

# A Newsletter of The Rockefeller University Community

# Political Science By Ian Berke

In March, David Satcher, the 16th Surgeon General, former Assistant Secretary for Health and former Director of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), came to Rockefeller as part of the new Rockefeller Insight lecture series. A Surgeon General's job is to take the lead in evaluating national health problems scientifically and thereby make recommendations based on the best available science. If there was one message to take from Dr. Satcher's talk, it would be that science, even of the clear-cut variety, does not always translate into changes of public policy.

Sometimes the reasons for this failure are general misconceptions and societal stigmas that make change difficult. In a report on mental health in the U.S., the Surgeon General's office found that more than 1 in 5 people suffer from a mental health illness. Yet, although 80-90% of these problems are treatable, less than 50% seek treatment because of stigma and fear of discrimination. Public policy reflects these opinions in the high cost of Medicare co-payments required for treatment.

Rather than general misconceptions or ignorance being the culprits, sometimes scientific evidence may not impact policy for more political and ideological reasons. Take for example one of the major reports of Dr. Satcher's career as Surgeon General: The 2001 Report on Sexual Health. In this report, the best available evidence showed that abstinence-only sex education programs were less effective at reducing sexually transmitted diseases

and teen pregnancy than more comprehensive sexual health education that included topics on contraceptives. Yet, when asked about the report's findings, the President's spokesman Ari Fleischer admitted the President had not even read the report. He then refused to address questions about its findings (in favor of broader sex education) by repeatedly stating "...that the only method that is fail-proof for averting unwanted pregnancies is abstinence." Abstinence-only programs continue to receive significant funding: in fact, President Bush has recently proposed doubling the budget for these programs.



Perhaps more disturbing than failure to translate scientific findings into policy changes, is the willful manipulation and misrepresentation of the scientific process itself. Several reports and accusations have thus far been made, most notably summarized in an August 2003 report by the staff of Rep. Henry Waxman (D-California and member of the Committee on Government Reform) and a February 2004 report by the Union of Concerned Scientists that was signed by over 60 well respected scientists including 20 Nobel laureates. Local scientists that signed the report included Sloan-Kettering's Harold Varmus and Rockefeller's own Joel Cohen. These reports detail numerous examples of

# Issue 3, April 2004

how the Bush administration has suppressed and distorted research findings at federal agencies, manipulated the appointment process of scientific advisory panels to support the administration's policies, and interfered with ongoing research and analyses. The examples below paint a grim picture for the future of science in America as an objective process that can advise and guide public policy.

Climate change and its potential effects on our biosphere is one of the most pressing issues our generation is facing, yet even as report after report of the human impact on global warming emerges, the Bush administration continues to contend that various uncertainties are too great to introduce mandatory regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unsatisfied with the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), who advocated stronger regulations, President Bush asked the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review the IPCC's work and provide further assessment. The NAS supported the findings. In a potential case of corporate cronyism, Exxon Mobil lobbied the White House for the removal of Dr. Robert Watson as the head of the IPCC (President of the Panel since 1996) shortly after the Continued on page 2

Natural Selections Editorial Board: Abraham, Mary Berke, Ian Colgan, Diana Deaconescu, Alexandra Duque, Paula Howard, Ellen Lainé, Muriel Ligr, Martin Muralidharan, Vasant

"Political Science" Continued from page 1 2001 release of the IPCC report. The State Department soon opposed his re-election (no scientific justification given) and he lost his position in April 2002. Further abuse of this issue came when the administration pressured the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to make major revisions to a draft report on air pollution. They demanded the removal of any mention of research demonstrating sharp increases in global temperature over the past decade and even objected to reference of the NAS report the administration itself requested. In the end, the EPA chose to eliminate the section on global warming altogether, even though the report on the state of air pollution had contained similar sections for the proceeding five years. In an internal EPA memo during these events, it was noted that the section "no longer accurately represents scientific consensus on climate change."

