

# The Ling Lang Letter

Department of Linguistics & Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages

2015-2016

## LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES HOLDS ITS FIRST ALUMNI REUNION

On April 9, close to one hundred alumni, students, faculty, and staff gathered for the first Department of Linguistics and Languages Alumni Reunion. The daylong event offered multiple opportunities to reconnect with old friends, to hear from experts on current topics of interest, and to be reacquainted with MSU campus life in the B-wing of Wells Hall. The day started off with a welcome from Chris Long, the new Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Sonja Fritzsche, the new Department Chair, and Kim Bowen of the College's Alumni Board. Sparty was on hand too!



Attendees then had the choice to attend a series of morning presentations on topics that included the European refugee crisis, current Linguistics PhD projects, a CeLTA/CLEAR Open House, the chance to refresh your Russian, travel in Arab countries, student activities of the new Korean minor and many more. All took a break to have lunch at the Brody Dining Hall to see how students of today eat their meals. Afternoon highlights included presentations by German study abroad students, tours of the Sociolinguistics and Neurolinguistics/EEG labs, teaching Hebrew, and student presentations from the Japanese and Chinese programs. After a coffee break and time to socialize, the day ended with a wonderful Swahili poem read by current students. Some also gathered at the



Beggar's Banquet to reminisce later. The most quoted statement at the end of the day was: "When is the next one!!" Watch for future alumni events organized by the Department or one of its Programs. Follow the Department or Program Facebook pages or events on the Department website. Please also consider donating to help our current students fulfill their language-related dreams. Click on "Make a Gift" on the Department Website.

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends of Linguistics and Languages at MSU,

This summer has granted me the time to reflect on my first year as Department Chair and at MSU as well. I want to thank the faculty and staff in Linguistics and Languages for such a warm welcome to a wonderfully diverse and vibrant Department. I continue to marvel at the quality of research and instruction that goes on here in Wells Hall. Thank you also to Susan Gass for her expert leadership as Chair from 2013-2015. Under her guidance, the Department increased its overall enrollments and added two new minors in Korean and TESOL.

*Continued on page 3*

## SCHOLARSHIP FUND DONATIONS

The German program wishes to thank Dr. Craig Melchert (MSU '67) for a generous supplementary gift to the Endowed Scholarship Fund for German Language and Culture in Mayen, Germany, which is an MSU summer study abroad program that is led yearly by a German program faculty member. The program just completed the 43rd year in Mayen. Dr. Melchert received his BA in German from MSU.

Thank you also to Thomas and Sarah Juntune for their establishment of the Thomas W. and Sarah L. Juntune Endowed Scholarship for Study Abroad in Freiburg. Thomas Juntune is a former faculty member in the MSU German program and led the program in Freiburg. Sarah Juntune is a retired area German teacher and currently teaches for the Michigan Virtual School.



In March the MSU Russian Club hosted Zolotoj Plyos, an internationally renowned Russian folk band from the Saratov Conservatory in Russia. The three-person band played over 20 authentic folk instruments and performed in native dress. The event was sponsored by the Department of Linguistics and Languages as well as several other departments on campus.

## TAIWAN FILM FESTIVAL

Since 2013, the Chinese Program has been presenting to the campus community and the general public a variety of Chinese-language films by directors working in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the US, and the UK. The 2016 Taiwan Film Festival was comprised of five films by three directors, two of whom were invited to campus from Taiwan. Faculty members, Tze-lan Sang (Department of Linguistics and Languages) and Sheng-mei Ma (English Department), jointly curated the films.

The featured films this year were: Huang Yushan's *Spring Cactus* (1999) and *The Taste of Life* (2015); Hou Hsiao-hsien's *The Assassin* (2015); Lin Cheng-sheng's *Murmur of Youth* (1999); and *Betelnut Beauty* (2001).

The film festival was made possible by the generous sponsorship from the Taiwan Ministry of Education (through TECO-Chicago) and the MSU Asian Studies Center. Support was also provided by the Department of Linguistics and Languages, the Film Studies Program in English, the Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and the Center for Gender in Global Context.



