Tim Carroll has spent the last couple of months working on the new Psychology Department website, and it looks great! The PLB wants to recognize his tireless efforts in the design of the website, corralling everyone to send him updated materials, and his excellent pictures (taken by his daughter). The photo (right) might be the only picture of Tim, ever. The website was a department-wide effort, thanks everyone and enjoy the new website!

If you have website comments, concerns, or updates— please send them to Tim, Marlene Behrmann, and David Creswell.
And don’t forget, the much anticipated Holiday Party Pub Quiz!!

Get ready for the 3rd Annual Psychology non-denominational holiday party Pub Quiz! Once again, quizmasters Rakison and Holt will be posing the questions on a wide and wild range of topics.

New for this year’s quiz (1) maximum of 10 people per table; (2) at least one faculty, staff, and student member on each team; (3) a special "buzzer" round in which double points can be won and lost!

Start gathering teammates! Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and last place (also known as the Kotovsky prize)!

We look forward to seeing you there,

Top Secret Social Committee
Where did the PLB come from? An Interview with Peggy Clark.

Given the dramatic rise in PLB readership in recent months and the impressive increase in the PLB’s impact factor, we thought it best to understand its roots. Yes, we all know how the first editor Holt got the PLB going but then got distracted with scientific writing and duck cakes. Then Thiessen ran the publication into near bankruptcy and obscurity, with many readers saying the name of the PLB should have been changed to “Psycho?Bulletin.” But where did the PLB come from? How was it named? PLB Editor Creswell got the inside scoop from co-founder Peggy Clark this month (Peggy is now a Professor at Yale, or as some call it, CMU-East Campus).

DC: Rumor has it that you came up with the name of the PLB, did you have any idea it would become the most impactful newsletter in the department?

PC: Yes, I did come up with the name for the Psycho?Logical?Bulletin— as I recall at a lunch with Sheldon, Ken, and Lori, perhaps others as well. Is it the most influential publication in the department? That's exciting. Of course it also has a readership beyond CMU (well, me, at least). I do like it and recently was proud of myself for being able to correctly identify all faculty members as depicted recently in Pictionary format, without looking at the answer key. I even identified you and I haven't met you nor seen a picture of you. (You had, however, been described to me when you were hired as "a surfer with blond hair.") I especially appreciated the article on the squirrel catapult. A year ago I actually found myself faced with squirrels moving in to an attic space in my new house. I contacted Ken for advice. I thought he would try to be helpful. (Some people never learn.) All he did was give me a recipe for "Squirrel Chili." I think he was hiding this new solution from me so I'm glad you published it. I'm just deciding whether to send the squirrels in one direction (to Long Island Sound) or in the other (across Route 95). Are squirrels better at swimming or dodging cars?

DC: Do you like Yale? Do you ever hang out with Kevin Pelphrey?

PC: Yes, I do like Yale. There’s an ocean nearby and faculty members get free lunches. Do I like it as much as I liked CMU? Of course not. To be completely honest I have not seen Kevin Pelphrey. I know he is here at the Child Study Center. There is, however, a major highway located between the psychology department and the Child Study Center. (I did meet Kevin once. I came back to CMU for a visit, went to my office and there he was.)

DC: What do you miss most about CMU?

PC: The people, of course. You can’t replace friends you’ve known for 29 years.
December Grad Student of the Month: Dussy Yermolayeva

PLB: Tell us a little about yourself. Where are you from and what made you decide to come to CMU for your PhD?

DY: I always find it difficult to answer the “where are you from?” question. Originally I am from Moscow, Russia. I went to middle school and high school in Newton, Massachusetts. After that I did my undergrad at Georgetown. So I guess I’m from a lot of places. I decided to come to CMU because it felt like a good fit. Ultimately, I realized that I did not really agree with the theoretical stances of the other schools where I got in. I also could not pass up the opportunity of getting years of hair advice from David Rakison.

PLB: What do you study in your research?

DY: In a nutshell, I make babies bored by repeatedly showing them videos of flying abstract shapes. Using that technique, I am investigating whether infants can select some correlations between moving parts and object motion over others. The equivalent of that in real life would be learning that leg motion is associated with walking, but arm motion is not. I am also looking at the time course of moving from learning associative relationships to causal relationships; so, not only learning that legs are associated with motion, but that they actually cause motion. Of course when I explain to parents that I can get all of this information by showing their child some flying triangle-like objects, the parent looks at me like I am crazy.

PLB: What types of things do you do in your free time?

DY: In my free time I like to explore new baking recipes. In fact, I am surprised that David took me as a student given my liberal use of carbohydrates. It is quite possible that he was not aware of this while reviewing my application. I also like to paint, but that is a lot more time consuming, so these days, that is pretty much limited to painting stimuli.

PLB: Who is your favorite person in the department and why?

DY: Dick Hayes. He looks more excited when hearing a first year talk for the fifth time than some people look when hearing it for the first time.
Food Drive committee
The Food Drive had its best year since 1999. A total of 7,896 pounds of food was collected, as well as $702 in cash.

i-Pay
Not to be confused with WePay, i-Pay will be rolled out by CMU in January and is a paperless paycheck system. Employees including faculty will no longer receive paper checks, nor will folks who currently have direct deposit receive the ‘This is Not a Check’ paycheck stubs anymore. Instead, you’ll have to choose between signing up for direct deposit OR arranging to receive a reloadable debit card from Payroll. You should have already received more info via email from your departmental administrator about how to set up your i-Pay online account (which lets you view your paycheck stubs online) OR acquire the pay debit card. It’s important to note that personal reimbursements will still be issued via paper check for now. Your i-Pay account will be suspended after 90 days of inactivity by either you or CMU.

