



BBS Bulletin

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Nov/Dec 2005

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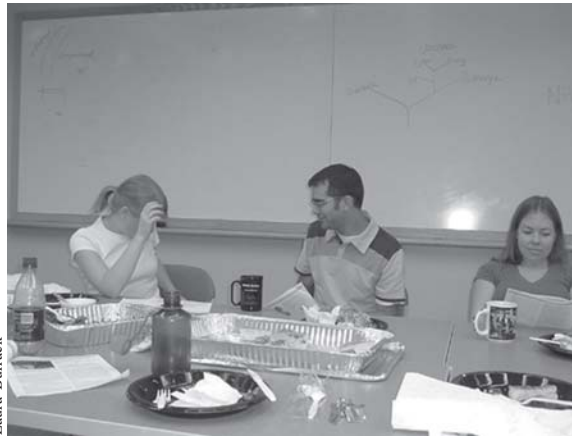
Letters to the Editor

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Student Journal Clubs

Laura Burrack (G4)

Every Friday at noon, many of the graduate students in the Microbiology Department gather for Micro Journal Club. We usually start by eating and catching up with each other for a few minutes before moving on to the paper discussion. Students take turns presenting, with each student presenting approximately twice a year. The subjects vary widely within the field of microbiology and sometimes stretch a bit (or a lot) beyond microbiology. For example, recently we have discussed



Erin Troy (G5), Mark Gonzalez (G5) and Melinda Faulkner (G3) discuss the discovery of archaea capable of nitrification at the Microbiology student journal club.

papers ranging from engineered zinc-finger proteins to polysaccharides on the surfaces of gut flora bacterial species. The format is highly informal with no pre-reading of the paper required. Mostly, the journal club serves as an opportunity to get to know other students in our department regardless of year, and to discuss some of the more interesting developments in

see 'journal' on page 6

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The Vandy Lounge:

A Common Student Lounge at Harvard Medical School

Allan M. Gurtan (G5)

Student centers have long been one of the hallmarks of colleges and universities. These centers, dedicated exclusively to student activities, strengthen interactions among the student body and promote a unified academic identity that spans multiple disciplines and recognizes the collective thirst for knowledge. To some, these centers provide opportunities to form professional networks while, to others, they allow new friendships to develop.

The closest facility Harvard Medical School has to student center is Vanderbilt Hall. It houses a dormitory, a limited athletic facility, and a few other resources. "Vandy," however, lacks an informal gathering place where students can relax with friends and meet new acquaintances, one of the cornerstones of any successful student center. The Common Room, while intended for this purpose in principle, has little to offer socially other than a few tables and seats. It is used on occasion for special events, often by invitation only, and remains unoccupied the rest of the time.

Elsewhere on campus, the HMS Societies were

established a while ago in the Tosteson Medical Education Center (T-MEC) to provide small student centers for medical students. Each society, however, serves only a quarter of every incoming medical school class and does not provide a chance to meet students in other programs. Even this limited social role has diminished over the years as the societies have been overtaken by administrative offices.

In light of these circumstances, there is an effort under way to establish, on the HMS campus, a student lounge inclusive of all Longwood students in graduate, medical, dental, and public health programs. During the last six months, the Biomedical Graduate Student Organization (BGSO) and the HMS Student Council have been meeting with HMS administrators to determine the feasibility and ensuing details of such a project.

The model for Vandy Lounge is based loosely on the three student-run pubs of MIT: The Thirsty-Ear, the Muddy Charles, and the R and D. These three "watering holes" provide opportunities for see 'Lounge' on page 7

Laura Benjamin: Assistant Professor of Pathology

Maria Naylor (G3)

Research Interests

Vascular biology relating to angiogenesis in normal development and disease progression.

Background in a Nutshell

- Grew up in Savannah, GA.
- *Undergraduate*: Barnard College in NYC, despite objections from her father who did not want his daughter living in “that pit.”
- *Graduate*: Princeton and University of Pennsylvania. Laura had a rather unusual graduate career - she went through four labs and three thesis projects before graduating. With a husband and small daughter (born five days after graduating from college), she was not free to follow the first three labs as they each left for other universities.
- *Post-doc*: Hebrew University, Jerusalem, with Eli Keshet.
- Joined the Harvard Faculty in 2000. When invited to give a job talk at HMS, Laura showed up wearing a short skirt, not realizing she would be speaking from a raised platform.

