French master’s candidates Adela Lechintan of Romania and Alexandra Salmeron of France (right) enjoy the food at LangFest 2006 at Hagerty Hall. Professor Wynne Wong and Germain Badang are also pictured. LangFest is an annual celebration of the diverse cultures and languages taught in the College of Humanities.

French M.A. student Todd Donahue organized a weekly roundtable discussion group to improve conversation skills for students at all levels.

Alumnus Stephane Spoiden (Ph.D., 1996) spoke at the January FRIT Alumni Lecture, explaining the slow development of a European identity distinct from national or regional cultures. Given that the early U.S. saw itself as “non-European,” the Europeans are now starting to see themselves as having values that are “non-U.S.”—not “anti-U.S.”
The Department of French and Italian is back on the Oval in a beautiful, newly renovated Hagerty Hall! We’ve already celebrated our first anniversary here and are delighted with our new academic home. We are particularly pleased to be able to enjoy the facilities of the World Media and Culture Center (wmcc@osu.edu), especially the Crane International Café and its offerings of coffee, sandwiches, and international television programming, including TV5 and RAI.

We are also pleased to have all of the foreign language departments together again and to be able to offer special events that focus on the importance of foreign languages for our students as they prepare to enter the global marketplace. Among these events are LangFest (see photo on page 1) and “Putting your foreign languages to work,” a foreign language career day held on May 11, 2006.

Our web site (frit.osu.edu) features current students and alumni who provide testimonials to the value of foreign languages and their experiences in the department. We were pleased to hear from many of you who sent in alumni updates and hope to hear from many more for our next newsletter. We have included the reflections of two alumni who speak eloquently on the value that foreign language study has added to their lives (page 11). We welcome the thoughts of other department alumni on the benefits that foreign language study has offered them in their professional and personal lives.

Interest in languages continues to grow, and enrollments in the department are increasing, as is our list of faculty and staff. What hasn’t changed, however, is the strong commitment of the department and its talented faculty to excellence in teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and to our commitment to innovative and intellectually rich research projects (see faculty news, page 5).

An update on former colleagues: Therese Bonin, Micheline Besnard, Bob Cottrell, and Albert Mancini are doing well and enjoying retirement. We note with sorrow the passing of esteemed professors Charles Carlut and Charles Williams. Both contributed fully in their teaching mission, in publications, and in their mentoring.

If you’re in the area, come visit us at Hagerty Hall to see the latest in technology-integrated learning, as well as the Crane Café for food and up-to-the-minute international news. Contact me if you would like more information on the changes that are making your college and department great! We would appreciate it if you would update your information for our alumni lists, especially your e-mail addresses. We’ve included a form to make this easier for you.

Of course, we would be delighted if you would choose to contribute to one of our development funds. These gifts are very much appreciated! They help us enhance the teaching and learning of French and Italian for both our graduate and undergraduate students.

Diane W. Birckbichler
Professor and Chair
Department of French and Italian
birckbichler.1@osu.edu

Rock historian Danielle Marx-Scouras
What’s the connection between a French rock group and Ohio State?

La France de Zebda 1981-2004
Faire de la musique un acte politique

Top:
Professor Marx-Scouras with Magyd Cherif and Hakim Amokrane of Zebda.
More students are studying foreign languages

Students, in increasing numbers, are rediscovering an interest in foreign languages and culture, and for a variety of reasons. For some, it is the idea of enhancing career opportunities by having a French or Italian major or minor along with a major in another discipline such as international business, international affairs, national security and intelligence, art history, and so on. For others, it is the idea that a second language would be useful for travel abroad or that studying French or Italian is a way to connect with their family's cultural heritage.

As a result, French and Italian studies are growing; we are adding new staff and opening additional sections of beginning language classes and seeing strong enrollments in classes at all levels. Italian, following national trends, has seen an increase in enrollments. For example, almost 100 students enrolled in Assistant Professor Heather Webb's "Introduction to Italian Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance" in spring quarter 2006. An Italian film class taught by Professor Simone Castaldi had more than 100 students. Enrollments in French intermediate and advanced level classes continue to grow.

