



MEDICAL FACULTY ASSOCIATION



Celebrating 51 years of service

Volume 51 Number 2

October, 2004

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have to tell you all that the months of August and September were two of the most memorable months of my living in South Florida. Hurricanes Charlie and Frances enlivened the Maudsley Household into a frenzy of preparation which was unprecedented! Shutters going up, food and water for 2 people and 2 dogs coming into the house, tubs being filled, drains being cleaned, outdoor studio being moved indoors — in San Francisco, we never got warnings to natural disasters so this was a welcome relief to the constant threat of an unpredicted earthquake.

We did not have much damage from those two storms but then Ivan reared its ugly head and threatened our Fall Welcome Brunch. I got depressed — it wasn't a normal depression! It was a full blown Edwardian Romance novel depression. My husband started to worry and the dogs acted terrified.

However, we have much to be thankful for because Ivan went west and we had a lovely brunch on September 15th with lots of great Greek food, about 50 participants and we as a group ratified the 2004-2005 budget and gave out three Graduate Student Awards to some people who are doing some truly amazing research on nicotine addiction, molecular enzymes and muscle reactions and prostate cancer antigens.

I want to thank Valerie Ricordi for the tremendous effort she made organizing the event. Kudos on the theme and food coordination. She did an excellent job. I also want to thank Pat Livingstone for letting us use her beautiful new home in Ye Little Wood. What a wonderful venue and there were plenty of seats for everyone. She made sure of that. You can read all about the luncheon and the student awards inside this exciting issue of the newsletter.

Arriving with this newsletter you will find paperwork and a letter from Ilien Hechtman and Lynda Gordon which will help you in your fundraising efforts for the Gala auction. Please take a minute to read this info packet and feel free to make copies.

Coming up next is our second big event of the year, the **MFA Pot Luck dinner** on November 6th at the home of Dr. Edward and Frances Reid. Linda Eton has this event well under control but if you want to give her some extra help, give her a call.

I am so happy this summer is over! —Nadia





2ND ANNUAL POT LUCK DINNER

Saturday, November 6, 7 pm



MFA members and spouses are invited to bring a dish to share for an evening of the 3 G's:

Good food, Good cheer and Great company!

Home of Dr. Edward and Frances Reid
3430 Alhambra Circle
(north of Bird Road, corner of Salvatierra)

RSVP Linda Eton 305-662-7260 by November 1

MFA GALA 2005

-SUBMITTED BY ILIEN HECHTMAN, GALA CHAIR

Anticipation for the MFA Spring Gala is building! The date has been set for April 2, 2005. The Ritz Carlton Coconut Grove has been reserved and the details are being ironed out. The 2005 MFA Gala Committee has been hard at work all summer long planning our biggest, best, and most successful Gala in MFA history. We are off to a great start with a \$10,000 sponsorship commitment from C.P. Motion. Our Lucky Tickets would not be possible without the commitment of Carl Fiorentino and his company Tiger Direct.

We are looking very forward to our Gala Kick-Off event on October 20. We are going to have Chef Wes Dallas give us a cooking lesson and the very captivating Tracey Zack Johnson will make a fantastic Pampered Chef Presentation. We will have a delicious lunch and share our plans for the Gala with all of you.

The committee cannot do it all alone. We need each of your help. Every member is needed to sell at least 10 Lucky Tickets for the chance to win a 46" Benq Plasma TV valued at \$4,995. The tickets are \$20 each, 3 for \$50, and 8 for \$100. The member who sells the most tickets will win two tickets to the Gala. *(what is cost for 10 tickets?)*

Our plans are also underway for the Gala Silent Auction. Last year the auction alone raised over \$25,000. We hope that we can count on each of you to solicit at least one item for the auction. We were very successful with restaurants, decorative home items, hand made items, jewelry, hotel weekends, airline tickets and the cruise. To solicit items, I drive around with several copies of the letter and form in my car. Whenever I go into a store that I frequent or a restaurant that we eat at often, I simply give a little pitch and leave the letter and form. Everyone I asked said yes last year. I also went through my phonebook and called upon friends who owned businesses or had special talents. They all said yes too.

Remember, you are not asking for yourself, but for the students that are helped by our fundraising efforts. I know that we can make a difference if we all work together. Thank you for your support.



FALL CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH IN YE LITTLE WOOD

The Medical Faculty Association reunited in the wake of Hurricanes Charley, Frances and Ivan at the magnificent home of Dr. Alan and Pat Livingstone in Ye Little Wood, Coconut Grove. Pat welcomed us warmly and our President Nadia Maudsley conducted our first General Meeting for the year 2004-2005.



