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B Contest: Grad Recruitment Nightmare

Student life in the Combined Program
in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences

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Congratulations to ourselves for making it to our TENTH volume and to you for surviving this long, cold winter! We'll warm you up with hot news, great winter recipes, and lots of outdoor fun. Keep smiling!

Crime and Safety in New Haven

BY ANNIE LE

Yale University is an intellectual hub consisting of over 11,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, and over 11,000 faculty and staff. With so many members, the Yale community is protected by a full-service police force that works in conjunction with the City of New Haven. Despite safety measures such as door-to-door escort and shuttle services, the Yale community is still plagued with thefts, some involving frightening confrontations. According to the Department of Education, Yale's on-campus motor vehicle thefts have doubled since 2005. Overall, theft on Yale campuses has increased by 59%, totaling to 162 reported events in 2007. By comparison, neighboring Quinnipiac University in Hamden has at most two thefts per year. Southern Connecticut State University, also located in New Haven, albeit further away from the downtown area, had a mere 10 thefts on its campus in 2007. Such numbers do not bode well for Yale. According to CNN Money Magazine, the City of New Haven has 7 times as much personal crime compared to the average for "safe" cities in the United States.

How does Yale compare to other Ivy Leagues (football stats aside)? In 2006, Columbia University's Morningside and Medical campuses reported 168 thefts, almost the same number as Yale, yet Columbia University had twice the number of students enrolled. University of Pennsylvania

experienced only 53 thefts, also with over 22,000 students. Harvard's Cambridge and Longwood campuses reported 324 thefts combined for their 26,000 students. As it stands, Yale experiences more thefts per student than any of these metropolitan Ivy League institutions. Well, at least Yale graduates have the highest earning potential of this sample, according to BusinessWeek magazine.

Most students are all too familiar with emails with the subject: "Message from Chief Perrotti" detailing the latest robbery. What can one do to avoid becoming another unnamed victim in these emails? We sat down with Chief James Perrotti of Yale University Police (yes, he is real) to discuss precautions that members of the Yale community can take. On their end, the Yale University Police have increased their presence in the East Rock neighborhood, the scene of a rash of Fall semester robberies that were, thankfully, solved. The additional patrols from 6:00 PM to 2:00 AM have succeeded in keeping the area quiet. Chief Perrotti assured us that "quality of life issues are on top of [his] list."

The Chief provided us with these handy tips for crime prevention:

1. Pay attention to where you are.
2. Avoid portraying yourself as a potential victim.

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Special thanks to **Benjamin Lacar**, Neuroscience, for his story on page 4, **Shirlene Scott**, MCGD Registrar for photo on page 6, **Matt R. Johnson**, Neuroscience, for photos on page 3 & 8, **Carol Russo**, Neuroscience Registrar, for photos on page 3 & 8.

Death of the Natural Philosopher, Birth of the Scientist

By **MOLLY KOTTEMAN**

There are many names given to us here in BBS, ranging from title to epithet - doctor, crystallographer, nerd. One term, scientist, we all shrug on with our lab coats and little thought, unaware of its origins and implications. Coined 275 years ago by the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the word scientist was created not only to label a trade but to define a mode of thought. It was meant to differentiate technical practitioners of the field from the Natural Philosophers, the Hookes and the Liebnizes, men who first make discoveries, then place those discoveries within the framework of their societies and use them to shape the intellectual zeitgeist.

The Natural Philosopher has in the past emerged when scientific progress tests the barriers of both specialized knowledge and the general human relationship with the world. From Aristotle to Newton, the early philosopher-scientists grappled with a shift from supernatural explanations - gods and humors, demons and homunculi - to the more concrete metaphysics of the observable and reproducible. In the early twentieth century, the great physicists were faced with a restructuring of knowledge on both the grandest and most miniscule scales yet explored.

In such cases, discourse expanded beyond the purely objective, as technical analysis became inextricable from the philosophical. The question of how we are became that of who we are: what are our origins, and, knowing them, what is our responsibility? As biologists today, we occupy a similar position in history, and therefore have a similar task. Yet too often,

we shy away from more holistic examination, preferring the technical practice of science to the interpretation of it. Our question is often less "what do I have to do?" than "what do I have to do with it?"

To many of us, philosophy is dry tracts more unreadable than the most eye-crossing Cell paper, or the hairy Hegelian at GPSCY to be avoided at all cost. Our evangelists - Watson, Dawkins - seem to trade in technical detail and controversial, sensationalist claims. Our thinkers - Stephen Jay Gould, E.O. Wilson, C.P. Snow - argue for great change, sweeping consilience across academia, syncretism of science and the humanities. Perhaps what we need is simpler. Let's try to communicate more clearly, with each other and with the public. Let's think not just about the answers to our scientific questions, but also about the answers to the ethical questions engendered by our science; let's consider how the shape and direction of our civilization is informed by those ethics.

