

December 2003

To: Worldwide members of the OSU Biochemistry and Biophysics Community
From: P. Shing Ho, Chairman

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Happy Holidays once again from the friendly confines of Corvallis. It has been a busy year, with a new President at Oregon State University, new faculty in the department, and new personnel in the department office. As many of you may already know, Dr. Edward Ray has taken over the helm as President of OSU, after a successful career as Executive Vice President and Provost of the other OSU (Ohio State University). Those of us who have met with Dr. Ray have been impressed by his very forthright manner, particularly his acknowledgement of problems as problems and dealing with them as such—this is a refreshing perspective.

We welcome **Dr Elisar Barbar** (Associate Professor) and **Dr Michael Hare** (Assistant Research Professor). Both were recruited from Ohio University, where Elisar had an established research program (supported by an NSF CAREER grant) using various physical methods, including NMR spectroscopy, to characterize dynein, a motor protein involved in intracellular transport, and Michael had helped to establish a mass spectrometry facility for the characterization of protein structure. They are joined by **Afua Nyarka**, one of Elisar's graduate students from her former department, and Mary Helen and Wendy Elizabeth (Elisar and Michael's 6 year old and 4 month old daughters). **Jill Waite** joined the BB office staff in January, replacing **Anterra** as the department bookkeeper (and recently advancing to the position of research accounting specialist).

The members of the department faculty remain busy, as always. **Andy Karplus'** group published a paper in the journal *Science* (with a commentary in the "News and Views" section) that proposes a novel mechanism in which eukaryotic peroxiredoxins serve as "floodgates" that allow hydrogen peroxide to act as a cell signal, even under the large cellular concentrations of the enzyme. In addition, Andy ran in the annual (and grueling) Hood to Coast race as a member of a group of heart surgery survivors (a story about this intrepid group was shown on CNN). **Chrissa Kioussi** and **Michael Gross** are adapting to their lives as faculty members—teaching, writing papers, and writing grant applications (including major proposals to develop a transgenic mouse facility). Congratulations to **Tory Hagen** for his promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. He along with **Joe Beckman**, **Balz Frei** and **Gary Merrill** had a new Program Project Grant funded through the NIH. **Kevin Ahern** set a new record with nominations for the Loyd Carter Awards for undergraduate and for graduate instruction, and for the Boedtker Award for Advising in the College of Science. **Jeff Greenwood** is busy with his new "toy", setting up the new EHSC/CGRB confocal microscope facility. **Gary Merrill** chaired the department's Graduate Committee, which completed one of its most successful graduate student recruiting efforts in recent years. **Phil McFadden** is in the process of switching his research system from the vertebrate to invertebrate form of sea-life (fish to squid). I had the privilege of Chairing the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship program in Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Biophysics, which also left me stranded for four days with my family at the Baltimore-Washington International Airport under 24 inches of snow. The University acknowledged the service of several BB faculty members: **Victor Hsu** (10 years), **Linda Wheeler** (15 years), **Michael Schimerlik** (25 years) and **Sonia Anderson** (35 years). **Isaac Wong** left OSU to accept a faculty position at the University of Kentucky Medical Center.

Frank Hays (4th year Ph.D. graduate student) received an award for his poster at the annual CGRB retreat, and was selected to present his work at the Annual Biophysical Society Meeting in Baltimore, MD in February, funded in part by a student travel award from the Biophysical Society.

I made a mistake in last year's newsletter, counting only 10 emeritus faculty (I must have run out of fingers)—there were 11 last year and, with the retirement of **George Pearson**, there now are 12.

George is still with the department on a partial appointment, teaching one course each year and serving as an undergraduate advisor. **Bob Becker** tells us that he is slowing down, but we see no evidence of that. He continues to be involved with antismoking efforts, and is very concerned with the recent changes to the PERS retirement system. **Curtis Johnson** has been seen driving around town in a vintage MG, and is considering adding to his stable of older (shall we say unreliable) British automobiles. He, **Ken van Holde** and I are working on the second edition of the *Principles of Physical Biochemistry* textbook. Ken continues his editorial duties with the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* and dividing his time between Woods Hole and Corvallis. The first Mathews Lecture, established by the friends and colleagues of **Chris Mathews**, will be presented by Rowena Matthews from the University of Michigan on April 30, 2004. Meanwhile, Chris continues to trot the globe with Kate, making trips to Antarctica and South Africa, and continues his research program. **Donald MacDonald** and Elizabeth travel, continue birding and are spending the holidays with daughter Peggy at the Rockefeller University. **Dave Loomis** is pretty much at home in not so good health. **Bob Newburgh** (sorry for the omission last year) has recently retired as Executive Director of the Protein Society. **Henry Schaub** is enjoying life at the coast, has sold his sailboat, but is considering getting another. **Derek Baisted** travels and golfs in multiple places around the world. **Wil Gamble's** work with bears continues, as do all of his other unofficial advising, free consulting, and hours and hours at the library. **Don Reed** is retired but still remains very busy with his research, writing and professional society business.

Undergraduate and Graduate Class of 2003

We congratulate all of the students who earned their Biochemistry and Biophysics degrees this year. On the Chinese calendar, 2003 was the year of the ram; but the scientific calendar tells us that 2003 was the 50th anniversary of Watson and Crick's structure of the DNA double-helix. To help celebrate this momentous occasion, all BB graduates in the class of 2003 received, at the annual graduation luncheon, a British 2£ commemorative coin showing the double-helix on the reverse side of the Queen.

