

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

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Dr. Greg Sapp named the Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility

Dr. Greg Sapp, a 1988 Stetson graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Religion, has joined the university faculty as the Hal Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility. With a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton University (1992) and a Ph.D. in Philosophical Theology and History of Christian Thought from the University of Virginia (1999) and 10 years of teaching experience, Sapp brings the academic training, teaching experience, and commitment to issues of civic and social responsibility necessary for giving leadership to the university's focus on community involvement. Dr. Sapp will give guidance to the University Values Council, teach in both the Honor's Program and First Year's Studies courses as well as be an active teaching member in the Religious Studies Department. As a department, we are always excited to see a Stetson grad excel professionally. To have one of our own return to join us is the most exciting thing of all!



Student highlights



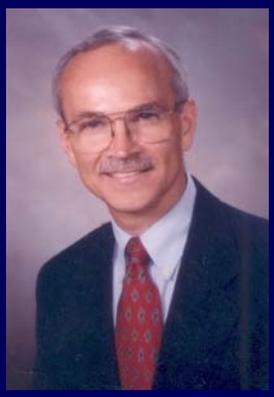
Grace Mikell was awarded The Katharine Hansen Award for Non-Art Majors and the Ann Hall Stetson Award at the 17th Juried Stetson Student Art Exhibition held on November 10, 2006. Grace is a major in Religious Studies with a minor in German and Art. She graduates in Spring 2007.

Gregory Nolan, a major in Political Science and Philosophy and minor in Religious Studies, received a Harry S. Truman Scholarship for 2006. The Harry S. Truman Foundation awards \$30,000 each to Truman Scholars for graduate school studies.



"Living is the constant adjustment of thought to life and life to thought in such a way that we are always growing, always experiencing new things in the old and old things in the new." Thomas Merton

Chair Comments



For the first time in several years we have no faculty gone on sabbatical or other leave of absence, no vacancies to fill, and no turnovers in the department. It's good to be settled once more! We welcome to our department Dr. Greg Sapp, the newly appointed holder of the Hal Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility (see the accompanying article). Dr. Sapp is a great addition to our department; students and faculty alike are already enjoying having him with us.

We have a strong Department of Religious Studies—excellent students, dedicated and engaged fac-

ulty, and a great administrative specialist (Ms. Lisa Guenther). Yet, we know that for any academic department, there are always areas that can be improved. One of the ways that departments in the College of Arts and Sciences at Stetson strive to improve is by conducting a thorough department review approximately every seven years. This review process involves not only a comprehensive self-evaluation, but also a careful scrutiny of the department by an external evaluator. The Department of Religious Studies will be undertaking its department review this year, culminating in a visit from Dr. Charles Kimball from the Department of Religion at

Wake Forest University. After reviewing a collection of reports and documents about our department, Dr. Kimball will come to campus in March for an onsite evaluation of the department, after which he will submit a report to the dean with his observations and recommendations. As an additional part of this process, alumni will also be asked to provide input about the department. While this process will be time-consuming and require a lot of work, we believe the end result will be a stronger department with a clearer focus of its strengths and weaknesses.

Mitchell G. Reddish

*“Do not go
where the path
may lead, go
instead where
there is no path
and leave a
trail.”*

*Ralph Waldo
Emerson*

Cavaliere and Christian Awarded the Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion



During the Spring 2006 Academic Honors Convocation the Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion was awarded to two recipients. First place went to Chris Cavaliere, Palm Coast, FL, for his essay entitled, “External Forces in Matthew and Luke.” Cavaliere is a senior at Stetson and will graduate this spring with a major in Sociology and a minor in Religious Studies. Second place went to Mary Beth Christian, Winter Haven, FL, a senior majoring in Religious Studies with minors in Music and Spanish, for her essay entitled: “Examining God as Warrior in the Psalms.”

ALLEN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM BECOMES A SMART ROOM

Over the summer break the Allen Hall Conference room was converted to a smart room. The room was outfitted with a document reader, computer, DVD and VHS recorders, and internet access with a projector and screen. A custom-made fireplace screen was installed by Harry Messersmith. Future plans include the purchase of art work for over the fireplace and roman shades for the doors and draperies for the windows. The room was put to immediate use by Dr. Taneja teaching Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, Dr. Reddish teaching Elementary New Testament Greek, and Dr. Queen-Sutherland teaching Tales & Myths of the Ancient Near East and Race, Gender, Class & Religion. Partial funding was provided by the Department of Religious Studies

