



# Historically Speaking

The Department of History Newsletter  
A University Exemplary Department

Spring 2008  
Volume 22

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 VirginiaTech  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
and  
State University

## From the Chair

### A New ASPECT to the department

There's a new ASPECT to the history department. ASPECT (known more formally as the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought) has been in the works for several years, but it was finally approved by the state just a few weeks ago. That makes ASPECT Virginia Tech's newest Ph.D. program, and it is now recruiting its first class of students.

This is not a Ph.D. in history. I certainly hope it will appeal to those with an interest in history, and I expect that some of its students will come out of history programs, but it was never intended to be a history degree. Rather, it was designed to encourage an interdisciplinary and theoretical approach to the study of cultures and societies across time and space. History, philosophy, political science, and interdisciplinary studies are the core departments of ASPECT, but faculty from a variety of other disciplines will also participate in the program, and many of its courses will be team-taught by faculty from several different fields.

Nor will ASPECT replace our current graduate program. Graduates of our program can only earn a masters degree. ASPECT, however, aims to recruit students who already have a masters; so it becomes another option for our graduates after they finish their studies in the history department. Some of our students already go on to traditional Ph. D. programs; ASPECT offers them another



**Daniel B. Thorp, Department Chair**

possibility. And undergraduates who might be interested in ASPECT can apply to the history graduate program, spend two years earning a masters, and then move on to ASPECT.

None of us knows *exactly* how ASPECT will operate. It's an intriguing prospect, though, and presents an exciting new opportunity for both our students and faculty.



## ★ Faculty in the News ★

**Professor Tom Ewing** participated in a roundtable at the American Historical Association pre-meeting workshop on *The Intersection between Teaching and Research in the New Media*. His presentation, “Practicing Digital History,” used materials from the Educational Modules and the Race & Education Archive components of the *Virginia Schools in the Great Depression* digital history project, funded in part by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. He also presented a paper, “The Making (and Unmaking) of a Stalinist Girl in the Soviet Union during the 1930s”, at the AHA Annual Meeting as part of a roundtable, *Girls and Girlhood in Global History*. In December, he gave a presentation on “Virginia Schools in the Great Depression” at a Teaching American History workshop for Virginia Beach Public Schools.

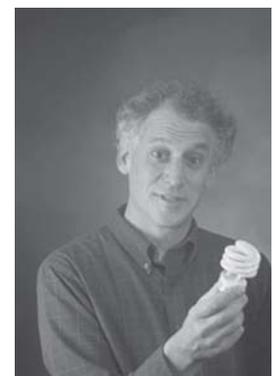
**Montgomery County Public Schools** concluded their first Teaching American History grant during the past year. This US Department of Education grant supported more than 70 sessions, during the school years and in summer workshops, starting in 2004 and ending in 2006. More than 20 Virginia Tech faculty and 6 Radford University faculty were involved in making presentations and leading discussions. The new grant began last fall with a professional development day for teachers on November 6, 2007. This grant is more deliberately aimed at including all teachers responsible for American history content across the grade levels. In addition to workshops and summer sessions, this grant also will support ten History Master Teachers from different schools and grade levels who will receive more intensive training and will be responsible for mentoring and guiding other teachers in the acquisition of content knowledge and the development of teaching skills. Spring 2008 sessions led by Virginia Tech and Radford historians will cover topics such as the American Revolution, the Truman Doctrine, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and American involvement in the Asian war during the 1940s.

**Roanoke consortium** (Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Salem City, and Floyd County) grant is in its second complete year, with monthly sessions held at the Roanoke Higher Education Center. To date, almost 20 sessions have been led by 11 Virginia Tech faculty as well as faculty from

other institutions. Nine more sessions are scheduled for the remainder of this academic year. In addition, Professors Crandall Shifflett, Peter Wallenstein, and Daniel Thorp taught graduate courses on the Transatlantic World, the Civil Rights Movement, and US History to 1877. Three more graduate courses will be taught in 2008-2009. During the summer of 2007, a group of teachers participated in a week long seminar at the University of Virginia on the Civil Rights movement. Some of these teachers are now engaged in year long independent projects under the supervision of Associate Chair Marian Mollin. A week long seminar on the Cold War will occur in the summer of 2008, with a second year of history scholars anticipated to follow.

Virginia Tech partners include the School of Education (Associate Professor David Hicks) and the Department of History (Associate Professor Tom Ewing).