It's Associate Professor Danielle Marx-Scouras. Taking the lead in an area of study that French scholars have ignored, Marx-Scouras recently published a book on the Maghrebin/Italian rock group Zebda. Zebda ("butter" in Arabic, just as the slang word for North Africans, "beur," means "butter" in French) won awards for "Best Song" ("Tomber la chemise") and "Best Group" at the 2000 Victoires de la musique (French Grammy). In 2001 the group became synonymous with the Motivé-e-s political ticket in Toulouse's municipal election. Professor Marx-Scouras's book, La France de Zebda 1981-2004: Faire de la musique un acte politique, has been well received in both the U.S. and in France.

In her course on French popular music, Zebda's lyrics were used to discuss current culture and politics. With the encouragement of her students and FRIT colleagues, Professor Marx-Scouras submitted a proposal to Editions Autrement in Paris to tell the story of Zebda within the social and political framework of France from 1981–2004. While 1981 marked the election of socialist Francois Mitterand as president—and much hope for social change—2004 marked the break-up of the group in a political atmosphere of complete disillusion with the possibilities of social advancement through political means. The weeks of car burnings and social violence in late 2005 among the second and third generation North African immigrants and other marginalized minorities lent an eerie note of agreement.

Professor Marx-Scouras is understandably enthusiastic about the opportunity to hang out with a rock group. "This was fun! It made me feel young again. . . . It was a wonderful experience for me as a teacher and a scholar." When asked if there were any problems communicating, given the differences in background with the members of the group, Professor Marx-Scouras pointed out that her 20-year-old son did the photography for the book. "He was a great buffer."

Over the past five years, the number of minors in French has more than tripled as students see the added value of having foreign language expertise as part of their professional toolkits.

New study options

French and Italian faculty continue to be responsive to changing student needs and demands, including a trend toward more choices and greater flexibility in designing a major. As a result, both language sections have been revising their curricula.

French options

Starting in fall quarter 2006, undergraduates will be able to choose from four major tracks in French: the traditional language and culture and language and literature, plus French studies (to include the first three areas) and French for the professions. This track has been developed for the growing number of students interested in pursuing professional careers that may involve French and Francophone cultures. Courses in the "professions" track are taught in French and focus on the institutions, practices, and vocabulary of French and Francophone professional experiences.

Associate Professor Dennis Minahen, chair of the French Curriculum Committee, negotiated agreements with other departments, e.g., business, to be able to include appropriate courses that could lead to a double major. "The updated and expanded tracks offer many options, but all are flexible and allow, in the case of the major, an extra-departmental component to count. Our new programs are designed for students with diverse interests who would like to major in French, make it part of a double major, or add a French minor."

Italian studies

In Italian studies, Assistant Professor Janice Aski, director of undergraduate Italian language programs, is chairing a committee charged with re-energizing the Italian undergraduate curriculum. The new curriculum envisioned by Aski and her colleagues (Professors Farina, Klopp, and Webb) will be based on content rather than the "mechanics" of a language. That is, the new set of courses (scheduled for winter 2007) will enable students to learn grammar and practice reading skills by focusing on a particular topic. For example, "Modern Italian Media" will emphasize conversation skills, grammar, and composition through the viewing and discussion of current soap operas. "Italian Identities" will look at Italian culture in Italy as well as in the U.S. A 600-level film course will be added to the curriculum. In general, broad topics will replace narrow ones, while maintaining a few traditional "bridge" courses that will cover grammar and composition.

According to Aski, the new curriculum "marks a significant departure from traditional language programs and will be among the most innovative in the county. Each student will leave the program with a firm understanding of Italy's history, culture, literature, and films, as well as proficiency in the Italian language."
New colleagues welcomed to the department

Heather Webb  Assistant Professor of Italian

Professor Webb’s second year at Ohio State started out with an amazing response from undergraduate students: 75 signed up for the Italian 251 course, Dante in Translation, with emphasis on the first section of The Divine Comedy, “The Inferno.” The course was discussion-based and focused on developing the skills necessary for interpreting text. Dante’s subtext focuses on faith and how faith intersects with political situations and one’s personal life. The students’ interest shows the remarkable appeal of Dante’s work in the public mind, 700 years after its first publication.

