Greetings from the Department Head

I am glad to return to heading the department this year for another three-year term, and I want to begin by thanking Professor Susan Anderson for having served so graciously as interim head last academic year. The current year is an exciting one for the program in a number of respects.

First, we have two new tenure-track members: Assistant Professor Katharina Loew—who works on German film, and whom we share with the new Cinema Studies Program—and Assistant Professor Gantt Gurley—who specializes on the Scandinavian side but also has broad comparatist interests in medieval studies, Jewish studies, and beyond. These two new faculty members got off to an energetic start this fall, and they are already enhancing our offerings and research profile in significant ways.

In addition, in spring term (May 10–11, 2012) we will host an important scholarly conference on “Kierkegaard and German Thought.” This initiative of Associate Professor Michael Stern, which combines speakers from all over the United States with speakers from the University of Oregon, represents the interpenetration of the Scandinavian program with the German one, as well as our ongoing productive collaboration with the Department of Philosophy.

Our graduate students continued this year not only to make positive progress through our program, but also to make their mark upon the world of scholarship by presenting scholarly papers at several conferences in the United States. Under the leadership of Associate Professor Dorothee Ostmeier, the number of PhD candidates in our program has grown in recent years, and we hope to maintain this trend.

Our undergraduate major continues to be one of the largest in the country, and Professor Alexander Mathias deserves particular mention for his long-term stewardship of the major in this regard. Our exchange program with the Baden-Württemberg universities is flourishing, and we will continue to maintain this program at the highest level. Matthias Vogel, a senior instructor, has developed an important new course in language pedagogy for our graduate students and continues to support the German Club and our other undergraduate programming.

continued on page 3
Farewell to Heidi Waltz

Originally from the south of Germany, in a very small village near Heidelberg, Heidi Waltz came to Oregon after eight years in Brazil at the University of the Amazon and in Holland where she taught with the Goethe Institute. Now, Heidi is a teacher trainer for the Goethe Institute of San Francisco and a consultant with the American Association of German Teachers, and has worked with the Department of German and Scandinavian Studies’ Outreach Program for ten years. This year, she will retire. Heidi was kind enough to speak about her experiences with the program:

I came to Oregon in 1999. I started to look for a job, and I applied at a Montessori school, because I am an English teacher, and a Montessori trained teacher. I found my first work at a Franciscan Montessori School, and I am still there. I taught Spanish. After awhile I thought, well, German would be actually the language I would love to teach. And then I started with the language program. At the time we had a coordinator, he was called Egerhart Springer, and Egerhart was the one who was coordinating the whole Northwest area. He did not only focus on high school German, he was interested in German for young students; I teach from five to fourteen. He was the one who started to build up a trainer network, to have teachers to teach teachers. And I was invited. And then Egerhart and Dorothee [Ostmeier] met, and Dorothee talked about the Outreach Program, and she was the one who invited me.

I just looked up, yesterday, the first e-mail I got from them was in 2001, so it is about ten years that I’m doing it, because I started in 2002. It’s ten years. So from this time on—and I was a beginner, too, because I didn’t teach that before, I taught students at the university, so I was learning teaching young students by doing it, with a lot of workshops, and I loved it. I could give my enthusiasm and passion for learning earlier language, not in high school—it’s often too late—and I could share with the Outreach Program. It’s a wonderful, wonderful program the university does here. I am very happy that they do this here.

It was Susan [Anderson] and Dorothee, and then Matthias [Vogel] and I worked together in the last year. And the new director [Jeffrey Librett], I met him, too. And every year it was wonderful to be here. I’m just giving some practical instructions, we do all the singing and working together and exercising. Singing songs, children songs. How do you introduce [the language]? How do you introduce different kinds of areas, like clothing or colors? How do you play in a classroom and make it a fun experience with learning a language? The students were wonderfully prepared, and they show their lessons, and we have almost two and a half hours—today we spent observing part of the class, they had to present about ten minutes, then we went through to discuss what was good, what could be constructive, very positive study.

It is very nice to see young students be able to communicate in the target language they have learned, and to see them growing in something that might be their profession later. And seeing also the curiosity for different ways of teaching approaches, and for learning experience, also.

The program has grown because it was first slowly looking around—“what is it, really? And what can we do?” Now it has been accepted here in Eugene, and the program asks for it. The students have done wonderful work, and the teachers who prepared them, too, so it’s a recognized program. Many times students came back and said, “wow, the director [of their schools] came and he was impressed with what the kids could learn in a short time.”

