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An occasional newsletter for the Emeritus Faculty Association

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Emeritus Faculty Association news September 2015

Next Meeting:

Friday September 4th, 10.30am Javits room, library 2nd floor.

Professor of History Robert Chase will talk on *The Prisoners' Rights Movement and the Construction of the Carceral State, 1945-1990*, based on his forthcoming book and an article which just came out in a special issue of *The Journal of American History*. Given the immediacy of the topic and recent events, the JAH has decided to make all articles in this issue free to the public via its website. The articles are available on the site as either a PDF or online version for free and without a JAH subscription at: <http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/issues/1021/index.html>

Bio: As a scholar of the post-1945 period, Prof Chase's areas of research and teaching include state and racial politics, African American and Latino history, urban history, labor history and working-class culture, critical race theory, political and sexual violence, social movements, and civil rights. Born in New York City and raised in Washington, D.C., he received his Ph.D. in US history at the University of Maryland in 2009 where his dissertation was the recipient of the University of Maryland's Ann G. Wylie dissertation award and the E. B. and Jean Smith Dissertation Prize in Political History. Previously, Dr. Chase held postdoctoral fellowships with Southern Methodist University, Case Western Reserve University, and Rutgers University. In 2011 he was the Public Historian of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston. Outside of academia, he spent eight years as a public policy analyst for Washington, D.C. area think tanks and public

policy research centers. He joined our SBU faculty in January 2013. His forthcoming manuscript, *Civil Rights on the Cell Block . . .*, explores the roots of twentieth century prison growth, inmate society and the coercive relationship between keeper and kept, and the legal struggle between inmates and the state over race, prisoners' rights, and questions of citizenship.

In Memoriam:

Daniel Dicker: Died on April 4 after a rapidly developing affliction with lung cancer. He obtained his doctorate in 1961 from Columbia University and was Professor in the department of Applied Math. He had been a visiting Research Fellow at Harvard and MIT and Visiting Professor at Imperial College of Technology, London. Dicker was known for his analyses of the 1940 aerodynamic collapse of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and the 1967 non-aerodynamic collapse of the "Silver Bridge" over the Ohio River. Prior to his career in academia he was associated with firms in New York City and did structural engineering for the Sprain River Parkway and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.

Harold Atkins: died peacefully at home on Friday, May 1, 2015 in South Setauket, at age 88 after a protracted struggle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Harold earned his BS from Yale University in 1948 and his MD from Harvard Medical School in 1952. In 1963, he wed Beverly Birns. A pioneer in the field of nuclear medicine, he worked as a research and practicing radiologist for 42 years at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and as head of SUSB Nuclear Medicine, publishing over 230 professional papers. See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/newsday/obituary.aspx?n=harold-atkins&pid=174772516>

Herbert Gelernter: passed away suddenly on May 28, 2015 while recovering from hip and femur surgery. Gelernter studied for his Ph.D. at the University of Rochester in 1957. He implemented, with Nathaniel Rochester, a computer language for list processing within FORTRAN. The work for this was done, in fact, with Carl Gerberich at IBM, to this end producing the Fortran list processing language (FLPL). His most ambitious project during his tenure at Stony Brook University was the SYNCHEM expert problem-solving system for the synthesis of organic molecules. This facilitated the discovery of potential synthesis routes through a self-guided intelligent search and application of its large knowledge base of graph transforms, rules and sophisticated heuristics representing generalized organic reactions organized around recognized functional groups.

Peter Manchester: died suddenly from cardiac arrest in the Stony Brook University Hospital on Sunday, June 28, 2015. He came to the Religious Studies Department at Stony Brook in 1980 from the University of California at Berkeley and Davis. He later joined the Philosophy Department in 1998. Manchester also served as the Associate Dean of the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts, as well as the Director of the Center for Religious Studies. In addition to a number of widely read essays, Professor Manchester published two books: an acclaimed study of the nature and experience of time, *The Syntax of Time* (2005); and *Temporality and Trinity* (2015).

