Psycho? Logical? Bulletin!

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There are going to be some great talks and posters presented at this year’s Meeting of the Minds. Here are a few excerpts from some of the abstracts that were submitted. If you have time, come on over and take a look at the great research our undergraduates have produced in the last year!

**Ashley McMakin & Abigail McUmber: Transition and Adjustment to Kollege (TALK)**

A longitudinal study was conducted to examine the relationship between cognitive processing and growth. Previous work has shown relationships between writing about traumatic events and health benefits; however, this study wanted to look at stress related growth as the primary outcome of cognitive processing through reflection on traumatic events. Thirty college freshmen were randomly assigned to speak about their thoughts and feelings about their transition to college (cognitive processing) or to talk about trivial topics. Each participant spoke into a tape recorder for 15 minutes on three sessions within a ten-day period and completed an electronic questionnaire about benefits and adjustment to college one month later. Cognitive processing was measured from a linguistic software program (LIWC) that analyzed the transcribed talking sessions. It was hypothesized that students instructed to engage in cognitive processing would report more benefits than those instructed to talk about trivial issues because benefit finding is facilitated by cognitive processing.

**Matthew Ward: The Effect of Veterinary Orthopedic Manipulation on the Biological Functions and Social Behaviors of Gibbons**

This experiment explores the effect of chiropractic adjustments to the spine of a one-armed Gibbon at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium. The animal’s feces will be sampled and analyzed for any changes in consistency as a result of the treatment (Advised by Lori Holt!).

**Katie Andreassen: Learning Associations Involving Predators and Non-Predators in Infancy**

Fear is one of the most universal human emotions and many common fears, such as aversions toward predatory animals, can be observed cross-culturally. Previous research has indicated that humans have an evolved predator detection mechanism. The present research explored this innate predator detection mechanism in infants by testing whether infants are able to learn paired-associations for predators more quickly than for non-predators.
Yes, this month’s Graduate Student of the Month is... all of them! Why? Because April 18th was officially Graduate Student Appreciation Day. Also, I forgot to schedule an interview with a GSotM until it was too late. So let’s take a look at some of the pictures from Graduate Student Appreciation Day!
What are all of the faculty looking at offscreen? Marlene Berhmann, who is leading them in a rendition of the traditional “Graduate Student Appreciation Song.” It goes something like this...

Oh graduate students
We appreciate you
For all that you do
We’re glad to know you
We wouldn’t trade you in for wool.*

*Unless maybe it was very cold, and we needed to knit a sweater? It’s possible I misheard some of the lyrics

Departmental Teaching Awards

Brent Vander Wyk and Joan Monin each won Herbert Simon Teaching Awards. Congratulations, and keep up the good work in the future!
It’s time for everyone’s favorite game. No, not Hungry Hungry Hippos. It’s...

Better Know a Graduate Student

The Clues

1. Gary Lupyan is a provocative booty shaker.
2. Miriam Rosenberg-Lee composed classical piano pieces at the age of 12.
3. Lindsey Lopez got an NRSA fellowship.
4. Roxanne Thrush is engaged.
5. Joan Monin has erotic dreams about Captain Picard.
6. Jessica Cicchino has a Diet Coke problem.
7. Chris Paynter has a pittbull named Lili.
8. Scott Douglass was once a sex/relationships columnist.
9. Jeffrey Horn is fluent in Spanish.
10. Erin Ingvalson was formerly a defensive back.
11. Elida Laski got a call back for a reality TV show.
12. Jamie Jirout has a trucker mouth when she has too much to drink.
14. Nora Presson is adopting a second baby.
15. Linda Moya went to an Amazing Race convention.
16. Kate Smith is a Dream Theater fan.
17. Cibu Thomas’s boyfriend makes nuclear reactors.
18. Tiago Maia quit grad school to become a fiction writer.
19. Stefani Nellen is still a graduate student.
20. Christine Watson’s given name was Candy.

How to play

These 20 facts are each paired with the wrong graduate student. Your job is to switch them, and get the facts and names matched up correctly.

For example, look at facts 1 and 20, and try switching them to “Christine Watson is a provocative booty shaker” and “Gary Lupyan’s given name was Candy.”

Hmmm. I don’t think that was the right pair to switch. Maybe you can do better!

Want to know if your guesses are right? e-mail jknihnic@andrew.cmu.edu

Submitted by the PLB’s Secret Graduate Informant

which, I’m warning you, means Page 6 is next
Still struggling with the grad student game? Maybe you could use a hint. OK - don’t say the PLB has never done nothin’ for you. Look at item 8. One of the graduate students used to be a sex columnist. We won’t tell you who. But we WILL show you a letter written to the editor in response to one of his/her columns. It might help you figure things out.

