Spring Greetings from the GW Philosophy Department! We have just finished another busy semester, which culminated with a departmental celebration on Saturday, May 18th in the lovely Smith Center Art Gallery in honor of our May 2013 BA and MA graduates and their families (please see the photos below from the party as well as the picture of our graduating BA students just before we were called to march in the CCAS graduation ceremony). We especially welcome our newly minted philosophy graduates to their first alumni newsletter!

As you can tell from the pages that follow, we had many terrific activities going on in the department this spring, including not only our annual Thacher and Goutman Lectures and our undergraduate philosophy conference, but also a University-wide reception in January in honor of our new Emeritus University Professor of Philosophy Peter Caws. I am happy to report that Peter has not really left us even though he is officially retired, since he will be returning this fall to the Mount Vernon Campus to teach one course each year for the GW Honors Program.

One new piece of information that was formally announced after the Board of Trustees met during the graduation weekend is that our dear colleague, resident logician, and philosopher of mathematics, Dr. Michèle Friend, has received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of Philosophy. This is indeed wonderful news for Michèle as well as for the department! With Michèle’s promotion, we will have two senior women in the philosophy department for the first time in GW’s history, and I, for one, could not be more pleased. We will also be welcoming a new Assistant Professor of Philosophy to our department this fall, Dr. Laura Papish (you can learn more about Laura’s background and philosophical interests in the faculty updates section). Laura is a Kant scholar as well as a moral philosopher who gave terrific research and teaching presentations during her on-campus interview earlier this spring. We are very excited to have her join our ranks! (continued next page)
Letter from the Chair (cont’d)

We hope you enjoy reading this Spring 2013 newsletter and we encourage you to stay connected with us. Please come and visit when you are in town. We always welcome our alumni at departmental lectures and we will be sending out information within the next couple of months about our first Sophia Lecture in Philosophy and our annual Elton Lecture, both of which will take place this fall. These two lectures will be tied to themes discussed in the two fall 2013 proseminars we will be offering to our junior and senior philosophy majors: Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s (1945) Phenomenology of Perception (taught by yours truly) and Human Rights: Reality and Justification (offered by Paul Churchill).

Last, but not least, I would like to thank our newest member of the department, Amanda McLaughlin, who was hired in January as the Executive Aide for the Philosophy Department. This is Amanda’s first time putting together our department newsletter. I’m sure you will agree that she has done a magnificent job!

All the best,
Gail Weiss

Spring 2013 Events

Goutman Lecture

John Stuhr, Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and American Studies and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Emory University, delivered the annual Goutman Lecture, which is supported by gifts from Thomas Goutman, on April 26, 2013. Professor Stuhr is the editor of a philosophy journal and two book series, the author or editor of a dozen books, and has won several teaching awards. Professor Stuhr’s most recent books, Pragmatism, Postmodernism and the Future of Philosophy and 100 Years of Pragmatism, lend to the content his lecture entitled “Pragmatism about God, Death and the Absurd.” Here is the abstract for his talk:

This lecture addresses a cluster of unavoidable questions that face everyone and that have troubled thinkers across the history of philosophy: Is life worth living? If so, why? Must human beings have faith in an omnipotent, omniscient being to render life meaningful? Is belief in God ultimately pragmatic, or does it run counter to a robust pragmatism and an honest naturalism? In responding to these questions, John Stuhr weaves together themes from American pragmatism, French existentialism, poetry, and pop music.

2013 Undergraduate Conference

The Philosophy Club held their annual undergraduate conference on Friday, March 1st, 2013. The itinerary filled the afternoon with a packed schedule of nine talks, including two students from GW who presented their work, Nimisha Jain on “Maternity Leave for Career Oriented Women” and Meagan Simons on “The Ethical Issues of DDT Use in Combatting Malaria.” The Philosophy Club extends a hearty thank you to all the participants and looks forward to another successful event next year!
Thacher Lecture

Kristin Andrews, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Cognitive Science Program at York University, delivered the annual Thacher Lecture, which is supported by gifts from Michael Thacher, on March 22, 2013. Professor Andrews has recently published a book, Do Apes Read Minds? Toward a New Folk Psychology (2012), and has published over twenty-five articles in numerous journals. Her Thacher Lecture was entitled “The Origin of Mindreading” and the abstract for her talk appears below:

On most views, the evolutionary origins of “mindreading” are traced to adaptive advantages derived from better behavioral prediction: hominins that were better than others at predicting behavior had advantages in social interactions, e.g., they could deceive better. I argue against this view. Linking the origins of mindreading to behavioral prediction gives rise to the so-called “logical problem” in comparative and developmental studies of social cognition: there is no way to distinguish behavioral prediction based on mindreading from behavioral prediction based on sophisticated behavior reading. Instead of a behavioral prediction function, I argue that mindreading makes more sense as a part of justificatory projects that arise in the context of primitive, community building norms.