In a related interest, Professor Webb serves on the advisory committee of the “World of Dante” [www.iath.virginia.edu/dante/ web site], a pilot project that is developing a student-centered hypermedia environment for Dante studies. It offers comparisons between artistic renditions and Dante’s text.

She is currently working on a book manuscript entitled “The Medieval Heart: Circulation Before William Harvey.” The book examines ideas of heart function and circulation in the Middle Ages through the lens of Harvey’s engagement with those ideas in the 17th century and, on another level, recent moves towards a more holistic understanding of the relationship between the body and the environment.

In the medieval period, the workings of the heart were not of interest to physicians alone; the texts considered by Professor Webb include poems, pious epistles, treatises of natural philosophy, and a preacher’s manual. Professor Webb’s doctoral dissertation at Stanford (2004) looked at other aspects of “The Medieval Heart.”

Simone Castaldi  Senior Lecturer

Professor Castaldi taught Italian literature and culture for three years at the University of Georgia in Athens after receiving his doctorate in 2001 from Brown University with a dissertation on Italian political cartoons from the 1970s and 1980s. While his master’s degree comes from the University of Virginia, his undergraduate degree (la laure) was granted by the Universita degli Studi di Firenze.

When asked why he thinks that so many students are choosing to study Italian culture at Ohio State, Professor Castaldi noted that many students want to travel to Italy and that some see Italian as an easy companion language to Spanish, which they may have already studied. More than 100 students signed up for Castaldi’s class on masterpieces of Italian cinema.

Castaldi’s other interests include 20th-century literature, visual arts, and the theory of the novel. Recent publications include articles on Italian minimalism, political cartoon artists of the ‘80s, and the early 19th-century erotic novel.

Have you studied a language lately? Research on aging indicates the great benefits of language study to your brain, no matter what your age. Perhaps you’d like to begin a new language or renew your acquaintance with French or Italian? Ohio State offers language courses for credit at three campuses: Columbus, Marion, and Newark. And for those of you not quite ready to take the plunge back into credit courses, Ohio State’s Office of Continuing Education regularly offers conversational French and Italian courses.

In addition, if you’re over 60 years of age and would enjoy sitting in on a class, you can take advantage of Program 60. When there are spaces available, residents of the state of Ohio, age 60 and over, can sign up for classes at any state-sponsored college or university at no charge. Check out the Office of Continuing Education web site at www.continuinged.ohio-state.edu for more information. There you’ll find out about other Ohio State options in continuing education, including career advice and non-credit online courses.

Photo courtesy of Laura Seeger
Janice Ashi, assistant professor of Italian, has just finished a new, first-year Italian text, Avanti! (2006) which she developed with Diane Musumeci. Ashi’s research includes historical Italian and Romance linguistics and task-oriented learning activities for languages.

Diane W. Birckbichler, professor and chair of the Department of French and Italian, is also director of the OSU Foreign Language Center. She recently published the second edition of Invitation au monde francophone with Thérèse Bonin (Professor Emerita) and Anne Lair (an Ohio State Ph.D. graduate) and edited a monograph on foreign language program evaluation, Evaluating Foreign Language Programs: Content, Context, Change.

John Conteh-Morgan, associate professor of French, has just published an English translation of Louis Sala-Molins’ 1992 treatise, Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment. He is also working on a grant to develop a cross-cultural online course covering the Francophone world.

Jean-François Fourny, associate professor of French, has published an entry on “personalism” in The Columbia History of 20th Century French Thought (Columbia University Press). He also had an article in the French Review. Last year he was a finalist for the College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Teaching Award.

Linda Harlow, associate provost of the University Honors & Scholars Center and associate professor of French, completed the 5th edition of her intermediate college French textbook, Bravo! —and its ancillaries—with co-authors Judith Muyskens, Michèle Vialet, and Jean-François Brière in 2005.

