

## Chair's Bulletin

May 2008

### Upcoming Events

On Wednesday, May 14, 2008, the Department will celebrate the 23 years **Dr. James Henretta** has been a member of the Department of History. We shall gather at the Rossborough Inn beginning at 4PM; there will be food and drink, a few speeches, and hopefully nice weather.

**Spring 2008 Commencement** for the Department of History will take place on May 23, 2008 at Ritchie Coliseum beginning at 5PM. There will be over 160 students graduating from our program; being there to show your support would be the perfect way to end their education at the University of Maryland. The University-wide Commencement will take place on May 22, 2008 at 7PM at the Comcast Center. Representation of the Department of History faculty at the ceremony would be appreciated.

### Notable Achievements

**Rick Bell** delivered three invited lectures last month: "History, Myth and Spectacle: Sherman Edwards and the American Revolution," Olney Theatre Institute, Olney, MD, April 12, 2008; "Assassination and the Presidency," Department of Literature, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA, April 24, 2008; and "The Literary Politics of Indian Suicide," Lunchtime Research Series, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA, April 29, 2008. He also received a University of Maryland International Travel Grant to support a research trip to the UK next semester.

**Berny Cooperman** presented a paper on "Isaac de Lattes: Preacher, Printer, and Popularizer of Kabbalah" and also chaired a session at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Chicago. He notes that over the past few years, Jewish Studies has become one of the larger topics at the RSA.

**Art Eckstein's** book, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*, received a superlative review in the latest American Historical Review.

**Robert Friedel** will once again be spending a chunk of his summer teaching in Kolkata, India. As compensation for his labors he has been promised opportunities to trek in the foothills of the Himalayas and swim in the Bay of Bengal. Bets are now being taken on his chances of surviving any of this. In the meantime the latest issue of the *New Yorker* has an article about science through ages that ends with a favorable mention of Robert's recent book.

On April 5, 2008, **Saverio Giovacchini** presented "Fritz Lang and Fury: Hollywood's Impact on Germany's Foremost Filmmaker" in the context of the Post-Classical Ensemble exploration of the music of Kurt Weill and Arnold Schoenberg "Artists in Exile" at UMD's Clarice Smith Center.

**Hilary Jones** will attend the Mande Studies Association (MANSA) Conference held in Lisbon, Portugal June 23-28. She will present a paper entitled "A Bamanankan/"Bambara" Ex-Slave Community in Senegal's Colonial Capital" as part of a two session panel on the Mande Diaspora inside and outside of Africa.

He may be retired, but he is still professionally active. **Keith Olson** presented a paper, "John F. Kennedy and Vietnam: The Preponderance of Evidence," at the 2008 Conference of The British Association for Americana Studies held at The University of Edinburgh, March 2008.

**David Sartorius** presented "Spanishness and Belonging before 'Cubanidad'" at the "Cuba: New Research Directions" conference at the University of California at Irvine on May 2. This was the headline event of the newly inaugurated UC-Cuba Multi-Campus Research Program. He also moderated a panel entitled "Queerly Unstable: Alternate Histories and Competing National Narratives" at the DC Queer Studies Symposium on April 17.

**Janna Wasilewski** presented a paper titled "'Her Virtue-Filled Breast': Berenguela of Castile in the Writings of Her Bishops" at the 43rd International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI, in May.

**Ellen Berg**, one of our affiliates, has been awarded a Smithsonian Postdoctoral Fellowship at the National Museum of American History, September 2008 through February 2009, to research the American symbol Miss Columbia. On June 21, 2008, she will present a paper on the American kindergarten's work with immigrant children at a colloquium organized by the Centre for the History of Childhood, University of Oxford, on the subject of "Agencies of Child Socialization in Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Britain."

**Betsy Mendelsohn** just published the article, "Law and the Environment," in *Cambridge History of Law in America*, eds. Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins (Cambridge University Press, 2008), Vol. 3, ch. 14, pp. 472-521.

**Leandro Benmergui** (PhD, Latin America; advisor, Daryle Williams) has been very busy. He was awarded the International Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Social Science Research Council to conduct dissertation research next year. He was also awarded an aid-in-grant from the Rockefeller Archive Center to conduct research in the Rockefeller Archive.

**Robert Chase** (PhD, U.S.; advisor, Gary Gerstle) has accepted a postdoctorate fellowship at Southern Methodist University's Clements Center for the Study of the Southwest beginning August 2008.

**David Hunter** was awarded the Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship for the semester of his choice for academic year 2008-2009..

**Katarina Keane** (PhD, U.S.; advisor, Leslie Rowland) has been offered a place in one of three workshops at the 2008 Schlesinger Library Summer Seminar on Gender History, "Sequels to the 1960s." The seminar is a program of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. The highly competitive selection process was open to scholars at all ranks. In the workshop Kate will present a chapter from her dissertation on second-wave feminism in the U.S. South.

**Giacomo Mazzei** received the Samuel Flagg Bemis Research Grant for 2008 from the Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations. He also received a travel grant at NYU's Center for the United States and the Cold War and a Kennedy Library Research Grant.

**Stephen Scala** gave a presentation entitled "Den Klassenfeind verstehen: Aussenpolitische Experten der DDR" ("Understanding the Class Enemy: Foreign Policy Experts in the GDR") at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Institute for Contemporary History) in Berlin on March 11, 2008.

Recent Ph.D **Jon White** received a one-year position as an assistant historian at the Federal Judicial Center.

The Department's chapter of the **Phi Alpha Theta** national history honors society is thriving, with forty-two new members inducted during a fine ceremony on April 29. **Paul Landau** delivered a fascinating talk, "Cinematic Cliche and Imagic Evidence, with an especial focus on Africa in the 1920s and 1930s"; **Richard Price** administered the pledge; and **Jodi Hall** and **David Sicilia** Organized The Successful Event.

### **Past Events**

On May 5, The Nathan and Jeanette Miller Center for Historical Studies marked the end of the academic year with the annual Rundell Lecture in American History. This year's speaker was Michael Denning, William R Kenan, Jr Professor of American Studies and Director of the Initiative on Labor and Culture at Yale University. Prof. Denning's lecture was entitled "The Spectre of the Wageless Life."

The Rundell Lecture is named for the late Walter Rundell, Jr., a professor and former chair of the Department of History whose work focused on the financial aspects of military history and the history of the American West. We were very honored this year to have as guests at the lecture two of Professor Rundell's children David and Jennifer Rundell.

At the lecture, Miller Center director Sonya Michel announced the winner of the **2008 Richard T. Farrell Prize: Max Grivno**, for his dissertation "'There Slavery Cannot Dwell': Agriculture and Labor in Northern Maryland, 1790-1860." Prof. Grivno teaches at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, and unfortunately was unable to receive the award in person. This year's selection committee included **Whit Ridgway** and **Philip Soergel**, and was ably chaired by **Donald Sutherland**. Our thanks to all of them for completing the difficult task of selecting one from a field of several fine dissertations.

And thanks, also, to **Jennifer Malia McAndrew**, who did such a fine job as this year's Miller Center Graduate Assistant. Congratulations of another sort are also due to Malia. She has just defended her dissertation "All-American Beauty: African American, European American, and Japanese American Women and Beauty Culture in the Mid-Twentieth-Century United States," and she will teach a course in Summer Session I. But then it is off to Cleveland for Malia to take up a position as Assistant Professor of History at John Carroll University. Good luck, Malia!