

# A Big Year for Peter Alagona!

WHEN PROF. PETER Alagona learned that he had been selected to receive the UCSB Academic Senate's Plous Award for 2012-13, he might have been tempted to rest on his laurels for a while.

After all, this is the Academic Senate's highest award for a non-tenured professor, given in recognition of outstanding performance in teaching, research and service,

Yet no sooner had he learned of this honor than he received news that the Mellon Foundation had selected his proposal for one of their highly competitive Sawyer Seminars.

And all of this is on top of a five-year Career Award from the National Science Foundation that Prof. Alagona received last year. The award supports the early careers of scholars identified as likely to become leaders in their disciplines.

Sawyer Seminars bring together faculty, visiting scholars, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students to conduct comparative research on the historical and cultural sources of contemporary developments.

The proposal, "Sea Change: Integrating the Historical Study of Human Cultures and Marine Environments in Three Pacific Regions" was submitted jointly by Prof. Alagona, English Prof. Teresa Shewry and Geography Prof. David Lopez-Carr.

Their seminar "seeks to advance the



Prof. Peter Alagona.

emerging field of marine environmental history while integrating diverse geographic perspectives and disciplinary approaches," according to the announcement.

It will be divided into three sections: "The Environmental History of the Oceans," "The Cultural History of the Oceans," and "The Contemporary History of the Oceans."

The \$175,000, two-year grant provides support for one postdoctoral fellow and dissertation research of two graduate students.

While he prepares for that seminar, which will launch next year, Prof. Alagona will also prepare to deliver the annual Plous

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## Cold War Comics

"COLD WAR" AND "comic books" are words that rarely appear in close proximity to each other. But those will be the topic of the first UCSB History Associates talk of the 2012-13 season at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 23 at Unity Church in Santa Barbara.

History doctoral candidate Paul Hirsch will take members into the clandestine world of Cold War propaganda, where the comics were anything but funny.

"During the mid-twentieth century, American publishers sold hundreds of millions of uncensored commercial comic books to consumers around the world," said Hirsch, who is writing his dissertation on the role of comic books in foreign policy between 1940-1960.

"As much as music, modern art, or Hollywood, these comic books defined for a worldwide audience what it meant to be American," he said.

"The violence, racism, and sexuality in uncensored commercial comic books created a string of diplomatic problems for the United States, and provided communist

propagandists with a limitless source of anti-American material."

But the popularity of comic books also gave federal agencies an opportunity to promote America's objectives to an avid readership worldwide.

"Even as multiple countries passed laws against American commercial comic books, federal agencies deployed propa-

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Doctoral candidate Paul Hirsch.

### JoBeth Van Gelderen Renews Challenge Grant For Fellowship Fund

FOR MORE THAN 20 years, Dr. JoBeth Van Gelderen has kicked off the UCSB History Associates' fundraising drive with an offer to match donations dollar-for-dollar.

At the suggestion of then-President Greg DeRoulhac, JoBeth and her late husband Don offered to match the first \$5,000 in donations back in 1991.

The amount grew steadily and has now reached \$10,000.

"JoBeth's annual challenge grant has played a key role in supporting our graduate students," History Chair Elizabeth Digeser noted. "Faculty and students alike are grateful for her continued support."



History Chair Elizabeth DePalma Digeser (left) shares a laugh with new lecturers (l. to r.): Terence Keel, Sarah Case and Shawki El-Zatmah.

## Lecturers Bring New Perspectives

THREE NEW LECTURERS joined the History department this term, bringing with them new courses and new viewpoints.

For Sarah Case, this year is something of a homecoming. She received her PhD at UCSB in 2002 with a dissertation on "Women's Education in the New South" co-supervised by Profs. De Hart and Harris.

She has been teaching at Salisbury University in Maryland, where she holds the rank of associate professor.

With a PhD in Religious Studies from Harvard and an appointment as Visiting Scholar Berkeley's Center for Science, Technology, Medicine, and Society, Terence Keel

brings expertise in a broad range of topics.

He is offering courses that correspond to his research interests in the study of race within the history of science and medicine, the relationship between religion and science and African American intellectual history.

