

Digital History Center Looks at the Future of Preserving the Past

By Tara Laskowski

It is hard to believe that the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) has only been around for 14 years. In that short time, the center's work has revolutionized the way historians think about history and the way history is taught. CHNM is now the largest and most-funded digital humanities and history center in the world, having been awarded more than \$20 million in grants since its inception.

In 1994, Roy Rosenzweig, the Mark and Barbara Fried Chair of History and Art History, founded the center. At that time, the entire operation functioned out of his office in Robinson Hall. When Dan Cohen, the current CHNM director, came on board at the beginning of 2001, he remembers working at a desk in the cramped hallway just outside Rosenzweig's office.

But the center couldn't be contained to such small quarters for very long. Eventually, the staff moved to Pohick Module and expanded the programs even more. Today, the center takes up half a floor in the Research I Building.

ROSENZWEIG'S VISION

With Rosenzweig at the helm, the center became well known internationally. Rosenzweig was involved in a number of different digital history projects, including web sites on U.S. history, historical thinking, the French Revolution, the history of science and technology, world history, and the September 11, 2001, attacks. His web-based project, History Matters, was one of the

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◀ HIGHLIGHTING HISTORY

A Natural Way of Life

By Heidi A. Bruce

McLean, Virginia, was nothing but horse farms and rolling hills, Centreville was an agricultural community, and Tyson's Corner was not the shopping capital it is today when Andrew McElwaine was growing up in Northern Virginia. Even then, there was no escaping the constant struggle to slow or halt the increasing urban sprawl. McElwaine attributes that time to an early appreciation for ideas of conservation.

Today, McElwaine is president and CEO of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which was founded in 1964 to preserve the region's environment through

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◀ FOCUS ON CONSERVANCY



PHOTO BY NICOLAS TAN

▲ Mason's highly successful Center for History and New Media has accomplished much in its 14 years.



▲ A gopher tortoise is treated for a broken shell.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences is a cornerstone of learning and research at George Mason University. Programs of study at the graduate level provide opportunities for career development and advancement, professional education, personal fulfillment, and participation in research. Through course work that emphasizes writing, research, technology, reflection on the past, global awareness, and leadership, undergraduates gain a broad foundation of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge. All programs promote direct or indirect exploration of contemporary issues, as well as opportunities to apply learning in the community.

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Cornerstone is intended to keep alumni, the Mason community, and the public informed about the activities, growth, and progress of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Articles reflect the opinions of the writers and not those of the magazine, the college, or the university.

We welcome your questions and comments. E-mail us at chssmag@gmu.edu, or mail a letter to Editor, *Cornerstone*, 4400 University Drive, MS 3A3, Fairfax, VA 22030.

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Dear Alumni and Friends:

As always, it's hard to believe another year has passed. No matter how hard we may try, preserving time is something that eludes us. Yet, preservation cuts across so many disciplines, from archiving history to maintaining a healthy climate, documenting our heritage to safeguarding the brains of older adults.

This issue of *Cornerstone* illustrates some of the many definitions of preservation that span the human and natural experience. Student Chris Hild documents a series of Mason moments from this past semester in a photo essay. Andrew McElwaine is just one of many alumni dedicating his career to conservation. The Center for History and New Media, founded by the late Roy Rosenzweig, continues to provide teachers, students, scholars, and the general public full and free access to historical knowledge and the opportunity to tell their untold stories and let them study and make their own history. Finally, we asked some of our professors to provide a snapshot of their current scholarship as it relates to preservation.

Preservation is also an appropriate theme for our college, which stands where the rush of the modern world intersects with rich academic tradition. The university has roots in antiquity, specifically the ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman societies. They constructed great cities filled with art, literature, science, and philosophy open

to those wanting knowledge. Today, universities commit themselves to preserving the knowledge of the past while discovering new theories and formulating new ideas.

The work of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is not just to interpret academic tradition but also to transform this understanding of history into a framework that can serve as a future foundation of progress and reflection. Thus, in the most positive sense, the college preserves the past and propels us into the future.

