School of Arts & Sciences 2015 Teaching Awards

Steven J. Fluharty, dean of the School of Arts & Sciences, and Dennis DeTurck, dean of the College, announce the following recipients of the School’s 2015 teaching awards, to be presented on Thursday, April 30 at an awards reception that is open to the University of Pennsylvania community. The reception will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. in room 200, College Hall.

Ira H. Abrams Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching

Dr. Devlin is known for his skillful and enthusiastic approach to engaging students in Astronomy 001, Survey of the Universe. He is “a natural teacher,” as one of his faculty colleagues notes, “who has inspired...students...for 19 years with his style, his blending of background and research material and his ability to connect with a large class of undergraduates.” He has a reputation as “the go-to faculty member” for those teaching the course, and, as his colleague continues, “the style and ideas he has developed form a model for every new instructor...[who teaches] the course.”

Dr. Ruscio is, as one of her fellow faculty members notes, “a dedicated, skilled, passionate and innovative educator” who infuses even large lectures such as her Abnormal Psychology course with lively and frequent student participation. Her syllabi, which have been adopted as national models, and her research collaborations prove that, as another colleague notes, “her teaching skills go far beyond the classroom...into the research laboratory and beyond.”

(continued on page 5)

Out on a Limb—A Tree Adventure (above) at the Morris Arboretum gives visitors a bird’s-eye view, which has helped the Arboretum broaden its reach and increase attendance since it opened six years ago. It has now led the Arboretum to receive the Buildy Award (see Honors & Other Things on page 4).

Donita Brady: Presidential Professor

University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann and Provost Vincent Price are pleased to announce the appointment of Donita Brady as the seventh Presidential Professor, effective July 1, 2015. Dr. Brady will be Presidential Assistant Professor of Cancer Biology in the Perelman School of Medicine.

“Rarely does a young scientist come along who is as impressive, accomplished and innovative as Donita Brady,” President Gutmann said. “Her discoveries have already opened new doors in cancer research, and we are proud to welcome her to our department of cancer biology. On the 250th anniversary of Penn Medicine, it is auspicious timing indeed that this pioneering researcher joins one of the world’s most revolutionary medical schools.”

Dr. Brady’s groundbreaking research studies the links between cancer and copper, with enormous potential for the development of future cancer treatments. She and a team of Duke University researchers discovered that reducing the body’s supply of copper also blocks the growth of certain kinds of cancers—specifically, cancers with a mutation in the BRAF gene that require copper for the growth of cells and tumors.

This class of cancers includes melanoma, one of the most common and deadly forms of skin cancer, as well as colon, lung and thyroid cancers. Dr. Brady’s research, which has already been featured in first-author studies in such leading journals as Nature and Molecular and Cellular Biology, therefore has significant implications for the production of new treatments, including the use of existing drugs for Wilson’s disease, a rare genetic disorder in which the body accumulates too much copper.

“Donita Brady embodies our highest aspirations for the distinction of the Penn faculty,” said Provost Price. “We look forward to her dynamic contributions to advancing research discoveries and interdisciplinary inquiry across campus.”

Dr. Brady is currently a senior research associate in the department of pharmacology and (continued on page 2)
The following is published in accordance with the Faculty Senate Rules. Among other purposes, the publication of SEC actions is intended to stimulate discussion among the constituencies and their representatives. Please communicate your comments to Vicki Hewitt, executive assistant to the Senate Office, either by telephone at (215) 898-6943 or by email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Chair’s Report. Faculty Senate Chair Claire Finkelstein gave a brief update on the activities of Faculty Senate Committees. She discussed the President’s Engagement Prizes and reported that the Senate will be attempting to promote and support these prizes by encouraging faculty to engage in mentoring of students. She also mentioned that the Faculty Senate Symposium, entitled Perceptions of Risk: How We Handle Emergencies, was held on April 1 at the Law School. She said that the Senate leadership would be interested in receiving suggestions for next year’s Symposium.

Past-Chair’s Report. Faculty Senate Past-Chair Dwight Jaggard reported that the Academic Planning and Budget Committee has met.

Briefing on Campaign for Community. The inaugural event for the Campaign for Community, which took place on April 14th in the Fitts Auditorium at the Law School, was a town hall conversation with six of Penn’s Deans, entitled Having Difficult Conversations in the Academy. Co-sponsored by the Provost’s Office and the Faculty Senate, the Campaign for Community is an initiative to help address cultural differences with the University.

Discussion of Arts and Culture at Penn. Karen Beckman, Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Professor of Cinema and Modern Media, Lynn Marsden-Atlass, Director of the Arthur Ross Gallery, Amy Sadow, Daniel Dietrich II Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art, and Julian Siggers, Williams Director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, presented on the activities of their cultural centers at Penn, particularly with regard to educational initiatives involving Penn faculty and students. The visitors then discussed with members of the Faculty Senate different strategies faculty could use for integrating the arts into their teaching, such as the use of object-based learning, as well as ways to promote the arts at Penn. Members of the SEC and the arts leaders would like to work together to further support faculty support for the arts and greater integration of knowledge across disciplines.

Update from the Office of the Vice Provost for Global Initiatives. Zeke Emanuel, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, updated the Faculty Senate on the Penn Wharton China Center in Beijing, which opened last month. The Center will host a variety of activities, such as research, education, career services, development and alumni relations, recruitment and public relations. There is a Penn China Research and Engagement Fund to support events and research at the Penn Wharton China Center. Construction of the new Perry World House is currently under way. The World House will be used to bring together faculty and experts from Penn to address global interdisciplinary issues, and will be a hub for internationally-oriented research, outreach and student activities. The Perry World House is scheduled to open in the spring of 2016. The Global Innovations Institute is the Perry World House’s initiative to nurture interdisciplinary collaboration and fast-track policy innovation. The initiative will focus on a number of different focal areas over the next few years and will partner with experts on policy-relevant outputs. Penn Global Initiatives will offer embedded travel abroad as part of the Global Seminars Pilot Program 2016.

New Business. By tradition, emeritus faculty do not currently serve on Faculty Senate committees, with the exception of the University Council Benefits Committee. The Faculty Senate discussed the potential for enabling emeritus faculty to serve on Senate committees. SEC may return to this issue when Senate Bylaws are next amended. SEC also considered whether the Tri-Chairs of the Faculty Senate should sit ex officio on the Senate Nominating Committee, as they do on the Senate Committee on Committees, in order to allow greater continuity with ongoing work of the Senate, particularly in selecting members of Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (SCESF) and the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility (SCAFR).

