

NATURAL SELECTIONS

A Newsletter of The Rockefeller University Community

Issue 7, August 2004

Postdoctoral Rent Subsidy Subsidized

By Ellen Howard and Mary Abraham

A major restructuring of postdoctoral pay and rent has just been made public. In a memo sent to postdocs on July 19th, president Paul Nurse announced the following new measures; the postdoctoral rent subsidy of a 15% discount off the base rate for university housing has been eliminated, there will not be any rent charge for the first month after a postdoc signs or renews their annual lease in the new system (this will only happen once for each postdoc), new increased postdoctoral salary guidelines will come into effect in September 2004, and a financial assistance fund for postdocs will be created.

Will the salary increases offset the rent increases? The issue is of concern, especially considering that many postdocs are currently living with little financial breathing space. In the 2003 RU postdoc survey, after basic living expenses were paid, one quarter of all surveyed postdocs living in RU housing were accumulating debt, and half of all postdoc households had less than \$500 dollars a month left over (for more details, see the February 2004 issue of *Natural Selections*).

The postdoc rent subsidy, which gave postdocs a 15% discount of the rent rate charged to faculty members, senior scientists and administrators eligible for RU housing, came into effect in 1999. The subsidy was paid from the general university operating budget, which at present is over \$200 million annually. In 2003, the postdoc rent subsidy cost the university

\$900,000, a total of 0.5% of the overall university budget for the year. In 2003, acting president Tom Sakmar, proposed gradually eliminating the subsidy. Postdocs did not respond enthusiastically to this scheme, and changes to the system were put on hold by newly installed president Paul Nurse, pending review. After conducting a survey to compare RU with other institutions, and undertaking studies to analyze how changes in the rent would affect postdocs' income, the review has been completed. This new plan still includes complete loss of the subsidy, but the main difference is that there are salary guideline increases and a one month rent rebate as part of the deal.

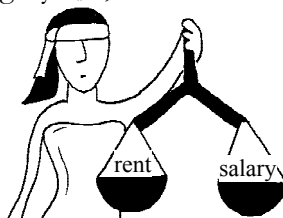
How much extra rent will postdocs have to pay due to loss of the subsidy? Figure 1 shows the annual rent that a postdoc would pay under the old and new systems. Having one month's free rent will phase in the rent rise due to subsidy loss over two years. This means that in the current financial year 2004/2005 (FY05), postdocs' annual rent will be close to what was expected under the old system (Fig. 1). The next year, and for all following years, postdocs will have to annually pay extra rent equivalent to the old annual amount of subsidy (see Table 1 and Fig. 2). Figure 2 shows the extra rent paid each year for average apartments in Faculty House because of subsidy loss. The figure shows that in FY06, under the new system, a postdoc living in an average studio apartment will have to pay roughly \$2,000 more because of

elimination of the subsidy. The postdoc will continue paying \$2,000 more, because of loss of the subsidy, every subsequent year. For a one bedroom apartment the corresponding amount due to subsidy loss will be over \$2,500, and for a two bedroom it will be \$3,500.

What are the salary guideline increases like, and will they compensate for these rent increases? First, an explanation of the RU postdoc pay system. Depending on the number of years spent as a postdoc, researchers get paid a salary that lies between minimum and maximum guidelines, shown in Figure 3. The salary guidelines increase with increasing seniority as a postdoc. Exactly how much a postdoc is paid between the guidelines, appropriate for their years of seniority, depends on the discretion of their lab head, and there is no guarantee that you will maintain your relative position within the salary guidelines as you progress from one year to the next.

In the RU new salary guidelines, increases have been weighted to be larger for minimum pay at the lower end of the postdoctoral pay scale (Fig. 3). The new RU guidelines for minimum postdoc pay levels for first and second year postdocs have both increased by \$4,000 dollars, to an amount that is \$2,500 above the new 2004 NIH guidelines. The new RU minimum pay guidelines for third to

