from Steve Luper, Chair . . .

Dear Alumni:

This has been a great year for support from former philosophy students! Trinity Philosophy alumni Kathy Schnare ’89 and her husband, William Reid, again made a generous donation in support of the students who submit philosophical essays in the department’s annual Hemlock Award competition. They have done this over the past several years, and we are very grateful for their support.

As part of the 2011 Fall Alumni Weekend, alumnus Robert Curtis ’89, of management consultation firm Bain & Co., visited campus and talked with our students about the ways in which majoring in philosophy can benefit those who intend to go into the business professions.

Philosophy alumni and attorneys Michael Gross ’84 and Laura O’Donnell ’93 are helping to make legal internships at their firms available to our philosophy majors interested in law careers. Our first legal intern is Mike Brew ’13, who is working at Michael Gross’s firm, Gross & Esparza, this summer.

On behalf of our department, I send out a personal note of thanks to each of these alumni for their commitment to supporting our philosophy students!

Larry Kimmel has now retired, and we all wish he hadn’t done it. But I guess he is happily hiking in the mountains of New Mexico. This winter we will be conducting interviews for a new scholar in Ethics. In the meantime, and after teaching the past Fall and Spring semesters, Nicholas Mantegani, University of Texas at Austin philosophy scholar, will be teaching throughout the forthcoming academic year. Recently he gave a very interesting departmental presentation concerning ontological commitments.

This year the Hemlock Award very deservedly went to first-place winner, Michael Garatoni ‘13 (Philosophy), and second-place winner, Mellissa Delcont ‘12 (Neuroscience). Congratulations to you both! And speaking of Michael Garatoni, he was awarded a Murchison Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship and is doing research on Trinity campus this summer. Congratulations again, Michael! This is the program’s second year and also the second year for a philosophy student to be awarded the fellowship.

It was a mild, relatively cool spring, and I’ve enjoyed several waves of flowers. First the flowering quince and anemones, then daffodils, species tulips, and irises, then cherry blossoms, mock orange, desert willow, and crabapple flowers. Right now I am looking at lilies, crinums, amaryllises, and althea flowers. My latest addition is gloriosa, a very strange and beautiful vine from Africa, whose flowers are the reverse of regular flowers. They remind me of colorful hot air balloons. I’m hoping to harvest some plums and peaches before the critters get them.

In June I made a trip to Slovenia again, where I gave a paper concerning whether posthumous events can harm or wrong those who die. I am now concentrating on writing an essay on the meaning of life, which will be my contribution to the forthcoming Cambridge Companion to Life and Death.

Trinity University Philosophy Faculty

Curtis Brown, Professor
Ph.D., Princeton University
Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Language
cbrown@trinity.edu

Damian Caluori, Assistant Professor
DPhil., University of Oxford
Classical Greek Philosophy, Hellenistic Philosophy, Late Ancient Philosophy (in particular Plutarch)
dcaluori@trinity.edu

Andrew Kania, Associate Professor
Ph.D., University of Maryland
Aesthetics, Philosophy of Music, Literature, Film
akania@trinity.edu

Lawrence Kimmel, Professor Emeritus
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin
Philosophy of Culture, Existentialism, Ethics
lkimmel@trinity.edu

Steven Luper, Professor and Chair
Ph.D., Harvard University
Epistemology, Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy
sluper@trinity.edu

Judith Norman, Professor
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin at Madison
19th Century Philosophy, Existentialism, Aesthetics
jnorman2@trinity.edu
Has another year gone by already? It’s been a good one overall. I got to teach lots of logic classes: two sections of Symbolic Logic I, and also Symbolic Logic II in the fall and Non-Classical Logic in the spring. I love teaching these classes, and was delighted that the advanced classes had healthy enrollments. They draw an interesting mix of students, including philosophy majors, computer science majors, and the occasional math major. I also taught Philosophy of Mind and, for the first time in several years, a section of Introduction to Philosophy.

I find starting new research projects more fun (and much easier) than finishing existing ones, so my projects-in-progress tend to keep multiplying. However, this year I completed two projects. One is an essay called “Combinatorial-State Automata and Models of Computation.” It will appear in a special issue of the Journal of Cognitive Science devoted to the important work of David Chalmers, who will reply to the essays. I also finished “Friendships: Epistemically Dangerous Liaisons?” for Damian Caluori’s collection of essays on various aspects of friendship, to be published by Palgrave Macmillan. This was a bit outside my usual comfort zone, but I have been interested in philosophical issues about friendship ever since Steve Luper and I included a chapter on the topic in our ethics text, The Moral Life, so it was great to have a reason to write an essay in this area.

