

THE AMBASSADOR

SPRING— SUMMER 2009

VOLUME III

Department of World Languages and Cultures

Notes From The Chair

DR. LEDFORD-MILLER



They tell me it's spring. True, the crocuses and daffodils are sporting their jaunty colors, but I'm still wearing my raincoat with the lining in it. There are other indicators as well: students stopping by for a quick look at their resumé's, e-mails about internships or jobs, requests for letters of recommendation, the stash of honors cords for this year's graduating seniors. Everyone wears the face of Janus, the Roman God of beginnings and endings, already looking backwards

to what is about to be over (but not until Finals week!), and forwards, perhaps with trepidation, to an unknown future. Okay, the job market isn't great, but don't despair; Janus is also the God of doors and gateways. Your future awaits; step through that door or gateway with enthusiasm.



POINTS OF INTEREST IN THIS EDITION:

- ◆ *SEED*
- ◆ *Faculty Activities*
- ◆ *Japanese Ceremonies*
- ◆ *News from alumni*
- ◆ *Chinese Lantern Festival*
- ◆ *Teaching Assistants*



World Languages and Cultures Faculty & Staff



From Left, Standing: Jamie Trnka, Marie Karam, Joyce Knott, Marzia Caporale, Jaime Meilan del Rio, Virginia Picchietti. From Left, seated: Linda Ledford-Miller, Habib Zanzana, Virginia Picchietti. Absent from photo: Joe Wilson, Robert Parsons.



“SEED”

**The perfect gift!
Scholarships to
Establish
Educational
Development**

The University of Scranton Bridges to El Salvador program 1999-2009 would like to present you with a unique opportunity to make a difference! The children of Las Delicias, outside of San Salvador, live in a village of corrugated metal shacks without sanitation, potable water and suffer from related medical ailments. Most want to attend school but cannot afford the cost of basic school supplies, shoes and clothing because of the extreme poverty.

The SEED program has changed that!

SEED certificates purchased cover the school expenses for one year for a child in elementary (\$50), middle school (\$80) or high school (\$300). Send checks (payable to University of Scranton/ SEED) to Marie Karam, O’Hara 308, University of Scranton, 800 Linden St., Scranton PA 18510. Please include or email karamm1@scranton.edu with gift recipients’ names which will be done in calligraphy on beautiful parchment SEED certificates.

Over the past four years we have sponsored all the children in this village of 600 families who wanted to attend elementary, middle and high school as well as several college students. This gift of education is truly changing the lives of these young people.

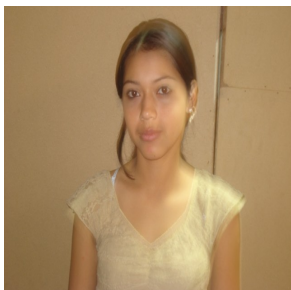
Thank you!

You are making a difference in the lives of these children.

Program coordinated by Marie Karam, Director, Bridges to El Salvador and Cristina Quintanilla, native of Las Delicias and graduate of the Jesuit Universidad Centroamericana (UCA)

Sponsored by University of Scranton Bridges to El Salvador.

Info: karamm1@scranton.edu



Faculty Activities

Marie Karam-

LAS DELICIAS is a town located in the Department of La Libertad not far from the capital city of San Salvador. As is common with over 50% of the population in El Salvador, the 600 families of Las Delicias live in housing of corrugated metal sheets, lack potable water, sanitation services and employment opportunities. The situation in this town is grave in relation to health. There are families who receive water every 15 days from the mountain and others who only receive water in the winter in May to October when it rains. Coffee fields, once a source of income, exist on a fault line and were severely damaged by the earthquakes of 2001. For the little coffee they are able to produce they are paid .75 cents for each 25 pound bag of coffee that is picked, the lowest price in history. The majority are unemployed and cannot cover basic necessities such as food, health, education and clothing. The men and women in this community are searching for a way to provide for their families. Many have left to find work in the city as construction workers or as domestic employees. The youth is the only group that can find jobs in the transnational sweatshops, and these jobs are without salaries, rights, or securities. This is a prime example of villages all over El Salvador experiencing a mass exodus not only to the cities but to "El Norte," the United States. It is estimated that on a slow day over 700 El Salvadorians leave El Salvador for "El Norte" in search of a better life.

