

DEPARTMENT
OF
HISTORY
The University of Montana

October 2011



Graduates mark successful careers

This fall 2011 issue highlights our graduates. Holly Pickett explains how a history degree prepared her for battlefield journalism and Dylan Strait connects the business world to historical scholarship. We also honor the untimely passing of one of our graduates, Scott Meyer, while celebrating a new crop of History Department alumni. In addition, this issue reports on the activity of our faculty and students and introduces two new visiting professors. As always, we invite news from you, our supporters and alumni. We delight in hearing from you.

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History Alumna Holly Pickett

History in action: Holly Pickett

Holly Pickett (UM, History 2007) works as a photo-journalist covering conflicts in the Middle East. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and other national publications covering Egypt, Gaza, Iraq, and Jordan. In an interview with Assistant Professor Tobin Miller Shearer on May 6, she reflected on how her history degree has influenced her current career.

What piqued your interest in the Middle East?

Meridad Kia is one of the reasons I'm in the Middle east right now. I took his classes and he had a way of delivering information that made me want to learn about it. Particularly after September 11 when many people were looking for answers, I turned to him in order to understand what had happened and he made it very accessible and interesting.

We had a couple of conversations in his office talking about how the popular conception of Islam was so divergent from what he knew to be the character of Islam and the character of that region. He was a good person to come to with questions and talk. He was very inspirational.

How did history classes prepare you to interpret current events?

With recent events, I feel like I have been watching history happen, people overthrowing

dictatorships right before my eyes. As a student of history, I know the implications of that and how the pieces fit together. I know the culture and history of the region as well as the geopolitical factors – that they have oil and ... we have tolerated these dictators because we need their oil. It has kept things stable, but it has been a disservice to the people who have been living there. It has been amazing to see people take their destiny in their own hands. I think that I am recording history all the time. I'm thinking about the responsibility that goes with it. What I am writing and photographing is going to shape people's understandings. I try to tell the truth, but it is complex and I bring my own biases. I really do try to tell what is going on as truthfully as possible. It is a huge responsibility. I am aware that my journalism is going to shape decision makers' ideas and the way people feel about what happened. What I do has an impact.

What have been some particular challenges that you've faced as a journalist?

There are times when people who are very aware of the power of images try to use people like me to promote their own personal agenda. It has happened a lot. It happens with dictators who only want you to photograph one particular thing or do so in a very particular way so

(continued)

“...I have been watching history happen, people overthrowing dictatorships right before my eyes. As a student of history, I know the implications of that and how the pieces fit together.”

that they are reflected in a positive light. So I try to find the other side to get to the heart of it. I don't want to be that person's lapdog or public relations person so I have to cut through the BS.

Do you have any advice for students in our classes today?

A history degree is not just a degree about dealing with things happening in the past. It is about what we're living today. It is the way we live today and it is the future too. It is what is going to happen. The history degree is also a degree in critical thinking, which I value very highly. At UM, I learned to think critically. That skill has been important in my daily life as

well as my journalist career.

Which classes helped prepare you to think critically?

Anya Jabour's Historian's Craft helped me think critically. It helped me understand how at one time historians looked at history in a particular way. At one point, people no longer looked at kings but at the level of daily life. They began to ask questions about women and those who were living at that time. That is really where I think I learned how to question what I read and to pose questions. I began to look for not just what is being said but how the writer arrived at those conclusions. It opened a whole new world

for me. I had never before thought of the process of writing history.

Do you have any advice for your former history professors?

Continue to teach writing and critical thinking. Those are the biggest tools that I've used in daily life just to make every day decisions. Also look for ways to incorporate current events into your teaching to show the link between the past and present so people can understand how significant history is. I'm so thankful that I had the best instructors here in the History Department. I am really thankful for the professors.

History alum applies skills in world of business

"Strait is the gate, and few there are that find it." For Dylan Strait, the gate led through the History Department.

