



# UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

## *Department of Philosophy Newsletter Spring 2011, No. 44*

### *Top New Stories of 2010-11*

#### **Fitzpatrick Joins Faculty, Revives Chess Program and Robust Ethical Realism**



The late 1980s and early 1990s were something of a golden age of chess at the UR. Faculty played leisurely games of chess Friday afternoons in the third floor lounge of the pre-Meliora Faculty Club. The chess set prominently displayed on Bob Holmes's desk rarely sat idle. The latest top-level games circulated among faculty and graduate students, inspiring critique and emulation.

"In that era we were able to recruit top chess talents like Predrag Cicovacki (2260; UR PhD class of 1991)," notes Prof. Randall Curren, General Manager of UR Philosophy since 2003. "Rebuilding our program is obviously a priority, for our organization and fans alike."

The recruitment of Bill Fitzpatrick as Head of Chess Operations, replacing the retired Bob Holmes, has been widely applauded. "Interest in the game has definitely grown during his first year here," says UR junior Nadia Karpov.

#### **Sixth Biennial Graduate Epistemology Conference**

Epistemology was once again the topic of the ever popular Biennial Rochester Graduate Epistemology Conference, hosted by UR philosophy graduate students October 22-23, 2010. The conference featured keynote speaker Michael Bergmann, respondent Earl Conee, and UR alumnus Andrew Cullison. The conference was delivered on time and under budget by conference chief architect, Kevin McCain.

#### **"Feldmania" Conference Honors Reagan, Claims Psychic**

In a bizarre twist, the long-time astrologer of the former First Lady has claimed that the February 18-19 conference in honor of Prof. and Dean Richard Feldman was actually devoted to the work of the late President Reagan.

"The evidence is clear. The 'Feldmania' conference at the Univ. of Texas at San Antonio was in fact devoted to Rich Feldman's work in epistemology. The title was in no way intended to refer to the Fall of Man, End Times eschatology, Supply Side Economics, or anything else associated with the nation's 40th president," says Curren. "The press has reported this as if there were room for reasonable disagreement. There isn't."

#### **Brett Sherman Visits, Leaves**

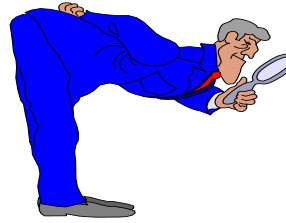
The Department was delighted to have Visiting Assistant Prof. Brett Sherman with us this year. He'll soon be on his way to a job at Brandeis, and will be greatly missed.

#### **Holmes Honored**

Rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, Emeritus Prof. Bob Holmes who was honored at an April 8-9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 conference, "War, Morality, Non-Violence: A Conference of Robert L. Holmes," hosted by the College of the Holy Cross.

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

**2012 Colin and Ailsa Turbayne International Berkeley Essay Competition**

The late Professor and Mrs. Colin Turbayne established an International Berkeley Essay Prize competition in conjunction with the Philosophy Department at the University of Rochester.

The next deadline for submitting papers is November 1, 2012. The winner will be announced March 1, 2013 and will receive a prize of \$2,000. Copies of the winning essays will be sent to the George Berkeley Library Study Center located in Berkeley's home in Whitehall, Newport, RI. Submissions should be sent to: Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Rochester, PO Box 270078, Lattimore Hall 532, Rochester, NY 14627-0078 or [phladmin@philosophy.rochester.edu](mailto:phladmin@philosophy.rochester.edu). Please see our website for details regarding essay specifications.

**COLLUQUIA 2010-2011**  
**Guest Speakers**

Mohan Matthen  
(University of Toronto)

Michael Bergmann  
(Purdue University)

Fred Feldman  
(Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst)

Andrew Chignall  
(Cornell University)

Alan Code  
(Rutgers University)

Brie Gertler  
(University of Virginia)

Selim Berker  
(Harvard University)

Randall Curren  
(University of Rochester)

Karen Bennett  
(Cornell University)

**FACULTY NEWS**

**Earl Conee**

My academic activities during the year included the usual mix of teaching, research, and service, culminating in the writing of this newsletter entry. (Any readers who have seen my previous quite similar newsletter entries and yet have read this one this far deserve some reward for their perseverance. I hope that the novelty of the noting of this desert is at least some relief from reiteration.)