Shawki El-Zatmah brings a unique perspective to the courses he is offering in the history of the Middle East. A specialist in the social and cultural history of modern

Egypt and the Middle East, Dr. El-Zatmah holds degrees from Bir Zeit University in the Palestinian West Bank and a PhD from UCLA in which he studied the social and cultural impact of soccer in Egypt.

His courses this year include the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a survey of Middle Eastern history and a course on women and gender in the Middle East.

### Akulov Teaches Modern Europe

DIMITRI AKULOV (PhD 2012 Hasegawa) is teaching courses



on modern European history in the department this year, including "Europe Since Hitler" and "History of Russia, 1917 to the Present."

Dimitri wrote his dissertation on "The Soviet Union and formation of the Grand Alliance: Soviet Foreign Policy in cooperation and conflict with the Western powers, 1941-1943."

### Postings

Torres-Rouff Goes to UC Merced Campus  
David Torres-Rouff (PhD 2006, Spickard?) has moved from Colorado College to the new UC Merced campus, where he serves as assistant professor in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts.

Ehrenreich Awarded African Fellowship  
Veronica Ehrenreich (Meishcher) has received the National Security Education David L. Boren Fellowship to conduct research for her dissertation on the history of chieftaincy and indirect rule in KwaZulu Natal.

Eardley-Pryor Awarded Nanotech Fellowship  
Roger Eardley-Pryor (Mc-Cray) has received a National Science Foundation Fellowship from UCSB's Center for Nanotechnology in Society to conduct research on environmental regulation of emerging technologies. He will also spend the year working on his dissertation on "The Global Environmental Moment: The Limits of Sovereignty and American Science on Spaceship Earth, 1956-1974."

### Postings

## Jason Kelly Appointed Humanities Director

JASON KELLY (Phd 2004 Guerini) has taken over as director of the Arts and Humanities Institute at Indiana-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI), where he is an associate professor of History.

The IUPUI Institute functions much like UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, sponsoring a regular series of lectures and seminars and promoting interdisciplinary faculty research.

Jason has also been elected as a Fellow of London's Society of Antiquaries, which recognizes scholarship in architecture,



Jason Kelly at Hadrian's Wall!

art and architectural history. His book on *The Society of Dilettanti: Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment* was published by Yale in 2010.

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Editor

Hal Drake

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lecture this year.

The award was established in 1957 in memory of Harold J. Plous, an assistant professor of economics.

In bestowing the award, The Senate committee characterized Prof. Alagona as "a superb young scholar whose research agenda exemplifies the interdisciplinary culture that UCSB strives to foster."

Prof. Alagona's selection brings to nine the number of historians who have received this prize.

Previous recipients are John Lee (2006), Alice O'Connor (2001), Randy Bergstrom (1993), Sarah Cline (1987), Pat Cohen (1982), Hal Drake (1977), Bill Bonadio (1968) and Bob Kelley (1963).

In addition, Mary Hancock, who holds a joint appointment in Anthropology, received the award in 2000.

## Meet the New Grad Students



Seventeen students joined the graduate program this year. Picture at their orientation meeting are (standing, left to right) Chichi Peng (U.S.), Samir Sonti (U.S.), Maria Fedorova (U.S.), Brian Griffith (Modern Europe), Chris Nofziger (Ancient Mediterranean), Paul Warden (U.S.), Will Thompson (Early Modern Europe), Stephanie Seketa (Modern Europe), Susan Schmidt (Medieval Europe), Graduate Studies Director Carol Lansing, History Chair Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, Francisco Beltran (U.S.), Allysen Watkins (U.S.). Seated (left to right): Fang He (U.S.), Ben Ma (East Asia), History Graduate Student Adviser Darcy Ritzau, Serge Ferrari (U.S.). Not pictured: Cheryl Frei (Latin America), Rozz Melczer (Africa), Travis Seifman (East Asia).

# Science and Pseudo-Science: Comics How to Tell the Difference

PRINCETON HISTORIAN Michael Gordin will deliver the fourth Lawrence Badash Memorial Lecture on Monday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m. in the Loma Pelona Conference Center at UCSB.

Prof. Gordin's lecture, entitled "The Pseudoscience Wars: Immanuel Velikovsky and the Birth of the Scientific Fringe," is based on his new book by the same title, published last month by University of Chicago Press.

