

A look inside the Russian soul

Matthias Schepp, '05, delivered the 27th Graham Hovey Lecture, "Powder Keg: Where is Putin Taking Russia?" at Wallace House in September. Schepp, Moscow bureau chief of the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* since 2006, maintains that Putin—despite propaganda that shows him "riding horses half naked in the Siberian taiga, racing in Formula One cars, hunting, tranquilizing tigers"—is a hesitant and isolated politician who listens too much to pollsters and reacts to short-term challenges rather than considering the long-term interests of his country. One of Schepp's books, "Gebrauchsanleitung Moskau," is a psychological guide to Moscovites and the Russian soul. He touches on that subject in the Q&A below. For more about the lecture, visit mjfellows.org.

Do Russians understand the rest of the world?

Their knowledge of foreign countries is in part still formed by the propaganda of Soviet times, especially among elderly people. In general, I would say the average Russian does not know less about foreign countries than the average American, but less than the average Western European.

When I drove from Beijing to Berlin by motorbike in 2004, an old woman was sitting on a bench in front of her wooden house in a small Siberian village. When I told her that I was German, she asked me for my opinion about the new leader of the Social Democratic Party, whom she could even name. This was more than 8,000 kilometers away from Berlin.

You said Putin's end has already begun. What's next for Russia? Which direction will she head?

Putin probably will be forced to cease power by the Russian power elite in some years. I have no certain idea where Russia is heading. The mainstream is more conservative and nationalist. On the other hand, the elite needs normal working relations with the West. That is where their money is and where their children study.

What can Russia teach the rest of the world?

First, the "avos"—a word that is difficult to translate. It means, the ability to mobilize all strength in order to do the impossible at the last moment.



Matthias Schepp, pictured delivering the Hovey Lecture, believes Russia has much to teach the rest of the world, and to learn from it.

Second, not to vote for fascists and communists even when the average real personal income declines around 60 percent in more than five years. This was the case in the '90s after the downfall of the Soviet Union.

What should Russia learn from the rest of the world?

From the West, that every individual has to be treated decently.

What do Russians think of Americans, in general?

Most of them don't like America and the Americans. They think Washington tries to be the world's policeman and they long for the Cold War situation when Moscow was the second policeman.

They also think that America tries to teach everybody how to live and they don't like that.

Some admire America's success; the others envy America's success.

During the U.S. presidential campaign, the candidates talked a lot about Putin and his vision for Russia in a changing world. If you were advising the president, what would you make sure he understood about Russia?

That Russia as nation, which endured more than 900 days of blockade of Saint Petersburg during World War II, will never kneel to foreign pressure. Lecturing the Kremlin on human rights, therefore, might be good propaganda but will yield little results. Foreign policy-wise, Putin and the Kremlin are ready for a deal.

From the Head Fellow

—By Charles R. Eisendrath '75

VISITORS IN SEARCH OF FIRE

The Canadians came last spring, the Brazilian, last month. They had heard reports about a motivational technique and decided to have a look. Hiding in plain sight is one thing, but who knew we were the invisible ones, or at least the inscrutable-to-some?

Out of the blue, officers representing the Canadian consul general wanted to know how much American journalists know about the country's biggest trading partner (nearly zero), whether that held true in KWF (yes) and what we do about it (flat zero, after trading a Toronto trip for Istanbul some years ago). "Pity," said the pair of distinguished vice consuls.

Thereinafter unspooled a line of suggested Canadian exposures, all of them sounding earnest ... and to me, boring. An awkward pause ensued.

Then what would be interesting? Running around, I said. Canada's a big, beautiful, fascinating place where I've worked and visit regularly; show us. I took their first retooled suggestion, provided it included a balance of environmentalists and government regulators as well as industry experts: Touring the oil sands around Fort McMurray, Alberta, the biggest energy play in North America and also the most controversial.

