



Historically Speaking

*The Department of History Newsletter
A University Exemplary Department*

*Fall 2005
Volume 18*

In This Issue:

- From The High Chair
- Faculty News
- Student News
- Alumni News

From The High Chair

A Milestone and a Challenge

This summer, the History Department achieved a major milestone when we gained our first endowed undergraduate scholarship – the Patricia A. Gallagher History Scholarship. Mrs. Gallagher was neither a student nor a member of the faculty in this department, but her daughter, Kathleen Gallagher Ray, was graduated from Virginia Tech in 1990 and established the scholarship to honor her mother’s love of history. To some departments this might be no big deal. There are, after all, entire departments at Tech named after donors and their families in recognition of support over several decades. The Gallagher Scholarship is a big deal to us, though. When I was Associate Chair of the department, it seemed that every year newly-arrived students or their parents asked what scholarships are available for history majors, and I had to say “None.” That should never be the only standard, or even the principal standard, by which to judge a discipline, but it still used to bother me. I knew the university has only awarded degrees in history since 1963 and that, as a result, few of our graduates had reached a point in their lives at which they were thinking about making a significant gift to their alma mater. I also knew that in its early years the department was relatively small, graduating only a handful of students each year; so for many years there simply weren’t a large number of history graduates around. But it still hurt every time I had to explain that we had no scholarships of our own. Now, however, the number of alumni and alumnae of the department has grown, some of them have begun to reach the more settled stages of their lives, and I’ll never again have to explain to a student or parent that Virginia Tech has no scholarships for history majors.

One is not enough, though. For much of the past decade Virginia has worked to cut taxes, and one of the ways it has done so is to raise tuition and fees. Students at Virginia Tech, both in-state and out-of-state, pay more for their education today than ever before, and the university’s plan to increase its ranking among America’s



Daniel B. Thorp, Department Chair

research institutions will involve further increases to pay for improvements to the library, labs, and faculty. Tech is still less expensive than many of its peer institutions, but it has already become harder for many students to meet the cost. Financial aid has never been more important – or more stretched. That’s where the challenge comes in.

Ideally, I would like to award the Gallagher Scholarship to a junior. That way s/he will have been in the department long enough demonstrate his or her excellence but will still be eligible for two years’ of support if s/he continues to do well. If we do that, though, we’ll only be able to award a scholarship every other year, and the years in between I’ll be back to explaining why we have no scholarships for history majors. We can solve that problem, though, with a second scholarship. I am not asking one of you to step up with a major contribution (though I won’t turn it down if you do). Rather, I am asking for small contributions from every one of you. We already have an account established into which any graduate, or non-graduate, who wants to provide help directly to future students can make a contribution of any size. Just direct your gift to account number 881353 or write “History Department” on the memo line of your check. This way we won’t have to wait for a fund large enough to generate the income we need. If each of you offers just a few dollars every other year to the fund, we’ll have enough to help another student. So please consider making a contribution.



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

★ Faculty in the News ★

We welcome two new faculty members this fall.

Brett Shadle received his Ph.D. in African history from Northwestern University in 2000. He has taught at Bowdoin College and the University of Mississippi. He is currently completing a book entitled “Girl Cases”: Marriage Disputes and Colonialism in Gusiiland, Kenya, 1890-1970,” which will be published in Heinemann’s Social History of Africa series. He lives in Blacksburg with his wife Marie, two-year-old Elliot, and four month old Alden. His hobby is dreaming about holding his published book while napping in a hammock as the boys play quietly nearby.

Greta Kroeker received her Ph.D. in Early Modern European History from the University of California, Berkeley in 2004. Her dissertation, “Erasmus in the Footsteps of Paul: From Tradition to Transcendence” examined the relationship between Renaissance Humanism and Reformation theology. She lives in Blacksburg with her husband, Karl.

As for the rest of the faculty...

Linda Arnold received a Certificate of Teaching Excellence this year — one of six awarded in the College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences. She was also invited by the government of Mexico to address the Mexican Senate and Supreme Court at ceremonies in March 2005 marking the tenth anniversary of the court’s restructuring.

Frederic J. Baumgartner was in great demand for interviews during the months of March and April with the death of Pope John Paul II and the election of the new pope. Among them were television interviews from Roanoke to South Korea, radio interviews across the United States, and print interviews with some 20 newspapers and news services. Purely by coincidence, the paperback edition of his book, *Behind Locked Doors: A History of Papal Elections*, was released three days after the pope’s death.

