May 2007

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

**Hugo Dooner** (Plant Biology and Pathology, pictured left) and **Paul Falkowski** (Institute of Marine and Coastal Science) were among 72 members elected to the National Academy of Science on May 1. Election to the NAS is one of the highest honors bestowed upon scientists and engineers. More on this recognition can be found [here](#).

**David Hughes** (Human Ecology) was recognized with a Rutgers Board of Trustees Fellowship for Scholarly Excellence for his studies of the issues facing southern African societies, including his work on conservation and national resource management in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Board of Trustees fellowships honor faculty members who have recently been promoted with tenure and whose work shows exceptional promise. The fellowship includes a citation and a $2,000 research grant.

**Audrey Adler** (Nutritional Sciences) has been selected to receive the 2007 Emerging Dietetic Leader Award, an honor for which she was recognized at the New Jersey Dietetic Association’s annual meeting.

**Larry Katz** (Animal Science) was awarded a Certificate of Leadership Excellence for “outstanding contributions and service to the Cook College Student Life Program” on May 1. Katz received a plaque in appreciation of his outstanding contribution to teaching and advising.

**Linda Rhodes** (Animal Science) was recognized at the spring meeting of the Graduate Program in Animal Sciences for her “exemplary contributions to graduate training and leadership in the profession.” Rhodes created the graduate-level course entitled “Animal Pharmaceuticals,” which has become an integral part of the program’s curriculum.

The **Rutgers Coastal Ocean Observatory Lab** has been chosen as an academic partner in a project to design and construct information technology and networking for the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI). Joint Oceanographic Institutions Inc., has selected UC San Diego to head the project with an initial $29 million cyberinfrastructure award; total funding may reach more than $42 million over the course of the planned 11-year project. The initiative will allow ocean observatories to collect, process, and transmit data 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Macy Compton**, state 4-H program coordinator, received the Early Career Award and **Lisa Rothenburger**, Somerset County 4-H Agent, received the Visionary Leadership Award from Epsilon Sigma Phi – Alpha Xi Chapter on March 30.

Gloucester County farmer and Cook College alumnus **Bob Muth** received the 2007 Mid-Atlantic Master Farmer Award on March 19 in Harrisburg, PA. **Michelle Infante-Casella**, Gloucester County Agricultural Agent, provided a slide presentation on the Muth Farm and **Jack Rabin**, NJAES Associate Director, presented the award on behalf of Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension.
Carey Williams, associate director of extension for the Equine Science Center, has earned the Office of Student Development and College Affairs’ Rising Women of Rutgers – Outstanding Woman Educator award. The award is given to “a professor who, through outstanding teaching skills, dedication to her field of study, and commitment to excellence, has contributed to the academic and personal growth of Rutgers University women.”

Left: Carey Williams with her award (photographer: Kristin Cothran)

Jack Rabin, Rutgers NJAES associate director, and Marilyn Hughes, program assistant in GIS/GPS, were acknowledged with Congressman Frank LoBiondo by the Winegrowers of New Jersey’s Outer Coastal Plain on March 30.

Richard Lathrop (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) was invited to serve as a member of a five-person listening panel to attend the U.S. Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program’s Spatial Analysis National Summit in Interlocken, CO, April 17–19.

Terry McGuire (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) received the 2007 School of Arts and Sciences Award for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Education in the category of associate professor.

Nilgun Tumer (Plant Biology and Pathology) served as the acting chair of the Study Section for NIH Partnerships in Therapeutics and Diagnostics of Biodefense Toxins in Washington, D.C.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Kelly Ryan (graduate student, Nutritional Sciences) has received a $500 award from the Society for Nutrition Education Foundation (SNEF) to assist with her travel to this year’s SNEF annual conference in Chicago. This award was given to five students nationally.

Lizz Nossier (graduate student, Nutritional Sciences) has received the New Jersey Dietetic Association’s Student Initiative Award, for which she was honored at the NJDA annual meeting on May 4th.