Near Ann Arbor, a gunky export called bitumen had paved the bottom of the Kalamazoo River, suffocating plant life and killing thousands, perhaps millions, of assorted critters.

I regularly canoe Michigan's lovely rivers and admitted straightaway that my mind was already made up. How could something that befouled a pristine Alberta landscape and then spewed pollution a thousand miles distant be anything but

nauseating? The consuls were unfazed: Come have a look, they said.

Their openness should have tipped me off, I guess. Instead, I was surprised all over again, beginning with the attitude we found in Fort McMurray: "Decide for



Philip D'Amico

on staff. In Ann Arbor, he concentrated on economic history in preparation for becoming opinion editor. To Frias, it's simple: "When good people get better," he says, "we get better. So of course I listen to what they want to do, and what they think the paper should be doing."

It sounds simple and it is. In an American media industry panicked about money but dead set against preserving its own human capital, it also sounds quaint. Frias' visit to Ann Arbor was the first after a prolonged absence from the U.S. because he has long thought that we've veered off-course ... away from quality of mind toward quantity of force; drifting from serious debate toward shallow bickering; shrinking high-quality journalism to fit lowest-cost budgets. These are not his words; Frias is much too polite. They are my paraphrase, to underscore his main point.

Frias travelled 10,000 miles for a three-day round trip to Wallace House because, as he put it, "I wanted to find out how you do it. We send our people all over the world for training and they often come back if not worse for the experience, then too often no better and no happier. From Ann Arbor, they come back on fire."

I don't recall ever feeling more deeply complimented, and instead of the modesty of silence, I thought I'd share the feeling, because it belongs equally to the staff of Wallace House, the faculty of the University of Michigan and, most fundamentally, to the Fellows, themselves. ▶

yourselves; we have nothing to hide and besides, why would you and with something this huge, how could you?" The exact opposite of Exxon and BP, I thought, and very Canadian.

Speaking only for myself, I can say that what I saw radically changed how I think of what's going on there.

Otavio Frias Filho is open in a completely different way. As chief editor whose family controls *Folha de Sao Paulo*, the biggest daily and most influential publication in Brazil, he regards part of his job as building his staff and taking his journalists' suggestions seriously. It shows.

For example, Marcelo Leite, a *Folha* Fellow last year, earned a Ph.D. and has written more than a dozen books while

CANDY LIEPA'S DELICATE DIPLOMACY WILL BE MISSED

—By Kyle Poplin, '10

When Candy Liepa retired from Wallace House in October, she told friends she planned to spend a full year in her pajamas, enjoying a life of leisure.

Her co-workers knew better. She's simply not the sit-around-the-house-in-pajamas-all-day type, as she made clear during her seven years of quiet efficiency at Wallace House.

Liepa officially split her time between administering the Livingston Awards and planning the Knight-Wallace program's conferences and special events—basically, any event involving food.

"She made Wallace House known for its hospitality with a sure touch for what matched the occasion," said Charles Eisendrath, head fellow.

"She coordinated food, drink, flowers, seating ... and 150 large egos at Livingston Award luncheons in New York."

Liepa took advantage of the perks that came with working at Wallace House, as she and her husband George, a nutrition professor at Eastern Michigan University who died in January 2011, regularly attended seminars.

"Her high competence came with an unassuming demeanor and an ability to include her husband George, even though his field lay far from journalism," Eisendrath said. Her favorite seminars? A couple stand out for their prescience. Several years ago, former U-M professor and U.S. State Department adviser Kenneth Lieberthal's talk about burgeoning China so intrigued Candy and George that they spent weeks talking about it and learning more. And she vividly recalls Bob Lutz, former vice chairman of GM, discussing the company's constricting financial pressures, including details like how it purchased toilet paper. She knew then that GM was headed for big trouble.

