

GRADGRIND

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1 FALL 2006

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Graduate Students,

I want to welcome to Tufts all the new graduate students and welcome back all the returning graduate students! I am looking forward to starting the year as the new president of the Graduate Student Council and hope we can work together to make a positive impact on graduate student life and the Tufts campus. As the representative body for the Graduate Schools of Arts, Science and Engineering, the Graduate Student Council has made great progress enhancing grad student life over the past year. We continue to work on improving our health care, stipends, and university support. Last year we instated the Graduate Student Health Advisory Board (GSHAB) to help open the line of communication between grad students and Health Services; we have worked to create an after-hours graduate student specific parking sticker for night when there is still work for us to do on campus; and we have provided crucial input for the search for a permanent Dean of the Graduate School. In addition to all the serious issues we deal with, the GSC continues to plan great social events as well. Keep your

eyes open for announcements and details about our annual apple-picking trip (Saturday, Sept. 16) that is organized in conjunction with the International Center, as well as the popular bowling night in nearby Davis Square! Every year the GSC offers subsidized tickets to area arts events-the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Ballet have been on the list in the past. This spring will be our 11th Annual GSC Research Symposium where all graduate students are invited to submit abstracts and present their work to others. The 10th Annual GSC 5K will also be held in the spring semester, an event that is planned with and benefits Boston area non-profit organizations. Make sure you sign up for our email list so that you receive all the announcements about these events. You can add your name to the email list by emailing gsc@tufts.edu. With all these events and issues to pursue, I want to encourage you all to participate in the GSC. We set the GSC's yearly agenda so we can tackle whatever issues we set our minds on! In between teaching, doing research, writing papers and grants, or performing, the GSC exec. Board hopes to see you at our monthly meetings. You can come to keep updated on the issues at hand, you can volun-



Jenny Lenkowski

teer to be your department representative to keep the GSC informed of events in your program, and you will even have the opportunity to volunteer on one of the various committees we established to plan all of the things I have mentioned. Our first meeting will be Monday September 18th at 7:00 in the Zamaprelli Room in the Campus Center. Please visit our website, ase.tufts.edu/gsc, or email gsc@tufts.edu or myself if you have any questions or concerns the GSC can address for you. I wish all of you an intellectually challenging, enlightening and successful year at Tufts!

See you September 18th,
Jenny Lenkowski,
GSC President

2006-2007 GSC OFFICERS

President: Jenny Lenkowski
Vice-President: Elizabeth Adams
Secretary: Stacy McHugh
Treasurer and GSC Office Manager: David Proctor
Academic Chair: open
Social Chair: open

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STUDENTS COLLABORATE ON 9/11 MEMORIAL PLAY

Two of the great forces of the world that often pull people together are crises and theater. These forces combined recently to bring together grads and undergrads in the Balch Arena Theater for Bare Bodkin's presentation of Drama & Dance Doctoral Student Meron Langsner's docudrama *Bystander 9/11* on the 4th anniversary of the September 11th attacks.

The play is an account of the events in New York City from the moments before the September 11th attacks to the early days of the aftermath when the civilian population returned to work in Lower Manhattan's shattered financial district. Ironically, the play often used humor to bring home the harshest realities of the situation. Any time the audience laughed however, tears were not far behind. The majority of the play was taken from Langsner's firsthand experiences in New York City; from being in the subway station under the Twin Towers when the planes hit to watching the buildings fall from nearby streets, and then returning to the area first as a Red Cross volunteer and then once more as a civilian worker when the area was reopened.

The undergraduate cast consisted of Julie Hanlon, Aristotle Kousakis, and Nathan Todd. They were directed by Drama graduate student Helen Lewis. The stage was bare but for the three stools and three music stands that held the actors' scripts. Nathan Todd performed the central character while Julie Hanlon and Aristotle Kousakis skillfully changed character according to the situations that the narrator found himself in, sometimes acting as various denizens of New York, sometimes as a Greek chorus. Helen Lewis' powerful and sensitive direction brought out the human elements of the catastrophe while the simplicity of the staging lent power and focus to the actors' storytelling.