With Justice for All: Investigating Campus Sexual Assault: April 22

On Wednesday, April 22, the Evelyn Jacobs Orntr Center on Family Violence and the Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice will co-sponsor With Justice for All: Investigating Campus Sexual Assault. The event will begin at 10 a.m. and will be held in Fitts Auditorium at the Law School.

The panel includes Chris Mallios, Penn’s sexual violence investigative officer; Claire Finkelstein, Algermon Biddle Professor of Law and professor of philosophy; David Rudovsky, senior fellow of Penn Law; Michelle Dempsey, Villanova Law School; and Alex Guerrero, assistant professor of philosophy and medical ethics & health policy.

The panel will be moderated by Ali Velshi of Al Jazeera America and will be followed by a question and answer session via text message.

Death Nancy Sue Kikta, New Bolton Center

Nancy Sue Kikta, a former secretary of 27 years at Penn Vet’s New Bolton Center, died suddenly on March 30. She was 69 years old.

From 1981 until her retirement in 2008, Mrs. Kikta served as the secretary in the Section of Medicine at New Bolton Center, Penn Vet’s large animal hospital in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. In her role, she scheduled patient hospital appointments and managed many other administrative duties.

“Nancy cared greatly for everyone, but she fiercely cared for ‘her Medicine’ doctors,” said Corinne Sweeney, associate dean at New Bolton Center, whose friendship with Mrs. Kikta spanned 35 years. “She would be sure you were properly celebrated/feated, whether it was a promotion at Penn or the birth of your child.” According to Dr. Sweeney, Mrs. Kikta often took new employees under her wing, regularly interacting with the interns and medicine residents.

After retirement from New Bolton Center, Mrs. Kikta worked at the American Music Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where she greeted people and enjoyed listening to the musical performances. She had recently moved to Bracey, Virginia.

Mrs. Kikta is survived by her husband, Edward M.; her son, Edward J. and his wife, Bonnie; her daughter, Lisa Lloyd and her husband, Dave; two granddaughters, Rachel Duncan and Marianna Lloyd; and three sisters, Helen Sciaretta, Elizabeth Staats and Shelby Vontill.

Memorial contributions may be made to the National Stroke Association, 9707 E. Easter Lane, Suite B, Centennial, CO 80112 or to the American Heart Association, 4217 Park Place Court, Glen Allen, VA 23060.

To Report A Death Almanac appreciates being informed of the deaths of current and former faculty and staff members, students and other members of the University community. Call (215) 898-5274 or email almanac@upenn.edu

Donita Brady: Presidential Professor (continued from page 1)

cancer biology at the Duke University School of Medicine, following a five-year postdoctoral fellowship that began in 2008. She earned a PhD in pharmacology (2008) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a BS in chemistry (2003) from Radford University.

“Dr. Brady’s exceptional work so early in her career makes clear that she is poised to advance the boundaries of our knowledge of cancer and our ability to treat it,” said J. Larry Jameson, dean of the Perelman School of Medicine and executive vice president of the University for the Health System. “We welcome her and are excited to watch her discover new pathways.”

Presidential Professorships, supported in part by a $2 million grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts and originating in the Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence first issued in 2011, (Almanac September 6, 2011) are awarded to exceptional scholars at any rank who contribute to faculty eminence through diversity across the University.
Policy on Non-affiliates Visiting Penn Research Facilities

For the purpose of this policy, non-affiliates are people who are not University of Pennsylvania faculty, staff, graduate or professional students or post-doctoral/clinical trainees. Non-affiliates include all elementary, high school and undergraduate students. The Principal Investigator/Supervisor of the entity is responsible for assuring that all non-affiliates in his/her facility are appropriately supervised and comply with the requirements of this policy. Please note that this policy addresses only people visiting labs. For students and other non-affiliates actively participating in labs, see below for the Policy on Undergraduate Students, High School Students and Non-affiliates Participating in Research in Penn Research Facilities.

Requirements for Visitors to Penn Laboratories:
• Visitors must be approved by the Principal Investigator.
• Visitors must be accompanied by a laboratory staff member.
• Visitors must sign in with security staff (in buildings with manned security stations).
• Visitors must wear proper laboratory attire: long pants, closed-toed shoes, lab coats and eye protection.
• Visitors must not be permitted to handle or be exposed to hazardous chemicals, biological agents, radioactive materials or animals.
• Foreign national visitors/non-affiliates must not be given access to export controlled equipment or materials without appropriate eligibility screening.

Requirements for visitors to Penn vivaria are detailed in the IACUC facility “Visitation Policy” at www.upenn.edu/regulatoryaffairs/Documents/visitor%20policy.pdf

Summer Research: Policy on Undergraduate Students, High School Students and Non-affiliates Participating in Research in Penn Research Facilities

During the summer many students and people unaffiliated with Penn participate in research in University laboratories. To provide for their safety and to ensure compliance with applicable regulations, the University established the Policy on Undergraduate Students, High School Students and Non-affiliates Participating in Research in Penn Research Facilities. This policy was published in Almanac on April 22, 2014.

In summary, Principal Investigators are responsible for assuring that all students and non-affiliates working in their laboratories are appropriately trained, supervised and comply with the requirements of the Policy. Programs for high school students must comply with requirements described in the Vice Provost for University Life’s current year “Special Summer Programs and Billing.” A consent signature sheet must be submitted to the Principal Investigator/Sponsor with signatures from both the high school student and parents.

Proper attire must be worn when working in the laboratory. This means long pants, closed-toed shoes, lab coat and safety glasses.

High school students and undergraduates must attend laboratory safety training offered by the Office of Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS). Students must register for a class at http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/resources/training/hssiform.html Check the EHRS website at http://www.ehrs.upenn.edu/training/dates/ for training schedules or contact EHRS at (215) 898-4453 to schedule a program for a particular group.

Please contact EHRS at ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu or call (215) 898-4453 for more information.

The Philadelphia Science Festival (April 24 through May 2) is in full swing. Among the festival’s series of events, several that feature Penn departments or schools are taking place around the Penn campus.

On April 25, enjoy Science Discovery Day at Clark Park from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and see that West Philadelphia has a lot of science to share. Meet local scientists and STEM students and experience the beauty of Clark Park. Participate in hands-on activities and hear about the great research happening all over University City.

