

# The Debunker

## Letter from the Editors

Dear Loyal Fans of the Debunker,

The new editor has been announced, and the Debunker is proud to present Stuart to the team!

In an attempt to give our readers more issues on which to contribute, this publication is undergoing a shift. All those who read the Debunker solely for the crossword will be relieved to here that it has retained a permanent position. We will also be shifting to a focus on contemporary issues and while these don't exclusively concern History students, as students of UCFV they affect us all. We will try and give such current events a historical spin, due to the fact that we are a history newsletter.

In this new spirit we have a commentary/rant on the recent SUS referendum, as seen to your right.

As many of you are aware, there have been changes in Cuba recently. Fidel has (sadly) stepped down as the father of the nation and his brother has taken the reigns. As a tribute to this amazing man (no bias present at all), we have called this the "Farewell to Fidel Issue" and our content reflects this. Stu has written a history of Cuba under Fidel. There is also a list of 10 must-see Cuba videos.

Don't miss the back page for upcoming events and a listing of history courses being taught this summer.

Finally we have two submissions. One is a review of the Qualicum/Parksville History Conference held at the end of January. The second is the review of the first forum in the Children of War and Peace series.

Enjoy the issue, and don't forget to submit!

*Stuart and Kim*



## **Qualicum/Parksville Conference Review** By Tricia Taylor

The Qualicum/Parksville conference was great this year. It was held in Parksville at the Bayside Quality Resort hotel over the January 25-27<sup>th</sup> weekend. The papers presented were thought-provoking and the casual atmosphere was wonderful in helping the individuals from the different post-secondary institutions to mingle outside of their normal circles. The graduate presenters are easily spotted, as they tend to be the nervous or panicking individuals, but they are usually easy to approach, as are the instructors attending.

What is nice about the Qualicum/Parksville conference is that it is run by students with graduate students presenting. For those who are looking at going beyond a BA and earning a Masters, this conference is perfect as a quick look into expectations and calibre of work needed for that level of education. It is also a great stepping stone from undergraduate to graduate work, as they accept papers from undergrads as well!

The conference itself is also great for talking with the faculty from different institutions, either for searching out a possible mentor for your masters or just to put a face to the name of the author from some of your assigned readings. This conference is also perfect for you to see what current research is going on.

Lastly, this conference is a great way to see your instructors in a different light - what most students forget is that the instructors are human and that they like to have fun too - at this year's conference, it was the instructors who were the loud ones!

## **The SUS Referendum**

As most, if not all, of you have now heard, the SUS referenda have passed. 1105 students voted, which is around 15% of our total enrolled student body. There was arguable overwhelming support for the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations with 74% of those who voted in favour. CASA represents students to federal and inter-provincial governments and on their site have noted efforts to decrease student debt upon graduation. The more controversial issue that plagues our fair institution is the passing of the SUB building fee, which adds an extra \$70-105 per year to the fees we all already pay. For those of you graduating, enjoy getting out while it's still good. For the rest of us, I would suggest (and I don't often suggest) picking up a copy of the Cascade. Not only will this fee not be lifted once building is complete, those who oppose the building have been excluded from voting positions. The rumour mill has suggested that a great team of lawyers has closed all loopholes, so my future search for a way out is likely to be in vain. The reduction in Health and Dental Fees was a separate issue not connected to the building fee and it took me a few times reading the poster to really pay attention to the "per semester" part. Being currently involved in an Association on Campus, I have lost count of the number of times SUS has mismanaged our account of a few hundred dollars. Now we are looking at millions to a "society" that can't seem to keep a budget. Not to mention that all this is occurring with a 52% passing rate. 575 students voted for this. Keep in mind that there are just under 7400 students enrolled in this institution. This 'exciting' 52% pass result turns into a pathetic 7.8% of our population who voted in favour. I can't help but feel that SUS needs a clear question provision, before asking us to give them millions of dollars for a building that is likely to be unsuccessful. Only history will tell if my personal pessimism is well grounded though.

