[News & Announcements]

Congratulations to Lisa Salati, Brad Hillgartner, and Bill Wonderlin, who were all recognized for 20 years of service to the department at a recent ceremony at the Alumni Center. Thank you for all that you do!!

Congratulations to Christy Ku, who completed the PhD portion of her MD/PhD on November 15th, 2012. Her dissertation was titled Rescue of Inherited Retinal Degeneration Associated with Aipl1 Defects. Christy will now complete her 3rd and 4th years of medical school with a continued interest in ophthalmology. Congratulations Dr. Ku!!

Congratulations to Holly Cyphert! Holly defended her doctoral dissertation on Friday November 16th, 2012, titled The Nutritional Regulation of FGF-21, A Novel Anti-Diabetic Hormone. She has accepted a post-doctoral position at Vanderbilt University where she will be studying the regulation of islet beta cell function. Good luck in Nashville, Dr. Cyphert!!

Congratulations to Ben Cieply! Ben defended his doctoral dissertation titled The Transcription Factor Grainyhead-like-2 is a Novel Suppressor of the Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition, on November 26th, 2012. He will be conducting his post-doctoral work on the role of ESRP and mRNA splicing in EMT, cancer, and iPS cells. Congratulations Dr. Cieply!!

[Chair’s Corner]

Every month there are a few very exciting moments in the Department. This past month’s excitement was provided by three senior graduate students, who successfully defended their dissertations in the few days around Thanksgiving. Christy Ku, a Neuroscience graduate student working with Visy Ramamurthy, Holly Cyphert, a Biochemistry and Molecular Biology graduate student working with Brad Hillgartner, and Ben Cieply, a Cancer Cell Biology graduate student working with Steve Frisch, publicly presented and defended their dissertations and then passed their final hurdle, the private defense with their respective dissertation committees. Holly is packing her bags to move and pursue her postdoctoral studies with Roland Stein at Vanderbilt University. Ben is finishing a few things in the lab prior to his move to Russ Carstens’ lab at the University of Pennsylvania. Christy is preparing to enter the third year of the medical school curriculum at WVU, which is the next stage in her studies as an MD/PhD student. All have done a wonderful job and will be missed! We are very proud of you! Congratulations Drs. Ku, Cyphert and Cieply!!

-Mike
[Humanity on the Fritz]

By Zach Hartman

Nationalism will do some strange things to the ethics of a person. Science is not exempted from this idea, though we like to play unbiased. It’s a force that gave us some of the finest works of art and science. We living in modern society understand this idea. It is internalized in most of us, as if the idea has been around forever. It is why it makes sense to us that a man would on one hand save the world from disaster with his science and then turn around and create one of the most horrific weapons in modern history. It would also take an immeasurably talented scientist. That man was Fritz Haber, and his story is a doozy.

Science is no stranger to tragic stories. Rosalind Franklin was snubbed for her contributions to modern science. Henrietta Lacks’s disease was the unwitting beginning of modern cell biology. Marie and Pierre Curie were killed by the elements they discovered and characterized. For my money, these all pale in comparison to the story of Fritz Haber. He discovered the aptly-named Haber process, the synthesis of nitrogen and hydrogen into ammonia. It may not sound like much, but this process single-handedly revolutionized agriculture and spared developing countries the disastrous famine predicted as inevitable by Thomas Malthus in the early 19th Century. Synthesized ammonia is the foundation for fertilizer, even today, and it accounts for a massive portion of the crops that we grow and eat.

But it was nationalism that fueled Haber’s innovations, not a sense of altruism. This is why he threw himself into work weaponizing poison gases during World War I, specifically chlorine. Profound disgust with his work in this field led to his wife’s suicide on the morning of Fritz’s departure to oversee a chemical warfare on the front (he still went, leaving behind his grieving thirteen-year-old son).

And then came the Nazis. Can you guess Fritz Haber’s heritage? I’m sure your answer of “Jewish” was a wild stab in the dark, and you are correct. Some conflict arises about whether Haber sensed his imminent ousting or whether he quit his university position in reaction to the initial persecution of Jewish scientists. Regardless, his dogged nationalism could not weather the storm of Nazi ideology. He died in 1934 of poor health, estranged from his beloved home.

Haber’s work in poison gas was not single-mindedly for the deficit of humanity, though. He formulated a cyanide-based compound that was used as an effective fumigant and pesticide for years. Unfortunately, in one final twist of fate, this was the same gas modified and used to execute Jewish prisoners in the Holocaust death camps, much of Haber’s remaining family among the victims.

Happy holidays!

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[Jess Hall: Peptide Blonde]

By Amanda Suchanek

As graduate students, we generally spend more time in our labs than we do in our homes. I remember when, during orientation week four years ago, Dr. Minnear stressed to all of us the importance of the ‘work hard, play hard’ philosophy. One person who lives by this is my fellow fourth year, Jess Hall. During the week (and most weekends, too), Jess can be found working in lab, helping with the 1st years Cell Methods course, or coordinating activities and events for the Cell Biology Training Program.

You might be asking yourself, “what about the ‘play hard’ part?” To that end, Jess is a member of Morgantown’s first and only flat track roller derby league, the Morgantown Roller Vixens (MRV). The mission of MRV is to provide an outlet for competition, athleticism, and camaraderie to the women of Morgantown and the surrounding area while promoting the sport of flat track roller derby. Jess plays the position of blocker, which “basically means I get in people’s way and knock them down (sort of like in lab).”

