“When the last Halq’eméylem-speaking Sto:lo elder dies, there is a real concern that the language could die too. But with the help of elders and others committed to the language, linguists have been working on preserving Halq’eméylem for future generations. As part of that preservation, a unique collection of more than 70 short stories recorded in the Upriver Halq’eméylem language stories—the traditional language of the Sto:lo people—was formally presented to the Chilliwack Archives and the Sto:lo Nation Archives during the recent Sto:lo Nation’s People of the River Conference. The stories were recorded by Sto:lo elder and fluent Halq’eméylem speaker Elizabeth Herrling over a number of years. The stories are largely personal tales about Herrling’s own life and the people she grew up with including her family, her work and her traditional way of life.”

Current research on languages of the Pacific Northwest in the department

by Henry Davis

So many languages, so little time... as the last generation of fluent first-language speakers of all 26 or so indigenous languages of British Columbia grows older, we are doing our utmost to ensure that the knowledge they possess is recorded as accurately and comprehensively as possible.

While our department has always had a strong reputation for research on the First Nations languages of BC, in the last few years, we have increased both the number of languages we are working on, and the number of department members (both faculty and students) directly involved in research on Northwest languages. In addition, UBC Working Papers in Linguistics is actively involved in publishing work on BC indigenous languages, as the home of the Papers for the International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages (ICSNL) and the Proceedings of the Workshop on Structure and Constituency in Languages of the Americas (WSCLA), as well as hosting the Kinkade Collection, a complete and unique electronic archive of ICS(N)L papers from 1967-1999, with current volumes being added as print stocks are exhausted.

Here are some of our currently active projects on First Nations languages of the Northwest:

SALISH FAMILY

- St'át'imcets / Lillooet. Lisa Matthewson and Henry Davis have been working on St'át'imcets since the early 1990's, frequently in partnership with the Upper St'át'imc Language, Culture and Education Society. Current projects include work on the second and third volumes of an English to Upper St'át'imcets dictionary, transcribing the dictionary to the First Voices website, completion of a comprehensive teaching grammar of the language, transcription and translation of textual material, and ongoing theoretical work in syntax and semantics. Meanwhile, John Lyon has been facilitating a St'át'imcets class for the last couple of years in Mission (taking over from Marion Caldecott) and has been videotaping, transcribing and editing interviews of Lower St'át'imc elders.

- Nie? kepmxcis / Thompson River Salish. Pat Littell and Scott Mackie have been working on evidentials with Flora Ehrehardt and Patricia McKay, continuing research they began in the 2008-9 Field Methods class under Strang Burton; some of their results are published in the 2011 Papers for the ICSNL.

- Nsylxwecn / Okanagan. Joel Dunham, John Lyon, and Stacey Mensies are part of a project documenting the remaining fluent speakers of the Douglas Lake (Spaxmen) dialect of Okanagan, which is less well-known than the Penticton/Lakes dialect. Joel and John are both writing their doctoral dissertations on Nsylxwecn, Joel on aspect, John on the syntax and semantics of DPs, while Stacey is writing her MA thesis on the modal system. Aside from their theoretical work, John has also been active in recording textual material and working on multi-media curriculum material, while Joel has set up an on-line database for the language. Both John and Stacey have attended summer immersion camps in Spaxmen territory.

- Sníchitsú'umtn / Coeur D'Alene. Audra Vincent is completing her MA thesis on aspect from her home territory in Plummer, Idaho, working with the very last first language speakers of Sníchitsú'umtn, supplementing direct elicitation using storyboards and textual materials.

- Halqéméylem, hən’q’əmin’əm’, Hulq’umi’num’ / Upriver, Downriver, Island Halkomelem. Martina Wituschko continues to publish on Upriver Halkomelem, perpetuating the legacy of the late Elizabeth Herrling and the late Rosaleen George, two of the last three fluent speakers of the Upriver (Sto:lo) dialect of Halkomelem. Strang Burton continues to work with Elizabeth Phillips, the remaining fluent speaker, as part of his ongoing work with the Sto:lo Shxwéli Program, developing curriculum material, teaching and training language teachers. James Thompson is currently revising his Ph.D. dissertation on nominalization in both Upriver and Island Halkomelem; he worked with Elizabeth Herrling, and has also elicited extensively with Ruby Peter, one of the best-known speakers of the Island dialect. Pat Shaw continues her work with the Musqueam (hən’q’əmin’əm’) program through the UBC First Nations Language Program.

- Senchothen / Saanich. We are happy to have Claire Turner here on a two-year SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship, investigating modals and evidentials in Senchothen. In addition, James Thompson plans to begin work with Janet Leonard of the University of Victoria on the syntax of Saanich in the new year.

- Skwxwú7mesh’ / Squamish. Peter Jacobs completed his dissertation on ‘Control in Skwxwú7mesh’ in the summer of 2011. Congratulations, Peter!

WAKASHAN FAMILY

- Kwak’wala. Several students (both undergraduate and graduate) who first encountered Kwak’wala in a UBC Field Methods course taught by Henry Davis in 2009-10 have gone on to do further work on the language in Vancouver, Victoria and Port Hardy, supported by a Group Grant from the Jacobs Research Fund, and resulting in several papers in recent volumes of the Papers for ICSNL. These include work by Alexis Black on determiners, Jon Jansen on prosody, Connor Mayer on voicing, Masaki Nagoshi on intonation, Katie Sardinha on the development of case marking in North-
ern Wakashan and Catherine Stewart on demonstrative predicates. Three students are currently pursuing research on Kwak’wala for graduate degrees: Pat Littell is working on focus for his Ph.D. dissertation, Hannah Greene is finishing her MA thesis on aspect while enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Massachusetts, and Ayako Moewaki is working towards her MA on quantification from back home in Japan. Pat, Katie, Jon and Laura Sherer are putting the finishing touch on a book of transcribed, translated and analyzed texts from our Vancouver consultant, the indomitable Ruby Dawson Cranmer, which will be published by UBC Working Papers in Linguistics in the spring.

- Nuuchahnulth / Nootka. Ryan Waldie is currently in the final stages of his Ph.D. dissertation on evidentiality in Nuuchahnulth.

KTUNAXA (isolate)

- Ktunaxa / Kutenai. Last year’s field methods course, taught by Martina Wiltschko with consultant Violet Birdstone, was on Ktunaxa. Work by undergraduates Emily Blamire, Becky Laturnus and Andy Matheson was featured at this year’s ICSNL, and Emily and Becky presented at the Cambridge Undergraduate Conference; in addition, Emily, Becky, Andy, and Tania Armstrong traveled to Cranbrook to present at the annual Ktunaxa teacher’s conference. Currently Martina is directing two undergraduate projects, one with Laura Tampmper on the syntax and semantics of independent pronouns, the other with Becky on the syntax and semantics of reflexives and reciprocals. Next year’s ICSNL will take place in Cranbrook, directly as a result of the interest generated in the Ktunaxa language community by the UBC project.

