From The High Chair

Moving on... This will be my last report. On August 10th, I will be stepping down as chair. I pass on the torch to my capable and natty associate chair, Dan Thorp, secure in the knowledge that the department is in good hands. I wish him well. As for me, I have been appointed the Whitehead Visiting Professor at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Greece for 2004-2005 (no, this was not a clever ploy to get free tickets to the Olympic Games!). On balance, these past four years have been a rewarding, learning experience, a wild ride, if you will, never boring, even at times, uplifting and gratifying. I have been blessed with finest staff on the planet, knowing that without them, the department would descend into chaos. I treasure their friendship and their basic humanity. I carry a few scars, seen and unseen, but no regrets for having served as chair. Never once did I consider abandoning my quirky sense of humor or my stoic perspective on academic crises. I have tried, to the best of my abilities, to advance the cause of the department and to affirm the dignity and worth of each and every faculty member. I have made my fair share of mistakes, but they were never motivated by evil design or malicious intent. I am just not that clever. I leave with the utmost respect for the department and its members, and hopes for continued success.

On my watch... We experienced crippling budget cuts, an unfunded and ill-advised Board of Visitors U.S. History competency requirement, and a major restructuring that led to a new college home. In spite of all of these changes, and the laughable pay raises for years, the department never gave up, and the faculty continued on its merry course to win teaching awards, deliver papers at national and international conferences, publish articles and books, win major and minor grants, and to sit on the many committees that are necessary for the department to function. And Jan and Linda grabbed distinguished honors for advising and career service. Perhaps in a word, it is all about professionalism. It is what we do and who we are. The department never yielded to passivity or self-pity; we chose to seek the light even in the dark days. We established a department alumni/advisory board. We proposed a new doctorate in "Digital History and Geography" and are collaborating with Philosophy and Political Science on another one known as ASPECT. We experienced a revolution in instructional technology; created a host of new courses and programs at the undergraduate and graduate level; and revised the department handbook for the first time in over a decade. We introduced a paid research semester to assist untenured faculty towards promotion and tenure. And each year the budget was balanced. There were changes, too, in our history family. Four faculty members retired and four were hired. Two of our colleagues left to take positions elsewhere, and a third relocated to northern Virginia on a special appointment. Sadly, we lost three of our dear comrades, Bert Moyer, Les Mellichamp, and Bill Lane. A room and a tree preserve the memory of our former chair. To be sure, a full four years. And in 2004? I am glad you asked.

The last phenomenon... 2004 University Exemplary Department! Enough said. Of course, I take full credit for it all. Well, okay, I helped write the letter of nomination. This award validates the creative work of the faculty as exemplified in their many and diverse projects, and they fully deserve to bask in the glory of it. The History Department is truly ‘exemplary’. It doesn’t end there. Individual faculty collected a boatload of awards. Professors Hirsh and Shifflett won the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHIS) award for Excellence in Research and Creative Scholarship; Professor Ochsenwald won a college Certificate of Teaching Excellence; Professor Wallenstein won the Phi Beta Kappa Sturm Award for Excellence in Faculty Research (as well as the 2004 Scholar Award from the Virginia Social Science Association).
Glenn Richard Bugh, Chair

Professor Ewing won a very competitive university grant (ASPIRES) and co-organized (with Professor Nelson) the very successful 42nd Slavic Studies Conference in Roanoke. The 7th Annual Brian Bertoti “Innovative Perspectives in History” graduate conference in April brought speakers from seven states and we conjoined this event with the second meeting of the History Alumni/ae Advisory Board. Linda Fountaine, our unflappable executive secretary, recipient of the 2003 President’s Award for Excellence, was selected as the university’s nominee to Governor Warner in the category of Career Achievement. At the end of the year, exhausted by our labors, we threw a party for ourselves, a ‘building’ party to honor the departments (History, Political Science, Philosophy, Foreign Languages & Literatures, and Geography) housed in Major Williams Hall. The provost, the dean of the Graduate School, and the dean of the college all showed up to enjoy the fun. Of course, the History Department made sure its faculty publications were on full display. This past fall, the department honored Jan Francis and Linda Fountaine for fifteen years of faithful service. A party, presents, and good cheer. A small token of appreciation and affection for two really fine people. This is but a sampling of the achievements of the faculty, graduate students, and staff this past year. Finally, I want to welcome our newest Alumni/ae Advisory member, Wayne Tripp, (’73), who is superintendent of Salem City Public Schools.