In May 2011 I visited Switzerland with my wife Karen, our two children, my sister, and one of Karen’s sisters. (There are some photos on my web site, www.trinity.edu/cbrown/, if anyone’s interested.) What a beautiful place! We flew into Zurich, but spent most of our time in Lauterbrunnen. We have no plans that ambitious for this coming summer, just trips to visit family in Michigan and Montana.

One of the most important figures in twentieth-century philosophy is Saul Kripke. He published his first book in a quarter of a century, a collection of essays entitled Philosophical Troubles (Oxford University Press). Some of the essays have been published previously, but many have not, making this an exciting event. I am looking forward to reading it this summer, along with a new collection of essays about Kripke’s work: Alan Berger, ed., Saul Kripke (Cambridge University Press, 2011). In lighter reading, I recently finished Hilary Mantel’s novel Wolf Hall, featuring Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, and Thomas More. I found it interesting in part for giving a very different picture of More than I remembered from the movie A Man for All Seasons. In even lighter reading, I have recently been reading (rereading, in some cases) Dorothy Sayers’ mysteries.
There are plenty of people and institutions devoted to changing the world, but philosophers are among the few who are devoted to understanding it.

— Harry Frankfurt
Greetings everyone! As I write this, I am on the cusp of my first-ever sabbatical. I’m looking forward to spending most of next year in New Zealand, back in my home town of Auckland. Though I won’t have an official appointment there, I do plan on hanging around the Philosophy Department at the University of Auckland a fair bit, discussing profound musical matters with my former MA supervisor, Stephen Davies, and his grad students. The main project I intend to work on is a detailed defense of the definition of music I’ve recently sketched in a chapter in the Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music and an essay on silent music in the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. Davies has already objected to my definition in a forthcoming essay, so we should have plenty to talk about! Of course, I might make it to the beach once or twice, too.

Some thoughts about music that saw their way into print over the past 12 months include an essay on the ontology of jazz that is in a sense the last part of my doctorial dissertation to be published. I argue that, in part because of the centrality of improvisation to jazz, performances in that tradition are properly compared directly with one another, and not (as in classical music, for instance) as performances of a distinct work. Probably the best feature of the philosophy of music if it’s really still about the music. I try to remind myself of that by staying active in connection with music. I was recently honored to sing on the stage of the Majestic Theatre downtown with other Trinity students and faculty in a special all-Berlioz concert with the San Antonio Symphony honoring historian Jacques Barzun, who at the age of 104 was still able to talk eloquently (and to know when to let the music speak for itself!). And having just sat the final exam of Music Theory IV, I’ve now completed the four-semester theory sequence required of music majors, allowing me to engage more easily with musicologists and their work, not to mention reminding me how different a classroom looks when your back’s to the wall rather than to the board.

I was lucky enough to get to travel to Tampa, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and Adelaide (Australia) this past year, to present my work to various audiences. Though, as a member of the American Society for Aesthetics (ASA) board of trustees, I will be travelling to St. Louis for the annual ASA meeting, I hope otherwise to confine my travels in the coming year to locations close to the coast in Australia and New Zealand. Let me know if by any chance you’ll be down under, yourself ....

I also collaborated with Harvard composer Richard Beaudoin on an essay about the score of one of his recent works. Employing a technique called ‘microtiming’, in which the minutest details of a musical recording are extracted (originally for close analysis), Beaudoin ‘recomposes’ famous recordings of classic musical works into new works for independent performance. We argued that the score of one of these works constitutes a kind of musical photograph of the recording that was its basis.

As students in my Philosophy of Music course in the spring well know, it’s easy to let philosophy run away with your thoughts, and to forget that it’s only good
Our student-led philosophy club was very active in 2011-2012. During both the Fall and the Spring semesters, students met every other week to discuss topics such as philosophy as a way of life, the philosophy of film, environmental ethics and the philosophy of love and sex. The meetings were very well attended and all students were strongly engaged, which led to good and lively discussions.

I offered two new courses this year: Hellenistic Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. I very much enjoyed teaching both courses. I like Hellenistic philosophy because it allows me to show students that ancient philosophy has more to offer than Plato and Aristotle. It is particularly interesting in the areas of ethics and epistemology. I like philosophy of religion because of the richness and variety of questions it raises. One book we read was Mark Johnston’s recent Saving God. Religion after Idolatry, which offers a view that challenges both (traditional) theists and atheists.