The MRV competes in bouts with other leagues throughout the area. Most recently they competed at the River Valley Riot in Wheeling. After losing their first bout, a nail biter, to the Beckley Area Derby Dames (56-63), they came back with a decisive victory against the Hades Ladies of Marietta, OH (206-96). Then played Heart of Appalachia Roller Derby from Charleston, WV, and won again (119-145), placing fifth overall. Next up for Jess and the Vixens is a home bout, the Jingle Brawl, on December 15th at Mylan Park. Come on out and cheer one of our own!

1Source: www.morgantownrollervixens.com
10 Things you didn’t know about
Travis Cyphert

The Basics:

Title: Graduate Student
Lab/Office: Salati Lab

1. What was your very first job?
Trader Horn

2. If you had to do it all over again, what would you study in school?
The weather/climate. I am actually the official weatherman of the Salati lab.

3. How many languages can you speak?
I speak Wookie, does that count?

4. What is your favorite season and why?
Any season but summer…As it gets cold you can always put more clothes on and go for a run. There is only so much you can take off during the summer months and it’s still too hot!

5. Worst movie of all time?
Any movie that is a musical, especially because they make my wife start singing really loudly.

6. Have you ever met anyone famous?
World-class runner and former USA 10K record holder Chris Solinsky.

7. What are you most afraid of?
Your MOM…haha

8. What would you say is your greatest achievement?
Running my first marathon in under 3 hours…2:53:51.

9. How do you take your coffee/tea?
Dark roast coffee (Caribou Obsidian is amazing) with Irish crème creamer.

10. What is your favorite type of beer?
IPAs…specifically Founders Red’s Rye IPA.
[Newsday Crossword]

12/03/12 PASS THE PEAS  Gail Grabowski, edited by Stanley Newman

Across
1 Baseball hats
5 Like a knife's edge
10 Minor quarrel
14 Offended
15 Loses color
16 Sport on horseback
17 Two-tone cookie
18 Bit of land in the ocean
19 Underground plant part
20 Time between salary checks
22 Waist circlers
23 Canonized person
24 Prepare, as a gift
25 Andy Warhol genre
28 Stayed out of sight
31 At the drop of ___ (quickly)
32 Sound like a bull
34 Top playing card
35 Sharp knock
36 Wild West bars
38 Thumbs-up vote
39 Before, in poems
40 Apply, as pressure
41 Sign of sorrow
42 Ruby or crimson
44 Rosebush stickers
46 Barnyard oinkers
47 Sharply inclined
49 Untrue
51 Portable electricity source
55 "That's too bad!"
56 Police-car wailer
57 Pressing appliance
58 Shower attention (on)
59 Pays to play poker
60 Cairo's river
61 Bird-feeder food
62 Short-tempered
63 Fence opening

Down
1 Pork serving
2 Mystical glow
3 Hunter's quarry
4 Pays a visit to
5 Enthusiasm
6 Entertains at home
7 Dole out
8 Marsh plant
9 Seattle clock setting: Abbr.
10 Jam or butter
11 Billiards participant
12 Oodles
13 Little kids
14 Corn portion
15 Londoners, informally
24 Advise caution to
25 Used a vegetable peeler
26 Scarlett of "Gone With the Wind"
27 Picnic dinnerware
28 Pirate's haul
29 Pacific or Atlantic
30 Has on
32 Winter glider
33 Neither here ___ there
36 Twilled suit material
37 Woodcutters' tools
41 Onion or mushroom, on a pizza
43 Smooched
44 Itsy-bitsy
45 That woman
47 Separates into stacks
48 Baby bird's noise
49 Short-lived trends
50 Hand-gel additive
51 Cone-bearing tree
52 Opera solo
53 Young male horse
54 Leg joint
56 Occupied a chair

Puzzle (c) Stanley Newman, distributed by Creators Syndicate, Inc. Hosting & Software (c) PZDL.com
**Upcoming Events**

**December 2012**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>Research Forum Ramamurthy Lab</td>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Erma Byrd 201</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>Seminar: Dr. Emidio Pistilli WVU Exercise Physiology</td>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>3067 HSN</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>PhD Dissertation Defense Karen Hayes, Weed Lab</td>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>3067 HSN</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>Jazz at Black Bear Burrito Evandsale Location</td>
<td>6:30pm</td>
<td>Black Bear Evandsale</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>Research Forum Mathers Lab</td>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Erma Byrd 201</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/15</td>
<td>Morgantown Roller Vixens Jingle Brawl</td>
<td>5pm</td>
<td>Mylan Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/18</td>
<td>Jazz at Black Bear Burrito Evandsale Location</td>
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<td>12/20</td>
<td>Research Forum Miller Lab</td>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Erma Byrd 201</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/31</td>
<td>Candlelight Countdown New Years Eve Bash</td>
<td>8pm</td>
<td>Waterfront Events Center</td>
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*Check it out on the Department website!*

**Have you seen the Biochemistry Timeline??**

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**Quote of the Month:**

“Don’t bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors. Try to be better than yourself.”

*William Faulkner*