

# LANGUAGE truth & GOSSIP

A newsletter for graduates of the  
MSU Philosophy Department

*Language, Truth & Gossip is published annually by the MSU Department of Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824*

*Editor  
Hilde L. Nelson*

*Department Chair  
Stephen L. Esquith*

*Associate Chair  
Marilyn Frye*

*Director of Undergraduate Studies  
James L. Nelson*

*Dean, College of Arts and Letters  
Wendy K. Wilkins*

*Visit the Department of Philosophy web site at <http://www.msu.edu/~phl/>*

## Inside ...

<i>Alumni Notes</i> .....	3
<i>Hello to</i> .....	2
<i>Departmental Review</i> .....	4
<i>Endowed Lectures</i> .....	4
<i>Environmental Ethics</i> .....	3
<i>Distinguished University Professorships</i> ...	2
<i>Journal Comes to MSU</i> .....	2

MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Faculty Notes &  
Activities

Graduate News

Fall 2003

October 2003

Dear Graduates,

This is the third issue of LTG, and as you'll see, there is much to report.

Last spring Rich Hall and Joe Hanna retired after long and distinguished careers at MSU. In character with their lifetime devotion to the Department, they decided to pool their retirement gifts, and then some, to launch a new fundraising initiative for the Department. The **Hall-Hanna Young Scholars Fund in Philosophy** is now accepting donations. Our target is a \$30,000 endowed fund that will provide undergraduate and graduate students planning a career in philosophy with support in the form of scholarships, travel grants, teaching awards, and special project grants. Contributions to the campus-wide MSU Capital Campaign that is now underway can be directed specifically to the Philosophy Department, and, if you choose, more specifically to the Hall-Hanna Fund.

Another long-time member of the Department, Christine Kaye, also bade her colleagues in Philosophy a fond farewell this past summer. Chris has returned to the School of Music where she earned a master's degree to serve as operations manager and academic advisor. The Department is grateful for Chris's many years of service. If you have a chance, I'm sure she'd enjoy staying in contact with the many former philosophy students she worked so closely with over the years.

It is our great pleasure to welcome to the Department this year Professor Paul Thompson, who comes to us from Purdue University, and holds the new W. K. Kellogg Chair in Agricultural, Food, and Community Ethics. In addition to his work with faculty and graduate students in Philosophy, Paul also has joint appointments in the Department of Agricultural Economics and the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resource Studies. We are also pleased that Assistant Professor Jennifer Susse is joining us this year. Jennifer has just completed her Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, where her area of specialization has been philosophy of mind. She has an interest in cognitive science, and will represent the department in the interdisciplinary graduate Program in Cognitive Science. Finally, join me in welcoming Jackie Campbell to the Department as our new office supervisor. Jackie has worked in the Dean's Office of the College of Arts & Letters for several years on graduate programs, and will be a great asset to the Department.

Quickly, then, let me simply say this has been a year of solid accomplishment for the Department. We completed our own internal Self-Study and received a very laudatory review by an External Review Committee made up of colleagues from the University of Minnesota, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the National Institutes of Health. Several faculty and students won individual awards and honors, our distinguished lecture series is bringing in some of the very best philosophers in the land, and a prestigious philosophy journal has made its home here for the next five years. All in all, despite the serious budget problems that public higher education is facing across the country, the Department seems to be doing relatively well. More good students are coming our way, faculty are energetically crafting new courses and programs, and in general, other programs on and off campus are seeking us out to do collaborative work with them.

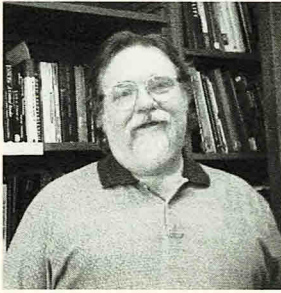
Best regards,

Stephen L. Esquith, Chair

## Distinguished University Professorships

This year not one but two members of the Philosophy Department were awarded Distinguished University Professorships. **Marilyn Frye**, an internationally renowned feminist philosopher who also serves as the Department's Associate Chair, is the author of *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*, and a number of articles on feminist philosophy and the philosophy of language. **Howard Brody** is both a philosopher and a physician, dividing his time between the Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences and the MSU Family Practice Clinic. One of the nation's leading bioethicists, his books include *Stories of Sickness* and *The Healer's Power*.

### Hello to:



**Paul Thompson**, Professor, who holds the Kellogg Chair in Agricultural, Food, and Community Ethics. He received his Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and comes to us after six years

at Purdue University. He is the author of *The Spirit of the Soil: Agriculture and Environmental Ethics*; *The Ethics of Aid and Trade*; and *Food Biotechnology in Ethical Perspective*; and is co-editor of *The Agrarian Roots of Pragmatism*. He has served on many national and international committees on agricultural biotechnology and contributed to the National Research Council's report, *The Environmental Effects of Transgenic Plants*. He has continuing interests in environmental and agricultural ethics.