### Stimulation for everyone

I would like to comment briefly on XXXX’s advice column of Dec. 6, Sex & the CT, in which she discussed anal stimulation. The author of the letter seemed concerned that his girlfriend was interested in penetrating him anally with a dildo, and XXXX advised “Anxious Anus” to try to dissuade his mate from engaging in what the columnist assumed was an uncomfortable, unpleasureable act.

I would like to challenge the notion that anal stimulation for men is, one, an inherently painful act, and two, something reserved solely for homosexual males.

The anus itself is a very sensitive part of the body, packed full of wonderful nerve cells. On top of that, it is one of the most intimate parts of anybody’s anatomy. By expanding the boundaries of their sexual relationship to include the anus, Anxious Anus and his girlfriend have the potential of opening up new worlds of pleasure and sexual communion.

While I am not sure if XXXXX has personal experience with anal intercourse (although it seems she is predisposed against it), her own history with the act is not entirely relevant in this situation. Anal intercourse for a man is inherently a much more intense experience thanks to the existence of the prostate, oft referred to as the male G-spot.

There’s no space on the prostrate-pleasure-train for you ladies! Direct stimulation of the prostate through anal intercourse is a new and unique pleasure unto itself. It often seems a great waste to me that God hid that pleasure button deep in a little-visited cave.

XXXX’s opinion seems to be that, overall, anal intercourse would be an obligation for Anxious, something he could do solely to make his girlfriend happy. To me, anal intercourse is a gift that Anxious’s girlfriend can give to him. Men, we must not fear our bodies! We must explore them and learn from them.

Couples, why not give yourselves the gift of anal sex this holiday season? Just because the act is predominant among gay men does not imply that the act must be limited to gay men or that receiving anal sex is emasculating.

Isn’t knowing one’s body and being entirely comfortable in it the most masculine way to be? What a waste to have a body and never explore it. Even if Anxious is afraid, isn’t it wrong to turn away from the things we fear in life, to deny ourselves new experiences simply because we are afraid?

I would advocate, of course, that everyone try anal sex at least once, that we all face unafraid the mysteries of our bodies. Anxious, you will never know unless you try.

Remember that anal sex is most fun when everyone and everything involved is clean. It is a good idea to empty your rectum before engaging, be it through a bowel movement or, even better, an enema. Finish with a thorough shower and take things very slowly. Use lots of lubricant and remember that dildos come in many sizes, some even designed for use in the ass. Choose something appropriate and set forth on your journey to freedom, self-discovery and pleasure!

Patrick Ripton
Deb Moon, CMU’s chief financial officer, gave an overview of CMU’s finances at the April meeting. Here are some of the more interesting excerpts:

**Tuition and fees**
In 2001, CMU received 166.1 million dollars in tuition and fees. In 2006, the university received 288 million.

**Deficit**
Currently, the university has 450 million in long term debt, at an interest rate of 3.3%. But it has a fund laid aside (separate from the endowment) as part of the plan to pay of that debt in 20-30 years. Currently, the “debt fund” has 140 million dollars. Last year, it made approximately 15% in interest.

**Donations**
As you might know, the university is in the midst of a big donor campaign, and has also spent significant money upgrading its alumni money-requesting operations. How’s that paying off? Well, in 1994, the university received 55.7 million dollars in pledges. Between 2004 and 2007, the university has averaged 94.6 million dollars in pledges.

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Well, that’s it -- that was my last Faculty Senate report. Even as you’re reading this, Anna Fisher is preparing for today’s Faculty Senate meeting: reading Robert’s Rules of Order, hydrating, finding a phone book to bring in case she needs something long out of which to read in order to fill-buster, all that good stuff. It’s been a fun tenure, and to encourage all of you youngsters out there to go into public service, I bring you this list of:

**Most Enjoyable Aspects of Being a Faculty Senator**

1) Refusing to acknowledge peasantery unless they refer to you as “Senator.”

2) Parliamentary Procedure

3) Deep satisfaction of knowing that the time you spend in Faculty Senate is time you’re not spending committing crime

4) Taking opportunity to remind members of Faculty House of Representatives how much less prestigious they are than Senators

5) Pork. Seriously: at the receptions after the Senate meetings, they have these fantastic mini-sausages.

6) Power is an aphrodisiac. I think my wife was very, very, very slightly aroused by the thought of the power I wielded as a Faculty Senator.

