

## Memorial Tributes.

### Abraham Edel (1908-2007)

Abraham Edel, a long time member of this society, passed away on June 22, 2007 in New York City. Although a brief obituary has since appeared on the society's web site, we have not so far memorialized his life and work in this venue, and so it is appropriate that we do so now. President Jim Campbell has requested that I present the following remarks, based on the remembrance written by Peter Hare and Guy Stroh.

Abraham Edel was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on December 6, 1908. Raised in Yorkton, Canada with his older brother Leon who would become a biographer of Henry James, Edel studied Classics and Philosophy at McGill University, earning a BA in 1927 and an MA in 1928. He continued his education at Oxford where he received a BA in Human Letters in 1930. In that year he moved to New York City for doctoral studies at Columbia University, and in 1931 began teaching at City College, first as an assistant to Morris Raphael Cohen. F.J.E. Woodbridge directed his Columbia dissertation, *Aristotle's Theory of the Infinite* (1934).

Active in establishing the College Teachers Union, Edel was called before the Rapp-Coudert Committee, a New York State forerunner of HUAC and McCarthy's Senate committee. His account of this radical movement was published as *The Struggle for Academic Democracy: Lessons from the 1938 "Revolution" in New York's City Colleges* (1990).

John Dewey was the preeminent figure in the Philosophy Department during Edel's student years at Columbia. All his subsequent publications can be seen as a blend of Deweyan and Aristotelian naturalisms. His philosophical style reflected his personality. A tolerant and modest person, his philosophical writing was never aggressive and dogmatic, as so much of the writing of his contemporaries was. Generously entering into dialogue with his opponents, he tended to interpret differences between philosophical movements as a matter of incomplete perspective rather than a question of incompatible answers.

In his first large-scale work, *Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics* (1955), Edel discussed at length the problem of ethical relativism. If ethics is to truly apply to the world, he suggested, its theories must somehow be tested by experience.

Edel's *Method in Ethical Theory* (1963) carried further his earlier studies to work out, as he said, a methodological approach for ethical theory that attempts to be both critical and comprehensive, one that will do justice to the factual as well as the normative.

*Anthropology and Ethics* (1959), co-authored with anthropologist May Mandelbaum, Edel, was an attempt to compare moral systems in cultures worldwide. His subsequent publications in the philosophy of the social sciences were brought together in *Analyzing Concepts in Social Science* (1979).

After teaching at City College from 1931 to 1973 and from 1970 to 1973 at the CUNY Graduate Center, he retired to become a research professor at the University of Pennsylvania. He held visiting appointments at Columbia University, University of California at Berkeley,

Swarthmore College and Case Western Reserve University among others. He was an associate at the National Humanities Center (1978-79); senior fellow at the Center for Dewey Studies (1981-82); recipient of the Butler Silver Medal from Columbia University (1959); and a Guggenheim Fellow (1944-45). He served as Vice President of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association (1972-73); President of the American Society of Value Inquiry (1984); and President of the American Section of the International Association of Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (1973-75). In 1995 he received the Herbert W. Schneider Award from this society. In the 1980s Edel gave much attention to the burgeoning field of applied ethics and published *Critique of Applied Ethics: Reflections and Recommendations* (1994) with Elizabeth Flower and Finbarr W. O'Connor. In 1987 Edel was honored by a volume titled *Ethics, Science and Democracy: The Philosophy of Abraham Edel*, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz and H. S. Thayer. Edel's last book was a return to Dewey – *Ethical Theory and Social Change: The Evolution of John Dewey's Ethics, 1908-1932* (2001).

Larry A. Hickman, The Center for Dewey Studies, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale IL 62901

