

Natural Selections

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

PDA Corner

ISMAIL ISMAILOGLU AND CLAUDIA SCHEKEL

The last couple of months have been a time of change for the PDA. We would like to thank the departing members Linda Feigherty, Asma Hatoum, Nidhi Gangadhar, and Paul D'Agostino for their service, and welcome newcomers Dusan Bogunovic and Bryan Utter (as well as ourselves).

The most significant issue we've encountered in the past few months is the ongoing construction in Faculty House. Waterproofing and façade replacement are nearly complete there, and the work will soon move to Scholars Residence. During construction, several residents have noted chemical smells and dust. At a meeting with the Housing Department, it was agreed that the work would continue at a slower pace and air quality measurements would be taken to ensure safety. Additionally, the Housing Department is providing air purifiers and temporary housing for those affected. The PDA continues to be in touch with the Housing Department and the community on this subject.

In other news, we are happy to announce that the Tri-I Seminar Series launched in early 2012 will continue this year. The series gives postdocs a chance to present their work in a less stressful setting and receive valuable feedback from their peers. Scientists from Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC), Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC), and The Rockefeller University (RU) are brought together, encouraging interactions between the institutions. Please join us for the upcoming seminars—pizza will be provided!

In a recent survey, several people voiced their concern about the lack of scientific interactions between laboratories. We are therefore planning to start another Seminar Series limited to RU. The format will be similar to the Tri-I Series, except that a student and a postdoc from different research areas will present at each seminar. The series will be held over the summer, to encourage attendance of the entire community. Please lookout for updates.



The PDA Board 2012-2013 (Ismail, Bryan, Paul, Nidhi, Claudia, Dusan). Credit: Nidhi Gangadhar.



PDA Holiday Party. Credit: Nidhi Gangadhar.

Finally, we hosted our traditional holiday party in December, which was a big success. More than 200 students, postdocs, faculty, and staff members gathered to celebrate the holiday season. Thanks for joining us—and stay tuned for our upcoming parties!®

Natural Selections interviews Jeanne Garbarino, Director of Science Outreach

CHRISTINA PYRGAKI

I met with Jeanne Garbarino, the newly appointed Director of Science Outreach, the day after the very successful RU holiday party, in her newly renovated office on the fourth floor of Nurse's Residence. The space radiates science, with flasks decorating the shelves of the bookcases and images of cells scattered on Jeanne's desk—those images she told me will be used to decorate the walls of her office. Jeanne was her usual personable and enthusiastic self, albeit ready for the well-deserved upcoming holiday break. No wonder she needs a break; this past year has been a busy one for the always-on-the-move mom/scientist/science communicator.



Credit: Sourabh Banerjee.

After she completed her five-year postdoc in Dr. Breslow's lab last November, Jeanne succeeded Ted Scovell as the Director of Science Outreach. In addition to her new duties, she continues her science communication activities, published two papers resulting from her postdoc work, and is working to revive *The Incubator*, a Rockefeller community blog. She also continues her work as the biology editor for *Double X Science*, an exceptional blog that brings evidence-based science stories to the public, which is not only for women in science, but also for women into science. Jeanne talked to *Natural Selections* about her new position, the revival of *The Incubator*, and more.

Before discussing Jeanne's new position as Director of Science Outreach, I asked her to talk to me about something that is not very often discussed when people leave a bench-science position for a position that does not involve any actual experimental research: how does it feel to move away from the bench? Though happy to answer the question, she pointed out that her situation was rather unique. Her postdoc in Dr. Breslow's lab obviously involved a lot of bench work, but also allowed her to get heavily involved campus life. She started writing for *Natural Selections* in her second year at RU, and, the same year, she co-founded *The Incubator*. She was also involved in the Biotech Forum for a little while, as well as the organization SpotOn, formerly known as Science Online NYC (SONYC)—the original name had to be changed because it was recently copyrighted by another group."

