

CSB/SJU BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Number 4

October 8, 1999

1. Message from the Chair

Whoever coined the phrase, "there's no such thing as a free lunch: didn't know about next weeks' visit by Dr. Philip Hessburg. We are very excited about his visit, not only because of the **free lunch** that will be available before his Friday lecture, but because he will be presenting two interesting public lectures. Thursday's lecture is "What Medicine has to Offer/Not Offer in the Next 50 Years" and on Friday he will tell us that "Everything has not been Invented". I hope that you can join us for these lectures. For more details check below.

Next week is also important because October 12th has been designated as "Six Billion Person Day" by the United Nations to recognize that our population has surpassed this mega-milestone. It's hard to comprehend the magnitude of this number, but it is even more difficult to imagine when it will stop. The human carrying capacity has been variously estimated anywhere from 8 – 20 billion. Considering that some people, like myself, consider population growth to be the root of our environmental problems, October 12 will be no day to celebrate.

However, since October 12 is also Columbus Day, I will be celebrate my favorite (biologically speaking) holiday. Columbus Day is a great time to reflect on the biological consequences of the Old World meeting the New World. As an example, consider our quintessential "American" dessert – apple pie ("Mom, apple pie and flag"). Not one ingredient in this tasty treat is native to North America; apples and wheat (crust) are native to the Near East, sugar to the Far East (cane, or Europe (sugar beets), and cinnamon from SE Asia. Similarly, tomatoes and potatoes, which are synonymous with Italian and Irish cuisine, respectively, are natives of South and Central America. Szechwan cooking owes its fire to peppers from Central America. No matter what you think about the controversies surrounding this day (*i.e.*, was Columbus really the first, the impact on Native Americans), Columbus Day is great time to appreciate the international origin and diversity of our cuisine.

Well, have a great long weekend and see ya at a seminar.

2. Student News:

Kelly Deutsch (Senior, Natural Science Major) – gave a great seminar about her internship experience with the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District during the summer of 1998. Kelly's seminar included slides and a video of her on Channel 11 news. Among the interesting things we learned is that a single pond the size of a football field can harbor over a million mosquitoes.

Andrea Berg (Nat Sci Major), **Ryan Hansen** (Biol major); **Alex Mettler** (Biol Major), **Matt Tinguely** (Biol major), and **Tom Warrington** (Nat Sci major) were among the students who attended the recent Nobel Symposium about genetics that was held at Gustavus Adolphus College.

Stephen McGreevey (Biology Major) and **Sarah Young** (Biology Major) – played host to more than 150 children from St. Peter and Paul Elementary School (St. Cloud) who visited

the CSB/SJU Biology Department Herbarium. They told the students about the herbarium and then had them prepare a mini-herbarium specimen.

Elizabeth Clysdale (CSB '95) – has a new job in Minnesota Pollution Control. She writes that she has “jumped head first into the world of industrial waste. And it is a strange one. So far, my oddest request was to land spread 2 million gallons of molasses in January. I suggested that they give it to farmers for cattle feed, the molasses might never come out of the trucks with the cold spell they were having...My learning curve is very high and there are lots of opportunities!!

3. Faculty News:

Dr. Charles Rodell - attended the recent Nobel Symposium at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. The topic of the symposium was “genetics”. Dr. Rodell reports that one of the presenters, Craig Venter, runs a gene sequence lab and that the automated sequencers he uses cost \$300,000 each. He has one hundred of them!

4. Curriculum News

5. Biology Club News: The Biology Club is planning for Halloween Science activities. Contact Kari Recker or Betsy Heins for details.

