

RNA Society

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RNA Journal

<http://www.rnajournal.org/>

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 Editor in Chief

RNA Society Web Page

<http://www.rnasociety.org/>

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From the President's Desk, Reinhard Luhrmann



To take over the presidency of a thriving scientific body such as the RNA Society is a privilege and a challenge. More than this, for me personally it is also a very great pleasure, and I would like to explain why this is the case. This will involve delving a little into past. However, as you will see, I

shall not be indulging in reminiscence for reminiscence's sake – quite on the contrary.

My initiation into the scientific community that would later evolve into the RNA Society took place in what I might call its nucleation phase, in 1981, when I was given an independent junior research appointment at the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics. Having spent several years working on ribosomes, I wished to move into a different field and was attracted by the then newly identified small nuclear ribonucleoproteins and the idea of their involvement in mRNA splicing. (Continued on p2)

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In 1983 I attended my first Cold Spring Harbor conference on RNA-processing. The RNA Society and its meetings were at that time still things of the future. Several aspects of this conference made a deep impression on me. The first was the warm welcome that I received, in spite of being a novice in the field. The prevailing attitude was “there's room for everyone”, while the elements of caginess and exclusiveness, for which science is sometimes critically portrayed, seemed entirely absent. The second was the open, stimulating and above all encouraging atmosphere and, if I may so put it, “discussion culture”. Finally, I was impressed by the structure of the conference, at which short contributions, mainly by doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows, predominated; much less emphasis was placed on – and time given to – major lectures by senior scientists and established researchers. Such luminaries were of course present (indeed, most of them stayed for the whole of the meeting, a welcome fact that was not to be taken for granted). However, they remained content to lead from behind the scenes and to make their mark in the formal and informal discussions, thus sustaining the experience base and high scientific level of the conference. Since then I have attended almost all of the RNA meetings, and they have invariably been a scientific high light of each year.

In the past decades, the RNA community has grown and evolved considerably, but I am glad to say that the family atmosphere, engendered and promoted by the annual RNA meetings, has so far survived these changes. I regard these meetings as the expression of a deep-seated recognition that science truly is a collective activity that thrives best on the participants' mutual, rather than self-, help. It is the responsibility of us older members, who have benefited so much from the pioneers of RNA biology and the ethos of the early RNA community, to ensure that this tradition is maintained; our aim must be to ensure that younger scientists who are – as it were – “growing up” in this community experience the joy, and not only the stress, of

research. It is a truism that we should learn from our mistakes, but we should also draw lessons from our successes, and one such success has been the consistently inclusive nature of the RNA Society, its members and its meetings – long may this continue.

What challenges face us in the future, and how can we meet them by building upon the past? One is the need to strengthen the Society's world-wide basis, and in this connection I note with pleasure the recent decision to hold the annual RNA meeting in countries off the well-trodden US/European track (see David Tollervey's letter of September 2008). Another is the task of incorporating new areas of RNA science into the overall thrust of our activities. Such areas, to name but two, include the study of the ever-growing world of microRNA and other newly discovered non-coding RNAs, and also RNA-related biomedical research. It would be highly regrettable, would act as a brake upon RNA research and would ultimately negate the *raison d'être* of the RNA Society if these emerging fields of activity became confined to specialist circles. A third challenge will be to strengthen the part played in our community in supporting younger research workers, for example by expanding our existing framework of career-development initiatives, which at present includes the holding of workshops on this topic and the promotion of mentor-mentee contact. An additional challenge for all of us is perhaps to continuously convey to the general public the relevance and content of the RNA field, and the great joy of doing science, in particular RNA Biology.

I see that I have, perhaps unintentionally, set out an agenda – in fact quite an ambitious one - for the near future. However, I look forward to tackling it together with the other officers and members of the RNA Society.

Finally, I think it is still not too late to wish you a Happy and scientifically productive year 2009!



RNA 2009

Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the RNA Society

Madison, Wisconsin
May 26th – 31st, 2009

Topics include:

RNAi and miRNA	RNP Function and Dynamics
Epigenetic Gene Regulation by RNA	RNA Transport and Localization
Riboswitches and Riboregulation	RNA Editing and Modification
Noncoding RNAs	tRNA, snoRNA and rRNA
RNA Catalysis	Chemical Biology of RNA
RNA in Disease	Ribosomes
RNA Structure and Folding	Translation Regulation
Splicing Mechanisms	Bioinformatics
Splicing Regulation	RNA Turnover
3' End Formation	RNA-Protein Interactions
Emerging Methodologies for RNA Science	
Interconnections Between Gene Expression Processes	

Keynote Speakers: Dr. Robert Darnell and Dr. Shiv Grewal

Organizing Committee: Andrew Feig, *Wayne State University*, Narry Kim, *Seoul National University*, Fatima Gebauer, *Centre de Regulació Genòmica*, Benoit Chabot, *Université de Sherbrooke*

The Organizing Committee invites abstracts on all aspects of RNA structure, function, biology and chemistry. Abstracts for oral presentations will be selected by the Committee and the Session Coordinators. Topics covered in oral presentations will be determined based on the abstracts received. Abstracts that are not selected for oral presentations will be presented as posters.

All members will receive an email announcing the start of the registration and abstract submission process at the end of December 2008. Others interested in participating should please check the RNA Society website (<http://www.rnasociety.org>) for details of the annual meeting. The deadline for registration and submission of abstracts is **Monday February 23rd, 2009**.

