

# UW LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT

Volume 5, Issue 1  
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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Our Autumn quarter was busy, as usual, and Winter will be equally or more so with our visiting candidates for a new sociolinguistics position.

Faculty presented at various national and international conferences, while here at home we named Alicia Wassink the new Nostrand Professor, we nominated Kathryn Speranza for the Distinguished Staff Award and we nominated Emily Bender for the

Distinguished Teaching Award.

Our generous Friends of Linguistics continue to support the Department in the following areas:

- our general fund, which contributes to lectures, professional travel and other enhancements to our grad students and faculty
- the Graduate Student Fellowship, an endowment from which we will recognize graduate student excellence in



research this year

- the Nostrand Professorship, which furthers the research of the named professor

We are once again especially grateful to Frances

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## WASSINK NAMED NOSTRAND PROFESSOR

The Department, the College and Nostrand contributors were thrilled to celebrate the naming of the second Nostrand Professor, Alicia Wassink, at a reception and lecture on December 1, 2006 in the Petersen Room of the Allen Library. The Nostrand Endowed Professorship in language and cultural competence is a \$500,000 commitment by Howard and Frances Nostrand that will fund the research of Professor Wassink



Frances Nostrand and Alicia Wassink

Photo by Shane Fricks

while furthering the vision of the Nostrands. Frances made an additional donation of \$35,000 on the occasion of the celebration as a memorial to Howard. The Department is extremely grateful to Frances for her continuing generosity.

At the celebration, the audience first enjoyed a luncheon that included a wide range of imported cheeses, wines and soft drinks.

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## MEET BARBARA CITKO

Now in her second year, syntactician Barbara Citko has brought an added enthusiasm to the syntax division. Here she provides some background on her life and work.

As one of the newest members of the Department, I would like to reflect on my first year at UW and to share with you briefly how I became a linguist.

I grew up in Gdynia, Poland, during what I consider one of the most interesting periods in Poland's history. Gdynia, like Gdansk, its perhaps better known neighbor, also had a huge shipyard, which meant that the Solidarity movement in the eighties was very strong. Both of my parents were members of Solidarity; my father worked in the shipyard, which meant that strikes, martial law, curfews, food rations, censorship, were very close to home, not just things you read or heard about on the news.

Few people might know that Gdynia and Seattle are sister cities, engaged in various types of cultural, intellectual, academic and economic exchanges. If you ever visit Gdynia, you will find a very nice sculpture of Pacific salmon, which was a gift to Gdynia from Seattle. The rumor has it that Gdynia reciprocated by donating a sculpture of two herrings to Seattle, but I have yet to locate their whereabouts here. Maybe the Fremont troll had something to do with it?

How did I get interested in linguistics? I think I took a road many linguists took, which is via an interest in foreign languages. I started studying English when I was quite young, which is how I got interested in crosslinguistic variation, and the idea that there are well defined limits to this varia-

tion. I ended up majoring in English philology as an undergraduate in Poland, where I first got exposed to Chomskyan linguistics. I still remember my first syntax class and how fascinated I was by the subadjacency principle, which unified what seemed like a random set of very specific island conditions on wh-movement.

And, as they say, the rest is history. I came to the States in 1994



to pursue a graduate degree in linguistics, which culminated with a PhD from Stony Brook University in 2000. My interests have since evolved, but various types of A-bar dependencies have remained one of my core research areas. My dissertation, for example, dealt with free relatives, which in many (but interestingly, not all) respects resemble wh-questions.

After graduating from Stony Brook, I spent one year as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Utah, one year at the

University of Connecticut and two years at Brandeis University. Even though these short-term appointments were all great experiences, I think I was ready to settle down, and was very happy to be joining UW's Linguistics Department.

Everyone in the Department has been very welcoming and supportive, and the Department felt like a home within days. The University, as a whole, has also been a very welcoming place for new faculty.

