

# PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO



## Number 15

October 2003

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# Noûsletter

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No. 15

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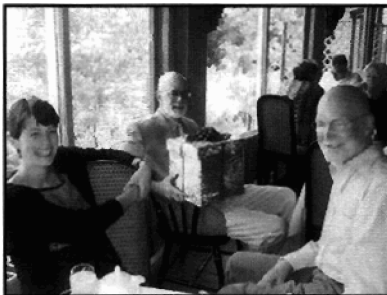
## The Changing of the Guard: Kearns Steps Down

I would like to express my appreciation for all the help and support that I have received during the nine years that I have chaired the Philosophy Department. My greatest debt is probably to the staff, to Eva, Eileen, and Judy. I have found that if I just leave them alone, only showing up occasionally to make sure they aren't playing solitaire on their computers, they will by themselves make the Department run smoothly. I owe a lot to Bill Baumer and to Ken Barber, for agreeing to look after undergraduate matters and the graduate program. Bill recruits majors and minors, and follows their progress once they are signed up. Ken oversees the graduate students from the time they write for information to the time they are defending their dissertations. He manages to keep our students on track, and sees that most of them make steady progress toward graduation.

Departmental faculty and students have also helped out to make my job easier. Faculty have (generally) shown themselves to be conscientious and responsible in their service on committees. They dedicate themselves to both teaching and research. Students have been generous in volunteering time for special events like conferences and receptions. Our students are keen on philosophy. By their interest and their energy, they have helped make this Department a lively and interesting place to work.

I have enjoyed my time as chair of the Department. The satisfaction I got from the job more than outweighs the demands that it made on my time. I am especially pleased about the many excellent students who received their PhDs while I was chair, and the success that many of them have enjoyed in finding jobs and building careers. They could have done it without me, but I am happy that I was heading the show while they passed through.

I am looking forward to Carolyn Korsmeyer's assuming the leadership of the Department, giving me time to do more logic than administration. I know that chairing the Department will be more work than she expects, but I hope that everyone will do all they can to make her job easier.



Department presents John with a captain's chair.

*John T. Kearns*  
Sincerely,  
JTK, Chair

by Jorge Gracia

When I told John Kearns that I was going to write a blurb for the *Noûsletter* about his service as Department Chair and asked him to help me recall the main accomplishments of his tenure, he answered with his characteristic parsimony, modesty, and self-deprecating wit. He preceded a very meager list of items by saying that in trying to think of what had happened while he was Chair, he could not think of anything much. I had asked for accomplishments, but he gave me a list of what he regards as events. Moreover, he ended by telling me that he had not killed anyone (or done something else that I will keep to myself for reasons that I will not reveal—that should be a good source of conjecture). If I put myself in his shoes, which I actually wore many years ago, I think the last comment was right on target both because he probably had wanted to kill every member of the Department at one time or another, and because his restraint in not doing it ranks with that which saints are supposed to have exercised.

The facts are different from what John's message conveys. In the first place, the impact of his years as Chair have been, and will continue to be for many years to come, defining for the Department. Consider that he is the third longest serving Chair the Department has had. The first is a shadowy figure from the past, Marvin Farber. He created the program and chaired for the years during which the University was a private institution. The second was Peter Hare, who chaired for one term and a half in the seventies and for three consecutive terms beginning in 1986. Peter kept the Department functioning during very difficult times, when cuts were common and

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resources were scarce. John served as Chair for three consecutive terms beginning in 1994, and during those years presided over a substantial transformation of the Department. The size of the Department from the time he came in and now has not changed drastically in spite of draconian attempts at downsizing us. So his first major accomplishment has been to keep the Department at an even level, compatible with its undergraduate and graduate missions in spite of enormous pressures to the contrary. Indeed, his second major accomplishment is that four people were hired during his tenure. The impact of these hires is going to be lasting, for all four are relatively young and will probably constitute the core of the Department for the foreseeable future. Dipert came in with the Peirce Chair, as senior appointment, but he is in the middle of middle age, so we should expect him to stick around and be an active member of the Department for many years. Yu and Hershenov are both junior appointments with not just promise, but actual substantial accomplishments. Indeed, Yu was promoted this year to Associate Professor, joining the senior faculty. They should be around long after old goats — not to say something else — will retire. And Shockley is just coming into the Department this year and we hope will also be with us for many years to come.

Hires are very important for a Department such as ours, of course, and in many ways define the course that a department will take. But promotions are just as important. Particularly tenure decisions are a key to the health and vitality of a graduate program. They recognize the work faculty do and they set the tone for the place. Now, John oversaw a very large number of promotions during his tenure, indeed larger than any other recent Department Chair: Hare was promoted to Distinguished Service Professor, Hull and Korsmeyer were promoted to full rank, and Thalos, De Greiff, and Yu were promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure. Unfortunately, Thalos and De Greiff left us shortly after they were promoted for what they considered greener pastures, but this should be taken as a vindication of the decision to promote in that the Department, under John's leadership, recognized the worth of these individuals.

Apart from hirings and promotion, there is one other accomplishment that has affected the lives of members of the Department in important ways so far and will continue to do so in the future. It was John who set up the Hourani

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Grad Student Awards & News

**Suck Choi** was awarded a Hourani Fellowship for this past year. This fellowship is granted to an outstanding graduate student who is specializing in ethics.

**James Delaney** was selected to receive a Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award. The competition for these awards is stringent, and receiving one of them is a real achievement.

**Andrea Ott** was awarded a summer 2003 internship with the National Center for Ethics in Health Care. Her 10-week, full-time paid position is with the bioethics education office of the Veterans Health Administration. She was selected for this highly competitive position from a national group of candidates.

