RNA Society Newsletter

February 2006

From the desk of the President
Lynne Maquat

Why is there an RNA Society?

2006 marks the 13th year of the RNA Society! While I've worked on RNA for well more than 13 years, and I became a member of the RNA Society in 1993, it wasn't until 1998 that I attended my first RNA Society meeting. Until then, I was getting my "RNA fix" by going to other more focused meetings. These meetings were terrific. Nevertheless, I felt something was missing.

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At the 1998 RNA Society meeting, I realized what I wanted was provided by a group of people who had for years been working on behalf of those of us who study RNA. This group understood and cared enough about RNA to form a society that engenders a more supportive environment for all types of RNA research – whether it be RNA processing, transport, function, structure, interactions or degradation, to name some topics – by advocating for our scientific success at many, many levels. As one example, the group created a journal specifically so that those of us who work on RNA have a better chance at getting a fair peer review in a publication read by most RNA researchers.

I feel fortunate there is an RNA Society and a chance to get to know members who forged the frontiers of the RNA world. Still, I read Olke Uhlenbeck's "Imperfect Account of the Founding of the RNA Society" in the first RNA Society Newsletter with a bit of awe and a lot of curiosity. From Olke's perspective, the most important question for the future is: "will the youngest generation of students and post-docs grow to feel that they too are integral to the Society and its future?" This question left me with the distinct impression that the founders are watching to see whom among us, young and not-so-young, will feel inspired to step forward and make a difference.

That brings the focus of this article to you. Besides paying your annual dues and doing the best RNA research possible, is there something else you can do to help ensure the continued growth and success of the RNA Society?

Participate at the annual meeting

Whether you are in academics or in industry, working as lab head, post-doc, graduate student, undergraduate or "other", simply participating in the annual meeting contributes greatly to the growth and success of RNA research and the Society. The meeting serves several major purposes.

By restricting the talks to no more than 15 minutes, and by having a few concurrent sessions and workshops, the meeting provides a forum in which many scientists – particularly young scientists – can present and get feedback on their research. I realize this forum is not beloved by all. However, it appears to maximize what the Society can offer the largest number of members during the available time.

The meeting also aims to cover all topics of interest to RNA researchers. Since the contents of oral and poster presentations are determined by which scientists submit for a presentation, it is important that submissions derive from all sectors of the RNA community.

Through poster sessions, coffee breaks, the Career Mentoring Workshop and simply sharing meals, the meeting provides many informal opportunities to exchange ideas and enjoy socializing.

Additionally, the meeting generates an infrastructure for Society business. Due to changes we have made, the workings of the Society are more transparent. There is now a chance for everyone to listen to RNA Society news from our leaders: Evelyn Jabri, our fabulous CEO; Jim Bruzik, our wizard of a CFO; and Tim Nilsen, our fearless Editor-in-Chief of the journal *RNA*.

Hopefully, the meeting takes place with a frequency and at locations that allow maximum attendance and maximum access to one another. The importance of your participation, even if you do not take to the podium, cannot be underestimated.

Promote RNA Research

Besides attending the annual meeting, there are many ways to enhance RNA research. With your support, I have served as a Society Director from 2000 through 2002, Secretary/Treasurer from 2003 through 2005, and now President. Other than being an elected officer, some Society members serve on study sections or editorial boards of journals as peer reviewers. Others accept invitations by editors of journals and books to write reviews or offer their perspectives on particular subjects. Still others educate non-scientists about the importance of RNA research by writing for newspapers or magazines or by speaking before sectors of the lay public that

range from members of Congress to kids in grade school. There are also local groups of RNA researchers that meet regularly to discuss their work. As the RNA Society grows, it is better able to help support smaller meetings that are organized either by these groups or individuals interested in a particular subtopic of RNA research. For more information about this type of meeting support, see the end of this Newsletter.

Look to the future

In short, we need your support as we solidify what we have established and look for ways to improve in the future. As of 2006, our Society stands at 1049 members. Evelyn currently heads a Membership Committee of one. Perhaps it's time we formed a committee to look into ways in which we can increase and retain members. We aim to increase membership, especially for those who study RNA topics in which we are underrepresented: New members bring new ideas and approaches into the group, and these additions are essential for keeping the Society relevant and of value to all of us. We would like to encourage more students and post-docs to become Society members. They are, after all, the future of the Society. Currently, we have only 32 student members and no post-doctoral members. As incentives, we now offer students and post-docs the following three benefits. (1) Society-subsidized membership fees ($70 for printed copies of the *RNA* journal, and $30 for electronic versions only). (2) Access to the eJobs web site. (3) Access to a special section of the Newsletter that addresses issues of interest to students and post-docs and to which students and post-docs can write. Of course, student and post-doc members will receive the $100 discount to the annual meeting that is available to all members.

The Society, from its inception, has included many women scientists who helped shape it. Also, throughout the years, women have been equally represented in the presidency and directorship of the Society. However, the fraction of women in graduate school who are later hired as assistant professors, while increasing over the last 10-15 years, remains woefully below that of men. A future goal is to find ways to keep some of our most gifted scientists on the tenure track and engaged in the Society so we can continue to be the home for RNA biologists regardless of gender or ethnic origin.

We also aim to continue to improve the quality and quantity of services that the Society provides. Last year's inception of this Newsletter and the expanded web site are just two of many ways in which we have aimed to serve you. We are open to suggestions for how we can better meet your needs. So please speak up, and we will see how we can accomplish what you request.

In sum, there are many ways to contribute to RNA research. We are continually looking for those of you who are willing and able to work on behalf of the RNA Society. We always need individuals with vision to keep us strong yet adaptable to our changing environment. We are faced with an increasing number of meetings that, while wonderful because they support RNA research, compete with our annual meeting. There are more journals that compete with *RNA*. Budget restrictions at the NIH and other funding agencies hinder our growth as individual scientists and as a Society. Plus, there is the constant exit of retiring Society members. It is important for each of us to think about how we, as individuals and as a community, can ensure that the Society stays strong for future generations.

If you are interested in contributing to the RNA Society and have a concrete idea for how you can help, please contact either :
Evelyn Jabri (ejabri@gmail.com)
or myself (lynne_maquat@urmc.rochester.edu).

In our last Newsletter we printed a proposal by Tom Blumenthal that the Annual RNA Society meeting be held on a biannual basis and asked for comments from you, member of The Society. Below is Tom's original proposal followed by the comments and rebuttals we received from you.

A proposal

I would like to get the membership's opinion on the possibility of going to alternate-year meetings of the full RNA Society. Many of us have RNA meetings in our specialty every other year; the Cold Spring Harbor Meeting on Eukaryotic mRNA Processing is one example. Many have therefore chosen to attend the RNA Society Meeting only in those years that they do not have the more specialized meetings. This has reduced attendance from people in the areas that have a specialized meeting. Furthermore, because each of us can only go to so many meetings it has meant that we have had to miss the RNA Society Meeting, which we would rather not have to do. I would therefore like to propose a model based on what the *C. elegans* community has done for many years: having the big meeting every other year, with local or specialized meetings on alternate years. I am hoping people will write to the Newsletter with arguments for and against this idea. Then if there appears to be some support for it, we can poll the membership in a more formal way. In any case, this idea would not be put into effect until after the currently planned meetings, which end in 2009. It would mean no RNA Society Meeting in 2010 at the earliest.
Tom Blumenthal Colorado Health Sciences tom.blumenthal@uchsc.edu

Your Comments and Rebuttals

I think that Tom has an excellent idea. Alternate year meetings of the RNA Society would improve the the meeting. With so many meetings relevant to many areas of RNA biology, it makes sense to switch to alternate years. The only problem will be to get the other meetings in the correct phase so as not to conflict with the RNA Society Meeting.
Thomas A. Cooper, M.D.
Baylor College of Medicine
tcooper@bcm.tmc.edu

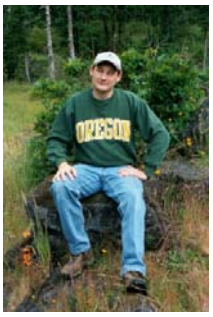
I think every other year is a very good idea. It would probably increase my attendance % for sure.
Russ B. Altman
Stanford russ.altman@stanford.edu

I would prefer to keep annual meetings, allowing younger researchers and post-docs/graduate students to have a better chance to attend and present. With meetings every other year, we might risk presentation rosters mainly containing well-established investigators - an outcome that many other conferences seem to promote. My masters students, for example, only stick around for two years. While in their first year they may not be ready, half of them (on average) would hit an off year at the productive end of their thesis and then leave, missing the experience and networking opportunity the RNA meeting might offer at exactly that stage in their career.