Dylan, who graduated with honors as a history major in May 2007, entered the field of title insurance upon graduation, and rapidly rose through the ranks of his firm, most recently becoming Division President of the Tri-Cities Washington branch of Stewart Title.

So how did a history degree prepare him for business? "My job is to ensure that we are profitable and augmenting our market share and profit margin," Dylan points out. "In the end, all business is very similar. You are going to have a customer

and a profit/loss statement, and you are going to have to stand out from your



Dylan Strait

competition" in the eyes of that customer. Dylan credits faculty such as Richard Drake and Paul Lauren with teaching him how to prepare information, structure an argument, and articulate a position effectively. He also appreciates the self-discipline that history's commitment to high standards instilled.

--- John Eglin

Department marks passing of honored graduate

The History Department lost an accomplished and greatly loved alumnus when Scott Meyer passed away on January 8, 2011, while snowboarding on Big Mountain, Whitefish, MT.

A 2003 graduate in American History, Scott had worked as a firefighter with Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation earning the position of engine boss, incident commander, and "Clearwater All Star." When not working as a fire fighter, he found employment as a substitute teacher in California's Coachella Valley and as a deputy corrections officer in the Riverside Sheriff's office.

At the time of his death, he worked as a probation and parole officer in Kalispell, MT.

Scott's parents remember him for his love of the outdoors already evident as a child and while a high school student in Palm Desert, CA. His wide circle of friends and Sigma Nu fraternity brothers attested to Scott's love of Montana's beauty as well as his academic abilities. During his time at UM, he made the dean's list and the school's honors list.

As the *Daily Interlake* reported, "If he had to pick one, and the San Diego Chargers weren't playing, Scott would probably choose a summer day standing in the river with his fly rod. Wearing that blue Chargers hat, Scott

would leave work in the early evening, find a fishing hole and stay until twilight. Anyone who ever went with him will never forget his patient passion as he waited for a trout to rise above water and

Scott's love of the outdoors was met only by his love of reading, given to him by his mother, a librarian.

go after his homemade fly. He especially loved and looked forward to his annual float trip down the Madison

River with his father."

Scott's love of the outdoors was met only by his love of reading, given to him by his mother, a librarian. Like her, Scott encouraged others to read by passing along books and encouraging them to do the same.

Scott's family grieves his loss. They are: his mother, Valeria, of Mission Viejo, Calif.; his father, Mike, of Palm Desert, Calif.; his stepfather, John Maginnis, of Mission Viejo, Calif.; his grandparents, Allen and Marion Wesson, of San Diego; his uncles, Thomas Wesson of Moab, Utah, and Jack Wesson of Telluride, Colo.; and cousins, Lucy, Mia and Chase Wesson.

(Adapted and excerpted from accounts in *The Missoulian* and *Daily InterLake* published January 12, 2011.)



Lauren and Drake honored with new awards

The History Department is proud to announce two new opportunities for student support in honor of history department faculty. The **Paul Lauren Human Rights Scholarship** has been endowed thanks to the generosity of friends and colleagues and leadership gifts from George Caras, Dan and Sophie Lambros, and Tom and Ann Boone. Throughout his career, Paul's passion for teaching undergraduate students has been met only by his commitment to research and writing about human rights, values that are reflected in the scholarship criteria. The scholarship will be awarded annually to a junior or senior history student who has demonstrated academic excellence in the study of human rights.



When first informed that the History department would be honoring him by establishing this scholarship, his colleagues report that Paul's face beamed. In response, he could only say two words: thank you.

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, the **Richard Drake Award for Writing** will provide funding for two humanities writing awards in the College of Arts and Sciences. The awards in honor of History Department Professor Richard Drake will be given to the authors of papers in history, literature, philosophy, religion, politics, or classics at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Professor Drake's commitment to excellence in writing, imaginative research and forceful argument has been reflected in the award criteria. Award winners who best match Drake's writing ability, research prowess, and incisive argumentation will receive \$750 each. The History Department joins the rest of the College of Arts and Sciences in congratulating Professor Drake for this prestigious honor.

