



Lingua Links

Newsletter of the Department of
Foreign Languages and Literatures



From the Desk of the Chair:

Dear Friends,

It has been an eventful first year for me as Chair of FL&L. First of all, we mourn the loss of Michael Morris, who passed away after a long illness on December 12, 2010. His family and friends have generously funded a scholarship in his name, the **Michael Morris Scholarship Fund**, which will be awarded once a year to a teacher certification student for a study abroad experience.

In Fall 2010, two new Spanish linguistics faculty members joined us, Lori Czerwionka and Nicholas Henriksen; Lori received her Ph.D. from the University of Texas and Nick from Indiana University. We also welcomed a number of new instructors: Kristi McAuliffe (German), Yuko Kato (Japanese), Patrick O'Connor (Spanish), Laura

Steele (Classics), and Emily Knudsen-Vilaseca (Spanish).

Last year, we welcomed two alums Ninja Nagel, the new chair at Barrington High School, and Thomas Bendicsen, World Language Department Chair at Addison Trail High School, and their students on campus. The students met with faculty, toured FLRP, ate in the Residence Halls and generally got a great introduction to NIU and the department.

We have started a monthly Brown Bag series, where a faculty member or graduate student presents on-going research to an interested and lively audience.

We are looking forward to the revamping of our departmental website <http://www.forlangs.net/>, which should be up and running in its newly updated form by the end of Fall 2011. Check it out!

Also, please mark your calendars for the 40th FLRP reunion, which will take place on October 13, 2012.

Finally, I want to thank everybody who so generously supported the department with their time, effort, and funds; we could not be successful without our extended FL&L family. So, please let us hear from you. If you are in the area, come visit! It is always inspiring for current students to meet with alums and for all of us to reconnect.

Volume 6, Issue 1

October 2011

Special points of interest:

- *Faculty News*, pg. 2
- *A Japanese Battle Flag*, pg. 2
- *Featured Alum—Ninja Nagel*, pg. 3
- *In Memory—Michael Morris*, pg. 3
- *Announcements*, pg. 3
- *Gifts to the department*, pg. 4

Year-end Party

On May 5, 2011, the department hosted its annual year-end party at Cabana Charley's in Sycamore. The party was attended by about 50 members of the department and their guests. The ladies in the office did a wonderful job of decorating the space. Cabana Charley's provided a nice meal,

and afterward the department handed out a variety of awards to our Fulbright TAs (Nanda Octavia, Sim Hui Woon, Weizel Arsenal, and Dzhamlayl Bakanaev) who returned to their respective countries. We also said good bye to Tatiana Kaledina who had worked with Greg Ross in the



FLRP office. She returned to Russia to pursue work on her doctorate in linguistics. We will miss all of these energetic people.





Faculty News

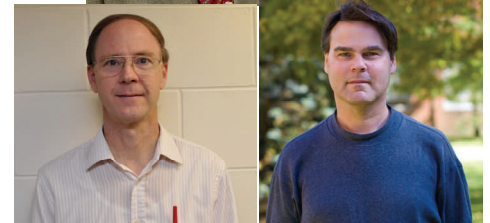
Professor John Hartmann (Thai), was named one of three 2011 Board of Trustees Professors. In 1975, John Hartmann, a young professor of Thai language and culture at NIU, received his first research grant to conduct linguistic fieldwork in, of all places, Iowa.

As it turns out, that's where large numbers of Lao refugees had been air-lifted following the Vietnam War. Hartmann soon compiled a dictionary of Tai Dam, a minority language with origins in northwest Vietnam. With leftover grant money, he hired a graduate student to write a computer program converting the alpha-numeric field data into printable Tai Dam script, which previously could only be

reproduced by hand with Chinese brush and ink.

Over the years, Hartmann and his many collaborators have received more than \$3.3 million in funding—from the likes of the National Science Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, the Thai government and U.S. Department of Education—to create online instructional tools benefitting students and teachers around the globe.

In addition, Professors John Bentley and Christopher Nissen were awarded promotion to Professor.



A Japanese Battle Flag

In May 2010 an alderman in Aurora contacted Professor Bentley about deciphering a Japanese battle flag that an ex-Marine had found on a dead Japanese soldier on Tinian Island in the Pacific Ocean during World War Two. The large five-character banner reads, "Prayers for everlasting fortune in battle." These flags were quite common, and the villagers who had sent a soldier to war would sign their names and put pithy comments of encouragement on it. This flag has comments like, "Sailors of the Japanese Imperial Navy: may your honor last for 10,000 years." Another says, "Be full of energy." "Soldiers, we

are grateful for your service."

The ex-Marine, Ken Udstad, of Aurora wanted to return the flag to the soldier's family. He attempted contact with the Japanese consulate in Chicago, but there was no progress. Professor Bentley is currently in contact with a veterans group in Tokyo in an attempt to identify the village and perhaps the owner of the flag. The story of Mr. Udstad and the flag appeared in the Aurora newspaper, *Beacon-News*, November 7, 2010.



