

Newsletter

of the History of Science Society

Vol. 50, No. 4
October 2021

Table of Contents

A Welcome Note from the New Executive Director, J.P. Gutierrez

If I close my eyes, I can almost see it.

My father, held in his uncle's arms, crossing from Mexico into Texas in 1953. My mother marching at the Chicano Moratorium in 1970. I see this, I see movement.

This personal history has shaped me into the leader I aspire to be. My entire career has been spent with these images in mind, inspiring me to apply my values to my labor. When the opportunity arose to join HSS, it was a natural move.

I bring to HSS 15 years of experience in scholarly publishing, communication, and society management. This is all academic. What I hope that I can bring to HSS is a spirit of ingenuity, openness, and inclusion. These elements take the mission of this professional organization and strengthen the intellectual heft it has provided the academy for almost 100 years.

What you'll see in the next year and beyond is transition. Things will change. How you'll interface and communicate with the Society will be transformed. These changes will help set forth a culture of service to the needs of our ever-changing membership, in an ever-changing academic world. My



A Welcome Note from the New Executive Director, J.P. Gutierrez	1
Congratulations Dissertation Prize-winners	3
An Oral Historian Speaks	7
Member News	10
HSS News	13
Notes from Our Bibliographer	16
News from the Profession	18

Continued on Page 1

A Welcome Note from the new Executive Director, cont.

hope is to establish a foundation of systems and benefits that will create touchpoints for the life cycle for each member.

There will be ups and downs. We face the uncertainty of a pandemic that has devastated communities and leaves the Society in a constant state of pivoting. We face a waning job market for new PhDs, shrinking departments, political strife. We will get through this. Together, this community endures, and it has moved through decades, as a supportive and caring community.

HSS moves forward. Forward to the next 100 years. I see it in all facets of the Society,

a movement that touches social justice, public engagement, and dissemination of knowledge. And I want to hear from members about your needs. I am only the shepherd of our community's vision: feel free to email me whenever you have ideas or questions, jp@hssonline.org.

We'll move forward, as a community, presenting the ideals that are the foundation of our scholarly society. A movement towards inclusion, internationalization, openness, and scholarship. The forward movement I have seen through my personal history.

My eyes are open. I can see it.



Plan Ahead Future HSS Meetings



2022
Chicago, IL:
November 17–20



2023
Portland, OR:
November 9–12

Executive Office
History of Science Society
440 Geddes Hall
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN 46556
Phone: 574-631-1194
E-mail: info@hssonline.org
Web site: <http://www.hssonline.org/>

Subscription Inquiries
University of Chicago Press
Phone: 877-705-1878
E-mail: subscriptions@press.uchicago.edu
Or write: University of Chicago Press,
Subscription Fulfillment Manager, PO Box 37005,
Chicago, IL 60637-7363

Moving?
Please notify both the HSS Executive Office and the University of Chicago Press.

Editorial Policies, Advertising and Submissions
The *History of Science Society Newsletter* is published in January, April, July, and October, and sent to all individual members of the Society.

The *Newsletter* Editor is Neeraja Sankaran. The format and editorial policies are determined by the Editor in consultation with the Society Editors. All advertising copy must be submitted in electronic form. Advertisements are accepted on a space-available basis only, and the Society reserves the right not to print a submission. The rates are as follows: Full page (10 x 7"), \$625; Two-thirds page (6.625 x 7"), \$450; Horizontal Half page (10 x 3.5"), \$375; Horizontal or Vertical Third page (6.625 x 3.5" or 3.25 x 7"), \$275; Sixth page (3.25 x 3.5"), \$150. The deadline for insertion orders is six weeks prior to the month of publication and should be sent to info@hssonline.org. Please send photographs in a jpeg format, in the highest resolution possible (minimum 4MB) to maintain quality during sizing and printing. The deadline for news, announcements, and job/fellowship/prize listings is firm: four weeks prior to the month of publication. Long items (feature stories) should be submitted eight weeks prior to the month of publication. Please send all material to the attention of the Executive Office: info@hssonline.org.

© 2021 by the History of Science Society

Congratulations Dissertation Prize-winners

Editor's note: *The HSS Newsletter warmly congratulates the winners of the 2021 DHST Dissertation Prize. Instituted in 2005 by the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Division of History of Science and Technology (IUHPST/DHST), these prizes have been awarded once every two years since 2017 to up to five outstanding history of science or technology PhD dissertations in any language from any part of the world. The 2021 laureates are:*

Sooyoung An, “*Cross-cultural Transfers of Chinese Materia Medica Knowledge in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Toward a Global History of Natural Knowledge*,” [Original language: Chinese]. (National Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies, Fudan University, Shanghai, 2019. Director: Shaoxin Dong).

Johan Gärdebo, “*Environing Technology: Swedish satellite remote sensing in the making of environment, 1969–2001*,” (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, 2019. Director: Nina Wormbs).

Charles A. Kollmer, “*From Elephant to Bacterium: Microbial Culture Techniques and Chemical Orders of Nature, 1875–1946*,” (Princeton University, 2020. Director: Angela N. H. Creager).

Fateme Savadi, “*The Historical and Cosmographical Context of Hay’at al-ard’ with a Focus on Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī’s Nihāyat al-Idrāk*,” (McGill University, 2018. Director: F. Jamil Ragep).

Although they could not travel to Prague to receive these prizes as originally intended, the 2021 laureates together with their predecessors from 2019 participated in an online session in Virtual Prague at the 26th ICHST. The awardees this year represent our community in all its wonderful diversity—disciplinary and linguistic—but please, don’t take my word for it. Read on and find out for yourselves.

What was your dissertation about? Could you please briefly summarize the main argument or discovery?

An: Although my dissertation is about the transmission of natural knowledge across three cultures—Korea, Japan, and Britain—my aim was to shed light on the cultural diversity of how knowledge about natural things traveled. By taking a comparative perspective, it highlighted the efficacy of imagining the world as multiple centers of knowledge-making for understanding the diverse ways that the material, e.g., specimens and textual, e.g. books, sources of materia medica knowledge, were translated and received and, in turn, influenced each of the cultures of naturalist inquiries in the three localities.

Gärdebo: In many ways, my dissertation is fundamentally about the creation of the environment as a crisis concept. It tells that story by focusing on how Sweden, a seemingly minor space power, promoted remote sensing satellites as a tool for both monitoring and managing the Earth’s environment.

