From the Chair

I have to keep reminding myself that I haven’t written one of these letters since before April 16. In the aftermath of the shootings that took place that day I heard from classmates in graduate school, college, and even elementary school; it seemed that I heard from everyone I’d ever known. They all wanted to know, of course, “how we were doing.” That passed after a few weeks, but now, as we prepare to resume classes, comes a new round of e-mails or phone calls asking some version of “what now?” All I can say is that we continue moving forward.

Like the University of Texas after Charles Whitman’s shooting spree or the manned space program after the shuttle losses, we have to go on. That is not to say that we ever could or ever should forget what happened here last spring. The university lost 32 of its best and brightest that day – and the world lost everything they would ever be or do. The History Department lost a promising second-year student, Leslie Sherman, while individual members of the department lost friends, colleagues, neighbors, and classmates. None of us wants to forget those who were taken from us that morning.

But none of us wants to remain trapped in April 16 either. To do so would be a disservice both to the memory of those who died and to the life of the university community to which they belonged. Those who were killed on April 16 were at Virginia Tech because they had a passion for learning and teaching. Going to class or the lab wasn’t something they did when they had nothing better to do; it was an integral part of who they were. They were driven to expand human understanding, and we honor that drive every time we teach or attend a class ourselves.

So where do we go from here? We go forward. We continue our efforts to make this department, this college, and this university the very best it can be. That’s what Leslie and 31 others died doing, and that’s how we can provide them a fitting legacy.

Daniel B. Thorp, Department Chair
Leslie Geraldine Sherman was a history/international studies double major at Virginia Tech. Leslie graduated from West Springfield High School in 2005. In high school she ran cross-country and track, and was the co-president of the History Honor Society. Leslie trained herself to run in the Marine Corps Marathon last October and was timed at 04:02:28 (beating Oprah Winfrey’s time!) She saved money from high school and college jobs to travel to Argentina (twice) and Ecuador. Leslie enjoyed bringing home new recipes from her travels to cook with her family. Leslie was a regular blood donor; a designated organ donor; and had previously donated her hair to Locks of Love.

Leslie was in her sophomore year at Virginia Tech but had already received junior standing due to taking accelerated classes in high school. She was also in the Honors Program and was working toward an Honors Scholar degree. Leslie was studying Russian and looking forward to studying abroad in Moscow for three weeks this summer and for spring semester 2008. In addition to her studies, Leslie worked 20 hours a week as a supervisor in West End, one of the dining halls on campus.

Leslie chose to participate in the alternative Thanksgiving Break last fall to help build houses for those who lost homes due to Hurricane Katrina. Leslie even spoke of joining the Peace Corp after college. She had a great interest in American history and enjoyed visiting the monuments and museums in Washington D.C.

She is greatly missed by all who knew her and her happy smile.

J. Dean O’Donnell Retires

J. Dean O’Donnell, Jr. was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1943. He graduated from Wesleyan University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 1965, received his M.A. from Rutgers University in 1966, and Ph.D. from Rutgers in 1970. He came to Virginia Tech in 1970 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1978. Since that time Dean has taught courses in European Civilization, Historical Methods, European Diplomatic, Industrial and Imperial Europe, Europe and the World Wars, (I & II), Germany, and Modern European History. He served on a wide variety of committees on the college and departmental level; supervised several theses on the undergraduate and graduate level; volunteered as an academic advisor since 1978 and advisor to Phi Alpha Theta and History Club since 2002. Dean’s plans for the immediate future include teaching one course a semester (European Diplomatic History in 2007-08).

At his retirement party in May, Dean recalled coming to campus for the interview in 1970. Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., department head at the time, showed him around campus. Later “Bud” and his wife, Libba, hosted History faculty and spouses at a cocktail party. The next day on the bus/train trip to Rutgers, Dean recalls thinking: “This is a nice place...These are nice people...They want me to take the offer...I know I’ll be happy here....It’s a no-brainer.” He says he was right. Now Blacksburg is one of the places which magazines list as good for retirees. Dean is staying. The department wishes him well...he will be greatly missed in Major Bill.
Faculty Continued...