7) Speaking at Faculty Senate expels carbon dioxide, which plants need to live.

Thanks, everybody -- not a single member of the department caused any constitutional crises that the Senate had to resolve, which made my job easier.

-- Erik Thiessen
Wine stores almost always have an overwhelming number of wines, most of which are totally unfamiliar even to people who are into wine. In most places (but not Pennsylvania), asking clerks in the store for recommendations is a good strategy. Most people who work in wine stores, like most people who work in bike stores, ski stores, nurseries, and other specialized interest businesses, know a lot about their products and enjoy sharing their knowledge. Pennsylvania has some people like that – for example, Ron Drescher, the manager of the new wine store next to the Borders on Center Avenue, is very helpful and a great source of recommendations – but many other employees seem to be some politician’s idiot brother in law who was hired due to connections (and inability to hold a real job), rather than knowledge, enthusiasm, helpfulness, or competence.

This makes experts’ ratings of wine an even more valuable guide in Pennsylvania than they are in other states. Not all wine raters are created equal, though. Here’s a simple guide to the most cited wine raters:

**The Gold Standard**: Robert Parker, a.k.a. The Wine Advocate

**The Silver Standard**: The Wine Spectator

**The Bronze Standard**: Almost everyone else, except

**The Poop Standard**: The Wine Enthusiast (often cited in Pennsylvania State Stores, because they give high ratings to wine that no one else would recommend (I heard that they gave a 95 rating to the Beringer Chenin Blanc that Erik described in the last PLB as “resembling the urine of Satan after he’d eaten nothing but asparagus for days.”))

There are also ad hoc recommendations, such as the “Chairman’s Selections” in the State Stores. These vary all over the place; some really are good buys, others’ aren’t. The good ones generally include confirming ratings from The Wine Advocate or The Wine Spectator, but if you’re in a hurry, the Chairman’s Selections aren’t a bad area in which to begin searching.

The next question is what the numerical ratings mean. Parker rates wines on a 50-100 scale, but almost never publishes ratings below 85. His qualitative categories are 85-89 (very good), 90-94 (excellent), and 95-100 (outstanding). Parker has written that 90-99 is like an “A” in the classroom, 80-89 is like a “B,” and so on. If taken literally, this would mean that all wines whose ratings are published are at least high “B’s,” which seems too generous, but if a wine is rated 89, 90, or higher by the Wine Advocate or the Wine Spectator, it’s likely to be quite good.

Unfortunately, as with almost everything, there’s a tradeoff between quality and price. It’s almost (though not quite) impossible to find a wine in a State Store that’s rated 93 or higher by The Wine Advocate or The Wine Spectator, but that isn’t very expensive. There does seem to be a sweet spot, though, with ratings of 89-91, where you can find wines that cost $10-$20. They’re not easy to find, but it’s sometimes possible. It’s most likely among Australian wines, and next most likely among Spanish wines. Looking in those two sections is a good bet. If you take a drive to DC and go to a Costco or a good discount wine store, you occasionally can find wines rated in the 89-91 range for less than $10, but that’s extremely rare here.
How do Parker and the writers for The Wine Spectator reach their ratings? This is a hard question to answer, and I have my doubts that even they know. Parker has written that he rates each wine “relative to its peers,” which would seem to mean that wines of a given type of grape (e.g., Cabernet, Merlot) would have the same distribution of scores. This clearly isn’t the case, though; almost all of his highest ratings are for red wines. The Wine Spectator takes price into account, and will rate a wine higher than an equally good peer if it’s cheaper than the peer. The Wine Advocate says that its ratings are independent of price and just reflect quality. I find The Wine Advocate system to be easier to interpret, because it’s impossible to know what weighting the rater gave to price and readers can weigh price in for themselves, but there’s something to be said for both being integrated into a single rating.

Here are a few choices that Parker rated 89 or higher and that are carried in local State Stores or can be obtained via the State Store Website http://www.lcb.state.pa.us

*Capcanes Mas Donis, 2002*: A very nice Spanish red wine that goes well with a wide range of food. The price I saw quoted was $13.99, and they have it at the State Store next to Borders, as well as at the downtown store in Oxford Center. Parker rated it 91; I bought a case of it a couple of years ago, and have enjoyed it a lot.

*Finca Luzon Tinto*: A somewhat heavier but flavorful Spanish wine, good with beef or lamb. There are two of these, one for $8.99 and one for $10.49. The one for $10.49 figures to be better. Unfortunately, they aren’t carried in stores, and I think there’s a charge for ordering them (I’m not sure what it is). If you go the State Store website listed above, you can contact them and find out what the shipping charge is.