Kollmer: My dissertation explored the circumstances in which scientists assembled microbial cultures, and how this work shaped scientists’ understandings of living things as chemical entities. I compared techniques and materials adopted by microbiologists in Western Europe and North America between the end of the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, tracing how experts trained in different backgrounds came to see the cultivation of microbes as central to their professional identities. For many researchers, the isolation of microbes in test tubes and petri dishes carried an alluring promise: the ability to define fleeting vital processes in precise chemical terms. Culture techniques indeed fostered a plethora of insights into chemical facets of microbial life, yet these efforts also raised vexing questions subject to acrimonious debates. Then as now, microbes were emphatically multifarious, lending themselves to overlapping, even dissonant definitions indissociable from

Dissertation Prize-winners, cont.

humans' relentless repurposing of living things as technologies.

Savadi: My dissertation aimed at defining a distinct genre of scientific geographical writing that was part of a broader genre of theoretical astronomy in the pre-modern Islamic world and at showing how the development of this genre is also central to the study of the geographical and cosmographical traditions of the medieval Islamic world. To do so, I prepared a critical edition and translation of a certain geographical work by the thirteenth-century scholar Qutb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī and showed how he fashioned his work to both fit into and expand the genre in question, and how he revised his text several times after its initial composition in 1281.

How did you find the topic of your dissertation?

An: First, I had never imagined myself delving into the history of science at the time I was starting my PhD. The motivation emerged along the way when my adviser Professor Dong inspired me to continue the research on ginseng, which had been the topic of my master's thesis. While the initial intention had been to write a "global history of ginseng," my path shifted rather dramatically while I was still at the stage of searching out historical materials. During this time, I went to Britain for academic visits to

the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge and Warwick University, where I accidentally encountered the notebooks and letters of Daniel Hanbury, a nineteenth-century naturalist who had made extensive studies of Chinese materia medica. At the same time, I also found numerous writings about ginseng, which were mostly written by natural historians. Gradually I became more fascinated by the research practices and rhetorical strategies deployed by these scientists from the past. Back in Korea, at my local library, I was lucky enough to stumble upon a book about Japanese naturalists engaging in a materia medica survey in Korea. One of them was primarily interested in ginseng cultivation. Thus, in short, the story of my coming up with my dissertation topic consisted of moments of coincidence rather than being a pre-planned project.

Gärdebo: I was initially interested in how the Swedish Government first began the detailed mapping and categorization of natural resources during the late 1800s. Nina Wormbs, who later became my PhD supervisor, persuaded me to pursue those questions through the history of satellite images, which shifted my research focus to the late 1900s.

Kollmer: I wanted to develop a transnational approach to the history of the modern life

sciences that would allow me to weave together source materials written in languages that I had studied before and during my doctorate. The professionalization of microbiology coincided with an intensive internationalization of scientific research, and microbiologists routinely traveled for fellowships and conferences, communicating their undertakings in all the languages I had learned (and several that I had not). The dissertation project crystallized around an odd document I stumbled upon that billed itself as a "Nomenclature of Nutritional Types of Microorganisms." This source helped me formulate the dissertation's central questions, namely, how did people professionally concerned with the activities of microbes go about positioning these organisms in nature's order? What tools and concepts did they wield in doing so? How did the technical work of cultivating microbes fit within different human cultures that sustained it?

Savadi: Most of the scientific texts that were written in the pre-modern Islamic world are not available in scholarly critical editions. My supervisor, Professor F. Jamil Ragep, had edited one of the most historically significant works of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274), who was Shirāzī's teacher. This project was appealing because it offered a chance to help fill a gap in the availability of scholarly texts and to examine how

Dissertation Prize-winners, cont.

Shīrāzī adapted, criticized, and assimilated Tūsī's text when writing his own.

What was the most rewarding aspect of working on your dissertation?

An: I can still clearly remember the moment of epiphany that I experienced, which did not occur until the last stages of writing the introduction and conclusion of my dissertation. Only when I reached this stage did I realize that the dissertation as a whole is indeed a vivid reflection of my long-duree agony. For me, the question of how to effectively think and narrate out of the box of the “center-periphery” framework took precedence over everything else. This mindset is likely related to my identity as a Korean, born and raised in a country, which has had a history of being particularly vulnerable to many strong “centers”—China, Japan, and the US. Although my dissertation itself is far from recognizable, I take personal pride in the fact that writing my dissertation led me to deliberate on how to effectively contribute to the scholarship of global history as a researcher from the so-called periphery, which, however, consists of major “Europe-” or “China-centered” narratives. In this sense, I consider the experience as an important part of my personal growth.

Gärdebo: I have always been fascinated by how we get to know an environment—how people can feel geographically lost somewhere and then use a set of tools to develop relationships with their surroundings. Working on my dissertation taught me a lot, not only about how technical means found their way into people's everyday life but also how culturally arduous that process seemed to the people involved in getting others to adopt these technologies.

Kollmer: The ambitious scope of the project forced me to hone my skills as a thinker and storyteller. It also provided a plausible excuse to live in Europe for a year, visiting archives in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and England. Perhaps most rewardingly, I found intellectual communion with scholars who share my fascination with the history of microbiology.

Savadi: I enjoyed working with the medieval Arabic manuscripts, especially reading the texts directly in Shīrāzī's hand and locating his handwriting as he made corrections to other manuscripts that were copied under his supervision.

What sort of unanticipated hurdles or challenges did you have to face on this journey? How did you meet or overcome them?

An: As a Korean who had chosen to study abroad in China, the biggest, most obvious challenge was my limited fluency in Chinese. During my first two years in the PhD, I struggled a lot to adapt to the new learning environment. What terrified me most almost every moment during the early phases was the anticipation that I would fail to write the dissertation in Chinese, which was required by the school and my advisor. However, thanks to the patient support and guidance from my advisor who had me write a book review in Chinese as homework every week, and the kind help of the friends I made in school who were so kind as to take on the role of my language tutors, I made “unanticipated” progress and managed to complete the dissertation. The writing is far from perfect because I first wrote drafts in English and Korean and only translated them into Chinese later, but it is, nevertheless, something that I can be proud of.

Gärdebo: I soon realized that the Swedish satellite experts gained power within the country through activities beyond Sweden. Methodologically then, the challenge was to follow these activities, namely, the uses of

Dissertation Prize-winners, cont.

Swedish satellite images, rather than a specific set of actors. My solution was to find people whom the Swedish experts had worked with or against, and talk to them over a cup of coffee. It turned out to be quite a lot of cups of coffee, and in different countries. These interviews, along with private documentation kept in basements and attics, supplemented official sources from government and company archives, often telling stories that would not have been found otherwise.