TSIMSHIANIC

- Gitxsan / Gitksan. The current research project on Gitxsanmx again sprang from a Field Methods course, this one taught by Henry Davis in 2004-5. The consultant for that course, the late and sorely missed Doreen Jensen, then handed over the reins to her sister, Barbara Sennott (featured below), who has acted as principal consultant ever since, first for dissertation work by Jason Brown and Tyler Peterson, then on a collaboration between Jason and Henry on the syntax of WH-movement and binding. When Jason took up a tenure-track job in Auckland and Tyler began a postdoctoral fellowship in Leiden, Henry and Lisa Matthewson took over; Lisa has been working on modality and tense, and Henry on quantification and relative clauses. Through an Arts Undergraduate Research Award (AURA), two undergraduates, Alyssa Satterwhite and Savanna van der Zwan began work on the language in 2011; the project expanded with the addition of a second excellent consult, Vincent Gogag, and has remained a particularly active research group ever since. Alyssa and Savanna both presented at this year’s ICSNL, and Alyssa has since gone up north to Gitksan territory with Tyler on a Jacobs Fund-supported project to continue her research on the perception of rhythm, supervised by Molly Babel. While there, Alyssa managed to elicit language samples with 23 speakers! Undergraduates Clarissa Forbes, Michael Schwann, and Garret Bouhuyzen-Wenger, as well as graduate student Andrei Angelescu have since joined the project, and are currently focusing on recording, transcription, translation and analysis of texts. A volume of traditional stories and personal anecdotes by Barbara is due to appear through UBCWPL early next year.

NA-DENE

- Tlingit. Last but not least, we are lucky to have been able to recruit James Crippen to our Ph.D. program. James is a one-man linguistic engine for work on Tlingit, the traditional language of his people: his work spans lexicographic, historical, pedagogical, and now theoretical research on the language.

It should be obvious from this brief account that our department is a hive of activity for work on North-west languages. (And this is without even mentioning very active research projects on the Algonquian languages Cree and Blackfoot, which fall just outside the area considered here). And so it should be: all the languages mentioned above (and all the BC indigenous languages we are currently not working on) are critically endangered, with a very limited time horizon before we can no longer pursue primary fieldwork. We are always looking for recruits for our projects, and are happy to accept volunteers; so please do contact us if you are interested in getting involved.

First Nations of British Columbia Resource Guides

by Jonathan Strang

There are a large number of programs and departments working on First Nations Languages at UBC and I’ve attempted to link to these on the home tab of the Resource Guide. To highlight another resource at UBC, in particular, I think the First Nations Language Program has a nice interactive website. Outside of UBC, I was really impressed with FirstVoices, Isuma.tv, Language Geek, and the First Peoples’ Heritage Language & Culture Council sites.

Consultant Spotlight

Beatrice Bullshields

Beatrice Bullshields was featured in the previous edition of The Gosling, but her picture did not make it into that issue. We apologize, and
present Beatrice once more. Please see the previous edition for the interview with Beatrice.

Barbara Sennott, a National Treasure
by Lisa Matthewson

Barbara Sennott is a fluent speaker of Gitxsanmx who has been teaching her language for approximately 40 years, and has been working with UBC linguists for over 20 years. She was born at home in the village of Ansplayaxw (Kispiox) and grew up with the language. Her parents later moved the family to Prince Rupert so the children could receive a better education; Barbara attended a day school there. Barbara survived many difficult experiences as a native child growing up in that era. The greatest dream that she knew to aspire to as a child was to become a maid. But Barbara survived, thrived and exceeded expectations; she later obtained an Associate of Arts Degree in Indigenous Governance, a Certificate in Family Counseling and a Business Certificate. She has also gone on to raise a “wonderful son” who completed a law degree and has exceeded expectations; she later obtained an Associate of Arts Degree. And now the children want to learn to read and write it. Barbara says that it is important to keep Gitxsanmx alive, especially for the Gitxsan people. “It’s part of our soul.” Her plans for the future are “to live in peace and harmony and teach Gitxsan till my last breath.”

Ruby Cranmer
by Blake Allen

Ruby Dawson Cranmer is a Kwak’wala language consultant at UBC Department of Linguistics

The Gosling: Where are you from?
Ruby Cranmer: Makamaxw Dza-wade’euxw, I’m from Kingcome Inlet.

TG: How long have you been working at the UBC Linguistics department?
RC: This is my third year. I retired from the Native Education Centre 6 years ago, and UBC hired me three years ago.

TG: What were you teaching at the Native Cultural centre?
RC: Button blanket and the meaning of it and the potlatches and what happened to them in the 1920s when they put all the people in jail for attending.

TG: How has your teaching experience here been?
RC: Oh I love it. We had 24 students to begin with, but now it’s really dwindled. We had three classes a week, but that was then.

TG: You want more students?
RC: Yes
TG: Why?
RC: Because that way I’ll have more days to teach, because I love talking my language and I’ve got no one to talk my language to anymore. I don’t want to phone Alert Bay all the time bothering them. I just want to work more before I get too old. I think it was the best thing that ever happened to me being hired by Henry. But I want more students.

TG: Do your kids speak Kwak’wala as well?
RC: No, never taught them, it was taboo in those days. I told my grandchildren the history and some of the language, but not enough. My grandson lives in Vancouver so I’m going to teach him the language. He’s really easy to learn, he picks everything up.

Visit our website: http://www.linguistics.ubc.ca

Masaru Kiyota
by Noriko Yamane

Masaru Kiyota is the Research Technology Support and Computer Network Administrator for the UBC Department of Linguistics.

The Gosling: How has been your life after getting Ph.D.?
MK: I have been enjoying a balanced life between the job at UBC Linguistics and my personal life, especially practicing and teaching Aikido (a Japanese martial art) as a volunteer instructor. I work part-time for the department and practice/teach Aikido a few times a week. My wife, who is a traditional Japanese hand-craft artist, also practices Aikido with me all the time. It is great to share the same interest and enjoy it together.

TG: Was it an advantage to you in getting that job that you work in UBC Linguistics?
MK: Though I tried to get a post doc or research position in this area
as soon as I completed the Ph.D. degree, I was not successful. But I was lucky enough to hear that the department was looking for a new tech person at that time. I think I had an advantage for getting the position because I was a long time department member who already knew what the department members would expect. I also worked as a TA/RA for the department for a long time so everyone knew how I would work. In addition, my work experience as computer center staff at a Japanese university helped me a lot.

**TG:** What do you enjoy the most about your position?

**MK:** I enjoy learning new things as this position must deal with rapidly-advancing computer/network technologies. However, the best part of working at UBC Linguistics for me is working with all the nice people, faculty members, staff members, and students.

**TG:** What are the challenges?

**MK:** Rapid progress of the technologies is an interesting part. However, it is a challenging part at the same time as newly developed technology can become obsolete in a few years in this age of rapid progress.

**TG:** What is your advice for students currently in a graduate program?

**MK:** It took relatively long for me to complete my Ph.D. I felt that thesis writing never ends when I was close to completion. But I learned that only the solution was just to keep writing anyway. Practicing Aikido also helped me a lot. At least when I was practicing the martial art, I was able to forget. I understand everyone is very busy with their course work and thesis writing, but I suggest that everyone should find some time to enjoy a hobby or something healthy for a change.

**TG:** Do you have any message to the department?

**MK:** I would just like to thank everyone in the department for working with me. If you need my help, please feel free to contact me anytime.

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**Grad Spotlight**

Anita Szakay

_by LAURA SHERER_

**Anita Szakay** is a Ph.D. student studying sociophonetics of New Zealand.

**The Gosling:** Where are you originally from?

**Anita Szakay:** I’m actually from Hungary, born and raised, with Hungarian parents and everything, so full on Hungarian. I finished high school in Hungary, and met a boy from New Zealand, ended up in New Zealand, and so I did all my university in New Zealand.

**TG:** How did you become interested in linguistics?

**AS:** I always knew that I wanted to do linguistics, even as a young child. When I was eight I actually made up my own language because I was so fascinated by Esperanto. So I made my own language and it was called Tesselo or something, and I used to make my family sit Tesselo exams, and they had to memorize the vocabulary and do grammar tests and stuff. When I got to New Zealand I did linguistics and Maori language as a double major, because my partner actually was Maori ethnically, but he didn’t speak Maori at all. As an undergrad I was actually more interested in syntax, but non-transformational syntax, and in my fourth year I got introduced to sociophonetics as an honours course and then I was hooked from then on.

