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Q&A with Holger Wagner

Here in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, we always like to hear from our alumni. Recently, we were fortunate enough to hear from Holger Wagner, who graduated from NMU in 1997 with a BA in International Studies/ Spanish and a minor in Business Administration. He shared with us some of what's been going on in his life since his days here at NMU.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself? Where are you from? What brought you to Northern Michigan University? What did you study? What language? Etc.

HW: I am originally from southern Germany and came to Marquette first in December 1992 to visit my pen-pal with



whom I had been in touch since he visited my hometown in 1985 and stayed with me for a week. Up until then, the idea of studying overseas had not crossed my mind, but since I was going to finish up an apprenticeship in Germany in 1993, I thought "why not

follow that up with studies in the US". I popped into the admissions office, had a quick chat with a counselor, filled out the application at home, sent it in, received an admission letter, and the rest is history. I enrolled in International Studies with a business minor and later added Spanish as a major as well, because I had so much fun in the Spanish class and Prof Compton was such an excellent teacher and mentor.

(Story Continues on Page 2)

International Food Fest

The annual International Food Fest will take place this Sunday, March 21st from 11 am to 3 pm at the D.J. Jacobetti Center. Enjoy food from 20 countries, dance performances and music courtesy of Radio X

DJ Royal Dane and DJ Jeff Frizzle.

Tickets are \$5 for NMU students and \$9 for non-NMU students.

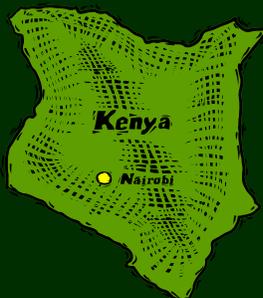
Tickets are available at the

International Office, 145 Whitman Hall. (906) 227-2510.

For more information:

mikunyua@nmu.edu

ddurham@nmu.edu



“It has so far been 13 years and I cannot wait to find out what is around the corner.”

- Holger Wagner

Q&A Continued

Q: What are you doing now? Where are you? Where are you working?

HW: I live in Nairobi, Kenya with my family and work for an organization called Ox-fam, which one of the biggest humanitarian aid organizations in the world. My job is to look after projects and funding in Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia. The particular focus of my work is on supporting emergency projects in water & sanitation, livelihoods, education, and capacity building for local community organizations. I travel frequently to various project areas where access is possible. Given the situation in Somalia and in parts of Sudan, it is not always easy to get to specific areas.

Q: Has your second language benefited your career? If so, how has it helped?

HW: I enjoy speaking Spanish wherever I can, although it does not play a major role in my current job. The language of International Development is English, so there is very little room for other languages as the most common denominator among people from different places around the world is often English. I do have a colleague from Spain, who works with me in the Nairobi office, so I do get a chance to apply my language skills now and then. When I was still working in South Africa

and was close to the border with Mozambique, the Spanish came in handy to understand Portuguese colleagues, although I claim no speaking ability in Portuguese.

Q: Does your second language come into play outside from work?

HW: There are a few Spanish-speakers in Nairobi, so apart from my good colleague from Spain, it is difficult to speak Spanish outside of that context. There is an annual Spanish Ball, however, but I have not been there yet.

Q: Is this where you imagined yourself ending up after Northern?

HW: The good thing is that I never imagined any particular place. I just knew that the time at NMU and the accompanying credentials would get me places and most of my career has been a mixture of personal tenacity, presented opportunities, good flexibility, and pure luck. I knew that I wanted to work in Africa and I left NMU in 1997 to move to South Africa. After that I knew that once arrived on the continent, opportunities would present themselves and an exciting journey would begin. It has so far been 13 years and I cannot wait to find out what is around the next corner.

Q: What is a favorite memory you have from your lan-

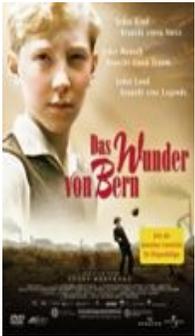
guage studying days at Northern?