Benefits committee
In late October, the committee did an online survey of SC reps concerning their perceptions of whether & how much their supervisors support their work & time devoted to Staff Council. 38 of 67 reps responded to the survey (58% response rate). Overall, reps reported very high supervisor support of their participation. In early 2010, the committee will survey supervisors themselves about their level of support for any of their employees’ service on Staff Council. An informational letter is typically sent to supervisors shortly after their employee is elected to Council. It is possible that based on the results of these surveys, the letter will be re-worded to clarify the anticipated time commitment and the fact that CMU administration / President Cohon have continuously affirmed their expression of support of staff giving time to SC meetings & events. For more info about the surveys or these issues, contact the chair of the Benefits Cmte., John Lanyon at jlanyon@.

Save the Date (not necessarily SC events)

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<td>Nat City to PNC switchover (supporting paperwork due to Payroll)</td>
<td>No later than Dec. 14 to ensure seamless direct deposit</td>
<td>Payroll Services, UTDC, Henry St. off of Craig St.</td>
<td>See your email or call Payroll for more info</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew password required to be changed</td>
<td>No later than Jan. 27 at 9 a.m.</td>
<td>Online</td>
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Departmental News

Pictures from the Core Staff Retreat on November 20th!

This year’s core staff retreat was held at the Entertainment Technology Center, and finished at the Hofbrauhaus on the South Side (Ginger took these great pictures). At Hofbrauhaus, Theresa (seen here with guilty facial expression) attempted to hide her beer but was too slow for Ginger’s nimble camera.
John and Lynne have considered moving to the Great Wall for weekend getaways. John discovered that the wireless connections are quite good and he could continue his frenetic publication rate (while on vacation).

They considered upgrading domiciles. They were told that this property in the heart of Beijing has 9,999.5 rooms (which just edges out their Squirrel Hill home by .5 rooms)

Terri Jones-Davis had the opportunity to ask Mayor Ravenstahl some questions on election day, and KDKA caught all the action. Click on one of the pictures to link directly to the story. Terri asked some tough questions, but said there was one question she didn’t get a chance to ask. Apparently, Ravenstahl’s wife (or mistress?) was wearing some really nice boots, and Terri wanted to say, “Excuse me Luke, I’ve heard enough about you. Now tell me where your wife got those boots!”

More Great Pictures from the Summer!

John and Lynne’s Trip to China
Grad Talk Presents: Faculty Holiday Dance Off

We don’t know where they learned these moves, but we were able to obtain top-secret footage of the faculty teams training for this year’s holiday dance off. Our sources say the competition will take place during this year's holiday party next week!

We’ve created a survey for you to vote on your favorite team!

The 2009 Teams: (click the links to see video footage)

The Disco Kings:  http://elfyourself.jibjab.com/view/q2kVASeKZyyU5i8GraLe

Click Here!
December Grad Talk

The “Young”sters: http://elfyourself.jibjab.com/view/ofrINyUUm0zQKfYXHKzN

The Socialites: http://elfyourself.jibjab.com/view/BPr9fcRYFbYroJhy9I3
The Modelers: http://elfyourself.jibjab.com/view/YpoNeNjDlpPJz547uCE

The Educators: http://elfyourself.jibjab.com/view/2n3RANDKfy9wbgYD769I
Recent sleuthing led to the discovery of several “holiday wishlists” that faculty members mistakenly left in the psych lounge. Select items include...

Erik Thiessen: an unlimited supply of duck cakes

David Rakison: Sexy hotpants (with spiders to ward off all the undergrads)
Ken Kotovsky: Year's supply of kids to mess with

Let’s make these dreams come true. To donate to the cause, email funtoysforcmupsychfaculty@gmail.com
This month’s Grad Talk brought to you by...
**December Grad Student of the Month: Matt Wood**

PLB: *Where are you from and what made you decide to come to CMU for your PhD?*

MW: I’m originally from the Pocono Mountains (if you call them mountains… PA Appalachia can be pretty diminutive), but have spent a good chunk of time in Lancaster and Philly as well. I was attracted to CMU because of its focus on interdisciplinary research which not only makes fundamental theoretical contributions, but can also have an impact in application. Coming from a Social/IO background, I was also excited to learn more about the cognitive aspects of problem solving and executive control. I like that the department has a long tradition of excellence in both of these areas.

PLB: *What do you find inspiring in your research?*

MW: In studying problem solving, I am always amazed by the resiliency of the process, especially in research settings. For the problems we work on everyday, we are often interrupted, the information can range widely in quality, and practical limitations can make accomplishing anything difficult. Yet, more often than not, we find ways to reach the goals we set by ourselves and others. Also, despite roadblocks and foibles along the solutions we create, they are usually interesting and sometimes really creative. Working in scientific research, where innovation is the currency we trade on, it is refreshing (inspiring maybe?) to frequently see how robust problem solving processes and the people they embody can be.

PLB: *Where is your favorite place to hang out in Pittsburgh and why?*

MW: By day, Frick Park. It’s just big enough to get yourself lost in for a few hours, but not so large to be intimidating. By night, D’s in Regents or Roland’s in the Strip… both are pretty low-key, but that’s how we roll.

PLB: *If you were to describe your advisor Ken Kotovsky in one word, what would it be?*

MW: Curious.