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GOSHEN COLLEGE

# History Department Newsletter

## Maple Scholars Pair Investigate Ethiopian Ethnic Conflict and Peace

By Elizabeth Miller

In the field of ethnic studies, the dominant models are based on expressed conflict and violence. Jan Bender Shetler, professor of history at Goshen College, and Dawit Yehualashet, a senior, challenge such assumptions through the completion of their 2006 Maple Scholars research.

The Maple Scholars program allows students to work on independent research projects with Goshen College faculty during the summer months.

Intrigued with the ideas of Ashutosh Varshney, a political scientist whose work Shetler used in her History of Ethnic Conflict course in the fall of 2005, Shetler and Yehualashet hope to expand on Varshney's ideas of peaceful coexistence of ethnic groups by studying ethnic relations in Yehualashet's native Ethiopia.

Varshney's research sug-

gests that greater multi-ethnic participation in civil society institutions correlates with an increased ability for communities to diffuse ethnic tensions and violence.

Shetler found Varshney's thesis applicable to the history of Ethiopia, a country where Christians and Muslims have lived in relatively peaceful coexistence for centuries.

Shetler and Dawit Yehualashet Kebede, Yehualashet are in the midst of his research. especially interested in the Ethiopian city of Harar. A predominantly Muslim city, Harar is home to the fourth holiest Islamic shrine in Ethiopia. A minority Christian population lives in the city, however, and the city is the site of an Orthodox Christian church that was built on the site of a former mosque.



Using current ethnic conflict models, Harar appears to be a prime location for ethnic tension, but there are no reports of significant ethnic conflict nor of violence against the church.

A peace and conflict studies major from Ethiopia, Yehualashet has always wondered about a possible explanation for peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, but says he never before made the link to civil institutions. During summer of 2006, Yehualashet read newspaper reports from three Ethiopian newspapers from 1991, marking the fall of the Derg, to the present.

"[In the articles] I look for anything on community conflict, religious conflict, anything along those lines," said Yehualashet. In addition, he conducted a *See Maple Scholars, next page.*

## History Department Graduates Three Teachers

By Jesse Smith

In the fall of 2005, three Goshen history majors plunged into student teaching. Don Williams, Steve Eigsti, and Andy Krabill were unsure of what to expect from their students, but each successfully (re)navigated junior high and high school.

The first day Don Williams entered his classroom at Westview Junior High, students exclaimed, "He's like 6 feet tall!" While Williams is actually 6'4", height proved no impediment to teaching social studies. He describes his semester at Westview as "the most rewarding" of his college career.

Although student teaching



Don Williams checks on a student's work.

was a significant time commitment, Williams had the combined support of the history and education departments.

Williams found the prepara-

tion he received at Goshen especially helpful for working with special needs students. Overall, said Williams, "[I learned] how to make good lesson plans that are relevant to the students and how to effectively manage a classroom."

Williams's supervising teachers must have been impressed with his work, because they hired him to teach World History, Government, and Psychology.

Steve Eigsti fondly recalls chaperoning his 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at a Concord Junior High dance. "It was hard not to laugh at all the students separating themselves by gender...I wasn't a fan of junior high dances as a *See Teaching, next page.*

## Maple Scholars, cont.

secondary literature review of work relating to ethnic conflict in Ethiopia.

The third part of the Maple Scholars project was an interpretation of the data and formulation of a hypothesis. "How have they [the residents of Harar, Ethiopia] been able to tolerate the existence of a Christian church in the middle of an Islamic city?" asked Yehualashet. Such questions will lead Yehualashet and Shetler beyond the scope of a summer's research, as they hope to travel to Ethiopia next summer to conduct fieldwork

and interviews in Harar and other cities. Here they will research what role civic institutions have played in the preservation of peace in such regions.

"We have not been able to find any quantitative data about institutions in Harar," said Yehualashet, but he and Shetler suspect that everyday interactions revolving around coffee rituals, funerals, weddings and shared religious pilgrimages for Christian and Muslims play a significant role.

