Back in Black and White
And various other colors, as required

New Recruiting System (pg. 2)
New Coke? (pg. 3)
New Vacation Photos (pp. 8-11)
Multitudinous Additional Novelties
The Psych-Research Bboard is a resource that helps researchers find participants and participants find studies happening on campus. It works just like misc.market.

About the Bboard

The Bboard was started over the summer (by Honors student Michael Pato) in an attempt to recruit research participants. Any member of the community can check it, just like they would check e-mail. But for the system to really take off, we need YOUR help. For this to become a resource people use, it needs to be populated with lots of experiments, so people get into the habit of checking it out.

Why use a Bboard?

1) When you post a new experiment, it’s INSTANTLY advertised to anyone who subscribes to the bulletin board
2) It’s easy for potential participants to see how new an advertisement is, unlike fliers
3) The bulletin board fits with the digital lifestyle of the youth of today, and is integrated with whatever e-mail client students use.
4) It’s free and easy!

How to sign up

1) Go to the Andrew Web-mail Site
2) Click on the “Folders” link at the top
3) Go to “Subscribe” and subscribe to org.psy.psych-research
4) The next time you open your e-mail client, you’ll be subscribed to the bulletin board, and can check all of the posts.
5) To gain the ability to post new announcements on the b-board, e-mail Mike Pato at mpato@andrew.cmu.edu

What it looks like

This is a screenshot from my e-mail program. See how easy it is to monitor the folder? It shows up right under your inbox!
New Coke Administration

A new year--a new Coke machine staff!!
Changes you should know about:
1. We will aim to refill the coke machine twice weekly (Monday and Thursday).
2. If you need beverages for a department function please contact either Jared (jdanker@andrew.cmu.edu) or Sophie (jingyuan@andrew.cmu.edu) in advance. Please *DO NOT* obtain the beverages on your own as we will be unable to receive reimbursement.
3. We want your input!! You are the consumers and we want to know what you want to drink! To vote on beverages to fill the coke machine please visit the following survey website [Ed note: after careful investigation, I have discerned that beer is not an option]
   -- Lindsey Lopez

PLB Shout-Outs
Submitted by Ellen Conser

To Jim, Tim, Vince, and colleagues, who are doing their darnedest to get me a computer that doesn’t spontaneously reboot (never a good sign).

To Terri Jones Davis, who has helped me tremendously (and enthusiastically) recently, in navigating the minutiae of our Cold Study subject payment paperwork.

Remember: This Friday is: BLACK and GOLD day

Wear your best black and gold apparel to celebrate the start of the Steeler season!
Fantasy Football 2007!

There are still a few spots available in the department’s official fantasy football league. Do you have what it takes to face defending champion Brooke “Killer” Feeney (motto: I will beat you like a rented camel)? If so, e-mail thiessen@andrew.cmu.edu

The draft is this evening, so don’t delay!

Did you ever wonder: what if CMU were located in Springfield, home of...

It probably wouldn’t be that different. I’m sure we’d still have a strong cognitive group...
And maintain our tradition of a strikingly handsome developmental group...

Along with a lovely group of people who study Social and Health Psychology.
We’re doing something slightly different with the Graduate Student of the Month feature this month, and putting the focus on collaborative research in a lab setting. To that end, we’re talking with Linda Moya and Cibu Thomas about what it’s like to work with Marlene Behrmann in the bustling Cognitive Neuroscience Lab. Also, I forgot to take their picture.

PLB: Tell us a bit about your background, and what drew you to working with Marlene?
LM: I have two engineering degrees, and I spent my first career working in industry. Then in 2001 I decided to come back for a PHD, actually in the Heinz school. But then I took the graduate cognitive core course in 2003 with Marlene Behrmann and discovered that cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience is where I really wanted to be, and so I spent the time since 2003 working my way over here to the psychology department.
CT: I did my undergraduate degree in India, in computer science. Then I did a one-year program in Creative Writing. I was a copy writer, and a creative consultant for ad agencies for about four years. That’s about the time that I got cynical about advertising and got interested in how people comprehend text. So I applied to universities that did that kind of research. I joined UT-Dallas as a graduate student and worked in the text comprehension lab under Richard Golden. But then, I met my niece, who is autistic and that really shifted my goals. I applied to the CNBC, because that seemed like the best fit. Eventually, I happened to meet Marlene, and we got to talking about our mutual interests in autism, and I never turned back.

