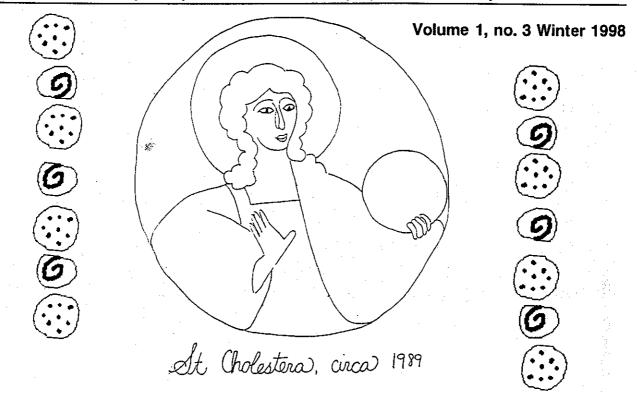
PHILOSOPHERS ON HOLIDAY

The Saint Cholestera Edition

Philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday—LW



CHOLESTERA: LIFE OF THE PATRON SAINT OF COOKIES

St. Cholestera, born Jane Lesser, was the youngest of three children of Malcolm and Elizabeth Lesser, *nee* Randolph, of Cos Cob, Connecticut. The Lesser family fortune had been made years earlier in the palm oil trade to the British colonies, a sordid business about which no one spoke.

The family sporting interests were divided among crew, equestrianism, and squash racquets. Each evening, they sat down to a meal (served by a humble Swedish servant girl) featuring elegantly prepared fresh vegetables (no sauces) and lean meats or fish, topped off by a dessert of fresh raspberries (in and out of season), with the occasional fruit ice when on holiday. (The cook, it goes without saying, was not Swedish.) Each Saturday morning, the family started off the day with a dip in the family immersion tank to measure their body fat percentages. Despite their devotion to good food and exercise, the Lesser family was, sadly, a sickly bunch, plagued constantly with ailments of one unpleasant sort and another.

When the little Lesser was only three, the family fortunes dwindled, as the result of a national decline in the consumption of tropical oils. Malcolm was forced back into the world of gainful employment, as a precaution against touching his principle. As luck would have it, his prep school roommate, Brooks Emerson, was scrounging for a president for his bank in Scarsdale, New York, and he offered Malcolm the post. Despite the shame of having a

Editors' Notes

Winter greetings from your editors! We welcome you to this, our third issue of Philosophers on Holiday, which celebrates just a few of the many holidays of winter. We have chosen to highlight our favorite of these, the Feast of St. Cholestera, which we celebrate each year in early December, just as classes end. This year, our feast day celebration was attended by some sixty of St. C's votaries, who made a significant dent in the 112 dozen Cholestera cakes we baked for the occasion. (There wasn't a Russian Tea Cake in the house by the end of the evening.) Highlights of the evening included a recipe writing contest, with prizes given in both

Philosophers on Holiday

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"Edible" and "Creative" categories; and a special St. Cholestera crossword puzzle. created for the event by Jean Jacobi. By day, Jean is Assistant to the Dean at Gustavus, but by night, she's a dedicated disciple of St. C. See page 9 for her puzzle. Kristi Reinholtzen and Jeff Stocco, also of Gustavus, won top honors in the "Edible" competition, for their inventive use of dried cranberries and marshmallow cream, while Jenifer Ward garnered the prize in "Creative," for her Okra Dabs, inspired by her Arkansas roots.

St. Cholestera, cont.

husband who had a day job, Elizabeth consoled herself with the fact that her husband's bank was near the home of Dr. Tarnower, the dietary pundit. (Years later she was devastated by his death. She was never able to forgive Jean Harris, even though they had been on the Daisy Chain committee together at Vassar.)

Jane led an exemplary life throughout high school. She was a fine equestrienne, and excelled in field hockey and lacrosse, where her lithe, limber frame and her daring made her an ideal goaltender. However, Jane scandalized the family by moving to the Midwest for college, where the opportunities for female athletes were limited to the plebian sports of softball, basketball or volleyball. Under the influence of the demure Swedish maid, Olga, she chose a small Lutheran college in a sleepy little hamlet in one of those Midwestern states one can never locate correctly on a map. The rebellious streak in Jane that had peeked out during her career as a goaltender took full flower, when she purchased for herself a used red Chevy Chevette in which to make the twice-yearly trip between the East Coast and the Midwest.