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Website: <http://www.rnasociety.org/>



Announcing the First Annual “RNA & SOCIETY” Lecture With Keynote Speaker Professor Keith Yamamoto By Lynne E. Maquat

With two well-attended Women in Science dinners behind us – the first in Madison with Keynote Speaker **Joan Steitz** and the second in Berlin with Keynote Speaker **Mary Osborn**, we have decided to broaden the scope of this new Annual Meeting dinner. We reasoned that a venue called “RNA & SOCIETY” would allow us to address a wider breadth of issues that affect RNA researchers.



Future topics could include not only how to keep women in science but also the ethics of science, RNA Biology for non-scientists, how to speak to the popular press, science from bench to start-up company, how government politics affect research science, and new changes at the NIH and other funding agencies, to name a few possibilities.

As a Society, we have formed a strong and vibrant network of researchers and educators from almost every country that is engaged in RNA biology. We have our own highly successful journal, *RNA*. We sponsor an annual meeting that promotes participation from RNA biologists at all career stages, and we support many other meetings that present RNA research. With our new RNA & SOCIETY venue, we aim to increase RNA Society awareness of issues that affect our science so as to become more influential in society at large.

We are working at a wonderful time for RNA biologists. There is little doubt that RNA research holds “promise and power”, to quote a November 10th, 2008 *New York Times* Science Times piece. It is not unreasonable to think that one of our next big steps could move toward more actively lobbying for our contingency in ways that positively influence research spending. Pertinent to those of us working in the US, President **Barack Obama** is anticipated to be supportive of science. Senator **Tom Harkin**, a democrat from Iowa who easily won re-election, has a long history of science advocacy. In view of these and many other encouraging events, a number of science societies continue to lobby Congress for an increase in research funds (see, e.g., www.nihadvocacy.org). While there is no denying the overall negative impact of the massive fiscal problems that plague the U.S. and other countries, science will undoubtedly be given greater consideration by the new U.S. administration. It is not too early to work toward the future implementation of science policy changes in the U.S. and abroad.

With these thoughts in mind, we are pleased to announce that our Keynote Speaker for RNA 2009 will be **Keith Yamamoto**. Keith co-chaired the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) Working Group that undertook an NIH peer review self-study at the June 2007 request of **Elias Zerhouni**, who then was NIH Director. The ACD Working Group labored together with the Steering Committee Working Group to release a Final Draft Report in February 2008 that documented a preliminary proposal. In March 2008, Zerhouni established another group that in June 2008 resulted in the Peer Review Enhancements and Implementation Plan. In July 2008, yet another group called the Peer Review Oversight Committee chaired by NIH Deputy Director **Raynard Kington** (who has since been appointed acting director of the NIH following the resignation of Zerhouni), worked together with subgroups and presented in September 2008 a first set of Implementation Plans for 2009-2010. They are, in a nutshell, as



follows. 1. Engage the Best Researchers. 2. Improve the Quality and Transparency of Review. 3. Ensure Balanced and Fair Review across Scientific Fields and Career Stages, and Reduce Administrative Burden. For those of you who have not seen them, details can be found at <http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/index.html>. One of the biggest changes, once implemented, is a shortening and restructuring of R01 applications. There will be a 12-page Research Plan, less emphasis on the details of how research will be undertaken, and more focus on the importance of the problem under investigation as well as the track record of the investigator(s). Another big change is a decrease from two to one in the number of times an application can be resubmitted. This means that if a proposal is turned down a second time, a future proposal will be considered only as a new and largely rewritten grant.

The NIH has and continues to undergo changes in how grants are submitted and reviewed. Considering these changes and our current economic crisis, we think Keith Yamamoto, who is also a Professor of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology at the University of California-San Francisco, will offer important insight into the future of NIH peer review and funding.

Please join us on May 28th for a thought-provoking presentation and stimulating discussions. Everyone registered for the meeting is welcomed and encouraged to attend. Advanced sign-up for the event is important since you will want to specify your choice of meal.

Suggestions for future topics and speakers are certainly welcome. To relate your ideas, please contact **Evelyn Jabri** (ejabri@gmail.com) or myself (lynne_maquat@urmc.rochester.edu).

OPPORTUNITIES TO SOCIALIZE ON THE WEB!

Interested in keeping in touch with RNA Society activities throughout the year?

Find us in **LinkedIn** (<http://www.linkedin.com/>). Join the RNA Society group and add our annual meeting to your events calendar. Using **Facebook** (<http://www.facebook.com>) search for the annual meetings in their events calendar or join the group: RNA Society Graduate Student Members.

And now, see (<http://www.ScientistSolutions.com>), and description of this new resource on page 13.



From the CEO's Desk Evelyn Jabri

Happy New Year! I'm pleased to note that the RNA Society had another great year in 2008, and enters 2009 on sound financial footing. Our society's continued success, financial and otherwise, is due to the commitment of its many volunteers. Thank you for devoting time to the RNA Society!



These volunteers, including myself, other officers, directors and committee members, manage many of the Society's operations. Our committees are especially important as their volunteer members implement and sustain the majority of programs for the RNA Society. The committee structure has evolved since I became CEO so here's an update of the current list of committees, their responsibilities and members.

As you will see, the existing committee chairs and members represent the diverse scientific, geographic, gender, and age distributions within the Society. This is as it should be, and with your help, we will retain the diversity as we move forward.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

Responsibility: Solicit suggestions from members and select the winners of the Lifetime Achievement Awards for Science and for Service.

Chair: President of the Society

Members: Past president, secretary/treasurer, and 3 directors in their last year of office. The term limits are 2 years for president (one year as president and one year as past president), 3 years for secretary, and 1 year for all other members.

2009 members: Reinhard Lührmann (Chair), David Tollervey (Past President), Angela Kraemer (Secretary/Treasurer), Doug Black (Director), Manny Ares (Director), Andrea Barta (Director).

