Turkish Nationality Room
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University of Pittsburgh

Nationality and Heritage Rooms News

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Our newsletter is available online at nationalityrooms.pitt.edu/news-events.
Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. Like you, I’m staying at home, dealing with the reality of COVID-19. The global pandemic is a transnational disaster that is impacting everyone. Four billion people around the globe, many of them living under more challenging conditions than us, have been told to shelter in place.

I am sure that you and your loved ones are experiencing this situation in unique ways. Many of us know someone who is caring for the sick and vulnerable, keeping hospitals safe and clean, delivering food, or providing the essential services that keep us moving forward. We are all thankful to these heroes for their extraordinary work. By doing our own work, we are contributing our share to overcoming this situation as soon as possible.

For me, one of the most difficult parts of the crisis has been the isolation. I gain so much inspiration and joy from working with all of you, so the distance has been challenging. Still, we’re working on innovative ways to stay connected. For example, the Nationality Rooms staff is creatively sponsoring virtual engagement efforts to ensure that we remain connected to each other in this trying and often alienating time.

I must also share the enormous pride I felt when the chancellor recognized the UCIS team, expressing his deepest gratitude and underscoring our role on the front lines in responding to the pandemic. He stressed the professionalism of everyone on our team and called the effort to bring students back safely “nothing short of miraculous.”

While we may be surrounded by grim news and stressful moments, I wanted to take this opportunity to share such wonderful feedback. I also want to personally thank and recognize the work of the NRIEP staff through this uncertain period with such grace.

With deep appreciation,

Ariel C. Armony
Vice Provost for Global Affairs
Director, University Center for International Studies
Professor of Public and International Affairs and Political Science
The Turkish Nationality Room’s design is based on the historical model of the baş odası (main room), which is found in all regions of Turkey, regardless of ethnicity or national roots. One enters the Turkish Room through a gallery that is modeled after the hayat or sofa, an anteroom that serves as the privacy buffer for the main room. Along the gallery are four ceramic panels bearing images of Turkish history dating back to the ninth century.

The key features of the classroom space are seating in the round, emphasizing parity for all occupants while hinting at hierarchy through positioning with respect to the entrance; cupboards placed close to the floor; and decorative crafts on the walls and ceiling. These include a hand-painted wall mural, kündekâri (wood joinery with alternating grain pattern), and citakâri woodwork, arts that are still practiced in Turkey.

The design of the Turkish Room was inspired by exquisite examples of main rooms in Istanbul’s Topkapi Palace as well as its civic versions opulently illustrated by the Emirhocazade Ahmet Bey house in Safranbolu. The Turkish Room design also uses a trompe l’oeil wall mural of Istanbul to create walls with a view of the city through painted windows.
Because we are featuring the Turkish Nationality Room in this issue of the newsletter, we would like to share with you some interesting facts about Turkey and its people:

- Turkey is the sixth-most-visited tourist destination in the world.
- Turkey has the highest per capita rate of tea consumption in the world. Tea is the social drink served around the clock everywhere in Turkey.
- The tulip is one of the national symbols of Turkey. The flower was cultivated by the Turks as early as 1000 CE and was introduced to Western Europe in the 16th century by an ambassador serving in the Ottoman Empire.
- Istanbul's Grand Bazaar is one of the world's oldest and biggest markets. It was established shortly after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. Over the centuries, it has grown into a warren of 61 streets lined by more than 3,000 shops.
- The signature Turkish treat is tavuk göğsü, or chicken breast pudding. It's a strange blend of boiled chicken, milk, and sugar, dusted with cinnamon, and it's delicious.
- There are 13 spots in Turkey on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. They range from a Mesolithic temple to a biblical city (Ephesus) to a World War I battlefield (Gallipoli).
- Saint Nicholas was born in Patara, Turkey. Saint Paul was from Tarsus. The prophet Abraham was born in Şanlıurfa, and Noah may have run his ark aground at Mount Ararat.
- İztuzu Beach, just west of Fethiye, is a major breeding ground for the endangered loggerhead sea turtle. The turtles arrive between May and October. The beach sees about 300 nests dug each year.
- Turkey is home to some spectacular mountain ranges. Palandöken, in the eastern province of Erzurum, is Turkey's highest at 10,200 feet (3,109 meters) and claims Europe's longest natural ski run.
- Istanbul has one of Europe's most exciting art scenes. The Istanbul Biennial art show ranks among the top contemporary art shows in the world.
- Historians believe that agriculture began in Anatolia some 11,000 years ago. At sites like Çatalhöyük, in south-central Turkey, there’s evidence that the residents of this proto-city added crops like wheat and barley to their diet, and wild grasses genetically identical to those first domesticated grains still grow in southeastern Turkey. Turkey is the world's 10th-biggest grain producer.
- Its population may be 99% Muslim, but Turkey draws tens of thousands of Christian pilgrims each year. The ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, the spiritual leader of the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians, lives in Istanbul, a vestige of the Byzantine Empire. The grotto dug by the Apostle Peter in Antioch was the first Christian house of worship, while a first-century patriarchal church is said to have been located underground in today's unprepossessing Istanbul district of Fındıklı. Istanbul also is home to the 1,500-year-old Hagia Sophia Greek Orthodox cathedral, now a museum. And the Armenian Apostolic Church was founded 1,700 years ago in what is today the city of Kayseri.
- The archaeological site of Göbekli Tepe was discovered in southern Turkey, with evidence of monumental construction taking place at least 2,000 years before the accepted time frame of the agricultural revolution. Buildings at Göbekli Tepe also predated the inventions of pottery, written language, and the wheel.
- A new type of plant is discovered in Turkey every 10 days. Turkey's 10,000 plant and 80,000 animal species help to rank the country among the world’s 35 biodiversity hot spots.
Turkish Art

Nur Lider

Minyatür sanatı (the art of miniatures), Ebru (paper marbling), Hat (calligraphy), and Karagöz and Hacivat (Turkish shadow theater) are some of the most well-known traditional art forms that are representative of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Turkey.

