

# BIORHYTHMS

## MONTHLY

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### Old News

#### *Insect Study Break*

As Borat would say, the study break was a “*great success!*” Congratulations to all of you who successfully devoured the giant chocolate covered oven-roasted crickets. Ummmmm...yummy!

### New News

#### *Library Survey*

WE NEED MORE SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS!!!! Please take the time to complete the LibQUAL+ Grinnell College Library Survey and let the library know that we need access to more scientific journals. The survey has already been sent to you via email however it can also be accessed through the libraries webpage at [[www.lib.grinnell.edu](http://www.lib.grinnell.edu)].

#### *Open Invitation to Biology Students*

Join us for our BioSEPC meetings on the second Monday of every month in SCI 1021 at 7pm. We would love to hear your input. Snacks will be available!

#### *Professor Humphreys Returns*

Yes, that right, Professor Humphreys will remain at Grinnell for another year! It is not clear yet what upper level class she will be teaching, but either way it is great to have her back!

#### *Biology T-Shirts*

If you are interested in buying one please email us at [BioSEPC@grinnell.edu](mailto:BioSEPC@grinnell.edu) We will also have a sign up sheet available on the BioSEPC bulletin board.



## Upcoming Events

### *Upcoming Seminars*

- Friday, March 2     Greg Whitworth, Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of California, San Francisco. "Rapid, Transcript-Specific Changes in pre-mRNA Splicing in Response to Changing Environments"
- Friday, March 9     Wallace B. Thoreson, Ph.D., Professor of Ophthalmology, University of Nebraska Medical Center. "Transmission of vision across the first retinal synapse from rods and cones."
- Friday, March 16    Nayantara Watsa '07, Adityarup Chakravorty '07

### *Study Break*

A global warming study break will be held sometime in April to coincide with the global warming awareness week sponsored by the college. Please make sure to keep an eye out for more details.

### *Ideas?*

If you have ideas for how your BioSEPC can improve BioRhythms, please send them to us at [BioSEPC].

## Alumni Insider

By spring of junior year, the Grinnell grind of tests and constant assignments had burned me out. As much as I loved learning about biology, I decided I could not go straight into graduate school after graduation. However, I did not want to leave the bench during this break, and was wondering how I could stay *in science*. Around this time, I visited a few labs at the University of Iowa on a field trip with Leslie Gregg-Jolly's Molecular Biology class. It was this trip that introduced me to the exciting research interests of Iowa professors and the opportunity of working as a research assistant before going to graduate school.

RAs range in age from recent college graduates between degrees to older folks who may or may not have a Master's degree. RAs help the principal investigator with their projects and often have projects of their own. Their responsibility often extends beyond the bench. I work in a small lab, so my job blends three positions, lab technician, researcher, and lab manager. Most of my time is spent working on my project or finishing an experiment for my PI when she gets too busy. At times though, I have to make media, maintain common stock solutions, and wash dishes. Additionally, I have the task of making sure the daily operations of the lab run smoothly, ensuring all of our supplies are in stock, and offering trouble-shooting advice on protocols to students.

To get my job, I just read through faculty web pages at some Midwestern universities where I could see myself. Then, I began emailing my CV and a short note to PIs who struck my interest, stating my interest in working in their lab and asking if they needed or had room for a research assistant. Many said they were currently full; however, they passed my CV on to new faculty members, who e-mailed me about positions in their labs. Most were impressed with the amount of research I had completed (summer research at Grinnell and a MAP with Leslie) and various techniques I had learned. To get the job, I completed a short interview process, where the PIs asked me a bit about my research and background and then told me about their research projects and intended directions. The whole process was relatively easy and currently I'm excited about the results on my own project. I'm looking at the scaffolding of proteins at cell-cell junctions and am studying protein interactions that have yet to be completely nailed down.

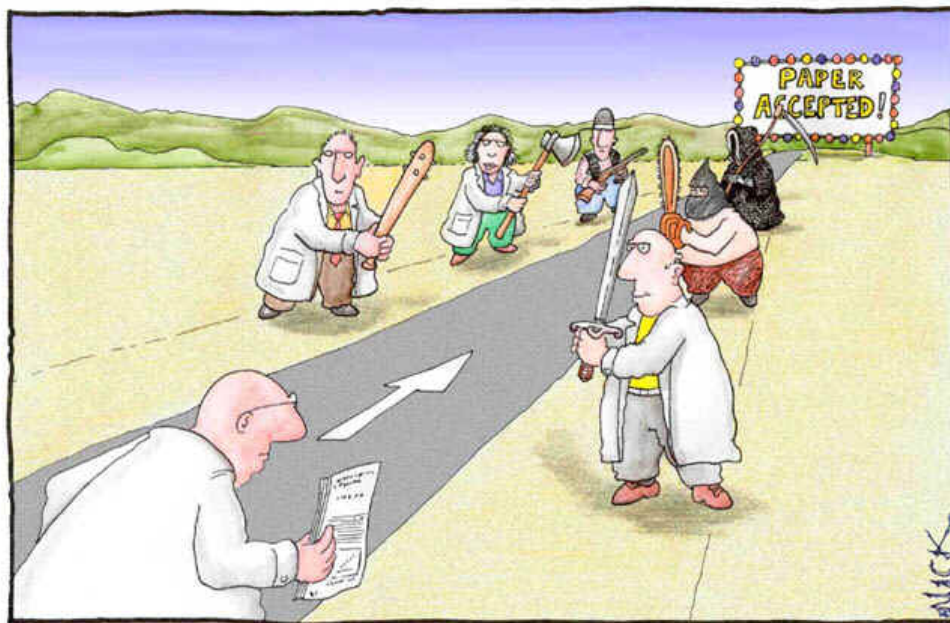
After working in Kris DeMali's lab so far, I have found that many new molecular biology and biochemistry techniques that I thought would be difficult, are actually quite simple. They just build off the ones we learned at Grinnell. I would recommend an RA position for those who are interested in lab work, but are not

completely sold on graduate school and also for people like myself who felt they need a break between undergraduate and graduate school. Working as an RA has also given me an idea about what I like and dislike in graduate programs and questions I will ask of graduate students when I go on my interview weekends. However, if you do not enjoy being in a lab for 40+ hours a week doing experiments, this is probably not the option for you.

Feel free to email me with any questions about working as an RA.

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### Biology Comic of the Month



Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as 'quite an improvement.'

### Ali's Random Fact of the Month

95% of all animal species on the earth are insects! ([www.sciensational.com](http://www.sciensational.com))