DC Ethics Bowl

This past year, Sam James and Landon Elkind volunteered as assistant coaches for the newly-formed Ethics Bowl team at the School Without Walls, the DC public high school located on our Foggy Bottom campus. Ethics Bowls are ethics debate tournaments in which students argue a case from whatever position they believe to be right rather than being assigned positions; both teams may argue the same side so that the teams focus more on developing their own position rather than demolishing an opponent.

The team’s first year was quite successful: the School Without Walls students won the regional competition and they competed in the National competition. Sam and Landon would like to thank Kerry Sylvia, the team’s coach and an instructor at School Without Walls, for allowing assistant coaches to tag along. Most especially, they would like to thank the students who showed their commitment by meeting after school multiple times, and made the experience enjoyable and edifying for their student coaches.

Online Education is a hot topic these days, and the Department has been very active in pursuing online summer options to benefit our students. Our online courses combine narrated visual presentations, multimedia, interactive exercises, discussion boards, blogs, wikis, and other elements. Students receive credit for courses that can be taken from anywhere in the world, on their own schedule. Paul Churchill and Megan Davis were the pioneers in the Department, having already developed and taught online courses in Social & Political Philosophy (PHIL 2132W) and Philosophy of Race and Gender (PHIL 2125W), respectively. This summer Michael Sigrist will teach an online version of Social and Political Philosophy.
Spring 2013 Events (con’t)

Jeff Brand (Associate Professor) was on leave in 2012-13 as a visiting scholar in the Department of Bioethics, National Institutes of Health. He worked on several projects this year, including a paper about consequentialism and health outcome measures and another paper about efforts to debunk moral intuitions via empirical evidence from neuroscience and evolutionary psychology. He also finished a sole-authored textbook in legal philosophy for Bloomsbury Publishing (London) and wrote book reviews for the Philosophical Review, the Journal of Moral Philosophy, and Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews. He is excited about teaching his ethics class this summer, which will be entirely online for the first time.

Robert Paul Churchill’s (Professor) major research focus continues to be on human rights and gender violence for a book tentatively titled “Women in the Crossfire.” He received a summer grant from Columbian College to support his research including funds to support a student research assistant. Paul presented two papers related to his research: a paper on honor killings was presented at the annual conference of Concerned Philosophers for Peace at Mercer University in October and this April Paul was invited to be the inaugural honors conference speaker at the College of Saint Rose in Albany. His paper for Saint Rose was on human rights violations against women. In addition, Paul gave a paper at the Society for Value Inquiry at the American Philosophical Association meetings on ethical issues related to massive open online courses (MOOCs). He has been elected president of the Society for Value Inquiry beginning in 2013 and Paul has been invited to present the Founder’s Lecture this July at the twentieth annual meeting of the Society for Contemporary Philosophy, an organization he cofounded and directed for its first six years. At GW Paul offered a brand new Dean’s Seminar on The Philosophy of Human Rights, and as faculty advisor for Banaa, he was instrumental in the University’s admission of a new Banaa scholar, Jacob Mator Aketch, beginning fall semester 2013.