**Randall Curren**

I'm tempted to say it has been a quiet year. The truth is that after three consecutive years of frequent academic travel I have been trying to devote more of my time to long-term projects.

Highlights of the year: I gave twelve hours of lectures on my work-in-progress in Oslo. I signed a contract with the University of Chicago Press to co-edit a book series.

### **Richard Dees**

I continue working on several projects in medical ethics: a paper on the ethical question involved in withdrawal of therapy decisions in very premature infants, another about the ethical puzzles raised by the vast number of new screening tests for newborns, and the development of an innovative interdisciplinary curriculum for a new course on the science and ethics of stem cells which will be taught for the first time next fall. I continue work with the ethics committee and the ethics consult service at Strong Memorial Hospital, and I now consult regularly for both the kidney and the liver transplant teams. And I continue to serve on the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee for the State of Connecticut as well as on its Grant Modification and Law and Ethics Subcommittees.

The new bioethics major continues to gain a few new majors every year, and we should have our first set of graduates next year.

### **William FitzPatrick**

William J. FitzPatrick joined the University of Rochester faculty as an associate professor of philosophy this past fall after eleven years at Virginia Tech (preceded by three years as a lecturer at Yale), where he was associate professor and director of graduate studies. His research addresses a variety of topics in moral philosophy. At the more abstract end of the spectrum are questions about the foundations of ethics: Can moral judgments be literally true, and if so, what grounds such truths? How might moral properties and facts fit into a scientific understanding of the world? What kind of rational authority do moral requirements have? He also takes up questions at the intersection of ethical theory and the sciences, and has spoken on this over the past year at conferences and colloquia at Harvard Law School, Amherst College, Syracuse University and SUNY

Geneseo. Some questions in this area: how do explanations of ethical behavior offered by evolutionary biologists, cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists relate to philosophical inquiry into ethics? Do they cast doubt on the rationality or objectivity of ethics? This is the topic of a special symposium session he will do with Sharon Street (NYU) at the 2011 Eastern APA meetings. In normative ethical theory, he presented a defense of the doctrine of double effect (against attacks from Thomson and Scanlon) at the 2011 *Arizona Workshop on Normative Ethics*. Finally, at a more applied level he explores such issues as the nature of our obligation to future generations in connection with climate change, and the moral status of embryos and the ethics of stem cell research and cloning, about which he recently gave lectures to student groups at Syracuse University and UR on the ethics of stem cell research.

### **Edward Wierenga**

In the fall I gave talks on Molinism and Miracles (separate papers) at the University of Arkansas. Then in January I presented my first epistemology paper (“Plantinga’s ‘Defeat’”) at the Baylor Workshop in Philosophy of Religion. The high point of the year was presenting a paper and being entertained at the International Conference of Religious Doctrines and the Mind-Body Problem at the Academy of Islamic Sciences and Culture in Qom, Iran. While there I discovered that I had a publication of which I was previously unaware, in Farsi, a language I do not know.

## **GRADUATE NEWS**

### **Brandon Carey**

Professionally, this was my most eventful year to date. Two of my papers appeared in print (“Overdetermination and the Exclusion Problem” in the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* and “Social Trinitarianism and Polytheism” in *Religious Studies*) and a third was accepted for publication (“Possible Disagreements and Defeat” in *Philosophical*

*Studies*). As a result, I noticed a serious lack of imagination in my paper titles. I also gave comments at a few conferences, taught several courses, and wrote less of my dissertation than I would have liked.

