Between work and personal life, philosophers pursue hobbies, avocations, and projects both related and unrelated to academic interests. This Thinking Duck issue is devoted to some of the “extracurricular” activities of students and members of the faculty and staff in the University of Oregon Department of Philosophy. While there are connections with what we do while working, the contents of this issue also express our personal interests. And so, readers are invited to supply their own philosophical interpretations of Jesse Chambers’ stylish chicken coop (on this page), Associate Professor Bonnie Mann’s account of her contribution to the Eugene Symphony Orchestra (page 2), Professor Scott Pratt’s culinary endeavors with Associate Professor Jerry Rosiek, (page 3), and Assistant Professor Colin Koopman’s work on digital civil liberties (page 3). We continue with an interview of panelists at the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy Conference that was hosted by the department (page 4), and then present Paul Bodin’s course, Teaching Children Philosophy (page 5). The Undergraduate Philosophy Club makes an appearance (page 5) and there are highlights of the UO Seminar Series, Biodiversity at Twenty-Five, which department head, Ted Toadvine and faculty fellow Nicolae Morar helped organize (page 6). The photographs taken by Ted Toadvine record his participation in the Fourth Annual Tar Sands Healing Walk by First Nations activists and allies, regarding the extraction of crude bitumen from the oil sands in Alberta (pages 7 and 8). Our account here is completed with the hobbies of those who run our office—Monica Guy, T. K. Landazuri, and Josie Mulkins (page 9). We then make an important exception to our extracurricular theme by congratulating this year’s PhD graduates and job successes (page 10). We finish up on the last two pages with a list of recent and forthcoming events (page 11) and our usual expression of gratitude for your support (page 12). The next Thinking Duck will return to our academic preoccupations.

I recently constructed this six-by-twelve chicken coop following principles of permaculture that utilize a logic of ecology. Basically, the idea is to maximize functionality while minimizing the ecological cost or impact: minimizing and reusing materials; designing multiple functions and the potential for modification; building for longevity, and to fit the land and weather in conjunction with the needs of people and chickens. The ecological relevance of such an approach should be clear, and the broader social and philosophical implications become clearer as I prepare to build sustainable, tiny homes for myself and others.

—Jesse Chambers, MA student, philosophy
This fall, I was asked to prepare a lecture on the theme of “Love and Fate” as part of the Eugene Symphony’s Counterpoint Festival. The series involved a number of community and arts organizations presenting concerts, theater productions, and combinations of both on that theme, and they wanted a philosopher to talk about it. I was given free tickets to attend, with my partner, the symphony’s own concerts, Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique, then Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet and Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess. I attended Oregon Contemporary Theater’s production of Aaron Posner’s Who Am I This Time? My lecture was entitled “Love and Destiny in Simone de Beauvoir’s Le Deuxième Sexe,” delivered November 25, 2013. I began at the beginning:

All human beings who endure at all are born into love. A perfect love? Probably not. Maybe it was even a love laced with hate and crossed by resentment, but for everyone that makes it far enough to listen to a lecture like this, it is simply a fact that someone else kept you alive and loved you enough to get you through that time when you were a helpless, wiggling little thing, vulnerable to abandonment. The absence of love would have meant death. This is the way we humans start, an event of separation that requires relation, absolutely and unutterably vulnerable to some other person. If we human beings believe we are fated for love and fear that we are not . . . this is why.

I encouraged the audience to think about how this ubiquitous human condition and the ubiquitous connection between love and fate is gendered in our cultural stories or myths, so that love becomes destiny for women in particular, and to fail at love is particularly disastrous for women. I illustrated this with themes from Dido and Aeneas and Porgy and Bess. I ended by suggesting that love understood as care (since it is the very condition of the possibility of our existence) should be a broad social responsibility, at the very center of our political lives, built into our social institutions, and affirmed in our spending priorities as a nation.
“It’s a long process, brewing beer or barbecuing, and so it’s an ideal occasion for philosophizing.” This describes how Scott Pratt, professor of philosophy, and Jerry Rosiek, associate professor of education studies, began their collaboration as competitive barbequers and home brewers. For the past five years, they have teamed up in barbecue competitions throughout the Pacific Northwest while also brewing a wide variety of craft beers.

Last summer, Pratt and Rosiek’s team, Pork ’n’ Stein, entered three barbecue competitions. The competitions generally consist of four categories: brisket, ribs, pulled pork, and chicken. The highlight of their barbecue career came in their latest competition where, among twenty-three teams—most of them caterers and restaurant owners—Pork ’n’ Stein took home the award for best brisket, which, as Pratt says, “is by far the most difficult category.”

