



Monday, December 20, 2004

Graduate's writing interest leads to journalism degree

By **Rebecca Wyatt**, OU Web Writer

College classes often can be difficult; the challenge is even greater if you study in a foreign land with a foreign language. That is what Virginie Perov did, having graduated from Oakland University on Dec. 18 with a degree in journalism and a future of working with words.

Perov always has been interested in English and enjoys writing. So it isn't a surprise she chose journalism as a profession. What is surprising is that English is not her first language.

Perov grew up in France in a city near Paris. When she graduated from high school, she didn't know what she wanted to do, but she knew she wanted to travel. She joined an au pair program and traveled to the United States in 1998. She enrolled in an English class at Oakland Community College, but soon found she was spending more time exploring America than studying.

"I chose the social life," Perov said.

After her year in the au pair program ended, she moved back to France, but missed something she left here, her now-husband, Boris, so she returned to the United States after just two months.

Perov got a student visa and started taking classes at OCC for a second time. She completed an associate degree in liberal studies, and in the fall of 2002, she enrolled at OU, where she immersed herself in her classes from the time she started.

Perov said she enjoyed many of her classes at OU, but ranks photography and a journalism ethics class with Neal Shine as the top two.

"I think ethics is one of the best classes in the **journalism program**," she said.

Perov also developed her leadership skills through her involvement on campus. She participated in the inaugural class of the OU Leadership Institute, a program designed to help students grow as leaders in every facet of their lives. She was involved with OU's student newspaper, The Oakland Post, and was the campus life editor this past semester. Perov also completed an internship at **The Daily Oakland Press**.

"I feel I am so lucky," Perov said of her experiences.

Oakland Post adviser, Holly Gilbert, said Perov was able to relate well to others and that earned her respect at The Post.

"She is a mentor to a lot of students, especially at the Post. She treats everyone as if they are important," Gilbert said. "She's going to leave a big void. Sure there are others who can do her job, but no one can do it the way she does it."

It has been difficult at times not having her family close, especially at birthdays, holidays and this past weekend at her graduation. Perov's family was unable to make the trip for commencement, but one very important person in her life was there, her husband.

"I would never be where I am if it wasn't for him," Perov said of her husband.

Now that she has her bachelor's degree, Perov is looking for a job at a newspaper.

Perov was one of the 1,391 students who graduated from OU this semester. For more information on commencement

ceremonies, visit the **OU Commencement** Web site.

SUMMARY

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