



Fall 2008 – Remembering Our Alumni – Issue 23

# Philosophy Alumni

## Newsletter

### Phi Sigma Tau

Our aims are expressed in the Greek motto, *Philóúnton Sophían Timé*, which means “the honor of those who love wisdom.” This expresses well the character of *Phi Sigma Tau*. It honors academic excellence and philosophical concern. It reminds us that the quest for truth is not the province of a single culture or time or person, but that there is a unity among all those who seek knowledge.

The Key of *Phi Sigma Tau* (above) represents this by a pentagon, each of the five angles containing a symbol which represents one of the five great streams of world thought: Chinese, Indian, Islamic, Hebrew, and Greek.

### Upcoming Events

#### Induction Ceremony

Fri, Oct 17, 2008, 6:30p.m.

The *Phi Sigma Tau* induction

ceremony will be taking place on at the Cool Mint Café.

Reservation/Payment Deadline: Fri, Oct 10, 2008 by 5:00 pm

(see back page)

#### Ethics Bowl

Sat, Nov 15, 2008  
St. Mary's University (San Antonio, Texas)

Annual Ethics Debate competition begins soon. Contact Dr. Carson for more information on participating: [JC28@txstate.edu](mailto:JC28@txstate.edu)

#### Dialogue Series

A unique exchange between Philosophy, students, and the community that happens all semester.

For a list of speakers, times, topics, and dates, please visit: [www.txstate.edu/philosophy/dialogue.htm](http://www.txstate.edu/philosophy/dialogue.htm)

#### Movie Nights

Every other Thurs at 6:00p.m. in the Dialogue Room.

Next Movie:

Oct 9 - The Quarrel – an argument between two friends “about themselves, their actions, their lives, their religion, their old quarrel, and their friendship” (IMDB)

(see back page)

#### Get Well Soon

*Phi Sigma Tau* would like to extend our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Professor Lynne Fulmer.



Editors: Luke McBride and Beverly Pairett  
Art: Luke McBride

This bulletin is published by the Philosophy Department at Texas State University -- San Marcos

# Alumni News

## [Jay Arnold]

I graduated with a Masters of Divinity in May 2008. My wife Joanna is an associate teacher at the Foote School in New Haven.

(The Yale Spring Philosophy Colloquium of 2008 was based on his paper "The New Knight of Faith: Pacifying Religious Violence in Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling".)

## [Jonathan W. Atkins - SGT, USA]

Just thought I'd share a little philosophy from here in Afghanistan...

When deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq, you tend to live a fairly Spartan lifestyle. If you accept that you can not enjoy the creature comforts of home, then upon return to home everything is a culture shock. If you do not accept the Spartan lifestyle, then you can never learn to accomplish your tasks while here and any time outside of your room is a culture shock. The question becomes do you then adapt to your surroundings or just bide your time?

## [Justin Bell]

I'm working toward a Ph.D. at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. My dissertation investigates the role of creativity and imagination for ethical thought in the American pragmatist tradition. This year, I've been named the Editor-in-Chief of Kinesis, a journal that publicizes the work of graduate students in philosophy.

## [Stephen Bres]

I will be headed to St. Mary's University Law School in the fall. I was awarded the Dean's Scholarship which puts a serious dent in the amount I will have to borrow, which is great!

I have been touring with a band "Honeybrowne" since I left school and have recorded the drums for their new record.... although I will be leaving the music business yet again to go

back to school only months after the record release date: June 17th.

My wife Claire and I are having a blast being parents, and could not have genetically engineered a better behaved and long-sleeping progeny (named Lennon).

## [Charles M Davis]



I graduated from law school this past weekend, and now I'm getting ready for the bar exam. It finally set in this past week that I'm actually finished. I think I was still shell-shocked from my final exams. We started our first bar review course this past week, and everyone was quickly reminded as to how much they forgot from their first year of law school. Lots of work to do until the exam at the end of July.

During my time here, I made Law Review and was also on the Board of Barristers. My Law Review article that won "Best Student Article" was also published this year.

This past January, we also won the National Arbitration competition in Tampa Florida. Our team took down the defending champs at Stetson School of Law. The competition is more like a bench trial versus a jury trial.

## [Booker T. Franklin]

Finished a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Legal Theory at the European Academy of Legal Theory in Brussels, and will continue to march hoping to obtain a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory within the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

It would not have been possible at all without the many giants I've had a chance to share conversations with. Surely there are too many to name and too many stories to recount. I must say that without the guidance and great push from so many there, I would not know this feeling right now. I can't pass up the opportunity to drop just a few names though... Professors and Distinguished Persons them all: Vince Luizzi, Gil and Christine Fulmer, Peter (Dr. Evil) Hutcheson, Jimmy McWilliams, Lydia Garner, Robert Gorman and Al Sullivan for sure! (And Kane and Darcy for showing me that it's not serious all the time!)

Feelin' dumber every day because I am constantly reminded about what I don't know....

