

wellesleyweek



nobel laureate speaks about brain and visual perception

David Hubel won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1981 for discoveries concerning information processing in the visual system. Despite his big win in the field of neurophysiology, the subject is only one of his many interests.

"In the laboratory, I enjoy almost everything, including machining, photography, computers, surgery – even neurophysiology," he said.

Hubel, a professor emeritus of neurobiology at Harvard, will present a lecture, "Brain and Visual Perception," Thursday, Oct. 4, at 5 pm in Science Center 277 with an introduction by President H. Kim Bottomly. A reception will precede the lecture at 4:30 pm in Sage Lounge.

Barbara Beltz, neuroscience, recalled being a postdoctoral researcher in the neurobiology department at Harvard Medical School when the Nobel was awarded to Hubel and his collaborator, Torsen Wiesel. In the small, familial department, everyone dropped what they were doing to celebrate the achievement. More than 20 years later, Beltz was excited to welcome Hubel into one of her classes.

"We were thrilled a few weeks ago when David joined us to teach the first lab in our brand new introductory neuroscience course

(NEUR 100)," Beltz said. "The lab used basic electrical components to build a functioning model of a neuronal membrane, and the content was based on a laboratory project that David has used in his teaching at Harvard. What a thrill for the Wellesley students and for all of us in the new Neuroscience Program to have David working with us in the teaching lab!"

In Hubel's lab, researchers study all aspects of vision— form, color, movement and stereoscopic depth— in higher animals, mostly macaque and squirrel monkeys.

"I am interested in learning how the activation of brain cells is related to an animal's environment and behavior," Hubel said.

Hubel's second lecture, "The Crystalline Organization of the Visual Cortex," will be held Thursday, Oct. 11, at 5 pm in Science Center 277. For more information, call x3048.



student uses research to help disaster area

When floodwaters devastated the town of Miami, Okla., early this July, Kathleen McCarthy '08 jumped at the chance to put her geological research to good use in helping officials estimate the impact of the disaster.

Before July's flood, McCarthy had been in Oklahoma collecting soil samples at the Tar Creek Superfund Site, a 50-square-mile area suffering from significant environmental degradation caused by decades of heavy mining in the region. But after Miami was hit by the second-largest flood in its history, McCarthy's work took on even more significance.

The earlier soil samples her team had collected now serve as a baseline to help determine the changes in soil composition caused by the flood. The researchers provided Miami officials and residents with

estimates of the concentrations of metal that had been deposited in local soil by the flood. Results showed that most of the floodwater originated from the larger Neosho River and contained only diluted metal concentrations—a finding that quickly relieved the concerns of area environmental agencies.

"There is still a lot of work to be done in characterizing the flood and estimating the impact," McCarthy said. "Yet, it feels nice to be conducting research that includes interesting science questions as well as a direct connection to humans."

McCarthy will present her team's research at the national conference of the Geological Society of America this month. Dan Brabander, geosciences, has been working with McCarthy on the study.



access renovation

Harambee House, the cultural center for students, faculty and staff of African descent, has been renovated to make it accessible to those with disabilities.

The Disability Services Committee had been interested in the project for years and finally accumulated the funds through a donation to PLATT trust funds, in which the donor earmarked money for wheelchair accessibility, said Jim Wice, disability services. As a result, a ramp was built, modifications were made to the doorway and interior work was done.

"It made an otherwise inaccessible program for African-American students open to everyone in the community," Wice said. "It's something that's been a long time coming."

WellesleyWeek is published each Monday during the academic year by the Office for Public Affairs. All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For directions, go to www.wellesley.edu/CampusMaps/. Phone numbers are dialed 781 283-xxxx. Campus-sponsored event listings are welcome via an online form at www.wellesley.edu/PublicAffairs/WellesleyWeek/Forms/wellswkform.html or e-mail wellesleyweekcalendar@wellesley.edu. Submissions can be mailed to WellesleyWeek, Office for Public Affairs, Wellesley College, 106 Central St., Wellesley, MA 02481. Deadline for calendar submissions is noon on the Monday prior to publication. For paid subscriptions, call 781 283 2373. View **WellesleyWeek** online at www.wellesley.edu/PublicAffairs/WellesleyWeek/archiveweek.html. For more events, go to <https://calendar.wellesley.edu/wv3> for the online campus calendar.

news

local tv news has room for improvement, professor says

What do TV viewers want? Hyped story lines that emphasize danger, dirt, doom and gloom? Or real news, thoughtfully presented and truthfully researched?

