From the Chair

With a fresh crop of eager new students arriving each fall, universities seem to be in a state of perpetual change. But this past year has brought even more transformation than usual at Virginia Tech, with the selection of a new president, Timothy Sands, and a new dean for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Elizabeth Spiller. In their interviews before their arrival here and public statements since then, both have repeatedly affirmed their strong support for the liberal arts, which is something we in the History Department most heartily welcome. All of us look forward to working closely with them in the coming years.

We were also extremely fortunate in being able to recruit five new faculty members to the History Department this year, which is more additions than since the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the university experienced a dramatic expansion under the leadership of President T. Marshall Hahn. We initially began the hiring season in the fall with searches for scholars of Middle East history and pre-1800 World history. By the time all the dust had finally settled in the spring, we also managed to land a new historian of race and slavery and a 20th-century U.S. historian. In addition, we welcomed the first postdoctoral associate for the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies. These new colleagues add a vibrancy, dynamism, and renewed sense of excitement to a department that is already widely recognized for its excellence in research, teaching, and outreach. More details about the promising young scholars who have joined us this fall are found in the pages that follow.

We also completed the initial phase of the first major overhaul of our undergraduate curriculum in over two decades. For the past several years now, we have been talking with students, alumni, colleagues, and each other about ways to enhance our curriculum, to make it better reflect recent trends in the field and better meet the needs of today's students and their prospective employers. The final result of that long, often-challenging series of conservations was a new set of requirements that will provide our majors with the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in the twenty-first century. First-year students arriving in the fall 2014 were the first to come in under the newly approved History major checksheet, while continuing students will have the option of using the old checksheet until fall 2018.

Amidst all of this change, though, there was also the constancy of a department that remains remain strongly committed to the pursuit of genuine

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 times of tight budgets. Any contribution can help fund student scholarships, graduate student fellowships, and exciting new program initiatives. Follow the link below for information on how to give and be sure to designate the History Department as the intended recipient of your gift:

http://www.givingto.vt.edu/

If you are interested in learning how to endow a fund or make a named gift, please speak with Jill Ashton, Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, (540) 231-8734 or jill77@vt.edu.”
excellence. We take great pride in our research, which is constantly pushing the boundaries of our understanding of the past; our teaching, which challenges students to think in new ways about the world and their place in it; and our outreach, which provides opportunities to share our sense of history with the broader community. In this newsletter, I am delighted to highlight a sampling of our many, many accomplishments this past year.

Please drop us a line to let us know what you are up to, follow us on Facebook, and if your budget allows, consider a financial gift to help us continue to cultivate excellence in the Department of History at Virginia Tech.

Welcome New Faculty

Carmen M.K. Gitre has been appointed an Assistant Professor in the Department of History. Gitre’s research focuses on modernity, imperial history, and culture in late 19th- and early 20th-century Egypt. She will teach a range of courses on Middle Eastern history with a focus on the modern Middle East. She has been published in the Arab Studies Journal and the Journal of Semitic Studies and is completing a book, Performing Modernity: Theater and Political Culture in Egypt, 1869-1923. She received a bachelor’s degree from Northwestern University, a master’s degree from Dominican University, and a Ph.D. from Rutgers University.

Edward J.K. Gitre is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of History. His research focuses on the transnational circulation of ideas, psycho-cultural analysis, war and society, interdisciplinary social sciences, and global Christianity, with an emphasis on 20th-century U.S. history. With a Ph.D. in History from Rutgers University, he has held fellowships at two interdisciplinary research centers engaged in cultural analysis, a doctoral fellowship with the Center for Cultural Analysis at Rutgers University, and a postdoctoral fellowship with the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, where he remains an Associate Fellow. Also, he holds a Masters degree in Cultural History from the University of Manchester, England. He has been published in a variety of journals, including Church History, Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, History of the Human Sciences, and Hedgehog Review. His current book project, entitled “One Nation, Under Adjustment: World War II, Groupthink, and the Crisis of American Individualism,” is a study of militarization and its interlaced relationship with midcentury conformity.