The playwright, **Meron Langsner**, is a third year doctoral student in the Department of Drama & Dance. He holds an MFA in Playwriting from Brandeis University and is an alumnus of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He recently attended the prestigious Last Frontier Theater Conference in Valdez, Alaska, where his play *b'Shalom* was voted an audience favorite. His plays have been produced around the country and overseas and have won numerous awards. Also active in New England and NYC as a fight director, he composed violence for last season's Drama Department productions of *Monster* and *Parade*.

Bystander 9/11 has previously been performed at the Episcopal Actors Guild in NYC, Brandeis University, and Buffalo Ensemble Theater. The proceeds from the Tufts performance went towards Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. For more information about Meron's work, see the *Tonya and Nancy: The Opera* article on page 6.



Meron Langsner, a doctoral student in the Department of Drama & Dance.

Photograph by H. Jamie Chang.



In the first annual Women's Perspectives: Health and Wellness Initiative, sponsored by WE LEARN, two students from the Project Hope Adult Learner Program received recognition for their writings. Priscila DaSilva received honorable mention for her work titled "Negative Body Images of Women" resulting in a \$25 cash award, publication of her writing, free registration to the annual WE LEARN con-

PROJECT HOPE UPDATE

BY KRISTIN SHAPIRO

ference to be held in March at Yale University, and the opportunity to read her writing to all conference participants. According to Priscila, "this experience really opened my eyes to see the impact society has on the decisions young people make. It helped me to understand that I am in school for myself and not to worry about what other people think." Taffy Roberson, the other Project Hope winner, wrote about the abuse of women and HIV. Her work will also be published on the WE LEARN website and in print. Taffy commented, "I didn't think I could write that well - I was shocked when I learned that my writing would be published." More than fifty students from across the United States and

Canada submitted theme-based writings. A panel of judges, made up of educators, administrators and experts in the ABE field, reviewed the works and selected the winners.



WEST CAFÉ: GRAND OPENING

Last spring, the GSC held a small, inaugural ceremony for the opening of West Café, a small snack bar in the GSC Lounge. So far, students have given positive feedback about the café, with respect to snacks and meal items provided. Many graduate students spend a fair amount time in the GSC Lounge, either completing work, studying, or printing and photocopying—so the snack bar was opened to allow students to grab a snack without leaving the lounge area. And we know we have the lowest priced snacks anywhere on campus!! We would love to receive feedback about the café, and other items you'd like to see being sold. Feel free to give your feedback to any staff member in the lounge, or email David Proctor at David.Proctor@tufts.edu. Happy snacking!

STUDENT FEEDBACK NEEDED

As this academic year begins, the GSC is looking to provide feedback in essential areas, such as the Tisch Library and Health Services, which are both highly utilized by graduate students. With regards to the Tisch Library, we are looking for feedback in the areas of collections, circulation, online services, ILIAD, hours of operation, and adequate individual and group study space. With regards to Health Services, feedback regarding hours, experience with services, counseling services, resources, dental school experiences, and whether or not more information is needed about the student health insurance plan. GSHAB (Graduate Student Health Advisory Board) is a student-led council, and an offshoot of the GSC, which was formed to address graduate student concerns in any area pertaining to health care. The group plans to meet four times a year, and will consist of executive GSC officers, GSAS representatives, and individuals from Health Services. To give feedback in either of these areas, please email gsc@tufts.edu—we look forward to your response.

OT GULF SUPPORT

BY THE OT GULF SUPPORT TEAM

Try to imagine the unimaginable: life, as you know it, destroyed. Last year's hurricane season devastated the Gulf Coast, destroying not only homes and businesses, but overall, life as people knew it. Every aspect of their daily routine changed. For some, the changes may be permanent, while for others, indefinite. As occupational therapy students, we began asking ourselves, "how does a community rebuild after such devastation? How will people adapt to the many challenges they are confronted with?" And as future occupational therapists, "what contributions can we make to assist individuals and groups in the community with the healing process?"