Velikovsky's 1950 best seller, *Worlds in Collision*, argued that catastrophic events described in ancient literature, such as the Biblical flood and the story of Atlantis, were caused by the proximity of a comet that became the planet Venus, about 1500 BCE.

In his talk, Prof. Gordon will discuss the way the Russian-born Velikovsky combined his



Prof. Michael D. Gordin.

training in medicine and psychoanalysis with broad reading in comparative mythology in a way that set a pattern for a wave of books that employed dubious methods to argue for catastrophic or extra-terrestrial contacts.

Prof. Gordin is director of Princeton's program in Russian

and Eurasian studies.

His previous books include a cultural history of Dmitrii Mendeleev, formulator of the periodic system.

The Badash Lecture is free and open to the public.

The Loma Pelona Center is near the UCSB Faculty Club. The most convenient parking is Parking Structure 22. A campus map may be viewed at <http://www.aw.id.ucsb.edu/maps/>

Prof. Badash taught History of Science at UCSB from 1966 until his retirement in 2002.

The lectureship is intended to recognize scholars who share Prof. Badash's interest in the intersection of science and public life.

Prof. Badash initially funded a lecture series in 2009. It was renamed in his memory following his death in 2010.

## Comics

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ganda comic books in Europe, Asia, and Africa in support of America's Cold War objectives," Hirsch noted.

Some of those comics went to Cuba, and since this month marks the 50th anniversary of the Cuban missile crisis, Hirsch will include examples in his illustrated lecture.

That crisis is regarded by many scholars as the high point of Cold War tensions.

Reservations for the event, at \$10 for members and guests, \$12 for non-members, may be made by telephoning the UCSB Office of Community Relations at (805) 893-4388.

Unity Church is located at 227 E. Arrelaga St., between Santa Barbara and Garden Sts.

The Unity parking lot is on the corner of Santa Barbara and Valerio Sts., with the entrance on Valerio.

# President's Corner

## The Power of Cartoons

Dear History Associates Members and Aficionados— Everyone knows “the funnies” are drawings with a satirical, witty or humorous point and we all undoubtedly have our favorites.

One of mine is the famous cartoon from 1971, with Pogo saying to Porkypine, “We have met the enemy and he is us!” I also love “Peanuts”—who can ever forget Snoopy riding atop his doghouse as he pilots his Sopwith Camel to hunt down the Red Baron?



I also got a good laugh over a “B.C.” comic strip that refers to the denial of insurance coverage for an injury, saying, “Stupid is not covered. It is a pre-existing condition.”

History is full of examples of comic strips and political cartoons and their influence on American culture.

Humor usually transcends social classes and it’s rarely hindered by a lack of education. Generally, cartoons are directed at the common person whose backing is being sought for or against a political idea.

I have no doubt that political cartoons have the ability to influence our thoughts, although we may not even be aware of it. In looking into the subject recently, I found that they began in the 16th century in Europe, usually as a means of criticizing the establishment, which, of course, could be very dangerous.

The foundations of cartoons can be traced back to Leonardo da Vinci, who is credited with inventing the caricature when he was investigating the concept of ideal beauty. The principles he utilized are the foundation for artists to this day.

In addition to the artists who created them, what drove the initial use of politically satirical cartoons was the invention of printing. Printing allowed messages to reach increasing numbers of the general public, or “the masses.”

Cartoons were utilized by Martin Luther in order to gain support for reforms he wanted to be made in the powerful Catholic Church. He thought that although peasants couldn’t read, they nonetheless could “get the message” from drawings and would thus align with his side of the theological conflicts he was having with the church.

Benjamin Franklin is credited with creating and printing the first political cartoon in this country. His

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# From The Chair

## Interesting Times

Greetings from the Chair’s office at the start of a new academic year! Thanks to the generous support of the History Associates so evident at our awards ceremony last Spring, many of our graduate students spent productive summers in the field and in the archives, and have the financial help they need to write those dissertation chapters this year. We are all very grateful!

