

# HDFS GRADUATE NEWSLETTER

## Spring 2015

We're excited to bring you the spring edition of the newsletter! We're calling it the spring edition because it is the spring semester, even though it is decidedly not spring outside. Rose is seriously considering storing a Snuggie in her office, professionalism be darned.

Inside, you will catch up on all of your colleagues' recent personal and professional achievements. You will discover some favorite hangouts around State College. And you will reminisce about how far you have come since you decided to get your PhD at Penn State.

Also, hello to prospective students reading this newsletter! We hope it gives you some insight into the departmental environment here, or at least serves as interesting reading material between meetings. (So many meetings.) We hope to see you in the fall!

Annie Le and Rose Wesche, editors

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### Please join us in congratulating our department award recipients!



**Susan McHale** has been named Distinguished Professor of Human Development and Family Studies for her extraordinary contribution to the field! Congratulations Susan! We are so honored to have you!



**Stephanie Wilson** was awarded Alumni Association Dissertation Award for 2014-15. At the time of the application, Stephanie had 8 published or accepted manuscripts and book chapters, and 19 presentations. Congratulations Stephanie!



**Lauren Philbrook** was awarded Harold F. Martin Graduate Assistant Outstanding Teaching Award for 2014-15 for her outstanding performance serving as a teaching assistant within the department, as well as an Instructor for 229 and 312W in several summers. Congratulations Lauren!

# Reasons WE chose Penn State HDFS



The food at Scott Gest's house during the visit weekend really won me over. As did Eric Loken's hilarious jokes.  
—Brian Calhoun.

The welcoming atmosphere in HDFS, both the students and the faculty made me feel .  
—Summer Braun

The biggest factors were that it's a wonderful program and I had a great fit with my advisor's interests, but on top of that I really liked everyone I met at visit weekend and I got the sense I could be very happy here both academically and mentally.  
—Mairin Augustine

I chose Penn State because it offers top education in HDFS and values students' diversities.  
—Hio Wa (Grace) Mak

Penn State was the only place that truly endorsed and modeled interdisciplinary research teams. I love being at a big school where I am surrounded by people doing diverse, innovative research. You learn so much just by being around many types of projects, even if you are not on them.

—Ali Doub

I chose Penn State for the opportunity to work with my advisor, the strong methods courses, and the collegial and collaborative atmosphere of the department.

—Lauren Philbrook

It was the best fit.  
—Jinshil Hyun

Solid interdisciplinary research in social and emotional learning!

—Deirdre Katz

Everyone always asks me this question when they find out I am from California, and I tell them I actually would have been a fool NOT to come. The program and my advisor -are really the best in their area.

—Jenny Padilla

I loved the department's friendly atmosphere.

—Emily Waterman



# Reasons WE chose Penn State HDFS

I chose to come to Penn State for 2 reasons: the people and the prevention. 1. Penn State HDFSers are kind, supportive people. 2. No matter what lab you are in or what research questions you ask, there are people who will help you connect your work to an applied prevention setting.

~Kristine Bova

I chose to come to Penn State primarily because my research interests aligned with faculty's work and the department's emphasis on prevention and promotion. Also, when I visited during the recruitment weekend, the grad students seemed happier and more open to talking about dealing with stress than in other programs I visited.

~Penina Backer



“Because of the programs' great reputation, and the fact that it is home to the coolest, friendliest grad students.”

~Roisin White

Heavy Prevention focus and Interdisciplinary approach to development.

~Megan Maas

I wanted to come to Penn State because it's the best program with the most amazing faculty!

~Chelom Leavitt

I chose to come to Penn State because it is a nationally-known program with great resources for students. Another major factor in my decision to come here was the great departmental environment, with supportive faculty and graduate students.

~Sara Freed

I wanted to work with Chuck Geier - I had come across his work and it seemed pretty epic. Also the fact that there were a number of people studying things I would be happy working on was a big plus - our lab is working with a ton of other labs which brings a lot of energy/opportunities for innovative work. Finally, everyone seemed very friendly at the visitation weekend and if you're going to be at a place for 4-7 years that's a huge deal. The grad students hang out with each other, the faculty collaborate with each other, and there are good relations between the faculty and grad students.

