

PHILOSOPHY

Newsletter The University of Alabama

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Volume I

The Old Folks Back Home

By Prof. Norvin Richards

When my friend Max Hocutt retired, my mind was filled with memories, with regrets that we were losing him, and with an eerie sense of how *odd* it was going to be not having Max around. A bit later, I had a thought of another kind: Max's retirement meant that the oldest guy in the Department was now... *me*? How did this happen? Has that much time really passed since Janet and I arrived in Tuscaloosa, ready to see whether I could make it as an assistant professor of philosophy? When we got here, we thought some of the faculty we found on the scene were pretty ancient. Are we really the old folks, now?

Well, yes. We are. We came in 1970, and that was a very long time ago. A lot has happened since then, and I find that many of my warmest thoughts about it concern the students I have had. I remember doing philosophy with them, I remember kidding around with them, and I remember them. Professors aren't paid very much, but what we are paid to do can be very sweet: we get to think about questions of interest to us, then talk about what we've come up with to people who are at least supposed to be listening. How sweet that is depends enormously on who the listeners are, and what they can do with what you tell them or ask them. I've been lucky in that, and I continue to be. The downside is that you "kids" are only here

for a while. You leave us for the real world--sometimes eagerly, sometimes not.

Other students come along behind you, and we enjoy them too while they are here, but we also remember you. We tell the new faculty stories about you,

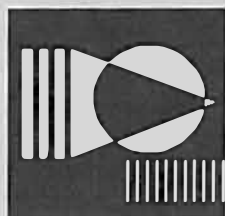


and about the good old days. We tell each other those stories too, but we don't get the same patient listening that we seem to get from the untenured faculty, for some reason... Anyway, thinking about you naturally leads to wondering about how things have gone since you left Tuscaloosa, about where you are now, and about what's new.

My guess is that you have your own set of stories about those days and those people, and that you too sometimes wonder whatever happened to so-and-so. Not so much what happened to your old professors, who I imagine you would picture as frozen in time, doing exactly

what we've always done--which isn't entirely wrong, but never mind. The people I'd bet you sometimes wonder about are your friends from your days here, and the various colorful characters who might not have been friends, exactly, but certainly caught your attention. What have their lives been like? Where are they now? Would it be fun to be back in touch?

I want this newsletter to be a place to find out. It will carry information about your professors and about events in the life of the Department. It will also carry what you tell us about yourself. I think that will be the most interesting material in the newsletter, and I am eager to hear it myself. This first issue has what we happen to know about former students, or think we know. This includes some material we have on display in our glass case in the lobby of ten Hoor, meant to answer a question you might recall being asked a time or two: "But what can you do with a philosophy degree?" We think that's best answered by showing the great things some of you have gone on to do. Please tell us about yourself--mostly because we'd love to know and so would your fellow old grads, but partly so there can be next issues of the newsletter and so that the material in the glass case can change from time to time.



NEWS OF THE DEPARTMENT

By our most recent count, there are now **forty-nine** students majoring in philosophy. Some of you will remember when there would have been **four**, and some of you will remember when there would have been **nine**, but **forty-nine**? We feel the same way. Having 49 majors puts us in a very comfortable position where the dreaded ACHE Viability Criterion is concerned. ("ACHE" is the acronym for "Alabama Commission on Higher Education," a creation of the state legislature.) ACHE's criterion for undergraduate programs requires that an average of 7.5 students per year take their degree in the subject. We will easily surpass that, in the current monitoring period. This means that ACHE will not judge us to be a waste of the taxpayer's money and decree that we can no longer offer our degree, which has been the threat.

There is a lot wrong with ACHE's criterion for deserving to exist, but since it is a fact of life we are greatly relieved to have met it. Auburn's department did not, despite having more than twice our number of faculty and despite a university requirement that all undergraduates at Auburn take either Ethics or Logic. South Alabama didn't meet the criterion either. Both of those schools have now combined their philosophy departments with departments of religious studies, but this is thought only to be a temporary fix, where ACHE is concerned. If so, a time will come when students at Auburn and South Alabama cannot major in philosophy, but only in some combination of philosophy and religious studies. For UAH the jury is still out, because its department is relatively new. Only UAB and Alabama are home free.



