

The Newsletter of
the Department of
Slavic Languages
and Literatures at
the University of
Virginia

SLL@VA

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SEASONS GREETINGS FROM UVA SLAVIC! IT'S BEEN ANOTHER EXCITING 12 MONTHS.

The 2014-15 school year was full of events. In March, my colleague Edith Clowes arranged what is surely the largest international conference the Department has been associated with. "Centrifugal Forces: Reading Russia's Regional Identities and Initiatives" assembled journalists, former diplomats, policy experts, historians, sociologists, and cultural studies experts from as far away as Germany, Daghestan, and Siberia, who spent three intense days discussing and debating current developments from the unusual perspective of Russia's regions rather than its capital(s). Live-streaming videos from the conference and Twitter allowed people from across the globe to weigh in with their questions and comments. A series of videos is now available at: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfhxkNo2hcj_fJql-pxFWoFxPE80_MXOq

The Department sponsored a number of other events as well.



Most prominent was a fascinating talk by the Russian writer (and until recently, TV talking head) Tatyana Tolstaya, whose free-ranging monologue, both broad and personal, touched on literature, culture, her own work, the state of Russia today, and recent politics, including the murder of Boris Nemtsov.

In addition, Prof. Andrzej Nowak, distinguished Polish historian and public intellectual from Jagiellonian Univ. in Cracow spoke on "Western Appeasement, Moscow, and Eastern Europe from an Historical Perspective."

Later in the year, Dr. Urs Heftrich and Dr. Bettina Kaibach from the University of Heidelberg in Germany gave lectures on translating the stories of Isaak Babel and on the interlocking issues connecting

the Holocaust and Hiroshima.

We also had talks by our very own PhD, Dr. Katya Jordan, who till recently had been teaching at Virginia Tech and now has become a tenure-track assistant professor at BYU. Katya discussed iconicity in Dostoevsky's novel, *The Idiot*. Dr. Greta Matzner-Gore visited from the University of Southern (continued on p. 2)

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California to speak on narrative curiosity in Dostoevsky.

Finally, Sasha Prokhorov from William and Mary delivered a very entertaining multimedia presentation on "Epic Film as a Tool of Hard & Soft Power During the Cold War."

This fall the Slavic Department, CREEES, and the Department of Media Studies invited Prof. Alyssa DeBlasio from Dickinson College to speak on post-Soviet Russian cinema and to run a professionalization workshop for Slavic graduate students on interviewing at liberal arts colleges.

In graduate student news, congratulations go to Dr. Jill Martiniuk and Dr. Kathleen Thompson who defended their dissertations respectively in spring and summer 2015. Jill is currently teaching in the Slavic Dept., and Kat is serving as the interim Slavic librarian at Alderman Library and working as a research assistant. A former graduate student, Dr. John Lyles, has also joined us this year as a Lecturer to teach language and literature courses for two faculty members on leave, Lilia Travisano and me.

This year we welcomed two new PhD students, Sharisa Nay (Brigham Young University), one of the University's prestigious Jefferson Fellows, and Valeria Provotorova (University of Delaware), as well as three MA students, Elizabeth Austin (Binghamton University), Brian Neel

(Virginia Tech), and Lisa Pisani, who is the first UVA BA to enter the new 4+1 Master's Program in Slavic Languages and Literatures.

On the undergraduate front I am delighted to note that we currently have 38 majors and 17 minors on the books, among the largest numbers we've ever had. Enrollments in our courses overall have been rising steadily, bucking the trend in a number of language departments.

I'm happy to report that Dariusz Tolczyk was promoted to Full Professor, in part on the basis of his groundbreaking work on the silence of Western intellectuals in the face of the network of Stalinist camps, the Gulag. The book came out in Polish in Poland, where it featured prominently in major media. Dariusz even did a number of TV and radio interviews. For an English-language audience, he is both translating and substantially expanding the book to include Stalinist crimes beyond the Gulag, which will make for an even larger and more important project. Expect that work to see the light of day in a couple years.

I am also happy to announce that starting next year Russian House has a new location in the handsome Shea House on JPA. The old Russian House was reclaimed by the Provost's Office two years ago (rumor has it something big will one day be built in that part of grounds) and

since then our students have languished in a suite in Bice, which is adequate for living, but far from ideal for language-house activities. The Russian students will now be sharing Shea (next to the Spanish and French Houses) with other smaller language groups, including among others Chinese, Japanese, and Hindi/Urdu. Shea will give us a wonderful venue for staging Russian plays and holding events. It also allows students to enjoy a dedicated dining center of their own instead of schlepping to central grounds.

On the topic of food, New Cabell can now boast of its own sandwich shop. It's on our floor (2nd), around the corner, in a spot analogous to where the Language Lab is on the other side of the building, with some seating outside on a new veranda in the courtyard.

If you come for a visit, be sure to take a look at the courtyard, which has new landscaping, subtle lighting at night, and an outdoor staircase leading up directly from the café to the entrance to the building at the foot of the Lawn near Bryan Hall.

All of this news and much more you will find as you enjoy this newsletter. Happy Holidays to all our friends and alumni, wherever you may be!

David Herman

GETTING TO KNOW YOU: A ONE ON ONE INTERVIEW WITH DARIUSZ TOLCZYK



Professor Dariusz Tolczyk. Many students have gotten to know and love him over 19 years in the classroom and mentoring MA and PhD theses at UVA. His colleagues know him well through his leadership in research on the Soviet prison system, known as the GULag and its treatment in literature and the media. Now SLL@VA offers an in-depth interview with Professor Tolczyk.

Where did you grow up and what were your greatest passions when you were a child?

I grew up in Warsaw, Poland. One of my earliest memories is looking out through my fifth-floor apartment window down on the courtyard, very early in the morning, and being absolutely mesmerized by the garbage collection. The huge garbage truck

automatically emptying garbage containers with all this wonderful noise, and all the action around it – the garbage men bumping the containers, yelling something to each other – made me extremely excited. This was better than any movie or show. Every day, I would wake up early in anticipation of all these great things to happen, and welcomed the garbage truck as soon as it appeared. I had my plans for the future all figured out. There was no hesitation in my mind: I wanted to be a garbage man when I grew up.

