Editor's Note: This issue and the next will carry items of interest from the 13th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy. We start in this issue with an overview of the conference, the Presidential Address, and various reports.

The 13th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy is now history. And the conference demonstrated that the teaching of philosophy is at a historic crossroads. As was evident at the conference there are (among others) four trends in higher education that teachers of philosophy are coming to terms with: the impact of technology on our teaching, our increasing awareness of the global scope of higher education, the blurring of the boundaries between disciplines, and challenges to traditional ways of practicing and teaching the disciplines.

We had outstanding and thought-provoking plenary presentations from George Macdonald Ross, Robert Timko, and Robert Solomon. Each of these focused on the response to changing circumstances in higher education. George Ross is directing a new effort in faculty development at the University of Leeds in the UK, and in his presentation, he shared the thinking behind it. The British government has provided funding for the establishment of learning and teaching support centers for the disciplines that go beyond the existing generic faculty development programs. These centers will help faculty in the disciplines to clarify what and how they teach, and share strategies for improvement. Ross explained how demographics, economics, and politics have changed the face of higher education in Britain, and how teachers of philosophy in the UK are coping with these changes. As Ross spoke, his audience from the U.S., as well the teachers from France, Slovakia, Israel, and Japan who were also present at the conference, could identify with the challenges of change that he described.

In his presidential address, Bob Timko reflected on the relationship between technology and the teaching of philosophy. Those who know Bob know that he is a technological wiz and has been an innovator in his own classroom with a variety of media, including the Internet. However, Bob described a kind of conversion experience in which he has come to doubt the wisdom of rushing ahead in bringing technology into teaching. While he did not advocate a rejection of technology, he did make a plea for raising the kinds of questions about the use of technology that are the particular province of philosophers: questions about access and about whether we are using the technology or being used by it. Bob's talk comes at a time when there are administrative imperatives for the use of technology in teaching and learning in colleges and universities across the country (and around the world). Even without these directives, many faculty feel that they must jump into on-line teaching or be left behind. Bob raised a flag of caution.

Robert Solomon's talk "What is Called Thinking?: Teaching the Joy of Philosophy" challenged one dominant paradigm of philosophy teaching. While many of the sessions and conversations around the conference gave evidence that the lecture mode of teaching is being challenged, Solomon raised questions about what might be called the "debate club" model of philosophy teaching ("debate club" is my term, not Solomon's). In this model, which he traces to practitioners of analytic philosophy, the job
Conference Reflections (continued)

of philosophers, and philosophy teachers, is to put forward positions for critique, and then engage in attacks on those positions. According to Solomon, this manner of teaching and doing philosophy is a narrowly intellectual enterprise that neglects the commitments and passions of those engaged in it, and focuses on the demolition rather than the creation of ideas. It also neglects the connections between philosophy and other academic disciplines, because it focuses on developing a set of specialized intellectual habits—philosophical attack strategies—rather than examining the students' and teachers' philosophical interests and commitments, which would lead to an engagement with ideas from other disciplines as well.

These talks, and the other sessions on the program, show the willingness of AAPT members to engage in rethinking both what philosophy means and how we practice it. Enthusiastic comments from participants on the conference survey attest to the usefulness of the sessions and the energizing quality of the conference as a whole. Thanks go to our presenters and to all who helped to make this another fine AAPT learning experience!

Kudos for the 13th IWCTP and Sincere Thanks!

from the Executive Director

"The conference was interesting and empowering."

"This conference was outstanding. It was the first AAPT conference I've attended, and I was struck by how warm, friendly, and open to dialogue fellow participants were."

"A nice balance among sessions devoted to more theoretical issues related to teaching, practical issues of classroom management, and methods for integrating computer technology into one's courses."

"Everything that I had heard about the AAPT Conference was true! What had I heard? That here is where you meet good folks with passion about the teaching of their discipline."

"Wonderful variety of thoughtful/delightful joyful sessions."

"Innovative, important, and effective."

"This is the most interesting and stimulating conference I have ever attended."

"I've never learned more from my peers and in the company of my peers at any other professional academic conference."

These remarks from the conference evaluations reflect AAPT's reputation as an open and inviting association whose members are warm, friendly, and devoted to improving the quality of instruction in philosophy. The Board of Officers of the Association would like to extend their sincerest thanks to all those who make the success of our conferences possible. In particular, we would like to thank Andrea Woda of Alverno College, whose hard work and professionalism made the conference run smoothly; Donna Engelmann, who was the Association's local liaison and put in innumerable hours coordinating and attending to every aspect of the conference; Joe Givvin, our 13th IWCTP Program Chair, who worked diligently to put together a high-quality conference program and rose to the challenge when unexpectedly faced with additional work; and to all those members of AAPT who helped review workshop proposals, and took it upon themselves to do all those other last-minute things that made the conference run so well. To all of you, a great big THANKS!