Growing up in the South

Laura describes growing up in Georgia as having been a completely different world and life from the one she lives in now – one grandfather was a pig farmer, the other was a grocer, and very few

people in her family had gone to college. She notes that the South was about 10 years behind the rest of the country, so that when she told her father (a psychiatrist) at the



age of 17 that she wanted to be a scientist, he replied by stating she would do no such thing – she was going to get married and have children. Laura managed to do both and says her father is one of her biggest supporters.

Inspirations

Laura cites her inspiration to go into science as coming from a number of sources. A self-described “nerd,” she enjoyed being alone as a child – exploring her natural surroundings and studying old medical textbooks. She was also inspired by an enthusiastic/crazy high school biology

teacher, who would place forgotten items into the animal morgue and smash earthworms between textbook pages. At Barnard, she took a class with Michael Levine and later worked in his lab, motivated by his energy and passion for science. Later, after feeling burned from her graduate experience, Laura says she had a lot of fun as a post-doc working with Eli Keshet and had her love of science rejuvenated.

Hobbies

When she can find the time, Laura enjoys reading and writing poetry and tackling crafts projects, such as “modernizing” an antique dressing table and tiling her kitchen. Most of all, she cherishes the time spent being with good friends (especially while singing karaoke at Maluken) and savoring good (cheap) wine.

Professor Recommendations

- *Restaurant (for fun, not food)*: Maluken.
- *Movie*: “Life as a House.”
- *Poet*: Adrienne Rich.
- *Good, cheap wine*: Mark West Pinot Noir; 1+1=3 Cava.

Advice to Graduate Students

- Be open minded – there is something interesting in every field.
- Be optimistic – even if you have a graduate experience similar to hers!

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Shopping Secrets for the Scientifically Inclined

BBS Bulletin Staff

The winter holiday season is upon us, and that means gift-giving will soon be on your mind. If you are looking for more than a box of pipet tips to give to that special someone, the Bulletin staff is offering its collective shopping wisdom. Below are straight-from-the-horse’s-mouth suggestions and commentary from the editors.

For one stop shopping: Wrentham Premium Outlets. The mall is outside so it gets cold in the winter and also crowded with other holiday shoppers. But, it is huge! There are a ton of stores offering everything from designer clothing to kitchen supplies to camping equipment. If you can (and are willing to) make the one hour drive, you can check everyone off your list. If vehicular transport is an insurmountable problem, hop on the E line

and head to the Prudential/Copley malls. They have many of the same chain stores, just not the attractive discounts.

For moms: Go to Williams-Sonoma (in the Copley mall and other locations) to find interesting kitchen gadgets or one of their handy and attractive cookbooks. Also, they are always giving away free samples of something yummy!

For dads: The Harvard Coop in Cambridge. A large assortment of T-shirts, hats, etc. all branded with the Harvard name. For dads who never go shopping for themselves, try a casual shirt or two from Filene’s or Macy’s in Downtown Crossing.

For boyfriends/husbands: A nice sweater that he would not buy for himself.

For girlfriends/wives: You can never go wrong with a spa gift certificate. Jewelry (it does not have to be expensive) is also a great gift.

For friends/siblings: If your loved ones live in the middle of the country, then it is easy to buy gifts for them at stores that are common in Boston but not in most of the country. For example: H&M, Lord and Taylor, Benetton, and the new Club Monaco store. If they live in Boston or places that have these stores, then you need to work a little harder. Tickets to a show, concert, or athletic event are a great gift and you know they will not end up cluttering your friend’s apartment.

For a group of friends: Many of us are too poor to buy all of our friends/ see ‘Shopping’ on page 6

Winter Fitness: A Graduate Student's Guide to a Free Workout

Alexandra Petrova (G4)

If you have been too wrapped up in classes or working overtime on your thesis project to visit the Vanderbilt Athletic Facility, now is a great time to explore all that it has to offer.

Vanderbilt Hall is home to a recreational facility better known as the Vandy gym. This small complex, the only fitness center available for free to BBS students in the Longwood Medical Area, has been the cause for complaints for years. Until last year, however, these complaints were falling on deaf ears, as the administration would not acknowledge the problem and cited a lack of funds for improvements. However, thanks to the efforts of the Biomedical Graduate Student Organization (BGSO) and other student council organizations around the LMA over the past year, the administration has taken notice and improvements have been made.