Later on, when I went to preschool and then to school, I got somewhat distracted from my professed career choice and developed a passion for drawing comic books, cartoons, and caricatures. This made me a popular figure among the kids who would gather around and ask me, "draw this, draw that." Teachers in school had problems with me because instead of paying attention in class, I was entertaining myself and other children with drawing and talking at the same time. There was a lot of action going on in these drawings and I was narrating and explaining all the time. Worse than that, I used to draw teachers' caricatures and the whole class would laugh. Something had to be done. They put me at a desk in the first row, in front of the teacher, next to the best behaved girl, named Beatka, in hopes of curtailing my distracting activities. To make a long story short, within a week or two Beatka and I were great friends. We were so busy talking and drawing together that neither she nor I paid attention in class.... Well, I must admit, things like this were going on until I began studying at the University of Warsaw where I finally got interested in what was being said in class. Since then, I have been paying attention. Anyway, I seriously hesitated whether to pursue studying literature or drawing as my future profession.

How do you spend your time when you are not teaching and pursuing literary research?

I was afraid you might ask.... I like watching soccer. Like most boys outside the United States, I grew up playing soccer pretty much anywhere – in courtyards, on playgrounds, in parks, and sometimes even on soccer fields. Actually, when I was a teenager, I used to play with my friends on the same (very modest) soccer field of the Varsovia junior soccer team in Warsaw where, some fifteen years later, Robert Lewandowski (today a great star of Bayern Munich) also started his career as a youngster. Well, the similarities between us end there, I suppose. I somehow did not end up playing for Bayern; I am still trying to figure out why.... But I consider myself an accomplished soccer TV viewer and theoretician of the game....

What is your favorite place in the world?

Warsaw, Zoliborz District, ulica Mickiewicza 18 and the area between Plac Inwalidów and Plac Wilsona.... I am sure everybody knows what area I am talking about. Of course, this is the place where I grew up. Plac Wilsona (Woodrow Wilson Square) was renamed by the communist authorities Plac Komuny Paryskiej (The Paris Commune Square) but the locals, including my family, ignored this and kept calling it by its previous name. Little did I know that many years later I would live a twenty-minute drive away from the place where Woodrow Wilson was born (Staunton, VA). I go back to my old neighborhood in Warsaw every year, and it has never

stopped feeling like home to me. By the way, my grandparents lived at ulica Kościuszki (Kosciuszko Street) – my other favorite place. And again, speaking of the coincidences and/or mysteries of life, Thaddeus Kosciuszko was not only a great Polish and American historic figure but also a friend of this man from Monticello, whose name must be mentioned one way or another in this interview...

Thomas Jefferson...

That's right! Thank you. Anyway, few people know that Kosciuszko bequeathed his money for the cause of emancipating and educating African American slaves. He named Jefferson the executor of his will, and suggested that Jefferson start with liberating some of his own slaves. When Kosciuszko died in Switzerland, Jefferson walked away from his obligations as executor and Kosciuszko's will was never fulfilled. Today, the will is stored right here, at UVA's Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library. I wrote an article about this story and tell my students about it.

Do you have a favorite saying?

How about – *the world is small*? I think what I just said about my favorite places illustrates that idea.

What do you love best about Charlottesville and UVA?

The list would be very long. Charlottesville and its vicinities are wonderful, and I am very lucky to live here and work at UVA. I very much appreciate both. Every day, driving to and from work, I go through amazingly beautiful countryside. I spent most of my life previously in big cities, so I do miss the many interesting things they offer; but, on the other hand, where else would a bear come to my porch and peer through the window into my kitchen? It does happen here. You just can't beat it.

What achievements make you most proud?

I prefer to think about being fortunate rather than being proud. So far, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to devote much time and attention to things that interest me deeply. As a result, I have written what I have written and teach what I teach. I am doing my best and it is up to others to evaluate it. I like to think that most of my important accomplishments are still ahead of me.

What advice would you give UVA students?

Today, students are ceaselessly encouraged to question everything and explore various paths. This, of course, is very important. But it seems to me that, in the midst of all this questioning, we tend to forget that the goal of asking most questions is to receive answers. The purpose of exploring different paths is not just to get tired and confused by the process, but to find the right path and commit to it. So I would like to reassure students: yes, question and explore by all means, but don't be afraid when it begins to look like you have found what you are searching for. Don't be afraid to find out who you are, what your priorities and values are, whom you trust, and to whom you owe your gratitude and loyalty. College is a unique opportunity for realizing that our own personal discoveries often have greater relevance than we assume because they belong to a larger context of similar discoveries made by others, sometimes long ago, and in places we have never thought about before. But sometimes, we don't have to look so far; sometimes we are drawn to paths that are familiar. Either way, realizing this is a great thing.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Music Departments will be hosting a pan-European conference titled "Into the Darkness" at The University of Virginia from April 1-3, 2016. This inter-disciplinary conference will examine topics like the occult, the subconscious, mortality and illness, darkness in the natural world, and the abyss. The conference will be open to the public.

NEW STAFF & FACULTY



In June, Sandy Kendrick joined the Slavic administrative team. Sandy comes to us with an administrative background in medicine. She worked at the UVA Medical Center for about 12 years. Her positions there included registration and scheduling of patient appointments, billing, collections and insurance verification. Sandy does not have many hobbies as her daughter keeps her pretty busy. Her daughter is a junior in high school and will be heading off to college in a little over a year to become a veterinarian.

We are delighted to welcome back our very own to teach as lecturers in Slavic Languages and Literatures for the 2015-16 academic year:

John Lyles (PhD, 2011) is teaching 1st and 2nd year Russian and 19th-century Russian literature.

Jill Martinek (PhD, 2015) is assisting with the Dracula and Dostoevsky courses.

NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS



Elizabeth Austin comes to us from Albany, New York. Liz graduated from Binghamton University with a major in Russian Studies. She is now working toward an MA degree in Contemporary Russian Studies. Her research interests lie in the area of Russian foreign policy and the relationship of Russia and former Soviet countries.



Sharisa Nay comes to the UVA PhD program from Spanish Fork, Utah. She graduated from Brigham Young University with majors in Russian and molecular biology. Her research interests so far focus on literature from the Stalin-era underground.



