



## NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY AND NEUROBIOLOGY

*Boston University School of Medicine - Division of Graduate Medical Sciences*



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### Volume 3, Issue 2

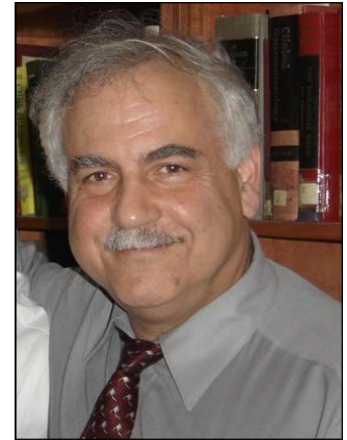
### Anatomy & Neurobiology

#### Chairman's Report by Dr. Mark Moss

Welcome to this issue of the Anatomy & Neurobiology Newsletter. As we move into the Spring 2007 semester, we are pleased to report on several new and exciting activities in the Department. We welcome two new faculty to the Department, Dr. Robin Cotton and Amy Brodeur. Dr. Cotton is heading our new and rapidly growing Masters Program in Biomedical Forensic Science

and Ms. Brodeur has assumed the role of Assistant Director.

We also take the opportunity to recognize one of our most distinguished alumni, Dr. William McNary. As you will read in the article by Dr. Richard Hoyt, the Department is working on an endowment fund in memory of Dr. McNary to recognize excellence in teaching among our graduate students. This will



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#### McNary Student Prize for Teaching in Anatomy by Dr. Richard Hoyt



*Dr. McNary officiating at a student meeting in the mid 1980s.*

The McNary Prize is new this year. It will be given periodically by the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology to a current or recently graduated student demonstrating exceptional commitment to and apti-

tude for teaching in the morphologically-based sciences. The prize honors the memory of William F. McNary, Jr., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anatomy, who at the time of his death in May 1991 had been a member of the Department for 42 years.

Dr. McNary's personality and unique position at the Medical School have been described evocatively by Dr. Lawrence Zoller in "A Tribute to Dr. William F. McNary" (*Newsletter from the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology*, Volume 1, Issue 1, Sept/Oct 2003). He was a superb teacher of embryology, histology, and gross anatomy and was idolized by generations of medical students. Importantly, he provided

the Medical School with a human face instantly recognizable by students, alumni, faculty, administration, and staff alike.

Dr. McNary has been remembered by the Medical School through the creation of the McNary Learning Center, and the Medical School Class of 1991, the last to graduate during his lifetime, established the William F. McNary, Jr. Award. This is presented each year to the graduating senior medical student "who demonstrates the qualities of friendship, leadership, and service to the School of Medicine so appreciated in Dr. McNary". However, those of us who had taught closely with him were interested in the

*(Continued on page 9)*

## China: A Teaching and Learning Experience by Kevin Bickart

Riding my bike down Tremont, I received a call from my father and was rewarded with a proposal that I had been awaiting for 4 years. My father, uncle, and I were to teach conversational English in Shanghai for 5 weeks, and then journey through China for an additional 3 weeks to view 6 of China's most beautiful sites: Beijing, Lhasa, Jozaigou/Huanglong, Chengdu, Guilin, and Hong Kong.

We shared three classes of increasing levels of speaking fluency – low (elementary school), intermediate (high school or college), and high (professional). We taught two classes per day. In addition, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons we held a combined session where we team-taught lectures regarding topics of our own choice (English Corners). We developed weekly themes for the English Corners that were directed at comparing and contrasting the American culture with that of the Chinese. In this setting, students would learn to develop both their auditory and visual learning capacity (during lecture style presentations) as well as their presenting style (during group problem-solving and debate exercises). We created five themes – American holidays; Levels of Learning in Language Acquisition; Art, Music, and Poetry as Emotional Expression; Belief, Balance, and Love; and the last week was appropriately the

Art of Closure.

