

The NICHD Connection

National Postdoctoral Association 9th Annual Meeting coming to NIH Bethesda in March

By Kris Langlais, PhD

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) 9th Annual Meeting is right around the corner! On March 25 - 27, join the postdoctoral research and training community in the Natcher Conference Center on the main campus for an action-packed weekend of talks, discussions, and workshops focused on the advancement postdoctoral training excellence nationwide. Postdoctoral fellows and a diverse range of stakeholders from the U.S. and abroad attend the annual meeting to discuss the latest trends and issues concerning training and careers. This meeting also provides a unique opportunity to network with leaders from various sectors from around the country. Sessions include: Advocacy: A Tool for Change, Confidence for Introverts, Entrepreneurship, Leadership Skills for Postdoctoral Scholars, Legal Seminar for International Postdocs, Marketing for Scientists, Preparing for Industry Careers, Scientific Teaching and Active Learning in Undergraduate Science. Please visit the NPA website for detailed agenda and registration information:

- <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/meetings-and-events/annual-meeting/2011-annual-meeting>

The NPA was established in 2003 with the goal of fostering necessary improvements to the postdoctoral situation in the U.S. The NPA sought to crystallize the diffuse postdoc debate and provide a focal point for achieving administrative and policy changes. Nine years later, its mission is to advance the U.S. research enterprise by maximizing the effectiveness of the research community and enhancing the quality of the postdoctoral experience for all participants. Working in collaboration with the entire research community, the NPA envisions changing the culture of those individuals and institutions engaged in the U.S. research enterprise so that the contributions of postdoctoral scholars are fully valued and recognized.

January 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

National Postdoctoral Association 9th Annual Meeting	1
Letter from the Editor	2
January Events	2
Announcements	2
Committee Corner: Looking Forward	3
NICHD Fellows Committee Bios	3
NICHD Newsletter Committee Bios	4
Holiday Party Photos	6
Sergey Leikin Lecture Photos	8
Additional Photos	9

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Shana R. Spindler, PhD
Shana.Spindler@gmail.com

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Nichole Jonas
jonasnic@mail.nih.gov

CONTRIBUTORS

Kris Langlais, PhD
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

PHOTOGRAPHY

Jeremy Swan
Stock.XCHNG



VISIT US ONLINE: <http://science.nichd.nih.gov/confluence/display/newsletter>

Letter from the Editor

You've made it through the holiday hustle and bustle! The refrigerator is stuffed with leftovers, counters are covered in half-eaten cookies, and the in-laws managed to leave you a few scraps of sanity. With New Year's resolutions in hand, it is time to hit the ground running! This month's issue is focused on "Looking Forward." Successfully navigating the graduate student or postdoctoral maze takes an active approach, packed with dedication, patience, and interaction. The NICHD Fellows Committee was formed to make this road a little less frustrating and a lot more fun. The committee is actively recruiting new participants, and they would love to hear from you; check out the committee member

bios on [page 3](#) of this issue—we guarantee you'll fit right in! We're also looking forward to a great opportunity to attend the National Postdoctoral Association's 9th Annual Meeting to be held at the NIH, summarized by Kris Langlais on [this issue's front page](#).

From the NICHD Newsletter Committee, welcome to 2011 and a Happy New Year!

Questions, Comments, or Announcements for *The NICHD Connection*? Please contact Shana at Shana.Spindler@gmail.com.

January Events

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2011 9AM-4PM
NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium
Natcher Building

Announcements

GPP OUTSTANDING MENTOR AWARDS ANNOUNCED!

The Graduate Student Council is pleased to announce that **Dr. Henry Levin**, nominated by Gang Feng, and **Dr. Matthias Machner**, nominated by Yang Chen, are the recipients of the "GPP Outstanding Mentor Award"! The winners were chosen based on a nomination essay written by their graduate student. Their outstanding mentorship will be recognized at the NIH Graduate Student Research Symposium on Jan 12, 2011 from 3:30 to 4:00 pm in Natcher. ([pictures on page 9](#))

IMAGE COMPETITION REMINDER

Don't forget about the May 16-17 annual retreat image competition! If your image is selected, it will be featured on the web site, the retreat poster, and on the cover of the retreat abstract book. Deadline fast approaching, check with [Kris Langlais](#).

