



SPT newsletter

Volume 24, Number 3 (Autumn 2000)

Message From The President

Dear SPT members,

I hope this issue of the newsletter finds you off to a good start on the fall!

In this issue, you will find information on many activities that are being planned for this year. In particular we have special sessions at the Eastern and Pacific Division meetings of the APA and our biennial conference in July in Aberdeen. You'll notice that the APA sessions have the same theme as the Aberdeen conference. Our hope was to get people thinking about the topic as we move closer to the conference.

You'll notice that Andrew Light has extended the deadline for submissions for the Aberdeen conference, and I hope as many of you as possible will submit something. The Aberdeen venue promises to be extremely nice and our meetings in Europe are especially nice because they give us the opportunity to interact with so many European colleagues!

My focus for the next year will be on increasing the membership of the Society. Please pay your dues if you haven't already done so, and please tell your colleagues about the Society, and ask them to join. Joining is now easier than ever in the sense that you can simply go to our website and download the membership form. As you all know, the membership dues are incredibly low so low that it might be more efficient for you to pay them for several years in advance.

Best Wishes,

Deborah

SECOND CALL FOR PAPERS

Note new submission deadline and address for submissions, below

**12th BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR PHILOSOPHY
AND TECHNOLOGY**

July 9th-11th 2001

University of Aberdeen
Aberdeen, Scotland

Conference Theme: "Nature and Technology"

The Society for Philosophy and Technology has sponsored conferences on philosophical aspects of technology since the late 1970s. Current conferences are held every other year, rotating between North America and Europe. The Society welcomes a broad range of papers from various philosophical perspectives and schools.

Our next conference will focus on the growing set of epistemological, moral, social, political and conceptual problems related to the juncture of, broadly speaking, nature and technology. Historical and contemporary issues will be addressed with preference given only to the clearest analysis of the stated problem.

Papers are invited on any topic relevant to the conference theme or to philosophical considerations of technology in general. Specific conference sub-themes include:

- + Moral and Conceptual Implications of Genetic Modification
- + Environment, Technology, and Development
- + Biotechnology in Medicine and Environmental Science
- + High Technology and the Boundary of Nature and Nurture
- + The Concepts of Nature and Artifact in the History of Philosophy
- + Relationships between Philosophy of Technology and Philosophy of Natural Science
- + Conceptual Foundations of the History of Natural Science and Technology

Keynote Speakers:

Stephen Clark, University of Liverpool

"From Biosphere to Technosphere - What will it be like to inhabit a world designed by people?"

Gordon Graham, University of Aberdeen: "Playing God: Is genetic technology in danger of crossing fundamental boundaries?"

Deborah Johnson, Georgia Institute of Technology: "Nature and Information Technology: The Convergence of STS and IT Policy"

Janet Radcliffe Richards, University College London: "Darwinism, Nature and Technology"

Program Coordinator: Andrew Light, Assistant Professor of Environmental Philosophy, and Director, Environmental Conservation Education Program, New York University

Conference Coordinator: Gordon Graham, Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of Aberdeen.

Two-page (max.) abstracts should be submitted by November 15th 2000 by post, fax, or e-mail. Notification of abstract acceptance by February 15th 2001. Proposals for full sessions also welcome, please include abstracts for all papers to be included in sessions.

All abstracts will be peer refereed and most accepted papers will be assigned a commentator.

Please also let us know if you would like to only serve as a commentator.

SEND ABSTRACTS TO:

**Andrew Light, SPT Conference
Environmental Conservation Education Program
246 Greene Street, Suite 300
New York University
New York, NY 10003
USA**

**fax: 212-995-4832
e-mail: andrew.light@nyu.edu**

Please also include an e-mail address with your submission where you can be contacted.

If you cannot meet the November 15 deadline for abstracts contact Andrew Light to inquire about a late submission.

Check the SPT website (www.spt.org) for conference updates.

This Society for Philosophy and Technology conference is sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, University of Aberdeen and the University of Aberdeen Centre for Philosophy, Technology, & Society.

Selected papers from the conference will have the option of being published in *Techné, the Journal of the Society for Philosophy and Technology*, edited by Professor Davis Baird, Department of Philosophy, University of South Carolina.

New Venue for SPT 2001: Aberdeen
Andrew Light
SPT Vice-President

In mid-March, the SPT board voted unanimously, at the behest of myself and SPT President Deborah Johnson, to move the venue of our 2001 international conference to Aberdeen, Scotland. Previously, it had been announced internally in the Society that the meeting would take place in Edinburgh. What follows is a brief explanation of the decision to change venue.

