

## CAS President's Report, 2014

15 May 2014

*Address by Dr. Megan Swift, President of the Canadian Association of Slavists*

Dear Colleagues, Members and Friends of the Canadian Association of Slavists,

This year we mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Association of Slavists – our diamond anniversary. Congratulations to one and all on this important milestone. This is also the last year of my second term as President of the Canadian Association of Slavists and it has been a great pleasure to serve this organization. Over the past four years I have seen numerous changes in our profession and our national organization, many of them positive. I am happy to report that thanks to the initiative of David Schimmelpenninck (Brock U), CAS will begin awarding an annual Book Prize beginning in 2015 that recognizes outstanding scholarship in our field. Many thanks to the other members of the book prize committee, Nigel Raab (Loyola Marymount U) and Gust Olson (Independent Scholar), for making this initiative a reality.

A second area of growth is in our outreach to graduate students. While CAS has always been exemplary as a mentoring organization, sadly, the elimination of the SSHRC travel grant program has meant that we are not able to offer travel subsidies to our annual conference in the way that we have traditionally done. This of course has had a deleterious effect on graduate students' ability to attend and present at our annual conference. To counterbalance this new financial reality, graduate student Dorota Lockyer (PhD candidate, UBC) has been working on a series of initiatives to improve graduate student participation and presence in CAS. These measures include a "Graduate Student Corner" webpage/blog, housed on the CAS/CSP website at <https://casgradcorner.wordpress.com/tag/cas-graduate-student>.

Dorota has also organized a round-table for graduate students at our annual conference at Brock U on May 25 from 1 pm to 2:20 pm with invited speakers Drs. Volha Isakava, Svitlana Kryz and Victor Taki. They will be discussing topics pertinent to grad students, including the job search, CV/resume building and academic publishing (insider and outsider perspectives). The event will be also hosted as a video conference via Skype for those who aren't able to make it to the conference this year. Finally, a Twitter account for CAS graduate students has been established (@CASgrads). It is thanks to generous and capable colleagues like David Schimmelpenninck and Dorota that CAS continues to be an innovative organization.

Alongside these pieces of good news, while scanning the pages of this newsletter, I note that Slavic Studies in Canada continues to go through a period of institutional change and retrenchment, with departments amalgamated under different names, and positions closed after retirements. At the same time, these pages are full of reports of research awards, fellowships,

new publications and engagement with the public. Our profession was launched back onto the front pages with the events in Ukraine of November 2013, events that continue to astound us. It is clear that Slavic scholars across the country became the sober commentators and even-minded analysts of this unfolding situation in a plethora of interviews, conferences, workshops and public talks.

Our national journal, *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes*, continues to uphold the highest standards of scholarship and peer review and recently published Vol. 55, Issues 3-4 (Sept.-Dec. 2013). Many thanks to our hard-working editor Heather Coleman (U Alberta) and our Assistant Editor Svitlana Kryz (U Alberta/MacEwan U) for their superb work on the journal (which continued valiantly even through Heather's broken wrist!) In response to increasing financial pressures on in-house publishing, Heather is currently guiding the journal through a move to a publishing partnership with Taylor and Francis, a division of Routledge, expected to begin in 2015. This change will assure financial stability and greater international reach, while preserving the academic integrity of the journal.

It is with sadness that we mark the recent passing of three respected Slavists. Gary Howard Toops (1954-2013, Wichita State University) was a long-time CAS member and a book review editor for language and linguistics at CSP for the period of 2006-2011. Christopher John Godfrey Turner (1935-2013, McMaster U and University of British Columbia) was a long-time CAS member and distinguished author of monographs on Lermontov, Chekhov and Tolstoy. Jaroslav Rozumnyj (1925-2013, University of Manitoba) was a respected scholar of Ukrainian poetry, prose and film, and a teacher of Ukrainian literature and folklore. We salute these scholars for their contributions to our field, and at the same time we honour the contributions of our young guard, in particular the winners of our CAS essay contest:

Our winner in the graduate category is Zsofia Surjan (U Victoria) for her paper "Fertility Treatment in Sixteenth-Century Hungary: The Correspondence of a Count, His Wife and a Physician" (nominated by Dr. Mitchell Hammond, Department of History, U Victoria).

Our winner in the undergraduate category is Antony Kalashnikov for his honours thesis paper "Party Ideology in the Late Soviet Period: an Althusserian Analysis" (nominated by Dr. David Marples, History & Classics, U Alberta).

Congratulations to both winners, and many thanks to our jury this year – Volha Isakava (U Ottawa), Norman Pereira (Dalhousie U) and Nigel Raab (Loyola Marymount U).

Finally, I would like to thank all of my colleagues on the CAS Executive who have made my four years as President such a rewarding experience. Jeff Sahadeo (Carleton U) attended Federation meetings on my behalf in Ottawa and Montreal this year. Maryna Romanets served in the important position of Secretary-Treasurer. Bohdan Nebesio (Brock U) and David Schimmelpenninck (Brock U) organized this year's annual conference in St. Catharines, Ont., which meets May 24-26. Volha Isakava (U Ottawa) and Arkadi Klioutchanski (U Ottawa) have

graciously agreed to organize next year's annual conference in Ottawa, Ont. Book review editors Alison Rowley (History and Political Science), Christina Kramer (Language and Linguistics) and Mark Conliffe (Literature and the Arts) generously contributed their time. My successor will certainly enjoy working with such a dedicated team of professionals.

With every good wish,

Megan Swift