One of the most memorable experiences during my first year was the Faculty Tour, which is a week long tour of the State of Washington organized by the University and designed specifically for new faculty. During the tour, we had a chance to experience, first hand, how beautiful and diverse the State is, and got to see what backgrounds our undergraduate students come from. It was particularly enlightening to see how different eastern Washington is from western Washington. I am positive that the perspective I gained on the tour will inform my teaching and research in years to come.

Visit the Department website at  
<http://depts.washington.edu/lingweb/>

## STUDENT NEWS

### GRADUATE DEGREES EARNED

Since our last update in June 2006, the following students have earned MA degrees. "CLMA" indicates students in the new Professional Master's in Computational Linguistics program.

**Albert Bertram** CLMA "An applica-

tion of a connectionist cognitive model to word sense disambiguation"

**David Bullock** CLMA "TreeTran: A tool for visual selection and testing of transfer rules for machine translation"

**Bill McNeill** "Segmentation and feature selection for conversational speech syntactic language models"

**Achim Ruopp** CLMA "Finding and evaluating structured bilingual corpora on the Web"

### PAPERS PRESENTED (see also LSA presentations, p. 6)

At the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany.

**Scott Drellishak** "The Grammar Matrix: Computational syntax and typology," in October

**Steve Moran** "From documentation to computation," in September

## FACULTY NEWS

**Emily Bender** is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in Computer Science and Engineering as of September. In November she gave a keynote talk at Texas Linguistic Society: "The Grammar Matrix: A crosslinguistic resource to promote grammar engineering for linguistic hypothesis testing."

**Ellen Kaisse** became Divisional Dean of Arts and Humanities in April, nine months after being appointed Acting Divisional Dean in that position. Kaisse joined the UW faculty in 1976 and previously was chair of the Department and a member of the College Council. She says it was her experience with the Council that led her to consider joining the Dean's Office, adding, "I found it so rewarding to learn what was going on in the College beyond my own department." Her present role, she says, involves "helping departments hire and retain the best people, and helping good things happen by providing small infusions of money. Nobody ever comes to you with a bad idea. The key is to give out money at the right speed

so you don't run out before the next good idea arrives."

**Jurgen Klausenburger** spoke in September at the DIACHRO-3 conference in Paris: "Pour un nouvel accord verbal en français."

**Toshi Ogihara** gave colloquia talks at University of Tsukuba in October and Tohoku Gakuin University in December.

**Alicia Wassink** has been enriching the sociolinguistics offerings in several ways. She has reorganized

the curricular offerings to clarify the socio track for undergraduates and graduate students, adding several new courses in the 430 series, and she has been expanding her Sociolinguistics Lab in a new space in the nether areas of Padelford. Finally, she is working very hard on the search for a second sociolinguist to begin in September 2007; candidates were interviewed at the LSA and finalists are coming to give talks in January and February.

## READERS TAKE NOTE

### TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Friday, April 27 the Department will have an "open house" from 1:30 to 5:00 as part of the third annual Washington Weekend. Billed as a signature event, Washington Weekend is expected to draw thousands of visitors to the campus-wide lectures, tours, art walks and more. Linguistics faculty and grad students will profile research through posters, discussions and demos by movable equipment. Visitors are also invited to attend a lecture, one of the regular Friday colloquium series, which will take place from 3:30 to 5:00. Refreshments will be served.

At the end of the year Professor **Jurgen Klausenburger** and Research Professor **Marina Tarlinskaya** will retire. Watch for on-campus announcements of a celebration or email [phoneme@u.washington.edu](mailto:phoneme@u.washington.edu) for information.

## LI FANG-KUEI AND HSU YING FELLOWSHIP

In 1924 a young Chinese man traveled to the US to study linguistics at the University of Michigan, followed by extensive study of American Indian languages under Sapir and Bloomfield in Chicago. PhD in hand, the man returned to China and plunged into Chinese and Tai historical linguistics. In 1949 he returned to the US to take up a position at the University of Washington, where he would teach Chinese language and linguistics for the next two decades before moving on to the University of Hawai'i.

