

Subject: *** SAMPLE *** From The Chair's Desk: News of the History Department
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FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK— FALL 2011

Greetings from the BU History Department! Since I last wrote, the wind of change has roared down Bay State Road. No, I'm not referring to Hurricane Irene, which mercifully spared us here in Boston, or to any of the historical artifacts that phrase often recalls, be it former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's famous speech on decolonization or the power ballad of that same name by the '80s heavy metal band the Scorpions. Rather, I refer to the torrent of new faces and features rippling through the department. Over the past few months, we have brought on board an entirely new administrative staff. In May, Luis Chunga-Celis, CAS'10, started as department administrator. Born in Peru, Luis grew up in Portland, Oregon and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics. Just this week, we also welcomed Justin Schreiber, SMG'10, as our new department secretary. A native of Danbury, Connecticut, who completed his undergraduate degree at the School of Management, Justin came to us from a Brookline-based mortgage company.

A new faculty member, Professor Phillip Haberkern, also joined the department over the summer. Originally from North Carolina, Phil studied religion and anthropology at Chapel Hill and Harvard Divinity School before completing his PhD in history at the University of Virginia. Haberkern's research centers around late medieval and early modern central Europe, and especially the Reformation. Within this broad topic, he is focusing attention on a man named Jan Hus (d. 1415) who was burned at the stake for heresy, but became a saint for his followers in Prague and for Martin Luther a century later.

THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST

Historians don't always live in the past or retain a sentimental attachment to dusty old papers, but sometimes we can be slow to change. While every BU department publishes their newsletter electronically, we continued to send a paper version through the mail. This Fall, the department enters the 21st century (a decade late perhaps, but with great

enthusiasm) and converts to a new electronic newsletter. Called *The Presence of the Past*, the newsletter will be published on the department website every two months during the academic year. You can find our first issue at the [Department of History's website](#).

But why wait for the newsletter? If you're a BU History news junkie—and what sensitive and intelligent person isn't—you can subscribe to the Department's RSS feed and get the latest news as it breaks. To sign up, visit, bu.edu/history/news-events/news/.

ALUMNI NEWS

Joseph Patrouch, '82 recently changed positions, leaving Florida International University in Miami after twenty years to take up a new job as full professor in the Department of History & Classics at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. Patrouch also serves as Director of the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta.

Betsy (Bowman) Burtis, '84 accepted a new position in the Concord, New Hampshire office of Lutheran Social Services of New England. Betsy also remains active in state politics. Last March, she was elected to the position of Trustee of the Trust Fund in Derry, New Hampshire, her home town, and she serves as a member of the State Democratic Platform Committee, as the Town Democratic Chair, and as the Secretary for the East Derry Village Improvement Society.

Chloe Magner, '08, writes in from Washington, DC, where she also moved to a new job, joining the digital design team for the *Washington Post*. Woodward and Bernstein now have a worthy successor!

Phillip J. Baram, Ph.D.'76, recently published *The Department of State in the Middle East* (Augmented edition). Using the declassified files of State Department correspondence and its wartime (WWII) plans for the postwar period, in addition to manuscript collections and interviews, Baram reveals the internal structure and behind-the-scenes nuances, the subtleties and texture, of Departmental decision making. This detailed study—with expanded chapters on Saudi Arabia and Oil, and also on Palestine and Zionism—has long been used as a reference book in the US and overseas. Winner of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations annual award for the best newly published work on US foreign policy, in 1978, it is now reissued, with a new introduction and maps. It continues to be an invaluable source with regard to the modern Middle East, the history of Israel, US policies in the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict, oil politics, and power politics in general.

NOLAN: SUMMER IN KABUL

During August, Professor Cathal J. Nolan worked as a technical adviser to USAID's *Foreign Affairs Institutional Reform (FAIR) Project* at the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Kabul. His principal mission was to assist the staff of MoFA's Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) improve their policy analysis and recommendations to Afghan diplomats. His work included direct mentoring of CSS staff on policy analysis and advising on a quarterly publication of the MoFA *Journal* (published in English, Dari, and Pashto). Topics covered in training sessions included illegal timber exports to Pakistan, security issues with Iran, a proposed long-term U.S.-Afghan security pact, and women's rights in Afghanistan. Nolan subsequently agreed to serve for three years on the

International Editorial Board of the *CSS Journal*.

While living and working inside reasonably secure compounds, Nolan reports, "general conditions in Kabul made it always necessary to commute in up-armored vehicles and with armed guards, it was possible to get into the city on many occasions. The most memorable of these excursions was along the Jalalabad Road to a hilltop overlooking Kabul known as the "King's Tomb," because, well, the former King's Tomb is sited there, along with a smaller tomb for some forgotten dead princess. The first visit found the place deserted, except by four teenage boys vainly trying to get foreigners to pose and pay for pictures with a small horse—a far better life choice than joining the local Taliban. That first trip was interrupted by dark smoke rising about a mile away, leading to a security alert and responding helicopters: it was discovered later that a column of eight fuel trucks were set alight en route to Fire Base Phoenix in northern Kabul.

The second visit took place on the first Friday of Ramadan (or *Ramazán*, as it is pronounced in Dari). At least a thousand people were there, mostly in family groups. Despite the heat, enforced fasting, and a building sandstorm, they were flying hundreds of colorful, simple kites—a traditional and beloved practice formerly banned and severely punished by Mullah Omar's Taliban. It was very good to see such ordinary resilience and normality in the midst of the armed camp that Kabul is on most days. It was also inspiring to see new construction and everyday commerce along city streets, even those badly obstructed by huge, medieval-looking fortresses housing the U.S. military, ISAF (NATO's official acronym in Afghanistan), and Afghan National Army units."

Finally, I'm always collecting material for my next message, so please send along stories, jokes, misadventures, cautionary tales, and any other material to me at bjschulm@bu.edu or just email history@bu.edu. I end with the latest batch of historian jokes (If you want to avoid another round of groan-inducers, the burden is on you to email in some better ones!) These follow the pun-filled pattern of "job history" jokes you find all over the Internet:

I started as a fisherman, but discovered that I couldn't live on my net income.

Next I tried working in a muffler factory, but that was exhausting.

So I got a job at the shoe factory, but I just didn't fit in. It's ok, since it never touched my sole.

Then I took work as a historian, until I realized there wasn't any future in it.

I look forward to hearing from you. Best wishes for the Autumn.

Bruce
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