

Editorial

Killer Brainworms

Comprehensive final math exams are not murder to this English Major, it's the two days of straight studying prior to it that's the killer. After packing and cramming an entire quarter's worth of math into my mind in just 48 hours, I tell ya I was just dead! The party responsible: brainworms!

These vicious creatures are the third leading cause of death to all college students, trailing only cafeteria food and insufficient consumption of quality alcohol. These brain decomposing varmint impose suffering that makes squeezing your head in a vice seem like a pleasurable alternative. I just wish I had one.

The worms launched their attack on my vulnerable, appetizing mind like the hamburger crazed Wimpy from Popeye-stamped toward a Big Mac truck. A collision was sure to ensue. The pests weaved their way in and out, and up and over the vast land of connective mountainous tissue that had become their playground of free food. They intended to torture me as long and as slowly as possible. I began to feel loose portions of decomposed brain rattle against my skull. My battle-grounded head dangled to the side from the weight of the million fat worms in my left brain hemisphere. These creatures of death were preying. I was too!

I was helpless from their powerful bite. I had to make a high grade on this final exam to earn transfer credit. This was an obligating mission I was determined to see through until the bitter end. It was a perilous quest to journey from the deep water I was in, over those insurmountable waves which would invariably set my course to land in the calm, tranquil world of low C's. To do this my small weakened vessel would have to penetrate a tidal wave final with clear sailing. I would have to have a near perfect test. A grade so high, I'd seen the number only once in my lifetime struggles with math. That was the day the teacher wrote 100% on the board. Getting this grade would be next to impossible and beside of improbable. Yet I had to give it a go. That or submit my half eaten brain to futher damage of the diet of worms in an entree course next quarter.

I dug deep into my trenches preparing to fight the last great war between my brain and this foreign language of math. I called up all the troops from their cells. I locked the door to my room, making sure my math book couldn't escape. I tapped into the uneaten, right portion of my mind where my creative resources live to ensure a productive study session. But none was home. I had then to rely strictly on my motivational incentive to muster up every ounce of discipline I didn't have to my name. I lost track of all other responsibilities. Primarily sleep. Tediously I poured over the text, and in no time at all (about 4 seconds) I found myself burnt out from my fractional proportion of interest, the lost of numerical values, decimalized integers of negative connotations, geometric diagonals with x amount of sides, and a lot of other stuff I've forgotten again.

The devouring group of worms were taking their toll. Still like a warrior I pressed on. Through the deafening cries of four million swollen, throbbing, bloody blood vessels in my eyes screaming for me to lower their shades. Paralysis had set in. I ordered my legs to move, but they would not respond. My stomach's incessant begging for nourishment was keeping neighbors awake. My bladder was the size of the Goodyear Blimp. My parched tongue and crisply crackling throat seemed to indicate that thirsting to death was no longer a possibility, but a dry splash of

reality. As another solid chunk of my brain fell to the base of my skull, I faintly heard its last words: "Matt, why don't you take a break! You've been working hard, you've got an entire night left to study, you're beginning to understand this stuff, you've got some fresh, homemade lasagna in the fridge..."

So I did. When I returned, several hours later I picked up right where I left off; second column of page two in chapter one. I proceeded to blaze through the other nine chapters and before I knew it, 8 a.m. had arrived. The moment of truth was here. I went to get in my car, and some lady in a full length nightgown with bright pink curlers ran out of the house screeching that it was her car I was in. She not so kindly pointed me in the direction of my car next door, and I stumbled that way. A shock of revelation hit me (knocking me over) as I discovered that these must be the same worms that cause disorientation in drunk people. I followed the signs to get to school, and then followed two zombie looking characters to my math class. They looked terrible.

I seated myself coincidentally between two smart M.F.'s (mathematical fanatics) who I thought might enjoy my lively spirit. They tossed my sleeping head back and forth from each of their shoulders until it was time to begin. I breezed through my test, finishing around midnight. The brainworms had by this time completely consumed their 'brain food' and started a march towards my spinal column. Fearing immediate death, I called myself an ambulance and was rushed to Wilkes General where I was pronounced B.D.O.A. (Brain dead on arrival). The worms had victimized yet one more innocent stander-by.

Six days later, I looked at myself in the bathroom mirror - because I woke up in the bathroom - and noticed a slight trace of improvement. My skin was now only light blue, and I was able to lift my chin from its indented hole in my chest. The worms had vanished for now, and my brain began its slow process of regrowth. Knowing I had successfully completed my voyage to the land of low C's facilitated its progress.