As a postdoc I was already doing most of the things I am doing now, so my transition from the bench to my current po-

sition was seamless," Jeanne told me. "The difference is that as a postdoc, I had to do all these when I could find the time and after my bench work was done; now I can do them full time." In terms of her postdoctoral work, Jeanne says that she was in one of those rare situations that could be considered

a good stopping point. "My project was nearly completed when I was informed that this position was available. I wrote two papers; one of them is already published and the other is in review now, and I felt I concluded my work and I could move on. It was the perfect stopping point," she told me. "That never happens," she added, laughing. But she has not yet come to grips with the fact that she doesn't work at the bench anymore: "I have not cleaned up my bench and I still have cells in the freezer" she admits, and adds, "I have not officially said goodbye." By her own admission, she loves the bench, but it so happens that she loves the outreach program a little more. The outreach program will give Jeanne the opportunity to be at the bench again, alongside the high school students who will come to Rockefeller University through the program for the summer. She will pipette samples, run gels, and image cells, and that way, in her own words, she will get her "fix." When I asked her to tell me more about the Science Outreach program, a new wave of enthusiasm colored her voice. "I took over from a very, very, very skilled and committed person, Tedd Scovell, who had really cool initiatives in place and had revamped the outreach program," she told me. "The primary function of the outreach program is to coordinate the recruitment of high school students to The Rockefeller University for a seven-week internship, during which they conduct biomedical research in state-of-the-art laboratories, get mentorship, follow coursework, both on science and science communication, and learn that scientific research is important and that it is fun! I want to encourage a full immersion into the culture of biomedical research." Even though that is the primary function of the outreach program, Jeanne is planning to use her science communications background and the contacts she has made in the past, while working on a number of science communication initiatives, to put in place more outreach initiatives throughout the course of the year, and not only during the summer. She is working on organizing workshops for teachers to help improve science teaching in the classroom by making it more interactive and fun for the kids. She also plans to spend a significant portion of her time creating opportunities that will help students and postdocs on campus enhance their CVs by acquiring teaching experience or science communication experience. Working to revive *The Incubator*,

Natural Selections
Editorial Board

EDITORIAL BOARD

Daniel Briskin
Cynthia Duggan
Carly Gelfond
Melina Herman
Jim Keller
Aileen Marshall
Engin Ozertugrul
Christina Pyrgaki
Susan Russo
Hemant Suryawanshi

selections.rockefeller.edu
nseeditors@rockefeller.edu

which Jeanne started with Joe Luna and Jessica Wright, is an example of one such opportunity, and it is part of Jeanne's effort to get the RU community involved in the process of communicating science not only among themselves, but with a broader audience. "The idea of the blog was born over a *Natural Selections* holiday lunch in 2009," Jeanne remembers. "Joe and Jessica hopped on board right away and with a little help from Jeff Smith, a computer wiz working in the Darnell lab at the time, we had the blog up and running in no time." For Jeanne that blog was the beginning of her own blog-writing adventures. "*The Incubator* was a very valuable experience. It gave me more exposure to the process of blogging," she told me. "Shortly after *The Incubator* I started my own blog (*The Mother Geek*), I started writing elsewhere as a guest blogger, and I became the biology editor for *Double X Science*." As each one of the co-founders of *The Incubator* ventured out to do different things, however, the blog went dormant. It's only now that Jeanne decided to revive it. "Based on my own experience and remembering how useful and fun it was for me to write for *The Incubator*, I thought that it would be great if students, postdocs, technicians, PIs, whoever wants to talk about science in a way that is accessible to a broad audience, had an opportunity to do so," she told me. "*The Incubator* would be a great place for members of the community to share their thoughts and practice their writing and communication skills. The more you write, the better you become at it; the more you communicate, the better you become at it." *The Incubator* is also going to serve as a way for researchers to share exciting research with the world. But the blog is not going to be only about sharing scientific results. It is also going to be a place

of intellectual interaction. Jeanne believes strongly that the more you share your ideas and interests, the more likely you are to cross paths with someone with similar ideas and interests, so *The Incubator* is expected to instigate collaborations and alliances within and outside of science. The blog will host information, thoughts, opinions on things as diverse as science and art, science and policy, science and parenting (a subject close to Jeanne's heart), and the science of how something works or why the natural world looks the way it does. When I asked Jeanne where she sees *The Incubator* a year from now, she expressed the wish to have it up and running with something fresh and interesting three times a week. "The bar is not set too high. I am not expecting to become being's top ten blogs or something," she said laughing. "It has the potential to be something very important for our community and I want it to serve our community as well as possible." Given her track record, however, I personally would not be surprised if *The Incubator* does become bigger than expected. Jeanne has the kind of passion for science communication that becomes contagious and I foresee that this passion will boost the blog much higher than the bar was set.