### **John Howie (1929-2008)**

SAAP old-timers will remember my colleague for many years, John Howie, who died last fall due to complications from Parkinson's. His life as a philosopher was dedicated to ethics and the tradition of Personalism. It is a pity that he did not see the recent revival of interest in Personalism in SAAP. But in those early days when American philosophy itself was marginalized, Personalism itself was even more marginalized, even within SAAP, which may have been one reason we did not see John much after the 1980s. Pragmatism held no allure for John, for, unlike Personalism, it did not look moral issues squarely in the eye. I knew John as a man of principle, but it was only after his son wrote a book about John's days as a young minister in the South that I came to appreciate where his principles came from. John grew up in Mississippi. As a young child he witnessed a lynching outside his grandparents' home—his grandmother had told him not to look outside, so he did and saw a man horribly die. This traumatic experience may have given John the white hot passion for justice that characterized his life. After receiving his Bachelor's from Vanderbilt (1951), he went to Emory University to get a Bachelors of Divinity (1954) and then a Masters (1955). As a young Methodist minister, he was inspired to become part of the struggle for civil rights then looming in the South. His first charge was to three churches in the coastal region of South Carolina. The story of John's and his young wife's courageous effort to bring that struggle into a small rural community is the theme of Stephen Howie's poignantly written book, *The Bluffton Charge* (Mammoth Books, 2000). Tensions across the South, from Little Rock to Birmingham, made even John's efforts as a liberal minister highly volatile and his congregation, in effect, put him on trial.

Disillusioned, John went on to get a PhD in philosophy from Boston University, studying under Peter Bertocci and L. Harold DeWolfe (Martin Luther King, Jr.'s mentor). John came to SIUC in 1966, after appointments at Randolph-Macon College (where he had been terminated for objecting to the requirement that applicants include photographs which were used to identify

race) and Earlham College. John's work at SIUC focused on ethical theory, medical ethics, the ethics of war and peace, Greek philosophy American idealism and the personalist tradition. He contributed articles on Brand Blanshard, Borden Parker Bowne, Edgar S. Brightman, and William Ernest Hocking as well as on Gandhi and Thoreau. He authored *Perspectives for Moral Decisions* (University Press of America 1981) and edited volumes on ethics and social policy as well as one on the philosophy of W.E.Hocking. He served in a number of professional societies, including SAAP, the Personalist Discussion Group and The Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought. He was Vice-President and President of the AAUP and worked on the national level for the Association for the Development of Philosophy Teaching. Stephen Howie tells the story that in one of his father's large lecture classes, John was driven by the apathy of the students to shout out to them "Who ever said living a moral life was going to be easy?" Ethics was not about words for John Howie. Those of you in SAAP who did not know him, might reflect on a question put to me by a colleague: "In the Civil Rights Movement, the personalists were in the streets. Where were the pragmatists?"

Thomas M. Alexander, SIUC

### **Arthur W. Burks (1915-2008)**

Arthur Burks passed away on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in Ann Arbor. He was 92. Burks was widely recognized as a pioneer of the computing revolution but within our SAAP community we also remember him for his important contributions to American philosophy.

Burks was born in 1915 in Duluth, Minn. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1941 from the University of Michigan with a dissertation on the logical foundations of Peirce's philosophy, one of the earliest dissertations on Peirce. Paul Henle, a student of C.I. Lewis, influenced Burks to write on Peirce and Henle served on Burks' Ph.D. committee with Harold Langford as chair. After completing his doctorate, Burks learned electrical engineering at the Moore School of Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and was recruited for the wartime ENIAC project and helped design the first general-purpose electronic digital computer. In 1945-46, Burks worked at Princeton with John von Neumann and Herman H. Goldstine on ENIAC's successor, the EDVAC, a stored-program general-purpose computer.

After Princeton, Burks returned to the University of Michigan as a Professor of Philosophy and of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. One of Burks' first doctoral students in Philosophy was Edward C. Moore who took his Ph.D. in 1950 with a dissertation on Peirce's metaphysics and pragmatism. Moore went on to become the founding editor of the *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* and, later, the founding director of the Peirce Edition Project. Burks spent a year at Harvard in 1954-55 editing volumes 7 and 8 of the *Collected Papers* which, when published in 1958, completed the Harvard edition of Peirce's writings. Included in Vol. 8 was Burks' 70-page annotated bibliography of Peirce's writings which provided the first comprehensive guide to the chronological development of Peirce's thought. Burks served as a member of the Advisory Board for the Peirce Project from its founding in 1976 and, in 1994, was appointed Executive Consultant to the project director, a position he held until his death. So Burks was integral for both of the major editions of Peirce's writings.

