History department enters new academic year on strong note

The University of Montana’s History department conferred degrees upon its first two doctoral students, Greg Gordon and Rodolfo Villarreal-Rios, in commencement exercises on May 15. The exercises also featured presentation of the department’s outstanding history student, Samuel Rostad, citation of other departmental award winners, and recognition of graduating seniors and masters students. With more than 1,670 students currently enrolled in Fall 2010 history courses, the program is entering a phase of strong student interest and faculty accomplishment. Read further for notice of faculty activities, new instructors, entering graduate students, and a reflection by past secretary Julie McVay.
Business End of A Burning Torch: Incoming Chair's Vision for the History Department

Everyone in the History Department knew, of course, that the torch would soon pass to a new generation. I didn’t think it would pass to me, however, and I can’t help feeling as if I’ve caught the thing with the business end burning my tracksuit (the sound you hear is a metaphor cracking under the strain). The robust condition of the department I now head is partly due to the efforts of two colleagues who arrived around the same time that I did -- Anya Jabour, who is happily still on the hall, and Pamela Voekel, on the hall in spirit, and among us in person as frequently as she can manage. I owe it to them, and everyone else, to rise to the challenge. Or, as my immediate predecessor would put it, “Avanti!”

Behold, friends, a vision of the future of the department, to be filtered, adapted, and adjusted through the collective wisdom of my colleagues.

We are already streamlining our undergraduate curriculum. By the time they graduate, history majors will possess a valuable skill set, including the mastery of research methods and the ability to read critically and write analytically. These skills will be progressively and incrementally embedded in history courses at all levels.

The graduate program is also at an exciting juncture, after twenty years of the tireless

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stewardship of Michael Mayer, under whom our doctoral program was reinstated, and under whom it reached critical mass, producing last spring its first new PhDs. The announcement of the Dennison doctoral fellowships will, I hope, be only the first of the internal and external fellowship opportunities available to our graduate students. We will cultivate professional opportunities for our PhDs, and continue our impressive record of placing terminal MA students in top doctoral programs.

We have an external mission as well, “to be a light unto the nations,” or at least unto other departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. I see history (immodestly, perhaps) as the hub of the humanities and social sciences, and see it as our responsibility to uphold academic standards and to build resources for scholarship both within our discipline and outside of it. Critical mass constituencies can be built to support these imperatives through closer interaction and collaboration with our colleagues in other departments.

We will also redouble our efforts at outreach to departmental alumni. From those of you who have departed the ivory tower, we would love to have dispatches from the Real World™. For all kinds of reasons, we are interested in where you are and what you’re doing with your life. Keep in touch with us, because we are certainly going to keep in touch with you. Thank you once again for your continuing support and interest.
There was a while there I thought the G's were going to kill me.

Writing a profile featuring Professor Michael Mayer feels a little bit like trying to fill a tin cup from a cascading waterfall. Supply is not the issue. In a department chock full of brilliant minds and strong memories, Dr. Mayer stands out as a historian who not only retains research minutiae but analyzes, processes, and presents with alacrity, ease, and abundance. As a distinguished visiting lecturer once noted, Michael Mayer does what he does better than anyone else.

Dr. Mayer has built his reputation - and his vast historical knowledge - through painstaking work. His most recent text, *Presidential Profiles: The Eisenhower Years* (Facts on File: 2009) makes the case. At 1,000 pages, the collection of over 350 biographies, every one of them penned by Mayer, is the result of more than five years of research and writing, reams of primary research, and a manuscript of more than one million words. "There was a while there I thought the G's were going to kill me," Mayer notes, referring to the array of Greens, Greenes, Greenbergs, Greenwalts, Golds, Goldwaters, and Goldbergs that he had to work through to provide a fair and judicious account of the period. His close attention to detail not only unearthed an alarming number of factual errors in even venerable sources like the New York Times but also revealed surprising histories that made otherwise gray officials come to life. "I even ran across a conservative senator from Indiana, Homer Capehart, who invented the jukebox," he noted.