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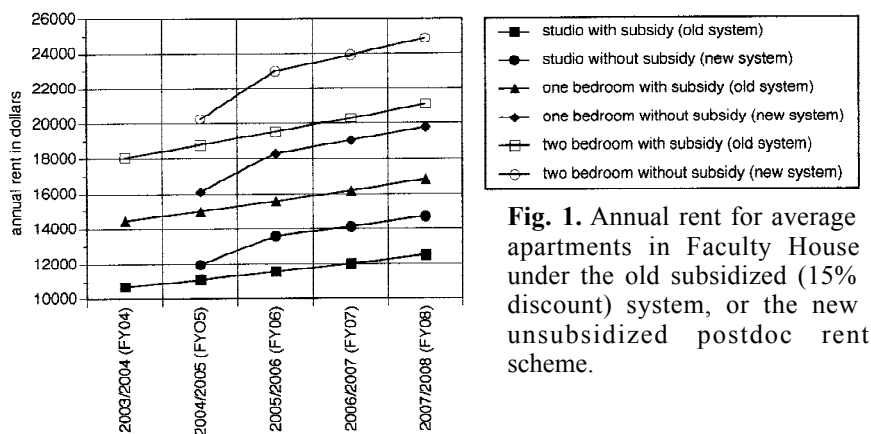


Fig. 1. Annual rent for average apartments in Faculty House under the old subsidized (15% discount) system, or the new unsubsidized postdoc rent scheme.

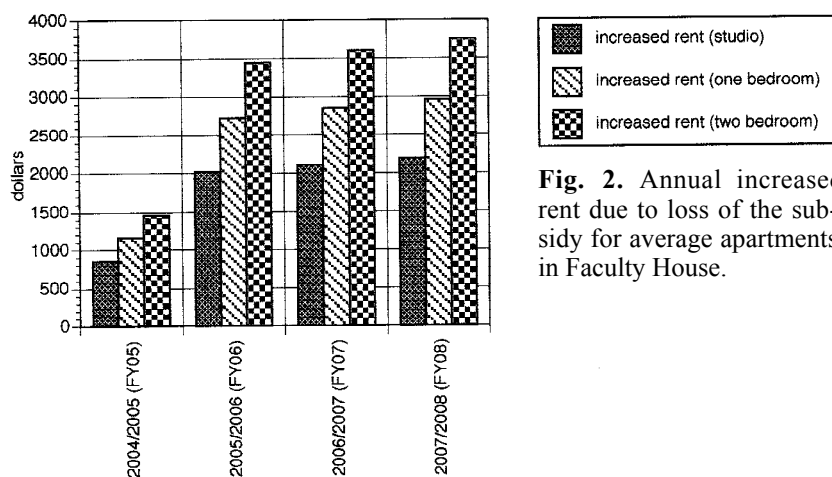


Fig. 2. Annual increased rent due to loss of the subsidy for average apartments in Faculty House.

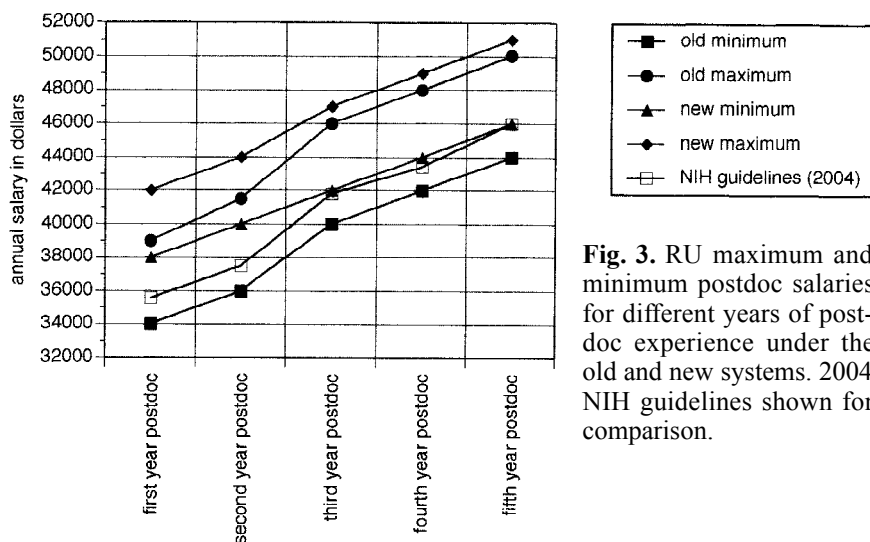


Fig. 3. RU maximum and minimum postdoc salaries for different years of postdoc experience under the old and new systems. 2004 NIH guidelines shown for comparison.