But what would award-winning brisket be without award-winning beer to wash it down? Beginning with five-gallon batches in Rosiek’s house, Pratt has continued to develop his brewing technique, now brewing as much as fifteen gallons at a time at his home. “The beer you make, if you do it carefully, is at least as good as the beer you buy, and often better. You can tweak it to your preferences,” Pratt said.

From summer ales, to Oktoberfests, and from Dewey’s Brown Ale to the Pragmatist Urquell, Pratt has crafted beers to match his barbecue pedigree. Most notably, his Pierce’s Porter was a blue-ribbon winner at the Lane County Fair.

On Monday, March 10, two representatives from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) visited the UO to help raise awareness about informational civil liberties. Nate Cardozo is a digital civil rights staff attorney for EFF. April Glaser is an activist with the organization (and, interestingly enough, was an undergraduate major in philosophy at Temple University).

Cardozo and Glaser participated in a morning roundtable discussion alongside David Fidanque (executive director of ACLU Oregon), Karen Estlund (UO Libraries), and Jennifer Frenzer-Knowlton (an activist with Occupy Eugene). The focus of the discussion was the big surveillance regime that has been a headline issue since...
Edward Snowden’s revelations in 2013. Snowden’s whistleblowing brought attention to issues that many in the privacy community have long been aware of. But what was surprising about the documents Snowden provided, Cardozo said, was hard evidence of the extent to which secret surveillance was being conducted without executive and judicial oversight. The new surveillance regimes, in short, are flatly extraconstitutional.

An afternoon event organized by UO undergrads from the Department of Philosophy’s Internet, Society, and Philosophy course then brought Glaser and Cardozo to the EMU for a tag-team talk on digital rights activism. What we can do, they both emphasized, is inform ourselves and others of the extraconstitutional surveillance regimes to which we have suddenly awoken. They discussed strategies of resistance ranging from legal matters (such as EFF’s two lawsuits against the National Security Agency) to technological solutions (such as installing the Tor encrypting browser). Student groups set up tables in the back of the room to help the curious install Tor on their machines (activists like to call this a “crypto-party”).

For further reading: Koopman’s recent New York Times piece on information politics, http://nyti.ms/1f4KUPv, and, EFF’s lawsuits against the NSA, https://www.eff.org/nsa-spying. Students from the Internet Philosophy course also developed class research projects relating to digital ethics; these are archived online and viewable at http://netphi.uoregon.edu. Issues of surveillance are particularly well documented in the student video project on NSA ‘chilling effects’ archived at http://netphi.uoregon.edu/14chillingeffect/nsa-surveillance-chilling-effect.

GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZERS OF WOMEN IN PHILOSOPHY EVENT

COLIN KOOPMAN

The Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) is the second largest professional organization for philosophy in North America. SPEP came to Eugene for a weekend in October 2013 that featured dozens of conference papers and an international set of speakers. The event was kicked off with a session organized by UO graduate students on the topic of “Women in Philosophy,” with panelists Linda Martin Alcoff (then president of the American Philosophical Association) and Amy Allen (codirector of the SPEP) as well as Bonnie Mann and Scott Pratt of the UO philosophy department. Assistant Professor Colin Koopman spoke with two of the organizers, recent PhD Sarah LaChance Adams (now assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin at Superior) and current PhD candidate Megan Burke.

CK: There has been a good deal of attention recently to the gender disparity in the discipline of philosophy. Unlike most other humanities disciplines, there is still a tremendous gender gap in philosophy. Why is this?

MB: There is an overwhelming consensus amongst feminist philosophers that the gender disparity is due at least in part to the hostile climate of philosophy. In other words, women are not staying in philosophy because the climate is hostile toward them and when they do attempt to do it, there is a preemptive bias against them.

SLA: There also tends to be a dismissive attitude toward topics such as care-giving, female embodiment, and children. In departments where these topics are dealt with, many more women are studying philosophy.

CK: What insights did the SPEP kickoff event yield?

SLA: What I gained from this panel was an appreciation of how far we have come and how far we still have to go to create the kind of climate that respects and engages women.

MB: There is still work to be done, but there appears to be a strong commitment to doing the work to change philosophy for women at the the UO.

CK: Is philosophy at the UO somehow different with respect to the gender climate?