MEETINGS COMMITTEE

Responsibility: Manage the scientific, contractual and financial aspects of our annual meeting.

Chair: any full active member

Members: CEO, CFO, as well as organizers of previous, current and next year's meetings. Members of this committee are responsible for many aspect of the annual meeting: identifying and soliciting proposals from future meetings venues (chair), collecting names of possible organizers and coordinating selection by directors (chair), establishing sound logistical and financial plans for the meetings (CEO & CFO), and developing the scientific programs (meeting organizers). Term of chair is 3 years with other members rotating off as their terms expire.

2009 Members: David Lilley (Chair), Evelyn Jabri, Jim Bruzik; *Organizers ('08)* Reinhard Lührmann, Joan Steitz, Juan Valcarcel, Elena Conte, Witek Filipowicz; *Organizers ('09)* Andrew Feig, Narry Kim, Fatima Gebauer, Benoit Chabot; *Organizers ('10)* Tim Nilsen, Doug Black, Elisa Izzauralde, Juli Feigon and Alan Weiner.

MENTOR-MENTEE LUNCH COMMITTEE:

Responsibility: Plan and organize the annual lunch that pairs students and postdocs with established professionals in various careers.



Chairs: any full active members

Members: None but chairs do consult with Junior Scientist Committee members for feedback and input on the needs of graduate students and postdocs. Term is indefinite.

2009 Members: Jamie Williamson & Rachel Green (co-Chairs)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Responsibility: Identify members willing to serve as officers or directors for the Society.

Chair: any active full member

Members: The Society President, in consultation with Officers and Directors, selects a group of scientists to serve on a committee of four. The members of this committee are selected to represent the scientific, geographic and gender distribution of the Society (no small task!). One member of the group is chosen as the chair. The committee then requests nominations for possible candidates, evaluates their willingness to serve, and finalizes the list of nominees. Term is one year.

Past Members:

(08') **Juan Valcarcel (Chair)**, Juli Feigon, Gloria Culver, Maria Carmo-Fonseca

(07') **Rachel Green (Chair)**, Guillaume Chanfreau, Pascale Romby, Joseph Piccirilli

(06') **Erik Sontheimer (Chair)**, Anita Hopper, Juan Valcarcel, Elena Conte

(05') **Martha Fedor (Chair)**, David Bartel, Nancy Standart, Witold Filipowicz

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:

Responsibility: Manage the editorial and financial aspects of the Society's journal, *RNA*.

Chair: Editor-in-Chief of *RNA*

Members: CEO, CFO, and publishing partner CSHP. On occasion, the president of the Society has also participated in contractual discussions. This committee meets yearly to discuss plans for the continued success of the Society's publishing operations.

2009 Members: Tim Nilsen (Chair), Evelyn Jabri, Jim Bruzik, John Ingles (CSHP).

RNA SOCIETY/SCARINGE AWARD COMMITTEE:

Responsibility: Select the winners of the graduate student and postdoc RNA Society/Scaringe Award.

Chair: None

Members: Past President, Editor-in-Chief of *RNA*, and other volunteer (often Associate Editor or Editorial Advisory Board member of *RNA*). Term is 3 years with option to renew.

2009 Members: David Tollervey, Tim Nilsen, Phil Bevilacqua. Special thanks to Ann Marie Micenmacher, Editorial Assistant for *RNA*, for collecting all applications for the committee members.

JUNIOR SCIENTISTS COMMITTEE

Responsibility: Develop social and scientific programs to meet the needs of graduate students and postdocs members

Chair: any active full member

Members: 2 postdoctoral fellows, 2-3 graduate student members. Term 2-3 years/member with overlap between incoming and outgoing representatives. Representatives work with the chair and organizers of the annual



meeting to organize social activities (pre-meeting excursion, evening social hour, etc.) and workshops that address the career needs of junior scientists. Term for the chair is indefinite

2009 Members: Lynne Maquat (Chair)

Grad Student Representatives: Melanie Baker, Rea Lardelli, Sarah Ledoux, Heather Miller, Claudia Recinos

Postdoc Representatives: Kimberly Dittmar, Daniel Golden

Other volunteer opportunities open to all active members:

Historian(s): Dorit Zuk

RNA & SOCIETY Dinner Organizers: Lynne Maquat (Lead) & organizers of the annual meeting

Newsletter Editors: Brenda Peculis (Lead) & Evelyn Jabri

Web Master: Fabrice Jossinet (Lead)

I welcome suggestions for how to improve the committee structure, and encourage members to contact me if they wish to volunteer.

Warmest regards and best wishes for a healthy, happy and peaceful 2009.

Evelyn

ejabri@gmail.com

**"If you want to be important—wonderful.
If you want to be recognized—wonderful.
If you want to be great—wonderful.
But, recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.
That's a new definition of greatness."
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

IT'S NOMINATION TIME!

Interested in shaping the future of the RNA Society? Run for office. In 2009 we will elect a President and 3 new Directors. Any member of the Society (except those serving on the Nominating Committee) can be elected to fill any office or serve on the Board of Directors. Those interested in running for office should email the CEO (ejabri@gmail.com) before March 1, 2009 to receive full consideration. Furthermore, 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 must include a statement from the nominee of willingness to serve if elected.



Chairman of the Meetings Committee David M.J. Lilley

Time flies, and it doesn't seem too long since I wrote my last piece for the Newsletter. We are still basking in the glow from the highly successful Berlin meeting in August, and now anticipating the next meeting in Madison.