Kollmer: Some of the archives I visited initially had been thoroughly picked over, and I had difficulty saying anything particularly interesting or novel about the things that I was finding. Through luck and persistence, I did locate sources that had not yet been studied, helping me find a tack toward the topic that felt distinctive. Further along, in the throes of writing, I often worried I had not done enough background research for each chapter, but I was also nervous that I was spending too much time on any one leg of the project. Perhaps unsurprisingly, I quieted this anxiety by presenting draft chapters at every opportunity, which forced me to move nimbly through large bodies of secondary literature.

Savadi: While working on my dissertation, I had to modify and focus the scope of my

project to fit within the timeline of my studies. Although it was difficult to part with some of the ideas that I had in mind at the proposal stage, I am glad that I now have the opportunity to get back to them as I am forming the dissertation into a book for publication.

What or where has life after the dissertation brought you?

An: Currently, I am working as a post-doctoral researcher at the Shanghai Normal University. I appreciate the opportunity not only because the school affords me material support to continue my research but also because I believe that the environment in China has unusual merits for a historian. In particular, it encourages one—to think about the question of perspective for and toward a “global history.” My point of view is still in the process of shaping and evolving, which may be the reason that I am thinking of trying to find yet another opportunity to continue to study abroad—this time, outside China—in the near future.

Gärdebo: Since graduating with my PhD, I have become engaged in understanding Sweden’s environmental politics, not only at the international but also at the national level, especially our present-day ambitions of transitioning towards a low-carbon society. I am currently traveling to Swedish industrial towns,

talking to people in steel factories, petrochemical refineries, and cement production plants about what they think should be the priorities for transition politics. But I also plan to conduct more projects on Swedish environmental management, this time focusing on meteorology, so I do expect to be back in the archives before too long.

Kollmer: Currently, I am a postdoctoral instructor in the history of biology at Caltech. Relocating across the United States during the pandemic was stressful, but my partner and I have come to enjoy living in Southern California greatly. Despite the disruptions of the past year-and-a-half, Caltech has been an excellent place to begin work on a book manuscript. I have been fortunate to teach courses that dovetail with my research interests, and conversations with colleagues and students here have been immensely stimulating.

Savadi: I’m still at McGill University, but with a new designation and new project! I am now a postdoctoral researcher working with Professor Robert Wisnovsky on a project entitled “Muhammad ‘Abduh’s Supercommentary on al-Dawani’s Commentary on al-Ijī’s Creed: A New Source for the Renewal of Islamic Analytical Theology,” sponsored by the Templeton Foundation.

An Oral Historian Speaks

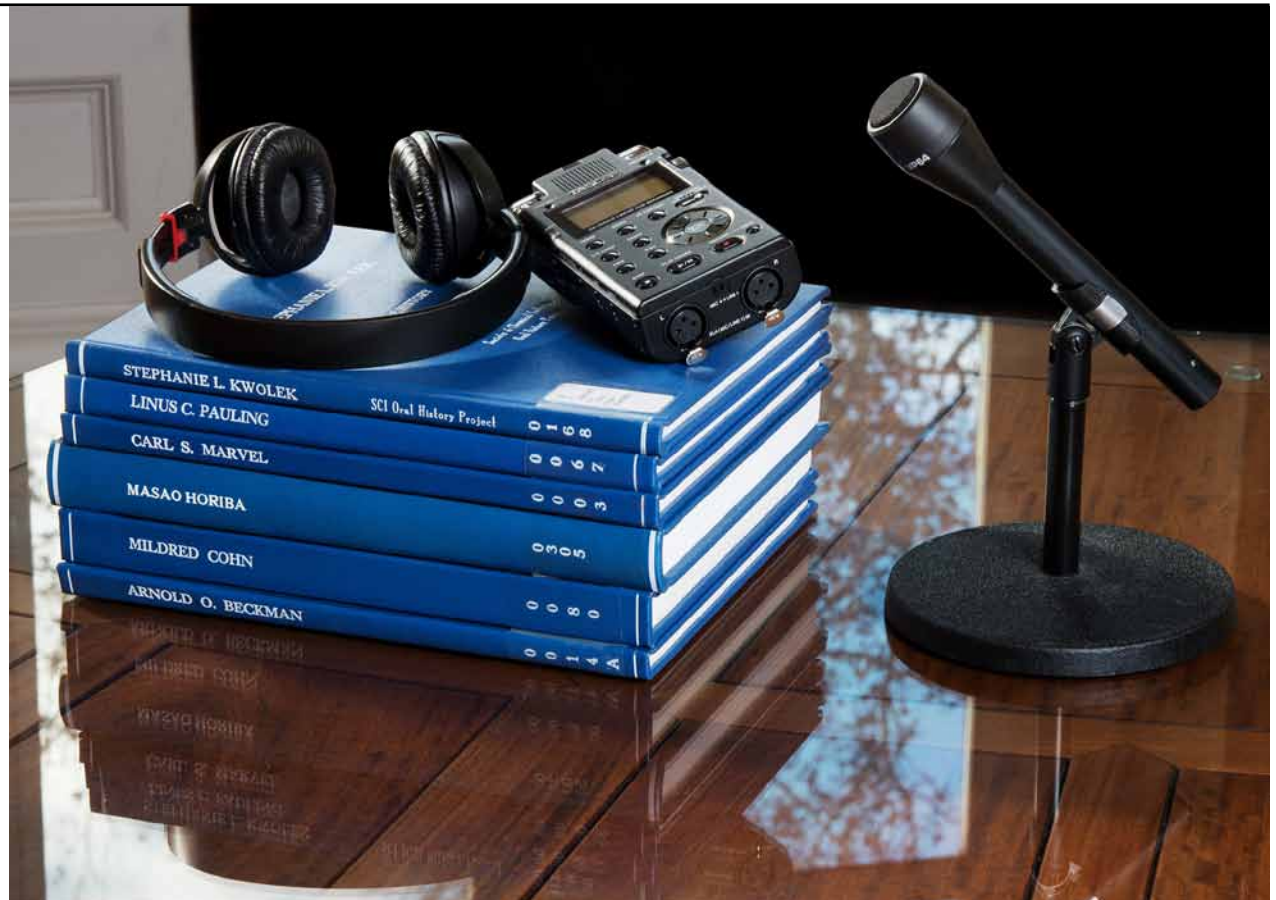
Editor's note: *Highlighting yet another facet of our diverse discipline, David Caruso of the Science History Institute in Philadelphia answers questions about, and shares some of his experiences doing, oral history.*

Beginning with the obvious, what is oral history?

Oral history, at its most basic level, is a methodology used to explore personal experiences of past events in an interview setting. The interviews take place face-to-face—or, at least for now, video camera to video camera—and are recorded for research and preservation purposes.