~David Lydon



# Our favorite places in State College

(in no particular order)

1. The 4th floor of the BBH building
2. Café Lemont
3. Chandlee Lab
4. Happy Valley Brewing Company
5. Local Whiskey

I love Local Whiskey. Our lab goes for cocktails there on Fridays. They also have whiskey tasting nights. Lauren, Nicole and I went last semester - it was so fun!

~ David Lydon

6. Penn State Arboretum
7. Rothrock State Forest
8. Saint's Café
9. Schlow Public Library
10. Shaver's Creek
11. Tussey Mountain
12. Wegman's

Doing work at the Wegmans café on a Saturday morning with a group of fellow HDFS students. Not only is coffee a few steps away, but we keep each other on track.

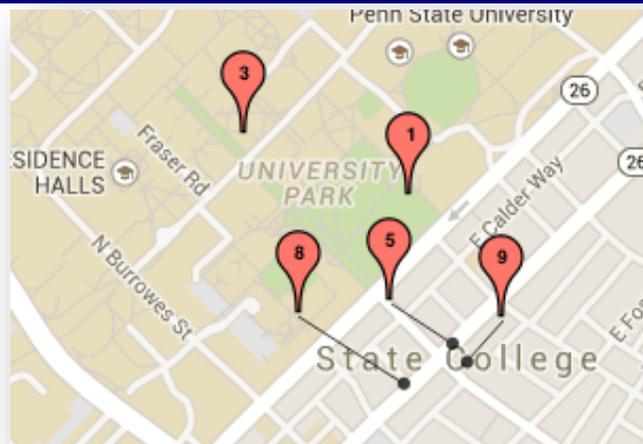
~ Sara Freed

## 6. Penn State Arboretum



The arboretum is a great place to explore when you need a break, need inspiration, or want to enjoy the view.

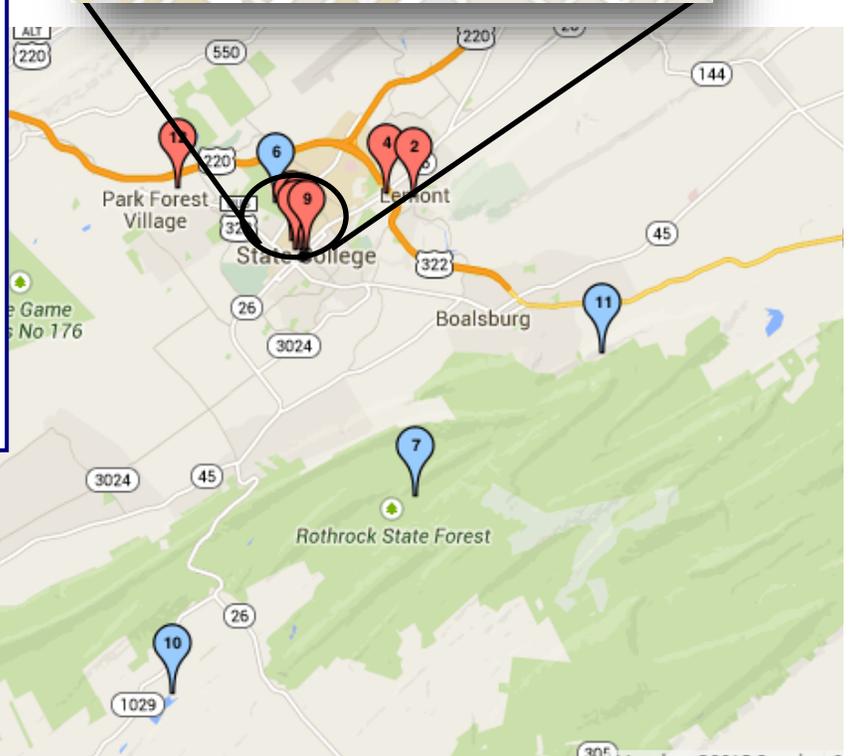
Also, it's a great place to take a date. Even if you have nothing in common, you can enjoy the scenery together.



