Greetings from Bay State Road! I’m delighted to report an enthusiastic response to my first bulletin. I heard from many of you and gathered numerous poignant and telling stories of life in the department from the 1940s to the present. So keep those cards and letters (and emails) coming!

ALUMNI NEWS

John Burtis (CAS 1978) writes from Derry, New Hampshire, where he regularly gets together with BU classmates. He checked in with a touching story about his wife, Betty, an American history grad compared to his European history major. “You see,” he writes, “I passed Betsy in the hallway at Shelton Hall one summer day and nearly gasped out loud even though it took me ten years to wind my own oddly circuitous route to the altar. But nonetheless, it was still all over for me that very day in the old hotel. This year Betsy (CAS 1984) is running for NH state representative, and her BU credentials have brought her raves about hockey and the school’s increasingly glowing academic reputation, but all too few, it seems, panegyrics about the BU history program, as she canvasses door to door. Although she’s a Democrat and I’m a Republican, she has my vote.” If you’re interested, you can find Betsy’s website at http://www.burtsforstaterep.com.

Ken Mondschein (M.A. 1998) defended his Ph.D. at Fordham last December (Tom Glick served on his dissertation committee) and published his first book, Fencing: A Renaissance Treatise, last autumn.

Letta Christianson (CAS, GRS 2001), now Letta Page, writes from the University of Minnesota, where she’s the managing editor of Contexts, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Sociological Association. “In general,” she reports, “we work to translate sociologists’ findings into rigorous, relevant, and readable articles on everything from America’s Next Top Model to Astroturfing and the citizen-corporation. I also edit books and journal articles as a freelancer for academics of all stripes—as I’ve told Cliff [Backman] many times, all those weeks upon weeks of writing précis paid off!”

Emily Berman (CAS/SMG 2009) reports that “I teach Ancient Civilizations to the most incredible sixth graders in Boston Public Schools, a job I was able to secure through Teach for America (www.teachforamerica.org). Last year, when my students asked, ‘Why are we learning this, Ms. Berman?’ I would stutter and blurt the first thing that came to mind: ‘Because it’s cool!’ While I firmly believe that history is ‘cool,’ this response is not the most convincing to a cynical sixth grader. Luckily, I have learned how to present my material in a much more engaging and challenging manner. This year, my students ask the most wonderful and insightful questions; they simply thirst to know more and explore as much history as possible. Every day, it is my job to inspire my students to love learning, to communicate important concepts, to coach my students to develop and master their social studies skill sets, and to plan for my students to be pushed to think in ways they wouldn’t have otherwise.”

H. Allen Larsen (CLA 1948) recalls the “stimulating class forums on Chinese history in ’47…. I wanted that experience because our squadron became part of the 14th Army Air Force in 1944 and we were then ‘Flying Tigers’ in China during WWII. Recently, a ‘photobook’ has been published containing the Kodachrome images of people and places my friends and I experienced during our military service in Kunming, Chengdu, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Emily Berman at a professional training event for Boston Public Schools teachers
and Shanghai. A second printing of the Chinese language version of the book is underway now and the publisher is planning the English version for this year.” The book’s title: China in the Eyes of Flying Tigers.

**“DRAFTS OF HISTORY”**

Journalism has been called “the first rough draft of history.” How rough? In a new, interdisciplinary seminar, entitled “Drafts of History: Journalism and Historical Revision,” COM Journalism Professor Chris Daly and CAS History Chair Bruce Schulman together explore several episodes from U.S. History and examine how the first drafts of journalists compare to subsequent drafts by historians. In so doing, students analyze not only how new evidence and chronological distance alter understanding of important events, but also the ways that different eras ask different questions about the past, interrogate different sources, and appeal to different audiences. This course marks the beginning of what we hope will become frequent collaborations with faculty and students from other BU schools and colleges.

**BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

Several alumni asked for suggestions of interesting new history books, a great idea that will become a regular feature of this bulletin. This month, ARIANNE CHERNOCK, Professor of British History, recommends Mrs. Woolf and the Servants: An Intimate History of Domestic Life in Bloomsbury by Alison Light (Bloomsbury, 2008). Many of us, Chernock says, “are familiar with Virginia Woolf’s 1929 seminal feminist treatise A Room of One’s Own. But how many of us have stopped to consider the men and women who enabled Woolf to have her room of her own, that is, the servants who ensured that she had enough food to eat and clean linens? Light’s book chronicles the lives of the cooks and maids who made Bloomsbury possible. In doing so, it sheds important light on class and gender relations in Britain between the world wars.”

Professor CATHAL NOLAN, specialist in military history, suggests James McPherson’s Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief (2008) and Peter Paret’s The Cognitive Challenge of War: Prussia, 1806 (not as tough as it sounds, well-written, subtle, short). For more ambitious readers, Nolan touts Robert Doughty, Pyrrhic Victory: French Strategy and Operations in the Great War (2005)—”a deeply scholarly revisionist book that will change their view of the Western Front in WWI and of how Frenchmen really fight.”

**REMEMBERING WARREN AULT**

When I arrived at BU in 1994, I soon heard stories of Warren O. Ault, the long-time faculty member and department chair whose name adorns the annual prize awarded to the outstanding History graduate. A Rhodes scholar, Ault spent more than four decades at Boston University, interrupting his long stint in the History Department to serve as a second lieutenant during World War I. History grad RICHARD T. BURKE (CLA 1956, GRS 1957) remembers his early experience with Professor Ault: “It was the summer of my freshman year and I took a Spanish class to help meet my language requirement and also Ault’s History of England. A paper was required, and Ault passed out sheets listing possible topics, with three secondary sources for each. I elected to write on the Battle of Hastings and dutifully read each of the three books. I was surprised to read that the since-forgotten authors disagreed on many points and interpretations. I had never encountered this before. History was like some magnificent mystery.”

**SHAMELESS BRAGGADOCIO**

Lovingly affixed to my grandfather’s car was one of those bumper stickers that read “Let me tell you about my grandchildren.” And for him, that was no joke: he often took walks around the neighborhood searching out unwitting strangers and subjecting them to endless stories of our “triumphs.” My teenage self found that horribly embarrassing, but as Department Chair, I can’t resist emulating the family patriarch with these recent news items. . . . Last month President Obama nominated Professor ALLISON BLAKELY (photo inset) to serve on the National Humanities Council (the appointment is pending the consent of the U.S. Senate). . . . Ph.D. candidate BRIAN CASADY received a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship for work on his dissertation, “An African City’s Metabolism: A History of Energy, Environment, and Priority in Colonial and Post-Colonial Nairobi.” . . . On October 20, Professor JONATHAN ZATLIN appeared on WBUR’s “On Point” radio show. Zatlin discussed the Hitler exhibition at the The German Historical Museum, the first major German museum to tackle the subject. You can listen to the podcast at feed://www.npr.org/rss/podcast.php?id=510053.

That does it for this edition. Please keep in touch! Send stories, jokes, adventures, misadventures, cautionary tales, and any other material to me at bschulm@bu.edu or just email history@bu.edu.