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If I Am Qualified, Do I Not Bleed?

BY D. HARBURGER

Every Ph.D. student that walks out the doors of Yale has qualified. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requires it:

“Each Ph.D. student must pass a general examination, separate from course examinations, in the major subject offered and in such subordinate subjects as may be required by the department. Such examinations are described in the individual departmental listings.” (http://www.yale.edu/bulletin/html/grad/policies.html#Degree)

What does this mean? Qualifying serves two main functions. For the student, it is a time to be pushed into an uncomfortable dark place where you teach yourself how to write scientifically, read critically, present clearly, and be humbled before faculty... in order to become a born again scientist. At the same time, the departments also use the qualifying process as a time to decide if a student is granted a rite of passage. The good news is that students are expected to pass and proceed on the graduate students path. The bad news is that this experience is probably one of the hardest parts of graduate school.

Several types of examination are used by BBS departments, such as: the anti-thesis (writing a grant on something you are unfamiliar with), a proposal based on your thesis, or a faculty-directed reading period. Most processes require both a written proposal and oral presentation as part of the process. While each program entails a different road to qualification, there are many similarities in the students’ experiences. Some of them will be addressed here to help future students prepare for what lies ahead.

Keep on truckin’. The qualifying process occurs over a long period of time. The experience is more of a marathon than a sprint. It is going to take a lot of careful research, creative thinking, and red ink editing followed by incorporating constructive criticism in order to assemble the final product. Whenever you feel lost, get organized, make a schedule, and start knocking off items one at a time. As long as you stay productive, you will become more prepared as you are one step closer to the finish line.

Avoid traps. There are things that veer one off the course of taking care of business or believing in oneself. For me, fear of failure manifested itself in the form of a passive job hunt. What is a passive job hunt you ask? That means surfing the internet for alternative careers in the middle... continued on page 3
On Monday, March 19, The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies convened to open discussion on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget for the 2008 fiscal year. This was the first of six meetings scheduled by the subcommittee to address the growing concern about flat NIH funding. For the past four years, funding appropriated to the NIH has failed to keep up with the cost of inflation, resulting in a 13% drop in the ability of this federal institute to fund biomedical research. As a result, the historical level of funding 30% of submitted grants has dropped to 20%, and current grants are being cut to help fund new ones. Worse, the President’s proposed budget for 2008 will cut the NIH budget by a total of $529 million, which includes a reallocation of the Global AIDS Fund to the Institutes.

Chairing the subcommittee meeting was Senator Tom Harkin (D – Iowa). Also in attendance was Senator Arlen Specter (R – Pennsylvania), a ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and former chairman of the subcommittee. These Senators have been commended by the scientific community for their roles in doubling the NIH budget between fiscal years 1998 and 2003. They remain passionate and dedicated supporters of the NIH mission, and secured a $637 million increase in NIH funding in 2007. This funding increase allowed the NIH to provide an additional 500 research grants, as well as additional funding for high-risk projects and young investigators.

The Senators discussed the strategies that would be needed to convince Congress of the pressing need to enhance the NIH budget. They stressed the importance of providing Congress with quantitative measures of how budget cuts or increases will affect biomedical research in the United States. Specifically, they asked for monetary figures relating to how increased spending on biomedical research will reduce health care expenditure in the long run. Specter stated that the NIH has “two strong allies in Senator Harkin and myself, and ... the potential to have 533 more if there is sufficient political pressure brought to bear on Washington, D.C.” They even advocated a million-person march on the Mall.

The first person to take the floor was Elias Zerhouni, Director of the NIH. Dr. Zerhouni described his vision for the NIH. He suggested that investment in the life sciences will be the “key determinant for national competitiveness” in the foreseeable future. He explained that the best way to reduce the rate of health care expenditures is to “advance the sciences that will allow us to preempt disease.” Understanding the molecular processes that lead to diseased states will allow intervention at the earliest stages of disease. In response to requests from the Senators, Zerhouni presented several slides of data on how cost expenditure increases exponentially as patients move from early to late stages of disease. He pointed out that advances in understanding how to prevent heart disease has led to health care savings on the order of trillions of dollars over the past several years. Finally, he cited his recent visits to Europe and Asia and pointed out that many of these countries are increasing their investments in biomedical research. In fact, China has recently announced that it will increase the percent GDP spent on research from 1.3% to 2.5% by 2020. With only 0.8% of our GDP invested in research and development, the U.S. risks falling behind in this global trend. As it stands, many bright and promising scientists are already being recruited away to countries that are working to establish strong biomedical research programs.

Traditionally, this Appropriations Subcommittee meets with the NIH director and with the directors of each Institute. This year, four NIH funded academic researchers were invited to testify and describe how the current NIH funding situation impacts research in the U.S. Among those on the panel was Yale’s own Stephen Strittmatter, Professor of Neurology and Neurobiology. The other panelists were Brent Iverson (University of Texas at Austin), Joan Brugge (Harvard Medical School), and Robert Siliciano (Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine). These investigators were part of a consortium of leading research institutions that recently assembled a report on the detrimental effects of flat NIH funding and the...
of the night instead of going to sleep. After considering applying to veterinary school, becoming a teacher, consulting, and digging up my old MCAT scores, I can conclude there is no better way to get through this period than to just manage your time well and stay focused on the science at hand.

