



PRL Alumni Newsletter

**DOE Plant Research Laboratory
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824**

<http://www.prl.msu.edu/>



**January
2007**

Number 8



*The Keegstras: Kurt, Brent, Ken, and Kevin
Julie, Tina, Ila (Ken's mother), Sue, and Colleen*

Greetings, Alumni!

As the new Director of the Plant Research Laboratory, it is my pleasure to address all of you for the first time in this annual newsletter. And at the risk of coming across as if I think this letter is “all about me,” I want to open by expressing to you that I am sincerely honored to take on this new role. I can assure you that I will do all within my ability to help the PRL continue the tradition of excellence that has been its hallmark for more than four decades, a tradition that was established and maintained through the efforts and contributions that all of you have made.

So 2006; it was another busy, productive and exciting year for the PRL. If, however, I had to capture in one word the overriding character of the year, it would be “change.” The first was the stepping down of Ken Keegstra as PRL Director. One cannot overstate how important Ken has been to the PRL over the past 13+ years and the high esteem in which he is held within the PRL and greater MSU community. Thus, it is not surprising that all of us wanted to do something special to honor Ken and his contributions and accomplishments. And what we wound up doing was “Ken’s Day”—a day of celebration that included a symposium, reception, and banquet.

The symposium, which was held on October 27, was on “Biofuels from Plants: Opportunities and Challenges,” a topic in which Ken has become very interested. The program for this special event is copied below, and photos, taken by graduate student Wanessa Wight and postdoc David Cavalier, are on the cover of this newsletter. Additional photos are on the PRL website. The afternoon symposium, which was open to the public, was followed by a reception and the banquet. Attending the dinner were many PRL members as well as department colleagues and representatives of CNS and the university. There were many wonderful remembrances and a marvelous tribute by MSU President Lou Anna Simon. And a particularly warming aspect of the day was the presence of Ken’s family, including, of course his wife Sue, but also his mom, Ila, and his three sons and their wives. The event enabled them to see first hand the high regard in which their son/husband/father is held by his PRL and MSU colleagues. It was truly a wonderful day.



Just one point of clarification here. It should not be thought that Ken is now in the process of retiring. Just the opposite. He is returning to full-time research as a regular faculty member in the PRL and aggressively attacking a number of basic questions regarding the synthesis and regulation of cell wall polysaccharides. You can read about his plans for the future on page 4 of this newsletter.

A second major change was not a joyous one; it was the passing of Hans Kende. I do not have it within my capacity to express how much Hans meant to the PRL, the greater

MSU community, and beyond (see page 2). But actually, I don’t have to, as you already know this. Moreover, his long-term colleague and close friend Jan Zeevaart wrote a beautiful remembrance which was previously sent out to you and is posted on the PRL website, in case you happened to miss it. We continue to receive contributions toward a memorial in honor of Hans and are discussing possibilities with University officials and Gaby Kende to determine what would be most fitting. When a decision is reached, we will relay this information via e-mail, as well as posting it on the PRL website. We are saddened by Hans’s passing, but also are heartened by our good fortune to have known him and to have had him as part of our community and lives.

And two final “changes” for 2006 which we are all very happy about; the arrival of our two new faculty members, Federica Brandizzi from the University of Saskatchewan and Markus Pauly from the Max-Planck-Institute for Molecular Plant Physiology in Gölml, Germany. Their labs are up and running and they are already making important contributions to the various activities of the PRL. You can find introductions for Federica and Markus on page 2.

And just a few last items. Several PRL alumni were among our guests for CHOICES Day V in September, including Mike Abler, Katrina Cornish, Scott Diehn, and John Pitkin. This day of presentations and discussions about career choices has been so successful that the format has changed little since the program was initiated in 1994.

I hope you will enjoy reading our news of the past year in these pages, as we have enjoyed reading the updates you send in.

Best wishes for health, happiness, and success in the New Year,

Mike Thomashow

Symposium honoring Ken Keegstra Friday, October 27, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Bruce Dale, MSU Department of Chemical Engineering & Materials Science
“Why cellulosic ethanol is nearer than you think!”

Dr. Lee Lynd, Dartmouth’s Thayer School of Engineering
“The role of biomass in America’s energy future”

Dr. John Ohlrogge, MSU Department of Plant Biology
“Plant oil biosynthesis: Can we put more energy into biomass and get more energy out?”

