Henry Lester is Professor of the Month

SANDHYA CHANDRASEKARAN
News Editor

To most members of the Caltech community, Henry Lester, Bren Professor of Biology, needs little introduction. A pioneer in the fields of neuroscience and disease, Lester has devoted his research career to understanding the biophysical basis of the nicotinic acetylcholine receptor, a fundamental player in nervous system signaling.

However, his knack for creative innovation has not been sequestered to this arena of his career. In recent years, Lester has co-taught Bi150: An Introduction to Neuroscience with Professor Ralph Adolphs. While the course had been around at Caltech for quite some time (“from the middle of the 19th century”, according to Lester), Lester, since joining the teaching force in 2008, has been able to impart some of his own ideas to shape the course into what it currently is.

Lester explains, “There has been a progression of Caltech neuroscience faculty who teach the course. Before I taught the course, (Professors) Kai Zinn and Mary Kennedy taught it. Ralph and I recently took over, and we will probably continue to teach it for a while. We enjoy teaching with each other, and we enjoy the students. But while we have the subject matter pretty much down, the field changes ultra rapidly, so we change it every year.”

The course has also been revamped in aspects beyond pure subject matter. Lester remarks, “Introducing quizzes has been a great success; everybody likes them, especially the students [because of the immediate feedback]. Problem sets are always there, as are exams. Online posting of videos has been a success. In-class interactions are also important; sections have been incredibly important. We have been blessed with every year, four terrific TAs who always get great scores, who are experts at and enjoy teaching undergrads.”

This past term, Lester put his instructional skills to the test by teaching Caltech’s first online Coursea course. He came upon the opportunity early last summer, when Vice Provost of Instruction Melany Hunt approached him. He elaborates, “She has been in charge of Instructional Development since 2008. I came upon the opportunity early last summer, when Melany Hunt approached me. She has been in charge of contacting Coursea, and called me on June 22, a fateful day in my life, as it really did transform the next seven or eight months.”

He goes on, “This intrigued me for three reasons. The first is that… I decided that one way to launch my relatively new ideas out to the world, I have a novel idea of how drugs work called the ‘inside-out’ pharmacology, and it struck me that I could be professionally responsible and still have an impact by mentioning a little bit of this idea without overemphasizing it. ‘I hoped the students would go back to their own professors and say, ‘What is this inside-out idea Lester has?’ And the professor would say, ‘Well I know Lester, and he’s okay, but this inside-out stuff…I better go read his papers!’”

Fostering discussions has been a primary aim for Lester, both inside and beyond the physical classroom boundaries.

Lester further describes his motivation, “Another reason is that Caltech has always been there for me with the resources that I needed to get a new research program going, talk with alumni, and perform other important parts of my job. So when Caltech asked, I thought I would give Caltech the best and most popular course I could. And lastly… any funding that comes back to my research program, however small, has to be better than what I’m doing at the moment (chuckles).”

Continued on Page 4

News briefs from around the globe
Helping readers burst out of the Caltech bubble

Need to know < 100 words about the world this week – topics sorted from good to bad by The Tech Eds

New S. Korean president 1st female president Park Geun-hye is daughter of former pres

No right to hide arms 10th ct. court holds 2nd Amend doesn’t guarantee right to conceal

Cyrus Cylinder in US 26,000-year-old icon tours US, symbol of religious tolerance

Raul Castro to retire 5 decades after taking power, Castro will leave reign to Diaz-Canel

Gold stolen $25,000 reward offered for gold taken from mining museum

Acapulco murder 59-year-old Belgian killed during vacation amid year of homicides

Palestinian hunger strike 11 prisoners on open-ended fast after suspicious death of inmate
Food with Mannion!

Do you like eating food?
How about free food at nice restaurants?
Ever want to tell the world exactly what you think of said food?
The Tech will be beginning a new column to chronicle the foodie experiences of new writers every other week...The Catch: They'll be going head-to-head with Tom Mannion who will be reviewing the same restaurant. If you have ever thought you were more of a gourmand than our resident master chef, now's your chance to prove it!
Email us for a spot on the list at tech@caltech.edu

get paid up to $30

ASCIT Minutes

Minutes for February 18, 2013. Taken by Allika Walvekar

Officers present: Diego Caporale, Matt Fu and Zach Rivkin in lieu of Christian Rivas, Pushpa Neppala, Mario Zubia, Michelle Tang, Allika Walvekar, Puikie Cheng

Guests: Connor Coley, Representatives from Dabney House

Call to Order: 9:12 pm

President's Report (Diego):
SFC: After the Honor Code discussion, we would like to encourage discussion amongst the students, as well as with the faculty about the honor code, and more specifically about how it is implemented. If anyone has suggestions on how to involve the most diverse group of students possible, please let us know by emailing me (pres@donut.caltech.edu).