Happily, it turns out to be the latter. Now, if only the authors of *We Interrupt This Newscast: How To Improve Local News and Win Ratings, Too*, a new book from Cambridge University Press, can convince local news producers of that, then TV has a better chance of informing and educating the public.

The book's authors include Marion Just, political science, who also served as the academic advisor to the team of writers.

"This is the largest study of local television news ever undertaken," Just said. "The similarities among local newscasts are based

on received wisdom. We hope we can change the prevailing view with hard facts."

The writers conducted a five-year analysis of local newscasts in 50 markets. They found that local newscasts are sim-

ilar in all regions of the country and in small and large markets. Crimes, accidents

and disasters dominate the first half of most broadcasts, politics, education and business are sandwiched in the middle, and soft news provides the happy or surprising ending.

Interviews with local TV journalists around the country show that these similarities in story placement arise from TV journalists' ingrained beliefs about the kind of news the audience wants— "urgent" stories over the "important" stories. The truth is quite different, the authors found.

"Our analysis of newscast content correlated with ratings success shows — contrary to the conventional wisdom — that local TV news could do better by following the rules of good journalism — putting in the effort to get good stories, finding and balancing sources, seeking out experts, and making stories relevant to the local audience," they report.



wellesley forms a new partnership

Wellesley College is one of 19 institutions to join as members of the new partnership between the Boston Library Consortium (BLC) and the Open Content Alliance in an effort to build a freely accessible library of digital materials.

"We have agreed to send books from our collection to be digitized, vastly increasing access to these resources – both for our own community and for the global community," said Micheline E. Jedrey, information services and college librarian.

The Consortium will offer high-resolution, downloadable, reusable files of public domain materials. Using Internet Archive technology, books from all 19 libraries will be scanned at a cost of 10 cents per page. Collectively, the BLC member libraries provide access to over 34 million volumes.

"Unlike corporate-backed efforts by Google, Microsoft, Amazon et al, which all impose different, albeit understandable, levels of restriction to protect their investment, the BLC has shown libraries all across the country the right way to take institutional responsibility and manage this historic transition to a universal digital archive that serves the needs of scholars, researchers and the general public without compromise," said Doron Weber, program director of the Universal Access to Recorded Knowledge at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. For more information on the BLC, visit www.blc.org/index.html.

colleagues

in the news

claire fontijn, music, was awarded the Nicholas Slnimsky Award for Outstanding Musical Biography in the Concert Music Field at the 40th Annual American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers-Deems Taylor Awards. Her book, *Desperate Measures: The Life and Music of Antonia Padoani Bembo*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), is the first-ever biography of the 17th century composer and musician Antonia Padoani Bembo, who was active in the cultural centers of Europe— Paris and Venice. The prize includes \$1,000 and will be awarded at a ceremony at Lincoln Center in New York City Dec. 13.

Several faculty members have received grants for academic research. david ellerby, biological sciences, received four years of research support from the NSF for his project, "RUI: Power Requirements and Efficiency of Fish Swimming." nicholas rodenhouse, biological sciences, also received a grant from the NSF for five years of research support and a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) supplement, Collaborative Research, for his project "LTREB: Behavioral and Demographic Responses of Migratory Birds to Climate Change." fred shultz and stanley chang, mathematics, received conference support for the Fifth East Coast Operator Algebras Symposium from the NSF. richard french and kim mcLeod, astronomy, each received grants from the STScI. French will pursue "The Ring Plane Crossings of Uranus in 2007," while McLeod has been awarded two years of research support for "A Search for Circumstellar Disks and Planetary-Mass Companions around Brown Dwarfs in Taurus." glenn stark, physics, received a grant from NASA for three years of research support on "Absorption Measurements of SO₂ Isotopologues with Application to Sulfur Isotope Mass-independent Fractionation during SO₂ Photolysis." philip kohl, anthropology, was granted three years of research support from the National Endowment for the Humanities for "Final Investigation and Publication of the Dagh-estan-American Velikent Expedition to SE Dagh-estan, Russia and Adjacent Region."

calendar

monday october 1

meeting. "Meditation." 12:30-1:30 pm, Schneider Loft meditation space. Sponsor: Religious Life. Info: x2793.

italian table. 12:30 pm, Tower private dining hall. Sponsor: Italian. Info: x2616.

