Reflections...

by Averill Earls

After three consecutive years of serving on the GHA executive board in various capacities, you could say I’ve acquired a bit of professional service experience. Three Plesurs, twelve brownbags, nine student research showcases, dozens of thank you cards, meetings, grant applications, uncontested (or unwanted?) elections, potlucks, semesterly mixers, a bowling night, an Elmwood Ave pub tour, a Graduate Student Handbook, a new Constitution—in total, what I hope I have accomplished in these three years is a legacy, a loose set of expectations for efficient and viable ways to build a stronger sense of community in our department and help our graduate students develop and stay connected academically, professionally, and socially.

After I served my term as President from 2011-2012, I returned the next year as Secretary, aiding Jake Newsome in his presidency, and this year as Vice President to Josh Schroeder’s Presidency. I believe in leaving things better than I found them. Now the new GHA executive board has a Plesur checklist; a handbook to send to new Ph.Ds (Jake’s baby); a GoogleDoc folder full of templates, forms, suggestions, and tips; a Facebook presence; a Constitution that outlines the duties of each officer and the goals of the GHA; and with the return of Marissa in the fall as Treasurer, a sense of continuity on the e-board. There was, of course, not any point at which I worked alone. I want to thank the other officers who’ve come and gone these last few years—Elisabeth George, Justin Donahoe, Sarah Handley-Cousins, Jake Newsome, Kathryn Lawton, Billy Pritchard, Josh Schroeder, Katie Smyser, and Marissa Rhodes. You were all instrumental in creating this legacy. I feel confident David, Justin, and Tommy will join Marissa in carrying on that which we started, and making the GHA their own, and better.

And to conclude this brief moment of self-indulgence and unabashed satisfaction with my GHA service, I offer my thanks to all of you. For coming to mixers, potlucks, brownbags, for presenting your work in showcases and at Plesur, for coming to meetings and voting and just being there. I hope you had as much fun as I did.

We should all take a moment to silently (or vocally!) thank our department’s support staff, particularly Mary, our Graduate Program Administrator, and the faculty. Thank you to Jason Young for your term as DGS, and welcome to Jon Dewald. Thank you to David Herzberg for supporting the Master’s students. And thank you Liana Vardi, who, in my time with the GHA, always volunteered to chair a panel at Plesur before we had to ask. Your support has been invaluable.

This newsletter is for all of us, a celebration of our accomplishments, a trip down memory lane for the year-in-review.

“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.”
Abigail Adams
Getting our social on

What a year!

We held our semesterly Departmental Mixers—Beer & Snacks in the fall, Wine & Apps in the spring. It’s always great to kick the semester off with mingling and reconnecting. Thanks to the graduate students and professors who stopped by the Room-Formerly-Known-As-Lincoln!

Averill hosted an end-of-summer BBQ and a Halloween party, and David opened his home for end-of-semester celebrations in the fall and spring. Other than having to push Frank’s car all the way down Windspear in December, the potluck-style gathering is always a huge hit among graduate students, and David’s quiz games are entertaining (and a bit incendiary!)

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<th>Kan-Jam &amp; nbs at Ave’s</th>
<th>White Elephant gift exchange at the Winter end-of-semester potluck at Dave’s!</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Quizmaster Dave &amp; conversation at end-of-year celebration potluck!</td>
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<td>Cards Against Humanity at the Halloween Party – Andee, Josh, John, Cate, &amp; Dave all dressed up!</td>
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Brownbags & the Grant Writing Group

This year the GHA held four amazing brownbags geared toward providing important academic and professional suggestions and information to our graduate students.

In the fall the returning graduate students led a brownbag for new students offering tips for TAing, adjusting to Buffalo life, finding things to do, and managing the course load. Dr. Jason Young led a brownbag for finding and getting research and dissertation funding. This conversation spurred the formation of a Grant Writing Group, which met three times in the fall discussing the construction of a C.V., the development of a project description for grant applications, and a meeting where we discussed examples of grant applications that the participants wrote. The Grant Writing Group was aided primarily by Dr. Young, although Dr. Herzberg led the session on creating a Project Description. Ideally this sort of collaboration between faculty and students will be revived each semester as both grant applications and job applications are in need of peer and professional review for submission.