**TG:** How did you end up at UBC?

**AS:** I ended up doing my Master’s in New Zealand, and it was never my plan to do a PhD, but because I was doing so well everyone was like, you know, “Oh, you have to do it!” [Jenn Hay, a professor in New Zealand] said she would love to supervise me for my PhD, but she felt it was better for my career to get a North American degree because it’s just worth more in the job market.

**TG:** What do you think of Vancouver?

**AS:** Vancouver is gorgeous. I love it. The first year I was here it was hard because my boyfriend was back in New Zealand, so it was hard because I was always trying to go back there as much as I could. I went back there for my summer break after my first year and spent four months back there. And then we broke up, and after that I started to really love the city here and actually have fun in the city! It reminds me a lot of New Zealand, because you have the mountains, and beautiful green parks and trees, and you also have the water.

**TG:** Is there anything you miss about home?

**AS:** It’s a funny thing; I don’t know where home is anymore. I go back to Hungary, say, once every two years and meet my family; all my family is still back in Hungary. I would say I miss, obviously my family, but I miss the food. Like paprika. There’s a Hungarian shop here so I often go and stock up on paprika paste and stuff. My families all in Hungary, but my friends are all in New Zealand, so I miss them.

**TG:** What are you doing your research on?

**AS:** Because I always had an interest in Maori, because my undergrad was in Maori language, my Master’s thesis was about ethnic dialects in New Zealand English, the white variety and the Maori variety, and I was comparing the two when it comes to suprasegmental features. But I never actually worked on Maori itself, so for this dissertation I’m actually doing a bilingual priming study. The title of the dissertation is “The effect of dialect of bilingual language processing and representation,” so I’m looking at whether different ethnic dialectal forms are processed differently by bilingual speakers.

**TG:** You were researching in New Zealand during the earthquakes last year – what was that like?

**AS:** I left here on 31 August, got there on 1 September, and my third night back was a 7.1 earthquake. It was really shallow, very close to the city, and so lots of destruction, but thank God no one died in that one. It was in the middle of the night, I was staying at a friend’s house, and all
of a sudden the house started shaking. It sounded like a big truck hit the house. It's the massive roar, you just hear it, and then it started shaking like crazy, my bed was moving and everything was falling off the shelves. The power gets cut right away for safety so there's no fires, so it was really cold because it was winter at the time. No power, no heating, and we didn't have a radio or anything. The aftershocks kept happening, and we had no idea what was going on because no TV, so we had no idea. The lucky thing was that I could text my boyfriend in Vancouver and my mom in Hungary, and so that's how we actually found out what was happening. The university closed for awhile, you kept getting aftershocks. In October they reopened the university and I could start. It seemed to be slowly going away, but then February 22 came, and there was a 6.3 earthquake. Technically it was an aftershock, but it caused massive destruction. It was lunchtime, and all these people were eating out because now it was summer, and I was in the gym in a step class. It started moving and we all fell to the ground, and the power was cut again, so it was all dark in the gym. At that point we did not realize how bad it was in the city centre. Everything collapsed, it was just destroyed. I still get goosebumps just talking about it. It took me five hours to get home; eventually someone offered me a ride, a complete stranger. We didn't have any power for a week or any water. And the university closed again, so basically my research got delayed so I'm a few months behind, but... This is going to sound cliché, but it just makes you think about what's important in life. When people die around you in a disaster like that and every day you get aftershocks, it makes you reevaluate everything.

**TG:** A paper of yours recently won Best Student Paper at this year's NWAV. Can you tell us about the paper, and how it felt to win that prize?

**NW:** I was presenting results from the first half of my dissertation, and this is really a new way of analyzing things, so this isn't what's traditionally included in this conference, but they're open to new ways. I think that's why Molly was excited that it won, because it shows that they're excited about new ways. I got a lot of feedback, and people are very excited. They haven't actually emailed me about it, it's just posted on the website and I got all these congratulations on Facebook. I hadn't checked, I didn't even know! But next year I have to start applying for jobs, so it couldn't have come at a better time.

Natalie Weber
by LAURA SHERER

Natalie Weber is a first-year M.A. student in the department.

*The Gosling:* What part of the world are you from?

**Natalie Weber:** I am from Texas, the best state in the world! Born and raised in Dallas, and I've been in Houston for the past six years. There was a year in there when I was in a little town in Germany taking linguistics classes and learning German, though.

**TG:** How did you decide to come to UBC?

**NW:** For one, I didn't want to jump straight into a PhD, so UBC stood out early because I can just do an MA if I decide to do that. And I really liked it, so I applied, and got in! And I have to say the city was a draw too.

**TG:** What sorts of differences have you found between Texas and BC?

**NW:** Well, it's cold here! And the leaves turn colors! In Houston, it's so warm that the leaves don't fall until the spring, actually. I just like that there are seasons here.

**TG:** Has your life as a grad student been more or less what you imagined?

**NW:** Yeah, I think so! There were several skills I thought I needed to learn, like time management and writing papers, and I feel like all of that is going according to plan. I'm really getting all I planned and more out of the program so far.

**TG:** What sort of research are you doing or planning to do?

**NW:** I do have an RA-ship with Martina, which we'll probably really start on in the summer. It's on Blackfoot syntax, specifically comparing it to other languages. And right now I'm doing some work on Blackfoot pitch accent.

**TG:** What do you do to relax?

**NW:** I'm actually way better at relaxing than I was when I was an undergrad! There used to be so much pressure on me to take classes and do research and do extracurriculars and hold a job, so I didn't sleep or anything, and it was terrible. But now I get 9 hours of sleep, go out dancing, cook, generally relax, and I get to do all this grad work!

**TG:** After your MA?

**NW:** I think I'm probably aiming toward a PhD, but I'm still on the fence because don't really want to become a professor, which could be a problem. So I'm looking at different programs. If I don't do a PhD, I definitely want to keep dance in my life, and I'm also really interested in sustainability initiatives... but I have no idea how to get into that! At least with linguistics I have a clear path in front of me.

**TG:** What's your favorite UBC campus animal?

**NW:** Oh my gosh, there are these crazy black squirrels! Every time one jumps in front of my I feel like I'm in Murkwood in Lord of the Rings... it's scary and terrifying! But they're pretty cool. Well, they're adorable, but in a frightening kind of way.
Undergrad Spotlight

Andrea Perez-Leon
by Esther Heng

Andrea Perez-Leon is in the final year of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Honours Speech Science, and a minor in Psychology. She is the current president of the Speech and Linguistics Student Association.

The Gosling: How is your degree related to your future career plans?

Andrea Perez-Leon: I am working towards an honours degree in speech science, and the program includes courses in linguistics, psychology, neuroscience, and several other areas of study. These courses have all prepared me for the path ahead and I look forward to what the future brings.

TG: Why did you decide to be president of SALSA?

APL: I became involved with SALSA last year, as the treasurer. Being a commuter student, I hadn't met a lot of people who shared the same academic interests as me, and joining SALSA provided me with an opportunity to meet people who were fellow linguistics' nerds. When the president stepped down this year, she asked if I would take over and I gladly accepted. I've always enjoyed being a leader and being the president of SALSA has allowed me to meet some great people, and organize a community where undergraduate students can be represented in the department of linguistics.

TG: What do you do as president of SALSA?