**Jennifer Susse**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy. Professor Susse has just earned the Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and begins her teaching in the Spring semester. Her

dissertation defends nonreductive physicalism from the criticism that it is false, incoherent, and unstable, and her primary interests lie in metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and the philosophy of science—specifically questions concerning reductionism, explanation, supervenience, emergentism, and physicalism.



**Jackie Campbell**, Office Supervisor, comes to the Department with 25 years of experience at MSU under her belt. She has spent 23 of them in the Dean's Office of the College of Arts & Letters, where she's worked closely

with Associate Dean Pat McConeghy on graduate programs. She lives in East Lansing, has a 26-year-old-son, and loves to ski when she isn't tending to the many demands of her job.

### Journal Comes to MSU

For the next five years, the editorial office of *Hypatia: A Journal in Feminist Philosophy* will be housed in the Philosophy Department. The premier journal in feminist philosophy, *Hypatia* is named for the Egyptian woman philosopher, mathematician, and astronomer who lived in Alexandria from her birth in about 370 CE until her death in 415 and who, as the leader of the Neoplatonic School, was famous for her eloquent and inspiring teaching. Published quarterly by Indiana University Press, *Hypatia's* content is now the responsibility of the MSU editorial team, which consists of Hilde Lindemann Nelson, editor; Marilyn Frye and Lisa Schwartzman, editorial advisors; Sonya Charles, managing editor; and Jason Matzke, editorial assistant.

**The Hall-Hanna Young Scholars Fund in Philosophy**

When Rich Hall and Joe Hanna retired last spring, a fund was set up in their honor to provide undergraduate and graduate students planning a career in philosophy with support in the form of scholarships, travel grants, teaching awards, and special project grants. Our target is a \$30,000 endowment, and for that, we need your help. One way to give to the fund is through the campus-wide MSU Capital Campaign that is now underway, as contributions can be directed specifically to the Philosophy Department, and, if you choose, more specifically to the Hall-Hanna Fund. The other way to contribute is to donate directly to the Department.

The Department is deeply grateful to all who have shown their support through gifts, large and small. Our hope is that these expressions of support will help us raise the level of active alumni involvement in the Department, and we invite your ongoing participation in the life of philosophy at MSU.

Please complete the form below and return it, along with your donation (could you manage \$5.00 for every year since you left MSU?) to: **Department of Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032.**

Name as you would like it to appear in our mailings: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a donation for the following amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My payment method is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Check (payable to MSU)

\_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard

\_\_\_\_\_ Visa

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For office use: ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Split # \_\_\_\_\_

## Alumni Notes

### John E. Clifford (B.A. 1957)

After leaving MSU in 1957 I went to Princeton, where I accomplished little except for learning how to be a graduate student. But that prepared me for the best decade of my life, in graduate school at UCLA. There I picked up a Master's in Linguistics, malaria from my fieldwork on an Indian reservation in India, enough Sanskrit to set up a dissertation project on Navya-Nyaya logic, and two years at the RAND Corporation working on machine translation. I was seduced away from that dissertation to one in tense logic (eventually *Tense and Tense Logic*), and was hired by the shiny new St. Louis campus of the University of Missouri to teach formal logic and Asian philosophy. I was chair of the department for a time and developed a passion for Loglan, a constructed language based in some very vague sense on formal logic. Over the years my interests turned to a new area, religious philosophy, and I began teaching courses in philosophy of religion, science and religion, mysticism, feminist theology, and medieval philosophy. I am now

retired, and play with my computer for genealogy and Lojiban, going to Episcopalian Deacons' School (*not* to become a deacon), and reading trash.

### Samuel Sarri (M.A. 1988)

Having earned a dual M.A. in philosophy and political science at MSU, I went on to Southwest University, New Orleans, and earned a Ph.D. in international business administration in 1992. I taught business courses and medical ethics for a while at Mesa College, in Phoenix, Arizona, and then moved to Las Vegas, where I am a tenured member of the faculty at the University and Community College Systems of Nevada. I teach a wide variety of courses, including macroeconomics, microeconomics, statistics, history of philosophy, critical thinking and symbolic logic, European politics, medical ethics, legal ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, philosophy of world religions, and philosophy of education. My textbook, *Logical and Critical Thinking*, will be published shortly by McGraw-Hill.

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## New Environmental Ethics Lecture Series

In cooperation with the University's new interdisciplinary graduate Environmental Science and Policy Program, the Department is hosting a series of lectures in fall 2003 by some of the most distinguished philosophers in the field of environmental ethics.