Registration for our 2009 meeting has just opened on line. It will take place back in Madison again, between 26 - 31 May. The organizing team of Andrew Feig, Narry Kim, Benoit Chabot, Fátima Gebauer Hernández have this well in hand, and will continue the gentle evolution of the meeting format. One of the significant successes from Berlin was the longer introductions from session chairs, and these will be continued in Madison. There will be keynote talks by Bob Darnell (on genome-wide interactions between RNAs and proteins) and Shiv Grewal (on the role of RNAs in epigenetic control of gene expression).

In 2010 we return to Seattle, after the very enjoyable meeting three years ago. Tim Nilsen is leading the organization of this meeting, and has just finalized the complete organizing team of himself, Doug Black, Elisa Izaurralde and Juli

Feigon, plus Alan Weiner (lead organizer for the highly successful 2006 meeting) to cover local issues.

As announced in Berlin, we shall go to Japan in 2011 as guests of the Japanese RNA Society. Two possible venues were offered, but after very strong support we have opted to hold the meeting in the wonderful city of Kyoto. We have just finalized the dates for this meeting between 14 - 19 June.

Kyoto will be our first Asian meeting, and we are very excited by this development. Hopefully in the future we can return to Asia. We have also had discussions with the Chinese RNA Society, and we hope to hold our annual meeting in their country in the future.

As ever we continue to look for interesting new venues for our meetings, and I welcome any suggestions. I can provide a copy of our venue guide that sets out the requirements for our meetings. Indeed, I appreciate correspondence on any aspects of our conferences.

See you in Madison in May
David Lilley
d.m.j.lilley@dundee.ac.uk

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!

For those who have not yet renewed your membership, please do so now. We have a new online renewal system (www.rnasociety.org/membership) that makes it very easy to rejoin the Society. At the same time, you can update your directory listing using the online directory. Members receive a discount on meeting registration costs. RENEW NOW!



Letter to the Editors

To the Editor,

It may not have been obvious but quoting some extracts of Norm Pace's address in the Society newsletter on receiving a lifetime award were deeply offensive to me and my group who were working on RNase P in 1983.



In that regard, Pace never mentioned to me the fact that Katherine Gardiner had observed catalytic activity of RNase P RNA from *B. subtilis* before we published a paper on this activity using *E. coli* RNase P RNA. In fact we were doing the experiments because at a meeting at the Stony Brook campus of the State University of New York earlier in the year, Pace and I decided to examine the activity of interspecies complexes of the hybrid enzymes made up of RNA and protein subunits.

No one had told us to look for RNase P RNA catalytic activity. It was found in a control experiment by Cecilia Guerrier-Takada and repeated immediately the next day. There is no doubt that some of the ionic conditions we used were motivated by the success of those conditions with *B. subtilis* holoenzyme complexes and so it became part of our experiments, too, as we were assaying the holoenzyme complexes and the subunits alone. The subsequent experiments published in a 1983 paper in *Cell* were done quickly by Guerrier-Takada over the next two weeks. When a manuscript was written by me with Guerrier-Takada's help, I called Pace and told him of our results. He was quite surprised and I remember quite clearly his comment that it was "Nobel Prize winning work", a remark that stayed with me but I did my best to ignore. I offered to put Pace's name on the paper reporting all of our results or to publish the results with the *B. subtilis* and *E. coli* holoenzyme complexes separately with his name on it, the catalytic activity would only be under my name and Guerrier-Takada's. Pace chose the former format; he made virtually no significant changes to the manuscript when I sent it to him.

Pace's personal memory of events in 1983 has been distorted by time. If anyone so desires, he/she may inspect our laboratory notebooks to verify the record of our experimentation.

Sincerely,

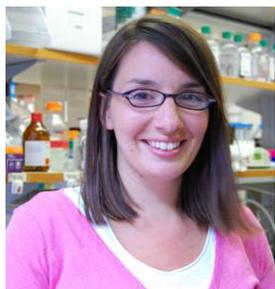
Sidney Altman
Sterling Professor of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology
Yale University

GradStudent and Postdoc Corner

PostDoc Events Planned at the Madison Meeting

Kim Dittmar and Daniel Golden

Happy New Year! It seems like just yesterday we were together in Berlin, but it's already time to prepare for the RNA 2009 meeting. This year's meeting promises to be as exciting and informative as ever. We will be returning to beautiful Madison



on May 26th for 6 days of new science and other great opportunities. Daniel and I are planning several events for RNA 2009 that will be of particular interest to post-docs. We are excited to be hosting the **3rd annual Post-**

Doc/Graduate Student Social. This event has proven to be a great opportunity for the junior members of the RNA Society to discuss science, career development, funding and other important issues with our peers. The Social will be on Wednesday evening, the second night of the meeting. Make sure to look for the exact time and location when you arrive in Madison.

During discussions with a variety of Society members, an interest in online resources has been consistently expressed. In conjunction with the executive committee of the Society and the student representatives, we have been working to develop social networking opportunities for Society members. The exchange of information and ideas that occurs during our annual meetings would ideally be available all year long. **Claudia Recinos Seldeen**, one of the Society's student representatives, was instrumental in establishing a Facebook group. If you use **Facebook**, you can search for "**RNA Society Graduate Student Members**" and join this fast growing contingency. In addition, our CEO Evelyn Jabri has established "**The RNA Society**" group on **LinkedIn.com**. Both of these online social networking sites provide a mechanism to contact individual Society members

or the entire group as a means to improve communication during the year. Daniel will be introducing an additional online resource that will provide a dedicated venue for discussion between RNA Society members and the greater scientific community. Be sure to see page 13 in this issue.