APL: SALSA is my baby. I'm very proud and grateful of being in charge of that this year. My main goal for the year was to increase membership and to hold events that would draw the interest of students and create a community in which they can integrate themselves more within the linguistics department. Such events include organizing study groups, social events, games nights, movie nights, and more. I've had a lot of amazing help from the other executives on the committee, and a lot of support from the department. It has been great and I only hope we continue to grow as an organization in the future.

TG: What opportunities has UBC's department of linguistics provided for you?

APL: The department of linguistics has given me a lot of support as the president of the Speech and Linguistics Student Association (SALSA). They are always helpful and I think they enjoy it as much as we do when students become excited about linguistics. In particular, I really appreciate all department members who take the time to attend our annual Wine and Cheese, as without them, students would not have the opportunity to get to know their professors in a relaxed setting. I also got the chance to work as a teaching assistant this semester, which I am very grateful for.

TG: What is it like to be a teaching assistant (TA)?

APL: Being a TA has been an amazing opportunity. At first, I was extremely nervous because I'm an undergraduate just like the students I would be teaching. As the weeks have gone by, I have become more confident in my knowledge and ability, and have enjoyed teaching more than I expected. I've had a lot of fun leading tutorials, and Dr. Lisa Matthewson has been great to work under. I feel like I've developed good relationships with my students, and hopefully, that they have learned from me as well. I also find that, in a way, it has been easy to teach them because I know what they're going through as undergraduates. All in all, it has been a very rewarding experience and I thank all who have been involved in it with me!

TG: Why did you decide to study Linguistics?

APL: I have always loved learning languages. I grew up bilingual (English and Spanish), and learned French in school. When I was accepted to UBC in 2007, I had the temporary goal of pursuing psychiatry. I did a random course search for “language” when looking for electives, and discovered LING 101 – languages of the world. I looked forward to this class every day, and did very well in it. I even convinced a good friend of mine to take it with me, and we became hooked. Here I am five years later!

TG: What was your favorite linguistics course in UBC?

APL: Sociolinguistics (LING 445) was my favourite course. I looked forward to reading long papers for each class and writing topic analysis reports on what I had learned didn't even feel like an assignment, because it was so much fun! It was also discussion-based, and it really got me to open up, participate, and not be so reserved as a student. We also had the opportunity to run our own research projects, and it was a fantastic experience! Our professor, Dr. Molly Babel, really pushed everyone and set high goals for us, so it was really cool to discover how much we were capable of doing. I also really enjoyed LING 447 with Dr. Michael Rochemont, which was a course on Focus in different languages. It also let me discover how fun research can be when you're encouraged to pursue a topic that interests you personally.

TG: What are your future career plans?

APL: This year I am applying for Masters' programs in Speech Language Pathology. I've done some volunteering and job-shadowing and have become very interested in deaf and hard-of-hearing children. However, the field is huge, and there is so much more to explore, so I am open to discovering more about the many areas that one can pursue.

Becky Laturnus
by Andrea Perez-Leon

Becky Laturnus is in her final undergraduate year and will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Honours in Linguistics and a minor in French. She is currently completing her honours thesis and is also working on Ktunaxa.

The Gosling: How did you become interested in linguistics?

Becky Laturnus: I decided to take
LING 101 as an elective in first year and got hooked. I had no idea linguistics even existed before enrolling, and had instead planned on going into French and taking as many different language classes as possible along the way. I will be forever grateful to the handy individual who suggested I take that first ling class with her.

**TG:** What course has been your favourite linguistics course?

**BL:** LING 317 (phonetics) was fascinating from the beginning. It was the first course I had taken in my undergrad that made me look forward to all aspects of class – from attending, to assignments, to writing the exams. It also opened a lot of doors. From there Dr. Molly Babel let me do an independent study, hired me as a research assistant to work in her lab, and invited me to do an honour’s thesis. Field Methods, Modality & Tense, and the current 447 have also been very rewarding.

**TG:** What is your honours thesis on?

**BL:** Well, as background, from the 1960s to mid-1980s, French-speaking Montreal shifted from an apical trill to a uvular trill/fricative. A study conducted in the mid-eighties found that by then the apical trill had become chiefly associated with older generations (Sankoff & Blondeau, 2007). My thesis looks at whether today’s young speakers from that area are familiar with the two variants and how this variation affects short- and long-term processing of words containing the apical trill. I’m also investigating what effect, if any, the age of the voices heard in the experiment will have on processing (i.e. whether hearing an older voice produce the apical trill will be processed faster or more accurately than a young voice).

**TG:** How did you choose your topic for your honours thesis?

**BL:** We read Sankoff and Blondeau’s paper in sociolinguistics last year and I was particularly intrigued because it was compatible with my own experiences of Montreal French. The social aspects of linguistics have always interested me, and this study provided the perfect opportunity to incorporate my minor into my thesis and to learn more about speech perception.

**TG:** Tell me about Ktunaxa. How did you become involved with that?

**BL:** I took Field Methods last year with Dr. Martina Wiltschko and Ktunaxa (Kootenay) was the topic language. It’s severely endangered and is spoken in southeastern BC and parts of Idaho and Montana. Martina hired me as a research assistant through the summer, so I was able to continue working on developing an accessible grammar for the nation.

**TG:** What are you working on in Ktunaxa?

**BL:** I’m currently doing an independent study with Martina on the syntax of reflexives and reciprocals. I’m also still working on Ktunaxa modality as part of Dr. Lisa Matthews and Dr. Hotze Rullman’s 530 class.

**TG:** What opportunities has UBC linguistics provided for you?

**BL:** Our department offers multitudinous opportunities to its undergrads! Because I’ve been lucky enough to have such supportive, encouraging profs, I’ve had a number of invaluable opportunities as an undergraduate. Last year I got to present my research on Ktunaxa at the Annual Harvard Undergraduate Linguistics Colloquium, and also travelled to Creston to present to the Ktunaxa Nation the grammar sketch and stories our Field Methods class had been compiling. Professors and graduate students in the department helped me prepare a paper I presented at the International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages this past summer. The independent studies, RA-ships and honours thesis have also been fantastic opportunities.

**TG:** What are your plans after the completion of your undergraduate degree?

**BL:** I plan on applying to graduate schools in the hope of pursuing sociophonetics while continuing to strengthen my bases in linguistics.

**TG:** What has been your favourite part of studying linguistics at UBC?

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Emily Blamire

Congratulations to Emily Blamire on behalf of the department of Linguistics! Emily graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, Honours in Linguistics with the added honour of having achieved the Dean’s List during both her third and fourth years. She was one of seven students who made the Dean’s list in both of their senior years. This past November 395 students graduated with Bachelor degrees. This is an outstanding achievement. We are very proud of Emily’s academic achievement. Good luck to you in your future endeavours.

Jessie Chen

by Kimberly Su

Jessie Chen is an undergraduate majoring in linguistics.

**The Gosling:** What made you interested in linguistics?

**Jessie Chen:** At first, I wanted to

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be an elementary school teacher (go into education) and I felt that linguistics would be relevant to that. Unlike other people who are triggered by their first linguistics course, I didn’t enjoy my first linguistics course (LING 201) but the second course I took (LING 200) I found really interesting. After taking LING 200, I found that it wasn’t really about how it was suitable for my future career plans but it was more of something that I actually enjoyed as a whole.

**TG:** Which linguistics course do you/did you find most challenging?

**JC:** LING 201 because I felt that the course was pretty rushed and I didn’t have time to keep up with assignments or to learn at a proper pace. The material I found was pretty interesting though – you can see language formation/sentence structure in a different way than before. You realize that sentence structure/meaning of words is not as simple as they appear to be and that fascinates you.