Both Shetler and Yehualashet see ethnic peace as a subject worthy of aca-

demical study, and they hope that their project can contribute to a shift from the current focus on violence in ethnic studies.

As Yehualashet said, "When you think of 'ethnic,' violence is what you usually think of next." For Shetler and Yehualashet, of course, ethnicity is characterized by far more than conflict and violence.

"If we begin to understand the mechanisms by which people live together," said Yehualashet, "we can have a better understanding of peaceful coexistence."

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## Teaching, cont.

junior high student, and my opinions of dances hasn't changed with age."

While Eigsti did not learn any dance moves at Concord, he did learn more about his subject matter. "In general my knowledge of the historical periods we covered increased because you can only effectively explain a concept after you have mastered it," said Eigsti. "It was here that the history department's emphasis on questioning and learning paid off." Time management was also an important skill for Eigsti. He describes teaching as "taking as much time as you are willing to give." Through student teaching, Eigsti reports that he learned to "balance the collegiate aspects of teaching (reports, lesson plans, certification forms, etc.) with the classroom aspects." This fall Eigsti will be a substitute teacher in the Goshen area.

Andy Krabill spent his fall semester student teaching at Elkhart Central High School. Krabill found the paperwork and busywork involved in a teaching profession to be frustrating, but overall the experience was fulfilling. Krabill will teach World Geography, World History, and US History at Elkhart Central during the 2006-2007 school-year.

These three graduates should be commended for surviving junior high and high school...twice. The History Department wishes them the best of luck in their professional endeavors.

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## Senior Seminar Theses

Fourteen history majors were members of the class of 2006. Thirteen were enrolled in history senior seminar during the spring semester prior to commencement. (Matt Hochstetler, Orrville, Ohio, completed senior seminar during his junior year.) As always, senior historians explored a range of subjects and their theses involved extensive primary source research and intensive writing. Congratulations to the Class of 2006!

**Dominique Burgunder-Johnson** (Vilseck, Germany), "Black, White, Mennonite: African American Students at Goshen College, 1968-1983."

**Israel J. Ditzler** (Bellevue, Ia.), "MCC Involvement in Settling Indigenous People in the Paraguayan Chaco."

**Kirstin Docken** (Sioux Falls, S.D.), "Apathetic Youth to Passionate Believers: How the Nekempte Youth of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus were willing to be Persecuted for their Faith."

**Greg Koop** (Goshen, Ind.), "The Right Idea: How Mennonite Anti-Communism Facilitated Immigration Following the Second World War."

**Andrew L. Krabill** (Tiskilwa, Ill.), "In the Midst of Transition: A Social History of Willow Springs Mennonite Church."

**Craig A. Mast** (Smithville, Ohio), "Faith Under Fire: Mennonite Men, the Military, and the Church during the Vietnam War."

**Elizabeth M. Miller** (Danvers, Ill.), "Moody, Fundamentalism, and Mennonites: The Struggle for Particularity and Engagement in Illinois Mennonite Churches, 1900-1955."

**Abby Nafziger** (Goshen, Ind.), "Fulfilling the Call: Mennonite Mission and Single Women, 1945-1965."

**Jeanette Pekich** (Grand Rapids, Mich.), "Americanization in World War I."

**Jesse Smith** (Iowa City, Ia.), "'With Eternity's Values in View': The Dynamic Message of Clayton F. Derstine."

**Joshua Weaver** (Bluffton, Ohio), "Ecclesia, Spiritus, Corpus Christianum: Nelson Litwiller and Mennonite Charismatic Renewal."

**Don Williams** (Middlebury, Ind.), "The Views and Outlook of the Florida Everglades: An Environmental View."

**Laurel J. Yoder** (Prescott, Ariz.), "Opening a Space for Ethiopian Initiative: The Mennonite Medical Mission and the Development of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, 1945-1978."

## A Note from the Chair...

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Greetings from the Goshen College! History remains a strong and vital program at GC. We are pleased with the number of students enrolling in our courses. Approximately forty-five sophomores, juniors, and seniors are declared history majors, and history was the third most common major among graduates at the May 2006 commencement.