The Career Workshops that were new to RNA 2008 in Berlin proved to be very successful additions to the meeting program. **Three Career Workshops** will take place at RNA 2009 and will be held simultaneously on Friday afternoon. One of these will be directed towards faculty members. Post-doc and student representatives will be hosting the other two Workshops. The first of the student-postdoc hosted workshops will cover non-academic career paths and will expand upon the Workshop in Berlin by featuring a panel of scientists who have successfully pursued careers outside of academia. This will be a great Workshop for post-docs and students who would like to find out about careers outside of university-based research and teaching. The second Workshop will deal with scientific communication, specifically focusing on paper writing and oral presentation. Effectively communicating your ideas to a variety of audiences is a must for a successful scientific career. This is a very important area for all of us, regardless of career stage, but will be particularly useful to post-docs working on manuscripts or fellowships and preparing for academic job searches.

Yet another event that will help with career planning is the annual **Mentor-Mentee Lunch**. This provides a venue where post-docs and students who share common career aspirations have an



informal lunch with established scientists who can offer guidance of how to realize those aspirations. The Lunch is an excellent opportunity to ask probing and honest questions of someone who has followed a career path you might be considering. Don't forget to sign up for the Mentor-Mentee Lunch when you register!

We also encourage you to sign up for a new event called **"RNA & SOCIETY"**. Over dinner, Keith Yamamoto from the University of California-San Francisco will speak about new and planned changes to the NIH system of peer review, a process by which scientific merit is evaluated not only in the

U.S. but also in every country that is engaged in research. See page 4 for more info on this new event.

We are really excited that RNA 2009 will be a productive and stimulating meeting. As your representatives, we are always happy to hear from other post-doctoral members of the society with any questions or suggestions you might have. We look forward to seeing you all in Madison!

Kimberly Dittmar dittmar@mail.med.upenn.edu
&
Daniel Golden degolden@northwestern.edu

Grad Student Plans for RNA2009!

Happy New Year, fellow RNA-loving grad students! It's that time of year to keep resolutions and...that's right, get ready for the annual RNA Society Meeting! We hope to see many of you in Madison, as there is quite a bit planned.



Sarah Ledoux



Claudia Recinos



Heather Miller



Rea Lardelli



Melanie Baker

If you'll be arriving in Madison early, we'd like to invite anyone interested to a day of fun before the meeting starts. Last year, many of us had the opportunity to tour around Berlin the day before the meeting. On Monday, May 25, 2009, we have some activities in mind, including a short walking tour of some historical sites in Madison. We'll also have some time to explore the areas surrounding the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, including, but not limited to, the capitol building area and Picnic Point in the Lakeshore Nature Preserve. To quench our thirst after all that walking, we'll head to a local brewery for some drinks and food. We'll post more info about our plans on our **Facebook** page, **"RNA Society Graduate Student Members,"** or send us an email if you have any questions.

During RNA 2009, there will be some excellent opportunities to make connections and get some direction from others in the Society. For instance, we're planning a **joint grad student-postdoc social on Wednesday** evening of the conference. It's a good way to meet your colleagues, to network, and to discuss the latest in science over drinks. Another great opportunity to make connections and to gain some valuable career advice in a casual setting is the **Mentor-Mentee lunch**. This year, you can identify specific topics on which you'd like advice, ranging from managing a lab, to balancing career and family, to non-academic careers. This should spark some interesting and informative discussions, so be sure to sign up during registration!



This year's meeting will also feature the first **RNA & SOCIETY dinner**, which is open to all registrants. The goal of this dinner is to discuss topics that link RNA research to the surrounding community. **Dr. Keith Yamamoto** will discuss the changes that have occurred in the grant review process at NIH and how this will affect the scientific community, an important topic that impacts all of us in some way or another.

Finally, **three concurrent career workshops** will be offered this year on Friday afternoon of the conference. Remember to take advantage of these informative sessions!

Please don't hesitate to email us with any suggestions you have to get grad students more involved in the RNA Society. You can also reach us through our **Facebook** page, "**RNA Society Graduate Student Members.**"

We look forward to seeing you in Madison!

Melanie Baker melanie_baker@urmc.rochester.edu

Rea Lardelli realardelli@mail.utexas.edu

Sarah Ledoux s-ledoux@northwestern.edu

Heather Miller heather.n.bennett@duke.edu

Claudia Recinos crecinos@med.miami.edu

RNA on ScientistSolutions.com

Daniel Golden and Joseph "Rusty" Bishop (President of Scientist Solutions)

Professional societies, like The RNA Society, exist to help a specific group of individuals improve themselves. Our shared love of the science and biology of ribonucleic acid is what draws us together. The goal of any society is to provide a venue for its members to share ideas, improve one another's science, provide a forum for publication of these ideas, and form professional connections. The tradition and ideas that gave birth to the RNA Society in 1993 have been carried forth to the present day. We are fortunate to have a society populated with so many individuals that are truly interested in helping one another improve their science and other professional goals. The cornerstone of this success is the annual RNA meeting. Whether it is held in Madison, Banff, Vienna, or some other location our meeting never fails to send everyone home more excited about their science and with a notebook full of ideas. The question has become how as a society can we continue this conversation throughout the rest of the year?

We live in a technological world. Some of the technology improves our daily lives, some of it annoys us, and some is just too expensive for us to purchase. The past several years has seen the birth of web 2.0 and social network services which promise to keep everyone more connected and empower the common man. I don't pretend to know whether world peace is obtainable through Wikipedia, but I do enjoy social networking. What is a social network service? As defined by Wikipedia.org a social network service focuses on building communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Sound like a traditional professional organization? The basic ideas are the same. Several social network services are available online; Facebook seeks to interconnect the networks of friends, LinkedIn helps to highlight unknown opportunities within your professional network. The RNA Society has groups on both of these services, but Facebook and LinkedIn are not dedicated to scientists.