Jeanne, as she put it, has a significant amount of love for RU and she is immensely proud to be a part of its community. It is that passion and pride that fuels her tireless work to improve and serve the Rockefeller community, and hardly contain her enthusiasm while doing so! It remains to be seen what else our new Director for Science Outreach has in stock for us, but it takes just one look at Jeanne's mischievous smile to see that what she has done thus far is just the beginning. ◊

The \$100 Guitar Project

NICK DIDKOVSKY

I am honored and pleased to share with my colleagues an NPR story that recently aired about my \$100 Guitar Project.

Two years ago, I bought a generic, no-name electric guitar online with a friend of mine for \$100. We passed it around to over 60 players in various countries and on various coasts, asking each to compose and record an original piece with it. The resulting collection of works is released on a double CD on Bridge Records that is available now on iTunes and Amazon. A portion of the profits on each sale will be donated to the nonprofit organization CARE.

The NPR story about the \$100 Guitar Project aired in December, 2012 and can be heard at the link below (there is a "Listen Now" button under the headline).


<http://www.npr.org/blogs/therecord/2012/12/03/166430924/a-100-guitar-makes-a-30-000-mile-odyssey?live=1>

I hope you enjoy this story; it has enriched my life greatly over the last couple of years and continues to generate lots of good energy.

Editor's Note: A little history of CARE via CARE.org: "CARE was founded after World War II, on November 27th, 1945. Originally known as the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, it aimed at sending food aid and basic supplies to war-torn Europe, in the form of 'CARE packages.' As the economies of the former wartime nations developed and improved, the focus of CARE's work shifted from Europe to the problems of the developing world.

In the 1950s, CARE expanded into emerging nations, and in the 1960s, the organization pioneered primary health care programs. In the 1970s, CARE responded to massive famines in Africa with both emergency relief and long-term agroforestry projects, striving to bring about lasting, meaningful change in the world's poorest communities. ◊

NATURAL SELECTIONS



Narrate your story, send us your memorabilia, share with us your interests!

Enrich us by describing your country, culture and living!

Share your experiences here and bring in your unique viewpoints!

Email: naturalselections@rockefeller.edu

NEEDS YOU!

CULTURE CORNER

Book and Film Reviews:

Austerlitz by W.G. Sebald

Celebration Day featuring Led Zeppelin

BERNIE LANGS

I waited impatiently for five years to view and listen to the one-time concert of the 2007 Led Zeppelin Reunion performance, and immediately bought the film the week it became available in November 2012. *Celebration Day*, the video of the occasion, was well worth the wait.

I would venture to say that living heroes are few and far between these days, there being a shortage of Achilles-types or gallant Mr. Darcys running around. I have a loose sense of those I admire, and my list includes former Rockefeller University President and scientist Sir Paul Nurse, who writes and speaks with wit and wisdom; Curtis Martin, a former New York Jets football player who diligently trained his body like a machine to absorb the hits he took for years as a premier running back; and Jimmy Page, because of the way he has handled the band's legacy after the death of drummer John Bonham in 1980. The market hasn't been flooded with countless Zeppelin retreads and reissues. Page and his bandmates, singer Robert Plant and bassist/keyboardist John Paul Jones, have issued only top-notch select concert footage and very few packaged musical offerings. Because of this, Led Zeppelin remains a precious commodity.