On April 26, Atlats: Physics of the Hunt will take place at the Penn Museum at 2 p.m. Experience how our ancestors developed the atlatl, one of the earliest hunting technologies relying on human manipulation of the laws of physics. Participate as Penn experts illuminate the history of this ancient hunting device and see more items from the museum’s collections. Make your own darts and practice throwing with a modern atlatl. How good of a hunter are you? This event is free with Museum admission.

On April 27, an Educator Workshop: Using Genomic Data to Save Lives will take place at Carolyn Lynch Laboratory at 5 p.m. Discover how genomic data can be used to save lives, fight infections and understand genetic diseases. Gain a deeper understanding of bioinformatics, the practice that combines computer science, statistics, mathematics and engineering to study and process biological data and how to use it in your classroom. This workshop is for middle and high school teachers. Register at http://tinyurl.com/jj3zw5h.

On April 29, an Educator Workshop: Teaching with Technology for the Global Educator will take place at the Annenberg School at 4:30 p.m. Learn tech-savvy strategies to build a creative, collaborative and globally-connected classroom. Explore the tools and apps that nurture student interest and learning about world regions and cultures. This workshop is for elementary, middle and high school teachers. Register at http://tinyurl.com/0mgshy8.

Penny departments and schools are also participating in eight other programs off Penn’s campus. For a full list of events in the 2015 Philadelphia Science Festival, visit www.philasciencefestival.org/calendar.

Hannah Bennett: Fine Arts Library
Hannah Bennett joined the Penn Libraries as the head of the Fisher Fine Arts Library. In her new position at Penn, she oversees the operations of the Fisher Fine Arts Library, works to further deve-lop its rich print and digital collections, designs and implements patron-oriented services and promotes engagement with the multifaceted faculty, student body and University community. Her experience and vision will be instrumental in guiding the Fisher Fine Arts Library, which supports study, teaching and research in contemporary and historical aspects of art, architecture, city and regional planning, historic preservation, landscape architecture, studio art and urban design.

Prior to joining Penn, she served at Princeton University beginning in 2009 as librarian for the School of Architecture Library. While there, she directed all aspects of the library and oversaw a major renovation of the facilities. Prior to Princeton, Ms. Bennett was assistant director at the Arts Library at Yale University, where she implemented a novel instruction program for the Arts Library.

Ms. Bennett holds an MA in medieval studies from the University of York (York, England) and an MLS from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She continued her studies by taking graduate courses in nineteenth-century European art and medieval architecture at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago.

Kathryn Woodward: Penn Bookstore Manager
Kathryn Woodward has been appointed the new general manager of the Penn Bookstore. She is assuming the responsibilities of former Penn Bookstore manager, Lew Claps, who had served as the Penn Bookstore manager for 15 years before assuming a new role with Barnes & Noble.

Ms. Woodward will oversee the operations and management of the Penn Bookstore, including directing the services of the textbooks, trade books, general merchandise departments and the café. Special services such as regalia, author events and customer relations all fall under her responsibilities. She has worked with Barnes & Noble College for five years, most recently at Columbus University’s bookstore, where she served in a similar capacity.

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Almanac On-the-Go: RSS Feeds
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Susan Davidson: TCPW-Provost Award

Susan Davidson, Weiss Professor in Computer and Information Science, is the recipient of the Trustees’ Council of Penn Women (TCPW)-Provost Award for contributions to advancing the role of women in higher education and research at Penn. The TCPW Award recognizes undergraduate faculty advisors who have distinguished themselves in providing assistance and advice to their advisee students and who have made a significant impact on the academic experience of these students.

Dr. Davidson’s work lies in fundamental computer science as it is applied to biomedicine. Her research interests center on information modeling and management, databases, data integration and exchange, workflow systems, crowdsourcing, provenance tracking and management and data citation.

As the founder and chair of the Advancing Women in Engineering (AWE) Program, Dr. Davidson has addressed pipeline issues at the middle- and high-school levels and been an advocate for female faculty, graduate and undergraduate students within SEAS. She has also been instrumental in establishing degree programs in bioinformatics and computational biology at the undergraduate, master’s and doctoral levels.

Morris Arboretum’s Out on a Limb: National 2015 Buildy Award

Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania was one of two recipients of the 2015 Building Museums “Buildy” Award in recognition of its exemplary accomplishment in leading an institution through the challenging process of creating new construction. Paul W. Meyer, the Arboretum’s executive director, received the award for the Arboretum last month at the Building Museums Symposium of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums.

Martha Morris, associate professor and assistant director of the museology program at George Washington University, who presented the award, said, “This award recognizes museum directors whose completed museum construction projects demonstrate high achievement in the principles espoused in the Building Museums Symposium: careful, creative planning and diligent implementation of construction—projects that lead to institutional transformation and sustainability.”

Mr. Meyer and architect Alan Metcalfe, of Metcalfe Architecture and Design (Philadelphia), were instrumental in creating Out on a Limb (see page 1) as an exhilarating open metal grating walkway 50 feet above the ground. It’s a structure that both respects the natural environment and draws visitors together in an intense, shared experience. Out on a Limb, at a cost of $2.5 million, was a relatively small investment for a large institution; but its impact has been significant. It increased attendance and membership by 30% the year it opened in 2009, and generated publicity that broadened the Arboretum’s reach.

“As we embark on spring in 2015, six years after Out on a Limb—A Tree Adventure opened, it’s exciting to see that we’ve been able to maintain and grow our levels of attendance and membership,” said Mr. Meyer. “In an age when children are barraged with electronic and social media, our ability to connect them with nature in a real and meaningful way is very much part of our mission at the Morris Arboretum.”

The idea for Out on a Limb was sparked when Mr. Meyer saw a mock-up of the tree canopy walk at Kew Gardens in London, when it was just a small, temporary test structure made of construction scaffolding. He immediately saw the potential of such an experience and came back to champion the creation of a similar structure. They were able to take advantage of sloping terrain to avoid the need for stairs and elevators that were eventually needed at Kew. They also added several exhibit elements: a giant bird’s nest and an enclosed pavilion along the walk. The excitement of being on an open metal grating walkway 50 feet above the ground naturally draws visitors together. But Out on a Limb has taken this a step further. Three segments of walkway are joined together with rope netting that forms huge hammocks. Visitors can walk, roll or tumble out onto this netting (called the Squirrel Scramble) and when they land, they instantly bond with the other ‘squirrel scramblers’ in an intense, shared experience. This project illustrates the value of bringing nature to an educational mission.