SLA: My personal experience with being a woman in philosophy studying at the UO was incredibly positive. It is where I came into my own as a feminist scholar. I had worried that such a designation would marginalize me, but I got over that fear because of the general acceptance of feminist philosophy as legitimate philosophy at the UO. I felt encouraged, supported and nurtured as a philosopher in general and as a woman in particular. According to what I have heard from other female colleagues. this is quite rare.

MB: Hopefully the event will help make more apparent why the question of gender and the reality it creates is important to philosophy as a discipline. Philosophy can be done in a way that creates a shift in how women are situated in the world or it can maintain and produce the oppression of women.
The University of Oregon Philosophy Club continues to foster intellectual engagement among undergraduates both in and outside the major. I sat down with the club’s leaders, Aurora Laybourn-Candlish and Ben Ogawa—both seniors majoring in philosophy—to discuss what the club has been up to this year.

The big news is that the Philosophy Club recently wrote bylaws and applied to the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO) for recognition as a student group. This recognition will bring more funding and increased visibility to the club among undergraduates. Says Ogawa, “We’re grateful to the department for supporting us over the years, but it’s time to join other officially recognized student groups and increase our profile and, through that, the profile of the philosophy major.” Laybourn-Candlish, who is writing a thesis on the genealogy of autism, concurred: “The club is a space for students who are interested in philosophy to learn more about the field.”

So far this year, the club has discussed such diverse philosophical texts and figures as Walter Benjamin’s theses on the philosophy of history, a video of Judith Butler discussing gender trouble, Friedrich Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Max Horkheimer’s sociology, and Theodor Adorno. In the spring term, the club will tie these readings in with George Bataille and Michel Foucault. In anticipation of the upcoming colloquium by Bernard Reginster—“What is a Nietzschean Genealogical Critique?”—the club continued to connect group interests and themes of club discussions with current conversations happening in the department. This emphasis on social-political philosophy and biopower fits well with the interests of the club, including Ogawa, who is considering writing his thesis on the problematic social and moral discourses surrounding Japan’s declining birthrate. Laybourn-Candlish emphasized that the club tries to answer to the interests of all of its members. “Everyone has something to bring to the table,” she said.

The capstone of the club’s activities is the undergraduate philosophy conference, which will be held May 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Walnut Room at the EMU.

There is a dramatic rise in confidence from the undergraduates from week to week . . . The fact that the [elementary school] kids are meeting in a circle together and talking about an issue make them more confident. They really learn to listen to one another. Some of them become very skillful at framing coherent points of view. We’re hoping that elementary teachers see this value, too.

Bodin sees his course as important for philosophers and teachers alike: “As an educator I want to keep alive the idea that education is more than facts, that you have to make sense of the world, and that the skills and facts have contexts from which we draw meaning.”
The concept of biodiversity has held sway as a core tenet of ecology and conservation for a quarter century. As a companion to this milestone, an environmental studies and philosophy department-sponsored seminar series, “Biodiversity at Twenty-Five” is examining not only the principle’s scientific value, but also its role within conservation ethics. Three faculty members of the Environmental Studies Program—Brendan Bohannan (biology), Nicolae Morar (philosophy), and Ted Toadvine (philosophy)—are serving as the series’ key organizers, and with varied expertise in biology and philosophy, they aim to bring science and the humanities into conversation with one another.

“The concept of biodiversity has a very interesting story,” explains Morar. “Probably one of the first times it was used was in 1985 by W. G. Rosen, and subsequently, it appeared in the proceedings of a 1986 conference (National Forum on Biodiversity) at the Smithsonian with a number of ecologists. However, from the beginning it wasn’t just a scientific principle. Ecologists in interviews said things such as ‘the loss of biodiversity is a threat to humanity next to thermonuclear war.’ The message wasn’t just scientific, but significantly more value-laden.”

Morar finds this troubling. As an ethicist, he is keenly aware of the messy and often competing priorities that influence value debates, and he notes that “if we’re using concepts [such as biodiversity] borrowed from the sciences, we often assume in a way that they’re carrying objectivity. I feel that’s dangerous, to make value debates look as if they can be scientifically solved. Scientists can tell us what reality is, but they cannot tell us what reality should be.”

A central goal of Biodiversity at Twenty-Five is therefore to disentangle scientific principles from ethical values, and to do so through interdisciplinary exchanges. The first guest of the series, Donald Maier, spoke in November and drew on his methods as a philosopher to question the value of biodiversity as an ethical framework for conservation. On March 12, the series featured a prominent biologist, David Hooper, whose research investigates biodiversity and ecosystem functioning; in May it welcomes Kim Sterelny, who according to Morar “is one of the most interesting philosophers trying to think about ways that biodiversity does work both descriptively and prescriptively.”
On the outskirts of the petroleum boomtown of Fort McMurray, at the heart of the Alberta tar sands, I joined hundreds of First Nations activists and allies for the Fourth Annual Tar Sands Healing Walk in July 2013.

