We’ll Miss You Peggy!

Above, Peggy celebrates with Mike Scheier and Rich Schulz.

A Note from Mike:

Rich Schulz and I were as responsible as anyone for pushing to hire Peggy 28 years ago. Shortly after she arrived in Pittsburgh, she became convinced that Rich and I were both sociopaths. She never really got over her fear, as the look on her face testifies. This was taken at a small going away party I had for Peggy at my house. She almost refused to attend, but accepted when I convinced her others would be invited too.

See Page 14 for a Peggy Story from Ken…
The Carnegie Mellon University College of Humanities and Social Sciences announced today that Professor Sheldon Cohen, the Robert E. Doherty Professor of Psychology, has purchased the naming rights to the Psychology Department for the sum of three million dollars. When asked about his plans, Dr. Cohen stated that while he has not finally decided on the new name for the department, he will not be naming it the “Cohen Department of Psychology” as some have suggested (and others have feared). He stated that he is rather leaning toward “The Department of Health Psychology” or possibly, reflecting both an open mind and a movement back toward the kind of psychophysical dualism that once was prominent in psychology until a new fad came along, “The Department of Mind and/or Body Relationships or Non-relationships as the Case May Be.” The latter name, while not particularly euphonic, reflects his deep-seated commitment to getting under our skin. He has also said that he will not, in the immediate future, be selling seat licenses to those who desire having a chair in the newly-named department. Luxury boxes however will be available. For those interested, a model of the new luxury boxes can be seeing by visiting Baker Hall 254K.

As part of this deal, the administration has agreed to erect a 20 foot tall model of Ypssi, Cohen’s beloved cat in the heretofore unfinished brick triangle at the entrance of Baker Hall. An architect’s preliminary rendering is shown at the right.
To Tell a Lie...

The box below is taken from an actual visa application to the United States.

An easy way to waste an entire afternoon:

http://earth.google.com/

Campus Hunt

Earlier this summer, a falcon showcased his hunting skills in the cut outside of Baker Hall. Horrified squirrel sympathizers look on.

Ken Kotovsky is being held for questioning regarding his participation in the campus squirrel massacre.

For more pictures (and a movie of the action!) go to the following URL:
http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/mtoups/birds_gone_wild/
Survivor: It’s the end of the competition as we know it. And we feel fine. No, really, fine. But thanks for asking.

The TSSC is sad to report the premature end of the Survivor competition after only four rounds. In the last competition, we asked the contestants to write an Onion-like story of a few hundred words. Apparently, this was asking too much. Of the nine contestants remaining, only three (yes, three) managed to submit an entry. Marlene B, Kathy Majors, and Roxanne Thrush are to be applauded for managing to get their excrement together enough to find time to write something. As for the other contestants - the TSSC fart in your general direction! Your mother was a hamster and your father smelled of elderberries!

Given the poor, nay embarrassing, turnout, the TSSC has decided to award the 1st place award to the person who wants it the most (based on her regular (and not at all annoying) questions about the competition and the fact that she was the only person to submit her entry before the deadline). That winner is *insert drumroll here*: Kathy Majors!

Congratulations Kathy! Your prizes will be awarded as soon as the university sorts out its financial crisis and provides the money.
Survivor “Onion” Satire Entry

The Psychology of Reality Television

The appeal of reality television is perhaps intuitively obvious to even the most casual observer: the deep emotional, perhaps even approximating spiritual, connection with contestants who resemble us in nearly every aspect of our lives. These contestants look like us, live lives like us (how many times have our parents insisted we sit at the dinner table until we finish our cow brain or drink our maggot bloodshake?), and pursue goals like ours (e.g. $1,000,000, the all-encompassing love of a construction worker, a Cover Girl contract). In fact, if we knew no better, we would swear we were in fact these contestants.

Psychologists, however, have a long-standing tradition of obscuring that which everyone knows and understands; researchers at CMU are just such investigators, illuminating the mysteries of reality television for the lay.

