FROM THE CHAIR

This last academic year continues a period of transition and transformation for the Biology Department. We had barely said goodbye to Ralph Cavaliere when Sherm Hendrix ’61 announced that he was retiring at the end of the academic year (see below for more details). At the same time, we welcomed new faculty in Biology. Our new tenure-track hire, Jennifer Powell, was introduced in our last newsletter. In addition, we have two visiting faculty. Dr. Gerardo Carfagno is a behavioral herpetologist who got his Ph.D. in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Gerardo came to us from the College of Wooster where he had been teaching for the last two years, and at Gettysburg he will be teaching in our introductory sequence. This summer Gerardo is involving two students in fieldwork on turtle behavior. We were also joined by Dr. Gregory Krukonis, who received his Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Arizona, and who published “Evolution for Dummies” in 2008. Greg studies the ecology, evolution, and genetics of wild viruses and is offering a new course on viruses for the Biology and BMB curricula.

—Véronique Delesalle

HOMECOMING 2010

Both Ralph Cavaliere and Sherm Hendrix’ 61 have retired! Not many departments can boast of having two faculty members who each have served more than forty years at one institution – Ralph from 1966 to 2009 and Sherm from 1964 to 2010. As you can guess, it is a little difficult to imagine the Biology Department and Gettysburg College without them.

We will honor Ralph and Sherm with a reception at Homecoming this fall on Friday October 1st, from 4:30-6:00pm in the Science Center Lobby. Please plan to join in this opportunity to raise a glass and a cheer for these much-loved faculty. We hope that you will send us a memento or two that we can incorporate into a memory book for each of them. This can be a story, photo, or other reminiscence – whatever you would like to share. We have created a web page where you can upload this information at http://www.gettysburg.edu/biology-homecoming/. You also may send your “memory” to the Biology administrative assistant by email to dkcooper@gettysburg.edu or by mail to the department.

Finally, we have designated two special gift funds as a way to recognize their long and dedicated service to our students. If you wish to honor their legacy with a donation, you may direct your gifts as follows:

For Ralph Cavaliere, donations to the “Cavaliere Teaching Award” fund will be used to endow the annual Student Senate Faculty Appreciation Award. This award will be renamed in Ralph’s honor.

For Sherm Hendrix, donations to the “Biology Special Gifts” fund will be used to support teaching and research in the areas of biology closest to his teaching: parasitology and microbiology. In particular, these funds would allow us to complement electron microscopy
work on the identification and study of microbes and parasites with molecular approaches.

To make your contribution, please go to the above web page or to the College's “Make a Gift” web page, choose “Other” and specify either “Cavaliere Teaching Award” or “Biology Special Gifts” (to honor both, you will have to make two separate donations, each designating the appropriate fund). Alternately, you may mail your donation to the Office of Annual Giving (300 N. Washington Street, Gettysburg College, Box 423, Gettysburg, PA 17325).

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**RETIREMENT OF SHERM HENDRIX**

The following are excerpts from Ralph Sorensen's Valedictory for Sherm Hendrix. We thought you might enjoy some of these reminiscences:

“Sherm Hendrix first came to Gettysburg as a student in the fall of 1957. Other than the three years for his master's degree from Florida State University, he has been at the college ever since. That's 53 years. When Sherm was a student the college swimming pool was in the basement of Weidensall, the dorms on Lincoln Avenue had not been built and his room was in Penn Hall, then known as Old Dorm. The semester began after Labor Day and classes were taught on Saturday morning. Sherm’s first office was shared with John Winkelmann when the biology department was on the top floor of Glatfelter Hall and there was no elevator.

Sherm is the author of close to thirty scientific papers, most on parasitic flatworms in fish. He has presented an equal number of symposium papers. In 1998 he was awarded both the Anniversary Award of the Helminthological Society of Washington and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Pennsylvania Academy of Science. (…)

There is one (more) story that is the stuff of Gettysburg legend. Ralph Cavaliere tells the story as follows. Every year during his parasitology class, Sherm would put out a general request for collections from the faculty. His request was simple: would those faculty members who had dogs please collect their dog fecal material for a lab analysis of intestinal parasites. He would even provide small "Dixie" cups and plastic spoons. He requested that the samples be brought to him. On many occasions, however, the samples were sent through the campus mail system. During the process of transport, some of the containers would be punctured, some of them leaked, and all of them were odiferous. The warm weather did not help with the stench that became a yearly occurrence in the mail room (then in the confines of the Plank basement). After a few years of this, the post office complained about their annual inundation with packages of fresh dog shit labeled with Sherm's name and box number. They rebelled. They went postal! Sherm doesn't do that anymore.

