

And so we arrive at April. You may not know that April is Humor Month, Global Child Nutrition Month, and Mathematics Awareness Month. It's also the month of GSG Leader Brendaly Drayton (interview below). So, if you have any friends who have not heard of math, tell them about it! Recommend a math GSG session! Then, and only then, read the April newsletter. It's a long one, but you have the whole month to get through it. **OH, AND PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY (#2 below).**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS**

1. On **Wednesday, April 6, at 6 p.m.**, two teams of tutors ("The Rough Writers" and "The Dangling Modifiers") will join the typically raucous and cutthroat competition known as the Mid-State Literacy Council's 17th Annual Ron & Mary Maxwell Community [Spelling Bee](#) at Foxdale Village! If you'd like to cheer for the teams and be part of this annual fundraising event, please contact Cindy Clem (crc189). Rides from Boucke will be organized for those who don't have transportation.

2. We are in the process of brainstorming ways to keep Penn State Learning alumni connected. Will you please fill out [this anonymous survey](#) that will help us know what you want and what kind of platform you're likely to use? Thank you! (Here's the link again, if the above link doesn't work: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2L55CZV>)

3. Interested in learning a language this summer? Check out Penn State's [Summer Language Institute](#). They offer a wide variety of language courses for academic credit as well as scholarships for select languages.

4. We are excited to announce that the PSL website now has a ["Giving" page](#). This will allow us to accept donations from Penn State Learning alumni and others who would like to support the work of our tutors and our community.

5. We are also excited to announce the [Outstanding Guided Study Group Leader Award](#)! A generous donation from a GSG Leader alumnus allowed us to create this award for current GSG leaders. Award winners will be announced at our final, all-staff, end-of-semester meeting (see #6).

6. The final, all-staff, end-of-semester meeting will take place on **Friday, April 29, from 5-7 p.m.** (or as long as it lasts) in 220 Boucke. Save the date, and watch your email for more information! We'll send off our graduates, congratulate the GSG Award winners, and celebrate the end of another fabulous year at Penn State Learning.

7. Mice droppings have been spotted at the Student Affairs end of the 2nd floor Boucke hallway. Student Affairs has partnered with Centre County PAWS to foster a cat on weekdays to help take care of this problem. The cat is supposed to be kept in the Student Affairs suite, but cats being cats, this one will probably get out sometimes. If you see a cat wandering the hallway, please inform one of your supervisors (or take it back to Student Affairs if you don't mind picking up cats).

### **STAND FOR STATE**

On Monday, March 28, we closed 220 Boucke to host a Stand for State workshop (also known as Bystander Intervention Training), led by Leanne Lenz. Over 30 staff members attended. As we blissfully ate Alumni Swirl, Bittersweet Mint, Raspberry Fudge Torte, and Death By Chocolate Creamery ice cream, we learned how to intervene in situations that could result in someone being harmed. Here's a summary of what we learned:

The Three D's:

1. **Direct** - If you're brave enough and the situation calls for it, you can stop potential abuse by directly telling the abuser to stop.
2. **Distract** - If you're not sure of what's happening or whether it will turn abusive (or if a direct confrontation might be dangerous), you can use distraction techniques to interrupt the progress. For example, if you hear your neighbors screaming at each other, you can knock on their door to ask to borrow sugar or a phone charger or to ask for directions. If you see a drunk person being led into a potentially harmful situation, you can pretend to know him or her and say, "There you are! Let's go home." Remember that you don't have to confront the potential abuser. You can focus on communicating with the potential victim.
3. **Delegate** - If you notice something happening that doesn't seem right, ask someone else for help. Maybe a bouncer, bartender, or your group of friends can address the situation or help you figure out what to do.

Leanne closed the workshop by encouraging us to make a commitment to safety. Even by doing small things, like not laughing at a racist or homophobic joke, we can make safety and respect for others the norm. We can also care for our own safety by enlisting our friends to watch out for us at parties, to know when we're doing something we'll probably regret, and to stop us.

If you'd like more information about Bystander Intervention or would like to schedule a workshop for a group or club, go to [standforstate.psu.edu](http://standforstate.psu.edu). Thanks to all of you who attended the meeting!