Sheldon Cohen, PhD, insists that reality television shows are a clandestine extension of his lab. “What you don’t see,” asserts Cohen, “are the behind-the-scenes technicians weighing snotty tissues and employing enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays to assess the effects of everyday stress on immunity.”

Colleague Brooke Feeney, PhD, also claims to use the contestant subject pool. “Ordinarily in the course of pursuing independent goals, when individuals meet with adversity they return to caregivers for comfort; this study experimentally manipulated caregivers’ presence by rendering them inaccessible.” When asked for predictions, Feeney’s comment was, “Oh, this was more of an exploratory study. I just wanted to see what would happen.”

Dr. Ken Kotovsky swore to interviewers that somewhere in the depths of his consciousness he knew all the answers, but was simply not cognizant of his “knowledge.” To his credit, Patricia Carpenter, PhD, appeared to agree, offering an explanation involving ocean waves.

Ostensibly we watch to be entertained, a desire faithfully drawing our eyes to the screen and involving electrical signals/chemicals, our sociocultural context complete with its socializing influences, both, and neither. But really, we watch in search of truth and in hopes of attaining a shared reality with all humanity.
Blast from the Past!

Can you name these youngsters?

Maybe so, but if you think you’re so smart....

Whose house have they taken over for a night of fun?

At what department event was this taken? (Hint: Gordon Bower was in attendance)

In what year?

Yesterday’s Dancers...
Today’s Department Leaders...

Special Bonus Brain Teasers:
Who is the guy on the far left?
Which department member was he dating at the time of the photo?

Who hosted this dance party?
What year did this take place?

See page 15 for answers...
Hungarian Social Club Welcomes MacWhinney

The article to the right is taken from a Pittsburgh Hungarian monthly newsletter.

Kathy Majors reports that Brian and Mary MacWhinney were kind enough to share their Sunday afternoon with the McKeesport Hungarian Social Club members and visitors. Kathy and her family were in attendance.

Brian wowed the audience with his excellent speech—delivered in Hungarian!

13. 2005, at the McKeesport Hungarian Social Club. President Robert Doby welcomed the guests. Rose M. Gerzsenyi, the Treasurer of the Hungarian Club, was the host for this special day.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Jalso of the First Hungarian Reformed Church in Homestead, PA, gave the invocation. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the American National Anthem and the magyar Himnusz were sung by the assembly, accompanied by Dorothy Krall.

Rev. Csilla Lucskay, Chaplain, director of pastoral care of the Bethlen Nursing Home of Ligonier, PA, addressed the assembly in English. Joseph Fabri, Director of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, recited the „Nemzeti d a l”. The Hungarian songs performed by our 1956 singers brought the assembly to their feet to participate. Noemi Borsay recited the „Egész világ harcmezőn”. Miklos Szabo, Vice President of the Hungarian Club in McKeesport, recognized all dignitaries. Hungarian songs sung by Mr. Paul Martinsecek and accompanied by Dorothy Krall were enjoyed by all. Professor Brian MacWhinney, of Carnegie Mellon University, surprised the audience with his excellent speech in Hungarian. The benediction was given by Rev. Dr. Daniel Borsay of the Free Hungarian Reformed Church of McKeesport, PA.

At the Reception following the Commemoration, platters of cold cuts, and wonderful cookies and pastries were served. I would like to congratulate McKeesport leadership in putting together a wonderful program year after year.
I am indeed interested in serving on the Space Committee as our first year representative. For all of you who doubt my credentials to serve on the board of such a fine institution, I have composed a little autobiography:

I am a dynamic figure, often seen scaling walls and crushing ice. I have been known to remodel train stations on my lunch breaks, making them more efficient in the area of heat retention. I translate ethnic slurs for Cuban refugees, I write award-winning operas, I manage time efficiently.

Occasionally, I tread water for three days in a row. I woo women with my sensuous and godlike trombone playing, I can pilot bicycles up severe inclines with unflagging speed, and I cook Thirty-Minute Brownies in twenty minutes. I am an expert in stucco, a veteran in love, and an outlaw in Peru.

