Well, not quite, but the History Department and College of Arts & Sciences hosted Bill Barker, renowned Thomas Jefferson interpreter, on October 16th and 17th.

Driven by a passion for studying and sharing history and his appreciation for Jefferson’s contributions to America, Barker serves as the official Thomas Jefferson interpreter for Colonial Williamsburg.

A degree in history from Villanova University set Barker on the path to a lifelong study of Jefferson. Yet, it was Barker’s career as a professional actor, producer, and director that allowed him to merge his love of history and theatrical talents into his Jefferson persona. He played Jefferson in the musical *1776*, and since 1984, when he first appeared as Jefferson at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, he has performed as Jefferson before a variety of venues including the White House, the Palace of Versailles, and numerous classrooms. He even debated “Patrick Henry” on the Las Vegas Strip.

He traveled to southeast Texas eager to share his knowledge of the life and times of our country’s third president.

The audiences went away from the performances impressed with Mr. Barker’s talent at portraying Jefferson as well as a new appreciation of one of the most important Founding Fathers. For more information visit: [http://www.thethomasjefferson.com/index.html](http://www.thethomasjefferson.com/index.html)

Department Announces Creation of 1960 Fund

Since the creation of an independent History Department in 1960, the department gift account has supported student travel to conferences and field trips, faculty development, and other departmental activities.

Generous benefactors of the department have funded this gift account because they believe in the core mission of a liberal arts education and the role played by history education.

The newly-created 1960 Fund commemorating the History Department’s creation hopes to raise money for the gift account to continue supporting the excellent history majors and the fine work of the department.

For more information on how you can contribute to the 1960 Fund, contact Dr. Mary Scheer at 409-880-8511.

Special points of interest:

- Course schedules for Winter Mini session and Spring Semester 2013 will be available on October 30, 2012.
- Advisement for Winter Mini session and Spring Semester 2013 will begin on November 1, 2012.
- Open registration for Winter Mini session and Spring Semester 2013 begins on November 15, 2012.
New Scholarship in History Announced

The Department of History is honored to announce the Preston Williams-Ralph Wooster scholarship given by Dr. Leland Bellot of Placencia, CA. Dr. Bellot, a University teacher and administrator, was a student of both men during his time at Lamar. The scholarship is to be given to an entering graduate student who intends to teach at the secondary or university level.

A native Texan, Dr. Williams served in the US Army during World War II. He attended the University of Texas, graduating with his PhD in 1949. A specialist in French Revolution and Napoleon, he began teaching at Lamar State College of Technology that same year. He became the first head of the Department of History in 1957 and the only Dean of the College of Liberal Arts in 1966. He retired in 1977.

Dr. Ralph A. Wooster joined the Lamar faculty in 1955. He became chair of the History Department in 1966, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies in 1976, Dean of Faculties in 1977, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1980, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1985. Although he retired in 1991, he continued to teach until 2008.

He is the author/editor of nine books and over seventy articles in professional journals.

The Scholarship is currently held by Mr. Kevin Broussard.

— Dr. Howell Gwin

Students, Teachers Gear Up for National History Day

Since 2009, Lamar University has proudly hosted the regional Texas History Day competition for local middle- and high-school students. As part of the National History Day competition, the local event provides students the opportunity to create special projects on a specific historical theme. This year’s theme is *Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, Events.*

By engaging primary sources, students learn that history is more than names and dates. Projects encourage students to see the bigger picture and think critically about their research.

History comes alive for them as they work individually or in groups to write papers, create websites, perform short plays, or produce documentaries. A prominent aspect of the competition is creativity.

The young scholars are currently hard at work developing their projects, which they will bring to Lamar University during spring semester.

Faculty News

The faculty continue to produce high quality research, as illustrated by this edition’s “Faculty News.”


Adjunct instructor Terry Rioux secured a contract for her latest research—a biography of war hero, actor, and environmentalist Eddie Albert, which will be published by BearManor Media.

Dr. Lee Thompson presented the Constitution Day lecture on September 17, 2012, focusing on “The British Roots of the American Constitution.”

Continued on page 4.
Student Explores Local History

Texas History student Maria Vasquez attended the 149th anniversary celebration of the Civil War Battle of Sabine Pass. The celebration commemorates the day in 1863 when Lt. Richard (Dick) Dowling and 47 Confederate regular troops and militia stymied a Union attempt to invade Texas and attack Confederate positions along the Sabine River.

The invasion was turned back, at least two Yankee gunboats were sunk, and many Union soldiers killed or made prisoner. “I did not realize that the Civil War was actually fought in our own backyard,” Maria commented, “until I came down here to see the reenactment.” “I was especially intrigued by the re-enactors themselves,” she continued, “and how they fight the battle, live in the outdoors, and create the costumes and uniforms by utilizing the skills that they have acquired by long study of the event and the times.”