Brian Neel just graduated from Virginia Tech with a major in German Studies. He is from Roanoke, Virginia. Brian is working toward an MA in Slavic Languages and Literatures. He has not decided what his exact research interests are but knows that they will be based on cross-literary research comparing German and Russian.



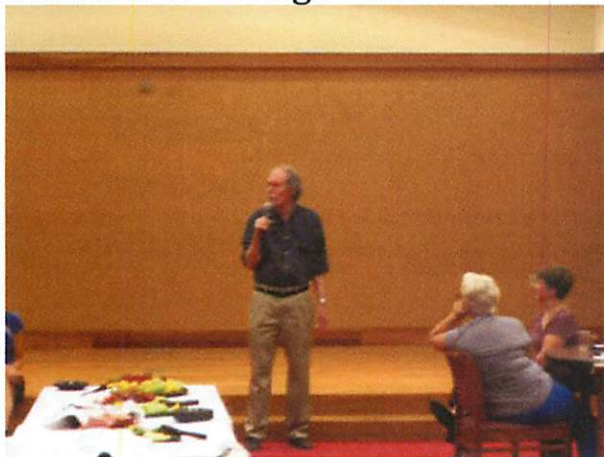
Lisa Pisani is from Northern Va. She received her BA with a double major here at UVA in both Russian Languages and Literatures and Russian and East European Studies. Lisa is UVA Slavic's first 4+1 MA. Lisa's main research interests involve thorough study of Dostoevsky's *oeuvre* in comparison with Nabokov's.

Valeria Provotorova hales from Dover, Delaware. She graduated from the University of Delaware with a BA in Russian Studies and Mass Communications. Her interests are Slavic Folklore, representation of Ukraine in 19th century literature, and Russian Postmodernism.

CONGRATULATIONS!

- Congratulations to Katya Jordan (2014) who has started working at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, as a tenure-track assistant professor in Russian language and literature.
- Congratulations to Jill Martiniuk who in April defended her dissertation on *Paved with Good Intentions: Venichka's Journey of Redemption in Moskva-Petushki and Its Relationship with Radishchev's Journey from Saint Petersburg to Moscow, Milton's Paradise Lost, and Dante's Divine Comedy*.
- Congratulations to Kathleen Thompson who in June defended her dissertation on *Searching, Rewriting, and Jumping Away: Émigré Identity in '1.5-Generation' Russian-American Literature*.
- Congratulations to Madelyn Stuart and Anna Kromin who passed their PhD comprehensive exams and defended their dissertation proposals.
- Congratulations to Samantha Guthrie who, if she clears all security checks, will be working next summer as an intern at the US Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Farewell to George Crafts!



In August Mr. George Crafts retired after four decades as a librarian at Alderman Library. The last few years he was the intrepid contact librarian for Slavic Languages and Literatures and Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. We appreciate his enthusiasm and readiness to help obtain even very hard-to-find materials. Thank you, George! Congratulations and all good wishes to you!

WHAT AN EVENTFUL YEAR!

Strong Feeling, Spring 2015 Russian Play



L to R: Carl Liles, David Vorona, Kathleen Thompson (director), Annie Weidhaas, Elsa Schieffelin

THE 2015 SLAVIC COLLOQUIUM



Dr. Maria Ivanova, lecturer in Polish and Russian

In the spring of 2015, we launched the Slavic Colloquium, a new forum for academic presentation and debate enhancing the spirit of intellectual community in

the Slavic Department. Our faculty, graduate students (especially those working on their dissertations), as well as our graduate alumni, present their recent research and open them for general discussion, thus raising our awareness of and interest in the work of our colleagues and co-workers.

In the spring of 2015, Professor Edith Clowes spoke at the Slavic Colloquium on "Text-Mining Mandelshtam's *Tristia*." Dr. Katya Jordan, our recent Ph.D., now teaching at Brigham Young University, gave a talk, "Do You See What I See? Iconicity in Dostoevsky's Fiction."

In the fall of 2015, the Slavic Colloquium hosted Dr. John Lyles, who defended his Ph.D. in 2011 and is currently teaching at our Department. He spoke on "Bloody Verses: Rereading Pushkin's *Kavkazskii plennik*." The last speaker was Maria Ivanova, a Ph.D. from the Moscow State University and a recent post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University, who now teaches Russian and Polish in the Department. Dr. Ivanova spoke on "Techniques of Concealment in the Eastern Slavic Culture (XVI–XVII Centuries)."

RUSSIAN REGIONS CONFERENCE

When we think of Russia, we tend to think of Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The major Slavic and CREEES event of 2015 was a three-day international conference that shed a unique light on Russia today. Titled “Centrifugal Forces: Reading Russia’s Regional Identities and Initiatives,” the gathering examined ordinary Russians’ identity, community organization, and public action away from the lights of the capital cities. Ignoring life in the provinces and regions as somehow derivative and uninteresting means that we lose much of the richness of the Russian sphere. The premise of “Centrifugal Forces” was that we must understand identity in the far reaches of Russia, beyond Moscow, to understand Russia as a whole.

When they congregated in late March on Grounds, a full range of humanists and social scientists—anthropologists, sociologists, historians, politics, literary and cultural critics, economists, and geographers—discussed important cultural, economic, and political initiatives of recent decades. Keynote speeches by leading experts in Russia’s regions were a highlight of the three days. Dr. Susan Smith-Peter of CUNY and prize-winning author, Dr. Catherine Evtuhov of Georgetown University provided a conceptual framework for regional studies as a whole. Dr. Anne Lounsbury of New York University spoke on the perceived “symbolic geography” of Russia’s provinces, which has traditionally been viewed as derivative and boring. Dr. Alan Holiman of William Jewell College (Kansas City, Missouri) delivered a riveting lecture on citizens’ grassroots legal initiatives following the bombings of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Conference panels addressed an array of topics from recapturing regional “usable histories,” suppressed in the strongly centralized Soviet system, to dealing with environmental

concerns, organizing social action, and economic and cultural “branding.” Talks dealt with regions as far flung as Yakutia, Bashkiriya, Tiumen’ Province, the Urals regions, Chechnya and the Russian North Caucasus, the contested space of the Crimea, as well as European Russia—Oryol, Pskov, and Voronezh, among others.