In regards to education, the majority of adults in this community have only studied for a few years in elementary school, often up to the third grade. The percentage of students who make it to high school is 4.5%. Poor families cannot afford to purchase notebooks, uniforms, shoes and other supplies.

The *University of Scranton Bridges to El Salvador* program has made a long term commitment to the village of Las Delicias to educate its children. The **SEED** (Scholarships to Establish Education Development) program launched in 2005 covers all school expenses for children K-12 including uniforms, shoes and related costs. The rare child who is able to complete high school (2-3%) may also attend college under this program. *Bridges* works closely with Cristina Quintanilla, a graduate of the Universidad Centroamericana (Jesuit University in San Salvador) and native of Las Delicias. Certificates to sponsor a child may be purchased throughout the year and are great gifts that raise awareness of justice issues. The first family assisted by the SEED program is pictured on the certificate. Contact Marie Karam at karamm1@scranton.edu for further information on **SEED**.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!! The Language Learning Center is currently involved in these service projects and welcomes volunteers!

- * Tutoring grade school Hispanic children in their homework several times a week. Great experience!
- * Tutoring Hispanic adults wanting to learn English evenings. Very rewarding service!
- * Outreach in area housing developments to assist Hispanic residents in learning to express basic needs in English.

Contact Marie Karam karamm1@scranton.edu

Habib Zanzana-Dr. Habib Zanzana presented a paper titled "Discourse, Desire and the Female Body in Contemporary Arabic Literature and Film," at the 25th Anniversary of the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies at Villanova University in April 2009.

Dr. Zanzana and Heba El Nasser are also organizing the First Instructional Arabic Film Series at the University of Scranton. They will be presenting four films in Arabic and one in Persian (Farsi): *Caramel* (Lebanon, 2007), *The Syrian Bride* (a Syrian and Palestinian coproduction, 2004), *Bab el-Oued City* (Algeria, 1993), *Children of Heaven* (Iran, 1997) and *Road Bump* (Egypt, 2007).

Virginia Picchetti -received an Intersession Grant and an ORS Grant for work on her article, "Writing the Shoah for Young Readers: The Case of Lia Levi."

Robert Parsons- **Bob Parsons** of World Languages and Cultures and **Kevin Nordberg**, of the Philosophy Department, conducted the Twelfth Annual Intersession Study/Travel Tour to Guadalajara, Mexico in January 2009. The highlight of the Guadalajara trip was a weekend tour of Mexico City which includes excursions to the Chapultepec palace, the famous Anthropological Museum, and the pyramids of Teotihuacán. Sixteen students participated in the 2009 trip. One of them, nursing major Alyssa Hartman, did service work at Ciriac, an educational and rehabilitation institution located in Guadalajara for people with cerebral palsy.

In the fall 2009 **Bob Parsons** will be teaching at the Universidad Espiritu Santo in Guayaquil, Ecuador as part of a teacher exchange agreement between the University of Scranton and Espiritu Santo.



Japanese Ceremonies



Bean Throwing (Mamemaki)



Tea Ceremony (Ochakai)

MAMEMAKI—Bean throwing in Japan is on Feb 3rd. Bean throwing is a Japanese custom where they throw beans at people with masks of demons to ward off evil. This is an ancient tradition. In the first picture above University of Scranton students are throwing beans at evil pictures (Oni) they drew.

OCHAKAI—Tea ceremony from Japan. It is a ceremony that can be done at any time to make a mental connection between host and guest through serving and drinking tea. It is customary to sit on heels, bow and sip tea directly from the bowl. In the second picture University of Scranton students are practicing a tea ceremony.

The French Film Series

It was a great success. You can view any of the films at the library's media center.

