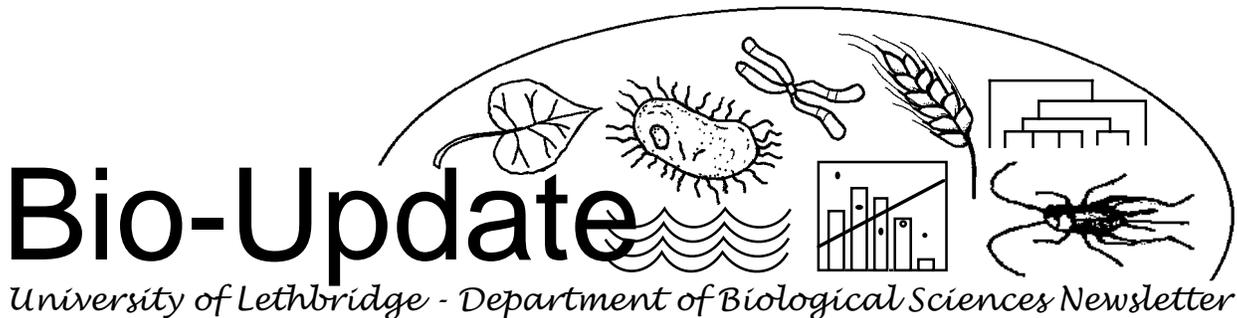


Issue #3 November 2003 - Special Graduate Student Edition



From the Chair

I once stumbled across the assertion that “Grad school is the snooze button on the alarm clock of life”. This is an amusing statement and I have little doubt that our years in grad school may seem to our friends and families to be such an avoidance of reality. However, most of us who have engaged in such endeavors have found grad school to be somewhat more challenging than pressing a snooze button and rolling over to descend again into slumber.

I remember grad school as being the most intense and challenging, yet the most exciting and rewarding, years of my career. The pursuit of discovery and scholarship was almost intoxicating. We minimize our time sitting passively in the classroom. We present hour-long seminars and develop and debate our own ideas with our colleagues. We devise novel experiments and methods to gain new insights into our little corners of science. In biological terminology, we ingest, respire, and egest our topic. We begin writing our thesis and learn how challenging it is to communicate clearly our ideas and our discoveries. Eventually, we experience the thrill of our first publication.

Some of you began your graduate experience only last month and I welcome you to the Department of Biological Sciences. Others are part way through their work, and a few of you are writing your theses. At whichever stage of graduate studies you currently find yourselves, I hope that the entire experience will be rewarding. We now have 14 graduate students in the Department, and it is time for us to encourage more interaction between students, and between faculty and students. This newsletter is a good beginning. We are now developing a graduate seminar course that should support further interactions. Please also attend the occasional seminars that are offered in biology and related areas. Some labs are planning journal discussion groups, also in order to encourage interactions.

Please introduce yourselves to me and to other faculty members if you have not yet done so. I welcome suggestions about how to further integrate graduate students into the life of the Department. Enjoy your studies!

Alexsandr Boyko



Alex started his M. Sc. In Igor's lab in the Spring, 2003. Alex is from the western part of the Ukraine (Ivano-Frankivsk city), situated in the beautiful Carpathians mountains. This explains why his favorite hobby is hiking! During studying in the Ukraine for his B. Sc., Alex carried out research in a variety of fields – genetics, entomology, biochemistry, ornithology, and he was even involved in some international projects dealing with some of these topics. His M.Sc. is a bit of a departure from the ecological side of things; he is studying DNA repair in plants focusing, in particular on homologous recombination. He is teaching Biology 1010 laboratories this semester. Alex's other hobbies including mountain biking, raising aquarium fish, and dreaming about visiting New Zealand and Tibet.

