

*The Interpreter*

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

Number 106A

★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

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**Our Mission**

*In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pineau and William Hudson, and the Archives first attempts in 1992, to gather the papers, letters, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS/OLS instructors and graduates to the War effort in the Pacific and the Cold War, to the creation of East Asian language programs across the country, and to the development of Japanese-American cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.*

## From Boulder into the Romance Languages

I'm still reeling with the surprise of getting your telephone call, about a week ago [*actually, December 2004, big backlog*]. I had long ago given up hearing any further information about the JL School, that long ago fascinating camp on the slopes of the Rockies. But now that I've received your packet, I've begun to study the various sections you've sent. As the weeks go by, I'll go back to my photo albums and will be happy to mail you all the photos I have, taken during that period, usually of friends of mine, in the same training school.

Meanwhile, I have written a letter to Jimmy Holderbaum, who is now resident in Florence, Italy. I knew him in 1943-44. His present address is very natural; even in the time I knew him, he was a specialist in Italian art.

Others I'd like to communicate with are, for one; Roland Gelatt [*We were informed by the Swarthmore College Alumni Office that Mr. Gelatt is deceased*]. He and his wife had an apartment near the campus; he was a critic and specialist in records of classical music, of which he had many. A number of times we gathered at his apartment to hear recordings. I've never heard of him since.

Then there's Paul Elicker [*On our mailing list*], who was my roommate in the Men's Dorm. He is/was son of a school superintendent in Newton, Massachusetts. I've never heard of or from him.

The Coffin brothers, I had some acquaintance with. They were sons of a prominent clergyman, a minister. Some names I do not see on your pages [*They are discussed in The Interpreters he had yet to read*]: Watanabe Sensei; Robert (Bob) Ross, then about 32 years of age, son of an American missionary in Japan. He had a little house on the hill-slope, spoke Japanese very well, but could not read it. I think he was teaching classes, at least he was more than just a student. Wahn Sensei [*Walne, see issues #37, 50, 59, 60*] – an American woman, then some 50 years of age, who was Head of the Teaching Staff of the school.

Of course, there was CPT Leo Welch, retired, who came in for the graduation exercises, I think it was 1943. His wife lived in Boulder. When newspapers in Denver were attacking the presence of Nisei in Colorado, CPT Welch went into print in their newspapers, defending the Nisei staff who were doing much work for the Navy at the JL School [*The Silver and Gold, the student newspaper at CU, also wrote a series of editorials at the same time criticizing the Denver Post, while defending Colorado's Nisei, CU's Japanese American students, and the Nisei JLS Instructors*]. (to be cont'd)

Fred W. Franck  
JLS 1944

## Madison S. Beeler, Linguistics: Berkeley

1910-1989

Professor Emeritus

With Madison Scott Beeler's death, after a long illness, on March 1, 1989, there disappeared from Berkeley's academic community a noted scholar connected with its language and linguistics departments for nearly a half-century.

Madison Beeler, born into the family of a Seattle lawyer and judge on April 24, 1910, stayed in his native city until graduating from high school in 1927, and then earned the A.B. degree at Harvard University in 1931, majoring in classics. He remained at his alma mater for a few additional years, earning in 1934 the A.M. degree and in 1936 the Ph.D. in comparative philology (i.e., essentially, in Indo-European linguistics), working especially under the guidance of Joshua Whatmough, who was the director of his doctoral dissertation. By 1938, Harvard recognized his accomplishments and his promise in two ways: by granting him a prestigious post-doctoral travel fellowship (1936-38), which allowed him to spend stretches of several months at various foreign universities (Perugia, Munich, Paris, Berlin); and by subsequently appointing him, for a period of three years (1938-41), instructor in the University Department of German and, simultaneously, tutor in Comparative Philology. Nineteen hundred forty-one became a crucial year in his life, on account of his transfer to the Berkeley campus of our University, where he started at the level of instructor and gradually rose to be appointed associate professor with tenure (1951) and eventually full professor (1958) and chairman (1962) in the Department of German. With the creation of an autonomous Department of

Linguistics here in 1953 and the gradual expansion of Beeler's research interests, it became possible for him to receive a split appointment in German and Linguistics for the years 1958-66. Thereafter he completed his years of active service in Linguistics. Even after his retirement in 1977 he was recalled to active duty for seminars in Gothic and in certain aspects of Indo-European by the Department of German.