David DeGrazia (Professor) completed his twenty-fourth and final year as a full-time member of the GW faculty. Starting in July, Prof. DeGrazia will be working 60% time at the Department of Bioethics, NIH as Senior Research Scholar while retaining a part-time position as Professor of Philosophy here at GW. This semester David taught a new course, Biomedical Ethics, for the M.A. program in Philosophy and Social Policy; he also continued as (interim) Director of the program and greatly enjoyed working with the M.A. students. David gave several talks: “On the Ethics of Gun Ownership” at George Mason University,
“Moral Enhancement and Biomedical Means” at NIH; and “Reflections on Procreative Responsibilities,” the Keynote Address for the annual graduate student conference at SUNY Albany. As for research, he focused primarily on the ethics of gun ownership and gun control, with two articles taking shape for submission to journals. He also completed an essay, “On the Nature of Human Death,” for an anthology, The Philosophy of Life and Death, which will be published by Cambridge University Press next year. An essay completed last semester, “Moral Enhancement, Freedom, and What We (Should) Value in Moral Behaviour,” was published as the feature article of an issue of Journal of Medical Ethics and followed by four commissioned commentaries. Safeguarding Children: Pediatric Medical Countermeasure Research, the report on which he worked in 2012 for President Obama’s bioethics commission, was published in March. David is looking forward to closer ties between GW’s Department of Philosophy and NIH’s Department of Bioethics as he continues with the former unit and joins the latter.

Jason Fisette (Lecturer) is presenting a paper, ”Hume on Secondary Qualities in a Corpuscular Age,” at the 40th International Hume Society Conference, which will be held this July at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. This paper was awarded a Hume Society Young Scholar Award by the conference organizers. Jason read an earlier version of this paper at one of the department’s brownbag colloquium events last fall, and would like to thank all the participants for their helpful comments. Jason extends a special thanks to the Department of Philosophy, and the Columbian College, for their generous financial support of his travel to Brazil.

Michele Friend’s (Assistant Professor) new book: Pluralism in Mathematics: A New Philosophical Position is in its final stages of publication. It’s coming out with Springer as part of the series: Logic, Epistemology and the Unity of Science. Last fall, she gave a talk at a conference in Hungary on the epistemological significance of a Hungarian project (Andréka, Madarász Németi and Sékely) to formally present the special and general theories of relativity. The paper underlying the presentation has been submitted to the conference proceedings. At the same conference she met with a co-writer of a paper on giving a fully mathematical explanation for a physical theory. Having worked on the paper at the conference and after the conference, she has just submitted the paper for review, and the authors are quite excited about it. It is quite revolutionary, since the philosophical literature in this area is debating whether mathematics can play any explanatory role for individual physical phenomena, let alone whole theories. Michele developed and taught a new course this year: an undergraduate course on the philosophy of the environment. In it, she addresses the problem that humans in the economically developed world have encountered in our relationship to the environment: using up finite resources, polluting, overfishing, causing climate change, etc. Then three solutions were explored: the technical, the socio-cultural and the economic solutions. In the summer, she will be giving two presentations: one in Evora (Portugal) at the Logic Colloquium, on the dialectical use of formal logical systems, the other in Irkutsk (Russia) at the conference run by the Russian Society for Ecological Economics. The latter presentation will be on the use of the formal logic of partial information to help with some problems identified in the literature on ecological economics, such as the Jevons paradox.

Mark Ralkowski (Assistant Professor) recently finished an article for an encyclopedia of philosophy. It is called “On Becoming What We Are: Heidegger’s Philosophies of Education” and it will appear in a forthcoming SAGE volume sometime in 2014. He is currently finishing an article on Plato’s Symposium, a book review for Ancient Philosophy, a second encyclopedia entry on Sartre’s concept of “Bad Faith,” and a proposal for a book project on Socrates and the existentialist tradition he helped inspire. Professor Ralkowski just completed his first year as a faculty member living in residence on the Mount Vernon Campus. He lives with freshmen in one of the MVC dorms, and he is very involved in student life at GW, going on hikes and GW Trails trips, taking students to museums and inviting them over to
Faculty News (con’t)

his apartment for dinner as well as philosophical movies and discussion.

Eric Saidel (Assistant Professor) has had an active spring, presenting papers at the meeting of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology in Austin in February and at the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division meeting in San Francisco in March. He’s really excited about returning to his alma mater (Madison) at the end of May to present a paper at a conference honoring Elliott Sober. Saidel has also spent this spring developing an online logic course to be offered this summer.