This was hard to do, but we have done it without watering down what we offer. In particular, what my colleagues are able to cover in their seminars would serve perfectly well for a first year course in a good graduate program, and we think the package of courses we now offer to students intending to go to law school is also exceptional. We are intensely proud of the quality of our program. It attracts very able students, though certainly not because a great many smart people now want to grow up to be philosophers. Most of our majors are still double majors--one is a triple major (something accomplished only by our own Michael Casiday and by Mallory Hayes, as far as I know.) My own current class in Philosophical Issues in Constitutional Law includes two of the University's five students who were named this year to the *USA Today* Academic All-Americans, plus the head of the undergraduate Pre-Law Society, plus five or six others who also do better with my questions than I have any right to expect.

In short, things are going very well for your old department, where attracting good students is concerned.

Whatever Happened To...

Previous Philosophy Students

Houston Howard (1975) is senior partner in Howard, Dunn, Howard and Howard, a firm of attorneys in Wetumpka. Some years back, his reply to a letter we had misaddressed included this: "When my wife noticed that the letter was addressed to George Houston Howard III (it should be George Houston Howard II) she said it was a sign from heaven that we should have a child. I assured her that heaven would not speak through the Philosophy Department at the University of Alabama..." He knows us all too well, alas.

Jeff Tilden (1977) took his J.D. from the University of Virginia. Jeff is a member of Gordon Murray Tilden in Seattle. He conducts a broad trial practice with emphasis on personal injury, product liability matters, real estate-commercial disputes, and insurance coverage litigation. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, and is a past President of the Washington Defense Trial Lawyers.

Candy Marquis Crawford (1978) is Coordinator of Imaging Services at the Faculty Resource Center here at the University. She and Richard have a son, Hayden, who starts his last year of high school this fall.

William Harper (1978) earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at Miami and taught here in the Department in 1992-93 and from 1995 until 2001. Current information about him is listed under "Past Faculty."

Nita De Boer Hestevold (1981) is currently pursuing an M.S. in Human Development here at Alabama. She and Scott have two children. Erik will start high school this fall at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. Kara is 9, with interests including dance and riding horses.

Harry Renfroe (1982) took a law degree at Alabama, and is an attorney in private practice here in Tuscaloosa.

Nick Sella (1985) is a Systems Analyst for Hunt Refining Company in Tuscaloosa. He and Mary have two children, Nicholas (9) and Anna (5). Nick has been a competitive runner for the past 12 years, the last five of them in

"Ultrarunning": events longer than a marathon. He has run several races of 50 kilometers and some of 50 miles, has also competed in the Cheaha Challenge 100 mile cycling race, and is currently preparing for a swimming competition.

Carl Burkhalter (1987) took his J.D. from the University of Chicago. A shareholder in the Birmingham office of Maynard, Cooper & Gale, P.C., he has a general litigation practice that includes securities, antitrust, intellectual property, and appellate work.

Russell Daw (1987) earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at Virginia, and was our colleague here in the Department from 1995 to 1999. Current information about him is listed below under "Past Faculty."

Henry Cribbs (1990) has a Masters in philosophy and a graduate certificate in Artificial Intelligence and Neural Networks from Washington University, where he is ABD. He is entering his fifth year as Visiting Instructor in Philosophy at South Carolina, where he will also start work this fall toward an M.F.A. in Fiction Writing. This December, in India, he will present "Virtual Community Boundaries: Censorship and the World-Wide Web" to a symposium of the Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development. He and Julie have a daughter Charlotte, who is 6, and a son Cole, who is 2.

Steve Lake (1990) is now managing the family publishing business in Puka, Tenn. Max Hockett reports that Steve married a lovely young woman in Savannah last year; at the ceremony Max was honorary officiant.

Marc Warner (1992) took his M.D. degree from UAB, interned in Houston, and is now a surgeon in Richmond, Virginia. On March 10, 2003, Heather gave birth to Zella Jordan Shutt Warner, now playing the role of outstanding sister to her brother Jacob.

Jim Abernathy (1993) took a law degree at Alabama and is now a partner in Ford, Martin and Abernathy here in Tuscaloosa. He and Shelley have two children, Austin (8) and Alexandra (4).

Whatever happened to...

Amy McManus (1993) took her law degree at Harvard, and worked for a firm in New York City while her husband, Andy Odewahn, completed his M.B.A. at NYU. They are spending a year traveling: last week a postcard arrived from New Zealand, where they had hiked the territory filmed in the *Lord of the Rings* movies. In August they will move to Portland, Maine, where Amy will take up a clerkship to a Federal Appellate Court Judge.

Clay Splawn (1994) took his M.A. in philosophy at Texas A & M, and is ABD at UMass-Amherst. He teaches philosophy and coaches softball at Berkshire School, a prep school in the gorgeous Berkshire Hills of Massachusetts.