Tilman Baumstark, Ph.D.
University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
e-mail: t.baumst@usip.edu

As a member of the RNA society from its beginning, I am delighted to see that we have remained a cohesive group dedicated to the advancement of RNA research. I believe that implementing the proposal suggested by Tom Blumenthal would be a means to continue this strong bond. After discussions with other society members, the consensus of those I spoke with seems to be that we would like to attend the society meeting every year, but time, outside obligations, specialized meetings, and limited funding has resulted in many of the members defaulting to attending the RNA society meeting every other year. By changing the meeting to every other year, we would not be missing the important contacts we need to keep the research and society going, since a larger percentage of the members would likely be attending all of the society meetings. I support Tom's proposal and would like to see a poll taken to see if the majority of the members of the RNA society support it. Judith Potashkin, Ph.D.
The Chicago Medical School judy.potashkin@rosalindfranklin.edu

I would be perfectly happy to attend the full RNA Society meeting on alternate years. I like the idea of being able to plan and attend regional meetings in the off years.
Niles Lehman, Ph.D.
Portland State University
niles@pdx.edu



I have always enjoyed the yearly meetings and almost always learned something amazing. The field moves fast and I see no reason for the meeting to occur every other year - a strategy that is best for a slow moving field.
Anita K. Hopper
Penn. State Univ. College of Medicine
ahopper@psu.edu

Seems to me that the RNA Society is one of the ***last*** ones for which less frequent meetings make sense - the whole field seems to get reinvented even more often than every year! No one person need come every time, of course, and a smaller attendance would not be unwelcome if it could be managed, which I rather doubt.

Just as one very specialized functionality, the RNA Ontology Consortium (supported by NSF & the RNA Society) holds their general workshop each year at the meeting, and certainly needs to get together that often.
Jane Richardson
Duke U Med Ctr
jsr@kinemage.biochem.duke.edu

I like having the RNA Meeting every year, and think it is much healthier for the RNA Society to have a constant annual presence than to come and go. All meetings conflict with other meetings and always will; there is no way to avoid it. In addition, the conflicts are usually different every year, and are never as significant in retrospect as at first blush. Any PI who has a conflict can send a student or postdoc to RNA; and any student or postdoc who has a conflict will probably learn more by going to the OTHER meeting than by going to RNA year in and year out. Finally, and very practically, the RNA Meeting is already big; if we have RNA every other year, it will get bigger. I for one think RNA is already close to the limit size at which the threat of anonymity (especially for newcomers) begins to overwhelm the occasional moments of intimacy and small group discussion. Alan Weiner University of Washington amweiner@u.washington.edu

I wanted to respond to Tom Blumenthal's suggestion about moving to a bi-annual meeting format. I feel that he has valid considerations concerning the difficulty of attending every year in light of budget constraints and conflicts with other smaller conferences. I would suggest that if the society were to move to such an arrangement a conscious decision would also need to be made to insure that the selected meeting site had a high enough capacity. I do not think the society would want to pick a site that might potentially limit attendance due to capacity problems. Also I think discussion as to the rotating a bi-annual meeting between a US/domestic location and Europe should be considered. This is something that would need to be discussed with our European colleagues at more detail.

I also wanted to bring to the front again Olke Uhlenbeck's discussion as to the future of the RNA society. I agree with him that I would hate to see the RNA Society go the way of a CV only type of association. I think the concerns he outlined in his essay should be considered when a discussion of having less large meetings and moving to more smaller meetings. What would the impact of sending more people to specialty meetings be to the society? Would it slow or stop the evolution of the society as the interests of RNA scientists change? Should the RNA Society try to sponsor or at the least endorse certain smaller meetings? Does the society indirectly already do this by supporting travel grants, distributing emails flyers of upcoming events, etc.? I would also be interested in seeing a post-doc association of sorts established within the governance of the RNA society. I don't know what exactly could be implemented by such an addition but bringing post-doc level scientists into the organization and direction of the society as a distinct group might help in cementing ties to the RNA society at an early career stage.

Daniel E. Golden, Ph.D. Marine Biological Laboratory dgolden@mbl.edu

A proposal has recently been put forward to change the RNA Society meeting schedule so that the meetings occur every other year. While there may be some merit to this proposal, given many investigators' hectic speaking schedules, it fails to take into account the tremendous benefits that an annual meeting provides to junior faculty, and scientists at smaller or more remote institutions. Junior faculty members are often surprised to discover that meetings, to which they were eagerly invited as postdocs from prestigious labs, are somewhat harder to attend as young scientists setting out on their own. In addition, travel funds can be harder to find. For both of these reasons, it may be difficult to attend smaller meetings, or to attend multiple meetings as many postdocs do. Having one big meeting each year is therefore essential for keeping up with developments in the field, and for maintaining and developing scientific contacts. These arguments are equally valid for scientists at smaller and more remote institutions, where travel costs become even more prohibitive, and where outside speakers are fewer. Two years is too long a gap between these opportunities to share results and hear about the current directions of the field. If the main beneficiaries of a biennial meeting schedule are the established PIs from major institutions, then this proposal would do little to help the presumably larger number of RNA Society members who depend on the annual meetings to stay plugged into the international network of RNA scientists. If senior scientists have more meetings than they can attend, then surely they can decide which ones to skip without inconveniencing everyone else.

Stephen Rader UNBC rader@unbc.ca

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to voice my opinion regarding the recent proposal that the RNA Society gather every other year rather than continue with its current annual meetings. I have serious reservations about this plan. Most of the discussion that I have heard has focused on the faculty and the feeling that we as PIs have too many conferences to attend. I would like to redirect the conversation to consider our graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. In my mind, this meeting is an essential part of their training. The meeting is intense. The pace of 12-minute talks for session after session takes some getting used to, but it also shows the vibrancy and diversity of the field, of the Society's members and the breadth of the research problems being addressed in the member laboratories. I would not want any of my students to be deprived of the experience of participating in our meeting at least once but preferably 2 or more times during their tenure in my lab. If the meeting shifts to a biennial format, there is a strong likelihood that the people who will suffer the most will be our trainees.

Consider the post-doctoral fellow who joins your lab in Sept. 2009. He/She may not have accomplished enough to write an abstract by Feb. 2010. The first chance this post-doctoral fellow will have to present their work before the Society will be summer 2012. What happens if that year happens to be an international site with reduced size and increased cost? The networking and exposure that would normally accompany this post-doctoral fellow's entry into the Society will be severely limited. True, they will have the opportunity to present their work at other meetings. But, this reduced exposure to the RNA community may fail to engender loyalty and a sense of belonging. It may lead these trainees to identify with other organizations first and foremost and maybe only peripherally with the RNA Society.

I agree that we all have commitments that sometimes require us to miss meetings. PI's may not attend the conference every year for a variety of reasons. But, I still feel that our annual meeting is somewhat different from the other venues at which we present our work. I like the fact that we strive to let the students and post-doctoral fellows dominate the platform sessions. The meeting spans a breadth that allows for efficient cross-fertilization of ideas and the development of new collaborations, not to mention long discussions with old friends and the making of new ones. The meeting serves a valuable function for me as a PI, for my students and for the Society. I hope it will continue to be an annual event.

I look forward to seeing you all in Seattle where I anticipate discussing this topic, and the other issues that face our Society, in greater detail. Sincerely,

Andrew Feig Indiana University afeig@indiana.edu

The frequency of future Society meetings will be voted on by the Board at the Annual Meeting in Seattle. Your comments and rebuttals will be provided to the Board so it may adequately consider the opinions of the Society. If you would like to have input on this, we encourage your participation in this 'discussion'. We will continue to collect your comments until 16, June 2006.

Email to : peculisb@missouri.edu

From the CEO's desk
Evelyn Jabri

Happy New Year everyone. I hope that 2006 started well for all of you. The Society is busy planning RNA2006 and examining ways in which we can improve the meetings program as well as other aspects of the Society.

Ongoing activities & discussions

Registration for RNA2006 is now open and I encourage all of you to consider attending our annual meeting in Seattle. Alan Weiner and his fellow organizers are very busy planning what is sure to be an engaging meeting. As usual, there are two business meetings during this week: one on Wednesday to discuss membership, the journal, and our budget, and a second on Friday to discuss our meetings program and plans for RNA2007. Both business meetings are open to all members but please do let me know if you will attend so I can plan accordingly.