Celebration Day is a dazzling display that shows that Led Zeppelin has not lost a step since its 1970s heyday. As a guitarist, I know that my own fingers are not as nimble as they were in the days I played in a band in the late 1970s, and I worried that Page's lead guitar lines would also suffer from a mild arthritic numbness of sorts. Not the case. His solos in the concert are breathtaking. There are several flashes of what I term "the core," when the music hits and exposes the very essence of the soul. John Paul Jones, who is completely underrated, having had to stand for years next to Page, glues the band together with solid, fluent bass lines and his melodic playing of the keyboard. His clavichord style in "Trampled Under Foot" keeps the band flowing at breakneck pace and in "Kashmir," his synthesized Arabic/Eastern sounds seem to create a welcome envelope around the guitar and drums, leaving one's mind to soar and travel through the ancient ether poetically described in the lyrics.

Robert Plant's singing is always spot-on. In recent years, he has enjoyed Grammy recognition for his work with Alison Kraus, and has been a part of many bands and performed many solo gigs since the breakup of Led Zeppelin. He was the band member who had not wanted to mount a full Zeppelin reunion debacle and tour. In *Celebration Day*, he displays the musical wisdom that the years have bestowed upon him. He's traveled the world, and some of the few comments he makes to the crowd during the show pay homage to the old American blues players who inspired the 1960s and 1970s generation of British musicians. During a great favorite of mine, "In My

Time of Dying," he sings out with such blues style that you'd think

you were listening to the ghost of Robert Johnson from the 1930s, standing at the crossroads, selling his soul. The drummer for the reunion concert is none other than Jason Bonham, the late John Bonham's son. He handles his duties and the weight of his responsibilities without missing a beat. I was glad he didn't imitate his dad's famous style, but pounds close enough to it to keep the Led Zeppelin sound intact.

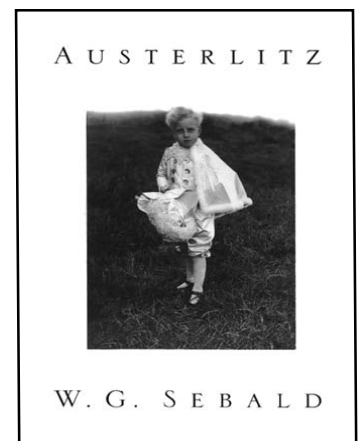
I was given a copy of W.G. Sebald's book, *Austerlitz*, so many years ago that I lost track of when it had first appeared on my bookshelves. I always figured that at some point I would get around to reading it. What a treasure I denied myself for so long! Within three pages of reading I was gasping at its power, at its magnificent prose, and basking in its old European style and seriousness.

There are books that make you feel that you are part of something special, that the knowledge imparted is fine and rare. *Austerlitz* is a stunning read. Sebald, who wrote in his native German and passed away in 2001 at age 57, constructs the character of Jacques Austerlitz. Austerlitz tells his life story to a man he meets on several occasions, each time in a different place. The book is without paragraphs, which adds to the gravity of the story of the protagonist's sudden remembrance of being a boy and taking leave of his parents on a Kindertransport from Czechoslovakia in 1939. He describes in detail the painful journey home and elsewhere in Europe to trace his parents' suffering at the hands of the Nazis.

The book is a testament to German soul searching in the wake of the atrocities perpetrated during World War II. I recall reading somewhere how a philosopher once asked the question of how we can attempt to make art today, in the shadow of the Holocaust. *Austerlitz* is a lesson on how it can be done. The book also boasts black and white photos of the places that Jacques Austerlitz journeys, giving it further descriptive and emotional strength. Any serious reader of modern fiction will be drawn to the power of Sebald's teasing of fact and fiction, of poetry and history, and his unflinching examination of the human condition. ◉



Source: Wikipedia



Source: Wikipedia



This month Natural Selections interviews Rada Norinsky, Manager of Transgenic Services.
Country of origin: Ukraine.

New York State of Mind

1. How long have you been living in New York? I'm originally from Kiev, Ukraine. I've lived in New York since 1996. It's already been 17 years!

2. Where do you live? I live in Brooklyn. The name of my neighborhood is Kensington, cleverly called "suburbs of Park Slope" by the real estate folks. To credit their sale-oriented creativity, I should say that we are indeed only ten minutes away from Prospect Park and the famous Park Slope neighborhood!