Allison Boylan Belan (1995) took an M.A. in English at Chapel Hill in 1997, then went into publishing. She and Scott Belan were married in 2000 and live in Durham, N.C., where Allison is an Account Manager for Cygil, a custom software consultancy.

Brian Carver (1996) is ABD in philosophy from UC Irvine, and has been teaching philosophy at Long Beach City College, and Riverside Community College the last few years. This fall he will begin work toward a J.D. at Boalt Hall, the law school at Berkeley. He is interested particularly in intellectual property law and cyberlaw, and hopes to intern this summer with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit organization advocating the public's interest in technology law issues. Brian and Jacqueline Asher were married this past summer. She has now finished her own exams and is also ABD.

Chase Wrenn (1996) took an M.A., and a Ph.D. degree in philosophy from Washington University in St. Louis. He returned to Alabama in 2001 as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy. More about him is on the "Present Faculty" page.

Michael Casiday (1997) took an M.A. in Classics at Washington University in St. Louis, and a Ph.D. in Theology at the University of Durham, (England), with the help of an Overseas Research Council studentship. Currently he is Research Associate for the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic at The University of Cambridge, and bibliographer for the Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature. He and Rachel are living in Cambridge with their two children:

Helen, who is 3 1/2, and Bea, who is 1 but also a third of the way toward 2.

Mike LeMaster (1998) is a grad student in English at the University of Virginia, writing a dissertation on the novels of Cormac McCarthy, and hopes to complete his Ph.D. by May of 2004. He is also coaching track part-time at UVA, and running 90 miles a week himself. He hopes to land a job as both an English professor and a track coach at a small liberal arts institution.

Tom Barrow (1998) is a Captain in the U.S. Army. He is headed for law school, all the expenses of which will be paid by the Army, including his full-time pay during this period. Tom is one of only fifteen Soldiers per year for whom the Army does this. In return, he will serve in the J.A.G. corps for six years, which he regards as "some of the best experience anyone can get. I'll be trying cases within three years or so, which is something you never see in the civilian world (unless you are a DA or a public defender.)"

Joseph Gassen (1998) took his M.D. degree at UAB, and is now completing the first of three years as a pediatric resident at Doernbecher Children's Hospital, part of the Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon.

Amy Henry (1998) was co-owner & operator of Let's Dance (Northport, Alabama) from 1998-2001. She took an M.B.A. from Alabama in 2001, with a concentration in strategy. She is now Associate Manager of the Consumer & Market Knowledge Department for Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Travis Vaughn (1998) worked for Jim Myers' Drugs for several years, and has now returned to the University to pursue a Masters in History.

Lee Goswick (2001) has completed a Masters in mathematics at UAB, and is now in their Ph.D. program.

Robbie Newman (2001) worked as an actor with Hampstead Players after graduation, then with a touring troupe in the Midwest and Southwest. Hampstead Players performed in schools in New England, about which he writes: "Performing for children can be a lot of fun. They suspend their disbelief to a much greater degree than adults." As for touring, "Touring can take its toll of your mind and body

Whatever happened to...

In Memoriam

(that may sound redundant if you're a materialist.) There are a lot of long, long drives. And everyday you're trying to find a place you've never been before, using directions that may or may not be accurate." Not a bad metaphor for some courses you took with us? Robbie will have his revenge, some day: this fall he begins work toward a Masters in Philosophy at Texas Tech.

Monica Free (2002) is in Osnabruck, Germany, where she is flourishing. "I did get the teaching job at the music school in Hagen, a nearby village. At first I was totally nervous to teach in German, since my level is pretty basic, but the job's going great. I still get nervous when I have to talk to parents, but thankfully that's not too often... I have 11 students, ages 10-18, and I make about 335 Euro per month (even in the vacations!!!) which is enough to pay all my monthly expenses (excluding things like travel, of course). I love the job. There is a lot of pantomime and drawing pictures involved in my teaching, but the kids don't seem to mind too much... I am doing 7 auditions in Germany and two in the United States next fall. I hope to stay in Germany, but I will just have to wait and see what the best available situation turns out to be."

Jason Gray (2002) first took a B.A. in history with a near double-major in philosophy, then returned to take a second B.A. in philosophy in 2002. He has just finished his first year in a Masters program at Georgia State. Next year he will teach three 2-hour sections of critical thinking for them, and write a thesis currently planned to expose certain shortcomings in soft determinism.