Emeritus Professor Li Fang-Kuei died in 1987. He was an academic of international renown who had produced influential, groundbreaking research in many areas of linguistics and philology and had been one of the pillars of

Asian languages and literature study as it developed at UW.

But that is only part of the story.



Li's wife, Hsu Ying, is remembered as contributing just as much to the life of the University as did Li. One of their daughters, Emerita Professor Lindy Li Mark (California State University, East Bay), recalls their home as "a warm and wonderful part of the UW experience

for faculty and students alike."

Mark's desire to create a fitting memorial to her parents led her to create the Li Fang-Kuei and Hsu Ying Graduate Fellowship Award to provide support for the study of Chinese linguistics by students in Anthropology, Asian Languages and Literature, Linguistics or other departments within Arts and Sciences.

The first recipient of the award is Lin Deng, who was granted a stipend of \$9000 and a tuition waiver for two quarters of the 2006-07 academic year. Deng, a student in Asian Languages and Literature, has broad linguistic interests, both in general linguistics and in Chinese linguistics, including phonology, syntax, dialectology, descriptive fieldwork, lexicology and paleography.

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Nostrand for her generous year-end donation of an additional \$35,000 to the Professorship.

Finally, we are very grateful to Lindy Li Mark who has funded the Li Fang-Kuei and Hsu Ying Fellowship in Chinese Linguistics (see story above).

Computational linguistics is a vibrant area of Department research and teaching whose mo-

mentum is fueled by our first cohort of professional MA graduates, PhD candidates, professional presentations and interdisciplinary research.

Our symposium series on computational linguistics—co-sponsored with Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Microsoft—continues to thrive. In October we UW folks crossed the lake to the Microsoft campus for the meeting, but we'll all meet back in Seattle in

February.

Our Linguistics faculty and graduate students have an impressive record of conference presentations all over the world (Richard managing to spend a few days in Hawaii in November), but just the run-down on p. 7 of the presentations at this year's Linguistic Society of America meeting will give a flavor of their accomplishments.

*Julia Herschensohn*

### WASSINK, from p. 1

Participants included faculty, graduate students, alumni, affiliates from other departments and Linguistics Department staff. Frances was joined by the Nostrands' son Richard and his wife Susan,

who were most gracious in representing the family and in conversing with the many attendees. After lunch, there were introductions and thanks by Divisional Dean Ellen Kaisse, Interim Dean Ron Irving and Chair Julia

Herschensohn. Alicia Wassink then delivered a well-received lecture entitled "How children become socially-competent language users."

## REFLECTIONS

This installment of our occasional feature in which alums look back at their days in and around the Department was contributed by Nile Thompson, who returns us to the 1970s and 1980s.

Sign up for a linguistics class? I didn't want to seem unworldly, so I didn't ask what linguistics was. I had met my friend Shawn after having moved from Auburn to Seattle and completed my last year of high school at Lincoln. In 1970 I was a sophomore at the University of Washington and had somewhat resolved to declare my major in anthropology. Leaving the HUB that day, Shawn and I ran into another of his high school friends whom I didn't know. I listened as the two of them discussed what classes sounded good for spring quarter. They agreed that they were both going to sign up for the introductory course in linguistics, a subject I had never heard of before. The next quarter I found myself in Sol Saporta's class but to my surprise Shawn hadn't signed up. This was, however, how I got into linguistics and became good friends with his friend, Paul Aoki (PhD '81).

The one thing I remember about my first meeting with Sol in his office was him asking me what I found interesting about linguistics and my answer dealt with aesthetics. Anti-war demonstrations and department meetings about the Vietnam War convinced me I was more at home with the left-leaning Linguistics Department than the politically divided Anthropology Department. So Paul and I embarked on a course of studies in which we would take the basic requisites for graduate students in linguistics—it wasn't until sometime later that an undergraduate curriculum was established. We took the 400-level

phonology sequence from Mike Shapiro and Stamatis Tsitsopoulos, and the 400-level syntax sequence from Fritz Newmeyer. Paul and I hung to the back of the classroom and hoped not to get called on. I remember the look of relief on Paul's face one quarter



when a Mr. Oki (from Japan) unknowingly began answering questions thrown out to Mr. Aoki (from Seattle). On one occasion, Paul and I worked at his parents' house late into the night on a homework assignment for another class, historical phonology from Joe Voyles. Although the rule in our answer covered most of a page, we were certain it had to be correct. The next day in class we found out that one of the TA's had written the problem incorrectly.