How does oral history mesh with other ways of doing history? What special advantages does it offer to the history of science?

Many questions go unanswered in the published literature and archival materials many of us use for our research. Take, as but one example, the style of many journal publications: written in the passive voice, these sources detail the work products of the actors we study but often obscure their work processes. Many historians are not interested simply in what happened, but how it happened and why. Oral history allows for a deeper understanding of the



Bound copies of oral history interviews from the Science History Institute's Oral History Collection with audio recording equipment. Courtesy of the Science History Institute.

scientific life and the life of a scientist through an active engagement between interviewer and interviewee to develop a more detailed and nuanced history of science and engineering. In an oral history interview we discuss not only the scientific practices themselves but also, to name

but a few, the politics of the individual and of the institution in which she or he works, the role of religion, faith, and belief, collaborators, colleagues, and competitors, experiments that worked and those that failed, and lab life and culture.

An Oral Historian Speaks, cont.

A quick description, if you would, about your job as an oral historian at the Science History Institute. What would a typical working day look like?

Our days at the Science History Institute take us through all aspects of oral history work: planning for and then executing projects like those we have on Science and Disability, Science, War, and Exile, and LGBTQ+ Scientists and Engineers; doing research about our interviewees in advance of a scheduled interview; conducting and then transcribing and annotating interviews to add to our collections; providing training in the oral history methodology; researching and writing our own work for publication; and, quite importantly, making sure that all of our interviews are available to other researchers through our library catalog and our digital collections.

Oral history can function both as an end in itself or as one of a diverse kit of historiographic tools. How would the design of an interview be different in the two cases?

Some use oral history as a way to understand the personal history of a scientist, a biography of sorts that complements materials gathered in archival research. But oral history, or, rather, multiple oral history interviews, allows for a

more prosopographic understanding of the history of science, medicine, and technology, looking at the common characteristics and experiences among interviewees, as well as aspects of history remembered differently or even disputed. Two core goals of the Science History Institute are to make our work available to other scholars for their own research purposes and to ensure that our collection can serve the history of science, medicine, and technology communities broadly. While we have our own research agenda, when we interview someone we do so under the assumption that our interview may be the only one conducted with that scientist or engineer; as such, we always capture full life history interviews instead of more narrowly focused ones on certain people or certain aspects of their lives and careers. The major difference, then, between oral history used in the service of biography and what we do at the Science History Institute quite simply is time. The methodology itself is the same, but it requires a greater investment to cover the histories of women and men whose lives and careers can differ in substantial and significant ways.

Would you mind sharing one of your favorite experiences in this craft or practice of doing history? What made it special?

I'd like to share two. Early on in my work, I interviewed a Nobel laureate who had emigrated from a European country to the United States in the mid-twentieth century. In addition to discussing his perspectives on race and gender in science in America, we also spent time discussing his early scientific career before leaving his home country. It had been so long since he had undertaken that research that he had but little to share about it, that is until I presented him with a copy of his first publication. Within moments of glancing at those printed pages, a flood of memories returned not just about the science itself, but also about his colleagues, his friends, and his struggle with religious and personal beliefs at that time in his life. When starting work as an oral historian, I had assumed it was a purely verbal/auditory medium—I ask a question, my interviewee answers it, and I follow up with another question. After that moment I realized the role of sensory experiences in remembrances and their utility in reconstituting long-lost memories; it changed my understanding of oral history and my practices thereafter.

More recently our work on science and disability has helped me reconceptualize my understanding

An Oral Historian Speaks, cont.

of scientific and engineering practices through the stories of those who navigate spaces—physical, social, cultural, and psychosocial, for example—in ways different from my own. Interviewing individuals who have moved through worlds not designed with them in mind has been powerful and insightful in so many ways. One interviewee, as a young girl with low vision on a trip with the Girl Scouts, brought birdseed with her on a camping trip, as she knew in advance that she would be relegated to a craft table while the others in her troop hiked through the woods to work on their birdwatching badge. After everyone else left, my interviewee recounted how she walked to an open clearing, emptied the bag of birdseed, and brought the birds to her. Her fellow troop members returned from their hike dejected, as they couldn't fill out much on their birdwatching list. They were then astonished to find most of the birds for which they were searching happily feasting on the birdseed in the field. Needless to say, my interviewee earned her birdwatching badge that day despite having originally been denied the opportunity to participate because of how those

around her envisioned what it meant to do birdwatching. The lessons she learned that day about navigating spaces not designed for her and assumptions others made about her capabilities were ones she applied to her scientific work later in life.

What advice (some important do's and don'ts) do you have for a graduate student who is thinking about designing a project around oral history.

I think the best thing to do is to take an introductory course or workshop in oral history as a methodology. There are many offered around the United States, and internationally, and they can provide invaluable insights into how to, and not to, conduct interviews, the legal and ethical aspects of the work, and best practices for archiving materials so that they are not lost should a recorder or computer fail. If someone does not have time to take a course, at a minimum I recommend reaching out to someone at a center for or program in oral history to discuss project design and other practices.



Just earned your PhD in the history of science? Congratulations! Here's a free e-membership to HSS.

Leaving the student world can present challenges.

The HSS would like to recognize your signal achievement by providing a **free electronic membership (one year)** to those who graduated in 2020 or in 2021.

Please go to <https://subfill.uchicago.edu/JournalPUBS/HSSpromotion.aspx> for details.

Member News

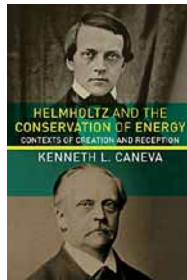
Scottie Buehler published “Aborted Dreams and Contested Labors: The Société Royale de Médecine’s 1786 Survey of Midwives” in the *Bulletin for the History of Medicine* 92, 2. (2021): 137-168. Additionally, he has accepted a position as Visiting Assistant Professor in the History of Medicine at Sam Houston State University.

.....

Luis Campos has been appointed Baker College Chair for the History of Science, Technology, and Innovation at Rice University, which he will begin in January 2022.

.....

Kenneth Caneva (University of North Carolina Greensboro, retired) published *Helmholtz and the Conservation of Energy: Contexts of Creation and Reception* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021).



.....

Karine Chemla (SPHERE (CNRS & Université de Paris)) was named the winner of the **2021 Hirst Prize and Lectureship**, awarded jointly by the London Mathematical Society and the British Society for the History of Mathematics (BSHM).

.....

Rachel Mason Dentinger (University of Utah) was named the **2021-2022 Environmental Humanities Research Professor** for the University of Utah's Environmental Humanities Graduate Program. Additionally, after five years of working as an instructor in the Honors College and department of philosophy, she has begun a new position as an assistant professor in the Department of History this fall (2021).

