

Our monthly e-Bulletin provides quick updates on activities of THEN/HiER and its partners.

What's new with THEN/HiER?

* **Three THEN/HiER Executive Board Members and our Anglophone Graduate Student Committee Coordinator** have been awarded Diamond Jubilee Medals from the Historica-Dominion Institute: **Margaret Conrad (UNB)**, **Peter Seixas (UBC)**, **Jan Haskings-Winner (OHASSTA)**, and **Rose Fine-Meyer (OISE/UT)**. Congratulations to all four!

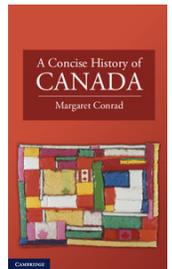


* **Congratulations to Viviane Gosselin, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member**, who has successfully completed her doctorate at UBC with Peter Seixas as her supervisor. The title of her dissertation is *Open to Interpretation: Mobilizing Historical Thinking in the Museum*.



Viviane with husband Werner and sons Frederick and Sébastien

* **Margaret Conrad, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member**, recently published *A Concise History of Canada*. Beginning in Canada's deep past with the arrival of its Aboriginal peoples, she traces its history through the conquest by Europeans, the American Revolutionary War, and the industrialization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to its prosperous present.



Graduate Student Projects Program

THEN/HiER supports projects related to history teaching and learning in Canada initiated, organized, and carried out by graduate students in history and history education. We will consider requests for support up to a maximum of \$2,500. There are six deadlines for submissions each year. The next deadline is July 3, 2012.

Small Projects Grants

The Canadian Historical Association (CHA) Active History Committee held a public mini-conference titled *The War of 1812: Whose War was It Anyway?* on May 30, 2012 in Waterloo during the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The conference included historians, educators and the general public in sessions on new teaching tools focussed on the war, local tourism and heritage initiatives, and neglected legacies of the war. An evening round table session on the politics and memory of the bicentennial celebrations was funded through a THEN/HiER grant.



Videos and Podcasts

THEN/HiER has many videos and podcasts on its website relating to history teaching and learning in Canada. The latest is a video of the recent THEN/HiER panel at the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) conference in Vancouver, BC this past April, titled *Race and Nation in Canadian History Education*.

What's new with our partners?

* Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (CSHC)

Carla Peck of the Historical Thinking Project of the CSHC is pleased to announce a new resource for teachers, Sam Steele: The Journey of a Canadian Hero. From June 1 - September 30, 2012, the University of Alberta Libraries will present the inaugural exhibition of the Sir Samuel Steele Collection at the Enterprise Square Gallery in downtown Edmonton which provides an amazing educational opportunity for students to visit an historical exhibition in person or online. The website includes excellent pictures of artifacts and digital copies of documents that can be read online by students. Students can test their detective skills at reading 19th-century handwriting against transcribed copies of many of the documents. All lesson materials have been developed using the historical thinking concepts from the Historical Thinking Project.



THE
Historical Thinking
PROJECT

* The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC²)

Two new teaching resources developed by TC² with THEN/HiER funding have recently become available. History Docs is a searchable collection of carefully selected sets of primary and secondary source documents for use as information sources about peoples, places, things and events in Canadian history. The Thinking about History videos build on the work of Peter Seixas to support teachers and students in using the six historical thinking concepts to go beyond merely learning historical information to thinking deeply about history.



* Parks Canada

Parks Canada and the Directorate of Naval History and Heritage of the Royal Canadian Navy are hosting *The Navy of 1812: Sailors on the Lakes* from July 13 to 15, 2012. This three-day event includes naval re-enactments with a flotilla of up to twenty period vessels. It will take place at Navy Hall and Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Graduate Student Committees



Rose Fine-Meyer

We would like to congratulate Samantha Cutrara on her new position as Senior Coordinator of Education and Exhibits at the Archives of Ontario. This means that she will be resigning as co-chair of the Anglophone Graduate Student Committee. We wish her well in her new career! Have you checked out our blog lately? There are several posts related to the recent *The War of 1812: Whose War was It Anyway?* event that took place during the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Waterloo on May 30, 2012. You can also add your comments to our Read/Review/Respond blog series. And don't forget to consider applying for a THEN/HiER Graduate Student Projects Program grant (see page one). Contact Rose Fine-Meyer.