DevTeam: The new devteam has been appointed: Eric Pelz, Daniel Kong, Mike Qian, and Connor Coley.

Officer's Reports:

V.P. of Academic Affairs (ARC Chair: Pushpa):
SFC: hosted 130-150 people.

V.P. of Non-Academic Affairs (IHC Chair: Matt Fu, Zach Rivkin):
Paper flyers on the wall: The IHC is working with safety to come up with a solution for allowing paper flyers on the wall.

New Leadership: James Chang (Avery). Ben Grabowski (Page) Prastuti Singh (Ricketts)

Director of Operations (Mario):
Club Update: Club steering committee met again. If your club has not been approved, contact Tom Mannion or Denise Okamoto to see what needs to be done with your club application.

Treasurer (Puikie):
Reminder that the take-a-prof-to-lunch program is still active; contact Puikie if you and up to 3 others want to have an informal meal with a professor you’d want to know better. Details on the donut website.

Social Director (Michelle):
Be A Kid Again March 1st: Puppies, jolly jumps, girl scout cookies, face painting

Secretary (Allika):
If anyone has any questions or concerns about a section of the minutes please email the appropriate officer. We are happy to answer any questions.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:15
In any case, no matter how difficult school may be, I do not believe that it’s impossible to find one thing to smile about.
Professor Henry Lester gets teaching honor

Continued from Page 1

I remember one incident when I was at Red Door...and there were a bunch of students moving around excitedly. I asked them what they were doing and they said, "We're trying to microwave a grape!...that's the sort of energy and enthusiasm you get from the students; to get that energy and enthusiasm, you have to reciprocate." - Henry Lester

He reflects that the experience has been a grand success overall: "It has been rewarding in terms of people all over the world, in terms of the feedback, and also in terms of the criticism. There is an entire forum on Coursera, which I started, devoted to "Finding Henry Lester's Errors," and it turns out that there is somebody in the world who is an expert, more of an expert than I am, on every topic in this course, (with the possible exception of the biophysics of the nicotinic acetylcholine receptor). And so, it has been gratifying to get those corrections, which survived undetected at Caltech for years." Interestingly, the Coursera course is quite similar to the Bio course Lester taught for seven years upon the turn of the millennium. He describes, "It was really a stealth introduction to the disease neurosciences. I started off with biophysics and chemistry and with how drugs work on the nervous system, and then went on to teach about addiction, I would have to go into gene activation, which gave me an excuse to teach about the genome and all the molecular biology you have to teach when teaching a freshman level course. "To keep these freshmen interested, I had to a bunch of stunts and it's fun to have something else to do outside of work. It's easier to separate when I should do things: work when I work and basketball when it's time for that.

When asked about how he manages his time, Lester claims, "The quanta of achievement of a professor are the 'good paper published' and the 'good career launched.' At this very stressful time in the world's history, I find it crucial to encourage and empower students at Caltech with the sense that there are interesting questions out there. That's why I devote a lot of effort to students. There are wonderful snippets of life on the Caltech campus, and in industry, while you are continually working with people with whom you are growing old, on a university campus, you are constantly energized by young people. I remember one incident when I was at Red Door, where I spend a fair amount of time, and there were a bunch of students moving around excitedly. I asked them what they were doing and they said, 'We're trying to microwave a grape! We want to see what happens!' I couldn't imagine this going on at an industrial cafeteria, and that's how that course got started.

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**Silver Linings Playbook**

sincere and uplifting

MALVIKA VERMA
Staff Writer

***WARNING! THIS REVIEW MAY CONTAIN SPOILERS***

With Oscar-day on Sunday, I rushed to watch all the films nominated for Best Picture. I was not successful (I have 2 more to go), but I did get around to seeing an extremely uplifting film *Silver Linings Playbook*.

It’s a gritty rom-com about second chances for Pat Solitano (Bradley Cooper) and Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence).

Pat Solitano, who has bipolar disorder, comes home to his parents after spending eight months in a mental health facility. He is determined to get back everything he has lost – his wife Nikki, his job, and his house. It’s an uphill battle all the way when Pat learns that Nikki no longer lives in the area and has a restraining order against him.

Pat’s father (Robert De Niro) has lost his job and is now gambling to make money for a restaurant. His parents are very supportive, though, and bond with him while watching the Philadelphia Eagles on TV.

Pat explains the events leading up to his hospitalization to his therapist Dr. Patel (Anupam Kher).

He had found his wife Nikki in the shower with another man with his wedding song, Stevie Wonder’s “My Cherie Amour,” playing. He had almost killed the other man.

Pat’s friend Ronnie tries to help Pat return to socializing.

At Ronnie’s house, he meets Tiffany, a widow who just lost her job.