For nine months, White House offices suppressed an EPA report on children's health and the environment with a lengthy review process. The report found significant levels of mercury in women that could lead to reduced IQ and motor skills of their offspring. The Bush administration has been advocating looser restrictions on mercury emissions from coal fired power plants. The EPA report was finally released days after a frustrated EPA employee leaked it to the press. Would the report have ever seen the light of day if not for the leak?

In another case of censorship, a research microbiologist at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) was prevented at least eleven times from publicizing his research on airborne bacteria resulting from hog farm wastes and its potential impact on human health. In an interview with the Union of Concerned Scientists, the researcher alleged that USDA officials censor controversial findings by forcing them through an extended approval process, preventing publication in scientific journals and presentation at public meetings, and by cooperating with industry groups to suppress results that do not meet their satisfaction.

The above are not isolated incidents during this administration. Detailed in the Union of Concerned Scientists report and the investigation findings by the Congressional Committee on Government Reform are cases where the White House has stepped into the workings of federal agencies to censure information. In several instances, government websites such as the CDC's and EPA's had been altered to remove information that conflicted with administrative policies. Also laid out in the reports are cases where scientific advisory panels were stacked with scientists having industry ties, passing up, or even dismissing well published and respected scientists in the relevant fields.

In recent news, there have been allegations of manipulation of the Bioethics Council to support the administration's no-new embryonic stem cell research policy. Two members of the panel that support the creation and use of new human embryonic stem cell lines have recently been replaced with those that do not, heavily biasing the committee's viewpoint. Although one of these replacements was made due to retirement, Professor Elizabeth Blackburn (Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at UCSF) claims she was dismissed for her support of embryonic stem cell research. In an article appearing in *PLoS*, coauthored by a current member of the Bioethics Council, Dr. Blackburn points out how two major reports from the committee misrepresented scientific study of stem cells and aging. The reports perpetuate myths including misrepresenting the scientific study of aging as a "search for immortality" and raising the specter of designer babies from the study of human genetics and development.

Taken individually, the incidents above and in the reports may not seem as drastic intrusions into science. The power of these reports is that they have assembled these cases in a document and identify a pattern of censorship, distortion, and manipulation. If the scientific process continues to be politicized and abused, what will happen to the scientific community? It is possible that talented scientists in government agencies such as the FDA, EPA and CDC will leave for freer scientific pastures. If scientific myths and distortions are propagated to the public, will society become disillusioned with science? Has it already?

All science is shaped in some manner by the society we live in. The funding we depend on for our passion and livelihoods is set by society's agenda. Even the make-up and diversity of our labs is shaped by pressures within society. That is why it is of utmost importance for us as scientists to be aware of how politics and society can shape and influence science, and how we in turn can shape society. After Dr. Satcher's Insight lecture, I attended a dinner in which he expanded on some of the problems facing science and public policy. When asked the best way to combat these difficulties, he responded, "Education, Motivation, Mobilization....the most effective people at change..[such as] Martin Luther King []r.]....were able to educate, motivate and mobilize people." Stay aware of how science is treated and presented in the public arena; and talk to your peers, scientist and layman, about these issues. The box on page 3 contains a list of sources for information and some groups that organize actions for change.



"Political Science" - Additional information

### **References and Notable Articles:**

- Blackburn and Rowley. 2004. Reason as Our Guide *PLoS* 2 (4) Drs. Blackburn and Rowley highlight concerns in the Bioethics panel reports: "Beyond Therapy: Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness" and "Monitoring Stem Cell Research" (bioethics.gov/reports/)
- Fleischer, Ari. White house press briefing, June 29, 2001 The response to Dr. Satcher's 2001 Report on Sexual Health
- Holden, 2004. Researchers Blast U.S. Bioethics Panel Shuffle, *Science*, 303(5663):1447
- Kennedy, Robert F. Jr., 2004. The Junk Science of George W. Bush ., *The Nation* 2/19/2004. http:// www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?2004030&&s=kennedy Robert Kennedy is the senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council (nrdc.org).
- Malakoff 2004. White House Denies Playing Politics With Science *Science*, 303(5663):1446-1447 John Marburger's responds to the UCS report as "irritated" and his attempts to discredit it are covered.
- \* Rep. Henry Waxman 2003. Politics and the Bush Administration. http://www.house.gov/reform/min/ politicsandscience/report.htm
- \* Union of Concerned Scientists 2004. Scientific Integrity in Policymaking. http://www.ucsusa.org/ global environment/rsi/report.html
- \* major sources for this article

