

HISTORY FROM THE HILL

VOLUME XIX, ISSUE I

WINTER 2012/SPRING 2013

FROM THE CHAIR

I am happy to welcome all our students, undergraduate and graduate, back to campus. I hope you had a happy and healthy holiday season.

As a cornerstone of the humanities and social sciences at Tufts, the History Department plays a vital role in the intellectual life of our campus. I hope that you will check out our department web-site at ase.tufts.edu/history. You will find useful information on major re-

quirements, faculty, and course descriptions. In addition, unique among the departments at Tufts, the history department web-site includes a list of courses we intend to offer each fall and spring semester for the next three years, to help you plan your undergraduate career.

The History Department is happy to welcome **Man Xu**, our newest full-time faculty member. Professor Xu is the department's professor of Chinese History;



Prof. Virginia G. Drachman

her focus is on Middle Period and Late Imperial China, Women, and Ma-

See Chair
continued on page 6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2012 HISTORY AWARDS	2
INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR HUGH ROBERTS	3
FOSTER, A FULBRIGHT AND FRANCE	5
HISTORY SOCIETY UPDATE	6
INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT-NOWARA	7
2011-2012 MARINA SPIROPOULOS FELLOWS AWARD	8
2011-2012 GEORGE A. DAVID FELLOWS AWARD	10

WHAT'S NEWS IN EAST HALL

Professor **Reed Ueda** received the Senior Research Fellowship from the Faculty Research Award Committee (FRAC) for the spring of 2012. He did research in Boston area archives and locations in the Pacific coast region to prepare his book-length study, "Connecting the Atlantic and Pacific: Migration in the Making of Transoceanic and Transcontinental Inter-Regionalism."

Professor **Leila Fawaz** has been honored

by the French government with the rank of chevalier, or knight, in National Order of the Legion of Honor (Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur) in recognition of her "exemplary personal commitment to French-American relations."

In February of 2012, Professor **Peniel Joseph** was named the founding direction of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy at Tufts.

Professor **David Ekbladh's**

"Present at the Creation: Edward Mead Earle and the Depression Era Origins of Security Studies," appeared in *International Security* 36 (Winter 2011/12) and his recent book, The Great American Mission, (Princeton, 2010), came out as an e-book in the fall of 2011. Professor Ekbladh was interviewed on NPR by the WGBH Boston Radio Program "Innovation HUB", "The Modernization of America" which was broadcast on April

21, 2012. Also available online at: <http://www.wgbh.org/articles/The-Modernization-of-America-6061>. Ekbladh was also the recipient of the 2012 Truman-Kauffman Research Fellowship from the Harry S. Truman Library Institute; a Tufts Collaborates Collaborative Research Grant for 2012-2013; and a 2012-2013 Research Grant from the Rockefeller Ar-

See What's News
continued on page 2

2012 HISTORY AWARDS

Each year, the Department of History awards a series of prizes to deserving Tufts undergraduates. Here are the prizes that were awarded in Spring 2011 and their recipients.

The **Albert H. Imlah European History Prize** is presented for distinguished work in the history of Western civilization. This year's prize was awarded to **Natalie Wiegand**, (LA'12).

The **Albert H. Imlah Excellence in History Prize** is awarded to a senior in recognition of outstanding achievement in History. This year's recipients of the Imlah Excellence in History Prize were **Emily German**, (LA'12) and **Allister Chang** (LA'12).

The **Russell E. Miller History Prize** is awarded to an undergraduate of exceptional ability whose participation in advanced history courses has demonstrated an eagerness to explore problems of historical analysis and interpretation. The 2012 Miller History Prize was presented to **Katherine E. Balch**, (LA'13).

The **Daughters of the Revolution Prize Scholarship** is awarded on recommendation of the History Department to a student demonstrating marked interest in American colonial history as well as excellence in schol-

arship. This year's prize scholarship was awarded to **Jacob T. Denney**, (LA '13).

The **Gerald R. Gill Prize** is awarded annually for the best paper written for a history research seminar. The award recognizes outstanding research and exceptional analysis. The Gerald R. Gill Prize was presented to **Jacob T. Denney**, (LA '13).

