Fall 2008

Time Lines Fall 2008

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A Note From the Chair: by Jenny Lloyd

At the end of my first year as chair, I am happy to report that I have enjoyed myself so much that I have talked myself out of retiring this summer, as I had intended! Instead, I am retiring from teaching only, and will be on a bridge to retirement, working three-fourths time, with an option to continue my bridge for a second year. The department faculty support me in this, and I look forward to another great year.

This past year we welcomed Dr. Jose Torre to the department, and Carl Almer joined us as our second two-year Presidential Fellow. We are also delighted that our first Presidential Fellow, Dr. Carl Davila, will return to us in the fall as an associate professor, after a national search. Dr. Davila and Dr. Nishiyama were responsible for organizing one of the department’s most significant events of the academic year, the highly successful international conference to mark the 30th anniversary of the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, an enormously influential book. Other history faculty in the news were Dr. Anne Macpherson and Dr. Paul Moyer, whose books were featured in the *Democrat & Chronicle*, and who also gave talks to local groups. I am very proud of all our professors, who are dedicated to teaching, but also find time for a multitude of other activities, both scholarly, and in the College and community, and I wish I had the space to list them all.

I am also very proud of our history majors. This year Michael Fickess won the President’s Citation, the College’s highest award, although I regret that bad weather prevented him from giving his commencement speech. History majors or graduate students won five out of six awards in the Scholarly Nonfiction category of the College’s Celebration of Writing, carrying on what is becoming an annual tradition. You will enjoy reading news of our alumni in this newsletter. Some of them now teach in the department. Recent graduates of our MA program who have come back to teach some of our introductory courses include Amber Humphrey and Tricia Peone, with Vassilios Pinopoulos and Debbie Wood joining them in the fall. I thank them and our other associate faculty for their expertise and dedication.

Please keep in touch; we are just an e-mail away. My very best wishes for a happy and fulfilling year.

Please Join Us For the Following Events This Fall

**Annual Maynooth Lecture**

**Thursday, October 30 at 7:00 in the NY Cooper Room**

Dr. Thomas O’Connor of the National University of Ireland at Maynooth will speak on Irish-European religious connections in the early modern period. His publications include *An Irish Theologian in Enlightenment France: Luke Joseph Hooke, 1714—1794* (Dublin, 1995).

**Annual Synnestvedt Lecture**

**Thursday, November 13 at 7:30 in the NY Cooper Room**

History Forum Past and Future Activities
by William Sturnick

The History Forum, which will be advised by Dr. Carl Davila, looks forward to revitalizing student interest in the club during the 2008—2009 academic year. The Forum’s newly elected board together with our other valued members (former President Krysten Collier, Megan McDaniels, Karla Smith, and Caitlin Moore) is planning a series of events to spark new interest in the Forum.

This past academic year was mostly a year of reorganizing and refocusing of energies. In spite of this, the Forum was still actively involved in a variety of events. In the fall, the Forum contributed funding to the Department of History’s annual Synnesvedt lecture, participated in the campus’ College Bowl competition, hosted this year’s Maynooth lecturer Dr. Raymond Gillespie for coffee at the Aerie Café in the Drake Library, and organized a movie night screening of *Evita* with Dr. Anne Macpherson. In the spring, the Forum assisted Drs. Carl Davila and Takashi Nishiyama during the Orientalism Conference (an event which hosted scholars, locally and from abroad, who shared their various papers and presentations related to various aspects of Orientalism). The Forum also hosted a Trivia Night for Brockport students. As much as the Forum’s members have accomplished this year, they intend to continue planning and supporting a variety of academic and non-academic events.

In addition to their usual funding of the Synnesvedt Lecture in the fall, some other events the Forum plans to host in the coming school year include more movie nights, an International cuisine night, a campus-wide scavenger hunt in addition to another trivia night. Unfortunately, their allocated budget for the 2008—2009 academic year is half of its normal amount. To compensate for this loss in funding, the Forum will be looking to fund raise and to seek funding from grants for student organizations. In spite of this decrease in funding, the Forum is optimistic about the coming academic year and hopes that this increased mix of varied events will generate greater student interest in the Forum for semesters to come. Furthermore, members are looking forward to continued interaction with Brockport faculty and students.

