

# Psychology Department Newsletter

Issue 5, May 2004

Price: An ever-coveted ticket to graduation!

If you have anything you'd like to share with the readers of the Newsletter, contact the Psychology Department Student Worker, Editor Gina Pustovar, Staff Writers Julie Sanem, Amanda Macht, Sue Schulzetenberg, or Amy Nordstrand or Department Coordinator Mary Lonergan

## Spring Fever: Blame it on the Weather!

Commentary by Susan Schulzetenberg

"You can't change the weather," they always say. With spring in full effect, the reason for the weather's unchangeable behavior shines through. The weather simply refuses to cooperate, even when it's being nice!

Take a fresh, April spring day.

Ahhh...the fresh flowers, the green grass, the bright sunlight, and the abundance of spring activities. With such happy sights I'm ready to leap from my desk, skip out the door, and join some friends for a game of Frisbee. Well, almost leap from my desk, if it weren't for, well, of course, work. Not that I'm complaining; I love my job. It's just that I'm assigned to write an article on Spring Fever today, and the weather refuses to work well with me.

I mean how can a person sit in a tiny office with no windows, staring at a computer, when the sun tempts with its beautiful rays? I fidget; I reorganize my papers; I check my e-mail for the third time in the last hour. Nope, no focus, only excessive energy and a constant need for movement.

One more errand and a peek from the hallway window, and I can begin. Loads of runners, bikers, walkers. Oh, they're merry and having a great old time; everyone is smiling; they're just happy to be outdoors. How wonderful!

Alright, now it's back to work. I stare at the blank screen. Its pale white mock paper stares back at me. The other people in the building share my tension. Students pass by into the psychology office, forcing themselves back indoors with their papers, research, and projects that they know should have received a little more attention.

Oh well. I can do this. Look, I have a few paragraphs already. Just a few more to go. But, oh, wouldn't it be nice to be outdoors! I

think that I have spring fever. The MSN Encarta Encyclopedia defines it as "feelings aroused by springtime: a feeling of restlessness, yearning, lust, or sometimes laziness, believed to be brought on by the coming of spring." Come to think of it, I think most of the psychology department and the rest of campus, for that matter, have it too.

A professor just walked into the Psychology Department Office to pick up the papers he printed from a student that isn't going to be in class again. Yes, there were quite a few missing from my class today too, says another professor. We all know where they, the absent students, go. They seek their habitat in the grassy areas of campus, tossing their footballs or hacky sacks; they run up and down the sidewalks with their walkmans and running shoes, and they avoid going back inside at all costs.

Now the department coordinator is coming into the office. I ask her for advice for how to write this article, since it is going absolutely nowhere. Maybe you could make a window, she suggests. Hang up curtains and blinds, and it would almost seem like you have a window. I stare at the unforgiving ivory walls and see a huge hole in the lower middle of the wall. Someone once told me that a student worker started digging that hole. He was trying to get to the sunlight on the other side of the wall. I don't blame him.

The coordinator and I talk about the gestation period of rats. I don't know why. Apparently the fever has struck her too. After a few minutes, she says its time for her to get back to work. I agree as I type a few more words.

Concentrate, I tell myself. Try to find a point to my article. I think I'm ready to dig through the wall and capture some light myself. I read in an article by Ron Seely (2004) that some people from Massachusetts found a direct correlation between serotonin and light. They studied 600 adults at a state health-care provider (*Spring, cont'd on p.6*)





# Psychology In The News

How is psychology affecting our world?

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## Insane or not? The use of the insanity defense

By Julie Sanem

Luke Helder, a former college student accused of planting pipe bombs in a “smiley face” pattern across the Midwest was declared incompetent to stand trial by a federal judge. In After a nationwide manhunt in May 2002, Helder was caught for placing 16 pipe bombs and anti-government letters in mailboxes in Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas. Four letter carriers and two residents were injured in Iowa and Illinois. When arrested, Helder told police that he was trying to draw a smiley face across the United States with his bombs. Helder will return to the Federal Medical Center in Rochester, Minnesota where he will undergo further psychological evaluation. If found to not be a significant risk, Helder can then be released.

