Representatives from several of the department’s foreign languages, including Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Japanese, and Russian, attended the SWCOLT (Southwest Conference on Language Teaching) annual conference in Henderson, NV from April 4 - April 6, 2013. This event included a special ACTFL-sponsored OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) workshop.

We have identified the ACTFL OPI as a productive model on which to base our support for the College’s initiatives in assessment. The OPI is a “standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability” (cit. ACTFL website below). An OPI assessment consists of a guided conversation between an interviewer and a language learner. During the OPI, the interviewer asks questions that elicit enough language to determine at which level the learner can reliably produce language (e.g. Novice High, Intermediate Mid, Advanced Low). Continued on page 4

The Ravella and Ponte Vecchio Bridge, where SWCOLT was held
Barbara Bird enthusiastically left behind frozen Wisconsin winters to join the College of Southern Nevada in January, 2013. She has taught Italian at Brigham Young University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Edgewood College, Russell Sage College, and the University of South Alabama. She has also worked on academic projects sponsored by ACTFL and the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research. Barbara holds a B.A. in History and Italian from Brigham Young University and an M.A. in Italian Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She will complete a Ph.D in Second Language Acquisition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison this year.

When she’s not teaching, Barbara enjoys spending time with family and friends, researching her Lithuanian family history, cooking, and imagining herself on the beach.

**Adjunct Faculty Focus: David Wang**
*By Amy Litman*

David Wang came to Las Vegas from Taiwan in 1990 to pursue his bachelor’s and master's degrees from UNLV. Years later, he is the owner and director of a school as well as an instructor in the Chinese language program at CSN.

He initially hoped to teach Mandarin to casino workers but found that the interest level wasn't there. Instead, he decided to focus his desire to teach towards children. In 1996, he opened his business, the Nevada Chinese Academy – NCA Learning Center. Last year, the school moved to its own building at Desert Inn and Spring Mountain and has nearly 70 students and six instructors with a full-time pre-school as well as Saturday classes for elementary through high school aged children.

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News Briefs

Students of Arabic Excel after Studying at CSN

Trenton Hammond, a CSN Arabic student, was accepted into the Arabic program at the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey, California. Melinda Sorgi, another Arabic student, went to Morocco for two weeks to study at a language institute recommended by Professor Anderson.

Eugene O'Neal, an Arabic 211 student who is a Ph.D student in Political Science at UNLV, was awarded the CLS (Critical Language Study) scholarship, an award with over 5,000 applicants from the U.S. State Department.

Russian courses Filling up

With one of the only institutions in the U.S. offering online Russian courses, the students signing up for these courses come from around the country. A number of current students have expressed interest in completing all of the courses available, through RUS 212. Diana Booth will certainly be kept busy!

Deaf Studies Service Based Learning

The Deaf Studies Interpreter Preparation Program student interns have had several unique opportunities to gain experience by participating in our Service-Based Learning Internship class.

Recently, Sorenson Video Relay Services hosted an event for the deaf community and welcomed CSN's interns to observe and practice their interpreting skills during the program.

Over the next month, the interns will have additional opportunities to providing interpreting services to the Cauliflower Alley Reunion, an organization of retired professional wrestlers, and to the Trade Show of the Home Based Travel Conference.

We appreciate these organizations giving CSN's IPP students opportunities to learn and grow.

Interpreter Career Expo

On May 16, the IPP will host its 7th annual Interpreter Career Expo for IPP graduates and professional interpreters in our community. Exhibitors are potential employers of interpreters and are invited to display their information [see flier on page 16].

French Club Fair

The French Club held its annual fair on March 8 to practice French through conversation, culture and games.
News Briefs

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Postcard from Japan

On Friday, April 12, 2013, the French Club listened to Zouk music with Metissa Vox and learned more about the culture of Martinique!

Bette Brickman, Shane Dick, and Sachie Karasawa gave a presentation on Japan as part of the Postcards of the World series on April 18, 2013.

SWCOLT
continued from page 1

This type of assessment is meant to provide meaningful data on what students can do in the foreign language by describing the kind of language they are able to produce. The OPI assessment is guided by three general categories: functions (ex: asking questions, narrating a story), contexts and content (ex: personal, theoretical), and text type (lists of words, sentences, paragraphs). Based on the language performance definitions set forth by ACTFL, we are then able to reliably determine learners’ proficiency levels.

Although it is not practical to do OPIs on a regular basis in class, they provide a guide for assessment in the foreign language classroom. The OPI guidelines can guide language teachers and learners to focus on increasing proficiency with tangible language goals. They can be helpful in creating assessment rubrics that go beyond textbook learning to describe students’ proficiency development.

