Second Annual Tournées French Film Festival a Huge Success

In October 2006, the Department of French, under the supervision of Assistant Professor Maggie Flinn, seconded by PhD candidates Audrey Evrard and Elizabeth Black, again partnered with Parkland College and Boardman's Art Theatre to put on the second annual Tournées French Film Festival. Seed funding for the festival was again provided by the French American Cultural Exchange, but this year, building on the success of Tournées 2005, many more U of I and Parkland units became involved in supporting the event through extensive curricular tie-ins, funds, advertising, and labor.

Six films had multiple screenings over the course of the week: Olivier Assayas' *Clean*, Robert Lepage's *La Face cachée de la lune*, Jonathan Nossiter's *Mondovino*, Karin Albou's *La Petite Jerusalem*, Arnaud Desplechin's *Rois et Reine*, and Sébastien Lifshitz's *Wild Side*. With total attendance over 2,200, there was enthusiastic audience response to this thought-provoking snapshot of contemporary French cinema. Most rewarding to festival organizers was the increased involvement of French department graduate students in coordinating festival events and the delight with which undergraduates in all levels of our French courses welcomed the festival's return. Local community radio station WEFT's "Les Francophiliacs" (co-hosted by U of I French PhD candidate Nicola Dach) dedicated two hours of programming to French and Francophone movie music. Midway through the festival, *La Petite Jerusalem* provided the U of I campus with an opportunity for lively lunchtime debate at an Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities-sponsored roundtable on Jews and Muslims in France.

The continued success of Tournées in Champaign-Urbana has become a model for other University of Illinois units to organize similar events. Boardman's hosted a Latin American film festival and an African film festival—the latter also featuring work from Francophone African nations.

"We are delighted at these additional opportunities to see high-quality international cinema in our community," Flinn says. "Preparations are underway for next year's Tournées, tentatively scheduled for late September 2007."

*Top left:* Vintner Hubert de Montville in Jonathan Nossiter's crowd-pleasing documentary, *Mondovino*, about the wine industry in the age of globalization.

*Top right:* Maggie Chung in a Cannes Best Actress winning performance as a recovering heroin addict in Olivier Assayas's *Clean*.

*Bottom:* *Little Jerusalem*
This has been a year in which we are experiencing change and movement, giving the lie to the ironic comment, “plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.” Nothing has so great an effect of change than the comings and goings of people. While student turnover comes naturally, since our purpose is to send educated people out into the world, changes among the faculty ranks are rarer. When Professor Alice Omaggio Hadley retired after the 2004-2005 academic year, the department initiated a search for a specialist in second-language acquisition. We are now pleased to welcome our new colleague, Annie Tremblay, starting this coming fall. Tremblay is a French Canadian, the first the department has ever employed in its faculty ranks. She is finishing her PhD in second language acquisition at the University of Hawaii, where her doctoral dissertation studies the connection between theoretical linguistics and psycholinguistics in the phonology of second-language learners. Tremblay will be teaching courses in French as well as in her specialty and will participate in the cooperative PhD program in second language acquisition and teacher education.

Professor Liz Martin, our specialist in French for special purposes and instructor in the popular business French courses, will be leaving U of I for a position at Cal State-San Bernardino. In addition to escaping from winter weather, Martin will have new opportunities in southern California. Although she leaves behind many disappointed friends and colleagues, we all wish her well in her new job.

Joe Price, who has ably run the Basic Language Program for two years, is also leaving for warmer climates, having accepted a tenure-track job at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. He and his wife, Amber, welcomed their first child, Henry, last year.

During the first eight weeks of the fall term, the department was fortunate to have Professor Kamal Salhi, Senior Lecturer at Leeds University in England, as the International Council Visiting Professor. Dr. Salhi taught a 400-level course in Francophone literature and cinema, combining novels and films from three North African countries. Now back at Leeds, he continues to advise graduate students who took the course.

This spring, emeritus professor Emile Talbot has offered a new course called “Paris: A Cultural and Social History.” Based on texts including chronicles, memoirs, observations, poetry, narratives, and sociological essays from the 6th century to the present, this course explores Parisian life from the period when Lutetia was a Roman city to the present day.

