MSU-DOE Plant Research Laboratory
Alumni Newsletter ♦ Number 12 ♦ January 2011

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PRL Retreat, 2010. Photos, this page, W. Wight; all other photos, MSU Public Relations Office, unless otherwise noted.
The year 2010 was filled with success, change, and numerous informative, enjoyable activities. Indeed, all is well in the PRL. I’ll briefly touch on a few highlights.

A major development in 2010 was the hiring of David Kramer as Hannah Distinguished Professor in Photosynthesis and Bioenergetics; his academic appointment is in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (see page 3). David came to us from Washington State University, Pullman, where he was a Professor in the Institute of Biological Chemistry. David employs a wide array of approaches ranging from sophisticated spectroscopy (much of the instrumentation that he uses was designed by him!), to biochemistry and genetics, to better understanding how photosynthesis and associated energy metabolism are regulated in response to environmental factors. His research area and expertise further broadens the PRL research portfolio and builds in the area of energy capture and transduction. We anticipate that the coming years will include considerable collaborative interaction between David and other members of the PRL and greater MSU research community.

Two major events this year revolved around celebrating the life and career of Jan Zeevaart. In May, the PRL sponsored a symposium in his honor (see page 5). The invited speakers were Maarten Koornneef, Rick Amasino and Tai-ping Sun (Peter McCourt was a fourth invited speaker, but a family emergency prevented his participation at the last minute). As you know, each of these individuals have made seminal contributions in research areas dear to Jan’s heart—hormone biology and control of flowering. The symposium, which was attended by Jan’s wife Riet and his son Scott, was followed by a reception and dinner where all shared stories and warm thoughts about Jan.

And the second event was the triennial research retreat at KBS, which included the inaugural Jan Zeevaart Lectures. The theme of this year’s Lectures was “systems biology”; our speakers were Sally Assmann, Wilhelm Gruissem, and Nick Provart. The Lectures were excellent and set the bar high for the future. The Jan Zeevaart Lectures, which will be featured at future triennial research retreats, are funded by an endowment established with contributions from alumni, colleagues, and friends of Jan (see page 6).

This brings me to shout outs for four members of the PRL family; these regard formal recognition for research excellence. In particular, the recipients of the Anton Lang Memorial Awards in 2010 were Graduate Assistant Eric Moellering (Benning lab) and Post-doctoral Research Associate Abe Koo (Howe lab) (see page 6); and the winner of the 2010 Hans Kende Award for Best Dissertation in the Plant Sciences was Hoo Sun Chung (former member of the Howe lab; see page 6). In addition, Gregg Howe’s research accomplishments and contributions to teaching and service were acknowledged by his receiving the MSU Distinguished Faculty Award (see page 4). Well-deserved congratulations to all!

And finally, I want to address a bittersweet development: the retirement of Alice (Albin) Martin in June and Karen Cline in December (see page 7). Most of you know that Alice and Karen have contributed to the success of the PRL for more than three decades. My mixed emotions reflect, in part, my sadness that I will no longer have Alice and Karen to turn to for advice on an array of PRL functions; their council and dedication to excellence have been key to my being able to transition into the position of PRL Director. But the mixed emotions also reflect joy in the fact that Alice is greatly enjoying her new life; and I know that this is certain to be the case with Karen, as well. In addition, the PRL and I are very fortunate that Eunice Hoeve has agreed to join the PRL and take on the administration responsibilities covered by Alice and Karen (see page 3). So, though we will miss Alice and Karen, we are happy for them and look forward to the future working with Eunice.

With best wishes,

~ Mike Thomashow

P.S. A PRL Group has been established at LinkedIn. See page 16 to find out how to join!
A Fond Farewell to Two Old-Timers!
We celebrated Alice in July and will celebrate Karen on January 28, 2011, with an afternoon reception and a dinner in the evening. (See page 7 for farewell messages.)
(Photos, Wanessa Wight.)

PRL Welcomed a New Faculty Member
David M. Kramer, Hannah Professor in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
David came to us from Washington State University, where he was a Professor in the Institute of Biological Chemistry and Chair of the Molecular Plant Sciences. He earned his doctoral degree in 1990 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

David Kramer’s research interests include:
- the conversion of light energy by plants into forms usable for life;
- understanding the processes involved at both molecular and physiological levels, how they are regulated and controlled;
- how these processes define the energy budget of plants and the ecosystem; and
- how plants have evolved to support life in extreme environments.

Among the tools used in Dr. Kramer’s lab are spectroscopic approaches including absorption, fluorescence, circular dichroism and electron spin resonance (EPR) applied to isolated membranes, organelles and intact plants. Students in the laboratory gain wide exposure to biophysical techniques and the important area of bioenergetics.