She'll miss her job. "It's an incredibly

stimulating work environment," she said. "You can't beat the people who come through the Wallace House doors. I never lost sight of the fact that these were interesting people. ... Plus, the house itself is a pretty cool place to work." And she'll especially miss the series of joyful conversations she had with talented young journalists every June. "There was this wonderful experience of Charles calling the winners of the Livingston Awards," she said. "I would call them back a few minutes later to give them the details. ... It was so fun to talk to them in those few moments after they won."

The Livingston Awards honor excellence by journalism professionals under age 35 and have become the largest all-media, general reporting award in the

country, with up to 500 annual applications. Their popularity is explained by their national significance, the lack of an application fee and the simple, one-page entry form. Plus, there was Candy's delicate diplomacy. "If their application came in looking like a mess, I would call them and help them," she said. "I don't think most awards programs do that."

Eisendrath said that because of the demands on the top judges' time, and their high visibility, the first rule of running the Livingstons has always been "no mistakes and whatever they need," which Candy delivered with a modest smile.

She's helped a lot of fellows and young journalists along their personal journey. Now she's off on one of her own, pajamas notwithstanding. ▶

Candy Liepa, right, who worked at Wallace House for seven years, was honored at a retirement party in October.



Brent Heck

THE CANADIANS INVITED US TO ALBERTA TO LEARN ABOUT THE TAR SANDS ISSUE.

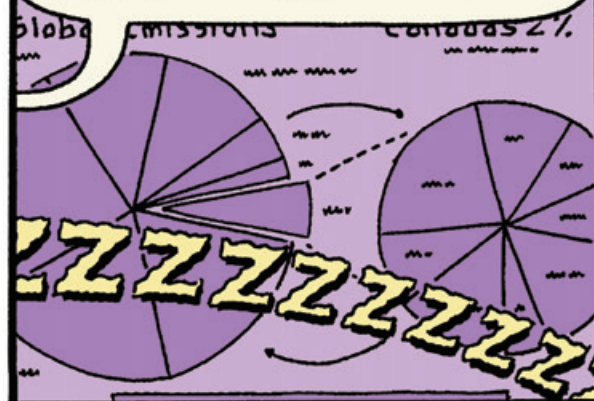
um, OIL sands, eh?

The Bitumen Junkie JOSH '12

JOSH'12

The first day we sat through lots of PowerPoints...

... whereas the in situ PRO-cess creates less GHG than...



...and learned lots of new words.

Dilbit Carbon Capture and storage

BITUMEN

Land disturbance

Tailings

1600 dead ducks

Charles asked lots of good questions.

How many women are there in the camps? /

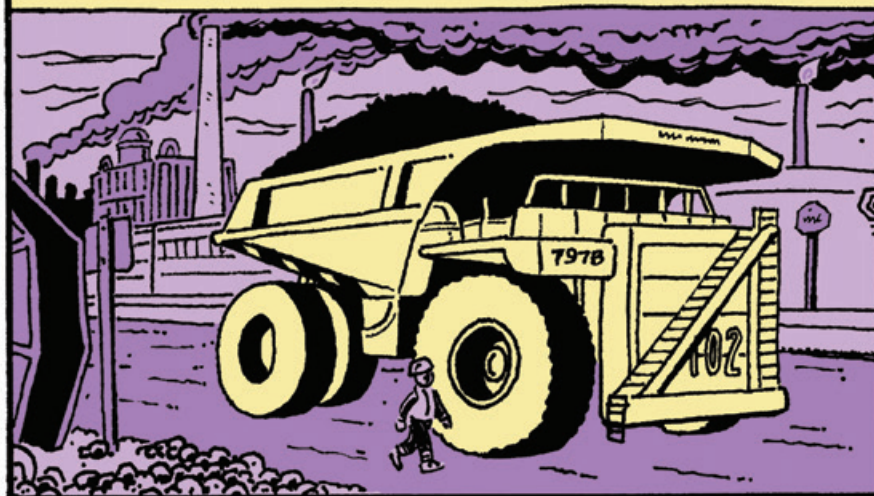
How fast does the bitumen flow through the pipelines?