Organizing conferences of the size we hope to see in Scotland is a difficult task. It is one thing to arrange for a program which will be of interest to the membership, and those we would like to draw into the Society; it is quite another to make the local arrangements which will insure that the conference runs smoothly. After considering at length some changes to the on site program committee in Edinburgh (one of the principle local co-organizers had unfortunately taken ill and would no longer be able to help with the planning) Deborah and I began to consider alternatives. Quite independently, and fortuitously, Gordon Graham, Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen, and Director of the University of Aberdeen Centre for Philosophy, Technology and Society, came forward and offered Aberdeen as a new host site for the conference. After further investigation, it seemed that the move to Aberdeen would be ideal – it not only allowed us to stay in Scotland, but also to work directly with one of the top departments of philosophy in the U.K. on the conference (see details about the history of work in philosophy at Aberdeen at the end of the call for papers for the conference in the previous issue of the *Newsletter*). In addition, we also considered the following:

+ The Centre and the Aberdeen Philosophy Department have successfully hosted several recent international conferences. The most recent are the CPTS International Conference on Ethics, Development and Technology in 1996 and the First International Reid Symposium

in 1998. There are two major conferences forthcoming – The Gifford Bequest International Conference on Natural Theology (May 2000) and the 2nd Reid International Symposium (July 2000). Graham has received the enthusiastic support of the Aberdeen philosophy department to host our meeting with the Centre which will insure us a secure berth at the site making scheduling, etc., much easier to deal with.

+ Graham, in addition to holding the Regius Professorship, is well known in UK philosophy circles as a prolific author of high quality analytic work in metaphysics and moral philosophy and is secretary of the Scotts Philosophical Society (publisher of *Philosophical Studies*). He also edits the Centre's newsletter *Ends and Means* which acts essentially as a journal on philosophy and technology, regularly publishing scholarly articles. Graham is becoming more well known in philosophy of technology, recently publishing, *The Internet: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Routledge, 1999) and presented a paper at our San Jose conference last August.

+ Because membership in the SPT is at an all time low (under 50 now according to our secretary's last report) and because interest in the Society seems to be dwindling in the philosophy community, we desperately need not only a successful gala conference, but also one that is well integrated in the philosophy world. We have here a rare opportunity to host a major international conference with one of the UK's most respected philosophy departments and figures in philosophy circles. Deborah and I felt that this might result in higher participation rates from the philosophical community in the UK and from North American philosophers who have not previously attended our meetings. In contrast our previous plans at Edinburgh were to organize the conference with an independent interdisciplinary research center which was not formally connected with the University of Edinburgh, and which exists largely outside of traditional philosophical venues in the UK.

If any of the membership wishes to inquire further about this change of venue, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail (andrew.light@nyu.edu). I hope to see you all in Aberdeen! Please help us by circulating the call for papers for the meeting to others who you think may find it of interest.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

SOCIETY FOR PHILOSOPHY AND TECHNOLOGY GROUP SESSION AT THE APA/PACIFIC DIVISION MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO, 29 MARCH TO 1 APRIL 2001

The Society for Philosophy and Technology announces the following session for the 2001 Pacific Division American Philosophical Association Meeting: "Technology and Nature."

Abstracts are invited on any subject relating to the general theme of "Technology and Nature," including work on biotechnology, environmental and development issues, genetic engineering in biology and agriculture, or other related themes. All philosophical viewpoints are welcome.

The theme for this session is the same as the theme for the SPT's upcoming 2th Biennial International Conference, which will be held in Aberdeen, Scotland 9 to 11 July 2001. Papers for the Pacific Division Meeting may also be submitted to the Aberdeen conference. For information on the Aberdeen conference, contact Andrew Light at the following email address. andrew.light@nyu.edu

Abstract Deadline for the Pacific Division Meeting: 15 October 2000, with notification by 1 November 2000. All final papers for the group session may

be considered for *Techné*, SPT's journal.

Send abstracts to:

Noam Cook

**Department of Philosophy
San Jose State University
San Jose, CA 95192**

SPT at the APA/Eastern Division

SPT is sponsoring two, two-hour sessions at the APA Eastern Division Meetings in New York City:

SESSION I: Thursday, December 28, Group Session V: 5:15-7:15 pm

Topic: Nature and Technology I: Author meets critics: Beneath the

Surface: Critical Essays on the Philosophy of Deep Ecology (MIT), eds. E.

Katz, A. Light & D.

