

PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO



Noûsletter

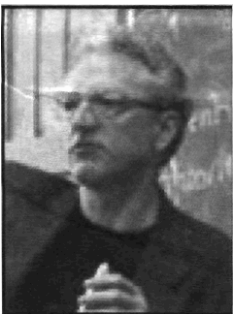
No. 14

July 2002

A Year for Awards

Smith Gets \$2 Million Research Award

Barry Smith, Julian Park Professor of Philosophy at UB, has received a \$2 million Wolfgang Paul Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The award, the most valuable ever in the academic history of Germany, is believed to be the largest single prize ever awarded to a philosopher.



Of the 70 candidates nominated by German academic institutions, 14 top-ranking international scholars and scientists have been selected to share the more than \$23 million that has been set aside by the German government for the Wolfgang Paul program. Of these, Smith will receive the largest single amount.

The bulk of the award will fund Smith's ongoing series of pioneering studies designed to show that philosophical methods and theories can be applied to information science.

The award was presented to him and to the other recipients by Edelgard Bulmahn, Germany's federal minister for education and

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Twain Winner Gets it Write

They came from as near as the next block and as far away as Iran — more than 700 "Twainies" anxious for a shot at finishing an unpublished story by Mark Twain and winning the first prize of \$5,000 offered by the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library.

Some contestants were editors, some were 14 years old, and some were Japanese. Only one, however, achieved characters so superbly drawn as to suggest what the judges called "an understanding of human nature reminiscent of Twain" and a "fluid and insightful (conclusion) displaying some fascinating plot turns and vivid descriptions."

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Dr. Yu Receives Two Awards

Jiyuan Yu is one of four College of Arts and Sciences faculty to receive the Excellence in Teaching Award. Faculty were honored at a ceremony and reception held May 9 in the Center for the Arts.

These teaching awards are intended to recognize superior teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the college. The primary criterion for the award is demonstrated excellence in teaching. Yu received his Ph.D. from Guelph University in Ontario in 1994, and worked for three years as a post-doctoral research fellow in philosophy at the University of Oxford before coming to Buffalo in 1997.



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research, at a ceremony in Berlin. In addition to the monetary award, Smith and the rest of this year's winners — eight of whom are from the U.S. — will have the opportunity to conduct research for three years under first-rate conditions at a German academic institution. In Smith's case, the host institution will be the University of Leipzig, where an interdisciplinary team of researchers will work under his guidance. They will collaborate with researchers at UB in a newly founded Buffalo-Leipzig Institute for Formal Ontology and Medical Information Science.

Smith will continue to teach at UB, but will take a leave of absence during the 2003-04 academic year to work in Leipzig. He will spend his vacations there as well.

Smith's research project in Leipzig serves to establish the future-oriented field of "formal ontology in information systems." It involves the university's departments of Philosophy, Medicine and Information Science, as well as the Max Planck Institute for Cognitive Neuroscience.

The project addresses a major problem confronting information science today, which is that it must employ a large number of modeling methods and conceptual categories that lack a unifying foundation. As a result, databases and terminological standards show a very low degree of compatibility and cannot be re-used, even for similar areas of application.



The goal of Smith's research is to develop a powerful general ontology, i.e., a semantically sound taxonomical and lexical framework, for overcoming problems in reusability and coherence. The main test bed for this general ontology will be the development of standards for clinical trials. Smith will in this connection collaborate with a team in the University of Leipzig led by Barbara Heller that is working on cross-linguistic medical standardization

projects sponsored by the European Union.

Smith recently helped establish at UB a master's program in ontology and information science that trains ontologists who are needed by private industry, government, non-profit organizations and other institutions to develop and manage large databases and directories. They model and analyze complex structures and processes, and build systems for data and enterprise integration in a variety of fields.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is a non-profit foundation established in 1953 by the Federal Republic of Germany for the promotion of international research cooperation. It enables highly qualified scholars to spend extended periods of research in Germany and promotes ensuing academic contacts.

Smith studied at Oxford University and received his doctorate from the University of Manchester, England. He has worked at the University of Sheffield, the University of Manchester and the International Academy of Philosophy in Liechtenstein. He joined the UB philosophy faculty in 1993, and is also affiliated with the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, and the Cognitive Science Center.

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Yu's areas of teaching and research include Greek Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy, Metaphysics and Ethics.



Jiyuan Yu was also awarded the *Young Investigator Achievement Award*, reserved for untenured scholars.

The University has established this new faculty award program intended to recognize exceptional achievement in research and creative activity. This is an important initiative, meant to honor faculty accomplishment in those aspects of faculty performance that constitute a key measure of our stature as a research university.