**TG:** How do you plan to apply your knowledge of linguistics to what you want you want to do in the future?

**JC:** The problem-solving skills that I’ve learned I feel I could apply to many different areas of study and in real life. I plan to become a teacher or a nurse so I feel that I would be able to use my knowledge as a good foundation in those careers. Especially living in Vancouver (which is very multi-cultural), I’m bound to be exposed to people speaking different languages and I can relate to them despite their language barriers through my knowledge of linguistics.

**TG:** What topic of linguistics do you find most interesting? And why?

**JC:** Phonology – because it makes learning a new language a lot easier. Over the summer, I also took French, and I felt that after taking LING 200, I was able to pronounce better and help myself understand how to pronounce something instead of just listening/hearing the teacher say it and trying to imitate the sound.

**TG:** Do you have an interest in learning languages? What languages are you fluent in and what languages would like to learn more of?

**JC:** I’m fluent in Mandarin and English. I’ve started learning French since grade 5 until the end of first year so there’s still lots to learn. I also want to learn Japanese and Taiwanese (a dialect of Taiwan).

**TG:** Why?

**JC:** Taiwanese, because I feel that it’s kind of dying – in our generation, no one is forced to learn it and only the older generations speak it. I think it’s nice to be able to speak a language that not many people can understand. Japanese because the Japanese culture fascinates me.

**TG:** How has your undergraduate experience been so far?

**JC:** I feel that this year has been my favourite year because I’ve been keeping myself relatively busy with school and work and finding a balance between the two.

**TG:** Do you have any specific studying tips for other undergraduates?

**JC:** Pre-read. Because when you read it first, you can get a head start about understanding the material which helps you make the most out of your lecture because the prof clarifies anything else. I find this to be really effective especially in linguistics.

**TG:** Where is your favourite place to study on campus?

**JC:** Koerner basement- but not in the silent study areas because I can’t study in complete silence.

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**Imagine Day**

![SALSA](image)

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Previous Grad Spotlight

Gessiane Picanço
by AMÉLIA REIS SILVA

Gessiane Picanço earned her PhD from UBC in 2006, with a dissertation entitled “Mundurukú: phonetics, phonology, synchrony, diachrony.” She’s currently working in Brazil.

The Gosling: What was your background before coming to UBC?

The Gosling: Before going to UBC, I had a 4-year scholarship to do research on Mundurukú, while an undergraduate student at the Universidade Federal do Pará.

TG: How was your grad experience at UBC?

GP: Unique. Going to UBC was the best decision I’ve ever made.

TG: What are you up to now?

GP: I work as a professor at the Universidade Federal do Pará, and I teach and supervise students at both grad and undergrad levels. I still do research on Indigenous Languages of Amazonia (Mundurukú e Kuruaya) and other Tupian languages (phonetics and phonology). I’m also working on Language revitalization and education. There is a group of Mundurukú, about 3,000 people, in the state of Amazona, that lost their native language. They are trying to revitalize it and I’m helping them. It is a program done together with professors from Faculty of Education of the Universidade Federal do Amazonas. I also develop a pilot project in public, Secondary and High, schools of Belém, helping students to gain fluency in reading and comprehension.

TG: What do you like about your current job?

GP: Teaching and doing research.

TG: Anything you miss about UBC/Vancouver?

GP: Yes, lots of things. About UBC I miss the library, the student life, and the academic environment. I miss the beautiful Vancouver, the winter, people...

TG: What was the most exciting/non-exciting thing about finishing your PhD?

GP: Exciting: the feeling of having succeeded in academic life. Non-exciting: not knowing how life will be after.

Alumni Spotlight

Hana Dethlefsen
by DAYANQI SI

Hana Dethlefsen did her B.A. (Linguistics) and B.Ed. (Elementary) at UBC in 2001 and 2005, respectively. Recently, she is back to UBC for the third time to get her M.Ed. (museum studies). In the meantime, she is also working as a part-time informal educator.

The Gosling: Why did you choose linguistics as your major in B.A.?

Hana Dethlefsen: I actually started with a general B.A. and got super interested by taking the very first linguistics class I have ever had in my second year of undergraduate education. I really enjoyed linguistics.

TG: Were you afraid of not getting a job after graduating from linguistics major?

HD: All I was thinking was that I was into linguistics. What I value is the learning experience that I get from going to a university, instead of the job it leads me to.

TG: What did you do after your first undergraduate graduation?

HD: I joined the JET (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) right after and worked in Japan as an assistant language teacher for three years.

TG: What is the job that you enjoyed the most in the past ten years?

HD: Informal educator. I really thought I would love to be a classroom teacher when I was doing my linguistics degree, but it was almost impossible to give out perfect lectures for eight hours a day when I was a classroom teacher. Nevertheless, as
an informal educator at a place like Science World, I have enough time and chances to craft a perfect workshop for children to learn through objects. This is also why I am back to school doing a Master's degree in museum studies.

TG: What's your advice for the current students?

HD: Try to take as many opportunities as you can. Be open-minded and take the chances to try out new things. Personally, I was conservative and focused on the one path to be a classroom teacher. However, I ended up with not really enjoying the life of a classroom teacher. It was hard to switch from a classroom teacher to an informal educator, but I really enjoy it.

Caleb Lee

I was first introduced to Caleb Lee via email as we tried to arrange for a time that we could meet up and talk about what he's been doing since graduating in 2005, and how his degree has helped (if it has) shape him into who he is now. Through our email correspondence, I could tell that he was so excited to share his story and to reconnect with the community back here at UBC. Caleb's story is one that echoes many of the same situations and questions that students face in their undergrad. Since graduating in 2006, his journey of self-exploration has helped him to understand himself, to recognize his passions and to utilize the knowledge and experiences gained from studying at UBC.

Beginning his undergrad in the Faculty of Arts in 2001, as with many students who enter UBC, he was unsure of what exactly he wanted to do after schooling. He gravitated to the social arts and declared a Linguistics Major in his second year after exploring his natural love and interest for language in first year through courses including French, Spanish, Latin and German! Asking the magic question: “What can I do with a Linguistics degree???, “ Caleb chose to enter the Speech Science tract and graduated with a Speech Science Major.

Caleb admitted shares that his outlook concerning education and his university career was very one-track: get a degree and finish university. Looking back now, he shares that he was not at a "level of maturity" that empowered him to look further past attaining that degree. Throughout his undergraduate degree and even afterwards, he still did not know what he really wanted to do in terms of his career or plans for the future. Rather, he just plowed on through the degree requirements because it seemed like the logical thing to do. After graduation, he had all the technical requirements but still did not quite know what the field of Speech Pathology held for him. He job shadowed speech pathologists in both private clinics and in the public system (VGH, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver School Board). He also assisted in a private clinic and was eventually hired on as a speech assistant. It was in his time working as a speech assistant that he began to seriously doubt if this was the profession for him. He describes this time as feeling like there was always “a big grey cloud over [his] head.”

After applying and being declined twice for graduate school largely due to grades, Caleb sought advice from a professor at UBC about retaking courses and upgrading his marks as a possible next step. To his surprise, the professor challenged him to re-assess his personal goals and reconsider if pursuing Speech Pathology was really something he wanted to do and would be willing to put in the enormous amount of time, effort and money into retaking courses. For the first time, Caleb was faced with the option of doing something different as opposed to following the "logical" next steps. With this conversation, he realized that it would be unrealistic for him to continue, especially as he had come to realize (through his two years of working in the field) that he did not have a passion for Speech Pathology and did not enjoy it. It was at this point that he effectively stepped out of the field and found himself back at square one.