**Beverly Bunch-Lyons** presented a paper co-authored with April Few (Associate Professor in Human Development), at the International New Directions in the Humanities Conference in Paris, France. The paper is titled, **WRITING AS RESISTANCE IN THE NARRATIVE DISCOURSE OF BLACK WOMEN**, and will be published by the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES.

**William C. Davis** served on the Lincoln Bicentennial Advisory Committee appointed by Congress; Member at Large for the Virginia Tech Capital Campaign; Board of Directors New River Friends of the Roanoke Symphony; Lectures: Delta Queen Steamboat Cruise; symposia at Sarasota, FL, Washington and Lee University, Bridgewater College; Publications: Revised edition of his first book BRECKINRIDGE: STATESMAN, SOLDIER, SYMBOL, Cumberland House, Nashville, 2007; VIRGINIA AT WAR, 1862, (edited with Dr. James I. Robertson), University Press of Kentucky; and he was added to the new 61st edition of WHO’S WHO IN AMERICA.

**Thomas Ewing** is pleased to report that Montgomery County Public Schools has been awarded a US Department of Education Teaching American History Grant ($491,411) for 2007-2010. For MCPS, Sharon Zuckerwar, the new social studies coordinator, and grant-writer Laura Williams did an excellent job as the authors of the proposal. Virginia Tech is a partner in this grant through the School of Education (coordinated by David Hicks and Melissa Lisanti) and the Department of History. This grant will provide many more opportunities for collaborations between Virginia Tech historians and high school teachers. Professor Ewing also won a major grant from the Spencer Foundation to support his research in the history of education in the Soviet Union.

**Heather Gumbert** joined the department as a tenure-track assistant professor. She won the Barnes F. Lathrop Prize for Best Dissertation 2006-07 from the Department of History at The University of Texas at Austin and has been nominated for the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize for best dissertation in German history given by the German Historical Institute (GHI).

**Kathleen Jones** won a National Humanities Center fellowship and will spend the 2007-08 academic year working at the Center on a book about youth suicide in the United States.

**Marian Mollin** assumed the position of Associate Chair in the department.

**Amy Nelson** assumed the position of Director of Graduate Studies in the department.

**William Ochsenwald** recently published: “Islam and Loyalty in the Saudi Hijaz,” in Die Welt des Islams 47:1 (2007), a journal published in Germany. During the last academic year he was the coordinator for the Middle East Working Group that brought to campus two speakers on the Middle East.

**Peter Schmitthenner** attended the International Water History Association conference in June in Tempere, Finland, where it never got dark! There he presented a paper on “The legacy of Arthur T. Cotton’s plans to link India’s rivers.” In August he became Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, which required shifting from the History Department office in Major Williams to the new office in Lane Hall. Though physically removed, he will remain spiritually attached to the History Department, which has been his home for the past fourteen years.

**Brett Shadle** traveled to Nairobi this summer to continue research on the history of sexual violence in Kenya, and recently had an article accepted by the African Studies Review entitled “Rape in the Courts of Gusilland, Kenya, 1940s-1960s.” With faculty and staff across the university he is organizing the Virginia Tech Africa Coalition, dedicated to encouraging research and activism at Tech and the community.

**Robert Stephens** was promoted to associate professor with tenure.

**Peter Wallenstein** is bringing out two books this year. Published in March 2007, by the University Press of Kansas, was Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History, which the History Book Club picked as an alternate selection in May. Assisting him on that book were undergraduates in two classes during fall 2005, one a Methods course and the other an Honors colloquium. Due out in late 2007, from the University Press of Florida, is Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses, which contains essays by six other historians as well as by Wallenstein. That book originated with one he wrote about Virginia Tech’s history for the school’s 125th anniversary, in 1997, and a special undergraduate class in which some of his students, in researching the school’s history in such sources as old yearbooks, uncovered facts about Claudius Lee.
and Lee Hall that caused a ruckus at Tech. The two experiences combined to propel a quest to understand the history of segregation and desegregation on campuses across the South.

