

Northern Accents

Northern Michigan University

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Españolandia was founded at NMU in 1991

It has grown exponentially since its inception, with 482 high school students attending and 150 NMU student involved in 2007

Españolandia is a unique opportunity for NMU Spanish faculty and students to interact with local Spanish high school students and staff.

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¡BIENVENIDOS A ESPAÑOLANDIA!

This year, Españolandia was bigger than ever with 482 high school students from the Upper Peninsula attending. Since its inception in 1991, Españolandia, also known as Spanish Field Day, has provided a wonderful opportunity for local high school Spanish students to practice their language skills in a completely Spanish-speaking environment.

Españolandia is a “mythical” Spanish-speaking country brought to life once a year by NMU students and faculty. When the high school students enter the country, the must have their passports stamped by immigration and then interact with Spanish-

speakers at many stations around the room. Students must pass customs, exchange money, go grocery shopping, barter for food and drink at a Café, play Spanish board games, and even go to jail if caught speaking English! Throughout the event, students also participate in grammar, singing, show and tell, and skit competitions conducted by NMU students. Dr. Tim Compton initiated Españolandia at NMU 16 years ago and he has been instrumental in organizing it every year since. Dr. Compton

participated in a similar event at Brigham Young University, attending as a junior high Spanish student and later assisting as a BYU college student. When he joined the faculty at NMU, he thought that Españolandia “would be a good way to increase contact with Upper Peninsula schools.” He was right! It is a great experience for all involved and local high school Spanish students and teachers look forward to Españolandia all year!



High School students performing in the Spanish Song competition

LATINO CULTURE WEEK

Last month, NMU celebrated its first Latino Culture Week. Initiated by Spanish students Alana Stuart and Brian Brinkman, the event was sponsored by many departments, organizations, and individuals across campus. The week-long celebration began on Sunday, March 25 with Salsa lessons, followed by a speech by Latino activist, actor, and direc-



Latino Culture Week organizers, Brian Brinkman and Alana Stuart, with Latino activist Edward James Olmos

tor, Edward James Olmos (sponsored by the UNITED conference), a screening of the Motorcycle Diaries, a forum on Inter-American relations, a Latino Culture Night, and a Noche de Baile, featuring a 13-piece Salsa/Merengue band. The celebration of Hispanic culture was a success and next year’s events are already being planned.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT VIRGINIA HARRIS



B.A. in International Studies
and Political Science ('06)



Virginia Harris was exceptionally busy during her last semester at NMU. In addition to the usual concerns over graduation preparations and job opportunities, she also had to deal with the stress of State Department background checks and medical clearances. Earlier that year, Virginia had passed the written and oral assessments for the United States Foreign Service, and now, just weeks after graduation, she is on the Foreign

Service register waiting to be called in for diplomat training and country placement. During this waiting period she can increase her ranking by learning another "critical needs" languages.

Virginia graduated from NMU in December 2006 with a double major in International Studies and Political Science and a minor in German. During her time at Northern, she spent a year abroad in Hungary as a recipient of the National Security Education Scholarship (NSEP). This generous scholarship, funded by the State Department, requires all recipients to work for the government in a defense department for at least one year after graduation. Virginia was the first NMU student

to receive the scholarship and she served as the NSEP campus recruiter after returning from Hungary in 2005.

Although occupied with her coursework and the Foreign Service, Virginia also wanted to find an exciting and enriching job to help her gain experience between graduation and the eagerly-anticipated call from the State Department. Using the internet to find national job postings in her field, she came across a 6-month internship opportunity at Global College in Brooklyn, New York. After an online application and a telephone interview,

Virginia was offered the job one day before graduation and she moved to Brooklyn in early January.

Global College is a leader in international education. The college is located in Brooklyn, but its unique students find themselves in a different country each year. After a brief orientation in New York, students spend their first year in Costa Rica, while the second year they must choose between India and China. The third year students may travel around the world through a year-long Comparative Religion and Culture program or spend the first semester in Japan and the second in South Africa. Finally, their senior year, students must perform independent research in the country of their choice, returning to New York to complete their senior capstone research project.

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GERMAN CLUB

The German Club has several regular activities including Stammtisch, the German Film Series, and weekly club meetings.

This semester, the German Film Series was held every other Wednesday at 7pm. So far the club has shown a diverse assortment of movies. The first movie, *Joyeux Noël* captured a unique moment during the First World War. It recounts true events that transpired on Christmas Eve 1914, when Scottish, French, and German forces called an informal, unauthorized

truce and celebrated the holiday together in the trenches.

In *Schultze Gets the Blues*, a retired miner and polka musician makes a strange pilgrimage to Louisiana in search of his musical roots.