## 7. Rothrock State Forest



Grad students love hiking, camping, and birdwatching at Rothrock. Go in fall, when the foliage is as beautiful as a million  $p$ -values under .05.



# Our favorite places in State College



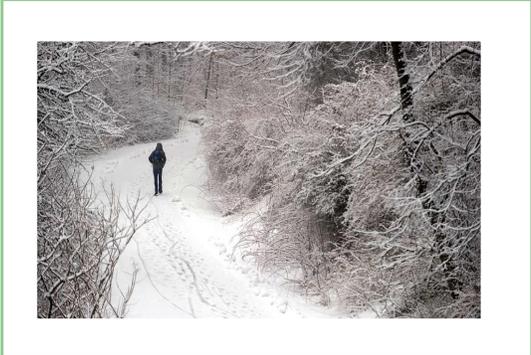
## 10. Shaver's Creek

Another wonderful place to hike, especially with children. I have seen more tadpoles here than anywhere else. Shaver's Creek also features a raptor center, where you can see birds of prey, including a bald eagle.



## 11. Tussey Mountain

Tussey Mountain is home to year-round outdoor activities. Go skiing in the winter, and check out the festivals in other seasons. Megan Maas is a fan of Wingfest, a week-long celebration and chicken wing competition. I enjoyed Oktoberfest, where I saw (and ate part of) my first whole roasted pig.



## Bike paths

An un-mappable favorite place

There are plenty of beautiful places to run, bike, and walk in State College. Even in winter, the views are stunning. My personal favorite place to run is Tudek Park, because its tall grass is home to tons of birds, groundhogs, and even a couple of horses.

# Words of advice for prospective students

Expectation management...you will achieve more than you thought you could in graduate school, but it takes time and hard work to get there! Don't ever give up! You WILL become a world-class researcher!

~Kristine Boa

The atmosphere of the department and community are incredibly important. In general, I'd also say to make sure to do things outside of academia as well. Have hobbies!  
~Briana Sprague

Ask all of the questions.  
~ Summer Braun

Find balance in your life. Don't create habits in grad school of putting your personal wellbeing at the bottom of your 'to do' list. Create good habits now by practicing work/life balance!  
~Deirdre Katz

Ask all of your "dumb" questions. Get involved. Don't get TOO involved though. Manage your time. Make sure you do things you like.  
~ Jon Reader

Go to the creamery  
~ Lauren Bangerter

Don't allow yourself to panic, you'll get all your reading done! By second semester, it will get better.  
~Roisin White

Don't make any decisions until you visit every campus you were accepted to.  
~Jenny Padilla

Have fun! You're going to meet some crazy smart/talented people and learn a bunch.  
~ David Lydon

If you come here, you better bring your A game and be prepared to write. Why are you even reading this survey? You should be writing .  
~ Urie B.

Don't get too caught up on the fact that State College is a small town. It is so close to other big cities! Also, your time here would be relatively short in the grand scheme of things.  
~Kameron Moding

Make sure you are a good match with your advisor - not only research interests but also personality. makes a huge difference!  
~Kami Dvorakova

Congratulations on getting this far! Don't let yourself get overwhelmed by the decision process. Find a place where you think your skills and passions will grow, motivation can sometimes be as useful as intellect.

Just jump in. Everyone is friendly and wants you to succeed.  
~ Chelom Leavitt

Think long term when making your decision about where to attend graduate school. Consider the different networks you would build and job opportunities that would be available after you are done. Ask where previous graduates have gone on to work to find out what is possible.

~Mairin Augustine

Join us!

~Ali Doub

Don't let all the information you're taking in overload your brain. You can probably go back and look most of it up on the internet.

When choosing a program/adviser, substantive interest is an important factor, but perhaps more importantly is how the training you receive (including networking, methods training, and publications) will prepare you for the career of your choice.

~Hio Wa (Grace) Mak

~Sarah Freed

~Brian Calhoun

# Lab Fun!

## Greenberg Lab

The Greenberg lab improved life of a group of college students via their intervention => actually fulfilling HDFS motto - "committed to improving your quality of life"

## Noll Lab

The Noll lab had a Christmas party and got a bunch of accepted pieces into SRCD!

