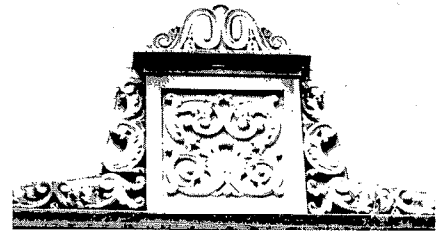


# NEWS



## *of the History Department at Boston University*

March 1999



Regina Blaszczyk (and friend). Photo by Kalman Zabarsky of BU Photo Services.

### **Regina Blaszczyk wins Warren Center Fellowship**

**R**egina Blaszczyk, Assistant Professor of History and American Studies, has won a fellowship from Harvard University's Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History for the 1999-2000 academic year.

The center's topic for the year is "After 'Base and Superstructure': Culture and the Economy in American Society," a subject that dovetails well with Professor Blaszczyk's current research. The program is directed by Professor Lizabeth Cohen of Harvard's History

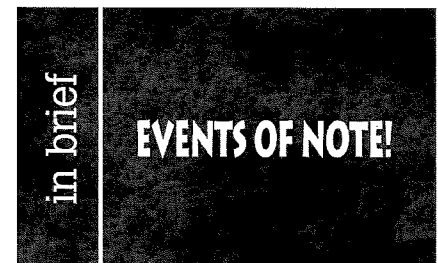
Department and American Civilization Program and Professor Werner Sollars of the English Department, Afro-American Studies Program, and American Civilization Program. The objective is to "probe the multiple and complex historical relationships between the economy and culture in American society, as well as to explore past and present attempts to account for these relationships."

This fall Johns Hopkins will publish Professor Blaszczyk's first book, *Imagining Consumers: Design and Innovation in America's Age of Consumption*, which examines consumer society from the vantage point of firms making pottery and glassware, artifacts that householders valued as demarcators of self, gender, and class identity. It sets out to demonstrate how companies scrutinized, evaluated, and developed strategic ties to the marketplace.

Professor Blaszczyk has another book on the way ("The Rise of American Consumer Society, 1865-1945"), but at the Warren Center she will focus on a third project, tentatively titled "The Color Revolution and American Consumer Culture," a work belonging to the "new business history" that seeks to reconnect the study of business to mainstream questions in U.S. history. The book will explain the tension between two forces in consumer products: one favoring uniformity and batch production (and thus efficiency) and the other (the consumer) demanding products with individuality, most notably a variety of colors. Eventually each side had to compromise: Experts named, standardized, and forecasted colors, but the range of chromatic

choices available to consumers remained large. In spite of the impulse for uniformity, flexible-production firms that met consumer demand for fashionable goods persisted. Thus the "color revolution."

While Professor Blaszczyk is at the Warren Center, the department plans to hire a replacement to teach her larger lecture courses. ♦



During the current semester Professor **Fred Leventhal** is at Harvard University as Visiting Professor of History and Faculty Affiliate of the Center for European Studies. He is teaching a lecture course on twentieth-century Britain and a conference course for undergraduates and graduate students on "War and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain."

Professor **David Mayers** has been appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs.

On February 5 Professor **James McCann** presented a paper to the Yale Seminar on Environmental Studies entitled "Imaginary Struggles and Historical Landscapes on the South African Frontier, 1833-1990." He

has been invited to lead an April planning session on "Environment and the Humanities" at the National Humanities Center in Research Triangle Park, N.C. The two-day program is part of the NHC's three-year grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

In January Professor **Jill Lepore** taught a two-day seminar for school teachers at the Harvard School of Education. The subject of the seminar was "Inventing the American Language."

Professor **Barbara Diefendorf** writes: "I will be giving what I hope will be my last talk on the Edict of Nantes at the Graduate School of the City University of New York on February 26. Entitled 'French Religious Identities After Nantes,' the presentation is part of a colloquium series 'Scattered Bodies of Truth: Inter-Religious/Sectarian Relations, 1450-1700.'"

