

Wired

DEPARTMENT OF
NEUROSCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF
MINNESOTA

DECEMBER 2007

MALAAK MOUSSA, EDITOR

Meant to keep you hooked

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT:

John Soechting (soech001@umn.edu)

I hope you find this newsletter interesting and we hope to make this an annual (or biannual) event. But we need signs of life from you! Let us know what is new in your life – professionally or personally and we'll share it with everyone. Our first solicitation for news was very successful and I hope it prods more of you to respond. You can send any news to me or to Malaak (mous0025@umn.edu).

I have been acting as Director of Undergraduate Studies since July 2007, since **Martha Flanders** is on a leave of absence (see below). It has been a crash course in learning the myriad of rules that govern the undergraduate experience and I still don't know most of them. But I've enjoyed meeting one-on-one with many of our present undergraduates. I also still teach in the spring semester course.

Martha Flanders is working at the National Science Foundation as a Program Director in Neural Systems Biology. She was recruited to serve in a 1-2 year rotating position, where she is involved in deciding which research proposals should be supported by the Foundation. She finds it interesting to act as an employee of the federal government, she enjoys living in Washington DC in a tiny apartment with a view of the National Zoo, and she thinks it is cool to ride the Metro instead of sitting in traffic on 35W.

Paul Mermelstein is still the course director for Neuroscience 3101 (Molecules to Madness), but starting this year **Lorene Lanier** has taken on some of the paperwork, acting as co-director with Paul. **Paul Letourneau** and **Paolo Kofuji** continue to contribute lectures as well. The popularity of the course is still growing; this year enrollment has set a new record at 94.

In Martha Flanders' absence, **Geoff Ghose** has taken over as course director for Neuroscience 3102W, the second of the introductory courses for Neuroscience majors. The course is maintaining its focus on exploring recurrent themes in neuroscience using original research papers. This year several new themes, including the retinal processing and vertebrate pattern generation, will be covered thanks to the inclusion of two new faculty members into the course, **Robert Miller** and **Mark Masino**. Mark Masino just joined our faculty last spring and he has already recruited a few undergraduates into his lab working on neural networks in the spinal cords of mice and zebrafish.

The laboratory course continues to be taught by **Dale Branton** and **Janet Dubinsky**.



1st Annual Alumni Reception 2006
Meredith Seaborn and Phillip Barbosa

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU TOO. SEND
UPDATES TO MOUS0025@UMN.EDU OR
SOECH001@UMN.EDU.

Phillip Barbosa, Graduated: 2004, UMN Medical School

"I traveled around the world for about eight months, came back and started medical school. I am now in my third year and have no idea what I want to do. The next big step is a year abroad, most likely in Uganda, doing rotations and research. After that I will be back to finish up my 4th year and applying to residency. The game continues!"

Sean William Marquis, Graduated: 2004, Ross University School of Medicine.

"My course work as part of the neuroscience major was very helpful during the first two years of medical school in understanding the basic sciences, neuroanatomy and reviewing health science journals. In my first year of medical school I spent some time working with the Salybia Mission Project in the Caribbean Island of Dominica. I was acting as a medical student and as the supervisor for the university's local campus emergency services. The University of Minnesota is well-known and respected around the world!"

Maya A Babu, Graduated: 2005, Harvard University

"Happy to hear that you are building an alumni network, what a terrific idea!!!! Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help in any way-I really enjoyed my time in the Neuroscience Program, and I would love to give back as much as I can."

Kasia Simura O'Donnell, Graduated: 2004

"Up until Winter 2006 I worked in Martha Flanders' lab for several years where I was able to apply my Neuroscience knowledge to the experiments and gain invaluable skills in the research field. I got the chance to attend and present at the SfN two years, which was an invigorating and very educational experience. While working with Martha I was also doing freelance illustration for various professors at the U and my artwork is published in several publications.

Right before New Year's 2007 my then-boyfriend Andy and I moved out east and settled in the beautiful state of Connecticut. Andy proposed several minutes before the bell struck midnight on New Year's Eve and we got married in a very simple ceremony on May 26th, 2007 (for those of you who might feel bad for not being invited DON'T, our decision was very spontaneous and we only had one guest/witness). :o) Since my husband is a helicopter pilot for the Army National Guard I got a chance to experience many exciting things since I met him, including flying in a helicopter and getting a chance to feel what it's like to actually fly one in a simulator. Our move gave me a chance to reanalyze which field I want to pursue, and I decided to put my Fine Arts degree to some use so right now I'm pursuing a Web Design career. However I still try to stay up to date on all Neuroscience events and research through various newsletters and research articles."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Year Graduated	Name	Post-Graduate Institute, Program	Status
2005	Maya Babu	Harvard University, MD/MBA	3 rd year medical student
2006	Maralyssa Bann	Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, MD	2 nd year medical student
2004	Phillip Barbosa	UMD Medical School, MD	3 rd year medical student
2001	Kelly Casperson	UMN Medical School, MD	Urology resident
2007	Callie Cox	Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine, D.O	1 st year D.O student
2006	Jonathan Ehrich	University of Washington, PhD	1 st year graduate student
2003	Joshua Froman	UMN Medical School, MD	General surgery resident
2007	Narayan Kissoon	UMN Medical School, MD	1 st year medical student
2004	Sean Marquis	Ross University School of Medicine, MD	3 rd year medical student
2007	Joseph Page	Rush University Medical College, MD	1 st year medical student
2006	Paul Johnson	The Scripps Research Institute, PhD	2 nd year graduate student



2nd Annual Alumni Reception
(L-R) Adia Attar, Amanda Kinnischtzke,
Rami Assadi, Anh Tran and Malaak

WORKING?

Year Graduated	Name	Gainful Employment
2001	Kathryn Klammer	MN Department of Health and Molecular Epidemiology Unit
2006	Megan Schmidt	Lab technician in Karen Ashe's laboratory at UMN

SPECIAL NOTES...

❖ Maya Babu currently holds the following posts:

- Chair of the Committee on Legislation and Advocacy for the American Medical Association-Medical Student Section (2007-2008)
- National Student Representative to the American Medical Association-Women Physicians Congress Governing Council (2007-2008)
- New England Region Representative to the National Council of Student Members of the American College of Physicians (2007-2010)
- Vice-Chair of the Massachusetts Medical Society-Medical Student Section Governing Council (2007-2008)

❖ Callie Cox has joined the United States Air Force and is a 2nd Lieutenant



1st Annual Alumni Reception 2006
Paul Mermelstein and Geoff Ghose