We realized these answers were not going to come to us through newspaper pages or passing news stories. We decided to see for ourselves what was needed, and to ask these questions of the individuals and groups in the Gulf region to understand their experience. We wanted to identify and contribute to their recovery process. So over our winter break we filled a van destined for New Orleans with eight determined graduate students, a 7-day supply of food and water, and nearly 100 personal hygiene kits we had assembled with the aid of our fellow occupational therapy students, faculty and staff. We embarked on a 27-hour road trip through 14 states and called ourselves "OT Gulf Support."

Our initial contact in New Orleans was with the Tulane University Paint Rally, which focuses on restoring the public schools of New Orleans. These schools are the heart of the community. Until they are in running condition, it is nearly impossible for displaced families to return to their community. The current Louisiana State policy is to withhold from rebuilding schools until there is a substantial display of community support. Part of our work as volunteers was to advocate and be the community support for families who could not return as a result of the hurricanes.

During Hurricane Katrina, many of the public schools became unofficial shelters for people escaping the floods. Residents, in search of safety and shelter from the deadly winds and floods brought on by the storm, broke into the schools. Before contractors are hired to fully prepare the schools for reopening, the community needs to demonstrate active support. As volunteers we assisted in this mission. We were the first group to enter some of the schools since the hurricane, and many times began the cleaning process from its worst condition. We encountered decayed food, discarded clothing, toys, diapers, and personal belongings that those seeking shelter had left behind. It was a very humbling experience to see first hand what people had to do to survive and take care of their families during Hurricane Katrina.

On a typical day, five of us would volunteer with the Paint Rally, while two pairs ventured out to various healthcare sites. We were extremely active in our short time there. Each site welcomed our extra hands and put us right to work. We called missing patients and filed charts at the Children's Hospital. At the ARC of Greater New Orleans, we worked as teacher assistants to preschool students and assisted adults with developmental delays during their daily routine. We made arts and crafts and played cards with the patients at the New Orleans Home and Rehabilitation Center. During their renovation process, we helped organize and clean toys and equipment at Crane Rehab's sensory integration clinic. We volunteered and spent time with the patients of Touro Rehabilitation Hospital. We were also welcomed as occupational therapy students and allowed the opportunity to learn about occupational therapy service provision in all of these settings. We were also grateful for the chance to receive tours of these facilities, learn of the sites' experiences over the past several months, and conduct interviews with clients and staff to absorb as much information as we could.

Through these experiences we slowly began to truly understand how Katrina affected these people, their workplaces, and their communities. We were told heroic stories from dedicated staff members and devastating accounts of challenge and loss during the evacuation process. People were grateful for our efforts, but we knew we were the lucky ones because we were allowed the opportunity to help rebuild a most deserving community.

We traveled to New Orleans unsure of what we would find. What we discovered was a community in great need, but also a community with unending hope and pride. Despite all the challenges, the people we met are looking forward to a re-New-ed Orleans. We heard many residents say that it was important not to get caught up in all that was lost, and instead view the hurricane as a new beginning.

Continued on page 7

CHEMISTRY CLUB

Those outside academia may believe that Ph.D. students spend all of their time considering lofty ideas and theories, but we on the inside know better: doctoral students are often swamped by the day-to-day grind. Chemistry Ph.D. students are certainly no exception; devising new chemical reactions or building custom instruments are minutely detailed, all-consuming tasks. In order to provide some counterbalance, students and faculty at Tufts Chemistry have set up regular forums to discuss new scientific ideas and their experimental applications.

Starting in the Spring 2003 semester, a few grad students began organizing biweekly meetings in which students and faculty get together for a presentation on a recently published and exciting article from the chemistry literature. At first, the club was explicitly focused on biologically relevant literature, but in recent semesters the focus has broadened somewhat. Recent presentations have addressed the description of a protein believed to be involved in schizophrenia, the acceleration of chemical reactions in different solvents and, in a guest lecture from Chemical Engineering's Professor Blaine Pfeifer, the large-scale production of organic chemicals by bacteria. One particularly memorable discussion considered basic scientific philosophy and how best to study complex biological systems.