ScientistSolutions.com is an open access internet site developed for scientists by scientists. The website was established in 2004 and the company is comprised over 75 scientist volunteers. The main focus of ScientistSolutions.com is the discussion boards, which feature user generated discussions in major categories spanning the life sciences.



ScientistSolutions.com aims to provide solutions to common laboratory problems (troubleshooting experiments), disseminate high quality information (meetings, jobs, protocols, publications, funding

opportunities, etc.), and promote discussion amongst scientists throughout the world.

A new RNA Society community is being designed by Scientist Solutions. This community, which the RNA Society is being asked to support, would be the first society endorsed area introduced on ScientistSolutions.com. Our section could provide Society members with an updating feed of the table of contents from the RNA Journal, areas to discuss upcoming society events, post announcements, share information regarding local RNA clubs, and forums to give and receive advice to other scientists. This site would provide an excellent venue for us to continue our conversations during the roughly 51 weeks between annual meetings. Furthermore it will place the RNA Society within an existing community of scientists allowing us to share our enthusiasm and expertise more broadly and to receive advice from new and diverse perspectives.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Madison and at ScientistSolutions.com in the future!



Meetings Sponsored by the Society

Meetings reports :

The RNA Society sponsored four poster awards at the **2008 Gordon Research Conference** on “**The Biology of Post-Transcriptional Gene Regulation**”, which was held at Colby College in Watertown, ME last summer. Prizes in the amount of \$250 were given to the following four individuals.

Jason M. Casolari from **Pat Brown**'s lab at Stanford University on “mRNA Localization and Organization in *S. cerevisiae*”

Rahul N. Kanadia from **Connie Cepko**'s lab at Harvard University on “Temporal Requirement of the Alternative Splicing Factor Sfrs1 for the Survival of Retinal Neurons”

Elizabeth M. Stroupe from **Niko Grigorieff**'s lab at Brandeis University on “Localizing the Intron in Spliceosomes with Actin Filament Labels Using Single Particle Electron Microscopy”

Shoba Vasudevan from **Joan Steitz**'s lab at Yale University on “Switching from Repression to Activation: MicroRNAs can Upregulate Translation”

The organizers, **Adrian Krainer** and **Lynne Maquat**, want to thank **Manny Ares**, **Brenda Bass**, **Xiang-Dong Fu**, **Fátima Gebauer**, **Mariano García-Blanco**, **Martha Peterson** and **Eric Phizicky** for serving as judges and, of course, the RNA Society for support.

EURASNET, the European Alternative Splicing Network of Excellence, received an award of \$1,000 from the RNA Society to sponsor the attendance of junior scientists at the “**First International EURASNET Conference on Alternative Splicing**” held in Krakow, Poland on May 21-23, 2008. The meeting was an international conference open to all interested scientists in the field of alternative splicing, combined with workshops on bioinformatics, career development and public understanding of science. Sponsoring information of the RNA Society was displayed on the meeting's web site and in the abstract book. A graduate student, **Monika Heiner** (University Giessen, Germany) and a post-doc, **Craig Simpson** (Scottish Crop Research Institute, Dundee, Scotland) received the RNA Society travel awards.

The **Microsymposium on small RNAs** was held in Vienna May 19-21st 2008 and hosted by Javier Martinez. At this meeting, we awarded the best two talks at the PhD-Workshop with a subscription to NSMB and a gift. The winners were **Thomas Ohrt** (Petra Schwillie Lab in MPI-Dresden) and **Saskia Houwing** (Rene Ketting Lab in Netherlands). We are planning a similar award for the Fourth edition of the meeting to be held, May 18-20 2009, (see below).



Upcoming Meetings Announcements



The **Microsymposium on small RNAs** will be held in **Vienna May 18-20th 2009** organized by **Javier Martinez** and his laboratory.

The Keynote speaker, **Witold Filipowicz (FMI-Basel)**, will elaborate on the present and future of RNA silencing. The Microsymposium on small RNAs nucleates young group leaders, advanced Postdocs and representatives from companies in the field of RNA Silencing and small RNAs. The Microsymposium includes a workshop for selected PhD students. The best presentations will be awarded at the end of the Meeting. Fellowships will be available to support traveling and accommodations.

Those interested should send an abstract for consideration. For more information, please see <http://www.imba.oeaw.ac.at/microsymposium/welcome/> for more information as it becomes available. As has been the case in the past, attendance is free but on-line registration is required.

The **Western Canada RNA Conference (RiboWest)** will be held on **July 27 and 28, 2009**, in Prince George, British Columbia.

RiboWest is being organized this year by **Stephen Rader, Andrea Gorrell, and Chow Lee**, all members of the Chemistry Department at the University of Northern BC in Prince George. The meeting covers a wide range of topics, including bioinformatics, transcription, splicing, nucleases, ribozymes, etc. RiboWest aims to provide a supportive environment for early stage scientists (including undergraduates) to present their work. Everyone is welcome, even if you are not from western Canada.

For more information, please contact Stephen Rader (rader@unbc.ca). Registration will open in April.

Cold Spring Harbor EUKARYOTIC mRNA PROCESSING

August 18- 22, 2009

Abstract Deadline: May 29, 2009

Organizers:

Douglas Black, *HHMI/University of California Los Angeles*

Lynne Maquat, *University of Rochester Medical Center*

Joan Steitz, *HHMI/Yale University School of Medicine*

The seventh Cold Spring Harbor meeting on Eukaryotic mRNA Processing will begin at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, August 18 and run through lunch on Saturday, August 22, 2009. The meeting will focus on the mechanisms and regulation of mRNA splicing, polyadenylation, turnover, localization and RNA interference. It will include all aspects mRNA transport, processing and control, including microRNA function.