In this new century and new millennium, George Mason University, in general, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, in particular, are working to value the past as well as look forward to future innovations and accomplishments. It is my hope that our new graduates, as do all our alumni, take the critical thinking skills they have developed in their studies at Mason and put them to work in their personal and professional lives.

If I may, I would like to humbly impart some brief words of wisdom for this year's graduates, as my colleagues have done at the end of this magazine: You were here for some of the greatest years in this young institution's history. Your future success will continue to embellish those achievements.

Go Patriots!

Jack R. Censer, Dean

Questions?
Comments?



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PHOTO BY EVAN CANTWELL

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PHOTO BY NICOLAS TAN

▲ CHNM Director Dan Cohen, above, vowed to continue the center's revolutionary work after the untimely death last year of its founder Roy Rosenzweig.

first projects of its kind and proved that Rosenzweig was thinking ahead as the online world grew.

Last October, Rosenzweig died of lung cancer. As a fitting memorial, CHNM used one of its online tools, Omeka, to create a tribute (thanksroy.org) to Rosenzweig that captures memories, photos, and other thoughts on his life.

"Roy was obviously one of the most distinguished faculty," says Provost Peter Stearns. "He was truly an imaginative historian, from his first book that I still use to the pioneering work he did with the Center for History and New Media."

Although Rosenzweig's death was a huge loss to CHNM and the larger realm of digital history, his legacy continues to live on and push the center toward bigger and better things.

Just before his death, the center was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education to create an online National History Education Clearinghouse. The project will help teachers of kindergarten through 12th-grade history become more effective and show their students why history is relevant to their daily lives. If fully funded over five years, the grant will total more than \$7 million.

Working with project partners Stanford University, the American Historical Association, and the National History Center, the clearinghouse will have both on- and offline components. These web- and nonweb-based resources will be grounded in the latest and most significant scholarship on history and history education, as well as research on best practices in teacher professional development and an awareness of the possibilities and limitations of the digital medium. Once online, the clearinghouse will provide educators with a host of teaching tools and resources and

be a portal through which they can share materials related to history.

POSSIBILITIES OF THE DIGITAL REALM

One of the things Cohen is most proud of is the comprehensive way CHNM looks at digital media and history. The center is divided into three areas: education, public projects, and research. The education division helps teachers use new media to teach history more effectively and provides quality online sources for teaching history. The public projects division provides online exhibits and archives, such as the September 11th Digital Archive, to the general public. Finally, the research division develops tools and methodologies for digital scholarship.

"The center pioneers in all of these areas simultaneously," says Cohen. "We try to take a 360-degree look at the possibilities of the digital realm."

One of the most successful tools the center has developed is Zotero, a scholarly research tool that runs in the Firefox web browser and improves the way research is stored, shared, and organized digitally. Zotero is changing the way scholars and students do research. By this summer, Cohen expects more than one million people will be using the tool.

"With Zotero, we really put our finger on the pulse of where academia will be in five years," Cohen says.

In December 2007, CHNM secured its second five-year National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grant, a follow-up to the challenge grant it received in 2000.

"Challenge grants are rare, and for us to receive two is even more special," says Cohen. "NEH uses these grants to identify centers of excellence that deserve to build an endowment and that they hope will be around for a long time." Through the most current grant, NEH will match one-third of the total funds raised, up to \$750,000, for the next five years.

Cohen hopes that by building a solid endowment, the center can develop even more of the ideas it has to improve online research and archiving.

"To have the opportunity to deeply examine these issues—and have a top-notch staff that thinks about this full time—is really amazing," says Cohen. "It was Roy's plan and his forward-thinking that put us where we are today. We hope to keep propelling that vision forward."

This article was featured in the Mason Gazette on February 4, 2008. View the entire Mason Gazette at gazette.gmu.edu.

A Natural Way of Life, continued from page 1

education, advocacy, public policy, scientific research, and wildlife rehabilitation. Its wildlife clinic treats more than 2,000 injured animals each year, releasing most of them back into the wild, and its science and research efforts have provided benchmarks for measuring the effectiveness of Everglades restoration. The policy team was instrumental in creating public policy that requires restoration be made when development might have harmed the local environment.