.....

Robert Fleck (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) published “**Fundamental Themes in Physics from the History of Art**” *Physics in Perspective* 23, no. 1 (March 2021): 25-48, and “**Einsteinian Subtleties in Magritte’s Time Transfixed**” *Physics Today* 74, no. 4 (April 2021): 10-11.

.....

André Goddu (Stonehill College) published “**Celestial Spheres in Fifteenth-Century Cracow Astronomy and Natural Philosophy**,” *SCIREA*, Vol. 5, Issue 4, August 2021, a revised and corrected version of the essay that appeared in *What is New in the New Universities?* ed. E. Jung (Warsaw, 2018), pp. 205-256.

.....

Edward Gosseline (Emeritus Professor, CSULB) is writing an essay on French historians, particularly on Michel Foucault and his

connection to the Annales school as well as to Friedrich Nietzsche. This is a proposed chapter in a series of essays for a book on post-retirement research. Gosselin has been particularly interested in Foucault since he was an auditor in Foucault’s class at the Collège de France in 1976.

.....

Julia Heideklang (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), along with Hans-Joachim Pflüger and Helmut Kettenmann, published *De fabrica systematis nervosi evertibratorum. Die kommentierte Dissertation von / the commented Thesis by Hermann Helmholtz* (Darmstadt: WBG Academic, 2021).



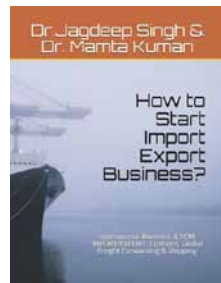
.....

Gerald Holton (Harvard University) was granted the **Frontiers of Knowledge Award in the Humanities and Social Sciences** for his numerous seminal contributions to the history of 19th- and 20th-century science, in particular physics, in which he has shown special sensitivity to the cultural, philosophical, sociological, and gender contexts.

.....

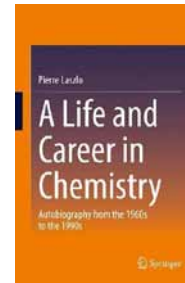
Member News, cont.

Greta Jones (Ulster University) was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPSI) for services to the history of medicine in Ireland. Additionally, Jones published *Doctors for Export: The History of Medical Emigration from Ireland c.1860-1960* (Brill, 2021).



Groningen University Press; ISBN 978-90-814428-9-3).

Pierre Laszlo (Ecole polytechnique and University of Liège) published *A Life and Career in Chemistry: Autobiography from the 1960s to the 1990s* (Springer, 2021).



Yan Liu (State University of New York, Buffalo) published *Healing with Poisons: Potent Medicines in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021).

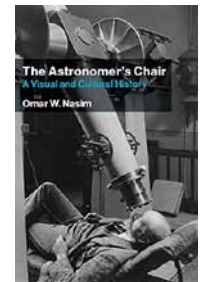


Robert (Jay) Malone, formerly HSS's executive director, has become the director of the **Association of College and Research Libraries** (ACRL). Founded in 1940, ACRL is committed to advancing learning, transforming scholarship, and creating diverse and inclusive communities. It develops programs, products, and services to help those working in academic and research libraries learn, innovate, and lead within the academic community. ACRL—with over 9,000 individual and institutional members—is the largest of the divisions of

the American Library Association, and the headquarters are based in Chicago. Jay is excited about this new chapter and one of his first moves will be to join HSS's Collections, Archives, Libraries, and Museums (CALM) Caucus.

Ronald Mickens published “The Roles of SIR Mathematical Models in Epidemiology” *History of Physics Newsletter* XIV, no. 5 (Fall 2020): 2, 10-15.

Omar Nasim (University of Regensburg, Germany) published *The Astronomer's Chair: A Visual and Cultural History* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2021).



Vivek Neelakantan (Independent Historian) was a featured speaker in the Third International Virtual Summer School entitled “Resilience and Control: Transmissible Disease and the Rise of Modern Society,” organized by Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia (August 11, 2021), directed at an international mix of undergraduate and graduate students, mostly from Southeast Asian nations. He lectured on the First Wave of COVID-19 in India and

Member News, cont.

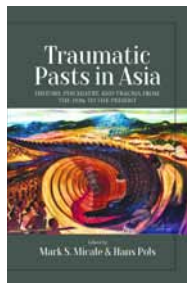
Indonesia from a comparative perspective, drawing from both history and sociology.

.....

Ronald Numbers (University of Wisconsin-Madison) is in the process of publishing “Creationism in Asia, Oceania, and Eastern Europe,” in a double volume of *International Journal for the History of Scientific Ideas*, v. 12: 2021, which was in production at the time of publication of this issue of the *Newsletter*.

.....

Hans Pols (University of Sydney) was elected to become a **Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities** in 2020. Additionally, he published *Traumatic Pasts in Asia: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma, 1930 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn, 2021).



.....

Seth Rasmussen (South Dakota State University) was named a **2021 Fellow of American Chemical Society**, in specific recognition of his work in the history of chemistry, as well as his traditional chemical research.

.....

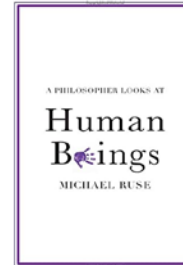
Whitney Barlow Robles (Dartmouth College) published a digital exhibition titled “**The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Science.**” The project was produced in collaboration with undergraduate students at Dartmouth College.

.....

Karin Roseblatt (University of Maryland) is PI for a five-year **NSF Research Coordination Grant** “Placing Latin American and the Caribbean in the History of Science, Technology, Environment and Medicine.” Email karosemb@umd.edu if you are interested in learning more.

.....

Michael Ruse (Florida State University, retired) published *A Philosophers Look at Human Beings* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).



.....

Emilie Savage-Smith (University of Oxford) assisted with the editing and translating of *A Literary History of Medicine: The ‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’ of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

.....

Sara Schechner (Harvard University) was awarded the **Sawyer Dialing Prize** from the

North American Sundial Society “for her career in education and conservation of our dialing heritage, and in particular for her authorship of *Time of Our Lives: Sundials of the Adler Planetarium.*” The prize is considered the “Oscar” of the sundial world because the awardee receives a personalized sundial.

.....

Ariel Segal (Library of Congress) presented a paper and slides at **Archival Kismet Conference** in April 2021 on two versions of paleontological art by John Martin, comparing and contrasting it with his earlier art of Biblical catastrophic scenes. He also described two items of paleontological interest encountered while helping digitize material at the Library of Congress.

