

The Memory Tribune



Newsletter of the Naveh-Benjamin
Memory and Cognitive Aging Laboratory

Department of Psychological Sciences
University of Missouri-Columbia
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McAlester Hall, University of Missouri-Columbia

This newsletter is designed to keep our research volunteers and participants up to date on lab news, recent developments, and goals of current research, and to provide information regarding normal aging and memory loss.

Questions may be directed to:
The Memory and Cognitive Aging Laboratory
(573) 882-8123 or e-mail navehlab@missouri.edu



Welcome to the Memory and Cognitive Aging Laboratory Newsletter!

SNAPSHOTS at jasonlove.com



"You forgot to turn the iron off, didn't you?"

*We grow neither better or worse as we
get old, but more like ourselves.*

--May L. Becker

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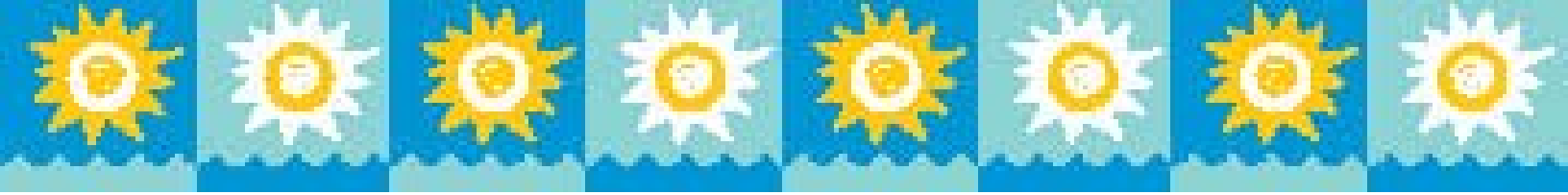
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A Message from Dr. Naveh-Benjamin

Greetings, veteran volunteers, and newcomers to our pool of participants!

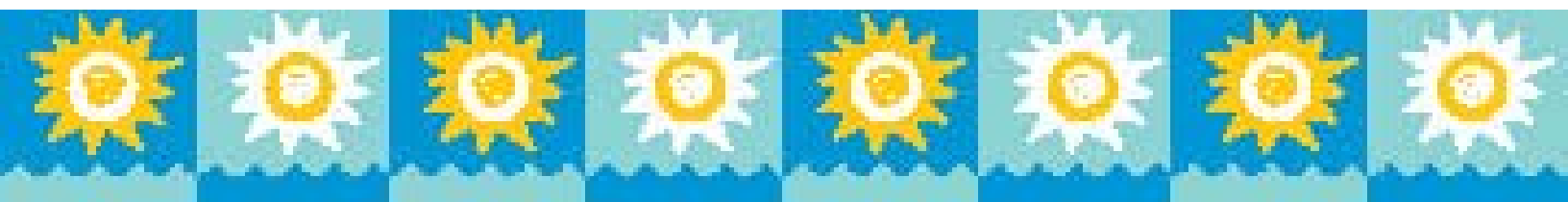
We hope that you have all had an enjoyable summer. Our Memory and Cognitive Aging Laboratory conducts research on how memory changes with normal aging. Our lab has been very active during the past six months, and this newsletter will bring you up to date on what is new since we sent you our first newsletter.

Inside the newsletter you'll find information about the current members of the lab, new research projects that we are pursuing, some tips on how to preserve your mental skills, and suggested readings that may spark your interest. In addition, we've included information for those who might be interested in joining our pool of participants. Our success in achieving our goals of a better understanding of the causes of age-related memory changes and the developing of strategies that people can use in order to improve their memory performance depends to a large degree on your help and cooperation. Your willingness to visit our laboratory and to participate in our studies is crucial to our research and is therefore greatly appreciated. We hope that you will continue to help us in the future! In addition, if you know anyone who is interested in joining our participants' pool, please provide them with our contact information that can be found in this newsletter.

We greatly appreciate your comments about your visits to our lab, as we would like to make these visits as enjoyable as possible.

We wish you an enjoyable and healthy autumn, and hope to see you in our lab soon.

Dr. Moshe Naveh-Benjamin





People in our Laboratory



Angela Kilb

Lab Manager;
Graduate
Student

Angela Kilb (Lab Manager) - I am a graduate student in the Cognition & Neuroscience department, and I've lived in Columbia for the past 5 years. I am interested in studying memory, and I hope to get a better idea of why memory declines with age so that we can find a better way of preventing it in the future.



