Dear Friends,

With the close of the academic year I am happy to share all the History Department’s good news. It has been an active and productive year. Once again thousands of students passed through our classrooms. We are proud to congratulate 152 graduating majors, including 21 receiving the BA with honors. We are also pleased to announce 21 new MAs. Of these, six will be going on to doctoral programs at a variety of universities, including UCSD, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Virginia. Another MA student will begin teaching at Grossmont College in the fall. Good work history grads!

Some of our current students are productively engaged with the community. Twenty-three worked as interns this spring at historical parks, museums, and archives around San Diego County. They earned credit towards graduation for preparing archival collections for research, designing activities for school children, and making authentic adobe bricks. These internships, under the supervision of our faculty, give history students the opportunity to contribute to the San Diego community, to apply their knowledge of history, and to explore a variety of public history careers.

We are also very grateful for the community’s outreach to us. We want to thank all the Friends of History for their generous contributions to the department. At this time we also want to extend a special thanks to our alumni Mary and Ray Wagner, both with rich histories of teaching in the San Diego Public Schools, for their generous contribution to our faculty’s research and development. In 2004, Ray published an impressive and thoroughly comprehensive reference guide on American combat planes highlighted here in the newsletter. Both Ray and Mary appreciate the connection between research and staying current in the classroom, upholding the teacher-scholar model.

And we continue to uphold the teacher-scholar model. Elizabeth Pollard won the faculty Senate’s Excellence in Teaching Award for the College of Arts and Letters and Edward Blum was chosen as History’s most influential professor. These two faculty are also to be congratulated for earning tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Several faculty produced scholarly books in 2008, including Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley (Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth-Century China); Joanne Ferraro (Nefarious Crimes, Contested Justice: Illicit Sex and Infanticide in the Republic of Venice, 1557-1789); John Putman (Class and Gender Politics in Progressive-Era Seattle); Chiou-ling Yeh (Making an American Festival: Chinese New Year in San Francisco’s Chinatown) while Paula De Vos co-edited Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500-1800 and Edward Blum co-edited The Souls of W. E. B. Du Bois.

There is a great deal to celebrate in our very fine department. ■
Ray Wagner is a well-known expert in the field of aviation history, having spent over fifty years in first-hand research. His extensive publications include *German Combat Planes* (1971), *The Soviet Air Force in World War II* (1973), and *Mustang Designer* (1990), a revealing description of the life of Edgar Schmued, designer of the successful P-51.

Ray Wagner was born in Philadelphia and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. His interest in aviation history began at a very young age, as demonstrated by his membership as a teenager in the Civil Air Patrol Cadets. He moved to San Diego and after a career teaching history and became the archivist at the San Diego Aerospace Museum.

Having completed this edition of *American Combat Planes of the 20th Century*, his research continues with the investigation of newly discovered Russian Air force records. We’re happy to have such a scholar as a Friend of History.

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**The Meanings of the Election of Barack Obama**

*Question and Answer with Professor Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman*

*By Mekila Martin*

1) **What are some of your initial reactions on the election of Barack Obama?**

*The election was a wonderful, welcome indication of social change in America. What remains to be seen is what kind of additional reform the President can facilitate beyond the election of our first African-American.*

2) **Were you surprised that Barack Obama won the election?**

*Not particularly. There have been ten presidents since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s, and twelve percent of our population is African American -- which means that one in ten presidents could easily be African American, based on statistics and on the premise that those years genuinely transformed our country. Jacob Javits, a liberal Republican senator from New York, predicted in 1958 that we would elect an African American president by the year 2000. He had it just about right.*

3) **Do you feel like race was the most influential factor in the 2008 presidential election?**

*No. I think that the war in Iraq was a much greater factor. It led Americans to become more engaged in politics than usual. Voters were eager for a different platform, so the race was the Democrats’ to lose. If Hillary had run there is a reasonable chance she would have won the presidency—and it would not have been because of her sex.*

4) **If Obama was a genie and could grant you three wishes for the United States what would they be?**

*I would wish for solutions to the problems of the economy, environment, and the Middle East.*