Around finals time every quarter these destructive brainworms expose themselves, and many students who are unaware of their danger die a harsh, cruel, suffering death. I was lucky! The other 42.7 million are not. Only one thing may curb this terrible onslaught of college students. Teachers, by canceling finals can prevent these abominable worms from infiltrating the vulnerable minds of students who are in search of a danger-free education. Failure to do this, will result in the continual rage of catastrophic casualties, and we will eventually be faced with extinction. Better yet, teachers could cancel all tests, from which brainworms are hatched. The chances of this occurring are at best slim, and it will take nothing less than an act of Congress to initiate a law that will rid us of this massive epidemic. But Congress is still suffering from the brainworms that were inflicted upon them by their teachers, who got them from their teachers, and so on from generation to generation. I guess we'll be trapped in the traditional concept of torturous education until a cure is found. Somebody did suggest staying caught up with the material, and studying a little each day to be prepared for the final without having to cram a quarter into two days. Gah! What a severe case of brainworms that guy had!

Spring Musical - Anything Goes

ANYTHING GOES is an amusing story wrapped about the magical score of Cole Porter that starts at the New York sailing of the Ocean Greyhound "America" bound for England. The Wilkes Community-College Symphony and the College Theatre present this musical comedy hit, directed by David Reynolds, for your enjoyment on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 22, 23, and 24 at the John A. Walker Community Center in Wilkesboro. The Friday and Saturday shows will be at 8:00 p.m. and the Sunday show will be a matinee at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$9.00 for regular adult admission and \$8.00 for students, senior citizens and the handicapped and are on sale now at the box office Monday-Friday from 9:00-5:00. Telephone reservations are accepted if charged to VISA or MasterCard and mail orders by personal check or credit card. Call (919) 667-0319 for reservations or information.

This is entertainment for the entire family with lots of dancing and a great musical score that includes "Friendship," "I Get A Kick Out of You," "Anything Goes," "Let's Misbehave," and "Blow, Gabriel, Blow," "It's Delovely," and "All Through the Night."

The play's characters include "Reno Sweeny," famed evangelist (Elaine Mulholland), with her four "Angels" ("Purity": Midge Reynolds, "Chastity": Linda Gorich, "Charity": Rebecca Brown, and "Virtue": Carol Cushwa). There is a love interest, of course, between "Hope Harcourt" (Nicole Walsh) and "Billy Crocker" (J. Kevin Isenhour), a stowaway by accident, who is on his way up in the Wall Street world. He meets his boss "J.B. Whitney" (Mike Hanville), who is not too pleased at finding him absent from the office. There is another celebrity sailing, but very much under wraps, "Moonface Martin" (Harry Galifianakis), a onetime ship's gambler, who has branched out to a point at which he is designated, 'Public Enemy 13.'

"Billy" has just five and a half days to win "Hope." Her mother (Suzy Kerley), is dead set on "Sir Evelyn," the baronet (Jim Brooks) for her daughter. The ship's officers search the ship for a man who is the occupant of the gangster's cabin, and "Billy" has to resort to varied disguises, that include "Moonface" and himself as Chinese converts.

Other characters are being played by Felicia Waugh, Kent Reeve, Sam Sebastian, Greg Daniels, Jane Gulden, Steve Roten, Steve Critz, Tammy Anderson, Natalie Dobbins, and Leigh Critz.

Passengers, sailors, and dancers include Sam Sebastian, Jane Gulden, Britt Vestal, Merritt Galifianakis, Melissa Mulholland, Michael Bangle, Grant Caudill, Brad Caudill, Dawn Barker, and Julie Hamby.

Music director is Jerry Bangle with piano accompaniment by Louise Hanville. The scenery designer is David Latham and lighting designer is Tom Tommlinson. Stage manager is Nancy Huffman and Kim Frye, choreographer.

CRUISE SHIP SUNDAY BUFFET

Sunday, April 24 at 12:30 before the play at 2:00 p.m. there will be a Cruise Ship Buffet in the lobby of the Walker Center. The cost is \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 12. You must have tickets to ANYTHING GOES in order to have lunch at the Walker Center. However, you may see the play without having lunch at the Center. Call for show tickets and lunch reservations now as space for dining is limited. Call (919) 667-0319 for tickets or reservations.

Mary Frances Galifianakis
John A. Walker Community Center
Wilkesboro, NC 28697
(919) 667-0319

This Month in Math History

Howard W. Eves - Distinguished Visiting Professor of Mathematics
University of Central Florida

A great many mathematically significant events occurred during the month of March; here is a selected dozen of them.

On March 1 (1884), following a call by Pope John Paul II, the Vatican announced that the so-called heresy for which Galileo was condemned by the Church in 1633 appears to have no foundation in either theology or canon law. On March 3, (1845) Georg Cantor, the founder of modern set theory and the theory of transfinite numbers, was born of Danish parents in St. Petersburg, Russia. On March 5 (1876), James Joseph Sylvester, then 61 years old, was appointed professor of mathematics at Johns Hopkins University, marking the beginning of genuine graduate mathematics education in the United States. March 5 (1954) also marks the passing of Julian Lowell Coolidge, perhaps the foremost geometer on the American continent during the mid-twentieth century.