Highlights included the introduction of two new members, Francesca Romanelli and Jessica Ginzburg, and Dr. Doris McLeod who we are delighted to welcome back after her many years practicing general medicine. The budget for 2004-2005 was ratified and Patty Scerpella and Lynda Gordon updated us on the prolific work of Ilien Hechtman and the Gala Committee. Surrounded by exceptional works of art, we enjoyed the camaraderie well established during the last fifty years. Valerie Ricordi organized a feast in the Greek tradition to honor the summer of the Greek Olympiad, the winners of the European World Cup, and perhaps to bring a little old world glory to these difficult modern times.



Three times in the last few months we have had the pleasure of reconfirming the importance of our mission to support the students of the University of Miami School of



Medicine. The first was to endow two medical students with the income from the **MFA Student Endowment Fund**. Their selection was modeled after the peer review process at NIH, and were confident with the results which were confirmed by the Medical Scholarship Committee at the School of Medicine.



We were touched by the many compelling stories in a way we did not anticipate. Pat Livingstone, R.N., is our liaison to the School of Nursing where we have increased our **Nursing Student Scholarships** in recognition of the urgent need for more nursing students.



Finally, the Fall Champagne Brunch heralded the presentation of the **MFA Best Research Awards**. As has become our tradition, we are grateful to Dr. Richard Bookman, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, for orchestrating the selection of those awards with the committee of Graduate Program Directors from the Departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Cell Biology and Anatomy, Microbiology and Immunology, Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology, Physiology and Biophysics, and for taking the time from a hectic schedule to attend our gathering.



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GRADUATE STUDENTS WORK RECOGNIZED

—SUBMITTED BY KRISTIN PODACK

Presented below are the research summaries of the winners of the **MFA Best Research Awards** for 2004 as described by their mentors. Our membership was enchanted with the students and the presentations of their mentors. We thoroughly enjoyed the chance to be together and we extend our warmest congratulations once again.

**Mr. Lewis Kimbell -
Second Runner-Up
Dr. Richard Rotundo - Department
of Cell Biology and Anatomy**

Acetylcholinesterase is the enzyme that terminates neurotransmission at sites of nerve-muscle contact by breaking



down the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Inhibition of this enzyme by organophosphate molecules, such as nerve gases or some pesticides,

frequently results in death by blocking the contraction of the diaphragm muscles. Our laboratory has defined some of the molecules involved in attaching acetylcholinesterase to these sites of nerve-muscle contact. Lewis' research has focused on defining the regions of the acetylcholinesterase molecule responsible for its attachment by using the purified recombinant human enzyme expressed in tissue-cultured cells. Using this technique, he has also helped develop assay procedures using human mutant enzymes that define the major requirements for acetylcholinesterase attachment to the sites of nerve-muscle contact. We are using this information to develop a chimeric active form of the enzyme that can be targeted to neuromuscular contact sites in vivo, thus replacing molecules that have been inactivated by organophosphate compounds such as nerve gases and pesticides and also restoring the enzyme in patients born with congenital myasthenia with acetylcholinesterase deficiency.

**Mr. Drew Everhart - First Runner-Up
Dr. Charles Luetje - Department of
Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology**

Drew Everhart has been working with neuronal nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChRs). These receptors are of interest for several reasons. Nicotinic ligands are potentially useful in the treat-



ment of dementias, schizophrenia, anxiety and chronic pain. Neuronal nAChRs are also the sites at which nicotine exerts its psychoactive and addictive effects. Thus pharmacologic intervention at

neuronal nAChRs holds promise for treating the effects of diseases of the central nervous system and for understanding and treating addictive processes. Critical to the realization of this potential, is the development of an understanding of the molecular basis for the interactions between the receptors and various ligands.

Drew's project has been an investigation of the interaction between alpha-conotoxins (small protein toxins) and neuronal nAChRs. He has used a variety of techniques including site-directed mutagenesis, electrophysiological analysis and computational protein modeling to build a complete molecular picture of the interaction between alpha-conotoxins and neuronal nAChRs. Drew's work has resulted in 2 first-authored publications, with a third in preparation. His work provides an important foundation for eventual drug design efforts directed toward neuronal nAChRs.

