A New Director for Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension

Dr. Larry Katz, presently chair of the Department of Animal Sciences, has accepted an offer to serve as the next director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension and as an associate director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. His term will begin on July 1, 2008. Katz will succeed Dr. Karyn Malinowski, who has served with distinction in this leadership role for the past six years.

Faculty and Staff Activities and Accomplishments

The following awards were presented at the Celebration of Excellence Awards dinner on April 24:

- **Lifetime of Distinguished Leadership**
  - Roger Locandro
  (Photo l to r: Jerry Kukor, Roger Locandro, Mark Robson)

- **Team Award**
  - Office of Communications
  - Mike Green, Gary Huntzinger, Lori Casciano, Lori Gillar, Michele Hujber, Patricia Kastner, Amanda Kolling, Bonnie Wasielewski, Phil Wisneski

- **Research Excellence Awards**
  - **Research Excellence**
    - Gediminas Mainelis
  - **Sustained Research & Impact**
    - Donald Schaffner

- **Academic Professional Excellence Awards**
  - **Excellence in Teaching**
    - Karen Schaich
  - **Academic Innovation**
    - David Tulloch
  - **Outstanding Undergraduate Advisor**
    - Scott Glenn
Rutgers Cooperative Extension Awards

Extension Faculty
Jerome Frecon

State Program Coordinator
Macy Compton

Program Assistant
Barbara Navatto (Photo l to r: Barbara Navatto, Mary Jane Willis, Mark Robson, Karyn Malinowski)

Support Staff
Bonnie Wasielewski

Staff Recognition Award
Kenneth Karamichael and Kathleen Maguire

George H. Cook Distinguished Alumni Awards
Joseph Cialone, Linda Madison, Robert E. Snieckus

Dennis M. Fenton Distinguished Graduate Alumni Award
Roy H. DeBoer

Alpha Zeta Awards

Teacher of the Year
Bruce Hamilton

Senior of the Year
Mahmoud Michael Esmail

Junior of the Year
Kathryn E. Barry

Sophomore of the Year
Stacey Chung

Freshman of the Year
Jillian M. Boden

Science Communication Award
Katherine Bradbury

(Photo right: Melissa Hobor, G. H. Cook Scholar, talks about her future plans.)
Dipak Sarkar’s (Animal Sciences) laboratory discovered a novel treatment protocol to prevent prostate and other cancers. The lab is able to make beta-endorphin neurons in vitro; when these neurons were transplanted in animals, they prevented the growth and progression of prostate cancer. These findings will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

David E. Fairbrothers (emeritus, Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) has been selected as the recipient of The Garden Club of New Jersey 2008 Medal. This is the club’s highest honor. The medal will be presented during the club’s Awards Banquet and Annual Meeting on May 22, at the Bridgewater Marriott Hotel.

Rodney A. Rountree (alumnus, Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources) was interviewed for a *New York Times* article titled “*What’s Making That Awful Racket? Surprisingly, It May Be Fish.*”

Lisa Rodenburg (Environmental Sciences) mentored Amtul Monsoor, a senior at John F. Kennedy Memorial High School, who participated in the North Jersey Regional Science Fair at Rutgers, March 14–15. She won second place in the category of plant science ($100 savings bond) and was given a U.S. Air Force Award (given to eight of the approximately 200 students). Rodenburg helped Amtul use the equipment in the DES teaching lab to measure the production of methane by hissing cockroaches. Amtul’s project demonstrated that after the cockroaches were dosed with antibiotic, which kills the bacteria in their guts and therefore shuts down methane production, cockroaches that received vitamin E experienced faster recovery of their intestinal bacteria, as evidenced by faster recovery of methane production.

Carey Williams (specialist in equine management) was recently inducted into the U.S. Pony Club’s Academy of Achievement Inductee “in recognition of her outstanding achievements after graduation from a member club of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc., and for her participation in the 2008 National Youth Congress.”

Tom Montville (Food Science) will be biking 3,800 miles—from California to New Hampshire over the course of 52 days to raise funds for Elijah’s Promise, an agency that aims to move people out of poverty. Montville has supported Elijah’s Promise for over 20 years by volunteering in the soup kitchen, distributing clothes, and donating money. An avid cycler, Montville will start his ride on May 31. His goal is to raise $38,000 which comes to $10 a mile. It is estimated that this total will allow Elijah’s Promise to serve more than 15,000 meals. Donations can be made online at [http://www.elijahspromise.net/](http://www.elijahspromise.net/).