I’m sure I will come to Eugene again. I have good friends here now, with the program, and I’m going to continue teaching. I’m not out of the teaching, yet. I’m still teaching two to three years in the school, and I’m opening this place now for [another] who will take it over, who is very happy to do this. I’d like to thank the university for having me, and I enjoyed working with them. They are the most caring and wonderful people I’ve met. They were really very, very nice and welcoming. And that’s very nice when you are coming to a new place, and you are not just in a function, you are in a supportive environment.

continued from page 1 in crucial ways. Emeritus Professor Helmut Plant continues to provide assistance with grammar instruction, and we deeply appreciate his exemplary generosity.

One new challenge that we currently face, in solidarity with our high school colleagues, is the closing of many high school German programs around the state due to the underfunding of secondary education and the ongoing recession. We are currently working to counter this disturbing trend, not only by speaking out on behalf of those programs that are threatened, but also by exploring actively the possibility of providing some online German instruction for those high schools around the state that have already decided to close their German programs. It remains an open question whether or not this will be feasible and how it will be funded, but we will do all we can to maintain secondary German language teaching across the state of Oregon, and we invite conceptual and financial support in this endeavor from our alumni.

Finally, and on the bright side, the department has received a significant donation in the previous year by Herbert Merker, which will support undergraduate German majors through important scholarships in the coming years. I would like to thank Herb sincerely here on behalf of the faculty, students, and staff of the department. Here’s to another exciting year of German and Scandinavian studies—the pursuit of Germanic and Nordic languages, literature, theory, and history—at the University of Oregon!

Jeffrey S. Librett
Department Head

MESSAGE FROM BARBARA VER WEST, OFFICE COORDINATOR

The Department of German and Scandinavian is the most productive, small-sized (reli- tive to the UO) department in which I have had the pleasure to work! For academic year 2011–12 we’ve hired two new tenured-track professors—Gantt Garley for Scandinavian and Katharina Loew for German cinema—and completed our department’s ten-year self-study for Academic Affairs, which was a major undertaking for all our faculty members and me, as the sole administrator for the department. These are just two of the many examples of our growth and progress this year. At the time of this writing we are anticipating the on-campus visit with the self-study external reviewers will go well and we will be able to gain more funding to expand our department’s graduate and undergraduate courses, increase scholarships, and hopefully add to our department’s overall offerings and opportunities in general.

We are in great anticipation of the German Studies Conference to be held May 10-11, 2012, “Kierkegaard and German Thought.” Associate Professor Michael Stern is organizing the conference with help from the German studies GTP, Alexis Smith, a German doctoral degree student. There are seven speakers from outside the UO who will be traveling from all over the U.S. to give their presentations at the conference. It was also my pleasure and privilege to say “Happy Eightieth” birthday to two of our emeritus professors—Peter Gunttram, former department head, and Helmut Plant, who is still very active in the department with an annual spring-term language retreat and teaching German grammar basics to first- and second-year students who need extra help with their German language courses in fall and winter terms.) I also would like to thank all the donors to the German and Scandinavian funds and scholarships. These donations are very important to a small department such as ours and truly make a marked difference.

Cheers,
Barbara Ver West
PERRIS CLEAYSSENS' first experience with Scandinavian culture was hosting a Norwegian exchange student during his senior year of high school. The following summer he visited that student in Norway and instantly fell in love with the country and culture. Upon returning to Oregon, Perris quit his studies in music and focused all his attention on Scandinavian studies. He says, “I set my sights on studying abroad in Norway and finally in my junior year this dream came true. I am currently having an amazing time abroad in Norway. In my years at the University of Oregon, the German and Scandinavian department has provided me with a home where I found amazing guidance, teachers, and friends.” In the spring of 2011 Perris received the Friends of Scandinavian Stud- ies Scholarship from the department. Perris says, “I know without a doubt that I would not be where I am today, if it was not for the German and Scandinavian department at the University of Oregon.”

JOANNA KING says her interest in the German language and culture was developed over time. She studied German for four years in high school and her interest was piqued. During his time in high school Danny was involved with the German American Partnership Program and spent time abroad in the city of Lüneburg living with a German family. Danny was also able to host a German student at his home. “It was an eye opening experience,” Danny says, one that encouraged him to continue with courses on the German language and culture at college. Since arriving at the University of Oregon three years ago, Danny has continued on a constant course of German classes. He declared a German major, which he continues to work toward. The German department, he says, has been fantastic. The language-focused classes are his favorites, as improving his communication skills and trying to get a better grasp of the language is something that he enjoys. Danny’s choice of German as a major has always seemed like the right choice to him. Last term Danny was able to study abroad in Mannheim, Germany, at the university there. Although his career plans are not yet clear, returning to Germany again is a goal of his. German is not his only major at the University of Oregon; he is also studying economics. If he could find a job that incorporates both of his majors, Danny would be very happy.

