Partnership with the White House Historical Association

A U’s History Department and the White House Historical Association (WHHA) have joined forces! The WHHA, “a nonprofit educational association founded in 1961 for the purpose of enhancing the understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the Executive Mansion,” and our department have created a strategic partnership. AU history graduate students participated in the WHHA’s recent symposium on the War of 1812 and the WHHA has generously funded a fellowship for one of our MA public history students.

This year’s fellow is AU MA candidate Julie Boser Rogers. She is assisting WHHA historian Bill Bushong and his staff with historical research, publications, and new media.

History Professor Max Paul Friedman and Dr. Erica Munkwitz win AU’s Top Awards

A U has named Max Paul Friedman its 2014 Scholar-Teacher of the Year, AU’s most prestigious faculty award. Professor Friedman is recognized for his exceptional teaching, concern for students and colleagues, outstanding scholarship, a record of significant contributions to the scholarly life of the university, and commitment to high standards of professional and personal life.

Friedman’s award-winning books include Nazis and Good Neighbors and Rethinking Anti-Americanism. He has won more than fifty awards to support his research, capped most recently by a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, one of the most prestigious awards in academia, for his new study tentatively titled The Containment of the United States: Latin American Diplomacy and the Limits of Principle.

Friedman has also been awarded a Fulbright Specialist Grant to support his research in the Foreign Ministry archives in Buenos Aires, where he is also teaching a graduate course.

In May 2014, Erica Munkwitz received her doctorate and was honored at the College of Arts and Sciences graduation with the AU Award for Outstanding Scholarship at the Graduate Level.

The award, recognizing “exceptional academic accomplishments and scholarly contributions” made by graduate students across the campus, is highly competitive.

Munkwitz, who earned her doctorate under the supervision of our historian of Britain Laura Beers, enthused: “It’s such an honor, and one that I share with everyone in the History Department, especially those who have supported and mentored me for all these years.”

Munkwitz’s dissertation, “‘Straight Ahead and Over Everything’: Women and Equestrian Sports in Britain, 1772-1956,” grew out of her research seminar with Professor Eric Lohr. It explores the impact of women’s participation in horse sports on gender norms, imperial ideology, and national identity in Britain over the long nineteenth century. Munkwitz’s research was

Continued on Page 3
Looking at the class of 2018, I think back to Europe’s class of 1918. They, too, assembled with excitement on a warm August day, with a very different four years ahead. When the guns of August started firing, they marched off with bands playing and flags flying, the French soldiers dressed in brilliant uniforms of red and blue…

There would be no homecoming for ten million young people. When the war was over, Woodrow Wilson put on his top hat and joined other leaders in Paris to change the world. We know what this did to fuel hatreds in Europe. We forget that when a young Vietnamese student named Ho Chi Minh showed up to ask Wilson whether self-determination applied to his country, he couldn’t get in. He took his disappointment to Moscow and his next hero, Lenin. Meanwhile the top hats in Paris carved the map of the Middle East into new states that replaced overlapping ethnic identities with cleanly-drawn lines marking Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq. Mission accomplished.

This isn’t an indictment of idealism. The problem was the notion that we alone know how to change the world, and we don’t have to listen to the people who live in the part we’re changing, whether it’s a faraway jungle, a desert, or downtown. We need world-changers. But before setting out to change the world, try letting the world change you.

AU students are well-placed to do this. You’ll learn in your classes, which are engaged with the burning questions of our time. Maybe you’ll study abroad, and discover that they have their own answers. Maybe you’ll escape the American disease of monolingualism, and learn to speak another language….

So let the world change you, but then please do change the world. We need your help. We need you to build an economy that values work as much as capital. We need you to fix Congress, and get more women into it, which may be the same thing. We need you to learn to produce things and move them around without using the same old Industrial Revolution-era fuels that are destroying the only planet we’ve got. Lincoln called America “the last best hope of Earth.” Your generation may well be the Earth’s last best hope….

“We need world-changers. But before setting out to change the world, try letting the world change you.”

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Max Paul Friedman Delivers Remarks at 2014 Opening Convocation

History Department Faculty and Staff

Front Row: Kelsi Schagunn, Sarah Adler, Alan Kraut, Pamela Nadell, Gautham Rao, Michael Brenner, Pedram Partovi.

Second Row: Kate Haulman, Theresa Runstedtler, Peter Kuznick, April Shelford, Justin Jacobs, Eric Lohr.

Third Row: Lisa Leff, Mary Frances Giandrea, Katharina Vester, Elke Stockreiter, Richard Breitman, Anton Fedyashin.

Back Row: Eileen Findlay, Daniel Kerr.