Nicole decorating for Chuck's surprise birthday party



## Geier Lab

The Geier lab received acceptance notifications for manuscripts from Nicotine and Tobacco Research and Journal of Health Psychology on the same day. That was pretty sweet.

The lab went to LA for the FLUX Congress for International Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience in September. Nicole and David saw James Pickens (aka Dr. Richard Webber from Grey's Anatomy) while eating at Bubba Gump Shrimp.

The group is planning a Geier Lab vs Chein Lab (Temple University) battle of the brains to take place at Gettysburg.

Nicole and David painted a whiteboard wall in their lab space.



Nicole at the FLUX conference in Los Angeles

## Lefkowitz Lab

The Lefkowitz lab is putting together several talks for the Conference on Emerging Adulthood in Miami. They are also preparing to present posters and talks at SRCD in March.

## Gest Lab

The Gest lab trained 10 new undergraduate research assistants.

## Kopp Lab

The Kopp lab organized a special issue for the Society for Psychophysiological Research!

## Sliwinski Lab

Last semester, the Sliwinski lab went to the Ren Fest. This semester, they're working on a few papers and are putting together submissions for GSA.



## Fredman Lab

Officially started running our lab by having weekly lab meetings.

## Zarit Lab

The Zarit lab took a trip to Falling Water, a Frank Lloyd Wright house about 3 hours from campus.

The Zarit lab at Falling Water



## Stifter Lab

The Stifter lab recently finished data collection for their 4.5 year lab visit! Now they are putting together a 5.5 year lab visit which should be a lot of fun for us and the kids. They have been following these children since they were 4 months old!

They are also taking their undergrads on a bowling night in a few weeks. :)

Ali Doub, Kameron Moding, and Dr. Stifter recently submitted a manuscript inspired by a 2013 SRCD poster and are awaiting review!

# HDFS Graduate Students' Top 3 Favorite Restaurants & Bars @State College

We asked people to vote for the top 3 restaurants and bars in State College that they really liked from a list of options and we are sharing the winners here. Additionally, we also would like to recommend some restaurants providing yummy Asian food and was very popular among international students in our department. They are: Little Szechuan, Fuji and Jade Garden, Penang, Kimchi Korean Restaurant, Kamrai Thai & Sushi, Say Sushi, India Pavilion, Seoul Garden Korean Restaurant.



**Description:**

Pub food, salads, sandwiches, great appetizers, locally brewed beers

**Votes:** 11

**Address:** 137 Elmwood Street, State College, PA 16801



**Description:**

Cozy trattoria serving Italian fare including pastas & wood-fired pizzas plus ample beer options

**Votes:** 12

**Address:** 1229 South Atherton Street, State College, PA 16801



**Description:**

Authentic Thai Cuisine

**Votes:** 11

**Address:** 232 South Allen Street, State College, PA 16801



**Description:**

Local Whiskey offers an international whiskey experience right in downtown State College.

**Votes:** 19

**Address:** 107 East Beaver Avenue, State College, PA 16801



**Description:**

Campus-area tavern is a draw for its vast selection of international brews, pub fare & live music

**Votes:** 14

**Address:** 100 West College Avenue, State College, PA 16801



**Description:**

Spots bar, traditional American food

**Votes:** 8

**Address:** 106 South Allen Street, State College, PA 16801

**Sarah Freed:** “Submit a National Science Foundation graduate fellowship application in my first semester of graduate school.”

**Jinshil Hyun:** “Methods! Before I came here, I thought that I hate methods., but now I enjoy doing methods :)”

**Deirdre Katz:** “Statistics! ”

**Summer Braun:** “Take a pottery class. Bicycle through the snow. Survive winter. ”

**Hio Wa (Grace) Mak:** “I never thought I would be able to read so many research articles each week in a second language.”

**David Lydon:** “I remember talking to Lawrence Lo at the prospective student weekend about how I wasn't that into methodology, that I was more of a concept person and that I couldn't see myself going that route. Fast forward to now where I'm obsessed with methods and SAS is one of my best friends.”

