



The G.S.A. NEWSLETTER

*a publication of the
Graduate Student Association
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine*

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 2 Oct./Nov. 1999

Get out of the lab!

by Holly Berkovits

Are you feeling out of touch with the world? Are elusive results getting you down? Volunteering is a great way to have a more direct impact on people's lives and it can feel more immediately rewarding than the daily grind of labwork. There are many ways and places to volunteer in the Baltimore/D.C. area, everything from working at soup kitchens and doing community cleanup to helping out homeless pets and working road races. You can donate as much or as little time as you can manage, which is perfect for the erratic schedule of a graduate student.

To help draw you out of the lab, the GSA is organizing several group volunteer events and training sessions for some of the local volunteer organizations. These are listed below along with a brief description. To sign up or to get further information, contact the event coordinator by sending mail to gsa-g@jhmi.edu, placing their name on the subject line. *If you would like to see a graduate student effort made for your own favorite cause, contact the the GSA Volunteer Coordinator, Charles Dann (cdann@jhmi.edu), to get started.*

- Hands on Baltimore: Otherwise known as "volunteer central." You can pick and choose from a large variety of events through this organization. To find out more, contact Charles Dann

Notes from the GSA:

Graduation; Student Mental Health Services; Dental Insurance

by Jutta Beneken

It is now about two months into the new year I'm hoping that the new students are getting settled in their routine and that some of the more senior students are beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Having been present at a number of New Student Orientations but never at a Graduation, it's unreal to think that it actually takes place. Graduating students give their thesis seminar, and a short while later, disappear off the face of the earth into post-doc land. Some of them apparently do return to campus in late May to walk with their classmates at Graduation. To all students possibly graduating by May 2000 and wishing to participate in the Graduation ceremony: please let us know by emailing us at gsa-g@jhmi.edu. All of you should have received an email about this a few weeks ago. It is very important for us to have you on our list. We will be contacting you with information about graduation speakers, marshals, the hooding ceremony, where and how to get your cap and gown, etc.

If you are neither a first-year nor looking to graduate within the next couple of months, chances are that you're battling the frustrations of 1) projects that seem to be going nowhere, 2) preparing for oral exams, the

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Upcoming GSA Meeting December 14

*** 811 WBSB ***

Meetings are held on the 2nd
Tuesday of each month at 2 pm

Upcoming GSA Events

Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Opportunity

Help renovate houses for low-income families in Baltimore City. January 29, 2000 and February 12, 2000. Email the GSA at gsa-g@jhmi.edu if you're interested in helping out.

Winter Happy Hour

Date/Location TBA.
Watch for posters and emails.

Pioneers in Biology Lectures

Speakers/Dates TBA.
(Suggestions for speakers
still welcome).

Contact gsa-g@jhmi.edu
with any comments.

simple thought of which is scaring the living daylights out of you, and 3) the third-year rut, which has been scientifically proven to exist (and to extend well into your fourth, fifth and sixth years).

Everybody knows what I'm talking about; we've all been through the natural ups and downs that make up not only graduate school but life in general. In a number of unfortunate cases, depression and suicidal tendencies among students pursuing advanced degrees have led to preventable tragedies. The worst feeling when experiencing bouts of depression is thinking that there is no one to go to and no one to talk to. Fortunately, that is not the case. If you are experiencing overwhelming feelings of stress, depression, or other emotional issues, and don't feel comfortable talking to your friends, family, or advisor about them, you should know about two independent resources available to you.

UHS provides mental health services through the Student Mental Health Service that is available to all students and their spouses/partners. There is no charge for up to eight visits per academic year, and all records are kept separate and confidential. Call the Student Mental Health Program at 5-1892 or check out the link from the GSA webpage at <<http://www.med.jhu.edu/gsa>>.

In addition to the UHS Student Mental Health Service, the National Grad Student Crisis Line is available toll-free at 1-877-GRAD-HLP. This is a 24-hr hotline, intended to help with immediate crises. Someone there will understand the particular issues and pressures that you are

facing as a graduate student. More information can be found at <www.gradresources.org/crisis.htm>. Keep these numbers, for yourself or for a friend. Know that help is out there if you need it.

Along an entirely different line of health issues: all of you should have received information about the newly established dental plan for all SOM graduate students (except Human Genetics students and others registered at Homewood) and post-docs. The CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield benefit guide you received in your mailboxes should help you to figure out what is covered and what isn't, but the easiest thing to do may be to simply ask your current dentist whether or not he/she is a participant and how your new insurance status will affect you. Most dentists are CareFirst providers and will file your claim for you. If you don't currently have a dentist in the Baltimore area, you can find out about participating dentists at 1-800-638-6378 or <<http://www.carefirst.com>>.

The pen is mightier than the pipet...

Please send any poems, short stories, creative writing, essays, photos, or black and white art to the *GSA Newsletter*!