McElwaine's office is a 23-acre nature center, surrounded by a 50-acre zoo and an 84-acre county preserve. His day usually begins with writing a proposal or meeting with a developer about limiting a new community so as not to disturb the natural habitat of the local wildlife, especially such endangered species as the Florida panther or the wood stork. Later, he might meet with a potential donor before heading to a local public agency to speak about the urgency of regional conservation. Despite his busy schedule, he always makes time to speak to visitors and tourists at the center about southwest Florida's natural beauty.

Since joining the conservancy in 2005, McElwaine has been involved in several significant milestones in the conservation of the region's natural beauty. One project is the preservation of the Babcock Ranch, a 100,000-acre parcel that would have been sold for development. In addition, under McElwaine, the conservancy has led the charge for more government funding by pushing for passage of three ballot initiatives in Collier, Lee, and Charlotte counties that will direct almost \$200 million to land preservation and habitat protection. He has also seen the conservancy's assets grow from \$10 million in 2005 to more than \$20 million today.

Together, the conservancy and McElwaine have done a lot for southwest Florida, but the main issue is still improving the basic understanding of why conservation is necessary to the general public. When asked about the level of awareness on the subject of climate change and conservation in the United States, McElwaine indicated that we are about where we were when the surgeon general's warning was placed on cigarettes 30 years ago—it is just the beginning. The challenge remains in translating the message into actual changes in behavior that will be effective.

As a long time Virginia resident, affordable in-state tuition enabled McElwaine to complete his studies. He

earned an MA in history from Mason in 1994. He credits his time at Mason for making him an exceptional researcher, an excellent communicator, and a critical thinker.

For McElwaine, history has always been a personal passion. "My motivation to keep studying and writing despite the lateness of the hour or the loss of a beautiful spring weekend was based on the deep interest in the subject," he says.

He chose Mason because it offered the flexibility he needed to balance working full time and starting a new family. Although his former professors would probably remember him as a distracted student, they were also very patient with him, he says. He is also thankful for his supportive professors, among them the late Roy Rosenzweig, whom he describes as a "great mentor," and Jane Censer. On the first day of classes one year, he had to call Censer to say he would miss class because he was fogged in at the Allentown, Pennsylvania, airport while on a business trip.

Another year, he had to rush through a European History final to make it to the birth of his son Robert. He even took a semester off after having major surgery—but through it all he maintained a 4.00 GPA. "Mason gave me the ability and self-assurance to continue my personal intellectual journey," McElwaine says.

His lifelong commitment to conservation and preservation and a passion for history played no small part in his decision to make a planned gift to his alma mater. It is his way of conserving and perpetuating the Mason experience for future generations. "Giving back is an investment in yourself," he says. "The value of [a Mason] degree hinges on the university's continued success."



**McELWAINÉ'S
ADVICE FOR THE
CLASS OF 2008**

First, become allergic to ideology. Think for yourself, and use the reasoning powers your education has given you. Second, be aware of your surroundings—the services we derive from nature, whether clean air or pure water, are taken for granted and given no place in our values. Finally, remember Mason.



This baby squirrel is one of more than 2,400 orphaned injured and sick animals treated annually at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. The center is able to release about half of the treated animals back into their native habitats.



Notes from the Field: PRESERVATION

We asked faculty members, "How do themes of preservation play a part in your current scholarly work?"

ACADEMIC INSIGHTS

John Nye, Economics **Preservation of Honesty, Truth, and Understanding**

Nye maintains a clear-eyed view of the past. He does cliometrics, a self-described kind of historical freakonomics, in which modern economics and statistical analysis are used to reveal the underlying structure of the economy.

Answer: My most recent book, *War, Wine, and Taxes*, is a revisionist look at one of the great myths in history: the idea that Britain was a uniquely free trade nation in the mid-19th century. It is an object lesson in why anecdote or even eyewitness commentary are not good substitutes for careful statistical analysis. Not only do I debunk the conventional wisdom, but along the way, I tell the story of why the British drink beer and the French drink wine. I show how these issues tie into the much bigger question of what propelled the revenue growth of modern Western states.