The largest mining operation of any type in the world, Alberta’s tar sands extraction extends over nearly 300 square miles and involves the complete removal of all vegetation and topsoil in order to reach the bitumen-rich layer of sand beneath it. Around two tons of these tar-rich sands are extracted for each barrel of oil produced, with a rate of production estimated at 1.6 million barrels a day as of 2010. This process is rapidly converting the boreal forests of First Nations treaty lands into a barren desert, contaminating their air and water, poisoning the surrounding plants and animals, and threatening livelihoods and cultural traditions. Furthermore, since tar sands extraction is one of the most carbon-intensive methods of petroleum production, climate change experts predict dire consequences if these mining operations continue to expand. Tar sands mining has become the focus of international attention due to ongoing debates over the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, which would facilitate the transport of tar sands petroleum to the U.S. Gulf Coast for processing.

Organized by the Athabasca Tribal Council, the Healing Walk is not a protest but a peaceful ceremony of grieving, solidarity, and spiritual renewal in the face of this environmental and cultural devastation, inviting its participants and the world to imagine a different future for the planet. The three-day event included workshops on the
political, cultural, and economic dimensions of the tar sands issue, eloquent calls-to-action from activists Clayton Thomas Muller, Bill McKibben, Naomi Klein, and Winona LaDuke, and the nine-mile ceremonial walk itself through the heart of the active mining operations on the “Syncrude loop.”

Led by First Nations elders, drummers, and flag bearers, and sharing the highway with a nonstop convoy of heavy trucks (many of whose drivers honked in support), the throng of more than 500 walkers wound its way through miles of sprawling industrial encampments within a wasteland of black muck stretching as far as the eye could see. Massive earth movers busily scraped and shoveled while towering smokestacks billowed acrid fumes. Every few seconds, the air was split by the booms of cannons intended to scare birds away from the enormous lakes of toxic tailings, since landing in them would mean instant death. Four times during the walk, once for each cardinal direction, we paused for prayer while elders conducted a healing ceremony for the land. Then, beyond the active mining zone, our path led us through miles of “reclamation” sites—white sand deserts extending to the horizon and absent of any signs of life.

The Healing Walk was an opportunity for me to experience firsthand one of the defining environmental crises of our time and to participate in the growing international grassroots movement for climate justice. What I learned in Alberta will inform my teaching and research in the areas of environmental ethics, climate justice, and the phenomenology of nature.
T. K. Landázuri, Undergraduate and Graduate Program Coordinator

T. K. Landázuri joined the philosophy department in 2003. In 2006, she became one of the thirty-one Eugene SLUG (Society for the Legitimization of the Ubiquitous Gastropod) queens (her SLUG queen name is Slugretha Latifah Uleafa Gastropodia Jackson—or SLUG Jackson if you're slimy). She is now an old queen (there are no former or ex-queens), and in 2016, she will be a very old queen. In 2026, she will be a very, very old queen (every ten years, another “very” is added to each queen's title). In her spare time, T. K. plays percussion and sings with Accordions Anonymous (the only twelve-step accordion awareness band in the world). T. K. (in red) joined the queens at the Willamette Hall Atrium on March 15, 2014, for the Special Program in Community Education (SPICE), which seeks to encourage K–12 girls to study science.

Josie Mulkins, Office and Budget Assistant

Josie joined the philosophy department in fall 2013. When Josie's not on campus, she likes to spend her free time socializing with good friends, remodeling, and hiking in the beautiful woods of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.
CONGRATS TO THE NEW PHILOSOPHY PHDS AND THEIR JOB SUCCESS!

Elizabeth Anne Caldwell, MA '09, PhD, '12
Dissertation title: “Embodiment and Agency: The Concept of Growth in John Dewey's Philosophy of Education.” Advisor: Scott L. Pratt. After working at Women's Space in Eugene, Liz has accepted a position in the Academic Advising Center at the University of Iowa in Iowa City.

Elena Cuffari, MA '09, PhD '11

Lucy Schultz

Elizabeth M. Grosz, MA '12

Aaron A. Rodriguez, MA '11
Dissertation title: “The Echo of God's Laughter: Aesthetic Experience and the Virtue of Openness within a Pragmatist Ethics.” Advisor: Mark Johnson (2014). Aaron has accepted a position as assistant professor of philosophy at Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland, where he will be helping develop their new program in public philosophy.