### Thought for the Day ...

Wit is seeing similarities  
between different things,  
Wisdom is seeing differences  
between similar things.

*John Corcoran*

## Shapiro Receives OSU Distinguished Scholar Award

**Stewart D. Shapiro**, 1978, O'Donnell Professor of Philosophy at the OSU Department of Philosophy was recently acknowledged as one of the leading philosophers of mathematics in the world today. Stewart Shapiro began his Ohio State career at the Newark campus in 1978 and joined the Columbus campus Department of Philosophy faculty in 2002. He published three books and

numerous articles, which propelled him to the forefront in his field, all the while carrying a heavy teaching load and concurrently serving on both Newark and Columbus campus academic committees. In addition, he organized a departmental colloquium series in logic, philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of science that has attracted a number of eminent speakers to Ohio State. The

brilliance of his teaching and mentoring skills is reflected in his graduate students, both at Ohio State and the University of St. Andrew in Scotland where he has served as a fellow in logic and philosophy since 1996. Shapiro earned his doctorate in philosophy at the State University of New York, Buffalo.

<http://philosophy.buffalo.edu>

# CONFERENCES

## Past ...

### *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law*

In September 2002, the Philosophy Department hosted the third series of George Hourani Lectures in Moral Philosophy. Martha Nussbaum, of the University of Chicago, delivered four lectures in a series entitled "Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law".

Martha Nussbaum is one of today's preeminent philosophers. 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.

### *Recent Thoughts about the Liar*

Organized by John Kearns, this conference was devoted to the Liar Paradox and received speakers from the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Colorado, St. Andrew's University, Bard College, and the University of Leiden. Commentators came from UB, the University of Waterloo, and McMaster University.

### *Capital and Social Reality*

Barry Smith, David Mark (Geography), and Isaac Elrich brought attendees from around the world. Prominent Peruvian economist, Hernando de Soto and John Searle personally attended and delivered major presentations.

The annual Graduate Student Conference was held in conjunction with the above and students received comments from Searle and de Soto.

## Upcoming ...

### *Philosophy and the Interpretation of Popular Culture*

The Fifth Samuel P. Capen Symposium in Philosophy will be held April 2-3, 2004 at the University's Center for Tomorrow. For more information please phone 716.645.2444 ext. 132 or visit [www.philosophy.buffalo.edu/EVENTS/events.html](http://www.philosophy.buffalo.edu/EVENTS/events.html).

### *Jesus and Jefferson: Violence & Nonviolence in the Context of Religion and Politics*

Newton Garver, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor, will present eight evening lectures this spring on the topic of nonviolence. Some of the lecture titles include: "Jesus and Jefferson: Myth, Reality, and Focus," "Nonviolence in the Eyes of Tolstoy, Ghandi, and King," and "Violence in the Service of Politics and Religion."

### *Fall 2003 Colloquium Series*

Robert Talisse (Vanderbilt University): "Towards a Peircian Politics of Inquiry"

Sally Haslanger (MIT): "The Future of Gender and Race"

Adrienne McEvoy (Mansfield University of Pennsylvania): "The Problem of Pain"

Lawrence McCullough (Baylor College of Medicine): "Scientific Observation of the Normal as Normative"

Gunshi Satomi (Osaka University): "On the Japanese View of Nature"

Thomas Bittner (IFOMIS): "Granular Mereology"

John Corcoran (Buffalo): "Comparing Aristotle's Prior Analytics and Boole's Laws of Thought"

Tadashi Ogawa (Kyoto University, Japan): "Are There Ethical Universals in the East and the West? From the Viewpoint of Phenomenology"

Tadashi Ogawa (Kyoto University, Japan) & Kah Kyung Cho (Buffalo): "Method' versus 'Way' as a Philosophical Issue"

Peter van Inwagen (Notre Dame): "Properties"

Jefferson McMahan (Rutgers University): "Unjust War"

Kenneth Shockley (Buffalo): "Walking Away"

John Collins (North Carolina State): "Retroactive Semantics and the Epistemic View Of Vagueness"

Maureen Donnelly (IFOMIS): "A Layered Theory of Spatial Regions"

*Please refer to our website for dates, times, and location.*

<http://philosophy.buffalo.edu>

## Faculty News ...

**John Corcoran** has been conferred by the University of Santiago de Compostela the Honorary Degree of "Doctor Honoris Causa". This is an outstanding award in recognition of the intellectual and personal trajectory of a distinguished scholar. A former student of John's and professor currently at Santiago, José Sagüillo, writes "In this case it specially acknowledged John's contributions to the field of logic as well as his support to the development of our Department."

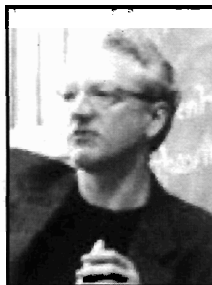


**Carolyn Korsmeyer** received a Sustained Achievement Award from UB in recognition of her many professional accomplishments and presentations, as well as work she is currently doing and its promise for the future.



**Barry Smith** received one of the

newly instituted S U N Y Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities. He was honored at the University Convocation last fall.



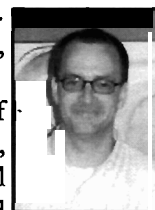
**Jiyuan Yu** has been awarded a fellowship at the National Humanities Center in the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina for the 2003 - 2004 academic year. This is a prestigious award, and is a great honor for Jiyuan, and for the Department as well.



**James Brady** retired this past year and **Charles Lambros** plans to retire after the Spring 2004 semester.

## New Faculty ...

The Department welcomes new faculty member, **Kenneth Shockley, Ph.D.** Washington University, St. Louis.