The next day we flew up to Fort McMurray to visit the extraction sites...



Synchrude was like a scene from THE TERMINATOR movies. The smell of oil was everywhere.



The Cenovus site was eerily quiet -- everything was happening far underground.



We left the next day, awash in new information...



Thunderous
round!

...and with 17 new perspectives.

The dilemma: Revere or fear Canada?

—By Markian Hawryluk '13

Sometimes it seems we pay more attention to our enemies than our friends. After all, Americans tend to know more about what's happening in Baghdad, Kabul or Benghazi than in, say, Toronto, Ottawa or, god forbid, Regina.

Despite being our closest ally and largest trading partner, the people who most closely resemble our cultural sensibilities and way of life, Canada remains largely an unknown to most Americans. So I wondered how the members of KWF 2013 would stack up in their understanding of Canadian issues when we visited the oil sands in Alberta in October.

I've straddled the 49th Parallel most of my life. My mother immigrated to Canada from Ukraine after World War II, and I wandered Toronto's Bloor Street most every summer. Educated at the University of Toronto and married to a Canadian citizen, I now have more relatives on both sides of my family living in Canada than in the U.S. (Although, frankly, how anyone can freely choose to live through an Edmonton winter is beyond me ...)

In my experience, most Canadians fall into one of two camps—those who complain Americans don't pay enough attention to Canada and those who fear the U.S. exerts too much influence on its neighbor to the north. Indeed, many Canadians believe the United States would like nothing more than to annex the provinces, our failure during the War of 1812 notwithstanding. Yet they fret when the president



Fellows watched 400-ton trucks carry oil sands on six two-story tires.

neglects to mention Canada in the State of the Union address.

From the southern perspective, Canada has long been seen as a refuge for those unhappy with prevailing U.S. mores, its pristine arctic landscape a blank canvas upon which Americans can sketch their own hopes and aspirations. From the days of the Underground Railroad to Vietnam draft dodgers to celebrities fearful of Republican administrations, Canada has always had most favored nation status.

Canadian Vice Council Mary Lynn Becker hosts a dinner briefing.



At the same time American ignorance allows politicians and advocates to use Canada as a shining beacon to the north and the sum of all fears.

With U.S. politics as divisive as ever, the Canadian approach is both revered and feared. It is the answer to our problems and the road to our destruction. (Remember, America is polarized. Canada is merely polar.)

The “free” health care system in Canada is simultaneously held up as the model for the U.S. and the road

map for eroding our health care freedoms. Canadians, you see, believe every one of their citizens has the right to a bilingual health insurance card, and if there's money left over, maybe an MRI or a hip replacement. The American system, on the other hand, runs everyone through for an MRI first, then worries about who to bill for it.

As the Knight Wallace Fellows learned in Alberta, Canadians are dumb-founded that we would rather buy oil from people who are shooting bullets at us in the Middle East, than from our hockey puck-shooting neighbors to the north. Environmental groups worry that relying on Albertan oil sands to establish North American energy independence would be a hip-check into the boards for the world's climate.

Even when Canadians offer to give the U.S. a free bridge, television commercials tell Michigan voters the new span to Windsor will steal

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BOOK AUTHORS FIND WRITING IS SOMETIMES THE EASY PART

Editor's note: An unusually high number of fellows this year have written books, including three bestsellers. Here, we learn more about these unique labors of love.



In reporting her bestseller “The American Way of Eating: Undercover at Walmart, Applebee’s, Farm Fields and the Dinner Table,” **Tracie McMillan** labored among farm worker families in California, at two Walmarts in Michigan and in the kitchen of a New York City Applebee’s. She felt the book would help her career—“It was the best shot I had at getting myself in position to do work I thought was important.”—and start a meaningful conversation about what America eats. She knew she’d succeeded on the latter when Rush Limbaugh “spent 45 minutes on air talking about my book and how awful it is and what a threat to liberty it is.” What advice would she give others? “Paint yourself into a corner if you want to get it done.”



