The Year in Review

This year the German Department has been able to teach a rich complement of courses despite complex staffing patterns. Prof. Kruse has been enjoying a year of sabbatical leave, while Prof. Ward has recently been teaching two courses each fall semester as part of her retirement plan. This coming fall of 2009 will be Margaret Ward’s final teaching semester in our department. She will soon be able to look back proudly on a career of 39 years at Wellesley College. Thomas Hansen and Thomas Nolden have been here full time, with Prof. Hansen chairing the department and Prof. Nolden administering the Wellesley-in-Vienna Program while also chairing Wellesley’s program in Comparative Literature.

We have been very fortunate this year to have a new colleague on a one-year appointment. Ms. Silke Brodersen taught courses in our department at the beginning and intermediate levels. Prof. Brodersen received her Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2008 with a dissertation on the Austrian writer Adalbert Stifter. She is interested in narratology in 19th century prose and issues of science and literature. This past winter the College held an interdisciplinary symposium to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth, at which Prof. Brodersen delivered a paper on Darwin’s influence on German literature. Next fall she returns to teach courses at Harvard. We wish her success for a brilliant future.

The department hosted several engaging speakers this past year. In the fall we were visited by two writers. Angela Krauss, who was born in Chemnitz (GDR) read from work Der Dienst, a portrait of her father and of life in the former East Germany. Antje Ravic Strubel, who was born in Potsdam, read from her novel Unter Schnee. Strubel’s American translator read from her English version of the work, which prompted a lively discussion of literary language and translation techniques. The famous writer and filmmaker, Doris Dörrie, visited Mr. Nolden’s 201 class in the fall and spoke about her work. Mr. Richard Cheek, a noted collector of World War II propaganda, addressed Mr. Hansen’s class on Hitler. He showed many fascinating objects that depicted the efforts of anti-Nazi propagandists between 1930 and 1945.

This past spring, thanks to the income still generated by endowed funds, the German Department was able to offer stipends to six students who wish to study German this summer. They are currently in our beginning, intermediate, or literature courses and have all expressed the desire to accelerate or intensify their studies. We are fortunate that the Elizabeth Vogel Falk Fund makes these opportunities possible for students who wish to pursue German Studies.

Thomas Hansen
A crowd of alumnae visited with Margaret Ward at the 2008 Reunion open house. In all, twelve former students of German were present.

The large class of 1983 was especially well represented by Karen Storz with her son, Bonnie (Parker) McEwen, Terry Thomas with her husband and three children, Lynne Jordal, with her husband and 4-year-old adopted daughter from China, and Pam Nourse who is studying theology and wants to refresh her German. Also in attendance were Dylan Johnson ’93, Amanda Zoellner ’03, Emily Odom and Peggy Escobar, both ’78, Christine von Klencke ’73, Dagmar Gunther-Stirn ’53, and Margaret Rusk ’48. Fond memories of German studies were shared by all.

Margaret S. Rusk ’48 writes "I came to my 60th—in 2008, a time full of nostalgia (though the meltdown didn’t hit me til I saw the performance of Wilder’s “Our Town” for probably the first time in fifty years).

That aside, I was either not quite, or more than, a German major; in first-year German, 2nd year of college, I thought I should tell Miss Salditt that I’d known this language in some prior life. This was crazy: why then was I spending four hours of homework for every hour of class? But I was allowed to skip second year German grammar—Himmel sei Dank—and take History of German Literature. After college, I tried to find a job in Germany, but never reached there in the immediate post-WWII years, except for biking across many canals eastward from Strassburg until I passed a “zoll-Duane” both, having already crossed an especially large canal (actually of course the Rhine).

Next, in Colombia, was communicating better in German than in any other language with Hitler refugees and other Germans. “Pension alemana?” was the best way to find an inexpensive, clean place to stay.

Eventually, back in the states, I translated German scientific papers into English for several non-German-reading friends; also turned German poems into poetic English to share with other friends. And, more eventually, went to Germany and got compliments of the “Where did you get your good German?”-kind, which I was pleased to answer truthfully.

Margaret (Peggy) Dolan Escobar ’78 had the good fortune to spend 6 weeks in Europe last spring. She visited her daughter who was spending her Junior Year in Oviedo, Spain, and worked out of the IBM office there for 2 weeks. Then she walked the Camino de Santiago for 2 weeks. The Camino is an ancient pilgrimage route. Finally, Margaret spent time in Vienna, Austria, and Bratislava, Slovakia visiting several members of her IBM team there. She got to speak lots of German on the Camino as she encountered Germans walking the route, and also in her few days in Vienna.