Last fall, Allan Gurtan (G5) and Luigi Adamo (G2), members of BGSO, along with representatives from HMS, HSPH and GSAS student councils met with the administration to address several issues, among them the state of the Vandy gym. They were told that strong student consensus was required regarding the need for improvements before the administration would commit to a plan. Adamo came up with the idea for an online survey to be taken by students from the major graduate and professional programs in the LMA. One of the issues addressed by the survey was the state of the athletic facility. More than 900 students responded: 76 percent of survey respondents rated Vanderbilt gym a 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Furthermore, one-third of the students expressed specific concerns about basic aspects of the gym, such as cleanliness and ventilation.

The survey results got the administration's attention. Jane Garfield, the Director of Campus Operations at HMS, worked together with other deans to find

money for improvements and discussed immediate and long-term concerns. Heather Sharpe, the Athletic Director at Vandy, put together a proposal recommending immediate improvements that needed to be made, taking into account safety, usability, and space. The main concern was the poor state of the cardio equipment and inadequate strength training equipment. As a result, the cardio room got a complete makeover; every piece of equipment was replaced. More treadmills and elliptical gliders were installed. Other equipment included step machines, recumbent bikes, and upright bikes. Various machines for targeted strength exercises were added to the multi-gym room. Sticky mats for yoga and pilates as well as balance balls were acquired.

Sharpe has been working hard to accommodate students' needs and constantly trying to improve and expand the athletic offerings at Vandy. She is enthusiastic about her commitment to the health and fitness of the student community, and is happy to talk to anyone about nutritional and fitness concerns or to recommend a personalized program. You can find Heather in her office in Vanderbilt or email her at heather_sharpe@hms.harvard.edu.

The Vandy gym may be limited in space, but it offers many hidden gems. In addition to the cardio room and two weight rooms, there is a bouldering room, three squash courts and an outdoor tennis court. The daily group fitness classes have diverse offerings that include yoga/pilates, cardio kickboxing, and hip-hop dance. Karate-Do and Tae Kwon Do classes are also offered, taught by members of the LMA community. The gymnasium is home to the basketball court as well as seasonal intramural sports such as volleyball, indoor soccer, and floor hockey. For more information, visit: www.hms.harvard.edu/operations/vh/athleticbrochure.html.

Although much improved with the recent makeover, the Vandy gym can leave you wanting more. If you are up for a bit of



Chris Brown

adventure, you should make your way over to the main campus. Harvard students have free access to a surprising number of facilities.

The Malkin Athletic Center (gocrimson.collegesports.com/facilities/malkin.html), located at the corner of Holyoke and Winthrop Streets, offers a variety of fitness options. It houses two cardio rooms with over 70 pieces of equipment, three weight rooms, two pools, and an indoor cycling studio. Students can choose from a full schedule of group exercise classes, take swimming lessons, or participate in Intramural or Club Sports; the latter ranging from martial arts to dancing and cheerleading. For a small fee, students can even engage the help of a personal trainer or take scuba diving lessons.

The recently renovated Hemenway Gymnasium located near the Law School is a lesser known option available to the Harvard Community. The facility holds cardio and weight equipment, a basketball court, and multiple squash courts. Group exercise classes are also now being offered.

Swimmers should also explore Blodgett Pool, located on the Allston side of the Charles. It offers 25- and 50-meter lanes as well as a variety of springboards and diving platforms (www.athletics.harvard.edu/recreation/Aquatics/aquatics_index.html). In the same vicinity, the Bright Hockey Center offers ice skating lessons and general skate hours. Other activities, such as indoor tennis, sailing, and sculling, can be enjoyed seasonally and for a fee. For more info, visit: gocrimson.collegesports.com/facilities/rec_facilities.html.



Chris Brown

Money Money Money!: The Taxman Cometh

Aryaman Shalizi (recent grad)

A year before his death, Benjamin Franklin observed that only two things are certain in life, “death and taxes.” While the good work of your fellow BBS students tries to stave off the former, the latter largely funds the necessary research. That alone should be enough reason for you to pay your taxes next April 15th, but as those of you who attended the retreat this year are no doubt aware, paying your income taxes also keeps the jackbooted thugs of the IRS and Massachusetts Department of Revenue off your back. (Note to any jackbooted thugs who get their hands on this article: Keep up the great work!)