**William Irwin's
edited volume on the
Simpsons has sold
more than
100,000 copies...**

See page 9 for details

Graduate Student Awards



Eric Little was awarded the *Graduate School's Excellence in Teaching Award*. He is one of seventeen who has won this year's annual award. *Hourani Fellowships* this year are awarded to **Jason Swedene** and **David Kaspar**. These fellowships are awarded to outstanding graduate students who are specializing in ethics.

CONFERENCES

Past ...

Assessing the Age of Analysis

In Fall 2001, Randall Dipert organized a conference "Assessing the Age of Analysis: 20th Century Analytical Philosophy in Retrospect". Dipert, Barry Smith, and Peter Hare presented papers, as did philosophers from Temple University, and the Universities of California at San Diego, Illinois, Toronto, and Tulsa. This conference was preceded by a one-day graduate student conference on the same topic, attracting students from universities in the U.S. and Canada.

Family/Surrogate Decision-Making for Incapacitated Patients

Also in the fall, the Department cooperated with Stephen Wear in the Medical School to sponsor a conference "Family/Surrogate Decision-Making for Incapacitated Patients: Ethical, Social and Clinical Issues". The primary energy for this conference was supplied by Wear and his Center for Clinical Ethics and Humanities in Health Care. The conference included the first *Patrick and Edna Romanell Lecture on Philosophical Issues in Medicine and Health Care*, delivered by Jonathan Moreno of the University of Virginia.

Undergraduate Conference

The Department hosted an Undergraduate Philosophy Conference in the spring, in cooperation with other area colleges. The organizing committee included faculty from UB, St. Bonaventure, Buffalo State, SUNY Brockport, SUNY Geneseo, St. John Fisher College, and Canisius.

Upcoming ... Martha Nussbaum

Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law

In September 2002, the Philosophy Department will host the third series of George Hourani Lectures in Moral Philosophy. Martha Nussbaum, of the University of Chicago, will deliver four lectures in a series entitled "Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law". The lectures will take place on **September 18, 19, 25, and 26** at the Center for Tomorrow (4 PM).

Martha Nussbaum is one of today's preeminent philosophers. She recently won the University of Louisville's \$200,000 Grawemeyer Award in Education for her 1997 book, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. In that work, Nussbaum calls for the development of a college curriculum that is based on critical reasoning and prepares American students to live in a global society. She also supports the use of Socratic critical inquiry to examine foreign cultures, and to compel students to give rational arguments for the values they take for granted.

Nussbaum received her master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard, and an undergraduate degree from New York University. She has taught at Harvard, Brown and Oxford Universities and she served as a research adviser at the World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki, part of the United Nations University.

In 1999-2000, Nussbaum was one of three presidents of the American Philosophical Association. She is the author of numerous books, including *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, *Love's Knowledge*, *The Therapy of Desire*, *Poetic Justice*, *Sex and Social Justice*, (which received a book award from the North American Society for Social Philosophy in 2000), and *Women and Human Development*.

Kwame Anthony Appiah, currently at Harvard but soon moving to Princeton, has agreed to deliver the 2004-2005 Hourani Lectures.

Recent Thoughts about the Liar

On October 19, the Department will sponsor a conference, "Recent Thoughts about the Liar", devoted to the Liar Paradox. This same topic was the theme of a conference that the Department sponsored in 1969. There have recently been signs that philosophers are "gearing up" for new approaches to the paradox, and this conference will serve to focus some of these new approaches, giving proponents of different approaches the opportunity to compare the virtues and defects of each view.

Faculty News ...

Kah Kyung Cho and **Kenneth Inada** were named as two of the most influential Asian-American scholars in the *American Philosophical Association Newsletter's* Spring 2002 Issue titled, "On the Status of Asian/Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies". It is a great source of pride to this department and the university that two of ten are associated with us. No other department in the country can boast of such an honor. The articles were written by Charles Guignon and

Nam-In Lee, and Xianglong Zhang, respectively.

John Corcoran has been awarded the *Sustained Achievement Award*, the award reserved for senior scholars. Corcoran was honored, along with other University winners, at a reception sponsored by the President's Office on May 2.



David Nyberg has been invited to give a lecture at the international conference on "Cultures of Lying: Philosophical and Linguistic Aspects" at the University of Regensburg (Germany) in September.

Visiting Faculty

Yukio Arii, Professor of Economics at Komazawa University, Tokyo, will visit the Department this coming fall. Arii will be working closely with **James Lawler** as well as the UB Department of Economics.

Also coming in the fall, **Shin-il Choi**, of Daegye National University, who will be working with **Kah Kyung Cho**.

José Sagüillo writes: I am very happy to let you know the good news that I have gotten the promotion to the "Catedrático" rank. I am the first logician at the University of Santiago de Compostela to get this honor.