It was during my junior year that I found my interest in American Indian languages. I started taking Swahili classes from Carol Eastman, who had a joint appointment in Linguistics and Anthro-

poloogy. Soon Paul and I were the only students in one of her classes in which the three of us did research on the Haida language. That summer I went to the University of Calgary to study Blackfoot (from Allen Taylor) while Carol and Paul went to Alaska to do fieldwork on Haida. Upon my return, I took a field methods class from Hal Schiffman and loved working with a speaker of Tulu, a Dravidian language in India. I also audited a Puget Sound Salish class taught by Thom Hess (PhD '67), who urged me to research the language's phonology. At the time I couldn't see a need for that because I had only been exposed to a morphophonemic rendering of the language and had no idea of the language's phonological alternations. After completing a General Studies thesis on Blackfoot phonology in March 1972, I opted to continue my graduate studies in the Linguistics Department. Paul made the same decision.

To support my education I worked the graveyard shift at the Rainier Brewery. I have no idea now when exactly it was that I slept. Later, I became friends with Jim Scholes (from Henrietta, NY) who worked with me to keep the departmental library in Padelford A-216 going. He also helped me to get a (less than satisfying) job at Pizza and Pipes Restaurant in Greenwood after my hands couldn't take the heat of steam cleaning at the brewery. Another regular in A-216, Jim Critz (PhD '76), had been involved in making

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## LSA PRESENTATIONS



The UW had quite a presence at the January 2007 meeting in Disney country (Anaheim, CA). In addition to faculty in attendance for executive committee work or to interview candidates for our new sociolinguistics position, there were additional faculty and graduate students who gave papers. The following list of presenters and topics provides a sense of the breadth of research going on in the Department, although this LSA conference is just one example of the many places UW linguists present their work.

**Grad students**

**Steve Moran** "Transcription systems interoperability through ontologies"

**Scott Drellishak** "Statistical techniques for detecting and evaluating phonesthemes"

**Daniel Jinguji** (see faculty entries)

**Sarah Churng** "'Double constructions' in ASL realized by resumption"

**Faculty**

**Emily Curtis and Soohee Kim**

"Underspecification and the mora in Korean morpho-phonology"

**Ellen Kaisse**, moderator

"Phonology: An appraisal of the field in 2007"

**Barbara Citko** "Determiner sharing from a crosslinguistic perspective"

**Karen Zagona** "A note on aspec-

tual primitives"

**William Lewis, Fei Xia** and grad student **Daniel Jinguji** "Projecting structure onto data for resource-poor and endangered languages"

**Laura McGarrity** "Coda weight variability and context-dependency in Kuuku-Ya'u"

**Sharon Hargus** and **Virginia Beavert** "The case for/against adpositions in Yakima Sahaptin"

**REFLECTIONS**, from p. 5

movies before he entered the Department. At some point there was a departmental showing in the HUB of a documentary about one of the films and later a group trip down to a theater on First Avenue to view the film itself.

In 1973 I heard from contacts in the Anthropology Department that they had been contacted by a former student (Karen James) about trying to find someone to work with the last speakers of the Twana language on the Skokomish Indian Reservation. I met with the tribe and we reached a mutual agreement that we'd look for funding to make something happen. My work at Skokomish began on the cheap. I got a ride down to Hood Canal with the Linguistics Department secretary (Connie Wilson), who was moving

back to the East Coast. I must have been traveling light as I was squeezed into her Peugeot wagon with all her worldly possessions. I house sat for Karen, who was about to have her first child, in exchange for feeding her family's rabbits—never again! I had a grant from the Jacobs Research Fund (about \$500, as I recall) for research on ethnobotany. Soon I received additional support that was equally small from the Indian Program at Shelton Public Schools. The tribe did get federal funding for an education project and I was the tribal linguist until 1979. During that period, I conducted fieldwork on a near daily basis, wrote a two-part dictionary, created curriculum materials and trained language instructors. My main informant was Louisa Jones Pulsifer (born in 1886) who at age

14 had become the second wife of a famous Indian doctor. She was also one of the last traditionally trained basket makers. The aesthetics of her language were important to her and she enjoyed discussing which female personal names "sounded pretty".

