

INTERSECTIONS

Greetings! News from the Chair

The last issue of the Philosophy Department's newsletter, appearing in the year 2000, contained a cordial welcome to the department's newest hire, now its present chair. So it's a particular pleasure for me to reanimate the publication, and to set some goals for what I'd like to see these pages do. These include raising the visibility of the department, on campus and off; offering past and present students news and serving them with opportunities for networking (we're particularly eager to hear from alumni how we can best serve their needs); and celebrating our individual and collective accomplishments.

First and foremost, this time out I want to review a

little departmental history, beginning by honoring the legacy of Dr. George Claghorn and his life-long dedication to the discipline and to our graduates. Dr. Claghorn began this department almost 43 years ago when West Chester University was West Chester State College, and established a newsletter in 1989. In 1965, Paul Banyacski, a talented former philosophy student, was the first to join him. Fred Struckmeyer, just out of Boston University, signed on a year later. Soon after that, aesthetician W. Stephen Croddy, and another talented former student, Edwin Williams, enlarged the ranks. And in 1969, a particularly volatile year in America, Stanley Riukas and Thomas W. Platt stepped in. In 1970,

with the hiring of Paul A. Streveler from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the full-time faculty core of eight was set for the next 21 years.

When I arrived in 2000, I had the opportunity to get to know every one of these professors except Paul Banyacski who had retired in 1998. Today, in 2009, all have left us. Fred Struckmeyer, chair from 2005 to 2008 and one of the first to be hired, was the last to retire. He stepped down last August.

Frank J. Hoffman, specialist in Asian Philosophy, and Ruth Porritt, specialist in aesthetics and the first woman appointed, joined in 1990 and 1991 respectively, so in 2000, I stepped
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Major NSF Grant Awarded

On the eve of going to print, we heard some very exciting news. Joan Woolfrey and Matthew Pierlott, the Principal Investigator and one of 4 Co-P.I.'s on a proposal for a federal grant sponsored by the Ethics Education in

Science and Engineering (EASE) initiative of the National Science Foundation, heard their proposal "Applying Virtual Worlds to Ethics Education in Science" was accepted.

This \$300,000, 3-year grant will generate content and

then build ethics training modules for the virtual world *Second Life* aimed at graduate students in the sciences. Matthew and Joan are a little dazed by the fruits of their first grant proposal—but are VERY excited.

Inside this issue:

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Dr. Keith Ward of Oxford and WCU students (see p. 6).

Graduate Student Activities



Grad students Hilary Nunes, Gabrielle Aruta, Alex Charles, Donovan (Irven) Martin and Ann Strom at 2008 IAPRS conference at IUP in Indiana, PA.

M.A. Student Ann Strom (pictured left) reports on her experiences as Grad Student Representative and Graduate Assistant:

“My experience shows that having the GSR on your hands is a good position to be in unless you're on an episode of CSI.^[*] As a grad student rep, I got to watch the department work on difficult issues and demonstrate a truly democratic decision-making process; it was an interesting experience for anyone thinking about becoming a faculty member one day.... The faculty was responsive to any questions or suggestions and wanted feedback often where decisions concerned the grad students; in particular, I suggested a workshop for applying to PhD programs which then happened a

few months later and which I found very helpful.

“I also enjoyed being a GA. I got to deal with some of the problems that students face when new to philosophical thinking in a less threatening, one-on-one setting, that I hope has helped to prepare me for thinking about how to present material to PHI 101 students. I also got to peek in on the little things that need to get done in the running of the department, like the prospective student events, and how much non-scholarship and non-teaching work being a faculty member entails.... but you'll notice I'm still applying to PhD programs in the fall, so it must have been fun. :)”

**See our website for a report on WCU's
Spring 2009 Fourth Annual Graduate
Student Conference in Philosophy—and
the next one!**

Regional Conferences and an Upcoming WCU Conference !

Our most far-flung conference participant this year was Donovan Irven Martin, one of the department GA's. He presented his work at the 2009 Society for Indian Philosophy meeting in Kolkata, India. His paper “Self as Symbolism in the Brhad Aranyaka Upanisads” argues that the concept of the self presented by the Upanisads is essentially a self mediated by “Otherness,” a notion relevant to the work of Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas. An invigorating question and answer section, according to Donovan, revolved around the natures of the Brahmin self and Atman self and their relation to one another.