Lisa Belzer (graduate student in Nutritional Sciences) was one of five semi-finalists in the Clinical Young Investigator Award Competition sponsored by the American Society of Nutrition. The candidates are judged on the basis of a written abstract, oral presentation, and full-length manuscript. Lisa received a $750 travel award to the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting held April 28–May 2 in Washington, D.C., where she presented a talk entitled “Changes in insulin and leptin across pregnancy in women with diet-treated gestational diabetes mellitus.”
Shadi Riazi, Gabriella Chiappe, Rashmi Tiwari, and Tom Nack (all graduate students in Food Science) have been awarded scholarships from the Eastern Frosted Foods Association. The scholarships came with a $1,000 award and plaque.

Several undergraduates working under the supervision of Animal Science faculty presented posters of their research at the Aresty Research Center’s second annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. Seniors Laura Barash, Thomas Caltabilota, Allisyn-Marie Gillet, and Megan Mackalonis are all G.H. Cook Scholars. Mahmoud “Mike” Esmail, a third-year Animal Science major, presented a research poster titled “The Effect of Environmental Endocrine Disruptor Metoxychlor Metabolite, HPTE, on Global Gene Expression in Rat Ovarian Granulosa Cells in Vitro.”

Biotechnology senior Lisa Passantino was selected as one of the “top 10” Student Employees of the Year. Passantino was nominated by her supervisor, Mehmet Uzumcu.

The following Department of Animal Sciences Endowed Scholarship Awards were presented at the May 17 Baccalaureate Ceremony.

Academic and Research Award
— Laura S. Barash and Chaney Jin

Academic, Research and Service Award
— Megan E. Mackalonis and Rebecca J. Potosky

Dr. Rex L. Gilbreath Memorial Award
— Justin G. Milizio and Heather E. Potts

Dr. John W. Bartlett Award
— Justin G. Milizio

W.R. Hutchinson Memorial Scholarship Award
— Rebecca J. Potosky

Ernest J. Bell Memorial Award
— Jessica DeWitt

Doris C. Murphy Endowed Scholarship in Equine Science
— Nicole M. Meyerkopf

Sarah Neal (undergraduate, Animal Science) is the 2007 recipient of the New Jersey Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science Award. This award is given based on merit, academic achievement, and need, “with the hopes of furthering a student’s education in the field of laboratory animal science.”

Animal Sciences graduate students Emily Lamprecht and Kristy Longpre received Conference Travel Awards from the Graduate School–New Brunswick in March. Lamprecht received $250 to attend the Equine Science Society Symposium in Hunt Valley, MD. Longpre received $100 to attend the Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology meeting in Pacific Grove, CA.

Julian Avery (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) received a $2,000 grant (Julie Lockwood, PI) from the Bermuda Audubon Society for Conservation Status of Eastern Bluebirds in Bermuda.
Blake Mathys (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) received a $14,000 grant (Julie Lockwood, PI) from the National Geographic Society for “Do non-native species show macro-evolutionary patterns? Non-native passerines and the Island Rule.”

The following graduate students in Ecology and Evolution were awarded Hutcheson Memorial Forest Fellowships:

**David A. La Puma**, $1,500 for “Where the Birds Are Year II: Continued study of avian diversity and distribution across a successional gradient at the Hutcheson Memorial Forest.”

**Inga P. La Puma**, $1,000 for “Continued sampling of varied landcover types to assess the vegetation structure and diversity of Hutcheson Memorial Forest.”

**Maria Lee Stanko**, $1,500 for “Research into mutualistic plant-animal networks.”

**Aabir Banerji**, $1,500 for “Pollen-mediated predator-prey dynamics on pepper plants and their conspecific neighbors.”

**Ben Baiser**, $1,500 for “An effort to determine where and what forest interior species are breeding at HMF.”

**Charles Hofer**, $1,500 for “Trophic transfer of heavy metals at an abandoned urban brownfield site: The effects of heavy metals on nest success of resident avifauna.”