Deanna Laney of New Chapel Hill, Texas was found to meet the standard for legal insanity in the death of her children, but prosecutors want a jury to decide. Laney claims that she received multiple signs from God telling her to kill her 3 sons. Her youngest son came to her with a rock and later squeezed a frog, and Laney took those as signs from God that she should either stab, stone or strangle her children. She claims, “I was telling [God] no, and each time it was getting worse and worse, the way that it would have to be done. I thought it was the Lord saying to me, ‘You’re just going to have to step out in faith. This is faith. You can’t see why. You just got to.’” It is now up to a jury to decide whether or not Laney knew right from wrong.

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## A psychologist's view on the Marriage Debate

By Amanda Macht

As we all know, marriage is a hot topic right now. For a refreshing view of this issue, visit the website for This American Life (the popular National Public Radio Show) at <http://www.thislife.org/>. Click and listen using RealAudio to the show entitled “The Sanctity of Marriage” which first aired on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004. You may be most interested to hear host

Ira Glass interview psychologist and marital researcher John Gottman. Gottman has conducted research with married couples for over a decade and provides insight on the characteristics of successful heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The show also goes on to discuss the marriage debate in more detail. Tune in for an interesting perspective on this controversy!

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## The mystery of Audrey Seiler

By Amy Nordstrand

On the morning of Saturday, March 27, surveillance cameras showed 20-year-old Audrey Seiler leaving her apartment. The next day, Audrey was reported missing, sending friends, family and police on a frantic search for the missing girl. After days of searching, Audrey was discovered alive in a remote area in the city of Madison, Wisconsin. Her discovery was followed by an extensive investigation that only uncovered more unanswered questions, leading investigators to believe this “abduction” to be a hoax. Audrey herself later confirmed this suspicion; the abduction was a hoax.

What would cause Audrey to deliberately stage her own abduction, causing tremendous torment and grief to her loved ones? Why would she lie to investigators about being abducted, and what were her motives? These are all questions that have been running through many minds since this case surfaced.

Many answers could be provided in response to these questions, as many people are currently attempting to do. It is possible to suspect mental problems as an answer to these questions. Audrey may have been depressed and was looking for a drastic way to receive attention. But it is also possible that she had a mental disorder called Munchausen’s Syndrome. In reference to the patients of this disease, Professor Aubrey Immanuel states, “These patients are not being deliberately malicious... their primary motivation, difficult though that may be to fathom, is to assume a “sick” or “patient” role — or, in this case, the role of crime victim.” It is possible that we have the answer to these questions right in front of our faces. However, we may never learn the answers to the mystery of Audrey Seiler.

## *Spotlight on Faculty: Steve Stelzner, Ph.D.*

### **CSB/SJU Director of Undergraduate Research**

One of our fine psychology faculty members, Dr. Steve Stelzner, has served for the past three years as the CSB/SJU Director of Undergraduate Research. In this capacity, he oversees the yearly budget, allocates travel and scholarship/creativity grants, coordinates Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Days and the CSB/SJU participants in the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR). He receives assistance in these endeavors from Mary Tamm, the undergraduate research office coordinator, and from a newly developed advisory board, which also includes psychology faculty members Dr. Rodger Narloch and Dr. Linda Tennison.

Dr. Stelzner recently returned from the 2004 National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in Indianapolis which took place from April 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. Both Dr. Stelzner and Dr. Linda Tennison have been involved with supervising CSB/SJU students at NCUR for the past three years. NCUR is a well known conference for undergraduate research that traditionally receives a great deal of support from faculty. Dr. Stelzner views NCUR as providing CSB/SJU students with the opportunity to present their research in a national setting and to gain experience with an academic conference. The priority of the conference is to support students.

