

## News from Alumni

Many thanks to those of you who liked our Facebook page. Keep your own comments coming! (On Facebook, simply search for Oberlin Philosophy). If you're not a Facebook fan but would like to share news, please email the newsletter editor: Katherine.Thomson-Jones@oberlin.edu.

**Kurt Beals '02** completed his PhD in German literature at the University of California, Berkeley, and will be starting a job as assistant professor of German at Washington University in St. Louis in the fall.

**Karen Bennett '93** writes: "I am an associate professor of philosophy at Cornell, though going up for full professor next year. In 2012-13, I worked on two big projects: 1) my book, *Making Things Up*, which is under contract with Oxford University Press, and 2) my daughter, Lila, who was born in May 2012. Both are interesting, but Lila is probably more fun. She is certainly messier."

**Don Baxter '76** is completing his first year as philosophy department head at the University of Connecticut. He asks that we look for an anthology in metaphysics he co-edited with Aaron Cotnoir (St. Andrews University) entitled *Composition as Identity*, due out from Oxford University Press later this year.

**Bill Bigelow '63** tells us of his most interesting philosophy news: his recent discovery of the works of Slavoj Žižek. "Are you familiar?" he asks, "He's quite interesting and surprising!"

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## A Note from the Editor

by Katherine Thomson-Jones

**A**s we come to the end of another full and rewarding academic year, it is time to take stock and reconnect. Thank you to all the alumni who have sent in their news; it is wonderful to hear about everything that life after Oberlin has to offer.

In department news, our course selection for the year was nicely balanced both in terms of level and subject matter. We offered three of our standard introductory courses—two with a focus on value questions as well as several sections of Problems in Philosophy. The college's First-Year Seminar Program also introduced some students to philosophy, thanks to Dorit Ganson's course on Rationality, Objectivity, and Truth in Science. The department offered two courses in logic, one in formal and one in informal logic; and, three courses in the history of philosophy—modern philosophy, 19th-century philosophy, and 20th-century Continental philosophy. Our other core courses were in the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language, biomedical ethics, the philosophy of law, philosophy of mind, and the philosophy of music. Finally, we offered two advanced seminars, one on perception and one on representation in science.

The importance of a full and varied course selection is now even greater due to changes in the philosophy major that follow a college-wide change to the course-credit system. In an effort to support and encourage the combination of philosophy with other majors, students can now choose a particular focus for their philosophy degree course—by taking more philosophy courses dealing with value questions and the arts, for instance, or more philosophy courses deal-

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## The Magic Summer of '66

by Peter Miller '67

**W**ith a title sounding as evocative as "The Magic Summer of '66" you might suppose I'd be referring to something in the nature of an intimate personal awakening. And, indeed, the honors program that summer afforded not just the singular experience of reading a Platonic dialogue with the commitment and sharp analytical guidance of Norman Care or the political and historical richness of Wilson Carey McWilliams or the classical brilliance and humble Socratic presence of Nathan Greenberg, any one of which would have been an education of note—the combined occasion of all three was truly a dream made in Oberlin.

Though I probably couldn't articulate it at the time, this was to be a founding experience in my journey to define my role in the world. Just as Strauss and Cropsey's *History of Political Philosophy* includes chapters on the all the great theorists as taken

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## THE MAGIC SUMMER OF '66, cont.

up by their various students, so would I contribute a chapter to Wolin and Schaar's *History* composed of chapters by Berkeley School of Political Theorists, clearly more eclectic and politically wise. I was going to be the academic/departmental philosopher in this school of theory and practice. I was at Oberlin that summer to start my study and work on John Rawls and the contrast in conception of the state of nature and political education with Jean-Jacques Rousseau that would be completed by graduation at the end of the next academic year.

My path was further set eight years later with my doctoral qualifying essay on John Dewey at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where the Berkeley Political Theorists had gone after their purge, my journey extended, modified, and deferred by plans in light of the Vietnam War. I

would be writing the Dewey chapter in the textbook, one that would revitalize the connections of "The American Philosopher" to both political theory—and practice—and to academic philosophy, along with the American Hegelian mo[ve]ment.

