Hello, 2006!

In this issue:
- Simpsons similarities? (page 2)
- Faculty Senate report (page 3)
- Tommy Maddox needs your help! (page 4)
- Holiday Party recap (page 10+)
- And much, much more!
Since the announcement of the logo competition, we’ve received some tremendous submissions, such as the one featured to the right.

Since it’s the holidays, though, and hardly anyone is around, we’re going to extend the submission deadline one more month. That’s right. If you have a logo idea that you think is super, just submit it to CMUPLB@hotmail.com. Next month, all submissions will be revealed, and you can decide which is your favorite.

Logo Tips

Do you need some help coming up with a logo? Then you’re in luck. The PLB has these handy tips to help you develop your logo idea!

1) Somewhere in your logo, “Psychology” should be mentioned somehow.

2) Central Michigan University has a copyright on the “CMU” abbreviation. I tried to buy it from them, but they weren’t impressed with the way I tossed around Hamiltons. So you may want to actually spell out “Carnegie Mellon.”

3) Your logo should feature the brain or science or something.

4) The University has guidelines on proper trademarking. From their webpage:
   - Carnegie Mellon has an official wordmark, as seen to the right
   - The name of the department should be in all caps, Helvetica Bold, colored to give greatest contrast to the wordmark
   - Any nudity in your logo should be tasteful
   - The key to brand recognition is Consistency + Frequency + Repetition. Brand recognition has had a significant impact in helping undergraduate recruiting.
   - For more exciting trademark guidelines, visit: http://www.cmu.edu/identity

It’s not clear that the university administration would approve of this logo. Perhaps we should have a meeting to discuss it. I suggest we meet at the Panther Hollow Inn. Be prepared for it to be a long meeting.
Shocking Simpsons Scandal

Beloved Simpsons Character Based on Department of Psychology Member?

Pittsburgh (PLB) - For years, fans have laughed with each new episode of *The Simpsons*. But recent allegations that some characters on the sitcom are based in part on members of the Department of Psychology are no laughing matter. Matt Groening, the creator of *The Simpsons*, has refused to respond to these allegations. However, recent investigations have concluded that both Dr. Marcel Just and *Simpsons* character Apu Nahasapeemapetilon took United States citizenship tests. How similar were their experiences? Consider the following:

According to Dr. Just, he was asked “What is Lincoln famous for?” He racked his brain for answers, because, as he said, one might argue that Lincoln is famous for several things: the Gettysburg Address, freeing the slaves, successfully prosecuting the Civil War and holding the Union together, his trademark stovepipe hat and beard, or even his childhood in a log cabin. “So I was quite nervous,” said Dr. Just, “but decided to say, somewhat tentatively, freeing the slaves. Fortunately, that was the answer they were looking for.”

Now consider Apu’s answer to a similar question in Episode 3F20, “Much Apu About Nothing.”

Proctor: All right, here’s your last question. What was the cause of the Civil War?

Apu: Actually, there were numerous causes. Aside from the obvious schism between the abolitionists and the anti-abolitionists, there were economic factors, both domestic and inter--


Apu: Slavery it is, sir.

While Groening has yet to acknowledge these clear similarities, many fans now believe that large elements from *The Simpsons* are based upon CMU faculty members. The PLB has begun to explore these allegations, and has already noticed one other striking similarity between *Simpsons* character Sideshow Bob and David Rakison, as pictured to the left.

Sideshow Bob and Dr. Rakison, both pictured here, may have the same barber.

It’s page 2. Do do da da do
Faculty Senate Report

At the last Faculty Senate meeting, the recent changes to the University’s health care plan dominated the discussion. Gordon Lewis, chair of the Faculty Affairs Council, reported that he had met with Barbara Smith, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. He expressed the Council’s displeasure with the process that led to the changes, as faculty and staff had very little input into them.

In fact, in years past, a group of faculty members (not part of the Senate) routinely convened to discuss any changes to health care benefits. For whatever reason, perhaps some sort of innocent oversight, that committee wasn’t convened this year. Lewis relayed Smith’s pledge to work more closely with the Faculty Senate on any future changes to the health care package.

After much discussion (and I mean “much discussion” in the same sense that I might use the phrase “fairly warm” to describe the temperature on the surface of the sun), the Senate passed a resolution expressing their feelings about the changes to the health care package:

“Whereas the administration modified the Health Benefits for 2006 without the advice or consent of the faculty and staff, the Faculty Senate strongly disapproves of the process and the result.”

As of this writing, there has been no official response from the administration or Human Resources to this resolution. But we’ll keep you updated.

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be Tuesday, January 24th. The topic which will likely dominate discussion is what position, if any, the Faculty Senate should take on H.R. 177, the Academic Bill of Rights. If you have any strong feelings on this matter, be sure to contact one of your Faculty Senators. Or, you could even attend the meeting and voice them yourself! The meeting will be held in the University Center, at 4:30 PM on Tuesday January 24th, in the McKenna Room.

Were you Aware?