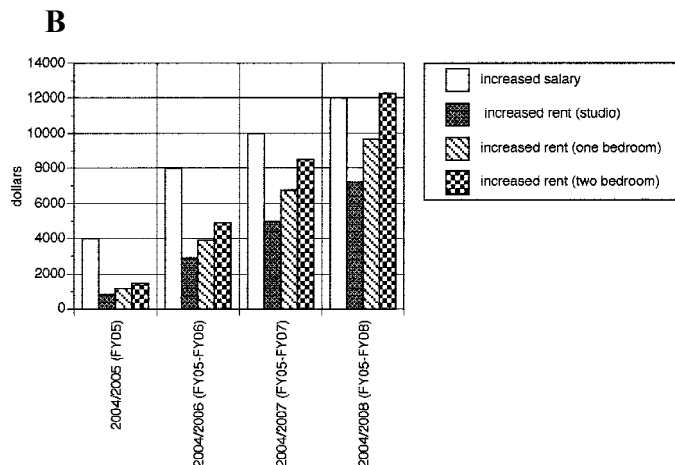
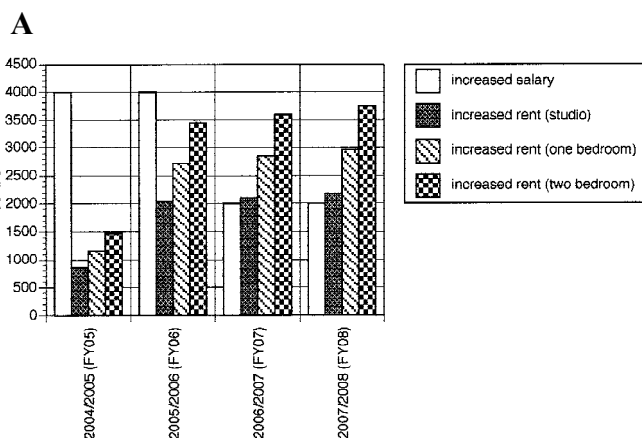


Fig. 4. Increases in salary and rent (due to subsidy loss) because of the new system, for a first year RU postdoc starting in Sept 2004 (FY05), paid at the minimum level for their postdoc years of experience, and living in an average apartment in Faculty House. (A) Annual increases. (B) Cumulative totals of the increases shown in (A).

In these figures; unsubsidized rent for FY05 adjusted for one month's rent rebate, subsidized and unsubsidized rent adjusted each year for the normal 4% increase (recent rent increases have been; FY02 = 4%, FY03 = 4%, FY04 = 3%, FY05 = 4%), and average rent is the value given in the RU housing handbook.

Table 1. Annual rent subsidy that a postdoc, paying the average apartment rent in each of the buildings listed, would have received this year if the old subsidy system had remained in place.

FY05 (04/05)	Annual 15% subsidy for a studio	Annual 15% subsidy for a one bedroom	Annual 15% subsidy for a two bedroom
Faculty House	\$1,958	\$2,644	\$3,316
Scholars Residence	\$2,063	\$3,033	\$4,176
East 70th Street	\$2,248	\$2,660	Not applicable
Sutton Terrace	\$2,354	\$2,911	\$4,264

fifth year postdocs have increased by \$2,000, to an amount matching the 2004 NIH guidelines. The RU maximum pay guidelines have also all increased (Fig. 3).

Many postdocs are worried that there is no system of checks and balances to ensure that salaries will be adjusted adequately for rent increases. For example, consider a second year postdoc living in a one bedroom and earning \$41,000 in FY05. Next year, if their earnings increased by just \$1,000 they would reach the new RU minimum for a third year postdoc, yet at the same time loss of subsidy would result in a rent increase of \$2,500. The pay increases that RU postdocs get are in the hands of their lab head, and the only requirement governing pay is that postdocs must get the minimum salary for their years of experience. A lab head is not obliged to give a postdoc an additional raise to compensate for extra rent. Therefore, because any additional raises above minimum pay levels are at the discretion of lab heads, some postdocs have complained that they are in the awkward position of having to request large raises from their lab head to compensate for rent increases.

Two months prior to the end of each postdoc's annual contract, Human Resources (HR) contacts the lab head listing the postdoc's current salary, experience, suggested salary range and will remind lab heads that the rent subsidy will end this year. While HR cannot share, without postdoc consent, specific information about an individual's rent with the lab head, HR can make a suggestion for where, within the salary guidelines, the postdoc will fit. If postdocs contact HR and give consent for their salary to be disclosed, this will enable HR to inform the lab head exactly what the impact of rent changes will be on the individual.