Raja Parasuraman, Psychology **Preservation of Cognitive Functioning as People Age**

Parasuraman knows that as people age, cognitive functioning becomes less efficient. But age-related decline need not be inevitable. His work, along with that of his colleagues, examines how cognitive functioning can be preserved and mental decline prevented, including dementia.

Answer: Pamela Greenwood, James Thompson, Karl Fryxell, and I are studying how cognitive functioning, particularly attention and memory, changes with age in



healthy individuals in their 50s and 60s. The main goal of the study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, is to examine the relations between genes, brain structure (as measured with MRI), and mental functioning longitudinally over four years to identify possible precursors of Alzheimer's disease (AD). If we are successful, earlier diagnosis might be possible, thereby allowing for treatments that prevent or delay onset of the disease. If onset is postponed by a few years, the incidence of AD will go down and more people will be able to lead productive lives for a longer time as they age, despite their genetic risk of getting the disease.

Debra Bergoffen, Philosophy **Preservation of Dignity**

Bergoffen works to provide a solid foundation for human rights claims so that past criticisms of human

rights principles (e.g., that they are Eurocentric) can be avoided and an international consensus regarding human rights can be achieved.

Answer: I am writing a book titled *Between Rape and Justice: Toward a Politics of the Vulnerable Body* in which I examine the trial and judgment of the February 22, 2001, U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia that convicted three Bosnian Serb soldiers, who raped and sexually enslaved Muslim women and girls, of crimes against humanity. This landmark case broke the silence that protected the dirty secret of war time and genocidal rape, a silence that protected soldiers from prosecution and effectively denied women protection from human rights abuses. Breaking the silence, the court established women's rights as human rights. I argue that the role human rights discourses will play in creating a global culture of gender justice will be decided by the ways in which the relationship between our vulnerable bodies and our human dignity is envisioned.

James Snead, Sociology and Anthropology
Preservation of Heritage as Expressed in Cultural Landscapes

Snead studies the way that Native Americans used local landscapes long before the arrival of the Europeans and how this evidence can be preserved for the future to witness and explore.

Answer: Mason is the home base of the Tano Origins Project, a multiyear study that seeks to understand the relationship between conflict and population movement in what is now the American Southwest during the 14th century. We're conducting excavations and surveys in the Galisteo Basin south of Santa Fe, New Mexico, an area with remarkable preservation of archaeological resources. In addition to exploring the Ancestral Pueblo past in this region, we are working with a variety of stakeholders in preserving this remarkable landscape from real estate and energy development.

Ann Palkovich, Sociology and Anthropology
Preservation of Heritage

Palkovich seeks to understand the past through interpreting archaeological sites and materials.



Because archaeological excavation ironically destroys the very sites she studies, her job is to preserve the past by documenting it and interpreting it.

Answer: My current project focuses on the reconstruction of 14th-century Ancestral Puebloan village life in northern New Mexico. I have spent five years reanalyzing mortuary remains from Arroyo Hondo Pueblo to document this material as part of the Native American Repatriation process. I am now completing the documentation and formal analysis of these remains and materials to understand the lives of these villagers. My work has reconstructed a story of hardship and resilience among Native Americans marked by unpredictable food sources, infections, and childrearing practices that left an indelible mark in the skeletons of Arroyo Hondo's inhabitants. These hardships, combined with evidence of witchcraft, ultimately resulted in the dissolution of the social order and village life at this ancestral pueblo.

Debra Lattanzi Shutika, English

Preservation of Tradition and Collective Memory

Shutika, a folklorist and immigration scholar, works to document new cultural traditions in communities that have growing immigrant populations, along with the traditions of longer-term residents.

Answer: My current research in Prince William and western Fairfax counties on citizen responses to immigrant settlement examines the phenomenon I have termed "localized displacement." Localized displacement is the

perception of being out of place in what should be a familiar locale, such as your hometown or neighborhood. In Prince William County, I see a group of people whose lives have been dramatically and irrevocably changed by immigrant settlement. As a folklorist, there are a number of tools that I can provide communities in change that may help them work through these processes. The strategies of cultural conservation can help residents document and preserve the past they once knew and give a voice to feelings of loss. With the tools to process their transition, it is my hope that the residents of Prince William County and western Fairfax County will begin to see their futures differently and be able to appreciate the community they have, instead of pining for the one they have lost.