NCUR actually capped off a month marked by thesis defenses and other presentations of undergraduate accomplishments on campus. Notably, Dr. Stelzner and Mary Tamm coordinated Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Days at the beginning of April. The purpose of this week, according to Dr. Stelzner, is to give students a venue to share their research and creative accomplishments. With the support of faculty members and advisors, any student work that would like to be shared with the public is eligible for presentation. The primary goal is to celebrate the achievements of CSB/SJU students.

Dr. Stelzner highlighted the importance of undergraduate research for psychology majors. Not only does research provide good preparation for graduate school, but such experience may also help set students apart while in the application process. Furthermore, research involves experiential learning that helps integrate the information students have gathered over the course of their academic career.

Individual research projects are not restricted to seniors only! Students can get involved in research at any time. In fact, both sophomores and juniors presented at this year's NCUR and have plans to return again next year! Dr. Stelzner advises students to start looking early for opportunities to get involved. Don't be afraid to ask questions about the types of research currently being conducted in the psychology department and in the undergraduate research program. Attend events on campus such as thesis defenses

and research presentations to get ideas and to realize how exciting research can be. Talk to faculty members to help develop your ideas. If you have questions visit <http://www.csbsju.edu/undergraduateresearch/> to obtain resources. And stay tuned for more information about NCUR and Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Days 2005!

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## *Coordinator's Corner*

*By Department Coordinator Mary Lonergan*

Hello Psych Majors!

It's hard to believe that second semester is almost over (as is this academic year)! There's just a week of finals and then you can all relax this summer.

First, a note of business: On behalf of the Psychology Department, I want to congratulate this year's \*graduating seniors\*! We are very proud of you and wish you all the best in your future. As a way to toast your accomplishment and to share some good cheer, we invite the graduates and their families to the Psychology Senior Reception on Saturday, May 8. Come after the CSB commencement (around 4:00 p.m., I imagine) and stay as late as 6 o'clock. Not only will you be surrounded by the good company of fellow Psych buffs, but we also will have some good eats.

As the school year comes to a close, so does my work at CSB/SJU. Leaving the Psych Dept. is a bittersweet goodbye, because I had the best time working with everyone (\*faculty and students\*), and I'm definitely going to miss being here next year. However, I'm looking forward to beginning graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in their Experimental Ph.D. program in Psychology. Even though I'll be several miles away, I would love to hear from you all. Feel free to drop me an email anytime – keep me posted about your achievements and adventures ([mlonergan@csbsju.edu](mailto:mlonergan@csbsju.edu) or [mlonergan@fastmail.fm](mailto:mlonergan@fastmail.fm) – until I get my new email at UWM).

I am also very pleased to announce that \*Kori Fitschen\* will be the new Psychology Department Coordinator for the 2004-2005 school year! With her positive attitude and enthusiasm, Kori will make a great addition to the Psychology Department. Kori is happily looking forward to next year's task, and I know she will come brimming with energy and clever ideas.

Again, thank you for a stellar year! Good luck with your final exams and papers, and have a restful and fun summer!

Cheers,  
Mary Lonergan  
Psychology Department Coordinator

# *Psychology Department Newsletter*

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## *Where are our senior Psychology students heading after graduation?*

We wanted to know, so here are the responses of the people we heard back from. We wish the best of luck to all graduating seniors!!

**Sara Kolb:**

I will be touring Europe for the month of May. I will then be working at Camp New Hope for the summer. Then, hopefully, next year I will be volunteering overseas in either Taiwan, Thailand, or the Philippines.

**Meghan Shepherd:**

I will be attending graduate school at Springfield College in Springfield, MA to obtain a Masters in Athletic Counseling.

**Ashley Sherwood:**

I am taking a year off to nanny, find grad schools and apply. Hopefully the following year I will be enrolled in a Clinical Ph.D program out west somewhere. Best of luck to everyone!

