



Dondrite news

N° 7.

Nijmegen, Saturday, May 27, 2017

In this month's Dondrite news we introduce a new board member, feature an interview with Filippos on trouble in track 4, and look back on

the recent General Assembly. Oh, and special thanks to Floortje for the gorgeous fresh Dondrite news logo!

Introduction of the Dondrite Board and Committees



Marlies Hiemstra was voted in as a new Dondrite board member by the general assembly on May 16. Prior to this, she was on the board of Nijmegen student gymnastic

association 'KUNST'. Besides studying in our master since February of this year, Marlies transforms into her alter ego "Professor Amnesia" on a weekly basis to teach science at various grade schools in the region and get the local kids excited to pursue careers in scientific fields. Marlies possesses valuable experience in basic web design which will help Dondrite build its very own upcoming website. Welcome!

Recent Dondrite Activities

Lecture by Pim Haselager:

One of CNS' most beloved lecturers, Pim Haselager, gave a very illuminating talk this month with useful, concrete advice on how to

prepare and behave during conferences in order to get the most out of them. The recording and slides of the talk will be made available soon, so that if, for whatever reason, you could not

attend, or if you wish to listen back to Pim's soothing voice over and over again, you will be able to do so!

Pub quiz :

Just this week the pub quiz took place. This was the first official Dondrite version, but as some second years may recall, it was actually the second one organised by this committee. Back in the days when we were still called CogNito we started this tradition. This years' edition was very relaxed and a lot of fun. Four teams took up the challenge in the Sportcafé. They battled through two rounds of 15 questions, on the topics Nijmegen, pop culture, neuroscience and international culture. For those of you still wondering what country has a population of which over 95% of people is overweight, where the common room of Slytherin is located or what the correct series expansion of a sine is, you can find the answers here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/oB2qxkgMTLodyZ2xBRmFQTndMSm8/view?usp=sharing>

After that, team Big Brainz faced team Westside in the 30 seconds inspired finale. The end score was very close, but only one team went home with these gorgeous CNS T-shirts (courtesy of Arno). Booyakasha Westside!



Upcoming Dondrite & Donders Activities

GA-related discussion:

Those interested can use this opportunity to discuss further some of the themes that came up during GA 1 episode 1. We're hoping this will foster further mutual understanding and possibly help crystallize intuitions into concrete proposals to be voted on at GA 1.2. Check the email we sent (May 22) for further info.

Info: May 29, 18:00, oval office (Trigon)

Dondrite Debate:

We heard you like discussions and so the education committee is proud to present the very first Dondrite Debate, with hopefully more to follow, so you can discuss both CNS and non-

CNS related topics to your heart's content. While there are many topics worthy of a great debate, the first topic that won the popular vote is going to be:

How useful is "human enhancement" and how far should it go?

With Elon Musk's announcement of his [wizard hat](#) project, it has become a topic that's more relevant than ever. So make sure to join us when we discuss whether we should all have silicon chips installed inside our brains!

Info: May 31, 19:00, Gr.1.170

Dondrite drinks:

Join us for refreshing drinks!

Info: June 2, 17:00, Cultuur café

Synapsium:

The Synapsium is almost upon us! In two weeks time, our very own symposium will open its doors to visitors from all over the world. We're looking forward to meeting fellow cognitive neuroscience enthusiasts of all shapes and sizes. A fine selection of student speakers has been made who will eagerly demonstrate their research to you through talks and poster presentations. Check out the website for more

information, a preliminary programme, and tickets: www.synapsium.nl

Info: June 8, 09:00, Linnaeusgebouw

General Assembly 1.2

Since we did not manage to get through all of the material during GA 1.1, the meeting will be continued on this later date. Check the email we sent (May 22) for further info.