During the Friday meeting we will discuss and vote on Tom Blumenthal's proposal to have the annual meeting every other year instead of every year. Thanks to many of you who have voiced your opinion on this proposal. As you can see from the responses printed on pages 4-6, there are strong feelings for and against this proposal.

Regardless of what we decide to do with the annual meetings, we need to hear your opinion on what defines a successful meeting. Betsy Goodwin requests your input on future meeting sites (see page 11). I encourage all of you to read an article written by Dr. Greg Petsko ("The highs and lows of scientific conferences", *Nat. Rev. Mol. Cell Biol.* 21 December 2005 | doi:10.1038/nrm1832) in which he gives his perspective on meetings, suggestions for organizers and tips for conference goers. It's a quick and fun read. I also encourage you to think about what makes a meeting enjoyable for you and let us know so that we can shape the meeting program to meet the needs of our members.

Improving member services

We continue to add value to our membership and to encourage new members to join. *Many of you have not renewed and I encourage you to do so quickly.* We depend on membership dues to fund our vibrant programs. In addition to the benefits listed on our Society web site (www.rnasociety.org/membership), this year members will receive a $100 discount on their meeting registration. To make the renewal process easier for you in the future, FASEB Member Services is designing a web-based renewal system linked to a searchable directory of our members. Look for the debut of this renewal/directory system in Fall of 2006. In the mean time, please fill out the membership renewal form at the end of this newsletter (or the one on our website) and return it as soon as possible.

I received great input from you on how we can increase and retain members. Thanks to all who took the time to express their opinion on membership. Many suggested the addition of new membership levels such as retired/emeritus, research scientists/technician, and postdoctoral fellow. These changes to our membership options will be discussed in Seattle. In the mean time, we have expanded the student membership category to include postdoctoral fellows to encourage junior scientists to join our society.

Building the RNA Community

Thanks to the talents of our webmaster Fabrice we continue to improve our Society website (www.rnasociety.org) which has recently undergone a face lift. We successfully launched the RNA Society Employment and Careers (eJobs for short) web page late last year. This site hosts job postings from our members as well as links to career planning sites such as NextWave and the NIH New Investigator site. To date we have posted more than 10 jobs and have placed a few junior scientists in RNA labs. Posting for members is

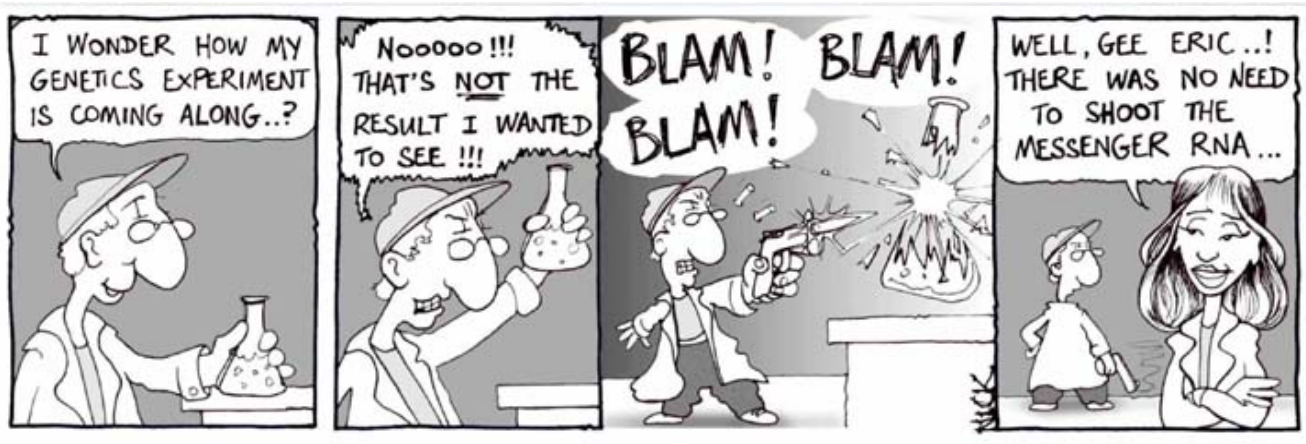
free so save yourself some stamps, send in your job ads. You will find an application form on our website and at the end of this newsletter.

We also launched this newsletter to keep our members updated on Society activities and provide a forum for open discussions on issues that affect RNA research and the Society. We thank you for your contributions and encourage you to write to us on a regular basis. Copies of this and previous issues of the newsletter can be found in the News section of our web site.

Fabrice and I are also discussing hosting a Social Bookmarking system on the Society website. What is Social Bookmarking? See page 16 and find out how it can help organize web links, references, and web-based activities. It is a powerful tool for sharing knowledge and we believe members of the RNA Society can use to it to build an international web-based RNA community.

I do want to bring to your attention yet another opportunity to help the community of RNA Scientists. As an editor, I see reviews of paper from diverse groups of scientists. One thing that surprises me is how different communities of scientists review papers. In particular, some are very useful and help the field move forward by providing excellent constructive criticism to the authors. In contrast, other reviewers are negative without providing guidance to the author as to how they can improve their science. These scientists are hindering the advancement of their field of research. So I ask that all of us working on RNA research to please consider how our actions during the review process, whether of papers or grants, can be used to help RNA research. The pace of science is break-neck, and it is almost impossible to be aware of all that is proven or has been proposed. Each product of our research is necessarily a work in progress towards the truth. When criticism of another colleague's manuscript or grant is warranted, let it be constructive. Let me also propose that every so often you ask a post-doc to review the paper and then guide them on how to write a constructive review. This mentoring will enhance the education of the post-doc and ensure that future generations of RNA scientists continue to promote RNA research. Let us see the value in another's imperfect work and offer useful advice for improvement. Sometimes we forget our beautifully idealistic reasons for engaging in research when faced with the everyday pragmatics of staying alive. By so doing, we do a disservice not only to our colleagues, but also to our selves and the generations of scientists to follow, who are watching and learning. To paraphrase the remarks made by John Abelson at RNA2005, it is more difficult to do science these days and we must help one another to ensure that RNA science remains strong and vibrant. In so doing we also ensure the future of this Society.

As always, I welcome your feedback. Please email me at ejabri@gmail.com.



From the CFO's desk
Jim Bruzik

I wanted to provide the membership a brief update relating to the finances of the RNA Society. First, we were able to clear a small profit from the annual meeting last year in Banff. Even after all of the awards and travel fellowships were disbursed, there was still a comfortable margin that kept us in the black. Secondly, the web site for RNA 2006 in Seattle (which was very artfully created), contains a specific link relating to corporate sponsorship of the meeting. Levels of sponsorship have been established with their associated benefits to the company making the donation. I specifically want to thank Marty Fedor for her extensive database of potential sponsors, all of whom have been solicited to contribute to the meeting this year. Finally, the overall costs associated with attending the annual meeting in Seattle this year have been kept to a minimum. While the cost of registration, meals and shared, on-campus accommodation is similar to the fees charged at other recent venues, the costs for other meeting packages is less. I hope that this helps to make RNA 2006 in Seattle a well-attended and successful event.

Nominations Committee
Marty Fedor

You might have wondered where the names come from that appear on the RNA Society ballot that we use to elect RNA Society Officers and Board Members every year. The RNA Society election procedures are spelled out in Article VI of the RNA Society Bylaws, which can be found in the member handbook. As

specified in the Bylaws, the ballot is assembled by a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is one of the Standing Committees of the RNA Society, described in Section 2, Article XIII of the Bylaw. The members of the Nominating Committee are appointed by the President as one of her/his first official actions early in the year in which he/she presides. The Nominating Committee is supposed to have at least three members, including a Chair, but usually has four members who are chosen with an eye toward a balanced representation of the RNA Society constituency in terms of geography, gender, and research interests. Nominating Committee members usually are announced in a "Call for Nominations" that is broadcast by email. After service during one election cycle, Nominating committee members become immune to further election service two subsequent elections.

Every year, the Society elects three people to serve on the Board of Directors for two-year terms and one person to serve as President-Elect for a term of one year. Of course, the President-elect becomes President and then Past President in the following years. Every third year, we also elect a Secretary/Treasurer for a term of three years. The Nominating Committee is charged with producing at least two candidates for President Elect and at least one candidate for each of the other open positions. The ballot normally contains at least two candidates for each position.