The **Vida H. Allen Prize** is awarded annually to the undergraduate History major who is judged to have written the best honors thesis during that academic year. This year's recipient was **Allister Chang**, (LA'12), whose thesis was titled, "A History of the Taiwanese Gay Rights Movement. Allister interviewed a cohort of Taiwanese men who founded the Mattachine Society – the group that forged space for gay male identity in Taiwan. Under the direction of Prof. Kris Manjapra, Allister worked with four faculty members from multiple disciplines to develop his challenging thesis. According to one his committee members, "Some students choose a thesis topic that is the equivalent of a swan dive, and with luck they execute it perfectly. Allister chose the equivalent of a triple twist, and he pulled it off brilliantly!"

WHAT'S NEWS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

chive Center.

The spring of 2012 saw Lecturer **David J. Proctor's** teaching at Tufts recognized with the creation of an endowed fund in his honor by the Aidekman family to benefit undergraduates in the International Relations Program. Dr. Proctor also participated, this past summer, in the inaugural year of the BLAST program (Bridging Liberal Arts Success at Tufts). The program provides support for those students who may be first generation college students, those whose high schools may have lacked significant numbers of AP courses or whose high schools have little history with Tufts. Dr. Proctor taught History 54—Europe from the French Revolution to the Present, to 22 BLAST scholars over the course of the second summer session. The course focused not only on learning the history, but also on improving student's writing skills. The program proved a strong success and plans are underway to continue it in the summer of 2013.

A VIEW FROM THE HILL—EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

A very big thank you to Professors Virginia Drachman, Elizabeth Foster, Hugh Roberts, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara and Reed Ueda for their valuable contributions. Thanks also to our 2011-2012 David and Spiropoulos Fellows, V. J. Seltzer and Colleen Chausse for sharing their experiences.

In the fall of 2013, *History from the Hill* will mark a significant milestone, our 20th anniversary. My hope is to make our 20th anniversary issue one in which we will look back to our beginnings while seeing all that lies ahead of us. As Yeats said, to speak and write "of what is past, or passing, or to come."

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR HUGH ROBERTS



**Professor Hugh Roberts at
Bawiti in Bahariyya oasis,
Western Desert, Egypt**

Q1: What made you choose to accept a position at Tufts? What attracted you here? And now that your second semester here has begun, what are your impressions? How do you view the students, the department and the university in general? Are you pleased with the decision you made to join the Department of History at Tufts?

The short answer to your first two questions is...the ideal academic job! I am primarily a specialist on North Africa and within North Africa, the countries of the Maghrib (former French North Africa) and above all Algeria. The United States has been ahead of the UK in recognising the value of studying North Africa and American universities have gone some way towards integrating North Africa into an enlarged conception of Middle Eastern studies, with the term MENA (Middle East and North Africa) increasingly used to define what is becoming a unified area of study. But full-time teaching positions for North Africa specialists have remained scarce here and non-existent in Britain (outside Francophone studies) until very recently. I have accordingly spent much of my career as a researcher and writer outside academia. So when Tufts advertised a chair in North African and Middle Eastern History, this was an exceptional opportunity I could not pass up. That I was able to come here I owe in equal measure to the late Edward Keller, whose early tours of duty in the US Foreign Service took him to Algeria and Morocco and whose bequest endowed my chair, and of course to my colleagues of the History Department who offered the position to me. It means that I at last have the opportunity to teach my subject full time, a dream come true.

My impressions so far are almost entirely positive and I have not regretted my move for a minute, although coming from Cairo to Medford has been quite an upheaval. I have been very touched by the warmth of the welcome extended to me by the Department and the University as a whole and this as counted for a lot. I very much like the atmosphere in the Department; it feels like an academic community, and it has been a real pleasure beginning to get to know my colleagues. I had a great group of students on my course on Middle East History in my first semester; they soon made a habit of asking pertinent questions, which kept me on my toes, and it was a pleasure to teach them. I still have a lot to learn about the University as whole; I feel as if I have barely begun. But I like the campus very much; from the aesthetic point of view alone it is a great pleasure to be at Tufts. Add in the Fares Center and its lively program and the Tisch Library and its very helpful staff, the fact is I am already feeling privileged if not spoiled. So as you can see my honeymoon period here is not over yet.