Gail Weiss (Professor and Chair) gave a keynote presentation at Duquesne University this April for the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center’s 31st Annual Symposium. The theme of this year’s symposium was “Merleau-Ponty into the Future” and her paper was entitled, “The Normal, the Natural, and the Normative: Merleau-Ponty’s Unique Contribution to Feminism, Critical Race Theory, and Disability Studies.” Gail presented a new paper, “Beauvoir, Irigaray, and the Ambiguities of Desire” at the New Directions in Feminist Phenomenology Workshop at the University of Western Ontario in late May and will be delivering three days of lectures at York University as the 2013 Visiting Scholar for the Canadian Hermeneutics Institute in early June. In late March, she completed her duties as chair of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Search Committee and is very pleased that we will be welcoming historian Ben Vinson to GW as our new CCAS Dean in early August! In addition to her position as department chair, Gail continues to serve on the CCAS Chairs Space Planning committee, the CCAS Graduate Advisory committee, the Women’s Studies Executive committee, and the Africana Studies committee. All in all a busy spring at GW! She is looking forward to finishing up the semester and will be working on two new essays this summer, one of which will be presented as the keynote address at the 37th meeting of the International Merleau-Ponty Circle at Fordham University in NYC in September.

Since the last newsletter, Tadeusz Zawidzki’s (Associate Professor) book, Mindshaping: A New Framework for Understanding Human Social Cognition, has come out with MIT Press (May 10). This past semester, Professor Zawidzki took part in The Liberty Fund’s “Liberty & Equality Colloquium” in Tucson, AZ (Jan 17-20, 2013), and presented a paper, “The Myth of Jones Revisited: Our Dennettian Ancestors,” at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology, in Austin Texas (Feb 28-Mar 2). He will present the same paper this summer at a conference to which he has been invited: “Minds in Common: Second Aarhus/Paris Conference on Coordination and Common Ground,” at the Institut Jean-Nicod in Paris (June 25-26, 2013). He has also been invited to present a paper at the 2013 Annual “Kazimierz Naturalism Workshop,” on “Wide Cognition and Social Intelligence,” in Kazimierz Dolny, Poland, Aug 19-23. On the teaching front, Professor Zawidzki just finished teaching his first seminar for the MA in Philosophy and Public Policy, Cognitive Science and Public Policy, as well as his second Senior Proseminar, on Daniel Dennett. In addition to continuing his duties as Faculty Guide for Potomac Residence Hall, member of the Honors Advisory Council, and member of the CCAS Research Advisory Council, this past semester Professor Zawidzki also chaired the Philosophy Department’s successful job search in Ethics and Modern Philosophy, and was a member of the Honors/Anthropology job search committee.

Falguni Sheth taught the Economic Justice graduate seminar this Spring while Professor Griffith recovered! Thank you, Professor Sheth!

Richard Reeves will teach a new graduate course entitled Liberalism and Social Policy for the department this Fall!
Faculty Spotlight

Cameron Bassiri

The GW Philosophy Club has chosen part-time researcher Dr. Cameron Bassiri as the subject for of the Spring 2013 Faculty Profile section of this newsletter. Below, Professor Bassiri responds to questions posed by the Philosophy Club.

Where are you from originally? Where did you grow up? Well, I suppose I have a few origins. My father is from Iran, and on my mother’s side, my grandfather is Danish and my grandmother was Italian. I grew up in Potomac, Maryland, not too far from GW.

Did you always want to do philosophy? When did you start ‘philosophizing’? I actually didn't always know that I wanted to pursue philosophy. I was a soccer player in my former life, and hadn't studied philosophy. However, essentially after the first day of my first philosophy class I knew that I wanted to major in philosophy, and shortly thereafter I knew I wanted to get a PhD and eventually teach.

Where did you attend graduate school? Do you have a best or worst memory (or teacher) from that time? I completed both my MA and my PhD at The New School for Social Research in New York. I have a lot of great memories from graduate school. I suppose as regards my courses, some of my best memories are from a one-year long seminar on Husserl's Logical Investigations, as well as an independent study on Sartre's Being and Nothingness, and a group independent study on the first volume of Sartre's Critique of Dialectical Reason. But I had a lot of fun with friends too in NYC – studying together, going to bars, etc.

How did you end up at GW? I graduated from GW. I stayed in touch with Professor Gail Weiss, and fortunately after I finished my PhD coursework and had the time to begin gaining teaching experience, a course at GW opened up, and I was able to take it.

