

Virginia Economics

December, 1996

Dear former students and colleagues,

One of those many fat manilla folders that Ed Olsen passed to me was labeled "Christmas letter," and it is actually more fun than the other folders he so joyfully left behind. As usual, this aspect of my job is a lot easier because of Ed's attention to detail, but I fear the office staff might not say the same thing. Ed, who actually admitted to doing all of his shopping at the Young Men's Shop on the Downtown Mall, was honored at the annual Rotunda dinner with a 50's classic pink blazer (upper left on the attached sheet of photos). We have nominated him to be in the escort for the annual Miss Dogwood procession on the Lawn next spring.

Also in the dinner photos is one showing (left to right) Wake Epps, Jacob Goeree, Simon Anderson (in red), his wife "La Femme" Anita, Maxim Engers, Shannon Mitchell (a UVA Ph.D. who teaches at VCU), and Mary Lee Epps. Jacob is a new assistant professor who arrived with his University Van Amsterdam t-shirt. Wake continues as Director of Undergraduate Studies and chief deer slayer, and Maxim returned from a year in Australia to become Director of Graduate Studies. The other person with administrative duties, Mike Brien (bottom left corner) is the associate chair. Mike just received his second distinguished teaching award in a row. Besides Jacob, the other new assistant professor this year is John Pepper, shown with his wife Elizabeth Wittner in the right/middle photo. John came from the University of Wisconsin, geographically following our two recent assistant professor hires, Jane Ihrig from the University of Minnesota and Brent Kreider from the University of Wisconsin. Does this tell you something about our junior recruiting strategy?

At the more senior level, we lost Ravikumar, who returned to the University of Iowa. The bright side at the tenured level is that Steve Stern was retained and promoted to Full Professor, Tim Bollerslev arrived from Northwestern this fall, and Ross Levine arrives from the World Bank this spring. Tim adds needed strength in finance/time-series, and with Ross here, there will finally be a development field for the graduate students. Recent hires and retentions have combined to put us very high in the Conroy and Dusansky rankings based on publications over the last five years for faculty in place in September 1995. I received a letter this fall saying that we rank 23rd among U.S. economics departments in total "AER equivalent" pages and 16th in pages per faculty member (as compared with ranks of 39 and 39 for faculty in place in 1992, reported in the Dec. 1995 *JEL*).

The two remaining photos bring me to the next topic, the conference honoring Roger Sherman's 30 years at Virginia. Roger has been a first or second reader to over 70 students, and more than half of them returned for the two-day conference last May, which was organized

with the help of Catherine Eckel (who is at the NSF, on leave from Virginia Tech) and John Mullahy (who just moved to the University of Wisconsin). Some of the participants shown in the Rotunda photo are Andy Barnett, Bill Wood, Bruce Johnson, Bill Huneke, Pat and Will McEachern, David Baumer, Fred Jones, Bob Feinberg, Charlie Holt, David Mills, and Phil Grossman. The outdoor photo shows Roger with Cathy Eckel on the left and Dick Schramm and Melayne McInnes on the right. Will delivered an emotional tribute to Roger in a dinner at Birdwood Plantation, and there were about 25 more or less spontaneous tributes in a dinner the second night. One of the conference sessions featured "UVA Economists in Washington": Dan Newlon (NSF), Suellen Crukendall (HCIA Inc.), Robert Rogowsky (ITC), Bob Feinberg (AU), and Larry Fullerton (a 1978 MA and Don's brother, a.k.a. Deputy Assistant AG in the Department of Justice). Among the other participants, Richard Higgins is now Senior Vice-President at Capital Economics in DC, Frederick de B. Harris is Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at the Graduate School of Business at Wake Forest, Keith Crocker is the Chair of the Department of Business Economics at the University of Michigan, and Bob Feinberg is the Chair at American University. Gary Fournier, who couldn't attend but sent coauthor Melayne McInnes to present his paper, was just promoted to Full Professor at Florida State. Other speakers and coauthors included Larry Pulley (William and Mary) and David Baumer (NC State). This conference turned out to be both a reunion and a tribute to an impressive group of Virginia graduates over the last twenty years.

As for our own faculty, it is a pleasure to report that Ken Elzinga won the prestigious and lucrative Kenan Enterprise Award, presumably based to some extent on his Marshall Jevons' mysteries (written with former UVA professor Bill Breit). Ken, who has taught at least 20,000 students over the years, now lives in Pavilion IV with his wife Terry. He was recently quoted: "I love the lawn at night....There is a certain majesty....When I walk back [home from Rous Hall] at 1 or 2 in the morning, there'll be a cluster of students on the steps of the Rotunda and some gathered in rooms on the Lawn, and I can say good night to them. Streakers aside, it's a very peaceful place." Ken, along with Bill Breit and Tom Willett, wrote a tribute entitled "The Yeager Mystique: The Polymath as Teacher, Scholar, and Colleague," in the *Eastern Economic Journal*, Spring 1996, 215-229. Read this and add to your appreciation for Leland and to your list of favorite Leland stories.

