



The G.S.A. NEWSLETTER

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Chinese Celebrate Traditional Moon Festival

By Wei Hua

The Chinese Moon Festival is one of the most widely celebrated traditional festivals for the Chinese all over the world. Many legends claim to be the origin of this festival, but the most popular story is one dating back to the Hsia Dynasty (2205-1818 B.C.) about Hou Yi and his beautiful wife, Chang-er. Hou Yi was an officer and bodyguard of the Jade Emperor in Heaven who sent him to earth to solve the world's problems. Unwilling to be separated from her husband, Chang-er descended to the area of the Eastern Tribes with Hou Yi. As the legend goes, Chang-er stole from Hou Yi an elixir said to ensure youth and immortality. Upon swallowing the drug, she soared to the moon, where her youth and beauty were preserved; however as her punishment, she was doomed to stay in the firmament forever. It was thought that on the 15th night of the eighth lunar month, when the moon is full and the brightest, we could see Chang-er on the moon.

Lifestyles may have changed from generation to generation among the Chinese all over the world, but the traditional festival carried forth from ancient Chinese society remains an important part of family life. The Moon Festival is a time for family reunion;

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"Gays, lesbians and bi's, oh my!"

By Ann Zumwalt

A few weeks ago you may have seen some rainbow-bedecked posters up around the JHMI campus announcing it was National Coming Out Day, a day that recognizes the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people in our community. You may have been surprised to see these signs, since gays and lesbians are largely an invisible subset of the Hopkins community, especially here on the East Baltimore campus. Many GLBT people at JHMI are hesitant to "come out" at work. This leaves some gays and lesbians feeling very alone, sure they are the only gay persons in the entire institution.

Contrary to this sentiment, GLBT folks are a thriving, integral part of the JHMI community. The Gertrude Stein Society is a group that consists of JHMI faculty, students and staff who strive to create an active GLBT presence on this campus. Although the group has traditionally been associated with the School of Medicine, this year we are expanding to welcome members from all divisions of JHMI, including the School of Public Health, the School of Nursing, and Johns Hopkins Hospital. The group sponsors a range of activities associated with community outreach and education as

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Upcoming GSA Meeting: November 21

***** 517 PCTB *****

Note: Meeting day and time have changed to the **3rd** Tuesday of each month at **3 pm**

JHMI to Establish Professional Development Office

By Tina Tenenhaus

Usually, we like to use this column to report on GSA news. This time, however, I am happy to report on a project that has been mainly the initiative of Dean James Hildreth: the Professional Development Office. The need for a career office for graduate students and post docs at the East Baltimore campus became apparent several years ago. It was only very recently that Dean Hildreth excitedly announced to graduate student representatives that the career office idea was finally going to become reality as a Professional Development Office (PDO), slated to officially open this spring in the 1830 building. Wendy Sanders, who many of you may recognize as the former instructor of writing courses offered through Welch library, will run the PDO. Services the PDO hopes to offer include instruction in communication skills and assistance in locating and applying for fellowships and awards. On behalf of the graduate students I would like to thank Dr. Hildreth for all of his work in instituting the Professional Development Office.

A Few Words of Advice to the 2000 Incoming

Class:

By Derek Jantz (with apologies to Kurt Vonnegut)

Don't leave your ID in a hot car.

The harmful effects of intense heat on magnetized plastic are evidenced by the warped and faded badges of countless grad students who have passed before you. The rest of my advice should be taken for what it is: the cynical ramblings of a fourth year Ph.D. student who is trying to put off writing his thesis proposal. While much of what I have to say was learned from my own experience, most of my advice has no basis more substantial than a drunken conversation with a talking palm tree.

I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy the fascination and enthusiasm of your first year. Oh, never mind. You will not understand the enthusiasm of your first year until you're studying for qualifying exams. But trust me, in 20 years, you'll look back at the young face in that faded Hopkins ID badge and think: Wow...I really should have graduated by now.

Don't dwell on failed experiments. Or dwell, but know that dwelling is about as effective as teaching molecular biology to medical students. The real problem with a failed experiment is likely to be something that never crossed your mind and is probably the result of an act of sabotage by a former lab member.

Do one thing every day that scares your PI.

Decorate your lab bench with obscure phrases like "Remember the Alamo" to confuse future generations of grad students.

Don't worry about your competitors. Sometimes you're ahead. Sometimes you're behind. In the end, the race is long and Craig Venter already did it faster and cheaper.

Get a hotmail account. Welchlink is like a roll of cheap toilet paper. It's great for spreading crap but falls apart when you really need it.

Don't feel guilty if you haven't decided on a thesis project. Some of the smartest fourth year students I know still haven't written a thesis proposal. The smartest Ph.D.s I know just slept with their PI and filed a lawsuit.

Sleep in. The early bird gets the worm but the little bus has air conditioning.

Maybe you'll get a Science paper. Maybe you won't. Maybe you'll get to the front of the fajita wrap line. Maybe you won't. Maybe you'll graduate in 3 years. Maybe you'll take your advisor hostage in 2015. Whatever you do remember one thing: we all make it through this. Everybody on your thesis committee is going to retire eventually.