If a postdoc does not get a salary adjustment to compensate for rent increases, a new additional mechanism that may help is the "Financial Assistance Fund". This is a one-time support mechanism for postdocs facing difficult financial circumstances. The administration is currently working with the PDA to determine the specifics of this fund,

such as the details of what will constitute financial hardship.

For current RU postdocs there are also scenarios where someone could also be better off or maintain the status quo under the new system. For example, a postdoc entering second year in FY05, living in a studio and paid at the minimum level each year, would by FY08 in the new system have earned \$10,000 extra salary and paid \$6,000 extra rent, ending up \$4,000 better off in the new system. Consider a postdoc entering third year in FY05, living in a one bedroom and always paid at the minimum level. During three years in the new system they would earn \$6,000 more than under the old system, but the salary gain would be cancelled out by the \$6,000 extra rent in the new system.

How will the new system affect new postdocs entering RU? Figure 4 shows increases in rent due to subsidy loss and salary increases as a result of the new guidelines, for a first year postdoc living in Faculty House, always paid at the minimum level for their years of experience. In the new system, after four years the postdoc would be about \$5,000 better off if living in a studio, \$3,000 better off if living in a one bedroom, and have no financial improvement if living in a two bedroom. Living in Scholars, Sutton Terrace, or East 70th St., improvements would be less, as rent increases would have been greater at these locations.

The memo announcing the new salary scales noted the guidelines offer: "a substantial increase at the low end of the postdoctoral pay scale and exceed the NIH NRSA levels as appropriate to our metropolitan New York cost-of-living." However, although first and second year postdoc minimum pay guidelines are \$2,500 above the NIH minimums, postdocs in years 3, 4 and 5, paid at the minimum salary level for their experience, will not get any metropolitan increase over the NIH NRSA levels (Fig. 3). An article, in the April 12th 2004 issue of *The Scientist*, noted that the cost of living in New York City is about two times more expensive than the national average, citing ACCRA (a non profit organization that produces a cost of living index) and the website of the National

Association of Realtors.

At a recent meeting of postdocs, the question of enforcement of the new minimum pay guidelines, in particular what authority the administration can exert on a lab head refusing to pay the minimum, came up as a cause for concern. We spoke to Maria Lazzaro in HR who told us that the new minimum salary guidelines are absolutely mandatory and offered a guarantee that the new salary minimums will be enforced. HR will know if a lab head tries to pay a postdoc below their mandatory minimum. If any postdocs are not getting their minimum salary, Maria Lazzaro said they should contact HR who will help to resolve the situation.

We asked when the new salary guidelines will be reviewed and we were told by Maria Lazzaro, "the guidelines will continue to be reviewed regularly, taking into account NIH guidelines and inflation. Most recently the review process has been occurring on an annual basis." Recently there have been new NIH guidelines annually.

The new system will also have reverberations for lab heads, who will have to pay the higher salary guidelines. This financial drain could result in less postdocs being hired. The administration is giving some financial assistance to labs most affected by the increased salaries.

We asked the RU Postdoctoral Association (PDA) for a comment and they replied, "The response of postdocs has been overwhelmingly negative concerning the loss of rent subsidy. The PDA is currently having discussions with the administration to determine the precise number of postdocs that will be adversely affected (i.e., many postdocs could experience a reduction in net income), and to push for a deal where postdocs are not worse off financially after all the adjustments go into effect. The PDA is also soliciting feedback from the postdoc community, including suggestions for a new policy."

Credit Course

By Martin Ligr

In a galaxy far, far away, a famous University recruited a prominent overseas Scholar to a leadership position. There was also a bank with a close business relationship with the University. But when the Scholar wanted the bank to issue him a credit card, he was turned down: he got no credit. This did not make him happy. The Scholar eventually got his credit card, hopefully without having to offer the bank a round piece of precious metal with Latin inscription as collateral. But what can regular mortals, who are not famous (yet), do?

Every credit card applicant soon discovers one basic rule: No credit without credit. This makes the situation difficult, especially for people who come to the US for work. Banks do not seem to trust anybody above 30 without a previous record of credit, and being a foreigner does not help either.