In the spring we held a Historiography writing brownbag, led by Dr. Erik Seeman. Dr. Seeman offered some really insightful pointers for the general writing of historiographies, a necessary skill for an historian at any level of their career. Dr. Victoria Wolcott and Dr. Adam Malka also led a Job Market brownbag in the spring, in which they discussed the application process, best practices for creating a teaching portfolio and tailoring yourself to fit into job postings, and general ideas about where to look for a job. The key theme of that brownbag was “Apply, apply, apply”—apply for every job that is even remotely viable.

The GHA is grateful to Drs. Young, Herzberg, Wolcott, Malka, and Seeman for their support this year in leading our brownbag sessions.
The GHA has striven to give back to the Buffalo community at least once per academic year since 2010. In the last four years, the GHA has organized volunteer days for the Buffalo Habitat for Humanity, Buffalo ReUse, Re-Tree WNY, and Friends of the Night People. If you know of an organization that can use a group of 10-15 volunteers for a service period of 3-4 hours, contact David Strittmatter (strittmatter.david@gmail.com).

Re-Tree WNY
In October ten GHA members joined the non-profit Re-Tree WNY committed to replacing trees Buffalo lost in a 2006 storm in planting trees on Daemen College’s campus.

Friends of the Night People
In January members of the GHA spent over 40 hours (spread among 10 people) welcoming and serving homeless men and women at Buffalo’s Friends of the Night People service center.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?
There are many non-profit organizations in Buffalo in need of volunteers. Check www.AllForGood.com, a tool that connects volunteers to organizations, for an opportunity near you.

This year we had an unprecedented number of paper and panel submissions for Plesur. The research presented throughout the day was truly an exemplary range of the up-and-coming work that graduate students in our department are doing, but also in graduate programs throughout NY state, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Canada.

The GHA was pleased to welcome Erin K. Rowe of The Johns Hopkins University as our keynote address. Her talk, titled “Imitating the Redeemer of the World: Blackness, Slavery, and Martyrdom in the Early Modern Hispanic World” was well-received and engaging.

This year we held Plesur in the Student Union, rather than at the location of the last three Plesurs, the Center for Tomorrow on the edge of North Campus. The space was great for the keynote and breakout rooms, and it put us way under budget for our year’s budget (allowing leftover money for the purchase of a Keurig for the grad lounge!) but it came with challenges—namely, the space not being set up for a conference when we arrived in the morning. Even with that little bump in the morning, however, the conference was a great success. The day concluded with a tasty reception at MacGregor’s.

A huge THANK YOU to the volunteers, especially Joe, Sheryl, and Ding for committing their entire Saturday to Plesur, as well as our chair/commentators: Liana Vardi, Sasha Pack, Claire Schen, Erin Rowe, Adam Malka, Victoria Wolcott, Lakisha Simmons, and Kristin Stapleton.
Plesur Graduate History Conference Program

Session I:

Room A – Culture & Society in Early America
Chair: Dr. Adam Malka, UB

Andee Nero, UB: “To Promote Useful Knowledge: The Writing of Early American History of Science”
Paul Zwirecki, UB: “His day is marching on: Apocalyptic Belief in Antebellum America”
Richard H. Tomczak, SUNY College at Brockport: “Where number and rank do not apply: Social Status and Prisoners of War in the Revolutionary South”

Room B – Culture, Identity, & Race in the Twentieth-Century
Chair: Dr. Erin K. Rowe, The Johns Hopkins University

Layla Abdullah-Poulos, SUNY Empire State College: “Islam’s Introduction to the American Cultural Stage: The Black Muslims”
Jessica Anderson, SUNY Albany: “The Albany Housing Movement: the Brothers and the NAACP”
Melinda Dolezal, West Virginia University: “Quagmire in Lebanon: The Unwelcomed Syrian-Israeli Proxy War”

Session II:

Room A – Agency in the Cold War
Chair: Dr. Sasha Pack, UB

Danielle Duncan, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania: “Cold War Feminism: A Brief Look at How the Cold War Helped Soviet Women Advance in the Workplace, Military, and Educational System”
Mark Sanko, West Virginia University: “Quagmire in Lebanon: The Unwelcomed Syrian-Israeli Proxy War”

Room B – State and Society in Britain & the Anglo Atlantic
Chair: Dr. Claire Schen, UB

Carly Naismith, University of Western Ontario: “A Sticky End: The Struggle of the British and Canadian Governments to Eliminate Bodysnatchers in the Nineteenth Century”

Session III:

Room A – Imperialism & Transnationalism in the Americas
Chair: Dr. Liana Vardi, UB