Jennifer Burke



Jenn graduated from the University of Lethbridge in 1997 where she studied biology and education. After living in Asia for a year, she returned to Fort Macleod and taught high school math and chemistry. After five years, she was lured back to South East Asia. She has always been interested in Botany, so she came back and is working with John on an M.Sc. examining the origins of *Erigeron trifidus*, a rare plant in Southern Alberta. She will be using molecular data to answer three questions: is *E. trifidus* a hybrid between two other *Erigeron* species?, is *E. trifidus* monophyletic?, and is *E. trifidus* able to reproduce via the production of asexual seeds? In those hours when Jenn isn't amplifying plant DNA, she can be found urging customers to buy soap at the Farmer's market, attending meetings for the South Country Fair, or sitting in a pub, listening to the music of *John Wort Hannam and the Sound Merchants*.

Andriy Cheypesh



Andriy was born in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, Nadvirna district, Lanchin village in the Ukraine and has lived most of his life there. Andriy studied at the Ivano-Frankivsk State Medical Academy from 1996 – 2002 and interned as a Doctor of Therapy during 2002-2003. He brings all of this experience to Olga's laboratory here at the U. of L. to do an M. Sc. in Molecular Biology (he started September, 2003). Andriy's main hobby is anything to do with computers!

Kateryn Rochon

Kateryn is a graduate student in the Biological Sciences Department. She has been working on the significance of *E. coli* in house fly and stable fly development, and will be defending her M.Sc thesis in early December. This semester, Kateryn is a lab instructor for both Biology 1010 and 2000. French-Canadian born in Montreal, she is a die-hard Montreal Canadiens fan. She started collecting tiger beetles last summer and has great hopes for a "Tiger Beetles of the World" collection she could pass on to her grand-children. Kateryn also enjoys white water canoeing, camping and hiking. She is currently pondering the pursuit of further graduate studies in vector biology and public health, but may also opt for early retirement.



Vanessa Carney

Vanessa recently graduated from University of Lethbridge with an MSc. in Biological Sciences. Her background is in entomology, specializing in biological control of insects and weeds. Currently, Vanessa is teaching Biology 1020 laboratories at the University of Lethbridge and works as a Research Affiliate with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

She is originally from Southern Ontario, but has lived in both the Maritimes and Western Canada. She enjoys hiking and skiing in Alberta and BC and loves to travel. She is a volunteer with the Lethbridge PAW Society, a local feline rescue organization.

Ryan Cormack



Ryan is originally from Winnipeg and recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a B.Sc. Hons in Biology. He is currently studying defects in leaf vascular patterns of *Arabidopsis* mutants with Dr. Elizabeth Schultz. Two interesting mutants have been isolated. Previous research has established that vascular tissue is formed as a result of auxin flow through the undifferentiated paracyma tissue. Over the next 2 years, Ryan hopes to determine whether these interesting mutants are associated with alterations in auxin biosynthesis, auxin transport, or auxin response, and he hopes to map the two genes. He finds the research interesting, the people friendly and helpful and is looking forward to being here over the next 2 years. Ryan is currently teaching two Biology 1020 laboratories. Ryan enjoys a great many activities including table tennis, racquetball, even taekwondo and rollerblading. His less athletic pursuits include

discussing topical political issues, as well as enjoying music and nature (even if it is just plants and pets!).

Jody Filkowski



Jody Filkowski started her M.Sc. in Igor's lab in May, 2002. She is a native Lethbridgian and graduated from U of L in 2001 with a B.Sc. in Biochemistry. Jody's research focuses on the effect of pathogens on genome stability in plants. She has done some laboratory teaching in Biology 1010

Jasmine Garrett



purchased her first car so she should be able to get out and see those mountains more often now!

Jasmine is originally from beautiful Nelson BC. Needless to say, she is a big fan of the outdoors and she misses the mountains and icy cool water terribly. She obtained her B. Sc. Degree in Biochemistry from the University of Lethbridge last May and is now continuing her studies examining the genes that control vein patterns in leaves with Elizabeth as her supervisor. Jasmine is currently teaching two Biology 2000 labs right now and in her words "loving it". She enjoys working with people. In addition to her schooling, she loves running, getting up at insane hours to go to the gym, performing volunteer work with children, and researching future traveling excursions to Third World countries. Jasmine also just