#### Web Links:

Schedule of hearings by the Commerce Science and Transportation Committee: http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/index.cfm Online scientist petition and activism: http://www.scienceinpolicy.org Union of Concerned Scientists: http://www.ucsusa.org Committee on Government Reform: http://www.house.gov/reform/min/politicsandscience/ Email alerts on environmental issues: http://www.bushgreenwatch.org Natural Resource Defense Council: http://www.ndrc.org

### SRC Corner Lab Student History File (LSHF)

In an effort to find a way to provide students with information about laboratories at RU, the SRC has created a Lab Student History File (LSHF). This electronic document contains relevant factual information regarding which labs students worked in for any length of time and should help students make informed decisions regarding

### Course Review: Virology By Alexandra Deaconescu

This two-credit course was last offered in Spring 2003 and consisted of weekly lectures as well as small-group discussions following each lecture. The credit requirements included active participation in the journal club as well as presentation of a written research proposal at the end of the course. Six out of seven registered students were surveyed and their comments have been compiled below.

### Comments:

Virology is a course "to treat yourself to when you have the time to really put in the effort to get the most out of it." The journal club discussions with the guest lecturers (a "star-studded cast of virologists") were both "stimulating" and "enjoyable," though many felt that the assigned reading was often "excessive", so this class certainly took "a lot of time." Students enjoyed the "diversity" and "breadth" of the discussion topics that covered "all major topics in virology" from virus structure and evolution to host responses and advances in antiviral therapies. The written research proposal was "an excellent exercise" especially since the class was given "a lot of freedom" in choosing a topic.

Virology will be again offered in Spring 2005 with a few minor changes in format. There will be group discussions regarding students' research proposals and these will be very much tailored like an "NIH study section." Students will begin by choosing a topic and formulating some specific aims, followed by their presentation to the entire group for discussion and input. Once proposals are written, students will be assigned as primary and secondary reviewers, and then proposals will be scored in "mock study section meetings."

Thanks to the course organizers, Drs. Charlie Rice and Paul Bienasz, for information regarding the course.



Molecular surface of the papillomavirus, one of the structures solved in the laboratory of invited lecturer, Dr. Stephen Harrison.

Lectures	Course Content	Credit Requirements	
		Journal Club	Research Proposal
8.7	8.5	7.3	8.3
Overall Course Rating: 8.3			

Ratings given out of 10 with 10 being the highest rating.

the planning of their rotations, theses, and scientific interactions in general.

The LSHF is a Word document with each page containing all or some of the following information for a given student: Name and email of student; Rotation labs, including length of rotation; Thesis lab, length of thesis and circumstances surrounding departure from lab; and Titles and short descriptions of their thesis research proposal (TRP) and thesis. Therefore,

a student interested in a particular lab can search the document for that lab and find the students who have worked there.

We believe that this information will be very useful to students who are choosing a lab for a rotation or PhD thesis. If you would like to utilize this resource, please contact Nicolai Siegel, the first year SRC representative at siegeln@mail.rockefeller.edu.

### Lost in Calibration By Kenta Asahina

Anybody who watched Lost in Translation may have wondered what on earth the director was yelling exactly at Bill Murray when the interpreter just kept repeating: "Look at the glass with intensity." You may then have assumed that you would have had the privilege to figure out the trick and have extra fun in the theater if you spoke Japanese. That is partly true and partly untrue. Of course translation does not always work on a word-by-word basis. If the interpreter was to show some Japanese consideration towards an actor with past glories, she would omit words like: "What the hell are you doin'? We have no time to waste! Da ya really understand what I'm sayin'?" This aspect would not be clear if you paid attention only to the process of translation itself.