The Buildy Award reflects new attitudes that are guiding the process of institutional growth and building design: respectful and appropriate attention to context, careful pre-planning to model business growth, engagement with user groups and the surrounding community, consideration of building impacts beyond the site boundaries, conservation of resources and planning for the future. Out on a Limb exemplifies these guidelines with success.

Mayor Michael Nutter and Renée Lewis Glover: Penn IUR Urban Leadership Awards

The Penn IUR (Institute for Urban Research) announced the recipients of its 11th annual Urban Leadership Awards, which recognize leaders who are guiding cities toward a sustainable and vibrant future. The Awards recognize the power that individuals can have in shaping cities throughout the United States and around the world.

The 2015 awardees are Michael A. Nutter, mayor of City of Philadelphia, and Renée Lewis Glover, chair, Board of Directors, Habitat for Humanity International and former president and CEO, Atlanta Housing Authority.

Penn IUR honored the work of these exceptional leaders recently at its 11th annual Urban Leadership Forum.

Hal Prince: Creative Spirit Award

Harold (Hal) Prince, C’48, HON’71, winner of a record-setting 21 Tony Awards and arguably the best known Broadway musical producer of the past century, will soon add yet another major accolade to his already impressive résumé. On April 23, at a reception that will both honor his achievements and herald the premiere of the Pennsylvania Players’ performance of his award-winning musical LoveMusik, Penn President Amy Gutmann will present Mr. Prince with Penn Alumni’s Creative Spirit Award.

The Award, established in 2009, recognizes a member of the Penn community who has illustrated a lifelong commitment to the arts through philanthropic or volunteer support and/or outstanding personal achievements. Mr. Prince has been selected to receive the award because of his extraordinary dedication to artistic endeavors, his lasting impact on his creative field and for being regarded as an exemplary figure in the arts. LoveMusik: April 23, 8 p.m.; April 24, 8:30 p.m.; & April 25, 1 p.m., 6 p.m. at the Harold Prince Theatre, Annenberg Center; $15; tickets: www.annenbergcenter.org

Kathleen Stebe: Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars

Kathleen J. Stebe, the Richer and Elizabeth M. Goodwin Professor of Engineering & Applied Science at the University of Pennsylvania, was one of 15 women and men who spent formative parts of their illustrious careers at Johns Hopkins who were recently inducted into Johns Hopkins’ Society of Scholars. The award event was hosted by Hopkins President Ronald J. Daniels and Provost Robert C. Lieberman.

Dr. Stebe serves as deputy dean for research at Penn Engineering. A respected researcher, she focuses on capillary phenomena, assembly at interfaces and within complex fluids and interfacial flows, with particular emphasis on how surfactants can be used to direct stresses at interfaces and to alter drop breakup modes.

Following completion of her PhD in chemical engineering at the Levich Institute and a postdoctoral year at the Université de Technologie de Compiègne, Dr. Stebe joined the department of chemical engineering at Hopkins, where she rose through the ranks to become a professor and department chair and received a Robert S. Pond Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. Stebe came to the University of Pennsylvania in 2008. She has been a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies, was named a fellow of the American Physical Society (APS) and received the Frenkel Award from the APS’ Division of Fluid Dynamics.
2015 Guggenheim Fellowship Awards

Penn Global is proud to announce 12 awards from the Global Engagement Fund for the 2015-2016 academic year. This fund is designed primarily to support projects that collaborate across Schools and disciplines, involve multiple faculty members, engage regions in which Penn has active academic partnerships and collaborative ventures and catalyze new research and engagement in a global context.

This year’s awards will support projects across Penn’s Schools and will provide the opportunity for undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff to study, research or teach in Chile, China, India, Iraq, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Syria and Tanzania, as well as here in the United States. Below are the Global Engagement Fund Award recipients for 2015-2016:

- Linda Aiken (Nursing), Jere Behrman (SAS), Eileen Lake (Nursing), Herb Smith (SAS): Healthcare Workforce and Quality Outcomes: Lessons from Chile, United States and Europe
- Stephen Avery (PSOM): Establishment of Medical Physics Training Program in Tanzania
- Julie Davis (SAS), Fred Dickinson (SAS), David Spoford (SAS): Globalization through a Japanese Prism
- Feng Gat (SAS), Jeffery Saven (SAS), Arjun Yodh (SAS): Joint Symposium on Materials and Energy Research with Peking University of China
- *Amna Ghafler-Kucher (GSE): Education for Refugees at the World’s Crossroads*
- Songtao Shi (Dental), Sungcuk Kim (Dental): Functional Dental and Orofacial Tissue Reconstruction from Mesenchymal Stem Cells
- Richard Leventhal (SAS), Salam al Kutun (Penn Museum), Brian Daniels (Penn Museum): Heritage Preservation Projects in Syria and Iraq
- Lisa Mitchell (SAS), Daud Ali (SAS), Raaiti Roy (SAS), Teren Sevea (SAS): C.U. in India and Southeast Asia
- Carol Muller (SAS): Seeing/Hearing South C.U. in India
- *Nedra Lexow, lecturer (Department of Romance Languages)*: *Inspire students to broaden their minds.***

This award recognizes the contributions to undergraduate education made by the School’s non-standing faculty. This year’s recipient is Anthony P. Espósito, undergraduate chair of Hispanic studies in the department of Romance languages. “Tony’s success as a teacher, notes a faculty colleague, “derives from his ability to take difficult, complex subjects and present them in such a way that he captures his students’ interest and inspires them.”

LPS Distinguished Teaching Awards

This award honors outstanding teaching and advising in the College of Liberal & Professional Studies (LPS).

This year’s recipient of the award for standing faculty is Cynthia Damon, professor of classical studies. According to one of her students, “Professor Damon creates an incredibly dynamic, engaging and stimulating course, leading students through a purposeful and carefully directed exploration of Latin syntax.”

The award for non-standing faculty goes to Nedra Lexow, lecturer in the biological basis of behavior. Commenting on Dr. Lexow’s teaching style in her Neurodegenerative Disorders and Psychopharmacology classes, a former student notes, “Her message to us…was to never settle for a superficial understanding when you can achieve a more robust one.”