When science outpaces a more complete understanding, it can lead to tragedy: Nazi eugenics, the atom bomb. And as our research opens increasingly spectacular avenues, from designer babies to the resurrection of the Neanderthal, we open ourselves to increasingly spectacular failures. So, let's do our best to deliberate as we discover. The scientist was named nearly two hundred years before the modeling of the atom, two hundred and twenty before that of DNA: it could not anticipate the experimental trials we set up or the moral trials we face. As scientists working at the cusp of the twenty-first century, let's reclaim our word. **B**

FELLOWSHIP WINNERS

We missed a few students when we announced fellowship winners in our previous issue.

Bradley Rubin, MB&B 4th Year
American Heart Association Fellowship

Crew Smith, Cell Biology 3rd Year
NIH National Research Service Award
Predoctoral Fellowship

Crime continued from page 1

3. Do not be distracted by ipods and phone calls.

4. Reduce your exposure (use the Yale escort and shuttle services).

5. Walk with a purpose.

6. Keep a minimum amount on your person.

As an illustration of tip #6, Chief Perrotti pointedly provided us with an exclusive look at his wallet, a small leather fold with a little cash, driver's license, and only one credit card. "Chances are, you don't need all the stuff in your wallet on a day-to-day basis," he commented.

This is all well and good, but what should we do if, heaven forbid, we were being robbed? Chief Perrotti recommended that, for our personal safety, we cooperate within reason and

then call it in immediately. In the meantime, make as many observations as possible regarding clothing, facial hair or distinct facial details (if unmasked), and other physical features. These are the usual, but Chief Perrotti added one twist: the shoes. "The shoes are very important because they can shed the clothing along the way... shoes are unique," he explained. As for car thefts, Yale Police is not required to send out emails regarding those, but since Yale car thefts have doubled in the past three years, it is noteworthy to point out that the length of time it appears to take to steal a car is inversely proportional to a thief's motivation to attempt it. In other words, make the car look like it will take more time and effort to steal. Cheap options

include the standard steering wheel lock, affectionately known as "The Club" (about \$25) and a brake lock (\$30). Even simple \$2 decals warning potential thieves that the vehicle is protected by an alarm system can be a deterrent. Spending a little money to up the intimidation factor could really be the difference between walking out to your car at the end of a long day in lab versus the police finding your car stripped and abandoned at McDonald's. Chief Perrotti's final point was that "crime prevention is nothing more than recognizing a risk and taking steps to prevent it." In short, New Haven is a city, and all cities have their perils, but with a little street smarts, one can avoid becoming yet another statistic. *B*



Neuroscience Poster Session. Charles Greer, INP DGS, & Amy Arnsten talk with prospective student. Photo Courtesy of Carol Russo.



Neuroscience Reception at the Hall of Dinosaurs, Peabody Museum. Photo Courtesy of Carol Russo.



Neuroscience Visiting Day entertainment. Photos Courtesy of Matt R. Johnson .

Try not to, um, use filler words

By Ben Lacar

Last December, Caroline Kennedy announced her bid for the Senate seat vacated by Hillary Clinton. Her interest was greeted by some with enthusiasm, including NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, making her the favorite—initially.

Despite her famous name, Ivy League education, and work as an attorney for non-profits, resistance to her appointment grew when critics raised questions about her qualifications. Her shaky media performances only contributed to the noise. In one interview, she uttered the phrase "you know" 168 times. SNL was getting ready to mock her. She would end her candidacy for "personal reasons," but her poor communication was detrimental from the outset, ironic considering her father John F. Kennedy was renowned for his oratorical prowess.

You know, um, so, uh. Filler words and phrases are used when we experience a break in our thinking or speaking. We all say them and it has almost nothing to do with our knowledge. But depending on their usage frequency, an audience's response to fillers can range from indifferent to distracted to downright annoyed. While we know verbal tics and filler words are bad, it is difficult to correct them because they're said nearly unconsciously.

How do you eliminate "word filling"? First, be aware. If you have a thick skin, have a friend score your next talk. Prepare to be surprised. We drastically underestimate our own usage of fillers. Then, learn to simply pause whenever you're tempted to use a filler: silence is more eloquent than "uh."

Eliminating verbal tics will make you a stronger, more effective speaker. You know?

Ben Lacar is an INP Student. He is also President/Shameless Promoter of the Greater New Haven Toastmasters Club, which meets at 6:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in City Hall. Email him at ben.lacar@yale.edu. B

WEIRD LAWS

BY PHILIP MCCOWN

For those of you who are not originally denizens of the glorious state of Connecticut, things are obviously a little different around here compared to your original domiciles. So, to ensure that you don't wind up on the wrong side of the law or have a "fun night" downtown, I've belaboriously collected this pile of funny, yet completely legitimate, laws...

- Keep your education to your students, as it is illegal to educate dogs.
- Watch your speed while biking because if you're caught going over 65, you're going to jail.
- I don't know how this is going to work, but it is apparently illegal to dispose of used razor blades.
- Keep your clamming to the day time or else you could be digging your way out of something a little different.
- Watch out, Dr. House. If you're caught with a white cane while hobbling along, and assuming you don't go blind, you'll be hobbling



all the way downtown.

