



Newsletter of the Department of Foreign Languages at Millersville University

MARCH 15, 2007

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

DID YOU KNOW?

Less than 8% of United States undergraduates take foreign language courses, and less than 2% study abroad in any given year. Foreign language degrees account for only 1% of undergraduate degrees conferred in the United States.

More than 200 million children in China are studying English, a compulsory subject for all Chinese primary school students. By comparison, only about 24,000 of approximately 54 million elementary and secondary school children in the United States are studying Chinese.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, only 31% of American elementary schools (and 24% of public elementary schools) report teaching foreign languages.

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Polyglot*, a newsletter designed for foreign language majors at Millersville University and alumni!

Message from the Chair

It is with great pleasure that I would like to introduce the spring 2007 newsletter to be produced on a semester basis by the department of foreign languages. In this fourth issue of *Polyglot*, you will meet one of the latest additions to the department: Professor Carmen Del Castillo-Zerbe, one of our Spanish adjuncts. You will learn about a special travel course to be taught by Professor Rivera-Hernández in Burgos, Spain this summer. You will read about some special departmental projects which took place during the spring of 2007 and accomplishments carried out by FL alumni. Club activities are also featured in this latest edition. Finally, you will be given a few tips by Spanish major Dan Ellis who is spending a semester studying abroad at the University of Valladolid, Spain.

Yours in cyberspace,

Christine Gaudry-Hudson

Welcome to the department, Professor Del Castillo-Zerbe!



Professor Carmen Del Castillo-Zerbe is a native speaker from Perú. She holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of San Martín de Porres, Lima, Perú and she has taken 30 graduate credits at Widener University School of Law. Back home, she worked as a judicial secretary, a civil attorney, a process curator as well as an Elementary English teacher! Let's welcome Professor Castillo-Zerbe as the newest addition to the department of foreign languages!

Study Abroad Special Opportunities:

From July 30- August 13, 2007, a special travel course taught by Dr. Rivera-Hernández will take place at the University of Burgos, Spain. Burgos is situated in the north center of Spain, and it is the birth place of el Cid Campeador whose burial site is the Cathedral of Burgos, one of the finest examples of Spanish



Gothic art. From tapas to toreadors, Picasso to Almodóvar, this class will explore many topics that make-up modern-day Spain. Among the topics to be discussed are the Spanish Civil War, the linguistic diversity in Spain, the importance of el Cid as a historical and literary figure, the state of the arts in

contemporary Spain, Spanish customs and, contemporary immigration issues. Students will enjoy several excursions to nearby historic and cultural sites, workshops on the food and culture of Spain. Guest speakers from the historic University of Burgos will offer special classes on local topics and themes.

Past and Current Events:

On Saturday, February 10, 2007, MU faculty, students and members of the local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French had the unique opportunity to meet one of the most promising young francophone authors of African origin, Cameroon author Patrice Nganang and ask questions about his novel, *Temps de chien (Dog Days)*, which received the prix Marguerite Yourcenar in 2001 and the grand Prix de l'Afrique noire in 2003. Professor Ambroise Kom, from the College of the Holy Cross, editor-in-chief of *Presence francophone* stated that this novel is "an amazing representation of African modernity. With its unique style, language, and rich creativity, this book indicates how Africans are struggling to culturally and symbolically appropriate the colonial heritage."



Babar the Elephant, the popular French children's fictional character created by author Jean Brunehoff, will become alive on March 29 when Professor Anita Renfroe plays the music of Francis Poulenc while Professor Gaudry-Hudson narrates the story in the Ford Atrium. This event is part of the Millersville University School of Humanities and Social Sciences' Noon Time Concert Series.



One of the most widely published Puerto Rican writers in the United States, Ms. Nicholasa Mohr, will come to Millersville University on March 30, 2007 to read from one of her books, *El Bronx*, which is a collection of stories about Puerto Ricans living in New York during the late 1940s. This event is co-sponsored by the English department and the Lancaster Literary Guild.

Clubs' Highlights:

In its vision statement, Millersville University offers to “partner with private, governmental, and non-profit sectors to serve the mutual needs and aspirations of the community and Millersville University.” French Club advisor Dr. C. Gaudry-Hudson was recently contacted by a representative from Willow Valley Retirement Communities. As part of a special community event to be held in May, they are transforming the entire upper level of the Cultural Center into a street in Paris. They plan to have the Eiffel Tower as you enter the building, backdrops of murals of buildings on the walls, a French restaurant in our ballroom, shops such as: a bakery, a crêperie, floriste, bistro, produce stand, and boutique for the guests to visit. They are going to have street music, a chalk artist, photographer, and strolling entertainment. Since they also want to have some "actor/actresses" to mingle and speak French to the guests, the French Club members students have offered to go and help out on this special day! German Club members are planning to go to Washington DC to visit the Holocaust Museum and have dinner at the Café Berlin near Union Station on Sunday, May 1. On March 3, Spanish Club members went to Philadelphia to see an exhibit of artifacts from Mesoamerica and Amazonia at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology.