A New Addition to the Staff!
Eunice Hoeve (hoo-vee) has been hired by the PRL to take over the combined positions of Alice Martin and Karen Cline (concomitant with some reassignment of duties among the office staff). Eunice has been with MSU since 1986, when she started as a Secretary in the College of Education. Moving up through the ranks over the next 24 years, Eunice worked for the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE), the School of Criminal Justice, Human Resources, CEE, and finally RTSF, where she served as Administrative Assistant for the past two years. Along the way, she acquired a good many skills and familiarity with the University. We’re lucky to be able to welcome her to the PRL!
Gregg Howe

Merits Distinguished Faculty Award

Since joining MSU in 1997, Gregg has made a number of seminal contributions to the understanding of the biosynthesis, perception, and role in defense of the plant hormone jasmonate. Notably, Gregg and his colleagues were first to identify a receptor for jasmonate and demonstrate that it not only is essential for signaling in wounded tissues but also is translocated rapidly to other parts of the injured plant to protect healthy tissues.

Gregg’s response: "It is an honor to receive a Distinguished Faculty Award. I greatly appreciate the many terrific colleagues and supportive research environment that make MSU a world premier institution in which to study plant sciences. I am particularly grateful for the privilege of having worked with many talented graduate students, undergraduates, and postdoctoral researchers whose hard work and dedication have made this award possible."

Current PRL faculty who have won this award are Peter Wolk (1998), Mike Thomashow (2002), Jonathan Walton (2003), and Sheng Yang He (2009). See Faculty Honors and Awards.

Plant Genomics at MSU

Plant Genomics Summer Research Program

The summer research program consists of coordinated activities with a variety of special visitors including guest faculty, secondary school teachers, and undergraduate students. Faculty, postdoctoral associates, and graduate students act as mentors for all visiting participants. Participants contribute to the project by working in the laboratory alongside their mentors, participate in group meetings and activities, and attend weekly informal seminars and pizza lunches where participants and faculty interact. At the end of the program, participants present short research project summaries of their work to the full project team.

Participating faculty from the PRL include Gregg Howe, Jianping Hu, Ken Keegstra, Beronda Montgomery, and Mike Thomashow.

Participant support: Teachers will receive a stipend of $600/week.

Application requirements: Applicants should be secondary science teachers who have a strong background in life science teaching. Applicants should submit a brief resume, a letter of reference from a mentor, program advisor, or supervisor, and a 1- to 2-page introductory letter. The best candidates would be teachers who demonstrate a strong interest in incorporating hands-on laboratory experience in genomics and bioinformatics into their curriculum.

Application deadline: March 25, 2011
During his research career, Jan Zeevaart contributed significantly to the understanding of plant physiology and the action of plant hormones in controlling plant growth and development. We celebrated Jan’s distinguished career, his forty-four years at Michigan State University in the Plant Research Laboratory, and his devotion to scientific research in a special symposium in May.

Three invited guest speakers spoke on topics dear to Jan’s heart:

Maarten Koornneef, “Genetics Meets Physiology: the ABA-GA Link between Wageningen and the PRL”

Richard Amasino, “Molecular Basis of Flowering Time Control”

Tai-ping Sun, “A DELLAcate Balance in Gibberellin Signaling”

The seminars were followed by a reception in the atrium of the Biomedical Physical Sciences Building and a dinner in the evening at the Kellogg Center on campus.
The 2011 Anton Lang Seminar, to be presented on Monday, March 14, by Joanne Chory of the Salk Institute, San Diego, CA, will be entitled “Environmental and hormonal control of Arabidopsis growth.”

An endowment, established with contributions received in Hans Kende’s memory, is being used to fund an annual award for the best doctoral dissertation in the plant sciences at MSU during the preceding two years. The awardee is invited to return to MSU to present a seminar during the Fall PRL/Plant Biology Seminar Series, and also receives a monetary award.

**Hoo Sun Chung** (right), of Gregg Howe’s lab, as the 2010 recipient of this award, delivered her seminar, “Negative regulation of innate immunity” in November. Hoo Sun is working as a postdoc in Jen Sheen’s lab in the Department of Molecular Biology, Harvard Medical School.

The 13th annual Anton Lang Memorial Lecture was presented on Monday, April 12, by Dr. Sarah Hake, director of the USDA Plant Gene Expression Center and adjunct professor of plant and microbial biology at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Hake’s seminar was entitled “Uncovering the regulators of maize architecture.”

**Awards for Outstanding Research in 2010** went to Graduate Student Eric Moel-lering (left, Christoph Benning’s lab), and Postdoc Abraham (Abe) Jeong-Kyu Koo, (right, Gregg Howe’s lab). Eric is now a Research Scientist at Synthetic Genomics in La Jolla, CA. Abe Koo was promoted to Research Assistant Professor in the PRL.

