History’s Happenings

IN THIS ISSUE

Student Spotlight  Faculty News  Hurricane Harvey

College of Arts and Sciences
Lamar University
Department of History
Students Awarded at HASBSEB Conference

A group of history majors in Dr. Scheer’s HIST 3390 course participated in the Annual Humanities, Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Education and Business (HASBSEB) Conference sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research. The conference was held November 18 and featured a wide variety of student research. Two history students, Shelvin Jackson and Tanner Driskill, earned awards for their research papers. Jackson earned second-place honors for his paper, “The Effects of Hurricane Harvey” while Driskill's paper, “Volunteers and Hurricane Harvey,” earned third place. The Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast provided cash prizes for the top three papers presented at the conference.

Fall Semester Students of the Month

The History Department would like to congratulate fall semester’s History Students of the Month. September’s award went to Billy Ray Whitaker, a sophomore History major and Anthropology minor. Lia Arce was October’s recipient. Lia intends to teach high school world history and coach girls soccer when she graduates from Lamar University. Junior History major and Political Science minor Alexander Nispel received November’s student of the month honor. After graduation, Alexander hopes to teach English abroad and then become a Foreign Service Officer for the United States Department of State. Brandi Fuller was the last recipient of the award for fall semester, earning the honor in December. Brandi graduated in December, completing a Capstone project on women during the Vietnam War. Brandi intends to return to Lamar University to earn her M.A. in History.

Celebrating Our Graduates

The History Department would like to congratulate the graduating seniors who received their diplomas at December commencement: Rebecca Butler, Candice Crouch, Brandi Fuller, Caitlin McAlister, Jose Rodriguez, and Ryan Romero. Students earning their M.A. degrees in December were: Adam Gorrell, Grayson Meek, Courtney Rhodus, John Rutherford, and Cheree Simon. Adam Gorrell completed his thesis titled, “Sound and Fury: Skinheads, Neo-Nazis, and White-Power Punk Rock.”

Pie-a-Prof Fundraiser a Messy Success

The Mu Chi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta held the “Pie A Prof” fundraiser. Lamar students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to pay $2, pick a history professor and pie them in the face. Students appeared skeptical at first, particularly because of potential retaliation on part of the professor. However, with a little encouragement and assurance that no repercussions would follow, they participated joyfully and created an excellent event.
Welcoming New Faculty

The History Department welcomed two new tenure-track assistant professors to Lamar University: Dr. Miguel M. Chavez and Dr. Brendan Gillis.

Dr. Miguel M. Chavez earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2010. He specializes in United States and Chicana/o history. His research interests focus on the social, political, intellectual, and cultural history of social movements. He is also interested in methodological aspects of United States and Chicana/o historiography and theory, contemporary urban studies, and the history of Mexican immigration to the United States.

Dr. Brendan Gillis earned his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 2015 and teaches courses on early North America, Great Britain, and the British Empire. A cultural historian of law and government, he is working on a book project titled *Cosmopolitan Parochialism: A Global History of the British Magistrate, 1690-1835*, which highlights the role of local decisions in constructing broader systems of rule. The American Antiquarian Society awarded Dr. Gillis the Hench Post-Dissertation Fellowship to support his research and writing. He has also received funding from such institutions at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library at UCLA, the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon, and the McNeil Center for Early American Studies.

Ongoing Faculty Success

Dr. Jimmy Bryan Jr. published *The American Elsewhere: Adventure and Manliness in the Age of Expansion* with the University Press of Kansas. He also presented a paper at the meeting of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic in July at Philadelphia.

Cassandre Durso, part-time instructor for the department, contributed “Quiet Passages” in “Nation of Immigrants,” an online resource through EDSITEment for AP high school teachers and college instructors. EDSITEment is an NEH program that provides curricular support for teachers nation-wide.

Dr. Jeff Forret enjoyed his Faculty Development Leave in the fall 2017 semester. He traveled to Washington, D.C., and New York City to research his next book, *Trajectories of Empire: U.S. Diplomacy, the Low Countries, and Slavery, 1814-1908*. He also traveled to Warwick, England, in October to deliver the keynote address at the 24th Annual Meeting of the Association of British American Nineteenth Century Historians (BRANCH). His current book, Williams’ Gang, on the domestic slave trade and the law, is nearing completion.

Dr. Mark Mengerink participated in The Ten Days That Shook the World, One Hundred Years Later: The Legacy of the Russian Revolution, an interdisciplinary panel marking the centenary of the Bolshevik Revolution. The panel included Dr. Mark Mengerink (History), Dr. Kevin Dodson (Philosophy), Professor Xenia Fedorchenko (Art), Professor Richard Gachot (Architecture and Design), and Professor O’Brien Stanley (Film). Dr. Mengerink spoke briefly on the evolving historiography of Joseph Stalin’s role during the Russian Revolution.

Dr. Mengerink was recently awarded a book contract from Routledge, an imprint of Taylor & Francis Group (UK) for his manuscript *Suicide, Jews and the Holocaust*. 
History Department students, faculty, and staff pitched in to help their local communities in the aftermath of Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey. Under the name Historians Helping Healing after Harvey (HHHH), the department pitched in on several projects. They collected school supplies for students at Pietzsch-MacArthur Elementary School in Beaumont. They also raised money for fellow Lamar University employees who lost everything in the storm. Individual members of the history community volunteered at the make-shift dog rescue established at Ford Park, with Cub Scout packs at Northpoint Church and The Anchor Church, and anywhere else needed as local communities tried to clean up and begin rebuilding from the worst natural disaster to hit Southeast Texas.