**Julie Sanem:**

I will be working as a Research Assistant on the Youth Access to Tobacco Project at the Center for Community Research at DePaul University in Chicago.

**Drew Raun:**

I'll be in law school at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. Hopefully I'll get into practicing intellectual property law or some related field in a big firm in the cities.

**Mel Laudenschick:**

I don't know exactly what I am doing. I will be getting married in October and hopefully will be attending a grad program at the U of M in the spring. However, my fiancé is in the Navy dental program so I will be traveling as of spring 2006. I guess I am just flying by the seat of my pants like usual.

**Laura Fitzsimmons:**

I'm getting married in June, and then in August I plan to begin graduate school at the University of Minnesota Moorhead for a Specialist degree in School Psychology—I'm looking forward to a crazy but exciting summer!

**AJ Myer:**

I will be attending the University of Cincinnati for a masters in criminal justice.

**Colt Blunt:**

I plan on attending grad school for my doctorate, and eventually joining the

FBI with aspirations to become a profiler with the behavioral sciences unit.

**Thomas O'Keefe:**

I will be commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army within the Medical Service Corps this May. I will be going to Officer Basic Course in San Antonio, Texas this Fall.

**Joquel Rudningen:**

I plan on working in adult and juvenile probation for the next few years to gain experience in the criminal justice system. I also plan on volunteering at the Bureau of Criminal Investigation to gain experience. In a few years I plan on heading back to grad school for investigational psychology. Ultimately I want to get my doctorate in psychology and hope to finish that sometime in the next ten years.

**Arthur Morrissey:**

I will be joining the work force to earn some bling before I go on to grad school in a year or two.

**Tyler Andres:**

I am going to be in Bolivia for three years with Jesuit Volunteers International working as a teacher, resident director and youth advocate in conjunction with indigenous in the region of Tarije.

**Andrew Stehberger:**

I will be attending graduate school at East Carolina University to study marriage and family therapy.

**Amanda Macht:**

I have been admitted to the Ph.D. Counseling Psychology program at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and will begin taking classes there in the fall.

**Taylor Hilker:**

My plans for the near future are continuing to sing in my band, coach my high school soccer team, and get a job in the Twin Cities. In a year or two, I will be going to graduate school for School Counseling, so I will be using my psych degree at some point!

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## **Marcus Needham:**

I will be commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army and report to Fort Lee, VA on 7 June for 4 months of school for the Quartermaster Corps. Following that, I will be stationed somewhere around the world, but still waiting to hear where that will be. My wife, Theresa, and I look forward to life in the military and the adventures we will have.

## **Sara Pflueger:**

I will be leaving in August to volunteer for a year with a program called Boys Hope Girls Hope. I will be heading out to Staten Island, New York for the year. The program works with high school aged children, either boys or girls. My main responsibility is being their guardian for the year. I am really excited.

## **Gina Pustovar:**

I will be living in Woodbury and working in Mendota Heights with a company called Paychex as a Payroll Specialist, beginning May 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **Travis Grotz:**

I will be getting married June 19<sup>th</sup> and then will be moving to Omaha, NE for medical school at Creighton University. I begin early August and will hopefully be specializing in Cardiology.

## **Jared Anderson:**

I'll be working for a couple years, or until my loans are paid off and hopefully be attending grad school.

## **Crystal Hackett:**

I am hopefully going to be going into the Marriage and Family Counseling Masters program at either SCSU or Argosy University/Twin Cities campus. From there I hope to work in the non-profit area by counseling married couples and families in the community.

## **April Becker:**

Hmmm...my future plans are really up in the air right now! I plan to work throughout this next year, gaining more experience and hopefully narrowing my interests. Next fall I hope to teach through the JET program in Japan. After that, graduate school could be in my future, but who knows what'll happen!

## **Asha Bornhorst:**

I will be moving to the Cities to work and take a couple of classes and then hopefully start a PsyD program in the spring of 2005.