President: William Sturnick
Vice President: Fil Belousov
Treasurer: Ken Lane
Secretary: Jim Eick

Please contact Will Sturnick for information about joining the History Forum and for the club’s meeting time and location during the fall semester at wstu0617@brockport.edu.

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What’s so funny? The Jewish Mother: Subjectively Comedic or Misogynistic
by Krysten Collier and Kenneth A. Lane

On April 2 the Department of History held the annual Robert Marcus Memorial Lecture. This year, the lecture was given by Dr. Joyce Antler, the Samuel Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture of Brandeis University. Her lecture, entitled “You Never Call, You Never Write: A Historical Perspective on ‘Mother Blame’” was based on her most recent book entitled *You Never Call! You Never Write! A History of the Jewish Mother*.

Following a heartfelt “Welcome and Remembrance of Robert Marcus” by Dr. Steve Ireland and an introduction by Dr. Jenny Lloyd, Dr. Antler delivered a provocative lecture on the stereotype of the Jewish Mother. She argued that the continuing conceptualization of a stereotypical Jewish Mother, one who is possessive and overbearing, found expression in many forms of comedy. Though originally humorous and harmless in nature, Dr. Antler argued that over time the concept transcended its benign character and developed a more misogynistic connotation. Still apparent in contemporary comedies, the concept of the Jewish Mother has become a prevalent figure to be marginalized and ridiculed. Though initially not intended for malicious purposes, the comedic value of the joke has faded and the characterization of the loving but overbearing Jewish Mother has been replaced with a racially and ethnically charged caricature.

To conclude, Dr. Antler acknowledged that many Jewish women, including her own daughters, find the caricature of the Jewish Mother to be humorous and culturally relevant. However, the distinction between the malicious and the comedic is not self evident nor easily determined, but instead is arbitrary and subjective in nature.
Student Success

History Department Awards

Queen Essay — Christopher Pearl & David Latella

Melinda Kleehammer Award

1st place — Kenneth Lane
2nd place — Krysten Collier
3rd place — Scott Harrison

Crandall Award (sophomore) — Jacqueline Scala

Griswold Award (junior or senior) — Lauren DeJoy

Schnell Award (soph - senior) — Christine Ditzel

Lee Award (senior) — Danielle Leone

Department Scholar — Krysten Collier

Graduate Award — Paul Brew

Flieger Fellowship (graduate) — A. Jonathan Chalmers

Phi Alpha Theta

Lori B. Bartkovich
Molly Brownson
Maggie Dianetti Broker
Krysten S. Collier
Daniel C. Coughlin
Devon Davidson
Ashley H. Decker

Lauren DeJoy
Christine Ditzel
Jennifer Geraci
Kenneth Lane
Ryan Maier
Matthew J. McGee
Jacob Piorkowski

Dr. John Daly congratulating David Latella during the Celebration of Writing awards ceremony

Celebration of Writing Awards

History majors won first, second, and third place in the undergraduate division, and first and third place in the graduate division of The College at Brockport’s Sixth Annual Celebration of Writing Awards competition. The faculty members who nominated these students’ papers, had the honor of presenting the winners with their cash awards of up to $250 during a ceremony held on Monday, April 21 in the New York Room of Cooper Hall.

Michael Fickess took first in the undergraduate division (Scholarly and Analytical Writing category) for his paper on “Politics of Devotion: The Faith, Culture, and Politics of Modern Iran and Iraq as Revealed through Shi’i Iconographic Posters.” (Carl Davila)

James F. Taylor III’s second place essay in the undergraduate division was entitled “Rational Liberty And the Just Government: Lockean Political Philosophy, the Declaration of Independence, and the Founding of the American Republic.” (Steve Ireland)

Peter Manktelow won third place in the undergraduate division for his paper on “Rapprochement Between the United States and Vietnam: Vietnamese Strategies and the Use of Amerasians.” (Steve Neese)

Christopher Pearl’s first place essay in the graduate division (Scholarly and Analytical Writing category) was entitled “Reluctant Revolutionaries: Benjamin Franklin’s Last Years in England.” (Steve Ireland)

David Latella received third place in the graduate division for his paper on “Floating Iron: Ironclads in the American Civil War.” (John Daly)

Dr. Steve Ireland congratulating James Taylor III

Dr. John Daly congratulating David Latella during the Celebration of Writing awards ceremony
Faculty News

Arden Bucholz was in Europe in May and June, walking, drawing and photographing the landforms of the three wars of German unification: Danish (1864), Austrian (1866) and French (1870—71).

