Getting to Know All About You

By Stephen Christ

It’s official! We have made it to a second publication of the Middlebush Times. To be perfectly honest, I was not sure if this concept would ever get this far, but I certainly am happy that it has. For those of you who missed our first edition, the main purpose was to introduce the idea of this newsletter, and to catch everyone in the department up on the summer happenings we are a part of. This month’s main theme is “getting to know you.” Yes, our department is relatively small, and most of us are on a pretty friendly basis already, but we have many reasons to work with this idea.

First, we have a fantastic new cohort of graduate students who we should all get to know and become friends with. Second, we are all going to be seeing each other for many more years to come so we might as well have some talking points ready for those awkward elevator rides. All kidding aside, we really don’t have too many opportunities to get to know each other outside of our classes. I hope that this edition of our newsletter helps to bring us together, show us how much we have in common, as well as demonstrate how much diversity exists among our graduate student population.

Call for Submissions—Academic Horror Stories, or ANYTHING else

By Stephen Christ

I would like to invite all graduate students, faculty, and staff to submit an original piece to the October newsletter. To go along with the spooky aura of October, anyone who has an academic horror story to share should definitely do so. Have you ever drawn a complete blank when asked a question at a conference? Did a professor yell at you for falling asleep in class? With as many years as we have all been in or around school, I know we have plenty of stories to tell. You can submit your story anonymously by placing it in my mailbox, or you can email it to me at src257@mail.missouri.edu by Friday, October 25th.

Do not feel limited by this idea! If you have something else you would like to share, please feel free to do so.
The fall is an exciting time. The nights are cooling off, the leaves are changing, college football is in full swing. Fall is also an exciting time in the department with the addition of each new cohort. This year’s first year students are a large and unique cohort with varying interests and backgrounds. If you haven’t had a chance to meet everyone yet hopefully this gives you the opportunity to learn a little bit more about the first year students.

**Don Willis** - Don is from Arkansas and attended University of Central Arkansas for his undergraduate degree before moving to the University of Arkansas to pursue a Master’s degree. Don is interested in health disparities with a particular focus on food insecurity. He is passionate about social justice and his hobbies include running, hiking, canoeing, and camping. Entering the PhD program, Don is excited about beginning a new phase of his academic career and sharing ideas about the social world with a new intellectual community.

**Kristen Kalz** - Kristen is from St. Louis and attended SIU-Edwardsville for both her bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Before beginning her doctoral work, Kristen was a sociology instructor at various institutions in the St. Louis area. Kristen’s general interests are in Culture & Identity, Gender, Environmentalism, and Social Movements. In the next year, she would like to cultivate her “sociological voice” and begin blogging. Kristen enjoys knitting, farmers markets, flea markets, antique shops, coffee/tea, Microbreweries, hockey, and her cat Gonzo. Kristen describes herself as someone who goes with the flow and tries to see the humor in life.

**Veronica Newton** - Veronica or V is also from St. Louis. She received her BA at Texas State University and her MA at St. Louis University. Veronica’s main research area is the sociology of education. Her passion is social justice and her hobbies include dancing, laughing, and having a good time. Veronica is most excited about submitting her second year paper. An interesting fact about Veronica, she used to be a ballet dancer and in 2003 she danced for American Ballet Theatre’s summer program.

**Anna Carrillo Arnal** - Anna is from Barcelona, Spain and has received a BA and MA from the University of Barcelona. Anna was also a research assistant at the Center of Research in Theories and Practices to Overcome Inequalities at the University of Barcelona. Her general research interests are in social inequalities with a particular focus on neighborhoods of concentrated poverty. Anna’s hobbies are reading novels, watching movies, and spending time with friends. This is Anna’s first time in the US and she is excited about the whole experience of living abroad. She is excited to meet new people and visit new places.

**Stephane Andrade** - Stephane or Steph is from Pawtucket, Rhode Island and previously attended the University of Rhode Island. His research interests include race and ethnic relations, culture and identity, the African Diaspora, and the sociology of sport. Stephane is passionate about education and community and youth development. His hobbies are playing basketball and watching sports. For the upcoming year, Stephane is most excited about getting to know the graduate students, faculty, and staff in the department. A fun fact about Stephane- he owns over 300 pairs of sneakers!

**Teah Hairston** - Teah or Slim is from Sacramento, California. For her undergraduate degree, Teah attended San Jose State University and then moved to the University of Mississippi for her Master’s work. Her general research interests are in criminology, deviance, social inequality, and race. Teah describes education as her passion in life. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with family and friends and eating good food! Teah is excited about discovering new things and meeting new people during her first year at Mizzou.
Sociology Department Fantasy Football League

By Mike Sickels

In anticipation of the second annual Mizzou Sociology Fantasy Football season, I interviewed the commissioner of our league, Mike Sickels, to find out more about this exciting intersection between academia, professional sports, and Dungeons & Dragons.

Graduate Student Mike: Hi, Mike. You look quite handsome today. Tell me a little bit about the departmental fantasy league and why you started it?

Commissioner Mike: Why thank you, Mike. Football fan and sociologist might seem like an oxymoron to some, but I also love playing games and distracting myself from work, so Fantasy Football is the perfect fit! You draft a team of NFL players and get points depending on how well they perform. You face off against a different sociologist each week, and the team with the highest point total wins. There are playoffs, and the champion this year wins $200!

Graduate Student Mike: Wow! So what is the time commitment? Doesn’t seem like academics have time for such frivolity…

Commissioner Mike: You can put in as much time as you like, but I think most people check their line-up once or twice a week. Not much time at all…if you don’t count watching football all day Sunday. Plus you can always publish a paper about it.

Graduate Student Mike: Interesting. So what is your favorite memory from last year’s league?

