Albert Moyer Steps Down as Chair

After serving five years as chair of the History Department, Albert E. Moyer has stepped down to resume his academic role and concentrate on family and other pursuits. Under his leadership the department has grown and expanded and a great many changes have occurred. Some of the best known are: the American History Initiative, Area Studies Program, Civil War Center, Diversity Award, and Virtual Jamestown. The faculty and staff wish to thank Dr. Moyer for his wise leadership and his basic gift for making everyone feel special. Thanks for the memories Bert!

The new Chair of the History Department is Dr. Glenn Bugh. We look forward to working with Dr. Bugh in the twenty-first century. His first article follows.

A New Chair's Reflections: Innocents Abroad

As I sit in the Blegen Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and ponder my upcoming inaugural year as chair of the History Department, I am reminded once again of the importance of foreign languages and international studies, and how the History Department should be on the front lines in its support of such endeavors. This goes well beyond the recently established graduate Area Studies program. Our commitment to foreign language study should be pro-active in the history curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

To understand a foreign culture, one must invest the time to seriously study its language—-one year of a foreign language is laughable in its intended results. To know another language, to acquire some level of fluency offers concrete dividends for understanding and bridging cultural differences; and it demonstrates a fundamental act of respect for a foreign peoples. It isn't necessary to agree with the positions of foreign governments or to share the fears and prejudices of their people, it is enough to understand why they feel the way they do, and to exhibit a modicum of toleration and sensitivity. This cannot always been done through the lens of English language publications. The obvious case is the enigmatic Greek position on last year's bombing of Yugoslavia. English is the language of technology and business, but it does not hold dominion over culture, history, the arts, and the few brief years America has been a nation pales before the thousands of years of history that encompasses the rest of the world. We give lip-service to internationalizing the curriculum, increasing global awareness, etc., all fine sounding words, but if we do not position the serious study of foreign languages into that strategy, these words will ring hollow.
So my advice to all our undergraduate history majors, past and present: return to that foreign language you so diligently labored over in high school and make it count for something. Don't let it go to waste. Don't be fooled by those who say that your task is over–language study is never over. It, like history itself, is life-long learning. Even if you do not achieve fluency, don't despair, at least you have tried, and in that you have won the right to be called a cosmopolites, a citizen of the world. And isn't that what history is all about?

Glenn Bugh
Chair

Stephen E. Ambrose, Nationally Recognized Historian, Visits the Department of History

On the afternoon of March 23, 2000, Stephen E. Ambrose—nationally recognized historian, best-selling book author, and popular TV commentator—met with Virginia Tech's history department for an informal question-and-answer session. Ambrose has written over 20 books, including *New York Times* best-sellers: *D-Day*, about the pivotal battle at the Normandy Beaches; *Undaunted Courage*, a biography of Meriwether Lewis; and *Citizen Soldiers*, about the closing campaigns of World War II. Dr. Ambrose also served as historical consultant for the film *Saving Private Ryan* and is collaborating with director Steven Spielberg on a book about the Academy Award winning film.

Charmingly gruff, outspoken, and clad in blue jeans, Dr. Ambrose fielded a wide range of professional and personal questions with verve and insight. In the audience for this extraordinary session were three groups: undergraduate from Phi Alpha Theta, the history club, the Corps of Cadets; graduate students from the department's master's program, including members of the Graduate Student Association; and faculty members. The price of admission was a question for Dr. Ambrose.

In the evening, Dr. Ambrose presented a public talk in Burruss Auditorium. Spirited and unabashedly patriotic, he spoke to an audience of over 2,000 about the combat experiences of American soldiers in Europe during World War II, from the day after D-Day to the surrender of Germany. The evening talk was a Cutchin's Distinguished Lecture, sponsored by the Corps of Cadets Center for Leader Development. The history department has Prof. Robert E. Denton, Director of the Center, to thank for helping arrange the special afternoon question-and-answer session with its students and faculty.

Welcome to the Class of 2004

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the Class of 2004 (or sooner if you are a transfer student). We hope you had a pleasant experience during summer orientation and have a class schedule you can live with (not too many 8:00 o'clock classes).

To get you started out right we are having an orientation for all new students on Sunday, August 20, 2:30, Major Williams 427. It is an informal get together with students and faculty so you can meet and chat with some of the professors and advisors. These people will play an important role in your academic growth during the next four years. If you are unable to attend, contact Jan Francis at 231-8382 or email her at jafranci@vt.edu.