Samantha Cutrara

As reported in last month's *e-Bulletin*, the Francophone Graduate Student Committee is organizing a one-day conference to be held on October 25, 2012, in conjunction with the *International Didactics of History, Geography and Citizenship Education Symposium* in Quebec City. A preliminary program for *History and Emotions: Between Collective Memory and Historical Thinking*, is now available on the THEN/HiER website. Please contact Marie-Hélène Brunet if you would like to be involved in this francophone event. We are also looking for new committee members, particularly students in the area of museum studies.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

Research Snapshots

This section of our monthly e-Bulletin highlights our members' research projects.

Michael Dawson, Associate Professor
Department of History, St. Thomas University



Twenty Questions... And the Historical Roots of Contemporary Canada

Pardon me, but who is Louis Riel and what was he fighting for? How and why did Canada develop a welfare state? When did Canada become a consumer society? What explains Canada's periodic national unity crises? And what (the Hell) can Sunday shopping tell us about the influence of Christianity in Canada? These are a few of the questions that occupy my time at the moment. My answers to these questions are derived in part from my previous research into the history of Canadian nationalism, regionalism, consumerism, and mass culture. The questions, however, emerged in response to my classroom experience teaching introductory Canadian History survey courses.

I have enjoyed teaching survey courses. But I've never been fully satisfied with the results. Over the past few years I've become increasingly concerned with finding more effective ways to engage the wide range of students sitting before me. (There are always a sprinkling of history majors; but there are also a fair number of non-history majors who are keen but unfamiliar with history as a discipline; and more than a few students who arrive in the course lacking much interest in the topic.) My goal hasn't changed: to provide all of these students with a broad understanding of Canada's history and to help them become more informed and productive citizens. But in the past few years I've come to believe that a sustained, comprehensive (and thus fairly dense) narrative may not be the most effective approach to pursuing this goal.

And so, since 2007, I've been reinventing what used to be a fairly typical survey course. Its current incarnation, *The Historical Roots of Contemporary Canada*, departs from the traditional model of a continuous 13-week-long narrative from 1867 to the present. Instead, with a little help from some fancy new "timeline" software and the use of student response devices (or "clickers"), I begin by providing my students with a concise three-week summary of Canadian history. This gives them a broad sense of political, social and economic developments and familiarizes them with key events and a fair number of influential actors and organizations. I then step back and spend the next 10 weeks providing thematic lectures that ask and answer questions such as those I've listed above. These lectures, in a very conscious and direct way, speak to the contemporary relevance of Canadian history.



My earlier, "traditional," approach to the survey course was working just fine - at least in terms of positive course evaluations and minimizing my course prep. But my gut told me that there was an opportunity here to engage many of my students more directly with shorter, more focused narratives that are, for the most part, contained in a single class lecture. In the past I would find myself awkwardly transitioning from one topic to another. For example, I would move from the October Crisis to the National Energy Program (because they both appeared at similar points in the historical chronology) with "wishful thinking" transitions along the lines of "You'll no doubt remember that a rich tradition of western grievance has existed concerning issues such as the tariff and federal control over natural resources..." I now get to walk into class and tell them that for the next eighty minutes we're going to examine everything they need to know about the origins and influence of western alienation. We get to talk about the October Crisis in the context of a lecture on French-Canadian nationalism and/or Canada's "rights revolution." The result, so far, is that my students are peppering me with more (and better) questions and comments in the classroom.

Taking this approach has, of course, forced me to set aside (or at the very least dramatically rework) a set of lecture notes that I'd carefully constructed over many years. And it's encouraged me to delve into books and articles and primary sources that I hadn't yet found the time to examine. In short, it's re-energized my approach to teaching Canadian history. My ultimate aim is a book of *Twenty Questions (And Answers)* - co-written with Catherine Gidney -- that will hopefully appeal to a broad non-academic readership interested in learning more about the historical roots of contemporary Canada but who are, like many of my students, reluctant to immerse themselves in a comprehensive 600-page narrative.

*** MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**