



InCognito

For your monthly study-related needs and feeds.

January 2014

Suggestions, feedback or comments? Let us know at newsletter.cognito@gmail.com.

A note from the newsletter committee

Dear Cognito members,
To begin with, the newsletter committee wishes you all a brilliant 2014! Hopefully with many beautiful and entertaining moments, loads of inspiring experiences and ideally also some study related successes.

A new year and a new committee ask for a new newsletter as well. Therefore, we are proud to present you this completely renewed issue. From now on the newsletter will carry the name 'InCognito'. And despite the new name, lay out and columns, the usual essential dose of distraction will remain unchanged.

Something else that is unmistakably connected to new year, is the tradition of New Year's resolutions. You may want to quit smoking, lose weight, or improve study performance, but the newsletter committee has a

New Year's resolution of its own: providing you with a fantastic yearbook!

We aim to create a yearbook with pictures and stories on the cognito events and other whereabouts of our first year cognito members. In order to include pictures, anecdotes, quotes and rumors which represent the complete cohort, we try to use information and photos from as many sources as possible.

To help us with this, we would like to ask you all to be our ears and eyes during the upcoming months. Pictures, quotes, stories and suggestions are more than welcome! For these and other purposes you can reach us via the email address:

newsletter.cognito@gmail.com.

Cheers,
Annemarie

Message from the Cognito board

Every year, in September, we at Cognito start afresh: A new board, a new set of committee members, a whole new year of people; a set of eager minds that have left their universities, their cities or even their countries to congregate in Amsterdam and learn about the brain and all its (confusing) splendor.

I've been lucky (and slow) enough to have experienced it once, and seen it happen twice now. Each year I marvel at how quickly we go from awkwardly taking a group picture in the courtyard of D, to building a canon: a concurrent cacophony of shared suffering from sitting exams and a supply of stories from dreadful dramas and drunken gezelligheid.

I'm not sure how your previous studies were, but here in Amsterdam, my bachelor was huge: a mass of frowning

faces that are more often than not only seen in giant exam halls, cursing the fact they never came to class; there were no post-STICs drinks to be had.

So although the holiday of Thanksgiving has long passed us, although many are back from their Christmases and maybe still recovering from that blowout New Year's Eve party, I'd like to take a moment in this new year, and give thanks to all of you. Thank you for opening your hearts and your homes to virtual strangers, thank you for making it fun and worthwhile to organise things, and thank you for having fun and making a study feel like a family away from family. May the year 2014 have more of the same.

With love,
Andrew

ABC Journal

The ABC Journal committee wishes you a happy and significant new year!

The first issue of the ABC Journal is almost ready for publication, which means you can soon see for yourself what kind of interesting internships have been done by fellow students of our master programme. It also means that we are now accepting internship reports for the second issue; we have already received some, but there is room for more! Please remember that the five best reports will undergo the full peer-review process and will be published in full, and all other reports will be published as an abstract (you may of course opt for an abstract in the first place). For more information (including submission guidelines and deadlines) you can send an e-mail to abcjournal.csc@gmail.com, go to our [Facebook page](#), or check out the [website](#).

We wish everyone good luck with their first and second internships!

All the best,
The ABC Journal committee



Flickr - Nigel Howe

AGENDA

Drinks @ Crea

Every Tuesday, 21:00-late

The Brainstorm Sessions

13 December - 19 January,
De Brakke Grond ([website](#))

Series of events organised by artist Frank Theys and psychiatrist Damiaan Denys examining the brain from an artistic and scientific point of view.

ABC Night of the Brain

10 January, 20:30-2:00,
De Brakke Grond ([website](#))

Part of The Brainstorm Sessions. Explore how the brain is influenced by social interaction and society through lectures, debates, gaming and dancing. Dick Swaab will launch The European Year of the Brain 2014.

Tickets €12 / Online €10

Symposium Neuroscience Campus Amsterdam

24 January, 12:15-18:00,
VU *W&N building Q105*

Conference on the interplay between science and business and the effects of recent government policy changes. Experts in the field will provide lectures, followed by discussion.