During her first year at college, the combination of starchy foods and the lack of a decent riding stable resulted in

the dreaded "freshman fifteen." But, under Mummy Elizabeth's strict supervision, and a lovely new Arabian from Daddy Malcolm, Jane went back for her sophomore year as trim and lithe as ever, firmly committed to her eating heritage. This necessitated that Jane live off campus in an apartment, so she could cook her own low-fat, low cholesterol meals. It was also during this time, however, that Jane was plagued by inexplicable hallucinations of a grinning Holstein, saying "MOOOO, Jane, MOOOO," which Jane,

again inexplicably, knew she was to understand as "come to me, Jane, come to me."

When travelling back to Cos Cob at the end of her sophomore year, the meaning of these visions (as she would come to describe them) was revealed to Jane when her Chevette took a turn that changed her life forever.

used the substance to bake small sweet biscuits known as "cookies," which they also marketed. Jane tasted these substances, and was instantly transfigured. Her face took on a radiant sheen of happiness, and from her emanated the glow of abundant health. (She was never to suffer another cold.)

Jane reluctantly left the charmed world of the wrinkle to continued her journey homeward, but now her life had meaning and purpose. Before she left, the faeries charged her with the mission of

> spreading butter--or, more accurately, the truth about butter--across the eastern seaboard. where it had not been seen for the last twenty-five years. The elves and gnomes gave her gift boxes of cookies to distribute to the unbelieving masses, as testimony to the deliciousness and wholesomeness of this divine sub-



Photo courtesy of Jay Benjamin_{Stance}.

After lunching at A rare photo of a talking Holstein

a village park, on watercress sandwiches she'd packed for her trip. Jane missed the entrance to the interstate, and ended up on a road not marked on her map. Truth be told, it was not marked on any earthly map. Jane found herself in a wrinkle in the time-space continuum, a place inhabited by faeries who gathered the mammary secretions of a large land mammal (which looked remarkably like her vision), and whipped them into a solid, yellowish substance, which they sold to supermarkets under the name of "butter." Other inhabitants of the wrinkle, elves and gnomes.

Jane's family of course imme-

diately disowned and disinherited her. Undeterred. Jane spent the summer giving out free samples of butter cookies at racquet clubs, riding stables, and regattas--her old haunts, now become foreign to her. Publicly shunned, Jane nevertheless received many nightly phone calls in her small efficiency apartment (where she churned butter and baked cookies in its cramped kitchen), in which muffled-voiced souls begged for recipes for "those marvelous sweet cakes." Penniless, Jane was happy broadcasting the message of butter.

That fall, she drove her now-rusty

Chevette back to college, where she completed her junior and senior years in a single year, due to her financial constraints. Even with this cost-cutting measure, Jane was forced to work in the school cafeteria baking cookies, a job that would have been wonderful, had it not been for the fact that they baked with a substance known as Flav-r Fry (shades of Jane's palm-oil background).

At the graduation ceremony (which Jane's bitter and sickly parents did not attend), the Holstein appeared to her once more, handing her her diploma as she made her way across the stage. This time, the cow said "Jane, MOO, MOO," which she understood to mean "Jane, stay here in the Midwest, learn the names of all the states, get your own little dairy herd, churn butter, bake cookies, have a little lunch every night before bed, and help others to stop counting fat grams. If you do, we will canonize you. Your name shall be St. Cholestera, and you will be worshipped by true believers the world over." (Jane, in the interim, had become fluent in Holstein.) Flushed with the power of this vision, Jane (now St. Cholestera) dedicated her life to butter on the pat. It is unclear if she ever died; rumors of her being sighted (and her recipes cited) still circulate in kitchens throughout the Midwest.

Evidence of the power of this seemingly-little-known saint can be found in the cooptation of her symbol, the cookie, by the idolatrous elves of the Keebler Baking Company. However, she has never become popular in the East, her own home, although in recent years, Nieman Marcus has introduced its own cookie label.











Travel Notes

While travelling cross-country from his base at the University of Indianapolis, philosopher Terry Kent landed in Montana, where, he notes, "The bookstore at the University of Montana sells cowboy boots. This strikes me as peculiar."

