

French

le bulletin des études françaises et italiennes

NEWS

WINTER 2012

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Bonjour, les assistantes!

Students visiting Le Cercle français this year will be ushered in by three very enthusiastic visitors from France.

Marine Christophe, Lan-Anh Nguyen and Elsa Vesin, all in their early 20s, arrived in Dalhousie's French Department this Fall via France's CIEP assistants programme.

The CIEP program – which stands for Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques – promotes international co-operation in education. After a grueling evaluation process, selected participants choose one country to visit for an academic year and assist in classrooms.

Each girl has a different reason for choosing Canada:

Marine, who wants to teach French to English students, wanted to come to North America. Because Canada is a bilingual country, there were more opportunities for assistants here than there were in the US.

Lan-Anh had visited Canada before and has family in Montreal and Toronto. She is currently pursuing her Masters degree in English and wishes to become an English teacher for French speakers.

Elsa had heard many good things about Canada. Like Marine, she wants to teach French to English students.

At the time of the interview (November 2011), the girls had been here almost three months. While they didn't choose Halifax specifically, they say they're loving their time here, both on and off campus.

"People here are very nice – always smiling and very helpful," says Elsa.

In addition to teaching intermediate French to first and second year classes, the girls take turns at Le Cercle français helping students with homework or just allowing them a space to practice their French.



Les Assistantes: Marine Christophe, Elsa Vesin and Lan-Anh Nguyen

"I love my students!" says Marine. "They're very motivated."

They've enjoyed their time in the Department, as well; the feeling is mutual.

"Their contribution is invaluable to us and we're very fortunate to be able to count on their energy and commitment," says Department Chair Vittorio Frigerio.

While much is the same here as back home, one big difference the girls have noticed is in the price of tuition. Marine, who received a scholarship, is paying less than five euros for her Master's Degree. Even without a scholarship, she says the most a student would pay in tuition for her degree is 400 euros (approximately \$550 CAD.)

Lan-Anh is surprised by course evaluations and the value which the university places on student feedback. "Teachers are graded here – that doesn't happen in France."

Off campus, the girls have found a few favourites, among them Point Pleasant Park, the Seaport Market and Halifax's historic downtown core.

The girls finish up their contract in April and then head home.

Dalhousie has participated in this program for more than ten years. With participants like these, it's a safe bet the Department will be participating for many years to come.

French Department Updates

New face

Nelleke Strik obtained her PhD in December 2008 at the Université Paris 8. She moved to Canada in Fall 2009 to become a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto.

Nelleke is a linguist, mostly trained in syntax, and her research focuses on language acquisition. Her PhD thesis was a comparative study on the syntax and acquisition of interrogative sentences in French and Dutch children.

After her PhD, Nelleke extended her interest to bilingual language acquisition.

In Toronto she started to work on the acquisition of (clitic) pronouns in French-English bilinguals. Her current research includes defining how one language can influence another and in which domains cross-linguistic influence can be expected.



Les Deux Patricias

This year the Department has welcomed back **Dr. Patricia DeMéo**, who had been seconded to Student Services for several years.

Patricia has delved into the fray with her characteristic energy, taking on the role of Undergraduate Coordinator and contribut-

ing in many and varied ways to the life of the Department.

It's good to have you back, Patricia!



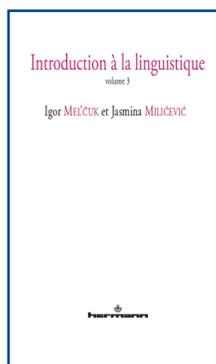
At the end of the summer of 2011, our colleague **Patricia Lee Men Chin**, who has been employed as an Instructor in the Department since 2003, successfully defended her PhD thesis, entitled "Stratégies d'apprentissage des langues secondes dans un environnement informatisé: une méta-analyse qualitative de l'utilisation du cour-

rier électronique", written under the supervision of Drs Marie-Josée Hamel (University of Ottawa) and Jasmina Miličević. Patricia has since been promoted to Senior Instructor.

Congratulations are in order!



