

THE SELF MONITOR

The Official Alumni Newsletter of the Psychology Department of the State University of New York at New Paltz

Volume 5, Summer 2012

Editors:

Dr. Phyllis R. Freeman (freemanp@newpaltz.edu)

Dr. Glenn Geher (geherg@newpaltz.edu)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note from the Department Chair	1
News and Updates	2
PsychTable	3
Focus on Alumni	4-5
Nicole Colletti ('07),	
Brian Walker ('12),	
Loretta Lynn ('95)	
Shakira Whitley ('04)	
NP Students Clean Up at NEEPS	6
A Year of Wonder	6
Congratulations!	7
Stay Connected!	7

Letter from the Chair (Glenn Geher)



Academic Year 2011/2012 was as busy and exciting as ever. Our Department continues to thrive in all areas – with our undergraduate and graduate programs expanding, our Department continuing to lead the university in student/faculty collaborative research, faculty publications and grant activities continuing at levels that would make anyone’s parents proud, and students and alumni continuing to reach academic and career success in all corners of the world.

As in past years we continue connecting our educational efforts to innovative extra-curricular activities. This past year this included our Department presence at the university’s annual Evolutionary Studies Seminar Series, the launching of our highly successful Cognitive Sciences Speaker Series, our well-attended holiday party and end-of-year barbecue, and, of course, the annual research-team Kickball tournament – which this year was won, by Tournament Commissioner Dr. Corwin Senko’s Strategic Strikers (who beat a strong, highly competitive, yet gracious Team Pleistocene in the final!).

As always, more work needs to be done – and we continue to strive to provide the best possible educational experience for all our students. And to foster the development of our alumni as they continue to grow and thrive in their professional and personal lives.

Glenn Geher (geherg@newpaltz.edu).
Chair, Psychology Department
www.newpaltz.edu/psychology

NEWS and UPDATES

Several of the following news blurbs come from our Departmental Website's news page from the past year:

www.newpaltz.edu/psychology/news.html

- Congratulations to **Dr. Julian Keenan**, an alumnus of both our undergraduate and MA psychology programs, who was named one of [New Jersey's 20 "Biggest Brains"](#) and [interviewed by NPR](#).
- The [Institute for Disaster Mental Health](#) (IDMH) is coordinating a program with helping professionals in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza that aims to address the mental health needs of Israeli and Palestinian children and families via development and distribution of psychoeducational materials.
- Congratulations to Professor **Jonathan Raskin** for receiving the 2011 [Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) "Excellence in Faculty Scholarship" award. Based on his many publications and presentations - along with his being honored in recent years by such esteemed bodies as the [American Psychological Association](#) - Dr. Raskin is, in the words of Dean James Schiffer, "richly deserving of this award." Please make sure to congratulate Dr. Raskin when you see him!
- **Professor Navin Viswanathan**, assistant professor of psychology, recently received an extramural grant from the National Institute of Health. This grant, for \$291,698, will fund a great deal of student research and travel as part of this initiative and will help shed light on the basis and architecture of speech perception. Way to go Dr. Viswanathan!
- Adjunct professor of psychology [Rosemarie Sokol Chang](#) has had a recent article of hers, published in the *Journal of Social, Cultural, and Evolutionary Psychology*, make the media all over the world. This article, titled "Whines, cries, and motherese: Their relative power to distract," has been covered in such outlets as *The New York Daily News*, 1010 WINS Radio, *Time* Magazine's website. And more. Here are just some of the media links to this story: [MSNBC](#), [Reuters](#), [The Huffington Post](#)
- Congratulations to Professor Doug Maynard, who was promoted to Full Professor – and to Professor Tabitha Holmes, who was promoted to Associate Professor. Drs. Maynard and Holmes represent the best of what we strive for as a department – we are lucky to have such dedicated and effective teachers and scholars among our ranks!

PsychTable has New Paltz Roots



Is the human brain continuing to evolve? In what ways does it adapt to changing conditions? Who else is asking these questions, and what answers are they finding? PsychTable.org is a new, online project co-created by Daniel Glass '12g (Psychology), with Niruban Balachandran (Rutgers University) and Timothy Nabzdyk (Mississippi State University and SUNY Buffalo), to collect information related to these issues. Evolved psychological adaptations (EPAs) of the human mind are the focus of Glass's research, and PsychTable.org is the first international collaborative endeavor to classify them. The project, which lies at the intersection of psychology, biology, cognitive science, neuroscience, and anthropology, allows scientists, educators, and students in each of these fields, as well as the general public, to connect directly and share information. Still in its infancy, it has already been endorsed by some of the top evolutionary psychologists and other behavioral researchers in the field, including Robert Kurzban (University of Pennsylvania) and Steven Pinker (Harvard University).

(From the campus newsletter, NewsPulse; June 27, 2012)

In addition to co-creating PsychTable, Dan Glass authored or co-authored eight significant scholarly publications during his two years at New Paltz. He also served effectively as the assistant to the Evolutionary Studies Program and as the Editorial Assistants for both the Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology as well as EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium during his tenure at New Paltz.