Nancy Slonneger Hancock

NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, APA

I very much enjoyed attending the recent AAPT meeting at Alverno College in Milwaukee. I am ashamed to admit that, before taking on my current APA position, I had never heard of the AAPT—despite having started my career at a school that emphasized teaching over research. In any case, I found the sessions that I attended highly stimulating, and highly conducive to the exchange of fruitful ideas on how to improve our performance in the classroom (real or virtual). The AAPT/APA seminar for advanced graduate students, which I attended at Martin Benjamin's invitation, is an excellent institution, which should definitely be continued. Martin says that he is going to retire in a few years' time; it will be important to find one or more suitable replacements to lead the seminar after that.

More generally, I very much support continuing and, if possible, enhancing the various joint sessions and activities in which the AAPT engages with the APA. Whatever differences of opinion and approach may have existed in the past—I will not presume to speak about this—the current APA recognizes the central importance of teaching in the academic enterprise, and regards the AAPT as a valuable collaborator on issues relating to this aspect of the profession.

Richard Bett
Acting Executive Director, APA
As I began preparation for this address, I imagined that I would be demonstrating the wonders of teaching technologies. Those of you who are familiar with my pioneering adventures in live videoconferencing and on-line courses would not have been surprised if I had indeed set up a laboratory of existing technologies for your observation and wonder. However, on my long journey to Milwaukee, a conversion of sorts took place.

As I re-read my favorite twentieth-century philosopher, George Parkin Grant, I began to reexamine some of my assumptions about technology and its instrumental value. Reading Grant was the triggering mechanism, but other thinkers I discovered for the first time added force to my somewhat reluctant but inevitable confrontation with technology's ontology, and the implications of that ontology for the political, social, and moral well-being of our community and its institutions.

Let's begin with Plato's Allegory of the Cave. We tell our students time and again about the struggle of the prisoners to break the chains, and the virtuous effort it takes to climb into the light of the sun. We tell them it is a story about knowledge, truth, and justice and that these things are intrinsically tied and mutually interdependent. We understand further that the story is about loving something outside the cave, outside popular opinion and common bias; it is about a passionate love of truth that cannot be abstracted from a love of justice. Finally, we try to teach our students that escaping the cave, pursuing knowledge, truth, and justice is a social activity. You cannot do it alone!

Sometimes we may consider that technology can cast images that lead us away from the progressive path to the sun, that it may allow us to remain isolated individuals mesmerized by its magic. But how deeply do we consider that our life, our being, has been shaped and directed by the needs (or demands) of technology? But I jump too far ahead.

One work that found its way into my summer reading is Alvin Kernan's In Plato's Cave. In this extended essay on the current state of higher education, Kernan briefly addresses the question of technology's existence and the implication it has for both teaching and learning. Consider, if you will, this brief statement:

At the deepest level, the steadying ballast of educational institutions is their governing concept of the nature of truth and falsity. And the computer, which is now used everywhere and for every purpose in the modern college and university, brings with it a distinctly different concept of truth than the printed book carried. Information we might say has replaced knowledge. (244)

Here we have an explicit claim that the being of technology reshapes "truth" and that "information has replaced knowledge."

If early modern philosophers believed that knowledge was power, we now understand that power resides in the control of information. Information, however, is not permanent or stable; it is fluid and relative to the moments at which it is dispersed and accessed. Information is about "bits and bytes" rather than about the whole or the relationship of parts to the whole. Relativity has replaced certainty as information replaces knowledge. This, we should imagine, will have political, moral, and pedagogical implications. Kernan claims, and I believe rightly, that this relativity of information has begun to reshape our educational institutions and practices. Can there be "permanent human truths" in a technological society? Has the being of technology come to preclude the possibility of permanence?

At this point in my conversion process, I came across a rather brief piece from the Washington Post and reprinted in Sarah Lawrence College's on-line newsletter. The essay is authored by Michele Tolela Myers, President of Sarah Lawrence, and begins with a passing reference to "easy access to knowledge" via the Internet, but it is not long before she argues that the access provided by the Internet is not to knowledge, but rather to information. The Web, she claims, may have removed the necessity of the educator as gatekeeper to information just as Gutenberg's press eliminated priests as gatekeepers of information and knowledge.

To think that the Web can eliminate the educator as a necessary guide to knowledge is to miss the reality of what is occurring! Myers argues, again I believe quite rightly, that the purpose of a university is not "to transmit information." She reminds us that accessing information is not sufficient for what we should be doing as educators; it is not sufficient for learning. (It is not sufficient to break the chains that bind us to the Cave!) Students need to learn, she says:

- how to make judgments about evidence and sources
- how to sort and evaluate information
- how to separate the important from the trivial
how to think analytically and creatively
how to have ideas
how to write and speak intelligently about ideas
how to learn
- to KNOW how to go from ideas to actions.4

One may ask if I am merely engaging in nostalgia for the academe of yesteryear, or in a polemic on the dangers of technology. Though on the surface that can appear to be the case (at least for some), I believe I am merely setting the stage for the questions we must ask as philosophers and teachers. Those questions, I have found, were most succinctly articulated by Canadian philosopher George Parkin Grant.