Health. During this stressful time many realize that they are starvers or stuffers. If you realize that you are constantly eating or never able to eat, try to modify your habits a little so that you don’t faint easily or have to buy all new clothes. Exercise is another problem during qualifying. It’s cold or muddy outside and you have planted yourself in a quiet corner next to a growing stack of papers. In order to keep the blood flowing, try taking the stairs instead of elevator, or walking to the corner store instead of driving. A little activity will also probably make it easier for you to go to sleep at the end of the day - which is important, as many students have trouble getting a solid night of rest during this period. Eating, exercise, and sleep are all important, as this period is several months and you don’t want to fall apart.

So…where do I begin? In the beginning it may help to have a model of something successful to serve as a template for what is expected. Ask senior students for their qualifying documents and Powerpoint files. This will provide a scope for what you are expected to create. In terms of seeing what ideas are relevant in the field you are researching, in addition to reading literature from http://www.pubmed.org, you can find successful recent NIH funded proposals at http://crisp.cit.nih.gov. If you are also searching for what to study for an anti-thesis, the website http://www.facultyof1000.com provides reviews of selected outstanding literature.

Speak when not spoken to. If you are stumped on certain ideas, ask people for their input. Email the senior students - they have been through this and can recognize promising ideas from those with which your committee will have a field day picking you apart. If there are labs on this campus that work on something related to what you are working on, you should not hesitate to ask around and approach students, post-docs, or faculty in those labs. Getting feedback from experts in the field can only help you prepare for the inquisition. Most people will welcome you in the door, as they enjoy talking about their own work and, in turn, your work if it is related.

The odd couple: lab work and qualifying work. The bottom line here is that you are more valuable to your PI over the next four years than you are during the several months of the qualifying period. Take the time you need to put your best foot forward. Everyone manages the balancing act between work at the bench and on the proposal differently. You will figure out what works for you.

Facing the firing squad. The most important thing I can tell you is this: when the big day comes, drink lots of fluids, and wear breathable clothing because you will sweat more than you have ever sweated before. Trust me. Assuming that your content is fine, often faculty will aim to push you out of your comfort zone, and that is when it is important not to B.S.; they can smell it from a mile away. You are better off admitting what you do not know than getting into trouble when you claim as fact something that you are unsure about. Lastly, even though you may think about running away when the faculty ask you to step outside the room so they can discuss your presentation, it is not worth it. Just hang tight for a few minutes, and it will all be over... and then you can take a shower and start your new life.

In the end, everyone is different. Some cruise through this process and remember it as a time to explore during a very manageable academic exercise. As for me, qualifying was a living hell. A combination of anxiety, fear, and stress consumed me. I even had ridiculous nightmares about presenting to relentless identical twins of my moderator. During this stressful time many realize that they are starvers or stuffers. If you realize that you are constantly eating or never able to eat, try to modify your habits a little so that you don’t faint easily or have to buy all new clothes. Exercise is another problem during qualifying. It’s cold or muddy outside and you have planted yourself in a quiet corner next to a growing stack of papers. In order to keep the blood flowing, try taking the stairs instead of elevator, or walking to the corner store instead of driving. A little activity will also probably make it easier for you to go to sleep at the end of the day - which is important, as many students have trouble getting a solid night of rest during this period. Eating, exercise, and sleep are all important, as this period is several months and you don’t want to fall apart.

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THE GHOSTS OF YALE
BY J. WALLACE

When I first came to Yale a year ago, I fell in love with the atmosphere. The gothic spires, the closed-off courtyards, the hulking gargoyles shaped like malevolent professors... it was like stepping into Never Never Land. Or at least a passable version of Hogwarts.

And yet, among all this gothic grandeur and high-spired inspiration, I soon found something missing.

Ghosts.

It shouldn't be so hard. In a three-hundred-year-old school riddled with secret societies and half-mad architects who pour acid down their buildings (I kid you not), you'd think that somewhere, lurking in some hidden corner of a residential hall or lecture room, there'd be a ghost. Maybe more than one. The unfortunate Skull and Bones initiate who should have paid more attention to the society's logo. The overworked law student who hung himself from the rafters of Levinson Auditorium. The shriveled old professor whose footsteps still echo through Woolsey Hall.

Yet no matter how many people I question—undergrad, grad, or professor—I always get the same answer: Sorry, haven't heard of any. Thinking I just had bad luck, I hit the great modern repository of all information: Wikipedia. No luck. I decided to brave the murkier waters of Google. Still no luck. In desperation I even resorted to that most arcane of information sources, the library card catalog (digitized, thankfully). Still no luck.

Yale appears to be an anti-nexus of paranormal energy. All the elements are there—centuries-old history, spooky architecture, secret societies, a graveyard next to campus—but the ghosts themselves stay stubbornly in their graves.