From left to right: Qing Xia (Visiting Professor), Tze-lan Sang (Linguistics and Languages), film director Lin Cheng-sheng, Asian Studies Center Director Siddharth Chandra, and Sheng-mei Ma (English Department).

## GERMANY - 25 YEARS OF UNITY CELEBRATION

Funded through a grant from the Embassy of the Federal Republic, the German program commemorated and reflected on 25 years of East and West Germany uniting through a variety of events during fall semester. Activities included a large public event, film series, and student essay competition. "Germany Today: The Legacy of Unification" was a panel discussion with topics that included soccer's role in national identity, German education reform, gender issues and Germany's role in addressing the world refugee crisis.

The film series titled, "Imagining Germany Beyond East and West", exposed audiences to a wide range of perspectives from both the former East and the West, thematizing the complex processes of social and cultural unification. Introductions and post-screening discussions were led by German faculty and graduate students.

Finally, the student project competition titled "Vereinigtes Deutschland!?-Contemporary Perspectives on German Life and Culture" was open to MSU students in German classes as well as area high school students. The students were encouraged to create written essays or multi-media projects reflecting upon the historical events and processes that contributed to, and resulted from, unification.

## RAISING THE DEPARTMENT PROFILE GRANTS

The Department was very excited to be able award four "Raising the Dept Profile" grants from associated monies from Dean Long. These grants resulted in three successful mini-conferences and funded one research project. Thanks go to Dean Long as well as the other associated sponsors of these events.

The series kicked off on March 25th with "'Them Damned Pictures: Explorations in African and Middle Eastern Political Cartoon Art" organized by Prof. Sadam Issa from the Arabic Program. The keynote was given by Tejumola Olaniyan, Louise Durham Mead Professor in the Departments of English & African Languages and Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

On April 1-2, there was a timely, two-day symposium on the "European Migration Crisis: A Two-Day Conference for Scholars/Community Members," which was organized by Prof. Johanna Schuster-Craig in German. Highlights included a keynote address from the German Consul General of Chicago, Mr. Herbert Quelle, a second keynote from Dr. Demetri Papademetriou from the Migration Policy Institute-Europe, and Ms. Salam Darwaza, a film producer from 1001 Media. The symposium ended with a screening of her documentary film *Salam Neighbor* (2015) and discussion.

On April 22, there was a Linguistics and Languages Roundtable entitled "Translingual Practices in an Age of Globalization" and organized by Prof. Peter de Costa of the SLS/MA TESOL programs. Guest speaker Professor Suresh Canagarajah, an internationally acclaimed linguist from Pennsylvania State University, gave the keynote.

Finally, Linguistics Professor Cristina Schmitt received a grant to fund her research project entitled "Strengthening Latin-American connections: a way to raise the department profile." We look forward to hearing more about the results in a Linguistics Colloquium talk this Fall.

## WORLD LANGUAGES DAY



Chinese major, Christopher Murphy, gave the keynote address at the ninth annual World Languages Day (WLD) conference in April 2016. Hundreds of high school students, teachers, administrators and parents participated in the day-long conference sponsored by the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR). A significant number of conference presenters and volunteers were faculty, staff and students from the Department of Linguistics and Languages.

### LETTER FROM CHAIR (CONT.)

This past year saw our first Department Alumni Reunion and the launching of a new Department website with outreach on social media. As part of this effort, we are starting a new alumni profile section. We would love to hear more about what you are doing, and invite you to send us a 200-word piece on your current activities and how your study of language helped to get you there. Please see the back cover for more information.

The faculty and students of the Department are so active that it is not possible to capture all of the guest speakers, cultural events, and research projects for the year in this one newsletter. What appears on these pages are but some of the highlights of a rich year of programming, teaching, research and outreach. I am especially excited to announce a new minor in Indian and South Asian Languages starting in fall 2016 thanks primarily to the work of Sean Pue.