Yoko Hara

Graduate
Student

Yoko Hara - I am a new graduate student from Japan and I had lived in Hawaii, California, and Pennsylvania before moving to Columbia. My research interests are human memory, learning and attention. I look forward to getting to know people in Columbia and hope to contribute to the community through my research and interactions with them.



Susan Old

Graduate
Student

Susan Old - I have enjoyed working in the laboratory during my first year as a graduate student and look forward to the coming years. I grew up near St. Joseph, Missouri, and graduated from Missouri Western State College in 2002. My research interests include memory and learning, as well as the physical attributes associated with those processes.



Jenny Flatt

Research
Assistant

Jenny Flatt - I have worked in the lab for one-and-a-half years, so some of you may have seen me when you came into the lab for an experiment. I am a senior at MU studying both psychology and sociology. I plan to go to graduate school and study clinical psychology with an emphasis in forensics. My goal is to practice psychology within a juvenile detention center and do research in forensics.



Jen Harvel

Research
Assistant

Jen Harvel - I am a senior undergraduate in the college of Arts & Science. I have worked in the lab for a year, and am a psychology major with a business minor. Upon graduation, I plan to attend graduate school to acquire a doctorate in Industrial-Organizational Psychology.



Jen Stumpf

Research
Assistant

Jen Stumpf - I will be a senior undergraduate at Mizzou in the fall. My major is psychology with a minor in sociology. I plan to go onto graduate school and hopefully someday become either a neuropsychologist or counseling psychologist.



Adam Sher

Research
Assistant

Adam Sher - I will be a sophomore at Brandeis University this fall. My major is cognitive neuroscience. My goal is to attend medical school.

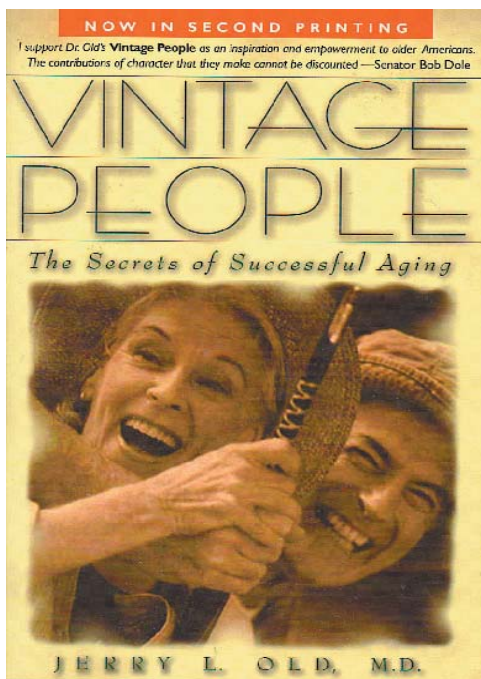
Welcome . . .



Please join us in welcoming graduate student **Yoko Hara** to the lab. Yoko joins us all the way from Japan. She has already earned a Master's Degree and is currently working toward her doctorate. Yoko has previously conducted research on prospective memory (memory for future events).

Win an autographed book!

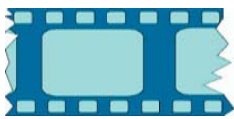
By spreading the word about our research, you could win a copy of Vintage People signed by author Jerry Old, M. D. !!! For every potential participant that mentions your referral to our laboratory, you will earn one ticket in our drawing. Drawings will be held every two months.



Some excerpts:

Vintage implies choice, value, being of a good period, representative of the best! It also suggests getting better with age. That is exactly what Vintage People do . . .

Our lives have seasons, just as nature has. To a certain extent, those seasons cannot be forced. We cannot hurry spring by reaching down and trying to pull the flowers from the ground. We cannot hurry summer by painting the cherries red. Nor can we hurry the bountiful harvest of fall. The vegetables, the fruits, and the grains cannot be rushed to maturity. Vintage wine takes time.



Eyewitness Accounts

One of our exciting new projects encompasses the wide world of eyewitness testimony and raises questions about the accuracy of witnesses' accounts. As the legal issues related to the truthfulness of eyewitness accounts mount, experiments testing memory in a realistic setting will provide interesting insight into the related brain processes.

Here at the Memory and Cognitive Aging Laboratory, we are presenting a series of video clips to volunteers coming into the lab, and asking

them to remember these real-world examples for later memory tests. A secondary task is implemented during some of the trials, in order to simulate the divided attention that occurs during the actual witnessing of a crime. That is, attempting to remember information at a crime scene is generally more complicated than experiments using full attention might suggest. With this experiment, we will learn more about the controversial debate among many issues related to the accuracy of eyewitness testimony accounts.



