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Neuroscience Graduate Students' Meeting

On September 26th, 2006, the new and returning graduate students met with Dr. Greer, Dr. Pearson, and Carol Ann. Attendance was on the low side, so here is the important news for those of you who missed the meeting.

Leipzig Exchange Program: Each year, under the Leipzig Exchange program, the Centre for Neuroscience supports 2 students who want to visit the University of Leipzig for up to 3 months. The students would work on a project related to their thesis, and this project could count as part of either NEURO 500 or NEURO 501. The Centre is thinking of cancelling the program due to lack of interest from the students, so if you have been thinking about taking advantage of this great opportunity, do it now! For more information, please contact Dr. Pearson (keir.pearson@ualberta.ca).

New computational science course: There is a new Computational Science course (COMPUT 499/BME 530) starting next term. More information can be found on page 2.

Graduate program milestones: There are a number of milestones in the Neuroscience graduate program. Every year, Carol Ann checks on each student's progress to make sure that they are on track, but it is also important for the student to keep an eye on his or her own progress. If you feel that you need to have a com-

mittee meeting, for example, you don't have to wait for your supervisor to initiate proceedings: you can decide when your own meetings should happen. Carol Ann mentioned specifically that some of you have not yet fulfilled ethics requirements.

Questions about Neuroscience program requirements: Dr. Greer is happy to answer questions about program requirements, but you can also find a lot of information on guidelines and responsibilities of the graduate student on the Centre for Neuroscience website (www.neuroscience.ualberta.ca)

New funding opportunities: The Centre for Neuroscience will have new funding available for students currently supported by their supervisor's grants. Twice a year, on January 1st and June 1st, the Centre will administer these awards based on financial need in the lab. Check with Carol Ann for application deadlines.

Grant application deadlines: For those of you applying for funding from agencies outside the Centre (NSERC, FGSR, etc.), your application normally has to be submitted by the Centre for Neuroscience, and not directly by you. This means that there is an earlier deadline for you to submit your application to Carol Ann, so that it can be reviewed by the Centre before it is submitted to the outside agency. Remember to keep an eye on those deadlines.

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Mark your calendars!

October 20: NGSA hosts a TGIF (on the Bridge)

October 24: Deadline to submit poster abstracts for Neuroscience Research Day

October 26: Prof Lunch

November 7: Neuroscience Research Day

Neuroscience Research Day 2006

The 18th annual Neuroscience Research Day is almost upon us! This year, the festivities will be taking place on November 7th, in Bernard Snell Hall. A tentative schedule can be seen below.

The NGSA is pleased to be hosting the illustrious Dr. Brenda Milner, who will be giving a talk titled "The Many Faces of Memory." Dr. Milner is currently the Dorothy J. Killam Professor at the Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI), and Professor in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at McGill University.

Originally from England, she began her doctoral research in the 1950's with Dr. Donald Hebb in the Department of Psychology at McGill University. Over several decades, Dr. Milner studied HM, a post-surgical patient made famous by her studies, and identified multiple memory systems by teasing out his cognitive capabili-

ties and deficits. Designing a series of subtle experiments for HM, Dr. Milner was able to demonstrate



Dr. Brenda Milner

two different memory systems. As evidence of her scientific skill and insight, it would be 25 years before other scientists developed experimental models of animal behaviour

to study episodic and procedural memory systems.

Currently, Dr. Milner uses non-invasive brain imaging technology to study the functional specialization in the right and left brain hemispheres, and is particularly interested in the role of the right hemisphere in remembering the location of objects.

As well as Dr. Milner's talk, Research Day will also feature student talks by graduate students. U of A students will give short talks, and the NGSA has invited students from other universities in Alberta to participate. And as always, Research Day will feature a student poster session in the afternoon. The poster session is a great opportunity to find out what kind of research other U of A grad students are doing. The deadline to submit abstracts for your posters is October 24th. Space is limited, so get working on those posters!