When I organized the Lennox Lecture Series on the philosophy of friendship in early 2011, I thought it would be very nice to also edit a book on this topic. So I asked the speakers for the papers they had given at Trinity and invited further famous and up-and-coming philosophers to contribute to a volume called Thinking about Friendship. Historical and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives. Everything worked out well, and the book will be published later this year by Palgrave Macmillan. The papers in this volume will be devoted to questions such as: What precisely makes friendship so valuable? What is friendship at all? What unites friends and distinguishes them from others? Is the preference we give to friends rationally and morally justifiable? It offers new interpretations of the answers given by famous classic philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Kant and provides fresh answers by leading contemporary philosophers.

Last Fall I was invited to give a paper on Plotinus at Cornell University, and in Spring I gave a talk about Plato at the New School for Social Research in New York City. This summer I will attend the international Plotinus colloquium in Paris. Moreover, I will spend a month at the Plato Centre in Dublin. I am looking forward to it, not only because the Plato Centre possesses an excellent library specialized in ancient philosophy. My stay there will also give me the opportunity to discuss my work with some first-rate philosophers and scholars affiliated with this wonderful research institution. Finally, it will allow me to make ample use of my umbrella, which I feel I have somewhat neglected in the last three years.

`Intuition’ plays a major role in contemporary analytic philosophy’s self-understanding. Yet there is no agreed or even popular account of how intuition works, no accepted explanation of the hoped-for correlation between our having an intuition that \( P \) and its being true that \( P \). Since analytic philosophy prides itself on its rigor, this blank space in its foundations looks like a methodological scandal.

Why should intuitions have any authority over the philosophical domain?
– Timothy Williamson, The Philosophy of Philosophy, p. 215
Michael Garatoni is entering his senior year with a major in Philosophy. Michael has had great success at Trinity; he is on the Dean’s list and is the winner of the 2012 Philosophy Department Hemlock Award for the best essay in philosophy. Most recently and perhaps most excitingly, Michael was awarded a 2012 Murchison Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. This is the second time (in the two years that the award has been in existence) that a student in the philosophy department has won this prestigious award.

The fellowship has enabled Michael to devote the summer to a research project he is pursuing with Dr. Steven Luper. Dr. Luper has been working on an article on life’s meaning, to be published in a volume he is editing, entitled The Cambridge Guide to Life and Death (Cambridge University Press). The article involves questions concerning the meaning of life and how meaningfulness contributes to welfare, as well as its relative importance with respect to other elements in welfare, such as happiness. Michael is working in tandem with Dr. Luper, discussing these issues with him and developing his own original thesis concerning the role of meaningfulness in assessing welfare. Philosophy is not generally considered a collaborative activity, but conversations between researchers pursuing closely related topics can be extraordinarily fruitful for both.

Michael has a particular interest in this topic, as he wishes to begin thinking about some of the ethical questions involved in legal and public policy issues. He hopes to continue this vein of inquiry in the future by attending graduate school and pursuing a JD/Ph.D. In the meantime, he will be submitting his Murchison essay for publication in an undergraduate research journal, and presenting some of his ideas at the Summer Undergraduate Research Conference. We wish him great luck!

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2012 Hemlock Award Winners for Outstanding Philosophical Essay

1st Place
"Coherentism"

Michael Garatoni ’13

2nd Place
"Respect for Those Outside the Moral Community"

Mellissa Delcont ’12

The Hemlock Outstanding Philosophical Essay student awards were made possible through a generous donation from Kathy L. Schnare and William Reid.
We are honored to recognize a group of students for their achievements in Philosophy and/or for their individual contributions to departmental events and philosophy student activities during the 2011-2012 school year. We note that a number of these students will return as graduating seniors in 2012-2013, and we are fortunate to have them at Trinity for another year.

A special thanks to each of you!

The department was proud to offer the Philosophy Honors Program for the first time in 2011-2012. To qualify for the program, students must be philosophy majors and meet stringent GPA requirements by the Fall semester of their junior year. The philosophy faculty must approve all honors program applicants before they are accepted into the program.

Aleksey Balotskiy '12 was the first student to complete the requirements and was graduated in May 2012 with departmental honors. He is now participating in a doctoral program at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada.
In 2011-2012, the department hosted five public philosophical speaking events. These events were all free and open to the public and were made possible by a combination of generous contributions from various academic departments, the Trinity University Lecturers and Visiting Scholars Committee, and the Arthur T. and Jane J. Stieren Foundation.

As part of Alumni Weekend in October 2011, Dr. Damian Caluori hosted Cinzia Arruzza, Department of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research, New York, for a talk entitled, "Cleaning the City: Popper and Plato on Political Change". The talk presented a philosophical approach to political change based on the works of classical philosopher Plato and twentieth-century philosopher Sir Karl Popper, a former professor at the London School of Economics who wrote extensively on social and political philosophy and is regarded as one of that century's greatest philosophers of science.

