

# Department of Philosophy Newsletter Spring 2017, No. 50

## FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

The past year was my 13<sup>th</sup> as department chair, the first year of a 5<sup>th</sup> term, and it was good. To be precise, the internal affairs of our department and programs were *very good indeed*. Less good is that the hazards of the current age intrude now and then.

I could name a few of these hazards, but you all have your lists. Universities are operating in a rapidly evolving terrain of budgetary landmines, a terrain far more uncertain than we faced even with the crash of 2008-2009. It is simultaneously more important than ever for all of us who speak for universities to explain how vitally important our institutions of public knowledge are to democracy and to any hope of progress. It is becoming evident that we must not only *explain* this but *exemplify* it in ways that are manifest and understood far beyond our campuses, even where we are vilified as bastions of a corrupt liberal elite that has abandoned real Americans.

Should we direct some of our collective imagination and resources to community outreach and public service projects in the struggling towns of rural America? How might such projects deploy our many forms of expertise? How might they bring multidisciplinary teams of faculty, administrators, and students together in work that is both intellectually rewarding and socially valuable? How might this strengthen the education of students at all levels and better prepare them to work and live well in the society that awaits them?

I wish all of you could have heard the talk Andrew Light gave in our Humanities Center on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. This year's HC theme was Environments, and attempts to bridge humanities and science were legion. Andrew is an environmental philosopher who for a couple years was also the US State Department Special Envoy to India, leading the successful effort to get the Modi government on board the Paris climate accord. His talk laid out the challenges that had to be overcome and the strategies pursued in crafting an accord that enlisted the cooperation of countries responsible for 90% of global carbon emissions. He explained the strengths of the agreement, the process going forward, and the approach to enforcement of targets envisioned in the accord. It was inspiring and a proud moment for UR philosophy.

Another such moment occurred shortly after commencement a year ago: Rich Feldman was named the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professor in Philosophy for 2017-18. His long and distinguished tenure as Dean of the College will end in June and we will be very pleased to have him back.

There is much more to report about exciting new courses, collaborations with other departments, and service initiatives in and beyond the UR community, but I should stop and ask the obvious question. Do philosophers rock, or what?



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***Congratulations and Thank You  
again this year to all faculty and  
staff in the Philosophy  
Department for their 100%  
participation in the 2017 United  
Way Campaign!***



**2016-2017 COLLOQUIUM SERIES**

<b>Colin Chamberlain</b> (Temple University)	“Malebranche on Thinking in Relation to the Body”
<b>Peter van Inwagen</b> (Notre Dame)	“A Defense of Lightweight Platonism”
<b>Brian Epstein</b> (Tufts University)	“A Framework for Social Ontology”
<b>Derk Pereboom</b> (Cornell University)	“Responsibility, Regret, and Protest”
<b>Gina Schouten</b> (Harvard University)	“Higher Education, Distributive Justice, and Positional Goods”
<b>William FitzPatrick</b> (University of Rochester)	“Unwitting Wrongdoing, Reasonable Expectations, and Blameworthiness”
<b>Eric Schliesser</b> (Ghent University)	“Newton’s Metaphysical Modality and his Polemics with Spinozism”
<b>Peter King</b> (University of Toronto)	“Moral Fatigue: Reviving a Medieval Vice”
<b>John Doris</b> (Washington University, St. Louis)	“Talking to Our Selves”



***“Dedicated to the  
Truth,  
the Half-Truth  
and the Occasional  
Bald-Faced Lie”***

## FACULTY NEWS

### **Paul Audi**

A teaching highlight this year was team-teaching with Alison. Our topic was early modern and contemporary theories of properties and predication. The seminar inspired me to write a paper on tropes. More recently, I have been thinking about truthmaking and time, both together and separately.

