

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Announcements	2
Research Opportunity	3
A Journey to the Exotic	4/5
Rational Ignorance	6/7
Calendar	8

## From the Director's Desk

From the director...

The CV Barbecue is one of the signature events of Collegium V Honors at UTD. Once a semester somewhere between 80 and 150 faculty, staff, and students get together at my home to eat hamburgers, hotdogs, chips, and an assortment of other foods ranging from deviled eggs to chili to cookies to fruit salad to a variety of wonderful to behold (and taste) ethnic foods. The Barbecue is a fun activity and a good way to meet others outside the classroom or lounge.

The rules are simple:

- 1) Harpham provides the hamburgers and hotdogs (and veggie burgers)
- 2) Everyone must bring a dish to share with 5-10 other people. An addendum to this rule is that people should try to be creative in the dish that they bring. Fancy side dishes, salads, and cookies that you make are treasured. But we will take store bought stuff as well. Ethnic foods from Grandma's secret recipes are particularly appreciated.
- 3) You show up on time (not fashionably late). An addendum to this rule is that you are allowed to come early to help set up. An addendum to the addendum is that you are encouraged to learn how to grill if you are so inclined. I always need more help.
- 4) You spend some time socializing with people you don't know. We invite alums and various administrators and faculty to come to the party and meet with you guys. So use the opportunity well.
- 5) You bring your guitar, banjo and voice, along with some musical inclination. About halfway through the party, a bunch of us move off to play, sing, and have a good time. Think of this as part hootenanny from the 60s, part good times from the 2013s for those of us who don't take themselves very seriously.

We have been doing CV Barbecues now for over 14 years at our house. A big change is in store this year: the Harpham pool is gone. We now have a big back yard, a fire pit, sitting wall, and satellite patio. The new landscaping should serve the barbecue well.

If you haven't come to a barbecue yet, you need to attend this year. The Date: Sunday April 21, 2013 from 5:00PM to 8:00PM. Signup sheets, ride sheets, and directions will be available in the lounge.

-Dr H



# Announcements

**Lost and Found:** Any items lost in the CV Lounge and classroom are often given to Valerie. Please go see her if you have lost something.

**Poster Presentations:** Presentations are going on now! Check your emails regularly and try to attend the presentations for support and experience!

**To graduate with CV Honors:** 24 hours CV coursework, 3.5 GPA, and a senior thesis/project and poster presentation. Please see Valerie if you have any questions.

*"Please go see  
[Valerie] if you  
have lost  
something"*

**Food in the Lounge:** Please do not leave food out in the Lounge. Pest control will be treating the Lounge on Fridays.

## **Graduation/Commencement dates (Spring 2013):**

Honors Convocation .....	Thursday, May 16
Commencement.....	Thursday, May 16 – May 18
Commencement RSVP Deadline .....	Wednesday, April 3
Commencement tickets available online .....	Monday, April 22
Degree conferral date .....	Saturday, May 18

# Research Opportunity

Dakota Deutsch

Dr. Rockford Draper, Professor of Molecular and Cell Biology at UTD, is looking for an interested student who wishes to gain research experience by working in his lab over the summer and subsequent semesters. This is an excellent opportunity for those wishing to gain research experience in the molecular biology/bionanotechnology fields. Students should be CV sophomores or juniors in good academic standing as of Fall 2013. Interested students should contact Dr. Draper via e-mail at [draper@utdallas.edu](mailto:draper@utdallas.edu) to set up an interview.

***“Students  
should be CV  
sophomores or  
juniors”***

# A Journey to the Exotic

Katelyn McWilliams

As an undergraduate student, it's hard to find ways to establish yourself as a serious academic. Opportunities to develop professional skills appear few and far between, especially apart from the comfortable realm of UT Dallas. However, I was fortunate enough to have one such experience a few weeks ago at the Undergraduate History Conference at UNT.