**Ambrish Patel** and **Sinéad Ní Chadhain** both won poster awards at the annual Theobald Smith Society Meeting at Douglass College on May 3. Patel is an undergraduate biotechnology major and won the undergraduate poster award. Ni Chadhain is a research assistant working in Gerben Zylstra’s lab and won the poster award for the second year in a row in the postgraduate category.

**Barbara O’Neill** (Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics) was the keynote speaker at Sussex County Community College’s commencement ceremony on May 17.

**Grants and Fundraising Efforts**

**Carol Bagnell** (Animal Sciences) and **Frank Bartol** (Auburn University) received a three-year, $343,912 renewal award from USDA-CSREES-NRI for a project entitled “Molecular markers and mediators of porcine reproductive tract development.” This project focuses on milk as a conduit for delivery of growth factors in a lactocrine manner from mother to offspring. These growth factors influence the critical developmental events that define the developmental trajectory of reproductive tract tissues.

On April 1, **Dipak Sarkar** (Animal Sciences) received a one-year $327,789 noncompetitive renewal of an NIH/NIAAA grant for “Fetal alcohol effects on circadian clocks and POMC.” The goal of this grant is to determine the long-term effects of prenatal ethanol exposure on the body’s internal clocks and sleep-wake cycle that govern the function of POMC-producing endorphin neurons in the hypothalamus.

**Mehmet Uzumcu** (Animal Sciences) reports that NIH-NIEHS is providing an additional $34,927 award for a project entitled “Epigenetic Effect of Methoxychlor on Ovarian Development” and is for a one-year period that began on January 6. This award is in addition to a $163,400 award that was made in January.
The North American Equine Ranching Information Council Yearling Horse Benefit Auction raised over $23,000 through the sale of 10 yearling horses. Auction proceeds benefit the Rutgers University Young Horse Teaching and Research Program. More information on the event and the program can be found here.

Beth Ravit (Environmental Sciences), Donna Fennell (Environmental Sciences), and Uta Krogmann (solid waste management) received $100,000 from the Rutgers NJAES EcoComplex for a study to improve the operation of the Burlington County bioreactor landfill and to investigate biogeochemical processes in this bioreactor.

Uta Krogman (PI), and Peter Strom (co-PI, Environmental Sciences), received $47,006 from various New Jersey companies and the Rutgers NJAES EcoComplex for “Expanding Markets for and Preventing Stormwater Pollution from Mixed Glass Cullet in New Jersey.”

Chad Ripberger, Mercer County 4-H Agent, and Sharon Gore, Mercer County 4-H program associate, received $3,000 from the ETS Social Investment Fund for the Get Moving–Get Healthy with NJ 4-H training, April 28–29 at the Chauncey Conference Center, for Trenton teenagers from the Sam Naples Community Center and New Jersey Youth Corps of Trenton.

Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, specialist in blueberry/cranberry entomology, and Dean Polk, IPM Agent, received $16,000 from USDA IR-4 for “Optimization of pheromone dosage for oriental beetle mating disruption in commercial blueberries.”

Daniel Kluchinski, department chair and assistant director of extension, and David Kimmel (PI), State Agriculture Development Committee, received $15,000 from the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education for “Advice from Farmers: Managing Human Risk for Maintaining and Sustaining Good Neighbor and Municipal Relations.” The grant will allow for the development of educational materials to minimize human relationship risk and its impact on farmers’ bottom lines.

The Department of Family and Community Health Sciences has signed a three-year memorandum of agreement with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services to assist in implementing an action plan on child obesity. For the remainder of this fiscal year, NJDHSS has funded Get Moving–Get Healthy NJ for $72,000.