(Rev.) Emily Enders Odom ’78 writes "I was ordained in 1991 as a minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), I have served since 2005 as an associate for mission communications for the denomination’s national headquarters based in Louisville, Kentucky. I work virtually from our home in Greensboro, N.C. My son, a freshman in high school, is now studying German. He probably wouldn’t want me to say that he’s following in his mother’s footsteps, but at least I can help him with his homework!”

Karen Storz ’83 now works part-time as a reference and instruction librarian at Lesley University while continuing her free-lance edi-
Amanda Zoellner '03 writes "I've been working for the past four years at Mass Audubon, for their overnight camp, Wildwood. I've enjoyed getting involved in organized camping at a regional level, including serving on the boards of the New Hampshire Camp Directors' Association and the American Camp Association—New England Section. I'm also a standards visitor for the ACA accreditation program. Together with some other camp directors, I've spent the past year preparing and presenting to various camp groups about how to make our camps more environmentally friendly places, and I'm excited to see what the next step down that greener path will be.

I was thrilled to attend my first Wellesley reunion in June 2008. I'm still living in Lexington, Mass., with my husband Bryan. I'm glad that I still have an opportunity several times a year to stop by Wellesley, often for lectures or workshops at the library, and I'm looking forward to joining the steering committee for the Friends of the Library this spring. I don't have a chance to speak German very often, although I still read books in German. However, I just re-connected with my German host-sister from my student exchange in high school—so I may have more chances to practice those skills!

Megan Snipes '93 writes she has been living in the Atlanta area for about 12 years, and for the last 6 has been an employee with Porsche Cars North America. "Although I don't get to use my German nearly as often as I would like to, I would like to keep my conversational skills up to par, having had the background that my studies provided did help me to establish a foundation on which I could predicate my understanding of the German culture. I was also one of the few new-hires who understood that Porsche was, in fact, a two-syllable word. ;)

Kat Bolstad '01 is still shrouded in the warm (in her own words) blanket of academia. Having completed her Ph.D. in squid taxonomy and having graduated in October 2008, she is continuing on at Auckland University of Technology (in New Zealand) as a post-doctoral Research Fellow for now. Two weeks after graduation she married Gary Peebles, a native New Zealander with very compatible Wanderlust and a willingness to learn German. Kat and Gary hope to move to Germany next, or at least hope to plan an extended trip there, but they are still bracing themselves for the flood of job offers that must surely await a newly minted squid specialist.

Cecily Goodrich, '02 writes that she "would love to combine my German with my job, " so she has been applying to law school and hopes to study international law. After her Fulbright in Goettingen, Cecily came back and worked at Oxford University Press for three years licensing translation rights, the last year of which she was living in the UK. She's back in NYC and has been working as a paralegal at a small law firm called Schlam Stone & Dolan. Always one to stay active in many arenas, Cecily has been playing rugby, and has joined the NYC German Language "meetup" group to practice German. She also studied Arabic for a year and has been active in several choral groups in the city.

She also played on the Oxford University Press softball team for 2 years, and was in the OUP Christmas show when she was over in Oxford.

Georgia Pelligrini '03 writes that she has been studying cooking in France and planning a book on Food Heroes, an exploration of artisanal techniques that have been preserved by growers and producers of cheese, beer, sausage, etc. The project has taken her all over the world and represents an impressive start in a career focused on food journalism.

Seila Selimovic '04 writes "I will defend my dissertation in September and am looking for a postdoctoral position in the area and also in NYC and Chicago. Boston offers many excellent opportunities, but in the current economic climate even finding funding for a postdoc is becoming challenging."
On a different note, my sister, who is a lecturer in Mediaevistik at the Ludwig Maximilian Universität in Munich, and I presented a paper together at the Forum junge Wissenschaft in Dresden (actually, she was present, and I wasn’t). The overall theme was "Monsters", and it was broad enough to encompass papers in the fields of Theaterwissenschaft, Mediaevistik, Soziologie, and Geschichte. It was great fun to write an actual research paper again in German, and do it together with my sister!”