Caleb then began exploring different areas of career possibilities that played to his strengths, abilities and interests. Growing up in a Christian family, faith was a large part of his life and so he pursued a Master of Divinity degree at Ambrose University College in Calgary but only completed one year before deciding that he did not want to be a pastor. He then explored his love for the social, visual and creative arts through hairdressing, counselling and catering. After all these forays into different fields and still without a clear direction or passion that he wanted to pursue, Caleb was discouraged and began wondering if he would be able to actually find something that he loved to do. His questions were answered when he unexpectedly decided to attend an information session at Vancouver Community College about teaching English. He proceeded to complete a TESOL certificate July of 2011, just graduating this past November as valedictorian of his class!

He is now teaching English at an international school downtown as well as volunteering his teaching skills at the Immigrant Services Society of BC. He loves his work and hopes to just gain more experience in the field and to eventually complete a Master's Degree in TESOL with which he can look at the possibility of teaching abroad. When I asked him if his Speech Science degree from UBC helps him in his teaching now, he responded enthusiastically saying that so many of his studies in syntax and
phonology have largely informed his own teaching style now. Because of his understanding about how sounds are made (e.g. manner/ place of articulation) as well as feature theory, Caleb has found that he can explain and teach English to his students in a way that breaks it down into tangible parts to learn rather than a whole abstract idea that they have to grasp. In one example, he shared that telling his students that one of the only differences between an /s/ and a /z/ was how they voiced it helped them to master the pronunciation much faster. When they realized that they already knew how to produce a /z/ sound and just had to adjust their phonation, the difficulty of creating the sounds was simplified into a tangibly understood concept rather than just trying to differentiate between an /s/ or /z/ on the page!

Because of his own personal journey from graduating with a degree that he did not quite have a passion for to finally discovering a career with which he finds fulfillment, Caleb enjoys volunteering with current students at VCC providing advice and teaching them about how to transition smoothly from school into the real world. Caleb shares that an important part of transitioning smoothly into the working world is making sure that you are motivating yourself rather than simply going through the motions and doing what you think you “should” be doing. He encourages undergraduates to ask questions and to take time to look into the field to see if it is something that they really will enjoy. He adds that one need not worry if there may not be questions yet, because questions WILL come once you really find your passion and area of interest. When asked if he had any advice or words of encouragement for current undergraduate students now at UBC, he had this to say: “Don’t worry if you don’t know what you’re doing now. Don’t feel pressured and definitely don’t feel that you are disorganized or immature if you don’t know. It’s OK, give it time and space so that you can find what you really love.”

Diane Jones
by Penelope Bacsfalvi

Diane Jones graduated in 1975, with a B.A. in Linguistics, and knew she wanted to teach ESL right away. She had already started teaching in August 1974 before completing her degree. She worked at King Edward Campus, Vancouver Community College for most of her career. She also earned a master’s degree in education in curriculum and instruction, from U.B.C. in 1983.

Most of her career, she taught in two different departments- ESL Dept., for general fee payers. These classes were for immigrants who had been in Canada for a long time and didn’t qualify for government assistance any more but were continuing to work on improving their language skills. Later she worked primarily with the federal government paid programmes for new immigrants.

Diane Jones: Originally I was going to do a B.A. in French. I was in 1st year at UBC sitting in class one day and it occurred to me that a degree in French from the University of British Columbia didn’t make sense. But I did keep taking French literature courses, but decided to major in Linguistics.

The Gosling: How did you know you wanted to teach ESL? Back in 1975 Linguistics was not known as well as now –how did you come to choose Linguistics?

DJ: I don’t remember a time when I didn’t have a fascination for language. As a child in Winnipeg I remember some people speaking French and saying ‘oui, oui’ and wondering why are they saying ‘wie’ for everything... and my mum explained it meant ‘yes’ and not ‘little’. And then we moved to Vancouver when I was 10 and I was fascinated by Cantonese and would ask friends at school or the people at the corner store what things meant. I also had a friend who was German, and was always asking her to count and say things in German. I always had an interest in language and how languages worked.

TG: Do you speak any other languages?

DJ: Yes, Russian. I was teaching at a boys’ school in Manitoba and one of the boys was Ukrainian and asked if I could read Ukrainian and he challenged me. So I taught myself to read and write Ukrainian from his book. When I came home to Vancouver, I couldn’t get a course in Ukrainian to continue with my studies, so I switched to Russian. Though they are similar they are quite different too-knowing one does not mean you understand the other.

I was teaching in Manitoba at a private school, I had not yet finished high school- although back then a high school diploma plus one year at Normal School (teacher’s college) allowed you a teaching certificate. I was doing my last course by correspondence while teaching at this boy’s school. I was teaching French and English grammar to grade 6 & 7 kids. This is when I met the young Ukrainian boy and became interested in Ukrainian, and then Russian. This would have been around 1977?

I married early, after grade 11, and I’m still married to the same guy. I went back to university once I had my 5 children, the youngest being in grade 2 at the time.

TG: Have you ever wanted to do a different job, working in government or using Russian in a different way?

DJ: No. But I did tutor people in university studying Russian. Also, in 1975 I went to Moscow and for three weeks I took a Russian course there. The way I really learned Russian, was that there were a lot of Soviet ships that came to Vancouver- from 1974 and 1984. Almost every day I went to a Soviet ship and visited with them. My husband and I would take our 5 kids and they would run around and help and play on the ships. The people were lovely, and I got to practice my Russian.

TG: What kind of ships were these?

DJ: They were freighters from Vladivostok and some from Sakhalin Island. They would bring goods and general cargo from Japan, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. From...
Sakhalin Island the ships were interesting and very small, and they had refrigeration on them. They would buy groceries from Vancouver and take the groceries to the factory ships in the Pacific because there were big canneries owned by the Russians and it was closer for them to buy supplies in Vancouver. I had one interesting day in particular, we were going to take the Russian crew out somewhere. We got there and there were T.V. cameras on the docks. The Russians were kind of nervous and asked what was going on. So I went over and asked, and I was told there was going to be a demonstration against the Russian whaler. I told them, this is not a whaler. The reporter asked to go on board, but the captain said no. I pointed out where would they put a whale? He walked up and down looking at it. The reporter asked what we were doing. I said we were taking them to the Abbotsford Airshow. So, we left. When we got back we watched the news report. The green peace ships were taunting them and shouting, saying things like “wake up,” “don’t ignore us,” etc. But the reporter knew that the demonstrators were mistaken. The reporter, to support the Russian crews, ended his broadcast with a shot of us all walking down the dock on our way to the Abbotsford Airshow saying, “And where are these sleeping Russians, they’ve gone to the Abbotsford Airshow...and besides, where would you put a whale?”

**TG:** That’s a great story- and what a fun way to practice Russian. And do you still do tutoring?

**DJ:** Yes, ESL, but nothing with Russian in a long time. I sometimes read a book in Russian or watch something on T.V.

**TG:** So you are still a very busy person. I noticed you have a blog, and you do volunteer work with your church.

**DJ:** Yes, I am busy, making sandwiches on Mondays at the cathedral. I volunteer with an elementary school for the last 8 years- reading with the kids. This year I will be reading with the grade 3-4 kids. I don’t know if this is of interest to you, but I was seconded by VCC to teach ESL in Hong Kong. I went by myself for 4 months in 1994. It was fascinating- just before the change in regime.

**TG:** That must have been a very interesting time. Did you have a chance to travel around China or mostly Hong Kong?

**DJ:** Mostly Hong Kong.

**TG:** Was working there very different from working here?

**DJ:** Yes, because I was teaching teenagers rather than working adults. They were interested in moving to Canada. They had a different attitude back then. They were very respective- but other than that like typical teenagers.