A pitch... Please consider contributing to the History Department fund-raising drive. For the past three years, we have been very fortunate to have contributions from three of our Alumni/ae Advisory Board members to fund the Banks Award (Mac Banks, ’73) for the best graduating senior in history each year and to reward the best paper delivered at the annual Bertoti graduate student conference. Now, supported by a contribution from Ken Noe (’81) and by the generosity of Michael Snyder (’95), two of our Advisory Board members, the undergraduate research internship program sprouting from the NEH-funded Digital Reader has received the $5,000 necessary to qualify for matching funds from the NEH. This will support three undergraduate interns in the summer of 2005. An additional generous contribution from Michael Snyder will allow us to establish an unrestricted endowment to support undergraduate and graduate scholarships for history majors. We are deeply gratified by the loyalty of our alumni and alumnae, and I encourage you to add to this unrestricted endowment. Any amount will be welcomed.

A farewell... As for the future, I invite you to join me for a glass of ouzo and some kalamarakia on a Greek island far, far away. I promise good company, good conversation, and a red sun sinking into the azure waters of the Aegean. Odysseus, and Bert, would have understood, and smiled.

Glenn Richard Bugh

Spotlight: The Journey to Becoming A University Exemplary Department

In a letter written on 5 April 2004 to Ronald W. Daniel, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education the History Department pitched its case for why we are a university exemplary department:

I wish to nominate the Department of History for this year’s University Exemplary Department Award. This department has a distinguished record of innovation in its undergraduate programs, and its members have long cultivated links between their research and scholarship and the university’s undergraduate curriculum.

Without question, the most exciting projects involving significant faculty collaboration and the forging of an innovative intersection of teaching and research center on the use of instructional technology, of what we call “digital history”. For the past six years, four members of the department (Professors Thorp, Barrow, Jones, and later Mollin) have worked to combine scholarly research with computer technology to develop an exciting new approach to teaching large sections of United States history. And since its beginning this project has relied on constant interaction among the faculty involved and the students in their classes. Faculty design the units to highlight the most recent scholarship in the field, try them out with hundreds of real students here at Virginia Tech, and then refine the units on the basis of those students’ comments. To date, the team’s efforts have earned them two major grants from the Center for Innovative Learning, an E-Learning Design Honorable Mention, and a contract from Houghton Mifflin Press to distribute their digital reader to high schools and universities across the country.
Spotlight Continued

Building on this base, a team of seven history faculty, led by Dr. E. Thomas Ewing, and a member of the Department of Teaching and Learning, were recently awarded a $180,000 Exemplary Education Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2003-2005 to continue the development of on-line modules for U.S. history and to expand the digital modules to European history. Noting the obvious potential of this project to transform the learning experience of undergraduates (and graduates) at Virginia Tech, the department has initiated a challenge grant under the auspices of the NEH project to fund summer internships for history majors on this Digital History Reader. The research opportunities for the history majors who participate are myriad: the close collaboration with a faculty team on a significant research and teaching project; the application of analytical skills learned in a liberal arts curriculum; and the acquisition of technical training (web design, editing, etc.), thereby adding value to the B.A. degree, to name but a few. The History Alumni Advisory Board has responded with great enthusiasm to this proposal.

In fact, the use of digital materials to introduce new historical scholarship into undergraduate classes is now ubiquitous in the department. Professor Linda Arnold, in her junior-level Latin American courses, frequently assigns paper topics that require students to employ on-line newspapers dealing with the same issues in Mexican history that inform her own research and to enlarge a database that is already attracting use from faculty and students at other universities; Randy Shifflet integrates his award-winning and NEH and Mellon-supported “Virtual Jamestown” project into every course he offers; and a new project to create an on-line index of Civil War newspapers led by Professors James L. Robertson, director of the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, and William Davis, associatestdir, and funded by a $200,000 grant from the Watson Brown Foundation of Atlanta, GA should soon bring a new element to the junior-level Civil War sequence that has traditionally been one of the most popular in the history curriculum.

It is also worth noting that both in the Historical Methods course that is required of our majors and in the senior seminars that provide a capstone experience for them, the faculty not only introduce students to new methodologies in a research context, but regularly involve history majors in their own scholarship. The Department of History believes that the learning process should always be a sharing experience, and that students must engage the primary sources first-hand to become historians. Toward that end, Professor Wallenstein has sent undergraduates into the Native American communities that was published in the Encyclopedia of Urban America; and in a recent seminar on Venice, university archives and worked with them to illuminate the history of race-relations on campus; Professor Thorp worked with students in a special summer course to co-author an article on the students were grappling with the linguistic and historical complexities of a 16th century Venetian manuscript (on microfilm) and their innocent but critical questioning inspired the instructor to modify his thesis in a paper he was composing for an international conference. And every year we honor history undergraduates by awarding three prizes that acknowledge student research efforts: the History Prize for the best paper on any historical topic; the Curtis Award for the most outstanding essay on a topic in Virginia and/or Civil War history; and the Digital History Prize for the best paper utilizing digital technology and on-line sources.