The conference was organized by a team of Russian cultural historians and critics from around the world, including the lead organizer, Professor Edith Clowes, Professor Ani Kokobobo, assistant professor of Russian literature at the University of Kansas, and Ms. Gisela Erbsloeh, an award-winning radio journalist with Deutschlandfunk in Germany. The fabulous team of Slavic administrators, Ms. Anne Zook, Ms. Gina Hutton, and Ms. Beth Eastwood-Beatty, conference assistant, Dr. Kathleen Thompson, and technical assistant, Mr. Michael Marsh-Soloway, managed the many details that made this conference a great success. The conference was streamed live through the fine work of the team at ASCIT (Arts and Sciences Center for Instructional Technology). Most of the talks are now available at this web site:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLfhxkNo2hcj_fJql-pxFWoFxPE80_MXOq

The organizers have announced that a selection of the papers with a focus on contemporary events and communities will be appearing in a special number of the journal, *Region*, in 2016. Another larger assemblage of papers that deal with a range of historical and cultural issues still relevant in Russia’s regions today will eventually be appearing as chapters of a book, currently titled *Russia’s Regional Identities*, with Routledge Press.



Conference presenters, March 28, 2015 (picture taken by M. Marsh-Soloway)

L to R: Back row: Dm. Zamyatin, R. Geraci, J. Rossman, U. Jaks, A. Charron, A. Holiman, J. Romero, R. Khandozko

Middle row: Yu. Gradszkova, V. Donovan, S. Smith Peter, D. Kurkovsky West, G. Erbslöh, A. Kokobobo, M. Gizbulaev, M. O'Neal, C. Evtuhov, O. Echevskaya, S. Smith, M. Lipovetsky, T. Kirk

Front row: H. Hundley, L. Manchester, A. Anisimova, L. Parts, E. Clowes, J. Costlow, A. Lounsbury, K. Graber

Spring 2015 Graduation





Dariusz Tolczyk, Kathleen Thompson (back)



Katya Jordan, David Herman, Edith Clowes

STUDENT RESEARCH TRIPS

In preparation for their final project in Russian culture (RUTR 2460), a group of Professor Edith Clowes's students visited an unusually fine collection of Stalin-era posters recently discovered at Sweet Briar's Pannell Museum. On Saturday, October 17, Maria Bakatkina, Jae Hyun Cho, Kimberly Daw, Amelia Flannery, Claudius Kim, and Tatyana Windsor drove with Professor Clowes to Amherst, Virginia. Ms. Karol Lawson, Director of the Art Collection and Galleries, generously gave her Saturday to display a rich selection of the posters and help the UVa students to orient themselves. After hours of scrutinizing and discussing the posters and their detailed iconography the students decided to focus on the posters' treatment of collectivization and industrialization of agriculture in the USSR that started in force in 1929. In winter and spring 2016 Sweet Briar will be mounting an exhibit of these posters, which, it is supposed, were collected by a SBC professor in the 1930s.

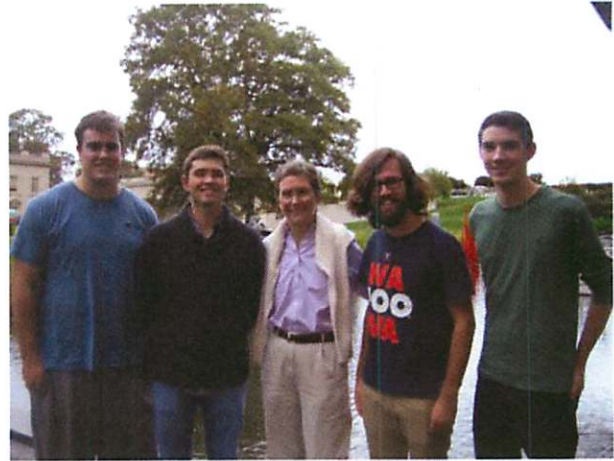


L to R: Kim Daw, Amelia Flannery, Jae Hyun Cho, Maria Bakatkina, Sweet Briar Professor of Art History, Kimberly Jones and daughter, Professor Clowes, Tatyana Windsor



Another group of students (John Barry, Ryan Doull, Alex Moree, David Peters) traveled to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts to visit their voluminous and rarely exhibited collections of Russian art and icons. Aided by Dr. Barry Shifman and Dr. Nancy Nichols, they viewed icons, avant-garde photography, and a rare and fascinating set of Russian Civil War-era cartoons by little-known artist, Vladimir Akimov. The group decided to focus their research on the Akimov cartoons, which offer scathing satire of the new Bolshevik government and for which the young artist was executed in August, 1922.

Both groups of students presented their findings the last week of classes.



L to R: Ryan Doull, Alex Moree, Professor Clowes, John Barry, David Peters

Russian Language Students Stage Dostoevsky's "The Crocodile"

At the end of the fall 2015 semester Russian language students in the UVA Slavic Department performed two stagings of F.M. Dostoevsky's story, "The Crocodile." The first performance was held at the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library in downtown Charlottesville on Saturday, December 5, and the second showing was staged in the Nau Hall auditorium on Wednesday, December 9. The actors recited their lines in Russian, but English subtitles also appeared above the stage for non-Russian speakers to follow the content of the play. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the UVA College Council and Slavic Department, both performances were free and open to the public. About 120 people attended the two shows, and the audience included university students, faculty, staff, and members of the local community.

First published in Dostoevsky's journal *Epokha* in 1865, the short story starts with the absurd situation of a civil servant, Ivan Matveevich, who is swallowed by a crocodile on exhibit in central St. Petersburg. After the crocodile's owner, an overly greedy German, refuses to cut the crocodile open to

save him, Ivan Matveevich decides that he is comfortably well off inside the crocodile and even has a captive public who will listen to his philosophizing on a variety of topics.

Sensing that the short farce and its humor would readily translate into a successful theatrical comedy, two PhD students in the Slavic Department, Michael Marsh-Soloway and Abigail Hohn, worked closely throughout the semester to adapt the satirical farce into a 15-page script. After visiting Russian-language classes at the start of the semester, they recruited an enthusiastic cast of 15 students, and commenced rehearsals on a weekly basis in late September. Michael and Abby co-directed the production. Two other students, Russian major Maria Bakatkina and PhD student Tierre Sanford, provided special instruction to the cast in phonetic articulation, grammar, and vocabulary.

