

The G.S.A. NEWSLETTER



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Upcoming GSA Meeting

November 11

GSA Meetings are held on
the 2nd Tuesday of each
month at 2pm in
Hunterian Room G-5.

The Dean's Luncheon

by Lesley Brown

On September 24, 1997, Dean Hildreth and his staff hosted the first Dean's luncheon of the 1997-98 academic year. Graduate students of the medical institutions, you will be glad to know that you were well - represented. All GSA representatives were in attendance as well as most of the departmental representatives.

The major issue on the agenda had to do with career/professional development and what the School of Medicine can do to help its students in these endeavors. The ultimate goal would be to develop a career placement office which would take time, financial resources, and an administrative commitment. But in a more immediate time frame, there were suggestions to purchase books/guides about preparing resumés and CVs and about preparing for job interviews. Dr. Hildreth was very receptive to this and would like suggestions for titles. As a point of information, the Welch Library does have a small "writing section" of reference books. It includes guides for preparing CVs and resumés, books on scientific writing and grant writing, and style manuals.

Also along the lines of aiding career development, both Dean Hildreth and the GSA will be working together to supply students with information about obtaining post-doctoral positions. The GSA has plans to highlight this issue at its annual career symposium and Dean Hildreth has been working to organize a series of seminars on writing grants and pursuing post-doc and faculty positions. Stay tuned for more information.

A second major topic of discussion had to do with classes and curriculum courses for graduate students. Not only have students been unsatisfied, but last year's curriculum review committee also voiced concerns about

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talking specifically about behavioral studies with NMDA receptor knockout mice. This lecture was the first of the 1997-98 academic year in the GSA-sponsored "Pioneers in Science" lecture series. Photo E. Hsiao.

On October 16, 1997, Dr. Susumu Tonegawa, Nobel laureate and current director of MIT's Center for Learning and Memory, gave a lecture on the role of place cells in the development of memory,

NOTES FROM THE GSA

1997-98 GSA Travel Awards

The GSA has budgeted funds for supplementing student travel to scientific meetings or for field work. The main goal of a travel award is to enable a student to attend a pertinent event where it would be otherwise difficult to do so because of limited laboratory and/or departmental funding. Priority will be given to those students who have not previously received a GSA travel award and students who will be making a significant presentation (e.g. poster, talk) or conducting relevant field work. The financial status of the requesting student's lab will also factor into the decision, as well as any support

already secured from non-GSA sources. The next deadline for applications is **November 1, 1997.**

Details about the travel award guidelines as well as the application can be found on the web at: <http://www.med.jhu.edu/gsa/travel.html>.

1997-98 GSA Student Group Funding

The GSA has set aside \$3000 from its 1997-98 budget to help fund other graduate student groups. Any student organization, including career interest, community service, journal clubs, and support groups, can apply for a portion of these funds. However, the GSA is most committed to supporting events of a scientific or professional development nature.

Details can be found at: <http://www.med.jhu.edu/gsa/funding.html>.

DRIVING ON THE ROAD OF SCIENCE

by Jutta Beneken

My favorite line from a popular commercial goes something like this: "On the road of life, there are passengers and there are drivers". Of course, this particular company happens to manufacture cars and hail from my native country, but any potential biases aside, you will see that this is more than just a sales pitch. In fact, it is a really neat way of thinking about things in general, not just cars. OK, so the "road of life" analogy is a bit old, but I happen to like it. We've all come across stop signs and intersections. We've all taken wrong turns and detours, not to mention those nasty speed bumps. We've all had accidents and near-accidents and mechanical breakdowns. Some of us are drivers, and some of us are passengers. The only question is: what distinguishes a driver from a passenger? The simple answer involves some proportionality factor of active vs. passive behavior. The real answer may be a little more complicated.

Let's consider something that we can all identify with: science. Many would say that by definition, every scientist is a driver, actively in pursuit of knowledge. But traffic on the road of science is getting worse every day.

Dr. Ham Smith, Nobel laureate and Hopkins native, is without doubt an excellent driver. At a recent BCMB retreat, Dr. Smith explained that whenever one sees "something strange" in one's data, it is one of two things: a) an artifact, or b) the beginnings of a major discovery. In some cases, one knows enough about the system to be able to distinguish a from b, so no time is wasted following a dead end road. In other cases, the big question is: to follow up or not to follow up? The answer to this question separates drivers from passengers.

Drivers will answer yes, striving to explain the extra bands on a gel or the strange cell morphology. They will take the risk of following an instinct that is not substantiated by any data. More often than not, those "strange" things in one's results turn out to be artifacts and not the beginnings of a major discovery. Since artifacts don't make for ground-breaking publications, this can be very frustrating. A select few will be rewarded with making an important discovery.