Finally, I should also note that the history department has a long history of working with the University Honors program in an effort to broaden the offering of that program and insure that Virginia Tech’s best undergraduates have access to the full spectrum of the university’s academic offerings. This effort, however, goes far beyond the tutorials that most departments offer. At the behest of Jack Dudley, director of the honor’s program, the History Department has also created a parallel track of regular introductory courses through which honors students can fulfill some of their core curriculum requirements in the sort of smaller, more challenging environment that one associates with honors work.

I suggest to you that the Department of History is a model for “effectively linking research and scholarship with teaching, with particular concentration on innovative undergraduate programs.” It is what we do, and we do it exceptionally well.

Glenn Richard Bugh
Chair, Department of History

Spring Commencement:
Timothy A. Work’s Valedictorian Address, May 15, 2004

On May 15, 2004 approximately 70 undergraduates received their Bachelor of Arts and 8 graduate students received the Master of Arts. In this newsletter we have included Timothy Work’s edited speech to the audience and fellow graduates.

"...In the upper register of the richly decorated reading room at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., high above the exasperated librarians and the scholars whose job it is to annoy them, there sits in one of the eight corners an allegorical figure of history and below him, a quote from Tennyson. It reads, "One God, one Law, one Element and one far off divine event to which the whole
creation moves.” Tennyson came from a tradition that considered history to be a series of immutable, inevitable events. Scholars studied the complexities of history and debated which “far off divine event” humanity was moving towards. Some thought it would be a utopian society in which all the peoples of the world could live a harmonious existence. Others thought it would more closely resemble a night of heavy drinking. In any case, with all due respect to a man who is much more famous and probably a lot smarter than I am, Tennyson was wrong. History is not a series of inevitable events – it depends on decisions people make. What would the world look like now if, on the banks of the Rubicon, Caesar hadn’t said “the die is cast,” but rather, “hey, uh, guys, I think I left the dice back at my place. I’ll be back in, like, five minutes tops.” What if Archduke Ferdinand had said in 1914, “Yknow, as much as I love carriage rides, I am exhausted! I think I’ll stay home with the Archduchess, maybe get a facial, paint my toenails, it’ll be fabulous!” The world didn’t have to end up the way it is now and we stand now at only one of any of an infinite number of possible outcomes. And the whole process isn’t over yet. History is still being written and our decisions now have a very real bearing on what will show up in the history books later. I would guarantee that, a century from now, every high school American history textbook will have a little paragraph explaining the Bush doctrine of preemption and a short debate on whether it was a wise policy or not. This is why we have to consider these things so carefully now. We don’t want the 16-year-olds of the year 2104 to be making fun of us, now do we?

Dan Thorp, Associate Chair; Timothy Work, Valedictorian; Mary Ann Lewis, Associate Dean of The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

There is another Washington landmark that better represents what history is and how we should look at it. Next to the steps of the National Archives, there is a marble block on which is inscribed the words “The past is prologue.” We possess the ability to write our own history decide our own fate. Thoughts of historical inevitability have no place in a world where our decisions have a very real bearing on the course of human history. We humans have the ability to adapt to and change our environment to a degree unsurpassed by any species. This presents a unique opportunity to further our progress as a species, but this ability also allows poorly conceived decisions to unleash destruction unimaginined in centuries past. Nuclear power, for example, has the potential to provide energy for all the world, but it may also be used to annihilate it. We stand at a crossroads every minute of every day. If we write our history with an awareness of the possible consequences, the possibilities for our progress are endless. If we write our history in a careless or, God forbid, intentionally destructive manner, the probability of the whole of human achievement succumbing to a history-ending cataclysm rises to a terrifying level. We stand at a crossroads every minute of every day; the decisions we make now will forever alter the course of humanity’s evolution...

Timothy A. Work

Washington, D.C. (November 2003); and the Organization of American Historians in Boston, Massachusetts (March 2004). He was keynote speaker at conference luncheons of the Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity (March 2004) and the Virginia Social Science Association (March 2004). Other speaking appearances were at the Brooklyn (New York) Public Library (March 2004); the Festival of the Book in Charlottesville (March 2004); and a conference sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, “A Half Century after Brown” (May 2004). His latest books are Blue Laws and Black Codes: Conflict, Courts, and Change

Faculty In the News

During the past academic year, Associate Professor Peter Wallenstein gave presentations at meetings of British American Nineteen-Century Historians in Cambridge, England (October 2003); the History of Education Society in Chicago, Illinois (October 2003); the Social Science History Association in Baltimore, Maryland (November 2003); the American Society for Legal History in
Faculty In the News Continued ....

in Twentieth-Century Virginia (University of Virginia Press, 2004) and From VPI to State University: President T. Marshall Hahn Jr. and the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962-1974 (co-authored, Mercer University Press, 2004). His recent essays include “Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: Desegregating the University of North Carolina”; and the Richmond Times-Dispatch published his op-ed on “Brown and Desegregation: Discussion Misses Higher-Ed Dimension” (May 2004). Tell the Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law–An American History (St. Martin’s Press, 2002) was released in January in a paperback edition, and Virginia’s Civil War (a co-edited collection of new essays, University of Virginia Press, 2004) is due out in the fall. The Southern Historical Association has appointed him to a four-year term on the Board of Editors of the Journal of Southern History. The Virginia Social Science Association presented him with its History Scholar Award for 2004. At Virginia Tech, he was a 2004 finalist for a university Diggs Teaching Scholar Award, and the campus’ chapter of Phi Beta Kappa recognized him with the 2004 Sturm Award for Excellence in Faculty Research for Tell the Court I Love My Wife and Blue Laws and Black Codes.