Q2: What is your research focus right now?

I have this month been putting the final touches to a longstanding project, a book on Kabylia, the most important Berber region of Algeria, in the Ottoman period. It provides a reconstruction, involving a combination of history and anthropology, of the Kabyle polity – the character and logics of the remarkable political organisation of the Kabyle Berbers – at the end of the Ottoman period and the moment of the French conquest, and then provides a political and social history of the region from the early 16th century to the late 18th century in order to explain the way this polity developed in a complex interaction of Kabyle society with the Ottoman Regency of Algiers. Once this is finished and a companion volume in French of essays on more recent aspects of Kabylia's relationship to the wider Algerian state is also completed, I look forward to moving on to other projects I have long been working on. These include a study of the crisis of the Algerian state since the 1980s and a book on Islamism in North Africa as a whole.

See Roberts
continued on page 4

ROBERTS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Q3: Tufts prides itself on having faculty who are both extraordinary scholars and superb teachers. What are your views on that balance between research and teaching? How does your scholarship influence what you do in the classroom? How do you maintain a balance?

It's too early for me to claim to have struck a balance. At this stage my view remains an abstract one concerning the principle of the matter, which is that of course ideally teaching and research should complement, stimulate and enrich each other. To what extent it is actually possible to realise this ideal here I don't know. My own case is no doubt an unusual one in that, having come back to teaching after a long absence, I have to give it clear priority over my research and writing projects for the time being, so attaining the desired balance is some way off. Where my own work already feeds into my teaching is in the way I can bring North African material into the teaching of Middle Eastern History, thereby in effect enlarging this into MENA history. This can be disconcerting for some students, but I found during my first semester that most students accepted this very willingly, since it provided fresh perspectives on Middle Eastern issues – bringing the Moroccan case into discussions of monarchies in the region or the Tunisian and Algerian cases into the discussion of Arab nationalism or Islamism, for example, and including the Berbers along with the Kurds and Christians in the discussion of minorities in the region. At the same time I have been enjoying teaching the history of countries outside my own research focus; it is refreshing for me to spend time reading about and preparing lectures on Iran and Iraq and Turkey and Israel/Palestine and I don't doubt that my own research and writing will eventually be the beneficiaries of this.

Q4: Speaking of balance, what do you do for fun when not enjoying the atmosphere at Tufts?

Music, cooking, reading novels, bird watching, swimming and walking up mountainsides, although I am yet to get around to the last two of these over here. I look forward to visiting some beaches and the Berkshires before long.

Thank you, Professor Roberts.

SCHMIDT-NOWARA
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

when I taught a class on the Caribbean or Spain's era of rule in the Americas I had students from communities drawn from the very places we discussed each week. Even if they were born in the US, they had an abiding interest in different parts of the Caribbean and Latin America. So their hunger for knowledge about those histories led me to write that book, as a way of responding to the questions that they asked over the years. Obviously, Tufts is not part of an urban fabric like New York's so I expect the questions and concerns of the students to differ, though in what way it is too soon to tell. In any case, what I am trying to say is that the way students engage with a historical topic leads me to see it in a new way. The interactions of classroom, archive, and writing desk are absolutely essential.

Q4: Speaking of balance, what do you do for fun when not enjoying the atmosphere at Tufts?

Cook, read mystery novels (especially in the great American vein of Jim Thompson and Dashiell Hammett), suffer along with fellow Red Sox fans, and rejoice with fans of Spain's national soccer team.

Thank you, Professor Schmidt-Nowara.

SUMMER 2012: FOSTER, A FULBRIGHT AND FRANCE

BY ELIZBETH FOSTER

I am in Paris this summer on a Fulbright grant, beginning my research on a new project on the Catholic Church (Catholic missions in particular) and decolonization in francophone Africa. This topic interests me because the Church formed one of the most important links between France and its African colonies (despite the militantly secular orientation of the French state after 1880), and Christianity in Africa is one of the most enduring legacies of European/African contact in the colonial era. I have completed a book on Catholic missions under colonial rule in French Senegal, and I am eager to learn more about how the Church, which was still staffed primarily by Europeans in the 1950s and 1960s, disassociated itself from French colonial rule and negotiated the era of independence. This meant contending with socialist and communist political movements and the possibility of Muslim theocracies in some locales. I am hoping this investigation will shed new light on the era of decolonization and the ways in which non-state actors helped to shape the transition. I suspect it will also point to the limits of “decolonization” and the persistence of ties between France and its colonies.