Kimberley Kutz, Post Doctoral Associate in the Department of History and the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, grew up in State College, Pennsylvania, and graduated from the Pennsylvania State University in 2006 with B.A.s in History and Art History. She completed her M.A. and Ph.D. in United States History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Since graduating in 2013, Kutz has served as Visiting Assistant Professor of American

D. Jonathan Felt has been appointed an Assistant Professor in the Department of History. Felt’s scholarship focuses on ancient and early medieval Chinese history, world history, and spatial history. He was recently published in the Early Medieval China Journal. He will teach world history to the year 1500 and will work with colleagues to standardize a two-semester world history sequence. Felt received his bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University, a master’s degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Warren E. Milteer, Jr. has been appointed an Assistant Professor in the Department of History. Milteer’s research focuses on free people of color in North Carolina from the colonial period through Reconstruction. He will teach U.S. history, the history of slavery, and native American history. He has been published in the North Carolina Historical Review and the Journal of Social History. Milteer received his bachelor’s degree from North Carolina State University, his master’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Studies at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Kutz's research focuses on Civil War memory, visual culture, and popular culture. Her current project centers on representations of Abraham Lincoln’s “ghost” as a site of contested memory over the war's true meaning for African American citizenship in the United States.

Faculty News


Melanie Kiechle, Danna Agmon and LaDale Winling have been awarded CLAHS Diversity Grants. Keichle and Agmon plan to organize another speaker series next year, this time on the theme "Crossing Borders, Transgressing Boundaries." LaDale’s project, entitled “New Town Space and Society,” aims to discover and disseminate the historical record of the New Town African American community in Montgomery County using a database-driven Web site. He is working closely with Dan Thorp on this exciting digital history project.

Eight History faculty members received the new Visible Scholars Initiative Mini-grants from CLAHS and the Library. They include: Danna Agmon, David Cline, Dennis Hidalgo, Richard Hirsh, Melanie Kiechle, Paul Quigley, Brett Shadle and LaDale Winling.

Niles Research Grants were awarded to Danna Agmon, Melanie Kiechle, and David Cline.

Glenn Bugh swapped lives with Dr. Patricia Baker in spring semester, 2014. He taught two courses at the University of Kent: City of Athens and Alexander and the Hellenistic World, while Dr. Baker taught two courses at Virginia Tech: Greek and Roman Medicine and Roman Britain. Baker, who is originally from the states, earned her BA in Anthropology from Millersville University, an MA in Classics from Florida State, and a PhD in Classics and Archaeology from Florida State.

Historically Speaking

David Cline has received a grant from the Truman Presidential Library to continue work on his book on Korean War veterans. Cline also played a key leadership role in the project to relocate the Corps of Cadets Museum from Rasche Hall to Newman Library.


Melanie Kiechle was awarded an American Antiquarian Society (AAS)-National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship for 2014 - 2015. She is working at the AAS in Worcester, MA, on a research project titled “Smell Detectives: An Olfactory History of Nineteenth - Century America.”
Brett Shadle has published an editorial entitled “Rights Violation Under Warehousing” on human rights in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, which currently serves over 110,000 displaced men, women, and children. Shadle has not only volunteered in this camp for several years, but he has also established Service Learning Kakuma, a program whereby he mentors VT students on issues surrounding philanthropy in Africa for a semester and then accompanies them to Kakuma, where they work in the camp during the summer.

Daniel Thorp has published ”The Beginnings of African American Education in Montgomery County” in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 121, no. 4 (2013): 314-345. The article is part of his larger research project on the history of African Americans in the area.

Daniel Thorp was featured in “Passion for the Past” which appeared in the Winter 2013-14 edition of *the Virginia Tech Magazine*.

Marian Mollin has been honored with an inaugural ASPECT Outstanding Faculty Award for all her hard work teaching and advising students in that doctoral program.

Robert Stephens, associate professor in the department of history, was named associate dean for undergraduate academic affairs for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Science.

Peter Wallenstein has recently published *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry: Loving v. Virginia* (University Press of Kansas, 2014) and *Cradle of America: A History of Virginia* (University Press of Kansas, 2014, second edition, revised). In recent months he has led a teacher workshop in Arlington; spoken at the Virginia Festival of the Book; given an invited paper on Reconstruction at the U.S. Capital Society annual symposium; been keynote speaker at a Phi Alpha Theta initiation at Mary Baldwin College; led discussions of the film *The Loving Story*; and presented “What’s Love Got to Do with It? High-Stakes Gambling and Cross-Race Choices among Women of Color in the Eras of Slavery and Jim Crow,” at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History’s annual conference. He co-chairs the advisory board to the university’s new Office of Undergraduate Research.

Richard Hirsh and his former graduate student, Bejamin K. Sovacool, co-authored and published “Wind Turbines and Invisible Technology: Unarticulated Reasons for Local Opposition to Wind Energy,” *Technology and Culture*, 54, no 4 (October 2013): 705-734. It has been a big year for Hirsh, who has also been inducted into Virginia Tech’s Academy of Faculty Service for his exceptional contribution to the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad. For over 25 years now, Richard has served as a volunteer, mentor, and leader for the VT Rescue Squad.