His areas of specialization are ethics, social and political philosophy and environmental philosophy.

## Visiting Faculty

The Department was pleased to welcome the following visiting scholars: **Thomas Bittner** and **Maureen Donnelly**, both from IFOMIS, Leipzig. **Rudolph Lütke** will be visiting us again this spring. Professors **Arii** (Japan) and **Shin-il Choi** (Korea) are spending a second year with us, and Professor **Ren Yuan** of China has been working with John Kearns.

## Logic in Industry

**Peter Kalshoven**, comments on how his graduate school experience at UB helped his career. He writes "I left UB [having earned] the University's Excellence in Teaching Award, and with quite a good background in Logic. This helped me land a job as the National Training Manager for Heatilator Inc., and to write what has become the industry standard Troubleshooting Manual. From there I have progressed within the Hearth Industry, always using the analysis skills that I learned in Philosophy".

## Undergraduate Awards

The *Steinberg Prizes* were awarded at the annual Philosophy Undergraduate Graduation held May 9<sup>th</sup>. The First Place winner of the 2003 Steinberg Prize was awarded to **Jordan Berry**, a continuing major in Philosophy and Political Science. Jordan received a monetary award as well as a bound copy of her essay, "A Comparative Study of Motif and Structure in Some of Heidegger's Religious and Non-Religious Works." The Second Place winner was **Michael Gallisdorfer**. He received a monetary award for his essay entitled, "Thomas Aquinas and Nishida Kitaro on Our Knowledge of God." Michael is a continuing senior majoring in Philosophy. Michael was awarded both the 2002 *Steinberg Prize* and the 2002-2003 *Mary Whitman Fellowship* last year. He is a young man of considerable philosophical talent. **Jordan Berry** was selected to receive the *Mary Whitman Fellowship* for 2003-2004. This is awarded each year to an outstanding senior Philosophy major.

*Awards of Excellence* were given to graduating seniors **Darla Martin-Gorski** and **Abdullah Sallaj** at the Undergraduate Graduation Ceremony.



## News of Our Graduates ...

**Jason Adsit**, 2002, has taken a tenure-track job as assistant professor at Baldwin-Wallace College.

**Richard Beatch**, 1993, writes that he is now at Allstate Insurance Company in Northbrook, IL working as Chief Ontologist in Enterprise Knowledge Management.

**Michael Berman**, 1997, has been appointed this fall to a full-time, tenure track position in the Philosophy Department at Brock University, in St. Catharines where he will be focusing on comparative East-West philosophy.

**Kimberly Blessing**, 1996, has accepted a position at Kings College, Wilkes Barre, Pa. After six years at Siena Heights College in Michigan.

**Lesley Friedman**, 1993, is an associate professor at Lynchburg College, and is chair of the philosophy department

**David Garren**, 2002, writes that all is well with him and his family. He teaches at the U.S. Naval Academy and has begun a philosophy club there with 90 midshipmen enrolled. He is putting together a new course on the philosophy of war. David reports that he, along with two other professors, appeared on a television show entitled "No Dogs or Philosophers Allowed." The topic of the show was violence, reason and justice.

**Michael Gorman**, 1993, writes that he is now living in his home town, which few academic people get to do. His family has grown to six children, 4 girls and two boys. Michael is currently working at The Catholic University of America.

**Ranjoo Herr**, 1992, has been appointed to a tenure track position at the University of Dayton, OH where she has been visiting assistant professor this past year.

**Shannon Kincaid**, 1999, has taken a tenure-track position at Queensborough Community College

of the City University of New York.

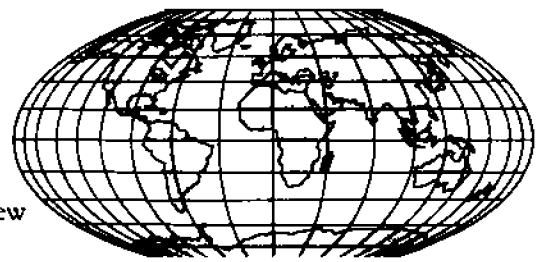
**Adrianne McEvoy**, 2002, has been offered a tenure-track position at Mansfield State University, Pa. She has taught the past two years at St. Bonaventure University.

**John Shook**, 1994, has undertaken extensive work, according to a recent brochure from Toemmes Press, that will increase access to work in pragmatism, and indeed to make more accessible facts about 20th Century

American philosophers.

**Daryl M. Tress**, 1983, of Fordham University has been awarded the Mary Ingraham Bunting Fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. Project title: "Before the Beginning. Human Origins in Ancient Greek Thought".

**Sarah Worth**, 1997, has been promoted to associate professor with tenure at Furman University.



## The Gift Card

John Kearns, the Chair

The Philosophy Department has long been aware  
the utmost importance of having a chair  
who knows all the ropes and is patient and fair  
all that and more was John Kearns, the chair

He took over the reins at the exit of Hare  
of fiscal downsizing he sure had his share  
faculty retires, new hires to snare  
all that and more well did John Kearns, the chair

And who can forget, let nobody dare,  
the perilous move to Park Hall from there  
when all seemed quite hopeless and gray with despair  
"Paint with teal and with purple!" said John Kearns, the chair

Lo and behold it turned out so fair  
those very same colors show up everywhere  
all of it owing to John Kearns, the chair

For three terms he labored, no small affair  
on departmental matters that required repair  
With Jane by his side he entertained with great flair  
in a style most befitting John Kearns, the chair

So we acknowledge, of his service aware,  
the nine years he spent as exemplary chair  
Though he thought he was leaving the job, we declare:  
"You might leave the office but you MUST take the chair"

Eva Koepsell  
2003

## A Letter from Florida

by John Corcoran.

