I love pirates. I was even trying to figure out how I could make my “personal statement” in my grad school applications exclusively about pirates, but finally I gave up on that (after much persuasion from everyone I know). I think this interest started with old tapes of sea shanties that my father would play on car trips. Several people I work with in lab anticipate the day I will bring those tapes in. Whenever someone plays music in lab, we playfully criticize each other’s taste. Finally, someone asked me, “Well what do you listen to that’s so great?” When I started going on about the sea shanties…let’s just say I think I lost some respect from the more musical lab members.

In my spare time, such as it is, I try to keep my collection of increasingly finicky orchids alive. So far, this has been a losing battle. The first indication that orchids might not be “my plant” was the Great Root Massacre of 2003, when I decided to trim up the roots of all of my orchids. Many of them did not survive.

Insects of all kinds have also played an important role in my life. Last year, I was in the bathroom of the Chemistry building at the U of M, and I noticed a cockroach on the floor. I was attempting to pick it up so I could release it into the relative wilds of the Diag. A fellow student was apparently watching this, and said, “Ewww! A cockroach! Umm…is that yours?” I was both entertained and a little flattered that she thought it was my personal cockroach. Recently, my interest in little squirmmy things has lead me to bacteriology, where I’d like to start my professional life: there are few living things that are squirmier or littler than bacteria.