Those of us who were able to participate in the SWCOLT and the OPI workshop are now thinking about how we can integrate the principles of the OPI assessment into our curricula.

The SWCOLT conference will be held again next year on April 24-26, 2014, in Salt Lake City, UT.

http://www.swcolt.org/conferences.htm
http://www.actfl.org/professional-development/certified-proficiency-testing-program/testing-proficiency
Thai Ways and My Ways
A Summary of a Presentation by Richard Williams

A presentation called “Thai Ways and My Ways” was given by Richard Williams, ESL professor in the Department of International Languages, on March 14 at Cheyenne Campus and again on March 27 at West Charleston. Professor Williams examined some of the contrasting observable Thais. It was based on his experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bangkok from 1969-1971 and subsequent visits. The following summary topics were explored:

Buddhism

Ninety-five percent of Thais are Buddhist, so how do their religious ideals influence their behavior? One example is the belief that one’s kwaan (spirit, soul) is located in the back of one’s head, where the cowlick is. This belief is behind an entire body hierarchy - upper parts being sacred and lower parts being profane. Therefore, another person’s head shouldn’t be touched casually, and one shouldn’t sit on tables or pillows because they are used for eating or resting your head. Don’t put your feet up or point the bottom of your foot at another person, and don’t open a door with your foot if your hands are full. If two people are talking and it’s necessary to pass between them, Thais may lower their heads before walking between them. Hanging socks above other clothing to dry on the clothes line is bad because things used nearer the head, where kwaan is located, should be separated from things used nearer the feet.

Another example of a Buddhist belief that influences daily life is the belief in reincarnation and in the making of merit by doing good deeds. This is demonstrated by giving rice to monks when they walk down streets in the morning accepting food in their ‘begging bowls,’ by putting gold leaf on Buddha statues, by helping the poor or by meditating. Doing good deeds in this life can improve your position in the next. If you are very good in this life, you may be reborn as a teacher. If you are bad, you could become a mosquito or a member of the U.S. Congress.

Animism

A popular Thai worldview sees man as part of a natural order that he should live in harmony with. Man has a spirit, but so do many other life forms and even objects. When first arriving in Thailand, seeing small houses on poles beside homes and businesses, the new visitor may think that Thais must be very kind to birds - showing a proper Buddhist regard for all life forms. However, they aren’t birdhouses at all but spirit houses called baan phra phuum. Thais may pray to these guardian property spirits, which are displaced when the real house is built. Thais burn incense and leave food, flowers, and small statues in the spirit house in return for a wish or favor granted. Guests who stay overnight may pay respect to phra phuum at the spirit house on arriving and leaving a home.

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Tanzania, an independent country in the eastern part of sub-Saharan Africa, had been ruled by Germany and then by England, the country from which it gained independence in 1961, for the most part, peacefully. In recent years, the country has encouraged tourism to boost its economy, and there are many places to visit such as Mt. Kilimanjaro (even if you don't plan to climb it), Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area and the Olduvai Gorge Museum (founded by Mary Leakey, wife of Louis). The tourism trade has managed to follow strict ecological guidelines to preserve the natural environment for the flora and fauna while at the same time conducting tours. On a recent trip to Tanzania as part of the Grand Circle Foundation, I was treated to both nature tours and school visits, both conducted in English.

Tanzania’s official languages are Swahili and English, but most of its citizens speak at least three languages: their tribal language, Swahili (which is taught in the lower grades), instruction for post-primary education). Amazing to me is the fact that many people in the tourist trade speak four, even five foreign languages well enough to discuss in detail every animal and plant on the route. Between the three of them, the guides on my trip were fluent in Datooga (Mang’ati), Iraqw (Wamgulu), Swahili, English, Spanish, French, German, Italian and Japanese. Even though they were proficient English speakers, the guides spoke Swahili to one another because speaking English would have been a sign of showing off. However, they quickly switched back to English to communicate with the tourists.

Swahili, which is written in Latin script, is a combination of Arabic, Persian, German, English, French and Portuguese, and probably additional languages as well. Some of the words sound familiar (bia for beer, shilingi for shilling), and other words are sort of familiar (maendeleo for progress), which I thought was a form

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During the course of my teaching career, I have encountered few students as dedicated to achieving their dreams as DeMark Scott. Last semester, he took my Spanish 111 class. Mr. Scott has an incredible diversity of interests and demands on his time. For example, last fall, in his first semester at CSN, DeMark took an acting class and landed one of the lead roles in ‘Ah, Wilderness’. This required many extra weeks of work on his part. At the same time, he is a single father.