Miniatures are colorful paintings that were historically used to illustrate manuscripts, especially during the Ottoman Empire. At the entrance wall of the Turkish Nationality Room, a beautiful miniature of Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Lawgiver depicts the unique form of perspective used by the miniature artists called nakkaş. People and objects that have social and political significance are drawn larger than other figures and elements. Usually, subjects of miniatures included events from the public and private lives of rulers, like weddings, circumcision festivities, and religious ceremonies at the Ottoman Palace, and historical events like wars and heroic deeds in battles. They also included literary works like epics, tales, poetry, and anthologies as well as texts on botany, zoology, alchemy, cosmography and medicine.

Turkish calligraphy, or Hat sanatı, is a unique artistic creation, although calligraphy itself is not of Turkish origin. Ottomans adopted it, taking this art to its pinnacle over a 500-year period. Turkish calligraphers have always made the paper, pens and ink they use. The paper would be painted with natural dyes, then polished with boiled starch and egg white. Dressing the paper in this way allowed for easy correction of mistakes. Pens were made of hard reeds. Bigger pens (known as celi) were made of wood. To produce ink, the calligraphers would burn materials such as pine and linseed oils.

Ebru is the art of creating colorful patterns by sprinkling and brushing pigments on a pan of oiled water and then transferring this pattern to paper. The technique spread from Central Asia to China, India, Persia, and Anatolia. Seljuk and Ottoman calligraphers and artists used marbling to decorate books, imperial decrees, and official correspondence and documents. Turkey, where ebru artists perfected new forms and processes, remained the center of paper marbling for many centuries. Until the 1920s, these artisans had workshops in the Beyazit district of Istanbul and produced colored paper for both the local market and the European market, where it is known as Turkish marble paper. Ebru remains a very popular art form in Turkey, with contemporary interpretations of traditional themes and motifs.

Shadow theater puppets are two-dimensional semitransparent colored figures with jointed limbs. Light from a lamp behind the stage reflects their images onto a muslin curtain, around which is a border of floral material. Shadow puppets made their debut at the Ottoman palace during the reign of Bayezid I (1360-1403). Subsequently, the plays were performed for the public in coffeehouses and in private homes between the 17th and 19th centuries, particularly during the month of Ramadan. Karagöz—literally “Black Eye”—is the hero of the Turkish shadow play. Uneducated, but with plenty of native wit, he inevitably gets the better of his gentle friend Hacivat, who is no match for Karagöz despite his education. Shadow puppets are traditionally worked by one puppeteer, known variously as karagözcü, hayali, or hayalbaz.

Contemporary shadow theater is used to entertain people in town centers, especially during the month of Ramadan, and to educate children on issues like personal hygiene, the environment, and treating others with love and respect.

Note: The Turkish Culture Portal (turkishculture.org) was used as a reference for sections of this text.
Ömer Akın, architect of record for the Turkish Nationality Room, passed away on March 13, 2020. He was a widely respected teacher, designer, and friend to so many in the Nationality Rooms community, and his legacy will live on through the unique and elegant design of this room.

Among his many accomplishments as a professor of architecture at Carnegie Mellon University, Akın was a pioneer in the field of computer-aided design. Yet, despite his comfort with modern technology, Akın approached the design of the University of Pittsburgh’s Turkish Nationality Room a bit differently. He knew that designing the room required a meaningful connection to the ancient wisdom of historical Turkish architecture. The digital blueprints could wait; this was a time for pen and paper. His wife, Meral Akın, recalls that he would spend night and day working up his initial sketches. He paid special attention to the woodworking and prototypes for custom seats with retractable desks for the students. Hidden beneath the desks were embedded laptop charging stations, combining old-world design with modern needs. With hand sketches that were accurate down to the millimeter, Akın could now digitize those designs and pass them on to the artisans who would transform his vision into the beautiful forms that adorn the room today.

Akin was always so grateful to be part of a diverse team of volunteers, including many from the Turkish American community, who dedicated their skills and expertise to make the room a reality. As the architect of record and a principal fundraiser for the room, Akin found this to be a perfect match. Akin was not only a qualified historian of Turkish architecture, having studied the discipline at Middle East Technical University, but he also had researched the most important ancient buildings across Turkey in person. This allowed Akin to gain a unique perspective on the precise angles and aesthetics required to complete the room’s design. His wife and three children had the pleasure of touring many of these historical sites with him over the years, experiencing his impromptu lessons on architecture along the way.

When the Turkish Room first opened, his family was once again treated to a lecture on some of the technical aspects of the design, which we are pleased to share with you now through a video taken in 2012. We remember him laughing and dancing to the music that played upon entering the room, a reflection of his infectiously uplifting presence. The video may be found at youtu.be/wrgDVlGeg8E.

Akin explained that the Turkish Nationality Room followed traditional design and architectural practices as evident in the room’s wooden forms: “This room was designed with ancient woodworking...
techniques in mind called kundekari and citakari that Turks have been using since their very early days in Central Asia. These techniques are based on creating larger wood panels out of very small wood pieces. Since there was and still is a scarcity of native species of lumber in Central Asia, and Turkish tribes were mostly nomadic in those days, they had to travel light and rely on structures made from small pieces of lumber.”