Sessions Include: Splicing Mechanisms (Chair, **Beate Schwer**, Cornell University); RNA Transport and Localization (Chair, **Anita Corbett**, Emory University); RNA 3' End Maturation (Chair, **Steve Buratowski**, Harvard Medical School); Regulation of Alternative Splicing I (Chair, **Juan Valcarcél**, CRG Barcelona, Spain); Regulation of Alternative Splicing II (Chair, **Xiang-Dong Fu**, UCSD); Genomewide Analysis of RNA Processing (Chair, **Benjamin Blencowe**, University of Toronto, Canada); Coupling of Transcription to RNA Processing (Chair, **Karla Neugebauer**, Max Planck Institute Dresden, Germany); mRNA Decay (Chair, **Hervé Le Hir**, CNRS Gif sur Yvette, France).

The 8th International Conference on Ribosome Synthesis will be held in Regensburg Germany from 26-30 August, 2009.

This year, the meeting is organized by **Susan Baserga, David Tollervey, John Woolford, Philipp Milkereit, Gernot Längst** and **Herbert Tschochner**. Topics to be covered include ribosome biogenesis, RNA polymerase I transcription, rDNA chromatin structure, rRNA maturation, ribosome assembly, formation of mature ribosome structure, rRNA quality control and degradation, nuclear export, snoRNPs, integration with cell division and metabolism, connection with diseases and insights into other nucleolar functions. For more information and registration please see <http://www-ribo-meeting2009.uni-regensburg.de/home.html> for more information as it becomes available.

The 7th International Symposium on Retroviral Nucleocapsid and Nucleocapsid-like Proteins will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, on **14th to 16th of September 2009**.

Nucleocapsid (NC) plays multiple roles in the viral life cycle and is therefore a prime target for anti-HIV therapy. NC is involved in the synthesis, maintenance and integration of proviral DNA, and in virus particle assembly. All these processes will be covered at the meeting. Other proteins playing a role in the viral life cycle that are either associated with NC, or resemble it in structure or function, such as the antiviral APOBEC3G protein, will also be discussed at the conference. In addition, we will be expanding the emphasis to discuss additional viruses with proteins similar to NC, including the hepatitis C virus.

The meeting is organized by **Ben Berkhout, Ph.D., Jean-Luc Darlix, Ph.D., Robert J. Gorelick, Ph.D., Louis M. Mansky, Ph.D., Yves Mély, Ph.D.** and **Karin Musier-Forsyth, Ph.D.** Keynote speakers include **Renee Schroeder** and **John McLauchlan**.

Please see <http://www.ahc.umn.edu/viroconf/> for more information and registration details.



Employment – positions available

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.

Faculty positions

Position available in Umea Center for Microbial Research (UCMR) of the MIMS (The Laboratory for Molecular Infection Medicine Sweden within the Nordic EMBL Partnership for Molecular Medicine) , Umea, Sweden

Position posted on Wednesday, November 12, 2008

A five-year PhD position in RNA Infection Biology is available now at the MIMS in the group of Dr. Emmanuelle Charpentier. The proposed projects are embedded into the current research topic of the lab: role of regulatory RNAs in the pathogenicity of *S. pyogenes*. The new lab of Dr. Emmanuelle Charpentier is part of the MIMS (The Laboratory for Molecular Infection Medicine Sweden within the Nordic EMBL Partnership for Molecular Medicine), a novel institution established within the Umea Center for Microbial Research (UCMR) at Umea University. The aim of this new initiative is to strengthen Swedish research and enhance the dynamics in the field of molecular medicine, partly by promoting the career opportunities for young scientists. The groups of the MIMS work in modern laboratories with well-equipped common facilities in a creative, inspiring and highly interactive environment. Further information: Visit the Website of the current group of Emmanuelle Charpentier in Vienna: <http://www.mfpl.ac.at/index.php?cid=45> ; Visit the Website of the MIMS in Umea: http://www.ucmr.se/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=96&Itemid=231

Highly qualified and motivated students from all over the world are invited to apply. Applicants must hold or anticipate receiving within the next months a University degree equivalent to a European University Master degree. Applicants should have a high interest in the field of molecular infection biology and be willing to take on a scientific and technical challenge. A strong commitment, a competitive scientific productivity and ability to work under pressure are expected. Prior hands-on experience in molecular biology and microbiology is highly desirable. Good English communication skills are required. Applicants should send a coverletter with a brief statement of research experience and interests, a CV and two letters of reference (or the names of two referees) to Emmanuelle Charpentier.

Contact :

[Dr Emmanuelle Charpentier](#)

Tel : +46 90-7856730

Fax : +46-90-772630

Email : emmanuelle.charpentier@univie.ac.at



Postdoctoral positions

Position available in Umea Center for Microbial Research (UCMR) of the MIMS (Laboratory for Molecular Infection Medicine Sweden within the Nordic EMBL Partnership for Molecular Medicine) , Umea, Sweden
Position posted on Wednesday, November 12, 2008