The National Science Foundation has recently awarded a grant to a group of researchers led by Professor Richard Hirsch. The grant for work on “A Holistic Approach to the Design and Management of a Secure and Efficient Distributed Generation Power System” will be pursued by members of the Consortium on Energy Restructuring at Virginia Tech. Richard created this group and serves as the lead principal investigator on the three-year grant.

Ginette Aley has published an article in Agricultural History 77 called “Knotted Together Like Roots in the Darkness: Rural Midwestern Women and Region.”

David Snyder presented a paper at the Environmental History of Houston conference this past Spring on “The Culture of the Oil Industry and the Geography and Environment of Houston.” This paper has been selected for inclusion in a collection of essays entitled “The Environmental History of Houston” to be published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 2004.


Thomas Ewing has recently received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor. Professor Ewing has also been awarded an ASPIRES grant for Spring 2005 to research a book on “Gender and Education in Modern Russia.”

James I. Robertson, Jr.’s new co-authored book, Faith in the Fight: Civil War Chaplains, represents the first book-length study by the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies. Jack Davis assisted in the research and editing.

Peter Wallenstein and Hayward Farrar participated in an educational series on the 1960s which was held at the Blacksburg (Montgomery-Floyd County) Public Library.

Amy Nelson and Tom Ewing organized the very successful 42nd Annual Southern Conference on Slavic Studies (SCSS) which was held in Roanoke, Virginia in March, 2004.

Barbara Reeves is teaching both semesters of the History of Science and Technology core courses for the Science and Technology Studies Program in summer 2004 (History/STS 5205) and spring 2005 (History/STS 5206), the latter while Richard Hirsch is on leave. She is also participating with a large group of faculty from several colleges across the university in the development and piloting (beginning in fall 2004) of an innovative four-semester integrated Core Curriculum sequence of courses on Earth sustainability; associated with these courses in the first year are dedicated sections of English Composition. She will be the humanist/social scientist in the classroom at least in the first year, teamed with Professor Barbara Bekken of Geosciences. Mark Barrow is advising the group. Students who complete all four courses will receive Core credit for Ideas, Cultural Traditions, and Values (Area 2), Society and Human Behavior (Area 3), Scientific Reasoning and Discovery (Area 4), Creativity and Aesthetic Experience (Area 6), and Critical Issues in a Global Context (Area 7), thereby gaining not only a thoroughly integrated learning experience but also great efficiency in meeting university requirements.

Marian Mollin presented papers this year at the American Historical Association, the Organization of American History, and the American Studies Association. Her article “The Limits of Egalitarianism: Radical Pacifism, Civil Rights, and the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation,” was published in Radical History Review this past winter. Her chapter-length synthesis of the history of the American peace movement will appear this July in the new 4-volume Encyclopedia of American Social Movements published by M.E. Sharpe. She is finishing up the revisions of her book, Actions Louder Than Words: Gender, Protests, and the American Radical Pacifist Movement, 1940-1970, under contract with University of Pennsylvania Press. She is also involved with several digital history projects, including participation in the large NEH Exemplary Education Grant on “The History Survey Online,” a digital U.S. History Reader (with Professors Jones, Thorp, and Barrow) under contract with Houghton Mifflin Co., and her ongoing work as editor of H-Peace, part of the H-Net Network in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Hayward Farrar completed 3 chapter length essays for the Blackwell Companion to African American History, 6 encyclopedia entries for the Oxford African American Reference Series, 2 articles for The International Journal of Africana Studies, presented a paper
Faculty In the News Continued ....

at the VI Conference of the Americas in Puebla Mexico, and had a paper proposal accepted for the Fall 2004 meeting of the Southern Historical Association. He also was appointed to be the chair of the East Baltimore History Project.

Sarah Mitchell presented a paper entitled “Medical Men and Monstrous Birth Narratives,” at the American Association of the History of Medicine annual meeting in Madison, WI, in May, 2004. She also received an AAIMH travel grant to attend the meeting. Sarah also presented a paper entitled “The Link which unites them”: Siamese Twins and Medical Men in the Nineteenth Century,” at the department’s Faculty Research Seminar on March 19, 2004. Sarah’s article entitled, “Exhibiting Monstrosity: Chang and Eng, the ‘Original’ Siamese Twins,” was published in Endeavour, vol. 27, issue 4, December 2003, pp. 150-154. Sarah served as a member of the Medical Humanities Faculty Study Group, 2003-2004, and was appointed a member of Tech’s Pre-Med Committee, beginning in the spring semester, 2004.