William C. Davis had two books come out in the last year: *Lone Star Rising: The Revolutionary Birth of the Texas Republic*, which was on the Washington Post list of most notable books for 2004, and *The Pirates Laffite: The Treacherous World of the Corsairs of the Gulf*. He was also named to the Advisory Board for the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

A. Roger Ekirch’s new book, *At Day’s Close: Night in Times Past*, unveils the mysterious history of night in how we survived in the centuries before electric lighting. Based on twenty years of detailed archival research, it is fascinating study of the darker side of human history.

Hayward Farrar published two and half chapters in *A Companion To African American History*: “The Black Soldier In Two World Wars,” “Identity, Patriotism, and Protest on the Wartime Home Front 1917-1919, 1941-1945,” and “African Americans and The Civil War,” which he co-wrote with Oscar R. Williams III.

Thomas Howard submitted the paper he presented at the annual meeting of the Transatlantic Studies Association in Scotland for inclusion in the journal of the association. His publisher released a new printing of the 2003 edition of his *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Shaping of the Modern World*. In the spring he again included a Service-Learning component in his Africa in the Modern World course in which students worked with local families sponsored by the Somali-Bantu Resettlement Initiative.

Ralph Lutts’ paper, “Like Manna From God: The American Chestnut Trade in Southwestern Virginia,” was published in the journal *Environmental History*.

Sarah Mitchell’s chapter, entitled “From ‘Monstrous’ to ‘Abnormal’: The Case of Conjoined Twins in the Nineteenth Century,” is forthcoming in the Routledge Press publication, *The Normal and the Abnormal: Historical and cultural perspectives on norms and deviations*, which is part of the Studies in the Social History of Medicine series. She presented a paper entitled “‘To Solve the Mystery of Their Union’: The 19th Century Medical Quest for Unusual Bodies,” at the American Association of the History of Medicine conference held in Birmingham in April, 2005. For the 2005-2006 academic year, Sarah will hold the position of Visiting Instructor in the history department at Virginia Tech as she completes her dissertation for the University of Southampton.

Marian Mollin spent much of the past year preparing her manuscript, *Actions Louder Than Words: Gender, Protest and the American Radical Pacifist Movement, 1940-1970*, for publication with University of Pennsylvania Press, and was pleased to see her related article on women in the Catholic Left of the 1960s published with a cover photograph in the Fall 2004 issue of *Oral History Review*. Her work with digital history also kept her busy: Mollin revised 2 chapters for a soon-to-be published-online American History reader, contributed to the *Digital History Reader*, and presented a paper at the American Historical Association’s annual meeting based on her work with digital history in the classroom. She is now working on a public history project with New River Community Action, Inc., reconstructing the history of this local anti-poverty agency in commemoration of its fortieth anniversary.

Amy Nelson’s book, *Music for the Revolution* has won the 2005 Haidt Prize from the Association for Women in Slavic Studies for “the best book by a woman in any area of Slavic/East European/Eurasian studies.”

James I. Robertson, Jr’s book, *Soldier of Southwestern Virginia*, appeared in November and is already in the third printing. In

Faculty in the News Continued...

addition, he wrote a chapter for the book *Generals in the Confederacy*, plus two other articles in refereed journals; he gave more than a dozen newspaper, radio, and television interviews — including an hour-long dialogue on World Talk Radio; he also appeared on two programs for the History Channel, conducted the “Civil War Weekend” in March and “Campaigning With Lee” seminars in June, and presented weekly radio broadcasts for public radio.

Crandall Shifflett’s work on the Jamestown project continues to grow with the approach of 2007. He recently secured funding from Verizon for a conference that will feature sessions by leading historians and archaeologists on the importance of links between their two disciplines. In the spring, he taught a senior seminar in which history majors worked to create a documentary on Virginia’s Indians. Students conducted interviews, visited Jamestown Island, and worked on all phases of documentary production, including storyboarding, script-writing, editing, and background research. This year, Prof. Shifflett will be in Charlottesville, serving as Interim Director of the Virginia Center for Digital History and teaching at the University of Virginia.