- If you planned on being in the mafia, make sure you don't do any drive-bys on the freeways or else you could be seeing your new family in the slammer.
- If you're married and in Hartford for the weekend, make sure you don't kiss your spouse or you could become someone else's new best friend.
- Don't talk on the cell phone while driving or you may get only one more call to make.
- If you plan on hunting or buying liquor, make sure to do it on days other than Sunday or you could get a rather hefty bill.
- If you live around Guilford, Christmas lights will look a little bland, as only white is allowed. Now, how about that white Christmas?
- If you plan on tattooing your dog, make sure you call the cops ahead of time.
- If you have or know someone who has a 16 year old who mouths off to his parents, make sure he stops or he could be stopped indefinitely.
- If you plan on teaching an old dog any new tricks in Hartford, don't count on it.
- Don't plan on barking at dogs on Wednesday or Friday or else you could get sicced on by a \$100 fine.
- If you like to walk on your hands, make sure to not do it in Hartford.
- Don't plan on taking a dirt bike or ATV through New Haven or else you could go for a very different ride.
- If you have a bike, make sure you have it registered. B

Winter Blahs

BY KATHRYN TWORKOSKI

It's that time of year again. That time when you wish that you hadn't eaten quite so much of mom's home cooking over the holidays, or that you hadn't had to try every last kind of cookie at the local bakery. It's time to start searching for diet programs on the internet. Maybe you'll even look up the fitness programs offered at the gym, or buy a new pair of running shoes, or check out the cost of an exercise bike. But let's face it: diets never work, there's no parking at the gym, it's too cold to jog outside, and if you have enough money to buy an exercise bike, I'd appreciate some financial tips from you. So why don't you put off those New Year's resolutions a little while longer and take a little more time to savor some winter goodies? As your personal gastronomic temptress, here's what I recommend:

Sweet Potato Delight

Ingredients for main dish:

- 3 cups mashed sweet potatoes
- 0.5 cup sugar
- 0.5 cup melted butter
- 0.3 cup milk
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 well-beaten eggs

Ingredients for topping:

- 0.5 cup brown sugar
- 0.25 cup flour
- 2.5 tbsp melted butter
- 1 cup chopped pecans

Directions:

Mix all the components for the main dish together and pour into a baking dish. Mix the ingredients for the topping and then spread it across the top of the sweet potatoes. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 min or until the dish is almost set in the center.

Cranberry Bread that Didn't Come From a Box

Ingredients for one loaf pan (Hang on, there's a lot of 'em):

- 2 cups flour
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 1.5 tsp baking powder
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 0.5 tsp baking soda
 - 0.25 cup butter
 - 1 beaten egg
 - 1 tsp grated orange peel
 - 0.75 cup orange juice
 - 1.5 cups raisins
 - 1.5 cup chopped cranberries
 - 1.5 cup chopped nuts
- (I recommend pecans or walnuts)

Directions:

Mix dry ingredients together. Add butter, egg, orange peel, and OJ, in that order. Stir in cranberries, raisins, and nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Healthy Apple Pie

(for those of you who really are trying to be good)

Crust Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 0.5 cup vegetable oil
- 5 tbsp cold water

Filling Ingredients:

- 6 to 8 apples (skin 'em and slice 'em up)
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Directions for Crust:

Mix flour and salt. Pour oil and water into a bowl (do NOT stir) and then dump it all at once into the flour mixture. Stir lightly and break into 2 halves. Roll each half out between 2 pieces of 12-inch square wax paper.

Note: Use a damp surface under the wax paper to prevent slipping. If you spread the dough to the edges of the paper, you will have enough for an 8-9 inch pie.

Directions for Pie:

Press 1 crust into bottom of pan.

Mix all the ingredients for the filling together and put them inside the crust.

Cover with the second crust. Press edges to top and bottom crust together and cut off excess dough (if any). Bake at 400 degrees for 50 minutes.

Apple Cider the Right Way

Ingredients:

- 4 cups apple cider
- 2 broken sticks of cinnamon
- 6 whole cloves
- 2 whole nutmegs
- 1 cup rum

Directions:

Combine ingredients in pot and bring to boil on stove. Immediately after liquid begins to boil, reduce heat and let simmer for at least 5 minutes prior to serving.

Yes, it's Pizza. With potatoes.

Ingredients:

- 1 package of scalloped potatoes
- 1 can (16 oz) tomatoes
- 1.5 cups water
- 0.25 tsp oregano
- 4 oz pepperoni (or meat of your choice)
- 4 oz shredded mozzarella cheese

Directions:

Put potatoes in a 2-quart, ungreased casserole dish.

Combine tomatoes, water, and oregano and heat to boiling. Pour mixture on top of potatoes and stir.

Put pepperoni on top and add cheese. Bake at 400 degrees for roughly 30 minutes. (Do NOT cover dish)

Easy Chili

Ingredients:

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped green pepper
- 28 oz tomatoes
- 8 oz tomato sauce
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 15.5 oz of drained kidney beans
- Optional: a dash of cayenne red pepper and/or paprika

Directions:

On the stove, cook beef, onion, and green pepper until meat is brown and vegetables are tender. Drain fat from pan and stir in tomatoes (with liquid from can) plus all other ingredients EXCEPT kidney beans.