**TG:** You have had such an interesting career and life. Have I missed anything?

**DJ:** Well, I am mostly interested in writing for children now.

**TG:** Oh yes, I saw this on your blog. What kind of books are you writing? For what age group?

**DJ:** I like to write for the middle grades and young adults.

**TG:** You only started writing when you retired?

**DJ:** I was always writing something, but it only became not a hobby when I retired.

**TG:** And do you write for the ESL population?

**DJ:** No, I’ve thought about it. I have given a lot of thought to it- but not yet.

**TG:** Have you been published yet?

**DJ:** Not any novels, but articles, a short story, and a game board game. They are listed on my blog: http://dianecbjonesjournal.blogspot.com/

**TG:** Well, you have certainly had a very interesting life and career based on your research interests in an unfettered way.

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- Joe has led us through some difficult economic times, during which the department has continued to grow and thrive. This success has many causes, but an important factor has been the presence of a head who has always had the collective best interests of the Department at heart. One so often hears of other departments where the head has his or her own agenda that may be at odds with the wishes of their units. This would be inconceivable with Joe. Even when his opinions have differed from the democratic choices of the Department, he has always done his best to implement and defend the group’s choices.

- Since I started working for the department as the tech support, Joe has always been considerate to me. I always felt comfortable and enjoyed working.

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**Faculty News**

**Joseph Stemberger**

*by Edna Dharmaratne*

I enjoyed working with Joe over the past nine years and I was happy when I was asked to write something about my working relationship with him as Head of the department. Joe took a while to open up, but once he did, I found the stories of his travels and childhood very interesting. I enjoyed very much watching him break into a song and dance in the office and corridors of TFS. Joe was very easy to work with – I found him to be honest and trustworthy. He showed his confidence in my abilities by letting me run the administrative office my way, and he made coming to work a pleasure for me because he was flexible and undemanding. I will miss not working with you Joe!

I have polled the department, and as you can see from the following comments Joe’s Headship has been much appreciated. Joe’s stewardship of the department was guided by a desire to foster an environment that allowed faculty members to pursue their research interests in an unfettered fashion.

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- Joe has led us through some difficult economic times, during which the department has continued to grow and thrive. This success has many causes, but an important factor has been the presence of a head who has always had the collective best interests of the Department at heart. One so often hears of other departments where the head has his or her own agenda that may be at odds with the wishes of their units. This would be inconceivable with Joe. Even when his opinions have differed from the democratic choices of the Department, he has always done his best to implement and defend the group’s choices.

- Since I started working for the department as the tech support, Joe has always been considerate to me. I always felt comfortable and enjoyed working.
- I have been working on a project with him and May Bernhardt. I think his strongest impact on the department (at least from my point of view) is that he gave grad students of linguistics lots of opportunities to interact with people in the school of speech and audiology sciences. Especially he invited us to participate in the project of Crosslinguistic Study of Children’s Speech Development, and I think many students are happy about learning about new aspects of data, method and analysis. It was a pleasure working with Joe. Right from the start he made a new employee feel very comfortable and at ease. He is very friendly and more like a colleague than a Head. As a Head, he was extremely fair and just. He was a great mentor, I learnt a great deal from him while working on various projects. I am very honoured to have worked for him while at Linguistics. When Joe arrived I was also a new faculty member and really appreciated how he made a point in stopping me in the hallway to chat (usually about some interesting fact about Serbo-Croatian). It made me feel comfortable and as a result I felt like I could knock on his door when I had a problem that I thought he could help me with. And in fact, he always made time to listen to whatever issue I felt I needed to be discussed. (And Joe’s singing in the hallway always makes me smile Joe’s term as Head of this department has been a period in which the department saw dramatic growth and many positive and exciting developments. Our faculty contingent is now much larger, covering a wider and more diverse range of expertise, and we have become more visible, both internationally and within Canada, and a more attractive place for students to pursue their graduate education. Our graduate and undergraduate programs have changed considerably, all for the better. Finally, when Joe took over the Headship, our home was a nondescript and very cramped corridor in the E-wing of the Buchanan complex. Now we have our very own building, with facilities and resources that have transformed the atmosphere of the department as a place to work, study, and interact with other department members. (Not to mention those geese in the parking lot!) Thank you Joe for your part in all of these positive changes!

- I appreciate that Joe stepped into the headship with no notice and when he had only been at UBC a short while. And that he was willing to do it for two terms. On a personal level I appreciate that he always tried his very best to get us the teaching assignments we requested - not all depts. are like that.

- Joe stepped into the headship twice, at times where there was either noone else who could do the job or where noone else was willing. He oversaw the transition from being a very small unit to being the size that we are currently. Joe strongly felt that individual faculty members’ time should be protected and he did his best to shield us from administrative tedium. Whatever the circumstances, Joe tried his utmost to be fair to all members of the Department.

- Joe has been department head for longer than I have been at UBC. It’s difficult for me to picture the department without him in the role of head. Being department head can sometimes be a thankless job, I’m afraid. Joe was asked to become head virtually overnight, only shortly after he joined the department, and he volunteered to stay on as head after the completion of his first term. Throughout those years he has always worked tirelessly on behalf of the whole department, and the department has flourished and grown under his leadership. What I have always especially appreciated about Joe is his fair and even-handed management style. Thanks, Joe!
Party for Joseph Stemberger
What kind of voices get imitated?

Previous research has argued that atypical voices will be imitated more than other voice profiles. Another line of research indicates that imitation is guided by social preferences, suggesting that pleasant or attractive voices may be imitated at the exclusion of others. In collaboration with Professor Grant McGuire at University of California, Santa Cruz, Professor Molly Babel is exploring this exact topic. To begin, the researchers took a database of 30 male and 30 female voices and had listeners in Vancouver and Santa Cruz rate the voices for attractiveness and typicality. From this set of voices, eight were selected for the imitation experiment; for each gender the most attractive, the least attractive, the most typical, and the least typical were used as model voices in an imitation task. To elicit imitation, a group of participants completed an auditory naming task, where they simply repeat words after hearing each word produced by the model talkers. Listeners are then used to judge perceptual similarity as a measure of imitation. Some of the results are shown in the accompanying figure. This figure shows how female participants (pink) and male participants (blue) imitate the eight model talker voice profiles differently. The measure of imitation is shown on the vertical axis; a value above .5 is evidence of speech imitation. These results indicate that female participants imitate more than male participants. Interestingly, it seems female imitation focuses on the attractive voices, the typical voices, and the least typical male voice. Male participants, on the other hand, seem to preferentially imitate the least typical male and female voices, along with the most typical male voice. Males seem to especially avoid imitating the most attractive male voice. These results demonstrate that voice atypicality and social preferences may drive imitation of the speech signal, but that these mechanisms may function differently for men and women.

Department Events

Department BBQ
Salish Conference

by LISA MATTHEWSON

In August our department hosted the 46th International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages. This year’s ICSNL was one of the most diverse yet in terms of language coverage. There were papers on the Salish languages Halkomelem, Lillooet, Thompson, Okanagan, Saanich and Lushootseed, as well as sessions on Ktunaxa (isolate), Kwak’wala (Northern Wakashan), and Gitksan (Tsimshianic). Many UBC faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students presented papers, and we were happy to welcome visitors from Vancouver Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Utah. The last day was devoted to a methodology session in which participants shared their innovative fieldwork techniques, and presentations by community language education experts. We were also well-fed at a barbecue in our department’s garden!

Fun fact: The UBC Department of Linguistics hosts the online archive of ICSNL papers (http://www.icsnl.org/), as well as now publishing the papers in print form and electronically (http://www.linguistics.ubc.ca/ubcwpl).