School of Arts & Sciences Teaching Awards (continued from page 1)

Dean’s Award for Innovation in Teaching

This award, which recognizes exceptional creativity and innovation in instruction, is presented to Jeffery Saven, professor of chemistry and co-director of the R.C. and Diana Vagelos Scholars Program in the Molecular Life Sciences.

Motivated by a deep commitment to innovative teaching, Dr. Saven initiated and developed the Biochemistry Video Project, which engages students in the production of video responses to journal articles. The videos are peer-reviewed—which makes them teaching tools in themselves—and shared with the articles’ authors, many of whom share their feedback. “The students responded enthusiastically (and brilliantly),” says one of Dr. Saven’s faculty colleagues, “to this innovative teaching experiment and deepened their understanding of biochemistry as a result of the work.”

Dean’s Award for Mentorship of Undergraduate Research

This award recognizes faculty members who have excelled in nurturing undergraduate students’ desires and abilities to conduct meaningful, original research. This year, SAS honors Geoffrey Goodwin, assistant professor of psychology, who, according to one of his colleagues, “strikes a perfect (and hard to achieve...) balance of hands-on and hands-off mentoring styles” when working with undergraduates in the honors program, in independent study and in his own Research Experience class.

Dean’s Award for Distinguished Teaching by an Assistant Professor

This award recognizes a member of the junior faculty who demonstrates unusual promise as an educator. The 2015 recipient is Emily Steinlight, Stephen M. Gorenger Assistant Professor of English. As a faculty colleague notes, “She has an abundance of talent and energy, and she gives all of it to our students, sharpening their skills and broadening their minds.”

Emily Steinlight

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Improve your skills and get ahead in your career by taking advantage of the many development opportunities provided by Human Resources. To register for programs, visit knowledge/link.upenn.edu or contact Learning and Education at (215) 898-3400.

Effective Performance Management; 5/1; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; $75. Conducting annual performance reviews is a task many managers are not comfortable with. This workshop provides the information, tips and applications that will make the process easier, more comfortable and more effective in producing real employee performance improvement. Managers will discover how to give effective feedback, understand the difference between standards and goals, why interim reviews are critical to the review process, the right way to handle employee performance and many more tips and techniques for completing effective performance reviews.

STEP UP Introduction: First Steps to Excellence; 5/5; 9 a.m.-noon; $150 for entire program. STEP UP is a pre-supervisory training program designed for motivated individuals who aspire to be supervisors or managers. First Steps to Excellence is the entry point for the seven-course STEP UP Pre-Supervisory Curriculum and must be completed as the first course in the curriculum. By the end of First Steps to Excellence, you’ll have a deeper understanding of your five signature strengths and discover additional ways to take charge of your career at Penn.

The Magic of We: Teamwork; 5/5; 1-2 p.m. The Magic of We is the feeling of achievement and accomplishment that comes through collaborative action, especially when it creates a highly successful result. After completing this workshop, managers and supervisors will discover how to effectively manage and leverage strategies that break down barriers that hinder effective teamwork. In addition, you will be able to apply the concepts demonstrated to a current challenge in your school or center.

Career Focus Brown Bag: Cover Letters That Get Results; 5/13; noon-1 p.m. We all know that employers get so many resumes in response to just one job opening. It becomes more important than ever to find ways to make your information stand out from the crowd. A well-written cover letter gives you that great opportunity to communicate your match to the position and your fit to the organization. Come to this session to learn the steps to creating a powerful cover letter.

Understanding Your Strengths; 5/28; 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; $75. “If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you will never be great at anything.” Do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day? Research has shown that employees who know how to be the best and use their talents and strengths in the workplace tend to be more successful, engaged and productive.

In this three-hour program, you will:
• Learn how to use your strengths more effectively in the workplace;
• Discover ways to use your strengths to better interact with others;
• Determine which strengths you are not currently optimizing for personal and professional success;
• Set goals and action items for using your strengths to maximize your personal development.

Prior to the class, you will take the online Strengthsfinder assessment (included in the cost) and receive a customized report that lists your top five signature strengths.

Quality of Worklife Workshops

Dealing with the demands of work and your personal life can be challenging. These free workshops, sponsored by Human Resources and led by experts from Penn’s Employee Assistance Program and Quality of Worklife Department, offer information and support for your personal and professional life challenges. For complete details and to register, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/registration or contact Human Resources at (215) 573-2471 or govhr@hr.upenn.edu

How to Handle Conflict in the Workplace; 5/5; noon-1 p.m. Gain the skills necessary for effective reducing or conflict with your colleagues and in the workplace. Learn the varied styles of conflict resolution and the options for managing conflict when it arises.

Webinar: Internet Information for Parents; 5/14; 1-2 p.m. In this webinar, we will look at the realities of the internet as well as the benefits. We will discuss the importance of learning the language of the internet and how to identify concerns and risks. Participants will learn strategies to increase safety online with instant messaging, social networking and chat rooms. A list of resources and monitoring software will be provided. This webinar is provided by Penn’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Healthy Living Workshops

Get the tools you need to live well year-round. From expert nutrition and weight loss advice to exercise and disease prevention strategies, we can help you kick-start your body and embrace a healthier lifestyle. Workshops are sponsored by Human Resources. For complete details and to register, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/registration or contact Human Resources at (215) 573-2471 or govhr@hr.upenn.edu

Spring Wellness Walk: 5/1; noon-1 p.m. Enhance your health and build community on campus with a two-mile walk around Penn Park. The event check-in table and starting line will be on Shoemaker Green (located at 33rd Street, in front of the Palestra). All registered participants will receive promotional giveaways. The Spring Wellness Walk is co-sponsored by PPSA, Human Resources and Penn Recreation.

Gentle Yoga; 5/5; 5/21; noon-1 p.m. Let your body reward itself with movement. Join us for this Gentle Yoga session and explore the natural movements of the spine with slow and fluid moving bends and soft twists. During this session, you will flow into modified sun salutations that loosen the tightened muscles and joints of the lower back, neck, shoulders and wrists. And as an added bonus, you’ll get a workout in the process. Mats and props will be provided.

Chair Yoga; 5/13; noon-1 p.m. Plenty of people turn to yoga for exercise, but striking a pose isn’t for everyone. If you’ve been tempted to try it but don’t know where to start, it’s time to try Chair Yoga. Chair yoga is a more moderate form of yoga that’s done while sitting in a chair or using a chair for support. You get the same benefits of a regular yoga workout (like increased strength, flexibility and balance) but don’t have to master complex poses. Beginners can do yoga with your breathing. Chair and teach you how to relax your mind and improve your well being. Ready to give it a try? Don’t worry about your experience or flexibility—chair yoga can be modified for all levels. This workshop will be led by Lieutenant John Wylie, of the Department of Public Safety at Penn.