In addition to attending to the details of each individual about which he wrote, Dr. Mayer worked hard to ensure that he covered them fairly. Although he recognizes that all biographies are distorted and reflect the period and perspectives of a given author, he did his best to present...
the lives of those he wrote about in as balanced a manner as possible. The challenge was particularly difficult in that he had only an average of 1,500 words per entry. “My goal was always to present them on their own terms,” he added.

Others have noticed his meticulous rigor and called upon him to fill critical roles. Editors at the distinguished Library of American Biography series (Longman) tapped his shoulder to write a biography on President Eisenhower. “I was honored,” Dr. Mayer said, “to be included in a series that has included” biographies of Puritan leader Jonathan Winthrop by Edmund Morgan, industrial magnate Andrew Carnegie by Harold Livesay, and Shawnee leader Tecumseh and his visionary religious brother Tenskwatawa by David Edmunds. Even as other historians have argued for the significance of their subjects, Mayer notes that Eisenhower was the only “president whose popularity did not decline during his term in office since the advent of modern polls.” Moreover, Eisenhower was proud of his military record while serving as president. Eisenhower bragged in his memoirs that “not one American soldier lost his life in combat after he ended the Korean War,” Mayer stated, “a remarkable fact given that Eisenhower had to guide the U.S. through the difficult terrain of the Cold War and decolonization.” Mayer will be spending the fall semester of 2010 honing his argument as he completes this work.

Mayer’s careful attention to detail shows up in his assessment of the historical record. He came across a statement that Eisenhower had prepared in case the Allied invasion of June 6, 1944, failed. After giving the order to go ahead with D-Day, Eisenhower originally wrote, “Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and the troops have been withdrawn.” He then crossed out the last clause and inserted, “and I have withdrawn the troops.” The last line of the statement read: “If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone.” Even as he faced the prospect of defeat, Mayer noted, “Eisenhower not only made his high school English teacher happy by avoiding the passive voice but also took full responsibility for his actions. That really says everything you need to know about the man.”

In addition to finishing the Eisenhower biography, Mayer has turned his energies and knowledge toward the study of cigarettes. At the behest of a major law firm, he and several graduate students are researching when and where the American public became aware of the dangers of cigarette smoking.

Concurrent with his fall sabbatical, Mayer has stepped down from the position he has held as (continued)
History Department Director of Graduate Studies for twenty years. Of his service in this capacity, he is most proud of the doctoral program. "We are producing good, competitive doctorates," he explained of the now seven-year-old program, "by focusing on the niche in which we are competitive." In addition to strengths in the history of the U.S. West, the doctoral program is known for the individual attention students receive as a result of each year’s cohort being limited to two or three new students. Likewise, the masters program is highly competitive and regularly sends graduates successfully into the job market or on to prestigious schools to complete their doctorates. “The program is in good hands with Robert Greene and Jeff Wiltse coming on as co-directors," Mayer added, “They will make the necessary adjustments to reductions in the job market that we’ve seen in the last several years and institute new changes.”

When talking with him, just be sure to bring a very big tin cup

A short profile does no justice to the overall knowledge Mayer brings to his research, writing, and teaching. Whether in class, on the hall, or in his office, all those who encounter him quickly become aware of his plentiful knowledge. Bringing a reputation for excellence in gourmet cooking, generous support of his colleagues, and a willingness to speak his mind on a broad array of national and local politics, Mayer is a colleague to be valued. When talking with him, just be sure to bring a very big tin cup.

Graduate Student News

Awards, honors and prizes
Stacy, Ian. Awarded "Best Graduate Student Paper" at the 2010 Phi Alpha Theta Northwest Regional Conference for his paper: “Murder by Inches: The Repression of British Loyalists during the American Revolution.”

