



BIOSPHERE

The Weekly Bulletin of Biology

Biology Colloquium: Friday, 14 November 2014, 2:00 pm in CR 5125

“A Convivial Origin of Life on the Earth: A Cooperative Network of RNA Replicators”

Niles Lehman, Ph.D.
Department of Chemistry
Portland State University

New Publications

Dinish Gupta, Tina Ip, Dr. Chhandak Basu, and Dr. Michael Summers have a new paper in the journal *Bioengineered*: “2-Methyl-3-buten-2-ol (MBO) synthase expression in *Nostoc punctiforme* leads to over production of phytyls.” The collaboration stemmed from Gupta’s MS Thesis project, which involved using of a novel plasmid constructed by Ip for over-expression of foreign genes in cyanobacteria.

Acta Histochemica has published, “Microbead analysis of cell binding to immobilized lectin. Part II: Quantitative kinetic profile assay for possible identification of anti-infectivity and anti-cancer reagents” by **Anasheh Ghazarian** and Dr. **Steve Oppenheimer**. Lectins are carbohydrate-binding proteins involved in pathogen attachment to cells and in cell–cell adhesion in cancer.

Grads Take Home Prizes at So Cal Academy of Sciences Meeting

Graduate **Parker House** won best student talk at the annual meeting of the Southern California Academy of Sciences. His talk was titled, “Fishing impacts on the trophic structure of kelp forest fishes in southern California.”

Likewise, grad **Stephanie Benseman** received honorably mention for her poster titled, “Distribution and growth estimates of young-of-the-year Giant Sea Bass off Southern California.”

Guest Speaker on Cancer

Michele Rakoff, Executive Director of the Breast Cancer Care and Research Fund, will speak on Monday, 10 November at 5 pm in CR 5126.

Oversight of NSF

Dr. **MariaElena Zavala** served on the National Science Foundation’s Committee of Visitors for the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences.

This committee reviews the grant portfolio and the processes and practices in that division.

Donate Cat Food

The group CSUN Cat People is holding its annual [cat-food drive](#) through December 1st. Donated food will be given to the campus feral cat population, a well-managed group of approximately 25 sterile cats. The campus community donated more than 400 pounds of food last year, enough to feed the feral cats for 6 months. Please bring donations to the Department of Biology Office, CR 5101, and look for the big red box in the workroom.

At Meeting in England

This summer, Dr. **Ray Hong** presented at the meeting known as, *Evolution of Caenorhabditis and other nematodes*, in Hinxton, England. His talk was titled, "Fainting towards necromeny: a host beetle pheromone regulates development and behavior in the nematode *Pristionchus pacificus*."

At Meeting in Chile

Dr. **Polly Schiffman** recently attended the 13th Mediterranean Ecosystems International Conference in Chile. She presented, "*Euphorbia terracina* recruitment and establishment in California Coastal Sage Scrub," coauthored with **Erin Roberts**.

At Meeting in Netherlands

Dr. **Michael Summers** and **Anantha Peramuna** attended the 9th European Workshop on the Molecular Genetics of Cyanobacteria in the Netherlands.

Peramuna presented a poster, "Enhancing alkane production in cyanobacterial lipid droplets," and Summers gave a talk, "Characterization of cyanobacterial lipid droplet expression, content, and protein associations." Both projects originated from Peramuna's MS Thesis work. Peramuna is currently working to identify the proteome of cyanobacterial lipid droplets with the goal of using these structures to produce high-value compounds.

Alumni News

Janna Fierst (MS 2004) began as a new assistant professor at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Becca Kordas (MS 2006) defended her Ph.D. this past summer from the University of British Columbia, and has begun an NSF-sponsored post-doc at University College London where she is studying interactions among stream-dwelling species in Iceland.

Ziba Razinia (MS 2006) completed her Ph.D. from Yale in 2012, published several papers, and was awarded a prize for her distinguished record of academic accomplishments including publications, a scholarly and well-written dissertation, and fellowships. Following Yale, she moved on to a post-doc at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Department of Biology

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