Anyone can attend a meeting of the Faculty Senate, and anyone can speak at a meeting. While only Faculty Senators can propose motions and vote at Faculty Senate meetings, members of the gallery can throw notes at their Faculty Senator telling them what to do. Or to wake them up.
SPRINGTIME IS VOLLEYBALL SEASON!
Are you a Psychoholic? Would you like to be?
If you like to play volleyball...YOU CAN!
To become a member of the psychology department faculty/grad/staff intramural volleyball team, contact Jen Brace at jbrace@andrew.cmu.edu.
The fine print: Games are on Saturday, and we practice 1 night/week. The season runs late January through late April.

Tommy Maddox Fan Club Seeks New Members

It’s been a rough year for Tommy Maddox. And here at the Tommy Maddox Fan Club, we empathize with him, rather than kicking him when he’s down or commenting about how he has twice as many interceptions than touchdowns, or a passer rating of 51.7. If that sounds great to you, we’re looking for new members. But not just anyone can join. To be admitted, you must pass this quiz!

1) Tommy has just thrown a third interception in the game. What do you comment on?
   A- His poor decision making
   B- His beautiful throwing mechanics
   C- The fact that the receivers are obviously in a conspiracy to make the QB look bad, and are actively running away from the ball

2) Tommy, on 3rd and goal from, is under a heavy rush. He runs backward 99 yards, then takes a sack in the endzone for a safety. Which do you think is true?
   A- The coaching staff called a bad play
   B- Tommy is an amazing runner, gifted with speed and stamina
   C- The safety is your fault for not leaping from the stands and blocking the defender

3) If the Steelers missed the playoffs because Tommy fumbled the ball in overtime of a critical game, who would you blame for the loss?
   A- Tommy’s buttery fingers
   B- The center’s inadequate snap
   C- Gravity

4) You and your family are asleep one evening when Tommy breaks into your house, kicks your dog, and, at gunpoint, makes you to give him all your money. Do you:
   A- Call the police
   B- Empathize with the circumstances that would lead such an obviously good-hearted young man to such a dire act
   C- Apologize for not having more cash to give him

If you answered “C” to all of the above questions, you’re just the kind of person we’re looking for! Every new member gets a prize. Turn to the next page to see it!
Every new member gets a box of Tommy Gun Flakes, the official breakfast of the Tommy-Nator!

Department Birthdays!

January 6th: Bobby Klatzky
January 14th: Jim Staszewski
January 17th: Nicholas Peter Yeung
January 26th: Mary MacWhinney

As you can see, I’m doing better on learning people’s birthdays, but this section is still birthday-deficient. So if you know someone’s birthday, or know your own birthday, feel free to tell me what it is.

CMUPLB@hotmail.com

Be sure to wish them a happy birthday!
Baltimore (Onion News) - A team of scientists at Johns Hopkins University announced Monday that a five-year study examining the link between polyphenols and lower cholesterol rates has found jack shit.

“I can’t explain what happened,” head researcher Dr. Jeremy Ingels said. “We meticulously followed correct scientific procedure. Our methods were sufficiently rigorous that they should have produced some sort of result. Instead, we found out nothing.”

Added Ingels: “Nothing!”

As Ingels stepped aside to compose himself, fellow researcher Dr. Thomas Chen took the podium to discuss the $7 million jack-shit-yielding study.

“We are all very upset,” Chen said. “When we began, this looked so promising, I would have bankrolled it myself. Now, after five years, I couldn’t tell you if polyphenols even exist.”

The study, which Chen characterized as a “huge waste of time and money,” was financed by a Johns Hopkins alumni grant to determine the effects of the compound polyphenol on cholesterol. A known antioxidant found in herbs, teas, olive oil, and wines, polyphenol was originally thought to lower cholesterol—a theory that remains unproven because the Johns Hopkins researchers couldn’t prove squat.

“We can’t say zip about whether it lowers cholesterol,” Ingels said. “We don’t know if it raises cholesterol. Hell, we don’t know if it joins with cholesterol to form an unholy alliance to take over your gall bladder. At this point, I couldn’t prove that a male donkey has nuts if they were swinging in my face.”

Dr. Jeremy Ingels, head of the total-waste-of-time-and-money study.

When a study’s results are inconclusive, a research team often asks for more time and money to finish. Such is not the case with the Johns Hopkins project.

“No. No fucking way,” Ingels said. “I don’t know about Dr. Chen, but I know that Dr. [Kerri] Bruce, who has been a real trouper through all of this, is quitting science to start a catfish farm in Louisiana. Me, I have a long date with my bed and cable TV. I may still do something in science, but if I do, it’ll probably be something easy, like re-linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer, just to get my confidence back up. It’s too early to say. I’ll have a better idea after a month of watching the Game Show Network and eating raspberry danishes.”

Ingels also spoke of Dr. James Long, a biochemist who worked on the inconclusive study until lapsing into alcoholism six months ago.

“Poor Jim just couldn’t take it,” Ingels said. “We were all hitting the bars pretty hard once we began to see that things weren’t adding up. I think he took it the hardest because he was the one who proposed the study in the first place. I guess he was accustomed to research leading to something... anything.”