Staff consultant Barb Heldke makes regular trips from her home in Red Hook, New York to St. Peter, Minnesota, to participate in Phil on Hol staff meetings. While she usually travels on the internet, she recently came in an airplane, and she had this to say about airplane travel: "No scratch paper is provided anywhere in the mountain of paper one gets in an airline ticket, an airline boarding pass envelope, or anything else. But now that there are also no PEANUTS being handed out, couldn't they stick a few notepads in the seat pocket? We don't ALL carry laptops (which is lucky, since only one of three people could plug in in a row). We also don't all carry cell phones, but perhaps a Mattel kiddy cell phone should be among our travel gear, so that we look de riguer, shuffling down the corridors in the airport."

Making Change(s)

T. Michael McNulty, S.J., philosopher at Marquette University, writes:

There are things about the North American way of life that get so imbedded in our psyches that we can no longer see them. They seriously distort our view of human relationships.

Some time ago, I was traveling with a friend in El Salvador, where we had both lived and worked for the better part of a year. We had managed to secure a car for the weekend and were off to explore La Union, the easternmost province of the country. During the war it was off limits to travel, but now we were free to explore the beaches, including El

Tamarindo, beautiful and deserted. It was July.

One thing that you have to understand about El Salvador in July. It rains every day. My friend and I were exploring the waterfront in the city of La Union, when the skies opened. Fortunately we were close to a taverna where, if we picked our spot carefully, we could drink beer and stay dry under the thatched roof. There were no walls. The rain was typically torrential, so we ended up having more than one beer each. Eventually, though, things uieted down enough for us to think about heading back to our hotel, so I went to pay the bill. AS it turned out, the bill came to 36 colones (a little over four dollars). I had about 75 colones with me (a 50, two 10's and a 5), so I offered the 50 in payment. To my irritation, the proprietor had no change. I don't remember exactly how we resolved the matter, but I left angry, having been forced (to my mind) to leave an involuntary fourteen colones tip.

As we were leaving, my friend wondered why I was angry. I told her with emphasis disproportionate to the incident that they didn't know how to run a business, that they had failed in their duty to satisfy their customers by not having change on hand, that they had extracted a tip without my consent.... Well, you get the idea.

My friend's irritation had been growing during this recital, and she interrupted to ask, hadn't I planned to leave a tip? Well, yes, I said, but that was not the point.... At that point it was her turn to explode. "Well then, get over it!" she said. She then proceeded with some heat to point out that if it weren't for my North American arrogance, I could have navigated the incident with politeness and empathy.

Life is tough in El Salvador, she said. Having change is not necessarily an easy thing. Getting change might involve going to a bank some ways away (we were not,

after all, in the capital), requiring that the business be left unattended for some time, and at any rate invoved having enough money on hand at the beginning of a day's business to be able to get change. That in itself is a big presumption in an economy like El Salvador's. And where was it written that it was the responsibility of the proprietor of the taverna to provide me with the change that would make my life easier by relieving me of the responsibility of having the correct change in the first place. I should not forget that if the taverna weren't there, we could not have enjoyed our beer and would have gotten soaked as well. Consideration was a twoway street, and perhaps I should think about the faact that we are all in this together, and if we try to make life easier. for one another, everyone benefits.

The economic pressuppositions of consumer sovereignty, competition and self-interest had permeated my thinking patterns. They are basics of the neoliberal paradigm that I claimed to reject and that is being imposed on the rest of the world by the industrial North, using the IMF, the World Bank and multinational corporations as instruments. They are not the only way to live, as my friend's caring but not-toogentle lesson in cross-cultural relations taught me in a very existential way.

Call for submissions:

Please send your contributions to these special theme issues. See page 2 for submission information.

Feminist Phil on Hol. Spring 1998; deadline March 30.

Phil on Hol: Philosophers as Kids. Real kids, not your immature colleagues; no deadline.

THE ETRST ANTMAL (HRISTMUS As Mar sat with Marical Bouse they thought about Christmas "I wooder what it was like " + the first Chartman "? asked I don't know" replied Magical Moure I wish we could Find out Mar said Suddenly smake filled the coom allowing to go back in time to the first Christmis said avaice from the smake Really " saidtax "I'll give you notel Desember 31; then you will come back to = present time. "Shall we go?" acked -Magical Mouse. "Yes lef's" After a few Do you Know where Bethlehem .7" "No I don't said Max "Oh well" : -said Max just follow the star! They

THE FIRST ANIMAL CHRISTMAS

Author's Foreword

This story was my first long piece of prose writing. I was a plaid jumper-wearing third grader at Holy Family Elementary School.