To support either of these funds or the History Department as a whole, please send a check or money order to The University of Montana Foundation, P.O. Box 7159, Missoula, MT 59807-7159, with a note in the memo line designating it for the History Department. Contributions are also accepted online at: <http://www.umt.edu/UMf/>. For more information about making a gift (with no obligation to do so), please contact Kelley Willett of the UM Foundation at Kelley.Willett@mso.umt.edu or (800) 443.2593, (406) 243.2646.



Four graduating seniors offered brief thoughts on what they learned most from their history education at UM:



Josh Kieser – the legacies of Black Power have lived long into our present time.



Helen Pegram – I need to proofread everything I write three times.



Kristin Howe – I can do anything I set out to do.



Seth Swihart – the skills of critical analysis allow you to see things you never saw before.

Taking our historical pulse

By

John Eglin

"How old are you? About fifty?" The question came from a perfect stranger on the next elliptical machine at the gym. I was taken aback for several reasons, but mostly because, first, I was not in Montana, but in Los Angeles (not as serious as it would have been in London, where being addressed by a perfect stranger would be a police matter), and second, he was only off by about two years (no one ever guesses that high), as I informed him, perhaps against my better judgment. "That's what I figured, from the way you're breathing and perspiring. What's your resting pulse?" And so began a series of queries I was unprepared for in every sense of the word. The intent, of course, was to ensure that I not exceed my maximum heart rate and keel over on the treadmill. I was rattled, nonetheless, and I like to think that I don't rattle easily.

My reaction to this well-meaning but possibly unstable stranger mirrors our reaction as faculty when we are asked by others, (particularly that most "other" of "others," university administrators) to engage in what they call "assessment." ("He had won the battle with himself," quipped one chair, recently, in parody of Orwell's 1984, "He loved assessment.") In this department, we have turned assessment to our

advantage, as an adjunct to fostering and maintaining academic standards. As a result of our own internal assessment, we have introduced a new course this semester, Introduction to Historical Methods, which will arm new history majors with the basic research skills they need to succeed in upper division courses and beyond.

This new course is a response, in large part, to new research opportunities. When I began teaching at UM, not really a very long time ago, we were all of us, faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates alike, at the mercy of Mansfield Library and its 600,000 – odd volumes, a collection not much larger than that of

much smaller institutions. Between then and now, of course, a still ongoing Information Revolution erupted, expanding in ways once unimaginable the range of material available to students and scholars, while at the same time presenting daunting new challenges. Our students now have access to the virtual equivalent of a major research library, and it is imperative that we continue to build these holdings, and integrate these new capabilities into our existing curriculum.

This effort is only one of the ways that we are constantly thinking about how to serve the needs of our students. It's our way of taking our pulse.

UM at Phi Alpha Theta



UM History Department members en route to the Phi Alpha Theta Conference in Seattle, WA, on April 9-10, 2011. From left to right: (back row) Professor Robert Greene, Cody Ewert, Professor Kyle Volk, Jonathan Hall, Shawn Bailey; (front row) Heather Mulliner, Professor Anya Jabour, Nichole Mikko-Causby, Kayla Blackman.

Visiting professors join UM

“I am fascinated by the human relationship with the natural world. The widespread interest in environmental issues at UM makes it an incredibly exciting place to be.”



Dr. Chris Pastore

Christopher Pastore holds a Ph.D. in American History and an M.S. in College Teaching from the University of New Hampshire, an M.F.A. in nonfiction Creative Writing from the New School for Social Research, and a B.A. in Biology from Bowdoin College. Focusing on the environmental history of early America and the Atlantic world, his current work

explores the ecological and epistemological complexities that arise at the nexus of land and sea. Titled “From Sweetwater to Seawater: An Environmental History of Narragansett Bay,” his dissertation uses one of the largest estuaries on the East Coast and one situated at the heart of early English settlement in New England as a means to write estuaries into Atlantic history. He is currently teaching the Early American history survey, Historical Methods, and a course titled “Nature, Knowledge, and Empire: The Environmental History of Early America.” During the spring he will teach a course on Atlantic world slavery and another exploring the “World of the American Revolution.” He enjoys sailing, hiking and fishing and is here with his wife, Susan, his three-year-old daughter, Rose, and one-year-old son, Abram.



