

German-Canadian Studies Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 3

February 2005

For Your Calendar:

Geschichten-
erzählerin
Katharina
Ritter aus München
präsentiert Fabeln,
Legenden, Anekdo-
ten, Sagen, Mär-
chen und andere
Geschichten am
**Mittwoch, den 2.
März 2005, um
20:00 Uhr, im
Faculty and Staff
Club, Wesley Hall
(4. Stock), Univer-
sität Winnipeg.**
Eintritt frei. Voran-
meldung bis Mon-
tag, den 28. Febru-
ar 2005 unter 786-
9009 oder
gcs@uwinnipeg.ca.

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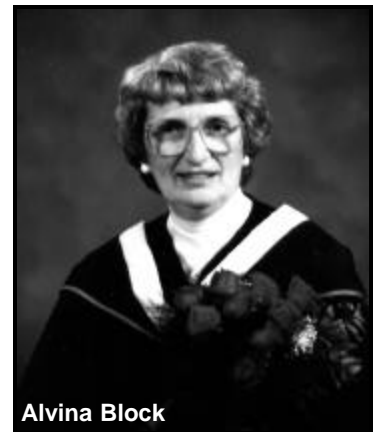
Scholarship Recipients

In 2004, three doctoral students received German-Canadian Studies Research Scholarships for their outstanding work in the field. Two undergraduate students received GCS Essay Awards, two University of Winnipeg undergraduate students received GCS Scholarships, and one Winnipeg high school received a GCS Research Grant. Here, some of them tell you who they are and what they study.

"Hello! My name is **Alvina Block**. My great-great grand parents, all four couples, immigrated to the United States in the 1870s with the first wave of Mennonites who left Russia. They came because they feared their privileges, given them by Catherine the Great, were about to be taken away from them – military exemption and freedom to run their own educational pro-

grams. Russian Mennonites had come from Prussia in the late eighteenth century, where they spoke German. It is almost 200 years since my ancestors left Prussia; however, I can still read and speak German, which has been invaluable to me in my research.

I graduated with a B.A. in English from the University of Winnipeg in 1991. In 1998, I received an M.A. in



Alvina Block

Canadian History from the
(Continued on page 2)

Ich war einmal eine...

...Prinzessin, hübsch und fein von Gestalt, Tochter eines Ritters und einer Königin," beginnt die Münchner Geschichtenerzählerin Katharina Ritter ihre phantastische Lebensgeschichte. "Von allen geliebt, wuchs ich bei Hofe auf, spielte mit dem Gesinde oder durchstriefte die grünen Wälder meiner Heimat - ich war ein glück-

liches Kind.

Doch eines Tages begann meine Erziehung. Ich sollte fleißig sticken und werken, wollte aber lieber tanzen und schwatzen den ganzen Tag. Das galt als ungehörig...

Irgendwann aber begann ich, mir mehr als einen Prinzen zu wünschen und zog, blutjung noch, hinaus in die Fremde

um mein Glück zu suchen.

... Dann lernte ich, mich zu verwandeln und zu zaubern und Geschichten zu erzählen und...

solang' ich nicht gestorben bin erzähle ich sie weiter..."

Ritter befindet sich zur Zeit auf einer vom Goethe-

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Scholarship Recipients 2004

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Joint Masters Program of the UofW and the University of Manitoba. My area of interest is missions to aboriginal peoples. For my master's thesis, I did extensive archival research on George Flett, a man of mixed ancestry who became a missionary to the Ojibwa at the Keeseekoowenin Reserve near Elphinstone, Manitoba. My thesis was titled "George Flett, Native Presbyterian Missionary: 'Old Philosopher'/Rev'd Gentleman."

My PhD dissertation is a comparison of American General Conference Mennonite missionaries to the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Hopi with Canadian Bergthaler Mennonite Pioneer Mission to bicultural peoples around Lake Winnipeg and to the Ojibwa and Cree of northern Manitoba. The American

mission began in 1880 while the Mennonite Pioneer Mission did not begin until 1948. Had attitudes toward Native peoples changed or were goals still the same? Although these two missions were closely connected and communicated well with each other, my initial findings are that Mennonite Pioneer Mission began with much the same attitudes as their American counterparts. Many changes have taken place since the 1880 and 1948 beginnings. Now Mennonites recognize the importance of dialogue and acceptance on a level playing field with Native peoples, but financial constraints in Men-

nonite Church Canada are seriously curtailing missions projects." (Alvina Block received a German-Canadian Studies Ph.D. Research Scholarship).