**Brian Calhoun:** “Talk to girls (sort of). ”

**Lauren Bangerter:** “I have learned so much and met some brilliant people. ”

**Libby Benson:** “Do all my analyses and visualizations in R, and read R blogs for fun (what?). And start an interdisciplinary graduate student organization called, We R: Penn State rstats users group!”

## Before coming to graduate school, I never thought I would...

**Mairin Augustine:** “I have become a much more thoughtful consumer and producer of research. I have gained more competence in my area of research and refined my interests. I am also WAY better at stats. ”

**Briana Sprague:** “My second year, I gave my first paper talk at a conference and didn't freeze on the spot! I've also learned a lot about methods that I didn't know existed or thought about before grad school. I guess I also thought I'd never learn R. :-P ”

**Kami:** “Work so much.”

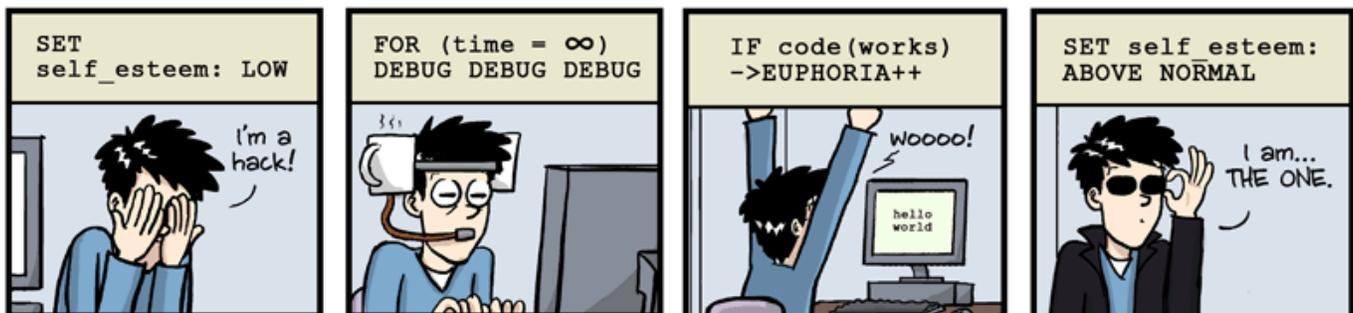
**Megan Maas:** “SAS! Advanced STATS! ”

**Kristine Bova:** “Statistical programming! (And LIKE it ;-)”

**Penina Backer:** “Learn basic coding in r! “

**Emily Waterman:** “Get my bird life list to 111. ”

**Yunying (Annie) Le:** “Have the opportunity to work with people trained in multiple disciplines and were once using 5 statistical programs doing analysis during the same week. Crazy! I know, but I'm so proud of myself too:)”



# What did you do over Winter Break?

I went skiing in the Swiss Alps, rode wild horses in Aruba, and worked on a farm in Ghana.

~ Brian Calhoun

I went back to Macau to visit my family and friends.

~ Hio Wa (Grace) Mak



I went to Sydney Australia! It was warm and amazing!

~ Amanda Griffin

I did try to get some work done, but I also got in quality time with my family and completed several puzzles while binge-watching TV.

~ Mairin Augustine

Dan and I went to Ireland to visit my family and my baby niece!

~ David Lydon



I recovered from finals week; spent time with family and friends; worked on a paper that I started over the summer during an internship

~ Ali Doub

I went home to Maui for a month.

~ Lauren Bangerter



I binge watched Scandal and read for fun a lot. I also went back to Kansas for a few days to see one of my best friends get married.

~ Briana Sprague

I baked 400 Christmas cookies.

~ Kristine Bova

I just hung out with my family.

~ Chelom Leavitt

Relaxed at the beach and went to Disney World!

~ Summer Braun

I went home and relaxed with family and dogs.

~ Sara Freed

I went home to Ireland, caught up with family and friends, and drank copious amounts of tea.

~ Roisin White



I went to Istanbul, Turkey.

~ Emily Waterman



Annie and her boyfriend at Disney World

I visited my family in Colorado!

