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1995-96 GSA TEACHER OF THE YEAR: SUSAN MICHAELIS

by Catharine E. Johnson

I was not really surprised to find that Susan Michaelis was elected the GSA Teacher of the Year. The first time I interacted with her I was a confused undergrad struggling with yeast genetics during a summer in another lab. I stumbled into her office one day for help, virtually without introduction, and expected simply to be handed a protocol and 50 ul of a-factor. I received much more, however. She sat me down, and we talked at length about my project. I was surprised to be greeted with such patience, encouragement and helpfulness - she treated me as a colleague, though I certainly didn't see myself as one. Many students know Susan for her involvement with the first year Genetics course, which she helped develop and still lectures in. Susan and co-director Jef Boeke had a clear vision of what they wanted students to gain from this class: not only an understanding of model organisms and principles of genetics, but problem solving skills and the opportunity for students to learn from each other as colleagues. In addition to teaching graduate and medical students since her arrival at Hopkins, Susan has spent four years directing the Cold Spring Harbor Course in Yeast Genetics.

It may seem strange to those of us who have seen her love of yeast genetics, but Susan did not always know that she wanted to be a bioscientist. A double major in anthropology and biology at Oberlin College, her only real exposure to a lab outside of classes was a job autoclaving glassware and reagents. She spent her college summers on archeology digs, and tended to "lean towards anthropology" when considering life after college. In the end, however, she tentatively interviewed for a job in a bacterial genetics lab at Tufts School of Medicine. Upon walking into the lab, she felt immedi-

ately "at home in the informal atmosphere...it just fit." She worked as a technician for 4 years, during which she "enjoyed a full life without the responsibility of being a graduate student." She then went on to graduate school in John Beckwith's lab at Harvard Medical School, where she identified signal sequence mutations in the alkaline phosphatase gene of *E. coli*. Looking back, she laughs to think that her entire thesis project "could feasibly be done now as a rotation project." Recombinant DNA technology was a novelty during her time in graduate school, and Susan recalls the most difficult point in graduate school being her decision to use this new technology "against the advice of her mentor and two senior postdocs." She was the first person in the lab to break with all tradition and not use an *in vivo* selection.

When faced with a career decision, Susan has always trusted her instincts. While in graduate school, she "intentionally rotated in the 'hot' field as well as [her] own areas of interest," but when it came time to finish up her graduate work, Susan recalls
(see Teacher, page 2)

Future GSA Meetings

July 9

GSA Budget

August 13

Orientation &

GSA Picnic Planning

GSA Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2pm in Hunterian Room G-5.

Career Symposium

The GSA and PDA are organizing another Career Symposium for October 14. Keep the date free.

Orioles Tickets

Tickets will be available for the traditional Orioles game when the new students arrive. The game will be Sept. 9th. Tickets will be available at the end of August.

GSA Picnic

The Fall GSA Picnic will be back at the Wymann Dell. Look for details. Contact Holly Berkovits with questions at hjb@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu.

MEDLINE AND BEYOND

Most would agree that science has changed a great deal over the past 25 years. The successful scientist these days wears many hats. S/he is not only highly proficient at the bench top, but an engaging speaker, a good writer, and an able manager and politician. In order to wear all these hats successfully, a scientist must be able to keep up with the rapid explosion of scientific and related information. Just scanning the tables of contents of a few select journals and attending journal clubs is simply old-fashioned and is not adequate for keeping up with what happens on the front lines of science. Fortunately, for the Hopkins community, Kerry Brandt, PhD., M.L.S. has organized Medline and Beyond: Survival Skills for Scientific Communication. This short course provides an overview of biomedical information sources as well as hands on experience in using the Internet, World Wide Web and a variety of literature and bioinformatics databases. The course is open to first and second year graduate students at the School of Medicine and is being offered this summer beginning on July 10. Contact Kerry Brandt at 5-1307 or at kab@welch.jhu.edu to sign up. Don't get stranded on the information superhighway!

Lesley Brown

Minutes from the June Meeting:

1. Budget

The GSA budget has been re-instated. We are funded above our previous level, and need to plan events for the next fiscal year. Discussions regarding the budget will be held in the next several meetings.