Grant understood (and we must help our students understand in like manner) that philosophy begins when we ask questions. Additionally, he believed that philosophy was about “existence” and “living well” (wellness is understood here as a spiritual rather than a material concept). Technology, he constantly argued, has molded and politicized our present existence. To understand where we are as a people, as a society, we must come to know what technology is, as well as understand its “coming to be.”

Part of the purpose of teaching philosophy is to help our students and our society confront the possibility of meaninglessness and to reacquaint ourselves and others with the myths (or images) that enchant our souls. Myths, Grant understood, are the images by which we are “to apprehend purpose in our existence.” They tell us “what is universal about human existence.”5 According to Grant, the last great myth is the “myth of progress”—it was the myth that liberated humankind from all other myths; it has, in fact, liberated us from “all sense of meaning.” (We may no longer have “access” to what Plato meant by the GOOD!). The “freedom” that technology brings to us separates us from all myths and changes how we understand the GOOD, and what we mean by value.

Technical achievement... moulds us in what we are... in our actions and thought and imaginings. Its pursuit has become our dominant activity and that dominance fashions both the public and private realms. (399)

We may believe that we are merely utilizing technology to improve access to learning, but because of that belief, we may not be asking some more fundamental questions. We may not be asking how our desire to embrace computers and on-line learning may be shaping our curriculum and hence, our schools. We tell our students that they must know “X” or “Y,” but we may not be asking what is directing that particular demand for information. We may be assuming, according to Grant, that “technology is merely an instrument” (422).

As a philosopher Grant reflects on the statement uttered quite simply by someone who works with computers—“the computer does not impose on us the ways it should be used.” The word should indicates, he argues, that the utterer had a sense that as an instrument a computer can be used in wrongful ways, and also had a sense of difference between good and evil, and that there are good purposes and a Good to be achieved by humankind and society. On a common-sense level the statement may lead us to the assumption that it is human decision alone that creates purpose and value in the use of technology. This belief may be deceptive! Grant reminds us that the negative in the statement “the computer does not impose” concerns the computer’s capacities, not its existence. The existence of the computer requires making assumptions about “knowing and being and making.”

The knowing here may be very different from the knowing that occurs outside the cave. Again Grant reminds us that learning within the assumptions that have made possible the very being of the computer “is not directed toward a leading out, but toward organizing within” (422). The computer brings with its existence a determinate meaning—a particular account of what it is to know.

Grant asks us to remember that the roots of the word “technology”—technē and logos—demonstrate a reciprocal relation between making and knowing. Originally technē (as associated/related with to poiesis) meant a “leading forth” that requires the work of human beings. Art or technē, he argues, is only one kind of knowledge: there is also theorētike episteme. The first, Grant argues, is concerned with what might or might not be—accidental being. Science is concerned with what must be—necessary being. Technology, he continues, is art co-penetrated with science; it is a new mode of being; it is a “reciprocal relation between knowing and making” (407-417).

If we are to take the simple statement “computers do not impose” merely at the level of appearance, we may be led to believe that “the instrumentality of modern technologies could be morally neutral” (423). What are the ways referred to in the
state as originally uttered? Computers store information. That is one of their capabilities. (Can a thing’s capabilities determine its use?) The storing and classification of information is about internal organization—the desire here is not to know; it is rather a desire for efficiency or the convenience of organization. Grant sees this as an homogenizing process—a standardization of learning skills and controlled or organized teacher training. The capabilities of the computer entail that it be used in an homogeneous way. (Ask yourself, do on-line courses adequately account for differences in learning and teaching, or do they emphasize particular ways of knowing and learning?)

Grant continues to argue that this simple statement—“a computer does not impose on us the ways in which it should be used”—tends to hide the fact that a computer’s very capabilities entail that the ways it is used are never neutral. Computers can only be used in homogenizing ways. And because this tends to be hidden in the statement, the question about the value or goodness of homogenization is excluded from our thinking about modernization.

Is the internal organization of society our highest political goal? Is the homogenization of education our highest moral goal? In what ways are the political and moral purposes of modern society shaped by the capabilities of its machines? (The computer is the fire in the cave; the fire is technology; what we see is shaped by the fire’s capabilities.) Are our values created by us as human or do they arise from the needs of our instruments, from our technology?

Does technology define our regime for us? As teachers of philosophy, should we not be asking ourselves and our students to learn about the being of technology—to analyze and to reflect on the needs and assumptions of technology as opposed to merely using it in our class demonstrations? Is competence in learning and teaching not defined in our classrooms in relation to the technologies we use or do not use? Is education molded by a technological regime? Are not contemporary criticisms of society and education framed within the language and assumptions of technology? The fact that we use and, perhaps, must use technology should not preclude an analysis of it and/or the presuppositions (assumptions) that give rise to its use and acceptance. If access to an enormity of information is the driving purpose in society and education, perhaps now more than ever we may need to help students make distinctions between judgments of fact and judgments of value, and, according to Grant, we might wish to consider discussing with our students the fact that technological change is indeed an aspect of ontological change! (In what ways have we as persons been altered in our being by “technological progress”?)