As a graduate student, you are in a different financial situation than most of your peers who went on to lucrative post-college careers. Instead, you have chosen the pursuit of knowledge, which is typically accompanied by a life of luxurious penury. You are not earning “wages,” but rather receive a taxable grant or scholarship. This

has some consequences, since “wages” can be contributed to a tax-deductible individual retirement account (IRA), but scholarship and fellowship money cannot. According to the US tax code, wages are defined as “payment received for services performed.” Scholarships and fellowships are defined as monies “paid for the benefit of an individual to aid in the pursuit of study or research.” The tech in your lab gets wages for western blotting. You get a scholarship/fellowship stipend for western blotting. Five years or so from now, the tech in your lab will still be earning wages, but you will have earned a PhD.

Some portions of the scholarship or fellowship you receive are tax-exempt (the part Harvard gets), and some portions are taxed (the part you get). But, the next time you think about the fact that your college roommate is earning enough to buy and sell you three times over, remember that, in reality, your tuition is also getting paid for

you, and your “total” earnings come in at close to \$70,000 a year. You do not have to pay taxes on the portion of your scholarship or fellowship that covers tuition and fees at Harvard, but you never see that anyway. You do have to pay taxes on the part that you receive for living expenses, which can be painful, but need not be complicated. The goal of this article is to clarify the tax payment process for you. Additional information regarding tax payments as a student can be found at www.irs.gov/individuals/students and at www.dor.state.ma.us/help/guides/abate_amend/Personal/PIT_IssuesStudents.htm.

All of the necessary forms and instructions for filing your federal and state income taxes are available off the websites of the IRS and DOR at www.irs.gov and www.dor.state.ma.us, respectively. Printouts of the .pdf forms are now accepted

see ‘Taxes’ on page 7

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Community Service Profile: Harvard Square Homeless Shelter

Bryan McIver Hooks (G5, Neuroscience)

What is the program you work for, and what type of service(s) do they/you provide and why?

I work for the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter at the Lutheran Church in Harvard Square. We are a winter emergency shelter, providing short-term shelter and meals for 24 guests each night. We open on November 15 and stay open each season until April 15. The shelter staffers are all volunteers, primarily undergraduates.

Are there any requirements such as training and education?

There is no previous experience or training required to volunteer. Students normally volunteer for a weekly shift, and we do offer a training session twice a year (in late October for fall term shifts and early February for spring term shifts), which lasts about 2 hours. But during vacations and school breaks anyone can volunteer.

Where is your program located?

We’re located in Harvard Square in the basement of the Lutheran Church at 66 Winthrop Street. This is next to Pinocchio’s pizza and the Malkin Athletic Center. We’re

open each night from 7 pm until just after breakfast (around 8 am) each day after November 15.

What is the most rewarding aspect for you?

I would say it has definitely been getting to know a lot of diverse people, both guests and students, and often far outside my socioeconomic milieu. Experiences with the guests range from extremely sad (such as watching someone struggle with alcoholism, drug abuse, and psychiatric problems) to good (seeing someone get a job, a home, or even just entertain us with a guitar). Other volunteers do a variety of impressive things outside the shelter, some with similar interests as me in medicine and science (one of my co-workers works in a competing lab at MIT), to pursuing a variety of non-profit careers.

Why did you choose to work for this program?

I actually picked it at random off the Phillips Brooks House Association website! People come to Harvard for a variety of reasons, and usually this includes challenging themselves intellectually by



studying with other outstanding people at Harvard College as well as at Harvard Medical School. But a large fraction of college undergrads say that volunteering through PBHA is the best course they took at school. I still like my research in electrophysiology better, but it is definitely worthwhile to be involved in something that makes a direct impact on other people.

see ‘Community’ on page 5

Recent BBS Student Publications:

*These authors contributed equally to this publication.

Chen W, **Arroyo JD** (G4), Timmons JC, **Possemato R** (G5), Hahn WC. (2005). Cancer-Associated PP2A α Subunits Induce Functional Haploinsufficiency and Tumorigenicity. *Cancer Res.* 65(18):8183-8192.

Agaisse H*, **Burrack LS**(G4)*, Philips JA, Rubin EJ, Perrimon N, Higgins DE. (2005). Genome-Wide RNAi Screen for Host Factors Required for Intracellular Bacterial Infection. *Science* 309(5738): 1248-1251.