Those who knew Akın can attest to how inspiring it was to watch him pour his passion into the Turkish Nationality Room project while creating an authentic design in both theory and practice. The study of design and creativity and the ethical considerations within each were always a central focus of his career. Professor Stephen Lee, head of Carnegie Mellon’s School of Architecture, said, “Through Ömer, I learned the importance of teaching how we design, not just what we design.”

Akın was professor emeritus at Carnegie Mellon at the time of his passing in 2020. Upon completing a graduate degree in architecture at Middle East Technical University in 1970, he obtained a Fulbright scholarship for graduate study in the United States. Subsequently, he earned a Master of Architecture from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1972 and a PhD in architecture from Carnegie Mellon in 1979, remaining there for the rest of his career.

During his time at Carnegie Mellon’s School of Architecture, he developed the architecture-engineering-construction management master’s and PhD degree programs and the Doctor of Professional Practice degree program. He developed and taught in the first professional Master of Architecture degree program at the school and served as both director of graduate programs and department head. Akın conducted extensive research on design cognition and is best known in this area for his books Psychology of Architectural Design (1987) and Representation and Architecture (1982). He also was known for his work in the field of ethics in architecture. He was a registered architect in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Republic of Turkey.

Akin was a 2010 recipient of the Jefferson Award, given to our nation’s “community champions,” for volunteering more than 3,000 hours of his time over 10 years to the Turkish Nationality Room project and for his work to promote academic diversity by bringing junior and senior architecture students from historically Black colleges and universities to Carnegie Mellon through the Summer Internship for Diversity program.

We end with one of Akın’s favorite quotes: “When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.” Those who knew him know all the great things he was. We can imagine with joy and wonder the great things he will now be, both in our memories and as his spirit lives on in one of the city’s most impressive attractions, the Nationality Rooms. We know how grateful he was to be part of it all, and his family extends its appreciation to those who continue to support these magnificent rooms.

A website showcasing Akın’s creative works can be found at ratsandberries.com.
Message from the Nationality Rooms Council Chair

Currently we are in an unusual time of a medical pandemic crisis. Many offices, universities, schools, and public places are closed. People have a great deal of stress because of the closures and the uncertainties of the present situation.

Recently, I saw a short meditation online that addresses this issue: “To put things in perspective for those of us feeling a bit stir crazy, Anne Frank and seven other people hid in a 450-square-foot attic for 761 days quietly trying to remain undiscovered to stay alive. We can all do our part to keep everyone safe and spend a few weeks at home.” These are truly wise words.

The University of Pittsburgh has addressed the issue of our committees’ scholarships, which were awarded to students for the 2019-20 school year. The awardees will be able to use their funding to travel abroad when it is safe to do so. The University will reopen sometime following the conclusion of the state of emergency, and our committees will gradually begin to resume their regular activities. It is my hope that the committees use this time to look ahead and plan activities for the fall 2020 and spring 2021 terms.

For now, I encourage you to comply with the public health directives to stay at home and be well. I look forward to seeing you at our next Nationality Rooms Council meeting.

Sincerely,
Joseph Bielecki

News from the Nationality and Heritage Room Committees

Philippine Nationality Room
Maryann Sivak

The Philippine Nationality Room was short-listed by the Master Builders’ Association of Western Pennsylvania, Inc., for its Excellence in Craftsmanship - Interior Construction award. Congratulations to Volpatt Construction Corporation for a job well done!

Polish Nationality Room
Lawrence Kozlowski, Chair

The Polish Nationality Room Committee had scheduled the sixth annual Spring Festival of the Egg for March 22, 2020. This multiethnic celebration of spring, which is conducted with support and participation from a variety of Nationality Room committees, churches, ethnic groups and local folk artists, was to be the biggest and best ever. With support from the University of Pittsburgh’s Year of Creativity, the festival was expected to draw more than 1,000 visitors. Floor plans had been drawn up and hundreds of eggs had been decorated. Everyone was ready to celebrate.

As life would have it, along came the COVID-19 virus. We had an informational, constructive and supportive meeting with Belkys Torres, the executive director of global engagement at the University Center for International Studies. Disappointment led to hope and future support of the egg festival by the University in March 2021. The Polish Room Committee was in complete agreement with the University’s decision that it would be in the best interest of its students, faculty, administration, staff, and guests not to cancel the festival but to postpone it for a year.

The University will host the Spring Festival of the Egg on campus. It will be included as part of the celebration of the 95th anniversary of the Nationality Rooms. This is a win-win situation. Dziekuje—thank you!

Sometimes you have to crack lot of eggs to stop an egg festival! Rebecca Sodergren, a staff writer for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette who was originally scheduled to cover the festival, quickly switched gears to write an article titled “Create an Egg Festival at Home, the Old-world Way.” The article, which ran in the March 19 edition, taught readers how to celebrate the customs of spring and Easter, with history, folklore, egg dyeing instructions, egg games, and even a recipe for holiday pastries.

Please plan to join us in March 2021, along with the Carpatho-Rusyn, German, Hungarian, Irish, Israeli, Japanese,
The Lithuanian, Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian, and Welsh committees, for the Spring Festival of the Egg. We welcome additional participation from local ethnic groups, churches, organizations, and folk artists. Contact me at 814-969-5940 for more information.

Swiss Nationality Room
Nancy Carlson, Chair

The Swiss Nationality Room Committee is pleased to announce that after seven years of fundraising efforts by our committee members, and with the generous support of many donors, we have reached our goal of a $100,000 endowment for a scholarship. This should allow the University of Pittsburgh and the committee to award one scholarship per year, in perpetuity, to a Pitt student for summer study or research in Switzerland.