Katherine Clark published “Piety, Punishment and the Discourse of Holy Widowhood” in the Journal of the History of Sexuality in December 2007. She taught some new courses this year, including “Ancient Rome” and “Love, War, and Social Change in the High Middle Ages.” Dr. Clark was responsible for organizing three lectures which brought to campus Raheel Raza for the American Democracy Program (in collaboration with Dr. Davila), Dr. Richard Pierce for the Synnestvedt lecture, and Dr. Joyce Antler for the Marcus lecture. This summer she presented papers at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women and the Medieval Congress at Leeds. Dr. Clark also spent some time in Germany, conducting research and revising her book, The Profession of Widowhood: Widows, Pastoral Care, and Medieval Models of Holiness.

John Daly presented a paper at the twentieth annual Popular Culture/American Culture Association Meeting in Las Vegas in January entitled “Case Open, Case Closed: The JFK Assassination in Recent Media, 1974—2006.” He also spoke on “The Election of 1860: The Election that Changed America” at the Strong Museum annual AP History Conference in March. Dr. Daly was named to the Advisory Board of the National Lincoln Prize. He is currently writing an article and book on violence during Reconstruction.

Carl Davila appeared in Mara Ahmed’s documentary The Muslims I Know which premiered June 8 at the Dryden Theater in Rochester. This past year, Dr. Davila presented a paper entitled “The ‘Other Andalusian Music’: Andalusian Strophic Poetry in the Moroccan Samă’ wa—Madīh” at a conference in London. He attended a seminar on religious extremism at Nazareth College, participated in a day-long seminar at the Levin Institute in New York City concerning their “Globalization 101” curriculum initiative, and lectured for the Second Iraq War Teach—In. Dr. Davila also reviewed The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid for the “Books Sandwiched In” program at Brighton Public Library, gave a lecture for the Anthropology Speaker Series, chaired a panel at Scholars Day and presented his own paper. With Dr. Nishiyama, and graduate students Paul Brew and Jacob Piorikowski, he organized the conference “Reconsidering the Orient and the Occident in the Twenty—First Century” which was held on April 12. Dr. Davila also succeeded in bringing his wife to the United States against all odds, got a puppy, and managed to have an actual vacation during spring break.

Steve Ireland and his wife Susan visited Dr. Vincent Comerford, chair of the Department of History, National University of Ireland (NUI) at Maynooth last summer. The Irelands also visited Gene and Francoise McCreary in France where they toured the Cathedral at Amiens, visited battle fields and cemeteries from WWI and WWII, and argued history and literature. This past academic year, Dr. Ireland organized the annual visit and public address of an Irish Speaker from NUI Maynooth, and continued to develop his course on the history of New York City. He also refereed a book length manuscript for Penn State University Press, read and criticized a book length manuscript for a colleague, presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the American Conference on Irish Studies entitled “Sex Lives of Irish Women, 1750—1980,” and made final revisions in an article due for publication in 2008—2009 entitled “Esther DeBerdt Reed and Female Political Subjectivity in Revolutionary America: Identity, Agency and Alienation in 1775.” This summer Dr. Ireland continued his research on Esther DeBerdt and women in the era of the American Revolution at the New York Historical Society and New York Public Library.

Bruce Leslie spent last year among the dreamy spires of Cambridge University in England as a Visiting Scholar in Wolfson College and the Faculty of Education. There he tried to figure out how two systems of higher education “separated by a common language” both began in Cambridge (the home of Harvard appropriately bears the same name) and yet have diverged so far structurally while remaining intellectually symbiotic. In April he hosted the Interim SUNY Chancellor (and Brockport’s former Interim President) to present a seminar at Cambridge in which Dr. Clark explained SUNY’s past and exchanged ideas with English scholars on possible futures. This Fall Dr. Leslie looks forward to returning to teaching as well as to helping plan a scholarly conference to celebrate SUNY’s sixtieth anniversary.

