



InCognito

For your monthly study-related needs and feeds.

May 2014

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

Brains Abroad

Koen Seignette in Zurich, Switzerland

And he's homesick for Canal Bridges.

In 2012, Monocle City Economics ranked Zurich the number one 'most livable city' in the world. That same year the Economist Intelligence Unit published their list of the world's 'most expensive cities.' Number one: Zurich.

It is hard to imagine how spending 10 bucks on 500 grams of processed beef can make your live more livable. 'Miserable', if you ask me, is more appropriate. Although being most-livable is definitely something to be proud of for a city with a population of only 400.000, one would expect that the doubtful honor of 'most overprized daily necessities' scares away luck-seeking immigrants. Yet here I am, enjoying this livableness less than two months after the Swiss referendum vote 'against mass immigration.' The European

money flow on international student funds is on the border of being shut down. Thank God Herr Erasmus was so kind to transfer my money all at once before this mess came about. It won't be hard to spent it here. You think half a liter beer in Paradiso is expensive? Let's just say I would do a lot of things to be in your position.

The downside of Amsterdam, though, is that there are no mountains (except for that canal bridge you fearlessly conquer each day). Here they have real mountains. And city hills. This basically means a round trip on your bike from city center to the university will take you an average of approximately $15 + 5 = 20$ minutes. Great. Now we're only sweating in the morning. Let's buy deodorant then. Eight bucks, shit.

What about the good stuff? First things that come to mind: chocolate, hiking, the beautiful lake Zurich, the Gonzo (google it), great Erasmus student parties, no NS-like delays and last but not least, excellent neuroscience. Like nowhere else they now how GABAergic neurons spent their day (and night, I am partly in a chronobiology group). I'll keep it short, I work on paraspeckles; subnuclear structures involved in nuclear retention of mRNAs (google it). Invisible for fMRI, definitely not made by evolution to generate EEG signals, but most likely crucial for cell signaling. Maybe you won't hear about them again, maybe you will. Hopefully the latter, we'll try to make that happen.

See you in 9 months!



Zurich and the Limmat river, seen from the Grossmünster.
Photo: Chensiyuan / Wikimedia Commons.

AGENDA

Drinks @ CREA

Every Tuesday, 21:00-late

Brain and Cognition Festival

May 9, 10:30-17:00

The IIS celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Masters of Brain and Cognitive Sciences by organizing a symposium. Several speakers will talk about topics in the field of cognitive neurosciences. There will also be creative activities and the special edition almanac will be presented. For more information on the programme, take a look on the website: abc.uva.nl/education/10-year-mbcs

Cognito Presents:

Cognito Trip

May 16-18, secret location

Make sure to apply for this supercalifragilisticexpialidocious weekend! Send an email to cognitosocial@gmail.com with your name, food allergies or other dietary requirements and the amount of beer you expect to drink. Costs will be around 80 euros.

A surprise event!

June 13th. 18:00-midnight

We would like to ask you to keep this evening free. Cognito is organizing an event as a thank you for all your hard work this year! It is still a surprise what we will be doing that evening, but make sure you bring your swimwear and have an empty stomach. ;) Exact details will follow, just make sure you save the date and inform your fellow students.

Want to see your event here? Please let us know by sending an email to cognito.newsletter@gmail.com



Tamashii dojo karatekas on training in Japan, with Myrthe as third from the right. Photo: Tamashii dojo.

Incognobel Prize

This month's Incognobel Prize nomination is in the category of sports! It appears many of our fellow students are active and interested in sports and Myrthe Knetemann certainly is no exception. As you have seen in the photo Myrthe likes karate and this summer she will earn her black belt. For this she needs to take an exam, which will take place from July 10 to July 13 at the Olympic sporting centre Papendal.

When one hears the word 'karate' all kinds of stereotypes arise. Small mysterious men wearing obscure suits are breaking piles of bricks using their small toe. Ancient deadly techniques are being practiced and strange rituals with lots of yelling and shouting take place. The reality, fortunately, is totally different and less movie-like as one might think. Kara-te, 'Empty Hand' in Japanese, is a sport that emphasizes personal development and endurance, both physically and mentally. Lethal techniques are forbidden and within the training centre, the 'dojo', all are part of one big family. Everybody tries their best and positively pushes others to the limit. By the way, breaking wooden plates, bricks and ice are part of the training.

