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Note from the editor:

Thankyou to Yuji Nakano, Richard Reina, Samuel Tan and Catherine Higgins for their contributions to this newsletter.

I also apologise for my (bad) attempts to be funny here. We are all due for holidays. I am sure you agree.

- Annie

Hey, it's both warm and cold in here...

As many of you will have by now noticed, our common room has become the proud habitat of a fridge and a sandwich toaster.

This is not evidence that there is, in fact, a spiritual being watching over us, nor is it due to the rapid evolution of the dust mites under the cabinet. The cause of this incredible event is due solely to the inspiration of our president, Yuji, and the support of you—the club members.

For those of you who did not enter the common room at all during the final week of March, you really missed out. There was a bake sale, a cool drinks stall, a guess-how-many-lollies-are-in-the-jar competition, and the piggy bank even got moved from the top of the microwave to the table. The result? We raised \$470, Yuji waxed his legs and got a pomegranate

mohawk (having agreed to do so if donations exceeded \$50) and we now have a sandwich toaster and a fridge fondly named Drunken Peshy (after Krupesh Patel, for his generous donations to the piggy bank).

It feels like a pun should be made about the room now being cooler, but unfortunately, the toaster kind of cancels out the statement. On a serious note, though, we want to make sure this hard work doesn't go to waste, so we have to put down a few basic rules. For the fridge: keep the door closed, label anything you

brought and don't want to share, be aware that anything past its used-by date will be thrown out and, of course, no storing of scientific samples. For the sandwich toaster: clean it after you use it. And no fighting over it.

So cool your drinks, toast your bread, take care of both these new appliances and they should live long, happy lives in the company of you wonderfully generous people.



Yuji (MASS³ president) with his funky new haircut.

"It is imperative that, as scientists, we look outside the square, do things differently and in general question every action we do."

Tirade from the fleeting sanity of a tyrannical dictator (a.k.a. Yuji's rant)

Prior to modern technological revolutions, such as the iPhones or LHCs, the means of viewing the world had been much

narrower. Only those with a broad understanding of the world in its entirety were able to understand that Earth was not, indeed, flat, or precariously balanced upon an infinite number of turtles, each slightly larger than the last. Only those brave enough to ask questions had them answered. Post-development, with the plethora of knowledge in our database, it is a lot easier now for us to

take plunges to challenge one's ideals and mores. Yes, indeed, I too took a leap in becoming president and making initiatives and undertaking challenges such as waxing my legs and getting a pomegranate Mohawk. It is imperative that, as scientists, we look outside the square, do things differently and in general query every action we do. Not all actions are correct, nor are all actions stupid. Doing is believing, as an intelligent philosopher once said. At once, the world becomes clearer and more opportunities present themselves. Freedom, as the mind is liberated

from the shackles bound during lower levels of education, feels like a life rejuvenated. Four units a semester allows for leeway in extra co-curricular activities, which is the cornerstone of university life. Committed are this year's committee members to bring you outstanding service to make your time at university as enjoyable as possible. Even if you are with us only for another few months, drop by common room to see what cool things we have planned!



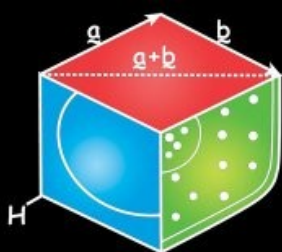
Yuji Nakano
President of MASS³

MASS³ website and Facebook page

Don't forget that MASS³ has both a website and a Facebook group, keeping you update about news, events, discussions and giving you a chance to have your own rants. If you haven't had a look at the website yet, be sure to check it out sometime—there are committee member profiles, forums and even the option of purchasing MASS³ merchandise! And most of you seem to be up with the Facebook group, but in case you haven't joined it yet, this is the place to access photos from events and here all the latest updates (it was even where we first heard about Ruby's malaria incident). So make sure you check it out!

Website: <http://www.masscubed.com/>

Facebook: Search for MASS³ (Group)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Leadership Seminars (28 April)

They are here—the first of the leadership training sessions are coming up over the mid-semester break. There will be two sessions running on Thursday 28 April:

- ◇ Identifying your leadership style (9am-1pm)
- ◇ Are you being heard? (2pm-5pm)

These are opportunities exclusive to you—students studying the Science Advanced with Honours or Science Scholar courses—so it's worth taking advantage of them whenever you can. Remember, too, that attending these sessions goes towards the hours required for completing the Science Student Leadership Program (Talented Students Program).