Maybe they got tired of all the foot traffic. There's somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 bodies still buried under the Green, right across from Phelp's Gate. Normally having your headstones removed and hundreds of people walk over your grave each day angers spirits, but these might have

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THE WORLD GAME: THIRD INSTALLMENT
BY K. FAKHRO

“THE WORLD GAME” IS A SERIES OF OPINIONATED ARTICLES FOLLOWING MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SPORT MOST COUNTRIES WOULD CALL THEIR NATIONAL PASTIME: FOOTBALL.

Beckham celebrates his goal during the 2006 World Cup which sends England to the quarterfinals.

Everyone from worldwide news agencies to your colleagues has been discussing it: Major League Soccer (MLS) committed the unthinkable by dedicating a rumored quarter billion dollars to a 31-year-old British pretty boy who's married to a former Spice Girl! You probably talked about it for a bit, then forgot it as the NFL playoffs arrived, the Basketball season gathered pace, and March Madness took over your sports radar. But even when your attention was diverted, the rest of the world continued to debate the question: is David Beckham worth it? If you have doubts, or remain marginally curious, you have come to the right place.

Consider this: Top European football teams usually have the highest paid midfielders, with an average weekly salary of $80,000. This figure excludes sundry performance-related bonuses. Additionally, there are hefty sums to be made from image rights, advertisements, and jersey sales, though they fall well short of endorsements top U.S. athletes make. So one can imagine why it was considered blasphemous at best to hear that a footballer past his prime would be making $1,000,000 a week to play for a team in a second rate league. Why is this deal going through? What can David Beckham bring the MLS and the LA Galaxy?

To answer these questions, it is best to look first at who David Beckham is. As a child, Beckham attended one of Bobby Charlton’s football academies in Manchester. In 1991, he joined Manchester United, and he went on to win the Youth Cup (at age 17) as part of United’s famous 1992 youth winning side. It wasn’t until 1995 that he would make his full Premiership debut for United, after which he quickly established himself as their first-choice right-winger. Beckham’s superb range of passing, vision, and dead-ball proficiency complemented his diligence. His excellent form saw him scoring a magnificent goal from the halfway line against Wimbledon, and his great run of performances won him the honor of being named the Premiership’s Young Player of the Year in the 1996-97 season.

As his footballing profile grew, so did his personal life. Beckham started dating "Posh Spice" Girl, Victoria Adams, and with her help he quickly became an unlikely fashion icon. His good looks landed him endorsements from clothing, cosmetic, and sporting brands alike. The ‘David Beckham effect’ was born, making this talented metrosexual the international face of football. His excellent form continued, as he cemented a permanent place in England’s starting lineup. Despite being a highly scrutinized football player, Beckham continued to impress. He was an integral part of United’s famous 1999 Treble-winning squad, after which he was nominated for both the World and European Player of the Year awards. Beckham’s ensuing inspirational performances saw him being appointed captain of the English national team and winning the 2001 BBC Sports Personality of the Year. In June 2003, at the end of what would be his final season with United, Beckham was awarded an Order of the British Empire for his services to football.

His incredible performances prompted a move to Real Madrid for a reported $35 million in transfer fees. To highlight his celebrity status, replicas of Beckham’s Real Madrid jersey (# 23) sold out in record time on the same day of his transfer, and the club made a jaw-dropping $1m in initial shirt sales! Unfortunately, Beckham did not have the same impact with the Spanish giants. At the same time, his games for England were marred with controversy, as his physical form started to suffer from a plethora of injuries. After the 2006 World Cup, Beckham finally resigned as captain of England, having played 95 games for his country and scored in all three World Cups.

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Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello responded to Beckham’s slump by benching him for most of the 2006-2007 season. Unsurprisingly, the 31-year old desperately wanted to leave the Spanish club, yet somehow managed to secure a contract that has a potential to pay him $50M a year over five years!

Given the volume of media coverage on this transfer, there are a few things that need to be set straight. Contrary to popular belief, Beckham is still a world-class player. He is more than a fashion model who happens to play football; rather, he is a footballer who knows how to make the most of his image. Skeptics will continue to point out that Beckham’s move is about the money; however, Beckham’s dedication and love of the game suggests this accusation is at best faulty. True, there’s a lot of money to be made, but in my opinion, David Beckham is coming to the U.S. because he genuinely believes this move will have a positive impact on football in North America. At a rate of $90/second on the pitch, will he achieve this goal?

Answering this question is difficult. In terms of increasing interest in the game, Beckham’s move is a positive one. However, I think the pressure to perform is unrealistic. In fact, the buzz created by this move is a double-edged sword. Newcomers may flock to watch Beckham play, but even if he performs at his best, much of his brilliance will be lost on the untrained eye. It is quite possible that many viewers will shun the game thinking, “Is this it? Is this all good soccer is?” Being the hard worker that he is, Beckham will push himself further, making him prone to injury. Pacy defenders will render space at a premium, and his aggrandized ability to “turn games around” will be ridiculed by the crowd. Fans and teammates will try to justify his under-performance, and the MLS will receive most of the heat for stretching its budget beyond its realistic boundaries for such a player. In fact, even Beckham’s soccer academies, into which he has poured significant resources, may suffer.