Dr. Bradley Naranch

Bradley Naranch is a specialist in the history of nineteenth and twentieth-century Germany and will

be teaching a variety of classes in modern European history during his time as a member of the history department, including a spring 2012 course on Charles Darwin. He received his B.A. from Williams College and holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. He has taught previously at the College of William and Mary and Stanford University. While at the University of Montana, he hopes to complete work on two major projects: a volume of essays on German colonialism, which he is co-editing with Geoff Eley at the University of Michigan; and a book-length manuscript for Oxford University Press, *Global Expansion and the Making of Modern Germany*, that revises conventional histories of German national unification by incorporating lesser-known (and largely forgotten) stories of overseas expansion, exploration, and empire building from the 1830s to the early twentieth century. In his free time, Bradley enjoys hiking, cooking, and traveling and has become a big fan of the Missoula Saturday farmers' markets.

Faculty News

Presentations

Flores, Dan. "Rethinking an Iconic Story: Environmental History and the Demise of the Bison," University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, May 2011.

----- . Yellowstone Public Radio did a program on *Visions of the Big Sky* following the Montana Book Awards.

Frey, Linda. "Those Miserable Quarrels of Etiquette: The French Revolutionaries Abroad," with Marsha Frey, Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, 1750-1850, Tallahassee, Florida, March 4, 2011.

----- . "Grégoire and the 'Breath of Reason': The French Revolutionaries and the Droit des gens," with Marsha Frey "Western Society for French History," Lafayette, Louisiana, October 22, 2010.

----- . Commentator, "Constructing Solidarities and Enlightenment Cosmopolitanism" Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, 1750-1850, Tallahassee, Florida, March 5, 2011.

Emmons, David. "Exiles and Evangelizers: Catholic Ireland's Western American Empire." Invited lecture at the 12th Annual Cormac O'Malley Lecture, Glucksman Ireland House, New York University. Nov. 18, 2010.

----- . Invited Lecture: "The Power to Exclude: Irish and Chinese in the Western American Labor Movement." 5th Annual Lawrence McCaffrey Lecture, St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa. April 10, 2012.

Jabour, Anya. "The Child in the City: Sophonisba Breckinridge and Child Welfare in Twentieth-Century Chicago," Fifth Biennial Conference of the Society for the History of Children and Youth, Columbia University, New York, June 24, 2011.

----- . "Sophonisba Breckinridge, Social Work, and Social Justice," Unsettling Feminisms, University of Illinois, Chicago, May 23, 2011.

----- . "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gilman in the Classroom: A Roundtable," panelist at Fifth International Conference on Charlotte Perkins Gilman, University of Montana, Missoula, June 17, 2011.

Shearer, Tobin Miller. "More than Fresh Air: African-American Children's Influence on Mennonite Religious Practice, 1950-1979," invited Lecture at Mennonite Church USA convention, Pittsburgh, PA, July 5, 6, 2011.

Wiltse, Jeff. "Beyond the Backyard: Public Swimming Pools in Southern California's Suburban Age," invited lecture at the Backyard Oasis Symposium, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, November 20, 2010.

----- . "Swimming Pools and the Popularization of Swimming," plenary lecture at the 2010 World Aquatic Health Conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, October 8, 2010.

[continued...](#)



Books

Flores, Dan. "When the Buffalo Roamed" and "Bringing Home All the Pretty Horses: The Horse Trade in the Early American West," were reprinted in Paul Hutton, ed., *Western Heritage: A Selection of Wrangler Award-Winning Articles* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011): 3-14, 83-116.