If you're interested in attending one or both of these sessions, make sure you sign up online on the Blackboard site prior to the date. Further details regarding the content of the sessions are also available on Blackboard.

Club events (Various times next semester)

Keep checking your emails, the Facebook page, and the common room noticeboard for these, but currently we are planning:

- ◇ Sitcom/movie week
- ◇ Another morning tea
- ◇ Games night

So stay tuned!

Science Industry Night (August)

It may seem like a while off yet, but the Science Industry Night will creep around sooner than you might think. For those of you who don't know, the Science Industry Night is for science undergraduate students and aims to introduce you to potential career pathways. There will be presentations from a variety of employers from a diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds and even though most of you are intending to do Honours, it is still worth checking out.

Keep an eye out for further updates!

5 minutes with Richard Reina



Richard Reina (as seen on the Monash Biological Sciences staff website)

"The living person I admire most is David Attenborough...he interested so many people by focusing on the wonder and beauty of the natural world"

Could you please briefly tell us what your main research interests are?

I'm really interested in how animals deal with environmental challenge and the various biological adaptations they use. I work mainly with marine animals, including turtles, penguins, sharks and fish, but also with some freshwater and terrestrial animals including frogs/tadpoles and small mammals. A lot of work I do focuses on understanding animal biology for better management of human impacts, such as the impacts of fisheries, salinisation of wetlands and fragmentation of forests.

What is your fondest memory from your undergraduate years?

I have many fond memories of university, most of which involved spending time with friends, but the single best one was probably getting an HD for a review I wrote about diving marine animals. It sticks in my mind because it really grabbed my interest and excitement as a topic, largely because of a book I read by a pioneer in understanding diving physiology. I met him at a conference a couple of years ago and he was really pleased when I told him how his book had inspired me.

Who is the person you admire the most?

The living person I admire most is David Attenborough, mainly because he interested so many people by focusing on the wonder and beauty of the natural

world, without trying to make himself the centre of attention – are you listening Bear Grylls? I have worked with David a couple of times and he is a genuinely nice guy. My most admired dead person is Leonardo DaVinci for being so far ahead of his time scientifically, creatively and artistically. I haven't worked with him though.

"I quit (my first part-time job) when I slipped on a wet driveway, smashed a glass milk bottle in my hand and nearly cut off two fingers."

First ever (part time) job was?

My first regular part-time job was doing a milk-run in Canberra where I grew up. We used to deliver the milk to people's houses each evening, jumping on and off a moving truck carrying crates of bottles. I think we ran about 20km a night carrying that stuff and got paid \$8. Looking back, I realise I was massively exploited, but at least it kept me fit and I drank all the chocolate milk I wanted. I quit when I slipped on a wet driveway, smashed a glass milk bottle in my hand and nearly cut off two fingers. I had surgery to reattach them but they still don't feel quite right.

Least favourite subject at School? Most favourite subject at School?

My least favourite subject was art, because I like art but I'm not good at it, so all my attempts at artistic flair ended up looking like a deformed rabbit. I remember one teacher looking at a

sculpture I made and saying "I quite like this, I'll give it a C minus." That C minus was the pinnacle of my artistic achievement at school. My favourite subject at school was woodwork, I really liked the smell of sawdust and of making something that didn't look like a deformed rabbit. For some reason wood takes my intended shape in a way that clay never did.

How many Lego pieces do you own (approximately)?

I still own some childhood sets of space Lego and technical Lego, so probably about 2000 pieces. But if you include the set that I 'own' (i.e. that belong to my kids), then it's probably 30,000 to 40,000. I know that there are well over 100 Lego minifigures in the house, I hope they never organise an insurrection.

What's one piece of advice you'd give to aspiring scientists?

I love to give good advice - it makes up for me not being a good example. Here's my advice: It seems pretty reasonable that the world would be better if people just did things my way. If you insist on doing it your way, do what you feel passionate about. If you're not sure what you are passionate about, think of the people you admire and find out what inspired them and why. You'll probably discover that it inspires you too.

In2Science: So what's it all about?

Most of you have at least heard of In2Science, through friends, emails or the Talented Students Program. But what is it all about, really?

