

Special Interest Articles:

- John Thomas Memorial Scholarship.
- MBRS-SCORE Grant Recipient, Dr. Lachs.
- Autism Center Growing and Moving.
- 10th Annual Depression Screening Day.
- 7th Annual ABA Conference.
- Student, Alumnus, Faculty, & Emeritus Spotlights.
- Departmental Honors, Awards, & Publications.
- 2006-2007 Student Scholarship Recipients.

Special thanks to Kylee Jepsen and Lorin Lachs for their help in producing the Department's inaugural newsletter.

Chair's Reflections

By Lynnette Zelezny, Ph.D.

Welcome to *Psynapse*, the inaugural newsletter highlighting the Department of Psychology at California State University, Fresno.

It's been a banner year. As one of the largest departments on campus, we now serve 1,100 undergraduate majors in psychology. Our impressive faculty has grown in number and outstanding accomplishments. The Psi Chi Honors Society is more active than ever, and several Psi Chi members served as student reporters on many of the features in this newsletter.

Please note there are a lot of events planned on our calendar this year including special lectures by B. F. Skinner's daughter, Dr. Julie Vargas, Feb 19, 2008 in



the University Business Center; and an alumni lecture on the Psychology of Religion by Dr. Ara Norenzayan on April 7, 2008 in the University Business Center. We encourage you to keep in touch with us.

John Thomas Memorial Scholarship

By Lynnette Zelezny, Ph.D.

Mary Ann Krating, (left in photo) a top graduate student in school psychology who is conducting research on bullying, received the first John Thomas Memorial scholarship. The John Thomas alumni scholarship was endowed by the Department of Psychology in memory of John Thomas, a beloved alumnus of the Fresno State School Psychology program and an adjunct professor in the department of psychology, who tragically died of brain cancer last year.

Diana Thomas (John's wife, right in photo), also an alumna of the Fresno State School Psychology program, awarded Mary Ann Krating the scholarship at the Department of Psychology's Student Award Reception last spring at the Smittcamp Alumni House.

Mary Ann was also recognized as the first John Thomas Scholar at the recent



Top Dog Alumni Awards gala at the Save Mart Center.

Contributions to this memorial scholarship may be sent to Fresno State Alumni Association-John Thomas Memorial Scholarship, 2625 E. Matoian Way, SH124, Fresno State, Fresno, CA 93740-8000.

Dr. Lachs Scores MBRS-SCORE Grant

By Dave Lewis, Psi Chi Vice-President



"Dr. Lachs was recently awarded a highly competitive 3-year, \$273K MBRS-SCORE grant from the National Institute of Health."

Dr. Lachs's research program examines the ways multiple sensory systems (vision, hearing, touch, etc.) integrate with one another. Specifically, his laboratory focuses on how visual lip reading information integrates with auditory information about speech to aid in the comprehension of spoken language. Visual information (as opposed to auditory) has long been known to be very helpful for individuals with mild to severe hearing loss. It is also well known that for normal-hearing individuals, visual information about speech can also be quite useful.

Despite knowing the importance of visual information in speech perception, it is not currently well understood how the human brain is able to combine sound and light patterns into a coherent perception. To this extent, Dr. Lachs currently has several lines of research which focus on the psychophysical processes that

underlie the brain's ability to integrate these kinds of stimuli.

To fund his research, Dr. Lachs was recently awarded a highly competitive 3-year, \$273K MBRS-SCORE grant from the National Institutes of Health. He will use this grant to study the role of visual and auditory information in the development of speech perception processes. Using distorted audio, combined with the visual stimulus of a moving mouth, he will produce an analog to the stimuli experienced under normal conditions when humans learn to perceive spoken language. His findings will help to produce a complete description of the effects of multisensory information on perceptual learning. This information may be used to improve the design of therapeutic techniques used to help individuals with new hearing aids or cochlear implants, and may be useful in developing automatic speech recognition systems in computers.

Autism Center: Growing and Moving

By Amanda Adams, Ph.D.



