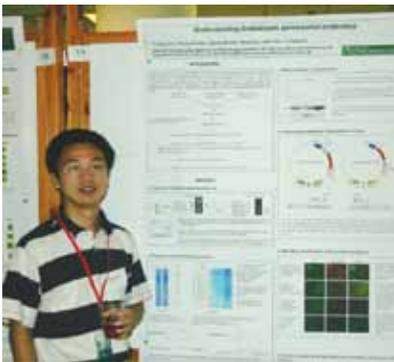


# PRL Alumni Newsletter

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

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



**January  
2008**

**Number 9**



*PRL Retreat, October 2007*



**We are trying to get away from printing and mailing copies of the PRL Alumni Newsletter. If you are interested in receiving notice of future issues, please send an e-mail message to the Newsletter editor, Karen Bird, at [birdk@msu.edu](mailto:birdk@msu.edu). Thank you!**

## Greetings, Alumni!

Well, I've completed my first full year as Director of the Plant Research Lab and can tell you that although the job has been demanding at times, it has also been very rewarding and enjoyable. This wouldn't have been the case, however, without the incredible support I have received from all of the faculty and staff. I don't know how many times I have gone down to Karen Cline or Alice Martin to ask "How do I do this?", or more often, "Could you please help me do this", which mostly translated to, "Can you please do this for me?" I could tell such a story for each of the faculty and staff, but of course there is not room here. However, there is one person I must single out: Ken Keegstra. For more than 13 years he provided steadfast leadership as Director of the PRL and, as would be expected, he continues to make vital contributions. Whenever an important issue has come up regarding the PRL, I have sought his counsel and he has always taken the time to give me sage advice. His input has been invaluable to me during this year of transition.

A major event on campus in 2007 was the DOE announcement of funding for the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center, a \$125M collaborative effort between MSU and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. This Center is completely separate from the PRL, but several of our faculty members had key roles in its becoming a reality and will conduct bioenergy-related research for the Center. PRL members including Jonathan Walton and, not surprisingly, Ken, will also have administrative roles in the Center. Read more about the GLBRC on page 3.

The PRL Retreat 2007 was held on October 5-7 at Kellogg Biological Station. This year's theme was "Plants as Factories for Biofuels and Other Products" (certainly a timely topic). Our guests were Steve Long (U Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), Tom Sharkey (U Wisconsin, Madison; now chair, MSU Department of Biochemistry), Debra Mohnen (U Georgia Plant Center), and Elizabeth Hood (Arkansas State U). Excellent science and good fun were enjoyed by close to 100 attendees, with 61 posters presented. This Newsletter's cover features photos from this event.

In 2007, we saw the establishment of two memorials to honor Hans Kende's memory. The Hans Kende Memorial Lecture Series on Integrity and Mentoring in Research and the Hans Kende



Endowment are described on page 4. These two memorials will ensure that plant biology students will continue to learn about Hans and his contributions to MSU and the field of plant biology for many years to come.

In 2007, Karen Cline celebrated 35 years with the PRL. Most of our alumni probably remember Karen as the person who first welcomed them into the PRL soon after their arrival in East Lansing, who bid them good luck and facilitated their departure as they moved on to the next chapter of their lives, and who helped them in countless other ways during their time here. I'm happy (and relieved) to report that Karen has no immediate plans to move on from the PRL to a new chapter in *her* life!



The MSU Plant Genomics Summer Research Program, initiated by Rob Last (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology) in 2006 with grants from the National Science Foundation, continued in 2007. The PRL hosted two high school teachers and three undergraduates for the ten-week summer program.

The First Friday Kaffee Klatsch, now in its third year, continues to be wonderfully successful. All Plant Biology building employees are invited to gather for juice, coffee, muffins, and bagels in room 168 on the first Friday of each month. PRL members continue to turn out in large numbers for the annual Gutterball event, which in its 13th year drew over 120 bowlers; the Puttin'-Go III, with 30 putters; and the PRL holiday party, with over 100 revelers.

The year 2007 was yet another busy one for the PRL and 2008 will certainly continue this trend. We are currently conducting a search for a new Assistant Professor to join the PRL, and in the fall DOE will conduct its 3-year formal review of the PRL. As you are aware, this includes our writing a research proposal and being evaluated on site by a team of research scientists and members of the DOE. I look forward to telling you all about what happened this same time next year.

