

LMU

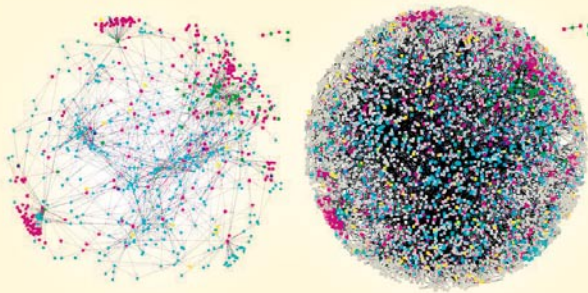
LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHENinsight **LMU**

The international edition of the LMU Munich newsletter

Profiling intruders to prevent hostile takeovers

by Susanne Wedlich

Pathogenic viruses are an ever-present threat. Using human herpesviruses as his model, virologist Professor Jürgen Haas has set out to elucidate systematically the complex molecular interactions that determine the outcome of a viral infection. A comprehensive understanding of the interplay between host and viral functions should point the way to more effective therapies for viral diseases.



▲ Herpesvirus-host protein interaction network. In the diagrams, which were constructed with Cytoscape software, the points represent proteins, while connecting lines indicate interactions. The panel on the left shows all viral proteins (green), the cell proteins with which they interact directly (purple) and the latter's normal partners (light blue). All other cellular proteins are included in the right panel (gray).



For the complete article, see

www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2010/04_01.pdf
Journalist, networker, CIA agent?

by Julia Zahlten

No other American journalist was as prominent in Western Europe during the Cold War or as well acquainted with leading intellectuals as Melvin J. Lasky. His literary estate is now held by LMU Munich, and is currently undergoing intensive study by LMU scholars.

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A world city and its Games

by Mike Gardner

Munich and the 1972 Olympics are at the focus of Simone Egger, a doctoral student at LMU Munich's Institute of European Ethnology. An exhibition on the topic that she helped prepare fits in with the city's bid for the 2018 Olympics.

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DAAD's 2010 student award winner

by Elizabeth Willoughby

If anyone knows how to make the most of LMU's foreign education experience, it's Rachel Shindelar, as demonstrated by the DAAD 2010 student award she was just honored with before she wraps up her Political Science degree at the end of the year.

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Journalist, networker, CIA agent?

by Julia Zahlten

A drawing by Marc Chagall with a personal dedication or a handwritten Christmas card from Charlie Chaplin – these and many other pieces carrying some very familiar names are part of Melvin J. Lasky's library and personal papers that are now in the possession of LMU Munich. The correspondence between the journalist and leading authors, artists and public intellectuals of his day constitute a rich source for scholars of the Cold War era, offering new insights into the cultural climate of the period.

From 1948, Lasky edited the West German politico-cultural journal *Der Monat*, in 1958 he was appointed editor-in-chief of the London based *Encounter*, the most influential European cultural magazine during the Cold War. Lasky soon became a central figure among the intellectual elite of Western Europe. "The fact that he was not just a journalist, but also a collector, is a stroke of luck for historians," says Christof Mauch, Professor of North American Cultural History and Director of the Lasky Center for Transatlantic Studies at LMU.

The collection, comprising approximately 10,000 books and thousands of letters, notes and drawings, has been donated to LMU by Lasky's widow, Helga Hegewisch-Lasky, and is now accessible for scholarly investigation. "Probably the most valuable element in the collection is Lasky's extensive correspondence," says Mauch. "He was perhaps the most effective networker in the cultural sphere during the Cold War."

About 3,500 letters and postcards give testimony to his correspondence with all the intellectual heavyweights in the post-war West, from Hannah Arendt to George Orwell, from Ignazio Silone and Raymond Aron to Heinrich Böll, from Thomas Mann to T.S. Eliot.

From Trotskyite to anti-communist

Lasky was born in New York in 1920 as the son of Jewish Polish immigrants. He studied at New York City College, which contributed significantly to his intellectual development and turned him into a Trotskyite. Alerted by the atrocities of the Soviet Regime, he became a convinced anti-communist and 'cold warrior'. The books that make up his library, together with his correspondence, annotated newspaper cuttings, travel guides and handwritten notes, make it possible to follow the evolution of his political thinking. "Of course, Lasky himself is at focus of our research, but we are also interested in illuminating the cultural aspects of the Cold War," says Charlotte Lerg, academic staff of the Lasky Center.