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR WRITING COURSES THIS FEBRUARY

This February, possibly March, two writing courses will be offered: Writing Abstracts and Business Writing. A must for any fellow!

HOLD THE DATE: SPEAKING TO PROGRAM OFFICERS, WITH NIGMS FEBRUARY 15, 2011, 12-1:30

Many NIH basic science grants, especially cell biology and biophysics, are funded through NIGMS. Meet the program officers who oversee research in these areas.

Committee Corner: Looking Forward

The NICHD Fellows Committee had a great start in 2010 and is ready to continue into 2011! The once-a-month fellow lunch outings have been a hit and the newsletter is on a roll, but the committee is always looking forward to planning new events, providing helpful resources, and generating networking opportunities. That said, the NICHD fellows committee is looking to expand with new members! The committee includes fellows from multiple research backgrounds, both basic and clinical. Take a look at the current committee members' bios and consider what joining the committee might be able to do for you!

The committee meets once a month for one hour. If you are interested in attending a committee meeting, please contact Jason Riley at rileyja@mail.nih.gov.

NICHD Fellows Committee Bios

FARIHA KAMRAN, MD

Fariha completed medical school and obtained her M.B.B.S degree from King Edward Medical University in Lahore, Pakistan. Shortly thereafter, while obtaining her ECFMG certification in the US, she volunteered as a research assistant at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. She then started residency at NUMC in Long Island, New York. During her residency, she studied the significance of Hemoglobin Fast Variant. In addition, Fariha studied the hormone dependent effects on COX-2 inhibition of 27-hydroxylase and ABCA1. After completing her pediatric residency, she started a fellowship in the department of Pediatric Endocrinology at NICHD in the summer of 2009. As a clinical fellow, she is now involved in a basic science project studying the role of microRNAs as regulators of growth.

EMILY KING, PHD

Emily King finished her Ph.D. in mathematics in August 2009 from the University of Maryland after earning a B.S./M.S. in mathematics at Texas A&M University. The following month, she began an IRTA Postdoc in the Laboratory of Integrative and Medical Biophysics under Dr. Bob Bonner. Her dissertation was in theoretical mathematics, so she has learned a lot during her short tenure at NIH. She is currently working on projects in retinal image processing and analysis of RNA pseudoknots. In February, she will leave for Germany, where she will be a Humboldt Fellow working with the Applied Analysis Group (Angewandte Analysis Gruppe) at the University of Osnabrück and the Institute of Numerical Simulation (Institut für Numerische Simulation) at the University of Bonn. She enjoys running, dancing, cooking, and drinking good beer.

KRIS LANGLAIS, PHD

Kristofor Langlais is a postdoctoral fellow at the NICHD, where he studies epigenetic mechanisms responsible for the establishment of complex body structure during development. He devised an innovative experimental system that makes use of transgenic fruit flies expressing tagged Polycomb Group (PcG) proteins to examine the role of PcG proteins in the regulation of key developmental genes. Early in his tenure at NICHD, Kris became

(continued on page 4)

NICHD Fellows Committee Bios

(continued from page 3)

interested in the intersection of science, health, and public policy. In fall of 2010, he served in a three-month detail as an International Health Analyst at the Office of Global Health Affairs of DHHS, where he discovered a deep interest in international health capacity building and bio-medical research collaboration. Prior to arriving at NICHD, Kris followed his passion for teaching for three years, serving as an adjunct professor at Oregon and Vermont community colleges, a visiting faculty member at Middlebury College, and a high school science teacher at Okemo Mountain School. He also held a postdoctoral research position at Middlebury College, where he studied mouse mutations affecting meiosis. Dr. Langlais obtained his Ph.D. in Molecular and Developmental Biology from Oregon Health and Science University in 2005.