Llewellyn M, **Dutton RJ** (G2), Easter J, O'Donnol D, Gober JW. (2005). The conserved flaF gene has a critical role in coupling flagellin translation and assembly in *Caulobacter crescentus*. *Mol Microbiol.* 57(4):1127-42.

Dutton RJ (G2), Zhaohui X, Gober JW. Linking structural assembly to gene expression: a novel mechanism for regulating the activity of a sigma 54 transcription factor. *Mol Microbiol.* Online publication date: 22-Sep-2005.

Elias JE (G6), Haas W, Faherty BK, Gygi SP. (2005). Comparative evaluation of mass spectrometry platforms used in large-scale proteomics investigations. *Nat Methods.* 2(9):667-75.

Park WH, Margossian S, **Horwitz AA** (G5), **Simons AM** (G7), D'Andrea AD, and Parvin JD. (2005). Direct DNA binding activity of the Fanconi Anemia D2 protein. *J Biol Chem* 280, 23593-8.

Martinez-Cruzado JC, Toro-Labrador G, Viera-Vera J, Rivera-Vega MY, Startek J, **Latorre-Esteves M** (G5), Roman-Colon A, Rivera-Torres R, Navarro-Millan IY, Gomez-Sanchez E, Caro-Gonzalez HY, **Valencia-Rivera P** (G4). (2005). Reconstructing the population history of Puerto Rico by means of mtDNA phylogeographic analysis. *Am J Phys Anthropol.* 128(1):131-55.

Laviolette MJ, **Nunes P** (G2), Peyre JB, Aigaki T, Stewart BA. A genetic screen for suppressors of *Drosophila* NSF2 neuromuscular junction overgrowth. (2005). *Genetics* 170(2):779-92.

Reiniger N (recent grad), Ichikawa JK, and Pier GB. (2005). Influence of cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator on gene expression in response to *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infection of human bronchial epithelial cells. *Infection & Immunity* 73:6822.

Frand AR, **Russel S** (G5), and Ruvkun G. (2005). Functional Genomic Analysis of *C. elegans* Molting. *PLoS Biol* Aug 30;3(10):e312 [Epub ahead of print].

Starita LM* (recent grad), **Horwitz AA*** (G5), Keogh MC, Ishioka C, Parvin JD, and Chiba, N. (2005). BRCA1/BARD1 ubiquitinate phosphorylated RNA polymerase II. *J Biol Chem* 280, 24498-505.

Sankaran S, **Starita LM** (recent grad), **Groen AC** (G5), Ko MJ, and Parvin JD. (2005). Centrosomal microtubule nucleation activity is inhibited by BRCA1-dependent ubiquitination. *Mol Cell Biol.* 25, 8656-68.

Takeda DY (recent grad), Parvin JD, and Dutta A. (2005). Degradation of cdt1 during S phase is *skp2* independent and is required for efficient progression of mammalian cells through S phase. *J Biol Chem* 280, 23416-23.

Wingert RA (recent grad), Galloway JL, Barut B, Foott H, Fraenkel P, Axe JL, Weber GF, Dooley K, Davidson AJ, Schmidt B, Paw BH, Shaw GC, Kingsley P, Palis J, Schubert H, Chen O, Kaplin J, Tubingen 200 Screen Consortium, and Zon LI. (2005). Glutaredoxin 5 deficiency reveals Fe/S clusters are required for vertebrate heme synthesis. *Nature* 436, 1035-1039.

Announcements:

Alice S. Tsay (G3) was recently engaged to Bradley C. Kaanta. She respectfully requests that her karaoke-loving friends not tease her with renditions of "Kaanta Hurry Love."

Community, continued from page 4

Why should students/faculty work for your program?

The service we provide is valued by many guests as being the friendliest homeless shelter in the Boston area. We make an effort to get volunteers to interact with the guests and make all parties feel at home, even if it is a temporary one. I think the volunteers also learn something valuable (often people's assumptions turn out to be wrong) and feel like their effort

was appreciated.

For PhD students and others who do not take all the vacation time that undergraduates take (Thanksgiving, Christmas, reading and exam periods, for example), this would be a great opportunity to make a positive and much needed contribution by volunteering once or twice at a time when our normal volunteers are away.

As a note, the shelter's hours are split up into shifts. So if you cannot work early evening during dinner, there is also a late

evening shift, an overnight shift, and a breakfast shift. Shifts range from 2-3 hours long to overnight.