A two-year post-doctoral position in RNA Infection Biology is available now at the MIMS in the group of Dr. Emmanuelle Charpentier. The proposed projects are embedded into the current research topic of the lab: role of regulatory RNAs in the pathogenicity of *S. pyogenes*. The new lab of Dr. Emmanuelle Charpentier is part of the MIMS (The Laboratory for Molecular Infection Medicine Sweden within the Nordic EMBL Partnership for Molecular Medicine), a novel institution established within the Umea Center for Microbial Research (UCMR) at Umea University. The aim of this new initiative is to strengthen Swedish research and enhance the dynamics in the field of molecular medicine, partly by promoting the career opportunities for young scientists. The groups of the MIMS work in modern laboratories with well-equipped common facilities in a creative, inspiring and highly interactive environment. Further information: Visit the Website of the current group of Emmanuelle Charpentier in Vienna: <http://www.mfpl.ac.at/index.php?cid=45> ; Visit the Website of the MIMS in Umea: http://www.ucmr.se/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=96&Itemid=231

Highly qualified and motivated fellows from all over the world are invited to apply. Applicants must hold or anticipate receiving within the next months a PhD University degree in the fields relevant for the position. Applicants should have a high interest in the field of molecular infection biology and be willing to take on a scientific and technical challenge. A strong commitment, a competitive scientific productivity and ability to work under pressure are expected. A strong background in knowledge and techniques of molecular biology, biochemistry and microbiology is highly desirable. Good English communication skills are required. Applicants should send a coverletter with a brief statement of research experience and interests, a CV including a list of publications, and three letters of reference (or the names of three referees) to Emmanuelle Charpentier.

Contact : [Dr Emmanuelle Charpentier](#)

Tel : +46 90-7856730

Fax : +46-90-772630

Email : emmanuelle.charpentier@univie.ac.at

Position available in Dept of Biological Chemistry of the University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor,
Position posted on Wednesday, November 05, 2008

Postdoctoral position in mRNA regulation in the Department of Biological Chemistry at the University of Michigan Medical School.

A postdoctoral scientist is sought to investigate the mechanisms and biological functions of mRNA regulation in eukaryotes at the University of Michigan. Exciting projects, which can be tailored to the candidate's interests, are available and will employ state-of-the-art genetic and biochemical techniques in multiple model systems. The University of Michigan offers an outstanding environment for training in RNA research. At the time of employment, candidates should hold a Ph.D. in biochemistry, genetics, or related field. They should be knowledgeable in the field of RNA biology and skilled in molecular biology techniques. Experience with yeast and/or mammalian cell culture is desired. A productive scientific history, as evidenced by publication record, is important. Candidates should submit curriculum vitae with publication record and contact information for three references. Please include a cover letter describing career goals, research experience and interests. The position is available in November, 2008.

Contact : [Dr Aaron Goldstrohm](#)

Tel : 734-647-5830

Email : acgold@umich.edu



Position available in Dept of Molecular and Structural Biochemistry of the North Carolina State University , Raleigh, United States

Position posted on Monday, October 20, 2008

RNA STRUCTURE/FUNCTION and CONTROL OF GENE EXPRESSION

Research areas include studies of RNA/RNA and RNA/protein interaction in control of gene expression, and involvement in human disease. Postdoctoral applicants should have a Ph.D degree in chemistry/biochemistry with the theoretical background and experience in operating modern high field NMR instruments and restrained molecular dynamics calculations for determining bio-macromolecular structure. All applicants should have a reasonable command of oral and written English. Competitive salary for a first time postdoctoral position is dependent on Ph.D. experience. Medical benefits are provided in addition to salary. Positions are for two years, possibly three years, but second and third year appointments are dependent on successful scientific progress in the first year. Although not a requirement, applicants are expected to look for and apply for postdoctoral fellowships. Respond with curriculum vitae, statement of research experience and interest and contacts for three references. Affirmative action/Equal opportunity employer and ADA Accommodations.

Contact :

[Dr Paul F. Agris](#)

Tel : 919-515-6188

Fax : 919-515-2047

Email : Paul_Agris@ncsu.edu

Other positions

Position available in Dept of Biological Chemistry of the University of Michigan Medical School , Ann Arbor, United States

Position posted on Wednesday, November 05, 2008

Research Laboratory Specialist at the University of Michigan Medical School

A motivated, efficient research laboratory specialist is sought for employment in a newly established laboratory at the University of Michigan in beautiful Ann Arbor. The research projects focus on gene regulation, utilizing biochemical and genetic approaches in yeast, insect and mammalian cells. Experience with these model organisms is highly desired. Candidates with experience in the use of radiation, tissue culture, and molecular biology methods are preferred. The laboratory specialist will be responsible for designing and performing experiments, creating essential reagents, interpreting and analyzing data, and the authorship of scientific reports. The individual will participate in the training of students, in addition to maintaining and managing lab supplies, equipment and personnel. Salary and benefits are commensurate with candidates background. Applicants should send resume with description of prior research and technique experience, along with three reference contacts. Minimum education requirements of Bachelors degree in biochemistry, molecular and cell biology, or similar with one or more years of laboratory research experience. Computer proficiency is necessary, as are good organizational and communication skills. Position is available beginning in November of 2008.

Contact :

[Dr Aaron Goldstrohm](#)

Tel : 734-647-5830

Email : acgold@umich.edu



eJobs with the RNA Society



The RNA Society is pleased to provide this job posting webpage to 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.

- Please complete this form using Microsoft Word by typing your text into the gray boxes, which will expand as you write.
- Name the completed form as LastName_eJobs.doc (for example, Jabri_eJobs.doc)
- Return the saved file via email to rna@faseb.org.

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

- Postdoctoral Fellow Positions Government & Industry Positions
 Faculty Positions Other Positions (*please specify*)

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

Contact information (*required*)

Name (*Must be a member to post on this site*)

Organization

Dept.

Address

City

State/ Prv.

ZIP/Postal Code

Country

Tel.

Fax (*optional*)

E-mail

URL (*optional*)

Signature (*electronic signature of available*)

Date

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