## [Scott Harris]

Had Dr. Hutchison for Philosophy. Have run a Philosophy club for 12 years at two different San Antonio high schools, taught a International Baccalaureate's "Theory of Knowledge" for two years.

Spoke at Texas State in the Philosophy dialogue series about five years ago. Will be teaching Philosophy as an official course next year at Ronald Reagan H.S. -- the only such course in San Antonio high schools.

## [Alicia Koestens]

I live in Conroe (it's by Houston) and I live on a farm. We have 10 cows, 1 horse, and of course our dog Cash. I started an alternative teaching program. I am getting certified to teach EC-4. Josh and I set our wedding date for June 27, 09!

# Alumni News

(continued)

## [Michael Andrew Munoz - Attorney At Law]

The practical application of all my years of study was law school was a culmination of all the knowledge that I absorbed. I took the LSAT, applied to some schools and graduated without knowing what lay in store. I then sought to get a job and found something interesting at Ameritrade as a stockbroker trainee.

## [Deacon Newhouse]

Deacon got in his car and drove to Buffalo, NY with the idea of earning a Ph.D. in philosophy. He spends his days reading and chasing fleeting moments of clarity. He would rather sit down and wait for clarity to come visit him, but he suspects that his professors

would not be too fond of this method. Clarity is not punctual. He wishes he were at the banquet drinking wine with his friends.

## [Richard Simões]

I'm working as a programmer while waiting to start on a math MS at University of Houston in the Spring.

## [Jen Rowland]

I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Philosophy at UNT in Denton, where I'm a Toulouse Graduate Scholar. My interests are in science and technology studies and policy governing emerging technologies (nano/bio/info technologies). I'm heading to Chile for a few weeks in December to work and study at the UNESCO Cape Horn research station. I was engaged this week and will be married next summer!

## [Jackson Schwartz]

I'm living in Athens, GA now. I just started my first semester working on my Ph.D. I really enjoy UGA and Athens is a good town. In a lot of ways it reminds me of San Marcos. Before this I was living in New Braunfels and teaching Intro to Philosophy and Intro to Ethics with the Alamo Community College District in San Antonio.

## [Peter Andrew Sutton]

Things are going well on my end. I got my Ph.D. from Cornell in January. I cut my postdoc short to move to Richmond, VA to be with my wife, who teaches philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth. I have been offered, accepted and begun a tenure-track philosophy position at Virginia Union University. So my wife and I have solved the two-body problem!

## In Memoriam

Allen Bates (1957-2008)



Philosophy alumnus Allen Bates passed away February 26, 2008.

Allen graduated from Texas State in 1993 with a BA in Philosophy and a minor in

business. As Allen pursued his degree, he and his wife Harriett started and operated Southwest Plumbing. He spoke frequently with Texas State students about the relevance of philosophy for business, and was a favorite speaker of Texas State's Entrepreneurial Club.

Allen had a strong sense of giving back to Texas State which took the form of assisting current philosophy students and promoting philosophy in the community. With generous donations from Allen, Harriett, and Southwest Plumbing, the Philosophy Department has been able to employ students as development liaisons for fundraising, host community reading and discussion groups, and initiate the funding for a Philosophy Faculty-Alumni Scholarship for an undergraduate philosophy major.

- Professor Luizzi

## **Alumni Banquet** (Annual)

Friday, October 17, 2008 6:30pm

Cool Mint Café-Mint Rose and Yellow rooms  
415 Burleson  
San Marcos, Texas 78666  
(512) 396-2665, [www.CoolMintCafe.com](http://www.CoolMintCafe.com)

Faculty Price-\$35.00  
Student Price-\$25.00

Please visit the Philosophy Dept. for a menu and registration form or contact (512) 245-2285 or BP06@txstate.edu for more information.

**Reservation and payment deadline:**  
Fri, Oct. 10, 2008 by 5:00 p.m.

## **Scholarship Program**

Our Philosophy Faculty Alumni Scholarship Fund makes it possible for Philosophy students to following in your path. Its is also a high priority to develop another scholarship for more students.

Please consider contributing. Contact Prof. Luizzi at VL01@txstate.edu for more information.

## **Movie Night**

(continued from front page)

*Phi Sigma Tau* and The Freethought Society will jointly sponsor Film, Food, and Discussion.

- Oct 9 - The Quarrel
- Oct 23 - Dogville
- Nov 6 - Leaving Las Vegas
- Nov 20 - The Four Horseman: Dennett, Dawkins, Harris, Hitchens
- Dec 4 - Memento

This is a "potluck" style event so bring food and drink if possible.

(Every other Thurs at 6:00p.m. in the Dialogue Room.)

# Poem

Composed by philosophy Student Kandace Lytle for Dr.  
Carson's Dialogue class during the "Democracy, Patriotism,  
and the Constitution" week.