Peter Wallenstein was promoted to professor. His publications in this year have included a co-edited book, *Virginia’s Civil War*, as well as a journal article, “Reconstruction, Segregation, and Miscegenation: Interracial Marriage and the Law in the Lower South, 1865-1900,” which appeared in Great Britain. He has been named one of Virginia Tech’s three Diggs Teaching Scholars for 2005-2006 — with the theme “undergraduate research at a research university” — and named also to the Organization of American Historians’ Distinguished Lectureship Program. He recently won the Hughes Gossett Prize for the best article published during 2004 in the *Journal of Supreme Court History*. He received a Dean’s Faculty Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, as well as an Archie K. Davis Fellowship from the North Caroliniana Society, to support his forthcoming book *Segregation, Desegregation, and the University of North Carolina*. During fall 2005, his classes include a University Honors colloquium in which students will work with him on a history of Virginia to be published in 2007.

And a team of faculty including **Mark Barrow, Tom Ewing, Woody Farrar, Kathy Jones, Marian Mollin, Amy Nelson, Rob Stephens, and Dan Thorp** won a 2005 XCaliber Certificate of Excellence from the university’s Center for Innovation in Learning for their “innovative approaches to teaching using technology” through the *Digital History Reader*.



Student News



At the annual Banks Reception, in March, winners of the departmental awards for 2004-2005 were announced:

James W. and Martha N. Banks Award – Sherry Elizabeth Elliott
History Prize – Matthew Nicholas Green
Curtis Award – Chad Michael Jennings
Phoenix Award – Vella Catharine Scott
Charles J. Dudley Award – Erin Kathryn Mooney



Class Valetorian - Marissa Sue Harris

Graduation ceremonies this year were held on May 9 in the Squires Student Center, where the department awarded eighty bachelors degrees and seven masters degrees. The class valetorian was Marissa Sue Harris. Among the graduates were two Commonwealth Scholars – Eric Carl Moore Gade and Erin Kathryn Mooney, two Honors Scholars – Corinne Frances Bigler and Sara Grace Hood, two George C. Marshall Scholars – James Christian Gouger and Michael Allen Makara, and seven members of Phi Beta Kappa – the oldest and best known academic honor society in the United States: Corinne Frances Bigler, Eric Carl Moore Gade, Marissa Sue Harris, Derrick Thomas Hogan, Sara Grace Hood, Erin Kathryn Mooney, and Elliott T. Wrenn



Daniel B. Thorp at graduation ceremony



Alumni News



Joseph Pierro (MA '04) received the William Preston Society's Gold Watch Award for the Outstanding Thesis in Humanities and Arts for 2004. Dr. Peter Wallenstein chaired Mr. Pierro's committee.

Thomas Sebrell (MA '04) began working on his Ph.D. at the University of London. In October, he will present a conference paper on the History of the British Parliament. Mr. Sebrell has been awarded scholarships from the University of London and VMI for the 2005-2006 year.

Elizabeth Tedrick ('03) is currently a Second Lieutenant stationed in Afghanistan and assigned to the 125th Signal Battalion. They support the historic 25th Infantry Division, activated just a few months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Jonathan A. Noyalas (MA '03) is currently teaching history at Lord Fairfax Community College in Warrenton, Virginia, and has been named director of LFCC's Center for Civil War History. He is awaiting publication of his next two books: *Two Peoples, One Community: The African American Experience in Newtown, Va., 1850-1870* and *Gray Eagle: General Robert H. Milroy's Civil War*. In April 2004 he presented a paper at "Reconciling the American Conflict: Causes and Legacies of the Civil War." He will also be a contributing author to the *Encyclopedia of African American History* being edited by Dr's. Leslie Alexander and Walter Rucker from Ohio State University. The three-volume set will be published by ABC-CLIO.

James Swain (MA '03) is working as an intelligence analyst for MZM, Inc., a U.S. Department of Defense contractor, in Martinsville, Virginia.

Brian Wojnar ('03) is a seasonal Park Ranger/Tour Guide with the National Park Service. He gives tours of FDR's home in Hyde Park, NY.

Bobby Holt (MA '02) received a MA in Library and Information Science at the University of Tennessee in May 2004. He is working at the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy on the UT campus. While working on the library degree, Bobby also led a research team in Virginia for a Pulitzer Prize-nominated writer named Edwin Black, who wrote *IBM and the Holocaust*. Two other VT history alumni — **Aaron Crawford** and **Susan Fleming Cook**, were also members of the "Virginia team."