Sarah-Grace Heller, assistant professor of French, specializes in medieval literature with emphasis on sumptuary laws, material culture, fashion theory, and the popular literature of the crusades. Publication of her current project, Growth of a Fashion System: Desire for Novelty and Consumption in Medieval France, is expected in 2006.

Eugene W. Holland, professor of French and Comparative Studies, served as a resident scholar at the University of California, Santa Cruz Center for Cultural Studies, during 2004—2005. He gave keynote talks at conferences in Sydney, Melbourne, and Paris.

Charles Klopp, professor of Italian, has published articles in recent issues of World Literature Today, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, and Cahiers d’études italiennes. In addition to teaching a course on the geography, culture, people, and literature of Trieste, Professor Klopp is organizing an international colloquium, “Borders, Culture, and the Construction of Identity: the Case of Trieste” for October 2006.

Christiane Laeufer, associate professor of French, has published reviews in Studies in Second Language Acquisition, French Review, and the Modern Language Journal. She is working on an advanced, linguistically informed grammar and phonetics reference text. She is the MA advisor, chairs several committees, and serves on two University Senate committees.

Mihaela Marin, assistant professor of French, recently completed two articles, one for The Romantic Revue and one in Zola et le naturalisme en Europe et aux Amériques: Contaminations et influences d’un genre, as well as working on Le livre enterré: Zola et la hantise de l’archaïque. In October 2005, she presented a paper at the 31st Nineteenth-Century French Studies Colloquium, University of Texas, Austin.


Danielle Marx-Scouras, associate professor of French, received the 2004 Rodica Botoman Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching and Mentoring in the Humanities at Ohio State. Her new commentary on political life in France through the lens of a multicultural rock group, La France de Zébda 1981-2004: Faire de la musique un acte politique (Paris: Editions Autrement), was published in 2005.


Karlis Racevskis, professor of French, has published reference entries on Pierre Bayle, Voltaire, and Julien Benda. He also authored an article on Edward Said and Michel Foucault for Research in African Literatures (Fall 2005), as well as discussing the “lamentable behavior and pessimism of university humanists” in the U.S. for The International Journal of Humanities (2006).

Jennifer Willging, assistant professor of French, specializes in 20th-century French literature and culture. Recent publications include articles on Paule Constant and Louis-Ferdinand Céline. Professor Willging also has completed a manuscript on anxiety in contemporary French women’s writing to be published by the University of Toronto Press.

Study abroad

Each year more and more of our French and Italian students study abroad—some for summer programs and others for year-long programs. In addition to exchange programs with universities in Quebec, Canada; Dijon, Paris, Nantes, and Rennes, France; and Lecce, Italy, discussions are under way to establish academic ties with the Universite des Antilles-Guyane in Martinique.

Lecce, Italy. . . on the heel of the boot

The OSU Summer Language program in Italy has settled in Lecce close to the southern port of Brindisi. Anna Bianco (Political Science, 2007) reported on her experience:

"I stayed in Lecce for a total of two months. I lived in an apartment for the first month with another Ohio State student and three Italian students. I thought that it was really helpful to have Italian roommates. It forced me to work on my Italian conversational skills. We cooked lunch at home, which was nice.

"The professors were all very good. Our TAs helped to translate some things we didn’t understand, but for the most part, those of us with elementary Italian skills just guessed what they were saying. It got better the longer that I was there and the more Italian I learned."

New summer program in Dijon

April Reed (M.A., 2006) reported on her experience as one of first Ohio State students to attend the new summer school program at the University of Dijon in eastern France. "Dijon was a friendly town, and the classes were incredibly challenging. Graduate students attended a seminar on second language acquisition with students from other countries."

French and Italian Graduate Student Association

The 12th Annual FIGSA Conference held on April 7 and 8, 2006, highlighted storytelling, gender studies, and cultural citizenship within Italian and Francophone literature. Thirteen papers were presented in English, French, or Italian. The keynote speaker this year was Professor Daniel Desormeaux of the University of Kentucky. The conference was organized by graduate students Julie Parson, Todd Donahue, Jessica Pino, April Reed, and Jacob Schott.