Any RNA Society member has the opportunity to place candidates for any open position on the slate by collecting ten signatures on a petition. Petitions also must include a statement from the nominee of willingness to serve if elected. Except for members of the Nominating Committee, any member of the Society can be elected to fill any office or serve on the Board of Directors and members can be nominated for any office any number of times. In practice, Officers and Directors rarely, if ever, serve consecutive terms. For 2006, the nominating committee, chaired by Erik Sontheimer, will accept petitions for candidates until March 1st, 2006. Elections will happen via the web using our eBallot system starting in April, 2006. All members will be notified that voting has commenced via an Email communicated from the Society office.

RNA 2006

University of Washington
Seattle, Washington
Tuesday, June 20 through Sunday, June 25, 2006

Registration and abstract submission are now open

The deadline for registration and abstract submission is **Monday, March 20, 2006**. For full details, registration, and abstract submission, visits:

http://depts.washington.edu/rna2006/index.html

RNA 2006 will include oral and poster presentations covering the entire field of RNA including structure, function, chemistry, and biology.

Sessions will cover RNAi, chromatin silencing, riboregulation, noncoding RNA, RNA structure and folding, RNA catalysis, splicing mechanisms and regulation, 3' end formation, RNP function and dynamics, RNA transport and localization, RNA editing and modification, RNA biogenesis, ribosomes, translation, bioinformatics, and RNA turnover. As always, the meeting will involve the membership of the society to the fullest extent, with all presentations being selected from submitted abstracts, and additional workshops being arranged as required.

Organizing Committee:
Andrea Barta (Medical University of Vienna), Adrian Ferre-D'Amare (Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center), Elisa Izaurralde (European Molecular Biology Laboratory), Alan Weiner (University of Washington)
Session Coordinators:

Session Coordinators:
Witold Filipowicz, Danesh Moazed, Amy Pasquinelli, Karen Wasserman, Saba Valadkhan, Stephen Cusack, Melissa Jurica, Juan Valcarcel, David Bentley, Kathy Collins, Maria Carmo-Fonseca, Ken Stuart, Eric Phizicky, Jon Lorsch, Kim Mowry, Todd Lowe, Elena Conti, Gabriele Varani

Sponsorship: If you are interested in sponsorship opportunities, please email the Society at rna@faseb.org.

We hope to see you at RNA 2006!

Future RNA Society Meeting sites …Any suggestions?
Betsy Goodwin

The annual RNA Society Meeting is a central and important event for the Society. Setting the location of future meetings must be done many years in advance of the meeting date, since conference sites often need to be booked well ahead of time. Over the last several years the meetings have rotated between Madison Wisconsin, Banff Canada, and a location in Europe. Due to the increased number of participating scientists, we have had to drop Banff from the rotation. Its facilities were not sufficiently large to accommodate everyone. For the next few years the location of the RNA Society Meetings are fairly well set. This year the meeting is in Seattle Washington, the 2007 meeting will be held in Madison Wisconsin, the 2008 in Berlin Germany, and 2009 most likely in Madison. The location of the 2010 meetings is not fully decided but Barcelona Spain is one strong possibility.

We are open to suggestions for additional venues, not only for 2010 but further into the future, as well. There are several important criteria for selecting a meeting site. The site must have auditorium space to accommodate about 1500 people, and it must have lodging that is readily accessible to the scientific meeting site. In addition, it must have space for potential parallel sessions, workshops and posters. Finally, it should have reasonable food and the overall cost of the meeting per person must be considered. This latter point is especially important given the tightening funding situation.

Having the meeting at a different location every year makes it very difficult to organize. Since Madison has hosted it so many times, the University of Wisconsin Conference Center knows what we need and can readily work with us. It may be advantageous to find two additional homes that could be placed in a rotation with Madison, with one being in Europe. If anyone has suggestions for future meeting sites and particularly for potential 'long term' sites please feel free to contact me. goodwin@wisc.edu

Travel Fellowships from Meetings Supported by RNA

Did you know that your membership dues help to support student travel fellowships and help launch new RNA-related meetings?

RNA Society can provide fellowships ($500-1000) to the organizers of a meeting to support the attendance of students or postdoctoral fellows. It's up to the organizers to decide how they will use these funds to help the junior scientists (support one versus support multiple with smaller fellowships), but the RNA Society will need a statement outlining your plans for the funds at the time of the request.

The Society can also help organizers launch a new meeting (one that has never been organized before), by providing an interest-free loan. The sum is negotiable and depends on what the organizers feel they can repay. In general, the Society would support the launch of a new meeting for 1-2 years but the organizers will have to develop a plan to obtain other support after 2 years. If you wish to pursue this option, we will need a proposal outlining why the loan is necessary, how the money will be used, how the organizers will repay the loan to the RNA Society, and the plans for making the meeting self-supporting in the future.

The RNA Society asks that the organizers display our logo on the meeting website and in the abstract book as an indication of our support. Also, the organizers are invited to write a summary (~500 words) of the meeting to be included in the Society Newsletter. This is an ideal opportunity to promote your favorite area of research.

If you are a meeting organizer and a member of the RNA Society interested in obtaining support for your RNA-related meeting, please contact Evelyn Jabri. (ejabri@gmail.com) and provide the information indicated above.

The Society is pleased to provide support for these recent and up-coming meetings

The first Western Canada RNA Conference (**RiboWest 2005**) was held last July at the University of Northern British Columbia. The meeting, designed to support the RNA community in Western Canada, was modeled on the very successful Eastern RiboClub run out of the University of Sherbrooke, Quebec. The idea for the meeting arose from a conversation between UNBC professors Stephen Rader and Chow Lee, and Don Riddle of GenomeBC, which provided significant funding for the conference.

Approximately 50 participants from six universities throughout BC and Alberta attended the 3-day meeting. Olke Uhlenbeck, of Northwestern University, and Past President of the RNA Society, presented the inaugural keynote address. Lecture sessions covered a broad range of topics, including mRNA splicing, RNA degradation, translation, RNA interference, and ribozymes. In addition, there were two poster sessions. The RNA Society provided support for Poster Prizes. Recipients included Alexander Ebhardt (Simon Fraser), Heath de la Giroday (UNBC), Sunny Wang (Simon Fraser), Paula Burke (Lethbridge), Matthew Lau (Simon Fraser), and Sepehr Alamouti (UNBC). Other support for the meeting was provided by UNBC's Office of Research, and Dharmacon RNA Technologies.

The University of Northern British Columbia opened in 1994, and has recently seen rapid growth in its biochemistry programs. The biochemistry program also has strength in structural biology, yeast biochemistry, and population genetics. Prince George is located in central British Columbia, approximately 800 km north of Vancouver and 800 km west of Edmonton, AB.

RiboWest 2006 is scheduled to be held at UNBC on **July 24 – 25**. More information can be found at the conference web site (http://web.unbc.ca/~rader/RiboWest/), or by contacting Stephen Rader (rader@unbc.ca).

EMBO Workshop: Functional organization of the cell nucleus Prague May 5-8th, 2006
Organizers:Ivan Raska, Ueli Aebi & William C. Earnshaw
http://lge.lf1.cuni.cz/embo06.html

The Intercollege Graduate Program in Plant Physiology of The Pennsylvania State University will host the Sixteenth Symposium in Plant Physiology titled "**RNA Biology: Novel Insights from Plant Systems**" at University Park, PA from May 18-20, 2006.

The 2006 Symposium will provide an interdisciplinary forum for over 20 leading researchers from around the world, working in diverse areas of RNA biology, to present their recent findings, share their ideas, and stimulate discussion. The symposium will highlight unique progress in RNA biology within the plant sciences, while also providing broader insights into the general field of RNA research from other biological systems and approaches. Topics to be explored at the symposium include RNA processing; RNA genomics, structure, and enzymology; RNA and stress; siRNA and miRNA; and RNA and plant development. For a complete listing of confirmed speakers and presentation topics visit http://plantphysiology.cas.psu.edu/.

The organizing committee for Penn State's 16th Symposium include Dr. Sarah Assmann (sma3@psu.edu), Dr. Philip Bevilacqua (pcb@chem.psu.edu), Dr. Teh-hui Kao (txk3@psu.edu), and Dr. Hong Ma (hxm16@psu.edu.) The committee is accepting up to 100 contributed posters relevant to the symposium's theme for presentation at the event. They will award 10 travel reimbursements to selected graduate students, postdoctorates or undergraduates who are presenting posters of their research. For additional information on poster submissions and the travel awards visit http://plantphysiology.cas.psu.edu/.