Afterwards, Bain & Co.’s Robert Curtis ’89 led a spirited discussion based on his professional experiences regarding the benefits of the Trinity philosophy degree towards a successful career in business finance and business law.

In January, as part of the Stieren Lecture Series, Dr. Judith Norman hosted Dr. Robert Wicks, Professor of Philosophy, University of Auckland, to give a talk entitled "Photographic Perception and the Present Sense of the Past: Reflections on Roland Barthes’s Camera Lucida". Dr. Wicks is the author of seven philosophical texts and numerous scholarly articles.

In February, Dr. Norman also hosted Robert Weick of Philadelphia’s Ironage Theatre Company in a dramatic one-hour monologue entitled, “Marx in Soho”, originally created by writer and activist the late Howard Zinn.

Dr. Andrew Kania hosted Dr. Dabney Townsend in April for a talk entitled “Anti-Aesthetics”. Dr. Townsend is Secretary-Treasurer of the American Society for Aesthetics (ASA) and is a member of the philosophy faculty at Armstrong Atlantic University in Savannah, Georgia.

On December 8, 2011 the Philosophy Department honored Dr. Lawrence Kimmel with a retirement reception commemorating 45 years of distinguished service at Trinity University. Speakers were colleagues Steven Luper, Department of Philosophy Department Chair, Michael Fischer, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Willis Salomon, Department of English, and Colleen Grissom, Department of English. The reception was attended by members of the Kimmel family and numerous friends, students, and colleagues.

Dr. Kimmel now spends much of his time at his home in the mountains of New Mexico and may be contacted at this email address:

lkimmel@trinity.edu.
ALUMNI SURVEY

Please help us in our assessment of the Department of Philosophy by taking our on-line Alumni Survey linked to the Department homepage at: www.trinity.edu/departments/philosophy/. 

Your responses will contribute greatly to the future direction of the department.

Thank you!

Alumni Weekend . . . November 9-11, 2012

On Friday, November 9, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in the Ruth Taylor Recital Hall, Dicke Art Building, the philosophy department will host two Trinity philosophy alumni in separate talks on the topic, “Beyond the Philosophy Degree: Careers in Business and Law”. A reception will follow.

Our speakers will be Robert Curtis ’89 from the Dallas office of management consulting firm, Bain & Co., and criminal defense attorney, Michael Gross ’84, from the San Antonio-based firm, Gross & Esparza, P.L.L.C.

featured artist . . . Rose Sanderson

Rose Sanderson of Bristol, England, is the featured artist in this issue of Philosophy News. Below is the artist’s profile from her web site:

“Inspired by the natural world, especially that which is generally unnoticed or disregarded by others, current work focuses predominantly on the fragility of life and representations of freedom. Seeing beauty in the seemingly ugly, Rose’s delicate, yet expressive paintings of insects, birds and anatomy, aim to provoke in an understated way; producing pieces that are empathetic, fresh and intriguing.

With backgrounds that give a feeling of decay (peeling layers of wallpaper, cracked surfaces; aged and ‘distressed’), combined with fine attention to detail in the subject matter, a vibrant mixture of traditional and experimental techniques are produced.

Her use of old book covers relates to the cycles within nature. The subject upon them is part of a narrative; again exploring life, death and existence.

Based in Bristol, England, Rose has exhibited in a number of locations including Bath, Brighton, Plymouth, London, Glasgow, Amsterdam, Brussels, New York, California, and Singapore.”

Thank you, Rose, for the use of your beautiful images in our newsletter.

Visit www.rosesanderson.com for more information about the artist and her work.
Trinity University

Department of Philosophy
One Trinity Place
San Antonio, TX 78212-7200
Phone: 210-999-8305
Fax: 210-999-8353
Philosophy Department Home Page:
www.trinity.edu/departments/philosophy/
Trinity University Alumni Relations:
web.trinity.edu/x8018.xml

Upcoming Events

Friday, Nov. 9, 2012 (Alumni Weekend)
1:00 p.m., Ruth Taylor Recital Hall
Robert Curtis ’89 & Michael Gross ’84
“Beyond the Philosophy Degree:
Careers in Business and Law”
Reception to follow

Wednesday, April 16, 2013 (Stieren Lecture)
7:00 PM, Ruth Taylor Recital Hall
Dr. Emily Brady
University of Edinburgh, Scotland
Fellow, Princeton's Center for Human Value
“Aesthetic Value, Ethics, and Climate Change”
Reception to Follow

Trinity University

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Spinoza... says that if a stone thrown flying through the air were conscious it would think it was
flying of its own will. I only add that the stone would be right.
– Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, p. 126