### **Hayley Clatterbuck**

During my second year on the faculty and first full calendar year in Rochester, I explored more of the spectrum of distinct joys of life in Western New York: spring’s bounty of lilacs, summer’s relentlessly lovely weather, fall’s beautiful foliage, and winter’s Sisyphean shoveling and ineptitude of the Buffalo Bills. I was able to explore more of the University as well: co-teaching a class with Allen Orr from Biology, joining up with the new Center for the Origins of Cognition in the Brain and Cognitive Science department, and developing a new course on probability aimed at math majors to be taught this fall. I continue to be grateful for the warmth and curiosity of students and faculty members in philosophy and throughout the U of R.

### **Earl Conee**

My activities during the past year have included the usual mixture of teaching, research and service. Usually I say that in my newsletter entry about a previous year and as usual I have said that I say it. In a departure from the usual, though, the entry has many tokens of "usual".

### **Randall Curren**

I had quite an eventful year. A few days after commencement weekend a year ago I gave a keynote address at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Self-Determination Theory, in Victoria, British Columbia, and the next day I delivered the final manuscript of *Living Well*, which I had been writing on and off since 2009. Three weeks later, I gave the closing keynote at a National Endowment for The Humanities Summer Institute on Moral Psychology and Education. So far, so good. A few weeks later, in mid-July, I was in Dallas – Did I mention it was mid-July? – as part of a keynote panel at a conference on education sponsored by Marty Seligman’s positive psychology movement. It was less a conference than I imagined it would be when I accepted the invitation. Billing itself as a “Festival,” there was more than a whiff of party in the air and much celebration of Marty. I confess that I *danced* with him, but only for a moment and quite accidentally. Alright, yes, it was *on stage and during someone else’s session*, but that’s how the positive psychologists roll. [PARENTAL ADVISORY: Lyrics at Positive Psychology events may include meta-ethically confused propositions, e.g., that “Happiness is the truth.”] Skipping ahead to spring break of this year, *Living Well* was released in March, in time for two author-meets-critics events – both of them models of Stoic sobriety.

### **Richard Dees**

I have a number of articles in the works, including a paper on harming the dead that I presented at RIT earlier this year. The research behind that paper formed the basis of a new course I offered last fall on Death, which had students look at what it means to die, whether dying is harmful, the implications of immortality, and the role death has in giving our lives meaning—as well as whether we can harm the dead. I also have ongoing projects about how to define the scope of public health, and about the justification for various forms of newborn screening.

### **William FitzPatrick**

My research and presentations over the past year have taken up a variety of issues: the defense of ethical realism and deontology against evolutionary and cognitive-science-based debunking arguments (where this defense, as I see it, is part of a more general philosophical project of resisting scientism); the ontology of robust ethical realism, drawing on parallels in the philosophy of mind; further development and defense of a moderate view of moral responsibility for unwitting wrongdoing; and a person-centered account of the value of life and human dignity, particularly in connection with end of life issues, in support of broadly liberal positions on physician-assistance in dying. In addition to giving a talk to the department during graduate recruitment, I gave a keynote address at a conference on *Ethics and the Brain* at the *Center for Cognition and Neuroethics* in Michigan, and delivered the Nancy K. Rhoden Lecture at Oberlin. I continue to chair the Distinguished Visiting Humanist Program and was delighted to host Noam Chomsky for three days last spring for a variety of talks, meetings, interviews, and film screenings and panel discussions. I'm still serving as an associate editor for *Ethics* and as the undergraduate adviser for the department, and supervised two senior theses this year: one on the ethics of socioeconomic inequality and one on the concept of death and complications introduced by biotechnologies.

### **Alison Peterman**

This academic year was a busy one but a good one. I pursued my research on the weird and fascinating Margaret Cavendish, which I've really been enjoying. This work has caused me to think a lot more this year about how we teach this history of philosophy, and how to integrate new figures like women philosophers into the early modern "canon". I really enjoyed my teaching this year; the highlight was a class that co-taught with Paul Audi on properties and predication. The department continues to be a fun and intellectually stimulating place to be.