Grad Student News

by LAURA SHERER

Analia Gutiérrez won an SOAS grant to do fieldwork and research on dialectical differences between speakers of Nivacle (Matacoan-Mataguayan), an endangered language of Argentina and Paraguay. She became a scholar with UBC’s Liu Institute for Global Issues for her research and efforts to develop Nivacle literacy materials, and received the “Bottom Billion” fieldwork grant in July to do research in Paraguay.

Jennifer Abel and Alexis Black presented a poster with Molly Babel at the Acoustical Society of America meeting in San Diego, entitled “Phonetic imitation in contexts of stimulus-directed and non-stimulus-directed attention.”

Anita Szakay won the Best Student Paper Prize at October’s sociolinguistic conference, New Ways of Analyzing Variation, for her paper entitled “Sociophonetic markers facilitate translation priming: Maori English GOAT – a different kind of animal.”

Michael McAuliffe presented a poster with Molly Babel at the Acoustical Society of America meeting in San Diego, entitled “Reduction of consonants and vowels in the course of a discourse” and defended his first qualifying paper in December, entitled “Assessing the relative cross-linguistic importance of consonants and vowels.”

Heather Bliss coauthored two papers with Bettina Gruber of Utrecht University; “Decomposing Blackfoot Proclitics” was presented at GLOW 34 (Generative Linguistics in the Old World) in Vienna in April, and “Anchoring Participants: The Case of Blackfoot Proclitics” was presented at the 21st Colloquium on Generative Grammar in Sevilla, Spain shortly before. She also presented a paper entitled “A Unified Analysis of Blackfoot” at the Western Conference on Linguistics at SFU in November.


Scott Mackie coauthored a paper with Jeff Mielke entitled “Feature economy in natural, random, and synthetic inventories” which has been published in Where Do Phonological Features Come From? Cognitive, physical, and developmental bases of distinctive speech categories.

James Crippen is writing two QPs on Tinglit grammar, one examining the word order and syntactic structure of relative clauses, and another examining the segmental phonology.
Abigail Scott
by Donald Derrick

Abigail Scott died suddenly on June 18, 2011. She was on her way to a friend’s wedding in Bloomfield, Indiana, travelling along windy rural dirt roads when she lost control of her car and crashed into a creek. They tell me she was ten minutes away from the wedding site when she passed away into the next life.

At the time of her death, Abigail was back where she grew up, celebrating with friends and rejoicing in their new loves and lives – this was to be her second wedding in as many days. And that is the Abigail I came to know in the all too short time we had as friends together on this Earth.

I met Abigail when she started graduate school at UBC and then joined our phonetics lab. One of the first things I noticed about Abigail is that she loved language almost as much laughing at the silliness of human behaviour. Needless to say she had a lot of material to work with, and her laugh was infectious! She would engage me in conversation, argue, and frustrate me to no end, but through it all she was the truest of friends.

One day a couple of years ago, I told her how frustrated I was that I couldn’t find a good, stable Church or Christian family since arriving in Vancouver. Well, she wasn’t going to tolerate that. She practically dragged me out to her Bible study and introduced me her friends. Through her I found the best of friends – diverse in beliefs able to argue gracefully about nearly everything. Together we understood each other’s frustrations, and formed a true and loving community – even in normally flaky Vancouver!

Abigail would do the most amazing things for friends; from dropping everything to get Jen the hockey tickets she left at work so she wouldn’t miss a Canucks game, to just sitting in the Regent library with Paisley and studying next to each other for hours on end, to joining me on a 5-day Easter service binge at St. James Anglican in celebration of my recent dissertation defence.

Abigail loved children, and in particular helped take care of Andrew, the son of our two Bible study hosts Karl and Meg. She used to delight in all his quirky toddler behaviours. Every time I saw him do something goofy before leaving for my job Australia, I’d keep thinking “I’ll have to tell Abigail about that! She’ll laugh and facepalm at the same time!”

But these stories don’t tell you how strong Abigail was. In the time I knew her, things were not easy for her, nor was her work or research life going smoothly. I saw her struggle with depression, and I often didn’t know what to do except do what she did for all of us, which was to be with her and pray for her. Yet through the pain of this frustrating and deeply enduring depression, Abigail found delight and joy and ability to just be with her friends. She embraced her life even when it hurt, and taught all of us around her to do the same.

Wugs Take Intramural Championship
by Kevin McMullin

“This is a wug! Now there are six of them! There are six... WUGS!” This was the cheer each time the UBC Linguistics volleyball team, dubbed the Wugs, stepped onto the court. After finishing the regular season 5-4, and 7th overall in the Tier 2 divisional co-rec standings, the Wugs achieved perfection by not losing a set through four playoff matches to win the championship on November 27, 2011. The Wugs toughest challenge came in the semi-finals when they faced Alpha Grabba DKE. Having lost twice to the fraternity/sorority team twice during the regular season, the Wugs bumped, set, and spiked as if their SSHRC grants depended on it, taking the tight match 25-18, 25-21 before beating the ADPi Titans with ease in the finals.

The team consisted of volleyball newcomers and veterans alike, with Molly Babel and Stacey Menzies setting, Alexis Black, Pat Littell, and Martin Oberg hitting from the outside, and Rob Fuhrman and Kevin McMullin putting up blocks from middle. If you would like to offer your congratulations, each Wug can be found around Totem Field Studios, likely wearing one of the coveted UBC Rec “Champion” t-shirts, and is more than willing to sign autographs. Go Wugs!
The Speech and Linguistics Student Association has seen a great increase in membership this year. Our executive committee is almost entirely made up of new members, and we have been excited with the amount of interest from undergraduate students. In September, we opened up the year with a BBQ/potluck hosted by the department. We then held an ice-cream social in which members were able to get to know each other. We had a great turnout, and students were able to make new friends and get to know one another while enjoying some ice cream. In October, we held a guest lectures by Dr. Penelope Bacsfalvi (Speech Science Advisor) and Dr. Henry Davis (Linguistics Advisor). Undergraduate students were provided some very useful insight and advice by an expert in the field. November began with our first ever movie night, in which we screen the documentary "The Linguists." It was nice to share this experience with other undergraduate students, and we hope to see more of you for our second movie night next semester! Our annual wine and cheese in November was also a great success! It is always an excellent opportunity for students to mingle with graduate students, staff, and faculty. Next semester we hope to continue to increase our turnout at events. Planned events include IPA bingo nights, phonotactic scrabble, guest lectures, a screening of the documentary “Nim Chimpsky”, and other social events. We hope that students continue to increase interest in attending events with other undergraduates. This year has been a great success and we wish everyone a Merry Christmas!
Pilot launch of the Faculty of Arts Tri-Mentoring in Linguistics

by Penelope Bacsfalvi

This year the Department of Linguistics is joining many of the departments at UBC by participating in the Tri-Mentoring programme. This programme connects undergraduate students and alumni for several meetings over a 3 month period. The Arts Tri-Mentoring Program connects Arts students with industry and faculty mentors, and with one another. It involves a UBC alumni who is matched with a junior (1st/2nd year) and a senior (3rd/4th year) student. Matches are based on academic and career goals. For more information see the following link: http://students.arts.ubc.ca/learning-experiences/leadership-mentorship/arts-tri-mentoring-program.html The Faculty of Arts mentorship programme runs for 8 months. Our programme is a pilot that will last three months, starting in January 2012 and running until April 2012. We will begin recruitment in January 2012. We are very excited by the upcoming event and look forward to the experience. A special thanks to undergraduate students: Andrea Perez-Leon, Keri Ng, and Estephanie Sta. Maria on taking responsibility in the project and making things happen.

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The Odd One Out

by Merlin