Based on his outstanding performance in my class and seeing him deliver yet another outstanding performance onstage, I became curious about his career plans and life background since I had already seen that he was a possible nominee for Outstanding Student. What he shared with me was truly inspiring.

As a child, DeMark grew up in a single-parent household in the crime- and drug-ravaged city of Flint, Michigan. On the positive side, he had his grandmother, who worked as a nurse in hospice care and sparked his lifelong desire to study medicine; on the negative side, he saw many of his middle and high school peers die in drug and gang-related violence. Both of these influences gave him, in his words, “motivation to become more than just a statistic in the city’s crime rate.”

While still in high school, DeMark took AP classes in the sciences to earn college credit. He also distinguished himself by becoming president, for two years, of the local chapter of Health Science Students of America (HOSA Genesee Regional). Not long after this, due to the legal battles to gain custody of his son, he spent some years working in the construction trades and also started a career as a professional boxer. He credits the latter with giving him still more self-discipline and focus to excel in any field he chooses.

In my opinion, DeMark is the perfect example of someone who emerges from the ‘school of hard knocks’ stronger and more determined than ever. I asked him how his winter break was, and he replied that he learned a lot: he had worked full-time in a hospice facility to gain still more experience. He is now enrolled in a CSN Nursing Assistant class and plans, upon finishing, to work as many hours as possible to further burnish his credentials for medical school admission. His dream is to become an orthopedic surgeon, and I have every confidence that he will achieve this. Again, in my years at CSN, I have encountered few students more dedicated and who have had to overcome as many obstacles.
of Mandela, as in Nelson Mandela.) *Karibu* is a phrase I heard often. It means “welcome” and “thank you.” I also learned to say *asante sana*, which is “thank you very much.” The common greeting is *jambo*, meaning “hello.” Woe to those tourists, familiar with the Jamba Juice chain, who mistakenly say *jamba*, the Swahili word for flatulence.

Twenty-eight-year-olds and three teachers welcomed us to the Rhoti Primary School in Karatu, Arusha, where we were treated to the welcoming song and dance ritual *Jambo, Jambo Bwana!* We distributed school supplies such as pencils, ball point pens (which command the enormous price of $1 each in the town), notebooks, world maps, and a soccer ball. Education up to the age of 15 is compulsory in Tanzania, and the country claims to have a literacy rate of 73%. However, many students do not complete their full seven years. They must pass a national examination to advance. Though the passing rate has been climbing in recent years, it is still a bout 43%. Unfortunately, continuing on in school is also prohibitively expensive for the families of many school-aged children.

Visitors to eastern Tanzania have their choice of two international airports, one in Dar Es Saalam and the other in Kilimanjaro. Both accommodate wide-bodied airliners that land there almost hourly. Although Dodoma is the capital city and does have an international airport, the tourist areas are concentrated in the northeastern part of the country near the border of Kenya. It’s a treat to glide over Maasai Boma villages and herds of goats on the approach to the ultra-modern international airport. Karibu Tanzania!
Thai Ways and My Ways
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Ghosts
Thai Buddhism teaches that there are realms of existence including Hell, the World of Ghosts and Giants, the Realm of Man, the Animal Kingdom, etc. How is this belief manifested in everyday life? Many Thai ghosts are female, like one called Phee Grasuu. She has the ability to appear beautiful at first and then become very ugly when she has a victim. She wears a long dress to hide what is underneath. At night, she begins to change into a demonic ghost, which has only a head, esophagus, and intestines that glow and blink like a firefly as she flies. Sometimes she attacks humans and eats their livers. She inherited her affliction from her mother, who spit into her daughter's mouth just before dying. Phee Grasuu can be killed by sunlight or by a thorn in her intestines.

Another nasty ghost is one called Phii Grahang, who sleeps by day as a man but at night flies about looking for muck to eat. Though it seems aerodynamically impossible, he uses two round, flat winnowing baskets for wings.

In the Bangkok Post, there was an article which reported the sighting by a well-known police colonel of the ghost of a well-known movie star who had recently fallen from a helicopter while filming a movie stunt. The police colonel claimed that the ghost wanted its picture taken one last time and seriously described in detail how that could be done with high-speed film, etc.

The World of Animals
To Buddhists, all life is sacred, so one way to make merit and be reborn into a better life is to buy small animals in the weekend markets and then free them. One may wonder if the vendors then catch and sell them again. To protect life, monks may even drink through a piece of cloth to filter out any possible organisms that might be killed by ingestion.