The committee met on March 8, 2020, for its annual meeting. Having reached our fundraising goal, we are now preparing to turn our focus to event planning, including identifying ways to participate in the Nationality Rooms’ 95th anniversary celebration in 2021.

The Swiss Nationality Room Committee has been requesting periodic updates from the University’s facilities department regarding the third-floor Nationality Room signage; the Swiss Room and other newer rooms are missing from the directional signage and map, causing confusion for some visitors to the rooms.

Turkish Nationality Room
Nur Lider, Chair

The Turkish Nationality Room Committee hosted an event on March 8 for the children of Turkish American families living in the Pittsburgh region. This event was a collaboration between the committee and the Turkish Women’s Group of Pittsburgh (TWGP). The children played a favorite game from Turkey. One of the mothers kindly prepared a slideshow about a preselected book in Turkish titled Gergedanlar Krep Yemez (Rhinos Don’t Eat Crepes), and she read the story to the kids. The event ended with follow-up activities and more games. The kids had a lot of fun, and we look forward to the time when we can safely do it again.

We also have been talking about having some kind of Turkish language school once or twice a month to teach children Turkish, but this is a long-term project that will require bringing in a lot of help and volunteers from the local Turkish community. The women in TWGP are thrilled and very supportive of this project. Some of them are elementary or middle school teachers by training and have said that they will help. It will take a while to make the arrangements for this school, but it is worth trying.

The Turkish Nationality Room Committee mourns the passing of Ömer Akın, whose work on the Turkish Nationality Room continues to pay tribute to traditional Turkish architecture and offers a unique example of the cultural heritage brought to the United States by the Turkish American community. His legacy will live on through the Turkish Nationality Room. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Akın family. The committee has decided to award a 2021 summer study abroad scholarship in memory of Akın. If you would like to make a contribution to this scholarship, please visit pittgivingform and scroll to the bottom of the page to see a list of available funds. Click on the section that reads, “This gift is in honor/memory of someone special” and enter Akın’s name along with the other required information.

Welsh Nationality Room
Dale Richards, Chair

Along with other members of the Welsh community of Pittsburgh, the Welsh Room Committee took part in Wales Week, which is a multinational celebration of Wales centered around St. David’s Day (St. David is the patron Saint of Wales). The Pittsburgh events included the following:

- **February 19:** Dinner gathering at Spoonwood Brewing Co.
- **February 22:** Six Nations Rugby: Wales vs. France
- **February 28:** St. David’s Pub Crawl, Downtown Pittsburgh
- **February 29:** Daffodil Luncheon, University Club, Oakland
- **March 1:** St. David’s Welsh Sunday Service, Tarentum
- **March 1:** St. David’s Day skyline illumination
- **March 7:** Six Nations Rugby: Wales vs. England

Yugoslav Nationality Room
Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, Chair

Several recent events were sponsored by the Yugoslav Nationality Room Committee.

**December 5: Cosponsorship of Serb National Federation Lecture on Karl Malden**

Predrag Petrovic, a professor at the University of Belgrade and an authority on Karl Malden, spoke on the life and times of the well-known Serbian American actor. The event took place in the English Room.

**January 26: Tea and Talk Presentation: Ervin Sejdic**

Ervin Sejdic, a biomedical engineer and researcher at the University of Pittsburgh Swanson School of Engineering, spoke on artificial intelligence in medicine and its advances and limitations. His current research focuses on devices for patients with swallowing disorders, and his passion for the subject matter was appreciated by the audience.
Rooms in Process

**Finnish Nationality Room**
Seija Cohen, Chair

We continue with our fundraising. According to the latest report, we have increased our account to $135,000. We are hopeful that we will reach our goal for the construction of the room. We have made new plans to expand our current fundraising program, especially searching for and contacting potential sources.

We are submitting grant proposals and doing targeted fundraising with the assistance of available nonprofit services. One of our summer activities will be to search for potential donors in the massive database of philanthropic foundations that has been compiled by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. However, two main obstacles remain: The Finnish American community in Pittsburgh is quite small, and many of our members are students and faculty who only remain here for relatively short time periods. Additionally, the cost of the room’s construction, which must satisfy the University’s building requirements, is high and steadily increasing.

The room committee had planned to send representatives to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, held in Helsinki, which was scheduled for June. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament has been rescheduled for 2021.

Among the things for which Finland is well known are its high literacy rate and variety of schools and the unique construction technique found in its log houses. Finnish immigrants arrived here with the construction skills learned in their homeland and brought their books and education with them. These will be highlighted in the room.

In conjunction with FinnFest USA 2019, which was held in Detroit, Michigan, we sold donated items, including some from Finland as a fundraiser for the proposed Finnish Nationality Room. Frank Eld’s room model was on display and attracted many visitors, especially young people and children who pulled their parents’ hands to come see the miniature Finnish Room.

In December, we had our annual Christmas party at the First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh. We entertained some new members, many of whom we met for the first time.

We continue to advertise and raise money for our campaign. Being mindful of the current pandemic, however, we also urge our contributors to support Pitt medical research, especially the vaccine program.
Programs and Activities
Maryann Sivak

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nationality Rooms are not open for tours, so we are happy to bring the Nationality Rooms to you! Michael Walter has scripted, scored and narrated 360-degree video tours of the rooms for your enjoyment and to provide content that is similar to what is provided on our in-person tours. To view the videos, visit our Facebook page at facebook.com/nationalityroomsprograms. The videos also are posted on the Pitt UCIS channel on YouTube.