Earlier in the academic year four French graduate students (Todd Donahue, Tina Quimjian, April Reed, and Jacob Schott) made 400 crepes for the Taste of OSU celebration. Seven Italian graduate students (Cristina Benedetti, Keith Davis, Jessica Pino, Sarah Parrott, Dino Perrotta, Vincent Porretta, and Michael Sherokee) provided fresh bruschetta.

Besançon, France

Linda Crossmock (B.A., 2006) majoring in international business, spent five months in Besançon in late 2005, where she “learned a lot of French.” Linda feels that the intensive language courses will help her achieve her goal of working in international business.

Senegal

Claire Bushorn (B.A., 2006) wanted to experience a non-western culture as part of her major in international studies. She chose Senegal. Living in Senegal for seven months opened her eyes to many things about the world. "I encountered other languages, primarily Wolof, on a daily basis. So much so that I spoke a ‘francais-wolof’ mixture most of the time. I keep in touch regularly with people I became close with and speak to them mainly in French and plan to visit the family members now residing in France. So, even if I am not using French in a work environment, I will definitely be using it for a means of communication."

Rennes connection

Saadia Ahmad-Bhatty joined the department for the 2005–2006 academic year, teaching one class and taking several others. Saadia holds a master’s degree in European law and plans to do research in law and the economy for the French government after passing the advanced “aggregation” test and finishing a doctorate in political science. MaryLaura Papalas, a Ph.D. candidate, will teach at the University of Rennes next year, completing the other half of the university exchange.

Nantes

Drew Bunker (History, International Studies and French, 2007) chose to study in Nantes in 2005 because he “wanted a ‘real’ French (non-Paris) experience.” His final take on it: “awesome.” Drew enjoyed his classes on the European Union, post-Revolution government, and grammar. The best part of his five months studying abroad was “making solid friendships with other students” in the program.
Alumni news

Denise Aalbu (B.A., French, 1984) has taught at several high schools in California and abroad since graduating from Ohio State. Her husband’s work in entomology and database design has allowed the family to live in several unusual places.

Oniankpo Akindgo (Ph.D., 2001) teaches at East Carolina University, in Greenville, N.C., and “therefore, I am a Pirate. I have taught language classes, one introductory literature class, as well as an advanced conversation class. It is so exciting—and so amazing—how students look the same from Columbus to Greenville!”

John Antolino (M.A., Italian, 2001) has been working in Europe since graduation: first in Vienna, Austria, for three years teaching English in a business setting; then in Lublin, Poland, where he has been taking Polish classes and teaching conversational English for the past two years.

Rebecca Bias (Ph.D., French, 2005) is a foreign language technology integration specialist in the Foreign Language Center at Ohio State’s World Media and Culture Center. Rebecca instructs faculty and graduate teaching assistants on the effective integration of satellite broadcasts and other visual and digital media into their language and culture courses at the university. Rebecca has also served as an instructor for the SBC Major Media Summer Workshop at Ohio State since 2003.

Mike Bierschenk (B.A., French and Linguistics, 2004) just finished his master’s degree at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, where he helped to develop courses in French for tourism. His thesis was a translation of Cajun musician Zachary Richard’s first volume of poetry, Faire récolte. With a university fellowship in hand from Ohio State, Mike will rejoin us for the MFA program in creative writing.

Douglas Boudreau (Ph.D., French, 1999) has worked as an assistant professor of French at Mercyhurst College since fall 2001. Most recently he chaired the committee organizing the first Mercyhurst Colloquium on the Americas. Its theme was “Women in the Construction of American Nations.” The keynote speaker was Acadian author Antoine Maillet.

Lisa DiGiaco (B.A., Italian, 1988; M.A., 1992) is the marketing communications manager for Ohio Willow Wood (Mt. Sterling, Ohio). “While we do not have offices in Italy, we do have offices in Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, so I draw upon my experiences while studying Italian and traveling to other countries to help guide me as I communicate with these cultures.”