Pictures and video recordings of the play will soon appear on the blog for the North American Dostoevsky Society, as well as the UVA Slavic Department website.



Back row: Abby Hahn, Thomas Fafara, Joseph Kubenashvili, Daniel van Horn, Pierre Santel, Michael Marsh, Soloway
 Front row: Maria Balatkina, Baylor Towne, Kimberly Daw, Madina Gazzeva, Elsa Schieffelin, Hyun Cho, Catherine Beazley,
 and the Crocodile, Carter Greene

Speakers

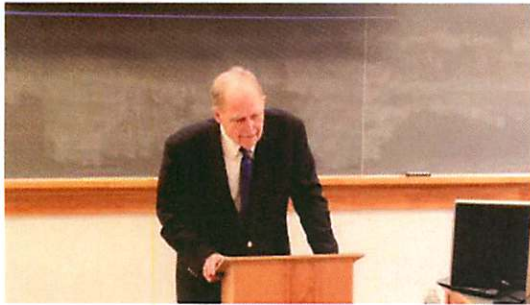


In early March leading Russian writer and cultural celebrity Tatyana Tolstaya spoke to a large audience of UVa fans about her life inside and outside of Russia. (picture by Tonya Utkina)

The Polish Speakers Series

The Center of Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREEES) in connection with the Slavic Department conducts the Polish Speakers Series sponsored by the American Institute of Polish Culture. The speakers have, thus far included, among others, former U.S. Ambassadors to Poland, Nicholas Rey and John Davis; former Polish Ambassador to the U.S. Przemysław Grudziński; eminent scholars, such as Piotr Wandycz, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Bogdana and John Carpenter, Ewa Thompson, John Micgiel, Timothy Snyder, Marci Shore, Clare Cavanagh, Beth Holmgren; writers, such as Adam Zagajewski, Piotr Sommer, and Andrzej Stasiuk.

In 2014, the Polish Speakers Series hosted the Honorable John R. Davis, former U.S. Ambassador to Poland in 1983–1990, who shared memories of his personal involvement in the process leading to the Polish transition out of communism in 1989.



In the spring of 2015, Professor Andrzej Nowak, an eminent historian at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and a noted Polish public intellectual, spoke about "Western Appeasement, Moscow, and Eastern Europe."



Current Undergraduate Majors and Minors

Majors:

Maria Bakatkina
 Brandon Bennett
 Alexander Caperton
 Jacob Cash
 Jae Cho
 Joseph Chong
 Mitchell Cleary
 Maya David
 Grey Davenport
 Nicholas Fenton
 Madina Gazieva
 Annie Greenberg
 Kira Guth
 Samantha Guthrie
 Rebecca Kientz
 Steven Lawrence

Laura Leddy
 Olivia Leggieri
 Carl Liles
 Catherine Liptak
 Michael McConnell
 Benjamin Moody
 Alexander Moree
 Joanna Morgan
 Nikolai Rabinowitch
 Elsa Schieffelin
 Sarah Schlichting
 Natalie Shea
 Alec Shklyar
 Hannah Southall
 Olivia Staff
 Poornima Sunder
 Adam Sykes

Kellianne Tomlinson
 Malia Uyehara
 David Vorona
 Anne Weidhaas
 Tatyana Windsor

Minors:

John Bakewell
 Katherine Coffelt
 Haley Hollen
 Victoria Holt
 George Lee III
 Elizabeth Mangin
 Mark (Ty) Vanover
 Matthew Wyatt

Undergraduate Student News

Maria Bakatkina won a Federal Work-Study Undergraduate Award that will allow her to gain experience as a research assistant in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Jo Constanz took Dr. Andrew Kaufman's course, *Books Behind Bars*, in Spring 2015. Through *Books Behind Bars* she writes that she glimpsed life in confinement in the Beaumont juvenile correctional facility. Jo learned so much

through this unlikely encounter; one fundamental realization is that we can build relationships even across radical lines of difference. She explains, "I was nervous going in that I would have nothing in common with the residents, or worse, my privilege as a college student would form an insurmountable barrier." "Fortunately," she continues, "my fears were unfounded; the Russian literature we read together formed a basis for finding and building connections, as well as respecting and understanding

our differences.” Jo continues to draw on her experience as a Sustained Dialogue moderator, leading challenging conversations about social issues at UVA. She is often reminded of the relationships the UVA students built with the residents, and is convinced that the same can be achieved here, on grounds, across gender, race, and socioeconomic divides.

Elsa Schieffelin has spent the majority of her UVA career split between the Slavic Department and student-run theater companies. These two interests have merged several times throughout the past three years. In the Slavic Department, she has participated in three Russian plays, including this semester’s production of *Крокодил*, which allowed her to explore her love of theater while expanding her knowledge of the Russian language and the culture of pre-revolutionary Russia. Unfortunately, these experiences are exceptions—often her interests collide. This semester, after spending a summer exploring St. Petersburg, immersed in the language and culture, Elsa intended to dedicate her last fall semester of undergraduate study entirely to

advancing her Russian. This plan derailed when she won a part in Spectrum Theatre’s *Title of Show*, an original musical, which, though an amazing experience, took her away from the department. Ironically enough, this was the show that has fully committed Elsa to a future studying Russian language and literature. True to its message, she has decided to follow her desires and will be applying for the 4 + 1 Masters Program at the University of Virginia, fully dedicating herself to the discipline she loves and to a department that has become like a home to her over these past four years.

Mark (Ty) Vanover is currently a REES minor. He spent this past summer in Budapest doing research for his Distinguished Major Program thesis on Austro-Hungarian art and architecture of the late 19th century, particularly as it relates to the opera houses in Vienna and Budapest. In addition to the research, he worked at the Hungarian National Gallery in the department of paintings.