3. Which is your favorite neighborhood? I'm not a mono-neighborhood lover! I've loved the Upper West Side because that's where my acquaintance with the City started in 1996. We came from Knoxville, Tennessee to visit our friends in their tiny apartment on 75th Street and Columbus Avenue. We were smitten by the food aromas floating in the air of the neighborhood! We were mixing with people strolling the streets! We danced swing on Lincoln Square! After living in Tennessee for 4 years, it felt like magic! I loved the East Village when I was studying at New York University. Now, I guess I like Park Slope for its homey, family friendly atmosphere, for its Upper West Side-like architecture, and abundance of great restaurants.

4. What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city? I don't know... maybe the pompous title, "Capital of the World?"
And underrated?

The friendliness of New Yorkers, of course if they are not in a rush.

5. What do you miss most when you are out of town? The diversity of people—I never feel like an outsider in New York (provided that I'm walking in the right neighborhood); the convenience of public transportation if I'm anywhere else in the States (known urban exceptions like Boston and San Francisco are excluded); the diversity of ethnic restaurants.

6. If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be? I would definitely ban all barbecuing in city parks. It kills all the remaining fresh air in the city.



7. What is your favorite weekend activity in the city? I can have two types of favorite weekend. One is with my kids, and one is without them. One with kids would have started with everyone getting up on time, eating their breakfast (maybe kids can do some pancakes? Or no, they are not old enough!). Everyone behaves, we go to a museum, the kids are all excited about stories of ancient Greece or Rome (and remember everything afterwards), no one whines, we stroll through Central Park, eat lunch, the subway is running smoothly, on the way home there's no battle over the iPad, calm evening, nice family movie, kids go to bed early, and we drink some wine and enjoy cheese from Zabar's.

The one without kids is even better...

8. What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC? Those seventeen years in New York gave me a whole

bunch of stories to talk about. One is a combination of a bad experience and a good one bundled together. Both are very memorable. August 14, 2003. The huge Northeast blackout. Everyone panics, buses packed with sweaty people, cell phones are not connecting. How to get home?!!

The fun part: we met each other in the crowd! My husband and I are walking from Midtown Manhattan all the way to Kensington, Brooklyn. Chinatown street vendors are begging us to eat their melting ice creams. Hot, hot, hot. The Brooklyn Bridge is swarmed with people. It really feels like the Bridge is swinging under our marching feet. It's scary! We run to the other side. Oh, great joy! The Brooklynites are greeting us with water! They give us cups of icy water and we can pour some on our overheated heads and still get more cups to drink.

Two hours down. How many more until we get home?! It got really dark and people were lighting candles on their porches. Many were playing guitars and singing. They cheered us on and it was really a beautiful, uniting experience! But I hope it will never repeat itself! After five hours of walking, we got home.

9. If you could live anywhere else, where would that be? I wish I could have several residences. Some in the great European cities, some in the mountains, some by the sea. Why not dream? It's better than just moving to New Jersey.

10. Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? Why? I think I'm one until I get too comfortable and feel like I know everything. Then—boom—I get one of those nice New York-style surprises—a lovely orange envelope on my windshield. Who writes those parking rules?! ◊

For Your Consideration—Chasing Gold Edition

JIM KELLER - @MUMBOJIMBO

Last month, I revisited my preliminary predictions in all of the major categories and offered up my final take on the season to date. Since then, the votes have been cast, the nominees announced, and two of the major awards programs came and went—all leaving in their wake a pile of bruised egos and, for the lucky ones, fluttering hearts. This edition includes a breakdown of my predictions versus the actual nominations as well as some short reviews of those films in the running, and concludes with my winner predictions. The table reflects those predictions along with an asterisk for films discussed in this installment. Misses have been crossed out and actual nominees not predicted are in bold. Predicted winners have been underlined.

As I mentioned in the last installment, the road to Oscar is paved by the studios. Here is a list of this year's casualties—those that failed to land a nomination in the main categories: Focus Features, Lionsgate/Summit Entertainment (the former acquired the latter), IFC Films, Music Box Films, Millennium Films, Magnolia Pictures, Columbia Pictures.