## **Andrew Laliberte:**

I will be putting school on hold for a bit and return to France where I studied abroad junior year. (*Seniors, cont'd on back page*)

## **Psychologist to Know: Gordon Allport (1897-1967)**

By Sue Schulzetenberg



There is something more, Gordon Allport thought. His work with social services helped bring about the conclusion. One needs to better study and understand individuals in order to help them, Allport said. His longing to learn something more established his successful career and led him to become one of the greatest personality psychologists.

The son of a country doctor and a school teacher, Allport grew up in a household that valued hard work and piety. While growing up, Allport assisted his father with his practice. When Allport attended college at Harvard University, his work revolved around his general interest in understanding people as he volunteered and studied social ethics and psychology as an undergraduate and psychology as graduate student. Through those studies and many following studies, Allport engaged in an in-depth study on personality in his book *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*. In his book, he established what psychology should study. In particular, Allport said that people should study traits, not types, when looking at personality. Trait theory, according to Allport, says that a person has cardinal traits that override all other traits and are the essence of the personality; central traits that are below the cardinal traits and are qualities such as those written on letters of recommendation; and secondary traits that are below the central traits and are often influenced by the environment.

During the time Allport was developing the theories, he taught courses in social and personality psychology at Harvard and Dartmouth College. In 1954, he published *The Nature of Prejudice*, a breakthrough book on prejudice, and in 1965 he published *Letters from Jenny*, a collection of letters that he used for his seminar on personality. His prestige in psychology was well known as he was the editor of *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* from 1937-1948 and elected as President of the American Psychological Association in 1939. Though he died in 1967 of lung cancer, his personality theories continue living.

*(Seniors, cont'd from p. 5)*

I will be working at the International College of Cannes for about six months while taking intensified French courses. I am just putting off being an adult for a little bit longer.

**Amy Rust:**

Still looking for a job...

**Emily Tesch:**

I plan to join the workforce and get a job in Human Resources.

**Abby Schmidt:**

I have NO idea what I will be doing. Possibly still working at ACR Homes, Inc, or maybe Hammer Residences, who knows?

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*(Spring, cont'd from p. 1)*

and found that there was an increased serotonin production with increased access to sunlight. The same article talks how mood and activity is monitored in all living things by the amount of sunlight; eighty years ago scientists recorded how tobacco plants know winter from summer by the amount of light. At any rate, there must be a biological reason for this fever of the spring.

If not neurotransmitters, we could always blame the madness on hormones. There was an article in the Chicago Sun-Times about the increase of testosterone in the spring. The increase in this hormone is linked to the mating pattern in animals. Humans are also said to have increases of testosterone with increased sunlight, and may also experience difficulty sleeping for long periods (Ritter 2004). So the

reasoning behind the antsy-ness of spring could be the biological clocks responding to spring's light. Nevertheless, it is time to be outdoors!

But it's not time to be outdoors yet. Just a few more paragraphs for my article. I wonder how long the article is supposed to be. I don't think that long; no one wants to stay in and read when there are so many other things to be doing. At least people are in good moods though; maybe if I make the article more enjoyable they'll be more inclined to read it. The weather will bring the readers happier moods. The depressed moods from the winter blues are gone and the happy moods of the spring are present. Researchers in Massachusetts found that hostility, anger, irritability and anxiety were highest in the winter and lowest in the summer (Ritter 2004). Well, at least people aren't irritable in their madness; just anxious and flighty.

O.K., back on task; I seem to switch tracks a lot lately. All this talk about the weather. No wonder this article is taking forever to write. Oh well, I'm about done, which is good because it's almost time to leave work. Just a few more sentences, and I'm done; yay!

Well, I think that's good. I think my article is long enough. Maybe, the article could be more newsy, more concise, more noteworthy, but, oh, the weather is just not cooperating.

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## Psychology Department

College of St. Benedict  
St. Joseph, MN 56352

St. John's University  
Collegeville, MN 45321