Submissions for the January/February Recruiting issue will be due **Jan. 14, 2000**.

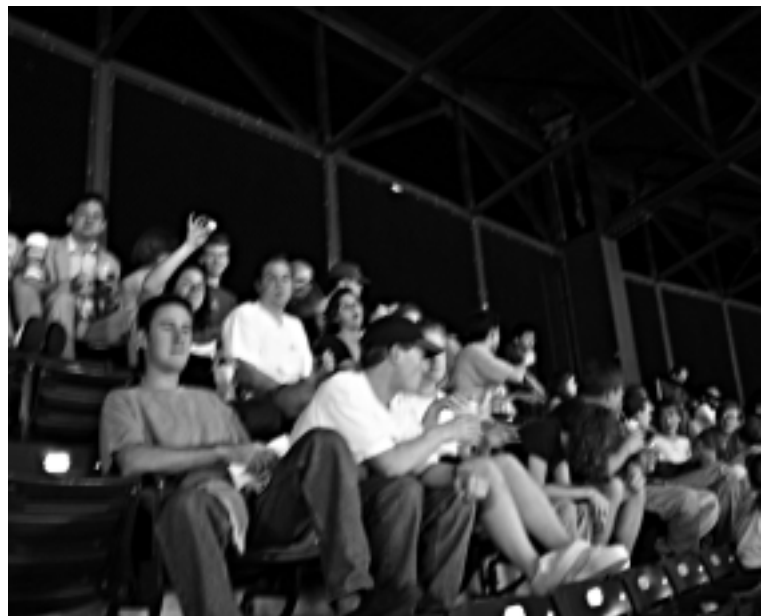
GRADUATE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

GCF is an interdenominational Christian fellowship. For further information, contact: Mike 410-516-6207, witness@jhu.edu, or <<http://www.jhu.edu/~gcf>>.

Meetings are
Wednesdays at 8 pm at the London Room of The Marylander Apartments (3501 St. Paul St.)

GCF

prayer, worship,
Bible study, fellowship, service



Graduate students enjoying a night out at Oriole Park for the annual GSA-sponsored New-Students' Game on September 13, 1999. Those coming to cheer on the Seattle Mariners were out of luck: the Orioles beat the Mariners 5-4. Photo by T. Tenenhaus.

On the Wild Side: Fall colors

by Ed Hsiao

Looking for something to do outside? Consider some fall touring through nearby state and national parks. October is the best time to see local foliage turn from green to vibrant colors!

Loch Raven Reservoir is one of the closest parks to Baltimore, located just north of Towson on Loch Raven Drive. Take the 695 Beltway to Dulaney Valley Road heading north. After passing the Pine Ridge Golf Course, Dulaney Valley curves to the right and passes over a portion of the reservoir. At the fork, take the right branch onto Loch Raven Road. When you approach Peerce's Plantation Restaurant (a great but somewhat pricey restaurant), take the right fork to continue towards the water. There will be a parking area at the intersection of Loch Raven Road and Morgan Mill Road.

Loch Raven has a great collection of trails popular with both mountain bikers and hikers. The main trail starts on right side of Morgan Mill Road, about 200 meters above the parking area. Although mountain bikes are restricted to fire roads, it is still a very challenging ride. The hiking trails also vary from easy to moderate. In addition, a section of Loch Raven Road is closed to traffic on Saturdays and Sundays starting at 10 am, making the area very popular with runners, road bikers, and rollerbladers. Fishing is permitted further down below the dam at the intersection of Loch Raven Road and Cromwell Bridge Road.

For the more adventurous, Catoctin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park are about an hour's drive away. To get to both parks, take I-70 west towards Frederick. Exit onto Route 15 north towards Thurmont and

follow the signs to the Catoctin Mountain Park Headquarters (off Route 77 west).

Catoctin and Cunningham Falls offers spectacular scenery, particularly during the late summer and fall. A wide variety of activities are available, from easy to strenuous hiking trails, camping, swimming, fishing, horseback riding, sailing, and some rock climbing. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are also available in the winter. Although Camp David (the presidential retreat) is located within Catoctin, it is not open to the public.

On the way home, stop by Larriland Farm on Rt. 94, 2 miles south of I-70 (exit 73) near Lisbon, MD. Larriland is one of a few "self-pick" farms in Maryland - the season opens in late May with strawberries and ends in November with various hard fruits and pumpkins. October is prime apple season; call 410-442-2605 for information on hours and what fruits are available.

For more information about these and other parks, check out the web sites at <<http://www.nps.gov>> and <<http://www.dnr.state.md.us>>. You can find foliage reports by calling the foliage hotlines listed below. Happy Trails!