Legacy Committee
Dale Richards and Jennie-Lynn Knox

In celebration of the 95th anniversary of the Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs, the Legacy Committee was formed to honor those who have had an impact on the Nationality Rooms over the years. Each room committee will nominate one of its members to serve on the Legacy Committee. Those honorees who have passed away will have their photographs placed on a poster, along with their biography, to be shown at the kickoff celebration for the 95th anniversary. If available, living honorees will be included in a video celebration on our website.

We look forward to honoring the past and embracing the future.
TOURS AND INFORMATION CENTER

Michael Walter

Because of COVID-19, our physical tours have been suspended and groups with reservations have been contacted to cancel or postpone their visits. Future cancellations or postponements may be necessary until physical operations resume. Please do not attempt to enter the Cathedral of Learning to see any rooms. They are locked and the building is inaccessible.

Our website has a notice regarding this, and the home page has been updated to include content for the many schoolchildren, tourists, and Pitt community members who wish to connect with the rooms.

Because I cannot report on tours, I will instead focus on the excellent Quo Vadis guides and their efforts and projects.

Quo Vadis

From February 14 to 16, the Quo Vadis guides took their annual trip to Washington, D.C., to visit embassies and museums. Our visit this year took us to the embassy of the Philippines and the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See (the Vatican). At the latter, Brother Britt welcomed our group to the second-oldest active embassy in Washington, D.C. He described how the apostolic nuncio (which is similar to an ambassador) worked to represent the pope himself: The pope in his person acts as the chief diplomat, and his delegates and nuncios convey the message to national political leaders and vice versa. Therefore, a great number of Vatican transfers of messages and artifacts are contained in the nunciature. On view were early documents from the beginnings of the United States, describing Catholics’ role in the formation of our republic. Art treasures transferred from the Vatican, including furniture from the Vatican furniture studios, were on display and used. Very similar to the mosaic and intarsia techniques we see in the Czechoslovak, German, Israeli, and Romanian rooms were intricate pictures of Roman structures done as tiny mosaics. We were invited to sit at the dining table in the chairs used by Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Bergoglio (now Pope Francis). Overall, it was a very enlightening visit.

From there, the group visited the Philippine embassy. We were warmly received, even though the embassy was just about to close, and were treated to an informational video about the diversity of landscapes and opportunities in the Philippines. The discussion then turned to languages and environmental concerns and how the country deals with both. The embassy officers were greatly pleased to hear about the new Philippine Nationality Room and lamented that the ambassador himself was not there, as he owns a generational home much like the inspiration behind the Philippine Nationality Room.

Various museums were visited along the National Mall and elsewhere, including the wonderful Dumbarton Oaks Museum, but a unique visit was made to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, where there are many ethnic shrines. We saw the Polish shrine to the Lady of Czestochowa, the Lithuanian shrine (which had a mosaic rendition of the sculpture that is in the Lithuanian Nationality Room), and the Irish shrine (with mosaic illustrations copied from the Book of Kells, which also inspired designs in the Irish Nationality Room). There were as many if not more such shrines than there are Nationality Rooms. A Sunday visit to the Washington National Cathedral brought with it some reminders of Pitt as well: A great deal of the ironwork in the National Cathedral was made by Samuel Yellin, who also made the iron gates in the Cathedral of Learning. We also found the tomb of Woodrow Wilson, the president who, along with Tomáš G. Masaryk, helped to create the state of Czechoslovakia. A copy of the Pittsburgh Agreement, which influenced Wilson to do so, is found in our Czechoslovak Room.

Other Quo Vadis news from this past term:

• Brynn Anderson is working with me and faculty members in the Department of Religious Studies to create an outline of a religion tour so that a historical presentation on faiths that inspired designs seen in the Nationality Rooms can be explained in an educational and neutral way. Testing of the tour will occur when things return to normal; development is ongoing for Anderson to receive academic credit from her department.
• Annette Yauger is interning with me through her museum studies and is helping to prepare a couple of exhibits of Nationality Rooms artifacts. Her first project was to assist with the research, description, and placement of some objects in the temporary Maxine Bruhns exhibit on...
TOURS AND INFORMATION CENTER

(continued)

the Cathedral’s third floor. Our main project is to create a digital exhibit on objects of practical use (not just aesthetic use) that are unified by nature imagery.

- Emily Wilk is working on a directed study project with the history department to report on the intricate history of the English Room. She is using primary sources in archives to plumb the depths of the many design changes and possibilities that went into creating the English Room.
- Keira Wood, who studies world music and is a member of the University Gamelan, and Thyra-Lilja Altunin, who studies ancient Greek music and classics, are helping me to develop a tour that will incorporate listening to music. We are examining several ways in which musical expression is shown, from ancient musical tones and intervals recognition to medieval notation and polyphony to the development of “classical” music and national music of the 19th and early 20th centuries. A parallel stream is to examine world music outside Western traditions, with some emphasis on the many different instruments.
- Claudia Haines presented at a conference called Conjuring the Past at Pennsylvania State University. The conference was organized by Penn State’s Early Period Studies Group and brought together undergraduate research across many fields that focused on the medieval and early modern periods. Haines presented a paper titled “Migration, Medievalism, and the Enduring Passion for Medieval Manuscripts: Collecting Manuscripts in America,” which was the result of her research residency in New York City last summer through the New York City Scholars in Residence program offered by Pitt’s Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity. Haines studied the creation of some of the foremost collections of medieval manuscripts in the United States by wealthy industrialists during the “golden age” of book collecting, with a goal of understanding how and why the collections were created.
- Member of Quo Vadis offered “tea tours” in late February. They brewed different teas of the world, allowed guests to try them, and then took guests on a tour of the rooms represented by the teas. These tours served as a fundraiser for the club.
- Elections of new officers will occur remotely. Guides are eligible to run for office if they have given tours and contributed to club activities.