Edgar I. Temam
RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2014

JANUARY 21–22
Rewired: How Law and Technology Shape Social Progress
Symposium on issues of technology, law, and ethics, with panels on aspects of digital ethics
Keynote address by William “Terry” Fisher (Harvard Law School)
Knight Law Center, Ford Lecture Hall
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art

JANUARY 23
Infection: The Health Crisis in the Developing World and What We Should Do about It
Workshop: William “Terry” Fisher (Harvard Law School)
4:00–5:30 p.m. • 250C Susan Campbell Hall

JANUARY 30
America the Philosophical
Colloquium: Carlin Romano (Ursinus College)
4:00–5:30 p.m. • Browsing Room, Knight Library

FEBRUARY 13
From the Critique of Reason to the Critique of Ideology: On the Relation between Life and Consciousness from Hegel to Critical Theory
Colloquium: Karen Ng (Stena College)
4:00–5:30 p.m. • 202 Ford Alumni Center Room

FEBRUARY 20
The Endowment of Music: The Voice and Vision
Colloquium: John Sallis (Boston College)
5:30 p.m. • 202 Ford Alumni Center

FEBRUARY 20–21
What Is a Thing? Key Responses in Modern German Literature and Thought
Noon–6:00 p.m. • Browsing Room, Knight Library

FEBRUARY 26
Feminist Research Interest Group Workshop
4:00–5:00 p.m. • Graduate Student Center, Susan Campbell Hall

APRIL 3
Pray Tell: Derrida’s Performative Justice
Colloquium: Michael Naas (DePaul University)
4:00–5:30 p.m. • 202 Ford Alumni Center

APRIL 9
What Is a Nietzschean Genealogical Critique?
Colloquium: Bernard Regenster (Brown University)
5:00–7:30 p.m. • Browsing Room, Knight Library

MAY 1
Making Sense of Interests: Reflective Scrutiny, Remorse, and Repair
Colloquium: Ellen Feder (American University)
4:00–5:30 p.m. • Browsing Room, Knight Library

MAY 6
Varieties of Moral Self Cultivation
Public Lecture by Owen Flanagan (Duke University)
Cosponsored with Institute for Cognitive and Decision Sciences

MAY 8
Cowboys and Wittgensteinians: Indigenous Politics in an Age of Diversity
Colloquium: Dale Turner (Dartmouth College)
4:00–5:30 p.m. • Browsing Room, Knight Library

MAY 10
What Is Materialism?
Graduate Philosophy Conference
Browsing Room, Knight Library
Time: TBA

MAY 12
Biodiversity at Twenty-Five Lecture Series
Workshop and public lecture: Kim Sterelny (Australian National University)
Cosponsored: Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Environmental Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences
Lunch workshop: Noon–1:00 p.m. • Coquille River Room
Public Lecture: 4:00–5:30 p.m. • Jaqua Auditorium

MAY 14
Commencement

MAY 16
Public Lecture: Lisa Heldke (Gustavus Adolphus College)
Cosponsored: UO Human and Animal Research Interest Group
Lunch Seminar: 12:00–1:00 p.m. • EMU
Public Lecture: 4:00–5:30 p.m. • Jaqua Auditorium

MAY 17
Undergraduate Philosophy Conference
10:00–3:00 p.m. • 276 Education Building

Supporting the UO Department of Philosophy
Faculty members, students, and staff members in the Department of Philosophy are committed to advancing the educational and scholarly mission of the university. Although we are a public university, only 5 percent of UO funding comes from the State of Oregon. This percentage was once much higher, but budget cuts during economic downturns over the past two decades have forced the legislature to shrink allocations for higher education. As a result, tuition is a challenge for many undergraduates, and graduate student stipends are modest. The department’s budget is stretched in an effort to meet increasing undergraduate enrollments and to support our graduate students through teaching assistantships. Grants for academic work in the humanities are relatively scarce compared to the sciences. Fortunately, many of our alumni and friends share our educational, scholarly, and culturally enriching ideals, and they are able to support our efforts through financial gifts. The philosophy department depends on gifts from our alumni and friends to support and enrich the content and form of the philosophy education that we provide. If you’d like to help, one good way to support us is to make a donation to the department’s general fund. To make a contribution online, select Give to the University of Oregon Foundation Philosophy Department Fund on the department website, philosophy.uoregon.edu/about/giving_to_philosophy.

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