~ Kameron Moding

puerto rico:) ~ Kami Dvorakova

I went to Vegas and home to California :) ~ Jenny Padilla

I went sailing in Seattle for New Years celebration ~ Deirdre Katz

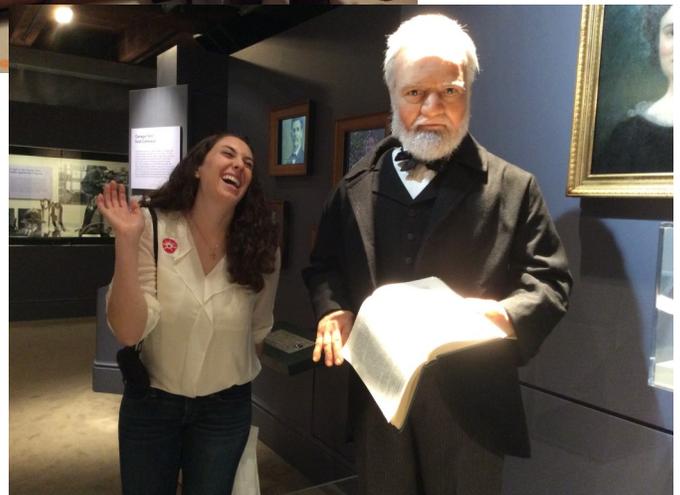
# Fun around State College



Kristine chilling with the Starkist tuna and Andrew Carnegie at the Heinz History Museum in Pittsburgh



Clodagh was a tiny ninja for Halloween



# I ♥ R!

## **We R: Penn State R Users' Group**



Libby Benson

On my first day of graduate school my advisor, Nilam Ram, mentioned he appreciated when individuals noticed an opportunity and took charge to implement it. At that time, I had no clue what I could possibly contribute that would be useful. I also never thought I would write a constitution as part of my graduate school experience, but somehow I spent my Saturday afternoon on Valentine's Day doing just that.

### **What is R and why is it awesome (most of the time)**

Through my coursework and research, I (and many others) have worked hard to become fluent in the statistical platform, fondly known as R. One of the exciting things about this platform is that it's an open science initiative, meaning (a) it's FREE, (b) anyone can develop tools (known as packages) for it, (c) there are always new things to learn, (d) people from many disciplines use this platform and (e) there is consistent entertainment from the name of each new version release -- "Warm Puppy" and "Pumpkin Helmet". Learning this new set of skills has been a conglomeration of challenge, frustration, and gratifying accomplishment (e.g. when you throw your hands up in the air because not only did your code run without errors, it also actually did what you intended for it to do!). I eventually realized I wasn't the only student experiencing these things, which inspired me to create a new graduate student organization.

### **The goal of We R: Penn State R Users' Group**

The goal of We R: Penn State R Users' Group is to provide an interdisciplinary work space, discussion and presentation forum for Penn State graduate students (undergraduates, postdocs, faculty, and staff also welcome) who use (or would like to learn) R for science. We hope to get a strong representation from HDFS students as well as students from other departments such as biology, nutrition, statistics, psychology, political science, demography, geography, sociology, etc. Based on a similar group at UC Davis, the general structure involves a reserved weekly space (likely Nilam's lab at Amy Gardner House) for members to come as they please (bring your laptop!) to work on their own projects, ask for help, provide help to others, and even (if you want) present short tutorials to the group on how to do something cool. Fun, snacks, and even schwag are all valid assumptions, and those of all skill levels are welcome.

### **How can I join?**

We hope to have a website sponsored through the Penn State Student Organization office up and running soon. In the meantime, please contact Libby ([LEB237@psu.edu](mailto:LEB237@psu.edu)) to be added to the listserv and/or check it out and join us on Facebook by clicking or searching [We R: Penn State R Users' Group](#). I also encourage you to invite your friends (especially those from other departments) to participate in the group. Have I mentioned there will be snacks?

# THE FRUIT BANDIT: AN INVESTIGATIVE PIECE

Penn State's HDFS department is known for its world-renowned methodological and prevention training, but maybe it should be known for its pranks! Anonymous pranksters have left origami cranes on students' desks, filled one professor's yard with marshmallow Peeps over Easter weekend, and even created a Twitter account used to bother grad students\*. But, surely, the Fruit Bandit is our department's most prolific prankster. The Fruit Bandit leaves foods and notes at students' offices and homes. Not even professors are safe-- the home of Eva Lefkowitz and Eric Loken was pranked just before Halloween.