Not pictured: Laura Beers, Mary Ellen Curtin, Kathleen Franz, Max Paul Friedman, Allan Lichtman, Erica Munkwitz.
The Honorable James Symington, 2013 Symington Award recipient Rebecca Darnell, IRC Founder and Chair Susan Carmel Lehrman, and IRC Executive Director Anton Fedyashin

The Initiative for Russian Culture (IRC) at American University promotes greater understanding of Russian culture’s versatility and richness among all Consortium students in the Washington area.

In academic year 2013-2014, the IRC continued its film screening series, opening with Sergei Eisenstein’s first classic, Strike. The IRC co-sponsored an exhibit of Siberian photographs at American University’s Katzen Museum of Art. In coordination with the museum, the IRC screened Mikhail Kalatozov’s Letter Never Sent—a hauntingly beautiful survival story of four Soviet geologists trapped by a wildfire in Siberia. The IRC then partnered with the International Trade Center at the Ronald Reagan Building to screen Lev Kuleshov’s silent comedy The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks, and with the Hillwood Museum in a symposium dedicated to Catherine the Great’s art collection, which the Hillwood showcased with an exhibit of rare pieces from the period.

In the summer of 2014, Professor Fedyashin took a group of Consortium students to Moscow and St. Petersburg to explore “Russia’s Twentieth Century: A Cultural History.” The class-trip revolved around Mikhail Bulgakov’s Master and Margarita, which is so realistic in its portrayal of Moscow, that Professor Fedyashin led his students on a four-hour tour of the sites described in the novel. The IRC also sent AU Consortium students to study language in Russia, take summer classes at MGIMO-University in Moscow (one of these was the James W. Symington Award recipient), and to take summer classes at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Under the aegis of the IRC, the Medish Fund for language acquisition also sent another AU student to Russia for language acquisition. At a total of eighteen, this was the most students to have traveled to Russia for study with the help of the IRC to date.

Overall, more than 11,000 Consortium students and guests have attended the IRC’s events during its three years, with students participating from George-town, George Washington, the University of Maryland, College Park and Baltimore County campuses, Howard, George Mason, and of course AU. We are grateful to the IRC’s Founder and Chair Ms. Susan Carmel Lehrman for her extraordinary generosity in supporting the IRC.

Photographs courtesy of the IRC.
Accomplishments

Professor Anton Fedyashin Featured in Washingtonian

In June 2014, Prof. Anton Fedyashin was featured in the Washingtonian magazine for his popular course, “The Cold War and the Spy Novel.”

For the past five years Fedyashin has had his students reading old spy novels – by Clancy, Deighton, Fleming, le Carré, and Ludlum, as well as less remembered names like Semyonov and Littell – to reflect on the years when they were the “commies” and we were the “imperialist west.” The list naturally skews toward Western authors—the Soviets were “a closed society.” “What better way is there to deal with stereotypes than spy novels?” Fedyashin asks. “They may not be serious literature, but you can use them to teach serious things.”

This inquiry fits nicely into Prof. Fedyashin’s mission as executive director of AU’s Initiative for Russian Culture (IRC). The IRC promotes greater understanding of Russian culture’s versatility and richness. With screenings of classic Soviet and Russian films with discussions led by visiting experts, academic conferences, exchanges of student choirs and theater groups, art exhibits, musical performances, and other events held at American University, the Embassy of the Russian Federation, and elsewhere in the Washington Metropolitan area, the IRC has brought the riches of Russian culture to thousands. Its events have become a magnet for AU and Washington Consortium students interested in exploring Russia’s past.

Excerpted from June 2014 Washingtonian article by Guy Gugliotta.

Alumni News

Borislav Chernev (PhD) accepted a term position in Russian History at Newcastle University in England.

Zachary Diebel (BA) received a James Madison Fellowship, which will fund his MA in history while he continues to teach full time.

Anna Friedlander (BA) is almost done with law school at George Washington and will be working as an associate at a union-side labor law firm in DC after she passes the bar exam.

Amy Harris (MA), who earned her PhD at UC Berkeley, published Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike (Manchester University Press, 2012) and was promoted to associate professor with tenure at Brigham Young University.

Ayah Nuriddin (BA) completed her MA at University of Maryland, College Park and will begin her PhD at Johns Hopkins in the fall.

Richard Paul (BA) published an article, “How NASA Joined the Civil Rights Revolution: Integration came to the nation’s space agency in the mid-1960s,” in Air and Space Smithsonian Magazine. The article is based on his forthcoming book from University of Texas Press.