Best wishes for the New Year,  
Mike



*Who are these people and why have they come together?  
See page 3 to find out.*

## *PRL Faculty in the News*

### *The Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center (GLBRC)*

MSU is partnering with the University of Wisconsin-Madison in establishing the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center (GLBRC), one of three new U.S. Department of Energy Bioenergy Research Centers. Based in Madison, the Center will receive \$125 million over five years. MSU will use approximately \$50 million for basic science research aimed at solving some of the most complex problems in converting natural materials to energy. Ken Keegstra



will be the executive director of the center, splitting his time between East Lansing and Madison. He and Tim Donohue, UW-Madison professor of bacteriology, led the initiative to bring the center to the Great Lakes region. ( Visit the GLBRC website: <http://www.greatlakesbioenergy.org/>)

Samuel W. Bodman, U.S. Secretary of Energy explained, “These centers will provide the transformational science needed for bioenergy breakthroughs to advance President Bush’s goal of making cellulosic ethanol cost-competitive with gasoline by 2012, and assist in reducing America’s gasoline consumption by 20 percent in ten years.”

Several current and past members of the PRL will be involved in the research of the GLBRC: Sebastian **Bednarek** (GA, Raikhel, 1987-93): membrane trafficking and cytoskeletal dynamics; Christoph **Benning** (RA, CR Somerville, 1992-93): plant lipid biosynthesis; Federica **Brandizzi**: confocal microscopy to study vesicle trafficking in plant cells; Ken **Keegstra**: cell wall structure and biosynthesis; Markus **Pauly**: structure, function, and biosynthesis of plant cell walls; Tom **Sharkey** (GA, Raschke, 1976-80): photosynthetic carbon metabolism; Mike **Sussman** (GA, Kende, 1971-76): biochemical and gene expression analysis of biomass plants; Mike **Thomashow**: transcription factors; Jonathan **Walton**: fungal molecular biology, wall-degradative enzymes; and Peter **Wolk**: cyanobacterial genetics and differentiation.



*Mark Estelle      John Shanklin*

*John Browse*



*George Haughn      Sue Gibson*



*Joe Ogas      Clint Chapple*

*Christoph Benning*

*James Zhang*



*Ljerka Kunst*

On the occasion of Chris Somerville’s (PRL faculty, 1982-93) 60th birthday, a symposium was held in October, entitled “CO<sub>2</sub>, light, hormones, lipids, cell walls, and biofuels.” Many PRL alumni were in attendance (labeled above) and among the symposium speakers were John Shanklin, John Browse, Christoph Benning, Clint Chapple, and Mark Estelle. A reception and dinner followed the symposium at the Carnegie Institution, Stanford, CA.

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## Our Faculty

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### *In Memory of Hans Kende*

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**An endowment** has been established with contributions received in Hans's memory. By agreement with the Kende family and representatives of the PRL and MSU, funds from this endowment will be used to provide an annual award for the best doctoral dissertation in the plant sciences at MSU during the preceding year. The awardee will be invited to return to MSU to present a seminar during the Fall PRL/Plant Biology Seminar Series. We

anticipate that the first lecture will be scheduled in Fall 2008. Those who wish to contribute to this fund may send contributions, payable to Michigan State University, to



The Hans Kende Endowment (A5122)  
CNS Development Office  
103 Natural Science  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824-9902

#### **Hans Kende Memorial Lecture Series on Integrity and Mentoring in Research**

Hans Kende was a Professor of Plant Biology, an MSU Distinguished Faculty Member, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and a valued colleague (<http://www.prl.msu.edu/faculty-and-research/hans-kende/>). Hans chaired the Research Mentoring Task Force in 2004 that proposed guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships (<http://grad.msu.edu/all/ris04relations.pdf>) and Integrity in Research and Creative Activities (<http://grad.msu.edu/all/ris04activities.pdf>) that were approved by the University Graduate Council and the Academic Council.

In recognition of Hans's dedication and commitment to enhancing effective research mentoring at MSU, Dr. Ian Gray, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies,

and Dr. Karen Klomparens, Dean of the Graduate School, are sponsoring public lectures by nationally recognized speakers on integrity and mentoring in research. Receptions will follow the lectures to enable continued discussion of the issues raised by the speakers.

The lectures are intended to address issues of importance to all disciplines and to all persons at MSU. The next scheduled lecture is:

Dr. Brian Martinson  
Senior Research Investigator, Health Partners  
Research Foundation, Minneapolis  
"Scientists' Misbehaviors  
and their Relationship with Mentoring"  
March 18, 2008 3:30 pm  
Big Ten A, MSU Kellogg Center



**Curtis Wilkerson**, shown here discussing a poster at the PRL retreat, was a Visiting Assistant Professor with the PRL from 1999 and Associate Manager of the genomics facility. In 2007, he accepted a position across the hall, as Associate Professor in Plant Biology. Congratulations to Curtis!