Eric Lam (Plant Biology and Pathology) received one of three awards from the Rutgers Energy Institute (REI) for a project titled “Optimization of plants for cellulosic biomass conversion to fuel via dual targeting of fungal lignin peroxidase and xylanase.” He will collaborate with three colleagues from the University of São Paulo, Brazil on the project. REI will provide $15,000 in seed money, matched by $30,000 from the Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment.

Nilgun Tumer (Plant Biology and Pathology) received $5,000 from the NSF to fund student research on her project, “Mechanism of translation inhibition and mRNA destabilization by pokeweed antiviral protein.” The award will support Andrew Tortora, an undergraduate biological sciences major.
Bingru Huang (Plant Biology and Pathology) received an $8,000 grant from the International Turf Producers Foundation in support of “Evaluation of Hybrid Bluegrass for Sod Production and Culture in Water Limiting Environments.”

James White (Plant Biology and Pathology) received a $147,018 supplement from the National Science Foundation for his study on “Systematic Monograph of the Gnomoniaceae (Ascomycetes).”

Conference, Seminars, and Other Events

On April 15, the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources celebrated the lifetime achievements of John Tedrow in his 90th year. Family, friends, and colleagues joined in the lunchtime gala. Tedrow, although retired since 1982, can be found in his office most mornings writing papers and book chapters and working on forensic soil science with local and federal law enforcement authorities.

Beverly Tepper (Food Science) was one of four keynote speakers invited to the 2007 Stanley N. Gershoff Symposium, held on April 23 at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Boston, MA. The theme of the symposium was “Body weight: The multifactorial determinants of eating behavior.” The title of her presentation was “Taste and psychological determinants of eating and body weight.”

During National Horticultural Therapy Week on (March 23), Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension offered its first Horticultural Therapy Workshop at UMDNJ’s Scotch Plains campus. It was organized by Madeline Flahive-DiNardo, Union County Agricultural Agent. In attendance were 85 Master Gardener volunteers, FFA students, and students from the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences’ Horticulture Therapy curriculum. Joel Flagler, Bergen County Agricultural Agent, gave the keynote presentation titled “Prescriptive Horticulture: The Nature of Nature.” Attendees also received the newly published “Guidelines for Starting a Horticultural Therapy Program by Partnering with Volunteers,” co-authored by Flahive-DiNardo, Katherine Sabatino (horticultural therapist, Bergen Regional Medical Center), and Flagler.

Joel Flagler, Bergen County Agricultural Agent, developed and offered a six-part series of training sessions for Bergen County Parks Department managers and supervisors. The series focused on topics such as best management practices for trees, sports turf, insect pests, ponds and lakes, wildlife pests, and pesticide licensing CORE training. Speakers included Larry Katz, Jason Grabosky, George Hamilton, Peter Kallin, and NJDEP’s Bruce Reimbold. The Bergen County Park Systems manages over 9,000 acres and includes 19 parks, five golf courses, an environmental center, and zoo.

Bob Mickel, Hunterdon County Agricultural Agent, and Stephen Komar, Sussex County Program Associate, presented a two session “meat goat” seminar, co-sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Mike Westendorf, extension specialist in animal science, and Jim Lechner, doctoral candidate, are assisting with the applied project and presented the lectures at the two sessions. The goal of the educational program was to assess the need for extension program development and the design of a value-added “meat goat” project. Over 160 participants attended the school and represented 13 different New Jersey counties.
Nicholas Polanin, Somerset County agricultural agent, and Jason Grabosky, extension specialist in urban forestry, facilitated the 2007 Garden State Tree Conference at the Cook Campus Center. More than 150 attended over the course of the two-day conference.

Ilya Raskin (Plant Biology & Pathology) gave an invited lecture entitled “Standardization of Botanicals” at the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.

William Sciarappa, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent, coordinated four bacterial source tracking meetings that were held in conjunction with Monmouth University. The meetings presented data from a two-year study funded by a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection grant. Over 100 municipal officials, environmental commission members, water purveyors, environmental agencies and concerned citizens attended from a dozen coastal towns linked by the Area 12 Watershed Partnership of Monmouth County.