What are you working on currently? Why are you working on this? Well, I just defended my dissertation, and focused on the themes of time and dreamless sleep in Husserl's phenomenology. I'm hoping to turn certain of the chapters into articles, and of course hope to use it as the basis for a book. I've simply been drawn to these issues. I wrote my MA Thesis on the theme of time in both Husserl and Descartes, and continued my work on this theme in Husserl through pursuing two recently published volumes devoted to the problem of time. I also became interested in the relation...
Faculty Spotlight (con’t)

between time and sleep, specifically dreamless sleep – though I also hope to study the relation between time and dream-filled sleep in the future – and the problems that dreamless sleep poses to Husserl’s work on time and his concept of subjectivity.

Who is your least favorite philosopher(s) and why?

That’s a tough one. I’m not really sure that I have one “favorite” philosopher. I take different things from different thinkers. The easy answer would simply be Husserl, since I wrote my dissertation on him. However, I suppose the other thinker I’ve worked on the most, and is thus my “other favorite,” is Sartre. As I said above, I’m particularly interested in Husserl’s work on time and sleep. And, when it comes to Sartre, I’m interested in his theories of consciousness and freedom from his early work, as well as his novel Nausea. I also have an interest in the later Sartre, namely, the Critique of Dialectical Reason and his work on Flaubert.

Did any particular philosopher have a significant influence on your intellectual development?

I’d say that Sartre and Husserl have had the most influence on my intellectual development, and continue to do so. I’m still working on both of them, and hope to continue doing so in the future. Generally, the areas of phenomenology and existentialism have had the greatest impact on me in general – not just my intellectual development.

If you were in charge of the world for one day, then what do you think you would do first and why?

Now that’s a question. Not sure really. I mean, other than try to save the world? I’d try to help various charities and eliminate student debt. I’m also not so sure I’m qualified – you know quite well that it takes a lifetime to become fit to rule, that is, to become a philosopher king, right? Should I even want to be in charge?

We noticed that you teach Existentialism, and would like to ask: how do you handle the problem of existing?

You mean other than with coffee and Mad Men? I spend my time with this “problem” – whatever that means – working in coffee shops, going to restaurants and bars, etc. I also love traveling.

Keep Us Posted!

Have news that you would like to share with GW Philosophy faculty, students and alumni? Have it published in our Fall 2013 newsletter! Just send your submission via email to Amanda McLaughlin at philosop@gwu.edu

Visiting Researcher

Dr. Abubaker Tallue (Libya) graduated with his BA from the Philosophy department at the University of Tripoli in 1973. He received his MA in Philosophy at the University of Missouri, Columbia, in 1987, and his PhD from Tulane University, Louisiana, in 1984. He was the Chairman of the Philosophy Department at the University of Benghazi, Libya in 1989. Currently, he is a professor of philosophy at the University of Azawia, in Azawia, Libya. He has published a number of books and articles, including Theories of Ethical Behavior, An Introduction to Philosophy, and others.

We also noticed that you recently received your doctorate. Congratulations! How do you feel? Do you have any reflections about the ordeal you would like to share?

Thanks! I’m not really sure how I feel. Kind of can’t believe that it’s complete; it hasn’t sunk in yet. I really enjoyed working on the dissertation. It’s important to love your topic and have a good relationship with your advisor. If you have that, then the work will most likely go well. As far as the actual process of writing it is concerned, I’d say just work on it every day. Once you have a topic and start writing, you really have to work on it constantly until it’s finished.

Do you have any advice for the aspiring philosophers at GW or elsewhere?

Essentially, what I said in the previous response. If you attend graduate school in philosophy, then, in addition to developing a topic of interest – a “passion project” as it’s sometimes referred to – make sure you enjoy the graduate program you attend. Similar to college – location, etc., is important. I’d also encourage the students to study languages. Even if you don’t pursue graduate work in philosophy, it’s important to read some of the material you study in the original to get a true sense of it.
Alumni News

Alumni Spotlight

**Ernest Wolf-Gazo (BA ’69)** received an invitation by Bonn University, Philosophy Institute, Germany, to be Visiting Professor of Philosophy for the Spring Semester 2013. He has started his lectures already with MA and PhD students (of all nationalities, especially German and Chinese) on the subject: “Nature and Aesthetics in the Cosmology of A.N. Whitehead” (in German). They are using his well-known book, *Whitehead: Introduction to his Cosmology* from 1980, which is still in use at German universities. He recently returned from professional visits to Ankara and Afyon Universities in Turkey, where he was a Distinguished Lecturer delivering lectures on Egypt and its Revolution. He sends best wishes to all GWU philosophy students and colleagues. Chair’s note: Professor Wolf-Gazo also gave a Philosophy Brown Bag presentation to department faculty and students in March on the Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt which he witnessed firsthand.