▲ Melvin J. Lasky

In 1945, Lasky was posted to Europe as a military historian. In 1948, as political tensions continued to grow between the USA and the Soviet Union, the American Military Government in Occupied Germany created a new position in its Cultural Section for Lasky: Together with the journalist Hellmut Jaesrich, Lasky was assigned to planning a new periodical designed to appeal to Germany's intellectual elite. The result was *Der Monat* and Lasky was soon able to attract the services of writers such as Max Frisch, Peter de Mendelssohn, Hilde Spiel and Hermann Kesten.

"Mel was Mel"

A major crisis in Lasky's life was precipitated by reports published in 1967, which revealed that *Encounter* had been financed by the CIA. "Interviews and conversations with his family and friends confirm that this period was the most difficult in his professional career," explains Dr Maren Roth, scientific staff at the Lasky Center, who is working on Lasky's biography. Several authors and many readers of *Encounter* were affronted by what they regarded as a personal betrayal. "But it is not yet clear how much and how soon Lasky knew about this," says Roth.

Regardless of that, Melvin J. Lasky is firmly fixed in the memories of his friends, colleagues and contemporaries. At the opening of the present exhibition "Cold War Politics. Lasky: New York – Berlin – London" in the Amerika-Haus in Munich, Professor Michael Naumann, former publisher of the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* and a close colleague of Lasky, summed up: "Mel wasn't just any professional journalist. Mel was Mel."



For more information, see:

www.laskycenter.amerikanistik.lmu.de



A world city and its Games

by Mike Gardner

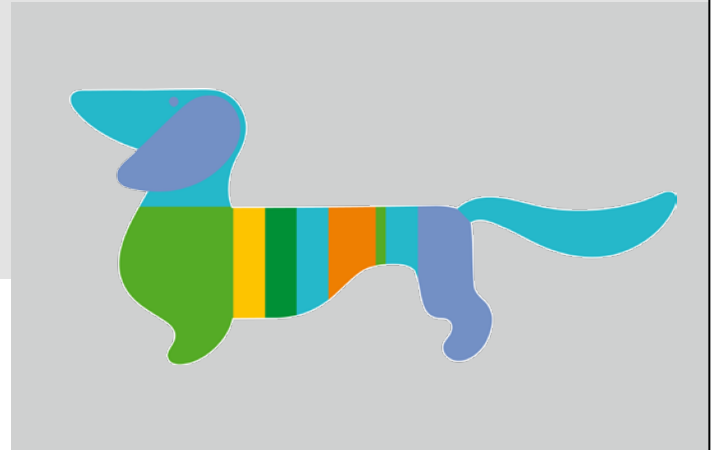
Munich is putting in a bid for the 2018 Summer Olympics – 38 years after the 1972 Games and the tragic events surrounding them. Simone Egger, a doctoral student at LMU Munich’s Institute of European Ethnology, is writing her thesis about the atmosphere in this Bavarian metropolis in the 1960s. She also helped prepare an exhibition featuring the 1972 Olympics, a collaborative effort by the *Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte* and the Institute of Bavarian History at LMU Munich.

The 1972 Olympic Games marked a climax in the making of modern Munich. One of the guiding notions behind the Munich Olympics was to present the Bavarian capital as a cosmopolitan, peaceful and pleasant city. The Games were conceived to represent a decidedly un-nationalistic event in Munich’s checkered history. This was reflected in a dachshund with colorful stripes and a gamut avoiding black, golden and red as far as possible.

A metropolis in the making

Simone Egger is working together with cultural anthropologist Professor Johannes Moser on theoretical and practical aspects of grasping the city as a complex object. Egger’s doctoral thesis shows how Munich turned into a modern metropolis in the sixties. “Urban anthropology must always be understood as a transdisciplinary subject,” Egger explains. “I view my area largely from a civilization studies angle but also consult ethnology, geography, art history and sociology. As well as looking through the archives, I interview and talk to people. Going into the city gives you important impulses and information.”