Argo (director: Ben Affleck, studio: Warner Brothers):

FYC: What begins as an innocent high-stakes plot to rescue six Americans from the home of the Canadian ambassador in early 1980s Iran, evolves into a seat-grabbing thriller that surprises and stuns. Ben Affleck, once again, proves his might behind the lens and on this third outing his efforts will not be ignored.

Lincoln (director: Steven Spielberg, studio: DreamWorks Studios):

FYC: Steven Spielberg's deft hand guides us through one of the most turbulent times in US history as our 16th President scrambles along with his cabinet to secure enough votes to abolish slavery, end the Civil War and reunify our nation. Daniel Day-Lewis is magnificent as Abraham Lincoln—a man unclouded by inherent clout who boasts a golden spirit in the body of a gentle giant. Sally Field gives a rousing performance as Mary Todd Lincoln and Tommy Lee Jones portrays Thaddeus Stevens as an iron-fisted man who

emboldens Lincoln's plight. There is much to love here.

Beasts of the Southern Wild (director: Benh Zeitlin, studio: Fox Searchlight Pictures):

FYC: Tragedy translates through the eyes of a young girl as she learns the ins and outs of growing up in a small delta community. Quvenzhané Wallis is a force to be reckoned with as Hushpuppy—a girl with a steel spine we're privileged to follow along on a quest of the mind, body, and spirit. First time director Benh Zeitlin captures the innocence of life and seamlessly juxtaposes it against the urgency of death—it's truly masterful work.

Life of Pi (director: Ang Lee, studio: 20th Century Fox):

FYC: A young boy's fight for life at sea becomes complicated thanks to a determined tiger in this retelling of a remarkable journey. While Ang Lee's adaptation of the novel is visually stunning, I expected something bigger and wondered if some greater message could be culled from the novel.

Les Misérables (director: Tom Hooper, studio: Universal Pictures):

FYC: While Tom Hooper's much-touted, live theatrical adaptation of Victor Hugo's French Revolution classic is ambitious, it's replete with enough cheese to make a pizza pie. Fortunately for us, it has given way to some of the year's best performances. Anne Hathaway's Fantine sets the bar for years to come and Hugh Jackman sinks his teeth into Jean Valjean, the tale's most versatile character. Samantha Barks and Eddie Redmayne also hold their own in this sprawling cast. The age-old question is: can the performances lift the film high enough to avoid being dragged into the dregs by this weighty production?

Silver Linings Playbook (director: David O. Russell, studio: The Weinstein Company):

FYC: Bradley Cooper may be the bipolar Pat freed from a mental institution to resume life and mend fences in this adaptation of Matthew Quick's novel, but it's Jennifer Lawrence who scores. She builds a would-be supporting character into a

woman brimming with defiant spirit and a solid heart as Tiffany, Pat's pal and confidant. Robert De Niro is also of note as Pat's OCD Eagles-obsessed father. While David O. Russell took several liberties with the script, it's bound to be a sure-fire hit.

The Impossible (director: Juan Antonio Bayona, studio: Warner Brothers):

FYC: The true story of a family separated during the 2004 tsunami that rocked Southeast Asia carries the weight of the world on its shoulders, and doesn't let go. Through this impossible journey, Naomi Watts's matriarch battles every step of the way as she gives a breathtaking, masterful performance. Newcomer Tom Holland, as the eldest of her three sons, also commands the screen. While difficult to watch, the fruit of this family's endeavor is as satisfying as a meal fit for a king.

Django Unchained (director: Quentin Tarantino, studio: The Weinstein Company):

FYC: Quentin Tarantino's spaghetti western-cum-slave provocateur is another tried and true effort from the blood-spattering auteur, but is a little too big for its britches. Featuring a throw-away performance from Jamie Foxx, the film's strength lies instead in its supporting players: Christoph Waltz, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Samuel L. Jackson. Word is Harvey Weinstein pushed Tarantino to finalize the film for a Christmas Day release and it shows. I can't help but wonder if Django's chains could've grappled tighter had the film not been rushed to completion.