Priceless: Hors de Prix (2006) *Starring: Audrey Tatou, Marie-Christine Adam, Gad Elmaleh* **Rating: PG-13**

On the Riviera with her elderly provider to celebrate her birthday, Irene slips down to the hotel bar when he falls asleep on her. She mistakes barman Jean for a well-heeled guest and he encourages the deceit by taking her up to the Royal Suite for the night. A year later the same thing happens but this time her lover finds out and disowns her. Now knowing Jean is indeed a barman of little means doesn't stop her from continuing to live in style until his money is gone. He soon finds himself in Irene's business with older and worldly-wise Madeleine, and though Irene also takes up with a new paramour the two of them keep in increasingly close touch.

Persepolis (2007) *Directors: Vincent Paronnaud, Marjane Satrapi* **Rating: PG-13**

In 1970s Iran, Marjane 'Marji' Satrapi watches events through her young eyes and her idealistic family of a long dream being fulfilled of the hated Shah's defeat in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. However as Marji grows up, she witnesses firsthand how the new Iran, now ruled by Islamic fundamentalists, has become a repressive tyranny on its own. With Marji dangerously refusing to remain silent at this injustice, her parents send her abroad to Vienna to study for a better life. Even when she returns home, Marji finds that both she and her homeland have changed too much and the young woman and her loving family must decide where she truly belongs.

Le Grand Voyage (2004) *Starring: Nicolas Cazalé, Mohamed Majd* **Director: Ismael Ferroukhi** **Rating: PG**

Reda, summoned to accompany his father on a pilgrimage to Mecca, complies reluctantly as he is preparing for his baccalaureat and, even more important, has a secret love relationship. The trip across Europe in a broken-down car is also the departure of his father: upon arrival in Mecca, both Reda and his father are not the characters they were at the start of the movie.

Blame it on Fidel (2006) *Starring: Julie Depardieu, Stefano Accorsi* **Director: Julie Gavras** **Rating: Unrated**

How do our experiences shape us, and how is political consciousness formed? Blame It on Fidel uses a light, charming touch to shed light on these questions.

Fauteuils d'Orchestre (2006) *Director: Danièle Thompson* **Rating: PG-13**

Jessica, raised by her grandmother, comes to Paris and gets a job at a bar across from a performance complex where a play, a concert, and an art auction will occur the same evening. It's a world in flux: the play's star wants off a popular TV soap that's made her rich, and she covets the lead in a film about de Beauvoir and Sartre; the pianist hates the concert circuit, but his wife, who's his manager, may leave him if he quits; a self-made widower with a girlfriend less than half his age is selling his collection of modern art - his son, a professor, objects to his father's love life. The stage manager at the complex is resigning after 30 years. Jessica sets the tone for how all plays out.



Special Feature

Keep Your Shoes on the Floor!

By. Joyce Hanks (Professor Emerita)
Currently in the Peace Corps in Thailand

Feet and shoes are a big issue here in Thailand, where both are considered dirty. More than dirty, they are not supposed to be pointed at anyone; nor should a person ever step over another who might be lying on the floor, and on and on. Anyone who comes to Thailand reads about these matters, but remembering them is another thing altogether.

So here you have Joyce, doing her sixth-grade practice teaching with all sorts of enthusiasm, who suddenly decides to ask her students how many shoes we have altogether in the room (the students' shoes are, of course, removed before they enter the building, and are stored in racks at the back of their classroom). For some reason she takes off her shoes to ask the class how many she has (teachers do not usually need to remove shoes before entering the classroom), and she begins waving them around to get their attention. Wrong! Shoes belong only on the floor in Thailand, so Joyce was doing something unheard of and utterly shocking. No wonder these bright kids couldn't seem to concentrate on figuring out how many shoes 34 students would have altogether.

Fortunately, we had observers in the class that day, and after praising the teaching to the skies, they gently mentioned that the shoe thing was a big mistake. Ouch! I hope I remember after this, but it's hard, somehow.