How can we break this vicious circle? It would seem logical for a prospective immigrant to do his homework and obtain a credit card issued by a branch of a bank doing business in both his country and the US. Then, to avoid fees for money transfers and currency exchange, it should be easy to trade in his foreign card for a US one upon arrival. Right? Wrong. For example, Citibank US does not talk to Citibank Germany, despite all the talk about globalization. Anecdotal evidence suggests that only American Express will take the enormous risk and assume that their colleagues abroad are sane businesspeople. Some banks offer premium services which provide help during relocation between countries (including issuing of credit cards). However, they are willing to do this only for their better-heeled customers. For example, the minimum requirement for HSBC's Premier service is \$100,000 in deposits and investments.

Alas, going through the motions of "establishing credit" may be inevitable. Probably the easiest way to do this is to acquire a secured credit card. They are easy to obtain, because the bank is minimizing its risk by requiring deposit of

collateral. It then issues a credit card, with credit line typically of an amount equal to that of the collateral. In reality the user of the card is then borrowing his own money, but with a significant side effect. These pseudo-credit transactions are reported to the agencies which collect information on credit holders. You are not an empty sheet of paper anymore, you are now a real, worthy person with a credit history. After one year or so, the bank usually offers to transform the secured card into an unsecured one and returns the collateral. The respectable banks offering secured credit cards include Wells Fargo, HSBC, and Washington Mutual (with annual fees \$18 for Wells Fargo and \$35 for HSBC and WM).



The information on credit holders is collected by three main private agencies: Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. Since they can provide this information to any company to which a person applies for credit, insurance, employment (with the person's consent), or to rent an apartment, it is prudent to know what information is collected, and if it is correct. The credit rating agencies are not only interested in your debt payment moral, but they also want to know how much you earn, how many lines of credit you have open and since how long, what is the ratio of used to available credit, how often you applied for credit and with what result, and more. Each of the three agencies record this information in a separate credit history file. Up until now the credit reporting agencies were providing individuals with

the copies of their credit history only for a fee. They were only required to provide the copies for free to people that were unemployed and seeking employment, or if a company, acting on the basis of the report, took adverse action against a person, such as denying an application for credit, insurance or employment. This is going to change soon. Under the Federal Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act the credit reporting agencies have to provide individuals once a year with a free copy of their credit record.

In addition to the credit records, the credit reporting agencies also calculate compound scores that express how likely a person is going to pay back their debt based on their financial behavior in the past. These scores – FICO scores (developed by Fair, Isaac Company) – are reported to lenders along with credit record, but are not part of the credit record per se and will continue to be provided to affected individuals for a fee. The exact formula used to calculate them is kept under wraps, but some details have transpired. So, for example, having too many or too few credit cards can negatively affect the score, the optimal number seems to be two to four. Also, apparently it does not look good if the available credit is used up to the limit: used funds should not be more than 50% of available credit, otherwise the score will suffer. Too frequent requests of credit reports from potential lenders also are not looked upon favorably.

Why bother getting a credit card at all if it is so much hassle? It is true that many plain ATM cards (those with MasterCard or Visa logo) offer similar conveniences as their more advanced relatives: freedom from cash and ability to shop online. But many credit cards offer additional advantages: financial flexibility, extended warranty on purchases, travel insurance, and

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Missing: 1944 - 1990

By Taulant Bacaj

The "missing link" scenario has been often used by unimaginative Hollywood directors to fill the yearly movie quota. The idea is fairly simple: A person has been raised in the jungle by animals, or better yet, has been frozen for the last 10,000 years – hence the erroneous connotation of missing link – and after being discovered, is introduced to society. The confusion of the newcomer presumably makes for great comedy.

What makes for even better entertainment is the "revival" of a whole society or country from such a state of suspended animation. Albania, my country, happened to take an extended nap in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of an extremely xenophobic communist regime. For those of you not from North Korea, let me explain the totality of our isolation. Apart from a handful of people – mostly diplomats – no one could leave or enter the country. All information from abroad could only enter through state-owned media, radios being built purposely subpar to only receive the local channel. Imports were limited to engine parts, a few minerals we lacked, and grains during the occasional drought (microwaves, computers, and

VCRs were not at the top of the list).

Waking up in 1991, we were amazed to see that the world had not stood still while we were lost in Marxist fairylands. Suddenly, a country that was immobilized in time had to quickly absorb five decades of socio-political progress.

