It’s tax season again, and this is just a reminder that the voluntary tax “check-off” for the Ohio History Connection that you’ll find on your Ohio individual income tax return benefits history, pre-history and preservation-related organizations across the state. When you opt to donate a portion of your state income tax refund to the Ohio History Connection, it supports the History Fund, which makes grants to organizations for local history projects in communities throughout Ohio.

For 2014, the History Fund received $165,000 in donations from 17,000 Ohioans who contributed a portion of their state income tax refund. Most donations are small, averaging $9.70 in 2014, but the impact Continued on page 2
Recognizing the increasing interest among students (and their parents) in matching a major to a specific job after graduation, the History Department at Muskingum University in the fall of 2014 began organizing visits to historical societies, museums, libraries, and archives. These programs complement existing on-campus workshops the department regularly organizes on topics such as graduate school, internships, and resume building. This new program introduces participating students to careers in history or with a history component not directly related to teaching. (Most of our undergraduates see education as the only option after graduation for those interested in studying the past.) In fall 2013, we met with Leslie Wagner, the Historian of the Dawes Arboretum in Newark, who gave us a tour of the facility’s archives and the Daweswood House Museum. Throughout the course of the morning she described the various responsibilities of the Historian, from maintaining the archive to creating educational programs for Ohio students. In Spring 2014 we traveled to Columbus to visit the Ohio History Connection (OHC) for a tour of their archives/library. Elizabeth Plummer, Research Services Manager, took students into the stacks and highlighted some of the organization’s vast collection of photographs, texts, and items of historical significance. Students also learned about the varied responsibilities and day-to-day work of the OHC staff.

For the fall 2014 semester we organized by far our most ambitious excursion – an overnight trip to Cleveland. Five of our majors accompanied two faculty members to some of the city’s most visited attractions. The group spent its first day at the Cleveland Museum of Art. We first met with several members of the exhibition department and learned about event organizing, including planning special exhibits highlighting art from multiple museums to keeping track and on schedule a variety of simultaneous events (often several years in advance) to utilizing the Museum’s own collection in new ways. We also visited the facility’s library. Leslie Cade, Archivist and Records Manager, and Lou Adrean, Head of Research and Public Programs, took us through some of the museum’s extensive research collection, discussing their work with museum staff, members, and the general public. The next morning we visited the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, where we met with Christine Lucco, Senior Director of Curatorial Affairs whose responsibilities include overseeing the creation of new exhibits and acquisition of new items (whether permanently or on loan). In the afternoon we toured the Rock Hall’s Library and Archives with librarian Laura Moody and heard about the typical workday of its staff assisting professional historians and the general public with their research. Each site visit also included some free time for students to explore on their own.

These programs introduced students to the variety of careers available to history majors, in particular those looking to work outside the traditional classroom. Program participants learned about the dynamic atmosphere of public history centers, museums, and libraries and, by extension, the variety of responsibilities found in the daily work of their employees. Some of the people we met spend a great deal of their day in history-related pursuits. Others split their time between various tasks, many unrelated to teaching or research. Everyone we spoke with utilizes skills essential to the study of history and familiar to all students in the major (such as the critical analysis and interpretation of documents, clear and concise writing, organization, effective speaking, etc.) regardless of the amount of “history” they engaged with on a daily basis. Students also learned the importance of pursuing internships while working toward their degree. As one of the students wrote regarding the trip to Cleveland, “This trip helped to broaden my potential options after graduation by demonstrating the opportunities that I have available … and by showing me what I need to do to prepare myself to work in a museum or archival career. This trip has helped me feel more confident in my post-graduation plans to take a year off. (Continued on page 5)
school and to get volunteer experience in a museum or other history-related field while working.” Everyone we spoke with highlighted his/her own experiences as volunteers or paid staff and the importance of having that experience on a resume. As another student noted, “It was useful to hear the different paths that each person took into museum work” and learning about the importance volunteering. This program has helped students to explore the variety of jobs suited to their major and interests, but also emphasized the need to think creatively and to set the groundwork early in order to secure a career in history outside of the traditional classroom.

For those considering a similar program, be aware that the cost to your department would be minimal and the benefit to students great. Everyone we met with volunteered his/her time free of charge. Most of the venues required no admission fee and those that did offered a student rate. For the overnight trip to Cleveland, admittedly a bit more ambitious and expensive, we received generous support from Muskingum University’s History Department, Social Sciences Division, Vice President for Academic Affairs James Callaghan, and Student Senate. With some institutional support, we have offered these excursions to students at no cost. Programs such as this allow History majors in the twenty-first century to immerse themselves in the past, while also keeping a watchful eye on their own future. Students, and ultimately the profession itself, will benefit from an introduction to the dynamic careers available in history.

The Ohio Academy of History will move to a regular membership year beginning in 2016. Memberships will run from 1 May to 30 April of the following calendar year, and, as with other professional societies, will not be prorated for the initial year of membership. This will be in full effect beginning in 2016. To implement this without harm to the membership, all current members renewing will be given an expiration date of 30 April 2016.

2015 Dissertation Award Nominees:

Justin T. Pfeiffer
“The Soviet Union through German Eyes: Wehrmacht Identity, Nazi Propaganda, and the Eastern Front War, 1941-1945.” University of Toledo.

Daniel A. Vandersommers

David L. Prentice