cws info panel. "Planning for Law School." 12:30 pm, PNE 239. Info: x2356.

lecture. Heard Lecture in Mathematics. "Public Key Cryptography, Lattices, and NTRU." Speaker: Jil Pipher, mathematics, Brown University. 4:15 pm, SCI 396. Sponsor: Mathematics. Info: x3148.

lecture. "Deliberation in Deeply Divided Societies: The Case of Kosovo." Speaker: Christiane Lemke, European political science, University of Hannover, Germany. 4:30 pm, PNE Atrium. Sponsors: German and political science. Info: x2584.

cws workshop. "Interviews." 4:30 pm, GRH 428. Info: x2356.

senate meeting. 6 pm, Academic Council Room, Green Hall, 4th floor. Info: sanand@wellesley.edu.

esl tutoring. 6-8 pm, PLTC small conference room. By appointment. Info: x2480.

tuesday october 2

japanese table. 12:30 pm, Tower private dining hall. Sponsor: Japan Club. Info: JapanClubmail@wellesley.edu.

french table. 12:30 pm, Bates dining room. Sponsor: French. Info: x2413.

tennis vs. Babson. 4 pm, Sports Center. Info: x2900.

field hockey vs. Clark. 4 pm, Sports Center. Info: x2900.

cws workshop. "Marketing Your International Experience, Part 2." 4:30 pm, GRH 441. Sponsors: CWS, International Studies. Info, reservations: jthomass@wellesley.edu.

panel discussion. "I Say Medieval, You Say Renaissance, Let's Call the Whole Thing Off!" 5:30 pm, FND 120. Sponsor: English. Info: x2575.

meeting. "Meditation." 7 pm. (See 10/1 listing.)

wednesday october 3

chinese table. Noon, Davis living room. Sponsor: Chinese Students' Association. Info: CSAmail@wellesley.edu.

german table. 12:30 pm, Tower private dining room. Sponsor: German. Info: x2584.

cws info session. "Management Basics." 12:30 pm, LWC 104. Info: x2356.

concert. Performer: Stephen Drury, pianist. 12:30 pm, Jewett Auditorium. Sponsor: Music. Info: x2028.

panel discussion. "How the World has Changed Since 9/11." 12:30-1:30 pm, PNE Atrium. Sponsor: CPLA. Info: CPLAmail@wellesley.edu.

clothes cupboard rummage sale. 1-8 pm, Alumnae

save the date!

10/11: "The Crystalline Organization of the Visual Cortex." Speaker: Nobel Prize laureate David Hubel. 5 pm, Science Center 277. Info: x3048.

10/13: Music Department Concert. Geri Allen. 8 pm, Jewett Auditorium. Info: x2028.

10/12-14: Wellesley October Weekend/Family and Friends Weekend 2007. Sponsor: Student Activities. Info: x2672.

10/14-15: Fall Open Campus. Sponsor: Admission. Info: x3291.

10/17: *The Ritchie Boys*. Documentary with introduction by Ritchie Boy Hans Loeser. 7:30 pm, Collins Cinema. Sponsor: History. Info: x2605.

10/19: "Bridging the Cultural Divide." Stand-up comic Bill Santiago. 7-9 pm, Jewett Auditorium. Sponsor: Mezcla. Info: Mezclamail@wellesley.edu.

10/24: Campus Sustainability Day Webcast. Noon-1:30 pm, Collins Cinema. Sponsor: President's Office. Info: x2239.

Hall. Sponsor: Alumnae Association. Info: x2310 or 617-997-7942.

info session. "Study Abroad in Japan." 4-5:30 pm, PNE Atrium. Sponsor: East Asian Languages and Literatures, Japanese program. Info: x3226.

film screenings. "Gender, Body, Performance: An Evening of Films by Cheryl Furjanic (*A Good Uplift*, *Bar Talk*, and *Sync or Swim*)." 5:30-8:30 pm, Collins Cinema. Sponsor: Davis Museum and Cultural Center. Info: x2034.

gathering. Unitarian Universalist worship circle. 6 pm, interim chapel, 2nd floor, Schneider. Info: x3484.

intramural kickball. 6-7:30 pm, PE/Rec. Field. Sponsor: Athletics. Info: x2016.

cws workshop. "Interviews." 12:30 pm, GRH 130. Info: x2356.

intramural basketball. 8-9:30 pm, multi-purpose gym. Sponsor: Athletics. Info: x2016.

