



THE CATALYST

Inside this issue:

- Hidden talents: 2
A postdoc show-
cases her art
- From postdoc to 3
professor
- Ask the JHPDA: 4
Taking classes
- Upcoming events 4
and other notices
of interest



Photo by Marianne Stefanini

‘Tis the season to be overindulgent: Science to help us understand and get through the holidays

Holiday hangover cures:
Too good to be true? That about sums it up! Currently, the only proven mechanism for getting sober is to wait for your body to metabolize the alcohol. To reduce a hangover symptoms, drink a large amount of water before sleeping: this will cause you to urinate and get rid of the alcohol-related toxins in your blood at a faster rate. But be warned: a BMJ review on the topic concluded “No compelling evidence exists to suggest that any conventional or complementary intervention is effective for preventing or treating alcohol hangover. The most effective way to avoid the symptoms... is to avoid

drinking” (BMJ 2005; 331:1515-8).

Dealing with jet lag:
Although the physiological function of sleep is still somewhat of a mystery to scientists, the regulation of the body’s clock appears to be in part due to the hormone melatonin. If you find yourself traveling long distances this holiday season to see loved ones, try exposing yourself to sunlight during the day (if you’re going someplace warm and sunny, of course), or try a supplementary dose of melatonin before bed. Studies show melatonin can help your body adjust to a new time zone, at double the rate, and

is available without a prescription.

Turkey and tryptophan:
It’s the tryptophan in turkey that makes you feel sleepy, right? Well, yes and no. While tryptophan can be metabolized into sleep-inducing serotonin and melatonin, turkey does not have a huge tryptophan content. In fact, most meat has roughly the same amount of tryptophan as turkey. So why do you feel so sleepy after a turkey dinner? The real culprits are the carbs (potatoes, stuffing, and pie, oh my!). These cause an insulin surge, which facilitates the uptake of most amino acids (Continued on next page)

Contributors:

Jacob Koskimaki
Anvita Kumar
Marianne Stefanini
Michelle Thiaville
Erin Vasudevan

Hidden talents: Hopkins postdoc shows piece in National Arts Program exhibit

Twenty six years ago, Leonard Andrews founded the National Arts Program (www.nationalartsprogram.org), sponsored by the National Arts Program Foundation. This annual exhibit promotes the artistic side of employees, commonly working in a non-artistic field, as well as their relatives. Five categories are represented: youth under 12 years old, youth between 12 and 18 years old, adult amateur, adult intermediate, and adult professional.

This year was the first annual exhibit to be held at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. With the help of Michele Fountain, from the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Center, the event was a great success. No less than 300 participants were happy to show their hidden talents and share it with friends, family and colleagues on November 5, 2008.

Among the art pieces, which went from sculpture to drawings to photography, was a painting by Manjula Puthenedam, a second-year post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Gastroenterology, who works under the supervision of Dr. John Kwon. Manjula started painting when she was really young, by creating greeting cards for her friends and family. The first time she heard about the National Arts Program was through an email she received. After collecting more details in the Inside Hopkins Medicine newspaper, she decided to register. To her, it was a fun way to share her artistic side with her fellow coworkers.

As soon as she registered, she started the piece that is now exhibited in Turner Concourse. This painting was inspired from a beautiful flower, a *tulipa*



Manjula Puthenedam shows her painting “Tuli-doscope”

viridiflora that she had found in a magazine. Unlike most tulips that are usually round-shaped, the *tulipa viridiflora* has slightly pointed petals with streaks of green, red and purple. The particular shape of the flower as well as the “kaleidoscope of colors” inspired Manjula to entitle her piece “Tuli-doscope.” After about three weeks of work, the painting was complete. Manjula was happy to share her art with friends and coworkers and, although she did not win

this year’s competition, she certainly plans to participate again next year.

In the meantime, the “Tuli-doscope”, among many other pieces from Johns Hopkins staff and relatives, are currently displayed in Turner Concourse and can be viewed until December 31, 2008. Come and have a look! And maybe, who knows, you will find that your labmate is also very skilled outside the lab!