My education in the Philosophy Department at UB was a fundamental part of my credentials for the promotion. Facing the five-member committee during my two presentations was difficult and challenging but I did the best job just by keeping to the demanding standards of clarity and rigour required for a presentation at the Buffalo Logic Colloquium. I especially appreciate the penetrating skepticism that I got from **Kearns, Corcoran, Smith** and others. It toughened me for this kind of "battle".

New Faculty ...

The Department appointed **David Hershenov**, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California at Santa Barbara, as an assistant professor starting in Fall 2002. Hershenov specializes in bioethics and philosophy of biology. He has an amazing record of publication in refereed journals of the first rank. His record would ordinarily be considered sufficient in a candidate for promotion to associate professor with tenure. Hershenov will fill a long-standing need of the Department for a specialist to teach large sections of the undergraduate course in bioethics while helping to equip graduate students to present courses in bioethics.

Undergraduate Awards

The recipients of this year's *Mary Whitman Fellowship* are **Thomas Betjeman** and **Scott Stambach**. Both are undergraduate students who graduated this May. The *Steinberg Prizes* were awarded at the annual Philosophy Undergraduate Graduation held May 10th. The First Place winner of the 2002 Steinberg Prize was awarded to **Michael Gallisdorfer**, a continuing major in Philosophy. **Michael** received a monetary award as well as a bound copy of his essay, "Reconciliation of the Mechanical Conception of Sense Experience with the Ordinary Conception of Sense Experience through Modification of the Ordinary Conception of Sense Experience".

The Second Place winner was **Andrea Pratt**. She received a monetary award for her essay on "Descartes". Andrea is a graduated senior who minored in Philosophy of Law and majored in English. She plans to pursue a J.D. degree at UB next semester.

Mrs. Muriel Steinberg and her daughter **Elizabeth Steinberg** were both in attendance at the graduation and awards ceremony. Mrs. Steinberg and her late husband, Charles, have graciously funded the Steinberg Prize for 28 years within the Philosophy Department.



News of Our Graduates ...

Gerald Erion, 1999, has just been appointed assistant professor at Medaille College, Buffalo.

Ranjoo Herr, 1992, is an Assistant Professor at Denison University, Ohio.

William Irwin's, 1996, edited volume on the Simpsons has sold more than 100,000 copies.

David Koepsell, 1997, is practicing law at Gettman and Biryala, Buffalo, NY and is certified as a Philosophical Practitioner/Consultant. His practice is located at the Center for Inquiry.

Teresa McGarrity, 1991, is an Attorney in Washington, D.C., having taken the LL.B from the University of Virginia.

Sriram Nambiar, 2000, is an Assistant Professor, St. Johns' College, Annapolis, Maryland.

Terence O'Connell, 1993, is now a Benefits Specialist for the Veterans Administration in San Francisco, California.

Constance Perry, 1973, is an Associate Professor of Medical Humanities at Drexel University, Philadelphia.

Eric Reitan, 1993, is an Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University.

Mike Rhodes, 1993, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, Magna Cum Laude. Besides his stellar performance in Law School, Mike found time to have two recitals in Pittsburgh, performing his self-taught Flamenco guitar skills to packed audiences. He joins a distinguished Pittsburgh law firm in September after passing the Pennsylvania Bar exam.



Philosophers and Others Get Together To Create Public Art

by Fabio Escobar

A notable aspect of the Philosophy Department is its diversity. Not only is it manifested in ethnic and intellectual realms but in the endeavors of the individuals who make up our community. We have among us philosophers who are bona-fide artists, poets, sailors, lawyers, musicians and stand-up comedians. The following is an account by graduate student Fabio Escobar of an adventure in diversity...L.K

As a philosopher, it is rare that one has a chance to interact with the public in an artistic fashion. It's no secret that philosophers are a relatively isolated lot in the United States, and while charges of ivory tower intellectualism may become unfair prejudices, there is nonetheless some truth to them: philosophy is a largely private practice wherein ideas take center stage. This can be seen if one only looks at the small degree of collaboration by philosophers with philosophers, and comparing this to other fields.

When we work with others, therefore, and especially those others outside our field, it is worth taking note of the process of that collaboration and reflecting upon it. In the present case, I would like to do this by considering the initial impulse behind what came to be called the Day's Park Commemorative Casting (colloquially known as "The Hole").

The participants (with the exception of myself and the instructor) were UB seniors in architecture who needed to complete their senior design project, a requirement of the degree. The course was titled "How to get conceptual projects built." The task was immense: design a suitable project; secure the necessary funding; gain local approvals and building permits; and construct and install the project, all in one semester. We were divided into project teams, with each team taking over responsibility for a project along the Allen St. corridor.