An Undergraduate’s Adventures Abroad (or What I Did during My Summer Vacation) **Samantha Guthrie (2015)**

It started here at UVA, in the Newcomb Commonwealth Room, to be exact. In mid-November, CREEES (the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies) brought in Tedo Japaridze to give a talk titled “The Republic of Georgia: Trying to Become a Normal Democratic State.” With my background as both a Russian major doing research on the Caucasus, and a regional enthusiast on my own time, I naturally skipped class to attend the event. Mr. Japaridze served as Georgia’s ambassador to the USA, Canada, and Mexico from 1994 to 2002, Georgia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2003-2004, and currently holds a seat in the Georgian Parliament where he chairs the Committee on Foreign Relations. After Mr. Japaridze’s talk, I approached him and we had a brief conversation. A few conversations later, and with a good word from my professor (and a personal friend of Mr. Japaridze’s), Professor Yuri Urbanovich, I managed to win a summer internship at the Parliament of Georgia. Thanks to the generous support of the UVA Parents’ Committee Internship Grant, I spent the summer working in Tbilisi, Georgia on the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations.

In my capacity as an intern, I supported the Committee’s work by researching various topics, focusing on Georgia’s development as a European state in the post-Soviet space. I conducted a series of personal interviews with officials throughout the Georgian government. One of my main roles was to revise and edit official

correspondence, documents, and other materials prepared by the Committee, and to draft statements for the media. I worked with elected officials and staff members, advising on public policy issues and advocating for Georgia in international forums, such as the Council of Europe. One of the most interesting things I did was attend a NATO training course, where I met young professionals from across Europe. After the training course I wrote an extensive report that was distributed to the participants.



In my free time I was able to travel all over Georgia. It’s a small yet staggeringly diverse country with a burgeoning tourism industry. I took full advantage of the

inexpensive public transportation (long rides on hot, sweaty public minibuses (*marshrutkas*) were worth the money I saved, and provide great people watching opportunities!). I visited almost all the major tourist sites, and racked up a good mental database of tourist information along with a broad network of contacts. With my pockets stuffed full of *churchkhela* (candy made of nuts and dried grape juice, the best road-trip food) and homemade business cards, I walked into a meeting with the Head of the Department of International Relations at the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA). What was meant to be an informational meeting for me, gathering quotes and statistics for an article, turned into a unique cooperative partnership. I had noticed a few mistakes on the GNTA website and offered to correct them. They happily accepted, and in fact opened the entirety of both of their websites to me. The head web designer taught me the basics of the HTML code used to write the sites, and I not only edited existing web pages, but was also asked to create my own content!

I also decided to conduct a small, very informal, ethnographic study of Georgians, which was a great excuse to approach new people and start interesting conversations. Georgian culture is still at times baffling to me. As soon as I feel I have a grip on some aspect of the culture, another rears up and smacks me in the face—generally in the form of the shocked looks on people’s faces when I break some social taboo. Whether it’s throwing back shots of eye-watering *chacha* (grape liquor, Georgian moonshine) and yellow homemade wine in the northern village of Kazbegi, or not donning a face full of makeup after the gym, challenging social taboos became a sort of pastime. Living near a cluster of government buildings, I walked past several security guards on the way to and from work every day. One day I decided to shun all post-Soviet rules of street decorum and offered a small smile to the guard on my street: he was not receptive. Absolutely nothing. Deadpan. Not a twitch. I was not deterred by his frosty exterior, however, I knew I just needed to crack the shell (and ensure him I was neither a lunatic nor coming onto him). After about two weeks of my most non-threatening smiles, slowly moving from the barely pursed lips to full dental flash, the heavens bestowed their favor upon me. He smiled back. The stoic, severe, uniformed guard finally opened up and barred a mouthful of jagged incisors in the shyest, most honest (most hard-won) grin I can ever remember seeing.

Continuing the narrative of bending the rules, towards the end of the summer I decided to take a trip north, to the storied Northern Caucasus of Russia. I decided to take advantage of my multiple entry visa and satisfy my burning curiosity with a long awaited visit to the lands of Lermontov’s fantasy and the site of the most recent conflicts in Russia’s history. One of the most interesting things about this part of the world is the impression people have of it, the ideas, images, and beliefs they’ve formed at a distance, which they share with you as soon as they find out you’re considering a trip. The wildly varying recommendations, warnings, and

encouragements made choosing where exactly to go difficult and confusing, and in the end I decided to just be flexible and play things by ear. Stepping out of my apartment on the day of departure, armed with a pocketknife and a phrase book, my plans were sketchy at best. I had a list of potential cities, subdivided into names of restaurants, hotels, attractions, and must-eat foods that I scrapped together from other travelers’ blogposts, locals’ suggestions, and out-of-date Wiki Travel pages. I took a *marshrutka* from Tbilisi to Kazbegi, spent the night with friends there, and in the morning headed north. My host family’s oldest son, Dato, just graduated high school and is one of the few people in the village who speaks English. He drove me to the city center to get a taxi to the Russian border. While on the way there, Dato suggested that I just hitchhike to the border...I ignored my nervous conscience and decided that locals know best! I had never hitchhiked before, and this seemed like prime opportunity on a warm, sunny day in the friendliest country I’ve ever visited. So I found a comfortable slice of highway to stick out my thumb, and was soon picked up by a Polish couple who took me through the Georgian border into no-man’s land between the checkpoints. There, the car line began, snaking through the Dariali Gorge in an estimated four-hour wait. Waiting isn’t really my style, so I thanked my drivers and began walking to Russia. I drew confused stares from the cars full of passengers as a single woman walking through the line hauling an oversized backpack, but I soon tacked myself onto two Russian travelers doing the same thing. We squeezed into a battered black sedan right before the official border (since you’re only allowed to cross in a vehicle), and the generous driver took us all the way to Vladikavkaz.

I spent two days in the city, eating every Ossetian thing I could find and seeing the sights. The highlight of this trip was by far the people. I ate dinner alone only once! On my first day I met a young man from Makhachkala, Dagestan, who changed the trajectory of my trip. I had been planning on going to Nal’chik, Kabardino-Balkaria the next day, but after some exciting experiences in North Ossetia, the sleepy resort town of Nal’chik seemed so tame. This guy also really talked up Dagestan, promising me I had nothing to be afraid of. I wasn’t completely sold that I should go to Dagestan alone, but I wanted at least to leave myself the opportunity, so I decided to go to Grozny first, to leave me another day to decide whether to head south east to Dagestan or back west to Nal’chik.