Kenneth Allen Lane, SUNY Binghamton: “To Secure the Lands of the King: The Ohio Company as an Agent of Empire in the Early 18th Century”
Miguel Dario Cuadros Sanchez, SUNY Binghamton: “Latin America in the US & the World Approach”

Room B – Print Media & Changes in Female Political Protest
Chair: Dr. Victoria Wolcott, UB

Chelsea Gibson, SUNY Binghamton: “Alice Stone Blackwell and the Struggle for Russian Freedom, 1900-1910”
Jessica Dereleth, SUNY Binghamton: “To Refute By Practical Example’: Suffrage Autobiographies and the Construction of Womanly Political Protest.”
Rachel Stevens, SUNY Binghamton: “Woman in Church and State: Annis Ford Eastman’s Fight for Socioeconomic Justice through the Pulpit”

Session IV:

Room A – Gender, Sexuality, & Society around the Globe
Chair: Dr. Lakisha Simmons, UB

Averill Einars, UB: “Conducting a Male Brothel: Prostitution, Same-Sex Desire, and ‘Manliness’ in Ireland”
Qiong Liu, UB: “The Burden of Bachelorhood: A Murder Case involving Homosexual Love in the 1930s”

Room B – War in the Mid-Twentieth Century
Chair: Dr. Kristin Stapleton, UB

Ahn Sy Huy Le, UB: “Nature in the Chinese Civil War: Friction, Revolution and the Guerrilla Warfare (1927-1934)”
David Strittmatter, UB: “A Recovery Shot from the Rough: Golf in Wartime Britain”
Richard D. Deverell, SUNY College at Brockport: “Constructions of Race during WWII: Captain America and Superman Comics as Primary Sources”
Justin Masucci
Justin studies the history of United States imperialism. He received his master’s degree at UB, and his master’s thesis, “Unveiling Imperialism: U.S. Public Works Projects in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1915 – 1934,” was the Honorable Mention for the 2012 – 2013 M.A. Thesis Prize. Justin received his bachelor’s degree in history from Canisius College, where he graduated summa cum laude with History Honors and All-College Honors. This year Justin broadened his study of U.S. imperialism by researching the U.S> colonial experience in the Phillipines at the turn of the twentieth century, findings that he presented at this year’s Plesur conference. Born and raised in Rochester, he is a lifelong western New Yorker. In his spare time, Justin enjoys following and talking about politics, taking long walks, listening to musical artists ranging from Beethoven to the Beatles, and watching and talking about American football, especially the Buffalo Bills.

Ahn Sy Huy “Tommy” Le
Hailing from Hanoi, Vietnam, Tommy graduated from Wabash College in Indiana with a degree in Economics and Chinese studies. He came to UB with an initial interest in Modern Chinese cultural history, studying the shift in the feminist discourse in China between the tumultuous periods of the Cultural Revolution and Reform China. After a year at UB, he now dabbles in both Chinese and Southeast Asian history, exploring the history of Sino-Vietnamese relations through the lens of the Chinese diasporic community in Vietnam in the 1970s. The spring semester was very different and also challenging as he began his interdisciplinary journey by taking two theory courses in the transnational studies department. He helped organize and participated in a graduate micro-conference on queer relativity and genealogy. He presented a paper on the visual representation of homoerotic orientalism, arguing that the queering of the colonial subjects was a significant regulatory mechanism that the colonizers used to penetrate their subjects. This summer, he was named a Kathryn Davis Fellow at Middlebury College and will be participating in an intensive 10-week advanced Chinese language training in Vermont before getting back to Buffalo for another school year. He plans to do more research on global diaspora, particularly Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, and study up a bit on urban and spatial theories next year. As a vested academic interest, he reads widely on gender and feminist theory, and hopes to somehow combine this perspective with his research on diaspora someday. When not in school, he likes to travel, read, blog, and study languages.

Siyue “Sheryl” Liu
Siyue just completed her first year in the History Ph.D. program. She focuses on modern Chinese history with a particular interest in the political life of the Chinese elite after the 1911 Revolution. She is also interested in China-Southeast Asia relations since the 1950s. Sheryl is from a city in southern China. She likes to explore different cultures worldwide, and is particularly a fan and amateur painter of hand-drawn Japanese comics.