DISPLAY CASES

The latest exhibit in the third-floor display cases is a collection documenting longtime Nationality Rooms Director Maxine Bruhns’ life and her work at the University.

IN MEMORIAM

Maryann Sivak

Ömer Akın

Please see the tribute on pages 5 and 6.

Patricia Fitzsimmons

We were deeply saddened to learn that Patricia Fitzsimmons died on March 31, 2020. Fitzsimmons was a longtime Nationality Rooms associate and friend to Quo Vadis. As a Pitt student in the 1970s, she delighted in visiting the Nationality Rooms and providing information about them. In the 1990s, she maintained departmental copies of all the committee archives she could lay her hands on so that the original information was not lost. She collected costumes and associated herself with the costume collection in the Nationality Rooms; her excitement on this front is what brought her into the office as often as possible. Fitzsimmons also helped with describing the many donations that would be placed or even rediscovered in storage. Her ideas always extended to what else could be done to enhance the touring experience with regard to using the materials on hand. In that same vein, she made herself available for numerous projects, volunteering every Christmas week to give tours and to do the mundane and time-consuming job of stringing group tour identification tags.

Emily Wilk is working on a directed study project with the history department to report on the intricate history of the English Room. She is using primary sources in archives to plumb the depths of the many design changes and possibilities that went into creating the English Room.

Keira Wood, who studies world music and is a member of the University Gamelan, and Thyra-Lilja Altunin, who studies ancient Greek music and classics, are helping me to develop a tour that will incorporate listening to music. We are examining several ways in which musical expression is shown, from ancient musical tones and intervals recognition to medieval notation and polyphony to the development of “classical” music and national music of the 19th and early 20th centuries. A parallel stream is to examine world music outside Western traditions, with some emphasis on the many different instruments.

Claudia Haines presented at a conference called Conjuring the Past at Pennsylvania State University. The conference was organized by Penn State’s Early Period Studies Group and brought together undergraduate research across many fields that focused on the medieval and early modern periods. Haines presented a paper titled “Migration, Medievalism, and the Enduring Passion for Medieval Manuscripts: Collecting Manuscripts in America,” which was the result of her research residency in New York City last summer through the New York City Scholars in Residence program offered by Pitt’s Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity. Haines studied the creation of some of the foremost collections of medieval manuscripts in the United States by wealthy industrialists during the “golden age” of book collecting, with a goal of understanding how and why the collections were created.

Member of Quo Vadis offered “tea tours” in late February. They brewed different teas of the world, allowed guests to try them, and then took guests on a tour of the rooms represented by the teas. These tours served as a fundraiser for the club.

Elections of new officers will occur remotely. Guides are eligible to run for office if they have given tours and contributed to club activities.
MEET THE GIFT AND INFORMATION CENTER STAFF

Maryann Sivak

Cheryl Richardson
Gift and Information Center Coordinator

Cheryl Richardson started working at the center in June 2015. She is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh. Richardson says that because the store is small, she gets the opportunity to interact directly with customers every day. She enjoys telling visitors about the Nationality Rooms and hearing visitors’ stories about the rooms. She recalls one visitor saying that she felt at home in the Japanese Room because of its unique aroma; the visitor had not experienced that pleasing scent during the 20 years since she had moved to the United States.

Tom Donatelli
Gift and Information Center Coordinator

Tom Donatelli has a BS degree in education with a major in social studies and a concentration in sociology/anthropology. He has been involved primarily in customer service and sales. He previously worked for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Kaufmann’s, Macy’s, and Giant Eagle. In the Nationality Rooms Gift and Information Center, he is the first point of contact for many of the visitors to the Cathedral of Learning. In addition to coordinating sales and tour payments and dispersing information about the Nationality Rooms, Donatelli provides general reception services to visitors. He greatly enjoys meeting visitors from both the local area and around the world and working with the dedicated, hardworking tour guides.

GIFT SHOP AND INFORMATION CENTER

Cheryl Richardson

The gift shop staff members are excited to show you our new items. Finding just the right gifts, especially for children, can be a challenge. You can find quality selections at the University of Pittsburgh Nationality Rooms Gift and Information Center. The small gift shop cannot carry gifts from every country but offers items from around the world—Africa, the Middle East, Ireland, Russia, India, China, and many more locations.

Featured items are matryoshkas (nesting dolls) from Russia, hand-carved wooden boxes from Poland, and Murano glass pendants from Italy. Popular children’s items include a snakes and ladders board game, musical instruments from Africa, and journals for drawing and writing. Items specific to certain holidays are especially popular. For Christmas, we offer smokers from Germany and Austrian snow globes featuring St. Stephen’s Cathedral. For the Day of the Dead, also called All Souls’ Day and All Saints’ Day, we have skeleton figures, earrings, and necklaces from Mexico and Peru. At Easter time, our top seller is hand-painted Ukrainian Easter eggs; we’ve even had real painted ostrich eggs.

The gift shop is proud to announce the addition of jewelry and other imported items from Ten Thousand Villages, the fair-trade craft retailer.

MAINTENANCE

A maintenance walk-through occurred during spring break week and found normal wear and tear to floors and other stained wooden surfaces. With the COVID-19 pandemic causing most University staff to work from home, the Office of Facilities Management has embarked on tackling some of the repair and maintenance projects that have been part of past requests.
We are pleased to announce that 2020 marked the largest number of recipients ever to win a summer study abroad scholarship. We awarded a total of $239,000 to 62 Pitt students. Even though 2020 travel abroad has been canceled, the recipients will be able to use their scholarships for travel in 2021.