### **Matthew Frise**

This year I presented at a philosophy conference for the first time (the Canadian Society for Epistemology at Carleton University). I now have more evidence suggesting it's not worth getting nervous about conference presentations. Also this year I was excited to earn a nice-sized book credit by refereeing for Oxford University Press. In the Spring, through the scholar exchange program I studied the epistemology of perception at Cornell. Every course I took this year was fantastic.

### **Placement 2010-11**

Joshua Spencer (Ph.D. 2009) is concluding his Post-Doc at Syracuse in December so that he can begin in January a tenure-track assistant professor position at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee.

### **Ph.D. Graduate Admissions Fall 2011**

Dustin Olson  
(McMaster University)  
Robinson Phillips  
(Metropolitan State College of Denver)

### **M.A.'s Awarded 2010-11**

Andrew Diehl  
Timothy Matthew Facemyer  
Brian Barnett

### **Ph.D.'s Awarded 2010-11**

Tae Ryang Kim

“In Defense of A Posteriori Minimal Physicalism”

(Professor David Braun, University of Buffalo and former UR faculty member and Professor Alyssa Ney, Co-Advisors)

Hannah Hyejeong Shoemaker

“Truth In and Of Fiction”

(Professor David Braun, University of Buffalo and former UR faculty member)



### **UNDERGRADUATE ALUMNI & FORMER FACULTY NEWS**

### **Bernard Freydborg (B.A. 1969)**

This past academic year involved my happy appointment as Scholar in Residence at Duquesne University, for which I have writing responsibilities. I miss teaching, colleagues, and students a great deal. I do not miss meetings and I do not miss dealing with administrators. My heart goes out to the brilliant young people who have the courage to enter our field and are now experiencing even greater difficulty finding good employment than we did; I hope very much (pray?) that the current shameful regard for the humanities somehow changes drastically for the better.

I have two books, both from a Continental point of view, awaiting final approval at their respective publishers, one on Hume and one on John Sallis; also several papers. In May of 2011 I will present two of them at Istanbul University. I presented another, on foundations of mathematics at a conference at Cork, Ireland this past March, and one on Aristophanes at a recent Classics conference at the University of South Carolina.

## GRADUATE ALUMNI NEWS

### **Andrei Buckareff (Ph.D. 2005)**

In the past year I managed to remain pretty active. I gave a paper at a conference on philosophy of action at Peking University in Beijing, China. I also gave a paper on mental causation in a colloquium at the Central APA and at the Eastern Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers. Finally, I gave a paper on divine action in a symposium at the Pacific APA.

I was involved in planning and organizing the first Annual Mid-Hudson Philosophy Conference sponsored by Marist College. I was impressed by the talent exhibited by many undergraduate philosophy majors (including the majors at Marist). I hope this event will continue to be a success and that those of you with talented undergraduate majors will encourage your students to submit papers to this conference in the future.

### **Charles E. Cardwell (Ph.D. 1972)**

I continue to serve as Philosophy Program Coordinator at Pellissippi State and Secretary of the Tennessee Philosophical Association. I read a paper, Justice v. Fairness, at the annual TPA meeting in November.

Our Pellissippi State philosophy program has grown enough that we have been granted a new entry level position for fall 2011. (That will bring us to three full-time and fourteen adjunct faculty.) We had ninety applicants for the new position, about 75 of whom were qualified. At least 60 were very well qualified. I would be quite happy to have any of them as a colleague. Applicants came from three continents. Two tenured associate professors applied; they were concerned about the financial future of their respective schools.

BLS has an inflation calculator online. On a whim, I plugged in the beginning salary for my first teaching job. Apparently I would now need \$10,000 a year more than I am in fact paid in

order to have the same purchasing power that I had back then. The pay for our new person will be nominally triple what I first earned, but will have only about 55% of the purchasing power.

### **Gegory Goode (Ph.D. 1987)**

This is my first posting since receiving the Ph.D. in 1987!