Will Beckham’s arrival revolutionize football in this country? History would beg to differ, as the arrival of Brazilian demi-God Pele, German talisman Franz “der Kaiser” Beckenbauer, or Dutch legend Johan Cruyff did not have lasting effects on football in America. Yes, it encouraged more people to watch these greats play a few games here and there; and yes, it may have paved the way for the U.S. to make a realistic bid to host the 1994 World Cup (a bid they are trying to repeat for 2014); but still, these effects are peripheral; and it is ludicrous to expect the arrival of one David Beckham to yield such a revolution. If these were the desired aims, one would need to multiply the catalyst by twenty via the introduction of many David Beckhams of varied talents. World-class defenders, strikers, goalkeepers and coaches need to be recruited heavily from Europe’s top club. Only once the MLS fully integrates itself with European leagues will the goals be realized. For example, some English football clubs have recruited American players: Brian McBride is Fulham’s choice striker, and goalkeepers Tim Howard and Brad Friedel are having fantastic seasons at Everton and Blackburn respectively. There’s a reason these top players are leaving the MLS for Europe, and it’s all about the status of football in those countries. Until football gains prominence in America, the league will remain of a lower standard than the rest of the world. And David Beckham, with all his star power, will remain helpless in trying to convert American viewers. The MLS’s approach is therefore wrong. Let’s face it, which world-class footballer will agree to come to America in the future for a contract below the financial precedent set by David Beckham’s move? In this case, either the MLS is going to bankrupt itself, or it will end up becoming a ‘retirement league’ that overpays has-beens.

In conclusion, Beckham’s move to the U.S. comes at a time in his (and his wife’s) career where other options are not quite as attractive. The media hype following his move was definitely over-done, and if the MLS does not want to suffer, they need to make it clear that one man, be it Beckham or even Pele, cannot single-handedly change the course of an entire league. Frankly, I don’t think Beckham has anything to lose by moving to the Galaxy. But, saying he’s got nothing to lose doesn’t mean he will win. What does this mean in terms of the potential for achievement? How will this great player’s career unfold while in the U.S.? I can say, acknowledging my limitations as a football pundit, that I do not know; more so, though, I don’t even think David Beckham knows.
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decided to leave instead of bothering to
wreak vengeance on the living.

Maybe they got tired of all the publicity. 
Every year between April and November,
Center Church on the Green doesn’t settle for 
just having a defunct graveyard in its back-
yard; it gives live tours (no pun intended) of 
its very own underground crypts. No restless 
shades seem to have objected to this so far; 
perhaps they figured it was better to take an 
eight-month vacation to Florida every year 
rather than deal with so many pesky grade-
school tour groups.

Or maybe they just moved across town 
and are hanging out with Midnight Mary, the 
only authentic ghost I could find in all of New 
Haven. Mary rests under an enigmatic pink-
granite tombstone in Evergreen Cemetery, a 
mile west of the med school. Stories about 
her range from hitching a ride home before 
disappearing to killing those who defile her 
grave by frightening them to death, impaling 
them on the graveyard’s wrought-iron fence, 
or—my personal favorite—simply making 
them vanish from the face of the earth. If all 
the Yale ghosts are hanging out with her, 
it would certainly explain how one frail old 
woman who died of either apoplexy or being 
buried alive could impale multiple college 
students on that fence.

I’m actually starting to think the Divinity 
School just exorcised them all. If any of you 
have better explanations—or better yet, 
actually know about some ghosts haunting 
Yale—please, drop me an email. In the mean-
time, I’m going to pay a visit to the physics 
department. If I’m going to keep ghost-hunt-
ing, I might as well get myself an unlicensed 
nuclear accelerator.

Happy haunting! B

Exciting Times for the Yale Biotechnology &
Pharmaceutical Society By R. Reznick

Biotech and pharma opportunities abound on campus. In late 
January, the Yale Biotechnology & Pharmaceutical Society held its Business of Biotechnology 
Program, which averaged 70 participants each night. In March, YBPS invited a former student 
and post-doc to chat about their post-docs and experiences working at biotech and pharma 
companies. In April, YBPS and the Yale Entrepreneurial Society will hold the Y50k Biotechnology 
Entrepreneurial Competition, which is an excellent opportunity for graduate students, post-docs, 
and faculty to gain experience writing business plans and making business pitches.

The flurry of activity makes this an exciting time to become more involved in the YBPS. The 
organization offers a great way to complement the skills you are developing in the lab with addi-
tional skills in leadership, management, teamwork, and communication. If you want to make your-
self more marketable when you graduate, consider joining the executive board of the YBPS.

In addition to honing vital personal skills, the organization offers you the opportunity to meet 
people from the graduate, business, medical, and law schools and Yale College as well as Yale 
post-docs, faculty, employees, and administrators and even people in industry and government.