The Central California Autism Clinic (CCAC) has now been open since August 2007. The first six months of operation have seen tremendous growth. The center celebrated its official Grand Opening in November, an event attended by President Welty, Dean Karen Carey, and Dean Paul Beare, as well as some media representatives from the community. The center experienced a wave of calls and inquiries after this event. During our first semester of operation the CCAC was able to grow to provide programs for four children, which was the level of operation before winter break. Now in early February, the center is providing therapy for eight children, with two more preparing to begin their treatment programs this month. A waiting list is now in place for incoming referrals.

The first semester was devoted to establishing the clinical practice in the center with staff training and supervision protocols requiring a great deal of time. This will continue into the second

semester of operation; however, with some structure now in place, we are able to turn efforts to our research program. Three master's thesis projects and two projects involving undergraduate research assistants will begin in the Spring 2008 semester. We are very excited to have this important aspect of the Center's mission begin to take flight.

During February, the Center treatment rooms are moving from their current location on the second floor of the Science II building to the Education Building. (The CCAC office space, assessment and research space will be maintained in the Science II building.) This is an exciting move for many reasons including better parking for parents, a more child friendly environment, and excellent facilities for treatment and research. We look forward to more interaction with our colleagues in education and the Center's ongoing growth and development.

10th Annual Depression Screening Day Reaches Students

By Christine Edmondson, Ph.D.

Depression Screening Day at California State University, Fresno was on October 18, 2007. The event is the culmination of mental health outreach activities developed and implemented by Anger Research Team members and Psi Chi in collaboration with University Health and Psychological Services. 2007 marked the 10th year of collaboration between UHPS, Psi Chi, and the research team in providing this service.

Screening Days are mental health outreach activities that provide students with the opportunity to learn more about when and how to obtain counseling services. They aid in raising awareness and reducing the stigma associated with depression and other mental illnesses. They're also used to educate support staff about depression and how to help students who suffer from depression get the appropriate treatment.

This year, the theme was, "Help a Friend – Know the Signs." The goal was to help students recognize when they need to seek additional support for dealing with the challenges of college. The collaboration

also sought to encourage students to support each other as they manage all the demands of their college studies.

Educational activities included training residence assistants in the dorms to recognize student distress and make appropriate referrals, as well as training Psychological Services staff to use the latest developments in research and clinical practice as they work with students who have depression.

On the day of the event in the Free Speech Area, research and Psi Chi students wore t-shirts and distributed information about the services available at the UHPS. These students also worked in the UHPS to greet screening participants and assist with scoring screening questionnaires. UHPS staff provided a video/lecture session and a meeting with a counselor to screening participants. Approximately 170 students participated in the screening activities available at the UHPS. Approximately 25% of screening participants were referred for follow-up evaluations and counseling.



Flier by graduate student and Psi Chi vice-president, David Lewis

7th Annual ABA Conference a Success!!!

By Amanda Adams, Ph.D.

The 7th annual Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) conference was held this past November 2007 on the Fresno State campus. The conference had over 150 attendees and featured speakers from all over the country. The keynote speakers were Dr. Jane Howard from CSU Stanislaus, and Dr. Bill Heward from Ohio State University. Dr. Howard has published research that has made an enormous impact on the field of ABA treatment for children with autism. He is the president of the International Association for Behavior Analysis and is also one of the authors for the seminal "gold-standard" textbook in the field of ABA. The conference featured two tracks: one on information relevant to the treatment of children with autism, and the other a more general focus for behavioral interventions in other contexts (ADHD and Tag teach among them). Conference

attendees included professionals in the community, parents and students. Fresno State students lead by the ABA club provided all of the required labor for the conference.

Keep an eye out for announcements of future ABA speakers featuring many prominent speakers in the field of Behavioral Psychology. The first, and perhaps most exciting is Drs. Julie and Ernie Vargas who visited on Tuesday, February 19th. Dr. Julie Vargas is B.F. Skinner's daughter and, besides having fascinating issues to discuss in her own right, usually shares interesting and unique information about her father much to the thrill of audience members. The chance to hear and interact with scholars of such importance and historical significance is a rare opportunity. Please plan to join us for future exciting events.

"The conference had over 150 attendees and featured speakers from all over the country."

Student Spotlight – Vias Nicolaides

By Mary Vongsackda, Psi Chi Member



Undergraduate psychology senior Vias Nicolaides was honored as the Downing Science Scholarship recipient for his final year of studies at Fresno State. Mr. Nicolaides was selected by the Department of Psychology based on his outstanding academic record and achievements during his junior year.