In July Thomas Howard presented a paper at the Annual Conference of the Transatlantic Studies Association that will meet July 12-15 at the University of Dundee in Scotland. The TSA promotes interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of the transatlantic region, and sponsors the Journal of Transatlantic Studies published at the University of Edinburgh.

South India Beckoned Peter Schmithenner
(By Dipesh Satapathy appearing in SPAN, in March/April 2003)

When Peter Schmithenner was offered a fellowship by the Chicago-based American Institute of Indian Studies (AHS) in 2001 to study technological history in South India, he received it with a feeling of homecoming and nostalgia. Born and brought up in South India until he went to the United States for higher studies in 1974, South India beckoned him. After all he was the third generation of his family to have a strong affiliation with India. His first book, Telugu Resurgence—C.P. Brown and Cultural Consolidation in Nineteenth-Century South India, was published two years ago. “I was also drawn to [British civil engineer] Arthur Cotton who is a much revered, and almost worshipped figure in coastal Andhra, mainly for the construction of a dam in the Godavari delta in the 1850s,”

In fact his AHS fellowship project was on the engineering legacy of Sir Arthur Cotton.

“To me India is like Europe,” Schmithenner says. “It is one country but has separate countries with different languages and richness of cultures.” He is fascinated by the fact that many ancient traditions still exist in India despite the advent of new technologies. “People are much more concerned with the preservation of ancient traditions there,” he says.

What keeps Schmithenner connected to India while being in the United States? “I have the opportunity to teach courses on Indian history and every time I teach the course, about half my students are of Indian origin—some call themselves ABCDs, or American-Born Confused Desis. There are about 250 students of Indian origin at Virginia Tech.

During his last trip a new generation of Schmithenners was introduced to the family alma mater, when his then 11-year-old daughter, Hillary, studied for a year-and-a-half at the Kodaikanal International School.
Historian bikes into the past on the trail of Lewis & Clark (By Sally Harris, Virginia Tech Research)

Dan Thorp says that the one thing he has learned from being an historian is that he wouldn’t want to live in the past — with one exception — he’d love to travel with the Lewis and Clark expedition that opened the American West to settlers.

Thorp envies those men who got to travel from the East to the West Coast. Beginning in the 1980s, he has biked the Lewis and Clark route through the Rocky Mountains from Eastern Montana into Oregon and imagines the unsurpassable beauty the pristine land opened up to the explorers. He’d go back in time to do it with them in a heartbeat. Thorp is the author of Lewis and Clark: An American Journey. To write the book, he read all extant journals, including those of the captains and the enlisted men, plus all the correspondence from the journey.

On his bike trips, Thorp travels the paved roads nearest the expedition route. One trip, he decided to visit Traveler’s Rest, “a mythic spot in Western history,” where Lewis and Clark stopped for awhile. Before leaving going west, they were worried because they had been told there was little game ahead. “Traveler’s Rest” is gravel on the side of the highway with a dump for dead highway equipment. “That was a big disappointment,” Thorp says. The Traveler’s Rest Preservation and Heritage Association is restoring the site and working with the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to provide programs of Traveler’s Rest State Park and elsewhere about Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery’s journey through Western Montana.

Thorp’s book covers the Lewis and Clark expedition from Jefferson’s first vision of the West as the future of the country to the celebration the president held on the Corp of Discovery’s arrival back home. He hopes he will be able to participate in some of the celebrations when the group reaches the Rockies where he biked the trail. Lacking time travel, that’s as close as he can come to being a part of the actual Lewis and Clark expedition that so captured his imagination and occupied his research for many years.

“Digital History Reader” Receives NEH Funding (Virginia Tech News)

A new project, the Digital History Reader, has been sponsored by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Digital History Reader was selected to receive the two-year NEH Exemplary Education Grant from among 172 applications. Tom Ewing, associate professor of history, is the primary investigator for the project and leads a Virginia Tech team that includes nine faculty members from the Department of History and Teaching and Learning.

The Digital History Reader is made up of two components. “United States History” provides materials covering important themes and issues from the colonial era to the present. “Modern Europe in a Global Context,” explores links between European and world history in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The modules are designed for introductory level surveys courses at colleges and university and for advanced history courses at the secondary level. Educators around the world will have access to the modules through Edsitement, an NEH web site.

“The Digital History Reader adds yet another dimension to our already techno-savvy faculty in the Department of History,” said Glenn Bugh, chair of the history department. “It dovetails nicely with four other major department projects: the on-line American history modules, the digitizing of Civil War-era newspapers for our Center for Civil War Studies, the award-winning Virtual Jamestown project, and the department’s development of a visionary collaborative P.D. proposal on Digital History and Geography.”