Peter Morin (Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources) was one of 25 participants invited to an NSF-sponsored workshop titled “Really Big Biogeographically Based Integrative Historical and Ecological Science.” The workshop was hosted by the University of Nevada–Las Vegas near the Mount Charleston Wilderness Area May 19–20.

2007 Cook College Convocation

More than 300 students (and some canine companions) received their diplomas at the May 18 Cook College Convocation held at the Louis Brown Athletic Center on Livingston Campus.

Photos: (l) Meghan Connolly and her seeing-eye puppy Leisha; (r) Jerry Kukor, dean of Academic Programs and Research, welcomes students and guests to the 2007 Cook College Convocation. (Photo credit: Phil Wisneski)
Spotlight on...

H. Boyd Woodruff, recipient of the 2007 Theobald Smith Society Waksman Award

H. Boyd Woodruff has spent a lifetime engaged in the advancement of science and has contributed significantly to its advancement, particularly in the area of natural products important to human and animal health and to agriculture. On May 3, the Theobald Smith Society, the New Jersey Branch of the American Society for Microbiology, recognized his accomplishments with the Waksman Award. In addition to accepting the award, Woodruff delivered an honorary lecture titled “A Soil Microbiologist’s Odyssey.”

Woodruff’s odyssey has its beginnings at Rutgers. He earned his Ph.D. in soil microbiology here while studying under Nobel Prize recipient Selman Waksman. As a graduate student, Woodruff developed a novel screening methodology and discovered actinomycin, the first antibiotic found at Rutgers and the first actinomycete antibiotic obtained in crystalline form. This discovery led to the preferred means of treating Wilm’s Disease, a childhood cancer. The disease, which previously had a 100 percent fatality rate, now claims fewer than 10 percent of Wilm’s patients.

“Boyd Woodruff has introduced major new directions in the pharmaceutical industry, stimulated development in what was at the time a fledgling fermentation engineering industry, and in bringing practical antibiotics to fruition, clearly revolutionized the practice of international medicine,” said Douglas Eveleigh, the Fenton and Eveleigh Chair in Applied Microbiology and the 2006 recipient of the Waksman Award. “Woodruff was one of the driving forces who established the United States as a world leader in the discovery of antibiotics and inspired a revolution in medicine and agriculture.”

Woodruff has been a loyal supporter of the school, and his service to the scientific community is evidenced by the endowment of the H. Boyd and Jeanette Woodruff Microbiology Fellowship, which was established with a $1 million contribution from the Woodruffs. This graduate scholarship fund in soil/environmental microbiology is awarded annually to outstanding School of Environmental and Biological Sciences students. The Woodruffs also have donated monies for the H. Boyd Woodruff Undergraduate Scholarship Fund to aid scholars from Cape May, Cumberland, or Salem Counties, and have given funds for the development of the Waksman Soil Microbiology Laboratory Museum in Martin Hall. In recognition of their contributions to Rutgers, Boyd and Jeanette Woodruff were awarded the Rutgers University Medal for Philanthropic Excellence.

Woodruff’s long and distinguished scientific career has been acknowledged many times over the years. In 1998, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, one of the highest honors that can be accorded to a scientist. He has also been honored numerous times at Rutgers, where he was inducted into the Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2004 and where he received the George Hammell Cook Distinguished Alumni Award in 2002.

Please send contributions, photos, and questions to Amanda Kolling, kolling@aesop.rutgers.edu, Office of Communications. Photos must be high-resolution and should add to the editorial value of a submission (i.e., the photo should represent some action, such as receiving an award or giving a lecture, and should not be a standard head shot). Issues of the Dean’s Monthly Message are published on the last Monday of each month. Deadline for submissions is one week prior to publication.