

# Psycho-Babble

Macalester College/ March 2009

## Important Dates

Friday, March 6  
T-Shirt Design  
deadline for submitting  
design

Wednesday, March 11,  
7:30 p.m.  
Weyerhaeuser Board  
Room, MPA  
Distinguished Scholar  
Lecture, Apostales  
Georgiopoulos

Spring Break - March  
16-20

Monday, April 6,  
Honors applications due  
to chair

Monday, April 13,  
5:00-6:30, Spring  
Dinner

Tuesday, April 14,  
7:00 Old Main 4<sup>th</sup>  
Floor, Psi Chi Induction

Saturday, April 18,  
MUPC

Wednesday, April 22,  
Johnson Lecture, 7:00  
p.m. Olri 250

Saturday, May 2, Mid  
Brains Conference, all  
day

## Chair Talk from Kendrick

The department is absolutely thrilled to welcome Rachel Lucas-Thompson to our psychology community at Macalester. Rachel will be a fine addition because of her great passion for the liberal arts and interesting research and teaching expertise. Beyond that, she's a fun person - as you can see below!

In addition to our ongoing cognitive

neuroscientist search, we have quite a bit happening. Rather than highlight all of it, however, I'll just say that there are so many ways to plug into the department. I hope that you're able to take advantage of those opportunities and help us maintain our commitment to providing a welcoming, informative place for all of you.

--K. Brown

## Rachel Lucas-Thompson coming to Mac

"I'm so excited to be joining the faculty at Mac! I'm currently finishing my doctoral work in Developmental Psychology at the University of California, Irvine. I grew up in Chicago and did my undergraduate at Beloit College in Wisconsin, so I've enjoyed the brief reprieve from winter while living in Southern California, but I am looking forward to moving back to the midwest. I'll be moving to the Twin Cities with my new spouse -- we just had a fantastic Valentine's Day wedding in upstate New York. While honeymooning, I tried cross-country skiing for the first time, so I am very excited to live somewhere I will be able to take it up as a new hobby! Another of my favorite hobbies is reading -- I read

just about anything I can get my hands on, but my favorites are mysteries and fantasy. I look forward to getting to know you!"



Rachel Lucas-Thompson

## Brain Awareness Week March 16-22

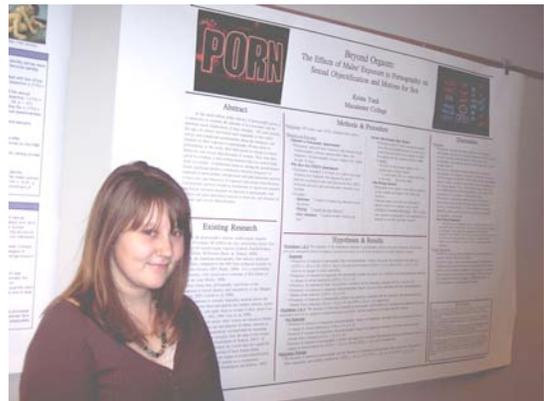
Macalester College and the University of Minnesota are founding members along with the Dana Foundation of BAW (Brain Awareness Week) March 16-22. During this week they are helping to lead the charge in increasing understanding of the brain & neuroscience.

From the BAW (Brain Awareness Week) website: "Brain Awareness Week (BAW) is an international campaign dedicated to advancing public awareness about the progress and benefits of brain research. Brain Awareness Week began in 1996 as a modest effort involving 160 organizations in the United States. BAW was created to bring together diverse groups from academia, government, professional, and advocacy groups and unite them with a common theme that brain research is the hope for treatments and preventions, and possibly cures, for brain diseases and disorders, and to ensure a better quality of life at all ages. Since that time, BAW has evolved into a powerful global initiative with more than 2,200 partners in 76 countries (as of the 2008 campaign)."