As the weeks passed by, we quickly became good friends with our students as they invited us to their home-towns and offered to be a guide here and throughout Shanghai. Through our formal and casual interactions with the students, we learned much about the Chinese language and culture. A teacher has reached success when the students become the teachers and the teacher becomes the student. The students had certainly taught us as valuable a lesson as we might have imparted to them; not only in the form of language and culture, but more importantly lessons in human relationships. My original intention for this China trip was to learn about the eastern philosophy of healing and viewing each patient as a whole person. In search of this lesson, I realized that I would not learn this directly but rather indirectly through the relationships that I had formed with our students. The lesson was in the people, our students – specifically they displayed complete and unconditional trust in us and each other – they believed in something greater than the vestigial details accompanying life's more significant meaning. They believed in gratitude, acceptance, and the general



*Kevin giving a lesson to his students.*

goodness of people as the strategy to live successfully.

Rather than to characterize our experiences at Shanghai International Studies University as one dominated by teaching, I would more accurately characterize it as an experience of true exchange – a communion of language and culture. During this unique time, I have not only learned about the art of teaching, learning styles, and levels of learning, but also about a culture's way of living and learning. It seems that the students exemplify genuine interest, determination, trust, and most importantly an extraordinary sense of gratitude in both their living and learning. With this approach, the students set the foundation for a productive and open relationship where we may speak with them rather than to them. Through this open window of exchange, we were able to empower them with an approach to learning and speaking the English language as we related this to the western culture as we know it. In the future, I will draw from this experience when in the medical and academic arenas to develop and encourage such relationships with my patients and students.

Visions from the trip and our teaching experience can be seen at: [www.bickart.com/chinatrip](http://www.bickart.com/chinatrip).

*Kevin Bickart is an M.D./Ph.D. student in the Department.*



*Kevin and his father with their students at Shanghai International Studies University.*



## STAMP Teaching Fellowship by Tulay Tankir

If I could use one word to describe the fifth graders I had the pleasure of getting to know during my teaching fellowship year it would be *sophisticated*. I never would have used that word to describe any of my former fifth grade classmates, but it really is an accurate adjective to describe these special students. I was afforded a tremendous opportunity to develop my teaching and communication skills with the awarding of a Teaching Fellowship through Boston University's Science, Technology and Math Partnerships (STAMP) program. This NSF-funded program partners graduate and undergraduate fellows with teachers in K-12 classrooms in Boston, Chelsea, Quincy and Newton. There were a total of 13 students - 9 graduate and 4 undergraduate - which were placed into the four school districts' physics, biology, chemistry, engineering, and mathematics classrooms. Each teaching fellow was paired with a classroom in their specialty. To apply my anatomy background, I was paired with Russell Springer from Cabot Elementary in Newtonville, MA to help develop a human body curriculum for his fifth grade biology class.

My fifth graders at Cabot Elementary were aware of global events and interested in expressing their opinions on a number of different topics. I would frequently catch the students reading parts of the *Boston Globe* and devouring 400-plus paged books dealing with topics that I remember learning in high school. Through the suggestions of my fifth graders, who knew my interest in science, I decided to read one of their favorite books at the beginning of the school year, *The House of the Scorpion*, by Nancy Farmer. It was after reading this futuristic science fiction book about harvesting DNA for future cloning purposes that I knew I would be learning something *from* my fifth



*Cabot Elementary School Fifth Grade Class 2005.*

graders over the course of the year.

The grosser the better would definitely describe the curriculum I designed for my weeklong human anatomy lesson plan. In putting together my anatomy lesson plan I knew that it had to be something both dynamic and informative. I began each of the five days with a brief interactive lesson on the respective body system which was to be covered that day. We would then move onto body system worksheets that were designed for students to learn interesting facts about each of the human organ systems. On the last day of the exhausting week, I developed a censored slideshow of the Gross Anatomy lab and thought it would be great competitive fun to play a human body-based version of *Jeopardy*, girls against boys of course. The school also benefited from my interest and knowledge of reproductive biology- to the pure relief of the other fifth grade teachers! Therefore, I also had the important task of teaching the puberty lesson to my fifth graders (who seemed more at ease on the topic than their educators). They were inquisitive

and generally curious about all the girl and boy parts and had some very unusual questions regarding the topic (which I promised would never be repeated).

My yearlong teaching experience was truly one that will always come to mind when trying to effectively communicate ideas and develop future pedagogical strategies. I feel extremely lucky to have been welcomed and accepted by the Cabot Elementary School and specifically my fifth graders who taught me more in the end than I am sure they know.

For more information regarding BU's STAMP program or to see the webpage I developed for my lesson plans, feel free to check out this website: <http://www.bu.edu/lnet/programs/index.html> and click on GK12 Project STAMP, then on 2004-05 GK12 Fellows, then scroll down to my mugshot and click on Tulay's curriculum activities.

