NEWS/EVENTS:

SPRING BREAK starting March 15! Have a great time, and we’ll see you in the spring!

Our journalist, Wayne Soon, has published another article in “Singapore Today.” See last page!

OPPORTUNITIES:

Apply for an internship at the Newberry Library at the University of Chicago! Three internships will be offered at the Newberry Library for Summer, 2007. The positions are: MIDWEST MODERN MANUSCRIPTS INTERN, PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS INTERN, and RARE BOOK INTERN. http://www.newberry.org/research/internships.html?s Molly Schultz, Program Assistant, schultzm@newberry.org

Check out the many resources (including the job bank) at LibertyGuide.com!

The Ted Mullin Prize Committee will meet early in Spring term.

HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE DAY

March 9: 1916 - Pancho Villa leads 1,500 Mexican raiders in an attack against Columbus, New Mexico, killing 17.
March 10: 1629 - Charles I of England dissolves Parliament, starting the Eleven Years Tyranny in which there was no parliament.
March 11: 1985 - Mikhail Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader.
March 12: 1947 - The Truman Doctrine is proclaimed to help stem the spread of Communism.
March 14: 1492 - Queen Isabella of Castille orders her 150,000 Jewish subjects to convert to Christianity or face expulsion.
March 15: 44 BC - Julius Caesar, Dictator of the Roman Republic, is stabbed to death by Marcus Junius Brutus, Decimus Junius Brutus and several other Roman senators on the Ides of March.

TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK: (Same as last week’s question—come on guys, you can get this one EASILY, just use those fabulous
search-engine skills) Who was the first child born in Britain’s American colonies?

(email abramowa@ or feders@ with the answer BEFORE ALL OTHERS and win COOKIES!)

SENIOR BIOGRAPHY: NINA SCHWARTZ

Q: If you could meet anyone from history, who would it be? Alternately, who would you definitely NOT meet?
A: I would like to spend a day with the Pilgrims- they would offer a first-hand perspective of the roots of the modern country. There is really no one that I would not care to meet.

Q: What is your primary field? Why is it so fascinating?
A: My primary field is US women's and consumer culture studies. It is fascinating because the studies are applicable to every day life, and extend far beyond the discipline of history.

Q: So what's your comps on? Why'dya pick it?
A: My comps is on women's dress code reform in the US from 1955-1975. I picked it because I wanted my paper to be about a narrative of change, and wanted to focus on clothing, because clothing is such an interesting symbol of value reform.

Q: Do you have any advice for juniors trying to make their way in the major?
A: Yes- definitely start comps early. It takes a really long time to choose a realistic and interesting topic. Also, think carefully about which 395 you take, because I know a lot of people who used their 395 papers as a start to their comps. It's a really good way to see how you write on a certain topic before you start writing a 30 page paper on it.

Q: What makes you so special?
A: This is my last term at Carleton. This spring, I will be studying at the University of Salamanca, and will then head to D.C. in search of an internship for next year.
1. How did you become interested in history? Were you always interested in Latin American history?
I came to be interested in history in a fairly romantic way. I grew up on the bleeding edge of the hip hop revolution in the mid-1980s, when hip hop, and political hip hop in particular, went from being completely underground (at least in the Midwest) to becoming a full-fledged counterculture. I was up to my eyeballs in it, as something about that style of combative identity politics appealed to me. As a result, I ended up working for a music magazine in Michigan, which afforded me the opportunity to interview my idols, an ultra-lefty group called The Goats. Over the course of the interview it came out that one of the band members, Oatie, was a middle class kid from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan who had been working for NASA prior to forming the group. When I asked him why he had taken such a radical turn in his life, he handed me a copy of Howard Zinn’s *Peoples History of the United States*, which he actually carried on his person, like a bible. Needless to say, the next day I bought the book, and within a week it became the first history book I ever read cover-to-cover. So admittedly I began my life as a historian as a vulgar Marxist. I was very impressionable. The rest, as they say, is history. Within a year I took a Modern Mexico course at Michigan State with a professor named David Walker, and fell in love with Latin American history. He was the best lecturer I have ever seen, and he took me under his wing. I really owe my academic career to him.

2. What is the best book you’ve read in the last year?
I’m currently finishing my dissertation, so I no longer read books. But seriously, my favorite history book I read this last year was *Xuxub Must Die*. In it, Paul Sullivan (not a professional historian) recounts the sacking of a plantation in nineteenth-century Yucatán, and does so with an informal, journalistic prose, without losing the historical nuance of the subject. Impressive and admirable. In terms of non-fiction, I am a devoted follower of Paul Auster and Cormac McCarthy, both of whom published excellent books in the last year.