Thomas Wood, New Century College
Preservation of Biodiversity—the Diversity of Living Things

Wood works to conserve biological diversity through an understanding of ecology and the interaction of culture and the natural world.

Answer: A part of the conservation studies concentration available to students in New Century College is the Smithsonian Mason Semester, a resident undergraduate semester at the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia. Fifteen Mason



students are in residence, learning about international conservation and research efforts

involving rare species such as black footed ferrets, red pandas, maned wolves, clouded leopards, red crowned cranes, and Eld's deer. Students interact daily with an interdisciplinary faculty team of Mason and Smithsonian researchers, constructing a learning community situated on 3,200 acres near Shenandoah National Park.



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“People around the world, Americans more than most, have been slow to grasp and accept that we, collectively, have a huge problem that absolutely must be solved.”

—Edward W. Maibach, *Communication*, on the topic of climate change

**Margaret R. Yocom, English
Preservation of Folklore—
the Everyday Arts of the People**

As a folklorist, Yocom listens to stories, gathers information about traditional arts and festivals, and records the life histories of the young and old alike to honor traditional cultures and preserve the arts of the everyday.



Answer: When I first came to Mason in 1977, I founded the Northern Virginia Folklife Archive in which

we house the fieldwork of our graduate and undergraduate folklore students, as well as relevant materials from members of the community. As a result, we now have a sizeable collection of traditional materials from all over the world, but especially on the middle Atlantic region. You can see a partial list of titles and sample holdings at our web site (folklore.gmu.edu/nvfa). In addition, my fieldwork in the western mountains of Maine involves collecting, celebrating, and preserving the traditions I find there (visit mason.gmu.edu/~myocom). My poetry also speaks to my fieldwork; this summer, *Beloit Poetry Journal* will publish a poem from my fieldwork in Maine.

**David Haines, Sociology
and Anthropology
Preservation of Options**

Haines focuses on immigration, anthropology, refugees, diversity, and other related topics. His current work on contemporary migration in East Asia has

given him an insight into the narrowness of public debates on immigration in the United States, in terms of the kinds of migrants considered and the way the situation of migrants changes over time.

Answer: I am involved in a historical consideration of the relationship between refugees and America. In the current politicized environment about undocumented immigration, people often forget how central refugees are to American history. The case of refugees must always be at the heart of discussions of immigration to the United States. If we forget refugees, we forget that America has always been both a land of opportunity and a land of refuge. It is those two together that have made America such a beacon to the world.

**Jennifer Leeman, Lisa Rabin,
and Esperanza Román-
Mendoza (Modern and
Classical Languages)
Preservation of Knowledge
of Spanish among Native
and Heritage Speakers**

Leeman, Rabin, and Román-Mendoza are working on two interrelated pedagogical projects to preserve knowledge of Spanish among heritage speakers. Although the United States has a rich history of multilingualism, people who immigrate here as children, as well as many children of immigrants, do not master their heritage language, and the overwhelming tendency has been for the third generation to be monolingual in English. Despite public perception to the contrary, this pattern has held steady, even with recent increases in immigration.

Answer: Often, heritage speakers understand spoken language with ease and have native pronunciation, but they have difficulty speaking. At

Mason, Leeman created a 300-level Spanish course designed specifically for heritage speakers of Spanish who have linguistic abilities and educational needs that differ significantly from those of monolingual English speakers, for whom traditional language courses are designed. The official recognition and valuing of students' linguistic abilities and experiences within the curriculum contribute to an inclusive educational environment, which in turn helps create conditions in which all students have equal opportunity for academic success. In 2006, to preserve children's knowledge of Spanish, promote early literacy in Spanish, foster positive attitudes toward Spanish, and integrate Spanish-speaking children's home identities into the classroom, Rabin created an after-school elementary school program for heritage language speakers at Arlington Traditional School supervised by Esperanza Román-Mendoza.

**Edward W. Maibach,
Communication
Preservation of Our Planet's
Life-Sustaining Mild Climate**

Working to preserve the Earth's mild climate, Maibach investigates how to inform and mobilize the public and policy makers to take the actions that will stop the threat of global warming.

