

# • THE PSYCHE

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR



*Jan Crowther*

Hello again, alumni and friends! We have some good news to share with you. Since July 1, 2006, many of our faculty members have been awarded new grants, with the total new grant awards exceeding \$7 million. Moreover, Diane Poston, whom so many of you know, received the Distinguished Staff Award for Quality Service, a prestigious university-wide award that recognizes and celebrates her dedicated efforts for the Psychology Department. And, if any of you flipped on CNN recently, you may have seen Angela Neal-Barnett being

interviewed about her research on “acting white.”

Unfortunately, members of the Department have been saddened by the passing of Jeanette Reuter, an emeritus professor in the Department. She was a dedicated mentor who had a great impact on our extended psychology family, and we are planning a memorial for Kent Hall to honor her legacy.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the *PSYCHE*. Some highlights include catching up with Dr. Nancy Docherty, who is the focus of “What’s Up Doc”, and a formal introduction to our new assistant professor, Dr. Dan Neal. Also, we are showcasing one of our alums — Dr. Paula Hartman-Stein — in our first ever “In the Loop” column. We certainly hope to get many of you in the loop in forthcoming issues of the *PSYCHE*.

I will be completing my term as chair of the department this summer, and I am looking forward to resuming my role as a faculty member in the fall. I’ve enjoyed having an opportunity to extend greetings to you from the department. As always, please keep in touch...

*Jan Crowther*

## DIANE POSTON: DISTINGUISHED SERVICE FOR THREE DECADES

Congratulations to Diane Poston, who won the 2006 Distinguished Staff Award for being a Quality Service Individual! This prestigious award honors Diane for more than 29 years of dedication to the Department of Psychology.

Diane has consistently provided the detailed know-how on how to make the Psychology Department run effectively. Her seemingly endless energy and her vast knowledge about university functions — at all levels of administration — has allowed her to help ensure that our department runs smoothly.

Diane is vital to the administrative functions of the department, and she also fills many other roles as well. For instance, she was a central member of the committee that guided the renovations to Kent Hall and serves as a member of the University Staff Advisory Council. Moreover, given her experience with the department, it is apparent she’s the go-to person about any issues or questions, regardless of how big or small they are.

As aptly noted in her nomination, Diane “has the skills and motivation of a CEO combined with the compassion and humility of Mother Theresa.” She definitely is the ultimate team player, and given her youth and vitality, we are hoping she continues to support the psychology department well into the future.



*Diane Poston*



*Louis and Jeanette Reuter*

*Photograph by Gary Harwood*

## MEET THE FACULTY

We'd like to introduce a new member of our faculty, Dr. Dan Neal, who is joining us from a postdoctoral position at the University of Texas at Austin. Dan is a clinical psychologist, whose research focuses on college student alcohol use and alcohol-related consequences.



*Dan Neal serving up research from his bar laboratory in Kent Hall.*

Dan investigates many aspects of alcohol use in undergraduates, who present an interesting test case because most students who use or abuse alcohol during their school years turn into responsible drinkers after graduation. He's especially interested in the association between alcohol intoxication and a variety of alcohol-related problems that face undergraduates. Although most students will not have any long-term problems with alcohol, those behaviors that occur when intoxicated (such as unsafe sex or aggression) can result in consequences that last a lifetime. One major goal for Dan is to develop interventions that will not only reduce problem drinking, but as important, will reduce the likelihood of these risky behaviors when students decide to drink. Beyond his research, Dan's expertise in statistics has already had a positive impact on our department. In particular, along with Dr. Manfred van Dulmen, Dan has begun a quantitative minor for our graduate students, which will be vital in their development as research scientists.

Dan is getting used to being a "Golden Flash." He's an avid wrestling fan and has enjoyed an excellent season, which ended with KSU ranked in the top 25! His interest in wrestling may even be surpassed by his influence on KSU football. Dan takes credit for our excellent season (breaking even, the football team passed all expectations), because as he notes "wherever I go, whether it's Texas for football or Syracuse for basketball, the teams seem to play big." Well, we certainly hope Dan's winning streak continues, and we're sure that the skills, interests and enthusiasm that he brings to the department will have a definite impact on ensuring our winning tradition in the Psychology Department.