The CNS seniors are working with selected other student volunteers from the "Brain, Mind, and Behavior" class and are heading out to spread the word into elementary schools all across Saint Paul. Help celebrate Brain Awareness week yourself: go to: [www.dana.org/brainweek/](http://www.dana.org/brainweek/)

## Congratulations Krista Yank!

Krista Yank is going to San Francisco to present her directed research poster: *Beyond Orgasm: The effects of male's exposure to pornography on sexual objectification and motives for sex.* Krista selected a topic she was very interested in researching and her research produced significant results. Because she wanted more people to know about her findings, Jaine Strauss recommended that she apply to present her poster at the Annual APA convention to be held in San Francisco this May. Krista went to the APA website and found out what she had to do. I asked her if there was any place for her to indicate that she was an undergraduate student and she said "No." You can see Krista's poster in the central hallway by Olri 350. Congratulations, Krista!



Krista Yank & her poster

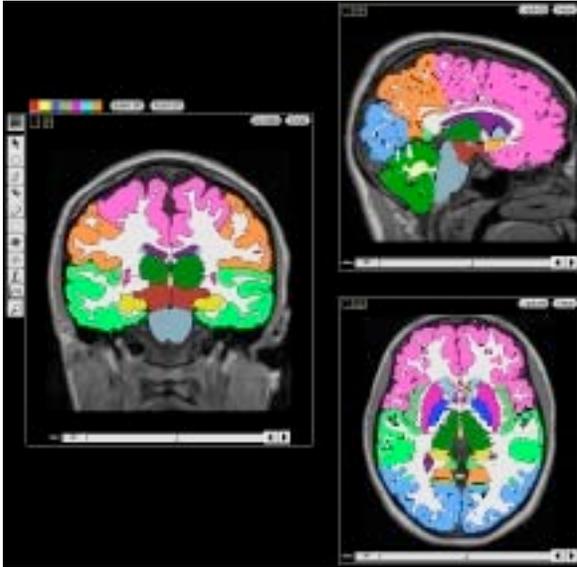
## Congratulations to Lisa Weinberg!

Lisa is one of eight to receive an APA summer science fellowships. This program is a stipend, all expenses-paid, intensive summer training program where rising seniors are placed in the psychology laboratories of some of the most outstanding researchers in the Washington, DC area for up to 7 weeks. This application process is very competitive and we are thrilled Lisa was selected. Right now Lisa is studying abroad in Copenhagen.



Lisa Weinberg

## Apostolos Georgopoulos to give MPA Distinguished Scholar Lecture



"A New Test for Brain Function Based on Magnetoencephalography (MEG) (DSL)" is the title of Regents Professor Apostolos Georgopoulos talk to be given on **Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.** in the Weyerhaeuser Board Room.

It was discovered that the pattern of synchronous neural interactions differed among healthy brains and those of patients with various diseases, multiple sclerosis, and others. Based on this information, a test was developed that is simple (just eye fixation), short (1 minute), non-invasive, and safe. The results obtained to present are very promising and may lead this test to become the first truly functional brain test. The talk is free to members of the Macalester community.

## Design the Psych t-shirt for 2009

The deadline for submitting a t-shirt design is **Friday, March 6**. Bring your design to the psych office. The design does not have to be perfectly executed; the most important part is the "idea". The shirts need to be ready by the Spring Dinner which is Monday, April 14, so we will make a decision quickly. Watch your email for news on the contest. The winning t-shirt designer will get a free t-shirt and a prize.



**Need a snack break from Midterms?**

**Join the Psych Club in the Student Lounge on Tuesday, March 10th @ 7pm for a delicious assortment of snacks and socializing! Feel free to bring a friend!**

## Movie Madness

With the Oscars on the horizon, we thought it would be a great idea to ask the psych majors (and staff) who *they* thought should take home the big gold "Best Picture" statuette! Showing some scary foresight (or just excellent taste), the majors were right on. "Slumdog Millionaire" was the year's favorite movie in eight of the sixteen responses received. "The Dark Knight" was second on the list; showcasing the extraordinary acting talents of Heath Ledger and a flair for suspense that left our psych majors breathless, it earned four votes. Not to be outdone, "Horton Hears a Who" garnered strong support, and "The Wrestler" was well loved too. With movie tastes as varied as we are, our psych majors clearly know just what to watch!