Burks' editorial and bibliographical contributions to Peirce scholarship are complemented by his many important philosophical and analytical contributions to Peirce studies. He published early papers in leading journals on Peirce's conception of logic as a normative science, on reasonableness and the laws of nature, on empiricism and vagueness, on Peirce's theory of abduction, and on Peirce's theory of signs. All of this work broke new ground in Peirce studies and made technical contributions that are still referenced today. During his middle years, Burks' work was concentrated on computer science, the theory of automata and complex adaptive systems, and on inductive logic and the logic of causal propositions. Peirce was given less direct attention but, as Burks pointed out in *Chance, Cause, Reason*, Peirce and pragmatism remained important in the background of his thought. In his later years, Burks focused on his own metaphysical system, a mechanistic theory of the universe that he generally contrasted with an appreciative though critical account of Peirce's evolutionary idealism. Burks rejected Peirce's idealistic pansychism but he accepted Peirce's thesis that evolution is logical and semiotic in character. He conceded that Peirce evolutionary cosmology was the best non-reductive theory of the universe yet achieved.

After his retirement, Burks, together with his wife, Alice, devoted considerable effort to the history of computing and tried to correct received views that had been promoted by powerful corporate interests. As a true scientific philosopher, Burks could not ignore disconfirming facts and sought them out even when they threatened to force revisions of his own life story and his own role in the birth of computing. Burks was a model for clearness of thought and a real force for truth.

N. Houser Written for the March 2008 annual SAAP meeting.

## **PATRICK JOSEPH HILL (1939-2008)**

Patrick Joseph Hill was born in Brooklyn, New York, on 26 March 1939. He received his undergraduate education at Fordham College, St. Peter's College (Baltimore), and finally his A.B. degree in philosophy from Queens College/CUNY in 1963. His graduate study in philosophy was at Washington University (St. Louis) and Boston University, where he earned his M.A. in 1966 and his Ph.D. in 1969. He taught philosophy, broadly conceived, at SUNY/Stony Brook (1968-83) and at Evergreen State College (1983-2008) for over forty years, accepting emeritus status shortly before his death on 26 June of last year.

While at Stony Brook, Pat founded the program entitled Federated Learning Communities, which has blossomed in various versions across the country. The goal of the FLC was to address a series of problems that were endemic in American higher education: mismatched expectations of students and faculty about the purpose of higher education; inadequate intellectual interaction on campus; incoherent undergraduate curricula; the inability of our refined disciplinary tools to engage with the complexity of our social problems; and the endless pressures on colleges and universities to 'do more with less.' As these problems further encroach on our academic lives, the suggestions that he developed for addressing them only grow in value.

Pat was one of the few philosophers who focused on improving higher education in America. His means was not writing better books or developing a persona to be emulated by his followers, but rather living the ideal of community. The roots of this quest can be found in his 1969 dissertation, *The Structure of Agreement and Disagreement: A Dialogical Study of the Uses of Philosophical Reason*. Let me read a bit from this extraordinary work:

When two philosophers argue and one convinces the other to adopt position b and abandon position a, it is *prima facie* reasonable to suppose that the argument in question is the sufficient cause of the change of position. A measure of doubt arises, however, when the same argument fails to bring about the same effect in a third philosopher; and that doubt may increase . . . when most prolonged and most intelligent attempts to produce the agreement . . . end in repeated failures . . . The puzzlement concerning this phenomenon of persistent disagreement leads to many questions, one of which concerns the instances of agreement. While philosophers are far from silent on the subject of why other philosophers do not (or will not) agree with them, these explanations are more than a little inadequate, because — generally speaking — they are functions of unshared philosophical positions . . . What is needed is a more general understanding of agreement and disagreement, a more fundamental one which is not a function of a particular philosophical position” (x-xi).

Here is a lowly graduate student fearlessly addressing one of the thorniest issues in the history of philosophy. Further, he is telling us that, on the one hand, our comfortable answer – that philosophical disagreement results because others fail to recognize that we are correct – is mistaken, and that, on the other, the only way off this treadmill is cooperative inquiry. What we need is philosophical community, on a much higher level than I have ever experienced, but not so high that it should not be pursued.