The instructor — Brad Wales — was a resident of Allentown and had worked as a licensed architect in the area. My partner on the project was Ramsey Daham, a senior now studying for an advanced degree in architecture at SciArc — the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

The Hole was the product of a brainstorm. We had been assigned a tentative location at the end of Allen — the aforementioned corner — and we knew some of the history behind that location. On a snowless January day the three of us did a site walk to talk about the site and throw out some ideas. We saw the park, noticed its center-framed view; saw the angles at which the two streets meet; and contemplated the Olmsted heritage of the park.

Frederick Law Olmsted — the prototype of landscape architects and in many respects the rural conscience of the nation's large cities during the turn towards the 20th century — designed Day's Park during his last visit to the area, capping off his work in the city with several small parks to go along with his overall cityscape for Buffalo, designed and completed several years earlier. For many years, the Olmsted affiliation to the park was lost: only in 2000 was it

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Paradigm

by Gerol C. Petruzella

"...for Being is not" - Avanzaro

Monday, June 5, 2006

In the first days after the anomaly, no one knew how to explain it, and almost no one knew what its effects would be, if any. With the exception of the usual apocalyptic doomsayers who proclaimed it as a sign of the gods' wrath, no one came forward with an explanation of its significance.

We didn't, although of course we could have — even, some of us argued, *should* have. Because we knew.

As an astronomical phenomenon, it was unprecedented, giving the Space Administration its long-sought justification for its share of the annual budget; the necessary committees were formed, and the astronomers were prepared to produce empirical proof of the greatness of humanity's best minds working together toward a common goal. Eighty four days now and counting; they're still holding their daily press conferences, although by now public interest has, shall we say, waned.

I don't think any of us knew all at once — no one awoke screaming in the middle of the night; it began simply as a fundamental unease that increasingly manifested itself in thought, in action, in just *being* in the world. Quite a few people started seeing their doctors, thinking it was depression; some, like myself, Noren, and some of our colleagues, recognized that this phenomenological angst was a widespread phenomenon. I posted an open call for discussion on the humanities net, and received over 100 replies within the next hour from theologians, philosophy professors, even some undergrads — all describing the same sense of dislocation.

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

How can I explain it? The limits of spoken language have been recognized for millennia, but I have never felt the lack so keenly as now. How can I say what it means to *know* that I, whatever I am, suddenly no longer fit anywhere in existence, that I somehow don't belong? Everything we can observe and sense remains the same: elements and quantum particles, laws of physics and of logic, are unchanged. Yet...there is something that has changed the value of our selves; a shift in the axioms of our relationship with reality. Perhaps I was too quick to deem logic unscathed; for it seems as though, before the anomaly, we could recognize certain things as unprovable, but *given* conditional assumptions about the world.

What can we do now that we know these things to be false — or, worse yet, irrelevant? We have had this holy grail of knowledge — absolute and unassailable — thrust upon us, and it is destroying us. The very uncertainty that drove humanity to seek knowledge has been removed in an instant. We have the absolute answer to the question of life: **no**. I fear the consequences once this realization reaches everyone. If humanity fled in terror from the unknown, embracing myths and irrational conflict to escape uncertainty, this absolute negation of moral worth might well produce the Armageddon that history's fiercest moral conflicts never brought about.

Saturday, February 9, 2013

The last skirmish of the War ended five weeks ago, with the detonation of the last several missiles in a military complex in London. Best estimates of world population are at about 30 million.

Our son just turned six. He was conceived a few weeks after the anomaly. That's probably a factor in

explaining why he seems unaffected by our conceptual disengagement from the world; he never lived under our moral parameters — the universe for him has always been as it is. It's obvious when we try to explain any of our moral concepts to him. Up to a point, his ideas and ours coincide — just enough so that the unavoidable and underlying differences are all the more disconcerting, reminding us of the futility of our attempts to perpetuate our self-contained existential bubbles, remnants of a nonexistent universe.

He, and other children of his generation, all have a remarkable self-assurance which, we surmise, results from a connection with this new world — their home, no longer ours. The very sense of the world, the certainty which has alienated us, has given the children the absolute knowledge that they belong.

Thursday, September 11, 2036

We formed the enclave by mutual consent; we could not continue living among them knowing that there was no way of establishing anything beyond the most superficial connections. The local community gave us the materials and labor to help establish our colony. It is still tempting to use familiar tags to describe their motivations, and so we like to think that they helped us out of some sort of compassion or kinship.

They have been remarkably efficient at rebuilding infrastructures out of the remains of the War. Global communication and transportation are almost up to peak pre-War levels. Many of our societies' excesses, however, remain unresurrected, moldering in the wreckage.

The initial intensity of dislocation which characterized the period immediately following the anomaly has been dulled in the mass carnage of the War. It is now a sort of constant,

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background fatalism; we are simply living on an Earth with no atmosphere, waiting for our oxygenators to run down.