PRL Faculty

Federica Brandizzi earned her BSc in Biology and PhD in Cell & Molecular Biology at the University of Rome, Italy. Following postdoctoral work in the Department of Plant Sciences, Oxford University, UK, and at the School of Biological & Molecular Sciences, Oxford Brookes University, UK, Federica joined the faculty of the Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada. From 2003-2006, she served that department as Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair. Among the projects to which she devoted her energies were (1) helping to design an undergraduate course to teach an appreciation of the biotechnological applications of sciences to non-life-science students; (2) training precollege women in cell and molecular biology lab techniques; and hosting hands-on visits of high-school classes to demonstrate applications of microscopes. Federica's research interests include the biology of the endomembrane system in plant cells using state-of-the-art imaging techniques, regulation of protein transport in the early secretory pathway, the dynamics of golgi membranes, and activity of GTPases of the plant secretory system. Learn more about Federica's research by visiting her page at the PRL website.



Markus Pauly earned both his Diplom (Masters) and his PhD in Biology at the Technical University, Aachen, Germany, although his research for both degrees was carried out at the Complex Carbohydrate Research Center, University of Georgia. He held subsequent research positions at the Royal Agricultural University, in Copenhagen, Denmark, then at Unilever, Bedford, UK. From 2001-2006, Markus served as Independent Research Group Leader at the Max-Planck Institute for Molecular Plant Physiology in Golm, Germany. During his tenure there he was awarded an Underwood fellowship of the British Research Council that allowed him to work for a 9-month sabbatical at the John Innes Institute in Norwich, UK with Prof. Keith Roberts's group. Markus's interest has always been on the structure and function relationship of the complex plant cell wall polysaccharides. Coming from a carbohydrate chemistry perspective, he has recently adopted biochemical and genomic approaches to alter wall polysaccharide structure in planta through e.g. genetic manipulation of their biosynthesis. His current focus are hemicelluloses and pectins in Arabidopsis and tomato. Learn more about Markus's research by visiting his page at the PRL website.

Hans Kende

We were saddened by the passing of our friend and colleague, Hans Janos Kende, on September 26, 2006, at the age of 69. During his forty years as a member of the PRL faculty, Hans conducted a rigorous program of research into the mysteries of deepwater rice and flower initiation. But he also paid attention to the human side of the research process. He never let pass an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of his advisees and colleagues. Members of the PRL, present and past, sense a rare esprit de corps that is uncommon in research institutes. Hans promoted this esprit, by such diverse activities as urging his lab members to attend seminars, always showing up for pizza lunch (though he never ate the pizza), and participating in every PRL-sponsored event. In the countless ways in which Hans contributed to the PRL, he is sadly missed by all of us.



There will be a memorial service for Hans on May 20, 2007, at 11:00 a.m., in the MSU Chapel. You are welcome to attend.

The Kende family suggests that contributions in memory of Hans can be sent to one of the following:

Michigan State University
DOE Plant Research Laboratory
106 Plant Biology
East Lansing, MI 48824-1312

Kehillat Israel, Hadassah
2014 Forest Road
Lansing, Michigan 48910

UM Comprehensive Cancer Center
1500 East Medical Center Drive
CCGC 6-303
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-0944

Standing Ovation for Ken Keegstra

And well deserved, too! After nearly fourteen years as Director of the PRL, Ken stepped out of the hot seat and back into his lab. During his tenure as Director, Ken oversaw the hiring of eight new faculty members; the departure of five members, many of them to direct research institutes themselves; the retirement of two members; and the untimely death of two members—a rather high rate of activity for a department of 12 faculty. While ensuring that the PRL continued to function smoothly throughout this time, Ken continued active service in science and education, earning many awards and honors along the way, including University Distinguished Professor (1998) and President of the American Society of Plant Biologists (1997-98). See below for his two most recent accolades!

What will Ken do with his new-found freedom? He replies, “My hope is to have more time to focus on our work on the biosynthesis of plant cell wall polysaccharides. This relatively obscure research topic has gained national attention because of the push to produce biofuels from biomass, in particular ethanol from plant cell wall polysaccharides. However, I expect that our research will remain focused on gaining a basic understanding of how plant cells make these complex polymers.”



Audience members at the Biofuels Symposium in Ken's honor show their appreciation of Ken's service to the PRL.

Ken Keegstra is named 2006 winner of ASPB's Stephen Hales Prize!

This award, given biennially in even-numbered years, honors the Reverend Stephen Hales for his pioneering work in plant physiology published in his 1727 book, *Vegetable Staticks*. It is a monetary award established in 1927 for a resident of North America who has served the science of plant physiology in some noteworthy manner.