The 2010 PRL Retreat was the first to feature **The Jan Zeevaart Lectures**, in honor of the late Professor Jan Zeevaart. The Zeevaart Endowment sponsored three speakers: Dr. Nick Provart, “Hypothesis generation in plant biology using large-scale data sets”; Dr. Sally Assmann, “Systems biology of guard cell ABA signaling: New approaches to old questions”; and Dr. Wilhelm Gruissem, “Leaf growth: A systems approach”. Guest speakers for future PRL retreats will likewise be sponsored by this Endowment.

**Contributions to the Hans Kende Memorial Fund, the Jan Zeevaart Endowment, and the Anton Lang Memorial Fund** may be sent to:

University Development Office
300 Spartan Way
East Lansing, MI 48824-1005

Please specify the fund to which you wish to contribute. All contributions are greatly appreciated.
Alice Martin (PRL Admin. Asst., 1986 - 2010)

Oh my, when Karen Bird asked me to write a few paragraphs about my years with the PRL and MSU, a flood of emotion swept over me. Where to begin? What to say?

How can I sum up 37 years at MSU, including 25+ at the PRL without writing pages and pages about all the wonderful people I worked with and experiences shared? I loved my job at the PRL. It was always interesting. I got to oversee the money—always fun, sometimes challenging! I got to supervise the support service staff—what a wonderful group of people! I got to coordinate renovations—never boring and always challenging! I got to interact with hundreds of people across campus on behalf of the PRL—many wonderful experiences. And, I got to help teach the Director(s) about budgets, MSU’s policies and procedures, past practices with the DOE and MSU central administration, etc. I enjoyed that part of my job very much.

On the flip side, what an honor I feel to have been mentored by the most brilliant scientists and administrators worldwide: Hans Kende, Jan Zeevaart, Peter Wolk, Ken Keegstra, Mike Thomashow and Lee McIntosh. What an awesome opportunity this was for me—both professionally and personally! My only hope is that I was worthy and that my contributions to the PRL reciprocated all that was given to me by these great men. I am so grateful to have been a part of their team.

I want to thank all PRL faculty and staff—past and present—for the opportunity to work with you. I developed close relationships with many, many people, and rather than list everyone, I will just say they know who they are, and I miss the daily interactions with them immensely. The PRL is a great place to work. My going away reception and dinner were wonderful. The gift I received was fantastic. Yet, I must say that the biggest gift of all was being able to work with each of you. I am so grateful. Thank you.

Turning the page... Retirement is awesome. My health seems to have stabilized, and I am feeling a lot better. I am rested, experience little stress, and am happy. I have time for everything that is important (family, friends, and hobbies). I plan to get involved in some community work this year—maybe an animal shelter? I also plan on traveling out west later this year. Life is good.

Karen Cline (PRL Clerk Typist ... Secretary ... Administrative Assistant, 1972-2010)

I started in the Plant Research Laboratory September 18, 1972. During my interview for the position I was asked by Homer Curtis, the Administrative Assistant at that time, how long I planned to stay? I responded “for at least one year”, believe me, this has been one LONG year. I learned later that I almost didn’t get the job because of that response. At that time the PRL office consisted of one administrative assistant, a bookkeeper, a secretary, and a clerk typist. I hired in as the “Clerk Typist”, when there really was a need for a typist; ALL letters, manuscripts, annual reports, minutes, etc., were typed by the office staff on electric typewriters reading from faculty handwritten documents. Have you ever tried to read their writing? The PRL was very advanced in office technology; at that time we had an IBM MT/ST, a forerunner to the PC. The information was typed onto a magnetic tape where the data was stored, waiting for the revised edition. To make corrections, the document was transferred to another magnetic tape, eliminating the need to retype the entire document.

After 9 months I moved up to the secretary position. In 1978, when Hans Kende was acting director, Homer Curtis retired as the Administrative Assistant and Hans asked me to be his administrative assistant. I felt very inadequate, but thanks to my husband’s and Hans’ confidence in me, I accepted the position. After 38 years, many friends and fond memories, I leave this position to enjoy more time with my husband, children, grandchildren, and our cabin in the north woods.

I have had the privilege of working for all of the PRL Directors: Anton Lang, Hans Kende & Phil Filner during their Acting Director years, Charlie Arntzen, then Hans as director, Peter Wolk, Ken Keegstra, and currently, Mike Thomashow. Was it something I did that made them keep stepping down? Thank you alumni and current PRL personnel for the many wonderful memories that I will carry with me.
Marco Agostoni (Montgomery lab, CMB) Marco worked for several years after high school, then spent a year in Australia. He decided to study biology and went on to earn his BS at University of Ancona, Italy, and his MS at U Texas-Austin, both in Marine Science. He is interested now in learning how plants respond to environmental stress.

