

The Dialectic

Classics & Philosophy Newsletter
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Gentle Philosophers and Classicists,

I invite you to peruse this issue of *The Dialectic* with care and heartfelt interest. At the very least, read it before you chuck it into the recycle bin! It promises to be worth the time and effort, guaranteed only mildly to disappoint but only mildly to amuse.

I wish also to extend a warm welcome to the new faces and a querying look to the old. Congratulations to everyone who has stuck with it so far, particularly to those who recently graduated and to those who will do so in May.

Best of luck to all of us and thanks for your time and patience!

Ravenna Romack
President
Philosophy Club at UT Arlington

p.s. Special thanks, again, to Jason Peeler for his contributions to this issue of the newsletter.

Pizza Packs Piquant Punch!

Pizza, pizza! The third annual fall *Pizza Lunch Extravaganza* drew an interesting mix of students and faculty. A little before lunchtime on September 13, 2006, the then Philosophy Club President Thomas O'Mara made the final arrangements for twenty of those tasty Mr. Jim's pizza pies to arrive in time to feed the many hungry young philosophers and classicists. Administrative Assistant Celia Stigall provided an environment that could foster academic and social discourse—no small feat for those in the academic world of philosophy and classics—while students and faculty took the opportunity to connect, as they strolled in and out grabbing slices. The Extravaganza provided the chance for new students and old students to become acquainted (in the Russellian sense?) with each other.

Philosophy Club faculty advisor Denny Bradshaw engaged in captivating discussion about the philosophy of mind with eager students. Then Philosophy Club Vice President Ravenna Romack was on hand to participate and to photograph the huge success. Club Treasurer Justin Adkins was attracted to the free food like a fly to honey. Phi Sigma Tau President Jason Peeler was doubly pleased as he not only

got to eat for free, but his new book for Philosophy Reading Group arrived at the same time! Fellow Reading Group participant Grant Smith also joined in the festivities, engaging in lively philosophical conversation.



**Jason Peeler, David Hoot, and Carl Hooey
enjoy their pizza repast**

The venerable Mr. David Hoot stopped in, brightening the conversation after he released his Intensive Latin students. A few of those students even managed to drag themselves to the festivities after being overwhelmed by intensive declensions and conjugations. Sum, es, est, sumus, estis, sunt? It can't *be!*

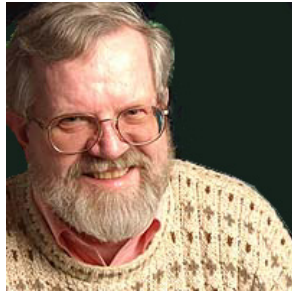
The scrumptious pizza opened the jaws of all and the conversation flowed, indicating the fascinating discussions to be considered in the future. Once again, the Extravaganza proved to be a bonding experience for all.

UNT's Hargrove Speaks at UT Arlington

Professor Eugene C. Hargrove provided an engaging and illuminating lecture on "Alternatives to Rights in Environmental Ethics," as the featured speaker at the Fall, 2006, *Phi Sigma Tau* Faculty Colloquium, generously co-sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts' *Festival of Ideas*. Dr. Hargrove is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies at the University of North Texas.

This was the first semester that the Philosophy Department at UT Arlington was able to showcase a faculty member from her sister

department and the institutional partner involved in their Cooperative Philosophy Ph.D. Program. As with many of the UNT philosophy faculty, Professor Hargrove's main interest lies in the area of environmental ethics. He is the founding editor of the journal

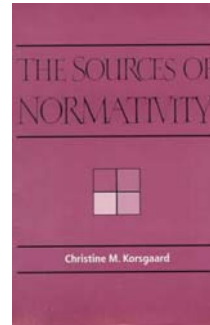


Environmental Ethics and is the author of the book *Foundations for Environmental Ethics*. Along with editing three books, he has contributed many articles and chapters to various journals and books.

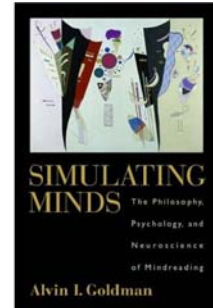
Professor Hargrove argued that talk of rights is conceptually confused and concluded his lecture by considering alternative ways of thinking about environmental "rights." Perhaps an example will help to illuminate: In what way does it make sense to say that a tree has rights like a human does? Professor Hargrove's answer...it doesn't!

Participating faculty now include Professor Jeremy Byrd from Tarrant County College. He has proved to be a lively addition, with his philosophical perspective stirring the proverbial pot. The answer is, "Yes," for those of you who noticed the sameness in last name (a token instantiation of the type 'Byrd'). Professor Jeremy Byrd is the husband of our relatively new addition, Professor Miriam Byrd. Professor Miriam Byrd also attends Reading Group when her busy schedule allows it.