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### *A Major Advance in the Study of Plant Hormones*

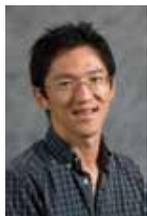
**Sheng Yang He** (below, left) and **Gregg Howe** (below, right) made headlines in the summer with their discovery of JAZ proteins that play a key role in mediating the action of the plant hormone, jasmonate (JAZ). As the *MSU News Bulletin* put it, "MSU Researchers JAZ(zed) about Plant Resistance Discovery" (<http://newsbulletin.msu.edu/july2607/plantsjaz.html>). In a collaborative study with John Browse and his research group at Washington State University, they gained significant insight into how jasmonate signals are converted into genetic and cellular action to defend plants against pathogens. "Now that we know what the active signals are and have identified the key regulatory proteins – the JAZ proteins – involved, the hope is to either genetically modify plants or develop compounds that mimic the jasmonate hormone,"

Gregg said. Their work is described in the July 18 issue of *Nature* 448: 661-665 (<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v448/n7154/abs/nature05960.html>).



## Our Students

### New Additions to the PRL in 2007



**Kyaw Aung (PLB)**, a native of Myanmar, earned his BS and MS degrees in Horticulture at National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan. His research, under Dr. Yang, was focused on the relationship between plant shoot vigorous and primary bud necrosis of grapevines. Upon completion of the MS, Kyaw joined Dr. Chiou's lab in the Institute of BioAgriculture Sciences

in Taiwan and studied plant nutrient stress physiology via molecular and genetic approaches. Kyang is in the Hu lab.



**Xiaobo Li (PLB)** earned his undergraduate degree in Biology Engineering from Xi'an Jiaotong University in Xi'an, China. Xiaobo was selected to work on a summer research project at the CAS Institute of Botany, where he studied salt tolerance of *Taraxacum officinale* Weber under Prof. Yinxin Li.



**Matthew Oney (PLB)** earned his BA degree in Biology at Western State College of Colorado in Gunnison. His research involved an investigation of induced responses in tomato plants to simulated and natural herbivory.

**Erin Slabaugh (BMG)** earned her BS in Biochemistry at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse. Erin was particularly motivated by her work with Drs. Sandra Grunwald and Mike Abler (RA, Green, 1992-96) on a project designed to identify the gene sequence of

a bifunctional nuclease and ultimately to characterize the enzyme. Erin plans a career in biochemical research and teaching.



**John Withers (PLB)** earned his AS in Fish & Wildlife Management at Hocking College, Nelsonville, OH, and his BS and MS in Plant Biology at Ohio University Athens. His MS project under Dr. Sarah Wyatt focused on the characterization of a cytochrome P450 involved in signal transduction in response to gravity in plants. John has entered the field with an interest in learning about the molecular and biochemical interactions between plants and insects/pathogens.

**Chin-mei Lee (PLB)** earned her BA in Zoology and MS in Biochemistry at National Taiwan University (NTU) in Taipei, Taiwan. Her undergraduate research, conducted in the Mammalian Molecular Reproduction Lab, developed into her master's research project, a study of the protein function and gene evolution of the rat seminal vesicle secretion protein RSVS III. Chin-Mei is in the Thomashow lab.



**Christine Shyu (PLB)** earned her BS in Agronomy at National Chung Hsing University in Taichung, Taiwan. She worked in the labs of David Ho and Chang-Hsien Yang while at NCHU. Christine has joined the Howe lab.

### 2007 Dissertation Defenses



**Carl Andre** (Benning lab, PhD, Plant Biology), "Biochemical and functional characterization of Arabidopsis plastidic pyruvate kinases involved in seed oil biosynthesis." Carl has joined John Shanklin's (RA, CR Somerville, 1989-92) lab at Brookhaven National Lab as a postdoc.

**Elena Bray Speth** (He lab, PhD, Biochemistry), "Subcellular localization and function of the *Arabidopsis thaliana* small GTPase RabE, a host interacting protein of the *Pseudomonas syringae* virulence effector AvrPto." Elena is dividing her time as a postdoc in the He lab and in the CNS Program for Math & Science Ed.



**Donatella Canella** (Thomashow lab, PhD, Cell & Molecular Biology) "Characterization of the *Arabidopsis thaliana* CBF1 transcription factor: Functional role of two evolutionarily conserved signature sequences." Donatella will begin work as a postdoc in Nouria Hernandez's

lab at the University of Lausanne in February.



**Joonyul Kim** (DellaPenna lab, PhD, Biochemistry) "Functional and evolutionary characterization of Arabidopsis carotenoid hydroxylases." Joonyul has joined his wife and baby daughter in Alabama and will start work as a postdoc at Emory University in March.

**Phil Ludwig** (vanNocker lab, MS, Cell & Molecular Biology). Phil is serving as a TA in the Department of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics at MSU.