In awarding this honor, the ASPB noted several of Ken's many accomplishments:

- his pioneering contributions to our understanding of chloroplast biogenesis, protein import into chloroplasts, and the structure and biosynthesis of the plant cell wall;
- his tireless promotion of plant biology at the national level and his distinguished service to ASPB as a member of the editorial boards of *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell*; as a member of the Executive Committee, the Committee on Public Affairs, and the Board of Trustees; and as President, 1997-1998;
- his research on the composition and structure of the plant cell wall as a graduate student in Peter Albersheim's laboratory, which resulted in a widely used model on how the polymers of the wall are interconnected; and
- his ground-breaking work on chloroplast biogenesis and protein import.

Three of the past five Stephen Hales Prizes were presented to then-current members of the PRL: Hans Kende in 1998, Jan Zeevaart in 2000, and Ken in 2006. And in 2004, the prize went to Natasha Raikhel (PRL faculty, 1986-2000; now at UC Riverside). Anton Lang received this prize in 1976.

AAAS Members Elected as Fellows

In October, the AAAS Council elected 449 members as Fellows of AAAS. These members are recognized for their contributions to science and technology. They will receive a certificate and a blue and gold rosette as a symbol of their distinguished accomplishments at the Fellows Forum to be held on 17 February 2007 during the AAAS Annual Meeting in San Francisco. **Among recipients of this award for 2006 are our own Ken Keegstra and former PRL faculty members Pam Green and Shauna Somerville.**

Our Students

New Additions to the PRL in 2006



Malia Dong (PLB) earned her BA in Biology at Willamette University in Salem, OR. In Gary Tallman's lab, she studied the relationship between auxin and the development of thermotolerance and thermoinhibition in *Nicotiana* guard cell protoplasts. Malia is hoping for a career in research and teaching. In addition to her research and studies, she was captain of the Willamette University Dance Team for two years. Malia has been awarded a University Enrichment Fellowship, a five-year support award from the MSU Graduate School, as well as a Plant Science Fellowship.



Jeong Woon Kim (PLB) earned her Bachelor of Agriculture at Seoul National University in Korea. Inspired by Ingo Potrykus and his work with golden rice, Jeong Woon joined an undergraduate research program to gain experience. Working in the Biophysics Lab, she investigated a novel sucrose-specific enzyme, sucrose hydrolase, in *Xanthomonas campestris*. Her thesis covered the enzymatic kinetics of this enzyme. Jeong Woon was also involved in a number of extracurricular groups on campus, serving, for example, as a volunteer at the English Café.



Caleb Knepper (GEN) acquired an interest in plants early in life, as an active 4-H member and in genetics courses in high school. He earned his BS in Biology and Microbiology at Kansas State, working on plant response to aphids. Caleb also enjoyed a summer internship in the Plant Genome Research Program at Boyce Thompson Institute (BTI). Working under Dr. Haiyang Wang, he studied light-signaling pathways

in *Arabidopsis* development. Caleb is interested in stress response and development in plants and is working toward a career in genetic research. He is the recipient of a Plant Science Fellowship.



Rachel Miller (CMB) arrived with two BS degrees, with honors: in Plant Breeding and Genetics from Cornell, and in Biochemistry from NC State. At Cornell, Rachel worked on a maize genetics project at BTI, and at NC State she studied potato virus X in Dr. Hemenway's lab. She is working toward a career in genetic research, in either academia or industry.



Bonnie St. John (PLB) completed her BS in Biology at St. Norbert College in DePere, WI. As an RA there, she studied stress-related signal transduction pathways in *Arabidopsis* and liverworts. As a summer intern in the Plant Genome Research Program at BTI, she worked on a genome-scale screen to identify secreted proteins from tomato infected with *Phytophthora infestans*. She is interested in plant signaling systems and hormones, and in plant response to environment. Bonnie is the recipient of a Plant Science Fellowship.



Sankalpi Warnasooriya (GEN) earned her BS in Biotechnology at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. Her undergraduate research project was based on detection of banana bract mosaic virus in a local banana variety. Sanki hopes to study virus replication, expression of resistance genes in host, and breeding for disease resistance, on her way to a career in research and teaching. She joined us in her second year of graduate studies and has chosen Beronda's lab for her graduate research.

Our Award-Winning Students



Bill Underwood (He lab) was awarded a Marvin Hensley Endowed Fellowship for academic achievement from the College of Natural Science.

Julie Bordowitz (Montgomery-Kaguri lab; see photo, right) won this year's CNS Barnett-Rosenberg Fellowship. This fellowship includes full tuition, a stipend, and health insurance.

Congratulations to ASPB Award Winners!

At the Midwest Section 2006 Annual Meeting in Chicago, two students in Mike Thomashow's lab took top honors!