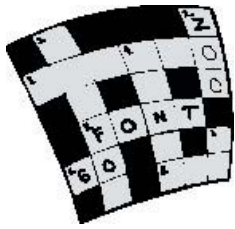
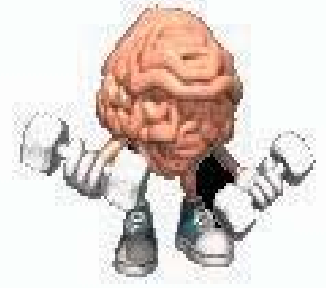
Digit Symbol Substitution

The Digit Symbol Substitution Test (DSST) is part of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, which consists of eight different sub-tests. The DSST, which requires matching of symbols with digits, is unique among the subtests in that it is extremely age-sensitive. Younger adults consistently outperform older adults.

In order to investigate possible reasons for the age differences in performance on this test, our lab has added new versions of it, in which participants are asked to memorize digit-letter pairings as well as word pairs. Approximately fifty younger and forty older adults were given this test. The results are still being analyzed.

Ways to Preserve Your Memory

1. **Exercise.** It appears that every time the heart beats, 25 percent of its output goes straight to the brain. By keeping your heart healthy, you can keep a flow of blood, oxygen, and nutrients going to the brain. This explains why exercise can be so important to cognitive function and brain fitness.



2. **Continue to learn,** by taking classes, reading, working puzzles, finding new hobbies, *participating in memory experiments*, etc.

3. **Don't smoke.** It has been found that smokers forget names and faces more quickly than do nonsmokers.



4. **Eat a healthy diet.** Maintain a normal weight, and eat plenty of antioxidants.

5. **Get enough sleep.** This allows your brain to consolidate the day's lessons.



6. **Maintain social connections.** Close ties with others seem to improve older adults' mental performance.

Sources:

Discovery Health. Don't forget—Give your brain a workout, too. http://health.discovery.com/centers/aging/staying_young/memory.html

MetLife. Healthy aging: Give your mind a workout.

<http://www.metlife.com/Applications/Corporate/WPS/CDA/PageGenerator/0,1674,P3657,00.html>



Information for Interested Participants

Please contact us if you know someone who might be interested in participating in one of our experiments!



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Thanks!

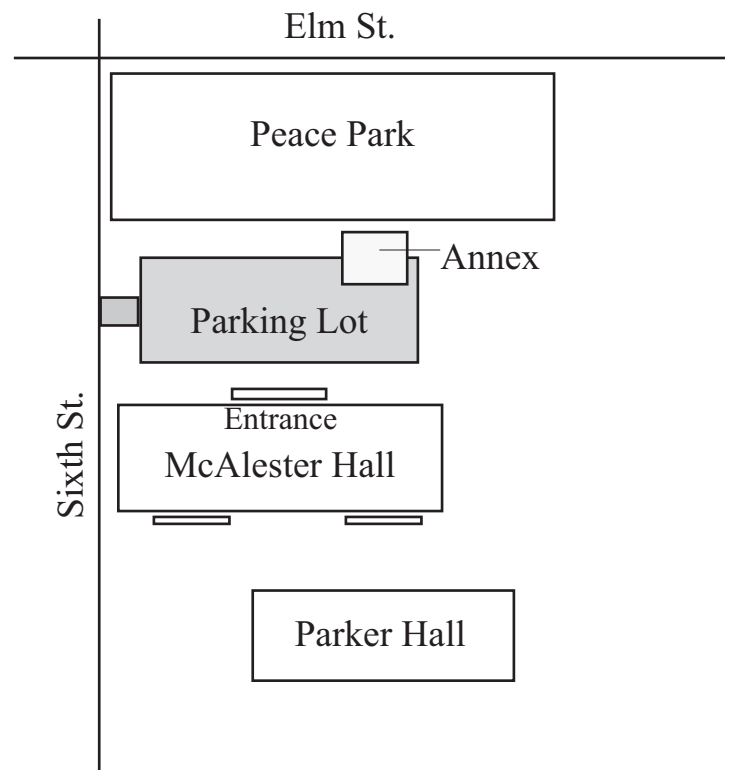
Directions for First Time Participants

From Stadium:

- head north on Maryland Ave. until reaching Conley Ave.
- turn left onto Conley Ave.
- Sixth St. will be the first street on the right.
- heading north on Sixth St., McAlester Hall will be the last building on the right before reaching Peace Park
- The parking lot is located just behind McAlester Hall.