.....

Frank W. Stahnisch (The University of Calgary) has received the **Jason A. Hannah Medal** for an important publication in the History of Medicine (his recently published monograph: *A New Field in Mind: A History of Interdisciplinarity in the Early Brain Sciences*. Montreal, PQ, and Kingston, ON: McGill-Queens University Press, 2020) through the Royal Society of Canada—the Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada, Ottawa.

HSS News

No Final Goodbyes!

The Executive Committee of the History of Science Society has voted to award Robert J. (Jay) Malone a lifetime membership of the Society. Although he stepped down from the position of Executive Director in July, the EC hopes Jay will continue to participate in the activities of HSS, which he served for more than two decades.

Best wishes,
Jan Golinski, HSS President

But Meanwhile, A Farewell Gesture

The HSS Editorial Office gratefully acknowledges Jay Malone's contribution of his personal collection of *Osiris* volumes. While our office has carefully maintained a complete *Isis* set going back to Volume 1, Issue 1—our treasured copy of which is signed by George Sarton—we had not systematically collected *Osiris* volumes. The annual was founded in 1936 by Sarton and then relaunched in a new thematically-oriented series in 1985. Jay's gift will help us preserve the work of generations of scholars in the history of science under one roof.

Another Departure

This issue of the *HSS Newsletter* marks the departure of editor Neeraja Sankaran, who has masterfully wrangled news, commentary, and items of interest to our field for the past two and a half years. You've seen her hand in everything from copy to proofreading to layout. She's brought energy, attention to detail, and a keen eye for a good story to these pages—and she never missed a deadline. Her work as a science writer may have sharpened those editorial skills, but it's her enthusiasm for the people and ideas that make up our discipline that shine through in these pages.

We are enormously grateful to Neeraja for the hard work she's done in supporting this community of scholarship, which she has deep roots in. One of her first acts as editor was to revive the Newsletter's advisory panel, the better to extend its connections throughout the network of the Society's membership. In years when we have too often been denied the chance to reacquaint ourselves with one another in person, Neeraja has created a space in which our members could let their work and their personalities shine out. In interviews, in cleverly curated collections of favorite artifacts, in calls for action, in thoughtful reflections on their careers, and a dozen other ways, she's helped remind us

that while our work may sometimes be solitary, it need never be in isolation.

Permit us to note some of her other accomplishments. A graduate of Yale's doctoral program, she's published prolifically in the history of the biomedical sciences—including two books during her tenure as Newsletter Editor. (The most recent, *A Tale of Two Viruses*, just came out from the University of Pittsburgh Press in April.) She has also been contributing her time and editorial energy to another HSS publication, the *Isis Current Bibliography's* forthcoming special issue of bibliographic essays on pandemics. An independent scholar presently a visiting fellow at Descartes Centre of Utrecht University, she is figuring out what exactly to do next and where. All she can say for sure is that it will most likely continue to involve viruses.

For ourselves, for the Society, and for all the people in our community that she has enriched with her work on the Newsletter, we thank our friend Neeraja Sankaran—and we look forward to seeing what she does next.

HSS News, cont.

Pamela Long, Independent Historian of Science

An HSS@Work Career Profile

Editor's note: *Back in 2008, Pamela Long wrote an essay (see p. 10) to tell the HSS what it meant to pursue a career outside of academia as an independent scholar. Thirteen years later, with two major prestigious fellowships under her belt, she's back, talking with Jamie Brannon about her continued life in that stream and offering some very timely advice.*

When in your career did you realize that you wanted to pursue the history of science and technology as an independent scholar? Was there any previous academic "experience" that convinced you a non-academic scholarship pathway would be better for you? Did you worry about income and finances?

Well, there was not one moment of epiphany. For years I applied for tenure-track jobs, sometimes five or ten a year. I just assumed this is what you needed to do to be a scholar. I never got one. I also applied for grants and fellowships every single year. I received many rejection letters but also, I received grants regularly. In addition, I taught intermittently in a great variety of settings.

I worried about sufficient income, of course, all the time. My income was always essential to our household. I have a loving husband (which makes every difference) but he also had and has an independent business, so, being Americans, we had to purchase ALL of our health insurance as well as the other costs of food, housing, etc. including the expenses of raising our daughter. But I received some kind of grant, or several small grants, or some part-time job, every year. It very slowly dawned on me that I was very lucky. I have many friends working in the academy, and although they would never give up their tenured positions, they are clearly overworked in kinds of work that they do not love and would like to devote more time to their scholarship. There was a point (probably much too late) when I said, enough of this. I am not putting myself through another grueling three-day academic interview, thank you, goodbye.

How has the receipt of two major fellowships—the Guggenheim [2007] and the MacArthur [2014]—transformed your approach to scholarship? Would you say the last five years have been more productive, perhaps more fulfilling, than your earlier career?

To answer the last question first, no, really, I didn't find the last five years more productive or

fulfilling than the previous years, even though they have been wonderful. The Guggenheim is a highly prestigious fellowship, which I loved getting, but the amount of the fellowship, although fantastic, especially if you have no income, is no more than the NEH and much less than say other grants such as the NSF. (I am an independent scholar so the accounting part of my brain works very well!). The MacArthur award was another story. After I got over the shock—which took a while—I have to admit I felt nothing but relief. I had been working for at least twelve years (along with several other projects) on a book about engineering in sixteenth-century Rome, a book that required many long months of work in the Roman archives. Although I live pretty frugally when in Rome, it does cost money. The MacArthur enabled me to finish this book without thinking about money at all. Also, I was fortunate to find a skilled, trained classical Latinist—Chiara Bariviera, now also a dear friend—with whom I could work (and pay!), working on extensive and sometimes complicated Latin texts. This made a lot of difference—I had someone to discuss grammar and translation issues with and she did some translating too—I went through many more Latin papal bulls and other Latin texts than I would have been able to go through on my own, with my own less-than-absolutely fluent Latin skills. *Engineering the Eternal*

HSS News, cont.

City, published by Chicago in 2018, which has received four book prizes., is very indebted to the MacArthur Foundation grant.

What are the advantages—and disadvantages—of pursuing historical research as an independent scholar?

The advantage is that you can get your research and writing done, even when you take on far too many projects at once, as I do. The disadvantage is that you can't be in one place teaching. I do think teaching is highly important and also rewarding. I have taught here and there, but this is not at all like building a teaching career in one place.

Lastly, what advice can you provide to early career doctoral-level scholars who are torn between following an academic career path that they were taught, and learned about, in graduate school, and the grinding realities of the academic marketplace with its all too few faculty positions available?