**Professor Richard Hirsh** has been spending some of his time for the last 1.5 years “on the dark side.” That’s right; he’s become a part-time administrator. But it’s not as bad as it sounds. In the summer of 2006, Tech’s Vice President for Research asked Richard to serve as a faculty administrative fellow in his office, with special responsibility to help pursue the university’s strategic plan initiative on energy. Since Richard does historical and policy-oriented research on electric power systems (while also directing Tech’s interdisciplinary Consortium on Energy Restructuring), the appointment made sense, even though his “home” is in the History Department. During his first year, Richard helped organize two university conferences to encourage novel interdisciplinary research.



Behind the scenes, he has worked to inform industry and government policy makers on how university faculty and students can help them achieve a more sustainable future. He has also collaborated with student groups and others to help Virginia Tech manage its energy resources more efficiently. As symbolic gestures, he often gives compact fluorescent bulbs to administrators and government officials. These

Faculty Continued...

swirl-shaped bulbs use 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs while emitting the same amount of light. Buy a few for your own use, he advises!

Eight members of the faculty — **Mark Barrow, Jr., Thomas Ewing, Hayward Farrar, Kathleen Jones, Marian Mollin, Amy Nelson, Robert Stephens, and Daniel Thorp** were part of an interdisciplinary team that received the university's 2007 Xcaliber Award for Excellence in Technology Assisted Teaching and Learning for the Digital History Project. The project was funded by a grant from the National Humanities Foundation and additional support from Michael Snyder (HIST, 1991). The finished product is available at <http://www.dhr.history.vt.edu/index.html>.

After 14 years, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History **James I. Robertson, Jr.**, has ended his Civil War radio commentaries on WVTF-FM and other public radio stations. Dr. Robertson researched, wrote, and narrated more than 350 essays on the Civil War. He continues to teach Civil War and directs the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies and over the next two years will be working to produce a three-hour documentary on the Civil War that will go, without charge, to every school, library, and museum in the commonwealth. The DVD will be released in August 2009 as Virginia begins to commemorate, in earnest, the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

**Peter Wallenstein's** latest book – an edited collection of essays entitled *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses* has just come out. Peter has been busy giving public lectures. These include four in October 2007: “Virginia Tech’s First Fifty Years, 1870s-1920s,” Historic Lecture sponsored jointly by the Blacksburg Museum and Smithfield Plantation, in Blacksburg; “East and West in the Shaping of Virginia History,” Forum series at the Higher Education Center, in Roanoke; ““Give Me Liberty!”: A Virginia History of Liberty Endangered, Denied, Demanded, Expanded,” in Richmond (the inaugural lecture in the Liberty Lecture Series, sponsored jointly by the Valentine Richmond History Center and St. John’s Church Foundation); and “Pioneer Professional and Business Women in Virginia,” Virginia Business and Professional Women, Northern Neck/

Essex County Chapter, Tappahannock. Two other talks, in February 2008, were “Pioneer Black Students at UNCG: The Courts Apply *Brown v. Board* to Higher Education, Students at Segregated Black High Schools Apply to a Segregated White College,” at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and “Virginia History in Black and White,” in South Boston, a Teaching American History grant activity coordinated by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. Also in February 2008, but through the International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State, he spoke via digital videoconference with two groups of university undergraduates and faculty in Morocco (most of them in American Studies or English), at Rabat and Casablanca, on wide-ranging questions related to Black History Month and the Civil Rights Movement.



## Alumni News



**Mark Musick** (B.A. and M.A.) – is president-emeritus of the Southern Regional Education Board and is the James H. Quillen Chair of Excellence at East Tennessee State University.

**Adam Tabaka** (B.A.) – recently completed his M.A. in International Commerce and Policy at George Mason University’s School of Public Policy in August 2007.

**Roddy Moore** (’65) – “Thank you for the newsletter with the information on Bill Mackie. I left Blacksburg in 1965 or 66. Worked at Colonial Williamsburg both in interpretation and later in the conservation lab of the archeology department. Later, I went back to school in a graduate program at Cooperstown, NY and got my masters in American Folk Culture. Since then, I worked at Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, VA, and have been at Ferrum College for over 30 years as the Director of the Blue Ridge Institute & Museum.”

**W. Kirk Wood** (M.A.’70) – Professor of History, Alabama State University, has written the following publications: *Nullification, A Constitutional History, 1776-1833, Volume One; James Madison Not the Father of the Constitution: Other Framers, Different Intentions,*

Alumni continued...