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

African Heritage Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Ms. Florence L. Williams
Swathi Tata, Dakar, Senegal
To study health care systems in developing countries and their responses to epidemics

Austrian Nationality Room Committee Grant in Memory of Joseph Pandl
Abigail Fortunato, Graz, Austria
To gain an understanding of health care systems on a global scale through comparative study

Austrian Nationality Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Joseph Pandl
Olivia Miller, Graz, Austria
To study the field of health care from an international perspective and learn how other countries prioritize their health care systems

Chinese Nationality Room Committee Grant in Memory of Karen Yee
Rachel Wonder, Kunming, China
To study the Chinese language in a culturally immersive environment while learning about my birth country

Chinese Nationality Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Karen Yee
Rebecca Chen, Shanghai, China
To learn about international marketing in China and develop business-specific Mandarin language skills

English Nationality Room Committee Scholarship in Honor of Dr. Anna E. Lomando
Alexandra Reinecker, London, England
To study at the Global Business Institute and learn firsthand how the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union will affect its economic policies

French Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Kelsie Vander Voort, Paris, France
To learn how to use French language skills in a culturally appropriate way in a professional work setting

Hungarian Nationality Room Committee Grant in Memory of Arlene Csoman
Sebestyen Sandor, Budapest, Hungary
To produce a documentary film on nicotine addiction among Hungarian youths

Hungarian Nationality Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Arlene Csoman
Lauren Weigand, Debrecen, Hungary
To study the unique aspects of Hungarian health care compared to other post-Soviet satellite states

Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Grant
Nourhan Abubaker, Graz, Austria
To learn about the role that the government plays in nationalized health care systems around the world

Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Scholarship
Uyaiabasi Akpakpan, London, England
To learn about the U.K. health system, with a focus on immigrants and marginalized communities

Indian Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Emely Carmona, Mussoorie, India
To learn about the challenges of emergency medicine in the Himalayas and become certified as a Wilderness First Responder

John F. Kennedy/Irish Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Erin Casey, Ireland
To participate in and learn how the Irish medical rehabilitation system works compared to the United States’

Italian Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Rosina Roccamo, Rome, Italy
To improve my Italian language skills through a culturally immersive experience in Rome

David L. Lawrence Memorial Grant
Joanna Owusu-Daaku, Valencia, Spain
To study the Spanish language and culture in an immersive environment
David L. Lawrence Memorial Scholarship  
**Alexander Skylar**, Grenoble, France  
To enhance my conversational French skills and volunteer at a café for financially unstable and isolated people

Herbert Lieberkind Scholarship  
**Mark Attenborough**, Copenhagen, Denmark  
To look at the role of culture in understanding relationships, personality, and psychological well-being

Nationality Rooms Council Scholarship for Quo Vadis Guides  
**Zachary Hartman**, Florence and Venice, Italy  
To study Renaissance engineering practices and sustainability issues, particularly in Venice

Polish Nationality Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Gertrude Long  
**Annette Yauger**, Giecz, Poland  
To study mortuary archaeology with human remains at a medieval-era site in Giecz

Helen Pool Rush Grant  
**Catherine Gannon**, Paris, France  
To grow as a student, professional, and individual through personal experiences with French people and culture

Helen Pool Rush Grant  
**Amara Novotny**, London, England  
To study both American and British sign languages and to learn about British deaf culture and art

Helen Pool Rush Grant  
**Kathryn Ratner**, Sao Paulo, Brazil  
To gain more knowledge of the Portuguese language and Brazilian culture while also conducting psychological research

Helen Pool Rush Scholarship  
**John Hudson**, Berlin, Germany  
To work at a German company as a computer programmer through Pitt’s International Internship Program

Radcliff-Umstead Memorial Scholarship  
**Peter Bosco**, Palermo, Italy  
To represent the United States as an intern with the economic section of the U.S. embassy in Rome

Ivan Santa-Cruz Memorial Grant  
**Mikala Aleksandruk**, Santiago, Chile  
To observe and participate in the Chilean health care system and learn about the complexities of caring for a socially diverse population

Ivan Santa-Cruz Memorial Scholarship  
**Katelyn Morrison**, Valparaiso, Chile  
To conduct self-directed research related to innovation and maker spaces in Chile

Robert and Helen A. Sette Memorial Scholarship  
**Destiny Harrison-Griffin**, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
To gain firsthand knowledge of the ways that social justice and human rights movements have emerged as a result of the former military dictatorship in Argentina

Savina S. Skewis Memorial Grant  
**Chibundum Ezenwukwa**, Alcala de Henares, Spain  
To study Spanish language skills for health care professionals so I am better able to serve Spanish-speaking patients in my future medical career

Savina S. Skewis Memorial Grant  
**Natasha Mayer**, Napo, Ecuador  
To explore how the progressive health care system of Ecuador accommodates the medical practices of its indigenous people

Women’s International Club Grant in Memory of Karen Yee  
**Abbygale Andrasko**, Buenos Aires, Argentina  
To gain greater cultural awareness and the global mindset essential to effectively work with clients around the world to solve critical problems through an internship

Women’s International Club Grant in Memory of Karen Yee  
**Kelly Prangley**, Chiang Mai, Thailand  
To learn more about the Buddhism-based Thai approach to health and illness, which focuses on physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual elements

Women’s International Club Scholarship in Memory of Karen Yee  
**Amari Long**, Havana, Cuba  
To see how the U.S. embargo on Cuba has affected the health care system of the country and how physicians and patients have dealt with the lack of resources and access to advanced technology

Wendell Wray Memorial Scholarship  
**Julia Raytselis**, Cape Town, South Africa  
To study health care service delivery to vulnerable populations affected by HIV/AIDS
GRADUATE AWARDS