**Harrie van Erp** (Walton lab, PhD, Genetics) "Cell wall biosynthesis in *Zea mays*." Harrie will move to a post-doctoral position in the Browse (RA, 1983, Vis. Sci., 1986-88, CR Somerville), Lab at Washington State University in 2008.



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## New Postdocs and Staff in 2007

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### Brandizzi Lab



**Michael Held** earned his BS and PhD in Chemistry & Biochemistry at Ohio University. His thesis, under former PRL Postdoc Marcia Kieliszewski (Lamport, 1991), is entitled "Synthetic genes for the elucidation of the molecular requirements of P3 extensin intermolecular crosslinking."

**Aurelia Boulaflois** earned her PhD at the University of Rouen, France. Her dissertation is entitled "Transport and retention of a type II membrane protein in the endoplasmic reticulum of a plant cell."

### He Lab

**Jian Yao** earned his MS in Botany at Nanjing University, China, and his PhD in Plant Pathology at UW Madison under Dr. Caitilyn Allen. His thesis is entitled "The effects of epi-Brassinolide on growth and pigment formation in *Onosma paniculatum* and saffron cell culture."

### Howe Lab



**Marco Herde** earned his PhD in Biology at the University of Goettingen, Germany, under Dr. Christiane Gatz. His thesis is entitled, "Identification and regulation of a geranylinalool synthase in *Arabidopsis thaliana*."

### Hu Lab



**Pingfang Yang** earned his MS in Plant Embryology at Huazhong Agricultural University and his PhD in Plant Proteomics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences under Dr. Shihua Shen.

### Pauly Lab



**Norma Funke**, a Tech Assistant at Max Planck Institute of Molecular Plant Physiology, was a Visiting Scholar for five months. She has worked with Markus since 2004 in the area of plant cell walls.



**Markus Günl** (Visiting Scholar) earned his MS degree in Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland, NZ, with a thesis entitled, "Characterization of a post-translational induction system for GIGANTEA in *Arabidopsis*."

### Walton Lab



**Hong Luo** earned his MS and PhD in Microbiology at Yunnan University, China. His thesis is entitled "Infection study of nematode by *Coprinus comatus*, *Stropharia rugosoannulata*, and an unidentified species of *Stropharia*."



**Heather Hallen-Adams** returned as a postdoc in the Walton lab, following an interim appointment in Frances Trail's lab (MSU Plant Biology). Heather completed her doctoral degree in Botany and Plant Pathology at MSU. Her thesis, under the guidance of Dr. G. Adams, is entitled "Amatoxin-producing fungi: Phylogenetics and toxin production." Heather's interest in fungi has led to her teaching courses and workshops on mushroom poisoning and identification of mushrooms. She earned her BS in Plant Biology at the University of Minnesota.

### Wolk Lab



**Sigal Lechno-Yossef** returned to work in the Wolk lab, following an interim postdoc position in MSU's Department of Chemistry. Sigal earned her MSc at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She earned her PhD at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY; her thesis was entitled "Identification and characterization of bacteria associated with the water fern *Azolla* sp."

### Computer Lab



**Sharron Wells** joined the PRL as our new computer technician, replacing Bryan Murphy. Sharron has a degree in Computer Science and 12 years of computer experience at MSU.

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### Postdoc Award



**Jin-Ho Kang** received the Best Poster Award at the 4th Solanaceae Genome Workshop 2007, September 9-13, in Jeju Island, Korea, for his poster: "Characterization of tomato trichome mutants and their role in herbivore resistance." The focus of the conference was "metabolomics and nutrigenomics." Of the 100 or so posters presented, five to seven received awards.

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## *Postdocs—Moving On*

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RA	LAB	LOCATION AFTER LEAVING PRL
Krassovskaya	Larkin	MSU, Plant Biology
Lerouxel	Keegstra	Institut Jean-Pierre Bourgun, Versailles, France
Melotto	He	University of Texas at Arlington
Oh	Brandizzi	Suwon-si, Korea
Otani	Walton	Gotenba, Shizuoka, Japan
Tripp	Keegstra	Nidderau, Germany
Van Buskirk	Thomashow	Lincoln, NE
Vergara	Walton	MSU CNS Math & Science Education, Plant Biology
Yang	Zeevaart	MSU, Forestry

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### ASPB Midwest Section Meeting

Susanne Hoffmann-Benning (BMB) and Colleen Doherty, BMB Ph.D. candidate, hosted the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Section of the American Society of Plant Biologists March 24-25 at MSU. More than 35 talks and over 40 posters were attended by 140 participants. MSU students received four of the eight student awards.