One of the aspects of Canadian philosophy that has added to my erotic attraction to it is its insistence that philosophy address the “self” as a lived experience. Another is its insistence that the theoretical ideal be made concrete. Still another is that the individual means nothing without community. Historically, Canadians as a whole have adopted a skeptical approach to the intrinsic value of technology. Canadian philosophers like Grant have always understood that technology encourages atomic individualism and competition rather than dialogue and community. Education is about both dialogue and community.

The allegory of the cave should remind us that the community always means more than the individual. Some might see philosophy as elitist. But the purpose of the prisoner returning to the cave is the good of all. The knowledgeable, the teacher, has a deep responsibility to the community and all its citizens. Technology as it currently presents itself, on the other hand, may be truly elitist.

Whatever the “World of Ideas” may be about, it is not about the artificial homogenization of society. Can we assume that universal or equal access to information is naturally good for either the individual or society? Can technology lend itself (as a classroom dialogue can) to a recognition of different talents, different intelligences, different learning styles or learning processes? Plato recognizes difference in the pursuit of a common good; technology, it seems, follows its potential to devalue difference in favor of organizational efficiency. It may very well be true that Plato accepts an ordering principle in his good society, but it is an ordering that respects and values differences in learning, differences in talent. Technology seems to demand that students learn in a similar manner, that they comply with the needs of the program or the machine. We need to ask ourselves and our students to imagine the ways in which what they learn (i.e., the curriculum, whether in general or particular terms) may be merely conditioned responses to the demands of technology. If there is an organizing principle in Plato’s allegory, it is the sun and not the fire. The computer, technology, may be nothing more than the fire in the cave. As Grant observes, what we should love as humans is outside the cave, but technology teaches us to desire only what is in the cave. If we accept what technology demands, we may lose the courage, or lack the virtue necessary to escaping the cave. If that is true, then the history of humankind becomes the history of the machine. Perhaps Plato’s allegory is a myth, but myths are not bad; they enchant us; myths go beyond the individual to something greater. Technology removes our access to myth; it may in fact alienate us from myth, and in the long run from our humanness if we are not careful and if we fail to ask the deeper questions.

When we unreflectively buy into the assumption that the exploitation of technology’s capabilities is the ultimate good, we may in fact be turning away from that which is good. When we do this, we lose the possibility of loving justice—we no longer desire or hunger and thirst after justice.

I had always believed that technology increased the possibility of justice, of equality, of love for my fellow man. I failed to understand the difference (and technology needs to obscure this difference in order to fulfill its purpose) between access and accessibility. I produced programs of learning without consideration that the learning was exclusive rather than inclusive. The paradox of on-line courses is that they may decrease rather than increase autonomy, increase rather than decrease class distinctions. How many of us have failed to consider visual,
hearing, or other learning disabilities and differences when constructing our programs?

Do I wish to retreat to an earlier age and pessimistically portray technology as inherently evil? No! I do not believe we should cease to use technology in teaching, but I urge that as philosophers we must ask deeper questions of ourselves and our students. We must find ways to make the use of technologies more just, more ethical. We need to address the existence of technology as a being that penetrates our lives. We need to question and direct our students in questioning the reciprocal relationship between technology and justice. We need to question the assumptions of technology. We need to question whether or not technology has altered our ability to think (thinking is not synonymous with learning or knowing), especially our ability to think about technology itself. Like George Grant, I am not asking that we turn away from the present; we need to ground ourselves in the present, understanding that to do this we must need to face what technology is. When thinking is replaced by expertise in technique, we cannot imagine that philosophy should not leave us as we were. Technology may have removed the awe and wonder necessary to “living well,” at least as Plato understood it. As teachers of philosophy we need to confront the existence of technology, and as Grant loudly proclaims, attempt to know it. Knowing entails neither accepting nor rejecting it. As teachers of philosophy we must attempt to place more emphasis on the accessibility of knowledge than on access to information. We need to raise questions about “gatekeeping” information and its consequence for human justice. We need to regain the passion of Eros; we need to think about what is good. Was Grant right when he claimed that technology’s “making” may take us outside the realm of human good?

I am not a Luddite. I do not see that I will abandon the use of technologies in my teaching. I do see myself asking my students to discuss what technology means to them as members of a moral community. I do see that I will try to address the difference between “access” and “accessibility.”

A familiar lyric from my youth continues to reverberate through my mind—"Suicide is painless." The loss of self goes unnoticed when we do not reflect on how that self is affected by or altered by its use of and responses to the organizational needs and demands of technology.

I have no answers to the many questions I have raised, but I shall not go quietly into the good night of technology. My love of philosophy demands I remain a heretic—someone who dares to think differently. The future of philosophy in our lives, in our academies, may require that we resist using technology without questioning its being. As teachers of philosophy (escapists returning to the cave), I firmly believe that we enter into a covenant (a virtue-laden contract) with our students that demands we each pursue responsibly that which is good for our communities. Philosophy’s future lies more in reciprocal human love, a strong sense of mutuality, than it does in the co-penetration of art and science.

NOTES

1I apologize that the written version of this talk is not accompanied by the irony of a PowerPoint show and is absent the personal stories of friendship included in the original oral presentation.
4<http://www.slc.edu/news_events/post.html>
5Christian, William and Sheila Grant, eds., The George Grant Reader (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 388. Subsequent references to this book will be by page number alone.