Bachelor's of Science degrees were conferred to **Sahmon Fallahian** (a medical student at Drexel University), **Michinao Hashimoto** (pursuing his Ph.D. at Harvard University), **Robyn Ikehara** (currently in the law school at the University of Southern California), **Jamie Miller** (working towards a Ph.D. at the University of California at Davis), **Jason Nunes** (staying at OSU to earn his M.S. degree in Genetics), **Heather Parsons** (an intern at the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in Morgantown, West Virginia), **Darla Richardson** (attending osteopathic school in Arizona), **Tom Sharpton** (in the Ph.D. program at the University of California a Berkeley), and **Ryan Sieg** (completing a Masters of Science degree in Chemistry at the University of Oregon while applying to medical school). It is obvious that the members of this undergraduate class were highly accomplished, and are on track to continue in that direction.

Four students completed their Ph.D. degrees in 2003, including **Thomas Ellen** (van Holde), **Louisa Hooven** (Baird), **Jung Suh** (Hagen and Frei, currently a postdoc with Bruce Ames at the Univeristy of California at Berkeley), and **Alexandra Vulpanovici** (Gerwick). In addition, **Jason Merwin** received a Ph.D. with Gary Merrill under the MCB program. M.S. degrees were completed by **Mohamed Al-Fageeh** (Dashwood), **Ann Marie Badeau** (Schimerlik), and **Summer Stone** (Karplus).

Alumni News

Several alumni returned to OSU to pay the department a visit. **Dr. David Wong** (MS '64) received an OSU Alumni Fellows Award in recognition of his contributions to the synthesis and development of Prozac. **Marian Waterman** (BS, 1981) presented an excellent seminar to the department describing her work at the University of California at Irvine on the Lymphoid Enhancer Factor/T Cell Factor family of transcription factors. **Robert Horton** (BS, 1999) presented a

department seminar on cobalamin uptake, the project that he is completing to earn his Ph.D. at the University of Utah. **Beth Basham** (Ph.D., Ho 1998), currently head of Bioinformatics at Dnax, discussed the joys of life in the biotechnology industry as part of the new technical Master's Program coordinated by **Kevin Ahern** and sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. **Paul Eakin** (BS, 1995) stopped by to tell us that he is now a resident in pediatric medicine in Dallas, Texas, after interning at the University of Hawaii.

We continue to receive news of great accomplishments from former graduates from the BB department. **Brandt Eichman** (Ph.D., Ho) and wife Jessica greeted the arrival of their son (Charles Frederick) on March 25. **Monika Ivancic** (Ph.D., Hsu) is currently the Assistant NMR Director in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin, **Jiuping Ji** (Ph.D., Mathews) accepted the position of Director of HPV (human papilloma virus) and Molecular Biology at Ventana Medical Systems in Tucson, AZ, **Jeffrey Vargason** (Ph.D., Ho) has a paper on the structure of an siRNA suppressor protein that will be featured on the cover of *Cell*, **Guangwen Zhou** (Ph.D., Ho) has moved to Louisiana State University as an Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Sonya (Baker) King (BS, 1995) is a research technician at the Oregon Health and Sciences University, **Steven Full** (BS, 2002) returned to OSU to earn an M.S. degree with Jeff Greenwood, **Keith Hazelton** (BS, 2002) is currently at Columbia University, and is applying to medical schools, **Tasha Ludwick** (BS, 2002) is in osteopathic school in Maine, **Morgan Parker** (BS, 2002) is in the Pharmacy School at OSU, **Pat Reardon** (BS, 2001) is in a Ph.D. program at Duke University, **Jackie Wirz** (BS, 2002) received a prestigious NSF Graduate Research Fellowship to continue her graduate work at the Oregon Health and Sciences University.

Jim Summerton (Research Assistant Professor, 1978-1981), who left OSU in 1981 to start Corvallis' first biotechnology company, Antivirals, Inc. (now AVI-Biopharma) has founded a new company, Gene Tools LLC, located in Philomath. He and his colleagues produce morpholine-based oligonucleotide analogs as antisense reagents, and continue research on intracellular delivery strategies for antisense-based drugs.

Development Efforts in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

We continue to work towards establishing a transgenic mouse facility to support the research efforts of Drs. Kioussi and Gross, as well as others in the BB department and around the OSU campus. A special fund (the Faculty Emergency Student Access Fund) was established by Kevin Ahern and myself through the OSU Faculty Senate to help students cope with the escalating costs of tuitions and fees at OSU. Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to all of those who have contributed so generously to the department this year. Your gifts help to support, among many things, the undergraduate BB Club, graduate student recruitment, and the department seminar series.

In closing, on behalf of the faculty, staff and students in the Department, I would like to extend to you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season, and best wishes for the New Year. As always, our doors are open to welcome your visit, and our ears attentive to news of your well being, wherever you may reside.

Yours warmly,

P. Shing Ho

P.S., With my ever faltering abilities to remember names and people, this letter could not have been completed without significant contributions and editorial help from Chris Mathews, Robert Becker, Kevin Ahern, and Barbara Hanson.