Conservative in his manner, droll in his humor, and square in a most charming way, Sherm could well be a character from Lake Woebegone — Pastor Ingqvist comes to mind. Grace Myers, who served as department secretary during Sherm's chairmanship writes that she never once heard him raise his voice and found him to be a total gentleman at all times. He is calm when others are on the verge of panic, strong when the occasion requires it, and always kind regardless of the circumstance. As he retires to his home in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, he looks forward to visiting his grandchildren, fishing, and continuing his lifelong devotion to the Lutheran Church. And his scientific work is not finished. His retirement comes with an important caveat - he gets to keep a small lab until he can work up the last of those parasite samples in his kitchen freezer.”

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**FACULTY RESEARCH WITH STUDENTS**

Working with Dr. Steve James, Jeffrey Moyer worked to insert tags into the _sca₄ⁿᵈ_ Gene of _Aspergillus nidulans_ and Thomas Bruno studied mutations in _snoARif1_ that rescue growth and DNA damage defects. Geraldine Hickey worked with Dr. Matthew Kittelberger to describe differential catecholamine expression in the vocal circuits of male and female midshipman fish. Kira Nightingale's Bio 460 project with Dr. Peter Fong was on increased feeding in Largemouth Bass induced by WIN55, 212-2, a cannabinoid agonist. Dr. John Winkelmann took Lauren Schmidt and Jennifer Merrill to South Africa to assist in a bioacoustic survey of Microchiropteran bat species in Kruger National Park.
In December, an interdepartmental team of faculty from Gettysburg College received a Major Research Instrumentation grant of $160,000 from the National Science Foundation for the acquisition of a Nikon Eclipse 90i microscope and digital imaging software. Matt Kittelberger (Biology and Neuroscience) is the Principal Investigator, with Steve James (Biology and BMB), Shelli Frey (Chemistry and BMB), and Steve Siviy (Psychology and Neuroscience) as co-PIs. Jen Powell (Biology and BMB) and Josef Brandauer (Health Sciences) will also use the new microscope in their research programs. The microscope will enable new research initiatives for these six faculty, and will broaden and enhance the undergraduate training environment at the College. The Eclipse 90i microscope will allow faculty and their undergraduate collaborators to pursue a variety of new research initiatives involving both fluorescence and bright field imaging with sophisticated digital analysis methods, which are currently not possible at the College. Acquisition of the microscope will contribute to the department’s teaching objectives by exposing our students to new areas of scientific inquiry and by providing sophisticated, discovery-based training with the latest technology and instrumentation. This award was funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

We had success with other grant proposals this last year. Dr. Etheridge received a three-year $354,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for Advancing Science, the K-12 outreach program that she directs. This grant will fund pre-college science education and professional development for teachers, focusing on environmental study of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Finally, Dr. Hendrix got a $4,010 to study the internal parasites of fishes native to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, work that he plans to start in his retirement!

We welcomed back Greg Crawford ’95 to give the Robert D. Barnes Memorial Honors Lecture. Greg was one of the first students to work in Steve James’ laboratory. He left Gettysburg to get his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan, and followed this as a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institutes of Health, where he worked under Francis Collins, then-director of the National Human Genome Research Institute. Greg is currently an Assistant professor of Pediatrics at Duke University Medical Center, working in the Institute for Genome Science and Public Policy. In his talk, titled “The Generation of a Genome-wide Atlas of Open Chromatin,” Greg described his work identifying actively transcribed genes in a variety of cell types and conditions, such as normal versus cancerous cells. He shared his newest findings showing that the active regions of DNA vary from person to person, and how these differences are heritable (for more, see McDaniell et al. 2010. SCIENCE 328 (5975): 235-239).

At the Honors Day ceremony Lindsay Parker received the Betty M. Barnes Memorial Award, presented annually to a female senior student of high academic ability preparing for a career in Biology or Medicine. Lindsey will be attending the Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University next year. The Biochemistry/Molecular Biology Award was shared by Jaclyn D’Innocenzi and Sarah Fritz. Both will be attending graduate school next year. Sara Levin and Brynn Duncan shared the William C. and Helen H. Darrah Award, presented to a senior who has given time and energy to the Department beyond normal academic work. Both Sara and Brynn have been extensively involved in the Department and their leadership in Biosphere will be greatly missed.

The class of 2010 did us proud. First, we are excited to report that the 2010 Class Valedictorian was Lauren Schmidt. Those of us who had the pleasure of having Lauren in our classes were not surprised by this outcome. Lauren is taking a couple of years off before applying to graduate school. Lindsay Parker was the Biology banner carrier, while Geraldine K. Hickey carried the banner for BMB. James Klunk was the recipient of the Dr. George W. Stoner award. Brynn Duncan won the Biology/BMB prize for best poster at Celebration ‘10. 

Keep in Touch!

We would love to hear from you! Share your news with us either 1) by filling the form below and returning it to us:

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Or 2) sending your info to dkcooper@gettysburg.edu

Name: ____________________________
Class Year: ________________________

Your News: __________________________

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