



# Dondrite news

No 8 APRIL 2021

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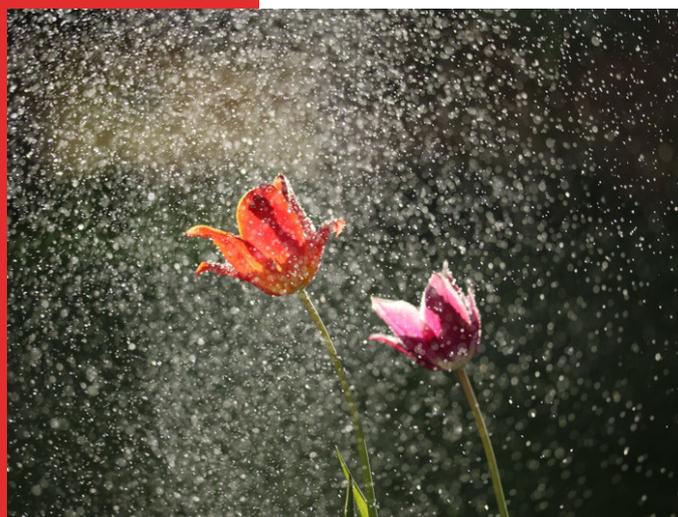
## DEAR DONDRITES,

There is a Dutch saying “April doet wat 'ie wil” (April does whatever he wants). This means that the weather in April can be different every day (or even every hour), which we definitely saw this month. We were able to enjoy the beautiful sun, we had to defy rain and hail and even some snow fell again. It can be hard to live in a country where the weather is that unpredictable, but luckily our amazing Dondrite newsletter is always there!

In this month's newsletter, you will finally get to know the guy in the basement during an interview with Paul Gaalman. You will also be able to test your knowledge about baby animals, find some studies to sign up to, laugh about funny memes and most importantly, there is some exciting news about the yearbook! Happy reading!

Cheers,  
Scribe

Oh and don't forget our 'hidden hyperlinks'. Try clicking on things! This icon might help you:



# APRIL

# This month, Scribe got to sit down with Paul Gaalman- "the guy in the basement" - to talk about his time at Donders.



## Thank you for this interview! Could you tell us a bit about yourself and your time at Donders?

I am Paul Gaalman, the MRI lab manager here at the Donders Institute. I've been working at the Donders Institute since April 2002 and have gotten to watch it grow and develop. The centre technically opened in 2001, so I did not see that, but I was actually there when it was officially opened by Queen Beatrix in October 2002. I am not a crazy royal's fan or anything but that was a very special moment. She was not supposed to shake our hands, but she broke the rules and did it anyways haha. Back then the institute was actually called FC Donders. I am glad that was changed, because that sounds like a football club.

When I first started here there were only about 25 people working in Donders, including about 7 PIs. The number of experiments running was very small compared to now, having 3 experiments in a week was considered busy. What people find especially shocking is that for the first few years experiments here only included about 12 participants.

It was amazing to watch how quickly Donders grew once it was opened. I think it was a partly good timing, but also kind of the almost magical feeling of being able to look at a person's brain without opening it was good for raising money! Even people who know nothing about science can really appreciate this. The aim of Donders was to be a place for neuroscientists to research - back then people were relying on using hospital MRIs when they were free in the evenings or weekends. Donders was very unusual in bringing all of the equipment here in person, so we had lots of media attention when we opened! It was a very exciting place to be.

## Wauw, it is amazing that you got to see Donders grow! What do you like about your job and the institute?

Obviously since then Donders has gotten much bigger and even more exciting. I really like that in this job I get to meet many people doing very varied research. It means that the job does not become boring even though I might often be physically doing the same thing. One thing that I really like about Donders is that all of the groups are mixed up. Different research groups do not each have their separate parts of the building. Instead, they are mixed together and this way lots of information gets shared between research groups just because of their proximity. I think this is a huge advantage for researchers here.

## It is indeed great that so much information gets shared between groups. What else do you do everyday apart from helping students learn how to use the MRI?

For this job I do help a lot of people with their MRI research, as well as teaching some of them how to do it themselves. Obviously while doing that I am spending a lot of time in the basement and I see all of the things needed in the lab. For example, I might hear a researcher speaking about their experiment saying "oh I would like to have this equipment" and then maybe we will get it for the lab. Or maybe I will realise that a certain set up for an experiment takes a very long time, so then I figure out how to fine tune it. As the lab manager here, I see it as my task to keep everything running as smoothly as possible. So as well as everything else, behind the scenes there is always admin, admin, admin. I also pride myself in staying on top of servicing the instruments, so that things continue to run instead of breaking down. Over the years I have learned to do a lot of this myself so I do not need to call repairmen in for smaller problems. I sometimes think of myself as a shop manager where the lab is my shop. Yes, we have the storefront where you see all the MRI activities, but there is also always many things happening behind the scenes.