Fulbright requires that I maintain an affiliation with a French University. This turned out to be a windfall for me—my French “host”—a professor at University of Paris 8 (Saint-Denis) put me on to a private archive that I would never have even been able to conceive of, let alone find, on my own. My work on Catholic sources has led me to a lot of random private archives housed in mission headquarters and retirement facilities in France and Italy, but this one has been one of the most obscure that I have used. It is the archive of the “Aide aux Eglises d’Afrique”: a group that “helps the Church in Africa”. It is the successor organization to the French Antislavery Society, founded in 1888 by the famous missionary bishop (later Cardinal) Lavigerie, and it has kept documentation dating back to the late nineteenth century. My French colleague put me in touch with the woman in charge and we set up a rendezvous. The Association is headquartered in the rue Monsieur (Monsieur being the younger brother of King Louis XVI, later Louis XVIII), just around the corner from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Overseas Possessions in the rue Oudinot, in a swank area of Paris. In fact, there is an old annex of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in rue Monsieur (currently under construction) whose wrought iron gates feature naked Africans holding up bundles of produce—clearly a holdover from the colonial era!

I met the woman in charge (she still disburses funds to needy parishes all over Africa for well digging, books, school supplies, etc.) and she immediately astonished me by giving me all the necessary door codes to enter the building, the offices, use the photocopiers, etc. Apparently, she was delighted that anyone took an interest in the archives, which were carefully rearranged just a couple of years ago. She then took me down two flights of stairs, across a courtyard, down two more flights of stairs, through an underground chapel to a dark and dingy basement room. In the closet in the back there was a large armoire. She unlocked it and showed me nine gigantic boxes inside, filled with documents pertaining to the Society’s activities on behalf of the Church in Africa. She then gave me the key to the armoire, made me lead her back through the labyrinth to make sure I knew my way, and instructed me to come back whenever I wanted to work, even when she was away on her four week French vacation.

I have been working through these files slowly and I am finding some fascinating documents that pertain to my project. There is a lot of correspondence with the Vatican, which is significant because the Vatican archives for the period that interests me are sealed. All in all, I am very impressed with the generosity of the staff here, who are happy to see me come and go and allow me to root around in their basement unsupervised. The French have a reputation for being cold and rude, particularly in bureaucratic settings, and I have definitely had some unpleasant encounters at some of the major state-run archives and libraries. Yet I have found that people who manage small private archives are nearly all incredibly warm and friendly, and are usually thrilled that someone cares to look at what they have. For example, five years ago I discovered that a private Catholic foundation for orphans had some archival holdings on a missionary priest that had been active in Senegal. I called them on July 13th, the eve of Bastille Day, the French national holiday (when no one in the country goes to work). The archivist was going on vacation the following Monday, so she invited me in on Bastille Day itself and proceeded to make me a bunch of free photocopies. I was completely flabbergasted and very grateful, as the material ended up being cru-

See Foster
continued on page 6

CHAIR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

terial Culture.

We also are happy to have with us this year **Kerima Lewis**, who is a Lecturer in Early American history, and **Brian McCommack** who is a Lecturer in African American history. In addition, Barbara **Corbett** will be back this spring to teach a course in Latin American history.

Our History Society is alive and well. I hope those of you with a special interest in history will get involved, if you have not already done so. You can learn details about it in the History Department office in East Hall 010. The History Society provides an opportunity for you to get involved in the department beyond your course work, to get to know faculty outside the classroom, and to help plan undergraduate events. The Society also offers the chance to participate in the production of an impressive journal, The **Tufts History Review**, which publishes annually the best work of students across the country and internationally.