Max was my cat.

Peg O'Connor December 1997

After a few miles of travel, they were set upon by bandits. The bandits taunted and teased them. Eventually Gripto, the head bandit, broke Magical Mouse's tail, and put out one of Max's beautiful sapphire eyes. Finally, the bandits released them. Max and Magical Mouse were now wretched creatures. Still, they pressed on to Bethlehem.

Because of their handicaps, it slowed travel to nearly a stop. Magical Mouse tried to go on but he couldn't. Then the smoke appeared again to them. The voice said, "I'll give you the courage, love and will to continue on to Bethlehem." Then the smoke vanished.

Magical Mouse and Max continued on. The star they followed seemed to grow brighter. Soon they were in view of Bethlehem. They approached it.

The town was crowded. There were all different types of people; shepherds, fishermen, tax collectors and many more, not to mention the types of animals. Then they noticed a group of people near a manger.

Max and Magical Mouse were afraid to look to see what was going on. Magical Mouse noticed that there was a loft above the manger. Quickly and unnoticed, they snuck upstairs. From there they saw the baby. They hadn't realized that the floor was weak. The board broke and they both fell through and landed next to the baby. They looked at the baby. The baby Jesus rewarded Max and Magical Mouse with the healing of the tail and sight of Max's eye. The two animals had great faith, courage and love. Then Jesus sent Max and Magical Mouse back to present time.

Each year, every member of the two animals' families gather near the fire to listen to this remarkable story. In all the rest of time, the story of the two brave animals will be remembered.

Author's afterword: When writing this story, I asked my mother, "What could Max the cat give the baby Jesus?" Without missing a beat, she said, "How about nine lives?" Not wanting to be expelled from Holy Family Elementary School, I chose not to incorporate that suggestion.

Pantheon Gastronomique

VEGETARIAN STEAMED DUMPLINGS AT CAFE ZEN, BALTIMORE MD. Instead of the usual white-flour dough that most Chinese restaurants use for their steamed dumplings, Zen's dough contains spinach. The dumplings are filled with a delicious mixture of still-crisp vegetables (and not just a wad of cabbage, either), and served with a delicious soy-ginger dipping sauce.

CUP COOKIES AT SOME LITTLE JOINT IN STONE MOUNTAIN, GA. A proper Feast of St. Cholestera celebration could do worse than to start with these store-bought gems. Take a muffin tin, line it with a rich, buttery "crust" of shortbread, and then drop in a blob of even-richer chocolate-chip cookie dough. Now bake it, and eat it while it is still warm. This is the kind of cookie that inspires visions.

Send your restaurant faves to us, attention Pantheon Gastronomique. Do your part to de-McDonaldize the country!

Restaurants We Never Visited



What do you wanna bet the meal ends with pie ala mode with ice cream?

Wilkerson's World

, 1997

Dateline November 21, 1997 Abby Wilkerson writes:

I just went to two liquor stores searching for a small size of Glenlivit Scotch. I hate Scotch, but I decided that since tomorrow is my father's birthday (he died 14 years ago) I would drink to him--his favorite. So, I go around looking for a "small size" of Glenlivit, which apparently is not a frequent request. (I guess that's not what was in those empty bottles Thelma and Louise were tossing into the back of the convertible.) The first person I asked looked at me strangely, called someone else over, and said, "would you help her?" The second person, on hearing my request, asked, "what would you want that for?" By now beginning to feel foolish, I said it was a long story. Somehow I couldn't bring myself to say to the assembled staff and customers of Barmy's, "a toast to my dead father, OK?" At the next place, I went ahead and got a full size bottle, and the cashier said she'd get me a box. I said no thanks, and she said, "it's not a gift?" I thought of saying yes, although the recipient is dead, but it still counts, right? I have the feeling Martha Stewart never has these experiences. What is her secret?

Attention Contestants!

Why is the University of Vermont called UVM, instead of the U of V, or UVT? UVM is the abbreviation for Universitas Veridis Montis (that would be green mountains to you). Since no one won the contest in the last issue, we guess that Mercedes sport utility vehicle will be going back to the shop unclaimed. Pity.

Category Construction at the State Fair

"By 'quality' I mean that in virtue of which people [or things] are said to be such and such. The fourth sort of quality is figure and the shape that belongs to a thing; and besides this, straightness and curvedness and any other qualities of this type; each of these defines a thing as being such and such. Because it is triangular or quadrangular a thing is said to have a specific character, or again because it is straight or curved; in fact a thing's shape in every case gives rise to a qualification of it."