Many of the faculty have taken on new professional responsibilities: Simon Anderson became a Managing Editor of the *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, and I am a co-editor of a new Kluwer journal, *Experimental Economics*, which will be accepting manuscripts this spring. Charlie Plott (Ph.D. 1965), who initiated much of the research in experimental economics, is on the Board of Advisors for this journal. Charlie is scheduled to give an afternoon lecture in the Dome Room of the Rotunda on March 28th, the day before a one-day workshop on classroom experiments here at UVA. Tim Bollerslev, already an associate editor of four journals, picked up four more: *European Finance Review*, *Journal of Macroeconomic Dynamics*, *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money*, and *Net Exposure*. Finally, Bill Johnson joined the Board of Editors of the resurrected *Southern Economic Journal*. The revamping of the *SEJ* was due in part to the efforts of Catherine Eckel, one of the gang of four "Steel Magnolias" (as Bob Clower called them) who forced the issue

several years ago, and to the journal committee that Ken Elzinga chaired the following year. Cathy Eckel also organized the Economic Science Association program for the SEA meetings this year in Washington. The Southern Economic Association continues to be managed by the Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Jadlow (Ph.D. 1968), and Ed Olsen was just elected to the Board of Trustees. The next meeting will be in Atlanta in November, and there will be a Virginia cocktail party that I hope you'll attend. The *SEJ* is not the only regional journal to change guard; former UVA professor Butch Browning will be one of the Editors of the new *Economic Inquiry*, to be located at Texas A&M.

After reading Thomas Malthus' *Essay on Population*, Karl Marx complained bitterly about neoclassical economists having babies. I have no such complaint, and it is a pleasure to announce babies with good economics credentials. In particular, John and Diane Lim Rogers also recently had a baby, and around here we have Dylan Arnold Baxter-King. On a different theme, three of our faculty got married this year: Roger Sherman, Brent Kreider, and John Pepper.

I have some news from students who have left the program recently, but let me apologize for omissions, since I have been better at keeping up with those who entered the program while I was DGS. Cathy O'Connor and Tom Kinnaman are now married, and "Mr. Garbage" had a paper in the *American Economic Review* (coauthored with Don Fullerton, now at Texas). Silvia Gomez gave me a tour of the streets of Pamplona during the running of the bulls last summer; she finished a year of graduate work at Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. Drew Battista is a consultant with Resource Information Systems in Charlottesville, and Eric Benrud is a visiting professor at Loyola College in Baltimore. Julia Devlin finished her Ph.D. at George Mason, and is teaching development and Middle Eastern economics at Georgetown, where she organized the first annual Gulf Economic Conference this fall. Karen Clay (BA 1988) finished at Stanford and is teaching at the University of Toronto, where she received the Ontario (John Polanyi) Award for Economics. Sunny Huang (MA 1993) is working as a financial analyst at Express Messenger in the bay area. Roger Rodriguez continues to consult in Washington, and Lisa Anderson took Roger and me to a country music bar there this fall. Roger (Mr. Electric) is reported to have quite a light show around his Christmas tree this year. He recently visited Ben Scafidi at NYU, who got married this fall. Lisa just had a paper accepted in the *American Economic Review*, and she continues to work at American University, along with Fred Graham, Bob Feinberg, and Charles Perdue, who received the award as the outstanding adjunct professor in the AU Business School.

I'm sure that many of you will agree that the brave souls who faced the job market last year deserve a lot of credit and sympathy. Chris Swann, a finalist for a National Tax Association Dissertation Award, is a visiting professor at the University of Michigan, along with Todd Stinebrickner, who is a post doc. In addition to Todd and Chris, the others who left with jobs last year are: Robert Burrus (married last week at Trinity Presbyterian in Charlottesville, and teaching at Kenyon College), Anthony Cheng (Social Security Administration), Eric Eller (UNC-Greensboro), Jeff Havsy (Chicago Board of Trade), Neeta Sinha (Bristol, Myers, and Squibb), and Alex Wolman (returned to the Richmond Fed).

Except for a new computer person, Joe Mannino, the staff situation is largely unchanged. Bev Lecuyer, who has been around the longest, keeps us filled in with stories, e.g. Bill Beazer. Bunny Stinnett, the supervisor and fiscal technician, recently got a deserved promotion, as did Gayla Gentry, the graduate secretary. The others are Margaret Sugerman, who does undergraduate studies work, and Rebecca Goodwin, who works half time for Ken Elzinga and does volunteer work in the community in the afternoons.

Ron Michener has moved up from DGS to DWM (not what you would think if you read the personal want ads, but rather, Department Web Master). The department home page is:

<http://www.virginia.edu/~econ/home.html>

The page also contains a listing of our Ph.D. candidates who are on the job market this year, or you can contact our placement director, Bill Johnson, directly: 804 924 3251, or wrj8y@virginia.edu. We plan to make the alumni directory available through the department home page, so keep us up to date and provide addresses of classmates who did not receive this letter (e.g. write to me at holt@virginia.edu). If you have an email address (or personal home page) that you would like to have listed (linked), please tell Ron Michener at rwm3n@server1.mail.virginia.edu.

Finally, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to you this holiday season. If you are in New Orleans for the January ASSA meetings, please stop by the University of Virginia Reception at Balcony M of the New Orleans Marriott, Saturday January 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m. If buying your own drinks isn't enough of an incentive, come for the drawing for a Virginia Economics t-shirt (the undergraduate Economics Club put "S" and "D" labels on the crossed-sabers University symbol).

Sincerely,

Charlie Holt