Children are born, but all eventually leave us to join the new humanity, the one that belongs here.

We have rebuilt much of the city we chose for our colony, and have even begun compiling some literature — studies and analyses, mostly — about the post-anomaly world from the point of view of those who lived before. Everyone realizes that we write for future generations who will have no way of relating fundamentally to our worldview; no more of us will be born here.

Wednesday, August 16, 2062

I spoke with my son today. He could not explain the difference between us; none of them can. There are no philosophers or mystics among them, for they all know the nature of their being.

I told him that I envy him that certainty, but cannot share in it. I told him everything — my hopes for him and my despair for us, our driving need to search for truth, our fundamental uncertainty — everything I wish he could know. I told him that I love him.

He left shortly before the hospital's visiting hours ended.

The specialist — one of us, of course — thinks that enough records of the techniques of regenerative surgery have been recovered from the pre-War literature to attempt such a procedure on my heart. She wants to run some tests tomorrow. I hate to disappoint her.

My son did not tell me he loves me.



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rediscovered and the park rededicated to the memory of Olmsted and its original benefactor, Thomas Day. Day was a real estate developer who donated the land for the express purpose of building a park.

There is a visceral reason to commemorate this location: the view is something amazing. For a little urban park, it provides a powerful panorama. Standing on Allen and looking down the center of the park, one first sees the center-view framed by rows of trees, then looks past the centered fountain, and on to the other side of the park and through a pair of providently-located houses which form a slit through which the eyes can barely glimpse the western frontier. One can easily imagine Olmsted seeing that view and recognizing his own past (he had been a frontiersman himself just a few years earlier, amidst his several other careers and endeavors).

Standing in the middle of the intersection, we immediately saw its unifying force and knew we had a germ of an idea with which to work.

The spot on which we stood was ideal. From there, we could see the Day-Olmsted legacy and experience the panorama; we knew we were standing on a point of historical interest to the City of Buffalo, not just due to the Olmsted connection, but more importantly the junction of the two competing grids. We were well aware that the location hearkened back to the City's origins and reminded one of its original plan. We were also driven by wanting to be minimally invasive: we had a short timetable and didn't want to intrude too much on the existing landscape, since that was after all what we were trying to highlight. We decided to mark the

spot with a monument that would contain an eyepiece appropriate to complete the desired effect.

The "desired effect" was paramount in our considerations. We had stood on a spot that we thought to be special, a unique urban view that melded together historical, personal, and aesthetic elements. Our driving aim thus became the communication of that experience which we ourselves had undergone. We set about the job of accomplishing that task with 13 weeks left in the semester.

By the fourth week we had a preliminary design: a single stone measuring about 7 feet tall and a couple of feet wide, with an opening carved out near the top for the plaque which would itself contain the small eyepiece. We had to select materials, and here again our central aim was the dominant consideration: how would our choice of materials impact the effect we wanted to create in the viewer? After much consideration, we went with granite for the stone. Concrete was cheaper, but the enduring strength of granite won the day. After all, we figured, since we had to do the fundraising ourselves we might as well go for broke. For the plaque, we chose bronze. It's easy to shape, relatively cheap, and looks pretty good.

The design of the bronze took some time. Wanting to re-present an experience we ourselves had undergone proved to be a tremendous undertaking. There was to be text on the plaque which would explain some of the historical and geographical uniqueness of the site, but this in itself would not fulfill the task we had set ourselves. We needed a creative plaque design that would itself bring the various elements together.

We chose to focus on orientation

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That contestant was Carolyn Korsmeyer, UB professor of philosophy, who grabbed the gold ring when she beat out 520 entrants in the international category of the library's Mark Twain Writing Competition.

"I generally pursue writing on an academic level," Korsmeyer says. "Fiction writing is rather unusual and a challenge for me. I entered the competition for pure fun and then became absorbed with it."

Korsmeyer, who has focused most of her scholarly work on aesthetics and the philosophy of art, is the author of "Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy" (Cornell University Press, 1999). Her book considers the philosophical merit of the literal "taste" and investigates its objects — food and drink — and the activity of their consumption, as well as their representation in art and literature.

The library's competition challenged writers to come up with their own, original conclusions to the first two chapters of "A Murder, a Mystery and a Marriage," an unpublished short story written by Samuel Langhorne Clemens (a.k.a. Mark Twain), a story to which the library owns the rights.

The tale turns on the question of how a mysterious stranger got to the middle of a snowy field in the town of Deer Lick without making any tracks. Both Twain and Korsmeyer ended up using the same plot twist at the end — a fall from a hot air balloon. Whether or not she was channeling ol' Crusty, Korsmeyer is thrilled with the outcome.

