Historian Explains Big History On New Cable Show

Jonathan B. Markley, associate professor of history, will be answering questions and explaining how things like salt, horses and secret codes affect historic events on several programs of “Big History” which premiered Nov. 2 on the History Channel H2.

The 16 half-hour programs “create an interconnected panorama of patterns and themes that link history to dozens of fields, including astronomy, biology, chemistry and geology,” according to the series website. Actor Bryan Cranston (“Breaking Bad”) is the program narrator.

“Big history is just how you zoom out and see how the big picture works,” Markley said in a promotional video about the program. “You go from the Big Bang to the present and try to figure out what it all means.

“Big History is an exciting field, where a lot has been happening in the last few years,” he explained.

“The Chronozoom Project that started at Berkeley has been working to create a platform that allows you to put the whole history of the universe on a single Web page, and really exciting things have been happening there since Microsoft Research got on board with the project,” he added.

Markley, who was involved in a 2011 History Channel program “History of the World in Two Hours,” has been working with the production company, Flight 33, since last year.

A member of the CSUF faculty since 2006, Markley’s research focus is on Chinese historiography, Chinese foreign relations and the Han Dynasty China. He is currently working on a book about the history of grass, which includes all cereal crops like wheat, corn and rice, and how grass has influenced the world.

Studying the Creatures Among Us

Legless lizards, bison, dolphins and oarfish are some of the animals being studied by Cal State Fullerton faculty members and their students.

Biology graduate student Calvin Duncan is studying the use of a contraceptive vaccine to find an economical and effective solution to manage the herd of bison on Catalina Island. Duncan has launched a multiyear study on the use of a contraceptive vaccine for his thesis research project. “It’s a project with a lot of conservation issues,” said Paul Stapp, professor of biological science and Duncan’s graduate research adviser.

Marine scientist Misty Paig-Tran is studying the remains of the 14-foot, roughly 250-pound sea serpent-like oarfish that washed up on the beach in Oceanside in October. As part of Paig-Tran’s studies, she packed up the frozen remains of the sea-serpent-like fish for a recent trip to UCLA for a CT scan, which will allow her to create 3-D reconstructions of the oarfish with the focus on the skeleton to assess its mineralization, or the extent to which the skeleton is hardened by the deposit of minerals.

Paleontologist James Parham, who with a colleague recently discovered four new species of legless lizards from California, is researching the genetically distinct reptiles. They have discovered four new species of legless lizards from California. Parham published collaborative research findings with a research colleague at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley in Harvard University’s Museum of Comparative Zoology’s peer-reviewed journal, Breviora.

Psychologist Kayla Causey and her students are studying the behavior of bottlenose dolphins in Orange County harbors and coasts. Causey’s Coastal Dolphins of Orange County Project will build a digitized, up-to-date online photo-identification catalog to track individual dolphins. The data will be compared with data of other researchers who are studying dolphins along the California coastline.
College of Communications Recognized as Organization of the Year

Cal State Fullerton’s College of Communications was honored as Organization of the Year by the National Hispanic Public Relations Association at the Oct. 23 PRemio Awards and Scholarship Gala in Los Angeles. The award recognizes the college’s leadership role in launching a new initiative to prepare Latino students for careers in the media and communications industry.

Living Military History Honored

The Center for Oral and Public History and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences honored the nearly 500 individuals whose memories make up the El Toro Marine Air Station Oral History Project at a special luncheon Nov. 2.

The project, a collaboration with the Orange County Great Park, has preserved the voices of the people who lived or worked at the base, including many veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, and their families.

“Ask Jim” Answers Titan Athletics Questions

“Ask Jim,” a new feature on FullertonTitans.com that allows fans, supporters, and friends of Cal State Fullerton athletics the opportunity to submit questions to Athletics Director Jim Donovan, has two postings as of Dec. 2.

University Police Reaccredited With Distinction

The University’s Police Department has been awarded the Accreditation with Excellence Award by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc. The department is the first California higher education institution to receive the award.

In addition, the campus police force was named a Flagship Agency, designating it an “extraordinary example of excellence in an accredited law enforcement agency”; a designation it has earned during its two prior reaccreditations.

Did You Know?

- 52 percent of 2012-13 CSUF graduates were first-generation college students.
- The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) offers 122 classes to more than 1,384 active seniors each semester.
- CSUF student-athletes completed a total of 1,548 hours of community service in 2012-13.