In 1979 I completed my MA degree, with my thesis being on Twana syntax. Four years later, after a period of working on an exhibit and book on Indian basketry, I started work on my doctorate and noticed that there was a distinct change in the Department. The new chairperson, Joe Emonds, was making an attempt to spread around TA-ships to more students as well as seeking out other types of university funding. Over the next few quarters I had two TA-ships and a disserta-

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**REFLECTIONS**, from p. 6

tion year fellowship. At one point a social worker called the Department asking if there wasn't some way that a Lillooet speaker in Federal Way could get employed with that skill. Instead of dismissing the call, Joe arranged for me to teach a field methods class with the woman, Mary Lagasca, as an in-class informant.

I completed my doctorate in 1985. My committee chair was Ellen Kaisse and the other members were Eastman, Newmeyer, Voyles and Melissa Denton (from Botany). My dissertation centered on phonology but also incorporated aspects of first language learning and cosmology. I recall Ellen trying to teach me the distinction between 'which' and 'that'. However, not all of the committee's comments were instructional. For one example of baby talk (adult speech to infants) I included a story about Mink being called 'papa'. Next to the portion of the myth where Mink was fathoming out his favorite vital organ from the northern Olympic Peninsula to Vancouver Island where a high class maiden was bathing in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, one of my committee members wrote, "Yeah, I saw that guy at the beach last weekend."

Some of my fondest memories of

being a student in the Department center about sports, food and drink. Before I went to Skokomish there was a Department volleyball team. After I came back we shifted over to softball. Then there were numerous games at the IMA: squash—never did beat Tom Huckin (PhD '77), racketball with Ellen and badminton with John Moore and a female student from Thailand with whom I was evenly matched. When I was an undergraduate the Department watering hole was the Dutchess Restaurant beyond University Village. Much later a group of us, including Ellen and secretary Anita Taberes, went out for pizza at the Hungry U for birthday celebrations.

Having a wife who had a job in Seattle and children in Seattle Public Schools, I never really tried that hard to get an academic position elsewhere (although I was on the short-list for positions at George Washington, UC Davis and UCLA). After working in the museum field (1986-93), I started a consulting firm, Dushuyay Research. This has allowed me to do work I enjoy, including federal acknowledgment, language planning, and company and organization history writing, and also to teach part-time at North Seattle Community College. It also gives me time to write academic arti-

cles. Often my work has been in collaboration with Department graduates. During the late 1990s, Jim Armagost (PhD '73) and I worked together on language planning for two tribes and wrote two papers, one attempting to right a wrong direction taken in Salishan syntax (my area) and one critiquing a work on Comanche (his area). Over the past three years, Dale Sloat (PhD '66) and I have published six articles on a variety of topics: Coastal Salishan phonology, the use of oral literature in community health education, ethnobotany, and language preservation and planning.

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Nile Thompson is the Managing Partner for Dushuyay Research and lives in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle. He regularly consults for the Skokomish and Steilacoom tribes. Recent publications include *Building for Learning: Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2000* (with Carolyn Marr), *The First One Hundred Years: PSF Industries, Inc. and PSF Mechanical, Inc.*, and *Unlikely bedfellows: How worldview and pedagogy can hinder language preservation* (with Dale Sloat), in *MIT Working Papers on Endangered and Less Familiar Languages* 7:1-16, *Studies in Salishan*. Nile's e-mail address is [dushuyay@nwlink.com](mailto:dushuyay@nwlink.com).

## UW Professional Master's in Computational Linguistics

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