African Heritage Room Committee Grant in Memory of Ms. Florence L. Williams
Gerald Quatro, Uganda
To intern with Amnesty International to evaluate the role of the United States, the United Nations, and nongovernmental organizations in influencing policy issues in Uganda

African Heritage Room Committee Grant in Memory of Ms. Florence L. Williams
Maya Williams, Kampala, Uganda
To focus on the protection of child rights and safe integration of refugees through Bright Kids Uganda and the Access of Justice for Forced Migrants program

African Heritage Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Ms. Florence L. Williams
Hope Finch, Durban, South Africa
To intern at the U.S. Department of State in Durban with career professionals and diplomats to learn the skills necessary to be an effective foreign service officer

Dorothy Bradley Brown Physical Therapy Scholarship
To intern with a renowned vestibular physiotherapist at St George's Hospital

Fred C. Bruhns Memorial Scholarship
Christine Gameos, Tripoli, Zahle, and Beirut, Lebanon
To research the migration crisis and its effect on human rights in Lebanon and the Middle East, in particular the right to education

Ruth Crawford Mitchell Memorial Grant
Melissa Griffoe, Pyrenees region, Spain
To reconstruct environmental history using the metal composition of lake sediments taken from core samples in the Pyrenees region of Spain

Ruth Crawford Mitchell Memorial Scholarship
David McCoy, various locations, Brazil
To study several unique municipal councils in Brazil to discern how participatory democracy institutions succeed or fail

Greek Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Charles Athanasopoulos, various locations, Greece
To explore the cultural experience of Romani (Gypsy) and Black people in Greece

Indian Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Ayesha Godiwal, Hyderabad, India
To work with SHARE India to assess the prepregnancy maternal environment on birth outcomes and child development in rural Telangana

Israel Heritage Room Committee Scholarship in Memory of Our Martyrs Lost on October 27, 2018
Arielle Herzberg, Tel Aviv, Israel
To intern at Sport Clinic and explore the clinical aspect of physical therapy in Israel

Japanese Room Committee Scholarship
Corrine Sugino, Kyoto, Japan
To study Japanese Buddhism in a non-Western context to uncover different possibilities for rhetorical communication

James W. Knox Memorial Scholarship
Matthew Pribus, Entebbe, Uganda
To help Ugandan women and refugees start income-generating businesses and become self-sufficient by providing business skills training and microloans

Josephine and John McCloskey Memorial Grant
Maya Brown, Legon, Ghana
To intern at the J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archives, which embody the art, history, and heritage of a multitude of African cultures

Josephine and John McCloskey Memorial Grant
Ricardo Vazquez Diaz, Paris, France
To study the Cuban writer Severo Sarduy, who was exiled in Europe during the decolonization of the French and British Caribbean and wrote radio plays for French public radio

Josephine and John McCloskey Memorial Scholarship
Nedah Nemati, Berlin, Germany
To explore archived correspondence between members of the Berlin, Leipzig, and Wurzburg schools and to analyze their characterizations of methodological crisis and compare them with contemporary disputes

George F. and Mary Ann McGunagle Scholarship
Daisy S. Williams, Entebbe, Uganda
To intern with Bright Kids Uganda and establish a transitional program for youths aging out of an orphanage
Frances and Sully Nesta Memorial Scholarship
Mark D’Alesio, Palermo, Italy
To conduct research at ISMETT in the Division of Thoracic Surgery and Lung Transplant, with the goal of improving the outcomes for patients undergoing lung transplants

Stanley Prostrednik Grant
Dijana Mujkanovic, Bosnia and Herzegovina
To get an intergenerational perspective on how the increased postwar segregation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is affecting perceptions of the future of interethnic relations

Stanley Prostrednik Grant
David Smith, Seville, Spain
To learn how music helps to connect migrant communities with both their heritage and the local culture simultaneously and to develop models for teaching intercultural competence through music

Stanley Prostrednik Health Sciences Grant
Steven Liebowitz, Palermo, Italy
To study the role of the mitral valve in hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy surgery at the world-renowned ISMETT transplant hospital

Stanley Prostrednik Health Sciences Grant
Emily Mulkey, Madrid, Spain
To learn European approaches to sports medicine and work toward improved international collaboration and standards in the field of sports medicine

Stanley Prostrednik Health Sciences Scholarship
Claire McCreavy, Entebbe, Uganda
To work with Pitt’s East Africa Field Based Research and Internship Program to conduct a health program evaluation for a local health organization

Stanley Prostrednik Scholarship
Edgar Colon Melendez, Buenos Aires, Argentina
To look at the influences exerted by three Polish refugees on Argentinian intellectuals in the aftermath of World War II and how they affected the relationship between chess and literature

Ivan Santa-Cruz Memorial Scholarship
Julia Heller, Santiago, Chile
To intern at the U.S. embassy to study policies regarding water access and sanitation in rural areas of Chile

Dr. and Mrs. Ryonosuke Shiono Grant
Marianne Seah, Singapore
To better understand how systemic and cultural differences in the practice of physical therapy affect patient-provider relationships and public welfare

Dr. and Mrs. Ryonosuke Shiono Scholarship
Hannah Standiford, Leiden, Netherlands
To examine the contributions and media representations of women in kroncong music through archival research at Leiden University Libraries

Swiss Room Committee Scholarship
Alexa Schwartz, Switzerland
To research the impact of cultural factors and mental health interventions on mass shootings

Syria-Lebanon Nationality Room Committee Scholarship
Falon Weidman, Beirut, Lebanon
To intern with the René Moawad Foundation, a refugee services organization that promotes social, economic, and rural development in Lebanon and the Middle East/ North Africa region.