Rothenberg

Chair: Deborah G. Johnson

Speakers:

Eric Katz, New Jersey Institute of Technology

David Keller, Utah Valley State College

Deborah Johnson, Georgia Institute of Technology

Andrew McLaughlin, Lehman College, City University of New York

David Rothenberg, New Jersey Institute of Technology

SESSION II: Friday, December 29, Group Session VIII, 11:15 a.m. 1:15 p.m.

Topic: Nature and Technology II: Panel on Nature and Virtuality

Chair: Deborah G. Johnson

Speakers:

Babak Razzaghe Ashrafi, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Deborah G. Johnson, Georgia Institute of Technology

Diane P. Michelfelder, Utah State University

Eric Steinhart, William Paterson University

Techné Update:

Papers from SPT99 in San José: In the last Newsletter I noted that two issues of volume 5 of *Techné* will be devoted to papers from SPT99 in San José. These issues are still in production. But, both will be published by the end of 2000. This puts us about a year behind the nominal schedule. However, given the number of submissions to the journal, this is

perhaps not a disaster.

Submission Crisis: Since my last update to the *Newsletter*, there have been no submissions to the journal. I repeat what I said in my last Newsletter update. This journal will not thrive with this frequency of submissions. *Techné* is your journal. That is, it is the journal for the Society. If you want a healthy Society and Journal, you need to submit your work. Please send your papers to me either by email or by snail mail.

Paper Publishing: Negotiations currently are underway with Seven Bridges Press to take *Techné* to paper format. Likely we will change the frequency to twice a year (unless the frequency of submissions changes even more radically than I am hoping it will change). We will add a book review section and a section for longer review essays. Details about cost have yet to be determined, but I am confident that the cost of the Journal will be quite reasonable. Seven Bridges will take on a lot of the marketing and production details and this should help get the word more generally broadcast that there is a journal devoted to the philosophy of technology.

Future Projects: Paul Durbin is editing a series of papers focused on Joe Pitt's new book, *Thinking about Technology*. These are taken from contributions to the SPT Author meets Critics session at the Central APA. I am still interested in having *Techné* do an issue on some aspect of biotechnology and another on some aspect of the internet. If anyone is interested in serving as a guest editor to put such an issue together, or in some other interesting project, please let me know.

Your Journal: I close with the same remarks I closed my last *Techné* update: *Techné* is your journal. If you share my belief in the importance of philosophical reflection on technology, you should be sending your papers to *Techné* and encouraging your friends with like interests to do likewise. Some of you have expressed concerns both over the quality of the journal and over the relative merit of an electronic journal. I understand these concerns, but the basic fact remains that *Techné* will be a high quality *electronic or paper* journal when it is used as a primary means to communicate philosophical work devoted to technology. It is up to the current and future members of the Society to use it as such. *Techné* is for you.

Davis Baird

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From The Editors

It is with some conflict that I inform you that this issue marks the end of Andrew Garner's service to the Society as Associate Editor of the *Newsletter*. Andrew, a PhD. Student in Virginia Tech's STS program, is now working on his dissertation, and needs to devote all of his time to that project. Andrew has done a superior job as Associate Editor – meaning by that he has gotten us onto a regular schedule, he keeps me on some sort of short leash, and he has sought to make the Newsletter more useful to the membership. He will be missed.

Taking over as Associate Editor is Ben Cohen, another graduate student in the STS Program at Virginia Tech. Ben comes to us with a background in engineering and an interest in the recasting the Two Cultures debate in the light of recent contributions in STS. I look forward to working with him and continuing improvement of the quality of the Society's publications.

Please send us your news, your editorial comments, book reviews, and other issues of interest.

Announcements

+ Andrew Light has been appointed Assistant Professor of Environmental Philosophy, and Director of the graduate program in Environmental Conservation Education, at New York University. The program currently has a terminal MA in environmental studies (established by Millard Clements and Tom Colwell), drawing students primarily from the major environmental NGOs and government organizations in the New York City area. Light's mandate is to investigate the creation of a Ph.D. component for the program (with additional hires) in environmental ethics or applied ethics. Editorial offices for the journal *Philosophy and Geography*, will go with Light to NYU. Light's new address is: Environmental Conservation Education Program,

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Professions, New York University, 246 Greene Street, Suite 300, New York, NY 10003. Phone: 212-998-5636. Fax: 212-995-4832. E-mail: andrew.light@nyu.edu. *Philosophy & Geography* phone: 212-998-5633.

SUNY Binghamton plans to search for a replacement for Light in environmental ethics during the 2000-2001 academic year.