Entering students
Ewert, Cody. Masters student working with Kyle Volk. Received a B.A. from the University of Montana.
Mikko-Causby, Nichole. Masters student working with Anya Jabour. Received a B.A. from the University of Georgia.
Mulliner, Heather. Masters student working with Anya Jabour. Received a B.A. from the University of Montana.
Sherry, Bennett. Masters student working with Paul Lauren. Received a B.A. from the University of Rochester.
Summey, Virginia. Masters students working with Anya Jabour. Received a B.A. from Catawba College (Salisburg, NC).
Williams, Randall. Doctoral student working with Dan Flores. Received a B.A. from the University of Chicago.
I find it hard to sympathize this day and age with secretaries who complain about heavy workloads. I wonder if there is more work created in a secretarial position now than, say, fifty years ago. Perhaps there is more volume to one’s job now, but look at the convenient and miraculous aids. No longer does a secretary type a carbon copy of a letter because there are copy machines! No longer does a secretary have to proofread a page before it is removed from the typewriter because there is a computer with spell check! No longer does a secretary have to center a title on a page—the computer does it. And the list goes on. Let me take you back in time.

The year 1958 launched the beginning of what became my thirty-year career as a secretary. I graduated from Missoula County High School in 1956 with a curriculum that included two years of shorthand and typing. While attending high school, I worked weekends and summers at the “World’s Finest Small Hotel”—the Hotel Florence. So it was only assumed that I would work the summer of 1956 at my hotel job. Not so. After a disagreement with the hotel assistant manager, I quit. Like so many eighteen-year-olds, leaving one’s hometown was the ultimate dream.

A friend and I decided Seattle would be an ideal new home. Shirley had a sister with whom we could stay until we found jobs, and I had a friend from high school who had moved to Seattle right after graduation.

After several days of walking in three-inch heels up and down the sidewalks of Seattle, and after numerous interviews with employment agencies, I took a job with Monsanto Chemical Company. I was hired to operate a Multilith machine (offset press), a Bruning machine, and a ditto machine. I also relied on the switchboard and the teletype.

Six months later, I returned to my hometown. I found a temporary job typing book pockets and catalog cards for the State Library Commission. In the fall, I enrolled at the University of Montana. One quarter of college school work was enough, and so began the most memorable part of my life.

The University of Montana’s Psychology Department hired me as a half-time secretary at $1.25 per hour ($25.00 per week!). My job was to type—on a manual typewriter—correspondence and multiple-choice tests onto mimeograph stencils, get mail, and serve as general receptionist.

I was “hungry” for more money, so one of the psychologists hired me half-time on his grant. After the chairman of the Psychology Department was tragically killed in an auto accident and, at about the same time, my other boss took a position in Georgia, I quit and went to work at Clerical Service.

Clerical Service was a department that served as a general typing pool for the entire campus and was the central supply store. I went to work on the first day of my new job, and where was I to sit and type? Well, I picked out a vacant desk, went to the window ledge that housed the “ready-for-the-boneyard” typewriters, chose one, and went to my supervisor for a typing assignment. She had a campus typing jobs and, to my horror, handed me a three-plus page math test. It was full of equations and, of course, most were not on the keyboard. To make matters worse, I had to type it on a mimeograph stencil.

A mimeograph stencil was a thin, dark blue, transparent sheet approximately twenty inches long that had a hard white backing and a clear film cover. To type on one,
the clear film was removed, one’s typewriter was set on the white dot (which meant no ribbon contact), and typing began. Heaven forbid if many mistakes were made. To correct a mistake, one applied a thick blue liquid to the typing error, let it dry a minute or so, and typed over the error. The stencils were then placed on the mimeograph machine and copies cranked out.