With the continuing support of the French government, our “France@Illinois” pluridisciplinary center sponsored a brilliant run of outside speakers, on a tremendous variety of topics, thus enhancing the learning and intellectual spread of faculty and students alike. During the fall, we also helped sponsor the second annual Tournées French Film Festival at Boardman’s Art Theatre in Champaign. Attendance was excellent, the films were brilliant, and many instructors took advantage of the films to enhance the cultural competence of their students. We have Professor Maggie Flinn to thank for spearheading the organization of the festival again this year.

Finally, we were pleased to welcome Professor Andrea Goulet to the tenured faculty ranks starting last fall. Enjoying a well-earned sabbatical this spring, Dr. Goulet is at work on a book about crime fiction.

Amitiés,
Armine Mortimer, Department Head
On the Job With Professor Lawrence Schehr

Zsuzsanna Fagyal-Le Mentec interviews French studies Professor Lawrence Schehr, the organizer of two new conferences hosted by the Department of French: “Interfaces, Visualizations, and Paradigm Shifts” in spring 2007 and “Rhetoric of the Other V: From Previsibility to Hypervisibility” in spring 2008.

ZsF: What made the spring 2007 conference “state-of-the-art”?
LS: State-of-the-art conferences, sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences through the Annual Development Fund, bring to campus leading national or international authorities on topics of general interest to students and faculty. “Interfaces, Visualizations, and Paradigm Shifts” was awarded this title and substantial funding to explore contact points between the humanities and high technology. The conference featured 16 presentations by scholars from Europe and North America, among them University of Illinois Professors Andrea Goulet and Maggie Flinn (French), Lisa Nakamura (speech communication and Asian American studies), Robert Markley (English), and Ryan Griffis (art and design).

ZsF: What does “interfaces” stand for in the spring 2007 conference title?
LS: The word points to questions about ways the humanities can use technologies that are currently available, and what the technological needs are for the humanities, so that researchers can pursue traditional and not-so-traditional objects of inquiry.

ZsF: How about “visualizations”?
LS: One of the key areas of this interface of humanities and technology is in matters relating to visualization. Speakers and participants are interested in examining the ways in which emerging technologies can literally and figuratively help illuminate cultural artifacts. Visualization and virtual reality, for instance, are emerging technologies that can look at text-based objects of culture and facilitate interpretations and readings. The humanities are interested in various combinations of text-to-knowledge, data-to-knowledge, and image-to-knowledge based possibilities. Critics can look at and compare editions of books by mapping them through computer applications. Additionally, speakers at the conference will look at objects of cultural studies to show how they are mapped, programmed, and displayed in our systems, in our minds, and in our computers.

ZsF: Does the third concept, “paradigm shifts,” refer to new ways in which the humanities adapt to existing and emerging technologies?
LS: Yes. Both these points of contact that I mentioned lead necessarily to paradigm shifts and new epistemological approaches in the humanities and technologies, as well as some synergistic combination of the two. We are now looking at texts and cultural artifacts in culturally different ways, as they are seen to be parts of systems and networks and not just freestanding objects. The post-human world to which I refer is simply a recognition of a basic reality in the West: we are always plugged in….

ZsF: What did you expect from this conference?
LS: I expected a productive two-day set of talks, dialogues, roundtables, and workshops. This conference not only did produce new knowledge, but also developed innovative approaches and a productive dialogue on this campus and elsewhere. I hope we can publish the proceedings in the near future so we can share this fascinating work with cultural critics and theorists everywhere.

ZsF: What did you expect from this conference?
LS: Yes. The Department of French will be hosting a conference on March 28-29, 2008, entitled “Rhetoric of the Other V: From Previsibility to Hypervisibility.” It will focus specifically on lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer (LGBTQ)-related matters in French and Francophone cultures, literatures, and media (film, television, new media, the Internet, etc.) from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. This event will be the fifth in a series that started at the University of North Carolina in 1997. It will be held over two days with two parallel sessions, accommodating approximately 50 speakers.

ZsF: The next conference in 2008 will be centered around literary and cultural analysis, and is also part of a growing tradition.
LS: Yes. The Department of French will be hosting a conference on March 28-29, 2008, entitled “Rhetoric of the Other V: From Previsibility to Hypervisibility.”