Stephanie Gilardi ’07 writes that she has started work at the Penguin Press, an imprint of Penguin Group in Manhattan.

It is a very small imprint that publishes literary non-fiction and select fiction. She has also taken on a somewhat wacky-sounding freelance job writing scavenger hunts for a company called Watson Adventures. For this she has to comb through the museums and neighborhoods of New York, which is an excellent introduction to Gotham.

This past winter she met the Austrian author Wolf Haas and read aloud in New York at the Austrian Cultural Center from the translation of Hass’s novel Das Wetter von 15 Jahren, which she and Prof. Hansen completed for Ariadne Press.

Viviane Dittrich ’08 spent her summer in DC doing the "Wellesley in Washington" internship program. She first interned on the hill, in Congresswoman Lowey’s office for five weeks and then at the Institute of International Education for five weeks. "Both internships were great and I feel so very lucky to have been part of the program as the summer has been such a great experience!"

She was accepted for the dual degree Master program at Sciences Po, Paris and London School of Economics, and started in Paris at the end of September. "As you can imagine I am very happy."

Sarah (Gibson) Kaczmarek ’08 "I am just about done with my first year of my master’s program in German and European Studies at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service. In June, I will begin a summer internship as an analyst intern at the Government Accountability Office and would be happy to talk with interested students about the program and the potential career opportunities it provides. I can be reached at sarah.kaczmarek@gmail.com."

Abby Tutor ’08, the recipient of an Austrian Government Teaching Assistantship in English, has spent the year in Zwettl. She writes "I learned to say "squirrel tail" in Austrian dialect and played ping pong with the younger students. Teachers took me on hikes and invited me over for dinner. I hung out at the local café, which has two different names, neither one written on the sign out front. I told my classes about Obama, American high schools, and the peculiarities of American cuisine (they found Twinkies especially fascinating.) I hope to be able to stay another year."
A freshly minted Ph.D. from Harvard, Silke Brodersen joined the Wellesley faculty for the 2008-2009 academic year as Visiting Lecturer. She has been busy teaching the German department’s beginning and intermediate courses. While enjoying the hospitable atmosphere at the college, she also spent the year working on an article that considers visual elements in a novella of nineteenth century author C.F. Meyer, in connection with historical constructions of the modern self. In October she gave a talk on that same topic at the German Studies Association conference in St. Paul, and in February, she hosted two panels on the topic of "Text and Image in German literature" at this year’s Northeastern Modern Language Association conference in Boston. She considers herself particularly fortunate to have been involved in the planning of the celebration of Darwin’s Bicentennial here at Wellesley, where she was invited to give a presentation on Darwin’s impact on the humanities. Her presentation discussed the metaphors and narratives that surround evolutionary theory and have helped to shape and popularize Darwin’s ideas, stimulated imaginative exploration of the human condition, but also led to abuses of Darwin’s theory. Darwin’s example reminds us of science’s intimate link with culture and language: being, in many ways, the foundation in the process of scientific "discovery," the cultural process may also transform a scientific idea in unexpected, inventive, and sometimes distracting ways.

Thomas Hansen has been Head of the Department since the fall. Because students in his course on "Hitler: the Man in History, Literature, and Film" have frequently wondered about the origins and meaning of the swastika symbol, he worked up an extensive lecture-presentation on the subject with countless illustrations drawn from all eras and civilizations. He gave this in April at TZE and desires to bring it to alumnae groups. Rest assured, the German aspect of this cross-cultural subject is small, and the talk is entertaining for a broad audience.

In 2008-09, Jens Kruse was on sabbatical, working mostly on a project with the working title “Goethe”: Biography of a Fiction. The projected book will trace the development of the image of Goethe in German culture from 1832 to the present, by analyzing novels and novellas in which “Goethe” is the protagonist.

Thomas Nolden took the students studying in Vienna last year to Germany’s capital and toured with them sites such as the Jüdisches Museum, the Deutsches Historisches Museum, the Stasimuseum in der Normannenstrasse (where students recognized the offices shown in the Oscar-winning film, Das Leben der Anderen) and other places of interest. In June, he presented parts of his new work on European literature at the L’Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. He also spent the better part of January 2009 teaching our Wintersession in Vienna.

