This September, I ran my first half marathon. With my mom. And at the risk of alienating my most loyal readership, here we go…
The most challenging part of it? Not the distance, not the terrain, but getting the maternal unit to say something – anything – positive. There were too many runners to pass, too many potholes, too much sun, too many runners passing us, too much pain in her knee, too much gravel… and always, too many more miles left to go.

As much of a downer as this sounds, I understood exactly what my mom was doing. She was trying not to believe in the outcome that she wanted (to finish the race), but instead to prepare herself for all of the other possibilities. Despite this apparent negativity, she kept running. We both glided through the finish, and only then did we talk about how lovely the course was and how much fun it would be to run another.

I am an only child with limited extended family, so our relationship (my mothers and mine) is necessarily close. I know her well enough to realize that she would call this behavior “skepticism,” not “negativity.” That word –skepticism– may sound familiar to anyone who’s spent time in a research laboratory. And this is not an accident.

Like any teenager, I wanted to be exactly what my mom wasn’t: a career scientist. But at the age of 24, I wound up here at OHSU in a Ph.D. program. And I’m starting to call myself, yes, a scientist. This path is certainly challenging, but not.. (cont. page 9)
Pharmacy Students Complete Rotation in Nigeria
Karim Moukalled and Matt Bennett, 4th-Year Pharmacy Students

As part of our fourth-year pharmacy rotation, Matt Bennett and I journeyed to Nigeria on a two week-long medical mission trip with Global Health Outreach (GHO). Our team was comprised of Bob Coulter, a pharmacist in La Grande, Oregon, along with 15 members from America including surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and medical doctors. Our American team joined ProHealth Nigerian doctors to provide care to Nigerians. Our first week was in a newly constructed hospital in the city of Uyo, the state capitol of Akwa Ibom. The hospital was considered one of the better hospitals in the state with an OR “theater room,” eye surgery room, doctor counseling rooms, and pharmacy. We were fortunate that the pharmacy was one of only... (cont. page 10)

2nd-Year Dental Students Sweep Intramural Sports
Pulse Staff (Photos courtesy of Dr. Michael Carlascio)

According to Dr. Michael Carlascio, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry, “The DS-2s dominated All-Hill sporting events this year.” Indeed, the Summer term championships for all three intramural sports (basketball, volleyball, and soccer) went to teams comprised entirely of DS-2s.

One team of DS-2s that has been especially prolific in their athletic success is the Swamp Donkeys, represented by captain Carly Miller-Werben. Beginning in their first quarter of competition in Fall 2010, the Swamp Donkeys have taken the indoor soccer championship title every season.

After speaking with Swamp Donkey Nate Risley, it was clear that the team planned to expand on their “4-peat” and continue their streak through the remainder of the school year (with the exception of Winter term, during which gym construction will put all intramural sports on temporary hiatus).

At the time of publishing, the Fall 2011 season was well underway and the Swamp Donkeys remained undefeated, eying the possibility of a fifth consecutive title match.
It takes an amazing amount of persistence to become a Principal Investigator, or P.I. First, in order for universities to notice your work and offer you a start-up package, you must earn a graduate degree and complete a successful post-doctoral fellowship that results in several publications. Then, a P.I. must continually think of new ideas and write grants that get funded, all the while assembling a team of scientists ambitious enough to perform hypothesis-testing experiments and publish their results.

It goes without saying that P.I.s are incredibly hard-working, determined individuals with lots of wisdom that they’ve gained through their journey in becoming a scientist. This is wisdom that P.I.s selflessly share with those around them. Unfortunately, there are times when it just doesn’t come out right.

Here are some examples in which P.I.s have said things that maybe just came out a little wrong... Or maybe they really meant to say it that way? We'll never know.

Happy Researching!

On dealing with difficult emotions:

*P.I.:* “Whenever I’m sad, I just read all of my Nature papers.”

*Student:* “But I don’t have any Nature papers of my own...”

*P.I.:* “Oh right...that’s depressing.”

On how to celebrate:

“Happy Birthday. Here’s your brownie... now get back to work!”