Schedule for Neuroscience Research Day – November 7th, 2006

Noon	Keynote speech by Dr. Brenda Milner: "The Many Faces of Memory"	Bernard Snell Hall
1:30 PM	Student Talks	Classroom F, 2J4.02 WCM
2:30 - 4:00 PM	Poster Session	Bernard Snell Hall

New Computational Science Course (CMPUT 499 / BME 530)

Next term, there will be a new course in Computational Neuroscience. This course is designed to introduce neuroscience students to the field of computational neuroscience, and computer science students to neuroscience. No previous experience in computer programming is necessary for neuroscience students.

The class will be divided for the first 3

weeks, so neuroscience students can learn the fundamentals of computer programming (the language is Matlab, which is now one of the major languages for scientific research), and computer science students can learn the basics of neurophysiology. Neuroscience and computer science students will then be paired to work on modules in three areas: properties of single neurons, properties of neu-

ronal networks, and simulations of biomechanical systems.

The course will be taught by three professors: Dr. Kelvin Jones, Dr. Walter Bischof, and Dr. Keir Pearson.

The prerequisites are PHYS 372 or PMCOL 371 or CMPUT 340. The course is scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 12:20.

The “Let’s Talk Science” Partnership Program is a great way to get involved!

If you are looking to get involved with a student group at the U of A, the “Let’s Talk Science” Partnership Program may be for you. The LTS Partnership Program is dedicated to science outreach at universities across the country. Here at the U of A the LTS Partnership Program has, in the past, been centered on pairing teachers in the community with graduate student volunteers. The grade level and types of activities cover the entire spectrum from kindergarten to high school and from growing plants to talks about personal research.

Last year, with the help of the University of Calgary site, we piloted a rural outreach program. It involved taking materials to a high school 1.5 hours outside of Edmonton and allowing the class to run a gel, learn about DNA replication and DNA fingerprinting and show them equipment

they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to see. It was also an important experience to have someone from the university environment to talk to and ask questions about what university is like, since this type of opportunity is rare in rural areas. We plan to continue with this program, and are looking for new volunteers to help with its expansion.

Another new addition to our program will be an All-Science Challenge. This program was developed at McMaster University in Hamilton two years ago. Schools from all around the community came together to participate in a day of science games and challenges. It was a huge success, so we are planning on putting together our very own All-Science Challenge. We are also looking for interested volunteers to help with this project.

The LTS Partnership Program is very flexible and open to new ideas and suggestions about how to reach out to the community and increase science literacy through outreach. Whether you are interested in pairing with a teacher for classroom visits, traveling to rural communities, organizing the All-Science Challenge, or have another idea, we are looking for all sorts of volunteers.

If you would like more information, please contact Rhiannon or Adrienne at uofa_ltspp@hotmail.com.

If you know of an event or anything else that would interest

Neuroscience grad students, e-mail Valerie at vey@ualberta.ca with the details. Your news item could be featured right here in PoNS!

Prof Lunches

Prof Lunches are a great opportunity to meet a visiting speaker and chat about anything you want, science-related or not. The Prof Lunch schedule for this semester is located below. Meet in the seminar room (HMRC 207, on the bridge) at 1 PM, right after the seminar. Hope you see you there!

The next Prof Lunch will be on October 26.

Find out about other Neuroscience students

Pat Stemkowski, a student in Peter Smith’s lab (in Pharmacology), is part of a band called From The Ground Up (FTGU).