The opening reception for the displays from the Soviet History for Networked Age was held February 19-March 14 in Newman Library. The Class-Sourced Content from Student Blogs in Amy Nelson’s Soviet History for the Networked Age course was a huge success.

The 12-poster exhibit “Protect Yourself against Influenza: Newspaper Advertisements during the 1918 Epidemic” was on display in the Wallace Gallery and the Science Museum of Western Virginia earlier in the year. Tom Ewing, professor of History and Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, directed the exhibit, which grew out of research begun as part of the Epidemiology of Information project, funded by the Digging into Data Challenge administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The posters were designed by Brooks Tiffany, a senior majoring in the professional writing program in the Department of English, with the assistance of Jennifer Mooney, senior instructor in the Department of English. Ewing is also the lead author of an article, “Mining Coverage of the Flu: Big Data’s insights into an Epidemic,” that appears in *Perspectives on History*, vol. 52, no. 1 (January 2014): 28-31.


Paul Quigley has published an article, “Civil War Conscription and the International Boundaries of Citizenship,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 3 (Sept 2014): 373-393. Quigley has also been selected by the local Phi Beta Kappa chapter to win this year’s Sturm Research Award for his book, *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865*.

Trudy and Andy Becker received the Alumni Award for Excellence in International Education. This is fitting university-level recognition for all the wonderful work they have done over the past 15 plus years. Glenn Bugh was the recipient last year.
Four faculty received major awards from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences this past spring:

- Marian Mollin, Excellence in Undergraduate Research Mentoring
- Brett Shadle, Excellence in International Initiatives
- Helen Schneider, Excellence in Research and Creative Scholarship
- Mark Barrow, Excellence in Research and Creative Scholarship

Department News

**Farrar Remembrance and Celebration**

The history department hosted a "Remembrance and Celebration of Life for Woody Farrar" on Friday, Sept. 27, 2013 at the Black Cultural Center in Squires Student Center on the Blacksburg campus. Wood dedicated himself to counseling, mentoring, and advocating for the underrepresented students, student athletes, and students in the Virginia Tech Corp of Cadets. There was a huge turnout to honor "Doc," and many spoke of how he made everyone feel special and changed their lives. There was much laughter and many tears.

**Annual Awards Ceremony**

On March 21, 2014, the annual Department of History Student Awards was held in Banquet Hall in conjunction with the opening the Bertoti Conference. The following History undergraduates were recognized for their achievements:

- Taylor Ullrich, James W. and Martha N. Banks Award
- Grayson Van Beuren, History Prize
- Rachel Goatley, Curtis Award
- Courtney Howell, Digital Award
- Kevin "Tiny" Dawson, Hayward Farrar Award
- Erica Aiken was presented the 2013-2014 Exemplary Graduate Assistant Award.

The Faculty Excellence Award was presented to Marian Mollin to acknowledge the exceptional support she has given to the graduate program.

**Annual Teaching Workshop**

The Department of History hosted its 3rd annual teaching workshop on the morning of November 5, 2013. About 25 local middle and high school teachers participated in the workshop, which was held at the Hahn Horticultural Garden Pavilion.
The theme of this year’s workshop was “New Perspectives on the Cold War,” and it featured a round-table discussion with the following History faculty members: David Cline (moderator), Marian Mollin, LaDale Winling, Helen Schneider, Tom Ewing, and Peter Wallenstein. History faculty members Jerry Berkley-Coats, Matt Heaton, and Mark Barrow delivered brief presentations that focused on the use of primary sources. David Hicks, of the Department of Teaching and Learning, led the wrap-up session. And History M.A. student Taylor Stoltz provided administrative assistance for the workshop.

**New Perspectives on the Cold War**

A Virginia Tech Workshop for Teachers

Tuesday, November 5

8:00 Arrival and Coffee
8:30 Welcome
8:45 Roundtable
10:00 Presentations
11:00 Wrap-up
11:30 End

Sponsored by the Department of History, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and the School of Education

**Commencement 2014**

The History commencement was held on May 17, 2014. Speakers included Taylor Ullrich, Valedictorian, and Erica Aiken, President of the History Graduate Student Association. Approximately 80 undergraduate and 10 master’s diplomas were conferred.

**Department Socials**

In September, December and May of each year, faculty, staff and graduate students gather for food, drink, and conversation. Beginning in fall semester, celebrating the holiday season, and wrapping up the academic year, these social functions are always well attended by faculty, staff, graduate students, and their families.

A new tradition has begun of having an annual Fall Tea attended by undergraduate, graduate students, faculty, and staff. This provides another opportunity to mingle and discuss academics and social aspects of the department.