Leticia “Ruby” Carrillo (BMB) Ruby’s interest in the study of photosynthetic organisms was inspired by Beronda Montgomery’s presentation to the MBRS-RISE program at California State U, Northridge (CSUN), where Ruby was a student. This experience led to her participation in the McNair/Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program/Summer Research Opportunity Program at MSU, in which she studied under Dr. Ning Jiang. Ruby earned her BA in biology from CSUN.

Kent Kovac (Kramer lab, PLB) earned his BS in microbiology and theater from U Wisconsin, Oshkosh. Kent is interested in photosynthesis, its regulation in plants, its effects on plant growth, and differences in the photosynthetic process among types of plants.

James Kremer (He lab, MMG) earned his BS in Biology and Environmental Science at Roanoke College in Salem, VA. His senior thesis research was focused on biocontrol of fungal pathogens in wheat by fluorescent pseudomonads. His wide range of interests includes soils, plant-microbe interactions, suppressive and microbial biocontrol.

Gary “Rudd” Larson (GEN) earned his BS in biology at Texas Tech in Lubbock, TX. Rudd is interested in genetics, particularly in gene regulation by microRNA. One of his research projects, focused on the ABA regulatory pathway in Arabidopsis and its interaction with the miRNA regulatory pathway, was conducted in the lab of Chris Rock (GA, Zeevaart, 1986-91).

Jiying Li (Hu lab, GEN) earned his MS in plant genetics and breeding at the China Agricultural University. His independent research project involved a study of the function of genes in the maize fatty acid synthesis pathway. Jiying is interested in delving deeper into study of this pathway.

Achira Mukhopadhyay (PLB) earned her BS in biotechnology at Nanjing University in China. Working in the labs of Genxi Li and Xinjian Liu, he built up skills in electrochemical and biochemical techniques and developed an interest in scientific research and communication.

Ronghui Pan (Hu lab, BMB) earned his BS in biotechnology at Nanjing University in China. Working in the labs of Genxi Li and Xinjian Liu, he built up skills in electrochemical and biochemical techniques and developed an interest in scientific research and communication.

Deserah Strand (Kramer lab, PLB) moved to MSU with Dr. Kramer from Washington State U. She earned her BS in biology at Kennesaw State University in Georgia before enrolling at WSU.

Sahra Uygun (GEN) is here on a Fulbright Scholarship from Turkey. Sahra earned her BS (food engineering) and MS (biotechnology) degrees at Middle East Technical University in Istanbul. She is interested in continuing research in plant biotechnology, particularly as it relates to the production of novel foods and plants.

Thirty-eight graduate students representing 11 different countries are currently members of the PRL.
**Our Students**

### 2010 Doctoral Dissertation Defenses

**Neil Adhikari** (Larkin lab) “Analysis of the subchloroplastic distribution of GENOMES UNCOPULED 4 and magnesium chelatase.” Neil is starting the new year as a postdoc in John Browse’s lab at Washington State University, Pullman, WA.

**Jonathan Davis** (Keegstra lab) “Membrane protein topology and subcellular localization of enzymes involved in the biosynthesis of the hemi-cellulosic polysaccharides xyloglucan and mannose.”

**Eric Moellering** (Benning lab) “Identification of the gene encoding galactolipid: galactolipid galactosyltransferase and its role in freezing tolerance” Eric moved on to a Research Scientist position at Synthetic Genomics in La Jolla, CA.

**Mike Ruckle** (Larkin lab) “The integration of light and plastid signals,” Mike will take a postdoctoral position at ETH (the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in Zürich, Switzerland.

**Sankalpi Warnasooriya** (Montgomery lab) “Tissue- and organ-specific phytochrome-mediated responses in Arabidopsis thaliana.” Sankalpi will continue in the Montgomery lab as a postdoc until summer 2011.

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### 2010 Award Winners

**Tom Cooke** (Howe lab) won the 2010 Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award in the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology. Tom moved on to Stanford University to pursue his graduate education. This is the third year running that BMB has awarded a student from Gregg’s lab!

**Sankalpi Warnasooriya** (Montgomery lab) received a Dissertation Continuation Fellowship, MSU College of Natural Science, Summer 2010; a Dissertation Completion Fellowship, MSU, Fall 2010; and the Sigma Xi Outstanding Graduate Student Award, MSU Sigma Xi Chapter, 2010.