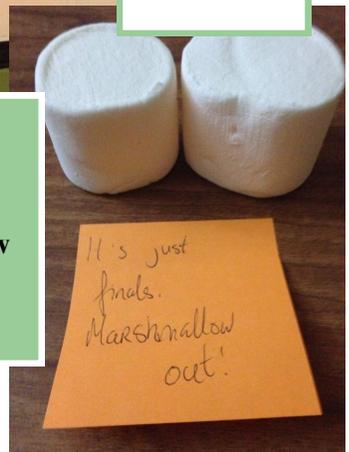
I, for one, am outraged by the audacity of the Fruit Bandit (and a little disappointed that I have never been pranked). It's time to reveal the identity of the person (or people) who have captured the attention of the HDFS community.

I asked HDFS-ers if they had been pranked by the Fruit Bandit. Here are their responses:



Typical fruit bandit pranks. "Orange you glad you have oranges?"

"It's just finals. Marshmallow out!"



Several times! We have received all kinds of tasty treats that my fruit-bat toddler enjoys!  
~ Deirdre Katz

The fruit bandit put a Ziploc baggie with an egg and some jelly beans and wrote a note from "Professor Egg-and-beans". Darn fruit bandit.  
~ Sara Freed



A trail of pumpkins outside Eric and Eva's house. The y have riddles on them!

Yes, got some yummy goodies.  
~ Kami Dvorakova

The fruit bandit left jelly beans and an egg at my door, a poor attempt at a pun on a certain professor's name....  
~ Roisin White

Yes. The fruit bandit left a bunch of food items on my door step and puns written on post-it notes on my door several nights in a row at the end of the Spring semester.  
~ Brian Calhoun

Plenty of times, I think the fruit bandit supplied my snacks for a week.  
~Jenny Padilla

No, but I love that they stick to primarily healthy foods.  
~ Ali Doub

The fruit bandit left a real beta fish on our doorstep!  
~ Emily Waterman

Yes. They left oranges and marshmallows at my house during finals last spring. Also someone keeps leaving mysterious notes in my letter box with things like: "the bear smells honey". They also tweet at me using the @urie\_b handle.  
~ David Lydon

The fruit bandit left bananas at my house one night. I used them to make banana bread.  
~ Lauren Bangerter

I have! I got macadamia nuts, Easter egg jelly bellys, and a real egg.. So I didn't get fruit, but it was the act of the fruit bandit!  
~ Briana Sprague

\*The handle is @UrieB, and he answered the newsletter survey. He thinks the fruit bandit is more clever than he is and wishes he were the fruit bandit.

# THE MYSTERY OF THE FRUIT BANDIT, CONTINUED

So, who is the fruit bandit? It has to be someone who has a great sense of humor, but that could be anybody in the department. It has to be someone who knows where the prankees live and work, which narrows the list down somewhat. The fruit bandit could even be the collaborative work of a den of master pranksters. I asked students what they think the fruit bandit's real identity is. Here are the suspects:



David Lydon

Motive: He has many talents. It is completely possible that criminal mastermind is one of them.



Brian Calhoun

Motive: He's just a suspicious-looking guy. Never trust Brian.

"I have almost no information, but somehow I suspect Brian Calhoun."

~ Lauren Philbrook



Emily Waterman

Pictured here holding a portrait of fruit. Coincidence? Maybe not.

"I'm starting to think it might be me."

~ Emily Waterman



Lauren Bangarter

Motive: She loves fruit.



Amanda Griffin

Motive: A gal's gotta relieve the stress of graduate school somehow.

# MORE PHOTOS



Meng, Annie, and Linying pose in front of jack-o-lanterns before Halloween.



Who can spot Jon in this photo?



Congratulations to Brandon McDaniel and his family on the birth of baby Skyler! He arrived on January 27th and weighed 8 lbs, 5 oz.



Sara and Jessica are best bros 4 lyfe