Andrea Nero
Andee grew up in Bensenville, IL, a western suburb of Chicago. She originally attended Elmhurst College in nearby Elmhurst, IL where she was pursuing a degree in journalism, but, after taking classes with history professor, Robert Butler, she realized that she was more interested in describing events taking place further in the past than journalism would allow. With a particular interest in early American history, she decided to move on to a larger school, Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX, which had more resources to help her develop scholastically. In 2011, she completed a B.A. in history and stayed on at SHSU after graduation to work on an M.A. in the same subject under the guidance of Rosanne Barker, Brian Domitrovic and Nicolaas Rupke. She completed her thesis on the reasons and costs of British failure to recognize Benjamin Franklin’s Gulf Stream maps in 2013 and completed her M.A. in history that year. She is currently working at UB with Tamara Thornton, who is helping her to think about early American intellectual life in new ways. Outside of school, she volunteers for the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site, where she serves as a docent, and at Community Beerworks, where she learns about craft brewing and community building.

David Strittmatter
David Strittmatter hails from Monticello, Iowa, and came to UB to study Modern Britain and sport. Before returning to pursue a doctorate, David worked for an education company in South Florida for three years, developing curriculum and organizing conferences. David earned a Master’s degree in modern history at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, where his thesis focused on social distinction and national identity during the first century of the British Open golf tournament. He spent his undergraduate years at Marquette University in Milwaukee, where he majored in journalism. While at Marquette, David studied abroad in London for a semester and won the Chris Farley Scholarship for Humor. In his first year at UB he presented at four graduate conferences: UB Milton Plesur Graduate History Conference; the Tri-University Conference for the Trans Disciplinary Study of Sport at Western University in London, Ontario; the Graduate History Forum at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; and the Graduate History Conference at the University of Rochester. In his free time, David enjoys pub quizzes, baseball, playing tourist wherever he may be.
Graduate Student Showcase!

Our graduate students have traveled the United States and the world conducting research, published articles and book reviews, won national and University-wide fellowships & grants, had babies and planned weddings. Take a moment to be proud of your classmates!

**Xiangli Ding** passed his qualifying exams in May 2014, and will defend his prospectus later this year.

Ph.D. candidate **Averill Earls** spent three months conducting research in Dublin, Ireland in the summer of 2013, and has been working with her sources in the months since. She presented part of her chapter on Irish masculinity and male sex work at the Milton Plesur Graduate History Conference, and her paper with Marissa Rhodes (UB) and Katie Hindmarch-Watson (Colorado State University) was recently accepted for the October 2014, Urban History Association Conference. She has been awarded fellowships for her research from the Mark Diamond Research Fund (2013-2014), the Graduate Student Employees Union Professional Development Fund (2013), the Plesur/Naylor Research Fellowships (2014-2015), and the Gender Institute Ph.D. Fellowship (2014-2015). She also served as Vice President of the GHA this past year.

**Philip Guingona** (Ph.D. candidate) was named a Humanities Institute Ph.D. Fellow for 2014-2015.

Ph.D. candidate **Sarah Handley-Cousins** traveled to Washington D.C., Brunswick, M.E., and Albany N.Y. to conduct research for her dissertation. She presented some of that research at the Humanities Institute Works-in-Progress series in February 2014. She has been asked to be a blogger for the history blog Nursing Clio, and has contributed short essays to the New York Times Disunion blog, and reviewed books for H-Net and The Civil War Monitor. She is also preparing to present at the Society of Civil War Historians biennial meeting in June.

**Ethan Horgan** completed the M.A. program and was accepted into the UB History Ph.D. program, which he will begin in the fall.

**Kathryn Lawton** passed her qualifying exams with distinction in May 2014. She will defend her prospectus later this year and begin conducting research on her examination of the deinstitutionalization of state psychiatric facilities in New York state.

**Qiong Liu** completed her coursework in the Ph.D program and will begin her exam readings in the fall. She presented her paper “Burden of Bachelorhood” at this year’s Plesur conference.

**Amanda “Maggie” Magdalena** passed her qualifying exams in May, and will be conducting some preliminary research over the summer before defending her prospectus later this year. She was the graduate student representative on the hiring committee for the Africanist position, and she just submitted a book review for publication to the African American New York Life and History journal on Beyond Home Plate: Jackie Robinson on Life after Baseball by Michael Long. She is also the new editor of the Humanities Institute Doctoral Research Conference. She also served as President of the GHA this past year.

**Elizabeth Masarik** completed the M.A. program this semester, and was accepted into the UB History Ph.D. program, which she will start in the fall. She also presented at the York University Graduate Conference in Toronto.