Science is a field with low contextdependency. We always use many technical terms to clarify what we want to say in scientific discussions. The meaning of words is supposedly the same whenever and wherever you use them, and independent of whoever uses them. Probably because of that fact, I did not face severe difficulty in communicating with others about scientific issues when I first came here a year and a half ago. In other words, I could always translate Japanese sentences directly into English and they still made sense. That is not always the case, though, as most foreigners know. I have had significant difficulties during conversations outside the laboratory, and I still do. Not only translation, but also some knowledge of context-dependency of each of the words and idioms, should be taken into account in most conversations.

Here, I will define "translation" as the word-by-word conversion of one language into the other. As opposed to "translation", I would like to bring up the word "calibration" as the interpretation with more consideration to

context, manner, and other cultural differences to convey the most proper meaning of a sentence. For example, grammatically, "Pass me the salt" is imperative. However, the "translation" of this sentence into Japanese would be too rude to be used in most cases ("Shio o watase"), because imperative in Japanese is used exclusively as a strong command from those of higher to those of lower rank (executive to employee, general to private, etc.). The original sentence, in this case, does not mean to be rude, but just to ask others to pass the salt. After this "calibration", the Japanese sentence would be something like "Please, pass me the salt" ("Shio o watashite kudasai"). "Please" is indispensable for properly conveying the meaning in this case, even though the word is considered grammatically odd.

Calibration should be a common process between any two languages. It might actually be happening between any two persons, as everyone has a distinct personal history. In fact, it would not be surprising if each person had a slightly different definition of a word. However, it is also true that people belong to certain cultural groups, and calibration between one set of groups can be easier than between others. How easy the calibration is depends on, as you might expect, how grammatically different the two languages are, how distant the two cultures, and how well the cultures - or the persons involved in the conversation - know each other.

One difficulty for me is that considerate calibration cannot be easily taught. Rather, it looks like something I have to



Actually, I wanted a DNA ladder

learn from experience. Grammar and vocabulary are easy to learn; you can always consult a textbook or a dictionary. Compared to the calibration between Japanese and English, calibration between European languages should be easier, as they are relatively close grammatically and culturally. Also, in some cases, you can just "translate" without virtually any process of "calibration". As I mentioned earlier, scientific conversations hardly require it. This is one of the wonderful things of working in a scientific community, and one of the reasons why it is a more international field than any other. Once I talk with others outside the lab, however, I cannot help realizing all the more that I do need to learn proper "calibration". Compared to just learning English grammar and vocabulary, it is exceedingly difficult and I have only reached the point where I can start learning the process.

I can raise several examples of these calibration problems between Japanese and English (especially American English). One well-known example concerns the word "difficult". The story is as follows:

An American company decided to collaborate with a Japanese one and sent Jim to Japan to propose a detailed plan. During a conversation with Kenji, the Japanese representative, Jim was told that "It may be very difficult for us to do this", in response to his proposal. Jim assumed that it would take them a long time to decide on the matter and called Kenji two months later: "By the way, how is the issue going?" "Excuse me? I am not sure what you are talking about" "The issue you said was very difficult" "Oh, it IS very difficult, so we cannot do it." Apparently, Jim took the meaning of "difficult" as something that requires a lot of time and energy, but can eventually be accomplished. But "difficult" in Japanese (and in this context) euphemistically means "impossible". Kenji directly translated the Japanese word, which resulted in two totally different interpretations.