## Reflections on Companion Fidel

By Stuart Slaven

Recently Cuba's president Fidel Castro made news by announcing he would neither seek nor accept a new term when his current term expires, after nearly 50 years of rule. One thing that Cubans have in common with Americans is that they will not need to learn a new last name when referring to their president, as Fidel's younger brother Raul, who has been acting president since Fidel underwent intestinal surgery in July 2006, was named the new Cuban president. Raul did say he will consult Fidel on all major decisions.

While Fidel remains the head of the Communist Party in Cuba and continues to write his "Reflections of Companion Fidel" column for Cuban newspapers, the staunch defender of Communism says he has promised himself a vacation. Cuba has a rich history and it is arguable that no single person has had more of an impact on it than Fidel.

Fidel earned his doctorate of laws degree from the University of Havana in 1950. Around this time he became interested in politics, but his dreams of becoming a politician were quashed when General Fulgencio Batista cancelled the 1952 elections after overthrowing the government. The next year Fidel launched a failed coup and is sentenced to 15 years in prison, while declaring "history will absolve me." In 1955 Batista pardoned Castro, who went to Mexico to plan his next move. A year later Fidel launched a 2 year long guerrilla war with the assistance of Che Guevara, eventually triumphing as Batista fled to the Dominican Republic. In 1959 Fidel became Cuba's leader.

The early 1960s were a time of rapid change in Cuba. The United States installed an economic embargo and broke off diplomatic relations while Castro declared Cuba a socialist state while allying himself with the Soviet Union. The United States backed a failed invasion by Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs, and tensions later rose further when the US discovered Soviet missile silos in Cuba. A settlement was eventually reached, but not before thirteen days of tense negotiations. Since then relations between the US and Cuba have thawed somewhat, though the embargo is still in place today. Cuba has enjoyed good relations with other countries, such as Venezuela, South Africa, other Caribbean countries, and Canada (Castro considered Pierre Trudeau a good friend).

Cuba's political and human rights record under Castro is certainly no bright spot of his time in power. Thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people were executed or imprisoned without trial and personal freedoms are limited.

In recent years Fidel Castro's health has obviously been failing. He fainted at a rally in 2001, fell and broke his arm and knee after a speech in 2004, and has had a limited public role since his intestinal surgery in 2006. While always a source of debate and controversy, there is no doubt that Companion Fidel has earned a vacation after 49 years as "Leader of the Third World."

## Children of War and Peace

By Jasper Kaur Nagra

On February 1st, 2008, UCFV's Institute for International Cooperation and Community Development and UCFV International partnered with the Canadian International Development Agency to produce the Forum called "Children of War and Peace"; it was a great opportunity for anyone to learn more about the war-torn countries of Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The personal work and experiences of the guest speakers exposed the reality and truth of each country's situation. The first guest speaker was Wendy van Tongeren Harvey; Wendy reported Sierra-Leone as second on UNICEF's list of the poorest countries in the world. She also talked about how difficult it was to prosecute child soldiers because of several complicated issues determining if a child was to be charged as a war criminal, or as a victim. Wendy's direct involvement in Project Sierra began a process of self-reliance skill development for poverty stricken women and children of Sierra Leone, through education and training.

The next guest speaker was Jean de Dieu Hakizimana; Jean's presentation encompassed the terrible losses of humanity in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, where some 800,000 Tutsis were murdered by Hutus. Jean stressed that millions of people in Africa and the world are suffering today because of poverty and war; mainly children who have been forced to become soldiers. Some child soldiers were specifically trained only to cut off hands of prisoners and enemies: full sleeve (up to the elbows), or short sleeve (up to the wrists). Jean advocates that change will not occur unless the idea of dichotomization, meaning "us and them," is banished from peoples' minds in West and Third World Countries.