**Marco Herde** (Howe lab) received a DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) Fellowship from Germany.

**Join the PRL Alumni Group on LinkedIn**

Keep in touch with PRL alumni, past and future, on LinkedIn. It’s easy to join the group: Go to LinkedIn, join if you aren’t yet a member, and search among groups for PRL. Ask to join this group. Your request will be relayed to Karen Bird, the group manager. She will approve membership for all members of the PRL family. Hope to see you there!
New Postdocs and Staff in 2010

**Elham Attaran** (He and Howe labs) BS, botany, Shahid Bahonar U, Kerman, Iran; MS, plant physiology, Teacher Training U, Tehran; PhD, plant science, Julius-Maximilans-U, Würzburg, Germany. Elham is working on the PlaNet project.

**Patrick Basitta** (Sept. - Dec., Visiting Scholar, Montgomery lab). BS, biology, Ruhr-University Bochum. Patrick’s project was entitled “The central cavity of hydrogenase A1 of *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* investigated by site-directed-mutagenesis (SDM).” He is from Frankfurt am Main.

**Frederique Breuers** (Vis. Fulbright Scholar, Brandizzi lab) Diplom, biology, U Heinrich-Heine, Düsseldorf, Germany; working toward PhD in plant biochemistry. Freddie is studying the in vivo dynamics of newly identified proteins of the chloroplast outer envelope membrane and their possible dual localization to other cellular membrane systems.

**Jeffrey Cruz** (Vis. Sr. RA, Kramer Lab) BS, biochem., Rutgers U; PhD, biology, Johns Hopkins U. From 2001-2009, Jeff served as Director of the Center for Advanced Bioinstrumentation at Washington State University, Pullman, WA.

**Christopher Hall** moved with David Kramer’s lab to MSU, where he is a student in plant biology. Chris is interested in the bioenergetics of photosynthesis and algae. He earned his BS in biochemistry at the University of Minnesota.

**Yuhua Jiao** (RA, Chen lab) BS, MS, PhD, Instrument Science & Technology, Harbin Institute of Technology, China. Her doctoral thesis was on perceptual audio hashing. Yuhua is interested in computational biology, gene expression data processing, and gene regulatory network inference.

**Atsuko Kanazawa** (Kramer Lab) BA and MA, history, Kansai University, Osaka, Japan; MA, History and PhD, biophysics, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL. From 2000-09, Atsuko was a Senior Scientist and Laboratory Coordinator at the Institute of Biological Chemistry, WSU, Pullman, WA. She is married to David Kramer.

**Kaori Kohzuma** (Kramer Lab) BS, Muroran Institute of Technology; MS, Nara Institute of Science and Technology (NIST); PhD, bioscience, NIST, in Japan. Kaori has worked as a technical assistant of experimental biology at the NIST and at Heidelberg University, Germany.

**Guangtao Lu** (Visiting Scholar, He lab) BS, botany, Shandong University; MS microbiology, Guangxi University; PhD, phytopathology, Zhejiang University, all in China. Guangtao is performing research on molecular plant-pathogen interactions.

**Ian Major** (Research Scholar, Howe lab) BSc, biological sciences with honours in molecular genetics, University of Alberta, Canada; PhD, forest biology, University of Victoria, Canada. Ian’s dissertation was entitled “Analysis of poplar (*Populus trichocarpa x P. deltoides*) inducible defense response against insect herbivores.” Since earning his PhD, Ian has served as a postdoctoral fellow at the Laurentian Forestry Centre, Québec, Canada.

**Maria Novokreshchenova** (Visiting Fulbright Scholar from Moscow, Russia, Thomashow lab) MS, PhD, biological sciences, Moscow State U. At Moscow State, Maria most recently served as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biology. Maria is here for six months to study cold acclimation.

Postdocs/Staff continued on next page.
Jiajie Peng (Visiting Scholar, Chen lab). Jiajie has been working toward the master’s degree in computer science at Harbin Institute of Technology in Weihai, China. Jiajie has pursued his interest in the detection and analysis of network motifs in biological networks in various research positions at the Bioinformatics Research Centre, HIT.

Bruce Rosa (Visiting Scholar, Chen lab). MS, biology, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. Bruce is enrolled in the doctoral program in Biotechnology at Lakehead. He is involved in a regulatory study of plants under various sources of stress.

Shailendra Singh (Visiting RA, Montgomery lab) BS, zoology, botany & chemistry, CSJMU University, Kanpur, India; MS, botany, Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, India; PhD, plant physiology, Friedrich-Alexander University, Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany. Shailendra is studying the molecular genetic and biochemical analyses of photomorphogenesis.

Ji Zhang (short-term Visiting Scholar from Australia, Chen lab) BE, Dept of Information Mgmt & Information Systems, Southeast University, PR China; MSc, School of Computing, National University, Singapore; PhD, computer Science, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Ji worked as an Asst. Professor in the Dept. of Mathematics & Computing, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia.