5) **What does the election of Barack Obama mean to you?**

*It’s a joyous thing. W.E.B. Du Bois famously wrote in 1903 that, “The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.” Isn’t it nice to know that we’re living in the 21st century?*
As it has for more than 25 years now, the San Diego State History Department presented the annual Andrew Bell Appleby Memorial Lecture on April 17, 2009. This lecture has served as a bridge between the department and the community, bringing together great historical minds such as Natalie Zemon Davis, Lynn Hunt, and Gary Nash with those in a community of interested scholars and Friends of History. Each year has seen the presentation of cutting edge scholarship, as well as the presentation of the History Department’s Andrew Appleby scholarship. The evening’s events began with the presentation of the award to this year’s recipient, William Honaker, by undergraduate advisor Carolyn Roy. Roy described Honaker as a “better than stellar” student, with a 4.0 GPA and a triple major in Japanese, Spanish, and History. Modestly accepting the award, and thanking the faculty and the Appleby family, Mr. Honaker informed the assembly of his planned use of the award to further his studies of Japanese on a study abroad program in Japan this coming year.

Professor Matthew Kuefler then introduced the evening’s speaker, Dr. Judith Bennett. Professor Bennett earned her Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto and has published several works in medieval history, feminist history, and the history of late medieval England. Her most recent work, History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism, examined current practices and theories in gender history. The subject of her talk on April 17th was “Death and the Maiden: From Chaucer to Pearl Jam.” Bennett wowed the audience with a rousing discussion of the historical evidence that unmarried maidens in the medieval period had come to be considered highly sexually desirable after death, even more so than other living medieval women. Owing to their virginal deaths, Bennett suggested that the society had come to see a maiden’s death as forever preserving that purity, and therefore creating an unattainable and forever perfect symbol of the ideal woman. Bennett provided some initial evidence that societies idolized these maidens by using grave images containing crowned heads. Such crowns do not appear on non-maiden figures. In keeping with her suggestion that history is an opportunity to reflect on the present, Bennett suggested that such potentially morbid obsessions with maidenhood and the reaper were not limited to medieval society alone, but existed in antiquity, and continue into modernity. Citing the example of several popular musical ballads of the 1960s and 1990s, Bennett demonstrated a link between western society and this ongoing interest in deceased female purity.

During the question and answer session following the talk, the audience became involved in offering other areas where professor Bennett might continue to search for contemporary, or even cross-cultural examples. Dr. Edgerton-Tarpley noted the existence of a cult of widow chastity in Chinese society that has similarities to what Bennett had described. Dr. Nobilletti mentioned the possibility of ties to the study of sexuality more broadly, noting the potential for such a maiden phenomenon to focus on power relationships rather than purity. The community attendees also offered suggestions ranging from Celtic songs about women and death to instances in modern horror movies in which the pure virgin survives the film so long as she resists carnal temptation. Bennett appeared pleased by the many suggestions. All in all, there was the sense that a community of scholars had participated in the evening’s activities, and that must have fulfilled the spirit of purpose for the Appleby lecture series.

Fall 2009: History Department Variable Topics Courses

- **400W/1, Historian’s Craft (White)**: This course is designed to introduce new majors to historical methods, and the theory and writing of history using an interdisciplinary approach to understanding certain historical events. This semester the course will focus on the **connections between the political and economic history of the United States and the history of oil**. The topics covered in the course will include research methods, bibliography and citation; modes of historical thinking; uses of evidence; and argumentation, interpretation and debate within the discipline. As means of enabling students to read, write and think more clearly about history in general, the immediate goal for the course is to prepare students to complete a 15 page research paper addressing a topic to be determined by the student and professor that focuses on some aspects of the material covered.

- **440W/2, Historian’s Craft (Weeks)**: This course is designed to introduce History majors to the art and science of History. Topics include “the objectivity question”; the politics of History; book reviews and group critiques in History; introduction to primary sources; and selected topics in the History of the American Empire.

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Big History from a Big Scholar
Reflections of Professor David Christian

I had 8 great years at SDSU, before returning to Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, where I began my career as a college professor in 1975. SDSU takes teaching very seriously and I learnt a lot about teaching while I was there. The expectations of students at SDSU were also new to me, and that, too, was a learning experience. SDSU students expected more of me. This was good and bad. It was good because it meant they rightly set high standards for their professors. It was bad because sometimes it meant students palmed off most of the responsibility for their learning on to their professors. In Australia, there is a terrifying exam called the “High School Certificate” in the last year of high school and that acts as a sort of rite of passage into the intellectual world of adults. The result is that (as a very broad generalization with many exceptions), Australian students expect to take more responsibility for their learning and expect their professors to take less responsibility. This can lead to some very poor teaching; but it also encourages students to engage more actively with the learning process; by and large, they tend to “push back” more often and more assertively than most of my SDSU students, and that’s fun!