Amongst other students active at conferences this past year was Ashley Manta, who presented a paper entitled “The Traumatic Aftermath of Acquaintance Rape” at the Eastern Society for Women in Philosophy (ESWIP) conference in Cleveland, from March 27-28th. She also attended the 2009 *phi-loSOPHIA* meeting in late May in New York City and will be at the 26th North American Social Philosophy Conference here in Philadelphia this summer.

Other conferences near and dear to us include the IAPRS, the state school system's annual Philosophy and Religion Conference, held this year at far-flung Slippery Rock University. This past year's conference was attended by Ann Strom, and Larry Udell, long-time philosophy instructor. Ann presented a paper on Dewey and propaganda, while Larry talked about the nature of the free market. The conference was, as Ann put it, “slightly longer than the drive there and back, but definitely worth attending.”

In other exciting news, **the IAPRS conference will be held here at WCU next April (2010)**. Helen Schroepfer is this year's president, and Larry Udell was named secretary! The IAPRS conference is open to anyone, and it is frequently attended by those with past ties to the schools in the system. The conference is held over a weekend in mid-April and submissions are usually due about a month in advance. If you have a paper in the drawer and have been looking for a reason to visit the old alma mater, this is an excellent opportunity!

Information about the conference has not

yet been updated for the coming year, but the website can be found at: www.sshe-iaprs.org/conference.html. And we invite you all to attend, whether you have a paper to give or not!

The details can be had later in the year, from Helen Schroepfer—hschroepfer@wcupa.edu—or by contacting the department secretary at 610-436-2841. Thanks, Rose!

Those interested in another educational reason to visit (and to find a gathering of philosophers you don't have to start yourself) may find it with Philosophy Forum—lectures given by those connected to or invited by the department. The schedule can be found at: iws.wcupa.edu/phi-club/faculty.html.

And, by the end of the summer, we'll have a complete list of scholarly activity for both students and faculty listed on our webpage.

Also, connect with us via our Facebook page: [Philosophy@West Chester](https://www.facebook.com/Philosophy@WestChester). Send your email address and other news to Rose at rsykes@wcupa.edu for future mailings. Or call us anytime!

George S. Claghorn, Professor Emeritus

Coming to West Chester State College in 1963, and chairing the department from 1965 to 1996, Professor Claghorn retired in 2004. We were honored to have him join us this past spring for the Phi Sigma Tau ceremony, and make the presentation to the recipient of the Claghorn Scholarship Award.

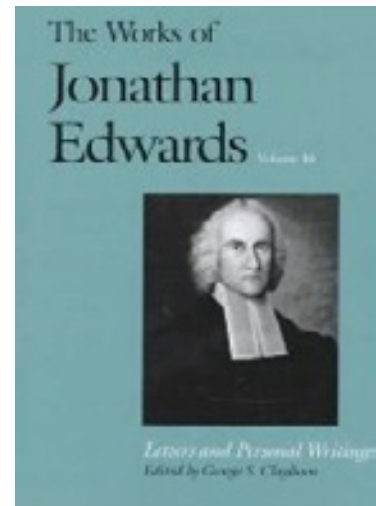
Last December, Dr. Claghorn attended a gala at Yale University for the publication of the completed series *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. The volume he edited: Volume 16: *Letters and Personal Writings*, came out in 1998.

Dr. Claghorn's *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Timaeus*, first published in 1954, is still selling—for \$125! on Amazon.com. Jonathan Edwards's biographer, George M. Marsden, thanks Dr.

Claghorn in the preface to *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (2004) for being “immensely helpful to me in making available transcriptions and information, in answering questions, in checking quotations from the correspondence, and in making numerous suggestions.” Doesn't that sound just like the George Claghorn we all know and love!

He is living in Allentown, PA now, near his son with wife Shirley, and enjoys being in touch with alumni, including Chester County Judge James P. MacElree II, '70; Dana Skaddan, '80, MBA Harvard; Michael Duff, '93, JD Harvard, professor at Wyoming School of Law, and Steve Reeder, '82, professor at the University of the Performing Arts in Philadelphia; and many others, “all lively

personalities,” he writes. And, lately he's been re-reading old favorites: Bacon, Locke and Plato.



Prof. Paul Banyacski

First to be hired when the department was created, and known for his love of motorcycles, Prof. Banyacski sends these words:

“For the past several years my wife and I have been involved in helping the Roma (gypsies) in Romania -- visiting, speaking, teaching and enabling partnership ministries with Christian friends in Satu Mare, Romania.



“Dubbed ‘The Miracle Man’ by some, I

have recovered remarkably well following a near fatal motorcycle accident in August 2007. Overseas travel is, once again, part of our lives!”