It is boiling hot here. Delicious. Three meals and cool drinks each day outside on the lanai next to the citrus trees and the bougainvilleas. Slow walks in the shade of the palms and magnolias. People ask: Doesn't it get boring? My first inclination as a member of the William Jefferson Clinton School of Analytic Philosophy is to say that it all depends on what you mean by 'it'. But, boldly sweeping semantics to the side, I candidly answer yes. Years of attending philosophy colloquiums have prepared me to deal with boredom and actually to enjoy it.

But the really good news must be that we have finally gotten a bird to bathe in the bird-bath. For these months previously the birds would drink the water they were supposed to bathe in. I don't know how other people feel about this, but I do not like the thought of dirty birds flying around in my

neighborhood. Unfortunately, the bather was only a measly blue jay. We are hoping for an upgrade to a heron, an ibis, an egret, or even a parrot, and then more bathers.

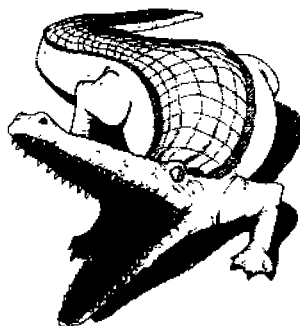
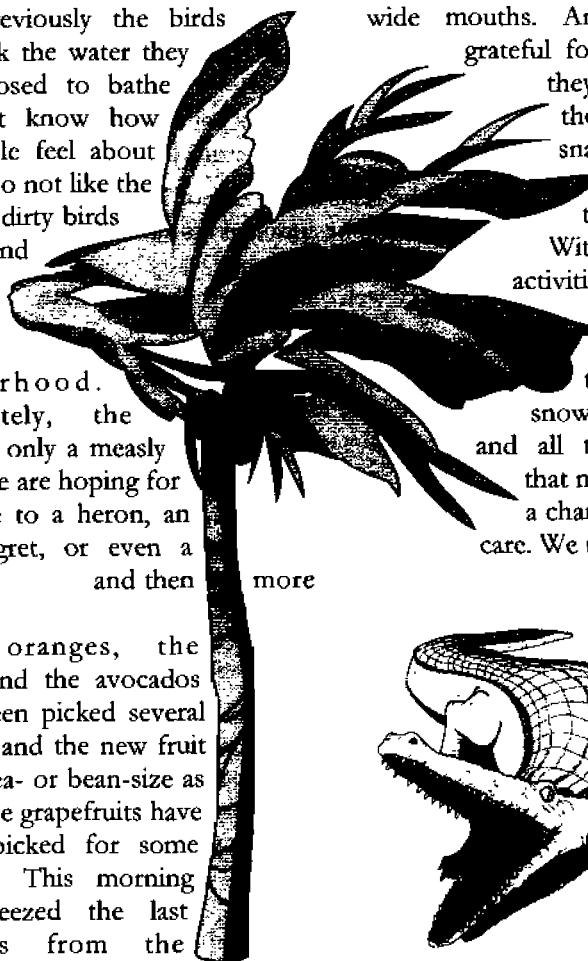
The oranges, the tangelos, and the avocados have all been picked several weeks ago and the new fruit is in the pea- or bean-size as I write. The grapefruits have all been picked for some days now. This morning Lynn squeezed the last grapefruits from the

baskets we squirreled away in various inconspicuous locations around the house. It doesn't feel so much like the produce department at Wegman's Supermarket anymore. But the fridge still has three shelves dedicated to grapefruits and the freezer has several two-liter bottles of frozen grapefruit juice. So do not start thinking about having grapefruits shipped to us.

As the days get longer and hotter, the alligators are getting more and more thirsty and they are requiring more and more Gatorade. It is lots of fun, as you can imagine, watching them try to slurp Gatorade dangling their long tongues over their teeth out of the sides of their wide mouths. And they are so grateful for the loving care they get from us that they hardly ever snap at us anymore when we ade them.

With all of our activities we hardly have time to regret missing the cold, the snow, the high winds and all the other things that make Buffalo such a charming place. Take care. We miss you.

JC



## \$1.5 Million Gift

by Mary Cochrane  
Reporter Contributor

Edna Romanell has made two gifts with a combined value of nearly \$1.5 million to UB.

With the two gifts—made through revocable trust expectancies—Mrs. Romanell has continued the legacy begun by her late husband, Patrick Romanell, a philosopher and author of several books on critical naturalism.

The first bequest of \$600,000 will provide for continuing support of the Romanell Lecture on Medical Ethics and Philosophy, a series she and her husband established in 1997 with \$50,000 in gifts.

Her second bequest of nearly \$900,000 will establish the Edna and Patrick Romanell Professorship in the Department of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences.

A former medical social worker, Mrs. Romanell says that she and her husband shared the same thoughts on giving.

"If we can afford it, let someone else benefit, too," she says. "You only live so long, and our philosophy was always to let somebody else profit, as well."

Peter Hare, SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus and former chair of the philosophy department, and Timothy Madigan, Ph.D. '99 and M.A. '98, then a philosophy graduate student, were friends of Patrick Romanell, who Madigan calls "one of the first philosophers to work in medical ethics."