I greatly enjoyed being a member of a department in which, despite the differences and clashes inevitable in any environment with lots of intellectually able and confident people, there was also a lot of collegiality, lots of willingness to take pleasure in the successes of one’s colleagues. That was fun because there were lots of successes to take pleasure in! When I arrived, it was also a young department and suddenly, I found myself in the strange role of a “senior academic.” At first I wasn’t quite sure what that meant. Should I grow a beard and start saying things that were totally unintelligible to everyone but myself? Slowly, it dawned on me that if you’ve been a college professor for 25 years (as I had when I joined the History Department), you have inevitably picked up some hard-earned experience about the business of being an academic, and that means you can pass some of it on. Some may have been nonsense, but some may have been helpful. Jung talks about people passing through a generative phase in mid-career, a phase in which interest in supporting friends and colleagues beings, slowly, to loom even larger than interest in supporting one’s own career. It’s true! So I realized there is a lot that is very enjoyable in what I at first thought was the rather intimidating role of being a “senior academic.”

Once I started teaching large lecture classes, I learnt a huge amount from my TAs. I was amazed each year by the discipline, commitment, hard work, and intelligence that they brought to the very tough challenge of teaching people who are just a few years junior to yourself. And my TAs were doing it in a field that was entirely new to them. Very impressive indeed, and I had a lot of fun teaching with them!

Finally, I want to say how enjoyable it was to become part of America’s superb community of world historians. My colleague and friend Ross Dunn opened many doors for me, but the SDSU department is, as I soon realized, widely recognized as one of the major centers for world history teaching and research. And I take great pleasure in the fact that it is continuing that reputation as I watch colleagues publishing exciting new work in the field’s major journals. Now, back in Australia, I want to persuade my colleagues here of the importance of world history, and to suggest that it might be very interesting to see what an Australian take on world history looks like, and how different it might be to an American take! I hope, as I do that, I can perhaps create some links between our departments. Though I miss my colleagues, I have high hopes that, over the next few years, many of them will find excuses to visit Sydney, and I do hope they will contact me before they do so and let me show them around one of the world’s great cities!

History Department Variable Topics Courses (Continued from Page 3)

- **400W/3, Historian’s Craft** (Campbell): This course is designed to introduce majors to issues of historical methodology, theory, and writing through an examination of one field of historical inquiry: the particular problems involved in the historical study of a formative religious figure (the prophet Muhammad) who lived in a period when oral transmission rather than written records prevailed. Among the topics covered in the course are orality and literacy; the use of translated sources, and the issue of transliteration; library research methods, bibliography and citation; uses of written, numismatic, and archeological sources; the problem of religious biography; and some of the chief trends and debates in the study of early Islamic history. This course should prepare students to complete a 15 page historiographic essay in which contrasting scholarly approaches to specific aspects of the life of the Muhammad are identified, and the impact of previous historians’ ideological commitments and methods on their work is highlighted. This course thus focuses squarely on identifying the ways in which a historian’s training, methods, and cultural, political, and religious commitments have influenced the biographical portrait that person produced of the prophet Muhammad. Although no previous study of the topic is required before taking this class, it is recommended, and students are encouraged to have read at least one introductory work on the Islamic religion, Islamic history, or the history and culture of the Middle East.
History Department Variable Topics Courses (Continued from Page 4)

- **400W/4, Historian’s Craft** (Wiese): 400W, the gateway course for the history major at San Diego State University, is designed to introduce majors to methodology, theory, and writing in our discipline through an examination of one field of historical inquiry. This semester, the course will focus on U.S. urban and social history. Among the topics covered in the course are research methods, bibliography and citation; modes of historical thinking; uses of evidence; and argumentation, interpretation and debate within the discipline. The ultimate goal of the course is to prepare students to complete a 15 page historiographic essay analyzing recent literature (5 books or equivalent number of articles) in one area of **U.S. urban or social history** (topic selected in consultation with instructor).

