

Wilson Worked Under Martial Law in Poland as Professor

Diana Iacono
Staff Writer

A member of Penn State Harrisburg's humanities faculty taught in Poland during martial law and the Chernobyl disaster.

Dr. Matthew Wilson, who is in his fourth year at PSH, taught American literature at the University of Lodz from 1984 to 1986 during the period of martial law, strict military rule. He said he was probably the only person in Poland who did not have an American sponsor.

"We all knew that there were students who had been contacted by the secret police to report on us," Wilson said.

"We also knew that our phones were bugged. We just took it for granted that we were being watched."

Wilson remembered a friend who was having a conversation with his mother. When his friend hung up the phone, it rang back and the conversation was playing.

"It wasn't the secret police screwing up," Wilson said. "It was the secret police letting us

know they were watching."

During Wilson's last semester at Lodz, after replacing a Fulbright lecturer, the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl occurred.

"We got hit on the second day, the northeast end of Poland got hit on the first day," Wilson said. "The plume went up to Scandinavia and came south."

One of the biggest concerns came after the disaster, he said. They weren't allowed to eat vegetables or meat.

"There was a good deal of drunken hysteria," Wilson said. "The Polish knew there was nothing they could do about it."

Because there were no instruments to measure the amount of radiation, the exact amount released into the atmosphere was unknown.

"Nobody knows what the consequences of that are going to be," Wilson said. "One of the greatest ironies of my life is that every day when I come to school, I go by Three Mile Island."

Despite the strict martial law in Poland, Wilson said he did not feel restricted in the classroom.

"The teaching was a lot of fun," he



Professor Matthew Wilson

Photo by: Priscilla Page

said. "The Polish education system was very, very good. In a lot of ways better than America's."

The students worked hard and their classes were taught in English, so it was tough for them at first, he said. But by the end of their four to five-year program, they spoke well.

The government kept the students in the classroom for 35 hours a week, Wilson said. They did not want them to get involved in politics.

"It was also sad because in those days, it was very, very difficult, for them to get out of Poland," he explained.

The teaching there was also intense, he said. In his Elizabethan drama class, the students were reading two plays a week.

Before teaching in Poland, Wilson taught at King Saud University in Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia.

"I really wanted to see what things were like in a culture that was really different," Wilson said.

Saudi Arabia was extremely restrictive compared to the West. There

was no alcohol, no entertainment and no movies.

"It felt like being in jail," he said.

When he received his first leave, he traveled to Cyprus, Italy, and Greece. It was there he met his wife, Marjan van Schaik, who is from The Netherlands.

Wilson's students say he keeps fairly quiet about his international experiences, but many knew of them.

"Wilson's personal experiences are provided as an aside, rather than a focus, to the critical material he discusses in his classes," said Audra Bingaman, a graduate student.

Senior Kelly Jean Morrow explained, "It is a great benefit to the student body to have a professor exposed to other cultures through personal experience. His ability to share this with his students allows them to gain an insight that they would not have without such a culturally enlightened professor."

Before coming to PSH, Wilson was the associate director of the writing program at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Wilson's current projects include a planned book on the African-American writer Charles W. Chesnut.

PSH Staffer Enjoys Radio Programming From 1940's & 50's

Dorsey Meredith
Staff Writer

A blast from the radio past gives enjoyment to a member of Penn State Harrisburg audio visual services staff.

At home whenever time permits, Peter DeHart of Middletown plays the radio programming of the 1940s and 1950s. Mr. DeHart, Penn State Harrisburg's Instructional Services scheduler, said that having the radio programs from the 1940s and 1950s brings back a time in society that he likes.

"It was quality radio programming, which reflected what society was all about 45 to 50 years ago," he said.

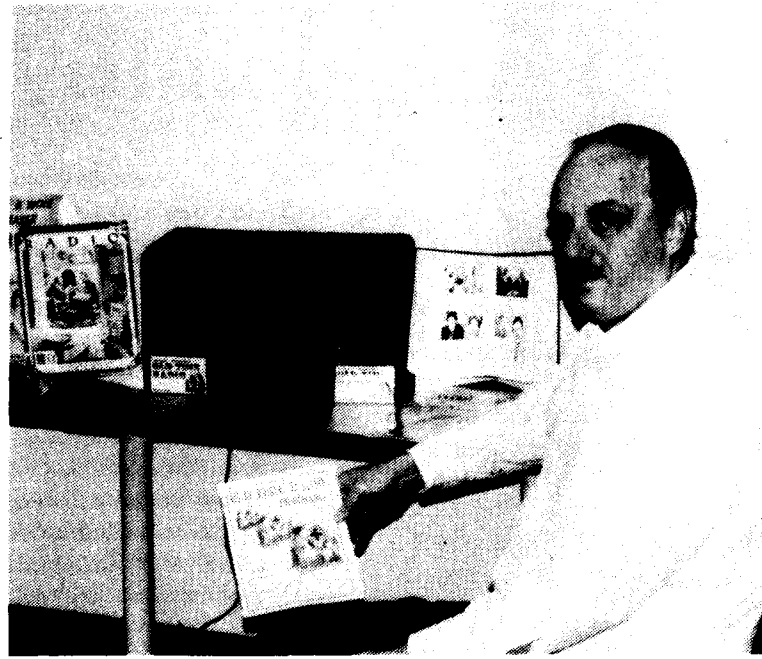
Radio programs from the early 1940s to the mid-1950s dealt with history, drama, comedy, feature and quiz shows. DeHart said he first got hooked on old radio programming by his friend Henry Koretzky of the Heindel Library.