On the other side of the parking brake we have the passengers. They work around a "strange" result or simply ignore it. They don't take any risks in their research, following the well-paved and well-lighted road to publication. They heard the traffic report and decided to carpool, thereby reducing the traffic volume.

Some argue that many, if not all, of the major biological phenomena have already been worked out. All we are doing now is filling in the blanks. If this theory holds in light of the present analogy, then the number of drivers reaching their destination will become smaller and smaller. This is not because they've gotten lost along the way, but because the traffic jam

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Life and Times...

by Peter Torgg

Never underestimate the power of the dark side.

When I first came to Baltimore last year, I couldn't care less about baseball. The extent of my knowledge about the Orioles was that some kid had robbed them of a win against the Yankees in the playoffs. This kid became a hero of New York City and even appeared on Letterman (which is how I heard of it). His fame lasted longer than Andy Warhol's supposed fifteen minutes, but he soon disappeared into obscurity like Macaulay Culkin. Still, it's hard to escape baseball fever when living in Baltimore, especially this time of year with the playoffs making front page news. There almost is a sense that the outcome of the Orioles games will predict the future, much like the groundhog foretells the weather every February by checking for its shadow. In any case, the power of the dark side was too strong, and I found myself spending hours in front of the t.v. watching the Orioles battle the Indians. And guess what? I actually cared about the outcome! By the time this article appears in print, the playoffs will be over. I hope the "outlook" was good!

But the end of the baseball season means something even more to a graduate student here at Hopkins. Namely, the beginning of a new academic year. Depending on your standing, this can mean many different things to you. First-year students are battling through classes, stifling yawns during lectures and symposiums, and picking lab rotations. If you're a second-year student like myself, you've just chosen your thesis lab and are digging the trenches for four more years of research. It's an interesting time: the research is still fresh and fun, and one feels a new sense of belonging. It is now *my* lab bench, *my* pipette, *my* lab coat, and don't even think of touching *my* coffee mug! If you are a third year student or beyond, you are probably noticing just how young all the new students look. Plus, you're wondering how much longer your thesis is going to take. There is no conceivable end in sight, as if someone has set the light at the end of the tunnel on 'dim'.

Yet like a good wine or a bad haircut, there are some benefits to age. The most notable is the discovery of some favorite spots on campus. The radiation safety building (2024 Monument St., across the street from Taste of China) is a great place to take your lunch, especially if you're picking something up from the market or Taste of China. It's convenient, bright, and complete with your pick of caffeine or entertainment: the guy at the Daily Grind stand usually plays jazz music during lunch time.

And finally, in keeping with the season, I'd like to recommend pumpkin carving as the romantic activity of the month. Just remember fellas: no matter how her pumpkin turns out, it is still the greatest one you've ever seen. In fact, offer to display it in your apartment. Such a gesture will greatly increase your chances for some pumpkin pie later on. And we all know, the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. That is, while he's not watching baseball on t.v.!

Flu Shot

Influenza season is almost here!

Free flu shots from Occupational Health Services (3rd Floor of the Houck Building East Wing, Rm. 355). Shots will be given from 7 am to 5 pm every weekday from **October 27th through November 7th.**

No appointments necessary.
Call 5-6211 for more information.

GSA Web Page

Check out the GSA Web Page at <http://www.med.jhu.edu/gsa/GSAmain.html>. You'll find everything from local happenings to GSA meeting minutes to back issues of the GSA Newsletter.
Bookmark it!

GSA Newsletter Editors

Edward Hsiao	<i>ehsiao</i>
Jutta Beneken	<i>jbeneken</i>
Alan Meeker	<i>ameeker</i>
Carolyn Sevier	<i>csevier</i>

fax 955-0831
attn. Ed Hsiao,
PCTB 607

snail mail: Ed Hsiao,
GSA Newsletter
PCTB 607, 725 N. Wolfe St.
Baltimore, MD 21205

Graduate Student Living -Fell's Point/Canton/Butcher's Hill by Matt Wallenfang

Because of the nature of where Johns Hopkins Hospital is located, it is often assumed that living anywhere near where you work is not an option (unless you consider Reed Hall an option). However the neighborhoods just south of the hospital, including Butcher's Hill, Fell's Point, and Canton, can provide a surprisingly safe and economical living environment for graduate students. This article - the second in a series detailing housing options for Hopkins graduate students - will focus on the pros and cons of living in these areas of the city.