Roberto DiMascio (M.A., Italian, 1996) has been teaching Italian since graduation, first at a middle school, then at a high school in Providence, R.I. Studies in Spain led to meeting and marrying Maria Mercedes in 2002. Their first child, Dario Roberto, is one year old. “I miss you all . . . and look forward to one day taking my family to visit the campus.”

Melissa Marsh Grusz (M.A., French, 1981) is a freelance editor and proofreader. She has edited French-language textbooks on language, literature, and culture, and English-language textbooks on a variety of topics, including children’s literacy, psychology, and environmental law.

Kerra Gazerro Hanson (M.A., Italian, 1998) is not only a full-time Italian instructor at Wheaton College, but also an A.B.D. at the University of Chicago. Her dissertation focuses on the work of St. Catherine of Siena, one of several female Italian mystics. Kerra married Glenn Hanson in 2003 and moved to Massachusetts.

Barbara Keller (Ph.D., French, 1979) led the search committee for the provost’s position at Capital University this year. Keller has chaired the Department of Modern Languages at Capital since 1996, besides teaching French.

Marcy Taylor Kersch (1991, B.A. with minor in French) worked for Motorola in the Chicago area for the past 10 years. “Initially, I handled calls from our French-speaking Canadian customers. When Motorola Canada opened its own call center, I moved onto marketing and did some very limited translating.

“I left Motorola about a year ago in preparation for my first child—a son named Aidan. After he turns ‘one’ this summer, he and I both will be enrolled in classes at Chicago’s Alliance Francaise. I’m really looking forward to it!”

Jenine Larrabee (M.A., French, 2005) works for the American Comer Library (sponsored by the American Embassy) at l’Universite d’Antsiranana, Departement d’Etudes Anglo-Americaines in Madagascar. Since January 2006, Jenine has presented classes on speaking English, writing, and using the library’s resources. Her overall goal is to increase usage and membership in the library. Organizing a women’s day for the Female Student Association was “in the top three best experiences of my life.”

Anne-Marie Logue (B.A., French, 2004) works at the American Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark, as an administrative assistant in the Public Affairs Section. Her more exciting responsibilities include running a Small Grants Program and administering the budget for public affairs.

“The work is varied and interesting, and my colleagues are really great, so I count myself very lucky to have the chance to be in Copenhagen. I am actually staying another year in the job and then planning on going back to grad school in 2007.”

(continued on page 8)
Maria Falasca Milano (M.A., 2004) has been teaching first and second year Italian at Ohio University for the past two years. Her new husband, Michael Milano, owns and runs an Italian restaurant in Columbus.

Daryl Rodgers (M.A., Italian, 2001) is working on his doctoral thesis on verbal morphology in Italian linguistics and second language acquisition and teacher education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he teaches. He and his wife, Rebecca, welcomed a daughter, Siena, into the world in November 2005.

Dorothée Mertz-Weigle (Ph.D., French, 2005) is currently working at Marquette University in Milwaukee and is involved with the local A.A.T.F. and Alliance Française. “I enjoy my teaching, my colleagues, and the proximity to Chicago!”

Thibaut Schilt (Ph.D., French, 2005) teaches French language, literature, and film courses at Bucknell University. His current research explores the representation of multiculturalism and hybrid identities in contemporary French cinema.

Amanda Miller Sperdel (B.A., 2004, MA., Foreign Language Ed, 2005) is now teaching French III at Churubusco High School in Indiana. “I’m using the music and videos of Zebda and MSS. The kids have really enjoyed the unit.”

Amanda was married this past summer and has moved to Fort Wayne. “I hope to get back to Columbus eventually. I love teaching and love my job . . . I am even planning a trip to France for the summer 2007.”

Don Spinelli (Ph.D., French, 1971) was an associate dean for 10 years in the College of Liberal Arts at Wayne State University. Last year liberal arts was combined with the College of Science to form the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Don plans to continue as an associate dean in the new college until retirement or the universe claims him.

