



The Nu Rho Psi Newsletter
December 15, 2008
Volume 2, Issue 1

Notes from the desk of the Executive Director

April 28, 2008 marked the 2-year anniversary of the creation of Nu Rho Psi, The National Honor Society in Neuroscience. It has been a terrific, dynamic time as our relatively new society continues to grow and promote excellence in the brain sciences. We reached several milestones this year. We inducted our 100th member (Nick Grisak, Alpha chapter in Ohio, Baldwin-Wallace College). We inducted our first honorary member of the society (Dr. Larry Squire). With the addition of a Nu Rho Psi chapter at the University of Southern California, our society now has chapters in all of the national regions (as specified in our Constitution and By-Laws) – 14 chapters total. Perhaps most important, we have begun our outreach activities and, this fall will sponsor our first Nu Rho Psi travel grants that will help send some of our members to the *Society for Neuroscience* and *Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience* meetings. As our membership grows, so will the opportunities to promote excellence in neuroscience research and scholarship.

I welcome your involvement and full participation as we continue to expand our membership and programs. Feel free to contact me with your ideas and suggestions: nurhopsi@bw.edu

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Mickley', is positioned to the left of the typed name.

G. Andrew Mickley, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Nu Rho Psi
Professor and Chair, Neuroscience Program
Baldwin-Wallace College

Feature Story

In July of 2006 the neuroscience faculty and students at Baylor University received word that one of our senior neuroscience majors, Kemi, was near death, after rolling her SUV to avoid a vehicle that had crossed over into her lane. The neuroscience community at Baylor, including the membership of Nu Rho Psi, played a role in her successful return to campus life and graduation. This is her story. -- *Joe Achor, Baylor*

Kemi's Story

"Mrs. Yemi-ese, I'm sorry to say that Kemi is taking her last breath. Be prepared to identify her body."

These are the words that echoed in my mother's mind as my family raced from Houston to Waco following my accident in July of 2006. I survived the accident, but was given the prognosis that I might not have any feeling or motor control from the neck down for the rest of my life. Two days after thirteen hours of surgery on my neck and leg, I began to experience hypersensitivity to touch, resulting in substantial pain in areas of my body still innervated and this continues to this day. Although I have regained some sensory and motor function, I have quadriplegia with substantial paralysis in all four limbs and controlled movement only of my head and neck. In my family I am the oldest of five children, the responsible one, the caretaker and protector of my siblings; to me this injury took all that away.

Before my accident I was facing my last semester at Baylor University as a neuroscience major with a minor in studio art. I had plans to go to medical school and I wanted to work in the extremely challenging field of psychiatry or neurosurgery. I saw myself practicing back home in Nigeria in my mother's free clinics, making a difference in the healthcare system and in the lives of people who deserve better. While doing outpatient therapy I made real steps towards re-enrolling in school and one year after my accident, I returned to Baylor University in the fall of 2007.

I had some fears about starting school again, like how I would be received by my friends and classmates, and just how I would be able to manage academically. I received the support of the Student with Disabilities office at Baylor (Office of Access, Learning, and Accommodation), my professors in the neuroscience and psychology department, and my friends. My initial obstacle was finding reliable help to manage my eighteen hours of care per day seven days a week. After many weeks of interviewing caregiver applicants, I was all set with a committed caregiver one week before school started. Unfortunately, after just one week she injured her leg and could no longer give me assistance. I was very fortunate to have my mother stay with me at school during this time, but I knew she couldn't stay long, as she had already been with me for about a month and needed to return to work. As it would take time to arrange for another caregiver, I reached out to fellow

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Nu Rho Tracts

*Denison Chapter,
Granville, OH*

Denison's Nu Rho Psi chapter had its first induction dinner in April 2008 (see photo on page 3).

The first big project that Denison Nu Rho Psi students completed was the production of an audio version of "Brain Facts". As you may know, "Brain Facts" is the book that SFN distributes for students who are studying for Brain Bees. With permission from SFN (and Norbert Myslinski, of the Brain Bee) we created the Brain Facts audio book so it could be downloaded on to iPods. You are free to download it from the Denison Neuroscience website:

<http://denison.edu/~matthewsn/nurhopsi.html>

The Denison Nu Rho Psi students are also presently recording the other book that is used for the National and International Brain Bee.

2008-2009 Conferences



Denison University's Nu Rho Psi Chapter member induction dinner.