Heat to boiling, then reduce heat and simmer for 2 hours (stir every once in a while). Add kidney beans, and heat through. **B**

Grad Recruitment Nightmares

EDITED BY KATHRYN TWORKOSKI

Welcome to the latest *B* Contest. Winners are announced on page 12.

“Why We Love Yale”

I always tell people I came to Yale *despite* my interview trip, not because of it. The List of Infamous Events includes (1) plane trouble that forced a dozen of us to arrive around midnight after being diverted to Hartford and taking the bus down, (2) a two-alarm fire at BAR, where we were supposed to have dinner, (3) a blizzard that dropped 8+ inches of snow the day we were to leave, (4) endless hours of being on hold trying to reschedule our flights due to said blizzard, (5) a trip to Tweed to speak with a live person only to find that the airport staff had all gone home, (6) the taxi we took to Tweed not starting up again when we wanted to leave, and (7) the heater in an another recruit's hotel room catching fire the next morning.

All things considered, it's a miracle we all *survived* that interview trip; coming to Yale afterward was just a bonus.

-Jason Wallace, MCDB 3rd year

“Did you expect us to feed you?”

I had a particularly awful experience at a certain university in Boston. My flight was scheduled to arrive between 4 and 5 pm on a Friday night, so I figured there would be a dinner provided. To my surprise, when I called the registrar upon my arrival, she told me that there were no dinner plans and that if I “walked around” I'd be sure to “find something.” Sadly, I was staying in a pretty run-down section of town, and I don't think I would have gone outside with an escort of 5 bodyguards. So, my roommate and I ended up having potato chips from the vending machine in the lobby for dinner.

The next morning, we were forced to walk a rather long way in some particularly cold weather to get to the university, where we were supposed to have breakfast. When we finally arrived, we discovered that the older graduate students had already started eating, and the only things left were juice, coffee, and a few bagels that we tried to split evenly amongst 30 people.

After the first round of morning interviews,

we took a lunch break, and I can't tell you how excited I was to finally get some real food. But when we got to the lunch room, all they had was potato chips and soda. So, for the second time in 24 hours, I was forced to make a meal out of chips. Yummy.

Much to my surprise, our dinner for the evening was scheduled to take place at a real restaurant with REAL food! But when we arrived at the restaurant, we were literally pushed out of the way by the older graduate students, who seemed determined to enter first. By the time I got in, a flustered-looking hostess told me that there were no more tables available because they hadn't anticipated that so many older graduate students would show up. She suggested that my fellow interviewees and I sit outside on the patio. In February. In New England. After some deliberation, we decided to make the best of it and get as much free alcohol as possible before leaving. So we went outside, sat down, and told the waitress to bring us as many bottles of wine as she could carry. At that point, we were informed that the university had only ordered a certain number of bottles of wine, and there were only 2 bottles left for the 30 interviewees that were shivering together outside the restaurant. In sharp contrast, I might add, to the older students inside the warm restaurant, who had about a bottle of wine for every 2 people.

Well, that was the last straw. We grabbed the 2 remaining bottles of wine and left. Together, we found a Chinese restaurant that doubled as a comedy club. It turned out to be pretty fun, but when we took our dinner receipts to the registrar the next day and asked for a refund, she turned us down flat. I guess I should have expected that!

“Did That Really Just Happen?”

My most memorable interview moment actually happened right here at Yale. The student who picked me up from the airport was telling me a bit about Yale and New Haven during the drive back to campus. Eventually, our car pulled up to a stoplight next to one of the university's infamous secret societies, and my host started telling me about them, stressing that part of



The poster session for BBS applicants, February 2009. Photo courtesy of S. Scott.

their schtick is that you never see anyone going in or coming out. Right then, the door of the secret society flew open and a string of stark naked guys came running out the door, did a loop around the building, and ran back in.

-Kristi Rudenga, INP 4th year

"The Trip from Hell"

Thursday:

In order to get to the airport, I was forced to dial 10 (no, I'm not kidding, 10) phone numbers before finding a cab company that was willing to pick me up. Then, I had to wait nearly an hour for said cab to actually show up. Stress level: high.

Four and a half hours later, I landed in Maryland. Unfortunately, I had just flown right into the teeth of a huge Nor'Easter snowstorm, so the plane was put in a holding pattern for an hour. When I finally got off the plane, the shuttle I was supposed to catch to the hotel was mysteriously not answering its phones, and the cab I had to take instead cost \$50 because they were under "snow emergency" conditions. I got to the hotel at 2 a.m. Which leads us to... *Friday:*

After only a few hours of sleep, I dragged myself out of bed and ran out to my morning interviews. I survived the morning, only to be informed that during the lunch break we were going to take a walk to see some graduate apartments, which were approximately a mile away through a lot of ice and snow. And I was wearing heels. Let's just say it got ugly.