Bringing people together from different backgrounds is one of the major goals of the Yale 
Biotechnology & Pharmaceutical Society. This strategy makes everyone more knowledgeable 
about the range of disciplines that converge in the biotech and pharma sectors and helps you 
build your career network. If you are interested in biotech and pharma, healthcare in general, 
healthcare consulting, biotech and pharma equity research, or any other facet of the industry, con-
sider getting more involved in the organization. For more information about the events and pro-
grams you can get involved in and officer contact information, please visit www.yale.edu/ybps. B

BOOK REVIEW

THE GOD DELUSION By B. Haider

If THE GOD DELUSION serves its purpose, religious readers will be atheists by the time they 
put it down. That is the self-described goal of Richard Dawkins’s latest work, which forcefully 
espouses a scientific world-view where supernatural religions have no place. This is an ambitious 
aspiration— as Dawkins himself admits— since those who have already abandoned religion don’t 
need further convincing, while those who do not question matters of faith will remain unconvinced 
by his reasoning. For whom is this book written? If the latest Harris poll* is any indication, of 
the 73% of Americans who believe in God, only 58% are “absolutely certain.” It is the remaining 
skeptical adherents” that Dawkins is targeting.

Dawkins is most famous for his widely influential ideas on genes as the units of evolution. 
This book is filled with the same incisive logical arguments and lucid prose that characterizes his 
other work, and his command of scientific ideas and their evidence is on full display. Dawkins 
methodically dissects the conventional philosophical arguments for God, argues that religions 
(particularly in the current political climate) are doing much more harm than good, and gives 
thoughtful consideration to the origins of religious feelings and beliefs. He is particularly critical 
of the prevailing notion that religious ideas (encompassing everything from the origins of life to 
morality) are “special” and therefore not subject to scientific inquiry. This is the greatest affront 
to Dawkins: the most influential ideas governing human affairs are not held to the same critical 
standards as any other hypotheses, and are thus allowed to perpetuate, despite being over-
whelmingly discredited by scientific evidence. For Dawkins, it is the responsibility of every proudly 
disbelieving atheist (or “bright”) to dispel these illogical notions in favor of humanist philosophy 
and scientific cosmogony.

While certainly clear and thought-provoking, a tone of condescension and passionate distaste 
for religion permeates the book. This is fine - even amusing - for those who completely agree with 
Dawkins already, but is not exactly the kind of respectful dialogue which will win converts, so to 
speak. His passion is understandable, but he may more effectively reach those willing few if his 
voice was more welcoming rather than censuring. B *(harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=707)
Franziska Bleichert
Discovering novel proteins involved in 18S ribosomal RNA maturation
BY K. PATRICK

Ultimate, a sport closely associated with hippies and bong rips, has evolved into a highly competitive sport that has players in almost every country across the globe. Although somewhat controversial, the story of ultimate begins with Columbia High School in Maplewood, NJ in 1968. A young student by the name of Joel Silver (yes, the movie producer behind “The Matrix,” “Swordfish,” etc.) had an idea for a sport that utilized a flying disc, or “Frisbee,” and implemented rules similar to that of football, rugby, and basketball. After graduating high school, Joel attended Lafayette College and started the first college team. Fast-forward 39 years, and now there are over 400 college programs as well as another thousand club teams in the US, Canada, Mexico, England, Australia, South America, basically everywhere.

What is Ultimate? First and foremost, it is Ultimate, not Ultimate Frisbee. Why the distinction? “Frisbee” is a company that manufactured the very first flying disc. Calling the game Ultimate Frisbee would be similar to calling soccer “Adidas.” Currently, there are several companies that produce an array of different discs, the standard being the 175-gram disc, made by “Discraft.” How is it played? The sport is played on a field similar to that of a football field. It is 70 yards long and 40 yards wide, with endzones that extend an extra 25 yards at each end. The game begins with what is called a “pull” or a long throw from one end of the field to the other. Similar to football, the defense begins by sending a high long throw to the offense who then catches/picks up the disc and begins play. A player can then pass the disc to anyone on the field but cannot move with the disc. Once held, a player must throw the disc within 10 seconds, counted off by the defender or mark, who is covering the thrower. Once another offensive player catches the disc, he/she must stop running and attempt another throw within 10 seconds. This continues until a player catches the disc in the endzone for a score, which is worth 1 point. If the disc is caught by a defensive player, or a thrower fails to throw the disc within 10 seconds, or the disc touches the ground, a turnover occurs; and the defensive team is now on offense and vice versa. They must then move the disc in the opposite direction and attempt to score in a similar fashion. Games are typically played to 15 but can be made longer or shorter depending on importance or time, respectively. Over the 40-year history of the sport, there have been 11 editions of the rules, which include calls such as “foul,” “travel,” and “pick,” all of which are illegal. The most unique element concerning the rules of Ultimate is that they are enforced by the players themselves in an unspoken tradition of “Spirit of the Game.” SOTG is the idea that the manner in which the game is played supercedes winning/losing and above all, the game should be played with camaraderie between opponents. This has been a founding principle of the sport, but it has also been its biggest
criticism and has kept it out of the Olympics and the public eye.