**Ms. Leah Lyons -
MFA Best Research Award 2004
Dr. Kerry Burnstein - Department of
Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology**

Leah Lyons' project addresses a critical problem in prostate cancer - the transition from a relatively indolent to aggressive disease. Current clinical data suggest

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GRADUATE STUDENTS WORK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

that a large percentage of men with prostate cancer may have had disseminated disease at the time of initial diagnosis.



These men are not cured by surgery or radiotherapy. Standard treatment for advanced prostate cancer is androgen deprivation. While this treatment decreases tumor burden in most men,

there is a gradual relapse and the recurrent cancer is termed androgen independent. Using a technique that permits the simultaneous analysis of tens of thousands of genes, Leah identified a gene, Vav3, that is more highly expressed in androgen independent cancer compared to less aggressive prostate cancer cells. Leah proved that

Vav3 allows prostate cancer cells to thrive even at very low androgen levels, such as are present in men who have undergone androgen ablation for prostate cancer. She established that Vav3 enhances the activity of the androgen receptor even at very low levels of androgen. This is an important finding as androgen receptor transcriptional activity is thought to drive progression of prostate cancer. Leah is determining what portions of Vav3 are required and defining the mechanism underlying Vav3 effects on androgen receptor transcriptional activity. This work is significant as it may ultimately provide investigators with a new therapeutic target for the aggressive, androgen independent form of prostate cancer.

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Dr. Bookman is always most gracious in thanking the members of the MFA for the only



financial support extended to the graduate students in terms of loans and awards. He emphasized the separate importance of each of our funds which

include the **Margaret Whelan Graduate Student Scholarship Fund** supporting competitive travel awards for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, the **MFA Graduate Student Loan Fund** which helps students meet the overwhelming immediate costs of relocation or health insurance, the highly competitive MFA Best Research

Awards for which exceptional graduate students have been nominated by their mentors. Most of these students are in their fifth year of graduate studies and close to completing their doctoral thesis. The membership was enchanted with the students and the presentations of their work by their mentors.

When our new President Nadia Maudsley was installed at our Spring Luncheon last May, we dubbed it a coronation. The Fall Brunch was also marked by ceremony when Pat Livingstone was draped with a gold medallion, laurel wreath and floral bouquet for her gold medal performance as Hostess Extraordinaire. In all, it was an enjoyable and meaningful occasion to launch our 51st year of service to the University of Miami Medical School.

2004-2005 CALENDAR

Board Meeting September 29, 2004

Home of Thomas and Linda Fitzpatrick
10:00 a.m.

Gala Kick-Off Luncheon Oct. 20, 2004

Home of Dr. Keith and Ilien Hechtman
11:00 a.m.

Pot Luck Dinner November 6, 2004

Home of Dr. Edward and Frances Reid
7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting November 17, 2004

Home of Dr. Michael and Lynda Gordon
10:00 a.m.

Holiday Lunch & Auction Dec. 8, 2004

Home of Dr. Leopoldo and Susanna Rajj
11:00 a.m.

Board Meeting January 26, 2005

Home of Dr. Andrews and Nadia Maudsley
10:00 a.m.

Board Meeting February 23, 2005

Home of Dr. David and Isabelle Andrews
10:00 a.m.

MFA Gala April 2, 2005

Ritz Carlton, Coconut Grove
7:00 p.m.

General Meeting April 27, 2005

Home of Dr. Camillo and Valerie Ricordi
10:00 a.m.

Installation Luncheon May 25, 2005

Ritz Carlton, Coconut Grove
11:30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW MEMBERS

Jessica Ginzburg
(Linda please submit pertinent information)
Francesca Romanelli

LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

The Medical School Class of 2007 has invited the MFA to join them in "A Night of Dinner and Laughter" at comedy club The Miami Improv. The \$35 per person charge (\$65 for couple) includes a three course dinner and entrance to the show. If you would like to participate please contact UMSM student Sarah Thompson at 305 377-8864
sthompson1@newssun.med.miami.edu

FUNDS ALLOCATION CLARIFICATION:

A total of \$10,000 of MFA 2003-2004 funds was directed to the support of the USMS Medical Graduate Program. The Margaret Whelan Graduate Student Scholarship Fund received \$6,000 and the Graduate Student Loan Fund was allotted \$4,000.

TREASURER POSITION OPEN

After several years of service in the MFA, Lisa Hu Barquist is resigning as treasurer. Lisa will remain as disbursements treasurer until a replacement is found. Patty Scerpella will handle all deposits, so please send them to her henceforth. We are looking for a volunteer to assume the responsibility of disbursing MFA funds for our various events and maintaining records of expenses paid.