The University recognized

Beeler's administrative abilities by appointing him Acting Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages, an office in which he served throughout the late 1950s. He also assumed the duties of chairman of the Linguistics Department on different occasions.

Beeler's reputation as a teacher of Germanic, Italic, and Indo-European linguistics soon became national: he was invited to take part in the summer programs of Stanford (1953), Michigan (1957), Colorado (1959), "Stanford in Germany" (1961), Princeton (1962), Indiana (1964), and Ohio (1970) -- a very impressive record indeed. On some of these occasions Beeler taught classes co-sponsored by the annual Institutes of the Linguistics Society of America. During the war years, he served in the U.S. Naval Reserve (1942-44), attending the US Navy Japanese Language School at the University of Colorado, and was honorably discharged with the rank of Lieutenant, j.g. He acquired a solid working knowledge of Japanese in this period.

Beeler was known as an avid student of languages. The 60-odd pieces that he published reflect this interest through the variety of subjects and languages they treat. The fullest list of his publications is included in the volume edited by Kathryn Klar, Margaret Langdon, and Shirley Silver: *American Indian and*

*Indo-European Studies: Papers in Honor of Madison S. Beeler* (The Hague: Mouton, 1980). Fairly late in life, Beeler added to the languages he spoke or read fluently (German, French, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch) a good knowledge of Spanish. He also prepared many valuable papers throughout his career for delivery at various conferences and events.

It was the reworked version, published in 1949, of Beeler's earlier Harvard dissertation ("The Venetic Language") which established his reputation on both sides of the Atlantic, promptly eliciting laudatory reactions from four established experts, including two Frenchmen: André Martinet, at that time attached to Columbia, and Michel Lejeune, whom he had come to know during his stay in Paris. Beeler's curiosity and enthusiasm about Venetic never waned; he returned to this subject as late as 1969, 1973, and 1981. He devoted a number of technical studies to Latin and Osco-Umbrian as well. Still within the Indo-European domain, he busied himself both creatively and critically with Germanic and Iranian. Over a number of years he acted as editor-in-chief of the onomastic journal *Names*.

After Beeler came to California, he soon developed a deep interest in the state's American Indian languages. It was first manifested in papers on some of California's Indian place names, especially those of the Bay Area. But it eventually resulted in the descriptive and comparative study of many of the state's languages. Beeler's first-rate philological abilities enabled him to interpret the Spanish records of these languages that were made in the mission period. His most notable work, for which he showed much enthusiasm and devotion, was that on the last family of speakers of the Chumash language of Santa Barbara and that on an unexpected cache of transcriptions of the same language in its extinct Channel Islands dialect, the latter resulting in an elaborate work now going through the press.

In addition to Madison Beeler's diversified

administrative duties, his dedication to the University and to his profession showed itself through his unceasing committee work, his participation in editorial ventures, and his constant availability for such worthwhile undertakings as the monthly gatherings of the campus-wide community of practicing linguists. He was also a founder and mainstay over many years of the Saga Club, a group of colleagues and students who meet monthly to translate and discuss the Old Norse sagas. It was, however, teaching on both the undergraduate and graduate levels that lay closer to his heart than any of his other activities. Here, too, he excelled. On the Berkeley campus he taught a wide variety of classes, ranging from Old Norse through Italic dialects to Old Irish. His command of these languages and his familiarity with their texts as well as their internal and external history was impressive. As a teacher he was far more interested in questions of methodology than in the simple reporting of a given subject. Students in his classes invariably came away with a grasp of the basic materials, the current state of knowledge, and the substantive unanswered questions as well as the tools necessary to investigate them. His gruff but jovial manner gave rise to trust and confidence in him. Beeler always went out of his way to be helpful to any student who showed interest or ability beyond the usual. He was at all times willing to entertain suggestions, no matter how unconventional, if presented in a cogent way. The combination of these qualities inspired intense loyalty in his students. He directed a number of doctoral dissertations in the Departments of German and Linguistics which bore on a wide range of subjects, principally Indo-European and Amerindian.