Faculty members are responsible for developing module content, securing necessary permissions, collaborating on instructional approaches, designing and maintaining appropriate formats, evaluating effectiveness, and disseminating materials over the course of the project. The project team includes Mark V. Barrow, Jr., Hayward “Woody” Farrar, Kathleen Jones, Marian Mollin, Amy Nelson, Robert Stephens and Daniel Thorp (all from the History Department), David Hicks (Department of Teaching and Learning), Eddie Watson (Instructional Designer), and Huaiying Gao (graduate assistant, Teaching and Learning).
Awards and Recognition

The following students were honored at the History Awards Reception on April 2, 2004:

Jana Pruitt received the James W. and Martha N. Banks Award. This award was created by McRae (Mac) C. Banks in 2001 to honor his parents, James W. and Martha N. Banks, who live in Union, WV. History was his father’s first love and both parents are involved in the Monroe County Historical Society. The Banks Award is given to a graduating senior to recognize his or her exceptional academic record and interest in early American history.

Timothy Work received the History Prize. This prize recognizes the importance of writing to historians. Each year, history undergraduates are invited to submit to this competition a paper they have written on any historical topic. A committee of faculty and students then selects the winning paper on the basis of its historical content and the quality of its prose.

Christopher Sanders and Joel Shelton were recognized with an honorable mention for their shared work on a paper submitted for the History Prize.

Matthew Krogh was the recipient of the Curtis Award. This award was created by Frank Curtis, who lived in Illinois all his life and was employed by the Chicago railway. Mr. Curtis never attended college but always loved history, in particular, Civil War era history. Due to this love, he joined the Chicago Civil War Round Table and met J. Ambler Johnston, who graduated from Virginia Tech in 1904. A close friendship developed late in life between the two men, and Mr. Curtis sought to leave a sizeable portion of his estate to a college where the study of Civil War history was firmly established. Mr. Curtis ultimately established an endowment through the Virginia Tech Foundation for the continued support of Virginia History. The Curtis Award is given to an undergraduate student who has written the most outstanding essay on a topic in Virginia and/or Civil War history. A committee judges submissions based on content and writing.

Adam Coffman earned the Phoenix Award. This award has been established by an anonymous donor and is named for the mythical bird that burns itself to death and rises from its ashes to have a new life. It is given to a student who has dramatically improved academically after overcoming adversity during the undergraduate years.

Innovative Perspectives in History Graduate Conference:
Update from the guest speaker, Dr. Amilcar Shabazz

Greetings! I had the pleasure this past weekend to visit your former home campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. I was a guest speaker along with Dr. Charles F. Bryan, Jr., President of the Virginia Historical Society, at the Seventh Annual Brian Bertoti “Innovative Perspectives in History” Graduate Conference, April 2-3, 2004, held at the Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center.

Held in honor of Brian Bertoti, a former history graduate student at Virginia Tech, the “Innovative Perspectives in History” conference gives aspiring historians the opportunity to present scholarly research in a cordial, academic environment. The conference was exceedingly well organized (mostly by Tech graduate students) and attended by faculty, students and community members in and outside of Virginia. I was honored to have been asked to participate in this conference and had a great time.

Amilcar Shabazz,  
Director, African American Studies Program,  
The University of Alabama
**Historically Speaking**

**Linda Fountaine: A winner of the 2004 President’s Award for Excellence and a nominee for the Governor’s Award**

Linda Fountaine, executive secretary/office manager in the Department of History, is known as an energetic professional who is a trusted member of the departmental team. Her colleagues say that they can trust her for “great attitude, her willingness to tackle any task, her action, intercession, fairness, follow-up, and discretion.” These qualities have earned her the President’s Award for Excellence for 2004.

In addition to this achievement, Linda’s name was sent forward in the category of ‘Career Achievement’ for the Governor’s Award. After a competitive on-campus screening process, Linda was one of only five names sent by the university to Governor Warner for this prestigious award. Linda has been with the History Department for fifteen years.

**New To The Department**

Joining the faculty in Fall 2004 is **Helen Schneider**. Professor Schneider received her Ph.D. in 2004 from the University of Washington. Her areas of specialization are Modern China, and women’s history. Her current research is home economics education in twentieth century China. Her dissertation is titled: *Keeping the Nation’s House: Domesticity and Home Economics Education in Republican China*.

**Susan Archer** is our no-longer new part-time Receptionist and Bookkeeper. She recently marked her first anniversary with the History Department. Susan graduated from The Ohio State University with a bachelor’s degree in Social Work, and she earned her Master of Business Administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Four years ago Susan moved from Ohio to her native Giles County to develop a campground specializing in family outdoor activities and group camping. She spends her spare time sewing and reading mysteries while she minds the gate at *Buckeyes’ Mountain Retreat* near the scenic Cascades.