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#### "Lost in Calibration" Continued from page 4

How about the term "friend"? I think this word might require even more complicated calibration, because "friend" can be a very ambiguous concept. My impression is that you can call someone "friend" if you know the person and he/she is not particularly annoying. When you do not refer to someone as a "friend", it sounds like you know the person but do not like him/her. I, on the other hand, do not say that someone is my "friend" even if I see him/her regularly in, say, class. "Friend" requires something more, at least to me. More importantly, Japanese usually do not refer to someone older as a "friend", unless they are very close to the elder person. This is maybe a past remnant of the inherent link between differences in age and in social rank. What makes the matter all the more complicated is that the concept of "friend" may vary between any two individuals who come from the same cultural background. Calibration of the word "friend" should, therefore, be carried out with extra care.

Calibration is not something a textbook can teach, although it is a very important aspect of communication. This is definitely true when you come from a different cultural background, because sometimes you cannot figure out whether there is a problem of translation or calibration. In less frequent cases, you do not realize at all that you are making a mistake in calibration, because the people around you do not think of the possibility that what you mean by a certain word may differ from what they perceive. Scientists can overlook this problem, for they speak in very low context-dependent language. In this sense, I appreciate the fact that I came here as a student, who is exposed to many more different kinds of conversation. The process is, of course, not enjoyable all the time. The more abstract, conceptual or sensitive the content of the conversation is, the higher the potential cost of "miscalibration" becomes. On top of this, being Japanese, I have to pay attention to the grammar issue, the

vocabulary issue, and whether what a person is saying is "right" or "light".

While I realize that I have to be aware of the potential need to apply proper calibration at any time, I also think that this process would be greatly facilitated if people around me would to some extent think of the existence of calibration. Generally speaking, mutual understanding of culture requires effort on both sides. Unfortunately, Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson did not have a chance to experience the process of calibration, as they were both isolated in a strange country, with no means to start communicating with locals. They did not even try, as they did not need to. They may still have thought they had some exotic experiences in their loneliness, but personally I am convinced that true interaction between two cultures starts when you realize the necessity of calibration. It is similar to the fact that true interaction between scientists in different countries became possible only after calibration of weight and measure units was implemented. The big difference is that my learning of calibration will continue as long as I try to communicate with people.

I would greatly appreciate your feedback, particularly on how you handle "calibration" (especially non English-speaking people). For Englishspeaking people: What is the definition of "friend"?



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### RUFP Film Series

Free Speech For Sale. A Bill Moyers special. Tuesday, April 13 at 6 p.m. in Weiss 305.

### Performed in Duplicate By Polly Soam

Feel obliged to hold the elevator for an illustrious RU professor? Maybe you shouldn't feel quite so bad if you let the door close, as perhaps they are not what they seem.

To hire and retain top faculty, universities face fierce competition, so each institution strives to offer a unique and compelling package of benefits such as parking spaces, or large interest-free mortgages. While it is legitimate for each university to do its upmost to ensure high caliber staff, I would like to question the regulation of the new ultimate perk of a scientific body double, offered by a handful of the nation's elite scientific institutions including Rockefeller. This benefit has been kept a secret from the wider scientific community; indeed, I only became aware of it when I chanced to overhear a conversation amongst senior P.I.s at the Faculty club.

For those lucky few scientists who have reached the pinnacle of their field, lack of time is the single greatest impediment to their ability to contribute to scientific advances. "Once you reach the upper echelons of the scientific establishment, the number of time commitments you have to juggle is unbelievable," said one tenured professor, who also told me that between reviewing and writing papers and grants, giving talks and attending committee meetings, he sometimes struggles to schedule a free hour every week to hold a group meeting.

All professors find particularly draining the constant grind of presenting talks at other universities. "If I have published over twenty *Cell* papers, why should I be forced to give a talk in some third world country like Denmark, where I will get jet lag and probably food poisoning?" commented a senior RU Professor. The solution to this dilemma is that some top tier P.I.s have begun to *Continued on page 6* 

"Perfomed in...." Continued from page 5 send doubles in their place. In New York, a large pool of unemployed actors makes it easy to find lookalikes who can be trained to deliver a scripted Powerpoint presentation. For versimilitude, a few actors are also hired to sit in the audience and ask prearranged questions, to ensure the ruse is not discovered. Use of scientific body doubles in such circumstances may be for compassionate reasons, as P.I.s forced to deliver the same talk at different locations, again and again and again, can develop the dreaded Repetitive Repetition Syndrome (RRS).