But the story is not simply one of numbers. My colleagues and I are delighted with the kinds of students with whom we work. They bring active minds, critical questions, high ideals, and remarkable life experiences and faith commitments to the communities that form in our classrooms. These students are at the heart of our departmental goal to “develop thoughtful, committed servant leaders capable of transformative action in the world.”

Alongside teaching and student advising, department members remain active in scholarly and professional settings. For example, this past year history faculty completed work on five books, all of which will be published in 2007.

In the 2007 History Department Newsletter we plan to devote space to what our alums are doing. We’d love to hear from you! Email what you’d like included to [stevemn@goshen.edu](mailto:stevemn@goshen.edu).

—Steven M. Nolt, History Department Chair

### Congratulations to Horsch Contest Winners!

The Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee has announced the winners of the 2005 John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest, and all three winners in Class II (Undergraduate college and university) were Goshen history majors! Jason Kauffman, Martha Miller Ruggles, and Laura Rheinheimer, received first, second, and third prizes, respectively. All were members of the Class of 2005, and their submissions to the Horsch Contest were versions of their history theses.

## 2006-2007 Scholarship Recipients

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Congratulations to Scholarship winners for the 2006-2007 School Year!

Willard and Verna Smith U.S. History Scholarship: **Dagan Bontrager** (Lancaster, Pa.) and **André Shenk** (Lancaster, Pa.).

Oswin and David Gerber Scholarship in Mennonite Studies: **Hillary Watson** (Seattle).

In addition, this year, through the generosity of Dr. Gunther Henry Schmitt, Goshen College was able to award Maria Klaassen Scholarships to **Jeff Hochstetler** (Orrville, Ohio), **Jonny Meyer** (Goshen, Ind.), and **Laura Neufeld** (Fresno, Cal.). Klaassen, in whose name these scholarships are given, was a missionary nurse and hospital administrator in Indonesia.

Our thanks to the generosity of the Smith and Gerber families, and to Dr. Schmitt. Goshen College welcomes donations to the Smith and Gerber scholarship endowments.

## Reflections on a History Internship

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During the close of my sophomore year, the history department faculty hosted a dinner for sophomore history majors to introduce the goals and elements of our study in history for the final two years of college. A senior student spoke to us at that meeting about her internship experience documenting the architectural history of homes in Elkhart County. An 80 to 120 hour internship is required for all history majors, but at the time I could not imagine what sort of internship would engage my own interests and career goals while still fulfilling my major's requirements.

A little less than two years later, I found myself riding in the back of a car, peering through the brambles of south-eastern Kentucky's mountains to swaths of open earth and coal seams, running like streams of molasses, on the mountain face across the valley. Such lunar scars testify to decades of strip-mining, the removal of topsoil and extraction of surface-level coal, an alternative to the more expensive process of traditional underground removal. While economic costs are lower, environmental and personal costs are certainly not, and communities in strip-mining regions suffer declines in air quality, water quality, personal safety, and property rights.

The trip was only one part of my spring 2006 internship with Mennonite Central Committee, which required me to research poverty reduction. Despite my sophomore skepticism of history internships, I was not only engaged, but inspired and confident in my work. I genuinely enjoyed synthesizing the information and organizing it to be shared with others. As it turns out, the research skills I learned in my history classes are helpful in many contexts, not just for researching ethnic conflict in Indonesia or immigration labor movements in the United States.

The benefits of this experience reached far beyond academic practice, however. My research also revealed my relationship to systems of poverty, including Kentucky's struggling coal-mining communities, and of contributions I can make to changing such systems. As a recent graduate, my future remains undetermined, but in Kentucky I gained a more intricate understanding of our world and of my place as one of its inhabitants. Hopefully, as I keep researching, writing, speaking and interacting, my understanding will only grow.