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Richard Williams at the Grand Palace, Bangkok, Thailand
Thai Ways and My Ways
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The Round Table

Thai Ways and My Ways

The Ideal Self

What are personal qualities that Thais admire most? Thais admire individuals who lead virtuous lives according to Buddhist ideals of gentleness, moderation, and generosity. Patriotism and education are admired. Social status and wealth, which reflect merit earned by good deeds in former lives, are also respected.

In the Land of Smiles, life should not be taken too seriously; it should be enjoyed and problems should be forgotten as soon as possible. Thais often say mai pen rai meaning 'never mind; it doesn't matter.' Jai yen [cool heart] means 'keep cool' and 'don't let life get you down.' Smiles can also show embarrassment as Thais put on a happy face to hide unpleasant feelings. The lack of jai yen is jai raan [hot heart], and it means losing your cool and showing your anger. For Thais, the best way to show that your enemy is a bully is to give in to him. Sanook mai [Was it fun?] is a common Thai question and 'being fun' is an important quality of any activity.

Status

Who deserves respect? In general, people older than oneself are respected. They are addressed by polite pronouns that mean 'older brother or sister.' Also highly respected are teachers, the royal family, monks and parents. When Thais meet, they wai [bow]. The person of lower status bows first and more deeply. Not returning the wai would be like refusing a handshake, though it would appear silly to wai children, taxi drivers or waiters. Thais also wai to the teacher when entering the classroom, to Buddha images and sacred spirit houses, to pagodas containing relics of the Buddha, to statues of the King and former kings, and to their parents as they leave for school.

Sex Roles

How should men and women act? In the past, Thai ideals of women were of nurturing and submissive mothers and sisters. Women were thought to be small and fragile and had to wait patiently for a man to 'capture' them. Men still have more rights than women, but Thai women educated abroad are beginning to claim their rights.

Friendship

What is the nature of friendship? Thai friends seem to have more personal interaction than Americans, and less privacy is expected.

Non-Verbal Behavior

What are appropriate and polite (or continued on page 11
inappropriate and impolite) gestures that could be misunderstood? Some of the examples mentioned in the presentation were how to avoid showing your tongue when licking a stamp or eating an ice cream cone in Thailand. If something smells bad, a Thai will wave a hand held vertically back and forth in front of his nose. Thais believe it is impolite to put your hands in your pockets. Thais beckon “come here” to others with the palm pointed down to be polite. Waving with your palm up is for children or animals, so this gesture is impolite. Giving or taking objects with the left hand is rude because the left hand is presumably used in the restroom. For Thais, putting hands on hips shows anger or arrogance. And don’t point your feet at others.

**Dining**

Thais have no religious taboos on what they can eat, and there is a long list of exotic foods to try. There are fruits never before seen in the U.S. such as smelly durian (it smells so bad, but it tastes so good), mangosteen, and rambutan.

Some examples of Thai eating behavior are:
1. Thais eat with a spoon in the right hand and a fork in the left. Putting the knife and fork crossed together on the plate is a signal that they have finished and do not want a second helping.
2. It’s best to eat moderately and, as a guest, to leave a little food on the plate in keeping with the Buddhist virtue of moderation.
3. It’s not polite to offer food that you don’t want as, for example, Americans sometimes do when they say, “Would you like the rest of this? I’ve eaten all I want.” Just offer the food.
4. Since the left hand is the ‘dirty’ hand, one shouldn’t eat or pass food with it.
5. Thais consider it bad manners to eat or drink anything while walking in the street.
6. Thais put hot red chili peppers in most of the soups and curries, which are truly

**Conclusion**

The reason Prof. Williams started to keep this photographic record of his cross-cultural faux pas was initially so that one day he might get some sympathy from his friends and family. He eventually realized that there was no gain without some pain and that he had learned valuable lessons. After about one year in Thailand, when new Peace Corps volunteers had arrived in the country, they appeared to be so green and culturally naïve that it was hard to be around them. He felt sorry for the necessary cultural adjustments they would soon have to make. Today, he knows that even the international students who come to study in the U.S. go through adjustments to our culture known as culture shock, and he empathizes with them. Knowing the worldview of other cultures has shown itself to be very helpful in the ESL classroom.

Links to more photographs, recipes and a charity on page 13.
The students come from a variety of language backgrounds and ethnicities. Many of the parents don’t speak Chinese but see the importance of their children learning the language. The children learn culture in addition to the language and have fun in the classroom. They don’t appear to be pushed into coming but enjoy it.

In his free time, David teaches Chinese at CSN, having developed the curriculum to include six courses: CHI 101 and 102 are conversational, and CHI 111, 112, 211 and 212 offer integrated skills.

