

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

## What's new with THEN/HiER?



\* **Stéphane Lévesque, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member**, was a guest speaker for the STUDY CANADA Summer Institute of Western Washington University. Sixteen American teachers were involved in this one-week intensive program held in Ottawa. His talk took place at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa on July 3.

\* **Jocelyn Létourneau, THEN/HiER Executive Board Member**, gave the keynote address titled "Le Québec, la révolution silencieuse" on June 13 at the Colloque annuel de l'Association française d'études canadiennes held at the Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis in France.



\* **Penney Clark, THEN/HiER Director and Mona Gleason, THEN/HiER member**, are organizing the next biennial Canadian History of Education Association (CHEA) conference, which will take place in Vancouver, October 21-24, 2012. The conference, "Rising to the Challenge: History of Education and the Pursuit of Relevance," includes sessions by educational historians and history educators from across Canada and internationally.

\* **Congratulations to THEN/HiER member Michael Dawson**, who has been awarded the inaugural St. Thomas University Early Career Research Award for his research in Canadian cultural history and Canadian historiography.



## Small Projects Grants

THEN/HIER has recently awarded two Small Projects Grants:

- *Understanding the Residential School System: Intergenerational Dialogue*. The John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights in Edmonton, Alberta, will bring together secondary school students, social studies teachers, Elders, human rights educators and researchers to learn about the legacy of the Residential School system in Canada and to develop collective action aimed at relationship building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Peoples. They will develop online curriculum materials based on the outcomes of this dialogue.
- *2013 Annual Meeting of the Agricultural History Society (AHS)*. Mount Royal University is hosting the 2013 annual three-day meeting of the Agricultural History Society (AHS). The conference provides an excellent forum for scholars and graduate students working in the field of agricultural history to present and discuss their work, as well as creating networks of historians, historical geographers, rural sociologists, agricultural economists, anthropologists, and independent scholars from 26 countries. Faculty members from the Department of Humanities will use THEN/HiER funds to help defray costs for graduate student participation in the conference. In addition, each student will write a blog post on THEN/HiER's website about their experience at the conference.

## New Video

THEN/HiER has recently posted a video of the presentations at the *Museums as Sites of Historical Consciousness Unconference* that took place on April 11 and 12 at the Museum of Vancouver (MOV). Contributors to the fourth edited collection in THEN/HiER's book series who are practitioners and academics from a range of disciplines considered historical literacy and the formation of historical consciousness within various museum and heritage site settings. Other members of the museum community from Vancouver and across the country participated and provided feedback to contributors.



## What's new with our partners?

### \* Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (CSHC)

The Historical Thinking Project held its third Summer Institute at Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, an arrangement made possible by the generous interventions of Ruth Sandwell. The theme of *exchange across boundaries* was explored in reference to the six historical thinking concepts. Participants came from across Canada as well as Sweden, the United States and Germany. In addition to lectures and discussions led by Jill Colyer and Peter Seixas, Ruth led a workshop on using primary source evidence, and Susan Dion of York University gave a lecture on history, education and aboriginal peoples. The participants' final projects (inspired by evidence of the past that they found on field trips at Fort York historic site, the Royal Ontario Museum, and Kensington Market) were extraordinarily creative and insightful.



### \* Upcoming 2012 Social Studies/History Teachers' Associations Conferences

- Alberta Social Studies Council: *Global Me -- Global We*, Banff, November 9 to 11.
- Association québécoise pour l'enseignement en univers social: *NOUS et l'@ctu@lité*, Beaupré, October 12 & 13.
- British Columbia Social Studies Teachers' Association: *Rights and Responsibilities - Thinking and Acting Locally and Globally*, Vancouver, October 19.
- Manitoba Social Sciences Teachers' Association: *It's an Honour to be a Canadian: Citizenship, Global Identity, Human Rights, Sustainability*, Winnipeg, October 19.
- Nova Scotia Social Studies Teachers' Association: *The New Teacher: New Approaches, New Strategies, New Technology*, Fall River, October 26.
- Ontario History and Social Sciences Teachers' Association: *Canadian Identity: 200 Years in the Making*, Niagara-on-the-Lake, November 23 & 24, in conjunction with the Association for Canadian Studies.
- Saskatchewan Council of Social Sciences: *Citizenship and Canadian Identity*, Saskatoon, October 18 & 19.
- Société des professeurs d'histoire du Québec: *50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference*, Shawinigan, November 2 & 3.

## Graduate Student Committees

The Anglophone Graduate Student Committee recently held a teleconference to review past initiatives and discuss future plans. We are extremely excited about the new administrator for our Teaching the Past blog, Kate Zankowicz, a museum educator who is currently doing a PhD at OISE/UT in the history of education. Her interests are in the history of object-based learning in Toronto museums, and more specifically in the role that women play in developing and supporting multisensory ways of learning about the past. Thanks to Kate we have some museum studies graduates who will be contributing to the blog, which will start up again in September when we plan to discuss themes such as learning from objects and collections, implementing diversity in classrooms and museums, and using performance to teach history. Future blog topics will explore issues of memory and commemoration, difficult histories, using multiple perspectives in classrooms and museums, history and social justice, and food history. We also plan to have a "using technology" month which will feature a critical review of the Google World Wonders Project and its potential for use in history education. As well, our Flickr and Facebook pages will be enhanced by monthly historical trivia and an Artefact of the Month feature, where history educators will discuss how they would use a particular museum object in their lessons. Twitter will have an added focus on upcoming museum exhibitions. Please visit the Anglophone Graduate Student Committee page to hear more about opportunities and events of interest to graduate students. Contact Rose Fine-Meyer.