Since my childhood, karate has been an important part of my life. Training two times a week, and sometimes even more, for such a long time creates a bond with the sport. An important part of my personality originates from the lessons and experiences with karate.

There are lots of different styles of karate, each with a different focus. The style I practice is called 'Kyokushin' and emphasizes on fighting skills and pushing your limits. Kyokushin is a 'full-contact sport', which means that sparring (testing ones techniques and strength while 'fighting' with an opponent) takes place without protective gear and full blows, kicks and punches are delivered to the body. This makes it an intense experience during tournaments and really makes you stronger in a lot of ways.

This summer I am taking the exam for the black belt. One earns this test by first completing all the 10 student grades, for which exams must be passed that are held twice a year, by participating in international tournaments as I did during the World Championships in Japan. Teaching others is also part of the requirements. Only

when you and your teacher both feel that you are ready for it, the exam takes place.

The black belt exam takes four days in which your endurance, physical strength, flexibility, techniques, fighting skills, theory and breaking skills are being tested. The international jury consists of renowned karatekas who are masters in all parts of karate. After passing the test one gets the title of 'Shodan', which means 'the very beginning' in Japanese, as the black belt is just the beginning of the journey of karate.

As Capelle aan den IJssel, a town near Rotterdam, is my hometown and the place were I train, studying in Amsterdam is not the most ideal place. As it takes about one hour to get there, training takes a lot of my time. Of course it's possible to find a school nearby, but training in the dojo where I grew up is special. I have known the people there my entire life and my karate-teacher is one of the most inspiring and wisest persons in the world. He is the one who always guided me and stimulated me to start training for the exam. Training for my black belt takes a lot of energy, but also gives me back so much!

OSU!

Student Council Elections

The elections for the Student Councils are upon us! Between 12 and 16 May you can elect the students that will be representing us within the science faculty and the university for the coming year.

Since this is THE way to have a voice in the university's policy, we urge you all to vote! Multiple parties are participating at the FNWI, so be sure to check them out at verkiezingen.studentenraad.nl/english. You'll receive an invitation to vote in your mailbox shortly, or you could go to stem.uva.nl starting May 12. Choose wisely!

BIRTHDAYS

Michael Whitehead
May 2

Gert-Jan Munneke
May 5

Miriam Maan
May 5

Martine Cederhout
May 6

Lea Himmer
May 7

Marta Grzegorek
May 7

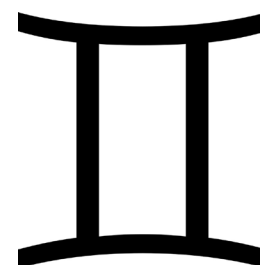
Jelle Bruineberg
May 19

Ellen Carbo
May 21

Leonie Dühlmeier
May 31

Illy van der Putten
May 15

HOROSCOPE



Gemini

21 May - 21 June

On the night of 6 May, Mars and Jupiter will align. Stock up on fruit juices and hamburgers and clear your entire schedule for 7 May - the position of the planets on the night before are a guarantee for a massive hangover. Although you may consider not to drink on 6 May, it won't help a bit - stellar powers determine that your prefrontal cortex will temporarily stop firing when a beer is present. Besides, doesn't STICS end on the same day? Don't fight what's written in the stars. Acceptance is the key.

Dr. Incognito

Hi my dearest readers.

Good to have you back, hopefully everyone had a really good and orange Kingsday! Saturday 26th of April 2014 is one to never forget. Orange faces, crazy people, boats and of course beer. Lots of brain cells got demolished that day, but it was totally worth it. Today I received letter from Marc, he is living in Madrid and he spent the last week in Amsterdam. This is what he wrote:

Dear Dr Incognito,

Last year I missed Quensday because I didn't know it was celebrated on the 30th of April and booked my flight back

on the 29th! This year, I made sure to block my agenda so I wouldn't miss it for the second time. I booked my flight and stayed for a midweek in Amsterdam to experience one of the craziest parties in the world. On Wednesday the 30th I was all dressed up, dyed my hair orange and even bought an orange rainsuit, just in case. I was walking around the city, found some other people who were dressed up in orange, but not nearly as many as I expected! How is that possible? How can this be one of the best parties of the year? Only a few people were dressed up, no parties, no boats and above all, no good weather. Did they cancel it this year?