I decided to catch up with Samuel Tan, who was involved with In2Science last year, and find out.

So Sam, for those who don't know, could you briefly explain what In2Science actually is?

In2Science is a program that strives to promote science and mathematics in government secondary schools, by placing students studying science at university in school science classes as role models.

And how did you – sorry about the phrasing here – get into In2Science? Personally, I heard about it from the email they send to all science students. It sounded like something I would enjoy doing, so I browsed the website and applied.

Do you get any say in what school and what age group you work with? Yes, you can indicate the schools that you prefer to work with (no guarantee of being placed there, though). The matching process is undertaken by your institution. Usually peer mentors are placed based on proximity considerations; there are multiple instances where this works out to being placed at a school near you, possibly one where you have done prior studies.

There is a list of participating universities and schools on the website. It is possible to get a school, for example where you did Yr12, onto the list by contacting In2Science and inviting them to initiate discussion. It is possible also for schools to contact In2Science and ask to be involved.

So how old are the kids you can work with? Currently the program has expanded to include Years 5-10. You do nominate your preferences for year levels and that is usually satisfied.

What kind of commitment do you need to make? It depends on you. Contact hours are usually one to two periods per week, usually for around 10 weeks. The time you spend preparing (if you seriously get into things) presentations, visits to uni, demonstrations etc. is up to you. At the last placement I did, I continued visits after my exams, which finished before the school semester ended. If you are unable to make it, just make sure you contact the school with sufficient notice. It is also a good idea to tell your coordinator at your home institution. The coordinator will pay you a visit on one of your placements to check your progress. Don't worry, there is no assessment, the visit is just to encourage you and see how your getting along.

How do the classes work? What do you do? That depends largely on how the teacher(s) you are placed with decide to use you. The mentor is NOT a student teacher/trainee, but a scientist. The teacher is responsible for the class, not the student mentor, and they are meant to be present at all times. "Show and Tell" and other presentations about what a science student does at uni is highly encouraged, as it allows the students to see scientists as real people and pique their interest in science and mathematics.

How did it compare to your expectations? Overall I was very pleased with how the program ran. There were no hitches for me. Maintaining active communication with all parties will ensure a successful placement.

Would you recommend this program to other students? Totally. This program is definitely worth your time, especially if you're considering education as a career and enjoy doing science and mathematics. I found it very rewarding to see how students responded to learning new concepts.

So how do we get involved? All the information necessary is on the In2Science website: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/in2science/>

Presuming that you're a Monash student, our coordinator is Catherine Higgins, your first point of contact if you have any questions. Her email is: in2science@monash.edu

Remember, the In2Science program counts towards your hours for the Talented Students Program.

The In2Science program is currently accepting applications from students interested in participating in second semester this year.



Samuel Tan undertook the In2Science peer mentoring program in 2010.

There is a tendency for clubs and societies of all kinds to report the 'success' of their events with a certain smugness, making those who attended feel incredibly important (or alternatively, indignant) and those who didn't attend feel suitably ashamed of themselves.

Not at MASS³, though. As endeavouring young scientists of the most critical mindsets, we believe in presenting the objective facts, and only the objective facts. We have therefore compiled our astute observations of the Inaugural Trivia Night and leave it to you to decide

— was it successful?



The Hosts: Elle,
Amanda and Yuji

Summary of the Inaugural Trivia Night

1. Night descended upon Sir John's Bar.
2. Crazy Hats were donned.
3. Elle, Amanda and Yuji dressed as a cow, Pokémon and Yogi Bear, respectively.
4. Teams decided upon suitably nonsensical names.
5. Mostly intelligent chaos ensued.
6. References to Chuck Norris were made.
7. Both sugary and salty rations were consumed.
8. Alcoholic beverages were sculled.
9. Slightly less intelligent chaos ensued from a particular table of first years towards the front.
10. Awards were awarded.
11. Before-mentioned first-years elected to remove certain items of clothing.
12. The occasional member from other tables was in favour of this notion and thus conformed.
13. The president's legs were waxed and his funky, fluorescent hairstyle was revealed.
14. Points were tallied.
15. Wonderful prizes (including custom-made MASS³ cubes) were awarded to the winners and runners-up, who proceeded to celebrate.
16. Team with least clothing was given wooden spoons, which they proceeded to celebrate.
17. Everybody had an amazingly splendid time and would do it all again next year.