We are amazed by what we've heard of his recovery, and are very pleased to hear he's well. Contact him at: BanyacskiPA@msn.com

Frederick R. Struckmeyer, Professor Emeritus

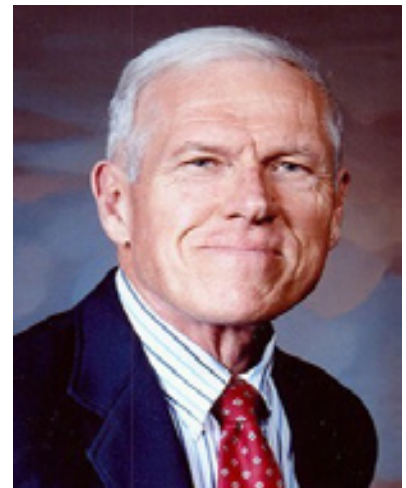
Dr. Struckmeyer retired in August 2008, after over 40 years of service, while Chair of the Department and Director of the Peace & Conflict Studies Program. Since then, he has been teaching English in the high security prison of Chester County which meets twice a week. He is enjoying a retirement full of gardening, tennis, and hiking, and is planning to spend some of his remaining spare time producing a book or two.

Dr. Struckmeyer's recent work includes a paper on punishing crime in America, which he gave at the 24th North Ameri-

can Social Philosophy Conference, and also again the next fall for our own audience here at West Chester.

He also continues to speak out about the situation in Israel and the possibilities for peace there, writing an op-ed peace last year on Jimmy Carter's efforts there.

We've recently been informed that our proposal for his emeritus status was approved, and he retains his email address at WCU, for those who may want to say hello or congratulate him on his new-found and well-filled leisure.



Prof. Edward Williams

Known for his bowties, Prof. Williams was a 1965 West Chester grad, and a talented former student of Dr. Claghorn's. His years of teaching, and thinking about teaching, critical thinking and logic trained a generation of West Chester students.

He retired in 2001. Sadly, he passed away in 2006 at the age of 68.



Dr. W. Stephen Croddy

Responding to our query about what he's up to these days, Steve Croddy writes via e-mail:

"Indicative of my current intellectual interests, am currently reading *En Russie avec Rilke 1900* by Lou Andreas-Salome, *Le Ge'nie Fe'minin, tome 1: Hannah Arendt* by Julia Kristeva, *Carants de Saorge* by Charles Juliet, and *Averno* by Louise Gluck. At the same time am indulging in the New York and Parisian musical, theatrical, and culinary cultures."

A productive scholar in the fields of philosophy of language and formal aesthetics, you can find many of his articles on-line. Steve retired in 2005 and lives in New York City.

Dr. Stanley Riukas

When Dr. Riukas turned 70 (a time when retirements were mandatory), he petitioned WCU's President for permission to continue teaching. Permission was granted and he went on to teach for more than another decade. A delightful colleague, his intellectual generosity is acknowledged in Jonathan Bennett's *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*. You can find his work from World Congress of Philosophy conferences at: <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/>.

He earned his Ph.D. from NYU and taught at WCU for 33 years. He had been a minister for 10 years before that. Stanley Riukas died on October 3, 2006. He had suffered a stroke in 2001, two weeks before his official retirement date. His wife Nathalie still lives in the area.

Paul A. Streveler, Professor Emeritus

A most popular and accomplished teacher, Paul Streveler still lives outside West Chester. And, much like Steve Croddy, indulges in musical and culinary delights whenever he can. He takes frequent trips to NYC for the opera, and makes improvements and does the chores around his amazing little domain west of town. He has recently taken on the responsibilities of a young Labrador re-

triever he named Sophia—a tribute to his esteemed profession. And, he is currently working on a paper for a *Festschrift* honoring a beloved professor of history from the University of Wisconsin—Madison, his *alma mater*. The paper is an examination of the notion of divine omnipotence in the writings of the fourteenth century Dominican Friar, Robert Holcot.

Check out his entry in the Stanford Ency-

clopedia of Philosophy on Richard the Sophister! (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/richard-sophister/>) because who wouldn't agree that "Every man is every man" since "Proof: This man is this man, that man is that man and so forth for each individual man, therefore every man is every man."

"Every man is every man."

— Richard the Sophister

Thomas W. Platt, Professor Emeritus

Chair from 1996 to 2006, Dr. Platt participates in department events whenever he can, and offers the following for this space:

"What have I been up to since 2005. Mostly, I've been involved with family things. Our two youngest grandchildren, both boys, live in Minnesota so we have been making two or three treks a year to the frozen North. Andrew is teaching at

St. Cloud State and while he is happy to be anywhere they long for somewhat warmer clime.