Twain wrote the story 125 years ago when he moved his family from Buffalo, where he worked as the co-owner and editor of *The Buffalo Express*, to Hartford, Conn. He sent the story to William Dean Howells, editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, with the idea that several leading authors of the day would develop the plot described in his first two chapters into their own story, each of which would be published in

the magazine.

For unknown reasons, the plan never materialized. The library eventually acquired the rights to the story, and this year, in the spirit of Twain, asked writers to collaborate with him on the story, which remained unpublished until the submission deadline had passed.

Since then, an illustrated gift edition of "A Murder, a Mystery and a Marriage" was published by W.W. Norton and Company and is now on best seller lists. It also appeared in the July/August issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. Contest entries were received from all seven continents, 43 states and every Canadian province.

"I was intrigued when I heard about it on the radio," says Korsmeyer. "I played the story for awhile, tried various plots that didn't go anywhere, including one that turned on a point of law. In the end, I came up with something more domestic and psychological."

Korsmeyer was not the only contest winner with a UB connection. In a separate category for young writers who attend school in Erie County, Sarah Waldrop — a junior at Williamsville North High School and daughter of Deborah Waldrop, assistant professor of social work — was chosen as the first place winner.

The winners were selected by a panel of celebrity judges that included Garrison Keillor; novelist Joyce Carol Oates, a Western New York native; humorist and Twain aficionado Roy Blount, and documentary filmmaker Dayton Duncan, who wrote and co-produced "Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery." Also scholars Robert Hirst of the Mark Twain Project and honorary panelist Leslie Fiedler, SUNY Distinguished Professor and Samuel Langhorne Clemens Professor of English at UB.



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and geography. A map of the intersection was drawn on the bronze and the eyepiece cut out of the map itself. A viewer standing before The Hole would see the eyepiece and the map on the bronze at the same time. The map of the intersection blew out to a map of Allentown itself and part of the waterfront, thus leading the eyes of the viewer through the hole and "towards" the ocean and the west. This approach — when combined with the accompanying historical text on the reverse side of the plaque — would generate the orientation necessary to create the experience we sought.

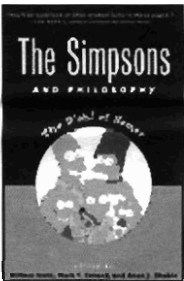
Through all of these design phases, we were concurrently seeking permits and funding. We met with the required city authorities — including the councilman for the area — and secured all the necessary approvals. We had to determine if we could dig in the spot in question and figure out whether there were any utility lines underneath the spot we had chosen (no easy feat, even with good maps). We had to secure the approval of the locals, since the last thing we wanted to do was embarrass the councilman by putting up an eyesore upon which his citizens would frown (we had to keep in mind that we were working only because a licensed architect's reputation had been "loaned" to us).

Funding came through fundraisers. Public approval came through open forums, speaking engagements, and letters and phone calls that sought to provide information and secure input at the same time. There was a stretch of a couple of months during which the project was at least as draining in time and energy as a full-time job. Everything had to be managed at once if we were going to meet our deadlines, and through most of it there were only two of us to do the work. At least 1,000 hours went into the project.

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Was it worth it? As a lesson in civic art, it was indispensable. From the future architect's perspective, the project was akin to a lawyer learning how to manage the trivial minutiae of courtroom litigation while trying his first case. For the future philosopher, the project was a lesson in translating a simple idea into a material medium, with all the nuances and vicissitudes that such a transformation requires in our modern bureaucracy. Classroom debates about idealism and materialism were never so taxing.



D'oh!

... Homer a Big Man on Campus

The Associated Press

ADRIAN, Mich. — It won't be taught by the Simpsons' evangelical neighbor, Ned Flanders, but a philosophy class being added to Siena Heights University's curriculum will be based on the popular animated TV series.

This winter, the university is offering a two-credit class on how religion and philosophy are part of popular culture, including "The Simpsons."

Readings will include "The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh! of Homer" by William Irwin, and "The Gospel According to The Simpsons: The Spiritual Life of the

Prize Named in Honor of One of Ours

The MCLA [Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, MA] Philosophy faculty wish to announce the winner of the annual Petruzella Prize for excellence in the study of philosophy. The award is named in honor of Gerol Petruzella, a 2001 graduate of MCLA currently doing graduate work in philosophy and classics at SUNY Buffalo; it annually recognizes an outstanding student of philosophy who is a graduating senior.

The award, in the amount of \$200, is funded by Dr. J. Stanley Yake, an



alumnus of the SUNY Buffalo Philosophy Department. Dr. Yake is currently an adjunct professor in the MCLA Philosophy Department, and is teaching a distance-learning course on Morals and Politics at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is involved in many community projects, including serving on the board of directors of Yaddo, an artists' community in Saratoga Springs, NY; serving as community vice president of the Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany; and serving on the board of trustees of public television station WMHT in the capital region.