**Best Oral Presentation by a Graduate Student:**

**Eliana Gonzales-Vigil** (Howe lab, photo at left): “Identification of plant defense proteins that impair insect digestive physiology: threonine deaminase as a case study”

**Best Graduate Student Poster:**

**Colleen Doherty** (Thomashow lab, photo at right), “Evidence for novel regulatory pathways that contribute to cold acclimation in Arabidopsis”



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## *Anton Lang Memorial Seminar and Awards*

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The 2008 Anton Lang Seminar will be presented on April 14 by Dr. William J. Lucas, Distinguished Professor, UC Davis. The focus of Dr. Lucas’s research is plasmodesmata & the supracellular nature of plants. He will speak on “Plasmodesmata, the phloem and control over flowering: In search of florigen.”



Awards for Outstanding Research in 2007 went to Graduate Student **Bill Underwood** (He Lab, photo at left) and Postdoc **Fred Beisson** (Ohlrogge Lab). Bill is now a postdoc in Shauna Somerville’s lab at the Carnegie Institution of Washington.



**Dr. Mark Estelle** (RA, CR Somerville, 1983-86), now the Carlos O. Miller Chair of Plant Developmental Biology, Indiana University, presented the lecture: “Genetic and biochemical studies of the auxin receptor reveal a novel mechanism of hormone perception.”

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• **Contributions to the Anton Lang Memorial Fund** may be sent to the University Development Office, 300 Spartan Way, East Lansing, MI 48824-1005. Please specify that your gift be directed to the Anton Lang Memorial Fund. All contributions are greatly appreciated.

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## Notes from PRL Alumni



**Diane Bassham** (RA, Raikhel, 1994-2001; bassham@iastate.edu) “This year I was promoted to Associate Professor (with tenure) at Iowa State University, where I have been since leaving the PRL. I also got married this summer, to Darin, and

gained a 7-year-old stepson, Max. I’ve attached a photo of the three of us enjoying our favorite family activity...”

**Peter Beutelmann** (RA, Kende, 1975-76) “After enjoying teaching and research in botany, for almost 40 years, I retired from my position at Mainz University on October 1. I still have pleasant memories of my post doc time (1975/76) with Hans Kende. It was an important part of my scientific education.”



**Kent Bradford** (GA, Kende, 1975-77; kjbradford@ucdavis.edu). “I did a MS degree jointly with Hans Kende (at PRL) and Dave Dilley (in Horticulture), then went to UC Davis for my Ph.D.”

Kent was honored in October 2007 with an Award of Distinction by UC Davis’s College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

The award is presented annually in recognition of achievements that serve to enrich the image and reputation of the college and enhance its ability to provide public service.

“Professor Bradford was the driving force behind the UC Davis Seed Biotechnology Center, established in 1999 to facilitate interaction between the seed industry and the university. He helped raise more than \$1.2 million in capital funds and nearly \$400,000 in operational support to launch the vibrant, vital center. Bradford correctly predicted that the biology and economics of many biotechnologies would converge in the seed - used increasingly as a multipurpose delivery system for agricultural technology.”

Among his accomplishments, Kent was a Fulbright Scholar in Argentina from 1998 to 1999; in 2002 he received the Seed Science Award from the Crop Science Society of America for his continuous high-quality research, and in 2003 he was selected as a fellow of the AAAS.

“He is an exceptional leader, among the brightest of the stars within the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, as well as the entire University of California system,” said colleague Joseph DiTomaso, a UC Davis Cooperative Extension specialist in plant sciences.” (For the full article, see the

October issue of SeedQuest at [www.seedquest.com](http://www.seedquest.com).)

**Robin Buell** (RA, S. Somerville, 1992-93; buell@msu.edu) “I joined MSU in the Plant Biology Department in October, 2007, after spending nearly nine years at The Institute for Genomic Research in Rockville, MD. I have transferred several projects to MSU including an NSF-funded Rice Annotation project, NSF-funded Potato Genome Sequence and Annotation Resource project, a USDA-funded Comprehensive Phytopathogen Genome Resource project, and a USDA-funded *Pythium* genome sequencing project. Several staff members will be joining me from TIGR and will be coming to MSU throughout the next few months. While at MSU, I will be continuing my work in genomics and bioinformatics of plant and pathogen genomes and expand my research portfolio to employ systems approaches to address biological questions in plants and their pathogens. I am excited to be back here at MSU ... and look forward to touching base with old and new colleagues at MSU.”