Last semester, I took one of the most difficult classes I've enrolled in at UTD: Historical Survey. Depending on the professor, this course can be a guaranteed three hour per week nap time or a serious venture to improve your academic skills. My professor chose the latter end of the spectrum. By the end of that section, I had greatly developed my writing skills and emerged with a ten page research paper of which I was extremely proud. Little did I know, I was not yet finished with that paper.

Through this same professor, I learned of the Undergraduate History Conference at the University of North Texas. I had never attended a conference before, much less applied to speak at one. I knew, however, that if my future goes according to plan, conference presentations will become a serious part of my professional life. Moreover, the paper I'd written for the class fulfilled the appropriate length and research requirements for the conference. It seemed a shame not to apply!

A few months later I received my acceptance letter and, while excited, I burst into a frenzy of activity. I went through multiple layers of preparation in anticipation for the UNT conference. I edited my paper for an oral presentation, perfected my speaking time, and chose an appropriately formal outfit for the big day. By the day of the conference, I felt understandably nervous but excited. As I accustomed myself to the environment and met my co-panel presenters, I mentally prepared myself for the day ahead. I was scheduled in the afternoon, so I had the opportunity to observe previous speakers and learn from their examples. The most beneficial experience, however, came before the presentations even started.

***“Opportunities  
to develop  
professional  
skills appear  
few and far  
between”***

*(continued on next page)*

# A Journey to the Exotic

Cont'd...

Dr. Richard McCaslin, chair of the UNT History department, acted as one of the hosts and our unofficial mentor for the day. After the opening check-in and breakfast, he and other panel organizers gathered everyone to provide tips for presenting and future conferences. He gave familiar advice, but he phrased his information so elegantly that I found it worth of repeating. Dr. McCaslin commented that everyone in the room had probably heard the advice he was about to offer from their own professors, but he, as a stranger, had an exotic appeal and would probably make a greater impact. He was right. I had heard a lot of the same advice before, but the repetition and the source lent vitality to old information. Dr. McCaslin stressed age-old tenets: dress professionally, submit all of your information in a timely manner, practice your presentation in a mirror ahead of time, find a balance between your own unique personality and a professional demeanor. His speech made it clear that these sorts of presentations were old-hat to him, and he hoped to impart a fraction of his experience to the undergraduates sitting in the audience wishing to perfect their presentation skills.

“Dress  
professionally...  
practice your  
presentation in a  
mirror ahead of  
time”

Overall, I was extremely satisfied with my foray into the unknown. I learned much from the other speakers, my own presentation went well, and I walked away with a new appreciation for the living organism that is the academic community. After such a positive experience, I cannot wait to present again next year, and anticipate applying for the statewide conference in 2014. I anticipate many enjoyable presentations in the future, and I hope that one day I will stand in front of a room full of bright-eyed undergraduates and offer them familiar words of inspiration!

*Edited by: Kelsey Drake*

# Rational Ignorance

Carter Plotkin

It has come to my attention that some people are of the persuasion that “rational ignorance” is a sensible thing. I was speaking to a gentleman who conceived of the theory as entirely reasonable, and subscribed to it wholeheartedly. He explained that rational ignorance is when you choose, on a rational basis, to be ignorant.

For example, when choosing to vote, if you know that your vote’s significance is negligible in comparison to the massive pool of votes, you may choose not to research candidates because you’re aware that your efforts will be almost entirely in vain. This impotence stems from statistics showing that incumbency and other political factors have much greater weight in deciding the outcome of elections than research on a candidate. Your effort put into researching is vain when the incumbent is almost certain to be re-elected; thus, you rationally decide to be ignorant about the candidates to save time.

*“If you were  
the only voter,  
you’d research  
your  
candidates ”*

Similarly, said gentleman explained the concept of strategized voting, which is similar to rational ignorance. For instance, say there were two Republicans running for office in Texas and one Democrat, and further suppose that you support the Democrat, but you know that he won’t be elected. So you decide to support the Republican candidate who is least offensive to you, since he has a greater chance of winning than the Democrat. You are thus strategizing your political behavior in a kind of game with the rest of the electorate, modifying your behavior in accordance with the way you think others will act. The same idea applies to rational ignorance, where you strategize your ignorance so that you save time by not casting a well-researched but negligible vote.