Jason Aker ('01) is a licensed residential appraiser in Virginia and is currently working with Wingate Appraisal Services doing real estate assessments for tax purposes. "The research and writing skills that I learned from Linda Arnold and Peter Wallenstein are going to

continue to benefit me as I work in the appraisal business...I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their guidance in the research and writing process."

Kathryn Muller ('01) graduated Summa Cum Laude from medical school and received two significant awards for her performance in medical school. This summer she enters her residency to become a pediatrician at duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware. "My four years at Virginia Tech prepared me very well for medical school. I have not lost my desire to keep learning about history either."

Tracey Dolehite ('00) is working for Figari & Davenport LLP in Dallas, Texas.

Adam Tabaka ('99) was recently accepted into George Mason's International Commerce and Policy Master's of Arts Program for Fall 2005 semester.

Adam Leslie ('98) was named Teacher of the Year at Blacksburg High School, Blacksburg, Virginia. Adam teaches ninth-grade world history and English.

Rand Dotson (MA '97) received his PhD from Louisiana State University in December 2003. His dissertation was completed under Gaines Foster and was titled "'Magic City': Class, Community, and Reform in Roanoke, Virginia, 1882-1912." He taught history at LSU's Evening School in spring 2004 and was appointed History Editor at LSU Press in July 2004.

Larkin Sinnott ('96) is the Education Coordinator/Webmaster for the New River Valley Association of Realtors.

James D. Bristow ('95) is an M.B.A. candidate at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business in Atlanta, Georgia.

Rich Hepner (BA '95. MA '97) has worked for Unisys as a Web Developer at the White House in Washington D.C. for the past four years. Rich and his wife, Michele, live in Fairfax, Virginia, with their son, Jackson. "I feel like I've been very well served from my history education, but the one lesson that I think about daily is Dr. Shumsky's instruction on proper comma usage. It makes me nervous even now that he'll be correcting this e-mail."

Michael H. Taylor ('94) is working at the Center for the Constitution, which is based at James Madison's Montpelier, Virginia.

Milton G. Bartley, Jr ('94) was appointed director of dealer operations at Lanier Worldwide, Inc. in Southlake, Texas.

Robert Goetz (MA'88) has published a book entitled *1805: Austerlitz: Napoleon and the Destruction of the Third Coalition* (Greenhill Books, 2005). It was recently selected as an Editors' Choice by the History Book Club. Mr. Goetz has been studying the Russian Army of the

Alumni News Continued...

Napoleonic Wars for the past seven years. He is the author of several award-winning articles concerning the Russian Army and its campaigns.

Daniel J. Dimarco ('88) joined Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern as a project architect in Roanoke, Virginia.

Ken Reuwer ('87) has returned to the world of academia after seven years in London and Italy as a supervisory Special Agent with NCIS, and seventeen years in the intelligence business. He accepted a one-year fellowship with Georgetown University's Government Affairs Institute. "I have not read so much since my college days under then rookie professor Dan Thorp and James Robertson, the two history professors who had the greatest impact on my college years. I'm glad to keep up with the first two through departmental news."

Thomas D. Perry ('83) founded the J. E. B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust, Inc. in 1990, which has preserved 75 acres of the Stuart property, including the house site where James Ewell Brown Stuart was born on February 6, 1833. He is the author of *Ascent to Glory, The Genealogy of J. E. B. Stuart*, a completed manuscript on Patrick County Virginia in the Civil War. He is writing about Stuart's birthplace, *A History of the Laurel Hill Farm*, and is collecting and editing Stuart papers for future publication. All of these are housed in Special Collections of the Carol M. Newman Library at Virginia Tech under the auspices of the Virginia Center For Civil War Studies.

Timothy S. Fincham ('82) is director of engineering and operations at T-Mobil USA in Sacramento, California.

David Fuchsman ('80) attended law school at the University of Dayton School of Law. Upon graduation he practiced law for twenty years, the last thirteen years of which were spent in his own law firm. In April of 2004, he closed his law practice to accept an appointment as a court Judge Magistrate in the Montgomery County, Ohio, Common Pleas Court, General Division. His most influential professor was Dr. Shumsky.

Paul R. Waibel (M.A. '72) has published a new book, *Martin Luther: A Brief Introduction to His Life and Works*. A new revised edition of the text he coauthored with Michael D. Richards, *Twentieth-Century Europe: A Brief History* was released in January, 2005. Paul continues as Professor of History at Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi.