Jenny Lloyd gave the annual departmental lecture at the National University of Ireland at Maynooth on “Ruskin’s Dublin Lecture: The Context and Subtext of Sesame and Lilies.” She greatly enjoyed visiting the Maynooth history department and going to the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. She also spent three days on a trip arranged by International Education to the Universidad Internacional in Cuernavaca, Mexico, discussing ways the Department of History can cooperate with their program. In March she gave a paper at Boston College’s Biennial Conference on Religious History. In the summer she worked on the final chapter of her book Plucking Sinners from the Fire: Women Preachers in Nineteenth—Century British Methodism, due at Manchester University Press on September 1.

Anne Macpherson has been on sabbatical during spring 2008, doing research on gender and politics in 1930s Puerto Rico, and consulting various archives in the San Juan area. She was also shamed into learning how to
downhill ski by her five year old. Dr. Macpherson wrote an essay on independence struggles in the twentieth—century Caribbean during summer 2008, for a University of Chicago anthology on Caribbean history. Her book on gender and politics in Belize was featured on the College’s website in March, and more recently in the local authors section of the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle. She looks forward to teaching and advising in the fall!

Morag Martin received a contract for her manuscript from The Johns Hopkins University Press. She is currently revising it for publication and hopes to be done this summer so that the book can be ready for 2009. Dr. Martin was busy this year as Graduate Program Director as well as running after her three year old. She enjoyed teaching a new research seminar on the history of European royal courts and having her students present at Scholars Day.


Takashi Nishiyama wrote two book reviews, one for Technology and Culture and another for East Asian Science, Technology, and Society. In early April, he was invited to comment on a panel at the Association for Asian Studies conference in Atlanta. Along with Dr. Davila and graduate students Paul Brew and Jacob Piorkowski, Dr. Nishiyama organized the international conference on Orientalism at Brockport. Dr. Nishiyama is a member of the editorial advisory board for the journal, Historia Scientiarum and continues to serve on the committee of the Young Scholars Travel Fund for the Society for the History of Technology. He will present papers at the twelfth International Conference on the History of Science in East Asia at Johns Hopkins University in July and at the Society for the History of Technology Conference in Lisbon in October.

Alison Parker finished a draft of her book manuscript, Nineteenth—Century Women on Race and Reform. She is submitting the manuscript for consideration at a university press. Parker began her research on a new book project (a biography of Mary Church Terrell, the first president of the National Association of Colored Women) at Howard University. She also presented a paper at the American Historical Association in Washington, D.C., and published several short essays and book reviews. This summer, she brought 13 students to London for a study abroad course called “British Perspectives on the American Revolution.”

Lynn Parsons, professor emeritus, was invited to speak at the Massachusetts Historical Society last September on John Quincy Adams, the first American Minister to Russia following his visit to Russia as part of the commemoration of 200 years of Russo-American diplomacy. He also participated in an “interview” of John Quincy Adams (portrayed by actor—impersonator Jim Cooke) in a series of venues in Massachusetts. Parsons and Cooke appeared at the Old South Meeting House in Boston, the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, and at Amherst College. Dr. Parsons is finishing his book on the presidential election of 1828, to be published by Oxford University Press in Spring 2009. He was elected a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society in May 2008, and he and his wife Anne are co—editors of the newsletter of the Castine (Maine) Historical Society.

Meredith Roman published “Racism in a ‘Raceless’ Society: The Soviet Press and Representations of American Racial Violence at Stalingrad in 1930” in International Labor and Working—Class History. She presented a paper entitled “Anti—Empire, Anti—Racism: Representations of the Soviet Union as a Superior Society during the Interwar Era” at the Annual Convention of the American Association of the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) in New Orleans in November. At the convention, she also participated in a four—person roundtable on the concept of Potemkinism in Russian history. Dr. Roman conducted research at the Library of Congress over the winter break, and this summer continued to prepare her manuscript for publication.