Donovan Hohn felt compelled to write “Moby-Duck: The True Story of 28,800 Bath Toys Lost at Sea and the Beachcombers, Oceanographers, Environmentalists and Fools, Including the Author, Who Went in Search of Them.” He says he “stumbled upon a book idea that captured my imagination and would not let it loose again ... and because it had been my ambition for many years to write a book, in particular a book like this one, mixing science writing and travel writing.” He advises authors to embrace the unknown: “Publishing a book is not unlike tossing messages in bottles overboard. You don’t know where they’ll end up and can only hope that the currents will deliver

some of them—or even many of them—into the hands of readers of the sort you were writing for.” The currents were kind; his book was a bestseller.



Multimedia sports journalist **Joanne Gerstner** recycled her expertise for a new audience last year, writing four children’s books: “The Detroit Tigers,” “The Toronto Blue Jays,” “The Detroit Pistons” and “The Toronto Raptors.” “It was tough at the beginning to go from writing *New York Times*-style to third grade level. By the end, I had developed the gut feeling of where I needed to be.” She loved the reaction of the readers. “Nothing has been more thrilling than to do book readings, and see children get excited about reading—and selfishly, something I wrote for them. Most touching was a mother of a 8-year-old autistic boy telling me he was rocking back and forth and making sounds while reading my book. He’s a big baseball fan, and his physical reactions were his way of showing enjoyment. I had tears in my eyes from that.”



Josh Neufeld, a comics journalist, wrote and drew “A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge,” about seven real-life residents of New Orleans and their Hurricane Katrina experiences. He wanted to tell the story in comics form “because I love the medium and believe it has a legitimate place among all the other accepted forms of long-form narrative.” The result was a bestseller. “I’ve had the opportunity to present the work—and the story of Hurricane Katrina—to schools all over the country, and even abroad.” He had to wait a long time to hold a copy in his hands: “Because of the costs of four-color printing, the book

was printed in Singapore and then shipped back to the U.S. by slow boat. ... That was five months of desperate longing.”



Sabine Righetti, who works as a reporter at *Folha de Sao Paulo*, edited and organized two books about the right to education in Brazil. “I’ve always been obsessed for education issues because I come from a country with a huge social gap,” she said. “I see education as a kind of freedom.” She certainly didn’t do it for the money, since her copyright was donated to a public university and UNESCO. She encourages other authors to pursue their passion, not the dollar: “Don’t think too much if the theme is relevant, if people are going to buy it.” The only thing she’d do differently, she says in hindsight, would be to “ask for a budget to translate them into English!”



At age 23, immediately following the Twin Tower attacks, **Kate Brooks** moved to Pakistan—on her own nickel—to photograph the impact of U.S. foreign policy in the region. That’s become her MO, i.e., taking off and collecting assignments along the way or on-station, and was the start of a 10-year odyssey covering world-changing events. In her book “In the Light of Darkness: A Photographer’s Journey After 9/11,” she interweaves a selection of those images with a series of personal essays. At first, she was less than enthusiastic about the finished product: “I noticed all of the imperfections and saw them as a reflection of myself. Only after several months was I able to begin appreciating the book as an independent object.” ▶

Our Great Geniuses

Cynthia Barnett, ’05, gave the commencement address at Unity College in Maine and received an honorary doctorate in sustainability science.

Mike Brennan, ’94, published the first in a series of cyber crime novellas called “Cyber Styletto.” He is editor and publisher at MITechNews.com.



Deborah Caldwell, ’94, is the deputy editor at CNBC.com in charge of all non-breaking news and the interface between the website and CNBC-TV. Previously, she was executive editor at *Wetpaint*.

John Collier, ’75, developed a documentary, “My Postcard Collection,” in which he uses vintage postcards from around the U.S. to tell the history of postcards and illustrate different events and eras.