Cole Mitchell (2002) spent the past year teaching English in the Czech Republic. This fall he will begin studies toward a Ph.D. at the world-class philosophy department at Arizona, with the support of a teaching assistantship.

Ernie Chapman, died of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma about six years ago. His widow, Beth Neilsen Chapman, is still in Nashville and enjoying a very successful life as a singer and songwriter. She and Ernie had one son, who has just graduated from a music college.

Brendan Jones, passed away February 27, 2003. Brendan had double-majored in philosophy and German until very near the end of his studies, finishing his degree in German after a year abroad in Germany. To his professors, he was a quiet, thoughtful student with good ideas. His early death is a great loss.

Lawson Jenkins, widow of our former Chair Iredell Jenkins and long-time friend of the Department, passed away on April 2, 2002, at the age of 89. For a half-dozen years, Lawson liked to have us choose several good students, preferably ones who had both merit and financial need, to whom she would give a very nice cash award. Often this would give us a chance to gather for lunch or dinner. Most of the students got only that brief glimpse of what a great lady she was, and what wonderful stories she had to tell. Prof. Richards reports "My personal favorite was set in her years as a schoolgirl in Switzerland, when she and her friends were told they could not attend a dance down in the village, and that the vehicle that would have transported them to it had been locked away. Lawson and her friends then put on their ball gowns and *skied* down to the dance. Not the most aerodynamic of ski suits, and I'm not sure how you ski *back* when the dancing's done..." As her son Dobie said at her memorial service, "If you were with mom, you were going to have fun." She was a pleasure to know, and we miss her.



PAST FACULTY

Jim Clark retired in 1987, and still lives in the family home in Tuscaloosa. His principle hobbies are international travel and collecting light classical CDs.

Russell Daw was with the Department from 1995 to 1999. He is now in a Ph.D. program in Applied Statistics at UC Santa Barbara. He continues to teach in the summers at the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, though he now teaches mathematics there rather than logic.

William Harper was with the Department in 1992-93 and then from 1995-2001. He is now with Security Benefit, a company selling securities to school teachers. He and Norma have two daughters, Grace and Anna Sophia.

Max Hocutt retired in 2001. Max published *Grounded Ethics* just before retiring, and has since published pieces in the *Independent Review* and in *Metapsychology Online*. He is also managing his sailing club and doing maintenance on his house and boats.

J.B. McMinn was with the Department from 1960 until 1987, when he retired and moved to Rusk, TX. Jim Clark reports that Billy has published his reflections on religion under the title "Mythtaken: the Key to the Puzzle."

Ralph Perhac was with the Department from 1989-1992. Ralph and Diane live in Murfreesboro, TN, where Ralph works for the TVA. They have three children: Angela, Alex, and Matthew.

Mark Rowlands was with the Department from 1988 to 1994, then joined the philosophy department at University College, Cork, where he published four books and has one forthcoming. Mark has now left Cork for the University of Exeter.

Crispin Sartwell was with the Department from 1993 to 1995. He now teaches at Maryland Institute College of Art. He continues to write prolifically, not only in standard philosophical locales but also op-ed pieces for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Washington Post*, and has a monthly column on country music in the *NY Press*. Crispin has remarried, and lives in rural Pennsylvania with his wife and their five children.

Casey Swank was with the Department from 1987 to 1989. He is now an Associate Professor of Philosophy at St. Cloud State University, in Minnesota.

Kathleen Wu was with the Department from 1975 until 1997. Now retired, she and H. K. reside in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL.

PRESENT FACULTY



Torin Alter (Ph.D., UCLA) joined the Department in 1995, and is a tenured Associate Professor. Torin specializes in philosophy of mind and philosophy of language. He is currently writing a manuscript provisionally entitled *Consciousness, Materialism, and Intentionality*, for which he was awarded a 2002-03 Sabbatical Fellowship from the American Philosophical Society. He is co-editing (with Sven Walter) a collection of new essays entitled *Phenomenal Concepts and Phenomenal Knowledge: New Essays on Consciousness and Physicalism*, forthcoming on Oxford University Press. His recent papers include "Jackson's Retraction" (forthcoming in the *Phenomenal Concepts* collection) and "Epistemicism and the Combined Spectrum" (co-written with Stuart Rachels, forthcoming in *Ratio*).

Scott Hestevold (Ph.D., Brown) joined the Department in 1979, and is a tenured Professor. Scott specializes in metaphysics, focusing on the nature of time and identity. He continues to work as well on problems involving moral psychology. His most recent work includes "Pity," forthcoming in the *Journal of Philosophical Research*, and "Presentism, Endurance, and Change," co-authored with W. R. Carter, to appear in the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*.