Articles

Frey, Linda, and Marsha Frey. "'Global Insider: Diplomatic Immunity,'" with Marsha Frey, *World Politics Review*

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/8042/global-insider-diplomatic-immunity>

Shearer, Tobin Miller. "More Than Fresh Air: African-American Children's Influence on Mennonite Religious Practice, 1950-1979." *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Religion* 2, no. 7 (May 2011):

http://www.raceandreligion.com/JRER/Volume_2_%282011%29.html

----. "Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries." *Mennonite Life*, Summer, 2011: http://www.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/2011/daily_demonstrators.php

Wiltse, Jeff. "Swimming against Segregation: The Struggle to Desegregate Pittsburgh's Municipal Pools." *The Historical Society of Pennsylvania Legacies* 10 (November 2010): 12-16.

Awards

Emmons, David. *Beyond the American Pale: The Irish in the West*, Honorable Mention for the James S. Donnelly Prize for the best book in Irish or Irish-American history awarded by the American Conference of Irish Studies. Flores, Dan. *Visions of the Big Sky* (2010) won a Montana Book Award, a Southwest Book Design & Production Award, and became a Finalist for the High Plains Booksellers' Award.

----. "Mustanging and Horse Trading in the Early West," *Wild West Magazine* (2010) was a Finalist in the category of Best Short Nonfiction from Western Writers of America.

Grants

Shearer, Tobin (with Robert Saldin in Political Science). NEH-sponsored American Library Association grant to bring the "Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War" traveling exhibition to UM. In addition to hosting the exhibit, Saldin and Shearer will organize panel discussions and workshops for the university and local educators.

----. Humanities Montana grant in support of "Beyond the Breadbowl: Hunger, Excess, and the American Appetite," to be held at UM, October 20-22 2011.

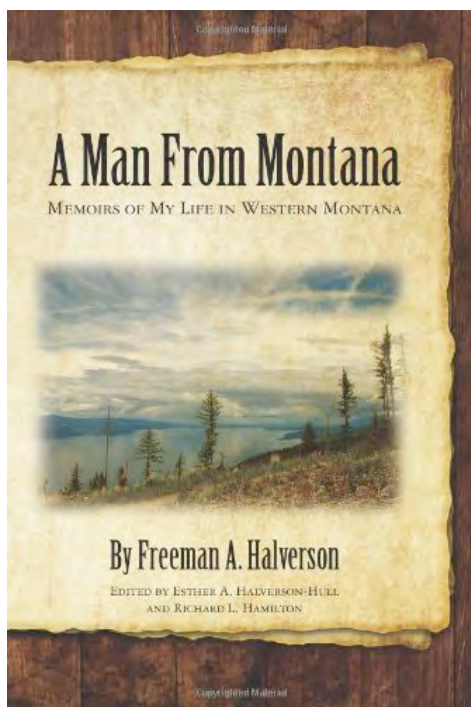


Professors Robert Greene, Kyle Volk, Wade Davies (Native American Studies), and Jeff Wiltse (with daughter June in arms) attend the annual History Department Labor Day picnic.

Alumni News

Books

Halverson-Hull, Esther ('49)
has published a memoir



written by her father, Freeman Halverson, about his experience homesteading and building a business in Lonepine, MT, in the early

Published by the History Department, U. of MT

Chair: John Eglin
Editor: Tobin Miller Shearer
Assistant Editor:
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Diane Rapp
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Zachary Shearer

Visit our newly re-designed website:
www.cas.umt.edu/history/

1900s. The book *A Man From Montana: Memoirs of My Life in Western Montana* (CreateSpace, 2011) is now available on Amazon.com.