*From left, Hyung-Taeg Cho, Suyung, Suwan, Boong-Boong, and Susanna (taken on 18th Nov. 2007)*

**Hyung-Taeg Cho** (RA, Kende, 1995-98; htcho@cnu.ac.kr) “It’s been nine years since I left East Lansing (Hans Kende Lab), but still something in my mind is rooted to E.L. It was my first land where I’d ever resided out of my home country and where my two daughters were born and grown. Now they are 9th and 4th graders. I came back to Korea in 2003, starting an assistant professorship at Chungnam National University in Daejeon. I started the associate professorship in September this year. My group has worked on two themes: cell type-specific gene regulation and auxin transport in the root hair cell. Now ten people are in my lab including myself: a postdoc, 4 graduates, and 4 undergraduates. And two more postdocs are coming in next month. My lab website is <http://bio.cnu.ac.kr/celldiffer>.”

**Richard Firn** (RA, Kende, 1971-73) “Having been let out of the institution that was once a proper university, I am enjoying a new life. Lots of house remodelling in the UK and Sweden,

charity work in York, still writing my book on Natural Products and fretting about the state of the world. How come we were worrying about the coming environmental problems in the early 1970s when I was at the PRL yet nothing has really been done? At the moment I am saddest about the hype that is bio-fuels, even though I have two clean-burn woodstoves myself!”



**Susan Fujimoto** (GA, de Bruijn, 1990-97) “This year has been pretty busy. The company I have worked for was acquired by another company, Entelos. So there were adjustments to be made as two companies merged into one. I also had a baby in October which has kept

my husband Augus and I pretty busy. Alex is a good baby and we have enjoyed life with him. Finally, we will be moving down to Southern California as my husband accepted a tenure track faculty position at Pepperdine University. He will be teaching Finance for their MBA programs. We will move soon and will relocate to Thousand Oaks. Lots of new experiences this year.”

**Susannah Gal** (RA, Raikhel, 1991-94; sgal@binghamton.edu) Photo (one year old): Christine (“born” at PRL) who is now 15, Hilton Baxter, Katrin, 10, and Susannah. “This past summer 2007 was the first in 6 when I haven’t been to Europe to



work with collaborators in France and Switzerland on a GFP sensor of plant protease activity. That grant money has run out so I may not get back to do that research for awhile. I have moved a bit away from the plant world into DNA computing and DNA binding in cancer cells with funding from the Army, Air Force and NIH. I am teaching molecular genetics, graduate courses in molecular and cellular biology and started a new cancer biology course this fall. As if research and teaching didn’t keep me busy enough, for fun we are doing Irish and contra dancing here as well as playing music together as a family. We attended a fiddle music camp together in Maine this past summer and had a blast.”

**Philipp Kapranov** (GA, de Bruijn, 1995-2000) “I am doing fine. Still at Affymetrix in the beautiful SF Bay Area. I am enjoying the work greatly and the surroundings as well. I wish all the best to the past and present members of PRL!”



**Hyder Ali Khoja** (RA, Keegstra, 2004-06; hkhoja@uwyo.edu) “I have moved from Virginia Tech to University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY--a beautiful western United States countryside. I have joined the Department of Molecular Biology and working towards

a fundamental problem in biology: how individual cells within a multicellular organism interact to coordinate diverse biological processes. To address this topic our laboratory studies the simple and easy to manipulate multicellular organism called *Myxococcus xanthus*. This soil bacterium preys on other microorganisms in ‘microbial wolf packs.’ However, when nutrients are limiting thousands of cells will aggregate to build fruiting bodies wherein vegetative cells differentiate into environmentally resistant spores. This developmental program requires gliding motility and cell-cell signaling. Our laboratory is particularly interested in how cells coordinate their movements and how the type IV pili motor powers social (S) gliding motility. The coordination of cellular movement is clearly illustrated when cells build fruits, form ripples or simply glide in coherent S-motile swarms. Cell-cell interactions play a key role in directing these movements. These signaling pathways in turn control the type IV pilus, which drives motility by the retraction of polarly localized pili that in turn pulls the cell forward. Our laboratory is using molecular genetic approaches to elucidate how the proteins in the type IV pilus function and interact with signaling pathways. In general, we are also interested in the role type IV pili play as virulence factors and biofilms in diverse bacterial pathogens.”

**Ursula (Hecht) Klaschka** (RA, Somerville, 1992; klaschka@mail.fh-ulm.de) “My main occupation is to explain to future engineers at our university [Hochschule Ulm, Germany] why it is essential to respect the environment and natural resources. In addition to teaching I am currently working on the ecotoxicology of fragrances and on the infochemical effect, which is a very interesting field.”



**Lei Li** (GA, Howe, 1998-2003; ll4jn@virginia.edu) “After graduation, I took a postdoc training at Yale University. From August ‘07, I am an Assistant Professor in the Biology Department at the University of Virginia, where I continue my research on plant genomics and informatics. Here is a website

with more information regarding my research and contact: <[http://www.virginia.edu/biology/Fac/li\\_lei.htm](http://www.virginia.edu/biology/Fac/li_lei.htm)>.”