Contributions are requested!

TEACHING RESOURCES

http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/governance/committees/teaching/orc

The APA Committee on Teaching invites you to contribute!

Course Syllabi

and

Short Descriptions of Successful Practices

This Web Site intends to be representative of all types of educational institutions, philosophical schools and interests.

Seed money for this project was provided by the Carnegie Foundation.
From the Conference:

GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING SEMINAR

Victoria Rogers, University of Southern California

As in previous AAPT International Workshop Conferences, this August’s conference included a teaching seminar for advanced graduate students. Sponsored jointly by AAPT and APA, and led by Dr. Martin Benjamin of Michigan State University, it was a four-day intensive seminar addressing pedagogical issues of particular interest to people at the beginning of their teaching career.

I was one of ten students in the seminar. We represented a variety of philosophical interests, from ethics to feminist theory to philosophy of science, and we were a geographically diverse group as well, with all major regions of the U.S. represented as well as several foreign countries. Most of the students were close to receiving the Ph.D. One student had just received his degree and had been hired for the 2000-2001 academic year, and another was just beginning a job search. A few of us were still completing course work, and one student was working on a doctorate in Education but had a strong interest in teaching philosophy. All of us had teaching responsibilities of one sort or another.

The format of the seminar was discussion. Students were not required to complete any written work or make formal oral presentations, but were expected to come prepared to participate. Readings had been sent to us a month before the seminar, together with an outline of the seminar. Since we were a diverse group of students, discussions were lively and represented a range of opinions, but most valuable were the insights of Professor Benjamin and of Dr. Richard Bett of Johns Hopkins, who sat in for the entire seminar. Both professors provided syllabi from their own classes and discussed their teaching methods and philosophies.

The first topic discussed, “Philosophy and Philosophy Teaching: An Overview” stressed the integral connection between teaching and doing philosophy, and explored the further question of a nexus between teaching philosophy and living in accordance with one’s own stated philosophical views. In addition, we discussed the issue of the neutrality of the instructor in the classroom. Is student autonomy with regard to forming opinions best encouraged by an instructor’s strict neutrality or does some form of critical disclosure constitute a more honest way of presenting material to students? For someone such as myself who has always followed the neutrality model, it was interesting to encounter a different point of view.

Day two of the seminar addressed some of the everyday tasks associated with teaching: tests, grading, and the like. We discussed setting the tone for the term on the first day of class, and some of the common mistakes teachers make with regard to consistency throughout the term.

One of the most interesting topics discussed in this segment was relativism, a view common among undergraduates. It is typified by the belief that a question that does not have an objective answer has only subjective answers, and (therefore) all opinions are equally legitimate. The sources of this kind of relativism were discussed as well as ways to respond to it, such as stressing the role of argumentation in reaching reasoned answers. One of the recommended readings, ‘How Many Angels Can Dance on the Head of a Pin?’ by Dona Warren, was particularly helpful on this point. Warren suggests that this relativism results from the poverty of the student’s taxonomy of questions and that one can enrich that taxonomy by introducing the student to “normatively answerable questions,” questions that admit of answers that are better or worse.

The third day of the seminar dealt with the introductory philosophy course, its various approaches and structures. Several approaches were discussed: historical, problem-based, and single-topic. We also read a piece by William Irvine entitled “Teaching Without Books.”

Irvine suggests a course in which the students’ own prephilosophical beliefs form the content of the course as students learn to philosophize. I found the bookless course an intriguing idea, although most of the graduate students in the seminar didn’t seem to consider it a viable option. The process of creating a course syllabus was also covered, with sensitivity to such issues as student population, workload, and the strengths of the instructor.

The final day of the seminar was, not surprisingly, the most controversial. On this last day of the conference we discussed multicultural approaches and gender sensitivity in the philosophy classroom. Both the practicalities and the underlying values of such issues were discussed at length, and the controversy inherent in these issues was apparent. How can or should a teacher handle the tension between blind fairness and inclusion? And how can we encourage those who have historically been excluded, either by their own choice or that of others, without being patronizing toward them? Needless to say, we did not reach consensus, but were able to flesh out important aspects of both sides of the debate.

I came away from the seminar with many new insights and material for further study. I intend to share the experiences and lessons with other graduate students in my home department at the University of Southern California.

NOTES


Notice of New Address and E-mail for AAPT
Please note that the AAPT home office has a new address. All membership dues and correspondence should be sent to:
Betsy Decyk, Executive Director
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Department of Philosophy
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840-2408
e-mail: aapt@philosophers.net

AAPT on the Web
The AAPT Web site address is now:
http://aapt-online.dhs.org/aapt.html

Dues Change
After more than 10 years, we have a change in membership rates. Beginning January 1, 2001, membership rates will be:

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Site for next International Workshop-Conference
The 14th International Workshop-Conference will be held in 2002 at Thomas More College, in Covington, Kentucky. The Rev. Gerald Twaddell will be the site liaison.