Mr. Nicolaides is working on his honors thesis with his mentor Dr. Robert Levine. Mr. Nicolaides is interested in replicating Dr. Levine's "Stranger Study." In testing his thesis, he conducted three experimental scenarios in five different countries measuring how helpful different cultures of people are. The five countries that Mr. Nicolaides examined included Greece, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and his home country Cyprus. Vias found it "important for people to

know what's going on in the Middle-East, and how people are in the Middle-East." Currently, Mr. Nicolaides is preparing to present his findings at the Western Psychological Association annual conference in April 2008.

As for his future aspirations and goals, Mr. Nicolaides has been accepted to multiple I/O programs including the University of Oklahoma and Wayne State University. Mr. Nicolaides says his post graduate school goals are to return to Cyprus and "contribute to my country and society as a whole, because I have always wanted to help people." The opportunities and accomplishments he has already achieved as an undergraduate student are preparing him well for a future career in the field of psychology.

Alumnus Spotlight – Ara Norenzayan, Ph.D.

By Elizabeth Savino, Psi Chi Treasurer



One of Fresno State's Department of Psychology graduates, Ara Norenzayan, Ph.D., has made a promising career for himself as an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Dr. Norenzayan began Fresno State in 1991 and graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1994 with his Bachelor of Arts. Since, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and went on to a post doctoral fellowship at the École Polytechnique in Paris. When asked about Fresno State professors, he recalled both professor Bob Levine and professor Lynnette Zelezny. Dr. Norenzayan remembers Dr. Levine as having "the greatest influence" and inspired him to become a social psychologist.

Dr. Norenzayan's research focuses on culture and cognition, the psychology of widespread cultural beliefs, supernatural beliefs and religious cognition, and cultural evolution. At the University of British Columbia, Dr. Norenzayan is the Director of the Culture and Cognition Lab. In this lab, graduate

and undergraduate students examine the interaction between individual cognition in relation to culture. Recently, he has been working on the relationship of religion to violence and martyrdom. He has published numerous articles in various journals as well as the New York Times Magazine. Dr. Norenzayan states that currently his favorite article is one of his most recent in which he and one of his graduate students illustrate that "subtle reminders of supernatural concepts increases generosity towards strangers." This exciting paper is part of a grant the two are working on titled "God Concepts and Prosocial Behavior."

Fresno State is honored to announce that Dr. Norenzayan has agreed to speak here on April 7, 2008. Psi Chi, the psychology honors society, is thrilled by his acceptance and is already beginning arrangements. Keep checking the Fresno State psychology website for additional details.

If you'd like to learn more about Dr. Ara Norenzayan and his research, check out his website at www.psych.ubc.ca/~ara/.

Faculty Spotlight – Jennifer L. Ivie, Ph.D.

By David Lewis, Psi Chi Vice-President

Dr. Jennifer Ivie is one of the newer faculty members in the Department of Psychology at Fresno State beginning her tenure in the Fall of 2006. She is a recent graduate of the University of Kansas where she graduated with a Ph.D. in Quantitative Psychology. Currently, she teaches courses on statistical analysis and scientific methodology.

Dr. Ivie loves to teach, making this department a great fit for her. Her classes typically include a lot of interactivity. As an avid proponent of student participation in the classroom, she will routinely get the entire class involved in discussions and activities. This seems to work well, for many of her students have gained a new interest in statistical theory. In fact, Dr. Ivie has already become a mentor to many of her previous students and is currently helping them with their research projects and theses.

Dr. Ivie's love for education has influenced her research greatly. She is currently studying critical thinking in high

schools, spatial and mathematical reasoning, and test taking strategies. To this extent, she has worked with organizations such as Educational Testing Services and the Kansas Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation. Specifically, subjects that have shown trends of gender differences are of interest to her. The stereotype that men are better at mathematical and spatial reasoning tasks is quickly becoming a myth with her around.

Overall, Dr. Ivie is fitting in nicely. She's enjoying her time here and is persistently looking forward. She feels that though there have been a lot of changes lately in the department and the campus, things just keep getting better and will continue to do so.

Dr. Ivie would also like to plug her Statistical Consulting Lab which is open to students, faculty, and alumni for assistance in designing and analyzing research. Contact the department for more information.