HISTORY SOCIETY UPDATE

BY TOMAS MANGHI

History Society is looking forward to a second semester filled with historic fun! Our group is made up of history majors and non-majors alike who meet biweekly to enjoy pizza and engaging historical conversation. Every meeting we discuss a historical topic- topics in the past have ranged from "What is your favorite revolution?" to "Which historical figure would you most like to go on a date with?" (Valentine's Day special). We also discuss History classes at Tufts, and as it comes time to register for classes for the upcoming semester, we have a course advising night to help people sort out their schedules and decide which classes they will most enjoy.

A big part of History Society is our trips. We take short trips to historical sites in the Boston area- this past year; we traveled to the African American Meeting House in Bos-

ton, and enjoyed a tour of the fortresses at George's Island. We also took a day trip to Salem, MA, visited the Witch Museum, and explored the colonial town and its mysterious past. Last November, some of us tested our knowledge of Boston history at the Guy Fawkes trivia night at the Old State House. In previous years we have visited the Newport Mansions in Rhode Island, Plymouth Plantation, Durgin Park in Quincy Market and a host of other historical sights in New England.

In addition to our conversations and trips, we also host movie nights and lectures. Last year, we screened *Tales of the Trade- a Story from the Deep South* and discussed the North American slave trade. On the lighter side, we have also watched movies that are loosely historical such as *The Last Samurai*, *Braveheart* and *Kingdom*

of Heaven. Additionally, we also collaborate with the Tufts Historical Review to sponsor a lecture each spring- last year; Dr. Alfred Andrea from the University of Vermont presented a lecture called "Crusaders in the Eastern Mediterranean- Thieves and Tyrants?" in which he analyzed and contrasted the images of the chivalrous knight and the bloodthirsty medieval barbarian.

History Society will meet bi-weekly, Mondays at 7:30 PM in Eaton 202.

This year's History Society board consists of:

Victoria Stevenson (2013) and
Tomas Manghi (2013)-
Co-Presidents
Lindsey Wright (2013)-
Treasurer
Karen Adler (2013)-
Trip Planner
James Barasch (2014)-

FOSTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

cial for an article I was writing, and for my subsequent book.

This is the kind of research experience that I enjoy most—uncovering unforeseen treasures in the most unexpected places. It is also exciting to know that I am one of only a few people who have yet examined these sources critically and carefully. I am looking forward to coming home in September and sorting through my findings.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT-NOWARA



Professor Schmidt-Nowara in his Tufts office

Q1: What made you choose to accept a position at Tufts? What attracted you here? And now that your second semester here has begun, what are your impressions? How do you view the students, the department and the university in general? Are you pleased with the decision you made to join the Department of History at Tufts?

When I was a graduate student at Michigan, I knew and admired the first Prince of Asturias Chair, José Álvarez Junco. We even collaborated on a book called *Más se perdió en Cuba: España, 1898 y el fin de siglo* with a group of scholars from Spain and France. Among historians of Spain, he made an important and lasting name for Tufts, so I was delighted when the History Department offered me the position in 2011. I

was in a bit of a daze when the department chair, Virginia Drachman, called me because my daughter Althea had been born just 10 days before. But instinct and memory prevailed so I happily accepted.

One year later and I am still happy to have moved here. The faculty and staff in the History department could not have been more welcoming and helpful. The department has an excellent faculty so I enjoy taking part in the intellectual community. The students are bright, curious, diligent, and responsible. What more could a teacher ask?

Q2: What is your research focus right now?

My research over the last 15 years has been about aspects of slavery and colonialism in the Hispanic world. As I arrived at Tufts last fall my new book appeared: *Slavery, Freedom, and Abolition in Latin America and the Atlantic World*. Since then, I have completed an edited volume called *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire*. I'm very excited to see the finished volume in 2013. My coeditor and I brought together scholars from throughout the US, Latin America, and Europe, a truly cosmopolitan undertaking that started with our original meeting in Barcelona in 2009.

At present, I try to work every morning on an unpublished diary that I plan to annotate and introduce. I have transcribed most of it (it is over 400-pages long) so the next step will be to write the introduction and carry out research for the explanatory notes. The diary is an account by Fernando Blanco White, a Spanish prisoner of war, of his escape from Napoleonic France in 1814. With a small group of fellow Spanish POWs, he trekked from eastern France through Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands before finally landing in England, where his brother Joseph, a renowned Spanish man of letters, had settled in exile. Fernando remained with his brother in England for two years and while there composed his diary. It is a gripping read and I am enjoying learning as much as possible about the places he traversed during this last gasp of the French Revolution, a period that also saw the transformation of Spain and its American colonies. Fernando's story is one small, vibrant part of that much bigger history.

