Goodbye Class of 2012!

Alas, it is time to say goodbye to the twenty-eight History majors that first walked into Leighton as dewy-eyed freshman before President Obama was elected. On May 22, the History Dept. Faculty hosted their 10th annual Senior Cocktail Party. Here are some photos from the event:

More pictures of the Senior Cocktail Party can be found on the Dept.’s Facebook page

The History Department would like to offer its particular thanks to Lily Sacharow and Raphael Coburn for their excellent work as the 2011-12 Student Departmental Advisors, starting with the New Student Week Academic Fair and running all the way through Spring Term Registration advising. Their enthusiasm, commitment to the major, and initiative (in starting new events like the sophomore information meeting in February) made them a wonderful asset for the history department!

Susannah Ottaway
Where will all the Seniors go?

Laura Michel will be starting an MA History program called “Eighteenth Century Worlds” at the University of Liverpool (England).

Clay Parrish will be a business analyst for Target in the Twin Cities.

Lee Conrads will spend the summer at home producing a play for the Kansas City Fringe Festival. Then she will move to Minneapolis. She plans to work, do some theater, “be kind of poor and very happy.”

For many more Senior responses, see the History Department’s Facebook Page!

Photos from Last Friday’s Honors Champagne Toast

Top row from left to right: Thabiti Willis, Nicholas Bellos (winner of the Williams-Harris Prize in African-American Studies), and Annette Igra; Lina Feuerstein (winner of Ellen Rogers Steif Award); Callie Millington and Lily VanderStaay (co-winners of the Ian Kraabel Prize).

Bottom row from left to right: Herman Zheng, Jabari Perry, and Charlie Rosenthal (co-winners of the 2012 Edward M. “Ted” Mullin Prize); Callie Millington, Laura Michel, and Ben Somogyi (not pictured) (co-winners of 2011 Ted Mullin Prize).

Mark The Date!

History reception for faculty, senior graduates and their families.
Friday, June 8 (Day before Commencement)
2:30 p.m., Leighton Front Lawn
On May 15, the History Department had its annual picnic!

Here are some snapshots of the event. For more pictures, check out our Facebook page...
Dear Colleagues, Students, and Alums:

My five-day visit in Xinjiang Autonomous Region, China’s remote and extraordinary northwestern terrain, is the most thrilling part of my soon-to-end 10-month Fulbright. I live and teach in Changchun, which borders Inner Mongolia, Russia, and North Korea, in the far northeast. Travel time by air from Changchun to Urumqi, Xinjiang’s capital, takes seven hours and underscores the vastness of the People’s Republic.

Xinjiang Normal University (XJNU) invited me to give two guest lectures. On Thursday, May 17, I gave a revised talk, “Is Barack Obama Martin Luther King’s Dream? A Qualified Misapprehension,” before a standing-room only audience. The next day in the lecture “Your Uncle Tom and My Uncle Tom,” I discussed the representation of Stowe’s title character in the US and China. Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) was the first American novel translated into Chinese in 1901. About 100 students and faculty attended the lectures.

The photo “Uncle,” which one of the boys in the called me, has many meanings in China. They are the sons of XJNU faculty. To them, I was an older man, a status consistent with China’s traditional sense of respect, decorum, and hierarchy. Only one boy in the photo is Han, China’s majority and ruling group. Can you identify him? The others are Uyghurs, a Turkic people, one of China’s 55-plus ethnic minorities. Before going to Xinjiang, I read Gardner Bovington’s The Uyghurs: Strangers in Their Own Land (2010). Essential.

Some brief comments about the other three photos. “With Friends” was shot in Urumqi’s Uyghur neighborhood where since the 2009 uprising, surveillance cameras are literally as common as streetlights. I saw no police presence, but there was a watchful contingent of about six military police standing in circle formation every day I walked the few blocks from my hotel to the university. The female in this photo and two of her post-graduate student classmates are Uyghurs and gave me a tour of the neighborhood and its flourishing bazaar on my last full day, Sunday, May 20.