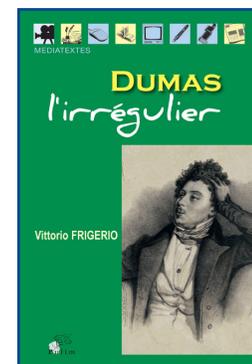
New Departmental Publications



Introduction à la linguistique – vol. 3
Igor Meščuk & Jasmina Miličević
Hermann Éditeurs, 2011



Jacques Ferron: hors Québec/
Jacques Ferron: outside Québec
Edited by: Betty Bednarski & Ray Ellenwood
Éditions du Gref, 2010



Dumas l'irrégulier
Vittorio Frigerio
Pulim, 2011

A breath of fresh air

“Building bridges”,
“reaching out”,
“connecting communities”

All popular buzzwords in the university community, but what do they mean for the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences?

Enter Jean-Jacques Defert, an assistant professor in the Department of French. Last year, he took the idea of internships –generally reserved for students in professional programmes – and amended it to fit language programmes.

What emerged was a new ‘service learning’ component to French 2002 – Spoken French.

Francophone associations in the Halifax Regional Municipality were matched with student volunteers; the students provided much needed assistance in programming while engaging in a valuable learning experience.

“I hope to make students realize that there is a life in French beyond the walls of our classrooms right here in Halifax,” says Defert.

“I want to give students an opportunity to discover and interact with the Francophone community, improve their language skills while at the same time getting a real life experience with a chance to work in their area of interest. With over 30 different associations in HRM, the community is big enough to allow that.”

Dr. Defert says francophone associations receive very little funding and rely on volunteers. These partnerships allow community organizations to acquire visibility and to develop action in the region. Defert’s students dedicated themselves to bringing national news on the local community radio station CKRH, helped organize events with Halifax cultural association CCGH or the Fédération des Parents Acadiens de la Nouvelle Écosse, while others worked on the conception of a web magazine for the Alliance Française or analyzed representations of the Acadian community in the media.

The students, Defert says, were thankful for being given opportunities to interact directly with members of the francophone community and were unanimous about how beneficial this experience was in boosting their confidence in speaking the language. In their own words:

« Moi, pendant les dernières quatre années à Dalhousie, je n’ai vraiment pas fait l’effort de faire des connexions avec la communauté. Comme... j’habite, tu sais, juste ici vraiment proche de l’université. Je ne sors pas

de mon quartier alors quand je devais aller à Dartmouth pour rencontrer Nathalie... Seulement j’étais en autobus, j’ai vu beaucoup de la communauté que je n’ai jamais vue, des personnes, des différentes démographiques ou quoi que ce soit que je n’ai probablement jamais vues parce que je vois seulement des étudiants de l’université alors je crois que c’est essentiel. Si j’ai fait ce projet en première année, je crois que j’aurais fait un plus grand effort de faire des connexions avec la communauté, pas seulement dans la communauté francophone mais les autres communautés, des sociétés parce que c’est vraiment important d’avoir une idée de communauté parce que sinon on est comme un étranger... » (Brendan, BSc programme)

“I hope to
make
students realize
that there is a life in French
beyond the walls
of our classrooms
right here
in Halifax,”
says Defert

« J’aimais bien savoir les autres aspects de la communauté francophone à Halifax, parce que je savais seulement de l’Alliance française parce que c’est seulement ma première année à Halifax, alors c’était bien de savoir qu’il y avait une radio francophone et une bibliothèque pour enseigner le français et d’autres possibilités pour pratiquer mon français dans le futur » (Olivia, BA programme)

« J’ai trouvé que c’était très utile pour un étudiant d’université parce qu’on dit toujours que les étudiants d’université sont inutiles dehors de la salle de classe et après 4 années c’est vrai (rires). Tu sors de la salle de classe et puis tu es dans un vrai emploi et de temps en temps on manque des habilités nécessaires après 7 ou 8 années d’université alors un projet comme celle-ci, ça veut dire qu’on sort de la salle de classe et on sort d’un environnement qui est très contrôlé et puis on est lancé dans des situations un peu plus dynamiques... » (Shawn, BA programme)

With such encouraging feedback from his students, Dr. Defert hopes to develop this program further and create partnerships with a wider range of associations in the community, which will provide students with a greater choice of placements and reinforce ties with the community.

DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS 2011-12

*Conférence sur la rétention
des étudiants*
Dr. Patricia De Méo
September 16

The Uncertain Country of Jacques Ferron: Stories from Quebec» «The Uncertain Country of Jacques Ferron: Stories in Translation
Dr. Elizabeth Bednarski
September 29

Il Gattopardo : dal romanzo al film
Dr. Alfredo Luzi Università di Macerata
September 30

*Répétition, originalité et
analyse du discours*
Dr. Vincent Masse
October 21

Le vocabulaire du vin
Dr. Jean Pruvost, lexicologue
October 28

*Education as a reflection of culture and
language: Reggio Emilia and the history
of student-centred education.*
Dr. Carla DiGiorgio, UPEI
November 4

Expérience migratoire
Dr. Jean-Jacques Defert
November 18

Intervenant sur la chanson québécoise
M. Jim Corcoran
November 25

*Jehan Rictus : vie et œuvres d’un
ancien enfant martyr*
Dr Vittorio Frigerio
January 13

*Des questions sur les questions en
acquisition bilingue et trilingue*
Dr. Nelleke Strik
January 27, 2012

*Le dévoilement du discours roman-
esque dans Femme nue, femme noire
de Calixthe Beyala ou la poétique d’une
écriture excisée*
Jean-Marie Watonsi
February 10, 2012

*Le lieu imaginaire chez François Cheng
et Ying Chen*
Anne Thibeault-Bérubé
March 16, 2012

*Littérature africaine et problèmes de
traduction*
Henri Biahé
March 30, 2012

Graduate Student Profile: Jean-Marie Watonsi

“It’s hard to work in Cameroon as a journalist,” PhD candidate **Jean-Marie Watonsi** tells me in his gentle French-African accent.

He is referring to the politics of the state which prohibit criticism of the government in his home country. The radio, TV and newspapers are under government rule; the private press, he says, is “only so free.”

This is a topic Jean-Marie knows firsthand.

Trained as a journalist at Marseilles in 1991, he worked for the Cameroon Radio and television media until 1994 when he left for the United States.

Following a Masters in French from the University of Kansas Lawrence and various teaching appointments, Jean-Marie came to Dalhousie in 2010 to study post-colonialist theory as it relates to French literature – specifically, French African literature.

After all, he says, “French does not always equal France.”

His thesis will explore French African literature and how it was received by the media in Cameroon from 1974-2010. It will look at how government control affected how books are reviewed by both the French speaking Cameroon majority and the English speaking Cameroon minority.

“As an African, it is interesting to understand where you’re coming from to understand where you’re going,” he says.

Jean-Marie first became interested in Dalhousie University while at the University of Kansas. There, he had the opportunity to meet former Dalhousie professor Ambrose Kom and current Dalhousie professor Raymond Mopoho.

He says he’s loved his experience so far.

“The weather is cold but the people are so warm,” he says.

Professors are always willing to answer questions or help.

“It’s a blessing.”

He likes that the department is so diverse, with professors coming from francophone regions in Canada, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

In addition to research, Jean-Marie teaches (Introductory) French 1005. He says teaching is a passion and something he’s done all his life, formally and informally.

“I’m not only teaching but I’m learning from my students,” he says.

Jean-Marie is slated to graduate from Dalhousie in 2014 and plans to teach, but where that will be remains a mystery.

“God will tell me,” he says. “Wherever He sends me, that’s where I’m going to go.”

For more information on the Graduate Studies programme at Dalhousie, visit:
www.dal.ca/french



Upcoming Conference: Fantastic Narratives and the Natural World

On April 27 and 28, 2012, the Department will be holding an international conference on the theme *Fantastic Narratives and the Natural World*, jointly organized by Elisa Segnini (Italian) and Vittorio Frigerio (French). The objectives of this symposium are to explore the relationship between man and nature within the natural sciences and the reflection of these ideas in the literary imagination, with particular attention to the Canadian identity. Numerous researchers from Canada and abroad will convene to examine the specific role the humanities can play in the process of reconfiguring mankind’s relation with the natural world, in an age when human intervention on the environment and its consequences have become particularly urgent. By uniting international scholars from a variety of different disciplines, we will explore how this debate is framed by individual and collective identities, as well as different cultural and scholarly perspectives. The invited keynote speakers will be Francesca Billiani, Senior Lecturer at Manchester University and editor of *The Italian Gothic and Fantastic* (Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), and Arnaud Huftier, Professor at the