“I’m buying lunch for the lab, and I don’t want to pressure you into making any decisions... but I will say that the free Saltine crackers at Mac Hall are excellent.”

On starting your morning right:

“When (arch-enemy scientist) wakes up in the morning, he probably thinks about diabetes. When I wake up in the morning, all I can think about is the stock market.”

On storing things in the freezer:

“minus 80 is where good kits go to die”

On replacing broken lab equipment:

“This machine lasted 15 years, and replacing it will cost 10 grand...well, at least it’s cheaper than a post-doc.”

On mentoring graduate students:

*P.I.:* “I really hope you are my last graduate student.”

*Student:* “Really, why?”

*P.I.:* “Well, you count for like five students, so if the next one is anything like you, I’ll need to retire.”

“You have to get me to revise your grant when I’m with you, because every time you leave the room, I forget I have a graduate student.”

On project development:

“Don’t try to hit a home run with your project if you’re not even on base.”

Would you like to share something your P.I. has said? Submit quotes to: StuffMyPISaid@gmail.com.

Advisors, would you like to share amusing stuff your students have said? Submit quotes to: StuffMyGradStudentSaid@gmail.com

As with this column, all submissions will remain anonymous.
Got Stress? An Introduction to Mindfulness
Jack Crossen, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Student Health Service

While stress or anxiety about an upcoming test or project may motivate us to keep on track, too much stress can impair focus and concentration and also can have significant negative health impacts over the long term. One technique proven to decrease stress is a regularly-scheduled meditative practice that emphasizes a state of mindfulness.

One useful definition of mindfulness is “non-judgmental awareness.” The practice of mindfulness is about getting in touch with our own experience, moment-to-moment, in an emotionally neutral and accepting way. When we do this, we avoid over-thinking.

The purpose of mindfulness may seem elusive, because a purpose seems to evoke evaluation. The actual purpose of fostering mindfulness is to practice shifting from personal evaluation toward neutrally and simply observing experience in a given moment. Mindful skills can be useful when we evaluate ourselves negatively by self-criticism or when we get…

OHSU Students – Let’s Rock the Vote!
Autumnn Fletcher, 5th-Year PMCB Graduate Student

Ah, the joys of adulthood: paying your own bills (or your portion of the bills), cooking your own food (such as it may be), cleaning your own house (to your own standards, if not to your mom’s), and most importantly (if you’re like me), being able to cancel out my dad’s vote for who gets to be the next local representative (or our next president).

The cynical among us would say that voting is an exercise in futility. I disagree.

Why should you bother to vote? Here are just a few reasons: 1) You then get to (truthfully!) say things like “That idiot in the White House, Senate, etc. isn’t my fault, I voted for the other candidate.” 2) You can feel like you’ve done your civic duty, and dutifully go back to ignoring politics in order to not be ticked off at the state of things. 3) It’s one of those things that people fight for the ability to do, so we shouldn’t take it for granted. And finally, 4) If you’re an Oregon voter, you don’t have to go anywhere; your ballot comes in the mail and you can just mail it back – so why wouldn’t you vote?!

If you recently moved to Oregon and you’d like to use your voice in upcoming elections, you can register at the Oregon secretary of state website: tinyurl.com/vote4oregon

If you’re here for school, and plan to keep your residency in your own state, here is a website where you can sign up to receive absentee ballots: www.longdistancevoter.org
Construction at the Student Center
Karen Seresun, M.B.A, M.P.E, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Life

This year, the OHSU Student Center has been awarded $900,000 by the University’s Capital Allocation Committee to continue with the multi-phase plan to renovate the Student Center. As a result, the third phase of capital construction will begin this Fall, and there are a number of projects that are scheduled to be completed.

The project list consists of seismic upgrades to the second floor, upgrades to the gymnasium (including replacing the floor and installing energy efficient lighting), and completing the fire safety work that began in the second phase of construction. It is not certain if the entire list of projects will be completed; however, we are working with a Project Manager in Design and Construction to accomplish as many projects as possible. Projects that are not completed with this year’s capital dollars will be rolled over and become a part of the subsequent year’s construction plans... (cont. page 10)

The Student Center is the proud new owner of a Steinway baby grand piano. Check at the front desk for availability.