Club News

*History Club / Phi Alpha Theta*

Carlton (Bubba) Fox is the new president for the 2000-2001 term of Phi Alpha Theta/History Club. Professor Richard Hirsh will again serve as faculty advisor. You will receive announcements via email about meetings in the fall. All students are invited to join the History Club. Phi Alpha Theta is an honor fraternity that requires you have an overall grade point average of 3.0 and a 3.1 in history with 12 hours completed. The clubs hold joint meetings and activities.
Faculty In the News


David Burr spent the summer making final revisions on a new book, The Spiritual Franciscans to be published by Penn State Press, where the editor is Peter Potter, a former Virginia Tech student.

In June 2000, Tom Ewing spent three weeks in Moscow, Russia, conducting research on the history of Soviet co-education, and particularly the campaign to enroll girls in non-Russian schools in the 1920s and 1930s. This research was conducted in the State Archive of the Russian Federation and the Archive of the Russian Academy of Education. The research trip was funded by a Humanities Summer Stipend from the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, and was arranged through an exchange with the European University in Moscow.

William Ochsenwald was interviewed in July about the Arab-Israeli peace conference at Camp David by the Chicago Tribune, the Voice of America, ABC Radio News—New York, and WRVA in Richmond, VA.

Crandall Shifflett was one of fifteen college and university teachers chosen to participate in an Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute at The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. The Institute, entitled "Texts of Imagination and Empire: The Founding of Jamestown in its Atlantic Context," was taught by Professor Karen Kupperman of New York University and ran from 19 June to 28 July 2000. Professor Shifflett will offer a graduate history course on Jamestown in the Atlantic World during the Fall 2000 semester.

James L. Robertson, Jr. was named Virginian of the Year for 2000 by the Virginia Press Association.

Daniel Thorp won the University's Alumni Award for Excellence in Academic Advising, Spring 2000.

Young-tsu Wong presented a paper at the Third International Conference on Sinology hosted by Academia Sinica in Taipei from June 29 to July 1, 2000.

Pending Faculty Retirements

After 34 years of dedicated and distinguished service to the Department of History, David Burr will retire at the end of spring semester 2001. Dr. Burr specializes in Medieval and Renaissance.

After 31 years of dedicated and distinguished service to the Department of History, Michael Alexander will also retire at the end of spring semester 2001. Dr. Alexander's specialization is England 1399-1783.

Dr. Burr and Dr. Alexander, both honored teachers and respected scholars, will step down with the esteem and admiration of a generation of students and colleagues. Our expectation is that the Board of Visitors, following a recommendation from the president, will award them well-deserved emeritus status. We will be doing feature articles on both professors in the spring newsletter.

Instructors Moving On

Arthur Hirsh has taken a position as Director of European Programs with Webster University in Vienna, Austria.

Phillip Troutman has moved to North Carolina.

Voula Saridakis is moving to Chicago. Ms Saridakis has been at Virginia Tech since 1991 when she entered as a graduate student and has taught many courses in that past years for the Department of History. She will be a Visiting Scholar at the University of Chicago.

Good luck in your careers and future endeavors.
POSSIBLE ACADEMIC AWARDS, HONORS, AND PRIZES: FOR UNDERGRADUATES

In the following list, "H" designates an opportunity sponsored by the Department of History, "C" by the College of Arts and Sciences, and "U" by the University. The main contacts in the history department are Associate Chair Daniel Thorp and Academic Advisor Janet Francis. The main contact in the college is Associate Dean Ellie Sturgis.

H. "Phi Alpha Theta." This is the history honorary society, with the induction ceremony usually held in at the end of fall semester. For membership details, contact faculty advisor Dr. Richard Hirsh, richards@vt.edu. (The department also sponsors a related History Club.)

H. "History Prize." Phi Alpha Theta and the Department of History administer an essay contest (6-20 pages on any historical subject). The winner receives a certificate and $100 in scholarship funds and his or her name is engraved on a plaque in the department. The winner's name is reported at commencement. Deadline, late April.

H. "Curtis Award." Another departmental essay contest (6-20 pages), but restricted to history majors and to the topics of the American Civil War and the History of Virginia. The award consists of a certificate and one or more books in Southern history. The winner's name is also reported at commencement. Deadline, late April.

H. "History Web Prize." The history web prize is awarded annually to a student research project, completed by a history major in any class or by any student in a history class, that demonstrates significant use of internet resources and presents the results as a series of informative and visually creative WebPages. The web prize may be awarded to one individual or to groups of students who worked cooperatively to research and create a webpage.

H. "Marshall Scholar." The Marshall is awarded to two students every year and usually goes to history seniors who have shown both a strong GPA and the ability to work on their own. It provides entree to the George Marshall collections on the campus of Washington and Lee University and a small stipend to cover the cost of travel to Lexington, VA.