Dan Glass (MA, 2012; co-founder of PsychTable)

FOCUS ON OUR ALUMS

Nicole Colletti (BA, 2007)
nicoleacolletti@gmail.com



After graduating from New Paltz in 2007 with my BA in Psychology, I found my life to be more of a whirlwind that has led me to where I want to be. I moved to Texas less than a day after graduation and was given the opportunity to work with the Boy Scouts of America for three great years. Though I loved my job and the people I worked with, I felt that I was missing out on my true goal in life, to help children in need. I received this opportunity in August of 2010 to work for High Sky Children's Ranch in Midland, TX. Though I took a dramatic cut in pay, I was finally at peace with a career track that I knew was meant for me. Exactly one year later, I was promoted to Case Manager for my shelter of 5-17 year old males and females. I have the perfect mix of office life and working with youth in my community that I feel need the most support. I wouldn't have been able to have taken this position if it wasn't for my very understanding husband, Aaron, and the training that I received at SUNY New Paltz. Also, a huge THANK YOU to my Oasis/Haven crew for teaching me how to handle the more difficult situations that arise at my job

Loretta Lynn (BA, 1995)
queenbee718@yahoo.com



After graduating from SUNY New Paltz with a BA in Psychology and in Dance as well as a minor in Philosophy, I obtained a Master's of Science in Dance / Movement Therapy from Pratt Institute. My experience at New Paltz helped me to think outside of the box and find a career path that has been incredibly satisfying. The American Dance Therapy Association defines dance/movement therapy as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual. After working for some years on an acute, inpatient psychiatric unit of a city hospital in Brooklyn, I relocated and currently reside in Tuscaloosa, Alabama with my triplet sons and husband. I am a Board Certified Dance / Movement therapist who works at a therapeutic school with children on the Autism Spectrum. My objectives in working with this population include helping to regulate sensory systems, improving socialization and enhancing communication. I additionally facilitate Wellness through Movement /Stress Reduction groups to faculty and staff at the University of Alabama from time to time. I went from being one of many Creative Arts Therapists in a department to one of two Dance Therapists in the entire state of Alabama...but the Deep South has really embraced me and my modality! I would not be where I am today without the foundation that New Paltz provided.

Brian Walker (BA, 2012)
n02145713@hawkmail.newpaltz.edu



I am a recent graduate who just received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology this past May. When I began college in 2009, I already had 8 years of military experience and had always envisioned working with fellow veterans and active duty service members within the field of counseling and Psychology. Beginning in February, I started looking for a job upon graduation and quickly realized how limiting a Bachelor's degree in Psychology can be in the professional field. This became even more apparent when I began to realize the importance of searching for jobs where I would have an edge/advantage over the majority--hence I began flooding the Veterans Affairs system with applications. Having worked in the "real-world" for a couple years upon leaving the military, I knew that I needed to remain flexible with where I would be willing to work; otherwise, I would have a very difficult time finding a job. Therefore, I began searching throughout the Northeast in areas such as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. Over the course of a few months, I had several interviews and about a half dozen referrals for positions. And despite receiving several "no's," I did not let that discourage me in my search. As a result of my perseverance, I was offered a position working at the VA hospital in Boston as a Psychology Research Assistant in the National Center for Women's Health PTSD Department. I am very much looking forward to beginning my new career in the field of

Psychology! I hope those who read this will find both encouragement and hope as only through dedication and perseverance, can we truly fulfill our dreams!

Shakira Whitley (BA, 2004)
Shakira.Whitley@yahoo.com



Upon graduating from SUNY New Paltz in 2004, I decided to take a break from school and went into the workforce. My first job was in the field of banking. After working there for 2 years, I decided to pursue my passion in becoming a guidance counselor and continued my studies to obtain my M.S Ed. in School Counseling. Since then, I have worked in New York City high schools and within the City University of New York (CUNY) assisting students in their transition from high school into college. Currently, I work within higher education as a counselor. I assist students in their development to achieve at their highest levels academically, socially and professionally. Many of my professional experiences would not have been possible if I did not receive my undergraduate degree in psychology. I thank Dr. Geher for assisting and advising me throughout my 4 years at SUNY New Paltz!

Team New Paltz Cleans Up At NEEPS 2012



NP at NEEPS 2012 (l to r by row): Andrew Geher, Megan Geher, Grant Trouton, Elan Abreu, Amanda Guitar, Rachael Carmen, Rebecca Newmark, Ashley Peterson, Laura Johnse, Melvin Phillip, Daniel Gambacorta, Terry Grandis, Haley Dillon, Ben Crosier, Glenn Geher, Ari Freuman, Daniel Glass, Jeremy Atkinson

The 6th annual meeting of the NorthEastern Evolutionary Psychology Society (NEEPS) was held in Plymouth, NH in April. Several New Paltz students (at both the undergraduate and graduate levels) attended and/or presented. Several faculty and alumni of the Department also played active roles in this year's conference (which featured the University of New England's David Livingstone Smith and the University of Pennsylvania's Robert Kurzban as keynote speakers).