Research Week: May 7-10, 2012
Jackie Wirz, PhD; Biomedical Sciences Information Specialist, OHSU Library

Research Week is coming May 7th-10th, 2012! This week will include the Student Research Forum and much more! We value your input in making this event happen. To provide input, or to obtain more information about this event, contact Biomedical Sciences Information Specialist Jackie Wirz: wirzj@ohsu.edu, 503-494-3443.

Official logo of the 2011 Student Research Forum, designed by PMCB graduate student Jonathan Nelson.
TGIF! WTF?
Nameless Graduate Student

The other day on Facebook, one of my non-graduate student friends posted “TGIF.” At first, I sat there dumbfounded. Then out of nowhere, I silently screamed at the top of my figurative lungs “WTF DOES THAT MEAN!!?”

Putting aside all of the religious connotations that go along with TGIF, I realized I had forgotten what it means to be grateful for the weekend. In the last four months, I can count the number of weekend days I haven’t spent working in the lab on one hand. In the last five years of my life, I can’t think of a weekend where I didn’t check my work email. Looking into my future, I don’t think there will ever be a weekend where I don’t think about my research.

In all honesty, TGIF might as well mean “transforming growth-interacting factor” to me (and I don’t even study that).

Less than a time to “catch up,” weekends for me have become my opportunity to “get ahead.” It’s become my mantra, resonating within me like a Central Tone that graduate school has harmonized my psyche to. “I have to get ahead, I have to be the best, I am never good enough right now, and there is no chance I will ever be good enough unless I work this weekend.” The other day, I heard that five percent of PhD graduates are able to attain a faculty position. Five Percent. My graduate program admits approximately twenty students a year, so five percent of twenty people would be one person for every class. One.

So I did a quick inventory of myself as compared to the rest of my class:

Are there students who went to better undergraduates than me? Yes. Students with more publications than me? Yes. Students with better publications than me? Yes. Students who are smarter than me? Yes. Students who work harder than me? Yes. It seems that the likelihood of me being “The One” out of my class seems pretty slim. I shared this thought with a friend today, hoping that they would empathize. Instead, they were astute enough to point out that 5% didn’t apply to OHSU alone, but to all PhD graduates in the world. Therefore I just have to face the fact that the odds of receiving a faculty appointment probably skews away from OHSU towards Harvard.

So why? Why do I give up my weekends (and so much more) for graduate school? I do it because I love it. I do it because I’ve seen myself grow more in the last five years of my life than in the previous twenty. I do it because I have an insatiable curiosity about how life works. I do it for the euphoric high that only comes from proving a hypothesis you’ve been working on for years. I do it for the blissful sleepless nights when I can’t stop anticipating the “perfect experiment” I just conjured up.

In writing this, I realized that if I could go back and talk to myself when I was a freshman I wouldn’t tell them to change a thing. I’d offer them advice and encouragement like “you can trust yourself” and “you are going to accomplish things you never thought possible”. I’d probably warn them about the painful jealousy they are going to experience when their high-school classmates (who don’t go to graduate school) own a home, two cars, and vacation in Cancun every year. But I’d also reassure them that it’s worth it for the sense of accomplishment they earn following their difficult dream of becoming a PhD.

However, that is the past, and I have to live in the present. It’s my experience that there is something clarifying, and perhaps even purifying, about stepping outside of yourself. So maybe it is a lot more constructive for me to ask, “If I could give myself any advice right now, what would it be?”

“You may not be ‘The One,’ and that’s ok, as long as you love the journey.”

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The Pulse: The OHSU Student Newsletter, Fall 2011
FREE OHSU Interlibrary Loan Pilot Project
Judith Norton, OHSU Library

We know from your feedback that paying for articles or books from other libraries through interlibrary loan makes it harder for you to access the materials you need for a successful student experience at OHSU.