Awards Banquet

The department hosted its awards banquet on Saturday, April 23rd at the Ellwood House. Faculty members were recognized: Lorenzo García-Amaya – AAAL Graduate Student-Travel Award, Dawn Rogodzinski-Lisa – NIU Ally Award, John Bentley – Promotion to Full Professor, Christopher Nissen – Promotion to Full Professor, John Hartmann – Board of Trustee Professorship, and Michael Morris – 2011 Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award. The department also honored our students: **Outstanding Women Award:** Caitlan Ayala, Mary Kassir, Katherine Petriz, Made-

laine Plewacki, Brittany Sheldon, Kaylee Walters. **Sigma Delta Pi:** Jessica Braley, Patricia Lyons. **Phi Sigma Iota:** Gina Gregolunas, Cody Happ, Stephanie Sears, Anne Marie Sticksel. **Lillian Cobb Study Abroad:** Sabine Keleba, Kristen Roenfan. **Interpro Translation Solutions FLRP Study Abroad Scholarship:** Craig Fugate. **Interpro Translation Solutions M.A. Scholarship:** Julie Moteau. **Essay Contest Winners:** 1st Richard Birman-tas, 2nd Kaylee Walters, 3rd Gabriela Flores. **Dean's Awards:** Stephanie Sears, Curtis Valasek.



Julie Moteau receives award from Ralph Strozza



Featured Alum—Ninja Nagel

Ninja Nagel graduated from NIU in 2003 with a BA in German. While at NIU she was the head native in FLRP. She did her student teaching at Naperville North High School, where the chair of the department nominated her for the Outstanding Student Teaching Award, which she received in April 2003. She later landed a job at Prairie Ridge High school. One of her colleagues has said about Ninja, “As a teacher, I think she can walk on water.”

This school year Ninja became chair of the Foreign Language Department at Barrington High School.

Ninja is a member of the *Goethe-Institut* Trainer Network Midwest, a group of accomplished teachers who offer workshops to colleagues. She devised a wonderful teaching unit, which included technology, based on a German book, *Die Lisa*. She is always ready and willing to share her materials with everybody--each of the units she has designed really amounts to a textbook.

Ninja is currently collaborating with Professor Barbe, Friedemann Stuebing and colleagues from elementary and high schools to incorporate recent changes in the AP exam into her classes.



Save the Date and Join Us

- **40th Anniversary of the Foreign Language Residence Program** at NIU, Oct. 13, 2012. The program was established in 1972 by the former department chair, D. Raymond Tourville (1935-2004). It is the oldest continuing program of its kind in the country.
- **Department Awards Ceremony**
April 21, 2012, 2-4 pm. *Adams Hall 143* (Chandelier Room).
- **FLRP Special Dinners**
5:30-9:00 pm in Douglas Hall
October 22, 2011 (French/Japanese)

November 12, 2011 (Chinese/German/Spanish).

- **Brown Bag Lunches**

(noon, WH 110)

October 19 (Katharina Barbe)

November 16 (Jessamine Cooke-Plagwitz)

February 15 (Lori Czerwionka)

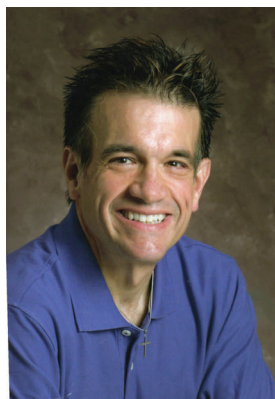
April 18 (Philippe Willems)



In Memory—Michael Morris(1961-2010)

Professor Michael Morris came to NIU in the Fall of 1996. Before going on to do graduate work, he was a teacher in the Chicago public schools (1984-87), and then moved to Iowa (1988-94). At NIU he was the coordinator for the teacher certification program. He started a program with Cheesbro Elementary School which provided teacher certification students a place to get practical experience. Not long after he passed away, his textbook, *Experience Spanish* (McGraw Hill) came out.

He not only taught at NIU, but he served on local, regional, and national boards. He completed two terms as the President of CITC at NIU (2002-2003, 2008-09), served on the Board of Directors, Illinois Council on



the Teaching of Foreign Languages from 2000-2002, as well as was Vice President of Faculty Senate for the 2009-10 year. Professor Morris also received the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award in 2011. He gave his students at NIU of his time in many other ways. Over the years he led study abroad programs to Costa Rica and Spain. He was an active advisor for Phi Kappa Theta, and participated in NIU’s annual Cancer Relay for Life.

He passed away on December 12, 2010 at his sister’s house in Wisconsin. He is missed every day. The **Michael Morris Scholarship Fund** has been established in his memory.



Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Northern Illinois University
Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Watson Hall 111

Phone: 815-753-1501
Fax: 815-753-5989
E-mail: askForLangs@niu.edu



We're on the Web:
www.forlangs.niu.edu

Would you like to visit us?

Addison Trails High School visited our department on April 20, 2011. The students were able to tour the residence halls, financial aid, honors program, study abroad, and the Language Learning Center.

If you are interested in scheduling a visit, please contact:

Dr. John R. Bentley
(815) 753-6451 or jbentley1@niu.edu

Let us hear from you!

Send us news, updates, and other information about where you are and what you are doing. Send your correspondence to jbentley1@niu.edu.

Donate to the Department!

*Exciting things are happening at NIU, especially in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. We have two new Scholarship Funds: **Interpro Translation Solutions FLRP Study Abroad Scholarship** and **Interpro Translation Solutions M.A. Scholarship**.*

If you would like to donate to either of these funds, please specify the fund on your check.

Please make checks payable to: NIU Foundation
Altgeld Hall 135
DeKalb, Illinois 60115-2882