**Chelsea A. Allinger (MA ’10)** will start a new role in Washington, DC, in June as Director of Communications at the Center for Community Progress, a national organization dedicated to revitalizing vacant and blighted properties in cities across the country through policy development, technical assistance, research, and advocacy. For the past two years, Allinger has worked in development and communications at a community development corporation in Brooklyn, New York. She is continually grateful for her graduate school experiences. The Philosophy and Social Policy program gave her the flexibility to design a degree around her passions, and spending those years in Washington, D.C., allowed her to build invaluable professional networks. She continues to use the knowledge she learned in her courses, and her career would not be where it is today if it wasn’t for the PSP program.

Elizabeth W. McBride (BA ’85) graduated from GW with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 1985. She obtained a J.D. from GW Law School in 1988. She is a family law attorney practicing with Page, Scrantom, Sprouse, Tucker & Ford, P.C. in Columbus, Georgia, the hometown of her husband, Gil McBride (BA ’84), who also graduated from GW undergrad in 1984 with a degree in American Literature. Gil later became a lawyer and is now a Judge of Superior Court, Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit in Georgia. They have four children ranging in ages from 7 to 19.

Neil Aresty (BA ’76, MA ’80) is currently maintaining a private law practice and consultancy in the area of electronic evidence and discovery under the business name, Aresty Associates.

Student News

**From our MA students in Philosophy in Social Policy:**

Elliot Schreur was recently offered a position as a policy analyst at the New America Foundation’s Asset Building Program. He will be researching and writing on policies that affect the assets of low- and middle-income Americans, such as retirement savings, college tuition, home ownership, and government assistance programs.

**From our undergraduate students:**

Sarah Holmes presented a paper entitled “National Security Exceptionalism, within and without the ‘Five Eyes’ Community” at the University of Maryland’s Undergraduate Research Symposium on May 3, 2013. This paper addresses the philosophical underpinnings of the Five Eyes community, a group comprised of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

**Save the Date**

**September 26—29, 2013**

Reconnect, Reunite, and Reminisce

**GW Alumni Weekend** 2013
Student News (con’t)

United Kingdom, and the United States. The Five Eyes are close allies, but they also share intelligence with one another, effectively divvying up their intelligence collection and analysis efforts in order to cover the entire globe. They strive to liaise and collaborate more effectively with one another. However, while all of this sounds great, it can lead to problems. While one might hope that an arrangement such as this one could lead to increased transparency, legitimacy, and accountability at all levels of government, this is not the case. There’s nothing fundamentally problematic with the Five Eyes, but in its current state it often undermines these principles rather than embracing them. In particular, the biggest players in the community are prone to using it as cover for actions not condoned by the international community at large. We can resolve this issue through policy, but for real change to occur we need to change the way member nations think of their place in the global order. Sarah works for a local defense contractor, and this project is in many ways a melding of her academic and professional interests. It is a work in progress, and she looks forward to developing it further. She would like to send a big thanks to Dr. Churchill for acting as her advisor during this project!

From Jamie Fisher-Hertz, who is currently majoring in International Affairs:

The Banaa Scholarship Program is pleased to announce the admittance of a new scholar to George Washington University for the upcoming school year! Banaa provides outstanding Sudanese and South Sudanese survivors of atrocity committed to peace-building with full scholarships at universities in the United States. Upon the completion of their degree, Banaa scholars are expected to return to Sudan and South Sudan with the skills necessary to peacefully address the complexities of the war-torn region. Last year, the first Banaa scholar, Makwei Mabioor Deng, graduated from GW with a degree in Philosophy and Economics. He returned to South Sudan last August, and has since been working as the Country Fellow for the IGC, an economic and academic think tank, conducting research and policy analysis for the government of South Sudan. Jacob Mator Aketch was selected to be GW’s second Banaa scholar as part of the class of 2017, and will begin studying engineering this fall. Ultimately, he hopes to leverage his education to work to develop infrastructure in Sudan when he returns to his home country. Other Banaa scholars are beginning or continuing studies at the University of Rochester in New York.