Colleen Doherty (left) gave the Best Talk: "Constitutive expression of a truncated version of the CBF2 transcription factor indicates alternative non-CBF cold response pathways involved in cold acclimation"



Ritu Sharma (left) presented the Best Poster: "Use of natural variation to identify genes regulating the cold response pathway"



Julie Bordowitz
with Dean Leroi

Julie Bordowitz, shown here with Dean George Leroi at Ken's Symposium Dinner, has served as the Graduate representative of CMB for the Dean's Student Advisory Committee (DSAC) for the past 2 years (this year she is the Graduate Chair). She also is serving as a graduate student representative on the Life Sciences Task Force, which Dr. Leroi initiated last January.

2006 Dissertation Defenses

Bill Underwood: "Innate immunity in *Arabidopsis thaliana*: Induction and suppression by *Pseudomonas syringae*" (PhD, Genetics) Bill will remain in the He lab for a month before relocating to Stanford, California, to work in Shauna Somerville's lab at the Carnegie Institution of Washington. (See photo, above left.)

Hiroshi Maeda: "Vitamin E functions in photosynthetic organisms" (PhD, Cell & Molecular Biology) "I will stay at DellaPenna's lab until May 31st, 2007, then move to Purdue University to work with Dr. Natalia Dudareva." (See photo, page 7.)

Postdocs and Staff

Brandizzi Lab



Kwangchul Oh earned his MS in Biology at Sogang University in Seoul, Korea, and his Ph.D. in Plant Physiology at Oregon State. His research was focused on molecular cloning and characterization of the *Diageotropica* gene in tomato. He then worked as a postdoc at UNC-Chapel Hill, and UC-Berkeley at the Plant Gene Expression Center.



Marika Rossi is a student from Federica's lab at the University of Saskatchewan, where she is working on a project entitled "Characterization of the *Arabidopsis thaliana* Bet11 and Bet12 and their role in the secretory pathway of plant cells" as part of her MSc program. Marika will continue working toward her degree for the coming year in Federica's lab here.

Saravanan RamuSubramanian earned his BS, MS, and PhD degrees at the University of Madras, India. He then served as a postdoc for a year at the University of Bourgogne, Dijon, France, and for three years in the Department of Plant Biology at Cornell. For the past two years, he was an Assistant Scientist at Iowa State University, where he studied signal transduction in plant pathogenic interactions.

Cell Wall Project



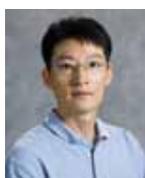
Yan Wang completed his MS in Molecular Biology at the Institute of Zoology in Beijing, China, and his Ph.D. in Plant Physiology at Penn State in Teh-hui Kao's lab. He has since been working in Patrick Masson's lab at U Wisconsin-Madison on the project, "Molecular characterization of members of the *WVD2WDL* gene family."

He Lab



Christy Mecey completed her doctoral degree in Genetics at MSU under Suzanne Thiem. Her dissertation was entitled "Mechanisms leading to translation arrest in AcMNPV-infected Ld652Y cells." Christy earned her BS in Plant Science and Agricultural Education and her MA in Agricultural Education at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Howe Lab



Jin Ho Kang earned his BS and MS in Agriculture at Seoul National University, Korea, and went on to Jena, Germany, for his PhD at Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology. Jin Ho is working in the Howe lab on the glandular trichome project.

Larkin Lab



Stephanie Buck earned her BS in Human Biology in MSU's Lyman Briggs School and is working as a technician.

Stephanie DeMarco, also a technician, completed her degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at MSU.

Montgomery-Kaguri Lab



Melissa Whitaker earned her BS in Horticulture at MSU. She served as RA in an internship with Rebecca Grumet, as a technician at Lansing Community College, and for Randy Beaudry in Horticulture at MSU. She is working as a technician.

Pauly Lab



Marcin Nowicki was born in Skierniewice, Poland. He took courses at Hiroshima University in Japan, and earned his PhD from RWTH-Aachen, Germany. His thesis work was in the field of plant lipid biochemistry and molecular biology. He speaks Polish, English, and German well, along with basic Japanese, French, and Russian.

Two of Markus Pauly's students are working toward doctoral degrees from Max-Planck Institute in Golm, Germany, but are conducting their research here:



Sascha Gille earned his Diploma-Biology at Humboldt-Universität in Berlin with a thesis entitled "Evaluation of the antiviral effect of proteasome inhibitors to the rat cytomegalovirus as a model for the human cytomegalovirus." Before joining us, he worked at TIB MolBiol GmbH in Berlin.



Nino Nikolovski holds a MS in Biology (Genetics) from Kazan State University in Russia. His thesis was entitled "Identification of differentially expressed genes during the transition stage of fiber cell wall formation in flax."

PRL Office

Elaine Bailey, is working with Zita Schneider as an Account Clerk. Elaine has been on staff in Mechanical Engineering at MSU for the past 6 and a half years.