2. Elections

Elections were postponed until July, due to the news of our budget. Nominations for President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer are being accepted. (e-mail Catharine Johnson at cejohns@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu)

3. Stipend Levels

Those present at the meeting discussed and voted on whether the GSA supports funding graduate students at similar 'net' stipends (post-federal tax) or at similar 'gross' stipend levels. The outcome of the vote and a list of those present was passed on to the MA-PhD Committee. The MA-PhD committee has since voted to approve the same gross stipend levels for all graduate students regardless of tax liability/burden. This only means that the MA-PhD committee supports this policy, and does not mean that the Dean's office will approve the policy change, or when any change would go into effect.

4. Community Service

The GSA is organizing community service events in the fall. Check the web page for more info. or e-mail Ann Marie Egloff (amegloff@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu)

CHECK OUT THE NEW GSA WEB PAGE

<http://www.med.jhu.edu/gsa/GSAmain.html>

Some of what you will find:

Information on GSA Meetings
Upcoming GSA Social Events
JOBS and Career Opportunities
Graduate Program Contacts
plus links to Hopkins sites

thanks to Michael Egan and Mason Meers for setting this up

Congratulations to this year's Graduates !

Masters of Arts

Renee Cannon
Tae Wook Chun
John Dorn
Suzanne Hong
Blakely Kim

Emiko Koike
Sarah Parsons
Quade Paul
Lawrence Womack
Tami Yahraus



Ph.D.'s

Michael Atalay
Allison Balogh
Carol Berkower
David Blake
Kimberly Brown
Shawn Burgess
Deborah Cabin
Yu-Jiun Chan
David Chang
Qinghua Feng
Matt Fishler
Margaret Guo

Matt Hall
Ronald Heinrich
James Hsieh
Eduardo Hsu
Aileen Huang
Robert Johnson
Jennifer Kalish
Adam Kaplin
Ji-Yun Kim
Kristy Kraemer
Ian Krop
Smadar Lapidot

Michael Lebowitz
John Lee
Andy Libson
Ying Litingtung
Alice Liu
Amy Lo
James Mahoney
Barry Margulies
David Mears
Jenna McKee-Johnson
Andrea Mook
Christopher Moore

Susumu Mori
Katherine Rafferty
Laura Rocco
Katherine Roche
Noriko Saitoh
Chandak Sengoopta
Brian Soher
Debra Wright Tingley
Whittemore Tingley
Chris Umbricht
Diana Weedman
Chris Wiese

Teacher (con't from p.1)

"I really didn't know what to do...I tried to think smart about what I should be doing, however I ultimately decided based upon what really grabbed me, which was genetics...genetics is a certain way of thinking." She felt graduate school had passed all too quickly, and decided to immerse herself in a different culture for awhile by taking a short postdoc in the lab of Maxim Schwartz at the Pasteur Institute, where she worked on the gene for pullulanase, a secreted protein of *Klebsiella pneumoniae*. Susan's time in France was followed by a postdoc with Ira Herskowitz at UCSF, where she began her work in yeast on the a-factor pathway. Susan joined the Hopkins faculty in the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy in 1988, founding a yeast lab focused on the biogenesis and secretion of the *S. cerevisiae* a-factor mating pheromone. Susan feels that it is important for scientists to "recognize the interplay in your own research [and other fields]...see it in the general sphere" and recommends that students "choose a problem with general implications for all cells, that also has very specific implications for the area you're interested in."

Susan distinguishes herself among Hopkins faculty for having an extensive collection of really neat vests, and when not in the lab she is an avid gardener, jogger and bicyclist. She shares a home in Mt. Washington with Nancy Craig, a Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, and two feline friends, Amanda and Zachary, whom she "talks about all the time."

Susan enjoys the didactic aspects of teaching, and likens the satisfaction of lecturing to writing a review article, but it is the one-on-one interaction, the informal teaching that she values most, and loves the "process of watching a student become a colleague." Her dedication and skill in teaching is widely appreciated by students, as indicated by the comments that accompanied her votes, such as the "Teacher of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching should go to Susan Michaelis...who brought both clarity and sophistication into the art of teaching."

Editors Note: Susan Michaelis was also awarded the Professors' Award for Distinction in Teaching in the Pre-Clinical Division by the Professors' Award Committee.

For inquiries about advertising or publicizing upcoming events, please phone Carolyn Sevier at 410-955-9650.

The GSANEWSLETTER is edited by
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