One Step Ahead Security & Privacy Made Simple

Another tip in a series provided by the Office of Information, Computing and Audit, Compliance & Privacy.

Email Risks: Well Beyond the Encryption Problem

Most people know that email is not a secure way to send messages because, barring a special application, email messages are not encrypted. However, the fact that emails messages can easily be intercepted in transit is only one of several risks to consider and manage. Consider these others:

• Auto-populating an Addressee.

Sending to the Wrong Person. Many email services offer a convenient but dangerous tool: When you start to type the first few letters of a recipient’s name, it guesses at who the recipient might be with a full name extension of those first few letters. This may or may not be your intended recipient. Make sure your message to “Jones” is not sent to “Jonston,” or accident because you failed to read the full name of the recipient before clicking “send.”

• Listserv Configurations: Revealing Too Much Information. Some listservs are configured to display only the name of the listserv to recipients of messages. Others actually show the email addresses (which often are full names or close to it) of everyone on the listserv. With the latter configuration, we see two different privacy risks: (1) revealing something potentially personal about the members simply by virtue of the fact that they are on the listserv and (2) revealing actual email addresses, which many people would prefer to keep restricted.

The Accidental “Reply to All.” When responding to messages sent to more than one person, it is unfortunately quite easy—when not paying close attention—to send to all on a list when you intended to respond only to the original sender.

All of the email-related risks above can be aggravated by sending something inappropriate in the content of the message, so be sure to only write things you would be willing to hear read aloud in a crowded room. Fortunately, the likelihood of encountering any of the above can be greatly reduced by only one simple method: read the “to” line, the “cc:” and the “bcc:” before you hit “send”— every time.

For additional tips, see the One Step Ahead link on the Information Security website: www.upenn.edu/computing/security/

2015 Summer Camps at Penn

Penn offers children and teens an array of summer activities, from athletics, enrichment and recreation—to more than a dozen athletic sports camps. See http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v61/n20/summercamps.html in the January 27 issue of Almanac.
Update
April AT PENN

CONFERENCE
24  It Takes a Village: Creating a Positive School Experience for your Child with Autism; 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sheraton University City; register: https://autismphilly.eventbrite.com (Penn Behavioral Health).

FILM
22  The Hip-Hop Fellow; follows Grammy award-winning producer’s tenure at Harvard; 6 p.m.; rm. 110, Annenberg School for Communication (Africana Studies; Annenberg School).

29  The Slow Food Story; opening remarks by Andrea Canepari, Consul General of Italy in Philadelphia & sample foods; 6:30 p.m.; The Rotunda; $5; tickets: www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1428728 (The Rotunda; Consulate General of Italy in Philadelphia).

FITNESS & LEARNING
27  Penn Summer Chat: Love Philly!; 5:30 p.m.; virtual event; register: www.sas.upenn.edu/summer/penn-summer-office-hours-registration (LPS).

28  Executive Master of Public Administration; 6 p.m.; virtual event; register: www.fels.upenn.edu/webform/2015-fels-spring-info-sessions-registration (LPS).

29  Executive Master of Public Administration; 6 p.m.; Fels Institute of Government; register: www.fels.upenn.edu/webform/2015-fels-spring-info-sessions-registration (LPS).

ON STAGE
23  All My Sons; Front Row Theatre Company; 7 p.m.; Class of ’49, Houston Hall; $10/door, $8/ Locust Walk. Also April 24, 7 p.m. & April 25, 2 p.m. (Platt).

Just Jew It; Penn Shabbatones; 8:30 p.m.; Shotel Dubin Auditorium, Hillel; $12/door, $10/ Locust Walk (Platt).

Sherlock Holmes; PennYo; 5:30 p.m.; Harold Prince Theatre, Annenberg Center; $10/door, $8/ Locust Walk (Platt). Also April 25, 9 p.m.

AT PENN Deadlines
The April AT PENN calendar is online at www.upenn.edu/almanac; The deadline for the Summer AT PENN calendar is Tuesday, May 12.

The University of Pennsylvania Police Department Community Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are all Crimes Against Persons and Crimes Against Society from the campus report for April 6-12, 2015. Also reported were 8 Crimes Against Property (5 thefts, 1 auto theft, 1 burglary and 1 other offense). Full reports are available at: www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v61/n31/creport.html Prior weeks' reports are also online. —Ed.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety and includes all criminal incidents reported and made known to the University Police Department between the dates of April 6-12, 2015. The University Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from the Schuylkill River to 3rd Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police. In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or suggestions regarding this report, please call the Division of Public Safety at (215) 898-4482.

04/07/15  8:36 AM  4000 Sansom St  Complainant pushed by male/Arrest
           04/08/15  6:59 PM  3725 Walnut St  Unknown male robbed
           04/11/15  12:54 AM  3700 Spruce St  Male attempted to harm compliant with knife

18th District Report
Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the 18th District: 4 incidents with 1 arrest (2 aggravated assaults, 1 assault and 1 robbery) were reported between April 6-12, 2015 by the 18th District covering the Schuylkill River to 42nd Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

04/06/15  6:09 PM  4000 Spruce St  Assault
04/07/15  11:05 AM  1118 S 47th St  Aggravated Assault
04/09/15  7:04 PM  3735 Walnut St  Robbery
04/11/15  1:18 AM  3730 Spruce St  Aggravated Assault/Arrest

Works on Paper at the Burrison Gallery

The Burrison Gallery is calling for submittals of artwork to be considered for exhibition during the 2015-2016 academic year. Any Penn faculty, staff, alumna, alumnus or family member of these groups may submit work for consideration. Selected artists will be given a one-person show at the gallery with the option of an opening reception.

The Gallery is an entity of the University Club, a private club for faculty, staff and associate members who include post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and alumni at the University of Pennsylvania. The Burrison Gallery provides a venue for artists in the University community. Maurice Burri-son’s vision was to encourage artistic freedom. His legacy continues as the Burrison Gallery emphasizes the role of art and culture in strengthening collaborative relationships across the University.

