

CAS President's Report, 2011

12 May 2011

Dear Colleagues, Members and Friends of the Canadian Association of Slavists (CAS),

Slavic studies is thriving in Canada thanks to the hard work and talents of all of us who are teaching, researching and publishing in this rewarding – but often challenging – profession. Recently I undertook a snapshot of Russian Language Programs across Canada and it confirmed that we are, at the core of many of our programs, strong and healthy. Over the past three years, at universities from Memorial to UVic, student enrolments have in general remained steady and in many cases increased. This is despite the fact that we are in the middle of an era of increasing fiscal restraint. We are all doing more with less, and we are continuing to do it well. So, congratulations to all of us, those bringing a smile to students' faces, those staying up late to finish marking those assignments or complete that article. Your efforts have, collectively, ensured our on-going place at the heart of the humanities.

As I looked over the items contained in this newsletter, I was proud to see how many of our colleagues have received accolades for outstanding teaching and research this year, as well as the impressive number of recently-published or forthcoming books and articles. These successes go a long way to maintaining the profile of Slavic studies in the academic world and setting a high standard for our graduate students and young colleagues entering an increasingly challenging job market. The Canadian Association of Slavists continues to be at the cutting edge in a number of areas, including the 'greening' of our journal, which has been available in a paper-free version for several years and, recently, the high-profile role of women Slavists in many of the top offices of our executive, as well as at the helm of Canadian Slavonic Papers.

In March of this year I had the genuine pleasure of attending the Recognizing and Imagining the Slavic in Culture, Society and Language conference, hosted at McGill University by the newly-formed Quebec Network of Slavic Studies. It was inspiring to see how graduate students from McGill, Concordia and UQAM had come together to create a resource for themselves, and how pleasantly surprised they were to see the overwhelming response to their conference as presenters came from across Canada, and many flew in from France. This conference and the round-table talk that I participated in on Current and Future Prospects of Slavic Studies in Quebec and across Canada highlighted several important ideas for me. Our greatest strength is in sharing information. Too often we feel isolated in the challenges that we meet at our home universities, challenges that are, most likely, happening in many other places. We need to take every opportunity to help each other through possible obstacles by sharing strategies and success stories. The last ten years has been a time of transition and sometimes anxiety as departments have changed names and sizes. Slavic studies now finds itself housed under a plethora of titles

(modern languages, cultural studies, Eurasian studies, etc.) But the core of what we do remains the same. And the importance of what we do remains the same.

Of course our greatest opportunity for sharing ideas comes at our annual conference of the Canadian Association of Slavists, hosted this year 28-30 May at the beautiful red-bricked University of New Brunswick. Many thanks go to Allan Reid for putting the program together and organizing what promises to be a memorable Maritime lobster feast for the banquet. Our CAS treasurer, Bohdan Nebesio, has once again ensured that the organization's finances remain solid and that as many graduate students as possible will be flying towards Fredericton with travel grants. Congratulations to Heather Coleman for maintaining the high standards of our journal in the first year of her editorship. Canadian Slavonic Papers has been well-served by the talents of our hard-working book review editors, Mark Conliffe (Literature and Art), Alison Rowley (History and Classics), Gary H. Toops (Language and Linguistics until 2011) and Sarah Turner (Language and Linguistics beginning 2011). Many thanks go to Svetlana Krys, whose official title is Assistant Editor for Canadian Slavonic Papers, but who is in reality indispensable in a large number of areas in this association. I am grateful to Zina Gimpelevich, our Past President, for giving some much-needed pieces of advice when she rightfully deserved to be enjoying the peace and quiet of her past-presidency. Elena Baraban once again did a wonderful job of editing our newsletter. And many thanks to Alison Rowley, Olga Mladenova and Natalia Pylypiuk, the members of our CAS essay contest jury. It is my pleasure to announce that, although there is no winner this year in the graduate category, two undergraduate essays were of such high quality that the committee has declared a tie:

Mr. Stephen Ejack (University of Alberta) "A Brief Critical Analysis of the War Industries Committees' Political Activities: May – September 1915." Nominated by Prof. Heather Coleman.

Mr. Terrance David Reid (University of Waterloo) "Laying the Theoretical Groundwork of Biomechanical Technique: Understanding the origins and theories of 'Biomechanics'." Nominated by Prof. Zina Gimpelevich.

The winners will receive a year-long subscription to Canadian Slavonic Papers and receive up to \$250 in travel subsidies for travel to the 2012 annual conference, which will be hosted at the University of Waterloo.

Respectfully submitted with warmest wishes to all,

Megan Swift