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS



### Catherine Corbett, Receptionist, April 5

**Year:** Senior

**Major:** Kinesiology

**Post-grad goal:** Attend a Doctorate of Physical Therapy program

**Time at PSL:** since Spring 2013

**What is your favorite zoo animal?** The polar bears

**How many pillows do you sleep with?** One



### John Quinlisk, Math Tutor, April 8

**Year:** Based off of my credits I'm a junior year; however, it's my first semester at Penn State (I went to Pitt for two years studying Actuarial Math, and I'm pretty much where a sophomore would be with my major).

**Major:** Secondary Math Education with a German minor

**Post-grad goal:** I plan on applying for high school math teaching positions in America and possibly Germany! (although that's very far away in my future...)

**Time at PSL:** one month

**If you could eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?** It would be mashed potatoes with an obscene amount of shredded cheese melted into it. I just really like potatoes and cheese.

**What is your favorite zoo animal?** My favorite zoo animal is an otter because they're insanely cute and like to do a bunch of neat swimming tricks for people watching.

**What three things do you think of most every day?** 1- how many dogs I have seen during the day and how important dogs are; 2 - what my next meal is going to be and when I am going to eat it; and 3 - how to create an open, safe, and respectful classroom for my future students.



### Jessica McKinley, Math Tutor, April 11

**Year:** Senior

**Major:** Secondary Education in Mathematics

**Post-grad goal:** Looking to move back to NEPA (Northeastern PA) to start teaching at the high school level, and work towards my masters (not sure which one yet).

**Time at PSL:** This is my second semester here.

**If you could join any past or current music group, which one would it be?** Pentatonix

**What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?** Barbecued kangaroo tail

**What makes you laugh the most?** Joanne Oh



### Lucy Ruzzini, Writing Tutor, April 12

**Year:** Junior

**Major:** Early Childhood Education with a minor in Human Development & Family Studies

**Post-grad goal:** My goal is to begin teaching elementary school after graduation. Lately, I've considered teaching abroad in Europe for a few years to start off my career.

**Time at PSL:** 5 semesters

**What is your biggest fear?** Many people are aware of my phobia of vomit. I'm often asked if I'm afraid of myself when I throw up, but thankfully not. I definitely don't like when I throw up, but what terrifies me is when I see or hear someone vomit. I actually wrote my I-Search paper about my fear!

**How many pillows do you sleep with?** I sleep with one pillow, but I actually prefer sleeping without a pillow. Almost every morning I wake up having my pillow scrunched against the wall with my head flat on my mattress. When I sleep with a pillow, I think my neck ends up being too high off the mattress. My shoulder tries to compensate for that, and then my shoulder ends up feeling stuck an inch away from my face the next day. Really, I should just stop sleeping with a pillow!

Kate Robinson, Writing Tutor, April 10

Christin Coleman, Writing Tutor, April 11

Maddie Lippincott, Writing Tutor, April 17

Lauren Shugarts, Math Tutor, April 17

Johan Moreira, Math Tutor, April 21

Andres Sousa, Spanish Tutor, April 22

Miranda Auhl, Math Tutor, April 25

Adam Baylor, Writing Tutor, April 27

William Graber, Math Tutor, April 29

## FUN FACTS

What color is a polar bear's skin?

- a. white
- b. black
- c. transparent

The correct answer is 'b'. A polar bear's skin is black, and its fur is transparent (not white). The more you know.

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The fear of vomiting is called emetophobia, which is best treated, according to [anxietycoach.com](http://anxietycoach.com), by exposure therapy. They recommend exposure exercises that include which of the following?

- a. eating at buffets
- b. spitting into a toilet
- c. smells, videos, and photographs of vomiting
- b. spinning around
- d. sitting in the backseat of a car
- e. reading an article that repeats the word "vomit" a lot
- f. all of the above

The correct answer is 'f.' Lucy, your cure awaits.

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According to acclaimed dog authority, AwesomeDude4 on [answers.com](http://answers.com), "Dogs are AWESOME and IMPORTANT. Police dogs help find criminals, they sniff drugs, and they patrol places like prisons or high-security areas. Therapy dogs comfort disaster survivors or help people with mental illness. Herding dogs help farmers round up sheep and cattle, and make very good companions for humans. (I used to have a collie)."

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Who is this hilarious Joanne Oh who makes Jess McKinley laugh? A famous comedian? No. A reality show star? No. A Guided Study Group leader? Yes! She's one of us!