Thirty-eight postdocs representing 12 different countries are currently members of the PRL.

### Postdocs—Moving On

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<th>RA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Marcela Carvallo</td>
<td>Thomashow</td>
<td>University of California, San Diego, CA</td>
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<td>Mintu Desai</td>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>Ohio State University, Columbus, OH</td>
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<td>Heather Hallen-Adams</td>
<td>Walton</td>
<td>University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE</td>
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<td>Michael Held</td>
<td>Brandizzi</td>
<td>Ohio University, Athens, OH</td>
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<td>Lucia Marti</td>
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<td>University of Florence, Italy</td>
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<td>Vandana Yadav</td>
<td>Thomashow</td>
<td>University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC</td>
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Ground breaking for the Plant Science Expansion began in May. The addition will house growth chambers in the basement, an atrium, lecture hall, and entrance to the Horticulture Gardens on the ground floor, and research space for bioenergy, plant biotechnology, increasing food production, and other important areas of research on upper floors. The addition will join the Plant Biology Laboratories and the Plant & Soil Sciences Building. For a slide show offering details of the planned expansion, visit the CNS Research web page.
Notes from PRL Alumni

Christoph Benning (GA, CSomerville, 1986-92; RA, 1992-93; benning@msu.edu) received the Terry Galliard Award at the 19th International Symposium on Plant Lipids in Cairns, Australia in July. He then presented the Terry Galliard Memorial Lecture, speaking on “Lipid Metabolism and Trafficking during Chloroplast Development and Maintenance.” John Shanklin (RA, 1992, Somerville) received the award in 1996, and John Ohlrogge in 2000.

Katrina Cornish (RA, Zeevaart, 1982-85) submitted the following press release, quoted in part from an Ohio State University news story.

"WOOSTER, Ohio — Katrina Cornish, an internationally recognized expert on alternative natural rubber, has been selected as Endowed Chair in Bio-based Emergent Materials at Ohio State University’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

“Cornish will hold a joint appointment with the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science and the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering. She will be based on the Wooster campus of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) — which is the research arm of CFAES and the largest university agricultural bioscience research facility in the United States.

“In her new position, Cornish will lead a multidisciplinary team in the creation of innovative industrial materials from plant-based sources and associated biological, chemical and physical processes. She will also be charged with training new scientists and engineers for the emerging global bio-based economy.”

Ivan Delgado Orlic (GA, Raikhel, 1996-2002; ivaan@ivaan.com) “Greetings from Carlsbad. At the end of 2009 I decided to step down from my job at Helixis; a few months before we were purchased by Illumina (summer of 2010). Currently I’m president and CEO of Mouse Genotype, a biotech company I founded. The combination of laboratory work and business management is simply wonderful. When I’m not managing my company, I like to go on reading walks at the beach, run (a few miles by the beach or a few more to finish marathons), partake in the California wine industry at friends’ vineyards, and enjoy a plethora of activities with Alex, my partner in crime. I love SoCal, and would be more than happy to share some of its many charms with anyone that happens to be in the area”.

Richard Firn (RA, Kende, 1971-73) In the past couple of years, Richard kept us up to date with his retirement activities and, last year, his recent diagnosis of cancer. We were sorry to learn that in 2010, he lost this last battle.

David White wrote a nice tribute to Richard in The Guardian, Monday 31 May 2010, from which the following is quoted:

“My friend Richard Firn, who has died of cancer aged 65, was a plant biologist whose questioning of orthodoxy made him an inspiring teacher and colleague, and a scientist of the utmost rigour.

“For most of his professional life, from 1973 until 2009, he was a member of York University’s biology department, which he helped to develop into a world-class centre of plant biology. He was a member of the Society of Experimental Biology, acting as its botanical secretary for many years. His social conscience was apparent from his years as the chair of the Brunswick Organic Nursery, a registered charity that offers work and training to people with learning disabilities. He is survived by his wife Ulla.”

Sarah Fowler (RA, Thomashow, 2001-05) Mike and I finally finished coursework at Massey University Veterinary School last November and graduated in May this year. Finding work was harder than we anticipated due to the recession but we were eventually both offered positions locuming
in the anesthesia clinic at Massey University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. We both really enjoyed this work, especially teaching 5th year students in the clinic. Based on his previous career (cancer and osteoarthritis research for Pfizer) along with his vet degree, Mike was offered a position as a senior lecturer in Anaesthesia/pharmacology, which he accepted, meaning we are now based on Palmerston North (a small city with an agricultural university much like East Lansing) permanently. Our other big news is that our first child, Annalise Isabel Gieseg (see photo above), was born on 28th September weighing 2.95 kg. So I am now doing the mummy thing full-time but looking forward to going back to work part-time when she is 6 months old. So it has been a very busy year, especially when you throw in selling and buying a house. We’re looking forward to 2011 being a bit more relaxing.