KARI OSTROOT started learning German in seventh grade because her older sister took it, and Kari always copied what her sister did. Throughout high school Kari found learning German came easily and that it was her favorite class, thanks to a wonder- ful teacher who maintained contact with her through her undergraduate career. Her fascination with German came from her love of European culture and architecture. Kari came to the University of Oregon to pursue an interior architecture degree, with dreams of moving to Europe and working in historic preservation and adaptive reuse. She spent last summer in Berlin, studying German and staying with a host family. Learning about the history of Berlin and hearing their sto- ries about growing up during the Cold War in Berlin was a life-changing experience for Kari. She hopes to return to study and work in architecture, but she says “mostly I miss Döners!”

KAREN REYES’ interest in German first developed in middle school, which was even before she formally began to study the language. Karen learned from her older sister, who would teach her simple phrases and cultural facts about Germany. This interest would moti- vate her to study German in high school, and later on, at the University of Oregon. Karen has received numerous awards, scholarships, and recognitions, which have helped support her travels to Germany. She says that the experiences she has had abroad have only secured her dedication to the study of German. Karen continues to be interested in this field and genuinely enjoys studying both German and Spanish. Karen plans on earning her degree as an ESL educator. She is interested in teaching Spanish (her native language) at the high school or university level in Germany. Karen also plans on living in Mexico for two years, teaching at an English school in her family’s hometown.

ANNA BAUMEISTER is writing her thesis on disgust and gender in contemporary Austrian literature and dress, and she presented at two conferences in February. Here at the UO, at this year’s graduate student research forum “Why Research Matters,” she presented the talk entitled “Disgusting Mermaids and Seductive Se- cretions: Artistic Disgust as the Negotiation of Possibility.” Secondly, at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst’s graduate confer- ence titled “Sensing Sensae: An Interdisci- plinary Conference in Sensory Perception and German Studies,” she presented the talk “The Sense of Disgust in Contemporary Austrian Literature and Arts: On the Provocation and Validation of Gender.”

ROBERT MOTTRAM has had a very fruit- ful year since the last newsletter. He passed his doctoral exams, defended his disserta- tion prospectus, and is now a doctoral degree candidate. Robert’s research continues to focus on how one reads Romantic litera- ture, primarily Novalis, after Nietzsche. The Nietzsche Reading Group, of which he was the cofounder, still meets weekly and has expanded. Additionally, Robert presented a paper, entitled “Abysmal Subjectivity: Nec- essary Fictions in Novalis and Nietzsche,” at a graduate student conference at Ohio State University, which was received with enthusiasm. The next year promises to be equally as fruitful as Robert begins writing his dissertation.

German Club

I n fall of 2011, the German and Scandinavian department cele- brated “Campus Weeks 2011.” The project was initiated and supported by the German Information Center and the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Goethe Institute of San Francis- co. Matthias Vogel served as the campus coordinator. Campus Weeks included a film series, an essay contest, “German Olympics,” German Club outings, and displays and banners advertising German in the Erb Memorial Union. It was scheduled to culminate in a rock concert by Ger- man indie rock band MADSEN, but the concert had to be cancelled due to lead singer Sebastian Madson’s laryngitis. Campus Weeks 2011 was a smashing success. The film series was attended by more than 200 students and community members, the German Club went on several outings including a mini-golf tournament, 600 German students from the UO and all over Oregon prepared for the MADSEN concert, and German major Tawny Philips won the $300 ac- cay prize. We hope to repeat this success with Campus Weeks 2012 in fall of this year.

GREETINGS!
SUSAN C. ANDERSON’s article on different notions of translation in a novel by Austrian writer Christoph Ransmayr, “Modes of Translation: Ovid’s Metamorphoses—Ransmayr’s Die letzte Welt,” is set to appear in the yearbook Gegenwartsliteratur (2012). Her review of Abigail Gillman’s book Viennese Jewish Modernism will be published in the journal Modernism and Modernity. She also presented “Tourists, Travelers, and Adventurers in Christoph Ransmayr’s Works” at the German Studies Association Conference in Louisville. She is working on a special committee of the Modern Language Association with professors from other universities about issues of comparative literature and folklore.

KENNETH CALHOON, who was on sabbatical leave for fall and winter terms of 2011–12, returns to full-time teaching this spring. His book manuscript, entitled Affecting Grace: Theatre, Subject and the Shakespearean Paradox in German Literature from Lessing to Kleist, has been accepted for publication by the University of Toronto Press and should appear in print before December. An essay, “Werner Herzog’s View of Delta, or, Nosferatu and the Still Life,” is forthcoming in A Companion to Werner Herzog (Blackwell). Another essay, “Das Judenbuch and die Narbe des Odysseus,” appeared in the collection Magie der Geschichten: Schreiben, Forschen und Reisen in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts (Konstanz University Press). Calhoon participated in a conference on Kleist held in December at the University of Chicago; his paper was titled “Sturmblüte: Antinomies of Music in Kleist’s Die heilige Cäcile.”