America...you have changed.  
How can one become a true patriot during a  
time of such confusion?  
No longer do we see the leaves of grass  
Whitman so eloquently described  
Thoreau's Walden ---erased  
Frost's path along the yellow wood, no longer  
taken  
There is no path  
There is no wood  
There is no patriot  
Hughes embraced his race and screamed of an  
equality that remains undiscovered  
Stevens, showed me the thirteen ways of look-  
ing at a blackbird who sings no longer  
Ginsberg spoke of madness within the streets;  
our minds are still starving, hysterical, naked  
Each expresses sidewalk sorrow  
Unlike any human before  
I want to hear America singing like Whitman  
once did  
I want to hear men and women and children  
and animals rejoicing  
I want to understand the beauty that once  
was  
Instead I must settle into sadness  
Where there is merely a cry of confusion  
This country no longer knows itself  
Since the towers fell---What has become of our  
patriot?  
An American flag lapel pin?  
Bumper stickers, t-shirts, bandanas, doggie  
designer wear,  
Plastered with red white and blue  
Capitalist memorabilia infiltrates the streets  
of Austin, Houston, San Francisco, New York,  
Denver, DC, Dallas, Memphis, Brooklyn  
Block by block we've become advertisements  
For this country we so "love"  
Yet, what does our patriot love?  
What has our patriot known in America he  
can know nowhere else?

Starbucks, McDonalds, Chevrolet, Disney  
World, Barnes and Noble, Mall of America.....  
Is this what our patriot values?  
Patriots? Who are you?  
Are you the men who enlist in the army be-  
cause the education system has beaten you  
down with standardized tests? Taxes? Poor  
teachers? And textbooks?  
Are you the men who knew no other future?  
Your ancestry dates back to men who fought  
along Washington? DO you feel an obligation?  
Are you the women who seek something  
unique from the patriarchal walls restricting  
you at home?  
Are you the minorities who feel you should  
fight for something because you're still suffer-  
ing from racism?  
Are you the child who loves America because a  
golden arch has replaced star-spangled?  
Child---what do you know of America?  
Child, are you learning of Lincoln?  
Of suffrage and slavery?  
Do we expose our youth to the despicable past  
this country crossed?  
Are their minds clouded by the television? The  
internet? Video games?  
Do they understand that the forefathers of this  
country valued the beauty of OUR rockies, our  
shoreline, our forests, our creatures, our hills,  
our trees, our flowers, our skyline, OUR grass,  
our green...green...green...  
And knew not of a colored screen?  
Oh, Patriot...sing for our youth!  
Sing for Our forefathers, Sing for Our nation,  
Sing for Our Spirit, Sing for Our Pride, Our  
Women,  
Our Men, Our children, ,Our landscape, Our  
truth, Our Past....  
Sing! Dear Patriot  
Of our future...

# Essay

## Why I'm glad I got a degree in Philosophy

by Luke McBride

Majors in Philosophy always gets *the look* anytime they tell someone their major. The implied statement behind this look is "why didn't you choose something useful?" Worse, I regularly find myself in the position of apologizing to people who are required to take Philosophy as part of their major or for their intro course. I try to be an advocate on behalf of Philosophy and the good that it does, but rarely do I have the opportunity to espouse the enormous benefits.

- In leadership, skills of writing and argument are foundational -- you cannot look competent without them. Philosophy gave me a very strong grounding in both.
- There are debate teams and English programs here on campus that can do what I just described, but Philosophy gave me a much stronger desire to focus on the structure of what I was trying to do. I try to demand clear and honest responses from people and myself, even when that answer is "I don't know."
- It was refreshing to be around teachers who actively encouraged disagreement and discussion. This was very humbling because now I realize that I'm doing the same thing and I'm much more willing to admit when I am wholly wrong. Leaders must have this capability as well.
- I am able to have conversations with people with whom I have vast ideological differences. From attending classes where everything is frequently stood on its head, I now understand that I am often hopelessly lost and I'm forced to always wonder if the other side might be closer to the truth.
- I now have a better conception of responsibility, brought on by a better understanding of what constitutes human freedom. Nobody told me what my responsibilities were, I decided them. There's something much more honest about doing that.
- Philosophy helps connect the dots between dramatically different disciplines. I've always been bad at math but taking a logic course led into learning a language led me right back to math again. I was astounded at just how similar these disciplines are and the parallels continue.
- I can speak with far more clarity and succinctness and stay on task much better. Taking classes with students and professors who were so clear-headed about issues of the utmost gravity and difficulty has made me focus on a genuine direction. I now find it easier to stay on track in any conversation.
- I now take on difficult problems and situations with genuine pleasure. Before I was always frustrated that I was not smart enough to handle puzzles or problems that exceeded my scope, but having seen so many that seem insurmountable, I now find enjoyment in making the attempt.
- I genuinely feel more self-aware than just a few years ago. I don't know if this is maturity or a result of Philosophy but I'm very glad to have it.

There are other, finer details that would take more room than I have in this note, but there is no distant, occasional benefit to what I have learned. There is a direct, daily application that has improved my life and prepared me for the unknown. I graduated with something very useful.