- **400W/5, Historians’ Craft** (Di Bella): This section will focus on the methods and intellectual approaches that historians employ in their reconstructions and interpretations of the past. We will discuss issues concerning the framing of historical questions and the types of evidence available to historians. All students will read a recently published book from a historical sub-discipline of my choosing. Each student will then write a 3-5 page review that incorporates not only their own opinion but also the published reviews of professional historians. The major project for the course will be a bibliographic survey of approximately 20 pages. All students will assess the recent work of six to eight historians in a field of their individual preference.

- **450W/1, The Writing of History** (Edgerton-Tarpley): “Natural Disasters in World History”—As the capstone course for history majors at San Diego State University, this course prepares students to write a 20-page scholarly research paper based on original research in primary sources. Student papers will answer a significant question about how people from a particular time period and culture responded to, described, made sense of, remembered, and drew meaning from a major catastrophe such as a famine, plague, earthquake, flood, or fire. In the first half of the course, students will read, discuss, and analyze in writing important historical studies of massive famines in nineteenth and twentieth-century Ireland, China, India, Africa, and Russia. Those readings will introduce students to different types of primary sources and to different scholarly approaches—ranging from demographic analysis and gender studies to cultural, political, oral, and environmental history—that will serve as models for their own research. In the second half of the course each student will select a particular natural disaster to research, and a realistic and appropriate research question to focus on. He or she will then locate relevant primary sources (such as letters, diaries, memoirs, poems, census statistics, newspaper reports, oral histories, photographs, relief agency records, and disaster memorials) on that disaster, and analyze them to write a 20-page essay on a well-defined historical question. Major disasters from any region and time period are acceptable as long as sufficient primary and secondary sources on that event are available. Throughout the course, students will work on recognizing and making use of appropriate scholarly approaches, framing a research question in the context of an academic literature, locating and analyzing primary sources, building a historical argument, and improving their academic writing.

- **450W/2, Writing of History** (Wiese): 450W, the capstone course for history majors at San Diego State University, aims to prepare students to write a scholarly research paper using primary evidence. That paper will answer a significant question about twentieth century U.S. urban history with an emphasis on California. Underlying this goal, the course aims to help students do the following: measurably improve their academic writing; frame a research question in the context of an academic literature; develop facility identifying and interpreting historical evidence; build a historical argument using evidence gathered from primary sources; and understand the historiographic developments in U.S. urban and 20th century California history.

- **451, Historians and the Public** (Colston): This seminar will focus on archives administration and on the relationship between archives and community history. Theoretical literature on these subjects will introduce students to real “case studies,” which will be the subjects of primary-source-based research papers. Particular attention will be given in this course to collection development strategies, oral history projects, and public programs.

- **History 452, Advanced Internship in Public History** (Elkind): Internships available Summer and Fall, but you must register for credit in Spring term (permission of instructor required). History 452 internships give you experience as a historian, in one of the many non-teaching history careers. History internships must involve substantive historical research or education. During your internship, you will work at an archives, museum or historical site for about 140 hours. They will provide you with training and some supervision. You will learn some real job skills, contribute to their operations, and use your history knowledge. During the semester, you will research historical topics, write progress reports and in some cases newsletter articles, new program development forms, descriptions of archival collections or other documents. At the end of the semester, you will write a reflection and assessment of your experience, and compile a portfolio about the internship. Internships require you to spend 10-15 hours a week on site; you must be able to schedule that time in advance and follow through on that obligation. If you are interested in a public history internship, contact Dr. S. Elkind.

- **539, Topics in the History of the American West** (Putman): The course will examine the West as place by exploring the history of the trans-Mississippi West from the 16th century to the present. In this course we will address numerous historical issues associated with this region, including cultural contact and conflict, economic development, visions and meanings of the West, human interaction with nature and the environment, relationship between western states and the federal government, tourism, the growth of the sunbelt cities, and the shifting nature of race, class, gender, and power in the region.
Believing that all amateur and professional historians share a love of reading, the History Department Newsletter set out to compile a list of the books “every historian should read.” This spring, the Newsletter polled several members of our department to discover what “five books” they would recommend to fellow historians.

The responses certainly reflected the diversity of our department, as many faculty members chose books indicative of their professional interests. Some chose classic works like E. P. Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class*, or primary sources like Winston Churchill’s *Memoirs of the Second World War*. Interestingly, Jared Diamond’s incredibly popular synthetic history, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, was the only book to garner multiple mentions.