As this newsletter goes to press, we have just received very good news. Starting this next year, MSU will use a three-year \$1.2 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to lead a multi-university research project to strengthen the teaching of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). The Center for Language Teaching Advancement (CeLTA) will direct this initiative on behalf of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (formerly CIC). Since the LCTL program is housed in Linguistics and Languages, we look forward to working with CeLTA and our Big Ten colleagues to improve the quality of and access to instruction in these languages. I wish to congratulate all of those involved in writing this grant, particularly Susan Gass, David Prestel, Angelika Kraemer, and Danielle Steider. I invite you to follow us on social media to keep up to date on this and other initiatives and events here in Wells Hall. Please keep in touch. We would love to see you!

-Sonja Fritzsche

## NEW STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

### ARABIC IN JORDAN

The department launched a new study abroad program in Amman, Jordan in the summer of 2015. The program is offered at the Jordan Language Academy (JLA) and is directed by Arabic instructor, Sadam Issa. This intensive nine-week program focuses on Arabic language and culture and allows students to earn two semesters of Arabic language credit at multiple levels.



Students can also take one credit courses on the Levant dialect, Arabic culture and Arabic Media.

Students live with host families and can participate in voluntary work and many other learning activities such as cultural excursions and clubs.

Arabic major and 2016 program participant, Brandon Parker, had this to say, "Jordan is going great! I'm having a wonderful time and meeting some wonderful people while I'm bettering my language skills."

### NEW JAPAN PROGRAM FOR TESOL MINORS

The *Teaching English in Japan* (TEJ) program was started at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) in Hikone, Japan in Summer 2015. The new program provides students from Michigan universities and other partner institutions an opportunity to learn about a variety of English as a Second/Foreign Language teaching methodologies, and to apply them to the context of EFL teaching in Japan. JCMU provides a classroom focus on theory and useful activities, complemented by class observations and face-to-face work with English-language learners at all levels and ages in the community and at local schools and universities.

Teaching English in Japan is credited through JCMU as Michigan State University's LLT 307 class, although a limited number of spaces are available for students wishing to complete the course as a practicum for a TESOL minor through LLT 496.

In addition, students who join the TEJ program at JCMU will also be enrolled in the JCMU Japanese Culture & Society course, a three-credit class (AL 400) that explores the foundations of Japan as a country through lectures, guest speakers, cultural activities, and field trips.

For more information about the Teaching English in Japan program and other exciting opportunities for study at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities, visit our website at <http://jcmu.isp.msu.edu/>.

*Written by Christopher Garth, a graduate of the department, with a B.A. in Russian Language, and an M.A. in TESOL. He is currently the English Program Coordinator for JCMU in Hikone, Japan.*



## JAPANESE INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS COLLABORATE ON SONG AND VIDEO



Miyuki Kamiya, an Instructor in the Japanese Program, worked with senior Japanese major, Tiara Harris, to compose a song for the Japanese Language program. The JPN 102 and 202 students, whom Kamiya taught during spring 2016, then performed the song while Kamiya played keyboards.

For a video of the recording, go to: <http://www.cal.msu.edu/japanes-song/>

## MAX KADE VISITING PROFESSOR - CHRISTIAN KLEIN



**Christian Klein:** No one ever asked my friends who intended to study medicine or engineering for the reasons of their choices. I was always asked why I wanted to study German literature. My answer was one of irritation and defiance: Simply because I want to! I still think that this is a reasonable answer, but today I would add: Because literature deals with the three great questions:

Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? In other words: Literature explores the "conditio humana", what makes the human being a human being? Literature asks how culture and society became the entity that shapes our lives today. And literature outlines scenarios of what our life might look like in the future. And please tell me: what else would you expect from studying at a university?

I did my Doctorate in Comparative Literature at the Freie Universität in Berlin. I knew quite early that I would like to continue my academic career, so I was very lucky when I got a job at the Bergische Universität Wuppertal, where I still work. My current fields of interest are contemporary German writers (like Marcel Beyer), comics and graphic novels, and recently I published a book that answers the question of how a book can become a cult book.