BètaBreak: How Science Works (DUTCH)

29 January, 12:00-13:00,
FNWI Central Hall ([website](#))

Discussion on the difference between the public appearance and the messy reality of science. Guest speakers are Frank Miedema, founder of *Science in Transition*, Rosanne Hertzberger, PhD candidate at SILS and columnist at NRC Handelsblad, and Joost Reek, director of HIMS, the FNWI chemistry institute.

ABC lecture: Prof. Simon Fisher

4 February, 16:00-17:00,
REC M 1.02 ([website](#))

Lecture by Prof. Simon Fisher on decoding the genetics of speech and language.

Incognobel Prize

The second Incognobel prize is in the category media and entertainment, both very important ways to share science stories. The nominee is Martine Cederhout. She definitely isn't afraid to talk to people, and knows how to share her excitement. This story, with an epic introduction, is no exception so let's hear it.

On an ordinary Wednesday during an ordinary week in December something extraordinary took place in the central hall of the Science Park. People from all over the Science Park crept out of their holes to gather around the elevators in the central hall, they even crowded the stairs and along the balconies of upper floors to see what was happening down there. What took place on this very ordinary December 11th 2013? It was the very first edition of the BètaQuiz: a scientific quiz featuring questions from all kinds of disciplines, and I was the lucky one (of the two) presenting it.

Every month the BètaBreak-committee organises a debate on a hot-topic in the natural sciences. To this end we invite researchers from the UvA or other universities and others with a strong opinion on the topic. The aim of the BètaBreak is to bring the different disciplines in the FNWI [faculty of sciences and mathematics] closer together and consider the broader, societal impact of research in the natural sciences.

We wanted the edition of December, the last one of the year, to be spectacular. That's how we came up with the idea for the Quiz. We approached lecturers with the request to come up with real quiz-questions, preferably concerning recent research, which would be interesting to think about and could be solved using thorough logical reasoning. This resulted in an interesting mix of challenging questions. The participants were representatives of the study associations located at the Science Park, as well as audience members. The lecturers were present to explain the questions and to demonstrate the answers with some cool experiments. To make it even more professional there were two lovely assistants, in glitter-outfit, keeping the scores. There were questions covering all the classical elements. *Earth* was covered in physics questions on sand and how to build a sand castle under water. *Air* was covered in biology questions on the flight behaviour of birds. *Water* was covered with an old-school (but still quite hard) question on electrolysis of water. Even *fire* was covered in another well-known chemistry experiment, dropping sodium in water, which resulted in a loud bang and sparks!

All in all it was an interesting and spectacular morning. The audience was excited and overwhelmingly positive, and

even Folia dedicated a laudatory article to the quiz. For us (the organisers) on the other hand, it was an hour of complete chaos. Almost nothing went as planned: last minute alterations in the questions led to confusions for the participants, the only screen we managed to obtain was not really visible for the audience, and the voting machines for audience participation seemed to be malfunctioning. The last experiment was good fun, which involved dropping an apple from the fourth floor on a little plateau with built-in sensors. The question was to estimate the duration of the drop of the apple. I counted down for the participants to show their answers, after which I heard a loud bang. The apple had dropped already, before someone even bothered to start the timer! Apparently my counting had confused the apple-dropper and we had to bring up another apple and have another go. This time it went well, we got our timing, but the whole plateau fell to pieces. In the end there was one team who had obviously won: the guys from the interdisciplinary studies Bèta-Gamma & Future Planet Studies, of course.

And for the people who could not attend, here's an example of a question from the quiz (because it is so addictive!).

Suppose you just arrived at the airport and have to walk quite a bit, but you can also use a moving walkway at some stretches. You're in a hurry to make it to this conference you want to attend. You are carrying a heavy bag so every once in a while you have to pause to catch your breath. What is the best place to rest in order to get there fastest?

- On the moving walkway
- Does not matter
- Off the moving walkway

I couldn't have told it any better really. The quiz was loads of fun and Martine did a very good job at presenting it; I certainly have high hopes for Martine's future presentations (no pressure). Congratulations!