Last Meeting:

Carl Bernstein (see bio last issue) was introduced by Frank Myers, currently teaching joint course with him. He started with an overview of where the country now finds itself, in order to generate a discussion on the subject. The recent long string of alleged police malfunctions started him going on a contemplation of how the long racial history of the US has yet to be resolved. This soon came down to a discussion of the main topic of the day, that racial tensions are just a part of a more general dysfunction that has been developing for the last 30 years. The last time that the US system of government really worked was in the Watergate case when the house judiciary committee and the supreme court were unanimous, 77 senators voted for impeachment, and Barry Goldwater was the one to convince President Nixon that his time was up. What would Nixon (or indeed a future president similarly inclined) have done with the vast data base the NSA has vacuumed up since? Despite huge expenditure in blood and money, the US has not won a war since WWII (Carl doesn't count Grenada). By now the congress is effectively paralyzed and the supreme court perennially split. And partly due to that supreme court, election campaigns are now up to \$5 billion. But we should not focus only on DC. Across the country the ideological divide has reached a point not seen since the civil war. The traditional US generosity of spirit is being overwhelmed by a situation in which a fact based debate is no longer possible. Too many "facts" with no basis in truth are endlessly repeated, and broadcast media reduce everything to she says vs he says.

Subjects that came up in the questioning: Ownership of newspapers is becoming more concentrated and traditional print journalism is no longer viable (and a downside of the electronic revolution is that everybody can now choose news sources that massage their own prejudices). Students are now disenchanted and too many are concentrated on career and are comparatively apolitical. Generosity of spirit is perhaps connected to the levels of hope vs fear in the population. Privately owned armies of lobbyists in DC have grown to around 150,000 (and who actually often know more than the

overworked aides in cut-back government agencies). US leadership in the world now is now in decline partly because its moral base has been undermined.

A last question brought Carl back to the cultural and ideological divide discussed at the outset. This is not only in the US, because intolerance is at present growing in most other countries also. Carl sees it as part of human nature. He bases his hopes on the younger generation, provided they can be educated with some knowledge of history. Perhaps this is why he has now gravitated to education himself, and particularly to Stony Brook which he hopes will be his teaching home for many years.

Postscript: drone courses anyone?

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration is expected to finalize regulations on commercial drones by the end of this year, and then more than 100,000 new jobs with an economic impact of \$82 billion are anticipated to develop in the following decade. Although the immediately forthcoming rules are allegedly limited to line of sight, industry is pressuring the FAA, and they have already sanctioned four companies to go further. This July Amazon filed paperwork also requesting permission to go beyond line-of-sight to deliver packages, which Google is also exploring. Universities are also getting into the act. The University of North Dakota was the first to establish a 4 year program in 2009. In 2012 when the FAA authorized testing at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Texas A&M, and Virginia Tech, the total number of universities that applied was over 30.

As this process plays out, real dangers to public safety and civil liberties will surely be coming. It has recently been widely reported that more than 400 large U.S. military drones have crashed in accidents around the world since 2001. And inside the US, according to FAA records, even among registered users such as law enforcement agencies and universities, there have been 23 accidents and 236 unsafe incidents reported since November 2009. Now that drones equipped with digital cameras are freely available to anybody for as little as \$700, controllable from a smart phone app (mostly, after practice), accidents and near-accidents are starting to be reported worldwide, particularly near airports.

Full disclosure: the views of your correspondent on drones are a little jaundiced after some amount of experience with German V1's (on the receiving end). Of course the V1's were intentionally aimed at the civilian population, while the civilians killed and injured by US drone strikes in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia (and now Syria), have been "collateral damage". On the other hand, the German assaults were preceded by an official declaration of war, now considered old

fashioned. But since WW2 the US has had a history of deploying new technologies to the hilt, before belated concern and attempts at international control after (inevitably) the same technology got into the hands of others. Witness nuclear weapons, space vehicles, cyber-terrorism. For all the good that star-wars and Stuxnet did us, it might have been better to have tried international regulation at the beginning. Returning to military drones, by this year 88 other nations operate them and 54 manufacture their own (ref: William M Arkin, *Unmanned*, Little-Brown, publishers, 2015).

Please visit the Provost's Lecture Series website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/provlec.shtml> for further updates.

If you would like receive your copy of the newsletter via email instead of snail mail please send your name, address, and current email address to *Alison Gibbons* at: alison.gibbons@stonybrook.edu

Brown bag tradition: The steering committee wishes to remind new members and old about the ongoing tradition of brown bag lunches in the Javits room immediately following each month's talk. Please take advantage of this opportunity to socialize and catch up with news of old friends.

Visit our website: To visit our website, first go to the University website at www.stonybrook.edu, click on "For Faculty and Staff", and then on "Emeritus Faculty Association". It always contains the latest emeritus news (click on "Next Meeting"), a list of members' email addresses, a list of officers, newsletter archives and many other useful links.