Patrick Farges was born in France in March 1974. He grew up bilingual (French and German). After receiving Master's degrees in Economics and German Studies he specialized in German Literature and Culture, and passed the French national degree in higher teaching ('Agrégation') in 1998. The following year, Farges was appointed as lecturer of French at the University of Toronto (St. Michael's College). After working at the French Embassy in Berlin for two years, he spent a year as a visiting scholar at the University of California (Berkeley). Since 2001, Farges has been a PhD-candidate in German Studies at the University of Paris 8 under the academic supervision of Prof. Michael Werner (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*). His doctoral project was started in Toronto and is centred on the acculturation and identity recomposing of German-speaking exiles to Canada after 1933. This research addresses a double agenda: Firstly, studying German-speaking exiles that fled Nazism in Europe and permanently settled in Canada, and secondly, reconstructing Canadian society's response to that specific immigration. It is particularly centred on mechanisms of cultural transfer and the building of a (trans)national dis-

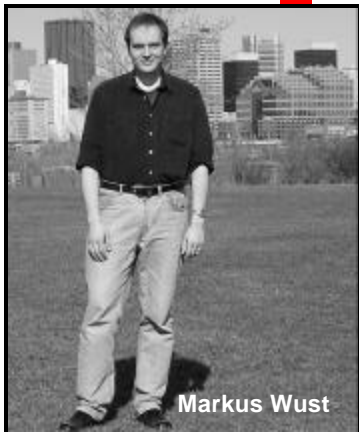
course, as well as other issues commonly discussed in migration studies, such as community-based integration, the construction of memory, and inter-generational transmission. (Patrick Farges received a German-Canadian Studies Ph.D. Research Scholarship).

Markus Wust: "Following a long-time interest in Canada that was fostered by hearing and reading about the country as a child, I first came here in 1999 to pursue a PhD in German literature at the University of Alberta after finishing a Master's degree in the same field at the University of Georgia. One factor that I found particularly fascinating was the peculiar Canadian landscape: a land area second in size only to that of Russia with a population less than half of that of Germany, boasting vast expanses of forests and open prairie land, the towering Rocky Mountains, and the particularly harsh winters. This landscape and its depiction in German-language literature became the focus of my dissertation with the working title "Mythologies of Nature: The Taming of the West by German-Canadian-Immigrant Writers" which I am currently writing under the supervision of Dr. Raleigh Whiting. After a short survey of the immigration to Canada by German-speaking settlers, I turn to an analysis of the argumentative strategies employed by writers of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century immigration propaganda to persuade these immi-

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Patrick Farges



Markus Wust

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grants of the feasibility of coming to Canada and, in most cases, finding a future as farmers. Given the general image of Canada as a barren, snow-covered wasteland, it was imperative for these writers to create a positive and occasionally idealized picture of the environmental conditions Canada had to offer. The third part of my thesis discusses the literary response of German writers to the challenges immigrants faced after being confronted with the landscape, and focuses on works by the German-Canadian writer Else Seel as well as the German authors Ilse Schreiber and A.E. Johann, who wrote extensively on Canada and its German immigrants. (Markus Wust received a German-Canadian Studies Ph.D. Research Scholarship).

Johanna Felske: "I am a

twenty-two-year-old undergraduate student at the University of Ottawa in Political Science. I am originally from Calgary, AB, and as a result of my family heritage, I am deeply interested in the experiences of German speaking immigrants to the prairies. My great grandparents, Gottlieb and Johanna Felske, were Germans from the Russian area of Volhynia who immigrated to Nokomis, Saskatchewan at the turn of the 20th century. I believe that it is important to examine the unique cultural heritage of these early Canadians in order to gain insight into their experiences as immigrants to the prairies and to preserve their legacy as Germans from Russia. My essay 'The Germans from Russia and the Canadian Prairies' discusses the immigration and settlement of the Germans from Russia as a cultural

group to the western Canadian prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is my hope that my essay will contribute an interesting glimpse into the geographical dispersion of the Germans from Russia, and their specific cultural experience as immigrants to the Canadian prairies. The essay was originally written for a geography course at the University of Ottawa, entitled 'Ca-nada and Its Regions,' instructed by Christopher D. Storie." (Johanna Felske received a German-Canadian Studies Undergraduate Essay Award).

For more information on the Chair in German-Canadian Studies **Fellowship Program**, please visit our website.



