

Psycho-Babble

Macalester College/ December 2008

Important Dates

Tuesday, Dec. 2,
7-8 pm

Senior Social
Jack's house
99 Cambridge

Friday Dec. 5.
Last Class Day

2:00-3:00 Olri
Holiday Party -
Decorate your own
Gingerbread person
Smail Gallery

3:20 Reception for
Jennifer Wenner,
Awards Wall

Dec. 8-11
Finals

Dec. 12- Jan 23
Winter Break

January 4-16
Australia Course

January 19 Martin
Luther King Day

January 26 Spring
Semester Classes
Begin

Chair Talk from Kendrick

Last month, I talked about the important faculty searches happening in the department this year. I want to give you an update on how the searches are proceeding. At this point, we have had two Developmental candidates visit us, with one more yet to arrive. Our goal is to use the very helpful and insightful feedback that you have provided us to choose someone who will fit well in our department. Hopefully, by the

time that you return to campus in January, we will be able to welcome our new colleague.

Our second search for a Cognitive Neuroscientist is well underway. We will invite candidates to campus early next semester, so be on the lookout for those visits.

Thank you for all of your help with the searches. We truly could not do this without you.

Happy holidays!

Celebration for Jennifer

On Friday, December 5 there will be a reception for **Jennifer Wenner** in honor of her years of teaching at Macalester. Jennifer has taught at Macalester since 2001. Jennifer will be at Macalester next semester however she will be devoting her time to her research.

Join us by the awards wall at **3:20 on Friday, December 5**. We will have a special cake and we will hear from her colleagues in the department.



Jennifer Wenner

Congratulations to our December Grads



Kyle Wortman



Melissa DeJonckheere



Daniel Rau

Three Psychology majors are graduating this December: **Melissa DeJonckheere, Daniel Rau and Kyle Wortman.** Congratulations! At our Senior Social on Tuesday, Dec. 2 we will recognize them and extend our congratulations.

Senior Social - Dec. 2, 7:00 pm

Invitations have been sent and we are looking forward to a festive time at Jack Rossmann's home on Tuesday, Dec. 2 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. The Senior Social is held each year at the end of fall semester. It's a great time for seniors to get better acquainted with members of their graduating class before the rush of spring semester and graduation activities.

Jack Rossmann is professor emeriti and he has generously offered his home for our fall picnics and these socials. Jack's home is at 99 Cambridge across the street from the Fine Arts parking lot. If you are planning on attending, please let Mary Claire know by email (schultzm) or phone 6223.



Olin Rice Holiday Party, Dec. 5



This is a party where you really get to show off your artistic creative side. All the trimmings will be there for you to decorate your own gingerbread person or holiday cutout cookie. You will be amazed at how creative you can be when you have all the ingredients there. This is a party for all the students who take classes in Olin Rice. It starts at 2:00 and will go until all the cookies and frosting and decorations run out. I suggest you get there early!

Congratulations to our Psi Chi Inductees



*Back row: Carolyn Klingensmith, Sara Gottlieb, Shantee Rosado, Amanda Wenzel, Evan Welo
Front row: Margaret Polta, Melissa DeJonckheere, Rosemarie Sesa, Chelsea Voskuilen, Jennifer Darwent, Sarah Minkoff, & Hannah Johnson*

Poster Presentations Dec. 9 4:00 Awards Wall

Ten Directed Research students who are studying abroad this spring are presenting their directed research projects on **Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 4:00** by the Awards Wall. There will be two poster presentations - one at 4 and one at 4:25. Pizza will be served and we will draw for the participant lottery prizes at 4:20.

We especially encourage students who have yet to take directed research to attend this event. It is an excellent opportunity to find out about directed research by seeing the different areas students have investigated. All the students who are currently in directed research will be there also.

What is an EEG?



Dave Harris demonstrating EEG.

Dave Harris (Sophomore, CNS Major) poses while hooked up to an electroencephalograph (EEG) in Cognitive Neuroscience (PSYC/CNS 244). An EEG uses very sensitive electrodes placed on the scalp to record the electrical changes of the brain (the movement of ions across the cell membrane for thousands of neurons). The EEG allows us a glimpse into the function of the human brain that is fun, safe and noninvasive. In this experiment, the class examined how the EEG signal changes while reading sentences that vary in semantic predictability.

Eric at SFN & FUN

"Did you know that Eric has had 94 student co-authors on papers presented at national and international conferences?"