How can others get more information about your program?

The best way is to email our Volunteer Director, Denise Tai (dtai@fas.harvard.edu). You can also email me (hooks@fas.harvard.edu), or even call or stop by the shelter sometime (617-547-2841, though we are only open at night). You can also find us online at hcs.harvard.edu/~hshs.

microbiology (and biology in general).

After talking to students from many labs, I found that there is also a joint BCMP/Cell Biology student journal club that covers a wide range of topics. Similar to the Micro journal club, students take turns presenting papers and enjoy lunch while discussing them. Each of these departments has a separate data presentation venue. BCMP has talks with pizza once a week on Fridays. Similarly, Cell Biology has "Pizza Talks" on Wednesdays. Microbiology has "Monday Talks" which not surprisingly are held on Mondays with assorted homemade baked goods served. The primary BBS departments without student journal clubs, Genetics and Pathology, have data clubs with students and post-docs presenting their work-in-progress.

Although the Microbiology and BCMP/Genetics journal clubs were the only dedicated journal clubs I could find that were not associated with specific labs, I did discover some other cool events sponsored by various departments spread throughout Harvard Medical School and the associated hospitals. Systems Biology has "Theory lunches" with chalk talks on "any biological subject that might be of interest to theoretically minded people." The department of Immunology and Infectious

Disease at the School of Public Health has a combination journal/data club comprised of mostly students and a couple of post-docs that covers topics ranging from bacterial genetics to any sort of parasitic disease. The department of Molecular Biology at MGH has departmental seminars on Fridays during lunch. The department provides pizza and the topics range from immunity to aging to synaptic transmission. The Daley lab sponsors a "Brown Bag Bioethics Discussion" on a bi-monthly basis. Lab members take turns presenting while Louis Guenin, a lecturer on Ethics in Science, moderates the discussion.

If any of the above activities sound interesting to you, I encourage you to broaden your horizons a bit and check them out (see the accompanying box for days, times and locations). If you are a member of a department that does not currently have a student journal club, think about starting one. All you need is a handful of fellow graduate students, someone to send out reminder e-mails, and some money for lunch. If you have to try to convince your department administrators, tell them to think of it as graduate student cohesiveness for about the same cost as a mini-prep kit.

Days, Times and Places:

- BCMP/Cell Biology Journal Club – Tuesdays, noon, Folin-Wu Room (C Bldg.)
- BCMP Data Club – Fridays, 12:15pm, Cannon Room (C Bldg.)
- Cell Biology Pizza Talks – Wednesdays, 12:15pm, Cannon Room (C Bldg.)
- Microbiology Journal Club – Fridays, noon, Warren Alpert Bldg. Rm. 341
- Microbiology Monday Talks – Mondays, noon, Warren Alpert Bldg. Rm. 341
- Immunology and Infections Disease Journal/Data Club – Fridays, 12:30pm, 7th floor conference room of Bldg. 1 at HSPH
- Genetics DJ Club (Data Club) – Fridays, noon, NRB Rm. 350
- Pathology Data Club – Fridays, 4pm, NRB Rm. 933
- Systems Biology Theory Lunches – Fridays, noon, Warren Alpert Bldg. Rm 436
- Molecular Biology (MGH) – Fridays, lunch, Simches Research Bldg. At MGH
- Brown-Bag Bioethics Discussion – email daleylab@childrens.harvard.edu

* Note – the smaller events may not be able to handle a large influx of people without advanced warning since they may be in smaller rooms and only have enough food for a limited number of people.

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Shopping, continued from page 2

roommates/labmates gifts. A solution is to get a group of friends together for a nice dinner. Everyone pays for himself/herself, but you feel like you are taking your friends out for dinner!

For labmates: Baking cookies or other goodies is a great way to show that you care without spending a lot of money. Find some good recipes and put your buffer-making prowess to good use!

For anyone and everyone: Books! The Brookline Booksmith has the greatest bargain tables with books that people actually want to read, and no one will know that you got their gift on sale.

For post holiday shopping: Filene's Basement on New Year's Day. If you can get out of bed before noon, you will have the place to yourself and be able to score big at this one day sale!