What is the status of Ultimate today? Currently, there is an Ultimate team at most universities across the country; and they are open to any student that is enrolled in the university, graduate or undergraduate. Most of these schools have both a women’s and a men’s team, and some even have A and B squads for both. Yale is no exception, and there has been a team here for over 2 decades. Yale also hosts two tournaments of 16-20 teams (men and women) annually, one in April known as “Yale Cup” and one in October, “Coffee Cup.” Teams come from all over the Northeast to compete on the IM fields for a weekend, pride being the sole motivation. Along with these two tournaments, Yale Ultimate (Superfly – Men’s, Ramona – Women’s) has traveled as far west as San Diego and as far south as Daytona Beach to play in tournaments. Most universities, including Yale, play 7-10 tournaments per year, with the season culminating in April-May. This time of year is known as “The Series,” which is a sequence of tournaments beginning with Sectionals, then Regionals, and ultimately Nationals, which typically falls on Memorial Day Weekend. There are dozens of Sectional, 8 Regional, and 1 National tournament. At each stage of the series, teams compete to see who moves on, much like NCAA March Madness. Ultimately, 16 teams (1-3 from each region) make it to Nationals, which has been in Columbus, Ohio the last two years. At Nationals, teams compete in round robin or pool play for spots in pre/quarter-finals much like the World Cup. Eventually, 16 teams become 10, then 8, 4, 2 and finally 1 champion. Last year, the University of Florida managed a miracle season with a record of 43-1 and toppled Wisconsin 15-12 in the finals.

College play is one of the most rewarding and exciting levels of Ultimate, but it does not last forever. After 5 years of college play, a student is no longer eligible, similar to that of college football. This is tracked by the UPA or Ultimate Players Association and is extremely well managed, to the extent of disqualifying teams that have ineligible players. The worst instance of this came in the spring of 2004 when UC-Santa Barbara was well on its way to winning their record 7th national title only to be eliminated from contention after a player was found to be out of eligibility.

There is a huge population of competitive college athletes playing all over the country, but there is also less competitive Ultimate including summer/winter/fall league play and pick up in just about every part of the world. Here at Yale, there is an indoor winter league of undergraduates, graduates, and faculty who play at Coxe Cage once a week. Games are usually played to 21 because the field is smaller, and each team plays once a week. There are usually 6 teams, and once each team has played the other 5, there is a playoff schedule to crown one team champion, the recipient of the Miller Wood, named after a former player. There are also winter leagues of similar competition put on by the Connecticut Ultimate Club in North Branford, Glastonbury, and East Windsor. It is not uncommon for people to play in 2 or 3 of these leagues. In conjunction with winter league there is also summer league which has as many as 20 teams who play in a variety of fields within 30 minutes of Yale, also put on by Connecticut Ultimate Club.

As if this were not enough, there are also small tournaments or “Hat” tournaments, where teams are made the day of. One is called MUD or Madison Ultimate Disc, which is in its 6th year and plays each summer. There is also an indoor tournament in early November and an outdoor tournament over Thanksgiving weekend, both in Glastonbury. For the true disc enthusiasts, there are also “Hat” or “just for fun” tournaments in Honolulu, Versailles, Ohio, Seattle, Paga, Italy, and Acapulco, Mexico. The participants of these tournaments defy reality, and beg the question “How can you afford to travel to all these places? Work? School?”

Along with organized leagues there are also Club teams, which compete in a similar fashion as college and are the closest thing to professional Ultimate. These teams can be either Men’s, Women’s, or Co-ed and are usually made up of former college players, but not necessarily. In the New Haven area there is a co-ed team known as Harpoon which has Yale Students as well as local professionals. Colt .45 is a men’s team that is based just south of Hartford and has student athletes from Connecticut College, University of Connecticut, Yale, and non-students. Yale students have also been known to compete with teams in Boston or with teams in their home towns. The Club Ultimate Series culminates in September-October with the National Championship in Sarasota, Florida over Halloween weekend. This National Tournament is the most elite tournament in the world, with the best teams from the US and Canada. There are also world tournaments that have taken place in Perth, Australia (2006); Duisburg, Germany (2005); and Turku, Finland (2004).

For those that are not looking for a competitive outlet and are more in search of a good time, there are several pick up games in New Haven at the IM fields, in Newington, Glastonbury, Wesleyan, Fairfield and Danbury. These are currently on hold until the weather improves, but during the spring, summer, and early fall, pick-up games happen almost every afternoon-evening of the week. For more information regarding pick up games, refer to the Connecticut Ultimate Club website (www.ctultimate.com). A collection of Yale students also meet very informally on Wednesday afternoons in the fall/spring on Science Hill.