(Above, left to right) Off to an easy start; Pimp hats are in with Georgie and Luke; the infamous 'No Flag, No Table' team.

(Immediately below, left to right): More weird and wonderful headwear sported by Neal and Melissa; some collaborative witty responses in the making.



Thank you to everyone who came along for making the night what it was. In addition, thank you to the Sir John's Bar staff for helping make everything else happen (including allowing us to jump on a table to place and retrieve a prize from behind the clock).

Congratulations to 'TBA' for their triumphant win, to 'Traffic Control' for their well-earned second place, to Lap Chieu for his most impressively crazy hat and to 'No Flag, No Table' for their most impressive craziness in general.

(Above) Lap Chieu, winner of most crazy hat (constructed from McDonalds wrapping), and PikAmanda.

(Below) The other most-crazy-hat finalists.



(Above) Yuji experiencing the pain of leg waxing. Ouch.

COMICS



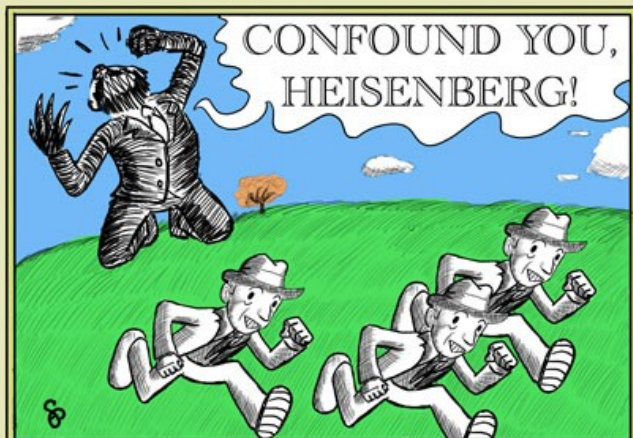
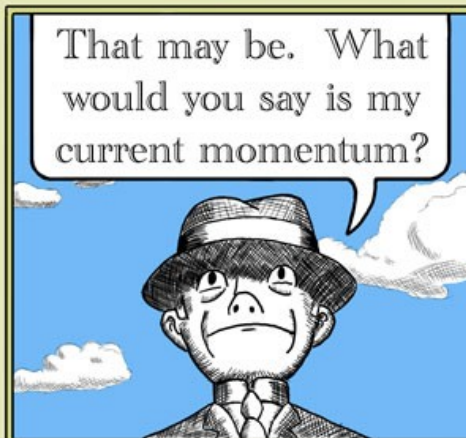
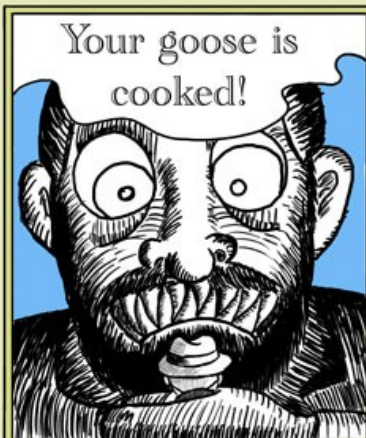
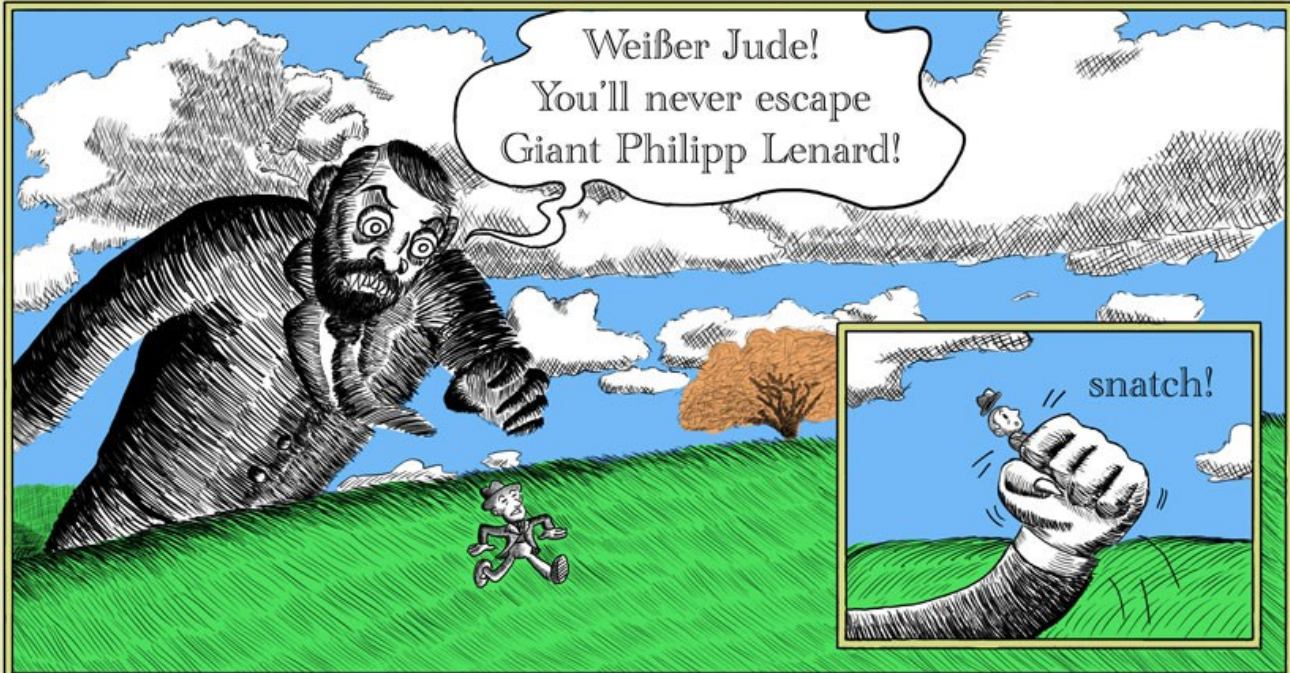
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calamitiesofnature.com © 2010 Tony Piro