They bond over medications for their mental health problems. They strike a deal – Tiffany will communicate with Nikki for Pat, while Pat must be her dance partner in a competition.

The film explores this unusual bond between two “crazy people” and how they both help each other grow as a silver lining appears for both Tiffany and Pat.

The acting from the entire cast is outstanding, with notable performances by Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence in unusual roles.

My favorite scene was when Pat throws out “A Farewell to Arms” in the middle of the night, yelling at Ernest Hemingway for a terribly unhappy final scene in the book.

He wakes up his parents and then the entire neighborhood as he thinks the world is hard enough without unhappy endings. It’s a funny (he breaks a window) but sad scene, since we realize that Pat is really not ok.

He is having trouble coping with the unhappy moments in his life. But throughout the film, Pat says, “if you stay positive, you have a shot at a silver lining.”

Please watch this movie if you are feeling down. It has really inspired me to find a “silver lining.”

Rating: 8/10

Note: this movie is rated R for language and some sexual content/nudity.
Caltech Public Events is now hiring student ushers. $15 per hour to work concerts, performances, lectures, films and parties.

No experience needed, no hard labor, flexible schedules.

*Requirements: Caltech student, Positive attitude, Friendly personality

To apply email Adam Jacobo (ajacobo@caltech.edu) or call (626)395-5907

For info on Caltech Public Events visit: www.caltech.edu/content/public-events
Caltech women’s tennis team continues strong start with another win; sports editor goes for ‘longest article title’ record, probably gets it; someone, please take my job

The California Tech
February 25, 2013

weekly scoreboard

MEN’S TENNIS
VS. ARIZONA CHRISTIAN
L, 6-3 FINAL

WOMEN’S TENNIS
VS. ARIZONA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
W, 7-2 FINAL

WOMEN’S TENNIS
VS. BIOLA
W, 7-2 FINAL

BASEBALL
AT REDLANDS
L, 14-4 FINAL - 7 INNINGS

BASEBALL
AT REDLANDS
L, 8-1 FINAL

Gocaltech.com

PASADENA, CA - The Caltech women’s tennis team completed a perfect weekend by topping Arizona Christian 7-2 on Sunday afternoon.

Less than 24 hours ago, the Beavers posted a win over Biola in helping Caltech start the season 3-0. It’s the best start for the program since the 2000 season when they won their first four matches.

On Sunday the Beavers started their team victory by winning four of the six singles matches in straight sets. Monica Li and Rebekah Kitto combined to drop just one game at No. 1 and No. 2 singles respectively.

Stephanie Kwan posted a 7-5, 6-1 win during the No. 3 singles match while Jessica Yeung dropped just one game at the No. 5 singles slot.

Heading into doubles play and needing just one point to clinch the match, the Beavers swept the three doubles match in aiding in their team win.

Caltech heads into SCIAC play next with a match against Cal Lutheran on Friday afternoon in Thousand Oaks, CA.

Tennis Match Results
Caltech vs Arizona Christian
02/24/2013 at Pasadena, CA (Braun Tennis Courts)
Caltech 7, Arizona Christian 2

Singles competition
1. Monica Li (CALTECH) def. TRINK, Jessica (ACU) 6-0, 6-0
2. Rebekah Kitto (CALTECH) def. LOPEZ, Brianna (ACU) 6-0, 6-1
3. Stephanie Kwan (CALTECH) def. SOUVIGNE, Lea (ACU) 7-5, 6-1
4. ANAYA, Julia (ACU) def. Michelle Lee (CALTECH) 2-6, 6-4, 6-0
5. Jessica Yeung (CALTECH) def. ALS, Taylor (ACU) 6-1, 6-0
6. LEVIN, Tiffany (ACU) def. Michelle Tang (CALTECH) 6-4, 6-1

Doubles competition
1. Rebekah Kitto/Monica Li (CALTECH) def. TRINK, Jessica/ SOUVIGNE, Lea (ACU) 8-1
2. Michelle Lee/Valerie Pietrasz (CALTECH) def. LEVIN, Tiffany/ LOPEZ, Brianna (ACU) 8-5
3. Jessica Yeung/Stephanie Kwan (CALTECH) def. ALS, Taylor/ ANAYA, Julia (ACU) 8-5
Match Notes:
Caltech 3-0
Arizona Christian 5-6
Official: N/A T-3:21 A-37
Acquired Taste

by Dr. Z

DO THE DEV

EY, GIMME SOMMA THAT MOUNTAIN DEX

GOLLY, WE'RE FLAT OUT! BUT HERE TRY THIS NEW FAYGO!

BY PAUL SENDORREX

SAY, THIS STUFF'S PRETTY GOOD!

For more photos, videos, and archives of previous issues, check out the Tech website!

tech.caltech.edu