Aside from his strictly academic concerns and curricular commitments, Beeler took a deep interest in geography and the natural world, and maintained that there was no substitute for actually seeing objects and hearing things of linguistic relevance. He traveled widely throughout his life. His

exploratory experience of California was nourished in part by his curiosity about the linguistic subsoil of this state. Travel abroad was stimulated by a Fulbright travel grant to Norway (1950) and by attendance at the 36th International Congress of Americanists in Barcelona, Madrid, and Seville (1964). In later years his unquenchable *Wanderlust* extended even farther, taking him and his wife to South America and other continents.

In December 1955 Madison married Florence (Deby) C. Rosene. His exceptionally happy marriage was blessed with two children -- Roxane and Peter -- in whose subsequent scholastic and professional achievements the parents took justifiable pride. The Beelers' home in El Cerrito is known for its hospitality; it also contains a fine private library, which allowed Madison, in the concluding years of his retirement, to devote much time to a leisurely program of recreational reading.

Murray B. Emeneau  
Gary B. Holland  
Blake Lee Spahr  
Frederic P. Tubach  
Yakov Malkiel

## Comment on Blanche Y. Belitz

[a response to the article in #87A] Help me here. Blanche Y. Belitz, 92 if still alive, is part and parcel of my dubious past: Washington Document Center (WDC) Stuart Motor Co., Wash. DC, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, where we ploughed thru 40 mail sacks of classified Japanese military patents known as Navy Op. 32. Spooky coincidence Dept: My father, also Bryan Battey, was Assistant Commissioner of the Patent Office 1934-39. WDC in time became the FDD (Foreign Documents Division) of the CIA. My brother Fraser Battey was a 20-year veteran of our sister division - FBIS - Foreign Broadcast Information Service serving in Sapporo, Oxford - on - Thames, Panama, Okinawa, and Cyprus. Add to the mix Transworld Language Service (TLS) a cover-blown CIA proprietary headed by Lydia Kenny, early lady pilot with the Powder-Puff Derby and WASP who flew bombers from factory to England and was a German translator for FDD, and me, Manager. We did stuff for FDD using unclearable

foreign nationals. I'd been given Georgian as a side language to enhance my qualifications for this motley crew. Gus Blackett took over TLS when it metamorphosed into USJPRS, US Joint Publications Research Service. Blanche Belitz is in there somewhere if we can just find her. The phone number we have rings but does not answer.

Bryan Battey  
OLS 1946

[Ed. Note: I sent out a large number of letters to WAVES two summers ago, and most of that mail came back. Blanche Belitz was one of those whose phone was disconnected and whose mail came back. I have no confirmation of her death. She could have moved or been placed in an assisted care facility. I will look again today for her. I'll get back to you on her.

By the way, Barbara and Thomas Deering dropped the name of "Brunt" Battey in a letter they sent me (and that graces our Issue #106). They had said that they had not recognized most of the names in the newsletter (except yours). I told them that the Russian stories start in #89A, coming up, after which Russian program stories follow regularly. I include their address in case you do not have it.

Mr. Thomas S. Deering  
1104 Onslow Dr  
Greensboro, NC 27408

Then Later: There is one Blanche Y. Belitz listed in the National white pages (one Blanche Belitz, for that matter) and she lives on 830 W 40TH ST BALTIMORE MD 21211 (410) 2434135 (no answer to our call a few minutes ago). It was not the long time Arlington address at which we unsuccessfully tried to reach her a few years ago. She is listed as being 28 years old, but I find the coincidence a stretch (perhaps a relative?). One good sign that she may still be alive is that she won the Biathlon at the Maryland Senior Olympics for the 80-89 year group in 2000 (atagirl). Granted it was 4 and a half years ago. So a Blanche Y. Belitz competed in a Maryland senior Olympics and another Blanche Y. Belitz is living in Baltimore? I will send her a letter. Be my guest and contact her, let me know how the call goes.]

## Recent JLS Losses

Laurence G. Thompson, 1943  
William Himel, 1943  
James H. Scheuer, attended JLS  
Harold Rogers, 1943  
Lyne Starling Few, 1944  
Lee F. Swope, 1944  
Daphne Shaw Stegmaier, 1944  
Their obituaries will be carried in future issues of the newsletter.