At the time, Romanell was a professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, and had taught at several colleges and universities in the United States and in Italy, his birthplace. He earned master's and doctoral degrees

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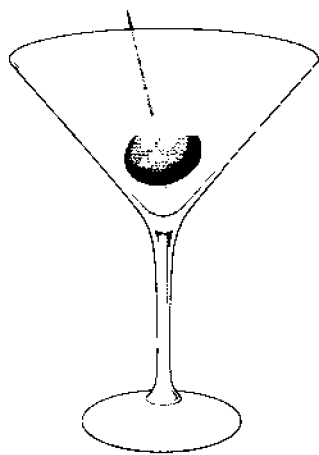
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from Columbia University.

In 1997, Hare invited Romanell to UB to give a lecture on medical ethics. Madigan, now editorial director at the University of Rochester Press, says Romanell later established a lecture series at UB because "he preferred lectureships as a way to get fresh, original ideas across."

The Romanells also gave \$20,000 to fund a graduate fellowship for UB philosophy students studying naturalism.

Patrick Romanell died of cancer in February 2002, but his generosity continues to benefit the university.

Edna Romanell's gifts are part of "The Campaign for UB: Generation to Generation," now in its final phase.



## All Shook Up

**J**ohn R. Shook, 1994, of Oklahoma State University, Philosophy Ph.D. from UB, and editor of the four-volume "The Chicago School of Pragmatism" (Thoemmes Press, 2000) has been appointed General Editor of the forthcoming three-volume *Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers* (Thoemmes Press, 2004). At UB, Shook worked with Peter Hare in American Philosophy.

Congratulations, John!

# Matters of Life and Death

by Eric Reitan

**M**y wife and I are expecting our first child in about a month. While American soldiers march through the sands of Iraq, risking death and shattered innocence far from the comforts of home, while Iraqi civilians huddle in terror as American troops rumble into their cities and rain death from the sky, the promise of liberation a pale hope in the face of the grim realities of war—as the terrible tragedy of war shatters the lives of so many, Tanya and I are nesting: putting up a "moose" border in the nursery, shopping for baby clothes, imagining what little Evan Alexander will look like.

There is a guilty strangeness to this juxtaposition. A week ago I read the troubled words of an American soldier who had learned, after participating in a battle in which hundreds of Iraqi attackers died, that many of those attackers were fighting for only one reason: troops loyal to Saddam Hussein threatened the lives of their wives and children if they refused to take up arms. And now that young soldier must live his life haunted by the image of women and children waiting hopelessly for their husbands to come home. Perhaps he is reminded of his own family waiting for his return, and feels a terrible solidarity with the men he has killed.

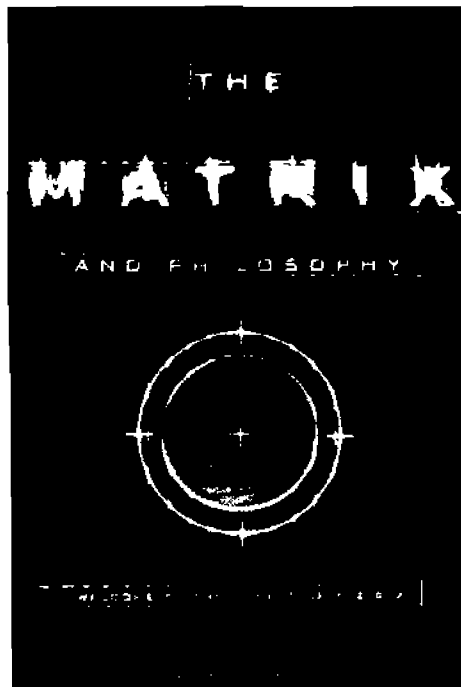
At moments I am ashamed to be happy. And then I think: No, I must be happy, now more than ever. I must let the joy descend all the way to my toes. Somehow I must find a way to be true to both realities: the terrible reality of war, and the joyous reality of new life. I must find a way to honestly express what each of these realities means for me. But such honesty is hard. For me, as a pacifist who does not believe in war, and especially not in this war, such honesty is particularly hard. It was easier before the war began. I could oppose the war in the slim hope of persuading the U.S. government not to send our soldiers into harm's way. Now, once they are there, I am torn between the conviction that we should not be there, and the realization that nothing good could come from abruptly turning on our heels, heading home, and leaving Iraq in ruins. This war violates some of my most sacred principles. It violates my understanding of what it means to be a Christian in this world. And yet I am paradoxically thinking that it would be best for all if we won quickly so that we could begin the difficult task of healing and rebuilding a shattered nation.

What should I say and do at such a time as this? My opposition to this war is not just theoretic. I live in fear of what it will mean for my son. Despite the promises of this government I can't bring myself to believe that this war will make things better for him. I have long opposed wars on principle, based on my philosophical and religious commitment to nonviolence. I have long believed that wars contribute to ongoing cycles of violence, and that the only hope of escape from the scourge of war lies in creating and nurturing effective institutions of international law. But when this country fought the first Gulf War I slept comfortably at night. Now I lie awake. Now I pace the house raging at the television, the blood pulsing in my temples. At the same moment that I am full of joy and anticipation at the prospect of being a father, I find myself full of anxiety and dread, full of fear for the future prosperity of the nation in which my

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# Pop Culture & Philosophy



In the new volume *The Matrix and Philosophy*, editor **William Irwin** collects 20 scholarly essays that examine connections between a famed sci-fi film and the body of philosophical thought. Each of the essay writers presses elements of *The Matrix* into the service of proving or illustrating points about various philosophical approaches.

Irwin describes the versatility of the subject matter in his introduction, with these words:

"*The Matrix* is a philosopher's inkblot test. Philosophers see their favorite philosophies in it: existentialism, Marxism, feminism, Buddhism, nihilism, postmodernism. Name your favoritism and you can find it in *The Matrix*."