I have enjoyed the time in Michigan a lot. I really like the combination of a small city, where you can reach everything by bike, with a large university (MSU has lots more students than the Freie Universität Berlin) with a lively campus life. And because we Germans are well known for our ecological awareness, I can easily join in with the slogan "Go green!". ;-)

Editor's note: Dr. Klein's visit was such a success in Spring 2016 that he will join the German program again in spring 2017.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



### Bailey Smith (BA Linguistics '12)

After graduating from MSU with a BA in Linguistics in 2012, I nannied until my husband's work moved us to Denmark in February of 2014. After moving, I started learning Danish at the language school (a free 3-year course for internationals provided by the government), and my fluency is a great party trick for impressing my Danish friends. I recently started teaching English to adults at an upper intermediate level, and finishing my Danish course will mean I can begin teaching adults less fluent in English. In 2016, I started an MS in Information Architecture at Aalborg University in which I apply what I love about linguistics: how people create and use a shared system of understanding to communicate. IA is a field that focuses on helping users find information and complete tasks by connecting the users, the content, and the context. At Aalborg University, we are encouraged to find real cases around which to create our semester project in application of the theories learned during the course. Working in the Sociolinguistics Lab at MSU and writing my senior thesis equipped me to identify appropriate research methods as well as to understand the theoretical and practical impact of my work.



The 2015-16 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs).  
Back row: Mr. George Wilbard, Swahili/Tanzania; Mr. Amr Rabie, Arabic/Egypt; Dean Christopher P. Long; Mr. Olayemi Awotayo, Yoruba/Nigeria; Associate Dean David Prestel; Assistant Dean Beth Judge; Front row: Ms. ThiThu "Hien" Hoang, Vietnamese/Vietnam; Ms. Selcen Erten, Turkish/Turkey; Ms. Andrea Lens, Portuguese/Brazil; Ms. Natalia "Natasha" Dolgoborodova, Russian/Russia

## STUDENT AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Department's second annual Awards Ceremony was held in April 2016 to recognize our outstanding students. For a full list of awardees and honor society inductees, go to our website. (<http://linglang.msu.edu>)



*Pictured here are: (from left to right) Ai Taniguchi, Tiara Harris, Sarah Scarbrough, Carly Lesoski, Sonja Fritzsche (Chair), Laura Eickhoff, and Jennifer Brooke.*

### University Awards

MSU BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARD  
**Joseph Saum**, Chinese major  
**Cattleya Trager**, Japanese major

RICHARD LEE FEATHERSTONE ENDOWED PRIZE  
**August Jenkins**, Cognitive Science and Linguistics minor

### 2016 College of Arts & Letters (CAL) Awards

ALUMNI ENDOWED STUDENT BOOK SCHOLARSHIP AND  
JOHN W. EADIE SCHOLARSHIP FOR INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
**Stephanie Saba**, Arabic major

COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP  
FUND  
**Jacob Blythe**, German major

EDWARD AND GEORGIA RYDER SCHOLARSHIP  
**Nicole Koenigsknecht**, German major

### Federally Funded Awards

BOREN SCHOLARSHIP  
**Brady Ryan**, Arabic major, 2015-16 study abroad in  
Morocco Flagship Program

CRITICAL LANGUAGES SCHOLARSHIP  
**Samuel Bigley**, Arabic major  
**Keegan McCorry**, Chinese major

FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES (FLAS)  
FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS  
**Zachary Bezemek**, Japanese major  
**Megan Burnham**, Russian major  
**Steven Gagnon**, Linguistics major and Korean minor  
**Sarah Hartlieb**, Russian major  
**Paige Henderson**, Arabic major and German minor  
**Harrison Jones**, Arabic major  
**Andrew Joseph**, Arabic major  
**Evan Karlson**, Russian major  
**Taylor Koonce**, Chinese major  
**Marissa Marinello**, Arabic major  
**Cori Matsui**, Arabic major  
**Keegan McCorry**, Chinese major  
**Patrick Mercer**, Japanese major  
**Christian Okeefe**, Japanese minor  
**Alexis Puente**, Arabic major  
**Ashley Rall**, Chinese minor  
**Tessa Raymond**, Chinese major  
**Stephanie Saba**, Arabic major  
**Bethany Zimmerman**, Chinese and Japanese major

GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP  
**Jarryd Calhoun**, German major  
**Renaysha Goode-Bailey**, Linguistics and Arabic major  
**Victoria Hamilton**, Linguistics and Japanese major  
**Kaylah Jetton**, Japanese minor  
**Anthony Johnson**, Chinese major  
**Evan Karlson**, Russian major  
**Joseph Kretowicz**, Japanese major  
**Nenna Maduko**, Chinese minor  
**Danielle Moreau**, Arabic major

### Additional Awards & Scholarships

**Zachary Bezemek** (Japanese major), S.C. Lee Scholarship  
**Jennifer Gohlke** (Ph.D. German candidate), Humanities Without Walls 2016 Pre-Doctoral Workshop Fellow  
**Emma Hintzel**, (German minor), Baden-Württemberg Scholarship  
**Katelynn Klemm** (Korean minor), S.C. Lee Best Paper Competition, undergraduate/third place  
**Alexis Pierce** (Korean minor), S.C. Lee Best Paper Competition, undergraduate/second place  
**Tessa Raymond** (Chinese major), S.C. Lee Scholarship  
**Chenchen Xu** (Ph.D. Linguistics candidate), S.C. Lee Best Paper Competition, graduate/third place

## NEW FACULTY



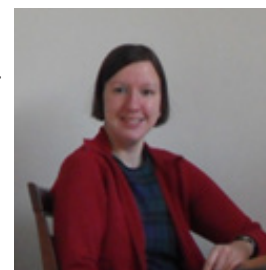
**Johanna Schuster-Craig** (German) received her Ph.D. in German and Feminist Studies from Duke University.

**Rajiv Ranjan** (Hindi/Urdu) received his Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Iowa.



**Yore Kedem** (Hebrew) received his Ph.D. in Secondary and Continuing Education from the University of Illinois.

**Marisa Brook** (Linguistics) is finishing her Ph.D. in Sociolinguistics at the University of Toronto.



**Ayman Mohamed** (Arabic) received his Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition from MSU.

**Ho-Hsin Huang** (Chinese) is a Ph.D. candidate in Linguistics at MSU.



**Masumi Hamada** (Japanese) is a Ph.D. candidate in East Asian Languages & Literatures at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

**Pia Banzhaf** (Linguistics & Languages) received her M.A. in German Studies from Memorial University of Newfoundland and is working on her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies at Queen's University in Kingston.



## FACULTY NOTES

**Alan Beretta** (Linguistics) received a grant from the Iceland Research Foundation.

**Jason Merrill** (Russian) promoted to Full Professor, effective July 2015.

**Peter De Costa** (TESOL) received the American Education Research Association (AERA) Language and Social Processes Emerging Scholar Award.

**Shannon Spasova** (Russian) received the 2016 AT&T Instructional Technology Award of Excellence for study abroad modules she developed for RUS 201 and 202 courses.

**Senta Goertler** (German) received the ACTFL/Cengage Learning Faculty Development Programs Award for Excellence in Foreign Language Instruction Using Technology.

**Patti Spinner** (TESOL) promoted to Associate Professor, effective July 1, 2015.

**Matthew Handelman** (German) received the Gerald Westheimer Career Development Fellowship. Leo Baeck Institute, New York, NY.

**Suzanne Wagner** (Linguistics) promoted to Associate Professor, effective July 1, 2015.



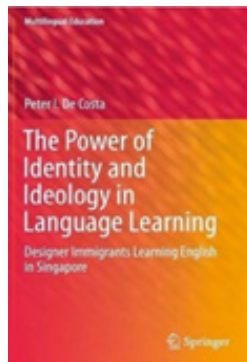
## New Teachers for African and Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs)

**Nahid Shiran** (Persian)  
**Marita De Leon** (Tagalog)  
**Cheikh Tangara** (Bambara)  
**Ernest Ndukwe** (Igbo)  
**Hailu Nigussie Abreha** (Amharic)  
**Prisca Nzube** (Igbo)