Steve Edwards, ’08, was named deputy director, programming, at the University of Chicago’s Institute of Politics, a nonpartisan academic program led by David Axelrod. Edwards, who previously hosted “The Afternoon Shift” on WBEZ, plans to develop a visiting fellowship.



Craig Gilbert, ’10, was named by *Politico* as one of its “50 Politicos to Watch” this year. The website writes: “Every four years, the nation’s eyes turn to Wisconsin—some presidential election cycles more than others, but the Badger State is usually up for grabs. As the Washington bureau chief for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Craig Gilbert

has a unique view on how the state fits into the nation’s political tapestry.”

Carolina Pig Pucker, a barbecue sauce that **Dan “The Pig Man” Huntley**, ’03, worked on during winter days at the Wallace House stove, was named an official sauce of the 2012 Democratic Convention in Charlotte.

SungWoong Kang, ’09, is leading the New Headquarter Task Force Team, overseeing the move of 24-hour news network YTN in Seoul. He’s in charge of manpower reallocation and adopting new broadcasting technology.

Marzio Mian, ’02, won the Amerigo International Cultural Exchanges Programs Alumni Association’s award for best communicating U.S. culture in Italy.



Maureen O’Hagan, ’00, won a national James Beard Foundation Award for a series of stories on childhood obesity that ran in *The Seattle Times*.



Vince Patton, ’04, won an Emmy for science reporting for his story on elk at Mount St. Helens. (He credits the good luck elk urine he and the videographer sprayed on themselves to better sneak in for up close pictures.)

Emily Richmond, ’11, added her blog as a regular partner at *The Atlantic*. She is the public editor of the National Education Writers Association.



Lance Williams, ’87, shared a George Polk Award for “Decoding Prime,” a series of stories on Medicare billing issues at a Southern California hospital chain. He reported the story along with Christina Jewett and Stephen K. Doig, colleagues at *California Watch*. ▶

Publisher: Charles R. Eisendrath ’75

Editor: Kyle Poplin ’10

Production and Design: Kathleen Horn, Blue Skies Studio

Views expressed in the *Journal* are not necessarily those of the Fellowship Program or the University of Michigan.

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A brave soldier of the independence

—Frederico Monjeau, '13

Editor's note: The snows of Alberta sent an Argentine music critic (*Clarín*) into a poetic reverie of barbecuing in Buenos Aires

The last time I saw snow before KWF's Alberta trip was July 9, 2007. July 9 is our Independence Day and I decided to join the celebrations with some very traditional Argentinian food, a barbecue. Snow began to fall while I was cooking on my terrace, but I remained there as a brave soldier of the independence.

I entered into history as the rare Porteno who barbecued in the snow.

Before that, Buenos Aires had only one snow day in the 20th century—June 22, 1918. Local legend maintains that snow inspired the tango “¡Qué noche!”

(“What a Night!”) by Agustín Bardi, but that's not true.

If in a movie like “Fargo” or in an Orhan Pamuk novel snow has an ominous quality, snow in Buenos Aires was no more than child's play, an untrue inspiration of a tango, a funny backdrop for a barbecue. But then, tangos are not meant to be true. ▶

Frederico Monjeau



—Revere or fear, continued from page 5

dollars from schools, roads and police departments.

Is that any way to treat a neighbor? As Sarah Palin might say, we can see 80 percent of Canadians from our front porch. Frankly, we welcome their highly proficient doctors, engineers and entertainers. There's no talk of building a wall to keep out illegal aliens from Canada nor are Montana and North Dakota seen as battlegrounds for immigration reform.

It's ironic that along the longest undefended border in the world, two border crossings—the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline and a new bridge in Detroit—have been defended so fiercely and at times, so dishonestly. It's taken away from our ability to work with Canada on more crucial issues, like getting all those unemployed hockey players working again. ▶