"Closer to home, on the academic front, I have been serving as co-mentor of an Education for Ministry Group at a local church. This is a four-year program of theological education for laypersons developed and administered by the Seminary of the University of the South. This

is adult education with tests or grades, and it's a four-year commitment so those present really want to learn. Dealing with them is great fun.

"Also on the academic side I have had two things appear in print since retirement. The first which came out in the winter of 2005 was a paper originally given at a World Congress of Philosophy.

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Current Faculty

Ruth Porritt

The students in Dr. Porritt's spring 2009 ethics classes established a chapter of National Students of Ailing Mothers and Fathers (AMF) Support Network at WCU. The organization supports college students coping with the illness or death of a loved one, encouraging all students to participate in helping those dealing with ailing family members. David Fajgenbaum began the organization in 2006 when he was a pre-med student at Georgetown University, after helping his mother with her cancer illness. He has just completed his first year of medical school at the University of Pennsylvania and plans to be an oncologist. The West Chester chapter was founded in honor of Annelise Harvey, a WCU student who attended Dr. Porritt's PHI 101 Introduction

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Frank Hoffman

Our Asian Philosophy specialist and co-director of Ethnic Studies, Dr. Hoffman gave five lectures at Mianyang Normal University in Sichuan China over winter break this past year. He gave formal lectures on Buddhism, Daoism and Wittgenstein and two informal talks on "Life Choices" and "Student Life in the USA."

He also was integral, last March, to bringing in Dr. Keith Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus from the University of Oxford, to a large crowd at Phillips Memorial Hall. Dr. Ward's lecture was entitled "How Did the Universe Begin?"

Dr. Hoffman is again spending his summer in China, sponsored by Rotary International.

Daniel Forbes

Dr. Dan Forbes joined the Philosophy Department in the fall of 2007. His research areas include the history of early modern philosophy, metaphysics, and epistemology. His dissertation examined the role of the infinite in Spinoza's metaphysics, and he is currently exploring the structure and function of Spinoza's geometrical method of exposition in the *Ethics*. He's teaching PHI270—History of Modern Philosophy—on a regular basis, along with a mix of introductory and advanced courses. This past year Dr. Forbes organized and facilitated a Pedagogy Workshop series where department faculty and graduate students had a chance to discuss their philosophies of learning and share teaching strategies.

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Helen Schroepfer

Dr. Schroepfer recently published "Pursuing the Enemies of Freedom: Religion in the Persuasive Rhetoric of the Bush Administration" in the journal *Political Theology*. She followed this up with a presentation at the American Academy of Religion last fall on the place of religion in the 2008 presidential election.

Always looking for ways to incorporate

her scholarly work into the classroom, Dr. Schroepfer has developed three new courses for us: *Religion in the United States*, *Women and Religion* and *Introduction to Islam*. In all three courses, students are encouraged to explore and articulate the ideas, rituals

"Many of the most important misunderstandings take place at the intersection of religion and politics" —H. Schroepfer

and symbols that are important in their own lives.

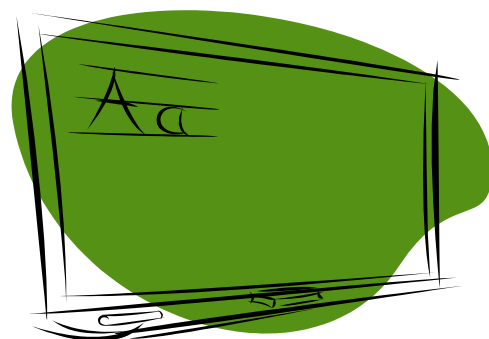
Dr. Schroepfer was also instrumental in organizing the "Islam in America: Understanding Intercultural Differences" conference on campus this past January; a very informative, successful event.

Matthew Pierlott

"I've always found philosophy to be the most attractive *and* practical study," says Matt Pierlott, assistant professor of philosophy, "because it examines the issues we care the most about and helps us to think through how we want to live."

In addition to trying to make philosophy appealing and accessible in the classroom, Pierlott has begun participating in a larger movement to create more popular

and accessible philosophy discussions. Just beginning his scholarly career, he has a book chapter coming out on 'truthiness' in *Stephen Colbert and Philosophy: I Am Philosophy (And So Can You!)* (Open Court, Spring 2009) and is slated for a chapter on sweatshop labor in an upcoming book, *Fashion & Philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell).