Université de Valenciennes, winner of the prestigious Grand Prix de l’Imaginaire 2011 for his book *Jean Ray. L’alchimie du mystère* and author of several books on French fantastic literature. Entry is free and everybody is welcome! For more information, contact co-organizer Vittorio Frigerio at vittorio.frigerio@dal.ca

Francesca Billiani (left) is just one presenter at the upcoming international conference

Departmental Awards

On April 12, 2011, members of the Italian Studies programme gathered to confer awards to deserving students.



Dr Paolo Matteucci with Jasmine Minoza, one of three award winners from his Italian 1010 class.



Third year student Brandon Robinson holds the bowl while Dante chooses the winner of the door prize



Sarah McGuire, winner from Italian 1010, with Dr. Elisa Segnini

Full list of winners:

Swiss Embassy Prize

Rachel Dragland

Italian 1010 (Buschi)

Benjamin Howells-Reid, Eleftherios Michalopoulos, Sydney Wright-Brown, Patrick Wappler, Carolyn Christian, Carla Correa Woodrow

Italian 1010 (Matteucci)

Rachel Bruce, Jasmine Minoza, Kelly Costello

Italian 1010 (Segnini)

Livia Anthes, Emily McGuire, Sarah McGuire

Italian 2010 (Matteucci)

Audrey Rousseau, Roxana Ter-ranera, Gabrielle Piacentini

Italian 3010 (Segnini)

Clare Funston, Peter L'Esperance, Nick Foran

The Department of French is pleased to recognize the following students with prizes in the 2010-11 academic year

Ruth Murray Scholarship

Each year, the Ruth Murray Scholarship is awarded to academically sound students, who are participating in a departmental programme abroad, or on-campus students who have demonstrated above average academic ability

Charlotte Bondy

Sarah Calvin

French Department Scholarship

The French Department Scholarship recognizes academic excellence in students with majors & honours entering 3rd or 4th year

Gavin Keachie

Thomas Baker

Prof. & Mrs Robert Lloyd McIntosh Prize

This prize recognizes a 2nd year major & honours student from 2045, 2201 and 2202

Kate Abarbanel

Prix du Consul du Liban

Le Prix du Consul du Liban goes to a graduating student with the highest standing in Advanced classes

Joanne Zalera

Prix de l'Ambassadeur de Suisse

This prize recognizes a graduating student who has won distinction by their work in French language

Courtney Knights

Alliance Française

An annual book prize awarded to a third or fourth year student who has achieved outstanding results in the study of French language and literature

Eunha Hwang

Prix de l'Ambassadeur de France

A book prize, offered by the French Embassy in Ottawa, is awarded annually to the graduating student with the highest standing in advanced French classes

Eunha Hwang

Marcelle Sandhu Prize

Colleagues, friends and students of the late Marcelle Cendres Sandhu have established an annual prize to be awarded to a Major or Honours student in the Department of French who achieves excellence in third or fourth year French grammar courses.

Keith Lehwald

Kelly P. O'Driscoll

Congratulations to all!

Giving funds goes a long way.

Donor gifts enhance the student experience by: providing publication assistance for departmental journals, including graduate student journal *Initiales*; increasing departmental library resources; awarding student book prizes and scholarships to exceptional students; engaging knowledgeable guest speakers.

The Department of French at Dalhousie sincerely thanks all donors for their generosity and support - we couldn't do it without you.

To learn more or make a gift, visit http://alumniandfriends.dal.ca/give_back_to_dal.html

Study Abroad Programme - Dijon, France

Sarah Calvin knows a good thing when she sees it.

From the moment the McGill transfer student first saw posters advertising the Dijon Study Abroad programme at the French Department, she knew she wanted to be a part of it.

Sarah switched her major from International Development Studies to French – a subject she had studied in elementary and high school – and got ready for the adventure of a lifetime.

Dijon, located in the heart of historic Burgundy, is steeped in history and tradition. It boasts unique architecture and its own Musée des Beaux Arts, which in France is considered second only to the Louvre.