Aristotle, Categoriae, 8b25, 10a10-15.

Lisa writes:

Readers of this 'zine may recall that, in our last issue, I lodged a complaint regarding the Blue Haired Mafia controlling food judging at the Minnesota State Fair. Here, I continue my examination of the vagaries of the fair, with a look at the nature and composition of entry categories.

When a budding cookie baker opens her Creative Activities Rules and Premiums booklet to decide what she is going to enter in the fair, she confronts this list:

Cookies

414 Bar cookie, plain, frosted

414A Bar cookie, layered

414B Bar cookie with nuts, fruit and/or chips

415 Brownies, plain (no frosting)

415A Brownies with nuts and/or frostning

416 Light, rolled flat (no frosting)

417 Dark, rolled flat (no frosting)

417A Meringue type

418 Ice Box

418A Ball type, not flattened

419 Light, drop

419A Chocolate chip with oatmeal

420 Chocolate drop

420A Peanut butter

421 Filled

422 Light, ball type, flattened

422A Dark, ball type, flattened

422B Oatmeal

423 Sweepstakes

Her head spins; she breaks out in a cold sweat; she sees her car reposessed, her children placed in foster care. Why? Because she sees the terrible potential for Contestant Error, written into the rules she is supposed to follow. Where does she

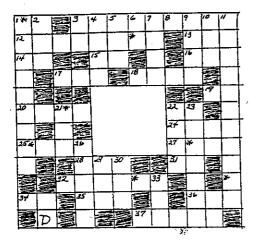
enter her grandmother's recipe for frosted seven-layer bars--under 414, or 414A? And what about that recipe for Ball-Type. Flattened Oatmeal Cookies she cut out of Redbook magazine--422 or 422B? Can she enter refrigerator cookies in category 418? You see, our would-be contestant knows the bitter truth; if she enters her cookie in the wrong category, her cookie will be unceremoniously disqualified faster than you can say Oatmeal Scotchies. (Take it from me, dear reader; I learned this bitter truth at the tender age of 12, when my refrigerator cookies were disqualified because of the Unauthorized Presence of chocolate shot, a substance deemed "nutlike" for the purposes of competition, and thus streng verboten.)

The problem with these categories is that they look orderly, but they aren't. They appear to divide the entire universe of cookies into types and subtypes, but in reality, they do nothing of the sort. They start off well enough, with 414 and its subcategories, all of which are bar cookies. We move briskly on to brownies, certainly a reasonable move-though some of us might argue that they should be a subcategory of 414. Then we come to rolled cookies; okay, but why aren't these 416 and 416A? And why in the world would "meringue type" be a subcategory of "dark, rolled flat (no frosting)" -- as the numbering system suggests?

And another thing: most categories define a cookie shape (cf. Aristotle). But suddenly, at 419A, we enter a zone in which flavor is the organizing principle; we get chocolate chip with oatmeal (a separate category???), oatmeal, peanut butter. Why the shift? And why the shift back to shape, with 422 and 422A?

And what if I wanted to make a dark drop cookie? Or a rolled cookie with frosting? Where would I enter such a cookie--or is the very possibility forbidden? Cookie bakers with an Aristotelian bent are advised to give this state fair a wide berth.

Crossing Cholestera by Jean Jacobi



Unscramble * letters:

ACROSS

- Hoiy one (abbrev.)
 Today's patron saint
 Type of missile
 Grease
 _____in the mood
 Not fatry (abbrev.)
 Elected official
 to the world
 Esse
 Reaction to hurt
 Christmas
 _____, a child is born!
- 22. ____, a child is b 24. Image 25. Carves turkey
- 27. What Santa gets on his suit28. Young boy31. State (abbrey.)
- 31. State (abbrev.)
 32. Philosopher
 34. 6th scale note
- 35. ___ Kapital 36. Paddle
- 37. Pine

<u>DOWN</u>

mas
٠

Which End is Up? A Neo-Luddite Confronts Dishwashers

Barb Heldke writes:

I frequently travel to family and friends during holidays--which means I'm often eating and drinking in the homes of people with dishwashers. Since I do not have one of these myself. I always marvel at the ongoing debate about how to use it. Should the dishes be rinsed first? Should they be virtually washed first, and then left until tomorrow? Should the silverware be "head down" or "tail down"? Should I be allowed to go anywhere near it? I got both "yes" and "no" answers to these questions on the recent trip to visit my family members during Halloween. [Ed. note: yes, this stretches the meaning of "winter holidays", theme of this issue, to meaninglessness. But seven years ago we had 30 inches of snow on Halloween.]