Some of the philosophies seem to fit snugly with the film, but others don't. Irwin himself, who writes the opening essay, stretches the issues somewhat. "*The Matrix*," writes Irwin, "is a retelling of 'the greatest story never told'...the story of Socrates."

Hmm...well, whatever...

To the book's credit, it does not collect only essays that praise *The*

*Matrix*. To the contrary, the book proves itself evenhanded by including papers like feminist critic Cynthia Freeland's "Penetrating Keanu: New Holes, but the Same Old S-t".

It's also to the book's credit that it doesn't propose to offer the only possible interpretations of the film. In fact, it doesn't even claim to have the correct interpretations of the movie. And it never pretends to speak for the filmmakers, as witnessed in this passage from Irwin's introduction:

"...the film is not just some randomly generated inkblot but has a definite plan behind it and intentionally incorporates much that is philosophical. The Wachowski brothers, college dropout comic-book artists intrigued by the 'Big Questions', readily acknowledge that they have woven many philosophical themes and allusions into the fabric of the film. *The Matrix and Philosophy* does not in every instance attempt or purport to convey the intended meaning of the writers and artists responsible for *The Matrix*."

One of the best essays is **Sarah E. Worth's** "The Paradox of Real Response to Neo-fiction" which examines the conceptualization of reality in *The Matrix*.

*The Matrix and Philosophy* is clearly a spectacular concept for a book, if intended those already interested in philosophy, but it's doubtful that mainstream *Matrix* fans will have patience to trudge through the sometimes repetitious volume. Still, fans who are inclined toward asking the "Big Questions" will find their

appreciation of the film increased by the points made in the volume.

If nothing else this book proves that exciting, action-oriented entertainment doesn't have to be void of intellectual content... So someone please send a copy to Jerry Bruckheimer.

by Chris Wyatt  
Associate Editor

## Memories of ...

### "Neither Knowing Nor Not Knowing"

**Seung-Chong Lee**, 1991, recently shared with us some memories of his life at UB; one of them follows.

"I first met Dr. Newton Garver at a welcoming party for new graduate students arranged by the philosophy department at UB. When I told him that I planned to study Wittgenstein with him, he invited me to his office. There I gave a short presentation about my understanding of Wittgenstein's philosophy based on my MA thesis written in Korea. After listening to what I said, Dr. Garver kept heavy silence for a while. Then he said, "What you said about Wittgenstein is almost entirely ambiguous. I am not sure whether you even understood Wittgenstein or not." He said that one of his papers might be of some help to me. He kindly handed me the paper, which had the very specific title of, *Neither Knowing Nor Not Knowing*."

*(Continued from page 7)*

*Matters of Life and Death ...*

child will grow. My opposition to this war has become very personal; it has become almost indistinguishable from my love for the child who is kickboxing Tanya's bladder every night. The war has come to symbolize every fear I have about my son's future. As I imagine anti-American sentiment spiraling out of control in the wake of this war, as I envision an American future punctuated with terrible repeats of 9/11, I want to scream out No! No! Please don't feed that hungry spiral of violence! Please keep my baby safe!

That is part of my reality, a part that I must express if I hope to live with integrity.

A few weeks ago, when our country began its invasion of Iraq, our neighbors across the street promptly put up an American flag on their lawn. Being so new in our home, my wife and I haven't gotten to know our neighbors very well yet, but we had a nice visit a few months back with those neighbors across the street. They've called us a few times since then. I think they want to be friends. A few days after the flag appeared on their lawn, an acquaintance gave me a small poster to put in my window. The poster says, simply, "No War Against Iraq." I didn't put the poster up.

Why not? Was it because I think that now that war is underway the best thing to do is win quickly so that we can get to work cleaning up the mess? A part of me wishes I could say that. It would make the fact that the poster lies facedown in the back of my car more honest than it is.

I've tried to convince myself that there is something honest about my failure to put up the poster. I know how hard it must be to have a loved one facing injury and death in a distant place. I know it not by experience, but because I feel Evan's little hands and feet moving underneath my palm

when I lay it against my wife's abdomen, and I know how much I want to keep him safe. One day he will be eighteen, a soldier's age. I imagine what it would be like to think of him, not only in harms way, but in service to an unjust cause. To think that would make the anguish all the more unbearable. So much better to think that his sacrifice serves some grander purpose, and if he dies he will have done so defending values I hold dear.

Perhaps those neighbors across the street have a son in Iraq; perhaps they remember when their child was kicking in the womb, and now recall with poignant fondness that time when they could keep their child safe within their own flesh. What would it do to them to see that poster in our window, to know that their neighbors think their son is a pawn in an unfair and unnecessary war? Perhaps the reason I don't put up that poster is because I don't want to risk challenging what I imagine to be their comforting illusions.

But that's not it. In the long run, I think that comforting illusions can only do harm. So why don't I put up the poster?