The right answer, for those wondering, is A. The total amount of time it takes to get out of the airport consists of time walking and time on the walkway. By pausing on the moving walkway, the least time will be wasted, because you're still making progress while pausing.

BIRTHDAYS

Tim Muntslag

16 January

Ayla Kruis

19 January

Marceline Veen

19 January

Elske Straver

22 January

Tessa Jacobs van Goethem

23 January

Ana Vojvodić

29 January

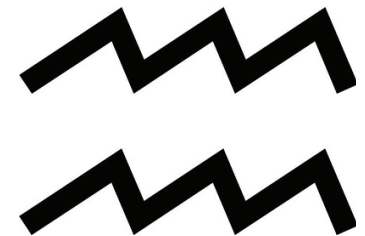
Nelson Mooren

29 January

HOROSCOPE

Aquarius

20 January - 18 February



Oh, ouch! My inner eye sees that the start of 2014 will not be a very good one for you. It might be your birthday soon, but before this is the case you have a lot to go through. First of all you have to get over the fact that you did not win the lottery, again. Also New Years Eve was not as great as you had expected, as always. You should have learned by now not to have great expectations for this evening. After Christmas dinners you certainly have to increase your leptin formation, but since the internship is absorbing all your time and power, this will probably take longer. Worst thing of course, is that you forgot to train your cortex and holidays in combination with a certain amount of alcohol have not done your favourite cells any good. But do not panic, no need to order SSRIs yet, the day of your birth will be your turning point. From that day on, 2014 brings you all the good that you hoped for this year. Your thesis will be perfect; writing seems to be taken over by the SMA and there is a wealth of PhD positions you can choose from! Lucky bastard, having your birthday so early on the year!



Photo by Nelson Mooren. Martine in her natural environment, with the participants and their improvised tables behind her.

Flea market: trash, treasure, grannies, hipsters

Column by Jan Koeleman

Since September 2011, I've lived in one of the shipping containers that have been turned into student housing at the NDSM wharf in Amsterdam Noord. The NDSM wharf used to be the largest shipyard in Amsterdam, something which is still evident from the immense buildings where the ships used to be built. Nowadays, one of these buildings contains the headquarters of MTV Netherlands, another building and an industrial crane are being turned into hotels, and the large open spaces and view over the IJ form the perfect location for several bars and events.

One event, which is hosted every month, is the flea market in the IJ-hallen, the largest flea market in the Netherlands. For €4.50 you can submerge yourself in the world of grannies and

hipsters in two massive halls filled with old junk, antique goods and just plain weird stuff.

While walking around, I've bumped into some great things: classic Gameboys, old ammo boxes from the Balkans, and an authentic navy officer's hat. The downside is that stuff like that, which is usually sold by specialised vendors, cost an arm and a leg – for example, the navy hat had a price tag of €350,-.

To find the real bargains, you have to go to the old ladies who still silently convert Euros back to Guilders, or walk by the people who just want to get rid of the old junk in their attic. Some people try to sell anything at the IJ-hallen: I've seen more second-hand lingerie being displayed than I'm comfortable with, and I saw one person trying to sell a bootleg copy of a 90's erotic CD-ROM once.

The first two times I visited, I hadn't bought anything – I always had mixed feelings about buying stuff there. Jochem told me it's best to just bring some cash and not think twice about buying anything, and that I wouldn't regret it. He ended up with a huge fake fur coat with leopards and jaguars printed all over it, which of course completely proved his point.

So I went out and without thinking twice, I bought a wooden cabin trunk. I bought it on an impulse, it barely fits in my room, but it makes for a great coffee table and I have no regrets. I highly recommend everyone takes a look at the IJ-hallen sometime, and if you have some money left, don't think twice about spending it there.

The next flea market at the IJ-hallen is on 25 and 26 January.