I have played ultimate for the last 5 years on both coasts. I played at UCSD for 3 years as an undergraduate and I am now in my second year playing with Yale Superfly, for which I am one of 3 captains. I also play for Colt .45 and have been to several of the previously stated tournaments. All told I have been to over 50 tournaments in 3 countries and 11 states. Ultimate has completely changed my life and, aside from Graduate School, is the most important thing in my world. I write this to say that the sport itself is one of the most rewarding ventures one can take — and I never thought a game would take me to so many places and help me meet so many people.}

For more information: www.upa.org.
For exciting video footage: ultivillage.com.
For ultimate around the world: Rec.Sport.Disc google group.
To see a player (Beau Kittredge) jump over another player (David Flock) during play at Southwest Regionals, aired on Sports Center’s Top 10, check out: http://gallery.mamabird.com/ and click ‘beau on espn’.
Legend has it that Mt. Lamentation’s name derives from the colonial days, when a hapless settler wandered off from Wethersfield colony. A search party found him days later on Mt. Lamentation, a twelve-mile slog from where they started. Either the lost man’s despondency, or the search party’s distress, is memorialized in the name (www.scrcog.org).

Nowadays, the area is part of Meriden’s Guiffrida Park, and a trail system allows for a pleasant, shorter day-hike. I decided to try the park one afternoon when I was looking for a change of pace from hiking Sleeping Giant but did not have time to venture much farther from New Haven. The trail starts at one end of Crescent Lake, from a field popular with local dog owners and their happy puppies. From there a trail heads north, tracing the west side of the lake through pine forest. Leaving the lake behind to wind uphill, the trail brings you to the Metacomet Ridge. Lichen-splattered rock abounds, and views open up to the west. The ridge peaks at Mt. Lamentation (elev. 720 feet) and gives wide views of the surrounding hills. The trail down from the ridge circles east and then south, eventually climbing Chauncey Peak (elev. 688 feet) on the other side of the lake and taking you to wide rock ledges with good views, this time of the nearby hills and valleys out to the north and east. The trail here also passes quite close to an active quarry, so take a look at the giant, graded layers before you head down the hill and back to the starting point.

My own experience with Mt. Lamentation is something of a comedy of errors, as it actually took me three separate trips to the park before finally making it to the top of Mt. Lamentation. The trail loop is only a few miles long, but on my first trip I started the trail on the west, became distracted by the quarry and ran out of time to finish the loop. The second summit attempt turned into a rainy afternoon of enjoyable bushwhacking when your intrepid ‘Trail Mix’ authors decided that following the trail was too easy. We traipsed up and down hills through forest and meadow and stumbled upon a large marsh full of cattails, but never made it to the top. A more goal-oriented approach prevailed on the third trip and was rewarded with a sunset view from the peak. I could make comparisons between my hikes and the plight of the lost settler, or to rigors of summiting peaks like Mt. Everest where conditions don’t always warrant a summit attempt. But really, I hope to inspire a little wandering – we may not live next door to the Himalayas, but we are lucky to be near many little parks worth a good exploring. (Just don’t get lost and require rescue by a team of villagers.)

Directions: 91 N to exit 20, left onto Country Club Road; this becomes Westfield Road, and the park is on the right two miles from the highway.

Elisabeth Wurtmann and Hannah Chapin, B magazine’s Trail Mix tag-team. Photo courtesy of H. Chapin.

Attention hikers: have a favorite hike we haven’t covered? Have a tip or a gripe or suggestion you’d like to share? Please feel free to get in touch with Hannah Chapin or Elisabeth Wurtmann because they want to hear your comments!
Even with the mild winter we had, I still got cabin fever. One day, I snapped—I went online and bought the cheapest tickets I could find to somewhere warm. That somewhere was Houston, Texas. My buddy Owen, who put in four winters in New Haven and is currently a graduate student at Rice, met me at the airport. No sooner had I dropped my bags at his house than he led me to his kitchen and opened the door to a huge chest freezer. “Check this out,” he said, barely containing his pride at the four cubic feet of venison he and his father had bagged this last white-tail season. “It was full up to here,” he exclaimed, pointing to the top of the box. I dug through the steaks and chops and sausages with hungry eyes. Owen obliged and we threw a couple sausages on the George Foreman.

I met Owen 5 years ago when I was working as a research assistant in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology department. Owen, an undergraduate EEB major, had been hired as a technician to help care for the labor-intensive animal stocks of *Hydractinia symbiolongicarpos*, a colonial hydroid which is a model for an early evolved mechanism of innate immunity. We became fast friends, going out for beers, SCUBA diving, fishing, and swapping stories of growing up in the rural South. Owen was a standout member of the Yale track and field team, as well as a defensive back on the football team. He hung around an extra semester to take advantage of a season of eligibility held over from time he had missed due to injury. Owen is a true sportsman beyond his varsity endeavors. He has studied martial arts since childhood and teaches Judo as president of the club at Rice. He grew up hunting with his dad in the wilderness expanses of central Texas. Most of all, he is an avid fisherman. There is tackle in every corner of his house in Houston, in every closet, and under every table. No fewer than six rods stand at the ready, and several more grace the wall in retirement. Pictures on the walls tell stories of great catches from the bass lakes of Austin to the rivers and surf of Corcovado National Park in Costa Rica.