- **Kristin Shrader-Frechette**, O'Neill Family Professor of Philosophy and Concurrent Professor of Biological Sciences at Notre Dame University, gave a public lecture on Friday, September 26, entitled, "What's Wrong with Environmental Ethics and How to Fix It," at 1:00 PM in 105 South Kedzie. She also gave a talk, "Comparativist Philosophy of Science and the Case of the Florida Panther," at a Philosophy Department seminar that afternoon at 3:00 PM, 530 South Kedzie Hall.
- **Mark Sagoff**, Senior Research Scholar at the School of Public Affairs of the University of Maryland, will visit MSU on November 18 and

19. He will give a large public lecture, "Native Is as Native Does: An Analysis of the Distinction between Indigenous and Non-indigenous Species," as well as a talk at a joint seminar for the Ag Econ and Philosophy departments, entitled "Value in Use and in Exchange; or, What Does Willingness to Pay Measure?"

- **Holmes Rolston**, University Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Colorado State University, will give a large public lecture, "Challenges in Environmental Ethics," on Monday, November 3, at 3:00 PM in South Kedzie Hall. An additional talk, "Nature for Real: Is Nature a Social Construct?" will be presented to the Philosophy and Agriculture faculty.

The Department is grateful to Professor Paul Thompson, Professor Tom Dietz, the director of ESPP and Professor Len Fleck for providing support for this series.

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## Endowed Lectures

To honor his undergraduate teachers in the Philosophy Department at MSU, Steven H. Holzman, the President and CEO of Infinity Pharmaceuticals, Inc., in Boston, has given \$90,000 to the Department, augmented by a gift from an anonymous donor, to create three separate lecture series in their names. This is the first year in which all three lectures will be given, and you are cordially invited to attend.

### The Charles J. McCracken Distinguished Guest Lecture,

“**Sellars’s Thomism**,” will be given on **5 December 2003** by **John McDowell**, University Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. Before coming to Pittsburgh in 1986, McDowell taught at University College, Oxford. He has held visiting appointments at Harvard University, the University of Michigan, UCLA, and Princeton University. He was the John Locke Lecturer at Oxford University in 1991. A version of his lectures has been published as *Mind and World* (Harvard, 1994). Several of his papers have been collected in *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Harvard, 1998) and *Meaning, Knowledge, and Reality* (Harvard, 1998). His major interests are Greek philosophy, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, metaphysics and epistemology, and ethics. He is a fellow of the British Academy and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**The Martin Benjamin Distinguished Guest Lecture, “Failures of Just War Theory,”** will be given on **March 19 2004** by **Frances M. Kamm**, the Lucius Littauer Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy at Harvard University. Before coming to Harvard this fall, Kamm taught medical ethics for many years at New York

University, with visiting appointments at the University of California at Berkeley and Johns Hopkins University. Her publications include *Creation and Abortion* (Oxford, 1992) and *Morality, Mortality*, vols. I and II (Oxford, 1993, 1996), as well as articles in such journals as *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Journal of Philosophy*, and *Ethics*.

**The Ronald Suter Distinguished Guest Lecture, “The Problem of Impiety,”** will be given on **April 16 2004** by **Cora Diamond**, William R. Kenan Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Virginia. Diamond’s major interests are the work of Wittgenstein, Frege and philosophy of language, moral and political philosophy, and philosophy and literature. She is the author of *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind* (Bradford Books, 1991), the editor of *Wittgenstein’s Lectures on the Philosophy of Mathematics* (Cornell, 1976; Chicago, 1989), and the coeditor of *Intention and Intentionality* (Cornell, 1979). Other publications include “Losing your Concepts,” *Ethics* (1988); “Rules: Looking in the Right Place,” *Wittgenstein: Attention to Particulars* (London, 1989); “Wittgenstein, Mathematics, and Ethics: Resisting the Attractions of Realism,” in Sluga and Stern, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, 1996); and “How Long Is the Standard Meter in Paris?” in *Wittgenstein in America* (Oxford, forthcoming).

## Department Self-Study and External Review Completed

In the summer and fall of 2002, the Department conducted its own Self-Study, culminating in a document describing the current state of the department and the general direction in which we hope to move. In early spring 2003 Professor Naomi Scheman (University of Minnesota), Professor Richard Schacht (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and Professor Daniel Brock (National Institutes of Health) spent three days in East Lansing, meeting with faculty, students, staff, and administrators. In their report to the Dean, they noted our continuing efforts to couple strength within the traditional fields of academic philosophy with a distinctive commitment to interdisciplinary and applied areas. “The attention,” they observed, “paid by the faculty to the students is impressive: the undergraduates are lively and

clearly engaged in the Department, and the graduate students benefit from serious mentoring, notably around their work as teaching assistants and graduate instructors.” They concluded: “The Philosophy Department impressed us with the efforts it is making to renew and reinvigorate itself, and with the progress it has made in this direction.” This year the Department will be crafting a new five-year plan that will follow up on the recommendations of the External Reviewers.

To send us news about you, e-mail Jackie Campbell at [campbe29@cal.msu.edu](mailto:campbe29@cal.msu.edu), or write to Jackie Campbell, Department of Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032. We would especially like to receive your mailing address so we can keep in touch with you from year to year.

