
UAH Historian

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

GREETINGS

Greetings from the History Department at UAH!

We have initiated a newsletter to keep in touch with friends of the Department. We want to let you know what is happening here and to keep up with what you are doing.

We have no firm "publication schedule," although we certainly plan to publish a newsletter at least once each semester. We'd like your help. We hope to devote a large portion of our new newsletter to the activities of graduates and friends of the Department. Please drop us a note and let us know what you have been doing. Send us a letter, or email me at dunara@email.uah.edu.

This has been a very busy year already, and we're still in the early stages of the spring semester. Faculty members of the department won two major awards in the fall. Dr. Boucher became only the fifth UAH faculty member in the history of the university and the first in the College of Liberal Arts to be awarded the title of "distinguished professor." Dr. Gerberding received a prestigious national award, the American Philological Association's award for Excellence in the Teaching of the Classics.

This has been a year of changes in the Department. Dr. Carolyn White retired in the fall after a career of exceptional service to the university as a teacher and administrator. She passed the



"History 490 Senior Seminar" torch to Dr. John Severn, and also left her position as associate provost. Dr. Jack Ellis, who had taught regularly in the Department during his five years as dean of the College of Liberal Arts, joined the Department as a full-time faculty member. Dr. Virginia Martin, whose Ph.D. is from the University of Southern California and whose specialty is Russian, Soviet, and Asian studies, joined the faculty in the fall. Dr. Johanna Shields announced late last year that she would retire at the end of this academic year after nearly thirty years of service to the Department and the university. The loss of Drs. White and Shields in one year is a painful one, although the blow will be cushioned somewhat by Dr. Shields's intention to continue to

teach courses for us on a part-time basis.

Finally, we are delighted that two of our graduates have offered their talents to help the Department in very different ways. Penny Wood is helping to organize a history contest for local high school history students, scheduled to be held on campus on April 11. And James Isbell is designing a Web page for the Department. Watch this space in the next newsletter for our Web address.

Let us hear from you!

Andrew J. Dunar
Professor & Chair

FACULTY NEWS:

Philip Boucher became the first faculty member of the UAH College of Liberal Arts to be named a distinguished professor in a ceremony last November at which both President Franz and Provost McManus lauded Professor Boucher's exceptional academic record. Only the fifth member of the UAH faculty to be so honored in the university's history, Professor Boucher presented a paper entitled "'Race,' Racism, and Colonialism: Reflections on Origins and Linkages" to the assembled audience, which included members of his family, former students, and friends of the Department, and all former chairs of the Department - Professors Frances Roberts, John White, and Johanna Shields. Professor Boucher also presented a paper and chaired a session at the annual

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meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society in Poitiers, France. His article "Du Tertre's Histoire generale" appeared in "I Found it at the JCB," a publication of the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island. He is on sabbatical in the spring semester, and is working on a book which will draw on twenty-five years of research on French colonial activity in the Western Hemisphere.

Andrew Dunar has served as chair of the Department since August 1995. He and Professor Stephen Waring have completed work on the manuscript of their co-authored history of Marshall Space Flight Center. The manuscript is currently under review by Marshall, and may be published before the next millennium. He is also working on post-presidential biography of President Truman. He is also conducting interviews for an oral history of The Farm, an intentional community in Summertown, Tennessee founded by a group of hippies from San Francisco in 1971. The University of Missouri Press will publish a paperback edition of his book The Truman Scandals and the Politics of Morality later this month.

Since leaving the deanship in August and resuming fulltime teaching duties in the Department, **Jack Ellis** has resumed his research in the social history of medicine and has begun work on a new book that will focus on the social role of black physicians in America between the 1890s and the 1960s. This summer, he is planning trips to the archives of Meharry Medical College in Nashville and to Tuskegee University. He has just completed a review of Catherine J. Kudlick's study of cholera in post-Revolutionary Paris, for the *American Historical Review*, and recently published two other

reviews: on George Weisz's *The Medical Mandarins: the French Academy of Medicine in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (American Historical Review, Dec. 1996); and David A. Barnes's *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-century France* (Journal of Interdisciplinary History, winter 1997). With Professor Stephen Waring, he also planned and organized this year's History Forum on "Evolution and Creationism: the History of Controversy."

It has been a year of books, clubs, and awards for Professor **Richard Gerberding**. In the spring of 1996 his Late Merovingian France, which he co-authored with Paul Fouracre of the University of London, was published in Britain and in the US. This was the result of many summers of research spent in the British Library. The Society for Ancient Languages, for which he acts as faculty advisor, had a very successful year. The Society's spring Convivium was pleased to have Professor Denis Feeney, now of New College, Oxford, as its speaker. In April, Dr. Gerberding received a UAH Foundation Award for Excellence in Research and in December he received the American Philological Association's national award for Excellence in the Teaching of the Classics.

Virginia Martin is a new addition to the Department this year. She comes to UAH from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where she received her Doctorate in History in July 1996. Her area of specialization in teaching is Russian imperial (18th c. - 1917) and Soviet/post-Soviet history (1917-present). Her research focuses on the history of the non-Russian nationalities of the Russian Empire in Central Asia in

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the 19th century. In November 1996, she presented a paper entitled, "Judicial Reform in the Kazakh Steppe: the Invention of the *Sud Biev* (Court of Nomadic Judges)" at the annual convention of the Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, in Boston, MA. Dr. Martin has been warmly welcomed by her colleagues into the Department, and she is enjoying teaching UAH students!