### **Brett Sherman**

I'm excited to announce a "forthcoming" addition to the family. The little guy's name is 'According to Phrases and Epistemic Modals. He weighs about 0.8125 pounds, when printed on standard US Letter size paper. His hobbies include getting scattered by a fan and playing ice hockey. His favorite food is chicken wings.

### **Edward Wierenga**

I will retire at the end of this semester after 40 years at the University of Rochester. In the past year I completed 15 years as philosophy of religion editor for *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, having solicited and/or edited over 50 entries. My book *The Philosophy of Religion* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016) was published, and I had the pleasure of using it in my course.

### **2016 Outstanding Essay Award**

Jannai Shields

### **Ph.D. Graduate Admissions 2017/18**

Jacob Morris (Boise State University)  
Stephen York (University of Alaska)

## MA Degrees Awarded 2016-17

James Otis  
Jannai Shields

## Ph.D. Degree Awarded 2016-17

### **Brian Barnett**

“Higher-Order Evidence: Its Nature and Epistemic Significance”  
(Richard Feldman, advisor)

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

### Matthew Baddorf

I am defending my dissertation on May 22, making this my last year as a student here. I have enjoyed working in the Department enormously, so leaving is bittersweet. I am immensely grateful to all the faculty, staff, and students with whom I have worked; it has been a pleasure to do philosophy with you all.

Over the past year, I have done the usual teaching, research, and cursing at unfinished dissertation chapters. Happily, I have also had two papers accepted for publication. One is on collective moral responsibility, and is coming out in *Philosophical Studies*; the other is on divine simplicity, and is coming out in *Topoi*.

### Zachary Barber

Returning to the U of R philosophy department as a graduate student has been a delight. I've become even more aware of the congeniality of the philosophical community here. My interests are maturing and I continue to be inspired by faculty and peers. Philosophize on!

## Jannai Shields

Year one, "Study hard!" our professors proclaim  
Year two, passing exams was my aim  
Year three was more of the same  
Year four, Paul and Hayley came  
Year five, the job market seemed pretty lame  
Year six I hope to finish with acclaim!

## GRADUATE ALUMNI NEWS

### Andrei Buckareff (PhD, 2005)

The biggest recent development in my life is that I am now a father. My son, Soren, was born on October 7, 2016. Needless to say, he has been the source of a great deal of joy for my spouse, Lara, and me. As those who are parents know, it is both exhausting and deeply gratifying to raise a child.

Besides being a new father, I've been busy directing some projects in the philosophy of religion with Yujin Nagasawa (University of Birmingham). Yujin and I received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. This is our second grant from JTF. Both grants were to do work on alternative conceptions of the divine. The present project is focused just on pantheism and panentheism and includes two workshops (one at the Rutgers Center for Philosophy of Religion at Rutgers University and one at the John Hick Centre for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Birmingham), public lectures, and two competitive stipend programs to fund research on pantheism and panentheism by analytic philosophers. For more information on the most recent project visit <https://sites.google.com/site/pantheismandpanentheismproject/>

Finally, I'm hoping to finish work on a book this year that I'm co-authoring with Jesús Aguilar (RIT) for The MIT Press. It won't surprise people who know me that it is on philosophy of action. We

argue for revising the standard causalist story in two ways. First, we contend that the neo-Humean metaphysics of causation assumed by many proponents of causalism is the primary source of many of the problems the theory faces. For this and other reasons, we argue that causalists should embrace a neo-Aristotelian ontology of causal powers and a powers-in-process theory of causation. Second, we apply the revised causalist account of intentional agency, showing how it enables the causalist to better address some challenges.

**Matthew Frise (PhD, 2015)**

My final year as a postdoctoral research fellow at Baylor is wrapping up. I've had some luck since the last newsletter, having two papers accepted at *Philosophical Studies* and one apiece at *The Philosophical Quarterly*, *Erkenntnis*, and *American Philosophical Quarterly*. In August my wife gave birth to our first child, Rowan Emmanuel Frise, who is a constant and rambunctious joy. My next academic position is uncertain, but certainty is overrated.