Works on Paper—ink drawings by Nazanin Moghbeli are on display until May 13 with a reception scheduled on Friday, April 24 from 5-7 p.m. in the Burrison Gallery at the Inn at Penn.

Ms. Moghbeli creates abstract ink drawings that reference the Iranian language (left). She takes one Farsi letter at a time and practices it over and over, trying to mimic its exact contour. That letter is then released from its exactness and becomes truly a “character,” sometimes looking bold, human-like, sometimes dominating, other times retreat-ing. She is a Philadelphia-based artist who creates works on paper using ink and graphite.

Burrison Gallery at the University Club at Penn: 2015-16 Call for Submittals

The Burrison Gallery is calling for submittals of artwork to be considered for exhibition during the 2015-2016 academic year. Any Penn faculty, staff, alumna, alumnus or family member of these groups may submit work for consideration. Selected artists will be given a one-person show at the gallery with the option of an opening reception. The deadline for submittals is May 15, 2015. Selected artists will be notified by June 1, 2015. See the Gallery’s website for an application form: http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/universityclub/burrison-gallery.html

The Burrison Gallery is an entity of the University Club, a private club for faculty, staff and associate members who include post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and alumni at the University of Penn-sylvania. The Burrison Gallery provides a venue for artists in the University community. Maurice Burri-son’s vision was to encourage artistic freedom. His legacy continues as the Burrison Gallery emphasizes the role of art and culture in strengthening collaborative relationships across the University.

TALKS
22  The Role of “Heterogeneity” in Tumor Evolution and Treatment Responses; Jeffrey Settleman, Genetec, Inc.; refreshments: 9:30 a.m., lecture: 10 a.m.; Sarah and Matthew Caplan Auditorium, Wistar Institute (Wistar).

Dynamic Wetting Failure and Air Entrainment in Coating Flows; Satish Kumar, University of Minnesota; 3 p.m.; Wu and Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (CEBE Seminar Series).

28  Lunch Talks: Race, Behavior and the Brain: Impacts and Challenges of Using Race in Neurosci-ence Research; Oliver Rollins, Penn Program for Race, Science & Society; noon; rm. 523, Goddard Labs; RSVP: info@neuroethics.upenn.edu (Center for Neuroscience and Society).

A Conversation with Anderson Cooper; Anderson Cooper 360; 8 p.m.; Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center; $10/public, $5/Penn students; tickets: http://tinyurl.com/n9q8gp2 (SPEC).

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The University of Pennsylvania’s journal of record, opinion and news is published Tuesdays during the academic year, and as needed during summer and holiday breaks. Its electronic editions on the Internet (accessible through the Penn website) include HTML, Acrobat and mobile versions of the print edition, and interim information may be posted in electronic-only form. Guidelines for readers and contributors are available on request and online. —Ed.

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The University of Pennsylvania values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University of Pennsylvania does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices. Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to Sam Starks, Executive Direc-tor of the Office of Affirmative Ac- tion and Equal Opportunity Pro-grams, Sansom Place East, 3600 Chestnut Street, Suite 228, Phila-delphia, PA 19104-6106; or (215) 898-6953 (Voice).
Parents’ exposure to ads for SSBs also had an effect on their children’s consumption of these beverages, although the differences were not statistically significant. A study by the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania found that Philadelphia parents know that sugar-sweetened beverages are unhealthy, but they may not know that other sweetened beverages, such as sports and energy drinks, are just as sugary. Parents were more likely to have their children consume sports and energy drinks than other sweetened beverages.

The study was based on a 2012 representative telephone survey of 371 Philadelphia parents in households with children between the ages of 3 and 16 and was led by researchers at the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

The study evaluated parents’ attitudes toward sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and the relationship between their attitudes, their consumption and their children’s consumption. The study noted that SSBs add an average of more than 200 calories and more than 20 grams of sugar to the diets of children and adolescents.

“Philadelphia’s parents know that soda is filled with sugar and calories,” said Michael Hennessy, lead author of the study and a senior research analyst at the Annenberg Public Policy Center. “The approach of anti-sugar PSAs will probably be ineffective because parents already know that.”

Parents who had been exposed to anti-sugar PSAs were more likely to believe that sweetened beverages are unhealthy, such as sports and energy drinks, and that they should be avoided. However, parents who had not been exposed to anti-sugar PSAs were more likely to believe that sweetened beverages are healthy and that they are just as sugary as other sweetened beverages.

Other findings of the study include:
- Nearly all of the surveyed parents (96 percent) reported seeing at least one ad for a sugar-sweetened drink per week; just over half (55 percent) reported seeing an anti-SSB ad.

- Seeing anti-sugar sweetened beverage PSAs had no effect on parents’ consumption or their children’s consumption of sugary drinks.
- However, parents’ exposure to ads for SSBs did have an effect on their own consumption of soda, sweetened tea and fruit drinks.
- Parents’ exposure to ads for SSBs also had an effect on their children’s consumption of sweetened tea and sports drinks.
- Any campaign to reduce consumption of soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages, the study concluded, “should work to reduce the belief that SSBs are a healthy drink and/or part of a healthy lifestyle.”

Additional authors on the study were Amy Bleakley, senior research scientist at APPC; Jessica Taylor Piotrowski of the University of Amsterdam; Giridhar Mallya of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Amy Jordan, associate director of APPC.

Remediating Neighborhood Blight May Reduce Stress and Improve Health

Greening vacant lots may be associated with biologic reductions in stress, according to a new study from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Residents who walked near newly greened vacant lots had significantly lower heart rates compared to those walking near a blighted or neglected lot.

“Our goal was to scientifically explore the connection between city environments and stress,” said the study’s lead author, Eugenia C. South, a physician in the department of emergency medicine at Penn. “We used heart rate as a physiologic marker of acute stress, and the reduction we found suggests a biologic link between urban blight reduction strategies like vacant lot greening and reductions in stress.”

The study, published online by the American Journal of Public Health, is the first known neighborhood walking trial in which a physiological marker was measured in real time for residents in their own communities.

The researchers used a heart rate monitor with GPS to measure the stress response in study participants in two randomly selected Philadelphia neighborhoods as they went on a prescibed walk around their neighborhood. Vacant lots in one neighborhood randomly received a greening treatment, while the other neighborhood served as a control and received no treatment. Participants were past volunteers by time and their three months after the greening treatment of randomly selected lots. The greening treatment, performed by the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, is a low-cost environmental improvement that includes cleaning and removing debris, planting grass and trees and installing a low wooden post-and-rail fence.