I made it through the afternoon, rushed back to my hotel, and promptly fell asleep. I woke up at 6:20 to discover that my roommate was gone and that I had no idea where we were supposed to be meeting for dinner. After wandering around the hotel lobby for a half hour, I was finally found by some older students. Turns out we were supposed to meet at the biology building almost an hour ago. Oh, well, at this point, we might as well move on to... *Saturday:*

After suffering through a LONG tour of the campus, I met up with some older students to head out to lunch at 1pm. Unfortunately, my first-year driver had no idea where she was going (despite being a native), and we didn't get to the restaurant until 2, which meant that we didn't get food until 2:45pm. So I bolted down my lunch and ran out to our next stop: the aquarium. But when we got there, we discov-

ered that the person who had our entry tickets wasn't there. In fact, she didn't show up until 4pm, at which point we had 20 minutes to wander around before we had to leave. Not much else happened until...

Sunday:

Things were going well until I actually tried to leave the hotel. Whereupon the airport shuttle - wait for it - DID NOT SHOW UP. Do we begin to see a pattern here, people? So, I flagged the nearest cabby, only to discover that I successfully found the only cab driver in the world who will go 25 mph in a 40 zone on the freeway.

I arrived at the airport exactly one hour before my flight was supposed to leave. And since I was in a hurry, the automated check-in kiosk decided to reject my flight number/credit card combo, forcing me to ask a Real Person (TM) for help. Then, after I finally made it to security, the guards there thought it would be a good idea to check my laptop backpack for explosive residue, thereby delaying me another 15 minutes.

I finally made it on the plane, and as I stumbled through the coach section with too much luggage, I spotted the Holy Grail—an open overhead bin that had nothing but pillows in it. So I shoved my suitcase inside, only to find myself facing the wrath of the flight attendant from hell because I used the Emergency Over-Wing-Exit Bin Of Specialness (which is, incidentally, labeled only on the OUTSIDE, so you can't determine its specialness when it's open). Eventually, I wound up putting my suitcase about 8 rows behind where I was sitting, which necessitated a certain amount of commando crawling to retrieve it once we landed.

Needless to say, I survived, but there were definitely a few times when I seriously considered making a break for the airport and rebooking my ticket home. Still, at least I got to recover by sitting around and eating junk food. In my smiley face pajama pants. So there, <insert name of Maryland university here>

- Jennifer Hardee

"The Dangers of Sharing a Cab"

My interview at a major university in NY didn't really start to get sticky until Saturday evening. See, on the way back to the hotel, I shared a cab with another interviewee who apparently had too much to drink after dinner. Long story

made short, she vomited right in the middle of the cab before giving the cab driver a chance to pull over. In the commotion, I somehow lost my wallet, which contained my ID, my money, and all of my credit cards. Needless to say, I was terrified by the prospect of having to fly out of NYC the next morning with no money and no ID!

Luckily, I managed to convince some police officers to help me out. For some reason, we couldn't get the wallet back from the cab company, which meant that my parents had to wire me money via Western Union so I could get a cab to the airport. Then, I had to take a police report with me on the airplane as identification, which is not a fun activity. Obviously the odds were stacked against me going to <insert university name here>

Rachel Roth

"Fear the Student Host"

It's never good for a school when a prospective student requests a change of host midway through interview day. But if you had my host, I'm sure you'd do the same.

The first day of the interview weekend was reserved for general information and social activities. Afterwards, my student host invited me to a party for students and candidates. I declined, and spent the evening preparing for the formal interviews which were scheduled for the following day.

The next morning, my host didn't meet me at breakfast. Nor did he appear to escort me to my first interview. Or my second interview, for that matter. When it was finally time for lunch, I found my host in the break room slumped over the table with his head pillowed in his arms. He squinted up at me through bloodshot eyes and offered me a half-hearted wave before quickly returning his head to the table's surface. As lunch wound down, he managed to pick himself up and meandered over to apologize for not meeting me earlier that morning. He then told me that my next interview was on another campus and that he would drive me to the building. Needless to say, such information did not improve my anxiety level about either the interview or my host.

About halfway across the parking lot, my host turned to me and mumbled "I don't think I'm going to make it."

"What do you mean?" I asked him.

continued on page 8

Recruitment Nightmares continued from page 7

"I don't think I'm going to make it," he repeated. He then rushed to a tree at the edge of the parking lot and threw up.

After picking my host up off the ground I told him that I thought I should find someone else to show me around, and he agreed to send another student to meet me after the interview. A few weeks later, I received a call saying that I was accepted into the program. Before he hung up, the professor told me that he was sorry I got stuck with such a "jerk" for a host. I was startled, because I hadn't said anything about my host to the school administrators. Apparently the story had gotten around. **B**



Neuroscience Poster Session.
Photo Courtesy of Carol Russo.



