession along with **Kevin Nordberg** of Philosophy. The three week trip features home stays with Mexican families and courses in Spanish and Mexican political cultures at UNIVA (the Universidad del Valle de Atemajac). The trip also includes a number of interesting excursions in and around the greater Guadalajara area in the state of Jalisco, including a visit to a large traditional Mexican *hacienda* that is now an important tequila farm and factory, and the recently discovered circular pyramids known as Guachimontones. The highlight of the Guadalajara trip, however, is a weekend tour of Mexico City that includes excursions to the Chapultepec palace, the famous Anthropological Museum, and the pyramids of Teotihuacán. 18 students participated in the 2008 trip. The Twelfth Annual trip will also be conducted by Parsons and Nordberg and will take place in January 2009.

In January 2008 **Linda Ledford-Miller** and **Sharon Meagher** of Philosophy took a group of thirteen students to Puebla, Mexico as part of a new course, Women and Development in Latin America. The course began on campus with a week of historical background and a grounding in feminist theories of development. The group then spent several days at the **CENTRO ECOTURISTICO KAKIWIN TUTUNAKU**, an *ecoposada* run by a cooperative of indigenous Totonac women, and supported by the State Organization of Indigenous and Country Women, "Xasasti Yolistli."

Activities included an interpretive botanical walk, a visit to a center for traditional indigenous medicine, a workshop in indigenous cooking, including learning how to make tortillas by hand, a demonstration of the making of sacred decorative candles, and visits to the homes of three different families of differing economic status.

Students also participated in a river clean-up and in the collection and planting of local plants at the Centro. We also witnessed and participated in a Huapanguada (traditional dance and music) and some students took traditional medicinal steam baths in a specially designed building. On the way back to Puebla, the group stopped at one of Mexico's designated "magic cities," Cuetzalan, for some shopping, and tour of the ecotourism center "Hotel Taseloizin" run by a Nahuatl women's cooperative, "Yoloxochitl S/N" Barrio de Zacitipan. In Puebla the group visited the offices of Xasasti Yolistli, with presentations from members representing various indigenous women's cooperatives. The group also had a tour of the historic city of Puebla led by a philosophy professor from the Universidad Iberoamericana de Puebla, followed by a luncheon on campus sponsored by the Ibero's office of International Exchanges.

FAMILIAR FACES IN NEW PLACES

Germán Zárate Sández, Fulbright TA for 2005-2006 and GA for 2006-2007, has successfully completed his first year in the PhD program in Linguistics at Georgetown University. He taught a summer course in Spanish in Amherst, MA in June and July and visited his family in San Juan, Argentina in August.

Mónica Morales Díaz, Fulbright TA in Spanish for 2007-2008, returned to La Rioja, Argentina where she will teach English as a Second Language. She recently published an article in *The Herald of Buenos Aires* on her teaching experience in Scranton and the methodology she learned in Professor Marie Karam's course. The article is titled "Bring Culture into the Classroom through the Top-Down Teaching Approach."

Huijing Wen, Fulbright TA in Chinese for 2007-2008, returned to China where she will teach English as a Second Language.

Khalid Ait Mansour, Fulbright TA in Arabic for 2007-2008, has returned to Morocco where he will teach English as a Second Language.



NEWS FROM OUR ALUMNI

Jackie DeFillippis (Counseling and Human Services, Spanish minor, 2008) was Vice President of the Latino Student Association at the University of Scranton in 2007-2008. Jackie will spend a full year (August 2008-August 2009) doing volunteer work in a day care center in Santa Fe, Mexico City through Incarnate Word Missioners.

Sarah Dilmuth (International Studies/Spanish, 2006) completed her work in the Peace Corps in Mozambique and is now working in Washington, D.C. at the National Cooperative Business Association (www.ncba.coop) as an assistant program manager for the international department.

Andrea Frankenberger (English, Spanish minor, 2008) has been awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Argentina.

Kim Friend (ILB/Spanish, Portuguese minor, 2006) has accepted a job as a flight attendant for Delta Airlines. She was hired specifically for her Spanish and Portuguese skills and will be using both languages on a daily basis in her job.

Dan Kiers (Communications, Spanish minor, 2006) spent the 2006-2007 year in Durán, Ecuador as a volunteer for Rostro de Cristo. Dan is now Rostro's Assistant Director at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Melanie Larsen (History/German, 2008) will begin work on her MS in Psychology at Shippensburg University.

Chris Lucas (Secondary Education/Spanish, 2008) received this year's award for Excellence in Secondary Education.

Rosa Manganara (Spanish, 2006, MA Secondary Education, 2008) recently got a job as Middle School and High School Spanish teacher in the Tunkhannock school district.

Allison Martyn (ILB/French, 2008) has been awarded Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to France.

Christopher Molitoris (IS, Arabic minor, 2008) has been awarded a Fulbright to Morocco.

Laurie Moyer (formerly Horne, Secondary Education/Spanish, 2004) is a Middle School Spanish teacher.