**Jeanne:** One of the labs I worked in before starting this degree did not have a lab manager and it was a very bad decision for the people running it. So many of the instruments we owned were never used because they would break and people would not know who to call to replace them. We had an instrument worth 0.5 million euro that was never used when I was there because the person who knew how to run it had left and nobody else in the lab knew how to use it! So it is very reassuring to me to see that Donders has you working to keep everything running smoothly in the basement.

## We were wondering, did you know much about MRI before you started this job?

I actually did not really know anything about using MRI. I also actually did not know very much English so I have had to learn a lot of things with this job.

**Last year was obviously different. What challenges has COVID presented for you? Many CNS students in the last year have never even been to Donders, has the quieter building been nice or do you miss the students?**

COVID actually did not change too many things for me. The Donders centre was closed for research from mid-March until June which was odd, but it gave me some time to catch up on the jobs that you do not get time to do when things are normal. This was nice because with all those things done it feels like the lab is now perfect. It is strange to have the building be so quiet this last year but I have gotten used to it, and I still get to interact with people in the MRI labs.

**We are sure the CNS students cannot wait to see the perfect lab as it is now! But if you could change anything about the way it works, CNS, the faculty, the Donders, Radboud University, what would it be?**

I guess there are some small specific things. I think for some courses such as neuroimaging some students need a more basic background in it before trying to learn it all. Perhaps there could be an fMRI for dummies class haha.

As well as this I am noticing a trend where researchers/PhDs etc. are not as involved in running the experiments as they are too busy with data analysis and programming. Therefore, a lot of the actual imaging etc. is done by research assistants. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it has led to some problems where a RA has not noticed that some results are not correct while an experiment is running, because they do not know how to analyse the data. Then when the researcher actually looks at the data, all of the participants need to be studied again because the data is useless. I think this could be avoided if the researchers & PhDs were able to be more involved in the earlier stages.

I have also noticed that sometimes there is not enough communication between Master's students and their PI. This is not always the case, but when it happens the student seems to feel a lot more pressure on them as they do not have the guidance they might need for their project. They also do not learn as much, which is very unfortunate as that is why they are here!

**Okay, so communication is key! Another question, if you won the lottery and decided to give up this job, what would you do instead?**

I have a very nice job, I enjoy being the manager of the basement – the responsibility is enjoyable. There is lots of satisfaction from helping people within the job. There is also a lot of freedom that comes with having worked here for so long. I am here for longer than most researchers, I think of the lab as a shop that I am the manager of and I enjoy running it. Maybe I would enjoy creative work, perhaps I would take up painting? But then how would I meet people? I enjoy the social aspect of my work here. I also do feel that this job is actually quite creative, it involves a lot of problem solving. So I guess I don't know if I would leave. If I did I would need to take some time to train a replacement haha.

**Great to hear that you love your job! Looking back, what accomplishment fills you with pride so far this year?**

A work-related accomplishment is that when there was a major technical problem on a Prisma scanner where a gradient chord broke, I managed to get it fixed in under 2 weeks. This meant that there was barely a delay in anyone's research, some people did not even realize that there was anything wrong! After working here for so long I have learned exactly what needs to be done when something breaks and things are running very efficiently, I am proud of this. By now I also have a very good relationship with service people too which is a nice feeling. It is good to know how to interact with the people who can repair things for you, it means things happen quickly. I am also pleased with how things are going in the lab. Over the years as things have broken and needed to be replaced/repared I have gotten very good at being prepared. Now I am rarely caught off guard by something going wrong, I already have a spare part waiting!

**That is indeed something to be proud of! Let's move on, what is your opinion about CNS students?**

When the CNS Master's first started the standard of student was extremely high. Now that neuroscience is more broadly known about I think maybe some people who join the course are not cut out to be a researcher. I think after so many years in this lab I can tell if somebody will be a good researcher or not – it has a lot to do with behaviour; how prepared they are, how they interact with people, etc. I have also noticed a very sad trend with CNS students. When they start the course so many students are extremely enthusiastic and excited to learn. But over time I see this decrease and I think it is because of the overwhelming amount of information that they are expected to know. There is also a very high level of quality/work involved in an experiment in the DCCN which puts a lot of pressure on students during their internship. I am not sure how this would be fixed but it is sad to see students lose their enthusiasm for the work.