Registrations for the symposium are now being accepted online at http://plantphysiology.cas.psu.edu/. The registration cost is $165 per person, which includes conferences materials, abstract book, T-shirt, lunch, and beverage breaks. There is a reduced rate for students and postdoctorates, including a $100 postdoctoral fee and a $90 graduate/undergraduate student fee. Registrations for the symposium will be accepted through Tuesday, May 2, 2006. Early registration is recommended because enrollment may be limited in order to provide the participants with an intimate atmosphere and opportunities for discussion and interaction. For registration questions please contact the Office of Conferences and Short Courses at 814-865-8301 or toll-free at 877-778-2937 or e-mail shortcourse@psu.edu.

Gordon Research Conference : Nucleic Acids Salve Regina, Newport, RI June 4-10 2006
Organizers: Scott Strobel and Steven Kowalczykowski
http://www.grc.uri.edu/programs/2006/nucacids.htm

Computational Approaches to Functional and Regulatory RNAs will be the topic of a meeting held July16-28 at the Benasque Center for Science. The major objective is to present and discuss the state of RNA computational biology, to identify the needs, and to propose new developments for the identification, annotation, and the computational analysis of functional and regulatory RNAs present in genomes.

A central aim of the meeting is to allow participants to do theoretical work on RNA genomics being in the same location with ample time to interact, transfer ideas, and do actual scientific research. The actual talks in the workshop are intended to give impetus and dynamism to the collaborative exchange of ideas and algorithms. Each participant has space to work and there is enough space for working together on problems of interests with several computers available. The meeting provides a unique opportunity for deepening and dispersing knowledge on RNA bioinformatics.

RNA computational analysis is intrinsically different from that of protein coding sequences. Most computational models for ncRNAs rely on capturing that secondary structure either with thermodynamic models, or probabilistic models, or by combining one of the previous with covariation information when in the presence of comparative sequences. These computational models have been under extensive development in the last five or so years with important progress made. The methods need improvement and the complexity of the algorithms make some problems difficult to approach.

Specifically, some of the topics to be discussed include:

- RNA structure prediction and RNA structural alignments;
- RNA genefinding and genome annotation;
- RNA databases and RNA Ontology.

Some of the expected participants include : Michael Zuker (USA), Robert Giegerich (D), Ivo Hofacker (AT), François Major (CA), James Brown (USA), Sam Griffiths-Jones (UK), Sean Eddy (USA), Richard Durbin (UK), Daniel Gautheret (F), Neocles Leontis (USA), Alex Bateman (UK), and Steve Brenner (USA).

RNA Chemistry and Physics Meet Biology (Supported by the Nobel Foundation)
September 29-30, 2006 Lund, Sweeden
Organizers : Eric Westhof, Tina Persson and Fritz Eckstein
http//:www.organic.lu.se

Translational Control and Non-Coding RNA Meeting
November 8 - 12, 2006, Nove Hrady, Czech Republic
Organizers : Martin Pospisek, Leos Valasek, Vasek Vopalensky, Tomas Masek
http://ribosome.natur.cuni.cz/~conference/

Graduate Student / Postdoc Pages

These pages are written for, to, and in some cases by our younger RNA Scientists. However the information, opinions and experiences here are by no means exclusive to this group. We are encouraging submissions by authors who wish to speak to this audience, to offer advice, information and commiseration as needed. If you have advice, opinions or stories to share, send them in!

Career Mentoring Workshop 2006

Lynne Maquat

We are pleased to announce the 4th annual Career Mentoring Workshop, which will be held during RNA 2006 in Seattle, WA. Previous Workshops have taken place at our annual meetings in Madison (2002), Vienna (2003), Madison (2004) and Banff (2006) with resounding success.

The Workshop offers the opportunity for graduate students and post-docs (and even the occasional undergraduate and technician who attend the meeting) to have lunch with their peers and several Principle Investigators. Discussion focuses on career opportunities, but topics of are determined by each mentoring group based upon mutual interests

The size of the Workshop continues to grow each year. Last year's Workshop consisted of 209 mentorees and 72 mentors, which together constituted a considerable fraction of those attending the meeting. Tables of ~10 individuals are arranged by topic and geographic interest. There are tables for careers in academics, industry and publishing for each of four major locations that are represented at the meeting: the U.S. Europe, Canada or Asia. Post-docs sit with post-docs, and students sit with students.

The workshop takes place over lunch on a day when there are no business meetings. The ambience is casual so as to nurture lots of discussion. It's a great way for students and post-docs to meet one another and have the chance to talk with Principle Investigators, and a terrific way for Principle Investigators to contribute to the future of the Society.

This year's Workshop will occur on Thursday, June 22nd. Be sure to sign-up when you register on-line for the meeting by filling out the brief questionnaire so we know how to place you.

I'm stepping down as organizer after three years of service. This years' Workshop will be organized by Jamie Willliamson and Rachel Green.

Social bookmarking and the RNA Society

Evelyn Jabri & Fabrice Jossinet

Q: What is Social Bookmarking?

It is the practice of saving bookmarks to a public website, tagging them with key words, and designating individual bookmarks as public or private. Some social bookmarking sites automatically check the links and notify the user if a Url still works. People who visit the social bookmark site can search by keyword, person, or popularity of a tag. They can also see bookmarks, tags and classification schemes developed by other users. Members using Gmail are familiar with this system of bookmarking at its most basic level.

Q: How is it useful?

It is most useful when collecting a set of resources that are shared or could be shared with others. These include references, teaching tools, websites listing techniques of interest to a lab, or links to favorite databases. For example, Dr. Joe receives information through emails, newsletters from societies, RSS feeds, email alerts, and uses search engines (Google, Pubmed) to collect resources that are useful for his research and teaching. Dr. Joe dutifully bookmarks the relevant links in folders on his desktop where he hopes to find them at a later date. When he needs to send a link to students or colleagues, he searches through the many folders looking for the needle in the haystack. Dr. Jane receives the same information as Dr. Joe but organizes her bookmarks on a social bookmarking site. She tags the bookmarks using multiple, self-selected tags. When she wants to find a link, she uses a search engine on the site and quickly finds the site of interest. In addition, by joining the social bookmark site, she has access to bookmarks from like-minded colleagues and her search delivers other sites that may be of equal interest. These results take her in a new direction that benefits her research.

Q: Who participates?

Anyone who wishes to organize the large amount of information they gather from the web. The technology is not complex and user friendly.

Q: Where are the social bookmarking sites?

There are now many social bookmarking sites. Some sites have a strong public following such as del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us/) and Flickr (http://www.flickr.com/). Others are known in the library community such as Furl (http://www.furl.net/). A few have an academic focus such as CiteULike (http://www.citeulike.org/) and Connotea (http://www.connotea.org/).Would you like the RNA Society to have a Social bookmarking tool?

Q: What are the downsides?

Since amateurs like us are participating in social bookmarking, there is the possibility that tags are misused and information is not correctly tagged. Social bookmarking also requires the user to store information in another area and update it.

Q: How can it benefit member research and teaching?

With the increased use of electronic resources to obtain information, social bookmarking has the potential to change how we store and find information. It may become less important to know where something is located but more important to learn how to retrieve it. Social bookmarking does simplify storage of information because it keeps many types of information in one searchable catalogue. It also simplifies the distribution of reference lists, paper, and teaching resources among colleagues and students.

Q: Why does the RNA Society need its own social bookmarking tool?

With del.icio.us or Connotea, the tags used are very general (according to the RNA field). If we provide such a tool for the RNA society members and encourage the members to use very precise tags (k-turn, 50S, chemical probing, ...), then we can produce a real RNA knowledge database that will benefit all of us.

***We want to hear from you*. Take a survey on the RNA Society website and let us know what you think about social bookmarking, a very useful web tool that is revolutionizing the way we manage research and teaching resources**

How to write a better Grant Proposal
Joanne Tornow, National Science Foundation

Writing grant proposals—it is a major activity for academic researchers that is essential to maintain an active research program. But when funding times are tight, it can sometimes feel like the bane of your existence. At the National Science Foundation, we often get calls from PIs wanting advice on how to make their proposals more competitive. The Foundation receives over 40,000 proposals a year in all areas of science and engineering. Several thousand of them receive funding, but none of them are the same. There isn't a magic formula for creating the "perfect" proposal, still, successful proposals (and successful proposal writers) do share some common elements, some of which are listed here.