The peculiar movie *Head On* follows a German

Turk addicted to cocaine and alcohol as he meets a suicidal woman in the hospital and the two begin a

precarious relationship in which they deal with the unique issues they face as Turks living in Germany.

Gloomy Sunday traces the similarly outrageous

love triangle between a waitress, a pianist, and a German in Budapest in the 1930s.

Finally, in the last week of the semester, German Club will show the film *Das Wunder von Bern*, which provides a glimpse of the 1954 championship-winning German soccer team.

The weekly German Club meetings are held on Mondays at 6pm on the third floor of the LRC, please refer to page 3 for more information about Stammtisch.



TERTULIA, STAMMTISCH, LA TABLE FRANÇAISE...

Although Marquette does not enjoy the diversity of language present in large cities such as Chicago and New York, there are still plenty of opportunities for NMU students to practice their language skills around town.

If you wander into the Overtime Pub on Monday night, you can enjoy the beautiful sound of French, while if you happen to stop by on Tuesday evening, German conversation will fill the building. Across town, Spanish speakers convene at the new Mexican restaurant, Los 3 Amigos to celebrate Hispanic language, food, and culture on Monday nights.

La Table Francaise was organized in Fall 2000. It not only provides an outlet for students to practice their French, but it also offers leadership and mentorship experience for NMU students. Each advanced student, after approving conversation topics with Dr. Nell Kupper, must host one conversa-

tion table during the semester.

Stammtisch is a German word for a table at a restaurant that is reserved for a group of regulars. At Northern, Stammtisch is a conversational event the German club co-sponsors alongside the German classes to give students and community members an opportunity to practice German. It is now held Thursdays at 7pm at Overtime Sports Pub/Restaurant (Formally Whiskers) next to the dome.

The Spanish Tertulia has been an important component of Spanish Club for the past few years, but this year it has finally established itself as a regular conversation table independent of club activities. Every other week (hopefully every week next year) a growing number of regulars meet at Los 3 amigos. Spanish Club previously met at Border Grill or other informal locations for chats, but Los 3 Amigos is the perfect location because students are able to

practice their language skills with the Hispanic staff. Not only can they order in Spanish, but they can also start up conversations about Mexican culture and enjoy the Hispanic environment.

The three conversation tables are open to all levels.

Stammtisch (German)

6:00-7:15—Thursday

Overtime Pub

eflasch@nmu.edu

Tertulia (Spanish)

Every other Monday

8:00-9:00—Los 3 Amigos

nmuspanishclub@hotmail.com

La Table Française (French)

7:00-8:00 Mondays

Overtime Pub

kmercerc@nmu.edu

STUDY ABROAD HIGHLIGHT : ASSISTANTSHIP IN FRANCE

For most foreign language students, a year or semester abroad is an indispensable experience for developing one's language skills. Unfortunately, university-sponsored study abroad programs are often outside students' financial possibilities and often do not promote the cultural immersion necessary to truly learn the language. I found this immersion possible through the Teaching Assistantship Program, as I spent seven months teaching English to elementary students in a small town in Normandy. Assistants teach 12 hours per week, with ample vacation time, and are paid a monthly stipend, which is enough to live on comfortably.



Becky with her students in Vernon, France!

Living alone in a small French town was intimidating, but I was forced to quickly develop my language skills. Because of the small workload, I was able to supplement this experience with full-time, online-directed study courses in French through NMU. Dozens of countries around the world offer assistantship programs for continuing or post-graduate students; most offer information on Embassy web sites. For more information about the Assistantship Program in France, visit <http://www.ambafrance-us.org/culture/education/support/assistant/index.html>.

Contributed by Becky Newman

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.NMU.EDU/LANGUAGES



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Knowledge of languages other than English and sensitivity to other cultures are becoming increasingly important as we start the twenty-first century. Efficient transportation and instantaneous communications make contact with people from around the globe more and more frequent and vital. Technological advances offer exciting new opportunities. Northern Michigan University's Department of Modern Languages and Literatures seeks to open doors to students in their wide-ranging pursuits through the study of languages and cultures.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT, CONT.

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Virginia is currently working as a Marketing and Admissions intern at Global College, and she spends her time getting the word out about this exciting and innovative educational opportunity. The position offers a lot of freedom, requiring her write, make contacts, talk to students, form relationships with international organizations, and create advertisements. Virginia also provides a unique link with the students of the 21st century, designing websites and profiles on facebook and myspace.



Virginia in Budapest during the 2004-2005 school year

Virginia reflects fondly upon her experiences at Northern. She loves the town and school, and feels that her education at Northern truly prepared her to participate in the global community after graduation. She believes that students at NMU have the opportunity to really shine if they actively seek opportunities that will set them apart from the rest of their generation. The message that she would like to leave with NMU students is to never become stagnant or doubt your abilities, because the world won't wait for you!

*Northern Accents Editor
Nicole King*