Foliage Hotlines:

Maryland: 800-532-8371

Delaware 800-441-8846

Pennsylvania 800-325-5467

Virginia:

Shenandoah National Park: 540-999-3500

Blue Ridge Parkway: 704-298-0398

West Virginia 800-225-5982

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or check out their website: <<http://www.handsonbaltimore.org>>. A short orientation session, required before participation in any of their sponsored events, is being planned to take place here at the Medical School within the next few weeks. Watch your email for an announcement.

- Habitat for Humanity: Internationally renowned, this organization renovates low-income houses for those in need. The GSA is sponsoring two dates for graduate students to help out: Saturday, January 29, 2000, and Saturday, February 12, 2000. These are all-day events and will involve indoor work on a house in the Waverly area (near Memorial Stadium). Space is limited. For more information, contact Marina Lee (mslee@jhmi.edu) or the GSA (gsa-g@jhmi.edu). Habitat for Humanity's website is: <<http://www.habitat.org>.>

- Maryland Science Center: The Science Center runs an overnight Camp-In program for elementary school

kids, teaching a different science topic each year. Volunteers help explain the exhibits to the kids and also get the chance to explore the museum and see an IMAX show. A group of graduate students will be able to volunteer at a pre-determined date in January, 2000. Contact Holly Berkovits for more information (holly@groucho.med.jhmi.edu). Again, watch your email for an announcement about this and other GSA-sponsored volunteer opportunities.

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A Taste of Baltimore

by Sarah Wheelan

We had long been awaiting the arrival of the Melting Pot, at 418 York Road in Towson, (410)821-6358. Remodeling began in the spring of '98, and for months we walked by and peeked in the windows. By September of '98, construction was completed, and the decor alone looked worth a visit. We waited for the opening, and waited, and waited. The opening was delayed by Baltimore county health officials, who were worried that serving customers raw meat was an invitation to serious problems, although there are dozens of these restaurants which have been operating safely around the country since the '70s. Finally, all hurdles were cleared and the restaurant opened.

The decor is modern, but cozy, without being cluttered. Each table has a burner in the center, where all food is cooked in the shared fondue pot. On each of our visits, our server was quite helpful and guided us through the beautifully designed but somewhat confusing menu. We chose the vegetarian, Thai, and seafood entrees (for three people, this was actually too much food), and the fiesta cheese fondue for an appetizer. The appetizer is made with a beer base and is prepared by the server at the table, so the customers can request more or fewer jalapenos in their Wisconsin sharp cheddar cheese mix. Served with tortilla chips, bread, and apple slices, this appetizer was much more flavorful than the typical cheese fondue. The entrees each come with a salad (we had the California salads, which come topped with an outstanding raspberry vinaigrette) and a bowl of assorted sliced vegetables to cook. The only consideration is the cooking style: there is a choice of vegetable broth or oil, and the whole table has to agree. We chose the broth both times, which is probably healthier but doesn't lend much flavor to many vegetables. The oil comes with several different batters and would probably be a better choice for a meat-heavy meal. The vegetarian platter comes with an array of excellent sauces, including mustard, curry, cheese, and horseradish, which significantly helped the flavor of the food. The seafood and Thai entrees came with teriyaki and peanut sauces, all of which were also excellent. The vegetarian platter includes mushrooms, carrots, and our favorite, cheese and spinach raviolis (don't spear these to cook them — they pop!). The seafood entree features shrimp and assorted fish, and the Thai entree includes marinated meats and fish.

The really outstanding part of dinner was the dessert. On one visit, we chose the Flaming Turtle, which is caramel and chocolate served on fire. On another occasion, we enjoyed the marshmallow and chocolate dip, also served flaming (lots of fun). Pound cake, cheesecake, strawberries, bananas, pineapple, and marshmallows dipped into the dessert fondues were a perfect way to end the meal. Prices at the Melting Pot range from \$10 to \$18 for a single dinner entree and \$5-8 for dessert and appetizers.



Platypus Myth (Ed Brignole, Chris Farrell, Jason Hoffert, and Dzung Nguyen) playing at Garland Field for the GSA Fall Picnic on September 11, 1999. For more info on Platypus Myth, check out the band's website at <<http://tinpan.fortunecity.com/solidgold/822>> or the Platypus Myth Fanclub website at <<http://homepages.com/~platypusmyth/PlatypusMyth.html>>. Their next concert will be on Nov. 30 at XandO (near Homewood). Photo by C. Dann.

Discount Card for Graduate Students of the East Baltimore Campus

A limited number of the new Johns Hopkins Alumni Association Discount Cards is now available to graduate students of the Medical School on a first come, first served basis. This card gives students 10% off at 15 merchants in Charles Village and Hamden. To get your card, call the Alumni Office at 410-516-0363 or send an email with your name, affiliation/department, graduate school year, and on-campus address to <alumni@jhu.edu>.

The discount program is just starting out this year. It will be expanded during the next year to include more merchants in other areas of the city. Please note that the card is only for students in Baltimore and that discounts are valid only at participating locations and with certain restrictions.