1. **Have a Good Idea**. OK, that should be self-evident, but it is oh so critical for a successful proposal, and not that easy to define. One of the hallmarks of a good idea is its potential to lead to a significant advance in the field. Good ideas are also usually innovative, exciting, or at the cutting edge. You also need to demonstrate that what you are proposing to do hasn't been done before. You can establish this by providing a good review of the literature that places your idea in the context of the state of knowledge in the field. Most successful proposals also provide evidence that lends credence to the idea, either from the published literature or in the form of preliminary data. If you are working in a very competitive area, try to find a unique angle or identify a niche in which your particular question or the specific approaches you plan to use set your proposal apart.

2. **Have a Good Plan to Explore Your Idea**. Having that good idea is really only half of the battle. You also need to be able to take that idea and turn it into action that will produce new knowledge and insights. A grant proposal should be forward-looking, and imagine what if? When developing your experimental plan, focus on the specific goals that you want to achieve during the proposed funding period, and provide information about how the work will be prioritized. The judicious use of preliminary data can help here as well, to show the feasibility of proposed approaches. Because there are often multiple ways in which a given problem can be addressed, be sure to explain your rationale for your choices. The experimental plan should consider possible problems that could arise, and suggest alternative approaches to work around those problems. It should also allow for the possibility that the proposed hypothesis is incorrect, and consider possible outcomes that might indicate alternative explanations. Describe possible next steps, depending on the experimental outcomes. It is particularly important to describe how further experiments will be prioritized if the initial experiments use open-ended or discovery-based approaches, such as microarray profiling or genetic screens. Make clear that you have the necessary reagents and equipment to carry out the proposed experiments, or that you can get access to them. If you have not published work that demonstrates your expertise with the experimental approaches proposed, include preliminary data that show you have the techniques working, or consider enlisting the assistance of an expert as a collaborator (and then include some documentation that they have agreed to help you). Finally, make sure that the scope of the proposed research is reasonable given the duration of the grant you request, the number of personnel that will be involved, and the resources that are available to you.

3. **Find the Right Funding Source.** Once you have determined what you want to do and how you want to do it, you need to identify who will want to fund it. Federal funding for scientific research is distributed across multiple agencies, each of which has a particular role to fulfill. Your perfectly good idea may be eminently fundable at one agency, but not at another, and so it is very helpful to understand our priorities, so you can make a good case for how your project helps us meet our responsibilities. Also consider broadening your view of possible funding sources. In addition to federal funding, there are often funding opportunities at the

state and local level, and through nonprofit organizations and the private sector. Most agencies and organizations have information about their mission and priorities on their web sites—you can read about NSF's mission and vision at http://www.nsf.gov/about/.

4. **Understand the review process**. Different agencies, and different programs within a given agency, have different goals and responsibilities, and will use different criteria to determine if a given proposal meets those goals. A successful proposal effectively demonstrates that the author understands the review criteria, and that the proposed work meets those criteria. An informed author also makes sure that the proposal is written so that it is accessible to the reviewers, and to do that you need to know who will be reading it. In the Biological Sciences Directorate at NSF, most proposals are read both by specialists with deep expertise in the specific subject and by generalists with a broad knowledge of the larger field—successful proposals are those that are written with both audiences in mind. To get a sense of the readability of your proposal, ask a colleague or two to critique your proposal before you submit it.

5. **Presentation is Everything (or at least very important)**. Even the best ideas can fail if they are buried in dense language or a blizzard of details, or if the proposal is carelessly prepared and contains typographical errors or other mistakes. Make it easy for the reviewers to understand what you want to do, why you want to do it, and how you will get it done. While you are telling a story in your proposal, it is not a mystery story, so put the important elements right up front to set the context for the rest of the proposal. Use a font that is easy to read and keep the figures at a reasonable size—resist the temptation to fill every square inch with text. Remember that your reviewers are busy people that will be reading several other proposals, so if you make it difficult for them to find the important information, there is a high likelihood that they will stop looking for it.

6. **Follow the Rules.** Every agency and organization has baseline guidelines on how proposals should be formatted, and about which materials are required and which are not allowed. Many specific solicitations also have other, additional, requirements or limitations. Make sure that you read the general and specific guidelines, and follow them. If you don't, you run the risk of having the proposal returned without review, thus wasting weeks if not months of your time.

7. **Don't Give Up**. We are in a particularly difficult funding climate at the moment, and so the odds are one or more of your proposals will be declined. If that happens, stay calm, and take some time to read the reviews carefully. Incorporate changes to address the reviewers' concerns, either by including their suggestions, or by improving your presentation so that they are persuaded by your views. If you have questions, contact your program director to discuss the review.

Finally, let me offer a few last suggestions. You can learn a lot about what works in a proposal and what doesn't by serving as a reviewer. If you are interested in reviewing for the NSF, send me a note with a copy of your CV, and I will circulate it to the appropriate program directors. Most agencies also do outreach, so keep an eye out for workshops on funding at scientific meetings or at institutions in your area. For more information on how to prepare proposals for the NSF (and for links to upcoming NSF outreach opportunities), visit the "How to Prepare Your Proposal" page (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/preparing/). Good luck with those new proposals!

A day in the Life of….
Dorit Zuk, Editor, Molecular Cell

When thinking about what to write in this column, I realized that most of you reading it will have had interactions with a journal editor, either as a reviewer or an author. You therefore probably have some idea of what my job involves, but perhaps less idea of how my time is spent overall. To give you a picture of how it all fits together, I decided to interpret the title of the section rather literally and give you a timeline of a typical day in my life at Molecular Cell:

7:30 – Fortified with a large cup of Dunkin Donuts™ iced coffee, I arrive at the office to read through the emails that have accumulated overnight. I answer the ones I can deal with quickly (Has my paper been sent out for review? Can I reproduce a figure?). I flag and print the ones that need more consideration and forward all pre-submission enquiries to our assistant, Andrea, for printing and discussion at our daily editorial meeting (more on that later).

7:45 – This is my quiet time – I settle in to deal with the issues that require thought and concentration. On any one day, this can include reading and deciding whether to review new papers, reading reviewers' comments on those that have been reviewed, going through responses to reviewers on revised submissions and carefully considering all the materials associated with appeals of papers that have been rejected. I write emails to the respective authors conveying my decisions on their paper or my thoughts on their appeal. I also use this time to call an author in Europe who wants to discuss the paper she is revising (she emailed me yesterday asking to discuss particular issues raised by the reviewers). We go through the issues and I give her as much advice as I can.

9:30 - Quiet time is over. The other editors start dropping by my office to discuss papers they're handling. In a typical conversation, we go over the experiments in the paper, the rationale of their design and the quality of the data and also discuss the conceptual novelty of the work: How does it fit with other papers published on this topic? Does it pose (and answer) questions that are important to the field? Does it move our understanding of the field forward?

11:15 – Andrea prints the reviews on the papers for which all the comments have arrived and brings them to me together with the files containing the papers. I look over the reviews to get a sense of the overall issues and enthusiasm and then distribute the files to the handling editor who read the paper initially. The handling editor will then consider the reviews in detail carefully evaluating the issues raised and weighing the relative merits and limitations of the work. He or she may bring the paper to our editorial meeting for further discussion if the issues are particularly complicated. I make as many decisions as possible on my own papers (if the reviewers' recommendations are straightforward and are in agreement with my notes from my original reading of the paper) and write letters to the authors communicating the reviews and the decision. If the reviewers disagree and/or raise complicated issues – the paper goes on the pile for tomorrow morning.

12:00 – I stop by our Managing Editor's office to make sure she knows what papers we're scheduling for the next issue of Molecular Cell and to plan the one after that. We discuss timing of both the research articles and the "front matter" (previews, reviews, meeting reviews etc.).

12:30 – Off to lunch. I try very hard not to have lunch at my desk, although I don't always succeed.

1:15 – Andrea has printed out the revised papers submitted since yesterday. Again, the same editor who handled the paper originally considers the revision. I go through the revised papers I handled and send out the ones that need to go back to reviewers. I accept any papers that have reached the final stage and for which we now have all the materials (hard copies, high-resolution files of the figures, etc.).

2:30 - One of the other editors comes in with the cover submissions for the issue that will be published in three weeks' time. The decision about which paper to put on the cover is based on the strength of the paper and the aesthetics of the cover submission. We also try to vary the topics we put on the cover from issue to issue.