HW: I really enjoyed the journey from Spanish 101 over 201, then 305 to 405 and my independent study in South America. All along I was accompanied by Prof Compton and it was magic to see this kind of progression and increased passion about a language over the course of about 3 years. I remember the little quizzes on irregular verbs, which always brought me cold shivers as I never quite seemed to get these irregularities sorted out in my head. The struggle continues.

Q: What advice would you give to students currently studying a language at Northern Michigan University, in regards to their future after college?

HW: Study with gusto, find ways to apply the language as often as possible, spend time in the places where the language is spoken, learn as many languages as possible, and see with what other skills you can combine it as there is nothing more powerful than a person with 3 or 4 languages under his/her belt and some sound technical knowledge. Especially in the world of International Development, this is a perfect combination.

German Film Series Winter 2010



The German Club is once again sponsoring a film series for students and community

members for the winter 2010 semester. To make sure you don't miss any of the upcoming

films, here is the schedule for the rest of the semester.

Wednesday, March 17

Der Baader Meinhof Komplex

Wednesday, March 31

Das Wunder von Bern

Wednesday, April 14

Vitus

All films start at 7 p.m. in Whitman Commons, located in Whitman Hall, Room 136. And don't worry if you don't speak German, or are a bit rusty, as all the films will have English subtitles.

Best of all, there is **no admission fee!**

So come and enjoy great films and great company! See you there!

Summer Study Abroad Sessions

Are you having trouble deciding what you might like to do this summer? Want to get out and travel?

Take a look into Northern Michigan University's study abroad line-up for this summer. There are a lot of opportunities to see the world and experience new cultures. Here is a list of what's being offered.

Vienna, Austria (May 9-June 6) "Central European Culture and Civilization"

Profs. Robbie Goodrich and Carol Strauss

Hikone, Japan (May 9- May 31) "Spirited Away: Japan's Visual Culture"

Prof. Mits Oba

Macerate, Italy (May 10-June 3)

"Travel Writing and Italian Culture"

Prof. John Smolens

Cusco, Peru (May 10- May 23)

"Alternative Healing in the Land of Incas"

Profs. Kerri Schuiling and Michelle Johnson

Buenos Aires, Argentina (May 8 - June 7)

"Survival Spanish for Travelers"

Prof. Amy Orf

Guanajuato, Mexico (May 8-June 5)

"Advanced Spanish Language and Literature"

Prof. Michael Joy

For more information, contact International Programs at:

227-2510 or email
goabroad@nmu.edu

There are also a few study abroad informational sessions coming up.

23 March 4-5 pm Whitman Hall Room 141

7 April 5-6 pm Whitman Hall 141

20 April 4-5 pm Whitman Hall 141

Spaces are limited, so act now!



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Knowledge of languages other than English and sensitivity to other cultures is becoming more important as we begin 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.

Check us out online!
www.nmu.edu/languages

Northern Michigan University's Languages Lab

There's no doubt about it. Learning a new language is challenging. It's like starting to read, speak and write all over again—in some cases, with entirely different alphabets. Whether you are first-year student of Chinese or a third-year French student, students may need some extra resources to help them along. We have the audio CDs needed to complete their lessons. We have a nice collection of books, international news and entertainment programming and movies too. Most importantly, we have friendly and apt tutors that are more than willing to give students help that the other resources are unable to provide. The Language Lab is happy to help language professors as well. Students may even need a nice quiet place to study or to try out their conversational skills with one

of the tutors.

The Language Lab is located in Jamrich Hall, room 203.

Winter 2010 Hours of Operation:

Sunday—5pm-7pm

Monday—11pm-7pm

Tuesday—11am to 7pm

Wednesday—11pm to 7pm

Thursday 11am-7pm

Friday—Closed

Saturday—Closed