I would say honestly that if you are torn, you shouldn't be making a definitive decision now. Go ahead and apply for academic jobs—give it all you've got. But also acquire the skills needed for applying for grants, post-doctoral positions, etc. Take part-time work. And above all, keep

an open mind. Think of alternative ways of making a living at the same time that you may be applying for academic jobs. Every academic job is different. You really need to think about whether this is what you want—this particular location, the kind of job it is, how it affects other aspects of your life, including your family and relationships, how well you can do your scholarship there. Maybe it would be wonderful if you got such a job, which only one of the many applicants will. But maybe not. The whole mindset that if you want to be a scholar you have to have an academic job is mistaken. Be flexible, continue to think about alternatives, and above all, continue to do your research and writing.

JSTOR for HSS Members

In its strategic plan, HSS identified professional development as one of our six goals. Specifically, the Society is focusing on supporting the “professional development of emerging history of science scholars in and outside the academy.” One of the ways in which the HSS can help our members advance their research and teaching is to facilitate access to the literature, and we are pleased to work with JSTOR to offer a **50% savings on a one-year JPASS subscription for members** (regularly \$199). JPASS, available as monthly or yearly plans, allows you to read whatever journal article you like and enjoy up to 120 PDF downloads a year from the JSTOR archive, an archive with over 7 million articles from 2 thousand journals (including *Isis* and *Osiris*), representing some 50 academic disciplines.

In addition to past issues of *Isis* and *Osiris*, members may find the following journals of particular interest:

- *The British Journal for the History of Science*
- *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*
- *Science Progress*
- *Science, Technology, & Human Values*

JSTOR adds new titles to JPASS every month so you'll have a growing collection of the world's leading scholarly journals only a click away. **Sign up here.**



Notes from our Bibliographer

Editor's Note: *I don't think that there's been a single issue of the HSS Newsletter on my watch that hasn't featured books in some way. I feared that this final issue might prove the exception until that is, Stephen turned the following piece in from the bibliographer's desk, complete with some delightful and important recommendations for further reading from within our ranks.*

Book Review Olympics

by **Stephen P. Weldon**

This week I was looking around for a new book to put next to my living room chair in the evening, professional reading outside of my research, just to keep me current. My main criterion was that it should be making waves in the field in some way.

But how to choose? I could talk to colleagues in the department, of course. Or look over publisher lists, they come regularly to email, after all. Twitter and other social media inundate me with recommendations from all directions. Also, I thought of the enormously useful **HSS award-winning book list** (thanks, Ryan, for this handsome and easy-to-use site). The one place I really can't rely on any longer is my local bookstore; browsing is not what it used to be, certainly not here in central Oklahoma.

In the end, though, there are a lot of outside ways to get recommendations. But, turning inward to my own resource, I wondered, what about the Bibliography. Could the IsisCB

Explore do something for me? Was there any way to turn it into a recommendation engine?

Given the kind of data we have in the database—primarily citations without full text—I decided that book reviews were the key. Perhaps I could simply count the number of reviews for every book we had for a given time period, sort them, and look for the books at the top of the list. This wouldn't tell me the content of the reviews, but it would show me the books journal editors think are important. Not a bad criterion in my mind.

Moreover, it's kind of fun. Why not make it a competition? What's the top-reviewed book? Is there a winner? And if so, what is it?

After some trial and error, I ended up with a set of book review data on all the books in the *Current Bibliography* published between 2011 and 2020. Judging, however, was harder than I thought. And more subjective. I had to take into account different types of review formats. How much weight should I give essay reviews?

Should a symposium in a journal containing several essay reviews of a single book count more or less than the same number of essay reviews in different journals?

Well, I came up with a set of criteria that seemed to make sense to me, and it resulted in two top-twenty lists divided into two five-year periods: 2011-2015 and 2016-2020.

And the winners are... *The Copernican Question: Prognostication, Skepticism, and Celestial Order* (University of California Press, 2011) by Robert Westman in the 2011-2015 category and *Political Biology: Science and Social Values in Human Heredity from Eugenics to Epigenetics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) by Maurizio Meloni for the 2016-2020 list. Westman's book had only nine reviews, but that included six essay reviews across a total of seven different journals. There was also a back-and-forth between author and reviewer in *Isis* and a four-article symposium in *Metascience* (which was only counted once because of how we entered it.) In

Notes from our Bibliographer, cont.

the recent books competition, *Political Biology* came in with ten reviews, including six essay reviews in a symposium published in the *History of the Human Sciences*. **Check out both books, and both lists on this Google Sheet.**

One other motive behind this exercise was to learn what it would take to automate these calculations and, more importantly, consider how useful it would be to indicate the number of reviews next to the search results for books. I do think this kind of data can help assess which books are most talked about.

Although we are not there yet, I am hopeful that we can create a book review highlighter in Explore. So stay tuned. But for the time being, let me extend my congratulations to Westman and Meloni for winning our gold medal!



The Isis-CB Olympians

News from the Profession

2021 AIP Helleman Fellows to Study Intercellular Communication, History of String Theory, Dark Matter

The American Institute of Physics' Center for History of Physics has selected **Robert van Leeuwen**, a graduate student at the University of Amsterdam, **Pepijn Moerman**, a postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins University, and **Jaco de Swart**, a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University, as the recipients of the 2021 AIP Robert H.G. Helleman Memorial Fellowships. The fellowships are made possible by a gift from Robert H.G. Helleman to establish an endowment for supporting young scholars with Dutch citizenship in their pursuit of research activities in physics and the history of physics in the United States. **Read more about the fellowship and current recipients.**

Newberry Library Fellowships are Open!

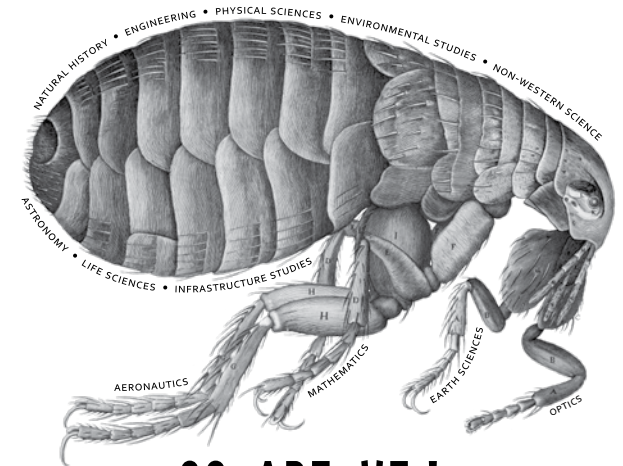
The Newberry is now accepting fellowship applications for the 2022-23 academic year!