Eric Wiertelak attended the SFN (Society for Neuroscience) and FUN (Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience) meetings in Washington, DC along with 32,400 other attendees this past November. Amazingly, in those huge crowds, he was able to connect with several CNS alums including: **Raphael Kaplan, Cliff Rogers, Nick Malecek, and Joe Barter** (who all are currently working at the NIH). **Tony Carr** is also at the

NIH and was at the meeting but Eric missed seeing him. Other alums Eric talked to at the meeting were **Erik Johnson, Alexis Gerber, Leo Walton and Madeline Nguyen**.

Colin Smith '09 presented at both meetings and **Sarah Tisel '09** presented at FUN. Eric was particularly gratified to see so many of his former students doing what they love in the exciting field of neuroscience.

Psychology & Chuck Green Fellows

Ann Baltzer was a Chuck Green Fellow last year. Her project was with New Americans Community Services - a nonprofit that serves and is run by African immigrants and refugees. She worked with them to develop an Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS) program for their organization that follows the requirements of Ramsey County (the certifiers and funders!) yet, most importantly, is culturally appropriate for the organization's African-born clients. Most of New Americans' clients are Somali, and their mental health problems are not treated all that successfully with the more Western model of mental health upon which Ramsey County's general mental health services are built. So, the ARMHS program I was working on incorporated the elements deemed necessary by Ramsey County yet included as many of the more culturally appropriate services. The program is far from up and running; however, I'm hoping it will come to fruition within a year!

Kayla Richards is a Chuck Green Fellow this year and she says: As of now I'm planning on working with the girls from the Avanti Center for Girls which houses girls ages 12-18 years old with behavioral issues as well as mental disorders. The girls live on site and most attend school there, all together, in one school room. I'd like to work with Avanti to improve this resource (college admissions visits, service projects, etc) so that the girls may 'keep up' while they are in the process of rehabilitation.

Vera Sidlova, another Chuck Green Fellow this year says: I'm hoping to incorporate mental health into the health awareness programming at Neighborhood House on the West Side of St. Paul. I would like to focus on creating a women's circle, that would use community psychology techniques and community building in general, to allow the women to cope with the stress they are exposed to in a more effective way.

Students apply what they learn in their psychology classes in their Chuck Green Fellowships"

And more babble . . .

Hilary Mead '00 is finishing up her PhD in clinical child psychology at the University of Washington. She just finished her generals reviewing the neurobiological adaptations to violence across development, and she's working on her dissertation on the assessment of ADHD among African American youth. She's also in the midst of applying for clinical internships.

Carissa Kaufman '08 has been accepted into Saint Mary's Master's Degree Program in Marriage and Family Therapy.

Congratulations to Joi Lewis and **Joan Ostrove** on their recent marriage. Joi and Joan are living in Oakland, California. Joan is on leave of absence from Macalester this year and Joi is the Dean of Students at Mills College. We wish them the absolute best!

Mesmerizing Major: Rosemarie Sesa



Rosemarie Sesa

"Mesmerizing majors are randomly selected from the list of psychology and CNS majors."

Favorite Movie: *Almost Famous* with Kate Hudson and Billy Crudup

Favorite Book: It's a tie between *The Little Prince* and *The Great Gatsby*

Favorite Place to Eat in the Twin Cities: I like anything in West St. Paul - Boca Chica is one of my favorites.

What do you do when you are not studying: I am usually watching TV, watching movies or hanging out with friends and procrastinating with them.

Where did you grow up? Los Angeles, California

Interesting fact about your hometown. There's a lot more to it than what you see on TV. It's not just Hollywood. There's lots of culture (music & art) and lots of different ethnic groups.

Tell us something about your family: All of them are back in California. I am only one that is not there right now. My sister graduated from Bowdoin and she is now back in California. I have one older and one younger sister and my mom and my dad.

Tell us something that you are pleased with or proud of about yourself: I am pleased that I get to go abroad next semester. I haven't traveled much and this is a really good opportunity for me. I am going to Copenhagen with the DIS program.

Psych in the News

Unusual use of toys in infancy a clue to later autism 'Atypical object exploration' seen at 12 months in children later diagnosed with autism

Researchers at the UC Davis M.I.N.D. Institute have found that infants later diagnosed with autism exhibited unusual exploration of objects long before being diagnosed. Studying a group of children at high risk for developing autism, the researchers found that those eventually diagnosed with the disorder were more likely to spin, repetitively rotate, stare at and look out of the corners of their eyes at simple objects, including a baby bottle and a rattle, as early as 12 months of age. These findings could help pediatricians diagnose and treat autism earlier, reducing some of the social and educational challenges associated with the disorder. "There is an urgent need to develop measures that can pick up early signs of autism, signs present before 24 months," said M.I.N.D. researcher Sally Ozonoff, first author of the current study, which was published in the October issue of *Autism*, the journal of the National Autistic Society.