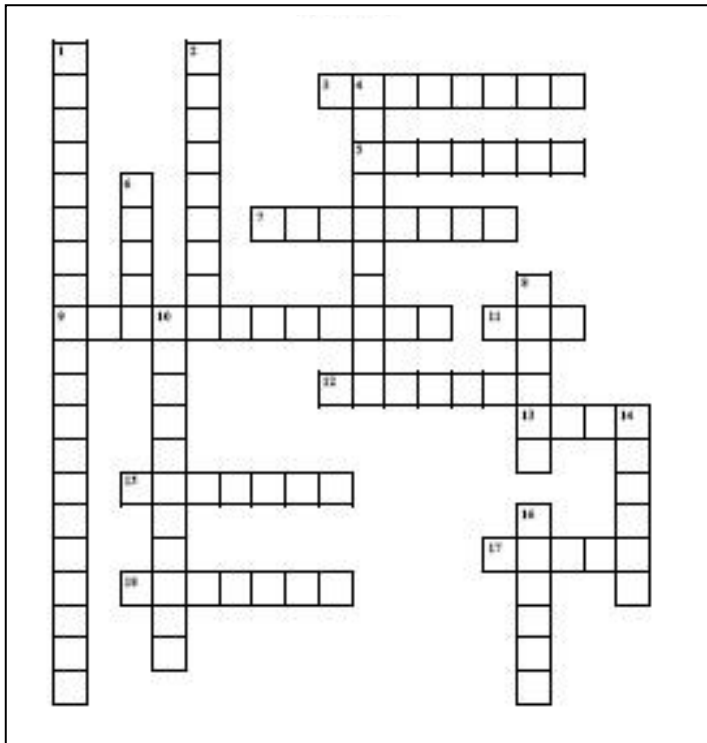
The final guest speakers were Nagmeh Sobhani and Stacy Makortoff. Nagmeh and Stacy reported that EFP is developing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada and the United States. Within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the healing process of Peace education has been implemented across the social spectrum; in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EFP program is being instituted in all 2200+ schools across the countries which include hundreds of thousands of students, teachers, school administrators, parents and civic and academic leaders.

The information presented at this forum can be researched further in the following websites; these sites provide updates on what Canadians are doing in these countries, and show how one can become directly involved.

For related websites see Page 4



# The Cuban Crossword



## Across:

3. US President during Spanish-American War
5. US has had this restriction in place against Cuba since 1962
7. Explorer who claimed Cuba for Spain in 1492
9. Film about Missile Crisis starring Kevin Costner
11. US gov't agency behind failed Bay of Pigs invasion
12. Overthrown by Castro's revolution
15. Castro was honorary pallbearer at this Canadian PM's funeral
17. US battleship that exploded in Havana harbour in 1898
18. US President during Missile Crisis

## Down:

1. 1997 album that started Cuban music craze
2. Political party in power in Cuba (only party in Cuba)
4. Argentinean-born Marxist revolutionary
6. Large Cuban exile community in this Florida city
8. Cuba's most famous export
10. Teddy Roosevelt-led regiment in Spanish-American War (or Sask. CFL team)
14. Castro's profession before becoming a revolutionary
16. Capital city of Cuba

## 10 Movies About Cuba

**Thirteen Days** - shown through the eyes of an aide to JFK as they tried to end the showdown with the USSR over Soviet missiles in Cuba; Starring Kevin Costner.

**Che!** - 1969 biography about Che Guevara starring Omar Sharif; Was considered so offensive by some in Latin American countries that Molotov cocktails were thrown at the screen.

**Buena Vista Social Club** - 1999 documentary focusing on aging Cuban musicians and pre-revolution music.

**Fidel Castro** - 2005 PBS biographical documentary by Adriana Bosch.

**The Last Supper** - not the film starring Cameron Diaz, but rather the 1976 release set in 18th century Cuba regarding slaves on a Havana sugar plantation.

**Memories of Underdevelopment** - 1968 film in which a bourgeois Cuban writer looks back at changes in Cuba since Castro took power and the effects of living in underdevelopment as his family flees to Miami.

**Death of a Bureaucrat** - Dark 1966 comedy about red tape in Cuba.

**Lucia** - traces 3 Cuban women's lives, one during the Spanish-American War, one during the 1930s, and one during the 1960s.

**Portrait of Teresa** - 1979 flick examining the life of a busy Cuban woman.

**Strawberry and Chocolate** - Oscar nominated film about the relationship between two young men, one Communist.

Some of the above are readily available; some are even in UCFV's library. Others may have to be tracked down in specialty video stores such as Videomatica in Vancouver, but should be well worth the effort. Thanks to Bob Smith and Geoffrey Spurling for their assistance in creating this list.

## Submissions!

Questions, Comments, Suggestions, or Issues you would like us to address

Send us an article: 400 word Maximum

Choose your topic!