On March 10 (1797), the Norwegian surveyor Caspar Wessel presented, to the Danish Academy of Sciences, the first description of the now familiar representation of the complex numbers of points in the plane. On March 11 (1780), August Leopold Crelle was born; Crelle, an engineer, in 1826 founded his famous Crelle's Journal, and promptly published a sequence of important papers by Niels Abel. On March 14 (1879), Albert Einstein, by long odds the most popularly admired mathematical physicist of modern times, was born in Ulm, Germany; he later became a prominent member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. March 20 (1726/7 o.s.) marks the passing of Isaac Newton, the most eminent mathematician of all times.

On March 23 (1882), Amalie Emmy Noether, the most outstanding woman in mathematics, was born in Erlangen, Germany; she subsequently taught in the United States at Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia. On March 26 (1619), Descartes reported to Beekman the earlier flash that led him to create "an entirely new science," later to become known as analytic geometry. On March 28 (1749), Pierre-Simon Laplace was born of poor parents; he later produced very substantial work in the fields of celestial mechanics and probability, leading to two monumental treatises on these subjects, the former one earning him the title of "the Newton of France." Incidentally, Laplace died on March 5 (1827), and it has been reported that his last words were "What we know is very slight; what we do not know is immense." On March 30 (1796), when only 18 years old, Carl Friedrich Gauss started his famous scientific diary, beginning it with his discovery of the Euclidean constructibility of a regular polygon of 17 sides.

Finally, to extend our dozen significant mathematical events that occurred in March to a baker's dozen, we conclude by noting what might be the most important event of all - on March 30 (1858), the pencil with an attached eraser was patented.

Note: A reader interested in such matters as the above can find great pleasure in perusing *A CALENDAR OF MATHEMATICAL DATES* by V. Frederick Riskey of Bowling Green State University.

College Bible Talks

Everyone is cordially invited to attend these open informal Bible discussions every Thursday evening at 7:00 p.m. at Windemere Apartments, Building 2 Apt. F

For Immediate Release

HORN IN THE WEST, the historical outdoor drama in Boone, NC, will be holding auditions on March 26th at Chapel Wilson Hall on the Appalachian State University campus. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. "We're looking for numerous men and women dancers, singers, actors and technicians," says Ed Pilkington, Artistic Director of the production. "This season, there are several principal roles available," he added.

Prospective actors should prepare a 2 minute or less monologue for the auditions. Singers need to bring two songs of contrasting styles. Dancers should bring appropriate clothing. Members of the artistic staff will be available to interview those interested in working with the technical staff.

HORN IN THE WEST, the third oldest outdoor drama in the nation, will begin its 37th consecutive season in June. "Over 1,280,000 people have seen the drama since it began in 1952," according to William R. Winkler, III, Executive Producer.

HORN IN THE WEST is produced by the Southern Appalachian Historical Association, a non-profit organization. More information about the auditions is available by contacting the Horn staff at (704) 264-2120 or P.O. Box 295, Boone, NC 28607.

Have and Help

Beautiful Saturday morning, perfect for jogging in the park - but then I saw him. Seated on one of the benches near the park's entrance was a listless figure of a man holding a tin cup with some coins and dollar bills in it. Propped up near his feet was this sign:

It's Spring Again
But I have AIDS
Don't Be Afraid
Causal Contact Won't Hurt You
Please Help!

"What a lousy way to start the day," I thought. "Can't help him either. No coins in my sweats."

I tried not to look at his empty-like eyes, and I picked up a little speed as I passed by. What a pitiful person he was. And that thought was followed by this: What a lucky person I am...

Think!
It's spring and I'm relatively healthy and strong. I can look forward to who knows how many years of life...

It's spring and I have so much time to grow and learn and appreciate whatever.

It's spring and I can feel and see and hear and do.

It's spring and I can love and be loved.

Yes, for me, it's spring. And I can rejoice with all that life has given to me... will continue giving to me.

"Yes, I'm just plain lucky," I thought. "But shouldn't I be doing something to help those who are not?"

"Yes, again."

Educational Loans Available

Three educational loan programs for North Carolina residents attending colleges in or out of state and for nonresidents attending colleges in North Carolina are available through College Foundation Inc.

One program is for dependent or independent students and is based on financial need. One is for independent self-supporting students and is not based on financial need. The third program is for parents of dependent students and is not based on financial need.

For more information, write College Foundation Inc., P.O. Box 12100, Raleigh, NC 27605 or call 919/821-4771.