Neuroscience Welcoming Breakfast Visiting Day.
Photo Courtesy of Matt R. Johnson

Scientists Who Cook

Pine Nuts on Pearl Street

By Rafael Rosengarten

I was half joking when I volunteered Duc to host the end-of-season brunch for the BBS intramural soccer team. I knew Duc likes to cook, but it wasn't until we arrived at his house the following Sunday morning that we found out Duc *loves* to cook, and to entertain friends with lavish meals. He had fixed so many dishes there was hardly room on the table for any of the contributions from teammates—my pitcher of Bloody Mary was consigned to an end table by the couch—but the best was yet to come. Duc squeezed through the door with a huge paella pan full of rice, saffron, mussels and clams destined for his wood-fired grill out back. I have to cook with this guy, I thought to myself, and asked Duc when we could collaborate on a dinner.

My chance would come sooner than I expected. Duc described an event he was planning with some other cooks—an Iron Chef battle just like the televised Japanese contest with Kung-fu dubbing—and I invited myself to be his sous chef. There would be two teams working in separate apartment kitchens in a house on Pearl Street. The kitchens were connected by a staircase and would serve as our stadium. We would have an hour and a half to prepare several dishes each highlighting a "secret" theme ingredient to be announced on the eve of the contest. The residents of the apartments and a selection of friends would serve as helpers and judges. We couldn't lose!

The night before the contest, the theme ingredient was announced: pine nuts. Duc arrived at my house the following morning with a list of dishes and a trunk full of ingredients. I had a list of a few winning dishes as well, and had packed a box of tools and gadgets I thought

we would need in a strange environment. We hauled his coolers and boxes and bags, and my gear and groceries, up to our kitchen. For effect, I decided to wear an old chef's uniform from my days as a line cook. Our competition was a team of brothers, Dante and Andres, a physicist and

an artist. They had no idea what they were getting into, but my chef's whites tipped them off to the severity of the situation. With the crowd assembled, ingredients and gear unpacked, and a list of marvelous dishes, the hostess Kara fired the starting gun.

Duc and I cooked like old pros—bobbing and weaving around the kitchen, anticipating each other's needs and movements, communicating with an occasional, "Oui Chef." We had settled on three of his creations and two of mine. Our strategy was to prepare all of the cooked ingredients first, so that when it came time to plate the food, we would only have to assemble and not actually cook anything *a la minute*. Twice Dante's team asked for more time. Twice we granted them half an hour and decided to make another dish.

At the end of two and a half hours of furious cooking, Duc and I had made seven phenomenal plates. Dante and Andres had made four dishes, which looked wonderful in their own right. They went first, offering the judges a pine nut and butternut squash soup with prosciutto bruscetta; gnocchi with pine nuts in cream sauce; pine nut crusted salmon with asparagus and risotto; and for dessert, a pine nut cheese-cake tart. I thought their dishes looked beautiful and promising, but the only true taste sensa-



Pine Nut Crusted Salmon with Risotto - Team Dante

tion was the bruscetta. Everything else needed more careful seasoning. I'm not sure where the pine nuts fit into the tart, exactly. Perhaps the crust. Or perhaps they accounted for the grainy filling. I could not tell.

Duc and I were allowed to present six of our

seven dishes. Thus, the napa cabbage leaves stuffed with ground turkey, pine nuts and coconut, with pine nut tahini sauce, was held back. The first dish we offered was pine nut-stuffed, bacon-wrapped apricots. These sweet, salty nuggets, piled high around a bed of frisee lettuce, were a big hit. Next came fresh chicken shiitake spring rolls with pine nut



Bacon Wrapped Pine Nut Stuffed Apricots - Team Duc

dipping sauce, a refreshing bite of cilantro and chilled rice noodles. Third we served pine nut butter and “jelly” sandwiches, made with homemade pine nut paste and sweet, savory red beet marmalade on focaccia bread. The PB&J was voted most creative, and convinced more than one skeptic that beets are a delicious and versatile vegetable. Fourth and fifth were a pair of Vietnamese salads—roast eggplant, and shredded green papaya



Green Papaya, Chinese Dried Beef and Crushed Pine Nut Salad-Team Duc

with dried Chinese beef—with toasted pine nuts standing in for the traditional peanuts. And for dessert, black rice coconut pudding with pine nuts and lychees. I am torn between declaring the papaya salad or rice pudding my favorite dish. Miraculously, there were plenty of leftovers, so I didn’t have to decide between one or the other. I could go on eating both.

The judges were overwhelmed by the bounty before them, and the spectators swooned. Duc and I were quite pleased with ourselves, and wore cat-that-ate-the-canary grins as everyone ooh’d and aah’d. The votes were tallied and we filled our bellies to bursting.