Info: June 6, 18:00, oval office (Trigon)

Upcoming Donders Events:

Date:

Formal DCC lecture Sandra Iglesias
Dopaminergic and cholinergic modulation of
associative learning [[url](#)]

Tuesday, May 30,
12:30-13:30
Donders Room Spinoza (A00.07)

Neurophysics seminar
The biophysics of human behavior in the wild [[url](#)]

Wednesday, June 14
13:00-14:00
HG 00.062

Donders Ponders
Lively scientific debate sessions [[url](#)]

Thursday, June 15
10:30-14:30
Red Room

Donders lecture by Alcino Silva (UCLA)
Strategies and principles underlying the
integration and planning of experiments in
neuroscience in an age of information overload
[[url](#)]

Thursday, June 22
16:00-17:00
LIN 3

For more information see: <http://www.ru.nl/donders/agenda-news/agenda/>

The first General Assembly (episode 1)

On the eve of a warm spring day in the Netherlands, almost thirty Dondrites gathered themselves in cafe Trianon's minor hall. It got a bit muggy inside, but luckily Trianon's staff took it upon themselves to create some airflow as they passed through the room. Ah well, it was free! Drinks were ordered and everyone found a place to sit down. The assembly began, and soon many hands were in the air, eager to contribute

to the discussions at hand. Topics of discussion were very diverse. They ranged from broad societal issues to detailed technicalities. I think it's fair to say that we were all a bit exhausted when the GA was suspended at 11:30, but we, for a few, were also glad to see that the association's members are passionate about so many things Dondrite.

Dondrite Spotlight



Each month a Dondrite is asked three questions, no more, no less. This month in the Spotlight: Filippos Panagiotou!

1. What is currently going on in track 4?

There has been some discontent about the way courses are organised within track 4 for a while now. Some of the issues we're dealing with include: unbalanced course loads, unreasonable expectations about student skillsets, changing examination requirements halfway through a course, and the overall coherence & coordination of the specialization. This has been mentioned on a number of occasions to lecturers and coordinators but not much action seemed to take place. As a result, this recently came to a head with a bunch of us contacting Arno and telling him that in the current state, we can not recommend this programme to aspiring students.

2. How did the Master respond?

Initially Arno was quite surprised by our little 'uprising', it seemed like he hadn't realised that

these problems ran so deep. We then had quite an exhaustive meeting together where a lot of the aforementioned points were discussed. After the meeting, I wasn't yet completely confident that this was going to change things. But when I later met Arno again it seemed like he really had given this whole situation much thought, and was trying to find ways to solve these problems. He is now putting together a document with the issues we discussed and possible strategies for solving them. This is going to be a long-term project and we're hoping that in two or three years a lot of progress has been made. I'm hoping that this whole ordeal might make the master's programme in general a bit more reactive to commentary from other angles too, as I realize track 4 might not be the only specialization that could be improved upon.

3. what is your favourite brain structure?

Well, I'm mostly interested in the information-processing level. In this view, structure isn't as important as information might be processed in the same way by a lot of different structures. In some ways I feel a bit disconnected from neuroscience, but I do think that a deeper understanding of the physical system that implements the computational processes in the brain can advance and inspire information

science.

Ask Consigliere Axoni



Oy vey, no questions came in for your trusty Consigliere this month. No matter, I can appreciate a vacation

every now and then. Although I hope there are still some out there whom I can help with my witty advice. Here's to sitting on the beach enjoying a caipirinha this weekend though!

Send us your weird/funny/personal/serious anonymous question for Axoni at:
<https://goo.gl/forms/yqp2rdVDWv4MGIqh1>

Fun Fact

Did you know that the shuffle function on your iPod/phone/computer is actually not random, even though it really feels like it is? App developers have had fully random shuffle functions in the past, but then a lot of people started complaining about their shuffle function not being random. This is because the human brain is eager to find connections between

different events even though there might be none. For example, if two songs by the same artist followed each other, people got the idea that their shuffle couldn't be fully random. Because of this, the shuffle function now works by a non-random algorithm that is designed to feel random to humans, but actually isn't.
