Welcome Back! What’s New on Campus? Geysers, Swine Flu

Water Main Break Results in Beautiful Campus Geyser

Workers mistakenly broke a water main on the cut last week (photo above). The PLB has included a picture of Old Faithful (left) so that you can note the striking resemblance. Don’t waste your time going to Yellowstone now! Although the CMU geyser was only blowing for a short while, we’ll never forget her. Names circulated for the geyser included: Old Scotty, What the Hell is that?, Cohon’s Blowhole...

Unconfirmed Cases of Mild Swine Flu Cause Mass Hysteria on Campus

What is the most newsworthy event of the start of the 2009-2010 academic year at CMU? Swine flu. Many students showed up to campus with flu-like symptoms (or developed flu symptoms once they got here). People are taking drastic measures to protect themselves against this deadly virus known to produce mild symptoms such as fatigue, slight headache, and fever. Emilie Rendulic (see above) wore surgical gloves when sorting Intro Psych papers. Ken Kotovsky has reportedly tried washing his hands after using the bathroom. Rumors are swirling that even Sheldon Cohen, the Flu Whisperer, won’t leave his office. Let’s hope for a vaccine soon.
Fall Harvest:
A Fresh Crop of Grads

Alyx Kronstein
1) Where you’re originally from: Center Township, PA (just north of Pittsburgh International Airport)
2) Undergrad Major and University: Linguistics & Russian Studies, Carnegie Mellon
3) Any hobbies you have: Reading (for fun), Netflix, shopping, wine and beer
4) your answer to this question: squirrels, evil or good? Evil, of course. Have you ever heard that sound they make when fending off cute, fluffy puppies? Scary.

Ed note: You should hear the noise Erik makes when fending off cute, fluffy puppies...

Michelle Moon
1) Where you’re originally from: Korea
2) Undergrad Major and University: (undergrad) B.A. in Business, Ajou University, Korea (grad) M.S. in Human Factors, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
3) Any hobbies you have: traveling, hiking, watching fish, camping, and drinking..
4) your answer to this question: squirrels, evil or good? good

Ed note: Very promising, but if you want to stick the course around here your answer to 4 may need to be revised, or avoid Kotovsky.
Ran Liu

1) Washington, DC

2) Carnegie Mellon, majored in Cognitive Science. I’m well on my way to becoming one of those people who never leave CMU, ever.

3) Yes, just a few. Reading, road tripping, hiking, adventures, watching documentaries, making music, writing short stories, mind expansion.

4) This seems like an extreme case of anthropomorhism, but if I HAVE to answer, I’ll trust google on it: 2,130 hits for “squirrels are good”, 404,000 hits for “squirrels are evil”. Make sure SafeSearch is off.

Ed note: I wonder if I can get all the answers for my PhD from a single carefully-crafted Google query.

Rodlesscia Sneed

1) Originally from Detroit, Michigan

2) Undergrad--Princeton University, Molecular Biology; Master of Public Health (MPH) degree--Columbia University

3) Amateur musician--love singing, playing piano/ violin; reading anything I can get my hands on!

4) I live in Squirrel Hill, so I think I’m required to say that squirrels are good.

Ed note: Have you ever tried playing the squirrel?
Karrie Godwin

1) Where you’re originally from: Boulder, Colorado

2) Undergrad Major and University: University of Colorado (B.A.) - Psychology and Elementary Education; Harvard University (M.Ed.) - Human Development and Psychology

3) Any hobbies you have: Hiking, following the PBR circuit, and scrapbooking

4) your answer to this question: squirrels, evil or good? Evil

Ed Note: For those as uneducated as myself, PBR is short for Professional Bull Riding. Ye-ha!

Grad Talk 1st Anniversary

That’s right, with this issue the graduate section of the PLB celebrates its inception almost one year ago. With hundreds of copies pressed into the hands of the department, it also oddly enough makes our articles more widely-read than any of our actual scientific work. The PLB at its finest!