James Otteson (Ph.D., Chicago) joined the Department in 1997, and is a tenured Associate Professor. Jim specializes in political philosophy and in the history of philosophy. He is the author of the highly regarded *Adam Smith's Marketplace of Life* (Cambridge, 2002) and editor of *British Classical Liberalism 1600-1900*, a sixteen-book series which is being published by Thoemmes Press. Jim will spend next year on sabbatical in Scotland, supported by fellowships from the University of Edinburgh and the University of Aberdeen, and promises to send dispatches of the Otteson family adventures for future issues of the newsletter.

Stuart Rachels (Ph.D., Syracuse) joined the Department in 1999, and is an Assistant Professor who will seek early tenure and promotion this coming year. Stu specializes in ethics. His most recent work includes "A Defense of Two Optimistic Claims in Ethical Theory" (forthcoming, *Philosophical Studies*), and "Nagelian Arguments Against Egoism," (*Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 2002.)

Norvin Richards (Ph.D., Virginia) joined the Department in 1970, is a tenured Professor, and has been Chairperson of the Department since Spring of 1992. Norv specializes in moral philosophy and in philosophy of law, and now teaches a four-course sequence for us on philosophical issues in the law. His most recent article is "Forgiveness as Therapy," which appeared in *Before Forgiving*, edited by Sharon Lamb and Jeffrie Murphy (Oxford, 2002).

Richard Richards (Ph.D., Johns Hopkins) joined the Department in 2000, and is an Assistant Professor on tenure track. Richard has a past life: he was a professional ballet dancer for some sixteen years, then a professional painter of landscapes, and somewhere along the line reinvented himself as a philosopher. His specialties are in aesthetics and philosophy of science, both of which he teaches for us at the 200 and the 400 level. Richard's most recent work includes "Character Individuation in Phylogenetic Inference," (*Philosophy of Science*, 2003) and "Aesthetic Fitness," forthcoming in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.

Chase Wrenn (Ph.D., Washington University in St. Louis) joined the Department in 2001, and is an Assistant Professor on tenure track. His specialties are epistemology and philosophy of mind. Chase has developed our new computer-aided version of Logic, which he will offer for the first time this fall, and he is in the process of developing a cross-disciplinary minor in Cognitive Science.

Mark Scala (ABD, Syracuse) joined the Department as a temporary instructor in fall of 2002, and will be with us next year in that same capacity. Like Scott Hestevold, Mark is particularly interested in the nature of time and persistence through time.



Class of 2003



This Year's Graduates

Nathan Bruner will begin law school this fall at Regent University in Virginia Beach.

Bonnie Coffey will be married this summer, and this fall will begin studies for a Master's in Secondary Mathematics Education at Boston College.

Lennis Clark will do mission work for a year in Zaire, before heading on to law school.

Jessica Kesler is returning to New Orleans, where she will work for a year before going to law school.

Robin Preussel will begin law school this fall at Yale.

Katie Terry will begin law school this fall at the University of Virginia.

J.C. Zannis will be married in June, and this fall will begin pursuing a Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Florida.

This Year's Prize Winners

Iredell Jenkins Endowed Memorial Scholarship:

J.C. Zannis

Honorable Mention:

Nathan Bruner
&
Robin Preussel

TenHoor Prize for Excellence in Philosophy:

Joshua Bell



Can I Help?

You bet. You can bring us great pleasure by sending us news of you. We'd love to know what you are doing and how things are going. We will brag shamelessly about you to the Dean, and we will pretend your successes are all our doing when we talk to him and to prospective majors. With your permission, we will also put your story in our glass display case to show where a major in philosophy can lead, and we will pass your news on to others via this newsletter.

You could also send us money. We would use it in any way you like. If you'd rather we choose how it is spent, here is what we might do:

- ♦ **Increase The ten Hoor Award** (A hundred dollar prize isn't what it use to be!)
- ♦ **Help Fund Outside Speakers**
- ♦ **Support A Worthy Undergraduate**

The e-mail address is **nrichard@tenhoor.as.ua.edu**, or write to
Prof. Norvin Richards, Dept. of Philosophy, The University of Alabama
Box 870218, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0218

Donations for any of these purposes would be very welcome, as would unrestricted gifts. Really big ones would make it the (Your name here) Lecture, Fellowship, or Lecture Series. Don't allow modesty to get in your way; please fill-in and return the card below.

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