

WELCOME! You hold in your hands, or rather, on your screen, the first issue of the Phi Alpha Theta Westminster Newsletter! We will be bringing you news of the most interesting people and events of the past, both globally and locally, along with current events related to the discipline of history. Along the way we hope to entertain and shed some light on that perennial question: "Why would anyone want to study history?"

Phi Alpha Theta is the national history honors society "whose mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians." — Sherrie Bakelar

South Pole Adventurer

Roald Amundsen, born July 16th, 1872, was a Norwegian polar explorer and first person ever to reach the South Pole on December 14, 1911.

From a young age, Amundsen held a passion for exploration and adventure. At the age of 31, Amundsen, along with five others on the ship *Gjøa*, became the first person ever to traverse the Northwest Passage, a feat attempted years earlier by others such as Christopher Columbus, Henry Hudson, and John Cabot. Not long after his northern adventures, Amundsen aimed his sails elsewhere.

In 1909, aboard the ship *Fram*, Amundsen along with a team of eight headed for the South Pole. Landing in the Bay of Whales, Amundsen and his team set up base and stayed there for nine months. When it appeared that the spring had arrived at last, Amundsen and his team set out to reach the South Pole, but things would soon turn bad, and quickly. Not long after the departure of the team, temperatures began to plummet, sometimes reaching -60° F. It wasn't long before Amundsen's team of eight became a team of five. Bearing these grueling conditions, the team pushed on and finally on December 14, 1911, Amundsen's team reached (90°00'S), the South Pole. The trip had taken ninety-nine days to accomplish, covering 1,860 miles. A camp was set up until the team left in January of 1912.

Amundsen continued to conduct explorations in the Northwest Passage until his disappearance on a rescue mission on June 18, 1928. His body was never found.

— Travis Estes



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This Month in History

12/01/1955: Rosa Parks ignites bus boycott

12/07/1941: Attack on Pearl Harbor

12/14/1911: Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole

12/17/1903: First airplane flies at Kitty Hawk

12/25/1914: The Christmas Truce

12/31/1600: Charter granted for the East India Company

Happy Birthday Sir Isaac Newton!



Sir Isaac Newton, born December 25, 1642, would grow to be one of the greatest scientists the world has ever known. His contributions include the discovery of the composition of white light, the three laws of motion and universal gravitation, and infinitesimal calculus.

Calendar of Events

Cool things to do during the break!

Utah Pre-history Poster contest. Deadline for entries is January 1, 2007. PDF with further details: http://history.utah.gov/archaeology/public_archaeology/utah_prehistory_week/documents/UTAHPREHISTORYWEEK2006postercontestPR.pdf

Frontier Christmas: Feast and Ball December 8 @ American West Heritage Center
Frontier Christmas: Winter Frolic December 9 @ American West Heritage Center
 See website for further details: <http://americanwestcenter.org/>

Candlelight Christmas December 8, 9, 15, 16 @ This is the Place Heritage Park
 For further details: <http://thisistheplace.org/events/candlelight.html>

Luminarias at the Edge December 20 @ Edge of the Cedars State Park in Blanding Utah. "Over 1000 tiny candles will illuminate the walkways around the Museum and the 1000 year old Ancestral Puebloan community. The magical evening will also include holiday music and refreshments. Exhibit halls will also be open. 6:00 until 8:00 PM."

Edge of the Cedars State Park Museum: http://www.utah.com/stateparks/edge_of_cedars.htm
 Calendar of Events: <http://www.stateparks.utah.gov/visiting/events.php?month=December>

Winter Solstice Celebration @ Bend-in-the-River December 20
 More Info: <http://www.sa.utah.edu/bennion/bend/>
 Directions: <http://www.sa.utah.edu/bennion/bend/location.htm>

Making History

Book Highlights

The Enemy within: A History of Espionage
 by Terry Crowley

Movie Highlights

Blood and Oil: The Middle East in World War I
 Directed by Marty Callaghan
 DVD Release: December 5

Apocalypto

Directed by Mel Gibson
 Theatrical Release: December 8



Classical Mayan Civilization began in 250 AD and lasted six hundred and fifty years, going into a decline between 900 AD and 1500 AD.

Historians and others continue to search for the causes of the civilization's collapse and several theories have been advanced including: earthquakes, pestilence, insufficient food supplies, rebellions and foreign invaders.

— Sherrie Bakelar

Editorial

PSYCHIC FILM REVIEWS By Psarah Johnson

Oh my Mel's at it again!! In the latest in his historically-based, "the world according to ME" film series, the Road Warrior is out to present an accurate and sympathetic presentation of the ancient Mayan culture. While little is known about the details of the film, it would be safe to place a high bet that this movie will be neither accurate nor sympathetic. True, his movie will be written in some form of the Nahuatl language and will star a cast of complete unknowns but beyond that Melly will give us little of the culture or achievements of the Mayan. Just the blood sacrifice will be honored; the blood, blood, bloody blood, blood that he does so love. What the hell is wrong with this man after all? Hates Jews, loves blood. Seems a bit psychotic to me. Seriously.

So what might be overlooked in this latest blood bath entitled *Mel Gibson's Apocalypto*? The intellect of the Mayan culture; their understanding of anatomy, of astronomy; the development of a complex writing system and strong emphasis on education. And while one of the characters is named Zero Wolf, I doubt Senor Gibson will waste much time showing the Mayan development of the concept of zero. He'll have too many sweet, slow-motion family scenes to show between Jaguar Paw (our hero) and his cute, little family.

I remain as convinced of Mel's historical inadequacy as the Mayans were of their own apocalyptic end. The rest of you can decide for yourself when it comes out on Dec. 8th. However, for those looking for a giggle, go to imdb.com and weigh in on the discussion "Is this movie about The Book of Mormon?" With questions like this it is no wonder there is still an audience for such mindless blood fests.

Opinions expressed in the editorial section belong to the writer and do not represent the opinions of Phi Alpha Theta or its members, Westminster College or its faculty, students and staff.



Westminster College campus from 1913. Digital Image©2003. Giovale Library, Westminster College. All rights reserved.

Converse Hall and Ferry Hall 1913. Dirt road in foreground is 1300 E.

For Further Reading

The South Pole: An Account of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition in the "Fram", 1910-1912. by Roald Amundsen

Roald Amundsen's Belgica Diary. The first Scientific Expedition to the Antarctic. by Hugo Decler

Newton's Philosophy of Nature: Selections from his Writings Edited and arranged with notes by H.S. Thayer; Introduction by John Herman Randall, Jr.

Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton by R S Westfall

The Neglected War: Mesopotamia 1914-1918 by AJ Barker

The Last Crusade: The Palestine Campaign in the First World War by Anthony Bruce

Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life Translated by Dennis Tedlock, with commentary based on the ancient knowledge of the modern Quich'e Maya

The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization J. Eric S. Thompson

Pictures from : <http://www.zeitreisezone.de/ife/1910.htm> , <http://cepa.newschool.edu/het/profiles/newton.htm> and IMBD.com

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