H. "History Department Valedictorian." In March of each academic year, the department selects its top senior in the graduating class—the history major (or double major) with the highest GPA—for the honor of departmental valedictorian. Department officials invite this honoree to make brief comments at the department's May commencement exercises, held in Haymarket Theater, Squires. The comments typically entail a maximum of fifteen minutes of personal reflection or commentary regarding university experiences or future plans.

C. "Book Scholarship." This textbook subsidy is funded through the College's Senior Challenge and is awarded to seniors through peer nomination and selection by the College Student Advisory Committee. Recipients are nominated for this award by students in the college during the fall of the academic year.

C. "Outstanding Senior." During spring semester of each academic year, departments nominate candidates and a college committee selects the outstanding senior for that year. All departmental nominees also receive a certificate.

C. "Dean's Scholarship." Nominations for rising juniors (more than 60 hours by May 2001) and rising seniors (more than 90 hours by May, 2001) are solicited in early March. (A sophomore recipient will be selected in the fall.) Nomination packages should include 5 copies of the completed application form, a personal statement by the student, and at least one letter of nomination from the department. Each department can nominate one rising junior and one rising senior. Nominations are due by March, 2001. Administered by the Executive Committee of the Dean's Roundtable, an alumni group.

C. "Roundtable Scholarship." Nominations for rising juniors (more than 60 hours by May 2001) and rising seniors (more than 90 hours by May 2001) are solicited in early March. A sophomore recipient will be selected in the fall. Nomination packages should include 5 copies of the completed application form, a personal statement by the
student, and at least one letter of nomination from the department. Each department can nominate one rising junior and one rising senior. Nominations are due by March, 2001. Administered by the Executive Committee of the Dean's Roundtable, an alumni group.

C. "Dean's Advisory Board." Nominations come from various departments.

U. "Phi Beta Kappa." Phi Beta Kappa is open to students who have completed at least 60 hours in the liberal arts at Va. Tech. To make it as a junior, one needs a grade-point average of over 3.8; admission as a senior takes at least a 3.6. The levels fluctuate, though, because the total number of students elected cannot exceed 5% of the junior class or 10% of the senior class in the College of Arts & Sciences that year; thus, no particular grade point average below 4.0 is a guarantee of election. Usually five seniors or so from the history department are elected to PBK each year and sometimes a junior.

U. "Wilson Essay." Sponsored by PBK, this contest recognizes excellence in undergraduate writing. The selection committee will award a prize of $500 for the best essay and honor the winner at the annual PBK initiation ceremony in May. Deadline is April 12. Contest rules and entry forms are on line at www.cs.vt.edu/~pbk/.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Ronald W. Gibbs ('64) is one of the first graduates of the History Department. He will be featured in an article in the next newsletter. Mr. Gibbs is a registered representative with Total Financial Group, Inc. In Blacksburg, VA.

Edward C. Stanley ('68) was recently promoted to Vice President of Operations at KSB A.G., a major manufacturer of Pumps/Valves in Frankenthal Germany.

Connie J. Quesenberry ('69) teaches history at Fort Chiswell High School, Wytheville, VA.

Cynthia A. Miller ('73) is Director of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

Bryan L. Carper, ('80), vice president at Crestar Securities, received the 1999 Capitol Region President's Award.

James Alex ('86) is currently with Ernst & Young LLP National Office, as head of New Service Development - Tax Services in Falls Church, VA.

John H. Escario ('91), is a portfolio manager with Rydex Fund and assists in managing their sector funds.

Michael Taylor, ('92), history teacher at Turner Ashby High School, wrote the following: On January 28th, we were notified that we had been awarded the only grant for a High School in the entire country. The competition dealt with C-SPAN's American Presidents TV series that was broadcast all of last year.

John Overton, ('92), recently became one of the youngest presidents of the Christiansburg & Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

Andrew Rotherham ('94) is part of the inner circle of advisors to President Bill Clinton on domestic policy, leading the White House Domestic Policy Council education team. He is the youngest person to serve as a presidential education advisor.

Jason A. Darish ('95) returned from a deployment with Patrol Squadron Five to Iceland and Puerto Rico and is stationed in Jacksonville, FL.

Shaun P. McElhinney ('98) is a Junior Logistics Research Analyst for TMA Corp. In Crystal City, VA.

Matt Ferret ('98) is Communications Coordinator for the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington, DC.
Attention all Alumni! Let us know what you are doing and where you are located. Return this form or email your update to us. Our address can be found at the top of the first page of the newsletter or you can simply email jafranci@vt.edu

Name: ________________________________

Year Graduated: __________________________

Where you live: __________________________

What you’ve been doing: _______________________

Most Influential Professor: __________________________

Other News or Story Ideas: __________________________