Philip Shucet ('72) who recently resigned as commissioner of the Virginia Department of Transportation, will become president of the real estate development firm DragasManagement Corp.

Cpl. Christopher Weaver ('02) from Fredericksburg, Virginia, was killed in an Iraqi ambush on January 26, 2005. Chris was a member of Theta Xi fraternity while at Tech.

Please Help the Department Evaluate Itself

Every decade or so, the University engages in Outcomes Assessment – an attempt to measure the impact it has on students passing through its doors. As part of that process, the History Department has posted an on-line questionnaire and would like as many of our graduates as possible to respond to it. It will only take a few minutes and will help the department tremendously. We have few other ways of soliciting feedback from our graduates, but such feedback is critical to the state's understanding of what it is we do and how well we do it.

So please go to <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1132341816863> and take a few minutes to offer your assessment of the department and its program.

★ **Back to School Bash** ★

Faculty and graduate students marked the start of the new academic year with an informal dinner on Friday, Aug. 26. In previous years, we've been lucky and managed to hold the event outdoors. This year rain drove us into the lobby of Major Williams Hall, but the food and company were still good, and no one seemed too upset by the change of venue.



Faculty and their family enjoy the food and company at the annual fall party.



There is a lot to talk about after a summer away from campus.



Second year graduate students plot how to survive another year. L-R: Abbey Barden, Burke Green Evan Noble, and Jared Peatman.



L-R: foreground - Katherine Murphy, Peter Schmitthenner and family members of faculty member concentrate on the delicious food.

9th Annual Bertoti Conference

Members of the History Graduate Student Association are hard at work planning the 9th Annual Brian Bertoti “Innovative Perspectives in History” Graduate Conference, which will be held March 31-April 1, 2006, at the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center in Blacksburg, Virginia. All sessions of the conference will be open to the public and free of charge.

Brian Bertoti entered our graduate program in 1996 and began working toward an M.A. in history. He also conceived a conference that would provide students, faculty, and other scholars an opportunity to explore new perspectives in history and initiated work on what would become the first “Innovative Perspectives in History” Conference. Sadly, Brian passed away in the fall of 1997, before he could realize his plans. In his honor, however, friends and colleagues completed work on the “Innovative Perspectives” Conference, which was held in April of 1998.

Since that time, and with the continuing support of the Brian Bertoti Memorial Fund that Brian’s parents established in his honor, the History Graduate Student Association has continued to organize and operate an annual Bertoti Conference. It continues to offer a venue at which students from Virginia Tech and a growing number of other schools can present their work to peers, colleagues, and the public. The full program for the 2006 conference will not in place until early next year, but Professor Helen Rountree, one of the leading experts on Virginia’s Native American population and history, has already agreed to present the keynote address. If you are interested in attending or participating in the Bertoti Conference, full details and a call for papers are available at http://www.history.vt.edu/hgsa_website/bertoti_conference/bertoti_conference.htm

Generosity begins at your academic home. . .

A gift to the History Department can be instrumental in supporting our undergraduate and graduate programs, particularly in these tight budget times. A modest contribution can fund student scholarships here and abroad, graduate student fellowships, and our exciting new program initiatives.

Please contact our chair, Daniel Thorp at wachau@vt.edu, when you submit information about your gift. With your permission, we will list the contributors under the following categories:

- Friends: Up to \$250
- Benefactors: Up to \$1,000
- Patrons: Up to \$5,000
- Philanthropists: Over \$5,000

If you are interested in contributing a larger gift, you should speak directly with Evan K. Bohnen, Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (540-231-8734 or ebohnen@vt.edu)

We Want To Hear From You! Please send updates on your activities to jafranci@vt.edu or to the Department of History, 431 Major Williams (0117), Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Historically Speaking

PUBLICATION OF THE
HISTORY DEPARTMENT

431 Major Williams
Blacksburg, VA 24061
USA

PHONE:
540-231-5331

FAX:
540-231-8724

EMAIL:
jafranci@vt.edu

TECHNICAL EDITOR:
Jesse Sherman
540-231-5332

Our newsletter will continue to feature articles and notes about our History Department alumni/alumae. We would appreciate information about what you have been doing since leaving Virginia Tech. Please send your name, degree, email, occupation and other related information to the Department of History, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0117.

The History Department



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Virginia Tech
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Department of History - 0117
431 Major Williams
Blacksburg, VA 24061
USA