Ann Gould (extension specialist, Plant Biology) and Mark Miller (Environmental Sciences) have been elected to represent the school on the University Senate for terms ending in 2011.
Ilya Raskin (Plant Biology and Pathology) was elected a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts in March. The Academy hosts about 1,300 of Europe’s top scientists and artists as members (among them 15 Nobel laureates), who approach issues facing Europe and the globe in various colloquia and publications.

Paul Falkowski (IMCS) was interviewed by Richard Harris of NPR, as part of its coverage of “Outlook for Oceans Bleak as Sea ‘Deserts’ Grow” on All Things Considered. Click here to read, or here to listen.

Peter Rona (IMCS) served on the National Research Council Associateship Program panel for Engineering/Applied Science/Math, March 20–21 in Washington, DC.

New Jersey Association of 4-H Agents Annual Awards
Excellence in 4-H Programming Awards

Jeanette Rea-Keywood, Cumberland County 4-H agent and Cheryl McCormick, Cumberland County 4-H program assistant for “Exploring Agriculture Summer Enrichment”
Laura Bovitz, Middlesex County 4-H agent and Abbie Kesely, Middlesex County 4-H program assistant for “Volunteer Counselors as Partners in Summer Camp Programming”
Laura Bovitz, Middlesex County 4-H agent; Abbie Kesely, Middlesex County 4-H program assistant; Bill Hlubik, Middlesex County agricultural agent; Rich Weidman, Middlesex County 4-H program associate; Matt Bickerton; Jessica Baculis; Jhon Othoa; and David Smela for “Eco-ventures at the Earth Center”
Chad Ripberger, Mercer County 4-H agent; Sharon Gore, Mercer County 4-H program associate; Karen Mansue, Ocean County 4-H program associate; Annette Devitt, Salem County 4-H agent; Abbie Kesely, Middlesex County 4-H program assistant; and Terri Yost, Morris County 4-H program associate for “Trenton Food & Fitness Ambassador Training”

Zhi Xu (postdoctoral fellow in Judith Storch’s lab) received a Travel Award from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology to attend the Experimental Biology meeting in San Diego.

Marcia and Tom Blackwell, owners of Blackwell’s Organic Gelato and clients of Rutgers NJAES Food Innovation Center, have received Edible Jersey’s First Annual Readers’ Choice Local Hero Award for best New Jersey food artisan.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

Melanie Spero (graduating senior in Biotechnology) has been selected as the undergraduate speaker at this year’s University Commencement ceremony. The university’s 242nd Anniversary Commencement ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 21, at 1:30 p.m. on Voorhees Mall. University Commencement is a universitywide ceremony at which the president of the university formally confers all undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded throughout the past academic year.

Amy DeMicco (undergraduate in Biochemistry) was awarded a Pfizer Travel Award to attend the Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA, March 20.
Ronela Belasa (senior, Biological Sciences), Robert Kennedy (junior, Plant Science), ChenryLee Lewis (senior, Sociology), Jihoon Park (junior, Exercise and Sports Studies), and Michael Sitaras (junior, Plant Science) submitted one of the four winning entries to the Rutgers Energy Institute’s Capping Rutgers Carbon Emissions contest. Their winning entry is entitled “Green Roof Systems” and would reduce university fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions by using existing campus building rooftops to implement a low-cost and efficient system of “green roofs.”

Sharron Crane (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) has been appointed as a Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning graduate fellow.

Holly Vuong (graduate program in Ecology and Evolution) gave an invited presentation at the 9th Annual meeting of the NJ Mosquito Control Association in Atlantic City, March 11–14. The title of her talk was "An exotic pathogen in an arid landscape: Ecological associations of West Nile virus and avian hosts of southern New Mexico."

Xian Huang (incoming graduate student in Environmental Sciences) received a 2008–2009 Rutgers Energy Institute Graduate Fellowship to work on bio-ammonia for hydrogen production with Donna Fennell (Environmental Sciences) and S. Prakash (Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering).

Josef Kardos (graduate student in Environmental Sciences) presented a poster, “Water Quality Trading in the Non-Tidal Passaic River Basin,” at the 73rd Annual Conference of the New Jersey American Water Works Association, in Atlantic City, NJ, on March 26. The poster earned second place in the student poster competition.