It was a perfect opportunity for Simone Eggers to meet contemporary witnesses when they brought along their 1972 Games’ souvenirs to be included in the exhibition. Most of them donated dachshund Waldi, the first Olympics mascot. It was created by Otl Aicher, the chief designer of the 1972 Olympic Games. As a schoolmate of their brother Werner, Aicher was a close friend of Hans and Sophie Scholl, who were to join the White Rose resistance movement against the Nazis, and were executed in 1943. He later married the Scholls’ older sister Inge, and together with her and Max Bill, he founded the Ulm School of Design in 1953.



New Games in a new Germany

Incorporating the notion of a different, broad-minded Munich, and a changed Germany, in his concept for the 1972 Olympics, Aicher presented the Games as an optimistic ‘rainbow’ event sporting light blue and green, silver, and apricot. The mascot Waldi was designed as a plush toy, appearing on posters, stickers and buttons. People were at first skeptical about Aicher’s plans. But the city’s Lord Mayor, Hans-Joachim Vogel, and Willi Daume, President of the Olympic Games Organization Committee, took to his ideas.

“The people of Munich were also infected by this enthusiasm,” says Egger. “The city generated an atmosphere that grew with intensity, only to culminate in a tragedy.” On September 5, eight Palestinian terrorists broke into the Olympic Village, taking eleven Israeli athletes, coaches and officials hostage. Two hostages died in the attack, while the others were killed in a botched rescue attempt. The Olympics were briefly suspended, but only a day later, Avery Brundage, President of the International Olympic Committee, decided that the “Games must go on.”

After the Games

“The tragedy certainly put a damper on Munich’s aspirations,” says Egger. “But many of the urban processes already underway were affected more by the impact of the 1973 oil crisis.” Today, people from Israel don’t seem to have reservations about Munich, or it’s once again seeking to host the Olympics, because of what happened in 1972. Tourist numbers are on the increase, with the new synagogue and the Jewish Museum acting as particular magnets. And the opening of a Consulate General in Munich in late 2011 has just been announced. Former Jewish Central Council President Charlotte Knoblauch welcomes the decision by Israel’s Foreign Ministry, and has referred to Munich as a “cosmopolitan but also culturally and economically highly attractive city.”

 RESEARCH


CABANIS

◀ *The physician Pierre-Jean-Georges Cabanis (1757-1808), the most prominent creative mind among the 'idéologues.'*




◀ *The picture shows two shamans of the Jēnu Kurumba in South India preparing for the ritual dialogues to be held during the mourning ritual.*

HISTORY

The incursion of science into politics

by Marcus Simon

On the threshold of the 19th century political theorists begin to search for ways to construct a science of politics based on empirical methods derived from the exact sciences. These efforts would provoke turbulent debates on what exactly might constitute a secure basis for a science of politics. This quest for a rational model of politics is at the focus of a LMUexcellent project currently being pursued by three LMU historians, Professor Eckhart Hellmuth, Dr Martin Schmidt and Dr Iain McDaniel.


 For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2010/04_02.pdf

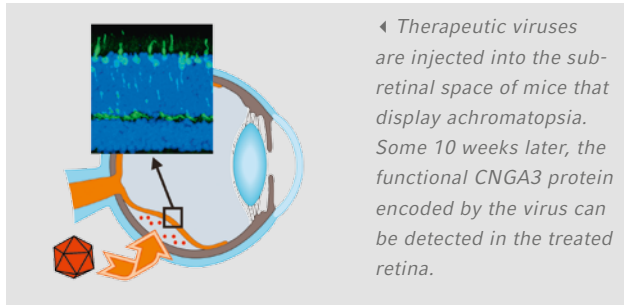
LANGUAGES

Ancestral voices

by Maximilian G. Burkhart

Some 6,500 languages are spoken around the world, and two-thirds of them are in danger of extinction. Among those threatened are such diverse and distinct idioms as Ob-Ugric in Northwest Siberia and Kurumba in South India. Linguistics Professor Elena Skribnik is working to catalogue and digitally document Ob-Ugric languages, while ethnologist Professor Ulrich Demmer studies the language and customs of the Jēnu Kurumba. In their different ways, both scholars are engaged in an effort to preserve part of mankind's cultural heritage.

