

# THE [CATALYST]



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**Happy  
Birthday!**

V.M. Rajendran	12/2
Sun Park	12/9
Sandy Poulson	12/12
Derek Andreini	12/15
Daniel Vanderbilt	12/17
Peter Stoilov	12/22
Brad Hillgartner	12/29
Bryan O'Hara	12/31

Did we miss someone? Please let us know via email  
asuchanek@hsc.wvu.edu

## [News & Announcements]

Congratulations to **Lisa Salati, Brad Hillgartner, and Bill Wonderlin**, who were all recognized for 20 years of service to the department at a recent ceremony at the Alumni Center. Thank you for all that you do!!

Congratulations to **Christy Ku**, who completed the PhD portion of her MD/PhD on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Her dissertation was titled *Rescue of Inherited Retinal Degeneration Associated with Aipl1 Defects*. Christy will now complete her 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of medical school with a continued interest in ophthalmology. Congratulations Dr. Ku!!

Congratulations to **Holly Cyphert**! Holly defended her doctoral

dissertation on Friday November 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, titled *The Nutritional Regulation of FGF-21, A Novel Anti-Diabetic Hormone*. She has accepted a post-doctoral position at Vanderbilt University where she will be studying the regulation of islet beta cell function. Good luck in Nashville, Dr. Cyphert!!

Congratulations to **Ben Cieply**! Ben defended his doctoral dissertation titled *The Transcription Factor Grainyhead-like-2 is a Novel Suppressor of the Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition*, on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012. He will be conducting his post-doctoral work on the role of ESRP and mRNA splicing in EMT, cancer, and iPS cells. Congratulations Dr. Cieply!!

Have an announcement or news story? Submit it to [asuchanek@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:asuchanek@hsc.wvu.edu).

## [Chair's Corner]

Every month there are a few very exciting moments in the Department. This past month's excitement was provided by three senior graduate students, who successfully defended their dissertations in the few days around Thanksgiving. Christy Ku, a Neuroscience graduate student working with Vishy Ramamurthy, Holly Cyphert, a Biochemistry and Molecular Biology graduate student working with Brad Hillgartner, and Ben Cieply, a Cancer Cell Biology graduate student working with Steve Frisch, publicly presented and defended their dissertations and then passed their final hurdle, the private defense with their respective

dissertation committees. Holly is packing her bags to move and pursue her postdoctoral studies with Roland Stein at Vanderbilt University. Ben is finishing a few things in the lab prior to his move to Russ Carstens' lab at the University of Pennsylvania. Christy is preparing to enter the third year of the medical school curriculum at WVU, which is the next stage in her studies as an MD/PhD student. All have done a wonderful job and will be missed! We are very proud of you! Congratulations Drs. Ku, Cyphert and Cieply!!

-Mike

## [Humanity on the Fritz]

By Zach Hartman

Nationalism will do some strange things to the ethics of a person. Science is not exempted from this idea, though we like to play unbiased. It's a force that gave us some of the finest works of art and science. We living in modern society understand this idea. It is internalized in most of us, as if the idea has been around forever. It is why it makes sense to us that a man would on one hand save the world from disaster with his science and then turn around and create one of the most horrific weapons in modern history. It would also take an immeasurably talented scientist. That man was Fritz Haber, and his story is a doozy.

Science is no stranger to tragic stories. Rosalind Franklin was snubbed for her contributions to modern science. Henrietta Lacks's disease was the unwitting beginning of modern cell biology. Marie and Pierre Curie were killed by the elements they discovered

and characterized. For my money, these all pale in comparison to the story of Fritz Haber. He discovered the aptly-named Haber process, the synthesis of nitrogen and hydrogen into ammonia. It may not sound like much, but this process single-handedly revolutionized agriculture and spared developing countries the disastrous famine predicted as inevitable by Thomas Malthus in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Synthesized ammonia is the foundation for fertilizer, even today, and it accounts for a massive portion of the crops that we grow and eat.

But it was nationalism that fueled Haber's innovations, not a sense of altruism. This is why he threw himself into work weaponizing poison gases during World War I, specifically chlorine. Profound disgust with his work in this field led to his wife's suicide on the morning of Fritz's departure to oversee a chemical warfare on the front (he still went, leaving behind his grieving thirteen-year-old son).

And then came the Nazis. Can you guess

Fritz Haber's heritage? I'm sure your answer of "Jewish" was a wild stab in the dark, and you are correct. Some conflict arises about whether Haber sensed his imminent ousting or whether he quit his university position in reaction to the initial persecution of Jewish scientists. Regardless, his dogged nationalism could not weather the storm of Nazi ideology. He died in 1934 of poor health, estranged from his beloved home.

Haber's work in poison gas was not single-mindedly for the deficit of humanity, though. He formulated a cyanide-based compound that was used as an effective fumigant and pesticide for years. Unfortunately, in one final twist of fate, this was the same gas modified and used to execute Jewish prisoners in the Holocaust death camps, much of Haber's remaining family among the victims. Happy holidays!