~Marianne Stefanini

‘Tis the season (con’t from pg 1)
from the blood into muscles, with one notable exception: tryptophan. Tryptophan is left in the blood and is taken up by the brain, where it is metabolized into serotonin and melatonin. Without insulin, tryptophan would be competing with all of the other amino-acids as they make their way to the brain via a common transporter, and not nearly as much

tryptophan would make it. So if it’s your job to do dishes after dinner, eat less carbs and more turkey!

Snow smarts:

According to the World Health Organization, new snow can reflect up to 80% of UV rays. This is compared to grass, soil, and water, which tend to reflect less than 10%. Even beach sand only reflects

~15%. So when you hit the slopes over the holidays, be sure to wear sunscreen and sunglasses or goggles that protect against UVA and UVB rays.

Also, remember that you still need to drink water during winter sports. Make your liquid refreshment more appealing by warming it up a little before drinking.

~Jacob Koskimaki and Erin Vasudevan

From postdoc to professor: Looking ahead

It's always been a little bit scary, the thought of actually leaving the comforting cushion of school, and getting – gasp – a job. With so many tools available, from new social networking sites to professional societies to your advisor's former advisor, it's no wonder the process can seem somewhat daunting. True, it's much easier to delay getting into the real world – that's what grad school, and the second postdoc were for, but at some point every postdoc has to decide whether to join the academic ranks or seek employment elsewhere. Check out what these postdocs in the School of Medicine are doing to expedite their next job search:



Adam Sylvester,
Postdoctoral Fellow,
Dept. of Functional
Anatomy & Evolution

The Department of Functional Anatomy & Evolution has

been known for two important tasks – teaching gross anatomy to the first year medical school class, and their innovative research strategies in comparative anatomy. As a postdoctoral fellow in the department, Adam Sylvester, Ph.D., has had an instructive role in teaching medical students dissection-based anatomy, and conducting biomechanics research on three-dimensional computational models of femurs. Adam has begun looking for academic jobs with the specific interest of teaching gross anatomy. As he has looked for faculty positions he stresses the importance of using previous advisors as contacts, and also talking with people who have recently acquired faculty positions and tenured jobs. “It pays to touch base with people from professional meetings and conferences,” he says “to keep updated on new positions.”

Before Hopkins, he had previously worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Tennessee, and has a Ph.D. in Physical Anthropology, but acknowledges he had “only considered

anthropology jobs” before working at the School of Medicine. Belonging to several professional organizations such as the *American Association for Physical Anthropologists*, he says these are the first places to look for jobs. His best advice? “Have a faculty member read everything before you send out your applications. Know the process and spend some time developing a teaching philosophy,” as that will be an important part of the application process. Adam further explains that faculty in the School of Medicine are already familiar with the process, and can improve your applications in an already competitive pool. “It also pays to start early, keep your CV going through graduate school, and be sure to write a dynamite cover letter.”



Amina Qutub,
Postdoctoral Fellow,
Dept. of Biomedical
Engineering

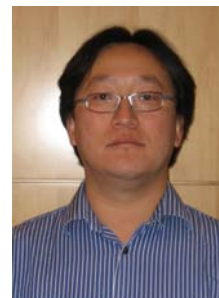
Talk to Amina Qutub, Ph.D. in the Department of Biomedical Engineering and you will likely get a sense of a true entrepreneur. Amina created a small startup company while completing her Ph.D., and recently completed an internship with a venture capital firm where she worked on two biotech companies that were eventually funded. For her, the internship was a valuable experience both for making important contacts and understanding how a drug company actually functions. “It's important not to limit yourself in your job search,” Amina says, “plus it's always good to be on the radar of executive recruiters.” She argues that one of the best ways to find a job in industry is to first complete an internship with a company of interest. Although Amina is drawn to the idea of being an entrepreneur, she is looking into faculty positions, and is applying for faculty transitional grants, which can ultimately grant more freedom for new faculty members. She acknowledges the strong role her current advisor has had in finding open

faculty positions, as well as recent alumni from her research group. In addition to having a strong publication record, and credentials, Amina argues it is also important to bring something unique to the academic setting, both in terms of specific research interests and personality. “It ultimately comes down to focusing on what you're uniquely passionate about, and being able to sell people on your ideas,” Amina says.