+ The Philosophy Section of the Delft University of Technology is pleased to announce that the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) has approved the research program 'The Dual Nature of Technical Artifacts'. The program, supervised by Professors Peter Kroes and Anthonie Meijers, centers on the notions of 'design' and 'technical function' in order to study the ontology and epistemology of artifacts, an important category of objects that has almost escaped philosophical attention. Four researchers, two post-docs and two Ph.D. students (one yet to be appointed), will work exclusively on aspects of the program, which is funded until 2004. International cooperation is a vital part of the program. A full description, as well as information on the participants and the remaining job opening, can be found on the section's website: www.fil.tbm.tudelft.nl, under the heading 'Research Projects'.

+ The Editors of the *Newsletter* are pleased to announce that the following papers presented at SPT99 will appear in the journal *Ethics and Information Technology* (Vol. II, No. 3):

Diane P. Michelfelder: "Our Moral Condition in Cyberspace"

Thomas C. Anderson: "The Body and Communities in Cyberspace: a Marcellian Analysis"

Joseph Westfall: "What is Cyberwoman?: The Second Sex in Cyberspace"

Brian T. Prosser and Andrew Ward: "Kierkegaard and the Internet: Existential Reflections on Education and Community"

Jason W. Patton: "Protecting Privacy in Public? Surveillance Technologies and the Value of Public Places"

Conferences and Calls for Papers

IEEE Technology and Society Magazine: Special Issue September 2001, Engineering Ethics: Continuing and Emerging Issues. Interest in engineering ethics grew rapidly in the last half of the 20th century as the scope and magnitude of the social implications of technology and the professional and ethical responsibilities of engineers became more apparent. Over the past two decades, engineering ethics developed into an established interdisciplinary academic field, including healthy debates over theory and methods. As IEEE Technology and Society Magazine concludes its twentieth year of publication, it is appropriate to take stock of developments in engineering ethics over the past two decades and consider emerging ethical issues at the beginning of the 21st century. Submissions are invited on such topics as: Engineering ethics and "globalization", Role of professional

ethics in research ethics, Technology, ethics, and healthcare, Relevance of ethics in engineering practice, Ethical issues in product liability, Innovations in engineering ethics education, Ethical issues and social impacts of information technology, Engineering ethics, technology, and gender, Role of professional engineering societies in ethics promotion and support, Risk assessment, management, and communication History of engineering, ethics in the late 20th century Engineering ethics and the environment, Perspectives on engineering ethics from Science and Technology and Studies, (STS) Engineering ethics and engineering design All contributions will be peer reviewed. Deadline for submissions is December 31, 2000. Electronic submissions are preferred. Contact: Joseph R. Herkert, Guest Editor; Division of Multidisciplinary Studies; Box 7107; North Carolina State University; Raleigh, NC 27695-7107, USA; Email: j.herkert@ieee.org

MEPHISTOS, MARCH 30-APRIL 1, 2001, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME. Please send an abstract and a brief c.v. to meph2001@nd.edu. Your abstract should be no more than 250 words. Both the abstract and the c.v. should be in Word or .rtf format. Abstracts are due January 15, 2001. All presenters will receive notification of their travel grant award by February 15, 2001. At Mephistos, you will have 20 minutes to present your paper, followed by a 10-minute period for questions. Your paper should fit one of the following genres: Presentation of Research: Present a paper in the history, philosophy, or sociology of science, or a related discipline. Papers may cover any era, from the ancient period to the present day. Though Mephistos 2001 is a conference for the History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science, we encourage students of allied fields to consider submitting their work to the conference. At past conferences, students of English, Communications, and Labor Studies (among other fields) have submitted papers. Working session: Submit a dissertation chapter to the conference for open discussion. The paper will be available to all participants through this site in the weeks leading up to the conference. Those participants who submit a dissertation chapter may also submit a regular conference paper. Plan your own session: Rather than submit a single paper on an independent topic, you may wish to organize with other conference participants to submit 3-4 papers on a related theme. Science studies for the classroom: Papers on how to teach science studies or on how Science Studies can complement the teaching of science in elementary, secondary, and higher education. Science studies for society: Papers on how science studies may be brought beyond academia.