So, from September 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011, the OHSU Library is conducting a pilot project to provide free interlibrary loans for all OHSU students. (Requests for Summit materials are already free. For more information about Summit service, please see: tinyurl.com/OHSULib1).

Other fees, such as RUSH surcharges ($10.00), or scanned copies from the Library’s collection ($10.00) will still apply.

To request items from the OHSU Library database, register an ILL Express account (tinyurl.com/OHSULib2) and click on the blue "Find at OHSU Library" button. Next, click on the Interlibrary Loan link, log into your ILL Express account, and hit Submit!

This pilot project will be evaluated in January 2012 to assess if it is feasible to continue the service. Announcements will be made at that time. Questions or comments? Please give us a call at 503-494-3499, or email libdoc@ohsu.edu.

Did You Know?
The average cost to the OHSU Library to fill an ILL request is $17.50; the range is from $8.50 to $90.00.
The average turnaround time for an article is 2-3 days; the range is from 2 hours to 2-3 weeks, depending on the library that is filling your request.

Because books must be shipped, the average turnaround for print or audiovisual materials is 2-3 weeks. The average turnaround for print or audiovisual materials requested through Summit is 4-5 days.

Library Open House: Mardi Gras Celebration
Amy Werner, OHSU Library

The annual OHSU Library All-Hill Student Open House is happening on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 from 4-6 pm in the OHSU Library. Come join your fellow students, enjoy food, drink, and prizes, learn about the library resources, get to know your library personnel, and get your Mardi Gras groove on! Open to all OHSU students.
Downtime = TV Time
Phil Han, 3rd-Year Dental Student

*Friday Night Lights (FNL)* and *The Wire* are two highly under-appreciated TV shows that capture the American experience. The five seasons from each show have garnered them a fair amount of critical acclaim, but not nearly as much commercial success. It’s definitely worth your R&R time to watch these amazing works of art, and get a taste of the best TV shows you haven’t seen.

*FNL* is not just about a high school football coach and the rural community in which he reluctantly leads (but also truthfully shows) the small town culture that is lacking in the mainstream. The show does not shy away from touchy subjects such as religion, abortion, gang violence, and decaying schools. Nor does it flatten its characters into clichés like your typical episode of *Glee*. However, it does portray what is likely the best on-screen couple on TV. So if you want to emulate a successful marriage, look no further than Mr. and Mrs. Taylor.

*The Wire* will likely stand as the best TV show ever made. This rich, sprawling, epic yarn of story-telling will likely give many the most authentic slice of urban America in any medium. Set in Baltimore, Maryland, this "cop" show is anything but *Law and Order* style. There are no good guys or bad guys, but plenty of grey. Its creator, David Simon, was a beat reporter in Baltimore, and his collaborators are ex-cops. The five seasons tackle the futility of the drug war, corruption in the political system, failing schools, and the selectivity of the media to great effect. Warning: the show is extremely addictive -- I know people who watched all 60 hours worth of episodes in two weeks. So make sure you’ve got a break lined up, or important exams in the distant future.

Neither show has generated a following the size of *LOST* or *CSI* because they don’t cater to a specific audience, and instead, demand us to thoughtfully digest some uncomfortable truths about the current state of urban and rural America. So the next time you get a chance to unwind, be sure to check out these two incredible shows.
Better Science Through Running?
(continued from page 1)

...in the ways that I imagined. With my classes done and my big tests taken, I am left with the day-to-day maze of trouble-shooting, the endless rearrangement of small volumes of liquid, unrepeatable results, and the constant need to organize my own time and supply my own motivation. The hardest part is to plug through all of this while simultaneously remaining skeptical. I have to consider all possibilities while still shooting for the most exciting one, the one that may land me a publication, and eventually, a defense date.