**Aaron Liepman** (RA, Keegstra, 2002-06; aliepman@emich.edu) “Greetings from Eastern Michi-



gan University! Since last I wrote, I've been keeping busy, but having fun. I'm working with an enthusiastic group of student researchers on cell wall-related projects, and we're having a great time. I have included a photo of me with my favorite little researcher, Owen, who is now nearly 2.5 yrs old. He's a very inquisitive and articulate little guy; both he and Claire are also doing very well."

**Steven K. Lorch** (RA, Wolk and Haug, 1972-73) "Our second grandchild, Shayna Ruth Berger, was born on July 17, 2007. Her mother, Elisa, was born while I was post-docing in Peter Wolk's lab." (Pictured my daughter and grandchildren)



**C. Robertson McClung** (GA, Chelm, 1984-86; C.Robertson.McClung@Dartmouth.EDU) "From the ASPB newsletter Sept/Oct 07 version--I am following in Mary Lou's and Mike T's and who knows how many other PRL alumni' (Keegstra, etc.) footsteps: 'Rob McClung Assumes Presidency October 1.' Rob earned his bachelor's degree in biology at Queen's University in 1976 and his MSc in biology from Dalhousie University in 1979, investigating bacterial nitrogen fixation associated with the roots of *Spartina alterniflora* in salt marshes with David G. Patriquin. He continued these studies with Robert E. Davis at USDA-Beltsville. His PhD (1986) is from Michigan State University, where he worked with Barry K. Chelm studying the symbiosis between nitrogen-fixing bacteria and soybeans. His postdoctoral research from 1986 to 1988 with Jay C. Dunlap in the Biochemistry Department of Dartmouth Medical School introduced him to circadian rhythms in the model filamentous fungus, *Neurospora crassa*. In 1988 he joined the faculty in Biological Sciences at Dartmouth College, and in 2004 he became the Associate Dean for the sciences. ... In 2002 his activities mentoring undergraduate women were recognized with a Dartmouth Women in Science Project Ten Year Mentorship Award. He currently heads the E. E. Just Program for Students in the Sciences, a program aimed at enhancing participation of underrepresented minorities, especially African Americans, in the sciences. He has served as a member of the ASPB Committee on Women in Plant Biology and as

a member and chair of the Publications Committee."

**Erik Nielsen** (GA, Keegstra, 1992-97; nielsene@umich.edu) "Well, it's been ten years since I moved on from a PhD in Ken's lab, and here I am again back in



Michigan... After three years as a postdoc in Heidelberg, Germany at the EMBL, I took a faculty position at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, in St. Louis, MO. Just this last year my wife, Christiane and I accepted faculty positions at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. So this last year has been a hectic one, with me moving my lab up from St. Louis, and Christiane busy setting up her own group. When we aren't busy with this we spend our time chasing around our daughter, Hanne, who will be two in January."

**Robyn Perrin** (GA, Keegstra, 1996-2001; robyn@perrinhome.com) "I have settled in Madison, WI, where I completed two postdoctoral appointments at the University of Wisconsin. The first was in the laboratory of Patrick Masson, where I characterized a novel class of microtubule-associated proteins in *Arabidopsis* (e.g., Perrin et al (2007) Plant J 49:961-971). The second was in Nancy Keller's laboratory and focused on regulation of mycotoxin production in molds of the genus *Aspergillus* (e.g., Perrin et al. (2007) PLoS Pathogens 3:e50).

"I recently became a Technical Writer for the Novagen brand of EMD Chemicals Inc (known outside of the US as Merck KGaA). I am Editor-in-Chief of InNovations, a quarterly newsletter for the Novagen brand that publicizes information about our products. It is tremendously fun; I interact with scientists, graphic artists, product managers, and marketing professionals, and even sneak back into the lab on occasion to test out new products. If you have any suggestions for future articles, please let me know! Prior to this, I also did an internship with the intellectual property team at WARF (Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation), the technology transfer office of UW.

"Our 3-year-old daughter Eleanor (Ellie) keeps my husband Clint and I in stitches with her constant questions, observations, and antics. I've enjoyed seeing several PRL alumni at various conferences over the past few years. Please feel free to contact me at robyn@perrinhome.com, and don't hesitate to look me up if you are in the Madison area."

**Sigrun Reumann** (RA, Keegstra, 1996-99; Hu, 2007) "My 6-year C1 position at the University of Goettingen expired in the end of 2007. Unfortunately, even with a successful habilitation in hand, young German scientists can currently neither get a temporary nor a permanent position at the same university and must be excellent and very lucky to get one of the few German faculty positions. It was a great coincidence that the *Arabidopsis* Peroxisome 2010 project headed by Jianping Hu needed somebody to establish the peroxisomal proteome research. I worked for nine months at both MSU and UMich in Jianping's and Laura Olsen's labs, and we were able to make further progress on several proteomics sub-projects. On February 1st I'll start my new faculty position at the University of Stavanger in Norway, where Simon Moeller has recently set-up a new centre for Cell Organelle Research (CORE). I hope we'll be able to celebrate the inauguration of the new building in 2009 with many European and American friends from the PRL and the MCDB and continue our fruitful collaboration on

functional genomics and proteomics of plant peroxisomes.”