Banaa is based at The George Washington University and, since its founding in 2005, has been facilitated by GW students. At the heart of Banaa is the idea that students and young people are able to use university resources to create peaceful change. While host universities commit to providing tuition, room, and board for the scholars they admit, Banaa is responsible for fund-raising to cover the cost of countless other aspects of the program, including a living stipend for the scholar, travel expenses, and other costs. Banaa also welcomes in-kind donations for items useful to scholars, such as winter coats, laptops, and cell phones.

The student members of Banaa ran the first ever Banaa Summer Summit, hosted at GW last summer, which is to become an annual event. Banaa partnered with DC NGOs including The United States Institute for Peace, The National Democratic Institute, and The ENOUGH Project, to provide scholars with several days of workshops centering around peace-building and conflict resolution skills. Scholars also honed public speaking skills during the Summit, working with professional facilitators to develop their incredibly powerful stories of self as tools for peace-building. This year, the Summer Summit is scheduled to take place at GW in August. For more information on any aspect of the Banaa program, including the Summit, the application process and existing scholars, and fund-raising or donating to Banaa, please visit www.banaa.org or email info@banaa.org.

The students work with a board of advisors made up of professors and professionals whose work or experience in some way relates to peace-building. Among them is our own Paul Churchill, who regularly teaches a course in the philosophy of nonviolence, and who has published research concerning peaceful conflict resolution abroad.
Recent Graduates

The department would like to congratulate the following individuals who graduated with BAs and MAs in Philosophy in the Spring and Summer of 2013:

Malena Bell  
Matthew Calardo  
Lawrence Caldwell  
Christian Diehl  
Alexander Douglas  
Landon Elkind  
Jonathan Goulart  
Alek Hannessian  
Jordan Hill  
Sarah Holmes  
Katherine Hurrelbrink  
Samuel James  
Alexander Kavteladze  
Jeremiah Kirstein  
Douglas Kulchar  
Kris Ledins  
Joanna Nicoletti  
Alexander Northover  
Andrew Nye  
Charles O’Connor IV  
Jerome Pierce  
Elliot Reaven  
Christiaan Reynolds  
Daniel Rice  
Elliot Schreur  
Thomas Stonitsch  
Travis Thibodeau
A Year of Brown Bags
The department hosted ten brown bags this year. All presenters are affiliated with the University unless otherwise noted. For more information, or to read the available papers please visit our [website](https://www.gwu.edu/online_giving).

September 14, 2012: Richard Reeves, senior fellow at The Brookings Institution and a professorial lecturer for Fall 2013, presented “Why Liberals Hold the Moral High Ground.”


October 5, 2012: Eric Saidel presented “Through the Looking Glass, and what we (don’t) find there.”


November 30, 2012: Mark Ralkowski presented “Heidegger’s Platonic Critique of Modernity.”


March 29, 2013: Ernest Wolf-Gazo, BA ’69, presented on the Arab spring uprisings in Egypt, which he witnessed first-hand.


April 19, 2013: Andrea Pedeperoni presented “Better to call a Mathematician a Pluralist than a Formalist.”

May 3, 2013: Dr. Abubaker Tallue, Visiting Researcher from Libya, presented “Philosophy and Practice.”

Donations
December 15, 2012 - May 1, 2013
The department gratefully acknowledges the following individuals who have made recent donations:

- Ms. Nicole A. Barrett, CCAS MA ’12
- Chevron Matching Gift Program
- Ms. Heather L. Fink, CCAS BA ’03
- Mr. Thomas M. Goutman, CCAS BA ’76
- Ms. Brook Jenkins Sadler, CCAS BA ’93
- Mr. Richard B. Sher, CCAS BA ’70
- Ms. Elizabeth St. J. Loker, CCAS BA ’69
- Mr. Aloysius Stonitsch
- Mr. Michael W. Thacher, CCAS BA ’70
- Ms. Helen Witt
- Ms. Jessica A. Yager, CCAS BA ’10

Credits
This issue of the GW Department of Philosophy Newsletter was edited by our Executive Aide, Amanda McLaughlin, with assistance from Professor Weiss, Landon Elkind, and Blair Bainbridge. The design of the newsletter was created by Julia Louie.