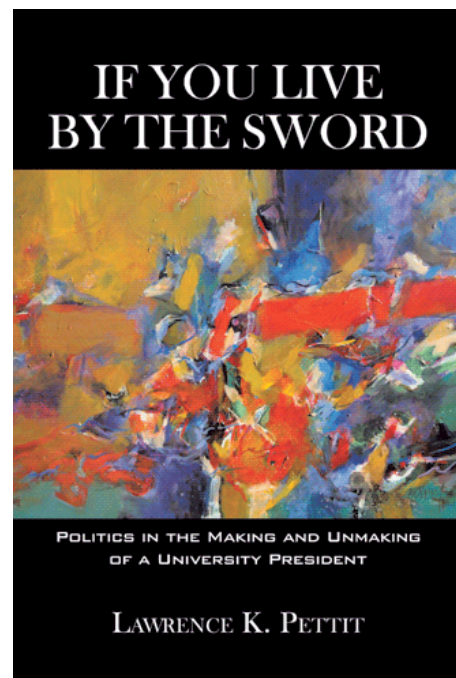
Pettit, Lawrence K., ('59; M.A. Washington U, St. Louis; Ph.D University of Wisconsin, Madison) recently published his memoir of an extensive dual career in politics and university leadership, *If You Live by the Sword: Politics in the Making and Unmaking of a University President* (iUniverse, 2010). Pettit taught at Penn State, headed the political science program at MSU-Bozeman, served as Montana's first Commissioner of Higher Education (1973-79); was a system chancellor in Texas, and a university president in Illinois and later Pennsylvania. He retired in 2003, and returned to Montana in 2007. He lives in Helena and is on the board of Humanities Montana and a senior consultant with an executive search firm in Kansas City. His book is available at Amazon.com and other booksellers.

Articles and reviews

Gordon, Greg. Review of *Splendid on a Large Scale: The writings of Hans Peter Glennborg Koch*, ed. Kim Allen Scott. *Montana Magazine of Western History* 61, no. 1

(Spring 2011): 78-80.

———. "Steamboats, Woodhawks and War on the Upper Missouri River."



Montana: The Magazine of Western History, Summer 2011, 30-46.

———. (with David Brooks). "Mountains and Rivers without End: Teaching Field Courses in Western History." *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 219-27.

Employment

Gordon, Greg (Ph.D., May 2010). Lecturer, Gonzaga University, Environmental Studies Department.

Student News

Awards

Bailey, Shawn. Bertha Morton Scholarship, one of the two most prestigious awards given to graduate students at the University of Montana.

Blackman, Kayla. Selected as UM's finalist for the Portz Scholarship, an award for the best student paper sponsored by the National Collegiate Honor Council.

Hall, Jonathan. Most Outstanding Graduate paper from the Spring 2011 Phi Alpha Theta Conference for "Rabid Republic: Mad Dogs and Men in America, 1800-1860."

Ewert, Cody. Honorable mention from the Spring 2011 Phi Alpha Theta conference for "The 'Antidote for Anarchy': Enforcing Patriotism in New York Public Schools, 1895-1905."

----. Student Prize, UM-

Faculty-Graduate Student Conference, April 23, 2011.
Mulliner, Heather. Newberry Library summer fellowship to explore "Gender and Native Americans," Chicago, Illinois.
Summey, Virginia. Pat Williams Research Scholarship to support summer research in North Carolina on African American judge Elreta Alexander Ralston.

----. Student Prize, UM-Faculty-Graduate Student Conference, 2011.

Mikko-Causby, Nichole. National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowship summer fellowship to attend "Varieties of American Feminism, 1830-1930," St. Louis, MO.

Stacy, Ian. Bertha Morton Fellowship, one of the two most prestigious awards given to graduate students at the University of Montana.

Public Presentations

Avery, Happy. Presentation of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on behalf of the Modern Hotel (Borden's) in Whitehall, MT, September 22, 2011, at the Montana Historical Society conference.

Research Presentations at Graduate Student Faculty Conference, UM, April 23, 2011

Heather Mulliner, "Transitions in Twentieth-Century American Courtship Practices: The Courtship Correspondence of Robert Campbell Line and Louise Chapman, 1914-1918"
Virginia Summey, "Precariously Perched: African-American Families and the Black Baptist Church"

Cody Ewert, "Testing Loyalty: Women's Efforts to Teach Patriotism in American Public Schools, 1890-1920"

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