We begin this year full of hope for a productive and engaging academic year, but still keenly aware that the ripples from 2008’s economic downturn have not entirely subsided. Should Proposition 30 fail (or should Proposition 38 garner a bigger majority), we can anticipate a sharp increase in undergraduate tuition, and we assume that there will be other cuts as well. In this environment, planning for the future is particularly fraught.



Nevertheless, we continue to hope for the best and to build on our successes. We have a strong and sizeable incoming class of graduate students whose interests extend from late antiquity to the 20th century US. We continue to be exceedingly proud of our recent graduates—indeed our placement rates match or exceed those of many other top-tier institutions.

And my colleagues continue to be creative and productive researchers and teachers. As reported in this issue, Peter Alagona has received a Sawyer Seminar grant from the Mellon Foundation. In addition, Stefania Tutino received the William Nelson Prize from the Renaissance Society of America for her article on hermeneutics and morality in early modern Europe.

We are happy to welcome several new faces as well: Dr. Sarah Case will be helping us build our Public History program, produce the *Public Historian* and supplement our course offerings in women’s and southern history. Dr. Terence Keel takes up a joint appointment with Black Studies teaching courses on the history of racial thought and the influence of theology on scientific structures of knowledge. Finally, Dr. Shawki El Zatmah will be teaching courses on the modern Middle East as Nancy Gallagher takes up her second year as director of the Education Abroad program in Cairo.

All told, we look forward to an engaging and stimulating new year—a year full of continued opportunities to talk about our favorite subject—history!—with all of you.

Beth DePalma Digeser

# A Lifelong Love of History

BY HAL DRAKE

WHAT DO OUR students do after they graduate?

We know about those who go on to graduate or professional school. But that's only a fraction of the number who take their BAs every year. What about the rest of them? How much of their training do they take with them, and what do they get out of it?

Through a series of coincidences, we now have an answer for a couple of them.

Last summer, Vera Mae Walsh (Class of 1970) read the announcement of a talk on Santa Barbara aviators who died in World War II that we posted on the *Historia* list-serv last summer.

The title interested her, because both of her parents had served in that war.

Then she noticed that one of the speakers was Karen Ramsdell.

That was the clincher for making the drive from Pasadena to the Goleta Historical Society, she said in a letter of thanks for the posting.

"Karen is my dear friend (since junior high)," she wrote. "In addition, we were classmates (she's a fellow 1970 History BA) and roommates during our years (1966-1970) at UCSB."

And that's how we found out that Karen's interest in history has made her a published author. Karen co-wrote *With Their Eyes Turned Skyward: Santa Barbara's Fallen Aviators of World War II* with Michel Nellis. The book was published earlier this year by Janaway Publishing.

"Needless to say, I was delighted to see her add another feather to a wonderful cap that she has been embellishing in a quiet, self-effacing style ever since I have known her," Vera Mae wrote.

## Lecture Notice Leads this Alum To a Renewed Friendship and An Answer to Faculty Questions



Vera Mae Walsh in 1970.

As for the talk, "The pages of the book really came to life as they shared H.S. photos, personal recollections from family members, official war-time telegraphs and other memorabilia.

"It was poignant, humorous and ever so respectful of the sacrifice these individuals made for our country. I know I was not the only one who had to wipe away more than a few tears as they spoke."

But what about Vera Mae herself? What kind of career has she had?

Here's what she said in reply to our query:



Vera Mae today.

"Since leaving UCSB, I joined the Peace Corps (I was recruited on campus) and spent a year doing public health education programs in the Republic of Niger, West Africa.

"I spent many days speaking three languages (English, French and Hausa, a tribal/trading language).

"In 2002 I returned for a Reunion/Celebration of 40 years of Peace Corps presence in Niger.

"The Peace Corps provided a base for working, successfully, in multi-cultural settings and piqued my interest in foreign languages, to the point that I can

meet and greet and converse, albeit at an extremely basic level in three more languages (German, Japanese and Spanish).

"Upon return from the Peace Corps, a 'temporary' job in a bank led to a 19-year relationship, not as a banker, but as a Human Resources professional.

"My entire career has been in HR, most of it at specific companies, but for the past eight years I have been a consultant to companies of all sizes and in a wide variety of industries.

"But the inner historian is always present. In my leisure time it manifests itself in traveling, reading and as an excellent Trivial Pursuit player.