Sunday morning we loaded the trunk of his car with an army of lures and grubs, an inflatable raft, a battery powered trolling motor, and lots more gear, “just in case.” One hour out of the city we were on the banks of Lake Raven, in Huntington State Park. We had gotten a late start, but by early afternoon we wet our lines. Owen said that at this time of year, afternoons are better for fishing because things warm up enough for the fish to be active. Sure enough, on his very first cast, Owen hooked a small large-mouth bass. Half an hour passed. All we could hear were the sounds of our lures hitting the water and being reeled back in. Owen looked up and asked, “Do you think the cell lineages in your Trichoplax are isogenic?” Before I could reply, with the suddenness every angler waits for, a large-mouth hit my line. Park rules require that all bass be released, so we switched to catfish rigs and bait to catch dinner. “Man plans, God laughs,” as my grandfather would say. Owen waited until the end of the day to tell me that catching a fish on one’s first cast is bad luck. True to superstition, we didn’t have a nibble after my fish.

Not to worry, there was the freezer of venison back home. Owen is not a gourmand, or even a real kitchen enthusiast. But he lives by an ethic of cooking what he catches or kills. The secret to cooking great fish or game is to keep it simple. Salt, pepper, and fire; some potatoes and onions go nicely, too. And if you’re like Owen, you’ll keep a bottle of hot sauce on every counter, at the ready. George Herter, the foremost American hunting guide of the last century, said the one iron-clad rule to cooking venison is to serve it on heated plates—this goes for all cuts—because the meat cools quickly and becomes tallowy and tough. Owen and I didn’t leave the chops around long enough for the plates to cool.
Beginning Sept. 1, 2007, the BBS stipend will be $28,000.

We hear that Tiffany Samaroo, Genetics, got married to David Briere on October 28, 2006.

Best wishes to Kristi Newhouse, INP and B staffer, who married Ben Rudenga on December 28, 2006 in Spring Arbor, Michigan.

Christian von Hehn, INP, and Jana Eaton, Ex Pathology, got engaged on December 17, 2006.

Yeqin Ma, MCDB, married Zhenning Kong, Engineering, on January 16.

Dylan Burnette, MCDB, and Gillian Hooker, MCDB '06, were married in Mexico on March 17. No green beer was involved.

Jason Wallace, MCGD Track and B staffer, and his wife, Amanda, had a little girl on December 29th. Eight pounds, 20.5 inches long, and far too cute for her own good.

S.P. Dinesh Kumar, Associate Professor of MCDB, and his wife, Nagu, proudly announced the birth of their daughter, Neha on February 15. She weighed in at 9.1 lbs and 22 inches.

Congratulations to Agnes Ang, Cell Biology '04 and Gene Ang, INP '04 and current postdoc in Neurobiology, on the birth of Eugenius Xavier Ang on March 10.

Shelby Montague, Phys/IM Track, recently returned from a spring break backpacking trip from Cape Town to Johannesburg, South Africa. And you say you're too tired to walk to lab.

Exciting news about B's Alice Ly, MCDB. She was selected as one of a handful of students who will join a Yale delegation to China in May. We hope to get a summary of her adventure in an upcoming issue.

Congratulations to all B

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B magazine’s “Posters I Wish I Could Have Presented at the Retreat But Didn’t” Contest

It was the closest contest ever, and we've tried to print as many entries as possible to honor everyone who got a vote from our judges. Thanks for entering! As for our winners, congratulations. Unfortunately, in these tight times, you fell just shy of a fundable score and won't get a prize. We encourage you to revise your entry and resubmit next time.

1st Place 50 Proof Martini and Zebra Fish Sashimi---A Grantless PI's Guide to Hosting Departmental Happy Hours
Yong Pan, Cell Biology

2nd Place Lack of Controls Lead to Momentary Elation
Alice Ly, MCDB (yeah, she's a B staffer, but since there are no prizes, we let her win)

3rd Place Error Bars, Shmerror Bars: A Qualitative Analysis
Matt R. Johnson, INP

Honorable Mentions
Chocolate Milk Increases Antibody Specificity in Western Blot
Li Zhang, Cell Biology

Stress-induced Depressive-like Phenotype and Reversal by Oral EtOH Administration: A Case Study
Shannon Gourley, INP

Kendra Frederick, MB&B

The Best of the Rest
The Effect of Anabolic Steroids on Senescence: How Sylvester Stallone was Able to Make Rocky VI
Tom Magaldi, MCGD Track

Graduate Students Subjected to a High-Ramen Diet Are Not Immune to Obesity
Kendra Frederick, MB&B

Strategies for Anticipating Which Figure (From an Unread Paper) One Would be Asked to Explain in Seminar Class
Alice Ly, MCDB

This Totally Would Have Been a Nature Paper...If the Data Had Actually Come Out the Way I Predicted
Julie Golomb, INP

Patterns of Free Food Foraging in Academia: Evidence of a Grad Student Waggle Dance.
Kathy Egan, INP

Departmental Seminar: How Many Licks it Takes to Get to the Tootsie Roll Center of a Tootsie Pop
Kaury Eisenman, MB&B

How to Get Other People to Do Your Lab Work
Matt Cabeen, MCDB

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