Dario J Englot (A alumni of university of Scranton and son of Prof. Maria Englot, Italian) published an article on seizures and cerebral activity which can be accessed at <http://www.jneurosci.org/content/vol28/issue36/>

Kathryn Prizeman (ILB/Spanish, 2008) is a Fulbright national finalist and alternate to Uruguay.

Abraham Quintanar (Spanish/English, 1993) received his Ph.D. in Spanish at the University of Wisconsin and has been teaching in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dickenson College since 2001. He was recently granted tenure at Dickenson, effective Fall 2008.

Stephanie Ramírez (Spanish, concentrations in Women's Studies and Latin American Studies, 2008) has an Internship at Planned Parenthood in Philadelphia. Stephanie was also the winner of this year's award for excellence in Latin American Studies. She currently works for a senator in Queens and is considering law school.

Bridget Rooney (Spanish, 2007) is currently working at Catholic Social Services in Philadelphia in case management and outreach programs. She expects to go to graduate school in Fall 2008.

Richard Santosdiaz (ILB/Spanish, 2008) has been awarded a half tuition scholarship to pursue his MBA (Master en Dirección de Empresas Internacional) at Foro Europeo in Pamplona, Spain.

Peter Secola (Spanish, 2006) is working on his PhD in Psychology at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, CA (about 40 miles east of L.A.). He has already earned his Masters degree in Clinical Psychology.



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Andrea Sidari (Political Science, minor French, 2008) received a Youth International Meeting Grant (Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes) sponsored by the French Government/French Embassy in Washington DC and open to American students.

Jennifer Stachnik (ILB/Spanish, 2008) continues to work for UPS and also has an Internship at Planned Parenthood in Scranton. Jennifer was also a Fulbright national Finalist to Mexico.

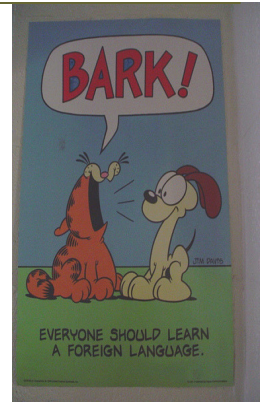
Stephanie Vázquez (IS, French minor, 2008) will be pursuing studies in International Conflict Analysis at the University of Kent in Brussels.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF CURRENT STUDENTS

Marny Blaire Smith (IB/Spanish) received a President's Fellowship grant for Summer Research with Dr. Susan Trussler.

Megan LoBue (English, German minor) received a President's Fellowship grant for Summer Research with Dr. Jamie Trnka.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS



Eriko Fujita I am from a place called Akita Prefecture, northern part of Japan. My hometown is totally different from Tokyo, which most of you would know, it is very country and has lots of snow in the winter. I pretty much spent most of my life in Akita, graduated from Akita University, majored in English education. I was in Brisbane, Australia as an exchange student for about a year studying linguistics. After graduating from the university, I worked as an English teacher for students of 4 years old and above. If you are interested in Japan, Japanese culture and Japanese language, please talk to me any time. I am happy to share what I know about my country with you all!!!

Kai Azizi I am from Germany and I am assisting Dr. Trnka. I am 27 years old, I am studying English and Geography in Germany and I will become a teacher at the German "Gymnasium" which is the school, German students attend from age 10 to 18 if they want to study at an university later on. I am, as most of the TA's this year, here with a Fulbright scholarship and will stay until the end of May.

CHEN Shen from Beijing, the capital city of China, which has just hosted the 29th Olympic Games. I have been a teacher of English at Central University for Nationalities in China and here I am teaching Elementary Chinese as well as Intermediate Chinese. I like traveling and meeting new people. Hope to be your friend here! My best, Shen Chen.

Julie Neveux I am from France. I majored in English at François-Rabelais University which is situated in a beautiful French region called the Loire Valley. I have been more interested in Linguistics for the past few years. I would like to be a French teacher for immigrants and international students when I return to France. You are more than welcome to pass by my office whenever you feel like practicing French!

Andrés Álvarez I am from Colombia, and I am 29 years old. I studied Fine Arts at the National University of Colombia, and now I am teaching Spanish at the intermediate and advanced levels. It is my first time outside my country, but I am enjoying the United States very much. I find that people here are very kind and warm, and also the city of Scranton is beautiful.



Top- Down adding culture to the language class

My name is Monica Morales

Diaz and I am from La Rioja, Argentina. Back at home, I am an English teacher; however, right now I am working as a teaching assistant at the University of Scranton in Scranton, Pennsylvania under the Fulbright program.

In order to fulfill the requirements of being a teaching assistant under the Fulbright program,

I had to take specific classes. One class that really changed the way I teach foreign languages was Specific Methods, a class taught by Marie Karam, a professor at the University of Scranton. I was initially hesitant about teaching my native language in another country but this all changed upon meeting Professor Karam. This very passionate and enthusiastic teacher showed me a door not only to teach Spanish but also for bringing my culture into the classroom by making use of the Top-Down teaching approach. This innovative teaching strategy enables teachers to present authentic language and culture regardless of what level is being taught.