Sarah arrived in the historic city on September 30, 2010 and was greeted at the train station by her homestay mom.

Over the next nine months, the two women forged a bond, watching TV together in the quiet house just outside of the city and chatting about Sarah's family back home.

Sarah was going to Dijon for the cultural experience; she was pleasantly surprised that the classes and teachers at the Centre International d'Études françaises, Université de Bourgogne, would turn out to be a highlight of her stay.

The international school taught both lan-

guage and culture, and offered a number of excursions as a way for students to bond and learn about French life.

These included a cooking class in Dijon, a winery tour in Beaune, a castle visit in the Loire Valley and a tour of Provence.

In addition to these excursions and self-planned trips around France, Sarah also had a chance to visit Portugal, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

She loved her year in Dijon and says the hands on experience was essential to her learning.

“The kind of education you get in a university class doesn't compare with the education you get when you're on the ground, immersed.”

Now 21 years old and in her fourth year of Honours French and Linguistics, Sarah is looking at options for when she graduates. She is currently tutoring math and science at Halifax's St. Agnes Junior High as part of the Dal-housie's

Golden Key International Honour Society and wants to pursue a BEd in French and Math. She has applied to the Odyssey program, a full-time work experience that gives young Canadians an opportunity to travel Canada and gain experience in a school environment. She is also considering returning to Dijon under the French government's Assistants programme.

Sarah continues to keep in touch with her homestay mom, her friends made in Dijon and the school itself.



Sarah cooking at one of the university-planned excursions

She is grateful to the French department for the opportunity.

“It was an incredible opportunity; I'd recommend it to anyone who wants to improve their French.”



Sarah (far right) and her homestay family celebrate a birthday

Fact: More than 140 students have participated in the Dijon France Study Abroad programme since it began in 2004-05.

For more information, visit www.dal.ca/french.

Study Abroad Programme - Macerata

In September of 2010, I began my journey from Toronto to Italy; a journey that I had unknowingly started in my second year at Dalhousie. I took Italian for Beginners during that year and became enthralled not only with the language but with the warm and welcoming staff in the Italian programme. After my third year of study, I went to Italy to study at the Università di Macerata.

Overall, I had a wonderful experience. Macerata is a beautiful town. There are several piazzas throughout that are nice venues for sipping an espresso with a new friend. The town's historic centre is enclosed within old stone walls. Outside of these walls, there is a breathtaking panorama of a Tuscan-esque countryside with rolling hills, wine vineyards and olive trees everywhere. There is a "pause" between noon and 4pm everyday. Once this is over, it's time for aperitivo!

I found living in Macerata to be invaluable to improving my spoken Italian. Italian is a living language; there is much more to it than learning grammar in the classroom. Gestures and body language really do contribute to the meaning of words and are a large part of the language.

I would certainly recommend participating in this exchange. Good luck to anyone wishing to go to Macerata - or as they say in Italy, "in bocca al lupo" e buon viaggio!

- Thais McIntosh

To any student studying a foreign language or culture, I cannot emphasize enough the benefits of studying abroad (luckily Dal offers many opportunities to do this!) My time here in Macerata, Italy has been an eye opening and thrilling experience; it has also been a rather significant challenge. By immersing myself completely in another culture, I have enjoyed discovering that I am capable of things I never realized.

Macerata is a small town, brimming with students; as a native Haligonian, both aspects make me feel quite at home. With four out of my five courses taught in Italian, my Italian

speaking abilities are growing faster than ever. Aside from the scholarly aspects of studying abroad, the thing which has touched me most is the community of foreign students from all over the world who live here. Every Sunday a group of 20 of us gather together for international dinners, each week being a different country's turn to host and provide traditional food.

Although I still have four months here in Italy, I am already dreaming of ways I can prolong my stay.