Award-Winning FDR and the Jews

Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman’s FDR and the Jews (Harvard University Press, 2013), an exploration of what President Franklin Delano Roosevelt did (and did not do) to protect the Jews of Europe during the Third Reich, won the American Jewish Studies Celebrate 350 National Jewish Book Award. The book, which was widely reviewed in publications such as The New York Times and the New Republic, was also a finalist for the L.A. Times Book Prize in the category of History.

Presidential Management Finalist

Mattea Sanders, who received her MA in Public History in May 2014, was one of a record 34 AU finalists for the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program, and the only one hailing from the College of Arts and Sciences. The PMF, which received 7,000 applications, is a highly selective program intended to develop a cadre of potential government leaders by providing salary and benefits in addition to training and mentoring.

Sanders’s Humanities background surely helped her application, because, as she puts it, “I learned how to analyze information, how to write well.” Currently pursuing her doctoral degree at UNC-Chapel Hill, Sanders hopes ultimately to “be in a position where I can help develop an expansive vision for the way the public learns about and experiences history.”

Sanders encourages her colleagues in the History Department at American University to apply for the PMF program: “I believe that you all have a unique position to not only succeed in the process but also take up fantastic positions in the federal government.”

Adapted from web article by Devin Symons.
Professor Alan Kraut’s Tenure as President of the Organization of American Historians

“George Washington, or Macy’s?”

This is the question that first sparked University Professor Alan Kraut’s interest in history.

“I grew up in New York City, where my father worked in a factory located in a building on John Street, not far from Wall Street. On some Saturdays he worked a half day and I would go along. I was about seven or eight years old at the time. After lunch, my father would ask me if I wanted to visit the George Washington statue in front of Federal Hall and go to Fraunces Tavern where Washington said farewell to his troops after the Revolutionary War, or see the toy soldiers at Macy’s department store. My father loved history, and we would go upstairs at the tavern to see the Washington artifacts. If the choice was Macy’s, we talked about the toy soldiers, and their uniforms and guns, and the wars they fought,” he said.

These adventures around New York inspired Kraut’s lifelong career of research, teaching, and writing about history. Most recently Kraut served in 2013-14 as the 107th president of the prestigious Organization of American Historians (OAH), the world’s largest scholarly organization promoting the study and teaching of American history.

“Professor Kraut is well suited for this important role leading the OAH,” said Dean Peter Starr. “He is an exceptional teacher, scholar, and leader, with an unparalleled passion for history.”

Under Kraut’s leadership, OAH launched a new magazine, The American Historian, pushed for funding to support the scholarship of young academics, and created a mentorship program for the next generation of historians. He also used the scholarship of the OAH to take a stand on important public issues of our times.

Now that his term as OAH president is over, Kraut, the prize-winning author or editor of nine books, is back teaching at AU and serving as the incoming mentor for the Frederick Douglass Distinguished Scholars Program. Professor Kraut also recently celebrated 40 years of service to AU.

Adapted from web article by Patty Housman.

Professor Michael Brenner elected International President of the Leo Baeck Institute

Michael Brenner was elected International President of the Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) in October 2013. The three institutes in Jerusalem, London, New York, and the branch in Berlin contain vast archival collections and libraries. LBI organizes public events and publishes the renowned Year Book on German-Jewish history. The LBI was founded in 1955. Its first president was the leader of the German-Jewish community during the Holocaust, Leo Baeck.

In 2014, Prof. Brenner was awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his efforts to re-establish Jewish Studies in Germany and for his active part in the reconstruction of Jewish life there. The Order of Merit is awarded by the President of Germany and was conferred by the German Minister of Justice in New York.

Professor Pamela Nadell Vice President for Program of the Association for Jewish Studies

Pamela S. Nadell, History Department Chair, has been elected to serve a two-year term as the Vice President of Program on the Board of Directors for the Association for Jewish Studies.

Founded in 1969, the Association for Jewish Studies is a learned society and professional organization that seeks to promote, maintain, and improve teaching and research in Jewish Studies at colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning.
Faculty News

Richard Breitman completed co-editing *To the Gates of Jerusalem: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1945-1947*.

Laura Beers is currently on research leave at the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom.

Michael Brenner co-edited a volume of the *Journal for Modern Jewish Studies*. His books appeared in Japanese, Danish and Czech translations. He was elected to the American Academy for Jewish Research.

Mary Ellen Curtin was promoted to Associate Professor.

Anton Fedyashin is working on his book *Superpower Subconscious: The Cold War and the Spy Novel*.

Eileen Findlay’s new book, “*We Are Left Without a Father Here*: Masculinity, Domesticity, and Migration in Post-War Puerto Rico” will be published by Duke University Press in late 2014.