John Severn has been occupied the past several months as program coordinator for the 1997 Consortium on Revolutionary Europe to be held in Baton Rouge on February 20-22. The program this year will feature plenary addresses by Jeremy Black of Exeter University and Charles Ingrao of Purdue University. They will be supported by eighty-four individual papers in thirty-seven panels. As usual, these panels will cover a variety of issues in European and western history from the period 1750-1850. Severn will be on sabbatical for the fall term 1997 in order to complete work on his project: *The Duke of Wellington and His Brothers: A Family Biography*.

After serving as chair of the Department between 1991 and 1995, Professor **Johanna Shields** was on sabbatical leave in the spring semester of academic year 1995-1996. During the sabbatical she continued working on a book-length project concerning writers on the Old Southwest. Professor Shields published an article entitled "White Honor, Black Humor and the Making of a Southern Style" in Southern Cultures in 1995; and she has recently published book reviews in the Journal of Southern History and the Georgia Historical Quarterly. She is a member of the Advisory Council of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, was a member

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of the Program Committee for the Southern Historical Association (1995-96), and is currently chair of the Green-Ramsdell Prize Committee for the best article published in the Journal of Southern History. She is presently serving her second term as chairman of the board for the Burritt Museum and Park and is Vice-President for Programs of the Huntsville Madison-County Historical Society.

Stephen Waring spent his sabbatical during the 1995-96 academic year doing research for a book on the space shuttle *Challenger* accident and investigation. He received support from the American Historical Association by winning its Fellowship in Aerospace History. He intends to present an interpretation that discredits perspectives that blame the accident on moral lapses or communications failures. Instead, Waring argues that the accident happened because of flaws in engineering analysis and testing; the shuttle engineers did not know that they did not know about the safety problems; they did not fix technology which they thought was working well.

Lee E. Williams, II is a professor of History who also serves as Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs. During Fall term 1996, he taught HY 366 - African Americans in the 20th century. During this spring term 1997, he is teaching two courses - HY 605 - Modern Interpretations, and HY 364 - Trans-Mississippi West. He is a member of the Academic Council, Administrative council, Office of the Provost's, Deans, and Directors Council, the campus Planning Committee, the State Articulation committee - Area studies sector and serves also as a counselor in the Academic

Advisement and Information Center.

EVENTS:

History Forum '97

The topic of the History Forum '97 is "Creationism and Evolution: The History of a Controversy". Charles Darwin's Origin of Species, first published in 1859, spawned a controversy that has lasted to the present day. Darwin's theory of evolution challenged not only previous biological concepts, but also religious beliefs of Christians and philosophical ideas dating back to Aristotle. Ever since Darwin, different groups have debated issues of science, religion, philosophy, education, and law. History Forum 1997 will examine the history of these debates in America. This year's distinguished speakers and panelists will explore a range of important issues. What was Darwin's theory of evolution? Who were its proponents and critics? What were the differences between the theory of evolution and religious perspectives? What are the ideas of scientific creationism, and how do these challenge evolution?

◆ Thursday, February 6
"The Evolution of Scientific Creationism".

Ronald L. Numbers,
William Coleman
Professor of the History of
Science and Medicine,
University of Wisconsin,
author of The Creationists
(1992)

◆ Thursday, February 13
"Ancient Texts Versus
Sedimentary Rocks: Cosmologies
in Conflict"

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Paul K. Conkin,
Distinguished Professor of
History, Vanderbilt
University, author of The
Uneasy Center: Reformed
Christianity in Antebellum
America (1995)

◆ Thursday, February 20
"The Scopes Trial: A Reappraisal
of Science, Religion, and Law in
the South"

Edward J. Larson,
Professor of History and
Law, University of
Georgia, author of
Summer of the Gods: The
Scopes Trial and the
Evolving Concept of
Freedom (1997)

◆ Thursday, February 27
"Creationism and Evolution:
Perspectives for the 1990s"
A panel discussion moderated by
Jack D. Ellis, Professor of History,
UAH, with panel members:
Donald Smith Armentrout, School
of Theology, University of the
South; John R. Christy, Associate
Professor of Atmospheric Sciences,
UAH; William R. Garstka,
Associate Professor of Biological
Sciences, UAH; Walter G. Nunn,
Pastor emeritus, University Baptist
Church, Huntsville, Alabama;
Stephen P. Waring, Associate
Professor of History, UAH; Kurt P.
Wise, Associate Professor of
Science and Director of Origins
Research, Bryan College, Dayton,
Tennessee.

Black History Month

The February is OMA
Black History Month. It has many
excellent programs planned.

◆ February 4, 11:15 a.m., UC
126, A lecture by Anne
Moody, author of Coming of
Age in Mississippi.

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- ◆ February 12, 11:15 a.m., UC Exhibit Hall, Darryl Van Leer in “From the Gallows to the Gavel”.
- ◆ February 18, 11:15 a.m., UC 126, “The African Origins of Egyptian Civilization” - A lecture by Dr. Ivan Van Sertima.
- ◆ February 28, 12 noon, UC Formal Dining Room, “African-American History Month Luncheon” \$ 5.00 per head.