While I was traveling, I didn’t usually tell people right away that I was American. It occasionally invites unwanted interest or anger. Although there were often awkward questions about being a spy, people joking about kicking me out of the car, or asking me how on earth I could live in a country with a black president, most people were genuinely interested in what I think of the Northern Caucasus and wanted to talk about life in America.

I ended up staying two days in Grozny, Chechnya’s beautifully restored, and uncomfortably artificial, crown

jewel. I met a few locals who gave me a whirlwind tour of the city, including a man who claimed to be President Ramzan Kadyrov's main English translator. The day finally came when I had to leave Russia, because I had delayed my exit several times, and now it was Monday and I was supposed to be back at work...so I got in a taxi (against my better judgment, because that taxi was extremely uncomfortable, and I got badly ripped off) and made it back into Georgia.

My last couple weeks in Tbilisi flew by with work, the GNTA project, last visits with friends, and soaking up the summer sun at Tbilisi Sea. Looking back, my experiences support my professional development through having gained a better understanding of Georgia

and the Caucasus, seeing the growth and development of Georgian democracy, and making professional connections. I also feel that I got to participate in the "bigger picture," working towards a truly valuable goal.

Although my time was short, I filled it with amazing people, wild adventures, a healthy dose of luck, buckets of Georgian wine, and, a favorite toast at the Georgian *supra*, "sweet memories." I believe that in some small way I was given the chance to contribute to global democracy and the international political system. I am so lucky to have been working in Tbilisi at such a dynamic time, when the future of the country and its alliances are at a critical juncture. I look forward to working this summer as an intern in the American Embassy in Tbilisi!

Graduate Student News

Michael Marsh-Soloway is currently hard at work on his dissertation, "The Ontological Necessity of All That is Imaginary: Mapping the Mathematical Consciousness of F.M. Dostoevsky." This past November, at the ASEES meetings in Philadelphia Michael presented a part of his dissertation chapter, "The Certainty of Uncertainty: $2+2=5$, the Underground Man, and Dostoevsky's Reconciliation of the Real and the Imaginary," on the panel, "Dostoevsky: Faith, Film, and Mathematical Discourses." In January, Michael will be presenting another part of his dissertation project at AATSEEL in a talk titled, "Dostoevsky and the Natural Philosophy of Classical Antiquity" on the panel, "Texts and Contexts: Tolstoy and Dostoevsky." He hopes to defend his dissertation in May, 2016.

Throughout the academic year, Michael has been teaching RUSS 3030 Intermediate Conversation. This past semester, he coordinated Russian tea and conversation, and co-directed the student theatrical adaptation of Dostoevsky's "The Crocodile" with Abigail Hohn. He is also currently participating in the Mellon Graduate Teaching Seminar for Excellence in the Humanities, "Pluralism in Society and the Academy," led by Alison Levine and Denise Walsh. In addition to his academic responsibilities,

Michael serves as the Graduate Student Manager in the Arts and Sciences Center for Instructional Technology (ASCIT).

Last Spring in one of her final successes as a UVA PhD student, **Jill Martiniuk** won the Huskey Research Competition for the Arts and Humanities.

Tierre Sanford is a second-year PhD student in Slavic Languages and Literatures. She recently received a 2015-2016 Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship at the University of Virginia. This past January, she also received a grant to participate in a week-long seminar entitled, "An Introduction to the Holocaust in the Soviet Union" at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. She spent this summer studying Yiddish language, literature, history, and culture at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Virginia. Tierre's research interests include Soviet literature, Russian women authors, and twentieth-century Russian Jewish literature.

Kathleen Thompson won the Slavic Languages and Literatures Departmental Award in the Graduate Teaching Awards Competition for 2014-15.

Alumni News

Crystal Alawi, CRS MA student who graduated in May, has landed a job as an Outreach Assistant with the UREG outreach team at UVA.

In January 2015 **Ben Bissell**, a 2013 graduate with a major in Russian Literature, started working for a geopolitical risk consultancy in Tel Aviv, Israel. Then in September 2015, he started a MSc program on China in Comparative Perspective at the London School of Economics.

In August 2015 **Jesse Cebulash** (BA, 2014) entered the PhD program in History at the University of Maryland.

This past June **Tanya Holland** (BA, 1987) travelled to Kazakhstan as part of the State Department's U.S. Speaker Program. Each year the program sends approximately 600 speakers around the globe to promote economic diversity and counter cultural stereotypes. In recognition of the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth Day, she conducted culinary master classes in Astana, Almaty, Shymkent, and Pavlodar. She spoke about southern cuisine and her experience as a female restaurateur, cookbook author, and African American. She was able to address audiences of young entrepreneurs, restaurateurs, chefs and community leaders through speaking events and televised cooking demonstrations. Her Russian study at UVA helped her to become familiar with the language and further combat the stereotype that Americans do not understand Kazakhstan and the greater region.



In October PhD alumnae, **Kathleen Thompson** and **Jill Martiniuk**, presented papers at the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Jill presented on "Insatiable Hunger: Russian Food and the Longing for Home in Contemporary Russian-American Literature." Kathleen spoke on "Identity as a Communicative Construct in Margarita Meklina's Short Stories."

Staff and Faculty News

The 2015 calendar year brought excitement and fun for **Edith Clowes**, including a great deal of conference planning and many speaking engagements. The year started with the most wonderful event, an invitation from our UVA Slavic alumna, Sasha Coleman-Johnson, to participate in Black History Month at Norfolk State University. Professor Clowes and Slavic PhD dissertation student, Michael Marsh-Soloway, drove to Norfolk and gave a symposium on "Investigating the Legacies of Cultural Exchange between African American and Russian Artists and Intellectuals" to an engaged and appreciative audience of Norfolk State faculty, students, and friends.



L to R: Sasha Johnson-Coleman, Edith Clowes, Michael Marsh-Soloway, colleague from Norfolk State University

In August Professor Clowes visited Japan for the first time. She presented a paper on the leading living writer in Russia today, Liudmila Ulitskaia, "Ulitskaia's Imagined Crimea," at the ICCEES conference in Matuhari, very near Tokyo.