AAPT Group Session Workshop at APA Eastern Division Meetings
Thursday, December 28, 2000, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Title: “Approaches to Teaching the Introductory Philosophy Course”
Moderators: James Campbell and Margaret Cuonzo
Speakers: Kenneth Amman and Michael Russo, David Fielding, James P. Friel, Craig Vasey, and Richard Hart.

APA/AAPT Teaching Workshop at the APA Pacific Division Meetings
Sunday, April 1, 2001, 9 a.m. – 12 noon.
Title: “Engaging and Encouraging Student Writing”
Chair: Betsy Decyk
Speakers: Paul Green, Donna Engelmann, Sharon Kaye, and Paul Thomson

Go On Line with Other Philosophy Teachers
The AAPT maintains a listserv site. People can ask questions about teaching practices and get ideas about texts, syllabi, and course design. To subscribe to AAPT-L, e-mail to
LISTSERV@LSV.UKY.EDU
the following one-line message:
SUBSCRIBE AAPT-L <your first name> <your last name>

Web Site on Teaching Resources
The American Philosophy Association’s Committee on Teaching now has a web site on Teaching Resources: http://www.apa.udel.edu/apagovernance/committees/teaching/orc/index.html.
See the Teaching Resources Announcement in this newsletter.

New Publication About Young People and Philosophy
The APA’s Committee on Pre-College Instruction is creating a newsletter illustrating young people engaged in philosophy.
See the Questions Announcement elsewhere in this edition of the AAPT News.

Conferences
A Calendar of Conferences can be found at the APA web site:
http://www.apa.udel.edu/apaoportunities/conferences

Submissions to AAPT News
AAPT News is published in the Spring, Summer, and Fall. Deadlines for submissions are January 1, May 1, and September 1.
Submissions may be sent as e-mail binary attachment files to bdeycyk@csulb.edu. Most major PC word processor file formats are fine, but WordPerfect (5.1 and later), Microsoft Word for Windows, or Microsoft Word for Macintosh 6.0 are preferred. Hard copies may be FAXed to (562) 985-7135 (attn: Decyk) or mailed to me at:
Department of Philosophy
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840-2408
If you need help, call me at (562) 985-4346.

— Betsy Decyk
Hand raising poses some pedagogical problems. First of all, some students may not want to raise their hands because they do not want to interrupt the teacher. When students do raise their hands, however, they have a tendency to rehearse what they intend to say and to tune out other comments. Finally, there is an implicit competition in hand raising, reinforced by years of (some) students trying to get their hand up first, sometimes even before they know the answer, and being rewarded by teachers who call on the first student to raise his or her hand. This phenomenon may be responsible for some of the gender imbalance in many classroom discussions. From the teacher’s perspective, having hands raised can be distracting and there is often a feeling that one must call on the students immediately.

I have developed an alternative to hand raising that solves these problems. On the first day of class, I hand out 5” by 8” note cards, which the students fold lengthwise. On one face of the card they write their full names horizontally. On the other face they write their first names vertically. I ask them to be as creative as they want as long as they write their name large enough to be legible to everyone else in the class. They place these cards horizontally on the desk or table in front of them. Now each of the students can learn the others’ names and can address them personally, and of course, I have an easy method for learning all my students’ names. When students have questions or comments, instead of raising their hands, they turn their cards vertically.

The card-raising method has several advantages over hand raising:

1. Students are less likely to feel they are interrupting the teacher when they want to make a comment or raise a question. They are, in my experience, more willing to enter the discussion at any time.

2. Students do not turn their attention inward as much as they do when they raise their hands. They are not distracted by the physical act of holding up their arms and they seem to pay closer attention to what the teacher and other students say.

3. Competition for attention is reduced. Students are more willing to raise their cards even if many other cards are raised than they are to raise their hands among a throng of hands.

4. The teacher has much more control over the pace and flow of the discussion.
   (a) The teacher need not feel obligated to call on students immediately. He or she can wait until the time is right for a pause in the lecture or for a change to a new speaker.
   (b) The teacher can wait before calling on anyone, allowing more students to raise their cards.
   (c) The teacher can call on students who do not speak much or have not contributed recently. The “overactive” student can be more politely passed over.

5. The teacher can experience the satisfaction of seeing that almost every student wants to contribute to the discussion when a controversial or interesting question is raised.

6. The teacher does not need to wonder whether a student actually has his or her hand up—the yawn or tentative hand motion is replaced with a clear signal that the student has something to say.

7. The community of the classroom is enhanced since everyone learns everyone else’s name and addresses others directly.

Teachers adopting the card-raising method should be aware of several potential problems:

- It takes some getting used to, both by the teacher and by the students. The teacher must work hard to ignore raised hands for the first weeks of class, and saying “Please use your cards” can be tiresome. But students usually get the hang of it after a few classes and they enjoy it.

- It can be overly controlling and, if incorrectly used, inhibiting in its own ways. I generally allow students to speak without raising their cards (or hands) when I ask a question I want a quick answer to, or sometimes when discussions get heated and I want them to respond directly to each other. I try not to let the cards be a barrier to free flowing discussion.

