



# The G.S.A. NEWSLETTER

*a publication of the  
Graduate Student Association  
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine*

**VOLUME 10**

**NUMBER 3**

**JAN./FEB. 2001**

## **Notes from the GSA: A Time for Thank You's**

By Tina Tenenhaus

We're half way through another academic year...good news for first years trudging through classes...probably a scary thought for the rest of us. The last few months have definitely been eventful from the perspective of the Graduate Student Association. Rather than patting the collective "GSA" on the back for all that's been done, I thought I would point out the several individuals who have made things happen. Consider today's article a big Thank You! column.

In November Dr. Phillip Sharp presented this year's first Pioneers in Science lecture. Aurora Kerscher, Jutta Beneken, Joanna Zarach and Cheryl Dunbar Warren helped to advertise the event, organize a dinner with students and prepare the reception. Clearly Dr. Sharp's visit was well received by students and faculty alike. I was very happy to see such a huge turnout to the lecture and the voracious interest by students in meeting with him for dinner. Your positive response gives us the feeling that it is all worth it. Many thanks to you and to our speaker committee who helped plan his visit. Perhaps now is a good time to mention that Dr. Mark Ptashne is going to be giving the second lecture in this series on Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>. I will hold one organizational meeting in early-mid February to get

ready for his visit. Here's a great opportunity to get in on the action without feeling bogged down by a long-standing committee (the GSA is going through an anti committee era because that "c-word" has such negative bureaucratic connotations).

Baltimore has many great opportunities for community service and the GSA will gladly sponsor (i.e. provide lunch for!) most any service activity that a graduate student wants to organize. So far we've had two GSA sponsored service days. Last fall Jason Ravenel and about 10 other graduate students participated in the annual Volunteer Central day. We, together with thousands of other folks, spent the day improving various aspects of our community. Our group went to an elementary school in SW Baltimore and repainted some blacktop games (we also reminded ourselves how to play hopscotch), painted over graffiti, and landscaped the area. On one of the warmer Saturdays in January (thank goodness) a group of about 15 students, organized by Marina Lee, went out to help with a housing project run by Habitat for Humanity. We learned how to operate power tools and find the Zen of a hammer. I think most of us are still searching for the Zen, based on the number of bent nails that I saw. At least we can operate a pipette.

By now anyone who was parking at the Thames Street lot is probably

## *Upcoming GSA Meeting: February 20*

*\*\*\* 517 PCTB \*\*\**

Note: Meeting day and time have changed to the **3rd** Tuesday of each month at **3 pm**

## Upcoming Lectures

Pioneers in Biology Lecture  
Mark Ptashne, Ph.D.  
February 26, 2001

BCMB Lecture  
Eric Wieschaus, Ph.D.  
February 12, 2001

### Announcement

**Science Fair Judges Needed**  
The Baltimore Hebrew Congregational Day School is looking for volunteer science fair judges for grades 2 through 9. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, from 11am to 3pm. No prior experience is necessary; both faculty and students are welcome!  
For more information, contact Niki Cutler at <nikirc@yahoo.com>.

*Continued on page 3*

## **Q & A with Rachel Green**

An interview with CMM correspondent Dan Gorelick

*Dr Green studies the role of ribosomal RNA in protein translation. She's an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics and a HHMI Assistant Investigator. She joined the Hopkins faculty three years ago.*

### **If you were reincarnated as RNA, which type would you be?**

Ribosomal.

### **Any particular subunit?**

I would be the action. 30S is the action—well, it's where the movements happen. It's like the brain [of the ribosome]. That's the obvious answer.

### **Obvious?**

I mean, I'm not going to choose to be telomerase RNA.

### **Do you have any outside interests? Any favorite movies or TV shows or books?**

I watch Thursday night TV because there are two Rachel Greens who feature prominently.

### **Two? As a grad student I can't watch TV so...**

Yeah. 'Friends' and 'ER.' Dr Green's daughter is named Rachel.