 For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2010/04_03.pdf



◀ *Therapeutic viruses are injected into the sub-retinal space of mice that display achromatopsia. Some 10 weeks later, the functional CNGA3 protein encoded by the virus can be detected in the treated retina.*

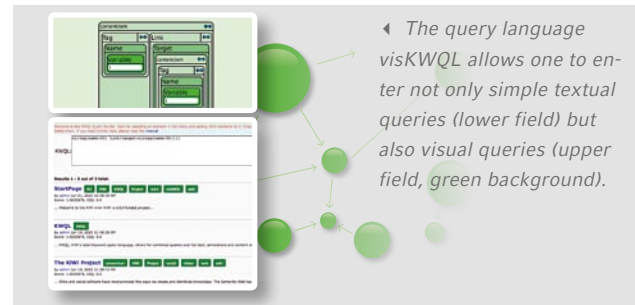
PHARMACY

Congenitally blind mice see the light

by Susanne Wedlich

The human eye is a highly complex organ and much can go wrong with it. For example, various genetic mutations in the cones, one of the photosensory cell types in the retina, result in achromatopsia – the inability to discriminate colors. Using a mouse model system, pharmacologist Professor Martin Biel has shown that the introduction of a functional copy of the defective gene into cone cells corrects the condition, and confers color vision on mutant animals.

 For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2010/04_04.pdf




◀ *The query language visKWQL allows one to enter not only simple textual queries (lower field) but also visual queries (upper field, green background).*

INFORMATICS

Teaching the old web new tricks

by Marcus Simon

Ever since the advent of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, the average Web user knows what a wiki is. The term 'semantic wiki,' on the other hand, is likely to evoke a quizzical look from most people. It refers to a tool that combines the wiki idea with the advantages of the Semantic Web. To find out what the concept entails and to understand its potential applications, one only needs to take a look at the work of LMU computer scientists Professor François Bry and Klara Weiland.

 For the complete article, see www.en.lmu.de/news/insightlmu/2010/04_05.pdf



DAAD's 2010 student award winner

by Elizabeth Willoughby

To be the recipient of DAAD's annual award, a foreign student at a German university must have acquired superior results in academia and demonstrate strong social or intercultural commitment. This year, the honor went to an American student, Rachel Shindelar. Highly praised by her LMU professors and peers, she exudes an energy and motivation that seems inexhaustible as she follows a path she describes was directed by luck and chance.

The lucky part was being born in a developed country, where a minimum level of education can be taken for granted, and into a family supportive of her skills and aspirations. Chance was what brought her to Munich. Without the financial means to do an exchange year in high school, Rachel applied for a Congress-Bundestag scholarship with no hope of receiving it, nor any knowledge of German – and yet the scholarship came.

"I had an amazing year with an exceptional host family and I fell in love with Germany."

When it came time for university, returning to Munich posed certain advantages. Rachel wanted her education from a perspective other than the US's, and university in Germany was more affordable. "I have been able to finance my entire college career without taking out a single loan, a dream for any American."

Instinctively drawn into politics, and formally involved in it at school and city-wide since adolescence, at LMU Rachel broadened her political arena into international organizations, theories and the UN. There, she discovered that she was in her element.

A strong political and social conscience

The Model United Nations (MUN) program provides foreign relations experience developing negotiation techniques, speech giving and leadership skills. Rachel gained her first experiences discussing strategies for the Afghan-Pakistani border region, and global food shortage as a threat to security.

Then the delegation's skills were tested at the National MUN in New York, an annual, weeklong 'UN simulation' conference of 4,000 participants. Rachel's group represented Indonesia and brought home two awards. Piqued by the experience, she joined the next generation as tutor. That LMU delegation represented the UAE in New York and won the two highest awards. Considering it the most rewarding experience of her life, Rachel says MUN, "has taught me expertise on the UN system and political systems of various countries,



▲ Para Dar Esperanza children – To Give Hope
▼ LMU's 2010 Model United Nations team



and the difficulty and beauty of intercultural negotiations. I have learned to push my limits, have faith and to recognize when it's time to sit back and accept some things are out of my control."

"I want to fight poverty and improve foreign aid, but I can't really say this until I see and experience what I am talking about."