Mark Barrow, Tom Ewing, Woody Farrar, Kathleen Jones, Marian Mollin, Amy Nelson, Rob Stephens, and Dan Thorp won the University’s XCaliber Prize for Excellence in Technology-Assisted Teaching and Learning for their work on The Digital History Reader - a web site devoted to helping students understand historical evidence.

Michael Alexander, Nicholas Ganson, Joanna Kucinski, and Reagan Shelton have joined the department as visiting faculty for the 2007-08 academic year.

Stuart Saunders (’64) “I just received Historically Speaking, which contained an article about my former course advisor, and friend, Bill Mackie. I had often wondered what became of Bill, if he was still alive. I would look for his name in the Alumni News, and think, one of these days I’m going to find the time to call the school and ask about him...well, one of these days never came, and today, you took my breath away...knocked the wind right out of my gut, and put a tear in my eye...I really liked Bill...and I can’t begin to tell you how sad I am that I never followed up on my desire to just make contact after all these years...I was in the class of 1964. That, I believe was the first year that a History Degree was awarded, first or second. Bill was instrumental in my decision to go to the University of North Carolina School of Law. As you know, he was a UNC grad. And, we kept in touch for many years...then...I got busy, and forgot my roots. Dr. Mackie was a great friend, a great teacher, and a wonderful person...almost forgot about the Mackie vs. MacAdoo debates...now he (MacAdoo) was an interesting guy.”

Father Ronald E. Shibley, Vicar (’64) “My senior year was the second year in which there was a history department (headed by Dr. Archer Jones, the first department head). I was ordained a priest in the United Episcopal Church of North America on 11 November 2006. I am Vicar of St. Chrysostom Church in Richmond. I have compiled and edited a 100-page volume entitled Prayers in the Christian Tradition, which includes prayers and collects from the 1st through the 20th Century, but primarily from the early Church before 750 A.D. The booklet is also available in a large type format for the visually impaired. I am still in practice as a financial advisor and am currently at work on a history of the stained glass windows at St. Joseph’s Villa Chapel, Richmond, to be published as part of the Villa’s 175th birthday celebration in 2009.”

James Counts (’68) “In Historically Speaking, I just read about the passing of Dr. William Mackie. The newsletter says, ‘Dr. Mackie will be especially remembered for his kind disposition, his quiet dignity, his wise counsel...’ That is exactly as I remember him. He was my advisor at Tech in the 1960s, and he was a great help to me.”

Wayne R. Sass (’82) Chief Information Officer, Greater Newport Physicians. “There are about 700 alumni here in Orange County, CA (another 1,000 in LA). I attended the candlelight vigil held by the OC chapter. I’d say more than half the OC alumni showed up. It was a very touching event. I even ran into one of my classmates from the Highty-Tighties. I was amazed at how many people I saw here in southern California, with no ties to Tech, wore Orange and Maroon that Friday. A few told me ‘Today, we’re all Hokies.’ By chance my next-door neighbor worked many years ago in Burruss Hall. We are both flying VT flags along side our American flags at half-staff for 32 days. Here at my work the nurses in one of our departments sent an oversized card with a U.S. flag on the front to the campus. It was signed by many of the employees at our company even though no one else here has any affiliation with Tech. I attended the candlelight vigil held by the OC chapter. I’d say more than half the OC alumni showed up. It was a very touching event. I even ran into one of my classmates from the Highty-Tighties. I was amazed at how many people I saw here in southern California, with no ties to Tech, wore Orange and Maroon that Friday. A few told me ‘Today, we’re all Hokies.’ By chance my next-door neighbor worked many years ago in Burruss Hall. We are both flying VT flags along side our American flags at half-staff for 32 days. Here at my work the nurses in one of our departments sent an oversized card with a U.S. flag on the front to the campus. It was signed by many of the employees at our company even though no one else here has any affiliation with Tech. I knew nothing about it until they asked me to sign it. It took me a couple of days to compose myself before I could write something. If by chance you see it, my note is written in orange. Please know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers.”