*Tulay Tankir is a Ph.D. student in the Department.*

## Volunteering Efforts by Sarah Greene

The Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology has been very active in volunteering in the surrounding community this year. In the past, the department has held toy drives for the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation over the holidays, and again had a very successful toy drive this year at their annual holiday party. This winter, students, faculty, and staff came together to donate two large overflowing boxes of new unwrapped toys to be distributed to children in the community by the Cambridge Fire Department for Toys for Tots.

In addition to the Department's efforts to collect toys over the holidays, students in the Department were also actively volunteering in the community. In December, students spent time volunteering at Bread and Jams in Cambridge, where they prepared and served a Sunday meal to at risk and homeless members of the community. In January, students prepared and served a meal at Rosie's Place in Boston, where assistance is provided for poor and

homeless women in the Boston area. In February students are scheduled to volunteer at the Boston Living Center in Boston, where assistance is provided for those living with HIV and AIDS.

Students will continue to seek out opportunities to volunteer in the community throughout the school year. Those

who have participated in donating toys and volunteering in the community have been sincerely appreciated, and it is hoped that this community service will continue in our department in future years.

*Sarah Greene is a Ph.D student in the Department.*



*Left to right: Lela Giannaris, Sarah Greene, and Tulay Tankir with donations for Toys For Tots.*

## GMSSO Update by Adrian Oblak and Linda Afifi

The Graduate Medical Sciences Student Organization (GMSSO) brings together graduate students in all departments and programs of BUSM to arrange social gatherings and address student issues in an attempt to provide a better overall community around campus.

This year, our very own Adrian Oblak was elected Vice President of the committee and has worked alongside a steadfast committee including our mentor Dr. Mark Moss to produce highly successful events. For the first

time, a commencement ceremony was held for graduates of the Masters in Medical Sciences in May, and this will continue annually. The orientation party at Club Felt in September and the annual Fall BBQ attracted a plethora of students and faculty members exceeding the success of last year's outcome. Besides planning and steering the events around campus, the GMSSO has been committed to acquiring funding to produce the first private graduate student lounge on campus. After a year of hard work, we are proud to announce that all graduate students can

now kick back and enjoy the quiet atmosphere in the new lounge located on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor, which includes some cozy furniture, tables, and a small kitchen.

GMSSO is continuing work on the health insurance issue and is always open to other suggestions and concerns students may have. You can e-mail the organization at [GMSSO@bu.edu](mailto:GMSSO@bu.edu) or visit the website for updates <http://people.bu.edu/GMSSO>.

**SAVE THE DATE! Department Retreat June 6th at Warren Conference Center, Ashland, MA.**

## UPCOMING SEMINAR SPEAKERS

February 26, 2007 **N. PAUL ROSMAN, M.D.**

4:00PM

Neurofibromatosis and the "Elephant Man": A Personal 100-Year Medical Odyssey

Location TBA



Dr. Rosman is a Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at Boston University School of Medicine. He received his medical degree from McGill University in 1959. His interests include developmental delay, speech and language disorders, and autism spectrum disorders.

*Hosted by the Clinical Neuroscience Society*



March 1, 2007

2:00PM

**FRANCINE BENES, M.D., PH.D.**

Department of Psychiatry Grand Rounds

Dowling  
Amphitheater

Dr. Benes is a Professor of Psychiatry at McLean Hospital in Belmont, MA. She received her Ph.D. in Cell Biology from Yale University School of Medicine in 1972 and later received her medical degree from the same institution in 1978. Her research investigates abnormalities of brain development in schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.



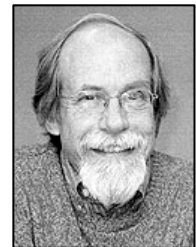
March 22, 2007

2:00PM

**ERIC FRANK, PH.D.**

Alan Peters  
Seminar Room

Dr. Frank is a Professor and Chair of Physiology at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, MA. He obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard University, and his current research focuses on sensory neuron development and the establishment of synaptic connectivity in the spinal cord.