Here in Oklahoma, support for the war is strong, and the response to opponents of the war is often hostile. When I first moved to Oklahoma a couple of years ago I felt very out of place. Among other things, I don't think that I had ever deliberately listened to a country song from beginning to end. A few months ago I finally began to feel my first glimmer of real connection to Oklahoma culture, or so I thought. I found a country music act that I really liked, that I actually looked forward to hearing on the radio: the Dixie Chicks. And then, just a few weeks ago, I witnessed footage of Oklahomans furiously crushing Dixie Chicks CD's under their heels. Whatever connection I thought I had

with Oklahoma culture cracked beneath those angry feet. Their rage was inspired by Natalie Maines, the lead singer of the group, expressing open opposition to President Bush's war policies. The feeling she expressed was a familiar one to me. "I am ashamed," she said, "that the President of the United States is from Texas." I am not from Texas, but I know the shame she was talking about. At a time when this nation is rallying behind the flag and expressing patriotism at a fever pitch, it is very alienating to feel ashamed of my country—to stand apart as the masses rally together crying "Yes! Yes!" when all I want to do is weep, cry out at what my beloved country is doing in the world. I pass a kindly older man in WalMart, and he smiles. Beneath the smile I sense an expression of solidarity: at this time of war, we must stand together as Americans. I like the man instantly, but I wonder what he would think of me if he knew my opposition to the war. I wonder if his smile would transform into an expression of dismissal and contempt. I witness the growing patriotism around me, and I look in on it from the outside—and think of Hans Christian Andersen's fable of the Little Match Girl, shivering in an alley as she magically sees into the warmth and comfort of a nearby home with its radiant Christmas tree. As long as she keeps her matchsticks burning, she is almost there, almost inside. As long as I keep silent, as long as I keep that poster facedown in my car, I can almost join in the star-spangled solidarity.

At a time when young men and women from all over this country are risking their very lives in a foreign land, I fail to honestly express my convictions because I am afraid—afraid I might alienate my neighbors; afraid that kids might see it and egg my home, or worse: leave the gleaming shards of Dixie Chicks music scattered

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### *Matters of Life and Death ...*

on my lawn; afraid of what this poster would do to the safe little nest my wife and I are creating for our child. I am in awe of the kind of courage and sacrifice our soldiers are showing in Iraq. I grieve that this sacrifice is for a cause I cannot believe in. As I live my life, anticipating with joy and hope and some fear the birth of my first child, as I put together the crib carried in by a deliveryman bubbling with enthusiasm over his own experience with new fatherhood (and showing us pictures of his baby), as I rub Tanya's pregnant abdomen and sing to Evan through her belly button—as I live my life of comfort and joy, American soldiers are far from their families, far from the comforts of climate-controlled homes and spaghetti dinners and walks at the

lake with the dog. They are off in a distant desert with sand chafing in their boots and at their necks, acting not out of their own self-interest, but because their nation has called them to serve. Some of those soldiers will not return home alive. Some will sustain physical injuries they will never fully recover from. Others will be haunted for the rest of their lives by things they have seen and done in the name of service to their nation. I can hardly imagine what that kind of sacrifice is like.

There are those who say that opponents of this war should keep quiet, out of respect for these soldiers. It would be easy for me to say that the reason I failed to put up that poster in my window is because I agree with this sentiment. But how can I honor these brave young men

and women if I remain silent when I sincerely believe that their lives are being put at risk to no good end? Worse, how could I claim to honor their courage if I refuse to show even a fraction of that courage in my own life by openly expressing my convictions?

I have a son on the way. My friends tell me I will be a good father. I hope that when the time comes for me to share with him, in love, my honest understanding of the truth, I will do so without fear, rather than hide it face down in the back seat of my car. If there is one thing that each of us can do, one thing to make this world a better place, it would be to speak the truth in love, and give others the space to do the same. Ultimately, I think that's what fatherhood is supposed to be about.

ER, 4 April 2003

## WANTED ... Alumni Information

**T**he Philosophy Department is currently updating our information regarding the whereabouts of all of our alumni. We are doing so for two reasons. First, we wish to update our Noûsletter mailing list to insure that everyone receives a copy of each issue. Second, we wish to create an online searchable database of alumni communication information. We often get inquiries in the department office about the current whereabouts of an alumnus. Maintaining an easily accessible and constantly updated online database will facilitate our response to such inquiries. Participation in the online database will be strictly voluntary.

The department has recently sent out requests for updated information via email and a direct mailing. Both mailings included an information and consent form that needs to be returned to the department in order to update the specific information for each alumnus and give us permission to include that information in the online database if you so wish.

If you are an alumnus and you have not yet returned your information and consent form, please take the time to do so soon. We are waiting to hear from you. If you misplaced the form or did not receive one, please contact the department office and we will supply you with one:

Telephone: (716) 645-2444 ext. 135  
Email: [evamk@buffalo.edu](mailto:evamk@buffalo.edu)

We appreciate everyone's cooperation in the makeover of our communication information. We hope all alumni will benefit from the effort.

## Cho's Influence

**A**s Japan's public universities are under great pressure to modernize and reform their humanities programs, Professor **Kah Kyung Cho** was invited in November 2002 to serve as outside reviewer of Osaka University's graduate and Ph.D. programs. In 1990 Cho was visiting professor in Osaka as Fellow of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science.

The German Society for Phenomenological Research invited Cho to its International Congress on "Mensch, Leben, Technik" in Wuerzburg (24-27 September 2003). The topic of Cho's concluding plenary presentation was entitled "Pflege des Lebens and Technik des Lebens."

Cho was called the "godfather" of the *Phenomenology for East Asian Circle* (PEACE) that was organized at Delray Beach, Florida in May of 2002. China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are the five core members. They are joined by associate members from Europe and the USA. The first full-scale PEACE conference will be held in Hong Kong in May 2004 under the title, "Identity and Alterity: Phenomenology and Cultural Traditions." Cho is drafting a "mission statement", and he will also deliver a keynote speech.