Most Animated Family."

Irwin, an assistant professor of philosophy at King's College, uses the Fox prime-time cartoon to make philosophy more accessible to people who are unfamiliar with the subject.

Irwin edited the first in his series of pop-culture philosophy books — "Seinfeld and Philosophy: A Book About Everything and Nothing" — after having spirited discussions with colleagues about the show. His work also has helped him connect with his students. Five years ago, he had many of the same interests as his students, but as he grows older, he is realizing the age gap is becoming more significant.

At Siena Heights University, Animated Philosophy and Religion, taught by Kimberly Blessing and Anthony Sciglitano, is already proving popular with students.

"I think, once again, I will learn a lot and it will be very funny too," said biology major Lucy Wilmot, who took Blessing's "Practical Wisdom" class in the fall. That class also used pop culture to get students interested in philosophy.

For 12 seasons, "The Simpsons" has mined religious subjects for laughs. The staple of the Fox network has sometimes been called sacrilegious — rather than satirical — for its jabs at

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Parting Words by Peter Hare

I was touched by the generous comments made about me at the conference held in my honor and in the retirement gift book given to me on the Send Off Cruise. The pleasures of being appreciated are considerable. Let me briefly explain what UB has meant to me.

It was my good fortune to be appointed in 1962 to a philosophy department that had been established by Marvin Farber in the late 1920's. As clearly reflected in the journal he founded in the early 1940's and edited until his death in 1980, Farber was passionately committed to both pluralism and internationalism in his philosophy. Sharing that dual commitment, I am proud to have been able to help this department become what I believe to be the most pluralistic and international philosophy department in the U.S.. I have never understood pluralism to be antagonistic toward analytic philosophy. Like Farber, I have considered mathematical logic and the analysis of language to have been ingredients of the American tradition since the late nineteenth century. Moreover, I have been convinced that social philosophy, including such radical social theory as Marxism, is also an ingredient in our tradition. Speculative metaphysics, too, has always been important and remains so.

Internationalism is integral to my brand of Americanism. A major strength of American philosophy is its ability to weave immigrant ideas into the fabric of our continuously evolving thought. This ability is central to the originality of our country's intellectual style. Too often philosophers in the U.S. have felt threatened by the invasion of ideas from abroad — logical positivism, Oxford ordinary language, Husserlian phenomenology, Heideggerian metaphysics, Derrida's deconstructionism, etc. Though I am someone whose publications have been largely in the history of American thought, I hold that the only good form of Americanism is also an internationalism and a cosmopolitanism.

From my earliest work in the administration of this department in the mid-1960's, I have believed that the achievements of the faculty and students are utterly dependent on the efforts of the non-teaching staff. To my knowledge, no department at UB over the last 40 years has been blessed with a staff as talented, dedicated and imaginative as ours. Nothing in my career has given me more satisfaction than the part I played in the appointment and nurturing of the members of that staff.

I wish the Department the best of luck in the coming decades.

P.H.H.

Department News ...

In the spring semester of 2002, the UB Philosophy Department saw the formation of a new student group. The UB Society of Catholic Philosophers was created to discuss philosophy from within the context of the Roman Catholic faith. Some issues discussed in the spring semester were the link between Faith and Reason, the role of the Catholic

Philosopher, the Theory of Papal Encyclicals, the Catechism, the Code of Canon Law, and the writings of various Catholic philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Edith Stein. For more information contact **Todd Bindig** or **Amy Cedrone**.

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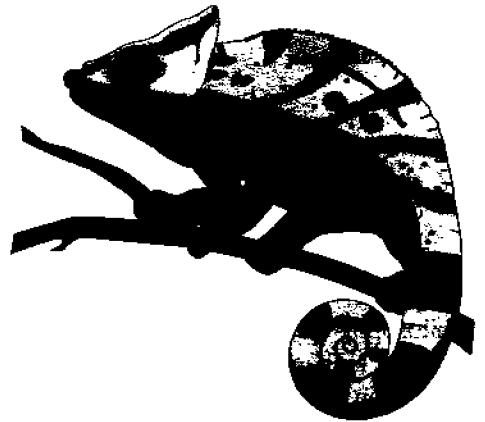
clergy and the faithful.

In "The Gospel According to The Simpsons," author Mark I. Pinsky notes that the characters regularly pray, attend worship and discuss humanity's inescapable religious questions.

For example, Homer regularly displays his religious ignorance (he calls God "omnivorous" instead of "omnipresent"), snoozes in church and prays largely in desperation. "God, if you really are God, you'll get me tickets to that game. Why do you mock me O'Lord?" he moans in one show.