- Emma D'Eon



Photos by Emma D'Eon and Rachel Dragland

Counter clockwise from above: photo of Urbino, the university; Rachel's class; gelato!; afternoon shopping at a street market



I was given the pleasure of spending a month in Italy in the summer of 2010 for the purpose of studying and singing Italian opera. Before I went, I knew little more about Italy and Italian culture than most: the food is great, the wine is magical, and the people are fantastically outgoing. Of course, the month that I spent in a tiny Italian city where no one spoke English gave me a much deeper appreciation for the ways of life that run through Italian culture. Even though I've been home for a year now, every time I hear the word "Espresso", I'm instantly transported to the sunny piazzas of southern Italy where I learned to converse with very patient, welcoming Italians. Taking Italian 1010 has given, and will continue to give me the tools to learn about and embrace Italian culture. I'm very grateful for the opportunity to nurture my love for the language and culture of Italy with the help of the Italian programme.

- Iain MacNeil

This is a program that somehow manages to provide classes that can be fascinating and challenging but also comfortable enough that they feel more like a group of friends learning together than anything else that I've experienced.

It allows you to be on a first-name basis with professors whose enthusiasm for what they teach is contagious; who genuinely care about their students; and who, as much as the courses they offer, give you a real sense of Italian culture.

This is a program that, both in the wonderful opportunity that it provided me with to study in Italy for the summer, and the atmosphere of the classes that it provided at Dal, was in large part responsible for the most inspiring and rewarding year of my studies.

- Rachel Dragland

Alumni Profile: Matt Maxwell, BA '77

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Do you have an interesting story to share?

Know of a former classmate who is doing something exciting and newsworthy?

Comments on this issue?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please send all comments, suggestions, ideas or inquiries to fassalum@dal.ca

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Matt Maxwell is many things: a Juno-nominated musician, an educator, a social activist, a vegetarian. The children's performer who brought us "Louie la grenouille" and "C'est l'Halloween" is also a Dal alumnus, having graduated in 1977 with a BA in French.

Born in Vancouver, Maxwell moved to Halifax when he was six years old. Growing up across from Dal on Studley Avenue, he was first drawn to French culture from hearing his mom tell stories of her time in Paris, where she was involved in the Rive-Gauche scene, spending time with the likes of author François Mauriac and artist Salvador Dali. Maxwell was hooked.

At 16, he moved to Paris for a year and lived with a family of "hopelessly unilingual" artists. When he returned to Canada, he enrolled in the French programme at Dalhousie.

He says his student experience at Dalhousie was great. Here, he was exposed to the writings of les Romantiques, in particular Baudelaire, whom he calls a great influence. He enjoyed sharing ideas and getting to know his professors in the small, intimate classes.

After graduating in 1977, Maxwell went on to complete a BEd at Saint Mary's University, at which point he took a French teaching position at the Halifax Grammar School. It was during this first year as a French teacher that he started writing songs to help his students learn. This teaching aide spiraled into a career, and in 1984, Maxwell released his first CD, "Comment ça va?"

Over a ten year span, Maxwell toured the country. He estimates that he performed 150 shows per year for close to a million children. To date, he has released five albums. In 1989, "Le Loup du Nord" was nominated for a Juno for Best Children's Album.

While touring, he met a young French teacher who had been writing plays based on Maxwell's songs. The two collaborated – first as husband and wife and later as colleagues – to develop a multi-modal, multi-disciplinary approach to French language acquisition known as the Accelerative Integrated Methodology (AIM.)

AIM differs from traditional core

French curricula by actively involving students in the learning process. The iconic gestures used are intuitive and reinforce grammatical structures both visually and orally. Instead of having a teacher at the front talking for a half hour, students are engaged in the process, which is further enforced by plays, songs and raps.

Since 1999, AIM has been used in 3000 schools in Canada, as well as in Holland, Australia and the United States. During this time, Matt also pursued his postgraduate studies, receiving a PhD in Holistic Education from the University of Toronto.

When he isn't working as the CEO at AIM, Maxwell is continuing work on his musical graphic novel series, a project that began during his time at Dalhousie.

He has worked as an active volunteer and board member on six different local arts and ecology-focused organizations, and is a supporter of progressive organizations, including Amnesty International and Western Wilderness Foundation.

"This world is calling out for people to step up to the plate and get involved."

A small percentage of all profits go to Stephen Lewis Foundation, an organization which works to eradicate HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Maxwell says a liberal arts education is essential to understand the depths of humanity.

"Without it, we only see bits and pieces of the puzzle but not the underlying patterns that are driving things."

Maxwell sees the bigger picture and, through his work, continues to share it with the world.