Alas, my 1975 work lay fallow down through the decades, though its vision continued to influence what would become my life's work in community media and technology, at periods racing round the country setting up community technology centers/CTCs, some like "The Bridge" on Main Street in Oberlin, the experience of the summer of '66 and the promise of '75 well integrated through all but explicitly laid aside and forgotten. That is, until some chance exchanges at the Oberlin '67 cluster reunion in 2008 led to a paper on "Oberlin College and the Berkeley School of Political

Theory" and the completion of my dissertation in political theory and community technology, pulling lots of pieces nicely together.

It has not quite been the career path I had once envisioned. But then, again, for those of us fortunate enough to go through Oberlin in the 1960s, or perhaps most any time, whose career path is ever a clear or traditional one? Attending my 45th reunion this May, I was pleased to stop by the philosophy open house and share some stories with the collegial attendees, students, other alums, faculty old and new. I hope to do so again at my 50th in a few years.

NOTE: ALMOST ALL PAPERS NOTED  
HERE ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
PETERBMILLER.WORDPRESS.COM.

## EDITOR'S NOTE, cont.

ing with questions about mind and the world. Along with the traditional option for a general philosophy degree, we hope that the new major will attract the most reflective students with a wide variety of interests and ambitions.

While the day-to-day business of teaching and research occupied each of us in the department, we were collectively and expertly represented to the college by our new (and first-ever female) chair, Dorit Ganson. Dorit gave a most gracious address at a recent reception celebrating David Bayless' endowment of a faculty support fund in the name of Al MacKay, emeritus department member. For more on David Bayless '72 and his generous support of the college, see below.

In years like this one, which fall between meetings of the biennial Oberlin Colloquium, Martin Thomson-Jones organizes our departmental speaker series. This year's series was no exception to the record in its high quality and rich variety. In the fall, we had talks from

Declan Smithies (Ohio State University), on the relationship between consciousness and cognition, and from Owen Flanagan (Duke University), on life as a performance. In the spring, we had talks from Ram Neta (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), on the nature of inference, from Robert Stecker (Central Michigan University) on the relation between aesthetic and artistic value, and from Carl Hofer (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), on the relation between causation and probability-raising.

Next year, we will be hosting the 41st Oberlin Colloquium in Philosophy with a focus on metaphysics. The colloquium's organizers, Kate and Martin Thomson-Jones, are very excited about the program they have put together.

Below you will find more news, from individual faculty members, alumni, and graduating students, as well as information about student achievements and specific department events. Happy reading, and have a wonderful year.

## 2013 Graduates

### *Philosophy Majors:*

(William) Austin Emerson\*  
Alexander Lykoudis\*  
Evan Baker  
Kevin Gilfether  
Stephan Goodwin  
Hana Jimenez  
Peter Meckel  
Justin Murphy-Mancini  
William Shenton  
Leigh Smith  
Maxwell Sugarman  
Robert (Chip)  
Williams

\*December graduate

### *Philosophy Minors:*

Charlotte Donnelly  
Charlie Hartford  
Daniela Medrano  
Jack Mintz  
Violet Peña  
Elizabeth Ross  
Benjamin Schild  
Anrey Wang  
Emily Whitaker  
Amy Wiltzius  
Ian Wood  
Max Zahn  
Zoe Zetlin

## FACULTY NEWS

**Dorit Ganson** was busy in her first year as chair of the philosophy department. She delivered an invited talk last spring at the Pacific APA in San Francisco, “The Bayesian Critique of Dogmatist and Evidentialist Responses to Skepticism.” In the paper she defends the idea that you can newly gain an epistemic reason to outright believe, even when your rational degree of credence goes down. She introduces an example, *Joe the Plumber and the Cruise Ship Murder*, inspired by Kate and Martin’s entertaining tales of their cruise ship vacation over winter break. She served as a referee for *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, and *Philosophers Imprint* this past year, and enjoyed advising Kevin Gilfether’s honors project on thought experiments in philosophy. Now that her parents have settled in to their new home in Oberlin, she has been able to take her mom to lots of concerts, including the wonderful senior recitals in composition and organ of Justin Murphy-Mancini, who is one of our graduating seniors in philosophy.