Using only a hoe and a large glass of water, I once single-handedly defended a small village in the Amazon Basin from a horde of ferocious army ants. I play bluegrass cello, I was scouted by the Mets, I am the subject of numerous documentaries. When I'm bored, I build large suspension bridges in my yard. I enjoy urban hang gliding. On Wednesdays, after school, I repair electrical appliances free of charge.

I am an abstract artist, a concrete analyst, and a ruthless bookie. Critics worldwide swoon over my original line of corduroy evening wear. I don't perspire. I am a private citizen, yet I receive fan mail. I have been caller number nine and have won the weekend passes. Last summer I toured New Jersey with a traveling centrifugal-force demonstration. I bat 400.

My deft floral arrangements have earned me fame in international botany circles. Children trust me. I can hurl tennis rackets at small moving objects with deadly accuracy. I once read Paradise Lost, Moby Dick, and David Copperfield in one day and still had time to refurbish an entire dining room that evening. I know the exact location of every food item in the supermarket. I have performed several covert operations with the CIA.

I sleep once a week; when I do sleep, I sleep in a chair. While on vacation in Canada, I successfully negotiated with a group of terrorists who had seized a small bakery. I balance, I weave, I dodge, I frolic, and my bills are all paid.

On weekends, to let off steam, I participate in full-contact origami. Years ago I discovered the meaning of life but forgot to write it down. I have made extraordinary four course meals using only a mouli and a toaster oven. I breed prize-winning clams. I have won bullfights in San Juan, cliff-diving competitions in Sri Lanka, and spelling bees at the Kremlin.

I have played Hamlet, I have performed open-heart surgery, and I have spoken with Elvis.

But I have not yet served on the Office Space committee...

Ok...I only wrote the last little bit, but nonetheless I am interested in the position.

Jefferson
Tired of dreaming up creative ways to be positive about the not-so-positive? PLB provides some help in preparation for this season’s letter-writing...

1. Since my last report, this student/assistant professor has reached rock-bottom and has started to dig.
2. I would not allow this student/assistant professor to breed.
3. This student/assistant professor is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definite won’t be.
4. Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.
5. When she opens her mouth, it seems that it is only to change feet.
6. This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
7. He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
8. This student/assistant professor is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.
9. This student/assistant professor should go far, and the sooner he starts the better.
10. Got a full 6-pack, but lacks the plastic thingy to hold it all together.
11. A gross ignoramus -- 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.
12. He doesn’t have ulcers, but he’s a carrier.
13. He’s been working with glue too much.
14. She would argue with a signpost.
15. He brings a lot of joy whenever he leaves the room.
16. When his IQ reaches 50, he should sell.
18. If you see two people talking and one looks bored, he’s the other one.
19. A photographic memory but with the lens cover glued on.
21. Donated his brain to science before he was done using it.
22. Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn’t coming.
23. She’s got two brains cells, one is lost and the other is out looking for it.
24. If she were any more stupid, she’d have to be watered twice a week.
25. If you give him a penny for his thoughts, you’d get change.
26. If you stand close enough to him, you can hear the ocean.
27. It’s hard to believe he beat out 1,000,000 other sperm.
28. One neuron short of a synapse.
30. Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; she only gargled.
31. Takes him 2 hours to watch ‘60-minutes’.
32. The wheel is turning, but the gerbil is dead.
Faculty Look-Alikes Courtesy of an Anonymous Source from the Graduate Wing

Professor Look-Alikes...

Mark Twain?

Elton John?

Jerry Garcia?

David Rakison?

...Hairstyles courtesy of www.clairol.com.

Try it out!

Share Your Own Big Hair... or that of a Colleague

- An upcoming edition of the PLB will highlight department hairstyles through the years. Rummage through your files (or those on the desk of an officemate). Find those 80s, 70s, or (egad!) even 60s hairstyles so we can see how they have evolved. Send your entries to lholt@andrew.cmu.edu.

- In honor of a certain graduate student’s Ph.D. Defense, we submit this example (which goes to show that Google is an amazing research tool...)