Douglas McGuire (’84) Major, USAF (Ret) “Just got my new issue of Historically Speaking, so thought I would offer...”
an update. Since I graduated with my BA in History in 1984, I have earned a MS in International Relations from The Troy State University, European Region, and completed a 20-year career in the United States Air Force. My career took me to Germany, Saudi Arabia (where I supported the Army during Operation Desert Storm), Panama, and Korea. I am currently employed as a C3ISR Analyst for Northrop Grumman Intelligence Group (TASC) supporting the Joint Information Operations Warfare Command (JIOWC) in San Antonio, Texas.”

Scott Astrin ('85) is an AIG staff counsel managing attorney in Royal Palm Beach, Florida.

Mark Warren ('88) “I currently work in real estate sales and development as well as local government and church based overseas missions.”

Bill Balding ('89), recently accepted a job as a GS-14 Supply Systems Analyst with the Defense Logistics Agency and is a LCDR in the Navy Reserve. He returned this summer from a tour of duty in Afghanistan as an Advisor to the new Afghan National Army, serving at the Pol-e-Charkhi Garrison of the Afghan Central Corps. “Thanks so much for the Historically Speaking newsletter. My background in history, especially the courses I took on the Middle East have served me much more than I can ever say.

Katrina Berger ('89) received the Department of Transportation Gold Medal for Outstanding Achievement for her contributions during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Anita Mack ('94) is a C-130 evaluator navigator for the U.S. Air Force. She and her flight crew – the first all female C-130 crew in the Air Force, visited Tech in the spring to give some of the cadets rides in a C-130.

Andrew Washburn ('96) has been working at James Madison’s Montpelier in Orange, Virginia, since 1997. For the past three years, he has served as the Assistant Director of the Center for the Constitution at Montpelier. The Center offers professional development programs on the Constitution and Bill of Rights to educators and other professional audiences, including State Supreme Court Justices. Since 1999, Andrew has also worked closely with the Center for Civic Education (CCE), an organization that provides professional seminars and educational materials for teachers all over the world. As part of his work with CCE, in 2004 Washburn traveled to Ramallah in the West Bank to assist with a civic education program for Palestinian teachers.

Matt Feret ('98) is the Director of Oklahoma Humana, Inc. in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Jonathan Lee ('00) is director of development and marketing for the Salvation Army in Roanoke, Virginia.

Gregg Dean ('98) is at Martinsville High School teaching and coaching cross country, indoor track, and assisting outdoor track.

Jeff Beasley ('00) is working in intelligence and living in northern Virginia. Jeff says that his history degree really is helpful with work in the intelligence field.

Aaron McClung ('00) received a M.B.A. from the University of Richmond and is now vice president for Westham Capital Partners, Inc. in Midlothian, Virginia.

Haden Conrad ('02) is currently in the first of three years of study in the Master of Divinity program at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. He expects to graduate in 2009 and will be ordained as an elder in the United Methodist Church.

Scott Krogh ('02) is a museum historical interpreter at Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Bernadette Blackburn ('03) is teaching Social Science (US history and Civics) in Craig County. In fall she will be moving to Loudoun County where she will be teaching 7th grade US History for the public schools.

Matthew Krogh (B.A. '03, M.A. '05) is working at the Valentine Richmond History Center as a Research Librarian in the Archives Department. He does research and helps people with inquiries regarding Richmond History.

Jared Peatman (M.A. '06) had three encyclopedia articles (Freedmen’s Bureau, Abraham Lincoln, and Reconstruction Acts) published in The Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition edited by Peter Hinks and John McKivigan.
**Student & Department News**

**Matt Barrow** ('08) worked as a fall intern for NASA History Division in Washington, DC. Matt worked on the biographical appendix for *Exploring the Unknown, Volume 7*, reviewed copy edits for the new edition of *Databooks*, and submitted and confirmed cataloging in publication data to the Library of Congress.