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If you [dream about eating mashed potatoes](#), you may be experiencing concerns over financial matters. [Dreams about eating cheese](#) are worse: "To dream of eating cheese denotes great disappointments and sorrow. No good of any nature can be hoped for. Cheese is generally a bad dream." Researchers have yet to determine the meaning of dreams about eating mashed potatoes with obscene amounts of cheese melted into them.

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Did you know that if you don't eat any red meat except kangaroo, you are a [kangatarian](#)? Former vegetarians like kangaroo because it's lean (only 2% fat), ~~does not fart as much~~ produces low levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and is killed humanely after living a natural life in the wild. That said, it would be difficult to be a kangatarian in State College, as none of our town's google-searchable restaurants with websites and menus serve kangaroo.

## RESOURCES

### Dr. Brendaly Drayton, 205C Boucke: A Brief Interview



Brendaly is the Guided Study Groups Program Coordinator. She has a Ph.D in adult education from Penn State and a B. A. in liberal arts from Vassar. She has worked at Penn State as a New Student Orientation summer adviser for two years, has served as a volunteer literacy and math teacher at The Downtown Learning Center in Brooklyn, NY, has supervised a district sales team at Verizon Information Services, and has a strong background in qualitative research.

**You have a Ph.D in adult education. What was your dissertation about?**

I wanted to gain an understanding of Black men's experiences with education and explore the relationship between literacy, learning, and identity.

**How long did you live in Brooklyn, NY? What do you love about it? What should we do if we visit Brooklyn?**

About 30 years. I love the cultural diversity. It is also close to the 'city that never sleeps' (the borough of Manhattan) but maintains its own identity (three-lined streets, quiet neighborhoods, etc.). If you visit Brooklyn you should definitely walk across the Brooklyn Bridge (connecting Manhattan and Brooklyn) - one of the oldest and most well-known landmarks in New York. Visit DUMBO (Down under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass) - trendy waterfront neighborhood - great view of the Manhattan skyline. Grand Army Plaza which includes Prospect Park (a replica of Central Park in Manhattan; free concerts in the summer), The Brooklyn Zoo, Botanical garden, museum, zoo and public library. Brooklyn is a great place for foodies-numerous restaurants from every part of the world. Grimaldi's coal-fired brick oven pizzeria is a tourist attraction and you will have to wait on very long lines but it is absolutely worth it and arguably the best pizza in New York.

**What do you like most about your job here at PSL? What about it keeps you awake at night?**

I enjoy working with the GSG leaders, in particular, observing their development and effectiveness in helping students enhance their learning as well as those moments when the light goes on and the students get it. Nothing keeps me up at night but I do lose a breath at the thought that there might be a 100 students waiting somewhere for an exam review I had not scheduled.

**To many of us, Guided Study Group Leaders are a mystery and an enigma. Because they work in different locations on campus, the tutors and receptionists don't interact with them often. Can you tell us a little bit about GSG leaders? Who are they, how is their work different than tutoring, what are their sorrows and joys?**

Our GSG leaders are sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are majoring in engineering, math, statistics, economics, physics, bio-renewable systems, management information systems, biochemistry and molecular biology, food science, secondary and elementary education, actuarial science, and wildlife and fisheries science. They have excelled in the course they are facilitating. They attend class lectures, plan learning activities to help students gain a deeper understanding of class material, foster environments where students feel comfortable to ask questions and learn from each other, host two to three sessions a week as well as exam reviews. Altogether, they facilitate 55 sessions a week and will have hosted about 50 exam reviews by the end of the semester. They are happy when a student finally "gets it" and leaves the session understanding material they initially struggled with but are challenged when their learning strategies are not as effective as they hoped or students don't show up. Our GSG leaders are very caring and committed, often staying beyond their scheduled times to help students.

**What are three of your life's defining moments?**

The most important moment or decision of my life was becoming a Christian and having a fervent dynamic relationship with Jesus. It has shaped who I am and who I am becoming. It has opened my heart to people and given me inner peace, among other things. Another significant moment was leaving Barbados to live in the United States. The culture shock was somewhat mitigated by living in a West Indian neighborhood in Brooklyn but the move expanded my perspectives and opportunities. The third significant decision was leaving the corporate world to pursue a career in education which resulted in my move to State College and my current position with Penn State Learning.

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