Choose thesis committee members based on age.

Question everything. Many of the scientific "truths" that we hold fundamental are still unproven and illegal to teach in Kansas.

Give technicians your utmost respect. Our career ladder is short and the rungs aren't that far apart.

Take advantage of every opportunity to use your body for non-scientific purposes. The most interesting experiments you are ever likely to perform probably won't be in the lab. Chicks dig the long ball and most of us haven't found the park yet.

Live in Charles Village once, but leave the first time you fall asleep in Eisenhower Library. Live in Fell's Point once, but leave the first time you wake up in the Wharf Rat bathroom.

An hour at the library can save a month at the bench. A decent rotation student can save 3 months.

Read the protocol, change everything by 10%. Call it your own.

Just over 3 billion years ago, a prokaryotic organism was endocytosed by a larger cell, giving rise to the first mitochondria. This pivotal point in history represents the last time an experiment worked on the first try.

Interesting people hang out at the Mount Royal Tavern. Attractive people hang out at the Gin Mill. Scientists are neither, so get your boring, unattractive ass back to lab.

But trust me on the ID thing.

usually a big and delicious meal is prepared for all members of the family, and round mooncake (a specialty of the festival) serves as a reminder of family unity.

The exact date of the fifteenth of the eighth lunar month in the western calendar changes from year to year but usually falls in September or early October. This year, the Moon Festival was celebrated together with China National Day on October 1, 2000. Over 400 Hopkins affiliates attended the festivities at the Hopkins' Homewood campus, which were organized by the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA). The program included traditional Chinese performances by members of JHMI, JHU Homewood, and the Baltimore-Washington area Chinese community. A dance party, karaoke, and a Chinese movie followed the two-hour performance. Sharing the happy occasion with the entire JHU community and facilitating intercultural communication, the event was open to all JHU students, staff, and faculty and was cosponsored by the Student Assembly in the School of Public Health, the Graduate Student Association, the Graduate Representative Organization at Homewood, and the International Society.

well as a wide variety of social events. In addition, the group serves as a source of support and community for GLBT folks at Hopkins. Gertrude Stein meetings are "safe spaces" where all are welcome. Your presence at a meeting is not going to "out" you, or label you as gay. In fact, you don't have to be gay to go to a Gertrude Stein meeting; the group welcomes and encourages the presence of straight allies. If you are interested in attending the next meeting of the Gertrude Stein Society or being put on the group's mailing list, email Tim Guimond at tguimon@jhmi.edu. You can also check out the group's soon to be updated website: (<http://www.jhsph.edu/People/Student/StuOrg/BGLIPH/gss.htm>).

Did you know?

-Gertrude Stein, the well-known lesbian writer and intellectual, was a medical student at Johns Hopkins near the turn of the century.

-In 1998, Johns Hopkins expanded its university benefits to cover the same-sex partners of all employees and students, a very progressive move for the Hopkins administration. (http://www.jhu.edu/news_info/news/univ98/oct98/benefits.html)

What am I going to do if I have to be?

By Wilson Kwok

Today, I accidentally walked into a clinic as I was trying to find my way back to the Ross Research building after an immunology seminar. In the clinic I could not help but notice a lady who was talking to herself. She kept asking herself the question, "What am I going to do if I have to be?" I realized the philosophy behind this question was indeed profound, so I tried to think of an answer as I walked back.

One of my first-year classmates in the immunology program told me his answer to this question, one that you might have come up with already. "Just don't do anything. Sit back and relax," he said. However, in my opinion, the answer is not this simple.

Allow me to linguistically divide the question into three parts – *what am I going to do*, *if*, and *I have to be*. The first part of the question either represents a *confused self* wondering what could she possibly do with her life, or it leaves open the chance that she has a *strong-minded self* who does not want to give up but doesn't possess any knowledge of what she has to do. The second part is a

conditional conjunction indicating the woman has a choice, to be or not to be. The word *have* in the third part confirms that the woman is leaning more towards the *to be* side of her *selves*.

"What a thought provoking question the lady has asked herself," one may say. However, one might think again since the woman is not a psychiatrist but a patient in the clinic. This raises another question, where to draw the line between insanity and genius?

Johns Hopkins Blood Drive

The next Johns Hopkins Blood Drive will be on December 12-13, 2000 in Turner Concourse.

Donations are accepted from 7am to 7pm on both days. Watch out for informational posters, or call 5-5488 for more information.



A group of graduate students enjoying a game of volleyball at the annual GSA Picnic. This year's picnic was held at the Homewood campus on Sept. 9, 2000. Photo by T. Tenenhaus

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 next issue will be due **Jan. 19, 2001**

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TOP TEN SUBTLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GRAD SCHOOL AND HELL:

10. It doesn't rain in Hell.
9. Everyone has heard of Hell.
8. It's a lot more fun getting into Hell.
7. You can't fail out of Hell.
6. At least you can sleep in Hell.
5. Hell is forever; grad school just seems like it.
4. People smile in Hell.
3. You only have to sell your soul to go to Hell.
2. There are hot men and women in Hell.
1. You wouldn't tell a friend to go to grad school.