JEFFREY S. LIBRETT presented three times in the past year: “The Construction of China in Herder’s Typoteleology,” an invited lecture presented at a small conference on “Reading China during the Enlightenment,” at Penn State University, February 25, 2012; “Aesthetics in Deconstruction: Kant in Derrida,” an invited lecture presented at a conference on The Legacies of Kant, III, at Cornell University, September 17, 2011; and “Herder’s Chao,” an invited lecture presented at a conference on Literature and the Public Sphere, at Cornell University, April 29, 2011. His essay “The Finitude of Method: Mourning Theory from the New Criticism to the New Vitalism,” is forthcoming in spring 2012 in Comparative Literature Journal. His manuscript on Orientalism and the Figure of the Jew is currently under review with an academic press.

CAMILLA MORTENSEN will be traveling to the University of Wisconsin–Madison in March to give an invited lecture called “Liminal Fields” on the intersections of the fields of comparative literature and folklore. When not teaching, she is a journalist with Eugene Weekly. Her series on water rights on the McKenzie River won two awards last year in environmental reporting, and her story on police ethics won a first-place award, as well.

Last June DOROTHEE OSTMEIER received a Dean’s Fellowship for the participation in the acclaimed teaching workshop “Reacting to the Past” at Barnard College. In September 2011 she was invited to participate in a Roundtable on “Lou Andreas-Salomé at 150: New Perspectives” at the GSA conference. She talked on Lou Andreas-Salomé as Rilke’s Erotized Renaissance Madonna. For this year’s MLA conference in Seattle she prepared the lecture “Rilke, Scham’s Tales about Fairy Tales.” Because of her work on fairy tales and fantasy literature she has recently been invited to join the folklore program’s core faculty.

MICHAEL STEIN presented “Staging the Modern” at Oregon State University in January. The talk employed the plays of Ibsen and Strindberg to illustrate the issues facing Scandinavians as they modernized and social mores were in flux. He plans to present “The I is Matter and Motion” at the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association. This talk addresses the influence of thermodynamics on Strindberg’s conception of the self. He will also be presenting “The Tyranny of Irony over Philosophy” at the “Kierkegaard and German Thought” conference, which he has both conceived and organized, and to be held here at the University of Oregon on May 10–11.

MATTHIAS VOGEL researched the effectiveness of self-assessment tools provided in the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR) for placement purposes in language classes. He presented his findings together with Robert Davis, associate professor of Spanish, at the November American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) conference in Denver. The project, entitled “Proficiency in Placement: Bridging the Gap Between Guideline and Achievement,” examined if student self-assessment using proficiency descriptors can serve as an adequate measure of placement in a language program and compared self-assessment results with actual in-class performance. Vogel and Davis collaborated with a national provider of computerized self-assessment tools, Avant Assessment, on this project.

Special Thanks

Helmut Plant wants to thank the department and the College of Arts and Sciences for the wonderful surprise party they had for him January 17 on the occasion of his eightieth birthday two days earlier (yes, his birthday January 15 is indeed a national holiday!). Plant was overwhelmed not only by the cake (with eight candles) and the gift certificates from the R&D and from the Duck Store but especially by the warm wave of friendship that almost swept him off his feet.

UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

MARTIN KLEBES contributed the essay “That Specter in My Name: Writing and Its Mirror Effects in Hoffmann and Poe” to The Self as Muse: Narcissism and Creativity in the German Imagination 1750–1830, published with Bucknell University Press (Lewisburg), in 2011.


ALEXANDER MATHÉS edition of scholarly essays, entitled The Self as Muse: Narcissism and Creativity in the German Imagination 1750–1830, was published with Bucknell University Press in summer 2011. Mathés is currently working on a monograph that focuses on the reception of eighteenth-century humanism.
P L E A S E  C O N S I D E R  M A K I N G  A  G I F T

Contributions of any size make a real difference. Here are five ways to give support:

1. $50 finances school materials and books
2. $100 could help with a visiting lecture
3. $500 contributes to a study-abroad experience
4. $1,000 helps fund a stipend-scholarship
5. $5,000 would help support an even better stipend-scholarship

Enclosed is my contribution of $________ for the

☐ German Department Fund (201116)
☐ Scandinavian Studies Program (201202)

☐ I have made my enclosed check payable to the UO Foundation.
☐ Please charge my credit card________________________ Exp.________

Name ____________________________  Mail donations to:
Address __________________________  University of Oregon Foundation
_________________________________  German-Scandinavian Funds
City, State, Zip _____________________  1720 East 13th Ave Ste 410
Phone _____________________________  Eugene OR 97401-2253

You can also give online at https://supportuo.uofoundation.org

Please be sure to designate your gift to either the German Department Fund or the Scandinavian Studies Program.

If you have any questions related to how to make your gift, please contact the College of Arts and Sciences Development office at 541-346-3950.