In the beginning, attendance was sometimes sparse and presenters sometimes had to be coaxed. Now, the group is established in department culture, and 15-20 students, faculty and postdoctoral researchers attend each meeting. Most gratifying, multiple presenters volunteer for each presentation. Refreshments are provided with the kind support of GSC, GSAS, and the Chemistry Department.

Students get some help keeping up with the fast pace of scientific research and also benefit from having faculty to provide background and insight. "The journal club is very useful to follow current trends in science and, most importantly, talk about them with people who are interested in it" comments graduate student Ivan Korendovych.

"Really interesting, new research is a great source of motivation. Seeing it presented gives you some perspective on how brilliant ideas turn into a final product" says Nick Yoder, one of the students who helps organize the meetings. Another side benefit is that students get an opportunity to hone their presenting skills, a significant and under-emphasized part of both academic and industrial science.

"The intellectual environment of our department depends heavily on events outside the classroom and lab, including seminars, journal clubs, and even the 'problem of the day' posted in the graduate student lounge. These extracurricular activities provide a forum for all of us to take a break from our daily problems and remember why we love science" says chemistry professor Marc d'Alarcao.

Perhaps the clearest sign of the first Chemistry Journal Club's success is the recent establishment of another Club which meets separately to discuss physics-oriented literature. Both clubs meet every two weeks during the academic semester.

For more information about the Chemistry Department Journal Clubs or to contact the organizers, please visit <http://chem.tufts.edu/Journal-club.html>.



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IT'S YOUR GSC!!

TONYA AND NANCY: THE OPERA

A new note is being struck in the world of performing arts at Tufts, a note that's reverberating around the world and echoing back to campus. That note is *Tonya & Nancy: The Opera*, a Music Department MA thesis composed by Abigail Al-Doory and directed by Meron Langsner that is garnering international media attention.

Tonya & Nancy: The Opera examines the events leading up to the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan scandal that rocked the Olympic figure skating world in 1994, the assault itself, and its aftermath. The dichotomous backgrounds and personalities of the skaters were explored through song on the stage of A.R.T.'s Zero Arrow Theater on May 2. The cast and production staff was composed of both professionals and Tufts students.

The opera has been written about in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *Sports Illustrated*, *USA Today*, *The London Times*, and many more newspapers worldwide through the Associated Press wire. There have been televised interviews about this project with the librettist, Elizabeth Searle, on ESPN and MSNBC, and Jon Stewart has even mentioned it on *The Daily Show*.

The composer, Abigail Al-Doory created the music for her MA thesis in the Department of Music. She has been working in the Tufts Music Library full-time for 5 years, and 4 years ago she began chipping away at two masters degrees— an MA in composition at Tufts and a Master of Library Science degree at Simmons, which was completed last August. She has been a member of both the Tufts Chamber Singers and the Tufts Chorale, and has both accompanied and participated in the Tufts Opera Ensemble. Abigail recently performed as an alto soloist in the Tufts Chorale and Symphony Orchestra's performance of the Messiah in December 2005. She now studies composition with John McDonald in the Music Department.

The director, Meron Langsner, is a third year doctoral student in the Department of Drama and Dance, as well as a professional fight choreographer and award winning playwright. He currently teaches Advanced Acting Workshop: Stage Combat through the Drama Department and has recently taught the same subject at Boston University's Opera Institute. Meron has been responsible for the fight choreography in several productions at the Balch Arena Theater since his arrival at Tufts. His plays have been performed around the country and overseas, and he is active as a director and fight director in New England and New York City. He recently directed *The Status is Not Quo* at Brandeis University and is scheduled to be a featured artist at the Last Frontier Theatre Conference in Valdez, Alaska this coming summer.

The librettist, Elizabeth Searle, is on the faculty of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Southern Maine, and is the author of several critically acclaimed books and short stories. The conductor will be Adam Grossman, who is a PhD candidate in composition at Brandeis University and is on the faculty of the All Newton Music School and the New England Conservatory Preparatory Department.