Allen Hall,
Room 103.
Smart
Classroom



IN THE FIELD...Dr. Phillip Lucas

Megalithic Temple in Malta



I am back teaching full-time after a year-long sabbatical leave. The leave gave me an opportunity to spend five weeks at a Hindu ashram in Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu State, India. The ashram is located at the base of a sacred mountain, Arunachala, that Hindu myths state is a manifestation of Lord Shiva. He appeared in this locale as a pillar of fire to settle a dispute with Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma. The pillar of fire was too intense for humankind in the present Dark Age, the Kali Yuga, so the pillar congealed into a reddish-colored mountain. The mountain is surrounded by eight Ashta Lingams, shrines that contain Shiva's aniconic image. They roughly correspond to the eight directions and are part of a pilgrimage route that devout Hindus take during the night of the full

moon every month. It was fascinating to see the depth of devotion in the pilgrims and the depth of meditation practice at the ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi. I made friends with several monkeys and a host of other creatures, some of whom I was not altogether comfortable with in my little bungalow room! It was a restful time, unplugged from the world's gaudy tumult. I was able to visit Kuala Lumpur and Taipei during my return trip and view the splendid collection of Buddhist art and manuscripts at the National Museum in Taipei. In the Spring I was able to visit megalithic sites on the islands of Malta and Menorca, and passage tombs in Southern Spain. The sites on Malta and Menorca were in very good condition and my observations will be incorporated into my

forthcoming book on megaliths. During the sabbatical leave I was able to complete three extensive articles, one on new theoretical directions in the study of new and minority religions (in the forthcoming *Handbook of Sociology*), a second on New Age millennialism (in an edited volume on millennialisms published by Oxford University Press), and a third on the contemporary use of megalithic sites in Western Europe (to be published next year in *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*). I also completed half of my forthcoming book on megaliths, past and present. It is good to be back in the classroom, renewed and refreshed.

Phillip Lucas



Religious Studies Outstanding Juniors and Seniors

Congratulations to our Outstanding Students who were selected by the Religious Studies Department for the 2005-2006 Academic Year.

Juniors: Ansley Faulkner, and Grace Mikell

Seniors: Kevin Hanson, Jamie Haskins, and Tara Holcomb

Theta Alpha Kappa 2006

Theta Alpha Kappa is a national honor society for professors and students of Religious Studies/Theology. Ten new members joined Stetson's Alpha Gamma Omicron chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa on April 27th: **Mary Bernard**, a Philosophy and French major with minors in International Studies and Applied Ethics; **Ansley Faulkner**, a Religious Studies major with a minor in General Business; **Kyle Kaminski**, majoring in Religious Studies and Environmental Science with a minor in Russian Studies; **Keri Labrant**, a Psy-

chology major with a minor in Religious Studies; **William McSwain**, majoring in Biology and a minor in Religious Studies; **Grace Mikell**, a Religious Studies major with minors in Music and German; **Alison Morriss**, graduated this past spring with a major in Religious Studies and General Business and a minor in History; she is attending Stetson Law School; **Kelly Rowles**, Political Science major and a minor in American Studies; **Jessica Whitely**, graduated this past spring with a major in Rehabilitative Studies and minors in Psychology, Religious Studies, and Health

Care, and **Valerie Winship**, majoring in Religious Studies and Psychology. To date Theta Alpha Kappa, chapter Alpha Gamma Omicron has inducted 75 students. The chapter was started in 1996. To learn more about Theta Alpha Kappa go to the national website at: <http://www-hl.syr.edu/admin/tak>



FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Fant and Dr. Reddish are working on a book tentatively entitled *Lost Treasures of the Bible* that deals with ancient artifacts in world museums. The primary focus of this work, which should be completed by next summer, will be on the major objects of antiquity that have a direct bearing on the history, events, or places associated with the Bible or that provide important background information about the biblical world. They have recently traveled to various museums for research for the project. Last December they visited museums in London, Paris, and Berlin. During spring break 2006, they traveled to Jerusalem and Cairo. During fall break 2006 they returned to London and Paris.

Dr. Reddish conducted a weekend seminar February 10-11, 2006, at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. The seminar, "Introduction to the Gospels," was sponsored by the Smithsonian Associates.

Dr. Dixon Sutherland, in addition to his classes on campus, during the Fall 2006 semester he was co-teaching an Introduction to Religion class at the Celebration campus every Saturday for Business majors. In 2005 he co-edited *War or Words? Interreligious Dialogue as an Instrument of Peace* (Pilgrim Press) with Dr. Musser. He is active on the Values Council and still serves as the Director of the Institute for Christian Ethics. He was interviewed quite broadly across the nation about the ethics of the Terri Schiavo case (probably because of her location in Florida). He currently is contracted to write an essay on the theological ethics of her case for a book to be published next year. He will deliver a Florida Humanities Lecture in Lake Worth, Florida in March, 2007

Dr. Greg Sapp attended two national conferences recently on the theme of civic engagement: one hosted by Campus Compact in Chicago, IL, and the other hosted by the Bonner Foundation in Princeton, NJ. At the end of November he will attend the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., where he will be a panelist on the subject of research in sports and religion.

Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland authored a five part series for Abingdon Press entitled "A Party Called Faith" to appear in the work *Pastor's Study Bible*, 2007. The studies focus on the five festival scrolls of the Hebrew Bible. She also reviewed a work by Johanna van Wijk-Bos, *Making Wise the Simple*, for the journal, *Interpretation* and continues work as an area editor for Smyth & Helwys Commentaries on the Bible.

Dr. Leena Taneja saw a long awaited article, "Deconstructing Faith: Gaudiya Vaishnavism and the School of Deconstruction," finally published in the *Journal of East/West*. The article offers new ways of imaging Indian religion from a postmodern perspective. Like much of her previous work, this article locates and interrogates Indian religion using the theoretical tools of deconstruction. Dr. Taneja presented a paper at the *Conference of Indian Religions* at Loyola University in the summer. The paper, "Circumambulating Govardhan Hill: The Yatra of the Pilgrim," explored the sacred mountain of Govardhan and its mythical and ritual significance in Hinduism. She completed a book review in the *Journal of Hindu Studies* on the medieval devotional school of SriVaishnavism, and submitted an entry on "Hindu Grace" for an upcoming *Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions* coming out later this year.

Dr. Phillip Lucas this past April, presented a paper entitled, "The Dreamtime Reawakens: Myth, Ritual, and the Sacred at Megalithic Landscapes in Western Europe" at the first annual conference of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture at the University of Florida. His article, "From 'Cults' to New Religious Movements: Coherence, Definition, and Conceptual Framing in the Study of New Religious Movements," has been accepted for publication in the *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. The handbook aims to establish benchmarks for the state of sociological thinking about religion. He also completed an invited 40-page article for the forthcoming (2007) *Oxford Handbook on Millennialism*. His article is entitled "New Age Millennialism: Progressive and Catastrophic Visions of Global Transformation." The volume looks at the many faces of millennialism, past and present.

Ms. Ramona Kirsch in April 2006, participated in her third *Vierbergelauf* pilgrimage in Austria. The *Vierbergelauf* (literally the "Four Mountain Run") is an annual pilgrimage that has taken place for over five hundred years in Kärnten, southernmost province of Austria. The annual pilgrimage is a fifty-two kilometer trek over four mountains (highest peak is 1160 meters) that begins at midnight on the second Friday after Easter with a Catholic mass in a thirteenth century church atop the first mountain. This pilgrimage is the focus of Kirsch's dissertation, "Bodies Displayed: *Der Vierbergelauf* and the Production of a Sporting Religious Identity in Kärnten, Austria, 1936-2006."

Dr. Donald Musser spoke at the Forest Community Church at Salt Springs, the Community Unitarian-Universalist Church in New Smyrna Beach, and the Community Church of Barrington, Illinois during the fall 2006. Dr. Musser chairs the university Values Council, directs the VC annual theme emphasis, and is the Chair of The Stetson Center for Science, Nature, and the Sacred.

Rabbi Barry Altman was recently invited to moderate a session at the Southeast Council Regional Biennial Convention in Orlando, Florida. The presentation was, "All the Rest is Commentary: The New URJ Press Torah Commentaries." The session dealt with modern scholarship and its effect upon contemporary translation. He was also asked to be a project coordinator for the North American Exposition of the "Neighbors Who Disappeared" collection. This project was created and coordinated by The Educational and Cultural Centre of the Jewish Museum of Prague in cooperation with The Czech Ministry of Education. This project encourages young people to seek out those who vanished from their neighborhoods during World War II.

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Welcome to the Stetson University Department of Religious Studies. Our mission is to help students explore the role of religion in shaping human cultures through studies of sacred texts, languages, ethics, beliefs, rituals, spiritual methods, and the history of religious traditions.

Website: www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion

Alumni News

Paul Gloersen, 06' is the Volusia/Flagler representative for the American Cancer Society.—**Kevin Hanson, 06'** is applying to law schools for admission in fall 2007.—**Luis Rodriguez, 06'** is Chorus/Music Teacher at Timbercrest Elementary, Deltona, FL.—**Jamie Haskins, 06'** and **Christopher Kopetz, 05'** were married in June 06'. Both Jamie and Chris are pursuing Master of Divinity degrees at the Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.—**Isaac Rodrigues, 06'** Ministry intern for Stetson University's Intervarsity Christian Fellowship.—**Tara Holcomb, 06**



