



FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

News from the History Department at Boston University

Greetings from Bay State Road! It's hard to believe that another semester has nearly reached its end! I suppose that means it's time to update you on the comings and goings in the BU History Department as well as to subject you to my latest (and not very good) history joke. Once upon a time (and no, I have no documentation for this account) Baldulf the soothsayer, prophesied to the king that his favorite mistress would soon die. Sure enough, the woman died shortly thereafter. Certain that his prophecy had caused the woman's death, the outraged King summoned the soothsayer and commanded him, "Tell me when you will die!" Baldulf understood that the king planned to execute him immediately, no matter what answer he gave. "I do not know when I will die," he cleverly retorted. "I only know that whenever I do die, you will die two days later."

Surely, you can find better jokes! So please keep in touch. Send stories, jokes, adventures, misadventures, cautionary tales, and any other material to me at bjschulm@bu.edu or just email history@bu.edu.

HISTORY BEYOND BU



On October 11, the Undergraduate History Association hosted *History Beyond BU*, an event which brought back former BU history majors to discuss how they have used their degrees in various fields including business, law, consulting, and medicine. An outstanding success, this event highlighted the important analytical, writing, and conceptual skills that history courses teach students and inspired students to think outside the box in searching for careers that value an education in the liberal arts.

Jana Sico, '08, discussed her work as an Investment Analyst at New Providence Asset Management in New York. She shared that having a history major made her interesting to employers, separating her from the traditional job applicants who all had finance or management degrees. When a student asked about if she felt she was "behind" when she started the job, she told students that even studying finance would not prepare you for the first couple weeks of a new job. She learned the ropes in the same manner with the same success as those with a business background. She actually excelled because of her ability to write

clearly and consider the context, something her history classes always emphasized.

Frances Wade,'07, formerly of the White House Records Office and now at a consulting firm for environmental policy also joined the panel. She discussed the importance of making contacts through internships and offered advice on how to take advantage of networking opportunities. While working at the White House, her knowledge of American history helped her understand the bureaucracy and think strategically about how to organize and categorize records from the presidential libraries. Now as a consultant, she continues to see how her ability to discuss current events from a historical viewpoint allows her to connect with more mature co-workers.

Craig Heeren,'03, formerly an instructor for Teach for America and now an attorney at Wilmer Hale in New York City, articulated how he continues to rely on his research skills to succeed in the courtroom. His first case required him to research shipping laws in the 1790's to establish legal precedents for a particular case. He frequently finds himself immersed in archival work, as he needs to be able to develop an argument and construct support. Writing a research paper for a history course, he told students, was in fact very similar to arguing a case in the courtroom.

Kyle Pronko,'09, a current medical student at Boston University, talked about how his history background helped him in his medical school interviews. Kyle also noted how in very practical ways, history taught him how to communicate with patients and write cohesive and succinct chart notes. Those current students with a biology or strictly scientific degree lacked the writing skills needed to thrive in all facets of medicine. He claimed he will be a much better doctor because of the important verbal and written communication skills he acquired while studying history.

Finally, Lucia Marconi,'10, a development officer at Historic New England, discussed how she works for a non-profit organization and focuses on fundraising and developing programs. While the historical knowledge she acquired on New England history drew her to the job, she ultimately finds that her strength in writing proposals and organizing fundraising programs came from her history major.

These diverse alumni not only showed students the practicality of a history major in the professional world, but they inspired them with their stories of professional success. In the words of Jana Sico, study what you love, and you will not only succeed in the classroom, but you will learn practical skills along the way.

MAKING HISTORY: UNDERGRADS MOUNT EXHIBITION AT MHS

I am delighted to invite the history community to an exhibit and talk at the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) presented by students of the course *Making History: Conflict and Community in Boston's Past*. The exhibit, "King Philip's War in Artifacts and Ideas," documents the culture of early Puritan settlers and Native Americans in the late seventeenth century. At its center is the devastating war, which cost 9,000 lives and destroyed nearly half of all New England towns.

Making History is a freshman-level class designed by members of our department and supported by BU's *Redesigning the Undergraduate Learning Experience* initiative. It covers three critical moments in the history of Boston: King Philip's War; the late 19th-century, when European culture shaped the city through art, architecture, and music, as well as wave upon wave of immigrants; and the 1970's, when racial tensions boiled over with court-ordered busing. Students work chiefly with primary sources in the course, whose assignments replicate the kinds of research and writing done by practicing historians. The MHS exhibit is researched, designed, and assembled by the members of the

class working with the staff of the Historical Society. It includes more than thirty letters, diaries, paintings, personal objects, weapons, and early printed sources from the time of King Philip's War, encompassing private life, religious beliefs, uses of the land, and the course of the conflict. Students will offer brief remarks describing the content and organization of the exhibit, and guests will then be free to circulate among the students and view their work.

"King Philip's War in Artifacts and Ideas" takes place **Thursday, December 13**, with a reception at 5:30 p.m. and the presentation at 6 p.m. Remarks will last about an hour. The Massachusetts Historical Society is located at 1154 Boylston Street, a short walk from Kenmore Square and just across street from the Fens. The event is free and open to the public.