September 2009 will mark fifty years since Margaret Ward first went to Berlin as an exchange student under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee and thereby started her career in German Studies. This coming year will mark its end as Prof. Ward is rapidly approaching her official retirement date of June 30, 2010, after thirty-nine years at Wellesley. She looks forward to teaching the bottom and top rungs of our curriculum in her last semester next fall, beginning German and the changing-topic seminar, German 389 in which she will repeat the topic she developed in 2006, "Latin America and the Caribbean in the German Imagination." During the past year her review of Christina Ujma’s book, Fanny Lewalds urbane Arkadien: Studien zu Stadt, Kunst und Politik in ihren italienischen Reiseberichten aus Vormärz, Nachmärz und Gründerzeit. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007, appeared in the German Quarterly and a new biographical sketch on Germaine Greer was published on-line in both German and English at http://www.fembio.org. Prof. Ward always welcomes news of former students.
This January, Professor Thomas Nolden and six Wellesley students spent two and a half weeks exploring and interacting with the beautiful city of Vienna and Viennese culture. In addition to class, the students enjoyed going on cultural trips, attending an opera at the grand Staatsoper and a Viennese Ball that was held in the Imperial Palace. They also immersed themselves in the beautiful architecture, history, and scrumptious coffees and cakes that Vienna has to offer.
T he Wellesley-in-Vienna program offers a wide range of studies at the oldest university in the German speaking world. The program usually starts with a warming-up weekend with the Resident Director at one of the beautiful places in or near Vienna: This is meant to find out the subjects, the sights, the activities, the internships the students are especially interested in and, of course, to get to know each other in a pleasant atmosphere. The first month is dedicated to intensifying the students’ knowledge of the German language, to get a first impression of Vienna and its surrounding area, and of its many cultural offerings. In regular meetings we find out about the beautiful historic sights, we visit new exhibitions, famous theatre plays or marvelous concerts. All this should help to understand not only the history and culture of Vienna, but also the crucial role it has always been playing in an international political and cultural-historical context. The core course, held in the summer term, is thus dedicated to the most important Austrian literature reflecting upon watersheds in European history since 1850. Apart from their studies, Wellesley students can also intern at institutions they are free to choose according to their interests and talents: among them the Democracy Center Vienna, Women-Without-Borders, scientific networks, or welfare services. The program offers both an insight into European history and tradition and the opportunity to take part in a vibrant cultural life.

From Ashley Muller ’10

I explore new environments through running. It’s a very controlled, yet open way of getting to know an area, in that I choose which road to follow and at which corner to turn, without really knowing where I will end up. My only limitation is the need to remember my way home: first runs, therefore, usually follow one main road and the deviations increase with time.

My first few runs in the heart of the city were memorable. I learned that streets are renamed after almost every point of interest: Heurigen than to Budapest and Prague. But familiarity is close at hand: I’ve already gotten a “Run, Forest, run!” in German.

News from others abroad:

Marit Schroeder ’10 wrote at length in German recently to say that she has been profiting from an intensive language course that is part of the Berlin Consortium program. She also reported that she has been having a wonderful homestay with a family that owns the Arsenal Kino in the Sony Center. She is currently looking for a WG (Wohngemeinschaft) to live in for the remainder of her time there.

Enid Li ’10 is spending a semester abroad in England, but she hasn’t forgotten she’s a German major. She wrote that she was in for a big surprise at Oxford, because when she met her academic advisor “it turns out she’s from Weimar! She was looking at my transcript and was so interested about our DDR course, and asked me a lot about it when she finally revealed that she grew up in East Germany. It was such a pleasant surprise and nice to talk about the DDR and Germany with someone. I got my first care package from Germany this winter, just as I was about to leave and I had lots and lots of Lebkuchen to enjoy on the plane. I’m going to miss taking German classes so much and I’m going to try and attend German lectures [here in England], so dass ich mein Deutsch nicht total vergessen werde!

Enid fondly remembers the summer of 2008, when a Falk Fund supported stipend helped her accelerate her study of German. "I spent a wonderful summer in two beautiful German cities: Mainz and Heidelberg. In Heidelberg, I participated in an intensive German course in the University of Heidelberg. In addition to meeting lots of students
from around the world, I was able to attend the interesting lectures, concerts and trips organized by the university, which really strengthened my interest in German history and culture. In the afternoons, our class would gather around the ruins of Heidelberg Castle and learn about works from German writers, such as Goethe and Hölderlin. I spent my weekends traveling to other German cities, and I will never forget the breathtaking scenery of the Alps in Bavaria, eating traditional Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte in the Black Forest, visiting Goethe's house in Weimar, and going to the magnificent cathedrals in Cologne, Aachen, Speyer and Marburg. The beauty of the country, the wonderful people and the fascinating culture made me fall in love with Germany and it is now a place I would consider a second home.