Since leaving the UR, I've been working at a large Manhattan law firm in the IT department.

Even though I haven't been working in the field of philosophy, I never lost my love of it. In fact, because of working outside the field, I've been able to pursue topics outside of the normal academic areas of specialization. I became interested in the meeting points between philosophy and spirituality. This led me to study Western topics such as Pyrrhonism and Skepticism, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, esoteric and mystical Christianity, and Eastern topics such as Advaita-Vedanta, Madhyamika, Pure Land and Zen Buddhism. I learned that while being at such a strong analytic school as Rochester, I was uninformed about much of the recent Continental tradition. So I acquainted myself with Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Lyotard, Adorno, Horkheimer, Derrida, Foucault, Gadamer, Ranciere, and many others.

I've written one popular, non-academic book on nondual philosophy called Standing as Awareness, published by *Nonduality Press*. I'm in the midst of a follow up book called A User Guide to Direct Self-Inquiry by the same publisher. A book on the soteriological teaching of emptiness a la Madhyamika, is in the planning stages. I've published many articles in online journals or websites, including "Nondual Emptiness Teachings," "Free Will and Freedom," "Is Spiritual Practice Necessary?," and "Nondualism, Yogas and Personality Characteristics." I helped launch the scholarly journal, *Philosophical Practice: Journal of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association*, and am now its technical consultant.

For the last 15 years, I've been hosting a periodic dinner in Manhattan (sometimes weekly, sometimes monthly) where the topic is nondual philosophy. The format is along the lines of a Socrates Cafe, but much more unstructured.

I've been teaching privately, through small classes at Yoga and Buddhist centers, as well as through the medium of the Internet. My website is [www.HeartofNow.com](http://www.HeartofNow.com).

### **Loretta M. Kopelman (Ph.D. 1966)**

I still enjoy teaching at Georgetown University School of Medicine, being a faculty affiliate with its Kennedy Institute of Ethics, and being Emeritus Professor at Brody School of Medicine. I have been invited to join a Pediatric Ethics Subcommittee of the Food and Drug Administration which reviews some controversial research proposals involving children. I have also joined the Joint Colloquium held by NIH, the philosophy Department of George Washington and the Kennedy Center and Philosophy Department at Georgetown. I gave a paper at Georgetown University's, "Works in Progress" Series entitled, "Make her a Virgin again: Exploring the Limits of the Best Interests Standard." I still serve on many editorial boards and on the Ethics Committee of Inova Fairfax Hospital. Arthur and I are well and enjoying family, friends, travel and the DC area.

### **James Leshner (Ph.D. 1967)**

Jim Leshner reports from North Carolina that the UNC Philosophy Department experienced only minor disruptions due to the loss of the ACC title to Duke.

He recently presented papers to the International Society for Presocratic Studies at the University of Edinburgh and at a Conference on Artistic Representations of Antiquity at the University of Bristol. He is scheduled to present a paper on March 26th at a UNC conference on 'Aristotle's Method(s) of Inquiry' and to participate in an author-meets-critics panel at the December Eastern Division APA Meetings (commenting on John Palmer's *Parmenides and Presocratic*

*Philosophy*). He is currently writing a book on Heraclitean themes in modern British and American poetry.

### **Raymond Martin (Ph.D. 1968)**

Now officially retired, I am spending my winters in Bradenton, Florida, and my summers in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where I read more, write less, and occasionally venture forth to speak. This Spring I will be an interviewed panelist during one part of the New York Academy of Sciences' six part series, Perspectives on the Self. Eventually, they say, there will be a book based on the series as a whole. This Spring I will also be giving a talk, "The Future of the Self," at Union College. Other than that, I am golfing more, fishing more, and sleeping later.