Computer Lab



Bill Park joined the staff in the computer lab as a Computer Assistant. Among other duties, he is working to update our website according to the new design envisioned by Hans Kende and Marlene Cameron.

Postdocs—Moving On

RA	LAB	LOCATION AFTER LEAVING PRL
Awai	Hu	Saitawa, Japan
Chen	Howe	Washington State University, Pullman, WA (Browse)
Choi	Kende	Kunsan National University, Gunsan, Korea
Constan	Thomashow	Returned to school for teaching certificate
Khoja	Froehlich/Keegstra	Virginia Tech., Blacksburg, VA
Jayanty	Howe	Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO
Lechno-Yossef	Wolk	MSU Department of Chemistry
Liepman	Keegstra	Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI
McCaig	Howe	BASF, Research Triangle Park, NC
Mikkelsen	Thomashow	RVAU, Dept of Plant Biology, Frederiksberg, Denmark

Lee McIntosh Memorial Award

Established in 2006, this award is given in honor of Lee McIntosh, a professor in the PRL and the Department of Biochemistry from September 1, 1981, until his death on June 28, 2004. In conjunction with a seminar, cash prizes are made to a graduate student and/or a postdoctoral research associate who demonstrates outstanding understanding of interdisciplinary collaboration and research in the field of plant biochemistry, as judged by the PRL Personnel Affairs Committee.



Sally Mackenzie (left; faculty, University of Nebraska), a long-time friend and collaborator of Lee's, presented a lecture in conjunction with this award on October 11. She spoke on a subject related to much of Lee's research, "The remarkable versatility of mechanisms underlying nuclear-mitochondrial interactions in higher plants."

Carl Andre, a fifth-year student in Christoph Benning's lab, was the first recipient of this award. He is studying carbon partitioning and the developmental regulation of seed oil biosynthesis, with the ultimate goal of successfully engineering crop plants for food and industrial purposes.



Anton Lang Memorial Seminar and Awards

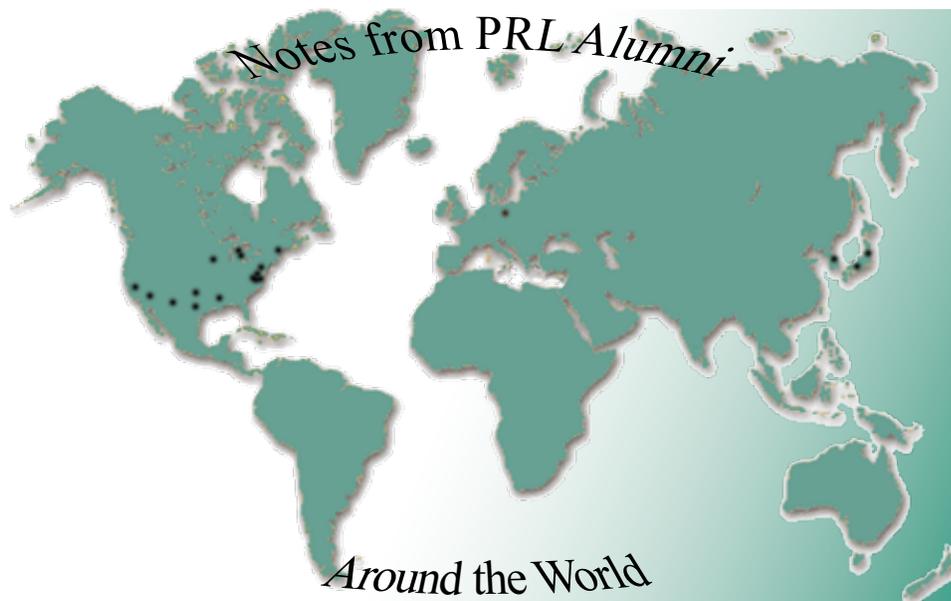


Awards for Outstanding Research in 2006 went to Graduate Student **Hiroshi Maeda** (DellaPenna Lab, Cell & Molecular Biology, photo at left) and Postdoc **Hui Chen** (Howe Lab, photo right). Dr. Ove Nilsson of the Swedish University of Agricultural



Sciences presented the lecture: "The role of the FT mRNA in photoperiodic regulation of plant growth and development." The 2007 seminar will be presented on April 16 by former PRL postdoc Mark Estelle (RA, CR Somerville, 1984-86).

• **Contributions to the Anton Lang Memorial Fund** may be sent to the University Development Office, 220 Hannah Tech & Research Center, 4700 South Hagadorn, East Lansing, MI 48823. Please specify that your gift be directed to the Anton Lang Memorial Fund. All contributions are greatly appreciated.