**Brian Peters** ('08) was the recipient of a Dean’s Roundtable Scholarship for the 2007-2008 school year.

**Hunter Simmons** ('08) was the recipient of a Dean’s Rising Senior Scholarship for the 2007-2008 school year.

The Department of History Awards Reception was held March 16, 2007. Recipients of the departmental awards for 2006-2007 were:

**Undergraduate Awards:**
- James W. and Martha N. Banks Award – Kathryn Riley
- Patricia Ann Gallagher Scholarship – Ashton Hoff
- Curtis Award – Thomas Casey
- History Prize – Hunter Simmons
- Digital History Prize – Tara Anderson, Paolo Busante, Ashley Edlund, Sevren Gourley, William Habermann, Russell Haynes, April Mooneyham, Matthew Pyrak, Marc Thomas, and John Torrance
- Phoenix Award – Mark Hoffman

**Graduate Awards:**
- Outstanding Thesis Award for 2006 – Evan Noble
- Graduate Student Exemplary Assistant Award – Jared Bond

Award Winners: (L-R) Evan Noble, Kathryn Riley, Hunter Simmons, Ashton Hoff, Jared Bond, and Mark Hoffman

Three Digital Prize Winners and their professor: (L-R) Marc Thomas, Dr. Robert Stephens, Ashley Edlund and Tara Anderson.
Phi Alpha Theta Induction

On April 30, 2007, Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honor Fraternity, inducted eight new members: Leslie Sherman (posthumously), Collinson Burwyn III, Andrew Davison, John Dingle, Kelly Engbersen, Kyle Johnson, Caroline Moore, and Graham Sturm.

New officers for 2007-2008 are Brian Peters, President; Hunter Simmons, Vice-President; Kyle Johnson, Treasurer; Kelly Engbersen, Secretary; and John Dingle, Student Representative to the Department Undergraduate Committee.

Phi Alpha Theta and the History Club would like to extend a warm thank you to Dr. J. Dean O’Donnell for his faithful service as faculty advisor for five years. Dr. O’Donnell retired at the end of spring semester but plans to teach part-time in the future.

10th Annual Brian Bertoti “Innovative Perspectives in History” Conference

During the fall of 1997, Brian Bertoti initiated work on what would be the first graduate student history conference.

Unfortunately, he never saw his dream come true. To honor him, his fellow graduate students organized the first “Innovative Perspectives in History” conference. During the past ten years nearly 120 students and professors representing 32 universities have participated in this conference. The 10th annual graduate conference featured the keynote address by Professor Stephanie McCurry from the University of Pennsylvania. Her topic was “Women Numerous and Armed: Gender and the Politics of Subsistence in the Civil War South.” This conference continues to grow and provide a unique opportunity for graduate students to present research at a conference.

Graduation

Congratulations to the class of 2007! A record number of 120 history students were awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree on May 12, 2007. This number was an increase of approximately twenty students from 2006. Also, for the first time the department had co-valedictorians, both with perfect 4.0 grade point averages. The valedictorians were Robert Bowman and Kimberly McKay. Timothy Edson was the salutatorian. This outstanding class had a record number of students graduating with honors. In addition, ten graduate students were awarded the Master of Arts.

Generosity begins at your academic home. . .

A gift to the History Department can be instrumental in supporting our undergraduate and graduate programs, particularly in these tight budget times. A modest contribution can fund student scholarships here and abroad, graduate student fellowships, and our exciting new program initiatives.

If you are interested in contributing a larger gift, you should speak directly with Tysus D. Jackson, Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (540-231-8734 or tysusj@vt.edu)
Our newsletter will continue to feature articles and notes about our History Department alumni/alumae. 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 the Department of History, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0117.