Thanksgiving is celebrated before the holiday each November. The department provides a bountiful meal and those attending bring side dishes and many desserts. In November 2013 the department acknowledged Linda Fountaine and Jan Francis’ arrival 5 days apart in November 1988. We celebrated this achievement with a cake and congratulations. There was some debate as to whether any other department has had the same two staff for that long. No one knew for sure, so this will remain a mystery. This duo will be breaking up when Jan retires in July 2015.
**Student News**

The College of Liberal Arts and Human named Andrea Ledesma as the Outstanding Senior of 2014. Andrea was also chosen to present her research at the ACC Meeting of the Minds Conference, in Pittsburgh on April 3-5, 2014. Her project is entitled “Keep up the Fight: Eudora Ramsay Richardson and the Evolution of Feminism after Suffrage.” Her faculty mentor is Marian Mollin.

The 2nd Annual CLAHS Undergraduate Research Symposium on Diversity took place on Friday, March 28, 2014. The following students gave presentations: Nicholas Robb and Will Gipe, “Virginia’s Crooked Road Heritage Trail”; and Andrea Ledesma, “Keep Up the Fight.”

The Graduate School awarded The William Preston Thesis Award to Alison Vick and the Outstanding Graduate Student to Alison Hight.

Elizabeth (Jade) Womack, whose faculty mentor is Peter Wallenstein, also presented her research titled, “Breast is Best: A Case Study of Advertising Techniques of Infant Formula Post-Nestles boycott (1984 - ).”

In addition to the many MA students who presented their work at the Bertoti Conference, three of our students presented papers or gave talks at other events this spring:

Alison Hight presented "Memory, Nationalism, and the Popularization of Fairies in Victorian Scotland" (a part of her thesis research) at the Mid-Atlantic Conference on British Studies in NYC.

Eric Ames is also presented work from his thesis, "United in Interest and Feeling: The Political Culture of Union in the Virginia Borderland, 1850-1861" at the Virginia Social Science Association conference in Richmond.

Betsy Reed gave a lecture, “A Brief Introduction to Civil War Photography” at the Virginia Tech Civil War Weekend.

Congratulations to Tyler Bergeron, Erica Aiken, Melea Foley, and Rebecca Middour. All successfully completed their MA research projects earlier in the year and graduated in May.

And congratulations to the undergraduates who regained the fabulous trophy in the annual Stump the Chumps contest. This is Phi Alpha Theta’s big event in April, when the faculty, grad students and undergrad students demonstrate their knowledge of trivia.

Grayson Van Beuren, a double major in History and Art History, has won the Phi Beta Kappa Wilson Prize for the best undergraduate essay for his paper entitled "Six Foot Gauge or Ten Foot Woman: Technological Anachronisms in John Tenniel's Work.” You might recall that Grayson also won the department’s History Prize for this paper.

Brooks Tiffany put together an exhibit for the Science Museum of Western Virginia, on the newspaper advertisings published during the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic. He worked closely with Tom Ewing.
Kim Staub, one of our recent MA graduates who is working as the Collections and Exhibitions Manager at the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia, has curated an exhibit on “Night in Colonial Philadelphia” that was inspired by Roger Ekirch’s book, At Day’s Close: Night in Time’s Past.

Christopher Pajonk (BA ’10) “I have been employed by the Walt Disney Company in a variety of roles. The research and organizational skills that the History Department taught helped me greatly as an employee of the Multimedia Archives.”

Victoria Heath (BA ’13) “I graduated in May 2013 and I decided to take a year off to volunteer. So I worked with the Great Oaks Charter School in Newark, NJ, as an AmeriCorps volunteer for one year working as a tutor for at-risk, high-need students. Since then, I have actually been accepted into the University of Toronto Munk School, in the Master’s of Global Affairs program so I am a MGA candidate for 2015. I hope to also collaborate this program with a focus in Ethnic and Pluralism studies with the Munk School and intern this summer in Oxford at the Fahamu Refugee Project or another type of NGO in this field.”

Ashley (Mixon) Kreib (BA ’13) “The first year after graduation I stayed in the area. My husband was finishing up his engineering degree. I did not do anything that used my degree. I worked in a field I had prior experience in, the child development field. I got married in May and moved to Harrisonburg, that is when I started working as an interpreter at James Madison’s Montpelier.”

Devon Martin (BA ’12) “I graduated with a double major in communication and history a semester early and began working at Modea as a digital content developer. I was then hired on full-time as a Project Lead in July of 2013. In July of 2014, I took a User Experience Designer position at Your Search Advisor, working in online and marketing.”