# INTRODUCING THE NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

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## MA Program

Matthew Calo	BA University at Buffalo (2002) INTERESTS: Ontology and Information Science, Cognitive Science, Metaphysics
Rafael Corchado	BA University at Buffalo (2003) INTEREST: Logic
Leonard Flier	BA University of Vermont (1983) INTERESTS: Aesthetics, Metaphysics
Nicholas Lane	BA SUNY at Binghamton (2003) INTERESTS: Metaphysics, Ethics, Philosophy of Law, Cognitive Science
Pamela Klecha	BA University at Buffalo (2003)
Darla Martin-Gorski	BA University at Buffalo (2003) INTERESTS: Political and Legal Philosophy, Ethics, Bioethics
Kerry McGrath	BA SUC at Fredonia (2000) INTERESTS: Social and Political Philosophy, Ethics
Stephen Stiller	BA SUNY at Geneseo (2000) INTERESTS: Metaphysics, Logic, Aesthetics

## PhD Program

Audrey Anton	BA Assumption College (2002) INTERESTS: Metaphysics, Medieval Philosophy
Christopher Barlow	BA Univ. of Wisconsin/GB (2003) INTEREST: Continental Philosophy, Formal Ontology, Metaphysics
Matthew Bartz	BA University at Buffalo (2001) INTEREST: Political Philosophy
Eric Chelstrom	BA Hamline University (2003) MA Northern Illinois (2003) INTERESTS: Aesthetics, History of Philosophy, Aesthetics, Metaphysics
Timothy Connolly	BA Xavier University (2002) INTERESTS: Nietzsche, Heidegger
Mona Doss	BS University at Buffalo (1985) MS University of Florida (1987) INTERESTS: Metaphysics, Logic, Ethics
Kristl Laux	BA Univ. of Wisconsin/GB (2002) INTERESTS: Metaphysics, Virtue Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy
Junecko Robinson	BA Dominican Univ. of CA (2001) INTERESTS: Phenomenology, Social Philosophy, Feminism, Ethics
David Rodriguez	BS Univ. of Puerto Rico (1998) MA Univ. of Puerto Rico (2003) INTERESTS: European Philosophy, Philosophy of Language
Ernesto Rosen	BA University of Illinois/Chicago (1998) MA University of Hawaii/Manoa (2000) INTERESTS: Latin American Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Analytic Philosophy, Metaphysics

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**Lecture Series.** As most of you know, Hourani was a Distinguished Professor and former Department Chair. He and his wife, Lelo generously left the Department a substantial endowment and John was responsible for the decision to use the bulk of this resource for a series of lectures in memory of George Hourani. These lecture series will provide visibility for the Department, and indeed, the speakers who have so far delivered them have been distinguished members of the profession whose work attracts considerable attention and serves as inspiration for our graduate students.

Finally, last, but not least, John oversaw the move of the Department from Baldy Hall to Park. No one likes to move, and certainly some members of the Department thought this particular move unwelcome. Thanks to John's guidance, however, the move was painless and many of us think it was a good thing. The new quarters are pleasant, and have many features that make them superior to what we had before.

Apart from these obvious accomplishments, I think we all are grateful to John for his style of management. I doubt there has ever been a more efficient Chair. He has suffered the brunt of the administrative tasks in the Department, and with the help of Eva, Judy, and Eileen, has made it look easy. One could always count on John being at his desk when one needed him. When he became Chair I said to him that the only way to keep one's sanity while chairing was to come to the Department three times a week for half a day at most. Well, John disregarded my advice, was at the office five times a week for a full day each time, and managed to keep his cool. I think he lost his

temper only once, and that was under an extraordinary provocation. I am sure all members of the Department can remember times when we taxed his endurance and tolerance, but he did not snap. Fly-off-the-handle was not something he did, which means that he was able to keep a good, working relationship with the members of the faculty in spite of all the vicissitudes connected to the job. And then there is his preaching by example. I think I speak for other philosophers in saying that we particularly dislike being preached at. John seldom did it explicitly, but he acted in ways that spoke loudly about our duties and his expectations. Just remember the attendance at the Department Colloquium. In his nine years as Chair, I do not think John



4 Chairs & a Dean ... Left to right:  
Gracia, Dean Sukhatme, Korsmeyer, Kearns, and Hare

ever missed one session that he could possibly attend, and he also attended the Logic Colloquium and the Cognitive Science Colloquium. Moreover, whenever conferences were organized by members of the Department, the organizers could count on John attending not only the sessions but also the social functions connected with it. This brings me to his efforts, with Jane's full cooperation, to bring us together socially. The list of social functions in the Department and at John's home is too long to list. Very few Department

Chairs ever attempted such an ambitious program of social activities for obvious reasons: it is just too hard and it puts a great burden on the Chair's family and personal resources. I think we are all going to miss Jane's and John's cooking, and their lovely hospitality. This record is extraordinary and speaks loudly about John's commitment to trying to develop a community life in the Department.

I believe I speak for all members of the Department when I say that John leaves a distinguished record behind him and a tough act to follow. We are going to miss him sorely, and we are grateful for his personal sacrifices on behalf of the Department, his good sense in dealing with difficult situations, and his unimpeachable fairness and upright behavior. Many of the vices that plague our profession — the arrogance, the upmanship, the tantrums, the bias, the cliquishness, the nonsense, the insecurity, and even the occasional malice — are completely foreign to his nature and modus operandi. To top it all up, John continued to write and think and to produce original philosophy and be an active member of the philosophical community. Clearly, a chapter in the history of our Department closes with John's departure.

For me personally, these nine years have been particularly pleasant largely due to John's influence. I am very sad to see him go, although I understand that nine years as Chair is more than can possibly be asked of anyone to do. I am going to miss both him and Jane. I will particularly miss his dry wit and Jane's cheerfulness. They brought to the Chair a unique and happy combination of elements.

Fortunately for us, Carolyn has agreed to take the helm. She is superbly qualified to do an outstanding job and we all look forward to her tenure.

JG