Kathleen Franz is completing work on the new permanent exhibition “American Enterprise” at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History.

Guggenheim Fellow Max Paul Friedman is conducting research in Argentina, Mexico, and the U.S. for his next book.

Mary Frances Giandrea taught the department’s first seminar on violence in the pre-modern world.

Kate Haulman published an article in *Early American Studies*.

Justin Jacobs published an article on the politics of foreign archaeological expeditions to China in the *Journal of Asian Studies* and gave a talk at the Wilson Center on Xinjiang exile politics during the Cold War.

Dan Kerr earned tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor. He continues to work on his second book, *To What End? Using Oral History to Document Homelessness and Poverty*.

Alan Kraut held a China Residency at Northeast Normal University in Changchuan supported by the Ford Foundation and published *Ethnic Historians and the Mainstream: Shaping America’s Immigration Story*.

Peter Kuznick was promoted to full professor. A young reader’s edition of his co-authored *Untold History of the United States* is forthcoming.

Lisa Leff’s *The Archive Thief* is forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

Allan Lichtman is a columnist for TheHill.com. His column, “Who Runs America?” generated more than 14,000 shares and more than 1,000 tweets.

Eric Lohr’s new edited volume *Russia and World War I: Empire and Nationalism at War* will be published this fall.

Pamela Nadell published a chapter in *Sisterhood: A Centennial History of Women of Reform Judaism* and “Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend,” in *Chasing Dreams: Baseball and Becoming American*.

Pedram Partovi is completing his book manuscript, *Popular Film and the National Imagination in Modern Iran*.


Theresa Runstedtler presented her work at the European Social Science History Conference in Vienna, Austria. She spent the summer in the University of Maryland’s archives researching a new project about the tragic death of Terrapin basketball star Len Bias.

April Shelford published “Civiliser le savoir créole” in *Mobilités et circulations des savants*.


MA student Sydney Johnson performs in a living history theater program about 1964’s Freedom Schools at the National Museum of American History.

Public History students tour Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County, VA.

Freedom Rider

“As a history major, I just love people’s stories. And as a writer, I love people’s stories. So I just want to know the Freedom Rider experiences, and learn about things that can be transplanted to today’s work,” says Tatehona Kelly, a senior history major from Ohio.

Kelly was selected by the Department of Education as one of 49 students to participate in a Civil Rights bus ride. In July of 2014, Kelly rode a bus from Washington, D.C. to Richmond, Virginia alongside some of the original freedom riders, activists who rode buses in the American South as a challenge to segregation laws, in order to commemorate and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. The bus made stops at several sites important in the struggle for racial equality, which, Kelly notes, is ongoing. A member of the Black Student Alliance, Kelly has volunteered for the DC Books to Prisons projects and held internships with the Innocence Project and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Adapted from web article by Gregg Sangillo.

Student News

Tatehona Kelly poses with original freedom rider Hank Thomas

Undergraduate Students

Claire Dapkiewicz won a 2013 American University James Mooney Award.

Nicholas Felt won the inaugural spring 2014 Valerie French Undergraduate Seminar Prize for his paper “Transition of Patriarchy and Changing Female Sexual Identities during the Cultural Revolution.”

Caitlyn Sellar received the Spring 2014 Janet Oppenheim Prize for her paper entitled “Consumerism on Display: Museums and Public Desires.”

Madeline Steiner won a 2013 Janet Oppenheim Research Award.

Seventeen undergraduate students were also chosen to receive the inaugural 2014 Anna Kasten Nelson Award for Excellence in History.

Public History students tour Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County, VA.

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Paul Behringer, Andrew Chatfield, Lauren Duval, Jordan Grant, Anna Kaplan, Lindsey MacNeill, Loren Miller, Nguyet Nguyen, Nicole Orphanides, Leah Shore, and Evan Taylor received Spring 2014 American University Travel Grants.

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Founded in 2011, the Student Historical Society works to promote the study of history at American University and encourages students to get involved in the field of public history. Over the past year, the SHS expanded its membership and prominence on campus.

Highlights of the past year include a series of discussions with Department of History Professors Alan Kraut, Dan Kerr, Gautham Rao, and Max Friedman; a behind-the-scenes tour of the collections at the National Museum of American History; and the group’s largest-event-to-date, a History Trivia Night competition that drew over 70 participants and spectators. The SHS also worked with the AU Archives to begin a campaign called “A Historical U,” highlighting American University’s history with display tables and campus signs.

The SHS kicked off the Fall 2013 semester with a National Mall scavenger hunt and a trip to Mount Vernon. For more information, follow the SHS on Facebook or email: historysociety@american.edu.