In spite of the fruitless results, other researchers at Johns Hopkins expressed confidence that, in time, some positive results can be gleaned from the study. Ingels has relinquished all collected data to the university, but stressed that he will not offer any further assistance.

“You want to look over this big fat goose egg, go nuts,” Ingels said. “I don’t want to hear the word ‘polyphenol’ for the remainder of 2003.”

Chen made the team’s closing statements.

“I just want to clarify that we had the best intentions going into this study,” Chen said. “We thought we would make a scientific discovery about polyphenols and cholesterol that would benefit the health of millions. I guess we were wrong. We tried to find a link, but instead we found bubkes.”

Editor’s Note: This article about finding nothing is the first in a series of PLB articles examining things that happen at other universities, but not at Carnegie Mellon. Never.

Next month’s topic: keggers.
Alert PLB reader Sheldon Cohen submitted this picture, the first evidence of bird flu in the United States. You saw it here first.

Like many states, Alaska has been struggling to decide what kind of picture and slogan to put on its state quarter, due in 2008. The PLB offers you this first-ever look at two of the rejected designs.

And there are 49 states I haven’t offended yet.
Did you get lots of craptacular presents this year? The PLB feels your pain. You’re not alone! To make you feel better, we offer this article on....

The Least Wanted Gifts of 2005

The Amazing Pants-Stretcher!
A fluctuating waistline doesn’t mean you need two wardrobes. This pants-stretcher will help your cotton slacks, skirts, or shorts fit better. For waistbands up to 50”.

The Squirrel Spinner!
Are you a bird-lover troubled by a plague of squirrels? Then the squirrel-spinner is for you! When squirrels attempt to climb a bird-feeder with the Squirrel Spinner attached, his weight will activate the motor, and the Squirrel Spinner will spin him right off. It’s twirling action will be your last best line of squirrel defense!

Jimmy Carter Action Figure!
He was our 39th Commander in Chief, but now he’s yours to command! 12” tall, with bending joints. Have him peanut farm, or re-live the Malaise speech. Fun for all ages! (Manufacturer’s note: Fun not guaranteed)
January’s Shout-out goes to Theresa Kurutz. I basically can’t count the number of times I call Theresa in a given month, whether it be because one of my advisees asks me a question that I have no idea about (“Can I take a course in Computer Sciences and double count it towards two majors?” “How do I cross-register at Pitt?” “If I failed one of my distributional requirements, can I take another one at an online university instead?”) or because I’ve forgotten to do something I’m supposed to do, like submitting final grades. And not only does Theresa kindly refrain from making fun of me, she pro-actively sends out e-mails to remind me to do things I would almost certainly have otherwise forgotten. Just this last month, for example, I had a student turn in a final after the deadline for submitting final grades. Just as soon as I had finished grading it, I had an e-mail from Theresa noting that there was a student in my class who hadn’t gotten a grade yet, and telling me she could take care of it if I would just let her know the final grade! For her help in making the department a better place for undergraduate education, and in particular for keeping on top of all of the details, thank you, Theresa.

Just as a reminder... anyone can feel totally free to submit a Shout-Out nomination. Really. It’s not very scary. CMUPLB@hotmail.com

The PLB Needs Your Help!

If you have a pet, the PLB would like to run a picture of him/her/it in February’s PLB. Doesn’t matter what kind of pet it is. Cats, dogs, fish, snakes, horses, it’s all good.

And of course, if you have any departmental announcement, news item, story idea, or incoherent rambling diatribe you would like to have published, the e-mail is, as always: CMUPLB@hotmail.com

Coming next month:
Pet-Owner Matching game
Department Archaeological Dig Results
Logo voting!

I had to put this picture somewhere.
Photographic Evidence Indicates Department can Get Down

All Bobby, Theresa, and Margaret want is a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T
Is that so much to ask?

The graduate students do a lovely rendition of Pink Floyd’s “Another Brick in the Wall.” It was apparent to this reporter that they had practiced for weeks.

Unlike the editor of a certain department newsletter, Dara and Jay can sing.
Those of us who are interested in learning were fascinated to watch members of the department attempt to master the Cha-Cha Slide.

Lynne has dance fever!

Mike Scheier and Anna Fisher are certainly transfixed by something off to the right. The Cha-Cha Slide?

This grainy, digitally enhanced photo has sparked controversy. Some believe the shot is a forgery, while others believe that this photo conclusively proves that Gary Lupyan was singing.
David Rakison and Nick Yeung sing the entire score of the HMS Pinafore.

Theresa, Margaret, Rochelle, and Tisha kick the party into high gear.

Anna Fisher spent a lot of time talking to me and Ken. She’s new to the department.
No karaoke session is complete without Sir Mix-A-Lot’s immortal classic, “Baby Got Back.”

Theresa Kurutz, fresh off of learning the Cha-Cha Slide, tried to teach Nick and David how to dance. She met with mixed success.

This photo appears to imply some sort of gender difference in karaoke effort. Smells like a grant application to me!