3:15 – I collect all the new papers and presubmission enquiries (sent to any of the editors or to our common inbox) from Andrea and meet with the other three editors on the Molecular Cell team for our daily editorial meeting. We talk about papers that are at various stages of the process and that raise issues that need to be discussed by the entire group. We read the Titles and Abstracts of all the new papers and of the presubmission enquiries. Questions that come up as we go through the papers include - does the general topic of the work fit into the scope of Molecular Cell? How do the conclusions in the paper relate to papers we've seen lately, either submitted to us or in the published literature? Has the topic come up at a recent meeting or in conversations with scientists while visiting their labs? We divide the papers up, assigning each one to a specific editor for further consideration. We also go through the front matter pieces that have been commissioned and plan which will go into the upcoming issues. The meeting can take anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours, depending on the number of new papers and how many other issues we need to discuss.
4:30 – I call a scientist in California to clarify an issue she raised when reviewing a paper I am handling. We discuss the overall merits of the work and how important it is that the authors address that particular concern.
6:15 or so – Time to go home.

The mRNA Song

Tune: YMCA

Student! I was once in your
shoes;
Got no staining
On my Coomassie Blues,
All my training
Was just paying my dues;
I could not get good data,

Then, someone
Said: Persulfate won't do
And the Lowry's
Should be flushed down the loo.
They smell flowery,
But they will not get you.
Any answers;
So study the

M-R-N-A
(yes, we study the)
M-R-N-A
It comes straight from the gene,
It can make a protein,
It's the code that connects
The whole cellular machine!

Then I
Got the data galore,
Got new answers,
With each gel that I pour;
With enhancers,
I can even get more.
And I churn
Out the papers.

So student,
If your work has been slowed,
Skip the protein
And go straight for the code.
Do in situs
On a fly, mouse, or toad.
Get respect
When you study the

M-R-N-A.
(Study the)
M-R-N-A.
It can run on a gel,
And it blots really well.
It's the way that you get
Your next paper in *Cell.*

M-R-N-A.
M-R-N-A.
M-R-N-A
M-R-N-A.....

(from DevBiol, Scott F. Gilbert http://www.devbio.com/article.php?id=231&search=RNA%20song)

Employment and Careers

The RNA Society is pleased to make the Employment and Careers web page available to the RNA community. Advertisements for employment opportunities are free to members of the RNA Society. All employment opportunities remain on this page for a three-month period. In addition, positions listed on this page are also published in the RNA Society newsletter (distributed to more than 1000 members and subscribers) as a free service and on a one-time basis.

If you would like to have your employment opportunity listed on this page, please download the E-Jobs form, and return the completed form via email to rna@faseb.org.

Current Listings

A Postdoctoral Position and a PhD position are available in **Andrea Barta's Laboratory** at the Max F. Perutz Laboratories (joint venture of the Medical University of Vienna and University of Vienna) in Vienna, AUSTRIA. Projects in the group are concerned with small non-coding RNAs in higher eukaryotes and their binding partners, the significance of miRNAs in signalling pathways (plants) and the elucidation of the molecular basis for the regulation of alternative splicing with a focus on SR proteins and SR protein associated factors. Expertise in molecular biology, genetics and/or biochemistry is preferred. Start date is asap, duration: 3 years
The Max F. Perutz Laboratories are located in an innovative environment at the Vienna Biocenter, which houses also other prestigious institution like the IMP (Institute for Molecular Pathology), and Institutes of the Austrian Academy of Sciences: IMBA (Institute of Molecular Biotechnology) and GMI (Gregor Mendel Institute). The beautiful metropolitan City of Vienna offers high quality of life in a formidable cultural setting together with numerous possibilities for outdoor and indoor sports activities.
Contact:
Dr. Andrea Barta
Tel: +43-1-4377 61640
Mobile: +43 664 800 1635011
Email: Andrea.Barta@meduniwien.ac.at
Homepage: http://www.mfpl.ac.at

A post-doctoral position is available in the **Lambowitz laboratory** in the Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology of the University of Texas at Austin. The Lambowitz laboratory studies protein-assisted splicing of group I and group II introns, aminoacyl-tRNA synthetases and reverse transcriptases that function as splicing factors, DExH/D-box proteins that function as RNA chaperones in group I and group II intron splicing, group II intron mobility by reverse splicing into DNA, and the use of mobile group II introns as gene targeting vectors in bacteria and higher organisms. The latter project includes potential applications in genetic engineering, functional genomics, and gene therapy.
Contact :
Dr Alan Lambowitz
Tel : 512-232-3418
Fax : 512-232-3420
Email : lambowitz[at]mail.utexas.edu
Ejob posted Sun Nov 27 03:22:35 CET 2005

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP available immediately in Virology at the University of Florida Shands Cancer Center. NCI/NIH-funded projects focus on EBV and KSHV lytic cycle RNA-binding proteins involved in gene regulation and their functional interactions with cellular proteins and messenger RNAs. Microarray technology and recombinant molecular genetics are being used to determine the role of virus proteins in modulating host cell gene expression. A Ph.D. or M.D. degree, experience in Virology and a background in molecular biology are required. The successful applicant will be expected to contribute to planning experiments and writing manuscripts and grant applications in addition to carrying our bench research. If interested, please send CV and names of three references to Dr. Sankar Swaminathan. Further information about ongoing research may be obtained at :
http://www.mgm.ufl.edu/faculty/sswaminthan.htm
Contact :
Dr Sankar Swaminathan
Tel : 352-846-1151
Email : sswamina@ufl.edu
Ejob posted Tue Nov 15 02:40:17 CET 2005

Applications are invited for a **postdoctoral fellowshi**p in the **RNA Biology Group at the Max Planck Institute** for Infection Biology. The aim of the research is to functionally characterize novel small noncoding, regulatory RNAs in the human pathogen Salmonella typhimurium. We are particularly interested in functions of this new class of regulators in bacterial virulence & pathogen-host interactions, as well as in dissecting the mechanisms that underly RNA-mediated regulation. For further information about the RNA biology group visit http://www.mpiib-berlin.mpg.de/institut/RNABiology.htm

Applicants should hold a PhD degree, and should have a strong background in biochemistry and/or molecular biology. The fellowship (20,400-24,000 euros p.a.) will be initially awarded for one year, with the possibility of extension by another year.

The institute is located in the heart of Berlin on the historical Charite medical campus. It is well-equipped and has excellent core facilities. Berlin is a metropoli-tan city that offers a high quality of life, affordable accommodation and a vibrant cultural scene. We welcome applications from suitably qualified people from all sections of the community regardless of race, religion, gender or disability.

Applicants are also encouraged to informally contact the head of the group, Joerg Vogel (vogel@mpiib-berlin.mpg.de, +49-(30)-28460-265) for more in-formation on the planned projects. Applications, including a CV and the names and addresses of two academic referees, should be sent by regular mail or email to:
Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology
Personalabteilung PhD Studentship Vogel
Schumannstrasse 21-22
10117 Berlin, Germany
e-mail: job@mpiib-berlin.mpg.de
Contact :
Dr Joerg Vogel
Tel : +49-30-28460-265
Email : vogel@mpiib-berlin.mpg.de
Ejob posted Tue Oct 25 14:05:42 CEST 2005

Postdoctoral Research position available in Biology of RNA Metabolism in Eukaryotes, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH. The successful candidate will investigate molecular mechanisms involved in the metabolism of noncoding and coding RNAs. This includes the link between transcription termination and RNA processing as well as nuclear transport. A major focus is on the conserved La antigen. Fission yeast, mammalian cell culture and genetically altered mice are studied.