The Sessions (director: Ben Lewin, studio: Fox Searchlight Pictures):

FYC: A man in an iron lung reaches out to the world to assist him in losing his virginity—based on Mark O'Brien's true story. John Hawkes and Helen Hunt shine as O'Brien and his sex surrogate, respectively, but the plot skips plainly from point A to B, leaving very little to savor.

The Master (director: Paul Thomas Anderson, studio: The Weinstein Company):

FYC: Joaquin Phoenix is brilliant as Freddie Quell—an unsettled naval drifter lost on the currents of life, who discovers "The Cause" in 1950s' America and is

swept up by its charismatic leader (Philip Seymour Hoffman) and his wife (Amy Adams). Throughout his journey, Quell seeks to leave behind the damning dogs of his dark past, not knowing what lies before him or how to achieve his innermost desires. But who really pulls the strings on our lives?

Zero Dark Thirty (director: Kathryn Bigelow, studio: Sony Pictures):

FYC: Kathryn Bigelow's long-gestating hunt for Osama Bin Laden sparkles with life thanks to the sure-fire talent of Jessica Chastain as the cagey, calculating Maya—a CIA operative with a keen sense of tracking, armed with willful determination.

Bigelow once again proves herself a force behind the lens and is clearly comfortable presiding over a sprawling cast. This is one hell of a film.

Next up will be my annual Crystal Ball edition where I spitball from some of 2013's film offerings. ◊

Category	W a r n e r Brothers	The Weinstein Company	Foz Searchlight Pictures	Focus Features	Sony Pictures Classics	U n i v e r s a l Pictures	DreamWorks	20th Century Fox	Para m o u n t Pictures	Columbia Pic- tures
Best Picture	* <u>Argo</u> (2)	* <u>Silver Linings Playbook</u> (4)	* <u>Beasts of the Southern Wild</u> (8)	<u>Moonrise Kingdom</u> (9)	* <u>Zero Dark Thirty</u> (3)	* <u>Les Misérables</u> (5)	* <u>Lincoln</u> (1)	* <u>Life of Pi</u> (6)		<u>Skyfall</u> (10)
		* <u>Django Unchained</u> (7)			<u>Amour</u> (11)					
Best Director	*Ben Affleck - <u>Argo</u> (2)	*David O. Russell - <u>The Silver Linings Playbook</u> (5)	*Benh Zeitlin - <u>Beasts of the Southern Wild</u> (15)		*Kathryn Bigelow - <u>Zero Dark Thirty</u> (3)		*Steven Spielberg - <u>Lincoln</u> (1)	*Ang Lee - <u>Life of Pi</u> (4)		
					Michael Haneke - <u>Amour</u> (7)					
Best Actor		*Bradley Cooper - <u>Silver Linings Playbook</u> (4)	*John Hawkes - <u>The Sessions</u> (3)			*Hugh Jackman - <u>Les Misérables</u> (2)	*Daniel Day-Lewis - <u>Lincoln</u> (1)		Denzel Washington - <u>Flight</u> (6)	
		*Joaquin Phoenix - <u>The Master</u> (5)								
Best Actress	*Naomi Watts - <u>The Impossible</u> (5)	*Jennifer Lawrence - <u>Silver Linings Playbook</u> (2)	*Quvenzhané Wallis - <u>Beasts of the Southern Wild</u> (4)		*Jessica Chastain - <u>Zero Dark Thirty</u> (1)					
			Helen Mirren - <u>Hitchcock</u> (6)		Marion Cotillard - <u>Rust & Bone</u> (3)					
					Emmanuelle Riva - <u>Amour</u> (7)					
Best Supporting Actor	*Alan Arkin - <u>Argo</u> (3)	*Philip Seymour Hoffman - <u>The Master</u> (2)					*Tommy Lee Jones - <u>Lincoln</u> (1)			Javier Bardem - <u>Skyfall</u> (5)
		*Robert DeNiro - <u>Silver Linings Playbook</u> (3)								
		*Christoph Waltz - <u>Django Unchained</u> (6)								
Best Supporting Actress		*Amy Adams - <u>The Master</u> (3)	*Helen Hunt - <u>The Sessions</u> (4)			*Anne Hathaway - <u>Les Misérables</u> (1)	*Sally Field - <u>Lincoln</u> (2)			
		*Jacki Weaver - <u>Silver Linings Playbook</u> (Not previously ranked)	Maggie Smith - <u>Best Exotic Marigold Hotel</u> (5)							