Phi Sigma Tau Award Ceremony

One of the seventy honor societies of the Association of College Honor Societies, Phi Sigma Tau—the International Honor Society in Philosophy—has been an important event for the Philosophy Department for many years.

The Philosophy Department is proud to continue a long-standing tradition of acknowledging academic excellence among its philosophy students, so the society bi-annually hosts an induction ceremony to honor those students who have shown academic merit and distinction. Students electing to join the society receive a life-long membership.

According to its Constitution, Phi Sigma Tau serves (1) as a means of awarding distinction to students showing scholarly promise and personal interest in philosophy; (2) to promote student interest in research and advanced study in the field; (3) to provide opportunities for the publication of student research papers of merit; (4) to encourage a professional spirit and friendship among those who have displayed marked ability in this field; and (5) to popularize interest in philosophy among the general collegiate public.

Dr. Leon Niemoczynski (WCU M.A. 2004, Ph.D. SIU, 2008), adjunct instructor for the Philosophy Department, himself inducted at WCU in 2004, enthusiastically serves as Chapter Leader. This year's ceremony last April inducted 14 members: Sara Fiorot, Natalie Virtue, Donovan (Irvn) Martin, Corinne Lecou-rioux, Sarah Nasser, Gabrielle Aruta,

Christopher Raab, Eli Bonner, Tony White, Casey Giovinco, and Diane Donato, all graduate students; and John Uetz, Tim Burke, and Amy Marvin, undergraduates. Ann Strom, graduate student, and Alexandra Perez and Michael Weaver, undergraduates, were not present for the ceremony, but did elect to join the Society.

Dr. Tom Young, long-time adjunct—now retired—gave the keynote address, reminding the gathering of the importance of the discipline, and the responsibility we all have towards it.

Also at the ceremony, the **2009 Claghorn Award** was awarded by Dr. George

Claghorn himself to graduate student Eli Bonner for his high academic achievement. We were very pleased that Dr. Claghorn could join us, and we look forward to more visits in the future.



Dr. Thomas J. Young, giving the keynote address at the 2009 Phi Sigma Tau ceremony in April.

The **2009 Streveler Research Award** went to Amy Marvin this year, for her paper “The Gender of Theseus: An Inquiry into Changes of Sexual Embodiment.”

West Chester hosts Videoconference!

Dr. Larry Udell, long-time adjunct, organized a video conference for his class *Theories of Justice and Equality*. It connected Professors Elizabeth Anderson and Frank Thompson from the University of Michigan and Geoffrey Harcourt from Cambridge discussing John Rawls.

The video can be found by linking through our department website at: wcupa.edu/_ACADEMICS/sch_cas.phil/.

Dr. Platt, con't

(Continued from page 4)

It was entitled “Science and Religion: Some Shared Presuppositions.” It is in Vol. 8 of the *Proceedings* now, edited by William Sweet. The second thing was a book review of “Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession” edited by John Caputo and Michael Scanlon. This appeared in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. XIX, No.

1/2, 2007.

“And, I’m still on the visiting nurses ethics committee [a hospice organization].

“Finally, most of my time is spent in hedonistic pursuits such as fishing, going to concerts or operas in Philadelphia, and the occasional play.

“My only regret is that I didn’t become a loafer sooner!”

News from the Chair, con't

(Continued from page 1)

into a department of ten full-time permanent faculty—an impressive figure considering that retirements and tough budgetary times have seen the reduction of our numbers to the six permanent faculty we have today. Of necessity, we rely heavily on our talented pool of adjunct instructors—several are fulltime while others teach only one or two classes a term, but all are integral members of our philosophical and university community.

Meanwhile, we have three tenure-track faculty coming up for tenure—one in each of the next three years: Helen Schroepfer, philosophy of religion and 20th century continental; Matthew Pierlott, business ethics, history of philoso-

phy and philosophy of freedom; and Dan Forbes, a Spinoza specialist, with strengths in metaphysics, epistemology, and history of philosophy. In all, then, we are a young and varied group who look forward to adding additional members to our department soon. In this past academic year, we worked hard on a search that did not bear fruit. But we're eager for next year and are confident that our small but accomplished community will attract vibrant, talented members and grow considerably in the next few years.