Get details and **Apply Now!**

CFP *Eikón-Imago* Journal 2023. Imago, ius, religio. Religious Iconographies in Illustrated Legal Manuscripts and Printed Books (Ninth to Twentieth Centuries)

The journal *Eikón-Imago*, alongside the research team IUS ILLUMINATUM of Institute of Medieval Studies (IEM) of the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas at the Universidade NOVA in Lisbon, has decided to devote a special issue in 2023 issue to the study and examination of religious iconographies in legal manuscripts and printed books. Coordinated by special guest editors, Maria Alessandra Bilotta (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) and Gianluca del Monaco (Università di Bologna), the special issue aims to create a place for discussion and exchange on the diverse artistic, historical, and social aspects of these iconographies. For complete details about the list of topics, **please visit the journal webpage**. The deadline for accepting submission is **01/02/2022**.

HOOKE(D) ON SCIENCE?



SO ARE WE!

Become a Linda Hall Library Fellow!

The Linda Hall Library in Kansas City, Missouri is accepting applications through January 21, 2022 for its 2022-23 Fellowship Program.

OUR COLLECTIONS

Primary and secondary sources, 15th century to present

FULLY FUNDED

One month to semester-long fellowships

INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY

Lectures, Workshops, Seminars

To apply and learn more about our program, visit:

WWW.LINDAHALL.ORG

Image: Robert Hooke, *Micrographia*, 1665. Linda Hall Library Collections.



LINDA HALL LIBRARY

News from the Profession, cont.

The Consortium at 14

by Babak Ashrafi

In the **April 2007 HSS Newsletter** (see p. 15), Michal Meyer interviewed me about a new organization we were starting, then called the Philadelphia Area Center for History of Science. The name was cumbersome, and we mostly used the acronym PACHS, which we pronounced "Pax." The folks at UPenn pronounced it "patches," which was perhaps more descriptive. This note is a brief update on how the organization has fared since that interview.

PACHS was started by Martin Levitt, the Librarian of the American Philosophical Society (APS). Levitt recruited many local scholars,



An example of how different versions of the essay, bibliographies and peer reviews will continue to be made available online.

including Ruth Schwartz Cowan and Angela Creager, as well as ten other organizations between Wilmington, DE, and Princeton, NJ, to help establish a regional consortium for the history of science, technology, and medicine. We offered fellowships for conducting research in Philadelphia collections, held a roving regional colloquium, and produced occasional public events.

The original idea was to emulate the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, a highly successful organization at the University of Pennsylvania. At first, we tried to mimic the programs of the McNeil Center, and the APS, and the Chemical Heritage Foundation (now the Science History Institute), as well

as other academic programs and cultural organizations. Those initial efforts were not entirely successful. We learned that there were important differences between the community of early American scholars and historians of ST&M. We learned the consequences of not having an established community of students

and faculty, a public audience, or a donor base. As we were trying to sort through these issues, the economy crashed in 2008. By 2010, funds were running out, and it was not clear that PACHS could continue. It was also not clear that it *should* continue. What, after all, was the value in difficult times of yet another fellowship program, yet more colloquia, and a few more public events with doubtful impact?

But there were hints that PACHS might be able to make distinctive contributions, and was worth saving. The fellowships had developed in ways that did not just mimic other programs. Our early fellows were vocal in their appreciation of the opportunities they found here. A nascent program of a few working groups seemed to foster interactions that went beyond just replicating other seminars. And there were hints of a public audience: some events were very well attended; sometimes the audience would not leave, complaining the event was too short; and attendees would often pepper speakers with more questions over email. Perhaps in response to such favorable reactions, the leadership of the APS and several other consortium members decided to lend their formidable experience and expertise to help PACHS raise funds.

At about this time, I received a call from an organization in New York City asking if they

News from the Profession, cont.

might join PACHS. My memory of my initial reaction was something like, “No, of course not, how does that make any sense for a Philadelphia organization?” I hope I did not actually reply that way. Later, we heard from scholars and administrators in Los Angeles, Chicago, and a group in Canada, as well as more New Yorkers. They asked for advice about starting their own consortia, or about joining PACHS.

So, responding to such interest from outside the local area, we started an experiment in 2014. We pretended that Philadelphia was just really, really, big and that I could not just get on a bus and talk with someone face-to-face at a member institution, nor have lunch with all the fellows when they arrived, nor personally hand them their stipend checks. How would we run a consortium and a fellowship program then? Although we found lots of logistical and procedural problems, we did our best to solve them.

In 2015, we changed our name to the as-cumbersome-as-before Consortium for History of Science, Technology, and Medicine to reflect our broadening membership and scope. Today, the Consortium comprises 28 member institutions—including universities, research libraries, and museums—in North America and the United Kingdom. The NYC organization mentioned above is an integral part of the

Consortium, as is the History of Science Society, which joined us in 2015.

Since our founding, more than 230 scholars at all levels have received Consortium fellowships. Most fellows are from North America, but also come from South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. They employ a broad variety of interdisciplinary perspectives in their research, including, but not limited to: history of science, history of art, architecture, a variety of area studies, English, comparative literature, history, philosophy, sociology, library and information science, psychology, and STS.

Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly changed how scholarship is done, and the Consortium, already a distributed-online organization, was able to continue much of its activity for our community. Participation in the Consortium's online working groups has grown exponentially, as evidenced by more than 3,300 attendees from six continents at more than 170 meetings held last year. We now have thirty-two online working groups, led by nearly one hundred prominent scholars from around the world. The groups are conducted in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Sanskrit. Topics range from the esoteric (such as translating ancient Sanskrit medical texts) to the urgent (such as race, the environment, and health in America).

The **Consortium website** now offers a wide variety of resources for teaching, learning, and research, including an online search hub with more than six million catalog records and 5,000 finding aids for the rare books and manuscripts held at member institutions. We produce audio and video podcasts for the non-specialist public. One series presents international perspectives on COVID-19 (12 episodes), and another explores the history of "race science" (8 episodes, with more in production). Other episodes examine Black maternal health, energy infrastructures, and black holes. Most episodes feature the work of Consortium fellows and scholars at member institutions, as well as highlights from members' collections.

The Consortium has generated some of the features that PACHS lacked in the early years: a community of scholars who not only participate, but create and lead programs; a small donor base, which keeps us afloat; and a distinctive set of programs for both specialists and non-specialists. Nonetheless, we still live on the edge and continue to work to make the Consortium sustainable for the long term. With a little luck, we will not only survive but thrive. Watch this space for the second update in 2035.