Jose R. Torre spent the last year working on his four volume series, The Enlightenment in America, 1720—1825 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008). In addition he developed a new graduate topics course, The American Enlightenment, taught the Early America half of the survey, and a “swing” course on the Early Republic. This summer Dr. Torre worked on a review essay of recent work on the Scottish Enlightenment for the William and Mary Quarterly, and a paper on moral philosophy and political economy to be delivered at the Library Company, Philadelphia, in November.

Wanda Wakefield has been actively researching the Cold War and winter sports. She completed an article for the Compendium of Military History on military sports through the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003. Dr. Wakefield has also completed a book review of When the Girls Came Out to Play, an analysis of the development of American sportswear for the new Journal of Play. Finally, she continued her work as an international luge official, serving as Chief of Control for the fall 2007, Senior World Cup, and the spring 2008, World Junior Championships.
Alumni News

Sarah Ashby, BS ’06, was accepted to the masters program in the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Buffalo.

Megan Davison, BS ’06, defended her thesis last summer to complete her masters in education at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. She is now working as an eighth grade geography and social studies teacher at Luther Porter Jackson Middle School in Surry, VA and also holds the position of the Middle School Gifted Coordinator.

Shawna Edwards, BS ’08, started a new job in April as a Disability Insurance Agency Specialist at Paychex in Henrietta. She attended a 3 week course to receive her Property and Causality Insurance License at Bryant and Stratton.

Christopher M. Green, BA ’95, owns a Chiropractic Care and Rehab Center in Estero, Florida. He recently married Dr. Michelle Giroux in May 2007, and still plays rugby for the Brockport Rugby Alumni Select Side at the Annual Canadian—American Rugby Tournament in Lake Placid, NY every first weekend in August.

Michael M. Huggins, MS ’91, is a social studies teacher at Sayville High School. He recently completed his second tour of duty with the New York Air National Guard which provided medical evacuation for the 82nd Airborne Division.

Amy E. Boyle Johnston, BS ’02, was interviewed on March 30 on National Public Radio’s “Weekend Edition” about Rod Serling and Emmett Till. She was the keynote speaker at a Serling conference in Ithaca, and is writing a major book on Serling in his historical context.

Hassan Jones, BS ’95, was featured in the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle in February as one of the community’s outstanding African—American leaders. Hassan is currently the head of the Middle School of the Harley School of Rochester.

Jane Oakes, MA ’03, a board member of the York historical society was quoted in an article in the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle on September 23 regarding the discovery that the oldest New York winery was most likely located in York.

Carl O’Connor, BS ’07, is currently working on his masters in Social Studies Education while serving as a Resident Director for the office of Residential Life and Learning Communities at The College at Brockport.

Diane Palmer, MA ’06, published the article “Present by Their Absence” in the Fall 2007 issue of New York Archives a publication of the state archives division. The essay was based on her master’s thesis. Diane was accepted in the Ph.D. program at SUNY Buffalo but has decided against pursuing full-time graduate study.

Christopher Pearl, BA ’07, was accepted to the PhD program in history at SUNY Binghamton with a full ride.

Luke Pereira, BS ’05, returned from Iraq in January after 15 months in Baghdad where he served as an Infantry Platoon leader of 20 soldiers. Luke recently moved to Fort Gordon in Augusta, GA with his wife Kimberly. He is currently attending the Signal Captain Career Course and will remain in the Army a few more years. Ultimately, he would like to earn a masters degree in Museum Science.

Gil Rosa, BS ’99, a social studies teacher at The School Without Walls in Rochester was featured in an article in April in the Democrat & Chronicle.

David C. Shampine, BA ’71, has been honored with a 2007 Professional Achievement Award from Jefferson Community College’s Alumni Association. David has worked as a crime reporter for the Watertown Daily Times for the past 37 years. Since 1998 Shampine has put his history training to work writing a monthly local history column entitled “Times Gone By.” His work has garnered him several other honors, including a New York Newspaper Publishers Association local reporting award of excellence and a New York State Associated Press Association award for spot news reporting. David and his wife Lucille have two sons and three grandchildren.

Edward Smith, BA ’70, is currently the Vice President for Continuing Education and Workforce Development at Tri—Community College in North Carolina. After earning an MS in education also at Brockport, Edward went on to earn his doctorate in adult education, and has been working in this field for 37 years.