## IN MEMORY OF JEANETTE M. REUTER (1921-2006)

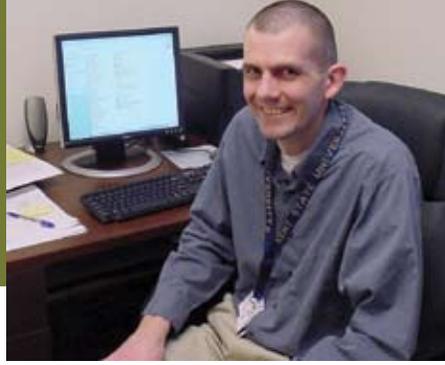
Born Sept. 9, 1921 in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Jeanette left home to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she met Louis F. Reuter III. They married before graduation and started a family. Jeanette then went back to school and ultimately earned a PhD in clinical psychology from the Western Reserve University in 1962.

In 1965, she joined the Psychology faculty at Kent State University, and, from the very beginning, she had a tremendous impact on the lives of our faculty and students. Although Jeanette began her career as a clinician, soon after arriving at Kent State University, she focused her energy on teaching and research. For her students, Jeanette was more than a scholar. She spoke out for the full participation of women in the university and was an outstanding role model of what a strong, professional woman could be at a time when women's roles were changing. For the department, she contributed the seed ideas that led to the

creation of the Applied Psychology Center in our department (see last *PSYCHE* for a discussion of how successful the Applied Psychology Center has become). In her research, Jeanette was dedicated to the measurement of early childhood development. She developed the popular Kent Infant Development Scale (KIDS), and along with her husband Louis (who was a close partner in her research activities), continued to refine the instrument and enhance its applicability to different cultures. Through their partnership, they saw the KIDS become widely used internationally.

During her 24 years at KSU, Jeanette earned many awards, including the KSU Alumni Award as a Distinguished Teacher, the Kent State President's Medal, and in 1990, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Ohio Women in Psychology. Although she retired from the faculty in 1988, her dedication to research and to developmental science continues to have a positive impact on the intellectual culture at Kent State University. In particular, Jeanette and Louis endowed a graduate fellowship program through the KSU Foundation to fund students who are conducting cutting-edge research in human developmental sciences.

Jeanette remained engaged with her profession and colleagues throughout her life. Jeanette and Louis (who died a month before Jeanette in 2006) will be dearly missed but certainly not forgotten. The Department of Psychology is working with a committee of Jeanette's family, former students, colleagues and friends to develop a special memorial in Kent Hall to her memory and legacy. Information about this memorial will be available in the near future.



*Dr. John Gunstad in his office,  
Kent Hall Annex*

## WHAT'S UP DOC?

A graduate of the State University of New York in Binghamton in 1991, Nancy Docherty joined the Psychology Department 12 years ago and has quickly emerged as a major player in research on schizophrenia. Along with her cutting-edge investigations on the cognitive and emotional origins of schizophrenic symptoms, Nancy has consistently garnered federal funding to support her research. In fact, she recently received a \$1.5 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to further explore schizophrenic patients' communication disturbances. In a conversation, individuals with schizophrenia are often difficult to understand, and according to Nancy, "they have different kinds of speech disturbances, which can arise from deficits in a variety of underlying processes, such as attention and memory." Understanding exactly what contributes to their communication problems will be invaluable for helping them to overcome these problems.

Nancy's enthusiasm for pursuing research rubs off on her students as well. As Nancy points out, "I really like working with students, and fortunately, I'm working with a cadre of



*Nancy Docherty*

great graduate students who also are full of good research ideas." She most enjoys the synergy that develops working with students, and the students certainly have reaped the benefits as well. Currently, three of her students are doing post-doctoral research, and other students have moved on to a variety of different positions, including university faculty, college teaching, medical research and program evaluation.

Beyond academe, Nancy has been cultivating her inner artist by taking classes on metalsmithing and enameling. These classes are offered at KSU and provide students with the basic skills that will allow them to work independently on their own projects. When asked about her biggest success, Nancy explained that "I really have no great successes yet, but really it's an evolving process. Metalsmithing allows me to be creative in ways that I couldn't be with science. Something develops out of nothing." Laughing, she adds "when I'm finished, I'll look at the piece and think 'I really made that? I wouldn't expect that from me at all!'"