It was during his years at Stony Brook that I studied with Pat – working especially on Royce and Dewey, and the large issue of community. He also stepped in at the last minute to shepherd me through my doctoral defense when one of my committee members had taken a job elsewhere, another had suffered a stroke, and a third was dying of not-yet-recognized Lyme disease. (Pat had earlier declined to serve on my committee because of the crunch of his administrative duties.) I can still feel the calming effect of knowing that Pat would take over this potential train wreck, and that his spirit of cooperative inquiry would pervade the event – as it did.

Because of a chronic illness, Pat did not attend many conferences. He did, however, speak at our 11<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Seattle in 1984. On that occasion, the topic of his plenary address was: “Intergenerational Community and the Community of Inquiry.” This topic, so central to his life and work, was, and remains, a vital theme in the life of our SOCIETY.

James Campbell SAAP President (2008-10) March 2009

## Peter H. Hare (1935-2008)

I'm sure we all have our private ideas about what Peter would have appreciated in honoring his memory. Assuming Peter's style, I'll be brief and efficient with my tribute to our friend and colleague, a man of genuine greatness.

In my dealings with Peter over many years, I became well acquainted with his many superlative qualities and abilities, his astonishing good sense, and his truly American "can-do" spirit. But more than anyone else with whom I have worked, Peter knew how to nurture and promote ideas by attending to systems and institutions, and by cultivating talent. He had long range vision, aimed both toward the past and the future, and he knew how to shape the future by wise yet calculated moves of the present. Peter was a master strategist. His strategic moves sometimes took the form of a letter to a dean or a university president in support of a new center or project; or a letter of reference for someone seeking a new position or going up for tenure—Peter always knew just what to say. They sometimes took the form of a well-placed telephone call or an email suggesting a capable and well-deserving person for a special appointment or honor, or a timely interjection at a business meeting that would set things going in a new direction. They sometimes took the form of a request to organize a session at a professional meeting (often the APA or the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy) or an invitation to write a paper for the *Transactions* on a topic that Peter believed needed attention. Not infrequently, the strategic move Peter thought necessary involved a personal appearance on some distant shore or a well-timed financial contribution. When I think of Peter, I often recall the wise if sometimes unwelcome counsel of Horace Kallen that if ideas are to thrive, if philosophic traditions are to continue, they have to be promoted by dedicated and capable adherents. Peter was not put off by the thought that one's chosen philosophy or philosophical method requires promotion—he understood this well and was a master of it.

But Peter was by no means narrow or partisan; he was delighted with brilliance and fine thinking wherever he found it and, in this sense, was no respecter of philosophic traditions. Not long ago, when recommending a person out of the mainstream for a top honor, Peter wrote the following to the other members of the selection committee: "It seems to me that our committee should take special care to recognize great distinction in [the] minority—lest we slide into a tyranny of the majority." That was typical Peter.

About three years ago a colleague of mine spent a few days with Peter in São Paulo and told me that Peter was developing a philosophical approach called flexibilism. Flexibilism, Peter said, was no ordinary pluralism, yet I'm sure it is a philosophy that reflects Peter's commitment to being a member of a vast community of thought that outstrips any narrow or partisan point of view.

I am aware that Peter was not always optimistic about the outcome of his causes or, for that matter, of civilization itself. Yet, as we all know, Peter was no quitter—he never gave up. He knew that it was in the realm of action-guiding ideas that our future will be determined and he cast his lot with the ideals of the naturalist pragmatists; it is this American tradition of thought, kept alive and up-to-date, that Peter believed offered the best hope for the future. He did more than anyone else to bring these ideas into vital participation with contemporary

thought. The world is a better place because of Peter and whatever our chances for the future, he raised the odds.

I'm honored to have known Peter. May his memory and his influence long endure.

N. Houser

(These remarks were originally given on 29 March 2008 at Peter Hare's memorial service in Buffalo.)

## **H. Stan Thayer (1923-2008)**

Horace Standish Thayer was born on May 6, 1923 in New York City, and died on August 8, 2008, in South Nyack, New York. Stan grew up in Columbus, Ohio, and Dobbs Ferry, New York, before attending Bard College in the Hudson River Valley and graduating with his BA in 1945. Concentrating on American philosophy and pragmatism, he earned the MA in 1947 and the PhD in philosophy in 1949 from Columbia University, studying with Ernest Nagel, Herbert Schneider, and John H. Randall, Jr. He stayed at Columbia to teach philosophy from 1949 to 1961. Then he moved to City College of New York to teach from 1961 until his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1990. While at City College he chaired the philosophy department from 1965 to 1968.