JASON RILEY, PHD

Jason Riley received his Ph.D. in "light transport in diffusing domains containing non-scattering spaces" (some maths for neo-natal brain imaging with light) at University College London in London, UK. In 2005, Jason joined the Section on Biomedical Stochastic Physics (now the Section on Analytical and Functional Bio-photonics) at the NICHD to develop inverse algorithms for the Lifetime Fluorescence Imaging problem (for breast cancer monitoring with light) under the direction of Dr. Amir Gandjbakhche. Currently his primary research is in functional brain imaging using Near Infra Red Light, however he enjoys solving any theoretical quantitative imaging/analysis problems thrown in his general direction. In his spare time, Jason enjoys family, hill walking, rock climbing, reading, and music - as well as ignoring light whenever possible....

NICHD Newsletter Committee Bios

NICHOLE JONAS, DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Nichole Jonas received her B.A. in Visual Arts from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Soon after, she joined NICHD as a Technical IRTA with the Unit on Computer Support Services. Nichole's work originally focused on designing and maintaining the Division of Intramural Research's many websites. Now, as a contractor, she is able to provide graphic design support in the form of various event posters and the upcoming NICHD DIR Annual Report. She enjoys traveling, geocaching, superheroes, and art and animation.

SHANA R. SPINDLER, PHD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Shana Spindler is a former NICHD Fellow living in Springfield, VA with her husband Jason and son Zachary. She received her B.A. at the University of Colorado, Boulder and her Ph.D. in Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology at the University of California, Los Angeles. During her fellowship at the NIH with Ajay Chitnis, Shana studied signal transduction during cell morphogenesis in the Zebrafish lateral line. She began her career transition away from the bench after joining the NICHD Fellows Committee, enabling her to initiate the first NICHD newsletter. Shana is now a freelance science writer who enjoys raising her son and not commuting three hours every day!

(continued on page 5)

NICHD Fellows Committee Bios

(continued from page 4)

JEREMY SWAN, PHOTOGRAPHER

Jeremy Swan graduated in 2006 from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, with a B.A. in Biomedical Communications through the Interdisciplinary Studies program. Soon after, he began a fellowship at the NICHD where he advocated for the use of 3D graphics in the communication of scientific information. In addition, Jeremy helped to start the intramural wiki, "Science@NICHD," and regularly assists with the production of audio, video, graphics, photos, posters, prints, and presentations for investigators, fellows, and staff. At home, Jeremy has a keen interest in the fermentation of palatable liquids through the use of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.

SILVIYA ZUSTIAK, PHD, REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR

Silviya Petrova Zustiak finished a doctoral degree in Chemical and Biochemical Engineering from University of Maryland Baltimore County and a B.S./M.S. degree in bioelectrical engineering from Technical University, Sofia, Bulgaria. Her master's research was focused on the design of a hybrid biosensor for ecological purposes, and her doctoral research was centered on designing biomaterials for neural tissue engineering applications as well as the use of polymers in the design of fluorescent sensors. Silviya started an IRTA position at NICHD in the beginning of 2010 in the Laboratory of Integrative and Medical Biophysics under Dr. Ralph Nossal. Her postdoctoral research is focused on building a 3D in-vitro model for cancer drugs screening. Her professional goal is to obtain a tenure-track faculty position in a Chemical, Biomedical, or Bioengineering Department. She enjoys the outdoors and a variety of adventure activities such as rock climbing, hiking, camping, and biking.