From Broadway:

- head south on Sixth Street
- just past the intersection of Sixth St. and Elm St. will be McAlester Hall on the left.
- The entrance to the parking lot is just past Peace Park & immediately before McAlester Hall



HUMOR

A couple celebrating their 50th anniversary had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two elderly gentlemen were talking, and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant, and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly."

The other man said, "What is the name of the restaurant?"

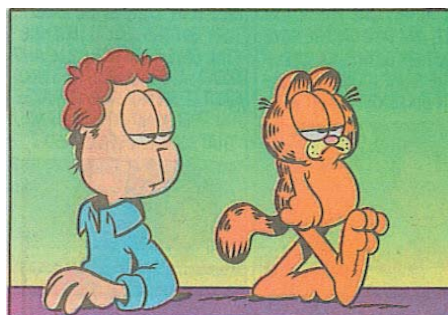
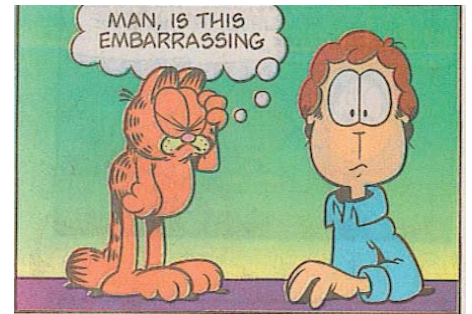
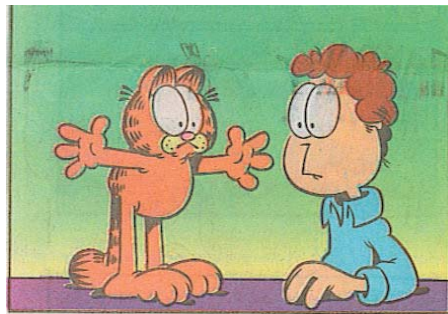
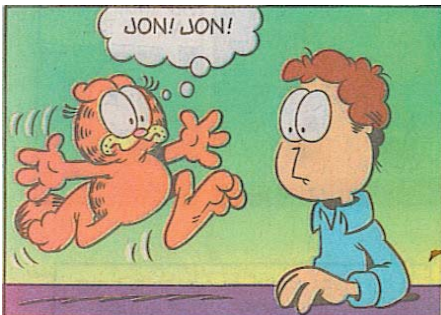
The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... the one that is red and has thorns."

"Do you mean a rose?"

"Yes," the man said and then he turned toward the kitchen and yelled, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?"



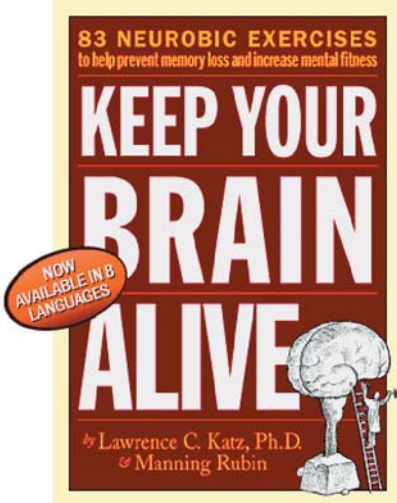
Garfield by Jim Davis



Additional Resources on Healthy Aging

The following information is from: *Keep Your Brain Alive* by Lawrence C. Katz, Ph.D. & Manning Rubin.

“Neurobics” is a set of brain exercises intended to ward off the effects of mental aging. These exercises involve using the five senses in a novel way. This causes underused pathways in the brain to become activated and connections become stronger.



To be neurobic, an exercise should do one or more of the following:

1. Involve one or more of your senses in a novel context. You can use additional senses to do an ordinary task by blunting the sense normally used. For instance:

Get dressed for work or take a shower with your eyes closed. Eat a meal with your family in silence. Use only visual cues.

or combine two or more senses in unexpected ways:

Listening to a specific piece of music while smelling a particular aroma.

2. Engage your attention. To stand out from the background of everyday activities something has to be unusual, fun, surprising or evoke one of your basic emotions like happiness, love or anger:

Go camping for the weekend.

Take your child, spouse or parent to your work for the day.

3. Break a routine activity in an unexpected, novel way (novelty just for its own sake is not highly neurobic).

Take a completely new route to work. Shop at a farmer’s market instead of a supermarket. Completely rearrange your office and desktop.

Local Resources on Healthy Aging:

Boone County Council on Aging (573) 443-1111; 1-800-829-2114

Central Missouri Area Agency on Aging (CMAAA) (573) 443-5823; 1-800-369-5211

Older American Klub (573) 874-7475

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) (573) 442-7238; 1-800-829-2114