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Mark Campana Rides into the Sunset

Matt THEADO

Mark Campana pushed his bicycle up a steep hill while my wife and I walked alongside. He wasn't even out of breath as he continued his description of the university that I had just joined. He was reassuring me that there were plenty of fine people in the department and that Kobe Gaidai students were eager to learn, most of them anyway, when he suddenly interrupted himself with an exclamation: "I've got to get a shot of that!" He laid his bike on the side of the road and lifted a camera from his bag. Then he was lying on his side, eye-to-eye with a green-winged insect, slowly turning his lens. The bug must have been a bit camera-shy and began to back away on his stick-like legs, but not before Mark had captured the image. I'd see that image again at one of my first English department meetings as Mark distributed a sheaf of photos, each one displaying an insect in all its flamboyant beauty. Mark informed us that the bugs were all contesting for the coveted title of Bug of the Year, and each department member had a vote. It was clear from Mark's example that not everything we do in the department – or in our life – has to be some dry academic venture.

That's one of the first things I learned from Mark, a professor who always seems to be casually sharing information and activities. In coming years, I'd learn the joys of playing ice hockey on the roof of his apartment, throwing a football back and forth in the middle of Sannomiya, and listening to arcane music selections on his outdated, one-of-kind music player.

Mark also has his serious academic side, though it's anything but dry: his main academic focus has been on the concepts of stance and tone-of-voice, and he enhanced his delivery on this topic while utilizing his own particular stances and tones of voice. One of my favorite of Mark's conference presentations is "The Prosody of Punch Lines," delivered at the 2017 Humor Research Conference. Mark's thesis is that a joke's punch line has a better possibility of success if it conforms to a culturally-accepted metrical structure. I agree that a good joke is one that concludes with the ol' *ba-da-DUM* rim shot whenever possible. But that's not all. Mark determined that a

punch line's success comes most often when two adjacent intonation phrases are juxtaposed in terms of metrical structure. Well, maybe that's been my weakness all these years, given the groans that my jokes frequently elicit when I hit the punch line; I fail to juxtapose the intonation phrases in terms of the metrical structure—*ba-da-DUM*. Well, you won't catch me out next time, now that I have gleaned some vital insights to the secret of humor.

Clearly, Mark has a gift for combining linguistic analysis and contemporary cultural topics to achieve fascinating results. One example is his exhibition on “Lyrical Form in Language and Music,” co-presented with his long-time colleague and friend, Chris Turner. These two professors collaborated in exploring the aesthetic forms of English metrical structures as applied to song lyrics. Theirs was one of the most attractive and talked-about presentations at the 2018 Japan Society for Language Sciences conference. Professor Turner had this to say about his experience in working with Mark:

As we well know, it often takes years, and in some cases years of blind alleys in tandem with a little luck and inspiration, to develop an approach that might bear fruit in terms of applicable research, let alone viable support data. In this case, Mark's love of music spawned a recognition of the ways speakers exploit familiar sound patterns to enhance the effect of stanzas in song. The research proved to be a labor of love concluding in a substantial, data-supported theory that measured in part what contributes to the popularity of a song. Working with Mark revealed a methodically driven approach, with an adherence to high standards, linguistic / professional integrity and yet an adventurous flexibility allowing for discovery. Above all, it was a pleasure to have worked with such an inquiring mind corroborated by years of hard-earned knowledge.

As a professor of Linguistics at Kobe Gaidai, Mark Campana has instructed, guided and enlightened the lives and careers of hundreds of students as well as colleagues with his friendliness, humor, and intellect. When we consider his contributions to his students, to his colleagues, and to the field of linguistics, it's clear that we'll all miss Mark Campana: his enthusiasm for photographing insects, his infectious zeal for American football, and the grace of his tall, lean professor swagger.