A number of book chapters, mainly about Russian literature and philosophy, have appeared: «А.Ф. Лосев и польза повествовательной прозы, или: Рождение философии из духа музыки» [A. F. Losev and the uses of narrative, or: the birth of philosophy from the spirit of music], *A. F. Losev: Tvorchestvo, Traditsii, Interpretatsii*, ed. A. Takho-Godi, E. Takho-Godi (Moscow) deals with the narrative fiction by the major Soviet-era Orthodox philosopher, Aleksei Losev. Another article treats the impact of the eccentric early-twentieth-century Russian thinker Vasily Rozanov on Soviet underground writers ("Being Eccentric Like Vasili Rozanov: How Andrei Siniavskii-Terts and Venedikt Erofeev Resisted Socialist Realism," *A Convenient Territory': Russian Literature and the Edge of Modernity. Essays in Honor of Barry Scherr*, edited by J. Kopper and M. Wachtel). Finally, a new chapter on the Russian expressionist, Leonid Andreev, explores a different kind of literary realism ("The Mute Body: Leonid Andreev's Abject Realism in the Russian Fin de Siecle," *Russian Writers and the Fin de Siecle: The Twilight of Realism*, edited by K. Bowers and A. Kokobobo).

The end of 2015 will see the appearance of a multi-authored introduction to post-Cold-War area studies, *Area Studies in the Global Age: Community, Place, Identity*, edited by Professor Clowes and Professor Shelly Jarrett Bromberg (Latin American Studies, Miami University). More on that in next year's newsletter.

In other news Professor Clowes continues to serve as one of the editors of *Russian Review*, one of the three top US Russian-area journals. She is delighted to report that the papers delivered at the 2013 UVA symposium, "In the Shadow of Stalin: African-American Artists and Intellectuals in Soviet Russia," will be appearing in 2016 as a forum in *Russian Review*. (See *SLL@VA*, vol. 2, 2013.)

In August **Julian Connolly** attended the ICCEES world Slavic Studies conference in Makuhari, Japan. He presented a paper on "Portraits of the Patriarchy in Dostoevsky's Early Fiction." In October PhD alumnae, Kathleen Thompson and Jill Martiniuk, and Professor Connolly presented papers at the Mountain Interstate Foreign Language Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Professor Connolly gave a talk on "Nabokov's Male Narrators

and the Women They Desire."



Dr. Jill Martiniuk, Professor Connolly, Dr. Kathleen Thompson (photo by D. D. Diaz)

Mark Elson published two reviews since last year's newsletter and has been at work steadily on his research project on the complicated question of how form and meaning come together in the linguistic unit designated *word*. He currently has four papers in preparation, three of which relate to this topic. The fourth, on the history of palatalization in the Romanian verb system, incorporates Bulgarian (i.e., Slavic) data and attempts to show Bulgarian-Romanian interaction within the Balkan Areal Group, is close to being ready to submit for publication.

Andy Kaufman's book, *Give War and Peace a Chance: Tolstoyan Wisdom for Troubled Times*, came out in paperback in February with Simon and Schuster and was selected as a Finalist for the Library of Virginia Nonfiction Award. Dr. Kaufman was invited to speak on his book at the 2015 Virginia Festival of the Book. He was also interviewed on the book on With Good Reason Radio/NPR, September 12, 2015.

In May 2015 story about Dr. Kaufman's course, Books Behind Bars, was featured on RTR Russia 1, Russia's largest national television network May, 2015. When Svetlana Alexievich was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, Dr. Kaufman was interviewed on NPR's Here and Now.

Dr. Kaufman gave a number of lectures this year. He was the annual speaker for the Elizabeth B. Neatrou Russian Studies Lecture Series, James Madison University. He also gave the plenary lecture, "Transforming Lives With Russian Literature," at the Central American Russian Teacher's Association, Dallas, TX. Finally, he gave the keynote address, ³*Give War and Peace a Chance*,² delivered as part of the American Conversations series at the Hauenstein Center for

Presidential Studies, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Dariusz Tolczyk is working on a book focused on Western responses to Stalin's crimes. Meanwhile, his book in Polish, *Gulag w oczach Zachodu* (The Gulag Under Western Eyes), continues to elicit public discussion in Poland. Last spring, Professor Tolczyk was interviewed there by *Wiadomości.onet.pl*. In November 2014, he took part in a forum, "Neglected Writers of the Gulag," at the ASEES National Convention in San Antonio, and gave a talk, "Why Solzhenitsyn? The Belated Discovery of the Gulag in the West," at the Glasscock Center for Humanities, Texas A&M University. Prof. Tolczyk's article based on this talk appeared in *Gulag Studies* (a Polish translation of the article is forthcoming in a Polish intellectual journal *Arcana*). He also co-edited (with Piotr H. Kosicki of the University of Maryland) a collection of articles on the Katyn massacre of 22,000 Poles on Stalin's orders in 1940 and the far-reaching historical, political, cultural, and legal implications of this crime. Professor Tolczyk wrote the introductory essay, "Katyn: An Inconvenient Truth." The collection, entitled *Katyn, 75 Years On*, was

published in *East European Politics and Societies* (vol. 29, no. 4). Throughout last year, Professor Tolczyk continued serving on the International Board of Reviewers of *Studia Polityczne* (journal of the Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences) and the editorial board of *Gulag Studies*, as well as the Committee on Slavic Emigration of the International Committee of Slavists.

At UVA, he served on the Jefferson Fellows Graduate Selection Committee and helped to organize and moderate the Polish Speakers Series, a privately funded forum for international scholars speaking on Polish topics. Last year's speakers included, among others, Professor Andrzej Nowak, an eminent historian and public intellectual from the Jagiellonian University of Cracow (recently appointed by the President of Poland to head the Cultural Section of the National Development Council of the Republic of Poland). Professor Tolczyk also organizes the Slavic Colloquium – a new series of presentations of current research by our Department's faculty, advanced graduate students, and alumni. Last year, he introduced a new undergraduate course, *Facing Evil in the Twentieth Century*, which has attracted a great many students.

The Holiday Party!



Let Us Hear From You

We would love to know what is going on in your life! Please share with us your news, personal or professional.

Send your news to any of these addresses:

Sandy Kendrick (sjk2v@virginia.edu)

Dariusz Tolczyk (dt8n@virginia.edu)

Edith Clowes (eec3c@virginia.edu)

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