As usual in "What's Up Doc", we asked Nancy about some of her preferences on some of life's essential dimensions. Here's what she had to say: Artist or Scientist? Nancy: "Scientist." Movies or Metalsmithing? N: Hesitates, "Both." Favorite movie of 2007? N: "Hmmm... Little Miss Sunshine... Well, perhaps it's just one of the best, at least it was more of an upper than a downer." Martini or Wine? N: "Martini, gin or vodka, depending on my mood" And finally, "the perfect Metalsmithing or the perfect publication?" N: "The perfect publication, of course."

## RESEARCH ROUNDS

### *DR. GUNSTAD'S FOCUS ON THE LINK BETWEEN PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH*

Most Americans probably think about their weight from time to time. Looking in the mirror, many of us have been inspired to begin working out to lose a little extra, or we've decided to embrace some fad diet in an attempt to regain our youthful appearance. Although some are successful, staying trim and fit is difficult for many American adults. In fact, one-

third of American adults are obese, which is a leading preventable cause of death and is related to heart disease and diabetes. As explained by Dr. John Gunstad, their trials do not stop there, because obesity is also an "independent risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, structural brain abnormalities, and cognitive dysfunction." Fortunately, some medical treatments are quite effective for reducing weight. For instance, bariatric surgery for individuals who are extremely obese alleviates many of the ailments associated with obesity, such as hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea and depression. What is less well understood, however, is whether such weight loss will also improve cognitive functioning.

Enter Dr. John Gunstad, who is currently funded by the National Institutes of Health to explore the cognitive benefits reaped by individuals who undergo bariatric surgery. He expects that bariatric surgery will successfully lead to improved attention and memory. Given that this research is just beginning, they do not yet know whether these expectations will be met, but other research conducted by Dr. Gunstad and his colleagues gives us reason to be optimistic. In particular, his program of research is aimed more generally at understanding the relationship between physical and mental health. In one set of studies, John is investigating whether cardiac rehabilitation will boost cognitive functioning in patients who have heart disease. Preliminary evidence from his research is encouraging, because rehabilitation improved brain functioning in ways that are associated with positive mental functioning.

In the short time John has been at Kent State University, his research has already received both state and federal funding. Given the obvious importance of his research to improving mental and physical health, it will certainly continue to attract the attention from both dedicated health scientists as well as those interested in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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*Paula, with her husband,  
Rob, and son, Eric.*

## IN THE LOOP

*Dr. Paula Hartman-Stein earned her doctorate from Kent State in 1982 (working with Dr. Jeanette Reuter), and since then she has become a leader in the field of health care for older adults. A Fellow of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychology Association, Paula appears tireless as she Directs Geriatric Psychology at Summa Health System, consults with Coleman Professional Services, and runs the Center for Healthy Aging (CHA) in Kent, Ohio. Her dedication to geropsychology cannot be overvalued, because although living longer is an important goal for most, successful aging necessitates that one remains healthy late in life. Accordingly, Paula strives to ensure that senior citizens have access to affordable — and high*

*quality — health care. For these efforts, she recently received the Alfred M. Wellner Senior Career Award, which is the most prestigious award presented by the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology.*

*While pursuing her clinical practice, Paula has also continued to publish on a variety of topics, such as the determinants of healthy aging and using caregiver reports in planning treatments for individuals with dementia. More recently, she has begun to develop interventions to improve cognitive fitness. The fitness program weds her expertise in gerontology with her passion for spelling — Paula was a competitive eighth grade speller and has led her CHA team to three victories in the Portage County Literacy Bee. Her research has shown that focused practice with spelling can*

*improve people's ability, and she's received a multi-year grant ("Keys to a Sharp Mind") to develop cognitive endeavors for high functioning older adults at Laurel Lake. On a lighter note, Paula recently began a spelling club called KAOS (Kent Area Orthography Society) and has organized several Senior Spelling Bees in Northeast Ohio.*

*Even with all these on-going activities, Paula still finds time for her family. She enjoys traveling with her husband Rob Stein (a labor arbitrator and mediator) and cheers on her son Eric, who is a varsity cross-country runner at Theodore Roosevelt High School. We hope you enjoyed catching up with Paula, and please don't hesitate to send us your own stories, so that we can get everyone back in the loop!*