Joong-Hoon Ahn (GA 1991-94, RA 1996-99, Walton; jhahn@konkuk.ac.kr) Joong-Hoon has moved into a new department at Konkuk University in Seoul, Korea: Bioscience and Biotechnology. He was also the recipient of the 2006 Distinguished Research Award presented by Konkuk University.

Charles Arntzen (Director, 1980-84; charles.arntzen@asu.edu; <http://lsvl.la.asu.edu/plantbiology/faculty/arntzen.htm>)



“At the 2006 annual meetings of the Botanical Society of America, Charles J. Arntzen was granted the Centennial Award, which was established to acknowledge and honor outstanding service to

the plant sciences and the Society. In addition, in the last year the NIH NIAID awarded \$3.7 million for a Cooperative Research Center for ‘Plant-derived Vaccines Against Hepatitis C’ to Arizona State University for which Charlie serves as the Principal Investigator. He still finds time to enjoy his grandsons, aged 2 and 4” (see photo!).

Emily Avila-Teegarden (GA, 1999-2004, Raikhel, emily.avil@chaffey.edu) Emily moved to UC Riverside with Natasha in 2001, graduating from MSU’s CMB Program in 2004. Following postdoctoral work in Natasha’s lab, Emily is now a full-time biology instructor at Chaffey Community College in Rancho Cucamonga, California.

Sruti Bandopadhyay DebRoy (GA, He, 2003; srutiban@hotmail.com) “In the three years since I left, I have moved significantly away from Plant Research. I spent nearly three years as a postdoc at Northwestern University studying *Legionella pneumophila*. We recently moved to Iowa City, Iowa; Ashish to pursue a fellowship in Pediatric Gastroenterology, and myself to another postdoc. This time I am studying Leishmania, a parasite that infects humans in many different parts of the world and is a growing concern for war veterans. Among other things, we bought a house, which unlike our condo in Chicago, has a yard and we are very excited to have a lawn. We also made a trip to Ireland in 2005 which was very enjoyable.”

Arun Goyal (RA, Keegstra, 1994-95; Arun_Goyal@TAMU-Commerce.edu) “I have recently joined Texas A&M-Commerce.”



“Arun Goyal has been appointed Chair of the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB) International Committee. Dr. Goyal, who is head of the university’s Biological and Environmental Sciences Department, began his term on October 1, 2006. He has been on the committee since 2000 and will serve as Chair through 2008. Additionally, he is on the ASPB Executive Committee, which is the Society’s governing committee.”

“Goyal’s specialty is physiology, genomics, and biotechnology, and since 1992 he has won more than \$1.8 million in grants. His professional accolades include

being an Honorary Life Fellow at the Indian Society of Agricultural Biology, and he was twice president of his Sigma-Xi chapter at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Furthermore, he has served as an advisor to industry and international organizations, such as the World Bank, the United Nations, and the Indian Agricultural Research Institute.

“... In 1997, he (co)founded the Plant Biologist/Biotechnologists and Agricultural Scientists of Indian Origin (PBASIO) weekly electronic journal, news, and discussion forum. The website brings together experts throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to help strengthen the agriculture and biotechnology industries in India.”

“Under Arun’s chairmanship, the IAC has resumed its efforts to reach out in support of plant biology conferences and plant biologists in nations with emerging economies, most recently Argentina and India,” said ASPB Executive Director **Crispin Taylor**. “As the internationalization of plant biology continues, I expect the International Committee’s interests and responsibilities will increase. Arun is well-qualified to manage these necessary transitions.” [From an ASPB Press Release]

“My family is still in Duluth MN. Archana is teaching in Lake Superior College, Amit is a junior attending Univ Minnesota and Anjali is a junior in high school. I travel to MN every other weekend.”



Anna Halinska (RA, ‘87-’88, Zeevaart; anna.halinska@fnp.org. pl) “Another year has flown by and this time you can write in the Newsletter that my professional career has come to an end, and my retired life will formally begin as of July 1, 2006, which is a bit sad in itself. However, I am still full

of energy and good ideas. I believe that I can build a new career even in ‘retirement’ on the good results from the past.”

Philipp Kapranov (GA, de Bruijn, 1995-2000; Philipp_Kapranov@affymetrix.com) “I am still at Affymetrix, continuing the work on the mapping of transcribed portions of the human genome and identification of their functions. I got recently promoted to Senior Scientist. I really enjoy the research and also Northern California, which is really, really beautiful.”