There are many aspects to this rather rare phenomenon of finding yourself out of touch with the world – especially after you add the secret ingredient of no experience of peaceful government transitions – but here I will highlight just the most striking: Squeezing half a century of Western culture in a mere five or so years.

Fashion, for example, started with a general rebellion against strict communist rules, and the embracing of the miniskirt, followed by spandex, then some incomprehensible mix, to finally settle at the current European looks. Men, not to be outdone, started by embracing jeans, cowboy-cut pants, and long 1980s hairstyles.

As for movies, that lucky 5% of the population who owned a TV and enjoyed countless reruns of communist-friendly/neutral movies like *Tarzan*, *Hercules*, and *The Three Musketeers*, was in for a change when cinemas and TV were showing the likes of *9 1/2 Weeks*, a mild shock to even the most progressive Albanian.



Music was probably the most interesting, since MTV Europe was suddenly available and, without the smallest hint of what had transpired in the music world since the Charleston ruled in the 1920s, we were rocking to AC/DC, Guns 'n Roses, and Jon Bon Jovi. Music, unfortunately, is one area where you cannot hide your ignorance. Attending college in the States, I often found myself explaining why I was downloading *Manic Monday* (I thought it was the latest hit by a girl band), why I knew almost nothing about the Beatles, or why I only knew post-*Thriller* Michael Jackson songs.

Although Albanians may have a debilitating handicap playing *Trivial Pursuit*, let me point out that there are some positives to skipping all socio-economic beta-testing. The whole of the 1970s and 1980s phase only lasted one or two years in Albania. One gets to upgrade from no TV at all to a DVD-R, or from no phone to a cellular one. No need to watch bad movies, the classics have sorted themselves out. And, of course, all radio stations play "today's" greatest music.

Fortunately, everyone can experience the missing link effect by traveling to new places or talking to people. Being at Rockefeller, take advantage, and find out the missing links in our midst. You might learn a thing or two about yourself, too.

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zero liability for fraudulent online purchases. Having credit history is also useful (and sometime required) when renting an apartment, a car, and even when buying a cell phone service.

Resources:

Secured credit card FAQ:

www.bankrate.com/brm/news/cc/19990823.asp

FTC guide to Fair Credit Reporting Act: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/fcra.htm

FICO score estimator:

www.bankrate.com/brm/fico/calc.asp

Fringe Benefits

By Mary Abraham

For those intrepid theatrical explorers eager to venture into the the under-world of Off-Off-Broadway performances, the New York International Fringe Festival will run from August 13th to 29th. On offer is a dizzying array of over 200 plays, musicals, comedy and dance performances, all at \$15 a ticket. As well as standard offerings, the festival welcomes some exuberantly surreal works for those who feel deprived of decent vampire cowboy musicals or drama addressing the medical ethics of voluntary amputation. www.fringe.nyc.org (official website) <http://www.nytheatre.com/fringeweb/> (for previews and show reviews)

The Language of the Rising Sun, Part II

By Kenta Asahina

In my last essay, I discussed how Japanese lacks tense, declension and gender, that there is less of a variety of sounds than in English, and that in Japanese, consonants are always followed by vowels. In this essay, I will expand on this, examining the differences in sentence structure between Japanese and English.

Existence of the particle, a distinct grammatical unit. Many of you may wonder how one can express something complex with such a poor conjugation of verbs. The trick is a class of words called "particles". They are usually very short words ("te", "wa", "ni", "de", "kara" etc.) that always follow other words like verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or nouns. It is, however, these tiny words that tell you time, case and other necessary information. Therefore, some scholars say that these are the most important words that characterize Japanese.

For example:

Kare wa koibito ni tegami o kaita
(he) (girlfriend) (letter) (write)
(in English... "He wrote a letter to his girlfriend.")

"wa"... indicates that "kare"(he) is a subject of this sentence.

"ni"... indicates that "koibito"(girlfriend) is an object ("to whom" he wrote a letter). In this case it works similarly to "to" in an English sentence.

"o"... also indicates that "tegami"(letter) is an object ("what" he wrote).

"ta"... indicates that it happened in the past by modifying a inflected verb "kai" (root form is "kaku").

There is no equivalent word for "his" (in "his girlfriend") in the original Japanese sentence. Japanese tends to omit words that are not necessary. For a Japanese speaker, in this case it is clear that he is writing to "his" girlfriend. I will explain this issue later.