6. Calendar of Events:

Oct 12	Six Billion People Day
Oct 14	“What Medicine has to Offer/Not Offer in the Next 50 Years” - Dr. Philip Hessburg, President Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology – ASC 142; 4:30 PM
Oct 15	“Everything has not been Invented” - Dr. Philip Hessburg, President Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology – SC248; 11:45 (LUNCH served)
Oct 19	Peace Studies Conference: SJU – Quad 264; 1:00 – 9:00 pm.
Oct 19	“Men’s Health Issues and cancer” Lecture – Matt Byrne; 3:00 SJU Alumni Lounge
Oct 20	“Wildlife Conservation in Zimbabwe” – by Dr. John Peck, Jr.; St. Cloud State University; Heritage Nature Center, St. Cloud, 7:30 p.m.
Oct 21	“Changing Perceptions of U.S. Oil and Gas Resources Based on Four Successive USGS National Petroleum Assessments” - Dr. Thaddius “Ted” Dyman - ASC; 4 PM
Oct 25	“Colon Cancer” lecture – Barbara Hansmeier, SJU Sexton 200
Oct 30	Halloween Science – Biology Club program for elementary kids
Nov 2	“Careers Working with the Environment” -TRC@CSB-7:00 PM
Nov 3-5	International Conference on Ethnomedicine and Drug Discovery
Nov 4	NSF Applications are due
Nov 11	“Microbial Magic: The Production of New Drugs by Combinatorial Biology” ; Dr. David Sherman, University of Minnesota; Department of Microbiology
Dec 2	“The South African Study Abroad Program 1999: What Really Went On?” Dr. Stephen G. Saupe; College of St. Benedict/St. John’s University; Biology Department; SC 325; 4:00 PM

7. Internships/Scholarships/Jobs

8. Seminars/Lectures/Symposia:

There are some great seminars coming in the next few months (see Calendar of Events). Mark your calendars now.

"What Medicine Has to Offer/Not Offer in the Next 50 Years" -Thursday, October 14, 1999. Dr. Philip Hessburg, President, Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology, SJU alumnus, will hold a talk to interested premed students at CSB, 142 Ardolf Science Center, 4:30 p.m. Refreshments and snacks will be served prior to the talk. Dr. Hessburg is a former flight surgeon, with experience in both China and Cuba.

"Everything has not been already been invented" - Friday, October 15, 1999. Dr. Philip Hessburg, President, Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology, SJU alumnus will hold a talk to interested students on at SJU, Room 248 SC, 11:45 a.m. refreshments and **LUNCH** will be served prior to the talk. Dr. Hessburg is a former flight surgeon, author of over 40 scientific papers and chapters in five ophthalmic books, is an inventor, lecturer and eye surgeon - he claims that is a tinkerer, not an inventor, is known internationally for the Hessburg Anterior Chamber Intraocular lens, and several other such devices.

"Changing Perceptions of U.S. Oil and Gas Resources Based on Four Successive USGS National Petroleum Assessments"- T.S. Dyman, U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, CO 80225

"Wildlife Conservation in Zimbabwe" – Dr. John Peck, Jr. will speak about elephants, rhinos, giraffes at the meeting of the Central Minnesota Audubon Society. It will be held on Wednesday, October 20, at the Heritage Park Nature Center, across from Cub Foods (West) and WalMart in St. Cloud, at 7:30 p.m.

9. Miscellaneous

Are You Interested in Pre-Med?

Then check out the Pre-Med website: <http://www.csbsju.edu/chemistry/> . Pre-meds should REGISTER (unless they already did so last year) so that we can keep track of people interested in the program.

Scholarship Information

Contact Ms. Johanna Davis, CSB

Biology Department Web Site

Don't forget to visit the department's web site at: <http://www.csbsju.edu/biology/>.

10. Joke of the week: (from Paul Melchior, SJU alum)

A frog goes into a bank and approaches the teller. He can see from her name plate that the teller's name is Patricia Whack. So he says, "Ms. Whack, I'd like to get a loan to buy a boat and go on a long vacation." Patti looks at the frog in disbelief and asks how much he wants to borrow. The frog says \$30,000. The teller asks his name and the frog says that his name is Kermit Jagger and that it's OK, he knows the bank manager. Patti explains that \$30,000 is a substantial amount of money and that he will need to secure some collateral against the loan. She asks if he has anything he can use as collateral. The frog says, "Sure. I have this," and produces a tiny pink porcelain elephant, about half an inch tall. Bright pink and perfectly formed. Very confused, Patti explains that

she'll have to consult with the manager and disappears into a back office. She finds the manager and says: "There's a frog called Kermit Jagger out there who claims to know you and wants to borrow \$30,000. And he wants to use this as colateral." She holds up the tiny pink elephant. "I mean, what the heck is this?" So the bank manager looks back at her and says: "It's a knick knack, Patti Whack. Give the frog a loan. His old man's a Rolling Stone."

11. Frequently Asked Questions:

For more information, contact:

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