What disturbs me is the lack of oversight of this system and the potential for exploitation of these scientific alter egos. Last week in the Faculty Club, I overheard one of our eminent scientists boasting that he was able to beat the weekend traffic to the Hamptons by leaving his scientific body double to arbitrate a lab dispute between a postdoc and a rotation student over allocation of microscope time. Even more disturbing, some graduate students that I have spoken with recollected a glassy eyed stare of some P.I.s during their thesis committee meetings. As one fourth year student put it, "I thought I had just put them to sleep, but what if it wasn't really them at all?" A third year student complained, "Did I just spend six months trying to immunoprecipitate my protein of interest from squirrel extract, based on the advice of a scientific imposter?" My plea is that those entrusted with scientific doubles should take care to use them responsibly and the university should ensure that abuses of the system are not tolerated.



Can you spot the real Tom Sakmar?

## Parent-to-Parent: Survival of the Unfittest? By Dr. Mom

I've been musing over what to write for this column for about two weeks now. I finally decided that as the first one to officially complain on paper, I will go all out and splurge. Like so many of you, I am a parent-postdoc, a member of the valiant breed I like to call "crazy people." The combination of being an aspiring scientist and a mother of two small children finds me caught in a vast continuum of time where experiments and chores define the time of day, and coma from sheer exhaustion equates with night. Yet we trudge on, determined to survive this struggle and come out alive and perhaps even a little scientifically accomplished in the end. How do we do this? I like to call it a story of survival.

Let me start off by acknowledging the things that make our lives easier. Many of us have the convenience of our labs being right in the middle of home and the Child and Family Center, making our morning commutes all of fifteen minutes on a bad day. We can replace forgotten lunches at the cafeteria or run home to pick up that umbrella when the rain surprises us in time for pick-up.

So why are we parents always in a rush, seemingly unable to derive composure from these indulgences that we have? Well, I've given this conundrum much thought, and have come to the conclusion that it is, as Paul Nurse so very aptly put it during his Friday Lecture, the Shackles of Guilt.

Consciously or subconsciously, we scientist-parents feel guilty that we are simply not doing enough in the lab...and so we try to go there whenever we can, regardless of time of day or night. For me this guilt is in full force at about 4:30 p.m. every day when, despite my repeated attempts at scrupulous planning, I am rushing to finish off most experiments while bringing the remaining one or two to some state of 'halt'... to be rescued or completed, almost invariably by a sleep- Contributions to the Parent-to-Parent walking me, sometime between 10 p.m. column and the next morning. I've thought about *naturalselections@rockefeller.edu* 

trying earlier mornings. I get the kids to the Center about the same time all other parents do. I shudder at the thought of trying a strict 8:30 a.m. rule; I imagine multiple miniature injuries on my tired limbs from two very reluctant and angry little humans and have nightmares that I've shown up to school with them in my pajamas. Although, perhaps, if I went to bed dressed for the morning...or better vet, didn't change at all...



Mind you, this is when all is going rather well. I haven't even touched upon sick-season yet and perhaps that is better left for another day. But those are the times when, more than ever, I am convinced that the P in Ph.D. stands for the Philosophy of Patience and Perseverance.

Though I have many survival stories to share, it will have to be goodbye for now. Perhaps one of you scientist-parents can take a turn at complaining next time. We may disagree, debate, sympathize and best of all, help each other by sharing our stories of pain and triumph. Know that you are not alone; there are many other crazies marching along-side who will lend an ear to anything you may want to share. On that note, I end by giving a much deserved pat on the back to all us hard-working, sleep-deprived, wellmeaning, ambitious scientist parents. We wear clean clothes, and can match guggly baby-talk with scientific discussion four out of five days a week. Now, that's commendable.

should be sent to



How long have you been living in New York City? I moved to the city in the summer of 2001 from Allentown, Pennsylvania, where I had lived for five years. I needed a change of scenery.