Extra shopping tip for guys: Want to

know what is going to be "in" for guys in the near future? Try paying more attention to the clothes that trendy girls are wearing. Chances are, if it has been widely accepted by the female populace, you will start to see toned-down versions of it for guys in 2-3 years (yes, we are slow). Examples: bootcut/flare jeans and striped shirts, or white capri pants that were all the rage for Eastern European guys two summers ago. Please use common sense, though. Short skirts and tube tops are never going to be in. At least, we hope not.

Random musings: There is a GAP in every "Square" (which is really ironic, considering the logo). Red Sox attire passes for "business" dress, especially during the Playoffs – but we did not have to worry about that for too long this year...<sigh>

Finally, on a more serious note: a gift idea for people who have everything or do not want to accumulate more stuff - donate to a charity in their honor.

2005 BBS RETREAT



Jennifer Svendsen

Above: Bob Kingston performs karaokee with back up singers Amy Ma and Diane Libuda. Below: casino night.



Jennifer Svendsen

Taxes, continued from page 4

for paper submission of your federal and state tax returns. Alternatively, you can file electronically from both the IRS and DOR websites. Electronic filing typically costs \$20-\$40, since it is performed through third-party websites, such as H&R Block, but most services will file both your federal and state taxes and keep track of your personal and tax information from year to year. Starting this year, the IRS also provides its own free electronic filing service for individual taxpayers, which can be found by following the “Free File” link at www.irs.gov/efile. At this time, Massachusetts does not have a free file site.

So, how much can you expect to pay in taxes? I do not know your personal situation, so I cannot give you an exact number. But, I can give you an approximate estimate based off of a typical BBS student. If you can get through this sentence without blinking, you are prepared to file standard tax forms: For the sake of argument, the “typical” BBS student earns about \$26,000 a year in the form of a grant/scholarship stipend, is single (for tax purposes), has no children or other dependents, rents an apartment that costs more than \$250 a month, does not have other significant sources of income, does not contribute to either a traditional or Roth IRA (which in a

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Lounge, continued from page 1

students across programs and disciplines to meet each other in an informal environment. The goal for Longwood is to have a similar venue: A low-key lounge that offers snacks, beer and wine (if a liquor license can be acquired); a dart board and a few other distractions; and mainly a collegial, social atmosphere that provides respite from a day’s work, whether in the lab, classroom, or clinic. Current ideas for the lounge include having a wet bar with service during Friday and Saturday nights, though the feasibility and demand for this service remains to be determined.

The most appropriate location for the new lounge is the Vanderbilt Common Room. It is well-situated in a student building; large enough to accommodate the characteristics described; and its intended function has always been as a meeting place for Longwood students. One concern, however, needs to be addressed: students currently use the room for private events and no other student space has yet been identified as an adequate substitute. To address this issue, the design criteria for

strict legal sense you cannot do, since IRA contributions must be made from “wages”), and does not make substantial charitable donations (by “substantial,” I mean your donations plus any moving expenses are more than the standard personal federal deduction of \$4,850). Using this model, the typical BBS student can expect to pay about \$3,390 per year in taxes, \$2,346 to the feds, and \$1,044 to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Here is how I arrived at the two numbers: From the assumptions above, on the federal personal income tax Form 1040, the typical BBS student can claim the standard \$4,850 personal deduction and a single \$3,100 exemption. That leaves \$18,050 of taxable income, which according to the 2004 tax tables (found in www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1040tt.pdf), means the typical student owes \$2,346. From the same assumptions above, on Massachusetts DOR Form 1, the typical BBS student will be able to claim a standard personal deduction of \$3,300 and also deduct up to \$3,000 of rent paid in the past year from your taxable income reported to the state. That leaves \$19,700 that is taxed at a rate of 5.3%, meaning that the typical BBS student will owe \$1,044 to Massachusetts.

Unfortunately, taxes are not

conversion of the room to a lounge should require that the layout maintain adaptability. If designed correctly, students who reserve the new lounge for their events should be able to change the layout based on their needs. Even this set-up, however, might reduce the availability of the Vandy Common Room. Nevertheless, the benefits of an inclusive, well-designed social space such as the Vandy Lounge would far outweigh those of the current arrangement in which the common room is available for students at the cost of general under-use.