- It is inappropriate for large classes in which the teacher cannot clearly see the card of every student.
Report on Activities of the Board

The Board of Officers met four times during the 13th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy held at Alverno College, August 2-6, 2000. The following is a brief report on the business addressed by the Board at those meetings.

I. Actions

The Board of Officers took the following actions:

- Selected Thomas More College in Covington, Kentucky as the site for the 14th International Workshop Conference on Teaching Philosophy, to be held in 2002. The Rev. Gerald Twaddell will be the local site liaison. Thank you, Gerry!
- Charged the Executive Director with soliciting proposals for hosting the 15th IWCTP, to be held in 2004. Anyone interested can contact the E.D. at aapt@philosophers.net for Guidelines for Site Proposals.
- Established the Committee on Policies and Procedures (Constitution, Article VII Sec. 1), chaired by Amy Baehr. This committee is charged with developing and implementing a manual of policies and procedures for the Association. Also established were two subcommittees: Subcommittee on Recognition (James Campbell, Martin Benjamin, Betsy Decyk, and Arnold Wilson), and Subcommittee on Subsidies (Gary Talsky, Phil Hamlin, Bob Timko).
- Established a policy governing distribution of the membership list of the Association. Distribution of the list will be free to those who request it, so long as it is to be used only for noncommercial purposes and its use furthers the goals of the Association.
- Identified four members of the Association—Donna Engelmann, Betsy Decyk, Joe Givvin, and Gary Talsky—willing to serve on the 2000-2002 Nominating Committee, charged with conducting the election (Constitution, Article VII, Sec. 2).
- Members of the Board, concerned that they have been withdrawn from the social activities of the conference due to Board business, agreed that in the future they will arrive at least 1 day prior to the beginning of the conference in order to complete business prior to the start of the conference.
- Charged Bob Timko and Arnold Wilson with studying and reporting on the legal status of the Association by the end of September, 2000. The Board seeks clarification of the Association's non-profit status and legal requirements for maintaining it.
- Recognizing that the cost of publishing and mailing AAPT News has been increasing steadily, that membership dues subsidize many essential activities of the Association (e.g., the IWCTP, grad seminar, APA workshops, etc.), and that dues had not been increased for well over ten years, the Board voted to increase dues. The following membership rates go into effect on January 1, 2001:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
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II. Discussions

The Board discussed a number of other issues not requiring action by the Board at this time:

- appointment of liaisons to each of the three divisions of the APA
- active recruitment of candidates for offices
- improvements to the conference organization (e.g., Wed—Board Meeting, Plenary, Wine & Cheese; Thurs—Sessions, Plenary, Sessions, Movies; Fri—Sessions, Business Meeting, Session, Free time; Saturday—Sessions, Sessions, Plenary, Picnic; Sun—2 sessions.)
- composition of the 14th IWCTP Program Committee

III. Reports

The Board heard the following reports:

- Rosalind Ladd reported that she would be visiting St. Petersburg, Russia, and would be willing to meet with members of the Philosophy Department at St. Petersburg State University, who had contacted AAPT with an interest in our activities.
- Betsy Decyk distributed a copy of the APA proposals “An Online Resource Center Toward the Improvement of the Teaching of Philosophy” and “From Insight to Practice: A Series of Teaching Institutes To Improve the Post-Secondary Instruction of Philosophy.” Betsy indicated that she would be contacting the Board via email at a later date with more information about these projects.
- Gary Talsky, Treasurer, reported on the current financial health of AAPT and indicated he is working to develop a financial history of the Association from the date he took office.
- James Campbell distributed “The Mark Lenssen Prize for Writing on the Teaching of Philosophy,” proposed guidelines for a biennial AAPT award for published essays. The prize honors the memory of Mark Lenssen, a long-time member of the Association and former co-editor of the newsletter.
- Members of the Board also received copies of the following items for future discussion:
  - “Certificate of Incorporation of American Association of Philosophy Teachers, Inc.”
  - “Application for Certificate of Authority: Foreign Corporation”

“Leadership and Organizational Guide for the Officers of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers” (Version 0.1; August 15, 1985) by Frans van der Bogert. [There is no record of this guide having been adopted by the Board.]

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Dr. Nancy Slonneger Hancock
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Report of the AAPT General Meeting

The following reports were made to the organization at the General Meeting:

1. The Treasurer's Report – Gary Talsky
2. The Executive Director's Report – Nancy Hancock
   a. Membership
   b. Report of the Activities of the Board
3. Newsletter Editor's Report – Betsy Decyk
4. Report on the Lenssen Award – Daryl Close and James Campbell
5. Awards – Arnold Wilson. The following people were presented awards “For Outstanding Leadership and Achievements in the Teaching of Philosophy”: Phil Hamlin, John Ladd, Mat Lipman, Tziporah Kasachkoff, Michael Hooker, and Bill Whisner.

Business Conducted at the General Meeting

1. Those attending the General Meeting voted to approve the 2000-2002 Nominating Committee proposed by the Board.
2. Those attending the General Meeting voted to endorse the International Philosophy Olympiad. The vote was recorded as unanimous.