**Todd Ganson** has been spending a lot of time thinking about perception and the meaning of life. A paper co-

authored by former Oberlin student Ben Bronner, titled “Visual Prominence and Representationalism,” appeared in *Philosophical Studies*. Todd has another paper titled “Are Color Experiences Representational?” forthcoming in that same journal. Todd also has a paper forthcoming in *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research* with the title “Burge’s Defense of Perceptual Content.” The paper was co-authored with two former Oberlin students: Alex Kerr and Ben Bronner. Ben and Todd also completed two other papers: “Skepticism about Meaning in Life” and “A Deflationary Approach to Illusion.” These two papers are currently under review at top philosophy journals. Todd is currently writing a paper on the concept of a sense with two former Oberlin students: Robert Williams (aka “Chip”) and Ben Bronner. As a teacher, Todd is spending a lot of time making slides as he switches to using PowerPoint more and more in the classroom. Next year he has a research leave during which he plans to do a lot of reading on perception.

**Tim Hall** taught four sections of Philosophy 121, Philosophy and Morality, this past year and thus oversaw a great

number of introductions to philosophy. In addition, he taught a section of Philosophy 235, Biomedical Ethics, in the spring. Tim reports that the pleasures of philosophical conversation are, as he recalled, great with a great number of interlocutors.

Tim also gave a couple of invited lectures this past year. In November, he delivered “How There Can Be a Right to Bear Arms?” at the University of Madison, Wisconsin, as part of a broader conference on gun policy. In April he gave a lecture at Trinity University entitled, “Occasioning Crime, Libertarian Property, and Agency.” Both lectures addressed, at different levels of abstraction, the moral status of behaviors that might occasion crime. Tim reports intensive discussion on these topics of contemporary controversy.

Madeline Hall, Tim’s Timneh African Grey parrot companion, appeared occasionally in philosophy classes this school year. Madeline continues to perform speech acts and various inscrutable acts of cognition. Maddie enjoyed her occasional forays into philosophical conversation, Tim reports, punctuating her superiority over humans with displays of flight.

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## SOME OF OUR GRADUATES’ FUTURE PLANS

**Austin Emerson** writes: “After a nourishing four years spent molding his brain in the rarefied air of the Oberlin intellectual environment, Austin Emerson will seek wisdom on the open road—in the hills of northern Spain, the beaches of Greece, and the peninsulas of Mexico. He plans on traveling for the next year or so, with no foreseeable plans after that.”

**Kevin Gilfether** will be attending Tufts University’s science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) elementary education program. He’ll be doing his student teaching in Cambridge, Mass., at the King Open Elementary School.

**Patrick Haggerty** will be attending the PhD program in math at Indiana University.

**Will Shenton** writes: “I am extremely fortunate in that I actually have a job lined up! Starting in August, I’ll be working

as a communications associate for Blue Oak School in Napa, Calif. It’s a small, private K-8 school, and I’ll be managing web content, writing articles, taking pictures, and doing general graphic design/layout work for their pamphlets, internal documents, and whatnot. I can’t wait to get started, as northern California is one of my absolute favorite places in the world, and it’s been too long since I spent time out there.”

**Chip Williams** writes: “I plan on returning to North Carolina to find gainful employment doing something or other, before applying to philosophy graduate programs in the fall. With my philosophy degree in hand, I’ll enjoy explaining to strangers and members of the extended family alike what I ‘plan on doing with that,’ and I look forward to basking newt-like in the warm glow of their approval as I reveal my plans to spend several years in pursuit of another, bigger philosophy degree.”

## FACULTY NEWS, cont.

Tim wishes our alumni well and he looks forward to hearing from Oberlin philosophers over the coming year.

**Peter McInerney** taught a full range of courses in 2012-13, including 19th Century Philosophy, 20th Century Continental Philosophy, and Philosophy of Mind.

His research concerns the interaction of scientific claims (from psychology, behavioral economics, and neuroscience) about the workings of human psychological systems with philosophical and commonsense conceptions of these matters in ethics, practical reasoning, and philosophy of mind. He is particularly interested in the extent to which people can exercise conscious control over what happens in their own minds. He has written several articles concerning various ways in which reflective activity can affect automatic, non-reflective mental happenings. Since some of his courses cover topics in these areas, there is a nice fit of research for publication purposes with research for

teaching purposes.

He stopped flying small planes a number of years ago, but he still plays basketball and tennis. His wife and daughter are doing well.

In the fall **Kate Thomson-Jones** taught the Philosophy of Music and a section of her introductory course, The Nature of Value. Both courses were considerably re-worked from previous years' offerings, and particularly in Philosophy of Music, Kate learnt a great deal from her students (including why she should care more about jazz!).