Q3: Tufts prides itself on having faculty who are both extraordinary scholars and superb teachers. What are your views on that balance between research and teaching? How does your scholarship influence what you do in the classroom? How do you maintain a balance?

I can best answer this question by talking about my last book on slavery and abolition in Latin America and the Caribbean. When I was at Fordham University my students came from throughout New York City, so

See Schmidt-Nowara
continued on page 4

2011-2012 MARINA SPIROPOULOS FELLOWS AWARD

BY COLLEEN CHAUSSE

Colleen Chausse is a Senior majoring in Greek and Latin. She spent the Fall 2011 semester in Athens, Greece on the College Year in Athens (CYA) Study Abroad Program as the recipient of the Marina Spiropoulos Fellows Award.

"I would like to thank Ms. Marina Spiropoulos for providing me with this wonderful opportunity."

Hiking in the rain on Kallidromo, swimming in the beautiful Mediterranean, standing on the stone that Socrates supposedly stood, snacking on my first tiropita, and watching the sun set over the Athenian Acropolis are only a handful of the fond memories I have from my semester in Greece. Thanks to the generosity of Marina Spiropoulos, I was able to spend four months in Greece studying at College Year in Athens. The experience was inspiring, invigorating, and challenging as I became immersed in a completely different culture. I gained an incredible glimpse into the world of both the ancient and the modern Greeks during my time abroad.

I went to Athens with the intention of gaining a better understanding of the ancient world. My classes at CYA were enriching and often took us out of the classroom in order to fully benefit from our prime location near the heart of ancient Athens. My archaeology professor led numerous trips to the Agora and Acropolis and even arranged for us to enter the Parthenon. The CYA trips to Crete and the Peloponnese were a welcome relief from the hustle of Athens. Crete was home to the Minoan ruins of Knossos and served the best dakos in the world. On the trip to the Peloponnese, I stood center stage at the Theater of Epidauros, explored an ancient fortress, and ran on the track at Olympia. We stopped at Delphi on our return to Athens where I drank from the spring of Delphos and saw the treasuries from many Greek city-states. These CYA trips and classes were both informative and fascinating for a student of classics.



View of the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis



Ancient Delphi

I received more than I had bargained for by studying in Greece. Not only did I have the opportunity to learn from the history of Greece, but I also experienced modern Greek culture during a time of political and economic unrest. Daily transportation and public sector strikes put into perspective how a government functions and how great an impact national debt can have on the general population. In my modern Greek class I not only learned basic (yet extremely useful) everyday phrases, but we also had valuable discussions on the Greek attitudes and values. My Greek professor expressed her distaste for the police protest being held just outside the walls of our classroom (and it

*See Spiropoulos Fellows Award
continued on page 9*

SPIROPOULOS FELLOWS AWARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

wasn't just because they were blasting music over the speakers). She also brought us on a tour of Parliament and welcomed us to her home for delicious Greek food. On an optional weekend trip, she introduced us to the beautiful, relaxing, simple island life on Andros. The pace of life there was completely different from the chaos of Athens. Athens is neither the prettiest city nor the best smelling, but I grew to appreciate every aspect during my time there. I grew used to the frequent shutdowns of various sectors of the city, adjusted to the late dinner times, learned to ignore the Plaka dogs, and was no longer alarmed by the shields that the riot police carry around. The Greek people were extremely friendly (although you wouldn't know it just by walking down the street) and their food is delicious and fresh. I quickly learned that olive oil goes on everything and the Friday vegetable market has the best quality food and prices. There was so much to learn about the Greek culture and way of life.

Over the course of several months, I grew to love Greece both past and present. I made new friends, learned lots both inside and outside the classroom, and shaped the way I view Greece, America, and the world. It was truly an incredible experience that left me with a greater appreciation for some things I took for granted in America (regular garbage pick-up), with great pangs for well cooked moussaka and saganaki, and with a better vision of what the ancient Greeks created.