Christian Speedling, BS ’05, is working for SUNY New Paltz as the international program’s assistant. In addition to other responsibilities, Christian helps students decide where they should study abroad.

John Stegeman, MA ’05, has completed his course requirements in the PhD program in history at Syracuse University. John and his wife Laura are expecting their second child, a boy whom they will name William Michael, after John’s grandfather and Laura’s father.

Jennifer Veras, BS ’05, has entered a masters program in Spanish Language and Literacy at City College (CUNY). Since graduation she has been working in adult education within the union movement.
Orientalism Conference Draws International Scholars to Brockport
by Jake Piorkowski

On April 12, 2008 The College at Brockport history department hosted an academic conference on the legacy of Edward Said and his seminal work, *Orientalism*. The presenters were organized under the theme of reconsidering “the Orient” and “the Occident” in the twenty-first century. Scholars were selected through a discerning screening process which accepted fifteen presenters from the United States, Canada, and Israel (one presenter from Indonesia was also selected but was unable to attend due to visa issues).

The conference began with opening remarks from conference chairs, Drs. Takashi Nishiyama and Carl Davila who offered a welcome to the guests and insight into the prescient nature of Orientalism for our modern era. Five panels were organized throughout the day and moderated by the conference chairs. Panels were based on a variety of themes such as tropes and arguments, imaginative geographies, and gender and visual cultures. Much of the work that occurred behind the scenes was coordinated by graduate students Paul Brew and Jacob Piorkowski. These students not only assisted in helping the conference run smoothly, but were involved in the organization of the event over the course of the semester. Brockport students Michael Fickess and Michael Weisenburg were among the presenters, and gave excellent papers that elicited numerous questions and comments from the audience during their respective panels.

The keynote speaker for the day was Raheel Raza, an award-winning writer, professional speaker, diversity consultant, interfaith activist, and film maker. Raza, who hails from Toronto, offered insight into issues concerning diversity and the need to move past imbedded tropes that perpetuate the dichotomy between the east and the west. Raza presented a refreshing look at the issues concerning Orientalism from a non-academic person which allowed the scholars and audience members to see the practical need for greater understanding between two major portions of the world.

The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion that was attended by faculty, presenters, and audience members, who engaged in a free-flowing discourse concerning a variety of issues connected to Orientalism. The roundtable discussion allowed those involved in the panels throughout the day to express support, concerns, and pose questions about how (and if) the academic world can spur change that will affect the greater population. The discussion allowed emotions to run high, and for people to passionately express their feelings regarding Orientalism. The discussion moderator, Carl Davila, kept the event academic and professional.

The event drew a high level of scholarship, excellent presenters, and strong attendance during the course of the day. Despite the obvious successes of the conference, numerous presenters commented that they were most impressed by the “warm” and “welcoming” feel from the conference organizers, and the college as a whole. Participants were able to establish friendships and contacts through informal events preceding and following the conference. Presenters therefore achieved more than merely the experience of delivering a paper. Ties were also developed that will allow greater scholarship to be produced in the future. A contingent of presenters from Ottawa recently announced plans to host a similar event based on Said’s work. The conference was so well received that talks of making this an annual event with a different topic each year have begun. Overall, the event demonstrated the ability of the department and college to engage in and promote scholarship of the highest order.

Paul Brew, James Eick, Will Sturank, Krysten Collier, Krysten’s sister, and Dr. Carl Davila

Dr. Carl Davila and Raheel Raza
It can be challenging to stay quiet in an archive reading room when you’ve just discovered something really exciting and your impulse is to jump on the table and shout “eureka!”—or something more mono-syllabic. At the Centro de Investigaciones Historicas archive on the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) campus in Rio Piedras, I found a 23—page handwritten letter dated June 1941 detailing the breakdown of a leading politician’s marriage, written by his wife to their mutual friend Ruby Black—a Washington D.C. journalist who covered Eleanor Roosevelt for the AP wire service.