In January, Kate began her ACLS-sponsored research leave with a month-long visit to the Humanities Collective at UC Irvine (accompanied by Martin and their daughter, Orla). While there, she gave a talk to a diverse audience on the aesthetic implications of digital movie projection. Work on this talk served as a useful bridge between Kate's earlier research in the philosophy of film and her current book project on digital art.

In Irvine, Kate also talked to a number of digital media scholars, toured various art museums, and spent as much time as possible outdoors with Orla.

Since returning to Oberlin, Kate has been writing furiously about digital images. She spent the summer in Montreal, visiting the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture at Concordia University. While there, she engaged with the work of digital scholars and artists, while enjoying francophone culture and city life with Martin and Orla. Upon her return from Montreal in August, Kate took up a short residency at the Allen Memorial Art Museum. With the support of an Andrew Mellon AMAM Summer Curriculum Grant, Kate is looking for ways to incorporate the Allen's collection into her teaching of a new seminar, to be offered in Spring 2014, on Realism and Representation in Art.

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## ENDOWMENTS

The philosophy department was delighted to learn in the spring that David Bayless '72 is endowing a faculty support fund in the name of emeritus faculty member Al MacKay. The fund is to support faculty in philosophy and the humanities with expenses related to research, travel, journal subscriptions, and other such activities and programs that will enhance the faculty experience at Oberlin.

David is a partner in the San Francisco office of the law firm Covington & Burling, which he joined in 2007. His practice focuses on SEC enforcement work, internal investigations, and private securities class action litigation. He represents public companies, their directors, and senior management. He has extensive experience in SEC investigations involving financial reporting and accounting fraud allegations, stock option backdating and insider trading.

He also represents mortgage-backed securities broker-dealers, investment advisers and their employees in investigations by the SEC and FINRA.

Before training in law, David completed a PhD in philosophy at Cambridge University and taught in the philosophy department at the University of Notre Dame for two years.

At a philosophy department reception in his honor, David spoke of the importance of his Oberlin philosophical training, particularly with Al MacKay, for his success in practicing law. As he explained, philosophy and litigation are both concerned with language and the structure of arguments even if the ends of the latter are rather more practical than those of the former. As our chair, Dorit Ganson, conveyed so well in her address at the reception, the philosophy department is deeply grateful for David's support.



*David Bayless '72 (center) with Al and Anne MacKay*



*From left to right: Al MacKay (emeritus faculty), David Bayless '72, Dan Merrill (emeritus faculty).*



## FACULTY NEWS, cont.

In 2012-13, **Martin Thomson-Jones** taught Philosophy of Science, Deductive Logic, and a seminar entitled “Representation in Science.” He also had the pleasure of supervising Chip Williams’s honors work, and is very pleased by the outcome. Departmentally, he ran the visiting speaker series, as is his wont, and, with Kate, he began organizing next year’s Oberlin Colloquium in Philosophy, which will focus on metaphysics. Research-wise, Martin is happy to report that the paper of which he was so anxiously awaiting news in last year’s newsletter (“Modelling Without Mathematics”) did indeed appear in the December 2012 issue of *Philosophy of Science*, as part of the proceedings of the 2010 Philosophy of Science Association meetings, and that another paper, “Against Bracketing

and Complacency: Metaphysics and the Methodology of the Sciences,” will be appearing in a volume to be published by Oxford University Press sometime in the next year or so. (Other writing projects continue to inch along, as is their wont.) He also had a paper accepted for a conference in Hannover but thought better of making the transatlantic trip mid-semester. It was a good year for travel nonetheless. Martin went to San Diego in November for the 2012 Philosophy of Science Association meetings, and then returned to California with Kate and their daughter Orla for the month of January. He spent the bulk of the second California trip visiting the (excellent) Logic and Philosophy of Science Department at U. C. Irvine, and finished the trip off with a workshop at U. C. San Diego. He also

spent a week in December on a Caribbean cruise, but a veil of silence has been drawn over that episode.

And finally, from our emeritus faculty:

**Dan Merrill** and his wife, Marly, co-edited a book that was published last year: *Up the Winds and over the Tetons: Journal Entries and Images from the 1860s Reynolds Expedition* (University of New Mexico Press, 2012). Dan writes, “Marly’s an experienced documentary editor (this was her seventh book); I had never done this kind of thing before, and it was great fun.”