CT: I find it hard to study just one part of the brain without looking at how it’s all connected! And I think that’s where I fit in, because I ended up looking at structural connectivity between the ventral temporal cortex and the rest of the brain. So I benefited from the lab’s diverse interests, and it was tremendously satisfying for me.
LM: I’m a bit different. I’m focused more on taking one of the directions of research in the lab, and pushing it a bit farther than we’ve gone in the past. I’m interested in visual perceptual and categorical learning using behavioral and neuroimaging techniques. I may yet use neuropsychological and/or computational techniques are well. Perceptual learning is still in vision, but a bit of a stretch from what people in the lab have done in the past.

PLB: How has your research been shaped by being part of a team, as opposed to working in isolation?
CT: I started off doing just behavioral work. But I was always more interested in the way different cortical regions interact to produce behavior. My first opportunity to pursue my interest was when one of the post-docs working in the lab had collected some DTI data, and she gave me the opportunity to analyze it. And I was hooked immediately, because, wow, here is a living human brain, and you can trace the connections! It sort of reflects the fact that if you work in a big lab, you have a lot of freedom to find a direction that fits your own interests, because there are people doing many different things. Everything I’ve done is at least partially based on someone else’s work! I’m just very fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time!
LM: That’s a common theme in the lab – that idea of freedom to explore. Once have a solid foundation in methods and statistics under your belt, you can trust in that foundation and approach research in new areas, using new techniques and find the interesting questions. And, of course, it’s great to be able to get feedback on your thinking from the people around you.

CT: Yes! I got so stuck at one point, just trying to think about too many things, DTI, autism… Marlene helped me put on the blinders, and focus on one tractable problem. It’s important to focus on the right size of problem, and to be able to produce a coherent body of work.

PLB: Cibu, as a wise older graduate – really, we might refer to you as the Old Man and the Sea(bu) – what kind of wisdom do you try to pass down to the young people in the lab? And Linda, what kind of wisdom do the newer graduate students receive?

CT: I think it’s really important to find what you’re interested in. If you’re reading a paper, and don’t feel the urge to get up and do something else, if it really interests you that much, I think it is good sign that this is the kind of work you’d like to do. Then, it’s just a question of persistence. It’s also useful to communicate to your advisor, or collaborators what you’re thinking about, what you understand, and what you don’t understand. Otherwise, it’s a colossal waste of everyone’s time.

LM: In my past career, I have supervised people, and been supervised. It’s a skill, and while some people are naturally good supervisors, most people really do need to be trained on it. And being respectful; treating everyone with respect makes things so much better.

CT: I have no management experience! I guess I manage myself, fairly OK. One thing I’ve learned is that it’s important to be on top of the game. You need to be abreast of what’s going on in the field. That makes being a mentor or an advisor much easier, so that when someone brings you an idea, you can respond to it with some depth. Being generous with your time and knowledge is also important. When I joined the program, I was quite naïve about psychology. But I felt so nurtured in CMU’s environment and my lab, because all of the post-docs and other graduate students were so nice, and so willing to teach you what they know. And I could knock on Marlene’s door any time she was there to clarify a burning question.

PLB: So, we have a new crop of wet-behind-the-ear first year graduate students. From your perspectives as veterans of graduate school, what one piece of advice would you like to give them?

CT: They should remember they’re a really smart bunch of people and that’s why they are here. From the minute you get here, you can contribute, to things like writing grants, critique papers etc. Also, figure out what really motivates you to come to your office every day, and just work hard.