**Yingge Li** is our new technical support person. She holds a Master’s degree of Information Systems from Pennsylvania State University, and a Bachelor’s degree of Business Law from Beijing Normal University. Before joining our department, she worked at Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education as a software engineer.

**Ellen Apperson Brown** (MA ’03) is operations manager for Radford’s Glencoe Museum. The Glencoe Museum is dedicated to the preservation of Radford’s historic and cultural heritage... through educational programming, public exhibits, and the collection and storage of artifacts and information.

**Jonathan Noyals** (MA ’03) is teaching history at Lord Fairfax Community College in Warrenton, Virginia. His first book was released in mid-October 2003 and America’s Civil War Magazine published, as its feature article, in its March issue: “To play the tyrant among these traitors”: General Robert H. Milroy and the Citizens of Winchester, Virginia.” He has also been awarded a $3200 grant from the Stone House Foundation, via the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation to begin preliminary research on a project entitled: “Unveiling the Past: The African American Experience in Civil War Newtown/Stephensburg.”

**Marianne Razzino** (MA ’03) is teaching high school math with at West Springfield in Fairfax County, Virginia.

**Patrick McSherry** (’00) is a 2nd Lieutenant in the USAF currently attending undergraduate air battle manager training at Tyndall AFB, Florida. Dr. Howard and Dr. Bugh were his most influential professors.

**Dennis Cook** (’00) received a J.D. from Pettit College of Law at Ohio Northern University.

**Edward Maggio** (’99) graduated with a master’s in law from Oxford University in England. Currently he is working as a criminal defense attorney for the Legal Aid Society in New York. Also Ed is working on his upcoming presentations on the history of crime and punishment and on the history of organized crime for some of the nearby universities.

**Daniel Palmer** (’99) formerly assistant director of development in the College of Science, assumed duties as director of development for Virginia Tech’s University Libraries in January, 2004.

**Alumni Updates**

**Timothy Work** (’04) received a Fulbright teaching assistantship and research grant in Vienna, Austria. Tim will be teaching English in the public schools and conducting research. He will live and work in Berlin during the summer before beginning his studies at Vienna’s Ludwig-Boltzmann Institute for Urban History Research.
Alumni Updates Continued ....

Frank Stovall (BA '98 History; '99 MA Ed) is the Site Manager of a 400-acre State Historic Site in Clinton, South Carolina. Prior to accepting the position, Mr. Stovall was the Park Ranger – Historian at Rivers Bridge State Historic Site in Bamberg, South Carolina. Rivers Bridge is the site of an 1865 skirmish between Confederate forces and Union troops under Sherman's command. The site protects a portion of the Civil War battlefield of River's Bridge, including an impressive line of earthworks overlooking the Salkehatchie River.

Richard Ashford (’97) is a Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps flying Cobra helicopters while stationed at Camp Pendleton, California.

Christopher Dodson (’97) is currently working as a Revenue Inspector. He completed his master's degree in Public Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Richard Keith Lilly (MA '96) teaches history courses for the Beckley Center of Concord College and for the New River Community and Technical College. In addition to teaching, he is Concord College’s Academic Liaison to the Southern West Virginia Teaching American History Project. This project is a three-year federal grant designed to promote the teaching of traditional American history in the 5th-12th grade classroom.

Rebecca (Lawrence) Ring (’95) earned a MA in History at ODU in 1997, and a MSED in Mathematics at ODU in 1998. She is currently a mathematics teacher at Loudoun Valley High School in Purcellville, Virginia (recently recognized as a Civil War Trail Location). Rebecca was recently recognized for 5 years of service in Loudoun County Public Schools. Her most influential professors were Dr. Thorp, Dr. Arnold, and Dr. Wieczynski. “Dr. Thorp and Arnold helped me hone my writing skills, and Dr. Wieczynski helped me learn to make connections and broaden my horizons.” Her husband, Keven Ring (BS CS 1996), and she had a baby boy, Brandon Nicholas, on Sept 19, 2002.

Larkin Sinnott (’95) has been through quite a bit since graduation: “At first I moved back to my hometown of Alexandria, VA and found a decent job and was doing pretty good. But in 1999 I had a horrible accident. I fell down some stairs and badly injured my head. I was in a coma for three weeks and in the hospital for three months! It was a miracle I even survived and while the first few years were full of re-learning life and recovering with horrible memory troubles, it was a great experience with all the love I received! Today I am back to normal and am a somewhat skilled web/graphic designer with my own business (Web Be Mine) http://www.webbemine.com.”

Jeffrey Graveline (’95) graduated from the University of Alabama School of Law, where he was a senior editor on the Alabama Law Review. He joined the commercial litigation firm of Engel, Hairston & Johanson, PC in Birmingham, Alabama.