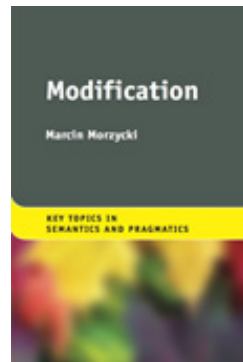


New office staff, pictured from left to right: Ryan Hasselbach, Beth Reid, Jennifer Tetreau, and Patience Adibe

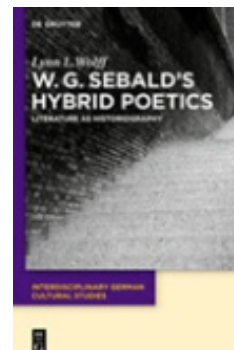
## FACULTY PUBLICATIONS



**Peter DeCosta**, *The Power of Ideology in Language Learning: Designer Immigrants Learning English in Singapore*. New York: Routledge, 2016



**Marcin Morzycki**, *Modification*. Cambridge: University Press, 2016



**Lynn Wolff**, *W.G. Sebald's Hybrid Poetics: Literature as Historiography*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014.



**Thomas Lovik, J. Douglas Guy, and Monika Chavez**. *Vorsprung: Literature as Third Enhanced Edition*. Boston: Cengage, 2017.

## A LOOK FORWARD TO 2016-17

### MidPhon 21 Conference Coming to MSU September 2016

The 21st Mid-Continental Phonetics and Phonology Conference (MidPhon 21), to be held at MSU on September 16-19, 2016, is organized by Yen-Hwei Lin, Karthik Durvasula and a group of linguistics graduate students, and sponsored by the Department of Linguistics and Languages and MSU's Cognitive Science Program. For the past 20 years, MidPhon has served successfully as an annual phonetics/phonology conference for faculty and students of the Big Ten Academic Alliance and Mid-West research institutions to disseminate research findings, to exchange ideas, and to seek collaboration opportunities. We are excited to bring MidPhon to MSU for the first time in 2016. The conference program (available in August) and information can be found at the conference website: <https://msu.edu/~lingorg/midphon21/>

### New Minor in Indian and South Asian Languages and Cultures

Linguistics and Languages will offer a new undergraduate minor in Indian and South Asian Languages and Cultures starting Fall 2016 and will be open to all MSU students. The minor will equip students with linguistic and cultural proficiency focused on India and South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tibet) to enable their future work across this important region. Expertise in South Asia will be an asset across disciplines such as Business, STEM and the Arts and Humanities.

Students will be strongly encouraged to participate in study abroad programs, internships, student-centered organizations, and experiential learning opportunities. Students will also become conversant with digital technologies as an integrated part of their academic training.

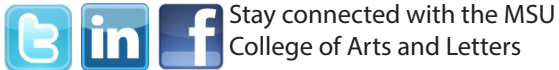
For more information on the minor, go to: <http://ling-lang.msu.edu/additional-programs/southasia/>

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## Check Out the New Website

The Linguistics and Languages website received a redesign this past year. Now it includes a Calendar of Events, and Twitter and Facebook pages. (<http://linglang.msu.edu>)

## Hello Alums! Tell us your stories!

We would love to hear more about what you are up to, what you do (your job title and duties), where you work, and how your studies in one or more of our programs helped prepare you for where you are now. Please send us your story of no more than 200 words to Beth Reid ([reideli1@msu.edu](mailto:reideli1@msu.edu)) with "My Alum Story" in the subject line. If you wish, you can also include a photo (.jpg or .png format). We'll include selected ones on our website or in our newsletter.



## Make a Gift to LingLang

Please think of investing in the future of the Department via a gift designated for either 1) Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages, which supports a program of your choice in the Department (contact us to specify program), 2) Endowed Scholarship for German Language and Culture in Mayen Program, which funds students who study on the Mayen, Germany summer program, or 3) George F. Peters Scholarship Fund, which supports students who study on the German Academic Year in Freiburg, Germany program.