Stephane Spoiden (B.A., 1989; M.A., 1991; Ph.D., 1996) is an associate professor at the University of Michigan–Dearborn. Besides teaching there since 1996, Spoiden has been a prolific writer on 19th- and 20th-century French culture, literature, cinema, business, as well as topics related to AIDS and the European Union and its relationship with the U.S.

Marie-Madeleine Stey (Ph.D., French, 1997) has chosen a new area of interdisciplinary research: anthropozoology, the study of the multiple links between animals and civilizations, especially anthropozoology in literature. In 2005 Stey presented papers on this theme at three separate conferences, one of which was the Société Renardienne meeting in Munster, Germany. Stey is an associate professor at Capital University.

Nancy Stohs (B.A. French, 1982) now teaches high school math and computer science in Worthington, Ohio. “When people think it’s odd that I have such diverse degrees, I just say that they’re all foreign languages. My daughter goes to Ecole Kenwood (the French immersion Columbus Public school), so I keep up with it a little that way.”

Elizabeth Vitanza (B.A., French, 2001) earned her M.A. in French and Francophone studies from UCLA in 2003 and is currently working at UCLA on her doctoral dissertation, tentatively titled “Rewriting the Rules of the Game: Jean Renoir in America.” Having honed her skills as teaching associate for courses on French film, culture, and language at UCLA, she now lectures part time in French at Loyola Marymount University-Los Angeles.

Carla Oronato Wysokinski (M.A., Italian, 1992) is currently assistant director of the Italian Elementary Language Program at Ohio State, co-author of the Avanti! Workbook and co-advisor for the Italian Club. She performs with two Ohio State dance ensembles: Folclor Hispano and Club Tropical.

Many of our students—both graduate and undergraduate—benefit from the support of generous alumni. For example, Rebecca Bias, (Ph.D., 2005), who received an Astier research grant, said, “Without the Astier grant, I wouldn’t have had the resources to visit the Paris film libraries and rare archive collections that provided key sources for the completion of my dissertation (From Golden Age to Silver Screen: French Music-Hall Cinema from 1930-1950).”

In 2005, undergraduates Cristina Rose, Courtney Tamimie, Adrienne Barbo, Megan Beck, Rosemary Blackburn-Smith, Melanie Bynum, James Lewis, Maureen Mork, Kristin Smith, and Megan Leigh Prince received William and Margaret Price Scholarship grants to study overseas.
We’d like to hear from you!
Department of French and Italian

Please take a moment to fill out this form and return it to us so that we can share your news in an upcoming issue of *Paroles*. Mail form to: Department of French and Italian, The Ohio State University, 200 Hagerty Hall, 1775 College Road, Columbus, OH 43210.

Name ________________________________________________________________________________________

Address _______________________________________________________________________________________

Degree _______________________________________________________________________________________

Year of graduation ____________________ Daytime phone _______________________________________________

E-mail ________________________________________________________________________________________

Tell us your news (professional and personal): __________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________

In 2006, undergraduates Abigail Smardon, Kevin Baldwin, Jared Bovinet, Jenny Crawford, Nathaniel Jacks, Ellen Mustard, Kathleen Nemer, and Maria Sanchez all received Price Scholarship grants to study overseas. Ashley Draught received the Arthur C. and Lura Bell Chamblin Jahn Scholarship designated for undergraduate students majoring in French or Italian along with business.

We invite you to make a gift to the department through one of our existing funds, or, if you’re considering setting up an endowed fund or in making a bequest to the department, through a fund of your own. See our Alumni Support Form on page 10 for ways to contribute.

Support the Department of French and Italian!

Announcing two new funds!
The Department of French and Italian is pleased to announce that two new funds have been established.

**Transforming Learning Through Technology (TLT):** The new TLT fund will help faculty and students in the department use the latest in technology to transform the teaching and learning of French and Italian. For example, Professors Conteh-Morgan and Marx-Scouras are developing an online, media-rich course on the cultures of the French-speaking world. Your gift would help support this project, as well as media training, the purchase of multimedia software and equipment, and the development of other multimedia projects.