Yevgen Nazarenko (graduate student in Environmental Sciences) received a scholarship from the Air and Waste Management Association to support his Ph.D. research.

Sindia Sosdian (graduate program in Oceanography) has been awarded a Sir Keith Murdoch Fellowship to continue her research in paleo-climatology, paleo-oceanography, and oceanography at the Australian National University.

Katye Altieri (graduate program in Oceanography) was selected to receive an Outstanding Student Talk Award for her presentation at the recent ASLO/TOS/AGU Ocean Sciences Meeting in Orlando, FL (3-7 May). These awards are reserved for the top 6% of student presentations (15 out of 268 eligible student talks) as determined by session chairs.

Melitza Crespo-Medina (Microbiology/Molecular Genetics) received an Outstanding Student Poster Presentation Award at the Ocean Sciences Meeting (March 2–7, Orlando, FL), which was sponsored by the American Society for Limnology and Oceanography. She presented a poster on "Microbe-Mercury Interactions at Deep-sea Hydrothermal Vents from the East Pacific Rise at 9ºN." Authors: Melitza Crespo-Medina, Aspassia Chatzieffthimiou, Nicolas Bloom, George W. Luther, John Reinfelder, Costantino Vetriani, and Tamar Barkay.
Rutgers undergraduate Oceanography program was highlighted in a recent NJN news report. Students are getting hands-on research experience by preparing underwater robotic gliders for a 1,500-mile journey from New Jersey to Nova Scotia, Canada. The report can be found here (segment begins approximately 15 minutes into the broadcast).

Jo Anne Crouch (graduate program in Plant Biology) was selected as the recipient of the Mycological Society of America (MSA) Memorial NAMA Graduate Fellowship ($2,000). The award will be presented at the MSA annual meeting at Penn State.

Luis Mejia (graduate program in Plant Biology) was selected as the recipient of the Mycological Society of America Backus Award ($1,000) for graduate students. The award will be presented at the MSA annual meeting at Penn State.

Luis Mejia and Tengbo Huang (graduate program in Plant Biology) were awarded the Spencer Davis Plant Biology Student Research Award for 2008.

Grants

Michael Lawton (Plant Science) and Nilgun Tumer (Plant Biology and Pathology) had annual funding renewed for separate projects through the USDA’s Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative. Both are working on resistance to fusarium head blight. Lawton was funded for a third year at $54,000 and Tumer’s project was funded at $60,000, for a sixth year of support.

The NSF awarded a new $450,000 grant to Eric Lam (Plant Biology and Pathology) for research on metacaspases in plant development and cell death.

Christopher Obropta (Environmental Sciences) arranged a Memorandum of Understanding between the NJDEP and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to develop a pilot program that hires five new tenure-track environmental county agents. This provides the NJAES the opportunity to work with local communities to address suburban and urban environmental issues. NJDEP will provide $750,000 in funding for the first three years of this pilot program.

Annette Devitt (Salem County 4-H agent); Nurgul Fitzgerald (extension specialist in health promotion and behavior); Daryl Minch (Somerset County FCHS educator); Kathleen Morgan (FCHS department chair); and Marilou Rochford (Cape May County FCHS educator), received $50,000 from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services–Division of Adolescent Health for “Get Moving – Get Healthy New Jersey.”

Chad Ripberger (Mercer County 4-H agent), Sharon Kinsey (Camden County 4-H agent); Robert Atkins (Rutgers-Camden Center for Children and Childhood Studies); Jennae DuBois (Passaic County 4-H program associate); Miss Harmon (Mercer County Urban 4-H program associate); Tamara Pellien (Bergen County 4-H program associate); Sharice Richardson (assistant dean); and Jenice Sabb (assistant director of special programs) received an RCE Community Enhancement Award of $50,000 for Urban Youth, STEM, and Quality Out-of-School Environments: A Promising Intersection of Audience, Content, and Context.
Hernan Arango (IMCS) received $80,036 from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution for "Community Sediment-Transport Model."

Kay Bidle (IMCS) received $43,054 from NSF for "Examination of the Autocatalytic Cell Death Machinery in Marine, Planktonic Photoautotrophs."

Robert Chant (IMCS) received $72,627 from the University of Delaware for "Mechanisms of Sediment Trapping & Accumulation in Newark Bay, NJ."