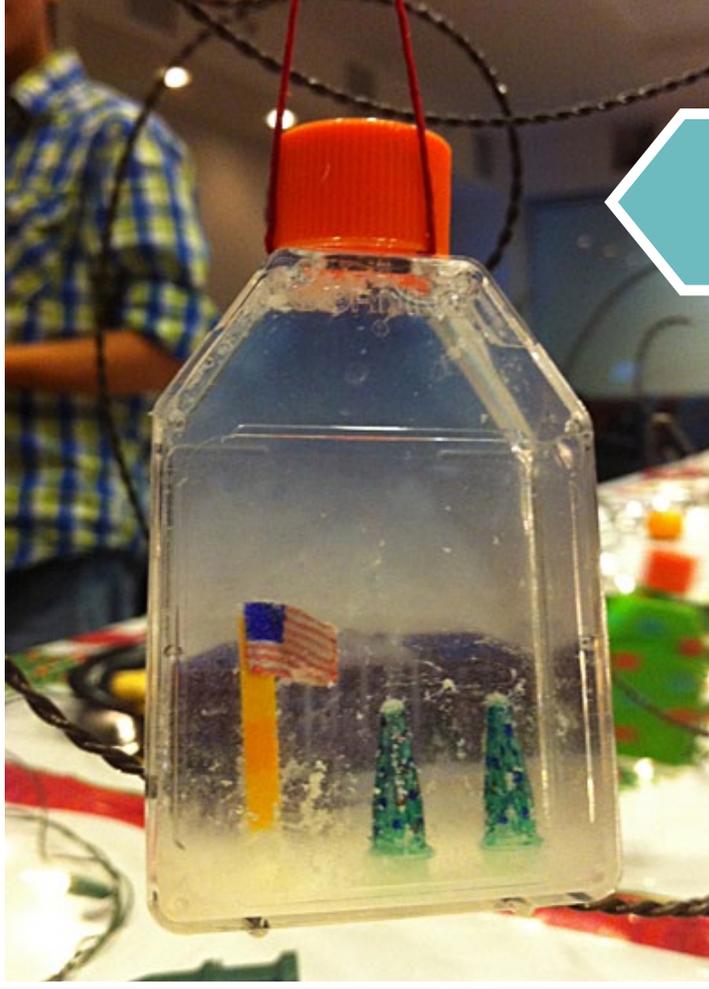


*NICHD
Holiday
Party
&
ORNAMENT
COMPETITION*



FIRST PLACE

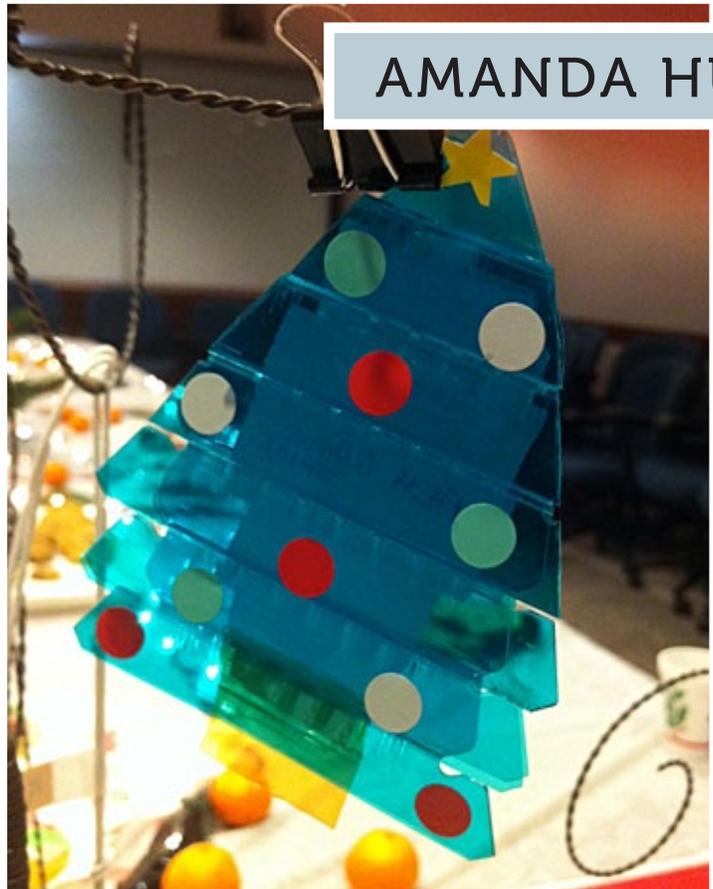
Kris Langlais



DR. RICH MARAIA



AMANDA HUEY



SHANNON FUHR

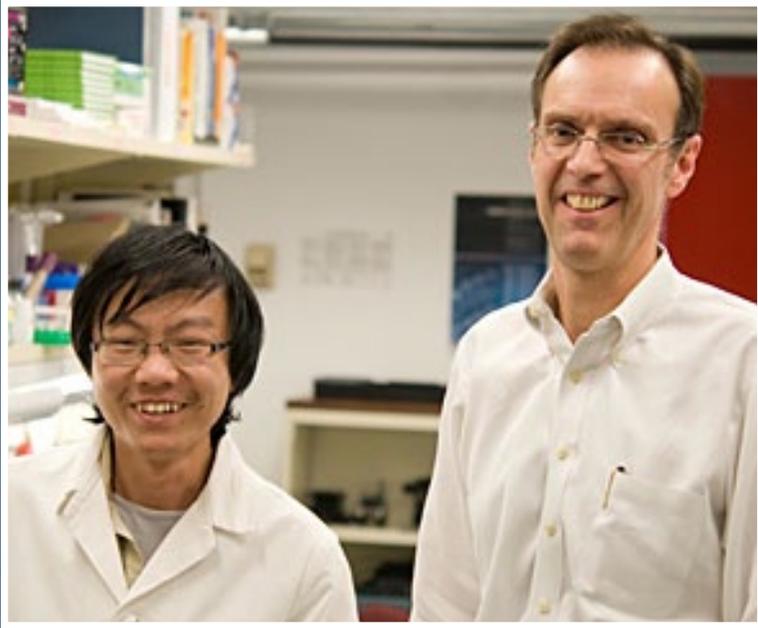




**RESEARCH ETHICS LUNCHTIME DISCUSSION
WITH DR. SERGEY LEIKIN ON “RECUSAL”