Doug Gage (RA, 1986-1987, Zeevaart, ... ; gage@egr.msu.edu; www.bioeconomy.msu.edu) “In 2010, a new umbrella organization, the MSU Bio-Economy Network, was created at MSU. Doug Gage, who has been Assistant to the VP for Research & Graduate Studies, was named Director of the new group. The mission of this Network is to coordinate the diverse campus activities in basic research, economic analysis, policy and education relevant to the practical development of fuels, chemical feedstocks, and materials from biomass. The goal is both to support multidisciplinary federal research opportunities, and to foster connections between MSU research and public and private activities in the bioeconomy sector.

“Previously at MSU, Doug Gage was a PRL postdoc with Jan Zeevaart in 1986-87; later a postdoc and a Research Faculty member between 1987-1994 in the MSU NIH Mass Spectrometry Facility. Doug joined the regular faculty in the Dept of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology faculty in 1994. In 2002, he was recruited to Pfizer Global Research and Development in Ann Arbor, where he founded and led the Discovery Biomarkers Group. Doug returned to MSU in 2007, where he has since served as an adjunct professor and special assistant to VP Gray, with responsibility as the administrative liaison for the GLBRC and other external research initiatives. He has also co-chaired the new Plant Science Building Planning and Steering Committee and worked to integrate MBI International into the MSU research enterprise.”

Prudy Hall (RA, Chelm, 1988) Although I am officially fully retired, I still have my office and small lab and keep busy. One perk of retirement is that I now have time to read journal articles. Another perk is that I get invited to co-lead trips for Hiram College’s Study Abroad program. In December 2009 I was in South Africa with another professor and 19 students for a very memorable trip. A year from now, if enough students apply, I’ll be returning to the Galapagos Islands for a fifth time. In the meantime, to keep ourselves busy, Rich and I are going to Antarctica Dec 11-Jan 2. Not much plant biology to be seen, but it will be quite an adventure.
Heather Hallen-Adams (RA, Walton, 2004-08) “MSU Plant Biology alum and long-term Walton lab post-doc Heather Hallen-Adams accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Food Science & Technology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, this past August, where she now serves as the food mycologist.”

Anita Klein (GA, Delmer, 1975-1981) Liliana Cardemil (Chile) spent two months in Ken Keegstra’s lab this past summer. This was the motivation for the 2nd reunion of the PRL International Ladies Club. [Our first reunion was in Spain, in 1996]. Yael Avissar (originally from Israel, now from Providence RI), and I (Newmarket NH) flew into Chicago, where Gracia Zabala (originally from Spain, now Urbana Champaign IL) met us in her car. We drove to East Lansing, all wondering how much would be familiar and how much would have changed in the 3 decades since we left. We had dinner at the Kellogg Center and officially inducted Gaby Kende (originally Hungary by way of Switzerland) and Riet Zeevaart (originally The Netherlands) into the PRL International Ladies Club (see picture below).

A whirlwind 40 hours in East Lansing seeing lots of friends, current and former PRLer’s (Ken Keegstra, Karen Bird, Tom Sharkey, Jim Smith) and other MSU folk. We enjoyed Dairy Bar ice cream, bought chocolate cheese, and visited the new Horticultural Gardens. We had such a great time together, we are considering a reunion in Chile in another year or so!

Best wishes for 2011!

Fernand Lambein (RA, Wolk, 1970-72) “Our university had changed the Email addresses and although both old and new were active for several years, I may have lost mails when the old one was discontinued. This way I may have lost contact even with the PRL, and finally finding last years Alumni Newsletter was a big shock learning about the passing of Jan Zeevaart. My first day in the PRL in September 1970 when I went to bring him greetings from common contacts in Ghent University, he replied to my Dutch greetings in English. Speaking Dutch was for at home. My visits to the Zeevaart home were immensely enjoyable, and he later visited us in Ghent with his wife Riet and then baby boy Scott.