And from Professor **Robert Schulmann**: "In early March in Chicago, I'll take part in taping the 'Eureka' section of a BBC radio retrospective on science in the twentieth century scheduled for airing next year. The organizers have identified five great paradigms: relativity, plate tectonics, quantum theory, genetic engineering, and chaos theory. Suitable historical context is sought, and I will try to provide it for the first entry."

During the current academic year department administrator **James Dutton** has been a member of a CAS Computing Committee, which has organized presentations to improve the computer skills of CAS staff members. One event dealt with the campus network and how it works as well as the basics of how computers operate; another presented University Information Systems' plans to move administrative computer functions to the Web. Beginning in March, Dutton will convene a group, tentatively called the CAS Web Designers Group, in which those in the College charged with developing or maintaining Web sites can get together to exchange ideas. ♦



## Study history in Venice this summer

The Department of History and the International Programs Office jointly offer "The Venetian Republic: Politics and Culture of the Serenissima" May 24-July 2 in Padua and Venice, Italy. This course, taught by Professor James Johnson and offering upper-division history credit, covers the rich history of Venice from its origins in Late Antiquity to the fall of the Republic in the Napoleonic era.

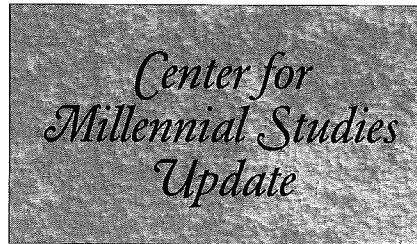
Students will live in the ancient university city of Padua, with class time evenly divided between classroom lectures and walking lecture-tours of Venice led by Professor Johnson. Sites studied will include the city's original tenth-century cathedral on the remote island of Torcello, the Basilica of San Marco, the Doge's Palace, selected Byzantine and Gothic palazzi, the Jewish ghetto and its synagogues, and the cemetery island of San Michele.

The course can be paired with either an upper-division class in Venetian Art and Architecture (also taught in English) or intensive Italian. Enrollment is limited, with a March 15 application deadline. For more information contact the International Programs Office (232 Bay State Road) or Professor Johnson (353-2554 / jhj@bu.edu).

## African Studies Conference

On March 26-27, the African Studies Center will host the Seventh Annual Graduate Student Research Conference on African Studies. This is an interdisciplinary conference intended for students at all levels of their graduate careers. In past years participants have presented research proposals, thesis chapters, methodological papers, or outlines of dissertation proposals. This year's conference will begin at 5 p.m. March 26 at the African Studies Center, 270 Bay State Road, Room 416 with a roundtable discussion on ethics in African studies led by Professor Misty Bastian of Franklin and Marshall College. Following the discussion, all are invited to an informal reception/mixer. Paper presentations will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 27. For more information, contact Heather Hoag at hhoag@bu.edu.

## MILESTONES



The following students passed foreign language examinations in January:

Carla Lovett: *Spanish*

Robert Munson: *Swahili*

These students had research papers accepted for credit:

Jean Dunlavy: "An obstacle in the way of our common rights': Antebellum Education for Black Children in Boston"

Stacy Holden: "Conquest and Commemoration: The Role of Monuments in the Colonization of the Western Sudan, 1878-1898"

Robert Munson: "Explorers and the Wachaga in the Pre-colonial Period"

Jean Dunlavy passed her qualifying oral examination on February 19. Examiners in the major field of American history were Professors Jill Lepore, Bruce Schulman, and Nina Silber; examiner in the minor field of colonial Latin America was Professor Thomas Glick.

### Greig Scholarship

The Herbert and Mary Greig Scholarship is available to undergraduate students studying in the Department of History or in related departments, with a significant focus on U.S. history. Applicants (1) must be juniors or seniors in the 1999-2000 academic year, (2) must have at least a 3.5 grade point average, and (3) must take a minimum of four courses in or related to American history. Applications are available in CAS 105; for more information, call 353-2400.