Former Exchange student, Ana Znidar '01 addressed an email to “all her German-speaking friends living all over the world,” and attached her newsletter. It reveals that she is now based in Vienna and Montreal, and with her Masters degree in hand she is running her own business conducting writing courses. This Arpil/May, for example, she is offering a five-day workshop on journalistic travel writing. She writes: “Even though you are far from Vienna, maybe you have friends who would be interested in my writing courses. If you can think of anyone, I would appreciate it if you could forward this information to them. You can find out more about Ana’s project at www.writersstudio.at

We also recently heard from another former exchange student, Agnes (Hellmuth) Schneeberger '02, now a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Communications Studies of the University of Leeds, U. K. Agnes is Chair of UACES Student Forum Specialist Study Group “Media and Communication in Europe,” and she has recently edited a special issue of their journal that can be accessed at http://www.jcer.net/ojs/index.php/jcer/index. She hopes to finish her doctoral dissertation later this year. She also reports that she has reconnected this past few year with a number of her Wellesley friends, including Caroline Geiersbach '02, who visited her and her husband Reinhard in Leeds. Agnes sends greetings to the German Department and Wellesley friends.

Vienna in Wellesley

Before I came to the US I planned my exchange year to be a kind of anthropological field study on this strange tribe living across the Atlantic. I wondered if Americans were really as different as everyone in Austria made me believe they were.

However, soon after I arrived I discovered that there are certain cultural achievements shared within both continents: typing questionable words on a calculator, uncritical admiration for Sissi, and a certain snarky attitude in confronting the world (which may or may not be behavior especially linked to the extraordinary Massachusetts tribe). Beyond all similarities, I stumbled upon differences: Inhabitants seem to love everything scented and flavored, be it candles, coffee, or notepaper. Tribe-members also appear to be cold resistant. Wellesleyans sport flip-flops while the outdoor temperature forces even arctic birds to migrate south.

Anthropology aside, my “American Experience” is not only influenced by the beauty of Root Beer floats etc., but is also deeply shaped by receiving a warm welcome by the whole Wellesley community, from professors to students. I am still struck by how interested people are in learning more about my own culture. During tutoring or while chatting at the German table, I am constantly met with questions that provoke me to reflect my own Austrian background in ways I never did before. In class discussions I find the same openness towards expressing one’s opinion.

Maybe I am the one from the strange tribe after all. I mean Käsekrainer? Really?
Kreuzworträtsel

Mythologische und historische germanische Helden

Senkrecht:
1. Dieser althochdeutsche Text erzählt von einem Kampf zwischen Elias und dem Antichristen.
2. Ein kunstreicher Schmied, der eine Rolle in vielen germanischen Texten spielt, insb. Thidrekssaga, Der große Rosengarten, und Beowulf.
3. Ein althochdeutscher Text erzählt von diesem Helden, der gegen seinen unerkannten Sohn kämpfen muss.
8. Der Hauptgott der germanischen Mythologie (nordgermanische Schreibweise).

Waagerecht:
3. Er befreite die germanischen Länder von den Römern im Jahre 16.
7. Ein berühmter historischer König, der im Fluss Saleph ertrank.
9. Diese Heldin kommt in einem mittelhochdeutschen Epos vor; der Name ist heute noch ein bekannter Frauenname.

by Erica Schramma '09
Congratulations!

The 2008 Elizabeth Vogel Falk Prize was awarded to:
• Lindsay Kua '08
• Tess DeLean '11

The 2008 Ethel Folger Williams Prize in German was awarded to:
• Enid Li '10

The 2008 Natalie Wipplinger Prize was awarded to:
• Sanja Jagesic '08

Vanessa Troiano '08 received an Austrian Government Teaching Assistantship in English for 08-09.

Colleen Corcoran '09 received an Austrian Government Teaching Assistantship in English for 09-10 in Kapfenberg, Steiermark.

Enid Li '10 received a Falk Fund summer stipend to study at University of Heidelberg.

Jing Chen '11 received a Falk Fund summer stipend to study at Middlebury College.