*Nepenthe, Chardonnay, 2004*: A very pleasant Chardonnay that goes well with chicken or fish. The State Store charges $14.49, but like the Finca Luzon, you have to order it. Parker rated it 89; here’s what he had to say about it: “A delicious white, the 2004 Unwooded Chardonnay, reveals abundant richness along with hints of tangerines, lemon butter, and apples. This medium-bodied, fruity Chardonnay possesses crisp acidity as well as excellent purity and depth. I consistently enjoy the wines from Nepenthe, a large, cool-climate viticultural management company in South Australia. Their reds and whites tend to be pure, fragrant efforts with crisp acidity as well as loads of fruit, all presented in an elegant style.”

Cheers,
Bob Siegler

This month’s PLB Shout-Out goes out to Rochelle Croom. For some reason, I’ve been having trouble keeping track of which receipts I’ve turned in, and which I haven’t, for my Tartan Trust Card since the start of this year. Rochelle’s reminded me to get things in to her at least once a month this year. If it weren’t for her, the University probably would have stormed my office and seized my Trust Card by now. So thanks for all your hard work, Rochelle!
Staff Council Notes, April 2007

∑ Reminder: Open Forum this Wednesday!
∑ Postal changes
∑ Kennywood day
∑ Parking changes

Open Forum
Just a reminder that there is a campuswide Open Forum this Wednesday at noon in the UC, McConomy Auditorium. If you do anything besides drive your own car to work or class, this forum will address some of the challenges you face on your daily commute:

Staff Council will host an Open Forum entitled, “Transportation and Pedestrian Safety” on Wednesday, May 2nd at noon in the University Center, McConomy Auditorium.

Panelists include:
Pittsburgh City Councilman, Bill Peduto
Dr. Robert Reppe (University Planning)
Dr. Robert Gradeck (Center for Economic Development)
Jacob Chen (4th-year Mathematical Sciences student).

Each panelist will briefly discuss their research findings, new data, and policy changes relevant to the current challenges faced by Carnegie Mellon, Oakland, and Pittsburgh pedestrians, bus riders, and bicycle commuters. A question-and-answer period will follow. For more information please check the Staff Council website at http://www.cmu.edu/staff-council.

Postal Changes
We heard a short presentation at our April meeting about the postal changes that’ll take effect May 14th. Rates will go up (surprise). Specifically, international mail rates will rise an average of 11%, and US mail by 8%. Also new this year, the cost to mail parcels will be determined by the dimensions of the object you’re mailing, not the weight. Good times to be had by all in learning that new system. Also, UPS will no longer be serving campus as of June 1.

Kennywood Day
…is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, July 14th.

Parking Changes
New parking assignments should be issued in mid-May. The new parking year runs from July 1 to June 30, to align with CMU’s fiscal year. Morewood stacked lots are scheduled to be restriped, responding to complaints. The parking shuttle will be discontinued May 31. On June 15th, the debit/discount card will be discontinued. Anyone holding one should turn it in for validation tickets. A replacement option under consideration is some other kind of discount...
On Tuesday, April 24th, Psi Chi’s CMU chapter inducted 16 new members, at a dinner ceremony held in the University Center.

Left: inductees and current members got the chance to hang out with psychology faculty. Below: Ken is not distracted by whatever Mike has to say. He’s keeping his eyes on the prize!

Psi Chi’s photogenic leadership: Gabriel Smith Treasurer; Jen Fillo, Vice President; Katie Andreassen, President; William Eimer, Secretary
New members (some of whom are pictured above) include psychology majors Rachel Bryner, Lauren Feierstein, Nicole Hallinen, Sam Hashemi, Jessica Jankowitsch, Shelly Kucherer, Yuliya Rinberg, Cecilia Westbrook, Hau-Yu Wong, and additional majors Ashlee Hoffmann, Carrie Kmetzo, Danielle Kramer, Theresa Myers, Andrew Park, Kristina Shahriari, Mike Scheier’s helmet, and Lisa Storey.

As you can see from the picture below, Psi Chi is really growing! And they’re selling plaid brain t-shirts. If you want one, be sure to get in touch with Katie Andreassen.
Brooke Feeney is travelling to London. She is one of the candidates to receive the First Ever Annual Award for Practical Psychology. She’s one of the final three candidates. Each of the final three will receive a significant cash prize in British Pounds, but we’re all hoping Brooke takes home the top prize. And brings back lots of pounds to share with her friends/PLB editors.

Denise Janicki’s office was invaded by a very confused pigeon. Also, I needed a picture to fill up this page.