Answer: People around the world, Americans more than most, have been slow to grasp and accept that we, collectively, have a huge problem that absolutely must be solved. We are conducting surveys and other forms of data collection with groups of people ranging from American teenagers to health professionals to Indian (Tamil-speaking) farmers to determine how best to engage key audiences in becoming part of the solution.

Mason Moments with Chris Hild

Chris Hild
at right

As I enter my final undergrad year, I am running full steam ahead on Mason spirit. My time at Mason is allowing me to broaden my horizons and challenge myself academically, socially, and culturally. An old slogan seen around campus is “Patriot Pride Starts Here!” Without hesitation, I can say that Patriot Pride starts with me.

As Mason Ambassador president, I spend a lot of my time speaking to prospective students and their parents about Mason and why I am here. I begin many of my days with “Hi! My name is Chris Hild, and I am a junior from Westfield, New Jersey. My major is administration of justice, and I am also minoring in Spanish.”

Rather than telling prospective students that they *have* to come to Mason or that Mason is the *best* university, I simply reflect on what Mason has given me and what I have been able to give back to Mason over the past three years.

Since I arrived in 2005, I have been a part of many moments that I believe I would not have had at any other university. Compared with my friends back home, I have gained so much more out of the college experience. Mason is not a place where you sit back and wait for opportunities to come your way—and I never want it to become that type of university.

Aside from serving as a Mason Ambassador, I have had the pleasure of interning at the State Department, being a member of the Honors Program, participating in intramural sports, playing on two club sports (trap and skeet and baseball), being a founding father of the Delta Chi Fraternity, and being named chair of the Office of Housing and Residence Life Conduct Board.

At Mason, I have seen numerous professional performances for free at the Center for the Arts, heard presidential candidate Barack Obama and former President Clinton speak, and sat onstage with Matt Damon, Robert De Niro, and Chris Matthews. As a member of the student fan club for Mason sports, the Patriot Platoon, I have supported 21 different Division 1 sports teams, including the men’s basketball team as it made NCAA history in 2006. My friend Pete and I sit in the front row at every home men’s basketball game.

I also love Mason’s proximity to Washington, D.C. It made my commute to the State Department over the summer simple, and there’s always something fun to do. As an administration of justice major, nothing is more fulfilling than to be taught by men and women who can speak of the daily successes and failures that occur when combating crime and terrorism.

Part of the Mason experience is the constant development of Mason’s campuses. Although construction can make it a pain to walk around or find a parking place, and wakes you up at 7 a.m., it also means new and better places to eat, sleep, and relax—oh, and study and go to class, too. With each new building comes the opportunity for Mason students to do great things and further enhance the university’s growing reputation.

Nothing can take away from the great accomplishments that Mason, its students, and its alumni have made in the past 35 years. The best has yet to come for George Mason University, and I am proud to be a part of these defining moments.

R. Christopher C. Hild

Photos courtesy of Chris Hild and Courtney Erland.



Words of Wisdom

FACULTY FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

“Keep outpacing your teachers. As a capstone for my courses and student papers on government and nonprofit finance, I have been using a weblog. The contributions from the students have been outstanding: 150 solid academic posts in one semester. Do it!”

—John F. Sacco, Public and International Affairs

“Our friends agree to listen to us complain, and in turn we listen to them. Yet complaining is a very weak form of communication. It focuses on the past and doesn’t build anything. Eliminate most of your complaining and get on with what really matters to you.”

—Andrew Finn, Communication

“Regardless of where your experience at Mason registers on the ‘pursuit of happiness’ scale, you should know that there is not only life after college, but that your life after college will be both a new and renewable adventure. What you are taking with you will serve you well and what you missed you can recover with hard work. So do well, do good—and please come back and share your stories with all of us who wish you the very best.”

—Martin J. Sherwin, History and Art History

“Choose the career that makes you happy rather than the one that satisfies other people’s expectations. Twenty years from now, they will have forgotten and you’ll be happy.”

—Mills Kelly, History and Art History

“Often we educate ourselves for the sake of education alone. Take a moment, pause, and don’t ask what you’re going to do next or why.”