Jim Kastenmayer (GA, Green, 1996-2001; RA, Green, 2001-02; jpk37@law.georgetown.edu)

“I’ve gone through a major career transition since my time at the PRL. After leaving the PRL, I was a post-doc for two years at the National Cancer Institute in a yeast lab. I did structure-function studies on a protein that ensures chromosome transmission fidelity and began a project to identify and characterize the function of small open reading frames in yeast. We published papers on both projects.”



“Following my post-doc, I decided to broaden my horizons and accepted a position at the NIH Office of Technology Transfer (OTT). OTT is responsible for patenting and licensing NIH inventions. MSU has a similar office for discoveries made at MSU. At OTT I assisted with analysis of patent portfolios and patent licensing. After a year at OTT, I accepted an offer to work for a law firm in D.C., where I’ve been for just over a year. I work as a patent agent helping inventors obtain patents on their inventions.”

“In the meantime, I have completed two and a half years of law school, taking classes in the evenings. I hope to be finished by this time next year.”

Ellen Kearns (GA, Somerville, 1991; EVKearns@aol.com) “I work as a Software Trainer/Application Support Specialist at the New York office of Blank Rome, LLP, in the Chrysler Building. The people are great and the building was built in 1928 and has beautiful hand-crafted details throughout. I’m also working on a project to inventory their art collection, which is a lot of fun.”

“In science, I am a board member of the Pound Ridge Land Conservancy and am running a research project on removal of the invasive reed, *Phragmites australis*, which is growing in two fens on one of our preserves.”

Hyder Ali Khoja (RA, Keegstra, 2004-2006; hyderk@vt.edu) Hyder reports from Virginia Tech, Department of Horticulture: “I have finally settled down to Blacksburg, Virginia and trying to acclimatize. One of the first new change which I still find it difficult



to do is to change from calling my self “Spartans,” Go Green-Go White to Hokie (What a strange Turkey name!). For the first time I thought it has been confused with the word Hockey (a sport) and not HOKIE. But, until I read the story behind (<http://www.vt.edu/about/hokie.php>) this word I was not sure what that really meant. So, after finding that out!! I’ve decided not to remove “SPARTAN-Alumni” Sticker from my car windshield and still proudly call myself a Spartan with a big-S bulging out!!

“Virginia Tech is based really in the heart of Blue Ridge mountainous range! And through my lab window you really can see the beautiful scenery. The working lab and other neighbouring labs are well equipped and running smoothly. They have recently moved to a new location. Basically, it is designed for Tissue-culture but molecular work is also in process. At the moment I have started verifying through PCR screening and doing southern blots on already established mutant lines of their strawberry crop. Presently I am working on Strawberry Genomics.”



Aaron Liepman (RA, Keegstra, 2002-2006) “I am enjoying my assistant professor position in the Biology Department at Eastern Michigan University. My first semester has been dominated by teaching responsibilities, but hopefully next semester I’ll make more progress setting up my research lab and recruiting

some students, and kickstarting some research projects. Anyone who would like to contact me about “spinach ring,” or anything else can e-mail me at: aliepman@emich.edu.”

Steven K. Lorch (RA, Wolk and Haug, 1972-73; stevenkl@comcast.net) “Our first grandchild, Jeffrey Ethan Berger, was born on May 7, 2006. His mother, Elisa, was born May 6, 1973, while I was post-docing in Peter Wolk’s lab.” (Picture of grandfather and grandson, right)



Ulrich Melcher (GA, ‘65-‘70, Varner; umelcher@biochem.okstate.edu; <http://opbs.okstate.edu/~melcher/UM.html>) “Several nice things have happened to me in the past year. My col-



leagues in the American Phytopathological Society have named me a Fellow of their Society. I was elected to be President-Elect of the Oklahoma Academy of Science. Yet, the recognition I am most proud of is from the Graduate and Professional Student Association of my university who named me their Phoenix Award

winner for excellence in graduate student mentoring. The first award I ever received was for being an excellent teaching assistant in Biochemistry at MSU! These events were pleasant distractions from coordinating a statewide effort in plant virus biodiversity and ecology exploration.

Murray Nabors (GA, Lang, 1965-1969; mnabors@olemiss.edu)

“I arrived at the PRL in fall, 1965 and graduated from the PRL in 1970 with a Ph.D. To be honest, I had been offered a job with the National Park Service on the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and would have taken that if not for the draft: You had to stay in school to avoid Viet Nam. Bruce Stowe, at Yale, had recommended me to Anton and Anton to me. I didn’t really know much about him except his flowering research and that he was head of an exciting new lab at MSU.