"There is an urgent need to develop measures that can pick up early signs of autism."

Psych in the News (cont'd)

Bullies may enjoy seeing others in pain

Brain scans show disruption in natural empathetic response

Unusually aggressive youth may actually enjoy inflicting pain on others, research using brain scans at the University of Chicago shows. Scans of the aggressive youth's brains showed that an area that is associated with rewards was highlighted when the youth watched a video clip of someone inflicting pain on another person. Youth without the unusually aggressive behavior did not have that response, the study showed. "This is the first time that fMRI scans have been used to study situations that could otherwise provoke empathy," said Jean Decety, Professor in Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Chicago. "This work will help us better understand ways to work with juveniles inclined to aggression and violence." The results are reported in the paper "Atypical Empathetic Responses in Adolescents with Aggressive Conduct Disorder: A functional MRI Investigation" in the current issue of the journal *Biological Psychology*.

SCHOOLS' RESOURCES IMPORTANT FOR HELPING CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES SUCCEED IN THE CLASSROOM

Schools with High-Achieving Students, Services for ESL Families Provide Best Learning Environment

Children of immigrants who enter school with low math and reading skills have a better chance of catching up with their peers if they attend a school with high-performing students, well-supported teachers and services to families of English as a second language (ESL) children, according to a new study. Previous studies show the importance of family resources in children's academic performance, said researcher Wen-Jui Han, PhD, of Columbia University. Now, this study, appearing in the November issue of *Developmental Psychology* published by the American Psychological Association, shows that aspects of the school environment are just as important for immigrant children, especially those children lacking resources at home.

"changing traditional white-light lighting to blue-enriched white light helped office workers stay more alert and less sleepy during the day."

Office Workers Given Blue Light To Help Alertness

Research carried out at the Surrey Sleep Centre at the University of Surrey in partnership with Philips Lighting has revealed that changing traditional white-light lighting to blue-enriched white light helped office workers stay more alert and less sleepy during the day. The research also showed improvements in subjective measures of positive moods, work performance, fatigue in the evening, irritability, ability to concentrate and focus and eye strain. Furthermore the workers reported improved sleep at night. The blue-enriched white light is thought to be more effective because it targets a recently discovered novel photoreceptor in the eye. The research was published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*.

ADHD tied to more severe nicotine dependence

Young people with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may be particularly vulnerable to serious nicotine addiction if they start smoking, a new study suggests. Past research has shown that kids with ADHD are more likely than their peers without the disorder to start smoking. These latest findings suggest that once they do take up the habit, they also tend to become more severely nicotine-dependent, researchers report in the *Journal of Pediatrics*.

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Psych in the News (cont'd)

Study Identifies Three Effective Treatments for Childhood Anxiety Disorders

Treatment that combines a certain type of psychotherapy with an antidepressant medication is most likely to help children with anxiety disorders, but each of the treatments alone is also effective, according to a new study funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The study was published online Oct. 30, 2008, in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental disorders affecting children and adolescents. Untreated anxiety can undermine a child's success in school, jeopardize his or her relationships with family, and inhibit social functioning," said NIMH Director Thomas R. Insel, M.D. "This study provides strong evidence and reassurance to parents that a well-designed, two-pronged treatment approach is the gold standard, while a single line of treatment is still effective."

"CAMS clearly showed that combination treatment is the most effective for these children. But sertraline alone or CBT alone showed a good response rate as well. This suggests that clinicians and families have three good options to consider for young people with anxiety disorders, depending on treatment availability and costs," said Walkup.

About Psycho-Babble...

Psycho-Babble is a monthly newsletter for Psychology and Cognitive and Neuroscience majors and other interested students. We welcome contributions from students and faculty. The goal of the newsletter is to inform the community of events, people and issues at Macalester and beyond.

*Happy Holidays from all of us in the
Psychology Department*

*Kendrick Brown
Eric Wiertelak
Joan Ostrove
Jennifer Wenner
Jack Rossmann
Jamie Atkins*

*Jaine Strauss
Brooke Lea
Sun No
Lynda LaBounty
Jeremy Loebach
Mary Claire Schultz*