Candidates must hold a Ph.D. and have less than 5 years postdoctoral experience. Expertise in molecular biology, genetics and/or biochemistry is preferred. Experience in RNA metabolism is desirable. The successful candidate must incorporate self-directed research, excellent technical, presentation, and communication skills as essential parts of the job. Applicants should submit a cover letter that details their interest in the research areas described above and their specific interest in the Maraia lab.
Contact :
Dr Richard J. Maraia
Tel : 301 402-3567
Email : maraiar@mail.nih.gov
Ejob posted Thu Sep 15 08:14:31 CEST 2005

An NIH-funded **postdoctoral position** is available immediately to study alternative pre-mRNA splicing in the immune system. On-going studies in the lab include investigation of the signaling pathways that lead to altered splicing in activated T cells, investigation of mechanisms of exon repression and identification and characterization of novel targets of splicing regulation. Enthusiastic candidates with a strong background in biochemistry, molecular biology and/or immunology are encouraged to apply. Duration of position is negotiable. Please email or send a letter of interest, CV, and the names of three references to Dr. Kristen W. Lynch, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Biochemistry, UT Southwestern Medical Center, 5323 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas TX 75390-9038.
Contact :
Dr Kristen W. Lynch
Tel : 214-648-2645
Fax : 214-648-8856
Email : klynch@biochem.swmed.edu
Ejob posted Thu Sep 15 08:04:14 CEST 2005

An NIH-funded **postdoctoral position** is available in RNA structure and biophysics in **Charles G. Hoogstraten's** research group at Michigan State University. Areas of interest are the role of conformational dynamics in ribozyme function and the energetics of RNA recognition by multidomain proteins involved in the regulation of alternative splicing. Techniques in use include nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, electron paramagnetic resonance spectroscopy, solution thermodynamics (calorimetry), and other biochemical and biophysical methods. Equipment available for these studies at Michigan State includes a newly-installed Bruker 900 MHz NMR spectrometer, CW and pulsed EPR at X and W bands, and a MicroCal VP-ITC calorimeter housed within the P.I.'s laboratory. Postdocs in the group can expect to gain experience in the production and isotope labeling of proteins and nucleic acids, NMR spectroscopy with an emphasis on the analysis of conformational dynamics, and general biophysical techniques. Applications from scientists with a background in either RNA science or biological spectroscopy and an interest in the detailed analysis of RNA structure and function are encouraged. Strong interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to work well within an enthusiastic research group of diverse scientific backgrounds and interests are required. The position is available immediately or upon completion of the applicant's graduate studies.
Contact :
Dr Charles G. Hoogstraten
Tel : 517-353-3978
Fax : 517-353-9334
Email : hoogstr3@msu.edu
Ejob posted Thu Sep 15 08:01:15 CEST 2005

A **post-doctoral position** is available immediately pertaining to the study of Hfq. Hfq is a bacterial homolog of the Sm/Lsm proteins. It forms stable homohexameric toroids that bind a variety of RNAs and proteins. This small protein is a key player in the metabolism of bacterial RNAs. It is involved in the polyadenlyation and turnover of RNAs as well as in post-transcriptional gene regulation (riboregulation) during stress response and virulence. The ideal candidate will be have a Ph.D. in chemistry, biochemistry, biophysics, microbiology or a related discipline. The candidate should be familiary with basic methods in RNA biochemistry and the study of RNA-protein interactions in vitro. Experience with in vivo methodologies such as RNA-lifetime analysis, polyA tail length determination and construction of report constructs would be desireable but is not essential. The candidate must have good oral and written communication skills and the ability to work effectively in a collaborative environment. Initial appointment will be for a period of 1 year with the expectation that the position will be renewed annually if there is mutual interest and appropriate research goals have been met. To apply: send email to Prof. Andrew Feig at afeig@indiana.edu. Include a CV and names/email addresses/phone numbers for 3 references. IU is an equal opportunity employer.
Contact :
Dr Andrew Feig
Tel : 812-339-0693
Fax : 812-855-8300
Email : afeig@indiana.edu
Ejob posted Thu Sep 15 07:53:20 CEST 2005

A **postdoctoral position** is available at Wake Forest University Chemistry Department in the laboratory of Dr. **Bernard Brown** involving the expression, purification, and biochemical, biophysical, and structural/functional characterization of protein-RNA interactions (this is an NIH/NIGMS sponsored postdoctoral position). The position requires a Ph.D. in biochemistry, chemistry, or a related field. Applicants must have a proven record of success in modern macromolecular crystallography, including crystallization, synchrotron data collection, primary phasing, refinement and structural analysis. Qualified candidates will have strong written and verbal English communication skills, work effectively in a team environment, and will be expected to assume some leadership responsibilities. Ideal applicants will be familiar with protein expression and purification, basic molecular biology and cloning techniques, and have experience working with RNA. Applicants should apply to Postdoctoral Search (Brown; Requisition Number 05207), Human Resources, Wake Forest University, Box 7424, Winston-Salem, NC, 27109. Please apply online: http://www.wfu.edu/hr/careers/. Wake Forest University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. The position is available immediately and will remain open until filled. Typical duration is 3-4 years, but could last longer contingent on the candidate's success and the laboratory's funding status. For more information visit: http://csb.wfu.edu/ and http://www.wfu.edu/academics/chemistry/ .
Contact :
Dr Bernard A. Brown II
Tel : 336.758.5514
Fax : 336.758.4656
Email : brownbag@wfu.edu
Ejob posted Thu Sep 15 07:19:20 CEST 2005

USB Corporation is a leader in supplying biochemicals and molecular biology products for research and emerging technologies. We are based in Cleveland, Ohio and are dedicated to product innovation, superior quality and unsurpassed customer service. USB is growing and in need of a **Research Scientist** to join our Research and Development Department.

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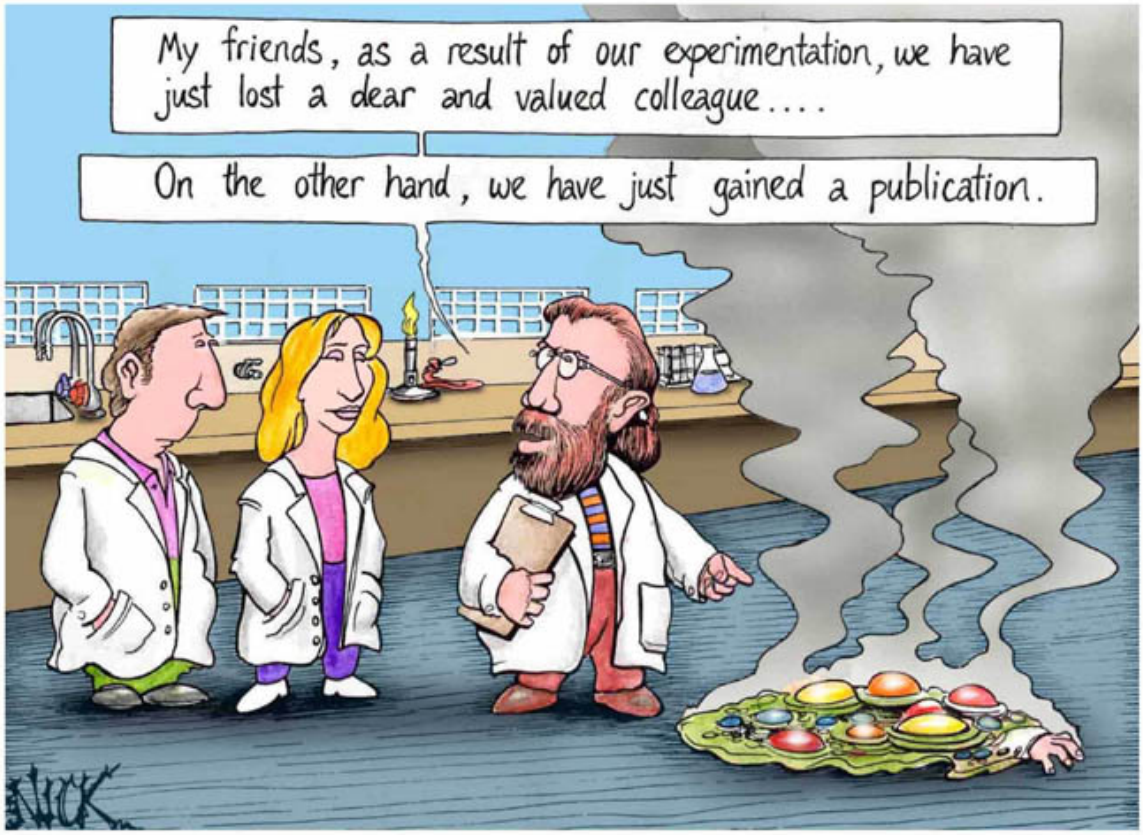
Contact :

Sangpen Chamnongpol
USB Corporation
Research and Development
26111 Miles Road
Cleveland, OH 44128
(216)765-5000
sangpen@usbweb.com



eJobs with the RNA Society

The RNA Society is pleased to provide an Employment and Careers webpage for the RNA community. Postings are free to members of the RNA Society. All advertisements are posted within two weeks of receipt and remain on this page for a three-month period. In addition, positions listed on this page are also published in our society newsletter as a free service and on a one-time basis.

- You may download the form as a Word document from the RNA society website (http://www.rnasociety.org).
- Please provide the requested information
- Name the completed form as LastName_eJobs.doc (for example, Genius_eJobs.doc)
- Return the saved file via email to rna@faseb.org.

Type of position (please click on one box to select category of job)

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Description of position (include area of research, skills required, start date and duration of position)

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The RNA Society has the right to reject job advertisements that they deem are inappropriate for posting on this site.

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