*and the Origins of Nullification, 1776-1787; Volume Two. James Madison and the Constitutionality of Nullification, 1787-1828; Volume Three. In Defense of the Republic: John C. Calhoun and State Interposition in South Carolina, 1816-1833.*

**Douglas D. Brisson** ('73) – “Since graduation I served a career in the Army retiring in 1996 as a Lieutenant Colonel. I was an Infantry Officer and Russian Area Specialist and concluded my service as a nuclear arms control treaty on site inspector. Since then I have worked in a defense contractor for the Foreign Comparative Testing Program, a variety of programs at SAIC, and am currently employed at Abrams Learning and Information Systems, Inc. supporting a non-profit foundation providing homeland security grants to universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. I received a MA in History from the University of Virginia in 1980 and a Master of Military Arts and Sciences in Operation Studies in 1988 from the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. I am married to the former Lanni Sullivan and we have 5 daughters and 2 sons.”

**Jim Swope** ('76) – “Just a quick note to say that I enjoyed Dr. Thorp’s message in the Fall issue of *Historically Speaking*. Those of us living at some distance from VT have had to depend on words and pictures to communicate the tremendous impact of this tragedy, and to underscore the resolve of students, faculty and staff to move forward.”

**Thomas D. Perry** ('83) – *Images of America Patrick County Virginia* was released on October 29, 2007. This book contains 200 photographs on the history of Patrick County, Virginia.

**Tom Howe** (MA '87) – is serving as Coordinator of the Wisconsin New Teacher Project, which is affiliated with the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He serves as a trainer and consultant to school districts in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, California, and Alaska seeking to create quality mentoring programs for beginning teachers.

**Caroline McJunkin Hudson** ('88) – is the Executive Director of the YWCA of Central Virginia in Lynchburg.

“We have started working on an oral history project in anticipation of the YWCA’s centennial celebration in 2012.”

**Katrina Workman Berger** ('89) – The information concerning Katrina Berger in the latest issue of *Historically Speaking* was incorrect. The correct information is as follows: she is currently the Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, New Orleans and received the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s highest award — the Secretary’s Gold Medal, for her outstanding contributions during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She also co-authored a paper with Dr. Dee Wood Harper Jr., Loyola University, New Orleans, entitled “Relevant Law & Empirical Research on Profiling in Law Enforcement in the United States” and they were selected to make a presentation at the International Police Executive Symposium in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in spring 2007.

**William Balding** ('89) – is a supply officer for the Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron.

**Catharine Canevari** ('91) – received an MLS from Indiana University-Bloomington and currently is the Associate Director, Research and Education at the Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.

**Susan Saville** ('95) – has published a novel, *Captain Devlin’s Captive*, set amidst 17<sup>th</sup> century pirates.

**Jeff Graveline** ('95) – has joined the faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham as the Reference Librarian for Business, Government and Law. He also teaches an undergraduate course in legal research and writing and is an adjunct faculty member at the Birmingham School of Law where he teaches a legal writing course. He can be reached at [jgraveli@uab.edu](mailto:jgraveli@uab.edu).

**Voula Saridakis** (B.A., M.A.) – taped an episode of the History Channel series “Lost Worlds.” “The particular episode, entitled ‘Al Capone’s Secret City,’ explores the Chicago haunts of Al Capone and my job as a historical investigator was to interview the local experts on Al Capone and Chicago history and make some conclusions about the buildings and structures we explored as we filmed. There is a

one-minute preview of it when you go to the 'Lost Worlds' minisite at : [www.history.com/minisites/lostworlds/](http://www.history.com/minisites/lostworlds/)."

**Brandon Rowe** ('98) – is a public facilities planner with the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission.

**Charles “Chuck” Bryden** ('99) – “I received the History Newsletter and thought I would share an update. I graduated from VT in 1999 with my degree in History. I received my Master’s in History from George Mason in 2002. I am currently a Special Agent with the FBI stationed outside the United States. My studies at VT, specifically History, helped me with my logical and analytical abilities, which certainly come in handy now. Thanks History Department and go Hokies.”

**James P. Rife** (M.A. '99) – is a senior historian with History Associates Incorporated based in Rockville, Maryland. “This past summer, the U.S. Navy and the Government Printing Office published my first book, entitled *The Sound of Freedom: Naval Weapons Technology at Dahlgren, Virginia, 1918-2006*, which I co-authored with noted naval historian, HAI vice president and Professor Emeritus from Rutgers Universtiy, Dr. Rodney Carlisle.

**Tracey E. Dolehite** ('00) – received a Master’s degree in criminal justice from Boston University and is employed with the FBI.

**Mark Rice** ('00) – received a master’s degree in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College.

**Rand Dotson** (M.A.) – has written a book entitled *Roanoke, Virginia, 1882-1912, Magic City of the New South*. Rand is Senior Acquisitions Editor at Louisiana State University Press and an instructor in the LSU History Department. His articles have appeared in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, the *Smithfield Review*, and *The Dictionary of Virginia Biography*.