When most people think of Fell's Point, what probably comes to mind are images of drunken college students and parking nightmares. What most people don't see is a neighborhood of historic homes, great coffee shops and bookstores, and friendly neighbors. For most people that I've talked to these aspects are more than reason enough to stay in Fell's Point. Rent in the "touristy" areas can be a bit pricier than in other areas of the city, but if you are willing to spend some time looking it is certainly possible to find places that fall within a graduate student's budget. While parking can be a problem, most times are not nearly as bad as the times that most visitors are familiar with (i.e. Friday and Saturday evening or during the festival). Most residents that I talked to feel that as far as personal safety is concerned, there are few areas of the city safer than Fell's Point; however, vandalism of personal property left outside can be a problem. Noise in the heart of Fell's Point can also be a problem on weekend evenings, but at other times Fell's Point is often more quiet than many other parts of the city where traffic and sirens are a problem.

North of Fleet Street, the character of the neighborhoods (Upper Fell's Point and Butcher's Hill) has a much different feel. This is a land of neighbors who sit on their porches and are always willing to indulge in a friendly chat - its Hampden without the hipness. Real deals can be had with the rents here, and parking is almost never a problem. These areas don't get the same pedestrian and vehicular traffic as Fell's Point, which makes them a good deal quieter (except for the occasional domestic dispute). I have not heard of anyone who has had a problem with personal safety; however, two people I know have had cars stolen from this area. Both claim that it could have happened just as easily in any other part of the city. It is a concern to keep in mind, however.

Canton - the area just to the east of Fell's Point - is the city's up-and-coming new hip place to be. New construction projects are ubiquitous along the waterfront, including renovation of the National Can Company which will potentially house a Border's bookstore and Donna's coffee shop, among other retailers. The square in Canton includes some of Baltimore's best restaurants. Canton has numerous options for students looking for luxury apartments. The rents at these can be steep, but become more economical if you consider roommates. Demand for these apartments is high, so if you are considering them be sure to look early and ask to be put on waiting lists. Alternatively, many of the side streets between Boston and Fleet Streets have great housing bargains to be found. These neighborhoods have much the

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Baltimore Food, Hon

by Sarah Wheelan

Outside of the confines of Little Italy and Fells Point you will find — good food! Yes, it can be found, and the biggest problem is choosing where to go. With a little advice from a die-hard ethnic food fan you can amaze your fellow narrow-minded classmates.

One of the best restaurants in Baltimore is, unfortunately, one of the more difficult ones to find. Over the past three years it has become increasingly well-discovered and while you still don't have to wait more than 15 minutes even on a busy night, the tables do fill up quickly with salivating diners. I speak of the Orchard Cafe and Market (NOT to be confused with the nearby Orchard Inn). At 8815 Orchard Tree Lane in Towson it is most easily approached from Joppa Road, less than a mile west of Loch Raven Blvd. It is on the north side of the street, behind Gardiner's (big green sign). Look hard and you will be rewarded (or call first for detailed directions, 410-339-7700). Open for lunch and dinner every day, this restaurant serves the most delicious and well-seasoned Persian food I have ever encountered.

Imagine fresh feta cheese in a rich, smoky saffron cream sauce adorned with caramelized onions and grilled vegetables of all shapes and sizes and you get close to one of my favorite appetizers, Sauteed Bulgarian Feta. Another winner is the Charbroiled Portabello, which features an impossibly large and richly flavored mushroom in a light sauce with feta and tomatoes. The hummus and yogurt appetizers are also quite pleasing.

Entrees are almost all served with saffron rice (REAL saffron, not just turmeric). Spicy Kermani beef was served in a tomato-based sauce with lots of vegetables and a light cucumber cream dip. The flavor was subtle and pleasant, contrasting nicely with the Seafood Rashti, which featured shrimp, scallops, marinated fish, and mushrooms in a slightly spicy, rich and flavorful sauce. The Seafood Rashti was possibly one of the best dishes I've tried here and I will be sure to try it again. Other winners have been Yadzi Vegetarian, Seafood Paiella special (pricy but excellent), and Chicken Kebobs.

Dessert is a must. We chose Tiramisu and shredded wheat with honey from a delicious tray which also included Creme Brulée and a caramelized sugar pastry. Desserts change quickly here; we have also enjoyed chocolate truffle cakes, sorbets and more.

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The annual fall GSA picnic was held at Garland Field at the Homewood campus on September 13. Graduate students from a variety of programs enjoyed BBQ food, snacks, volleyball, soccer, and softball. Many thanks to GSA VP Kellie Cummings for organizing much of this fun event! Photo J Beneken.

con't from p.3, *Living*

same feel to them as Upper Fell's Point, and many of the same comments mentioned above apply here.