Dancing at the Dora Strattou



A Greek home on the island of Andros



A demonstration in Athens

2011-2012 GEORGE A. DAVID FELLOWS AWARD

BY VERONICA J. SELTZER

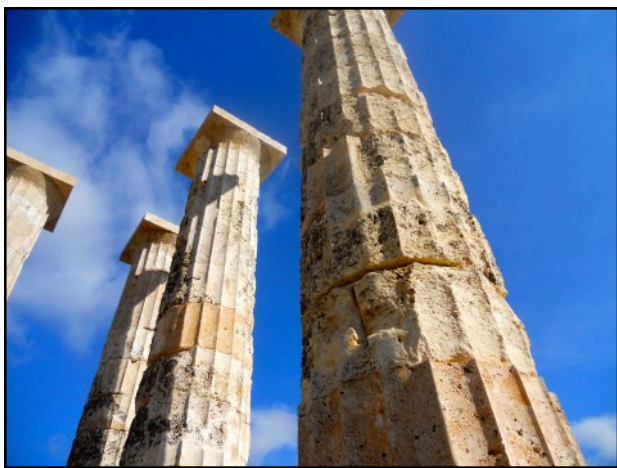
VJ Seltzer is a senior majoring in Classics. She spent the fall 2011 semester studying at the College Year in Athens Program as a recipient of the George A. David Fellows Award.

"Thanks to the generosity of George A. David I had an extraordinary fall semester living in Athens and studying with CYA (College Year in Athens)."

Just behind the famous Acropolis in Athens is a lesser-known hill called the Pnyx. It quickly became my favorite spot in Athens during my four months living and studying in the ancient city last fall. On my first visit to this retreat, I learned from CYA Professor, Nigel Kennell, that the Pnyx was the long time home to the ancient Athenian Assembly. It was the heart of Athenian democracy in the bustling 4th and 5th centuries B.C., the meeting place where every male citizen was encouraged to speak out based on the principle of *Isegoria*, or equal speech. Today, unlike the bustling Acropolis, which is constantly visited by tourists, the Pnyx mostly plays host to local runners and is devoid of voices; there is only the noise of a whipping wind lashing against the hillside. With its perfect bird's eye view of the city, though, I understand why the Athenian Assembly met on this hill. Looking out from the Pnyx, I often saw protests in the struggling city below and paused to consider issues



Excavation



Acropolis

that occupy my thoughts these days: how have modern republics evolved from Ancient Greece? Is there still something in the Greek culture and people that can help explain the origins of democratic government? And, how are leaders made? Living in Athens, I found that the Greeks' innate courage and faith in humanity dictates that individuals can retain their own autonomy even in an overburdened and stressed modern society.

Luckily for classics majors like me, Greece prioritizes preserving its ancient history. Participating in College Year in Athens' extra-curricular seminar on archaeological conservation, I learned that re-constructing the past means more to the Greeks than just recognizing their history; it is also thought of as a building block for the future. Before our first meeting, our professor, a conservationist at the Agora, asked each of us to buy a reproduction ancient pot, which are easily found at every tourist shop in *Plaka*, the neighborhood surrounding the

Acropolis. I chose a jug with a design of Aphrodite gazing in a mirror, which I then proceeded to smash into pieces in class. Our professor dotingly guided us in the challenging process of gluing the pieces back together, filling in the missing pieces with plaster, mixing paints to match the pot's background, and painting over the patches. All through our sessions, as we worked, our Professor explained what motivates him and his colleagues, "If we preserve the ancient," he said, speaking of Greece's current difficulties, "it may help solve our future." My conservation professor expressed a sense of nationalism and pride in his heritage that I would glean throughout my time in Greece.

See David Fellows Award
continued on page 11

DAVID FELLOWS AWARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Naturally, it is easy to believe that Greece's ancient democratic history deeply impacts the modern country. My peers often say it and even tour guides at the Acropolis shout in broken English, "It's not just a bunch of rocks! Democracy lives here," but is there really something internalized in the Greek psyche that somehow is different than the rest of us citizens of more modern republics? I surprise myself when I admit there is actually something special about the way all the Greeks I met are attentive and engaged in the official decisions that affect their lives. Wherever I traveled in Greece I found that the people in all walks of life are unusually knowledgeable about the details of their government and always at the ready to discuss contemporary issues. In my neighborhood's outdoor market, vendors constantly call across to each other about the daily protests taking place nearby, but even outside of the city center politics was the constant buzz.