ZsF: What is new in the “Rhetoric of the Other” that would warrant biannual conferences on this topic?
LS: New approaches to queer studies and its interrelations to cultural studies, aesthetics, and specific literary praxes come and go, but the field changes rapidly. As LGBTQ studies is maturing, its marginality is decreasing, and thus new conceptions of what queer theory might be, changes in the optics relative to HIV infection, and the development of new means of communication and representation become of wider interest. They speak to the necessity of holding regular scholarly forums on these issues.

ZsF: Thank you!

Information on both conferences is available at Professor Schehr’s website: www.french.uiuc.edu/schehr/conference.
Laura Spear, PhD Candidate in French Studies

A native of Texas, Laura Spear, PhD candidate in French studies, is scheduled to go home this summer. Unlike most trips in recent years, however, this visit is expected to last longer than a summer break: in February, Laura accepted a tenure-track position at Austin College in Texas. Beginning in fall 2007, she will be teaching French literature, culture, and film at her alma mater, where she took her first classes in French studies.

Shy, almost self-effacing, Laura receives our congratulations with a bright smile and sparkling eyes but also, what appears to be restraint. Her characteristically short answers and seemingly deferent attitude, however, should not be mistaken for a lack of enthusiasm. When asked to tell about her feelings, Laura reveals that there is real passion behind her choice of a profession, which she discovered at the University of Illinois.

Having received a degree in French, German, and mathematics at Austin College in 2001, Laura first worked for a human resources consulting firm as an actuarial analyst. She quickly realized, however, that going home every day, sitting down, and reading one book after another on 20th century French literature and film was more than just a hobby for her. “I missed the intellectual challenge; I missed literary work and imagination in everyday life,” she says. “So I applied to college to study what interested me the most.” A recipient of a fellowship to enter our MA program in French studies, Laura completed her degree in just one year and soon after started her doctoral dissertation on 19th and 20th century crime fiction under the direction of Professor Andrea Goulet the same year.

Other honors and fellowships were quick to come. In 2006, Laura went to France on the Walter J. Jensen Fellowship for French Language, Literature, and Culture from the Phi Beta Kappa Society. It is a relatively new fellowship (first awarded in 2005) that provides a generous $10,000 for six months of support for research and study in France. “I set out to research rare and difficult-to-find ‘polars,’ both fiction and film from the beginning to mid-20th century in a project entitled: “Vanishing Vectors: Trains and Speed in 19th and 20th Century French Crime Fiction and Film,” she says. “What made my application stand out, I believe, is my project’s combination of both textual and visual media to study a very important cultural object in French society: the railways.”

From July through December 2006, Laura conducted research in Paris on fiction and film at the Bibliothèque Nationale and Bibliothèque du film, as well as on rare pulp fiction from the 1910s at a specialized crime fiction library, the Bibliothèque des littératures policières (BILIPo). When asked about Paris, her smile widens even more: “As my first time to live in Paris,” she says while revealing that this might not be the last, “this stay was truly both an adventure and a stimulating educational experience. Each day brought me into contact with new people, students, researchers, and interesting discussions, which engaged me in a warm and collaborative culture. I was also, for the first time, face to face with the current realities of French society. I believe I acquired the knowledge to analyze cultural topics from various directions (literature, film, art, etc.) in a way that was crucial for my dissertation.”

We wish you the very best in your new job, Laura! Your impressive career path and original dissertation work will continue to inspire all of us.
Elizabeth Nakubulwa

Swift and always ready for class, Elizabeth Nakubulwa naturally comes to mind as a model undergraduate student in French. Her flawless French, however, does not hide native Francophone origins. Early multilingualism, on the other hand, was of crucial importance in her choice and continued interest in French. Here is what she had to tell us about how it all started.

I was born and raised in Kampala, Uganda, for 10 years before the family came to the United States. In Uganda I spoke, and I still continue to speak, Luganda, which is a dialect of Swahili. I grew up with two younger brothers. Our relatives essentially raised us because my mother left to pursue her Masters in French/English translations, in Canada, when I was four. My father, a composer of African-Classical music, had to travel numerous times due to his profession. At last, my father was accepted to pursue his doctorate and then to teach at Northwestern University. My mother, who had finished her degree, joined my father in Evanston, Ill. This is when we settled in the United States.