Partly as a result of the expulsion of some apocalyptic Christians from Israel, partly because of typical end-of-the-year-story-hook time, the Center for Millennial Studies (CMS) got lots of attention in the press lately, including some implication in the expulsion policy itself. Generally, the consensus among associates of the CMS was that the action was premature and unnecessarily aggressive. In response, the CMS is working on a conference that would get the American group of scholars and FBI agents who have been discussing policy since Waco together with Israeli scholars and agents of public order to discuss the best ways of, when possible, dealing non-coercively with millennial groups.

Director Richard Landes and the CMS have been involved in a number of Y2K think-tank sessions (with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Arlington Institute, and the Newport Naval War College). The CMS co-designed and sponsored a role-playing scenario designed to explore public perceptions of Y2K expectations and their social consequences; it hopes to stage sessions on some of the more academic subjects surrounding Y2K at BU and other sites, addressing more directly pragmatic approaches. Topics include: Y2K and 1) political culture, 2) psychology, 3) media and communication, 4) environment, 5) managerial techniques, 6) religious interaction, 7) rhetoric.

Professor Landes has served on panels and given orientation lectures and keynotes at the Naval War College sessions, at the Jewish Community Relations Council of N.Y., the Library of Congress, and the World Affairs Council of Boston. The Center's executive administrator David Kessler has participated in local Y2K panel discussions, and program coordinator Beth Forrest

will present a paper at the March 25 Boston College symposium, "Specter of the Millennium."

The CMS has established a committee called the Jerusalem Advisory Task Force for 2000, in conjunction with the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (the initial meeting included 20 people), which plans to address the kinds of problems facing Israel in the year 2000-2001. The Center is planning March meetings on Y2K and the possibility of holding a First Night International in Israel, an April gathering of scholars and public policy makers on "How to and not to Interact with Apocalyptic Groups," and a large June conference called "Millennial Cities in 2000: Jerusalem, Rome, Bethlehem," which will address logistics and problems of public order, religious dynamics and relations between natives and pilgrims, and the role of the media.

The CMS' 1999 symposium series began on February 7 with "The Madonna and the Millennium," a consideration of Marian apparitions and their movements, and will continue with "The Holocaust as a Millennial Movement" (March 7), an examination of millennial themes in Nazism and apocalypticism in the Jewish response. The next event in this series will be "Engendering the Millennium" (April 18), a consideration of women's role in millennial movements past and present and their overall societal roles at the approach of 2000.

Public submissions to the CMS archive (books, pamphlets, clippings, cartoons, and ephemera sent in by interested individuals) have begun to pick up notably, and the Library of Congress has expressed interest in housing the final CMS archive. Submitted materials can include those mentioned above as well as fliers, interviews, research, URLs, photographs, brochures, and other ephemera related to millennialism, apocalypticism, 1000, 2000, 2001, Y2K, survivalism, mass gatherings, revolutions, witch hunts, 5/5/2000, and revelation.

More information is available at the office (704 Commonwealth Avenue) or at the Web site ([www.mille.org](http://www.mille.org)).

*Richard Landes*

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*Announcing the 1999*

## *Merle Goldman Lecture*



**"Why Some Nations Are So Rich  
and Some So Poor"**

*by*

**David S. Landes**

*Professor Emeritus of History and Economics  
Harvard University*

*Tuesday, March 30, 5:15 PM*

*Conference Auditorium, George Sherman Union*

## **EARLY REGISTRATION**

*Fall 1999*

The early registration period for fall 1999 courses begins toward the end of March, and department advisors will be available for undergraduate concentrators and graduate students between Monday, March 15, and Friday, April 2. Those wishing to make an appointment may stop by the office or call 353-2551. After this period students may see a faculty member during regular office hours. After a student meets with an advisor, he or she goes to the department office (Room 308) to obtain the TelReg code for telephone registration. The procedure for admission to restricted classes will be as follows: For HI 301 (limited to history concentrators), students go to the department office. For colloquia (400-level courses) students first see the instructor and then visit the department office, where the registration is handled by computer.

Fall courses (with descriptions) may be found on the department's Web site ([www.bu.edu/history](http://www.bu.edu/history)); printed copies of the course offerings are also available in the office.