ALUMNI NEWS

— John Burtis,'78, reports that his wife and fellow BU alumna, Betsy Bowman Burtis,'84, won election to the New Hampshire House on November 6. Betsey will represent their home town of Derry, NH.

— After graduating in 1991, Chris Hazen headed off to Hong Kong where he ended up having a fantastic career as a general manager of professional services companies in China and the United States. "I have reflected," writes Chris, currently Managing Director at ORIX Energy Services International, "at various points on the value of the History degree during that career and here are the key assets as I have come to appreciate them over time: seeing the forest AND the trees; a comfort level with the sweeping tide of history and how it relates to micro-level activities that can overwhelm people with more specialist backgrounds; a laser focus on deducing cause and effect relationships and patterns in complex business situations; and, the ability to skim very large amounts of written material very quickly and accurately identify key points and key implications in a pithy written summary." Not a bad skill set to prepare you for general management.

— David Dorfman,'88, LAW'91, checked in from the Andes where he trekked Machu Picchu on a trip with First Descents, a cancer survivorship program. Currently practicing elder law in Princeton, New Jersey, David is also an IronMan triathlete currently gearing up for his fourth IronMan as well as the 20th marathon since cancer survivorship. He also coaches triathlon as a USA Triathlon Certified Coach and helps other patients and survivors as a Certified Cancer Exercise Trainer



David Dorfman,'88, LAW'91

— Danielle (Lightburn) Duggan,'00, is an advancement officer at Lesley University, where she works closely with senior leadership and alumni to solicit major gifts in support of institutional priorities. In a wonderful account of several significant encounters she had in the History Department, Danielle reflected not only about the skills she developed and knowledge she acquired, but remembered the appearance of one guest lecturer in Professor Jill Lepore's

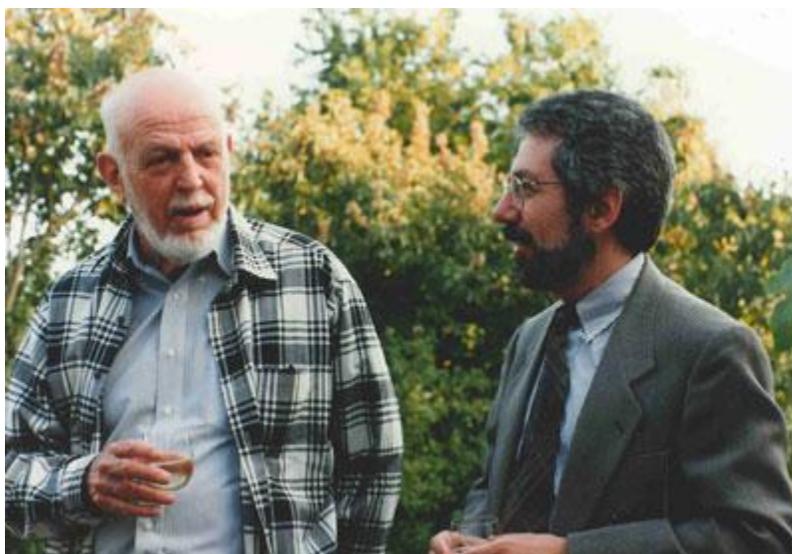
course on "Boston's Public Past." Fourteen years later, that speaker, Thom Duggan, is now her husband. They recently celebrated their eighth anniversary and also have a wonderful son Henry—see the photo of the "Future Terrier" sporting his BU gear at age 6 week—cheering for either the BU hockey team in the Beanpot or the BU women's synchronized swimming team, which Danielle helps coach.



Danielle & Thom Duggan's Future Terrier

TRIBUTE TO A MENTOR

At the heart of the academic experience is the relationship between students and teachers. We can all point to one or two (or, if we're lucky, three or four) mentors who not only influenced our professional and intellectual development, but shaped the kind of people we became. In September, Professor Charles Capper wrote a tribute to one such mentor, his graduate school adviser, Henry May, who passed away on September 29 at the age of 97. One of his generation's most distinguished historians, May was a Margaret Bryne Professor of American History Emeritus at the University of California Berkeley, where he had taught from 1952 until his retirement in 1980. Capper was one of his last PhD students. Originally published in the blog of the Society for U.S. Intellectual History, you can find Capper's tribute via the [link](#).



Professor Charles Capper (right) and his graduate school adviser, Henry May.

That wraps up this installment of news from Bay State Road. Of course, you need not wait through the long intervals between newsletters. If you're a BU History news junkie—and we hope you are—you can subscribe to the Department's RSS feed and get the latest news as it breaks. To sign up, visit the department's news page.

Finally, in this season of giving, I'm hoping that you'll consider making an annual gift to support the History Department. While a small gift will enable a student to present original research at a conference, a slightly larger gift lets a professor take students into the field or sends a student to an archive. You can rest assured that your donation will go directly to the department and help us to maintain its record of excellence in scholarship and community service. Particularly in these times of tightened budgets, we rely more than ever on your generous gifts to be able to do the extraordinary and extracurricular things that often have a tremendous impact on our students. If you want to join us in enhancing the student experience, please visit our [online giving form](#) and indicate that you'd like to support the History Department in the designation box.

Thank you for supporting excellence in the History Department.
Best wishes to you and your family for a healthy and happy New Year.

All best,
Bruce

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