it's

lil' WERNER!





<http://animal.discovery.com/>



<http://img246.imageshack.us>



T-shirt (available to order online!) showing a tally of the number of kakapo chicks born each year from 1997-2009... basically, the conservation efforts are impressive.

<http://rlv.zcache.com>

EDITOR'S COLUMN

I intended to have a rant in a column or page somewhere about the state of the world in general, but it turns out that I am finishing this newsletter too late at night to be bothered thinking about the world.

So instead, I will talk about something quite a bit smaller and seemingly much more useless, but no less incredible in its own right.

The kakapo (maori for 'night parrot') is a species of fat, nocturnal parrot now found only on Codfish Island, off the coast of New Zealand. Those of you who watched *Last Chance to See* will know it as the bird that tried to rape the back of zoologist Mark Cawardine's head. It has a wide range of calls which, when put together, have been described by Douglas Adams as sounding more like Pink Floyd studio outtakes than parrot noises. It is not only flightless but has 'forgotten that it has forgotten how to fly' (Douglas Adams again) and will apparently climb up trees and throw itself out of them when in a panicky state. I could go on about its absurd features but I would run out of space. Not all that surprisingly, the kakapo is critically endangered, not helped by the fact that it doesn't even seem to recognise a predator when it sees one.

So is it worth bothering to try and save the stupid creatures? Well, I suppose you could say that we don't have the right to decide. But on the other hand, since humans—as usual—were the ones to bring all this endangering kerfuffle over to the kakapos in the first place, then to let them be now is to bring about their ultimate demise. And it turns out that nobody really wants this. An intense recovery plan is currently underway on Codfish Island and the population seems to be slowly, but surely, increasing. In the past few years it exceeded 100 individuals, causing great excitement among all those involved. Considering that there were only 25 of them a couple of decades ago, this is certainly an achievement.

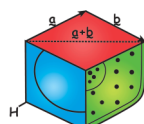
As for me, I hope that they stick around for a long while yet. If we have learnt anything from the extinction of the dodo, way back in the seventeenth century, is that the loss of something more than a little absurd will be remembered with regret a long time into the future. And where would be without the absurd in the world, anyway?

Annie Aulsebrook, Editor of MASS³

Any queries, complaints, ideas, discussion material or advice for the editor?

Any content that you'd like to contribute to future newsletters (the next will be published towards the end of this semester)?

Send me an email at: aaul4@student.monash.edu



MASS³

www.masscubed.com