Natural Confections

CARLY GELFOND

Let's be honest: pretty much all holidays are better when you're a kid. Really, think about it. Halloween: enough said. Hanukkah and Christmas: truly holidays in which children reign, their stacks of presents littering the carpet, with no obligation to reciprocate since the little rascals have no money (and probably wouldn't spend it on you even if they did.)

Then there's Thanksgiving: parents slave over a hot elaborate meal, clean the house, and entertain for hours. Then it's all over, the meal is gone, and the house is dirtier than before. Meanwhile, the kids have spent the evening horsing around with the cousins, then sitting briefly at the table eating a meal of mostly potatoes before scurrying below deck to tie everyone else's shoes together (or, uh, maybe that was just me.) Easter and Passover both include child-centric activities, in the form of egg and afkomen hunts. For July 4, there are carnivals and on New Year's Eve every kid looks forward to staying up past his bedtime (the time parents cherish as the child-less hours of the day.)

And now let's talk about Valentine's Day, since it's right around the corner after all. This one should be about the grownups, right? A "kissy" holiday all about love and affection, romance in the air, the willful exchange of cooties. And yet this is never exactly how it goes, as anyone who's ever gone to a restaurant on Valentine's Day will tell you. One year, John and I made reservations at a little place in the West Village. When we arrived, we were greeted by two men dressed in billowing, satin red shirts, worn specially for Valentine's Day (or that was what I sincerely hoped.) Man, we felt bad for those guys, scuttling through the restaurant like two nervous crayfish. They looked awkward and uncomfortable, like pets you'd sometimes dressed up in doll clothes (or maybe that was just me.) Eating at a restaurant on Valentine's Day also entails the requisite special (read: inordinately expensive) prix-fixe menus and the close quarters of a packed house (you can feel the breath of your date, and also the breath of the guy next to him.)

Grownups! It's time we take a stand. Our younger, better, thinner selves knew how to have a good time. We've forgotten the true meaning of what holidays are all about!

Presents! Fun! And most importantly, as anyone under 4 feet tall will verify, cookies.

So, with that in mind, here is the perfect activity for a perfect Valentine's Day. These cookies are meant to be made and assembled with other people (loved or just "liked," or even "like' liked.") Just make sure no cooties fall in.

HOMEMADE OREOS

Makes about 25 cookies

For the chocolate wafers:

1 1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup unsweetened Dutch process cocoa

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup sugar

1 1/4 sticks room-temperature, unsalted butter

1 large egg

For the filling:

1/2 stick room-temperature, unsalted butter

1/4 cup vegetable shortening

2 cups sifted confectioners' sugar

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon almond extract

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Make the wafers: In a food processor, mix flour, cocoa, baking soda and powder, salt, and sugar. While pulsing, or on low speed, add butter, and then egg. Continue processing or mixing until dough comes together in a large ball.

Place rounded teaspoons of dough on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet at least two inches apart. With moistened hands, slightly flatten the dough. Bake for 9 minutes. Cool.

Make the filling: Place butter and shortening in a mixing bowl, and at low speed, gradually beat in the sugar and vanilla. Turn the mixer on high and beat until filling is light and fluffy.

Assemble the cookie: It helps to have a pastry bag to pipe the filling onto the wafer. But if you're like me, and "buy pastry bag" is forever on tomorrow's to-do list, spread the filling carefully on the wafer with a knife, and top with another cookie, equal in size to the first. Press down lightly, and continue the process until all cookies are now sandwiches. Enjoy. This is your holiday. ◊

Life on a Roll



Light by Elodie Pauwels



Natural Selections is not an official publication of The Rockefeller University. University administration does not produce this newsletter. The views expressed by the contributors to this publication may not necessarily reflect views or policies of the University.