Johanna Felske

Review: *The Germans We Trusted*

Pamela Howe Taylor. *The Germans We Trusted. Stories of Friendship Resulting From the Second World War*. Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2003. 208 pp. ISBN: 0-7188-3034-2

This is a collection of 36 interviews with British, Canadian, and American men and women about the friendships they formed with German prisoners-of-war during and after World War Two. Each story is between one and 13 pages long, and most stories are illustrated with photographs (many of which are too

small and poorly reproduced). The only story from Canada tells about the relationship between a young Mennonite and two German POWs. George Harder from Manitoba was a conscientious objector and spent part of the war in an Alberta labour camp. As a kitchen-helper, he met two POWs. 16-year-old Erich was the camp's youngest POW while Hans Meyer, an ocean liner captain, was the oldest. As an appreciation of their friendship Erich gave George a ship in a bottle while Hans gave George the only thing he

had saved from his ship—a mattress cover. George "has preserved both these gifts with great care for nearly sixty years" (p. 25).

Taylor provides no information on POW-camps in Canada, nor does she explain why this one Canadian story (and four US stories) is included in a book that is essentially about the British experience. Nevertheless, this book can make for a heartwarming read about the importance of friendship between enemies during times of war.

"As the oldest of the 400 internees, Captain Meyer was permitted to wander outside the prison camp, having given his word of honour that he would not try to escape."

Contact

Alexander Freund
Chair in German-Canadian Studies
The University of Winnipeg
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3B 2E9

Phone: 204-786-9009
Fax: 204-774-4134
Email: gcs@uwinnipeg.ca

In person: My office at the University of Winnipeg is on the 3rd floor of Ashdown Hall: 3A37

We're online:
<http://germancanadian.uwinnipeg.ca>

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies was established in 1989 with grants from the Secretary of State's Program for Canadian Ethnic Studies and a group of private philanthropists within the German-Canadian community of Winnipeg. It is located in, and affiliated with, the History Department at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Chair promotes the teaching of, and research into the history and culture of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada. It interacts with the German-Canadian community in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the rest of Canada through public lectures and the newsletter. The Chair promotes regional, national and international research through conferences, grants and publications.

Editor/Producer: Alexander Freund

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Unless otherwise stated, all articles were written by Alexander Freund
Submissions of articles, news, reports, and reviews as well as artwork and photos for publication in this newsletter are welcome.

Geschichtenerzählerin

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Institut organisierten Nord-amerikatournee. André Oberlé (German Studies, UW) organisierte die beiden Ritter-Aufführungen (eine für SchülerInnen) in Winnipeg.

Ritter erzählt "Kindern so gern, weil die kein höfliches Publikum sind", und Erwachsenen, "weil die sich dann doch irgendwann gern verzaubern lassen." Ihre Geschichten, die sie gerne im "alemanischen Dialekt" vorträgt, sind "skurril, dunkel und schräg."

Am **Mittwoch, den 2. März 2005 um 20:00 Uhr**, verzaubert Ritter im **Faculty and Staff Club, Wesley Hall (4. Stock), Universität Winnipeg**. Der Eintritt ist frei, aber



Ritter: Verzaubern

es wird um Voranmeldung bis Montag, den 28. Februar 2005 unter 786-9009 oder gcs@uwinnipeg.ca gebeten.

Hörproben von Ritter gibt es im Internet unter www.geschichtenerzaehlerin.de.

Vergangene Veranstaltungen...

Am 25. Januar 2005 gab Prof. Dr. **Christiane Harzig**, Preisträgerin des John G. Diefenbaker Awards (Canada Council), eine sehr gut besuchte Voresung zum Thema "Arbeitsmärkte, Liebhaber und schmutziges Geschirr: Die Dienstmädchenprogramme in der kanadischen Nachkriegseinwanderung." Sie erklärte die Zusammenhänge zwischen Einwanderungsprogrammen für "domestics" aus den europäischen Displaced Persons-Lagern, aus Europa, und aus der Karibik. Deutlich wurde, dass die Dienstmädchenpro-

gramme die kanadische Einwanderungspolitik maßgeblich beeinflusste.

Prof. Harzig ist im laufenden akademischen Jahr im Fachbereich Geschichte der Universität Winnipeg angesiedelt. Sie forscht zur Zeit zur Geschichte weltweiter Migrationen von Hausangestellten und Kindermädchen.

Der Vortrag fand im Rahmen der vom Chair in German-Canadian Studies veranstalteten Öffentlichen Vorlesungsreihe statt, die jedes Semester zwei bis drei öffentliche Veranstaltungen organisiert.