Team Duc Doing Their Dance

Whose cuisine reigned supreme? Team Duc, hands down! What impressed me most about cooking with Duc wasn’t his purpose or ambi-



Eggplant and Toasted Pine Nut Salad-Team Duc

tion, his knife skills or his honed sense of taste—rather I was awed by his professional timing, his “mental mise en place” as we would say on the hot line, the ability to plan and execute a complicated set of dishes, juggling everything with

maximum efficiency. Duc had been taught ingredients and recipes by his mother and grandmother in his native Balat, Vietnam. They nurtured his enthusiasm for cooking and his discerning palate. But the mental mise en place . . . that’s one of those talents that can be learned, but it can’t be taught. Duc must have been born with it. He may be a genetics research scientist by day, but Duc is wired to be a cook by night. ■

DEAR B

Got a problem? Got questions? Just ask B. (Advice is for entertainment purposes only, and you have only yourself to blame if you follow any of the stupid suggestions.)

Dear B,

Times are tough, and I'd like to donate some of my stipend money to a worthy cause. Have any ideas?

--Mr. Compassion

Dear Mr. Compassion,

As a general rule, you should donate your money to organizations that have lost the most money in an economic downturn. So, what's it going to be? The federal government or the Yale endowment?

Dear B,

A faculty member wants to be my friend on Facebook. What should I do?

--Conflicted in Cyberspace

Dear Conflicted in Cyberspace,

You have a moral obligation to the rest of the student body to do the following:

- 1. Scrub your Facebook page of any evidence of partying, watching TV, listening to music, smiling, or otherwise enjoying existence.*
- 2. Post pictures of yourself and use this caption under each one: "me in the lab at 2:00 am".*
- 3. Publish a list of your top 5 goals for 2009. Number 1 should be "work more hours in lab." So should numbers 2 through 5.*
- 4. Write an emotional essay on how you wish you weren't so dedicated to your thesis project because it limits you to volunteering just 10 hrs/week at the local leper colony.*
- 5. Write a second essay noting that no matter how hard you work, every other BBS student seems to work even harder.*
- 6. Invite this faculty member to be your friend.*

Yale faculty, deans, and provosts spend countless hours sitting around talking to each other on Facebook. It'll take no more than a day, then, for the news to spread that BBS students work waaay too hard. That's when President Levin announces mandatory 3 week vacations. By taking one for the team, your Facebook page will land us all in Cancun. B

Lifestyles of the Poor and Academic **COLD AND BORED?**

BY DAVID HARBURGER

We're still in the midst of the the grey season in New England. The days are cold and dark. However, from the perspective of a New Englander, I see this frigid time of year as a season that offers many activities that can only be done in the chilly winter. Here are some suggestions for enjoying the winter that are specific to living in New England.

Downhill Movements.

The good news about New Haven being so close to many highways is that one can travel far away to other places very quickly. In just over three hours you can be in southern Vermont, hitting the slopes on mountains far larger than anything in Massachusetts or Connecticut. It should be noted that Connecticut does not have mountains, despite their names such as "Mohawk Mountain" and "Mount Southington". These are more like slanted football fields that are great for beginners. (Just because there is a chairlift does not mean you can call it a mountain.) Massachusetts has several intermediate mountains that are fine for a nice day trip, such as Jiminy Peak and Wachusett. However, I would only recommend them if it has been very cold and the snowmakers are in full force or if a blizzard dropped over a foot of snow, as they can be sparse on snow and a little rocky when it is warm.

Back to Vermont, my favorite New England winter state. Southern VT has two great mountains that I highly recommend for all levels: Stratton and Mount Snow. Both have a good base for most of the winter and are the nearest large mountains to New Haven. If you want to continue traveling up Rt. 91, you can reach a plethora of great options throughout middle and upper VT. One reason I love Stratton in particular is that it has everything you need at the base of the mountain. There are hotel rooms/condos, equipment rentals, restaurants, spas, bars, shops, convenience stores, a fitness center, and even an outdoor Russian-style heated pool -all within walking distance from the chairlifts at the base of the mountain. To top it off, they have reasonable ski-n-stay packages. Regardless of

where you plan to go, I found www.snocountry.com very helpful for checking weather conditions and the number of trails open at various mountains.

Flatter Movements.

If you do not want to blow out your knees or twist your ankles, there are many more conservative winter outdoor activities worth checking out, such as ice-skating and cross-country skiing. For ice skaters, the Yale Ingalls Rink offers recreations open skate sessions. Additionally, the website www.visitconnecticut.com has links to all the state parks that offer ponds for ice skating, trails and centers for cross country skiing, and even sledding hills for the snowy hill enthusiast.

No Movements.

Many interesting tourist destinations and historic sites are still open in the cold months and have a very homey feel in the winter. If wetting the palate is up your alley, maybe the CT Wine Trail <http://www.ctwine.com/> or Brewtopia <http://www.brewtopians.org/breweries.php> would provide some interesting destinations. If your travels take you far from home, when thinking of a place to stay, keep in mind that New England is scattered with bed and breakfast getaways that offer competitive rates throughout the year (see <http://www.bbonline.com>). B&B's are really worth checking out. The kitchen's often have coffee or cocoa available throughout the day, the staff are usually able to talk your ear off about worthwhile local attractions and good eats, and last, but not least, breakfast is included.