Thayer was the recipient of numerous honors. He was awarded a Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in 1970 and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship in 1974–75. He was a member of the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study in 1974–75 and 1982–83. Thayer was Vice President of The John Dewey Foundation, served on the editorial board of the Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society, and served on advisory boards for the Peirce Edition Project and for the editions of the correspondence of both William James and John Dewey. He received the Herbert W. Schneider Award for contributions to American philosophy from the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy in 1989. Although Thayer published numerous essays and articles about all of the major pragmatists, his research on John Dewey's philosophy has been the most penetrating and influential. His 1952 book *The Logic of Pragmatism: An Examination of John Dewey's Logic* was the first full-length exposition of Dewey's theory of inquiry and knowledge. This valuable book and subsequent articles have powerfully shaped Deweyan scholarship.

Thayer's interests extended beyond American philosophy, including several publications on ancient philosophy. However, Thayer's definitive histories of pragmatism are his major works and have served for decades as the most comprehensive studies available. The first edition of *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism* appeared in 1968 and remained in high demand as the best single volume examination of both the primary and secondary figures of pragmatism. The greatly expanded edition of *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism* (1981) still stands as the essential guide to classical pragmatism and its figures in America and Europe. His anthology *Pragmatism, the Classic Writings* (1970) remains in print as well. Thayer's tremendous scholarly efforts were essential

to the preservation and appreciation of classical pragmatism during an era of analytic philosophy's neglect for the traditions of American philosophy.

In high school Stan Thayer was a fine athlete who played football, basketball, and baseball. Years later, after getting his doctorate in Philosophy at Columbia, Thayer ran into his old high school coach who, unimpressed with his academic achievement, remarked that he would have made a good baseball player. Before getting interested in philosophy, Thayer attended the Yale University School of Art where he established a lifelong friendship with fellow student and artist Leonard Baskin. Although Thayer painted and drew throughout the tenure of his professional career, retirement allowed him the time to work prolifically at his art in a great variety of media. As a writer, Thayer was deeply influenced by the works of Byron, Shelley, Keats and Shakespeare. He could quote passages from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets at length, and enjoyed writing verse of his own. His children's stories have been a continuing source of delight for his grandchildren. While at the Institute for Advanced Study in 1974-75, Thayer published a letter to the editor of the New York Times regarding the depletion of the ozone layer and the need to preserve our environment for future generations. This led to an invitation by Jacques Cousteau for Thayer to join the Cousteau Society's Board of Advisors, and to a lifelong friendship with Cousteau. Those who knew Stan Thayer will also remember his love of the ponds, birds, and beaches of Cape Cod, and the great games of tennis which were played around the town of Truro.

John R. Shook, University at Buffalo, and the Children of H. S. Thayer

## **Advance information for the Charlotte Meeting, March 2009**

The 2010 SAAP meeting will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, at the Omni Hotel and will be hosted by Queens University of Charlotte <http://www.queens.edu/> and The University of North Carolina at Charlotte <http://www.uncc.edu/>, 11-13 March.

Hotel reservations at the Omni Charlotte Hotel at the special SAAP rate of \$109 per night can be made online now at: <http://www.omnihotels.com/FindAHotel/Charlotte/MeetingFacilities/SocietyfortheAdvancementofAmericanPhilosophy3.aspx> or call 1-800-The-Omni and ask for rooms for the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy at the Omni Charlotte Hotel.

The Omni is located in the very center of Charlotte, which is a vibrant, although not very expansive, urban locale. Charlotte, despite being incorporated in 1768 has only recently become a large city. Thus it feels new and bustling, thanks to the big banks and a hub airport. (This past year, the airport was the eighth busiest in the United States and twenty-fourth busiest in the world by passenger traffic.) Bank of America's headquarters is across the street from the hotel. Across another street is the new Epicentre <http://www.epicentrenc.com/>, an interesting mix of entertainment, shopping and restaurants. An enjoyable way to learn about Charlotte's history is