### **If you weren't a scientist, what would you be?**

I started as a chemical engineer. I was good at math and science in high school, and I'm female, and when that happens all your [guidance] counselors tell you to go into engineering. I spent my second year of college in France, studying history and poetry. I returned to Michigan and went to my first engineering class. They told me what type of pencils we had to buy and what kinds of paper to use. I dropped out after that first day and went to chemistry.

### **Why chemistry?**

I liked chemistry.

### **How did Biomedical science come into play?**

I did some grunt work in a bio lab my last two years [of college]. My final summer I had my own project, studying flavins. It wasn't anything important, but I liked the atmosphere. I certainly didn't graduate from high school saying 'I want to be a scientist.' It was my exposure to

grad students- I thought this [what they're doing] would be fun.

### **Why RNA?**

After a year of *sir* mutations and genetics [in grad school], I needed to be on the chemical end of things.

### **Why didn't you go into industry?**

I never thought about it [working in industry]. I like academics. I like doing what I want, freedom. I like the whole student thing, and the in-principal pure motivation.

### **Did you publish 'Birth order and the ratio of brothers to sisters in transsexuals' in the July 2000 issue of *Psychological Medicine*?**

Oh, I think there's also some kind of hair article.

### **You mean 'Uncombable-hair syndrome' in *Pediatric Dermatology*?**

Yeah, somebody told me about that one.

### **So those aren't by you?**

No.

### **Rachel Green must be a pretty common name. Do you get complaints from grad students when they try to do PubMed searches on you?**

No. You have to search with 'AND RNA' or 'AND ribosome.' Grad students should learn the 'AND' command. And don't drop the middle initial.

### **You don't have a middle initial.**

Actually, my first name is Dorothy but D. Rachel Green sounds too pretentious.

### **Why do you go by Rachel?**

My parents always wanted to call me Rachel. But they named me after my grandparents and they thought Dorothy Rachel sounded better than Rachel Dorothy.

### **Why did you keep Green after you married?**

I had my whole graduate career published as Green.

### **What kind of car do you drive?**

A Honda Civic.

### **Is that the one with the 'Honk if you love Phylogeny' bumper sticker?**

No—somebody has that?

**Do you plan on giving the same phylogeny question every year on the Molecular Biology exam?**

Yeah, until people get it right. Until everybody gets it right.

**Do you fantasize about travelling back in time and living in the primordial RNA world?**

Definitely. Well, I think the primordial RNA world was really hot, so I don't want to be there. It would get uncomfortable.

**How does Puerto Rico fit in with the hybrid states model?**

It doesn't.

**If all the RNA researchers had to fight the crystallographers, who do you think would win?**

Fight? What kind of fighting?

**Ultimate Fighting Championship style.**

They [the crystallographers] have Jeremy Berg, and he's pretty big.

**What if you guys had Jef Boeke?**

Oh yeah, he'd help.

**Do you do any benchwork?**

I do some, sure. My goal is to do more. The crazy thing? I'm really good at benchwork, at [physically] doing the experiments- that's why I got this job, and now I don't do any.

**Why did you come to Hopkins?**

It was clear that a lot of people were really happy here, scientifically happy. A place where everybody seems to make the family thing work. Also very interactive.

**So that line they feed us when we're applying to the grad school, about how collegial Hopkins is?**

I think it's pretty true.

**Hopkins has a cancer research building. Shouldn't there be an RNA research building also?**

No. RNA hasn't killed many people.

getting used to the new Monument Street lot. As the Thames Street lot neared its close last fall we frantically organized a ridership survey. Our goal was to determine how many riders were not actually parking at the lot, but simply using the shuttle service to live or hang out at Fells Point. Marina Lee organized a group of students, Melissa Vining, Pam Bradley, Jason Pelletierri, Courtney Harper, Charles Dann, and myself, to pass out and attempt to collect surveys from every single person that got on the shuttle during the time that we stood out there. While our mission was successful in obtaining an estimate on the number of people who would use a Fells Point shuttle, so far we have not been successful in convincing the Hopkins administration to continue providing such a service. It may not be a closed issue, but I'm not holding my breath either.