"Henry is a wonderful information resource and so when we talked about radio, Henry led me in the right direction, telling me where I could find old radio programming," DeHart said.

"It only took a few shows," he said, adding, "It was love at first sight."

Dehart collects a variety of 1940s and 1950s radio programs, such as "The Halls of Ivy," which is his favorite drama/comedy piece about a university, and "City of the Dead," a thriller bit. Comedy programs such as "Fibber McGee and Molly," or programs with a little bit of comedy and drama like "The Halls of Ivy," are favored most by him. He

tries to stay away from mystery programs, even though he admits to liking "The Shadow." Along with the variety radio programming from the 1940s and 1950s, Dehart enjoys



the music shows of the Big Bands during those times. He said these music shows describe society during World War II.

"There are some people that are inter-

ested in the old shows when you talk about them, however they don't make an effort to go out and get them," said DeHart.

He believes that a lot of people would be interested in old radio programs, but are just too consumed with modern radio and television.

DeHart also thinks that listening to old radio programming might be helpful to children.

"Children could learn more about society and life from history and would learn by listening how to use the imagination," he said of the radio programs.

There is not enough creativity happening in today's radio, and it tends to be less thought provoking, DeHart said.

"With today's emphasis on talk radio, we don't have to use our imagination," he said. "When listening to old radio programming from the 1940s and 1950s, I can visualize what characters look like."

Along with the lack of imagination, he said that moral values are not as present in

today's radio programming as was the case in the old radio days.

Although DeHart respects the current era of communication technology, he does not want to forget where it all began.

"Satellite and television have a place in society, but also I think there is a place for looking and stepping back and seeing how we progressed into this age, in exchange for programs and information," he said.

"That place is with radio programs from the 1940s and 1950s," DeHart said.

There are people who are aware of Mr. DeHart's radio programming, including PSH's radio assistant, Greg Smith.

"I think that Peter's radio programming is unique in the fact that he is preserving the past," Smith said.

DeHart explained that he obtains his radio programs from many different sources, including clubs, dealers and flea markets.

"If you have the time to look for materials relating to old radio shows, the rewards can be fascinating," he said.

Fernandez joins PSH as new information systems professor

John Zimmerman
Staff Writer



File Photo

The Penn State Harrisburg School of Business Administration added a full-time professor of information systems to its faculty for fall 1994.

Dr. Eugenia Fernandez joined PSH as the 27th full-time faculty member in Business Administration.

Dr. Fernandez, who has a Ph.D. in management information systems from Purdue University, said she hopes to combine her research interests in computers with her desire to teach.

"I like to continue learning things, and

with teaching one gets to try different things all the time," she said. "One can set (her) own classes and what would be done."

She expresses her commitment to teaching with a comment to PSH students: "My door is always open."

Dr. Fernandez' research interests include computer anxiety, database management systems, user involvement in application and development and expert systems.

She tries to assess whether or not exposure to a computer literacy class, or exposure to computers reduces or increases a person's anxiety, she explained.

Dr. Fernandez also has a background in engineering. She has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Worcester Poly-

technic Institute. In addition, she also has a master's degree in computer, information, and control engineering from the University of Michigan.

She worked as a fire protection engineer for about 2 1/2 years. She traveled the state of Michigan, inspecting plants ranging from car manufacturing to food processing.

"I inspected industrial plants for fire safety in terms of plant and property," Dr. Fernandez said. "I have to admit that I tend not to eat hot dogs now because I inspected a processing plant."

Dr. Fernandez, who is a native of northern New Jersey, was an assistant professor at Butler University in Indianapolis before coming to Penn State Harrisburg.

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"The Humanities Division has lost a real friend."

Dr. Mahar on Dr. Crist



Dr. Francis L. Ferguson

File Photo

belief that good character and positive thinking make life bearable," he said. "The Humanities Division has lost a real friend."

PSH Crime Data for 1994 Released

Cathy Nolan
Staff Writer

Total Crimes reported on campus were down this year, while total arrests for most crimes increased proportionately, according to recent crime data released for the campus.

The figures, compiled annually by the Penn State Harrisburg police in accordance with state law, listed a total of 128 offenses that occurred on campus in 1994. That number is down from 177 in 1993.

Decreases in incidents were reported in most categories, including larceny theft (excluding motor vehicles), which dropped from 56 occurrences in 1993, to 41 in 1994. There were no robberies reported in 1994, down from three in 1993.

The data also shows a significant decrease in the occurrences of vandalism on campus, down to 16, from 1993's 23, and in disorderly conduct complaints, down five from last year's 29.

New complaints on campus included one charge of sex offense, as well as one charge

each of driving under the influence, and violation of state liquor laws.

Campus police chief Charles Aleksy said the amount of closed cases decreased by one, from 41 to 40. Since there were fewer incidents this year, however, the ratio of closed complaint files is higher than in 1993. While 23 percent of the complaints filed in 1993 ended with the identification of a suspect, 31 percent were completed and closed in 1994.

Aleksy said all the "Peeping Tom" incidents filed at the end of last semester were figured as one incident, under "other offenses."

Aleksy also said the driving under the influence charges were thrown out of court at the end of last year by the presiding district justice.

Those charges will be refiled, with supervision by the district attorney's office, Aleksy said.