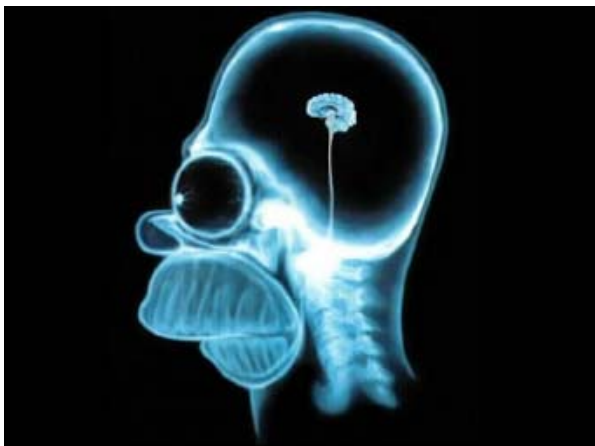
SYNAPSE is planning their next meeting in 2009 at College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina. See <http://www.cofc.edu/synapse/> for updates and for information about last year's meeting.



Dr. Mickley, Nu Rho Psi Executive Director, resting his brain during a backpacking trip.



The most recent **MIDBRAINS** conference was held at Macalester on May 3, 2008. Check for the next meeting date at: <http://www.macalester.edu/midbrainconference/>.



Nu Rho News is looking for photos of your chapter activities.

Send your photos to Sandi Brabb at brabb@wsu.edu.

The 12th annual **N.E.U.R.O.N's** conference was held November 8, 2008 at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. The keynote speaker was Klaus Miczek from Tufts University. His talk was on, "Why do aversive social stress experiences promote intensely rewarding drug taking? Common molecular adaptations." Check for the next meeting date at: <http://www.albany.edu/neuron/conference/index.html>.

Kemi's Story, continued

students to fill in. Dr. Achor, my Neuroscience Advisor and one of the professors who visited me in the hospital, asked me about my physical, emotional, and spiritual readjustments and I shared with him about the loss of my caregiver and the burden on my mother. In response he contacted the two neuroscience organizations he advises (Nu Rho Psi and the Baylor Neuroscience Society) and a number of students generously volunteered to help. Shortly thereafter Dr. Achor created an online calendar to coordinate the volunteers in meeting my needs. One of the members of Nu Rho Psi took over the calendar duties and maintained contact with regular shift workers and backups. The care I received from undergraduate and graduate students in the Baylor neuroscience community included dressing, bathing, personal hygiene, accompaniment around campus, note-taking, and assistance with meals. Within a couple of weeks three full-time caregivers were hired to take care of me throughout the remainder of the year. I feel blessed that so many stepped up to help and continued to think about me throughout my remaining time at Baylor.

As a wheelchair-bound student, I came to realize the difficulties others had faced in navigating the campus and negotiating what for most individuals were minor annoyances. Even a two-inch difference in sections of concrete sidewalks that others just stepped over seemed like a fault uplift between tectonic plates! The surprisingly rough terrain of campus caused me frequent neck pain, spasms, and embarrassment when I would be thrown forward by underestimating the slope of a ramp. Although my wheelchair was motorized, my limited control of arm and hand movements made controlling the joystick very difficult. I wanted to be as independent as possible, but I found numerous instances where I needed the help of strangers or my caregivers. Even the inside doors of our new science building, which fully met the standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act, were an obstacle for me. I've had the rare opportunity to experience college life able-bodied and as a quadriplegic, and I am now an advocate for those with disabilities.

In the near future I hope to do another exhibition of my art, write a children's book and go through more therapy, including work with ProjectWalk, in San Diego, CA and Austin, TX. The therapy is mainly exercise based and focused on getting individuals with spinal cord injuries to walk again. I am excited to participate with them, as I have already seen much improvement myself. Although I would like to have full recovery, I do not want my life to revolve around getting back what I lost. I want to work with Teach for America, go through a post baccalaureate program and then apply to medical school. I've learned from this accident that life may take unexpected turns and my plans should be flexible and I should be grounded in my faith enough to adjust to these turns. -- *Kemi*

Chapters

Baldwin-Wallace College
Berea, OH

Baylor University
Waco, TX

Denison University
Granville, OH

Drew University
Madison, NJ

Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, MD

Knox College
Galesburg, IL

Macalester College
St. Paul, MN

Miami University
Oxford, OH

Pioneer Valley Chapter,
Smith College & U Mass
Northampton, MA

St. Mary's College
St. Mary's City, MD

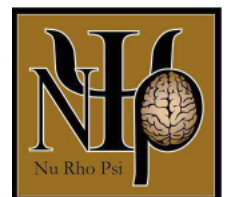
University of Scranton
Scranton, OH

University of Southern
California
Los Angeles, CA

University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, MN

Ursinus College
Collegeville, PA

If your chapter has news for
Nu Rho News, please e-mail
your information to Ruth
Grahm, regra@conncoll.edu.
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