Aaron Glenn



Aaron is originally from southwestern Manitoba and he spent his first two years of post-secondary education at Brandon University in Botany. He then transferred to U of A (in 2001) and recently (April 2003) completed a Plant Biology degree with first-class honors. He just started a MSc in Biological Sciences with Larry Flanagan studying environmental controls on carbon dioxide and water-vapour exchange in contrasting peatland ecosystems in Northern Alberta (in the Athabasca/Lac La Biche vicinity). He will be using the eddy-covariance micrometeorological technique to make measurements of ecosystem gas exchange, while investigating various possible abiotic and biotic influences over these processes. Aaron is currently teaching laboratories in Biology 3700. Aaron, a vegetarian, enjoys music, reading, and nature.

Claudia Haas



Claudia was born and raised in Calgary, and received her B. Sc. from the U. of Calgary in Environmental Science. In an attempt to leave the hustle and bustle of the big city, she decided to pursue her Master's degree in Lethbridge. Ralph Cartar introduced her to the life of bumble-bees, while she was interning at the Kananaskis Field Station. Consequently, she is studying the effects of wing wear on the foraging ability of bumble-bee workers. Claudia spent last summer at the R.B. Miller Field Station in beautiful Kananaskis Country and managed to go the whole summer only getting stung once (unfortunately, it was on her upper lip which then swelled up like a watermelon – sadly, no photographs are available)! Claudia's recent obsession is reading the classics, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens... She has also just recently recovered from a Shakleton obsession, the Antarctic explorer who lost his ship and still brought all of his men back. Claudia is teaching Biology 1010 laboratories this semester.

Yaroslav Ilnytsky



Slava started in Igor's lab in January 2003, working on a project entitled "Characterization of novel DNA repair related genes in *Arabidopsis thaliana*". To accomplish this, one method he is using is screening the T-DNA insertional library that includes 11 000 targeted *Arabidopsis* lines, hoping that in some of them, the desired genes involved in DNA repair are targeted. Slava's work is significant because, in his words, "we still lack knowledge about the mechanisms of maintaining DNA integrity in plants. Research of DNA repair in *Arabidopsis* will allow us to study these processes in agricultural plants more efficiently. Also, discovered genes may have analogs in humans that may be related to certain genetic diseases." Slava is teaching two laboratories in Biology 1010. When not screening *Arabidopsis* genes, Slava enjoys hiking in the mountains, poetry and good beer.



Mark Klassen started his M.Sc. in January, 2003 in Andy's Lab. He is currently looking at risk-sensitive foraging amongst hummingbirds. After graduating with his B.Sc. in the spring of 2002 (U of L), he worked in Andy's lab and TA'ed Bio 1020. He has spent the last 3 summers working at the Westcastle Field Station. Mark is a Coaldale native

Cassandra Lang



Cassandra Lang began her M.Sc. with Brent and Jim in January 2003. Originally from Medicine Hat, she graduated from U of L in 2002 (B.Sc. Biol. Sci./Psychology). Cassandra's research focuses on the development of genotypic and phenotypic bacterial profiles of enteric pathogens located within the Oldman River Watershed. Cassandra is a T.A. in Biology 1010.

Kimberly Pearson



Kimberly Pearson started her M. Sc. in Cam's lab on 1 Sept, 2002. She is looking at the effect of introduced trout on the demography, life-history and behavior of long-toed salamanders. Kim is from St. Albert and graduated from U of A in 2000. Kim is funded by the Alberta Conservation Association. Kim is carrying on a proud family tradition – her father, John Pearson, was a member of the first graduating class back in 1968 (B. Sc. Biology).

Chad Willms



Chad Willms started his M.Sc. in Stew's lab in January, 2003. He is from Edmonton and graduated from the University of Alberta in 1998 with a B.Sc. in Environmental and Conservation Science. Chad's research investigates the requirements of riparian cottonwoods in relation to both flow regimes and hydrogeomorphic features.

As always, comments and suggestions are ever welcome. Please email Laurie Pacarynuk (pacarynuk@uleth.ca) or Bruce McMullin (mcmullin@uleth.ca).

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