“My former supervisor Peter Wolk is now the only ‘founding father’ of the PRL still active in the PRL. In last year’s Alumni Newsletter, the historical picture with the Anton Lang gang at the start of the great PRL history is of particular interest to me as they all were there during my PRL years. At the time, Andrew Mort was the youngest graduate student and I jestingly called him ‘grandson’, and he retaliated by giving me the title of grandpa, what I actually am now. For me this was indeed a very memorable time in my life, not the least “This picture was taken in Ghent when celebrating the 60th birthday of Dianna and Ludo Van Rompuy, who was my first PhD student and a postdoc with Jan Zeevaart.” (Fernand Lambein is on the left.)

because I met my wife Yu-Haey Kuo (Dianna) who was doing a masters in the Biology Department, that had a common elevator with the PRL... She did her PhD in Ghent University and we are still collaborating, also on the research front. We are now married 37 year with two girls. Ingrid followed in my footsteps in the Agricultural Faculty (now Bio-engineering) of Ghent University and went to Sapporo for her PhD, where she also met her Korean husband. She now works in a Pharmaceutical company in Belgium. They settled at walking distance from our home and we can fetch the two children from school. Kathleen went to medical school in Ghent University, is now a licensed pathologist and goes on for a PhD, sometimes visiting Yale University.

“After retirement seven years ago the university granted me the status of active emeritus, renewable each year for five years. Then I applied for and received a ‘senior’ card giving access to university facilities including library and internet until the end of December 9999. Probably this is a computer joke, wishing me long life. As I still can not stay home, I now am a voluntary post doc. A year ago we organised a workshop with attendance from five continents on the neurodegenerative diseases of the poor in Africa and South Asia: konzo and neurathymy, caused by unbalanced consumption of cassava or grass pea, respectively. We edited the 25 proceeding papers for a special issue of Food and Chemical Toxicology. My last two PhD students may graduate soon, one in bio-medical sciences in Ghent and one in chemistry in Bangladesh.”

Aaron Liepman (RA, Keegstra, 2002-06) “Greetings from Eastern Michigan University! 2010 has been an eventful year. At work, I was honored to be this year’s recipient of the Ronald W. Collins Distinguished Faculty Award for research. I also received a faculty research fellowship award that provided release from teaching for the fall semester. I have used this time away from teaching in the classroom to conduct research in the lab. It has been invigorating to do benchwork again; I didn’t realize how much I missed it!

“At home, Claire and I are doing our best to keep up with our two boys; Owen (5) and Mason (2) are very active and bring us joy each day. Owen started kindergarten this year and Mason attends preschool two days per week. Both are growing quickly and having a great time!

“At EMU we’re always looking for excellent seminar speakers, if any PRL folk are interested in coming to speak, please drop me a line (aliepman@emich.edu). Best wishes for a fantastic 2011!”

Ulrich Melcher (GA, Varner, 1965-70) “My efforts (cooperative with Carolyn Malmstrom of MSU Botany Department) to bring together plant virologists and plant ecologists under a plant virus ecology umbrella are bearing fruit. We are making some headway in convincing colleagues that viruses have been around such a long time that they must play essential roles in ecosystems and should not be regarded exclusively as pathogens. The network (PVEN) had its third workshop this summer at Cornell Univ. I was invited to present the keynote REF Matthews lecture at the Australasian Plant Virology Workshop in Melbourne, Australia. While in the country I also visited with fellow virus evolutionist Adrian Gibbs in Canberra where I also became reacquainted with fellow PRL’er Jake Jacobsen.”

Stefan Rose-John (RA, Kende, 1983-84) Please visit our homepage: http://www.uni-kiel.de/Biochemie/

“We are happy to announce that the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) has decided to fund our new Collaborative Research Centre (SFB877) with the title ‘Proteolysis as a Regulatory Event in Pathophysiology.’ The first funding period is from July 2010 through June 2014, with two possible additional periods. For
more information see http://www.biochem.uni-kiel.de/sfb877/index.html"

Larry Smart (GA, McIntosh, 1987-92; lbs33@cornell.edu; http://willow.cals.cornell.edu) Associate Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Dept. of Horticultural Sciences, Cornell University, at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, NY. Larry is a plant geneticist and physiologist who directs the largest shrub willow breeding program in North America, established in 1998 at SUNY-ESF in Syracuse and moved to Cornell in 2009. The work in Larry’s lab is focused on developing and testing new willow varieties that produce high yields on marginal land for bioenergy, as well as studying the basic genetic mechanisms that determine variation and regulation of traits important for bioenergy and biofuels production.

Vandana Yadav (RA, Larkin, 2005-07; Thomashow, 2007-10) “I have joined the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Plant Biology Department under Dr. Jason W. Reed. He works on regulation of flower development by auxin.”

We look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions for improvements to the Newsletter, as well as your news for inclusion in future newsletters. Please send these via e-mail to Newsletter Editor, Karen Bird (birdk@msu.edu).

Join the PRL Alumni Group on LinkedIn

Keep in touch with PRL alumni, past and future, on LinkedIn. It’s easy to join the group: Go to LinkedIn, join if you aren’t yet a member, and search among groups for PRL. Ask to join this group. Your request will be relayed to Karen Bird, the group manager. She will approve membership for all members of the PRL family. Hope to see you there!

We invite you to visit the PRL website

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