The conference was enormously successful, and included attendees from several regions of the USA as well as from other nations in North America, Europe, and Asia. The success of this society, currently led by NEEPS president and Psychology Department part time instructor, Rosemarie Sokol Chang, is a testament to the growing international interest and excitement surrounding the field of evolutionary psychology.

Congratulations to the following SUNY New Paltz faculty, alumni, and students who won honors at this year's annual meeting:

- Daniel Gambacorta (class of 2009) with Tim Ketelaar (at New Mexico State University)

received Honorable Mention in NEEPS Student Poster Competition for their presentation titled: Dominance and deference: The effect of social status on creative display in a competitive mating context.

- Amanda Guitar (MA student) and Daniel Glass (MA, 2012) with Glenn Geher (New Paltz faculty mentor) won best NEEPS oral presentation for their paper titled: Situation-specific emotional states: A test of evolutionary functionality.
- Amanda Guitar (MA student) with Maryanne Fisher (St. Mary's University), Justin Garcia (The Kinsey Institute), Daniel Kruger (University of Michigan) and Glenn Geher (New Paltz faculty mentor) won best Feminist Evolutionary Psychology Society (FEPS) poster for: Assessing definitions and interpretations of sexual and emotional infidelity.
- Rosemarie Sokol Chang (Part time faculty member in Psychology; SUNY New Paltz) with Maryanne Fisher (St. Mary's University) won best faculty poster for FEPS for: Rose Sokol Chang and Maryanne Fisher, What do women paint?

Next year's conference is slated to take place at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania – and it may well include a trip to Hershey Park – don't miss it!

Glenn Geher

A Year of Wonder

The period from fall 2011-spring 2012, was probably one of most varied, exciting, and challenging times I have had in 36+ years at New Paltz.

Among a range of health psychology- related projects, I spent this sabbatical year investigating the large literature on the psychoneuroimmunological basis of changes in emotional and cognitive behavior in those with chronic disease and the relationship of these changes to markers of circulating pro-inflammatory cytokines. For this work, I searched for evidence for this relationship in

the patient charts of a large (12,000 + patient) tick-borne disorder practice in Hyde Park, NY using a data base and coding system I developed with the help of two SUNY New Paltz computer science students. Pro inflammatory cytokines are directly implicated in *sickness behavior* a coordinated set of behavioral changes including, lethargy, anorexia, energy conservation, fever, vomiting, hyper analgesia, anhedonia, cognitive and memory impairments, mood and affect changes in humans and spatial memory deficits in animals that develop in during the course of an infection. Biological defense requires a lot of energy. This cytokine system normally ensures that while we are ill we decrease energy consumption and stay out of harm's way. But what if this normally evolutionary advantageous system doesn't shut down? Pro inflammatory cytokine **over production** and subsequent inflammation may represent the mechanism underlying illnesses like diabetes and congestive heart failure and some forms of mental illness such as clinical depression and perhaps even schizophrenia. I believe that my work (which is ongoing) is one of the first to examine cytokines and sickness behavior in patients diagnosed with tick-borne disorders like Lyme disease and Babesiosis. Treatment strategies that inhibit the release or over activity of pro inflammatory cytokines and relieve patients from symptoms of sickness behavior currently are being investigated in this medical practice.

Phyllis R. Freeman



SPOTLIGHT ON YOU!

Would you like to be featured in an upcoming newsletter? Do you have any news you'd like to share? We want to hear from you! Please contact one of the editors:

Dr. Freeman (freemanp@newpaltz.edu),
Dr. Geher (geherg@newpaltz.edu), or

- or contact the Psychology Department:
Tel: (845) 257-3470
Web: www.newpaltz.edu/psychology

New Paltz Students Heading on to Doctoral Programs

Congratulations!!!

BA in Psychology

- Laura Johnsen, Binghamton University, Ph.D.
program in Evolutionary Anthropology

M.A. in General Psychology Students:

- Haley Dillon, Kansas State University, Ph.D.
program in Experimental Psychology
- Ashley Peterson, Binghamton University, Ph.D.
program in Evolutionary Anthropology

M.S. in Mental Health Counseling Students:

Nicole Giordano, University of North Dakota, Ph.D.
program in counseling psychology

* Are you in a PhD program and we forgot to mention you here? Don't worry – contact us and we'll be more than glad to feature you in the next issue of the Self Monitor.

Miss New Paltz? Come back to the MidHudson Valley in the Fall for
Alumni Weekend
Sep. 21-23, 2012

<http://www.newpaltz.edu/alumni/reunion/>

See you there!

Do let us know you're coming so we can plan some Department reunion activities

On Facebook? Consider joining the NP Psych Alumni/Student Facebook Group:
http://www.facebook.com/#!/home.php?sk=group_29569222443 it's free!