Psycho? Logical? Bulletin
In recent years, fraudulent resumés have initiated several scandals in the sports world. Zygmunt “Triple-Word Score” Wilf succeeded in purchasing the Minnesota Vikings largely because of questions that arose when inaccuracies in Reggie Fowler’s resumé surfaced. Similarly, Jack Wilson defrauded the Pirates of several million dollars by imitating a competent hitter for five months. Perhaps the most famous incident is that of George O’Leary. O’Leary was fired as Notre Dame’s head football coach, not for the traditional reason – getting destroyed in a bowl game by Oregon State – but because an investigation of his credentials indicated that he had never received the Master’s Degree that he claimed.

Creative resumé entries are not limited to athletes, though. A shocking case has surfaced in our very own Psychology department. Assistant Professor Erik Thiessen’s claims of a Master’s Degree are being seriously investigated. An undated photo of Thiessen (see accompanying photo) has fueled concern that he may have been a Pokémon Master, rather than a Master of Psychology. Thiessen’s CV is suspiciously vague about the degree, and his whereabouts from 1993-1995 are completely unaccounted for.

Thiessen could not be reached for comment. However, in a statement released to the press, he said, “That photo is obviously doctored. I would never have a poster of ‘Pokémon: The Movie 2001’ when ‘Pokémon: The First Movie’ and ‘Pokémon 3: The Movie’ are so obviously superior. Also, even if I didn’t have a Master’s Degree, my dissertation on infants’ ability to discriminate between the speech of good and evil Pokémon is rock-solid.”
Behrmann Lab Members Take to the Florida Waters

Galia Avidan (postdoc), Joy Geng (graduated grad student) and Sarah Shomstein (postdoc) getting ready for kayaking in Sarasota Florida during the Vision Sciences Society Meeting

These Inside Jokes Brought to you by the Shatz Dining Room Lunch Crowd

FROM: scohen@andrew.cmu.edu

- Ever find yourself thirsty or hungry as you reach the middle of the day? Dr. Lori Holt of the Carnegie Mellon Department of Psychology has opened a refreshment stand to help address your hunger and thirst. Holt, with extensive experience in the refreshment stand business, has stocked (what used to be a gerbil lab) with candy and sugary sodas. When asked about the potential contribution of these foods to obesity and diabetes, she said “XXXX it”, it’s what the customers want. All products are sold at only a small mark-up to help to pay Dr. Holt’s rodent chow bills. Rodent chow is also available in 50 pound bags. TIPS are encouraged.

FROM: lholt@andrew.cmu.edu

- You’ve heard of Psychology Survivor, how about Psychology: The Apprentice? Mock me now, but with CMU’s looming financial crisis and NIH’s belt-tightening I’ll soon have the model system for funding research with Raisinettes and Good N’ Plenty. Still, it’s a tough department to make a penny. The Brits think 10% is a tip, Ken is a conscientious tipping objector and Erik is always just anxious to get his Reese’s Pieces bill.

FROM: scohen@andrew.cmu.edu

- A pair of Japanese speaking gerbils are missing from the laboratory of CMU Psychology Professor Lori Holt. The gerbils, who recently emigrated from Japan were apparently looking for a Sushi Bar, with no luck in Baker Hall. If you spot any gerbils, and don’t speak any Japanese, try some simple Italian. Invite them to go out for pizza while you call Dr. Holt’s laboratory. Dr. Holt, by the way, could not understand why these gerbils would want to leave. They were being fed the standard candy and soda diet recommended for the American gerbil.