Betsy Decyk

International Cooperation

reported by Rosalind Ladd

The Faculty of Philosophy of St. Petersburg State University in Russia has announced a new Center to promote the advancement of philosophical education in Russia. The Center will include three main sections:

1. Department of academic exchange where foreign professors will read courses.

2. Department of social and metaphysical research, offering programs in social phenomenology, philosophical anthropology, theory of European and East culture, history of philosophy, philosophy of science, and others.

3. A publishing house with the aim of translating foreign philosophical books into Russian and vice versa.

Currently the Center publishes a philosophical magazine and holds all-Russian and International conferences.

The Center solicits the participation of AAPT members. The contact person is Professor Eugene Makovetsky, Faculty of Philosophy, SPSU, 199034 Mendeleevskaya linii, 5, St. Petersburg, Russia. E-mail: science@philosophy.pu.ru or evmak@mail.ru.

Those in this country who wish to pursue faculty exchange might consult the IREX web site or contact Prof. Jakko Hintikka, Chair of the APA Committee on International Cooperation.

AAPT-L: A Discussion List about Teaching Philosophy

For several years now, the AAPT-L has been available as a forum for philosophers to discuss issues related to the teaching of philosophy. Anyone, regardless of whether they are a member of the AAPT, may join the list by sending the one-line message “Subscribe AAPT-L <firstname> <lastname>” without the quotation marks to LISTSERV@LISU.EDU.

To promote greater use of the discussion list, we are seeking a volunteer or group of volunteers to take over management of the list. Principal duties of the list manager(s) would be to promote the list through publicizing it (e.g., through Philosophy News Online and other venues) and to generate discussion on the list (e.g., through posting “discussion-starters”). Anyone interested in working with this project should contact Nancy Slonneger Hancock at hancockn@nku.edu.

A Thank-You Note from Mat Lipman

Dear Arnold:

Believe me, I was very touched by the plaque sent me by the AAPT. It's very tangible evidence of your long-term recognition of the existence of Philosophy for Children, as well as regard for the quality you recognize in it. I hope you will pass along to your membership my appreciation for the plaque and for the well-worded message inscribed on it. It took me completely by surprise. Thanks a million for having it sent to me.

Cordially,
Mat

QUESTIONS: A New Newsletter

The American Philosophical Association's Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy is pleased to announce the creation of a national newsletter illustrating young people engaged in philosophy. The pilot issue of the newsletter, Questions, will appear in early 2001 and will be organized around the theme of children's rights. It will include transcripts of philosophical discussions about children's rights from K-12 classrooms around the country, photographs from some of these classes, and essays, drawings, stories, and poems created by young people on the subject of children's rights. We welcome the involvement of additional philosophers and teachers who are working with K-12 students.

At this time, the editorial board for Questions is composed of Jana Mohr Lone, David Shapiro, Betsy Newell Decyk, Rosalind Ladd, Michael Pritchard, Hugh Taft-Morales, and Wendy Turgeon. Funding for the pilot issue has been provided by the American Philosophical Association. For more information please contact Jana Mohr Lone at jmohrlone@compuserve.com or call her at (206) 463-1217.
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AAPT BOARD MEMBERS

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bdecyk@csulb.edu

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rtimko@mns1ld.edu

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University of Cincinnati
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James Campbell, Past President
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John Christensen, Program Chair
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jgivvin@nmcanmi.com

Betsy Newell Decyk, Newsletter Editor
California State University, Long Beach
bdecyk@csulb.edu

AAPT LOGO CONTEST

The American Association of Philosophy Teachers is looking for a new Logo!

Grand Prize:
1 year subscription to Teaching Philosophy
1 year subscription to Aitia
1 year membership in AAPT

Send submissions to: Dr. Nancy S. Hancock, E.D.
Soc/Anth/Phil
Northern Kentucky University
Highland Heights, KY 41099
hancockn@nku.edu

Postmark Deadline: January 31, 2001

Format for submission: Two camera-ready copies
One 3.5" PC disk in jpeg or gif format

Logos will be judged by members of the Board of Officers. The winner will be announced in the Spring issue of AAPT News. All submissions become the property of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers.
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Membership Application

All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year. The expiration date of your membership will be listed on the address label for each newsletter. If you have any questions about the status of your membership, contact the Executive Director at aapt@philosophers.net or by writing to Betsy Decyk, Executive Director, AAPT, Department of Philosophy, California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840-2408.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND RATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before January 1, 2001</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1 yr.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emeritus</td>
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<td>Part-Time/Adjunct</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Lifetime memberships are also available for $500, which may be paid in installments over the period of one year.

Complete the form below, and send with your check or money order to:
Betsy Decyk, Executive Director
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Department of Philosophy
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840-2408

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City: ___________________________State/Province: ____________Country: ____________
Zip (+4): ___________________________Phone (W): ____________(H): ____________
E-mail: ____________________________

Is this a renewal ______ or a new membership ________?

Please check membership type: __Regular __Student __Emeritus __Part-Time/Adjunct

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: $ ____________