Clerical Service also had a Multilith machine. It was used for “special” jobs like these and multiple copies of letters. One typed on a Multilith master, which was about 20-24 inches in length and approximately 13 inches wide. It was light green (almost white), of medium stock, and had a typing grid. One had to be extremely careful when handling Multilith masters, as every fingerprint showed when printed. When one made an error on a master, a soft Multilith eraser was used.

Since I had operated a Multilith machine in Seattle, I got the privilege of being the relief operator. The girl whose main job was operating the machine would come to work in beautiful sweater outfits and never get a spot of ink on her clothes. I, on the other hand, would be covered from head to toe with the nasty black ink.

One of my most memorable jobs in the four years I was at Clerical Service came on the Friday of our annual Christmas party that was to commence at 5:00 p.m. At 1:00 p.m., my boss sent me to the Wildlife Biology Unit to take dictation from Dr. John Craighead. I was very nervous, not only because it was Dr. Craighead, but I had not been using my shorthand for quite some time.

I anticipated maybe taking a half hour or so of dictation and then back to the office. Wrong again. The dictation I took was one letter to his editor containing the corrections to his wildflower book. Filled with scientific names that he did spell for me in a hurried manner, the letter took four hours and filled one entire shorthand notebook.

Anyone who has ever taken dictation knows that you should transcribe your notes while they’re “hot.” Not so in my case. I arrived back at Clerical Service also had a Multilith machine. It was used for “special” jobs like these and multiple copies of letters. One typed on a Multilith master, which was about 20-24 inches in length and approximately 13 inches wide. It was light green (almost white), of medium stock, and had a typing grid. One had to be extremely careful when handling Multilith masters, as every fingerprint showed when printed. When one made an error on a master, a soft Multilith eraser was used.

The History Department was such a fun job and provided challenges that were new.

Service as everyone was leaving for our Christmas party. I put my shorthand notebook in my purse with the notion that I would transcribe my notes at home on Saturday.

Saturday morning came, I sat down at my old clunker of a typewriter, and I began living a nightmare. I don’t recall how many pages I ended up with, perhaps ten, but a savior was in my midst and agreed to proofread the typed pages. That savior was my entomologist father who could, at the age of 85, still remember the scientific name of any bug. So Dad changed an “a” to an “e,” or an “e” to an “a,” added a letter here and there, and when he was finished my “manuscript” looked like it had been sprinkled with paprika. He was my hero!

The first thing I did the following Monday morning when I arrived at work was to sit down and type a clean copy of Dr. Craighead’s letter and deliver it to him. He called my supervisor about two hours later and told her I had done an excellent job.

Another horrific job at Clerical Service was typing the telephone index for the switchboard operators. I had to type on an “econotype” typewriter which had, I am only guessing, sixteen characters to the inch, whereas pica type has ten and elite twelve. The econotype was also a manual typewriter with a very long carriage. Clerical Service had two electric typewriters when I was hired and, if I remember correctly, had only two when I took on another position four years later.

I moved from Clerical Service to a receptionist job in the College of Arts and Sciences. I worked at that position for only one year. The Dean and Assistant Dean were super nice men, but I wasn’t getting any challenging work. Thus, I took a job with the Institute for Social Science Research (later the word Science was eliminated from its name).

Well, I thought I had had nightmares before. Nothing was to compare to my first assignment at ISSR. It was typing a 500-page book on 20% rag bond with five carbon copies! As all five carbons had to be legible, I was changing carbon paper every three to four pages. I had, however, my very first electric typewriter. It was an IBM with a movable carriage. The assignment was a mountain to climb with no summit in sight. I remained at ISSR until federal grant money ran out eleven years later.

I took about a two-month break and applied for a secretarial job in UM’s History Department.
Department. The Department Chairman at that time was a former high school classmate of mine. I often wonder if that fact was influential in my being hired.