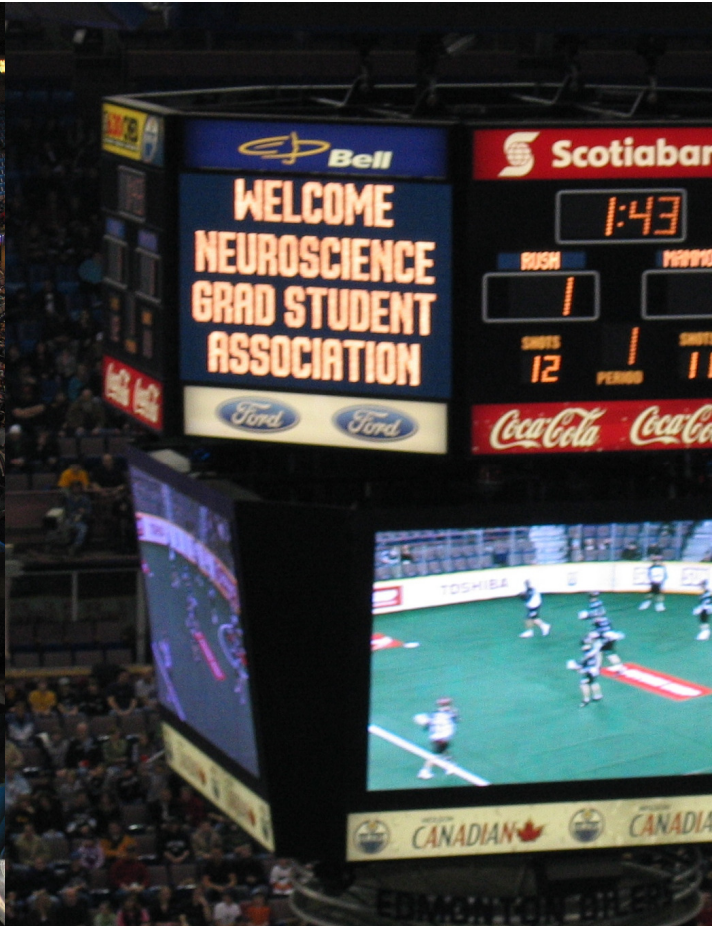
FTGU is one of the more dynamic and versatile alternative bands to hit the Edmonton scene. Successfully blending the talent of its individual members – SID (vocals/percussion), Pat Bastarde (guitar/backup vocals), Dan da Man (drums/backup vocals) and Chris (bass/backup vocals) – FTGU’s flair for both songwriting and stage presence is indisputable.

With influences ranging from Stravinsky to System of a Down, the result is a unique blend only partially describ-

able as alternative metal. Though young, the band has rocked Edmonton’s music scene at a number of venues with a variety of bands.

FTGU is a band that has to be seen live to be fully appreciated – in fact, it would be a challenge to not remember their wild, intense performance. With a motto of “there’s only one way to go,” FTGU won’t stay exclusive to Edmonton for long: the band plans to tour Western Canada through 2006 and 2007. FTGU launched their debut, a three-song eponymous EP in September 2006. For more details, please visit FTGU at www.myspace.com/ftgurocks.

Social Report



Edmonton Rush Lacrosse Game
April 2006



Camping in Jasper August 2006



Sports Report



Red-Eye March 2006

Intramural Volleyball Team

Spring 2006



Announcements

Congratulations to graduating students in Neuroscience!

June 2006

David McVea, MSc

Tera Mosher, PhD

Raza Noor, PhD

July 2006

Janka Hegedus, PhD

August 2006

Conrad Aglah, MSc

Emily Krauss, MSc

The NGSA congratulates all these students on completing their studies at the U of A. We wish you all the best of luck!

This issue of PoNS was edited by Valerie Yeung. Please send feedback to vey@ualberta.ca.

Welcome back, Carol Ann!

The NGSA would like to welcome back Carol Ann Johnson, who returned to us in August. We're happy to have you back, Carol Ann!

The NGSA would also like to extend thanks to Nancy Evans, who kept the Centre going while Carol Ann was on sabbatical. Nancy, all of the students appreciate your great work, and we wish you luck in the future.

Elections for NGSA Executive positions (President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Coordinator, Sports Rep, Webmaster, and PoNS Editor) will take place in December 2006. If you would like to get involved with the NGSA before then, please contact Rhiannon Noble (rnoble@ualberta.ca). Everyone is welcome to attend NGSA meetings, which are held on the first Tuesday of every month.

Did you know...

...the NGSA has its very own website?

Visit <http://www.ualberta.ca/~ngsa/> for the latest news about the NGSA, event announcements, Prof Lunch schedules, and even back issues of PONS. It's everything you need in one handy place.