**David Silver** (GA, de Bruijn, 1991-96; dsilver@acom.yu.edu) “Silke is an assistant professor at Columbia University in the Department of Medicine. Her work focuses on diabetes and obesity. Max is now 6 years old and is completing his first year of kindergarten. He loves to play soccer and has a

strong interest in science and art. Axel is turning 4 this August and is probably the happiest person I’ve met in my life. All troubles just roll off his shoulders, as opposed to Max, who feels the weight of the world. I was recently recruited at the end of 2005 to the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Department of Biochemistry. My lab works on the biogenesis of cytosolic triglyceride droplets and the relationship this pathway has to obesity and type 2 diabetes. In a nutshell, we’re all doing well and happy living in New York City.”

**Tom & Michiyo Skokut** (TS: GA, Filner, 1974-78; MS: Tech, Poff, 1974-78) “Just wanted to let you know that Michiyo and I retired from Dow AgroSciences in June 2007 (21 years for me and 10 years for Michiyo). We plan to travel and spend a lot of time with our daughters Megan, 28 and Mary, 23. We also would love to keep in touch with our dear friends from the PRL, who we think of often. We plan to remain in Indianapolis and would love to hear from you. Please stop by anytime.”



**Jun Tsuji** (GA, S. Somerville, 1987-92; JTSUJI@sienaheights.edu) “Since 1994, I have been working as a professor of biology at Siena Heights University, a Catholic liberal arts university located in Adrian, Michigan. I recently authored a biography, “The Soul of DNA,” which describes the life of Sister Miriam Michael Stimson and her DNA research.



This book was nominated for the 2007 Margaret W. Rossiter History of Women in Science Prize.”



**Jonathan Vogel** (GA, Thomashow, 2001-05; vogeljon@ufl.edu) and his wife Kelly are proud to announce the birth of their son Henry Edward. Henry was born May 7, 2007 in Gainesville, FL. Jonathan is currently balancing his time as a new father and working as a postdoctoral associate in Harry Klee’s lab at the University of Florida.



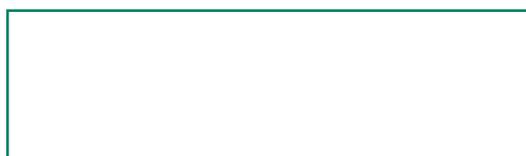
**Pam Weathers** (RA, Jost, 1969-74; pweathers@astate.edu) In January 2007, I joined the Arkansas Bioscience Institute (ABI) at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, AR as the first Director of the Molecular Biosciences (MBS) Doctoral Program, the newest doctoral program approved at ASU. I was also named as the inaugural Judd Hill Distinguished Chair of Agricultural Biotechnology in the College of Agriculture. I am currently on leave for up to two years from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, MA where I am a Professor in Biology and Biotechnology. WPI is one of the leading engineering schools in the country, and I have built an interdisciplinary program combining plant science and engineering to address research problems involving the production of secondary metabolites from plant tissues grown in mist bioreactors. I went to the ABI in Arkansas because of my cross-disciplinary interests, which have proved to be an ideal and exciting fit with the mission of ABI, WPI’s plant research group, and the MBS Ph.D. program. All are focused on solving problems at the interface between agriculture and medicine. My research strengths are leading to the development of an ongoing collaborative research program between ABI and WPI, and other programs around the country. While I am continuing my work on secondary metabolism, especially in *Artemisia annua*, I have begun a new area of study focused on the use of algae for biofuel production. I am thus going back to my PRL roots working with algae, only this time it is eukaryotic algae and not cyanobacteria (sorry Peter!). The hardest part of this temporary move to Arkansas is separation from family. My husband, Steve, and adult children, Jessica, Debbie, Kathryn, and Dave (wife Jen), and one new grand daughter, Olivia Rose, all reside in Massachusetts. My husband visits frequently but my travel home is especially cherished!”

**Wensheng Wei** (GA, He, 1995-99; wswei@pku.edu.cn) “My research at Stanford University (1999-2007) was mainly on the study of cancer metastasis and host susceptibility against bacterial toxin. I am currently holding a faculty position at the College of Life Sciences of Peking University in China. My research focus is on the study of human diseases with the emphasis on the infectious diseases.”

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