The History Department was such a fun job and provided challenges that were new. I was now in charge of billing multi-departmental copying costs since History shared its Xerox machine with other faculty on our wing. In addition, I was responsible for getting out various publications and handling foreign student applications while serving a three-year rotating chair involving twelve professors. At one point, in an effort to save money, the faculty decided to axe all but two office phones and put the savings into the department’s meager travel budget. With no assistant, handling incoming calls for what had been ten separate lines certainly kept me hopping. Yet throughout, everyone from professors to students was the best that God had created. I formed many friendships that continue to this day as well as earlier friendships from Clerical Service and ISSR.

I worked as department secretary for thirteen years until my retirement in 1990. About two months before my retirement, the department purchased a computer for me. We were somewhat behind the other campus offices in getting one. Well, mine got a lot of early morning (before office hours) use when I mastered the game of solitaire! But when typing jobs came in, it was back to my faithful IBM Selectric.

My enthusiasm for typing was enhanced by the ability to center a title and judge the placement of typed material—how I loved the typing of tables, which required figuring out how many spaces to put between columns, lining up decimal points, allowing for footnotes, etc.

In retrospect, I retired too young, but at a good time, for what I loved to do for thirty years was becoming history. And it is primarily because of that history that present-day complaints of heavy workloads elicit only a bit of sympathy.

Visiting Profs Join Faculty

Peter Staudenmaier comes to us from Cornell University where he received his doctorate this spring after successfully defending his dissertation, “Between Occultism and Fascism: Anthroposophy and the Politics of Race and Nation in Germany and Italy, 1900-1945.” His current research focuses on the political history of organic agriculture in Nazi Germany. He will be teaching Modern Germany, 1866 to the Present; Nazi Germany and the Holocaust in Historical Context; and Environment and Society in Modern Europe: Nature, Culture, and the Changing Landscape. Staudenmaier notes that he first visited Montana when he was eight years old, on a family vacation, and has been in love with mountains ever since.

Serdar Poyraz joins us this fall as a visiting professor of Middle Eastern History. He will be defending his dissertation, “Science versus Religion: The Influence of European Materialism on Turkish Thought, 1860-1960,” this early fall at Ohio State University. Classes he will be offering include: Introduction to Middle Eastern History, Modern Middle East, Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, and Introduction to World History (to 1500).
Presentations
----- Reading/powerpoint presentation about Visions of the Big Sky at Collected Works Bookstore in Missoula in May 2010.
Jabour, Anya. Reading and book singing for, Topsy-Turvy: How the Civil War Turned the World Upside Down for Southern Children, National Archives in Washington, D.C. August 4, 2010. The event, which was featured in the Washington Post’s “Literary Calendar” on Sunday, August 1, and in an article by Cameron Glover on the Scripps-Howard website, shfwire.com, on August 10, 2010, was organized as part of the National Archives’ “Discovering the Civil War” exhibit, which commemorates the sesquicentennial of the war. Jabour’s August 4 lecture aired on CSPAN on September 25 and 26.
Lauren, Paul. Delivered a series of invited lectures in Japan in May and June and is currently completing a new book on international human rights.
Wiltse, Jeff. Gave an invited talk at Villanova University titled “More Sensitive than Schools: Swimming Pools and the Racial Divide in Modern America.”

Activities
Professor Richard Drake sat on a National Endowment for the Humanities screening committee evaluating European history research proposals on August 9, 2010. Professors Harry Fritz, Robert Greene, and Kyle Volk accompanied several UM students to the Phi Alpha Theta Northwest Regional Conference held at Fairmont, MT in April 2010.

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Professor George Price was selected as one of seven Native American historians to participate in Salish Kootenai College’s Heartlines Tribal History Project, which recently received a renewable 1.4 million dollar grant from the Kellogg Foundation. The group convened near Flathead Lake during the second week of August to begin collaborating on a high school text on Native American history, tentatively titled "A Parallel History: Stories From Indian America."

Publications


Wiltse, Jeff. His book, Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America, was released in paperback by the University of North Carolina Press.