Lots of love, Marc

Dear Marc,

I don't know how to tell you this, but you missed the big party! Since King Willem-Alexander was crowned last year, this year there was no no Queensday, but instead Kingsday was celebrated. The national holiday was also moved from the 30th of April to the on the 26th. Too bad, because the party was really good and the weather was lovely. Next year it will be celebrated on Aril 27th, so mark the date and don't miss out! Fortunately for you, the internet exists and you can google all the great pictures and movies from this year. Hope you'll enjoy it.

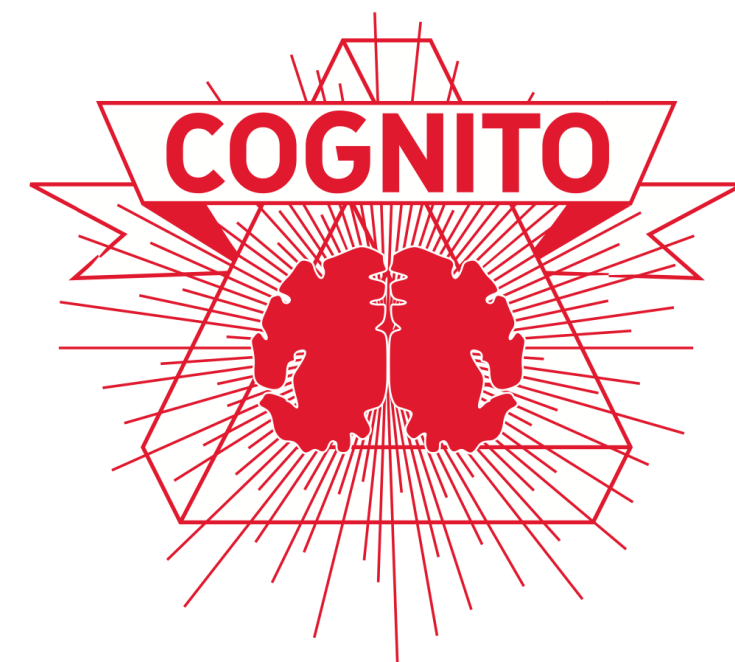
Dr Incognito

JOIN THE COGNITO BOARD (MEETING)!

As the academic year is coming to an end, we have to prepare for our next year. Just like the members of the Cognito board. Unfortunately, some of them will leave the nest and fly out to hotshot careers. This means that we are looking for enthusiastic Cognito members to join the board next year.

We meet regularly to discuss what is going on within our student union, our committees and our faculty, all while enjoying dinner together. We organize a few amazing events a year, like Drinks & Discussion and the Brain Slicing Event. In addition, we keep in touch with other student unions within and outside our faculty. Starting a new year means there is the possibility to set up a new event, engage as Cognito in more faculty events, or even start a new committee. And this is your change to get involved!

If you are enthusiastic about joining the board next year,



COGNITO WANTS YOU!

we have a public meeting at 20.00 o'clock the 8th of May at Marthe's place; Kleine Wittenburgerstraat 144. Everyone who is interested

can join (no strings attached)! If you would like to attend this meeting, please let us know by sending an e-mail to cognitouva@gmail.com.

Food for Thought

Summer is coming and that means it's time for all kinds of fresh summery dishes and drinks! We've collected a few things, among which is one of my favourite summer dishes and a super easy one at that. It is a light dish that goes very well with toasted bread or a baguette.

Green asparagus with Gruyère cheese

This is a freehand recipe I learned from a friend. I usually just combine the things in amounts that seem adequate. You can use pretty much any cheese you like if you're not a fan of Gruyère.

Ingredients:

- green asparagus,
- (red) onion,
- (cherry) tomatoes,
- Gruyère cheese

Preheat oven at 200 °C.

Dice the onion and cut the tomatoes into blocks. If using cherry tomatoes, they can be halved but this is not necessary.

Spread the asparagus evenly on the bottom of an oven dish and cover with the onions and tomatoes. Cut the cheese into blocks and add as much as you like.

Place in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes and enjoy!

Easy home-made lemonade

For that summery feeling!

Combine lemon juice and sugar into a pan. Use 100 g. of sugar for every lemon's juice you use. You may also add some lemon zest for an extra intense flavour. Boil for a few minutes until its nice and syrupy.

Now all you have to do is add water and you've got yourself some lemonade!