

Inside Ole Miss

January 26, 2009

Coming Up

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

• Through March 1

Exhibit: "Randy Hayes: Ruins of Mississippi and Other Places." The Mississippi native displays three pairs of oil paintings on acrylic-covered photographs. University Museum. Call 915-7073.

• Today

Communiversity: Fiber Art Class. Learn various fiber techniques. Meek Hall, Room 219, 6 p.m. Fee \$275. Call 915-1299.

Performance: "Drumline Live." Marching band tradition comes to the theatrical stage. Ford Center, 8 p.m. Tickets \$25. Call 915-7411.

• Tomorrow

Seminar: "How to Write a Business Plan." UM Small Business Development Center, 1 p.m. Call

Meeting Set to Tackle Tough End-Of-Life Issues

A dying loved one has signed a "do not resuscitate" order at one hospital. She falls deathly ill and is taken to a different hospital, where doctors, completely oblivious to the DNR order, revive her.

Question: Once the error is discovered, should she be permitted to die according to her original wishes?

These and other difficult questions will be tackled Friday and Saturday during "Ethics at the End of Life," a town hall-style meeting in Bryant Hall. The event is free and open to the public. Registration and a reception are set for 6:30 p.m. Friday, followed by the 7:30 p.m. opening session. Sessions resume at 9 a.m. Saturday and run until approximately 3 p.m., with breaks and lunch.

The event is sponsored by the Society of Philosophers in America, with support from the American Philosophical Association and the Mississippi Humanities Council. Continuing education credits are available. For more infor-

mation, go to www.philosophersinamerica.com/.

While some may think the event is geared for professors and other scholars, SOPHIA is working to bring everyday people into the dialogue - especially the nurses, doctors, lawyers, social workers and hospice workers who face these issues daily.

"It's an unconventional format in that nobody is going to read a research paper," said John Lachs, professor of philosophy at Vanderbilt University, who serves as facilitator and keynote speaker. "Everyone's perspectives are important. We'll just sit down and talk. Hopefully, the conversation will move on its own."

"Philosophers think in the abstract, so we wanted to get together with people who deal with these very tough issues and learn from them," said event organizer Eric Thomas Weber, UM assistant professor of public policy leadership. "We also hope to bring value to their work as practitioners."

For all the murky questions and heated

debate about when life begins, there's a very simple reason why end-of-life issues are seldom pondered, Lachs said.

"Clearly, we don't want to talk about dying - or even think about it," he said. "When life begins, you're talking about satisfaction and promise. When life ends, you're talking about pain, suffering and loss. Who likes to talk about that?"

When those conversations do happen, they can quickly drift into morally ambiguous waters, Eric Weber said.

"We have so much control over how we conduct our lives, but little control over how we end them," he said. "There's a lot of stigma attached to how you choose to die. In one case, an angry teenager isn't able to make that decision, but should a 90-year-old sick person be entitled to more freedom?"

For more information or for assistance related to a disability, contact Eric Thomas Weber at etweber@olemiss.edu or 915-1336.