In the coming issues, we hope to bring you stories that are bigger, badder, and more exciting than ever. In realizing this lofty goal, we call upon our doctoral brothers and sisters in arms to help dig up those little tid-bits that we call pay-dirt. Who knows, an article in the PLB could be the first in a long and illustrious scientific career.
What did you do this summer?

The PLB Requested Snapshots of what you did this summer, and you delivered.

Post-doc David Reitter (right) gave a talk at CogSci in Amsterdam. He sincerely apologizes for the lack of pre-talk shirt ironing.

Professor Bobby Klatzky edited Bob Swendsen’s thermal physics book. This book is also known as Physics for People who aren’t Reading “Mastering the Art of French Cooking”
Assistant Professor David Creswell and Kasey Griffin bought a house in the Point Breeze/Regent Square area!

Graduate student Ran Liu went scuba diving with her little sister (and without certification) in China

Shellie Sherman rode an elephant (with family)
Graduate student Erika Laing went to the Dolphin Research Center and was a trainer for a week. Time was spent working on training behaviors, eventually leading to a public show at the end.

Lab Coordinator Pamela Snyder earned a bronze medal by winning three matches in the round-robin raquetball tournament at the Summer National Senior Games in Palo Alto, CA. This was Snyder’s first time competing in the Senior Games. Way to go Pam!

Professor Marlene Behrmann was a keynote speaker at the Taiwan Attention and Perception Conference. Despite the heat, she visited great temples and other places in Taipei.
Children’s School Director Sharon Carver spent the summer supervising the reconstruction of the Children’s School after the June 17th flood. Good news, the reconstruction is almost complete and an Open House will be held on Friday September 11th from 3-5pm. (Sharon also found time to go to Bar Harbor, ME and Acadia National Park for a week in August)

Graduate student Jingyuan Huang got married to CMU grad student Qiao Li on June 29th in Shijiazhuang, China
PLB Retraction:

Mike Tarr is Co-director of CNBC and is married to Laurie Heller (not Mike’s sister)

Ah, well, we knew it was going to happen. You hand the power over to a new PLB editor, someone who constantly takes shortcuts, and you are going to witness some major debacles. The PLB would like to retract the May PLB article welcoming Mike Tarr and Laurie Heller. Although the PLB still would like to formally welcome these two new faculty members, we want to get the facts straight.

First correction: Mike is actually the new Co-Director of CNBC (not the Director, as was stated in the PLB).

Second correction: The PLB mistakenly included a picture of Mike and his SISTER in the May PLB welcome article. Yikes. Google images is a rich source of images, but it’s best to read the captions before downloading them.

You may see Mike and Laurie around, so please make sure to introduce yourself! To set the record straight, we now include a picture of Mike and Laurie with their kids, Ben and Sam (right).

What you want to know about Mike and Laurie, but were afraid to ask:

Amidst the moving boxes, the PLB asked Mike and Laurie about their interests and Pittsburgh

PLB: What are you most excited about in moving to Pittsburgh and CMU?

Laurie: I’m excited about all the great restaurants and events in town. At CMU, I am excited about having colleagues who care about auditory perception!

Mike: I’m excited about not having to put up with Patriots fans, and being closer to grandparents.

PLB: What are your favorite hobbies and interests?

Laurie: bicycling, drawing

Mike: cycling, woodworking (I have a full woodshop in my basement), techie/audiophile
Benefits Changes for Next Year; Barbara Smith presentation

• Overall, a third of CMU staff/faculty will see their healthcare premiums rise from between ~0% to 3%; another third of staff/faculty will experience a rise of 3% to 10%; the remaining third will see premiums go up >10%. (These projections assume everybody re-enrolls in their current plan next year)

• Premiums will rise 5% or less in what CMU calls its ‘target plan’, UPMC PPO-2

• Office visit MD copays are rising $5 to $10 each, as exemplified below.