**Where do you live?** Just off York Avenue on 75<sup>th</sup> Street.

Which is your favorite neighborhood? It depends. To live in, the Upper West Side, Brooklyn Heights or Battery Park City – I like being near the water. For eating dinner and walking around, I like Tribeca and the West Village. For character, Canal Street. For architectural flavor, the Financial District.

What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city? And underrated? Overrated: They call this the city that never sleeps, but it's hard to find a video store open past midnight, and you can't get decent sushi later than 10:30 p.m. Underrated: The Roosevelt Island Tram. Most people don't even

## Someone's Diary Page

### Found by Martin Ligr

When walking through the parking lot in front of the GSR on Sunday evening, I found a piece of paper. It appears to be a page from someone's diary. Apparently, somebody had an interesting night on the town:

\*\*\* It was raining like hell on Saturday night, but I had to get down to the Slipper Room. I couldn't afford to miss Uncle Earl's birthday party! I got there just when Miss Pickles was on the stage, doing her routine. It was before midnight but the bar was already crowded. I spotted a couple of faces I see at Rockefeller: D. was there without her friend M., and J. was sporting a chic cowboy hat. I managed to order a drink; isn't it embarrassing that the bartender knows me by name?

The host of the show was Scotty, a giant bunny in stilettos and blue span-



Zach Veilleux Editor, BenchMarks and The Rockefeller University Scientist Office of Communications and Public Affairs Country of origin: USA

know it's there and even those of us who work a few blocks away rarely ride it. Take it at night. It's the best \$2 you can spend in the city.

What do you miss most when you are out of town? The energy. Just standing on a busy street corner in New York City is both exhilarating and exhausting. Every so often I need a break from it, and yet once I leave I start to wonder why everything seems so quiet and slow.

If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be? Trash on the sidewalk. We're the most evolved society in the world but we put our rotting food on our front doorsteps and let our dogs use the sidewalks as open sewers.

**Describe a perfect weekend in NYC.** A long bike ride along the Hudson; a round trip on the Staten Island ferry;

dex suit, wearing a manly mustache. He can be quite mean, as one bald guy sitting right next to the stage soon discovered. The Blue Bunny was picking on him, and eventually he ended up in his lap. Then it was another bunny's turn to get on the stage. Bunny Love performed a patriotic number to the tune of Amazing Grace. She managed to transform herself from a jute-bag-wearing bum into a sparkling fairy. Miss Pinky demonstrated her versatility first as a Natural Woman, than as a Skunk. Finally it is Uncle Earl's turn! At eighty-one he definitely doesn't look his age. The statuesque Miss Ace presents him with a birthday cake, which she manages to spread all over him, herself, and the stage in the process. Now it is Uncle Earl's job to close the show. He declares "The reality is... It is all about love..." and sings a Neal Diamond song. It is 2 am and the show is over, but Amber Ray still dances on the stage. Time to go \*\*\* home.

walking over the Brooklyn Bridge at night; eating at a sidewalk café I've never been to before, will never go to again and don't bother to notice the name of; visiting the gorillas at the Bronx zoo; a long nap - in no particular order.

What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC? The first night I moved to New York I spent in the Lenox Hill emergency room, waiting four hours to get a tetanus shot after cutting my thumb on a metal fan blade. I made friends with a girl who sprained her ankle. She turned out to be crazy. I hadn't even lived here 12 hours and I'd had the entire New York experience danger, perseverance, romance and heartbreak, all of it totally superficial. If you could live anywhere else, where would that be? I've always thought my own tropical island would be nice. Beyond that, I'm not

picky. Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? Why? I pay the exorbitant rent; as far as I'm concerned, the title comes with it.