“I think I was one of the first students to graduate from the lab. There was a Danish student before me (Kjell—don’t remember his last name), but I think he left without graduating. I was one of, if not the only, graduate student of Anton’s at the PRL. Anton had another graduate student, Joe Scheibe, before PRL. Joe worked at Washington State for many years. Although I worked for Anton, I was housed in Hans Kende’s lab, so I was sad to learn of his passing. I think all of my committee members have died. They included Anton, Hans, and Joe Varner.

“I’ll give you a few recollections of those guys. Anton usually worked in his office with no artificial lights, so it took a time of adjustment to be able to make eye contact with him. At my first visit, after a short conversation he took a canvas bag of lettuce seeds out of his desk, plunked them down in front of me and

said, “Vell, if you want to work for me you will study these.” The interview was over. He didn’t care much for graduate students because they wasted time away from research taking classes. He much preferred post-docs. Generally he started talking to me in Russian or German before remembering that I didn’t understand. There were few Americans in the lab at the time. In those days he invited the entire lab to his house for barbecues. He used to sweep through the labs before seminars, collecting people to attend. I hid out from this on occasion, firmly believing that I was attending so many seminars that I would never graduate from my own research efforts, or worse, that I would go to a seminar and hear my own results already being presented.

“Joe Varner was among the most active, innovative researchers I have known. He was very interactive with students, and his enthusiasm for trying something new, daring, and maybe even crazy was unbounded. I used to take data on paper towels since there was a convenient dispenser at the end of my lab bench. One day he stopped by to say a few words, rinsed his hands in the sink, and then casually dried them on a couple of sheets of my data. ‘Ever considered a research notebook?’ he commented on leaving.

“Hans Kende was a great help to me throughout my doctoral research at PRL. I always appreciated this since I wasn’t his student. He told me, for example that one of my referees was writing short, unhelpful letters, and that I shouldn’t use this person. He was known to play jokes on people including sending Varner a glossy totally fake letter from a prospective graduate student which lauded Varner’s accomplishments in unabashed, oily, never-ending praise. Varner fell for it.

“Currently I am Professor and Biology Chair at the University of Mississippi. I am the author of a Botany text published by Benjamin Cummings and direct research with a few students on various plant tissue culture topics. I am married to Adriana, an RN, and have 6 children ranging in ages from 1 to 25.”

Kerry Pedley (GA, Walton, 1996-2001; Kerry.Pedley@ars.usda.gov) “I have completed my postdoc at the Boyce Thompson Institute and, although it was tough to leave Ithaca, NY, I have taken a position with the USDA-ARS Foreign Disease-Weed Science Research Unit. I now live in Frederick, MD and work ... at Ft.

Detrick. My primary research focus is Asian soybean rust. Outside of work I have become an avid runner – completing my third marathon this past fall.”

Jiro Sekiya (RA, Filner, 1979-1981; sekiyaj@kyoto.gakuen.ac.jp). “I moved to new affiliation on April 1, 2006, from Kyoto University, Graduate School of Agriculture. My new affiliation is Department of Bioenvironmental Science, Kyoto Gakuen University, and I serve as a dean. The address is Kameoka, Kyoto 621-8555, Japan.”

Yun-ling Xu (RA, Zeevaart, 1998; yun-ling.xu@fda.hhs.gov) “I used to work at PRL as post-doc in Dr. Zeevaart’s lab. It has been more than 7 years since I left PRL. Since I left PRL, I worked in Dr. Walker’s lab at MSU for more than three years, then I went to MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX. Now, I am working at Food and Drug Administration as a mathematical statistician in Rockville, MD. I miss my days at PRL, in particular I always remember all the help I got from everybody in the PRL office.”

Tomoyuki Yamaya (RA, Filner, 1979-81; tyamaya@biochem.tohoku.ac.jp) Tomoyuki is a Professor in Tohoku University (Graduate School of Agricultural Science) (<http://www.agri.tohoku.ac.jp/cellbio/index.htm>) “Research interest: molecular physiology of nitrogen utilization in rice. Since last April, I have been working for Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) as a Senior Program Officer in Agricultural Sciences Group of Reserch Center for Science Systems, as an adjunct job (<http://www.jspss.go.jp/english/e-center/index.html>) This will be continued till March 31, 2009. JSPS is the organization similar to your NSF in USA.”

Jinsong Zhu (RA, Wolk, 1995-97; zhujin@pop.ucr.edu) “Thanks to my training in PRL and the Entomology Department, I will join the Department of Biochemistry, Virginia Tech, next January as an Assistant Professor. My research interest lies in understanding signal transduction and regulation of gene expression in mosquitoes.” [Since leaving the PRL, Jinsong has been working with Alex Raikhel at UC Riverside.]



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 PRL Director Mike Thomashow (thomash6@msu.edu) or to Newsletter Editor, Karen Bird (birdk@msu.edu).

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