The average heart rate reduction attributable to being in view of the greened lots was more than five beats per minute (bpm) lower than when near non-greened lots. In contrast, at the control site, there was minimal change in heart rate from the pre- to post-time period when walking past control lots versus non-study vacant lots. In a second analysis, the total net reduction of heart rate when near and in view of greened vacant lots was more than 15 bpm. Walks ranged from about 1,500 to 2,000 feet in length.

These data support the conclusion that proximity to greened lots versus trash-strewn lots results in lower heart rates. In response to an acute stressor, the body activates the sympathetic nervous system, resulting in the release of epinephrine, which in turn increases heart rate. Thus, higher heart rates at unexpected moments and because of urban blight, which can be ubiquitous in some city neighborhoods, can be inferred to be evidence of stress. Heart rate change has been used in a few previous studies to evaluate acute stress responses, although potential limitations of the current study.

The current research builds on previously published findings by Dr. South and her colleagues, which found that residents living near greened vacant lots feel safer than those near non-greened sites. “Our hypothesis in the earlier published work was that transforming vacant lots from being overrun with weeds and trash to a clean and green space may make it difficult for people to hide weapons and conduct illegal activities such as drug use in or near the space. Thus the lower heart rate response we found in the newly published study may be tied to residents feeling safer and experiencing less stress from their environment.”

The study’s senior author, Charles C. Branis, professor of epidemiology and director of the Urban Health Lab at Penn, observes, “This research on greening urban lots provides an important scientific impetus for urban planners and city officials to take relatively low-cost steps toward improving health for their residents. Future trials that dynamically measure additional biological information, such as cortisol levels (another marker of stress) and blood pressure, are now warranted to further advance our understanding of the relationship between stress and blighted urban environments.”

Other Penn co-authors are Michelle C. Kondo, Center for Public Health Initiatives and Rose A. Cheney, Penn Nursing.

This study was funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and Society Education Fund, with additional funding from the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

Parents Need to Know That Sports and Energy Drinks Are Not Healthy for Kids

Although many public service announcements (PSAs) about sugar-sweetened beverages emphasize that the drinks are high in sugar and calories, most parents already know that, so PSAs that take this approach to curtailing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages are likely to be ineffective, a study of Philadelphia parents has found.

But parents do believe that sports and energy drinks are healthier than other sugary drinks. So public service announcements seeking to curtail the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages should try to reduce the belief that those drinks are healthy, too.

“Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption by Adult Caregivers and Their Children: The Role of Drink Features and Advertising Exposure” was published online in March by the journal Health Education & Behavior. The study was based on a 2012 representative telephone survey of 371 Philadelphia parents in households with children between the ages of 3 and 16 and was led by researchers at the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health.

The study evaluated parents’ attitudes toward sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and the relationship between their attitudes, their consumption and their children’s consumption. The study noted that SSBs add an average of more than 200 calories and more than 20 grams of sugar to the diets of children and adolescents.

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Parents who had been exposed to anti-sugar PSAs were more likely to believe that sweetened beverages are unhealthy, such as sports and energy drinks, and that they should be avoided. However, parents who had not been exposed to anti-sugar PSAs were more likely to believe that sweetened beverages are healthy and that they are just as sugary as other sweetened beverages.

Other findings of the study include:
- Nearly all of the surveyed parents (96 percent) reported seeing at least one ad for a sugar-sweetened drink per week; just over half (55 percent) reported seeing an anti-SSB ad.

- Seeing anti-sugar sweetened beverage PSAs had no effect on parents’ consumption or their children’s consumption of sugary drinks.
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- Parents’ exposure to ads for SSBs also had an effect on their children’s consumption of sweetened tea and sports drinks.
- Any campaign to reduce consumption of soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages, the study concluded, “should work to reduce the belief that SSBs are a healthy drink and/or part of a healthy lifestyle.”

Additional authors on the study were Amy Bleakley, senior research scientist at APPC; Jessica Taylor Piotrowski of the University of Amsterdam; Giridhar Mallya of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Amy Jordan, associate director of APPC.

Roseroot Herb Shows Promise as Potential Depression Treatment Option

Rhodiola rosea (R. rosea), or roseroot, may be a beneficial treatment option for major depressive disorder (MDD), according to results of a study published on February 23 in the journal Phytotherapy. The study was led by Jun J. Mao, associate professor of family medicine, community health and epidemiology and colleagues at the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania.

The proof of concept trial study is the first randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, comparison trial of oral R. rosea extract versus the conventional antidepressant therapy sertraline for mild to moderate major depressive disorder.

Depression is one of the most common and debilitating psychiatric conditions, affecting more than 19 million Americans each year, 70 percent of whom do not fully respond to initial therapy. Costs of conventional antidepressants and their sometimes substantial side effects often result in a patient discontinuing use prematurely. Others opt to try natural products or supplements instead.

All of the study’s 57 adult participants, enrolled from December 2010 through April 2013, had a diagnosis of MDD, meaning they exhibited two or more major depressive episodes, depressed mood and/or loss of interest or pleasure in life activities for at least two weeks, as well as symptoms including significant unintentional weight loss or gain, insomnia or sleeping too much, fatigue, diminished ability to think or concentrate and current thoughts of death.

The participants received 12 weeks of standardized R. rosea extract, sertraline or placebo. Changes over time in Hamilton Depression Rating (HAM-D), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Clinical Global Impression ( CGI) change scores were measured among groups.

Participants who took sertraline were somewhat more likely, as measured by HAM-D scores, to report improvement in their symptoms by week 12 of treatment than those who took R. rosea, although these differences were not found to be statistically significant. Patients taking R. rosea had 1.4 times the odds of improvement, and patients on sertraline had 1.9 times the odds of improvement versus those on a placebo. However, patients on sertraline experienced twice the side effects—most commonly nausea and sexual dysfunction—than those on R. rosea: 63 percent versus 30 percent, respectively, reported side effects. These findings suggest that R. rosea may possess a more favorable risk to benefit ratio for individuals with mild to moderate major depressive disorder.

“These results are a bit preliminary but suggest that herbal therapy may have the potential to help patients with depression who cannot tolerate conventional antidepressants due to side effects,” Dr. Mao said. “Larger studies will be needed to fully evaluate the benefit and harm of R. rosea as compared to conventional antidepressants.”