FROM: scohen@andrew.cmu.edu

- CMU GERBILS COMPLAIN OF LACK OF STEROIDS

- On reading of a recently published study out of USC, where hamsters were given four popular anabolic steroids (Behavioral Neural Science, vol 119), local gerbils working in Dr. Lori Holt’s laboratory have filed a formal complaint. In an interview (conducted in Swedish), Peppy, one of the local gerbils who immigrated from Japan complained: “How come those California rodents get their choice of drugs while we are lucky if a sloppy student drops a potato chip in our cage?” The USC study found that anabolic steroids are reinforcing for the hamsters. Although not reported in the paper, California hamsters on steroids learned to speak fluent Spanish in less than a week when reinforced with anabolic steroids. “And we learn much more difficult languages for peanuts and rodent chow” complained Peppy. The hamsters also were lifting free weights that were said to be four to five times their own weight and several have been recruited to play for the San Francisco Giants. The CMU administration has formed a committee to review the complaints against Dr. Holt. Meanwhile, other data have suggested that long-term exposure to anabolic steroids boosts aggression in rats. “If anabolic steroids are reinforcing (says an unnamed local psychologist), it could contribute to the increasing and long-term use of these drugs in gerbils with untold effects on the level of violent behavior.” This investigator suggests a careful review should be conducted before drugging Dr. Holt’s rodents.
Faithful PLB readers will recall that large numbers of squirrels have been the targets of deportation from Squirrel Hill over the last year. Although the squirrels’ current whereabouts are unknown, there are rumors that they have been sent to relocation camps across the Monongahela in Homestead. The loss of these upstanding former members of the tight-knit Squirrel Hill squirrel community is being felt by those that remain behind.

A recent study finds the squirrel families touched by this tragedy in Squirrel Hill Wilkins-and-Murray area to be devastated by their loss. In the last six months alone, depression-driven alcoholism among the remaining Squirrel Hill squirrels has sky-rocketed, leading local proprietors and state stores to more closely guard their liquor inventories from the gangs of roving intoxicated squirrels.

Ken Kotovsky could not be reached for comment.
There was a time when Peggy was going on vacation (to the beach--before they bought the house) and loaded up her car with stuff. She was picking up Fred on the way (he’d been away on business, so they arranged to meet in at Newark airport where his meeting was. Anyway, in typical Peggy fashion, the car was vastly overloaded with kids in the back seat and a lot of "stuff" including some large boxes of things in the front seat, and on top of it, she was late and freaking out about Fred standing on the curb at the airport waiting for her. Just after she got off the highway very close to the airport, a box or something fell over and she made a grab for it, took her eyes off the road and ran over a small dog...injuring it. She didn’t know what to do, so she made a space for it (it was bleeding a bit) in her car trunk and thought she’d pick Fred up and get it to a vet. A few blocks later, an airport cop pulled her over because the car looked dangerously "overloaded" or poor visibility or something (hard to think he’d be suspicious of terrorism, but maybe he was using the other stuff as an excuse) and, after looking it all over, told her she’d get a ticket if she didn’t manage to squeeze some things into the trunk or back seat. She tried to get out of it, but he insisted she do it in front of him and when she (I’d imagine somewhat “reluctantly”) opened the trunk and there was the bleeding dog! ….I’m afraid that I forgot to mention that the dog was very shaggy---that is, I don’t have a good Peggy story…..sorry, but if I think of one, I’ll convey it. --Ken
Moonlighting Associate Professor?
See it to believe it... http://yannai.com/

Blast from the Past! Revealed

Dancing like only a health psychologist can and sporting the wide-collared yellow leisurewear is Department Head Mike Scheier. Rumor has it that he taught Travolta all his best moves.

Behind him, Peggy Clark enjoys the show. To her right, Eric Devin (Susan Fiske’s then boyfriend). The party took place in 1979 at Pam Weiss’s house.

This one is taken from a Carnegie Symposium party circa 1980 or 1981. Karen Matthews and Mike Scheier are pictured with Chuck Carver at Peggy Clark’s old house in Highland Park.

Do you have a Blast from the Past? Share it with the PLB!
The PLB Needs Your Help!
Send us your photos, stories, vacation pictures and random thoughts...

“What I did on my summer vacation”
Send us your vacation photos and stories!

Psychology Makeover Edition
Send us your worst hair moments from the past. Better yet, send us the worst hair moments of a colleague.

Restaurant Reviews
Best or worst... send us your reviews of local eats

Movie Reviews
Seen anything good lately? What should we rent?

Blast from the Past!
Send us photos from past department events, incriminating photos of colleagues, or poorly-doctored Photoshop renditions of either!

Have a Rant? Need to go on a Tirade? Send it!
Have an idea for a column? Send it!

Send materials to lholt@andrew.cmu.edu