March 27, 2007

9:00AM

**LI LIANG, M.D.**

Thesis Defense

Alan Peters  
Seminar Room

Dr. Liang received her Bachelor of Science degree from China Medical University and her Doctor of Medicine degree from Peking Union Medical College. She is now a Ph.D. candidate in Dr. Julie Sandell's lab studying the retina of retinitis pigmentosa patients and an animal model of retinal degeneration.



March 29, 2007

2:00PM

**AARON ETTEMBERG, PH.D.**

Alan Peters  
Seminar Room

Dr. Ettenberg is a Professor of Psychology at University of California at Santa Barbara. He received his Ph.D. in Psychopharmacology from McGill University in 1980. His research focuses on the neurobiological substrates underlying reinforced and motivated behaviors, and his laboratory has been particularly active in the development and employment of novel behavioral assays to the study of drug-behavior interactions.



April 26, 2007

2:00PM

**STEVEN JOHNSON, M.D., PH.D.**

Alan Peters  
Seminar Room

Dr. Johnson is a Professor of Neurology, Physiology, and Pharmacology at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, OR. He obtained his Ph.D. in Pharmacology from Oregon Health & Science University in 1981 and his medical degree from University of Colorado Health Science Center in 1985. His research interests include movement disorders, with a special emphasis on treatments and prevention of Parkinson's disease.





## Snapshots from the Department Holiday Party, December 13, 2006.

Special thanks to Sushma Agam and Sixto Medina for the photos.



## Welcome New Faculty! Dr. Robin Cotton and Amy Brodeur

Dr. Robin Cotton has been recruited as the Director for the new Biomedical Forensic Sciences Program at Boston University School of Medicine. She has been appointed an Associate Professor in the Department.

Dr. Cotton comes to the University from the Orchid Cellmark Laboratories in Germantown, Maryland where she was the Laboratory Director since 1992. Dr. Cotton received her Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from the University of California at Irvine and then completed post-doctoral research with Dr. Roger Chalkley at the University of Iowa. Following her post-doctoral work, Dr. Cotton conducted research at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism before joining Orchid Cellmark.

During her career, Dr. Cotton has participated in over 50 training seminars and workshops in forensic sciences and authored or co-authored more than 60 presentations and abstracts. She is a member of several prestigious forensic sciences societies and academies, such as the American Society of Human Genetics, American Academy of Forensic Sciences, and American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors. She currently serves as an elected member of the ASCLD/Lab Board of Directors and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Forensic Sciences.

In addition to her role as Director, Dr. Cotton will be involved in the development of several new Forensic DNA courses within this program and will also continue with private casework. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Cotton join the faculty at the Medical



*Dr. Robin Cotton.*

School. She brings invaluable insight and experience in forensic sciences to this program, and we are very privileged to have such a talented scientist as the leader of our new program.



*Amy Brodeur.*

We are thrilled to have Amy Brodeur join our Department as an Instructor and Assistant Director of the Forensic Sciences Program.

Ms. Brodeur received a Masters of Forensic Sciences degree from George Washington University. She has worked as a forensic scientist for 8 years in both the private and public sector. For the last 5 years, she has

been a Criminalist for the Boston Police Crime Laboratory. This relationship continues on a contractual basis.

Ms. Brodeur has extensive experience in general criminalistics, crime scene processing, and forensic DNA. She has testified in numerous criminal cases in Suffolk County as well as other parts of country.

***Congratulations for completing  
your Ph.D. thesis defense!***

**Michael Bowley**

**Yu-Ming Chang**

**James Lister**

**Debra Roberts**

## Grants and Awards

Dr. Gene Blatt has been awarded a three year grant from the Nancy Lurie Marks Family Foundation entitled "Neuropathological and Neurochemical Analysis of Key Speech and Language Areas in Autism." Drs. Thomas Kemper and Margaret Bauman are co-investigators on this project.





## Meet our Student Officers

*Below, left to right:* Seminar Coordinators Sixto Medina and Veronica Akle.



*Above, left to right (back row):* Newsletter Editors: Kristen Lindgren and Lela Giannaris; GMSSO Representatives: Linda Afifi and Adrian Oblak. *(front row)* Graduate Student Representatives: Patrick Mabray and Kelli Dominick; Alumni Affairs Coordinator: Tulay Tankir; Volunteering Coordinator: Sarah Greene.