Maria, who works for the Beaumont Independent School District and takes evening classes, describes herself as a “non-traditional” student that has gained a greater appreciation for the richness of the history of Southeast Texas.

— Ken Poston

Graduate Assistants Shine in 2011-2012

The History Department congratulates graduate students recently earning the M.A. in history.

Sharon Courmier, Bruce Hodge, James Burnes, and Cassandre Durso successfully completed the M.A. program during the 2011-2012 academic year.

Sharon opted for a comprehensive written and oral exam, while Bruce, James, and Cassandre completed written theses, examining U.S. immigration policy from 1939-1944, especially the role of Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long; William Mann, long-time director of the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.; and the Italian immigrant experience in Louisiana and Texas, respectively.

Bruce currently works as an academic advisor in the Center for College Readiness. James enrolled in the University of Oklahoma History of Science Ph.D. program. Sharon currently serves as an adjunct instructor in history while Cassandre currently teaches two sections of LAMR 1101.

Congratulations to all for their fine work!

Majors Benefit from Scholarships

Many fine undergraduate and graduate students in history benefit from numerous scholarships offered through the department. General requirements for these awards are full-time enrollment as a history major and a 3.0 GPA. The staff at History’s Happenings would like to preview the awards and current recipients.

Charlsie E. Berly, long-time Professor of English, created the Charlsie E. Berly Scholarship. An incoming freshman history major earns this scholarship for four years. Ms. Alexandra McKenna currently holds the award.

The Daughters of the American Republic established the DAR/Virginia Weir Scholarship in honor of Ms. Virginia Daniel Weir, long-time university history professor. The current recipient is Ms. Emily Kosh.

Ms. Renee Morris, of Orange, TX, currently holds the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Scholarship, while Mr.
Scholarships, cont’d.

Glenn Brown was awarded the Dr. Samuel L. Evans Memorial Scholarship. Dr. Sam Evans’ daughters created the award in his honor. He served as a faculty member of the History Department from 1959 to 1964.

Both Mr. Benjamin Bonsall and Ms. Casey Diaz hold prestigious scholarships in the department as well. Bonsall earned the Eleanor and Ronald Fritz Scholarship given by Dr. Ronald Fritz, former member of the Lamar University History Department, in honor of his parents. Ms. Diaz holds the Howell H. Gwin, Jr. Scholarship, which was established by Dr. Howell H. Gwin, Jr.’s mother in his honor. Gwin has served in the History Department since 1962.

The service of others associated with Lamar University and the History Department is honored through the granting of scholarships in their names. The son and wife of Dr. Allan Sutton created the Walter Allan Sutton Memorial Scholarship to commemorate Dr. Sutton’s service as history professor from 1963 to 2005. Brent Dixson is the most recent recipient.

The Peter Boyd Wells, Jr. Scholarship in History was given by his daughter in honor of Dr. Wells’ accomplishments at Lamar as a founding trustee of the Lamar University Foundation and founder of Lamar Library Associates.

Meghan Seim holds the Ralph A. Wooster Scholarship given in honor of Dr. Ralph A. Wooster, Professor of History from 1954 to 2005.

Faculty News (cont’d.)

Dr. Thompson has also submitted to Palgrave Macmillan his finished manuscript, Never Call Retreat: Theodore Roosevelt and the Great War, which will appear in 2013.

University of North Texas Press recently published Women and the Texas Revolution, an anthology edited by department chair Dr. Mary Scheer. The book has been nominated for the Liz Carpenter Book Award in women’s history.

Dr. Jeff Forret’s Slavery in the United States was published by Facts on File in September. The distinguished journal Slavery and Abolition recently published his article, “Slaves, Sex and Sin: Adultery, Forced Separation and Baptist Church Discipline in Middle Georgia.” His essay, “The Underground Economy,” appears in the third edition of Major Problems in the History of the American South, vol. 1, which was published by Wadsworth, Cengage in 2012.

Congratulations on your scholarly accomplishments!

Pet Corner

Regular readers of History’s Happenings probably remember Priscilla from last issue. Carol and Richard Atmar rescued Priscilla and have cared for her, providing a safe home. Here is Priscilla in all of her glory! It is nice to see Priscilla adjusting nicely to her new forever home.
Edited, compiled, and written by Dr. Mark A. Mengerink, who could not accomplish any of this without assistance from Patty Renfro, the department’s administrative assistant; Dr. Howell H. Gwin, professor emeritus; Dr. Mary Scheer, associate professor and chair of the department; Ken Poston, adjunct instructor; and colleagues who submitted materials for inclusion in this edition of “History’s Happenings.”

Have History Department related news to include in the next issue? Praise or complaints? Contact Dr. Mengerink:

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