Emeritus Spotlight – Thomas Breen, Ph.D.

By Mary Vongsackda, Psi Chi Member

Professor emeritus of psychology, Dr. Thomas Breen, has been teaching in the Department of Psychology at Fresno State for over forty years. Even after retirement, he is still teaching two courses for the Department.

Dr. Breen has had several memorable moments while teaching at Fresno State including Psi Chi honoring him by attaching his name to the annual Psi Chi/PSU Outstanding Professor Award. "What a wonderful compliment," stated Dr. Breen. He especially loves teaching because of those moments when students come back after taking one of his courses and tell him that he has touched their lives in an important way. According to Dr. Breen, teaching is of the essence "when you get feedback that you've touched a life." Dr. Breen has also stated that he will keep on teaching as long as he is having fun and as long as the Department of Psychology needs him.

Early next year, Dr. Breen and his wife plan to go to Argentina as part of one of Fresno State's criminology courses. Dr. Breen's team taught a graduate seminar titled the "biopsychosocial determinants of violent criminal behavior" with Dr. Skrapec of the Department of Criminology.

Another of Dr. Breen's passions is music. He is a founding board member of the non-profit organization, JazzFresno, whose mission is to promote jazz in the Central San Joaquin Valley through education and performance.

A fellow faculty member described Dr. Breen as "one of the most generous and gentle souls you'll ever meet."

As a retired professor, Dr. Breen still has a busy schedule, but he is content living "everyday as fully and as consciously as he can."

"Dr. Breen is content living 'every day as fully and as consciously as he can.'"



CSU Fresno Department of Psychology

2576 E. San Ramon Ave.
M/S ST11
Fresno, CA 93740

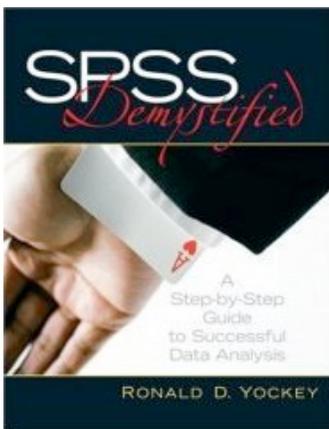
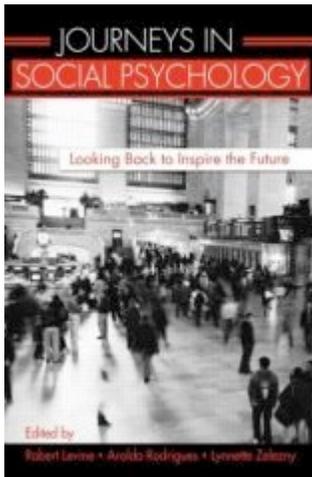
PHONE:
(559) 278-2691

FAX:
(559) 278-7910

We're on the Web!

See us at:

psych.csufresno.edu/psychweb



Departmental Awards, Honors, & Publications

Drs. Amanda Mortimer and **Lynnette Zelezny** are part of a team that was awarded a Research Infrastructure for Minority Institutions (RIMI) grant from NIH. The funding will enable faculty from chemistry, biology, and psychology to increase their research addressing health issues that are concerns of underserved populations. Dr. Mortimer's research will focus on marital communication between people, specifically Mexican-American and Caucasian couples, developing Alzheimer's Dementia and their spousal caregivers to explore ways to reduce the stress of caregiving.

Alum **Adam Hess**, **Dr. Matthew J. Sharps**, and current psychology students, **Marcel Garcia**, **Joy Ewart**, **Melissa Griffith**, and **Sina Tuy**, received the award for Best Research Paper (Student) at the annual meeting of the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology (SPCP) in Springfield, Massachusetts, September 27, 2007. The paper, entitled "Visual Allocation in Simple and Complex Crime Scenes," is a continuation of ongoing work in forensic and criminal justice contexts. This is the third consecutive year that this research group has received an SPCP research award.

Dr. Matthew J. Sharps was awarded the Fellow of the American College of Forensic Examiners Institute, 2007. He was also appointed to the Editorial Board for the Society for Police and Criminal Psychology, and invited to give an address at the NASA/Ames Research Center in Moffet Field, California. The address was titled "Perception and processing of peripheral sources of hazard: Application to aviation and space environments."