LM: What I’d say is that, in the end, everything is a people process. You deal with technical issues, sure. I’m doing some MEG work right now and we are running into some technical problems in acquiring the data. There are also going to be challenges in analyzing the data, particularly analyzing it the way psychologists and neuroscientists do: focusing on hypothesis testing and testing for statistical significance. Certainly the technical problems are a focus, but in the end, it’s my working with others that’s going to make these issues get resolved. So I think that’s very important.
The PLB Wants to know:

What did YOU do with your summer vacation?

Submit your pics and stories to thiessen@andrew.cmu.edu

To get you in the mood, here are some pictures of what your colleagues did with their summer vacation!

Rochelle, Erin, and Emilie, er... don’t remember exactly what they were doing. But it sure looks like a good time!
Anna Fisher and Ken Koedinger were married at the national aviary

Leading Ken to profess his love for Anna the only way a man ever really can: with an electric guitar!

Editor’s note: I had a difficult time picking the caption for this photo. Other possibilities included:
1) And now you can see why Ken’s vita lists “Seeing a million faces and rocking them all” under “Service Activities”
2) “I gave my love a chicken, that had no bones... I gave my love a cherry, that had no stone...”
Other News from the Koedinger/Fisher nuptials:

**Faculty Member Releases Live Bird**
Despite marrying in an aviary, Ken and Anna chose not to go with the classic “Dove Release” maneuver. However, the PLB has learned that a guest at the wedding, another faculty member, DID release a bird.
The unidentified faculty member was searching for a restroom when he or she accidentally opened the cage for a large bird that subsequently charged out the door. Aviary staff later captured and returned the bird.

**Anna-Ken now official couple nickname**
Pronounced like “Anakin.”
PLB is in negotiations to get baby named “Luke” or “Leia”

**Ken Koedinger**
**Pleased with Russian Male-Order Bride**
Ken Koedinger has been very happy with his Male-Order bride, Anna, who is Russian. Ken says, “Before I married Anna, I would sometimes go to a restaurant, and not know which dessert to order. But now, Anna tells me which one I want.” Anna has taken to ordering Ken around in many different ways, including several (story continues on page 22)

Brooke Feeney decided to work at home for a while

Sheldon Cohen showed off his dance moves
Erik Thiessen went kayaking and fishing for 8 days in the Pacific ocean.

I didn’t shave or shower for those 8 days, since we were out on the islands. If I ever become a fugitive from justice, now you have a sneak preview of what I’ll look like. Keep this one handy in case you need it for the police sketch artist.
Since May’s PLB, a lot of interesting stuff has emerged from Staff Council. I’ll tell you a little about what went on at our June, July and August meetings.

**June Meeting**
CMU IDs: We were told that because CMU and its finances will be audited by the government this fall, CMU staff and faculty (not students) would be required to swap their ID cards for new ones. The reason for this is boring and related somehow to the treatment of the bus pass as a taxable benefit if you stop working for CMU before the ID expires. Furthermore, we were told that new IDs would be issued annually. (Later in the summer, we were told that all of the above was a false alarm and would not in fact occur.) Also, Port Authority has considered implementing a swipe system (magnetic card readers) in all buses, but since it’s in dire fiscal straits and this is expensive to do, it’s on hold.

Staff Satisfaction Survey: About 53% of staff completed the staff satisfaction survey issued earlier this year. CMU Planning Office says select results will be released this fall. Not all survey data will be released: Results university-wide will be averaged and released. Results specific to individual departments/divisions may be released, at their individual heads’ choosing. Apparently, staff will be given insufficient information to compare satisfaction results across departments/divisions. I serve on the Benefits Committee, and I have inquired as to the reasons for constraints on release of complete survey data. I’ll let you know if I hear anything.

**July Meeting**
Kennywood Day: Kennywood Day was well-attended this year as in prior years, and the weather was good. However, attendees reported problems with long lines and waits for rides and other activities, and it was reported that this was due to the fact that many other large employers (e.g., Highmark) had their Kennywood Day the same day.

Term Limits: There was discussion about altering our Constitution to introduce term limits for members, committee chairs, and officers. Rationales include burnout, opportunity for wider participation, continuity, etc.