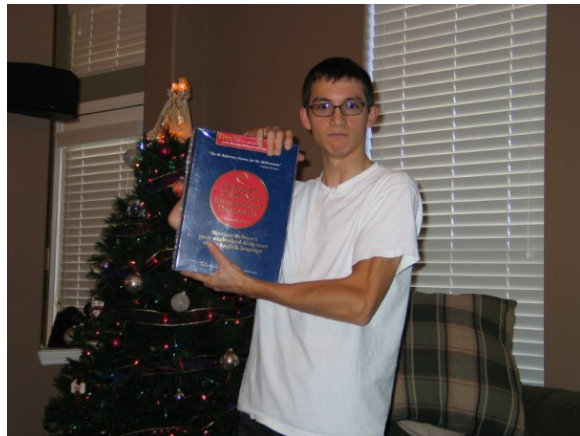
Philosophy Reading Group has not just had the benefit of new faces with Ph.D.'s but has also seen a remarkable influx of student participants. Averaging two graduate and eight undergraduate participants per week during the fall, Reading Group has afforded them the chance to augment their normal philosophical education with conversations of great depth and breadth. For instance, discussions of Christine M. Korsgaard's *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) during the summer presented us the opportunity to delve into an area of metaethics not regularly covered in the normal course offerings.



Our current book, Alvin I. Goldman's *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology and Neuroscience of Mindreading* (New York: OUP, 2006) presents the occasion to explore in greater depth a topic dealt with briefly in the philosophy of mind course. Goldman argues for a hybrid of the theory-theory and the simulation theory of mindreading.



UT Arlington's Philosophy Reading Group is primarily intended for undergraduate philosophy students who think that they might be interested in philosophy graduate school and who want to see what serious philosophical reading and discussion are like. The group meets at 12:30 p.m. on Friday afternoons in 305 Carlisle Hall and then goes off campus for lunch and discussion. Interested students should contact Denny Bradshaw at bradshaw@uta.edu.



Holiday Happening: Santa surprises philosophy major Nathan Aquino with BIG DICTIONARY!

Philosophy Reading Group Thrives

We're sure you've all been wondering about what's going on in the much venerated *Philosophy Reading Group*. Well, in short, the books have been hard-hitting and the discussion has been exhilarating. The usual suspects, Professors Denny Bradshaw and Charles Nussbaum, regularly inspire awe in students while they demonstrate their knowledge and the capabilities that come with having worked in an area for some twenty years. The combination of conversation and books read is often like taking another course in and of itself; but, instead of paying between \$800 and \$1000 per course, this education can be obtained merely for the cost of one lunch per meeting.

Kyle Stanford Captivates Listeners

To the delight of aspiring philosophers of science, Kyle Stanford, Associate Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of California at Irvine, delivered a dazzling lecture for the Fall, 2006, Philosophy Lecture Series entitled, "Theories of Generation

and the Problem of Unconceived Alternatives: Darwin, Galton, and Weismann.” The lecture, which drew a sizable crowd, consisted of a condensed version of part of his relatively new book, *Exceeding Our Grasp: Science, History, and the Problem of Unconceived Alternatives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).



Kyle Stanford wows his audience

Dr. Stanford captivated listeners with his examination of inheritance and generation theories of Charles Darwin, Francis Galton, and August Weismann. Dr. Stanford used his examination of those theories to support his claim that scientists routinely fail to conceive of alternative theories which are both confirmed by the evidence at the time and sufficiently serious possibilities as to warrant consideration in the scientific community. Dr. Stanford went on to argue that this demonstrates that modern scientific theories are best thought of only as conceptual tools which might contribute significantly to the achievement of certain goals but that those theories should not be thought necessarily to embody even probable or approximately true descriptions of the world.



Philosophers Grant Smith, Jennifer Anderson, Jason Peeler, Denny Bradshaw, Chris Atwood, Thomas O'Mara, and Jonathan Hubbell sip delicious Big K sodas at the reception for Kyle Stanford

This radical work is fleshed out in more detail in his book, the next place to go for those astonished scientific realists interested in rescuing their view from Dr. Stanford's elegant and insightful attack of unconceived alternatives. His clarity and careful consideration of various aspects of an issue can no doubt explain his numerous articles on the history and philosophy of science which have appeared in top-tier philosophy journals, including *The Journal of Philosophy* and *Philosophy of Science*. Dr. Stanford received his Ph.D. in 1997 from the Department of Philosophy and the Science Studies Program at the University of California at San Diego and has been active lecturing and writing articles for encyclopedias, as well as journal articles, book chapters, and book reviews. In his spare time he has served as referee for notable journals and professional associations.

Mike McDowell kicks philosophical butt!

The UT Arlington Department of Philosophy and Humanities welcomes Mr. Michael E. McDowell as an Adjunct Lecturer. Mr. McDowell joined the department this past fall, in order to lend his theological and philosophical expertise to such classes as “Understanding *The Bible*.” He also teaches “Business Ethics” and “Introduction to Philosophy.”

Mr. McDowell received his B.A. from Dallas Baptist University and then went on to attain his Th.M. (Master of Theology) degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. He is now in the ABD (all-but-dissertation) stage of his Ph.D. from Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary. If things go as planned, having submitted his dissertation in January, he will have his Ph.D. awarded in 2007. His area of specialization is Augustinian Studies, with Ancient Philosophy among his areas of competence.

Mr. McDowell has also taught courses at Tarrant County College for the past two years, including “Logic” and “Introduction to Biblical Religion.” Mr. McDowell notes that the students at UT Arlington are thoughtful, creative, and willing to work—indeed, he says they are many times more wonderful than his TCC students. Was there ever any doubt? It's a pleasure to have Mr. McDowell as part of the department faculty.

Feeling grateful...nostalgic...generous?

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<http://www.uta.edu/philosophy/contact.php> .

Also be sure to send your alumni news to cstigall@uta.edu.