**Sadly, we think students indeed recognize these problems. Do you have any advice for the students? Words of wisdom or hope?**

Take your time to do things. If your experiment technically needs an hour but you're not super confident – book 2 hours. Time pressure causes mistakes. Be prepared before starting an experiment. And remember that you are not in a hospital – nobody will die if something goes wrong or takes too long. Don't be put under pressure by your supervisor, it is better to do something slower and get it right than rush and have to redo it.

**Thank you for this very nice advice and interview! We'll finish with an important Dutch question – Friet or patat?**

Definitely friet!



## A WORD FROM THE BOARD

Dear Dondrites,

Another month has passed, and we are happy to fill you in on some exciting insights!

Firstly, we are extremely proud of our amazing Activity committee, who managed to raise €1124,50 for charity during the RAGweek. They did an amazing job organising an auction and a photography challenge, and with the Hike for Hops event they will raise even more money! A round of applause for the hard work done here!

Further, we are happy to announce that if you ordered merchandise, you will receive more information on the payment and pickup soon! We can already tell you that the totebags and notebooks look amazing!

Next, we also want to give praise to the Synapsium committee, who are working harder than ever to organise an amazing online event. The sign ups will open later this week, so keep an eye on our social media for that!

Lastly, the Board itself is also organising an event! During this event, you can get to know researchers from the Donders Institute in a way that you have never met them before! The event will take place on May 14th from 16:00 - 18:30, so save the date! More information will follow soon!

Love and read on,

Jochem, Brittany, Nele and Eline



# RECENT DONDRITE EVENTS

## RAG week

As mentioned by the board, our Activity Committee did an absolutely amazing job of raising €1124,50 for RAG week charities with their wonderful [auction](#) and [photography challenge](#)!



## Career event

Our wonderful Education Committee planned an interesting career event for us at the 6th and 7th of April. We got to hear from people in both academia and industry to help us plan our lives after the Masters!

## Monthly Meme



# UPCOMING DONDRITE EVENTS

It's an exciting month for collaborations as the Travel & Activity Committees team up to combine the monthly board game night with a **Geoguessr event**! Come join us to virtually travel the world on May 4th :)

## Language workshop

Have you ever wanted to learn Hindi? Then join Scribe's lovely chairperson Vaishnavi along with the Travel Committee for an exciting Hindi language workshop on the 22nd of May.

And as always the wonderful language cafés will be taking place throughout the month.



Just in case you hadn't heard, **Café Philosophique** has moved to 4.30pm on Mondays. With those neurophilosophy deadlines looming these chats are more helpful than ever.

Sadly Activity's charity **Hike for Hops** had to be cancelled due to rain, but keep an eye out for this event coming on a sunny Saturday near you!

## Synapsium

Time for our annual Symposium!! Synapsium is bringing us a wonderful event on the 29th of May. Make sure to register on the 21st of April to book your place!

The Synapsium committee are also looking for some generous souls to help them out a little to make the event as perfect as possible. Anyone who helps out will get a free ticket which I think is pretty tempting...



# SCRIBE'S STUDY BOARD

From now on, you can promote your study, or look for a study to participate in, on the Scribe Study Board! It's a win-win situation for everyone! Click the titles to go to the respective SONA page of each study. To promote your study, send the name of your study, the SONA link, e-mail address, duration, payment and inclusion criteria to [scribedondrite@gmail.com](mailto:scribedondrite@gmail.com)!

## **[DCCN] Behavioural: How well do you see under threat?**

**Duration and payment:** 135 mins, €20  
**Inclusion criteria:** send a message to [eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl](mailto:eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl)  
**Contact:** [eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl](mailto:eline.hagenberg@donders.ru.nl)



## **[DCCN] MEG/Gedrag: Nieuwe Nederlandse woorden leren**

**Duration and payment:** 150 min, €24  
**Inclusion criteria:** native Dutch speaker; MEG compatible (no dental wire); no dyslexia  
**Contact:** [f.schneider@donders.ru.nl](mailto:f.schneider@donders.ru.nl)

## **[DCCN] BEH/MRI: Test your memory.**

**Duration and payment:** 1h + 3h, €40  
**Inclusion criteria:** right handed; 18+ years old; MRI compatible  
**Contact:** [a.ferrari@donders.ru.nl](mailto:a.ferrari@donders.ru.nl)



## **[DCCN] fMRI: Freeze all motor functions!**

**Approach-avoidance decisions for money**  
**Duration and payment:** 150 min, €24 + bonus  
**Inclusion criteria:** 16-35 years old; right handed; MRI compatible; not claustrophobic/epileptic/pregnant  
**Contact:** [f.klaassen@donders.ru.nl](mailto:f.klaassen@donders.ru.nl)



## **[DCCN] BEH/fMRI: Leer een Nieuwe Taal!**

**Duration and payment:** 3x 60 min + home sessions, €68  
**Inclusion criteria:** right handed; no dyslexia; native Dutch speaker; not bilingually raised  
**Contact:** [w.menks@donders.ru.nl](mailto:w.menks@donders.ru.nl)



# NOTICEBOARD

## **Yearbook**

The Scribe committee is extremely excited to announce that we are working on the 2020-2021 yearbook!  
Keep an eye on your inbox....

