



Historically Speaking...

Department of History Newsletter

October, 2001, Volume 13

In This Issue:

From the High Chair	1
Introducing New Faculty	2
Graduate Student Conference	2
Faculty in the News	3
Student Awards and Recognition	5
Club Scene	5
Alumni Update	5

Published by the History Department at Virginia Tech
431 Major Williams (0117)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
edited by Janet Francis
phone: 540-231-8382
fax: 540-231-8724
email: jafranci@vt.edu

Visit our homepage at
www.majbill.vt.edu/history/



From The High Chair...

I am delighted to report to our friends and alumni/ae of history that our faculty and staff have once again been recognized for their exemplary service. Professor Richard Hirsh has been awarded a National Science Foundation grant for Fall semester, 2001 and 2002; Professor Mark Barrow a National Endowment for the Humanities grant for Spring 2002; Professor Dan Thorp, our associate chair of the department, a Fulbright Fellowship to New Zealand for Spring 2002; and Professor Peter Schmitthenner, a research grant and Fulbright to India for 2001-2002. In addition, in an unparalleled achievement, five of our faculty (Roger Ekirch, Alexandra Cuffel, Marian Mollin, Thomas Ewing, and Mark Barrow) have won Virginia Tech Humanities Stipends for summer 2002 out of a total of ten humanities stipends awarded! Professor Beverly Bunch-Lyons, last year's recipient of the Distinguished University Diggs Teaching Award, has now been awarded one of two Cultural Diversity Award from the College of Arts and Sciences for 2000-2001. I am also pleased to pass on to you that Jan Francis, our intrepid Undergraduate Advisor (and now also responsible for assisting in the Graduate Program) was one of three finalists for the prestigious Provost's Award for Excellence in Advising, and our Executive Secretary and Office Manager, Linda Fountaine, was the recipient of a certificate awarded to the finalists of the President's Award of Excellence.

In previous remarks from the chair to this Newsletter, I have stressed the importance of foreign languages, global awareness, and international education for the students of Virginia Tech. These goals have now been articulated in the university's strategic plan as essential to the quality of the educational experience for our students. The History Department seeks to take a leadership role in accomplishing these goals, but new initiatives require new monies. And in tight fiscal times, we cannot count on the state or the university at-large to help us. This is where I appeal to our friends and alums of history to join us in two exciting projects with international import. Both are connected to Virginia Tech's Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA), located in the village of Riva San Vitale in the lake region of the Swiss canton of Ticino. About ten years ago, the university purchased a 200-year old villa in Switzerland, renovated it, and created a residential study abroad program. Over the years the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Architecture, Business, and even Engineering, have sent students over to study for a semester. I myself was privileged to have been selected as a teaching faculty there for the year 1995-96, followed by Professor Thomas Howard in the Spring of 1998. Every Spring, the College of Arts and Sciences offers a residential semester abroad of languages, social sciences, and humanities—taught by faculty from the college and native instructors—and these 15-18 credit hours are transferred back to Virginia Tech.

1) **Riva Travel Grant.** We propose to establish a fund to help defray the travel costs of one or more of our history majors to attend the Center for European Studies and Architecture in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland. A student's tuition normally covers the costs of the semester-long program in Riva, but does not pay for the flight costs

see Chair, continued on page 2

Chair, continued from page 1

over and back, nor incidental travel costs associated with the program: These additional costs have been prohibitive to many of our history majors and have made it impossible for them to participate in this life-changing international program. The History Department feels that it is unfair and short-sighted that student participation in this worthy study abroad program be limited to the elite, particularly since we as history instructors bear great responsibility—and rightly so—for generating an interest in and appreciation for global issues among our students.

2) Ticino Graduate Fellowship. We propose to recruit a qualified native of the canton of Ticino to be funded by a graduate fellowship to come to Virginia Tech to matriculate in the new Master's degree program in Area Studies. The Area Studies Program, an option within the History Department's graduate program, is an interdisciplinary collaboration of three departments: History, Foreign Languages and Literatures, and Geography. Since students from Ticino, as is the case for Switzerland generally, are fluent in Italian, French, and German, and usually English, this foreign student would be easily integrated into the graduate curriculum of foreign languages and literatures as well as in history, and would infuse an exciting European perspective into classes shared with American students. And perhaps just as importantly, it would help forge a closer bond between the citizens of Ticino and Virginia Tech's residential center in Riva San Vitale. The director of the CESA would assist in identifying a worthy Ticinese recipient.

Your faculty in the Department of History chose their profession because they love the field of history not because they thought it would make them rich. It cannot concern us that the legislators in Richmond are deadlocked over the budget or that we might not receive any merit pay increases this year. What is truly important is that we assume our proper responsibilities to our students, give them the best education we can provide under any and all circumstances, and bring honor and distinction to the History Department. The most important resource we possess is our students, past, present, and future. This is just the beginning. Please join us in supporting our two initiatives with your future contributions.

Glenn Richard Bugh
Chair

P.S. A Virginia Tech student will be calling you in the next few months seeking support for the College of Arts and Sciences. If you would like your contribution to support the aforementioned initiatives in History, please tell the student caller you would like to designate your gift to the "History Department." Thank you so very much for your thoughtful consideration.

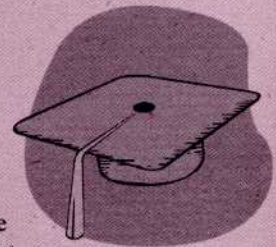
Introducing New Faculty...