Tonya & Nancy: The Opera presented an amazing opportunity for the Tufts performing arts community to interact with professionals on what has become a world stage. The fact that the work of our graduate students has garnered such attention is a testament to their talent and hard work. Those involved in the performance; grads, undergrads, and outside professionals, look forward to sharing their efforts with the Tufts community.

“*TONYA AND NANCY: THE OPERA* EXAMINES EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE TONYA HARDING/NANCY KERRIGAN SCANDAL THAT ROCKED THE OLYMPIC FIGURE SKATING WORLD IN 1994”

EVENT ALERT!!

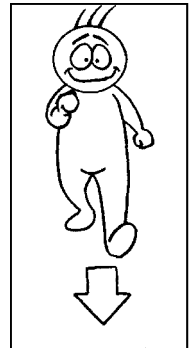
What: GSC & International Center Apple Picking Trip

When: Saturday, April 16

Time: Bus Departs Campus Center at 9:30 AM. All should arrive by 9:15AM

Tickets: \$5 available from GSC Office, 001 West Hall & Classics Dept. Office, 321 Eaton Hall

For more information, gsc@tufts.edu



GRADGRIND

Editor: David Proctor

Staff: Natalie Abbott

Fall 2006 General Meeting Schedule

September 18, 7:00 pm, Zamparelli Room, Campus Center

October 2, 7:00pm, Zamparelli Room, Campus Center

November 6, 7:00 pm, Zamparelli Room, Campus Center

December 4, 7:00 pm, Zamparelli Room, Campus Center

Event Reminder

Apple Picking Trip

Saturday, September 16

TUFTS UNIVERSITY,
GRADUATE STUDENT
COUNCIL

001 West Hall
Tufts University
Medford, MA
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Phone: 617-627-3576
E-mail: gsc@tufts.edu



GSC UPDATE: WEST CAFÉ, EVENTS, AND MORE!

The GSC Lounge is finally home and where it belongs! With the West Hall renovations complete, the lounge moved back to West Hall in January 2006, for the start of the Spring semester. We've added a few new things, which we hope will meet the needs of graduate students. There are 6 computers in the work area and 2 printers, which hopefully will keep up with the increased use we're seeing. Also, please keep others in mind when utilizing this space. With the increase in usage, there have also been an increase in complaints of disruption due to talking and laughing. A new snack bar, West Café, has been up and running for the past few months, and we've gotten good feedback from students who use West Hall for extended study times and are looking for something to eat. Keep an eye out for special events, such as bagel and coffee mornings, or pizza. We have a packed semester ahead of us! The 2006 Apple Picking Trip is only a few weeks away, Saturday, September 16. Tickets are available at the Classics Department in 321 Eaton Hall, or the GSC office, behind West Hall, starting September 1 for \$5 per person. The bus departs at 9:30 a.m. in front of the Mayer Campus Center and returns to Tufts at 3:00 p.m. For more information, please contact David Proctor at extension 73213 or at david.proctor@tufts.edu. With respect to issues that the GSC is working on, Health Services is continually one of our priorities, which we are targeting with the creation of G-SHAB (Graduate Student Health Advisory Board). Negotiations are currently underway to designate graduate student only parking space on campus. The GSC diligently works alongside Donna Rodriguez at the Off-Campus housing office and Yolanda King director of residential life, to ensure that information relevant to on and off campus housing is always available to graduate students.

OT GULF SUPPORT, CONT'D FROM PAGE 4

There is much work to be done, so much so it is hard to know where to begin. But, everyone can help. Before traveling to New Orleans we planned to share our experiences with the occupational therapy department and the larger Tufts community. Upon return, we felt even more compelled to share what we learned, saw, and encountered, and to show how clearly the issues are so interwoven with the work of occupational therapy. We feel a responsibility to those individuals in New Orleans who said, "Please tell people...we do not want to be forgotten...we still need help."

The OT Gulf Support team includes Amanda Hamm, Amy Urguhart, Michele Ferrelli,, Paula Queido-Kahn, Theresa Leed, Gayle Offenber, Lindsay Malarky and Heather Bailey