The thought of learning Chinese can be daunting to many English speakers. There are approximately 50,000 Chinese characters, two to three thousand of which are commonly used. Students at CSN who study 111 through 212 study reading, writing, listening and speaking, but class time is at least 70 percent conversation. Most of the written work is done for homework. David claims the writing is “really not that hard” once you learn the meaning of the radicals. When asked which areas are the most difficult for students, he noted that the four different tones used for pronunciation present challenges since using the wrong tone may completely interfere with comprehension. Therefore, he tries to teach only phrases and sentences that learners will find the most useful when communicating. In every class, students stand up in front of the group to speak Chinese. David tells his students, “Someday you may be facing a billion Chinese, so you can start with this group.”

Many of his students study for job-related purposes, but he also has casino workers, a police officer, a construction worker, and a mail carrier. About a quarter of David’s students come from other Asian countries, such as Korea or Japan, where they may have already studied Chinese. He also has students whose parents or grandparents speak Chinese.

When asked what he most enjoys about teaching, David expressed his belief in the value of learning languages and building connections in the community. His students learn language that can be used immediately, such as a valet parking attendant who used his lucky phrases during Chinese New Year to impress his Chinese customers. David also believes there is much to be learned from each other in the classroom.

The two separate parts of his life provide a healthy balance. David noted that the teaching environment at CSN is very different from running a school. He seems to truly enjoy the variety. CSN is fortunate to have David Wang as an instructor in the Department of International Languages.
Take this quiz to discover your knowledge of international etiquette. Where in the world are you? Try to guess which country you are in if the following incidents occur.

A. While Tameka is a guest in this foreign country, she wants to show her appreciation for her hostess’s hospitality by giving her a present. She picks out a beautiful clock. When her gift is opened, the hostess looks distressed.

B. George brings roses to his girlfriend Elvira in this European country. She counts the flowers and says, “Where’s the missing one?”

C. Miguel arrives late to class one day after the teacher has begun teaching. He knocks on the door and asks if he can come in. He then greets everyone in the class before he finds a seat in the front of the room. The teacher looks annoyed but keeps talking.

D. Roselyn is teaching English as a foreign language in the Peace Corps. One day she wears to class the diamond owl pendant that her family sent her for her birthday. All day, students give her strange looks.

E. Etiquette books note that because they are featured so prominently in the flag, in Brazil, it is considered offensive to wear which two colors together in the workplace?

A. In China, there are a number of gifts to avoid. A clock symbolizes that time is running out. It may mean the end of a relationship or the end of life. Also, the Chinese word song zhong sounds like the word for a funeral ritual. Other bad gifts are handkerchiefs, towels, sharp objects, yellow or white flowers, a set of four anything, straw sandals, and things in white or black. Most of these are associated with death or a broken relationship.

B. Romanians believe that an odd number of flowers should be given. George had given her a dozen roses. Bouquets with even numbers are for cemeteries. Also, the ‘missing’ flower is the beautiful recipient herself.

C. In the U.S., it’s not a good idea to interrupt the teacher when the class has begun and you are late. The above actions may be polite manners in some other countries, but in U.S. classrooms, you should enter quietly and sit in the back so as not to interrupt the lesson.

D. The hooting of an owl is a harbinger of death. The owl is a symbol of death in Vietnam.

E. Green and yellow are the colors of the Brazilian flag.

Thai Ways and My Ways
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To view more photographs, see http://sites.csn.edu/eslhome/thaiways.htm
To view video clips of delicious Thai recipes, click on this link: http://thaifoodtonight.com

To view information about a charity organization created by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Thailand Group 27, together with Thais now living in America, to help poor, up-country students and their families, please visit http://fordecusa.org
French Club Meetings
Fall Semester 2013

West Charleston Campus
Building I, 301
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

COME AND JOIN US!
on the second Friday of each month
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FRENCH CLUB ADVISOR
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ESL STUDENTS practice English for free!

Grammar and Conversation Corner

Contact Professor Michael Young for fall semester time and place
College of Southern Nevada’s Interpreter Preparation Program Hosts

2013 Interpreter Career Expo

Thursday, May 16, 2013
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
CSN; West Charleston Campus
6375 W. Charleston Blvd, Las Vegas, Nevada 89146
Building B - Lobby

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- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy and Resource Center
- Department of Education, Training and Rehabilitation
- Judicial Court Interpreters Office
- Nevada Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- Nevada State College
- Preston Bass Interpreting Services, LLC
- Sign Design Theatre
- Sign Language Communication Services, Inc.
- Sorenson
- Southern Nevada Coalition of Organizations of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- SPRINT
- The Smith Center
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