Diane Barnes

is originally from West Virginia, but grew up in Los Angeles. She returned to West Virginia in time to attend Fairmont State College and earn her bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology. She then pursued graduate work in counseling and worked for seven years as a career counselor in an adult vocational school and in Career Services at Fairmont State College. Finally in 1994, Diane took her own advice and went back to graduate school at West Virginia University to pursue a degree in history. Her interests lie in various areas of nineteenth century U.S. history, but mostly social, labor, and regional studies. In 1997, while still a PhD student, she started working as a graduate assistant on the Frederick Douglass Papers, and gained an interest and aptitude for documentary editing. She has worked for the project ever since, and is now consulting Associate Editor working on both Douglass's autobiographies and the correspondence series. While at WVU she taught U.S. survey courses for three years, and in 1999 took a full time position as Assistant Editor with the Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series at Monticello. Dr. Barnes completed her PhD in December 2000, finishing her dissertation titled, "Hammer and Hand in the Old South: Artisan Workers in Petersburg, Virginia, 1820-1860." She says she is thrilled to have a one year position at Virginia Tech that allows her to stay close to Virginia history sources as she works to revise her manuscript.

see *New Faculty*, continued on page 3

Graduate Student Conference...



The Brian Bertoti, "Innovative Perspectives in History" Graduate Student Conference

will be held April 5-6, 2002. This annual conference organized by History Department graduate students provides an opportunity for Virginia Tech students as well as students from other graduate programs to present their work at a professional forum. This year's conference will be extra special with the addition of a reunion scheduled Saturday evening. Former graduates and faculty members are invited to return to Blacksburg, visit old friends and make some new ones. A call for papers will be issued in late October. For more information contact Sarah Taylor at (540) 674-4424 or sataylor1@vt.edu. Please visit our website: www.majbill.vt.edu/history/HistoryHomepage/GraduateProgram.html.

New Faculty, continued from page 2

Alexandra Cuffel

is currently completing her Ph.D. in medieval history at New York University. Her dissertation examines the ways in which laws of ritual purity, concepts of dirt, and medical theories were gendered and used as tools in religious polemic between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages. She recently published an article, "Call and Response: European Jewish emigration to Egypt and Palestine in the Middle Ages," in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, and is hoping to continue her work on religious and cultural exchanges between medieval European and Near Eastern Jews, Christians, and Muslims. She is particularly interested in shared saint cults and festivals among members of the three faiths, and will be presenting her most recent findings in this area at the Midwest Medieval History Conference later this fall.

Robert Stephens

joined the faculty this semester after earning his Ph.D. in Modern European history at the University of Texas at Austin. He specializes in post-1945 Europe, youth culture, and the history of drugs. His current project, *Germans on Drugs, 1945-1975*, focuses on the intersection of youth consumption and the internationalization of culture and markets. In addition to his research agenda, Robert intends to focus his attention on computer-assisted instruction and development of various media for classroom use. He would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the staff and faculty who have made his move to Virginia Tech such a pleasure.



Faculty In The News...

Glenn R. Bugh

visited Greece three times this year. Last March, he attended a conference in Athens on the 'Contacts between Venice and Cyprus during the 16th Century', and stayed on to do research on late Hellenistic Athens at the American School of Classical Studies. In early July Dr. Bugh delivered a paper on "Andrea Gritti and the Greek Stradiots in the Early 16th Century" at the international conference on 'Greeks and Venetians: From Approach to Assimilation' held at Monemvasia, Greece. This conference was sponsored by the Gennadius Library in Athens, the Monemvasia Restoration Society, and the Hellenic Institute for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice, Italy. He stayed on in July to continue his research at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. Then in early August, Dr. Bugh served as Lecturer for a Smithsonian Institution Study Tour to Greece and Turkey, delivering six lectures.



been invited to take part in a meeting of American, French and Italian scholars next summer to set an agenda for research in the immediate future on Franciscan history.

David Burr

has a new book, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (Penn State Press, 2001) which will be published this fall. He is collaborating with another medievalist, E. Randolph Daniel, in a translation of Angelo Clareno's *Chronicle of the Seven Tribulations of the Franciscan Order*, which will be published by Franciscan Institute Press. Angelo (d. 1337) was a leader of the radical wing in the order. Dr. Burr is under contract to do a book on interpretation of the book of Revelation in the Middle Ages, and will turn to it after finishing the chronicle. In addition, he did a paper on Angelo at the Kalamazoo medieval conference this May, and is scheduled to do one there on the Beguins next May. Dr. Burr has

William C. Davis

has a new book entitled *The Union that Shaped the Confederacy: Robert Toombs and Alexander H. Stephens*; in May his book *An Honorable Defeat: The Last Day of the Confederate Government* was published; his latest book *Rhett: The Turbulent Life and Times of a Fire-Eater* comes out in November. He has been on numerous tours, including leading two Civil War trips for the Smithsonian; lectures with the West Virginia Civil War Scholars series, VT alumni groups, Round Tables; television interviews with A&E and the History Channel; and recently received the Hamilton-Townsend Award for contributions to Civil War history.

Tom Ewing

traveled with Associate Dean George Crofts and other faculty and staff from the College of Arts and Sciences to meet with employers in the Richmond area for discussions of how to prepare liberal arts majors for professional careers. In August, Dr. Ewing led a session on "Writing Across the Curriculum in Social Sciences Disciplines" at the Virginia Tech G.T.A. workshop. In September, Dr. Ewing was invited by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to participate in a workshop on "The History of Universal Basic and Secondary Education," under the direction of Professor Ellen Lagemann.

see *Faculty*, continued on page 4