There is a vibrant running culture in Portland, and especially here at OHSU. It was class and labmates who convinced me to run my first 5K and 10K races, participate in my first Hood-To-Coast Relay, and helped me to realize that marathon runners are in fact human beings. I wonder if this is more than coincidence. The parallels between science and running are many; sports are often seen as a metaphor for other, more consequential life struggles. Running in particular is a lesson in plodding on despite discomfort and fatigue, in finding meditation in monotony, in learning to enjoy the view along the way and trusting in the eventual, and certainly euphoric, runner’s high. (Read more at lilaventures.wordpress.com)

Got Stress? An Introduction to Mindfulness
(continued from page 4)

...stuck in worrying about things.

A very common outcome of mindfulness is to increase our awareness of how often (and automatically) attention shifts from one thing to another. In the course of observing our thoughts while slowly breathing, we routinely notice that we might move from 3-6 different thoughts within one minute!

It is especially intriguing that such shifting bogs down when we try “not to think of something!” Some therapeutic applications of mindfulness consider this process in facing problems like anxiety, depression, anger, and other negative emotional states. Facing these feelings mindfully instead of trying to prevent them paradoxically facilitates letting go of them as transient, and neutralizes their hold on our attention.

There are numerous written guides and auditory CDs that can assist in trying out mindful experiences. In fact, over the course of many centuries, several diverse cultural traditions have developed concepts about “the observing self.” For instance, the terms meditation and contemplation are often used to refer to similar disciplined practices that foster a state of mindfulness.

We are expanding our health and wellness services at the OHSU Student Health Service, and we are here to encourage you to make the same investment in your personal health that you are making in your academic endeavors. In addition to our fantastic clinicians, we now have a wellness library and a wellness space for students. Please accept our invitation to browse the library or attend a scheduled mindfulness session to see for yourself the efficacy of mindfulness-based stress reduction. Feel free to contact the OHSU Student Health Service for further information, or to schedule an appointment: 503.494.8665.
Pharmacy Students Complete Rotation in Nigeria
(continued from page 2)

...two air-conditioned rooms in the hospital. The hospital featured electricity in each room and functional plumbing, which was hard to come by elsewhere. Each day, medical cards were handed out to Nigerians (with priority to pregnant women, children, and elderly), allowing them to see a consultant doctor that referred them to surgery, an eye doctor, or wrote them a prescription to be taken to the pharmacy. Our mornings began at 6:15 am with an hour dedicated to worship and prayer, and ended at 7:00 pm followed by a late dinner at 8:00 pm. The GHO group preformed 120 surgical cases (mostly hernias and goiters), while the pharmacy served over 500 patients a day, totaling over 8,000 prescriptions during the week. The eye center dealt mainly with cataract surgeries and also provided several eye exams.

During our second week, we took a 4 hour drive from Uyo to Oguta, a more rural city in Imo state, which features the Oguta Lake landmark and a much higher prevalence of malaria. The hospital in Oguta was considerably less developed than the first, with non-functional plumbing and a generator used to provide power. The hospital did not have any air conditioning, but had similar wards with an OR headed by four local surgeons, an eye surgery room, consulting rooms, and a pharmacy. The pharmacy served over 400 patients in a single day, each with multiple drug orders. The most common prescribed medications included antibiotics, anthelmintics, antihypertensives, and antimalarials.

In total, over 200 surgical cases were performed, and over 4,500 people were treated over the course of two weeks. Thousands of lives were touched, including those of many GHO and ProHealth team members. The trip was a valuable and life-changing experience that provided a greater perspective on healthcare in a third-world country, and how pharmacies and medications play a role in people’s lives.

Construction at the Student Center
(continued from page 5)

...Throughout the various renovation projects at the Student Center, the goal has been to complete the construction that may disrupt students and normal business functions during off-hours, or on weekends. However, in order to complete the majority of this year’s projects, the gymnasium will need to be closed for approximately three and a half months. The construction project is scheduled to begin on Monday Dec. 5th, 2011, and the anticipated completion date is Monday March 19th, 2012.

We apologize in advance for the inconvenience that these projects may cause and appreciate your patience as we upgrade the facility. Any students who are interested in serving on the Student Center Planning Committee are encouraged to contact Jesse Hollander, 4th-year dental student, at hollanje@ohsu.edu.