Scott Glenn (IMCS) received $105,451 from the Office of Naval Research for "Characterizing Mesoscale Physical Oceanography on the New Jersey Shelf - NLIWI" (Non-Linear Internal Wave Initiative).

Lee Kerkhof (IMCS) received $118,393 from the U.S. Department of Energy for "Structure & Function of Subsurface Microbial Communities."

Mike Kennish (IMCS) received $51,182 from NJDEP for "Assessment of Eutrophication in the Barnegat Bay-Little Egg Harbor System: Use of SAV Biotic Indicators of Estuarine Condition."

Janice McDonnell (IMCS) received $55,000 from the Geraldine Dodge Foundation for "Marine Activities Resources & Education Program 2008."

Robert Sherrell (IMCS) received $100,000 from the American Chemical Society-Petroleum Research Fund for "Development & Application of a Direct Coral Proxy for Surface Water Phosphate in the Paleo-Ocean." Sherrell also received $430,947 from NSF for "A Coral Skeleton P/Ca Proxy for Surface Ocean Phosphate: Testing and Calibration."

Gary Taghon and Ken Able (IMCS) received $93,159 from the NSF for "REU Site: Research Internships in Ocean Sciences."

Ann Gould (Plant Biology and Pathology) received a $14,007 grant from the Tree Fund for her project "Bacterial Leaf Scorch of Oak: Early Warning Techniques for Arborists."

Dave Foord (Sussex County 4-H program associate) and Jim Nichnadowicz (Union County 4-H agent) both received $1,400 through the 2008 Youth in Action Grant, National 4-H Council, and Cumberland Farms.

Publications and Editorships

Beth Ravit (Environmental Sciences) conceived, coordinated, and edited a series of five papers related to the Teaneck Creek Conservancy wetland restoration project. The papers were published online in March 2008 in Urban Habitats:

- Arnold, M. Historical Perspectives.
• Ravit, B., Rohleder, L, Johnson, L., Ehrenfeld, J., Kallin, P. A Vegetation Survey of Teaneck Creek Wetlands.
• Bergstrom, J., Kallin, P., Obropta, C. Implementing Restoration Projects Upstream from the Teaneck Creek Conservancy.

Michele LaVigne’s (graduate fellow, IMCS) paper, "Skeletal P/Ca tracks upwelling in Gulf of Panamá coral: Evidence for a new seawater phosphate proxy," was published in Geophysical Research Letters and featured in the “Editor’s Choice” section of Science. Co-authors are Eleni Anagnostou and Paul Field of Robert Sherrell’s lab.

Dawn Brasaemle (Nutritional Sciences) has been appointed to a five-year term on the editorial board of the Journal of Biological Chemistry and reappointed to a three-year term on the Journal of Lipid Research.

Conference, Seminars, and Other Events

Gerben Zylstra (Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment), along with Jeff Rankin (School of Engineering assistant dean and Busch Campus dean), hosted a group of students from the University of São Paulo in Brazil and the University of Porto in Portugal April 23 to 27. The students came to Rutgers as part of the annual undergraduate exchange program of student scholars. The visiting students presented their research in poster format and participated in the Aresty Research Symposium, the George H. Cook Thesis presentations, and enjoyed Ag Field Day.

Doug Eveleigh (Biochemistry and Microbiology) gave an invited talk on “Impacts of Soil Microbiology: The view from Rutgers University” at the Thai-American Symposium on Plant Biomass, Biotechnology and Agriculture, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, April 8. Eveleigh also gave an invited talk on “The Waksman Foundation” at the Waksman Foundation of Japan in Tokyo, April 11.

Lori White (Biochemistry and Microbiology) co-chaired a symposium entitled “Advances in Technology and Increasing Acceptance for Zebrafish Use in Drug Discovery” at the Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, March 19.

Max Häggblom (Biochemistry and Microbiology) visited the Finnish Forest Research Institute in Rovaniemi, Finland, in March for a project meeting. Haggblom is the PI on a new four-year project funded by the Academy of Finland to study the impact of climate fluctuations on microbial communities responsible for carbon and nitrogen cycling in Arctic soils.