The politician was Luis Muñoz Marín, founder in 1938 of the important Popular Democratic Party (PPD), and later architect of the Commonwealth status for Puerto Rico. His wife was Muna Lee, an American feminist and poet, who recounted near the end of the letter her husband’s horrified reaction to her demand that the divorce be on the grounds not only of adultery but also the financial and emotional desertion of their two children. “Think of those two million jíbaros!” she reported him shouting. If Muna Lee can be trusted as a source, Muñoz Marín was well aware that the jíbaro (peasant) voters he was targeting in his 1938—40 populist election campaign valued a father’s care for his children much more highly than a husband’s fidelity to his wife. Had Muñoz Marín just made the connection between his domestic drama and party politics for me?

Evaluating a single source, no matter how much of a bombshell it may seem, must be done carefully and in context. Judging by her overall correspondence and by secondary works that mention her, Muna Lee was a level-headed woman who had tolerated her husband’s infidelities for years, and who would be unlikely to exaggerate or invent in her recounting of the breakup, especially to Ruby Black, who would certainly hear Luis’s version of events as well. The PPD’s party paper, El Batey, written in simple repetitive Spanish for its minimally literate audience, paid virtually no attention to women voters or their pressing economic issues during the campaign, despite major controversies in precisely the 1938—40 period over a new federal minimum wage in the important needlework industry. Did Muñoz Marín only conceive of the female body politic as being swayed by his domestic performance as a father, and not by his party’s policies concerning women’s issues? Could such a narrowness of vision have cost him crucial votes in November 1940, when the PPD eeked out the narrowest of victories?

Multiple regression analyses by UPR sociologist Juan José Baldrich—who also told me how scandalized his middle class mother was by Muñoz Marín campaigning with his mistress and their infant daughter—show that
needleworkers were not strongly attracted to the PPD in the November 1940 elections. Confirming this, I found voter registration statistics from January 1940 from the district of Mayagüez, where the needlework industry was centered, that show new women voters registering for the PPD at markedly lower rates than men. It seems that by the time Muna Lee laid out her demands for the divorce terms, Luis Muñoz Marín had already failed to connect with a critical group of women voters, thus weakening his new political coalition.

I had almost none of that analysis in the moment of reading the letter in the archive. Feeling like I had just lived through the demise of the marriage at high speed I stepped out of the super-chilled reading room into the warm humid air to pace up and down. Surrounded by Puerto Rican university students lounging with their laptops between classes, and posters about the issues of 2008—like the suddenly crucial Democratic primary on the island—I smiled at my historian’s capacity to care about long-dead individuals’ sorrows and imperfections. Yet often it’s that emotional connection that spurs us to the measured analysis that can create new or change established interpretations of the past, and of course how that past has shaped our collective present.

And yes, the beaches were delicious, not least the one conveniently located across the street from the main government archive. Nothing like doing research with sand between your toes…

From Maynooth, Ireland to Cuernavaca, Mexico
by Jenny Lloyd

I was lucky to escape the Brockport winter to travel to Ireland and Mexico. At the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, I visited the Department of History as part of our on-going exchange. On my first day, while fighting jet-lag with coffee, I enjoyed a campus tour with the Chair, Dr. Vincent Comerford, especially admiring the Victorian Gothic chapel designed by the architect Pugin. In the evening Dr. Comerford and his wife took me into Dublin by train to a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Abbey Theatre. It was an edgy modern—dress production, quite lively and stimulating enough to keep me awake!

Over the next two days I renewed acquaintance with the Maynooth faculty who had come to Brockport, spent time with Tom O’Connor, who will be giving the Brockport lecture in the fall, and sat in on classes to get an idea of how they differ from our own (not much). On the second evening I gave my own lecture regarding the context and subtext of John Ruskin’s lecture in Dublin in 1868.

A few weeks after returning to Brockport, I traveled to Cuernavaca, Mexico with Ralph Trecartin, interim director of International Education, Patricia Siegel, chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, and Andrea Rubery, chair of the Department of Political Science. Our objective was to strengthen ties with the International University in Cuernavaca by identifying courses that could transfer from one institution to another. We were briefed extensively by the university’s administration, with translation by Norma Lazcano, one of Brockport’s faculty in residence, and Greg Stephany, a former International Education employee, before the formal signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions.