Yesterday and today all 51 of us Peace Corps trainees were interviewed about our preferences concerning the site where we will work from April 2009 to April 2011. By sometime in March we will learn where we will go, and even visit the place. Excitement builds, but bugs are everywhere and language learning proves more challenging than most of us expected. Sleeping under a mosquito net, which I don't remember doing in Costa Rica, feels really swanky. Then when the temperature in my second-floor room reached 100 degrees F. the other day, I began to think I have more capacity to adapt than I had realized. It's hot, but I'm walking up a storm, getting ready for what may prove to be quite a hike to and from school at my (still unknown) site. I think I may have finally tracked down a church in the area, and hope to attend services soon.

Rice three times a day (no kidding), but with delicious and varied sauces. Wonderful tropical fruits, most of which I have never seen before. Too much sun. Mail arrives regularly, and I have learned to text message. More later, perhaps reasonably soon, since today I found a really large internet cafe, thanks to another trainee.



News From Our Alumni

Tara McMahon (Secondary Education/Spanish, 2008) is currently teaching Spanish at Fanwood High School in Scotch Plains, NJ. However, Tara is hoping to make a career change and has been accepted into the EBC International TEFL Certificate Course for August. Her hope is to teach in Spain next year, and EBC helps with placement and obtaining the correct visa.

Laila Essmidi (Spanish/International Studies, 2008) is now a Peace Corps volunteer in the African island nation of Madagascar, where she is teaching CEG and Lycee students, and working with adult students on Sundays and leading discussions with adult groups on women's rights and equality on Saturdays.

Leandra Barbuti is now married with a beautiful baby girl, Laurelee Maria Ayala. "I recently got a job at Lackawanna College in their continuing ed. department teaching Spanish to their Allied Health Students. My position is a 3 year grant to teach medical students the basics of medical Spanish so when they graduate they will have a general understanding and the ability to communicate with their Latino patients." Leandra is also a registered Spanish court interpreter for the Pennsylvania court system.



Alumni Love From Madagascar

Good Day,

I hope this correspondence is reaching all of you in a time of health and happiness. I am sure you are all busy with a terrifying stack of papers and exams to either grade or create (or even worse BOTH!) Therefore, I hope reading this does not take up too much of your valuable time, but I was compelled to take a moment out of my life to express my gratitude for the time you have given of yourself to me in the past.

I was a student at the University of Scranton majoring in both International Studies and Spanish and graduated May 2008. Although not displayed while I was a student, I took great pleasure from each of your diverse methods of teaching. Each one of you, honorable professors, creates magic in and out of the classroom.

Since graduating, I am officially a Peace Corps volunteer in the interesting (for a lack of a better word) island-nation of Madagascar. I am part of the Education sector and “play” teacher to CEG and Lycee students. In addition to that I teach an adult class on Sundays and lead a discussion about equality of women rights every Saturday.

This new chapter in my life has taken me back countless times to memories I have with each one of you. Your work is selfless and admirable. Each time I step into a classroom I take my hat off to you, the passion you evoke in students. You are all amazing and inspiring. I use the dedication you show to your students to

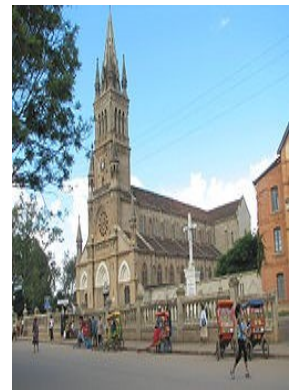
give my own students a mere glimpse of the humanitarian service you offer every day.

I also want to thank you for being patient and understanding of the fact that I had responsibilities of providing care to my ill mother while attending the University. She left this world shortly after graduation, but I know she thanks you with every portion of her soul for showing me compassion and allowing me to spend as much time with her without failing my courses.

A million times and more “thank you!” and an IOU card that will never expire. Always grateful,

Laila Essmidi Class of 2008

“THIS NEW CHAPTER IN MY LIFE HAS TAKEN ME BACK COUNTLESS TIMES TO MEMORIES I HAVE WITH EACH ONE OF YOU”



Chinese New Year and Lantern Festival By: Chen Shen

When I came back from China after the winter break, a little bit upset for missing the most important traditional festival in China. Dr. Susan Trussler at the U of S made this event so big and the celebration so authentic that there is no need for those guest families adopting Chinese kids in Northeast Pennsylvania to go to China to experience all the customs and traditions for this special occasion.