Alumni Section:

Aurélie Young, who received her BA in French in August '05, accepted a position as Field Representative for the University of Phoenix (Overseas Military Campus Europe). She is working on a Master of Education which she hopes to complete

by June of 2008. Spanish alumni Michael Erdman ('03) and Shannon Lawrence ('05) graduated from MU with Latin Minors and they were both hired as Latin teachers at Central Dauphin School District in Harrisburg. They did a phenomenal job and have doubled the enrollment in a year! Finally, German alumnus Kevin Kreiser, who graduated in December 05 with a double major in German and Computer Science, was offered a teaching assistantship and fellowship by the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Delaware.

Studying Abroad: Some Suggestions by Spanish Major Dan Ellis:

One week: that is how much time you have left before your study abroad experience begins. You are probably both excited and terrified as you try to focus on packing the right things and making sure to say goodbye to all of your family and friends. Despite what you may be thinking, that *I cannot believe that I am actually going to do this*, I am here to tell you that things will work out more than you know. Before I studied in Valladolid, Spain for the semester, I thought the same thing. As someone that has already been through the experience, I humbly submit my suggestions that will help you have an amazing study abroad experience. Hopefully they will also help alleviate some of those worries you may already be having now.

1. Keep an open mind. This is a pretty obvious suggestion that I am sure everyone will give you, but you would be surprised how difficult it is to follow. You are going to be thrown into a different culture, which has some norms that will be very different from your own. Exhibit A: the sub, *el bocadillo*. The first time I had a sub in Spain was when my host family packed it for me for my first trip to the city of Segovia. Simple enough, right? You would think so, but they packed the meat and cheese-filled sandwich the night before and left it out on the counter overnight with no refrigeration. Such a thing did not seem at all strange to them. However, imagine the next day on the bus when the Americans look at each other with a great deal of squeamishness as most of their families did the same to them. Would it surprise you that I did not get sick from this dubious looking sub? I can assure you that I thought I would most definitely fall ill. But, I am glad I kept an open mind because my stomach was growling by lunch.

2.) Bring peanut butter. I wish someone would have told me this before I had left for Valladolid. All I can say is that many of the Americans in the program, myself included, began to have massive cravings for peanut butter by the time March hit. When asked to list favorite foods before my trip to Spain, I never would have thought to put peanut butter on the list. However, when it costs over 7 euros (almost \$10) for a tiny jar at the local *Corte Inglés*, you will wish you had some to put on anything. I cannot tell you how overjoyed I was to receive Reese's Peanut Butter Cups for my birthday from home, though they obviously

did not last long.

3.) Accept that you will make mistakes. It is quite difficult living in a foreign country at first when the language is not your own. It will come as no surprise that, during your stay, mistakes will be made when speaking the language. Though it will be very frustrating at times, embrace such mistakes as learning experiences. I made such a mistake when I first got off the plane in Madrid. After going through customs I met up with the rest of my program group and a representative from the university. We were all exhausted from the long flight, but the woman actively engaged us in friendly conversation. I was very confused when she started asking me how my grandfather was, *el abuelo*. My quizzical look and my response "¿Abuelo?" made her smile. No, she was not concerned about my family as much as about my flight, *el vuelo*. Mind you, I realize it seems like a dumb mistake to make, but I am sure you will have an experience such as this in your time abroad. However, it is nothing to worry about because you can learn from it and the ensuing smile or laughter is a great way to break the ice.

Hopefully my stories of *bocadillos*, peanut butter, and flight confusion will help you get just a little bit more out of your study abroad experience and feel more comfortable before it even begins. It truly is an experience in every way: you will have the chance to learn a new language, meet people from around the world, and most important of all, have fun! Yes, I do remember the challenges of my time abroad but I cannot tell you how much I miss walking through the streets of Valladolid and eating *tapas*. I never grew tired of meeting new people and exploring the many amazing and very different parts of Spain. So, for all of you that are ready to depart on such an adventure, have a great trip! ¡*Buen viaje!*