Different word order. You may notice

that the order of words in the Japanese sentence above is very different from the English sentence. The most important difference is that a verb always comes last in the sentence in Japanese. Other modifying words can be placed more or less flexibly, but there are certain preferences of the order that are usually distinct from English. I can give an extreme example below:

(English) *He said that we had to wait for another 2 hours until the train came, which had been already delayed by 3 hours.*

(Japanese) *Kare wa sudeni san jikan mo okurete iru sono densya ga kuru made sarani ni jikan matana kereba naranai to itta.*
(He) (already) (three) (hours) (had been delayed) (the) (train) (came) (until) (another) (two) (hours) (wait) (have to) (that) (said)

I omitted annotations of particles for simplicity, but it is clear that the words placed first in English tend to come last in Japanese. Now you can imagine how hard a simultaneous translation would be!

Absence of subjects As previously mentioned, Japanese tends to omit words whenever they are not necessary. This is applied even to a subject, an indispensable grammatical unit in European languages. When is the subject unnecessary? Please read the following conversation:

Paul: Hello Charlie! Long time no see! How are (you) doing?

Charlie: (I)'m fine, but (my) wife had a big accident. Did (I) tell (you) that?

P: No! What happened to (her)?

C: (She) was hit by another car on a highway. The driver was totally drunk. (She) broke both of (her) legs and had to use a wheelchair for 3 months.

P: Oh, that's too bad. Is (she) getting better?

C: Yes, but (she) still goes to hospital once a week.

P: Please tell (her) that (I) hope (she) will fully recover as soon as possible.

Parenthesized words are omitted in Japanese. Or rather, these words are not omitted, so much as they do not exist in the first place. In the first two sentences,

"I" and "you" are absent because there is no realistic possibility that anyone other than the two of them are subjects of the conversation. "My (Charlie's) wife" is actually the first subject that is clarified, because otherwise Paul has no clue whom Charlie is talking about (or simply assumes that it is Charlie that had an accident). After that, they are talking about Charlie's wife, so unless specified, (for example, "the driver" was drunk) the subject is his wife.

Generally Japanese tends to avoid using a personal pronoun. The subject, in particular, is inferred from the context of a conversation, which is sometimes very difficult even for a Japanese speaker - and which allows politicians and CEOs to give ambiguous answers to evade difficult questions.

Now, some of the fundamental differences between English and Japanese become clear. A simple word-by-word translation is impossible, which means a native Japanese speaker has to make a painstaking effort to communicate in English.

Survival Of The Fittest By Mary Abraham

In June, the administration ruled on a dispute over sudden denial of Founder's Hall gym access to MD-PhD students not affiliated with RU labs (for full details, see the May 2004 issue of *Natural Selections*). It was decided that access would be returned to the affected students who are living in RU accommodation. The MD-PhD student representative commented: "I applaud the Rockefeller administration for granting gym access to all MD-PhD students living at RU. However, inequalities still exist in benefits for MD-PhD students of different institutional affiliations that must be dealt with, to ensure the future success of the MD-PhD program".



New York State of Mind

How long have you been living in New York City? I've lived in New York all my life.

Where do you live? I live in the Bronx.

Which is your favorite neighborhood? I like Riverdale, it is a very clean part of the city.

What do you think is the most over-rated thing in the city? And underrated? Central Park is overrated: The only time you hear about Central Park it is negative press and some crime has been committed in the park. The Bronx is underrated: There are lots of beautiful places in the Bronx, like the Botanical Gardens and Yankee Stadium.



Luis Rivera
Security Guard
Country of Origin:
USA

What do you miss most when you are out of town? I really miss the fast pace of the city.

If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be? I would like to see a change in the amount of time it takes to complete public construction projects in the city. For example, the work on the West Side Highway has taken two years. In other cities similar jobs can get done in just a few months.

Describe a perfect weekend in NYC.

On Saturday, I would like to go to the golf range on Chelsea Piers.

Afterwards, I might go to the ESPN zone on 42nd Street - I like the beer, the hot wings, and the company isn't too bad. I would probably end the day partying at the China Club! I enjoy Techno and Free Style music. On Sunday, I would take a long walk on Broadway, starting around 72nd Street. For dinner, I would go to a steakhouse - Ruth's Chris Steak House is my favorite.