Although I had learned English—the official language of Uganda—before coming to the United States, I had a hard time speaking and understanding it at first since it wasn’t my native language, but I was determined to grasp it. I have always had a passion for languages since I was a child, my mother being my main inspiration, as she is fluent in three and knows two more. I was immediately attracted to French. I think that’s a result of hearing my mother speaking it when I was young. I always thought it was the most beautiful language. I started pursuing studies in French when I was 11 years old, in junior high, where it was a requirement to take a foreign language. I enjoyed it so much that I continued to study it throughout high school. I found French to be difficult at first, but I persevered, a habit I developed while learning English. Keeping up my French became more of a challenge when I left the University for two years and then enrolled again in the fall of 2006, since I had not put it to use for some time. However, with the help of my French professors and a couple of French-speaking organizations on campus, such as Pause Café and a Francophone ministry at my church, my vocabulary and speaking skills have improved very quickly.

During this past year, my junior year, I took four French courses here at the University of Illinois. I would like to finish my degree in French commercial studies, receive a Master’s degree in international business, and then maybe pursue a doctoral degree. Before pursuing my Master’s degree, however, I would like to work in an international business corporation to gain some experience. My ultimate dream is to work as an interpreter for an embassy or United Nations. I would like to foster a deeper understanding across cultures, especially since I have had the privilege of living in the Ugandan and American cultures. Next year, I will be able to live in a French-speaking country through the study abroad program and get to know that culture as well. As an interpreter, I could put all this to good use and make a personal contribution to international dialogue and information-sharing between people and cultures in business and politics.
The Making of ‘On Evelyne Accad: Essays in Literature, Feminism, and Cultural Studies’

French Department Alumni Pay Tribute by Contributing to Edited Book

As a tribute to their professor, Evelyne Accad, who was retiring in the summer of 2004 after a career of 30 years, alumni of the University of Illinois French department organized an international conference in the Maison du Liban in Paris, focusing on Accad’s critical and creative writings, activism, and music.

Upon the initiative of Cheryl Toman, a former student of Accad (PhD ’96) and currently Assistant Professor of French and Women’s Studies in Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, papers given at the conference and solicited from well-known scholars and writers will be published later this year in a book by Summa, a scholarly publisher of Francophone studies. The goal of the book was to go beyond ordinary actes du colloque and feature samples of creative writing and feminist autobiography in addition to traditional scholarly essays. “The book had to speak to all of Accad’s contributions to her field and demonstrate the inspiration she and her oeuvre represented for her students over the years. I wanted to make sure that this volume was of the highest quality it could be,” Toman states.

Guest essays were solicited from close collaborators and colleagues, many who are long-time friends of Accad, such as Miriam Cooke (Duke), author of War’s Other Voices; Dorothy Figueira (University of Georgia), and Zohreh T. Sullivan (English, U of I).

Eight U of I PhD alumni contributed, in addition to Toman—Ruth Hottell (’87), Julia diLiberti (’94), Elizabeth Zahnd (’99), Deirdre Heistad (’00), Cynthia Hahn (’91), Samira El Atia (’03), and Youenn Kervennic (’97). They represented all of the French department’s programs: Interdisciplinary French studies, French literature, linguistics, and language acquisition. Alumnus Patrick Reidenbaugh (PhD ’97) and former U of I professor Farida Cassimjee were among the 12 peer reviewers called upon for evaluating the preliminary manuscript. Acknowledging the importance of Accad’s work to feminist and Middle Eastern studies, the renowned Egyptian feminist writer and scholar Nawal El Saadawi agreed to write the preface.

The book features 22 essays grouped in eight themes, among them “Women Writers of Lebanon,” “Tradition and Modernity,” “Otherness,” “Wellness, Trauma, and Mental and Physical Excision,” and “Translating Accad.” Open discussions of sexuality and war, excision, Arab feminism, and film “make this book unique for many reasons,” Toman explains, “one being the enthusiastic contribution of so many U of I alumni in French to a single scholarly project.”

Emile Talbot Awarded the Prix du Québec

Emeritus Professor Emile Talbot received a Prix du Québec award jointly from the American Council for Québec Studies and Québec’s Ministère des Relations Internationales. This award is given once every two years to recognize a U.S. citizen who has made outstanding contributions to Québec studies. The citation was read by Mme Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, the current international affairs minister, at a plenary session of the biennial conference of the American Council for Québec Studies this month in Cambridge, Mass. Professor Talbot received a standing ovation.
A Year in France With an Authentic (Cheesy!) Savoyard Flavor

After I graduated as a French major in 2003, I had two short-term goals: improve my French and get in a full season of skiing. Thanks to some good advice from professors A. Mortimer and A. Fresco, I spent a year in the French Alps as a high school English assistant in Annecy. Annecy is located near all the major ski resorts of France and about an hour from the famous Mont Blanc and Switzerland.