The biggest news of the semester came somewhat suddenly last November. Dr. James Hildreth has accepted the challenge of an important new position at the National Institutes of Health as the Director of the Office for Research and Training for the new National Center for Research on Minority Health and Health Disparities. While he will retain his lab and faculty position in the Department of Pharmacology his tenure as Associate Dean for Graduate Studies unfortunately has come to end. James was actually the School of Medicine's first Dean of Graduate Students. He brought us from a time when the graduate students apparently didn't even need a dean, to a time when the graduate students outnumber the medical students in the School of Medicine. The Dean has the difficult position of being a problem solver: the guy that deals with issues. But James has done so much more than simply deal with the issues. The establishment of the Dunbar High School cooperative teaching program and the Professional Development Office are just two projects he created to enhance graduate student education. Nothing I could write would even begin to express the gratitude that so many of us feel toward James. From all of us, "Thank You, James!"

**Johns Hopkins Blood Drive**

The next Johns Hopkins Blood Drive will be on March 6-7, 2001 in Turner Concourse.

Donations are accepted from 7am to 7pm on both days. Watch out for informational posters, or call 5-5488 for more information.

## ARE YOU THE TYPE TO SAVE A LIFE?

By Melissa Schaekel

Type for Life, the 2nd annual marrow registration drive, will take place March 12-16, 2001. This student-run event provides FREE convenient registration with the National Marrow Donor Program. Registration, which takes about 20 minutes, involves completing a short health questionnaire and donating about three tablespoons of blood (drawn by professional Hopkins phlebotomists) for a simple blood test called a "tissue type."

Registering with Type for Life is only the first step towards becoming a donor. After the March drive your tissue type is entered anonymously into a national database that is searched daily by thousands of patients needing a marrow transplant. If your type matches a patient's type, you can consider donating to save a life! At no time is there any cost to you, and new donation procedures are safer and more convenient than ever. Your body replaces the donated marrow within a few weeks. Leukemia, breast cancer and other tumors, and many fatal blood diseases are just a few of the diseases your healthy marrow can cure. Everyone is encouraged to participate, and there is a special need for non-caucasian people to register.

Join us in the fight to save lives through marrow donation. Mark your calendar to register with Type for Life at the most convenient time and place listed below. For more information about Type for Life, please call 410-502-7716 or visit our web site at <[www.typeforlife.org](http://www.typeforlife.org)>. Are you the type to save a life? Come and find out:

March 12: School of Nursing, Carpenter Room, 8am-5pm

March 13: School of Medicine, PCTB 113, 8am-5pm

March 14: School of Public Health, Anna Baetjer Room, 8am-5pm

March 15: JHH, Children's Zoo, 8am-5pm; JHBayview, Pavilion Conference Center, 10:30am-7pm

March 16: JHH, Children's Zoo, 8am-4pm; JHBayview, Pavilion Conference Center, 7am-1pm

### **The pen is mightier than the pipet...**

Please send any poems, short stories, creative writing, essays, photos, or black and white art to the *GSA Newsletter!*

Submissions for the next issue will be due **March 23, 2001**

### ***GSA Newsletter Editors and Staff***

*Karen Pinco*      *kpinco*

*Emily Overholser*   *eoverhol*

*Soo Hee Lee*        *shlee*

*fax 955-4129, attn. Karen Pinco,*  
*snail mail: Karen Pinco, GSA Newsletter*  
*WBSB 120, 725 N. Wolfe St.*  
*Baltimore, MD 21205*

### **Annoucement**

I am a Brownie (girl scout) leader looking for help with a program on African Culture. We are planning an event for the afternoon of March 4 and are looking for guests to demonstrate/teach the girls African crafts, cooking, dancing etc. If you would be interested, or know someone in the community who might like to help us, please contact me at 410-889-4260.

Corinne Sandone

Medical Illustrator, Assistant Professor  
Art as Applied to Medicine

1830 East Monument Street, Suite 7000

tel (410) 955-3213

fax (410) 955-1085