

Christmas 1980

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

1980 marks the year of the solidification of Wesleyan's biopsychology program. Harry Sinnamon was granted tenure! Now, the two of us are free to plan the best such program anywhere, with time and resources at our disposal. Perhaps the most evident result of this so far is our sharing the thesis support for Jon Mink. Jon is recording from single neurons in the basal forebrain while a rat (male) runs on a wheel towards an estrous female rat, and he finds some neurons that are specific to this behavior and not running for water reward or escape. Bob Russo and Robert Castillo are assisting him in the project as are Harry and I. This year there was even a collaboration between lab groups from our two methods courses; my group was looking at running wheel approach and his group was doing brain lesions, so they combined their skills.

I set out this past year to combine science and politics to a greater extent and was very pleased with the results. We held symposia at the Behavior Genetics Association and the International Society for Research on Aggression on the ethical consequences of these sciences. They were very provocative and useful. Burr Eichelman and I of the ISRA (Aggression) ethics committee obtained a two year grant from NSF to pursue this topic on an international basis. And now I have been talking with the commissioner of the newly formed United Nations University for Peace about getting involved in their curriculum, etc. Apropos of this is a chapter I wrote for a book to come out this year. The chapter is entitled The Use and Misuse of Aggression Research and it will appear in A Multidisciplinary Approach to Aggression Research by P.F. Brain and D. Benton, Elsevier. I expect this type of involvement to grow in the future as I am concerned that we are, as scientists, responsible for the ultimate use to which our discoveries are put.

My theory of motivational systems is getting considerable publicity. It was first published in detail last year in The Behavioral and Brain Sciences, the peer commentary journal where it received a great deal of comment and interest. An even longer and more detailed paper reviewing ethological and experimental findings is due to appear this month in Aggressive Behavior. A detailed account of the effects of hormones upon motivational systems will appear next year in a book edited by B.B. Svare entitled Hormones and Aggressive Behavior, to be published by Plenum Press. And an extension of the theory to primates will appear in the journal Aggressive Behavior next year. Much of my work in the past two years has concerned experimental tests of the theory. One paper is in press by Jon Mink, entitled Why Offense is Reduced when Rats are Tested in a Strange Cage (Physiology and Behavior). Another paper by Jeanette Talavera concerns the effect of estrous hormones upon the system. And the experiment we ran (very successfully) in Psych 207 this year (the methods course) concerned the nature of the motivational mechanism for patrol/markings. Jon Mink's thesis can be seen, among other things, as a search for neurons of the patrol/markings motivational mechanism. And next summer I am scheduled to do research in Holland with Jaap Koolhaas in search of the neurons of the offense motivational mechanism.

Other research continues at the usual slow pace of science. The sex research was carried on this year in an excellent thesis by Leslie Kassman, and we will put it together for publication with Alice Gold in the coming year. The research on brain size determinants will finally get a full publication, tentatively in the American Journal of Physiology, with Jon Mink as first author and Rob Blumenshine as second. And the behavior genetics research putters along, never quite reaching a conclusion. Finally, this last year I published an abstract of some of the behavior genetics work done by Andy Eichenfield and Jane Witten Surgeon.

It's been a good year at Wesleyan in my courses. As mentioned above the 207 course did an outstanding piece of research on patrol/markings. The evolution of the brain course did the best brain

drawings ever, using real brains rather than books this time. The 207 research was directed by Sunhi Lee who had been an apprentice of Jeanette Talavera last year. Excellent theses have been produced. In addition to those of Jon Mink and Leslie Kassman mentioaed above, Chris Logan produced a thesis last spring on The Popularisation of Aggression Research and Maz Burbank did a thesis entitled The Development of a Methodology for Studying the Social Interactions of Children, in which we used television analysis of motor patterns to study children in a daycare situation. I missed seeing many of you at Neuroscience this year because I was laid up from a bad car crash. By now I am almost fully recovered. Among the papers presented at Neuroscience were those of Mike Edwards, Mike Lehman, Danny Simons, Jon Mink and Walter Severini. John Zook, where were you this year? But perhaps the biggest news of all from ex-Wes students is the paper last month in Science with Michael Lehman as first author. We're all proud of it. Mike, it's an elegant paper!

I was pleased to hear from or about a number of you this year, and will pass on the news. Danny Simons took a job as Assistant Professor of Physiology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He, Susan, Billy and Scott were due to move to Pittsburgh in July. Steve Lum was finishing his residency program this spring and moving on to a two year fellowship in endocrinology at Los Angeles County Hospital. He and Gwyned have a two year old boy now. The last news from Rob Blumenschine was a postcard from India where he was doing anthropological fieldwork before returning to the Anthropology Department at Berkeley. I almost got to see Jane Witten Surgeon when I was in Chicago this summer, but we were not able to able to make the connection; she is now in the neurobiology program and reports that her first year went vary well. She has received a training grant for the next three years and is considering doing work on pharmacology in invertebrate systems. A nice card case from Rich and Paula Ladd in Arizona, where he says they are "always busy discovering and dealing with the plants, animals and people." I wrote a note this year to Wayne Barber who is working at a hospital of tha Sacoton Indian Health Service in Arizona and suggested that he look up Stanley Benally. Did you ever get together? Maribeth Champoux began working this year in the Department of Psychology at Wisconsin in the primate research facility, a position that she has been looking for since I first met her as a student. Joe Wright is very pleased with New Jersey Medical College where he says that the neuroscience background gave him a headstart. Zane Baily and Kevin Smyley, who were students in the very first methods course, were back for alumni reunions last spring and it was good to see them and to get back in touch. Kevin is a lawyer in New York. John Kanki took a job this year in the laboratory of Thorsten Wiesel at Harvard Medical School, Since Mike Edwards is now down the road at MIT, also working on the development of visual connections, you two should get together sometime.

The coming year should be interesting - as always. In the spring I am at Wesleyan's Center for Humanities where I will give a course on the history of warfare. I've gotten tired of people claiming that warfare is due to "war genes" or "war paths in the brain" and so I have set out, with the help of a superb student, Danny Rosenblatt, to trace the history of warfare as an institution. In fact, it begins to look like a case can be said for it as the most critical institution of male supremacy since feaales are traditionally excluded from possession and use of weapons, presence at war councils and participation in the initiation of young warriors. In the summer as mentioned above, I will be guest scientist in Holland. And next year I have been awarded a Fulbright nomination to be visiting professor of physiological psychology at Moscow State University. Keep your fingers crossed that world tensions do not worsen and jeopardize the exchange.

I guess I'll send you next year's letter from Moscow, That will be a new twist! In the meantime drop your old scientific father a line or two,

Peace, David