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Guissepina Raviola Memorial Seminar

**May 18, 2007**

**Guest Speaker: Jill Goldstein, Ph.D.**

For more info visit:

<http://www.brighamandwomens.org/ConnorsCenter/Research/Goldsteinprofile.aspx?subID=submenu4>



## Stay in Touch! New Alumni Webpage Launched

A Google group has been created to allow alumni of the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology to keep in touch. Please visit the website and join the group. We want to hear from you!

**Group name:** BU Anatomy & Neuro Alum

**Group home page:** <http://groups.google.com/group/bu-anatomy-neuro-alum?hl=en>

**Group email address:** [bu-anatomy-neuro-alum@googlegroups.com](mailto:bu-anatomy-neuro-alum@googlegroups.com)

## New Course Offering: Methods in Neuroscience - AN 718

This course will provide a general overview of the major techniques and methods used in contemporary neuroscience research. The major objective of the course is to provide students with the knowledge necessary to read and understand methods used to probe the brain from the molecular to the system level. The course is subdivided into four parts. Part I will introduce students to various animal and tissue/cell models used to study the brain from molecules to behavior. Part II will focus on anatomical techniques used to map neuronal pathways and connections and techniques used to study cell-signaling pathways. Part III will focus on brain mapping and electrophysiological techniques. Part IV will focus on biochemical and molecular techniques.



## McNary Student Prize for Teaching in Anatomy

(Continued from page 1)

possibility of a suitable tribute based in the Department. Our attention quickly focused on his persistent interest in training a new generation of teachers to succeed him.

Through personal example, Dr. McNary showed young faculty and graduate students that teaching holds a necessary and honorable place alongside research and administration in a biomedical academic career. To see him give a histology lecture without slides was a liberating experience, and his embryology lectures unfolded as stories illustrated with board drawings that evolved as you watched (if you got to class early

enough, though, you could see many of these marked out in chalk dots so fine as to be invisible from the front row). He was very open-minded and encouraged us to develop our own teaching styles, not just to mimic his. He was unfazed when some of us drifted away from chalk and began to use colored paper, foam-core, hoses – even soap bubbles. If it worked, that was enough. His critiques were always fair, constructive and hedged around with encouragements, and a word of unsolicited praise could make your day.

In fact, Dr. McNary was an informal, unobtrusive, and extremely effective one-man Vesalius Program! It was this that I wanted to commemorate when in

December, 1991, I wrote a check to the Medical School establishing the McNary Student Teaching Prize. Even after Dr. Zoller left the Department for the University of Las Vegas in 2005, he and I have served as an unofficial steering committee, strongly supported by Dr. Mark Moss. Having grown slowly but steadily for 15 years through donations from faculty and friends, the fund finally has been endowed, and we hope to award the Prize for the first time this spring to a student in the Department.

The McNary Student Teaching Prize is supported by Fund #1769-1.

*Dr. Richard Hoyt, Jr. is an Associate Professor in the Department.*

## Chairman's Report

(Continued from page 1)

oft be a difficult task, as our Vesalius Program has produced some remarkable teachers among our graduate students. To contribute to this fund, please see the donation coupon included below.

With this issue, we also announce the launching of the Department's Alumni

Organization. In recognition of those who have come before us, and to those we have trained and have been part of the Department's successful growth and development, we are launching a website for alumni, and creating an alumni organization to help us with fundraising for the Department's targeted missions.

Finally on a lighter note, enjoy the pic-

tures from our Department Holiday Party, at which we all got to unwind (to varying degrees!) to celebrate the holidays and holiday break. In keeping with the holiday spirit, our Department also fundraised for needy children through the Toys for Tots program. Our thanks to Sarah Greene for the huge success of this effort.



### Boston University School of Medicine - Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology



- ☐ Enclosed is a check payable to **Boston University - McNary Fund** in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Please charge to my credit card the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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#### McNary Student Teaching Prize (Fund # 1769-1)

Please detach coupon and return with donation to:

#### **Boston University School of Medicine Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology**

715 Albany Street L-1004

Boston, Massachusetts 02118-2526

Phone: (617) 638-4200

## Recent Publications

- Allen, J. A., Adlakha, A., & Bergethon, P. R. (2006). Reversible posterior leukoencephalopathy syndrome after bevacizumab/folfiri regimen for metastatic colon cancer. *Archives of Neurology*, 63, 1475-1478.
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**Anatomy & Neurobiology  
Newsletter**

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