## Walter Kintsch to deliver Johnson Lecture

Johnson Memorial Lecture is Wednesday, April 22, 7:00 p.m. Olri 250

The Johnson Memorial Lecture is an annual lecture sponsored by psychology. This year our speaker is Walter Kintsch, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Colorado in Boulder. He retired from being director of the Institute of Cognitive Science in 2004. His research focus has been on the study of how people understand language, using both experimental methods and computational modeling techniques. In cooperation with the Dutch linguist Teun van Dijk, he formulated the first psychological process theory of discourse comprehension in 1978. In 1988, this work was reformulated as a constraint-satisfaction process. His 1998 book "Comprehension" summarizes the empirical and theoretical work from recent years. Kintsch received the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award of the American Psychological Association in 1992. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Humboldt University in Berlin in 2001. He has been Chair of the Governing Boards of the Cognitive Science Society and the Psychonomic Society, and President of Division 3 of the American Psychological Association.

A reception in the Smail Gallery follows the Lecture.

## Program on Psychology Majors & Careers

What will I do with a psychology degree from Macalester?

What are the careers that psychology majors pursue?

Will I be able to get a job after graduation that uses my psychology training?

What is an informational interview and why is it important?

What about degrees beyond a BA (MSW, MA in Counseling, etc)?

THE PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS AND CAREER PROGRAM WILL ANSWER ALL OF THESE  
QUESTIONS AND MORE.

WATCH YOUR EMAILS AND DEPARTMENT FLYERS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS  
EXCITING PROGRAM.

## MUPC is Saturday, April 18

The Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference is **Saturday, April 18** at the College of Saint Benedict & Saint John's University in Collegetown Minnesota. This is the 44th annual Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference. This one day annual conference promotes undergraduate research in the field of psychology and will feature oral and poster presentations of student research. The keynote speaker is Dr. Laura A. King, Professor of Psychology at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Dr. King's research interests include emotion, health, motivation, goal setting, personality, and the self/identity. Registration is free and open to the psychology community. A call for proposals will be forthcoming.

---

*Presenting at MUPC is a requirement of the psychology major at Macalester.*



Keynote speaker: Laura A King

## MidBrains Conference is May 2

Macalester will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference for neuroscience majors on **Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>**. The conference will feature a keynote speech, presentations from the faculty in the different graduate neuroscience programs in the region and student presentations. All CNS seniors will be presenting at the conference. The day concludes with a BBQ for all.

## Volunteer at Family Place

**Rachael Hanson '07** works with families and children at Family Place, a daytime shelter for homeless families in downtown St. Paul. Rachael started volunteering at Family Place when she was a first year student in 2003 and now she is a full time employee there. She reports that with housing crisis Family Place is full. If you are interested in volunteering there, she would love to have you, especially if you could commit to a regular time. She said the busiest time is from 2:00 pm to 6:pm. At 2 the school busses start dropping off children, the families eat dinner around 4 and at 5 the busing to the overnight shelters begins. If you are interested you can contact her at 651-209-6634 or [Rachael.arlene@gmail.com](mailto:Rachael.arlene@gmail.com). Family Place is located at 5<sup>th</sup> street and Wacouta.

## Mesmerizing Major: Nicholas Frantzides

*Favorite Movie:* I like the "saw" movies. They are kind of gruesome, but I like the whole psychological aspect behind them.

*Favorite Book:* *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde

*Favorite place to eat in the Twin Cities:* I don't eat out. I like to cook!

*What do you do when you are not studying* I read a lot for my own enjoyment. I watch movies. I hang out with friends. I try to work out every now and then.

*Where did you grow up?* Nicosia Cyprus.

*Interesting fact about your hometown:* We have Venetian and Roman walls in the city. It is OLD. It is the last divided capital in the world since the Berlin wall went down.

*Tell us something about your family:* I am an only child. I grew up with my aunt (my mother's sister) and she had two boys and a girl so I grew up in a family. I spent time with my aunt's family because both my parents were working.