Rose Fine-Meyer

Preparations are well underway for THEN/HiER's Regional Annual Conference in Quebec City on October 25, 2012 which is being organized by the Francophone Graduate Student Committee and will be held in French. We are pleased to announce that Dr. Carla Peck, Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, will be the keynote speaker. We will have many other invited speakers, including Danny Robertson of the Huron-Wendat Museum in Wendake, and Alain Fréchette from the Stewart Museum in Montréal. We will have a full day with panels on empathy in the history class and in museums in the morning, and a visit to the Plains of Abraham in the afternoon. We hope many of you will join us! For more information and to register (it's free!), contact me. Please have a look at the excellent articles by Bruno-Pierre Guillette (*The War of 1812: Commemoration or Propaganda?*) and Vincent Boutonnet (*Soccer or Historical Consciousness?*) on the blog Enseigner l'histoire. Both discuss the impact of patriotism on our understanding of historical and modern-day events. Contact Marie-Hélène Brunet.



Marie-Hélène Brunet

## Research Snapshots

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

**Tony Taylor, Associate Professor**  
Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia



### The Politics of History Education: from the Battle of the Boyne to Chairman Mao

It was Brother Richard of De La Salle Preparatory School, Pendleton, Manchester (UK) who inadvertently acquainted me, at the age of eight, with the connection between history education and ideology, a connection that has, in the past decade or so, been a dominant theme in my research. Brother Richard taught us his own Catholicised version of the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, and this is it. On one side of the Boyne River (a muddy creek, in reality) stood the forces of the deposed Catholic King James VII, who still claimed the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland. Facing him was the army of the Protestant incumbent, Prince William of Orange. According to Brother Richard, the battle, and the cause of Catholicism in Ireland for the next two centuries, was lost when, freakishly, a Williamite cannon ball took off the head of the only Jacobite general who knew the plan of battle. In consequence of this misfortune William triumphed, James fled into exile - and the post-conflict, commemorative Orange Order is still with us today. In actuality, the battle was a bit of a muddle and the Jacobites retreated in the face of a more professional Williamite force. But it was not just Brother Richard who tweaked historical narratives to suit his own viewpoint. In college (senior high school) we

were later taught that Henry VIII actually died a good Catholic and that Elizabeth I recanted her mistaken Protestant ways on her deathbed, unusual historical assertions then and now.

It took quite a while for me to journey from a forsworn Elizabeth to more recent examples of the relationship between ideology and the ownership of historical narratives. My next enlightenment came much, much later, in 1999, when the Liberal National Party (LNP - conservative coalition) federal government in Australia set up a national inquiry into history in schools and I was fortunate enough to lead the Monash University team that conducted the survey. As a consequence of that inquiry, from 1999 onwards, I have been closely involved in successive federal LNP and Australian Labor Party (ALP) initiatives in history education and they have

taught me the following: first, conservative politicians value history education with much greater intensity than do their Labor counterparts. The latter will give a dutiful but inattentive nod to the importance of history. The ALP is much keener on literacy, numeracy, career-friendly curriculum subjects and laptops in every classroom. Labor has been, and in practice remains, perfectly sanguine about banishing history education to the margins of the school curriculum.

The contrasting emphasis that conservatives place on the importance of history education is largely based on a belief that history in the classroom should celebrate the national story through knowing (rather than understanding) a master narrative of a (Burkean/Whiggish) organically developing parliamentary democracy, a narrative based on unassailable political and economic facts. To give you an example of what I mean by this, here is another story. In late 2006, I was in the ministerial suite in Canberra, sat across the table from two black-suited LNP advisers who were peering at a draft (inquiry-based, conceptually organised, open-ended) history curriculum framework I had prepared for their minister. "We'd like to see more particularities," one of them said. "Do you mean more facts?" I asked. They shifted in their seats, and nodded. "And more political and economic history" said the other. My response was that the full range of high school students generally disliked political and economic history but did respond well to social history. Good teachers could use social history as an inquiry-based avenue to exploring political and economic issues. They looked at me as if I were quite mad. They could not comprehend the notion of student inquiry in history classes - and social history smacked of socialism.

Which brings me to the second thing I have learned which is that, as a rule, conservative politicians suspect continuing Leftist infiltration of the history classroom and they see progressive history education as a radical activity carried out by seditious history teachers. It was certainly the case that during the 2006-2007 national debates on Australian history education, the term 'Maoist' was bandied about with wild abandon by the then LNP education minister and her advisers.

This obsession with the politicised nature of what is assumed to be happening in history classrooms explains some of the intensity that the conservative side of politics displays about history in schools, especially in Grades 9-10, the final years of compulsory education. The fervent hope of my black-suited advisers was that they could wield influence in the classroom with an ideologically-framed form of school history that would act as a prophylactic against the incursions of more reflexive, discursive (and consequently subversive) forms of history. In other words, incontestable and celebratory facts are intended to drive out complex, contested themes and thoughts.

In this vein, the latest research trip that I, and research associate Sue Collins, have undertaken is a study of the influence of the conservative press on history education in Australia. It makes for fascinating reading: "The Politics are Personal: the Murdoch Press, a Culture of Intimidation and the Australian History Curriculum," *The Curriculum Journal* (forthcoming).

Tony Taylor teaches and researches at Monash University, Victoria, Australia. From 2001-2007 he was director of the federal National Centre for History Education, a THEN/HiER partner organization. He is currently working on two Australian Research Council history projects: one is on early years national curriculum implementation in Australia, and the other is a comparative project on senior school implementation in Australia and in Russia. Sue Collins is an Assessment Research Centre (ARC) research officer at Monash University.

**\* MORE TO COME NEXT MONTH!**