### **Gary Merrill (Ph.D. 1974)**

My retirement from GSK in early 2010 went well for about five months. It was a calm and happy time. Then in July my paper "Ontological Realism: Methodology or misdirection?" was published in the journal Applied Ontology. It and a subsequent discussion in an Open Biomedical Ontologies online forum, surrounding the issues raised in the paper, generated something of a furor in the biomedical informatics community. The editors of Applied Ontology asked for a response to a reply to that paper and this was my "Realism and Reference Ontologies: Considerations, reflections, and problems" that appeared in the next issue. The title of that paper was taken in part from an old paper of Henry Kyburg's on subjective probability. As in Henry's case, the editors (for the sake of some sort of decorum) decided not to use the desired running head for that title.

In the fall semester I taught my course in Practical Ontology at NC State (with graduate and post-doc distance students drawn from far-away places such as Stanford, Oregon, Ohio State, etc.). The course went reasonably well, but I would do it differently if I do it again. I also continued a casual flirtation (with some presentations) with the hymenoptera people at NC State and their colleagues at such places as the Encyclopedia of Life. They are doing very

interesting stuff in the development of anatomy and phenotype ontologies and are fun people to work with.

Finally, after being repeatedly (and in some cases with quite ludicrous referee reports) rejected by some otherwise fine philosophy journals, my paper "Ontology, Ontologies, and Science" was accepted by Topoi and appears in the current issue. It is, I concede, something of an odd paper; but I hope that philosophers will read it and perhaps even think about it -- though perhaps that is naive.

I find it a bit odd that in the past few years I have, in terms of volume, published more than I did in a decade of academic philosophy. Perhaps that is what happens when one gets old. Aside from one lengthier project, I think I may be done with that. I am trying once again to be retired.

#### **Mark Sagoff (Ph.D. 1970)**

"After 31 years at the University of Maryland, I have moved to George Mason University, where I am a professor of philosophy and director of the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at GMU in Fairfax, Virginia. My new e-mail address is: [msagoff@gmu.edu](mailto:msagoff@gmu.edu). For more information, please see <http://news.gmu.edu/articles/4866> and <http://philosophy.gmu.edu/IPPP>."

#### **Mark Stone (Ph.D.1987)**

I have a new role at Microsoft, on their cloud computing team. Working on the very cutting edge of technology is a thrill. And yes, I can explain what "cloud computing" is: <http://plink.net/index.php?id=10>. The pull of doing another start-up is strong, though, and there are several possibilities I'm considering. On the personal side, my oldest is now attending City College of San Francisco with aspirations to aerospace engineering; my youngest starts kindergarten in the fall. Last summer our family did a wonderful cruise up Alaska's Inside Passage; seeing Glacier Bay was awe-inspiring. My old boss is pushing me to write a successor volume to "Open Sources" and "Open Sources

2.0", and while I haven't committed to anything yet, the wheels are turning.

#### **James Van Cleve (Ph.D. 1974)**

"I have been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Humanities Center to spend next year completing a book to be entitled Problems from Reid—a sequel of sorts to my Problems from Kant."

#### **Gregory Wheeler (Ph.D. 2002)**

I spent the first part of 2011 in Berlin visiting Gerd Gigerenzer's Adaptive Behavior and Cognition (ABC) Group at The Max Planck Institute for Human Development, followed by a trip through the west coast of the US, which included colloquia at the Universities of Arizona and Nevada at Las Vegas, and an APA Formal Epistemology Symposium (joint with Richard Scheines) focusing on our recent work spelling out how probabilistic measures of association ("coherence," in BonJour's sense) do track confirmation after all. Recent work in this area includes a paper with Max Schlosshauer, forthcoming in *Philosophy of Science*. Other highlights: Our long-awaited monograph, *Probabilistic Logics and Probabilistic Networks*, was also published in January, and also in January I became the Editor-in-Chief of *Minds and Machines*. Finally, Pedro Barahona and I upped the ante in a recent thread creating (and solving) ever harder versions of Boolos' Hardest Logic Puzzle Ever. This paper will come out in the *Journal of Philosophical Logic*.



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