The remaining two photos were taken on Saturday, May 19, in the old Silk Road city of Turban. Turban is a stark landscape from Urumqi and is a green oasis that, according to the National Geographic travel guide, is China’s lowest spot below sea level, “a basking kiln” in summer (temperatures can soar to 130F/55C) and a blistering freeze in winter. It was quite hot the day I made the journey. Several of the male XJNU professors and administrators in our tour group of nine (only one woman) carried open umbrellas to block the May sun. I had my trusted straw hat and sunglasses. The Kar Walls, an elaborate irrigation project, water grape vines. Tiny infant grapes awaited summer maturity when tourist descend on the city, eat grapes and drink as much wine, as they like – for a price. Carleton has two wind turbines, nothing compared with the miles and miles of turbines standing like soldiers between the outskirts of Urumqi and inner Turban. Quite a few oil rigs, too.
I'm laughing – really lost it – in the photo “With Uyghur Dancers” because of the undulating graceful snake-like thing the dancer in blue did with her neck as she simultaneously raised her arm. The photo was taken just after lunch at one of Turpan’s famous restaurants that serve excellent food. [By the way, there is a Uighur restaurant in the vast canteen on the university campus where I teach.] You haven’t lived until you’ve tasted Uyghur kabobs, yogurt, or noodles in a Xinjiang restaurant! During lunch – believe it or not, the women and a male partner danced to Uyghur music that sampled Michael Jackson!

Finally, “At Jiaohe Ruins” I’m with my interpreter, a Han, who has taught English at XJNU for 10 years. In the background are the ruins at Jiaohe, which were built on a plateau and occupied in the second century B.C. Jiaohe was the capital of the kingdom of Jushi, which was destroyed by a fire in the 14th century.

Harry McKinley Williams, Jr.
Laird Bell Professor of History
Harry Williams is in China for the year on a Fulbright teaching fellowship.

Don’t forget to “like” us on Facebook! The History Department Facebook Page is constantly updated and is your go-to source for information between newsletters. Job postings, alumni updates, talks at Carleton, ALSO: 3 NEW PHOTO ALBUMS FEATURING 2012 PICNIC, COCKTAIL PARTY & PRIZE WINNERS' TOAST... it’s all here! Check us out at:

http://www.facebook.com/CarletonHistoryDept

The History department has hired three new newsletter editors for next year, Charlie Rosenthal, Ben Welna, and Peter Hall. Charlie is currently editor of The Carl. Ben has previous newsletter experience, too. We are looking forward to an enthusiastic newsletter crew next year, led by Ellen McKinstry, our current newsletter editor.

Carleton Reunion 2012 - Save these dates and times!

Friday, June 15, 4-5:30 pm, Bald Spot, All Class Happy Hour. All faculty and emeriti /retired faculty and alumni are invited. Rather than offering individual department receptions, signage will help everyone find faculty by department groupings in the same large space. Libations won’t be available at dorm headquarters - come to the Bald Spot, instead! Bring your kids & take advantage of the Reunion Carnival, with the bouncy tent, face-painting, etc.

Friday, June 15, 1:15-2:30 pm, Leighton 304. History Faculty, Alumni, and Alumni of the Medieval and Medieval and Renaissance Concentrations (and all Reunion guests!) are also cordially invited to: *The First Crusade: Apocalypse, Rivers of Blood, and Renaissance in 1099*, a presentation by Jay Rubenstein ’89, Associate Professor of History, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Refreshments will be served and child care will be available. Questions? wnorth@carleton.edu. See additional websites to read more about Jay and The First Crusade at: http://quest.utk.edu/tag/jay-rubenstein/; http://articles.latimes.com/2011/nov/06/opinion/la-oe-1106-rubenstein-apocalypse-20111106; and http://www.haaretz.com/culture/books/jay-rubenstein-on-the-apocalyptic-vision-that-drove-the-first-crusade-1.398660
MAY 29, 1953: Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reach the summit of Mount Everest, becoming the first to do so. News of this feat reached Britain on the day of the Queen’s coronation, adding to the celebration.

MAY 30, 1431: Joan of Arc is burned at the stake in Normandy for heresy. She was recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church in 1920.

MAY 31, 1909: The National Negro Committee, a predecessor to the NAACP, has its first meeting in New York City.

JUNE 1, 1974: The Heimlich Maneuver is first published in a journal of medicine.

JUNE 2, 1966: Surveyor I lands on the moon, becoming the first US spacecraft to soft land on another world.

JUNE 3, 1989: The crackdown at Tiananmen Square begins, as the government authorizes soldiers and tanks to advance on the space.

JUNE 4, 1912: Massachusetts becomes the first state to set a minimum wage. Oregon’s minimum wage for women, passed in 1914, was $8.25 a week. (Also editor Kenzie Zimmer’s birthday!)