Publication in a Student Newsletter looks great on a resume

Email: [hi.stu.new@gmail.com](mailto:hi.stu.new@gmail.com)

# HISTORY

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### Early sessions (May - June)

- HIST 101 Canada: Prelude to Confederation - M/W - 17:30-20:20  
Barbara Messamore
- HIST 102 Canada: 1867 to Present - T/R - 13:00-15:50  
Barbara Messamore
- HIST 108 Birth of Europe: Antiquity to 14th C. - T/R - 8:30-11:20  
Adrianna Bakos
- HIST 210 European History since 1914 -M/W - 13:00 - 15:50 Daniel Kwan
- HIST 323 History of Education in Canada - M/W - 13:00 - 16:40 Robin Anderson
- HIST 397D Reform in Russ 1860 - 1945 - T/R - 17:30 - 21:10  
Larissa Horne
- HIST 418 The Great War, 1914-1918 - T/R - 8:30 - 12:10  
Christopher Leach



### Full sessions (May -Aug)

- HIST 102 Canada: 1867 to Present - W - 8:30 - 11:20 Bruce Hiebert
- HIST 105 BC: Pre-contact to the present - ONLINE  
Jenea Tallentire
- HIST 381 Social History of Late Imp. China - T - 13:00 - 16:40  
Li Yu
- HIST 396G History of N. Amer. Mennonites - R - 13:00 - 16:40 Bruce Hiebert
- HIST 499H N. Amer. Environmental History - W - 17:30 - 21:10 John-Henry Harter

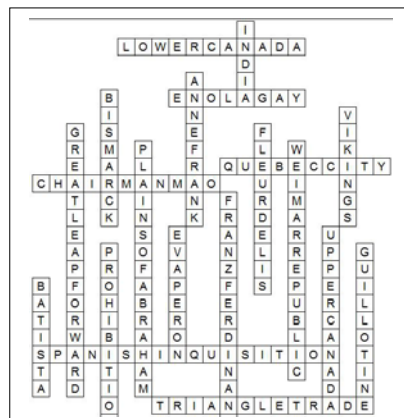


### Late session (Jul - Aug)

Answers for the Remembrance Day Crossword:

Historical Films Matchup:

1. Zulu
2. Gunga Din
3. Joyeux Noël
4. Goodbye Lenin
5. Best Years of Our Lives
6. Sophie Scholl: The Final Days



## Upcoming Events

### History Department Roundtables

- Steven Schroeder (History, UCFV)  
"Reconciliation in Occupied Germany, 1944-1954"  
Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-5:00 PM  
A225 (Boardroom)
- Andrea MacPherson (English, UCFV)  
"Breathing Life into the Past: How Historical Fiction Works"  
Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-5:00 PM  
A225 (Boardroom)

### Upcoming forums presented by UCFV International and CIDA:

- "The Politics of Foreign Aide: Will Children Benefit?" with Stephen Lewis and Hugh Brody on 8 March 2008. Tickets 15\$ for Adults, 8\$ for Students.
- "Cities for Children and Youth: Child Friendly Development in Canada and Globally." 11 March 2008. Free.
- The Abbotsford Collegiate is also hosting a speaker series. Romeo Dallaire will be speaking on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2008. For information call 604-843-3367. To buy tickets their address is 2329 Crescent Way. It's \$25 for each single talk (with student ID) or \$35 if you aren't a student. If there are extra tickets they will be available at 6:30PM the evening of the event at the Abby Arts Centre Box Office.
- Just a reminder that you can download back issues of the Debunker off the Association of History Students website [ucfv.ca/history/ahs](http://ucfv.ca/history/ahs)

### Information Websites

#### Sierra Leone:

The Special Court for Sierra Leone

<http://www.sc-sl.org>

Project Sierra

<http://www.projectsierra.org>

United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone

<http://www.uniosil.org>

#### Rwanda:

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

<http://69.94.11.53>

CIDA Rwanda

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-222115954-MXH>

Neighborhood Care International

<http://www.neighborhoodcare.org>

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Education For Peace

<http://www.efpinternational.org/>

CIDA Bosnia and Herzegovina

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-12119534-KG8>