## [Jess Hall: Peptide Blonde]

By Amanda Suchanek



As graduate students, we generally spend more time in our labs than we do in our homes. I remember when, during orientation week four years ago, Dr. Minnear stressed to all of us the importance of the 'work hard, play hard' philosophy. One person who lives by this is my fellow fourth year, Jess Hall. During the week (and most weekends, too), Jess can be found working in lab, helping with the 1<sup>st</sup>

years Cell Methods course, or coordinating activities and events for the Cell Biology Training Program.

You might be asking yourself, "what about the 'play hard' part?" To that end, Jess is a member of Morgantown's first and only flat track roller derby league, the Morgantown Roller Vixens (MRV).

The mission of MRV is to provide an outlet for competition, athleticism, and camaraderie to the women of Morgantown and the surrounding area while promoting the sport of flat track roller derby.<sup>1</sup> Jess plays the position of blocker, which "basically means I get in people's way and knock them down (sort of like in lab)."

The MRV competes in bouts with other leagues throughout the area. Most recently they competed at the River Valley Riot in Wheeling. After losing their first bout, a nail biter, to the Beckley Area Derby Dames (56-63), they came back with a decisive victory against the Hades Ladies of Marietta,

OH (206-96). Then played Heart of Appalachia Roller Derby from Charleston, WV, and won again (119-145), placing fifth overall. Next up for Jess and the Vixens is a home bout, the Jingle Brawl, on December 15<sup>th</sup> at Mylan Park. Come on out and cheer one of our own!

<sup>1</sup>Source:

[www.morgantownrollervixens.com](http://www.morgantownrollervixens.com)



# 10 Things you didn't know about Travis Cyphert



## The Basics:

**Title:** Graduate Student

**Lab/Office:** Salati Lab

### **1. What was your very first job?**

Trader Horn

### **2. If you had to do it all over again, what would you study in school?**

The weather/climate. I am actually the official weatherman of the Salati lab.

### **3. How many languages can you speak?**

I speak Wookiee, does that count?

### **4. What is your favorite season and why?**

Any season but summer...As it gets cold you can always put more clothes on and go for a run. There is only so much you can take off during the summer months and it's still too hot!

### **5. Worst movie of all time?**

Any movie that is a musical, especially because they make my wife start singing really loudly.

### **6. Have you ever met anyone famous?**

World-class runner and former USA 10K record holder Chris Solinsky.

### **7. What are you most afraid of?**

Your MOM...haha

### **8. What would you say is your greatest achievement?**

Running my first marathon in under 3 hours...2:53:51.

### **9. How do you take your coffee/tea?**

Dark roast coffee (Caribou Obsidian is amazing) with Irish crème creamer.

### **10. What is your favorite type of beer?**

IPAs...specifically Founders Red's Rye IPA.



the  
[Spotlight]



## [Newsday Crossword]

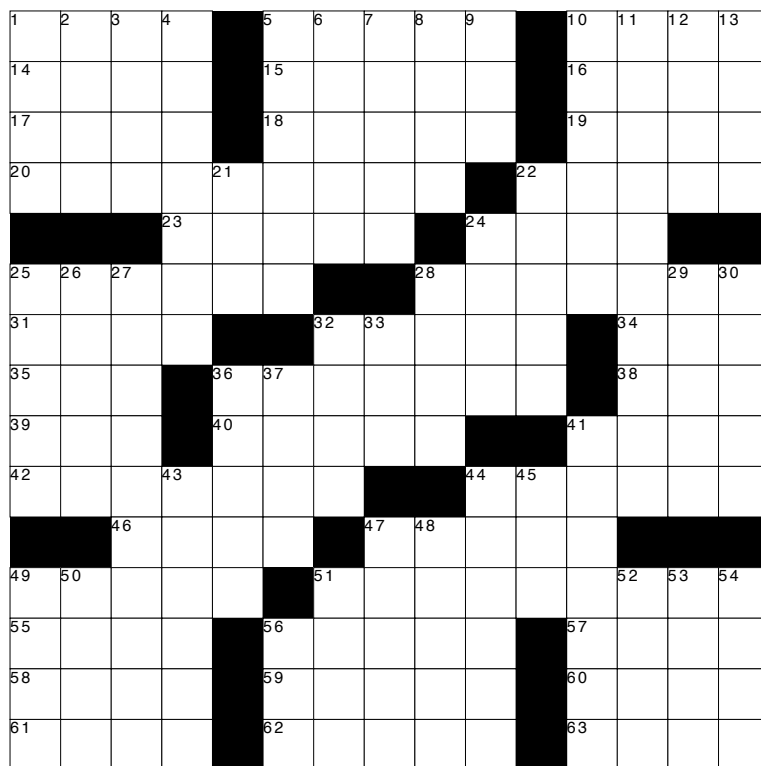
12/03/12 PASS THE PEAS Gail Grabowski, edited by Stanley Newman