**Steven Metzger** ('03) – is an associate with Gallagher, Evelius, & Jones LLP.

**Jana Pruitt** ('04) – “I graduated from Law School at UVA in May and am beginning my career as an attorney with Moran Kiker Brown in Richmond on October 1. I also just got married on September 15, 2007 and will be changing my name to Jana Pruitt Roemmich. It seems as if everyone in the History Department is doing well. If there are any history

## 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.

majors considering going to law school, please feel free to pass along my contact information.”

**Jason Crosby** ('04) – recently completed his Master's of Arts at the University of Leeds in Leeds, United Kingdom.

**Rebecca L. Carr** ('04) – received an M.P.A. and is a municipal personnel consultant for the New York State Department of Civil Service.

**Shannon L. Jones** ('04) – received a J.D. from Ohio Northern's Pettit College of Law.

**Thomas E. Sebrell III** (M.A. '04) – continues to work on his Ph.D. in Union and Confederate propaganda and how it affected parliamentary and public opinion of the American Civil War at Queen Mary, University of London.

**Matthew Krogh** (B.A. '04, M.A. '06) – is an archivist at the Valentine Museum and an adjunct faculty at John Tyler Community College where he teaches American history and Political Science.

**John Wheeler, Jr.** ('05) – has completed the Advanced Naval Flight Officer Program with Training Squadron 86.

**William D. Shapiro** ('07) – is attending Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Michigan.



## Student News



### Phi Alpha Theta Induction

Congratulations to the newest members of Phi Alpha Theta, History Honors Society: **Mackenzie Aubrey, Pearl Blevins, Sarah Brown, Paul Dolenc, Jennifer Foreman, Jenny Geiger, Sarah Hewitt, Elizabeth Lyon, Jennifer Mecca, Kate Millman, Griffin O'Hanlon, David Serideo, M.J. Sparacio, Jessica Vandegrift, and Timothy Walters.**

### Graduation

Thirty-two history majors graduated with Bachelor of Arts degrees on December 14, 2007. The following students graduated with honors: **David Blaha, Anna DeSouza, Nathan Entsminger** (*Summa Cum Laude*); **Jessica Pierce, Emily Smith, Stephen Waldron** (*Magna Cum Laude*); **Patrick Henderson, Mary O'Mara, Tiffany Prince** (*Cum Laude*). Congratulations to the Class of 2007.

### 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, Professor Dan Thorp (wachau@vt.edu), when you submit information about your gift.

If you are interested in contributing an even larger gift, you should speak with Ms. Tysus Jackson, Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (540-231-8734 or tysus@vt.edu).

### Leslie Sherman Memorial Fund

Leslie Sherman, a double major in history and international studies, was one of the students killed in Norris Hall last April. In her honor, the Leslie Sherman Memorial Fund was established last fall and endowed with a portion of the money raised by the Hokie Spirit Fund from thousands of Virginia Tech's friends and supporters around the world. The income from this endowment will provide a permanent remembrance of a wonderful young woman by providing financial support to other undergraduates majoring in Leslie's chosen fields — history or international studies. If you would like to make a contribution to the fund, contact Ms. Tysus Jackson, Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at (540) 231-8734 or [tysus@vt.edu](mailto:tysus@vt.edu).



### The HGSA Graduate Conference

Sponsored by the HGSA and the Department of History at Virginia Tech, the Brian Bertoti *Innovative Perspectives in History* Graduate Conference gives aspiring historians the opportunity to present scholarly research in a cordial, academic environment. The event is held in honor of Brian Bertoti, a former Virginia Tech graduate student who helped found the conference.

The Eleventh Annual Brian Bertoti *Innovative Perspectives in History* Graduate Conference will begin on Friday, April 11, with a keynote address by Dr. Thomas J. Sugrue, Kahn Professor of History and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. His book, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, won the Bancroft Prize in American History and other awards for best book in North American urban history, labor history, and social science history. Sugrue's forthcoming book is entitled *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Unfinished Struggle for Racial Equality in the North*.



Top: Jack Atkins presents Professor Marian Mollin with a Teaching Award

Bottom: Alumni Helene and Robert Goetz discuss the conference with Dr. Glenn Bugh.

**We Want To Hear From You!**

Please send updates on your activities to [jafranci@vt.edu](mailto:jafranci@vt.edu) or to the Department of History  
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Our newsletter will continue to feature articles and notes about our History Department alumni/alumnae. We welcome 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.

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