On my first excursion to Piraeus, Athens' seaport, I walked around the fish market, breathing in the briny smell and gawking at some bizarre looking fare. As I mingled among rows of pink fish, scaled, de-boned and propped up, looking like plucked chickens, I was drawn to a particular boat, on the back of which giant octopi were stretched-out and hung to dry in the Mediterranean sun. As the Captain cleaned a shining red snapper I bought to make *psarosoupa*, he asked me where I was from. When I told him that I went to school in Boston he chuckled and told me that the then-new Prime Minister, Lucas Papademos, used to work at the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston. The fisherman continued to tell me that the PM's cut back on work hours and other austerity measures, "is not good for Greece. What he says may be okay in America where there is much social help. But here, if we cannot earn, there is no way to get the money we need for our families." I felt truly surprised and enlightened finding that this fisherman, on his boat for most of the day, had so much political knowledge. I found conversation like this swimming with locals in the Mediterranean under the Temple of Poseidon at Sounio, sightseeing at Bronze Age excavations in the Peloponnese, and volunteering with the World Wide Fund for Nature in Crete. This past year I was fortunate to spend extensive time in France, England, Italy, Spain, Morocco, and the U.S., and nowhere did I see such wholehearted political participation as I did in Greece. It did seem to me to be a rekindling of the active citizenship seen thousands of years ago in the agora and on the Pnyx.

While everyone finds it easy to say the Greeks speak out unabashedly because of their deep, democratic roots, it is important to note that today people are demonstrating about societal problems all around the world, but there is still something more truly democratic in the way the Greeks register their complaints against public policy.



Catch of the Day



Market in Athens

See David Fellows Award
continued on page 12

DAVID FELLOWS AWARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11



Author, scholar, explorer

In Athens, I learned that public protesting is an integral part of Greek government working similarly to lobbying in the U.S., only participation is not limited to hired advocates or a few hundred random individuals across the country. Almost every citizen involves himself in some direct way. Last fall I was shocked by the frequency and variety of labor actions: municipal employees, metro-workers, garbage-men, hotel-staff, teachers, and even pharmacists were constantly on work slowdowns or strikes. When I asked the owner of the taverna where I had become a regular, whether all the train shortages and electric outages was just due to tough times or if it was normal, Lilli immediately told me, "Oh no, this is very usual. This is how it has been years before our problems." As she served me *horiatiki*, or Greek salad, filled with bright red tomatoes and fresh bell peppers, Lilli explained

that the prevalence of demonstrations is the Greeks' way of securing what they want and need from government. Lilli elaborated that her countrymen believe each individual should control his or her own life and should not be burdened by big government, "Greeks don't ever pay their taxes," she once exclaimed to me. This sentiment was repeated to me often as I spoke with various neighbors who mostly felt that their actions had direct impact on government policymaking and hoped that their autonomy would continue despite the country's economic crises.

Living and learning in Athens was an incredible experience. In addition to visiting legendary ruins and studying the history that had so intrigued me my first two years at Tufts, observing the Greek culture, with its inbred inclination to protect the prominence of individual rights, was eye opening. I cannot help but wonder what will become of the feisty people I met and whether their ancient sense of autonomy can withstand the stresses of a complex modern world. The Greeks I met were all highly informed and outspoken about their society, but they were also joyfully hospitable and adoring individuals. I appreciated their gaiety and generosity especially in light of their own burdens. While times are difficult right now and all democracies have to adjust their balance between individual rights and the good of society, I have faith that the Greek's love for people, combined with their weighty legacy, will help buoy the country and continue to preserve their passionate way of life.

HISTORY FROM THE HILL—

NEWSLETTER OF THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY

EDITOR: DAVID J. PROCTOR

010 East Hall—Medford, MA 02155
Tel: 617-627-3520 Fax: 617-627-3479

Email: david.proctor@tufts.edu <http://ase.tufts.edu/pandp/historyhill>