Jason Darish (’95) is assistant strike officer on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, home ported in Norfolk, Virginia.

Eric App (’94) was promoted to the position of Director of Museum Operations at the Museum of the Confederacy, in Richmond. He has been at the Museum of the Confederacy off and on since 1989, (Dr. Robertson is on their governing board) He current duties include overseeing all the daily operations, from admissions, retail, and facilities management to education, interpretive, and volunteer programs. The Museum of the Confederacy is a private, non-profit institution, which opened in 1986, and to date, houses the largest collection of artifacts, personal effects, and memorabilia related to the Confederate States of America.

Milton Bartley (’94) of Southlake, Texas, is the strategic sales director at Candlewood Hotel Company.

William Van Velzer (MA ’94) was Director of Education at Virginia’s Explore Park 1996-1998) and the Gifted Program Coordinator for Floyd County Schools (1998-2000), an English Language/Civics Project Coordinator (in ESOL) for Literacy Volunteers, Roanoke Valley, where he still works part time. This summer, he will begin teaching U.S. History for Virginia Western, and has been picked up as an adjunct faculty member beginning in the fall.

Charles Sensabaugh (’92) of Centreville, Virginia, was recently promoted to specialty sales representative with Forest Pharmaceuticals.

Thomas Mays (MA ’92) accepted a position with the history department at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California.

Carol Chavez (’90) served ten years as a supply office at Reese AFB in Lubbock, Texas. In July 2000, she decided to try life as a civilian and took a job at McKesson Corp in Richmond, Virginia and served part-time with the Virginia Air National Guard. After September 11, 2001, she volunteered to reactivated for full-time duty with VANG. In July 2002, Chavez’s VANG unit was deactivated but she stayed full-time for another year. Today, she is once again a financial analyst at McKesson Corp.

Dai Q. Nguyen (’91) is a program manager who develops and manages federal and local employment training programs. His most influential professor was James I. Robertson, Jr.

Paul Relish (’88) is President and owner of Historic Title, Inc. in Winchester, Virginia.

Michael East (’87) was promoted to assistant special agent-in-charge with North Carolina’s State Bureau of Investigation.

William Berlin (’85) joined Ober/Kaler Attorneys at Law as a
Alumni Updates Continued ....

principal in the Washington, DC office.

Brion Loftus ('81) is working as a consultant in the defense industry. After graduating from Virginia Tech, he served in the U.S. Navy until he retired as a Commander in October 2002. His most influential professor was Glenn R. Bugh. “He taught a course in ancient Greek history in either ’78 or ’79. His description of the decline of Sparta mesmerized me for the entire quarter. He was the most gifted lecturer and speaker that I had the pleasure of learning from while I was at Virginia Tech.”

James Heffernan ('75) is teaching AP history via distance learning for the Department of Defense schools in Stuttgart, Germany.

N. Wayne Tripp ('72) is the superintendent of Salem City Schools. He is responsible for the leadership and management of a comprehensive K-12 school system. He was named Superintendent of the Year for 2004. Wayne was also named Outstanding Alumnus of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences for 2004. His most influential professor was David Burr.

Jim Casada ('68) is a full-time freelance writer after retiring as full professor of history at Winthrop University. He writes two newspaper columns weekly, holds masthead positions with eight outdoor magazines and writes approximately 120 magazine features each year. He has written, edited, or contributed to more than 50 books. His most influential professors were Thomas Howard and James I Robertson, Jr.

John G. Danz, Jr. ('63) is the President and CIO of Wealth Management Association. He is Vice President of the Asian Arts and Cultural Center at Towson University, Towson, MD, and Director of Echo Hill Outdoor School. His most influential professor was William Mackie.

John B. Murphy (MA ‘90) died August 13, 2003 from an aneurysm at age 55. John was a dedicated teacher who shared his interest in history and society by teaching civics for fifteen years at Blacksburg Middle School. John grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota and earned a bachelor’s degree in history form the University of Minnesota before teaching at a Texas middle school for 12 years. He and his family moved to Blacksburg in 1988 and John earned his Master’s degree from Virginia Tech in 1990.

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We Want to Hear From You ....

Our newsletter will continue to feature articles and notes about or History Department alumni/alumnae. 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 jafranci@vt.edu or Historically Speaking, Department of History, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0117.

It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to Glenn Richard Bugh, our leader since 2000. Glenn became chair of the department in the midst of budget cuts and major changes throughout the university. Through all the trials and tribulations, he kept his wacky sense of humor. We will miss him very much but since he is going off to Athens for a year we shouldn’t feel too sorry for him. As time has passed Glenn insists that he has come to look more like his hero, Théodore Mommsen, whose picture rests on his desk. So as a parting tribute to a good friend and excellent leader, here is a picture of the person Glenn is starting to resemble. Farewell Glenn. Have a great time in Athens.