What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC? September 11th 2001.

If you could live anywhere else, where would that be? If I didn't live in New York, I would like to live in Florida, for the sunshine, of course.

Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? Why? I do consider myself a New Yorker, New York is in my blood.

PDA News

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

Your current PDA Representatives are Asifa Haider (Krueger Lab), Tirtha Das (Gaul Lab), Andreas Keller (Voss-hall Lab), José Morales (Auerbach Lab), and Bill Netzer (Greengard Lab). They will be the PDA Representatives for 2004-2005.

The Employee Assistance Program Consortium (EAPC) is a free, confidential, short-term counseling and referral service available to The Rockefeller University employees and their dependents. They are located at 455 East 68th St. To contact them, you can phone (212) 746-5890 or email EAPC@mail.med.cornell.edu. Visit the PDA website for more details at www.rockefeller.edu/pda/PDAnews.html.

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



Interested in *GeneSpring* microarray data analysis software? As a service to the research community, the PDA is working with the Gene Array Resource Center (GARC) and scientific computing, to identify labs that are interested in using *GeneSpring* for microarray data analysis. We hope to identify labs (with their post-docs) in order to negotiate a deal with Silicon Genetics, the makers of *GeneSpring* and *Varia* (SNP analysis), for an affordable price for each lab. Please note that a single user academic price is approximately \$3,000 per seat, per year, but with 20 buyers, a campus license could provide 5 simultaneous network licens-

es plus training and online support for approximately \$1,000 per seat. The PDA has identified nine labs and over 10 postdocs who are interested, formed a users group, and met with Yves Gagne of Silicon Genetics, who gave a presentation on this software. To make this affordable, we need more buyers. If you are interested in this, please contact José Morales moralej@rockefeller.edu.



Children in the RU Child and Family Center play with Brio trains purchased with funds donated by the PDA.

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Raise High the Roof Beam

By Lawrence Weaver

Memorial Sloan Kettering's \$400 million dollar new research building, currently under construction, has become a visible presence on the neighborhood skyline. The 23 story building, with a projected completion date of 2008, will reach 420 feet into the sky, making it the tallest research building in New York.



The skeleton of the new research center is already causing unease for RU scientists. One RU PI's online blog recently noted: "Why should someone of my caliber be facing a ignominious future, languishing on a single digit floor, while some inferior punk PI from across the street will be elevated to a laboratory workspace that almost touches the stars? I can just picture them up there, sniggering about window views where they can look down on Rockefeller University."

Will there be widespread defections of RU faculty to the new Sloan Kettering building when it opens? Rumor has it that one plan to retain our faculty, is for a few RU laboratories to move to upper floors of the landmark GE building at Rockefeller Center, a skyscraper twice as tall as the new Sloan Kettering building. Such a relocation of labs would raise the public profile of the work of the university. In addition, it would also help to alleviate the problem of "the disappeared" - all those scientists who get in a cab at JFK, ask to be taken to Rockefeller, end up deposited lost, alone and disoriented in Midtown, some of whom are never heard from again.



"So you say you've been feeling repressed..."

By Sean Taverna

Restaurant Review:

Novecento

By Pinar Akpinar

343 W Broadway (Between Grand Street and Broome Street)
Phone: (212) 925-4706
Entrées range from \$15-\$21
A link to the restaurant's official website can be found at: <http://newyork.citysearch.com/profile/7113459>

At this dimly lit Argentinian restaurant at the edge of SoHo, you can have a romantic dinner for two, hang out at the bar with native Spanish speakers, or make your way upstairs to the lounge to listen to the music. The food is well worth the trip, but the choices are limited for you vegetarians out there. Although the menu offers the somewhat expected selection of a bistro, the food and presentation are excellent. I found the wait staff to be very friendly in general. For an appetizer, I recommend mollejas, pan-fried sweet bread that is served with

string beans, fried yucca, and red onions in a mustard sauce. Apparently, sweet bread is a delicacy that can either be prepared from calf thymus or pancreas. It is just delicious. For entrées, you should try the stracetti, which is sliced filet mignon sautéed with oysters, mushrooms, spinach and cherry tomatoes in a balsamic vinegar sauce. The meat melts in your mouth, and they are not sparing with the portions. I would recommend the restaurant highly if your mission is to eat steak. Other entrées such as the seafood linguini are good, but nothing extraordinary.



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