is attending the Lake Tech Institute of Public Safety in Tavares, FL to pursue a career in firefighting.—**Jamie S. Kinsley, 06'** is a student in the Master of English Program at the University of South Florida, Tampa, FL.—**Alison Morriss, 06'** is a student at Stetson Law School, St. Petersburg, FL.—**Stephanie Rooney, 06'** is a student in the Master of Divinity Program at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.—**Amanda Leach, 05'** is a student in the Education/Specialist/masters program in the School of Psychology at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL.—**Sara Collins, 05'** is working at the Lutheran Peace Fellowship, Seattle, WA as

a Youth Trainer and Coordinator.—**Annie Genetti, 05'** was accepted into the Master of Professional Counseling Program at Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia.—**Adriene Zedick, 05'** is enrolled in the Master of Divinity Program at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL —**Robert Oliver, 05,** is a student in the Master of Divinity Program at the Baptist Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia — **Kenneth Matthews, 05'** is a student in the Masters Program at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL— **John Mills, 04'**, is a law student at Cornell University and worked in the San Francisco Public Defender's office this summer.—**Jonathan Martin, 04'**, is a law student at Liberty University School of Law, Lynchburg, VA— **Amy Bucciarelli, 03'**, is a student in the Masters in Art Therapy Program at Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL —**Kelli Daniel, 03'**, graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary on May 13, 2006 with a Master of Divinity degree and is currently a Religion Publicity Associate for Doubleday Publishers, New York, NY—**Teresa Schwarz, 03'**, is a student in the Master of Creative Writing Program at the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT—**Jonathan Bailey, 03'**, was ordained on May 21, 2006 to the priesthood in the Charismatic Episcopal Church; completed the

Army Chaplain Office Basic Course in September, and graduated this past spring with an M.Div from Boston University School of Theology and is currently a Chaplain on active duty.—**Charles T. Myers, 03'**, received a Master of Divinity Degree from the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL.—**Klem-Mari Cajigas, 01'**, As part of her 2003 Ministry Fellowship, Cajigas received a \$5000 grant for a FTE summer project in which she worked as an intern for The Center for the Study of Latino Religion at the University of Notre Dame.

We ask alumni to please visit our website at www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion and to click on the alumni questionnaire located on our home page and fill it out and send it to us at: 421 North Woodland Blvd. Unit 8354, DeLand, FL 32723 or you may e-mail the questionnaire to ljguenth@stetson.edu. We would love to hear how everyone is doing including marriages, children, career moves, graduate work, or anything else you might wish to share. Also please contact Mrs. Guenther, Department Secretary, for any corrections to the Alumni News. We can't wait to hear from you!



NOTES OF INTEREST...Dr. Leena Taneja

This summer I traveled to India on a research grant from the Indo-Canada Shastri Institute, a funding agency that provides small amounts of money for students and scholars to conduct research in Indian studies. My travels took me to Vrindavan, a small rural village in northeast India about 300 miles from present day Delhi. Vrindavan is a pilgrimage site for devotees of the dark lord, Sri Krishna, whose playful adventures unfold in the meadows and groves of Vrindavan. These mythical pastimes are imprinted on the topography of Vrindavan, and have become sites of veneration for pilgrims.

The purpose of my project was to trace how different sectarian voices in the sixteenth century influenced an ancient theological doctrine entitled *acintya-bheda-bheda-tattva*, meaning inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference. This theological doctrine is critical to understanding the relationship between God and the living being, and is further responsible for the distinct doctrinal identity of the early medieval sect of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Plans are underway to publish the research from this project in the *Journal for the Study*

of British Cultures. The journal article will appear later this fall.



South Indian Temple, Chennai, India

Hindu temple visit

In the spring semester, our Hinduism class attended a spring festival called Holi at the Hindu Temple in Casselberry. Students toured the newly completed South Indian temple complex and observed Hindus worshipping Ganesh, Rama, Krishna and other important gods and goddesses from the Hindu pantheon. We sampled some very hot Indian food, perused the different stalls peddling their Indian wares. Some students even came away with henna tattoos! All in all, a good time was had by all!

Classroom Interaction—REL100 Introduction to Biblical Literature

In the fall of 2006 I had the opportunity to be a student intern for Dr. Musser's Introduction to Biblical Literature class. As a student, I led class lectures, led exam review sessions, as well as edited test materials. Although all of these responsibilities have provided me with challenges and growth, the most important lesson it has taught me is that teaching is not only the acquisition of knowledge, but is also fostering personal relations in the classroom.



I can remember one morning before class, Dr. Musser took me to his car full of basil plants. Little did I know within ten minutes, he and I would have turned our class into a garden shop! Not only that day in class did the students excel on their test, they also left with gifts of basil to take home to friends and family.

As a student intern I have experienced what it is like to teach, but even more, I have participated and facilitated a growing community learning together. This experience cannot be taught but can only be exemplified through giving away gifts of yourself to encourage personal relationships.

Mary Beth Christian, a major in Religious Studies, graduating spring 2007.