Presumably, if you were the only voter, you’d research your candidates and vote for the one who best represents you; the man—or woman—you think would be best for the job. In that scenario, there is no political behavior game being played with other voters.

Logically, this single-voter scenario renders the two “rationally ignorant”

*(continued on next page)*

# Rational Ignorance

Cont'd...

models of behavior entirely inane. It escapes me why anyone would practice them. Practicing so-called “rational ignorance” when you receive an invitation letter from Phi Kappa Phi might seem sensible because there are many organizational scams that want your dues. You save time by not researching the organization. So it would make sense under that theory to discard the invitation. Little did you know that Phi Kappa Phi is an extremely prestigious honors organization founded in 1897 that invites only the cream of the crop—and which confers special benefits.

These two ostensibly rational models of behavior are completely ridiculous; if you practice rational ignorance then you invite others to do the same. “Be the change you wish to see in the world”—a quote by Gandhi—should guide our behavior. If you do your research on political candidates or honors organizations you invite others to follow your lead, thereby allowing for consideration of individual merits without prejudice. Your time commitment is a visit to a candidate’s website or to the ever-handly Wikipedia. Now that’s not too much to ask, is it?

“These two...  
models of  
behavior are  
completely  
ridiculous”

*Edited by: Mikaela McMurtry*

# APRIL 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Volunteer Opportunity	10 POETRY	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 CV BBQ	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**Volunteers Needed** (Apr. 9): Please contact Helen Roth if you can help with the Phi Kappa Phi Banquet from 2:45-4:20 p.m. or around 6:00 p.m.

**Poetry** (Apr. 10): Campbell McGrath has authored nine collections of poetry, a play and a libretto for a video opera. He teaches English and creative writing at Florida International University and has won numerous accolades for his writing, and has earned a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1998 and a MacArthur Fellowship in 1999. Spaces are limited so please RSVP to Mr. Seeligson. 4 p.m. in CV Library.

**CV BBQ** (Apr. 21): Held at Dr. Harpham's house from 5:00PM to 8:00PM. Signup sheets, ride sheets, and directions will be available in the lounge.



# CV Newsletter Staff

**Editor-in-Chief:** Kelsey Drake

**Copy and Print Editor:** Katelyn McWilliams

**Logistics Editor:** Dakota Deutsch

**Writers:**

Anita Chandrahas

Waqas Haque

Mikaela McMurtry

Carter Plotkin

Husain Mogri

**Redactors:**

Kinsey Cline

Andrew Nguyen

Mikaela McMurtry

Carter Plotkin

Anandini Rao

**Calendar/  
Announcements:**

Josh Olson

## Special Thanks To:

Dr. Harpham

Dr. Dow

Valerie Brunell

Dr. Scotch

Dr. Champagne

Michael Seeligson

## Collegium V: Learning That Never Sleeps



The Collegium V Honors Program at The University of Texas at Dallas was established in 1997 to provide an undergraduate honors experience that extends beyond the classroom. Small classes, innovative instruction, world class faculty, bright and inquisitive colleagues, and an array of extracurricular events offer Collegium V members special opportunities for professional and personal growth at the university.

If you are interested in learning more about Collegium V, please visit our website at [cv.utdallas.edu](http://cv.utdallas.edu) or contact us for an application or to set up a tour.

## CV Contact Information

### CV Council

[events@collegiumv.org](mailto:events@collegiumv.org)

### CV Network Administrators

[cvadmins@utdallas.edu](mailto:cvadmins@utdallas.edu)

### CV Lounge Phone

972-883-6605

*The CV Lounge (GC 1.202) is located on the 1st floor of the Green Center between the McDermott Library and Green Hall*

*If you have any questions/comments about the CV newsletter, please email Kelsey Drake at [krd093020@utdallas.edu](mailto:krd093020@utdallas.edu).*