Communication: Staff Council is considering informing the campus community prior to each vote, and devising a way to record each rep’s vote for constituents to see.

**August Meeting**
Elections: We met our newly elected reps, and there are a large number of them (51 new members & 6 alternates). In fact about 10,000 votes were cast in this election. Kudos to staff who exercised their voting powers!

Representation: There was additional discussion about the Chair of Staff Council’s and President Jared Cohon’s interest in amending our Constitution to require representation from each department/division, and redesign elections accordingly.

Satellite Campuses: We discussed the quandary about adequately representing satellite campuses such as Qatar in Staff Council. Specifically, how can we learn about their quite unique needs in a timely fashion, and how can we ensure they have a meaningful presence and participation on Staff Council? We have a newly elected Qatar rep who joined us at the meeting via real-time videolink. We decided he’ll give us a quick briefing at each meeting. So far as I know, we don’t have representation yet from the other, non-Pittsburgh campuses.
Staff Council Report, Part 2

Dates to Remember: Fall-Winter (some are subject to change; keep your eye out for campus postings regarding more details or revised dates)

Sept. 21: Andy Awards

Sept. 27, noon: Staff Council Ice Cream Social. Meet your rep(s) and find out what exactly it is that we do, and how you can join up (if you like). Oh, and by the way, get free ice cream.

Oct. 29: CMU Food Drive starts. Last year, we collected more food than the Steelers drive!

Nov. 19, noon: President Cohon’s Open Forum (topic: TBA)

Feb. 11, noon: President Cohon’s Open Forum (topic: TBA)

It’s the start of a new school year, which means we’re interacting with undergraduates again. In the interests of helping the rest of you keep your finger on the pulse of what the youth of today are hip to -- which the PLB is famous for -- we present to you some highlights of the 70-item Beloit College Mindset List. The List is intended to identify a worldview of 18 year-olds in the fall of 2007. The List identifies the experiences and event horizons of students as they commence higher education.

1. What Berlin wall?
4. They never “rolled down” a car window.
5. Michael Moore has always been angry and funny.
6. They may confuse the Keating Five with a rock group.
7. They have grown up with bottled water.
10. Pete Rose has never played baseball.
11. Rap music has always been mainstream.
13. “Off the hook” has never had anything to do with a telephone.
14. Music has always been “unplugged.”
15. Russia has always had a multi-party political system.
16. Women have always been police chiefs in major cities.
22. No one has ever been able to sit down comfortably to a meal of “liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti.”
23. Wal-Mart has always been a larger retailer than Sears and has always employed more workers than GM.
26. Katie Couric has always had screen cred.
28. They never found a prize in a Coca-Cola “MagiCan.”
29. They were too young to understand Judas Priest’s subliminal messages.
32. They grew up in Wayne’s World.
33. U2 has always been more than a spy plane.
34. They were introduced to Jack Nicholson as “The Joker.”
35. Stadiums, rock tours and sporting events have always had corporate names.
36. American rock groups have always appeared in Moscow.
39. Fox has always been a major network.
41. The “Blue Man Group” has always been everywhere.
43. Being a latchkey kid has never been a big deal.
44. Thanks to MySpace and Facebook, autobiography can happen in real time.
45. They learned about JFK from Oliver Stone and Malcolm X from Spike Lee.
46. Most phone calls have never been private.
48. Microbreweries have always been ubiquitous.
51. China has always been more interested in making money than in reeducation.
52. Time has always worked with Warner.
53. Tiananmen Square is a 2008 Olympics venue, not the scene of a massacre.
54. The purchase of ivory has always been banned.
55. MTV has never featured music videos.
58. They get much more information from Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert than from the newspaper.
61. They never saw Johnny Carson live on television.
65. Illinois has been trying to ban smoking since the year they were born.
67. Chronic fatigue syndrome has always been debilitating and controversial.
68. Burma has always been Myanmar.
69 Dilbert has always been ridiculing cubicle culture.
70. Food packaging has always included nutritional labeling.