thursday october 4

clothes cupboard rummage sale. 10 am-5 pm, 6-9 pm, Alumnae Hall. Sponsor: Alumnae Association. Info: x2310 or 617-997-7942.

meeting. "Meditation." (See 10/1 listing.)

spanish table. 12:30 pm, Tower private dining hall. Info: x3571.

lecture/poetry reading. Speaker: Rachel Tzvia Back, Israeli poet. 4:30 pm, College Club. Sponsor: Hillel. Info: x2687. (See story, page 4.)

cws info session. "Columbia Law School." 4:30 pm, PNE 351. Info: x2356.

lecture. "Brain and Visual Perception." Speaker: David Hubel, neurobiology emeritus, John Enders University. Reception, 4:30 pm, Sage Lounge; lecture, 5 pm, SCI 277. Sponsor: Neuroscience. Info: x3048. (See story, page 1.)

esl tutoring. (See 10/1 listing).

info session. "Travel Talk Series. The Road Less Traveled: Experiential Programs in Nontraditional Destinations." 7-8 pm, LWC 210. Sponsor: International Studies. Info: x2320.

meeting. Interservice Christian Fellowship. 7-9 pm, Wang 415. Info: x4335.

friday october 5

bible study. 7-11:30 pm, Wang 415. Sponsor: Asian Baptist Students Koinonia. Info: mkhoo@wellesley.edu.

saturday october 6

field hockey vs. Kenyon. Noon, Sports Center. Info: x2900.

soccer vs. Wheaton. 1 pm, Sports Center. Info: x2900.

sunday october 7

gathering. Darshana. 11 am, meditation room, Schneider. Sponsor: Hindu Students. Info: x2794.

field hockey vs. Smith. 1 pm, Sports Center. Info: x2900.

monday october 8

no classes. Fall break.

ongoing

exhibition. *Transfigured Texts*. Special Collections, 4th floor, Clapp Library. Through 11/07. Info: x2129.

exhibition. U.S. Constitution Display. Celebrate U.S. Constitution Week by learning how the Constitution was conceived, debated and passed. Read about relevant Supreme Court decisions and answer Constitution trivia questions. Clapp Library, 2nd floor. Through 10/07. Info: x3426.

exhibition. *Patterns in Nature*. Multi-media art works by Judith Greenberg. Greenhouse Visitor Center. Sponsor: Friends of Horticulture. Through 11/15. Info: x3094.

exhibition. *Don't Look: Contemporary Drawings from an Alumna's Collection*. Davis Museum and Cultural Center. Through 12/9. Info: x2034.

exhibition. *Global Feminisms*. Davis Museum and Cultural Center. Through 12/9. Info: x2034.

don't miss ...

israeli poet to share works about identity, violence and motherhood

Rachel Tzvia Back—a poet, translator and literature professor—was born in Buffalo, N.Y., into a Zionist, half-Israeli family. For the last 27 years, she has lived in Israel with what she calls a “loving, but increasingly troubled, Israeli-identified sensibility.” Back will speak and read from her latest work during “On Ruins & Return: The Personal and Political, Israel 2007” Thursday, Oct. 4, at 4:30 pm at the Wellesley College Club.

Her latest collection, *On Ruins & Return: Poems 1999-2005*, tracks the cycle of violence marking the lives of Palestinians and Israelis in the last *intifadah*, or uprising. For Back, violence and war are what she knows, and what she is moved to write about. Back admits that understanding herself as a political poet was a slow process. She didn't want to sacrifice the quality of the craft.

“I have come to understand that as poets we can only testify to that which is ours, authentically and completely—and the politically charged, ever-violent and bloody landscape of Israel, and by extension Palestine, is mine, so I write about it,” Back said.

In today's world, violence done to others is commonplace and images of that violence splattered across televisions and newspapers no longer touch us, Back said. Americans, Israelis and Palestinians alike have become desensitized.

“I think that one of the ‘jobs’ of the poet is to un-numb—to touch the reader, to open up an avenue of compassion,” Back said. “If I can accomplish that in my poetry, I believe I have accomplished something of significance.”

Back's poems and essays have been published widely, as have her translations of Hebrew poetry. Her translation, *Lea Goldberg: Selected Poetry and Drama*, is regarded as the most significant edition of Goldberg's poetry in English. Her other books in English are *Azimuth* and *The Buffalo Poems*. For more information, call x2687.



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