—Tyler Cowen, Economics

“I tell students that one may feel more ignorant upon leaving the university than when entering as freshmen. This uneasy perception may signal that one has achieved real wisdom. Education is a lifelong enterprise that does not conclude after graduation.”

—Marion Deshmukh, History and Art History

“We all want basically the same things; we just approach them from different routes. Some routes go straight, some meander, some have major detours. So read anything and everything with as open a mind as you can, to know yourself, to know others, to know the other side.”

—David Beach, English

“Always keep in mind the three lessons of history: (1) Never invade Moscow in winter; (2) never vote for Richard Nixon; and (3) never listen to historians who predict the future, since their main job is to predict the past.”

—Mack P. Holt, History and Art History

“The single greatest source of human behavior is insecurity. If you can admit to your doubts and still press ahead, you’re on the path to contentment.”

—Jon Gould, Administration of Justice

“Whatever you do when you’re not doing your work is your real work.”

—Roger Lathbury, English

“The two pieces of advice that have served me best in my adult life came from a former boss, who constantly amazed by finding creative ways to help others, and from my grandma, who knew what was most important in life. They are, respectively, ‘Never miss a chance to be a hero,’ and ‘you always have time to go to the bathroom.’”

—Meredith H. Lair, History and Art History

“I would leave you with the following words by Winston Spenser Churchill at the Lord Mayor’s Banquet at the Mansion Hall in London, on November 10, 1942, following the Allied desert victory at El Alamein, North Africa, later viewed as the Hinge of Fate in the ultimately successful war against the Axis Powers: ‘Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.’”

—Charles K. Rowley, Economics

“Develop a purpose, pursue it with passion, and let nothing stand in your way. Education merely opens your eyes so you can see clearer than before; now you must do the hard work and find one.”

—Patrick E. McKnight, Psychology

“The better world about which you have been dreaming since you came to Mason is now in your hands. Wake up and make it happen.”

—Rei Berroa, Modern and Classical Languages

“Write well. Edit better.”

—Steve Klein, Communication



“Don’t give up. When Plan A doesn’t work, move on to Plan B. It’s not a coincidence that we have 26 letters in the English alphabet.”

—Don Gallehr, English

“Keep thinking.”

—David Haines, Sociology and Anthropology

“I try to impress upon my students Cromwell’s warning as he dismissed the Long Parliament: ‘Remember, by the bowels of Christ, that ye may be wrong!’”

—Dave Williams, English

“Never take communication for granted. Communication may seem easy, but effective communication takes work.”

—Melinda Villagran, Communication

“One of the greatest moments in life is recognizing that education and knowledge prepare us for great struggles and also provide us with the opportunity to enjoy a high degree of inner peace.”

—Rutledge M. Dennis, Sociology and Anthropology

“Maybe old hat; maybe cliché; maybe too much like a doddering professor, but every so often read Polonius’s advice to his son Laertes. *Hamlet*, Act I, Sc iii, lines 55–81.”

—Hugh Sockett, Public and International Affairs

“During your college career, my hope is that you have established the habits of lifelong learning and viewing events in the world through multiple lenses. These habits will make you better human beings and better citizens of the world.”

—Suzanne Scott, New Century College

“Embrace paradox: exploring apparent paradoxes leads to knowledge; contemplating actual paradoxes leads to wisdom.”

—Richard A. Nanian, English

“Learning should never stop! Now that you have received an undergraduate education, I hope you will always take advantage of opportunities to learn. Making the most of learning opportunities will continue to help hone critical-thinking skills and problem solving. Congratulations.”

—Linda D. Chrosniak, Psychology

“Trust but verify. Much of what we believe to be true or which sounds plausible rests on shaky foundations and does not withstand careful analytical and numerical scrutiny. Be not afraid of the truth even when it isn’t politically correct.”

—John Nye, Economics

“Conformity is never a virtue. Hard work almost never a vice.

Optimism is a moral obligation,
And a sense of humor helps.”