3. If you were to eat dinner with anyone you have studied, who would it be? And what would you eat?
There is old Latin American adage that talking politics is bad for digestion, so it would have to be somebody who would be fun and versatile. Unfortunately, this rules out most of the people I study – guerrilleros tend to be too disciplined, dogmatic, and devoted to the cause to have a sense of humor. Fun, in this sense, is the other opiate of the masses. Maybe they have a point. I guess the one guy who fits the bill would be Fidel Castro. I think he would be engaging, charismatic, fascinating, and maybe even fun. But it would have to be the 1959 social
revolutionary model, not the 21st-century Stalinist version. Fidel and I would sit down in front of a nice plate of moros y cristianos (Moors and Christians – traditional Cuban beans and rice), and then enjoy a couple of nice Cuban cigars while discussing revolution and baseball.

4. Any current projects that you'd like to talk about? Again, I am finishing my dissertation. First things first.

5. What was the coolest thing you've gotten to study? I didn’t really study it, but I was a participant-observer in the recent civil protest in Oaxaca. It was exciting to be in a movement like the ones I had studied for so long, but also a little sad. I was really taken aback by the amount of suffering endured by those who have nothing to do with the movement. I think it would be a good lesson for everyone who studies social movements.

6. Do you have any advice for undergraduates trying to make their way in the world? Be ambitious, but always take time to celebrate or be burnt out. You WILL work hard – that’s a given – so celebrate your little victories and let yourself be burnt out sometimes. If you always try to work through burn out you will end up either in a mental home, or with a Trans-Am and a hoop earring when you’re 55.

Or: “Take dead aim on the rich boys. Get them in your crosshairs and take them down.” (Herman Blume, *Rushmore*)

7. Tell us a joke. Telling a joke would simply take time away from the work of making revolution.

NEW ARTICLE Published in SINGAPORE TODAY - Feb 23, 2007

“Quelling that unease” by our own journalist, WAYNE SOON!

A possible population size of 6.5 million in 20 years' time was suggested by Minister Mah Bow Tan recently as part of the ongoing policy of attracting immigrants to Singapore.

Many Singaporeans still seem to be concerned about the downsides of immigration even as the government seeks to put Singaporeans first in its education and healthcare policies as well as critically developing new strategies for urban planning to anticipate the rise in population.

Issues ranging from foreign students topping the 'O' level charts thus reducing similar opportunities for local students, to the perception that foreigners are taking away jobs from Singaporeans, and the increasing strain on public facilities brought
about by increased immigration continue to simmer among Singaporeans. Can these concerns be alleviated by a rational discourse based on thorough research on the role of immigration and immigrants in Singapore?

The Singapore Government has maintained strongly that having an open immigration policy helps to fill critical sectors in our economy, especially in the finance, technology and creative industries. In addition, the government asserts that having more foreigners in Singapore helps to make Singapore a more vibrant and cosmopolitan polity.

Besides enunciating the benefits of having such a policy, one wonders if more research can be done on the effects of immigration on the Singapore polity.

While basic data such as the education level of Permanent Residents? generally quite high? can be gleaned from the Singapore Statistics, much more research is needed in order to have a clearer picture on the impact of immigration in Singapore.

On the issue of job creation, what is the net increase in jobs created for Singaporeans as a result of having more foreigners into Singapore? The relevant methodology and expertise for such a survey can be sourced from the labor economists in think-tanks and higher institutions in America ? where they regularly assess the impact of immigration on America's job markets.

Another area of possible research will be the perception of foreign students in Singapore. Currently, it seems that emphasizing on intrinsic values such as fostering a global vision on economic and political issues, creating international awareness on transnational problems and creating life-time friendships across boundaries may not be enough to convince young Singaporeans on the benefits of having more international students amongst their midst.

Should there be more research into evaluating the benefits of international students in Singapore and how well they integrate with the domestic students?

Besides helping to formulate relevant policies to help foster integration, research in this area could glean into whether having more foreign students in our schools mean more or fewer opportunities for academic, leadership and social advancement for young Singaporeans. It could also shed light on whether international students in Singapore create issues of "zero-sum" game in Singapore. For example, are fewer young Singaporeans able to achieve honors in local universities in Singapore as a result of the presence of more competitive international students?

A common grouse against increasing our population is the strain it puts upon our public transportation. Improving the quality of our public transportation will go a long way into convincing Singaporeans that an open immigration policy does not correspond to a decline in the quality and efficiency of public transport in Singapore. More research can be invested towards rethinking our philosophy
towards public transportation as we bear in mind an upsized population.

Immigration is likely to become an important issue of contention as the country moves towards the projected population of 6.5 million people.

However, the debate on immigration should go beyond the emotional and intrinsic towards a rational discourse based on rigorous research on the issue of immigration in Singapore. If all residents and foreigners will need to live in a growing Singapore due to the necessities of globalization, is increasing resources for research on immigration not the least we can do?

Wayne Soon, the author of this article, is a Singaporean attending Carleton College in Minnesota.