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 12PM**



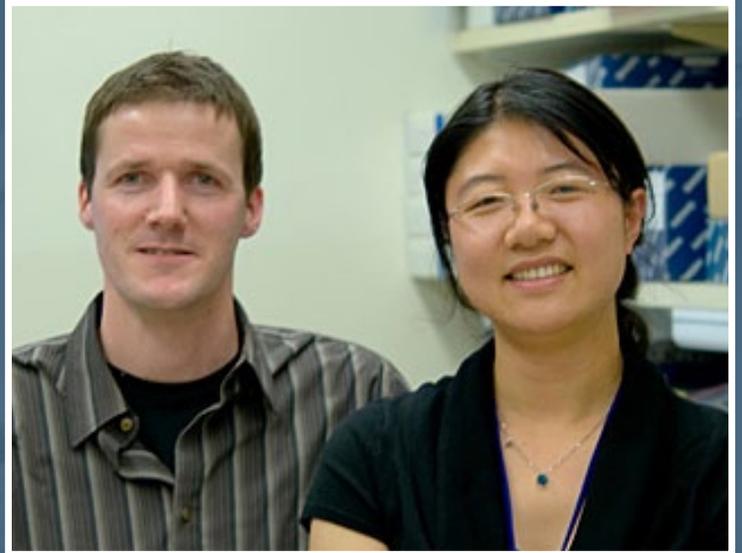
GPP Outstanding Mentor Awards (continued from page 2)



*Dr. Matthias Machner, left,
nominated by Yang Chen*



*Dr. Henry Levin, right,
nominated by Gang Feng*



*Fellows and
newsletter com-
mittee members
enjoy lunch at
Haandi Indian
Restaurant in
Bethesda, on
December 15,
2010.*