IF YOU’D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT FACULTY RESEARCH, PLEASE SEE THE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE: [HTTP://NEW.OBERLIN.EDU/PHILOSOPHY](http://new.oberlin.edu/philosophy).

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Philosophy Majors Committee

Ari Benjamin, Kevin Gilfether, Chip Williams

The Majors Committee hosted several events this past year. Chip and Kevin held a peer paper review session toward the end of the fall semester. In the spring, the committee arranged a forum for the discussion of privilege in philosophy and at Oberlin College, following a series of bias incidents on campus. Finally, with the support of the Nancy K. Rhoden fund, the committee organized a trip to Case Western University in Cleveland to attend a lecture by Donald Brown (Pennsylvania State University) entitled “Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change Ethics in Light of a Thirty-Five Year Debate.”

### Honors Work

**Kevin Gilfether**, under the supervision of Dorit Ganson, successfully wrote and defended a thesis entitled “The Content of Thought Experiments and Philosophical Context.” Kevin received an overall grade of high honors.

**Chip Williams**, under the supervision of Martin Thomson-Jones, successfully wrote and defended a thesis in the philosophy of biology entitled “Natural Selection and Replicators.” Chip received an overall grade of Highest Honors.

We offer special thanks to Simon Fitzpatrick, from the department of philosophy at John Carroll University, for serving as external examiner for Kevin and Chip’s Honors Defenses.

### Essay Prizes

The **Christopher P. Dahl Essay Prize** is given for the best undergraduate essay in any area of philosophy, and the **Rhoden Essay Prize** is given for the best undergraduate essay in the areas of ethics, medical ethics, or the philosophy of law.

**Chip Williams** won this year’s Dahl Prize with his essay, “The Rovers and the Bees,” which the examiner described as the “most polished” of the submissions as well as perhaps the most creative.

On the department’s Facebook page, Alan Durning ’85 commented on this news: “Congrats to Chip, from the 1985 winner of the Dahl Prize.”

Chip also won first prize in the Rhoden Essay Competition, with his essay, “Nozick and Cohen on Distributive Justice.” Second prize went to Whitman Barrett with his essay, “The Second Amendment and Gun Bans.”



Graduate Chip Williams (center) with his parents.

## ALUMNI NEWS, cont.

**Mike Blejer '06** writes: “Well, my most philosophically relevant news is that I’ve just been cast in an ESPN/Coors Light national commercial. Don’t tell, but I’m going to play my character as a cross between two of the greatest names in British thought, David Hume and Shaquille O’Neal.

Basically I’ll be a giant who denies that my future free-throw statistics can be inferred from my crap free-throws in the past (n.b., I know nothing about sports but according to Socrates that means I’m wise at sports, so I think the joke works).

“I appeared at the Boston Comedy Festival again this year and also had my first Television Stand-up debut on Xfinity/Comcast. Network TV still eludes me (both in it’s reason for existing and in practice). I suppose by the time this comes out I should have the video up on my website, <http://mikecomedy.com>.

“I’m the comedy editor at *The Daily Dolt*, a political satire site. Our first video, which I cowrote and starred in, recently hit 70,000 views. Give it a look at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfYIjwhDjVE>. I’m also writing some satire for the *Dolt* and my first article was on the top ten of Reddit, which I’m told is the “front page of the internet.” It’s about another college trying to silence a victim of sexual assault, and I think you can see my Oberlin showing: <http://www.thedailydolt.com/2013/02/28/university-of-north-carolina/>.

“I recently appeared on the NPR quiz show *Ask Me Another*, which should be out on their podcast/website by the time this is published.

“Finally, my podcast *Malignant Brain Humor* is still going full steam, and was included in the first ever NYCPodfest, a podcasting Festival in New York. Our live show went amazingly and I’m hoping to do some more of those and hopefully tour the show in the next year or two. As ever, the podcast is available at <http://mbhumor.com>, which discerning readers will note redirects to [mikecomedy.com](http://mikecomedy.com). Two plugs for the price of one. Or one for the price of two. See I knew I should have majored in math.

“I also recently ran into an Oberlin ’92 graduate at a clown orgy. It was weird.”

**Rahul Chaudhri '07** successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in philosophy at Stanford University. The title of his dissertation is “On Nietzsche’s Historical Philosophy.”