Each of the three homes I visited continues to insist that they love their dishwashers--couldn't be without them. I watched carefully to see how much time/ water the tidying up after the meal took, compared to what my appliance-free variation requires. I must confess, I think it's a "wash" (sorry). I know that I find arranging the items in the machine correctly to be a horrible experience. And no matter what Martha S. says in her December '97 issue, there is no right way to do it. Wherever two or three are gathered around a dishwasher, there are at least four opinions about how things should be done. Martha, btw, insists that cutlery be mixed--multi-endian?--some up, and some down, to avoid nesting. (Swift might have had an essay on this, had he lived in our time. See his discussion of the political significance of "big endian" and "little endian" egg consumption in Gulliver's Travels.)

We've made one concession in our own dishwashing. Rubber gloves have been featured recently.

Excluded from an APA special session, an angry Phil on Hol editor ...

Special Session Arranged by the APA Board of Officers, 303 G.

Topic: Talk with the APA—Developing a Philosophy Magazine for

the Educated Public

Moderators:

Eric Hoffman, Philip L. Quinn

Participants:

10

Jonathan Adler, Charles Echelbarger, Peter Hare, Rick Lewis, Raymond S.

Pfeiffer

- PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES OF THE APA, 71:1 -

..Speaks Out

Peg writes:

22

Our invitation to participate on this panel must have gotten lost in the deluge of winter holiday catalogues and submissions to this philosophical 'zine for the educated public. Another explanation (perhaps the more plausible one) is that, in typical fashion, the American Philosophical Association lags behind the times, caught forever in a bygone era when we women didn't worry our pretty little heads about philosophical issues. We, the editors of Philosophers on Holiday, are putting the APA on notice; we're here, we're peer (reviewed), we're fabulous, get used to us.

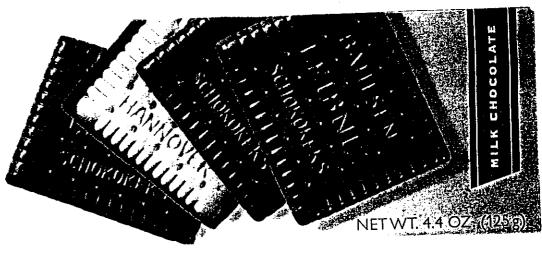
Upon arriving in the Minneapolis airport for our annual trip to living hell, I looked at the Northwest screens announcing gate numbers for departing flights. I looked for "APA" as my destination. We don't go to a city so much we go to the APA which always seems to be in a generic Marriott. I won't discuss the horrors of the APA--most of you are familiar with them and why waste valuable time. I didn't bother to attend the special session sponsored by the APA, but I've been imagining what I would have said.

Fellow APAers,

Thank you for not extending an invitation to speak at your puny little session. As Marx (Groucho, not Karl) said, "I wouldn't want to belong to any club that had me as a member." I am sure that we would have strenuous disagreements over what counts as "philosophical" as well as who would be considered members of the "educated public." My sincere hope is that you would be scandalized by our publication. I am sure that without much effort, you could passionately argue that this publication is symptomatic of all that is wrong with higher learning in the late twentieth century. Console yourselves with this, gentlemen. We're almost in the twenty-first century, and we, the editors of this 'zine, are already many steps ahead of you. Philosophers on Holiday is the zine of the new millennium.

Where are they now?





Seems that ol' Windowless Gottfried finally climbed out of his monad and has set up shop in a kitchen in Hannover, Germany, where he produces these delectable butter biscuits (plain, or topped with milk or dark chocolate). One of St. Cholestera's most dedicated votaries, Herr Leibniz.

Bakesen LEIBNIZ

Yes! I want to be on the cutting edge of discursive practices that explore the interstices of travel and philosophy!!!! Please deploy future issues of *Philosophers on Holiday* to my situatedness. I'll send you two George Washingtons every time another fabulous issue appears in my mailbox.

Name
Mailing Address

Return to: O'Connor and Heldke 1002 Riverview Hills St. Peter, MN 56082

poconnor@gac.edu; heldke@gac.edu