—Elizabeth Miller, Class of 2006

# Faculty News

## John D. Roth

During the 2005-2006 school year John was on sabbatical from teaching and committee work, but continued as editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review* and director of Mennonite Historical Library. In May, in conjunction with the hundredth anniversary of the MHL, he planned and coordinated a two-day centennial conference, Future Directions in Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholarship. As part of his sabbatical, John made several trips to Europe for research and to participate in Mennonite-Lutheran ecumenical conversation. In June he led an Anabaptist history tour in Europe, sponsored by the alumni office.

## Jan Bender Shetler

In 2005, Jan taught the History Department's first year Colloquium class for the first time. The subject of this topics course is designated by the instructor, and this year Jan and her students focused on 19<sup>th</sup>-century millenarian movements in the non-western world. Student response was enthusiastic, and she will repeat the course in fall 2006. Jan also led for the third time the popular, on-location May Term course History in the Southwest, and she also coached GC students attending Model UN in Dayton, Ohio. In March in England she presented an invited paper, "Ethnic Narratives of Unity and Difference: Post-colonial Popular Historians of North and South Mara, Tanzania," at a Cambridge University workshop on Ethno-History and the Construction of Identity in Twentieth-Century Africa.

## Steve Nolt

Steve taught both general education and upper-level history courses, including Colonial and Revolutionary North America, History of Mennonites in America, and junior and senior seminars. In September in France he gave lectures on Amish life, under sponsorship of the French Mennonite Historical Association. Steve's current research projects include work on the Global Mennonite History Project's North American volume (with a colleague in Manitoba), and as a member of a three-person National Endowment for the Humanities research team studying Amish history and life in ten states.

## Lee Roy Berry

Lee Roy continues to teach in the area of political science and Latin American History. This year he developed a new course in U.S.-European Relations, examining the cross-Atlantic relationship in the post-WWII period. Lee Roy remains busy as an attorney in Goshen. The July 2006 issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review* includes his major essay "Mennonites, African-Americans, the U.S. Constitution and the Problem of Assimilation."

## Abraham Friesen

Recently retired from teaching Reformation history at University of California-Santa Barbara, Abe Friesen and his wife, Gerry, spent the spring semester in Goshen. Friesen taught Anabaptist-Mennonite History and conducted extensive research in the Mennonite Historical Library in preparation for his next book.

## What Are They Doing Now?

**Theron Schlabach** (faculty 1965-1995) recently completed a substantial biography of Mennonite historian and ethicist Guy F. Hershberger, with publication expected in the next year or two. He serves as president of Michiana Anabaptist Historians. And he remains active as a trucker.

**James Hertzler** (faculty 1966-1998) reports that he is doing a lot of reading these days—everything from novelists Scott Turow and John Grissom to theologians John Shelby Spong and Paul Tillich. He also volunteers at College Mennonite Church and spends time with his family and working on their small farm.

**Alan Kreider** (faculty 1969-1980) is associate professor of church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. His most recent book is *A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church* (Good Books, 2005), with Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja.

**Robert Charles** (faculty 1994-1999) recently moved to New York City, where he remains Mennonite Mission Network's Regional Director for Europe. His essay on Mennonites and the state appeared in the July 2006 issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

**Rachel Waltner Goossen** (faculty 1995-1999), is associate professor of history at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas. In addition to teaching, she directs a World War II oral history project and coordinates the National History Day program. She recently contributed a chapter to a book honoring GC professor emerita of music Mary K. Oyer.

**David Hostetter** (faculty 1998-2001) is currently Director of Programs and Research at the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University, in West Virginia. He recently published *Movement Matters: American Antipartheid Activism and the Rise of Multicultural Politics* (Routledge, 2006).

## Graduate Student Celebrates Publication of Thesis

A scholarly journal recently published Jessica Meyers' (GC '03) history senior seminar paper. "Phở and Apple Pie: Eden Center as a Representation of Vietnamese American Ethnic Identity in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area, 1975-2005" appeared in the February 2006 issue of *Journal of Asian American Studies*, pp. 55-85. Following graduation Meyers spent two years teaching in Szolnok, Hungary, and this fall will begin a graduate program in journalism at University of California, Berkeley.