*Tell us something that you are pleased with or proud of about yourself:* I went to the army (it was obligatory). It was 25 months long and I survived it. I am also proud that I am completing a double major in English and Psychology.



Nicholas Frantzides

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

## And more babble . . .

**Oliver Crane '08** reports that he has just started a position working at Bristol Place, a group home for people with mental illness.

**Annaka Sikkink '05:** "I've gotten a new job as a Job Coach with the Employment Action Center, part of RESOURCE, Inc. I'll be helping people secure placements in temporary, subsidized employment positions, and supporting them to have successful working experiences so that they can get the experience and references to move to quality, long term jobs and help their families be self-sufficient."

Congratulations to **Ann Baltzer '10** Ann was named to the 2008-09 ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District 5 women's basketball team, as selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Baltzer currently leads the MIAC with a .531 field goal shooting percentage while ranking fifth in the conference in scoring and 12th in rebounding. She leads the team with a 13.6 scoring average. Baltzer's career figures at Macalester include 796 points scored and 387 rebounds.

## Psych in the News

### Why we procrastinate and how to stop

Procrastination is a curse, and a costly one. Putting things off leads not only to lost productivity but also to all sorts of hand wringing and regrets and damaged self-esteem. For all these reasons, psychologists would love to figure out what's going on in the mind that makes it so hard to actually do what we set out to do. Are we programmed for postponement and delay?

Led by Sean McCrea of the University of Konstanz in Germany, an international team of psychologists wanted to see if there might be a link between how we think of a task and our tendency to postpone it. In other words, are we more likely to see some tasks as psychologically "distant"-- and thus making us save them for later rather than tackling them now?

The findings, reported in *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science, were very clear. Even though all of the students were being paid upon completion, those who thought about the questions abstractly were much more likely to procrastinate--and in fact some never got around to the assignment at all. By contrast, those who were focused on the how, when and where of doing the task e-mailed their responses much sooner, suggesting that they ~~hopped right on the~~ assignment rather than delaying it

### Impaired Brain Activity Underlies Impulsive Behaviors in Women with Bulimia

Women with bulimia nervosa (BN), when compared with healthy women, showed different patterns of brain activity while doing a task that required self-regulation. This abnormality may underlie binge eating and other impulsive behaviors that occur with the eating disorder, according to an article published in the January 2009 issue of the *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

"those who thought about the questions abstractly were much more likely to procrastinate"

### PEOPLE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD MAY ACT HEATEDLY TOWARD OTHERS

New research helps explain link between social rejection and aggressive behavior

People who feel socially rejected are more likely to see others' actions as hostile and are more likely to behave in hurtful ways toward people they have never even met, according to a new study. The findings may help explain why social exclusion is often linked to aggression - which sometimes boils over dramatically, as in the case of school shootings, for example. "Prior case studies show the majority of school shooters have experienced chronic peer rejection," said the study's lead author, C. Nathan DeWall, Ph.D., from the University of Kentucky. "And while not everyone who feels rejected reacts violently, we found they tend to act out aggressively in other ways. We wanted to help explain psychologically why this happens." A full report of the study appears in the January issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, published by the American Psychological Association.

## Macalester College

1600 Grand Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105-  
1899

Phone:  
651-696-6223

Fax:  
651-696-6348

E-Mail:  
schultzm@macalester.edu

*Be sure to check out  
our website.*

## Psych in the News (cont'd)

### COGNITIVE REHAB HELPS PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

Age at injury, type of injury, timing and specificity of treatment matter. Cognitive rehabilitation after a serious brain injury or stroke can help the mind in much the same way that physical therapy helps the body, according to a new meta-analysis. Because the data suggest that treatment may work best when tailored to age, injury, symptoms, and time since injury, the findings may help establish evidence-based treatment guidelines. A full report is in the January issue of *Neuropsychology*, which is published by the American Psychological Association.

## 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.



Study Abroad Lunch Participants: Kitty Elmer DeWitt (Czech Republic), Devin English (Scotland), Griffin Schwed (London), Becky Nieber (Namibia), Jillian Laffrey (London), Huong Nguyen (East Anglia), & Shantee Roxado (Fiji).