Commissioner Mike: I loved Wayne Brekhus’ weekly Facebook assessments of our league performance. He’s the Nate Silver of Mizzou Fantasy Football.

Graduate Student Mike: One final question, Commissioner. How do you explain the fact that you, as founder and commissioner of this league, were also its first champion? Does that not seem suspicious to you?

Commissioner Mike: Why I never... This interview is OVER.
Department Picnic
By Stephen Christ

Once again our department celebrated the annual picnic tradition in Fairview Park. The day was beautiful, the food was delicious, and the fellowship was topnotch. No official count was taken, but by my estimation we had a turnout of at least forty people. We even had a surprise visit from Jeff McCully, a recently graduated student from our department now wonderfully successful as a professor in Chicago. If you missed it this year, we hope to see you around come next September.
Sociologists and Friends Compete In 10K Race
By Stephen Christ

While you were relaxing on your couch these past few months, an elite group of sociology graduate students, faculty, and friends were training to compete in the annual Roots, Blues, and BBQ 10k Race (that’s over 6 miles!!) The idea for the group came about when sociology professor, Eileen Bjornstrom, was reminiscing on her glory days as an athlete in her undergraduate years. Not content to merely think about competing in races, Eileen decided to start running again. It didn’t take long for her dedication to get noticed by people in the department, and plenty of others wanted in! So, Eileen did what anyone in the 21st century might do. She started a facebook group for anyone in the department who wanted to be a part of an emerging runners support group. The group grew and grew, and eventually included significant others, statistics graduate students, and friends—hence the name. The group decided to all compete in the 10k race this month and everyone started training. The facebook page was very important to the group as weekly running logs, diet suggestions, and plenty of support was exchanged daily. Without a doubt, the group has been a success as ten graduate students, faculty, and friends/family completed the race! Woo-hoo! Congratulations to all the runners and those who supported them on this truly awesome accomplishment!
Getting to Know You Trivia
By Stephen Christ

How well do you know your peers in the department? Test your knowledge in this fun trivia challenge. Answers can be found on the back page of the newsletter. Good luck!

Test 1: Match Graduate Students to their Favorite Food

1. Chelsea Platt  a.) Beef Roast w/ Veggies
2. Dennis “Buzz” Bledsoe  b.) Sushi
3. Teah “Slim” Hairston  c.) Beer
4. Kevin Martin  d.) Mushrooms
5. Margo Ralston  e.) Coffee (that’s a food group, right?)
6. Zach Rubin  f.) Tacos
7. David Elliott  g.) Lasagna
8. Veronica Newton  h.) Crab
9. Ashley Isby  i.) Sour Cream
10. Jenn Stafford  j.) Spinach Salad and Sushi

Test 2: If You Weren’t A Sociologist, What Would Be Your Dream Job?

1. Julia Mulligan  a.) Photographer
2. Braden Leap  b.) Preschool Teacher
3. Robyn Swink  c.) Fishing Guide (Trout, Etc.)
4. Gummi Odds  d.) Journalist
5. Katelynn Towne  e.) English Teacher
6. Rebecca Rodriguez-Carey  f.) Run a Breakfast Taco Food Truck
7. Mike Sickels  g.) Professional Wrestler (WWE)
8. John Pruit  h.) Occupational Therapist
9. Chelsea Platt  i.) Professional Duck Hunter
10. Kevin Martin  j.) Own a Coffee Shop
11. David Elliott  k.) Closet Organizer
12. Ashley Isby  l.) Traveling Antique Dealer/Carpenter
13. Ashley Vancil  m.) Lawyer
14. Stephen Christ  n.) Comedy Writer-Director (like Woody Allen or Preston Sturges)
15. Jenna Pirok  o.) Astronaut/Physicist
16. Robert Schmidt  p.) Wildlife Veterinarian (Lions and Tigers, but NOT bears!)
Overheard in Middlebush

By Mike Sickels

We hear some interesting things in the Middlebush Hallways. Here are some of our gems. Be sure to send us yours in the future!

Test 3: What is Something Most People in the Department Don’t Know About You?

1. Eva Woods
   a.) I have been to Japan
2. Veronica Newton
   b.) I was once an awesome ice-skater and wanted to do it professionally
3. Stephane Andrade
   c.) I am one of 10 people living in my house right now
4. Zach Rubin
   d.) I was the helmet car driver at MU games as an undergrad
5. Margo Ralston
   e.) I count how many hours of sleep I will get before going to bed at night
6. Dennis “Buzz” Bledsoe
   f.) My Great Uncle was a flying monkey in “The Wizard of Oz.”
7. Ashley Vancil
   g.) I was a top 100 nationally ranked tennis player as an undergrad
8. Gummi Odds
   h.) I have played the French horn for ten years
9. Robert Schmidt
   i.) I own over 300 pairs of sneakers
10. Jenna Pirok
    j.) I am a twin
11. Braden Leap
    k.) I have dress clothes
12. Stephen Christ
    l.) I was a Pre-Professional Ballet Dancer
13. Mike Sickels
    m.) My nickname is “Winston” (I have never smoked, ever)
14. Kristin Kalz
    n.) I hate confrontations...it’s the Libra in me.

MORE TRIVIA TO COME IN NEXT MONTH’S NEWSLETTER

Trivia Answers

Test 1  Test 2  Test 3
1. D   1. L   1. N
2. E   2. I   2. L
8. B   8 B   8. M
   11. N  11. D
   13. A  13. F
   15. E
   16. D

Happy Birthday to:

Braden Leap (Sep. 25th)
Robyn Swink (Sep. 27th)
Eva Woods (Sep. 29th)

We hope you had awesome days! Sorry if we missed you!