**Mary Conger '03** writes: “I currently live in Bangkok, Thailand, where I work at a British international school. Since wrestling myself from Oberlin I have finished a masters degree in education, culture, & society (a mish-mash of philosophical and anthropological perspectives on education) and completed doctoral coursework in educational leadership at Penn. I also started a small company, Collegocity, that helps families and school groups undertake affordable and productive campus visit trips. But really, these days I spend most of my time avoiding a dissertation and marveling at our Roomba.

“On the personal side of things, my partner, Adam Bliss, and I are tickled to be expecting a child in October. When back in the States this July we’re also hosting a Love Fest to celebrate our commitment to each other with our families and community.” [Mary.conger@gmail.com](mailto:Mary.conger@gmail.com)

**Katharine Cook '59** writes: “Inspired by John Liu of Bioneers fame, I’ve been at work outside ‘the monetary system based on the production of goods and services’ trading native perennial grasses for food, researching native plant foods such as the California walnut, and tending a native wildflower garden. A poem of mine was just published in the Pulitzer prize-winning local newspaper, *Pt. Reyes Light*. Daughter Amber, also an Oberlin student, is a five-minute walk away. Happy to hear from alumni at [katharine.cook@gmail.com](mailto:katharine.cook@gmail.com).”

**Jeff Dean '91** writes: “In April I began a new role as publisher for Focal Press (now part of Taylor & Francis). Focal Press doesn’t publish philosophy books, so that means my long tenure (14 years!) as a philosophy editor has come to an end. Instead, I’m now managing a team of editors who publish rather practical,



*Jeff Dean '91 and his son Oscar.*

hands-on material relating to the media and performing arts (such as film, photography, audio, animation, theater, gaming and so on). It was a very tough decision, but outside of philosophy my main interests are in the media arts, and this was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up.

“I should also note that since my last update, my wife Clare and I had our son, Oscar, on August 8, 2012. I’ve included a picture of me and the little fellow.”

**Emily C. Francomano '92** is associate professor of Spanish and teaches in the comparative literature and medieval studies programs at Georgetown University. Her second book, *Three Spanish Querelle Texts: Grisel and Mirabella, The Slander against Women, and The Defense of Ladies against Slanderers, A Bilingual Edition and Study*, was just published. Emily writes that she “remembers well her conversation with Dan Merrill about going to graduate school in philosophy. He said something along the lines of: ‘No, no, you don’t want to do that, you want to study comparative literature.’ He was right! Nevertheless, my philosophy major at Oberlin certainly influenced the ways I read and write about literature.”

**Jay Garfield '75** writes: “I am leaving Smith College for at least three years to take up the Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Professorship in the Humanities at the new Yale-NUS College in Singapore, where I will be head of the discipline of philosophy, responsible for leading the development of a new curriculum in global philosophy at a new interdisciplinary college, the first liberal arts college in Asia, and the first liberal arts college with a truly global core

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## ALUMNI NEWS, cont.

curriculum. Should be exciting. Visitors welcome!”

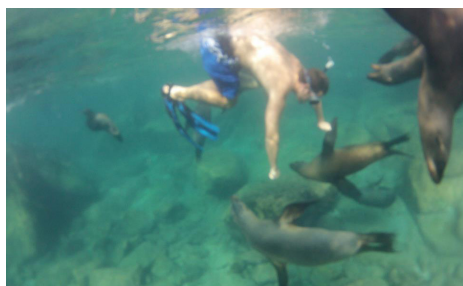
**Adam Gordon '06** is currently pursuing a master's of science degree in sustainability management at the Earth Institute, Columbia University. This summer, he was an EDF Climate Corps fellow with Colgate-Palmolive working on sustainability and energy efficiency projects within the global supply chain.

**Kyle Greenfield '08** writes: “After four years running a startup in San Francisco, I gave it up last fall to travel for a while and work on some philosophical musings integrating economic and social theory, taking full advantage of the fact that writing is location independent. I sailed down from California in October and spent five months living on a boat in Mexico, then went on land, spending a month in Guatemala and a week in Honduras. I'm currently in Leon, Nicaragua and will continue to work my way south.

“I'm attaching a picture of me playing tag with some sea lions. Just another day in the life. I'm keeping a blog at [www.beyondthemast.blogspot.com](http://www.beyondthemast.blogspot.com) if anyone is interested in longer, semi-mellifluous descriptions of my travels.”