A few general things to consider: Various transportation options exist for all of these areas. One popular option for Fell's Point residents is to walk to the Thames Street parking lot and take the shuttle from there. The number 13 bus runs down Wolfe Street and goes all the way down to Canton Square. I usually walk up Wolfe Street to the hospital from Upper Fell's Point (my place is on Gough St.) and have never had a problem, but safely along this route remains a concern - if it is after dark I usually take the bus. Grocery shopping is a pleasure at the new Canton Safeway on Boston Street. A number of corner grocery stores and the Broadway market offer additional convenience. Finally, more and more graduate students seem to be moving into these neighborhoods, making for a real sense of community. Virtually all of the students I talked to who live there were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences, and plan to continue living in the area.

The next article in this series will highlight the neighborhoods of Mt. Vernon, Downtown, and Federal Hill. If you have had experience living in any of these areas and would like to comment, please email me at mwallenf@welchlink. Thanks.

con't from p.1, *Dean*

the large class sizes. Our views will be taken to the administration by Dean Hildreth and some of the suggestions that came up are listed below. Since first year courses for all graduate students are generally quite large, each department could supplement these larger lectures with smaller core discussions. Many students also felt that having a unified calendar between the School of Hygiene and Public Health and the School of Medicine could help shrink class size. And of course, there should be student representation on the curriculum review committee. As an aside to this discussion, we learned that there is a new policy that allows graduate students in the School of Medicine to transfer between graduate programs with the approval of the program directors and department chairs.

Lastly, we were provided with some perspectives from a more senior graduate student about some of the changes that have occurred during her tenure here. For example, five years ago there was no Dean of Graduate Student Affairs, the GSA had no budget, parking options were basically non-existent, and there was very little student representation on many of the administrative committees. Let us keep up the good work.

con't from p.3, *Food*

The beverage menu includes gourmet coffees, juices and yogurt drinks as well as birch beer and sassafras root beer. The Orchard does not have a liquor license but this is to your advantage as you are encouraged to bring your own wine and they will serve it to you at no extra cost, a big money-saver over other restaurants which charge twice the price for their wine and/or charge a "corking fee".

Appetizers range from \$3 to \$7.95, entrees from \$10.95 to \$15.95, and desserts are all \$4.95.

Cafe Tattoo is another place to try. Take exit 32A, Belair Rd south, from the beltway and head south to 4825 Belair Rd. There you will find this outpost of good food and entertainment, a bar that serves ONLY excellent beer (you will be actively sneered at for ordering Budweiser) and award-winning chili that will undoubtedly cause you pain and suffering if you don't treat it with respect. Black bean burritos for \$2.95 were among the limited but hearty menu selections; other items include turkey and white bean burritos, several sandwiches, barbecued ribs, and corn chips with homemade salsa, some of the best I've had. If you ask for hot sauce you will be rewarded with a very large bottle of sauce that will (or should) scare you. Dessert is hard to refuse — their peanut butter pie has also won awards. Conversation with the bartender (sit at the bar if there's room) ranged from Trotsky to Dunkirk to Churchill to Mayan technology to the current Whitbread race. Tuesday nights Carl Filipiak will treat you to excellent jazz sounds, and various other bands grace the stage the rest of the week. Open Tuesday through Saturday, this is a place to try. 410-325-7427.

Next time: battle of the Greeks, and a quaint little place out in the farmlands of Phoenix (not nearly as far away as it sounds).

con't from p.2, *Science*

on the road of science is insurmountable.

Today's competitive funding situation makes it impossible for many researchers to follow up on "strange things" unless supported by preliminary results. But having to produce sufficient data to renew next year's grant should not discourage anyone from becoming a driver. So how is the future of science going to accommodate all the budding drivers? Money seems to be the issue here. How about building some HOV lanes? Open up more funding opportunities for the basic sciences. That way multiple passengers can take turns driving and everyone will be sure to reach their goals. On the road of science, there are passengers and there are drivers. Drivers wanted.

Hopkins Graduate Student Dressed for Success

Some of you may be familiar with Nextwave, Science's online magazine for young scientists. A few weeks ago, Peter Fiske of Nextwave advertised a contest seeking a young scientist who would be willing to undergo a partially subsidized fashion makeover. The winner of this contest, the "scruffiest of the lot", was our own Tim Worrall.

Check out Tim's metamorphosis at <http://www.nextwave.org/server-java/RetDoc/nextwave/dress.htm>.

If you're not a registered Nextwave user, you can either register yourself (it's free and takes less than two minutes) or use the gsa account. Login name "gsa", password "gsa97".

The pen is mightier than the pipet...

Please send any poems, short stories, creative writing, or black and white art to the GSA Newsletter! Submissions for the next issue are due January 16, 1998. Contact any editor for a copy of the 1997 Submission Guidelines.