"On the job, I'm known for my ability to bridge the past with the present by using a continuum approach that links internal/corporate matters and external/societal events at both the individual and organizational level.

"I have to thank both Dr. Bonadio and Dr. Gollin for opening that learning window for me."

Vera Mae closed with a charming PS:

"I tried to be brief, but it has been 42 years since I graduated from UCSB (in my heart I have never 'left' it)!"



Vera Mae forgot to mention that she was on the 1970 women's swim team (that's her in the top row, farthest right).

# Ready to Join?

Another great year of UCSB History Associates' events is under way. You'll want to keep posted about events in the History Department as well. To renew your membership or join for the first time, just fill out this form and mail it with your check or money order (payable to UCSB History Associates).

Enclosed are my annual membership dues of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Active \$35  
 Corresponding 15

*(Available to residents outside of Santa Barbara County only)*



In addition to my membership dues, enclosed is:

- \$25 to obtain a UCSB Library card  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ gift to the History Associates Graduate Fellowship Fund.  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ gift to the History Associates Dick Cook Fund.  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ gift to the History Associates \_\_\_\_\_ Fund.  
*(specify other scholarship fund)*

*Note: Gifts of \$1,000 or more qualify for one-year membership in the Chancellor's Council.*



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Gifts to the scholarship fund are considered charitable donations.

Please make your check payable to the UCSB History Associates and return it to:

History Associates  
Department of History  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9410  
Questions? call (805) 893-2991

## President's Column

# Getting Serious About the Funnies

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goal was to rally support for colonial unity in 1754. A cartoon of his depicts a snake that's cut into pieces that represent the colonies, with the caption, "Join, or Die." The cartoon was published in newspapers across the country and it grabbed the attention of the American people, implanting an idea that became the basis for the motto on the flag saying, "Don't Tread on Me."

Later on, the Civil War greatly affected Thomas Nast, the person who's considered to be the greatest political cartoonist ever. Nast greatly influenced the public with his depictions of the war and President Lincoln often said that Nast was his best recruiting sergeant.

Nast is also remembered for his cartoon attack against corruption in New York City in the 1870s when he exposed the dishonesty of Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall.

One of his cartoons showed Tweed and the Tammany Hall Ring pointing at each other in response to the question, "Who stole the people's money?"

After the cartoon appeared, Tweed supposedly shouted, "Stop them damned pictures. I don't care what the papers write about me. My constituents can't read. But damn it, they can see pictures." In addition, Nast was the creator of the Republican Elephant and the Democratic Donkey, as well as the image we all accept today as the true image of Santa Claus.

Political cartoonists and comic strip artists continued to influence people's opinions over the years, especially during WWII, when Bill Mauldin and Dr. Seuss had wide followings. Mauldin was most famous for his World War II cartoons depicting American soldiers with depictions of two be-draggled "dogfaces," two infantrymen named Willie and Joe, who wearily endured the hazards of war together. Mauldin received two Pulitzer Prizes for his work.

Theodore Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, supported the war effort through his work but he also used his cartoons to convey social messages, fighting against racism and anti-Semitism. Interestingly, Dr. Seuss also received a Pulitzer Prize but much later, in 1984 when he won a Pulitzer Prize Special Citation award "for his contribution over nearly half a century to the education and enjoyment of America's children and their parents." Charles Schulz's comic strips weren't political in nature but they had an enduring influence by reflecting on the everyday problems and anxieties we all experience. Schulz was a staff sergeant in the 20th Armored Division during WWII and it's said that he once refused to toss a grenade into an artillery emplacement because he saw a little dog wander into it.

Since they began, "the funnies" have been instrumental in swaying public opinion. Their images have communicated complex messages and influenced people's thoughts and reasoning. One of the lesser-known propaganda battles of another war—the Cold War—was fought in the pages of comic books. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, The History Associates is proud to present what promises to be a fascinating seminar on Tuesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Unity Church located at 227 East Arrellaga Street. The illustrated lecture will be presented by UCSB History doctoral student, Paul Hirsch, about the way American policy makers capitalized on the popularity of this medium in order to sway people's thinking around the world. It will be a great evening and I hope you'll join us!

*With Warmest Regards,  
Ann Moore, President*