• Prescriptions are going up $5 – $10 each

• For PPO plan, visit copay hikes are as follows: From $15/$25 (PCP/Specialist, 2009) to $20/$35 (PCP/Specialist, 2010)

• For HMO plan, visit copay hikes are as follows: From $10/$20 (PCP/Specialist, 2009) to $15/$30 (PCP/Specialist, 2010)

• For prescriptions, copay hikes are as follows: From $15/$30 (drugstore/mail order, 2009) to $20/$40 (drugstore/mail order, 2010)

• This is a Dental & Vision election year; rates for both are going up, too

• Dental premiums are going up 7%

• Comprehensive family plan premiums are going up nearly 30%

• Comprehensive individual plan premiums are going up ~ 40%

• If you’re currently using Highmark, consider UPMC instead for next year, since Highmark network is in general ~20% more expensive than UPMC network

• Keystone HMO often is more expensive than choosing a UPMC plan

• New this year is a MasterCard debit card for FSA expenses, which will cut down on paperwork. It can be used to pay MD office copays, prescriptions, drugstore OTC purchases, grocery store OTC purchases.

• Vision Option 1—little change in premiums next year

• Vision Option 2—relatively bigger hikes next year

• Nota bene: People have expressed complaints about the Davis plan (a Highmark product)

• Monthly premium next year for both Davis Option 2 and VBA Option 2 is identical: What cost $2.37 per month this year goes up to $4/month next year, for both plans.

• Flu shots (for regular seasonal flu) will be in September this year, NOT at the health & benefits fair. More details forthcoming at a later date.
Faculty Senate Notes and Announcements (continued)

G-20 Logistical updates from Tom Ogden, CMU Director, University Security

- 45,000 to 50,000 protestors expected
- Expect significant driving delays to/from the airport, parkways, downtown
- Officials say that commuters in the Pgh area can realistically expect travel times to TRIPLE
- Port Authority service to be hindered; details unavailable
- Fri. Sept. 25, beginning at noon: 'Large' scheduled protest march in Oakland to begin at Fifth & Craft intersection, will likely affect traffic
- Thurs. Sept. 24, afternoon and evening: Expect numerous rolling road closures and blocked-off parking between 2 pm and 11 pm on the following streets: Boulevard of the Allies; Frew St.; Tech St.; Panther Hollow Rd.; Forbes Avenue; Joncaire St.; Schenley Dr.; nearby streets. (More specific details unavailable.)

Save the Date

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Flu shots (regular seasonal flu)</td>
<td>Sometime in September (TBA)</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hrhelp@andrew.cmu.edu">hrhelp@andrew.cmu.edu</a></td>
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<td>G-20 dinner at Phipps for diplomats, US President etc.</td>
<td>Thurs. Sept. 24, evening</td>
<td>Phipps Conservatory. Traffic &amp; roads to be greatly affected from ~2pm-11pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>G-20 ‘Large protest march’ in Oakland</td>
<td>Fri. Sept. 25, noon</td>
<td>Begins at Fifth &amp; Craft intersection, Oakland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Senate mtg</td>
<td>Tues. Oct. 6, 4:30</td>
<td>UC Connan Rm</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cmu.edu/faculty-senate/">http://www.cmu.edu/faculty-senate/</a></td>
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<td>HR Benefits Fair</td>
<td>Weds. Nov. 4, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.</td>
<td>UC</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hrhelp@andrew.cmu.edu">hrhelp@andrew.cmu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits Open Enrollment period</td>
<td>Mon. Nov. 2 – Mon. Nov. 16</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cmu.edu/hr/benefits/index.html">http://www.cmu.edu/hr/benefits/index.html</a></td>
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Don’t Forget!

The Annual Psychology Department Meeting and Gathering will be held on Monday September 14, from 4:30-5:15 in 136A Adamson Wing, Baker Hall. Snacks and refreshments will follow.
2009 Department August
Happy Hour is best yet

Cheers!

Down the hatch!

David Rakison & Theresa Kurutz

Look at all those happy grad students!

Thanks to everyone who made it out to Doc’s!

We’ll see you at the next happy hour!

Colleen, Dussy, Blair, Nora