Dr. Incognito

Earlier this year Dr. Incognito took part in a pilot experiment on MDMA, but unfortunately the bag of MDMA had been switched up with methamphetamine... Thankfully, he managed to recover quickly, and seeing all the mailbags with your post and questions sure cheered him up. Luckily, Dr. Incognito doesn't suffer from any permanent brain damage, although his personality may have changed slightly! On to this month's letter:

Dear Dr. Incognito,

Like so many of us, I went home for the holidays to spend Christmas with my family. On Christmas Eve, my brother, my parents and I had dinner at my grandma's. She had made mushroom soup using a traditional recipe that has been in the family for generations. It tasted good, but different from how I remembered it... By the time dessert was served, Santa was standing in the middle of the room! The strange thing was though, he was only as big as my thumb... So I was wondering, maybe Santa does exist, but everyone just thinks he doesn't just because he's so small! What do you think?

Anonymous (22)

Dear Anonymous,

Thanks for your outstanding question! Unfortunately, I have to disappoint you: Santa isn't real. He's a figment of imagination based on the Dutch Sinterklaas, some old Nordic rituals and Coca-Cola commercials. Since you were eating mushroom soup, I think it might have something to do with that... It seems to me as if you have been eating the wrong mushrooms. Yes, wrong mushrooms. As in, they might have been expired. At least, I think... Do mushrooms have an expiry date? What are you asking me for anyway, I don't know anything about cooking! Try calling the Albert Heijn customer service or look at the frequently asked questions on their website, stuff like this must happen all the time. I hope I was able to enlighten you, Anonymous, even though I lack expertise in this field.

Dr. Incognito

Do you have a burning question for Dr. Incognito? Let us know on [newsletter.cognito@gmail.com!](mailto:newsletter.cognito@gmail.com)

Food for Thought

Although Dutch people may be reluctant to combine spinach and fish, because of the apparent **carcinogenic effect** of combining fish and spinach, this danger is apparently unknown to cooks in the rest of the world. The quantity of formed carcinogenic nitrosamines in dishes that combine fish and spinach is much debated amongst scientists, but it is generally regarded too small to have a relevant effect in real-life. The same apparently goes for the formation of nitrite when microwaving spinach.

The much-debated carcinogenic effect aside, the preparation of lean fish in the oven, and the addition of spinach, which is rich in iron, certainly make this a healthy recipe. Pangasius is also a relatively inexpensive and sustainably farmed fish. This dish looks great, so it is perfect for showing off at dinner parties or dates, and it is very easy to make!

If you really want to show off a spectacular dish, add the luscious lemon-and-dill sauce. The exorbitant amount of butter that goes into this sauce arguably diminishes the 'healthy' aspect of this dish, but the taste is definitely worth it.

Ingredients (serves 4):

For the fish rolls:

- 4 Pangasius filets
- 200 gr of (preferably fresh) spinach
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 onion
- zest of half a lemon

For the lemon-and-dill sauce:

- 2 egg yolks
- juice of half a lemon
- 125 gr of butter
- (fresh) dill

Preheat the oven at 180°.

Shred the spinach. Dice the onion and finely chop the garlic. Heat some olive oil and add onion, garlic and lemon zest. When the onion has become soft and translucent, add the spinach. Add some pepper (the fish is usually somewhat salty already, so you don't really need to add salt).

When the spinach has wilted, leave it to cool somewhat. In the meantime, check whether your pangasius fillets are the right way up - the side that has a slit through the middle should be facing down, because that is going to be at the outside of the roll. Spread some of the spinach over the fillets. Start rolling from the caudal to the rostral side (which is from the thin to the thick side) and put the rolls in a casserole. Put in the oven for about 15 to 20 minutes.

In the meantime you may prepare the sauce. Slowly melt the butter in a saucepan. Put the egg yolks in a bowl and whisk until they have turned into an even liquid. Slowly pour in the butter, while whisking all the time. The butter and egg yolks should form a lump-free, thick sauce. Stir in the lemon juice and dill, and add salt and pepper to taste. Great with mashed potatoes and green beans, or leftover spinach. Enjoy!