## Across

- 1 Baseball hats  
 5 Like a knife's edge  
 10 Minor quarrel  
 14 Offended  
 15 Loses color  
 16 Sport on horseback  
 17 Two-tone cookie  
 18 Bit of land in the ocean  
 19 Underground plant part  
 20 Time between salary checks  
 22 Waist circlers  
 23 Canonized person  
 24 Prepare, as a gift  
 25 Andy Warhol genre  
 28 Stayed out of sight  
 31 At the drop of \_\_ (quickly)  
 32 Sound like a bull  
 34 Top playing card  
 35 Sharp knock  
 36 Wild West bars  
 38 Thumbs-up vote  
 39 Before, in poems  
 40 Apply, as pressure  
 41 Sign of sorrow  
 42 Ruby or crimson  
 44 Rosebush stickers  
 46 Barnyard oinkers  
 47 Sharply inclined  
 49 Untrue  
 51 Portable electricity source  
 55 "That's too bad!"  
 56 Police-car wailer  
 57 Pressing appliance  
 58 Shower attention (on)  
 59 Pays to play poker  
 60 Cairo's river  
 61 Bird-feeder food  
 62 Short-tempered  
 63 Fence opening

## Down

- 1 Pork serving  
 2 Mystical glow  
 3 Hunter's quarry  
 4 Pays a visit to  
 5 Enthusiasm  
 6 Entertains at home  
 7 Dole out  
 8 Marsh plant  
 9 Seattle clock setting: Abbr.  
 10 Jam or butter  
 11 Billiards participant  
 12 Oodles  
 13 Little kids  
 21 Corn portion  
 22 Londoners, informally  
 24 Advise caution to  
 25 Used a vegetable peeler  
 26 Scarlett of "Gone With the Wind"  
 27 Picnic dinnerware  
 28 Pirate's haul  
 29 Pacific or Atlantic  
 30 Has on  
 32 Winter glider  
 33 Neither here \_\_ there  
 36 Twilled suit material  
 37 Woodcutters' tools  
 41 Onion or mushroom, on a pizza  
 43 Smooched  
 44 Itsy-bitsy  
 45 That woman  
 47 Separates into stacks  
 48 Baby bird's noise  
 49 Short-lived trends  
 50 Hand-gel additive  
 51 Cone-bearing tree  
 52 Opera solo  
 53 Young male horse  
 54 Leg joint  
 56 Occupied a chair



Puzzle (c) Stanley Newman, distributed by Creators Syndicate, Inc.

Hosting &amp; Software (c) PZZL.com

Coffee Break





# Upcoming Events

## December 2012

### Quote of the Month:

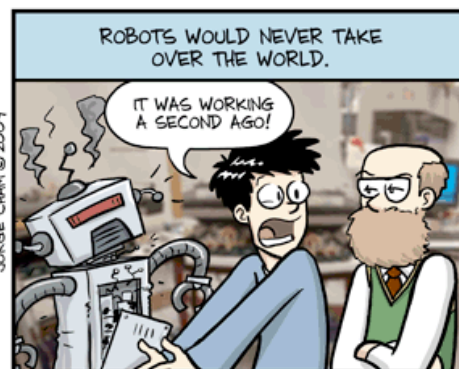
“Don’t bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself.”

• • •

William Faulkner

Date	Event	Time	Location
12/6	<b>Research Forum</b> <i>Ramamurthy Lab</i>	4pm	Erma Byrd 201
12/11	<b>Seminar: Dr. Emidio Pistilli</b> <i>WVU Exercise Physiology</i>	12pm	3067 HSN
12/11	<b>PhD Dissertation Defense</b> <i>Karen Hayes, Weed Lab</i>	2pm	3067 HSN
12/11	<b>Jazz at Black Bear Burrito</b> <i>Evansdale Location</i>	6:30pm	Black Bear Evansdale
12/13	<b>Research Forum</b> <i>Mathers Lab</i>	4pm	Erma Byrd 201
12/15	<b>Morgantown Roller Vixens</b> <i>Jingle Brawl</i>	5pm	Mylan Park
12/18	<b>Jazz at Black Bear Burrito</b> <i>Evansdale Location</i>	6:30pm	Black Bear Evansdale
12/20	<b>Research Forum</b> <i>Miller Lab</i>	4pm	Erma Byrd 201
12/31	<b>Candlelight Countdown New Years Eve Bash</b> <i>rmhcmorgantown.org for more info</i>	8pm	Waterfront Events Center

### IF TV SCIENCE WAS MORE LIKE REAL SCIENCE



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WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Have you seen the  
Biochemistry  
Timeline??

Check it out on the  
Department website!