Suggested websites:

www.academickeys.com

scjobs.sciencemag.org/search?t=Faculty



In Hong Yang,
Postdoctoral Fellow,
Dept. of Biomedical
Engineering

As a research scientist in South Korea, In Hong Yang spent some time outside the academic setting

before setting his sights on finding an academic job. Now having already completed two postdoctoral fellowships, he has begun his job search for a faculty position. His best advice is to apply for faculty fellowships, especially transition grants from being a postdoc to a faculty member. Bottom line: if you have funding already a university is much more likely to hire you. What's the one thing that can hurt an otherwise strong applicant from acquiring a faculty position? “A lack of publications,” In Hong says. “You need to be able to show a strong potential to lead and earn million dollar grants for research.” In Hong stresses the importance of being an independent researcher with novel ideas to survive in integrative disciplines such as biomedical engineering. It pays to act, and think independently and have a strong ability to communicate ideas and market yourself. In addition to his advisor and personal contacts, he has used various websites such as BMEnet, *Science Magazine*, and the American Chemical Society (ACE) for more chemical engineering jobs.

~Jacob Koskimaki

Ask the JHPDA: Taking classes

Dear JHPDA,
I've always wanted to learn French. Is there any way I can take a French language course at the Homewood campus?

Merci beaucoup,
Frog Wannabe

Dear Frog,

Yep, you sure can. Postdocs get to take most courses at Hopkins-affiliated schools for free. The main exception is the Peabody Institute, where you have to pay for courses out of pocket. For specific instructions on how you register for courses, go to the Office of the Registrar

(in BRB—where you go to register as a postdoc every year) and ask for a copy of the **Postdoctoral Fellow Course Registration Procedures**. The only thing that we ask is that you try to take courses during the regular session. If you take courses in the summer or winter intersession, the school of medicine has to pay your tuition (regular session courses are at no cost to them) and that means less money to be used for other initiatives that may benefit postdocs.

Bonne chance!
JHPDA



Happy Holidays from the JHPDA!

And may your New Year be filled with publications and job offers!

Upcoming international events:

JHPDA International Community Social Evening

Wed, January 7 @ 7pm - then every 1st Tuesday of the month

Red Maple - 930 N Charles St, Baltimore
For international post-docs but everybody is welcome!

First Fridays Potlucks are for spouses of international students, faculty and staff at JHMI and are sponsored by The Johns Hopkins International Society.

When: January 9 (each first Friday of the month, except in January)

Where: Reed Hall, JHMI campus

When 12-1:30 p.m.

Bring a food item to share with 4-6 people. It can be homemade or store bought. Drinks will be provided. Children are welcome too!

Contact Dacia Gauer if you plan to attend: internationalsociety@jhmi.edu

Postdoctoral Career Development Conference

Wednesday, January 21, 2009
8AM-2:30 PM in the Turner Auditorium

An exclusive event for Postdoctoral Fellows!

Find out how to make the most of your Postdoctoral fellowship!

Free networking lunch!

Tips on transitioning to industry from AstraZeneca

Learn how to become an independent investigator



For your **FREE** registration please e-mail postdoc@jhmi.edu by January 14, 2009

(Co-sponsored by the Professional Development Office & the Johns Hopkins Postdoctoral Association)

Logo contest: Win \$50

Are you a starving artist? Or perhaps a starving scientist with artistic inclinations? Design a new logo for The Catalyst and you could win \$50 and have your artwork displayed proudly on this publication. Entries should incorporate the text "The Catalyst" in the design. Submit your design to postdoc@jhmi.edu by Feb. 6th. The winner will be notified by Feb 20th.

Want to contribute to The Catalyst?

We are looking for writers, editors, photographers, artists, comic illustrators, etc. Our next submission deadline is Feb 6th. If you plan to submit something, please e-mail postdoc@jhmi.edu prior to the submission deadline.