Despite the lack of agreement, we believe this list represents both the power and range of the historical tradition. The Newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed to our project. Here is a selection of the responses from our faculty:

**Professor Lawrence Baron:**
Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*
Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*
Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*
Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History*

**Professor Ed Beasley:**
Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*
Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*
Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*
G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England*
Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study of the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society*

**Professor Ed Blum:**
E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*
Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: The Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America*
Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights and Murder in the Jazz Age*
Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*
Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America*

**Professor Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman:**
Felix Gilbert, *To The Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy*
Joseph Ellis, *Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams*
G. Calvin Mackenzie and Robert Weisbrot, *The Liberal Hour: Washington and the Politics of Change in the 1960s*
Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights*

**Professor Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley:**
Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*
Susan Brownell and Jeffrey Wasserstrom, eds., *Chinese Femininities, Chinese Masculinities*
Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*
Henrietta Harrison, *The Man Awakened from Dreams: One Man’s Life in a North China Village, 1857-1942*

*(Continued on page 7)*
Finally, Professor David Christian, provided a “what may look like a very odd list. But it’s a list!”

“I’ve been thinking about this challenge, and don’t really know how to respond. The first reason is that history, unlike the sciences, doesn’t really have a core canon or “paradigm” (which suggests they should read T. S. Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and see if they agree with Kuhn that history is a “pre-paradigm” discipline). Second, are we talking about history today or history in general (which suggests that they should be reading some creation myths, i.e. histories from societies without powerful traditions of literacy, perhaps Barbara Sproul’s *Primal Myths: Creation Myths Around the World*? Should they be reading what are commonly regarded at least in “the West” (whatever that is) as the pioneering works of history (so perhaps they should read Herodotus, *The Histories*? Perhaps they should read some of what passed for history in societies with limited literacy such as Anglo Saxon Britain (for which they might dip into *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or the Histories of Bede or even the Magna Carta). Finally, you might want to direct them to what is widely regarded as one of the greatest of modern histories, Fernand Braudel’s *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II.*”

History Department Variable Topics Courses (Continued from Page 5)

- **581, Topics in Urban History** (Wiese): “The History of Suburbia”: Tracing the history of the United States’ (and southern California’s) characteristic social landscape since the 19th century, this course asks “How did America become suburban?” “What precisely does this mean?” and “Why does it matter?” We will use a rich variety of field trips, audio-visual sources, and textual materials to help answer these questions. Themes of particular interest include changes in technology, landscape and the environment, ideas about family and domestic space, the making of race, class, and gender, and the wider political economy and political culture of suburbia.

- **583, Topics in the History of Gender and Sexuality** (Kuefler): A look at the different ways that human societies have organized gender roles throughout the past from antiquity to the present, especially those roles that crossed the boundaries between male and female roles. We will look at warrior women and eunuchs in the ancient Mediterranean, berdaches in native American societies, hijras in historical India, cross-dressing actors and actresses in early modern Europe, and transsexuals in the twentieth-century US, among others. We will also look at the ways in which such individuals reflect other boundaries in historical societies: social, political, and religious.

- **620, Directed Readings in European History** (Beasley): “Making Victorian England”—English people of the Victorian era (1837-1901) saw themselves as very different from their wild Romantic forebears. How did they first create the idea of “Victorian England” as a new and special period? How did they reinterpret their era as Victoria’s long reign progressed? And how have post-1901 historians remade our views of a time that continues to live in the popular consciousness?

- **630, Directed Readings in United States History** (Elkind): Our goal for this semester is to examine both this transformation of American political historiography, and the major concepts and events of American politics through monographs and articles. We will begin with the founding ideologies that underlie American democracy. Over the course of the term, we will also discuss local governance, the expansion of federal authority, corruption and reform movements, and political dissidence. But by far the most important concept for this course is federalism. Our focus will be critical: we will examine the work itself and its broader place in political history.

- **640, Directed Readings in Latin American History** (Passananti): This course will examine the relationship between Mexico and the global economy from the Conquest Era to the dawn of the twenty-first century (or from the Aztec to Pemex). It will follow recent “de-centering” efforts in international history by scrutinizing not only how the global economy shaped Mexican history, but also how Mexico influenced the global economy. It will also situate Mexico within the larger region of Latin America and the “Americas,” and seek to identify both common and unique patterns and trends.
If you would like to join our e-mail list to receive notification about upcoming events, please send a note to: jleblanc@mail.sdsu.edu

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