If your life is reduced to traveling to lab and back home again for food and sleep, nothing beats the last resort in the winter: a hot cup of hot cocoa/coffee/tea by the fire. If you do not have a fireplace, you could sip that warm drink next to your ancient hissing radiator and count down the days till your sentence of serving five to ten is completed (unless your lab moves and you get out early on parole). B

Trail Mix - Talcott Mountain and the Heublein Tower

BY HANNAH CHAPIN AND ELIZABETH WURTMANN



and liquor businesses – he proudly marketed Heublein cocktails with the slogan "better than most people make" – and had the tower built in 1914 as a summer home. Before being turned into a state park, the property was owned by the publisher of the Hartford Times in the 1950s, a prominent Republican who hosted both Ronald Reagan and General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Indeed, in the living room sits a crown jewel



One thing generally not encountered on hikes are famous leather chairs.

A mix of hiking and history can be found on the trail up Talcott Mountain to the Heublein Tower. One early fall day, I started down the trail in the MDC's Reservoir #6 in West Hartford. The Reservoir is a 3,000 acre nature preserve that rings lakes used by the surrounding towns for water storage and is a popular place for walkers, joggers, and hikers. The trail heading north along the west side of Reservoir #6 intersects the Metacomet Trail after about a mile. The Metacomet is a 50-mile trail running north-south through the central part of the state over numerous peaks, and this section heads up Talcott Mountain. Leaving behind the gravel trail of the Reservoir system, the Metacomet is a qui-

eter trail, twisting upward 1.5 miles to the top of Talcott Mountain.

At the top, traprock ledges overlook views of the Farmington River valley. Atop the ledges sits the Heublein Tower, a large house with a six-story viewing tower emerging from its center. The top floor of this 165-foot structure is a wood-paneled room with massive 360° views. The clear skies the day of my visit allowed views to the north well into Massachusetts and perhaps even to New Hampshire, nicely highlighted by signs pointing out various peaks and points of interest. Easily recognizable to the northeast is the skyline of Hartford as well as the runways and circling planes of Bradley airport. Turning to the south, you can look over the trail you've just hiked up and down to the reservoir. Even



better, the arching hills of Sleeping Giant and a sliver of Long Island Sound are visible 40 miles away.

After soaking in the panorama and the geography lesson, head back down the tower for some history. Along the way, stop in the rooms off the sides of the central staircase to see rooms of the house arranged with period furniture and information on Gilbert Heublein. Heublein had much success in the restaurant, hotel,

of historical trivia: a blue leather chair that is said to be where Eisenhower was seated when he was formally asked in 1950 to run for president. Outside, a large barbecue pit named after Eisenhower serves as further commemoration of the visit. I can make no promises that your visit to the Heublein Tower will have similar political consequences, but enjoy the views!

Directions: take 91N to left exit 32; after taking the exit, bear right and then left on Trumbull Street; turn right onto Main Street/Rt 44 and go west ~6 miles along Rt 44 to the MDC Reservoir #6. **B**

The BUZZ



Beginning September 1, 2009, the BBS stipend will be \$29,600.



Chris Case, (Microbiology 3rd year) was married this past November.

Jennifer long, (C&MP 5th year) got engaged to Ken Baughman (Yale '06) this past Labor Day. Their wedding will take place in October 2009.

Annie Le, (Pharmacology 2nd year and B staffer) announced her engagement to Jonathan Widawsky, grad student at Columbia. Wedding in September 2009.

Keke Fairfax, (Microbiology 5th year) will be getting married this coming June in the British Virgin Islands!

Elena Poiata, (MCDB 3rd year) received a surprise marriage proposal from Will Brockliss of Yale's Classics Department while visiting one of her favorite cities, Philadelphia, on January 7th.

Jamie Duke, (CBB 3rd year) got engaged to Benjamin Heiser, her college boyfriend, on November 21st. They will wed in the fall of 2010.

BBS Office News -

New Office Assistant - Please welcome **Jennifer Franzoni**, who joined the BBS staff in November 2008 and formerly worked in the Yale Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Aids.

If you are wondering - *Where did John Go?*

You can find him in his new office across the hall SHM L205.

B magazine's

Grad Recruitment Nightmares

Contest

EDITED BY KATHRYN TWORKOSKI

Ok folks, we asked you to share your most memorable recruitment stories with us. And you gave us some really good material to work with! We've picked some of our favorites to publish, and we've decided not to reveal the names of any non-Yale universities in order to protect the not-so-innocent. But with a little imagination, we're sure you can figure it out on your own. So if you're having a bad day in lab, take comfort in the knowledge that it could always be worse. Don't believe us? Go to page 6 and see for yourself.

1st Place

Why We Love Yale

Jason Wallace, MCDB, 3rd year

2nd Place

Did You Expect Us to Feed You?

Anonymous

3rd Place

Did That Really Just Happen?

Kristi Rudenga, INP, 4th Year

1st Runner Up

The Trip from Hell

Jennifer Hardee, MCDB, 4th Year

Other Notable Entries

The Dangers of Sharing a Cab

Rachel Roth, Pharmacology, 6th Year

Fear the Student Host

Anonymous

Beware the Open Bar

Anonymous