I knew no one in Annecy, but a friend of a friend had agreed to meet me at the train station and let me stay a few nights at her place while I searched for an apartment. In the end, she even found the apartment for me because her friend had an extra room in downtown Annecy. There were about 15 other language assistants from around Europe, Australia, and the Americas living in Annecy as well. We became one big group of friends celebrating various national holidays, attempting to cook our own Savoyard specialties, or just hanging out at a local café.

The work part of my stay was more pleasure than work. I found myself in a very good high school, where I taught students as young as 15 and as old as 22. I was assigned to teach basic discussion classes, but, additionally, I taught an American history class in English and a post-Lycée business class in English. I think I learned more from my students than they probably did from me. Working with them improved my grammar in both French and English because I had to explain rules that I had always accepted as correct without actually understanding why they were correct. Near the end of the school year, I got to help lead a senior class trip to Scotland. Teaching at the Lycée was a great experience because the students and faculty were both entertaining and excellent.

When I think back on my year, one event that always stands apart from the others is the descent of the Alps. My friend and I were hiking in the mountains one autumn day when we came across a cheese farm. It was a Reblochon farm! Haute-Savoie, the department where I lived, is the famous Reblochon cheese region of France. My friend wanted to make a quick visit just so I could say I saw a typical Savoyard farm. However, before we had left, the proprietor invited us to come back in two weeks for the descent of the Alps. The descent occurs every fall when it is time for the cows to leave their summer pastures in the mountains for a lower, more hospitable winter domain in the valley.

The day started at 5 a.m. with a hike up to the farm, where we were treated to a breakfast complete with red wine. I spent the morning trying to look like I knew how to help out on a farm. Manual labor stopped at lunch. There were a variety of potato dishes, green beans dripping with tastiness, and fresh grilled steaks. The wine was special because some of the people attending were “vignerons” and had supplied generous amounts of wine from their own personal vineyards.

The descent was done in typical French fashion. It seemed like more of a festival than a chore to move these cows every fall. There were wine and sausage stands every 15 minutes or so along the route, and the typical sounds of the laborious march were laughter mixed with cowbells and moos. The descent is also one of two times each year that a farmer has the opportunity to show off his animals; the other is the ascent in spring. Each cow is washed, brushed, and given a special decorative cowbell for the occasion. In the major Alpine cities like Annecy, the animals parade through the city in their formal dress. There are pigs, cows, ducks, and geese among the throngs of people in traditional Savoyard dress, who look like they were plucked from a Ricola commercial. The day ended in a cheese-making room in the valley at the winter home.

Now that I’ve returned from France, I’m currently employed at Trader Joe’s, and I’m studying Arabic. I’ve recently applied to graduate school to study international relations this fall and am eagerly awaiting a response.

Warm wishes to all students, faculty, and alumni,

Brian Calhoon
“Collections in Context: The Organization of Knowledge and Community in Europe (15th-17th centuries),” a conference mounted by the Program in Medieval Studies and sponsored by the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, the Department of French, and several other units, will take place September 13-15, 2007, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Scholars from across the disciplines in medieval and early modern studies will discuss various aspects of collecting, which is an increasingly important creative activity in this period. Participants will address such questions as how collections illuminate networks of book production and readership during this period, when manuscript and print culture overlap. What do the provenance and codicological evidence in these books show about shifting patterns of patronage and book ownership? What orientations in taste and interest can be deduced from these anthologies, many of them miniature personal libraries? What is the relation among the texts in different languages in these collections? How do manuscript anthologies influence print collections and vice versa? What regional and national currents are evident in the style and content of manuscript and print collections? How do these books shape or reinforce communities of readers? Sessions will be held in 1080 Foreign Languages Building and are open to the public. For more information, please contact the organizers: Karen Fresco (kfresco@uiuc.edu) or Anne D. Hedeman (ahedeman@uiuc.edu).