Donna Fennell (Environmental Sciences) presented an invited talk entitled “Combined Physical-Chemical-Biological Treatment of Aniline and Parachloroaniline” to the DuPont Chambers Works Technical Team and the Science Advisory Board on March 27.
Lily Young (Environmental Sciences) gave a keynote presentation, “Microbes are the Best Chemists in the World: Making a Living on Arsenic,” at the Symposium on Frontiers in Environmental Microbiology: The Emerging Roles of Microbes in a Changing World. The event was held March 14 in Gurabo, Puerto Rico.

William Hallman (Food Policy Institute and Human Ecology), Caron Chess (Human Ecology), Cara Cuite (FPI), Mary Nucci (FPI), and Andrew Pleasant (Human Ecology) presented an invited seminar entitled “Examining the 2006 Spinach Crisis from Multiple Perspectives” to the USDA’s Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, in Washington, D.C., and to the U.S. FDA Center for Food Safety and Nutrition, in College Park, MD, on March 10. A copy of their presentation can be found here.


In observance of its centennial, Saint Peter’s University Hospital, an affiliate of Drexel University’s College of Medicine, sponsored a Grand Rounds Lecture Series. On March 18, Hans Fisher (professor emeritus, Nutritional Sciences) presented the Grand Rounds Lecture “Alcoholism, Fatty Liver, Diet and Drug Treatment.”

Nurgul Fitzgerald (Nutritional Sciences) chaired a mini symposium titled “Community and Public Health Nutrition Interventions I” at the Experimental Biology Conference in San Diego on April 5.

Rutgers NJAES Office of Continuing Professional Education, together with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, hosted a “Bee-ginner’s Beekeeping” course earlier this month. The course is proving so popular that a second was added and promptly sold out. A third class is being considered for the fall. The course was covered in the Courier Post and The Times.

Gef Flimlin (Ocean County Marine Extension Agent), working with colleagues from the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association, held workshops with shellfish growers from MD, NJ, CT, and RI in three separate sites to expand their discussion on best management practices (BMP). Funded by USDA Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center, the project seeks to develop a code of practice and a set of BMPs that states can adopt or adapt to fit their specific needs. Sessions were held in Maine and Massachusetts in March followed by sessions in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina/Georgia, and Florida.

Bill Sciarappa (Monmouth County agricultural agent) organized the Central Jersey Vegetable Growers Conference in Freehold on February 8. Nearly 140 people attended to hear Rutgers specialists and agents speak on crop production issues as well as to get updates from NRCS, Farm Service Agency, Farm Bureau, and NJDA. This 10-year vegetable program has had progressive growth in attendance (from 40 to 90 to 140) and attendees reported a high degree of satisfaction—over 75% rated the meeting excellent, and 25% rated it good in all categories.
Rutgers Annual “Horse Management Seminar” offered advice to over 100 new and prospective horse owners. “So you want to own a horse? And if you already do, what next?” was the theme of the 2008 Horse Management Seminar held January 26 and sponsored by Rutgers NJAES Equine Science Center, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, and the New Jersey Horse Council. The seminar was coordinated by Carey Williams (specialist in equine management).

FYI

Rutgers Turf Research Golf Classic
WHEN: May 5
WHERE: Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club, Far Hills, NJ
CONTACT: Shaun Barry, 732-846-8173

Rutgers Gardens Spring Flower Fair
WHEN: May 10, 9:00 a.m. to May 11, 4 p.m.
WHERE: The Rutgers Gardens
CONTACT: Mary Ann Schrum (schrum@aesop.rutgers.edu), 732-932-8451.
FOR MORE INFO: http://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/

Rutgers University’s 242nd Anniversary Commencement
WHEN: May 21, at 1:30 p.m.
WHERE: Voorhees Mall, College Avenue Campus
FOR MORE INFO: http://commencement.rutgers.edu/

2008 Cook College Graduation Convocation
WHEN: May 23, 10 a.m. (or, in the case of inclement weather, in the Louis Brown Recreation Center at 10:30 a.m.)
WHERE: Passion Puddle Lawn
SPEAKER: Eva J. Pell (Ph.D. in plant biology, Rutgers, ’72) Senior Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School at Pennsylvania State University
CONTACT: Patricia Kastner (Kastner@aesop.rutgers.edu), 732-932-7000, ext. 4211.
FOR MORE INFO: http://sebs.rutgers.edu/graduation/

Please send contributions, photos, and questions to Amanda Kolling, kolling@aesop.rutgers.edu. Photos must be of high resolution and should add to the editorial value of a submission. 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.
Greetings from Rutgers Ag Field Day!
April 26, 2008