Because of its vibrant cultures and shared history with the US, Latin America held an interest for Rachel. Not content with fluency in only English and German – believing that communicating with others in their language provides good insight into another culture's mentality – and with a dream to write her thesis abroad, the south became even more appealing. Chance again influenced Rachel's path by opening a door that led her to Ecuador.

In one of Quito's poorest neighbourhoods, Rachel volunteered at the Para Dar Esperanza project, one of the most challenging and depressing experiences she's ever had, as she worked on her thesis, *"Gifts Unwholesome: The Debate on Aid-Effectiveness and the Paris Declaration"*. While aiming to point out the inherent weaknesses of international and nonreciprocal foreign aid, she joined a small group of ladies four days a week to help 40 to 60 children with homework and give them a warm meal, for some the only one of the day. Despite being disturbed by the decrepit surroundings and poverty, she was inspired by the teachers, women and children through their dedication and positive energy.

With her degree nearly completed, Rachel is still pondering her future direction: "When there is so much to do and learn, it's frustrating to have to commit yourself to one area."



Planning for international summer schools 2011

Planning for the Munich International Summer University (MISU) 2011 is already underway: During the months of July and August, students from all over the world will have the chance to enrol at one of Europe's leading research universities and participate in programs covering a wide range of academic subjects, from European politics, German and European law to medicine, biology, electronic media and literature. In 2011, Environmental Sciences will be the focus of a newly launched academy. MISU also offers German courses for all learning levels. Furthermore, the Amgen Scholars Europe Program at LMU will be supported by \$1 million over the coming four years following the successful completion of a two-year pilot phase. The money will be used to give undergraduates from all over Europe the opportunity to become familiar with front-line research in the fields of biotechnology and life sciences under the tutelage of established investigators.



www.lmu.de/international/misu
www.amgenscholars.eu

Junior researchers in the biosciences honored

New insights into Alzheimer's disease, a novel mechanism that regulates nerve cell survival in the brain, elucidation of the structural requirements for the attachment of specific sugars to proteins, and an increase in the power of a method for the analysis of neural circuitry. These recent advances in biosciences feature in outstanding publications in the fields of molecular biology and neuroscience for which four junior researchers based in Munich have received valuable awards. The prizes were sponsored by the Munich Center for Neurosciences (MCN) and the Graduate Center of LMU Munich, together with science publisher Elsevier. In offering the awards, the sponsors aim to support and encourage young scientists working in the Munich region. The four prizes went to: Dr. Jovica Ninkovic, Helmholtz Zentrum München; Hongbo Jia, Technical University of Munich; Dr. Tobias Bittner, LMU; and Dorota Zielinska, MPI for Biochemistry and LMU.

LMU among top German universities in world rankings

In the 2010 Times Higher Education World University Ranking LMU Munich takes 61st place overall, and is once again among the best universities in Germany. Only three German institutions figure in the top 100: Georg-August-Universität Göttingen is ranked 43rd and Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg takes 83rd place. Indeed, LMU has significantly improved its position relative to last year's ranking, moving up no less than 37 places. This underlines LMU's standing among its peers in Germany. The fact that LMU currently occupies a leading position in the three major worldwide ranking lists serves as further confirmation of this status. In the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) published by Jiao Tong University in Shanghai recently, LMU takes 52nd place, while the latest table produced by the British research and recruiting firm QS puts LMU in 66th position.



www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings

Scientific challenges in European health

At a two-day conference in Brussels in October, researchers from LMU Munich contributed to preparatory discussions and priority areas to be addressed during the upcoming funding period of the European Research Framework Program, which begins in 2014. Matthias Schieker, LMU Professor of Regenerative Medicine, and Patrick Cramer, LMU Professor of Biochemistry and Director of the Gene Center Munich, were among the leading scientists from renowned research institutions who discussed key challenges, goals and new directions in medical sciences with international stakeholders from industry and EU research policymakers. The conference was the third in a series launched in 2009 by the Bavarian universities to highlight new ideas emerging from excellent scientific work that deserve to be developed at the European level. This year's event was jointly organized by LMU and the Technische Universität München.



www.bavarian-research-for-europe.eu

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