**Dr. Rick Mikulski** successfully (wooooo!) defended his dissertation and graduated in May. He also presented at a conference at George Mason University in March, the “Virginia Forum: Traffic,” and has been asked to write a book review for the Alberta Journal of Educational Research.

**W. Jake Newsome** (Ph.D. candidate) successfully defended his prospectus in Fall 2013. He was awarded fellowships and grants to support his research “Remembering Things Once Hidden: German & American Memories of Homosexuals in the Holocaust, 1949-2008”: UB College of Arts & Sciences Dissertation Fellowship (2014), German Historical Institute Doctoral Research Fellowship (2014), John Naylor Dissertation Fellowship (2013-2014), Mark Diamond Research Fund Grant (2013-2014), Anne R. Tirone Research Fellowship (2013-2015), Graduate Student Employee’s Union Professional Development Grant (2013). He visited 4 German cities to do archival and interview research and is conducting research in 4 American cities as well. He will be presenting a paper at the 2014 annual German Studies Association conference this September in Kansas City, MO. He and his partner Dennis have been planning their wedding, which will take place in July in Boston.

William “Billy” Pritchard (Ph.D. candidate) and his wife Lisa welcomed baby Noah Robert into their family on February 25th. He and Sarah Handley-Cousins also just had a panel endorsed by the Society of Civil War Historians accepted for the 2015 AHA program.

**Marissa Rhodes** served as GHA Treasurer and finished her course work. She presented at the Plesur Conference a paper titled “Dirty Domestics: Wet-Nurses and the Eighteenth-Century Parent’s Moral Dilemma in the Urban Anglo-Atlantic.” She selected my exam fields and reading committee: Dr. Dewald will oversee my readings in early modern Europe, Dr. Bono my readings in medicine and the body, and Dr. Schen my readings on early modern England, and expects to start readings June 1 and to sit them in February 2015. She just found out that her paper, with Averill Earls, has been accepted for the Urban History Association Conference.

**Joshua Schroeder** served as President of the GHA this past year, and completed his coursework for the Ph.D. program. He will begin his qualifying exam readings in the fall.

**Katie Smyser** and her husband Andy welcomed baby Imogen Agnes “Ginny” into their family in April. Katie also served as Secretary of the GHA this past year and completed her coursework.

**Dr. Paul Zwiericki** successfully defended his dissertation in the spring of 2014 and graduate in May.
Congratulations to the 2014-2015 Graduate History Executive Board:
David Strittmatter, President | Tommy Le, Vice President | Justin Masucci, Secretary | Marissa Rhodes, Treasurer

Valedictory letter from the President
Josh Schroeder

It was a busy but successful year for the Graduate History Association. As expected, the lion’s share of our time and energy went into the 23rd Annual Milton Plesur Graduate History Conference; however, we were also able to put on a number of brownbags, research showcases, volunteer events, and the all-important social gatherings.

In addition to brownbags covering topics from entering the job market to writing a historiography paper, we also held two graduate student research showcases this year. Alyssa Kohler shared her research for her master’s thesis on France and the Holocaust, and Steve Peraza also discussed his progress on his dissertation, “Suing the Master: Slave Litigation as Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Louisiana.” We also participated in two volunteer events with local organizations. In the fall semester over ten students helped Re-Tree WNY plant dozens of new trees at Daemon College. In the spring we again had over ten students assist the Friends of the Night People in giving food and clothing to the people of Buffalo in need. Both events were a lot of physical work for a group of bookworms but they were rather enjoyable experiences.

We are proud to report that this year the GHA was able to grant $450 to graduate students for attending and presenting at conferences all over the United States and Canada, with each student receiving $50 to help cover expenses.

The Plesur Conference in April was definitely the capstone of our year’s events. Even though we experienced a slight setback in the morning we were able to quickly recover and get the conference going with the admirable efforts of our volunteers and faculty (special thanks to Joseph Humnicky). The keynote address given by Dr. Erin Rowe of The Johns Hopkins University was great and we had an eclectic mix of topics presented this year. To match the diversity of topics we were proud of the especially large number of presenters from outside of UB. Graduate students from all over New York as well as out of state and Canada descended upon Buffalo to present at our conference.

While no less busy and hectic than previous years, 2013-2014 was a success for both the GHA as a whole as well as a number of individual students. With theses and dissertations being defended, exams being passed, paper being written, and research being conducted all over the world, UB graduate history students accomplished quite a bit. Next year’s GHA executive board is already cooking up some ideas for us to look forward to. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who helped make this year a success. Enjoy your summer! See you all next year!