The Top-Down teaching approach avoids breaking a language down into its components but rather presents the material through "whole texts", such as a piece of literature, a song, a piece of realia and other authentic forms, that demonstrate the use of the language. The idea behind this approach is that the learner will benefit from focusing on main ideas instead of memorizing minute grammatical details. This will enable the student to gain a better understanding of the language as a whole, and to later be able to communicate through the manipulation of grammatical structures. "By means of activities such as negotiation of meaning and joint problem solving with

the teachers and classmates, learners demonstrate performance before competence; that is, they participate in more complex tasks than they are capable of completing without assistance" (Rogolf, 1990). By encouraging conversation though example rather than by focusing on the complex grammatical rules of a language, the students gain competence, a sense of direction, and a new found confidence in their language abilities "The purpose of the Top-Down learning is to give the student a clear and whole picture of how the words and structures they must learn are contained in a context that makes these elements meaningful through the overall message." (Judith L. Shrum, Eileen W. Gilsan. Teacher's Handbook). I employed this approach as much as possible in teaching my native language here in the United States. Each day gave me a new opportunity to present language by showing facts about my own country and culture. One example of how I implemented this interactive approach was when I taught the second conditional. As a teacher, I was required to adhere to my class syllabus and the course textbook but I was still encouraged to turn every class into a chance to share more about Argentina. Even though I needed to make slight adjustments to my syllabus in order to employ this technique, I was not about to let that keep me from taking advantage of this powerful teaching technique.

One day in class, I discussed politics with my students and I asked them what they thought

about women running for political office. We discussed how the United States currently has a female running for President for the first time and I related this to the political situation in Argentina.

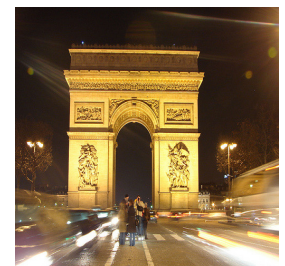
I showed my students pictures of various female Argentine leaders and shared with them how having a woman in office was a relatively common occurrence. This led to an open political debate and created the perfect situation for me to ask my students what they would do if they were the President of their own country. To begin this discussion, I wrote two possible answers on the board as examples and let the students come up with their own responses based on what I had written. I had not yet discussed the necessary grammatical structure of the second conditional, but my students were still able to employ it to express their own ideas. After this open conversation, I then drew my students' attention to the grammatical aspect and formally taught the second conditional. This application of the Top-Down teaching strategy not only enabled my students to express their own thoughts without struggling over grammatical structures, but it also allowed me to teach them about the current political situation of Argentina. I strongly recommend that teachers in general, especially those who teach foreign languages, make use of the Top-Down teaching strategy in order to bring their classes to a higher level of understanding and competency.

By. Monica Morales



Monument to Jose De San Martin, 25th of May Plaza, La Rioja.

"I WAS INITIALLY HESITANT ABOUT TEACHING MY NATIVE LANGUAGE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY BUT THIS ALL CHANGED UPON MEETING PROFESSOR KARAM"



ARC DE TRIOMPHE,
PARIS, FRANCE



Teaching assistants (continued)

Heba Waleed Al Nasser, is from a city called Irbid in Jordan. I did my internship at the US Embassy in Amman, after graduation I joined save the Children Organization as a facilitator. I am happy to be here at the University of Scranton to teach my native language which is Arabic. I like the people here, the green city of Scranton and of course I like my Students. Shokran!

Graduate Assistants



Kelly Bucconear I graduated in 95 from The University of Scranton. I am a second year Graduate student and Graduate assistant. I am working on my Master's Degree in Secondary Education with a French certification.

Joseph Rubino I graduated from Hofstra University. I am currently working on my Master's Degree. I am from Long Island, New York. I hope everyone has a great year. Ciao!!!

Recent publications:

A translation of Dr. Trnka's "Women Writing Out of Time: Confessions, Histories and the Politics of Writing Terror," appeared in the German language anthology *NachBilder der RAF. Literatur-Kultur-Geschlecht*. Berlin: Böhlau, 2008 Inge Stephan and Alexandra Tacke, eds. [After-Images of the Red Army Faction. Literature-Culture-Gender].

"'The struggle is over, the wounds are open': Cinematic Tropes, History, and the RAF in Recent German Film" *New German Critique* 101 (Summer 2007): 1-26.

Dr. Habib Zanzana published an article titled "Technology, Foreign Language Pedagogy and the Teaching of Critical Languages from a Portfolio Perspective: The case of Arabic" in the International Journal of Technology, Knowledge and Society, Volume 4, Number 2, April 2008. He also presented a paper titled "Estos hombres son terroristas domesticos": Domestic Abuse Drama in Contemporary Spanish Literature and Film" at the Pennsylvania Foreign Language Conference, Duquesnes University, September 2007.

Film Festivals:

Last fall, Dr. Trnka hosted the Jurek Becker film festival; this fall we will again host an East German film festival and guest director Rainer Simon. If you want more detailed information on these programs, please let me know; I also should still have copies of the press releases from the Becker Festival.

**Faculty Editors Robert A. Parsons
and El Habib Zanzana**

**Faculty Secretary Joyce Knott
Student Editor Joseph Rubino**

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