Despite challenging economic times, we look forward to the coming year, confident of the expanding resources we can provide our students. These include a revitalized undergraduate Philosophy Club; career-planning workshops for

majors and minors; a steady increase in available scholarship funds; the second annual *Ideas That Matter* lecture; and a growing presence for the department as a whole on campus. Cases in point: Samantha Noll, December 2008 graduate, won a College of Arts and Sciences Research Award last fall, and Larry Tamaccio, also a December grad, was chosen to speak at December commencement. Both are firsts for the philosophy department as far as I know.

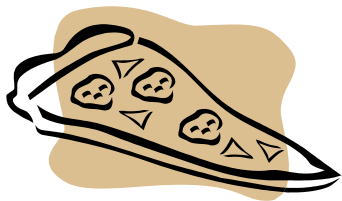
Our energies are large. Our commitment to our field is strong. And we are poised for a prosperity of the most important kind: the continued grounding of our lives, our learning, and our community in the oldest, and newest, academic discipline of all.

*Best wishes,
Joan Woolfrey, Chair*

Forbes, con't

(Continued from page 5)

Dr. Forbes reports that he's still in search of the best pizza in the West Chester area; so far Iron Hill Brewery's brick oven pizza holds the lead.



Porritt, con't

(Continued from page 5)

tion to Philosophy and PHI 174 Principles of the Arts courses. Like David, Annelise also helped her mother during her cancer illness. After Annelise died tragically in a car accident in 2008, Dr. Porritt aspired to preserve

**Chapter of National Students
of Ailing Mothers and Fathers
(AMF) Support Network
founded at WCU**

Annelise's legacy of care at WCU through a program that would directly benefit students. Starting in the fall of 2009 students can attend bereavement support groups co-facilitated by student peers who have studied the value of grief within a fully engaged, ethical life.

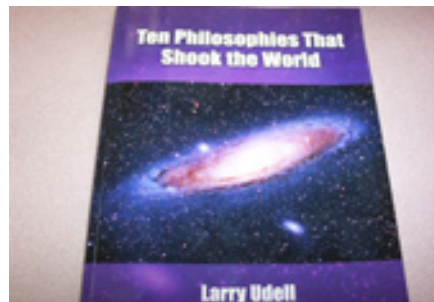
Instructor Larry Udell Publishes a Textbook!

Congratulations are due to Larry Udell, who has published a textbook, listed on Amazon, through Kendall Hunt Publishing. Intended for introductory philosophy classes, the book contains excerpts from Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Adam Smith, Hume, and Marx—along with a helpful introduction by the author.

In the preface, Dr. Udell notes: "If you

look through the contents of this book, you are likely to encounter names you have run across before. There is a reason for this: every one of the philosophies in this book played a major role in the development of Western culture. This is important to note, for people sometimes think of philosophers as engaged with quaint and curious arguments that have little to do with the way we actually think and live."

Shh, Larry, you'll blow our cover!



You're All Invited in April!! WCU's Philosophy Department is hosting the PA State System's religion and philosophy conference this coming April—open to all, applications by past students encouraged! Do you have a paper in a drawer and a yen to visit the old alma mater? Or maybe just a yen to visit looking for an occasion! Drop in for a weekend! Contact Helen Schroepfer at hschroepfer@wcupa.edu for details.



Please send email addresses and updated mailing addresses to rsykes@wcupa.edu. And, don't forget to look for us on Facebook at **Philosophy@West Chester**.

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For the Love of Wisdom.

http://wcupa.edu/_academics/sch_cas.ph/

Philosophy Student is Commencement Speaker!

Graduating Senior Larry Tamaccio. Student Speaker for December 2008 Commencement



Excerpts from Larry's Commencement Speech follow:

"Ralph Waldo Emerson has said 'Do not follow where the path may lead. Go in-

stead, where there is no path and leave a trail.'

"These words speak to the explorer within each of us. That noble spirit within every human heart which directs us towards greatness even in the face of overwhelming odds. . . .

"....West Chester has provided me with direction. West Chester has provided me with drive, and, most importantly, at a time in my life when I didn't know which way was up and which was down, this university, these fine people, all of you, provided me the greatest gift that one can give; confidence. . . ."

Some of you might find his account of wandering into our philosophy department familiar:

"It took me a long time to find my way to the philosophy department at WCU. As a wide eyed first year student, I could not decide upon a path of study so I set out upon an exploratory expedition of sorts—taking classes from many different disciplines. Gradually, I found myself drawn to the philosophy department and it was there that I finally found what I was looking for: a discipline that *actually* encourages you to question and explore."

The entire speech is available at http://www.wcupa.edu/_ACADEMICS/sch_cas.ph/Tamaccio.htm Find other student comments on our website as well.