**Barry Gan (PhD, 1984)**

Barry Gan continues to teach philosophy and nonviolence full-time at St. Bonaventure University. He stepped down this year from editing *The Acorn: Journal of the Gandhi-King Society*, after serving as editor for 26 years. He also stepped down from serving for six years as chair of the Faculty Senate, on which he had served in one capacity or another for about thirty years. In October 2016 he delivered a short address on the relevance of Gandhi today at the United Nations' annual celebration of the International Day of Nonviolence. He and his wife, Miaoli Zhang, who recently immigrated from China, live in their home in Olean, NY, where last summer they finished building a swim spa in their back yard. Barry swims there each morning with bungee cords that keep him from swimming out of the small pool. Barry also continues to play guitar and sing with Not Norman, a popular, local rock'n' roll band.

**Loretta Kopelman (PhD, 1966)**

Hello everyone

It has been a busy year. I presented a paper and panel on "The forced marriage of minors: what are our duties" at the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities in Washington D.C. in October. After working and publishing on this widespread and terrible problem, it is good to see some states begin to take actions to stop them even when they are instigated by parents or relatives for cultural, financial or other reasons (like a marriage-based visa). I am still teaching part-time at the Georgetown School of Medicine and enjoy the students very much. I have almost finished a long and critical project on the writings of Edmund Pellegrino, who was an early and foundational figure in bioethics. I still serve on the ethics committee at Inova Fairfax Hospital and some ethics panels at the FDA and NIH. I also still serve on various editorial boards. Arthur and I enjoy family, friends, travel and the many opportunities in the Washington DC area.

Greeting and best wishes to all,  
In friendship,

Loretta

**Richard Legum (PhD, 1981)**

After four years as a substitute and adjunct and almost two years as a tenure track Assistant Professor at Kingsborough Community College (City University of New York), I continue to enjoy my return to professing Philosophy. In March, I gave a talk at Long Island University, entitled, "To Get a Good Job, You NEED to Study Philosophy." I chaired a symposium session on Action Theory at the APA's Eastern Division meeting and sessions at the Eastern and Central Division meetings sponsored by the APA's Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges.



I was recently appointed as chair of the APA Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges and as an *ex officio* member of the APA Committee on Teaching of Philosophy.

I had the pleasure of meeting Jim van Cleve at the APA's Author Meets Critics session on his book *Problems from Reid*. After almost 40 years, I got a chance to thank him for publishing a paper which he wrote as a graduate student at Rochester entitled "Probability and Certainty: A Reexamination of the Lewis-Reichenbach Debate." His paper provided me with my professional debut in philosophy as a graduate student, a response to his paper which also appeared in *Philosophical Studies*. Jim, who had for many years been a colleague of Roderick Chisholm, was kind enough to discuss some ideas that I have been working on for a paper on Chisholm's Epistemology. I continue working on this paper in my spare time (something that I am finding less and less of due to administrative responsibilities as a full-time faculty member; take out your violins...)

### **Jonathan Matheson (PhD, 2010)**

This year I finished my seventh year at the University of North Florida and was an Ethics Fellow at the Florida Blue Center for Ethics. I continue to enjoy life in sunny Florida despite the fact that my research continues to focus on how little I know. This year I was also able to give my first keynote address at the University of Tartu's graduate conference on the epistemology of disagreement.

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**Matthew Frise (PhD, 2015)**

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**Barry Gan (PhD, 1984)**

My relatively recent publications include:

*Violence and Nonviolence: An Introduction* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2013) and co-editor (with Robert L. Holmes) of *Nonviolence in Theory and Practice* (Waveland Press, 2012).

**Richard Legum (PhD, 1981)**

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