**The French and Italian Lecture Fund:** This fund supports lectures on various aspects of historical and contemporary topics of general interest. The lectures supported by this fund are designed to appeal to both the members of the Ohio State community and to the community at large. With the aid of the latest in technologies, we hope to offer podcasts and webcasts of some of our lectures so that our alums can participate from a distance in the intellectual life of the department.
Students air Ohio State’s first foreign language broadcasts

In May 2006, undergraduate students Drew Bunker, Caroline Hersch, and Matt Jepsen (French); and Michelle Hungerford and Mathew Daniels (Italian) produced several French and Italian broadcasts on Ohio State’s “underground” online radio station (www.underground.fm). Working with Professors Janice Aski and Wynne Wong, the students wrote scripts and selected a variety of music in French and in Italian for the hour-long broadcasts. Professor Rebecca Bias coordinated the project along with Vinnie Young (B.A., Italian, 2006), who is credited with initiating this project. This year’s student producers will train a new group of DJs to carry on the work next year.

Paroles

Issue 1 Spring/Summer 2006

Paroles is published annually by the Department of French and Italian of The Ohio State University for its alumni, majors, staff, and friends.

Editor ....................................... Clare Balombin
Faculty Advisor………………… Professor Diane Birckbichler
Design ................................. University Marketing Communications
Photography .......................... Clare Balombin
Rebecca Bias
Karen Rugani Loy
Ohio State Photo Services
Dr. Mark Parker
Stephane Spoiden

For information about the newsletter, contact:
Jodi Obert
200 Hagerty Hall
1775 College Road
Columbus, OH 43210
obert.1@osu.edu

Department of French and Italian
Phone: (614) 292-4938
Fax: (614) 292-7403 (Fax)
Web: frit.osu.edu
While the benefits of studying French and Italian at Ohio State are evident in the careers of our many graduates who are now teaching or doing research in secondary and collegiate settings, we received letters from alumni who found other reasons to celebrate what the study of French and Italian meant to them.

Here are two of the responses we received . . .

Mark Parker has a private practice in pediatric endocrinology in Charlotte, N.C., caring mostly for children with diabetes, but also for those with thyroid, growth, and other glandular problems.

“When I started college, my plan was to study medicine. I had planned to major in biology, but changed my mind while taking the basic French courses required for graduation in the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences. I truly enjoyed my time at Ohio State and was drawn to major in French primarily because of the wonderful people in my 100-level classes and the French department. Drs. Rosbottom and Cottrell were just great . . . .”

“I can say that my education and experience in the College of Humanities have made me more well-rounded than some of my colleagues. I tell my patients who are going off to college that I majored in French at Ohio State and recommend that they widen their vision beyond their ultimate goal to glean the most from their college experience.”

Karen Rugani Loy “stumbled” into Italian as a major that fit into her schedule as an undergrad at Ohio State getting certification in dental hygiene. “Because my father was a first generation Italian-American, the language interested me. After taking my required three quarters freshman year, I decided to major in the language. I loved it!”

“My grandmother took me with her to Italy for a month—the summer between my freshman and sophomore years—to visit her sister. My great aunt lived just outside of Florence, so I got to see most of Tuscany, and we made trips to Milano, Venezia, Pisa, and other small villages, too. It was an incredible experience. The language endeared me to my Nonna, as we could have wonderful conversations in Italian.”
Not only is there a 400-level course on Trieste, Professor Charles Klopp has planned an international colloquium on its “Borders, Culture, and Construction of Identity” for October 2006. A key speaker will be Professor Giuseppe A. Camerino from the Universita degli Studi in Lecce, Italy. Others will be drawn from Italian and Slavic departments in the U.S., especially Ohio State’s Slavic language department. The colloquium is expected to be of interest to those concerned with the issues of borders, the problematics of contact with the cultural “other,” and with how space can be a literary and cultural determinant and imaginative construct.

The goal of the Department of French and Italian to use technology effectively has resulted in a “landmark” event in April 2006 that brought together French students from Ohio State and the University of Damascus, Syria, to discuss L’Hôte by Albert Camus. Given the time constraints—one hour for discussion—the 35 students involved agreed to keep in touch via e-mail to continue their dialogue.