---------. Published an op-ed piece in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch titled “Swimming in the Long Shadows of Segregation,” which examines past racial discrimination as a cause of the current swimming and drowning disparity between blacks and whites.
Alumni News

Publications

Updates
Borchers, Timothy K. You never know where a UM History degree will take you. I am class of 84 and especially remember Professor Dozier’s lectures on British and Civil War History, as well as Professor Lauren’s inaugural class on Winston Churchill, which I took as a freshman. After 18 years as a maritime and insurance coverage lawyer in Seattle and Houston, including as a partner at Cozen O’Connor, a 500-lawyer firm, I was tired of the practice of law. I joined Thomson West (now Thomson Reuters) as a salesman for on-line databases and books used by lawyers to conduct research. After four years as a field rep in the Seattle area I was recently promoted to a regional manager position supervising sales reps for small law firms in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine and New Hampshire. Today I am supervising sales to over 3,500 law firms in these states, working with the entire northeast on a variety of company issues, and am regularly consulted due to my attorney background on a variety of product and marketing issues. My license plates still read Grizfan.

Employment
Bauer, Rob. 2006 M.A. graduate. Instructor in History. Flathead Valley Community College (Kalispell, MT).

Published by the History Department, U. of MT
Chair: John Eglin
Editor: Tobin Miller Shearer
Administrative support: Dianne Rapp
Photographic support: Michelle Lacrosse
Visit our newly re-designed website: www.cas.umt.edu/history/

Masters student Bennett Sherry (left) and his guest Noel Tague discover that Labor Day in Missoula can be long-sleeve and jacket weather.
The papers of three Montanans whose work was integral to the Conservation movement both in Montana and on the national stage have recently been opened for research at the Mansfield Library’s Archives & Special Collections:

**Guy M. "Brandy" Brandborg** was long-time employee of the U. S. Forest Service and Forest Supervisor of the Bitterroot National Forest from 1935-1955. His collection includes files documenting his interest in and activities related to wilderness, conservation, and watershed protection efforts in Montana. Two memorial scrapbooks document his activities in favor of sustainable timber harvesting and against extensive clearcutting. More information about this collection is available at: [http://tinyurl.com/2bmkodu](http://tinyurl.com/2bmkodu)

**Stewart M. Brandborg** served as Executive Director of The Wilderness Society from 1964-1977 and his papers include correspondence, research files and other documents from his time with that agency, as well as materials documenting his work with the National Wildlife Federation, the National Park Service, Wilderness Watch, and Friends of the Bitterroot in Montana. More information about this collection is available at: [http://tinyurl.com/27srmoc](http://tinyurl.com/27srmoc)

From 1964 to 1978 **Clifton R. Merritt** served as Director of Field Services for The Wilderness Society. After leaving The Wilderness Society, Merritt founded the American Wilderness Alliance (later American Wildlands). His papers include correspondence, research files and other documents from his time with these agencies. Other materials cover his work with Montana Wilderness Association, Montana Wildlife Federation, and Friends of the Bitterroot in Montana. More information about this collection is available at: [http://tinyurl.com/27kr8l5](http://tinyurl.com/27kr8l5).

An 1866 edition of J.L. Campbell’s *The Great Agricultural and Mineral West; A Hand-Book and Guide for the Emigrant* was recently acquired by Archives & Special Collections. This was one of the most popular guides to Idaho and Montana and includes detailed descriptions of routes and the gold fields, woodcut illustrations throughout the text, and a map that was one of the first delineations of the new territory. This valuable acquisition was made possible by the Wayne K. Cumming Fund.

Learn more about Archives & Special Collections and our other primary sources at: [http://www.lib.umt.edu/asc/home](http://www.lib.umt.edu/asc/home)
Alumni News Requested

In addition to reporting on faculty and students, we would like to hear from History Department alumni. Send us news about your publications, honors, awards and employment. Updates can be sent to: tobin.shearer@umontana.edu.