As for the festival of Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival, it begins on the first day of the first month in Chinese lunar calendar (January 26th in 2009) and ends on the 15th of the same month, which is the Lantern Festival when people hang lanterns at night and have a lantern parade. It is a time

for family reunion and also a time to enjoy a variety of delicious foods. During the New Year holidays Chinese people also take time to visit temples to pray for good fortune and health, visit friends and relatives, and go sightseeing. Children always have a good time for not only can they set off firecrackers to welcome the New Year, but they also get Hongbao, a red envelope with money from their senior people for good fortune.

At the party at the U of S, many kids as well as Dr. Trussler were dressed in red, which in Chinese culture symbolizes fortune and happiness. We also enjoyed the typical food for Chinese family dinner, Jiaozi, dumpling with ground meat or vegetable filling wrapped into a thinly rolled piece of dough.

After getting the “lucky money” (actually it was chocolate in the shape of a coin) in Hongbao, the kids were more than pleased to get the toys of ox, for 2009 is the Year of Ox according to Chinese zodiac. People born in the years of 2009, 1997, 1985, 1973, etc. are thought to have the qualities of the ox, hard working, dependable and steadfast. The Lion Dance (pictured to the right) after the lantern parade became the highlight of the party when all the kids were lined up and “danced” in a lion’s costume. The most exciting moment to welcome the New Year has always been setting off fireworks. And I am quite sure that we did successfully invite the Chinese New Year to Scranton by jumping on the long bubble wrap when it joyfully “sings” with the voice of “fireworks”!





World Languages and Cultures

TEACHING ASSISTANTS 2008-2009



From Left to Right: Andres Alvarez, Heba Waleed Al Nasser, Chen Shen, Eriko Fujita, Julie Neveux and Kai Azizi

Eriko Fujita During the winter vacation, I basically visited friends in different places in North America. I started out with Washington D.C. where we had a workshop, then went to Miami, Key west, Ottawa in Canada, Chicago and Lafayette, IN. I spent Christmas with my friend's family in Ottawa and learned that this is an event for families. In Japan, people usually celebrate Christmas with their boyfriend or girlfriend, and there is even an expression "single-bell" instead of "jingle bell" to describe a single person's lonely Christmas. It was a good experience for me to see how Catholic families celebrate Christmas and learn the real meaning of this holiday.

After Ottawa, I went to Chicago via Toronto, however the flight was canceled at the Toronto airport and I ended up staying at the airport over night. I had lunch, dinner and breakfast at the airport and slept there. It was just like living there. It reminded me of the movie "Terminal" and I actually enjoyed this "rare" experience. Not only this, but also I encountered so many problems during the trip, but after all, everything was a great experience and I believe learned a lot from it.

Julie Neveux After a very busy semester, I decided to go back to France to visit my friends and family... longing for free time to just relax. That did not happen and I spent my time traveling around France, from south to north... Because of the huge amount of snow falling everyday, the trains were mainly delayed. Nobody could believe that it was snowing in Marseille! Whenever I could escape the train station I would meet my friends, we talked a lot, drank a lot of coffee, hung out in our favorite Cafés in Tours. My favorite moment was definitely Christmas Eve which I spent with my parents, drinking champagne, nice wine and eating "foie gras", smoked salmon, turkey and the cutest "Bûche de Noël" (Christmas Chocolate Log). Nevertheless, I am so glad to be back here, because I must say, I really missed my job and my TA friends!