Thus far, the administration has been very responsive. Several DMS faculty members strongly support the idea of a common student lounge (in fact, a few had discussed a similar plan amongst themselves before finding out about the ongoing efforts of BGSO). HMS and DMS administrators have also been supportive and are lending cautious support for the project. The proposal for Vandy Lounge is especially timely because of the ongoing plans by HMS to assess and revise many aspects of the school, from academic

automatically withheld from your monthly stipend, so you must make sure you file quarterly estimated tax returns using Form 1040-ES and Form 1-ES for federal and state taxes, respectively. That means every three months sending checks for \$587 to the IRS and \$261 to the DOR. Exact filing dates are listed on the respective forms. Of course, one would probably prefer to buy an iPod Nano or trip to California with that money, but resist the temptation! Either set up a separate bank account that is only for paying your taxes, or use the magic of PeopleSoft, accessible at <http://harvie.harvard.edu>, to automatically withhold the appropriate amount each month from your stipend.

This is a basic introduction to what you can expect when paying your taxes. It is not too bad if you budget yourself appropriately each month instead of waiting until April 2nd to realize that you have two weeks to come up with \$4,000. Just think of paying taxes as doing your part to keep hordes of scientists off the street, and avoid contemplating the irony of paying taxes on a stipend that was created from other people’s taxes.

curricula to facilities management. Student input at this stage of planning is essential and will ensure that student needs are not overlooked and that HMS resources are not wasted on suboptimal student facilities.

Ultimately, these efforts are intended to introduce LMA students to their colleagues in graduate, medical, and public health programs. After all, though there may be differences in the ways that researchers, clinicians, and epidemiologists approach the same problem, it is the sum of these approaches that forms a complete solution. In this vein, the goal of Vandy Lounge is to establish a unified academic identity at HMS – one that rejects the distinctions between the school’s academic programs and recognizes our common interests in the life sciences.

Allan M. Gurtan is President of the Biomedical Graduate Student Organization (BGSO) and may be contacted at allan_gurtan@student.hms.harvard.edu. BGSO may be contacted at bgso@hms.harvard.edu.

Joanne Chan: Assistant Professor of Surgery

Geng Li (G3)

Research Interests

Defining the molecular mechanism of blood vessel formation and relating it to human diseases; the Chan lab is working on vascular receptor signaling with chemical genetic and molecular approaches in z e b r a f i s h embryos, and on regenerative angiogenesis in adult zebrafish.



Background in a Nutshell

- Grew up in Canada.
- *Undergraduate*: University of Toronto, majored in physiology; worked with Dr. Colin Bayliss, a cardiac surgeon.
- *Graduate*: University of Toronto, molecular biology; worked with Dr. Valerie Watt on novel tyrosine kinases.
- *Postdoc*: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; worked with Dr. Tom Roberts and established the zebrafish as a model system for receptor signaling pathways relevant to cancer and angiogenesis.
- Joined the Harvard faculty in January 2004.

Why angiogenesis? Why zebrafish?

At the age of 17, Joanne encountered a paper in *Science* about a compound that dissolves atherosclerosis plaques. It intrigued her and drove her to engage Dr. Bayliss in a four-hour conversation on the circulation system. Later on she joined his lab and began her energetic and dedicated adventures in the field of cardiovascular medicine.

Joanne played a large role in initiating the research of angiogenesis in zebrafish at Dana-Farber. Proudly and enthusiastically, she and her colleagues gave me a tour of their fish tanks and showed me (under the microscope) the adult fish fins and circulation system of the transparent zebrafish embryo.

On Mentoring

Joanne has always been motivated by her parents, especially her mother, to become an expert in a field and help people understand nature better. A lot of scientists have inspired her over the years and become lifetime mentors, as well as friends. She

herself is very interested in communicating with students and post-docs, and her enthusiasm for science is contagious. She also takes time to promote scientific research and to help bridge the gap between science professionals and the public.

Hobbies

Joanne likes arts and crafts and does power yoga regularly as way of meditating after a day of challenging work. She also enjoys cooking because she feels it is an experiment that is always rewarding.

Professor Recommendations

- *Restaurant*: Pho Lemongrass.
- *Movie*: "Silence of the Lambs."
- *Book*: "Love in the Time of Cholera."
- *Vacation destination*: Italy.

Advice to Graduate Students:

- Find a lab where you feel comfortable and follow your heart in doing what you want to do.
- Go to conferences and get exposed to people using their scientific training at different jobs. Ask questions.
- Set a goal for the end of your PhD early on – it will give you a lot of motivation throughout graduate school.



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