We also had time for sight—seeing with Norma and Greg, including Cuernavaca itself, a colonial town the other side of the twin volcanoes from Mexico City, a village on the slopes of one of the volcanoes, and the silver town of Taxco. I lived in Mexico City for three years in the late seventies, so I was interested to see the changes, mostly for the better. I was also very happy to see Dr. Jim Horn, former member of the Brockport Department of History, who now lives in Cuernavaca.

I came back eager to promote study abroad in both Ireland and Mexico to history majors. They would be in beautiful surroundings, with plenty of study options.
Good Afternoon, Class of 2008!

When we first set foot on campus here at the College at Brockport, each one of us embarked upon an incredible journey of discovery. In this journey, we have each been forced to shed our assumptions, to challenge conventional wisdom, and open our minds to new ways to view the world around us. Each of us can recall particular moments of revelation in our undergraduate courses when this process began to take hold; those times when a particular fact or way of viewing the world challenged everything we thought we knew, and opened our eyes to a more enriched vision of the world around us.

Now, as we move on to the next stage of this journey, we must strive to keep the hunger for knowledge and understanding alive inside ourselves. We must remember those moments of revelation, those times when our intellectual curiosity got the best of us and we were inspired not only to dig deeper to understand the world we live in, but also to let that new empathy and knowledge inspire us to action, activism, and advocacy. It is vital to maintain that intellectual curiosity, to cultivate it, to feed it and cause it to grow, because that curiosity is the only thing that can protect us from the cancerous apathy that has enveloped our culture.

Today, as we begin the next phase of our journey and leave the comfort of Brockport’s cozy village, the immediate demands of life confront us: Will we find work in our field? Can we create lives for ourselves that realize the American dream? How can we maintain the idealism we internalized in our undergraduate work?

These questions become even more urgent when we look at the world outside The College at Brockport. The American economy is faltering. Our communities are crumbling under the weight of debt and poverty. Our nation stands at the precipice of disaster in its foreign entanglements. These are uncertain times.

However, our generation is strong enough to face these challenges. Our generation is a sleeping giant, still waiting to be roused. When we choose to awake, united in commitment to our social and civic responsibilities, nothing will be able to slow the progress that we will set in motion. When we choose to raise our voices as advocates, together in thunderous shout, the small voices of fear and division will be drowned out. When we choose to lay down the remote control and pick up the ballot and the picket sign, we will set in motion a generational shift in this country, ushering in a new era of progressive idealism in which we each will share some small part.

Soon, we will be ejected from the nurturing cocoons of youth and forced to face the harsh realities of the world we live in. And when we do venture out, we have a choice: to retreat back to a safe place of our own making, or to face the world with courage, vision, and the lessons we have learned here.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

Class of 2008, today is the day to celebrate our successes, reflect on our journey, and extend our deepest gratitude to the families who nurtured us and the professors who challenged us. But tomorrow, after the ribbons and balloons are cleared from our party rooms, after the diplomas are hung proudly on our walls, after all the tears and hugs, let us not forget our sober responsibilities to this nation. Rather, let us find strength in our unity and look for the small things that we each can do to contribute to a brighter tomorrow.

Michael Fickess and President Halsted
Graduation, May 2008

Dr. Clark introducing Matthew McGee

Dr. Bucholz introducing Donald Powell

Deidre Devlin with her mother Nellie and her son Donovyn with Dr. Parker and Dr. Martin

Jacob Piorkowski, Paul Brew, and Dr. Daly after the Graduate Ceremony in Tuttle North

(Cut Here)
Alumni News
Attention History Alumni! We’d like to hear from you. To make it easier, please fill out, clip and mail this form to: Newsletter, Department of History, The College at Brockport, 350 New Campus Drive, Brockport, NY 14420-2956. Or reach us by e-mail: trombaut@brockport.edu. You can also fax us: (585) 395-2620. Check us out on the Web at www.brockport.edu/history. Many thanks!

Name: __________________________________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________________________
Date of Graduation: _______________________________________________________________________
Degree: _________________________________________________________________________________
Current Position: __________________________________________________________________________
Any news that you’d like to share (career, hobbies, travel, family, etc.) _______________________________
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