## **MERCHMERCH MERCH**

Those of you that ordered merch will receive an e-mail about the payment and pickup soon!

Hi!

My name is *synapsium* and I'm looking for

**sign-ups!**

## *Save the Date*

Meet (y)our  
Donderians  
event

**May 14th, 16:00 - 18:30**

Do you have anything you want to share here? Send us your message at  
[scribedondrite@gmail.com](mailto:scribedondrite@gmail.com)



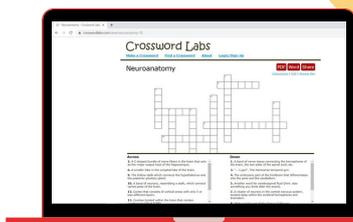


# CROSSWORD

You probably know that many baby animals are born in spring. The meadows are full with lambs, chicks are everywhere and if you're lucky, a cute baby bunny comes hopping by. But how well do you know the names of baby animals? Do you remember what a baby alpaca is called, or a baby frog? Test your knowledge in this month's crossword and see how many baby animals you know! Have fun!

On the next page you will find the solution to last month's puzzle.

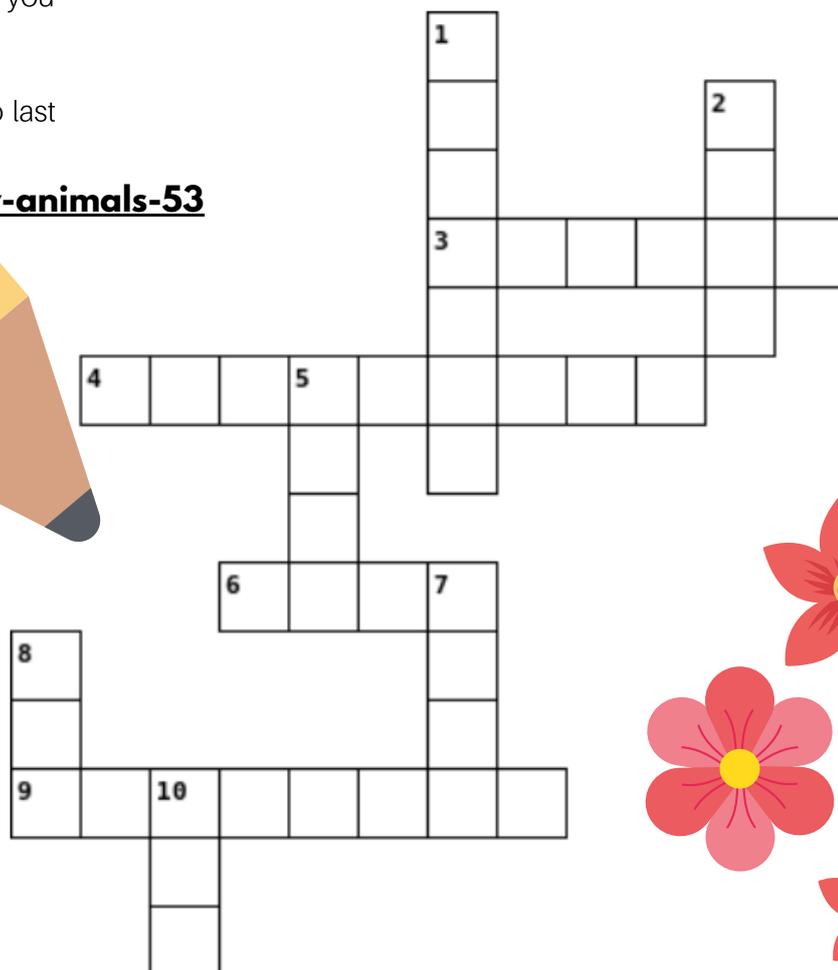
<https://crosswordlabs.com/view/baby-animals-53>



On the next page you will find the solution to last month's puzzle.



## Baby animals



### Across

- 3. Baby animal of a pig
- 4. Baby animal of both a snake and alligator
- 6. Dumbo is a ...
- 9. Baby animal of a duck

### Down

- 1. We all tried to catch these animals in the water when we were younger
- 2. Baby animal of an opossum
- 5. Baby animal of an alpaca
- 7. Bambi is a ...
- 8. Baby animal of a goat (and name of a human child)
- 10. The baby animal of both a bear and lion