—Harold Morowitz, submitted by Ann Palkovich, Sociology and Anthropology

“Older adults who exercise, continue their education, and engage in learning new skills lead healthy, mentally fulfilling lives. The same benefits will accrue to you, not only in the years following your graduation, but for many decades thereafter.

—Raja Parasuraman, Psychology

“Remember whose shoulders you stand on
But look up
Find the joy of your own voice
Make your way in the world
On a path of generosity”

—Debra Bergoffen, Philosophy

“If you think that you can possibly be happy without going to graduate school, try that way first.”

—Robert Pasnak, Psychology

“Don’t bore yourself.”

—Jennifer Atkinson, English

“As you move through the world, be aware that the places that you visit and where you live have deep histories reflecting those who came before us and that can still be seen by those who seek it. Your surroundings have much to teach you; some days turn off the iPod, put down the cell phone, and look.”

—James Snead, Sociology and Anthropology

“Be aware of the natural world and your place in it today. Stewardship has never been more important for humanity.”

Tom Wood, New Century College

“It isn’t what people don’t know that gets us into trouble so much as knowing things which just aren’t so.”

—David Levy, Economics

“Think global, act local.”

—Lisa Marie Rabin, Modern and Classical Languages

“Global warming is the most important problem that your generation and mine must solve. The natural tendency when facing a problem this big, this complex, is to avert our gaze and let someone else deal with it. Please, don’t do that. Engage. Most important, demand actions from our elected officials—your mayor, state and federal representatives, and our president—that will dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Our great nation can rally to get this done.”

—Ed Maibach, Communication

“Life is short—make haste to be kind.”

—Jane Flinn, Psychology

“Remember that the traditions you have give you roots and wings. Carry them with you.”

—Margaret Yocom, English

Good Friday, 1989

Creative submission by Jennifer Atkinson

Atkinson is an associate professor of English at George Mason University. This poem previously appeared in the *Missouri Review* and is included in Atkinson's forthcoming book, *Drift Ice*.

Submit your creative work to
Editor, *Cornerstone*
4400 University Drive, MS 3A3
Fairfax, VA 22030
or chssmag@gmu.edu.

Bligh Reef off Valdez, Alaska

Equinoctial days, light winds: a short fetch
and a shallow swell.

All day snow rots in sooty, rain-riddled mounds,
Snow bulldozed off the tarmac, the dock,
All but the corners of the Valdez parking lots.
Nights under the streetlights, the cloud-dulled moon,
The snow heaps freeze over, the day shift sleeps.

Bligh Island light, the Coast Guard lights, the Alyeska office
Lights show up like moth holes in a woolen sky.

In retrospect I'm tempted to call it tenebrous dark,
For the rich mythic sound, the liturgical grandeur,
The once and once onliness of the words,

But that March night was all so routine—

A night run's insomniac boredom,
A good drunk to numb it, See ya,
A slip-up, another—as ordinary
As a misplayed four of clubs.

And a single-hulled tanker rammed Bligh Reef.

It's hard to give up the illusion of once, of before, of primordial
Clean, a world, a sound, a single pristine cove untouched
By human greed and grief, the smear of human fingers.
Meanwhile, black ribbons and reams, bolts of satiny stuff unfold,
Unfurl into the water. Meanwhile, the spilled oil spreads,
Sheets, finds its own level breadth. The sheen
Congeals to a lid, like the bland skin
On a pan of boiled milk, the paraffin seal on a jar of preserves.

Meanwhile the wind picks up, the waves churn a greasy foam.
Beach rock, sea stars, seals, fin fish, popweed,
Mussels, otters, kelp, ducks, plankton, alder, plover
Slick up and tar. Whole days pass, the spill's range widens.
Meanwhile Easter's shipped-in lilies bloom
In their pink and purple foil-wrapped pots.
All over the Exxon-Alyeska company town
The gorgeous, viscous scent of a greenhouse spring.

Meanwhile, money, media, and blame spill in,
As the effort to hose things clean begins:
More error to displace and efface error,
To trace back the cause to a single man's fault,
Too many whiskeys, too much trust, badly maintained equipment.

And hot oil slides down the pipeline toward Valdez. . .

And a tanker plows though the swells off Las Palmas,
Long Island, Galicia, the Niger delta. . .

