

# Opinion

# Mathematical Seduction

by Daniel D. Ester  
guest columnist

Yes, my major is in fact, Math, but here I am, writing an *article*. Why, you ask, is a math-person invading your precious *Collegian*? Am I not busy all day color-coding my notes and cleaning my pocket-protector? Don't I have a computer I need to get to? Isn't there someone with an English or Creative Writing major I could be criticizing, asking if they'll be satisfied with their job at Burger King when they graduate?

But I'm not doing any of those things, and for good reason! I'm here to review a seminar--the first of the *Mathematics Seminar Series*--which was Thursday, September 12, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Reed Lecture Hall. Behrend's very own Dr. Richard Bertram was the guest speaker, and the topic was, "Electrical Signalling in Nerve Cells and the Marriage of Biology and Mathematics."

Although I'm sure you'd rather walk through the fires of hell wearing nothing

but *tissue paper* than go to a mathematics-slash-biology seminar, I think that you may have found this one interesting.

Dr. Bertram is a new instructor at Behrend (and he has a nice cushy office inside the Nick building, even though there are many other instructors whose offices are out BACK in the trailer-trash section--instructors who have been here ever since Behrend was a FARM--and all because of three magic letters: Ph.D.).

Anyway, as I was saying, Dr. Bertram is new at Behrend, and, among other things, he teaches the undergraduate class MTHBD 420.1 (which is Penn State University Registrar Secret Code for *Real Analysis*). Further, I happen to be enrolled in that very same class (and I love the class and I think that the instructor is excellent and he's really *really nice* and has a good sense of humor and is handsome and talented).

Dr. Bertram's seminar, "Electrical Signalling. . ." was not at all what I'd expected. Yes, I probably wouldn't have gone to the seminar had two of my instructors not bribed me with extra credit

(one instructor required a short write-up while the second simply wanted his students to sign a piece of paper. A-duh, like I'm going to pass up extra credit because I'm too stinking lazy to sign my name and write a simple report.

So I went to this seminar, seduced by bonus points. Is that so wrong? Have we just witnessed the creation of *Mathematical Seduction*? It will be called MTH SED 101: *Coaxing Your Students Into Attending Lectures Which Aren't Required*.

ANYWAY, after a brief and surprisingly interesting history of the study of the brain, Dr. Bertram was underway with the main topic, a taste of how computational neurologists use mathematical equations to describe the electrical signalling process in a neuron. Nerve cell functioning has been studied by these mathematical models for over 40 years, and the 1980's computer revolution advanced this area incredibly.

I must say that I left the seminar feeling infinitely more satisfied than when I went in (or would that be "more satisfied" to the oo power?). The lecture was easy to

follow no matter what previous math or biology classes you've had, and there was not a lot of technical nerd-talk detracting from the enjoyment of the seminar.

I rate this seminar as follows:  $\epsilon \epsilon \epsilon \epsilon$  (that's four epsilons, for those of you Mathematically Challenged Persons who are applying for social security disability because you can't pass MTHBD 001. I strongly encourage everyone to attend the next seminar. And for those of you who would simply like to read my smart-ass reviews, I'll be there!

*Dan Ester is a Senior. He has completed the Forest Science minor program at University Park and is finishing his math major courses this year. Dan is a member of the National Gold Key Honor Society, and has been elected President of Trigon, Behrend's Lesbian Coalition, for the '96-'96 school year. Please send your remarks to dde104@email.psu.edu.*

## The Chopping Block

by Philomena Corradeno

Salmon is in good supply right now, making it a wise choice for a meal with a touch of elegance. Izaak Walton called it the "king of fish," a rightly deserved title.

Today we have a dish served at the DaPietro restaurant in Westport, Conn. Salmon, poached in a skillet of simmering white wine and water, is drained and dressed with a radish vinaigrette. The quartered radishes add just the right texture and tang without overpowering the firm flesh and sweet salmon flavor. Radishes can play an inexpensive role in many dishes. You might want to send for a brochure containing six recipes and a number of tips for use outside the salad bowl. Send a self-addressed,



stamped No. 10 envelope (business size) envelope to: Radish Council, 49 East 21st Street, 8th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10010.

### POACHED SALMON WITH RADISH VINAIGRETTE

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup dry sherry
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper, divided
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 8 (4 ounces each) salmon fillets
- 2 1/2 cups trimmed radishes cut in wedges (10 ounces)
- 2 quarts (6 ounces) mesclun salad greens or baby salad greens

In a bowl, whisk together olive oil, vinegar, sherry, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper; set aside. In a skillet, bring to a boil 1 quart water, white wine and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper.

Place salmon fillets in boiling

water-wine mixture. Cover; simmer until cooked, about 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily with fork. With slotted spatula, remove fillets to a serving platter; set aside. Place salad greens on platter. In a bowl, toss together radishes and reserved olive oil mixture; spoon over salmon and salad greens. Serve immediately. Makes 8 servings.

**NEW PRODUCT NEWS:** Ice cream producers have been busy developing new temptations.

Turkey Hill, for example, has added Raspberry 'n Cream Gourmet Lite, vanilla swirled with raspberry sherbet. Also Strawberry Rhubarb Pie made with Strawberry premium laced with strawberry/rhubarb pie and bits of pie crust. A newcomer to their frozen yogurt line is Snicker

Doodle Dandy, cinnamon yogurt with miniature snicker doodles, a Pennsylvania Dutch treat. Breyers gives us a new line of six ice creams blended with mix-ins: Reese's Pieces, Peanut Butter Cups, Nutrageous, the latter two also from Reese's; Maxwell House Cappuccino with cream swirls and chocolate-covered Irish Cream candies; Sara Lee Fudge Brownie and Hershey Chocolate with Almonds. Snickers Ice Cream Cone is peanut and caramel in ice cream in a cone lined with chocolate.

Healthy Choice joined forces with Nabisco to bring out a line of low-fat cookies and bread crisps. They have also added a fat-free Super Chunky Mushroom Pasta Sauce to their sauce lineup. It has no fat, no cholesterol, no MSG.

## Tempus

• the Behrend magazine of literature and the arts •

Call for submissions of:  
poetry, fiction, non-fiction, art work, and photographs

### Guidelines:

- > all submissions must be typed
- > fiction and non-fiction will be double spaced with a 15 page limit
- > poetry will be single spaced
- > name, phone #, and box # will appear on the text along with a title
- > no limit on quantity

Deadline for submissions is Nov. 25

Don't wait until the last minute or you may be too late  
Only high quality pieces will be accepted

Place submissions in the Tempus mailbox in the SGA office (Reed)

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