Editorial warning: Our research indicates that the location alluded to above is the *Slipper Room*, at the corner of Orchard and Stanton Street. Readers are advised to avoid this establishment unless they want to get exposed to risqué entertainment (also known as *burlesque*) and cheap alcoholic beverages.



Illustration by Lea Schroeder

### Relax it's Tax Time By Muriel Lainé

April is not only the start of the blooming season; it is also the month of the less pleasant moment known as tax filing. After all, it is written in the instructions: "The IRS mission is to with integrity and fairness to all." Do p23), ooh-la-la, this is more complex. vou believe that?

belong to. So sorry for the Americans, there are not as many forms that you can choose from. Let's read the form: first name, last name, address, oh easy! Wage, taxable, interest, OK, oops, I have to attach Schedule B, what is it?

## **PDA News**

This column provides reminders and updates of PDA activities and services.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS In April, the PDA will hold its annual elections to replace your current representatives. At present, we are seeking postdocs that are interested in serving their community. Please contact the PDA if you are interested in standing for election and have any questions about the roles and duties of Representatives. Please note that we will be issuing the formal call for candidates in early April.

Discount Movie Tickets can be purchased from Pat Griffin at the Faculty and Students Club. Various Museum Passes can be acquired from the Dean's Office to offer discount or free entrance to many museums in New York City. In addition, presentation of your Rockefeller ID card will gain you and a guest free entrance into the MoMA and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The Employee Assistance Program Consortium (EAPC) is a free, confidential, short term counseling and referral service available to The Rocke-



provide American taxpayers top Let's continue: "Add the amount in the quality services by helping them far right column for line 7 through 21, understand and meet their tax then subtract the amount from line 12responsibilities and apply the tax law 14-17a (if Schedule B is required, see

I thought that once you figure out First of all, let's find the right form. what number to put in which box, then The aliens must figure out by the arithmetic would be the easiest part. themselves which alien group they That was before I read the way they recommend to do the adding and subtracting in the instructions form. In the paragraph called computations, they actually tell you how to do a subtraction. Well, I think the person who wrote that part skipped Calculus I: "If you

> feller University employees and their dependents. They are located at 455 East 68<sup>th</sup> St. To contact them, you can phone (212) 746-5890 or email EAPC@mail.med.cornell.edu. Visit the PDA website for more details: www.rockefeller.edu/pda PDANews.html.

> The PDA provides financial support for Clubs and Societies. For more information visit www.rockefeller.edu/ pda/PDAStructure.html (Section G).

> The Summer BBQ Policy covers interlab social functions held at the Faculty and Students Club throughout the year. To find out how to get funding for your next social event, please visit and scroll down www.rockefeller.edu/ pda/PDANews.html.

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need to enter a negative amount, use parenthesis rather than minus sign," I guess parentheses are clearer! Then further down, "if you are asked to enter the smaller or larger of two equal amounts, enter that amount." Oops, now I am completely confused! Don't worry, after a couple of years you will get it right. Eventually.

The instructions will also teach you some vocabulary. Does everybody know what a Head of Household is? Well it is easy: "A Head of Household is a person that is unmarried or considered unmarried on the last day of the year and that pays more than half the cost of keeping up a home." I guess unmarried sugar daddy can qualify! I did not go through all the pages, but I am sure we can find more.

However, if you get a sugar daddy or mummy that can add and subtract, I think you are safe.

# Letters to the Editors

#### Natural Selections,

The cartoon on page 8 [Issue 2, March 2004] was particularly offensive and disturbing.! I have strong beliefs and feelings about animal experimentation.! I somewhat reconcile my ethical concerns with the need for scientific advances and!the belief that I work for an institution that does not indulge in unnecessary procedures and treats the animals that help them make scientific advances with respect and humane regard.!!I tried to explain the cartoon to someone and I could not - I am really not sure what it is saying.! I was upset by the imagery, but I really do not know what context it is placed in.! At this point, all I can say is that I am !troubled and agitated by a cartoon that I do not understand.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Carol Radovich

Rockefeller Archive Center



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