Atomic Culture in the Nuclear Age, March 7-10, Sheraton Oldtown Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association invites panels and individual papers examining atomic culture for its annual conference to be held March 7-10, 2001 at the Sheraton Oldtown Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Possible areas of consideration include, but are not limited to: Film, Television, Fiction and science fiction, Music, Radio, Comic books, Trinity, Civil defense, The nuclear physicist as cultural figure, Nuclear tourism, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Anti-nuclear movements. Located between Los Alamos and the Trinity Site, Albuquerque offers a unique place to consider cultural manifestations of atomic energy. Participants will have the opportunity to visit the National Atomic Museum located on Kirtland Air Force Base. Please send proposals for panels and individual papers (include a 100 word abstract and a one-page c.v.) by November 1, 2000, to the Area Chair at the address listed below. Contact information: Scott C. Zeman; Assistant Professor of History/Humanities Department; New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology; 801 Leroy Place; Socorro, New Mexico 87801; Phone: (505) 835-5628 Fax: (505) 835.5544; Email: szeman@nmt.edu; Call for Papers website: <http://www2.okstate.edu/swpca/>

Technologies of Uncertainty: Reconstructing Order Through Rhetorics of Risk. Department of Science & Technology Studies, Cornell University, April 20-22, 2001. Inside and outside academia, people engage in assessing, mitigating, managing, and communicating risk. Work in Science and Technology Studies has revealed how particular ways of defining risks are social and political achievements with public consequences. This interdisciplinary workshop expands upon these important contributions by exploring how constructions of risk are employed as a resource to sustain and transform social order. How does risk influence the production of new identities and reconfigure old ones? How is risk used as a device to construct and manage public(s)? How do actors manipulate risk discourse to influence the dynamics of power such as credibility, legitimacy, and expertise? The Department of Science & Technology Studies at Cornell University invites researchers in all fields to reflect critically on how discourses of risk are used as political tools in diverse areas, from nuclear power to Wall Street, information privacy to genetic testing. The workshop will be discussion intensive, including commentaries on pre-circulated papers. Sheila Jasanoff (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University) and Brian Wynne (Centre for the Study for Environmental Change, Lancaster University) will serve as distinguished guests. Abstracts of no more than 250 words and a one-page curriculum vitae should be sent to the postal or e-mail address listed below by December 1, 2000. Full papers for pre-circulation will be due March 9, 2001. Abstracts from scholars at all stages of their careers are encouraged. Josh Greenberg, Abstract Coordinator; Technologies of Uncertainty Workshop; Dept. of Science & Technology Studies; Cornell University; 630 Clark Hall; Ithaca, NY 14853; e-mail: jmg48@cornell.edu

The First Flight Centennial Commission invites the submission of proposals for sessions and individual papers that might be presented during its international symposium on the history of flight, **October 22-25, 2001**, at **North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC**. The Commission has established 5 major themes for the symposiums as follows: (1) "North Carolina and the Outer Banks" circa 1900-11 while the Wrights tested various craft there; (2) "Innovation in Flight" from Wrights to the present; (3) "Civil Aviation and Policy" from 1903 forward; (4) "Warfare and Flight" from 1903 forward; and (5) "Flight in Human Imagination," including art, music, literature and other aesthetic realms. Other topics beyond these general themes in the history of flight (including rocketry and space) are also invited for individual non-theme sessions. The Commission also welcomes session or presentation proposals using innovative methods of presentation, exhibitry, live demonstrations, and rare film for a concurrent film festival on flight. The symposium will include internationally known speakers, entertainment, and tours to local centers of interest. Session and individual proposals (including speakers, their affiliations, session titles, and brief 1 or 2 sentence description) should be submitted (if in hard copy) to Dr. Larry E. Tise, Symposium Director, First Flight Centennial Commission, 4635 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4635 not later than October 15, 2000. E-mail inquiries and submissions (but not as attachments) should be directed to Dr. Tise at ltise@ibm.net. Non-program inquiries

about the symposium and other activities of the Commission should be directed to the mailing address above or to phone 919.733.2003 or fax 919.715.8959.

Newsletter Affairs

Send inquiries about and information for *The Newsletter* to:

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The Newsletter is published by Joseph C. Pitt, Andrew Garnar, and Ben Cohen

SPT Membership

SPT welcomes as members persons from all countries whose professional interests include philosophically significant considerations of technology.

Membership is open to those who have an advanced degree (typically but not necessarily in philosophy), to those who are in a technological field, and to students whose work is in keeping with the interests of the Society.

Dues are \$15/year, except for students and people from developing nations, which includes a subscription to The Newsletter. Dues for students are \$5 and gratis for people in developing nations.

Please enclose a cheque or money order for \$15US (payable by a US branch of the bank on which it is drawn) made out to the Society for Philosophy and Technology. Canadians may pay by cheque payable in Canadian dollars in an amount equal to \$10US. The Society cannot accept Eurocheck numbers. Alas, we are not yet able to accept credit cards for payment.

Dues and this membership form should be sent to:

Diane Michelfelder

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