**Sommer Hodson '07** is “nearly done” with her graduate work in philosophy at the University of Rochester; She will be defending her dissertation, on the topic of personal identity, later this year.

**Justin Hughes '82** sends a photo of “maybe the first time an OC philosophy major negotiated and signed a multilateral treaty for the United States. This is from the June 26, 2012 signing of the Beijing Treaty



Kyle Greenfield '08 swimming with sea lions.

on Audiovisual Performances; I was head of the U.S. delegation, and the folks behind me are all the other members of the U.S. delegation.

“The Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances was the first substantive multilateral treaty in intellectual property since 1996. The treaty establishes rights for film and television actors; while those ‘performers’ rights’ already exist in most developed countries, there are many jurisdictions lacking such statutory rights, putting actors in a substantially weaker negotiating position with film and television producers.

“The initial effort to complete the treaty in 2000 floundered on a disagreement between the European Union and the United States. In late 2010, the U.S. negotiating team led by me got efforts to complete the treaty restarted and a tentative agreement on how to complete the treaty was reached in the summer of 2011, paving the way for the ‘diplomatic conference’ to complete negotiations in June 2012 in Beijing.”

**Wes Kania '04** writes: “I currently live in Indiana with my wife, Rebecca, and 2-year-old son, Tommy. I've been working for Jaguar Land Rover for the past two years, and traveling extensively. I cover a territory that spans as far north as Minnesota, as far west as Kansas, and as far east as Kentucky. I completed my MBA in marketing and finance at Northeastern University in the beginning of 2012.”

**Jon Kleinman '91** writes: “I earned an MA in counseling psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in 2000. I work as an academic advisor for the School of Arts and Sciences at SUNY College at Old Westbury. In 2012, I gave a presentation entitled ‘Liberal Arts in a Career Oriented World’ at a regional conference of the National Academic Advising Association. I focused on the personal and intellectual benefits gained by students who complete coursework in the liberal arts. Much inspiration for this presentation came from the book *Liberal Arts at the Brink*, written by Oberlin alumnus Victor Ferrall. A review I wrote of Ferrall's book was published in the Spring 2012 issue of the *NACADA Journal*.



Justin Hughes '82 (front and center) at the signing of the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances.

In my non-working hours I enjoy writing. For the last several years I have been writing reviews of recordings and performances for *Elmore Magazine*, a publication dedicated to American Roots music. I also have a short story entitled “The Spectacle of a Lifetime” published on a literary humor website called *Eric's Hysterics*.”

**Chris Patton '91** completed his second year teaching creative writing and literature at Western Washington University. His most recent publication is a book of translations from 2011: *Curious Masonry: Three Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* (Gaspereau Press, Kentville, Nova Scotia). In that same year, he completed his PhD in literature and creative writing at the University of Utah.

**Lei Zhao '08** writes: “I think it's worth sharing that I got married last summer! Here's a picture of me and my wife (Maria Land '08). We did this all backwards—got the legal part done at the courthouse and are planning the celebration for this summer.”



Lei Zhao '08 and his wife, Maria Land '08.

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**Department of  
Philosophy**

10 North Professor St.  
Oberlin, OH 44074

## OBERLIN PHILOSOPHY

**Editor:** Katherine Thomson-Jones

### **Department of Philosophy**

Oberlin College

10 North Professor Street

Oberlin, OH 44074-1095 USA

Phone: 440-775-8390

Fax: 440-775-8084

<http://new.oberlin.edu/philosophy>

### **Find us on Facebook:**

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Dorit Ganson (*Chair*)

Peter McNerney

Martin Thomson-Jones

Todd Ganson

Timothy Hall

Katherine Thomson-Jones

**Administrative Assistant:** Karen Barnes

## DON'T MISS OUT!

In an effort to curb print, postage, and environmental costs college-wide, Oberlin is moving several of its print publications online. Please make sure we have your email address, so that you don't miss out on newsletters, invitations to alumni regional events, and more. You can update your email address (and other information) via OBIEWeb at [www.oberlin.edu/alumni](http://www.oberlin.edu/alumni). Go to the MyOBIEweb box and click on "register to access the community" (it's free). Please direct questions to [alumni@oberlin.edu](mailto:alumni@oberlin.edu) or call the Alumni Association at (440) 775-8692.