Chen Shen "You're everywhere, and you're having a good time everywhere..." This is how Dr. Linda Ledford-Miller summarized my winter break when I talked about all my travels and adventures from the middle of December, 2008 to the end of January, 2009. We started our trip from Washington D.C. after the workshop for more than 400 Fulbright FLTAs from all over the world. From Florida in a huge van of 15 Chinese Fulbrighters, we set foot on the lands of Miami, Key West and Key Biscayne, Houston and San Antonio in Texas, beautiful west coastal cities of L.A, San Francisco and San Diego in California. My husband and I enjoyed the greatest deals on shopping in Las Vegas outlets and bought gifts for at least 15 friends back home in China. The coolest thing was traveling to NYC. I had a chance meeting with Michael Phelps at JFK airport. Then my husband decided to take me back to China for two weeks to enjoy all the Chinese food that I had been missing so much. I was more than pleased to take a picture with Michael and it turned out that he was on the same flight with me to China. It was very interesting, when we arrived at the airport in Beijing, Michael's fans were waiting nervously for their hero with flowers and banners!

The whole journey was full of adventures and when it came time to say goodbye to my fellow Fulbright friends, we couldn't help bursting into tears and promised to travel together again in the U.S and even when we go back to China. Indeed it was a journey of friendship and a journey of so much fun. The stories of fifteen Chinese Fulbright FLTAs (later our team increased to 16 members when my husband joined us in L.A.) traveling through the U.S from the east coast to the west are like the beautiful beads of a shining necklace and we are all sure that it will never fade with time.



Teaching Assistants (continued)

Heba Al Nasser -December 2008 was a month that I will never forget; a month when I experienced and discovered the US to the maximum. Heading from Scranton to Washington DC to meet 417 fellow Fulbrighters from all over the world was the most exciting part. I spent 5 sleepless days rocking and discovering DC, going out downtown, walking to the White house and taking countless photos with the Christmas tree that I was standing next to. After those 5 days, I headed with some of my friends to NYC, a city where you can't look down when you are walking because you don't want to miss all the lit skyscrapers. One of the things that impressed me the most in NYC was Ellis Island. It was interesting to me to have a close look at the history of a million immigrants who passed through that port of entry. It was so emotional to look at their photos, luggage and clothing. Longing to spend time with my family and eat "Mansaf," Jordan's national dish, I headed to NJ where some of my relatives live. There I had a good time. Chatting, hanging out and eating lots of Arabic food like "Knafeh, Bezer, Falafel and Hummus." After this refreshing time with family I went to Wisconsin and Chicago, a place to be but not during that incredible snow storm which hit right before Christmas. I have never ever experienced a freezing cold like the one in Chicago. I was about to cry as I couldn't bare it. Chicago is one of the must-visit cities in the States. I loved it so much and I am planning to go there again to experience its fabulous downtown. Definitely during summer. After I survived the harsh weather in Chicago yet full of sweet memories and laughs, I headed to California. The weather was awesome. I visited Orange County, Los Angeles and San Francisco. I liked San Francisco the most because of the colors, the architecture and the people. Unfortunately I could not spend more than two days in San Francisco because I had to come back to lovely Scranton. I enjoyed this trip, learned a lot, laughed and took photos. I will remember the Big Apple, the windy city and the city of bays for the rest of my life, BUT I discovered something that's worth mentioning: "Ain't no place like Scranton". Love, Heba

Kai Azizi Well, my break was quite calm. I went back home to Germany as Christmas is a family thing for me. My brothers and sisters came home and we celebrated together. Everybody told me that the winter in Scranton would be so hard, cold and long but until December it was ok. When I came back home, however, we experienced the coldest winter in over 8 years I think. Welcome back! The Christmas celebrations are pretty much the same every year: first we go to church, then we usually eat, then we sing Christmas carols and then we give each other the presents...on Christmas Eve! After that, there are two more public holidays on the 25th and 26th of December. So I got to meet with a lot of my friends, hung out with my team mates and apart from that, relaxed a lot until I got back to the US, at the end of January.

Andres Alvarez— I spent the winter break in Washington D.C., one of my preferred cities to be a tourist in the U.S. I had a great time with some friends from Colombia. When I came back to Scranton in January, I had to say that it felt like home and I also had a great time enjoying the city with my friends at the University of Scranton.

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