Next-door neighbor Flanders has his boys play Bible Bombardment board games and vacations at "America's Most Judgmental Religious Theme Park." His piety irritates people, but he's also one of the kindest characters in the series.

"When 'The Simpsons' book came along, I thought it would offer another opportunity to draw people into philosophy," Blessing said.



Eva Koepsell, Assistant to the Chair, continues her avocation of poetry writing. She will have one of her latest poems, "Part-Time Saint", published in the *St. Anthony Messenger*.

Judy Wagner, Graduate Studies Secretary, due to exasperation of faculty and students at UB, is taking early retirement and moving to Aruba. You may write to her c/o the divi divi trees and the iguanas.....

Patrick Romanell (1912-2002)

A wonderfully versatile and cosmopolitan philosopher, Patrick Romanell published books in English, Spanish and Italian on topics ranging from the philosophies of Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce to the influence of medical training on John Locke's empiricism, naturalism, medical ethics, and Mexican culture. His profound commitment to the American naturalist tradition was enriched — to a degree rare among philosophers of his or any generation — by insights gleaned from the study of other cultures.

He held teaching posts in Panama, Ecuador and Italy as well as at several colleges and universities across the U.S. Beyond this wide-ranging scholarship and teaching of his own, in the later stages of his career Pat became a dedicated philanthropist. We know of no professional philosopher who has devoted as much effort and money as Pat did to the scholarship of others.

Born Patrick Romanelli on October 2, 1912 in Bari, Italy, he became a naturalized citizen as a teenager. He earned a B.A. degree, magna cum laude, from Brooklyn College in 1934. His M.A. and Ph.D. degrees were received from Columbia University in 1936 and 1937. He taught at Brooklyn College (1936-41), Barnard College (1941), University of Panama (1941-44), Wells College (1946-52), University of Texas, Medical Branch, Galveston (1952-62), University of Turin (1952-53), University of Ecuador (1956), University of Oklahoma, Norman (1962-65), and finally as H.Y. Benedict Professor of Philosophy, University of Texas at El Paso (1965 to retirement). His books, some co-authored, include: *The*

Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile (1938), *La Polemica entre Croce y Gentile* (1946), *Homenaje a Antonio Caso* (1947), *Can We Agree?* (1950), *Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration* (1950), *Making of the Mexican Mind* (1952), *Verso un Naturalismo Critico* (1953), *El Neo-Naturalismo Norteamericano* (1956), *Toward a Critical Naturalism* (1958), *Benedetto Croce: Guide to Aesthetics* (1965), *Para um Naturalismo Dialéctico* (1967), *Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective* (1967), *Humanistic Perspectives in Medical Ethics* (1972), *John Locke and Medicine: A New Key to Locke* (1984).

Having taken his graduate education at Columbia in the 1930's when that department was dominated by the non-reductive naturalism of Dewey, Woodbridge and others, Romanell considered *Toward a Critical Naturalism* (1958) to be his most important work and continued to refine his version of American naturalism until his death. For Pat, Columbia naturalism did not adequately capture the tragic aspects of life. In his "critical naturalism", he urged recognition that clashing good things sometimes bring unavoidable failure in their train. Despite his lifelong call for attention to tragic dilemmas, Pat encouraged also a sense of humor about the human condition. Asked in his eighties by Warren Smith whether he was still a naturalist, Pat replied, "I'm still a damn naturalist, not a damned one in Dante's Inferno!"

Romanell was also a pioneer in the field of medical ethics. In 1952 he introduced medical philosophy into the curriculum at the University of Texas at Galveston, and taught similar courses throughout his career. He authored several articles

on this theme, with titles such as "Medicine and the Precariousness of Life" (1969), "Medical Ethics in Philosophical Perspective" (1972), and "Medicine and Pragmatism in William James" (1975).

In his distinguished career as a philanthropist Pat funded the annual Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Professorship in Philosophy and the APA's annual Patrick Romanell Lecture in Philosophical Naturalism. Most recently, he endowed at the University at Buffalo a lecture series in medical ethics and a graduate scholarship in naturalism. His papers and extensive library have been gifted to the Center for Inquiry, Amherst, New York.

Pat died of cancer on February 3, 2002 in Tucson, Arizona. He is survived by his wife, née Edna Pellegrino, whom he married in 1939.

Peter H. Hare
University at Buffalo, SUNY

Poetry and Pragmatism

Do poets and philosophers think alike? This seminar will be co-taught by **Peter H. Hare** and **Susan Howe** over a four week span in October 2002. Ideas and texts that are planned include: *Poetry and Pragmatism*, by Richard Poirier, "Ifs and Cans" and "Truths", by J.L. Austin, Louis Zukofsky's *Bottom on Shakespeare*, C.S. Peirce's logical graphs, as well as some of Richard Rorty's most recent works.