Janet Saenz, Department of Psychology McNair student, supervised by **Dr. Paul Price**, received the award for best presentation in her session at the McNair Symposium this fall. Her presentation was titled, "Effects of Physicians' Revealing Uncertainty of Patient Satisfaction."

Dr. Robert Levine was named Outstanding Teacher of the Year at this year's annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association and he received the Provost's Award for Teacher of the Year at CSU Fresno. Also, he was awarded Fellow Status in the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Michael Botwin received the Provost's Award for Outstanding Service.

Dr. Karen Carey was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics and will soon serve as the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Blankenship, K. L., & Wegener, D.T. (2008). Opening the mind before it closes: Considering a message in light of important values increases message processing and later resistance to change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 196-213.

Cramer, P., & Jones, C. (2007). Defense mechanisms predict differential lifespan change in Self-control and Self-acceptance. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41, 841- 855.

Jones, C. (2007). P-technique factor analysis as a tool for exploring psychological health. In A. D. Ong & M. Van Dulmen (Eds.), *Handbook of methods in positive psychology* (pp. 3-11). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levine, R. V., Rodrigues, A., & Zelezny, L. (Eds.) (2008). *Journeys in Social Psychology: Looking Back to Inspire the Future*. Psychology Press.

Oswald, K. M., & Coleman, M. L. (2007). Memory demands on facial composite identification. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 21, 345-360.

Rehman, U. S., Gollan, J., & Mortimer, A. R. (2008). The marital context of depression: Research, limitations, and new directions. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 28, 179-198.

Rodrigues, A. (2008). *Psicologia social para principiantes [Social psychology for beginners]*. Petrópolis,RJ: Ed. Vozes Ltda.

Shapiro, M. A., Kacelnik, A. and Siller, S (2008). Simultaneous and sequential choice as a function of reward delay and magnitude: normative, descriptive and process-based models tested in the European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*.

Sharps, M.J., Hess, A.B., Casner, H., Ranes, B., & Jones, J. (2007). Eyewitness memory in context: Toward a systematic understanding of eyewitness evidence. *Forensic Examiner*, 16, 20-27.

Sharps, M. J., Hess, A. B., & Ranes, B. (2007). "Mindless" decision-making in environmental context: Gestalt/feature-intensive processing and environmental decisions. *Journal of Psychology*, 141, 525-539.

Triona, L. (2007). A new framework for understanding how young children create external representations for puzzles and problems. In E. Teubal, J. Dockrell, & L. Tolchinsky (Eds.), *Notational Knowledge: Developmental and Historical Perspectives*. Sense Publishers.

2006-2007 Student Scholarship Award Recipients

Roger L. Bailey Memorial Scholarship - David Lewis

Outstanding Thesis Award – nominee Jennifer Soeda

The Dean's Medalist and The Graduate Dean's Medalist

Undergrad dean's medalist nominee - Melissa Dittmar

Graduate dean's medal nominee – Jennifer Soeda

Outstanding Student/Psychology Department

Undergrad outstanding student - Tomoe Suyama

Graduate outstanding student – Farah Mohammadi

Milton J. Lindner Memorial Scholarship - Gunjan Singh

Lee J. Cronbach Scholarship - Mary Vongsackda

Pickford Memorial Fund-Psychology Scholarships

Graduate students - Aisling Morrison, Megan Otto, Hanna Wolde, Bethany Guerra, Melissa Dittmar

Undergraduate students - Debbie Schmidt, Angela Persicke, Elizabeth Echeveste, Georgianna

MacDowell, Ashley Jessen, Kristen Lein, Eduardo Barragan Soph, Corin Clark, Regina Bates

Downing Science Scholarship – Vias Nicolaidis

Merry West Outstanding Reentry Student Award - Paula Robinson

Edward V. Tenney Memorial Scholarship - Hilary Casner & Andrea Salazar

Benjamin B. Burton/Alan D. Button Renaissance Person Award - Joshua McDonald

*For more information on these outstanding scholars, check out our website.

**Pictured above – Dr. Robert Levine (left) and awards ceremony speaker and Fresno State alumnus, Dr. Virgil Adams (right)

